Aguero not

AFP, Liverpool

for sale

Atletico Madrid coach Javier Aguirre has warned Manchester City that all the money in the world will not buy them Sergio Aguero.

The 20-year-old Argentinian striker has emerged as a top target for Mark Hughes as the City boss prepares to spend big in the January transfer window.

Aguero has been a revelation in La Liga, netting 31 times in 84 appearances since joining Atletico Madrid in 2006 and has represented Argentina at senior level 14 times.

But Aguirre, who will field Aguero against City's Premier League rivals Liverpool in Tuesday's Champions League group game at Anfield, insisted the player was staying put.

Asked on Monday whether he had a message for City regarding Aguero, the former Mexico coach said "Yes, I can give you a message.

"I know he is very happy at Atletico and he is still a very young player. For those reasons he will be staying with us for many years irrespective of how much money is on offer.

Aguero is expected to start for Atletico against Liverpool after scoring twice in a 2-0 win over Mallorca at the weekend which lifted his side to sixth spot in the

Meanwhile Luis Garcia believes Liverpool are stronger than the side which won the Champions League in 2005.

Garcia played a pivotal role in helping Rafa Benitez's side win the European Cup for a fifth time after scoring decisive goals against Juventus and Chelsea on the road to Istanbul.

He moved to Atletico in 2007 after scoring 18 goals in 77 appearances during three years at Anfield and is guaranteed a warm reception when he steps out in front of The Kop.

"Liverpool have a lot of different players from when I was here," Garcia said. "The squad is a bit bigger and the team is very consistent. That is something that Liverpool perhaps lacked a little bit when I was here.

He added: "Fernando Torres has been a very good signing for them. When I was here, Liverpool didn't have a player who could score 20 goals in a season. That is what Torres gives the team."

Barcelona admonish Messi

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona coach Josep Guardiola on Monday reprimanded Argentine striker Lionel Messi, who appeared in television images to have spat at Portuguese midfielder Duda during his side's 4-1 win at Malaga over the weekend.

"It is not right that these sorts of things happen," he told a news conference ahead of Barcelona's Champions League Group C match at home against Swiss side Basel on Tuesday.

Messi, a candidate for the Ballon d'Or awarded by French magazine France Football in December, seems to have spat in the direction of Duda after the two exchanged words during Saturday's rainsoaked Spanish league match.

The 21-year-old scored one of Barcelona's four goals, helping Barcelona achieve their seventh successive win and reach the top of the Spanish league standings. Duda, 28, scored his side's only goal.

The match was also marred by the monkey chants which Barcelona's Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o was subjected to by the home fans at La Rosaleda sta-

Ronaldinho left out

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

AC Milan's Ronaldinho was once again left out of the Brazil squad as coach Dunga on Monday named his 22-man squad for a friendly with Portugal on November 19.

Despite some excellent performances in Serie A from Ronaldinho the coach opted for a strikeforce which includes Manchester City sensation Robinho, saying: "Ronaldinho needs more training and more

