Magath fumes at party boys

AFP, Gelsenkirchen

Under-fire Schalke 04 coach Felix Magath is threatening to heavily fine a key group of players - including captain Manuel Neuer - for partying hard two days before a German Cup game.

Schalke have been poor this season and are 16th in the Bundesliga with just six points from nine games and face second division FSV Frankfurt in the German Cup on Tuesday.

The Royal Blues were held to a goalless draw in the Bundesliga by Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday.

But Magath is furious after learning a large group of senior players including Dutch striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar, US player Jermaine Jones and Germany goalkeeper Neuer had partied until 4am on Sunday morn-

"I expect an answer," fumed Magath in German daily Bild.

"It will not be sufficient just to get into the next round.

"I want a good game and a clear victory. Let no one come to me and say they are too tired. I will not accept that. "We will talk about the

consequences after the game."



PHOTO: REUTERS

Les Bleus were knocked out in

the group stage and went on

strike to protest against the

exclusion of Chelsea striker

Nicolas Anelka after he had

insulted then coach Raymond

ners Inter Milan had four

announced on Jan. 10, 2011 in

SHORTLIST

PLAYERS

Xabi Alonso (Real Madrid/ESP), Daniel

Alves (Barcelona/BRA), Iker Casillas

(Real Madrid/ESP), Cristiano Ronaldo

(Real Madrid/POR), Didier Drogba

(Chelsea/CIV), Samuel Eto'o (Inter

Milan/CMR), Cesc Fabregas (Arse-

nal/ESP), Diego Forlan (Atletico

Madrid/URU), Asamoah Gyan

(Sunderland/GHA), Andres Iniesta

(Barcelona/ESP), Julio Cesar (Inter

Milan/BRA), Miroslav Klose (Bayern

Munich/GER), Philipp Lahm (Bayern

Munich/GER), Maicon (Inter

Milan/BRA), Lionel Messi (Barce-

Iona/ARG), Thomas Müller (Bayern

Munich/GER), Mesut Oezil (Real

Madrid/GER), Carles Puyol (Barce-

Iona/ESP), Arjen Robben (Bayern

Munich/NED), Bastian Schweinsteiger

(Bayern Munich/GER), Wesley Sneijder

(Inter Milan/NED), David Villa (Barce-

Iona/ESP), Xavi (Barcelona/ESP)

MANAGERS

Carlo Ancelotti (Chelsea/ITA), Vicente

del Bosque (Spain/ESP), Alex Ferguson

(Manchester United/SCO), Pep

Guardiola (Barcelona/ESP), Joachim

Loew (Germany/GER), Jose Mourinho

(Inter Milan/Real Madrid/POR), Oscar

Tabarez (Uruguay/URU), Louis Van Gaal

(Bayern Munich/NED), Bert Van

Champions League win-

The winner will be

Domenech.

Zurich.

year award.

world.

players on the list.

AC Milan striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic (L) heads in the winning goal against Napoli during their Serie A encounter at the San Paolo Stadium in Naples on Monday.

Milan keep winning

AFP, Rome



AC Milan kept on Lazio's heels at the top of Serie A as they beat 10-man Napoli 2-1 at the San Paolo stadium in Naples on Monday. Robinho and Zlatan

Ibrahimovic scored the goals for Milan as Michele Pazienza was sent-off for the hosts for a pair of handballs before Ezequiel Lavezzi hit an ingenious late consolation.

Milan now trail Lazio by just two points in second place while Napoli, who were by far the better side for long periods, even with 10 men, remain sixth.

"We exploited our numerical advantage until it was 2-0 but then we struggled with a lack of concentration and some mistakes," said Milan coach Massimilliano Allegri.

"Napoli had a great desire to equalise, we lost many one-on-one battles and fluffed our

final balls. "We're on 17 points, we've had four (league)

wins in a row, we just messed up in Madrid." Napoli coach Walter Mazzarri said his team

were unrecognisable until they were down to 10 "We need to forget the league table and play

with calm, the responsibility of being near the top inhibits. We weren't us," he said. "After taking this ridiculous sending off,

paradoxically we played better but I would have preferred to stay with 11." Napoli, as ever, were slow out of the blocks

and the first chance fell to Milan as Robinho's low shot was saved by Morgan De Sanctis on the guarter hour.

But on 22 minutes they were ahead as Robinho played a one-two with substitute Massimo Oddo before finishing inside the far

However, Napoli's disorganised defending was the true architect as they had seven defenders and their goalkeeper in the area but still failed to pick up the Brazilian's run.

