Players are to blame: Anelka

Chelsea striker Nicolas Anelka said the players should take the blame for Saturday's FA Cup humiliation at Barnsley rather than manager

The Israeli coach has admitted he is under the microscope again at Stamford Bridge after the 1-0 quarterfinal loss in Yorkshire followed soon after the League Cup final defeat by Tottenham Hotspur.

"We knew it was going to be

times these results happen. The tactics were right. Chelsea is a big club and we should be better than

"The criticism must be about the players because we didn't play well and we have to accept the fact. We know the media will be after the

ond division) side, Chelsea's first against lower league opposition since 1999.

"When I am responsible for the team and when my team loses at Barnsley, there will be many negative things said about it," Grant was

Barnsley, even though we had a lot injuries, was good enough to win."

Unholy priest

REUTERS, Rome

A footballing priest has been sent

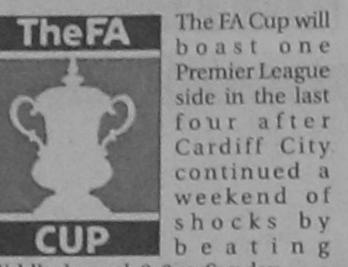
Antonio Cassano's red card for Sampdoria last weekend, happened in the Clericus Cup with the actions of the Burkina Faso priest leading to Paul the Apostle's College being eliminated.

Serie C, because of anger at refereeing decisions.

news service. "We are tired of having to submit to injustices every

Shocks continue to flow

REUTERS, London



Middlesbrough 2-0 on Sunday. First-half goals from Peter Whittingham and Roger Johnson handed the Championship (second division) side a deserved win at the Riverside and a place in the semifinals alongside Portsmouth, Barnsley and five-times winners West Bromwich Albion, who last lifted the

The last time there was only one top-flight team in the FA Cup semifinalswas 1908.

West Brom restored some order to the competition after the side in the last Championship promotion challengfour after ers ended the run of League One (third division) outfit Bristol Rovers with a 5-1 victory, Ishmael Miller hitting a hattrick.

On Saturday, Barnsley stunned holders Chelsea with a 1-0 win at Oakwell while Portsmouth ousted Premier League champions and last season's beaten finalists Manchester United with a 1-0 success at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Portsmouth are now favourites to win a second FA Cup, 69 years after their first triumph.

Cardiff are the only non-English FA Cup winners after lifting the



Cardiff City defender Roger Johnson (L) is over the moon as he celebrates his goal against Middlesbrough with teammate Gavin Rae during their FA Cup quarterfinal at the Riverside Stadium on Sunday.

trophy in 1927 and manager Dave Jones said he hoped his modern-day side could achieve their own slice of history.

"Its important for us as a football club. I get it rammed down my throat... 1927 every time... so we're trying to make our own history, and these boys deserve it and I'm sure the plane (home) will be rocking, not with the wind but with us on it tonight," Jones told BBC Sport.

Cardiff rocked Middlesbrough by taking a ninth-minute lead Whittingham producing some trickery inside the penalty box before unleashing a curling shot into the top right hand corner past a flailing Mark Schwarzer.

Boro claimed that a Cardiff player had handled in the build-up to the goal but their protests were waved

Whittingham then turned provider as the Welsh side doubled their lead on 22 minutes. His freekick from the left was missed by all of Boro's static defenders who failed to pick up Johnson's run and the defender scored with a well-placed diving header.

James Morrison fired West Brom ahead after 16 minutes against Bristol Rovers, slotting in after keeper Steve Phillips had parried a shot into his path. Miller hammered in a second on

the half-hour before Rovers got one back immediately through Danny Coles following a corner. Miller poked in to make it 3-1,

substitute Kevin Phillips got a fourth and Miller completed his hattrick in a one-sided second half.

The draw for the semifinals is on Monday. Since the Football League began in 1888-89 there has never been a final between two clubs from outside the top division.

Gunners fire blanks

REUTERS, London



Premier League leaders Arsenal suffered a come-BARCLAYS down from their

Champions League win over AC Milan as they were held to a 0-0 draw at strugglers Wigan Athletic on Sunday.