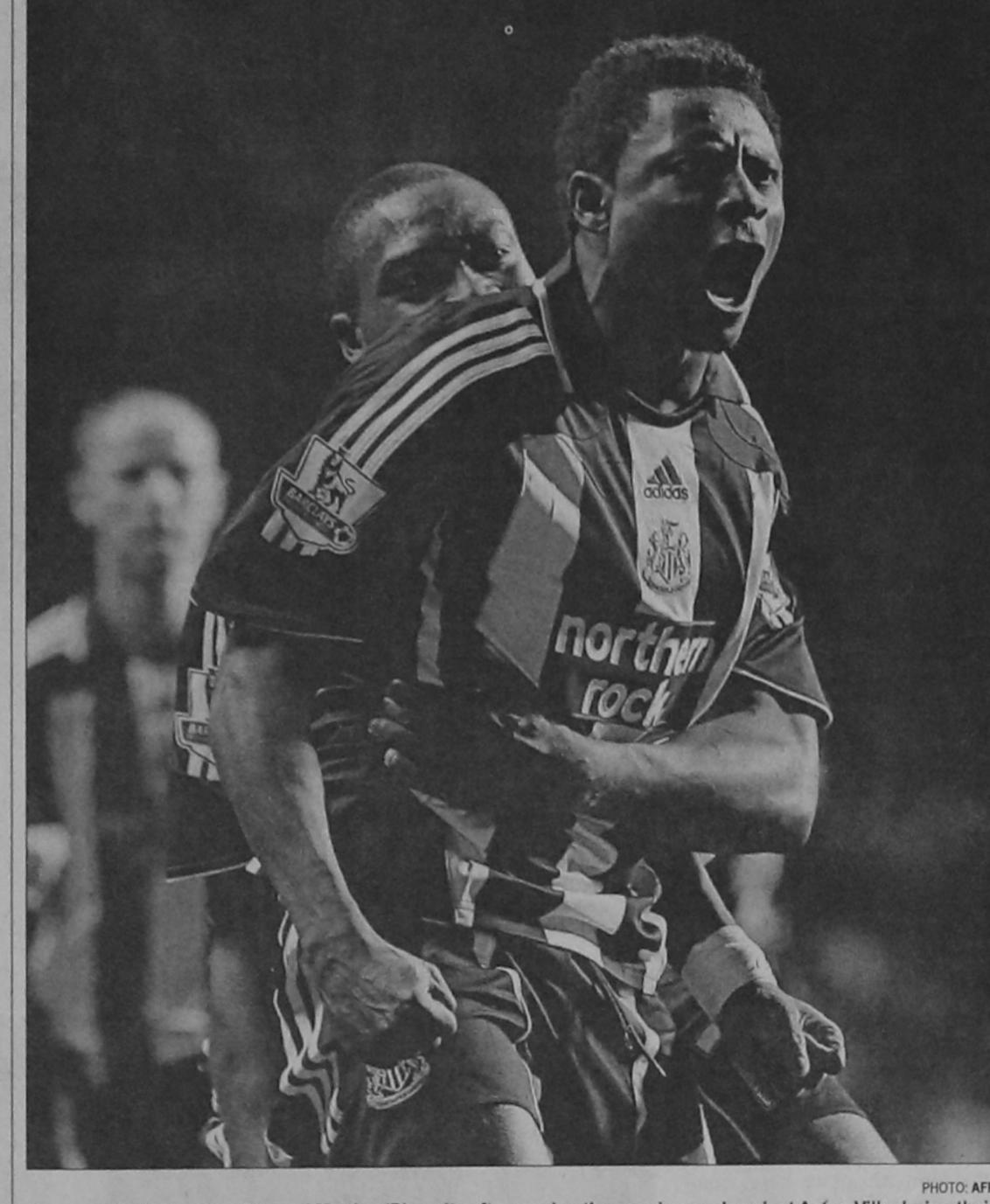
rhythm." SQUAD

City/ENG)

Goalkeepers: Julio Cesar (Inter Milan/ITA), Doni (AS Roma/ITA) Defenders: Maicon (Inter Milan/ITA), Daniel Alves (FC Barcelona/ESP), Lucio (Bayern Munich/GER), Miranda (Sao Paulo), Thiago Silva (Fluminense), Luizao (Benfica/POR), Kleber

(Santos), Marcelo (Real

Madrid/ESP) Midfielders: Gilberto Silva (Panathinaikos/GRE), Josue (VfL Wolfsburg/GER), Anderson (Manchester United/ENG), Elano (Manchester City/ENG), Kaka (AC Milan/ITA), Mancini (Inter Milan/ITA), Diego (Werder Bremen/GER), Alex (Internacional) Attackers: Luis Fabiano (Sevilla/ESP), Alexandre Pato (AC Milan/ITA), Adriano (Inter Milan/ITA), Robinho (Manchester



Newcastle United striker Obafemi Martins (R) exults after scoring the opening goal against Aston Villa during their Premiership encounter at St. James' Park on Monday.

Martins struck on the hour mark

from outside the box before mak-

ing the game safe for the hosts

seven minutes from time when he

netted from close range following

Jonas Gutierrez's fine run and

above champions Manchester

United and into third spot. But

instead they remained in fifth place

after suffering their third league

Shay Given, making his 450th club

appearance, had saved well from

Ashley Young and Villa's Martin

But former Manchester United

The deadlock was broken with

midfielder Nicky Butt came close to

opening the scoring for Newcastle

when a free-kick hit the woodwork.

half an hour left when Joey Barton,

fortunate to escape punishment

and possibly a red card after flick-

ing his fingers into the face of Villa's

Gabriel Agbonlahor, played the ball

TOP SIX

11 6 2 3 17 18 20

off the outside of the post.

Earlier Newcastle goalkeeper

Victory would have seen Villa go

Martins lifts Magpies

above the relegation zone.

