

Papers feel the rage

AFP, London

Arsenal's fury at Manchester United's 2-0 win in the English Premiership on Sunday spilled over into the papers on Monday with Gunners' manager Arsene Wenger's claims they had been cheated given prominent display.

'Roo Dirty Rat' headlined The Sun over Wayne Rooney's apparent dive under a challenge from Sol Campbell which led to Ruud van Nistelrooy's penalty which broke the deadlock.

And Wenger's claim that the Dutchman should not have been on the pitch to take the penalty after stamping on the foot of Ashley Cole also figured prominently.

'This defeat is very difficult to take because we feel like we were robbed,' Wenger told The Sun.

'You cheats' blared The Daily Mail which pointed out that referee Mike Riley has awarded United a penalty in all eight matches he has handled at Old Trafford.

'Arsenal pay the price this time as ref gets it wrong,' added the Mail.

'Arsenal in a rage after Rooney's party piece,' said The Daily Telegraph of Rooney's 19th birthday performance which included winning the penalty and scoring the second.

But the papers agreed feelings ran too high for much good football with players allowed to get away with murder in an often scrappy match.

'Ruud van Nistelrooy, with a dubious penalty, and Rooney, in jury time, inflict the first Premiership defeat on Arsenal in 50 games,' was how The Times summed it up.

'Wayne Rooney tucked home a stoppage-time goal as the substitutes Louis Saha and Alan Smith combined on the counter-attack. The opportunity arose only because Arsenal were trying to notch an equaliser and right a wrong. Van Nistelrooy's penalty was not merited,' said The Guardian.



PHOTO: AFP

FACE SAYS IT ALL: Manchester United's Ruud van Nistelrooy is relieved after converting a penalty against Arsenal during their Premiership clash at Old Trafford on October 24.

Premiership

Gunners get Ruud shock

Football

AFP, Manchester

Ruud van Nistelrooy took his revenge on Arsenal in the sweetest possible fashion as Manchester United ended their arch rivals' 49-match unbeaten run in the Premiership with a 2-0 win in controversial circumstances.

Van Nistelrooy, who had been violently jostled and taunted by the Arsenal players after he missed a penalty that would have given United victory in the corresponding fixture last season, coolly sent Jens Lehmann the wrong way from the spot to put United ahead 17 minutes from the end.

His strike partner Wayne Rooney, who had won the penalty, then applied the final fatal blow in stoppage time, side-footing home Alan Smith's cross from close range.

It was Arsenal's first defeat in the league since a loss to Leeds in May 2003 effectively handed United the title and it is one that is likely to leave a legacy of lasting bitterness given the nature of the crucial penalty.

Television replays suggested Rooney had gone down extremely easily after the lightest of contacts from Sol Campbell. But referee Mike Riley had no hesitation in pointing to the spot and van Nistelrooy did the rest.

As a spectacle, the match was disfigured from the outset by challenges that spanned a spectrum from the mildly reckless to borderline malevolent and which, for the first 35 minutes, Riley was peculiarly reluctant to sanction.

Ashley Cole was extremely fortunate to escape a booking after clattering into Ryan Giggs inside the first two minutes but he could not escape the lunge from Rooney that followed 60 seconds later.

That set the pattern for a stop-start contest in which neither side was able to play with sustained fluency.

A more open encounter may have ensued had United managed to exploit the eighth minute chance that fell to Ryan Giggs after Kolo Toure charged down Rooney's shot from just inside the area.

The loose ball fell to Scholes who immediately returned it to Rooney. The teenager's cut-back wrong-footed the Arsenal defence but Sol Campbell was able to recover in time to block Giggs' shot from just behind the penalty spot.

Arsenal had another scare shortly afterwards when Lehmann straight at Ronaldo, whose first-time pass caught van Nistelrooy only fractionally offside.

It was the visitors however who had the better quality chances and they had considerable cause for complaint when Edu sent Freddie Ljungberg sprinting clear of the United back four mid-way through the opening period.

The Swedish midfielder appeared to be barged over by Rio Ferdinand but referee Mike Riley judged the challenge legitimate.

Another chance went begging when Dennis Bergkamp's control let him down as he received Jose Antonio Reyes's neat dink into the box, allowing Roy Carroll just enough time to close him down and block.

United had further reason to be grateful to Carroll three minutes before the interval when Edu, drifting in from the right, played Thierry Henry in behind his France teammate Mikael Silvestre.

Again the Northern Ireland goalkeeper was quickly off his line to narrow the angle and block Henry's attempt at a chipped finish.

