SPÖRT

Beckham out of action

AFP, London

England captain David Beckham will be out of action for up to three weeks after tests revealed he has fractured ribs.

The Manchester United midfielder is thought to have originally picked up the injury in the Premiership win over Southampton on November 2.

He played in Wednesday's Champions League victory over Bayer Leverkusen and complained of pain after the match but it was initially thought the ribs were just bruised, rather than fractured.

A scan has proved otherwise and Beckham was ruled out of Sunday's Premiership clash at West Ham.

He is also set to miss crucial league games at Newcastle, Liverpool and Arsenal, as well as the opening match in the second phase of the Champions League, against

FC Basel of Switzerland. The injury is a setback for Beckham personally as well as a hammer blow for United's ambitions in Europe and at home.

Beckham is currently acting as the club stand-in skipper while Roy Keane recovers from hip surgery.

A broken foot incurred in April almost forced Beckham to sit out the World Cup in the summer and he now looks unlikely to join up with the England squad for next week's gettogether at a health farm north of London

The bad news on Beckham comes just two days after United's England defender Rio Ferdinand was ruled out for three weeks with a torn thigh muscle.

The England defender limped out of the win over Bayer Leverkusen and a scan on Friday confirmed that the muscle had been

Ferdinand will miss at least three league games -- including those make-or-break clashes with Liverpool and Arsenal -- as well as the start of United's campaign second phase campaign in the

Champions League. United's playing resources have been seriously depleted this season with key midfielders Nicky Butt and Roy Keane still out of action. Gary Neville, Ruud Van Nistelrooy and Paul Scholes have also been sidelined for spells while Ferdinand himself had only just come back from knee surgery before Friday's bad news.

Zico loses mother

AFP, Tokyo

Japan coach Zico flew home on Sunday following his mother's death, meaning the Brazilian football legend will miss the friendly match against Argentina on Wednesday. Zico's mother. Matilde Dasilva

Coimbra, died Saturday from multiple organ failure at a hospital in Rio de Janeiro at the age of 83. Her funeral was to be held Sunday morning local time.

"When my father and brother died, I was near them, but it is bitter that I couldn't be by her side. I want to share this heartbreak with my brothers and asked the football association for permission to leave," said a dejected Zico.

"It is very difficult to lead the team for the game right now after I lost my

As for the match against Argentina, Zico said: "I trust my staff. I hope we will have a good result Zico, who will arrive home

Monday, will attend a Mass later this

Assistant coach Masakuni Yamamoto will replace him as Japan take on the South Americans at the Saitama stadium, one of the venues of the World Cup finals cohosted by Japan and South Korea.

Zico, 49, a midfielder in Brazil's World Cup campaigns in 1978. 1982 and 1986, succeeded Philippe Troussier after the World Cup, where Japan made it past the first round before being beaten by Turkey.

The match against Argentina was to have been his second and last this year after drawing 1-1 with Jamaica last month

League One

Auxerre sink further

AFP, Paris

Nice won 2-0 at Auxerre on Saturday with two late goals to consolidate their lead in the French championship and yet further dent the Burgundy club's faltering season.

Goals from Adekamni Olufade and Sammy Traore in the 88th minute and then in injury time left Guy Roux's men languishing in midtable, adding to their elimination from the Champions League first

round. Lyon remain a point behind the Riviera club following their rousing 4-2 comeback win over Bordeaux at home when they scored three of their goals in a seven-minute period at the start of the second half.

Marseille, fourth after last weekend's matches, moved up a place following their 0-0 home draw against Troyes but Paris Saint German could oust them from third spot following their trip to Lens in the

Nice have 29 points from 15 matches, with Lyon on 28, Marseille on 25 and PSG and Sochaux on 24.



THE HIGHBURY THEATRE! Arsenal's Thierry Henry (C) enjoys his wonder goal against Tottenham in style along with teammates (L-R) Ashley Cole, Sol Campbell and custodian Rami Shaaban at Highbury Stadium in north London on

Best coming soon!

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid superstriker Ronaldo believes it is only a matter of time before he recaptures the devastating form he produced while he was at his peak, before the knee injuries that have plagued him over the last three years.

