Drogba charged with violent conduct

AFP, London

The English Football Association on Friday charged Chelsea striker Didier Drogba with violent conduct after he threw a coin into the crowd during his club's League Cup defeat by Burnley.

Drogba's reaction to having been hit by a coin that was thrown at him from the stands leaves him liable for a three-match ban.

The incident is also being investigated by London police, who are expected to issue the Ivory Coast forward with a caution.

The Football Association have also written to Burnley seeking further information on the throwing of missiles from the Burnley section at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge stadium.

Spain name team for Chile tie

AFP, Madrid

Spain squad announced Friday for the November 19 friendly against Chile in the southeastern Spanish city of Villarreal:

SQUAD Goalkeepers: Iker Casillas (Real Madrid), Pepe Reina (Liver-

pool/ENG) Defenders: Raul Albiol (Valencia), Alvaro Arbeloa (Liverpool/ENG), Joan Capdevila (Villarreal), Juanito (Betis), Carlos Marchena (Valencia), Carlos Puyol (Barcelona), Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid)

Midfielders: Xabi Alonso (Liverpool/ENG), Albert Riera (Liverpool/ENG), Santiago Cazorla (Villarreal), Marcos Senna (Villarreal), Cesc Fabregas (Arsenal/ENG), Xavi Hernandez (Barcelona), Juan Manuel Mata (Valencia) Strikers: Fernando Torres (Liverpool/ENG), David Villa (Valencia), Daniel Guiza (Fenerbahce/TUR), Fernando Llorente (Athletico Bilbao)

Murray knocks out Federer

AFP, Shanghai

British world number four Andy Murray knocked defending champion Roger Federer out of the Tennis Masters Cup with a 4-6, 7-6 (7/3), 7-5 victory on Friday.

The result means Gilles Simon of France also qualifies for the semifinals, while Federer fails to reach the last four for the first time

in seven visits. Gilles Simon swept aside Czech alternate Radek Stepanek 6-1, 6-4 on Friday.

Simon broke twice in a dominant first set up and again in the first game of the second, and weathered growing resistance from the Czech to finish it in one hour and 11 minutes.

It was Simon's first win in two matches against Stepanek after their first meeting at this year's French Open.

Simon qualified for the eightman season finale after top-ranked Rafael Nadal withdrew, while Stepanek was called up during the group phase when Andy Roddick pulled out with an ankle injury.

Becks may not play: Seedorf

AFP, London

AC Milan's Clarence Seedorf believes it's quite possible that new loan signing David Beckham won't play a single match for the Italian giants.

Beckham, 33, is due to arrive at the San Siro in January after agreeing a temporary move from LA Galaxy during Major League Soccer's close season.

The former Manchester United and Real Madrid midfielder hopes this will keep him in the thoughts of England manager Fabio Capello, who has made it clear he won't pick players for February's friendly against Spain unless they are actively involved with a club team. However, Seedorf told Sky

Sports here Thursday: "I don't even know if he'll be able to play for us. I mean the first goal is for him to get fit and in the best shape possible. "Training with a club like AC

Milan will definitely improve his | champions said Thursday. game even if it's only from a training point of view," the Dutch midfielder added.

"But I don't know if he'll play, that's another thing completely. "2010 (when the next World Cup takes place in South Africa) is not that far away so he has to work hard

and show Capello he's still here." Nevertheless Seedorf, said he was looking forward to welcoming Beckham, now just one short of 1966 World Cup-winning captain Bobby Moore's England record of 108 caps

for an outfield player, to Milan. Everyone is excited of course, we're looking forward to it.

to see Richard Steadman, who Personally I will help him out to operated on him on Wednesday, achieve his goals, knowing that he's the club said. a great professional and he'll help us to do the same thing."



Genoa defender Domenico Criscito (R) clears the ball off the line as Juventus defender Cristian Molinaro (L) and Genoa goalkeeper Rubinho (lying on the ground) look on during their Serie A encounter at Olympic Stadium in Turin on Thursday.

Iuventus thrash Genoa



AFP, Berlin

Saturday.

Juventus moved into second place in Italy's Serie A with a 4-1 win over Genoa on Thursday at Turin's Stadio

Claudio Ranieri's team are now level on 24 points with Inter Milan, but have a worse goal difference and have played one match more.

