

Cahill rescues Everton

AFP, Liverpool



Tim Cahill enjoyed a birthday to remember as the Australia midfielder's late equaliser helped Everton rescue a dramatic 2-2 draw against Tottenham.

Cahill turned 30 on Sunday and the Socceroos star won't forget the milestone in a hurry after heading the crucial 86th minute goal that capped Everton's fightback from two down at Goodison Park.

After three successive league defeats, David Moyes' side desperately needed to stop the rot, but they looked dead and buried when second half goals from Jermain Defoe and Michael Dawson put Tottenham on control.

Louis Saha sparked injury-hit Everton's revival when he scored with 12 minutes remaining, then captain Cahill turned in Leighton Baines' cross for his third goal of the season - and his first in the league since September.

There was still time for more drama as Everton defender Tony Hibbert conceded a stoppage time penalty with a clumsy barge into Wilson Palacios, but American goalkeeper Tim Howard ensured Cahill's birthday celebrations would go with a swing as he saved Defoe's spot-kick with his legs.

"We tried our hardest, we went down, picked

ourselves up and Tim Howard produced a great save and I guess there's a bit of justice," Cahill said.

Howard was given some advice by Saha during a lengthy delay between Palacios being fouled for the spot-kick and Defoe finally taken the penalty after the Tottenham midfielder was stretchered off.

The instructions appeared to have been relayed from the home dugout and Howard said: "He gave me a word of advice. I kind of knew what to expect."

"There's so much video now that there's not one penalty taken that's not there to see. You try your best not to leave any stone unturned."

Injuries continue to be a problem for Everton, who lost centre-back Joseph Yobo to a recurrence of a hamstring strain after just 15 minutes but that actually turned into a positive for the Toffees.

Moyes had to send on Seamus Coleman for only his second Premier League appearance and the 21-year-old had a hand in both goals, earning him the man-of-the-match award.

While Moyes breathed a sigh of relief at Everton's escape, Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp was frustrated at the careless way his side squandered two points which would have taken them third in the table.

"There looked to be only one winner. It was game over as we looked to be in control and I couldn't see any way we weren't going to go on and win," he said.



Everton midfielder Tim Cahill (L) celebrates scoring the equalising goal against Tottenham Hotspurs during their Premier League encounter at Goodison Park on Sunday. PHOTO AFP

Valencia go third

AFP, Madrid



Valencia climbed above Sevilla into third with a 2-1 comeback win at 10-man Athletic Bilbao on Sunday as they stretched their unbeaten run to 15 games in all competitions.

Valencia warmed up for next weekend's clash with rivals Real Madrid at the Mestalla Stadium with a fine win at San Mames to move three points behind Madrid in the standings with Barcelona eight points ahead having played one game more.

Substitute Iker Muniain, who holds the record as the youngest player to score in the Spanish top-flight, put Bilbao ahead on 58 minutes but David Villa equalised three minutes later with his 11th goal of the season.

Frenchman Jeremy Mathieu netted the winner on 83 minutes but Valencia had to survive a late scare when David Lopez missed a penalty for Bilbao in the closing minutes.

Spanish international defender Joan Capdevila scored a brace as nine-men Villarreal twice came from behind to defeat Getafe 3-2 at El Madrigal on Sunday and continue their surge up the table after the worst start in their history.

Capdevila's international team-mate Santi

Cazorla had equalised with a superb volley before Capdevila scored the winner with three minutes remaining to sink Getafe and move into mid-table as Villarreal atone for their nightmare start.

A superb first-time volley from Pedro Leon, who seems to specialise in great goals, gave Getafe a third-minute lead before Capdevila, who scores lots of goals for a left back, equalised on 17 minutes.

Minutes into the second half Cani was sent off for conceding a penalty and Villarreal goalkeeper Diego Lopez, who saved two penalties in his last league match, was helpless to stop Robert Soldado's fierce spot-kick.

Cazorla came on for Robert Pires on 66 minutes and had an immediate impact volleying in a terrific equaliser 60 seconds later.

Capdevila then bagged the winner after great work from Joseba Llorente gave the Euro 2008 winner an easy tap-in.

Earlier on Sunday Real Mallorca continued their perfect home record cruising to a 4-1 win over Real Zaragoza for a seventh successive league victory at their fortress Ono Stadium to close to within a point of fifth-placed Deportivo La Coruna.

Top-scorer Ariz Aduriz netted a brace either side of the break to take his season's tally to seven goals as Mallorca made it a perfect 21 points at home with Barcelona and Real Madrid the only other two teams with a flawless home record.

