# Brits face tough ties | Mascherano to lead Argentina

AFP, Paris

British clubs are facing a tough scrap for points in the UEFA Cup Thursday, while European heavytag of tournament favourites.

began to turn their season around, in the cap of their recent revival.

And the London club's Brazilian keeper Heurelho Gomes believes that result has sparked a renaissance just in time for the crunch

picked up three very good results," said Gomes, whose side sit bottom

He added: "We went through a difficult period but worked hard in training to put things right, so now this is a good time for the team."

Mark Hughes may opt for attacking experience against FC Twente, after the Eastlands side drew blanks in recent defeats at Middlesbrough and Bolton.

With Benjani and Darius Vassell both deemed fit after a reserveteam outing against Liverpool on Tuesday, Hughes may be tempted to hand the duo a start to take the Spurs, revitalised under new pressure off record signing Robinho.

"They will come into the equation. It is important that they got some game time under their belts, but they impressed and Benji scored into the bargain," Hughes told www.mcfc.co.uk.

"We have enjoyed the games in Europe. FC Twente are a decent team, who are very well organised startold the club's website. and it's going to be a good test."

Republic stamp on their passports

knowing they are in pole position to qualify from Group F after a win over European giants Ajax on October 23.

It is the second time Martin O'Neill has put a hoodoo on the Dutch side, the first being with Celtic in 2001, but the northern Irishman will be wary of a Slavia shock, especially after his side's 2-0 slump against Newcastle on

But all eyes will be on the San Siro as the Milan maestros take on Braga with the Italians riding high after a 1-0 win over Napoli at the weekend propelled them to the top

And David Beckham's future teammate Clarence Seedorf sent a chilling message to the Portuguese opposition.

"Finally after almost four years of suffering, especially in the last two seasons, we have reached the top spot (in Serie A)," the Dutch

"Milan is showing continuity Villa will receive the Czech and what Milan is doing right now is the proof of a great team."

"Torsten and I had already had a

October in Dusseldorf before the

Russia and Wales games when I told

him he can be an important player

for the national team," Loew said in

a statement on the German Football

intense and he must prove himself. He

Frings told Premiere that he

expected no selection guarantees

and would fight for his place in the

self and Loew) said what we had on

our minds. The issue has now been

claim no special privileges based

on my previous success and

In similar contrite remarks last

"The talks were good. Both (my-

"It is quite clear to me that I can

has accepted this and apologized."

Germany team.

dealt with," he said.

achievements.

"But competition for midfield is

### **SQUAD**

mates."

AFP, Buenos Aires

friendly against Scotland.

the player's club, Barcelona.

the date with Scotland.

Liverpool's Javier Mascherano.

Maradona has already said.

Goalkeepers: Juan Pablo Carrizo (Lazio/ITA), Sergio Romero (AZ Alkmaar/NED)

thinks the most, who has the spirit

of sacrifice, is the most profes-

sional and has the ear of his team-

Defenders: Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan/ITA), Nicolas Burdisso (Inter Milan/ITA), Martin Demichelis (Bayern Munich/GER), Daniel Diaz (Getafe/ESP) Gabriel Heinze (Real Madrid/ESP), Fabricio Coloccini (Newcastle/ENG)

Midfielders: Javier Mascherano (Liverpool/ENG), Maximiliano Rodriguez (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Angel Di Maria (Benfica/POR), Fernando Gago (Real Madrid/ESP), Jonas Gutierrez (Newcastle/ENG), Luis Gonzalez (Porto/POR), Jose Sosa (Bayern Munich/GER)

Forwards: Sergio Aguero (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Carlos Tevez (Manchester United/ENG), Lisandro Lopez (Porto/POR), Ezequiel Lavezzi (Napoli/ITA), German Denis (Napoli/ITA)

## Knee blow for Petrov

AFP, Manchester

Manchester City's Bulgarian winger Martin Petrov must undergo knee surgery next week and faces up to four months on the sidelines, the club said Tuesday.

Petrov, who expects to undergo the op in Spain, will hope to return in time for Bulgaria's World Cup qualifiers against the Republic of Ireland in Dublin on March 28 and then in Sofia against Cyprus on April 1.

Bulgaria currently stand third in their group behind world champions Italy and the Irish.

## Iniesta faces 6-weeks out

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona's Spanish international midfielder Andres Iniesta could be out for as long as six weeks after sustaining an injury to his right leg during his team's 1-1 Champions League draw with FC Basel on Tuesday.

