

# Half-time advantage Liverpool's



AFP, Liverpool

A sensational finish by Spanish midfielder Luis Garcia helped give Liverpool a 2-1 win over Juventus in their Champions League quarter-final, first leg tie at an emotionally-charged Anfield here Tuesday.

The former Barcelona player struck from 25 yards to put Rafael Benitez's side 2-0 up after Sami Hyypia had given the Premiership club a deserved lead.

But Liverpool must overcome the toughest of challenges in the return leg in Turin next week if they are to advance to the semi-finals after Fabio Cannavaro presented the Italians with a second-half lifeline courtesy of a header which inexperienced keeper Scott Carson ought to have saved.

Afterwards Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard told ITV Sport: "We're pleased. We would have taken that before the game. It was such a great atmosphere and we scored two but it was a blow to concede one.

"I'm sure Scott will be disappointed with it but he stopped one in the first half that was one of the best saves I have seen this season.

"He will learn and now Scott or Jerzy (Dudek) need to keep a clean

sheet for us in the second leg.

"I don't think we'll play for a 0-0. We have got the ability to nick a goal over there. That will be the game plan, to keep a clean sheet and nick a goal.

"A clean sheet and we're in the last four of the competition. That would be magnificent."

Hyypia, whose left foot volley put Liverpool ahead after 10 minutes, added: "It's half-time at 2-1. We have a difficult game at their place next week. We will have to work hard to get the result there.

"We do not fear anyone. They are a good team and it is going to be hard but we showed today we can win."

It was the first competitive meeting between the two sides since the Heysel disaster at the 1985 European Cup final where Juventus's 1-0 win was overshadowed by the deaths of 39 Italian fans.

Before kick-off there was an impeccably observed minute's silence which was preceded by the sight of Phil Neal, captain of the Liverpool side that ill-fated night in Brussels, carrying a banner promoting peace and friendship between the two clubs from one end of the ground to the other.

Many other players left traumatised by events in Belgium 20 years ago were also present in the crowd, including former Republic of Ireland international Ronnie Whelan and France

great Michel Platini, whose penalty saved Juventus crowned kings of Europe for the first time in their history.

It is nine years, however, since the Italians were last top of the European tree and they may have to wait another few years to claim the title unless they can turn things around next week.

Injury-hit Liverpool were forced to field one of their most inexperienced teams for one of their biggest European nights in recent time with 20-year-old French striker Anthony Le Tallec and 19-year-old Carson making their first Champions League starts.

Yet any fears the occasion might prove too much for the youngsters quickly vanished as Liverpool rocked Juventus by racing into a commanding 2-0 lead.

The Serie A joint-leaders had hardly ventured outside their own half when they fell behind to a goal from the most unlikely of sources.

A corner by Gerrard was flicked on by Garcia and waiting at the back post to volley the ball over the line was none other than Hyypia to put away his second goal of the season.

So often this season Liverpool, who are lagging behind in fifth place in the Premiership, have been accused of taking their foot off the gas. Not this time.

Juventus were forced to endure wave after wave of first-half pressure

and it was no surprise when Garcia increased the Merseyside club's advantage with a sublime 25th minute left-foot finish.

There appeared to be little danger when the former Barcelona midfielder unleashed a venomous 25-yard rocket shot which left keeper Gianluigi Buffon - Juventus's 32 million pounds record signing - rooted to the spot as it flew into the top corner.

Suddenly Liverpool were in dreamland but Benitez's outfit were given a warning that the hard work was not over when Zlatan Ibrahimovic hit the post before the interval while it needed a smart save by Carson to deny veteran hit-man Alessandro Del Piero a vital away goal.

Juventus pressed strongly after the break with Liverpool forced to endure some desperate defensive tactics to keep out the visitors.

But just as it seemed they had weathered the storm Cannavaro found the net with a 63rd minute header to set up an intriguing second leg.

## Warne named Wisden's best

AFP, London

Legendary leg-spinner Shane Warne has been named the leading cricketer in the world, succeeding his Australian captain Ricky Ponting who won Wisden's inaugural honour last year.

