



Liverpool midfielders Xabi Alonso (L) and Javier Mascherano smile during a training session in Melwood on Monday, ahead of their Champions League tie against Real Madrid in Anfield on Tuesday.

English are well-placed

INTERNET, undated



England could have four teams in the quarterfinals of the Champions League if the Premier League quartet can match their first-leg performances in this week's return games. However the last 16 remains in the balance, with four Spanish sides and Italy's trio still strongly fancying their chances.

Only German champions Bayern Munich look comfortable after a 5-0 demolition of Sporting Lisbon two weeks ago in Portugal.

None of England's four - Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal - conceded a goal in their first-leg matches, but both Chelsea and Arsenal take narrow 1-0 leads to Italy.

Liverpool also have to protect a 1-0 advantage when nine-time European champions Real Madrid are the visitors to Anfield, while holders Manchester United renew the battle against Italian league leaders Inter Milan at Old Trafford following a goalless first leg.

The same English quartet also reached the quarterfinals

last season, while Manchester United, Chelsea and Liverpool are seeking to reach the semi-finals for a third successive season.

United are upbeat after Saturday's 4-0 FA Cup quarterfinal victory over Fulham, but centre-back Rio Ferdinand is a doubt for Wednesday's match after turning his ankle.

If he is unavailable, Jonny Evans will return alongside Nemanja Vidic, who missed the first leg through suspension. John O'Shea is also a concern after coming off against Fulham with a hamstring problem.

United impressed in the first leg in Milan without managing to find the net, and manager Sir Alex Ferguson's biggest problem is deciding whom to pick.

"My biggest concern is picking the right team and I'm leaving out great players all the time and that is not easy for me," he said.

Defensive mainstay Walter Samuel is due back for Inter after a long absence, but defenders Nicolas Burdisso and defender Marco Materazzi are doubts after taking knocks at the weekend.

Liverpool hope striker Fernando Torres will have recovered from an ankle injury to face Real Madrid on

Tuesday. Torres sustained the injury in Liverpool's first-leg victory at the Bernabeu, and has not played since, but his rehabilitation has progressed well.

"He is working hard with the physios and we now have two or three more training sessions before we have to make a decision," manager Rafael Benitez said.

Real were fortunate to come away with a 1-1 draw at home to Atletico on Saturday, but go to Anfield in optimistic

mood as they seek a first quarter-final place since 2004.

Portugal defender Pepe, who missed the derby through suspension, said: "Everything will be different in Anfield, because I do not believe that Liverpool will be so defensive as they were here."

Spanish league leaders Barcelona seem better placed at home to French champions Olympique Lyon after a 1-1 draw in the first leg, but Atletico Madrid and Villarreal have difficult away trips.

Atletico were held to a 2-2 draw by Porto, while Villarreal are up against Greek side Panathinaikos following a 1-1 draw at home.

The Italy-England duels continue with last season's losing finalists Chelsea at Juventus on Tuesday, and Arsenal travelling to Roma on Wednesday.

Forward Nicolas Anelka and midfielder Deco are injury doubts for Chelsea who have won each of their five games under Guus Hiddink, while Juve have lost midfielder Mohamed Sissoko to a foot fracture.

Former Chelsea coach Claudio Ranieri may choose an attacking trio of captain Alessandro Del Piero, David Trezeguet and Vincenzo Iaquinta, with Brazilian

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FIXTURES

TUESDAY	
Bayern Munich (GER) v Sporting Lisbon (POR)	Bayern lead 5-0
Juventus (ITA) v Chelsea (ENG)	Chelsea lead 1-0
Liverpool (ENG) v Real Madrid (ESP)	Liverpool lead 1-0
Panathinaikos (GRE) v Villarreal (ESP)	1-1 after first leg
WEDNESDAY	
Porto (POR) v Atletico Madrid (ESP)	2-2 after first leg
Barcelona (ESP) v Lyon (FRA)	1-1 after first leg
Roma (ITA) v Arsenal (ENG)	Arsenal lead 1-0
Manchester United (ENG) v Inter Milan (ITA)	0-0 after first leg

FA CUP Everton clinch semifinal spot

AFP, London

Everton came from behind to beat top-flight rivals Middlesbrough 2-1 at Goodison Park on Sunday to book a place in the semifinals of the FA Cup.

