

Serie A Inter pull ahead

Football

AFP, Milan

Inter Milan were held 1-1 by Udinese Sunday, a result that nonetheless sees Hector Cuper's side maintain their one-point lead in the Italian First Division.

A second-half goal from Nicola Ventola looked likely to give Inter maximum points but then David di Michele's penalty - fiercely disputed by the Inter players - allowed Udinese to grab a point against the depleted leaders whose French midfielder Stephane Dalmat had been sent off for a wild tackle.

Inter, who play in the image of their dour Argentinian coach and are the only unbeaten side left in the division, stay a point clear of Verona-based Chievo whose 2-2 draw at Brescia also saw them drop two points.

Cuper said: "There is a bit of bitterness at throwing away the points at the end but the team did well and that's without talking about the absentees (Ronaldo, Christian Vieri and Alvaro Recoba)."

But the best match of the day was at Turin. Juventus, held 3-3 by Torino who had trailed 3-0 at the interval in the city derby, continued their indifferent run as did AC Milan who were held 1-1 by bottom club Venezia at the San Siro.

For sheer drama the Turin derby had everything. Second-half goals from Cristiano Lucarelli, Marco Ferrante (penalty) and Riccardo Maspéro pulled Torino back on terms but Juve's Chilean forward Marcelo Salas still had time to miss what would have been a match-clinching penalty.

Salas blasted his shot high and Torino survived to claim a famous result at the Stadio Delle Alpi shared by both teams with Juve technically the home side.

It was an astonishing finish after two goals from Alessandro Del Piero and one from Croatian Igor Tudor looked to have killed the match for Juve after only 25 minutes.

Torino coach Giancarlo Camolesse said: "At half-time I told the team not to kick bottles in despair but to stay rational. That's the beauty of football - even against a technically better team you can still get a result."

His Juve counterpart Marcello Lippi said: "We made the mistake of thinking things for granted even though at the break we talked about it being a derby match and we said that even a 3-0 lead is no reason to be complacent."

At Brescia Chievo took the lead with their first real attack of the match through Massimo Marazzina only for in-form Roberto Baggio to level from the penalty spot after the break.



Stephane Dalmat (R), Inter Milan's French recruit, passes the ball during the game against Udinese on October 14. PHOTO: AFP

Federico Cossato restored Chievo's lead but Andrea Sussi levelled for Brescia.

Chievo coach Luigi del Neri said: "We still have our feet on the ground - we know we are competing with very good teams."

AC Milan were held 1-1 at the San Siro by Venezia who earned their first point of the season.

Ukrainian Andriy Shevchenko broke the deadlock for Milan with a superb half-volley just before half-time but Venezia, under the interim management of Sergio Buso, levelled with a Filippo Maniero header.

Asked about his club's chances of avoiding relegation Buso said: "I hope that is possible, I am sure of it. In three or four months I hope we will be in a better position."

AC Milan's Turkish coach Fatih Terim, also referring to his side's 3-1

defeat at Perugia last time out, said: "We have lost four points now, I will not accept results like this."

Those results allowed Bologna to move third with a 1-0 victory at Verona earned by Salvatore Fresi's goal in a match where Verona's Andrea Filipponi was red carded.

Southerners Lecce beat Fiorentina 4-1 in a tempestuous match. They went ahead after three minutes by their Croatian striker Davor Vugrinec despite appeals for offside.

Uruguayan midfielder Guillermo Giacomazzi made it 2-0 after linking up well with compatriot Javier Chevanton but Yugoslav international Predrag Mijatovic pulled one back for the Florentines. Only 12 minutes had elapsed.

Things died down but then midway through the second period Fiorentina keeper Giuseppe

Tagliapietra was sent off for a professional foul on Chevanton.

Lecce's Luigi Piangerelli and Fiorentina's Domenico Morfeo also saw red before late goals from Vugrinec and Chevanton killed the game.

Parma and Piacenza fought out a 2-2 draw. A brilliant goal from Marco Di Vaio gave Parma a first-half lead but after the break much-travelled veteran Dario Hubner restored parity for the visitors.

Hubner was not finished and then he came up with a beauty, his seventh of the season making him the division's top scorer before Parma's Ghanaian player Stephen Appiah squared the match again.

