



Primera Liga

Sociedad halfway there

Football

AFP, Madrid

Spanish league leaders Real Sociedad retained their unbeaten record this season with a 2-1 win over Atletico Madrid on Saturday and were proclaimed the 'winter champions' in the process.

Second half goals from Tayfun Korkut and Darko Kovacevic ensured three points for the visiting Basques, the latter responding to an Atletico equaliser from Luis Garcia.

Sociedad have 43 points from their 19 games while second-placed Real Madrid lie six points in arrears but have a game in hand and play at Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

After a first half of intermittent excitement, the game moved up a gear after the break.

Only 90 seconds had elapsed before Sociedad broke the deadlock.

Spanish international winger Javier De Pedro sent a pass in from the left and Tayfun crept in unmarked to stab the ball past Atletico goalkeeper Mono Burgos.

However, the hosts wasted little time in getting back on level terms.

Two minutes later, Luis Garcia darted down the left wing and fired the ball under Sander Westerveld's body from an acute angle.

Kovacevic then headed his 11th goal of the season just after the hour, connecting with an Aitor Lopez Rekarte cross from the right touch-line.

The Yugoslav striker, and arguably the most consistently dangerous header of the ball in the top flight of Spanish football, had gone close to giving Sociedad the lead a minute before half-time but headed a corner against the upright.

However, it was Westerveld who was Real Sociedad's true star on Saturday.

The Dutch goalkeeper saved his second penalty in as many weeks, parrying Fernando Correa's effort midway through the first half, after Bjorn Kvarme had felled Fernando Torres.

Westerveld also stopped a vicious, rasping, long-range thunderbolt from Correa early in the second half which few 'keepers could have contained, and had a series of excellent saves late in the game.

Nevertheless, Sociedad will not

be considering themselves the champions just yet.

They have twice before led the league at its halfway point, albeit in the 1930s, only to slip up down the home straight.

By contrast, the two seasons they took the title, in the consecutive years of 1981 and 1982, they came from behind in the second half of the season.

Among the key matches on Sunday is Barcelona's visit to Celta Vigo with the job of Barca coach Louis van Gaal in jeopardy.

The struggling Catalans lie 10th and have lost more games than they have won in the league this season.

TOP SIX										
Spanish football league table after Saturday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):										
Sociedad	19	12	7	0	36	21	43			
Real	18	10	7	1	39	18	37			
Valencia	18	9	5	4	31	16	32			
Deportivo	18	9	5	4	26	21	32			
Betis	18	8	6	4	29	21	30			
Celta	18	8	3	7	20	18	27			

Bundesliga

Berlin upset Dortmund plans

Football

AFP, Berlin

Reigning German champions Borussia Dortmund blew their chance of gaining ground on league leaders Bayern Munich when they were pipped 2-1 by Hertha Berlin as the Bundesliga returned to action on Saturday.

With Bayern playing Borussia Munchengladbach on Sunday, Dortmund could have closed the six-point gap but Hungarian international Pal Dardai put Berlin ahead in the capital after 69 minutes.

Jan Koller's header pulled Dortmund level with 10 minutes to play before Brazilian midfielder Marcelinho scored the winner with his head in the final minute.

Dortmund coach Matthias Sammer blasted his players for a lacklustre performance after the six-

week winter break.

"We made too many mistakes. My team needs to understand that the Bundesliga didn't end on the 18th match day," said Sammer.

Dortmund also lost second place in the table to Werder Bremen, who drew 2-2 at home to Arminia Bielefeld, all the goals coming in a frantic first half.

Ukrainian veteran Viktor Skripnik opened the scoring for Bremen in the third minute before Senegalese striker Mamadou Diabang equalised.

The league's top scorer, Brazilian striker Ailton, put Werder ahead with a penalty on 36 minutes for his 14th strike of the season but the South Korean international Cha Du Ri equalised for Bielefeld five minutes before half-time.

The 22-year-old son of one of South Korea's best ever players, Cha Bum Kun, has had a disappointing season but he used his strength to knock in the chance from

TOP SIX										
German league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against):										
Bayern	17	12	3	2	36	14	39			
Bremen	18	10	4	4	36	29	34			
Dortmund	18	9	6	3	29	15	33			
Schalke	18	8	7	3	23	15	31			
Stuttgart	18	8	6	4	29	23	30			
Munich	18	8	4	6	29	25	28			



Alex Alves (L) of Hertha Berlin being pulled by fellow Brazilian Evanilson of Borussia Dortmund at Berlin on January 25.

