

Sevilla slay Galacticos

AFP, Madrid



lead at the summit.

Real were aiming to make it a perfect six wins and join Barcelona on maximum points but instead Sevilla underlined their own credentials with a fifth straight win to move level on points with Real.

Sevilla were good value for the win and could have won more convincingly had it not been for Real goalkeeper Iker Casillas.

Jesus Navas headed Sevilla ahead on 33 minutes and the hosts should have scored more but for two wonder saves from Casillas.

Pepe headed home a fortunate equaliser on 49 minutes from a set-piece before Brazilian Renato netted with yet another header after 66 minutes following a great ball from the impressive Navas.

It was a first defeat for Real boss Manuel Pellegrini who had won all seven of his matches in charge at home and abroad.

Real and Sevilla both trail Barcelona by three points after the champions beat Almeria 1-0 on Saturday for a sixth successive league win, matching a club record set in 1991 and 1998.

Real had lost Cristiano Ronaldo, scorer

of five league goals already this season, to an ankle injury so captain Raul came in.

Sevilla fielded Real old boy Alvaro Negredo who had a point to prove after Madrid sold him for 15 million euros in the summer.

The hosts bombarded Real with crosses and should have scored in the fourth minute but Abdoulay Konko failed with a header.

Sevilla got the goal they merited on 33 minutes with Fernando Navarro clipping a cross in and Navas took advantage of Marcelo's lack of awareness to bullet in a header.

With half-time approaching Casillas pulled off a miraculous save to stop a header from Renato.

It stopped Sevilla going into the break with a psychological two-goal cushion and Casillas pulled off another unbelievable reflex save from Diego Perotti 90 seconds into the second half.

Sevilla should have been 3-0 up but Real made them pay with Pepe heading a 49th minute equaliser after some woeful defending.

The goal lifted Real who came back into the game but Renato glanced in a header on 66 minutes to deflate Casillas and Madrid.

In other matches, Serbian striker Nikola Zigic came back to haunt old club Racing Santander, coming off the bench to score a 60th-minute winner as Valencia won 1-0 at El Sardinero.

Zigic replaced the injured David Villa

on 56 minutes and took just four minutes to make an impact and push Valencia up to fifth.

Zigic scored 13 goals in 19 games on loan at Racing last season and did not celebrate the goal out of respect for the Racing fans.

It was a first win in four for Valencia although the injury to top-scorer Villa is a concern.

Villa limped off holding his hamstring and is likely to miss Spain's 2010 World Cup qualifier against Armenia next Saturday although the European champions have already qualified for the finals.

Elsewhere, Villarreal and their new coach Ernesto Valverde were still waiting for their first win of the season after a frustrating 0-0 draw with 10-man Espanyol.

"It is a bad situation and we can't hide that," admitted Valverde. "We have to be patient and keep our heads up."

"There is a long break now (due to international games) which is difficult but we can use these days to work hard and improve."

Despite their opponents being a man short for three-quarters of the match, goal-shy Villarreal could not score and were jeered by fans at El Madrigal.

Runners-up in the league just two seasons ago, Villarreal have just three points from a possible 18 and sit second from bottom of the table with their pre-season Champions League target looking a long way away.



Sevilla midfielder Jesus Navas (2nd from L) kisses his shirt after scoring the opening goal against Real Madrid during their Primera Liga encounter at the Sanchez Pizjuan Stadium on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Italy welcome back Gattuso

AFP, Rome

Italy coach Marcello Lippi on Sunday named a 24-man squad for this month's decisive World Cup qualifiers against Republic of Ireland and Cyprus.

World champions Italy travel to Dublin on October 10 where a draw will see them qualify for next year's World Cup in South Africa.

However, if they lose, they still have a chance to qualify if they beat Cyprus in Parma on October 14.

Lippi welcomes back AC Milan midfielder Gennaro Gattuso to the squad following injury while there were also recalls for defenders Salvatore Bocchetti of Genoa and Fiorentina's Alessandro Gamberini.

Italy captain Fabio Cannavaro was also selected even though he will be suspended for the game in Dublin.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Gigi Buffon (Juventus), Morgan De Sanctis (Napoli), Federico Marchetti (Cagliari)

Defenders: Fabio Cannavaro, Giorgio Chiellini, Fabio Grosso and Nicola Legrottaglie (all Juventus), Salvatore Bocchetti (Genoa), Alessandro Gamberini (Fiorentina), Davide Santon (Inter Milan), Gianluca Zambrotta (AC Milan)

Midfielders: Mauro German Camoranesi and Claudio Marchisio (Juventus), Gaetano D'Agostino and Simone Pepe (Udinese), Daniele De Rossi (AS Roma), Rino Gattuso and Andrea Pirlo (AC Milan), Angelo Palombo (Sampdoria)

Forwards: Antonio Di Natale (Udinese), Alberto Gilardino (Fiorentina), Vincenzo Iaquinta (Juventus), Fabio Quagliarella (Napoli), Giuseppe Rossi (Villarreal/ESP)

Totti out for two weeks

AFP, Rome

AS Roma captain Francesco Totti will be out for up to two weeks after suffering a knee injury during Sunday's 2-1 victory over Napoli.