"People expect me to be like I was when I was at Barcelona when I ran from the halfway line, beat three or four players and then scored.' Ronaldo told Spanish daily El Pais in an interview

"I will be able to do that again but need time. I am sure I will be the same as I was before.'

The 26-year-old Ronaldo, who joined Real from Inter Milan for 45 million euros (\$45.31 million) after protracted transfer negotiations at the start of this season, scored two

goals on his debut for the club at the start of last month but has scored iust once since then

However, the powerful striker, whose goals fired Brazil to their record fifth World Cup triumph this vear, said his disappointment at losing to France in the final of the 1998 tournament and his succession of serious knee injuries had taught him to be able to deal with all manner of setbacks. "I believe in destiny," he said. "I

think that all the bad things that have happened to me over the last four vears were sent to test me. "I am pleased because I have managed to overcome the obsta-

cles and because I showed that I had the character to face up to some very serious problems." The Brazilian international

admitted that before this year's World Cup final against Germany he had been worried that he might suffer a repetition of the mysterious fit that hit him before the last final

against France.

"I remember that after eating before the Paris final I went to sleep and when I woke up I felt ill.

"This time I was very scared of going to sleep after lunch... I spent the whole afternoon talking with (the Brazilian goalkeeper) Dida so that I didn't go to sleep. I was very afraid."

Ronaldo also admitted that he had already made up his mind to leave Inter Milan before the World Cup began and once again pointed to the presence of Argentine coach Hector Cuper as the reason behind his decision.

"I spoke with the (Inter) president (Massimo Moratti) and said that I didn't get on with the coach. I asked him to do something to sort it out but he preferred to keep Cuper rather than me.

Bundesliga

Bayern Cruz past Wolfsburg

Football

AFP. Berlin

1-0 in the German league on Saturday thanks to a Roque Santa Cruz goal to maintain their five-point

Defending champions Borussia Dortmund got the better of Bayern's 1860 Munich with an early goal by Brazilian Ewerthon to win by the same score to remain second and stop Bayern surging ahead in the title race.

Bayern welcomed back Oliver Kahn, Jens Jeremies, Michael of a poorly positioned Ballack was easily caught by Claus Reitmaier in Wolfsburg's goal.

In the 27th minute, Paraguay striker Santa Cruz put Bayern ahead. Ze Robert surged down the right and his left foot cross found Santa Cruz six metres out and he headed past Reitmaier.

Several minutes later. Ze Robert again showed his playmaking skills to set up Elbe who found himself one-on-one with Reitmaier but he was foiled by the keeper at point blank



MY BALL! Bayern Munich ace Michael Ballack (top) eases off as Wolfsburg's veteran playmaker Stefan Effenberg falls on the ball at Munich on November

Roberto, having a great game, put a ball into the area from the left, forcing a fingertip save from Reitmaier via Wolfsburg's Romanian midfielder

scoring after just five minutes. Lars Ricken crossed from the right leaving Brazilian Ewerthon to fire home with his left foot in the six-vard box. Shortly after, 1860 keeper Simon

home match against 1860 Munich.

Jentzsch was once again beaten by Ewerthon but Austrian Markus Weissenberger headed off the line. After a lively initial spell, the last half hour of the opening period was a

calmer affair. On the stroke of half-time however. Dortmund's Czech striker Jan

highest after a Tomas Rosicky corner and once again midfielder Weissenberger saved on the line. But like in the Bayern game, the

second half was a tamer affair and no more goals were added to the scoreline Fourth-placed VfB Stuttgart could only manage a 1-1 draw at lowly Hansa Rostock though Hertha Berlin

earned all three points against Hannover 96 with a 1-0 victory to provisionally claim third place, seven points off the pace. However in Sunday's matches, VfL Bochum, who host Schalke 04, and Werder Bremen, who entertain

Kaiserslautern, would both overtake Hertha with victories. And midtable Bayer Leverkusen, dubbed 'Neverkusen' after finishing

runners-up in the German League, German Cup and Champions League last season, could only draw 2-2 at home to Borussia

TOP SIX

German football league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against,

Bayern Dortmund Berlin Stuttgart Bochum Munich	13 13 13 12	6 6 5 6	6 4 6 2	1 19 3 16 2 21 4 27	14 29 9 24 12 22 15 21 19 20 15 20
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Premiership

Fiery Gunners

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said his side were back to their best after the champions shot back to the top of the English Premiership on Saturday with a 3-0 win over Tottenham in the north London

With Liverpool playing Sunderland at Anfield on Sunday, Arsenal grabbed their chance to go two points clear with goals from Thierry Henry, Freddie Ljungberg and Sylvain Wiltord.

