



PHOTO: AFP

Liverpool players (from R-L) Dirk Kyut, Steven Gerrard, Mark Gonzalez and Bolo Zenden take part in a training session at the club's Melwood training ground in Liverpool on Monday.

## Reds aim for Chelsea jugular

AFP, Liverpool



John Arne Riise has warned his Liverpool teammates that patience will be the key to their chances of overturning a 1-0 deficit in the second leg of their Champions League semifinal against Chelsea here on Tuesday.

Chelsea go into the clash as favourites to progress to next month's final in Athens on the back of the narrow advantage they earned through Joe Cole's winner at Stamford Bridge last week.

But Liverpool's Norwegian defender is confident that the Reds can repeat their triumph over the London club at the same stage of the competition two years ago, despite being outplayed in the first leg.

Chelsea might easily have added to Cole's winner last Wednesday, but they can scarcely expect that fact to be taken into consideration when they run out at Anfield, where they were beaten 2-0 in a Premiership clash earlier this year.

The home crowd will expect nothing less than an all-out assault on the Chelsea goal, but Liverpool also know that an away goal for opponents who are adept on the counter attack is likely to be fatal.

"We know we're going to have to score and it would help if we can get an early goal," said Riise, one of the few survivors from the Liverpool squad that beat AC Milan in the final on penalties two years ago.

"We didn't create many chances on Tuesday (at Chelsea), but we performed better in the second half and at home we know we can get

forward and score goals.

"We need a good start. If we get that, with the crowd behind us, it means it could be game on. It's also important to be patient and be careful to give nothing away.

"Two years ago it was unbelievable and it can be the same again." Liverpool know they must be wary of the threat posed by Didier Drogba, the giant Ivory Coast striker who set up Cole for his first-leg winner.

"He's as strong as a bull, he works hard and he scores goals," admitted Riise. "It's very difficult to play against him."

Drogba's physical presence has repeatedly given Liverpool's defence serious problems and it was his run and pass which created the opening for Cole to score in the first leg.

But the big striker will be walk-

ing a disciplinary tightrope on Tuesday night -- a yellow card would mean he misses the final should Chelsea progress.

On paper, Chelsea still have a chance of claiming four pieces of silverware this season, but the weekend's Premiership results have seriously compromised their chances of a third straight league title.

That should ensure that Mourinho will need to do little to get his side in the right frame of mind for their task here, but the cause has not been helped by the loss of centre-back Ricardo Carvalho.

Chelsea's best defender this season is destined to spend the summer recovering from a knee injury after limping out of Saturday's 2-2 draw with Bolton, while Michael Ballack will also be

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## Barthez flees Nantes

AFP, Nantes

France's World Cup-winning goalkeeper Fabien Barthez has quit his club Nantes for safety reasons following a violent post-match run-in with a group of disgruntled supporters.

"I'm not going to play for Nantes again. I don't feel ready to live like that," said the 37-time capped keeper who arrived at Nantes during the winter transfer window.

"I don't feel safe there and I'd just prefer to leave."

Basement side Nantes succumbed to a 2-0 home defeat to Rennes on Saturday, and after just five minutes into the match, Barthez became the target of insults from certain sections of the Nantes support.

Five supporters accosted him in the stadium car park after the game, insulting him and then attacking his car as he tried to drive away from the scene.

Barthez was forced to fight back as one of his assailants tried to pull him from the driver's seat.

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## Rijkaard to shield Messi

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard admitted on Sunday that he might have to curb some of Lionel Messi's inspired and mesmerising runs in order to save him from further injuries.

Three Levante players were booked for fouls on the Argentine teenage talent during the second half of Barcelona's 1-0 win over the struggling side from Valencia.

One of the trio of trippers, Alexis Suarez, was by common consent among Spanish pundits lucky to not be sent off after brutally hacking down Messi in injury time.

"He (Messi) is a player that's a pleasure to watch but we may have to think about altering some of the things he does to avoid the fouls he's suffering when he makes some of his individual plays," admitted Rijkaard.

Amazingly, Messi does not turn 20 until June 24.

The Argentine international has already suffered two injuries this

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## ALLARDYCE STEPS DOWN Lee new Bolton coach

AFP, Bolton

Former Liverpool and England coach Sammy Lee has been confirmed as the full-time manager of Premiership side Bolton following Sam Allardyce's shock resignation.

Allardyce resigned as Wanderers boss on Sunday after seven-and-a-half years at the helm amid rumours he could be appointed Manchester City boss in the summer.

Lee had been working as an assistant to Allardyce for the past two seasons, but brings plenty of experience to the job having worked as a backroom coach to both Liverpool and England.

It is the 48-year-old Lee's first role in management and comes at a time when Bolton, who sit fifth in the Premiership, are bidding for a place in Europe next season.

"I'm delighted about the prospect of being Bolton manager,"

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## Kaka calls for character

AFP, Rome



Brazilian striker Kaka has called on AC Milan to reproduce the form which had Champions League semifinal rivals Manchester United in a half-time sweat during their first leg at Old Trafford last week.

A second-half fightback gave United a precious 3-2 win against the Italians, but that only came in the wake of a sublime first-half performance from Kaka whose brace of goals gave the visitors a 2-1 lead at the break.

The Brazilian star admits they will need to produce an "exploit" on Wednesday if they are to stop a determined United from taking the win that would book their place in

the May 23 final in Athens.

But he feels that despite United's qualities, Milan can secure the minimum requirement of a draw to book their spot in the final.

"We were leading Manchester United after the first-half last week thanks to our strength of character, our personality and our confidence," Kaka said in an interview with Radio Italia.

