SPÖRT

Serie A

Fantastic Fiore

Football

REUTERS, Rome

Two goals from midfielder Stefano Fiore has given Lazio a 2-1 win at champions Juventus in Serie A to maintain their 100 percent away record and stretch Juve's winless run to four games.

Victory keeps Lazio in second place, just a point behind leaders AC Milan who enjoyed a 2-1 win at bottom club Como with goals from Massimo Ambrosini and Andriy Shevchenko. Juventus are in fifth place, six points behind Milan.

Third-placed Inter Milan remain two points behind their city rivals after they beat Atalanta 1-0 at home thanks to a fine strike from Sierra I eone striker Mohamed Kallon.

AS Roma put some disappointing results behind them to emerge convincing 3-0 winners over Reggina with goals by defender Walter Samuel and strikers Francesco Totti and Vincenzo Montella.

Lazio had to come from behind at a foggy Delle Alpi stadium in Turin, but thoroughly deserved their seventh straight away victory after dominating a lacklustre Juventus.

Juve keeper Gianluigi Buffon was a busy man in the opening half hour with a series of stops, including an outstanding reflex save from Bernardo Corradi and a doublesave from Dejan Stankovic.

In the 34th minute Juve went ahead against the run of play when former Lazio midfielder Pavel Nedved provided a clinical finish after being set up by Alessandro Del

Lazio were level within a minute -- Fiore latching onto a header down from Bernardo Corradi and beating Buffon with a superb shot on the

The winner came five minutes after the break when Fiore beat Buffon with a perfectly-timed lofted 20-metre drive with the outside of his right-foot.

Apart from an Edgar Davids strike which forced a good save out of Lazio's former Juve keeper Angelo Peruzzi, Marcello Lippi's champions failed to trouble the Lazio defence and could have few complaints about their second straight defeat following last week's reverse at Brescia.

In Como, Milan took the lead in the 20th minute when midfielder

Football

REUTERS. Madrid

league leaders.

of the season.

Primera Liga

Real Sociedad edged out Real

Mallorca 2-1 to re-establish their

four-point lead at the top of the

Spanish first division and ensure

they will go into the New Year as

Samuel Eto'o header early in the

second half but goals from Javi de

Pedro and Miguel Aranburu took the

unbeaten Basques to a ninth victory

claimed a valuable win, 2-0 away to

local rivals Villarreal on Saturday,

while Real Madrid came from two

goals down to beat Recreativo

Huelva 4-2 on Sunday and claim

their first home victory in two

Real Sociedad remain untouch-

Houllier sorry

able at the top, though, with 32

Gerard Houllier has apologised to

Liverpool fans for the club's worst

Liverpool have taken only one

point from their last six Premiership

matches in a run that has under-

mined their championship chal-

lenge and the club's French man-

ager says he feels guilty.

Football

AFP, London

run in 19 years.

Champions Valencia also

Mallorca took the lead with a



YOU DON'T HAVE TO FALL AT MY FEET! An ecstatic Lazio forward Stefano Fiore (up) makes room for teammate Dejan Stankovic after scoring against Juventus at the Delle Alpi stadium in Turin on December 15.

Ambrosini beat goalkeeper Fabrizio Ferron from the edge of the area, but the home side equalised two minutes later through midfielder Fabio Pecchia after Dida had spilled a shot by midfielder Benoit Cauet.

Milan then began to put pressure on the home side and Shevchenko's winning goal arrived in the 41st minute when the Ukrainian headed in at the far post from a Rivaldo

In the second half, Milan controlled the game and were only denied a third goal when Ferron saved Filippo Inzaghi's right-footed shot with his legs.

Last season Atalanta helped wreck Inter's title chances by beating them 2-1 at the San Siro and Inter coach Hector Cuper was determined it would not happen on

The early chances, however, were limited to long-range efforts and moments of individual skill.

In the 12th minute Inter's Turkish midfielder Belozoglu Emre dribbled nast two men but shot wide and after half an hour Atalanta goalkeeper Massimo Taibi tipped defender Daniele Adani's 25-yard shot round

The substitution of defender Giovanni Pasquale for Kallon in the 68th minute changed the match. Two minutes after being introduced, Kallon beat Taibi with a powerful,

Sociedad unbeatable

leaders but with a game in hand.

down 3-0 at Racing Santander and

Betis losing 1-0 at home to Rayo

behind Real Madrid on goal differ-

ence, with Betis in fifth a point fur-

sixth, behind Betis on goal differ-

ence, thanks to a 1-0 win at home to

Malaga that came courtesy of an

Albert Luque overhead kick four

come from behind to claim victory

over Mallorca and Deportivo

Coruna needed a late flourish to

beat Malaga, the best of the eve-

While Real Sociedad had to

ther back.

minutes from time

Celta slip to fourth on 24 points,

Deportivo Coruna moved up to

Valencia stay second on 28 sate for an appalling start.

right-footed shot to win the match and leave Atalanta marooned in the relegation zone.

