



Real Madrid's Brazilian midfielder Flavio Conceicao (top) being fouled by Real Mallorca's Marcos Martin de la Fuente at the Son Moix stadium in Palma de Mallorca on December 8.

Primera Liga

Mallorca taste the Real stuff

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Brilliantly-taken goals from superstars Ronaldo and Raul have helped fire new World Club Cup champions Real Madrid to a 5-1 win over Real Mallorca in a pulsating Spanish First Division clash.

Ronaldo, who scored the opener against Olimpia of Paraguay in Japan on Tuesday, claimed his first on seven minutes on Sunday after some neat work by Luis Figo and Raul and struck again at the start of the second half with a superb solo effort.

But Raul was not to be outdone by his Brazilian team mate and made the most of his opportunism to notch his own double in the space of just three second half minutes, while substitute Guti got in on the act with another classy goal in injury-time.

Earlier on Sunday, Real Betis and Celta had dug deep to earn hard-fought victories that kept them in touch at the top of the

table. Betis let slip a 2-0 first half lead at Espanyol, but Fernando Fernandez struck twice late on to help the fourth-placed Andalucians to a 4-2 victory, while Celta had to work hard for their 2-1 win at home to Alaves.

Unbeaten Real Sociedad, who won 1-0 at Sevilla on Saturday, lead the table on 29 points, four ahead of second-placed Valencia, who claimed a 2-0 win at home to Racing Santander.

Celta move into third on 24 points, while Betis are a further point behind. Despite their comprehensive defeat, Real Mallorca remain in fifth, level on points with Betis, but Real Madrid are now in sixth on 21 points with a game in hand.

Real got off to a perfect start at San Moix when Ronaldo finished off a neatly-worked move with a well-taken goal on seven minutes.

The striker raced free after a slick interchange of passes between Luis Figo and Raul, outpaced makeshift defender Marcos and drove a powerful shot

past keeper Leo Franco.

But Mallorca, who went into the match on a nine-match unbeaten run, were untroubled by the early setback and responded by putting together a succession of well-

worked attacking moves.

Former Real Madrid striker Samuel Eto'o levelled with a close-range volley on 18 minutes after midfielder Harold Lozano headed neatly into his path.

The two sides continued to trade attacks for the rest of the half but despite some entertaining football the scores remained level until the break.

Just two minutes after the restart Ronaldo struck again.

Picking up a short pass from Zinedine Zidane 30 metres out he left one defender stranded as he feinted to one side then showed a clean pair of heels to Miguel Angel Nadal before sending an inch-perfect angled shot past Franco.

Mallorca rallied briefly as Eto'o forced Casillas into action on several occasions and the Cameroon international was unlucky not to be awarded a penalty when he appeared to be brought down by Michel Salgado in the area.

Ronaldo spurned a chance to grab his first hat-trick for Real when he raced free with just

TOP MARKSMEN

Leading goal scorers in the Spanish football league after the weekend's matches:

- 10 - Roy Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)
  - 9 - Darko Kovacevic (Real Sociedad)
  - 8 - Walter Pandiani (Real Mallorca)
  - 7 - Julio Alvarez (Rayo Vallecano), Ismael Urzaiz (Athletic Bilbao)
  - 6 - Patrick Kluivert (Barcelona), Nihat Kahveci (Real Sociedad), Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid)
  - 5 - Luis Enrique (Barcelona), Kiki Musampa (Malaga), Raul Molina (Recreativo Huelva), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Raul (Real Madrid)
- Leading scorers in the Italian football league after the weekend's matches:

Franco to beat on 58 minutes, but the Mallorca keeper forced him so wide he sent his shot into the side netting.

Then Raul took over. The Spain striker snatched his first on 63 minutes with a deft first touch and poached his second when he clipped in with his right when the ball fell to him after an Ivan Helguera header.

Mallorca were reduced to 10 men when Pandiani was sent off 11 minutes from time and Guti completed the rout when he split the Mallorca defence open after a neat one-two with fellow substitute Fernando Morientes before guiding his shot inside the post.