AFP, Newcastle



Obafemi Martins scored both goals as Newcastle United climbed off the bottom of the Premier League table with a 2-0 win against Aston Villa at St James' Park here Monday.

Their second successive victory saw the Magpies rise out of the bottom three and into 14th place to go above local rivals Sunderland on defeat of the season. goal difference.

Nigeria international Martins paid tribute to interim manager Joe Kinnear, brought in on a temporary contract while unpopular owner Laursen saw a header come back Mike Ashley looks to sell the club after becoming something of a hate figure with supporters following the departure of fans' favourite

Kevin Keegan. "The gaffer is doing his best, for us just to try and push the pace in training," Martins told Setanta Sports. "It helped us a lot today. We are happy he is here and I hope he

Martins was in no doubt about the significance of Newcastle's first back-to-back successes since April.

"We really needed this match, to put in 100 per cent to win. I hope we continue like this. "It is very important for strikers to be scoring goals and I'm very

really tried." But even after this win, and a 2-1 victory over West Brom last time out, Newcastle were left just a point

English Premier League table after Monday's match (played, won, drawn lost, goals for, goals against, points): Chelsea 11 8 2 1 27 4 26 happy to score two goals. I have to iverpool 11 8 2 1 16 8 26 thank my teammates because we Arsenal 11 6 2 3 23 12 20 Aston Villa 11 6 2 3 19 14 20

to Martins.

Despite having his back to goal, the striker turned sharply before letting fly with a low shot that beat diving Villa keeper Brad Friedel.

Gutierrez set up the second when, after a superb sprint down the left wing, his cross found Martins, who'd cleverly hung back before dashing into the six-yard box, and the forward made no mistake from barely a yard out.

Villa boss Martin O'Neill said of the Barton-Agbonlahor clash: "I haven't seen the incident. But Gabby said something had hap-

with. I also looked after my behav-Former Northern Ireland midfielder O'Neill said Villa had paid heavily for not turning their first-half dominance into goals.

"We had great chances to win and we couldn't get our noses in

"When they scored it was the turning point.

"I thought when Newcastle got the goal confidence came flooding back to the side and the last 20 minutes I thought they played exceptionally well.'

O'Neill, previously in charge at Celtic, denied his side were suffering in the Premier League because of their participation in the UEFA

"This is what we wanted. We'll fight back, we have to. We are far from the finished article but we want to be battling, we want to be up there."

What's eating Podolski?

INTERNET, Hamburg



club Fiorentina in the Champions League n't mean that Lukas Podolski will be playing.

Luci Toni is still

sidelined when

Bayern Munich

visit his former

Podolski, 23, is a successful Germany striker with 31 goals in 59 caps but is yet to show similar form in Munich where he is normally third choice on the bench behind starters Toni and Miroslav

But the issue reached a new dimension last Saturday when not even Toni's ongoing injury problems gave Podolski a place in the first 11 because coach Juergen Klinsmann changed the team tactics for the Bundesliga match against Arminia Bielefeld.

Instead of the usual 4-4-2 scheme, Klinsmann - looking ahead at Fiorentina and also intending to prompt a reaction from Podolski - tried out a 4-3-2-1 format with Klose the lone striker.

The tactics didn't work against defensive-minded Bielefeld and Munich reverted to 4-4-2 after the break. Podolski came on, fed Franck Ribery for the second goal and then clinched Munich's 3-1 Monday. win with a penalty.

However, Fiorentina are not Bielefeld and as the Italians are in a must-win situation Klinsmann is expected to have a 4-3-2-1 formation on the pitch again in Florence.

Podolski has never really felt at home in Munich since being hired from Cologne for 10 million euros (12.8 million dollars) in 2006 on a contract until 2010.



LUKAS PODOLSKI

He is homesick for Cologne (where he even played second division football in 2005-06), wanted to leave in summer but Bayern rejected a move. Now speculation is growing again about a winter break move.

"Podolski and Bayern. That was it," said Kicker sports magazine on

Munich general manager Uli him a lot."

Hoeness said sarcastically: "For him there is only Cologne, Cologne and Cologne. He dreams of Cologne day and night." Hoeness has been Podolski's

most outspoken critic and even suggested that Podolski shines only for Germany against minnows such as Liechtenstein. An angry Podolski countered

that he will ask coach Joachim Loew to field him only against top teams in the future, and that he will carefully monitor the situation in Munich.