David Wheeler headed Middlesbrough, second-bottom in the Premier League, into the lead shortly before half-time but Everton, sixth in the table, hit back with two goals in six minutes early in the second period.

Australia midfielder Tim Cahill crossed from the right and Marouane Fellaini rose above Robert Huth to head past Boro goalkeeper Brad Jones.

It was a similar story when South Africa's Steven Pienaar was given time and space to cross before unmarked substitute striker Louis Saha headed past Jones and so secure a semi-final appearance for the Toffees for the first time since they last won the FA Cup in 1995.

Earlier Arsenal - playing catch-up after the postponement of their fourth round replay against Cardiff - gained a measure of revenge for their League Cup exit at the hands of Burnley by defeating the Championship side 3-0 to reach the quarterfinals.

The Gunners, who now face Premier League rivals Hull in the last eight, went ahead in the 25th minute through Mexican starlet Carlos Vela.

Eduardo's magnificent volley early in the second-half doubled the hosts' lead at the Emirates Stadium before Emmanuel Ebose set the seal on victory by finishing off a well-worked move six minutes from time.

Burnley's exit means that only top tier clubs are now left in this season's FA Cup.

Premier League giants Manchester United and Chelsea both won through Saturday to the semifinals of the FA Cup with victories over Fulham and Coventry respectively.

JUVENTUS V CHELSEA

Ranieri dreams revenge

AFP, Turin



Juventus coach Claudio Ranieri will be looking to get one over his former employers when the Italian giants face Chelsea in the Champions League here on Tuesday for a place in the quarterfinals.

Juve need to overturn a 1-0 deficit from the second round, first leg at Stamford Bridge two weeks ago and Ranieri would like nothing more than to eliminate the team that sacked him five years ago.

Ranieri enjoyed four years of varying success in west London from 2000 to 2004 before he was fired by billionaire owner Roman Abramovich despite just having led the Blues to their highest league finish in 49 years -- second.

One of the reasons for his demise at Stamford Bridge was his constant meddling with his team and formation, something that earned him the nickname 'the Tinkerman' in England.

Things haven't changed in Italy as he rested a host of first choice players for Saturday's 1-0 derby victory away to Torino and he revealed

more changes are possible Tuesday.

"We played three days before (the Torino game) against Lazio and for me it was very important to rotate the players and of course on Tuesday there will be a different team," he said.

Although Juventus have far greater European pedigree than Chelsea, things have changed in recent years to make the Italians the underdogs.

Chelsea have only two European trophies to their name in the now defunct Cup Winners' Cup while last season was the first time they reached the Champions League final -- which they lost on penalties to Manchester United.

Juventus by contrast have played in the final of Europe's premier competition seven times, winning twice, and have also lifted the UEFA Cup three times and the Cup Winners' Cup once.

But Juve are a team under reconstruction following their relegation to Serie B in 2006 for their part in a match-fixing scandal.

That saw them lose many top players and although they have rebounded impressively -- they finished third in their first season back in Serie A last year and are currently second in this campaign -- they cannot call on the same calibre of stars as Chelsea. "This is a new Juventus,

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Numancia down Valencia

AFP, Madrid



Debt-ridden Valencia watched their Champions League cash lifeline slip further away on Sunday when a 2-1 defeat to relegation strugglers Numancia left the troubled club six points off the top four.

It was a ninth defeat of the season for Valencia, who have been unable to pay their players on time due to acute financial problems and after a great start their league form has dipped and they are not even in the European spots after falling to eighth.

