



Barcelona striker Samuel Eto'o (R) scores a goal from a backheel against Almeria during their Primera Liga encounter at Nou Camp on Saturday. Eto'o scored a hat-trick in Barca's 5-0 rout of Almeria.

## Spurs sack Ramos

Football

AFP, London

Harry Redknapp has been officially confirmed as the new manager of Premier League strugglers Tottenham Hotspur following the sacking of Juande Ramos last night. Spurs, who sit bottom of the English top flight, have agreed a compensation package of around five million pounds (7.9 million dollars) with Portsmouth to bring in Redknapp immediately. Ramos left the club after its worst-ever start to the season, which has left it anchored to the bottom of the league. Spurs announced late Saturday. Redknapp -- who was in charge at Portsmouth -- was confirmed as the new man in charge at White Hart Lane after Portsmouth had "reluctantly" agreed to talks. It has led to a return to London for the former West Ham boss, and although facing a huge challenge Redknapp believes his move will be best for the long-term future of both clubs. He told BBC Radio Five Live Sportsweek programme: "I suddenly got a phone call and was told Tottenham were interested in me, and I thought it was a wind-up at first. Then when I had spoken to them, I decided it was a good move for everybody, for Portsmouth as well in the long term and they have a terrific compensation deal when things were a bit tight. I just thought maybe it was time to move on and Tottenham are a big, big club. I thought 'let's just give it a go before it's too late'. I could have gone to Newcastle, but did not take it and a lot of peo-

ple said 'he does not have any ambition', so this is a good chance for me.

"It is a tough job, they are bottom of the league, so let's see what we can do."

Despite winning the League Cup in February, Spurs have taken just two points from eight games.

Their UEFA Cup group campaign also got off to a poor start Thursday when they were beaten 2-0 at Udinese amid reports that dressing room confidence has hit rock-bottom.

The northeast London club announced Saturday that Ramos,



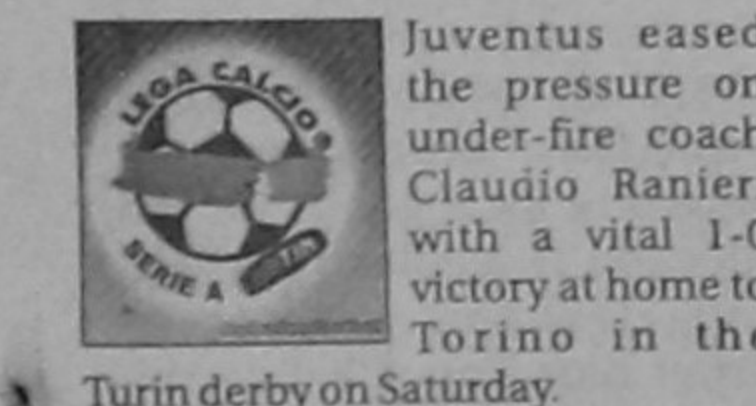
**JUANDE RAMOS** formerly in charge at Sevilla, and other key staff were leaving.

A statement from Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy on Sunday read: "Relieving Juande Ramos, our head coach, and Juande's assistants, Gus Poyet and Marcos Alvarez, of their posts is not something I have undertaken lightly. Unfortunately, our record of just three league wins since our memorable Carling Cup victory against Chelsea last February, combined with our extremely poor start to the season, led the board and I to determine that significant change was necessary as a matter

of urgency." Levy made it clear the departure of sporting director Comolli signalled a return to a "more traditional style of football management". He added: "We must prepare ourselves to take advantage of the January transfer window. Harry's experience of the UK and international transfer market will be of critical importance and I shall be looking to Harry for clarity on our priorities." Redknapp added: "The chairman knows the team needs strengthening in two or three positions still, we are short in one or two areas and that is something I will be looking at. However, first and foremost it will be about getting the best out of the players who are here. There are some good ones who have not done as well as they should have done. We have got to get them playing to their maximum and if we do that, then we will be OK." Tottenham said that Clive Allen, a former club player who is now development squad coach, and youth team manager Alex Inglethorpe would be in charge for Sunday's clash with Bolton. Redknapp expects to be at White Hart Lane for the Bolton match and plans to address players before the match. Ramos, who won the UEFA Cup with Sevilla, had only been in the job for a year. The team's recent performances have been criticised by players Jonathan Woodgate and David Bentley. "We aren't too good to go down - believe me," defender Woodgate said. "We really have got to roll up our sleeves because I am telling you, it is going to be hard."

