



Boca Juniors' prolific striker Martin Palermo (R) vies for the ball with San Lorenzo's Pablo Alvarado during Argentina's first division match in Buenos Aires on Sunday. San Lorenzo won 3-0.

# Mourinho doesn't fear for his head

Football

AFP, London

Jose Mourinho insists he does not feel under pressure to win the Champions League because he will walk away from Chelsea a rich man if Roman Abramovich decides to sack him.

With Manchester United looking increasingly likely to end Chelsea's two-year reign as Premiership champions, Mourinho has to deliver Europe's elite club prize to keep demanding Blues owner Abramovich happy.

The pair's bitter dispute over Chelsea's transfer policy has led to suggestions Mourinho will sacked at the end of the season, but success in the Champions League would make it much harder for the Russian to wield the axe.

Defeat against his former club Porto in the second leg of their second round tie in London on Tuesday would leave Mourinho's future under threat, but he is not worried about losing his job because the pay-off on his 5.2million pounds-a-year contract,

which has three years to run, would soften the blow.

And, with Real Madrid certain to lead Europe's top clubs in a stampede for his services if he were to leave Stamford Bridge, the Portuguese coach remains unconcerned by his employer's sky-high expectations.

"The only pressure is what I make on myself," Mourinho said. "I do not accept pressure from other people.

"If the club decides to sack me because of bad results that is part of the game. If that happens I will be a millionaire and I will get another club a couple of months later.

"I have won a lot of things in my career but I cannot win every time and every week. In this club this season nobody could do a better job than me.

"I have a happy family, my kids are healthy, I have a lot of friends. I live a good life. What pressure is there? None.

"There only pressure is the same I have had since I played football in the street as a kid. I like to win and that is the pressure I put on myself."

Mourinho believes it has taken a monumental effort by his players to

remain in contention for all four major trophies after a season scarred by serious injuries to John Terry, Petr Cech, Joe Cole and Arjen Robben.

The League Cup has already been won and, after a 1-1 draw in Portugal, a victory or a goalless draw against Porto would take Chelsea through to the Champions League quarterfinals.

They also face Tottenham in the last eight of the FA Cup on Sunday and haven't given up hope on overhauling United's nine-point lead in the Premiership.

"We are in a difficult moment but to be in every competition is good," Mourinho said. "This team deserves to win more. We want more than the League Cup.

"My motivation is that at the end of the season my players have another cup in their hands to show they got something for their efforts.

"The players deserve all the credit. I think you have to give more credit to Michael Essien for the way he is playing in a position that is not his normal role.

"You have to give more credit to Ricardo Carvalho because he is playing with a partner that is not a

central defender. You have to give more credit to Frank Lampard because he is playing every game at the same high level.

"You have to give more credit to Petr Cech because he has come back from surgery looking a better keeper than before. The attacking players are not in the rotation and play every game so they deserve more credit than before."

The way Chelsea coped with injuries to Terry and Robben in Porto two weeks ago underlines Mourinho's conviction that his players have an unquenchable desire for success.

"In Porto we prepared to play a certain way but lost everything when Terry was injured," he said. "Then we changed the system and Robben was playing well. It looked like we would win the game but then Robben was injured.

"But we still managed to get a result. I am not saying it is a miracle or a job for Superman, but my players deserve credit and respect."

## Curbishley backed again

AFP, London

West Ham chairman Eggert Magnusson has given under-fire manager Alan Curbishley his "100 per cent" backing after the Hammers' weekend loss that left them languishing 10 points from safety in the English Premiership.

The Hammers lost 4-3 to Tottenham at Upton Park on Sunday having twice thrown away the lead.

But while Curbishley is under intense pressure despite having only taken over from Alan Pardew this season, Iclander Magnusson insists the former Charlton manager's job is safe.

"I want everyone to know that Alan Curbishley remains the man who we will build our future success on," Magnusson said.

## Kaizer Chiefs axe coach

AFP, Johannesburg

South African football giants Kaizer Chiefs have fired their head coach Ernst Middendorp following a dismal run of performances which has seen them ruled out of championship contention.

The 11-time South African league winners, who were crowned champions of Africa in 2001, are languishing in seventh place after being defeated at home by lowly Amazulu on Sunday.

Middendorp, a much-travelled German who has previously coached in Nigeria, will be replaced on a temporary basis by Kosta Papić who was formerly in charge of the Chiefs' arch-rivals, the Orlando Pirates.

"Papić will fill the void left by Middendorp and will be Chiefs head coach for the next three months," the Chiefs said in a statement.

# Bayern have a 'twelfth' man!

AFP, Munich



Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld says his side's fans will act as a 'twelfth man' in their bid to cancel Real Madrid's slim advantage to book their Champions League last-eight berth.

