

'Italy wont be complacent'

AFP, Rome

World Cup-winning captain Fabio Cannavaro insisted that Italy will not be lacking in motivation for their 2008 European championship campaign.

Italy take on Lithuania in Naples next Saturday before facing France - the team they beat on penalties in Berlin last month to become world champions for a fourth time - in Paris the following Wednesday.

Raising morale after hitting such a high in Germany will be a tall order for the Azzurri, but the imperious Cannavaro said they will not rest on their laurels.

"After winning the World Cup it would be understandable if there was a bit of complacency, but we are now thinking about our next target and we want to win the European championships," said the 32-year-old Cannavaro Monday, who left Juventus to join Spanish giants Real Madrid last month after the Turin club were found guilty of match-fixing.

"We haven't won the European championships for a long time and it's about time we did."

Italy have won the European championships just once, in 1968, when they hosted the tournament.

They have played one friendly since their triumph in Germany but new coach Roberto Donadoni picked a reserve team and they lost 2-0 at home to Croatia.

Odonkor set for Betis

AFP, Berlin

Borussia Dortmund announced Monday they have reached agreement to transfer German international midfielder David Odonkor to Real Betis in Spain.

Borussia's sporting director Michael Zorc said the "negotiations were successful" but that the deal would only be sealed once Odonkor had completed a medical on Monday.

The 22-year-old Odonkor was tied to Borussia until 2008, and will be transferred for a fee of "more than six million euros", according to Zorc.

Odonkor was given a late call-up to Germany's squad for the World Cup, but impressed many in the tournament with his turn of speed.

Despite boasting a similar reputation in the Bundesliga, Odonkor - capped six times for Germany - has been a substitute for Borussia during two of their league matches so far this season.

Martins relief for Newcastle

AFP, Newcastle

Newcastle's new 10-million-pound signing Obafemi Martins should be fit to face Fulham a week on Saturday despite suffering a knee injury during his Premiership debut at Aston Villa on Sunday.

The Nigerian, who only arrived from Inter Milan on Thursday, was stretchered off during the second half of the 2-0 defeat at Villa Park.

It looked like the injury might be serious, but boss Glenn Roeder breathed a sigh of relief when he learnt that Martins would not be joining long-term casualty Michael Owen on the sidelines.

"He has been in some discomfort but we think it is just a nasty dead leg where he will have had a bleed in the muscle," Roeder told the Newcastle official website.

"He will be sore for a few days, but we don't think there will be any problems with regards to the next game against Fulham."

Van Bommel signs for Bayern

AFP, Berlin

German champions Bayern Munich said Monday they have completed the signing of Dutch international midfielder Mark van Bommel from Spanish champions Barcelona.

Van Bommel arrived in the Bavarian capital on Sunday to take a medical and has now signed a three-year deal.

The two clubs reached agreement on a transfer for the 29-year-old, believed to be around six million euros (7.7 million dollars).

Van Bommel, who was bought to replace Chelsea-bound Michael Ballack, had not been a first choice in Catalonia since his arrival from PSV Eindhoven in 2005.

He has also lost his place in Netherlands manager Marco van Basten's international squad since the World Cup, where the Dutch lost to Portugal in the second round.

His signing could pave the way for England international Owen Hargreaves to join Manchester United, although Bayern general manager Uli Hoeneß continues to insist the Canadian-born midfielder will stay in Germany.



PHOTO: AFP

Monaco's Czech forward Jan Koller (L) takes a tumble at a challenge from Sedan defender Jeremy Henin during their Ligue 1 match at the Louis II Stadium in Monaco on Sunday.

Marseille go top

AFP, Paris

Marseille reclaimed top spot in the French League on Sunday when a 2-0 win over Le Mans completed a memorable week in which they also reached the knockout round of the UEFA Cup.

Marseille have 10 points and took top place on goal difference from champions Lyon who beat Nice 4-1 on Saturday.

They were indebted to two substitutes for their opening goal which came after 70 minutes when Samir Nasri played a wonderful pass for Habib Bamogo to score.

Mamadou Niang then sealed the three points from the penalty spot 10 minutes from time after he had been chopped down by Gregory Cerdan.

"We knew that Le Mans could be capable of scoring goals and be difficult to play against," said Marseille coach Albert Emon.

"But we thought about what we had to do and we had great confidence. It pleased me to see the joy in the players."

Nancy went into fourth spot, just a point off the pace, thanks to a 1-0 win over Auxerre, the victory secured by a

73rd-minute strike from Benjamin Gavanon.

Saint-Etienne also have nine points after a 3-2 home win over Lens.

Monaco enjoyed a first win of the season beating Sedan 2-1.

Mohamed Kallon (31min) and Francois Modesto (43) were on target for Monaco with Mansour Boutabout grabbing an 83rd-minute consolation.

