



Nuremberg players dive to the ground in front of their German Cup trophy that they won after beating Stuttgart in the final at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kaka eyes English hat-trick

INTERNET, undated

AC Milan star Kaka is looking forward to inflicting a third dose of misery on English football by inspiring Brazil to victory in new Wembley's first senior international match.

Milan beat Liverpool 2-1 in last Wednesday's Champions League Final, having overcome Manchester United in the semi-final, and Kaka said: "The end of my season is being defined by English football. I've been successful so far and I expect this to continue. It would put the seal on my year."

"I have seen some England matches since the World Cup. They have sensational players but perhaps they have not tried the perfect system under the new coach."

"I believe Brazil have been better than England in recent years but we have to prove that on the field. This is not a training match for us."

"Wembley is an icon in football and it would be a pleasure to win there against the inventors of the game."

Kaka believes England will be stronger because of the recall of former captain David Beckham and the return from injury of Michael Owen.

"Owen and Beckham being in the England squad is good news for football," he said.

"Both have a lot of qualities and England will gain much from their return."

Alonso rules Monte Carlo

AFP, Monte Carlo



Spain's two-time Formula One world champion Fernando

Alonso won his second successive Monaco Grand Prix here on Sunday to record his McLaren team's 150th success.

Alonso - recording his 17th career victory - beat home teammate Lewis Hamilton, his fourth successive second place in his maiden season, while Felipe Massa of Ferrari was third, his best result in the race.

Alonso - who leads the title race on 38 points the same number as Hamilton but has the edge as he has won two races this season - led by seven seconds after 20 laps with Hamilton recording the fastest lap of the race at the time and Massa in third. It was the McLaren team's first one-two finish at the famous race on the unforgiving Mediterranean street circuit since 1989, the heyday of Brazilian Ayrton Senna, who won, and Alain Prost of France, who was second.

It was Alonso's second win this season, following his maiden win for the team in Malaysia, and the team's second one-two. They did the same by finishing in the same order in Kuala Lumpur.

Alonso won last year's Monaco Grand Prix for Renault, so this was his second win in the principality and lifted him to the top of this

year's drivers' championship standings ahead of Hamilton on races won.

Alonso had won his previous three races on the twisting roads of Monte Carlo in junior formulae so this achievement was also his first defeat.

The result left both men on 38 points at the head of a title race that now looks as likely to be as dominated by them as was Sunday's procession of supremacy around the harbour.

Massa came home third for Ferrari and was the only driver not lapped by the 25-year-old Spaniard and 22-year-old Briton in the race.

Italian Giancarlo Fisichella was fourth for Renault, Poland's Robert Kubica fifth for BMW Sauber ahead of his team-mate German Nick Heidfeld.

Austrian Alex Wurz was seventh for Williams and Finn Kimi Raikkonen, who started from 16th position on the grid, came home eighth to grab a point for Ferrari.

The race did not produce a single notable passing move and was hardly a thrilling exposition of the thrills of Formula One as Alonso came home in a winning time of one hour 40 minutes and 29.329 seconds, at an average speed of more than 260 kph, on the 3.340 kms circuit.

The race began under a cloudy sky with intermittent sunshine and some breeze, but the threat of rain

diminished as time passed. When the lights went out, Alonso made a smooth start and swept unchallenged down the road to Ste Devote and up the hill towards Casino Square ahead of Hamilton in second.

The order behind them settled down immediately into a predictable order with Massa third ahead of Fisichella, Heidfeld and the German-born Nico Rosberg in his Williams.

In front of a big crowd, estimated at more than 120,000, that included several well-known guests like Hollywood actors Jude Law and Johnny Lee Miller, former Juventus and Czech Republic soccer star Pavel Nedved and German tennis legend Boris Becker, the race soon turned into a routine procession.

Hamilton, seeking to become the first driver in his rookie season to win the Monaco Grand Prix, chased Alonso hard, but more than seven seconds behind him before the first round of pit-stops.

These allowed him to lead for three laps from lap 36 to 39 until he pitted himself and Alonso regained the advantage.

The Spaniard stayed there out in front with few alarms until he pitted again for a second time after 51 laps.

This time Hamilton enjoys a stronger position and after leading briefly he trails Alonso by only 1.9

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

SERIE A

Chievo relegated in thrilling finale

INTERNET, undated

Chievo's six-season stint in Serie A has ended with relegation after a thrilling final round of matches. The Verona-based side lost 2-0 to Catania, while wins for Reggina, Siena and Parma meant the 'Flying Donkeys' were finally grounded.