Hitzfeld was buoyed by his side's impressive performance in their 3-2 first-leg defeat at the Bernabeu a fortnight ago and believes Bayern's passionate fans will make the difference at the Allianz Arena on Wednesday.

Anarow win will almost certainly put Bayern into the last eight, netting the proud club a five million euros windfall from UEFA and gate receipts.

"Munich's fans can be our twelfth

man on Wednesday night," Hitzfeld told German TV channel Premiere on Tuesday, "we must be prepared to run all night and be more aggressive.

"Moral is high and a big plus is that we took plenty of confidence from the first-leg and we are very determined to get a good result on Wednesday night."

Meanwhile, Bayern's Brazilian former goal-scoring hero Giovane Elber says Bayern must show Real who is boss when they tackle the Spanish giants on home turf.

Elber is the Bundesliga's top foreign goal-scorer with 133 goals, 92 of them in a successful six-year spell at Germany's most successful club.

The 34-year-old has flown back from Brazil for the game and tasted success at the Bernabeu when Bayern won 4-2 in 2000 and scored

in the Germans' 1-0 Champions League semifinal win over Madrid in 2001, the year they won the trophy.

"I'm convinced Bayern will win," Elber told Bayern's website.

"It won't be easy, but Bayern are at home and need to show Madrid who's boss. It was tough in Madrid, but fortunately we scored a second at the end.

"Real Madrid aren't as good as they were three or four years ago. I firmly believe Bayern will win at home and go through. They have to take this opportunity."

And Elber says Bayern have an advantage already with knee-injury victim and chief playmaker David Beckham out of the Real side.

"You have to respect Beckham, he can take you apart with his free-kicks and corners. It's good news for Bayern that he's not playing. The game's started well already," he said.

# Tevez eyes Brazil return

Football

AFP, Sao Paulo

West Ham's Argentine international forward Carlos Tevez celebrated his first goal for the Premiership side on Sunday by admitting on Monday he would like to return to Brazilian team Corinthians.

Tevez arrived from the Sao Paulo outfit alongside international teammate Javier Mascherano on transfer deadline day in August, a move that sent shockwaves through football – Mascherano has since moved on to Liverpool.

It had been shrouded in secrecy and took everyone by surprise. To

add to the intrigue, no financial details were released and a management company allegedly owned the contracts for both players.

At the weekend Tevez netted a sublime free-kick as his relegation-threatened side lost 4-3 at home to Tottenham.

But Tevez said Monday he has received an approach from Rio de Janeiro giants Flamengo, although the Argentine said he would like to return to Brazilian football but only to play for Corinthians.

Tevez was speaking by telephone on a television programme 'Terceir Tiempo'.

"Many people say that I left by the back door at Corinthians, but that wasn't the case," said 'Carlitos', as he was

known in Brazil.

"I know that I am going to return to Corinthians and give the fans what they want. They can rest assured that I will return."

That may even happen sooner than he expects as West Ham have been charged by the English Premier League for breaking transfer rules over the signing of the two Argentines and it remains to be seen what comes of that.

With West Ham also looking certain to be relegated, Tevez will surely not play in the English second tier.

Corinthians are struggling at the moment and need a boost having lost 3-0 to Palmeiras in the Sao Paulo state championship, leaving them in ninth place and with little chance of qualifying for the championship semifinals.

## Marseille top French fan-poll

AFP, Paris

Former European champions Marseille may be struggling on the pitch but they can still count on the largest fan base in France, according to a report published Monday.

The poll, taken among 1,000 people and published in France Football magazine, shows that Marseille can call on 17.2 per cent of French football supporters as their own, ahead of dominant champions Lyon, with 12.5 per cent and capital giants Paris St Germain on 4.6.

France's most successful team of all-time St Etienne came in only sixth with 2.6 percent while Lyon were voted the most attractive team to watch.

Despite their recent lull, Real Madrid came out as the most popular foreign team with 11 per cent of that vote.

## Cannavaro looking to hit form

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid's Italian defender Fabio Cannavaro insists that he can put his current slump behind him in Wednesday's Champions League last 16 second-leg clash at Bayern Munich.

The 2006 World Player of the Year has not played his best since helping Italy win the World Cup last year.

"I'm not at my top level. I've never had so many yellow cards. It's a strange experience for me. But since the World Cup it has been difficult," Cannavaro told sports daily Marca.

"I've been thinking a lot about this. I've looked at players who reached the World Cup final like (Thierry) Henry and others, and I'm realizing they're not at their best either so I hope that this is the explanation," said Cannavaro.

"When you're not playing your best all you can do is work more."

Cannavaro said that Real will be looking for a goal-fest after Bayern netted important away goals in the 3-2 first-leg defeat to the Spaniards at the Bernabeu a fortnight ago.

"We know that we have to score. Otherwise we're dead," he added.

