

# Primera Liga Real roar

## Football

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid regained the leadership of the Spanish First Division after thrashing bottom club Tenerife 4-1 on Saturday.

The defending Spanish champions now have 65 points from 35 games, with three games to go.

However, Valencia are only two points in arrears, have a game in hand and could regain pole position if they beat third-placed Deportivo La Coruna on Sunday.

First-half goals from Roberto Carlos and Luis Figo, and a brace late in the game from Jose Maria 'Guti' Gutierrez, gave Real a convincing victory over the Canary islanders, whose defeat brought the prospect of their relegation even closer.

Vicente Del Bosque took Tenerife seriously enough at the outset to put out eight of the Real players who are expected to start in Tuesday's European Champions League semi-final first leg against bitter rivals Barcelona.

Brazilian midfielder Flavio Conceicao was given a rare outing in place of suspended Spanish international Ivan Helguera, while Del Bosque reshaped his attack in the wake of Zinedine Zidane still feeling the bruises on his left leg after Wednesday's outing for France in their less-than-friendly 0-0 draw with Russia.

In the absence of the world's most expensive player, Raul Gonzalez moved out to the left flank and striker Pedro Munitis came in to front and Real started to unravel from the whistle.

After 15 minutes of continuous pressure, Real got their reward when a Roberto Carlos free kick found the net.

However, there are likely to be some lessons handed out at Tenerife next week in how to defend against dead ball situations.

The Brazilian's blast went through the legs of Javi Venta, who had his back to the ball after spinning round in panic-stricken anticipation of the thunderbolt.

Venta at least salvaged a little of his pride when he got Tenerife's equaliser in a rare lapse of concentration by the defending Spanish champions, seven minutes before the break.

With Real pressing forward for a second goal, Bichi Fuentes stopped an attempted long-ball forward with a fortuitous overhead kick and Venta rushed almost half the length



Barcelona superstar Rivaldo (R) controls the ball while Celta Vigo players Luccin (L) and Mostovoi looks on at Vigo on April 20.

of the field to chip the stray ball over the head of Real's advancing goalkeeper Cesar Sanchez.

However, the visitors only stayed on equal terms for four minutes.

Raul proved he is adept down the wing as he is as an out-and-out striker and provided the cross for Luis Figo to head home his seventh goal of the season.

Guti's two goals in the last 15 minutes, both left-foot efforts from the edge-of-the-box after Tenerife had been torn apart down the left wing by Roberto Carlos and his fellow Brazilian.

One negative note for Real Madrid is that Fernando Hierro was shown a yellow card, his 15th booking of the season, and Real's club captain will be suspended for next

week's trip to Real Sociedad.

In a protest against Real Madrid's continued tolerance of their infamous right-wing supporters Ultra Sur, all photographers went on strike at the game, apart from those from Spain's two main sports newspapers.

The lensmen were protesting about the fact that suffered continual abuse from the Ultra Sur at the end of the Bernabeu they inhabit, including objects being thrown at them and being spat on, in the face of apparent indifference from Real.

Barcelona coach Charley Rexach did have his picture all over the Spanish newspapers on Saturday after hinting that he might resign at the end of the season, unable to take the pressure of being

at the helm of one of the world's most prestigious clubs.

His unhappiness was probably increased on Saturday after the Catalans' 2-1 loss at Celta Vigo, which brought to an end to a five-game unbeaten streak.

The Galicians took the lead after 25 minutes when Russian international midfielder Alexander Mostovoi slotted home a Fernando Caceres cross.

Celta went further ahead just after the hour when Gustavo Lopez scored with a right-foot free kick, before Barcelona got one back a few seconds from time when Rivaldo headed home a Marc Overmars cross.

Celta now move up to fourth, swapping places with Barcelona, although they are both on 57 points.

Rexach's anxiety at having dropped out of the places which will see Barcelona in next season's Champions League will be increased at the sight of Rivaldo limping off the field at the end of the game.

Medical officials said that the Brazilian former World Player of the year had injured his right knee but didn't immediately know how severe the damage was.

"In my mind, this latest contract agreement was never in doubt."

## Primera Liga's top six

Spanish league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

	35	19	8	8	69	38	65
Real Madrid	35	19	8	8	69	38	65
Valencia	34	17	12	5	44	26	63
Deportivo La Coruna	34	18	7	9	57	38	61
Celta Vigo	35	15	12	8	62	43	57
Barcelona	35	16	9	10	58	35	57
Real Betis	34	13	14	7	36	2	8
	53						

## Bundesliga

# Leverkusen kept waiting

## Football

AFP, Berlin

Bayer Leverkusen blew their big chance to wrap up their first ever Bundesliga crown on Saturday when they slumped to a 2-1 defeat at home to Werder Bremen.

To make matters worse, closest rivals Borussia Dortmund beat with Marcio Amoroso the hero scoring from the penalty spot one minute from the end of time to secure the three points.

Leverkusen still lead the table with 66 points from 32 matches but are just two ahead of Dortmund with only two matches left to play.

Kristian Lisztes put Bremen ahead after just five minutes in front of 22,000 fans at the Bay Arena only for Leverkusen's nerves to be settled by a goal from Brazilian midfielder Ze Roberto just after the half hour mark.

Leverkusen, who take on Manchester United on Wednesday in the first leg of the Champions League semi-finals, were then handed a chance to take the lead six minutes from the break with the penalty spot.

But goalkeeper Hans Jorg Butt, who takes responsibility for the spot-kick duties at the club, saw his shot saved by opposite number Frank Rost.

Leverkusen were made to pay for that miss when Werder Bremen's Brazilian striker Alton smashed home the winner after 61 minutes to register his 16th goal of the season.