On Saturday Lazio finally pulled off their first win of the season Saturday, beating Alitalia 2-0 at Rome.

The opener was from Argentinian forward Claudio Lopez - courtesy of a deflection off Massimo Paganini's backside - and Portuguese defender Fernando Couto added the second.

In the evening match AS Roma were held 0-0 at Perugia with the champions having to hang on after being reduced to 10 men by the sending off of Brazilian midfielder Emerson.

"It was one-way refereeing," fumed Roma coach Fabio Capello.

Houllier paying a price?

AFP, London

As Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier was recovering from open heart surgery on Sunday he may have wondered why he chose to return to club management after helping to mastermind France's 1998 World Cup win.

Even as the celebrations went on for France's World Cup win over Brazil in which Houllier had played a major part as French national technical director alongside team coach Aime Jacquet, Houllier was drawn to the challenge of rebuilding Liverpool.

The Frenchman had never lost his fondness for the northern English port city in which he taught and studied in the 1960s, when he would stand with the massed ranks on the Kop at Anfield to see the beginnings of the great Liverpool team of the 1970s and 1980s.

Houllier was born in Therouanne in northern France on September 3, 1947.

His playing career was modest, starting at amateur club Hucqueliere before moving to another amateur outfit, Le Touquet, the once-fashionable resort on the north coast, where he was player manager from 1973 to 1976.

Then he joined Noeux-les-Mines in the declining coalmining areas of the Pas-de-Calais and took the tiny amateur club from the third division to promotion to the professional second division in six years with the club.

Bigger clubs showed interest and Lens, one of France's best-supported clubs, became his first major coaching job in 1982.

Three years later, Houllier was lured to the bright lights of the capital and Paris Saint-Germain. In 1988, he led the club, who were only founded in 1970, to their first French league title.

Houllier stayed another two years with PSG before the call came to become French national coach in 1988.

Over the next decade his role alternated from national senior



GERARD HOULLIER

coach to the role of national technical director, overseeing the development of national teams at all age levels.

One of his periods as coach, from July 1992 to November 1993, was a lowpoint of his career as France failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States.

Houllier's team, containing stars such as Jean-Pierre Papin and David Ginola, needed a point from their last two home qualifying games against Bulgaria and Israel, but they lost both matches.

Houllier was moved to coach of the under-18 team and led them to European title in 1997.

The next year, he would share in the glory of France's first World Cup win, on home soil.

As the English Premiership's search for coaches moved to the European continent, Houllier's friendship with Liverpool's former chief executive, Peter Robinson, led to an approach in July 1998 to assist the then coach Roy Evans in an unusual coaching partnership.

The experiment failed as Liverpool failed to improve and four months later Houllier was handed sole control.

He has rebuilt Liverpool into a side realistically able to challenge Manchester United, looking to France but to other countries too for top-quality signings.

A remarkable 2001 saw Liverpool win the treble of the League Cup, FA Cup and UEFA Cup - their eighth European trophy but first for 17 years. They added the Charity Shield and European Super Cup at the start of this season.

But perhaps more importantly for the club, they are in the European Champions League, the continent's most prestigious and lucrative competition, for the first time.

Unfortunately, after feeling severe heart pains during the Premiership match against Leeds on Saturday and the subsequent emergency open heart surgery, Houllier will not be in Ukraine when Liverpool face Dynamo Kiev on Tuesday.

The Frenchman with a near-perfect grasp of English has often hinted at the stress of his profession - and had told Leeds manager David O'Leary before Saturday's match that the job with its added financial pressures had changed.

"He said that looking after 20 very rich people was bad for your health," said O'Leary.

Odds against Liverpool



AFP, Paris

Liverpool travel to Dynamo Kiev for their European Champions League match on Tuesday in a major test of character following open heart surgery of their manager Gerard Houllier.

The 54-year-old former French national coach was in a stable condition after surgeons operated on him at Liverpool's Broadgreen cardiothoracic unit during the night of Saturday to Sunday.

Houllier was found to be suffering from a condition known as dissection of the aorta after being taken to hospital at half-time of their 1-1 Premiership draw with Leeds on Saturday.

A spokeswoman at the hospital, which is the largest specialist heart and chest unit in the country, said on Sunday that surgery had lasted several hours and had been carried out by two of the hospital's leading surgeons and cardiac consultants.

