

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 Tenerife 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 Fuertes stopped an attempted long-ball forward with a fortuitous overhead kick and Venta rushed almost half the length



PHOTO: AFP

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 palces 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.

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 to bed 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."

Premiership

Wonderful Owen

Football

AFP, London

Liverpool replaced Manchester United as leaders of the English Premiership and consigned Derby to First Division football next season with a 2-0 win over John Gregory's men at Anfield on Saturday.

Defeat for Derby, their 23rd league defeat this campaign, saw them relegated from the top flight after five seasons in the Premiership.

Manchester United had taken top spot earlier Saturday after beating Chelsea 3-0 at Stamford Bridge, and the lead could change hands for a third time on Sunday if title favourites Arsenal beat strugglers Ipswich.

Owen, who has taken over as England captain in the absence of injured skipper David Beckham and scored in the 4-0 win over Paraguay in midweek, rounded off a memorable week by scoring both goals for Liverpool.

The 22-year-old striker scored his first in the 16th minute, picking up Vladimir Smicer's pass before neatly clipping the ball over Derby goalkeeper Andy Oakes.

Owen doubled his tally in the last minute, latching onto Emile Heskey's angled pass before taking the ball past Oakes and rolling the ball home.

Manchester United kept the pressure on leaders Liverpool and Arsenal with a comfortable 3-0 win over Chelsea in the early match at Stamford Bridge.

A stunning shot from Paul Scholes and a close range effort from Ruud van Nistelrooy gave United a two-goal first-half lead before Ole Gunnar Solskjaer grabbed a late third for the visitors.

While United's victory keeps the pressure on their title rivals, defeat for Chelsea virtually ended their hopes of clinching a place in next season's Champions League.

United boss Alex Ferguson admitted Arsenal remain firm favourites to win the title but was hopeful that Ipswich might do his side a favour at Highbury on Sunday.

"Anything can happen in football - we've done our job today and the form of the team is fabulous," he said.

"Ipswich are fighting for their lives and they will be looking for a result at Highbury that could save them from relegation."

United midfielder Nicky Butt, playing his eighth consecutive game, admitted the destiny of the championship is still out of their hands.

"This time of year we can only go out and win all our games and hope that the other teams will slip up," he said.

"We're confident in our ability and we went out and showed how good we are today, and as long as



PHOTO: INTERNET

Liverpool ace Michael Owen scoring his first goal against Derby County on April 20.

we keep winning we could still win the league yet."

Chelsea defender John Terry made no excuses for his side's lacklustre performance and complimented United on an impressive display.

"We were poor today but all credit to United - they were superb," said the England under-21 international.

Newcastle are on the brink of clinching fourth place and a place in next season's Champions League next season after beating Charlton 3-0 at St James's Park where Alan Shearer netted his 200th Premiership goal.

Wales international Gary Speed put the Magpies in front in the 22nd minute with a bullet header and Lomana Tresor Lua Lua added a second just after half-time.

Shearer rattled home his landmark goal a minute from time.

Fulham eased their relegation worries with a crucial 1-0 win at sixth-placed Leeds, Frenchman Steed Malbranque scoring the decisive goal seven minutes after the interval.

Blackburn Rovers edged closer to safety with a vital 3-1 win at Middlesbrough.

Jorge Yordi scored the opening goal just after the half hour mark, tucking home into an unguarded net after Republic of Ireland international had opened up the Boro defence with some dazzling footwork.

Andy Cole claimed Rovers' second goal 16 minutes from time and a David Dunn penalty seven

Premiership's top six

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

Liverpool	35	22	8	5	58	26	74
Man Utd	35	23	4	8	86	44	73
Arsenal	33	21	9	3	68	33	72
Newcastle	35	20	7	8	68	46	67
Chelsea	36	16	13	7	63	35	61
Leeds	36	16	12	8	51	37	60

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 defeated Cologne 2-1 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.

Krisztian 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 from 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 Ailton 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 Lotner 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.

Bundesliga's top six

German league standings after Friday's and Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Bayer/Leverkusen	32	20	6	6	75	36	66
Borussia Dortmund	32	19	7	6	56	29	64
Bayern Munich	32	18	8	6	61	23	62
Schalke 04	32	18	7	7	51	32	61
Hertha Berlin	32	17	7	8	58	36	58
Werder Bremen	32	16	5	11	50	39	53

Shearer is 200



PHOTO: AFP

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

Football

AFP, London

Newcastle striker Alan Shearer on Saturday became the first player to score 200 Premiership 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

SHEARER'S PREMIERSHIP GOALS

1992/93: Blackburn 16
1993/94: Blackburn 31
1994/95: Blackburn 34
1995/96: Blackburn 31
1996/97: Newcastle 25
1997/98: Newcastle 2
1998/99: Newcastle 14
1999/00: Newcastle 23
2000/01: Newcastle 5
2001/02: Newcastle 19
TOTAL: 200

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

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 goals 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.