Warne claimed the award ahead of three English candidates -- Andrew Flintoff, Andrew Strauss and Graham Thorpe -- following his impressive return from a drugs ban to retain his place in Australia's imposing line-up.

Australia's dominance over world cricket is reflected by 10 of their players being included in the Wisden 40, the almanac's listing of the world's leading players, with England and India being their nearest rivals with six included.

But England's Test revival has led to Wisden naming an all-English selection for their five cricketers of the year for the first time in 45 years.

The 2005 Cricketer's Almanac has chosen five cricketers every year based on their influence on the previous English season since 1889 with overseas players traditionally dominating the selections.

But in recognition of England's record-breaking run of eight successive Test victories -- including seven during last season -- Wisden has picked Ashley Giles, Steve Harmison, Robert Key, Andrew Strauss and Marcus Trescothick as their top players.

Both captain Michael Vaughan and all-rounder Andrew Flintoff were ineligible as previous winners, but it was still the only third time since the Second World War that Wisden had chosen an all-English selection and the first since 1960.

"We obviously considered a good many other players," explained Wisden editor Matthew Engel today. "But in a season when England won seven Tests out of seven, the case for these five was overwhelming."

Warwickshire left-arm spinner Giles enjoyed a major revival during the past year, taking 31 wickets during the summer whitewashes of New Zealand and West Indies, while Durham fast bowler Harmison briefly became the number one bowler in the world having claimed 23 wickets during the historic series win in West Indies last winter.

The return to the England side of Kent batsman Key, who hit a magnificent 221 against West Indies at Lord's, earned his inclusion while Middlesex batsman Strauss was even more impressive with five centuries in his first 11 Test appearances, including one on his Test debut.

Somerset left-hander Trescothick completes the England line-up having hit a crucial 180 to help clinch a dramatic victory in Johannesburg this winter and also became the first player in history to score centuries in both innings of an Edgbaston Test.

## Ganguly looks

FROM PAGE 12 the skipper got that way," former Test captain Bishen Bedi said on television. "There are better batsmen in India at the moment who are not in the team."

But Ganguly remained unfazed by calls for him to step down.

"Criticism is going to happen because I have not scored runs for the last five to six innings," he said.

"People are going to criticise but these things remind you that you have been good enough in the past."

For the record, Ganguly has scored 4,949 career runs in 82 Tests, but only 927 runs in the last 20 matches at an average of 33.10.

In 269 one-dayers, he has amassed 9,945 runs.

Ganguly has four more one-dayers against Pakistan to salvage his reputation as one of most fluent strikers of the ball in the game.

The third match of the current series will be played in the eastern city of Jamshedpur on Saturday.

# Cocu gives PSV hope



AFP, Lyon

Good finishing by veteran Phillip Cocu earned PSV Eindhoven a 1-1 draw at Lyon here on Tuesday and a vital away goal for the Dutch club in this Champions League quarter-final first leg.

Lyon had been largely on top at the Gerland stadium and Florent Malouda's early goal looked to have given the Frenchmen the advantage before the second leg in the Netherlands on Wednesday next week.

However 34-year-old former Barcelona midfielder Cocu changed all that with his late goal.

Running upfield, he played a one-two with South Korean Park Ji-Sung and, with the luck going Cocu's way as the ball cannoned into his path, finished the move with an accurate left foot shot past Lyon keeper Gregory Coupet.

Lyon reached this stage with a 3-0 success away to Werder Bremen before winning 7-2 at the Stade Gerland and were boosted by the

news that captain Claudio Cacapa was fit after suffering a serious knee injury.

The 28-year-old Brazilian defender proved his fitness after two reserve games and was ready to return after nearly five months out.

Hiddink fielded the same starting XI which twice beat Monaco last month to book their last eight berth. They lead the Dutch league by 10 points having won 13 matches and drawn once since mid-December.

Malouda scored the opener in the 12th minute. Sidney Govou, out on the right, passed into the area to Sylvain Wiltord in the middle of the area who was trying hard to control the ball among a crowd of players.

The ball then came out to Malouda at the far post and he tucked the ball neatly inside the right hand post of PSV keeper Heurleho Gomes.