TOP SIX

Spanish football league table after Sunday's matches:

Sociedad	13	8	5	0	24	14	29
Valencia	13	7	4	2	22	7	25
Celta	13	7	3	3	17	9	24
Betis	13	6	5	2	24	14	23
Mallorca	13	7	2	4	20	20	23
Real	12	5	6	1	22	11	21

Wenger for a fresh start

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Paris

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger has demanded his team put behind them a worrying slip in form by wreaking Champions League revenge against Valencia on Tuesday.

Two years ago, Wenger's men were left heartbroken when Valencia won their quarter-final clash on away goals - a defeat which still burns deep into the Frenchman's memory.

"It was a bigger disappointment than losing the UEFA Cup final against Galatasaray," said Wenger.

"It was a very sad night. It was terrible. The last time they came here they tried to have a go at us and they surprised us.

"But that was knockout football - this time they might go more for a point," added Wenger who is confident that his side can continue where they left off two weeks ago when they defeated AS Roma 3-1 in their opening second round Group B clash.

However, niggling away at the back of his mind is Saturday's 2-0 defeat at Manchester United, the Gunners' seventh defeat in their past 13 games.

"We must react on Tuesday and respond in a positive way, that's all we can do," added Wenger whose team still top the English Premiership.

His major selection headache is over whom he puts in goal.

David Seaman is still battling a groin injury while Rami Shaaban was injured at Old Trafford and had to be replaced by Stuart Taylor just before half-time.

Spanish international midfielder Francisco Rufete has been included in the Valencia squad by coach Rafa Benitez after three weeks out of action with a slight hamstring tear.

The coach, who saw his side endure a disappointing 1-1 draw against Ajax in the first match of the second stage, knows that victory at Highbury is crucial.

"We can't let this opportunity slip away because otherwise it would make life difficult for us," Benitez said.

In Group A, Bobby Robson makes an emotional return to Barcelona where he was coach in the mid-1990s with his Newcastle side desperate to put behind them the nightmare of their opening game where they were crushed 4-1 by Inter Milan.

To make matters worse for the Tynesiders, they will be without both first-choice strikers Alan Shearer and Craig Bellamy.

Shearer was banned for two matches after being found guilty of elbowing Inter defender Fabio Cannavaro while fiery Welshman Bellamy, who was sent off in that game, automatically misses the match because of the red-card.

The absence of Shearer and Bellamy means a chance for Shola Ameobi to stake his claim.

"It's unfortunate that they are banned, but it gives other people a chance to come in and prove they can do a job," said Ameobi. "I feel I have improved as the season has worn on, and my confidence is getting better with every game."

In contrast to their mid-table position in Spain, Barcelona's Champions League form is scintillating and a win on Tuesday would equal the record of 10 wins in 10 Champions League games and the Spanish giants will believe luck is on their side after coming from behind to beat Bayer Leverkusen 2-1 two weeks ago.

While Robson is assured of a warm welcome from the Nou Camp fans, who remember his Ronaldo-inspired Cup Winners Cup-winning team with fondness, the present day incumbent is ready for a barrage of insults.

Louis van Gaal was roundly abused when his team returned from Saturday's 1-0 defeat at Rayo Vallecano - a result which means that finishing in the lower half of the table for the first time since 1942 has become a distinct possibility.

"I'm not nervous about anything, this team has the capability to go forward," said a defiant van Gaal.

Inter Milan face Leverkusen at the San Siro while the night's other Group B game sees Roma visiting Ajax.

Inter go into the match having staged a stunning fightback in the Italian League at the weekend where they drew 3-3 with Lazio after being 3-0 down.

Roma are struggling in Italy standing in 11th place after their 1-0 defeat to AC Milan - a defeat which was their third in five games and they have had to soldier on without the influential figure of skipper Francesco Totti.

Ajax too have their own injury worries with Raphael van der Vaart, John O'Brien, Bogdan Lobont and Johnny Heitinga all hurt while skipper Christian Chivu and midfielder Tomas Galsaek are suspended.

