

Comfortable lead for Milan



AFP, Milan

AC Milan moved a huge step closer to the last four of the Champions League...

Dutch defender Jaap Stam broke the deadlock in first half stoppage time before Andriy Shevchenko...

The goals, both headers, were created by Andrea Piro's superbly delivered free-kicks.

Inter were denied a precious away goal in the closing stages when substitute Giorgos Karagounis' angled shot rattled the post.

Milan, who knocked Inter out in the semi-finals of the same competition two years ago before beating Juventus in the final...

Milan, joint top of Serie A with Juventus and a massive 16 points clear of Inter, have not been beaten by their neighbours since March 2002.

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti was pleased with the result, but insisted the tie was far from over.

"It's certainly a good advantage to take into the second leg, but it won't be easy as Inter are still alive and they have showed they can cause us plenty of problems," he said.

"We will approach the game as if it were still 0-0 and try to build on this result. We won't think about the semi-finals until we actually go there."

Inter coach Roberto Mancini was disappointed not to have something to show for all his team's possession and first half superiority.

"Milan weren't two goals better than us because the game was pretty even," he said.

Mancini's side will have to do something they have failed to do this

'We will kill them, just like they killed us'



AFP, Rome

Turin police force will have a major security operation in place for next Wednesday's emotionally-charged Champions League match between Juventus and Liverpool.

Fears for the safety of the 4,000 Liverpool fans have been heightened by threats of reprisals for the Heysel disaster 20 years ago.

On 29 May 1985, as Liverpool and Juventus were preparing to contest the European Cup final in Brussels, a wall collapsed killing 39 people as Juventus fans tried to escape a surging mass of Liverpool fans.

Hundreds of Juve supporters, including many from the hardcore 'ultras', have swamped internet chatrooms with threatening messages following the quarter-final, first leg at Anfield which Liverpool won 2-1.

Before Tuesday's match, a large section of the visiting Juve supporters rejected the hand of friendship offered to them by Liverpool, turning their backs in protest when a banner promoting

3 changes

FROM PAGE 16 the innings but can also get wickets for us," he said.

Kaneria has so far played 10-one-dayers in which he has taken nine wickets at 42.44.

Inzamam said Shahid Afridi would continue to open the innings because the wickets suit his style of batting and that he can be more destructive on top of the order.

Both WI

him to prove his fitness in a domestic match before dispatching him to the Caribbean, but there are adequate bowling choices for Smith with Makhaya Ntini and Andre Nel to lead the way.

WEST INDIES (from): Shivnarine Chanderpaul (captain), Courtney Browne (vice captain), Dwayne Bravo, Pedro Collins, Chris Gayle, Wavell Hinds, Reon King, Brian Lara, Donovan Pagon, Daren Powell, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Dwight Washington. SOUTH AFRICA (from): Graeme Smith (captain), Nicky Boje (vice captain), Mark Boucher, Abraham de Villiers, Boeta Dippenaar, Herschelle Gibbs, Andrew Hall, Jacques Kallis, Charl Langeveldt, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini, Ashwell Prince, Jacques Rudolph, Monde Zondeki.

KCA chairman charged with \$3.3m theft

REUTERS, Nairobi

Kenya Cricket Association (KCA) chairman Sharad Ghai was charged in a Nairobi court on Thursday with stealing 3.3 million dollars belonging to the sport's governing body.

Ghai, who was arraigned before principal magistrate Wilbroda Juma, denied both two charges.

The first charge stated that he conspired with others between April and December 1999 to steal the money, which was set aside for a quadrangular tournament held in Nairobi that year. The second count charged him with the actual theft.

Juma ordered Ghai be released on a bond of 62,500 dollars. Further hearings are scheduled for April 21 and June 22.

Ghai was arrested by anti-corruption police on Tuesday.

Three months ago the government disbanded the KCA and installed an interim committee to run the association.

Ghai successfully challenged the move but the government registered a rival body to run cricket in Kenya. Both matters are pending in Kenyan courts.