Arsenal found Wigan more resilient than the European aristocrats were at the San Siro and had to settle for a point which put them two clear of second-placed Manchester United, but having played one match more.

The Londoners have 66 points from 29 games, United 64 from 28 and Chelsea 58 from 27.

Arsenal, drawing for the third successive game in the league, were far from their fluent best and created few clear openings.

Emmanuel Adebayor and and Cesc Fabregas wasted their best chances while the second-half introduction of Dutchman Robin superior goal difference.

van Persie after a two-month injury absence failed to spark the Gunners.

"I am sure we will take off again.

We have to keep our calm, focus and belief," Arsenal manager zone. Arsene Wenger told Sky Sports

sometimes. The negative is that we have a deficit in points. The positive is that we didn't lose a game." United and third-placed

Chelsea were in FA Cup action on Saturday, suffering shock quarterfinal defeats against Portsmouth and Barnsley respec-

Andrew Johnson's second-half goal secured Everton a 1-0 win at Sunderland to stay firmly in the hunt for a Champions League

Victory puts fifth-placed Everton level with city rivals Liverpool on 56 points from 29 games, with Liverpool having a

Johnson bundled in Mikael Arteta's cross after 55 minutes to increase the relegation worries for Sunderland who remain in 16th place, two points above the drop

Everton manager David Moyes was delighted by how his side "You go through a patch like that responded after their UEFA Cup defeat in Italy by Fiorentina on Thursday.

"After the exertions we have had this week it was a terrific result and it keeps us going," he told the club's

Tottenham Hotspur increased the pressure on under-fire West Ham United manager Alan Curbishley after handing the east London side a third successive 4-0 defeat with Bulgaria striker Dimitar Berbatov netting twice at White Hart Lane.

Gilberto and Darren Bent were also on target for Spurs.

West Ham had Luis Boa Morte sent off just before halftime for a second booking.

Camacho quits Villarreal down Barca Benfica

REUTERS, Lisbon

Spaniard Jose Antonio Camacho has resigned as Benfica coach, the Lisbon club's president Luis Filipe Vieira said on Sunday.

Camacho's assistant Fernando Chalana will take charge of the team for the UEFA Cup last-16 second leg game against Getafe on Wednesday, Benfica said on their Web site (slbenfica.pt). Benfica lost the first legathome 2-1.

They were held to a 2-2 draw by bottom-of-the-table Uniao Leiria on Sunday, a result which left them 14 points behind Portuguese Premier League leaders Porto with eight games remaining this season.

"I think it is best (my resignation) for the team," the former Spanish national coach told a news conference. "I hope that the players improve with another coach." Camacho, who led Benfica to

second place in the standings in a previous spell in Lisbon in 2004, was appointed coach in August after Fernando Santos was sacked. The Spaniard made his name as a

hard-tackling defender for Real Madrid and Spain in the 1970s and

He was assistant to Real first-team coaches John Toshack and Alfredo Di Stefano in the early 1990s before steering both Rayo Vallecano and Espanyol to promotion to the top

Camacho had two brief spells in charge of Real Madrid, resigning after just 23 days in 1998 following a row over back- room staff and quitting after three league games in 2004 claiming that he could not carry a dressing room packed with highprofile players.

He coached Spain between 1998 and 2002, guiding the national side to the quarterfinals of both Euro 2000 and the 2002 World Cup.

Resigning after Spain's World Cup exit at the hands of co-hosts South Korea, he then had his first spell in charge of Benfica, steering the Portuguese side to second place in the league behind Porto before leaving to take over at Real.

Zlatan set to sign bumper deal

INTERNET, undated

Zlatan Ibrahimovic has reportedly agreed terms on a new contract with Inter worth an incredible 8 million pounds per year. The audacious Swedish fantasista

is expected to put pen-to-paper on a five-year deal which will make him one of the highest paid players in Serie A alongside Milan ace Kaka. Nerazzurri President Massimo

Moratti was keen to tie the forward, who has scored 15 goals in the League this season, to the club after interest from Real Madrid. "I think that the contract renewal

is virtually ready," revealed the Inter patron. "There are no problems, "Will he be paid more than Kaka?