Grenoble break duck

AFP, Paris



Rock bottom Grenoble secured their first win of the season at the 15th attempt with a long-awaited victory against Toulouse in the French league on Sunday.

Grenoble's record-breaking 14-game winless start to the season has already guaranteed their place in Ligue 1 history but they finally broke their duck with a deserved 1-0 win over Alain Casanova's Europa League participants.

The home side largely bossed proceedings at the Stade des Alpes but had to wait until the 81st minute to break the deadlock, with Nicolas Dieuze slamming home after Olivier Blondel parried Danijel Ljuboja's free-kick.

"It's a first victory that does us a huge amount of good," said Grenoble coach Mecha Bazdarevic. "We've rediscovered that state of mind that was our strength last season. If we continue like this we'll have a little chance of getting out (of the relegation zone)."

Stuttering Auxerre succumbed to a second successive defeat when they lost 3-1 at home to Nancy.

Victory would have taken Jean Fernandez's side up to second place, two points behind league leaders Bordeaux, but they fell to sec-

ond-half strikes from Abdeslam Ouaddou and Youssouf Hadji after Andre Luiz's 26th-minute opener for the visitors had been cancelled out by Valter Birsa.

Auxerre soared to the top of the table on the back of a seven-game winning run that ended with a 1-0 defeat at Paris Saint-Germain in their last outing but Sunday's loss leaves them in fifth place, five points off the pace.

Boulogne came from a goal behind to defeat local rivals and fellow top-flight new boys Lens 2-1 thanks to a goal shortly before half-time from Damien Perrinelle.

Boulogne had to play with 10 men for over 70 minutes after defender Mame N'Diaye saw red in the 18th minute following a foul on Sebastien Roudet that yielded his second booking.

Lyon came off worst in a seven goal feast in Sunday's late game, the multiple former champions losing 4-3 at Lille.

That left Lyon in fourth, five points shy of leaders Bordeaux, who edged PSG 1-0 on Saturday to stretch their lead at the top to four points over Montpellier.

Lyon looked set for a victory which would have jumped them up into second place after a first half hat-trick by Argentina striker Lisandro Lopez, but Lille dug deep and Gervinho's injury time contribution clinched the three points.

On Saturday Marseille took the spoils in the Mediterranean derby by beating Nice 3-1.

Kevin reaches milestone

AFP, Berlin



Ex-Germany striker Kevin Kuranyi scored his 100th Bundesliga goal on Sunday in Schalke 04's 2-0 win over Hertha Berlin which put the Royal Blues third behind league leaders Leverkusen.

Kuranyi walked out on the Germany team last October leading to national coach Joachim Loew saying he will never select him again, but the 27-year-old forward has been in good form this season with seven goals in 14 league games.

Having made his debut for Stuttgart in 1997, Kuranyi went onto score 40 league goals before switching to Schalke and Sunday's header was his 60th for his club.

Kuranyi profited from a header by Schalke's Brazil defender Marcelo Bordon to power his own head effort past Berlin's goalkeeper Jaroslav Drobný on 59 minutes.

Brazilian defender Rafinha then netted a penalty in injury time to seal the 2-0 win over the league's bottom side.

Schalke are now third in the table as Felix Magath's side closed the gap to three points behind the leaders and left them level with second-placed Werder Bremen.

Hertha are now seven points adrift at the foot of the table with one win.

With almost ten minutes remaining, Hertha's Columbian striker Adrian Ramos wasted a golden chance to equalise when he fired over with the goal at his mercy.

Earlier, Werder Bremen squandered the

chance to close the gap behind Leverkusen when they were held to a goalless draw by relegation-candidates Cologne.

Leverkusen also drew 0-0 with Hanover 96 on Saturday, but Thomas Schaaf's Bremen are still three points off the leaders after failing to crack a resolute Cologne defence.

The single point takes Cologne away from the relegation zone and leaves them 14th.

Markus Babel was sacked as coach of Stuttgart on Sunday after his side drew 1-1 with Bochum on Saturday, their eighth straight game without a win with Christian Gross taking over.

Babel was robbed of his first league win since September at home to Bochum on Saturday after Bochum's Austria defender Christian Fuchs curled in a stunning late free-kick to equalise.

Several thousand Stuttgart fans then gathered outside their Mercedes-Benz Arena after the game demanding Babel's resignation with their side third from bottom.

