



Valencia captain David Albelda (L) carries goalscorer David Silva after the midfielder netted a late equaliser for the Spaniards against Inter Milan during their Champions League clash at the San Siro on Wednesday.

# Valencia win a draw

**AFP, Milan**

Inter Milan were left kicking themselves after being held to a 2-2 draw by Valencia in a gripping Champions League last 16, first leg tie here on Wednesday.

The Italian side should have had more to show for their first-half domination than just the one goal headed in by Argentine midfielder Esteban Cambiasso.

And poor finishing came back to haunt them as David Villa grabbed an equaliser the Spaniards barely deserved with a sublime free-kick from 25 yards.

A cool finish by Brazilian defender Maicon restored Inter's lead, but David Silva's low drive four minutes from time levelled the score and left Valencia as favourites to reach the quarterfinals.

Valencia's joy at scoring two away goals was soured slightly by a yellow card for their captain David Albelda.

Inter, who have won their last 16 league matches and hold a 14-point lead at the top of Serie A, will have to win or get a higher scoring draw at the intimidating Mestalla stadium to advance.

With the San Siro yet to fully comply with security measures introduced by the government in the wake of the crowd violence in Sicily earlier this month which claimed the life of a policeman, only Inter's 36,000 season-ticket holders were allowed in.

But the several hundred Valencia fans there will have gone home far happier after seeing their side come away with a result they never looked like getting after the first 45 minutes.

Patrick Vieira was ruled out for Inter with a thigh strain, so Luis Figo came in for the injured France international. Figo was deployed in the hole behind the two strikers and Serbian Dejan Stankovic dropped into Vieira's role as a holding midfielder.

Argentine Hernan Crespo was given the nod ahead of Brazilian Adriano to partner Zlatan

Ibrahimovic in Inter's attack.

Inter, who knocked Valencia out in the quarterfinals of the 2001-02 UEFA Cup and the last eight of the 2002-03 Champions League, were nearly gifted the lead in the ninth minute.

Valencia keeper Santiago Canizares was given a back pass which he tried to boot downfield, but his attempted clearance struck his own defender and the ball looped over his head and nearly went over the goal-line.

The danger was cleared as far as Stankovic and his right-wing cross was met by Ibrahimovic whose glancing header struck the inside of the post.

Inter maintained the pressure with Canizares getting down low to palm away Javier Zanetti's drive.

Villa tested Julio Cesar's reflexes as Valencia mustered their first attack before Inter went ahead.

Albelda chopped down Figo who picked himself up off the floor to take the resulting free-kick. Ibrahimovic was first to the

Portuguese's delivery and although his acrobatic volley was brilliantly saved by Canizares, the ball looped into the air and Cambiasso headed into an empty net.

The Bianconeri are looking to strengthen their squad in view of their likely return to Serie A and need fresh blood in their striking department, as David Trezeguet seems set to leave the outfit in the summer.

The Old Lady are also eager to build a competitive team in order to convince players like Mauro Camoranesi and Gianluigi Buffon to accept another season away from the European stage.

A website reported that Kanoute has been eyed by Juve scouts who have been travelling through Europe and South America, as he is considered a perfect replacement for Trezeguet.

The French-Malian striker currently leads the scorers' chart in La Liga with 18 goals, ahead of the likes of Ronaldinho and Ruud Van Nistelrooy.

Kanoute is contracted until 2009 and has a 17.8-million-pound release clause, but rumours suggest that Juve's bid might be enough to convince the Spanish outfit to let the 29-year-old leave.

If the Mali international were to snub the Bianconeri, the alternative is likely to be Dutch striker Klaas Jan Huntelaar of Ajax, who was already paired with Juve before Christmas.

## Spurs edge out Everton

**REUTERS, London**

Watford missed the chance to climb off the bottom of the Premier League after they were held 1-1 at home by fellow strugglers Wigan Athletic on Wednesday.

Tottenham Hotspur won their first league game of the year, Jermaine Jenas curling in a fine late winner to seal a 2-1 victory over Everton at Goodison Park. Spurs moved up to 10th.

Wigan were forced on to the backfoot at Vicarage Road after defender Fitz Hall's red card midway through the first half but the draw gives them a six-point advantage over West Ham United, who occupy the third relegation place.

Watford prop up the standings with 19 points from 27 games. Then, in ascending order, come Charlton on 20 along with West Ham, while Wigan have 26 points.