Arsenal's dominance extended into the opening stages of the second half, which saw Bergkamp squander another gilt-edged opportunity. Ljungberg was the creator, beating Gabriel Heinze on the right touchline before delivering a low cross that Bergkamp pulled wide of the target.

As things were to turn out, that was to prove Arsenal's last chance of extending their winning run to 50 matches in their biggest rivals backyard.

Arsene Wenger's men can console themselves however with the knowledge that they remain eight points clear of United in the Premiership table.

Elsewhere, controversial striker Craig Bellamy brought an eventful week to a remarkable conclusion by claiming an 89th-minute winner for Newcastle in a seven-goal thriller against Manchester City.

England hopeful Shaun Wright-Phillips looked to have snatched a point for the visitors with his 77th-minute strike, but the Welshman claimed the points at the death with a clinical finish to make it 4-2.

Kevin Keegan's former club looked to be flying after Laurent Robert's superb 49th-minute free-kick and a 56th-minute Alan Shearer penalty put them two up, but Wright-Phillips sparked an unlikely fightback with a 64th-minute strike and substitute Robbie Fowler levelled from the spot three minutes later, only for Robbie Elliott's header to creep home two minutes later.

Southampton clawed their way off the bottom after a bitty 0-0 draw with Birmingham.

The Saints, still to win under head coach Steve Wigley, did have the better of the first half and Dexter Blackstock's header bounced off the top of the crossbar.

But the visitors, this season's draw specialists having arrived at St Mary's on the back of four successive stalemates, improved after the break.

And only a superb diving stop from keeper Antti Niemi denied a winning volley from David Dunn.

Stewart Downing's late strike cancelled out Diomansy Kamara's fine effort as Middlesbrough and Portsmouth shared the spoils at The Riverside.

The in-form Boro youngster rifled home a shot from 18 yards 16 minutes from time to earn Steve McClaren's side the point their attacking football deserved.

Portsmouth took the lead as early as the fourth minute when Kamara embarked on a mazy run which ended with a low left-footed strike past Mark Schwarzer.

But Harry Redknapp's troops were on the back foot for the rest of the second half and Shaka Hislop produced fine saves to deny Downing and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, while Yakubu cleared a Szilard Nemeth header off the line.

The Boro domination continued after the break, with Hasselbaink, George Boateng and Nemeth all going close before Downing pounced.

Mark Viduka had a glorious chance to grab a winner as time ran out, but Hislop pushed his header onto the underside of the bar before the ball was scrambled away to safety.

Table with 5 columns: Team, P, W, D, L, Goals For, Goals Against, Points. Includes Arsenal, Chelsea, Everton, Bolton, Man Utd, Liverpool.

Wenger's tirade at ref

Football

INTERNET REPORT, London

Furious Arsene Wenger launched a bitter attack on Wayne Rooney, referee Mike Riley and Manchester United's rough-house tactics after Arsenal had surrendered their 49-game unbeaten record at Old Trafford on Sunday.

The Gunners boss was already seething at Riley for failing to dismiss man of the match Rio Ferdinand for a foul on Freddie Ljungberg during the first half of the Red Devils' 2-0 win, then for

failing to spot Ruud van Nistelrooy's apparent stamp on Ashley Cole and finally for not clamping down on a succession of fouls on Jose Reyes.

But what really tipped Wenger over the edge was Riley's decision to award a penalty for Sol Campbell's tackle on Wayne Rooney 18 minutes from time when there appeared to be minimal contact between the England pair.

Wenger just stopped short of directly accusing Rooney of being a cheat but claimed the youngster, who celebrated his 19th birthday by tapping home an

injury-time second, had told the Arsenal team Campbell had not touched him.

'Rooney told my players he had not been touched,' fumed Wenger.

'There is a deep feeling of injustice among my players because it is quite clear there was no contact. It feels like we have been robbed.'

'Sol Campbell told me there had been no contact and in situations like that, the referee has to be sure.'

'I didn't look obvious to me but look at the record of the referee in matches involving Manchester

United. That tells you all you need to know.'

Riley has a history of awarding penalties for the Old Trafford side, including two in one game against Liverpool a couple of seasons ago.

Sir Alex Ferguson believed the Leeds official had an impossible job, claiming Patrick Vieira was running the game during the first half because 'he was always by the referee's side'.

Not surprisingly, Wenger saw things differently.

The Frenchman said: 'We are not happy about the penalty, or the tackle by Rio Ferdinand on Freddie Ljungberg in the first half, or the fact Reyes was kicked off the park.'

'Ashley Cole has a big bruise on his shin and nearly didn't come out for the second half after the incident with van Nistelrooy.'

