



Manchester United midfielder Park Ji-Sung (R) scores the winning goal with a diving header past the despairing dive of Pepe Reina in their derby encounter against Liverpool at Old Trafford yesterday.

# MU prevail against L'pool

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United regained top spot in the Premier League as goals from Wayne Rooney and Park Ji-Sung secured a 2-1 win over arch rivals Liverpool on Sunday.

Sir Alex Ferguson's team responded to an early opening goal from Fernando Torres to earn a victory which ends Liverpool's run of three straight wins in this fixture and maintains United's quest to win a 19th English league title.

The champions are now two points ahead of second placed Arsenal with seven games to play.

The opening 10 minutes at Old Trafford were among the most incident-packed, and contentious, of the Premier League season as the ill-feeling between the two old enemies became abundantly apparent.

First blood was drawn by Liverpool with a superbly-worked goal that suggested their hopes of another win over the defending champions might not be that far-fetched.

Steven Gerrard drove deep into United territory from just inside his own half before feeding the ball to Dirk Kuyt whose run continued to the right-hand by-line before he pulled back a pinpoint cross, which found the head of Torres, inexplicably unmarked six yards from goal, for a routine finish.

Old Trafford was stunned but it took just seven minutes for the home side to respond, the equaliser coming after

**Manchester United 2 (Rooney 12, Park 60) Liverpool 1 (Torres 5)**

Emiliano Insua made a weak defensive header which saw the ball fall for Antonio Valencia.

He immediately set off towards the Liverpool goal, with Javier Mascherano snapping at his heels and bringing him down just as he entered the area.

Referee Howard Webb pointed to the spot and immediately brandished a yellow card at the Liverpool midfielder, with United players surrounding the official and

demanding he show red.

Gary Neville sprinted half the length of the field to voice his opinion and engaged in an angry exchange with Jamie Carragher, one duplicated on the touchline by rival managers Ferguson and Rafa Benitez who engaged in a finger pointing spat before the United boss screamed his disapproval at Webb.

After the rows, Rooney's poor penalty was well saved by Jose Reina but the rebound falling kindly for the England forward, who was alert enough to turn the loose ball into the open net for the equaliser.

Perhaps understandably, the early intensity was not maintained but United remained on top.

Park placed a pair of headers wide of the Liverpool goal and Nani's strong run ended with a powerful shot from the edge of the box which Reina turned around his post.

Just before the interval, Carragher was booked for a foul on Darren Fletcher and Rooney produced a 25-yard free-kick which Reina caught easily, but such opportunities were rare.

Park had endured an ineffective first

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## IN BRIEF

### Terry slams referees

AFP, London

Chelsea captain John Terry has launched a scathing attack on referees in the Champions League in the aftermath of his side's exit against Inter Milan.

The Blues had two penalty appeals turned down by German referee Wolfgang Stark during Inter's 1-0 win at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday and Terry claims his team are suffering more than most from bad decisions by officials.

"It was a bad performance by us but a really bad performance from the referee," Terry said.

"It is not good enough at this stage of the competition. We were at home and we didn't get one decision.

"We do our best to get ourselves in this position and for two years running we get let down by bad refereeing.

"We need someone at the club to take it up with UEFA. I'm not going to say the word conspiracy. But I'm so frustrated by what happened.

"Florent Malouda got fouled inside the box in the first half and the referee waved play on. Didier Drogba gets manhandled and if the referee misses it, we have the linesman."

Terry claimed Stark was unwilling to talk with him during Tuesday's game and accused the official of showing "disrespect".

"When a decision didn't go our way I, as captain, went to speak to the German referee and he turned his back on me," Terry said.

"I wasn't shouting. I went to try to talk to him and when he wouldn't talk that is when I got frustrated. That is just pure disrespect.

"If I get myself in trouble, then so be it. I owe it to our fans to speak out."

