

It's English versus Italians

AFP, Paris



England's two surviving representatives in the Champions League, Chelsea and Arsenal, were handed tough ties against Italian opposition in Friday's draw for the last 16, while holders Barcelona will come up against Germany's Bayer Leverkusen.

Chelsea will take on Napoli, while Arsenal will meet reigning Serie A champions AC Milan, with both Premier League clubs travelling to Italy first.

Chelsea have never previously faced Napoli, but they will know not to take Walter Mazzarri's side lightly after they qualified for the last 16 at the expense of Manchester City.

The 2008 beaten finalists have also only ever won once in Italy in seven

attempts.

"I think that at this stage we can come up with the cliches about it being difficult, and it will be difficult because we've seen that Napoli were in the same group as Manchester City, so that reflects on the quality of Napoli," Chelsea secretary David Barnard said.

For Arsenal, meanwhile, the clash with Milan is a repeat of their meeting at the same stage in 2007-08.

On that occasion the Gunners won 2-0 on aggregate, with Cesc Fabregas and Emmanuel Adebayor scoring late goals in the second-leg at the San Siro after a goalless first-leg.

"It's going to be a fantastic two games," Arsenal club secretary David Miles told Sky Sports after the draw, before admitting: "If I'm being honest there are probably

RESULT OF THE DRAW			
OLYMPIQUE LYONNAIS (FRA)	VS	APOEL FC (CYP)	
SSC NAPOLI (ITA)	VS	CHELSEA FC (ENG)	
AC MILAN (ITA)	VS	ARSENAL FC (ENG)	
FC BASEL 1893 (SUI)	VS	FC BAYERN MÜNCHEN (GER)	
BAYER 04 (GER)	VS	FC BARCELONA (ESP)	
PFC CSKA MOSKVA (RUS)	VS	REAL MADRID CF (ESP)	
ZENIT ST PETERSBURG (RUS)	VS	SL BENFICA (POR)	
OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE (FRA)	VS	FC INTERNAZIONALE (ITA)	

some other teams we may have preferred."

Nevertheless, Milan have also been eliminated by English clubs in the round of 16 in each of the last two campaigns, losing to Tottenham last season, and to Manchester United in 2010.

Barcelona will go to Germany first to face the 2002 runners-up Leverkusen, who qualified from Group E behind Chelsea.

There is history between the clubs, as Leverkusen beat Barca in the 1987-88 UEFA Cup quarter-finals, on their way to winning their only European trophy to date.

However, the Catalans will fancy their chances of gaining revenge this time as they aim to become the first club to win the Champions League in successive seasons.

Real Madrid, who romped through the group stage winning all six games in Group D, will be heavy favourites to beat CSKA Moscow, although their Director of Institutional Relations Emilio Butragueno told Eurosport that the Spaniards will not be taking the tie lightly.

Meanwhile Bayern Munich, who are hoping to reach the final at their own Allianz Arena, will meet Manchester United's conquerors Basel.

Marseille will take on 2010 winners Inter Milan in a tie that sees Claudio Ranieri once again come up against Didier Deschamps.

Ranieri was in charge of Chelsea when they lost to Deschamps' Monaco in the semi-finals of the competition in 2004.

Benfica meet Zenit St Petersburg, while Lyon will face the tournament outsiders APOEL Nicosia of Cyprus.

Balotelli in new bust-up

AFP, Manchester

Mario Balotelli found himself at the centre of yet another training ground confrontation with a Manchester City team-mate following a spat with Micah Richards.

According to the Guardian, the two players clashed Thursday towards the end of a practice match in preparation for the Premier League leaders' game against Arsenal on Sunday.

Witnesses reported words were exchanged before the two players squared up.

Afterwards England defender Richards played down the flare-up with Italian striker Balotelli, telling his Twitter followers: "Me & Mario are all good! these things happen in training & we shook hands after. It shows passion!"

This is not the first time Balotelli has found himself making unwanted headlines as a result of training ground confrontations this year.

City have repeatedly insisted Roberto Mancini's expensively assembled squad is not especially volatile.

City's Gunners test

AFP, London



Manchester City are determined to bounce back from the disappointment of losing their unbeaten record on Sunday as the Premier League leaders entertain a resurgent Arsenal.

Roberto Mancini's men suffered their first loss of the season with a 2-1 reverse at Chelsea, a setback which slashed City's lead at the top to two points and removed their aura of invincibility.

By the time City kick off against the Gunners in the weekend's showpiece fixture, they may already have been knocked off top spot if second placed Manchester United manage to beat Queens Park Rangers at Loftus Road.

Nevertheless Mancini is adamant that his expensively assembled side have the character to shrug off their defeat at Stamford Bridge, a game they had led 1-0 before Chelsea struck back to blow the title race wide open.

"I think that at these moments we should be strong," said Mancini. "After one defeat, we can improve - we know what we can do, and in this moment we can become stronger."

"We have never had a problem bouncing back after a defeat, and I am sure we will do it again."

"We play Arsenal on Sunday and at the

moment Arsenal are playing very well. It will be difficult but we need to start again. What is important is that we start to win again."

City's Arsenal old boy Gael Clichy, sent off against Chelsea, is suspended for the clash with his former club.