'But these type of tactics are exactly what I expected from Manchester United.'

'This is what they always do when they are in a difficult situation and playing against us.'

'It's disappointing because we were the better team. They hardly had a chance in either half before the penalty, so it's natural we are not happy.'

'But we can only look after our own performance, we can't do anything about the referee.'

'I am proud of my players and we are still a great side. Now we just have to go on another unbeaten run.'

Wenger denied reports there had been a post-match bust-up in the tunnel, although there had been a series of running feuds throughout the game, including one between Roy Carroll and Thierry Henry, who became increasingly frustrated at the time taken by the Irishman to pick the ball up in his own area once the hosts had gone in front.

The Arsenal boss remained bullish about his team's title chances, even though United have now closed the gap on them to eight points and second-placed Chelsea, whose owner Roman Abramovich was watching from the stands, are only two points adrift.

For Ferguson though, it was the perfect outcome to a must-win game, with the extra satisfaction of Van Nistelrooy putting the misery of his penalty miss in the corresponding fixture last term well and truly behind him.

'It has taken over a year but I am so pleased he had a chance to put what happened last season behind him,' said the Scot.

'I was just starting to think about making a substitution when we got the penalty.'

'It looked clear enough to me. If someone gets brought down in the area, the decision is automatic.'

'As for the Ferdinand situation, the referee got it right again. Ljungberg wasn't getting the ball, he wasn't beating Rio for pace, so the next best thing is to try and get the referee to make a decision.'

Primera Liga

Barca overwhelm Osasuna

Football

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona extended their unbeaten streak to eight games and maintained their five point lead at the top of the Spanish first division as they cruised to a 3-0 win over Osasuna.

Samuel Eto'o and Ronaldinho found the net late in the first half to put the Catalan club in the driving seat.

The Brazilian showed why he is a prime candidate for the FIFA world-player-of-the-year with a dazzling run down the left flank before providing the service for the African player-of-the-year smashing home the opener after 39 minutes.

Four minutes later, it was Ronaldinho himself who was doing the celebrating after scoring from the spot after being brought down by Osasuna's Cesar Cruchaga.

Eto'o then got his seventh goal of the season two minutes into injury time, after having the visitors from Pamplona under the cosh for most of the second half.

On Saturday, Real Madrid got their first win in four domestic outings and moved up to seventh place, with a 1-0 win over reigning champions Valencia.

Sevilla maintained their role as the surprise package of the Spanish season with a comfortable 2-1 win over Atletico Madrid to move up to second on Sunday.

Aitor Ocio opened the scoring for Sevilla after just 10 minutes with a hard, low shot from the edge of the area that gave Atletico goalkeeper Leo Franco little chance.

Seven minutes after the break, Baptista danced past Atletico's frustrated defender Pablo Ibanez before slotting the ball in.

Ibanez partially made up for his lax defending by scrambling home an Atletico consolation goal in injury time.

Espanyol leapt up to fourth after their impressive 2-0 win at Levante.

Oscar Serrano got his debut goal in the Spanish first division seven minutes after the break and Alberto Lopo made sure that three points went back with the Barcelona-based side by hitting Espanyol's second after 72 minutes.

At the other end of the table, Racing Santander clawed their way off the bottom of the Spanish first division with a 1-0 win over Real Zaragoza.

A fourth minute goal from Uruguayan international Mario Regueiro, after a neat one-two between Fernando Moran and Pedro Lopez split the Zaragoza defence, was sufficient to grab Racing's first home win of the season.

Numanca slumped to the foot of the table after their 4-0 thrashing at Villarreal, their fourth consecutive away loss.

Juan Roman Riquelme opened the scoring for Villarreal after 20 minutes and the Argentine midfielder made the second after 66 minutes when he ran rings around the Numancia defenders before laying the ball off for Hector Font.

utes to add his second before former Manchester United striker Diego Forlan found the net five minutes from time to complete Villarreal's quartet.

The goal was Forlan's fourth since his arrival in Spain, to equal his tally for the entire year in the English Premiership last season.



PHOTO: AFP

WHAT'S SO FUNNY: Barcelona Brazilian playmaker Ronaldinho (R) jokes with teammate Giulio after scoring against Osasuna during their Spanish league match at the Nou Camp on October 24.

Bundesliga

Stuttgart stumble

AFP, Berlin

Ten-man Stuttgart fell to a surprise 2-0 defeat at struggling SC Freiburg on Sunday as they missed the chance to regain top spot in the German top flight.

Goals from Georgian international Alexander Iaschvili (35) and Mali star Soumaila Coulibaly (90) helped Freiburg become the first team to defeat Matthias Sammer's side in the 2004/05 campaign.

Martin Stranzl was dismissed for Stuttgart in the 69th minute to cap a miserable afternoon for the visitors who must get themselves fired up for Werder Bremen on Wednesday.

Eisehower Brazilian attacker Ailton scored his first league goal for Schalke 04 in a 2-1 home victory over Mainz 05.

Ailton, 31, was furious at being left warming the substitutes' bench for the UEFA Cup draw with FC Basel Thursday, but took his frustrations out in the best fashion with a fine strike.

All three goals were netted by Brazilians with Schalke's Lincoln opening the scoring with a ferocious volley in the 25th minute.

Table with 5 columns: Team, P, W, D, L, Goals For, Goals Against, Points. Includes Wolfsburg, Stuttgart, Bayern, Bremen, Mainz, Schalke.

Serie A

Honours even in Milan

Football

AFP, Rome

Leaders Juventus were the happiest team in Serie A after title rivals AC Milan and Inter Milan played out a 0-0 draw in front of an 80,000 crowd at the San Siro.

Clear-cut chances were at a premium, but the best opportunity fell to AC Milan striker Andriy Shevchenko 17 minutes from time, the normally clinical Ukrainian sending his close range header wide of the post.

The stalemate left Juventus, who won 3-0 away to Siena on Saturday, sitting pretty at the top of Serie A with a five point lead.

Juventus top the table with 19 points from seven matches, while dark horses Lecce, 4-1 winners at Messina, are tied with AC Milan on 14 points but have a superior goal difference than that of the defending champions.

Chievo kept their unbeaten record but fell to fourth after they were held to a 0-0 draw at home to Reggina which left them with 13 points, two ahead of Inter and Messina.

In Milan, the first 10 minutes belonged to Inter with Christian Vieri spurning three half-chances.

But after their early enthusiasm had fizzled out, Milan started to wrestle control of an open and fiercely-contested derby.

Inter keeper Alberto Fontana denied Hernan Crespo with a superb reflex save when the Argentinian tried to divert Marcos Cafu's right-wing cross into the net and then Kaka sent a diagonal shot wide of the post.

Fontana was busy again on the half hour mark, saving first from Shevchenko before fisting the ball away from Crespo, who had tried to capitalise on the loose ball.

Inter may have been under the cosh in the first 45 minutes, but they had a good chance to break the deadlock in stoppage time.

Brazilian Adriano bundled his way past Alessandro Nesta and Gennaro Gattuso, only to see all his good work undone with a poor

finish. The game's best chance fell to the prolific Shevchenko in the 73rd minute, but for once he failed to hit the target.

In Sicily, Croatian striker Sasa Bjelanovic scored twice for Lecce, a sweetly struck right-footed shot and a towering header, while Serbian forward Mirko Vucinic and Sam Dalla Bona chipped in with the other goals for the Puglian side.

Arturo Di Napoli's third goal of the season proved to be a mere consolation for Messina, whose defeat saw them fall to sixth place.

Livorno moved off the bottom after winning 1-0 at home to Bologna, their first victory since being promoted.

Cristiano Lucarelli scored the only goal in the 72nd minute, his close range shot hitting the bar before crossing the line.

Fiorentina striker Fabrizio Miccoli was on target for the first time since his big money summer move from Juventus, scoring both goals in his side's 2-2 draw at

Udinese, while Luigi Di Biagio's second half penalty gave Brescia all three points in a bad-tempered match at Sampdoria.

In other games, Parma beat Lazio 3-1 for their first win of the season, while Roma salvaged a 1-1 draw at home to Palermo thanks to Francesco Totti's 57th minute penalty.

Palermo had taken the lead courtesy of a superb strike from Fabio Grosso.

Table with 5 columns: Team, P, W, D, L, Goals For, Goals Against, Points. Includes Juventus, Lecce, AC Milan, Chievo, Inter Milan, Messina.



PHOTO: AFP

Ukrainian superstar Andrei Shevchenko (R) of AC Milan is challenged by Belozoglu Emre of Inter Milan during the Milan derby on October 24.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes words like Pitching, Tizzy, Sermion, Spirited, etc.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers. Includes words like ZAY, YXG, FAR, BC, etc.

CRYPTOQUIP N ZAY YXG Q FAR BC GTG U P F U A C F N F J W N B A B N W X A W T N J X Y Z A U G M M A B " W M G R G F B P C B A C . " Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN MANY SCHOOL PUPILS RAISE A HAND AT ONCE, WOULD YOU SAY THEY'RE UP IN ARMS? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals C