



Werder Bremen striker Claudio Pizarro (L) scores from a flick against Udinese during their UEFA Cup quarterfinal in Udine on Thursday. The match ended in a 3-3 draw with Werder Bremen qualifying for the semifinals.

## Real hope for a favour

AFP, Madrid



After reaching the Champions League semifinals for the second

successive season Barcelona are back in league action on Saturday when they travel to Getafe, who have proved a difficult customer for the Catalans in recent seasons.

Barca have a six-point lead over Real Madrid at the top of the table but have failed to beat Getafe in their last three league meetings, while Getafe famously thrashed Barca 4-0 to reach the 2007 King's Cup final.

Real will hope their city neighbours, just four points above the drop zone, can do them a favour in the title race, while Real can fulfil their end of the bargain by beating third-bottom Recreativo Huelva.

On Wednesday Barcelona overcame Bayern Munich to reach the last four of the Champions League - where they will face Chelsea - and midfielder Xavi admits they have a tough six weeks in store as they go in search of an historic treble.

"The team is in spectacular form both physically and mentally and is ready to face a really tough month and a half," said the Spaniard.

"We have to round off what we're doing with trophies and we are fighting to win all three competitions, although it'll be very difficult."

Real have not allowed Barcelona to stretch their advantage at the summit with an impressive unbeaten run in 2009 and Portuguese defender Pepe believes his side are mentally tough enough to come from behind and snatch the crown.

"This season we want to show that we are brave and have the desire to win the title," said Pepe. "The arrival of the new coach (Juande Ramos) has given us a new mentality."

"Getafe beat Sevilla last weekend and they will be on a high going into the Barcelona game. We hope they go in full of confidence and make life hard for Barca."

Former Real coach Bernd Schuster took a swipe at the club this week, saying they wouldn't be able to attract coaches like Arsenal's Arsene Wenger or Liverpool's Rafa Benitez due to the club's insistence on controlling their transfer policy.

Ramos, who only has a six-month contract, has done his chances of keeping the job no harm at all by winning 14 out of his 16 league games in charge.

The game of the weekend sees two Champions League contenders come face to face

when Valencia host Sevilla at the Mestalla Stadium on Sunday.

Third-placed Sevilla are eight points ahead of Valencia, who will be keen to avenge this season's King's Cup quarterfinal defeat to the Andalusian side.

"Valencia are behind us and playing well so it is going to be a difficult game which is crucial for both sides," said Sevilla's Aldo Duschier.

"We will still have an advantage whatever the result but we have tough games coming up against Barcelona, Real and Villarreal."

Valencia have taken advantage of Villarreal's poor form to climb to fourth but face a fight to stay there with Villarreal, Atletico Madrid and Malaga all

still in the hunt.

"Our fans know it is a big game to help ensure we are in the Champions League next season," explained Valencia defender Carlos Marchena.

Villarreal, runners-up last season, have lost three out of their last four league matches to surrender fourth and are now one point behind Valencia going into Sunday's trip to Valladolid.

Villarreal limped out of the Champions League to Arsenal on Wednesday - losing 4-1 on aggregate - and need to restore confidence quickly, although injuries to Spanish internationals Marcos Senna and Santi Cazorla have not helped.

Captain Senna is absent for three weeks with a leg injury while Cazorla is out for the season with a broken leg.

"We were beaten by a better side," Villarreal coach Manuel Pellegrini said after the Arsenal defeat. "Now we have to concentrate fully on the league to make sure we are in the competition next season."

Atletico Madrid, three points behind Valencia, host troubled Numancia, hoping to snatch a top-four spot and a much-needed Champions League financial windfall that would help them hold onto stars such as Sergio Aguero and Diego Forlan.

### FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
(1800GMT unless otherwise stated)  
Athletic Bilbao v Deportivo La Coruna, Atletico Madrid v Numancia, Getafe v Barcelona, Malaga v Mallorca, Recreativo Huelva v Real Madrid (2000GMT)  
**Sunday**  
(1500GMT unless otherwise stated)  
Almeria v Osasuna, Espanyol v Racing Santander, Valladolid v Villarreal, Real Betis v Sporting Gijon (1900GMT), Valencia v Sevilla (1700GMT)

## Cahill warns United

AFP, London



Australia midfielder Tim Cahill has warned Manchester United that he will

peak form just in time for their FA Cup semifinal at Wembley this weekend.