But Real Madrid captain Raul admitted that he fears the pressure cooker atmosphere of the Allianz Arena in Munich.

"It will be the first time that we've played on this new pitch. The fans are very near the players, it will be a different atmosphere," said Raul.

## West Ham probe racism claims

AFP, London

West Ham confirmed Tuesday that they have opened an investigation into allegations that some of their fans engaged in racist and anti-semitic chanting before the 4-3 home defeat to Tottenham at the weekend.

"We are a leading campaigner in the Kick Racism out of Football campaign. We will not tolerate racist behaviour. We will investigate this matter fully," the club said in a statement.

According to reports, among the chants heard was: "I'd rather be a Paki than a Jew".

Tottenham is a club historically supported by the Jewish community in London.

The Football Association (FA) has passed footage of the alleged incidents to police and asked the club to provide CCTV images.

An FA spokesman added: "Racist behaviour has no place in football. We would hope that, if these individuals are identified, they will be issued with banning orders."

## Lyon fan jailed

AFP, St Etienne

A fan of French league leaders Lyon has been sentenced to two months in prison for throwing a smoke bomb at rival St Etienne fans, the court here said Monday.

The local derby at St Etienne's Geoffroy Guichard stadium was held up for 20 minutes after smoke bombs were thrown onto the field of play and police responded by firing tear gas into the crowd.

The Lyon fan, a 25-year-old plumber, is a member of a group of supporters known as the "Bad Gones" and has also been banned from sports stadia for six months.

He had already been convicted of offences five times previously, although none relating to football matches.

The French football federation (FFF) is investigating the incidents and either club could face sanctions over the behaviour of their fans.

Rival club presidents Jean-Michel Aulas of Lyon and his St Etienne counterpart Bernard Caizzo have been hauled before a disciplinary committee to explain their actions after they exchanged insults in the days preceding the game.

# Milan favourites against Celtic

REUTERS, Milan



AC Milan have hit form at the right time and start strong favourites to eliminate Celtic from the Champions League at the San Siro on Wednesday.

The first knockout round tie awaits a first goal after Milan failed to capitalise on their dominance in the first leg in Glasgow.

Injuries and the eight-point penalty from last season's match-fixing scandal made it hard work for Milan at the start of the season.

But with eight wins in their last 10 league matches, and only one goal conceded in their last four games, the six-times European champions go into the game full of confidence.

"It has been a difficult season, but we are starting to see the light," coach Carlo Ancelotti said after his side's 2-1 win over Chievo Verona on Saturday.

"We have always given our best performances in European matches. They take personality and courage. Milan has both."

Brazil striker Ronaldo is unavailable for selection, having already played Champions League football for Real Madrid this season.

In his absence, Ancelotti could recall Filippo Inzaghi to partner Alberto Gilardino up front.

The 33-year-old Italy international, who has recently recovered from a thigh strain, is Italy's most prolific scorer in Europe, with 55 goals in all competitions.

Celtic have a clutch of injury worries with Japanese midfielder Shunsuke Nakamura vowing to play through the pain of a broken bone in his hand.

Polish striker Maciej Zurawski is out with a thigh injury while fellow forward Craig Beattie is battling with a recurring hamstring injury and was taken off in Saturday's 2-1 league win over Dunfermline.

Defender Stephen McManus also limped out of the game with a

groin strain, but is expected to be in Celtic's squad.

"We just need to score one, but they are a top team and they have handled this before whereas it is something new for us," said manager Gordon Strachan.

"I told them if you cannot win then zero-zero is a good score."

### PROBABLE TEAMS

**AC Milan:** 1-Dida; 44-Massimo Oddo, 25-Daniele Bonera, 3-Paolo Maldini, 18-Marek Jankulovski; 8-Gennaro Gattuso, 21-Andrea Pirlo, 23-Massimo Ambrosini; 22-Kaka; 11-Alberto Gilardino, 9-Filippo Inzaghi

**Celtic:** 1-Artur Boruc; 2-Paul Telfer, 44-Stephen McManus, 48-Darren O'Dea, 3-Lee Naylor; 25-Shunsuke Nakamura, 15-Evander Sno, 18-Neil Lennon, 46-Aiden McGeady; 9-Kenny Miller, 10-Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink

**Referee:** Konrad Plautz (Austria)

# Trophies rather than records

Football

AFP, London

Didier Drogba is in the form of his life but the Chelsea striker would be happy not to score another goal if it means his side can win the Champions League.

Drogba is on the verge of becoming the first player to score 30 goals for Chelsea in a single season since Kerry Dixon in 1985.

The Ivory Coast forward has already bagged 29 goals so far this term and could emulate Dixon's achievement against Porto in the Champions League second round, second leg on Tuesday.

But he would gladly swap a place in the record books for the chance to get his hands on a Champions League winners' medal in Athens in May.