"Unfortunately we were missing some of those ingredients in the second-half. We began to fear them, and we paid for it."

United's Wayne Rooney took a leaf out of Kaka's book by scoring a second-half brace to seal the win for United last Tuesday.

But Kaka, who is top scorer in the Champions League this season with nine goals, believes home advantage -- and the memory of

their quarterfinal taming of Bayern at Munich -- will tip the advantage in their favour.

"Manchester are a young and strong team and they play quickly on the counter-attack thanks to their forwards who are always very mobile on the pitch.

"We will be hoping to produce the same kind of achievement as we did against Bayern," added Kaka. "But this time we will have the advantage of playing at home."

In their second leg quarterfinal Milan beat Bayern 2-0 in Germany having drawn the first leg 2-2.

Kaka admitted that Milan's likely tactical ploy of playing with a lone striker, in the shape of Filippo Inzaghi, leaves him "more tired".

But Kaka added: "In this kind of formation the team plays so well that I just try to adapt and give 100 percent."

## Status quo unchanged

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona maintained their slender one point lead of the Spanish first division, thanks to a Samuel Eto'o goal in their 1-0 victory over Levante, as the top three teams

in Spain all won.

Second-placed Sevilla triumphed 3-1 over Espanyol while Real Madrid remain one point and one place further back after their 4-1 thrashing of struggling Athletic Bilbao.

The three-way race for the title with six games to go is the tightest for five years.

Reigning champions Barcelona were on top from the outset against Levante, dominating down the flanks thanks to Argentine wonderkid Lionel Messi, but it took 27 minutes for them to find the net.

Eto'o hammered the ball home from the edge of the area for his ninth goal of the season after Levante goalkeeper Jose Francisco Molina only managed to palm away a Xavi Hernandez volley.

Eto'o then fluffed two superb chances in the first 15 minutes of the second half while Molina had a superb game and denied not only last season's top scorer in the Spanish first division but also superstar Ronaldinho.

"We had plenty of possession of the ball and also plenty of opportunities despite the scoreline only saying 1-0 but failing to make the

most of your opportunities is also part of football," reflected Barca coach Frank Rijkaard.

Sevilla had taken over temporarily at the top after beating fellow UEFA Cup semi-finalists Espanyol earlier on Sunday.

"In the first half we played well but couldn't score but a little more space opened up for us in the second half. The only negative note was the way we conceded the goal," said Sevilla coach Juande Ramos.

Two goals in as many minutes from Antonio Puerta and Ernesto Chevanton early in the second half seemed to put Sevilla well in control in what could be a rehearsal for the UEFA Cup final in Glasgow on May 16.

Ferran Corominas replied for Espanyol on the hour, making the most of some slack marking, before Jose Luis Marti restored Sevilla's two goal advantage on 71 minutes with a left foot thunderbolt from the edge of the area.

Real imposed themselves quickly on Athletic and were 2-0 up at the break thanks to headed goals from Sergio Ramos and Ruud Van Nistelrooy, the first from a David Beckham free kick and the latter from a Cichinho cross.

Real Sociedad remain in penultimate position after losing 1-0 at Getafe, with defender Alexis Ruano headed home a Mario Cotelro corner after 70 minutes.

Celta Vigo continue to struggle, despite the arrival of new coach Hristo Stoichkov three weeks ago, and crashed 3-0 in front of their own fans to Real Mallorca.

"We lost a battle not the war, and no player went out on the field

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## Peruzzi hangs up his gloves

AFP, Rome

Lazio's veteran keeper Angelo Peruzzi announced his retirement after Sunday's drab goalless draw against city rivals Roma.

Immediately after the match, Peruzzi revealed he was hanging up his gloves.

"That's enough -- I had already made up my mind in January," said the 37-year-old who was reserve keeper for Italy in their triumphant World Cup campaign last year.

"I don't even think I will play another game this season. I've had three injections in my finger for a fracture, and I can't carry on."

Peruzzi won three Serie A titles and the 1996 Champions League while playing for Juventus, and also had spells at Roma, Verona and Inter Milan.

## Arsenal let Fulham feel it

AFP, London



Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor plunged Fulham deeper into relegation trouble as his late goal set up a 3-1 win over Lawrie Sanchez's struggling side on Sunday.

Fulham had looked set to snatch a crucial point when Simon Davies cancelled out Julio Baptista's early goal at the Emirates Stadium. But Adebayor's sublime strike left Fulham heartbroken and Gilberto Silva rubbed salt into their wounds with a penalty in the final moments.

The west London club sit uncomfortably just a point above the relegation zone after their 10th match without a win.

The decision to sack Chris

Coleman earlier this month and hire Northern Ireland coach Sanchez has failed to bring the upturn in fortunes Fulham's board had hoped for.

Fulham now face a nervous finale to the season as they try to scrape the points they need for survival in their last two matches against Liverpool and Middlesbrough.

Bolton and Everton's failure to win on Saturday had guaranteed Arsenal the top four finish that

# TOP SIX

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Man Utd	35	27	4	4	82	26	85
Chelsea	35	24	8	3	62	22	80
Liverpool	36	20	7	9	55	24	67
Arsenal	36	19	9	8	62	34	66
Bolton	36	16	7	13	44	47	55
Everton	36	14	12	10	48	35	54

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PHOTO: AFP

Arsenal's Brazilian midfielder Gilberto Silva leaps high to celebrate his strike against Fulham in their Premiership encounter at the Emirates Stadium in London on Sunday.



PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid stars Ruud Van Nistelrooy (R) and David Beckham (L) slap high fives after their team's second goal against Athletic Bilbao in a Primera Liga match at the San Mames stadium in Bilbao on Sunday.