Most hated Van Gaal!

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona coach Louis van Gaal got a rude return to the Catalan city on Sunday ahead of Tuesday's Champions League home tie against English Premiership side Newcastle United.

Hundreds of the club's fanatical supporters were waiting for the Dutchman at Barcelona's El Prat airport on their return from Madrid after their 1-0 defeat at struggling Rayo Vallecano and proceeded to hurl abuse at van Gaal.

The torrent of insults continued at the afternoon training session. Barcelona have now lost their last two Spanish league games and have only won one of their last six domestic outings.

They are mired in the middle of the Spanish First Division and finishing in the lower half of the table for the first time since 1942 has become a distinct possibility.

However, they are one of the most feared sides on the European stage.

If they beat Newcastle at the Nou Camp on Tuesday they will equal the Champions League record of 10 consecutive wins, an honour uniquely held by Milan from the 1992-93 season.

Despite Saturday's humiliating defeat, van Gaal remained unbeaten about the team's prospects both at

home and abroad. "I'm disappointed with the result but that was the best game we have played out of the last five. We may have lost two games in a row but we could easily win the next three.

"I'm not nervous about anything, this team has the capability to go forward," said van Gaal.

Barcelona midfielder Juan Ramon Riquelme, who is expected to be a key figure in Tuesday's clash with the Tynesiders visitors, said that the team was anticipating triumphing out of the current adversity, and gave a warning to Newcastle coach Bobby Robson.

"This team is more united than ever despite the recent results in the league. I came here to win titles and everyone is pulling together to do just that," the Argentine international told Spanish reporters on



LOUIS VAN GAAL

No Collina please!

Football

AFP, Rome

AS Roma are to ask the Italian football authorities to ensure Pierluigi Collina never referees their matches again following a spate of controversial decisions made by the official against the Serie A club this season, according to Italian media reports on Monday.

The Corriere dello Sport said Roma were putting together a television dossier which they claim proves Collina, who took charge of this year's World Cup final, has been at fault on several occasions this season when officiating Roma matches.

Collina was in charge when Roma lost 1-0 against AC Milan at the San Siro on Saturday where Filippo Inzaghi scored a controversial second-half winner to leave the Rome club in 11th position in the table.

Inzaghi appeared to control a

pass from Andriy Shevchenko with his hand before running into the 18-yard box and settling the contest.

This latest incident follows the stormy encounter between Roma and Inter Milan last month.

Collina turned down claims for a penalty when Ivan Cordoba tugged Vincenzo Montella's shirt just as the Roma striker was about to shoot for goal.

Television pictures showed Cordoba's challenge was illegal, but the incident went unnoticed by Collina and his linesman.

Collina then awarded Inter a controversial late corner from which they scored a late equaliser, but once again Roma appeared to be hard done by.

Photographs showed that the last touch came off an Inter player and not Roma defender Jonathan Zebina.

Collina was also in charge for Roma's matches against Bologna, Modena, Brescia, Lazio, Perugia, Piacenza and Parma this season.

Not one of them produced a win for Fabio Capello's men.

Serie A Brescia baffle Juve

Football

AFP, Milan

Reigning champions Juventus blew the chance to go level on points with leaders AC Milan when their unbeaten Italian league run was ended by a shock 2-0 defeat at Brescia on Sunday.

Juve were looking good for at least a point until Austrian midfielder Markus Schopp broke the deadlock with a towering header 12 minutes from time.

The visitors poured forward in search of an equaliser but were caught out by a swift counter-attack which led to Brescia's second goal, scored by Albanian international striker Igli Tare.

Juventus remain fourth with 26 points from 13 matches, three behind table-toppers Milan who won 1-0 at home to AS Roma on Saturday night.

Brescia's colourful coach Carlo Mazzone was on the edge of his seat during stoppage-time, even though his team were holding a healthy two-goal lead.

"The seven minutes of injury-time seemed like an eternity," he said.

"I was afraid because Juventus are specialists in getting back into matches late in the game.

