



Chelsea midfielder Michael Ballack celebrates scoring the equalising goal against Sunderland during their Premiership encounter at the Stadium of Light on Tuesday.

## Chelsea outclass Sunderland

AFP, Sunderland



Chelsea dug deep again to maintain new manager Carlo Ancelotti's 100 per cent start with a classy 3-1 victory at Sunderland on Tuesday.

On Saturday, a miscued Didier Drogba cross deep into injury time dipped into the net to give Ancelotti's side a narrow 2-1 home win against Hull City after the Blues had fallen behind.

The west London club found themselves in trouble again at the Stadium of Light as record signing Darren Bent gave Sunderland an early lead. But thereafter it was all Chelsea as Michael Ballack, Frank Lampard from the spot and Deco produced second-half goals that eased the visitors to a deserved victory.

Having themselves won on the opening day - 1-0 at Bolton - Sunderland were reminded of the class gap in this league.

It was art against graft in the engine room, where Bruce trusted in the workrate and strength of former Marseille captain Lorik Cana alongside Lee Cattermole - both of them close-season signings - against the quality of

Lampard, Ballack and Deco.

It was still a bright start from the home side and Bent, who had taken only five minutes to claim his first Sunderland goal at Bolton, threatened but lashed wide inside three minutes with Kieran Richardson better placed in the middle.

Chelsea could not break through the home side's determined early rearguard, their best moments coming from a string of early corners, and were behind in the 18th minute as Bent, ridiculed by Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp last season for missing a chance he reckoned his wife could have put away, finished with cool precision.

He started the move with a ball over from the left that broke for Jones 18 yards out. The Trinidad and Tobago striker's shot was blocked, but the ball squirted out to the left for Bent, who steadied himself before firing under Petr Cech.

Ballack ballooned a shot over when teed-up by Lampard inside the box and Jordan Henderson had to head clear Jose Bosingwa's cross from under his own bar before Sunderland's goal survived an almighty scare in the 37th minute, Cattermole hooking Ballack's shot off the line following Deco's corner from

the left.

Five minutes after interval, Marton Fulop clawed away Branislav Ivanovic's header from a Lampard centre and the Hungarian was relieved seconds later to see Drogba's bullet headers skim the roof of his net.

Henderson conceded a corner when he hooked Lampard's cross from the head of Ashley Cole, but there were to be no more let-offs for Sunderland as Lampard's flag kick took a touch on at the near post for Ballack to force the ball home at the far post in the 52nd minute.

The home side was in danger of being overwhelmed and Chelsea made their dominance tell in the 61st minute as Drogba was upended by George McCartney for a clear penalty, which Lampard drilled home.

Drogba somehow headed Cole's cross over the bar from close range, but victory was in the bag for Chelsea when Deco eluded substitute Grant Leadbitter to angle home a delicious right-foot shot from 20 yards.

Substitute Daniel Sturridge tested Fulop with a curling effort at the death. A fourth would have been cruel on Sunderland, but little more than Chelsea would have deserved from a fine display.

## Rafa needs Masche talks

Football

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez admits he needs to hold talks with Javier Mascherano to resolve the Argentina midfielder's future at Anfield.

Mascherano was keen on joining Barcelona in the close-season after the European champions approached Liverpool over a deal for the Argentina captain.

Benitez hinted that Barca forward Lionel Messi, a compatriot of Mascherano's, had been trying to persuade his international team-mate to make the switch to the Nou Camp.

But the Liverpool boss refused to agree to the transfer because he was already resigned to losing Xabi Alonso to Real Madrid.

There is now speculation that Liverpool want to offer the 25-year-old a contract extension in order to prolong his stay at Anfield and Benitez told Sky Sports News: "We were talking

with Mascherano before. He knows we have to have a meeting and talk about his future.

"There is a possibility that we will be friends, and will talk about things in private."

Meanwhile, Benitez has hinted that he could enter the transfer market before the window closes on August 31.

With Danish defender Daniel Agger out for several weeks and centre-backs Jamie Carragher and Martin Skrtel injured in Sunday's defeat at Tottenham, Benitez is looking for defensive cover, with Bilbao defender Fernando Amorebieta reportedly top of his list.

"I try to see how the market is, and what players are available, just in case," he said.