Two first-half goals made the difference, the first from defender Zoltan Grygera and a second from Amauri, his sixth league goal of the

There was a disappointing showing from Genoa's Diego Milito. The Argentine striker is the leading scorer with nine, but was unable to escape from Juventus

Bayern Muni-

ch's Germany

defender

Philipp Lahm

has shaken off

his ankle injury

and is hoping

to help fire the

German giants

to the top of the Bundesliga on

With their main rivals

Hoffenheim and Bayer Leverkusen

facing tough opposition this week-

end, Bayern travel to strugglers

Borussia Moenchengladbach

"I'm ready again, and I guess I'll

be playing on Saturday," said Lahm

who resumed full training last

Friday having damaged his ankle in

last month's Champions League

over Schalke which left Bayern

third in the table and the defending

champions are now within just a

Bayern have bolted up from 11th in

the table last month and the confi-

dence is flowing says Lahm, with

recently," said Lahm, with Bayern's

Under coach Jurgen Klinsmann

point of leaders Leverkusen.

Lahm sat out Sunday's 2-1 win

with Lahm back in the side.

win over Fiorentina.

and Italy defender Giorgio showed Juventus' strength in Chiellini.

Genoa had been completely nullified by the time Juventus scored their third. Alessandro Del Piero flicked the ball over the defence and substitute Vincenzo Iaquinta used to his pace to race away from the defence and slot the ball past Rubinho. However, there was still time for

Milito to move into double figures by firing in a late penalty after Nicola Legrottalie was penalised for handball. There was more good news for

Ranieri with the return to action of midfielder Mauro Camoranesi. It was from his cross that Sokratis Papastathopoulos turned the ball into his own net for the home

For coach Ranieri the return of Camoranesi was very pleasing, though he said he felt that it

Lahm back for Bayern

French star Franck Ribery having

scored in each of the last four games.

"We're not conceding goals as

He told Sky Italia; "I like to make everyone feel that they are part of Juventus. Everyone prepares the same way and on the pitch you are with your teammates and everyone wants to do well. "I played a lot of the big names

early on in the Champions League preliminaries, but to play matches every two or three days, in the league or the Champions League, you need to revolve your players.'

It didn't take Juventus long to take the lead, when Zoltan Grygera found the net from the right of the penalty area, after being teed up by Alessandro Del Piero.

On 25 minutes Amauri made it two when he rose above the defence to head home Marco Marchionni's first time cross, not long after Milito had wasted Genoa's best chance of the night.

Bayer missed out on picking up

their fifth straight win last weekend

lead to a draw at Karlsruhe and

coach Bruno Labbadia has said he

have plenty to celebrate with both

defender Marvin Compper and

midfielder Tobias Weis called into

the Germany team to play England,

but they will want three points

back from Sunday's 1-0 defeat at

Hertha Berlin and hoping the

league's top scorer Vedad Ibisevic

can add to his 13 goals in 12 games

At the other end of the table,

But they are at home to

Having upset Hoffenheim last

weekend, Hertha Berlin will be

hoping to build on their success

when they host Hamburg at the

fitness of striker Marko Pantelic

and defender Sofian Chahed.

But Hertha are waiting on the

In the weekend's other games,

mid-table Hanover are at home to

VfL Bochum on Friday and on

Sunday Werder Bremen host

Karlsruhe who picked up only their

first point in five games against

Leverkusen last weekend.

Olympic Stadium.

Cologne.

Energie Cottbus are already four

points off survival at the bottom of

Hoffenheim will want to bounce

Second-placed Hoffenheim

wants no repeat this time.

against Wolfsburg.

so far this season.

Brazil set Italy date

Brazil are to play a friendly against World Cup holders Italy at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium on February 10, the Premier League club announced here Thursday.

Brazil have used the Gunners' north London home, which seats 60,000, for a friendly match having played Argentina, Portugal and Sweden there since the stadium opened in 2006 following Arsenal's move from Highbury.

Club is delighted and honoured to be hosting this international match between two of the world's greatest national teams," said Arsenal chairman Peter Hill-Wood.

