

City rivals, PSV, Dortmund in last four



AFP, Paris

Inter Milan's Spanish midfielder Francisco Farinos was forced into goalkeeping heroics to ensure his side reached the semi-finals of the UEFA Cup alongside city rivals AC Milan on Thursday.

Farinos repelled the onslaught from his former club Valencia after Inter goalkeeper Francesco Toldo was sent off in the closing minutes of the Italians' dramatic 1-0 quarter-final second leg win, giving them a 2-1 aggregate victory.

AC Milan ended the fairytale run of Israel's Hapoel Tel Aviv with a controlled 2-0 win at the San Siro, giving them a 2-1 result over the two legs, and German giants Borussia Dortmund crushed Czech side Slovan Liberec 4-0 on the night and on aggregate.

Feyenoord had Pierre van Hooijdonk to thank for overcoming fellow Dutch club PSV Eindhoven to move into the last four.

The flamboyant striker scored the decisive spot kick in a 5-4 penalty shootout victory after the match in Rotterdam ended 1-1 on the night and 2-2 on aggregate.

But the real drama came at the Mestalla stadium, where Nicola Ventola scored Inter's crucial goal after just two minutes before events took a fascinating turn in the 89th minute when Toldo was sent off for his second yellow card, apparently for dissent.

Inter had already used their permitted number of substitutes so they were unable to bring on a replacement 'keeper, forcing them to turn to Farinos, who played five seasons at Valencia before joining Inter in



PHOTO: INTERNET

Inter Milan striker Nicola Ventola (R), about to score the deciding goal past Valencia custodian Santiago Canizares at Valencia on March 21.

2000.

Seconds after donning the gloves, he was called into action as Fabio Aurelio unleashed a rasping shot that Farinos saved but could not hold - the Inter defenders cleared the danger.

Farinos had five agonising minutes of stoppage time to endure but he clung on and was mobbed by his victorious team-mates at the end.

The win was also sweet for Inter coach Hector Cuper, the Argentinian who led Valencia to last season's Champions League final where they were beaten on penalties by Bayern Munich, but who left after feeling his defensive tactics were never truly appreciated in Spain.

All four of the names going into Friday's semi-final draw have also won the more prestigious European Cup - although Inter last lifted that trophy in 1965 and Feyenoord have only won it once, in 1970.

Van Hooijdonk had taken Feyenoord into extra-time when he

headed in a cross from Brett Emerton in the second minute of injury time to level the scores after Mark van Bommel had put PSV ahead.

But after the extra time stalemate Hooijdonk - often far from the hero during turbulent spells with Nottingham Forest and Celtic - scored the decisive spot-kick after PSV's luckless Georgi Gakhovidze had his kick saved by Edwin Zoetebier.

Hapoel Tel Aviv knocked Chelsea and Parma out of this competition and after the Israeli side's 1-0 first leg victory, hopes had been high that they would continue their history-making run into the semi-finals.

But AC Milan's European pedigree told in the end and a fifth-minute freekick from Manuel Rui Costa and an own goal on the stroke of half-time from Shimon Gershon did the job.

Hapoel coach Dfor Kashtan said: "This is a great team from little Israel that played some good football

against Europe's top sides - Chelsea, Parma and Milan. Our results have been good - just one defeat."

In Dortmund, Borussia crushed Slovan Liberec with a devastating second-half performance.

Dortmund's exciting Brazilians Marcio Amoroso, Dede and Ewerthon played a part in all four goals, Amoroso scoring in the 51st minute before Dede's cross was headed down by Christian Worns for giant Czech international striker Jan Koller to fire past goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky.