"You never know if you get injuries or if you have to bring someone in. It also depends on the position (of players) too."

"We are trying to keep working with the scouting department and will see what happens."

The Reds boss may have to sell before he can buy however after reports that Liverpool's American owners George Gillett and Tom Hicks are refusing to release any more transfer funds.

## Jens to hang up his gloves

AFP, Berlin

Former Germany and Arsenal goalkeeper Jens Lehmann is to finally hang up his gloves after a near two-decade career at the end of the season.

Lehmann, who turns 40 in November, will see out his contract with Stuttgart, the club he joined after a long spell with Arsenal, and then retire, he announced on German television on Tuesday.

"After this season it's finished for me, I've had enough, it'll be time to try something else and to disappear a bit off the radar," he said.

The veteran stopper known for his temperamental character, has 61 international caps to his name, appearing at the 2006 World Cup and at Euro 2008.

## Diego issues rallying cry

AFP, Buenos Aires

Diego Maradona is only considering victory for his Argentina side in next month's pivotal World Cup qualifier against continental arch rivals Brazil.

With four games to go in South American zonal qualifying, Argentina are lying fourth in the last automatic qualifying spot for South Africa, with 22 points, five behind leaders Brazil.

Chile and Paraguay are in second and third.

Despite that precarious position, Maradona was in positive mood Wednesday, telling a press conference in Rosario where the September 5 tie is being held: "I'm only thinking of victory, I'm not considering defeat."

"Honours were shared with a goalless draw in the two countries' first meeting on the road to South Africa in Belo Horizonte in June last year.

But this time Maradona believes the outcome will be different.

"We're hungrier than Brazil," insisted the Argentine football legend who this month was forced to dismiss reports linking him to the manager's job at English Premier League side Portsmouth.

Maradona, who took over as Argentina boss in November 2008, spoke in reverential terms of Dunga's Brazilian side which in June successfully defended their Confederations Cup title.

"The entire Brazil team makes me scared," he admitted.

"They have a fantastic side but the best players must be Kaka and Robinho."

"I have the utmost respect for Carlos Dunga, he organises things very well."

He concluded by issuing a rallying cry to his team who had to come from behind to edge Russia 3-2 in a warm-up to the Brazil clash last week in Moscow.

"We are all Argentinians and we're going to be coming up against our biggest rivals."

"We have to remain united, otherwise Brazil can do us great harm."

## Big guns safely thru'

INTERNET, undated



Arsenal, Stuttgart and Olympiakos Piraeus on Tuesday took a giant step towards the lucrative group stage of the Champions League with away wins in their first leg matches in the play-off round. Premier League side Arsenal won the Battle of Britain against Scottish club Celtic 2-0, while Stuttgart beat Romanian club Timisoara 2-0.

Olympiakos managed in 2-0 victory in Tiraspol against Moldovan club Sheriff.

In Glasgow 58,000 spectators were hoping for a Celtic victory, but a William Gallas goal two minutes from the break against the run of play and an own goal by captain Gary Caldwell in the 71st minute gave the London side a convincing victory.

Ironically the only English player on the field was Daniel Fox, who played for Celtic.

Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger said that he fielded a young side, but they had done well in a difficult game. "Our passing was not 100 per cent. But we won away and we now have a good chance to go through."

"But we have not yet advanced. The ties are over 180 minutes and we need to play well over the 180 minutes."

German Bundesliga side Stuttgart went into their game against Timisoara as overwhelming favourites and soon made their intentions known as they were up two goals after just 30 minutes.

Timo Gebhart scored from the penalty spot midway through the first half after Marica had been brought down by Romanian goal-

keeper Costel Fane Pantilimon.

On the half hour Aliaksandr Hleb scored a world-class goal after walking through virtually the entire Timisoara defence before pushing the ball past the Pantilimon.

Stuttgart coach Markus Babbel said that he was satisfied with the result. "But they had a good chance to pull one back shortly after we went up two goals. If they had scored, we could have been under pressure."

In other games on Tuesday Zdenek Pospisil gave FC Copenhagen a 1-0 victory against ten-man APOEL Nicosia from Cyprus, while Sporting Lisbon were held to a 2-2 draw in the Portuguese capital by Serie A club Fiorentina.

