Serie A preview **Pumped up Cassano**

Football

AFP, Rome

Striker Antonio Cassano is hoping to conjure up a trick or two in Sunday's Rome derby, in which victory comes second only to winning the Scudetto itself for the capital's football-crazy inhabitants

Nicknamed 'Peter Pan' for producing moments of brilliance on the football field, Casssano has had few opportunites to wave his magic wand since joining AS Roma from Bari in a 30-million-euro deal last

But the gifted 20-year-old is hoping to cast a spell on Lazio this weekend, although he may have to start on the substitutes' bench due to the fierce competition for places at the Stadio Olimpico.

"Sunday's headlines are up for grabs," Cassano told Italian sports daily Corriere dello Sport.

"A goal would be nice but I really verv first time don't care as long as the team wins. following the departure of

form.

matches

season

"The atmosphere will be intense but it's something I feed off, it drives Asked what he thought of his

new nickname, he replied: "Isn't Peter Pan the one who makes magic? Well, my football is full of fantasy and instinct." However, Cassano may have to be content with a bit-part role follow-

ing Friday's news that Marco Delvecchio has declared himself fit after a lengthy lay-off Roma coach Fabio Capello

received a major boost 24 hours earlier with the news that talsimanic captain Francesco Totti has recovered from a knee injury and is available for selection.

The international midfielder missed Italy's last two Euro 2004 qualifiers, as well as Roma's 3-1 win at Empoli last Saturday - the club's third league win in a row. Lazio skipper Guiseppe Favalli,

Bologna. in charge for a Rome derby for the Inter, who kept alive their

defeat at Charlton

Saturday.

pitch

Freund recalled.

most important.'

Chievo on Saturday

point more than Roma but that will

count for little on Sunday." said

Favalli whose side are fourth in the

table with 10 points from five

we are starting to compete once

again," he added, referring to the

club's disappointing campaign last

tained their 100 per cent record in

the Champions League with a 2-1

win over Bayern Munich in mid-

week, aim to continue their

unbeaten league run at Verona club

Second take on third at the San

Siro on Sunday as Inter Milan host

Leaders AC Milan, who main-

"What is more significant is that

Champions League qualification hopes with a gritty 3-3 draw against Alessandro Nesta, believes there is Lyon on Tuesday, have two more points than Francesco Guidolin's little to choose between the two surprise package, who like their teams who are both in a rich vein of illustrious rivals are unbeaten. "I'm not surprised that we have a

Fifth-placed Juventus, who lost 1-0 at Newcastle in the Champions League on Wednesday but still top their first phase group, host Udinese at the Stadio Delle Alpi in Saturday's late match.

In other games Atalanta and Parma, both knocked out of the Italian Cup by Serie B clubs this week, meet at the Ennio Tardini stadium while winless Reggina host third-from-bottom Torino.

FIXTURES

Saturday: Chievo v AC Milan, uventus v Ūdinese Sunday: Brescia v Como, Inter

ilan v Bologna, Lazio v Roma, Parma v Atalanta, Perugia v Modena, Piacenza v Empoli, Reggina v Torino

Two-game ban on Vieira AFP, London

SPORT

Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira was banned for two matches and fined 25,000 pounds Thursday after being found guilty of insulting a referee after being sent off against Chelsea on September 1.

French international Vieira was cleared by the Football Association of a more serious charge of using abusive language against referee Andy D'Urso in the English Premiership clash

Vieira has already served a onematch ban for the red card, which was shrouded in controversy. Video replays showed that Vieira

did not make any contact with Gianfranco Zola in the incident which earned him his first yellow card and Chelsea winger Jesper Gronkjaer admitted he had been at fault in the collision which earned Vieira the red card

In D'Urso's report to the Football Association (FA), however, he said Vieira used foul and abusive language when shown the red card.



Brazil's coach mystery on

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil are due to visit South Korea for a friendly international in November but the five-times world champions are still without a coach.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) were expected to name an interim coach last Friday for the match, their second since the World Cup, but the announcement has been post-

poned to a new date which has not been revealed. In the meantime, the media continues to speculate about who

will take charge for the match and. more importantly, who will be named as the permanent replacement for Luiz Felipe Scolari early next year The CBF has already suggested

that veteran coach Mario Zagallo, who was sacked after the 1998 World Cup for "only" finishing second, could be brought out of retirement to lead the team in South Korea as a "tribute.

Zagallo, 71, was involved Brazil's first four World Cup victories -- as a player in 1958 and 1962, as coach in 1970 and as assistant coach in 1994.