"You can understand that I will be considering by the winter break how things are going to continue," he said.

"We'll have to wait and see what happens in the next weeks and months. We have some important games coming up and that is more important than beginning any speculation."

Ribery hopes that the recent success against Bielefeld have boosted Podolski's morale and that he can become an important player for Munich after all.

"Lukas must play and score goals. That gives him confidence," said the Frenchman. "I have the impression that he

is getting better. I hope he is still around after the winter break because he is an important player for the club and the team. I like

Euro breather for Gunners

AFP, Paris

SPORT



Arsenal host Fenerbahce in and that is very frustrating." the Champions League on Wednesday

CHAMPIONS knowingawin is LEAGUE vital to boost team spirits, while north of the border Celtic will attempt to halt the Manchester United juggernaut.

Arsene Wenger's players top the same side." Champions League Group G but have dropped five points in the last two Premier League matches, including a 4-4 draw at home against Tottenham and a shock away defeat at Stoke City on Saturday.

And, with a crunch game against third-placed Manchester United next weekend, a good result against the Turks is vital for the players' confidence.

"We have a Champions League game on Wednesday and then Manchester United on Saturday lunchtime," said Wenger. "There are no better games in which to come back, give confidence and show our

The French coach is concerned about Arsenal's loss of the killer touch they exhibited earlier in the season, which saw them rattle home 10 goals in Europe, five of which were against Fenerbahce.

"My biggest worry is that we did

Brazil coach Carlos Dunga on

Monday played down his rivalry with

Diego Maradona, after the new

Argentina coach had criticized

Dunga last week. "I hope things go

After his controversial appoint-

ment last week as coach, Maradona

recalled his playing days, when he

had led Argentina on the pitch to the

1986 World Cup and Dunga had

captained Brazil to the 1994 World

lutely not," Maradona said. "Dunga

kicked (opponents), I didn't. I drib-

"I do not play like Dunga, abso-

Pressed Monday during a press

conference, Dunga took a veiled shot

at Maradona, whose playing days

and retirement have been marked by

high-profile partying, drug problems

as much as him, although I had less

talent. I knew my limitations, and

that is why I worked very hard,"

"As a national team player, I won

"I always looked after my body,

because that is what I built my career

iour, which transmits confidence to

those who work with me. God gives

Bologna appoint

Serbian Sinisa Mihajlovic was on

Monday named the new boss of

Serie A strugglers Bologna after they

division after 10 matches, having

lost eight times, including Sunday's

Lehmann won't

Former German international

goalkeeper Jens Lehmann will not

have his wish granted of making a

nostalgic final appearance in the friendly with England here on

November 19, German coach

Joachim Low announced on

The 38-year-old Stuttgart

guardian had said he wished to

have one final appearance at the

ground where he produced one of

his finer performances in his 61

caps when he saved two

Argentinian penalties in the 2006

World Cup quarterfinal penalty

could see why Lehmann had

wanted one final appearance and

against a country where he played

for five years with Arsenal there

matches as a way of giving our

young goalkeepers more experi

ence at international level,'

great for Jens to once more don the

where he played for five years with

Arsenal. However, the wider brief is

the forthcoming sporting chal-

lenges and they must have prior-

Loew, who guided Germany to

the Euro 2008 final and now to the

top of their World Cup qualifying

group, did pay a handsome tribute

to Lehmann, whose last appear-

ance for Germany was in the 1-0

football and was for me an impor-

years together at international

level," said Loew.

"Jens brought a lot to German

defeat by Spain in the Euro final.

"We have to use our friendly

"It would of course have been

"Especially against England

were bigger issues at stake.

explained Loew.

national team shirt.

However, while Loew said he

Bologna sit 19th in the 20-team

and struggles with his weight.

wellforhim," Dunga said.

bledthem.

Dunga said.

AFP, Rome

each person a talent."

Mihajlovic

fired Daniele Arrigoni.

5-1 humiliation at Cagliari.

get friendly

farewell

AFP, Berlin

Monday.

Dunga v

Diego!

INTERNET, undated

not create a lot," Wenger said of the 2-1 defeat at Stoke. "We are not used to playing without creating chances

Wenger told the club's website that he might have to reshuffle his squad for Wednesday's match.

"We have to rotate. Unlike Stoke we play in between (Premier League matches) and the games in the Champions League are very demanding. You cannot play with

European champions Manchester United prepared for Wednesday's north-south battle against Celtic with a tricky 4-3 home win over Premier League surprise package Hull City on Saturday. Unlike the London club, United

avoided a morale-sapping defeat, but Hull bagged three goals at Old Trafford - the first team to do so since Chelsea in May 2005.

