

# Zlatan leads Inter to glory

AFP, Rome



Inter Milan won their third straight Italian Serie A title with a 2-0 victory at Parma on Sunday.

Sweden forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored both goals after coming off the bench to secure the nerazzurri's 16th Scudetto crown.

AS Roma's hopes of snatching the title on the last day of the season faltered as they were held to a 1-1 draw at Catania, but Ibrahimovic's double rendered their result meaningless anyway.

Florentina claimed the last Champions League qualifying position after finishing fourth following their 1-0 win at Torino.

Juventus had already made sure of third place.

AC Milan missed out and will play in the UEFA Cup next season after finishing fifth despite a 4-1 homewin over Udinese.

Parma and Empoli went down to Serie B with the already relegated Livorno while Catania's point was enough for the Sicilians to survive the drop.

Inter may have won the title but at half-time things seemed to be

going against them and they looked like living up to their reputation as chokers.

Roma needed to win to keep their hopes alive and took the lead after just eight minutes courtesy of a stunning goal from Montenegro forward Mirko Vucinic.

He took the ball from out on the right flank, beat three men with a combination of skill and pace and then fired a cross shot past Albano Bizarri and just inside the far post.

Inter now had to win to keep hold of their title but they struggled under the heavy rain during the first half.

Coach Roberto Mancini responded to the situation early in the second period by throwing on Ibrahimovic in a three-pronged attack alongside Julio Cruz and Mario Balotelli.

The Swede had not played since March 29 in a 2-1 home defeat to Juventus but he quickly adapted to the pace of the game and needed just 11 minutes on the pitch before making the difference.

He took a square pass from Dejan Stankovic in his stride, took two more steps and fished a low shot from 20 yards along the slippery surface and past Nicola Pavarini.

And 11 minutes from time, having just had a one-on-one

### INTER FACTFILE

Factfile on 2008 Italian champions Inter Milan who clinched their third straight title following a 2-0 victory against Parma on Sunday.

**FULL NAME:** Football Club Internazionale Milano

**FOUNDED:** 1908

**STADIUM:** Giuseppe Meazza (82,955 capacity)

**COLOURS:** blue and black striped shirt, black shorts and white socks

**PRESIDENT:** Massimo Moratti

**COACH:** Roberto Mancini

**STAR PLAYERS:** Javier Zanetti, Esteban Cambiasso (ARG), Zlatan Ibrahimovic (SWE), Maicon (BRA), Marco Materazzi, Mario Balotelli (ITA), Dejan Stankovic (SRB), Patrick Vieira (FRA), Cristian Chivu (ROM)

**TITLES:**

**ITALIAN CHAMPIONS:** 16 (1910, 1920, 1930, 1938, 1940, 1953, 1954, 1963, 1965, 1966, 1971, 1980, 1989, 2006, 2007, 2008)

**ITALIAN CUPS:** 5 (1939, 1978, 1982, 2005, 2006)

**ITALIAN SUPERCUPS:** 3 (1989, 2005, 2006)

**CHAMPIONS LEAGUE/EUROPEAN CUPS:** 2 (1964, 1965)

**UEFA CUPS:** 3 (1991, 1994, 1998)

**INTERCONTINENTAL CUPS:** 2 (1964, 1965)

opportunity thwarted by Pavarini, Ibrahimovic met a deep right-wing cross from Brazilian full-back Maicon on the volley to ease Inter's nerves.

In Sicily, where Catania needed a point to survive the drop, Roma could not quite hold on and Jorge Martinez levelled matters late on to ensure Roma's title wait will go on for another year.

Inter finished the season with 85 points, three more than Roma, whose valiant late charge ultimately came to nothing.

They will have a chance to gain their revenge next weekend, though, when the pair meet in the Italian Cup final for the fourth year in a row.

Inter won in 2005 and 2006 with Roma claiming the trophy last season.

Florentina's Pablo Osvaldo scored the only goal of the game in Turin with just 14 minutes left to clinch fourth spot for La Viola.


Milan ultimately paid for last week's 3-1 defeat at Napoli and their comfortable home win over Udinese, with goals from Pato, Filippo Inzaghi, Cafu and Clarence Seedorf will be of no consolation to coach Carlo Ancelotti.



Inter Milan striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic scores his second goal against Parma during their Serie A encounter at the Tardini Stadium in Parma yesterday.

