

PRIMERA LIGA

Ronaldinho keeps Barca atop



AFP, Madrid

Brazilian World Cup star Ronaldinho brilliantly illustrated his status as European Footballer of the Year with a breathtaking goal which gave Barcelona a 2-1 win over Sevilla and kept his side on top of the Spanish league.

The 25-year-old scored the winner, and his 10th league goal of the season, in the 78th minute when he dummied over the ball, picked up a smart reverse flick from Henrik Larsson, dribbled between two defenders before slotting the ball home.

Sevilla had earlier stunned Barca by taking a 63rd minute lead in Sunday's Nou Camp clash.

Fredi Kanoute scored his first goal since his eight-million-dollar move from Tottenham when he prodded home from close range after the ball had come back off the post. But Samuel Eto'o levelled just

two minutes later when he headed home a Ronaldinho corner which the Sevilla defence, who had conceded only eight goals all season before Sunday, failed to clear.

It was the Cameroon international's 13th goal of the season.

Real Madrid began Spanish championship life under Juan Ramon Lopez Caro, their fifth coach in the last two and a half years, with a 2-0 win at Malaga to go third.

Caro, who succeeded the sacked Vanderley Luxemburgo, was in charge of his first league game and his side responded well to his new 4-5-1 formation with French international Zinedine Zidane key to victory.

It was Zidane who created the first goal when he swung over a corner for Sergio Ramos to head home after 34 minutes.

Four minutes later, Real were 2-0 in front when Brazilian ace Robinho picked up a pass from Zidane, waltzed past two defenders to drive the ball past Francesco Amari in the Malaga goal for his third of the season.

Real, who are reported to be in the running to win the signature of former Manchester United skipper Roy Keane, moved into third place on 28 points, six behind leaders Barcelona while Osasuna, level on points with Barca, are second on goal difference.

"I am happy and proud because the players worked exceptionally well," said the 42-year-old Lopez Caro whose first game in charge had been the Champions League defeat at Olympiakos in midweek.

That proved academic, however, as Real had already made sure of their place in the last 16.

Real will face a test of their resolve next weekend when they entertain Osasuna whose 1-0 win against Mallorca gave them their eighth win in eight homes games this season.

Cameroon international Pierre Achille Webo scored the only goal of the game after six minutes at the El Sadat stadium.



PHOTO: AFP

IT'S ME AGAIN: Barcelona's Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho celebrates after scoring a gem of a goal against Sevilla in their Primera Liga clash at the Nou Camp on Sunday.

Dravid India's 3rd top Test batsman



PTI, New Delhi

Captain Rahul Dravid on Monday added another feather to his cap by becoming the third Indian to aggregate 8,000 runs in Test cricket.

Dravid achieved the milestone when he reached 50 with a cover driven four off Dilhara Fernando in India's second innings on the third day of the second Test against Sri Lanka here.

The Bangalore batsman, whose

Vaas takes 300 Test wickets

REUTERS, New Delhi

Chaminda Vaas removed India opener Gautam Gambhir on Monday to become the second Sri Lankan bowler to claim 300 Test wickets.

The 31-year-old fast bowler reached the milestone on the third day of the second Test against India when he trapped Gambhir leg before wicket in the third over of the second innings.

The Sri Lankan vice-captain is playing in his 90th Test.

By reaching the 300-wicket mark, Vaas emulated off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, who is the second highest wicket-taker in Test history with 577 victims so far.

"I have been waiting for this milestone for long and this is a very happy moment for me," said Vaas. "I think we still have a chance in the match if we restrict the lead to around 350."

Vaas praised Muralitharan, saying successes often came because of him.

"Murali is definitely one of the best bowlers in the world and he has helped me a lot by bowling from the other end keeping the pressure on batsmen," he said.



Did U Know?

With 7 for 100 at New Delhi on Sunday, Muttiah Muralitharan has produced the best bowling performance in a Test innings for Sri Lanka in India, bettering Kumara Dharmasena's 5 for 57 at Mumbai in 1997-98.



Ehsan Mani (ICC president)

"It is a great disappointment to see this former great player, particularly as he is from my own homeland, make such ill-informed, offensive and inaccurate comments."

While reacting to Wasim Akram's comment on ICC.

Top BBC award for Flintoff

AFP, London

England's Ashes star Andrew Flintoff on Sunday won the prestigious BBC Sports Personality of the Year award for 2005.

The 28-year-old all-rounder was the favourite to win following his man-of-the-series role in the summer Test success over Australia.

