



PHOTO: AFP
Getafe striker Daniel Guiza (R) stabs the ball past the onrushing Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas to put his side ahead in their Primera Liga clash at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday.

Real lose Beckham and Reyes

REUTERS, Madrid

David Beckham and Jose Antonio Reyes have been left out of the Real Madrid squad for Wednesday's Champions League last-16 match against Bayern Munich because of knee injuries.

The two players sustained the injuries in Real's 1-1 draw at home to Getafe on Sunday. Beckham damaged the lateral ligament in his right knee, while Reyes suffered a similar injury to his left knee.

Both players will undergo scans later on Monday to determine the extent of the injuries.

Raul and Guti were included in the squad after recovering from their respective injury problems, as was Brazilian midfielder Emerson, who also missed the Getafe game.

Argentine striker Gonzalo Higuain and Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy made the squad despite suffering bruising to thigh muscles.

Real hold a 3-2 lead over Bayern from the first leg of their last-16 tie.

Pricey draw for Real

REUTERS, Madrid



Real Madrid lost ground in the Primera Liga title race when they could only draw 1-1 at home with local rivals Getafe in the Bernabeu on Sunday.

The visitors dominated early on and took the lead with a well taken goal from Daniel Guiza in the 38th minute, but they only held the lead until just before the break when Ruud van Nistelrooy scored from the penalty spot.

It was one-way traffic in the second half but Real failed to press home their dominance. They have won only one of their last five home games and look like being without David Beckham and Jose Antonio Reyes for Wednesday's Champions League clash with Bayern Munich after both were injured.

Real stay fourth in La Liga with

44 points, but slipped two behind third-placed Valencia who beat Celta Vigo 1-0 at home on Saturday.

Sevilla are the new leaders with 50 points after coming from behind to beat Barcelona 2-1 at home in a dramatic encounter on Saturday. Barca dropped to second with 49.

Earlier, Real Zaragoza came from behind to beat struggling Real Sociedad 3-2 at home to climb to fifth on 42.

The Basque side, who have not won away all season, took the lead through German Herrera early on, but Zaragoza staged a second-half fightback.

Pablo Aimar, Diego Milito from the penalty spot and Ewerthon sealed the win for Zaragoza. Sociedad, who slipped to the foot of the table, pulled a goal back at the end through Inigo Diaz de Cerio.

In the late game, Recreativo Huelva beat sixth-placed Atletico Madrid 1-0 at home to go level on 40 points, in seventh.

Getafe took the game to Real in the Bernabeu and had a goal ruled

out for offside after just six minutes, and soon after rattled the home side's crossbar as a Ruben Pulido header.

Real's first chance came when Reyes played a one-two with Gonzalo Higuain in the 32nd and slipped the ball past Getafe goalkeeper Roberto Abbondanzieri.

Getafe managed to scramble the ball off the line under pressure from Robinho. Reyes was injured in the collision with Abbondanzieri and was stretchered off to be replaced by Ruben de la Red.

A busy Beckham crashed a long range effort against the crossbar in the 37th, but a minute later the visitors scored when Mario Coto split the Real defence for Guiza to finish past Iker Casillas.

Real levelled after Abbondanzieri brought down Robinho in the area, and Van Nistelrooy scored off the post from the spot.

Getafe tired after the break as Real dominated but Antonio Cassano and Robinho failed to make the most of their chances.

We can catch United: Carvalho

AFP, Lisbon

Reigning champions Chelsea can still close their gap on leaders Manchester United in the English Premiership, according to the club's Portuguese defender, Ricardo Carvalho.

"We are not going to let Manchester do what we have done in the last two years, which was reach the end of the season several points ahead. We are going to fight until the end," he told Portuguese sports daily A Bola.

"Our team is capable of recovering from this disadvantage. Now with (Petr) Cech back as goalkeeper and when (Chelsea captain) John Terry returns, the music will play to a different key," the 28-year-old added.

Cech returned at the end of January from four months in the sidelines after fracturing his skull in a collision during a match against Reading in October while Terry continues to recover from a head injury suffered during Chelsea's 2-1 win over Arsenal in the League Cup final on February 25.

Chelsea trail Manchester United by nine points with a game

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Metzelder set for Dortmund exit

AFP, Berlin

German international defender Christoph Metzelder will leave Borussia Dortmund at the end of the season after the Bundesliga club withdrew an offer to extend his contract.

"We gave Christoph sufficient time to study our offer, which was very good," said Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc.

"We had fair and open talks, but we must now prepare our personnel plans for next season (without him)."

The 26-year-old Metzelder, capped 28 times by his country and part of Germany's World Cup squad, had until February 28 to accept the club's offer and has reportedly been in contact with Italian league leaders Inter Milan.

Del Piero hits hatrick

AFP, Rome

Alessandro Del Piero scored a superb hat-trick as Juventus reclaimed top spot of Serie B with a crushing 4-0 home win over Piacenza on Sunday.

