

## Carlo professes love for Roma

AFP, Rome

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti admitted on Monday that he wants to take over the reins of Serie A rivals AS Roma.

Ancelotti has won two Champions League titles with Milan, the Serie A crown and even the Club World Cup, but he has come under fire this season as his team languishes in sixth place in the league.

There has been speculation that he is slated to take over from Roberto Donadoni as Italy coach after Euro 2008 but Ancelotti has set his sights on another job.

"If I could decide to finish my career with one club, it would be really wonderful to finish it with Roma," said the former Roma player and captain on La7 programme 'Victory'.

"Rome is the most beautiful city in the world; you cannot find another comparable city anywhere."

Ancelotti spent eight seasons at Roma as a midfielder, winning the Serie A title in 1983 and claiming the Italian Cup four times.

He reached a European Cup final with Roma in 1984 where they lost to Liverpool.

He never won European honours until he joined AC Milan and was part of their successive European Cup winningsides of 1989 and 1990.

"The defeat to Liverpool in the European Cup was a great disappointment," he said.

Ancelotti's Milan were knocked out of the Champions League this season in the second round by Arsenal while Roma face Manchester United in the quarterfinals, with the first leg at the Stadio Olimpico on Tuesday.

## Mercedes gets Stuttgart stadium

AFP, Stuttgart

Bundesliga champions VfB Stuttgart have leased their stadium name for 30 years to Mercedes Benz, the German car manufacturer confirmed on Monday.

The 55 thousand seater stadium, one of the few remaining in the German top flight that does not bear the name of a business, will be inaugurated the Mercedes-Benz-Arena during a friendly against English side Arsenal on July 30.

It is currently called the Gottlieb Daimler Stadium, after the founder of German vehicle manufacturer Daimler and inventor of motor fuel.

Renovated for the 2006 World Cup, plans are underway to demolish the stadium in 2009 and replace it with a new 60,000-seater one without an athletics track, which hosted the 1993 world championships.

The 93-million-euro project is expected to be finished by 2011, but has still to receive the backing of local authorities.

## Rome could lose hosting right

REUTERS, Rome

Rome's Stadio Olimpico could lose the right to host the 2009 Champions League final if there were further violent incidents at Tuesday's quarterfinal between AS Roma and Manchester United, UEFA said on Monday.

Stabbings by roving gangs armed with flick-knives happen often around the stadium, with violence flaring during United's last two visits to Rome.

There were also incidents at Roma's knockout round game with Real Madrid last month.

"If tomorrow at Roma-Manchester United, incidents are proved to have happened outside the stadium which are like those at the match with Real - with people stabbed - we would have to reconsider the decision to assign the 2009 Champions League final to Rome," UEFA spokesman William Gaillard told Italian radio, according to ANSA news service.

## Zenga takes over at Catania

REUTERS, Milan

Former Italy goalkeeper Walter Zenga has been appointed coach of Serie A strugglers Catania.