### Van Persie back in training

THE GUARDIAN

Robin van Persie returns to Arsenal to join full training this week. Having missed nearly five months of the season with serious ankle damage sustained on international duty with Holland, the striker is ready to rejoin his teammates and attempt to regain match fitness before the end of the season.

"We sent our fitness coach to Holland where he has been doing his rehabilitation and we are told he looks very sharp," said the manager, Arsene Wenger, after Arsenal's 2-0 win over West Ham. "He will be back this week but we have to wait at least a month."

If Van Persie is able to get back on the pitch in a month, he would be available to help his team for at least three Premier League matches. Arsenal play Manchester City at the Emirates on 24 April, then visit Blackburn, and end their campaign with a home game against Fulham. There is also the possibility of their fixture at Tottenham being rescheduled, subject to how their north London rivals get on in their FA Cup semifinal replay.

If Arsenal progress in the Champions League, the Dutchman would also be in contention to play around the time of the semifinals. Van Persie scored eight goals in 15 appearances before his injury last November.

# Bayern stunned

INTERNET, undated



Bayern Munich looked to be cruising to victory against Eintracht Frankfurt in the Bundesliga Saturday but two late strikes saw Louis van Gaal's side crash to a shock 2-1 defeat.

Miroslav Klose's only second league goal of the season after six minutes looked to have secured a hard-fought win for the Bundesliga leaders but Frankfurt substitute Juvhel Tsoumou levelled matters on 87 minutes, just two minutes after coming on.

Incredibly, Martin Fenin snatched a dramatic winner with a minute of regulation time remaining, slamming the ball past Bayern goalkeeper Joerg Butt from the narrowest of angles.

Despite the loss, Bayern stay two points clear of second-placed Schalke 04 on 56 points. Felix Magath's side can go top with victory against SV Hamburg on Sunday.

Bayer Leverkusen stay third, three points behind the leaders after going down 3-0 away to Borussia Dortmund through a second-half brace from Lucas Barrios and a late strike from Dimitar Rangelov.

Germany striker Klose hadn't netted in the Bundesliga since scoring as a substitute in Bayern's first game back after the winter break against Hoffenheim in January but the 31-year-old was clinical with the only clear chance he had at the Commerzbank Arena.

Mark van Bommel sent in a teasing cross early on, and a dozing Frankfurt defence allowed Klose time to control the ball with his chest before steering a low shot past goalkeeper Oka Nikolov.

Frankfurt refused to be intimidated, however, and dominated proceedings after the early setback and eventually got the result their efforts deserved.

First, an Alexander Meier header was cleared off the line by Daniel van Buyten on 20 minutes while a minute later Butt had to be at this best to tip a Benjamin Koehler header over the bar.

Pirmin Schwieger found the side-netting with a poorly directed shot eight minutes after the restart as Frankfurt continued to press while substitute Anatoliy Tymoshchuk should have wrapped matters up for Bayern with 20 minutes remaining but was denied by Nikolov.

Bayern paid the price for that miss three minutes from time when an underhit David

Alaba backpass meant a Butt clearance rebounded off the challenging Tsoumou and into the Bayern net.

The 17-year-old left-back was also at fault two minutes later as he left Fenin unmarked in the area to fire home the winner.

Leverkusen, meanwhile, while kicking themselves that they didn't take their early chances in Dortmund before being eventually outplayed in the second half.

Stefan Kiessling had a glorious opportunity to put Leverkusen in front when put through clear on goal after 10 minutes but the striker fired straight at Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Weidenfeller.

Eren Derdiyok was denied by Weidenfeller 10 minutes later while the Swiss striker also saw a shot graze the outside of a post three minutes before half-time.

It was all Dortmund after the break, though, as first Kevin Grosskreutz was denied by Leverkusen goalkeeper Rene Adler on 49 minutes before Barrios poked the home side in front from the resulting corner.

Barrios made it 2-0 on the hour-mark, tapping in from close range after being set up by Mohamed Zidan. Rangelov completed the scoring three minutes from time with a breakaway effort as Leverkusen committed more and more players forward.