"Had we only been 1-0 up I would have been scared stiff!" Brescia's veteran striker Roberto Baggio, a former Juventus idol, said the three points were hugely important as the club battle to avoid the drop to Serie B.

"A win was crucial as we were getting sucked into the relegation zone," said the former Italy international.

"We're still far from being safe but we can take confidence from this result. To beat the champions gives us a massive lift."

Juventus are currently not speaking to the media so as not to provoke any controversy which may lead to violence between rival fans.

Brazilian striker Adriano scored twice as Parma overcame Reggina 2-0 at the Ennio Tardini stadium, while a last-gasp penalty from Vincenzo Iaquinta gave Udinese a 2-1 win at home to Empoli.

Elsewhere, Modena were held to a 1-1 draw at home to bottom club

TOP MARKSMEN

Leading goal scorers in the Italian football league after the weekend's matches:

- 12 - Christian Vieri (Inter Milan)
- 9 - Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus), Francesco Totti (AS Roma)
- 8 - Antonio Di Natale (Empoli), Claudio Lopez (Lazio), Filippo Inzaghi (AC Milan)
- 6 - Andrea Pirlo (AC Milan), Julio Cruz (Bologna), Bernardo Corradi (Lazio), Adrian Mutu (Parma)

Como and Perugia played out a 0-0 draw against Piacenza.

In Sunday's late match Chievo drew 0-0 at home to Bologna. A point keeps Chievo in fifth place, three points behind Juventus.

Earlier Sunday, Torino's fixture at home to relegation rivals Atalanta was called off following the death of the visiting team's chief medic.

On Saturday Filippo Inzaghi came off the bench to score the decisive goal which took Milan back to the top of the table.

Inzaghi netted with a cool finish in the 73rd minute in an otherwise dull encounter at the San Siro.

The visitors protested that Inzaghi had used his arm to control the ball before beating Francesco Antonioli, but after consulting with his assistant, referee Pierluigi Collina said the goal was good.

In Saturday's other match Lazio threw away a three-goal lead to draw 3-3 with title rivals Inter Milan in a tense thriller at the Stadio Olimpico.

Claudio Lopez's stunning first-half hat-trick gave Lazio a commanding lead before Fernando Couto's bizarre own goal handed Inter a lifeline just before the interval.

Two long-range strikes from Turkey international midfielder Emre Belozoglu in a dramatic eight-minute, second-half spell completed Inter's amazing comeback.

TOP SIX

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

Milan	13	9	2	2	28	9	29
Lazio	13	8	4	1	28	13	28
Inter	13	8	3	2	28	15	27
Juventus	13	7	5	1	21	10	26
Chievo	13	7	2	4	21	13	23
Bologna	13	6	5	2	16	9	23



Brescia's veteran superstar Roberto Baggio (C) finds himself sandwiched between Juventus' French international player Lilian Thuram and Italian Ciro Ferrara at Brescia on December 8.

Humble Emre

Football

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan midfielder Emre Belozoglu says the only thing he has in common with Diego Maradona is his height.

Emre had been nicknamed 'Diego' by his team-mates following a string of excellent performances this season, but the Turkey international insists he has little in common with the Argentine legend.

"The only thing I have in common with Maradona is that we are about the same height," Emre joked.

"Maradona was an incredible player but all that I am concerned with is doing my best for Inter."

Emre, who has been switched from the left flank to a central midfield position by coach Hector Cuper, scored two superb goals on Saturday as Inter battled back from being three goals down to draw 3-3 at the Stadio Olimpico.

"I'm very happy to have scored

especially as they were so important for us," he added.

Cuper explained why playing in a more central position has brought out the best in Emre.

"Playing in the middle allows him to make the most of his technical and tactical qualities," Cuper said.

"I know that when needed Emre can be played out wide on the left, but he gives his best in the centre. He is a very intelligent player."

Lazio stormed into a 3-0 lead on Saturday night thanks to Claudio Lopez's hat-trick, but after Fernando Couto had put through his own net Emre completed a miraculous comeback by scoring twice from outside the penalty box.