On Saturday, Lyon, seeking a sixth consecutive French title, had temporarily taken top spot with a come from behind win at Nice who took a 1-0 half-time lead through Marama Vahirua.

But goals from Florent Malouda, Tiago and a brace from Karim Benzema sealed a third straight victory for the champions on their travels this season.

Sochaux stunned visitors Paris St Germain 3-2.

Karim Ziani opened the scoring for the hosts in the 29th minute, and six minutes later Badara Sene had doubled their lead.

Portugal striker Pauleta grabbed a brace late in the match to level, taking his goals tally to 121 to surpass Lilian Laslandes as the French league's highest goalscorer still playing.

However, Pauleta and PSG's joy was ended by Ziani when he stepped up to convert from the penalty spot 10

minutes from time to wrap up the points.

Lorient grabbed a 3-1 win over Nantes with striker Andre-Pierre Gignac grabbing a first-half debut hat-trick.

Canaries striker Frederic Da Rocha waited only 10 minutes before levelling Gignac's opener in the second minute, however Nantes' joy was short-lived as Gignac added goals in the 15th and 28th minutes.

Lille maintained their tradition of enjoying a solid start to the season with a 3-0 whitewash at home to Bordeaux to go third with nine points.

Yohan Cabaye, Mathieu Bodmer and Peter Odemwingie were on target.

TOP SIX							
Team	p	w	d	l	gf	ga	pts
Marseille	4	3	1	0	7	0	10
Lyon	4	3	1	0	10	4	10
Lille	4	3	0	1	9	2	9
Nancy	4	3	0	1	5	2	9
Sochaux	4	2	2	0	7	5	8
Lorient	4	2	1	1	7	5	7

'Slave' claim strong but logical

AFP, Paris

Claude Makelele believes Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho was 'too strong but logical' when describing him as 'a slave'.

The Blues boss was reacting to Makelele being picked against his will for the French national team by coach Raymond Domenech.

Makelele announced his international retirement for the second time after the World Cup in Germany in July but Domenech did not accept his decision.

Domenech has called him up ahead of France's Euro 2008 qualifiers

against Georgia and Italy on September 2 and 6, and Makelele has now agreed to play.

Mourinho said yesterday: 'Makelele is not a football player - Makelele is a slave.'

But Makelele told French television station TPS: 'My coach's words are a bit too strong, he's probably gone too far.'

"But his disappointment is logical. There was an agreement after the World Cup that I would retire."

"But I spoke with the French team coach (Domenech) and he believes I am still able to bring something extra to the team."

"I don't blame him (Domenech) for anything and I will go back and play with France."

Makelele, 33, admits the workload of club and country games will be taxing.

"This is a delicate situation because I will play more matches and I will be more tired," he said.

"But I am in the list and I have to go. The French team is still something important for me."

"Everyone knows me and I am a professional, I do my job and even if my club is not happy I will honour my call-ups."

"So I will go to Clairefontaine (the France training camp) and I will be there for the two matches. I consider it normal to wear the colours of my country."

The French team gather in Clairefontaine tonight.

Ferdinand fit for qualifiers

AFP, London

Defender Rio Ferdinand has been passed fit for England's Euro 2008 qualifiers with Andorra and Macedonia.

It was feared the 28-year-old had broken a toe in Manchester United's Premiership win over Watford on Saturday and would therefore miss Steve McClaren's first competitive game in charge of the national side.

But a scan carried out on Sunday suggested there was only bruising

rather than a break and further examination on Monday has left United's medical staff able to pass Ferdinand onto their England counterparts.

The news will be a major boost for McClaren, who faced the prospect of having to re-jig his defence for the Andorra and more hazardous Macedonia games.

Although the former West Ham player will still need his fitness assessed before being given the all clear to start Saturday's Old Trafford encounter, United are much more relaxed about the situation now McClaren is in charge.

Confirmation that Ferdinand will

not be out of action for up to six weeks, as had been feared, also represents a real boost for United boss Sir Alex Ferguson.

United have started the season on top form, as they currently head the Premiership after winning their first three games.

But Ferguson has been only too aware his side made a similar start 12 months ago, only to see their hopes of challenging Chelsea undermined by a series of long-term injuries, which so far this year they have managed to avoid.



PHOTO: AFP

Bayern Munich coach Felix Magath (R) talks to the media as the club's new-signing Dutch midfielder Mark van Bommel looks on during his official presentation in Munich on Monday.

Chelsea slam Schwarzer claims

INTERNET, undated

Chelsea have described Middlesbrough goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer's claims that the champions lacked 'respect' following his side's midweek draw as 'complete nonsense'.

The Australian keeper hit out at the Blues over the weekend accusing Jose Mourinho's side of lacking class and claiming the players left the pitch without shaking hands following Boro's 2-1 win at the Riverside Stadium.