Deportivo La Coruna took advantage with a 5-3 win over Racing Santander to climb to within three points of Villarreal who are in fourth place.

Promoted Malaga are level on points with Deportivo after beating Getafe 2-1 to maintain their surprise European push.

Sevilla look a good bet for the Champions League following a 2-1 home win over Almeria on Sunday as they bounced back from their midweek Kings Cup semifinal defeat to Athletic Bilbao.

Freddy Kanoute and Renato provided the goals for Sevilla, who survived a late onslaught after Alvaro Negredo reduced arrears from the penalty spot with 20 minutes left.

Sevilla stay three points better off than Villarreal and eight points ahead of Deportivo.

Valencia had to do without 19-goal top-scorer David Villa because of a knee injury but were favourites against a Numancia team that propped up the table before kick-off.

Winger Vicente put Valencia in front after just nine minutes but Numancia replied through Carlos Aranda shortly before half-time.

A Jose Bakero freekick just after the break then put Numancia ahead and they held on for a first win in two months.

Numancia move off the bottom at the expense of Espanyol and closed in on third from bottom Osasuna, who lost 2-1 against Sporting Gijon.

Beckham sacrificed a lot of money

AFP, Milan

David Beckham gave up a "huge" amount of money to make his dream of staying at AC Milan turn into a reality, the club's vice-president Adriano Galliani revealed.

A deal allowing Beckham to stay in Italy until the end of June before returning to Los Angeles to see out the remainder of the 2009 Major League Soccer season with Galaxy was announced on Sunday, just one day before the former England captain's loan agreement was due to end.

And Galliani said that the 33-year-old had made a big financial sacrifice in order to stay at Milan.

"Many players show their affection only through words. David Beckham is one of the few who has done so with his actions," he said.

"He's made an incredible economic effort, paying a huge amount out of his own pocket."

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said he expected great things from the former Manchester United and Real Madrid midfielder now that his contract uncertainty was behind him.

"I think he was surprised to play from the start from the first match against (AS) Roma, now after a period where his level dipped a little he is returning to his best," he said.

LIVERPOOL V REAL

Make or break for Spanish

AFP, Liverpool



When it comes to experience of high-pressure European encounters, Real Madrid can hardly be placed in the category of innocent novices.

But even a club that can point to a trophy cabinet weighed down by nine European Cups, occasionally finds itself confronted with a new frontier, and Tuesday's visit to Liverpool certainly has that kind of feel about it.

Having lost the tactical battle in the Bernabeu two weeks ago, Real's players will duck under the "This is Anfield" sign with some trepidation before they embark on their attempt to overturn a 1-0 deficit against opponents for whom the Champions League looks increasingly like a last chance of silverware this season.

One veteran of such occasions is expecting the magical atmosphere of Anfield on a

European night to compromise Real's chances of denying Liverpool a place in the last eight.

"Madrid haven't played at Anfield and they won't be ready for the atmosphere," said the former Reds striker Ian Rush.

"They'll say they know about it but look at Juventus in 2005. They said they were expecting it, but were blown away in the first-half. Chelsea were 1-0 down before they knew it that year too."

"When the players walk out onto the Anfield pitch in the Champions League it's a completely different atmosphere to anything you'll find anywhere else, and that could be the difference for us."

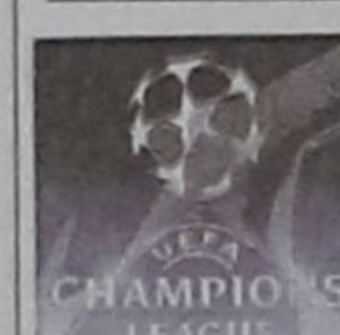
Liverpool's win in Madrid, courtesy of an unlikely header from Israeli midfielder Yossi Benayoun, underlined the vulnerability of Juande Ramos's side, as well as making a mockery of pre-match comments from Real's Dutch forward, Rafael van der Vaart, who had claimed the Merseysiders "were a little bit scared" by his

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BAYERN V SPORTING

Klinsi stresses focus

AFP, Munich



Bayern Munich coach Jurgen Klinsmann insists Tuesday's Champions League last 16 clash with Sporting Lisbon is not a foregone conclusion despite the Germans' huge first-leg advantage.