Amoroso's cross found an unmarked Lars Ricken for Dortmund's third and in the 90th minute Ewerthon, on as a substitute, fired home after his original shot obligingly came back to him off a defender.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated results from UEFA Cup quarter-final second leg matches on Thursday:

At Valencia, Spain
Valencia (Spa) 0 Inter Milan (Ita) 1 (Ventola 2)
Inter Milan win 2-1 on aggregate

At Milan
AC Milan (Ita) 2 (Rui Costa 5, Gershon 44-og) Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr) 0
AC Milan win 2-1 on aggregate

At Dortmund, Germany
Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 4 (Amoroso 51, Koller 57, Ricken 70, Ewerthon 90) Slovan Liberec (Cze) 0
Borussia Dortmund win 4-0 on aggregate

At Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Feyenoord (Ned) 1 (Van Hooijdonk 90) PSV Eindhoven (Ned) 1 (Van Bommel 76)
Match finished 1-1 after extra time, 2-2 on aggregate.
Feyenoord win 5-4 on penalties

FA Cup replay
Shearer relishing penalty prospect

AFP, London

Alan Shearer will take a penalty should Newcastle win one in Saturday's FA Cup quarter-final replay with Arsenal at Highbury - despite his miss against Ipswich last weekend.

Shearer turned from hero to villain after grabbing the goal which earned Newcastle a 2-2 draw only to squander the chance to claim a last-gasp victory by dragging his spot-kick wide.

But the Newcastle skipper's nerve will not be found wanting if the Magpies are awarded a penalty against the Gunners this weekend.

"Of course I will take a penalty if we get one on Saturday," said Shearer. "I have missed penalties before for Newcastle and England - and I will probably miss more for Newcastle."

Manchester United, who dramatically beat Bayern in the 1999 final, avoided the biggest names after being paired with Spanish team Deportivo La Coruna.

Liverpool drew German league leaders Bayer Leverkusen with the first leg at Anfield and the English club's chief executive Rick Parry confirmed that French manager Gerard Houllier, who returned from heart surgery for the dramatic win against AS Roma on Tuesday, will again be in charge for the two-leg tie.

The English clubs will meet in the semi-finals should they progress.

"I think we're emotionally pleased that we've avoided Manchester United for at least another round, that was really the

goal a game in club football since last August but Scolari, defying public opinion, had not picked him since the World Cup qualifier against Uruguay in July.

On Thursday, Scolari refused to justify Romario's absence, saying he did not want to talk about players who had not been picked.

Romario returned to action on Thursday after missing Vasco's

Bayern-Real pick of the draw



AFP, Nyon, Switzerland

Bayern Munich will meet Real Madrid in the quarter-finals of the Champions League in a clash of the past two European champions following the draw here on Friday.

Real, who won the European crown for the eighth time in 2000, and holders Bayern will first meet at the Olympic Stadium in Munich with the Spaniards, as second-phase group winners, playing the crucial second leg at their Bernabeu stadium.

Bayern's vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said: "It's a difficult draw for us, because Real Madrid is a super team, maybe the best in the world at the moment, and they will be two tough games."

"But we will try and that's what we've done in the past, we've had some luck."

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"I think we're emotionally pleased that we've avoided Manchester United for at least another round, that was really the

only concern we had, we felt that would have been a little too early," said Parry.

"I think it is a fair bet Gerard Houllier will be in charge for the quarter-final. It would be difficult to keep him away."

Panathinaikos, the Greek side who have made a surprising run to the last eight of Europe's top club competition, face a tough hurdle in the shape of Spanish giants Barcelona with the first leg in Athens.

But the undisputed tie of the round is the Real-Bayern clash in a draw which saw Bayern paying the price for failing to win their second-phase group. As runners-up to United, Bayern could only be paired with group winners for the quarter-

finals.

The German and Spanish giants have met in the semi-finals of this competition for the past two seasons, with Real victorious in 2000 before going on to beat Valencia in the final and the Bavarians winning last season before overcoming the hapless Valencia on penalties in the final.

"Bayern Munich are obviously a very good team and they are the holders," said Real's sporting director Emilio Butragueno.

"It's good for us that we're playing at their stadium for the first leg. The most important thing is that we need to keep up our good physical condition for their quarter-finals."