Flintoff, who is currently in Pakistan on tour, topped the public poll ahead of his captain Michael Vaughan, Liverpool's Champions League-winning skipper Steven Gerrard, record-breaking yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur, tennis star Andy Murray and lightweight boxing champion Ricky Hatton.

Second went to MacArthur and Gerrard finished third.

Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne received the overseas sports personality award.

Lord Sebastian Coe received a special award for his role in leading London's winning 2012 Olympic bid.

Brazil legend Pele received the lifetime achievement award for his contribution to football, a prize which was presented to him by Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, who was named coach of the year.

Real close in on Keane

AFP, Madrid

Roy Keane is poised to join Real Madrid after passing a medical for the seven-time European champions, Spanish daily Marca reported on Sunday.

Real are among a list of suitors wooing the 34-year-old Irishman ever since his shock departure from Manchester United in November.

In their report Marca suggest the way was cleared for Keane's arrival at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium after Real's financial division gave the green light to come up with the money to pay for his services.

Keane, who is said to have passed Saturday's medical "on British soil" according to Marca, is keeping stum on his plans.

Michael Kennedy, who acts as the player's representative, said last Wednesday: "There is nothing to report and I have no idea if there will be any decision this week."

ICC a 'waste of space'



AFP, Sydney

Australia's fearsome former fast bowler Jeff Thomson has branded the International Cricket Council (ICC) a "waste of space" following their attempts to gag players who criticise opponents in the lead-up to Test matches.

Thompson, renowned as one of Australia's most aggressive bowlers, slammed the sports international governing body and said they were taking the fun out of the game.

"They ought to get their own house in order rather than worry about the players, the ICC do nothing," Thomson said Monday.

"They do nothing about blokes chucking, they do nothing about all this other stuff, they are more worried about words, that is all they are, full of words the ICC."

"They always look like they are doing something but they do nothing. They are the biggest bullshitters in the world the ICC. What a waste of space."

His comments follow warnings from the ICC to players earlier Monday to cut down their verbal sparring or risk disciplinary action.

The body singled out Australia and South Africa for their so-called "war of words" before the three-Test series starting in Perth on Friday.

Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne on Sunday suggested the South Africans might need a psychologist after his team had finished with them.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said there had been a spate of code of conduct reports since the

Ashes series which finished in September and pointed to a slight increase in the number of players charged this year over their sledging.

"There have been a series of comments by players and former players ahead of the Australia v South Africa series that I believe make it necessary to remind the players of the



JEFF THOMSON

importance of playing within the spirit of the game ahead of this series," Speed said in a statement.

Thomson and fellow former Test bowler Terry Alderman felt the ICC comments showed they were trying to sanitise the sport and make players more robotic.

"You have got to have a bit of gamesmanship, that is what it is all about," Thomson said.

He believed the ICC's actions were taking the focus away from the actual game.

"They are bagging the game rather than promoting, it's highlighting things that aren't worth highlighting," he said.

Alderman said the ICC hierarchy were trying to justify their six-figure salaries following the recent move to Dubai.

"We need some characters in the game, we don't need assaults on players out in the middle, but the banter that does go on - there is nothing wrong with that," he said.

"They are putting the cart before the horse, they are almost saying there is going to be problems because of what has been written and said by players. Well that is ridiculous."

"Let the game be for goodness sake."

The Australian team, renowned for verbal sledging in the past, have attempted to clean up their behaviour under captain Ricky Ponting.

James Sutherland, the chief executive of Cricket Australia, the sports governing body here, said he was comfortable with the current standards of the national team before Friday's Test at the Western Australian Cricket Association Ground.

"The lead-up to the series against South Africa has seen some banter from both teams, but we expect the Australians will continue to lead by the example they have shown in recent times," he said.

Thomson's comments were the second major attack on the ICC this month after former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram claimed the body was biased against Asian countries.

Pakistan level in style

FROM PAGE 12 Jones (seven) and Ian Blackwell (10) as part of his fourth five-wicket haul in 122 matches.

SCOREBOARD

|                                 | Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|---------------------------------|--------|---|---|---|---|
| ENGLAND                         |        |   |   |   |   |
| Trescothick b Akhtar            | 16     |   |   |   |   |
| Prior b Razzaq                  | 32     |   |   |   |   |
| Strauss c Akmal b Akhtar        | 0      |   |   |   |   |
| Pietersen b Naved               | 28     |   |   |   |   |
| Flintoff c sub (Hameed) b Naved | 0      |   |   |   |   |
| Collingwood c and b Kaneria     | 23     |   |   |   |   |
| Jones c Younis b Akhtar         | 7      |   |   |   |   |
| Blackwell b Akhtar              | 10     |   |   |   |   |
| Plunkett c and b Akhtar         | 56     |   |   |   |   |
| Solanki not out                 | 38     |   |   |   |   |
| Harmison run out                | 0      |   |   |   |   |
| Extras: (b-5, lb-6, nb-6, w-3)  | 20     |   |   |   |   |
| Total: (All out in 48.4 overs)  | 230    |   |   |   |   |

