

## Ronaldo wants to score 30 goals

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil's Ronaldo, who returned to competition with Corinthians earlier this month after a year's absence, said on Sunday he wanted to score 30 goals this season.

The 1994 and 2002 World Cup winner, and two-time European footballer of the year, tore his left knee tendon while playing for AC Milan in February last year.

"I would like to play a match a week, or about 30 matches, and scoring about 30 goals would be good. It's a figure I like. It's a good aim, and includes the two goals I have already scored," Ronaldo told local media.

Ronaldo started his spell at Corinthians on March 4 after coming on midway through the second half of a 2-0 Brazilian Cup victory over Itumbiara.

## Eto'o, Zlatan boost value

AFP, Paris

Samuel Eto'o and Zlatan Ibrahimovic took their combined goals tally to 42 on Sunday to spectacularly boost their sale value if Barcelona and Inter Milan decide to cash in their prize assets in the summer.

Cameroon international Eto'o scored twice as Barcelona crushed Malaga 6-0 to restore their six-point lead in Spain to take his league goals to 25.

Swedish striker Ibrahimovic also grabbed a brace, to take his personal goals collection to 17, as Inter Milan went seven points clear in Italy with a 3-0 win at the San Siro against rock-bottom Reggina.

Reports in Spain have linked Eto'o with a move to AC Milan, but Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola insists the striker has yet to make up his mind.

"The press have given the impression that Eto'o is already out of Barcelona," said Guardiola. "He doesn't deserve this. He will decide his future when the time is right for him."

After striking his two goals on Sunday, the 28-year-old Eto'o, who has been at Barcelona since 2004, preferred to concentrate on this season, rather than next.

"It is one more game gone," said Eto'o. "I always have a chance of scoring in this team. We just want to push on now and carry on with this form after the international break."

After his star performance, Ibrahimovic, who signed for Inter from Juventus in 2006, hinted that he may be considering a future away from the San Siro.

"I'm totally focussed on winning the title but as for next season, we'll see," he said. "I'm very happy to be at Inter but next year we'll see."

Mourinho reacted by suggesting that Inter would survive without the 27-year-old Swede.

"Ibrahimovic is a great player but no player is bigger than a club. He has become very important to Inter but certain clubs are bigger than any player or coach," said Mourinho.

## Barca demolish Malaga

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona showed Real Madrid they will take some budding from the top of the table with an emphatic 6-0 home win over Malaga on Sunday to restore their six-point cushion over the champions.

A few hours earlier Real had defeated Almeria 3-0 at the Santiago Bernabeu to cut Barcelona's lead to three points, but Pep Guardiola's side responded by cutting poor Malaga to shreds.

Xavi, Lionel Messi, Thierry Henry and Samuel Eto'o were all on target in a sensational first 45 minutes and Malaga couldn't wait for the half-time whistle.

It was more of the same in the second half with Eto'o scoring his second on 56 minutes while marauding right back Dani Alves (51) also netted.

Barcelona have plundered 84 goals this season at an average of three goals a game and are well on course to reach a century before the end of the season.

Cameroon attacker Eto'o leads the way with 25 goals while Messi has 19 for the season and Henry a creditable 15.

The trio were on the score-sheet against Malaga but Brazilian Alves had the honour of scoring the goal of the game heading in after a sublime pass from Andres Iniesta had carved the visitors open.

Dutch striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar made it eight goals in his last six games with a brace as Real Madrid eased to a 3-0 win over Almeria.

Legendary Real old boy Hugo Sanchez, now coach at Almeria, grabbed the pre-match attention on his return to the Santiago Bernabeu, but it was Huntelaar who stole the headlines with a clinical second-half double.

Brazilian Marcelo, jeered by his own fans this season, silenced the doubters with a 23rd minute opener before Huntelaar showed his predatory instincts in the 52nd and 65th minutes to wrap up the points.

Real struck first on 23 minutes with Marcelo driving home from outside the area with his weaker right foot.

Marcelo hit the crossbar early in the second period before Huntelaar rifled a volley into the roof of the net. The Dutch forward added a second with a neat finish after Almeria failed to clear their lines.

Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid's Champions League hopes suffered a blow as they fell to a 2-0 defeat at Real Mallorca.

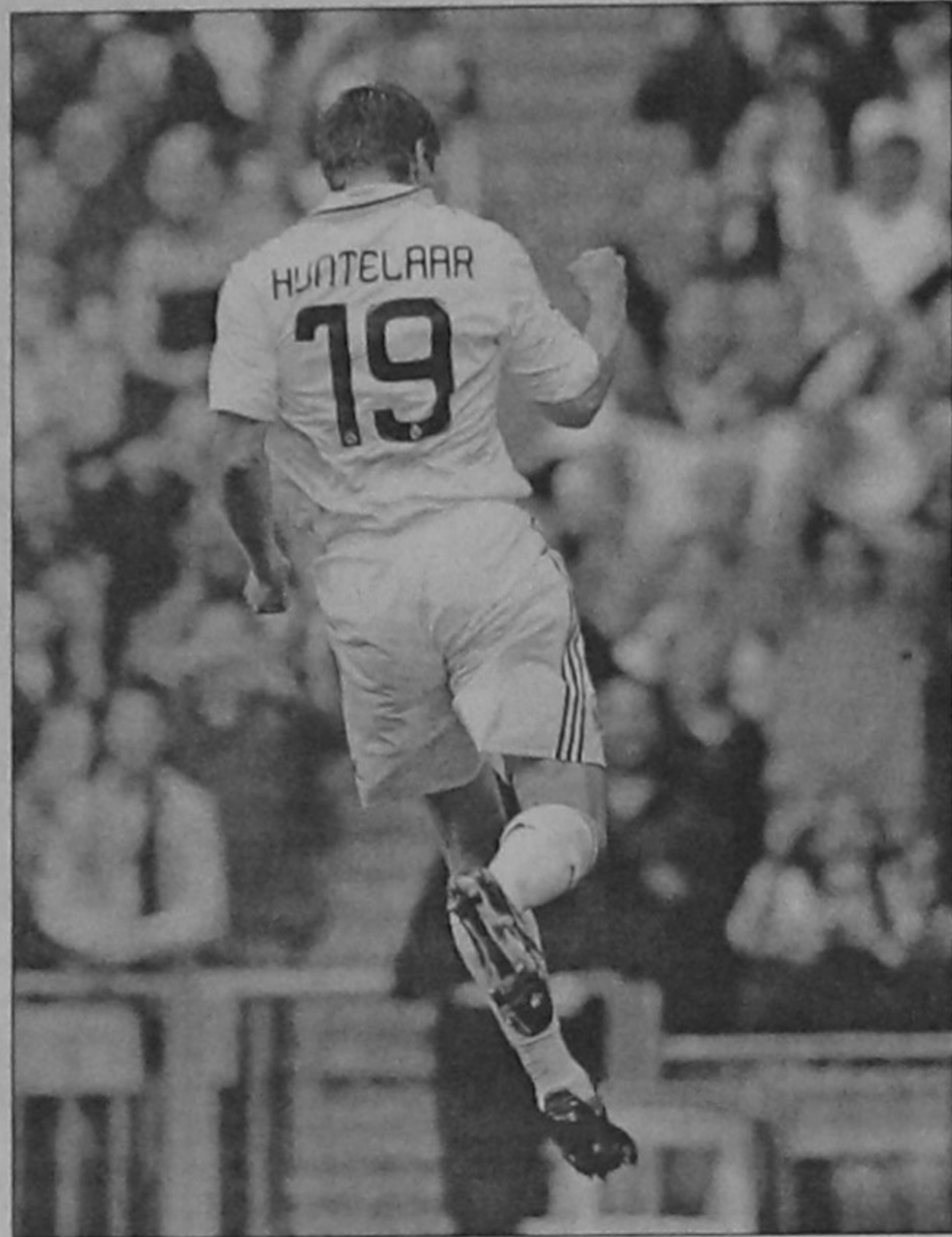
Atletico stay five points behind fourth-placed Villarreal with Valencia now level on points following their 1-0 victory over Racing Santander.

It was a big win for Mallorca who surge up to 12th although they are only three points above the drop.