Crazy about Woodgate!

AFP, Newcastle

Premiership highfliers Newcastle United are to make a one-off eight million pound (12 million dollar) bid to try and wrest England centreback Jonathan Woodgate from cash-strapped Leeds United, it was reported on Sunday.

The Newcastle Sunday Sun said manager Bobby Robson had sanctioned the take it or leave it offer for Woodgate, though should Leeds accept their boss Terry Venables could leave the club.

According to the newspaper insiders at Newcastle believe there is a "70-30" chance of Leeds agreeing to accept the bid as they seek to reduce their estimated 80 million pound debt.

Despite having offloaded Rio Ferdinand, Robbie Keane, Oliver Dacourt and Lee Bowyer, Venables has been told he must still sell and with Robbie Fowler's proposed move to Manchester City and Seth Johnson's to Middlesbrough falling through, Woodgate is seen as the only hope of placating the bankers.

Robson admitted he had reflected on Woodgate's much-publicised problems off the pitch which resulted in him being convicted of affray over the assault on an Asian student for which he still faces a private prosecution from the victim's family.

However the former England manager said what was more important for him was Woodgate's ability on the pitch which has seen him win one cap under the regime of Kevin Keegan against Bulgaria and would have been more but for his court case.

"I have considered all the possible problems that come with signing Woodgate. I considered them with Lee Bowyer (who was acquitted) as well," Robson said.

"But my information was that Bowyer was only heading to London so I didn't waste much energy on him. But as a footballer he is first-class, just as Woodgate is - and that is my only concern.

"I like what Woodgate can do on the park and that is why I have gone for him," added Robson, who has guided his side into third in the Premiership despite dreadful away form.

Woodgate's ultimate ambition is to play on the continent.

"I'm one of those who eventually want to test their skills outside England," he told the Sunday Sun.

FA Cup

End of surprises

Football

AFP, London

Dagenham and Redbridge's FA Cup dream was shattered in agonising fashion on Saturday.

The Football Conference side came within seconds of forcing First Division Norwich City to a fourth round replay only to be eliminated by a fluke last-minute goal.

A deflected cross wrong-footed the Conference side's defence and Norwich substitute Zema Abbey was able to smash home the winner from close range.

With fellow minnows Farnborough Town going down 5-1 to Cup holders Arsenal at Highbury, the cruel defeat brought an abrupt end to non-league interest in the competition.

"What can you say? Its a hard blow," Dagenham boss Garry Hill said afterwards.

Norwich have lost at home only twice this season but it wasn't tiredness or a lack of discipline and concentration that have cost us the match. It was a wicked deflection.

"The boys are very upset and understandably so."

Rochdale, currently struggling in the bottom half of the Third Division, pulled off the biggest upset of the day when they eliminated the 1987 winners Coventry, who are gunning for promotion to the Premiership.

Paul Connor and Gareth Griffiths struck either side of the break to secure a famous 2-0 victory that left player-manager Paul Simpson praying for a glamour fifth round tie.

"We are in the next round and I want a massive one - a match big enough to get live on television and radio and make as much money out of it as possible because that's the way we've got to think about it at this football club."

Icelandic forward Heidar Helguson piled on the misery for Premiership strugglers West Brom with the goal that put Watford into the fifth round.

Arsenal made harder work of killing off Farnborough than the scoreline suggested.

A Sol Campbell header and a Francis Jeffers strike on his 22nd birthday had put the Cup holders two ahead before Farnborough were reduced to ten men with over an hour to play.

Christian Lee got his marching orders for scything down Jeffers as he closed in on goal.

That appeared to set the stage

for a Highbury massacre but it was not until mid-way through the second half that Jeffers scored his second and Arsenal's third.

Rocky Baptiste then outpaced Pascal Cygan to earn Farnborough some extra respect before Dennis Bergkamp and Lauren completed the win.

Gunners manager Arsene Wenger paid tribute to Farnborough's efforts. "They had great resilience and fitness. I was



Gary Holloway (L) of Farnborough Town locked in an aerial tussle with Arsenal's Patrick Viera at Highbury stadium in London on January 25 during their FA Cup fourth round match.

surprised. Even when they had ten men it was not easy. They never gave up.

First Division Gillingham took full advantage of Mark Viduka's sending-off to earn a replay against

Leicester City 4-1 at Molineux.

