



HOLY GROUND! Barcelona's Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho, plays with a ball during the recording of an advertising spot of the Holy Way of Santiago (Camino de Santiago) in front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela on March 1.

## Ronaldinho the sinner!

Football

BBC, Barcelona

Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho has sparked an unholy row after kicking a football through the window of a famous 12th century cathedral.

The Barcelona midfielder was filming an advert in front of the Santiago de Compostela in

Madrid when disaster struck.

One minute Ronaldinho was shaping up to perform a spectacular scissor kick, the next there was the sound of tinkling glass familiar to schoolboys everywhere.

Ronaldinho's only saving grace was that the broken pane in the cathedral's Portico de la Gloria (Portal of Glory) did not date from the 1100s.

The cathedral in the northern region of Galicia contains relics of

St James, Spain's patron saint, and is the destination for thousands of pilgrims each year following the Camino de Santiago trail.

Local newspaper La Voz de Galicia quoted the advert's director Emil Samper as saying: "It was my fault. I asked Ronaldinho to hit the ball as hard as he could and he had the bad luck to hit the window."

You can bet David Seaman won't be shedding too many tears.

## Money United!

AFP, London

English Premiership champions Manchester United have again topped the rich list of football clubs based on last season's income.

The list, produced by accountants Deloitte, revealed that United's income was 167.83 million pounds (308 million dollars) last term, well ahead of nearest rivals Juventus.

### FOOTBALL INCOME RICH LIST

1. Manchester United	167.83 million pounds (308 million dollars)
2. Juventus	145.75m (267.5m)
3. AC Milan	133.66m (245.3m)
4. Real Madrid	128.5m (235.8m)
5. Bayern Munich	108.6m (200m)
6. Inter Milan	108.4m (199m)
7. Arsenal	99.87m (183.3m)
8. Liverpool	99.74m (183m)
9. Newcastle United	92.73m (170.2m)
10. Chelsea	89.32m (164m)

## Collymore's confession

AFP, London

Former England international Stan Collymore has told a newspaper he visited "dogging" sites near his home to have sex with strangers.

The ex-Liverpool, Nottingham Forest and Aston Villa striker told the Daily Mirror he had confessed to his wife Estelle that he had driven to several sites where people watch each other having sex in their cars.

"What I have done is disgusting and I'm so ashamed, but I'm only human," the 33-year-old said. "I can only beg for forgiveness."

"Over the last couple of years I have been to dogging sites maybe a dozen to 15 times, and yes I have taken part and had sex during them."

"My only hope is that the people I know and love can find it in their hearts to forgive me."

Collymore said he was curious about what happened at dogging sites after reading about the activity on the Internet.

His secret visits to dogging sites were revealed by two undercover reporters from The Sun newspaper who met him at a car park.

The controversial player quit the game two years ago after a short spell with Spanish side Real Oviedo.

Collymore, for whom Liverpool paid Nottingham Forest a then British record 8.5 million pounds in 1995, scored 113 league and cup goals in 223 appearances for nine clubs.

His career never took off, beset by off-pitch problems which were continually reported in the media, his potential was never realized.

## Ronaldo commits to Real

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Ronaldo signed a two-year extension to his Real Madrid contract on Tuesday and said he expected to close out his career at the Spanish club.

"I had no doubts about this extension, from the moment Real Madrid expressed their interest," said the Brazilian striker, whose new deal runs until the end of the 2007-08 season.

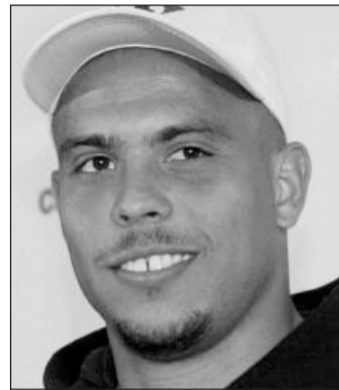
"Between now and 2008 I've got time to think but I assume I'll finish my career at Real Madrid. It would be spectacular to do that."

Ronaldo joined Real from Inter Milan for 45 million euros (\$56 million) in 2002, signing a four-year deal with an option for one further season.

Real announced on Tuesday that the two parties had agreed to prolong the contract for two further years.