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger responded Saturday to Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson's claim that the double chasers would lose the FA Cup final against Chelsea.

Frenchman Wenger, whose team will regain the Premiership lead if they beat strugglers Ipswich on Sunday, countered by saying that reigning English champions United had a better chance of winning the Champions League than retaining their domestic title.

Ferguson had declared that Chelsea, who were beaten 3-0 by United on Saturday, are favourites

to beat their London rivals in the FA Cup final.

The United boss, whose team face a Champions League semi-final first leg against Bayer Leverkusen next week, also tried to put the title pressure firmly on the Gunners after the game at Stamford Bridge.

United are currently second but Arsenal have two games in hand over their rivals.

"At the moment, it looks like United have a better chance of winning the Champions League than the Premier League," said Wenger.

"But we are just concentrating on doing well ourselves. I think it's down to how well we do in our next three games.

"We have restored our home

strength and we feel strong away from home so we don't see any reason to be concerned by the game at Old Trafford next month.

"At the moment, it doesn't look really important as what is really important is Ipswich.

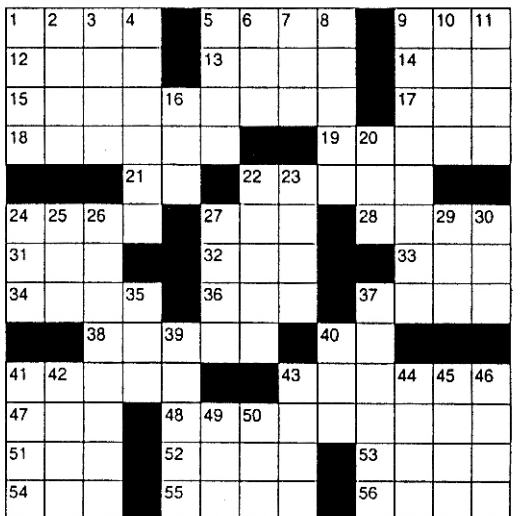
"The Old Trafford game (when Arsenal travel to United) will certainly matter, but what is important is how we do at home.

"It's still all to do but when you put so much effort in like my players have since the start of the season, you keep going from this sort of position."

If Arsenal win four of their five remaining league games - three of which are at home - they will be champions regardless of what United and currnet leaders Liverpool do.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Lady's title
5 Enthusiasm
9 Hound's hand
12 Christiana, now
13 Pearl Mosque site
14 Expert
15 Rider
17 Long lunch
18 Irregular
19 Horror movie reactions
21 Calif. city
22 Snap
24 Mimic
27 "Norma
31 Lawyers' org.
32 Grease
33 Prior to
34 Atomizer output
36 The whole shootin' match
37 Entreat
38 Hosier features, sometimes
40 Opposite of "nyet"
41 Wooden peg
43 Book-maker?
47 Self
48 Like
51 Each
52 Hayseed
53 It takes the cake
54 Mr. Koppel
55 Writer
56 Dweeb
DOWN
1 Broom closet supply
2 Now, on a memo
3 As well
4 Pretty much
5 Wild and crazy
6 Ovum
7 "Roses — red, ..."
8 Slowly, in music
9 Exodus celebration
10 "We'll tak' — o' ..."
11 Entanglements
16 Greek vowel
20 Put away
22 Milkmaid's burden
23 "War is —"
24 Neely of hockey
25 Sapporo sash
26 Long-popular TV game show
27 Gad about
29 Historical period
30 Madrid monarch
35 Ball-bearing item
37 Customer
39 Greek leader?
40 Payable
41 Cabinet branch (Abbr.)
42 Curved molding
43 Pumps, perhaps
44 Place of great activity
45 Hum-dinger
46 Tear
49 Intention
50 Lab study (Abbr.)



CRYPTOQUIP

L X T K N W L O D A L B N W M T K R W
N W V O T Z R M F U V , H B
S T Z R V Z F L O S L X U M F C V M
R L C V H V D L M V A L M Z F Z R .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE COOK DIDN'T KNOW WHICH MUSHROOMS TO USE AND SUFFERED A MOREL DILEMMA.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals R

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.