SPORT



Chelsea midfielder Michael Essien (R) celebrates with teammates after scoring to make it 1-1 against Juventus during their Champions League round of 16 second-leg encounter at the Olympic Stadium in Turin on Tuesday.

Chelsea oust Juventus

AFP, Turin



Goals from African pair Didier Drogba earned

Chelsea a 2-2 draw at Juventus in the Champions League on Tuesday to send last year's finalists through to the quarterfinals 3-2 on aggregate.

In a pulsating match Juve finished with 10 men following the second half dismissal of Giorgio Chiellini but goals from Vincenzo Iaquinta and evergreen Alessandro Del Piero had briefly given them cause to

Instead the first of three Anglo-Italian ties in the second round went the way of the said. powerful Premier League.

But Chelsea had to come back from a goal down on the night, something that had about their reaction.

"Playing here at Juventus's home is not the easiest task. We had a job to do, we started rather sloppily, we lost too many duels. They could give some easy passes into their front players and the defence was not marking well," he said.

"But the reaction of the

team was ok, we knew that at 1-0 or even 2-0 we must not panic because we were able to score any moment.

"We reacted at 1-0, had good score on edge of half-time and in the second half we controlled the game a little more and didn't play stupid long balls.'

Trailing 1-0 from the first leg and needing to score, Juve coach Claudio Ranieri picked an attacking line-up with Del Piero playing behind forwards David Trezeguet and Iaquinta.

It initially paid dividends and at the end of the game Ranieri rued what might have

"We lost this tie at Stamford Bridge because we didn't score and in this competition it's important to get an away goal, but we didn't manage it," he

"I think if we had gone through it wouldn't have been a scandal. They're a great team of course and if you think of coach Guus Hiddink purring what Chelsea did last year, reaching the final and the great economic investment which has made this team really

> much until the 19th minute when the hosts took the lead out of nothing.

> Iaquinta played a one-two with Trezeguet, whose return

ball flicked over his head was perfectly weighted, allowing his strike partner to outpace John Terry and finish past Petr

Cech with aplomb. Juve suddenly had a spring in their step and Del Piero tried his luck from distance, forcing Cech to tip the ball over.

The hosts were looking comfortable and having the better of things without lookinglike adding to their lead.

But the game turned on its head in a crazy spell at the end of the first period.

On 45 minutes Drogbalined up to take a freekick which he bent around the wall and just inside the post. Gianluigi Buffon got across

his line to clutch the ball at the post at the second attempt but television replays showed it had just sneaked over the line. It wasn't given but Chelsea's

frustration fired them up enough to equalise in first half stoppage time anyway. Frank Lampard set his sights from distance and his shot took a deflection and

looped up with Buffon arching back to tip it onto the bar. It came down and may too Even so, they did not create have crossed the line but Essien charged in to bundle the ball home and leave no doubt

> this time that the Blues were on level terms.

It was his first goal in 11

months in his first start since September.

That changed the tone of the game and it took Juventus a full quarter of an hour of the second period to start looking

dangerous. When they did Del Piero was the architect of a move on 65 minutes that almost resulted in a score as he crossed for Trezeguet to head goalwards, only for Cech to

produce a flying save. Ranieri introduced young playmaker Sebastian Giovinco and he too almost created something but Del Piero couldn't quite get a flick on his teammate's freekick.

But 20 minutes from time any chance of a Juve revival seemingly died as Chiellini picked up a second booking for clattering into Drogba.

However, moments later Del Piero fired a freekick into the Chelsea wall that struck Michael Ballack's raised arms and the referee pointed to the spot, with Del Piero himself cooly slotting the ball home.

It was game on but seven minutes from time Chelsea sealed their passage into the last eight as substitute Juliano Belletti crossed for Drogba to poke home from close range for his fourth goal in five

Real to fire Mijatovic

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid sports chief Pedja Mijatovic is close to being fired following the Spanish giants humiliating 4-0 Champions League defeat at Liverpool in Tuesday, sports daily Marca reported Wednesday.