He also coached the team in his own right at two other World Cups. leading them to fourth place in 1974 and the runners-up spot at France

As for the long-term replacement, speculation is beginning to mount that the job could be handed to Vanderlei Luxemburgo, who was sacked in disgrace little more than

two years ago. The sports daily Lance claims

Premiership preview **Redknapp's Red return**

Markus Babbel, who has spent a

vear out of the game after being

struck down with the life-threatening

Guillan-Barre Svndrome, has been

on the Liverpool bench for their last

two matches and could feature on

Then you know what is impor-

tant. It is wonderful to play football,

wonderful to be part of Tottenham

or, for him, Liverpool, but health is

Arsenal, whose season has

been derailed by back-to-back

defeats by Everton and Auxerre, will

attempt to get their show back on

for the last 20 minutes of the

Robert Pires is in line for a return

the road at home to Blackburn.

Football

AFP, London

Former Liverpool captain Jamie Redknapp can expect no favours when he returns to Anfield with Tottenham on Saturday.

Redknapp, who left Liverpool in the summer after a long battle with injury which blighted his career there, is guaranteed a warm reception from the Liverpool fans.

But Reds skipper Sami Hyypia warned there would be no room for sentimentality as Liverpool seek to extend their lead at the top of the Premiership

Hyypia, who replaced Redknapp as Anfield skipper, said: "We will be forgetting our friendships during the game and we will be more like enemies. But after the match I will shake his hand and be happy to be

friends again. "Jamie was at Liverpool for a long time and I am sure he will get a good reception from the fans because they still love him.

"I am pleased that he is fit again and that he is over his injury problems and can play football.

Champions League match against Liverpool have been increasingly Auxerre on Tuesday then coming impressive this season and have through a reserves outing 24 hours not conceded a goal in four Premiership matches. Tottenham in Pires, who scored for the contrast faltered last weekend with

reserves, said: "To score was terrific. but the main concern was to get stronger and fitter.

"It was very different playing for the reserves than it was against Auxerre, but I had some strong tackles on me and that is good for my confidence.

Spurs midfielder Steffen Freund, Blackburn, who thrashed Newcastle 5-2 last weekend, will who shared a rehabilitation centre with Babbel, is hoping they will be travel south without Irish winger Damien Duff, who is ruled out with a able to meet again on the Anfield hamstring problem.

"It was a shock to see him, a But manager Graeme Souness friend, a footballer, in a wheelchair. will be able to align his strike pair of He was so ill overnight, maybe he Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke after could have been finished with Cole recovered from his hamstring football, maybe he could die even, injury all that to a person so young,"

Matt Jensen is also in contention for the first time this season after recovering from injuries incurred in us. a scooter smash while on holiday in Italy in the summer.

Manchester United are hoping injured duo Ruud van Nistelrooy and Nicky Butt, both missing from the Champions League win at Olympiakos in midweek, will be fit in time for the visit to Old Trafford of struggling Aston Villa.

The match could not come at a to the starting line-up after playing worse time for Villa manager Graham Taylor, who was booed off the pitch after the defeat by Southampton on Monday.

Villa's slide has been mirrored by that of Manchester City, who must try and turn things around at

Birmingham

It is exactly the sort of game Kevin Keegan's side must win if they are to avoid dropping straight back to the First Division. "We have got two very hard away

games now against Birmingham and then West Brom," City's Israeli midfielder Eyal Berkovic said.

"We need to show a lot of character in these games and fight, not just to play good football."

"It is these type of games in which you have to battle and give 100 percent. A pretty game will not be enough. Those teams will look at us and fancy their chances because we are in a bad run and they are looking to extend the gap between

> FIXTURES (1400 GMT kick off unless tated)

Saturday: Arsenal v Blackburn, Birmingham v Man City, Bolton v Sunderland, Chelsea v West Brom, Liverpool v Tottenham, Man Utd v Aston Villa, Middlesbrough v eeds, Newcastle v Charlton Sunday: Southampton N

Fulham (1300 GMT), West Ham v Everton (1505 GMT) Monday: Bolton v Sunderland (1900 GMT)

Espinoza were struck by lightning.

