



Getafe forward Guiza (R) celebrates with teammate Casquero (C) after scoring the fourth goal in their rout of Barcelona in the semifinals of the Copa Del Rey at the Alfonso Perez Coliseum on Thursday.

Tevez to leave Hammers?

INTERNET, undated

Carlos Tevez will leave West Ham United at the end of the season even if the Hammers stay in the Premiership, according to media reports.

The Argentine goal ace has even stopped learning English as he does not know if he will still be in England come the start of the new season.

The Sun reports that the 23-year-old striker has already told his Hammers' teammates he will play his last game in a claret and blue shirt against Manchester United on Sunday, as Alan Curbishley's side look to avoid the drop.

After a difficult start to his career in the Premiership, it has been the explosive form of Tevez over recent weeks that has sparked West Ham into life and on their way to survival. But despite the likelihood that the Hammers will stay in the top flight, his future is still very much up in the air.

Getafe's wonder comeback

Football

AP, Getafe

Getafe trounced Barcelona 4-0 on Thursday to overcome a three-goal deficit and advance to the first Copa del Rey final in their history.

Trailing 5-2 from the first leg, Getafe got two goals from Daniel Guiza and one each from Javi Casquero and Angel Vivar Dorado to advance 6-5 on aggregate.

Getafe will now make a short trip to Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu Stadium to play Sevilla in the final on June 23. Sevilla completed a 5-0 aggregate win over Deportivo La Coruna on Wednesday.

"What a match we played. The players, the club and the supporters all deserve it. What a gift. You always have to believe you're capable and you have to go for it," Getafe coach Bernd Schuster told radio station Onda Cero.

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard

said his team had endured "a very tough night."

"I feel terrible, as do all the players. We left a really bad impression tonight. We began badly from the very first minute and suffered a lot," Rijkaard said. "I'm not ashamed but I have to apologize to all our club members, who will be very disappointed."

Barcelona, who were seeking their first final in Spain's knockout competition since 1998, are still in position to win their third straight league title. They leads La Liga with five games remaining, two points ahead of Real Madrid and four in front of Sevilla. Barca, who did not use Lionel Messi -- who scored two first-leg goals, didn't manage a shot on goal in a lifeless first-half display.

Getafe, making their first appearance in the last four of the competition, created several chances early although Guiza was unable to capitalize.

Striker Maris Verpakovskis had an opportunity in the 16th while

left back Javier Paredes wasted another 12 minutes later.

Goalkeeper Albert Jorquerá denied Guiza in the 38th minute, but midfielder Casquero capitalized on the ensuing corner, hitting a spinning, bouncing volley into the net for the first goal.

Guzza doubled the lead five minutes later, sending a shot that deflected off defender Gianluca Zambrotta.

Getafe continued to dominate after the half but Jorquerá thwarted Guiza in the 55th and 63rd minutes.

Rijkaard inserted forwards Eider Gudjohnsen and Javier Saviola only for midfielder Vivar Dorado to score Getafe's third goal in the 71st.

Guzza doubled his tally two minutes later when he burst past Edmiston and volleyed home for the aggregate winner.

Barcelona finally spurred its offense the closing stages but Samuel Eto'o fired over the bar and Saviola shot wide.

Former star Rincon arrested

AFP, Sao Paulo

Former Colombian footballer Freddy Rincon has been arrested here by federal police at the behest of authorities in Panama as part of a probe into international drug trafficking and money laundering.

According to the Globo website, the 39-year-old former Real Madrid and Corinthians player was arrested at his house and taken to federal police headquarters where he will remain pending a legal decision on an extradition request.

Rincon, who works in Brazil as coach of Sao Bento, is accused of laundering money coming from an international drug trafficking organisation headed by fellow Colombian Pablo Rayo Montano, who was arrested in Brazil last year in a US-led operation.