Totti scored both goals to reach 184 Serie A strikes and join former Argentina striker Gabriel Batistuta, who played alongside Totti in Roma's 2001 title winning team, in eighth place on the all-time top Serie A scorers list.

Totti, 33, hurt the same knee on which he has had surgery.

He underwent scans after the match, but those revealed no serious damage, according to Totti's doctor.

It means the club talisman will soon be back on the pitch and hunting down seventh and sixth places on the top scorers list, currently occupied by Giuseppe Signori (188) and Swede Kurt Hamrin (190).

The Roma captain will probably have to wait until next season before he can surpass fifth-placed Roberto Baggio's 205 goals.

Ronnie rescues a point Juve crash to Palermo

AFP, Rome



from the chop.

Meanwhile, the last unbeaten record in Serie A disappeared as Juventus were beaten 2-0 at Palermo to drop to third in the table.

Milan may have come from behind to earn a draw but their hosts played almost an hour with 10 men and it took the seven-time European champions 45 minutes to break down their lowly opponents with a numerical advantage.

It was also only Milan's fourth goal in seven league matches in which the struggling giants have managed just two wins.

In Europe and at home they have failed to win in their last four matches, a bleak statistic which has piled the pressure onto Leonardo.

But centre-back Alessandro Nesta insisted the Brazilian boss should not be blamed for the club's woes.

"These are two points dropped. We put our heart into this match but if it seemed as if we weren't trying it's because we're not working well. We're not managing to cover all areas of the pitch," he said.

"It's a difficult moment but we're right behind Leonardo. You win and you lose all together. It's not one single person's failure."

Atalanta deservedly took the lead on 21 minutes as Simone Padoin's cross from the right caused confusion in the Milan backline.

Centre-backs Nesta and Giuseppe Favalli were both drawn to Cristiano Doni at the neat post, leaving Simone Tiribocchi free behind them as Ignazio Abate had failed to cover from right-back.

When Doni missed the ball it fell to Tiribocchi, who had time to pick his spot and beat Marco Storari in the Milan goal.



Milan forward Ronaldinho (C) shoots to score the equalising goal against Atalanta during their Serie A tie at the Azzurri D'Italia Stadium in Bergamo on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Monaco edge Marseille

AFP, Paris



Monaco went into fourth spot, five points behind leaders Lyon.

Park was put clear by a fine, long pass from Argentine midfielder Alejandro Alonso in the 42 minute.

Marseille defenders Gabriel Heinze and Souleymane Diawara allowed the Korean to break away from their attention to score past goalkeeper Steve Mandanda for a 2-0 lead.

Monaco had taken the lead in the 19th minute through Brazilian midfielder Nene, but they had to survive a nervous closing period when Mamadou Niang grabbed his sixth goal of the season to cut the deficit.

Marseille, beaten 3-0 by Real Madrid in the Champions League in midweek and 3-2 by Valenciennes last weekend, are fifth in the table, a point behind Monaco.

Serbian midfielder Ivan Radovanovic then made the hosts' hopes of holding out for victory look decidedly tougher as he was sent off six minutes before the break for a needless second booking, pulling Pato's shirt when the forward was practically on the halfway line.

Milan were expected to come out firing after the break as Leonardo replaced French midfielder Mathieu Flamini with Ronaldinho.

The former European champions did fashion an early chance as Thomas Manfredini over-committed himself in trying to reach an Andrea Pirlo cross leaving Pato free to shoot from 10 yards but Consigli came to the rescue, making a point blank stop.

Atalanta then survived a double scare 17 minutes from time.

Following a slick Milan passing move, Consigli saved well from Ronaldinho before Pato's volleyed follow-up bounced into the ground and over the goalkeeper, only to come back off the bar.

Milan played much of the second half just in front of Atalanta's penalty box and the 10 men finally cracked on 83 minutes when Nesta lifted the ball over the backline and Ronaldinho volleyed home in one brilliant movement.

Juve could have gone top if they had won in Sicily but that never looked likely in a game in which they were clearly second-best.

First half goals from Brazilians Edison Cavani and Simplicio within five minutes of each other gave Palermo a deserved 2-0 lead at the break after dominating the first half.

Juve's Brazilian playmaker Diego came closest for the visitors, hitting the woodwork with a free-kick.

Sampdoria failed to take back top spot from Inter Milan, who beat Udinese 2-1 on Saturday, as they were held to a 1-1 home draw by Parma.

Francesco Totti scored a brace in AS Roma's 2-1 victory over Napoli that saw him move level with former Argentina, Roma and Fiorentina striker Gabriel Batistuta in eighth place on the all-time top Serie A goalscorers list.

IN BRIEF

Llorente leaves hospital

AFP, Madrid

Athletic Bilbao's Spanish international Fernando Llorente was released from hospital Monday, one day after suffering a blow to the head during a league match, the club said.