Watford's predicament is looking increasingly bleak and history is against them escaping the drop.

Since the Premier League began in 1992, West Bromwich Albion remain the only side to have been bottom of the league at Christmas and gone on to escape relegation, a feat they achieved in 2004-05.

Watford capitalised on Hall's 21st-minute dismissal, for a two-footed lunge on John Cavalli, by taking the lead shortly after when Jordan Stewart hooked back across goal for Darius Henderson to fire in from close range.

Striker Caleb Folan, signed last month from third division Chesterfield, equalised five minutes before the break after being put through by Lee McCulloch.

Spurs followed up last Sunday's impressive 4-0 FA Cup win at Fulham to end a six-match winless league run by overcoming Everton, who were without injured England striker Andy Johnson.

Bulgarian striker Dimitar Berbatov slotted in an Aaron Lennon cross after 35 minutes for his seventh league goal of the campaign to put the London side ahead.

Spaniard Mikel Arteta levelled three minutes before halftime with a freekick but Jenas had the final say a minute from time when he picked up Steed Malbranque's pass and beat Tim Howard to give Spurs only their second away win in the League this season.

# Rijkaard admits to complacency

**AFP, Barcelona**

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard usually protects his players in public but he laid into them in the wake of their shock 2-1 Champions League defeat to Liverpool on Wednesday.

"In this situation you don't always know why players did what they do but it was not one player's fault, it's everybody's fault," said the bitterly disappointed Dutchman after Barca struggled badly in the second half.

Rijkaard -- who may have wished that he had after all picked three time African player of the year Samuel Eto'o after falling out with him instead of having him watching from the stands where he cast a disconsolate figure ending with his head in his hands -- typically didn't raise his voice but knew everyone was listening to his unusually harsh words.

"From the moment we conceded the goal it seemed to affect us mentally and physically," added the man at the helm of the reigning European champions who seem destined to relinquish their hold on the trophy at Anfield on March 6.

"It's a question of not covering well from fouls, missing centres, and every one was not doing well," commented Rijkaard about Craig Bellamy's headed opening goal which led to Barca's own heads going down.

Liverpool's went in the other direction at a crucial point in the game, three minutes before the break, after being under pressure for much of the first half.

"It was an unfortunate moment. After that goal, Liverpool's confidence grew. We didn't have the strength to come back mentally, or physically because Liverpool are such a strong team," reflected Rijkaard, whose Barca side are only the second to lose at the Nou Camp to British opposition in European competition the

other one being the 1976 vintage who lost to...Liverpool.

"We started off quite well and we had high expectations after the first goal, we dominated the first 20 minutes but after that the rhythm of the game changed and we conceded a goal. We couldn't find a way to change this."

Rijkaard didn't hold out much hope that Barcelona can come from behind in the second leg between the two most recent Champions League winners after such a psychologically crushing defeat.

"We always have to be positive but it's always difficult to come back from this situation, but we will try our best. Things didn't go well for us today on the pitch. We have to be confident now and trust in ourselves."

"We know we lost to Valencia and now Liverpool, that's the reality, but we now have to keep on working, trying to improve," said Rijkaard, although he seemed at a loss on Wednesday as to how to reverse the current losing trend.

# Draw satisfies Houllier

**REUTERS, Rome**

Olympique Lyon coach Gerard Houllier said he was satisfied with his team's 0-0 draw with Champions League rivals AS Roma on Wednesday.

"It seems about right to me. Of course I would have liked to win, but I think 0-0 was the best we could have got tonight," Houllier said after the first-leg stalemate at the Olympic Stadium in their last 16 tie.

"I'm happy with the way my players played. It was a typical Champions League match. Very intense, very hard-fought."

"Both sides have about the same capabilities, but getting a draw here in Rome, against a team that is used to winning, was a good result and I'm confident that we can do well in the return leg (on March 6)."

The contest was most notable for the refereeing of Mike Riley, who handed out 11 yellow cards -- eight to Roma and three to Lyon.

"Roma won that match 8-3, though I didn't think the match was particularly violent," laughed Houllier, when asked about the bookings.

"The refereeing reflected the regulations made by UEFA, which differ from those in many of the national leagues."

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti felt Lyon's failure to score an

away goal could favour his side in the return leg.

"In our away matches in the last two years we've always managed to score a goal," he said.

Roma's slow start to the game was down to nerves, explained Spalletti.