It was cruel on Luigi Del Neri's side, who started the day 14th but plunged into the drop zone after all four teams directly below them won.

Chievo appeared safe until the 65th minute, when Fausto Rossini powered a header past Lorenzo Squizzi into the left corner of the net.

Even then, it looked like they might survive with Siena drawing 1-1 against Lazio, but a late close-range Paolo Negro goal saved the Tuscan outfit.

Chievo started the season in the qualifying stages of the Champions League having moved up to fourth in the wake of the match-fixing penalties handed out.

But a poor run of form saw them fall into the relegation zone. Not

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Juve capture Serie B title

AFP, Rome

Mighty Juventus added an unlikely honour to their overlaid trophy cabinet on Saturday when the famous Turin club were crowned champions of Serie B.

Demoted last summer for their part in the Italian match-fixing scandal Juve ensured they bounced straight back up to Serie A in style, their 2-0 win over Mantua securing the title with two games to go.

Goals from France striker David Trezeguet and the Czech Republic's Pavel Nedved ensure the win on a day the club denied press reports that manager Didier Deschamps had resigned.

The former Juve player and captain of France's 1998 World Cup winning side has reportedly fallen out with the club's management over his contract negotiations.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Ribery coy on Bayern reports

INTERNET, undated

Marseille midfielder Franck Ribery has remained tight-lipped on rumours that Bayern Munich are set to sign him for 15 million euros.

Ribery has been long mooted to be in line for a move to Arsenal, Juventus, Lyon, Real Madrid and Bayern, but a move to the Germans seems odd as he always maintained that Champions League football was all he craved - something he has achieved with Marseille but cannot with fourth-placed Bayern.

German news agency SID claimed today that Bayern had agreed a deal for the winger-cum-playmaker, but the France international simply told L'Equipe: we will

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

GERMAN CUP

Nuremberg spoil Stuttgart party

Football

AFP, Berlin

Danish midfielder Jan Kristiansen was the toast of Nuremberg on Saturday night as his goal in extra-time ended his side's 45-year wait for the German Cup with a 2-1 win over 10-man VfB Stuttgart.

Kristiansen struck in the 109th minute with a long-range effort at Berlin's Olympic Stadium which made his side German Cup winners for the fourth time and denied Bundesliga champions Stuttgart their first domestic double.

"I was delighted with the goal," said Kristiansen, who has won nine caps for his country, "I knew I had hit it well, but it was a great feeling when it went in."

"The boys are over the moon, it has been a fantastic and superb night, there will be quite a party."

Stuttgart goalkeeper Timo Hildebrand, playing his last game before leaving to join Spanish giants Valencia this summer, said his side went down with a fight.

"We threw everything in and fought hard with ten men," he said,

"the referee did not have his best day, but I am proud of the boys, they gave everything and worked hard just like they have done all season."

Having beaten Stuttgart home and away in the league, this was Nuremberg's third win of the season over their rivals - their first German Cup win since 1962 - but the Hans Meyer-coached side had to come from behind.

Stuttgart's prolific striker Cacau put his side ahead when he ran onto a chip ahead from midfielder Sami Khedira which stretched the Nuremberg defence and the Brazilian stabbed the ball home past goalkeeper Raphael Schaefer after 20 minutes.

It was Cacau's 18th goal of the season - his fifth in the cup - but he was not to remain on the pitch for long.

Nuremberg hit back quickly when Slovakian midfielder Marek Mintal blasted home his shot after 27 minutes from a superb cross by defender Dominik Reinhardt which beat Stuttgart's Hildebrand.

It was a fantastic effort which began in the Nuremberg goal-mouth and swept the full length of the field.

But the game then developed an ill-tempered edge - there were nine cards shown in all - as both early

goalscorers left the field within minutes of each other, but for very different reasons.

First Cacau was sent off for lashing out at Nuremberg defender Andreas Wolf and he was shown a straight red card by the referee.

Then Portuguese defender Fernando Meira earned himself a yellow card for a terrible tackle on Mintel which floored the Slovakian, who had to be stretchered off in some distress on 32 minutes.

The first-half finished 1-1, but Nuremberg took the lead just two minutes after the break when Spanish defender Horacio Pinola drilled in his corner and German international midfielder Marco Engelhardt headed home.

But with ten minutes to go Schaefer brought down Gomez in the penalty area, referee Michael Weiner wasted no time awarding the penalty and Mexican midfielder Pavel Pardo drove home his shot to make it 2-2.