Paul Dickov was Leicester's scorer with a 29th-minute penalty.

Blackburn and Sunderland will have to replay their all-Premiership tie after a 3-3 thriller at Ewood Park.

French Cup

PSG owe Ronaldinho one

Football

AFP, Paris

Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldinho came off the bench to inspire Paris Saint Germain to a 2-1 French Cup extra-time triumph over bitter rivals Marseille here on Saturday.

In a stormy encounter which saw both sides finish with ten men, and where eleven others were booked, it was the Brazilian's mazy run in the seventh minute of extra-time which proved the difference and gave his side a place in the last 16 of the tournament.

He mesmerised the Marseille defence so much that four of their players were drawn to him giving the Brazilian the chance to slip the ball to the unmarked Fabrice Fioresse whose shot was deflected over Vedran Runje in goal for what proved to be the winner.

However, the match which attracted 40,000 fans as well as 2,000 policemen to the Parc des Princes, was a bruising encounter with both Marseille's Manuel Dos Santos and PSG's Talal El-Karkouri sent-off.

The away fans were stunned into silence when their team fell behind after just 14 minutes as PSG's Argentinian skipper Mauricio Pochettino headed a corner past Runje.

Frederic Dehu and Fioresse both wasted good chances when they were through on goal and Paris were made to pay for their wastefulness when Marseille defender Daniel Van Buyten levelled the scores with a 62nd minute header from a long-range free-kick.

On 66 minutes, Ronaldinho came off the bench in an effort to break the deadlock. He went down in the penalty area in the dying moments under a heavy challenge from Van Buyten but his claims for a spot-kick were waved away by referee Stephane Bre whose tendency to reach for the card even stretched to PSG substitute Francis Liacer who was yellow-carded just seconds after coming on.

The official was back in the spotlight in the last minute of normal time when he sent off Dos Santos for a foul on Fioresse which led to a brief free-for-all between both sets of players on the sidelines.

El-Karkouri got his marching orders in the last seconds of extra-time for a foul on Ibrahima Bakayoko who had earlier wasted a chance to level for Marseille but could only fire tamely into the arms of PSG keeper Jerome Alzonzo.

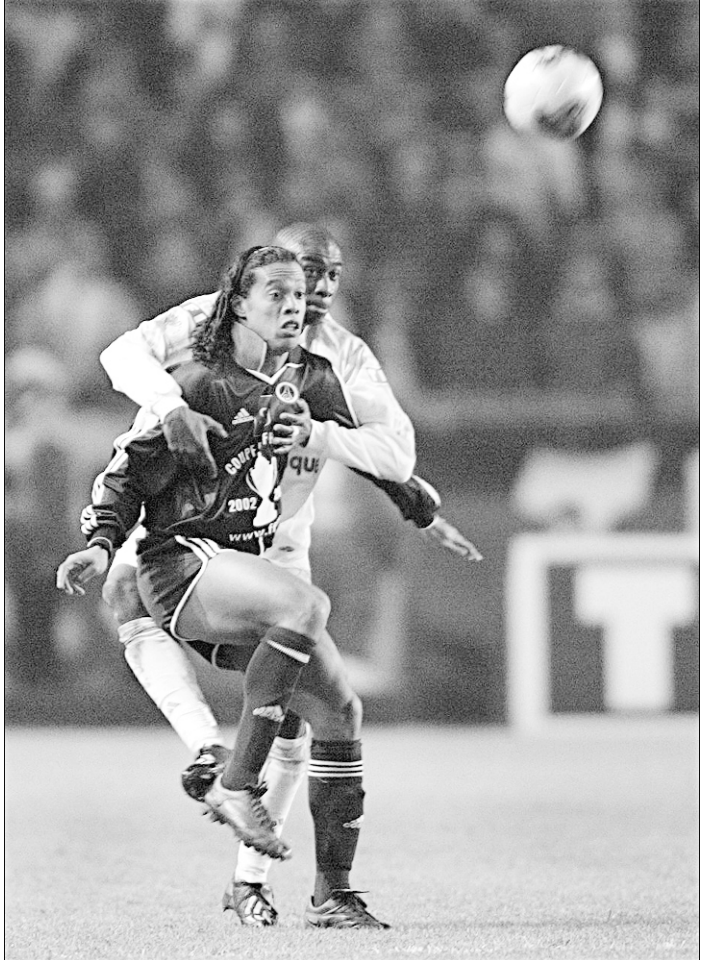
The tone for the atmosphere at the match was set even before a ball had been kicked with police confiscating numerous dangerous objects including iron bars from visiting supporters.

