



Liverpool midfielder Raul Meireles (3rd from L) celebrates his all-important goal with teammates during their Premier League encounter against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

## Raul sinks Chelsea

AFP, London



Fernando Torres suffered a dismal debut as Chelsea's £50 million striker was substituted following a lack-lustre display in his new side's 1-0 defeat against his former club Liverpool on Sunday.

Torres was hauled off after just 66 minutes of his first Chelsea appearance and the Spain striker had even more reason to forget his Stamford Bridge bow when Liverpool's Raul Meireles bagged the winner for his old team just moments after his premature exit.

Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish won the tactical battle with his Chelsea counterpart Carlo Ancelotti and defeat leaves the Blues, who are 10 points behind leaders Manchester United, with virtually no chance of retaining the Premier League title.

Dalglish's side are now just six points behind Chelsea and it is not impossible that Torres could see his former team beat his new club to a place in the Champions League.

There were friendly greetings for Torres from his old colleagues before kick-off, although the Liverpool fans wasted little time giving him a rough ride as they unfurled a host of abusive banners with messages like "once a red, in our hearts you are dead" and "he who betrays will always walk alone".

Whistles and chants of "Judas" greeted his every touch, but Torres had a golden opportunity to silence those taunts in the second minute.

Maxi Rodriguez's wayward pass gave Torres a clear sight of goal from the edge of the area but his hurried shot sailed high over the bar.

After playing a 4-3-3 formation for much of the season, Ancelotti tinkered with his tactics to accommodate Torres and opted to play the Spaniard alongside Didier Drogba,

with Nicolas Anelka tucked in behind the front two.

However, with Liverpool playing three centre-backs there was little room for Torres to influence the game and he was crowded out whenever the ball came his way.

Chelsea's Branislav Ivanovic was unable to take one of Chelsea's few chances when he glanced a header wide from Frank Lampard's corner.

Torres briefly escaped his shackles with a clever run onto Drogba's pass, only for Jamie Carragher to snuff out the danger with a superb sliding block.

After sitting back for long periods, Liverpool should have taken the lead when Steven Gerrard's low cross found Rodriguez unmarked at the far post.

The Argentine midfielder looked certain to score yet somehow managed an astonishing miss as he scooped his close-range effort onto the bar.

Torres was a completely anonymous figure. The Spaniard has been well below his best for much of this season and this was another strangely subdued display.

There was no obvious sign of any understanding between Torres and Drogba and Ancelotti had clearly seen enough.

The Blues boss decided to send on Salomon Kalou in place of Torres in the 66th minute, prompting a jubilant chorus of "you should have stayed at a big club" from Liverpool's fans.

Michael Essien almost put Chelsea ahead moments later with a curling long-range effort, but it was Liverpool who snatched the lead thanks to a terrible piece of defending from the champions.

When Gerrard whipped over a low cross in the 69th minute, Cech and Ivanovic left the task of clearing to each other and Meireles punished their confusion by steering the loose ball into the net from close-range.

## IN brief

### Fabregas falls ill

AFP, Madrid

Arsenal skipper Cesc Fabregas will miss Spain's friendly against Colombia on Wednesday as he is suffering from an upset stomach, the Spanish Football Federation announced on Monday.

The midfielder played in the Gunners' 4-4 draw at Newcastle on Saturday but fell ill after that and it was decided that he would stay behind in London and not travel to Spain for the match.

The World Cup winners have lost their last two games going down 4-1 to Argentina and 4-0 to Portugal.

### McClaren fumes at Diego

AFP, Wolfsburg

Former England manager Steve McLaren said he wants his own midfielder Diego punished after the Brazilian ignored his instructions during Wolfsburg's 1-0 defeat to Hanover.

Diego disregarded McLaren's decision to let Germany striker Patrick Helmes take an 80th-minute penalty on Saturday.

Diego's spot-kick rebounded off the crossbar and Hanover held on for the win that puts them fourth.

But with his side 12th in the German league, and dangerously close to the bottom three, McLaren was left fuming at Diego's decision and warned there will be consequences.

"Patrick Helmes was to take the penalty, then I turn round and see Diego taking it - incredible!" fumed McLaren, whose side have just one win from their last 10 league games.

### Gerrard out of friendly

AFP, London

Steven Gerrard is likely to miss England's friendly against Denmark on Wednesday after suffering a groin injury in Liverpool's 1-0 win over Chelsea on Sunday.

Gerrard will join up with Fabio Capello's squad at their Watford training base ahead of the trip to Copenhagen, but Liverpool boss Kenny Dalglish doesn't expect his captain to feature in the match.

"Gerrard has a groin problem. We've spoken to the England team, he's got to go to let them have a look at him but he won't be playing," Dalglish told reporters after Sunday's match.

Gerrard's absence will force England coach Capello to pick a new captain as Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand, the regular national team skipper, has already been ruled out with a calf injury suffered in the warm-up for Saturday's match at Wolves.

With Gerrard and Ferdinand out, Capello will likely choose Frank Lampard or Wayne Rooney to lead out the team.

### Gomez suffers knee injury

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich star striker Mario Gomez is out of Germany's friendly against Italy on Wednesday with a knee injury, it was revealed Sunday.

The 25-year-old damaged ligaments in his right knee during Bayern's shock 3-2 league defeat to Cologne on Saturday and will sit out Germany's friendly against the World Cup winners in Dortmund.

An examination by Bayern's doctors revealed Gomez, who has scored 16 goals in 19 league games this season for Munich, needs to rest his knee and Germany coach Joachim Loew was informed on Sunday.

## Real back on track

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid responded in style to Barcelona's record breaking, 16th consecutive league victory with Cristiano Ronaldo leading the way in a 4-1 win over Real Sociedad on Sunday.

Ronaldo was charged up for the game after being criticised for not scoring in four matches and having seen Lionel Messi hit a hat-trick in Barcelona's 3-0 win over Atletico Madrid on Saturday.

That victory saw Pep Guardiola's side surpass the run of 15 victories set by Alfredo Di Stefano's Real Madrid team of 1960-1961 and put them ten points clear at the top.

Real, with Emmanuel Adebayor given a starting place after his goal in the Copa del Rey against Sevilla in midweek, pressed forward from the start with the visitors encamped in their own penalty area.

Sociedad were nervous in possession and a poor clearance from Gorka Elustondo fell to Kaka and the Brazilian slotted the ball into the corner after just seven minutes.

Ronaldo was toying with the Sociedad defence and showing his full repertoire of

### RESULTS

Sevilla 0 Malaga 0  
Real Madrid 4 (Kaka 8, Cristiano Ronaldo 21, 42, Adebayor 89) Real Sociedad 1 (Arbeloa 72-0g)  
Valencia 2 (Aduriz 43, Tino 53) Hercules 0

flicks and back-heels.

He turned his man on the edge of the area and was given time to find his spot with his left foot to add to the lead.

Before half-time he powered home a header from a corner to notch up his 25th

Raul Tamudo's shot was blocked by keeper Iker Casillas but the rebound cannoned off Alvaro Arbeloa into the goal.

Adebayor had the last say for Real with a cool finish in the final minutes.



Real Madrid star Kaka celebrates his opening goal against Real Sociedad during their Primera Liga clash at Bernabeu on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Genoa halt Milan

AFP, Rome



Inter Milan thumped 10-man Roma 5-3 and Napoli beat Cesena 2-0 as both sides closed in on Serie A leaders AC Milan, who were held to a 1-1 draw at Genoa on Sunday.

Napoli trail Milan by just three points while Inter are five points back but with a game in hand.

Samuel Eto'o took his tally this season to 27 club goals with a brace while Wesley Sneijder, on his first start since December, Thiago Motta and Esteban Cambiasso added the other strikes for the champions.

Brazilian midfielder Simplicio, Montenegro striker Mirko Vucinic and substitute centre-back Simone Loria replied for Roma.

The first 45 minutes were pulsating and Inter went ahead on three minutes as Sneijder took a pass inside from Maicon, shifted his feet quickly and sent an unstoppable shot into the top corner before Roma goalkeeper Julio Sergio could even react.

Roma were level on 13 minutes as Vucinic ran at the defence and fed the overlapping Marco Cassetti whose cross was turned in on the slide at the back post by Simplicio.

Just two minutes later Cesar came to Inter's rescue with a triple save.

He beat away Menez's rasping drive, bounced straight up to stop Marco Borriello's headed follow-up and then rushed across his goal to stop Menez's shot with his foot.



Inter Milan striker Samuel Eto'o is about to score his second goal from a penalty during their Serie A tie against Roma at San Siro on Sunday.

## Italy recall Buffon

### Football

AFP, Rome

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon was recalled to the Italy squad for Wednesday's friendly against Germany in Dortmund, less than a month after making his injury comeback.

Buffon has not played for his country since a herniated disc in his back forced him out of Italy's first match at the World Cup last June.

But having made his injury return in January for Juve, he has earned an immediate call-up to coach Cesare Prandelli's squad.

The major surprise was a first selection for Inter Milan's Brazilian-born midfielder Thiago Motta who has long been naturalised Italian.

He is one of three Inter players in the squad alongside transfer window

signings Giampaolo Pazzini and Andrea Ranocchia.

Antonio Cassano also received his first call-up since his move to AC Milan having missed out on Italy's last friendly in November as he was suspended by his then club Sampdoria.

The only foreign-based player is Villarreal striker Giuseppe Rossi.

Alessandro Matri is in the squad after scoring two goals for Juventus on Saturday less than a week after making a move from Cagliari.

### SPORTS POLL

#### WEEKLY QUESTION

Have the organisers done a good job with the World Cup preparations?

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