# Bayern set new record

AFP, Berlin



Luca Toni scored a hat-trick to secure his place as the Bundesliga's top-scorer as Bayern Munich broke the 20-year record for the least goals conceded in a league season after Saturday's 4-1 win over Hertha Berlin.

Italian World Cup winner Toni, who joined Bayern from Fiorentina last summer, finished the season with 24 league goals - 39 in all competitions - after the win at Munich's Allianz Arena.

And on the final weekend of the season, VfL Wolfsburg and SV Hamburg secured their places in Europe while Nuremberg were relegated.

In his final Bundesliga game for the German giants before retirement, goalkeeper Oliver Kahn let in a late Berlin goal, but his side have leaked just 21 league goals all season.

They have broken Werder Bremen's previous mark of 22 set in the 1987/88 season as Bayern farewelled coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, who will take over the Swiss national side, and Kahn, who will become a TV pundit next season.

And after a successful reign at Bayern where he won the Champions League in 2001, Hitzfeld signed off as coach with his fifth Bundesliga title.

"These have been incredible years," the tearful Hitzfeld told German sports agency SID.

"The responsibility and the pressure were always big, it has cost me a lot of nerves, but I am very happy."

"I can't hide my tears any more, but they are tears of happiness."

Having wrapped up the league title a fortnight ago, Bayern finished with a 10-point lead as second-placed Werder Bremen beat Bayer Leverkusen 1-0.

Toni opened his account with a header from a Franck Ribery cross after just three minutes and followed that up with his 23rd from a Bastian Schweinsteiger cross on 27

minutes.

Ribery slotted Bayern's third goal before Toni smashed home his third on 61 minutes before Berlin forced a consolation goal.

On the final whistle, Kahn lifted the Bundesliga shield for the eighth time in his 14 years at Munich.

Fifth-placed Wolfsburg sealed one of the two UEFA Cup places up for grabs as they raced into a 2-0 lead after just six minutes before running out 4-2 winners against Borussia Dortmund.

Hamburg claimed fourth in the league after striker Jose Paolo Guerrero bagged a hat-trick in their 7-0 rout of Karlsruhe.

The result was a fitting send off for Dutch coach Huub Stevens, who coaches PSV Eindhoven next season to be replaced by ex-Tottenham Hotspur boss Martin Jol.

"I have never had a 7-0 with Hamburg before, it's something to be proud of," said Stevens, who took over as Hamburg coach in February 2007.

"During the play, I have experienced some of my best moments with Hamburg."

The home side took an early lead at home when captain Rafael van der Vaart scored a 23rd minute penalty.

But Peruvian international Guerrero needed just 15 minutes either side of half-time to seal his hat-trick.

And midfielder Piotr Trochowski celebrated his Euro 2008 call up for Germany with a goal in the 57th minute to make it 5-0 before Croatian striker Ivica Olic scored two late goals.

Having won the 2007 Bundesliga, VfB Stuttgart missed their chance to claim a UEFA Cup place next season when they drew 2-2 with Arminia Bielefeld, who secured their place in Germany's top flight next season.

Relegated Duisburg left the Bundesliga with a whimper as they went down 4-2 against Eintracht Frankfurt.

And third-placed Schalke 04 sent Nuremberg into the second division as captain Marcelo Bordon scored two headers both off crosses from defender Christian Pander to seal a 2-0 win.

## Jose hopes to return in one month

AFP, Lisbon

Former Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho said Sunday that he hopes to return to coaching within four weeks.

"There's a week left before the end of leagues. I still don't know where I'll work but I hope to be working in one month," Mourinho was quoted as saying.

"I don't know where (I'll be working) but I'm sure that I will be working."

The 45-year-old, who left Chelsea last September, recently denied reports he had held talks with Serie A leaders Inter Milan.

Mourinho, who lifted the Champions League with Porto before guiding Chelsea to two Premiership titles and an FA Cup, is one of the most sought-after coaches following his abrupt departure from Chelsea.

Rome International Jankovic ends Cornet run

AFP, Rome

Serbian defending champion Jelena Jankovic ended the giant-killing run of French qualifier Alize Cornet on Sunday at the WTA Rome International, trouncing the 18-year-old 6-2, 6-2.

Cornet, 18, had no answer for Jankovic's relentlessly consistent groundstrokes as the errors piled up, reducing her to tears at the changeover when she was trailing 1-4 in the second.

The precision serve that had helped Cornet defeat two Russian top tenners, fifth-ranked Svetlana Kuznetsova and eighth-ranked Anna Chakvetadze, deserted her on Sunday.

