

# Chelsea imperious

AFP, London



Frank Lampard scored twice as Chelsea leap-frogged champions Manchester United into top spot in the English Premier League with a 5-0 rout of Blackburn Rovers at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

An own goal in the 20th minute from French defender Gael Givet, who turned Nicolas Anelka's cross past goalkeeper Paul Robinson under pressure from Didier Drogba, put the Blues ahead.

England midfielder Lampard scored his first Premier League goal since April when he fired home from Drogba's pull back before Michael Essien wrapped up the points in the 52nd minute when he beat Robinson with a curving shot from fully 35 yards out.

Lampard scored his second, and Chelsea's fourth, from the penalty spot after Drogba was brought down seven minutes later by Rovers captain Ryan Nelsen, the New Zealand defender.

The impressive Drogba then added a fifth in the 64th minute as Chelsea made it nine goals in two matches after their midweek 4-0 Champions League defeat of Atletico Madrid.

It was an important result for the Blues after they'd lost 2-1 to Aston Villa last time out in the Premier League and Lampard told ESPN: "We were disappointed after last week. We wanted to bounce back and we did it in style."

Lampard was especially pleased by the confident return of fellow England international Joe Cole, playing his first Premier League match since suffering a knee injury against Southend in January.

"He is different class," Lampard said. "I think everyone knows what Cole brings us, he is something different, he runs with the ball and he can create something out of nothing."

Cole added: "When you're out for 10 months just getting back on the training pitch is great so to come back to a game like that was fantastic."

Earlier, Tottenham Hotspur missed the chance to go level on points with United after losing 1-0 late on at home to Stoke City.

The match was goalless until four minutes from time when Glenn Whelan, played in by Ricardo Fuller, struck against a home team a man down with England winger Aaron Lennon off the field after the north Londoners had used all three substitutes.

Lennon took himself off and Spurs manager Harry Redknapp said: "We're not sure what the problem is. He just said he couldn't carry on and that was that."

At the bottom of the table, basement club Portsmouth were held to a goalless draw by fellow strugglers Hull.

Meanwhile Birmingham beat their former manager Steve Bruce's Sunderland side 2-1 and Colombia's Hugo Rodallega scored twice as Wigan came from behind to end Burnley's 100 percent home record this term in a 3-1 win.

Elsewhere, Wolves drew 1-1 with Midlands rivals Aston Villa.



Chelsea striker Didier Drogba gets ahead of a host of Blackburn defenders to head home from a corner during the Premier League clash between the sides at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

# It's a Real struggle

AFP, Madrid



After losing to AC Milan in the Champions League in midweek, Real Madrid dropped two points in the title race with a 0-0 draw at Sporting Gijon on Saturday as they failed to score for the first time this season.

Real go top above Barcelona on goal difference but the champions, also beaten at home in Europe by Russians Rubin Kazan, can open up a three-point lead with a home win over Real Zaragoza on Sunday.

Madrid coach Manuel Pellegrini was short of striking options with Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema, Gonzalo Higuain and Ruud van Nistelrooy injured so the onus was on Raul and Kaka.

The pair had two of Real's best chances, with Esteban Granero missing the other, but Real could not find a way through against a Sporting side that remain unbeaten at home and a respectable seventh in the table.

"Football can be like this sometimes," reflected Real playmaker Guti. "You can create lots of chances but don't take them."

"We had some important attacking players absent today and of course we missed them."

Sevilla, the only Spanish side to win in the Champions League this week, missed the chance to capitalise on Real's slip following a 0-0 home draw against 10-man Espanyol.

Sevilla stay three points behind Real after failing to score in the league for the second successive game although that was largely down to some heroics from Espanyol goalkeeper Carlos Kameni.

Espanyol, now unbeaten in five matches, had been reduced to 10 men after defender Nicolas Pareja was sent off for hacking down Diego Capel on the hour mark but Kameni pulled off some fine saves to hold on for a point.

"We have to get some points away and try to win at home - that is our strategy," said Kameni.

The Milan defeat had raised defensive issues at Real Madrid again and Spanish international Raul Albiol was dropped to the bench with Argentine Ezequiel Garay taking his spot at centre-back.

Sporting had lost 7-1 and 4-0 against Real last season so must have feared the worst.

Real goalkeeper Iker Casillas, at fault for two Milan goals, flapped at an early cross but Sporting could not take advantage of the mistake.

Kaka had Real's first effort on 20 minutes with a low shot before Raul swivelled and shot wide close to the half hour mark following a goalmouth scramble.

Gijon had their best opening close to half-time with Miguel de las Cuevas, who has four goals already this season, forcing Casillas to get down quickly to defend his near post.

Sporting goalkeeper Juan Pablo denied Esteban Granero with an outstretched foot early in the second half and then a fingertip save to thwart a fierce Kaka free-kick.

Substitute Rafael van der

Vaart almost caught Pablo out with an overhit cross but the goalkeeper recovered just in time to palm the ball over.

At Atletico Madrid, unpopular coach Abel Resino may have gone but the fans jeers continue after the club failed to beat nine-man Real Mallorca struggling to a 1-1 draw at the Vicente Calderon.