Barcelona qualified for the last 16 of the Champions League with the point but it came at a cost with Iniesta hobbling off in the 66th minute to be replaced by Samuel Eto'o and initial reports suggest he could be out for a month and a half.

"The injury to Andres (Iniesta) is the bad news from the game," confirmed Barcelona president Joan

"It looks like it is an injury that will take some time to come back from. It is a real blow because Andres is a key player in this team."

If the injury is as serious as first thought Iniesta, a member of Spain's victorious Euro 2008 side, could even miss the season's first 'El Clasico' against arch rivals Real Madrid at Camp Nou on December 14.

## Keane charged with improper conduct

AFP, London

Sunderland manager Roy Keane was charged Tuesday with improper conduct by the Football Association after he was sent to the stands at half-time during his team's 5-0 defeat away to Chelsea last weekend.

Former Manchester United midfielder Keane was told to leave the dugout by referee Martin Atkinson, having questioned decisions the official had made in the players' tunnel during the break at

"Sunderland manager Roy Keane has been charged with improper conduct," an FA statement said.

"The charge relates to his conduct towards referee Martin Atkinson in the tunnel at half-time of Sunderland's match against



Roma players celebrate with coach Luciano Spalletti (top) after forward Mirko Vucinic scored against Chelsea during their Champions League encounter at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on Tuesday.

## Rome nightmare for Blues

CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Paris

Catalan giants Barcelona were the first team to progress to the Champions League knockout stages after Tuesday's group matches after a 1-1 draw with Swiss side Basel.

However, it was a nightmare evening for English Premier League giants Chelsea and Liverpool as they both missed out on qualifying for the eliminatory stages - for the moment at least - as they went down to defeat to AS Roma and a draw with Atletico Madrid respectively.

Chelsea lost 3-1 to the out of form Italian side - who had lost their last four Serie A matches while Liverpool drew 1-1 with Atletico with a fortunate injurytime penalty by Steven Gerrard grabbing them a point.

Chelsea's former coach Jose Mourinho has made barely more friends with his outspoken style since he took over at Inter Milan and the knives will be out for him even more in Italy after the Italian champions managed to grab a fortunate 3-3 away draw with surprise Cypriot package Anorthosis Famagusta in Nicosia.

Both French sides lived to fight another day with much-needed wins as Brazilian Wendel scored

1 away win over Romanian side Cluj while Marseille got their first points on the board with a 3-0 win at home to PSV Eindhoven -Seneglese international striker Mamadou Niang scoring two of

Barca coach Pep Guardiola was happy despite his side's flawless ity. Champions League start and their run of 11 successive victories in all competitions being terminated by a plucky Swiss side that had gone down to a 5-0 home defeat a fortnight ago. However, qualification did

come at a cost for the Catalan giants as Spanish Euro 2008 winning midfielder Andres Iniesta was ruled out for up to six weeks with a leginjury. For Basel coach Christian Gross

- who didn't have the opportunity this time to just take the metro to the game as he had infamously done when he enjoyed a brief period as Spurs coach in England it was a merited result.

"Apart from the draw, which is a spectacular result for us, the most important thing was that we were compact as a team tonight.

While Chelsea let slip a chance to progress their defeat was a welcome relief for embattled Roma coach Luciano Spalletti, who despite two successive runners-up spots in Serie A was looking a mite in trouble to keep his job.

Showing a certain willingness to how it goes."

Bordeaux' second to give them a 2- change things Spalletti transformed his usual 4-2-3-1 formation to a standard 4-4-2, something he will stick with for the time being. "For now yes, we'll continue

along this path. To change things you need the players," he said before explaining how he had changed his team's losing mental-"The psychological work was in

staying united and compact and with a push from our fans who let it be known that they were right behindus. "It's clear that you have to have

confrontation with some players and then players such as (Daniele) De Rossi, (Simone) Perrotta and (Matteo) Brighi make the difference on the pitch in terms of spirit."

Atletico must have believed that they had qualified for the last 16 until Gerrard as ever Liverpool's saviour stepped in to score the injury-time penalty - and it will be little consolation to Atletico that it extended the hosts record of never winning a home Champions League tie against Spanish teams.

Gerrard for his part believed that it was deserved - as indeed he "I went down first, so yes it was a

penalty," said Gerrard.