Chelsea's Didier Drogba (2nd R) blasts in the fourth goal from close range past Bayern Munich custodian Oliver Kahn at Stamford Bridge in London on April 6.

Blues baffle Bayern



AFP, London

Chelsea showed they can perform even without their talismanic manager Jose Mourinho as Bayern Munich were defeated 4-2 in the Champions League quarter-final first leg at Stamford Bridge here Wednesday.

Mourinho, who is serving a two-match touchline ban handed down by UEFA for accusing referee Anders Frisk of improper conduct in the last round against Barcelona, will only be disappointed by the fact that four-time European champions Bayern grabbed a lifeline for the second leg with an injury time penalty.

England midfielder Joe Cole's deflected shot got Chelsea off to flying start four minutes in but Bayern substitute Bastian Schweinsteiger equalised on 52 minutes before Frank Lampard hit a left-footed double.

The England midfielder scored from the top of the penalty box seven minutes later before firing in a skilful shot on the turn in the 69th minute.

Didier Drogba thought he had sealed affairs in the 80th minute, stabbing the ball in after a goalmouth scramble.

But an injury-time Michael Ballack penalty gave Bayern hope for the second leg in Germany next Tuesday.

Was there something fishy going on?



AFP, London

Chelsea refused to dismiss rumours their manager Jose Mourinho cheated his touchline ban by contacting his assistants during their Champions League win over Bayern Munich.

The Portuguese boss was banished from the touchline and the dressing rooms for both legs of the quarter-final, starting at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday where the Blues cruised to a 4-2 victory.

Coach Rui Faria, on the Chelsea bench, appeared to put his hand to his ear at several points, as if listening to an earpiece, but rather than dismissing the rumours outright, the Blues repeatedly blanked suggestions any underhand moves had taken place.

"We've not had anything from UEFA at all. We've got nothing to say about it," said Director of Communications Simon Greenberg, suggesting the matter would only become a problem if European football's governing body felt there was sufficient evidence to step in.

Mourinho is serving a ban handed down by UEFA for accusing referee Anders Frisk of improper conduct in the last round against Barcelona.

The relationship between the English Premiership leaders and UEFA is already at breaking point and the consequences of any such further spat, so soon after Mourinho and the club were sanctioned, could be extremely serious.

Greenberg admitted he was aware of the rumours but would not deny Mourinho was in contact with his touchline team.

"Yes, but we haven't had anything from UEFA so we've got nothing to say about it. We've got nothing to say about it. Next question please. We're not going to get into a debate," he snapped.

Ballack's free kick rebounded off the wall and Cech could only parry Ze Roberto's follow-up into the substitute's path for a simple cross-shot.

The stalemate lasted just nine minutes before Lampard restored Chelsea's lead.

Joe Cole launched a long pass for Drogba, whose header found Lampard on the edge of the box and the England midfielder lashed in a left-foot strike.

Lampard scored his second ten minutes later thanks to Claude Makelele's excellent pass that found him in space in the penalty box.

The France midfielder capitalised on a loose clearance to pick Lampard out with an excellent pass and the England man chested the ball down and swivelled before firing across Kahn.

Lampard took the corner from which Drogba scored. Kahn kept out Gudjohnson's close-range effort but the Ivorian reacted first to seemingly give Chelsea one foot in the semi-finals.

However, Bayern won a dubious penalty in injury time when Ballack tumbled in the box under minimal pressure from Carvalho.

The Germany midfielder then scored the resultant spot kick that keeps Bayern's Champions League hopes alive.

Peru striker Claudio Pizarro and Netherlands hitman Roy Makaay were both out injured forcing Bayern boss Felix Magath to start with Jose Paolo Guerrero and Hasan Salihamidzic in attack.

Mourinho claimed beforehand that he would not even be at the stadium but he would barely have settled in his seat before man-of-the-moment Cole gave him the dream start.

John Terry launched a long ball upfield for Drogba but though his marker Robert Kovac won the challenge, the Croat's weak header dropped for Damien Duff.