Tottenham never recovered after Simon Davies was sent off midway through the first half for his second bookable offence.

Wenger was bubbling with confidence, believing Arsenal had turned the corner after their recent slump.

"Our confidence is back. It takes two to three games, but we are back to our best. "It is important to be up there at

the top of the Premiership because two weeks ago before the Fulham game we were seven points behind Liverpool." Of particular pleasure, though

will be the performance of Wenger's protege Henry, whose scintillating 13th minute solo effort was his first league goal since the end of Picking the ball up deep inside

his own half, the French international bore down on Kasey Keller's goal, brushing aside the ineffectual challenges of three Spurs players before stroking the ball past the helpess American international. "Thierry scored a world class

goal," said Wenger of the player he nurtured at Monaco beforing rescuing him from the Juventus reserves.

Serie A

Football

Okan Buruk's equaliser a minute

from time rescued a point for Inter

Milan as the Italian league leaders

snatched a 2-2 draw against AS

Roma in front of a near capacity

crowd here at the Stadio Olimpico

unchallenged to head home at the

back post to deny Roma who had

come from behind to take the lead

through second-half substitute

league defeat of the season last

week at home to unfancied

Udinese, went ahead in the 58th

minute thanks to Dominico Morfeo's

But their lead lasted just 60

Roma coach Fabio Capello

seconds, Vincenzo Monteĺla slot-

ting into an empty net after a superb

dodged questions about a bust-up

in the tunnel between the two sets of

players after the final whistle and

blamed the referee for costing his

side a crucial victory in the race for

had to spoil it because it was a

brilliant match between two great

late goal should never have been

"It's such a shame the referee

"The corner that led to Okan's

"He made several curious deci-

sions during the match, one of them

a blatant penalty when Ivan

Cordoba pulled back Montella in the

"It hurts, because we've worked

"But what can we do? You can't

legislate for that kind of refereeing."

box as he was about to score.

hard all week for this match.

cut-back from Gianni Gigou.

Inter, who crashed to their first

Gabriel Batistuta's brilliant vollev.

The Turkish international rose

AFP,Rome

on Saturday night.

deflected shot

the championship.

teams," he said.

awarded.

"It is a very special goal when

you take the ball from the edge of

your box and score. "He needed that goal because although he did not have a dip in his performances recently he had a dip

in his goalscoring record. "I expect so much from him but I must say he always gives you the hope that he will score a goal from anywhere. When he can get to the other side of the pitch in a two seconds the pitch looks so small. He gives you that kind of superpower." Swedish international Ljungberg

put Arsenal further ahead when he met a Sylvain Wiltord cross 10 minutes after the break Robert Pires was the provider for

his French international teammate Wiltord to kill off the match with the third goal in the 71st minute. Tottenham manager Glenn

Hoddle said he would be appealing

against the sending-off. "I would hope the referee would look at it and a bit of common sense. would prevail, but that doesn't help us as we were one-down to Arsenal away from home," Hoddle said.

Chelsea cemented third place in the table and closed the gap on Liverpool to three points when they beat high-flying Middlesbrough 1-0 at Stamford Bridge.

Nigerian international Celestine Babayaro chested down a pass from Gianfranco Zola and hammered in a superb shot for the only goal of the game just after half time. The victory ensured Claudio

Ranieri's side went three points clear of fourth-placed Everton, who play Blackburn away on Sunday, while Middlesbrough drop to sev-But despite their lofty position

Asked whether his side were genuine title contenders he said: "At the moment, no. It's too early to say something about that

Ranieri was refusing to get carried

"The objective is to put Chelsea

Inter Milan's Turkish midfielder Turkish Emre Belozoglu (L) loses balance under pressure from AS Roma's Brazilian

international Emerson (R) while another Brazilian Aldair watches at Rome's Olympic Stadium on November 16.