However Samir Nasri, who departed Arsenal for City last summer amid acrimony, could feature for the Manchester side.

Arsenal head into the fixture chasing their ninth league victory in 10 games, a two-month unbeaten streak which has left them within touching of the top four, just two points behind rivals Spurs.

Chelsea meanwhile will be confident of stretching their winning league run to four games when they travel to struggling Wigan on Saturday, with the Latics still languishing in the bottom three.

Chelsea's season had been threatening to unravel earlier this month until an away win at Newcastle followed by a convincing Champions League defeat of Valencia provided the platform for Monday's rousing vanquishing of City.

QPR meanwhile are scenting an upset as they face Manchester United with the champions battling a mounting injury crisis.

Darren Fletcher became the latest name added to United's sick list this week, joining long-term absentees such as Nemanja Vidic and Javier Hernandez.

FIXTURES

Saturday

(1500 GMT unless stated)
Blackburn v West Brom,
Everton v Norwich, Fulham v Bolton,
Newcastle v Swansea,
Wigan v Chelsea (1730),
Wolves v Stoke.

Sunday

Aston Villa v Liverpool (1405),
Man City v Arsenal (1610),
QPR v Manchester United (1200),
Tottenham v Sunderland (1500).



Udinese forward Antonio Di Natale celebrates his equalising goal against Celtic Glasgow during their Europa League tie at the Friuli Stadium on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

Udinese qualify

REUTERS, Berne



Udinese, Udinese, Bruges and AZ Alkmaar qualified for the Europa league knockout stages on Thursday.

Rubin Kazan, down to 10 men after 13 minutes, held on for a 1-1 draw at PAOK Salonika to qualify at the expense of last season's Champions League quarter-finalists Tottenham Hotspur.

The under-strength English Premier League side, with only three outfield players on the bench, won 4-0 at Shamrock Rovers but finished third in Group A, one point behind the Russians.

Udinese's Antonio Di Natale volleyed an equaliser in first half stoppage time to give the Italians the point they needed at home to Celtic who had taken the lead through Gary Hooper. The 1-1 draw left Udinese second in Group I behind Atletico Madrid.

Bruges also went through with a 1-1 home draw versus last year's Europa League finalists Braga, who played most of the Group H match with 10 men, as did Dutch league leaders Alkmaar by the same scoreline against Metalist Kharkiv in Group G.

Bjorn Vlemminckx opened the scoring for Bruges just after the break against a Braga side who had defender Elderson sent off in the 16th minute for a trip on Vadis Odjidja

but the Portuguese outfit equalised with a fine strike from Ewerton in the 65th.

English Championship (second division) side Birmingham City beat Maribor 1-0 but finished a point behind group winners Bruges and Braga who had already qualified.

Alkmaar's Adam Maher equalised seconds after Metalist went ahead late in the first half through Marko Devic and the point kept the Dutch side in second place just above Austria Vienna, who beat visitors Malmo 2-0, on goal difference.

Tottenham needed a win combined with a defeat for Rubin and had to make up a difference of five goals to qualify and, although it looked impossible to start with, it was on the cards at the break in the respective games.

Rubin fell behind to a Vierinha penalty in the 16th minute after their goalkeeper Sergei Ryzhikov was sent off for scything down Giorgos Georgiadis, while a second-string Tottenham side had opened up a three-goal halftime lead at Shamrock.

But Paraguay forward Nelson Haedo Valdez scored for Rubin three minutes after the break, volleying in from the penalty spot after Gokdeniz Karadeniz had cut the ball back.

South Africa midfielder Steven Pienaar, with his first goal for Spurs, Andros Townsend and Jermain Defoe struck in a 16-minute spell before halftime to keep the Londoners in the hunt.



send and win
a free trip
to Cox's Bazaar

so you think you have the craziest friend circle?

show us and you might win a free trip to Cox's Bazaar on the 31st!

To participate:

- Go to airtelbuzz (www.facebook.com/airtelbuzz)
- Get into 'live young, live crazy' application
- Get registered with e-mail ID & password
- Upload your photos (as much as you want) and/or one video of your friends doing crazy stuff
- Get as many votes as you can to win a trip for you and your friends to Cox's Bazaar on the 31st



SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION

Who is Bangladesh's
sports personality
of 2011?

Visit the sports page of
www.thedailystar.net to cast vote

Follow The Daily Star Sport on

www.twitter.com/dssport

What to
WATCH

BTV
Bangladesh v Pakistan
Second Test, Day 1
Live from 9:30am

TEN Cricket
South Africa v Sri Lanka
First Test, Day 3
Live from 2:30pm

ESPN
English Premiership
Newcastle v Swansea
Live from 9:00pm
Wigan v Chelsea
Live from 11:30pm

STAR Sports
English Premiership
Wolves v Stoke City
Live from 9:00pm

TEN Action+
Serie A
Chievo v Cagliari
Live from 10:55pm
La Liga
Sevilla v Real Madrid
Live from 2:55am (Sunday)

TEN Sports
Serie A
Fiorentina v Atalanta
Live from 1:40am (Sunday)

DAY'S
EVENT

Bangladesh v Pakistan
Second Test, Day 1
Time: 9:30am
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National
Cricket Stadium, Mirpur