

Primera Liga

Ronaldo, Real break duck

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Superstar Ronaldo scored his first goal in more than a month as Real Madrid beat Rayo Vallecano 3-2 away in a nail-biting city derby here on Saturday.

Accused of being overweight by an impatient media after failing to score since a double on his debut following his move from Inter Milan, the Brazilian World Cup winner finally answered his critics with the first goal of the match.

Then a brilliantly-struck injury-time free kick from Luis Figo allowed Real Madrid to grab their first league win in four games.

Rayo had looked on course to claim a well-earned point against the European champions after they twice levelled to cancel out spectacular strikes from Ronaldo and fellow Brazilian Roberto Carlos.

But Figo's free kick allowed Real to edge their first league win away from the Bernabeu since last March and catapulted the European champions into third place in the table, a point ahead of rivals Barcelona who sneaked a 1-0 win at home to Villarreal.

Unbeaten Real Sociedad retained their three-point lead at the top despite being held to a 1-1 draw at home to Deportivo Coruna, after second-placed Valencia also drew 1-1 at home to Real Betis.

Betis took the lead with a superb 20-metre free-kick from Brazilian midfielder Marcos Assuncao on 70 minutes, but Argentine playmaker Pablo Aimar equalised with a fine diving header nine minutes from

time. Yugoslav striker Darko Kovacevic notched his seventh goal of the season for Sociedad when he put them into the lead with a powerful far post header after a fine cross from Valery Karpin on 28 minutes.

But Depor equalised just before halftime when Albert Luque slotted home with the outside of his foot after midfielder Fran and Dutch striker Roy Makaay had prised open the Sociedad defence.

The draw still allowed the Basque side to better their previous best start to a league campaign which dates back to the 1981-82 season when they went on to win the championship for the second year in a row.

Real Madrid, anxious to put an end to their recent poor run of form, went on the attack from the first whistle with Rayo responding by packing their defence and playing on the break.

Fernando Vazquez's side survived a succession of early corners, but were then hit by a devastating Real attack launched from well inside their own half.

Figo made the goal with a superb defence-splitting pass which fell into the path of the advancing Ronaldo.

His former Barcelona team mate swooped on to the ball, steadied himself and then fired a first-time shot high into the corner.

It was the Brazilian's first goal for Real since he grabbed a double on his debut against Alaves more than a month ago.

But surprisingly it was Rayo who grew in confidence following the goal and began to take control of the match as Real relaxed.

The Brazilian's strike was more

than matched 22 minutes later when Rayo midfielder Jorge Azkoltia skipped past Claude Makelele before hitting a swerving 20-metre shot past keeper Iker Casillas and into the far corner.

Real lost Zinedine Zidane shortly afterwards with what appeared to be a thigh injury and Rayo took control after the break.

But Real took the lead against the run of play when Roberto Carlos scored with a trademark rocket following a free-kick on the fringe of the area.

The Brazilian defender fired his shot under the ragged Rayo wall, leaving keeper Imanol Etxeberria with no chance.

Rayo continued to dominate, though, and levelled once more on 75 minutes through a controversial penalty after Azkoltia fell to the ground on the edge of the area.

Julio Alavarez, on loan from Real, stepped up to blast home past Casillas to level once more.

The excitement was not over, however, and it was Real who had the final say when Figo sent his free kick over the wall and into the corner from the edge of the area seconds before the final whistle.

TOP SIX										
Standings in the Spanish championship after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):										
Sociedad	9	6	3	0	21	13	21			
Valencia	9	5	3	1	18	6	18			
Real	9	4	4	1	17	10	16			
Barcelona	9	4	3	2	17	11	15			
Malaga	9	4	3	2	17	16	15			
Mallorca	8	5	0	3	11	10	15			



Superstar Ronaldo (C) trying to bulldoze his way past Rayo Vallecano's Russian international Victor Onopko (L) and Corino at Teresa Rivero Stadium in Madrid on November 9.

Premiership

Boro upset leaders' plans

Football

AFP, London

Liverpool had the worst possible preparation for their make-or-break Champions League match this week when they slumped to their first league defeat of the season, losing 1-0 to Middlesbrough on Saturday.

England defender Gareth Southgate scored a rare goal eight minutes from time at the Riverside Stadium to leave Liverpool just one point clear of reigning champions Arsenal, who beat Newcastle 1-0 with a Sylvain Wiltord goal.

Liverpool's first defeat in 15 league matches could not have

Luzhny was his first for two months, but Newcastle manager Bobby Robson was in no doubt that Wiltord's French international teammate Vieira was the real star of the match.