His first was an exquisite chip from 25 yards which floated into the corner while his second was a low drive struck with his less favoured right foot which beat Angelo Peruzzi at the near post.

Emre has enjoyed a lengthy run in the team after being used mostly as a substitute last season following his move from Turkish giants Galatasaray.

French League Cup Monaco in last 16, PSG out

Football

AFP, Monaco

Monaco earned a 1-0 victory over depleted Auxerre, who gave debuts to Jean-Pascal Mignot and Hassan Yebda, to reach the last 16 of the French League Cup on Sunday.

Monaco, up to sixth spot in the French championship following a poor opening spell, scraped through thanks to a goal by Ludovic Giuly after half-an-hour's play.

In Sunday's night's late matches, Paris Saint Germain fell 3-2 at home to Brittany club Nantes, and St Etienne beat Le Havre 1-0 after extra time.

Auxerre should have scored early on however. David Vanderbosche, who just escaped offside, rounded Monaco keeper Flavio Roma but his shot was cleared off the line by Sebastien

Squillaci.

From then on, Didier Deschamps' principality side took control. From a cross by Jerome Rothen, Giuly, quick to react following a Shabani Nonda error, found the side netting.

Monaco deserved to go ahead when Lucas Bernardi fed Giuly with a long pass and he got the better of Jean-Alain Boumsong before beating Auxerre keeper Fabien Cool for the winner.

After the break, Auxerre's Zimbabwean striker Benjamin Mwaruwari, nicknamed Benjani, had a header cleared off the line by Squillaci, who was starting to make a useful habit of such goal-saving action.

From then on, Monaco were content to make counter-attacks and held out against the Burgundy side who lacked penetration going forward.

Premiership Spurs go seventh

Football

AFP, London

Tottenham moved up into seventh place with a 3-1 win over English Premiership strugglers West Brom here at White Hart Lane on Sunday.

Spurs' superior finishing was the key to their victory over the top-flight new boys, first-half goals from Germany's Christian Ziege and Republic of Ireland striker Robbie Keane putting them in control.

West Brom substitute Scott Dobie pulled one back 17 minutes from time before Spurs' Uruguayan international Gus Poyet came off the bench to seal victory with an 80th minute goal.

The result meant West Brom stay fourth from bottom, just a point outside one of the three relegation places.

Tottenham took the lead as early as the third minute. Spurs captain Teddy Sheringham was brought down by Lars Sigurdsson's poor challenge

five yards outside the area. West Brom's defensive wall looked poorly organised and so it proved when Ziege bent his low free-kick around it and past wrong-footed keeper Russell Hoult.

But to their credit, the Midlanders rallied and they should have been on the scoresheet before half-time.

But on the quarter hour mark Neil Clement did make contact from 10 yards after more good work down the flanks only to stab his shot wide.

Hughes at least forced Tottenham keeper Kasey Keller into making a save although his weak shot was no real challenge for the United States international.

But Johnson and Albion captain Derek McInnes were harrying Tottenham out of their favoured passing game in midfield while Jason Koumas almost rewarded the duo's efforts with a powerful 25-yard strike which the diving Keller did well to save.

Unfortunately for Gary Megson's side there are no points for approach play and their failure

to take their chances was punished by Tottenham in the 30th minute.

Ziege's precise pass unhinged the Baggies defence and Keane showed Albion how to finish with an elegant chip over the advancing Hoult.

West Brom, 2-0 down at half-time, continued to press hard and Keller had to be alert to save a 66th minute Koumas free-kick which he himself had conceded for a trip on second-half replacement Dobie as the striker went past him.

However, there was nothing Keller could do when the unchallenged Scotland forward let fly from just outside the right hand side of the area with a superb angled strike that gave West Brom a lifeline in the 73rd minute.

And five minutes later Clement should have done better than steer a free header from a corner wide of the far post.

Once again West Brom's miss was punished when following a goalmouth scramble Poyet, who had replaced ex-England striker Sheringham, toe-poked the ball home.