France international David Trezeguet opened the scoring inside the first 60 seconds with a fierce left-footed shot before Del Piero stole the show at Turin's Olympic stadium.

The Italian World Cup winner slotted a 51st minute penalty after Piacenza keeper Ferdinando Coppola had brought him down in the box, before doubling his tally with a sweetly-struck free-kick.

Del Piero, 32, completed his treble with a solo effort in stoppage time, cutting inside two challenges before finishing coolly.

Del Piero insisted another Juventus victory was more important than personal glory.

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Down The World Cup Lane

1996: Aravinda leaves his legacy

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

The surprising triumph meant that the West Indies moved to the semifinals where they were pitted against Australia, whom they had already beat in the group stages. India and Sri Lanka squared off in the other final four encounter, which served to make sure that all the semifinalists came from one group.

Eden Gardens was the venue for the first semifinal and a wave of nationalism threatened to take India through as 110,000 turned up to watch. Azharuddin won the toss and elected to field first a decision that would later backfire in a fast deteriorating pitch. But his choice seemed vindicated initially as the Indians sent back both openers with the score on one. Aravinda de Silva launched a vicious assault and smacked fourteen boundaries in his whirlwind 66. When he was out the scoreboard read 85/4. But the solid Sri Lanka middle order and long batting lineup proved their worth. Roshan Mahanama demoted from the openers slot turned in an assured performance at number five anchoring the innings alongside captain Arjuna Ranatunga who nudged and pushed the score up. But after Ranatunga had been done in by the clever bowling of Sachin Tendulkar, Mahanama too had to retire hurt with cramps after scoring a sedate 58. Some lusty blows from Chaminda Vaas towards the end pushed the score up to 251. Tendulkar finished with 2 for 34 off his tenovers.

And the Little Master looked in the mood when he came out to bat as well. He smashed a breathtaking 65 but when he was out to

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PHOTO: INTERNET
Sri Lanka legend Aravinda de Silva plays a square-cut during his unbeaten century in the final of the World Cup against Australia at Lahore on March 17, 1996.

A decade and not out



AFP, St. Vincent

Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe, Wes Hall and Charlie Griffith, Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath -- cricket has known many great partnerships.

But while Frank Duckworth and Tony Lewis cannot match the playing exploits of these illustrious names the pair have made their mark too.

The initials D/L have become a familiar sight on cricket scoreboards in the 10 years since the system devised by the two English statisticians for setting a revised target in rain-affected one-day matches was first introduced at international level during the Zimbabwe-England series of 1996-97.

Previous systems revolved around adjusting the total required in proportion to the number of overs or indeed balls remaining.

And the weakness of such an approach was demonstrated by the extraordinary climax to the 1992 World Cup semi-final between South Africa and England.

Rain halted South Africa's chase when they needed a tantalising 22 runs off 13 balls.

But this became a ludicrous 21

off one ball by the time the match resumed, an impossible target.

David Richards, then the chief executive of the International Cricket Council (ICC) issued an appeal for an improved system.

Duckworth, the editor of the Royal Statistical Society journal, delivered a paper entitled "Fair play in foul weather", to the organisation's 1992 conference.

"It was a mathematical problem that required a mathematical solution," he told February's Wisden Cricketer magazine.

The paper came to the attention



FRANK DUCKWORTH & TONY LEWIS

of Lewis, a lecturer in management science at the University of the West of England in Bristol.

He then corresponded with Duckworth, discovering that they had both grown up in Lancashire, north-west England and by 1995 they'd pretty much settled on the formula as it now exists.

Unlike previous systems, it gives the team fielding second credit for taking wickets so, in the event of a further rain stoppage, the required rate for the batting team increases.

Perhaps the biggest criticism of the D/L method is that unless you are equipped with a copy of the accompanying table showing the calculations at any given point for the required total, it's hard to know what's going on.

This has led to accusations that the system, while fair, is incomprehensible. That irks Duckworth and Lewis although their brief explanation to the Wisden Cricketer does not exactly aid their cause.

"When a one-day cricket match is shortened after it has started, due to rain or any other cause, the target required by the batting side is adjusted, not in proportion to the relative number of overs the two sides have to face but in proportion to the total run-scoring resources the two sides have been left with for their respective innings.

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Equation simple for Gerrard

AFP, Liverpool



Steven Gerrard believes Liverpool can open the door to a second Champions League title in three years by shutting down Barcelona at Anfield on Tuesday night.

A memorable 2-1 win in the Nou Camp a fortnight ago has left the 2005 champions as favourites to progress to the quarter-finals of this year's tournament at the expense of the holders.

Gerrard knows the first leg result has enhanced Liverpool's status among the rest of Europe's elite but he has also reminded his teammates of the torrid opening half-hour they endured in Catalonia, when Frank Rijkaard's side could possibly have put the tie beyond reach.

"Our performance over there has probably sent a message around Europe," Gerrard said. "People were expecting Barcelona to walk all over us but we got our game plan and tactics spot on and got a great result."