Rincon has admitted to knowing Montano since his childhood in Colombia and having met up with again in Brazil, but denies accusations that he collaborated with him.

Gunners sign goalkeeper

AFP, London

Poland international Lukasz Fabianski will be competing with Jens Lehmann for the Arsenal goalkeeper gloves next season, manager Arsene Wenger revealed on Friday.

The Frenchman said the club had reached an agreement which will see the 22-year-old move to London from Legia Warsaw.

"That will be done," said Wenger. "He will be our new goalkeeper. He will join us next year in the squad and compete for a position."

"He is one for the future. We have identified him as having all the qualities to challenge here and be one of the future great goalkeepers for Arsenal Football Club."

The capture of Fabianski comes in the wake of Lehmann's recent decision to accept a one-year contract extension, the 37-year-old having failed to persuade the club to offer him a longer deal.

Arsenal, who had been linked with a move for Spanish number one Craig Gordon, also have Spanish goalkeeper Manuel Almunia on their books.

Defoe dashes Rovers dreams

APP, London

A second-half equaliser from Tottenham striker Jermain Defoe ended Blackburn's

hopes of a direct route entry into next season's UEFA Cup on Thursday.

Mark Hughes' men needed a win to stay in the chase for a top-seven finish in the Premiership but their European hopes now rest with a possible Intertoto Cup campaign.

Rovers had looked on course for victory under the driving rain at White Hart Lane when Benni McCarthy headed in just after the half-hour mark.

But Defoe hit back with the equaliser after 67 minutes following an assist by Dimitar Berbatov to leave the final scoreline at 1-1.

Spurs now need a point against Manchester City on Sunday to play in

the UEFA Cup again next season.

"We worked hard in the first half and let ourselves down in the second," complained Blackburn winger Morten Gamst Pedersen.

"We didn't keep the ball and gave it away too many times. You want to go straight in (UEFA Cup) but we want to get ready for the last game," added Pedersen ahead of Sunday's clash at home against Reading.

Both sides went into the game with European qualification in their sights, with Rovers needing two wins from their final two games of the season.

Spurs, however, would have secured their place in next season's UEFA Cup with a win, as they needed only two more points.

And after a stale first half hour, South African striker McCarthy put the visitors ahead when he headed past Paul Robinson into the far left corner of the net following a magnificient Pedersen pass.

McCarthy missed the chance of a second ten minutes later when he drilled right footer from the centre of the penalty area was blocked by Tottenham skipper Ledley King and a subsequent effort from David Bentley went over the bar.

Spurs were rejuvenated following the arrival of Robbie Keane on the hour mark.

And Blackburn were left rueing a missed chance to convert another thundering Pedersen free kick from the right to the back post two minutes later when Christopher Samba got on the end with his head and hit the bar from close range.

Keane almost snatched victory but hit the post in injury time before Rovers finished the game with ten men after Jason Roberts was sent off after receiving two yellow cards in quick succession -- the first for a tussle with Didier Zokora and a second for protesting about the decision to referee Rob Styles.

Nadal on course for Rome title

APP, Rome

Second seed Rafael Nadal, Rome champion for the past two years, eased into the quarterfinals with a straightforward victory over Mikhail Youzhny.

Nadal, who earlier on Thursday went to see a doctor after complaining of dizziness, was a picture of health in a 6-2, 6-2 demolition of the Russian 15th seed.

Nadal's victory extended his record-winning streak on clay to a staggering 74 matches and clinched a last eight meeting with Serbian fifth seed Novak Djokovic.

Winner of three ATP titles this year, Djokovic beat Cypriot Marcos Baghatis in straight sets.

Nadal said he felt no dizziness in his destruction of Youzhny.

"There were no dizzy spells today," said the 20-year-old Spaniard.

"I felt much better and there were no problems. It was a good day and I'm very happy with the result."

"My game was almost perfect."