Mahamadou Diarra had a chance with the outside of his right foot and Mickael Essien had a headed effort from the penalty spot caught by keeper Gomes.

In the 39th minute, PSV had a real scare when an Essien shot beat keeper Gomes, diving to his left, and hit the post.

However the Dutch team had an opportunity when Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink's turn and shot sailed over Gregory Coupet's crossbar.

Lyon went into the break with a deserved lead having been on top in virtually every department of the pitch with striker Wiltord in particular having a good game.

Italian referee Pierluigi Collina noted no changes for either team for the second half. A Juninho freekick was punched away by Gomes as Lyon kept up the pressure.

A golden opportunity for Paul Le Guen's men to go two goals up came in the 63rd minute however. Govou's shot from inside the area was brilliantly deflected away for a corner by Gomes, diving to his left.

South Korean winger Park Ji-Sung, who was man-of-the-match when PSV beat Monaco last month, had been having a quiet game with Lyon defender Anthony Revellere blunting Park's forays on the left flank.

Then came Cocu's 79th minute goal which spoiled the evening for most of the 39,178 crowd and gave Guus Hiddink's men the advantage with the final leg in the Netherlands.

# Thorpe's plea to mates



AFP, London

Graham Thorpe has told his England teammates not to be overawed by the reputations of the Australian players they are up against when the Ashes Test series starts here at Lord's in July.

Australia have won the last eight Ashes series and, following a dominating 2-0 series win in New Zealand which confirmed their position as the world's best team, will be firm favourites to inflict more misery on their oldest opponents.

Veteran batsman Thorpe, 35, has missed the past two Ashes series but re-established himself in the side after injuries and personal problems with a classy century against South Africa at his Oval home ground in September 2003.

Although England will be underdogs, the fact remains they are ranked as the world's second-best Test side after a run of four successive series wins.

And that should be five in a row when minnows Bangladesh arrive for a two-match series early in the English season.

But with Australia's top seven batsmen all averaging around the 50 mark and their four-man attack featuring two of the all-time greats in leg-spinner Shane Warne and fast bowler Glenn McGrath, few would give much for England's chances of a first Ashes series win since 1986-87.

However, Thorpe said England had to forget about facts and figures

and just treat each match as a fresh challenge.

"I can visualise towards July and think what it's going to be like," said Thorpe, who made a hundred on his Test debut, against Australia, at Trent Bridge in 1993.

"It will be a massive occasion and the lads have to relax and enjoy what is going on," added the Surrey



GRAHAM THORPE

left-hander, who has scored 6,636 in 98 Tests at an average of 43.94 with 16 hundreds.

"If we play the men rather than statistics and figures it will be our best way of playing against them."

"We won't do well being tense and worrying about their record or who we are playing against. You have to have a certain amount of belief regardless."

"Come what may it is important not to beat yourself up if you have a

bad day.

"Being realistic we will have some bad days against Australia and you have to get out of bed the next day with a smile on your face and enjoy it."

And Thorpe added: "I would love to be fit because it would be great to have an opportunity to play against them with this England team."

"We have a lot of good performers and I know we are going to have to play as a team and to our highest potential against them."

"This summer I have not got a great deal to lose, it has been a pretty good journey in the past 18 months, probably the best period I have played for England."

Two more Tests will see Thorpe become only the eighth Englishman to have played in 100 Tests, a landmark he should reach, form and fitness permitting, in June's second Test against Bangladesh at Durham's Riverside ground in north-east England.

"I am never one to tempt fate or look to landmarks but I have an opportunity and it is in my own hands whether or not I get there at the moment," said Thorpe, who, an unbeaten 118 in the second Test at Durban apart, was not at his best in South Africa.

"Life can be cruel and I might get injured but if I don't play any more Test matches so be it; I have had a fantastic ride playing international cricket and been privileged to have one more crack at it so feel very lucky whatever comes this summer."

## Let down

FROM PAGE 12 an enormous embarrassment and in practice, a disgrace," said the paper, adding that several Juve supporters had been arrested at the airport.