Ronaldo, who has been the subject of speculation linking him with moves to England or back to Italy, said his first choice would be to remain at Real.

"Interest from other clubs is always nice but I'm at the best club in the world, playing with the world's best players," said Ronaldo, who was speaking at a news conference at Real's Santiago Bernabeu stadium. "I'm planning on spending a



RONALDO

lot of years here and going on to be an ambassador for the club."

Ronaldo is the second of Real's world-renowned players, the so-called "galactics," to agree to a new longer-term deal following Zinedine Zidane's decision last

month to extend his contract to 2007.

Spanish players Raul, Guti and Michel Salgado have also signed new contracts recently as part of the club's strategy to keep the first team squad as stable as possible.

"We're trying to maintain the nucleus of the side for years to come," Real director Emilio Butragueno told reporters. "This is great news for Real Madrid fans."

Ronaldo emerged from four years of career-threatening injury problems to help Brazil to victory in the World Cup in 2002, scoring two goals in the final to finish the tournament as top scorer with eight.

After a protracted transfer battle, he secured his move to Real and enjoyed an outstanding first season, scoring 23 league goals to lead his side to the league title. He was named FIFA's World Player of the Year for the third time in 2002.

Ronaldo is comfortably the leading scorer in the Primera Liga this season, with his 22 goals helping Real build an eight-point lead at the top of the table.

## Blues get Robben

AFP, London

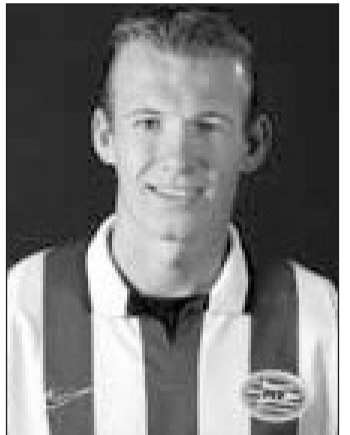
Chelsea have snatched 20-year-old Dutch winger Arjen Robben from under the noses of English Premiership champions Manchester United.

The London club confirmed Tuesday the PSV player had undergone a medical. Reports said the player had agreed a five-year contract worth around 2 million pounds (3.7 million dollars/3 million euros) a year that will see him complete the transfer in the summer.

Chelsea were said to have agreed to pay PSV 14.3 million pounds (26.7 million dollars/21.5 million euros) for the player.

Negotiations with United broke down a month ago when PSV were told Manchester were refusing to pay more than 8.6 million pounds (16 million dollars/13 million euros) for the player.

Chelsea stepped in and Robben was said to have met Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich and manager Claudio Ranieri in London two weeks ago. He was flown to London by private jet on Monday with PSV director Frank Arnesen and his agent Ton Smit.



ARJEN ROBBEN

Robben was understood to be suffering from a hamstring injury and the results of his medical would not be known until later Tuesday.

The transfer will take Abramovich's signings to over 135 million pounds (251 million dollars/202 million euros) on 12 players since he bought Chelsea last July.

Robben had three years left on his contract and has scored 17 goals for PSV in just over a season-and-a-half - including five this term - since joining after a two year spell at rivals FC Groningen.

## Bates era ends

Football

BBC, London

Ken Bates has stepped down as Chelsea chairman after being sidelined following Roman Abramovich's £140m takeover of the club.

The outspoken 72-year-old announced an end to his 22 years at the club in a speech to staff and supporters.

"Ken Bates is no longer chairman of Chelsea Football Club as of 10.30pm," read a statement from his office.

Bates' position at Stamford Bridge was weakened by the appointment of new chief executive Peter Kenyon last year.

And he was replaced by American lawyer Bruce Buck as chairman of the Chelsea Village parent company last month.

His notorious column in the club's magazine was then axed and he was not even on the official club flight out to Stuttgart for last week's Champions League tie.

Bates broke the news at his monthly Chairman's Super Club, telling 100 guests during a question and answer session he had been determined to make a "clean break" so as not to outstay his welcome.

"Certain things were agreed in July but they have not gone as planned," Bates said.

"It is in the best interests of the club that Peter Kenyon runs Chelsea in his own style rather than me being on side."

"There has been a clash of eastern and western cultures and eastern and western values."

Under the terms of Abramovich's takeover, Bates was said to have a contract to remain as football club chairman until the end of next season, when he was then due to become a life president of the club in its centenary year.

Instead he has opted to stand-down just a few weeks after Kenyon finally took up his post following his six-month enforced "gardening leave" from Manchester United.

Bates leaves with Chelsea unrecognisable from the club he bought for £1 in 1982.

In his 22 years he secured the future of Stamford Bridge amid a battle with property developers and oversaw the creation of the Chelsea Village empire.

He also oversaw success on the pitch having lured first Glenn Hoddle, then Ruud Gullit and finally Gianluca Vialli to the club.

Under that trio Chelsea won the FA Cup in 1997 and 2000, as well as

the Cup Winners' Cup and Coca-Cola Cup in 1998.

They also reached the quarter-finals of the Champions League in 2000 under Vialli but Bates still took the decision to replace the Italian with Claudio Ranieri last year.

But Bates had stretched his business financially and, with an enormous wage bill and the bottom falling out of the European television rights market, Chelsea were in trouble again.

The club was heavily in debt by the time Bates sold his shares to Abramovich last July, the Russian wiping out debts of £80m as well as providing Bates with a considerable personal fortune.

Ironically it is the Russian's ambition to take Chelsea to an even higher level - bringing in Kenyon and other backroom personnel as well as spending £137m on players - which has finally forced Chelsea's controversial and colourful chairman to quit.

## Carlos banned

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Nyon

Brazil defender Roberto Carlos will miss Real Madrid's Champions League return match against Bayern Munich next week after he was banned for two European games by UEFA on Monday.

Roberto Carlos was punished by

European football's governing body after hitting out at the head of Bayern's Argentinian defender Martin Demichelis in the first leg of the second round match last week.

The match referee Terje Hauge of Norway failed to see the punch, but UEFA based its ruling on television pictures.

UEFA said in its ruling that such an offence is normally punishable by a three-match ban. However the

disciplinary committee accepted that Demichelis had provoked the Brazilian by making the original foul for which he was booked.

Roberto Carlos scored the equaliser in the 1-1 draw after Bayern goalkeeper Oliver Kahn let the ball squirm under his body.

Under the ban, the Brazilian would also miss the first leg of the quarter-final if Real qualify.

## Houllier threatened with death

REUTERS, London

Police have launched an investigation after Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier received a death threat in the post last month, the English premier league club said on Wednesday.

Houllier received the threat in a letter he opened at the club's Melwood training centre three weeks ago and Liverpool reported it to Merseyside police, the club said.

"It was worrying enough to involve the police," a Liverpool spokesman told the club's website.

"They are still investigating. It was very unpleasant and because of that we have involved the police in the situation. We do not want to over-dramatise the incident, but such letters cannot be ignored."

Merseyside Police confirmed "an investigation was launched after a threatening letter was sent to Gerard Houllier...at the beginning of February and the investigation is ongoing."

According to newspaper reports, the letter was anonymous and said the Frenchman should resign as Liverpool manager or his life would be in danger.

Houllier is in Sofia with his team for their UEFA Cup third round second-leg match against Levski on Wednesday night.

Liverpool are 2-0 up from the first leg but the UEFA Cup is their only chance left of a title this season. They are out of the FA Cup and the premier league title race and pressure has been heaped on Houllier to quit.

After Liverpool lost at Portsmouth in an FA Cup fifth-round replay last month graffiti scrawled on the wall at the club's training ground included the message: "Hope you die of Aids, Houllier."

Houllier, 56, has been in charge at Liverpool since 1998. His side won the treble of FA Cup, League Cup and UEFA Cup in 2001 and they won the League Cup again last year but Liverpool have not won the league championship since 1990.

## Preview

# British duo in comfort zone

UEFA CUP

AFP, Paris

Liverpool and last year's finalists Celtic are confident of progressing to the last 16 of the UEFA Cup as they take comfortable leads into their third round second leg matches on Wednesday.

In contrast, Italian big guns Inter Milan and AS Roma are both teetering on the edge of humiliation against relative minnows Sochaux of France and Turkish side Gaziantepspor.

