



Juventus striker David Trezeguet shoots to score against Inter Milan during their Serie A encounter at the San Siro on Saturday.

Juve blank Inter

Title race blown open

AFP, Milan

"We can't dwell on this, we have to keep giving everything in every match," he said. "We can't dwell on what might have been. The right thing to do is keep giving everything."

Roma overcame the loss of Simone Perrotta to a red card early in the second half to keep their title chase alive.

They were locked at 1-1 when Perrotta was dismissed but a goal from veteran defender Cristian Panucci sealed the three points.

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti praised his side for their resilience when down to 10 men.

"It was a great reaction on a heavy pitch with a numerical disadvantage," he said. "In 300 matches as a coach I've never had an easy one. Empoli are a good team with young players."

On loan Juventus youngster Sebastian Giovinco was a constant thorn in Roma's side. He should have put the visitors ahead on 13 minutes when he burst through into the area but he smashed his shot straight at Brazilian goalkeeper Doni, who deflected the ball over the bar.

The 66th minute strike owed much to the work of Italy interna-

tional Alberto Gilardino, who moments earlier had seen a shot from seven yards blocked by Torino goalkeeper Alberto Fontana.

But Gilardino got through again and despite falling over, he was up quickly to turn Fontana and beat him with a trickling cross shot that Pato poked over the line from centimetres out.

Torino had great chance to equalise in the last quarter of an hour but Milan's Australian goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac made a point blank save from Roberto Stellone.

"We had to win this match at all costs. We have to look at those ahead of us and Fiorentina won," said Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti.

Milan are still fifth, four points behind fourth-placed Fiorentina who beat Lazio 1-0 in Florence.

Fiorentina came close to scoring when Giampaolo Pazzini headed a pass from Romania forward Adrian Mutu onto the bar midway through the second half.

But on 77 minutes Pazzini finally broke the deadlock as he turned on to a pass from Fabio Liverani and shot low past veteran goalkeeper Marco Ballotta at the near post.

Luca Toni rejected the idea Bayern Munich had clinched the Bundesliga title with Saturday's 2-1 victory over Bayer Leverkusen.

"No, not until we've mathematically clinched the championship will we be able to relax," the two-goal striker told Premiere Television after Bayern opened a seven-point lead at the top of the table with nine games left.

"Until then we've got to keep battling. We had to win this match and we did."

With 26 goals in 34 matches in all competitions this season, the Italian international has proved to be worth the 11 million euros (\$17.01 million) fee Bayern paid Fiorentina for him.

The most valuable contribution the 30-year-old has made in his first season in Germany is consistency. Toni is the top scorer in the Bundesliga with 16 goals.

"I never think about slumps," he replied when asked how he managed to avoid the goal droughts that have plagued team mates Miroslav Klose and Lukas Podolski.

"I don't worry about them. I just hope things keep going the way they are."

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld said: "We saw once again (today) Luca Toni has an incredible nose for finding the goal."

"He's extremely valuable for us."

Luca Toni struck twice as the German giants went seven points clear at the top of the Bundesliga with a 2-1 win over title rivals Bayer Leverkusen.

With nine rounds of the Bundesliga left, Bayern look like a good bet to pick up their 21st crown as German champions.

Bayern took an early lead on 17 minutes as Germany forward Miroslav Klose passed back into the five-yard box for Toni to rifle home his 15th league goal of the season.

And Toni struck again on 59 minutes to put the game beyond doubt when he headed home defender Philipp Lahm's spectacular cross to put him on 26 goals for the season in all competitions.

The Italian is now the league's top scorer with 16 goals while between them Klose and Toni have hit 46 goals for Bayern since they both moved to Munich last summer.

Bayern captain Oliver Kahn was the first to compare him to Zidane earlier this month, but so far former Galatasaray star Ribery has only a German League Cup and a Turkish Cup winners medal to show for his efforts.

In comparison, Zidane won the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000 with his country, while lifting the 2002 Champions League title and two Spanish championships with Real Madrid.

His personal awards list is also impressive - along with Ronaldo he is one of only two players to be voted three-time FIFA World Player of the Year when he was named in 1998, 2000 and 2003.