Fall of wickets: 1-30, 2-30, 3-74, 4-74, 5-89, 6-103, 7-120, 8-130, 9-230

Super-sub: Arshad for Kaneria

| Bowler  | O   | M | R  | W |
|---------|-----|---|----|---|
| Akhtar  | 8.4 | 1 | 54 | 5 |
| Naved   | 8   | 0 | 42 | 2 |
| Sami    | 10  | 1 | 33 | 0 |
| Razzaq  | 8   | 0 | 25 | 1 |
| Kaneria | 6   | 0 | 24 | 1 |
| Malik   | 5   | 0 | 26 | 0 |
| Arshad  | 3   | 0 | 15 | 0 |

PAKISTAN

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Butt b Flintoff                 | 43  |
| Akmal c Solanki b Harmison      | 102 |
| Younis b Collingwood            | 15  |
| Yousuf not out                  | 28  |
| Inzamam not out                 | 31  |
| Extras: (lb-4, nb-3, w-5)       | 12  |
| Total: (For 3 wkts in 44 overs) | 231 |

Fall of wickets: 1-86, 2-113, 3-187

Did not bat: Malik, Razzaq, Akhtar, Naved, Sami, Arshad

Super-sub: Solanki for Anderson

| Bowler      | O  | M | R  | W |
|-------------|----|---|----|---|
| Flintoff    | 8  | 1 | 30 | 1 |
| Harmison    | 10 | 0 | 52 | 1 |
| Plunkett    | 7  | 0 | 63 | 0 |
| Blackwell   | 7  | 0 | 28 | 0 |
| Collingwood | 9  | 0 | 43 | 1 |
| Solanki     | 3  | 0 | 11 | 0 |

Result: Pakistan won by seven wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Shoaib Akhtar.

Toss: England.

Umpires: Darrell Hair and Brian Jerling.

Third match: December 15, Karachi.

PREMIERSHIP

Misery mounts on MU



REUTERS, London

Manchester United, eliminated from European competition in midweek, endured Premier League frustration on Sunday when they were held to a 1-1 home draw by Everton.

United, knocked out of the Champions League following a 2-1 defeat by Benfica on Wednesday, fell behind to an early goal by James McFadden but earned a point thanks to an equaliser from Ryan Giggs.

The Old Trafford club remain third in the table with 31 points from 15 matches. Liverpool, also on 31 points, are second on goal difference with runaway leaders Chelsea on 43 points having played a game more than their two closest rivals.

Everton, who have collected 17 points from 15 matches, climbed two places to 15th.

"I think we deserved to win," United manager Alex Ferguson told Sky Sports. "We had four or five clear chances but their goalkeeper (Richard Wright) had an excellent game."

"I think we got a bit anxious in the second half. The players were desperate to win, they tried their best and put all their effort into it and when they got the chances I thought we'd go on to win it."

United looked unusually nervous in the opening period and Everton wasted a good chance after three

minutes when keeper Edwin van der Sar scuffed his clearance straight to striker James Beattie but his shot was blocked by Mikael Silvestre.

The visitors were ahead four minutes later when McFadden fired a left foot shot past Van der Sar at the near post after good work by Kevin Kilbane and Leon Osman.

United fashioned an equaliser after 15 minutes when Giggs guided the ball past Wright with the outside of his left foot from near the penalty spot after a delightful pass over the defence by Paul Scholes.

With the Old Trafford crowd getting behind their team, United created further chances for Rooney, who headed Giggs's fine cross straight at Wright, and the Welsh winger himself whose low shot was turned around the post by the keeper.

United's dominance continued after the break with Scholes's fierce shot beaten away by Wright.

Everton were pinned back in their own half but twice launched dangerous counter attacks, McFadden forcing a flying save from Van der Sar and Kilbane wasting a good chance by firing high and wide.

Giggs almost snatched an injury-time winner when he curled a left-footed free kick over the defensive wall and Wright pulled off a diving save.

SERIE A

Inter win derby, Juve stretch lead



REUTERS, Rome

A dramatic stoppage-time winner by Adriano gave Inter Milan a 3-2 win over city rivals AC Milan in a pulsating Serie A derby on Sunday.

