

# Serie A Inter's last gasp relief

## Football

AFP, Milan

A spectacular injury-time equaliser from Clarence Seedorf saw Inter Milan snatch a 2-2 draw at home to Juventus Saturday at the San Siro to stay top of the Italian First Division by a single point from the visitors from Turin.

Dutchman Seedorf, who had earlier given his side a sixth-minute lead with an equally spectacular strike, followed up with a candidate for goal of the season after goals from Frenchman David Trezeguet and Croatian substitute Igor Tudor looked set to put Juve top of Serie A.

It also denied Juve coach Marcello Lippi a famous revenge win over the club that sacked him on day one of the 2000-1 season when Inter lost to Reggina just days after being eliminated from the Champions League preliminary round by Helsingborgs of Sweden.

However, champions AS Roma will join Inter at the top of the division if they win Sunday evening's Roman derby with Lazio.

Lippi said: "It is disappointing because we were finishing the game so well. Compliments to Seedorf not only for the two goals but also the way he played."

"I believe in the Scudetto and so do the players."

Inter's Argentinian coach Hector Cuper said: "They were two great goals, he played really well and I did not think he had a chance scoring from that far out for the second. You have to be happy when you score in the 90th minute. We started very well but Juve were strong after the interval."

"As far as the Scudetto is concerned all three teams have equal chances."

Seedorf's goal ensured a thrilling end to a match that had also started in thrilling mode.

The game got off to a frantic start and in the first minute Juve goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon needed treatment when he injured himself, diving at the feet of Inter's Alvaro Recoba.



PHOTO: INTERNET  
Inter Milan's Dutch international star Clarence Seedorf (R) unleashing a volley to score his first against Juventus at the San Siro on March 9.

Then Buffon's opposite number Francesco Toldo almost embarrassed himself when he kicked the ball straight to Juve's Pavel Nedved but the Czech international screwed his his wide.

But six minutes into the match Inter took the lead. An attack seemed to have broken down when Mark Jullane headed the ball clear. However, the ball fell to Seedorf on the left side of midfield who controlled it and fired a spectacular volley into the far corner.

After 11 minutes it was nearly 2-0 to Inter when Cristiano Zanetti's header forward beat the offside trap only for Inter's Colombian defender Ivan Cordoba, admittedly at full

stretch, to fire wide from point-blank range.

Seconds later Inter were made to rue that miss as Juve drew level. The ball was quickly moved out to Juve's Gianluca Zambrotta on the right and his pinpoint cross fell perfectly for Trezeguet, who made no mistake with a simple header for his 18th goal of the Serie A campaign.

It was thrilling stuff and Alessandro Del Piero had already netted seconds after referee Gennaro Birolli had blown for offside when Inter nearly went 2-1 up after 20 minutes.

Uruguayan Recoba got free down the left and centred only for

the ball to cannon off the shin of Juve's French defender Lilian Thuram onto the post and back safely into the arms of Buffon.

Thuram was spared the embarrassment of an own goal but immediately had to leave the field injured, replaced by Tudor, a severe blow to Juve who had moved the Frenchman from right back to central defence to cover for Uruguayan Paolo Montero and Ciro Ferrara who were both unavailable.

The second period had a scrappy start and within the space of 30 seconds Birolli rejected two appeals for a penalty against Inter defender Marco Materazzi.

Just as the game appeared to be drifting towards a 1-1 draw Juve struck.

Nedved floated in a freekick and an unmarked Tudor glanced his header inside Toldo's left-hand post.

It looked all over but as the game drifted into injury time Seedorf struck from 30 metres with his swerving shot leaving Buffon stranded to deny Lippi a priceless victory and cheer the majority of the 80,000 crowd.

## Serie A's top six

Italian First Division table after Saturday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

	26	15	8	3	46	23	53
Inter Milan	26	15	8	3	46	23	53
Juventus	26	14	10	2	49	21	52
AS Roma	25	13	11	1	35	15	50
Bologna	25	12	5	8	28	26	41
Chievo	24	11	6	7	42	35	39
AC Milan	25	9	11	5	35	26	38

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