The paper also criticised the response of Juventus fans in the stadium to the Kop's raising of a card-banned mural carrying the slogan 'Amicizia' (friendship).

"To the applause of the opposing fans they turned their backs and raised their middle finger. The enormous difference was there to see," reported the paper.

Gazzetta dello Sport gave lengthy coverage to the Liverpool Echo's front page apology for Heyssel on Tuesday and reported the efforts of Liverpool fans to "embrace" the visiting Italians.

## Move over Becks!

AFP, London

England football star Rio Ferdinand has taken the title of Britain's best-dressed man from team-mate David Beckham in an influential annual magazine survey released on Tuesday.

To add insult to injury, Beckham, who had won the GQ magazine poll for three consecutive years, slumped from first to last in the list, being labelled the worst-dressed man in the land.

Real Madrid star Beckham, famed for his ever-evolving hairstyle and sometimes flamboyant clothes, was cruelly labelled "the original fashion victim" by shoe designer Manolo Blahnik, one of the expert judges.

In contrast, Ferdinand, who turns out for Beckham's former club Manchester United, was praised for his understated yet stylish fashion sense.

"He is the unlikely hero of the hour, a footballer who takes himself just seriously enough," said Dylan Jones, editor of GQ's British edition. "He is a clotheshorse in the best sense of the word and has got great dress sense."

Yet another football-related star was second in the list, dapper Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho, who is in charge of Chelsea.

Actor Jude Law, hailed as "a modern Cary Grant", was third, while fellow film star Clive Owen was fourth.

Others in the top 10 included Alex Kapranos, singer with Scottish art-rock band Franz Ferdinand at seven, two places above current rock bad boy Pete Doherty, sacked last year from The Libertines for drug abuse.

The worst-dressed top-10 list also featured Prince Harry -- who infamously wore a Nazi military uniform to a fancy dress party -- and his elder brother Prince William.

## Sunday tragedy

REUTERS, London

An amateur footballer, involved in a Sunday league match only because his team were short of players, has died from head injuries he sustained in a brawl at the end of the game.

Thomas Slattery, 39, a father of nine, died in hospital after clashing with opposition players as the teams walked off the pitch following an ill-tempered match in the North Birmingham Sunday League, the Times newspaper reported on Wednesday.

There had been an earlier scuffle in the closing minutes of the game between St Joseph's and Lozells AMG.

Three Birmingham men, aged 25, 27 and 29, were arrested on Sunday on suspicion of murder, said a spokeswoman for West Midlands police. They have since been granted bail while further police inquiries are made.

## STANCHART CRICKET Maple Leaf ride on Asif ton

SPORTS REPORTER

Asif Ahmed made a century on the opening day of the Standard Chartered Under-13 Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament at the Residential Model School ground yesterday.

The 98-ball 123 by the Maple Leaf opener helped his side register a massive 191-run victory over Manarat International. Maple Leaf amassed 289-9 in 50 overs and then Mehedi Hassan guided five wickets for 26 to wrap up the Manarat innings for 98 in 25 overs.

At the same venue, a five-wicket haul by Siddiq gave Shaheed Ramizuddin High (112-6) a four-wicket victory against Scholastica (106).

Zahir Hossain stole the show with the ball (5-37) at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium as Natun Paltan Line School (217-4) handed a six-wicket defeat to Blue Bird International (213). At the Mirpur Outer stadium, DCIR High (76-1) outplayed Dhanmondi Tutorial (75) by nine wickets.

In other matches, Junior Laboratory (151-6) defeated Happy Times International (150) by four wickets, Badda Alatunnessa (144) beat Bangladesh International (140) by four wickets and Enam Children's Education (161-8) earned an exciting two-wicket victory over Government Laboratory High (157).

## Partex squash

SPORTS REPORTER

Shirish Chouhan moved into the semifinals of the C Division in the Partex Open squash tournament beating Mohammad Aziz 9-4, 9-6 yesterday at the Gulshan Club.

Hamza beat Rubel Aziz in the other C Division encounter of the day. Swapan Parvez remained on top of the Premier Division table with 14 points after the fifth round with Bishu Nath following on 10 and Ram Jagdish on nine points.