He was European Footballer of the Year in 1998 and in 2004 fans voted him top in UEFA's fifteenth-anniversary Golden Jubilee Poll.

But Bayern star Ribery insists he just wants to "concentrate on doing well at Bayern" where he is contracted until 2011 with a host of top European clubs wanting to sign him.

"I want to fulfil my mission and do well, everyone is happy with the way I am playing. What happens in the future, we will have to wait and see," added the Frenchman.

Argentines fire Atletico

AFP, Madrid

Atletico Madrid have never qualified for the Champions League but that wait may soon come to an end after they defeated Sevilla 2-1 on Saturday to move five points clear of their rivals.

Goals from Argentine internationals Kun Aguero and Maxi Rodriguez saw Atletico overcome ten-man Sevilla, who had Enzo Maresca sent off in the second half, and they sit fourth with a five-point cushion over Sevilla.

It was the first time Atletico had won at Sevilla's Sanchez Pizjuan stadium since the 1992/93 season and the historic victory puts them in pole position for a Champions League berth.

For Sevilla, the team that have collected the most points in 2008, it represents a major setback but they still have nine games left to fight for a second successive season in the Champions League.

The last time the teams met Atletico won 4-3 and goals were

expected in the rematch between two sides that put the emphasis on attack rather than defence.

Atletico started the stronger with Portuguese international Simao looking very threatening and the left winger created the opener on 18 minutes with his cross-side-footed by Maxi.

It was a shock for Sevilla but they were almost gifted an equaliser when Italian goalkeeper Christian Abbiati dropped a high ball but his defence smothered Luis Fabiano's effort.

Aguero then went close for Atletico on the half-hour mark with his shot flashing wide of the post.

Sevilla boss Manolo Jimenez was forced into change before the interval with Tom de Mul replacing the injured Jesus Navas who had been struggling since a knock early in the match.

But the hosts levelled shortly after the interval with Diego Capel following up after Frederic Kanoute's initial shot was well-saved.

Depor may have beaten leaders Real Madrid last weekend but the 2000 league champions are just two points better off than third from bottom Recreativo Huelva.

Manchester United's Anderson will replace the injured Kaka in the Brazil squad for Wednesday's friendly international against Sweden in London.

The Brazilian Football Confederation confirmed on their website (<http://cbfnews.uol.com.br>) that World Player of the Year Kaka had been ruled out and that midfielder Anderson would step in.

Brazil will also be without Ronaldinho for the game after he was left out of the squad by coach Dunga.

Anderson takes Kaka's spot

Reuters, Rio de Janeiro

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Atletico Madrid star Kun Aguero is ecstatic after scoring against Sevilla during their Primera Liga tie at the Sanchez Pizjuan Stadium on Saturday.

Terry backs refs protection

AFP, London

Chelsea captain John Terry has backed plans to curb dissent against referees even if it requires changing the rules of the game.

Terry, who also skipper England, said he was in favour of a rule change which would only allow team captains to speak to officials over contentious decisions on the pitch.

His comments came in the wake of the incident in his side's 4-4 draw with Tottenham which saw teammate Ashley Cole turn his back on referee Mike Riley after he had booked him for a wild tackle on Alan Hutton.

It is time for the English Football Association to get rid of mass confrontations between players and referees, he believes.

"I do agree there has to be a line drawn and confronting the referee has to be taken out of the game," said Terry.

"I think we have to give it a go and if it doesn't work then the FA and the officials have to say that. But we have to try these things."

Terry came under fire for running over to Riley when he saw the Tottenham staff react angrily to Cole's challenge on Wednesday night. But Terry played down suggestions he was trying to influence the official.

"I saw their bench jump up and I ran forward to tell Mike Riley not to listen or be intimidated by their bench trying to force him into a decision," explained Terry.

"I spoke to him and he told me it was a high tackle and it was going to be a booking," agreed and walked away.

"There was no argument from me or anyone else close to Mike Riley and I thought he handled it fantastically well."

'It's not over yet'

Reuters, Berlin

Luca Toni rejected the idea Bayern Munich had clinched the Bundesliga title with Saturday's 2-1 victory over Bayer Leverkusen.