"He was awesome," said Robson. "Gary Speed said he's the best midfield player he's ever come up against."

Alex Ferguson made an uncharacteristic attack on his team after they lost the local derby to Manchester City for the first time in 13 years.

City marked the last Premiership derby at their Maine Road ground with a 3-1 win that represents another serious blow to United's title ambitions, although despite three defeats they are still eight points behind the leaders after Liverpool's slip-up. A brace

David Moyes' side up to fourth place.

At the other end of the table, meanwhile, points were shared as Bolton scored a late equaliser against West Brom, as did Blackburn against Southampton.

Aston Villa inflicted a fourth consecutive defeat on Fulham, winning 3-1 at Villa Park.

Radzinski justified his selection ahead of teen prodigy Wayne Rooney in the Everton starting line-up by scoring the only goal of a tight game at Goodison Park against Charlton. He stroked home a Thomas Gravesen cross on the half-hour.

With Sunderland and West Ham playing on Sunday, the two bottom sides Bolton and West Brom both blew a chance to move out of the relegation zone.



Arsenal's French international Sylvain Wiltord (C) takes on the Newcastle United defence at Highbury Stadium on November 9.

come at a worse time with a match against FC Basel on Tuesday which they must win to stay in Europe's top club competition.

Manager Gerard Houllier said his team had been unlucky but he called on his players to use the defeat as a springboard for a spirited performance in Switzerland.

"I thought a draw would have been a fair result," said Houllier. "We were in control of the attacking play but we knew at some stage we would lose a game."

"It's done and let's show our mental strength by bouncing back. We must produce better football than we showed today."

"It's early days. We've only lost one in 13 and we've another 25 to play. I'm frustrated because we can give a lot more and we will."

Houllier will not have been enjoyed watching his Polish international goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek - replaced by Chris Kirkland for the midweek League Cup win - make a horrendous mistake in the closing minutes to gift a goal to Boro.

Dudek spilled a cross after colliding with Sami Hyypia and Southgate was on hand to poke the ball home and lift his side into the top six.

Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger believes his side are back in business after welcoming back Patrick Vieira from a two-month suspension and earning the hard-fought victory over Newcastle at Highbury.

"Two weeks ago our confidence was low and it is difficult to bounce back, but we are doing it," said Wenger.

"We worked hard together, got back to basics and got the luck. It was a great team reaction you could feel today."

Wiltord's first-half strike from a cross supplied by Ukrainian Oleg

from Bermudan international Shaun Goater sealed City's win over after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer had cancelled out Nicolas Anelka's fifth minute opener.

But Ferguson was fuming at basic defensive errors.

"At times like this I wonder if I should open the dressing room door and let the fans tell the players exactly how I feel," he said.

"Quite simply, they have under-achieved. They have received a rollicking and quite rightly so. In big games like this, concentration is the key and ours was poor at times."

"It was a real kick in the teeth. We work hard to prepare them for games like today and they have let us down."

"We will get a reaction from this."

The smile of delighted City manager Kevin Keegan's face said it all.

"I have been involved in some great derby matches over the years but I will remember this one forever," he said.

"There were lot of nerves out there but the crowd found another level today. They were like a twelfth man at times."

Next season City will move to the new stadium built for the Commonwealth Games.

Chelsea took immediate advantage of United's defeat, brushing aside Steve Bruce's Birmingham City 3-0 to move up to third place.

The Londoners got off to a perfect start as Icelandic striker Eidor Gudjohnsen drilled in a shot from close range after just three minutes. He added a second on the half hour after excellent work from Gianfranco Zola the veteran Italian conjured a third three minutes from the break.

Everton's impressive form continued at home to Charlton as Tomasz Radzinski's goal lifted

Bolton lost a goal and a player within the space of three minutes in the first half as first Scott Dobie celebrated his call-up to Bertie Vogts' Scotland squad with a well-taken goal.

The Trotters' woe was compounded just seconds later as defender Bruno N'Gotty received a straight red card for elbowing Jason Roberts.

But Sam Allardyce's side stole an unlikely point at the death as Per Frandsen headed in an equaliser in the last minute. Despite the point, Bolton remain bottom of the table.

Former England striker Andy Cole managed a similar feat for Blackburn Rovers at Southampton, scoring deep in injury time to cancel out James Beattie's first-half penalty.

Rovers equaliser came despite the team playing with ten men for the last 15 minutes after Turkey international Tugay Kerimoglu was sent off for his second bookable offence.