No, I don't think so. But there will certainly be similar figures involved." The Italian press has been awash in recent days with reports that Real were preparing a bid for the 27-year-

have been nothing short of magical over the past 18 months, leading some to tout him as a potential winner of the Ballon d'Or. The former Ajax and Juventus

Ibrahimovic's performances

man netted on his return from injury as Inter beat Reggina 2-0 at the week-

He will almost certainly start against Liverpool on Tuesday night as the Nerazzurri attempt to overcome a 2-0 first-leg deficit to qualify for the quarterfinals of the Champions League.

Queiroz apologises to Taylor

THE GUARDIAN

Manchester United assistant manager Carlos Queiroz has apologised to Martin Taylor for suggesting the Birmingham defender was a violent player.

Queiroz mentioned Taylor, who broke Eduardo's leg in a tackle last week, during a furious tirade against referee Martin Atkinson and Portsmouth's Lassana Diarra following Saturday's 1-0 FA Cup defeat.

The Portuguese coach has now apologised to Taylor - but not to the referee or to Diarra.

Queiroz said: "I am deeply sorry if my comments, made when emotions were running high after the Portsmouth game, were misconstrued. Everyone at Manchester United knows that Martin Taylor is not that type of player. All I sought to say was that in the modern game, because of its speed, we need to have more vigilance on mistimed tackles. I apologise for any upset my remarks may have caused."

Queiroz had accused Diarra of elbowing Cristiano Ronaldo, and the referee allowing him to use over-physical tactics against the winger for the rest of the game. "That's why the Taylors of this

game can survive and some of the best players are out of the game. It cannot happen any more," he said rhythm after such a long injuryrelated break. But really, I'm not worried about him at all,"

> and continue to play in Chelsea, he'll be his old self by June. Michael mind because they are a very expepublic will catch on."

but substitute Tomasson produced will be very important for our

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona's title hopes are hanging by a thread behind Real Madrid after a late goal from

Tomasson helped Villarreal to a 2-1 win at Camp Nou on Sunday. With 11 games left Barca need a minor miracle to overhaul Real, 2-1 conquerors of Espanyol on Saturday, and prevent their arch -

ivals from retaining the Spanish

championship. Xavi Hernandez looked to have snatched a point for Barca after he cancelled out Marcos Senna's first half penalty but Danish substitute Tomasson struck the winner nine

minutes from time. "We played very poorly," admitted Barca president Joan Laporta. "They dominated us for almost the whole match apart from a brief period in the second half.

"We can still win this league as we are in the same position we were five games ago. There are games left and points to play for so there is

It was a famous win for Villarreal who have completed a league double over the Catalans and are now only four points behind in

Two weeks ago Barcelona were just two points behind Real but successive defeats to Atletico Madrid and Villarreal could have ended their title hopes.Rijkaard has guided Barca into the quarterfinals of the Champions League and the semifinals of the Kings Cup but losing the league title to Real again may prove the final straw for the Barcelona board.

Barca were without Lionel Messi, sidelined for six weeks with a leg injury, but their attacking trident of Thierry Henry, Ronaldinho and Samuel Eto'o still made fearsome reading for the Villarreal back

With Carles Puyol missing, Ronaldinho took over the captain's armband.

The home side dominated possession but Victor Valdes hauled down Guille Franco in the box and Senna braved the home whistling to convert the spot-kick. Xavi equalised on 67 minutes

a shock winner as Villarreal won at Camp Nou for the first time in six

Earlier, Sevilla bounced back from their midweek Champions League exit with Luis Fabiano's 20th goal of the season sealing a 2-1 comeback win over Levante.

Sevilla coach Manolo Jimenez watched in agony as his team crashed out of the Champions League on penalties to Fenerbahce five days ago and was under fire as he struggles to fill the shoes of Juande Ramos - now at Tottenham.

Levante went ahead through Rahamat Riga after just four minutes but Seydou Keita equalised and Fabiano struck a second half winner. Sevilla move up to sixth and

close to within two points of the top four with the win taking advantage of the fact that Atletico Madrid and Espanyol both lost.

"It was a great effort from the players because they were very tired after Tuesday," said Jimenez.