Deportivo Cali players surround their teammate Herman Gaviria (inset) after he was struck by lightening on October 24 during a practice session in Cali, Colombia. Gaviria, who played for the national team in the 1994 USA World Cup,

Colombian World Cupper

killed by lightning

Cordoba was in intensive care in

three players were described as stable, according to a hospital statement at 7:15pm local time on Thursday (0015 GMT on Friday). During the 1994 World Cup finals

couldn't remember anything." America de Cali Manuel Bonilla was in the USA, Gaviria scored the first also killed by lightning.

training in a stadium in Pance, to the goal against Switzerland in a 2-0 south of the Cali, Gaviria, Giovanny first round victory though Colombia, Cordoba, Carlos Alvarez, Giovanny Hernandez and Julian Mauricio

shortly after arriving at the hospital.

a critical condition but the other

Bundesliga preview No room for comfort

Football

threatens to pass them by.

mathematically in with a chance of

forlorn hope as in ten years of the

Champions League no side has

managed to progress after taking

stronger domestic demands - most

immediately for three points at home

Oliver Kahn, who has a thigh injury

picked up in the 2-1 reverse at Milan.

Tuesday's Champions League

only just invested in the likes of

currently injured Sebastian Deisler

for what they termed their "best

ever" squad at the start of the cam-

crunch match at Deportivo.

Kahn's target for a return is

Already Bayern are counting the

Their fans will therefore make

just one point from four games.

Borussia Dortmund.

AFP, Berlin

nence grise Franz Beckenbauer says seeing off the likes of Hanover match which pits third-placed would scarcely compensate for an Werder Bremen against Dortmund early European exit, with all the financial consequences engenfourth - or even lower if Berlin take dered by the loss of a potential extra full points and fifth-placed Schalke Bayern Munich will have no hiding 11 matches and a guaranteed see off Nuremberg. place on Saturday as they attempt to minimum of six. Schalke will be without Polish "Next season the money wouldreconcile themselves with impendinternational Tomasz Waldoch, who ing Champions League elimination. n't be there to strengthen the team. has damaged his fibula and faces And it hurts if you have to watch the Wednesday's defeat in Milan surgery. their third in four matches - should rest of the Champions League in have sent the Bavarians out into the front of the TV," Beckenbauer Back down at the bottom Kaiserslautern, champions as premature cold winter night looking tersely told Bild.

Berlin will hope to profit from the with the loser likely to slip down to

Five years ago, a young player of





The Daily Star

Lightning killed former Colombia international Herman Gaviria and injured four other players, leaving one in a critical condition, during training with top flight side Deportivo Cali It was a tragedy for the

died from the injuries caused in the incident.

Colombian league leaders and the 44-million-strong population of a country which is passionate about football

During a storm on Thursday afternoon when the team were

among the favourites before the finals started, did not advance in the tournament. The five players were taken to Espinoza, speaking to radio hospital in Cali, 470km south west of station RCN from hospital, said: capital Bogota, but 33-year-old "Training had been going for five attacking midfielder Gaviria died minutes in the rain when lightning

started to streak across the sky. Lightning struck Gaviria on the head and, shortly afterwards, I was also "I fell down and from then on, I

that Luxemburgo is negotiating for what would be a hugely controversial return with the CBF and that he is already forming his national team staff

Luxemburgo's first stint began after the 1998 World Cup and ended in after the Sydney Olympics when his team were humiliatingly eliminated in the quarter-finals by nineman Cameroon.

Luxemburgo had already been under fire for previous poor results and for using too many players.

The heat was turned up further when a former business associate accused him of taking commissions on the sale of players when he was a club coach earlier in his career.

Shortly after being fired, Luxemburgo became one of the central figures in a Congressional investigation into alleged corruption in Brazilian football

A commission of inquiry grilled him over his tax returns, told him that his income -- more than \$9 million in five years -- was not compatible with his profession and said that his explanations had not been satisfactory.

Luxemburgo also admitted that he had used a fake birth certificate, which knocked three years off his real age and changed the spelling of his first name to Wanderley instead of Vanderlei, for most of his career.

He returned to coaching in early 2001 with Corinthians, the team he led to the Brazilian championship title in 1998, and later moved to Palmeiras but this year became bogged down in more controversy.

Primera Liga preview Minnows' fiesta time

Alaves.

adrift of Sociedad.

Galicia on Saturday.

sured at 55 metres.

Sunday.

Malaga are still unbeaten and will

fancy their chances of extending

their run at home to Espanyol on

spectacular goals from Roger

Garcia, his first a long-range chip

from inside his own half and mea-

play host to Athletic Bilbao on

Saturday while Real Madrid are still

smarting from their 2-0 defeat at

Racing Santander last Saturday, as

well as Tuesday's lacklustre 2-2

draw in the Champions League with

Defending champions Valencia

Football

AFP. Madrid

The sharp end of the Spanish championship has a very unfamiliar look about it and Spain's less-heralded teams will be aiming to keep it that way over the weekend.

