



Argentina legend Diego Maradona (C) prepares to dink goalkeeper Edgar Estrada "El Gato" (L) during a Showbol match against Guatemala at the Cementos Progreso stadium in Guatemala City on Sunday.

MARSEILLE HUMILIATED

Wiltord rescues Lyon

AFP, Paris



denying their visitors a place in the French league's top three. Sochaux took a 2-0 lead in the first half through goals from Alvaro Santos and a Karim Ziani penalty before the half-hour mark. Lyon's Czech striker Milan Baros reduced the arrears just before the break but when Sebastian Grax restored the visitors' two-goal advantage four minutes from time, the game seemed to be over. But a Sylvain Wiltord strike in the last minute followed by Brazil midfielder Juninho's stoppage-time penalty rescued a point for the five-in-a-row champions and stretched their lead at the top to 14 points. Lyon coach Gerard Houllier was understandably relieved at the

final whistle. "At 3-1, to come back like that, you've got to tip your hat to the players," he said. "It's like a semi-victory but we put ourselves in difficulty." Sochaux coach Alain Perrin was fuming. "I'm very frustrated. These are dropped points because when you're winning 3-1 with three minutes left to play you should be able to see out the match," he said. "But everyone knows that late goals are Lyon's speciality." Toulouse took over third place after drubbing Marseille 3-0 at home. A Johan Elmander double and a third from Achille Emana proved Marseille's undoing as they dropped from fifth to sixth in the table. They have actually been the best side in the league since January 1 but coach Eli Baup was not getting carried away.

"We managed to score with every chance we had and it was a flattering result," he admitted. Match-winner Elmander was less reserved. "It was a stunning performance, one of the best matches we've played," he said. "Marseille are a great team with great players but today, we all played at 100 per cent and that's what made the difference." Toulouse went in front when Elmander outstripped the Marseille backline to run away and score. That body blow before halftime was followed by a knock-out strike just after the break as Elmander turned Ronald Zubar and hit a cross shot into the far corner of the net for 2-0 on 48 minutes. Marseille switched from 4-4-2 to 4-3-3 as they sought to end their four-match winless streak but to no avail. Paulo Cesar released Emana with a stunning pass and he beat Carrasso on 62 minutes to put the result beyond any doubt. Marseille coach Albert Emon could not hide his disappointment.

Riquelme weaves magic for Boca

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Midfielder Juan Roman Riquelme set up two goals and Martin Palermo scored from near the halfway line as Boca Juniors came back to beat Independiente 3-1 away in a pulsating Argentine championship match. Independiente went ahead in the 23rd minute of Saturday's game when Emiliano Armenteros beat his marker to Lucas Pusineri's cross and fired past Mauricio Caranta. Boca replied with two goals in as many minutes just before halftime, both set up by Riquelme who is on loan from Spanish club Villarreal where he has fallen out of favour. Riquelme prised open the Independiente defence in the 43rd minute with a perfectly weighted pass for Neri Cardozo, who beat Oscar Ustari with an angled shot, then set up Rodrigo Palacio for the second in the next attack. Former Villarreal striker Palermo completed the win in the last minute when he spotted Ustari off his line and beat him with a superb effort from more than 40 metres. The defeat left Independiente with one point from three games in the Clausura championship, heaping the pressure on coach Jorge Burruchaga. Boca, who had midfielder Ever Amaga sent off in the 58th minute for a second bookable offence, have seven points. Velez Sarsfield suffered their first defeat under former Mexico coach Ricardo La Volpe, going down 2-0 at home to Argentinos Juniors. Defender Leandro Desabato headed Argentinos in front from a corner in the 69th minute and Leonel Nunez scored on the break seven minutes later. In between, Velez defender Maximiliano Pellegrino was sent off for a second bookable offence. La Volpe, who coached Mexico at the World Cup, took over at Velez in December after an unhappy four months with Boca. Arsenal have a maximum nine points from three games after winning 4-0 at Nueva Chicago on Friday.

Football

AFP, Sydney

Frenchman Gerard Houllier has emerged as the prime candidate to become Australian national coach after July's Asian Cup, press reports said Sunday. Sydney's Sunday Telegraph newspaper, citing Football Federation Australia (FFA) sources, said Lyon's coach Houllier was expected to land the Australian job on a part-time basis similar to the deal cut with 2006 World Cup boss Dutchman Guus Hiddink. Hiddink coached PSV Eindhoven while working with the Socceroos. Houllier's contract with Lyon ends this season but he is believed to want to continue in the same role but with a clause allowing him to be in charge of Australia's internationals, the newspaper said. FFA chief executive Ben Buckley has denied the newspaper's claims. "We've had discussions with some candidates but nothing has eventuated and we're quite a while away from narrowing it down to one person," Buckley told The Sunday Telegraph. "We're going through an extensive process and we're developing a list of suitable candidates. "Ideally, we would like someone full-time so they could be totally dedicated to the role." The newspaper said former Liverpool manager Houllier is expected to join interim national coach Graham Arnold for Australia's Asian Cup campaign in Thailand in an advisory role. Houllier was on the FFA's wish list after Hiddink left the Australian job to coach Russia last year, it said. Arnold is reportedly fielding offers from Dutch club Roda JC. A Dutch newspaper also reported that the former Socceroos striker had rejected the NAC Breda coach job for this season. Arnold was in Dubai with the Australian Olympic team this week-end and could not be contacted, the Sunday Telegraph said.



A bleeding Peter Crouch holds his head after being injured by a kick from an opponent during Liverpool's thumping victory over Sheffield United in their Premiership clash at Anfield on Saturday.

Curbishley's job safe

AFP, London

West Ham manager Alan Curbishley has been told his job is safe despite Saturday's 4-0 thrashing at relegation rivals Charlton. Curbishley's struggling side have won just once in the league since he took charge in December and their defeat at The Valley left the east London club second bottom of the Premiership and six points from safety. It had been reported that West Ham chairman Eggert Magnusson had told Curbishley he must start to turn results around quickly to save his job. The Icelandic businessman denied that and, after Saturday's humiliating defeat, West Ham released a statement supporting former Charlton manager Curbishley. A club spokesman said: "Alan's future is not in doubt. Obviously everyone is disappointed with today's result but the chairman remains fully committed to Alan."

Zaccheroni adamant to stay

AFP, Rome

Torino Coach Alberto Zaccheroni is refusing to resign despite their sixth consecutive defeat and awaits the club's response. "I have never thought of handing in my resignation, because I am thoroughly convinced that Torino will stay in Serie A," said the under-fire tactician. The situation deteriorated sharply this afternoon with a crushing 3-0 loss at Chievo. It would have been four, but Sergio Pellissier turned a penalty off target. "It would be a grave mistake if I no longer believed in my abilities. In the past I have always achieved the objectives I set and I have enough experience not to let myself get caught up in all this talk." Zac took charge of the Granata three days before the start of the season, as Gianni De Biasi was fired after helping them to promotion. Torino have lost their last six Serie A games on the trot and are now level on 22 points with Chievo.

Dida on his way out

AFP, Rome

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti suggested Saturday that the club's Brazilian keeper Dida could leave when his contract runs out at the end of the season. Dida is due to make his return from injury in Sunday's game against Sampdoria, having hurt his shoulder at the beginning of the month. "Until the end of June, Dida is AC Milan's goalkeeper. Then, if there's no agreement (between Dida and the club), he will go wherever he thinks is best," said Ancelotti. "It's the club's position, and a position that is equally clear for Dida as it is for Milan, that if there's no agreement then each party will go their separate ways." The 33-year-old Brazilian arrived in Lombardy in 2000 and claimed the number one jersey in the 2002-03 season. During his time he won the 2004 Champions League crown. According to Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper, Dida is set to join Barcelona at the end of the season.

Palermo held by Atalanta

REUTERS, ROME

Third-placed Palermo's indifferent Serie A form continued as they drew 1-1 at Atalanta on Saturday. The Sicilian side have earned just six points in their last six matches but have 44 points and a comfortable nine-point cushion over fourth-placed Empoli. Leaders Inter Milan (63 points) will extend their record winning sequence among Europe's big four leagues with a 17th successive victory if they beat Catania on Sunday. Palermo spent most of the first half pushed back into their area as the home side went on the attack. Their keeper, Alberto Fontana, made two good saves to keep out early shots by Cristiano Doni and Antonio Bernardini, but Atalanta went ahead in the 13th minute when Riccardo Zampagna turned Luca Ariatti's low cross into the roof of the net. Palermo came out with more determination after the break, drawing level just before the hour when defender Marco Pisano burst into the area, held off his marker and slid the ball across the box for Aimo Diana to sidefoot home at the far post. At the other end of the table, Torino slumped to their sixth defeat in a row after losing 3-0 at Chievo Verona. Both teams are battling to stay out of the relegation zone but Chievo ran out easy winners with Albanian striker Erjon Bogdani's first-half double and a goal just after the break by Matteo Brighi.

Del Horno set for Liga start

AFP, Valencia

Valencia's Spanish international defender Asier Del Horno is set to play his first game since moving from English champions Chelsea last summer, the club announced here on Saturday. After being out injured since May 2006, Del Horno was included in Quique Flores's 18-man squad that will play at bottom club Gimnastic Tarragona on Sunday. Del Horno tore the Achilles tendon on his left ankle while part of Spain's World Cup squad and never made it to Germany. His comeback was almost delayed by the death of his grandfather in Bilbao on Friday but his family insisted that he returned to Valencia and, travelled with the team. Valencia, the 2002 and 2004 Spanish champions have climbed to third in La Liga despite an indifferent start to the season, after winning eight of their last 10 league games.

C'Ron vows more goals

INTERNET, undated



Cristiano Ronaldo has warned worried Premiership defences he is not ready to put away his shooting boots just yet. The Portugal winger took his tally for the season to 16 with his late, late show against Craven Cottage on Saturday. Ronaldo's brilliant efforts are one of the major reasons why Manchester United have established a nine-point lead at the Premiership summit. And, with eight wins from the final 10 games required to seal a first title during his four years at Old Trafford, the 22-year-old knows

now is no time to call a halt to his scoring spree. "Sixteen goals is good for me but I have 10 games left and I hope to score more," he said. "That is why I am working so hard. Yesterday, I just picked the ball up and beat two players. After that I just wanted to try and score. When the ball hit the net it was a fantastic feeling." Although Ronaldo is not noted for having a low opinion of his abilities, the description of his scintillating strike is modesty indeed. The importance of the goal could be judged by the reaction of Sir Alex Ferguson and his coaching staff, both as the ball hit the net and when referee Peter Walton blew the final whistle on a game

the Red Devils never looked like winning until they actually did it. Ronaldo is certainly toying the party line by refusing to declare the title race over, even if it did feel like one of those season-defining games. Instead, he wants to keep exerting pressure on Chelsea until they eventually crack. "We were all a bit tired after playing in the Champions League last week and the pitch made it even more difficult for us," he said. "Fulham did well but we had to win because we are going for the title. "We have put some pressure on Chelsea now because we are nine points clear. The confidence within the squad is very high and we must keep it going."

Mourinho satisfied with youth scheme

Football

REUTERS, London

Jose Mourinho is waiting for a return on Roman Abramovich's investment in Chelsea's academy so he can match Arsenal in producing the sort of young players his side will meet in Sunday's League Cup final. Arsene Wenger's team have reached the final in Cardiff without the help of established players such as captain Thierry Henry but with Ammand Traore, Denilson and Theo Walcott. "As the first team manager, I'm waiting for the work they do in the youth department. I'm waiting for the final product," Mourinho said after a coaching session at the club's Cobham training ground. The Portuguese manager, whose team is depleted by injury but who does not have the reserves of top youngsters to call on, said he was pleased with the work being done at youth level at Chelsea. "I'm satisfied because it was very, very bad before. In this moment we have very good coaches." Abramovich bought the club in 2003 when there was little youth structure and has spent 30 million pounds (\$8.67 million dollars) on training facilities and staff to establish the academy. Chelsea say they now have 11 England internationals at