AS Roma's win over Reggina was a bittersweet victory for the home side as their captain Totti, who had scored his team's second goal, left the pitch in the first half clutching his troublesome right knee.

Defender Walter Samuel had given Roma the lead in the third minute with a left-footed shot from close range before Totti's strike and Montella sealed Roma's victory in the 70th minute by latching on to a neat pass by Gabriel Batistuta before coolly beating the Reggina

Roberto Baggio scored the 200th Serie A goal of his career from the penalty spot to complete Brescia's 3-1 win over Perugia.

TOP SIX

Standings in the Italian championship after the weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

14 102 2 30 10 32 14 9 4 1 30 14 31 14 9 3 2 29 15 30 14 8 2 4 24 13 26 Lazio Chievo 14 7 5 2 22 12 26 14 7 5 2 18 10 26

FIFA allot places



Oceania will have one direct qualifying place to the 2006 World Cup football's world governing body FIFA confirmed here Tuesday.

The last time a team from the region gualified for the World Cup finals was New Zealand in 1982.

CONCACAF, the Central American and Caribbean region, gain half a place on the back of strong performances at the 2002 World Cup by USA and Mexico and have the chance of a fourth team going to

In addition to their existing three places a fourth country will play in the play-offs against an Asian Meanwhile, qualifying for the

2006 World Cup will officially begin on February 28 2004 and finish by November 20 2005 including playoffs, FIFA announced on Monday. The sport's world governing

body's organizing committee for the 2006 World Cup, meeting in the Spanish capital, also rubberstamped two important

December 5 2003 is the date for the qualifying draw in Frankfurt and Leipzig will host the draw for the finals in December 2005. The committee also formally approved the 12 host cities which

furt on April 15 2002. Breakdown of allocation by region for 2006 World Cup in Germany following meeting of FIFA executive committee here Tuesday:

had originally been named in Frank-

Europe: (including hosts Germany) Africa: Concacaf: Oceania: Asia:

Conmebol:

* Fourth placed Concacaf country will play fifth placed Asian country to decide 32nd and final spot

Remember the name 'Robinho'

Football

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro Teenage Santos striker Robinho

has become the latest name put forward to emulate Pele after his stunning performance in the Brazilian championship final.

Robinho capped a remarkable debut season when he inspired Santos to a 3-2 victory against Corinthians to seal a 5-2 aggregate win and their first domestic title

The 18-year-old scored the first from the penalty spot after being fouled and then set up two late goals to finally kill off Corinthians.

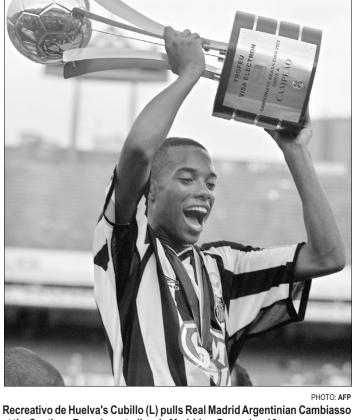
For years in Brazil bright young players have been hailed as "the new Pele" but Robinho has stronger credentials than most.

He shares the same slender build that Pele possessed at the same age -- and he plays for Santos, the club where Pele spent 17 years of his career and helped turn into arguably the best club side in the world at the time Like Pele, Robinho has already

shown that he will not be intimidated by threats and aggression from opposing defenders.

After the first leg of the semi-final tie against Gremio, rival goalkeeper Danrlei warned that Robinho born in the year that Santos last won a domestic title -- could end up with a broken leg if he kept making defenders look stupid. But Robinho, who finished the

championship with 10 goals, has kept on taunting defenders, apparently unmoved by what Danrlei claimed to be friendly advice but which many interpreted as a



at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on December 16.

straightforward threat.

"A top-line player, a genius, a rare precious stone who, without exaggerating, reminds us of the King (Pele)," said Cesar Seabra, a columnist in the sports daily Lance.