The Anfield club confirmed that he did not have a heart attack, but that other problems diagnosed and surgery was needed.

Assistant manager Phil Thompson will take over his role for the Kiev game and Houllier is likely to be out for a matter of weeks.

Thompson will know that just one win from three games is not a great return from a team which has won five trophies in the last year or so.

The plight of Kiev is even worse with just one point from three games and coach Valeri Lobanovski will be fully aware this is a game to win if they want to go through from group B.

Dynamo won their domestic league match 2-1 at Uzhgorod at the weekend to share the top spot in the table with Shakhtar Donetsk which may have given them a boost.

Dynamo's goals came from Belarus international halfback Valentin Bialkevich and Ukrainian international striker Alexander Melashchenko.

However on Tuesday Dynamo will be without midfielder Yury Dmitrulin, who is still injured, defender Vitaly Kosovskiy and Uzbek international striker Maxim Shatskiikh, who both have colds.

Group B leaders Boavista travel to Borussia Dortmund on the back of a poor result. They fell 2-0 at Vitoria Guimaraes on Friday though they still managed to hold on to top spot in the Portuguese championship.

Boavista coach Jaime Pacheco will have a largely fit squad to choose from though defender Jorge Silva and striker Jorge Couto are recovering from injury and will not travel.

WEEK'S FIXTURES

European Champions League first phase fixtures this week:

Tuesday

Group A
Anderlecht (Bel) v Real Madrid (Spa)

Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) v AS Roma (Ita)

Group B
Borussia Dortmund (Ger) v Boavista (Por)

Dynamo Kiev (Ukr) v Liverpool (Eng)

Group C
Arsenal (Eng) v Panathinaikos (Gre)

Real Mallorca (Spa) v Schalke 04 (Ger)

Group D
Lazio (Ita) v PSV Eindhoven (Ned)

Galatasaray (Tur) v Nantes (Fra)

Wednesday

Group E
Juventus (Ita) v Rosenborg (Nor)

Porto (Por) v Celtic (Sco)

Group F
Lyon (Fra) v Fenerbahce (Tur)

Barcelona (Spa) v Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)

Group G
Manchester United (Eng) v Deportivo La Coruna (Spa)

Olympiakos (Gre) v Lille (Fra)

Group H
Bayern Munich (Ger) v Spartak Moscow (Rus)

Feyenoord (Ned) v Sparta Prague (Cze)

The railroad-backed squad's skipper Igor Chugainov, who missed the side's recent domestic league's matches, is also uncertain to play along with Belarus international midfielder Andrei Lavrik.

In the other group A match, leaders Real Madrid go for their fourth straight victory, which would guarantee a spot in the second phase, at Belgian side Anderlecht.

The world's most expensive player at 66-million-dollars Zinedine Zidane of France will be absent as he purges the last match of his European suspension.

Defender Aitor Karanka, who got injured in Madrid's 0-0 draw at Alaves on Saturday, will probably miss the trip but Brazilian left back Roberto Carlos is back in the frame after recovering from a left ankle injury.

Real Mallorca midfielder Vicente Engonga, who had muscular problems in their 2-2 draw against Seville on Saturday, is a doubt for their Group C home match against Schalke 04.

Schalke 04 must win to give themselves any chance of reaching the second phase.

In the other Group C game, Greek side Panathinaikos travel to Highbury knowing they only need a point against Arsenal to virtually guarantee passage past this first round.

The Athens club bring back strikers Michalis Konstantinou and Nikos Licheropoulos who have recovered from injury and will give coach Giannis Kirastatos more options up front.

Midfielder Giorgos Karagounis, who had a great game for Greece against England earlier this month, has another chance to show his mettle on English soil.

In group D, Lazio host PSV Eindhoven having been boosted by their first Italian league victory in six matches on Saturday, a 2-0 win against Alitalia.

Argentinian striker Hernan Crespo, who missed the Atalanta game, is back to full fitness and is expected to start for Lazio.

Table toppers Nantes travel to Turkish club Galatasaray in the other group D game.

However the Turkish giants have several injury worries with key midfielder Sergen Yalcin uncertain with a leg injury, and skipper Bulent Korkmaz out with a serious knee problem.