Italian World Cup winner Luca Toni and French midfielder Franck Ribery both scored two goals in Portugal two weeks ago as Bayern hammered their hosts 5-0 in the first leg.

Both Ribery, who is suffering with a shin complaint, and Toni, achilles tendon, will be missing with injuries for Tuesday's second leg at Munich's Allianz Arena.

And while Lisbon face a virtually impossible task if they are to make the quarterfinals, Klinsmann insists his side will not sit back.

"It looks a formality on paper, but it's not. We can take nothing for granted," said the ex-Germany boss.

"We need to take it seriously and mustn't be careless. That's something we can't afford."

With several top-name stars missing, Klinsmann is likely to use fringe members of his squad against the Portuguese.

"It's the kind of match where we can have a

look at one or two players, but we won't overdo the rotation. I want to maintain the flow," he said.

Squad players such as Argentina forward Jose Ernesto Sosa, Brazilian defender Breno, defender Andreas Ottl and reserve goalkeeper Hans Joerg Butt look set to feature.

Both Bayern and Sporting warmed up for Tuesday with comfortable wins in their respective leagues at the weekend.

Lisbon beat 12th-placed Pacos Ferreira 2-0 on Saturday courtesy of goals from Brazilian strikers Liedson and Derlei which keeps them in touch with the top of the Portuguese league as they remain four points off leaders Porto.

Bayern are up to second in the Bundesliga after they hammered Hanover 5-1 minus a host of first-choice players including captain Mark van Bommel, midfielder Tim Borowski, Ribery and Toni.

Although Czech forward Jiri Stajner opened the scoring for Hanover, Bayern defender Daniel van Buyten, striker Miroslav Klose and midfielder Hamit Altintop put Bayern in control by the half-time break.

Germany star Lukas Podolski and Argentina's Martin Demichelis wrapped up the scoring as Bayern climbed up to second behind league leaders Hertha Berlin.

Of the real Ronaldo

Football

INTERNET, undated

Manchester United's claims that 'there's only one Ronaldo' have been met with a shirty response in Sao Paulo.

Fans of the legendary Brazil striker got a bit hot under the collar when they found out United were selling T-shirts bearing the Stretford End chant.

More than 1,200 readers joined an online debate on whether Cristiano or Ronaldo Luis Nazario de Lima was the greatest.

And the latter's new club Corinthians have designed their own jersey to remind the Barclays Premier League champions that 'O Fenomeno', then playing for Real Madrid, wrecked United's Champions League hopes at Old Trafford six years ago.



From Wednesday, 13 pounds will get you a T-shirt proclaiming: 'There is only one Ronaldo that: scored three goals against Manchester United at Old Trafford; won three times the FIFA World Player of the Year award; won two FIFA World Cup titles; is the greatest scorer in FIFA World Cup history; had three unexpected comebacks.'