## Vital win for Juventus

AFP, Rome



Juventus eased the pressure on under-fire coach Claudio Ranieri with a vital 1-0 victory at home to Torino in the Turin derby on Saturday. Meanwhile Catania missed the chance to go top of Serie A, for 24 hours at least, as they drew 1-1 at Siena. Brazilian striker Amauri was the Juve match winner as the Italian giants ended a run of four Serie A matches without a victory and moved up into the top half of the table, until Sunday at least. Torino lost for the fourth match in a row and remain just above the relegation zone, although they deserved something from this game. Tellingly, though, Juve celebrated wildly after the final whistle, hardly behaviour befitting one of the continent's giants following a 1-0 home success over a team fourth from bottom. Although coupled with Tuesday's 2-1 victory over Real Madrid in the Champions League, it's been a good week for the Old Lady of Turin. "It's been a great week and now the winning goal in the derby," enthused Amauri. "It feels like a dream. I'm happy that Juve are back to their old selves again. Now we can't slacken one bit, if

you slacken the others will jump all over you. We have to stay on track to achieve our objectives which are (winning) the title and hopefully the Champions League."

Juventus had the better of a largely uneventful first half with Marco Marchionni twice denied by Alex Calderoni in the visitors goal.

Even so, the best chance of the half fell to Torino's Rolando Bianchi after a mistake by Juve keeper Alex Manninger, but the former Manchester City forward failed to find the target. Juve sprang out of the traps early in the second half with Amauri outpacing his marker before shooting under Calderoni's body from an angle.

The hosts' mental frailty was exposed thereafter, though, as they clung on desperately to what they had. Torino pushed forward but failed to work Manning despite creating some good opportunities. Juve defended solidly with Nicola Legrottaglie denying Bianchi while Elvis Abbruscato and Nicola Amoruso were off target with headers from good positions. Sicilians Catania were lucky to escape with a point in a game the hosts dominated throughout. Siena took a deserved lead on 75 minutes when Emanuele Calio ghosted between two defenders and headed home a deep cross from Cristiano Del Grosso. But just five minutes later Siena

were stung on the counter-attack as Michele Paolucci broke from the halfway line before being brought down by Gianluca Curci after he had rounded the goalkeeper. Giuseppe Mascara made no mistake from the spot, sending Curci the wrong way. Catania coach Walter Zenga, a former Italy and Inter Milan goalkeeper, made no apologies for the point nicked. "For me the cup is half full, when you take home a point on a night like this it means the team is reacting, suffering and continuing to fight for its survival," he said. "Siena played really well, they were very good tonight, we perhaps waited too much for them to do something but we did well. A point at Siena is very important against one of our direct (relegation) rivals."

Siena will feel hard done by though after dominating throughout. Catania goalkeeper Albano Bizzarri denied former Middlesbrough forward Massimo Maccarone and Frenchman Abdel Kader Ghezzal twice each. Ghezzal, who was playing for Crotone in the Italian third division before this season, claimed the point was a kick in the teeth for Siena. "I feel bitter. Given how we played tonight we deserved the three points," he said. Siena moved up to second with the point behind only champions Inter Milan.

## MU deny Jose rumours

AFP, London

Manchester United have brushed aside claims they are already studying possible successors, including former Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, to current manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

Mourinho said earlier this week he could return to the Premier League once his contract with Inter Milan expires in 2011.

Ferguson declared in the summer that he would only remain at Old Trafford for another two years, meaning he would finish in 2010, after 24 years at the helm.

Although the timing for Mourinho would be out by a year, the News of the World claimed Sunday that Old Trafford chiefs are already considering the Portuguese manager as a possible successor to Ferguson.

However United on Sunday rejected speculation that they have already opened talks that will lead to Ferguson's successor being appointed.