Meanwhile, four other First Division clubs were knocked out.

Nantes lost 1-0 to Second Division Lorient courtesy of an 87nd minute goal by Eli Kroupi, Lens fell 1-0 at Toulouse, Le Havre were 2-1 losers at Laval while Rennes won the all-First Division clash with Ajaccio 3-0.

Anthony Bancarel scored a 23rd minute for Toulouse but the most impressive celebrations were at little Libourne Saint-Seurin of the Fourth Division who drew 2-2 with Le Mans of the Second Division before reaching the last 16 with a 12-11 penalty shoot-out success.

Libourne had knocked out league leaders Lyon in the last round.



WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE GOING? Marseilles' Abdoulaye Meite (Behind) grabs Paris-Saint Germain's Brazilian superstar during their French Cup match at Paris Parc des Princes stadium on January 25.

Serie A

Como baffle Roma

Football

AFP, Rome

Struggling Como clinched their first win of the Serie A season on Saturday with a stunning 2-0 win over AS Roma.

Vedin Music and Benito Carbone were on target with goals in the 83rd and 90th minutes as Como took full advantage of the sending off of Roma's Greek defender Traianos Dellas in the 79th minute.

On Sunday, Inter Milan can call on loan signing Gabriel Batistuta as they continue their push towards what they hope will be a first Serie A title in 14 years.

Batistuta joined the Serie A title-

contenders this week after failing to hold down a regular place in AS Roma's first team and is expected to start Sunday's match at home to Empoli alongside Christian Vieri.

Leaders AC Milan, three points ahead of Lazio and Inter who are tied for second place, travel to Udinese, unbeaten at their Friuli stadium this season.

Lazio, who on Tuesday advanced to the semi-finals of the Italian Cup where they will meet city rivals Roma, host struggling Calabrian club Reggina.

In Sunday's other matches Juventus, currently in fourth, four points off the lead, welcome Piacenza to the Delle Alpi Stadium while fifth-placed Chievo visit Perugia.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 A little lower?

5 Lowers the lights

9 Bankroll

12 Reed instru-ment

13 Disquiet

14 Coloration

15 Talk-show legend

16 Distorted

17 George's brother

18 Part of N.B.

19 Some-where out there

20 Despot

21 Deteriora-tion

23 Three-match link

25 Obey

28 Hasen-pleffer base

32 Use

33 Stringed instru-ment

34 Stratagem

36 With TLC

37 Head of cabbage?

38 North Pole worker

DOWN

1 Barber-shop prop

2 Busy as —

3 Barelt

4 Great excitement

5 In need of caulking

6 "The Music Man" locale

7 It's worth looking into

8 Crafty

9 Genius in geome-try

11 Cherished

20 Need to get out

22 Kukla's crony

24 Orange type

25 Garfield, e.g.

26 Eggs

27 Apple product

29 Automa-ton, for short

30 "— say!"

31 Scottish river

35 It can lead to united states

36 Old Faithful, e.g.

39 Eucharist wafer

40 Notion

41 Para-phernalia

43 Con

45 Forum raiment

46 Satiat

47 Pianist Dame Myra

49 Possesses

Solution time: 28 mins.

H	U	A	D	A	M	P	E	S	T
I	N	C	M	E	G	A	A	C	H
M	C	G	U	E	F	F	E	G	R
O	K	A	I	S	E	I	P	O	U
L	I	V	E	S	S	T	E	R	I
P	E	R	B	O	O	M	S	G	C
A	N	N	A	L	L	I	S	E	Y
S	I	D	E	C	E	E	Y	O	U
F	I	G	H	T	S	E	A	R	H
I	D	L	E	M	C	C	A	T	H
R	O	A	R	P	E	A	R	R	O
E	L	M	S	H	O	R	N	T	O

CRYPTOQUIP

Y I J M X P G M S Z W D X J Y R V M
D N Y R S M N . Y P E F B V Y V
N M T K S W P K K Z G P D

F D R P - I T K P E F P W Y P R B P .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AS THE PHYSICIST
WAKES HIS CHILDREN, HE ALWAYS MAKES
SURE TO SHOUT, "UP AND ATOM!"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals W

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, it will equal Q throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.