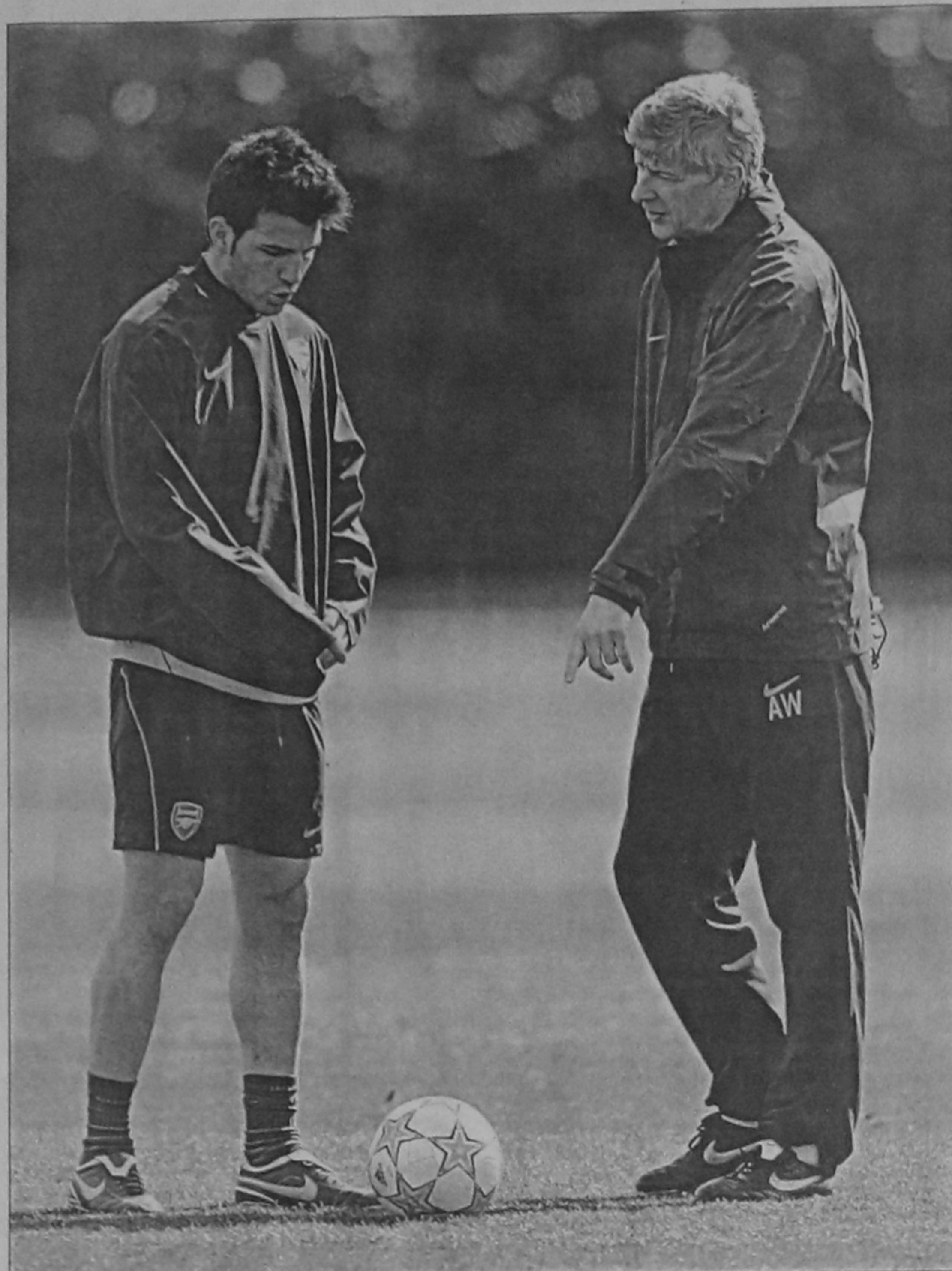
The Sicilians, hovering above the drop zone after a 2-1 home defeat by Torino on Sunday, parted company with Silvio Baldini on Monday.

The club, who have seven games left this season to avoid relegation, made the announcement on its Web site (www.calcio.catania.it) on Tuesday.

Zenga quit as coach of Romania's Dinamo Bucharest in November after losing a derby to former club Steaua Bucharest.

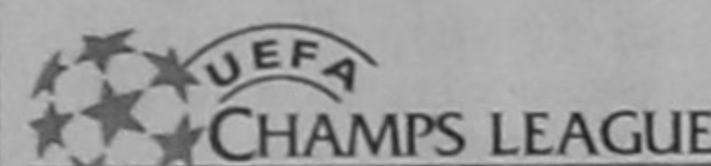
The 47-year-old had also previously coached National Bucharest as well as New England Revolution in the United States and UAE side Al-Ain among others.

He earned 58 caps for Italy and was a mainstay of Inter Milan's side in the 1980s and early 90s.



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger (R) makes a point to Spanish star midfielder Cesc Fabregas during a training session at London Colney on Tuesday.

## Rivals to break new ground



REUTERS, London

Arsenal and Liverpool will break new ground in their 115-year rivalry at the Emirates Stadium on Wednesday when they meet in European competition for the first time.

The Champions League quarterfinal first leg will be the 200th occasion the sides have clashed and although they have faced each other in FA Cup finals and a title decider in the past, few of the previous encounters have had as much at stake.

A place in the semifinals against Chelsea or Fenerbahce awaits the winners, with May's final in Moscow looming just over the horizon.