"After going out of the Kings Cup and the Champions League we only have one competition to fight for and we have to give our all to be

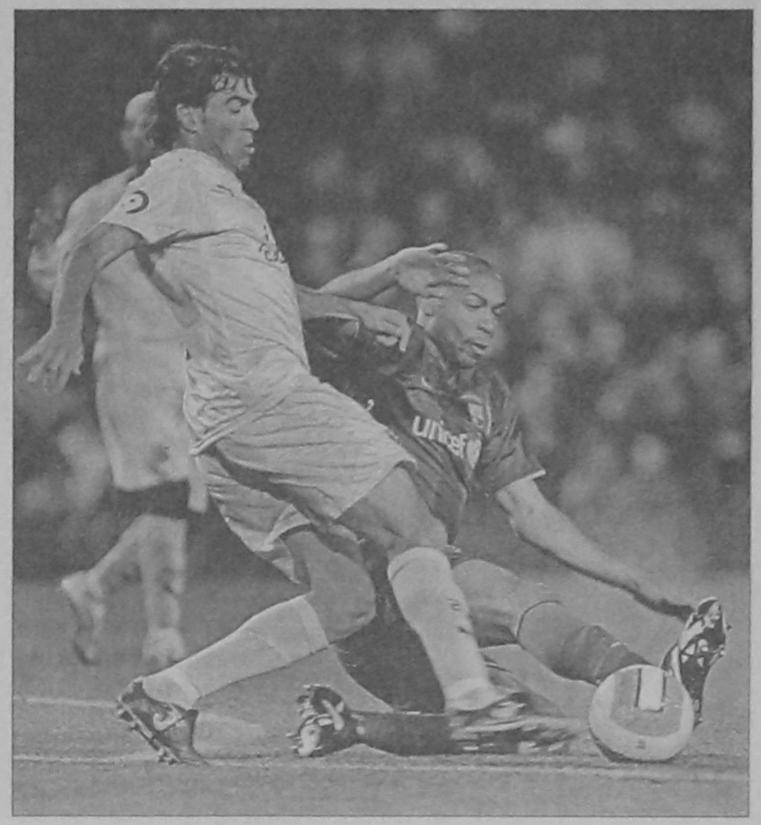
near the top of the table." Brazilian forward Fabiano leads the goalscoring charts with 20 and his efforts have seen him linked

with a move to Real Madrid. Racing Santander are a surprise Champions League contender and they moved level on points with fourth-placed Atletico following a 3-0 win over Real Betis.

Argentines Ezequiel Garay and Aldo Duscher, the player who famously broke David Beckham's metatarsal prior to the 2002 World Cup, were both on target for Racing.

Valencia and Deportivo La Coruna shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw at the Mestalla in a match-up between two fallen giants.

Depor, Champions League semifinalists in 2004, are two points clear of the relegation zone "We face Valencia and Atletico after the hard-earned point while Madrid next and those matches title dark horses Valencia are ninth.



Barcelona striker Thierry Henry (R) falls under the challenge of Villarreal defender Javi Venta during their Primera Liga match at the Nou Camp on Sunday.

Inter seek a miracle

Inter Milan have problems in defence for Tuesday's Champions League last 16, second leg against Liverpool where the Serie A leaders

Marco Materazzi is suspended after his harsh red card for two firsthalf bookings in the first leg at Anfield while fellow centre-backs Walter Samuel and Ivan Cordoba are probably out for the season

Cristian Chivu missed Saturday's 2-0 win over Reggina with a shoulder injury but is set to be fit for Tuesday when he may partner usual right-back Nicolas

Inter, who celebrated their in the city at the same time. some good injury news on media reports saying the club's Saturday when striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic returned from two

Cruz also made the bench after injury and will be available against Liverpool but Hernan Crespo took a knock to the head and is a slight

Captain Javier Zanetti, a right

injured and is expected to do the firmly back in contention for a same on Tuesday unless Chivu Champions League place, The Italian champions hope to

repeat their 1965 European Cup

semifinal performance when they lost 3-1 at Liverpool before winning 3-0 at home in the second leg on their way to lifting the trophy. "Tuesday will have to be a special evening, one in which every-

thing goes well," Inter coach Roberto Mancini told reporters after Saturday's victory. "The team's general state of

health is not the best. We will need great concentration but you can be sure we will do our best." The second leg is being played a

week after AC Milan lost to Arsenal to avoid the San Siro pitch from having two successive days of punishment as well as officials not wanting Arsenal and Liverpool fans Liverpool's off-field future, with