Fixtures

(Kick-offs in GMT)

Saturday

Real Madrid v Espanyol (1800), Sevilla v

Recreativo Huelva (2100)

Sunday

Athletic Bilbao v Deportivo La Coruna

(1500), Celta Vigo v Levante (1500),

Getafe v Atletico Madrid (1500),

Gimnastic Tarragona v Real Sociedad

(1500), Osasuna v Villarreal (1500),

Racing Santander v Real Mallorca

(1500), Barcelona v Real Betis (1700),

Valencia v Real Zaragoza (1900)

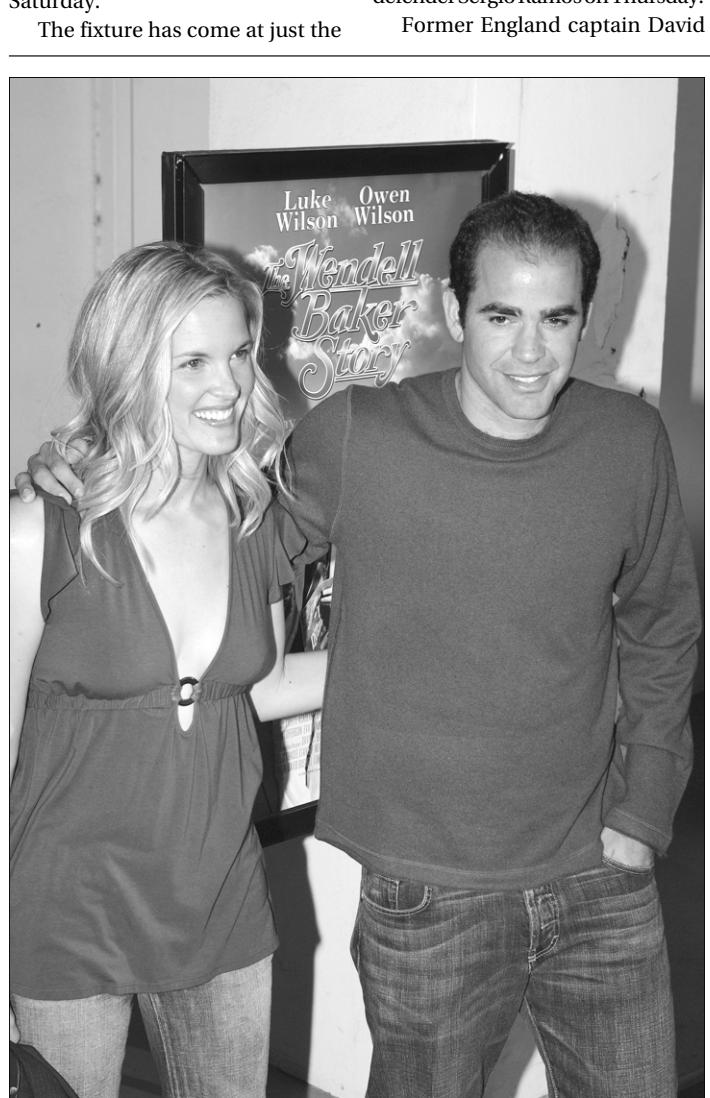
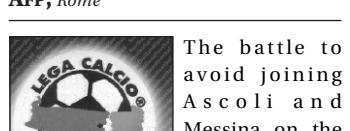


PHOTO: AFP

Tennis legend Pete Sampras (R) and his wife actress Bridgette Wilson arrive at the premiere of "The Wendell Baker Story" at the Writers Guild Theatre in Beverly Hills on Friday.

Relegation battle heats up

APP, Rome



The battle to avoid joining Ascoli and Messina on the relegation scrapheap could not be tighter with eight Serie A teams involved in the survival dogfight.

Just three points separate third from bottom Siena from 11th-placed Cagliari with only three games of the season left.

Tension will be high in Reggio Calabria where Reggina host Chievo with the two teams level on 35 points, one clear of Siena.

