



Chelsea's new manager Guus Hiddink (L) watches training alongside club owner Roman Abramovich in Cobham on Friday.

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona's
'bestia
negra'
or
bogey
opponent,
Real Betis,
aim to end
the 21-game
unbeaten
league
run of the
league leaders
on Saturday
with Pep Guardiola's
side preparing
for a testing
trip to
Seville.There is certainly unrest in
his camp and Dutch forward
Klaas-Jan Huntelaar had to
come out in the press this
week to deny he wanted to
leave the club.Huntelaar was signed by
former coach Bernd Schusterfrom Ajax for around 20 million
euros but has been used sparingly
and has yet to score his first goal for the club,although he scored for the Netherlands
in Wednesday's 1-1 draw with Tunisia."I don't want to leave
Madrid," vowed Huntelaar."Of course you are not happy
when you play a quarter of an hour.
However, I have to be patient and wait for my opportunity."Atletico Madrid's recently
installed manager Abel Resino
hopes to build on a winning
start by downing derby rivals
Getafe at the Vicente Calderon
on Sunday.Results went Atletico's way
last weekend - withChampions League rivals
Sevilla and Valencia both
losing - and Atletico are now
just two points off the top four."When you change coach it
is all new and we have to adapt," explained Atleticodefender Tomas Ujfalusi. "A
new coach always brings
something different. At the
moment we are working on
the defence although you
can't change everything in a
week."The two giants of Spanish
football Barca and Real are
streaking ahead at the top and
it now looks like a four-way
duel for the final two
Champions League berths
with Sevilla, nine points
behind Real, Villarreal,
Valencia and Atletico in the
frame.Promoted Malaga are just
two points off the top four
after an incredible first half of
the season but qualifying for
Europe's premier competition
would be nothing short of a
miracle.Valencia, beaten by lowly
Osasuna last time out, host the
dangerous Malaga on
Saturday night and will look to
Spanish international striker
David Villa for inspiration.Villa became the first
Spanish player to score in six
successive internationals
following his goal in Spain's
comfortable 2-0 friendly win
over England on Wednesday
that extended their unbeaten
run to 29 games.Sevilla have found goals
hard to come by - of the top ten
teams only Deportivo La
Coruna, Real Betis v Barcelona, Valencia v
Malaga

FIXTURES

Saturday

Deportivo La Coruna v Osasuna,
Real Betis v Barcelona, Valencia v
Malaga

Sunday

Almeria v Valladolid, Athletic Bilbao
v Recreativo Huelva, Sporting
Gijon v Real Madrid, Racing
Santander v Villarreal, Numancia v
Real Mallorca, Espanyol v Sevilla,
Atletico Madrid v GetafeIt was the first time Betis
had won at Sevilla in 13 years
and new signing Ricardo
Oliveira, a nine million euro
purchase from Real Zaragoza,
believes they are also capable
of turning over the runaway
leaders, who sit 12 points
ahead of Real."The all powerful Barca are
coming to play us and they are
the favourites but we have
home advantage and if we
play with intelligence and
belief we can upset them,"
said Oliveira. "How many
years had it been since Betis
won at Sevilla? We have broken
that jinx and we can beat
Barcelona too."

Real have collected a maxi-

France to bid
for Euro 2016

AFP, Paris

The French Football
Federation (FFF) on Friday
officially announced its intention
to bid for the organisation
of Euro 2016.Candidates for the competi-
tion have until March 9 to
submit their letter of intention
to European football's ruling
body UEFA.France have the backing of
French secretary of state for
sport, Bernard Laporte, and
the country's president
Nicolas Sarkozy.Spanish lesson
worthwhile

AFP, London

Fabio Capello insists
England's chastening 2-0
defeat to Spain will play an
important part in the development
of his team.Capello's men were out-
classed by the European cham-
pions in Seville on Wednesday
but it wasn't all bad news for
the England coach, who
claimed he had learned a lot
from the way Spain retained
possession and made such
good use of the ball."Spain are the European
champions and a very good
team. I have learned a lot," he
said."They are a very difficult
team to play against because
technically, all their players
are very good and it is very
difficult to win back the ball
from them."I need to understand a
lot of things about the char-
acteristics of our players against
theirs, who are very small and
quick.""Before the game I said I
expected to learn a lot - and I
have."Although Capello was
disappointed to suffer only his
second defeat as England boss
- his first since losing to France
in March last year - he believes
the team has improved since
beating Germany 2-1 in a
friendly last November."After two months we are
not the same team that played
against Germany. There is a
big difference," he said."But people also have to
understand the style of Germany
and the other teams in Europe is
different to that of Spain."Kinnear needs
triple heart
bypass op

AFP, Newcastle

Newcastle manager Joe
Kinnear will undergo a triple
heart bypass operation on
Friday, the Premier League
club confirmed on Thursday.Kinnear's assistants Chris
Hughton and Colin
Calderwood will continue to
look after first-team affairs at
St James' Park.They have been in charge
since Kinnear was taken to
hospital complaining of pains
in his arms ahead of his side's
win at West Bromwich Albion
last Saturday.After a series of tests it was
decided that the 62-year-old
needs the operation immedi-
ately.In 1999, Kinnear suffered a
heart attack before a match
against Sheffield Wednesday
during his time as Wimbledon
manager.

league's minnows.