Several police officers were injured and a handful of arrests were made after angry scenes.

Stuttgart must beat Romania's Unirea Urziceni at home on Wednesday with Gross now in charge to progress from Group G in the Champions League behind Sevilla.

Defending champions Wolfsburg needed a late goal to seal a 2-2 draw with Freiburg on Saturday as they prepare for Tuesday's crunch home Champions League match against Manchester United, which they must win to progress.

IN BRIEF

Chiellini out of Bayern clash

AFP, Turin

Italy centre-back Giorgio Chiellini is out of Tuesday's winner takes all Champions League battle with Bayern Munich due to a calf injury, his club Juventus said on Monday.

Chiellini took a knock in Saturday's top of the table 2-1 victory against Inter Milan and will likely be out for about three weeks, his club added.

Nicola Legrottaglie will replace Chiellini alongside Fabio Cannavaro in the centre of the Juve defence.

Bayern head into this final Group A clash a point behind Juve in the standings knowing they must win to progress.

Group leaders Bordeaux have already qualified for the knock-out stages.

FA denies viagra report

AFP, London

The English Football Association has denied a report on Sunday that Fabio Capello has considered giving his stars the anti-impotence drug Viagra to help cope with playing at altitude at next year's World Cup in South Africa.

The report claimed Viagra would help improve the England players' lung capacity, with the squad set to be based nearly 5,000 feet above sea level at Rustenburg.

But an FA spokesman said: "The England medical staff are conducting detailed research with a variety of experts ahead of next year's World Cup."

"However, there has been no discussion with regard to Viagra and certainly no plans for the players to take it in South Africa at the tournament."

Stuttgart sack Babel

AFP, Berlin

VfB Stuttgart on Sunday confirmed the sacking of coach Markus Babel just a few days before their crucial Champions League clash.

Former Tottenham Hotspur boss Christian Gross was named as Babel's successor on Sunday evening.

Stuttgart need to beat Romanian champions Unirea Urziceni at home on Wednesday to reach the knock-out stages of the Champions League.

The 37-year-old Babel was sacked less than 24 hours after his side drew 1-1 with Bochum, which left them third from the bottom of the German league with just two wins to their credit all season and 12 points from 15 games.

Babel said: "I wish the new coaching team all the best."

"I hope they find the way to get the best out of the team so they can play well again - I never found it."

Juve, Bayern to fight it out

AFP, Paris



The first four Champions League groups conclude on Tuesday

with a host of major clubs including Real Madrid, AC Milan, Juventus and Bayern Munich still unsure of a place in the knockout phase.

Real are practically assured of qualification and can afford to lose their Group C clash at Marseille on Tuesday by three goals, while Milan will progress from the same group with victory at FC Zurich.

Brazilian playmaker Kaka has been ruled out for Real due to a groin injury but Cristiano Ronaldo is expected to start despite being sent off in his side's 4-2 La Liga win over Almeria on Saturday.

Karim Benzema was on target against Almeria, converting a rebound in the 83rd minute to put his side 3-2 up after Ronaldo had seen a penalty saved, and the former Lyon striker is likely to receive a hostile reception from the

Marseille fans.

"It's always a pleasure to return to France. We expect the match in Marseille to be tough," he said.

German giants Bayern Munich travel to Juventus in Group A knowing that only a win will prolong their Champions League campaign.

Juve lost 2-0 at Bordeaux in their last match in the competition, handing the French champions top spot in the group, but they warmed up for the visit of Bayern with a rousing 2-1 win at home to Serie A leaders Inter and need just a draw against Bayern to join Bordeaux in the last 16.

"This can be very useful going into the Bayern game if we are smart, humble, focused and realise we can play with this aggression against everyone," said Juventus's veteran forward Alessandro Del Piero after the win over Inter.

"If we forget that, then we run the same old risks." Bayern will still be without tendinitis victim Franck Ribery for the trip to Turin but Dutch winger Arjen Robben and Belgian centre-back

Daniel van Buyten have both overcome injuries to be included in the squad.

The four-time European champions endured a poor start to the season but their 2-1 win at home to Borussia Muenchengladbach on Friday extended their unbeaten return in the league to eight matches and took them up to third in the Bundesliga standings.