After the "painful loss to Liverpool", the departure of the top club official before Real's next general assembly at the end of March is more likely and could be announced very soon, the newspaper added.

The only sticking point is the fact that Mijatovic, who took up the post in 2006 and is under contract until 2010, would qualify for a compensation payment of one million euros (1.3 million dollars) if he is fired, it said.

But the interim president of the defending Spanish champions, Vicente Boluda, "is looking for a formula which will allow the dismissal to be cheaper", the newspaper said.

Mijatovic, a former Real striker who was one of Yugoslavia's best players of the 1990s, has been criticised for failing to recruit top talent.

Liverpool, which already had a 1-0 win over nine-time European champions Real from the away leg, reached the last eight with a 5-0 aggregate

Spanish media on Wednesday dubbed Real's loss to Liverpool, its heaviest defeat since the competition became known as the Champions League in 1993, as a "humiliation" and said the club was "leaking water everywhere".

AFP, Rome

Napoli sacked manager Edy Reja and replaced him with former Italy coach Roberto Donadoni on Tuesday in a move aimed at improving the club's fortunes after defeats in

games. Napoli, highflyers early in the campaign, they were placed second last October, have gone into freefall since mid-January since when they have only added a meagre two

Reja joined the club, then in the third division, in 2004, and under his stewardship they gained promotion to Serie B in 2006 and then the top flight the following year.

Last season they ended up in eighth place to qualify for the Intertoto Cup.

They are currently placed

Reja's replacement, Donadoni, was sacked himself as Italy manager after the national side's elimination from Euro 2008 at the quarterfinals stage.

Donadoni, 48, a three-time winner of the Champions League as a player with AC Milan, is taking charge of his third Serie A side after spells with Genoa and Livorno.

Dunga praises Ronaldo

Football

INTERNET, undated

Brazil coach Dunga says he will summon Ronaldo if the striker returns to top form.

Dunga praised Ronaldo for his return to soccer more than a year after knee surgery, saying the striker will have his spot in the squad secured if he plays well again.

"If he becomes the Ronaldo of old, why not?" Dunga told Cultura TV late Monday. Ronaldo, 32, returned to

a Brazilian Cup match.

equalizer after 31 minutes on the field against Palmeiras.

suffering a left knee injury with AC Milan in February

Ronaldo was far from his best after more than a year out of action, but liked the way he performed in his first two matches.

"He has the will to become the great player that he once was," Dunga said. "He feels pleasure playing football." Ronaldo told SporTV chan-

nel on Monday that his goal was to return to the national team, but that he feels he has

It was his first goal since elimination in the quarterfinals of the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

The president of the Dunga said it's natural Brazilian federation dismissed any animosity against "There is no veto," Ricardo

> Teixeira said Tuesday. "I Ronaldo becomes the player he was in the 2002 World Cup, he has the chance to return to the national team and play in the 2010 World Cup." Ronaldo's return to action

> has been praised across Brazil, including President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. "He wasn't 100 per cent

ready, played five minutes, got Dunga replaced Carlos said, according to the website, Alberto Parreira after Brazil's Folha Online.

Del Piero surpasses Di Stefano

AFP, Paris

Juventus may have failed to overcome Chelsea in their Champions League last 16 return on Tuesday but evergreen Italian striker Alessandro Del Piero at least had the consolation of netting his 51st goal in the competition to overhaul Alfredo Di Stefano.

Real Madrid's Raul still leads the way with 64 - but like Del Piero will not add to that total this season after the Spaniards crashed out to Liverpool.

Villarreal advance

AFP, Athens

Argentine midfielder Ariel Ibagaza scored one goal and then turned provider for Joseba Llorente's winner to lift Spanish club Villarreal into the Champions League quarterfinals after a 2-1 victory Tuesday night at Greek side Panathinaikos.

Ibagaza, a surprise starter by Villarreal coach Manuel Pellegrini, gave the visitors a 1-0 lead in the 49th minute when he took a well-aimed pass from Joan Capdevila to score from up close past Panathinaikos keeper Mario Galinovic.

