



Bayern Munich midfielder Franck Ribery (2nd L) is congratulated for his goal by teammates Luca Toni (L) and Christian Lell (2nd R) during their Bundesliga clash against Arminia Bielefeld on Sunday.

## Basten remains silent

INTERNET, undated

Marco van Basten has already come to a decision on whether he wants to stay on as Holland coach ahead of his showdown talks with the Dutch Football Association.

Van Basten will meet the Dutch FA (KNVB) on Tuesday to discuss extending his contract beyond this summer's Euro 2008 finals.

But the former Ajax and AC Milan striker insists he already knows what he wants to do.

"I have made up my mind, but I will first have to speak with the FA before I can tell the public about it," Van Basten said.

"I have thought hard about it in the weeks after we qualified for Euro 2008."

It has been reported that the KNVB want Van Basten to sign a new deal which would tie him to the position until after the 2010 World Cup.

Holland were drawn alongside world champions Italy, Romania and France on Sunday for the finals of Euro 2008 in Austria and Switzerland next summer.

## Birmingham takeover still on track

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong tycoon Carson Yeung's plan to takeover Birmingham City remains on track despite doubts over his ability to meet the deal's deadline, a report said Monday.

He wants the board of the English Premier League club to keep a cool head and work together as the December 23 deadline to buy the remaining 70.5 per cent of the club draws near, the South China Morning Post reported.

"We have already taken a 29.9 per cent stake in the club with real cash, it was not for a joke," the tycoon's spokesman Sammy Yu Wai-ying was quoted as saying.

He was speaking after a weekend report in The Independent newspaper that Yeung has failed to prove he can raise 35 million pounds (72 million US dollars) to buy out Blues co-owners David Sullivan and David Gold, who cast doubts over the takeover.

He told the South China Morning Post: "We don't know why they (Gold and Sullivan) are being so negative. This kind of news does not help the cause. We hope that all parties will stay cool and work together."

## Loew markets Klinsi for England

INTERNET, undated

Germany coach Joachim Low has backed Jürgen Klinsmann as an ideal candidate for the England job.

Klinsmann, who guided his native Germany to the World Cup semi-finals in 2006, has been linked with the role that became vacant following Steve McClaren's dismissal.

Low believes the former Tottenham striker is ready to return to the game and would be interested in taking charge of a national team again.

Low is unsure whether the Football Association is considering Klinsmann but has urged England to move for him.

"I'm 100 per cent sure he will be back in football because he was so successful as a player and as a coach," Low said in the Daily Mirror.

"I don't know what exactly his plan is, but if he gets a good offer from a national team, he will do that."

"England have not told me what they are planning, but for any big team like them he would be a good coach."

## Ribery shows his class

REUTERS, Madrid



victory in the rain at Arminia Bielefeld.

Ribery gathered a through ball from Italy striker Luca Toni after outraging two Bielefeld defenders.

He rounded goalkeeper Mathias Hain at the right edge of the box before powering an angled shot into the vacant goal.

Ribery's goal in the 22nd minute, his fourth of the season, came against the run of play, turned the match around and put Bayern back into first place after Werder Bremen temporarily moved ahead on Saturday with their 2-1 win over Hamburg SV.

Bayern lead the table with 34 points ahead of Werder's 33 and HSV's 30. In Sunday's other match, Ivica Grlic scored in the 71st minute to take MSV Duisburg to a 1-0 win over Nuremberg.

Bielefeld seemed more comfortable at first in the atrocious weather conditions in front of 23,800 rain-drenched fans and thoroughly dominated the first 20 minutes, repeatedly testing Bayern captain Oliver Kahn.

Jonas Kamper was just wide with a crisp free kick in the fourth minute and then forced Kahn to his knees to fist away a dipping long-range blast five minutes later. A Sibusiso Zuma shot in the 20th minute bounced off the right post.

"It was a difficult match and it took us a while to get our rhythm," Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld told Premiere Television.

"It took a long time but after 20 minutes we finally got going and after we got ahead we didn't let them near our goal."

Ribery, who was also superb last week in Bayern's 2-1 win against VfL Wolfsburg with one goal and an assist, once again proved he was worth every cent of the Bundesliga record 25 million euros (37 million dollar) transfer fee in the off-season.

"I'm very pleased," said Ribery, taking on board the Bielefeld fans' taunts before the match. "Who needs Ribery when we have

Kamper". After scoring his goal, Ribery made mocking gestures to the Bielefeld fans, drawing jeers.

"I wanted to get the three points to take back to Munich," added Ribery, who has been taking intensive German lessons. "But you have to hand it to Bielefeld. They played aggressively."