"I can understand why Atletico were livid as we would have been if it had been against us. But that is

AFP, Paris

European Champions League results on Tuesday: Group A At Cluj

CFR Cluj (ROM) 1 (Dani 9) Bordeaux (FRA) 2 (Gourcuff 6, Wendel 38) At Rome

AS Roma (ITA) 3 (Panucci 34, Vucinic 48, 58) Chelsea (ENG) 1 (Terry 75) Group B

At Nicosia Anorthosis Famagusta (CYP) 3 (Bardon 31, Panagi 45+1, Frousos 50) Inter Milan (ITA) 3 (Balotelli 13, Materrazi 44, Cruz

At Bremen Werder Bremen (GER) 0

Panathinaïkos (GRE) 3 (Mantzios 58, Karagounis 70, Tziolis 83) Group C At Lisbon

Sporting Lisbon (POR) 1 (Derlei 73) Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 0 At Barcelona

Barcelona (ESP) 1 (Messi 62) Basel (SUI) 1 (Derdiyok 82) Group D

At Liverpool Liverpool (ENG) 1 (Gerrard 90+5) Atletico Madrid (ESP) 1

(Maxi Rodriguez 37) At Marseille Marseille (FRA) 3 (Kone 30,

Niang 63, 71) PSV Eindhoven (NED) 0

Adelaide

AFP, Osaka

daunting task.

## Minnows almost stun Inter Osaka crush the ball into an empty net.

World Cup winner Marco

Materazzi rose above the players

in the area from a corner and

headed at Begaj who fumbled the

ball as it slipped through his legs

Georgios Panagi - one of only

three Cypriots on the field - also

scored with a header from a cor-

And the goals didn't stop there.

the box to strike a low shot into the

as the half-time whistle beckoned.

CHAMPS LEAGUE

Tuesday.

AFP, Nicosia Cypriot minnows Anorthosis Famagusta twice came from behind to tame Italian giants Inter Milan in a thrilling 3-3 draw in this action-packed Group B Champions League game here on

> Anorthosis showed dogged determination and enjoyed a large slice of lady luck against their more illustrious opponents who will be wondering how they let three points slip from their grasp.

Inter coach Jose Mourinho praised Anorthosis but said his side were too complacent.

"We came here to win, it was easy to win but we gave the game away...we could have scored four or five but conceding three was too many," Mourinho told reporters.

"Anorthosis played a fantastic game and I hope this serves as a

walked on the pitch to personally congratulate the Anorthosis play-Home coach Temuri Ketsbaia

"This result was not an accident," said the ex-Newcastle player.

The Cypriots earned a precious point that still keeps them on course to be one of the smallest clubs ever to reach the last 16 in this competition. Inter took an early lead through

home on 13 minutes after keeper Arian Begaj failed to hold a stinging Zlatan Ibrahimovic struck from 35 Anorthosis drew level on the

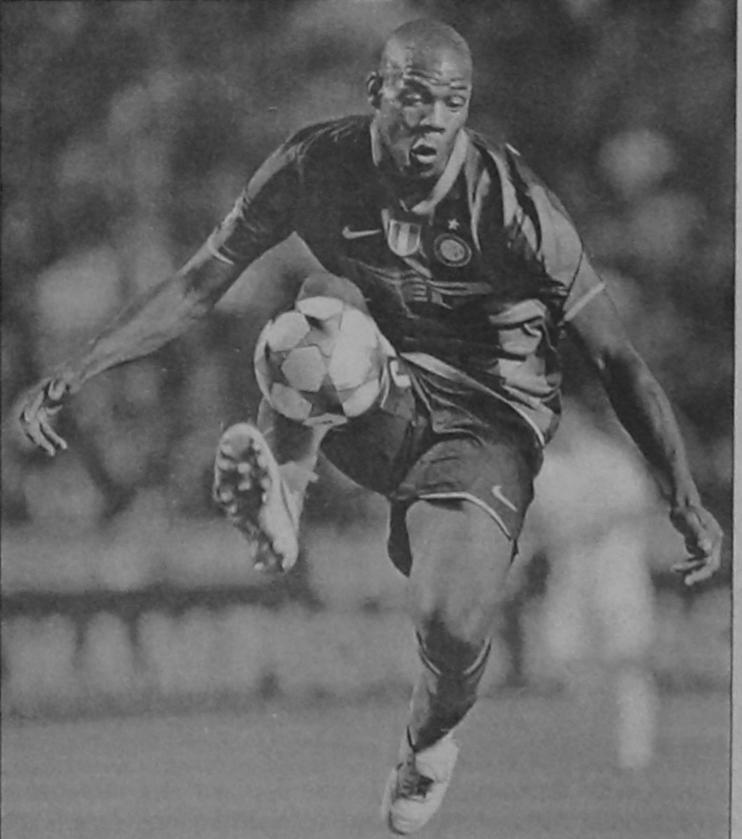
half hour following a bad mistake from Argentine defender Nicolas Burdisso whose poor back header left keeper Julio Cesar stranded enabling Cedric Bardon to stroke

needed a radical shake up and made three substitutions all at once on 57 minutes as his team lost their way.