The 24-year-old striker briefly lost consciousness and was taken to hospital after clashing with Brazilian defender Nivaldo in the 11th minute of Athletic Bilbao's 2-2 away draw to Real Valladolid on Sunday.

Medical exams carried out at the hospital ruled out "any type of complication" and the player was allowed to return home where he will rest for "two, three days," the Basque club said in a statement posted on its web site.

England game live in cinemas but not TV

AFP, London

England's World Cup qualifier against Ukraine on Saturday is to make history by being the team's first international to be shown live in cinemas and on the Internet but not on TV, media group Perform said.

With England already qualified for next year's World Cup finals in South Africa, major television stations such as the BBC and Sky have opted against buying the rights to screen live coverage of the match being played in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine.

Irish satellite broadcaster Setanta had been due to cover the match live but the group's British arm went bust in June.

Fans not travelling to the Ukraine can still see the game live at Odeon cinemas across England and over the Internet for a fee of between 5.0 and 12 pounds (5.5 and 13 euros, 8.0 and 19 dollars).

One dead after Croat, Muslim fans clash

AFP, Sarajevo

One person died from injuries after Croat and Muslim fans clashed in the southern town of Siroki Brijuni ahead of its Bosnian Premier League match against Sarajevo, police said.

"It seems that one person has died," police spokesman Damir Cutura told AFP.

National radio BH Radio 1 reported that a Sarajevo fan died in the town's medical facility after sustaining serious injuries.

It added that there were several others injured, while fans demolished shops in the town's centre and set at least three vehicles ablaze.

The league match was subsequently cancelled because of the fatality, radio reported.

Following the 1992-1995 war Bosnia remains ethnically divided and violence during major football matches occasionally occurs here.

The war that claimed at least 100,000 lives pitted the country's Croats, Muslims and Serbs against each other.

Blues trump Reds

AFP, London



Liverpool.

Carlo Ancelotti has warned Manchester United that the destiny of the Premier League is in Chelsea's hands after the Blues went back to the top of the table with a 2-0 win over

Ancelotti's team took advantage of United's 2-2 draw against Sunderland by over-powering the Reds at Stamford Bridge thanks to second half goals from Nicolas Anelka and Florent Malouda.

Chelsea are two points clear of second placed United and six points ahead of Liverpool, leaving the title momentum firmly with the west Londoners going into the international break.

Ancelotti admitted he was surprised to see United drop points at Old Trafford and he is convinced Chelsea can win the title if they remain focused on their own game.

"Their result was a surprise for sure but we want to stay concentrated on our own season," Ancelotti said.

"This season depends only on us. We're top of the table and we prepare for the next game with concentration and determination."

"It was three points against a very good team and I'm happy. Our aim is to lose only one game. We've lost that. I'm satisfied, for sure, when we win. But also when we play well."

Despite a third defeat in just eight league games this season, Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez is refusing to write off his side's title hopes.



Chelsea striker Didier Drogba (C) is locked in a tussle with Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher (R) during their Premiership clash at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hamburg blitz Hertha

AFP, Berlin

Friedhelm Funkel as their new coach on Saturday, following last week's sacking of Lucien Favre, and the ex-Eintracht Frankfurt boss took immediate charge.

"We started very well, we were competing well and took the lead, but all of those three goals were unbelievable," said Berlin captain Arne Friedrich.

"We just could not recover from those setbacks."

But the Germany centre-back said Funkel is the man to lead Hertha out of trouble.

"He makes a positive impression."

Hertha got off to a dream start after nine minutes when Germany defender Arne Friedrich headed home a cross from Patrick Ebert at the far post from four metres out.

It sparked a long run of celebration at Berlin's Olympic Stadium, but the delight was short-lived.

Hertha's Brazilian defender Kaka headed into his own net on 24 minutes and Hamburg added to the home side's misery when

midfielder David Jarolim scored a great goal from 25 metres out on 38 minutes.

Barely a minute later ex-Bayern Munich midfielder Ze Roberto scored with a long-range effort to make it 3-1 at the break.

Hertha failed to make any impact in the second-half and the result leaves Hamburg second in the table on goal difference behind Leverkusen.

Earlier Werder Bremen strikers Claudio Pizarro and Aaron Hunt both netted to seal a 2-0 win at VfB Stuttgart which lifted their side up to fourth.

Bremen have only lost one game all season and Thomas Schaaf's men were rarely troubled by Stuttgart who are now 13th.

"We took another step forward today, the team played well and concentrated from first minute to last on what they had to do," said Bremen coach Schaaf.

"We had a bit of luck with the early goal, but that is what you need."

Werder got off to the perfect start when Germany squad member Marko Marin beat Stuttgart defender Stefano Celozzi and swung in a cross to the far post which ex-Chelsea forward Pizarro headed home on three minutes.

Hunt made sure of the three points when Germany midfielder Mesut Ozil spotted a huge gap in the Stuttgart defence.

Ozil floated his pass and Hunt drove his shot into the bottom right corner on 51 minutes to seal a 3-0 win.

Germany goalkeeper Jens Lehmann.