Aston Villa move up to 13th position after a 3-1 win over hapless Fulham. Juan Pablo Angel's opener was cancelled out by Fulham striker Luis Boa Morte but substitutes Marcus Allback and Oyvind Leonhardsen struck to hand Graham Taylor an invaluable win.

TOP SIX										
English Premiership table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):										
Liverpool	13	9	3	1	24	10	30			
Arsenal	13	9	2	2	23	23	29			
Chelsea	13	6	5	2	23	12	23			
Everton	13	7	2	4	16	15	23			
Man Utd	13	6	4	3	17	22	22			
Boro	13	6	3	4	16	10	21			

Bosnich tests positive for cocaine!

Football

AFP, London

English Premiership side Chelsea's Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich has tested positive for the Class A drug cocaine, it was claimed here Sunday.

The New of the World newspaper reported that the former Aston Villa and Manchester United player has failed a drugs test and a B sample has yet to be analysed.

The Football Association (FA) has however refused to confirm or deny whether a test has been carried out on the 30-year-old.

It is understood that Chelsea

were only informed of the positive test a few days ago and if the B sample confirms the finding for cocaine then the FA can order a lengthy suspension and rehabilitation.

Chelsea may also consider terminating the contract of Bosnich, who has made a handful of appearances for London club despite being paid around 40,000 pounds (63,500 dollars) a week.

An FA spokesman said: "We cannot confirm or deny whether or not a test has been carried out. We do not discuss anything to do with the FA's drug-testing programme."

If the finding is confirmed, Bosnich will become the most high-profile Premier League player to have tested positive for drugs.

Bundesliga

Bayern turn around

Football

AFP, Berlin

A resurgent Bayern Munich beat the reigning German champions Borussia Dortmund 2-1 on Saturday to stretch their lead at the top of the Bundesliga to five points.

Dortmund scored first through a deflected shot from Brazilian striker Marcio Amoroso in the seventh minute but Bayern hit back with two goals in the space of four second-half minutes as their opponents tired after having two men sent off.

Paraguay international Roque Santa Cruz equalised for Bayern on 62 minutes and three minutes later Claudio Pizarro had the sellout 63,000 crowd in Munich's Olympic Stadium on their feet as he scored the winner after being set up by French international Willy Sagnol.

After having German international Torsten Frings sent off for two yellow cards in the first half, Dortmund lost their goalkeeper Jens Lehmann who was dismissed after earning his second booking for disputing Pizarro's goal. Giant Czech international Jan Koller took over in goal.

Bayern moved on to 26 points with Dortmund on 21.

The victory was a relief for Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, who is still dealing with the fallout from the club's early elimination from the Champions League.

"We were under more pressure than our opponents," said Hitzfeld. "All that counted today was the three points."

"We were unlucky to go behind and after that we were the most convincing team."

Dortmund coach Matthias Sammer was counting the cost of

the red cards.

"We should have been leading 2-0 after the first 20 minutes," he said. "The lost points are not my main concern, I'm more worried about the consequences from this. Next week I'm going to have players missing."

Unfancied VfB Stuttgart rocketed up to third place with a 3-2 home victory over VfL Bochum, thanks to a hat-trick from Romanian international loan Viorel Ganea.

Stuttgart were trailing 2-1 when Ganea struck in the 86th minute before notching the winner on the final whistle.

1860 Munich dropped to fourth after losing 1-0 to SV Hamburg and Werder Bremen's bright start is fading. They were beaten 3-1 at VfL Wolfsburg and are in fifth place.

Bayern Leverkusen meanwhile earned a welcome away win over title hopefuls Schalke 04. Bernd Schneider converted a last-minute penalty after Schalke keeper Frank Rost fouled Thomas Brdaric in the penalty area and was sent off.

Leverkusen need more wins like that - Klaus Toppmoller's side are only 12th.

Another big name, Kaiserslautern, remain deep in relegation trouble lying second from bottom after stumbling to a 1-0 home defeat to Hanover.

TOP SIX										
German football league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):										
Bayern	12	8	2	2	28	14	26			
Dortmund	12	5	6	1	18	9	21			
Stuttgart	12	5	5	2	20	14	20			
Munich	12	6	2	4	18	14	20			
Bremen	12	6	2	4	22	22	20			
Schalke	12	5	4	3	14	11	19			

Serie A Inter conquered

Football

AFP, Milan

Italy's league leaders Inter Milan lost their unbeaten record after crashing to a shock 2-1 home defeat to Udinese on Saturday.