PAUL CANNON (FOX SPORTS)

The time has come once again for the grandest match in all club football. Real Madrid hosts FC Barcelona on Sunday.

The match will be indicative of each club's season fortunes as a Madrid win will make the Barcelona lead less comfortable, but victory for the Catalans will surely seal the title.

A storm of debate has been brewing around whether Real Madrid should play Raul or unleash super-sub Michael Owen. The talismanic Spanish no.7 has an unimpressive ratio of one goal every 316 minutes this season, while the England forward, recently insulted as a 'midget nobody' by Azerbaijan coach Carlos Alberto, strikes every 127 minutes on average. And that while only playing a cameo role.

Raul though provides an unmatched pedigree in white, with over 300 goals for the club. He has led Madrid to both European and domestic glory over the course of a decade. His is the kind of record that cannot be ignored.

Owen, although a great goal-scorer, will never be part of the club's history. He is a fleeting ghost in the Bernabeu it is unlikely he will stay for next season. "He is an island," as one commentator put it. Disconnected and remote from his teammates, a man playing somehow all on his own, despite his good goals ratio.

Raul, since the departure of Fernando Hierro, has been the heart and soul of the Bernabeu locker room. He fights on where other galacticos give up with a shrug. In the big games and they don't get bigger than this it is to such players you turn for inspiration.

For the 26th time in La Liga

## Ganguly wants Chappell as coach?

CRICINFO, undated

Sourav Ganguly is in favour of Greg Chappell, the former Australian great, taking on the job of Indian coach following John Wright's imminent departure.

Cricinfo has learned that Ganguly has put forth Chappell's candidature before senior board officials twice, during the first one-dayers against Pakistan at Cochin and Visakhapatnam.

However, this seems to be personal initiative from Ganguly. Other senior members in the team have not been consulted on the issue, and they do not see it fit to approach board officials when their views had not been sought.

Chappell, who was in Mumbai recently for a promotional event, told Cricinfo, "If they (Indian board) approach me and want to talk about it, I'm happy to do it. I've got plenty to do and I'm really focusing on getting on with my life."

"I tend not to think too much in hypothetical terms. I'm open to most things and always prepared to look and listen. If someone wants to talk to me about a job in or out of cricket I'm open-minded enough to have a listen."

"Coaching any national team would be a great honour, but it would also be difficult because it brings its own set of challenges. It would depend very much on what the offers was."

Interestingly, when Chappell was in Mumbai over three days, he was not contacted by any board officials regarding the coaching job. It is understood that the board is actively seeking the advice of Sunil Gavaskar and Ravi Shastri in the selection of the new coach, and may well ask one of the two to speak to the candidate they eventually decide on.

history, Barcelona travel to the Bernabeu Stadium in a higher league position than their Madrid rivals.

It will be the third time they visit Madrid with a nine-point advantage.

The first time Barcelona came to the Bernabeu with such an advantage, in 1974, they stuffed Madrid 5-0. In that game the mercurial Dutchman Johan Cruyff, led the rout, scoring one, and inspiring Asensi, Juan Carlos and Sotil to score the rest in an emphatic victory which had their coach Rinus Michels (who sadly recently passed away) in ecstasy and disbelief: "It would be inhuman if we always played like that."

Barcelona won the title that year.

By the time of the 1990/91 campaign, when Barcelona again made the trip to Madrid with a nine-point superiority, Cruyff was himself manager and his Barca team had already been garlanded as Spanish champions, but the Catalans succumbed to a 1-0 defeat.

In the 2002-03 season Barcelona travelled with little hope. They were 24 points (!) adrift of their white counterparts. The result was a 1-1 draw and Madrid went on to win the league.

Last year Barcelona found themselves seven points behind Madrid in the league but took the battle to the newly-dubbed 'galacticos' and earned a 2-1 victory kick-starting a downward spiral in Madrid's season and an upward surge in their own fortunes under Frank Rijkaard, which saw them finish second in the league, two places above Madrid.

For the significance of this Sunday's clash, listen to Rafael Marquez, Barcelona's Mexican defender:

"If we win, La Liga is over."

