

SERIE A
FIXTURES

Saturday

Bologna v Inter Milan, Palermo v Juventus, AS Roma v Siena

Sunday

AC Milan v Cagliari, Catania v Reggina, Fiorentina v Chievo, Lecce v Lazio, Napoli v Genoa, Sampdoria v Atalanta, Torino v Udinese

Tevez leaving United?

AFP, London

Carlos Tevez could be on his way out of Manchester United after the Argentina striker's owners admitted they are studying other options for his future.

Tevez's two-year loan at Old Trafford expires at the end of the season and United have yet to agree a permanent deal with his representative Kia Joorabchian.

United had the first option to sign Tevez but failed to agree a deal before it ran out at the end of January.

Although Tevez is keen to stay with the Premier League leaders, Real Madrid and Inter Milan have been linked with bids for the forward, and Joorabchian confirmed the player's third-party owners are weighing up interest from other clubs.

"Carlos is in the market now that United have not made any move for him," said Joorabchian in the Daily Star on Friday.

"We are now studying other options and interested parties. There is no option left with United any longer."

Joorabchian is the frontman for Media Sports Investments (MSI), the group of investors who bought the economic rights to Tevez earlier in his career.

MSI can transfer Tevez to whoever pays their asking price, with Joorabchian taking a key role in negotiating with clubs on Tevez's behalf.

Copenhagen hold City

AFP, Paris



FC Copenhagen's Martin Vingaard hit an injury-time goal to force a 2-2 draw at home to Manchester City in the UEFA Cup on Thursday to inflict another blow after coach Stale Solbakken accused the English side of "destroying football".

On a bitter-sweet night for English football, a second-string Tottenham lost 2-0 at Shakhtar Donetsk in their last 32 match, with manager Harry Redknapp only fielding two players -- Jermaine Jenas and Michael Dawson -- which drew against Arsenal in their

last match.

Substitute Vingaard scuppered the plans of City manager Mark Hughes in Denmark to score on his debut to set up an intriguing Eastlands secondleg in a week's time.

Stephen Ireland's goal on the hour looked enough for Robinho and co to grab the victory but Vingaard had none of it. City's Nedium Onuoha had opened the scoring for City before Alton Almeida secondleg.

Solbakken had been outspoken before the match, saying the riches being spent by City, backed by the wealth of Sheikh Mansour and his group, were not healthy for football.

Redknapp had put together a makeshift side, resting Luka Modric, Jonathan Woodgate, Wilson Palacios and Aaron Lennon, plus leaving out a

host of other players for injury and administrative reasons.

Goals late on from Yevgeny Selenov and Jadson mean Tottenham will have work to do to go through from their February 26, White Hart Lane secondleg.

Dawson told Channel Five: "I thought we did well in the first half and for the first half-hour of the second half - but what happened at the end has cost us.

"We knew coming to a place like this they would have a lot of the ball but we're disappointed. It's going to be an uphill task - but we still believe we can do it."

"Look at the players who've come in, we had a great team out there and believed we could come here and win. But we know how good we are at home and we'll have to take the game to them."

BUNDESLIGA
FIXTURES

Saturday

Energie Cottbus v Werder Bremen, Borussia M'gladbach v Hanover 96, Karlsruhe v Eintracht Frankfurt, VfL Wolfsburg v Hertha Berlin, Arminia Bielefeld v VfL Bochum, VfB Stuttgart v Hoffenheim, Bayern Munich v Cologne

Sunday

Bayer Leverkusen v Hamburg

'Title race not yet over'

AFP, London



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger may have labelled Manchester United "untouchable" but Liverpool forward Dirk Kuyt insists the title race is not yet over.

Reigning champions United, still on course to win an unprecedented five major trophies in the one season, could be as many as eight points ahead of second-placed Liverpool by the time Kuyt's team kick-off against Manchester City on Sunday should they beat Blackburn on Saturday.

"We have players who are just reaching their peak, Steven Gerrard just seems to get better every season and maybe he hasn't reached his peak yet," Kuyt said.

"He scores loads of goals and everyone can see how important he is. It's the same with Fernando Torres and a few others. I think this is the best team I have played with at Liverpool."

Long-serving United manager Sir Alex Ferguson warned: "Things can happen. We were 12 points clear of Arsenal in 1998 but we got a lot of injuries and lost the league."

However, he added: "Now we can cope with it, like we have done in the last few weeks. That is the change at this club. We have such a big squad we can make changes."

