



Inter Milan midfielder Dejan Stankovic (C) is about to score against Parma during their Serie A encounter at San Siro on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Inter bounce back

AFP, Rome



A hatrick by Inter Milan's veteran Serbian midfielder Dejan Stankovic saw the champions to a welcome 5-2 victory over Parma on Sunday and ended a run of four Serie A matches without a win.

Inter had given Rafael Benitez some breathing space by squeezing through to the last 16 of the Champions League in mid-week when, had they been defeated by Dutch side Twente, many believed the Spanish coach would have been sacked.

However, Stankovic's treble and goals from Argentinian Esteban Cambiasso - who had scored the only goal against Twente - and Thiago Motta saw them to the three points against Parma, for whom veteran Hernan Crespo bagged a brace.

"It was a crazy match and we showed that we were a bit crazier," joked Benitez. "The team played very well and proved its character. I'm happy."

"We still believe in the title. The season is still long."

Inter are still seven points adrift of bitter city rivals and league leaders AC Milan, who drew 1-1 at Sampdoria on Saturday.

Former leaders Lazio could have moved to within a point of Milan with victory at home to Catania, but they were held to a 1-1 draw.

Matias Silvestre gave the visitors the lead in the 44th minute, but Lazio's Brazilian summer signing Hernanes levelled within a minute as the Rome club extended their lead over third-placed Juventus to three points.

A superb late free-kick from substitute Simone Pepe had earned Juventus a 1-1 draw at home to Fiorentina on Saturday, keeping Juve

ahead of Napoli on goal difference.

In the late game, Roma missed a chance to go third after they lost for the first time in eight games, 3-1 at Palermo, who leapfrogged them into sixth place on 23 points - one ahead of the capital club and more notably level on points with Inter.

Francesco Totti netted a last-gasp consolation as Palermo took the points with Fabrizio Miccoli on target in the opening period and further goals from Josip Ilicic and Antonio Nocerino.

Also Sunday, Italy international striker Antonio di Natale claimed a hatrick as improving Udinese inflicted a 3-1 on defeat on Napoli.

Brescia drew 0-0 with Genoa. Cagliari saw off a late fightback to win 3-2 at home to second-bottom Lecce and bottom side Bari drew 1-1 at home to fellow relegation candidates Cesena.

Former Inter star Crespo gave Parma a fourth-minute lead but Inter levelled and then went ahead through two deflected shots from 32-year-old Stankovic, both of which were set up by Frenchman Jonathan Biabiany.

Cambiasso scored the third from a corner before his compatriot Crespo reduced the deficit

following a poor clearance by Italian central defender Marco Materazzi, who is deputising for long-term injury victim Walter Samuel.

Motta and Stankovic rammed home Inter's superiority with further goals in the second half to leave Parma just four points above the drop zone.

The match between Bologna and Chievo was postponed by referee Marco Guida after heavy snowfall in Bologna, with a decision on when the match will now be played yet to be taken.

## RESULTS

**Inter Milan 5** (Stankovic 18, 19, 75, Cambiasso 23, Motta 72)  
Parma 2 (Crespo 4, 36)  
Bari 1 (Caputo 64) Cesena 1 (Colucci 62-pen)  
**Udinese 3** (Di Natale 17-pen, 45, 57) Napoli 1 (Hamsik 58)  
**Cagliari 3** (Matri 6, 15, Canini 28) Lecce 2 (Ruben Oliveira 54, Di Michele 81)  
Lazio 1 (Hernanes 45+2) Catania 1 (Silvestre 44)  
Brescia 0 Genoa 0  
**Palermo 3** (Miccoli 20, Ilicic 61,

# Chelsea fall from top

AFP, London



English Premier League champions Chelsea moved up to second place in the table and Tottenham Hotspur went fifth on a day of contrasting fortunes for the two London clubs on Sunday.

Chelsea were held to a 1-1 draw away to Newcastle at St James' Park while Tottenham came back from a goal down to beat Liverpool 2-1 at White Hart Lane after Aaron Lennon's winner in time added on.

Liverpool defender Martin Skrtel opened the scoring but put through his own net mid-way through the second half when trying to cut out Luka Modric's cross.

Earlier, Chelsea went ahead of London rivals Arsenal on goal difference to move two points behind leaders Manchester United.