The reaction from the hosts was swift as four minutes later Lavezzi got down the right and crossed for Marek Hamsik, whose near post

Blackburn

Rovers are in

takeover talks

with Indian

company

Venky's and

hope to complete a sale next

month, the English Premier

League side confirmed

Blackburn chairman John

Williams said in a statement

on the club's website that a

series of meetings between officials from Rovers and

Venky's had already taken

place as well as an "extensive"

that the transaction will be

completed in November,"

Venky's chairperson

Anuradha Desai said in the

statement the company was

looking forward to becoming

the first Indian owners of a

Indian company to acquire a

Premier League team and we

are particularly delighted that

the team is Blackburn Rovers,

with whom we believe we have

many shared values and ambi-

Asia's largest poultry group

and has an annual turnover of

1 billion pounds, last year

recording a profit of 118 mil-

lion pounds, according to

The company is one of a

Venky's is established as

"We expect to be the first

"Both parties are hopeful

due diligence process.

Williams confirmed.

Premier League team.

tions," Desai said.

reports in England.

AFP, London

Tuesday.

toe-poke went wide.

Hamsik then crossed from the left but Edinson Cavani missed his shot and substitute Hassan Yebda attacked with the wrong foot, playing the ball almost back to where it had come from.

Andrea Dossena got down the left and crossed for Cavani but he didn't get hold of his shot and it bobbled wide. Pazienza was then dismissed, somewhat

harshly, for a second yellow card after picking up both for handball offences. Zlatan Ibrahimovic tried an acrobatic effort from seven yards that De Sanctis parried in

stoppage time. And before the half-time whistle Christian Abbiati made a stunning one-handed save from Lavezzi's diving header after Hamsik's

pin-point cross. Even down to 10 men, Napoli were on the attack after the break and Lavezzi volleyed just over from Dossena's centre.

But Milan were dangerous on the counter and Ibrahimovic should have done better than curl a shot into De Sanctis's arms when well placed.

Midway through the second period Milan wasted a two-on-two break as Ibrahimovic's pass to Pato was too strong and De Sanctis blocked the Brazilian's shot from an angle.

Napoli paid again for poor defending on 71 minutes as Oddo burst down the right and crossed into the centre where the unmarked Ibrahimovic headed home from six vards out.

Lavezzi was a thorn in Milan's side all night and a determined run down the right saw him skip past Sokratis Papastathopoulos with a clever back-heel and tee up Cavani who, having an awful night, shot well wide.

But on 78 minutes he went shoulder to shoulder with Papastathopoulos again and after they both fell over, Lavezzi over the ball, the Argentine managed to quickly stand up and flick the ball over Abbiati and in off the bar.

De Sanctis made a late save to deny Mathieu Flamini and even charged forwards for a couple of corners but Napoli were left frustrated despite a stirring fight-back and inspired play from Lavezzi.

up for sale.

"We have a strong base at

Rovers, a very good club which

is run and managed very

professionally indeed

Blackburn Rovers has a strong

history and it could have a

bright future given the right

Blackburn were one of the

big four of Manchester United,

Liverpool to win the Premier

League, lifting the title in 1995.

footballing nation, but its vast

Last year, Manchester

United approached the

Sahara group for a shirt spon-

sorship deal when the club's

four-year 100 million dollar

Indian cricket team, is a group

with interests from financial

services to real estate. The deal

Subrata Roy, and Indian

billionaire Mukesh Ambani

were later reported to be

bidding to buy Liverpool

before both pulled out.

Sahara, headed by

did not work out.

Sahara, which sponsors the

deal with AIG drew to a close.

Established in 1875,

sort of investment."

Football League.

17th place.

the sport.

number of firms which have

gone through the process of

due diligence and inspected

Rovers up for sale two years

ago in the hope of attracting

buyers willing to invest in the

club, but Venky's is the first

company to have satisfied

club chiefs about their inten-

the globe for a potential buyer

for several months and man-

ager Sam Allardyce last week

said he was looking forward to

the prospect of new invest-

for some time and new invest-

ment would be most wel-

every football club and invest-

ment here has dried up some-

Roma president Rosella Sensi

was on Monday hit with a

9,000-euro fine for questioning

ing Roma's September defeat

at Brescia that the referee had

Federation's disciplinary

commission hit both the

president and the club with

been biased against her team.