Inter's victory -- their first over Milan in the league since March 2002 -- lifted them to second on 32 points, 10 behind leaders Juventus who earlier crushed Cagliari 4-0.

Fiorentina are third, also with 32 points, after a 1-0 win over Treviso on Saturday. Milan slip to fourth on 31 points.

Inter came out aggressively, pushing Milan into their own half, and went ahead in the 24th minute.

Obafemi Martins played a one-two with strike partner Adriano and rushed into the area only for defender Alessandro Nesta to tumble in front of him.

It looked like a harmless incident but referee Domenico Messina judged Nesta had obstructed the Nigerian and gave a penalty, which Adriano converted by sending Dida the wrong way.

Milan responded by upping the tempo, reaping the reward seven minutes from halftime when Kaka won a free kick on the edge of Inter's area.

Dejan Stankovic handed Andrea Pirlo's kick and Milan had a penalty of their own, which Andriy Shevchenko dispatched coolly into the bottom corner.

Both sides continued to press forward after the interval.

Milan striker Alberto Gilardino narrowly failed to connect with a Jaap Stam cross that flashed dangerously across Inter's goal before

Martins restored Inter's lead with a poacher's goal in the 59th minute.

Adriano fired in a powerful free kick and Dida parried but he could not prevent Martins firing home the loose ball.

An 83rd-minute Stam header from a Pirlo free kick briefly levelled the scores but in the first minute of stoppage time Adriano headed a corner past Dida to give Inter the three points and consign Milan to a third loss in four Serie A matches.

In Turin, Juventus had a much easier time against Cagliari as they handed a 4-0 defeat to the visitors' thanks to a brace of goals from french striker David Trezeguet.

Elsewhere, Livorno's excellent run continued as they beat Lazio 2-1 to consolidate fifth place on 28 points.

Booter Tamij passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

Former footballer Tamij Uddin died of a heart attack on Sunday night. He was 57.

He had long association with Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society in the sixties and seventies.

He left behind his wife, one son and a daughter to mourn his death.

Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday expressed its deep shock over Tamij's death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

**CROSSWORD**

**By Eugene Sheffer**

**ACROSS**

1 Become one

4 Family

8 Prince

Charles's pastime

12 Past

13 Present

14 Green acres

15 Night shift

17 Ring out

18 Ever-green

19 Public speaking

21 Play-ground set

24 Dos Passos trilogy

25 "Price Is Right" decor item

26 Will Ferrell movie

28 Chubby

32 Mideast potentate

34 Still

36 Dangling locale

37 Lucy: Ethel :: Wilma: —

39 Slight applica-tion

41 Aykroyd or Quayle

42 Afternoon get-together

44 Progeni-tor

46 Bring to trial

50 Postal Creed

51 Sailors word

52 Elvis hit

56 Send forth

57 Otherwise

58 —

59 Period-icals, briefly

60 Antelope's playmate

61 Location finder (Abbr.)

**DOWN**

1 Bankroll

2 Freudian concept

3 It involves a pair of aces

4 Attack go-ahead

6 Not pizzicato

7 1960s jacket eponym

8 Encour-aging words

9 Hydrox competi-tor

10 "To Tell the Truth" contes-tant

11 Sans siblings

16 Victory

20 Venom-ous viper

21 Impale

22 Carry on

23 Crafty

27 Nourished

29 Likely loser

30 Average

31 Cooped (up)

33 Authen-ticates

35 Spigot

38 Verily

40 Flag

43 Rued the

46 Scepter

46 Particular

47 One of the Three Bears

48 Overly proper one

49 Loose-leaf feature

53 Work with

54 Unlike (Abbr.)

55 Petrol

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | T | A | S | T | S | U | M | O |
| P | T | A | A | G | E | E | P | R |
| A | C | T | G | O | A | S | T | L |
| S | H | O | O | K | T | O | E |   |
| D | A | D | A | Y | E | L | L | S |
| H | E | A | D | L | I | N | E |   |
| A | L | L | S | E | N | D | S |   |
| T | B | A | G | M | A | I | N |   |
| E | A | B | I | A | R | I | O |   |
| P | A | R | T | I | N | E |   |   |
| A | G | U | E | T | O | U | R |   |
| S | E | E | D | O | U | T | S |   |

**CRYPTOQUIP**

O A P S S M A G O V ' A B Y B Z V P B C

X B Z V V R B V B I B H B Y I G E G

B V G V R G H A G C E G A M P V

M X R M P A G B Y I R M H G .

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** IF A FELINE HAD A STORY FOR EACH OF ITS LIVES, COULD YOU HAVE A CAT O' NINE TALES?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals T

The Cryptoquip 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.