



Long serving Manchester United winger Ryan Giggs (R) escapes the challenge from Spurs defender Anthony Gardner to shoot and score his side's fourth goal in their comprehensive victory during their Premiership encounter at White Hart Lane on Sunday.

## United dismiss Spurs

AFF, London



Cristiano Ronaldo's controversial penalty put Manchester United on course for a 4-0 win at Tottenham on Sunday that restored their six-point advantage at the top of the Premiership.

Ronaldo convinced referee Mark Clattenburg to award a spot-kick when he stumbled under minimal contact from Steed Malbranque just before half-time and the Portuguese winger converted it himself to give United the lead.

Nemanja Vidic, Paul Scholes and Ryan Giggs added further goals in the second half at White Hart Lane as Sir Alex Ferguson's side underlined their determination not to be overtaken by second-placed Chelsea.

Jose Mourinho's team had increased the pressure on United with a 1-0 win at Charlton 24 hours earlier that reduced the gap to three points, but they replied with a clinical display worthy of potential champions.

## Italy buries policeman



Football

REUTERS, Rome

Italy's football industry urged government and sporting authorities meeting on Monday to lift a ban on soccer matches as the nation paused for the funeral of a policeman killed by rioting fans.

A soccer-mad nation which only seven months ago celebrated a World Cup victory was stunned by the outcome of riots at a derby between rival Sicilian teams Catania and Palermo on Friday, in which the policeman died and over 70 people were injured.

Ministers and soccer federation officials have vowed to hammer out emergency measures. Possible steps reportedly being considered include banning spectators from unsafe stadiums and redirecting a



Officers carry the coffin, draped in an Italian flag, of fellow policeman Filippo Raciti during funeral mass at Catania Cathedral on Monday. Raciti was killed in a bomb attack on Friday and thousands turned up for his funeral highlighting the nationwide shock caused by his death.

Tottenham were completely outclassed by the end of a chastening defeat, but they will feel Clattenburg's decision was the turning point.

With fit-again Aaron Lennon and Dimitar Berbatov back in the side, they had looked a threat early on.

But United gradually imposed their patient passing game and should have taken the lead in the 24th minute.

Ryan Giggs's corner was flicked on by Vidic to Michael Carrick, whose header was parried by Paul Robinson. Ronaldo, just five yards out, seized on the loose ball but the winger somehow managed to blaze his shot well over.

United had a case for a penalty after half an hour when Henrik Larsson stumbled under Anthony Gardner's challenge, but Clattenburg waved away their appeals.

Gary Neville was furious and Tottenham almost rubbed salt into the wound when Berbatov took Tom Huddlestone's pass and worked space to drive in a low shot that Edwin van der Sar pushed away for a corner.

Tottenham thought they should

percentage of TV profits to improve security.

But the industry was worried that officials could decide to prolong a costly suspension imposed last Friday on a sport that, beyond being a national obsession, rakes in an estimated six billion euros (\$7.81 billion) a year.

Antonio Matarrese, who represents the financial interests of the teams as president of the football league, said hooliganism was largely a police matter and matches should be resumed.

"We are pained, but the show must go on," he told La Repubblica newspaper. "Soccer must never shut down."

Speaking about the death of 38-year-old policeman Filippo Raciti, Matarrese said: "Deaths in the soccer system unfortunately are part of this enormous (hooligan) movement that the police have not

been yet able to control." Monday's meeting was set to begin at 4.30 pm (1530 GMT).

The prime minister described the riots in the Sicilian city of Catania as a "guerrilla war". Hooded youths wielding metal poles and large firecrackers lashed out at police, as streams of fans fled down city streets to safety.

"It was terrible, terrible, terrible," Pierluigi Zotta, one Rome soccer fan who had had time to reflect on the violence after a weekend without soccer, told Reuters television.

"Unfortunately most people on Sunday spend their day watching football, I didn't know what to do with myself, but after this terrible thing it was right that soccer was stopped."

A firecracker which exploded in Raciti's face was initially considered

## Eto'o makes return

AFF, Madrid

Barcelona's Samuel Eto'o ended a four-month injury nightmare and played the last five minutes of the league leader's 0-0 draw at Osasuna on Sunday.

Some pundits were surprised that last season's leading scorer in the Spanish first division, and the three-time African Player of the Year, was given so little time to break the stalemate, but Eto'o himself was not.

"I knew beforehand I was only going to get five minutes," said the Cameroon international striker, revealing that Frank Rijkaard had discussed his role with him.

The coach explained: "He wasn't here to play many minutes and we have to act prudently. It's important that he got into the rhythm, participated and we have to carry on working with him."

Many were surprised that Rijkaard actually named Eto'o in his squad on Saturday after only three days full training with the rest of the squad but the player came through his first challenge unscathed.

"I'm quite OK," said Eto'o, after a contribution which really only consisted of a couple of touches of the ball and some running along the left flank.