Wednesday's match is the first of three between the sides in seven days with a Premier League meeting at the Emirates on Saturday to follow before the return leg at Anfield on April 8.

Arsenal, buoyed by their gutsy 3-2 comeback win at Bolton Wanderers on Saturday when they overturned a 2-0 deficit with only 10 men, are set to recall Togolese striker Emmanuel Adebayor to the

starting line-up.

Adebayor, who scored 22 goals in his first 31 appearances of the season, has scored just once a 90th minute strike against AC Milan in the previous round in his last nine matches, and was rested at the weekend.

Manager Arsene Wenger, who brought Adebayor on after an hour against Bolton, said he looked jaded recently, but Liverpool will need to be wary of the rangy striker's threat.

Likewise Arsenal's defence, missing the injured Bacary Sagna, will need to watch Fernando Torres, who scored his 21st league goal of the season and 28th in all competitions against neighbours Everton on Sunday.

Before Saturday's victory, Arsenal had gone five league games without a win and their central playmaker, Cesc Fabregas appeared to have lost some of his early-season dynamism.

Fabregas sparked back into life in the second half, having a hand in the 90th minute winner, and if he gets the better of his Spanish compatriot Xabi Alonso on Wednesday, Arsenal could live up to their tag as slight favourites.

Both Wenger and Liverpool boss Rafa Benitez know what it takes to

reach the Champions League final with one or other being involved in the last three. Liverpool won in 2005 and lost last season while Arsenal were runners-up in 2006.

Arsenal are third in the Premier League, one place and eight points better off than Liverpool with the five time European champions unable to replicate their Champions League confidence and swagger domestically.

Benitez's side have not won at Arsenal since 2000, but with the home side's domestic dominance and the visitors European self-assurance, the stage is set for an intriguing battle.

Another intriguing aspect to this all-English tie is this: only two English players Liverpool's Jamie Carragher and Steven Gerrard are expected to start.

**Probable teams:**

**Arsenal:** Manuel Almunia; Kolo Toure, William Gallas, Philippe Senderos, Gael Clichy, Abou Diaby, Alexandr Hleb, Matthieu Flamini, Cesc Fabregas; Robin van Persie, Emmanuel Adebayor.

**Liverpool:** Pepe Reina; Jamie Carragher, Martin Skrtel, Sami Hyypia, John Arne Riise; Fabio Aurelio, Steven Gerrard, Javier Mascherano, Xabi Alonso, Yossi Benayoun; Fernando Torres.

## 'Torres will be a threat'

REUTERS, Liverpool

Arsenal will be wary of Fernando Torres when Liverpool travel to the Emirates Stadium for Wednesday's Champions League quarterfinal first leg, Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez said.

Spain forward Torres has scored 28 goals in his debut season in English football, including four in his last four Champions League games.

"Arsenal will know that Torres is on fire and is scoring goals and will be a problem for them," Benitez told a news conference on Tuesday.

"Fernando also knows that if we play well he will score goals so he will work hard for the team. As this is a European competition he wants to play well and score goals."

"He has a great mentality and is very competitive, but against the top sides he must be focused and have confidence in himself because against the best defenders it will be more difficult."

Benitez said Liverpool's system of playing Torres as an out-and-out striker meant he was now more dangerous than during his spell at previous club Atletico Madrid.

"In Spain he was playing on his own up front. He was going to wide areas and was working hard to receive the ball and go against defenders," said Benitez.

"Here he has Steven Gerrard, Ryan Babel and Dirk Kuyt behind him so he can play higher and that is the reason why he has scored more goals."

Arsenal's 3-2 win over Bolton Wanderers on Saturday has pushed the Gunners back into the Premier League title race, and Benitez said that could give Liverpool an advantage in their Champions League tie.

"The title could be a distraction for them," he said. "Since they beat Bolton, it means they now have the league to think about and that could be an advantage to us."

Liverpool play Arsenal three times in the space of seven days, twice in Europe with a Premier League game sandwiched between the Champions League matches.

"These are games in which the managers know each other and the players know each other. That makes it difficult to find an edge, but it also makes the game more exciting," said Benitez.