Elsewhere on Tuesday,

FIXTURES

Tuesday
(all matches 1945GMT)
Group A
Juventus (ITA) v Bayern Munich (GER), Wolfsburg (GER) v Manchester United (ENG)
Group B
Besiktas (TUR) v CSKA Moscow (RUS), Wolfsburg (GER) v Manchester United (ENG)
Group C
FC Zurich (SUI) v AC Milan (ITA), Marseille (FRA) v Real Madrid (ESP)
Group D
Atletico Madrid (ESP) v FC Porto (POR), Chelsea (ENG) v Apoel Nicosia (CYP)

Wolfsburg can join Manchester United in the knockout round if their result at home to the English champions in Group B is better than what CSKA Moscow achieve at Besiktas.

United will tie up top spot, and subsequently a favourable draw in the last 16, with a draw at Wolfsburg but coach Sir Alex Ferguson will be forced to field a makeshift defence due to a mounting injury crisis at the club.

Chelsea and Porto are already sure of a place in the next round, Chelsea as winners of Group D, but Atletico Madrid will seal a consolation berth in the Europa League if Apoel Nicosia fail to win at Chelsea.

Defending champions Barcelona travel to Dynamo Kiev in Group F on Wednesday and can afford to lose by any two-goal scoreline apart from 2-0 and still go through due to their head-to-head record, while in the same group Inter Milan face a winner-takes-all home meeting with Russian champions Rubin Kazan.

Parma draw with Genoa

AFP, Rome



Jonathan Biabiany scored a brace as Parma drew 2-2 away to Genoa on

Sunday to keep hold of fourth place in Serie A.

With Italy's top three all playing on Saturday it was the battle for fourth and a Champions League spot next season that took centre stage.

Parma came into their match in fourth after Sampdoria's 3-0 defeat at AC Milan on Saturday had dropped them to fifth.

And with several teams within touching distance of that crucial Champions League qualifying position it promised an exciting afternoon of action.

Rodrigo Palacio initially put Genoa in position to take fourth with a 14th minute goal after shrugging off a Parma defender.

But Biabiany struck on 36 and 59 minutes to give Parma the lead before Raffaele Palladino equalised eight minutes later, leaving Genoa seventh.

Parma coach Francesco Guidolin said: "I'm not looking at the table at this time even if I like the look of it a lot and would happily see it finish right now."

"Unfortunately that won't be the case but the important thing is to back up our performances (with results) and once again today we showed that we're in rude health."

AS Rome moved up to sixth after triumphing in the Rome derby 1-0 against Lazio

thanks to a 79th-minute goal from substitute full-back Marco Cassetti.

In a terrible game the first chance came on 61 minutes as Mauro Zarate shot against the post for Lazio before Roma goalkeeper Julio Sergio made an instinctive one-handed save from Stefano Mauri's follow-up.

Simone Perrotta went close for Roma on 67 minutes before Cassetti's scuffed shot from Mirko Vucinic's cross found the corner.

At one point during the afternoon Sardinians Cagliari, who had won five of their last six matches and beat Juventus 2-0 a week ago, had looked in pole position to go fourth as they led 1-0 at Palermo at half-time through Alessandro Matti.

But goals from Igor Budan and reported Manchester United target Simon Kjær 10 minutes apart gave Delio Rossi his first win as boss of the Sicilians.

Florentina moved up to

fifth after their 2-0 home win over Atalanta ended their two-match losing streak in Serie A.

Peru international Juan Vargas opened the scoring on 26 minutes with a left-foot rocket from outside the box and Italy forward Alberto Gilardino clinched the victory a minute from time.

The race for fourth is so tight that Parma are only five points above Palermo in 13th.

Napoli extended their unbeaten run since Walter Mazzarri took over from Roberto Donadoni to nine matches in all competitions as Fabio Quagliarella scored a brace, including the winner two minutes from time, in a 3-2 success at home to Bari.

Bari had led 2-1 just after the hour mark through goals from Paulo Barreto and Andrea Ranocchia but then had Alessandro Parisi dismissed.

Cristian Maggio restored parity before Quagliarella's late winner while Bari ended with nine men as Ranocchia also saw red in injury time.

At the bottom of the table Siena gave themselves a lifeline with a come-from-behind 3-2 home win over second-bottom Catania.

The Tuscans were 1-0 and 2-1 down to the Sicilians after two Jorge Martinez strikes sandwiched an Emanuele Calaiò effort.

Siena risked being cast adrift at the bottom of the table but goals from Claudio Terzi and Michele Paolucci secured the win and brought them level on points with Catania and three from safety.



Roma defender Marco Cassetti runs off to celebrate scoring the all-important goal against Lazio during their Serie A clash at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on Sunday. PHOTO AFP