

RESULTS

FC Twente (NED) 2 (Janssen 20, Milito 30-og) Inter Milan (ITA) 2 (Sneijder 13, Eto'o 41)
Werder Bremen (GER) 2 (Almeida 43, Marin 47) Tottenham Hotspur (ENG) 2 (Pasanen 13-og, Crouch 18)
Lyon (FRA) 1 (Bastos 21) Schalke 04 (GER) 0
Benfica (POR) 2 (Luisao 21, Cardozo 68) Hapoel Tel-Aviv (ISR) 0
Man Utd (ENG) 0 Rangers (SCO) 0
Bursaspor (TUR) 0 **Valencia (ESP) 4** (Costa 16, Aduriz 41, Pablo Hernandez 68, Soldado 76)
Barcelona (ESP) 5 (Messi 22, 45, Villa 33, Pedro 78, Alves 90+3)
Panathinaikos (GRE) 1 (Govou 20)

Buonanotte in hot water

AFP, Buenos Aires

Prosecutors have charged Argentina footballer Diego Buonanotte with triple homicide after a car crash in December that killed three of his friends.

After a technical analysis of the car, the public prosecutor decided he had been driving at excessive speeds when he lost control of the car.

His three friends, aged, 21, 22 and 24, were all from his home town of Teodelina, in the northeastern province of Santa Fe.

The 22-year-old River Plate star himself suffered lung damage as well as broken arms and a fractured right shoulder when the car he was driving hit a tree in Santa Fe.

He was the only passenger wearing a seatbelt.



READY, SET, GO: Sevilla players sprint during a training session at the Sport City yesterday on the eve of their Europa League tie against Paris Saint Germain.

PHOTO: AFP

Rivera blasts Berlusconi

AFP, Rome

AC Milan and Italy legend Gianni Rivera on Tuesday hit out at the club's president Silvio Berlusconi for his transfer policy.

Milan caused a stir these last couple of weeks by securing a couple of transfer coups in bringing Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Robinho to the club for a combined total of 42 million euros.

With those two teaming up with Ronaldinho and Pato, many believe Milan to have potentially the best strike-force in the world.

But Rivera, an elegant midfield playmaker in his day, says that's not the way to build a title-winning team.

Asked if Ibrahimovic's arrival will propel Milan to the title, he said: "I don't know, the league has only just started."

"But maybe the rossoneri also need defenders, instead there are some who believe that all you need to win the title is forwards," he added in a clear reference to Berlusconi, the Italy prime minister.

Rivera, who currently has a role with the national team supervising the youth sector, believes teams in general are investing their money in the wrong way.

"I believe they need to spend more on development rather than the first team, but I doubt this will ever happen."

"In other countries the youth sectors work because they're a way of reducing the club's spending and who knows if the Ajax model couldn't work in Italy."

Mancini's big City test

AFP, Paris



Roberto Mancini's first European campaign as Manchester City coach begins in earnest on Thursday, when they visit Red Bull Salzburg in their opening Europa League group phase fixture.

Having failed to qualify for a place among the Champions League heavyweights last season, City have had to content themselves with the more understated glamour of the continent's second-tier cup competition.

Progress in the Europa League will bring with it increased global exposure, however, and City's mega-rich owners will be expecting to see some return on the 325 million pounds (389 million euros) they have invested in new players since buying the club in September 2008.

City have started the domestic season in irregular fashion, beating Liverpool 3-0 in their first home game but picking up a disappointing five points from their opening four fixtures.

David Silva was one of the club's headline summer signings, arriving from Valencia for around 28 million euros during the World Cup, and he feels Mancini's embryonic team will soon click into gear.

"We have a great squad and it takes time for all the new players to adapt and gel together," Silva told the club's official website.

"We may have lost and drawn the last couple of league games, but we'll soon start climbing the table and I think we'll have a very good season."

A mistake from Joe Hart allowed Blackburn to claim a 1-1 draw against City in their last league outing, but Mancini says the England goalkeeper will keep his place against Salzburg despite competition from Shay Given.

"We are involved in four competitions and I'm sure Shay will play in Europe at some point but I will continue to play Joe on Thursday,"

said the Italian.