Javier Mascherano will return to Liverpool's starting line-up after missing out on Sunday's Merseyside derby win over Everton due to suspension.

## Berlusconi wants Sheva

REUTERS, Milan

AC Milan President Silvio Berlusconi has backed coach Carlo Ancelotti despite the club's problems and has reiterated his desire to bring back Andriy Shevchenko.

Milan were dumped out of the Champions League by Arsenal last month and are sixth in Serie A, four points adrift of a European Cup spot for next season.

"Carletto is going very well," Berlusconi told Tuesday's Gazzetta dello Sport, referring to Ancelotti by his nickname.

"You change in order to improve. For Milan who could I find better?"

Ukraine striker Shevchenko had seven successful seasons at Milan before leaving for Chelsea in 2006 but he has struggled in English soccer.

"It would be good for Shevchenko to return to us," he said. Milan have lacked a cutting edge up front this term with Ronaldo being ruled out with a long-term knee injury that may threaten his career. The Brazilian's deal runs out in June but Berlusconi said he was ready to offer him a new contract.

"If he has the will, he will return. I would like to give him a performance-related contract in order to motivate him," he said.

## Roddick engaged to model

INTERNET, undated

Andy Roddick is engaged to his 20-year-old model girlfriend Brooklyn Decker, his website reported Monday.

With the world number six competing at the Miami Masters, news of the hook-up is travelling around the grounds at Crandon Park.

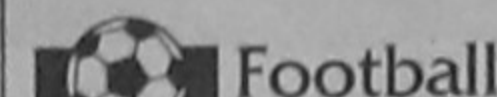
Andyroddick.com said that the player proposed in early March and had hoped to keep the engagement a secret.

"The couple wanted to tell their family and close friends first, but good news travels fast," said the site. "With their hectic travel schedules, Andy and Brooklyn plan to enjoy their engagement and will wait to set a wedding date."

Decker's claim to fame was an appearance in the annual swimsuit issue of US magazine Sports Illustrated.

Decker lives in New York while Roddick is based in Austin, Texas, but has reportedly bought a flat in the city recently.

## EPL edges Primera Liga



AFP, Madrid

Spanish clubs have fallen behind English clubs in recent years, said players who ply their trade in Spain and other football personalities.

Only one Spanish team, Barcelona, made it to the quarterfinal of Europe's top competition this season while the Premier League's Big Four Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester are all present.

The Spanish league's defending champions, nine-times Europe champions Real Madrid, have not made it to the quarterfinals of the Champions League since the 2003-2004 season.

"Real Madrid and Barcelona are giants in Spain but children in Europe, which has put an end to our international hegemony," former Real striker and coach Jorge Valdano of Argentina said recently

in his column in sports daily Marca.

"The Champions League has shown us the truth: that great football is played in England," added Valdano, who is nicknamed "The Philosopher of Football".

Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson agrees, saying recently that the Premier League was the strongest in Europe.

"For a while, it was the Spanish league. Now it is the Premier League. There's no doubt," he said.

"I remember that eight years ago the Spanish had Real Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona in the semifinals. That has changed, the English clubs are better," he added.

English teams have an advantage because they are flush with cash thanks to a series of mega-money television deals, said Espanyol coach Ernesto Valverde.

"They can recruit any player they want and you can see that on the pitch. We are witnessing a significant change," he said.

Among the players who have

been lured to the Premiership are two of Spain's best players: 20-year-old midfielder Cesc Fabregas and 24-year-old striker Fernando Torres.

Liverpool signed Torres from Atletico Madrid on a six-year contract worth 36 million euros (59 million dollars) last year while Fabregas joined Arsenal from the youth ranks at Barcelona in July 2003.

Other La Liga stars dream of following their example.

Sevilla's Brazilian full-back Dani Alves, 24, made no secret of his desire to join Chelsea last season but the Spanish side would not let him go for less than 40 million euros and he ended up staying put.

"The difference with Spain right now is enormous. I'll bet that we will have a Champions League final between two English teams," said Spanish side Almeria's coach Unai Emery.

"In any case, these things are cyclical. One year it could be England, the next it's Spain, then Italy and so on," he added.

## Turks to go all-out



REUTERS, Istanbul

Coach Zico says it is imperative Fenerbahce beat Chelsea in Wednesday's Champions League quarterfinal first leg.