American owners are considering selling to new investors, has not affected their form on the pitch. They have won five in a row

since being dumped out of the FA Cup by Championship (second division) side Barnsley in mid-February, a run kick-started by their confident Anfield showing against Inter in the first leg.

league wins have put Liverpool

Mascherano missed the Newcastle game after suffering a dead leg and is an uncertain starter.

it was perfect," Benitez said.

ration for facing Inter.

"I have confidence that Mascherano will be ok, but it is too soon to say," the Spanish coach

Saturday's 3-0 home win over

Newcastle cementing fourth spot

and taking the Reds to within two

Torres and Steven Gerrard scored

in a performance coach Rafa

Benitez said was the perfect prepa-

"We needed to win and we

scored three goals and kept

another clean sheet. We were also

able to rest some players as well so

Argentine midfielder Javier

Jermaine Pennant, Fernando

points of third-placed Chelsea.

added. Probable teams:

Inter: 12-Julio Cesar; 13 Maicon, 16-Nicolas Burdisso, 26-Cristian Chivu, 4 Javier Zanetti; 7-Luis Figo, 19-Esteban Cambiasso, 5-Dejan Stankovic, 11-Luis Jimenez; 8-Zlatan Ibrahimovic, 9-Julio Cruz. Liverpool: 25-Pepe Reina; 3-Steve Finnan, 23-Jamie Carragher, 4-Sami Hyypia, 12-Fabio Aurelio; 8-Steven Gerrard, 20-Javier Mascherano, 21-Lucas Leiva, 19-Since then four successive Ryan Babel; 18-Dirk Kuyt, 9-

Ballack the key: Kaiser

INTERNET, Frankfurt



German playing believes Michael Ballack will play a major role at the EURO2008 European

Auatto-twitzerlord Championships but that the German team needs to pick up a gear. In an interview with the German Football Federation (DFB) released Monday, the Bayern Munich president said he was confident that German captain Ballack would be at his best in June. The Chelsea midfielder was

last year after a complicated ankle injury and had not played for Germany since March last year until featuring in last month's 3-0 victory over Austria in a friendly. "It takes a while to regain the

sidelined for almost eight months

Beckenbauersaid.

Ballack will play a major role at the Euro. I do not foresee any problems in this regard."

Beckenbauer Cup winner as both player and 1972, and one of six Bayern Munich coach, believes the German team needs to regain momentum to do well at the tournament in Austria and Switzerland from June 7 to 29.

> "When our team clinched the ticket for Euro last autumn, everybody eased up a little," he said.

> "You could just see that the players took the foot of the accelerator pedal, but the team still played

> the pace again. Certainly, you do not want to peak too early, but if we want to reach the playing level of the 2006 World Cup, we should shift

top favourites" but a surprise team like Greece who won in 2004 could not be ruled out.

rienced team," he said.

Fernando Torres.

Beckenbauer was also captain of the West Germany team which However, Beckenbauer, a World became European champions in players in the winning side in the final against the Soviet Union.

> Five Bayern players were also in the team which won the Euro 1996 final - the last trophy for the national team. Beckenbauer said something similar "would be helpful" for the current Germany team although he could not see a Bayern bloc materializing.

Beckenbauer, who was head of "It's about time now to pick up the 2006 World Cup organizing committee in Germany and resides in Austria, said both co-hosts Austria and Switzerland were doing "an outstanding job."

"Obviously with three months Germany is "of course one of the to go, not everybody has caught Euro fever yet, which is quite honestly not much different from the situation in 2006," he said.

"But you can feel the excitement that a surprise as in 2004 is cer- growing. Each day, the Euro is "If he manages to stay healthy tainly possible. I for, for example, talked about in the media. It's just a have Croatia in the back of my matter of time, when the general



Roma captain Francesco Totti converts a penalty during their Serie A match against Napoli at the San Paolo Stadium in Naples on Sunday.

REUTERS, Milan

must overhaul a 2-0 first-leg deficit.

after knee ligament injuries.