Sensi complained follow-

And the Italian Football

the impartiality of a referee.

Roma chief

AFP, Rome

equal fines.

The club has been for sale

"Investment is needed at

ment into the team.

come," Allardyce said.

Rovers have been scouring

The Jack Walker Trust put

Blackburn's accounts.

tions.

Spurs snap up Khumalo

AFP, London

Tottenham have signed an agreement with South African international defender Bongani Khumalo which will see the player move to Spurs in the January transfer window, the club announced Tuesday.

Tottenham said the SuperSport United player had signed a pre-contract agreement which would be confirmed subject to a work permit being approved.

The 23-year-old impressed Spurs boss Harry Redknapp during a trial in September, which took place after Khumalo starred in all three of South Africa's matches at the World Cup.

"He's not expensive. We had him over on trial and we like him," Redknapp said last month. "He's got potential and we've got a tie-up with the club SuperSport so we've taken him on.

"It will be a great chance for the kid. He's a great lad. He comes from a poor background and he's desperate for a chance and we're going to give him a chance."

Khumalo's arrival should strengthen Redknapp's defensive options following an injury crisis which has seen central defenders Ledley King, Michael Dawson, William Gallas and Younes Kaboul all spend time on the sidelines this season.

Jonathan Woodgate is also unavailable due to a longterm injury.

Cloud over Venky's eyeing Rovers Germans' WC win what because of the club being

AFP, Berlin

Germany's legendary 1954 World Cup winning side are said to have been injected with the banned substance methamphetamine, a new university study has revealed.

Germany lifted their first World Cup title in Berne, Switzerland, when they beat founding members of the Hungary 3-2 in the final and They were also the last club shocked the eastern European from outside the established side led by the legendary Ferenc Puskas, but the study Arsenal, Chelsea and claims the winners were doped.

Despite highly-fancied They are currently lying just Hungary taking a 2-0 lead after above the relegation zone in just eight minutes, underdogs Germany fought back at India may not be a top Berne's Wankdorf Stadium with winger Helmut Rahn population and commercial scoring twice, including hitpotential makes it one of the ting the 84th-minute winner. biggest untapped markets for

The study, published on Monday, says the team, dubbed 'the heroes of Bern', believed they received vitamin C injections before the final, but were actually given methamphetamine, a substance given to German troops in World War II.

The study by Leipzig University, called 'Doping in Germany' and funded by the German Olympic Committee, is due to be published in 2012 and reveals doping was first used in high-level sport in West Germany as early as 1949.



MESSI

Spaniards dominate

FIFA Ballon d'Or list

who joined from Valencia

victor Lionel Messi of

Argentina is also there as La

Liga emerged as the most

represented league in the list

had three players in the

shortlist, none of them

The Premier League only

Last year's Ballon d'Or

during the close season.

with 11 players.



INIESTA

Football

World Cup winners Spain have

seven players featured in a 23-

man shortlist for the FIFA

Ballon d'Or unveiled by soc-

cer's governing body and

France Football magazine on

REUTERS, Paris

XAVI

A Spaniard last won the coveted prize in 1960 when Luis Suarez triumphed and included in this year's list is Barcelona's Andres Iniesta, who netted the only goal in extra time to defeat the Netherlands in the final.

Barcelona have six players in the list, four of them Spanish including David Villa



SNEIJDER

Asamoah Gyan of Sunderland actually played the whole 2009/10 season at Stade Rennes in Ligue 1.

Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney, who had an indifferent World Cup, was not on the list.

No French players were on the list, following France's fiasco in South Africa, where

Reina's faith in Torres

AFP, London

Liverpool goalkeeper Jose Reina believes Fernando Torres could be ready to relaunch his season after breaking his goalscoring drought against Blackburn.

Torres has struggled to rediscover his best form this season, cutting a disillusioned figure up front for Liverpool as the club slumped to their worst start to a season for more than 50 years.

However with the saga of the club's ownership settled, Reina believes Torres is ready to play his part in an Anfield revival which got underway with Sunday's 2-1 victory over Rovers. "All strikers are about

scoring goals, scoring winning goals, and I think he can build on that strike from now on,' said Reina, referring to Torres' winner, only his second of the season.