Yup, it's pretty clear-cut. Lose this and Real can kiss the title good-bye. Joan Laporta, Barca president,

has no doubts about the outcome. "We're going to win the league," he said, following the weekend's 3-3 draw with Real Betis. When asked if defeat would press panic buttons, he answered: "With a six point advantage we would still be tranquil, but not relaxed."

The league leaders will be buoyed by news that captain Carles Puyol, ironically a Madrid transfer target, will be fit. On the downside however, Portuguese midfield engine Deco is suspended.

Madrid coach Wanderley Luxemburgo's fingers are crossed that David Beckham will recover from a knock he received on international duty for England against Azerbaijan. It is crucial he take up the midfield double-pivot position, following the suspension of it's normal inhabitant, Guti.

At the back there are serious concerns as Argentine hardman Walter Samuel, nickname 'The Wall', is injured. Ronaldinho & Co. will be rubbing their hands with glee if error-prone Raul Bravo is drafted into the Real back four as cover.

A fascinating duel will be that of Samuel Eto'o and Ronaldo, head to head. The Barcelona and Cameroon player has 20 goals this season, an average of two goals every three games. In four visits to the Bernabeu he has three wins under his belt and one draw. Ronaldo is on 12 goals for the season, a far cry from his three previous pichichi campaigns. Eleven of those goals came before Christmas, and he's registered only one in the last 11 games. The last time 'Ronnie' scored was March 5. In three 'clasicos' he has had to make do with one win, one draw and one defeat. Something tells me the Brazilian will feel he has something to prove this Sunday...

## Mourinho to become richer

AFP, London

Jose Mourinho has reportedly been offered a million pound pay rise, taking his annual salary to 5.2 million pounds, after steering Chelsea to the verge of their first English championship in 50 years.

The controversial Portuguese coach was given the three-year extension after an extraordinary series of rows with the club which left billionaire owner Roman Abramovich fearing he could walk out.

His current deal, which runs until 2007, is worth 4.2 million pounds a year.

And the pay rise puts him out of reach of the next highest-paid manager, the England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson, who earns 4 million pounds a year, and Premiership rivals Sir Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger.

The offer was made after two days of peace talks with Mourinho. The Chelsea head coach was angry because Chelsea had refused to support him over a UEFA's decision to ban him from the touchline for two matches over the Anders Frisk referee row.

## Batsmen make

FROM PAGE 12

92, Ashraful 8, Alamgir 23, Saifulah 6, Sumon 1 n.o., Ashraful 3-72, Zia 4-113, Manjurul 1-26, Jamal 2-58).

**Khulna first innings:** 265-3 in 65 overs (Sahagiri 90, Sajjadul 105 batting, Monirul 30, Sakib 13, Asadullah 16 batting, extras 11, Saifulah 2-69, Naem 1-19).

**SYLHET-CHITTAGONG**

**Sylhet first innings:** 448 all out in 141.4 overs (Rahman 43, Moniruzzaman 30, Imtiaz 16, Parvez 102, Kapali 77, Mabud 17, Mawla 86, Rana 3, Hasibul 1, Nabil 6, Zakwan 65, extras 18, Sunny 5-95, Arafat 3-87, Ahsan 1-73, Faisal 1-54).

**Chittagang first innings:** 80 without loss in 28 overs (Salahuddin 40 batting, Masum 29 batting, extras 11).

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS** 37 Keeps complaining 38 Money (Sl.) 8 Shot, for short 12 "Hi, sailor!" 13 "This tastes terrible!" 14 Combine resources 15 Scout gathering 17 Parli-mentarian 18 Hurry 19 Rings up the bulb 24 Astrir-gent 25 On the rocks 26 Beach gathering 30 To and-- 31 "... calm, bright" 32 Retainer 33 Official gathering 35 Shoppers' mecca 36 "— and Michele's High School Reunion"

**DOWN** 1 Army rank (abbr.) 2 "Eureka!" phrase 3 Male turkey 4 Composite 5 Set fire to 6 Succumb to time 7 Rainy Spanish area? 8 Poise gathering 9 Apollo destination 10 Oliver Twist