England striker Andy Carroll gave Newcastle a sixth-minute lead after a defensive mix-up before the Ivory Coast's Salomon Kalou dragged the Blues level on the stroke of half-time at a snow-covered St James'.

"It was difficult at the beginning because we had a mistake but we had a good reaction," Chelsea manager Carlo Ancelotti told Sky Sports.

The Italian, whose own position has been called into question by a run of results that has now seen the Londoners win just one of their last five league matches, added: "I think the performance was good and we were unlucky."

"But we've lost the top (position) in the table and we have to run (chase) now, we have to improve."

And he insisted the various off-field dramas at Stamford Bridge, including the unexpected departure of former assistant manager Ray Wilkins, could not be blamed for recent results.

"I don't think so. The performance was good this game, we just have to convert the chances we had."

The draw saw Newcastle move up into ninth place in the table, ahead of Liverpool's match away to Tottenham Hotspur later on Sunday, and Magpies manager Chris Hughton said: "Credit to every one of our players."

## RESULTS

Newcastle 1 (Carroll 6) Chelsea 1 (Kalou 45)  
**Tottenham 2** (Skrtel 65-og, Lennon 90) Liverpool 1 (Skrtel 42)

"We got to a stage where we knew we had to dig in but we also got to a stage where, if you can ever be a little comfortable against the quality of what they (Chelsea) have got, we ended up being a touch comfortable."

Back in London, Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp admitted his side had been fortunate to come away with all three points against a Liverpool team who lost Jamie Carragher to a shoulder injury during the

second half in addition to already sidelined club skipper Steven Gerrard.

England midfielder Gerrard missed the match at White Hart Lane with a hamstring problem suffered on international duty against France.

"They started well and were dangerous, it was a fantastic game," Redknapp said. "Liverpool played their part, they were always a threat."

"But we got after them a bit better, had shots blocked, missed a penalty and eventually managed to get the goal."

Jermain Defoe missed a penalty with Spurs trailing 1-0 but Skrtel's own goal saved his blushes before Lennon's cool finish in injury time snatched all three points at the death.



Tottenham Hotspurs winger Aaron Lennon (L) scores the winning goal deep into injury time during their Premier League tie against Liverpool at White Hart Lane on Sunday

PHOTO: AFP

# Lyon, PSG share spoils

AFP, Paris



Lyon and Paris Saint-Germain both spurned the chance to reach the top of the French first division table as they fought out a pulsating 2-2 draw at Stade Gerland on Sunday.

Guillaume Hoarau put PSG 2-1 up from the penalty spot with eight minutes remaining but Bafetimbi Gomis smashed home an equaliser five minutes later after seizing on a dreadful clearance by visiting goalkeeper Apoula Edel.

Aly Cissokho had put Lyon ahead with his first league goal for the club, but PSG drew level through top scorer Nene and Cissokho was then sent off for a challenge on Nene that led to the penalty.

A win would have taken Lyon level on points with leaders Marseille, while victory for PSG would have sent them a point clear at the top.

As it was, the club from the capital climbed to third, a point behind Marseille and second-placed Lille, while Claude Puel's side moved up

to seventh.

"It's a disappointment," said Lyon coach Puel. "It's good to have been able to equalise despite the numerical disadvantage, which shows character, but we had chances to double our lead."

Lyon have suffered from sloppy starts in recent weeks, as in their 3-0 defeat at Schalke in the Champions League in mid-week, but after bossing the first half they went ahead in the 54th minute.

It was Cissokho who provided the killer touch, striding onto Kim Kallstrom's through-ball and placing the ball inside Edel's near post.

Ludovic Giuly squandered an opportunity to reply immediately for PSG when he headed over from close range.

The equaliser arrived moments later though, with Hoarau hurdling a challenge from Dejan Lovren, electing not to dive and crossing for Nene to head home.

Nene tumbled theatrically under Cissokho's challenge but it convinced referee Fredy Fautrel to point to the spot and Hoarau placed the ball to Hugo Lloris's left for his sixth league goal of the season.

Edel's rash clearance made

sure that PSG would not depart with all three points, however, as it gave the ball straight to Gomis, who slipped between two defenders and drove home from the edge of the box.

There was even time for both teams to spurn chances to claim a late winner, with PSG substitute Stephane Sessegnon dragging wide from Hoarau's knock-down and Gomis hitting the side netting in injury time.