"I'm very disappointed, but next time it'll be better," said Cornet, who dropped only one set -- to Chakvetadze on Saturday -- on her way to the final.

"I started to be very tired. ... I couldn't do what I wanted to do on the court," said Cornet, whose run here will see her WTA ranking rise from 34 to about 22.

Jankovic, although she hardly showed it, said she was "very nervous" on the court.

The 23-year-old Serbian champion, ranked fourth in the world, had work on her right shoulder towards the end of the match.

Giresse quits Gabon

AFP, Libreville

Frenchman Alain Giresse has quit as coach of Gabon over security fears in the wake of his side's 2-0 loss to Cameroon.

"I've decided to quit, to stop working in Gabon," Giresse, who was named Gabon coach in March 2006, told AFP.

"After Saturday's defeat to Cameroon, I experienced the anger of the public. I don't feel safe. We've been threatened. Police had to ensure our exit from the stadium and I was the first one targeted."

The former France midfielder - part of the great midfield along with Michel Platini and Jean Tigana which captured the 1984 European Championship title - described the after-match situation as having been "violent and hateful".

Gabon's loss, after having beaten Cameroon 2-1 in the first leg, means they will not play in the first African Nations championships in Ivory Coast.

# 'I have nothing to prove'

AFP, Manchester

Cristiano Ronaldo insists he has nothing to prove to the critics who claim the Manchester United winger will never be a truly great player until he shines in the biggest matches.

The 23-year-old has a chance to put an end to the claim that he goes missing against world-class opposition when United face Chelsea in Wednesday's Champions League final.

A series of lacklustre performances in last year's FA Cup final defeat to Chelsea and the Champions League semifinal against AC Milan led to suggestions Ronaldo is a flat-track bully.

But the Portugal star is adamant his superb form over the last two Premier League seasons has shown his true worth.

"I scored two goals against Arsenal, I scored against Liverpool and against Chelsea," he told the Observer. "I am very happy with my season. I have scored 41 goals and won every award, I don't have to show anything to anyone. There is nothing to prove."

"People can think what they like, I don't care. Maybe if I play well in Moscow I might win the European individual award, too, and that would end the argument, but I am not thinking about that now."

"I have never won the Champions League and I think I have a great chance with Manchester United. That's what I am concentrating on."

If Ronaldo can impose his unique talents against Chelsea in Moscow he believes there is every chance the match will rise above the mediocre level of their FA Cup final meeting at Wembley last season.

"Different competition, different style, different stadium, every-

thing is different," he said. "And this is the biggest game of all to look forward to."

"Most of the players on the pitch will not have played in a Champions League final before, this will be the biggest game of their careers. Me included. It is the only thing I have not won in English football."

Ronaldo's first Champions League final appearance could be his last match for United if reports that he is interested in joining Real Madrid are true.

In public he makes a convincing case that he will stay at Old Trafford, for now at least, though, he appears to say one thing to the English press and quite another when he speaks to the Spanish media.

"I think I am at the right club. It feels like home and the people here have been fantastic with me," he said. "I am happy here, and I think I will be here next year, but you never know the future."

are world champions that year. I've placed my bet and I've taken that path."

**SQUAD**

Goalkeepers: Gregory Coupet (Lyon), Mickael Landreau (PSG), Sebastien Frey (Fiorentina/ITA), Steve Mandanda (Marseille)

Defenders: Eric Abidal (Barcelona/ESP), Jean-Alain Boutsong (Lyon), Francois Clerc (Lyon), Julien Escude (Sevilla/ESP), Patrice Evra (Manchester United/ENG), William Gallas (Arsenal/ENG), Philippe Mexes (Roma/ITA), Willy Sagnol (Bayern Munich/GER), Lilian Thuram (Barcelona/ESP), Sebastien Squillaci (Lyon)

Midfielders: Alou Diarra (Bordeaux), Lassana Diarra (Portsmouth/ENG), Mathieu Flamini (Arsenal/ENG), Claude Makelele (Chelsea/ENG), Jeremy Toulalan (Lyon), Patrick Vieira (Inter Milan/ITA)

Strikers: Nicolas Anelka (Chelsea/ENG), Hatem Ben Arfa (Lyon), Karim Benzema (Lyon), Djibril Cisse (Marseille), Bafetimbi Gomis (St Etienne), Thierry Henry (Barcelona/ESP), Florent Malouda (Chelsea/ENG), Sidney Govou (Lyon), Franck Ribery (Bayern Munich/GER), Samir Nasri (Marseille)

# Lyon's magnificent seven

AFP, Paris

Lyon wrapped up their seventh straight French championship on Saturday with a 3-1 win at Auxerre while Paris St Germain saved their top flight status by winning 2-1 at Sochaux to relegate Lens.