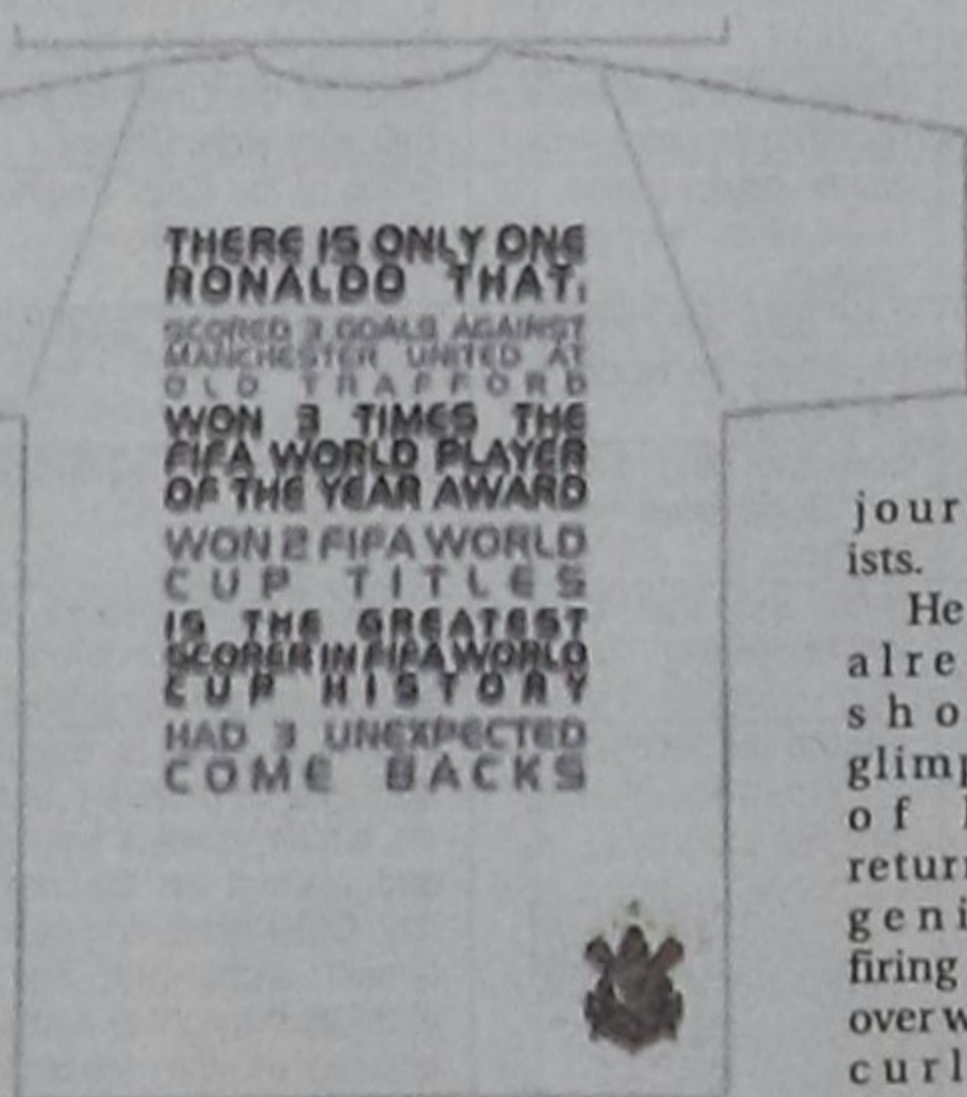
The Brazilian Ronaldo made his point on the pitch by scoring his first goal for nearly 15 months on Sunday.

Coming on as a second-half substitute for Corinthians, he rescued a point for against Sao Paulo rivals Palmeiras in the Paulista championship.

Ronaldo headed in from a corner in injury time to make it 1-1 in just his second appearance since suffering a career-threatening knee injury while playing for AC Milan against Livorno in February last year.

The goal sparked chaotic scenes as he was surrounded by journalists at the edge of the pitch. Police needed to calm down supporters and Ronaldo, along with several of his teammates were booked for their over-exuberant celebrations.

At the end of the match, the 32-year-old found it impossible to leave the pitch as he was again mobbed



before he finally found the net.

by journalists. He had already shown glimpses of his returning genius, firing just over with a curling shot from 25 yards a few minutes



Corinthians have taken objection to Manchester United's rampant marketing of Cristiano Ronaldo, and have used a novel T-shirt (L) as a means of reminding the Red Devils that another Ronaldo is still alive and very much kicking as evidenced by this last-gasp equalising goal (top) from the Brazilian legend in their league match against Palmeiras in just his second appearance for his new club.

PHOTOS: INTERNET/AFP