

Inter cruise

AFP, Rome
Inter Milan continued their 100 per cent record under Leonardo, beating Bologna 4-1 at the San Siro on Saturday as title rivals Napoli slipped up in a 0-0 draw at home to Fiorentina.

After a difficult first half to the season, Inter were looking like their old selves again as they cruised to victory against their troubled opponents, leaving them perilously close to the drop zone.

Dejan Stankovic, Diego Milito and a Samuel Eto'o brace -- taking his tally to 23 goals in 26 games this season -- moved Inter up to fourth, for a day at least, and just eight points behind leaders Milan having played a game less.

It was a special night of celebration for Inter as captain Javier Zanetti equalled Giuseppe Bergomi's record of 519 Serie A appearances for the club.

Henry Gimenez scored Bologna's late consolation in a terrible week for the club who were hit with a three-point deduction for failing to pay taxes and player salaries.

Napoli failed to capitalise on their chance to close in on AC Milan in a dull and frustrating stalemate.

The point keeps the southerners second in Serie A, but still three points behind Milan who have a game in hand away to Lecce on Sunday.

RESULTS

Napoli 0 Fiorentina 0
Inter Milan 4 (Stankovic 20, Milito 30, Eto'o 63, 72) Bologna 1 (Gimenez 77)



PHOTO: AFP
Villarreal midfielder Cani laps up the applause after his stunning strike on Saturday which kept them in third place in La Liga and maintained their push for a place in Europe.

Bayern stumped

AFP, Berlin
Borussia Dortmund were 13 points clear at the top of the Bundesliga on Saturday after second-placed Mainz lost at Stuttgart and champions Bayern Munich drew 1-1 at Wolfsburg in a game where both sides missed penalties.

Borussia had blitzed Leverkusen with three goals in six minutes on Friday as Jurgen Klopp's young side showed no sign of releasing their grip at the top.

After ex-England coach Steve McClaren sold striker Edin Dzeko to Manchester City over the German league's winter break, Wolfsburg lacked firepower up front against Bayern, but showed dogged domination against the champions.

Bayern's Dutch star Arjen Robben conceded Dortmund may now be too far ahead for Munich, who are 16 points off the pace, to retain their title.

"There's no point talking about first place any more, as several of us have already said," admitted Robben after making his first appearance of the season.

"Obviously, there's always hope while it's still theoretically possible, but we're just too far behind."

"You have to accept and also respect that. It's simply a superb achievement by Dortmund, you can already congratulate them on winning the title. Dortmund are simply too far ahead."

Bayern opened the scoring when Thomas Mueller went one-to-one with goalkeeper Deigo Benaglio for a loose



RESULTS

Werder Bremen 2 (Pizarro 36, Frings 90+2) 1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Vukcevic 87)
VfB Stuttgart 1 (Hamik 79) Mainz 05 0
VfL Wolfsburg 1 (Rietter 86) Bayern Munich 1 (Mueller 7)
Nuremberg 0 Borussia M'gladbach 1 (Neustaedter 8)
St. Pauli 2 (Ehbers 13, Asamoah 68) Freiburg 2 (Cisse 61, 75)
Schalke 04 0 Hamburg 1 (van

since picking up thigh injury at the World Cup last July.

Dejagah then won a penalty for the hosts when he was fouled by Bayern's Germany defender Holger Badstuber in stoppage time at the end of the half.

Bayern goalkeeper Thomas Kraft, who was making his Bundesliga debut, showed he could cope with the pressure by pulling off a reflex save from Brazil striker Grafite.

Wolfsburg secured a point when defender Sascha Rietter netted with less than five minutes to go.

Mueller almost poached victory when he found the target in the 89th minute, only

for his effort to be ruled off-side.

In Saturday's late match, Real Madrid target Ruud van Nistelrooy scored the only goal in Hamburg's 1-0 win over Schalke, who have reached the last 16 of the Champions League.

Real are reported to be interested in re-signing the Dutch striker, who spent four years in Madrid, but the German side are keen to hold onto their forward.

The result leaves Schalke 10th and Hamburg seventh.

Bottom side Borussia Moenchengladbach gave themselves a boost in their battle to stay up with a 1-0 win at Nuremberg with goalkeeper Christofer Heimeroth making a dramatic late penalty save.

