



**EGG ON HIS FACE:** An actor wearing a mask depicting Chelsea captain and ex-England leader John Terry is pelted with eggs during a photocall organised by the London Dungeon, in London, on Friday. John Terry was named as the 'the country's biggest love rat' in a survey of 400 people conducted by the The London Dungeon. Passersby were then invited to pelt the actor dressed as John Terry with a selection of eggs, rotten fruit and vegetables.

## Reprieve for Pompey?

**AFP, London**  
**TheFA CUP**  
 Beleaguered, bedraggled and very possibly bankrupt by the end of next week, things could hardly get worse for Portsmouth at the moment.  
 This weekend however brings the chance of relief in the form of an FA Cup last-16 meeting with arch rivals Southampton that is arguably the pick of the fifth round ties.  
 Nothing cheers a Pompey fan up more than beating the "Scummers" and, despite being rock bottom of the Premier League, the Fratton Park faithful will make the 17-mile trip along England's south coast in confident mood ahead of Saturday's lunchtime tie.  
 Southampton, themselves a top flight club as recently as 2005, are currently to be found residing in the middle of

League One, the third tier of English football, although they would be close to the promotion play-off spots if they had not started the season with a ten-point penalty imposed for going into administration towards the end of last season.  
 That's the kind of future that is currently haunting the dreams of most Portsmouth supporters and Southampton boss Alan Pardew will have no qualms about inflicting further trauma on them.  
 "We are very much aware of the pain they're going through," Pardew said. "All the staff here have gone through it recently. I wasn't at Southampton at that time but they suffered. I feel for Portsmouth, but there'll be no sympathy from us on Saturday."  
 Chelsea will be without captain John Terry for the visit of 2008 runners-up Cardiff in another early kick-off on Saturday, a match that is being broadcast on the Football Association's website, www.thefa.com.

Terry has been given the weekend off to visit his wife, who is holidaying in Dubai following the recent furore over the centre-back's alleged infidelity.  
 Cardiff boss Dave Jones believes the absence of Chelsea's on-pitch leader will make little difference given the depth of resources at the holders' disposal.  
 "We know they've got some fantastic players - not just some, their squad is littered with fantastic players," said Jones.  
**Cardiff are battling an injury**

crisis and have had a tough week off the pitch with the club embroiled, much like Portsmouth, in a fight to avoid entering administration.  
 Against that background, Jones welcomes the distraction of being hosted by the millionaires of west London. "It will be a great occasion for the club and if we play to our potential, we have a chance."  
 Saturday also sees Manchester City, the second favourite to lift the Cup following the exit of Arsenal, Liverpool and Manchester United at earlier stages, entertain Stoke. The only other all-Premier League tie is on Sunday, when Bolton host Tottenham.  
 Reading, the side responsible for Liverpool's demise, meet Championship leaders West Brom.  
 Arguably the best chance of a fifth round upset is at Crystal Palace, the conquerors of Wolves in the last round, who entertain Aston Villa.

**FIXTURES**

**Saturday**  
 Chelsea v Cardiff City (1200 GMT), Southampton v Portsmouth (1230 GMT), Derby v Birmingham, Reading v West Brom (both 1500 GMT), Manchester City v Stoke (1715 GMT)

**Sunday**  
 Bolton v Tottenham (1330 GMT), Fulham v Notts County (1500 GMT), Crystal Palace v Aston Villa (1545 GMT)

## Cesc, Barca rubbish deal claims

**SOCERNET**  
 Arsenal legend Cesc Fàbregas has denied rumours that he has agreed a deal to join Spanish champions Barcelona next season.  
 Reports in Spain claimed Fàbregas had struck a verbal agreement to sign a five-year contract at the Camp Nou, but both Barcelona and the player refute such an accord exists.  
 "They have denied it, I have denied it. I just want to focus on Arsenal," Fàbregas told Sky Sports. "I think Arsenal Football Club is above everything, every single player in its history and their fans, and the club, and myself - I think we deserve a little bit more respect."  
 Fàbregas left Barcelona's youth academy to join Arsenal in 2003 and in a recent interview the Spain international said he would love to return to the club one day.  
 The feverish media speculation surrounding a proposed swoop for Fàbregas also prompted Barcelona to release a statement insisting no secret deal had been agreed with the midfielder.  
 "Given the exceptional repercussions created by the stories that have appeared in different media with respect to an agreement with Cesc Fàbregas, Barca flatly deny there have been any negotiations or agreements with the player," the statement read.

