



BARCA HELD AT GETAFE Real relive Riazor nightmare

REUTERS, Madrid



Barcelona and Real Madrid returned to action in the Primera Liga after the Christmas break with disappointing performances on Sunday.

Barcelona scrambled a barely deserved 1-1 at Getafe, while Real slumped to a second defeat in a row when they went down 2-0 against struggling Deportivo Coruna.

Midfielder Xavi got Barca out of jail with a superbly struck free kick to cancel out an opportunist goal by Getafe striker Daniel Guiza who had cashed in on a howling error by Mexican centre back Rafael Marquez.

Depor, led by the inspired Angel Arizmendi, had a host of chances to extend their lead during the first half and the former Atletico Madrid striker was unfortunate not to add a second when he danced his way through the Real defence only to hit the post.

But Arizmendi got his reward 11

minutes into the second half when he slipped past World and European Player of the Year Fabio Cannavaro and squared the ball across the goalmouth for young striker Cristian to poke home into the open net.

Real's new signing Fernando Gago was taken off early in the second half after making a forgettable debut but Real continued to draw a blank when Ronaldinho came on to replace the Argentine.

keeper Roberto Abbondanzieri standing as he curled a superbly struck free kick around the wall and into the top corner 20 minutes from time.

Deportivo made a whirlwind start at the Riazor and it came as no surprise when defender Joan Capdevila put them ahead when he fired a free kick through a ragged wall and past a sprawling Iker Casillas in the 10th minute.

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The Mexican, one of several

Barca players who arrived late for training this week after the Christmas break, scuffed a backpass allowing Guiza to pounce on the loose ball, shrug off a challenge from Carles Puyol and side-foot into the net.

Barca continued to struggle in the second half, but midfielder Xavi came to the rescue when he left

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