Drogba said: "I know how big Dixon was for Chelsea. It would be something great for me to reach his record, but there is no interest for me to score if we don't win."

"It would mean nothing special if we don't win this competition."

"I want my team to win and everybody to be happy. Even if I don't score until the end of the

season it is not a problem if we win the Champions League and the FA Cup."

Drogba believes Chelsea can cope with the pressure of chasing Premiership leaders Manchester United, as well as trying to win Chelsea's first Champions League crown.

He said: "The only pressure is being second and having to win every game until the end of the season. Of course (Jose) Mourinho helped us but we are big players and can deal with the pressure."

Drogba has been the driving force behind Chelsea's bid to win all four major trophies this season.

He has already received recognition of his prowess after being named African Player of the Year and is in the running to win the English version of the award as well.

Only Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo has made as much impact as Drogba this season, but the Chelsea star claims his Stamford Bridge teammate Michael Essien would be equally deserving of the prize.

Ghana midfielder Essien has had to play in central defence in the second half of the season after

injuries to John Terry and Khalid Boulahrouz.

Drogba said: "Everyone is speaking about Ronaldo and me but there are players like Essien and Paul Scholes who are having good seasons, so it is difficult to choose one."

"Essien is doing a lot. If I am voting for a player he deserves something big because he has made a great contribution."

After being condemned for some lacklustre displays and his occasional theatrics in the last two seasons, former Marseille star Drogba has won over the critics.

Chelsea boss Mourinho insists Drogba deserves all the credit for his transformation.

"It is different for a striker playing in this country and they need time to adapt," he said. "When we brought Didier we knew he had qualities to play the English game. That was our vision."

"He has improved year after year and at this moment he is at the top of his game. He has all the responsibility for his improvement. For sure he is one of the players whose performance all over the season makes him a candidate for player of the year."



DIDIER DROGBA

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>38</b> Vast expanse	<b>2</b> Telegram	<b>23</b> In olden days
<b>1</b> Sleepy, e.g.	<b>40</b> Citi Field team	<b>3</b> Friendship	<b>24</b> Kreskin's claim
<b>6</b> Elevator channels	<b>42</b> Favorite recipe	<b>4</b> In medias	<b>25</b> Comedian Phillips
<b>12</b> Black Sea peninsula	<b>44</b> Leftovers	<b>5</b> Evoking déjà vu	<b>26</b> Purchase from the Avon Lady
<b>13</b> Outcast	<b>46</b> Lotion additive	<b>6</b> Resorts international?	<b>28</b> Laterally
<b>14</b> Strict adherence to the rules of grammar	<b>50</b> Biblical prophet	<b>7</b> Destruction with	<b>30</b> Gun the engine
<b>15</b> Get back	<b>52</b> Assault	<b>8</b> "You — There"	<b>31</b> Work with
<b>16</b> Lend a sly hand	<b>54</b> Nauseate	<b>9</b> Adjust precisely	<b>33</b> Fairway start
<b>17</b> Facto preceder	<b>55</b> Went like Columbus	<b>10</b> Labels	<b>34</b> Lustrous black
<b>19</b> Curvaceous character	<b>56</b> Commandeering	<b>11</b> Females	<b>39</b> Wan
<b>20</b> New England campus	<b>57</b> Provide	<b>12</b> Book-keeper (Abbr.)	<b>41</b> Flavorful
<b>22</b> Heathcliff, e.g.		<b>18</b> Mark used one	<b>42</b> Director Kazan
<b>24</b> Conger		<b>21</b> Essen expletive	<b>45</b> Piquancy
<b>27</b> Movie			<b>47</b> Hum-dinger
<b>29</b> Mentor			<b>48</b> Curved molding
<b>32</b> Common aliases			<b>49</b> Tackle's teammate
<b>35</b> Vatican VIP			<b>51</b> Enjoy Aspen
<b>36</b> Latest fashion			<b>53</b> Answer to the Sphinx's riddle
<b>37</b> Enos' granny			

Solution time: 27 mins.

DAM	SHAR	PAPA
ABA	YOGA	EPTO
DELUSION	RENT	SINITS
WET	DELANEY	
HAIREM	BOW	TOE
AGED	GOG	ETNA
RUE	AHA	EQUS
DELUXE	GNU	
BEH	ACTIDIC	
MEMO	DELOVELY	
AREA	AGAR	USA
DENT	ROSE	SAN

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### CRYPTOQUIP

V F P X T F Z F Y L X V P V I V F M

U F P L B I Z V E O M B Z V V M V U L

L X V B U U C P V, X V I V O B I L V T M Z

Y X B Q L V T "P X V V I C B!"

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHAT UNIVERSITY DIVISION DEALS WITH STUDENT BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS? THE DEPARTMENT DEPARTMENT?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: V equals E