And it is a feat defender Nemanja Vidic does not want repeated at Celtic Park.

"The most important thing is that we took the three points, but we made a few mistakes and lost a few goals,"Vidic said. "We can learn from the game. We

made small mistakes that cost us three goals, so I hope we can improve on that so it doesn't happen again." The Serbian added: "We need to

forget this game but not how we conceded the goals. That way we can make sure it doesn't happen again. We have a few days to work on that (before Celtic) and to improve."

Celtic boss Gordon Strachan was upbeat ahead of United's visit, thanks to a 2-0 win away to Hearts on Sunday, but the ex-Manchester player gave due respect to the

Premier League champions. "Man United are probably the best team in the world," Strachan said Monday. "Everyone who goes there, who has spent more money than us, has got a right tonking there," said the coach.

Celtic took a 3-0 'tonking' at Old Trafford last month, a victory that put United in the driving seat in Group E, but the Scottish champi-

FIXTURES

Champions League fixtures on Group E: Aalborg (DEN) v Villarreal

Celtic (SCO) v Manchester United Group F: Fiorentina (ITA) v Bayern Munich (GER)

Lyon (FRA) v Steaua Bucharest (ROM) Group G: Arsenal (ENG) v Fenerbahçe Dynamo Kiev (UKR) v FC Porto (POR)

Group H: BATE Borisov (BLR) v Zenit Saint-Petersburg (RUS) Real Madrid (ESP) v Juventus (ITA)

ons ran out 1-0 winners last time he two met in Glasgow in 2006.

"I'm hoping we'll win, but let's get it right - we want to play better but we know we're playing against the best team in the world,"

Strachan added. Elsewhere, Real Madrid go into a crunch Group H match against Juventus looking to exact revenge on last month's defeat in Turin,

which was inspired by the wily Italian veteran Alessandro del Piero. And a 1-1 league draw at midtable Almeria on Sunday left Madrid stars Arjen Robben and Fabio Cannavaro even more determined to get a result in 'Fortress' Bernabeu, where they have only lost four games out of 29 against Italian

opposition. "We had the match under control at all times, but we even almost lost," the Italian said of the Almeria match

"We cannot slip up on Wednesday against Juventus. We have to win at all costs to be the group leader and qualify for the next

That was a sentiment shared by Dutch international Robben.

"Real Madrid must defeat Juventus on Wednesday. We have two days to prepare and we need to win any which way we can. We won't give the Italians any option of leaving with points in hand."

Two years later, Real returned to

"Juventus have become a diffi-

But the big game has not come at

Ruud Van Nistelrooy, Pepe and

On Sunday they played poorly

The pressure has started to build

up on coach Bernd Schuster, as

Alfredo Relano, influential editor of

sure now," wrote Relano, really for

the first time. Last season, the

German swept to the Liga title

against a free-falling Barcelona side.

reborn. And Schuster is not only

obliged to retain the Liga title but

also to get Real past the round of 16

for the first time since 2004, with a

squad short on forwards because of

the flight of Robinho to Manchester

City - and because of the failure to

sign Cristiano Ronaldo from

almost exclusively on veterans Van

Nistelrooy and Raul Gonzalez, as

well as on the injury-prone Arjen

on badly with sporting director

Pedja Mijatovic and with Miguel

Angel Portugal, the enigmatic

adviser to president Ramon

without injured veterans Gianluigi

than they did a month ago, partly

due to the good form of fellow veter-

goal in Saturday's 2-0 defeat of

Roma, a win which takes Juventus

Juventus, for their part, are still

But they look much stronger

Del Piero, now 33, scored the first

In addition, Schuster is getting

Schuster's attack depends

Manchester United.

Robben.

Calderon.

Buffon and Trezeguet.

ans Del Piero and Nedved.

This season. Barca have been

"Schuster is under serious pres-

sports daily AS, said on Tuesday.

Mahamadou Diarra are all strug-

down in Almeria, and were lucky to

escape with a 1-1 draw - a result

which leaves them two points

behind runaway leaders Barcelona.

Turin with a 1-0 lead in the round of

16 - and were beaten 2-0 from goals

by Trezeguet and Marcelo Zalayeta.

cult team for us in recent years," said

veteran Real right-back Michel

Salgado. "That is why it is important

we beat them on Wednesday."

a good time for Real.

gling with minor injuries.