"It took us a little time to gain confidence. But after that we played well. In the return leg I think both teams will be prepared to risk a little more."

Despite the eight yellow cards, Spalletti was happy with Riley's performance.

"The referee did very well. He was balanced in his decisions and was always in control of the match," he said.

## Rabbi beats Wanderers

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Fazle Rabbi blazed an unbeaten 96-ball 115 after taking three crucial wickets as Mariners Youngs Club won by seven wickets against Dhaka Wanderers in the Kai-Altech First Division League at the Dhaka University ground yesterday.

While batting first after winning the toss, Wanderers were bowled out for 193 runs in 47.5 overs. Rabbi's superb hundred saw Mariners reach the target in only 36.5 overs, losing three wickets.

Left-handed Rabbi, coming in at number three after previous match centurion Golam Fayyaz fell for 12, smote as many as five sixes and 12 fours in his trail-blazing knock where he shared 149-run second wicket stand with opener Mofizur Rahman (46).

Earlier, Wanderers' innings was built around one-drop Nahidur Rahman's 64 in which he struck seven fours and a six. But their innings was brought to a swift end, thanks mainly to Rabbi who took 3-29 with his left-arm orthodox.

## Juve eye Kanoute swoop

**INTERNET, undated**

Juventus have made a 12.8-million-pound offer for Sevilla striker Frederic Kanoute, according to reports in Spain.

The Bianconeri are looking to strengthen their squad in view of their likely return to Serie A and need fresh blood in their striking department, as David Trezeguet seems set to leave the outfit in the summer.

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Flachi, who will now probably be suspended as a precautionary measure, could face up to a year out of the game if he is found guilty of a doping offence.

This latest incident is already the second high-profile setback that the former Fiorentina man has encountered this term.

The Italian was handed a two-month suspension in September, along with Atalanta stopper Moris Carrozzi, after a betting probe.

## Flachi fails dope test

**INTERNET, undated**

Sampdoria ace Francesco Flachi is facing a lengthy ban after he tested positive for traces of cocaine.

The striker failed the routine dope test after the Week 21 clash between Sampdoria and Inter on January 28, a game which saw the Nerazzurri come away with a 2-0 win.

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## Cole unscathed

**AFP, London**

Chelsea's knee-victim Ashley Cole has passed a significant test on the road back to full fitness after coming through unscathed in a midweek reserve fixture.

The England left back, out of action since his knee ligament strain against Blackburn in January, played an hour of the match at Reading's Madejski Stadium.

His return will serve as a welcome boost to manager Jose Mourinho, who watched skipper John Terry leave the field on a stretcher during his side's 1-1 Champions League draw in Porto on Wednesday night.

While Terry is definitely out of Sunday's English League Cup final against Arsenal, Cole has an outside chance of playing at Cardiff's Millennium stadium.

# Reyes joins Capello critics

**Football**

**AFP, Madrid**

Real Madrid's Spanish international Jose Antonio Reyes admitted that the Spanish giants are blundering their way through the season, Spanish radio reported on Thursday.

"The team is disorientated because one day I'm playing on the right and on the other I'm playing on the left," Reyes told Radio Marca, in the wake of Real's less-than-convincing 3-2 win over Bayern Munich on Tuesday.

With two away goals to hand, the German side are favourites to progress into this season's Champions League quarterfinals after the last 16 return leg in Munich

on March 7.

"But it's not just me. Robinho, Raul and Guti are playing in various positions, but we are professionals and we have to accept this," he added.

"Personally, I prefer to be on the left wing because that's where I am the most comfortable."

Reyes, who is on a season-long loan deal from English Premiership side Arsenal, made no attempt to disguise the fact he is not on the same wavelength as his under-pressure boss Fabio Capello.

"I was warming up for 45 minutes against Bayern and Capello didn't find it convenient to put me on. In other previous games, I haven't played as many minutes as I would have liked."

"I'm irritated because the game against Bayern was one I didn't want

to lose out on. I don't have to pass an exam, all I'm thinking about is playing."

"He's given me freedom. I have to defend him for that," added Reyes, referring to the way Capello has repeatedly changed his role. "But I'm not getting many chances."

Despite Reyes' remarks, which many Real fans are likely to agree with after their erratic season, they still have a modest chance of ending their barren streak without a major title, which stretches back to 2003.

Real are currently fourth in the Spanish first division but only four points away from the league leaders Barcelona in the closest title race for many years and they could also still overcome Bayern in the Champions League.

