



Inter Milan's mercurial midfielder Alvaro Recoba takes a shot on goal as a Lazio defender fails to impede him during their Serie A clash at the San Siro on Sunday.

Milan, Lazio seal CL spots

APP, Rome



AC Milan and Lazio booked their places in the third qualifying round of next season's Champions League, despite both teams failing to win in Serie A on Sunday.

Lazio led Inter Milan 2-0 and 3-2 but ended up losing 4-3 to the champions - for whom Hernan Crespo scored a hat-trick - while AC Milan, who on May 23 play Liverpool in this year's Champions League final, were held to a 1-1 draw by Catania.

Defeats for Empoli and Palermo meant AC Milan and Lazio are certain to finish in the top four, and they will now participate in the two-legged qualifying for Europe's premier club competition.

AC Milan's achievement with two games of the season left is all the more impressive given the fact

they were deducted eight points for their part in 'CalcioPoli', the Italian match-fixing scandal.

Lazio were also involved in the scandal and were docked three points.

The winners of the third qualifying round will enter the Champions League proper.

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti urged his players to ensure their season would go down in history by beating Liverpool in Athens in 10 days' time.

"We've reached two important targets: at worst fourth place, and the final of the Champions League. But this season could turn out to be unforgettable - it's up to us," he said.

Lazio coach Delio Rossi said he never dreamed his side could qualify for the Champions League.

"We've achieved something that was unthinkable at the start of the season," he said.

"I would have been content with qualifying for the UEFA Cup."

Beaten 6-2 by Roma in the first

leg of the Italian Cup final on Thursday, Inter once again showed their defensive frailties as Lazio went two goals up inside the first four minutes at the San Siro.

But Inter reacted positively with Crespo converting crosses from Maicon and Patrick Vieira to bring his side level.

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