## Giggs out for four weeks

**AFP, Manchester**  
 Ryan Giggs has broken his right arm and will be out of action for at least four weeks in a serious blow to Manchester United's prospects of claiming silverware this season.  
 The Welsh winger was injured in a collision with Steve Sidwell during the second half of United's 1-1 draw at Aston Villa on Wednesday and an x-ray has confirmed a fracture that will mean he misses the League Cup final against Villa on February 28.  
 Giggs, 36, will also be absent for both legs of Champions League last-16 clash with AC Milan and Premier League games against Everton, West Ham and Wolves.  
 In the twilight of his career, Giggs has become more important to United than ever and his absence will be felt even more because Portuguese winger Nani, who has lately been playing the best football of his time at Old Trafford, faces a three-match domestic ban after being sent off against Villa.  
 Nani will be available for next week's first leg in Milan, a match that United will have plenty of time to prepare for as a result of their third round FA Cup defeat by Leeds last month.

## Atletico through despite loss

**INTERNET, undated**  
 Atletico Madrid set up a King's Cup final against Sevilla when they went through 6-3 on aggregate despite conceding two late goals to lose 3-2 at Racing Santander in their semi-final second leg on Thursday.  
 Atletico thrashed Racing 4-0 at the Calderon in last week's first leg but were rocked in only the second minute in Santander when defender Juan Valera headed into his own net from a corner.  
 Valera made amends six minutes later when he burst into the penalty area and pressured Jose Moraton into diverting a Jose Antonio Reyes freekick past goalkeeper Mario Fernandez.  
 Atletico midfielder Jurado snuffed out any hopes of an unlikely Racing comeback shortly after halftime when he exchanged passes with Sergio Agüero and curled the ball into the bottom corner with the outside of his right foot.  
 Christian Fernandez was shown a straight red card with just over 20 minutes left after catching Atletico substitute Ibrahim Balde in the face with a forearm and late goals from Racing strikers Xisco and Mohamed Tchite were mere consolations.  
 Sevilla, the 2007 King's Cup winners, won last week's first leg at home to Getafe 2-0 and hung on to clinch a 2-1 aggregate win after losing 1-0 in Madrid on Wednesday.

## Cole breaks ankle

**Football**  
**AFP, London**  
 England boss Fabio Capello has admitted that the potential loss of Ashley Cole from his World Cup squad is a severe blow to his preparations for South Africa.  
 Chelsea left-back Cole will be sidelined until early or mid-May after suffering a fracture of his left ankle, leaving him with only a few weeks to prove his fitness before the World Cup gets underway in mid-June.  
 "It is sad news for me because he is a very important player," Capello acknowledged. "He is good when he is defending and really dangerous when we go forward. I hope this problem will not be too serious."  
 Cole's injury, suffered in a defeat by Everton on Wednesday, is also a major setback for Chelsea, for whom Cole had been in superb form, as they pursue a Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup treble.  
 Chelsea manager Carlo Ancelotti can deploy Yuri Zhirkov or Paulo Ferreira in the left-back slot but neither of them provide the kind of attacking dynamism that Cole offers and which is an integral part of the club's system.  
 Cole limped off in the second half against Everton, following a challenge with Landon Donovan, the United States international who, ironically, could line up against the defender again when England face the Americans in their World Cup opener on June 12.  
 The injury to Cole could make life more complicated for Capello as he mulls how to handle the fallout from the recent furore over John Terry's alleged affair with the former girlfriend of Wayne Bridge, Cole's under-study at

left-back for the national team.  
 Having Bridge and Terry in the same dressing room will inevitably take some managing but the loss of Cole will make it virtually impossible for Capello to sidestep the issue by leaving Bridge out of his squad for the March 3 friendly against Egypt.  
 That would not be the case if Cole were fit with Stephen Warnock of Aston Villa and Everton's Leighton Baines currently pushing for promotion above Bridge, who has been plagued by injuries and poor form at Manchester City this season.  
 There has also been speculation that Bridge might decide to turn his back on England, although his manager at City, Roberto Mancini, said on Friday he thought that was unlikely.  
 "He never told me that he wouldn't play for England," Mancini said. "The national team is important. I have not spoken to him but I think, if he is picked, he will play."  
 Warnock is currently injured but could be back in action in time for the Egypt match while the case for Baines has been made by Everton boss David Moyes.  
 "I think the England left-backs will be Ashley Cole and Wayne Bridge and then I think it is toss-up between Stephen Warnock and Leighton Baines," the Scot said.  
 "I think Baines on his day is a match for any of them and I know Fabio Capello knows about him. He is certainly in and around the reckoning."  
 "He has been a very consistent player for us this season, as he was last year."  
 Whatever the merits of the possible replacements, the loss of Cole would be a serious blow to England's chances in South Africa.  
 On his recent form, he has a legitimate claim to be regarded as the finest player in his position in the world and is arguably the only England international to have that status.