"It is a difficult decision for me because, as I keep saying, Shay is a strong goalkeeper but at the moment this is my choice."

Salzburg were one of the revelations of last season's competition, winning all six of their group fixtures before falling to Standard Liege in the last 32.

The other opening Group A fixture sees Juventus, who drew 3-3 with Sampdoria in Serie A on Sunday, host Polish side Lech Poznan.

Liverpool, like Juventus, are another richly decorated team being made to slum it among the lesser lights of the Europa League after an underwhelming domestic campaign last term.

The five-time European Cup winners welcome Steaua Bucharest to Anfield in their first Group K encounter, hoping to shrug off a lacklustre start to the season in which they have claimed just one win in their first four games.

"We have got to try and win every game and hopefully we can start on Thursday night," said Serbian winger Milan Jovanovic after the 0-0 draw at Birmingham City on Sunday.

"It will be difficult but we will be doing our best as always."

Dutch side FC Utrecht, victors against Celtic in the final Europa League preliminary round, travel to Napoli in the other Group K game.

Defending champions Atletico Madrid, who lead La Liga after winning their opening two league matches, begin their bid to qualify from Group B with a trip to Greek side Aris.

Other eye-catching fixtures on Thursday include PSV Eindhoven's game against Sampdoria, who fell in the play-off round of the Champions League, and Paris Saint-Germain's visit to Sevilla, UEFA Cup winners in 2006 and 2007.

Swiss second tier outfit Lausanne-Sport, shock winners against Lokomotiv Moscow in the play-off round, face another side from the Russian capital in 2005 UEFA Cup winners CSKA Moscow.

France fall in FIFA rankings

AFP, Paris

Spain maintained their place atop the FIFA world rankings published on Wednesday, but France fell six spots to 27th despite new coach Laurent Blanc's first victory since taking charge.

The World Cup winners, also the reigning European champions, remain at the top of the standings despite going down 4-1 to Argentina in a friendly, ahead of the Netherlands and Germany, who leapfrogged Brazil after successes against Belgium (1-0) and Azerbaijan (6-1) in Euro 2012 qualifiers.

RANKINGS

1. Spain
2. Netherlands
3. Germany (+1)
4. Brazil (-1)
5. Argentina
6. England (+1)
7. Uruguay (-1)
8. Portugal
9. Egypt
10. Chile
13. Italy (-2)

Antic to be sacked

AFP, Belgrade

Serbia's national football coach Radomir Antic could be sacked from his post on Wednesday due to poor results at the World Cup and qualifiers for Euro 2012, local media reported.

"The Serbian Football Federation (FSS) has already decided to break Antic's contract after Serbia's failure at the World Cup and bad start in qualifiers for Euro 2012," Belgrade radio B92 reported.

Serbia won 3-0 in a qualifier with the Faroe Islands, but managed only a draw against Slovenia.

Antic might be replaced with Vladimir Petrovic, the former Red Star Belgrade striker who also played for English Premier League giants Arsenal and French outfit Nancy, the report said.

FSS was expected to announce its decision at the press conference later Wednesday.

Antic has already been at odds with the FSS following Serbia's failure to qualify for the last 16 at the World Cup earlier this year.

In August, Antic agreed to have his salary halved to hang on to his job following a four-match ban by FIFA for "inappropriate behaviour" during his team's World Cup exit at the hands of Australia.

Antic, who has previously coached Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid and Barcelona, took over the helm of the national squad in August 2008 after two disastrous campaigns by Serbia for the 2006 World Cup and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Valencia out for season

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United winger Antonio Valencia will not play again this season after a freak injury in the 0-0 Champions League draw with Rangers left him with a fractured and dislocated ankle.

Manager Sir Alex Ferguson defended his selection policy, for the second consecutive game, after making 10 changes to the team that drew at Everton in the Premier League on Saturday.

But the loss of Ecuador international Valencia was, possibly, the most costly feature of the Old Trafford stalemate for the United manager.

Valencia, who had surgery on the right ankle in the summer, twisted awkwardly as he sprinted down the sideline and was left with a shattered left ankle, dislocated and fractured.

