

# Inter start with a defeat

REUTERS, Rome



Antonio Conte's revamped Juventus outclassed Parma 4-1 in the first Serie A match in their new stadium but the coaches of Inter Milan and AS Roma suffered painful defeats on their league bows on Sunday.

New Inter Milan boss Gian Piero Gasperini watched his side lose 4-3 at Palermo where he started Wesley Sneijder on the bench and saw his new three-man defence badly struggle.

Diego Milito twice gave the visitors the lead, flicking in Dejan Stankovic's errant shot and scoring a penalty but Palermo strike duo Fabrizio Miccoli and Abel Hernandez hit back.

Miccoli's superb late free kick and Mauricio Pinilla's outrageous strike sealed the win for the Sicilians before an otherwise anonymous Diego

Forlan marked his Inter debut with a stoppage-time goal for last term's runners-up.

Swiss right back Stephan Lichtsteiner got the party started at Juve's 41,000-seat arena, which still does not have an official name after a failure to find a sponsor, when he converted fellow new signing Andrea Pirlo's great dinked pass.

Three excellent goals followed in the

second half with Simone Pepe blasting home, new midfielder Arturo Vidal scoring spectacularly and ex-AC Milan playmaker Pirlo capping a wonderful debut by expertly setting up Claudio Marchisio.

Once mighty Juve have finished a lowly seventh in the last two seasons as they struggled to recover from their 2006 match-fixing demotion but the new stadium, signings and coach have revived supporter hopes that their glory days could return.

The only other downside for Juve was a bare-looking pitch in the packed new arena, built on the site of their former Stadio Delle Alpi home and the first ground to be owned by an Italian club.

Roma, sixth last term, have spent millions on new players since being taken over by American investors but a 2-1 home defeat by Cagliari was a bad start for new coach Luis Enrique.

"How much time do I need? I don't know but I am staying 100 percent optimistic because I have a very good squad and I'm sure things will change," the

Spaniard said.

Daniele Conti, son of ex-Roma stalwart Bruno, grabbed the opener midway through the second half after a mistake by new defender Jose Angel, who was soon sent off for a rash tackle.

Moestafa El Kabir added the Sardinians' second in injury time before Daniele De Rossi's consolation.

## RESULTS

**Juventus 4** (Lichtsteiner 16, Pepe 58, Vidal 73, Marchisio 83)  
Parma 1 (Giovenco 90-pen)  
Catania 0 Siena 0  
Chievo 2 (Pelissier 5, Thereau 24)  
Novara 2 (Marianini 27, Paci 86)  
**Fiorentina 2** (Gigliardino 20, Cerci 47) Bologna 0  
Genoa 2 (Velooso 6, Mesto 55)  
Atalanta 2 (Moralez 8, 43)  
Lecce 0 **Udinese 2** (Basta 2, Di Natale 16)  
Roma 1 (De Rossi 90) **Cagliari 2** (Conti 68, El Kabir 90)  
**Palermo 4** (Miccoli 48, 86 Hernandez 54, Pinilla 88) Inter Milan 3 (Milito 33, 51-pen, Forlan 90)



Palermo players Mauricio Pinilla (2nd R), Federico Balzaretti (2nd L) and Afriyie Acquah (R) celebrate after pulling off a sensational victory at the end of their Serie A clash against Inter Milan at the R. Barbera stadium in Palermo on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'Aguero at perfect club'

REUTERS, Dubai

Argentina great Diego Maradona reckons son-in-law Sergio Aguero is playing for the perfect club after his compatriot's stunning start at English Premier League outfit Manchester City.

Aguero, 23, scored a hat-trick in the 3-0 defeat of Wigan Athletic on Saturday to take his tally to six goals in four games, having joined City from Atletico Madrid in July for an estimated 45 million euros (\$61.7 million).

"I said Aguero needed a team that would support him, so that Aguero can play in the Champions League, can play in very important championships," Maradona told a news conference in Dubai on Sunday ahead of his first competitive game in charge of the city's Al Wasl FC.

"It was not the case with Atletico Madrid. People from Atletico Madrid said I was a fool. I told them that foolish person wasn't me, because Aguero is now playing for a team Manchester City that will fight for everything. Now Aguero is playing in a place that he deserves."

# Barca the team to beat

AP, London



Seeking a third Champions League title in four years, Barcelona will again be the team to beat when Europe's elite club competition kicks off this week.

Led by Lionel Messi, the Spanish giants produced a football clinic to dispatch Manchester United 3-1 in last season's final at Wembley and few would bet against them being anointed European champions for a fifth time in May's showpiece at Munich's Allianz Arena.

"They are so difficult to play against," said United striker Wayne Rooney. "It is hard to get the ball off them and when you do, you are tired from chasing around."