## Ribery is back

**AFP, Berlin**  
**BUNDESLIGA**  
 Bayern Munich will look to their fit again French midfielder Franck Ribery on Saturday as the German giants hunt a ninth straight league win against Borussia Dortmund that could see them move top.  
 The 26-year-old star playmaker has been sidelined with a knee injury and has not started a Bundesliga game for more than four months.  
 But after scoring once and lasting 73 minutes in Wednesday's 6-2 drubbing of second-division side Furth in the German Cup, coach Louis van Gaal said he was looking to Ribery to shine against fifth-placed Dortmund.  
 Ribery himself said he was "sad" and "surprised" at being hauled off before the final whistle, but said he was pleased he was able to start.  
 Van Gaal's men will be hoping for a similar result to the last time the two sides met in the league, with Bayern thumping Dortmund 5-1 on September 12.  
 And the coach will also be willing former Chelsea striker Arjen Robben, who has struck the net in the last three Bundesliga games, to continue his impressive goal-scoring run.  
 Meanwhile, top-of-the-table side Leverkusen will be aiming to keep holding Bayern at bay with three points against Wolfsburg, who have lost the form that took them to the Bundesliga crown last year, slumping to 12th in the table.  
 In a Sunday afternoon kickoff, third-placed Schalke, 3

he needs to come back gradually as Bayern continue to battle on three fronts this season, in the Champions League, the Cup and the Bundesliga.  
 "Everyone wants to play for longer... I need to build him up and integrate him back into the team. That is what I am doing," he said.  
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points behind the leaders, host Cologne, also languishing in mid-table.  
 Fourth-placed Hamburg will be hoping their new star signing Ruud van Nistelrooy makes an immediate impact as they travel to Stuttgart.  
 The prolific Dutchman made his debut as a 90th-minute substitute during last week's 3-3 draw with Cologne but will likely play a more prominent role as Hamburg seek to close the gap on Schalke for an automatic Champions League berth.

## Bayern struck by virus

**AFP, Berlin**  
 Bayern Munich coach Louis van Gaal on Thursday ordered some of his squad to train separately after a mystery stomach bug struck down a number of the Bavarian club's players.  
 "We have a virus in the dressing room," the 58-year-old Dutchman said.  
 "It's bad for us... we expect more cases within the coming weeks," he added.  
 As a precautionary measure, van Gaal told the infected players to train away from the rest of the first team.  
 It comes as the German giants gear up to face Italian side Fiorentina in the Champions League next Wednesday.  
 Bayern were already missing five players in their German Cup quarter-final on Wednesday after second division Furth including defender Daniel van Buyten and goalkeeper Joerg Butt.

## FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
 Bayer Leverkusen v VfL Wolfsburg, VfB Stuttgart v Hamburg, VfL Bochum v Hoffenheim, Hannover 96 v Werder Bremen, Hertha Berlin v Mainz 05, Bayern Munich v Borussia Dortmund

**Sunday**  
 Schalke 04 v Cologne, Eintracht Frankfurt v Freiburg

### IN BRIEF

#### Mourinho fined 15,000 Euro

**INTERNET, undated**  
 José Mourinho has been fined €18,000 (£15,000) for his comments after the Milan derby last month. The Internazionale coach said that "everything was done for us not to win" although his side defeated Milan 2-0 despite finishing the game with nine men after Wesley Sneijder and Lucio were sent off.  
 Mourinho added that the game had left a "strange taste" in his mouth and "I've realised they won't let us wrap up the championship early."  
 Inter's chief executive, Ernesto Paolillo, was fined €20,000 for questioning the Italian Soccer League's neutrality after Milan managed to have a fixture before the derby rescheduled.