"But they showed in the first half-hour how good they are and we know we need to show the same work ethic we showed over there. They're not going to let their crown go without a fight."

That was a sentiment echoed by Ronaldinho, who has a point to prove at Anfield after the latest in a string of underwhelming performances in the first leg.

"The danger for Liverpool is if they think they have already done the hard work by winning in Spain," the Brazilian said.

"We know very well we have to get a result but there is plenty of life left in us."

"We've been in difficult positions in the past and come out victorious. We are the defending European champions and we will not relinquish the trophy without a fight."

Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez won the tactical battle in the first-leg by deploying two strikers, having

correctly judged that the Spanish champions would find Dirk Kuyt's physical strength hard to handle while being stretched by the pace of Craig Bellamy.

"People were expecting us to be camped on our 18-yard box but the manager told us to be positive," Gerrard recalled.

"Before the game we'd have taken a draw so to have won is a massive bonus and it sets things up nicely."

Both clubs will go into the match on the back of domestic defeats at

the weekend, Liverpool having been beaten 1-0 at home by Manchester United while Barca were being knocked off the top of Spanish league courtesy of a 2-1 reverse at Sevilla.

The difference was that while Liverpool played well and were unfortunate to go down to John O'Shea's stoppage time strike, the first league goal they had conceded at Anfield since October, Barcelona missed a penalty and had two men sent off in an edgy display that did

nothing to dispel the confident mood on Merseyside.

Ronaldinho, who was responsible for the penalty miss, was deployed as a central striker in Seville with Ludovic Giuly and Lionel Messi on the flanks.

But Barca coach Frank Rijkaard looks set to recall Samuel Eto'o to his starting XI on Tuesday in the hope that the Cameroon striker's pace can unsettle Liverpool's centreback pair, Jamie Carragher and Daniel Agger.



PHOTO: AFP
PLOTING A BARCA DOWNFALL? Liverpool coach Rafa Benitez (L) explains tactics to his defenders Jamie Carragher (C) and John Arne Riise during a training session at the Melwood training ground in Liverpool on Monday.

An Anfield humdinger

AFP, Paris



Reigning champions Barcelona travel to Liverpool on Tuesday desperate to save their title

defence having lost 2-1 in the home leg of their last 16 clash two weeks ago.

The 2005 champions shocked the Catalan giants with a come-from-behind win at the Nou Camp and with their mean defence they will undoubtedly be favourites to progress to the quarter-finals.

But Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard is taking nothing for granted and he knows his team face a battle at Anfield to turn their good work from Spain into a place in the next round.

"Our performance over there has probably sent a message around Europe," Gerrard said. "People were expecting Barcelona to walk all over us but we got our game plan and tactics spot on and got a great result."

"But they showed in the first half hour how good they are and we know we need to show the same work ethic we showed over there. They're not going to let their crown go without a battle."

Barcelona were totally dominant in the first half hour of the first leg and could easily have killed the tie

before it reached the end of its first quarter.

Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho has warned Liverpool against underestimating his side.

"The danger for Liverpool is if they think they have already done the hard work by winning in Spain," the Brazilian said.

"We know very well we have to get a result but there is plenty of life left in us."

"We've been in difficult positions in the past and come out victorious. We are the defending European champions and we will not relinquish the trophy without a fight."

In other ties on Tuesday, Chelsea will be looking to finish off the job at home to Porto having earned a respectable 1-1 draw in Portugal in the first leg.

They will once again be without captain and talisman John Terry as he recovers from being knocked out in last month's League Cup final.

With Manchester United maintaining a nine-point lead at the top of the Premiership, this competition has taken on added significance for Chelsea.

TONIGHT'S MATCHES

(all kick-offs 1945 GMT)
Chelsea v FC Porto (1-1)
Liverpool v Barcelona (2-1)
Lyon v Roma (0-0)
Valencia v Inter Milan (2-2)

"The Champions League is more realistic than the league," said England full-back Ashley Cole.

"We are nine points behind United and it will be an uphill struggle from now on, but we are in good stead for the next round of the Champions League."

Italian league leaders Inter Milan are sweating on the fitness of their Brazilian forward Adriano ahead of a second leg trip to Valencia.

Inter are up against it after drawing 2-2 at home and can ill afford to be without their top marksman.

Adriano pulled his left hamstring in Wednesday's 1-1 Serie A draw against Udinese, forcing him to miss Saturday's 2-1 victory at Livorno which saw Inter stretch their lead at the top of the Italian table to 16 points.

Luis Figo, who is set to play in the hole behind the two strikers, believes Valencia start as favourites due to their two away goals.

"They have bags of experience, they're playing at home and have a small advantage from the first leg," said the Portuguese.

"Valencia are a team that give you little space and are used to big matches, but all we have to concern ourselves with is getting through to the next round."

Inter are already without France midfielder Patrick Vieira, who has a torn right hamstring, while Argentine midfielder Esteban Cambiasso is

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