"His performance yesterday (Sunday) is never to be forgotten."

heir to Pele's thrown at the Vila Belmiro (Santos headquarters)." Other pundits preferred to compare him to the late Garrincha

O Globo wrote: "Robinho's

artistic football has made him the

for his irreverent dribbling skills. "He upset the Corinthians

defence on the right, as if he were Garrincha, taking the ball to the byline and then placing it on Elano's foot for the second goal," said Fernando Calazans in O Globo.

On Monday, almost every Brazilian news programme showed replays of the incident in which Robinho tormented and provoked his marker Rogerio into giving away

the penalty by feinting repeatedly. He lifted his foot over the ball seven times, twisted his way into the penalty area and went down after receiving the slightest of contacts from Rogerio's arm in what appeared a harsh decision on the Corinthians player.

"It was a move that will go down in history," said Marcos Augusto Goncalves in Lance.

Santos president Marcelo Teixeira insists the player is staying put at least until the middle of next year, which will make him available as Santos enter the Libertadores Cup -- the South American equivalent of the European Champions League -- for the first time since

But long-suffering Santos supporters are now wondering when the club's most prized possession is snapped up by one of the big Furopean clubs

They will also be hoping that. with three sportswear corporations already reported to be chasing him for a sponsorship deal, the trappings of success do not spoil his

Coach Emerson Leao, referring to his whole team and not just Robinho, warned after the game: "Now the difficult part begins, which is to live with success and a ful

Time for a Real celebration

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid will have every reason to feel on top of the world on Wednesday when they close out their centenary celebrations with a match against a FIFA World Selection featuring many of the best players on the planet.

The 75,000 fans expected at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium will have little concern for the names on the opposition team sheet, though, as they come to honour a Real side already with the look of an all-star line-up.

Real will run out with a side that could even claim comparison with the club's golden age from 1956 to 1960, when the likes of Alfredo di Stefano, Ferenc Puskas, Paco, Gento and Raymond Kopa were leading the team to five European

Figo, Zinedine Zidane, Roberto Carlos, Raul and Ronaldo bearing the standard for a team crowned this year as World and European champions. The club had originally believed

On Wednesday, it will be Luis

that FIFA would clear the calendar completely to ensure that the whole of football was focused on the

In the end that has proved impossible and the World Selection will feature no players based in England or France, for example. The likes of Rivaldo, Michael

Ballack, Alessandro Del Piero and Paolo Maldini will be present, though, to play for a side coached by Luiz Felipe Scolari, the man who masterminded Brazil's World Cup win in South Korea and Japan. The game is the climax of four

days of FIFA meetings in Madrid and comes the day after Tuesday's annual gala awards ceremony, where Real are already certain of receiving one award -- a special trophy to mark the club's first 100 They also have a strong chance

of landing Tuesday night's main prize, with their Brazilian striker Ronaldo and French midfielder Zidane vying for the Player of the Year award with Bayern Munich's German goalkeeper Oliver Kahn

in his career, he will step up to receive the silver ball for being

FIFA's top honour for the third time

Whether or not Ronaldo takes

match with European champions Real Madrid here Tuesday.

manager Luis Felipe Scolari chose them after injuries robbed him of Ajax duo Christian Chivu and Hadem Trabelsi for Wednesday's clash to celebrate Real's cente-

Real Madrid have their own injury problems and will be without Brazilian star Roberto Carlos former Spanish captain Fernando Hierro and French international Claude Makelele

FIFA WORLD SQUAD

(Celta Vigo/Arg), Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich/Ger) **Defenders**: Bixente Lizarazu (Bayern Munich/Fra), Alessandro Nesta (AC Milan/Ita), Paolo Maldini (AC Milan/Ita), Nourredine Naybet (Deportivo La Coruna/Mar), Cafu AS Roma/Bra).

. Midfielders: Ŕuben Baraja (Valencia/Spa), Michael Ballack (Bayern Munich//Ger), Kaka (Sao Paulo/Bra), Hidetoshi Nakata (Parma/Jpn), Pablo Aimar (Valencia/Arg), Marc Wilmots (Schalke 04/Bel), Andres D'Alessandro (River Plate/Arg), Murat Yakin (Basel/Swi), Cha Du Ri (Arminia Bielefeld/Kor), Roberto Baggio (Brescia/Ita)

Forwards: Rivaldo (AC

named second best player at the World Cup, as well as the golden shoe for finishing the tournament as top scorer. The Brazilian is also in the run-

ning for the Golden Ball award for Europe's top player due to be announced by France Football on Monday After the match against the

World Selection has been played, the fireworks have fizzled out and Placido Domingo has sung the club's new anthem, Real will be able to look back on a year that has been remarkable even for an institution with near-mythical status.

Real began the year still celebrating a FIFA award for Team of the Century, announced at the last annual awards gala.

While the 2001-02 Spanish league title proved beyond them, Vicente del Bosque's side won the title they really wanted when they landed the European Cup for the ninth time thanks to a wonder goal from Zidane in the final in Glasgow.

The team then settled an outstanding score with history by winning the European Super Cup for the first time, clinching it in style with a 3-1 win over Feyenoord in Monaco.

Meanwhile, president Florentino Perez was adding to the club's reputation as the natural home for the world's best players as he finalised a deal to bring in Ronaldo from Inter Milan

Ronaldo made an immediate impact on his Real debut, taking about a minute to open his scoring account and adding a second goal a few minutes later, and the Brazilian scored again to lead Real to a World Club Cup victory over Olimpia back in Yokahama. There was one major disappoint-

ment over the year, when Real were beaten 2-1 by Deportivo Coruna in the final of the King's Cup at the Bernabeu 100 years to the day since the club's official formation.

There are also nagging doubts about whether the team will be consistent enough to win the league title back, and whether a poor start to the second phase of the Champions League will spell the end for their hopes of a 10th European Cup success

Germany down Bundesliga REUTERS, Gelsenkirchen

Promising young striker Benjamin Lauth scored two goals to help World Cup runners-up Germany beat a Bundesliga selection side 4-2

in a charity match.
The 21-year-old TSV 1860
Munich forward, still waiting for his first cap in an official international, came on as a substitute to give Germany a 3-2 lead on 68 minutes before wrapping up victory in the

dying moments.

The game, staged for the victims of the floods that devastated the country last August, was attended by over 36,000 fans in the AufSchalke Arena, home to first division club Schalke 04, and helped raise 3.5 million euros.

'The result is secondary," Germany coach Rudi Voeller said after his side's last game of a year in which they emerged from a périod in the doldrums to reach the World Cup final.

"The most important thing is we could raise a lot of money for the

lood victims Bayern midfielder Jens Jeremies and Kaiserslautern striker Miroslav Klose also scored for Germany in a game played in a relaxed atmo-

Hertha Berlin's Brazilian midfielder Marcelinho and Borussia Dortmund's Czech striker Jan Koller scored for the Bundesliga selection.

featuring only non-German players. Several of the most prominent foreign Bundesliga players, notably Bayern's Brazilian striker Elber, Bayer Leverkusen's Brazil defender Lucio and Dortmund's Czech playmaker Tomas Rosicky, missed the game through injury.

Linsi new FIFA general secretary

REUTERS, Madrid

Urs Linsi has been appointed fulltime general secretary of world soccer's governing body, FIFA said on Tuesday.

Swiss Linsi was appointed FIFA's interim general secretary in June after Michel Zen-Ruffinen was sacked by president Sepp Blatter following Blatter's re-election.

Linsi had been FIFA's financial director and Zen-Ruffinen's deputy.

after the player stamped on a

Malaga player's head in the UEFA

ever, as Wilcox crashed home the

once Bolton' industrious French

midfielder Youri Djorkaeff missed a

the kick for hand ball by lan Harte in

the area as Diorkaeff, at the heart of

most of Bolton's attacks, bore down

wide from close range as Bolton,

who shocked Leeds 4-2 at Elland

third goal with a venomous strike.

23rd-minute penalty.

Bowver was not missed, how-

Leeds' win was never in doubt

Referee Graham Poll awarded

Gudni Bergsson then flicked just

Cup exit.

on goal.

Premiership

Venables can breathe now

Football

AFP, London

Leeds manager Terry Venables said his players "had made an old man very happy" after their 3-0 win over Bolton here on Monday eased the pressure on his job.

Despite the three points Leeds stay in the bottom five but have now drawn to within two points of Aston Villa following their sixth win of the season, achieved with early goals from Danny Mills and fit-again Robbie Fowler and a clincher from Jason Wilcox.

The win moved the Yorkshire side. knocked out of the UEFA Cup by Spain's Malaga last Thursday, five points clear of the drop zone and the gutsy manner in which it was achieved suggested Venables will win sufficient time to turn the

"It has been difficult but the players have been really good," Venables told Sky Sports. "There has been a lot of sniping... you always get two or three with a problem but they have kept going when we have had bad result after bad

"We've been going down to goals in the 89th minute, in the 91st minute and it has been tough.

"But this is a big, big result for us. They have made an old man very happy tonight."

Albion began the brighter. But Leeds went in front on 12 minutes when the combative Mills curled a left foot shot in off the

Mills, having broken his scoring duck for the season, rushed to the

who allowed himself a grin - a collector's item since he took over from David O'Leary in the summer.

Three minutes later Leeds went two goals ahead as Bolton's Finnish keeper Jussi Jaaskelainen allowed an lan Harte cross from the left bounce up against the crossbar after defender Bruno Ngotty let the ball go over his head.

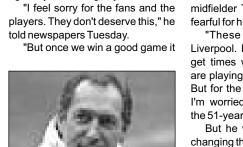
Kewell headed goalwards only for Jaaskelainen to parry but Fowler, making his first start since a hip injury, poked home the rebound.

Fowler scored a hattrick in the fixture last season and took his personal tally against Bolton to nine goals in six games.

The former Liverpool star gave Leeds a welcome option up front with fellow England striker Alan Smith suspended for the match at

Road a month ago, strove for an Bolton had another penalty appeal turned down nine minutes

after the restart as Diorkaeff tussled



GERARD HOULLIER

Former England fullback Alan Kennedy, who was playing for Liverpool when they last had such a bad spell in 1983, says Liverpool are in a crisis.

0 in the 1981 European Cup. "We were champions and we

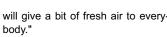
midfielder Terry McDermott is also

Liverpool. It does happen that you get times where so many players are playing badly at the same time. But for the first time in many years I'm worried about Liverpool," said the 51-vear-old.

changing the team. "Now is not the time to experi-

to rediscover his form

of it and put a run together."



"That run in 1983 was different." said the 48-year-old, who scored

the goal that downed Real Madrid 1-

Former Liverpool and England fearful for his old club. "These are hard times for

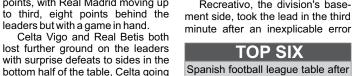
But he warned Houllier against

ment. Look at Manchester United and what they have done after their

bad run a month or two ago," he

"I still think the team can pull out

Liverpool first need Michael Owen to start scoring again and England midfielder Steven Gerrard



where Real Madrid had to compen-

drawn, I against, p			goal	S	for,	goals
Sociedad		_	_	_		
Valencia		_	-	_		
Real	13	6	6	1	26	13 24
Celta	14	7	3	4	17	12 24

14 6 5 3 24 15 23

Sunday's matches (played, won,

Deportivo 14 6 5 3 19 17 23

from Iker Casillas. The Spanish international raced from his goal in an attempt to clear and David Cubillo was able to fire

the ball straight past him. Miguel Angel Espinola added a second on 15 minutes with a neat

close-range finish before Real raised their game, rarely used full back Raul Bravo reducing the arrears with a cool chip from the edge of the box on the half-hour.

Ivan Helguera headed in from a corner on 64 minutes and Raul put the home side ahead with a classy drag-back and shot 20 minutes from

Recreativo keeper Jose Antonio Luque was sent off in the final minute for bringing down Guti in the area and Luis Figo converted the spot kick to make certain of a much needed victory. The response from my team

was magnificent," Real coach

Vicente del Bosque said. "We scored another four goals and set the crowd shaking. "We played a good game. The first 15 to 20 minutes was a case of the opposition taking their chances. They deserved their lead but we

were able to turn the situation

round.'

TASTES LIKE BECKHAM! Female models pose in front of a large statue Manchester United superstar David Beckham made from chocolate at Shibuya shopping district in Tokyo on December 16. A Japanese chocolate company unveiled the 3.3-meter statue as a main feature for chocolate campaign of the firm.

All-star gala at Madrid

Brazil's World Cup winning captain Cafu and former Italian football icon Roberto Baggio were called up to the FIFA world squad for the

Brazil's World Cup winning

Goalkeepers: Pablo Cavallero

Milan/Bra), Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid/Spa), Roy Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna/Ned), Joaquin (Real Betis/Spa), Miroslav Klose (Kaiserslautern/Ger), Predrag Mijatovic (Levante/Yug), Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus/Ita), Samuel Eto'o (Real Mallorca/Cmr)

Second-bottom Bolton, bidding to close the gap on West Bromwich

crossbar after playing a neat one-two with Australian forward Harry

the Reebok Stadium. Venables elected to leave

midfielder Lee Bowyer on the bench

with Kelly and Woodgate, who then blocked a Per Frandsen vollev.