"Brazil and Italy both have proud and very successful football histories and we are looking forward to welcoming the teams and many Brazilian and Italian supporters to Emirates Stadium in

"Some of the world's finest footballers will be on display and we are all very excited at what is when they surrendered their 3-0 sure to be a thrilling contest.

Donovan close to Bayern move

AFP, Berlin

Los Angeles Galaxy forward Landon Donovan has taken a step closer to a move to German giants Bayern Munich after impressing coach Jurgen Klinsmann on his 10day trial in the south German city.

"Landon is a player who bring all sorts of qualities, he has developed into one of the top players in North America and Mexico," said over as Bayern coach on July 1.

named US football's Player of the Year for the fifth time, the same day he started a ten-day trial with Bayern while his United States club Galaxy are on their annual winter break.

Having struggled to impress on his last sojourn to the Bundesliga when he had a brief spell at Bayer Leverkusen, Donovan said he is enjoying his time in Munich and is keen to stay.

completely different now to how I was then, I have matured. I am ready," said the attacking midfielder who played in Bayern's 6-1 win over their second team on Wednesday. Donovan has a contract with

Galaxy which runs until 2012 and with 105-caps to his name, his market value is around 2.5 million euros (3.1 million US dollars).

former England captain David Beckham who will join AC Milan for three months later this winter, Donovan may also sign only a short-term contract with Bayern.

He was the top-scorer in Major League Soccer last season with a career-high 20 goals in 25 matches, although the Galaxy failed to qualify for the eight-team MLS playoffs.

And the 26-year-old is the top scorer leader for the United States with a total of 37 goals in 105 international appearances.

award, voted on by the US media, was his fifth and he is the only player to earn the accolade more than twice.

Leaders resume tussle

AFP, London



Chelsea and Liverpool will attempt to draw a line under what BARCLAYS has been a diffi-

cult week for both clubs as they resume their tussle for pole position in the Premier League title race this weekend.

Chelsea, who travel to bottom club West Brom on Saturday evening, currently top the table courtesy of the impressive goal difference that reflects Luiz Felipe Scolari's commitment to an expansive style.

Liverpool, who are at Bolton on Saturday lunchtime, have not set many pulses racing but they have matched Chelsea's haul of points and Rafael Benitez's side appears set for a serious tilt at what would be the club's first English title since

Both the pacesetters were left smarting by ignominious exits from the League Cup in midweek, Liverpool slumping to a 4-2 defeat at Tottenham while Chelsea's exit on penalties to Championship side Burnley was aggravated by Didier Drogba's ill-judged reaction to being struck by a coin thrown from the stands.

The Ivory Coast striker tossed the missile back into the crowd and

treated the visiting supporters to a one-fingered salute, conduct that is likely to earn him a ban at a time when he has only just come back found to their cost two weeks ago. from a knee injury.

Scolari will not have been impressed and Drogba could find himself confined to the bench on Saturday given Nicolas Anelka's rich vein of goalscoring form of

Benitez has shrugged off Liverpool's defeat in midweek but acknowledges a response on the pitch is required to prevent a blip in the club's season escalating into something more significant.

Champions Manchester United, out-boxed by Arsenal last weekend in a contest that delighted purists, face an altogether different kind of bout when Stoke visit Old Trafford. In Rory Delap's laser-guided

FIXTURES

(1500 GMT unless stated) Saturday

Arsenal v Aston Villa, Blackburn v Sunderland, Bolton v Liverpool (1245) GMT), Fulham v Tottenham, Manchester Utd v Stoke City, Newcastle v Wigan, West Brom v Chelsea (1730 GMT), West 'Ham v Portsmouth Sunday

Everton v Middlesbrough (1330 GMT) Hull v Manchester City (1600)

long throw-ins, the Potters have a weapon capable of perturbing the best of opponents, as Arsenal

Manager Tony Pulis recognises that the trip to Old Trafford will represent the biggest test yet for his top-flight newcomers, but insists it is United who should be concerned about tailoring their approach to

the opposition. Of the top four, Arsenal look to have the toughest day with fifthplaced Aston Villa the visitors to the Emirates Stadium.

Confidence is, however, running high in north London following last weekend's win over the champions and an equally exhilarating display by the next generation of Gunners stars in the League Cup in midweek, while Villa's early season momentum has been checked by back-to-back defeats.