But Panathinaikos came roaring back to score just six minutes later to delight - albeit briefly - a sellout 60,000 crowd at the Athens Olympic Stadium when striker Vangelis Mantzios headed the ball beyond goalie Diego Lopez's reach after a perfect corner from midfielder Giorgos

Karagounis. Mantzios' fourth goal in six UEFA Champions League matches made the score 1-1, just as in the first leg of the first knockout round of the competition in Spain.

The winning tally by forward Llorente came in the 70th minute from up close after a nifty pass from Ibagaza split the Panathinaikos defence.

Villarreal's win stopped a five-match unbeaten run by Panathinaikos in the competi-

The first half was mostly dull, with no threats from either team coming until the 28th minute when Villarreal striker Giuseppe Rossi had an ideal opportunity to score blasting a left-footed shot just outside the penalty box which was deflected wide after hitting two Panathinaikos defenders.

The visitors had a goal ruled out by referee Massimo Busacca in the 35th minute when Ibagaza scored from up close in a mixup in front of the Panathinaikos goalmouth, but the official ruled that Ibabaza fouled defender Loukas Vintra.

The best chance for the home team in the first half came when Mantzios broke away from two defenders after taking a perfect pass from midfielder Simao, but Mantzios' hard, low leftfooted shot was deflected by Lopez.

Riquelme walks out national side - we are not on

Football

AFP; Buenos Aires

Boca Juniors veteran playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme has insisted he will not don the colours of Argentina again as long as Diego Maradona is coach. "As long as Maradona is

coach I will not return to the

the same wavelength, Riquelme told Argentine television. "It's clear we cannot work

together," the 30-year-old insisted. "The national side is over

for me - I say that very clearly. I learned from the radio that I was not going to play against France (a February 11 friendly with the South Americans won



JUAN ROMAN RIQUELME

2-0 in Marseille). I have principles and they are not those of the coach," Riquelme complained.

"It's a shame to know I will miss the World Cup in South Africa in 2010 and I wish the team all the best. If I go things would not be easy and I prefer that someone else goes in my place," he added.

"I'm tired - I want to live in peace. It's strange how things are in 2009 with all the criticism after an incredible 2008," said Riquelme, who won Olympic gold last summer in Beijing.

Riquelme had already walked out on the national side in 2006 before returning under Alfio Basile.

Ironically, before Riquelme made his announcement, Maradona had indicated he wanted to call the player into the squad for upcoming World Cup qualifiers.

Riquelme was angered last week when Maradona told Argentine television he had issues with the player's current form.

"Riquelme, I need him in the final 20 metres so he can link with (Carlos) Tevez, (Sergio) Aguero and Lionel Messi and peel off an opponent. I like it when he uses his speed to spray around decisive passes and also get on the scoresheet. If he's not doing that he is of no use to me, Maradona said.

Two-time world champions Argentina currently trail South American qualifying group leaders Paraguay by seven points and Brazil by one point, although they are wellplaced to take one of four slots for the finals.

Bring on MU: Rafa

AFP, Liverpool



LEAGUE

Rafael Benitez believes Liverpool's Champions League humiliation of Real Madrid has set the stage perfectly for his side to cut Manchester United down to earth in Saturday's makeor-break Premier League

clash.Benitez admits Liverpool must win at Old Trafford or forget about catching their rivals in the domestic title race, and a Fernando Torresinspired 4-0 demolition of Real could hardly have been better preparation.

"When you have an important game coming up, if the players play well and score four goals against a top side like Real Madrid you have to be really pleased," the Spaniard said. "As a manager maybe it is the best way to approach a big game." The return of Fernando Torres from injury

finest display of the season, although their fans would be guilty of wishful thinking if they were to anticipate United's defence conceding as many chances as Real's hapless back four did here on Tuesday evening. The irrepressible Torres opened the scoring after quarter of an hour, a penalty from Steven Gerrard killed the tie and the Liverpool cap-

tain's second and a late effort from substitute

Andrea Dossena sent Benitez's men into the

helped inspire what was arguably Liverpool's

last eight for the fourth time in his five seasons in charge. Adopting an unexpectedly bold approach, Benitez once again demonstrated his tactical nous on the European stage as Real were caught cold by Liverpool's high-tempo pressing, as well as being unable to cope with the

pace and trickery of Torres.