Sporting finished the game with ten men after having Simon Vukcevic sent off on the

hour. Vukcevic received a second booking after celebrating his goal for his side's 1-1 equalizer by taking off his shirt.

Juan Manuel Vargas had given his side the lead in the sixth minute, before Vukcevic equalized in the 58th. A ten man Sporting then pushed forward and were rewarded just eight minutes later when Miguel Veloso found the net for their second goal.

Alberto Gilardino gave the visitors a share of the spoils and the advantage ahead of the return leg with a 79th minute equalizer.

Five other first leg matches will be played on Wednesday August 19.

The return legs will be played next Tuesday August 25 and Wednesday August 26, with the winners of the ties advancing directly to the group stages of the Champions League.



Stuttgart midfielder Aleksandr Hleb kisses his shirt after scoring the second goal against Timisoara during their Champions League play-off in Timisoara City on Tuesday.

## IN BRIEF

### Govou out for four weeks

AFP, Lyon

Lyon captain Sidney Govou has been ruled out of action for four weeks because of a thigh injury, the French first division club confirmed on Tuesday.

"Sidney will be out of action until the end of the next international break," said Lyon coach Claude Puel.

Lyon, who had been bidding for an eighth straight league title last season, finished third in 2008/2009 with Bordeaux crowned champions.

### Rovers seal Salgado deal

AFP, Blackburn

Real Madrid defender Michel Salgado on Wednesday signed a two-season deal with Blackburn, the English Premier League club announced.

Blackburn are now waiting for international clearance before the 33-year-old can make his debut.

He is heading back to Madrid next week to say goodbye at a match arranged in his honour against Norwegian side Rosenborg on Monday.

During his time at the Bernabeu, the 33-year-old helped the club to two European Cup triumphs and four league titles.

Salgado, capped 53 times for his country, arrived at Real from Celta Vigo in 1999.

He chose Blackburn over offers from Dubai and Spanish side Zaragoza, according to the Spanish press.

## Keogh sinks Wigan

AFP, Wigan



Wolverhampton forward Andrew Keogh ruined Wigan boss Roberto Martinez's first home match in charge of the Latics as his early goal clinched a 1-0 win on Tuesday.

Former Wigan midfielder Martinez saw his side win 2-0 at Aston Villa in Saturday's Premier League opener, but his homecoming at the DW Stadium ended in disappointment thanks to Keogh's header.

Wigan pressed hard for an equaliser but the visitors battled gamely to hold onto their first victory since promotion from the Championship last season.

Wolves boss Mick McCarthy was without former Manchester United striker

Sylvan Ebanks-Blake, who had a hamstring injury, while captain Jody Craddock made the 500th start of his club career.

But Keogh filled in nicely for Ebanks-Blake. He was close to putting McCarthy's men ahead in the second minute when he cut back onto his right foot to curl a shot which struck the far post.

Keogh didn't have to wait long to open the scoring. In the sixth minute the Republic of Ireland international rose above Paul Scharner to glance Nenad Milijas's free-kick past Chris Kirkland and in off the post.

It was Wolves' first Premier League goal since 2004 and they should have had another soon after. This time Keogh was the provider as his flick found Greg Halford, only for the unmarked midfielder to shoot over.

Wigan gradually began to exert some pressure of their

own. Martinez's team had the ball in the net when Jordi Gomez headed in Charles N'Zogbia's free-kick but the effort was ruled out for offside.

Latics defender Titus Bramble headed wide from a corner, then N'Zogbia squandered a glorious chance when he ran on to Hugo Rodallega's flick only to shoot tamely at Wayne Hennessey.

Wolves appealed for a penalty when Keogh was caught by Bramble's outstretched foot, but referee Mick Jones booked the forward for diving.

Martinez made a double substitution in the 61st minute, sending on striker Jason Scotland and on-loan Chelsea winger Scott Sinclair for Michael Brown and Jason Koumas.

Sinclair headed Gomez's cross agonisingly wide at the far post and Scharner fired over in the last chance of the game as Wolves survived.



Argentina coach Diego Maradona (C), flanked by assistants, inspects the field at the Gigante de Arroyito Stadium in Rosario on Tuesday. Argentina will play Brazil in a crucial 2010 World Cup qualifier on September 5.