The game went into extra-time and it was Kristiansen's inch-perfect shot from 30 metres which gave Hildebrand no chance and sealed Nuremberg's win.

BECKS ROUSES REAL, RONNIE SENT OFF

Set for a photo finish

AFP, Madrid



The Spanish title chase reached boiling point Saturday as both Real Madrid and Barcelona scored key home wins to stay level on points with just two games to go.

David Beckham inspiring Real to a 3-1 win over Deportivo La Coruna at the Bernabeu to take the capital club onto 72 points from 36 games and Barca promptly drew level with a nervy 1-0 win at the Nou Camp over Getafe.

That win at least avenged the Catalan club's humiliating Spanish Cup exit to Bernd Schuster's side from the Madrid suburbs, but it came at a cost as Ronaldinho, who scored the only goal in the second minute, was sent off five minutes before half-time for aiming a kick at an opponent.

In the day's other game, Valencia's title hopes ended when they lost 3-2 at home to Villarreal.

Beckham celebrated his recall to the England squad after a year in post World Cup purgatory with a fine showing in what was liable to be his penultimate match at the Bernabeu before he heads to MLS side LA Galaxy in the summer.

Beckham had a big hand in the opening goal by Sergio Ramos on 28 minutes but so did former Manchester United teammate Ruud Van Nistelrooy as he fisted Beckham's cross on, unseen by the referee, to lay the foundation for a sixth straight league win. Beckham, who picked up a first-half booking, is desperate to finish with a flourish by finally claiming a trophy in Spain after three barren seasons.

And if they can win their final two games he will achieve his goal even if Barca finish level on points owing to Real's superior head-to-head record over their two matches this season with the Catalan club.

Deportivo made Real sweat after Joan Capdevila levelled nine

minutes after the restart after Julian De Guzman crossed low from the left.

But Beckham ensured the hosts regained the lead, a trademark cross finding the head of Raul, who made no mistake for only his sev-

enth goal of the campaign before Van Nistelrooy finished things off with league goal number 23.

Ronaldinho then netted his 20th league goal of the season after

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona forward Ronaldinho (C) is being sent-off by the referee during their Primera Liga clash against Getafe at the Nou Camp on Saturday.

Eto'o's Anfield desire

Football

INTERNET, undated

Barcelona striker Samuel Eto'o has admitted "it would be wonderful" to play in front of the Kop for Liverpool.

Although he does not expect to join the Reds in the summer, the Cameroonian striker said life at Barcelona was getting "more difficult" each season.

The speedy goalscorer has reportedly been identified as Rafa Benitez's top target in his attempt to bring a world-class striker to Anfield.

Eto'o insists he is not aware of any approach being made by the Champions League finalists, but revealed his admiration for the club and its fans.

"The great thing about Liverpool is their team spirit - it is very strong," he told the Sunday Mirror.

"But, for me, it is their fans who win matches for Liverpool because they have so much power."

"They are fantastic. Any player would love to have those types of fans behind him."

"I have played at Anfield in the Champions League quarterfinal so I know all about their fantastic supporters."

"It would be wonderful to have that kind of support as a Liverpool player but I really don't know what will happen in the next two years."

Eto'o believes he will still be at the Nou Camp next season, despite his much publicised falling out with manager Frank Rijkaard earlier this year.

He added: "I have not heard anything from Liverpool or anyone else. These things don't come through to me."

"I'm only thinking about next season and I will be here next season. But every year that passes things become a bit more difficult."

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Reo-Coker demands transfer

AFP, London

Nigel Reo-Coker is set to leave West Ham after handing in a transfer request.

West Ham boss Alan Curbishley had told Reo-Coker he would listen to offers for the Hammers captain, who has responded by making it clear he will not stay if he isn't wanted.

Curbishley wants eight million pounds for the England under-21 international, who was a member of the reserve World Cup squad last year, and is likely to get offers from Tottenham, Arsenal, Aston Villa and Newcastle.

Reo-Coker's agent Tony Finnigan said: "I can confirm that Nigel Reo-Coker has officially handed in a transfer request."

"I am surprised that a Londoner who is captain of his club is being allowed to leave."

"At the end of the day he never felt wanted but I am sure he will have a bright future elsewhere."



PHOTO: AFP

Spanish McLaren-Mercedes driver Fernando Alonso (R) celebrates after winning the Monaco Grand Prix next to Princess Caroline of Hanover (L) and Prince Albert II of Monaco in Monte Carlo on Sunday.