"We knew that maybe they were expecting that we would play deep and try to play on the counter-attack," Benitez said. "From the and we kept on top of them from the beginning to the end. They found it difficult to deal

with our tempo."

For Real boss Juande Ramos, the defeat, which means Real have failed to advance beyond this stage since 2004, represents a blow to his chances of continuing in his job beyond the end of this season.

The former Sevilla and Tottenham manager admitted Liverpool deserved to go through but voiced grievances over the manner of their first two goals, claiming Torres and fouled Pepe in the build-up to the first while describing the penalty as doubtful. "We conceded two early goals -- both of

which were doubtful," Ramos complained. "That meant we had to go all out for goals and we laid ourselves open to the counter-attack. But they deserved to go through, they were the better side over the two legs."

Real could legitimately argue that the penalty was harsh, Gabriel Heinze having been adjudged to have handled when the ball bounced off Liverpool defender Alvaro

Arbeloa and struck him on the upper arm. But it was also true that Liverpool could easily have been three up by that stage with only the outstanding goalkeeping of Iker Casillas preventing a much more embarrassingrout.

Ramos dismissed a suggestion that such a demoralising defeat would handicap his side's chances of catching Barcelona in the race for the Spanish league title.

"They are two totally different competitions. We carry on in La Liga with every hope of making a comeback and catching Barcelona. We will be trying as hard as we can for the rest of the season. It was not all good news for Liverpool. The

vellow card received by Javier Mascherano for

kicking the ball away after the referee had blown for a freekick means the Argentinian midfielder will miss the first leg of the club's quarterfinal tie through suspension. There will also be a nervous 24 hours as

beginning we tried to put pressure on them Liverpool's medical staff wait to see if Torres's ankle shows any reaction to a match he played in heavy strapping.

Napoli appoint Donadoni

seven of their last nine Serie A

points to their total.

action last Wednesday, playing enemies in the Brazilian foot-28 minutes for Corinthians in ball federation. Ronaldo was never recalled five balls and was still better to the national team once than everybody else," Silva On Sunday, he scored a late



CHAMPIONS

twice on

Tuesday as LEAGUE Munich hammered Sporting Lisbon 7-1 to set a new Champions League record on felt.

their way to the quarterfinals. Tuesday night's rout at Munich's Allianz Arena means the tie finishes 12-1 on aggregate and sets a new record for a Champions League knock-out stage tie - bettering Olympique Lyonnais' old mark of 10-2 against Werder Bremen in the

2004/05 season. "We wanted to show from the first second who was the boss," said delighted Bayern

coach Jurgen Klinsmann.

very seriously.

Sporting realised we weren't going to give them anything and we now have ten busy

weeks ahead of us. "We need players like Lukas Podolski to be at the top of their

game and he showed a cast-

iron will today."

Luca Toni and Franck Ribery had both scored two goals in Lisbon a fortnight ago in the first-leg Round of 16 tie virtually to ensure Bayern a last eight spot when Sporting were

France's Ribery were missing with injury for the second-leg, but their absence was barely Having totally dominated in Lisbon, Bayern carried on

where they left off as Brazilian

midfielder Ze Roberto flicked a pass to Podolski, who lobbed Sporting goalkeeper Rui Patricio after just seven min-And having scored in the 5-1 hammering of Hanover in the German league last Saturday,

two games with an opportunist bicycle kick after a Patricio "The team took this game error which he smashed into the net on 34 minutes. And things went from bad to far worse for the guests when Sporting defender Polga

> knocked a cross into his own net on 39 minutes.

