Bayern eye up van Gaal

Uli Hoeness revealed on won this season's Dutch championship with AZ Alkmaar, is one of Bayern Munich's targets to replace Jurgen Klinsmann.

Klinsmann was sacked as head coach of Bayern last Monday after just ten months in charge and 57-year-old's van Gaal's name - along with fellow Dutchmen Martin Jol and Frank Rijkaard - has already been linked to the vacancy.

"Van Gaal is one of the candidates we are interested in," Hoeness told daily newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung on Saturday before adding there is a list of possible candidates Bayern's bosses want to

newspaper, Bayern have already contacted van Gaal who is under contract with AZ Alkmaar until 2011.

side.

five league games of the season and are third in the Bundesliga, three points behind leaders Wolfsburg. But Hoeness says the

German-speaking coach as a matter of priority. "It is an enormous handicap if the trainer must constantly pass on his ideas

"There are only a few cases, Liverpool, who would make you rethink, but he is not avail-

plan new league

Serie A's 20 clubs on Thursday voted to break away from their Serie B counterparts and form a new competition along the lines of the English Premier League.

would no longer involve sec-

Only Lecce, who are in the relegation zone and look set to drop to Serie B next season, voted against the motion to split from the Lega Calcio, which currently organises the

picked Maurizio Beretta, a former director of Italian television channel Rai Uno, as its newhead.

Briton smashes keepy-uppy WR

AFP, London

A British man on Friday smashed the world record for keeping a football in the air after tapping it up and down for a marathon 24 hours, an AFP reporter said.

Dan Magness, 25, played keepy-uppy using his feet, legs and head in the popular tourist spot of Covent Garden. He sailed past the previous record of 19 hours and 30 minutes at 0830 GMT and just kept going.

Just seconds away from reaching the 24-hour mark, Magness relaxed as the crowd cheered him on, and almost lost control of the ball -- but he managed to regain his composure in time.

As the magic milestone flashed up on the clock, an exhausted Magness raised his arms in delight and embraced his wife as 200 spectators

applauded wildly. "It feels good," he said, before revealing he had been worried after ten hours that he would be unable to continue as tiredness took hold -- but he

gritted his teeth and fought on. A representative for Guinness World Records which allowed him only a few brief pauses, to relax his muscles -- was on hand to confirm the feat and present him with a

certificate. Magness, from Milton Keynes in southern England, describes himself as a professional exponent of "freestyle football" and says he is the "David Blaine of football" after the US magician who stages high-publicity stunts.

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich team manager Saturday Louis van Gaal, who Ex-Germany coach

have coach their side. According to the Munich

Van Gaal, who has a reputation for discipline, has coached European giants Ajax, who he guided to Champions League success in 1995, and Barcelona as well as the national Dutch

Bayern have Jupp Heynckes as caretaker coach for the last

defending Bundesliga champions are determined to find a

through a translator," said Hoeness. for example Rafael Benitez at

Italian clubs

AFP, Rome

The new league, which ond-tier clubs in its decisionmaking process, is to be called Lega Serie A.

top two divisions in Italy.

The new organisation has

"We've agreed a new A league. Am I satisfied? No, but it was necessary," said Palermo president Maurizio Zamparini following the meeting in Rome.

'Almunia for England'

Football

through by Marlon King.

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger believes Manuel Almunia could be England's goalkeeper at next year's World Cup finals in South Africa.

encounter at the Riverside Stadium on Thursday.

AFP, Middlesbrough

win away to Middlesbrough.

Newcastle on Sunday.

league victory.

four trophies.

MU in box seat

Manchester United extended

their lead at the top of the

Premier League to a com-

manding six points as goals

from Ryan Giggs and Park Ji-

Sung sealed a comfortable 2-0

Giggs struck his fourth goal of the season

before the break here at the Riverside Stadium

on Saturday to help double United's points

advantage over title rivals Liverpool, who host

deservedly doubled their advantage early in the

second-half as reigning champions United,

seeking to equal Liverpool's record of 18

English titles, strolled to a fifth consecutive

United couldn't have asked for an easier

warm-up for Tuesday's Champions League

semifinal trip to Arsenal, where they defend a

single-goal first-leg lead, as they showed little

sign of fatigue despite clocking up their 60th

game of a season that could yet see them win

had been little to choose between the teams

before Giggs - almost a week after his peers the

Professional Footballers Association (PFA)

voted him player of the year - broke the dead-

the best chance to open the scoring, when he

saw his shot blocked by the feet of goalkeeper

Ben Foster after the forward, under pressure

from defender Nemanja Vidic, had been put

team that started in the 1-09 Champions

League victory over Arsenal on Wednesday,

Giggs, one of seven United changes from the

Middlesbrough's Jeremie Aliadiere spurned

lock midway through the first-half.