France defender William Gallas was booked for hacking down Schweinsteiger on the edge of the box and the substitute soon punished the error personally.

Ballack's free kick rebounded off the wall and Cech could only parry Ze Roberto's follow-up into the substitute's path for a simple cross-shot.

The Republic of Ireland winger played in Cole, whose shot from outside the penalty box took a big deflection off Lucio's heel, leaving goalkeeper Oliver Kahn stranded.

Bayern were rattled but England midfielder Owen Hargreaves soon led their resurgence with a menacing run and a free kick that forced Blues goalkeeper Petr Cech into his first save.

The visitors should have levelled in the 30th minute courtesy of a woeful Glen Johnson error.

The right-back slipped as he attempted to clear a cross, his lame header falling straight to Ze Roberto. However, the Brazil midfielder's shot flashed across the face of goal.

Lampard seved Kahn notice in the 34th minute with a curling blast after a corner that just bent away from the Germany stopper's goal.

Chelsea almost started the second half in the same fashion as the first, but Duff's shot was cleared off the line by Willy Sagnol after Kahn deflected the shot.

It was Bayern who struck early this time thanks to Schweinsteiger, on for Salihamidzic for the second half.

France defender William Gallas was booked for hacking down Schweinsteiger on the edge of the box and the substitute soon punished the error personally.

Ronaldinho scare for Barca

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona's Brazilian maestro Ronaldinho could miss out on Sunday's top-of-the-table clash with Real Madrid striker at the Bernabeu with a stomach bug which forced him to miss training on Wednesday.

With Portugal international Deco suspended Barca were relying more than ever on Ronaldinho's magic as they seek to preserve a nine-point lead over their bitter rivals with just eight games to go.

The bout of gastroenteritis was the result of the player eating something which simply disagreed with him, Barca medical staff said, adding they expected the player had a good chance of being fit by the weekend.

Prize-giving ceremony

SPORTS REPORTER

The prize distribution ceremony of Keya-Bangladesher Khela Sportsman-of-the-Year 2004, organised by sports website Bangladesher Khela, will be held on April 11.

The event, sponsored by Keya Cosmetics, will be telecast live on Channel 1 from the Shilpakala Academy auditorium.

The Sportsman-of-the-Year, elected by 149 sports journalists, will receive a trophy and cash award of Tk 50,000.00.

Fominyh

FROM PAGE 16 Mohammed Javed drew with K Ramu, Rishpal Singh beat Sohail Chowdhury, Ram Krishnan beat Monir Hossain, Debaraj Chatterjee beat Hasan Emam, Mainuddin Ahmed drew with Nikhilesh Kumar, Uten beat Saifuddin Lavlu and Aminul Islam Polish beat Shamima Akter Liza.

The fourth and fifth round games will be held today.

WACKY FOOTBALL!

INTERNET SOURCE

Michael Owen may have been called a 'midget' by Azerbaijan manager Carlos Alberto last week, but his predecessor as England's nice guy goal machine is suffering the greater indignity of having to dress up as a sunflower to mark his tenth anniversary of selling crisps!

Gary Lineker is set to appear in a new advert for Walkers dressed as a giant sunflower, to highlight the fact that its core range of crisps are now cooked in a new blend of cooking oil, which contains vegetable oil and sunflower oil, which is apparently better for us.

The ad sees our undercover hero in the ultimate flowery disguise making his way through acres of sunflower fields to try to sneak his way into the Walkers Research Centre. Gary then peers through the factory window and haphazardly reaches towards the crisps, setting off the alarm in the process.

Gary is forced to flee the area and is seen running through the fields in his sunflower costume only to encounter a combine harvester. Despite Gary's best efforts to escape, the audience is left wondering whether he has met a tragic end. It wouldn't be the first time, as anyone who remembers his last appearance for England can testify...