Nevertheless, it was a welcome return for the player after picking up a serious knee injury against Werder Bremen in the Champions League last September.

His reappearance also sparked warm applause from the Osasuna fans.

The big question now is, when will Barcelona's number nine regain his starting role at Barca?

Eto'o scored four goals in as many league games at the start of the season before his injury and Barca's other main target men, Javier Saviola and Eidur Gudjohnsson, have failed to fill his boots.

"I have to respect what the other players in the squad have done," added Eto'o but there is the strong feeling in the Spanish media that Rijkaard could name him to the starting lineup against Racing Santander next Sunday.

Barcelona currently lead the Spanish first division by one point after 21 games but have often seemed out-of-sorts without their talismanic striker.

They also have a Champions League last 16 first leg tie against English Premiership side Liverpool looming on February 21.

## Dutch hit by injuries

REUTERS, Amsterdam

Injured defenders Urby Emanuelson (knee) and John Heitinga (thigh) have pulled out of the Dutch squad for Wednesday's friendly international against Russia, the Dutch soccer federation (KNVB) said on Monday.

The Ajax Amsterdam players sustained their injuries during the 4-1 victory against Feyenoord on Sunday.

Dutch coach Marco van Basten will also be without goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar who sustained a broken nose and concussion in Manchester United's 4-0 victory at Tottenham. Feyenoord's Henk Timmer has been called up to replace him.

## BARCA HELD AT OSASUNA

# Levante shock for Real

AFF, Madrid



League Leaders Barcelona missed their chance to put daylight between themselves and the rest of the Spanish title contenders when they were held to a 0-0 draw at Osasuna on Sunday.

The reigning Spanish champions retain a one point lead at the top of the La Liga after their nearest rivals Sevilla were also held to a 0-0 draw by struggling Real Sociedad.

Meanwhile, the problems of Real Madrid continued with an embarrassing 1-0 defeat at home to lowly Levante.

Barca, without the injured Ronaldinho, had the better of an entertaining game despite the lack of goal opportunities with their two best chances both falling to Javier Saviola, but the Argentine striker couldn't find the net.

Samuel Eto'o, last season's top scorer in the Spanish first division and the three-time African Player of

the Year, came on as a substitute for Barca five minutes before the end.

The Cameroon international had been out of action for the last four months with a knee injury but not even his return could inspire the Catalan visitors to victory.

Sevilla coach Juande Ramos must be regretting his decision to rest Fredi Kanoute, this season's leading scorer.

Ramos, clearly believing that he would have enough firepower with his other forwards, gave Kanoute the day off after starting every other league game this season.

However, the closest Sevilla came to scoring against Real Sociedad was when their recent Russian acquisition Alexander Kerzhakov hit the crossbar midway through the first half.

"The team wasn't playing as well as in other recent games. I think we were drained after Thursday's Cup match against Real Betis," said Ramos, reflecting on the tense local derby which ended in a 0-0 draw.

"We dominated possession but never got that opening goal which would have settled us and perhaps changed the course of the game."

Despite the useful point, Sociedad remain second from bottom and are staring at second division football for the first time in 40 years.

Real Madrid's erratic season continued with a 1-0 loss at home to Levante in what was the 1000th match to be played in their historic Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

The only goal of the game came from a Salva Ballesta penalty after 10 minutes.

"We had six or seven chances to score a goal and three penalties were not given. They had one shot on goal, the result was unfair," whined Real coach Fabio Capello.

Malian midfielder Mahamadou Diarra clumsily fouled Damiano Tommasi in the area and the former Spanish international marked his debut for Levante, after signing on the last day of the transfer window, by making no mistake from the spot.

Real threw everything at Levante in the second half but some solid defending by the visitors from Valencia, not least by their former Spanish international goalkeeper Francisco Molina, thwarted the Spanish giants.

"We played well in the air. We also had bad luck when a shot went off the post," added Capello, who had to face the wrath of the near-capacity 75,000 crowd calling for his head at the end of the game.

Real's third home defeat of the season leaves them in fourth place, and five points away from the top, while Levante remain third from bottom and still in relegation trouble.

David Beckham, who has been left out in the cold by Capello since he announced he was going to move to the Los Angeles Galaxy in the summer, watched the game from the VIP seats.

Television pictures showed him to be more interested in his mobile phone than Real's tepid performance.

Celta Vigo have plunged into the relegation dogfight in recent weeks and are now 10 games without a win after their 1-1 draw with bottom club Gimnastic Tarragona.

Borja Oubina put Celta in front after 49 minutes when he rose above the Gimnastic defence to head home a Gustavo Lopez cross but Gimnastic's Javier Portillo 13 minutes from the whistle.

## Crises at the Bernabeu

AFF, Madrid



Real Madrid directors were due to hold their weekly meeting Monday afternoon in an atmosphere of tension after Sunday's morale-sapping home loss to struggling Levante

wrecked hopes of marking the 1,000th league match at the Bernabeu stadium with a win.

