



Zimbabwe defender Dezidetio Kapenya fails to clear the goal-bound attempt from Egypt's Mido (No. 9) at Sfax on January 25.

Zidane took creatine

AFP, Turin

Real Madrid star Zinedine Zidane admitted at the Juventus doping trial here Monday he took the muscle growth supplement creatine while he played in Italy.

"I took creatine, only when I played for Juventus. It was never the case when I played in France and hasn't happened since I've been playing in Spain," the FIFA World Player of the Year told the court.

"It's useful and I need it to play 70 matches a season," he added.

Creatine is banned in France but can be bought over the counter in



ZINEDINE ZIDANE

several European countries, including Italy and Britain. It is not on the International Olympic Committee's list of banned substances.

The France playmaker also said he was given vitamin injections at Juventus.

Zidane played for Juventus from 1996 to 2001.

The 31-year-old joined Real Madrid for a world record 75 million euros (90 million dollars) from Juventus in 2001.

Two Juve officials are on trial over charges relating to the doping of players from the club over a four-year period in the 1990s.

The prosecution alleges that Juventus managing director Antonio Giraudo and club doctor Riccardo Agricola supplied pharmaceutical products to several of the club's players between July 1994 and September 1998.

It is charged that, while the drugs in question were legal, they had been used in such a manner that essentially produced the same effects as illicit substances.

Over that period, Juventus won three Italian league titles and the European Cup.

Zidane, former France captain Didier Deschamps and Italian star Alessandro Del Piero are all under suspicion of being given illegal substances by club doctors.

Two weeks ago Juventus defender Paolo Montero, who joined the club in 1996, admitted to having been given creatine, soon after arriving in Turin.

Agricola has insisted many other clubs have also given their players substances such as creatine.

The scandal broke in 1998 when Czech coach Zdenek Zeman, then in charge of Roma, called on the authorities to clean drug cheats out of Italian soccer, aiming his accusations at Juventus.

Primera Liga

Valencia hand it to Real



Football

AFP, Madrid

Valencia handed the Spanish league lead back to Real Madrid after they surprisingly lost 1-0 at home to Osasuna on Sunday.

To add to the misery of the 2001-02 champions, the only goal of the game came off the foot of one of their own men and they ended the match with just 10 players after right back Andoni Carboni was sent off four minutes from time.

Osasuna got their victory, and move up to fifth, thanks to their Cameroon international striker Pierre Webo, discarded from his country's African Cup of Nations squad two weeks ago.

Webo, who was a constant threat to Valencia, sent in a cross from the left only for the ball to be deflected into the net off the right foot of Valencia's Mauricio Pellegrino.

Valencia coach Rafa Benitez refused to provide excuses for the loss.

"It was nobody's fault and the

Deportivo had the best of the chances but poor finishing let them down.

Athletic got the points thanks to a Francisco Yeste shot from 20 metres, five minutes after the break, the ball helped into the net by Deportivo keeper Francisco Molina, who could only get one hand to the shot.

Mallorca got a quick return after their signing of Andrija Dalibasic on Thursday, the Serbian striker heading home a Nene corner after 41 minutes to set up a 3-1 win over relegation-threatened Real Zaragoza on Sunday.

Arnold Bruggink put Mallorca further ahead before the break and although Leonardo Ponzio got one back for Zaragoza just after the hour, Nene confirmed Mallorca's first win in six games in injury time when he waltzed through the home side's defence before finding the net with his left foot.

Zaragoza are now third from the bottom and face an immediate return to the second division after getting promotion last season.

A similar fate is even more likely for bottom club Murcia, last sea-

Murcia's David Karanka levelled the score at 2-2 two minutes in injury time, only for Racing to race down the pitch straight after the kick off and for Javi Guerrero to complete his hat-trick.

Celta Vigo could also be looking for a new coach very soon after they went down 5-2 at home to Real Sociedad despite taking the lead after just a minute through a Gustavo Lopez header.

The Galicians' under-fire coach Miguel Angel Lotina left the field to the crowd chanting 'resign, resign' after the loss left them just one place and one point above the relegation zone.

Inevitably, Lotina's future will be discussed at Monday night's meeting of the Celta board of directors.

By contrast, the pressure eased slightly on Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard with the Catalan giants maintaining their recent improvement and winning 1-0 at Sevilla.

Rijkaard's compatriot and former team mate Patrick Kluivert headed home a Luis Garcia cross for the goal that clinched Barca's three points.



PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona's Dutch international striker Patrick Kluivert is delighted after scoring against Sevilla at the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan stadium in Seville on January 25.

players gave 110 per cent. We were not tired and we don't need reinforcements. These things happen," said Benitez.

Real Madrid lead the race for the championship again, after a hiatus of three weeks, with 46 points from their 21 games after their 2-1 win at home to Villarreal on Saturday.

Valencia are now two points in arrears, with Deportivo La Coruna third on 40 points after they lost 1-0 at Athletic Bilbao.

son's second division champions.

A change of coach could not change their fortunes and Murcia have now gone 15 games without a win after losing 3-2 at Racing Santander on Sunday.

It was far from the worst game of the 463 Spanish first division matches that Murcia's new coach John Toshack has guided from the sidelines but he will be admonishing his players for a lack of concentration.



AFP, Tunis

Defending champions Cameroon, bidding for their third successive African Nations Cup crown and fifth in all, suffered a setback in their opening match of the 2004 tournament when they were held to a 1-1 draw by Algeria in Sousse.

That result allowed four-time winners Egypt to take top spot in Group C thanks to a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Zimbabwe in Sfax while, in Tunis, Guinea also recovered from a goal down to beat the Democratic Republic of Congo 2-1 in Group A.

Veteran striker Patrick Mboma, recalled to the squad just before the tournament after the intervention of President Paul Biya, put Cameroon ahead after 43 minutes and Brahim Zafour levelled for Algeria in the 52nd minute.

Pharaohs smile as Lions draw

The build-up to the clash in Sousse was overshadowed by the all-in-one body suits of Cameroon, who were given the go-ahead just hours before the kickoff to wear a garment world governing body FIFA considers illegal.

The African Football Confederation said the reigning champions can wear the body suit in first round fixtures, but must change if they reach the knockout stages.

Cameroon deservedly took the lead when Mboma, joint leading scorer at the 2002 finals in Mali, rose unchallenged to head the ball into the net.

But Algeria levelled seven minutes into the second half as a corner fell loose inside the penalty area and half-time substitute Zafour drilled a low shot past Kameni.

Cameroon twice came close to regaining the lead within 60 seconds as a Mohamadou Idrissou header from a corner rebounded off the crossbar and Samuel Eto'o

broke through only to waste his chance.

In Sfax, Egypt fought back from a goal down to defeat newcomers Zimbabwe 2-1.

Zimbabwe skipper Peter Ndlovu had put his country in front a minute after the break when he coolly headed home a cross from the left past stranded goalkeeper Nader El Sayed.

But Egypt fought back with Tamer Abdelhamid getting the equaliser after 57 minutes and, five minutes later, substitute Mohammed Barakat grabbed the winner with a header.

"We played well in the first half but I want to believe that the pressure of this being our first game got to us," said Egypt coach Mohsen Salah.

"But in the second half I told the players to press harder for a goal. And the Zimbabwean goal only seemed to motivate my team."

In Tunis, former Liverpool

striker Titi Camara inspired Guinea to a second half fightback and a 2-1 win over the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Camara, who now plays his football in Qatar, played a telling role throughout the match and scored the equaliser that was to set up Guinea's win.

Ekakanga Masudi had given DR Congo a first half lead but after Camara's leveller, it was Guinea who finished the strongest with Pascal Feindounou scoring the winner.

"We deserved to be behind at half-time but I told the players at the break that they have to use their strengths and after the interval they played with more freedom and found plenty of space," said the team's French coach Michel Dussuyer.

The result puts Guinea equal top of Group A with hosts Tunisia who defeated Rwanda 2-1 on Saturday.

Rangers getting Frank de Boer



Football

AFP, Glasgow

Rangers are set to announce the surprise signing of Frank de Boer, Skysports reported Monday.

The Scottish club already have de Boer's twin brother, Ronald, on their books and have made a move to sign the vastly-experienced defender from Galatasaray.

The former Ajax centre back is keen to quit the Istanbul outfit.

A move to Perugia had been mooted last week, but Rangers are keen to reunite the de Boer twins at Glasgow.

The Holland international is to undergo medical tests at Ibrox on Monday, according to Dutch sources, and is likely to be unveiled to the press if everything goes to plan.

De Boer is the most-capped player in Dutch history, and, providing he stays into next season, will team up with Auxerre's Jean-Alain Boumsong at the heart of the defence next term.

Dad won't let Robben go to Chelsea

AFP, London

Highly-rated Dutch teenage striker Arjen Robben has been ruled out from joining big spending Premiership side Chelsea by his father who blasted the London side for lacking any structure and owner Roman Abramovich as having no idea what football was about.

The PSV Eindhoven forward's father Hans is also his agent and added his son would only go to Chelsea over his dead body indicating a clear preference for him to go to champions Manchester United who he said were a professional outfit.

His favouring United may not go down well with PSV who were irritated that United invited the 19-year-old over for talks without their knowledge - relations between the two clubs had already been soured over Ruud van Nistelrooy's transfer.