Chelsea have issued a statement in response which read: 'The comments from the Middlesbrough goalkeeper are complete nonsense and totally ignore the facts on the night.'

'Several Chelsea players swapped shirts with Middlesbrough players after the whistle and Jose Mourinho stood by the side of the pitch after the Chelsea team had already gone to the dressing room and shook the hands of most, if not all, the Middlesbrough players.'

'One has to question Schwarzer's motives for coming out with this unwarranted attack on our players and manager given they are not borne out by the clear facts.'

'We delayed our response to this because we had an important match against Blackburn and we did not want this issue clouding the build-up to the game, but we cannot allow this attack to go unchallenged.'

Chelsea beat Blackburn 2-0 at Ewood Park on Sunday.

Van der Vaart out of Dutch match

AFP, Berlin

Injured midfielder Rafael van der Vaart has been ruled out of the Netherlands' Euro 2008 qualifier against group G opponents Luxembourg, his club, SV Hamburg, said Monday.

The 23-year-old Dutch skipper of the Bundesliga side injured his thigh playing in the 1-1 draw with Hertha Berlin on Sunday and will be unavailable for Saturday's match in Luxembourg.

Van der Vaart is set for a scan on Monday to find out the extent of his injury.

Villa chief delighted with win

INTERNET, undated

New Aston Villa owner Randy Lerner could not conceal his delight after watching Martin O'Neill's side climb to second spot in the Premiership by defeating Newcastle at Villa Park.

Lerner and his family flew over from the United States and received a standing ovation from the Villa fans before witnessing goals from Luke Moore and Juan Pablo Angel maintain an unbeaten start to the campaign.

The 44-year-old Lerner was introduced to some of the Villa players by outgoing chairman Doug Ellis after the game and will now sit down with O'Neill to discuss transfer targets before the window closes at midnight on Thursday.

Lerner, the billionaire owner of NFL side Cleveland Giants, said: 'What a great start that was. My family have enjoyed it, particularly with Villa scoring within two minutes of the kick-off.'

'They didn't waste anytime and the crowd were chanting my name. That was great. I thank them for that.'

'The whole afternoon gave me a nice warm feeling. It underlined to me why exactly I am so happy to be buying into English soccer. It is a great club.'

O'Neill said: 'I haven't sat down with Mr Lerner yet. I will do hopefully in the next day or two. He is staying on in England for a little while.'

'Before the transfer window closes we are going to try and do something. The good players at the club need a bit of help and it would be really important for us to get some people in.'

'There is some momentum there at present. We have got seven points and for club to make a signing or two would be nice if that is the case. If it doesn't materialise, then we still try and get some people in - even if they are on loans.'

'We will try and do something because the squad does need bolstering. All thoughts will be on that between now and Thursday evening.'

On an almost perfect day for Villa, new skipper Gareth Barry pledged his future to the club by signing a new four-year deal after coming close to asking for a transfer in the summer.

Villa defender Aaron Hughes said: 'I think Gareth pledging his future to us is a massive lift because he is a very important player for us.'

'Since I've been here, he has been very consistent, probably the most consistent player at the club. To get him signed up is fantastic for us.'

O'Neill said: 'We wanted him badly and I think it was really important for us to keep Gareth at the football club.'

'If he had left - and at one stage he could have done - it would have been a massive disappointment to us. All just to get him on board has given all of us a big lift.'

Newcastle suffered their first defeat in 13 games but the one consolation was new £10million signing Obafemi Martins' injury was not as serious as first feared when he was carried off on a stretcher after an hour.

Relieved Magpies boss Glenn Roeder said: 'We have been very lucky. He has suffered a heavy dead leg. When he was stretchered off I thought it could be a serious knee injury but he expect him to be fit for our next game with Fulham.'

Roeder admitted: 'The players will be disappointed with the goals they conceded. There were individuals who should have done better.'

Not the Real deal

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid's new coach Fabio Capello was at pains ahead of his side's opening league game against Villarreal to stress that he was not an exponent of creating "boring sides" who know how to win.

After Sunday's goalless draw the boring tag, clinging to a man who spent a decade in Italy before embarking on a second Bernabeu stint, threatens to stick.

And as for how to win, that quality wasn't much in evidence either as Villarreal carved out enough chances to have earned a win bonus.

Brazilian Robinho had a second half chance to settle Real's nerves but sent a shot-cum pass across the face of goal as Villarreal keeper Sebastian Viera and his defenders breathed a sigh of relief.

It was not what the injection of 61 million euros over the summer for Ruud van Nistelrooy, Fabio Cannavaro, Emerson and Mahamadou Diarra was supposed to bring about and the fans loudly whistled their unhappiness with

some even leaving before the end.

Real were crying out for the guile of the retired Zinedine Zidane but nobody proved able to supply it.