Werder Bremen kept their hopes of European qualification alive after twice coming from behind to eventually beat VfL Bochum 3-2.

Stanislav Sestak put the visitors in front after 14 minutes but a clinical finish from substitute Claudio Pizarro levelled the tie on 58 minutes.

Bochum were back in front just five minutes later through Zlatko Dedic but that lead lasted two minutes before Marco Marin drew Bremen level once again.

Substitute Torsten Frings secured all three points for the home side with a deflected effort 10 minutes from time to move Bremen up to fifth place on 45 points, three behind fourth-placed Dortmund and two clear of Hamburg.

VfB Stuttgart felt no ill effects their 4-0 drubbing by Barcelona in the Champions League, cruising to a 2-0 victory over struggling Hannover 96 thanks to a brace from Ciprian Marica.

SC Freiburg boosted their chances of escaping relegation with a 1-0 victory over Mainz with Johannes Flum netting the only goal of the game after 10 minutes courtesy of a superb 25-metre strike.

In the day's other match, relegation threatened Nuremberg played out a goalless draw with Hoffenheim.

# Arsenal ride on Almunia

INTERNET, undated



Arsenal moved back on top of the English Premier League table - for 24 hours at least - after they beat West Ham United 2-0 on Saturday,

despite being down to 10 men for more than half the match.

Denilson now sit the Gunners ahead after four minutes but Thomas Vermaelen was sent off shortly before half-time after he was adjudged to have fouled Alessandro Diamanti.

The Italian's subsequent penalty was saved by Manuel Almunia, though, and Arsenal sealed the points when Cesc Fabregas converted from the spot after a handball by Matthew Upson.

Arsenal now sit one point clear of champions Manchester United at the top, with Chelsea three points back in third. United play Liverpool on Sunday while Chelsea travel to Blackburn.

Tottenham Hotspur cemented their bid for fourth place and the remaining Champions League spot as they won at

**Arsenal 2 (Denilson 5, Fabregas 83-pen) West Ham 0**  
**Aston Villa 2 (Carew 16, 82) Wolves 2 (Craddock 23, Milner 38-og)**  
**Everton 2 (Arteta 72, Pienaar 89) Bolton 0**  
**Portsmouth 3 (Smith 37, O'Hara 88, Kanu 89) Hull 2 (Folan 27, 73)**  
**Stoke 1 (Etherington 64-pen) Tottenham 2 (Gudjohnsen 46, Kranjcar 77)**  
**Sunderland 3 (Bent 5, 11, Campbell 88) Birmingham 1 (Jerome 60)**  
**Wigan 1 (Rodallega 90) Burnley 0**

10-man Stoke City while one of their rivals, Aston Villa, lost ground.

Niko Kranjcar scored a late winner for Spurs as they won 2-1 at Stoke, who had Dean Whitehead sent off after 48 minutes.

The win moved them four points clear of Liverpool in the race to secure the remaining Champions League spot, while Villa's 2-2 draw at home to local rivals Wolves means they are a point further back.