"I've always said that the
problem isn't (playing
against) Inter but the matches
before and after the derby," he
told Mediaset, the TV station
owned by Milan president and
Italy Prime Minister Silvio
Berlusconi."The repeated negative
results against small teams
account for the distance
between us and Inter.""That's something the
club, Ancelotti and the technical
staff have to think about.""As for (Inter coach Jose)
Mourinho I still think he's a
good guy and he simply says
the truth: well done (David)
Beckham, well done Pato, well
done Milan but in the mean-
time Inter were six points
ahead and now it's eight."Milan are paying for draws
at Cagliari, Lecce and Torino
as well as those at home to
Genoa and Reggina.In three of those matches
they conceded late equalisers,
something that has riled
Ancelotti."Even playing well we've
lost points in matches that
we're already won against

FIXTURES

Saturday

Lazio v Torino, Napoli v Bologna
SundayAtalanta v AS Roma, Cagliari v
Lecce, Chievo v Catania, Genoa v
Fiorentina, Inter Milan v AC Milan,
Juventus v Sampdoria, Reggina v
Palermo, Siena v Udinese

Betis eye Barca scalp

DHAKA SATURDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2009

Guus meets his stars

Football

AFP, London

New Chelsea manager Guus
Hiddink meets his players for the
first time on Thursday at the
club's Cobham training head-
quarters.Hiddink has replaced Luiz
Felipe Scolari, who was sacked on
Monday, and although he doesn't
officially take charge until next
week, the Dutchman flew into
England ahead of Saturday's FA Cup
fifth round tie at Watford to get to
know the squad.He was greeted at Cobham by
chief executive Peter
Kenyon, who gave the former
Australia and South Korea
coach a tour of the main building
and met some of the play-

ers this morning.

"I've spoken to the man-
ager a couple of times about
my position but I can only
hear the same thing so many
times," Bent told The Sun."I'm not one of those play-
ers who will just sit back and
let his career pass him by.""I'll bang on his door. I'm
only 25 and there is so much
more to come from me as a
player. I'm not the finished
article and I will get better.""I'd like to think that
improvement will be with
Tottenham. But if nothing is
happening for me by the end
of the season then I will look to
go elsewhere.""I need to play more games.
I want to play football. I don't
want another season where
I'm in and out of the team all
the time."Bulgarelli dies
after long
illness

AFP, Rome

Former Italy international
midfielder Giacomo Bulgarelli
has died at the age of 68 following
a long illness, his former club
Bologna announced on Friday.Bulgarelli, who played for
only one club during a career
that lasted from 1959 to 1975
and almost 400 Serie A
matches, was a European
champion with Italy in 1968.He played for his country 27
times, scoring seven goals, and
played in the World Cups of
1962 and 1966.He also won the Serie A title
with Bologna in 1964.Dean Ashton
undergoes
ankle surgery

AFP, London

West Ham's injury-hit striker
Dean Ashton has had another
operation on his ankle, the
Premier League club confirmed on Thursday.Ashton has been out of
action since September after a
previous surgery failed to cure
the problem and no date has
been set for his return after
this latest operation."It was disappointing to
have another operation. But it
had to be done and was only a
minor thing, a small problem
that had to be dealt with and I
am glad it is all done now,"
Ashton said."I was also very pleased to
have two of the best ankle
specialists in the room at the
same time when I had the
operation done."The feedback I have had
from everyone has been great,
so that is very good for me."Ashton is yet to play for
Hammers boss Gianfranco
Zola but he is hopeful he is
now on the road to recovery.Sacked Chelsea boss Luiz
Felipe Scolari admitted that he
had no relationship with his
players away from training and
matches, before he was
sensationally axed by Roman
Abramovich on Monday.In an interview with France
Football magazine, given
before his exit, the Brazilian
claimed he was not close to his
squad and also that the club
badly needed the inspiration
of Robinho, who snubbed
Chelsea for a lucrative move to
Man City on Sunday.He said: "There are egos in
the dressing room, but that is
normal, isn't it? We all have egos.
But my relationships with the
players are good on the pitch.
It is true that they are not the same
as the relationships I had withRobinho could have been
this player. He is not afraid to
dribble, to take a risk. As aplayer in Portugal, but I
spent five years there."In Brazil (as a club manager)
it was also easier. I knew
everything about the players.
Here, I don't have a family
relation with the players. That's why Robinho
would have done a lot of good
for the team."Scolari went on to explain
why he left striker Didier
Drogba out of his starting XI
even when he regained fitness
after injury, and suggested that
French winger Florent
Malouda was also well below
his best form.He added: "Drogba lacks a
lot of confidence at the
moment. After two or three big
injuries, he is missing something.
Drogba doesn't have enough
confidence, so I choose (Nicolas) Anelka."

Malouda, at Chelsea, isn't

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