"As we have said many times before, there has been no discussion about who will eventually succeed Sir Alex," said a United spokesman.

Ferguson's place in United's history books is already assured.

He has become the club's most successful manager, winning his second Champions League trophy in May with a penalty shoot-out victory over Chelsea, who had Avram Grant in charge.

Mourinho's failure to land Europe's biggest prize led to his exit from Stamford Bridge, although he did win the competition - and the UEFA Cup - during an impressive spell at Porto, beating United on the way.

## No stopping Hull

AFP, London

Hull City's fairytale start to life in the Premier League continued Saturday as a 3-0 win over West Brom left them level on points with leaders Chelsea and Liverpool.

At least one of the top two will be ahead of the Tigers by something more than goal difference after their clash at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

Nevertheless fans of Hull, in the top flight for the first time in the club's 104-year history, will be able to look at a league table this weekend where their team are five points ahead of champions Manchester United.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side saw their title challenge checked earlier on Saturday when Marouane Fellaini rescued a point for Everton in a 1-1 draw at Goodison Park.

Having already won away to Arsenal this season, a trip to the Hawthorns was unlikely to hold few fears for a Hull side only promoted via the play-offs.

It wasn't until after half-time that they went ahead but Kamil Zayatte's spectacular 47th minute volley was worth the wait.

Geovanni doubled the lead by heading in a cross from Marlon King before the striker himself added a third in the 66th minute. "If you get 20 points from nine games you are going to be somewhere near the top," said Hull manager Phil Brown. "It is Champions League form but that is what it is, form. That is temporary."

## Eto'o sends Barca atop

AFP, Madrid



LFP

Samuel Eto'o scored a hat-trick inside the first 24 minutes as Barcelona powered to the summit of the Spanish first division with a 5-0 win over ten-man Almeria on Saturday.

Barcelona replace Valencia, who play at Recreativo Huelva on Sunday, at the top on goal difference after a scintillating display which saw the hosts score five times in the first half. Cameroon international Eto'o opened the scoring after just four minutes and Frenchman Thierry Henry netted on 13 minutes after brilliant play from Lionel Messi.

The floodgates opened on 20 minutes when Eto'o scored his second and his quick-fire hat-trick was completed four minutes later. Eto'o becomes the league's top-scorer with nine goals after his treble - he now has one goal more than Valencia's David Villa.

Almeria's cause was not helped when striker Alvaro Negredo was dismissed for a crude challenge on the half hour mark and shortly afterwards Brazilian international

Dani Alves scored his first Barca league goal from a free-kick. "It is great to finally score as I have been waiting a while," said Alves. "We are scoring a lot of early goals at the moment which helps a lot and the whole team is doing well."

"I think we are on the right path towards success and we are getting our reward for the hard work we have all put in." A half-time standing ovation from the Camp Nou greeted the smiling Barca players while Almeria's players trudged off.

Barcelona continue to plunder the goals having recently crushed Atletico Madrid 6-1 - when they led 5-1 at the break - and they also demolished FC Basel 5-0 in midweek in the Champions League.

It was a sixth straight win in the league for Barca and a ninth successive win in all competitions.

Barca's title rivals are now under pressure to respond with reigning champions Real Madrid, three points behind, looking to bounce back from their 2-1 Champions League defeat to Juventus with victory over Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

Valencia, level on points with Barca, travel to Recreativo while fourth-placed Villarreal, two points

behind, host Atletico Madrid at El Madrigal on Sunday in the game of the weekend.

Sevilla are in third, level on points with Villarreal, going into Sunday's home match against Malaga.

Earlier Saturday, Osasuna's miserable start to the season continued with a 2-0 home loss to Real Betis with Turkish international Mehmet Aurelio and Argentine Hugo Pavone on target.

New Osasuna manager Jose Antonio Camacho is still waiting for his first win in charge and the Pamplona outfit are the only team in the league yet to register a win eight games into the new season.

It was a match-up between two teams that were amongst Spain's elite not so long ago but are now regarded as relegation battlers.

Betis were fourth in 2005 and played Champions League football the following campaign while Osasuna finished fourth themselves in 2006 and reached the semifinals of the UEFA Cup in 2007.

