



Werder Bremen defender Per Mertesacker (R) rises above Chelsea midfielder Michael Ballack (L) to head in the winning goal past goalkeeper Carlo Cudicini during their Champions League match at the Weser-Stadion in Bremen on Wednesday.

## Bremen give Chelsea blues

AFP, Berlin



Chelsea progressed to the knockout stages of the Champions League despite losing 1-0 in their Group A clash with Werder Bremen here on Wednesday.

A 27th minute header from German international defender Per Mertesacker inflicted a first European defeat on Chelsea and punctured confidence ahead of Sunday's title showdown with Manchester United at Old Trafford.

Chelsea knew a point would be enough to see them finish top of the group and with winless Levski Sofia their final opponents they should at the very least get one.

German outfit Bremen are now level on ten points with Chelsea and have a great chance to eliminate reigning champions Barcelona.

Barcelona, two points behind Bremen after a 2-0 win over Sofia, face the Germans in a thrilling finale at the Nou Camp on December 5 needing a win to go through.

Chelsea manager Jose

Mourinho was not aware that his side had progressed but admitted he was not happy to have gone through having lost.

"For sure are we? I like to lose to my kids but not to my opponents, it was not a super game by Chelsea."

Chelsea captain John Terry admitted it was a disappointing result but warned people off from accusing them of not wanting to win the match so it would make life for Barcelona very difficult.

"I am a little bit disappointed to lose," said the England captain, who picked up a booking which sees him miss the clash with Sofia.

"I am disappointed but pleased we played so well and upset we got nothing from it."

Mourinho also insisted that Chelsea had taken it seriously.

"I think we showed that we treated it seriously."

"We tried everything. We missed Lampard and Didier (Drogba who went off with an ankle injury but should be fit for the United match) in the last period."

As promised Mourinho fielded a full-strength team with German international captain Michael Ballack making his first return to his homeland since a summer switch from Bayern Munich.

With Lampard suspended the omission of prolific Ukraine international forward Andriy Shevchenko came as a surprise.

Bremen manager Thomas Schaaf fielded his usual 4-2-2 with the only surprise seeing Portuguese striker Hugo Almeida come in for Aaron Hunt.

Both sides were keen to get forward whenever possible and Chelsea had a great chance in the eighth minute but Jon Obi Mikel headed over after a great lay-off from Terry.

Almeida, who played under Mourinho at FC Porto, had an equally good chance for Bremen on 16 minutes but screwed his shot wide under pressure from Geremi.

Bremen then forged ahead with Mertesacker, a cornerstone of Germany's World Cup side, ghosting in from a corner to head in on 27th minutes with Chelsea's marking all at sea -- though Mourinho was furious as Torsten Frings had won a freekick which produced the corner having not been touched by Ashley Cole.

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### WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS

**GROUP A**  
Levski Sofia (BUL) 0 Barcelona (ESP) 2 (Giuly 5, Iniesta 64)  
Werder Bremen (GER) 1 (Mertesacker 27) Chelsea (ENG) 0

**GROUP B**  
Inter Milan (ITA) 1 (Crespo 36) Sporting Lisbon (POR) 0  
Spartak Moscow (RUS) 2 (Kalinichenko 16, Kovac 72) Bayern Munich (GER) 2 (Pizarro 22, 39)

**GROUP C**  
Bordeaux (FRA) 3 (Alonso 22, Laslandes 47, Faubert 50) Galatasaray (TUR) 1 (Inamoto 73)

Liverpool (ENG) 2 (Gerrard 65, Crouch 89) PSV Eindhoven (NED) 0

**GROUP D**  
Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 1 (Marika 61) AS Roma (ITA) 0  
Valencia (ESP) 2 (Angulo 45, Morientes 46) Olympiakos (GRE) 0

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## Crespo sends Inter thru'

AFP, Milan



Inter Milan beat Sporting Lisbon 1-0 here Wednesday to book their place in the knockout stages of the Champions League.

Herman Crespo's clinical finish nine minutes before half time sealed a narrow but deserved victory over the Portuguese and saw Inter join Group B rivals Bayern Munich in the last 16.

Sporting were pretty on the ball and Nani's dribbling skills proved a handful for Inter's defence, but his trickery alone was not enough to prevent them being eliminated from the competition.

Inter's final first phase match is against Bayern on December 5 in Germany where a victory for the Italian champions will see them win the group.

Bayern, who drew 2-2 at Spartak Moscow, are on 11 points, two ahead of current Serie A leaders Inter.

Inter coach Roberto Mancini saluted his players for their third Champions League win in a row, which came after two defeats in their first two matches.

"They have been extraordinary -- winning three games on the trot is a great achievement," he said.

"It was a difficult match, just as we expected, but we didn't give Sporting many chances. They rarely threatened our goal and that was pleasing."

"I felt we were always in control, although we should have got the second goal that would have allowed us to relax a little more."

Sporting coach Carlos Pereira admitted Inter were worthy winners. "We had a good spell just before Inter's goal, but overall we didn't create very much," he said.

"We can't complain about the defeat. Inter are a strong side and deserved their victory."

Argentine striker Julio Cruz, Inter's match-winner in the back-to-back wins against Spartak Moscow which revived their European campaign, was ruled out with a knee injury so Zlatan Ibrahimovic partnered Crespo

in attack.

Sporting were without striker Liedson due to a one-match suspension.

Inter had the ball in the back of the net in the first minute, but Crespo's strike was ruled out as Dejan Stankovic was standing in an offside position.

Fabio Grosso sent two long-range shots wide in quick succession as the hosts continued to apply the pressure, before Inter's Brazilian defender Maicon was yellow-carded for a two-footed tackle on Nani.

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Inter Milan's French midfielder Patrick Vieira (R) hugs teammate Hernan Crespo after the Argentine forward scored in their Champions League clash against Sporting Lisbon at the San Siro on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

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