Christian Vieri scored his eighth goal of the season with a firm header to give Inter an early advantage before Martin Jorgensen's spectacular long-range shot restored parity for the visitors.

And Roberto Muzzi netted his first goal of the season 10 minutes after the break to give Udinese their first away victory of the campaign after four straight defeats on the road.

Inter remain top of Serie A but can be overtaken by second-placed AC Milan should they win in Turin on Sunday against reigning champions Juventus who are third.

Second-half substitute Hernan Crespo was left scratching his head as to why Inter lost the match having had plenty of opportunities to put the game out of Udinese's reach.

"At the point in which we were playing our best football and making lots of chances, Udinese scored the equaliser and we never recovered from that," he said.

"There's a lot of anger in the changing room because it was an opportunity to increase our lead at the top of the table."

"But we're still first and we can put things right by getting a good result against Ajax in the Champions League on Tuesday."

Inter need a point against the Dutch champions in Amsterdam to

be certain of a place in the second phase.

In Saturday's late match AS Roma threw away the chance to put some pressure on the leading pack by drawing 1-1 at Piacanza.

Antonio Cassano, restored to the Roma side after making his peace with coach Fabio Capello following a training-ground bust-up, gave the visitors a first-half lead with a close-range effort.

But Enzo Maresca rescued a point for Piacenza with a superb right-foot free-kick from outside the box 17 minutes from time.

The hosts could have won the match had Dario Hubner not missed a penalty six minutes before the break.

Roma coach Fabio Capello, who thought justice was done when Hubner fired his spot-kick wide, said his side threw away the points by conceding a silly free-kick.

"We keep giving away presents," he told Telepiu after the match.

"We played brilliantly for 80 minutes but were punished for that one late mistake."

Inter made the best possible start by taking the lead in the third minute at the San Siro.

Dominico Morfeo's left wing cross was diverted by Udinese's veteran defender Nestor Sensini into the path of Vieri and the Italian international's powerful close-range header gave Morgan De Sanctis no chance.

But Inter failed to build on their early advantage, and after Jorgensen had shot inches over the crossbar, the Danish international levelled the scores for Luciano Spalletti's men in the 25th minute.

The lively 27-year-old midfielder,

who has been linked with a move to Inter, picked up the ball 25 metres from goal and unleashed a fierce drive which flew into the top corner to silence all but a few hundred of the 70,000 crowd.

Jorgensen should have doubled his tally just before half-time, but after collecting Chilean David Pizarro's neat pass he shot wide from six yards with only Inter goalkeeper Francesco Toldo to beat.

Turkish midfielder Emre Belozoglu struck the post as Inter poured forward at the start of the second-half, but their adventurous approach was to cost them dear in the 55th minute when Udinese went ahead.

Udinese countered swiftly after an Inter attack broke down and the ball was worked to Muzzi whose shot took a wicked deflection off Francesco Coco to wrong-foot Toldo.

Toldo kept his side from falling further behind with some excellent goalkeeping and second-half substitute Hernan Crespo almost snatched a point in stoppage-time but De Sanctis was equal to the Argentinean's effort.

TOP SIX										
Italian league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):										
Inter	9	7	1	1	19	9	22			
Lyon	8	6	1	1	22	5	19			
Juventus	8	5	3	0	12	4	18			
Lazio	8	5	2	1	15	7	17			
Roma	9	4	3	2	19	14	15			
Chievo	8	5	0	3	14	9	15			

Kadhafi targets Liverpool!

AFP, Paris

The son of Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi is hoping to take his passion for football a stage further by forging merchandising links with English Premiership side Liverpool.

El-Saadi Kadhafi, who is head of Libya's football federation, already holds a 7.5 percent stake in Italian giants Juventus and recently spent time at Anfield as a guest of the Merseyside club.

The football-mad 29-year-old believes a move into England is a "good investment" which would also help Libya to continue to improve its image to the world only three years after United Nations sanctions were removed.

"England may be the next step. Maybe Liverpool. Maybe we make a deal to market their merchandise or we invest in the new stadium," Kadhafi told the Sunday Times newspaper.

Liverpool have played down talk of any deal, with the club's official spokesman Ian Cotton saying: "There have not been any discussions about it at all."

However Kadhafi is hoping his recent trip to the club, during which he gave star forward, and his personal hero, Michael Owen a "non-football" gift, will lead to a commercial tie-up - or at least lead to Liverpool travelling to the north



A distraught Inter Milan striker Christian Vieri leaves the field after the loss to Udinese at the San Siro on November 9.