"Fenerbahce are facing one of the most important matches in their history," said the former Brazil captain.

"We definitely have to win the first match at home. If we concentrate properly we can achieve our goal."

Zico will be pinning his hopes on playmaker Alex in his team's debut appearance in the last eight.

Alex scored twice in Saturday's 2-1 victory over city rivals Besiktas, a result that gave Fenerbahce renewed confidence in their battle to win the Turkish title.

"I don't want anyone to talk about the Besiktas game any more," said Zico. "Another very big

test awaits us on Wednesday."

Since joining the club four years ago, Alex has scored 70 goals in 116 league matches.

He could be joined in Wednesday's team by fellow Brazilian Roberto Carlos, who has been out injured since the first leg of their last-16 tie with Sevilla.

Midfielder Ugur Boran, injured against Besiktas, is likely to be fit while Onder Turaci will probably play at right back in place of the suspended Gokhan Gonul.

Chelsea manager Avram Grant finds himself in a peculiar position despite collecting five wins and a draw from his last six Premier League games.

A fortunate 1-0 victory over Middlesbrough on Sunday means the Londoners are still the closest challengers to Manchester United in the title race but there are grumblings of discontent among the fans.

The League Cup final defeat by Tottenham Hotspur and a humili-

ating defeat by Championship (second division) side Barnsley in the FA Cup have reduced Grant's chances of winning a trophy in his first season.

Midfielder Frank Lampard should return after missing Sunday's victory with a stomach upset.

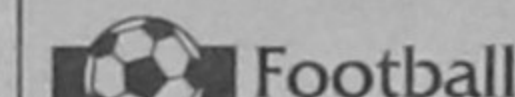
Goalkeeper Petr Cech is doubtful with an ankle injury but Didier Drogba is expected to be fit after picking up a knock at the weekend.

**Probable teams:**

**Fenerbahce:** 1-Volkan Demirel; 19-Onder Turaci, 2-Diego Lugano, 36-Edu Dracena, 3-Roberto Carlos; 20-Alex, 15-Mehmet Aurelio, 33-Claudio Maldonado, 25-Ugur Boran; 99-Deivid, 9-Mateja Kezman.

**Chelsea:** 23-Carlo Cudicini; 20-Paulo Ferreira, 26-John Terry, 6-Ricardo Carvalho, 3-Ashley Cole; 8-Frank Lampard, 4-Claude Mamelele, 5-Michael Essien; 10-Joe Cole, 11-Dieter Drogba, 21-Salomon Kalou.

## Capello investigated



REUTERS, Rome

England coach Fabio Capello is being investigated by an Italian state prosecutor on suspicion of withholding information from a court, a judicial source said on Monday.

The prosecutor intends to bring a case against former Juventus coach Capello and ex-Juve director Antonio Giraudo after they gave evidence in a trial of six men accused of fostering unfair competition through the use of threats or violence as part of Italy's Gea World sports agency, the source said.

Under Italian law, a person found guilty of withholding information in court can be jailed for up to six years.

The English Football Association, Capello's employers, declined to comment, calling it a "private matter", but the Italian's lawyers said in a statement they were confident everything "will soon be completely cleared".

"We are really surprised by the Public Prosecutor's declaration. Mr Capello was heard as a witness in the proceedings against Gea...and confirmed before the Court of Rome all of the declarations he had already provided to the Public Prosecutor during the investigation," the statement said.

"Mr Capello made it clear he

has never been involved in the conclusion of professional football players' contracts and has only limited and indirect knowledge of this subject.

"At the end of the hearing this morning, Mr Capello was certain that in his capacity as a witness, he had given all the information required of him to the Prosecutor and the Court."

Capello told the court he had never heard of players being put under pressure to sign specific agreements.

Former Juve general manager Luciano Moggi, at the centre of Italy's 2006 match-fixing affair, and Davide Lippi, son of former Italy coach Marcello, are among the defendants.

Capello worked under Moggi at Juventus from 2004-06 and his time in charge of AS Roma between 1999 and 2004 also interested the court.

The 61-year-old, appointed England coach in December is also being investigated for alleged tax fraud by prosecutors in Turin. He has said his finances are in order.