"You have to applaud them for the way they play. They are a great team to watch. Our aim for us to reach that level over the next few years."

Fierce Spanish rival Real Madrid, English sides United, Chelsea and big-spending newcomer Manchester City plus Italian champion Milan are among the main threats to Barcelona this season.

And it's at home against Milan, a seven-time European champion, where Barcelona begins the defense of its title in a repeat of the 1994 final, which the Serie A team won by dishing out a memorable 4-0 thrashing.

Barcelona is Europe's superpower 17 years on, however.

Pep Guardiola's side has already won two trophies this season the Spanish Super Cup and the European Super

## FIXTURES

**TUESDAY**  
**Group E**  
At London  
Chelsea (ENG) v Bayer Leverkusen (GER)  
At Genk, Belgium  
Genk (BEL) v Valencia (ESP)  
**Group F**  
At Athens  
Olympiakos (GRE) v Marseille (FRA)  
At Dortmund, Germany  
Borussia Dortmund (GER) v Arsenal (ENG)  
**Group G**  
At Oporto, Portugal  
Porto (POR) v Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR)  
At Nicosia  
Apollon Nicosia (CYP) v Zenit St-Petersburg (RUS)  
**Group H**  
At Barcelona, Spain  
Barcelona (ESP) v AC Milan (ITA)  
At Pilsen, Czech Republic  
Plzen (CZE) v Bate Borisov (BLR)

Cupand is bidding for a 10th victory in its past 11 home games in the competition.

"We are calm but we know that we have to repeat what we have done before to continue to be successful," Barcelona's Brazil right back Dani Alves said. "And that is not easy."

Milan hasn't been beyond the competition's last 16 since 2007, the year it won the last of its European titles.

"They have great players, especially in attack with (Zlatan) Ibrahimovic, (Alexandre) Pato, Robinho and (Antonio) Cassano, and we have to pay a lot of attention to them," said Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets.

The other match in Group H sees BATE Borisov of Belarus travel to Czech Republic's Viktoria Plzen, another of the

Champions League debutants.

Of the first timers, Man City likely to be the one to break up the established order.

Backed by the bottomless pockets of Abu Dhabi billionaire Sheikh Mansour, City has built a squad that is the envy of most clubs on the continent and has won all four of its matches in the Premier League this season. With options in its forward line comprising Carlos Tevez, Sergio Aguero, Edin Dzeko, David Silva and Samir Nasri among others, they could make a splash back in Europe's elite for the first time since 1968.

"This is a new season, a new era," said England defender Joleon Lescott, who is among the raft of expensive recruits brought in by City over the past two years. "We've got new signings and once everyone is together and firing on all cylinders, I'm sure we will be there or thereabouts."

City opens up Wednesday against Italian side Napoli, with four-time European champion Bayern Munich of Germany and Spanish team Villarreal also in a tough-looking Group A.

Spanish heavyweight Real Madrid, the competition's most successful team with nine titles and coached by two-time winner Jose Mourinho, visits Dinamo Zagreb in Group D, which also sees Ajax host Lyon on Wednesday.

Madrid was eliminated by Barca last season after an explosive pair of semifinal legs but with Mourinho appearing to be adopting a more attacking philosophy, the capital clubbed by star forward Cristiano Ronaldo could be even more dangerous.

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## Tough times ahead, says Heynckes

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich coach Jupp Heynckes has warned the German league leaders that a 7-0 rout of Freiburg should leave no room for complacency as they embark on their much-anticipated Champions League campaign.

Having last won the Champions League title in 2001, Bayern begin their Group A campaign at Spain's Villarreal on Wednesday.

Tough tasks lie ahead as Bayern face German title-rivals Schalke 04 and Bayer Leverkusen over the next two weekends in the Bundesliga before hosting Manchester City at the Allianz Arena on September 27 in the Champions League.

"We know we'll have to keep on improving, because we have a packed and intense programme over the next few weeks," said Heynckes.

Bayern striker Mario Gomez, who scored four goals, and midfielder Franck Ribery, two, shone in Saturday's rout in Munich while replacement Nils Petersen scored the seventh just before the final whistle.

The rout leaves Bayern top of the league and with just over a month gone of the new season, they already have a goal difference of 15.

## Wolfsburg end losing streak

REUTERS, Berlin



VfL Wolfsburg striker Mario Mandzukic scored twice, including with the winner eight minutes from time, to give his team a 2-1 victory over Schalke 04 on Sunday and end the 2009 champions' three-match losing streak.

The Croat offered under pressure coach Felix Magath, the controversial former Schalke boss, some respite and lifted Wolfsburg to six points from five games.

Spaniard Raul who was Magath's biggest transfer coup at Schalke last year needed only 13 minutes to strike, volleying in a clever chip from Peruvian Jefferson Farfan to put the visitors in the driving seat.

Wolfsburg quickly recovered and levelled with Mandzukic heading in from close range after being left completely unmarked.

With Schalke offering little further threat, the hosts gradually grabbed the initiative in the second half and snatched the lead when the Croatia international deflected a Marcel Schaefer free kick into the net.

Schalke missed the chance to join leaders Bayern and Werder Bremen on 12 points, remaining stuck on nine.

Bayern lead the table following their 7-0 demolition of Freiburg on Saturday with Mario Gomez netting four times. Bremen are second on goal difference after their 2-0 win over rivals Hamburg SV.

In the only other Sunday game, visitors Nuremberg scored twice from the spot through captain Timmy Simons in a span of four minutes to secure a 2-1 win at Cologne.

In a rugged and at times bad-tempered encounter that left both teams with 10 players, Cologne cut the deficit just before the break through Adil Chihi but could not find the equaliser despite pressing for most of the second half.

## RESULTS

Cologne 1 (Chihi 39) **Nuremberg 2** (Simons 31-pen, 35-pen)  
**Wolfsburg 2** (Mandzukic 33, 82)  
Schalke 04 1 (Raul 13)

## Zlatan to miss Barca reunion

AFP, Rome

Sweden forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic has been ruled out of Tuesday's plum Champions League clash between Barcelona and AC Milan at the Camp Nou due to a groin problem.

The 28-year-old has not even travelled to Spain with the rest of the Milan squad to face his former employers.

However, chief executive Adriano Galliani said it was not a big problem for the Italian champions.

"We're calm and relaxed, we'll play Pato and (Antonio) Cassano, who are two great players," he told reporters.

"I don't like feeling sorry for myself. We're champions of Italy and we're not going to play a knock-out match, there will be others so we'll continue calmly."

"Barcelona are the best team in the world but we're the one with the most (international) trophies."

"We'll play as we always have in the best stadiums in the world, it will be a footballing party."

Milan and Barcelona are the overwhelming favourites to progress from Group H.



PHOTO: REUTERS

**LITTLE AND LARGE: Arsenal midfielder Andrey Arshavin (L) and defender Per Mertesacker take part in a training session in London Colney on Monday. Arsenal will face German champions Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League tonight.**

## Blatter referred to as a 'brat'

AP, Seoul

Former FIFA vice-president Chung Mong-joon has compared Sepp Blatter to a "little brat," saying he rules the governing body of world football like a dictator.

Chung made the criticism in a memoir published in South Korea last week, titled My Challenge, My Enthusiasm. Chung had been regarded as a leading candidate to succeed Blatter as FIFA president before being defeated in an Asian election for the vice presidency early this year.

The book hits stores as Blatter prepares to present detailed anti-corruption reforms in October after a year of scandal that has rocked world football.

"President Blatter is fluent in five languages, has a good way with words and is intelligent ... but I think he is not an international gentleman and he is like a little brat," Chung said in the book.

Chung, who served as a FIFA vice-president for 16 years, accused Blatter of trying to usurp the authority of FIFA's executive committee via his proposal to create an oversight, anti-corruption panel that could include former U.S. diplomat Henry Kissinger and opera singer Plácido Domingo.

## 'Germany more complete than Spain'



INTERNET, Undated

Brazil head coach Mano Menezes has heaped praise on the quality of the Germany national team, stating that it is a more complete package than current world champions Spain.

The 49-year-old tactician has come under fire of late after watching Brazil crash out of Copa America in the quarterfinals at the hands of Paraguay.

Menezes has vowed to improve the quality of the team, but a 3-2 defeat against Germany and a 1-0 victory over Ghana have given the fans very few reasons to rejoice.

The coach conceded his side are still far away from what they have been in the past, and stated he believes Germany are currently the best national team on the planet.

"It is necessary to recognize Brazil are no longer playing the best football in the world," he told Veja. "This is nothing new. At the 2010 World Cup we were behind Germany, who for me are the most complete team, even more complete than Spain."

He added "Germany has always been very methodical and almost perfect when it comes to tactics, but they lacked the ability to solve matches. This gap has been brilliantly filled by players such as [Mesut] Ozil, [Thomas] Muller and [Bastian] Schweinsteiger."

Menezes lamented that, contrary to Germany, Brazil will have to go through a quick period of transition for the upcoming World Cup, but stressed he still thinks he can turn the team's fortunes around.

## SPORTS POLL

### WEEKLY QUESTION

Should Sachin Tendulkar quitte ODI cricket?

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Bangladesh A v GP-BCB NCA

One-Day Match

Time: 9:00am

Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur