



WHEN NOTHING GOES YOUR WAY: (L) A downcast Real Madrid superstar Ronaldo after straining his thigh against Osasuna during their match at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid on April 11. (R) Fellow ace Zinedine Zidane leave ing the field dejected after Osasuna won 3-0.

headed in by Moha.

with Antonio Lopez.

By the final whistle, there were

huge swathes of empty seats inside

the Bernabeu as fans showed their

displeasure, although Mrs

Beckham was still there waiting to

confront her husband over allega-

only goal of the game as Valencia

Miguel Angel Angulo scored the

Angulo headed in a free-kick

from Jorge Lopez in the 71st minute

but the win was overshadowed by a

knee injury suffered by striker

Mohamed Sissoko which could rule

him out of Wednesday's UEFA Cup

tions that he has had two affairs.

won 1-0 at Real Zaragoza.

Primera Liga

A Real-ly bad week

Football

AFP, Madrid

David Beckham's worst week of his professional and personal life plunged to new depths on Sunday when his Real Madrid team lost 3-0 at home to Osasuna and surrendered the lead of the Spanish cham-

The England skipper, who woke up on Sunday to more lurid allegations concerning his private life splashed across the British tabloids, found no hiding place as Real Madrid suffered only their third home league defeat in four seasons to follow their Champions League exit at Monaco.

Goals from Valmiro Valdo, ironically on loan at Osasuna from Real, Pablo Garcia and Mohamed El Yaagoubi Moha were enough to strip Real of pole position after title rivals Valencia had earlier defeated Real Zaragoza 1-0 to go top by two

"I am sad and very disappointed," said coach Carlos Queiroz ho now looks certain for the axe.

"Losing the first home game this season is a bad moment. Our morale wasn't the best after losing to Monaco and the Spanish Cup final, but the players are professional and they will recover. "I haven't talked to the officials

(about his future). My priority is with Beckham's first touch came in

the first minute of the game and that was to kick the ball back into his own net in frustration after Valdo had opened the scoring making the most of a defensive mix-up. Beckham, watched by wife

Victoria and son Brooklyn in the Bernabeu stands, endured a lacklustre start before almost pulling his side level in the 19th minute.

He unleashed a lob from the halfway line which floated over the head of a backtracking Osasuna goalkeeper Ricardo Sanzol only for the ball to land on top of the goal.

The England skipper then came in for some rough treatment getting caught on the side of the head by Garcia before taking a nasty knock to the calf.

Things got worse for Real when, first, Ronaldo was forced to limp off with a thigh injury and they fell further behind when goalkeeper Iker Casillas dropped a cross at the feet of Garcia who lobbed the ball in from the edge of the box for 2-0 just before the break.

On the hour mark, it was 3-0 when a long clearance from Sanzol

allowed Valdo to sprint away from clash against Bordeaux. Roberto Carlos and his cross was In two weeks' time, Real Madrid

face bitter rivals Barcelona who kept Zinedine Zidane then had a goal up their push for a Champions disallowed before Beckham was League spot next season when they convinced he should have been defeated Valladolid 3-1 on awarded a penalty after clashing Saturday.

Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldinho scored one of the goals which set Barca on their way but then put his good work to waste by getting sent off.

booked for refusing to retreat the full ten metres from a free-kick and then received his second yellow card in the 55th minute when he tried to kick the ball out of the hands of Valladolid goalkeeper Albano Bizzarri.

Barca were cruising at the time having gone 2-0 ahead through Javier Saviola and Ronaldinho who found the net for the 20th time this

After the Brazilian's dismissal, Valladolid took full advantage with Oscar pulling a goal back in the 66th minute but Andres Iniesta then scored his first goal in the top flight

to make sure of the three points in the 85th minute

TOP SIX Ronaldinho had already been

Spanish league standings after Sunday's late match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points): Valencia 32 21 6 5 63 21 69

Real 32 20 7 5 65 40 67 Deportivo 32 18 6 8 52 30 60 Barcelona 31 17 8 6 51 33 59 Osasuna 32 11 15 6 35 27 48 32 13 9 10 42 40 48

Ronaldo injures thigh again

Football

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid's woes continued Monday with the news that Brazilian striker Ronaldo will be out of action for up to two weeks after injuring his left thigh in the 0-3 home loss to Osasuna on Sunday.

That shock defeat lost Real the league leadership to Valencia and deepened the gloom at the Bernabeu following last week's

Champions League elimination to Monaco.

Ronaldo pulled up in the 25th minute of the Osasuna game and was replaced two minutes later by

Club doctor Alfonso del Corral said that the injury was similar to the one that sidelined the player in

He will definitely miss the game against Atletico Madrid next weekend and possibly the showdown with Barcelona on April 25.