In court, Capello denied having had relations with the directors of Gea and having been put under pressure over the management of players during his time at Juve and Roma.

Prosecutor Luca Palamara asked the court for and obtained the transcripts of Capello and Giraudo's statements, accusing

both of withholding information, the source said.

It was not clear which part of Capello's testimony the prosecutor was unhappy with.

"I give indications for transfers, then I give the assignment to the sporting director of the club and he takes care of it," Capello had said about his practices as a club coach.

Capello was coach of Juventus when they were demoted to Serie B and stripped of their 2005 and 2006 Italian championships because of a match-fixing scandal linked to procuring favourable referees.

He subsequently left for a second spell in charge of Real Madrid.

Moggi, who was banned from football for five years for his part in the scandal, was told off in court on Monday for gesturing to England assistant coach Franco Baldini, who was also a witness from his time as Roma sporting director.

Moggi's son Alessandro, also on trial, is head of Gea.

Capello was appointed as England's second foreign coach after they failed to qualify for Euro 2008 in November when Steve McClaren was sacked.

His side beat Switzerland 2-1 at Wembley in February in his first game in charge but England lost 1-0 in France last week in a second friendly.

## Bonus points from next season?

INTERNET, undated



Bonus points will be introduced into football for the first time next season as UEFA and FIFA look to reward big-scoring teams.

From the start of the 2008-9 season, a series of bonuses will be on offer, including an extra point for winning league matches on aggregate, more points for winning in midweek and added points for every multiple of three games in succession won.

The move is sure to spark as much controversy as the 39th game plan that was scrapped last month just days after it was mooted by Premier League chiefs.

However, this has the full backing of world football's chiefs who are trying to rid the game of 0-0 draws without introducing American-style overtime sessions to decide results or increasing the size of goals to 40m wide.

The policy was set to be rubber-stamped at a full World Football Summit meeting on April 1 having been concluded in a shroud of secrecy.

The effects will be far-reaching for football. For example, Manchester United's 6-0 defeat of Newcastle at Old Trafford earlier this season would have earned them 3 points for winning, plus 2

extra points for 2 lots of three goals - plus another 2 for winning by two three-goal margins - making 7 in all.

Their 5-1 win at St James' Park would have earned them 3 for winning, plus 1 extra point for 1 multiple of three plus another 1 for winning by one multiple of three - making 5 in all.

Their aggregate victory would have given them an extra five points, and as they netted 11 goals, they would qualify for the 'hyper bonus' of ten for scoring a combined total of ten or more.

Therefore they would actually have accrued a stunning 27 points for their hammering of the Magpies, leaving Arsenal and Chelsea in their wake.

Fans will notice the changes whether they agree with them or not, especially in their pockets.

National Football Associations are going to have to employ a team of 100 full statisticians to make sure the database does not fall behind - and in the event of teams finishing level at the end of the season, the number of corners won would be the deciding factor, followed by throw-ins - then programmes sold to away fans.

FIFA spokeswoman Avril Premiere said: "The points bonus is vital to keep football moving forward. It is the brainchild of all our top officials and intended to ensure

dreary teams such as Chelsea who only seem to win 1-0 cannot be champions again."

UEFA spokesman Abril Primero also unveiled a series of other enticements. These include more points for winning midweek matches, three-in-a-row win bonuses and the introduction of a five-minute joker that can be played any time in the match and any goals scored during that time are doubled - but goals conceded on your own joker are trebled.

Primero insisted: "These ideas might seem extreme but it's time to bring football into the 21st century. The Joker always worked well in It's A Knockout and we are hoping to get Stuart Hall to provide a voiceover when jokers are brought out to be played. And jokers are no fools - unlike some people."

FA chiefs are sure to be seething at yet another erosion of their authority but refused to comment when asked about the FIFA ruling - but that's because Sportsmail phoned them at 3am when nobody was there.

But Serie A chief executive Angelo Primo d'Aprile blasted: "UEFA and FIFA should just leave football alone and instead just concentrate on coming up with fresh ways that Liverpool can qualify for the Champions League no matter where they finish in the table."



US tennis player Andy Roddick (R) is seen with his girlfriend model Brooklyn Decker. They announced their engagement on Monday.