David Moyes' side have lost just one of their last 11 matches and Cahill is confident they can extend that impressive run at United's expense on Sunday.

After narrowly losing 1-0 to United at Old Trafford in January, the Toffees have moved up a gear. They are firmly set at sixth place in the Premier League and go into their first FA Cup semifinal for 14 years brimming with confidence.

"We feel a lot of confidence at the moment and we have been training really well ahead of the semifinal," Cahill said.

"We are playing with a purpose and the character of the lads is really starting to show."

"It is just so good to be a part of it. We are growing week-in, week-out and getting stronger on and off the pitch."

Cahill has played a key role in Everton's winning streak after adapting superbly to a more advanced attacking role.

Injuries to Ayegebeni Yakubu, James Vaughan, Victor Anichebe and Louis Saha have often forced Moyes to use Cahill as a striker, but the Socceross star hasn't been fazed and is Everton's leading scorer with nine goals.

With Brazilian striker Jo copped to Sunday's clash, Cahill may be thrust into the attack yet again. Not that the prospect of going up against Rio Ferdinand and Nemanja Vidic - United's imposing central defenders - will worry him.

"It does not matter where I have been playing, it is all about the team," he said.

"We got the ball in the net three times against Aston Villa last Sunday and we want to do the same at the weekend."

"If I end up getting opportunities, I will get my goals and they are a bonus which I really enjoy."

"Hopefully there will be a few more chances to come and I will stick them in the back of the net."

"We are now looking forward to the next game because our play has been good for the last few weeks."

While Everton haven't reached this stage of the competition for over a decade, Cahill has experience of an FA Cup final after scoring the semifinal winner for Millwall against Sunderland in 2004, when the south Londoners went on to lose 3-0 in the final to United.

If Everton spring a surprise on Sunday, Cahill will face either Arsenal or Chelsea in the final this time.

The London rivals both reached the Champions League semifinals this week, but neither will be taking their Wembley showdown lightly.

Arsenal captain Cesc Fabregas will be playing at Wembley for the first time and the Spain midfielder is already dreaming of returning to lift the cup in May.

"It is a great stadium from what I heard, there will be 80,000 fans there," he said. "It is a dream for me to captain Arsenal to a trophy but we still need to work really hard for that to happen."

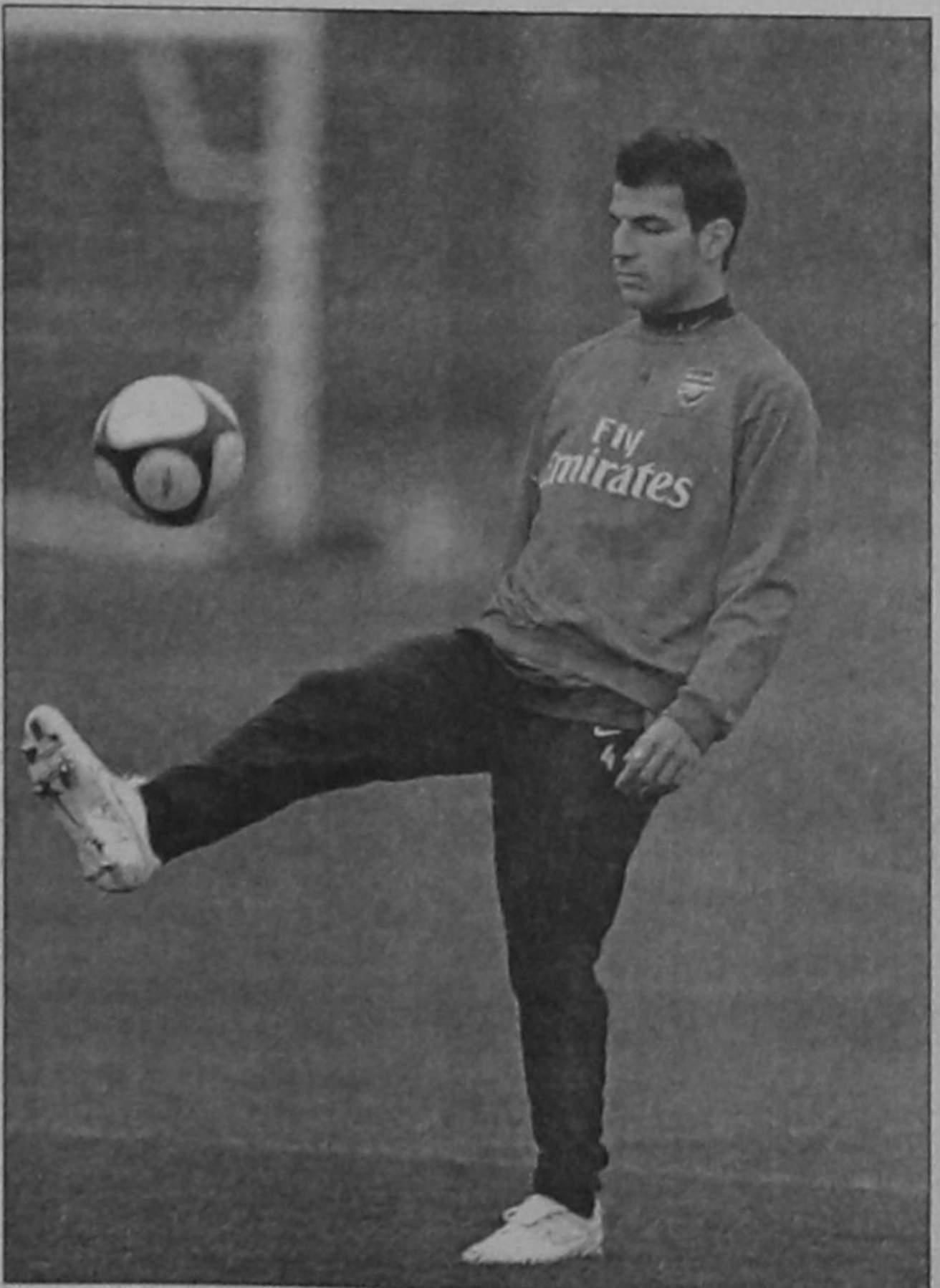
"We are in a very good position that three months ago we would be praying to be in."

"We have to enjoy it but for

sure it would be a disappointment if we do not get to a final or win. What we have achieved is good but a semifinal is not good enough."

### FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
Arsenal v Chelsea (1615GMT)  
**Sunday**  
Everton v Man Utd (1500GMT)



Arsenal star Cesc Fabregas controls the ball during a training session at the club's training ground in London Colney on Friday. Arsenal play London rivals Chelsea in the FA Cup semifinal today.

## UEFA Cup semis line-up

AFP, Paris

UEFA Cup semifinals line-up: Werder Bremen (GER) v SV Hamburg (GER) Dynamo Kiev (UKR) v Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 1st legs April 30 2nd legs May 7 Final May 20 Istanbul

## Everton weigh Saha risk

AFP, London

Everton are weighing up the risk of throwing striker Louis Saha into the fray against his former side Manchester United in Saturday's FA Cup semifinal at Wembley.

Saha has been suffering all week from a stomach virus and other injury problems have limited his appearances.

Coach Moyes already has Brazilian loan striker Jo cupped and may push Aussie midfielder Tim Cahill into attack and also push up Marouane Fellaini, meaning he could draft teenager Jack Rodwell into the side if he decides not to risk Saha.

Cahill has played a more attacking role in recent games which have seen him become Everton's leading scorer with nine goals while his change of role has coincided with a hot streak of form which has seen Moyes' men lose just one of their last 11 matches.

Defender Joseph Yobo and striker James Vaughan are both back from injury.

## Pizarro's Peru fine cancelled

AFP, Geneva

International sports top court on Friday cancelled a fine the Peruvian football federation imposed on Werder Bremen striker Claudio Pizarro for alleged misbehaviour in a hotel 18 months ago.

Following an appeal Pizarro made last year, the Court of Arbitration of Sport rejected the fine imposed on the player, saying there was no concrete evidence against him.

The Peruvian player was initially fined 80,000 dollars and suspended for 18 months, after several players were accused of indiscipline on November 2007 following the side's 1-1 draw with Brazil in a World Cup qualifier.

The sanction was later cut to three months and 10,000 dollars after a first appeal by the player, but he later sought redress with the international court.

"The CAS Panel noted that the facts put forward by the PFF in relation to Pizarro were not supported by concrete evidence," CAS said in a statement.

"Furthermore, the Panel also noted that the incidents reported by the PFF were not dealt with either in the PFF regulations, or in the FIFA regulations." Accordingly, the CAS has cancelled the fine of USD 10,000.

The former Chelsea forward was left out of Peru's squad for World Cup qualifiers so far this year.

## Man City bow out

AFP, Paris



Ten-man English Premiership side Manchester City bowed out of the UEFA Cup on Thursday, falling short against Hamburg, who advanced to an all-German semifinal against Werder Bremen.

City came from behind to win 2-1 on the night, and Elano twice hit the woodwork, but Paolo Guerrero's opener gave the hosts too much to do after the 3-1 loss in Germany as Hamburg advanced 4-3 on aggregate to delight coach Martin Jol.

"It's a good experience for our team. To get to the semifinals of the UEFA cup is fantastic," he told ITV.

The historical omens had appeared to favour Jol, who while in charge of Spurs won six times in as many attempts facing City and was also unbeaten in four clashes against City's former Blackburn boss Mark Hughes.

Hughes was sanguine in elimination. "We produced a performance of real desire and commitment," he said. "We got our noses in front after a poor start (but) it wasn't quite enough."

City ended the match down to ten men after skipper Richard Dunne was dismissed ten minutes from time for a second booking.

"We're very disappointed. Now we've got to concentrate on finishing as high in the league as we can," said City midfielder Stephen Ireland, as the club make a last-ditch bid to make next season's revamped Europa League tournament.

Shorn of Craig Bellamy's attacking guile and the width of Shaun Wright-Phillips, City rallied manfully and claimed the equaliser five min-

utes after Guerrero had shocked them with Hamburg's goal on 12 minutes.

Elano netted from the spot after his snapshot struck Piotr Trochowski on the arm.

City came out full of fire after the interval and went in front five minutes after the restart with a neat Felipe Caicedo finish from Ireland's pass.

Caicedo then ballooned over from point blank range before having an effort chalked off for offside.

But a third goal would not come in a frantic finale as City bowed out.

Aided by a brace from Diego, Bremen drew 3-3 away to Italy's Udinese, to wrap up a 6-4 win overall while the other semifinal will be an all-Ukrainian affair after Dynamo Kiev swamping a poor Paris Saint Germain 3-0 after a goalless draw in France.

PSG goalkeeper Mickael Landreau handed the Ukrainians victory with two glaring errors which led to two of the goals.

Shakhtar Donetsk inflicted more Ukrainian punishment on French opposition as they won 2-1 at Marseille with Brazilian pair Fernandinho Luiz Rosa and Adriano on target for a 4-1 aggregate win.

Jol rated Werder Bremen as favourites to reach the final after the latter saw off Udinese.

With Udinese trailing 3-1 from the first leg they were forced to attack and Swiss star Gokhan Inler put them ahead on 15 minutes.

But Brazil playmaker Diego, a reported target for Juventus, responded with a sublime equaliser on 28 minutes, turning on the ball before firing into the top corner.

Fabio Quagliarella struck twice within eight minutes to level the tie but Diego then headed home just before the hour mark.

Although Diego then missed out on a hat-trick when Samir Handanovic saved his penalty on 72 minutes Claudio Pizarro poked home from close range to put the result beyond doubt.

## Juve take on Inter

AFP, Rome



Serie A's top two come face to face in an epic battle at Turin's Stadio Olimpico on Saturday.

Saturday with only seven matches left until the end of the season.

The scene should have been set for a massive title decider but instead the whole event risks turning into a damp squib.

Not because the two sides aren't worthy of their position at the top of the table or because there won't be top class players on display but because Juventus have as good as given up the ghost.

They trail Inter by 10 points with just seven matches left to play and even a victory, or a convincing one, would hardly result in a situation that appears anymore favourable to them.

Their best case scenario after Saturday's game would be trailing by seven points with six matches to go, including a trip to AC Milan.

Instead of playing for the title, Juve are merely playing for pride, according to their president.

"As well as the points on offer, we're playing for pride and for our honour," said Giovanni Cobolli Gigli.

"It will be a very difficult match especially as we have some important players suspended and others have yet to recover from injuries."

"The title is still possible

but only mathematically. Second place is extremely important and we have to do everything to defend it. We want it more than Milan."

Juventus lead Milan by only two points and the rossoneri have a distinctly easier looking task in the visit of Torino to the San Siro.

The title may not be at stake but this match is still called the 'derby of Italy' and like clashes between Real Madrid and Barcelona or between Manchester United and Liverpool, there is always much to play for.

"There is a rivalry between us and Milan," said Marco Tronchetti, president of Inter's shirt sponsors Pirelli.

"But with Juventus, for the success they have had, for the history between the two teams and for the dramas, they have always been the A+ rivalry."

It's not just the historic rivalry that will fire up the visitors, though. Coach Jose Mourinho is a proud man and won't want to concede anything in his quest to demonstrate how superior Inter are to the rest of Serie A.

Genoa are in a fight with Fiorentina for fourth place and the final Champions League qualifying place but they are only four points behind Milan and six off Juve.

A strong finish to their campaign could even see them sneak into the top three and gain automatic entry into the group stages of Europe's premier club competition.

Meanwhile, the bottom five all play away this weekend so any points gained could boost their survival hopes.

### FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
Genoa v Lazio, Juventus v Inter Milan  
**Sunday**  
AC Milan v Torino, Atalanta v Reggina, Cagliari v Napoli, Catania v Sampdoria, Palermo v Bologna, Roma v Lecce, Siena v Chievo, Udinese v Fiorentina

## Bastian back for Bayern

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich welcome back Germany star Bastian Schweinsteiger for Saturday's Bundesliga clash at Bielefeld as they look to put their Champions League heartbreak behind them and chase league leaders Wolfsburg.

Schweinsteiger scored in last Saturday's 4-0 league win over Frankfurt, but a knee injury kept him out of Tuesday's 1-1 draw with Barcelona which knocked Bayern out of the Champions League.

"We hope that the problem will be healed by the weekend," said Bayern boss Jurgen Klinsmann with his side second in the table.

Schweinsteiger's Germany teammate Lukas Podolski is still out with a calf problem and the striker has not trained with the team this week.

As Bayern focus their thoughts on retaining their Bundesliga title, Klinsmann says it is all about points now and the ex-Germany boss was booed by his own fans at the Allianz Arena on Tuesday.

"We have to concentrate purely on the Bundesliga and win points, points, points,"

said Klinsmann, with Italians Carlo Ancelotti and Robert Mancini both being linked to his job by the Italian media.

Bayern are three points behind leaders Wolfsburg, who are at home to Bayer Leverkusen.

Wolfsburg have few injury worries as they prepare to host Leverkusen. Strikers Edin Dzeko and Brazilian Grafite have scored 36 league goals between them, but coach Felix Magath is keeping his feet on the ground.

"Look at Hertha Berlin: three rounds ago, they were four points ahead of us. Now, they are five points behind. It can happen so fast," said Magath, with Hertha now fourth in the league.

Hamburg, who qualified for the UEFA Cup semifinals on Thursday, are at home to strugglers Hanover, who shocked Hertha Berlin 2-0 last weekend.

Hertha Berlin v Werder Bremen, Hamburg v Hanover 96

### FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
Arminia Bielefeld v Bayern Munich, Cologne v VfB Stuttgart, VfL Wolfsburg v Bayer Leverkusen, VfL Bochum v Borussia Dortmund, Eintracht Frankfurt v Borussia M'gladbach, Karlsruhe v Hoffenheim  
**Sunday**  
Hertha Berlin v Werder Bremen, Hamburg v Hanover 96

Hamburg are level on points with Bayern and can still win the treble of the Bundesliga, German Cup and UEFA Cup this season.

Hertha Berlin are in danger of dropping out of the title race and another defeat at home to Werder Bremen on Sunday will seriously damage their hopes.

Hot-shot striker Andrei Voronin has been banned for three games after being sent off last weekend, while fellow forward Marko Pantelic is out with a groin strain.

Having climbed up to fifth in the league thanks to Germany striker Mario Gomez scoring an injury-time goal last week, Stuttgart have a good chance to take three more goals at strugglers Cologne.

Gomez has now hit 15 goals in 26 league games this season.

In the weekend's other games, Schalke 04 are at home to strugglers Energie Cottbus on Friday while bottom club Karlsruhe are home to Hoffenheim who are now 10 points off Wolfsburg and effectively out of the title race.

Mid-table sides Bochum and Dortmund will slug it out Saturday and Eintracht Frankfurt, who were humbled 4-0 at Bayern on Saturday, are up against Borussia Muenchengladbach who are third from bottom and in the relegation zone.