A last minute equaliser from Borja Valero denied Atletico victory after Diego Forlan had put them in front from the penalty spot.

The insipid display will not have impressed incoming Atletico coach 'Quique' Sanchez Flores.

Former Valencia and Benfica coach Flores will officially take over on Monday after Resino was sacked on Friday.

## 'Only goals lacking'

INTERNET, undated

Pepe has defended Real Madrid's 0-0 draw against Sporting Gijon, saying his team played well enough to win, and was unlucky not to.

Real were missing the services of Cristiano Ronaldo, Ruud van Nistelrooy, Karim Benzema and Gonzalo Higuain, who were absent from the first-team squad through injury.

"We lacked goals," Pepe told Marca after the game. "We played well and fought for the victory. We are good enough to win the league."

"They pressured us a lot. They are a well-organized

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## Inter maintain lead

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan maintained their two point lead over Sampdoria at the Serie A summit as the top two both won on Saturday.

Inter eased to a 2-1 victory at home to Catania while Antonio Cassano inspired Sampdoria to a 4-1 thumping of lowly Bologna.

It means Inter lead with 22 points after nine matches with Sampdoria opening up a five-point gap between them and the rest, although that could be cut to two if either Fiorentina or Juventus win on Sunday.

Inter were anything but spectacular against the Sicilians but their superiority was clear to see as they put the game to bed by half-time.

"I'm happy with the way we played in the first half and the way we fought in the second half," said Inter boss Jose Mourinho.

Cassano was the catalyst in Genoa as the 27-year-old bad-boy turned in one of his most influential performances, setting up two goals and proving a constant menace.

Italy coach Marcello Lippi has resisted the temptation to select Cassano for more than a year despite intense media pressure, but he cannot have failed to be impressed by this match-winning performance.

Neither could he have failed to notice the performance of Giampaolo Pazzini who scored despite playing in a mask after having his nose broken in a clash with Lazio goalkeeper Fernando Muslera last week.

## Bordeaux back on top

AFP, Paris

French champions Bordeaux took advantage of a shock 4-1 defeat for Lyon at Nice to return to the top of the table with a 3-0 home victory over Le Mans on Saturday.

Lyon secured a historic Champions League victory at Liverpool in mid-week but they fell behind in the 17th minute at struggling Nice when Mamadou Bagayoko emphatically headed home Loic Remy's cross from the right flank.

An own goal from stand-in Lyon goalkeeper Remy Vercoutre, who fumbled a touch from team-mate Aly Cissokho over his goal-line, put Nice 2-0 up at the break before David Hellebuyck added a third with 20 minutes to play.

Remy deepened the visitors' woes in the 75th minute, pouncing on hesitancy from Jean Makoun before rounding Vercoutre and tapping home.

Ederson notched a late consolation for Claude Puel's side, who have now lost consecutive games after their 2-0 defeat at home to Sochaux last time out.

Bordeaux went into their meeting with Le Mans on the back of a 2-1 win over German giants Bayern Munich in the Champions League, but they had slumped to surprise defeats in their last two matches against Saint-Etienne and Auxerre.

Laurent Blanc's side enjoyed

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# Beach ball boy sorry

AFP, London



A teenage Liverpool fan who caused one of the oddest goals in English football history came out of hiding Sunday to apologise profusely for belting a beach ball onto the pitch.

Callum Campbell, 16, told the Sunday Mirror newspaper it was he who whacked the inflatable onto the pitch, triggering Liverpool's 1-0 defeat at Sunderland on October 17.

The youngster has faced death threats for his part in a defeat that dented the Reds' bid to win the Premier League title and locked himself indoors for two days.

"It was me," Campbell told the tabloid. "I'm the one who did it. I'm the one caught on camera. I'm so, so sorry. This is my worst, worst nightmare."

In the fifth minute of the match, Black Cats striker Darren Bent fired a shot on target, but it hit the Liverpool-branded beach ball, taking a big deflection and completely bamboozling Reds goalkeeper Pepe Reina - who went for the wrong ball.

Millions around the world have seen the bizarre incident.

When the beach ball came Campbell's way before the kick-off, he punched it onto the

Stadium of Light pitch. It went into Reina's goal but blew out as Sunderland went on the attack.

"When I got home I went into the garden and threw up. I was physically sick -- and that's before the death threats started appearing on the Internet the next day," Campbell said.

"I watched it over and over again, and I still can't work out how it happened."

"But my mum tells me it wasn't my fault -- and that's what I have to believe. The referee should never have allowed the goal. I just hope the real fans understand and forgive me."

"How was I supposed to know what would happen? It was just a bit of fun, and if I could turn back the clock and do it differently, throw the ball into the crowd instead of on to the pitch, then I would."

"I'm really, really sorry it happened like it did."

"It's bad enough when Liverpool lose, like in a normal way, but this was just one big disaster."

"It would have taken someone a couple of seconds to move it away, or put a foot on it and flatten it, but nobody bothered. And then it started to roll about. Just at the wrong moment."