Senegal striker Pappis Demba Cisse scored twice to go top of the league's go-scoring list with 15 goals as he helped his sidesneak a 2-2 draw at St Pauli.

Bremen picked up a rare win after captain Torsten Frings drilled in a free-kick in the second minute of injury time to seal a 2-1 win over Hoffenheim which left his side 12th.

A Cani wonder-goal

AFP, Barcelona
A spectacular lob from the half-way line by Ruben Cani helped Villarreal to a 4-2 victory over Osasuna on Saturday which kept them in third place in La Liga and maintained their push for a place in Europe.

Villarreal went into the game with several important players missing but Marco Ruben took advantage of a rare start with the opening goal.

Osasuna drew level from a corner with Krisztian Vadocz heading home but they were soon behind again when Cani spotted keeper Ricardo Lopez off his line and lofted the ball from the half-way line over his head.

In an exciting end-to-end game Joan Capdevila and Gonzalo Rodriguez scored further goals for Villarreal with substitute Javier Calleja finding the back of the net in



RESULTS

Villarreal 4 (Ruben 22, Cani 50, Capdevila 65, Gonzalo 84)
Osasuna 2 (Vadocz 47, Calleja 71)
Real Zaragoza 1 (Gabi 45) Levante 0
Getafe 0 Real Sociedad 4 (Prieto 10-pen, Griezmann 32, Aramburu 88, 90)
Sporting Gijon 2 (Barral 1, Cases 31) Hercules 0
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Martinez 7, Muniain 10) Racing Santander 1 (Bolado 74)
Sevilla 1 (Negredo 90+1) Espanyol 2

between for the visitors.

"We have played a lot of games and to maintain this level is not easy. We have managed it as a team by suffering and fighting in each game. This match was tough and to win without playing particularly well gives you a boost," said Villarreal coach Juan Carlos Garrido.

Osasuna coach Jose Antonio Camacho admitted that Cani's goal was a big blow.

"I told the keeper to push forward a bit and they caught us out. We now need to keep working but we have to do more than that to win as we are working hard at the moment," he said.

A brace from Jose Callejon gave Espanyol a 2-1 win over Sevilla which put them on the verge of the Champions League places but the real star was keeper Carlos Kameni.

Early goals from Javi Martinez and Iker Muniain set Athletic Bilbao up for a 2-1 victory over Racing Santander.

Real Sociedad bounced back from four straight defeats with a convincing 4-0 win away to in-form Getafe.

DAY'S EVENT

Premier Division Cricket League
Cricket Coaching v BKSP
Venue: KSOAS
Old Dohs v Gazi Tank
Venue: BKSP-2
Victoria v Surjo Tarun
Venue: SBNSC
Bangladesh League
Sheikh Jamal v Arambagh
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal

Iran thru', Iraq close

AFP, Doha
Iran became the first side to make the Asian Cup quarterfinals on Saturday after beating North Korea 1-0, while defending champions Iraq got a stoppage-time winner to heap misery on the UAE.

Three-time champions Iran are seeking to end a 35-year continental title drought and Karim Ansari Fard moved them a step closer with a 62nd-minute winner as Team Melli fought hard to crack a tight North Korean defence.

It put Iran on six points in Group D following their opening 2-1 victory over Iraq, guaranteeing them a spot in the last eight with one match to play.

Iraq stunned United Arab Emirates when

Walid Abbas put the ball into his own net in the third minute of added time to leave the Iraqis well placed in the race for the second qualifying berth.

They now have three points to the one of UAE and North Korea, setting the scene for a nail-biting final round of matches on Wednesday, when Iran play the Emirates and Iraq face the Koreans.

"The qualification of our team into the final eight for me is a fantastic accomplishment," Iran coach Afshin Ghotbi said.

"Our group was a group of death and I still believe it is the most difficult group in the tournament."

While Iran deserved the win, North Korea captain and FC Rostov midfielder Hong Yong-Jo should have equalised in the dying seconds but he sent his shot from close range against the bar to deny his side a precious point.

Gyan robs Magpies

AFP, London
An injury-time goal from Sunderland's Ghanaian international Asamoah Gyan denied Newcastle home-and-away victories over their northeast rivals as Birmingham and Aston Villa drew in the Premier League on Sunday.

Newcastle, seeking to bounce back from their shock FA Cup exit to lowly Stevenage last week, looked to be heading to a 1-0 victory over Sunderland at the Stadium of Light after a Kevin Nolan goal put them ahead.

But with the game deep into injury time World Cup star Gyan scrambled in a fortunate equaliser to make it 1-1 and deny Newcastle a famous win.

What to WATCH

NEO Cricket
New Zealand v Pakistan
Second Test, Day 3
Live from 4:00am

ESPN
AFC Asian Cup
Jordan v Syria
Live from 7:30pm

Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 10:00pm

STAR Sports
Australian Open
Live from 6:00am
AFC Asian Cup
Saudi Arabia v Japan



PHOTO: AFP
Manchester City striker Carlos Tevez is ecstatic after scoring their second goal in the Premier League clash against Wolves at the City of Manchester Stadium on Saturday.

Tevez steals the show

AFP, London
Carlos Tevez scored twice as Manchester City survived a late fightback to beat Wolves 4-3 and move to the top of the English Premier League on Saturday.

Argentinian international Tevez struck his 14th and 15th goals of the season while Ivorian brothers Kolo and Yaya Toure both netted as City took a slender one-point lead over Manchester United.

United, who also have three games in hand over City, will return to the top if they avoid defeat to fifth-placed Tottenham in Sunday's crunch match at White Hart Lane.

Serbian midfielder Nenad Milijas had fired Wolves into a shock lead on 12 minutes, rifling home a

rebound after a Matthew Jarvis cross.

City's blushes were spared five minutes before half-time however when Kolo Toure controlled on the edge of the six-yard box and prodded a deflected shot past Wolves keeper Wayne Hennessey.

And four minutes after the restart, City were in front, captain Tevez weaving his way through the Wolves defence before finishing calmly.

Yaya Toure made it 3-1 five minutes later, lifting his shot over Hennessey to join his brother on the score-sheet after good work by 27-million-pound signing Edin Dzeko, making his debut for City.

Tevez made it four on 66 minutes, stooping to steer home as City looked to be cruising to victory.

But Kevin Doyle slotted a late penalty for Wolves to

make it 4-2 and an 86th-minute goal from French defender Ronald Zubar set up a nerve-jangling finale.

City manager Roberto Mancini was happy with the way his side performed after a poor start to the game.

"I think we were bad in the first 20 minutes," he said. "We didn't play. But after that we played well. We scored four goals and had two or three good chances."

RESULTS

Chelsea 2 (Ivanovic 57, Anelka 76) Blackburn 0
Man City 4 (K. Toure 40, Tevez 49, 66, Y. Toure 54) Wolves 3 (Milijas 12, Doyle 68-pen, Zubar 86)
Stoke 2 (Higginbotham 37, Etherington 63-pen) Bolton 0
West Brom 3 (Odemwिंगie 37, 87, Morrison 52) Blackpool 2 (Vaughan 11, Taylor-Fletcher 80)
West Ham 0 Arsenal 3 (Van Persie 13, 77-pen, Walcott 41)
Wigan 1 (Rodallega 57)

Chelsea maintained their title hopes with a laboured 2-0 win over Blackburn thanks to second-half goals from Branislav Ivanovic and Nicolas Anelka.

Ivanovic opened the scoring on 57 minutes, firing a low shot through a forest of legs to the relief of under-pressure manager Carlo Ancelotti, before a flicked effort from Anelka on 76 minutes made the game safe.

The result put Chelsea back into the top four ahead of Spurs' match against Manchester United on Sunday.

In the late kick-off, third-placed Arsenal piled the pressure on West Ham manager Avram Grant after cruising to a comfortable 3-0 victory at Upton Park courtesy of two goals from Robin Van Persie and one from Theo Walcott.

A miserable evening for the Hammers was completed when new signing Wayne Bridge hacked down Walcott to concede the penalty for Arsenal's third, a development which sent fans streaming towards the exits.

At the Hawthorns, two goals from Peter Odemwिंगie -- including an 87th-minute winner -- handed West Bromwich Albion a 3-2 victory over Blackpool as the Baggies ended their six-match losing streak.

Stoke meanwhile moved up to eighth place with a 2-0 win over Bolton.

At the DW Stadium, substitute Andrew Johnson scored an 86th-minute equaliser just 10 minutes after coming on as Fulham secured a 1-1 draw against Wigan, who had taken the lead through striker Hugo Rodallega.