Okan saves Inter's day

Inter coach Hector Cuper

We looked a beaten side, so I

"When Batistuta came on he

"But we had some fortune at the

Roma, who along with Inter

refused to blame the referee for a

stop-start game and praised his

have to be happy with the result," he

gave them a lift at a time when we

were on top, and they finished

end and I'm pleased to go home

booked their place in the last 16 of

the Champions League in midweek,

spurned two excellent chances in

the opening stages as Capello's

side took the game to the early

weak tackles to provide himsself

with a goalscoring chance in the

eighth minute, but with just

Francesco Toldo to beat he dragged

his right foot shot wide of the upright

replacing injured skipper Francesco

Totti in Roma's forward line, was the

next to go close, his right foot curler

whistling inches past the post from

final third, Inter's front two of

Christian Vieri and Hernan Crespo

rarely threatened in a first-half

dominated by the home side who

were unlucky not to be ahead at the

before the hour mark when hesi-

tancy in the Roma defence allowed

Morfeo more time on the ball than

he should have had, and the tricky

midfielder was able to drill a shot

past Francesco Antonioli off the

ing. Roma hit back to get the home

But while Inter were still celebrat-

shins of Brazilian Samuel

crowd on their feet.

The game exploded into life just

Deprived of any service in the

the edge of the 18-yard box.

Seconds later Antonio Cassano,

Montella sliced through three

players for sneaking a point.

strongly

with a point.

season pacemakers.

from nine yards

in the top four (to qualify for the Champions League). That's my first

must try to win every "We match.

He added: "I said before the match we would need the best Chelsea of the season to win today and at the end of the match we are very happy.'

Newcastle followed their qualification for the second phase of the Champions League with a 2-1 victory over Southampton at St James' Park which lifted them up to sixth. James Beattie opened the

scoring for Southampton after just two minutes with his sixth goal in six games before Shola Ameobi equalised four minutes before the halftime break

Aaron Hughes scored the decisive goal in the 54th minute but it was a frustrating afternoon for Alan Shearer.

Seeking his 100th goal for the club. Shearer had one effort disallowed for offside and a goalbound header cleared off the line by Wayne Bridge

Manager Bobby Robson reflected on an eventful week. "We've had a terrific week," said

the former England boss. "We've gone to sixth with a game in hand - I've got nothing but praise for the players because of what we

it again today. "A lot of people would have thought we would drop points today, but we haven't. The players summoned up massive reserves of energy. Nobody flagged and we gave a very competitive, combative performance with a fair amount of

did on Wednesday and we've done

In the day's other derby, Aston Villa and West Bromwich Albion ground out a workmanlike 0-0 draw the battle of the West Midlands at the Hawthorns.

Veteran Villa midfielder Dion

Dublin missed a second-half penalty - and with it the chance for his 100th Premiership goal - when goalkeeper Russell Hoult saved. Manchester City crashed down to earth after their win in last week-

end's Manchester derby when Kevin Keegan's side were beaten 1-0 at Maine Road by struggling Charlton, South African striker Shaun Bartlett scoring the only goal late in the second half. Keegan admitted his side had shown neither the desire nor the commitment which brought them last weekend's 3-1 triumph over Manchester United and is now set for talks with chairman David Bernstein to establish the extent of his entry into the January sales

"This result tells the board that we are nowhere near my ambitions." he said.

"We are only two or three players away from what I am looking for but I need to know what is available, so I know what I can go for.'

He added: "It was an after-the-Lord Mayor's show-type performance. If we had been a top side we would have won that game, but we are not a top side. We have some very good footballers, but not enouah.