A seventh league defeat of the campaign left Real on the ropes, five points behind leaders Barcelona and facing a fourth season without a trophy.

At the same time, coach Fabio Capello made it plain he has no

intention of calling in David Beckham, frozen out of the squad and who watched the game from the stands, to help stop the rot.

Disciplinarian Capello has stamped his authority on the team since arriving last summer from Juventus but that has meant offloading top names such as Ronaldo and Beckham.

Beckham is still available to the end of the season, when he moves to LA Galaxy, but Capello, who in recent days had appeared to soften his initial stance that the Englishman would never play for the club again after electing not to extend his contract, was scathing of the veteran.

"Beckham doesn't do anything for me. In the three years he has been here the results haven't been that good. Now we are trying a new way of doing things," said Capello,

who preferred to have 20-year-old Miguel Nieto on the bench than call up the former England skipper.

More significantly, the loss on home soil to a side in the bottom three who had never won at the venue finally snapped the patience of long-suffering fans.

Many waved white handkerchiefs, whistled their derision and demanded the resignation of chairman Ramon Calderon.

"The Bernabeu explodes," was how El Pais newspaper saw the cascade of angry sentiment which poured from the stands after a thoroughly mediocre performance by a Real side devoid of creative ideas.

"The Bernabeu is fed up," was how AS sports daily summed up the fans' feelings after a fourth defeat in six games.

Calderon and sporting director

Pedja Mijatovic held crisis talks after the game, while Capello was moved late Sunday to bat away speculation by national television station TVE 2 that his future was in the balance.

"I am not thinking about resigning. I want to see out my contract," Capello insisted, adding he was convinced the club can still "win something this season."

Even as El Pais described the team as a "public joke" both Capello and veteran striker Raul blamed bad luck while the latter called for "stability and unity."

Long-serving defender Michel Salgado urged the team to "back Capello to the hilt", telling reporters: "It's understandable people are fed up. We are generally playing badly. We all have to share the blame."



A large contingent of the Real Madrid faithful display their frustrations during their Primera Liga loss to Levante at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday by waving the white handkerchief asking for drastic changes in the light of Real's recent catastrophic form.

## Brazil out for revenge



Football

AFF, Lisbon

Brazil will be driven by a thirst for revenge when the five-time World Cup winners face Portugal in a friendly international in London on Tuesday.

Portugal claimed their first win over the South Americans for 37 years when they met in Porto in 2003 and the defeat still rankles in Rio.

So, although Tuesday's match at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium is nominally a friendly, there is likely to be an aggressive edge to the clash as Portugal's Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari tries to upset his compatriots again.

Scolari led Brazil to World Cup glory in 2002 before leaving to take over the Portuguese national team and he has no qualms about inflicting more misery on his home country.

"It will be the second time I'll face

Brazil since I took charge of the Portuguese team," Scolari said.

"To me it's of course a special moment and I'm really looking forward to the match."

While Scolari's ability to craft winning teams at international level has made him a coveted coach, Brazil boss Dunga is just starting out in management.

Dunga replaced Carlos Alberto Parreira after Brazil slumped out of the World Cup in the quarter-finals with a timid defeat by France.

He has made an impressive start, winning four of his first five matches in charge of the Selecao, with the Emirates Stadium holding particularly fond memories after the 3-0 win there against Argentina in September.

The former Brazil captain, who lifted the World Cup in 1994, has yet to play a match on home soil as his country's federation insist on hawking the team around Europe in money-spinning friendlies.

That at least allows Dunga's primarily European-based squad more time together. One familiar face back in favour after that World Cup flop is Inter Milan's Adriano, who failed so conspicuously in Germany.

The powerful striker has rediscovered his desire after a miserable 2006 at Inter, when he went nine months without scoring.

Four goals in three matches for the Serie A leaders last month was enough to persuade Dunga to pick him for the first time.

"He has been through a troubled time but he is getting back on the right path again and this is a way of giving him some more incentive," Dunga said.

"We don't have reserves in the Brazil squad, we have choices. Each player has to win his place in the team."

Lyon striker Fred, Shakhtar Donetsk's Elano, Hertha Berlin's Gilberto have all taken their

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## C'Ron better at Barca: Scolari

AFF, London

Cristiano Ronaldo should leave Manchester United for the good of his playing career and join Barcelona, Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari said on Monday.

Ronaldo's brilliant form for United this season has attracted interest from Barca and Real Madrid, but his boss at Old Trafford Sir Alex Ferguson has made it clear the Portugal winger is not for sale.

Despite Ferguson's insistence reports emanating out of Spain suggest the two Spanish giants are set to lock horns in a bid to lure the 22-year-old with a bid in the region of 40 million pounds.

And Scolari has joined in the debate telling Monday's The Sun newspaper that Ronaldo would be better off at the Camp Nou.

"The basic education stage of his career is ending and I know Cristiano is ready for a change of atmosphere," Scolari told the tabloid.

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