And it was one of those substitutes, Julio Cruz, who saved Inter's The home side looked to be blushes with an equaliser ten heading towards the interval 2-1 in arrears when substitute minutes from time. Another corner, another header.

Debutants Anorthosis are the first Cypriot team to host Champions League group games and Nicosia's GSP stadium - their home stadium does not meet UEFA requirements - was packed

And an almighty cheer greeted the players when the final whistle bottom corner to put his side in blew.



### setting up the second for midfielder Yasuhito Endo six minutes later. Michihiro Yasuda added a third for the home team in the 68th minute, leaving Adelaide with a moun-

Gamba Osaka have one hand on

the AFC Champions League trophy

after trampling Adelaide United 3-0

in the first leg of the final Wednesday

to leave the Australian side facing a

The Japanese outfit completely

outclassed their opponents with ace

Brazilian striker Lucas opening the

scoring in the 37th minute before

It could have been worse for Aurelio Vidmar's men, with Endo having a goal disallowed in the dying minutes with striker Roni

tain to climb in the second leg at

Hindmarsh Stadium on November

adjudged offside. Vidmar vowed before the match that his team would rise to the occasion but their tactical discipline failed them with nerves evident in the biggest game in the club's his-

Given their home advantage, Gamba was always going to be favourites and they started the better side, encamped in the Australian field for most of the first half with Tomokazu Myojin, Hideo Hashimoto, and Hayato Sasaki

going close. Adelaide's best chance came after 26 minutes when Robert Cornthwaite let rip from 25 yards only to see his effort go wide.

The A-League side would have dearly loved to take an away goal into the second leg, but it was Gamba who opened the scoring in front of a packed stadium.

onto a pass from Takahiro Futagawa from near the centre line and goalkeeper Angelo Costanzo could only watch it flash past him in the 37th minute. The partisan crowd was ecstatic

Lucas fired a shot after latching

six minutes later when Diego won the ball and set free Lucas who then released Endo down the left with acres of space.

## Inter Milan striker Mario Balotelli controls the ball during their Champions League tie against Anorthosis Famagusta in Nicosia on Tuesday.

## weights AC Milan host Portuguese outfit Braga looking to justify their Tottenham welcome Dinamo

Zagreb, Manchester City take on former England manager Steve McClaren's FC Twente and Aston Villa travel to Slavia Prague.

coach Harry Redknapp, have a 2-1 win over league leaders Liverpool on Saturday the feather

Zagreb match.

"I think the key is belief at the moment. The team is playing with more confidence now and we have

Peace back at Mannschaft Football

INTERNET, undated

An apology from Torsten Frings appears to have restored the peace to the German national team set-up after a mini-revolt threatened to upset the World Cup qualifying

himself having to deal with a number of bush fires in the last few weeks despite Germany's solid start to its World Cup qualifying campaign. Late Tuesday he met Werder Bremen's Frings in Berlin to tell him in no uncertain terms he would

Coach Joachim Loew had found

have to prove himself if he wants to win back his place in the team. Loew had last week summoned his captain, Michael Ballack, for talks after the Chelsea midfielder had made some highly critical comments in a newspaper inter-

view.

Ballack and team manager Oliver Bierhoff which had been simmering for some time and came to the fore immediately after the lost Euro 2008

final against Spain in July. In addition, striker Kevin Kuranyi

walked out on the team during last

The coach this autumn has also

had to deal with a dispute involving

Russia in Dortmund, unhappy at

final 18-man squad. picked again for Germany under Loew - and Ballack and Frings have now both had to apologize to the his discontent publicly.

Beckenbauer has not been alone in his surprise at the recent behaviour of players, effectively describing some of today's players as wimps -

between Loew and Frings, he told Premiere television: "Let's hope that's enough of all these sensitive feelings. It was getting ridiculous hearing it all."

and then initially under Loew has been dealt a blow.