Those days must be a distant memory for both sides who fought relegation last season.

Betis climb to 12th with their second win of the campaign while Osasuna stay second from bottom.

## Bayern stage a fightback

AFP, Munich



BUNDESLIGA

Defending Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich impressed coach Jurgen Klinsmann with a gutsy display after turning a 2-0 deficit into a 4-2 win over Wolfsburg and leap up to fourth in the table.

"A huge compliment to the team for turning the match around and exploiting their quality to get the result," said Klinsmann as his side picked up their third straight win on Saturday.

Having gone 2-0 behind at Munich's Allianz Arena it looked like Bayern were heading for their third defeat of the season - having lost to Werder Bremen and Hanover last month which left them 11th in the table before kick-off.

Bayern had a shaky start, conceding first-half goals from Wolfsburg strikers Brazilian Grafite and Edin Dzeko, before Munich's French star Franck Ribery scored to reduce arrears before the half-time interval.

Bayern's Dutch captain Mark van Bommel then equalised after a period of sustained pressure and

swallow for Wolfsburg's former Bayern coach Felix Magath. "Nothing has changed: Wolfsburg are incapable of winning in Munich," he said. "It looked as though it might be different up to half-time, I still had hopes. But we had too much fear to win the game. We were too passive and let Munich back into the match, and you'll always be punished for that. At the end of the day, it's about quality. We had our chances, although I'm not going to criticise my team. Bayern simply have the quality and took their chances."

Also on Saturday, bottom side Energie Cottbus are two points adrift at the bottom of the table thanks to their 3-2 defeat at home to Eintracht Frankfurt.

Having earned Werder Bremen a point at Panathinaikos in the Champions League on Wednesday, Portuguese striker Hugo Almeida equalised for his side at Hanover in the 1-1 draw which leaves Bremen eighth.

Schalke 04 drew 0-0 with Arminia Bielefeld to move up to fifth in the table and Borussia Moenchengladbach came off the bottom of the league with a 1-0 win at home to Karlsruhe as veteran coach Hans Meyer took charge.

Wales in World Cup qualifiers. "There was a group of experienced players in that squad like Torsten Frings, Miroslav Klose and me whose achievements have suddenly been questioned and we find ourselves under attack."

But Ballack, 32, has now backtracked on the FAZ interview and said he never intended to attack Loew. "I telephoned Jogi Loew again on Saturday and said it was never my intention to criticise his work as national team coach, but primarily to protect and support my fellow players in a difficult situation," said Ballack. "I have a high opinion of Jogi Loew as a coach and a person. Comments in the interview were made due to the situation and were not meant to be personal. I did not want to attack anyone, but to openly address and criticise issues which were close to my heart."

Platini, who captained his country to victory in the 1984 European Championships, added: "You have to ask yourself what that means for football at national level. England is the traditional home of football but do you think that England will ever win the World Cup again? When you look at the statistics right now - when hardly any English players are in the final stages of the Champions League - it is a good question and the answer is probably no. At least it will not happen under the present structures. England have won the World Cup just once in their history, when they triumphed on home soil to beat the then West Germany 4-2 in the 1966 final at Wembley Stadium. Platini has repeatedly angered many within the English game by his criticisms of the debt levels which finance the top clubs and he recently attacked his compatriot Arsene Wenger, the manager of Arsenal, for poaching youngsters for the Gunners' academy.



Bayern Munich star Franck Ribery (R) celebrates with teammate Ze Roberto after their stunning comeback win over Wolfsburg in their Bundesliga match at the Allianz Arena in Munich on Saturday.

## Ballack says sorry

Football

AFP, Berlin

Germany captain Michael Ballack has apologised to national team coach Joachim Loew for comments made last week in a German newspaper criticising him for showing a lack of respect to senior players.

"I must acknowledge it was unfortunately an error to chose this way (to communicate)," Chelsea midfielder Ballack said in a statement. "I will meet with Joachim Loew as soon as my health allows and I will apologise to him for my behaviour."

Ballack first apologised to Loew in a telephone conversation on Saturday evening and the pair have agreed to meet in Germany once Chelsea allows him to travel from London after recovering from his foot operation.