Earlier, Toulouse moved up

## RESULTS

Caen 0 Sochaux 3 (Perquy 40, Ideye 48, Maurice-Belay 63)  
Auxerre 1 (Traore 57) Toulouse 2 (Braaten 8, Santander 35)  
Lyon 2 (Cissokho 54, Gomis 87) Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Nene 63, Hoarau 82-pen)  
Marseille 4 (Lucho 20, Cheyrou 28, Valbuena 65, Remy 90+2) Montpellier 0  
Monaco 1 (Park 76-pen) Nice 1 (Mouloungui 85)  
Lorient 2 (Romao 61, Morel 86) Rennes 0  
Nancy 1 (Vahirua 67) Saint-Etienne 1 (Perrin 52)  
Valenciennes 3 (Pujol 20, Sanchez 78, Danic 83) Arles-Avignon 0  
Bordeaux 1 (Rami 51-og)

to 11th place and ended a run of three straight losses by consigning Auxerre to their first defeat in six league matches with a 2-1 victory at Stade de l'Abbe-Deschamps.

Goals from Daniel Braaten and 19-year-old Federico Santander, his first for the club, put the visitors 2-0 up, with Alain Traore pulling one back in the second half after good work from Julien Quercia.

"Looking at the dynamic that we had, with three defeats, this victory turns things around," said Toulouse coach Alain Casanova.

In the day's other early game, Sochaux won 3-0 at second-bottom Caen -- without a win in nine games -- to climb above Lorient into ninth place.

Defending champions Marseille went top for the first time this season after winning 4-0 at home to Montpellier on Saturday, despite losing right-back Cesar Azpilicueta to a serious knee ligament injury early in the game.

Lille slipped off top spot on goal difference after drawing 1-1 at Bordeaux, while Rennes have now won just one of their last six league games following a 2-0 defeat at Brittany rivals Lorient.

# MU drawn against Liverpool

AFP, London

Bitter rivals Manchester United and Liverpool will meet in the third round of the FA Cup after the English giants were drawn against each other at Wembley here on Sunday.

The match, which will take place at United's Old Trafford ground, was the only all-Premier League tie in the last 64 of the world's oldest major knockout football competition.

Holders Chelsea were drawn at home to second-tier Ipswich with Arsenal, another side with several FA Cup triumphs to their credit, were given a home draw against Leeds.

The two non-league sides definitely through to the third round both received away draws with York travelling to Premier League Bolton and Dover destined for Huddersfield Town.

FC United of Manchester, a club formed by disillusioned United fans unhappy with the club's direction under US-based owners the Glazer family, will be at home to Portsmouth -- last season's beaten finalists and 2008 Cup winners -- if they defeat Pompey's south coast rivals Brighton.

Third round ties are due to be played on the weekend of January 8-9.

Manchester United and Liverpool have won the FA Cup 18 times between them and have met twice in the final itself.

# Laporta wins parliament seat

AFP, Barcelona

Former FC Barcelona president Joan Laporta won a seat in Catalonia's parliament in a regional election on Sunday in representation of a new party that calls for independence from Spain.

The Catalan Solidarity for Independence party which he launched in July after leaving the presidency of FC Barcelona, won a total of four seats in Catalonia's 135-seat local parliament.

It captured just over 100,000 votes or 3.3 percent of the total.

"We must choose between being a region that pays a lot of taxes and has no significant powers or being a leading state of Europe," Laporta said on Friday during his final campaign rally held in Barcelona.

A moderate nationalist party, the Convergence and Union, won Sunday's regional election, gaining 62 seats and ousting the Catalan Socialist Party, which had ruled the wealthy northeastern region since 2003.

Catalonia is home to around seven million of Spain's population of some 47 million as well as the headquarters of some of its largest companies.

Laporta, a 48-year-old lawyer, was the chairman of Barcelona until June, when his second term came to an end...

# Soldado keeps scoring

AFP, Madrid



Spanish international forward Roberto Soldado made it four goals in five days as Valencia defeated Almeria 2-1 at the Mestalla Stadium on Sunday to close to within a point of fourth-placed Espanyol in the

Spanish first division. Soldado netted twice in Valencia's 6-1 Champions League win over Bursaspor on Wednesday and followed that up with another brace as Valencia heaped more misery on second from bottom Almeria.

Former Real Madrid striker Soldado opened the scoring on 26 minutes, taking advantage of an unintentional piece of control with his head but the second goal on 57 minutes was a work of art.

Aritz Aduriz cut a cross back from the right and Juan Mata produced a delightful flick to Soldado, who finished with aplomb to cap a fine team goal.

It was a losing start for new Almeria coach Jose Luis Oltra who took over from Juanma Lillo after Almeria's humiliating 8-0 loss against Barcelona last weekend.

Valencia are now a point off the top four but must now brace themselves for two testing away fixtures at Real Madrid in the league and then at Manchester United in the Champions League.

Earlier Real Mallorca kept up their push for European football moving into the top six with

a 2-0 home win over strugglers Malaga on Sunday.

Mallorca followed up last weekend's impressive 2-1 win at Sevilla with another three points as two goals in four minutes clinched victory.

Cameroon striker Pierre Webo opened the scoring on 50 minutes and Chori Castro doubled the lead four minutes later to kill off the game as Mallorca moved three points behind Valencia in sixth.

"At this stage the most important thing is having 21 points which relaxes us because of course it is easier to play when you are far away from the teams at the bottom," said Mallorca coach Michael Laudrup.

Malaga languish third from bottom after their ninth defeat of the campaign with new coach Manuel Pellegrini, who took over at the beginning of November, failing to revive the team's fortunes.

In other matches, Hercules won the battle of the promoted sides triumphing 3-1 over fellow newcomers Levante on Sunday.

A brace from Paraguayan international Nelson Haedo Valdez and a seventh league goal of the season from veteran France star David Trezeguet sealed a fine home win for Hercules.

Real Sociedad are the highest placed of the three promoted sides with a 3-1 away win at Sporting Gijon on Sunday lifting them to ninth two points off the top six.

Athletic Bilbao joined Sociedad on 19 points thanks to a late 1-0 home win over Osasuna on Sunday thanks to a 90th minute winner from Carlos Gurpegui.

## RESULTS

**Hercules 3** (Valdez 39, 67, Trezeguet 62) Levante 1 (Ruben 40)  
**Racing Santander 1** (Rosenberg 60) Deportivo La Coruna 0  
**Real Mallorca 2** (Webo 50, Castro 54) Malaga 0  
Sporting Gijon 1 (Gregory 2) Real Sociedad 3 (Prieto 11, Zurutuza 45, Arambaru 90)  
**Athletic Bilbao 1** (Gurpegui 90) Osasuna 0  
**Valencia 2** (Soldado 26, 57)



Valencia striker Roberto Soldado is ecstatic after scoring one of his two goals against Almeria during their Primera Liga clash at the Mestalla on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Almeida fires Bremen

AFP, Gelsenkirchen



Hugo Almeida scored a hatrick but was then red-carded as Werder Bremen took the first step in salvaging a disappointing season on Sunday by defeating St. Pauli 3-0 and snapping a seven-game

winless streak. Almeida scored in the first and 20th minutes to give Bremen a 2-0 lead before the Portuguese international added a third goal in the 64th minute as Werder ended their drought stretching through league, German Cup and Champions League action.

But Almeida was then given his marching orders in the 80th minute for an elbow to Carlos Zambrano. And St. Pauli's Markus Thorand also saw red in the 90th minute.

Almeida's first goal came just 52 seconds

into the game after Bremen had not scored in their last five matches.

Bremen have been bounced out of the German Cup and the Champions League and failed to qualify for the Europa League, meaning Thomas Schaaf's team can focus solely on saving their Bundesliga season - where they stand 11th on the table with 18 points - five points from a Europa League spot.

"I had been fouled a lot during the whole game and I just lost my nerve. But that cannot happen and I apologise to the club and my teammates," said Almeida about his red card.

Werder were later out to move past Bremen with a victory later Sunday at second-to-last Cologne.

The leaders after the 14th round of games are still Borussia Dortmund, who retained their seven-point lead atop the Bundesliga with a come-from-behind 4-1 victory at home Saturday night over Borussia Moenchengladbach.

## RESULTS

**Werder Bremen 3** (Almeida 1, 20, 64) St Pauli 0  
FC Cologne v VfL Wolfsburg - late result