Manchester United general secretary Ken Merrett said United had no fear of meeting Deportivo again after losing to them in the group stages this season.

"We're playing a lot better now than we were then, so I think we'll still fancy our chances, it's a good draw."

"In the first group stage it was different, we had a quiet start to the season but we've played a lot better in recent months and I think this an opportunity to turn the tables on them."

Senior Deportivo executive Luis Sanchez Doporto said his side had no fear of going to Old Trafford for the second leg.

"I am happy because it's a team we know, of great prestige, we have met them and beaten them before, so I'm happy in all respects," he said.

The quarter-final ties will be played on April 2-3 and 9-10, the semi-finals are scheduled for April 23-24 and April 30-May 1 and the final takes place at Hampden Park in Glasgow on May 15.

QUARTER-FINAL DRAW

Champions League quarter-final draw made at the headquarters of European football's governing body here on Friday:

Panathinaikos (Gre) v Barcelona (Spa)
Bayern Munich (Ger) v Real Madrid (Spa)
Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) v Manchester United (Eng)
Liverpool (Eng) v Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)

* Quarter-final ties, with group winners playing 2nd leg at home, to be played on April 2/3 and 9/10

**Semi-finals: April 23/24 and April 30/May 1

*** Final at Hampden Park, Glasgow on May 15

All-Milan final on the cards



AP, Nyon, Switzerland

Neighbors Internazionale and AC Milan could face each other in the UEFA Cup final after being spared a semifinal matchup in Friday's draw.

Inter will meet Dutch club Feyenoord, while AC Milan faces

Borussia Dortmund in the other semifinal.

AC Milan, which has never won the UEFA Cup, shares the San Siro stadium with its *Serie A* rival.

The semifinal games are set for April 4 and 11, with the final on May at Feyenoord's own stadium in Rotterdam.

Italian clubs have won the UEFA Cup eight out of the last 13 seasons and reached 10 out of 11 finals between 1989 and '99 before being shut out of the last two.

Inter, conqueror of Valencia on Wednesday, has won the competition three times, in 1991, '94 and '98. But Milan, which ended the run of Israeli club Hapoel Tel Aviv in the quarterfinals, has never collected the trophy, despite winning the more prestigious Champions Cup five times.

Primera Liga preview

Leaders very serious



AFP, Madrid

It will be business as usual for league leaders Real Madrid on Sunday when they play host to Real Zaragoza at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

Out will go the eight reserve team members, who made up almost half the squad that travelled to Athens for Wednesday's 2-2 draw in the European Champions League with Panathinaikos, and back into the fold will be the likes of Roberto Carlos, Raul Gonzalez and Zinedine Zidane.

The lack of sentiment from Real coach Vicente Del Bosque even extends to Javier Portillo, the 20-year-old scorer of Real's spectacular second goal in his first game for the top team.

"Portillo's time will come. He's been scoring goals like that every Sunday since he was 11 but he's still young and has got more things to learn," said Del Bosque.

Del Bosque's reticence to experiment is because the race for the Spanish title could hardly be any closer.

Real have 53 points from 30 games, but lead just on goal difference from Valencia, with Deportivo La Coruna lurking in third on 51 points.

Real Madrid's World Player of the Year Luis Figo will be almost certainly missing for his second straight league match with a sprained ankle, which means Zidane will move out wide to the right flank and Argentine striker Santiago Solari will keep his place on the left wing.

Since the New Year, Zaragoza

FIXTURES

Saturday (Kick off 1600GMT unless stated): Malaga v Rayo Vallecano (1700), Real Betis v Sevilla (2030), Las Palmas v Villarreal (2100)
Sunday: Athletic Bilbao v Celta Vigo, Deportivo La Coruna v Tenerife, Espanyol v Alaves, Real Madrid v Real Zaragoza, Real Mallorca v Real Sociedad, Valencia v Osasuna, Valladolid v Barcelona (1900)

have slid into the relegation zone and they are now in danger of spending time in the Spanish Second Division for the first time since

1978.