The Turks are in a confident mood after Saturday's 4-1 win against rising Turkish league newcomers Goztepe.

"We're confident that we will win the three points we need from Nantes. We play good football and the spirit of the team is great," Galatasaray manager Abdurrahim Albayrak said.

Primera Liga Celta too good for Betis

Football

AFP, Madrid

Celta Vigo put an end to the surprising start of Spanish first division newcomers Real Betis Sunday, beating them 3-1 in a masterful display of finishing to move second behind Deportivo La Coruna.

In the glamour match of the night, Betis were top of the table going

into Sunday's matches, but Celta preserved their nine-month unbeaten record at home as heavy rain fell on the Balaidos stadium.

Gustavo Lopez scored the first after a free kick was rolled to him and he planted a shot into the bottom right-hand corner of the net after 14 minutes. Lopez created the second, taking the ball down the left before crossing past two Betis defenders. Catanha trapped the ball, deftly turned past his marker and rifled it home.

Lopez's skilful flicks and crosses were an invitation for Catanha to score again, but he sent a header wide midway through the second half.

Celta's Russian midfielder Alexander Mostovoi earned a penalty when he was brought down as he tried to round Betis goalkeeper Tony Prats after a sublime turn into the penalty area.

The Russian coolly converted the spot-kick for a 3-0 lead before Calado scored a spectacular long-range consolation goal for Betis, who are now level on points with Celta.

In Barcelona, last season's beaten European Champions

League finalists Valencia opened the scoring when Juan Sanchez crossed to Salva Ballesta who side-footed home.

Just before half-time, Barca's 19-year-old Argentinian starlet Javier Saviola moved to the near post to nick home the equaliser.

An unstoppable Carlos Marchena shot from outside the penalty area regained the lead for Valencia in the 73rd minute, but a minute later a heavily deflected shot from Gabri pulled the Catalans level.

Barcelona almost stole the three points when Frank De Boer headed narrowly over the bar in the dying minutes.

Deportivo La Coruna, champions in 2000, had taken top spot with a 2-1 win at Real Zaragoza on Saturday.

Diego Tristan scored in the 13th minute and grabbed another just after half-time to give his side victory and 17 points from eight matches, one ahead of Celta.

Yordi had put Zaragoza back in the game with a 69th-minute effort at the La Romareda stadium but it proved insufficient.

Primera Liga's top six

Spanish first division table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Deportivo	8	5	2	1	16	9	17
Celta Vigo	8	4	4	0	16	6	16
Real Betis	7	8	5	1	2	1	2
	7	16					
Barcelona	8	4	3	1	13	6	15
Valencia	8	3	5	0	9	6	14

Bari player's Laden dilemma

Football

AFP, Bari

Bari's Moroccan defender Rachid Negrouz has caused a controversy by ambiguous remarks about Osama Bin Laden, named by US president George W. Bush as the prime suspect for the September 11 terror attacks in the United States.

Negrouz made his comments in the Corriere del Mezzogiorno newspaper, repeated in Monday's Gazzetta dello Sport, but later partially disowned them after pressure from the Italian Second Division club.

Negrouz said: "Our people have suffered for too long. When the Twin Towers were attacked on September 11 the whole world stopped and cried for the civilian victims."

"No-one cries for all the poor people killed every day in the rest of

the world."

Asked if the attacks were justified Negrouz said: "I am not saying terrorism is justified."

But pressed further he said: "I am with Bin Laden and against Bin Laden. His reasons are good it is only his method terrorism that is wrong. He (Bin Laden) is the only person to stand up to the United States. He has succeeded in avenging the suffering of thousands of innocents, who have spent years and years living with death."

Premiership Seven-star Rovers

Football

AFP, London

Blackburn Rovers celebrated the unveiling of a statue of their late multi-millionaire backer Jack Walker with a 7-1 thrashing of West Ham in the English Premiership on Sunday.

The result moved Rovers up into eighth place but left their London

visitors just one place off the bottom of the table with only Leicester below them.

In a bid to get his justification in first, West Ham manager Glenn Roeder pleaded for time to turn the club around.

"I hope I'm given more time," he said. "Believe me whether it is me or ultimately somebody else they won't have a magic wand to turn it round straight away," said Roeder, whose team were beaten 5-0 by Everton in their previous match.