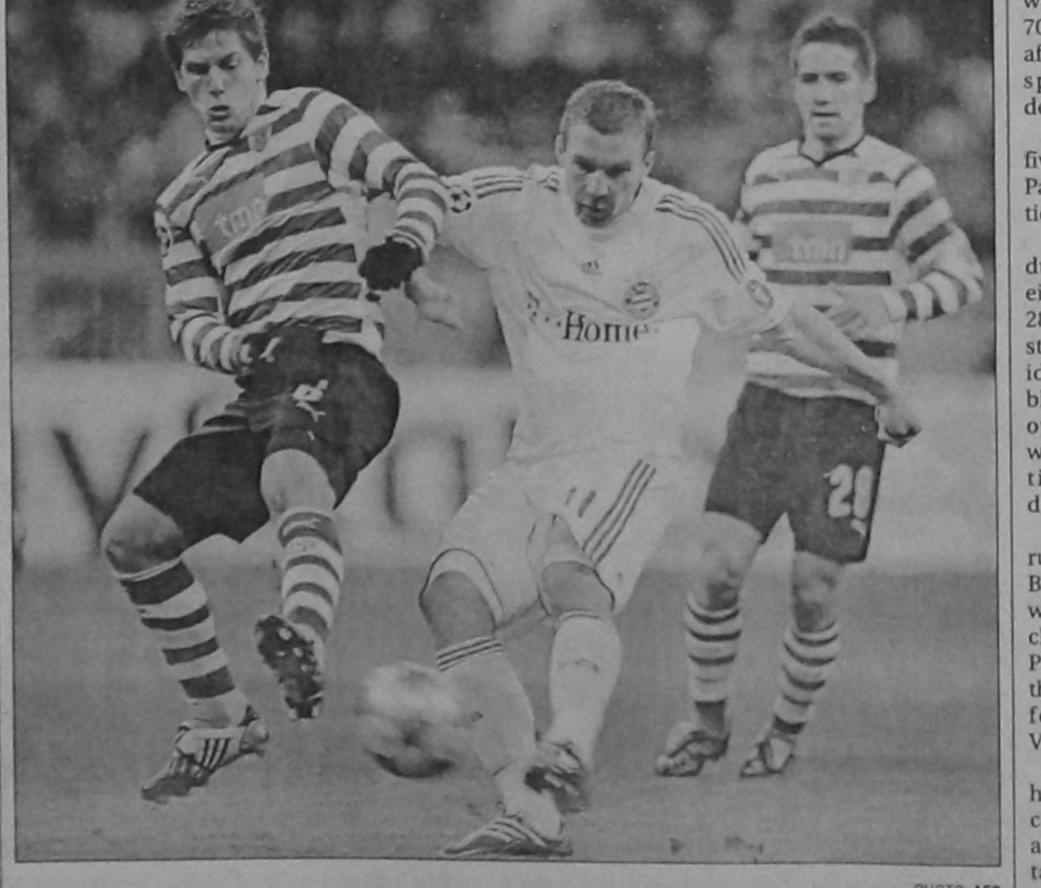
Record-breaking Bayern effort into the top left-hand corner on 42 minutes to peg the arrears back to 3-1, but Germany midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger scored less than two minutes later to make

it 4-1 at the break. Munich teenager Thomas hammered 5-0 in Portugal. Mueller took over from Both Italy's Toni and Schweinsteiger and the 19year-old had played just two minutes of his Champions League debut when he set up Bayern's fifth goal after 74

Mueller beat the Sporting defence on the right and put in a pin-point accurate cross which Miroslav Klose headed back for captain Mark van

Bommel to drill home. And Klose grabbed one of his own when he was brought down by Sporting defender Podolski made it three goals in Pedro Silva, but the Germany star picked himself up from the turf to drill home his penalty on

82 minutes. And Mueller profited from a saved shot from Podolski on 90 minutes when he was presented with a simple tap-in as Bayern became the first team to score 12 goals over two legs Lisbon captain Joao in a Champions League knock-Moutinho hit a superb dipping



Bayern Munich striker Lukas Podolski (C) shoots past Sporting Lisbon defender Adrien Silva (L) to score one of his two goals during their Champions League round of 16 second-leg clash at the Allianz Arena on Tuesday.