Van Nistelrooy, left as a sole spearhead, missed two chances and otherwise found the supply lines blocked.

"I am not worried - I told my players (Villarreal) were the worst team we could meet currently as they are physically strong and are playing well."

At least Real did not start at home to champions Barcelona, against whom an opening day potential loss would have had the brickbats being hurled at Capello and his men.

Amid reports that former England star David Beckham is extending his contract by two years the former Manchester United man received a big fat zero from Marca sports daily for a contribution which ended with his giving way to Robinho.

The Madrid-based sports media are wont to believe in the Real hyperbole on occasion but Marca was in merciless mode Monday.

"Capello fulfilled his promise - Madrid are more secure and more boring," the paper summed up.

Capello insisted that "the players did all they could. But we weren't

able to change the rhythm and we were weak in the one on ones."

For Marca, Real did "good work off the ball, but were poor with it."

"It was the same old Madrid," said Barcelona-based El Periodico, while AS sports daily headline read "Capello asks for time."

AS also quoted Real chairman Ramon Calderon as saying Sunday that Brazilian Ronaldo, who missed the match as he is not fit, had personally told him he would be staying with the club, finally squashing speculation of a move back to Italy.

AS had reported Saturday that Ronaldo had told Calderon he felt "capable of scoring 30 goals this season."

With Real looking like a side which will struggle to end three years without a trophy Barca were to travel to Celta Vigo Monday night without Brazilian star Ronaldinho, will miss the game with a leg strain.

"Hopefully he will be back soon - absences such as these are always important," said coach Frank Rijkaard, reeling from a 3-0 European Super Cup mauling by compatriots and UEFA Cup winners Seville.

Juve undone in Napoli

AFP, Naples

Juventus are out of the Coppa Italia after a dramatic 3-3 draw at Napoli, Gigi Buffon eventually missing a penalty in the shoot-out after Mauro Camoranesi's dismissal.

Juve got off to a great start at the packed out Stadio San Paolo, where 60,000 fans crammed in to the legendary arena, as after 27 minutes Giorgio Chiellini nodded in Federico Balzaretti's cross.

However, after Cristian Bucchi saw a good chance charged down by the defence, the former Modena hitman equalised just before the break with an acrobatic volley.

Bucchi was Serie B's top scorer last term and again went close with a header, so it was no real surprise when Napoli capitalised on their good play to take the lead.

Emanuele Calaiò ran on to a defence-splitting pass to waltz round World Cup winning goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon.

Didier Deschamps had to reinforce the side and threw on Alessandro Del Piero for Valeri Bojinov. As against Cesena in the last round, Pinturicchio's entrance made all the difference, as he unleashed a curling strike from the edge of the box that slammed in off the upright.

Inacio Pia wasted a glorious opportunity for the home side and it went to extra time, where Marco Marchionni brought a tough save out of Gennaro Iezzo and Cristiano Zanetti's shot was charged down.

Mauro Camoranesi replaced Pavel Nedved and did little to endear himself to the Juventus fans, as he was sent off for elbowing Montevino soon after stepping on to the field. Napoli didn't have an advantage for long, as moments later Grava also saw red for a second bookable offence.

The drama was most definitely not over yet in an incredible night at the San Paolo. Del Piero thought he had secured victory for Juventus by turning in Balzaretti's assist with 120 seconds to go.

However, Paolo Cannavaro

the younger brother of ex-Juve captain Fabio sent the home crowd wild with a spectacular overhead kick right at the death. The final score was 3-3 and only penalties could separate the two fallen giants of Italian football.

Ivano Trotta beat Buffon and the goalkeeper bizarrely took Juve's first spot-kick himself, but fired it off target. Bucchi and Maurizio Domizizi also converted for Napoli, but Sam Dalla Bona's effort was saved. Tomas Guzman and Alessandro Birindelli scored for the Bianconeri, then Marco Marchionni's kick was blocked by Iezzo. Cannavaro had the decisive kick and this time Buffon kept him out, so Del Piero kept his cool to level the scores after five penalties each.

The shoot-out continued with Montevino, Chiellini, Amodio scoring, but Balzaretti fired wide to hand victory to Napoli.

The Azzurri continue their Coppa Italia adventure, winning on penalties after a 3-3 draw, and go on to face Parma in the next phase.



PHOTO: AFP

Juventus' veteran forward Alessandro Del Piero (R) celebrates his strike against Naples during their Coppa Italia clash at the San Paolo Stadium in Naples on Sunday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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23 Female	54 Re Ra	11 Co-worker of Murphy	36 Re a people
24 Arrogant	55 Bashful	17 Unlikely to wobble	38 Big rigs
25 Hasn't paid yet	56 Pouch		39 Fidelity
27 Viny shelter			40 Vex
29 "Herzog" author			42 Rodeo gear
31 He played Oswald in "JFK"			45 McGwire rival
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