Burdisso in central defence. centenary this weekend, did have

weeks out with a knee problem. First choice striker partner Julio

midfielder nowadays, started at left

back against Reggina with Maxwell

on Saturday. The Football Association is examining the post-match comments of both Queiroz and manager Sir Alex Ferguson and disciplinary charges could follow.

into another gear right now."

"The field is so well balanced

REUTERS, London Avram Grant.

difficult because (Barnsley) played with their lives and everyone in the dressing room was determined to win this game. Sometimes in football, things go wrong and you have to accept it," Anelka, signed by Grant in January, told Chelsea's Web site (www.chelseafc.com) on Monday.

"Barnsley played well and some-

manager but you know as players when you played well and we did-Grant looked stunned after the defeat to the Championship (sec-

quoted as saying in Monday's Guardian. "The team that played at

off in a church tournament for throwing his shirt at the referee, Italian media reported on Sunday. The incident, reminiscent of

In a memorable day for Italian amateur football, the president of minor league club Doria has decided to pull his side out of the championship, the division below

"We are retiring the team," Franco De Rose told Italy's ANSA

Sunday."



scored a penalty as he played his 500th match for AS Roma in the 2-0 defeat of Napoli but despite his the San Siro. side's stirling form he is still not

Totti is nothing short of a living

legend at Roma and has set several

appearances for the club and now

First he notched his 200th goal in Europe. in professional football, then he

talking up their title chances.

records this season.

he has surpassed the 500 barrier in all competitions. And for his club, things could not be going much better. Roma knocked Real Madrid out of the Champions League in the

previous round and are through to the last eight. Their league form has also been mightily impressive as they've closed to within six points of leaders Inter Milan, and but for the dubious sending off of their French centre-half Philippe Mexes when last the two sides met, they could even have won that match at the

San Siro and been just three points behind. Goals from Simone Perrotta and Totti's spot kick gave the giallorossi a victory Sunday on the same pitch that saw Inter lose their unbeaten league record a week earlier.

ment because last week Napoli were stratospheric," said Totti. "But we came here with a winning mentality. The championship, and I repeat, is Inter's to lose because we can't do any more than we are doing.

carried away.

there's still a long way to go." Inter ended a four match streak including three league matches without a victory by beating Reggina 2-0 at home on Saturday

Totti remains cautious

last season's finalists Liverpool at

managed a record 388 league to beat a great Liverpool side." One thinks, though, that Totti is also hoping Inter's continued involvement abroad might distract them in the league, while Roma

hope to use their European pro-

but their goalkeeper Julio Cesar was their best player.

League on Tuesday when they must overturn a 2-0 deficit against Totti, though, will be cheering betIwantedtowinsinceIwassmall.

on the Italians. "I hope Inter get through. I'll be Arriving at 600 games? I'll need supporting Inter because we don't want to be the only Italian team left there, but also to reach 300 goals."

Turning his attentions to his for a place in next season's own achievement, Totti was understandably proud. It is no secret they are far from their best and face the possibility of "That number is important but I daylight between themselves and dropping out of the Champions

gression to inspire their league point of the Viola.

"Now I don't want to wake up.

hope to play on as long as possibeaten all the records in this jersey. It's a dream that I wanted to realise, a

another three years, I hope to get While Roma kept the pressure "They've got the right team even on Inter, another important battle took a another twist.

> Massimo Ambrosini and Kaka allowed AC Milan to win 3-1 at Empoli and close to within one go. We have the advantage of not

The two teams are battling it out different but I hope it helps us."

Fourth-placed Fiorentina lost 1-0 at Siena while two late goals from the defeat of (Cesare) Prandelli's team (Fiorentina)," he said.

Juve have 51 points with "It's with satisfaction that I've Fiorentina on 47 and Milan on 46. Only two of those three will make it to next season's Champions League.

Champions League, alongside

third-placed Juventus who put

the others with a 2-0 win at Genoa.

team's chances of claiming a top four finish, particularly as his team is out of Europe while Fiorentina are still in the UEFA Cup and battling on two fronts.

"It was a good day for us due to

"But there's still a long way to

playing in the cup (Europe). It's

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti is now feeling a lot better about his