Despite United winning at a canter, there

And South Korea international Park

The Spanish-born keeper, who will soon be eligible for England under residency rules, was outstanding in the Gunners' 1-0 Champions League semifinal defeat to Manchester United in mid-

And Wenger believes his faith in the often-criticised 31year-old has been vindicated Arsenal still have a chance of some silverware this season.

"I believe he is not only good enough, but he is the best," Wenger said of the possibility of Almunia declaring his availability for England.

"It is down to what you expect morally and mentally from a national team. I believe at some stage you have to observe just the rules and decide what you want.

"On the English side, for the national team, it is not so much a problem because if the guy decides to become English, he has had to observe and respect the rules like anybody else.

"Why should he then not be qualified to play for the national team?

"It is more a moral problem maybe for Manuel Almunia, because does he consider he

with Juve

SOCCERNET

Juventus star Gianluigi Buffon admits he has become frustrated at the club this season.

criticised at times this season, even though Juve are still in third in Serie A and pushing AC Milan for second.

sider his future, despite the fact by a display that has ensured he has four years left on his current deal. "I have been criticised for

the game.

when I make a mistake or not.

have lost a game because of me this season. That is the reality. My contract runs until 2013, a lot of time is left until then.

team will be formed next year, and I hope it will be an even more competitive one. What I want to do is sit back and assess

tre back across the edge of the area.

made its way through to Giggs were ignored by

showed the Frenchman how it should be done

after 25 minutes.

clinical finish left-footed into the bottom corner from 20 yards after Federico Macheda had squared England striker Wayne Rooney's cen-Middlesbrough appeals that Dimitar Berbatov fouled Matthew Bates as the ball

The former Wales international produced a

referee Mark Halsey as United sealed a third league and cup victory over Boro this season. Macheda should have doubled the advantage straight after the break when Rooney beat Tony McMahon to provide an inviting cut-

back, only for the teenage striker to poke the chance wide at the near post from five yards. United didn't have long to wait for their growing dominance to be rewarded as Park

claimed their second in the 51st minute. Rooney was again the architect, with a sublime slide-rule ball into the area which wrongfooted the Middlesbrough defence to allow Park to fire home his third goal of the season from 12 yards past stranded keeper Brad Jones.

Only a desperate late block from Bates, the hosts' best player, prevented John O'Shea - the goalscorer from Wednesday's Champions League clash - from adding a third from close range inside the last 10 minutes as Boro left gaps at the back in a fruitless bid to find a way back into the contest.

A first home defeat for more than four months left Middlesbrough second from bottom and three points adrift of safety with just three games remaining, starting with the crucial derby trip to Newcastle on May 11.

But after just two victories in their last 23 league games, the Teesside club need to show a vast improvement in form if they are to extend their 11-year stay in the top flight.

Buffon upset

The Italian No.1 has been

This has led Buffon to con-

the past six months," Buffon told French daily L'Equipe. "It is like I am not allowed to concede any goals. But it is part of "I am 31 and I understand

But what I know for sure is that I feel good. Just watch my "Nobody can say that Juve

"We have to know what

what is going on at the club. "At the end of the day, I will make a decision."

has a chance to play in the Spanish national team or not?" Arsenal head to

Portsmouth on Saturday looking to extend a 20-game unbeaten run in the Premier League. Wenger must do without

striker Eduardo, who is out for around three weeks with a groin problem, and defender Mickael Silvestre is struggling to face his former club again because of a similar problem. Gael Clichy (back) will miss

the Champions League second-leg against United on Tuesday, but leading scorer Robin van Persie (groin) could return next week, Wenger indicated.

Russian playmaker Andrey Arshavin is available for the trip to Portsmouth having been cup-tied for the Champions League clash. "We have a good run and

want to win the game tomorrow. Tuesday is not in our mind," Wenger insisted. "Sometimes it is good to rest players, but we will have a

baller."

strong team out and go there to win the game. "When you are on a pitch, you focus on the game - you do not have in your mind what you do three days later, that is part of being a top-level foot-

Wenger added: "We will go deal verbally, will officially sign into the United game with full his new contract later this belief and with certainty. We are happy to say 'let's have a month. real go at Manchester United for 90 minutes' and I am convinced we will go through." best club in the world."