PSV admitted they had invited Chelsea to talk to Robben, who has scored 16 times in 48 appearances for PSV and is thought to be a probable for the Dutch Euro 2004 squad later this year.

"My son will not go to Chelsea. Over my dead body will he go there," Hans Robben told the Sunday Mirror.

"They have an owner who has no philosophy or structure at the club. Chelsea just buy expensive players all over Europe and think it will make them a great team."

"But my son has been to see Sir Alex Ferguson and nobody knows better why organisation and a good structure at a top club is so important."

"Old Trafford is the only place he wants to play and if he can't play there he would rather stay at PSV."

"In fact he would rather play in their reserves than go to Chelsea. It's as simple as that."

PSV officials said that if United wanted to pursue their interest in him they would have to come to the Netherlands like Chelsea had done to talk to him and the club.

Serie A

Five-star Milan



Football

AFP, Milan

Roma's title hopes suffered a setback on Sunday after they were held to a disappointing 1-1 draw at home to plucky Udinese.

Two dropped points coupled with AC Milan's 5-0 thrashing of bottom club Ancona saw Roma's lead at the top of Serie A cut to just one point.

Milan can now overtake Roma at the summit if they win their game in hand at home to Siena on Wednesday.

Roma are on 43 points, one ahead of second-placed Milan, while title-holders Juventus are three off the pace after being held to a 3-3 draw at struggling Empoli later Sunday.

Juventus were thwarted in their bid to close the gap on the leaders

with a hat-trick from their French international David Trezeguet cancelled out by a similar effort from Empoli's Tommaso Rocchi.

A rare goal by defender Christian Panucci gave Roma an early lead at the Olympic stadium, but after spurning several gilt-edged chances they grew anxious and invited pressure by defending from deep inside their own half.

Roma goalkeeper Carlo Zotti denied Udinese with some superb goalkeeping but could do nothing to stop their 88th minute equaliser which was no more than the visitors deserved.

The Roma defence failed to clear their lines from a high ball as Udinese piled forward, and Marek Jankulovski pounced to sweep a low shot past a helpless Zotti.

Milan failed to break down Ancona in a frustrating first 45 minutes at the San Siro, but they got their

act together in the second-half, scoring five goals in a 26-minute purple patch.

Andriy Shevchenko led the way, scoring his 15th league goal of the season from the penalty spot after Roberto Maltagliati had handled in the box, before turning provider to set up Manuel Rui Costa for Milan's second goal.

Shevchenko was then substituted for Jon Dahl Tomasson, who took over the spot-kick duties when Maltagliati gave away another penalty to put Milan 3-0 up.

Brazilian midfielder Kaka iced the cake with two goals in the last six minutes which left Ancona rooted to the foot of the table and still looking for their first win.

Inter Milan remain fourth after drawing 1-1 at Modena, but they would have come away with nothing had Francesco Toldo not saved Omar Milanetto's penalty.

TOP SIX											
Spanish league table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):											
Real	21	14	4	3	40	21	46				
Valencia	21	13	5	3	36	15	44				
Deportivo	21	12	4	5	36	17	40				
Atletico	21	10	5	6	29	24	35				
Osasuna	21	8	9	4	22	16	33				
Villarreal	21	9	6	6	28	24	33				

Alvaro Recoba put Inter ahead only for Nigerian striker Stephen Makinwa to level the scores.

Empoli had been bidding to pull off another upset hot on the heels of their victory over Inter Milan at the San Siro, with Rocchi, the striker who sunk Inter last week, putting them on the scoreboard first after 21 minutes following a cross from Igli Vamucchi.

Juve got the equaliser from Trezeguet after half an hour's play, and he doubled his account four minutes after the break.

But Rocchi struck again to draw level six minutes later with a header and completed his hat-trick seven minutes later with a volley.

Not to be outdone Trezeguet completed his hat-trick for Juventus after 75 minutes. The tie remained open until the final whistle with the draw lifting Empoli one spot to fourth from the bottom.

Parma were held to a 0-0 draw at home to nearby Bologna and remain fifth, behind Inter on goal difference.

Chievo came from behind to beat Brescia 3-1 in Verona.

Lazio returned to winning ways after a miserable run, snatching a 1-0 victory at Lecce. Brazilian wing-back Rodriguez Cesar scoring the only goal for the Rome side, who stay in sixth place.

TOP SIX											
Italian football league table after Sunday's games (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):											
Roma	18	13	4	1	37	8	43				
Milan	17	13	3	1	33	8	42				
Juventus	18	12	4	2	41	21	40				
Inter	18	9	5	4	29	13	32				
Parma	18	9	5	4	26	19	32				
Lazio	18	10	2	6	26	21	32				