Elsewhere, Tottenham will seek to extend their unbeaten start to life under Harry Redknapp when they travel to London neighbours Fulham.

Newcastle entertain Wigan in the hope that they will be able to claim a win that will lift them out of the relegation zone, which is where the league's richest club, Manchester City, could find themselves if they go down to defeat at Hull on Sunday and other results go against them.

Rome derby tops billing

AFP, Rome



Lazio and Roma will be playing for more than local bragging rights when they meet in the season's first Rome derby on

Sunday evening. Delio Rossi's Lazio have made a strong start to the season, winning seven of their 11 league matches, drawing one and losing three to leave them two points behind leaders Inter Milan in fourth place with 22 points.

One of the main reasons behind Lazio's form is summer loan signing Mauro Zarate. The Argentine. who is on loan from Qatar's Al Saad, has hit seven goals so far and is expected to form part of a three man attack, alongside captain Tomasso Rocchi and Goran

Rocchi has already declared

whathe expects, telling Sky Italia; "I wouldn't settle for a draw. The derby is a truly great match and is important to play in. You give your all to win it, because the taste of victory is fantastic."

However, he added that league positions and current form will count for little when the match

"The fact that we have more points signifies that until now we are playing better. But, when you play a derby I think that only the match counts and not the moment you are in."

Saturday Palermo v Inter Milan

Malanta v Napoli, Cagliari v Fiorentina, tania v Torino, Chievo v AC Milan ampdoria v Lecce, Siena v Bologna, Jainese v Reggina, Roma v Lazio

Roma sit one place and one point away from the relegation zone, with only two wins and two draws to their name, a far cry from 2007-2008 when they were 30 minutes from being crowned champions.

League leaders Inter Milan meanwhile travel to a potentially tricky away fixture against Palermo, who have won four of their five games at their Stadio Renzo Barbera home so far.

The week has been dominated by the falling out between coach Jose Mourinho and striker Adriano, with the Brazilian expected to be sold in the January transfer window after he missed Tuesday's training citing flu, the latest in a long line of misdemeanours.

Should Inter slip up on the road, cross-city rivals AC Milan who are currently in second will be confident that they can secure all three points when Chievo visit San Siro.

Axe hovers over Schuster

AFP, Madrid



Bernd Schuster has experienced some lows in his 16-month spell as Real Madrid manager but the German coach is currently facing

intense speculation that he could be set for the axe if things don't improve, starting with Saturday's match at Valladolid.

The champions are only two points behind leaders Barcelona but Schuster is feeling the heat after back-to-back defeats to Iuventus in the Champions League, unconvincing displays in the league and a humiliating Kings Cup defeat at the Bernabeu to third division Real Union, who play at the same level as Real's reserves.

"I'm not worried about my job, but I understand that others will have some doubts," said Schuster. "That's logical with what we are seeing."

Alarmingly Real, who have not kept a clean sheet since the end of September, have leaked eight goals in their last three matches - something Schuster needs to sort out

Barcelona's fortunes are the complete opposite with eight straight league wins and scintillating football seeing them sit proudly at the summit. Barcelona have plundered 34

goals in their first 10 games, with Samuel Eto'o scoring 13 goals after a quadruple last weekend, and the Catalan titans have set their sights on the season record of 107 goals set by John Toshack's Real Madrid side in 1989/90.Lionel Messi was unstoppable in last weekend's 6-0 destruction of Valladolid and teammate Thierry Henry is in no doubt that the little Argentine is currently the best player on the planet.

"Messi is the best. What he does is from another world," explained Henry. "After watching Arsenal

FIXTURES

Saturday Valladolid v Real Madrid, Valencia Sporting Gijon Sunday

Getafe v Sevilla, Malaga v Villarreal Almeria v Real Mallorca, Atletico Madrid v Deportivo La Coruna, Espanyol v Numancia, Real Betis v Racing Santander Athletic Bilbao v Osasuna, Recreativo Huelva v Barcelona

Cristiano Ronaldo is one thing and Messi is another. There is no comparison. Messi deserves to win the Ballon d'Or this year."