"But I accept I shouldn't have thrown it on to the pitch in the first place."

At Campbell's request, part of the fee for his interview was donated to the Hillsborough Disaster Fund.

# Late show from Bayern

AFP, Berlin



Belgian defender Daniel van Buyten made amends for his dismissal at Bordeaux in midweek by heading a late winner for Bayern Munich in a 2-1 home win over Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday.

The centre-back saw red in France last Wednesday in the 2-1 defeat to Bordeaux in the Champions League, but he came off the bench to score with a crucial 88th-minute header as the German giants came from behind.

"We created several good chances against opponents who were very defensively minded," said Bayern coach Louis van Gaal with his side now four points behind leaders Bayer Leverkusen.

"We couldn't convert them into goals and Frankfurt scored through the first possibility."

"I decided to bring on (Arjen) Robben and (Mario) Gomez and switched van Buyten for Luca Toni. I was very happy with the changes and in just eight days we have now halved the gap behind Leverkusen."

Eintracht took the lead at Bayern's Allianz Arena when midfielder Alexander Meier timed his run through Munich's offside trap to perfection and latched onto a pass from Patrick Ochs on 60 minutes before firing home.

Bayern welcomed back play-maker Robben after three weeks out with a knee injury and the Dutchman marked his return with the equaliser.

After Gomez won an aerial battle against Frankfurt goalkeeper Oka Nikolov, Robben pounced on the loose ball and slotted home on 70 minutes

before van Buyten's priceless goal which put Bayern in fifth place.

Hoffenheim moved up to sixth after enjoying an impressive 3-0 win at home to Nuremberg when defender Christian Eichner slotted home a dream goal from 30 metres out before striker Vedad Ibisevic hit their second after 38 minutes.

Then 19-year-old Argentinian striker Franco Zuculini, playing only his third Bundesliga game, unleashed a fierce shot from 20 metres out to add Hoffenheim's third.

Stuttgart coach Markus Babel may have been given a vote of confidence by his board last week, but his position looks increasingly precarious after his side lost 1-0 at Hanover.

Ex-Germany goalkeeper Jens Lehmann was pulled out of position by Dutch midfielder Arnold Jan Bruggink allowing Ivory Coast striker Didier Ya Konan a simple tap-in on 30 minutes.

Stuttgart hit the woodwork twice, but could not break Hanover's defence as they lost their fourth straight game.

Despite the defeat, Babel will still be in charge for Tuesday's German Cup game against second division Greuther Fuerth.

"There is no discussion about the trainer," said Stuttgart team manager Horst Heldt. "Markus Babel will be on the bench against Fuerth."

Mainz moved up to seventh with a 3-0 win at Freiburg while Cologne were held 0-0 at home to Borussia Moenchengladbach.



Bayern Munich goalscorers Arjen Robben (L) and Daniel van Buyten celebrate at the end of their Bundesliga match against Eintracht Frankfurt at the Allianz Arena in Munich on Saturday.

## IN BRIEF

### Pep has faith in his side

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola said Saturday he continues to have faith in his side despite the wave of criticism the European and Spanish champions have received.

"They are training, they're playing and they are competitive everyday but they will hear from me if they are not trying anymore," Guardiola told a news conference ahead of Sunday's league match against Zaragoza.

"You have to live with criticism. If you win, everything is going well and people give you big compliments. If you lose, it's going bad and they criticize you. I will not lose faith in the team."

Barcelona suffered their first European defeat in 10 months, falling to a shock 2-1 home loss to Rubin Kazan in the Champions League on Tuesday, three days after they were held to a 0-0 draw against Valencia in the Spanish league.

It was Barcelona's first Champions League defeat since December 9 when Guardiola's side lost 3-2 at home to Shakhtar Donetsk at the group stage -- although they had already qualified.

Barcelona still lead the Spanish league, with a one-point edge over arch-rivals Real Madrid, and are tied with Rubin Kazan and Dynamo Kiev at the top of Group F in the Champions League.

### 'Determination was the key'

AFP, Berlin

Defender Daniel van Buyten headed Bayern Munich's late goal which sealed a 2-1 win over Eintracht Frankfurt and insisted it was the German giants' determination which saw them through.

Van Buyten's 88th-minute goal gave Bayern the three points on Saturday which lifted them to fifth in the table after Saturday's matches, just four points behind leaders Leverkusen who drew 1-1 with Dortmund on Friday.

"Frankfurt scored with their first chance, which obviously made it even more of a pressure situation," said van Buyten with Bayern set to host Leverkusen in the Bavaria derby in Munich on Sunday November 22.

"But that just spurred us to get forward."

"We were utterly determined to win, we started taking far more risks, we kept on creating chances, and at the end of the day, we've taken the three points."

Bayern captain Mark van Bommel praised his side's spirit to come back from behind to win the game.

"We had five or six very good chances in the first half, and we had to be putting those away," said the Dutchman.

"It would have made it a whole lot easier for us."



PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid captain Raul is the picture of frustration after missing a chance during their frustrating 0-0 Primera Liga draw with Sporting Gijon at the Molinon Stadium in Gijon on Saturday.