Reina said when strikers fail to perform "fingers are pointed at them" even if the whole team was misfiring. "It is not fair," Reina said. "I

think we were not assisting him rightly in the last few weeks and he could do nothing at all. He can win you a game easily but we have to feed him in, that is the point." While Reds boss Roy

Hodgson refused to describe Sunday's win as a turning point, Reina believes the side showed unmistakeable signs of improvement. "It was an important game,

we knew that, and that is why we started with a high tempo,' Reina said.

"The supporters were great once again because we were showing a little bit of the old spirit and we have to keep believing in ourselves because we are not such a bad team. "If we play like that and

deliver this kind of performance there will be more victories than defeats. "It is all about confidence, when you are not winning

games it is difficult to be out there and competitive." Liverpool's next league

assignment is a potentially awkward visit to Bolton on Sunday.

Ten managers, including four national coaches, were nominated for the coach of the Magpies to The gong, formerly known

rest stars

Hughton is set to give his fringe players a chance in Wednesday's Carling Cup clash against Arsenal.

month but, ahead of Sunday's derby clash against

"I'll definitely make changes - how many, I don't know," he told the Jarrow & Hebburn Gazette. "It will be an opportunity for a lot of players. We're at home - it's a nice

opportunity for us.' The likes of Tamas Kadar, Shane Ferguson and Haris

Arsene Wenger has vowed to select a strong squad as he seeks to end Arsenal's trophy drought.

Wenger broke with tradition as he picked a strong side in the 4-1 win over Tottenham in the last round and, as Arsenal look to secure a place in the quarter-finals, he is set to rely on some of his senior

stars once more. "Some players need games so we will play a strong team,' he said at the weekend.

That means Nicklas Bendtner, Theo Walcott and Kieran Gibbs could be in line to start, while Laurent Koscielny is also likely to play after recovering from a back

problem. Wenger, though, has said there will still be a number of

youngsters in the team. "We had some impressive performances from our young players at Tottenham," he said. "It is a good opportunity for me to pay tribute to our academy and the quality of its work.

"Matches like this justify what I have said for a long time - that we have a fantastic English generation coming though. You can add Theo Walcott, and the other players who are pushing to play, to those that were involved

against Tottenham. "It is a pleasure to see what is happening at the club and I am very confident that, very soon, we will have six or seven Englishmen playing."

City won't break rules "Our two-year plan was to take a budget and

Football

AFP, London

Manchester City have vowed to comply with UEFA's new financial fair-play rules despite lavish investment of more than 500 million dollars in only two years, it was reported Tuesday.

City officials said the club had no intention of breaking regulations set to be introduced next season, which will bar any club from making an aggregate loss of more than 45 million euros over the three seasons from 2011-2012. Failure to comply with the rules could see

clubs excluded from UEFA competitions such as the Champions League and Europa League.

Earlier this month City announced losses of 121 million pounds for the 12 months up to May 31 2010, up from 92.5 million pounds the previous year.

spree in the transfer market in a bid to assemble a squad capable of challenging for trophies. City chief executive Garry Cook however

told the Guardian however that he did not

"Clearly our intention is to comply," he told

the paper.

Those figures came after City went on a record

expect the club to show the same level of "intensity" in the forthcoming transfer windows.

"We are pleased with how that worked, and will not be signing players to the same level of intensity in the next transfer windows. "Financial fair play is on our conscience. We

planning in every position.

talk about it at every board meeting, and it's part of our long-term plan."

build a competency to compete at the highest

level, not forgetting the need for succession

Cook also brushed off critics of the club's eye-popping summer spending spree where more than 100 million pounds was spent on bolstering Roberto Mancini's squad with the likes of David Silva, James Milner, Mario Balotelli, Yaya Toure and Jerome Boateng.

"Critics only have their own perspective. They're not at the football club," Cook said. "They haven't been part of the planning or the long-term financial strategies. "People think we choose players from the

fantasy football league but there was a clear plan for who Roberto wanted to sign."

Since taking over City in 2008, Abu Dhabibased owner Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan has spent more than half a billion dollars, the Guardian reported. That includes the September 30 purchase of 37,547,169 new shares in the club which amounted to 79.6 million pounds of fresh investment.

as the European Footballer of the Year award, is voted on by SOCCERNET journalists from across the Newcastle boss Chris

Newcastle saw off Chelsea 4-3 in the third round last

Sunderland, Hughton has vowed to rest some of his key

Vuckic are set to start, but Sol Campbell will be denied the chance to face his former club due to a thigh injury. Newcastle are also without Steven Taylor, Steve Harper, Leon Best, Hatem Ben Arfa and Dan Gosling.