Real try to end jinx

INTERNET, Madrid



Wednesday will be a very important night for Real Madrid. That is when the CHAMPIONS Spanish giants

will be trying to turn the tables on their Euro jinx team of recent years, Juventus of Turin, in the week's most high-profile Champions League game.

At the same time, Real will be

trying to go back on top of Group H. "The Old Lady", as Juventus are known in Italy, are currently top of the group, with seven points to

Real's six - thanks to their 2-1 home

win over the Spaniards two weeks

This was the fourth time that the nine-time winners Real had lost in Turin within 12 years. Juventus, who have lifted the

Champions' trophy twice, beat Real in the 1996 quarterfinals, with Alessandro Del Piero playing a starringrole. Real did beat Juventus in the 1998 final, with a controversial goal

from Pedja Mijatovic, but since then nothing has gone right for the whites against the "Old Lady". In May 2003, Juventus scored a memorable 3-1 win over Real to reach the final against compatriots

AC Milan, with goals from Del Piero,

David Trezeguet and Pavel Nedved.



Juventus in Madrid on Tuesday.

Real Madrid defender Marcelo (L) and midfielder Guti have fun during a training session on the eve of their Champions League match against

up to sixth in Serie A - and which puts them in good heart for Wednesday.

Long road to the top

INTERNET, Milan



place they last occupied more than four years ago. home to promoted Bologna and at Genoa, but the following seven wins and one draw have now pushed

AC Milan have

pride to their rise

to the top of the

Italian Serie A, a

them to the top on a 22-point tally from 10 games. A lucky 1-0 win over Napoli, who were down to 10 men and hurt themselves with an own goal, allowed the Diavoli to leap ahead of Udinese, Napoli, and, probably most important, champions Inter

Massimo Moratti, the president of the title-holding cross-town rivals, did not miss the chance to underscore the scudetti Interwon in

the past three seasons. Beside praising Milan, who in late September beat Inter 1-0 in the city derby, Moratti said he "didn't know it was so long since they were last placed first in the home league. It was years that they didn't feel the

thrill of the first place." tant go between during our four Milan vice president Adriano the derby and the game against Galliani promptly replied in a radio interview that "as regards the thrills

felt and not felt, in Italy and abroad, there's nothing to debate." It was a clear reference to Milan's

reacted with a mix triumphs in the international arena, of surprise and which made them one of the most lem is the absence of (Alessandro) successful clubs worldwide. After their last Scudetto in 2004, a

year after winning the Champions League, the red-blacks finished second, third, fourth and fifth, Their start to the season was a respectively, in the Serie A - 26 and nightmare with two defeats, at 21 points behind Inter in the past two seasons. Their international successes,

> however, remained intact, with a seventh Champions League and the Club World Cup won in 2007, plus two European Supercups. As for Inter, they won their last international trophy, the UEFA Cup,

> in 1998, and need to go back to the 1960s for their two Champions Cups, the predecessor of the Champions League. Looking at the remainder of a

season that sees Milan also engaged

in the UEFA Cup, a trophy they strangely never won, Galliani said that "the idea is to remain at the top. "We are geared for this. But I'm no clairvoyant and I cannot tell if it

will happen. "After the first two rounds of Palermo and Catania. games everything was a disaster and (new arrival) Ronaldinho was but a football sticker. Now he made us win

Ronaldinho is Milan's best endsin May.

scorer on four goals and said he feels that the team "have the mentality to remain at the top in the league."

Galliani added that "our prob-

Nesta, who is injured. To me he is the greatest central defender in the Nesta, 32, has suffered from backache since the summer and

this week was on his way to surgery in Florida, with a possible return on the pitch set for January. Milan's defence package, however, is already the best in the

league, with seven goals conceded, as many as Inter and Juventus. The Devils' also miss star playmaker Andrea Pirlo and look for improvement from Andriy

Shevchenko who returned after two dismal seasons at Chelsea. There is also David Beckham, who will play for Milan for a few weeks early next year. The English star's arrival is at least fantastic for

Milan are likely to stay at or near the in the next weeks as the Serie A calendar pits them against midlevel sides as Lecce, Chievo, Torino,

Milan's marketing and merchandis-

But things will get tougher before the half-season point, with clashes against Juventus, Udinese, Roma and Fiorentina - a gruelling schedule to be repeated when the season