Barca's next opponents are Recreativo Huelva on Sunday and they will be hoping Messi and Eto'o have off days. Villarreal sit a point behind Barcelona in second and are the

only unbeaten team in the league

although they crashed out of the Kings Cup to minnows Polideportivo Ejido in midweek. On Sunday, Manuel Pellegrini's team travel to promoted Malaga, who were unfortunate not to beat

Real Madrid on their own ground last weekendlosing 4-3 against ten men. Valencia are a point behind Villarreal in third - with Real fourth on the same points after a strong start to the campaign - under new coach Unai Emery and host

Sporting Gijon on Saturday night. Atletico are at home to Deportivo La Coruna, one point above them in sixth, on Sunday and Aguirre could do with a win to calm the persistent talk over his future with last season's Champions League qualification seemingly not enough to satisfy the demanding board.

PHOTO: AFP



AFP, Madrid Real Madrid's Dutch striker Ruud

van Nistelrooy underwent an operation on his right knee in the United States and will miss the rest of the season, the reigning Spanish "Following an exploratory

Football

arthroscopic operation on Wednesday, it was determined that Ruud van Nistelrooy had a partially torn meniscus in his right knee," the club said in a statement, adding he will "miss between six and nine The 32-year-old former

Manchester United player, the top scorer in the 2006-07 Spanish league season with 25 goals in 37 matches, picked up the injury during a 2-1 Champions League defeat at Juventus in October. The Dutch striker made the trip across the Atlantic earlier this week

Steadman successfully operated

often as we were, but there are still a few things we need to do better. Our rivals have spotted we're there or thereabouts again at the top." Lahm is now keen to play his

part in Bayern moving back to the summit in the standings. Bayern will be up against Moenchengladbach's teenage midfielder Marko Marin, 19, who is in the Germany squad to face England in Berlin next Wednesday and scored both goals in last week's

2-0 win over Arminia Bielefeld. But Germany striker Oliver Neuville is just one of seven injured looking for their sixth straight win

Borussia players. Leverkusen are at home to Schalke 04 on Saturday, who will be looking to bounce back from last week's defeat by Bayern and build on their position of sixth in the

Saturday

Sunday

VfB Stuttgart v Arminia Bielefeld, Bayer Leverkusen v Schalke 04, Hertha Berlin v Hamburg, Borussia Dortmund v Eintracht Frankfurt, Energie Cottbus v Karlsruhe, Borussia M'gladbach v

Bayern Munich, Hoffenheim v VfL

Germany star Bastian Schweinsteiger also back after a shin injury. "Things have improved a lot

FIXTURES

Werder Bremen v Cologne

Wolfsburg

Nistelrooy out for season on the same knee in 2000 after the marksman, then a PSV Eindhoven player, suffered ligament damage during a training session that threatened to end his career.

RUUD VAN NISTELROOY

Van Nistelrooy has scored 45 league goals in La Liga, including four this season, since he arrived at Real from Manchester United in 2006 and is the second top-scorer in the Champions League with 60 goals. His prolonged absence is inthe competition this season.

another blow for the Spanish club which has been plagued by injuries which have contributed to a shaky start to the season that has raised questions about German coach Bernd Schuster's future at the club. Real Madrid are currently fourth in the league, two points behind

leaders Barcelona, and they crashed out of the Spanish Cup on Tuesday after they struggled to beat third division side Real Union 4-3 at home. The Basque club beat Real 3-2 at home in the first leg last month and went through on the away goals rule.

Van Nistelrooy's fellow

Dutchman Arjen Robben is out for

up to six weeks after he suffering a

leg muscle tear during a training

session earlier this month while

Mali international Mahamadou Diarra will be out of action for up to three weeks due to a thigh injury. Even if Real has gaps in defence, the club will now most likely recruit a new striker during the winter

transfer window. Real would be unable to play Arshavin in the Champions League as he has already turned out for Zenit

AFP, London

It will be the fourth time that

"Everyone at Arsenal Football

February.

Klinsmann, who was a technical advisor at Galaxy before he took On Tuesday, Donovan was

"As a person and a player, I am

Just like Galaxy's other star,

Donovan has an impressive CV.

His 2008 Player of the Year

Real Madrid players have fun during a training session at Santiago Bernabeu on Thursday.