Valencia coach Rafa Benitez will assess the situation after Thursday's UEFA Cup quarter-final second leg match against Inter Milan before naming his squad to face Osasuna on Sunday, but he will want to bounce back on the domestic front after the surprise 2-1 loss to struggling Rayo Vallecano last Sunday.

However, Valencia will be without their suspended Argentine international Kily Gonzalez against the Pamplona-based side, that have only won once in 22 league visits to Valencia's Mestalla stadium.

Still chasing the top two hard are Deportivo, who face a resurgent Tenerife on Sunday.

The Canary islanders have not lost in their last four games since former Spanish national coach Javier Clemente took over last month but still lie at the foot of the Spanish First Division on goal difference, with just two points covering the bottom eight teams.

Fourth-placed Real Betis - who are now unbeaten in their last 11 league games - play their local rivals Sevilla on Saturday, but will have to do so without their suspended Brazilian international Denilson.

are also to be ordered to clampdown on shirt pulling and diving in the penalty area, which FIFA has pinpointed as offences of concern for the World Cup.

The International Football Association Board, soccer's rule making authority, decided this month to back a FIFA call to World Cup referees to get tough with players seeking an unfair advantage by pretending to be fouled.

The board said referees would also be told at the seminar not to tolerate players demanding yellow or red cards for opponents for fouls, real or simulated.

Referees have also been warned about time-wasting by players and

Serie A preview

League decider at San Siro?



AFP, Milan

Joint Serie A leaders Inter Milan and AS Roma meet Sunday night at the San Siro as they battle for a win that would see either side grab outright control of the Italian First Division with just six matches remaining.

A capacity crowd is expected in Milan for the game that sees champions Roma defend their crown against an Inter team seeking its first Scudetto since 1988-9.

But by the time Inter and Roma clash there may have been a change at the top with third-placed Juventus, a point behind the two frontrunners, due to visit relegation-threatened Parma Saturday night.

Victory for Juve and a draw at the San Siro would leave Juventus top by a point, making them favourites for what would be a 26th Serie A title.

Inter's Argentinian coach Hector Cuper rested star strikers Christian Vieri and Ronaldo to keep them fresh for Sunday but the Brazilian is unlikely to play the full 90 minutes.

Cuper admits that it is the Scudetto or bust for his troops, saying: "If either side wins next Sunday then they will be considered serious favourites to win the title."

Roma coach Fabio Capello must lift his side after the midweek 2-0 defeat at Liverpool that ended their - and Italy's - interest in the Champions League.

But whatever happens this weekend the three-way title race will still be too close to call with the distinct possibility that a play-off will be needed for the first time since Bologna pipped Inter to the title in 1963-4.

Elsewhere in the city derby at the Stadio Marc'Antonio Bentegodi Chievo host Verona whose coach Alberto Malesani vows that by the

to scrutinise the way players celebrate goals.

The rules board last year urged referees to take a "lenient attitude" to extravagant celebrations after a goal is scored while still expressing concern about time-wasting.

Now the international board said it was "concerned about players deliberately taking off their shirts to reveal messages on their undershirts, sometimes of a political, religious, commercial or social nature".

It said that starting from the World Cup undershirts must contain no messages and be of one plain colour.

The World Cup opens in Seoul



RONALDO

end of the season his side will finish ahead of their cousins who are still in the race for a Champions League spot.

The match dubbed the 'Romeo and Juliet derby' in honour of the city's most famous interecine feud will give Chievo another chance to live up to the 'Flying Donkeys' tag that was years ago a taunt by Verona fans who used to say donkeys would fly the day Chievo played in Serie A - now Chievo rejoice in that nickname.

Bottom club Venezia hope to delay an inevitable relegation when they host Atalanta while struggling Fiorentina visit Torino.