Bolton Wanderers will look to pull further away from the relegation zone when they face West Ham at the Reebok Stadium on Saturday.

Wanderers boss Gary Megson, who has suffered his fair share of taunts from disaffected fans, said Chelsea's recent decision to sack Luiz Felipe Scolari proved just how difficult it was to be in charge of a football club.

"After kamikaze pilot I would guess football manager

has about the same sort of job security," he said.

"It is really strange that these decisions are made and yet the people who make these decisions, after getting it wrong with one manager and then doing it with another one and then another one - surely the common denominator is the person making the decision isn't it?"

Chelsea, under new manager Guus Hiddink, travel to Aston Villa looking to keep pace with the leading trio.

Arsenal, for whom a top four finish is now the summit of their ambitions, will expect to see off Sunderland at the Emirates Stadium but Black

City manager Ricky Sbragia said: "We can't go there looking to defend all game, we have to go there looking to get something."

Middlesbrough may be second bottom but manager Gareth Southgate said he had reason for believing his team, who are at home to Wigan on Saturday, could still preserve their top-flight status.

"I'm very confident we can get out of the position we're in," the former England defender said.

"In recent weeks I have seen in our performances that we are growing in confidence, and I can see the players are ready to play better football."

Portsmouth caretaker manager Paul Hart oversaw a morale-boosting win against Manchester City last week.

FIXTURES

(1500GMT unless stated)

Saturday

Arsenal v Sunderland, Aston Villa v Chelsea (1245GMT), Bolton v West Ham, Manchester United v Blackburn (1730GMT), Middlesbrough v Wigan, Stoke v Portsmouth

Sunday

Fulham v West Brom (1330GMT), Liverpool v Manchester City, Newcastle v Everton (1600GMT), Monday Hull v Tottenham (2000GMT)

But they are still just four points above the drop zone while Stoke, their opponents when they travel to the Britannia Stadium on Saturday, are only a point above the bottom three.

"We've only won that first game and if we don't win the second, I know it will probably be a different story and different expressions on faces," said realistic Hart.

Sunday's other matches see Newcastle at home to Everton while bottom-of-the-table West Brom are away to a Fulham side looking to bounce back from their 3-0 midweek defeat by United.

Hull are at home to Tottenham on Monday.

Barca make record profits

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona, runaway leaders of Spain's Primera Liga, has defied the global financial crisis with a surge in profits from the first half of the season.

Sales reached a record 186 million euros (235 million dollars) in the six months to December 31, up 12.4 per cent from the same period in 2007, while profits leapt 28 per cent to 15 million euros, the club said Friday.

Currently 10 points clear of second-placed Real Madrid at the top of the league, Barcelona attributed the financial performance on new television contracts and a deal with sports apparel giant Nike, as well as gate receipts from its participation in the Champions League.

The club has a budget for the 2008-2009 season of 380 million euros, while that of arch-rivals Real Madrid is 400 million euros.

Barcelona face Lyon on Tuesday in the quarter-finals of the Champions League, after hosting city rivals Espanyol in the league on Saturday.

Real focus on league

AFP, Madrid



Spanish champions Real Madrid warm up for Wednesday's Champions League duel with Liverpool with a home match against Real Betis on Saturday as they continue their bid to reel in runaway leaders Barcelona.

The upcoming European tie with Liverpool has understandably stolen the limelight this week but Real need to retain their focus as they attempt to cut Barca's 10-point advantage at the top.

Juanito Ramos' team have won eight successive league games and shaved two points off Barca's lead last weekend when they crushed Sporting Gijon 4-0 and Betis held Barca to a 2-2 draw.

"Since my arrival (at the end of December) we have

only collected one point less than Barca," Ramos pointed out in newspaper 'La Gazzetta dello Sport'. "There is no doubt we are doing brilliantly and are not that far away from the best Barcelona in history."

Statistics show Barcelona have recorded the most ever points in the first half of the season - an incredible 50 points from 19 games - but coach Pep Guardiola has insisted that it will count for nothing if they don't win the title.

It is top against bottom and with home advantage Barcelona are expected to win especially when taking into account the fact that Espanyol have not tasted victory since the beginning of November. Nevertheless Barca shouldn't be complacent having struggled to a 2-1 win in the first league game when Espanyol 1-0 until Thierry Henry (78 min) equalised and Lionel Messi scored a winning penalty eight minutes into stoppage time.

Barcelona travel to Lyon on Tuesday for their Champions League assignment but first of all they have a derby match against Espanyol on Saturday night.

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