Ferguson said: "He's gone to hospital. It is a dislocation and a fracture, it's a bad one and will keep him out for a long time."

"He seemed to dig his toe in the turf and when we saw the Rangers player waving we knew it was bad. It was an innocuous challenge and we didn't expect that."

"It's a similar injury to the one (former striker) Alan Smith had here in 2006 so he is out for the rest of the season."

Rangers defender Kirk Broadfoot looked shaken as he helped Valencia and waved on the United medical team who stretchered off the player.

But the injury was not the only concern for Ferguson who recalled Wayne Rooney, whom he had controversially

left out at Everton, and Rio Ferdinand but saw his team unable to make a single clear-cut chance.

Ferguson, while defending the policy, did admit that omitting Dimitar Berbatov from even a place on his bench may have been an error.

"The criticism will be why I didn't pick a strong team but I felt I picked a strong team," said Ferguson. "We have a

difference.

"They should have won the game but give Rangers credit as their system was difficult to break down."

"You need 10 points to qualify. Obviously our home record over the years has been very good. It was a blemish against Rangers but it is one point and you never know how the rest of the games will go. But we have a

Rangers manager Walter Smith, Ferguson's old friend and ally, was delighted with his team's point although he conceded that financial limitations make it difficult for his team to compete in the Champions League.

"From our point of view, I'm pleased with the way the boys handled themselves," said Smith.

"They showed great deter-



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United winger Antonio Valencia receives treatment for a broken ankle during their Champions League clash against Rangers at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

terrific squad of players and most of them played at the Charity Shield.

"We wanted to see how Chicharito (Javier Hernandez) could do in a full game but by doing that we left out Berbatov and his form has been outstanding."

"He's been one of our best players this season and you have to say that was a loss. His ability to create in tight situations would have made a

target now, nine points from five games." Ferguson, who has seen his team draw two away games already in the Premier League this season, is also expecting a positive response from his team when Liverpool visit Old Trafford on Sunday.

"It's a big game," he said. "The disappointment of last Saturday has to resonate with the players, we can't make mistakes like that again."

mination and a high level of concentration throughout the game and limited United to very few clear-cut chances.

"It's not just Scottish clubs, but clubs in Holland, Portugal and others. We're all suffering badly because of financial limitations and we have next to no chance of winning the Champions League - the same as 85 per cent of English teams have no chance of winning their league."

Diego eyes Portugal job

Football

INTERNET

Argentina legend Diego Maradona is said to be interested in taking charge of Portugal's national team.

Carlos Queiroz was sacked as Portugal coach last week in the wake of being handed a six-month ban for allegedly insulting anti-doping agents before this year's World Cup.

And Alejandro Mancuso, one of Maradona's assistant coaches during his two-year reign as Argentina coach, claims he has discussed the idea of coaching Portugal with Maradona.

"It's true," he told A Bola. "Diego and I have already talked about the option of working for Portugal because it's a project that we like very much."

"He has the will and absolute freedom, but for the moment nobody has got in touch with him in an official way."

Maradona has welcomed any coaching offers since the Argentinian Federation chose not to renew his contract after their quarterfinal exit at this summer's World Cup.

And although there is yet to be any contact regarding the Portugal job, Mancuso insists it would be Maradona's preferred choice if their federation expressed an interest.



DIEGO MARADONA

Priority "There is a priority for the option of the Portuguese national team, but this will be once there is interest from the Portuguese Federation and they get in touch," he said.

"Maradona has opened the doors to everyone and this is a project in which he feels a big motivation."

"In addition, money wouldn't be a problem at all." Maradona, 49, had only two brief coaching stints in club football before being appointed Argentina coach in October 2008.

Queiroz became Portugal coach that July and struggled to qualify them for this summer's World Cup, where they were knocked out in the second round by Spain.

Portugal then opened their Euro 2012 qualifying campaign with a 4-4 draw at home to Cyprus and a 1-0 defeat in Norway then hastened Queiroz's departure.

The Portuguese Federation said upon his dismissal that they hoped to appoint his successor in time for the team's next qualifier at home to Denmark on 8th October.