Real Sociedad lead the league for the first time in over 20 years with 14 points from their six games and not since their league title winning days of 1981 and 1982 have they

been in pole position. "I'm not sure how long we can stay on our own as leaders but it's now up to everyone else to catch us The only thing I am worried about is how we play, not now the other teams play," said Real Sociedad coach Ravnald Denoueix

The San Sebastian side face another of this season's surprise packages on Sunday, newlypromoted Racing Santander who are in sixth, but may have to do without Spanish international Francisco De Pedro and his under-21 counterpart Xabi Alonso. The pair have been struggling all

AEK Athens. Inevitably, two bad games have week with knocks received in last

Sunday's bruising 2-2 draw at prompted the Spanish media to start talking about a crisis, but the Celta Vigo relinguished their lead European champions' coach last weekend with their first league Vicente Del Bosque was remaining loss of the season, a surprise 1-0 cool.

reverse at home against Rayo "We don't depend solely on Figo Vallecano and are now one point and Raul. We are not tired, we are not worried, we are not too relaxed, However, the fixtures computer we are not going through a bad has conspired to give them a patch, we are not in crisis," fumed chance of quick revenge against the **Del Bosque**

Real's World Player of the Year teams from the Spanish capital as Luis Figo should be back to face Atletico Madrid have to pay a visit to Villarreal on Saturday, after missing two games with a hamstring strain. Like Sociedad, third-placed

However, Raul, Zinedine Zidane and Claude Makelele all face late fitness tests

Barcelona coach Louis van Gaal Espanyol finally got a win under must be wondering what his team their belts last Sunday, with two have to do to please their fans.

After their 1-0 win over Lokomotiv Moscow on Wednesday. and qualifying for the next round in the Champions League, they still left the pitch to a chorus of derision.

"I don't understand the whistling The team are always trying to win and play to their limit. It isn't easy to be a player here," commented van Gaal

Perhaps ending their domestic three game winless streak on

Saturday - they have slumped to 12th place over the last month would help Barcelona silence their critics but visitors Alaves are unlikely to be very accommodating.

Last season, Alaves only just succumbed 3-2 in the Nou Camp and this year their away form has actually been better than at home. Alayes though will have to do

without their midfielder Pablo Gomez after he was sent off last week against Real Sociedad.

FIXTURES

Saturday (kick off GMT): Recreativo Huelva v Real Betis (1600), Real Madrid v Villarreal (**1700)**, Rayo Vallecano v Deportivo La Coruna (1800). Valencia v Athletic Bilbao (1800), Barcelona v Alaves (1900), Celta Vigo v Atletico Madrid (1930)

Sunday: Malaga v Espanyol v 1700), Real Mallorca v Osasuna (1700), Sevilla v Valladolid (1700), Real Sociedad v Racing Santander (1930)

> paign Former coach and club emi-

back at the lucrative feast which Bild itself was not slow to sound the alarm, with domestic success Instead, Deportivo La Coruna's these days coming a poor second to loss in Lens means Bayern are still

continental glory. won just once all season but on "At the World Cup we waved Wednesday received a boost when them goodbye one by one: England, making the last 16 - but it looks a a consortium of banks agreed to Italy, Spain and digraced world champions France.

"But in the Champions League we're suddenly right down the European pecking order - everyone else is leaving us standing," the mass daily lamented Meanwhile, Bayern's fellow Euro

to promoted Hanover 96 which would preserve their five-point lead travellers Bayer Leverkusen, likeover unbeaten reigning champions wise still just hanging on after their midweek win over Maccabi Haifa But Bayern will go in search of a have denied they are about to sign win to strengthen their hand at the German international Paul Freie top of the Bundesliga without keeper from Bochum.

If Bayern can console themselves with a likely league title on the horizon regardless of their European form, Leverkusen have been on the slide since losing the final of the Champions League and German Cup and letting Dortmund cost of probable elimination having steal the league title from under their noses last May. Michael Ballack, Ze Roberto and the

Leverkusen have spent the season in the lower reaches of the table and badly need a win at Hertha Berlin, themselves going well in fourth spot.

lend the club 20 million euros to cancel out a 17.8m overdraft. The club also hope German international striker Miroslav Klose will help to rescue them, despite a poor season to date, after he scored in Germany's narrow Euro 2004 qualifying win last week against the

recently as 1998, must beat Bochum

The cash-strapped side have

on Sunday to liven the gloom

FIXTURES

Faroe Islands.