Bielefeld coach Ernst Mittenkopf was pleased despite losing.

"It was an incredibly close match to the final whistle. I'm not at all disappointed. I think we played a fantastic match."

Bielefeld's keeper Hain was injured in a collision just before haltime with Bayern striker Miroslav Klose. He managed to finish the half but was taken to hospital with concussion.

TOP SIX					
German football league table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):					
Bayern Munich 15 10 4 1 31 8 34					
Werder Bremen 15 10 3 2 34 18 33					
Hamburg 15 9 3 3 23 12 30					
Bayer Leverkusen 15 8 3 4 27 11 27					
Karlsruhe 15 8 2 5 16 18 26					
Schalke 04 15 6 7 2 22 14 25					

## Imperious Inter

AFP, Rome



Inter Milan's seemingly relentless march towards the Serie A title continued Sunday with a comprehensive victory over one of their main title rivals.

Inter were at their dominant best as they won 2-0 at Fiorentina, confirming their coach Roberto Mancini's pre-match assertion that the Viola are themselves to be another turning point and Roma will lose some points along the way."

Jimenez opened the scoring on 10 minutes, slotting home after running on to a through ball from the excellent Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

The Sweden forward was also the provider on the stroke of half-time as he fed Cruz to squeeze the ball into the far corner of the net past French goalkeeper Sebastian Frey.

Mancini had said before the match that Prandelli's team lacked the experience for this season but that they could develop in the future into a top class outfit.

And this defeat, Fiorentina's second of the season, saw them

slump to seven points behind league leaders Inter, who also have a game in hand. Only Roma are keeping up with Inter at the moment.

"Yes, this Sunday could be a turning point," Mancini told Sky Sport cameras. "Right now, Inter and Roma are the best two squads. Hopefully there will soon be another turning point and Roma will lose some points along the way."

Jimenez opened the scoring on 10 minutes, slotting home after running on to a through ball from the excellent Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

The Sweden forward was also the provider on the stroke of half-time as he fed Cruz to squeeze the ball into the far corner of the net past French goalkeeper Sebastian Frey.

Ibrahimovic was unstoppable and could easily have had a hat-trick on the day but found Frey in inspired form.

Fiorentina's former Chelsea forward Adrian Mutu was not too disheartened by the result.

"Today we were up against a

great team such as Inter. It's not gone well for us but nearly everyone has lost to the nerazzurri (black-and-blues)."

Inter's lead at the top of the table was pegged at three points by Roma who came out on top in an unlikely early-season title-battle against Udinese.

Roma took the lead after just 11 minutes in slightly fortuitous circumstances. Brazil centre-back Juan got in the way of David Pizarro's effort from outside the box and the ball dropped kindly for him to poke home past Samir Handanovic in the Udinese goal.

But a minute later and Udinese were level through former Manchester United target Fabio Quagliarella, who flicked the ball up, swivelled and fired home from outside the box.

Udinese also put the ball in the net on 25 minutes but Quagliarella was adjudged offside and two minutes later, Roma scored the winner.

Again it was slightly lucky as French winger Ludoovic Giuly's shot was only half-cleared and fell to Brazilian midfielder Tadeu who air-kicked his first attempted volley, before finding the ball still bouncing at his feet and his second effort took a wicked deflection to beat Handanovic.

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti insisted it was too soon to claim the title would be a two-horse race.

"Inter and Roma can move clear on Wednesday (if both win their games in hand) but it's too soon to say that the others are out of the title race," he said.