Chievo, whose place in Italy's top division is under threat for the first time since the 2001-02 campaign, their first in Serie A, have only won twice on their travels this season.

But coach Luigi Del Neri believes last week's precious 1-0 victory over relegation rivals Parma has filled them with confidence.

"Sunday's match will be like a play-off, but we are in good shape," he said.

"If we play like we did against Parma, there's no way we will be relegated."

Reggina coach Walter Mazzarri,

England call-up for Owen

APP, London

Michael Owen will pull on an England shirt for the first time in 10 months as part of a 20-man squad for a 'B' international against Albania on May 25.

The match, at Burnley's Turf Moor stadium, will also mark the return to the international fold of Tottenham defender Ledley King and Manchester United striker Alan Smith following injury-ravaged seasons.

Preston striker David Nugent, who scored on his England debut against Andorra in March, and Blackburn winger David Bentley are also in the squad for a match that forms part of head coach Steve McClaren's preparations for the June 1 friendly against Brazil at the new Wembley and a must-win Euro 2008 qualifier in Estonia four days later.

Unexpected new faces include Everton and Reading defenders Joleon Lescott and Nicky Shorey, and Sheffield United's battling midfielder Phil Jagielka.

With Wayne Rooney suspended for the Estonia match and Everton forward Andrew Johnson out injured, McClaren will be desperate to see Owen performing close to his best, albeit against modest opposition.

"We have to respect the position of the other teams at the bottom," said the Scot. "Paul Jewell has done a fantastic job at Wigan, as has Neil Warnock at Sheffield United. I cannot be putting a team on the pitch that disrespects those teams.

"We also have our own reputation to think about, so although I

am a great friend of Alan Curbishley, he understands the position I am in and knows I will be playing my strongest team on Sunday."

The final day relegation drama has been set up perfectly with all three clubs involved retaining control of their own destiny.

A point would be enough for both West Ham and Sheffield United while Wigan must secure a win to safe.

Whatever happens it could all be decided by the finest of margins. A one-goal win for Wigan would put them level on points with their hosts with the same goal difference. In that case, Jewell's side would stay up courtesy of their superior goal-scoring record.

If both West Ham and Sheffield Utd lose, the Blades would be favourites to stay up as their goal difference is three goals better than the Londoners going into Sunday's matches.

After playing out a lacklustre goalless draw in midweek, Manchester United and Chelsea have to start regaining sharpness in the build-up to their FA Cup final meeting next week.

At Chelsea in particular there are Wembley places up for grabs as a result of the injuries which will mean Ricardo Carvalho, Michael Ballack and Andriy Shevchenko will miss the showpiece.

England left-back Ashley Cole

No favours for Hammers

APP, London



Manchester United will parade the Premiership trophy to a jubilant Old Trafford on

Sunday but manager Sir Alex Ferguson insists it will be business as usual as soon as the whistle goes against relegation-threatened West Ham.

The Hammers, one of only three teams to have beaten Ferguson's men in the league this season, need a point to complete a remarkable escape from relegation on the back of six wins in their last eight matches.

But although Ferguson is a good friend of their manager Alan Curbishley, he acknowledged that United are duty bound to make West Ham's players sweat as profusely as their nervous fans will be as they await news from the Bramall Lane meeting of the two other teams still battling to survive, Sheffield United and Wigan.

"We have to respect the position of the other teams at the bottom," said the Scot. "Paul Jewell has done a fantastic job at Wigan, as has Neil Warnock at Sheffield United. I cannot be putting a team on the pitch that disrespects those teams.

"We also have our own reputation to think about, so although I

Night racing in Singapore

BBC ONLINE, undated

Singapore will stage a Formula One Grand Prix next year, with the race set to be the first in the sport's history to be held at night.

It will be on a street circuit around the Marina Bay district, and is planned for September or early October.

"Singapore is going to be the leader with the street race at night -- we're excited about