Lecce visit fourth-placed Bologna while Lazio meet Udinese at the Olympic Stadium. Brescia entertain Perugia while AC Milan travel to Piacenza.

FIXTURES

(1400 GMT unless stated)
Saturday: Parma v Juventus (1930 GMT)
Sunday: Bologna v Lecce, Brescia v Perugia, Chievo v Verona, Lazio v Udinese, Piacenza v AC Milan, Torino v Fiorentina, Venezia v Atalanta, Inter Milan v AS Roma (1930 GMT)

Veteran striker Romario has been dealt another blow to his hopes of playing in this year's World Cup finals after being left out of the squad to face Yugoslavia in a friendly next week.

Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari ignored the claims of Romario for the game in the north-eastern city of Fortaleza on March 27, preferring instead Gremio striker Luisao.

"I would say that 90 percent of the players chosen for this game will form part of the Brazil squad for the World Cup finals in Korea and Japan," said the coach, who refused to say whether Romario, his country's top scorer at the 1994 World Cup finals, still featured in his thinking for the 2002 finals.

Scolari had already named his foreign-based players for the game with Yugoslavia, but he will be without Barcelona's inspirational midfielder Rivaldo who is suffering from a knee injury.

Meanwhile, Romario said he still hoped to be picked for the World Cup after scoring again for his club.

Romario scored Vasco da Gama's second goal in the 2-2 draw with Botofogo later in the day.

It was a typically opportunist goal as he pounced on a mistake by the Botafogo defence shortly before halftime, taking his tally in the Rio-Sao Paulo championship to 10.

"I'm not throwing in the towel, there are still two months to go before the squad is named," the 36-

Premiership preview

Chelsea test for Liverpool



AFP, London

Liverpool, chasing honours at home and abroad, face a severe test of their Premiership credentials when they entertain free-scoring Chelsea on Sunday.

But the Merseysiders go into the game in good spirits following their dramatic Champions League victory over Roma on Tuesday.

Their 2-0 win at Anfield clinched a place in the last eight of the competition and sent the Italian champions crashing out.

On an emotional night in front of a vociferous home crowd, Liverpool welcomed back manager Gerard Houllier after a five-month absence.

The Frenchman has been at home recuperating after having major heart surgery and chose Tuesday's European clash to make his return.

Houllier, who won the UEFA Cup, FA Cup and League Cup with Liverpool last season, received a standing ovation before taking his place in the dug-out alongside assistant coach Phil Thompson.

The presence of their returning manager visibly lifted the players and they produced a breathtaking performance to advance to the next stage with goals from Jarl Litmanen and Emile Heskey sealing the



ROMARIO

previous match with a virus and being taken off with apparent heat exhaustion in the game before that.

The former PSV Eindhoven striker desperately wants a chance to play in his third World Cup.

Romario made a brief appearance at the 1990 competition in Italy before leading Brazil to their fourth world title with five goals in 1994. He



LUIZ FELIPE SCOLARI

(Atletico Paranaense), Kaka (Sao Paulo), Juninho (Sao Paulo), Emerson (AS Roma/Ita)

Strikers: Denilson (Real Betis/Spa), Edilson (Creiro), Luisao (Gremio), Ronaldinho (Paris Saint Germain/Fra), Ronaldo (Inter Milan/Ita), Djalmira (Deportivo La Coruna/Spa)



GERARD HOULLIER

Italians' fate.

"It was one of the best nights I've ever known at Anfield," said Thompson himself a multiple European Cup winner with Liverpool as a player.

"We knew it was going to be special and Gerard Houllier's

FIXTURES

(all 1500 GMT unless stated)
Saturday: Charlton v Bolton, Derby v Everton, Ipswich v Aston Villa, Leicester v Leeds, Manchester United v Middlesbrough, Sunderland v Southampton
Sunday: Fulham v Tottenham, (1600 GMT), Liverpool v Chelsea (1400 GMT)