The Bundesliga leaders must be sick of the sight of Werder Bremen having lost 2-1 to them when they met earlier in the campaign.

Meanwhile Tomas Rosicky gave Dortmund a 21st-minute lead at home to Cologne before Dirk Lottner scored in the 56th minute to level the

scoreline.

The game seemed to be heading for a stalemate until Amoroso stepped up to convert an 89th-minute penalty to claim his 16th league goal of the season.

Meanwhile, defending champion Bayern Munich kept up their slim hopes of hanging onto their crown with a 3-0 win over Hertha Berlin.

But they had to wait until late in the game to secure the three points with Michael Hartmann gifting them an own goal after 67 minutes before South American pair Giovane Elber and Claudio Pizarro added two more in the 82nd and 83rd minutes to move Bayern onto 62 points from their 32 matches - four behind Leverkusen.

Bayern Munich went into the match having dropped skipper Stefan Effenberg after he caused a furore by branding Germany's unemployed as 'lazy'.

Coach Ottmar Hitzfeld said Bayern needed all the support they could get in their last-ditch Bundesliga charge, and could not risk alienating supporters by failing to act against Effenberg.

In an interview with the German edition of Playboy magazine this week, Effenberg said laziness and over-generous benefits were behind his country's unemployment problem.

"A lot of the unemployed have such good benefits that they don't want to get up in the morning and do a full day's work," said Effenberg, one of the highest paid players in the Bundesliga.

But Bayern coach Hitzfeld distanced himself from Effenberg's comments here Saturday. "The match against Hertha is particularly important for us and we need total support from the public," Hitzfeld said.

## Shearer is 200



I'VE GOT IT: An ecstatic Newcastle United striker Alan Shearer celebrates his 200th Premier League goal with team mate Luis Milla at Saint James' Park on April 20.

## Football

AFP, London

Newcastle striker Alan Shearer on Saturday became the first player to score 200 Premier League goals.

The former England international's strike in the 3-0 win against Charlton - the 319th of his senior career - brought him the latest in a series of distinguished landmarks which have set him aside from his peers.

Shearer admitted he was relieved to hit the target after failing to score in his last two matches.

"I'm pleased I've got it," he said.

"The longer it goes on, obviously, the harder it becomes."

"I could never have imagined I would score 200 goals in the Premier League and the reaction those fans gave me in the last few minutes will live with me forever."

Shearer's goal was just reward for his bravery, playing just a week after breaking his nose at Derby.

"He would have jumped down St James' Boulevard if one had hit him on the nose today," manager Bobby

## PREMIERSHIP'S LEADING STRIKERS

### ALAN SHEARER (Southampton, Blackburn, Newcastle)-200

Andy Cole (Newcastle, Manchester United, Blackburn)-139

Les Ferdinand (QPR, Newcastle, Tottenham Hotspur)-132

Robbie Fowler (Liverpool, Leeds) - 132

Teddy Sheringham (Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester United, Tottenham Hotspur) - 115

**TOTAL: 200**

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## French League Cup Bordeaux champions

AFP, Paris

A vintage performance handed Bordeaux their first French League Cup after a 3-0 final win over struggling league opponents Lorient at the Stade de France on Saturday.

Portuguese international striker Pauleta handed the Girondins the perfect start to the match, netting after just five minutes then adding a second goal on the hour mark.

Camel Meriem scored Bordeaux's second goal three minutes before half time to leave Lorient, who face relegation from the top flight, with an uphill climb for the remainder of the match.

Bordeaux, who sit sixth in the league and were facing no European competition next season, can now look forward to competing in the UEFA Cup after their victory - their first in three attempts after they lost finals to Strasbourg and Paris St Germain respectively in 1997 and 1998.

## Beckham close to signing new deal

AFP, London

A top official of European Champions League semi-finalists Manchester United is claiming star midfielder David Beckham may sign a new contract in the next seven days, the Mail on Sunday reported.

A broken bone in Beckham's foot has put a dampener on United's and England's plans in the coming weeks with the England captain being ruled out of the remaining matches of the domestic season.

It was a crunching tackle by Deportivo La Coruna's Aldo Duscher, who has since apologized to Beckham, in a Champions League game on April 10 which did the damage.

Another concern for the Premiership champions is that Beckham's current contract runs out in the summer of 2003 and he has been in on-going negotiations with the Old Trafford club for several months.

Image rights have been the stumbling block over a new deal, reported to be worth around 100,000 pounds (145,000 dollars) a week.

However, United chief executive Peter Kenyon believes Beckham, 27 next month, will shortly put pen to paper.

He said: "I am now convinced that the contract with David will be in place before he flies off to Japan with England. It could even be put off within a week or so."

"David has been making strong statements about wanting to remain at United for some time and, despite all the speculation, I have always been convinced he would stay with us."

"In my mind, this latest contract agreement was never in doubt."

Robson said.

"He's played with a fracture that won't heal for a while and he's been brave to play."

"He wanted to play because he thought today would maybe be the day he could get the 200, and it's turned out great for him."

"Everybody was willing him to get it. I wouldn't say it's been irritating him, but it's in the back of the net now, it's chalked up and he's on for his next hundred."

The result virtually booked Newcastle's place in the Champions League next season.

Shearer scored his first Premiership goal in his Premiership debut for Blackburn Rovers in a 3-3 draw at Crystal Palace in August 1992,

and, despite series of potentially career-threatening injuries, has continued to find the back of the net regularly.

He broke the 30-goal barrier in three successive seasons during his time at Ewood Park.

Such is Shearer's strike rate that his nearest challenger - Blackburn's Andy Cole - is now 61 adrift of the 31-year-old.

He is the first player to score 200 goals in the Premier League, having done so in just 180 appearances.

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