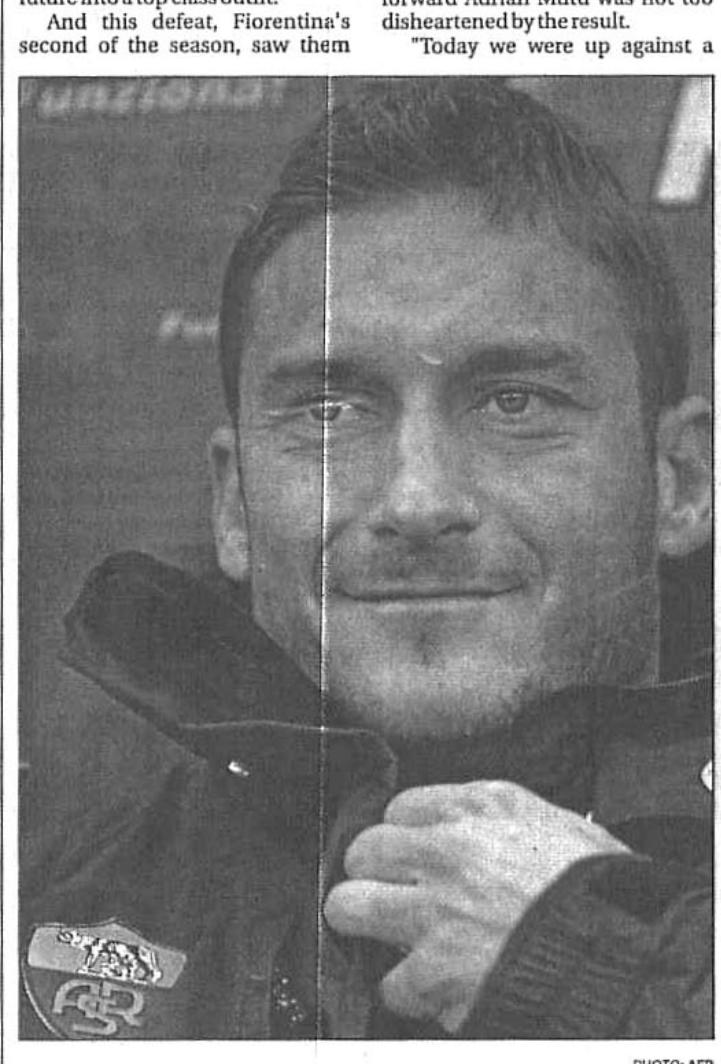
Udinese stay fourth while Juventus are third in the table, five points down on Inter, after holding AC Milan to a 0-0 draw at the San Siro on Saturday.

It was Milan's seventh home league game this season and the seventh time they had failed to win. They have just five points and three goals from those games and now sit eighth, a massive 16 points back from Inter.

In other games Sunday, Catania edged Palermo 3-1 in the Sicilian derby, while Atlanta ran riot at home to Napoli, winning 5-1.

In the late game, draw specialists Torino were held to a 1-1 stalemate at home to Genoa.

TOP SIX					
Italian football league table on Sunday (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):					
Inter 13 9 4 0 26 8 31					
Roma 13 8 4 1 28 17 28					
Juventus 14 7 5 2 29 13 26					
Udinese 14 7 4 3 17 15 25					
Fiorentina 14 6 6 2 19 11 24					
Atalanta 13 5 6 2 21 16 21					



AS Roma captain Francesco Totti sits on the bench prior to their Serie A match against Udinese at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on Sunday.

## Lyon in full flow

AFP, Paris

Champions Lyon pulled further ahead of the pack in French league action on Sunday with a 5-0 rout of Strasbourg as their nearest rivals Nancy fell 2-1 at Le Mans.

Lyon's goal-fest, which included a double from Swedish international Kim Kallstrom, stretched their advantage to six points on Nancy who lost ground after suffering just their second defeat of the season on Saturday.

Kallstrom opened for the six-time champions after 13 minutes after a superb move between Francois Clerc, Juninho, Sidney Govou and Karim Benzema, and Juninho increased their advantage six minutes later with a free kick which left Stephane Cassard with no chance in the Strasbourg goal.

The pressure continued after the break with Benzema (65) adding a third and Clerc finishing off a Milan Baros pass for 12 minutes from time, with Kallstrom converting a penalty after 81 minutes.

Bordeaux, meanwhile, bounced back from last week's 5-0 rout at Caen to hold on to their third position with a hard-fought 4-3 win over Toulouse on Sunday.

A double from Brazilian midfielder Wendel after seven and 39 minutes combined with Alou Diarra's 33rd-minute goal gave the Girondins a 3-0 advantage at the break.

But a hat-trick from Swedish striker Johan Elmander revived Toulouse before Pierre Ducasse dashed their hopes three minutes from time, to leave the point between the western side just one point above the drop zone.

Earlier Sunday, Valenciennes' 3-0 win over Rennes saw them move up two places to fifth in the Brittany side dropped to seventh.

Meanwhile, Paris St Germain boss Paul Le Guen remained defiant despite his side slumping to their fifth defeat of the season at their Parc des Princes stadium, a 1-0 loss to Caen, on Saturday.

Nicolas Florentin's 74th-minute strike was the only goal of the night as PSG remain stuck in the relegation zone with just 16 points from 16 games.

Sloppy defending by Brazilian Cearense allowed midfielder Florentin a golden opportunity which he did not miss.

But Le Guen insisted: "The season isn't over; it's the moment to dig deep and hold firm and show character. I'm totally committed. In any case I won't be going."

On Saturday, Nancy slumped despite taking the lead after nine minutes following a penalty converted by midfielder Benjamin Gavanon.

Le Mans levelled after 59 minutes with a Hassan Yebda header and superb finishing from Ivorian midfielder Gervinho (80) secured all three points for the hosts who move up two places into fourth with