There are a staggering 11 teams still involved in the relegation battle with tenth-placed Racing only four points better off than third from bottom Osasuna.

Osasuna secured a 1-0 win over troubled Espanyol scoring in the dying seconds to snatch the spoils.

Espanyol, one of the few teams to beat Barcelona this season, are adrift at the bottom eight points from safety.



Real Madrid striker Jan Klaas Huntelaar jumps for joy after scoring against Almeria during their Primera Liga clash at Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday.

## Guerrero fires Hamburg

AFP, Berlin



Peru striker Jose Guerrero netted both goals on Sunday to seal Hamburg's 2-1 win at Schalke 04 which keeps Martin Jol's side in the heart of the title race and just a point behind leaders Hertha Berlin.

The three points in Gelsenkirchen leaves Hamburg fourth in the league, but level on 48 points with Bayern Munich and VfL Wolfsburg with the three clubs all just a point behind Hertha who were humbled 2-0 in Stuttgart on Saturday.

The game was heading for a goalless draw until Schalke goalkeeper Manuel Neuer went to head away a dangerous ball in the area, but only managed to nod his clearance into Guerrero's path who fired the gift home on 70 minutes.

And the Peruvian striker made it 2-0 just five minutes later when Germany midfielder Marcell Jansen fired at goal to give Guerrero a simple tap in at the far post.

On Saturday, defending champions Bayern Munich beat Karlsruhe 1-0 without injured strikers Luca Toni and Miroslav Klose to close the gap behind Hertha.

Karlsruhe stay bottom while the win keeps Bayern second, but just one point behind Hertha who were brought crashing down to earth after hosts Stuttgart scored two goals in four minutes to continue their rise up the table to sixth.

Wolfsburg are joint second with Bayern and just a point behind Hertha after they won 3-0 at Arminia Bielefeld.

Hoffenheim dropped further back in the title race as their 2-2 draw at Hanover left them five points off the leaders in fifth and they are now four points off the title race.

Bayer Leverkusen are seventh after their 1-1 draw with Eintracht Frankfurt.

Although they hammered Stuttgart 4-0 the week before, Werder Bremen continue their erratic season as Borussia Dortmund captain Alexander Frei slotted home a 61st minute penalty to take the three points as his side are ninth, with Bremen tenth in the table.

Cologne remain in mid-table after their 2-0 win at second-from-bottom Energie Cottbus, while on Friday night Borussia Moenchengladbach remain in the bottom three as they lost 1-0 at home to fellow strugglers VfL Bochum.

## Lippi names uncapped trio

AFP, Rome

Italy coach Marcello Lippi on Sunday called up three new faces to his squad for World Cup qualifiers away to Montenegro and at home to the Republic of Ireland.

AS Roma full-back Marco Motta, Genoa centre-back Salvatore Bocchetti and Sampdoria striker Giampaolo Pazzini have all received their first international call-ups.

Midfield pair Matteo Brighi of Roma and Sampdoria's Pasquale Foggia have also been summoned into the world champions' squad.

However, there is still no place for in-form Sampdoria forward Antonio Cassano or Juventus' veteran striker Alessandro Del Piero.

Italy, who lead qualifying Group Eight, travel to Montenegro on Saturday before hosting Ireland on April 1.

### SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus), Marco Amelia (Palermo), Morgan De Sanctis (Galatasaray/TUR)

**Defenders:** Salvatore Bocchetti (Genoa), Fabio Cannavaro (Real Madrid/ESP), Giorgio Chiellini (Juventus), Andrea Dossena (Liverpool/ENG), Alessandro Gamberini (Fiorentina), Fabio Grosso (Lyon/FRA), Marco Motta (AS Roma), Gianluca Zambrotta (AC Milan)

**Midfielders:** Matteo Brighi and Daniele De Rossi (AS Roma), Pasquale Foggia (Lazio), Riccardo Montolivo (Fiorentina), Angelo Palombo (Sampdoria), Simone Pepe (Udinese), Andrea Pirlo (AC Milan)

**Forwards:** Antonio Di Natale and Fabio Quagliarella (Udinese), Vincenzo Iaquinta (Juventus), Giampaolo Pazzini (Sampdoria), Giuseppe Rossi (Villareal)

## Iniesta out of qualifiers

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona's 6-0 thrashing of Malaga on Sunday came at a cost with midfielders Andres Iniesta and Yaya Toure getting injured and sidelined for two weeks.

Spanish international Iniesta limped out of the match with a thigh complaint and will now miss Spain's 2010 World Cup qualifiers with Turkey on March 28 and April 1.

Toure sustained an injury to his right thigh and manager Pep Guardiola confirmed the pair would be out for around a fortnight.

"Andres and Yaya picked up injuries and will be out for about 15 days," confirmed Guardiola.

Barcelona face Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals of the Champions League on April 8 and will be keen to get both first-teamers back for the crunch clash at Camp Nou.

## Heitinga out of danger

AFP, Madrid

Atletico Madrid's Dutch defender John Heitinga was "out of danger" Monday after suffering a head injury during a league fixture.

The 25-year-old is "conscious, out of danger and in good general condition," said the club.

It did not indicate how long he would be out of action. Heitinga "received a blow to the head" and lost consciousness after colliding with Mallorca player David Navarro during Sunday's match, which Atletico lost 2-0.

The Madrid club bought the Dutch international from Ajax Amsterdam last year for 10 million euros (13.6 million dollars).

Atletico is fifth in the Primera Liga, 26 points behind leaders Barcelona.

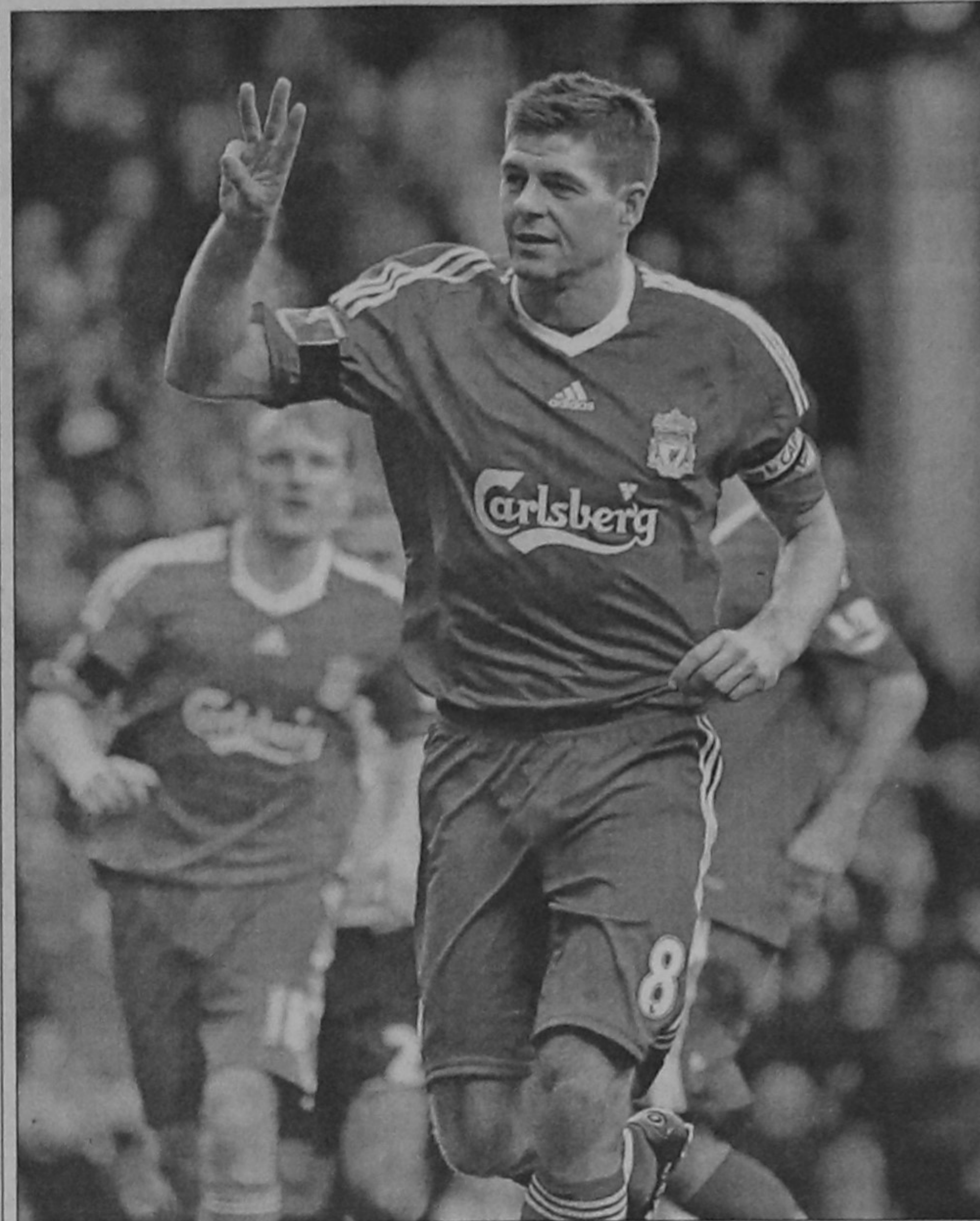
## France lose Anelka

AFP, Paris

Injury-hit Chelsea striker Nicolas Anelka has withdrawn from the France squad to play the upcoming World Cup qualifying double-header against Lithuania and has been replaced by Guillaume Hoarau of Paris St Germain.

Anelka is suffering from a toe injury and will be out for 30 days, prompting coach Raymond Domenech to call up PSG's uncapped striker Hoarau, the French league's second-highest scorer this season with 15 goals.

France, lying third in Group 7 of World Cup qualifying behind Serbia and Lithuania, play the Lithuanians away on March 28 and at home on April 1.



Liverpool star Steven Gerrard makes a three fingers gesture to celebrate his hat-trick against Aston Villa during their Premier League encounter at Anfield on Sunday.

## Red hot Liverpool

AFP, Liverpool



Liverpool moved within one point of Premier League leaders Manchester United after Steven Gerrard's hat-trick inspired a 5-0 rout of 10-man Aston Villa on Sunday.

United still have a game in hand but, having won 4-1 at Old Trafford last week, the Reds now have a better goal difference by two with eight games left.

Dirk Kuyt started the goal-spree with seven minutes gone and Albert Riera doubled the lead just after the half hour at Anfield.

England midfielder Gerrard added a third from the spot just before the interval and scored a fourth with a freekick just after the restart.

The Liverpool captain scored a second penalty after goalkeeper Brad Friedel was sent off for a challenge on Fernando Torres as Villa's winless run stretched to eight games.

Fifth-placed Villa remain three points behind Arsenal and a place in the top four is now looking beyond them.

Liverpool began with real purpose and from Fabio Aurelio's corner, Friedel was forced to save from Martin Skrtel's header with just a minute on the clock.

After Villa's James Milner had a shot deflected wide, Liverpool took the lead with just seven minutes gone following Nigel Reo-Coker foul on Riera down the left flank.

Gerrard drove the ball into the area and Xabi Alonso's header came back off the bar but Kuyt made no mistake with a powerful follow-up from six yards for his tenth goal of the season.

With Gabriel Agbonlahor left on the bench, Villa had a strong spell and Pepe Reina pulled off an impressive stop from John Carew's flick from Ashley Young's cross from the left.

Midway through the opening period,

another glancing header from Carew, this time from Reo-Coker's lofted freekick, was pushed away by Reina before Young hit the side-netting.

But just as Villa were looking threatening, Liverpool doubled their lead.

Gareth Barry's curling freekick was easily held by Reina and his long clearance bounced over the Villa defence before Riera hit a half-volley with his left foot that flew in off the bar.

Five minutes before the interval, Kuyt's cross-field pass picked out Riera and the Spanish winger was tripped in the area by Reo-Coker and Gerrard sent Friedel the wrong way with his penalty to make it three.

Half-time brought only a little respite for Villa and five minutes after the restart they were four goals behind.

Carlos Cuellar chopped Kuyt down on the edge of the area and Alonso took the freekick short for Gerrard to place the ball into the corner of Friedel's goal.

As they looked for a response, James Milner's drilled cross was headed straight at Reina by Emile Heskey.

But Liverpool were still not satisfied and after Alonso picked out Kuyt, he received the return ball on the edge of the box only to stab wide.

In the 65th minute, Alonso sent Torres clean through and after the Spaniard knocked the ball on, he collided with Friedel.

Referee Martin Atkinson gave a penalty and showed Friedel the red card. Gerrard stepped up to send Friedel's replacement Brad Guzan the wrong way from the spot to complete his hat-trick.

Lucas missed from Riera's cross as the Reds searched for a sixth goal and Torres was frustrated in his attempts to score.

But Liverpool were happy to play out time in the knowledge that the title race is now wide open.

## Ibra dazzles for Inter

AFP, Rome



Zlatan Ibrahimovic starred as Inter Milan cruised to a 3-0 victory over rock-bottom Reggina at the San Siro to re-establish their seven-point lead at the top of Serie A on Sunday.

Second-placed Juventus had briefly reduced the arrears on Saturday with a highly-impressive 4-1 romp at Roma, but Jose Mourinho's men showed they were in no mood to concede any ground in the title race.

Meanwhile third-placed AC Milan were held to a 0-0 draw at Napoli, who have not won in 11 matches.

Two goals in the first 10 minutes effectively turned the top-versus-bottom clash into a non-contest, despite Inter playing with midfielder Esteban Cambiasso in a patchwork centre-back pairing due to injuries.

With only nine matches left, the chances of Juve catching Inter are diminishing and may even rest on the pair's clash in Turin next month.

But Mourinho is still thinking about how to improve his side for a tilt at European glory rather than mere domestic success.

"To make Inter more competitive, even in Europe, we need some retouching. We have two or three young players with great potential who in two or three years will be great players," he said.

Inter got off to a fine start as Mario Balotelli played the ball into the area and a clever between-the-legs flick from Dejan Stankovic released Cambiasso to delicately chip over Christian Puggioni on six minutes.

Just before the hour, Ibrahimovic showed why he is thought of so highly in Italy.

He picked up the ball 30 yards from goal, burst past three defenders and at the edge of the box hit an exquisite chip over Puggioni and into the top corner.

Reggina had one last chance late on to salvage something from the match but Julio Cesar pulled off a fine save to deny Alessio Sestu.

In the race for fourth place, and the final Champions League qualifying position, Genoa maintained their two-point lead over Fiorentina.

Genoa beat Udinese 2-0 at home with goals from Giuseppe Sculli and Diego Milito while Romania captain Adrian Mutu scored the only goal in La Viola's 1-0 home win over Siena.



Inter Milan striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic scores from a penalty against Reggina during their Serie A tie at San Siro on Sunday.

## Baines gets surprise call-up

AFP, London

England coach Fabio Capello handed Everton defender Leighton Baines a surprise call-up to his squad for the friendly against Slovakia on March 28 and World Cup qualifier against Ukraine on April 1.

Capello also named Manchester United goalkeeper Ben Foster, Tottenham defender Ledley King and his White Hart Lane teammate Aaron Lennon in the 24-man squad.

Uncapped left-back Baines comes in for injured Manchester City star Wayne Bridge, who is the usual England deputy for Ashley Cole.

### SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Ben Foster (Manchester United), David James (Portsmouth), Robert Green (West Ham)

**Defenders:** Leighton Baines (Everton), Ashley Cole (Chelsea), Rio Ferdinand (Manchester United), Phil Jagielka (Everton), Glen Johnson (Portsmouth), Ledley King (Tottenham), Joleon Lescott (Everton), John Terry (Chelsea), Matthew Upson (West Ham)

**Midfielders:** Gareth Barry (Aston Villa), David Beckham (AC Milan/ITA), Michael Carrick (Manchester United), Stewart Downing (Middlesbrough), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), Frank Lampard (Chelsea), Aaron Lennon (Tottenham), Shaun Wright-Phillips (Man City)

**Forwards:** Carlton Cole (West Ham), Peter Crouch (Portsmouth), Emile Heskey (Aston Villa), Wayne Rooney (Man Utd)