

'Focus' Ronaldo's problem

INTERNET SOURCE

Brazil's national team boss Carlos Alberto Parreira has revealed he is not surprised at Real Madrid striker Ronaldo's indifferent form insisting the buck-toothed star is "distracted".

"I believe that in football you must put everything to one side and focus on training," said Parreira.

"But if you are distracted, like Ronaldo and his wedding, which was postponed three times, then you will lose the centre of your focus."

"He (Ronaldo) makes the difference. But he needs to be motivated and in form."

Full bench

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judge (Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury) referred the CMP to the full branch or regular branch," said Barrister Shamsul Hasan, the one of legal advisors of the directors. Barrister Amir-Ul Islam and Barrister Tania Amir also moved for the aggrieved directors.

Bidyut, Lajuk

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Both Bidyut and Lajuk were found guilty of taking money from Abahani and Muktiyoddha during the inter-club players' transfers last November and were subsequently suspended by the BFF.

However, the players' status committee headed by Akhter Hossain took a lenient stance after both clubs withdrew their case in a meeting yesterday.

Midfielder Biddyt will now play for his old club Muktiyoddha while Abahani will get the services of left-back Lajuk.

Dalai Lama won't

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cause any inconvenience to any party."

Dharamshala has hosted the Dalai Lama since he fled Tibet in 1959 amid a failed uprising against Chinese rule.

PCB director Abbas Zaidi was quoted in Pakistani news reports as saying that the team will "not take part in any social activity -- even those involving the Dalai Lama."

"We have a clear understanding with Board of Control for Cricket in India about our engagements in India on the coming tour," Zaidi said.

"We've conveyed to them the sensitivities involved in our relations with China and that we will not be attending any social function in Dharamshala including those involving the Dalai Lama."

The Pakistani team, which arrived in New Delhi earlier on Monday, will play three Tests and six one-day internationals on their first full tour of India since 1999.

BCB XI play

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match with their top-order batsman Rajin Saleh returning home yesterday following symptoms of measles, coach Dave Whatmore said after the visiting team had a workout at the nets here.

"Saleh had developed rashes and after the incubation period the rashes have gone but he should return home and take rest," Whatmore said.

Whatmore does not appear to be worried about the nature of the pitch "My team will play on any kind of wicket prepared for the match."

He said that the Indian cricket board informed him during the match in Nagpur that the next game of Bangladesh would be held either in Delhi or Meerut in Uttar Pradesh state.

Meanwhile, Central Zone will be captained by Indian Railways batsman JP Yadav in place of Test star Mohammed Kaif, who will lead the Indian Cricket Board President's Eleven against the Pakistan team in their lone opener from March 3.

Keane in court

Football

AFP, London

Manchester United and Ireland football star Roy Keane grabbed a teenage boy round the neck, swore at him and swung a punch towards his face before stopping his fist at the last minute, a British court heard on Monday.



ROY KEANE

The midfielder, who denies a charge of assault and a public order offence, clashed with the 16-year-old student near his home in Manchester, northwest England, last year, Trafford Magistrates' Court was told.

Keane, 33, was walking his dogs when the boy rode past on a moped with a friend and beeped his horn to acknowledge the star, the court was told.

As the moped passed, Keane -- who was then injured -- swung out with his walking stick, prompting the 16-year-old, who was not named in court, to turn around and make a crude hand gesture at the footballer.

A few weeks later in September 2004, the pair were visiting a friend near Keane's home when they were approached by the sportsman, the boy said in a videotaped interview to police shown to the court in place of direct testimony.

The teenager told police he was sitting on the moped when he noticed Keane walking towards him.

"I felt a bit like, 'God, what's going to happen now,'" the boy said.

"Then he (Keane) said: 'Did you call me a wanker? Why did you do that?'"

The teenager said he replied: "Because you nearly hit me; you swung for me with your walking stick."

"He walked up to me and I'm not sure what he said next; he was being a bit aggressive."

"The next thing he did was swing at my face with his right fist. He said, 'That's nearly hitting you'. I flinched backwards."

Keane also grabbed the boy round the neck, the court was told.

