



Chelsea's Romanian star Adrian Mutu (No 7) is ecstatic as he celebrates his match-winning strike against Lazio with Damien Duff (11) and Frank Lampard at Stamford Stadium in London on October 22.

Chelsea owe it to Mutu



AFP, London

Romanian Adrian Mutu completed a second half fightback by Chelsea in a 2-1 Champions League victory over Lazio here on Wednesday to wipe away recent disappointments. Simone Inzaghi scored for Lazio in the 38th minute against the run of play but Frank Lampard and then Mutu scored for the Blues after the break to put them firmly on course for qualification from Group G. "Happily we won tonight," said Lampard.

"If we had lost, we would have put ourselves in a very difficult situation." Chelsea now top the pool with six points from three matches with Lazio and Sparta Prague on four points and Besiktas with three. Chelsea's welcome victory comes in the wake of Arsenal knocking them off the top of the Premiership on Saturday with a 2-1 win at Highbury and a 2-0 home defeat to Turkish club Besiktas in

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated results and standings after the latest round of European Champions League Group matches on Wednesday:

Group E
At Glasgow
Glasgow Rangers (SCO) 0
Manchester United (ENG) 1 (Phil Neville 5)
At Stuttgart, Germany
VfB Stuttgart (GER) 2 (Szabics 13, Soldo 25)
Panathinaikos (GRE) 0

Group F
At Marseille, France
Marseille (FRA) 2 (Drogba 24, Marlet 84)
FC Porto (POR) 3 (Maniche 31, Derlei 35, Alenichev 81)
At Madrid
Real Madrid (SPA) 1 (Raul 38)
Partizan Belgrade (SEM) 0

Group G
At London
Chelsea (ENG) 2 (Lampard 57, Mutu 65)
Lazio (ITA) 1 (Inzaghi 38)
At Prague
Sparta Prague (CZE) 2 (Zelenka 58, Poborsky 84)
Besiktas (TUR) 1 (Pancu 60- pen)
Group H
At Milan, Italy
AC Milan (ITA) 0
FC Bruges (BEL) 1 (Mendoza 33)
At Amsterdam
Ajax (NED) 1 (Ibrahimovic 53)
Celta Vigo (SPA) 0

Perugia eyeing Swedish starlet



AFP, Stockholm

Italian club Perugia is courting the star of Sweden's World Cup women's football team Victoria Svensson apparently to play in the Serie A. Controversial Perugia president Luciano Gaucci, who said recently he would like to put a woman into his team, told the Swedish daily Aftonbladet he had contacted Svensson's Djurgarden club. "We want her to join us as soon as possible," Gaucci told Aftonbladet. "My sons and I watched 'Ia Svensson' during the World Cup, we watched the matches on TV and she was brilliant. We want her," he added. But Victoria and her team manager, Per Darnell, remained sceptical. "It doesn't look very serious.

One can ask oneself why Perugia would want a female player, no matter how good she is," Darnell told Aftonbladet. "The important thing for Victoria is to prepare for the Olympics next year and for that she can't be sitting on the bench on a men's team, regardless of how much money she gets. And it's ridiculous to believe that she'd get to play for Perugia," he said. Sweden lost the World Cup final 2-1 to Germany in overtime when Nia Kuenzer headed in a free kick. Perugia made headlines in June by signing Saadi Kadhafi, the son of Libyan leader Moamer, to a one-year contract. The team also hired disgraced sprinter Ben Johnson, stripped of his 100 metres gold medal for using drugs at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, to put players through their paces in July.

STANDINGS										
Standings of Groups E - H (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):										
Group E										
Man United	3	2	0	1	7	2	6			
Stuttgart	3	2	0	1	5	3	6			
Rangers	3	1	1	1	3	3	4			
Panathinaikos	3	0	1	2	1	8	1			
Group F										
Real	3	3	0	0	8	3	9			
Porto	3	1	1	1	5	6	4			
Marseille	3	1	0	2	7	7	3			
Belgrade	3	0	1	2	1	5	1			
Group G										
Chelsea	3	2	0	1	3	3	6			
Lazio	3	1	1	1	5	4	4			
Prague	3	1	1	1	4	4	4			
Besiktas	3	1	0	2	3	4	3			
Group H										
Ajax	3	2	0	1	3	1	6			
Milan	3	1	1	1	1	1	4			
Bruges	3	1	1	1	2	3	4			
Celta	3	0	2	1	1	2	2			



NEVILLE'S MOMENT: Manchester United's Philip Neville scoring the all-important goal against Glasgow Rangers at Ibrox stadium on October 22.

Neville makes Fergie's day



AFP, Glasgow

Manchester United made it a happy homecoming for manager Sir Alex Ferguson as the English champions held out for a 1-0 win over their Scottish counterparts Rangers here on Wednesday. Phil Neville's well-taken fifth minute strike was enough to get United's Champions League campaign back on track, as well as

making Ferguson the first coach to notch up 50 victories on club football's biggest stage. Fittingly, it was an achievement Ferguson completed within a mile of his birthplace and at the home of the club he played for at the peak of his career. It had been billed as the Battle of Britain but it proved to be an encounter with a distinctly continental flavour. It was also one which, despite the defeat, will have enhanced the European credentials of Rangers and their manager Alex McLeish.