"The club has been on a losing run now not just for this season, but for most of last season as well and just survived," added Roeder, appointed as successor to the popular Harry Redknapp before the

timed his run well.

Then in the 26th minute it was 2-0 when England Under-21 captain David Dunn beat West Ham goalkeeper Shaka Hislop with a 25-yard curler - not a bad goal to score in front of England boss and one-time Blackburn target Sven-Goran Eriksson.

Barely a minute later Northern Ireland international Damien Johnson started and finished a move that led to Blackburn's third.

He fed Turkish star Tugay and in turn he crossed to the back post where Grabbie headed back across goal before Johnson finished things off with a shot from just a yard out.

West Ham midfielder Michael Carrick gave the London club a toe-

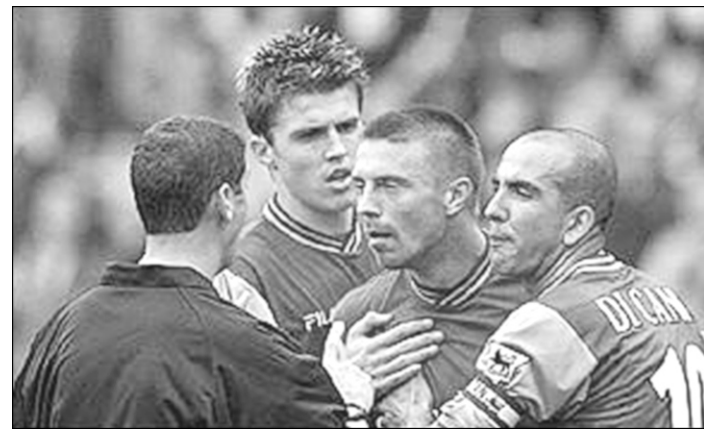


PHOTO: INTERNET

NOTHING GOING RIGHT: West Ham's Paolo di Canio (R) and a teammate trying to restrain a furious Thomas Repka (C) who is confronting the referee after being shown the red card during the match against Blackburn Rovers at Wood Park on October 14.

hold when his right foot effort from the edge of the box went in six minutes before half-time.

But on the hour mark West Ham's Tomas Repka, returning after being sent-off on debut against Middlesbrough, again took an early bath for a second bookable offence.

The match was now beyond the visitors and it was simply a question of how many more Blackburn would score.

Grant McCann added to West Ham's woes by putting through his own net before Villa's industrious Turk, Tugay struck with a dramatic curler.

Matt Jansen added the sixth a minute later before substitute Craig Hignett netted Blackburn's magnificent seventh in extra time.

Elsewhere Fulham manager Jean Tigana had plenty to think about after his side went down 2-0 against Aston Villa.

The result left the London club in 15th place and still searching for their second league win of the season.

Bankrolled by Mohamed Al Fayed, millionaire owner of London's Harrods department store, Fulham have spent upwards of 30 million pounds (44.1 million dollars) on players, with 11.5 million pounds (16.9 million dollars) going on striker Steve Marlet alone.

Once again last term's First Division champions played plenty of pleasing football but lacked real goal threat up front with Marlet one of the main culprits.

Their plight was summed up when, with five minutes left, Fulham striker Louis Saha saw his penalty kick sail well wide of Peter Schmeichel's right post.

"I am very disappointed that we got nothing from the game because in the first half we had many, many chances which we missed," said former France international Tigana.

"Maybe my team is too nice and they need to progress quickly because we need the points."

"It is nice when you play well in midfield but you need to kill the game off in the penalty area."

Second-half goals from Darius Vassell and Ian Taylor secured an Aston Villa victory that put the Birmingham club into fourth place in the table and maintained their unbeaten home league record this season.

Their delighted manager John Gregory said: "I know that we have got the ability to get the breakthrough as a match wears on and we have been a team that does well in the second half of games for as long as I can remember."

Premiership's top six

English Premiership table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Leeds	8	5	3	0	12	3	18
Arsenal	8	5	2	1	18	5	17
Man United	8	5	2	1	25	14	17
Aston Villa	7	4	3	0	11	3	15
Newcastle	8	4	2	2	15	11	14
Chelsea	7	3	4	0	12	7	13