Gerard Houllier's shaky hold on the managerial job at Liverpool was slightly bolstered by last week's 2-0 defeat of Bulgarian side Levski Sofia at Anfield.

Houllier said Monday that all the pressure was now on Sofia. "It was difficult to beat them at home because they had practically ten men behind the ball," said the Frenchman.

"I think they've got to come out and try something. Hopefully that will give us more space to play. We've got an advantage of two goals and a clean sheet, and we have to build on it."

Liverpool, who are listed as 10-1 by British bookmakers to win the trophy they last lifted in 2001, have been boosted by the turbo-charged form of Czech striker Milan Baros since his return from

injury.

"He (Baros) has been missing for six months and now when I watch him, I realise just what we have been missing," said Houllier.

Australian forward Harry Kewell will be looking to add to the goals he scored in the first leg and in the weekend Premiership draw against Leeds.

Celtic are romping away with the Scottish title so manager Martin O'Neill is urging his players on to pick up other trophies.

A 3-0 lead over FK Teplice should be enough for O'Neill's men to progress in the Czech Republic.

"We have two big cup matches against Teplice next Wednesday and Rangers again (in the Scottish Cup) and we are focused on them," said O'Neill.

Newcastle's home tie with Norwegian side Valerenga is poised at 1-1 and it is certain that coach Sir Bobby Robson will not

repeat his tactics of last week when he angered veteran striker Alan Shearer by resting him on the bench.

Inter Milan were held 2-2 by Sochaux in the first leg in France and despite gaining two valuable away goals the out-of-form Italians will need to put their foot down at the San Siro to pull away from the team lying fourth in the French league.

The Inter players were pelted with missiles by their disgruntled fans after their 3-1 home defeat to Brescia on Sunday which left them sixth in the table, 22 points behind leaders and bitter city rivals AC Milan.

Sochaux were boosted Monday when the club announced that their Brazilian-born Tunisian international Santos would play in Wednesday's match after all.

Santos was set to miss the game after traces of corticoids, or steroid hormones which reduce fatigue and swelling, were found

in his urine following a routine check-up.

But club president Jean-Claude Plessis said the importance of the drugs had been overblown.

"The issue is cleared up. We had declared him positive when in fact he wasn't," said Plessis. "The reading was amplified by stress and the birth of his daughter yesterday (Sunday)."

Roma have potentially the trickiest task of the night as they host Turkish side Gaziantepspor, who are leading 1-0 from the first leg.

A 4-1 league win over Parma on Sunday set Roma on their way.

Spanish giants Barcelona will expect to build on their 1-0 first leg lead against Danish side Brondby at the Nou Camp.

Former European champions Marseille meanwhile head to the cold of Ukraine to put a narrow 1-0 lead against Dniepropetrovsk on the line.



Bulgarian fans crowd near Liverpool's Michael Owen after his arrival at Sofia on March 1.

PHOTO AFP

### FIXTURES

UEFA Cup third round second leg fixtures on Wednesday (first leg scores in brackets):

Real Mallorca (SPA) v Spartak Moscow (RUS) (3-0)	Newcastle United (ENG) v Valerenga (NOR) (1-1)	Villareal (SPA) v Galatasaray (TUR) (2-2)	AS Roma (ITA) v Gaziantepspor (TUR) (0-1)
Bordeaux (FRA) v Gyorcin (POL) (1-0)	Dniepropetrovsk (UKR) v Marseille (FRA) (0-1)	PSV Eindhoven (NED) v Perugia (ITA) (0-0)	Genclerbirliigi (TUR) v Parma (ITA) (1-0)
Debreccen (HUN) v FC Bruges (BEL) (0-1)	Barcelona (SPA) v Brondby (DEN) (1-0)	FK Teplice (CZE) v Celtic (SCO) (0-3)	Levski Sofia (BUL) v Liverpool (ENG) (0-2)
Panathinaikos (GRE) v Auxerre (FRA) (0-0)	Inter Milan (ITA) v Sochaux (FRA) (2-2)	Besiktas (TUR) v Valencia (SPA) (2-3)	Rosenborg (NOR) v Benfica (POR) (0-1)