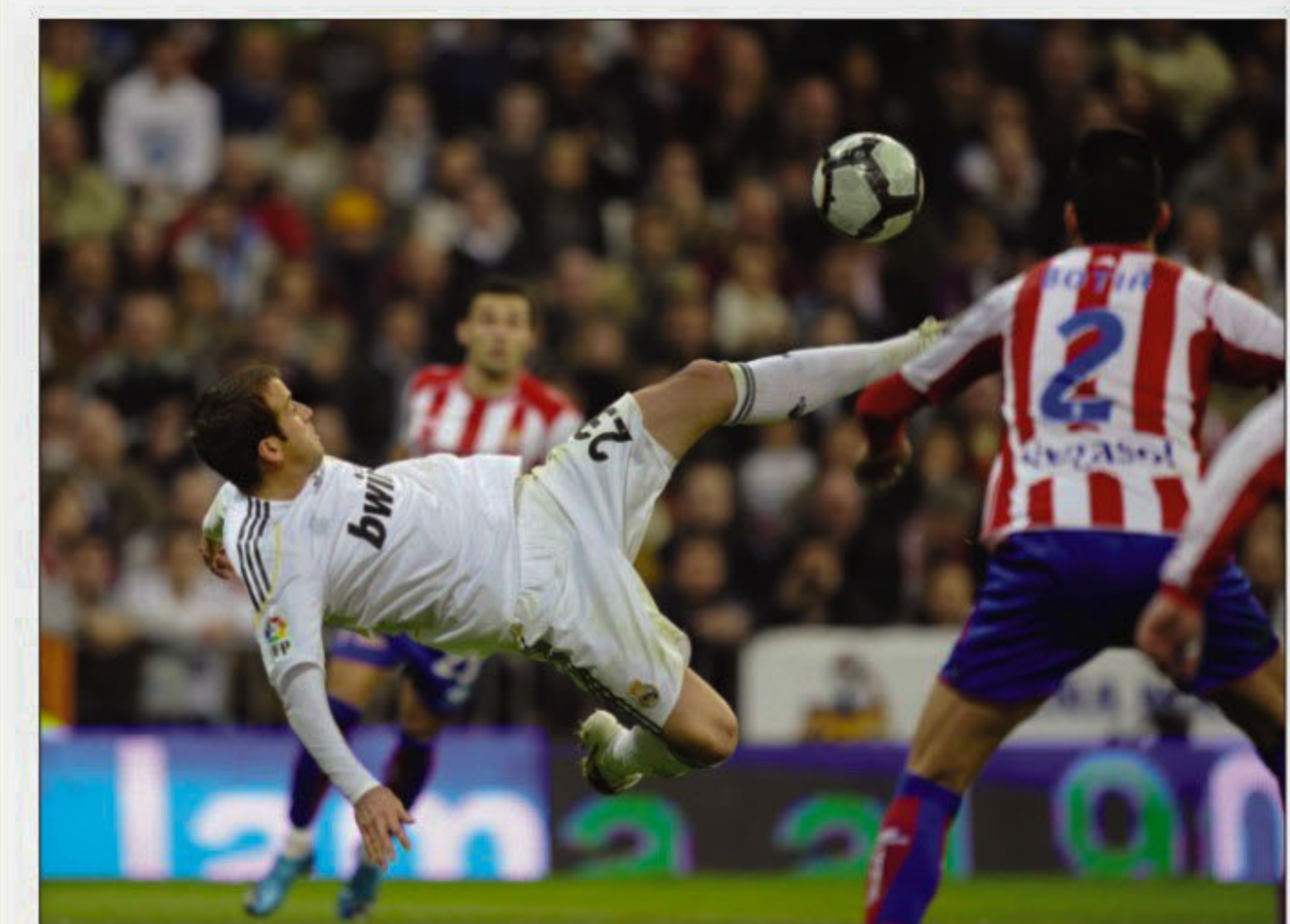
Eidur Gudjohnsen put Spurs ahead just after half-time and then Whitehead made things worse for Stoke by getting himself sent off for a mistimed challenge on Luka Modric.

Spurs failed to make the extra man pay, though, and Stoke levelled when Matthew Etherington scored from the penalty spot after Benoit Assou-Ekotto had fouled Dave Kitson.

But a nice dummy by Gudjohnsen allowed Kranjcar to slot in the winner and Spurs pinched the three points, leaving manager Harry Redknapp to praise Gudjohnsen's influence since his loan move from Monaco.

At Villa Park, John Carew gave Aston Villa an early lead from close range but

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Real Madrid midfielder Rafael van der Vaart (L) tries an acrobatic volley during their Primera Liga clash against Sporting Gijon at the Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid on Saturday.

# Real keep up pressure

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid secured their ninth straight victory after coming from behind to beat Sporting Gijon 3-1 on Saturday and open up a three-point gap on bitter rivals Barcelona at the top of La Liga.

The home side were the better team in the first half

but lacked the killer touch in front of goal with Gonzalo Higuain missing two excellent chances.

After the break, Sporting went ahead against the run of play through David Barral, but the goal injected some much-needed urgency into Real.

Rafael Van der Vaart brought Real level, although replays suggested he controlled the ball with his hand, and then Xabi Alonso headed them into the lead.

Higuain got on the score-sheet to finish off the threat from Sporting.

"We had a bad start and it wasn't until the second half that we improved but we lacked the creativity to break down Sporting," said Real coach Manuel Pellegrini.

"You can't play all games well and while we scored three goals we can't be happy with the way we played.

"This was a game which gave us a warning as we have to start matches with a greater rhythm. Sporting defended very well and on the counter-attack were very dangerous."

beat Zaragoza on Sunday to remain level on points with Real.

The champions have not been playing at their best and it is largely thanks to Lionel Messi, who has scored eight of their last ten goals, that they are still locked in a tight tussle with Real.

Coach Pep Guardiola, though, has emphasised the importance of the team as a whole playing well from now until the end of the season.

"When I talk about the team I am not trying to downplay Messi at all. There is no doubt that Leo is very important to us because he is the best player in the world, and he is like Michael Jordan was to basketball," said the coach.

Sevilla coach Manolo Jimenez's future was left hanging in the balance following his side's 2-0 defeat by Espanyol.

The Andalusian team have now gone four matches without victory in the league as well as crashing out of the Champions League against CSKA Moscow.

Espanyol went ahead through their first attack with Pablo Osvaldo heading home a Javi Marquez cross.

Sevilla then lost two important creative players in Jesus Navas and Diego Capel to injury.

Osvaldo finished off a well-worked move on the hour mark to double Espanyol's lead and there was no way back for Sevilla.

A surprise 2-0 defeat for Deportivo La Coruna against Valladolid allowed Athletic Bilbao, who drew 2-2 with Getafe, to move above them into a Europa League place.

## SERIE A Inter held by Palermo

SOCCERNET

Inter Milan's hopes of a fifth successive Serie A title suffered a setback on Saturday evening as Jose Mourinho's side were held 1-1 at Palermo.

Diego Milito fired Inter ahead from the penalty spot after ten minutes but Edinson Cavani levelled after 24 minutes and neither side could find a winner. The result left Inter two points clear of Milan, having played a game more.

Third-placed Roma are four points adrift of Inter after Mirko Vucinic netted a hat-trick in a 4-2 win over Udinese.

Luca Toni fired the Giallorossi in front after 14 minutes and Vucinic doubled the lead with his first after 24 minutes. However, Palermo hit back to go in front with two goals from Antonio Di Natale, one of which came from the penalty spot.

But Vucinic restored the hosts' lead from the spot after 66 minutes and netted his third and Roma's fourth seven minutes from time.

Fiorentina climbed above Cagliari to revive their hopes of qualifying for Europe next season thanks to a comfortable 3-0 win over European rivals Genoa.



Inter Milan forward Diego Milito is dejected after only managing to draw against Palermo in their Serie A clash at the Barbera Stadium on Saturday.

## West Ham in for sensational Becks sweep?

AFP, London

West Ham United co-owner David Gold admits his club are considering an ambitious approach to sign England midfielder David Beckham.

The 34-year-old was born not far from West Ham's Upton Park stadium in the east end of London and Gold feels the former Manchester United midfielder would be the perfect man to help revitalise the under-performing Premier League side.

He told the News of the World: "David keeps on showing he still has so much to offer and if he's available then we want to be bidding."

"It's not only a case of what he can do on the pitch but what he does off it -- he'd be a sensational ambassador for his home-town club.

"He's a local boy like the two owners and this could appeal to him. It's not fanciful as he has so much to offer. His arrival would be massive."