Commenting on the new ad, which marks Gary's tenth year of working with Walkers, he said: "I have never been what you would call a 'shrinking violet' or a 'wall flower' but I never thought that I would be a great big sunflower! Still, one thing I have learnt to expect over the years from Walkers is the unexpected. I just hope anything that they come up with in the future is a little more comfortable than this one... and possibly a little less embarrassing!"

BAD MEDICINE

Kashimawo Laloko, the technical director of the Nigerian Football Association last week admitted that he believes 'juju' (witchcraft) can be used to influence matches. Mind you, it was hardly a surprise, as in 2000 he was sent off before the start of an African Nations Cup clash with Senegal for removing a talisman from the pitch: "I had to pick whatever I found there and I left," he said.

"I believe that it does exist," he said of juju. "As an African, we have our customs and traditions. Before the match [the Senegalese] came onto the pitch and started performing some rituals. An executive member of Caf then asked me if I was going to allow what was happening. If I had not done what I did and we had lost, journalists would have written all sorts of nonsense."

Nonsense or not, there are still in African football who believe in it, and it's not any more silly than some of the superstitions in football around the world. Argentinian goalkeeper Sergio Goycochea had a special tradition before penalty kicks, where he would hitch up his shorts and urinate on the grass, while Barry Fry one did a similar thing in all four corners of the pitch to lift a curse.

Perhaps Jose Mourinho should try a similar thing (maybe with a talisman rather than urine) to make sure he can still influence Chelsea's Champions League quarter-finals against Bayern Munich...

DIEGO IN LOVE

It certainly makes a change to see a footballer actually learning from his mistakes...

One ex-footballer who will seemingly never learn is Diego Maradona, who has been in the news again recently when he had a stomach-stapling operation in Colombia to help him lose weight. Now he has announced that he is in love... with Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.

"I like women, but I've fallen in love with Chavez," said Maradona, who has already planned a first date, seemingly. "I say to Chavez, I'm available for whatever he needs me for. I told him I'll teach him soccer if he teaches me baseball." Perhaps American football or sumo wrestling would be more appropriate Diego?

APRIL'S FOOLS

An April Fools Day joke in Croatia almost caused a riot when angry football fans took to the streets. An online news agency claimed that the country could be banned from the 2006 World Cup unless they handed over General Ante Gotovina, who is wanted for war crimes. The story quoted Sepp Blatter as saying: "It is clear that Croats care about football more than about anything else. In contact with EU Council of Ministers, we have decided to ban Croatia from World Cup before the country extradites the fugitive general Ante Gotovina."

Unfortunately, fans failed to look at their calendars and headed into the streets to protest all over the country, including Pakostone, where Gotovina was born. Local police spokesman Zlatko Mehun said: "There was a large gathering outside his former home. It was very heated but peaceful, and I have heard that there were also large gatherings in Zagreb and angry scenes, but I don't believe there were any arrests."

LIBERTADORES CUP

Robinho's day



REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Santos forward Robinho scored two goals and gave a virtuoso performance as the Brazilian champions revived their Libertadores Cup hopes with a 3-1 win over Ecuador's LDU on Wednesday.

Five-times winners Boca Juniors celebrated their 100th birthday in style and put themselves back on course for the last 16 with a 4-0 home win over Pachuca in Buenos Aires, one of two ties between Argentina and Mexican clubs.

UANL salvaged Mexican pride with a 3-0 win away to nine-man Banfield in the night's other match.

Santos, who gave away only three free kicks in their game, and Boca both avenged painful defeats last month.

Santos, who lost 2-1 away to LDU earlier in Group Two and were knocked out of the Copa

Cryptogram grid with letters and numbers for a puzzle.

CRYPTOQUIP

NANDY DXRT GXRGPARNRT Z MPBBXQ QYX ZBQZID DENBPD QZAEBI: "HY P QPZANRT XM HYP TANNR." Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A PHARAOH SNACKS ON LOTS OF CRACKERS IN BED, WILL WE END UP WITH A CRUMBY MUMMY? Today's Cryptquip Clue: T equals G

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.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solution time: 21 mins.