

Primera Liga

Tristan back with a bang

Football

AFP, Madrid

Diego Tristan had gone seven league games without scoring but he ended his barren streak in emphatic fashion as Deportivo La Coruna won 2-0 at Spanish league leaders Celta Vigo on Tuesday.

The Spanish international striker had been finding the net on average every other game until he lost his goalscoring touch in December but, having been given one last chance by Deportivo coach Javier Iureta, he repaid the favour by helping Deportivo to their first away win for nearly four months.

The victory meant Deportivo moved up two places to third, after winning in Vigo for the first time in seven seasons.

Celta continue to lead the Spanish First Division despite the loss, with 40 points from 24 games.

Real Madrid and Deportivo are second and third respectively, with the same number of points but an inferior goal difference.

However, Celta's occupation of the top slot is unlikely to last more than 24 hours as Real Madrid travel

to Valladolid on Wednesday.

Alaves also play host to Valencia on Wednesday and should the defending champions falter for the second time in four days, then either of them could go to the head of the table as both teams are only one point adrift of the leading trio.

Deportivo started the game clearly determined to unsettle their opponents from across the region and the fouls flew in thick and fast, a typical feature of the often brutal duels between the bitter rivals.

Nevertheless, Deportivo kept their cool and seemed to have a legitimate claim for a penalty turned down after only 15 minutes when Noureddine Naybet - back in club colours after Morocco's premature exit from the African Nations Cup - appeared to have been dragged

down in the penalty area by Celta defender Pablo Coira.

Diego Tristan finally broke the deadlock after 32 minutes when the Celta defenders were caught square.

Former Spanish international winger Fran Gonzalez crossed into the box and Tristan chipped the ball over the head of Celta goalkeeper Pablo Cavallero and into the net, while Celta were protesting fruitlessly about him being offside.

Celta were again caught asleep, with their last man almost on the half way line, after 64 minutes and Juan Carlos Valeron found Tristan roaming forward unmarked.

Valeron had little trouble finding his likely room mate during Spain's forthcoming World Cup campaign and Tristan only had to round

Cavallero for his 10th goal of the season.

Celta ended their miserable night with only 10 men after their Brazilian midfielder Wagner was given his marching orders for scything down Tristan eight minutes from time.

Iureta wisely substituted a limping Tristan immediately in order to save him from further assaults by the frustrated Celta players.

For the second time in as many games, Tristan left the field to whistles and howls of derision.

On Saturday, it was his own supporters who heralded his departure in such a fashion - Tristan has been blamed by the Deportivo faithful for being an egotist and greedy in front of goal - but this time it was the less-than-sporting opposition supporters who were glad to see him go.

Celta's Balaidos stadium was filled to 31,800 capacity but only 120 of them were Deportivo supporters.

However, Tristan was given a rousing send off by the tiny contingent of visitors and he celebrated his return to their affections by throwing his jersey into their midst after the final whistle.

Primera Liga's top six

Spanish football league table after Tuesday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

	24	10	10	4	42	27	40
Celta Vigo	23	11	7	5	40	26	40
Real Madrid	24	12	4	8	37	30	40
Deportivo	23	10	9	4	27	20	39
Valencia	23	12	3	8	23	19	39
Alaves	23	10	7	6	25	21	37
Real Betis							

Saudis a different proposition



AFP, Riyadh

Brazil face a tougher test here on Wednesday against World Cup qualifiers Saudi Arabia than they faced in their 6-0 drubbing of a second-string Bolivia side last week.

Saudi Arabia are fresh from winning the Gulf Cup tournament last month with an improbable 3-1 win over Qatar after being led 1-0 as late as the 77th minute.

The hosts will want to avoid a repeat of the scoreline when the two countries last met, in the Confederations Cup in 1999 in Mexico, when Brazil won 8-2.

Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari earmarked the win over Bolivia, this

match and the next game, against Colombia next month, as a chance to experiment ahead of the World Cup finals - and that was the case against Bolivia as Kaka and Kleberson formed a new midfield partnership.

Scolari has taken advantage of the closer proximity of the Gulf to call up one of his Spanish-based players, Djalminha, the Deportivo La Coruna midfielder.

But the South Americans again have to do without their European-based stars such as Rivaldo of Barcelona, Real Madrid defender Roberto Carlos and rising star Ronaldinho, who plays for Paris Saint Germain.

And there is still no place for Romario, despite calls for the top scorer in the 1994 World Cup to be recalled in the light of fresh injuries to Ronaldo.

The match against Saudi Arabia is the second of seven warm-up matches prior to the finals in June.

Cup finals and has called up three midfielders who played no part in the Gulf Cup - Nawaf Tomiyat, Mohammed Nour and Abdelaiz al-Khatran.

Scolari meanwhile announced last week that he will be quitting his job after this year's World Cup finals.

"My contract with the Brazilian football federation finishes at the end of the World Cup no matter how the results go," he said.

Scolari took over in June 2001 when the four-time world champions were struggling to qualify for the finals and he faced criticism for favouring a technical and sometimes tour style of play.

Brazil recovered and qualified third in the South American qualifying group.

The match against Saudi Arabia is the second of seven warm-up matches prior to the finals in June.

Bowyer's ban was given a two-match ban and fined 7,500 pounds for using foul and abusive language towards a referee during Leeds' Premiership win over Arsenal at Highbury in August when he was sent off for two bookable offences.

Bowyer's team-mate Danny Mills was also in hot water with the FA.

The English international defender was given a one-match ban and fined 7,500 pounds for using foul and abusive language towards a fourth official in the tunnel at Arsenal after being dismissed for two yellow card offences in the same volatile Highbury clash.

Six-match ban for Bowyer

AFP, London

Leeds United and England under-21 midfielder Lee Bowyer was hit with a six match ban and fined 10,000 pounds (14,000 dollars) Tuesday after being found guilty of bringing the game into disrepute by the English Football Association (FA).

Bowyer's ban is for elbowing Liverpool's Gary McAllister in last year's 2-0 FA Cup defeat and of

using foul and abusive language towards a referee during Leeds' Premiership win over Arsenal at Highbury in August when he was sent off for two bookable offences.

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Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari

STAR MOVIES



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STAR PLUS

STAR GOLD

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TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

EKUSHEY: 8:00p.m. Jibon Boro Shundor. This is a story about the family of an old lady, whose three sons are one of a kind. The elder one always plans to sell their property and live a happy life. Her second son is so lazy that someone else has to close his eyes so that he can sleep. And finally the youngest one, he is so miserly that in the winter he does not wear anything because they will get dirty.

STAR WORLD: 6:00 & 9:30p.m. Roswell. July 3, 1947: The crash of a spaceship, an event officially but never effectively denied by the United States government. In tonight's episode Liz gets visions about a space ship crashing to earth - Max, Michael and Isabel's ship.

AXN: 10:30p.m. The Thing. Based on both the short story by John W. Campbell, Jr. and the 1951 film produced by Howard Hawks, THE THING is John Carpenter's stunning masterpiece of horror. A group of weary scientists enduring the winter in an isolated camp deep in Antarctica chance upon an alien spacecraft buried in the ice.

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