# Lyon lock out Roma

**AFP, Rome**

Roma and Lyon played out a damp squib of a 0-0 draw in rainy Rome's Olympic Stadium in the Champions League last 16 first leg on Wednesday.

Chances, action and interest were at a premium in a dreadful game dominated by bookings, fouls and diving.

However Lyon coach Gerard Houllier was satisfied to take Roma back to Lyon all square in a fortnight's time.

"In the second-half we lacked a bit of freshness up front but I am proud of the players," said the former Liverpool and France handler.

"I would have preferred 1-1 but we will be back at the Gerland (Lyon's ground) and it will be for us to run the match."

The first half was notable only for its fractious nature with six bookings and few chances.

Roma's French centre-back Philippe Mexes was the first name in the book after only three min-

utes as he cynically chopped down Lyon's Brazilian playmaker Juninho.

Three more home players, two for blatant dives, followed him into English referee Mike Riley's book while two from the visitors also fell foul of Riley's strict interpretation of the laws.

Juninho almost orchestrated an early opener in the eighth minute as his dangerous in-swinging free-kick flicked off Roma midfielder Rodrigo Taddei's head and cannonned back off the post with goalkeeper Doni a helpless spectator.

Lyon were playing more like the home side than Roma and Florent Malouda had a great chance to give them the lead midway through the opening period.

Daniele De Rossi fluffed a back-pass and Malouda turned Matteo Ferrari inside out to open up a shooting position on his right foot. But the left-footed midfielder tried to turn the ball back onto his favoured side and overran it allowing Doni to snuff out the danger.

De Rossi almost made amends as he found space in Lyon's box

just after the half-hour mark but France goalie Gregory Coupet saved down low to his left and De Rossi turned out to be offside as well.

The second half was worse even than the first and it took 20 minutes for something -- other than two more bookings -- to happen.

In the end it was thanks probably to boredom as Doni spilled a 45-yard Juninho free-kick into the path of Brazilian Fred. Doni woke up just in time to spread himself well to block his countryman's poked effort.

Following Doni's lapse, Francesco Totti tried his luck from almost as far out but Coupet was slightly more alert than his opposite number and although he too spilled the ball, he gathered it at the second attempt.

That was about as close as anyone got to scoring in the second half with the only noteworthy statistic being a total of eleven bookings -- eight for Roma -- the most in any Champions League game this season.



Lyon midfielder Juninho (R) escapes the attention of AS Roma hardman Simone Perrotta during their Champions League encounter at the Stadio Olimpico on Wednesday.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>DOWN</b>
1 En-grossed	1 Music edition of
5 Upper limb	21 Unadorned
8 Freeway access	24 Tea time, maybe
12 Entreaty	25 Describe
13 Cattle call?	26 Dog-ear, e.g.
14 A Great Lake	30 Important numero
15 Price reduction	31 Obliterate
17 Confront	32 Court
18 "A mouse!"	33 March in place
19 World-wide	35 Groovy
21 Unadorned	36 Hill troop
24 Tea time, maybe	37 Weil's dance
25 Describe	38 Crazy one
26 Dog-ear, e.g.	41 -- relief
2 Carte lead-in	
3 Apiece	
4 Do some tailoring	
5 Beyond control	
6 Tier	
7 Ricki-Tikki-Tavi is one	
8 Improve nut	
9 Speedy horse	
10 Isinglass	
11 Steed's co-Avenger	
16 Lair	
20 New Testament book	
21 Music edition of	
22 Director	
23 Cupid's specialty	
24 Lathers	
26 Pants	
27 Off base	
28 Castle	
29 Caffeine-rich	
31 Sicilian spouter	
34 Bygone German ruler	
35 Sagan's subject	
37 Chum	
38 Repair	
39 Malaria symptom	
40 Protruberance	
41 Huffed and puffed	
44 "Hall, Caesar!"	
45 Illustrations	
46 Nipper's co.	
47 It's between Jay and el	

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

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**CRYPTOQUIP**

C Z N A S U G I U H F C H S M

N M C L D S B A L Z P I T D K

C E E M S D N L U S , A S K C R S

ALF FTUA NLFSGP CBRLUS.

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** IF YOU WERE COMPLETELY TAKEN OFF THE WORK SCHEDULE, WOULD THAT MAKE YOU A SHIFTLESS PERSON?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals T