

# Howard halts MU

## All Blues final in Wembley

AFP, London



Everton will face Chelsea in the FA Cup final after David Moyes' side secured a 4-2 penalty shoot-out victory over Manchester United following a goalless draw at Wembley on Sunday.

Tim Howard, Everton's former United keeper, was the hero as he saved from Dimitar Berbatov and Rio Ferdinand, allowing defender Phil Jagielka to strike the decisive spot-kick.

That took Everton to their first final since 1995 and ended United's hopes of completing a clean sweep of honours.

"It was a tough game for us," Moyes said. "If they put out their under-14s it would have been a tough game - they are going after every trophy."

"For everyone at Everton it is fantastic. If they keep doing what they are doing now, success will not be too far away."

It was the first time Sir Alex Ferguson had experienced defeat at this stage of the competition, but the United manager was furious his side had been denied a second half penalty appeal when Jagielka clipped Danny Welbeck.

After winning the League Cup and Club World Cup already this season, United now have to focus on retaining the Premier League and Champions League trophies they won last year.

Ferguson had sprung a major surprise by fielding a side packed with youngsters and fringe players in advance of Wednesday's league clash with Portsmouth.

Wayne Rooney, Cristiano Ronaldo and Ryan Giggs were among those missing, and without their big names United looked a shadow of their usual selves.

Carlos Tevez accepted the responsibility of co-ordinating his inexperienced teenage strike-partners Federico Macheda and Welbeck and orchestrated a series of neat passing moves around the edge of the Everton area.

But without Rooney and Ronaldo, United were desperately short of a cutting edge and Everton keeper Tim Howard remained largely untroubled during the opening 45 minutes.

In fact United came closest to scoring when Howard was wrong-footed when teammate Joleon Lescott deflected Park Ji-Sung's right wing cross and both defender and keeper were relieved to see the ball drift narrowly wide of the near post.

Whether Everton were boosted or insulted by the sight of the United team-sheet, they initially showed few signs of being able to exploit their weakened opponents.

Despite boasting an overwhelming advantage in terms of first-team experience, it was David Moyes' side who looked inhibited on the big stage, although a line-up that left lone striker Louis Saha painfully short of support did nothing to encourage their ambition.

Marouane Fellaini attempted to get close to Saha but the Belgian's aerial threat was nullified by Nemanja Vidic and Everton's only half chance of the first half came when United keeper Ben Foster scuffed a clearance.

It was clear Everton needed to inject more purpose and self-belief into their attacking movements.

And that is exactly what they did after the restart when they pressed United onto the back-foot and finally brought a meaningful save from Foster when Tim Cahill let fly from 30 yards in the 54th minute.

But instead of building on that momentum, Moyes' side again found themselves overrun as United took charge with Park and Darren Gibson both coming close with well-worked shots.

There best opening, though, was denied by referee Mike Riley who adjudged there had been no infringement when Jagielka appeared to trip Welbeck after the United striker had latched onto a loose ball and rounded Howard.

United were adamant it should have been a penalty - and Ferguson remonstrated angrily from the touch-line. It's likely he would have been even more furious had he known his side would struggle to make another chance of note before the tie drifted into extra-time.

Penalties always looked the most likely outcome once the extra half hour had been signalled, although Everton substitute James Vaughan wasted a good opening when he directed a shot straight at Vidic.



Everton goalkeeper Tim Howard saves a penalty from Manchester United striker Dimitar Berbatov (not in picture) during the shoot-out of the FA Cup semifinal at Wembley on Sunday. Howard saved two penalties as Everton defeated United 4-2 in the tie-breaker after the match ended goalless.

PHOTO: AFP

## Totti shoots into all-time top 10 list

AFP, Rome

AS Roma captain Francesco Totti scored a brace in the club's 3-2 home success over Lecce on Sunday to move into the top 10 list of all-time Serie A goalscorers.

His two goals took the 32-year-old's tally to 175 in the top flight since making his debut for Roma in 1994.

In reaching the top 10, having scored his ninth and 10th league goals this season, Totti replaced former Roma forward Amedeo Amedei (174 goals), who reigned during the 1940s and is now 87 years old.

### TOP 10 SERIE A GOALSCORERS:

1. Silvio Piola 274
2. Gunnar Nordhal (SWE) 225
3. Giuseppe Meazza 216
4. Jose Altafini 216
5. Roberto Baggio 205
6. Kurt Hamrin (SWE) 190
7. Beppe Signori 188
8. Gabriel Batistuta (ARG) 184
9. Gianpiero Boniperti 178
10. Francesco Totti 175

## Pippo still having fun

AFP, Rome

He may be 35 but Filippo Inzaghi has become an increasingly important element in the AC Milan team this season.

The penalty-box predator scored his second hat-trick within two months on Sunday in Milan's 5-1 hammering of Torino to take his tally to nine goals in his last six matches.

He more than anyone else has made the difference in Milan's recent resurgence that has seen them join Juventus in joint second place in Serie A.

But when the season began, Inzaghi looked likely to play no more than a bit part with the likes of Ronaldinho, Andrei Shevchenko, Pato, Kaka and Marco Borriello also competing for forward positions.

In fact, before the turn of the year, most of his starts came in the UEFA Cup, where coach Carlo Ancelotti rotated his squad to give fringe players a game.

But now the veteran revealed he is loving his new lease of life.

"I'm still having fun, especially when I read in the papers that Milan don't have a big strong forward who can score with his head. That motivates me," he said.

Two of Inzaghi's goals against Torino came from close range headers while a third header - all from David Beckham crosses - also found the net but was ruled out for offside.

The goals took Inzaghi's Serie A count to 149, putting him second amongst active forwards behind AS Roma's Francesco Totti and Alessandro Del Piero of Juventus.

And his run in the first team - he has started Milan's last seven matches out of only 10 league starts this season - looks set to continue.

"Right now he's a vital player for us," said Ancelotti.

# Reds' vital Gunners clash

AFP, Liverpool



Liverpool head into their vital Premier League clash with Arsenal well-rested but knowing that only a victory will do on Tuesday as they look to maintain the pressure on Manchester United.

The build-up to the game will once again be dominated by the continued bickering between Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez and United's Sir Alex Ferguson.

Their row, which first became public when Benitez publicly criticised his counter-part back in January, escalated once again last week with Ferguson branding the Liverpool manager "arrogant".

But the sparring will be given a new context by the midweek matches that could see the title race take another twist.

Liverpool host Arsene Wenger's side on Tuesday with the opportunity to move two points above the leaders, who will still have two games in hand.

Ferguson's team will then go into Wednesday evening's match with Portsmouth at Old Trafford with their title credentials once again under scrutiny.

If Liverpool lose, United have the chance to move five points clear and will still have a game in hand.

With Liverpool having just six matches left, Benitez accepts his team can simply not afford any more slip-ups.

He will once again be without Steven Gerrard, who is still struggling with a groin problem that has kept him out of Liverpool's past two matches.

Although that absence will be a blow, Benitez is pleased that squad players are hitting form at the right time to boost the Reds' run-in.

In particular, he feels that defenders Daniel Agger and Emiliano Insua can make a significant contribution to the run-in.

Benitez said: "Insua is improving and the competition for the left back position is very high with Fabio Aurelio and Andrea Dossena."

"Insua is doing well and the team is doing well. Hopefully we can see Emiliano fighting for his position until the end of the season with Fabio and Dossena."

"Daniel is a centre back who can bring the ball forward and score goals, not just from set pieces. He is doing well and he is working very hard."

Arsenal are still getting over their 2-1 FA Cup semifinal defeat to London rivals

Chelsea on Saturday.

They also have a Champions League tie with Manchester United next week to concern them but Robin van Persie is doubtful for the game at Anfield due to a groin problem picked up at the weekend.

The Gunners sit fourth in the table and are seven points above fifth-placed Aston Villa and six points adrift of third-placed Chelsea.

But both Kolo Toure and Theo Walcott are relieved to be heading to Anfield so soon after their disappointment at Wembley.

England winger Walcott said: "Everyone is down, but we have to forget about this, because we have got a very big game on Tuesday against Liverpool."

"We dominated the first 30 minutes, but then Chelsea came back and took over the midfield a bit. Frank Lampard was the man of the match, and his experience showed."

"They have got a lot of experienced players and they showed that they have some world-class players in the team."

"We will learn from it and bounce back, because that is all we can do. It is another great experience for us all, but we have got to move on."

"It is a busy month for us and we are looking forward to it."

# Juve abhor racist chants

AFP, Rome



Juventus have apologised over the racist chanting directed at Inter Milan's teenage striker Mario Balotelli during the pair's clash at Turin's Stadio Olimpico on Saturday.

Balotelli, an Italian under-21 international, was born to Ghanaian immigrant parents but was brought up by an Italian family, whose surname he goes by - his real parents' surname is Barwuah.

The striker is an at times controversial figure who angered home fans in Turin throughout the game, particularly for his role in the sending off of Juve midfielder Thiago.

Balotelli was playing keep ball on the touch-line with Muntari Sulley, a Ghana midfielder, when Thiago let his frustrations get the better of him and kicked both of them, earning a straight red card.

Balotelli, who fell down from Thiago's fairly innocuous kick, earned the wrath of a small section of the home fans.

But Juventus president Giovanni Cobolli Gigli condemned the chants.

"On behalf of Juventus and the great majority of our fans I want to strongly condemn the racist chanting against Inter Milan's Mario Balotelli," he said in a statement on Monday.

"There are no excuses or justification for this type of behaviour. Football fans can get hot up but episodes such as this are inexcusable."

"Together we must all try to promote a sporting culture that puts respect for the adversary at its core and fights against racism."

Italian police are studying video evidence of the racist chanting to try to identify those responsible.

Marcello Nicchi, president of the Italian Referee's Association (Aia) said the chants were very serious.

"There are 16,000 matches played in Italy every weekend, we have to send out the right signals and educate the people," he said.

"The racist chants directed at Balotelli are very serious, UEFA and FIFA are always talking about eliminating them."

"Referees don't have the power to stop a match but they can report on the events to the right authorities."

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon said that Balotelli's character made him a target.

"I promise that I'm against racist chanting but there are two aspects to consider here," he said.

"One good: Balotelli is young, he has a lot of room for improvement in his behaviour in the future."

"And one bad: with this character he knows how to be respected but he risks compromising moments of a career that promises great things because he has all he needs to be great."

"But I have to say that he's a good kid, before and after the match he was joking with everyone."

Brazil coach Dunga said football was a goldfish bowl that exaggerates the problem of racism.

"Racism is a terrible thing but you feel it more in football because there are players from all over the world. The fans want to let off steam but they do it in the wrong way," he said.

"Football needs to take tangible steps to combat racism."

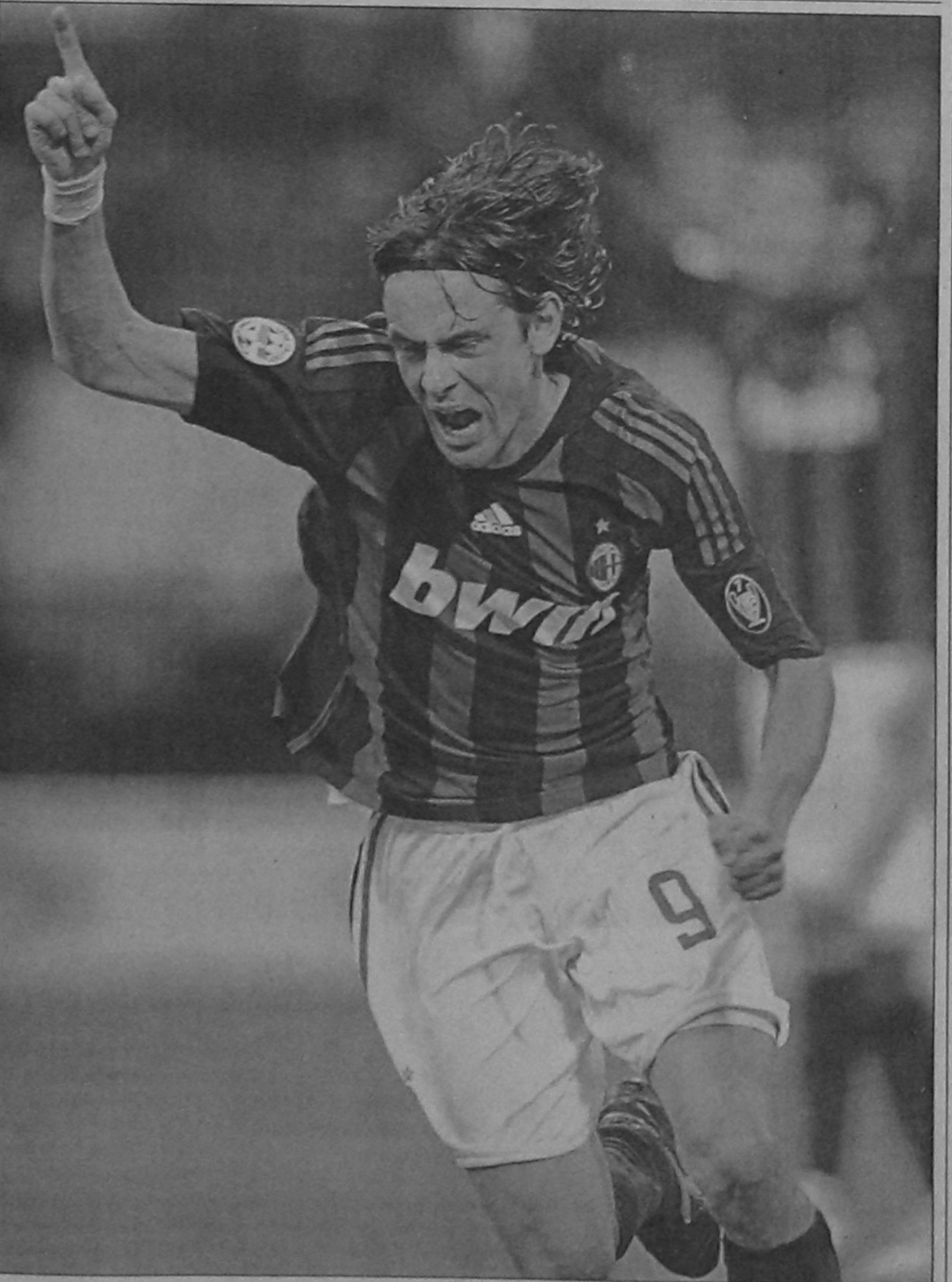


PHOTO: AFP

ANOTHER PIPPO HATRICK: AC Milan's veteran striker Filippo Inzaghi is ecstatic after scoring one of his three goals against Torino during their Serie A encounter at San Siro on Sunday.

# Barcelona up for it

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona have to battle through the fatigue barrier as they continue fighting on three fronts and play their fourth game in 11 hectic days when they host Sevilla at Camp Nou on Wednesday.

Six clean sheets have helped Barca maintain their six-point buffer over Real Madrid and this is another crucial week for Pep Guardiola's side with a testing trip to Valencia at the weekend.

"We are not tired, neither mentally nor physically," said Xavi. "When things are going badly you feel tired but at the moment we are competing for three titles and it is a privilege."

"Everyone would swap shoes with us because fighting for trophies is just fantastic."

Getafe lost 1-0 against Barcelona on Saturday but it should have been much more and boss Victor Munoz admitted afterwards that it felt like Barca had more players on the pitch.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to

Getafe beat Real 3-1 at the Coliseum this season to put one of the final nails in Bernd Schuster's coffin and also won 1-0 at the Bernabeu last season when they scored on the counter attack as Real players were celebrating a disallowed goal.

The champions have won 15 out of 17 league games under Juande Ramos and French midfielder Diarra saluted the achievements of the ex-Sevilla coach.

"We are focussed on winning every match to try and

win the league," said Diarra. Real have lost Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder for around a month with a torn hamstring that will keep him out of 'El Clasico' against Barcelona at the beginning of May.

Elsewhere Valencia go to Real Betis on Wednesday looking to put the pressure on their Champions League rivals who are all in action on Thursday.

Valencia lie three points above Atletico Madrid and Villarreal with the Champions League battle set to go down to