under-21 or younger and several very promising 16 and 17-year-olds. But they have yet to catch up with Arsenal in the more developed age group. Mourinho, who did not sign new players in the January transfer window because of Russian billionaire Abramovich's desire to cut back on expensive imports and promote home-grown talent, praised Wenger's success. "When you have such a long time in a club you can create conditions if you are a good manager like he is. I think their scouting of young players must be good, especially abroad. He is good coach. He works well with young boys." Chelsea have employed Danish coach Frank Arnesen as chief scout since 2005 and newspapers were full last month of stories of tension between him and Mourinho over their roles. Wenger has a wider remit, covering youth teams as well as the top squad. Most of his youngsters are imported. "It's a different job. This is my job and I am dedicated to it but to be fair my communication with the reserve team and reserve team coaches is ... great," Mourinho said. "It's not easy to bring young players up to Chelsea's level." Chelsea's target is for one home-grown player to reach the first team by 2010 and one a year thereafter.

Mourinho has used three young players, Nigeria's John Obi Mikel, 19, Ivory Coast striker Salomon Kalou, 21 and French under-21 midfielder Lassana Diarra extensively this season but they were all relatively expensive foreign signings. Israeli 17-year-old Ben Sahar, who played his first full international earlier this month and 16-year-old Michael Woods, bought from Leeds, have played cameo roles, coming on when games were in the bag. "For next season I think Ben is ready to come up and be in the first team," Mourinho said. "What we did for Ben we should do with a central defender," he added, lamenting injuries to captain John Terry and Dutch international Khalid Boulahrouz which meant Chelsea would have to play midfielder Michael Essien in defence on Sunday. He said Diarra, who arrived from Le Havre in the 2005 close season, had now established himself in the first team. He played right back at Porto in the 1-1 Champions League draw and was likely to start on Sunday. Maybe, Mourinho suggested, it was better to wait some time for the call-up and then become a regular rather than make sporadic appearances like some of the Arsenal youngsters do.



Chievo midfielder Franco Semioli (L) crosses the ball past Torino defender Jacopo Balestri during their Serie A match at the Bentegodi Stadium on Saturday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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8	On the rocks	40	Happy companion?	3	Culture medium	29	Telemarketer's tactic				
12	Therefore	42	It ain't worth a dime	4	Units	30	Second person				
13	Literary collection	45	"Scream" director	5	Screen-er's aid	31	Resort				
14	Scruff	49	Elliptical	6	Individual	36	Sharp-shooter played by Merman				
15	Bank transaction	50	"Eureka!"	7	Head's opposite	37	Re-sembling (Suff.)				
16	Main-lander's memento	52	Pianist Peter	8	Water received, e.g.	41	Otherwise				
17	Dog bane	53	Big wind	9	Good tryout response	42	"Fuhged-daboudit!"				
18	Lie spread-eagle	54	Fa follower	10	Duel tool	43	Lendl of tennis				
20	Enjoyed the hammock	55	Half a sextet	11	Out of play	44	Cabooses's place				
22	Poor grade	56	Sibling-less	19	Lindbergh book	46	"Ship of Fools" ship				
23	Filch from	57	— Aviv	21	Tramcar contents	47	Ms. Brockovich				
24	Corn holders?	58	Tug hard	24	Garfield, e.g.	48	Cranney counter-part				
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CRYPTOQUIP

AIOLBRI CEI ABCCIV TLC  
FLR FDJJDJX ADX LC CEI  
OLRDJY, DC TVYOZLDNIK  
"D'N YJ L VYZZ!"  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A SOCIAL FUNCTION'S LEADER DEMANDS VERY CASUAL DRESS, IT'S MOST LIKELY A LACK-TIE EVENT.  
Today's Cryptquip Clue: D equals I