The trial was expected to last two days.

John right for India?

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"India have always had the talent base -- an abundance of talent in certain match-winners -- but the number of match-winners has grown within the group and certain disciplines in cricket which are very important are quite evident now."

It has not always been smooth sailing for Wright.

Within a year of taking the job, a series of poor results in Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and South Africa led to calls for him to be replaced.

A difficult tour of New Zealand in 2002, where India lost 2-0 in the Tests and were trounced 5-2 in the one-dayers ended with Kapil Dev calling it the "lowest ebb" in the country's cricket history.

"The expectations of a large number of people weigh on your shoulder," explained Whatmore, who guided Sri Lanka to World Cup glory in 1996.

"As an overseas employee I feel the same way. There is a bit of pressure in a country that expects performances from players that

are stars."

An important factor behind Wright's longevity is the support he has had from senior players like Sourav Ganguly and Sachin Tendulkar and the notoriously fickle cricket authorities in India.

Whatmore says being an outsider can have its pitfalls and advantages -- and he feels Wright has navigated the minefields expertly.

"As a foreigner, there's no excess baggage. You're able to look at issues without bias and you come from a different angle to offer possible solutions," he added.

"But dealing with your bosses and being able to get along is very important."

"It's about understanding the culture and learning how to deal with different people and sensitive issues."

"If you come across okay, you manage a lot better but it can be difficult if you're a bit of a dictator that wants to stand up and beat drums."

Imran's recipe

FROM PAGE 13

motivational speech from Imran Khan. I am sure the players must be inspired after hearing him.

"Now its all up to us how we play. We have to let our performance do all the talking. The next 50 days are going to be very crucial cricketing days in the careers of many. So it's better to concentrate (on the Indian series) rather than think of the West Indies tour (in June) or financial benefits," Inzamam said.

Shaharyar Khan, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman, who was the manager of the 1999 cricket team that toured India, advised the players to enhance the image of the country by their conduct, performance and humble attitude.

"For the next 50 days, you will be the ambassadors of the country. The Indian public will see Pakistan in you. Now it's up to you what picture you want to show them. But we are all hoping that with your conduct, you will prove that Pakistan is a moderate, peace-loving and tolerate society,"

Shaharyar said in his address to the team.

Shaharyar recalled that in 1999 the team won the hearts of millions of Indian fans because of the attitude, conduct and performance.

"Don't forget that besides cricket, you will be on a goodwill tour and the excellent relations between the two countries have to be maintained at all cost."

Board insiders said Shaharyar, considered as a fatherly figure in PCB, did not mince his words in communicating that no act of indiscipline would be tolerated.

"One act of indiscipline and the manager will book you on your next flight home," sources quoted Shaharyar as telling the players.

The PCB later in the evening arranged a lavish dinner for the India-bound team that was attended by celebrated former test cricketers besides the board officials.

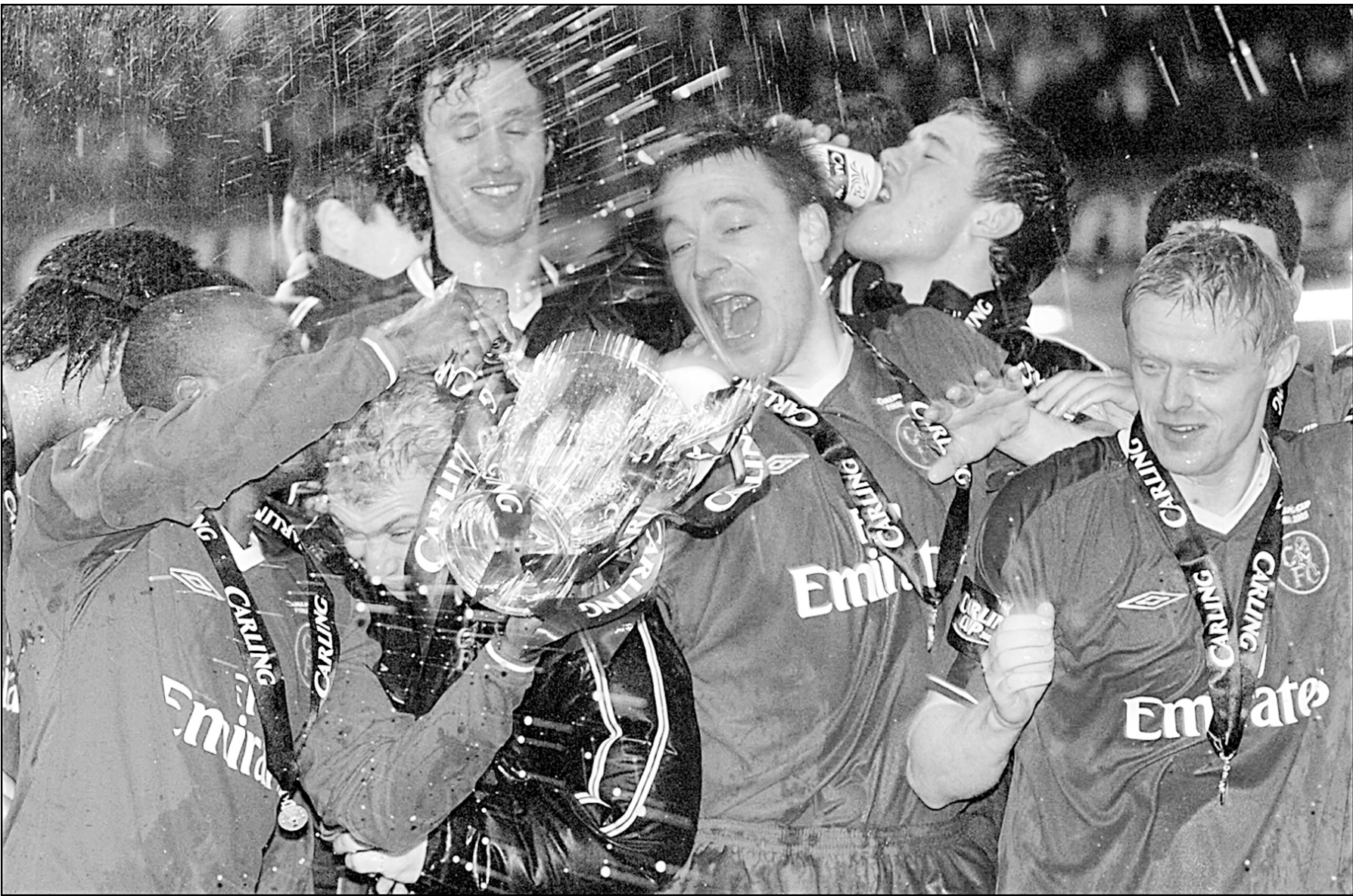


PHOTO: AFP

Chelsea players Claude Makelele (L), captain John Terry (C) and Damien Duff celebrate with the Carling Cup trophy at the Millennium Dome in Cardiff, Wales on February 27.

Chelsea's first champagne moment

Football

AFP, Cardiff

A week of turmoil ended in triumph for Chelsea as they came from behind to beat Liverpool 3-2 and win the League Cup, their first silverware under the management of Jose Mourinho.

The Portuguese was not on the bench to see it, though, having been sent down the tunnel for his over-enthusiastic part in the celebrations that followed their equaliser 11 minutes from the end of regulation time.

His over-reaction spoke most clearly of relief. After losing to Newcastle and Barcelona in the last week, for nearly 80 minutes on Sunday Chelsea seemed to be heading for another defeat, let down once again by their inability to convert territorial supremacy into

chances.

Finally, though, their pressure told, and although the FA Cup has gone, Chelsea will believe the Premiership and the Champions League can still be theirs.

Chelsea's rearguard - unbreached in its last ten Premiership outings - has been the prop that has shored up the occasional shaky performance this season, yet Liverpool were ahead within 45 seconds.

There was quality in John Arne Riises volley, but the defending in the build-up was far from assured.

Fernando Morientes turned far too easily past William Gallas on the right and, as he flicked a cross to the back of the box, Riise emerged wholly unmarked.