But for Loew, his captain went

month's World Cup qualifier against enough respect following the decinot being selected by Loew for the

an "over-sensitive bunch."

nurtured harmony around the squad which had begun to irritate Ballack in the first place.

with Loew last week in Frankfurt,

It was a sense of an artificially

sion to leave stalwart Frings out of the side for the last two matches. Ballack apologized in a meeting

coach or also risk banishment.

German football icon Franz fair and open discussion last

After Tuesday's peace talks Federation website.

Schalke striker Kuranyi won't be and Frings has now conceded he had also made a mistake in airing

Not all commentators are convinced the air has been really cleared. And the harmony and team spirit which had been a notable feature of the squad under Juergen Klinsmann at the 2006 World Cup

too far when he complained that

week, Ballack, 32; had said: "I apologized to Joachim Loew. He is the coach, he makes the decisions and senior players were not being shown we have to respect them."

Liverpool star Steven Gerrard (L) scores the equalising goal from a penalty during their Champions League clash

## against Atletico Madrid at Anfield on Tuesday. L'pool's lucky escape

CHAMPS LEAGUE

Champions League.

AFP, Liverpool

Rafa Benitez admitted he is concerned by Liverpool's lack of cutting edge after his side needed a dubious penalty to salvage a 1-1 draw against Atletico Madrid in the

Hansson decided Steven Gerrard's theatrical tumble was worthy of spot-kick seconds from full-time at Anfield on Tuesday. the penalty to keep Liverpool on shake up his forward line. course for the second round, con-

Benitez was unimpressed with the

Benitez's team were grateful

that Swedish referee Martin

way the Reds laboured to kill off Atletico. They created the better chances but, in a worrying repeat of their is starting to prove costly for chances before Gerrard collided misfiring defeat at Tottenham on Liverpool and Benitez hopes he with Mariano Pernia to win that Sunday, failed to take them and will be ready to play against West controversial spot-kick. were eventually forced to settle for Bromwich Albion on Saturday. less than their build-up play deserved.

the last 16.

A win over Marseille at Anfield later this month would clinch qualification from Group D, but Benitez knows Liverpool will have to sharpen up their act to progress much further.

we have to take our chances," deliveries, Benitez said. Benitez said.

the character of the team. Five or

six times we have come from

With Fernando Torres out with a another striker can be lucky." hamstring injury and Robbie Keane still searching for his best Even Gerrard, who smashed in form, Benitez had few options to Maxi Rodriguez capped an incisive

because his confidence is low after

several weeks out of action.

but he had no confidence so it was Gerrard's last-gasp heroics are a better to keep him in the stands," win needed to qualify against PSV regular part of Liverpool's Benitez said. "He could play this Eindhoven. European campaigns and the weekend. It depends on the confi-England midfielder's latest inter- dence of the player, if he is happy vention kept his team on course for and training well and happy with his fitness.

Benitez highlighted Keane's prodigious workrate as evidence that the 20 million pounds signing is earning his keep, but he hauled him off before the end and it would be no surprise to see the Irish for-"We were talking before about wardleft out if Torres returns.

behind and that is important but but it depends on luck and good "He is doing his job but some-"It makes a massive difference, times you want to change things. especially in the Champions Wewere creating chances so sometimes you change things because

Atletico were within touching

distance of the second round after

about strikers you talk about goals

"He is working hard. If you talk

break by wrong-footed Jamie The Liverpool manager admit- Carragher and shooting low into ceded it was a harsh decision, and ted Torres was unwilling to come the far corner of Jose Reina's goal in back against his former club the 37th minute. Liverpool were always the more threatening side but Keane, David But the Spain striker's absence N'Gog and Daniel Agger all missed

> Atletico coach Javier Aguirre "He was very close to playing took heart from his team's mature display and backed them to get the

> > Aguirre said.

Stamford Bridge.

"We were solid at the back, well organised and played well against a Chelsea on Saturday, 1 November. great side at an imposing stadium," to respond to the charge."

"Keane has until 19 November

landmark for progress in Cypriot football." After the game Mourinho

called the outcome a "just result" and said his team deserved their good fortune as they played with "desire and passion".

striker Mario Balotelli who slotted

dreamland. Mourinho decided his team

Anorthosis came out reinvigorated in the second half and took a to near capacity for this game. shock lead when Greek forward Nicos Frousos lost his marker in