Rangers dominated after Neville's early strike and were unlucky not to capitalise on a string of chances or to be awarded at least one of two good penalty claims in the first half. Ferguson was happy with the way his trip back to his roots had turned out, although he admitted that United had been lucky to come away with the three points. "I always enjoy coming back to Glasgow but it's better when you win, mind you," he said.

Generous Kaiser!

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer has vowed to hand over the 10,000-euro wager he had with Lyon striker Giovane Elber whether the Brazilian forward scores against his former club or not. The pair, old friends from their time at the Olympic Stadium, placed a bet that Elber would not score in either of the two Champions League ties between Lyon and Bayern Munich. But Beckenbauer insists he will pay up regardless, with Elber set to use the money for a good cause in his homeland. "Giovane will get the 10,000 euros from me even if he doesn't score against us," Beckenbauer announced. "He wants to spend the money for homeless children in Brazil, so he deserves to have it." Elber failed to score in Lyon's 1-1 draw with Bayern Tuesday, although he came very close but will hope to win the wager outright when Bayern host Lyon on November 5.

Ferdinand not charged yet

AFP, London

English football chiefs have delayed charging Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand for failing to take a routine drug test. The Football Association said it was still studying documents, including Ferdinand's mobile phone records, to decide whether there was enough evidence to charge him with 'wilful' or deliberate failure to attend the drugs test on September 23. The charge would carry a certain ban.

Bruges baffle Milan



AFP, Milan

Bruges pulled off a major shock by defeating Champions League holders AC Milan 1-0 here on Wednesday for their first group H victory. A stunning first-half strike by Peruvian forward Andres Mendoza gave the Belgians three valuable points as Milan tasted defeat for the first time this season. Currently sharing first place in Serie A with Juventus, Milan enjoyed the lion's share of the possession at the San Siro, but found no way through Bruges' resolute and well organised defence. Defeat for the Italians allowed Ajax to leapfrog them at the top of the table and throw the group wide open. Milan travel to Belgium for the return match in a fortnight's time.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti, who dismissed suggestions that his players were tired, was left frustrated by his team's lack of invention around the penalty box. "We dominated for long periods and had lots of possession without punishing them in the final third," he said. "Once they got the goal they sat back and got everyone behind the ball. "Sometimes you end up with nothing even when you deserve to win. It was one of those defeats that sometimes happen in football." Ancelotti made just one change from the team that defeated Lazio 1-0 on Sunday with Cristian Brocchi replacing the suspended Gennaro Gattuso in midfield. Belgian champions Bruges made three changes to the side that thrashed Westerlo 4-0 on Saturday. Norwegian striker Rune Lange, who scored twice at

the weekend, was dropped to the bench, along with Hans Cornelis and Bengt Saeternes. Sandy Martens, Ivan Gvozdenovic and Timmy Simons came in for the dropped trio. Milan, who defeated Juventus on penalties in last season's all-Italian final, thought they had taken the lead in the ninth minute. Clarence Seedorf fired in a shot which deflected into the path of Filippo Inzaghi who turned sharply to stab the ball in from close range. Milan's celebrations were cut short however as the referee ruled that the Italy international was in an offside position when he found the net. Seedorf and Brazilian international Kaka both wasted good chances before Bruges took the lead

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PHOTO: AFP

THAT SINKING FEELING! AC Milan ace Pippo Inzaghi is desolate after the loss to FC Bruges at the San Siro stadium in Milan on October 22.

Raul does the minimum



AFP, Madrid

Spanish sharpshooter Raul's close range header propelled nine-times champions Real Madrid a step closer to the knockout stages of the Champions League after seeing off Group F rivals Partizan Belgrade 1-0 here Wednesday. Raul struck seven minutes before the break after Portuguese international Luis Figo knocked on a David Beckham corner and although there was a suspicion of offside the goal stood to preserve

the Spanish giants' 100-percent record in the group. But it was a dull performance which the two sides served up before special guest spectators, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and his host Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar. The two men will Thursday attend the opening of a two-day conference on aid to Iraq but whereas both are hoping for donations in abundance in contrast the Partizan defence came here determined to give nothing away. Zinedine Zidane, who was substituted late in the second half, admitted it hadn't been the most engaging of encounters.

"We didn't play great - we can play better, but it wasn't an open game. They came here to defend and didn't actually get a lot of chances to score," Zidane said after the match. Beckham's game meanwhile finished early after he suffered a strained right leg which almost forced him out of the starting line-up and which could mean he misses a weekend date against Racing Santander, Real medical staff revealed. Real had the lion's share of the

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PHOTO: AFP

TOLD YOU I'D SCORE! Real Madrid superstar Raul Gonzalez (C) tells something interesting to teammates Zinedine Zidane (L) and Roberto Carlos after scoring against Partizan Belgrade at Madrid on October 22.