There are few truer strikers of a ball in the Premiership than the Norwegian, and his first-time strike flashed past Petr Cech into the corner.

Going behind immediately presents Chelsea with problems, for they do not find goals easy to come by these days.

In the 440 minutes they had played between Arjen Robben suffering a broken bone in his foot against Blackburn and Riises goal, Chelsea had scored only twice.

It was not until the 28th minute that Chelsea mustered their first noteworthy attack, Didier Drogba chasing onto Joe Coles through-ball, only for his shot to be diverted wide by the outstretched foot of the sliding Jamie Carragher.

The longer the game went on, though, the more dominant Chelsea became, and the more beleaguered Liverpool's thin red line looked.

Garcia hacked Lampard's header off the line, Drogba was denied by another magnificent Carragher challenge, then Jerzy Dudek made a superb sprawling save to his right to keep out an Eidur

Gudjohnsen header, before somehow scrambling William Gallass follow-up around the post.

Liverpools threat was sporadic, and the way they brought all ten outfielders back when defending dead-balls said everything about their ambition.

Nonetheless, but for a fine diving save from Cech, they would have added a second after 64 minutes, as Dietmar Hamann met Garcias pass with a smart first-time shot.

Steven Gerrard then poked just wide from Antonio Nunezs cross, but, inevitably, with 11 minutes remaining, the equaliser came. As at Barcelona on Wednesday, Chelsea were aided by an own goal, Paulo Ferreira's free-kick flicking Gerrards head and looping in via a post.

Exuberance is natural in such circumstances, but Mourinho ran 20 yards towards the Liverpool fans, with a finger raised mockingly to his

lips; his expulsion was inevitable.

His team, though, were unaffected, and from then on it was simply a matter of when their second goal would come.

Duff and Lampard both went close, and Drogba hit a post, before finally, 17 minutes into extra-time, the Ivorian squeezed between Sami Hyyipia and Carragher to collect a long-throw from Glen Johnson and hook his finish past Jerzy Dudek from close range.

Mateja Kezman added a third two minutes later, stabbing home after Dudek had parried Gudjohnsens shot from an acute angle.

Liverpool pulled one back within a minute, Antonio Nunez forcing the ball over the line from close range. That, though, served only to give the scoreline a flattering gloss; Chelsea were well worth their victory.

SERIE A

Kaka makes derby difference

Football

AFP, Rome

Juventus and AC Milan remain neck and neck at the top of Italy's Serie A after they both recorded precious victories on Sunday.

Alessandro Del Piero scored twice - a cheeky back-heel and a penalty - and Emerson grabbed the other goal as Juve defeated lowly Siena 3-0, while Kaka netted a 74th minute winner for title-holders AC Milan in their scrappy 1-0 win against local rivals Inter Milan at the San Siro.

The Brazilian midfielder reacted quickly to redirect Gennaro Gattuso's low drive, which Inter keeper Francesco Toldo had covered, for his fifth league goal of the season.

Juve and AC Milan have 57 points from their 26 matches played, 13 more than third-placed Sampdoria who won 1-0 at Brescia on Saturday.

Defeat for Inter, their first in the league this season, left them in fourth place on 43 points.

Juventus coach Fabio Capello was delighted to see his team react positively after their 1-0 Champions League defeat away to Real Madrid on Tuesday.

"We are now confident of our potential once again," he said. "I always knew we'd recover from that moment of nervousness. The team played with great determination and moved the ball around much faster."

AC Milan's match-winner Kaka admitted his team were lucky to claim all three points.

"It was a lucky moment for Milan, an opportunist's goal," he said.

Palermo improved their chances of qualifying for next season's Champions League with a hard-fought 2-0 victory over Roma, courtesy of second-half goals from Marco Brienza and Luca Toni.

The Sicilians' eighth home victory

left them in sixth place, level on 42 points with Udinese who drew 2-2 at Fiorentina on Saturday.

Bottom club Atalanta, who already look doomed, came from behind three times to earn a 3-3 draw away to Cagliari, while Lazio eased their relegation fears with a 2-0 home win against strugglers Parma.

In other matches, Lecce and Reggina both sneaked 1-0 wins at home to Messina and Chievo respectively and Livorno drew 0-0 away to Bologna.

In Turin, Juve's Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved was ruled out after being knocked unconscious in Madrid, while French striker David Trezeguet failed to recover from the virus that forced him to miss the game in Spain.

Manuele Blasi came in for Nedved and Uruguayan forward Marcelo Zalayeta replaced Trezeguet.

Juventus dominated the early

exchanges at the Delle Alpi stadium with Del Piero at the heart of every attack, but Siena always looked dangerous on the counter-attack.

After Tore Andre Flo and Rodrigo Taddei had gone close for the visitors, Juventus broke the deadlock with a lightning break.

Zalayeta slipped the ball through the legs of Francesco Colonnese wide on the right before crossing from the byline for Del Peiro, whose flick flashed past Alex Manninger in the Siena goal.

The visitors fell further behind soon after the break when Emerson rose to head home Mauro Camoranesi's right-wing corner and Del Piero completed the scoring from the spot in the 63rd minute after Emerson was brought down in the box.

The Milan derby was a rather drab affair and rarely lived up to its billing.

The best moment of the first half

came in stoppage time when Inter's Juan Sebastian Veron's vicious drive was superbly turned away by Nelson Dida.

The decisive goal, which arrived 16 minutes from time, was a little harsh on Inter. Clarence Seedorf's left-wing corner was headed out by Ivan Cordoba, but only as far as Gattuso whose shot from the edge of the box was turned in by the instinctive Kaka.

TOP SIX

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

Milan	26	17	6	3	44	16	57
Juventus	26	17	6	3	43	15	57
Sampdoria	26	13	5	8	30	20	44
Inter	26	9	16	1	47	31	43
Udinese	26	12	6	8	36	26	42
Palermo	26	11	9	6	28	19	42

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Bloke

5 Austin Powers' power source

9 Pump up the volume

12 Wheels of fortune?

13 Finished

14 Guy's companion

15 Stench

16 Catcher's catcher

17 Com-motion

18 Escritoire

19 Mag.

20 Cauldron concoction

21 Chignon

23 "Caught ya!"

25 Sci-fi critter, often

28 "Tuesdays With —"

32 Dizzying designs

33 Vestige

34 Under-world god

36 Big-enough fish

37 Red deer

38 The whole enchilada

39 "Monop-oly" corner

42 Listening device

44 Actor

48 Chic no more

49 Performer with an ego

50 Look lecher-ously

51 Before

52 Condo, e.g.

53 It's good for a

54 Thanks-giving veggie

8 Tidbit

**DOWN**

1 Catfish one

2 Stash

3 "Famous" cookie-maker

4 Lucrative government projects

5 Instant

6 "Meta-morphoses"

7 Stuff thrown over-board

8 Tidbit

9 Gelling agent

10 Put together

11 Oxen's burden

20 Aerobatic maneuver

22 Before

24 Arthur

25 Cattle call

26 Boom times

27 Skater

29 Knock

30 Milieu for

27-Down

31 Always

35 Flocks of geese in flight

36 Chopping spree?

39 "Friends" spinoff

40 Emanation

41 Particular

43 Hertz rival

45 Malaria symptom

46 Radius' neighbor

47 Staying power

49 Payable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13			14		
15					16			17		
18					19			20		
			21	22			23	24		
25	26	27					28		29	30
32							33			
34					35		36			
			37				38			
39	40	41			42	43		44	45	46
48					49			50		
51					52			53		
54					55			56		

**CRYPTOQUIP**

U B K J O G R F A V A D B A V A

P R O N K U F A E O U A , E G U

U N A X Z P R O J J X P V K R A F K G U

U N A P V F P Z Z A V A R I A D

Yesterday's Cryptquip: A GUY HAD FLIPPED A LAUNDRY DETERGENT CONTAINER ON THE SHELF, SO I TURNED THE TIDE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: Z equals F

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

PREVIEW: PRIMERA LIGA

Real's only option

Football

INTERNET SOURCE, Madrid

It is a make-or-break week in Spain's Primera Liga with Real Madrid needing to win if they are to maintain any realistic ambition of overhauling league leaders Barcelona.