UEFA CUP Fernandinho

rescues Shakhtar

AFP, Kiev

GETTING BETTER WITH AGE: Manchester United's veteran midfielder Ryan Giggs (L) shoots past Middlesbrough defender David Wheater to score the opening goal during their Premiership

Shakhtar Donetsk will take a slight advantage into the second leg of their UEFA Cup semifinal against fellow Ukrainians Dynamo Kiev after drawing 1-1 against them here in the first leg on Thursday.

Fernandinho equalised teammate Dmytro Chygrynskiy's first-half own goal to make Shakhtar favourites to become the first Ukrainian side to qualify for a major European final since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Shakhtar are the reigning Ukrainian champions but Dynamo lead the current domestic standings by 12 points from their rivals and it was the home side who drew first blood when Chygrynskiy deflected Oleksandr Aliyev's driven free-kick into his own net in the 22nd minute.

Neither side had shown much attacking endeavour in a muted opening and the visitors didn't threaten until Brazilian winger Fernandinho tested Dynamo goalkeeper Stanyslav Bohush with a low shot on the half-hour mark.

Bohush then raced from his line to deny Luiz Adriano as Shakhtar grew bolder, but in first-half injury time Dynamo almost increased their lead when Correa's deflected strike brushed the right-hand upright.

Artem Milevskiy glanced a header wide from another Aliyev set-piece in the early stages of the second period before defender Ognjen Vukojevic diverted an Aliyev long-ranger inches wide shortly afterwards.

Dynamo were firmly in the ascendancy, but in the 68th minute three of Shakhtar's Brazilian contingent combined to craft a priceless equaliser.

Jadson sprang the offside trap with a pass to substitute Willian on the right and his low cross was slid home by Fernandinho, putting Shakhtar firmly in the driving seat prior to the second leg on May 7.

Park agrees new deal

AFP, Manchester

South Korea winger Park Jisung has agreed a new deal with Manchester United, according to reports in England. Park had 18 months left on

his current deal but Sir Alex Ferguson was keen to keep him at Old Trafford for even longer. The four million pounds

signing from PSV Eindhoven admits he never considered leaving a club he thinks is the biggest in the world. Park, who has agreed his

"I have no reason to move, he told The Sun. "I play at the

Hiddink hits back

AFP, London



Chelsea boss Guus Hiddink has hit out at claims Chelsea used "dirty tricks" to secure last week's goalless draw with Barcelona in the first leg of their Champions League

semifinal. The Catalans voiced criticism of what they saw as an overly physical approach to the encounter but Hiddink has no intention of

apologising. "It was a man's match," he said on Friday. "There were some collisions, but from either side. It's a man's game. They were controlling and dominating the game and I'd have liked to have had some more initiatives, but they con-

"I don't like to give in that easily. We were well organised and played well, defensively. I'd like to have taken a little bit more of the initia-

tive, but they are a disciplined team as well. 'Under Pep Guardiola, they know how to defend firmly and their centre-back, too, isn't afraid to make the game tough. On top of that, they can play.

"We would, of course, have liked to play more, but we were playing the best team in their

concept of football. "We didn't want to play 'anti-football'. This

team has proved for several months, and at the

"But we were not able to start a good attack-

ready."

ing game in Barcelona - you can blame us for not starting well and they made it difficult.

beginning of the season, that they can play

Ferdinand

Rio Ferdinand should be fit for

Manchester United's

Champions League semifinal

second leg clash with Arsenal

next week, Sir Alex Ferguson

in the final minutes of the 1-0

first leg victory at Old Trafford

amid fears he had broken a rib.

The England defender left the

field in visible pain and had to

miss United's Premier League

tie with Middlesbrough on

Saturday, Ferguson is confi-

dent he will be back in

United's starting line-up for the decisive second match at

the Emirates Stadium on

assessed the situation and the

good news is that there is

nothing cracked or broken

which caused a bit of cough-

ing of blood when it happened

but nothing has happened

since so hopefully we will be

able to get him ready for

getting a crack in the rib area

you fear the worst with that,

particularly when he's cough-

ing blood, but that has passed

him training by Sunday I think

and hopefully he will be

"We just have to try and get

"When you see someone

"There is some bruising

which is terrific news.

Ferguson said: "We have

Tuesday.

Tuesday.

However, although he will

spend a night in hospital.

Ferdinand was substituted

on track

revealed on Friday.

AFP, London

"We don't like to allow them to take the victory. This team has the character to fight as

Hiddink's comments reflected the extent to which Chelsea are preoccupied by Wednesday's second leg. But the Dutchman must first focus on Saturday's clash with local rivals Fulham, who are chasing a place in next season's Europa Cup.

Chelsea cannot afford to be too complacent about their occupation of third place in the Premier League with Arsenal, who they will face at the Emirates on May 10, only six points behind them.

"There might be one or two changes for the Fulham match," Hiddink said. "But it's not that we're going to decrease the quality of the players coming in.

quality to perform well. Maybe one or two will start tomorrow. We take this game very seri-

"We have players on the bench with the

"Roy Hodgson is doing a tremendous job at Fulham. He's one of the older managers, like me, who knows that the job is difficult.

"I respect the job he's doing. He's a man with a lot of experience and dignity.

Piotr fires Hamburg

AFP, Bremen



in the firstleg of the German

UEFA Cup semifinal as his winning goal sealed a 1-0 win at Bundesliga rivals Werder Bremen on

Thursday. "My team did particularly disgruntled Schaaf. well in the first half and even though Bremen were better

after the break, we still created

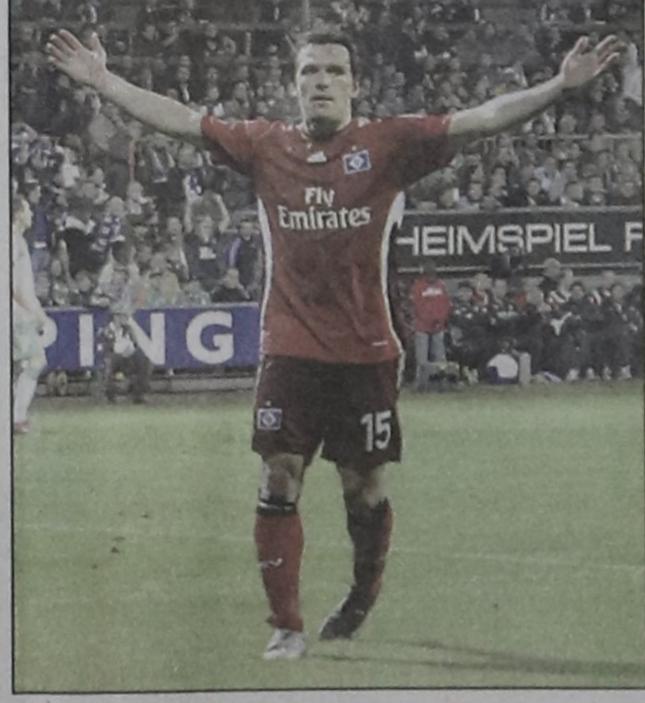
one or two chances," said Hamburg coach Martin Jol after the diminutive winger Trochowski's first-half header. "That was a good result for us - I have never seen

> head before!" added the former Tottenham Hotspur May 10. manager. But Bremen coach Thomas Schaaf insisted it will be a different matter at Hamburg

Trochowski score with his

next week. "My team needs to understand that a game consists of two halves and we must do well in both periods," said a

"Although it was an entertaining game, I think the replay will be a classic."



Hamburg midfielder Piotr Trochowski celebrates after scoring the all-important goal against Werder Bremen during their UEFA Cup semifinal first-leg match at the Weser-Stadion in Bremen on Thursday.

This was the second of four derbies between the north Germany neighbours who have met each other in the German Cup last week, play twice in consecutive weeks in the UEFA Cup before meeting again in the Bundesliga on

It was sweet revenge for visitors Hamburg after their German Cup semifinal heartbreak the previous week at the hands of Bremen.

Goalkeeper Tim Wiese had been Werder's hero the week before when his three consecutive saves in the penalty shoot-out at Hamburg knocked the hosts out of the German Cup and put his side in the final on May 30.

German teams reached the semifinals of the UEFA Cup and this was this first time in 26 years Hamburg have reached a Euro semifinal since they beat Juventus 1-0 to win the 1983 European Cup. Hamburg went ahead here

Not since 1989 have two

when midfielder Guy Demel crossed the ball in from the right and Trochowski headed home from close-range giving Wiese no chance on 28 minutes. It was 1-0 to the guests at half-time and Hamburg's

Bayern Munich-bound striker Ivica Olic had the chance to put his side further ahead when he broke into acres of space just after the hour mark, but fired straight at Wiese. Moments later Peru striker Jose Paolo Guerrero earned

himself a yellow card and will be suspended from the return leg at Hamburg's HSH Nordbank Arena next Thursday. With time running out,

Werder raised the tempo to try and earn an all-important away goal, but Hamburg goalkeeper Frank Rost was not to be beaten.