"No, not until we've mathematically clinched the championship will we be able to relax," the two-goal striker told Premiere Television after Bayern opened a seven-point lead at the top of the table with nine games left.

"Let's get one thing straight, I don't call players up to do them a favour. I call them up with a view to future games and what I need to do in the future."

"Until then we've got to keep battling. We had to win this match and we did."

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Ribery flattered by comparison

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich's French midfielder Franck Ribery admitted on Sunday he is flattered by comparisons to Zinedine Zidane, but wants to match his compatriot's achievements to be useful.

"It's not my style to call someone up to do them a favour. I call up players who I believe are important to the team. I believe he is going to be useful."

"Good players are good players whether they play in the US or

Magpies finally win

REUTERS, London

Newcastle United eased their relegation fears with a 2-0 win over Fulham on Saturday as attention focused on the battle to stay in the Premier League.

Sunderland, Reading and Middlesbrough also claimed important wins but nowhere was there more relief than at a wintry St James' Park.

Mark Viduka's early shot and a late Michael Owen header gave Kevin Keegan the winning feeling for the first time since returning as Newcastle manager in January.

"It was a great result," Keegan told Sky Sports television. "We showed character... and when we had to dig in we stuck together and that's what these players have been criticised for in the past."

"Michael Owen has been magnificent, not just his goals but his leadership on the pitch."

Viduka, who has recently returned to the side after niggling injuries, fired past keeper Kasey Keller after six minutes and Owen

should have made the points safe before finally ending Fulham's resistance seven minutes from time.

Newcastle rose to 13th, six points above third from bottom Bolton Wanderers who snapped a run of five consecutive league defeats by drawing 0-0 at home to Manchester City.

Fulham remained four points from safety.

Sunderland, who began the day fourth from bottom, beat Aston Villa 1-0 with an 83rd-minute goal by Michael Chopra to secure their first away win of the season.

Roy Keane's side moved above Birmingham City, who went down 2-1 at Reading after two headed goals by Andre Bikey.

United are three points clear of second-placed Arsenal who visit Chelsea, in third, on Sunday.

In Saturday's early game, Portsmouth's chances of securing a top-six finish were dented by a 2-0 defeat at Tottenham Hotspur who grabbed late goals through substitutes Darren Bent and Jamie O'Hara.

There have now been 101 goals scored in all competitions at Tottenham's White Hart Lane this season.

No favours, says Capello

Football

AFP, London

England or in Spain," Capello, appointed after England's failure to qualify for Euro 2008, insisted.

Beckham, who kept his place in the England squad when it was reduced to 23-man on Saturday, was watched last week by Capello's longstanding assistant, Franco Baldini, has been training with Arsenal and playing practice matches ahead of the start of the Major League Soccer season.

Capello, speaking via an interpreter at the FA's London headquarters, added: "The previous match he was not fit because he had not played any games. He is now fit."

"When David is fit he always make an important contribution because of his vision and the fact that he can cross the ball and create chances, not only from free-kicks but during open play as well."

"We have to watch him in training. The important thing is that he is available and fit."

Among those left out from Capello's provisional 30-man squad for the France game were 21-year-old Middlesbrough defender David Wheater.

Capello explained that Wheater's initial inclusion was a sign he was looking beyond established England internationals at so-called 'big' clubs.

"Having world-class players is not enough if you do not have a winning mentality," Capello said.

Michael Owen, who was left out against Switzerland, made the

first half," said Stuttgart coach Armin Veh, whose side have recovered from their alarming slide towards relegation before Christmas.

"In the second half we were much better. I thought we had let Rostock back in with our own goal, but we closed out the win. German Cup finalists Borussia Dortmund shared a point in their battle to stay away from the relegation zone when they drew 1-1 with mid-table Karslruhe."

Croatian striker Mladen Petric's 12th league goal of the season to put Dortmund ahead before Sebastian Freis equalised.

Defending champions VfB Stuttgart are on the verge of breaking into the top five - and a place in Europe next season - as they beat Hansa Rostock 4-0.

Mexican midfielder Pavel Pardo opened the scoring with a second-half penalty before Brazilian striker Caca put Stuttgart 2-0 ahead.