But Loew has made it clear the future role of Ballack in the national team will depend on the outcome of the conversation. "I have registered the explanation of Michael Ballack," said Loew on the German Football Federation (DFB) website. "The personal discussion is much more important. Afterwards, I will give a concluding statement."

The pair are expected to meet in the next seven days once the stitches from Ballack's operation have been removed.

The row between the pair erupted last Tuesday in an interview with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) when Ballack criticised Loew and said senior players in last June's Euro 2008 squad were being treated unfairly.

"Experienced national players deserve at least some respect and loyalty," Ballack had said following Germany's wins over Russia and

LEAGUE ONE

## Auxerre hold Lyon

AFP, Paris

French serial champions Lyon left their shooting boots at home Saturday, a goalless draw at Auxerre handing title rivals Marseille the chance to reach the summit if they can see off Paris Saint Germain on Sunday.

Lyon, who have won the last seven league championships, were frustrated as they edged on to 21 points from ten games at the Abbe-Deschamps stadium to leave Marseille in with a chance of overtaking them by a single point. Bordeaux could have sneaked provisionally into second spot overnight with a win at Nice but were held instead 2-2 after throwing away a two-goal lead, Nice levelling affairs with a penalty six minutes into stoppage time by Loic Remy.

Brazilian Wendel had given Bordeaux an 11th-minute lead and Argentine Fernando Cavenaghi made it two nine minutes after the restart. It looked all over but Eric Mouloungui pulled one back as Nice, hovering on the fringes of the top six, belatedly began to show some muscle in attack before Remy clinched a point.

Bordeaux are fourth, three points off the pace like third-placed Le Mans, who also drew 2-2 away, in their case at Rennes. Toulouse were facing Monaco, currently sixth from bottom, in the late game hoping for a win to take them a point clear of Marseille.

Lille are sixth on 16 points after a brace from Ludo Obi and secured a 2-2 home draw with Caen, who remain in midtable. Down at the bottom, Le Havre thanked two goals from Jean-Michel Lesage as they recovered from going a goal down inside a minute against fellow strugglers Valenciennes while Lorient dragged former giants Nantes back down towards the mire with a 3-0 win in their Breton derby.

On Sunday, as well as Marseille and PSG, St Etienne and Grenoble face off in a midtable encounter and Nancy host Sochaux in a lowly battle.

World football body FIFA on Friday announced it had suspended the federations of Kuwait and Samoa while placing that of Peru under surveillance and also rejected entry for Kosovo.

"We had given a supplementary delay" to the Kuwaitis before finally suspending them, Blatter said at FIFA's Executive Committee meeting in Zurich. Kuwait's federation were to have held their general assembly in September but delayed it for Ramadan but after no meeting took place Blatter said the Kuwaitis had been "definitively suspended" from international matches.

In the case of the Samoans, they were suspended for "repeated management problems," FIFA Secretary General Jerome Valcke explained. Valcke said Kosovo's attempt to join the body had been rejected and that the Peruvians were under close surveillance as FIFA maintains that there is political interference in their federation.

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AFP, Zurich

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## Platini attacks England

AFP, London

England won't win the World Cup again while leading Premier League clubs are so reliant on foreign players, according to Michel Platini, the president of European football governing body UEFA.

"Soon in England you will have no English players, no English managers, just foreign speculators," France football great Platini said in an interview with the Observer Sports Monthly here Sunday. Platini, who captained his country to victory in the 1984 European Championships, added: "You have to ask yourself what that means for football at national level. England is the traditional home of football but do you think that England will ever win the World Cup again? When you look at the statistics right now - when hardly any English players are in the final stages of the Champions League - it is a good question and the answer is probably no. At least it will not happen under the present structures. England have won the World Cup just once in their history, when they triumphed on home soil to beat the then West Germany 4-2 in the 1966 final at Wembley Stadium. Platini has repeatedly angered many within the English game by his criticisms of the debt levels which finance the top clubs and he recently attacked his compatriot Arsene Wenger, the manager of Arsenal, for poaching youngsters for the Gunners' academy.