Bordeaux placed second, four points adrift, after they could only draw 2-2 at Lens, sending their opponents down, along with Metz and Strasbourg, a decade after winning the title.

"I have the satisfaction of a job well done and I will always have that feeling," said Lyon coach Alain Perrin whose future at the club is in doubt.

"But as far as my future is concerned as the coach of Lyon, I don't have an answer although I am under contract."

"This is mission accomplished. As coach I was handed the task of winning a seventh title and it is a deserved championship for Lyon. We have shown quality and consistency in the big games."

Also smiling along with PSG, who were relieved at the last after appearing destined for the drop for much of the campaign, were Marseille, France's only side ever to lift the European Cup.

They bagged third place and with it a third qualifying round spot in the Champions League after edging Strasbourg 4-3.

"My heart was beating at 200km/h," said Marseille coach Eric Gerets after his team came back from a goal down to beat Strasbourg.

"To finish third is a mini-miracle. I have great pride in the players and the supporters who are the best, by a long way, in France."

With Laurent Blanc's Bordeaux breathing down their necks two points adrift at start of play Lyon had to compose themselves for the final push to glory.

And they enjoyed the perfect start, France international striker Karim Benzema firing them into the lead after just 23 seconds, the first of what would prove a blizzard of goals across the league, 43 in all in ten games.

From the kickoff, Benzema bore down on the Auxerre goal, played a one-two with Brazilian teammate Fred and planted the return into the net with the inside of his left boot for his 20th goal of the campaign.

Nine minutes later Fred made it 2-0 on the half volley after a neat interchange between Benzema and Kader Keita.

A Kim Kallstrom header eight minutes after the restart, prior to a Frederic Thomas consolation, wrapped things up for Alain Perrin's side whose golden shirts ultimately proved appropriate.

Bordeaux meanwhile had to keep on believing in a miracle at the Stade Bollaert, home to Lens, but it didn't materialise.

The 2-2 draw spelled relegation for the northern club, one of the best-supported in the country and stewarded by former Marseille hero Jean-Pierre Papin and Daniel Leleucq, architect of their 1998 success.

"This really hurts, especially as we put in one of our best showings against Bordeaux," said a tearful

Eric Carriere, a champion three times with Lyon and once with Nantes, as frustrated fans began to pelt the pitch with objects.

Bordeaux coach Laurent Blanc, whose side were twice pegged back by Lens, believes his team can enjoy a bright future.

"I believe that we take great pleasure from playing football," said Blanc.

"We have young players of real quality here. We came to Lens hoping for a miracle but when we saw Lyon were leading 2-0 at half-time, we knew that the miracle no longer existed."

Marseille celebrated after a topsy-turvy game at the Stade Velodrome which saw them recover from a goal down to beat Strasbourg 4-3 aided by a double from former Liverpool striker Djibril Cisse and a pleydriver from midfielder Samir Nasri.

Mamadou Niang put Marseille ahead but their relegated rivals rallied through James Fanchone and Kevin Gameiro to lead inside 20 minutes.

Cisse, returning from suspension, levelled with an instinctive header after visiting keeper Stephane Cassard had parried a spotkick awarded for a foul on the burly forward.

Nasri then blasted home on the volley to send the hosts in 3-2 ahead at the interval.

"Could be my last at the Velodrome. It would be a good way to sign off," indicated Nasri, who is seeking a move.

The goal deluge continued as Nigerian Simon Zenke levelled only for Cisse to poach his second with 13 minutes remaining for a season tally of 16.

Modeste Mbami still had time to fluff a spotkick for Marseille.

As for PSG, who face Lyon in the French Cup final next Saturday having already lifted the League Cup, they thanked a brace from Amara Diane to down Sochaux as Paul Le Guen's men rallied to survive.

St Etienne go into the UEFA Cup along with Nancy after thrashing Monaco 4-0, as do PSG by dint of their League Cup success.



Lyon players celebrate with the trophy after their victory over Auxerre during their League One match at the Abbe Deschamps Stadium in Auxerre on Saturday.

Fm 89.6

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