In Sunday's other games, Manchester United play West Ham. Leeds face Bolton and Birmingham

TOP SIX

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

Arsenal	14 '	10	2	2	31	13	32
Liverpool	13	9	3	1	24	10	30
Chelsea	14	7	5	2	24	12	26
Everton	13	7	2	4	16	15	23
Man Utd	13	6	4	3	17	12	22
Newcastle	13	7	1	5	20	17	22

Primera Liga **Deportivo**

AFP, Madrid

Two goals in the last eight minutes gave Deportivo La Coruna a 2-0 win over Barcelona on Saturday and continued Louis van Gaal's misery in

rarely looked like ending the sorry streak during a dire game in driving rain that only rose above mediocre in the final few minutes. The only player to shine on a dismal night in every respect was

who successfully contained Barcelona's Argentine international Javier Saviola and was a constant threat going forward. Scaloni got his just reward eight minutes from time when his long-

range shot from the edge of the area fooled his Argentine compatriot Roberto Bonano in the Barcelona Spanish international striker

connected with a pass from Victor Sanchez and found the net with his

chances. Saviola was the main culprit for the visitors and Roy Makaay also

the day at Villarreal, who can thank their Brazilian international Belletti for giving them just their second victory of the season a minute from the

marooned on the rocks after defender Sergio Ballesteros had been sent off after 86 minutes but Belletti had other The World Cup winner, although

winner against the run of play. In addition to Ballesteros' dis-

Italy international Guiseppe Signori scored the decisive goal for Bologna in their 2-1 home win over a tough task ahead if they are to Signori, who earned most of his caps while playing in Rome for

Lazio, picked the ball up 20 vards from goal and let fly a swerving left foot shot which beat visiting goalkeeper Christian Abbiati's outstretched left hand On Sunday reigning champions

Christian Panucci delivered a

teasing cross from wide on the left

for first-half substitute Gigou and

the South American's intelligent

header across goal from the by-line

minutes from time and the 33-year

Batistuta replaced Cassano 20

Gigou whipped in the ball from

wide on the left flank and Batistuta

shrugged off his two markers to

volley with the side of his foot low

end and Okan punished some slack

marking to head home a late corner

which salvaged a point in Inter's

But Roma were clinging on at the

In Saturday's early match former

gave Montella a simple tap-in.

old made his mark immediately.

into the bottom corner.

quest for the title.

Juventus face neighbours Torino in the Turin derby at the Stadio Delle Alpi while AC Milan welcome Parma to the San Siro.

TOP SIX Italian league table after

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

10 7 2 1 21 11 23 9 6 3 0 14 5 21 Juventus 6 1 2 23 7 19 Milan Chievo 9 6 0 3 18 10 18 5 3 1 15 7 18 Lazio Bologna 10 5 3 2 12 8 18

leave it late

the Galician city. Barcelona's Dutch coach has never won in La Coruna and his team

Deportivo wing back Lionel Scaloni,

Alberto Luque got Deportivo's second three minutes later when he

Otherwise, it was a night of missed

squandered several chances to put Deportivo in front. A late winner was also the order of

whistle The Yellow Submarine, as Villarreal are nicknamed due to their iersevs of the same hue, looked

he did not play in the final, took a cross from Martin Palermo on his chest and then blasted home a right foot half-volley to give Villarreal the

missal for, a rather harsh decision for obstructing Sevilla midfielder Marcos Vales, the referee Eduardo Iturralde Gonzalez also dished out nine yellow League leaders Real Sociedad visit Real Madrid on Sunday but have

preserve their three point lead at the top of the Spanish First Division. The Basques have not won a league match in the Santiago Bernabeu stadium for nine seasons. while Real Madrid have not lost a

league game at home for more than Second-placed Valencia play at Osasuna on Sunday and will regain pole position if they win in Pamplona and Real Sociedad lose in the

Spanish capital. **TOP SIX** Standings in the Spanish champi-

onship 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 Mallorca 9 6 0 3 14 11 18 9 5 2 2 12 6 17 Celta Deportivo 10 5 2 3 14 13 17 9 4 4 1 17 10 16

Ballack, Ze Roberto, Giovane Elber and Santa Cruz who all missed the 3-On the stroke of half-time 74 3 Champions League draw against Lens on Wednesday. Bayern had the first real chance of the match when Mehmet Scholl crossed from the left but the header Bayern Munich beat VfL Wolfsburg Dortmund had a great start in their