Bundesliga

Bremen can relax

Football

AFP, Berlin

Werder Bremen believe they have virtually clinched the German title after a controversial penalty gave them victory over Eintracht Frankfurt and kept them seven points clear at the top.

Bremen struggled to get past Eintracht who are fighting relega-tion and Saturday's match at the Waldstadion appeared to be heading for a draw after Bremen's Umit Davala and Frankfurt's Ioannis Amanatidis were sent off in the 41st minute.

But ten minutes from the end, Bremen substitute Nelson Valdez was pulled back by Alexander Schur on the edge of the area.

Referee Jurgen Jansen pointed to the spot and French defender Valerien Ismael converted the penalty to earn Bremen's first victory in three matches. Bayern bounced back from

going a goal behind to beat Schalke 2-1 thanks to two goals from Roy Makaay, but failed to close the gap on the long-time leaders and saw goalkeeper Oliver Kahn limp off at the Olympic Stadium after an hour.

Bayer Leverkusen crushed struggling Kaiserslautern 6-0 at the BayArena to consolidate fourth spot and a Champions League place.

The onslaught began with an own goal from Timo Wenzel in the second minute and strikes from Dimitar Berbatov, Lucio and Franca made it 4-0 at half-time. Franca added a second goal in

the second half and Turkish international Yildiray Basturk finished VfB Stuttgart firmed up their hold on third spot on Sunday when

Kevin Kuranyi scored after 10 minutes against SC Freiburg and

that proved enough for a 1-0 victory which leaves them five points ahead of Leverkusen. Bayern's victory came over the

team managed by Jupp Heynckes, who guided them to two German championships. Schalke opened the scoring through a fourth minute penalty from Sven Vermant after Sammy Kuffour fouled Levan Kobiashvili. But Makaay equalised four

minutes later when he turned in Ze Roberto's cross for his 21st goal of the season. Kahn twisted his knee in a clash with Michael Delura and had to be

replaced on the hour mark by 19year-old substitute keeper Michael However Bayern shook off that setback to claim victory through

Makaav in the 64th minute. In other results, Hertha Berlin

mproved their chances of avoiding relegation when they beat VfL Wolfsburg 1-0 in the capital thanks to a 22nd minute goal from Angolan striker Nando Rafael which meant Eric Gerets made a losing debut as Wolfsburg coach.

Berlin move up a place but are third from bottom and level on 28 points with Kaiserslautern.

Bottom-of-the-table Cologne have one foot in the second division after losing 1-0 to Hannover on Sunday. Cologne are eight points adrift of the next team in the safety zone.

TOP SIX

German league table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

	Bremen	28	20	6	2	67	28 66
1	Bayern	28	17	8	3	63	30 59
1	Stuttgart	28	15	9	4	43	17 54
1	Leverkusen	28	14	7	7	56	34 49
1	Bochum	28	12	9	7	46	33 45
1	Dortmund	28	13	6	9	47	36 45

Premiership

Stalemate suit Gunners



AFP, Newcastle

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger marveled at his side's inner strength after the Gunners' inched another step closer to the Premiership title with a 0-0 draw against Newcastle at St James' Park on Sunday

Wenger's champions-in-waiting extended their unbeaten run in the league to 32 games this season and their advantage over second-placed Chelsea to seven points with six matches to go.

The result left Newcastle level on points with Liverpool, their main obstacle to reserving a place in the Champions League next season. After a gruelling week which saw

Arsenal crash out of the Champions League. Wenger hailed his team's

"My players responded marvellously - they showed great mental strength

"We're in a good position but we are not big enough to say we feel comfortable - we want to extend our lead and now have six games left."

He added: "We had three good chances to score but the difficult pitch played its part." His Newcastle counterpart Bobby

Robson laughed when it was put to him that Wenger thought Arsenal may have just deserved to take the three points. "Arsene always thinks that!" he

said before acclaiming the Gunners' spotless Premiership run. "It's an amazing achievement to be unbeaten," he said, adding that he felt

his young side were not a million miles

away from standing shoulder to

shoulder with Arsenal. "Arsenal are where we want to be, but on the evidence of what we have already we're not far behind. What we need is investment to get where they

The former England manager hailed "a stirring contest"

"There was hardly anything

between the two sides. No one made any mistakes - there were no free presents here today. "There was a big battle in midfield.

and the defenders were on top of the attackers, nullifing any shots.

"We've shown resilience and character after a lot of football this

Robson picked an identical team to the one that drew 1-1 with PSV Eindhoven in the UEFA Cup on Thursday with one exception, Andy O'Brien coming on for Titus Bramble.

Wenger made three changes from the side that blew away Liverpool on Friday, with Freddie Ljungberg, Dennis Bergkamp and Robert Pires giving way to Sylvain Wiltord, Brazilian Edu and Jose Antonio

A largely scrappy first period offered up only the occasional chance - one coming early on for Newcastle when Alan Shearer crossed to Gary Speed whose backheeled shot was only denied by Jens Lehmann's outstretched fingertips.

Reves then set up Thierry Henry who was playing after shrugging off a back problem, for a curling rightfooted shot from 20 yards, the ball edging wide of the right post.

Despite dominating possession. Arsenal's opportunities were few and far between, with the best coming from Wiltord as half-time beckoned.

The France international, returning after a lengthy lay-off, pounced on Jermaine Jenas' attempt to get the ball back to keeper Shay Given but his dangerous left-footed shot from the penalty area going wide of the right post.

Laurent Robert' had a free kick fly past the Arsenal wall only to be saved by a diving Lehmann in the 50th

In a one-on-one with Given, Henry deftly sidestepped the onrushing Newcastle keeper but despite an open goal his shot from the right hit the Shortly after the French ace

crossed from the right but Reyes' neader in front of goal was a lame effort directed straight at Given. Both managers made late tactical changes in an attempt to break the

deadlock with on Arsenal's side Pires coming on for Wiltord and Bergkamp replacing Reyes with less than guarter of an hour left.

But the tinkerings were to no avail and both teams wll have been happy with a share of the points.

TOP SIX

English Premiership table after Sunday's

match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals

32 23 9 0 62 22 78

32 22 5 5 58 24 71

32 13 10 9 48 35 49

32 12 13 7 45 33 49

20 5 6 58 31 65

for, goals against, points):

31

Arsenal

Chelsea

Man Utd

Liverpool

AFP,London

captain's alleged infidelities.

Beckham was expected to make a

Speculation was rife that he might consider legal action, after a week-long series of allegations that soccer star Beckham, 28, was unfaithful to his pop star wife Victoria, who turns 30 next week-



Beckhams in conference!



David and Victoria Beckham were back in Britain on Monday, plotting their next move in the face of a tabloid frenzy over the England

They arrived at their sprawling Hertfordshire home, dubbed "Beckingham Palace," in the early hours of the morning, and statement after huddling with his advisers.

In a public show of support, Victoria was seen in the stands at

Bernabeu stadium on Sunday as Beckham took to the field for Real Madrid for a league match against

Beckham has dismissed as "ludicrous" claims by his erstwhile personal assistant Rebecca Loos, 26, that they had sex together after he moved from Manchester United to Real Madrid while Victoria stayed in Britain.

Osasuna, which they lost 3-0.

The furore intensified Sunday when Malaysian-born Australian model Sarah Marbeck, 29, told the News of the World newspaper that she had a two-vear affair with Beckham that started during a Man U tour in Singapore in July 2001.

Meanwhile, the father of Marbeck said yesterday that he was devastated over reports involving his daughter.

Marbeck, 29, told the tabloid how the former Manchester United player had sent her hundreds of erotic text messages during their

relationship Her father, Terrance Marbeck,

told reporters outside his home in the Perth suburb of Karrinyup that he had not seen Sarah recently and was unaware of the claims until he read them on the newspaper's website.

"I just came over from Malaysia, and I am just totally devastated by this," Marbeck a barrister said. "I just want to send a message to Sarah, she's not here, ... wherever you are -- Mum and Dad love you verv much. And call us.'

Mr. Marbeck, accompanied by his wife Elizabeth, said he had not heard from his daughter since the claims were published and did not know where she was.

"If you had a daughter would you like all these revelations coming out in the press, would you?" he asked. "I'm feeling pretty rotten about it."

He said he had not seen his

daughter for a couple of months and she had not confided in him prior to telling her story to the News of the World. But he wanted to "touch base"

with his daughter, who has not visited the family's Perth home since Christmas "I hope you will now leave us all

alone to enjoy the rest of Easter," he told reporters. They left on Monday after Mr. Marbeck made it clear his daughter

The journalist who wrote the article confirmed Sarah Marbeck had been paid for the story -- how much, he would not say -- but said it did not make her comments less

was not in Perth.

Newcastle Birmingham 32 12 10 10 38 38 46

Arsenal's French star Thierry Henry (L) goes round Newcastle United's keeper Shay Given at St James Park, Newcastle on April 11. But Henry's attempt went wide.