Saturday: VfB Stuttgart v Energie Cottbus, Bayern Munich Hanover 96, Borussia Monchengladbach v 1860 Munich, Schalke 04 v FC Nuremberg, Werder Bremen v Borussia Dortmund, Arminia Bielefeld v SV Hamburg, Hertha

Berlin v Bayer Leverkusen a Sundy: Kaiserslautern v VfL Bochum, VfL Wolfsburg v Hansa Rostock

League One preview Paris braces for a classic



AFP, Paris

Marseille's visit to Paris Saint Germain gets top billing in the latest round of French league matches this weekend

Over 2,000 police are due to be deployed at PSG's Parc des Princes stronghold in what has been classified by security forces in the French capital as a high risk fixture.

For the first time the sale and use of alcohol is being banned around the stadium in a bid to take some of the heat out of this traditionally

explosive occasion.

If tensions are expected to be "We know PSG are very solid in high off the pitch that mood will surely be mirrored on it as the two bitter rivals find themselves in the

unusually healthy position of lying third and fourth respectively, just one point off surprise leaders Nice. With Frank Leboeuf out of action Marseille will be captained by Manuel Dos Santos who is only too

aware of the importance attached to the visit. "There's a lot of pressure. For us it's a bit like our own Champions

League final," he said. "Here in Marseille fans are expecting a lot from us. Unlike previous seasons we're among the

leaders

defence and in attack they have talented players like Ronaldinho and Cardetti to count on. Both sides go into the game on a

high after wins last weekend, Marseille beating Strasbourg and PSG defeating Troyes thanks in part to a superb Ronaldinho lob.

PSG goalkeeper Lionel Letizi concurred with Dos Santos' prediction that Saturday's game was

special "This will be more decisive than usual, there'll be perhaps more tension but also as a result more motivation.

Away from the spotlight down on

the Cote d'Azur Nice are seeking to hold on to their lead against in-form Lens, who enjoyed a surprise midweek Champions League win over Spain's Deportivo La Coruna.

Another team buoyed by success in Europe are Auxerre. Guy Roux's side, who are second in the table but only by dint of inferior goal difference to Nice. host Rennes four days after their huge win over Arsenal at Highbury.

Second from bottom Rennes are managed by Vahid Halilhodzic who hit out at the way he's being depicted in the French media

"You're demonising me. And how do you depict me? As a tyrant, a military officer, above all I don't like

that." he said.

Rennes can take some comfort from last weekend when Auxerre were soundly beaten last week by Lyon, who travel to Ajaccio's Corsican base having done their chances of qualifying for the last 16 in the Champions League no harm at all with a midweek draw with Inter Milan

FIXTURES Friday: Bordeaux v Monaco

Saturday: Paris Saint Germain Marseille, Nice v Lens, Auxerre v Rennes, Ajaccio v Lyon, Lille v Sochaux, Strasbourg v Bastia, Le Havre v Nantes, Guingamp v Sedan, Montpellier v Troyes

Zidane for a Real farewell

Football

REUTERS, Paris

French playmaker Zinedine Zidane could end his career when his contract with Spanish giants Real Madrid comes to an end in 2005.

"I'm signed to Real until 2005 and I think I will honour my contract," the 1998 World Cup winner was quoted as saying in the French daily Le Parisien.

"Afterwards, at 33-34, I think it will be a good time to put an end to my career.

Although the 30-year-old admitted he had not made any firm decisions yet, he ruled out returning to

trous World Cup, Zidane, who had a knee injury and missed France's first two games, said it had been a verv hard time.

"I was not feeling part of the squad, not because of them but because of my injury.

"When they were training, I was receiving treatment. "It was a hard period to live," he

But he insisted France, who had an ideal start to their Euro 2004

games, would fight hard to retain the European crown.

once again," he warned.

Looking back on France's disas-

his native country "I've played in the biggest clubs so it would be a little difficult. "To return to France would be a decision from the heart. And I don't

want my career to be ruled by my

The top for Zidane -- who sup-

campaign with three wins in three

We're working to be competitive and to be European champions

heart but by reason. I want to finish at the top," he said ports his hometown team

Olympique Marseille and Girondins Bordeaux, the club in which he made his first real impression -- is to play in the Spanish Liga.

"The best league is here in Spain. It's bubbling football, all out attack. It's much better than the locked play you have in Italy," he