Just two weeks ago Real had salvaged some hope of catching Barca, with a run of seven wins putting them within four points of the league's pacesetters.

However, consecutive defeats have set Real back again - the gap is now eight points - while the games are quickly running out for Wanderley Luxemburgo's injury-hit galactics.

They entertain an in-form Betis on Wednesday night and Saturday's sorry 2-0 defeat at Deportivo La Coruna means that should Barca win, and Real fail to match them, it could put the title beyond Real even though coach Wanderley Luxemburgo is trying to remain positive.

"We have a lot of games ahead of

us and there are still a lot of points to play for. We have the possibility to recover," said Luxemburgo, who will be able to recall Raul, Ronaldo, Guti and Ivan Helguera on Wednesday.

Madrid will lose Zinedine Zidane, however, after he limped off with a knee injury against Deportivo and the game is made all the more crucial with Madrid facing a difficult trip to Valencia just three days later.

Betis can vouch for that having lost 2-1 at the Metella on Sunday, but despite that defeat they travel to the capital in excellent form and thinking about Champions League qualification.

With players of the speed of Joaquin Sanchez and Ricardo Oliveira, they are a side built to play on the break so Helguera and Walter Samuel will have to be at their best.

Barcelona kick off the midweek fixtures by entertaining neighbours Espanyol in the Barcelona derby on Tuesday.

The derby will bring together two close friends face-to-face on opposing teams: Maxi Lopez, the goal

scoring hero of Barcelona's defeat of Chelsea in the Champions League last week, and Espanyol's top scorer Maxi Rodriguez.

"We both know each other from Buenos Aires and regularly used to eat together. We lost touch a little when I came to Spain three years ago but know we are back together," explained Maxi Rodriguez about his Argentine compatriot.

Maxi Lopez signed for Barcelona during the winter transfer winter from River Plate in his native Argentina.

"I hope Maxi bangs in lots of goals for Barcelona but hopefully not in this particular game," joked Rodriguez on Monday.

Rodriguez himself has found the net 10 times this season including with a thundering header on Saturday.

Madrid's defeat in La Coruna means their 1-1 draw at bottom-club Numancia was not such a bad result, but Barca coach Frank Rijkaard will want all three points to stretch their lead at the top.

Espanyol seem to have slipped in

recent games, but Miguel Angel Lotina's side are still aiming for a place in Europe after their 2-1 win over Albacete on Saturday.

"We will have to suffer if we want to win the game," he said.

The battle for Europe also hots up as a resurgent Valencia visit Sevilla with a place in the top-three at stake.

Antonio Lopez's arrival appears to have breathed new life into Valencia, while Sevilla suffered a setback against Racing Santander on Sunday by only drawing 2-2 at home.

Villarreal will want to get back on track following their 1-0 defeat to Zaragoza and they have a perfect chance against Mallorca, who are starting to look as if they may spend next season in the second division.

Likewise Atletico Madrid will hope to take three points from their visit to lowly Racing Santander, while Deportivo will be aiming to keep up the good work in Getafe's Alfonso Perez Coliseum.

Malaga are sure to be in high spirits when they entertain Athletic Bilbao after Antonio Tapia's side

continued their league recovery with a 6-1 win over Osasuna, while Athletic will be wanting to forget their surprise UEFA Cup exit to Austria Vienna.

Albacete have to beat Osasuna or risk being out adrift at the bottom of the table, while Numancia will take heart from their draw with Barca when they travel to play a Levante side who look almost safe from relegation.

FIXTURES

Tuesday: (kick off times in GMT): Barcelona v Espanyol (2100)

Wednesday: Albacete v Osasuna (1900), Getafe v Deportivo La Coruna (1900), Levante v Numancia (1900), Malaga v Athletic Bilbao (1900), Sevilla v Valencia (1900), Racing Santander v Atletico Madrid (1900), Real Sociedad v Real Zaragoza (1900), Villarreal v Real Mallorca (1900), Real Madrid v Real Betis (2000)