#### Sven leaves Notts County

**INTERNET, undated**  
 Sven-Goran Eriksson's spell as director of football at Notts County came to an end on Thursday as he was released from a contract that had more than four years to run. The news came after a consortium of investors, including former Lincoln City chairman Tay Trew, bought out the majority shareholding of the League Two club's executive chairman, Peter Trembling.  
 Trembling and the club's chief executive, Gary Townsend, will also leave.  
 "I am absolutely certain I can do something with this club. But I might upset a few fans," Trew told the Times.  
 "The problem with this club is that it has been living beyond its means and that cannot go on. We have to build a club here that is secure for the future generations, and that means we will have to make some serious decisions."  
 The club is still fighting a winding-up petition from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.  
 Thursday's edition of Catalan

## Roma run in threat

**AFP, Rome**  
**LEGA CALCIO**  
 AS Roma's incredible 19-match unbeaten run will come under threat this weekend due to a striker crisis that will see both Francesco Totti and Luca Toni miss out.  
 Roma's recent form has seen them win 16 and draw three of their last 19 games, a sequence that has propelled them to second in Serie A and seen them progress in both the Europa League and Coppa Italia.  
 But with a tough tie against Champions League chasing Palermo on Saturday, it's a bad time to have your top two forwards out injured.  
 The Sicilians will arrive in the capital in buoyant mood as they sit just one point and one place outside a Champions League qualification position in fifth.  
 And Roma will have to rely on Montenegro forward Mirko Vucinic if they are to take anything from this game, although he proved the match-winner in their 1-0 success at Fiorentina

last weekend, a game in which Roma were second best throughout.  
 The giallorosso sit nine points behind leaders Inter Milan as they continue to pay for a poor start to the season that saw them lose their first two matches and then three more in a row in October.  
 Those three defeats are what separate them from the four-in-a-row champions but they will have been encouraged by Parma's 1-1 draw with Inter on Wednesday.  
 And Jose Mourinho's champions arguably have a tougher weekend test away to Napoli, who had been on a 15-match unbeaten run in the league before losing 3-1 at Udinese last time out.  
 Although fourth-place

**FIXTURES**

**Saturday**  
 AS Roma v Palermo, Sampdoria v Fiorentina

**Sunday**  
 Cagliari v Bari, Catania v Atalanta, Chievo v Siena, Juventus v Genoa, Livorno v Bologna, Napoli v Inter Milan, Parma v Lazio

## Barca up against nemesis

**INTERNET, undated**  
**LFP**  
 The fans of the world champions Barcelona are very worried about Sunday. That's when Lionel Messi and company are away to unpredictable Atletico Madrid, who have beaten them on their last two visits to the Estadio Calderon.  
 Barca's excellent defence has been torn to shreds by injuries and suspensions, obliging coach Josep Guardiola to improvise an emergency back four.  
 Eric Abidal, Daniel Alves and Dmytro Chyrynskiy are all injured, Rafa Marquez and Gerard Pique are both suspended.  
 Captain Carles Puyol will have to play despite his muscle problems, alongside Gabriel Milito - just back after almost two years out injured - and Maxwell.  
 Thursday's edition of Catalan

daily Mundo Deportivo calls it "an emergency situation" and hints that Guardiola might put young winger Jefferson back.  
 In addition, playmaker Andres Iniesta is doubtful with muscle problems, whilst Yaya Toure is out for two more weeks.  
 The Madrid foe are hopeful that Barca can drop points in the Calderon, which would allow Real Madrid to reduce Barca's five-point lead at the top.  
 An online poll in Marca

**FIXTURES**

**Saturday**  
 Sporting Gijon v Valencia, Xerez v Real Madrid, Villarreal v Athletic Bilbao

**Sunday**  
 Espanyol v Deportivo la Coruna, Valladolid v Zaragoza, Getafe v Almeria, Racing Santander v Malaga, Sevilla v Osasuna 19.00, Atletico Madrid v Barcelona 21.00

**Monday**  
 Tenerife v Mallorca

shows, on Thursday, that 55 per cent of readers believe - or maybe just hope - that Barca's performance against Atletico will be affected by their many absences.  
 Barca will be hoping that Atletico are tired after Tuesday's King's Cup semi-final second leg away to Racing Santander.  
 Barca have 55 points from 21 games. Real have 50.  
 Real should have few problems on Saturday away to bottom team Xerez, despite the rain-soaked pitch that awaits them.  
 Cristiano Ronaldo will return from suspension. Ezequiel Garay, Lassana Diarra and Rafael Van der Vaart are fit again. On the other hand, Karim Benzema is out for a week and Marcelo has been laid low by gastroenteritis.  
 Also on Saturday, third-placed Valencia - who are eight points behind Real - are away to Sporting Gijon, and troubled Villarreal are at home to young Athletic Bilbao.



**Atletico Madrid midfielder Raul Garcia (L) shoots at goal as Racing Santander midfielder Mehdi Lacen attempts to block during their Spanish King's Cup match at the El Sardinero stadium in Santander on Thursday.**