

## Jose set to leave Real?

THE GUARDIAN

José Mourinho is to leave Real Madrid at the end of the season in order to take up a new job in the Premier League, it has been reported.

Speculation over Mourinho's future in Spain has increased in recent weeks following a series of public rows, amid suggestions that he is being undermined from within the club despite their impressive form. Real's 3-1 win over Real Zaragoza on Saturday was their 17th league victory from 20 games, keeping them top of La Liga on 52 points.

A source close to Mourinho told the Sunday Times that the coach had become exasperated by life at the club. "José is sick and tired of this situation at Madrid. It doesn't matter if he wins this season or not. It's not about the money. He's decided to come back to England and he will go in the summer."

The 49-year-old, who earns a net salary of £8.4m at Madrid, has previously been linked with both Manchester clubs, while Chelsea's relative struggles have raised doubts over André Villas-Boas's long-term future. Arsène Wenger's situation at Arsenal, and the Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp's links to the England job, also raise the possibility of high-profile Premier League vacancies at the end of the season.

## BARCA HELD TO A DRAW

## Madrid now 7 clear

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona dropped precious points in a 0-0 draw at Villarreal on Saturday night to slip seven points behind Real Madrid at the top of La Liga.

Earlier Kaka, Cristiano Ronaldo and Mesut Ozil had scored to help Real Madrid beat Zaragoza 3-1 and pile the pressure on Barca, who never convinced against a well organised Villarreal.

In a tight match with both teams relying on their passing games to create space, goal opportunities were rare and what Barca did create was stopped by an inspired Diego Lopez in the home team's goal.

The first chance came on three minutes when Dani Alves found himself clear with just Lopez to beat at close range, but the Villarreal goalkeeper stood tall and blocked the Brazilian's weak shot.

Five minutes later Villarreal conjured up some quick passing that produced an opening for Ruben Gracia 'Cani' who produced a good save from Victor Valdes.

Lionel Messi was then sent clear for a one-on-one with Lopez which saw him gently lob the ball over goalkeeper only to watch the ball gently roll inches wide.

Javier Mascherano was at hand to clear a wayward Gerard Pique header from the Barcelona goal-line and Villarreal were suddenly creating the better chances.

Marco Ruben shot high on 35 minutes after strong run took him clear and then Marco Senna brought an acrobatic save from Valdes.

Pep Guardiola made a tactical change on the hour mark, taking off Pique and replacing him with Alexis Sanchez, but the all

important three points seemed a long way from Barca's grasp.

Cesc Fabregas had a shot pushed by Lopez onto the bar with 12 minutes remaining and a subdued Messi had two shots blocked in the final minutes.

Angel Lafita gave bottom side Zaragoza an early lead in the Santiago Bernabeu but the leaders were dominant throughout and could have scored more than three goals in reply.

The result makes it fifteen wins in sixteen league games, the home defeat to Barcelona in December being the only blip, for a Madrid side showing great consistency in the league.

Afterwards Madrid coach Jose Mourinho avoided talking to the press, preferring instead to send out his assistant Aitor Karanka.

"The team has not been as good tonight as we would have liked," he said.

Lafita surprised Madrid when he opened the scoring on ten minutes against the run of play, turning in a cross from ex-Madrid youth player Carlos Aranda.

However, Madrid soon responded as Kaka latched on to a Ricardo Carvalho pass and slotted the ball home for the equaliser on 31 minutes.

Madrid continued in the same vein after the break and Ozil supplied Ronaldo for an easy finish on 48 minutes.

Then Kaka was the supplier for Ozil, who finished well with a powerful shot from a tight angle for his first goal of the season and Madrid's third on 55 minutes.

Iker Casillas had to save well to deny Hector Postiga on 71 minutes, but Madrid were never in trouble of losing control of the game against a side marooned six points behind their closest competitor at the foot of the table.

## RESULTS

Real Madrid 3 (Kaka 32, Ronaldo 49, Ozil 56) Real Zaragoza 1 (Lafita 11)  
Villarreal 0 Barcelona 0  
Rayo Vallecano 2 (Michu 11, Arribas Garrido 27) Athletic Bilbao 3 (Llorente 15, 23, 68)

## Crowded at the top

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich stayed top of the German league on Saturday as Mario Gomez claimed his 17th goal of the season in a 2-0 win over Wolfsburg, but Borussia Dortmund and Schalke are both hard on their heels.

Japan winger Shinji Kagawa scored twice in Dortmund's 3-1 win over Hoffenheim, while Schalke's 4-1 win at Cologne means there is a three-way tie with Dortmund, Schalke and Bayern on 40 points.

Munich stay top by virtue of a superior goal difference.

Germany striker Gomez has now scored 17 goals in 18 league games this season, as Bayern bounced back from their shock 3-1 defeat at Borussia Muenchengladbach with a win over Wolves.

The 26-year-old fired home at Munich's Allianz Arena with an hour on the clock after France winger Franck Ribery was fouled and Gomez converted a free-kick from Germany team-mate Toni Kroos.

Dutch winger Arjen Robben added Bayern's second in the 92nd minute when the ball went in off his stomach after a lob from Croatia striker Ivica Olic.

"We had good chances in the first

half, but we didn't take them," said Bayern coach Jupp Heynckes.

"This time, we had the luck and the ability to take the lead through a set-piece. In terms of our scoring chances and the way we played, the win was deserved."

## RESULTS

Werder Bremen 1 (Pizarro 29) Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Reinartz 57)  
Hertha Berlin 1 (Lasogga 81) Hamburg 2 (Jansen 24, Petric 45+1)  
Augsburg 2 (de Jong 5, Hain 66) Kaiserslautern 2 (Dick 25, 48)  
Borussia Dortmund 3 (Kagawa 16, 55, Grosskreutz 31) Hoffenheim 1 (Johnson 63)  
Bayern Munich 2 (Gomez 60, Robben 90+2) VfL Wolfsburg 0  
Cologne 1 (Podolski 4) Schalke 04 4 (Marica 60, 72,

Dortmund stay second after their home win over Hoffenheim, with Kagawa in dazzling form for the hosts.

The champions suffered bad news in mid-week when it was revealed teenage midfielder star Mario Goetze will be out for up to eight weeks with a groin injury.

But Kagawa teamed up with Kevin Grosskreutz to compensate and the Japan star put

Dortmund ahead after just 16 minutes before Grosskreutz slotted home the hosts' second after 31 minutes.

The pair then combined for the stunning third goal, when a crisp back-heel from Grosskreutz fell into Kagawa's path and he fired home from close range on 55 minutes.

USA defender Fabian Johnson scored a 63rd-minute consolation for Hoffenheim, but it was too little, too late. "We were very strong in the opening phase, but didn't convert all our goal chances," said Dortmund coach Jurgen Klopp.

"In the second half, we saw what could have happened if we hadn't put in so much work in the first half (as Hoffenheim came back). It was an excellent home game."

Schalke came from behind to record a 4-1 win at 10-man Cologne to stay third after Germany striker Lukas Podolski gave the hosts an early lead.

The Royal Blues got back in the game when Romanian striker Ciprian Marica netted with headers on 60 and 72 minutes.

Cologne's problems were compounded when defender Miso Brecko was sent off for fouling Schalke's Julian Draxler in the area and Klaas-Jan Huntelaar netted the penalty on 78 minutes.

Midfielder Marco Hoeger completed the rout with a late strike to claim Schalke's fifth straight league win.

## City's no to Tevez-Carroll swap

AFP, London

Manchester City refused an offer from Liverpool that would have seen unsettled Argentinian forward Carlos Tevez move to Anfield in a straight swap for misfiring Reds striker Andy Carroll, reports said Sunday.

According to two newspaper reports Liverpool were prepared to suffer a loss of around £10 million on Carroll if City agreed the swap deal.

Carroll cost Liverpool a club record £35 million when he moved to Anfield from Newcastle last season, in the process becoming the eighth most expensive footballer in history.

But while prolific with the Magpies, Carroll has scored only six goals in 36 appearances and failed to secure a regular starting spot in Kenny Dalglish's side.

The career of Tevez has been in limbo since a touch-line bust-up with manager Roberto Mancini during the Champions League defeat Bayern Munich in September, when he refused to come on as a substitute.

The Argentinian, who was hit with a £1.2 million fine by City in December for going to Argentina without permission, has been trying to seal a transfer in recent weeks but touted moves to AC Milan, Inter Milan and Paris St Germain have all come to nothing.

## Fergie backs De Gea

AFP, Manchester

Under fire Manchester United goalkeeper David De Gea received the support of both manager Sir Alex Ferguson and veteran striker Michael Owen on Sunday.

"Our own players created a problem for the first goal," said Ferguson.

"They didn't give him (De Gea) enough room to deal with it."

Owen said that he believed De Gea -- recalled in place of Anders Lindegaard for the match -- would develop into a front rank goalkeeper.

"Don't agree with all this negativity towards De Gea," tweeted Owen.

## Unbeaten Juve march on

AFP, Rome



A brace from Alessandro Matri saw Juventus do their hopes of winning the Italian title the power of good on Saturday, seeing off fellow high-riders Udinese

2-1 in Turin.

The win preserved Juve's unbeaten league record and opened up a provisional four-point lead over AC Milan, who host Cagliari on Sunday, while Udinese could see Inter Milan draw level with them if the Nerazzurri can win at Lecce.

Juve coach Antonio Conte saluted his side for an important victory.

"This was a real six-pointer," Conte told Sky Sport. "I was wary of Udinese's way of playing - they are very strong on the counter attack. We lost a few balls on occasions that could have cost us but we managed to tough it out. Well done to the players."

Juve moved onto 44 points from 20 games but were eternally grateful to Matri for his predatory instincts after Antonio Flo

Flores had threatened to bag a point for the visitors with a fine strike for Udinese to peg things back at 1-1.

Matri's winner just after the hour mark owed much to an inspired substitution by Conte, who sent on Claudio Marchisio for ex-Udinese favourite Fabio Quagliarella.

Marchisio promptly diverted an Arturo Vidal cross right into Matri's path and the striker lashed the ball past visiting goalkeeper Samir Handanovic to clinch a crucial win.

Matri had notched his opener from point-blank range after Handanovic had palmed out a near-post header from Quagliarella straight to the lurking forward

three minutes before the interval. But substitute Floro Flores pilfered the equaliser 10 minutes after the restart, curling a neat right-footed effort beyond Gianluigi Buffon for his second goal of the season.

Earlier on Saturday, Catania and Parma shared a 1-1 draw that left both clubs in mid-table.

## RESULTS

Catania 1 (Bergessio 33) Parma 1 (Modesto 43)  
Juventus 2 (Matri 42, 62) Udinese 1 (Floro Flores 55)



Dortmund forward Shinji Kagawa is ecstatic after scoring in their Bundesliga match against Hoffenheim on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP



Barcelona forward Lionel Messi (R) hides his face in his hands after missing another chance against Villarreal at the El Madrigal on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Racist L'pool fan arrested

THE GUARDIAN

Liverpool knocked Manchester United out of the FA Cup but were put on the defensive when the question of racism again raised its head at Anfield. An image of a Liverpool fan appearing to make an offensive monkey gesture was circulated on Twitter, prompting Merseyside police to make an arrest.

Patrice Evra, who became embroiled in the row that led to Luis Suárez being found guilty of racially abusing the United defender in the 11 draw on 15 October, was booed loudly every time he touched the ball during the Cup tie, which Liverpool won 2-1.

Merseyside police said in a statement: "We can confirm that a 59-year-old man from North Wales has been arrested following an alleged incident. The man has been taken to a police station and will be questioned by officers. Merseyside Police would like to thank North Wales Police and Liverpool Football Club for their assistance with this matter."

When Kenny Dalglish was asked what he thought of Evra's every touch being booed, the Liverpool manager responded: "Are you winding me up?" He added: "Why would I be disappointed for Evra? I can't believe you have asked that question before anything else. Have you ever played football? I used to get booed."

## Lazio receive Honda boost

Football

AFP, Tokyo

Japan and CSKA Moscow midfielder Keisuke Honda, the 2011 Asian Cup's most valuable player, is to join Serie A side Lazio in a 14-million-euro transfer, a Japanese sports daily reported Sunday.

CSKA and Lazio have narrowed their differences and come to terms on the transfer fee -- worth \$18.5 million -- after the 25-year-old Honda agreed other terms with the Rome outfit, the Sports Nippon said.

Following the club-to-club agreement, Honda lunched with Lazio president Claudio Lotito in Rome after flying in from Barcelona, where he was undergoing rehabilitation on his injured right knee, the daily said.

He is expected to undergo a medical at Lazio, possibly on Sunday, and his transfer will be formally announced as soon as the Italian side's quota on non-European Union players is vacated to allow Honda, the Sports Nippon said.

Several major English clubs including Liverpool, Arsenal and Aston Villa were reported to have shown an interest in Honda during the Asian Cup in January last year when Japan won a record fourth continental title.

In June, Juventus reportedly held talks with CSKA Moscow over the midfielder, who was also linked with Paris Saint-Germain earlier in the month.

After four years at J-League powerhouse Nagoya Grampus and two years at Dutch club VVV Venlo, Honda joined CSKA in January 2010 and became the first Japanese player to reach the quarter-finals of the Champions League.

He was the driving force behind the Blue Samurai when they reached the last 16 at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

## SPORTS POLL

## WEEKLY QUESTION

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## Premier Div Cricket League

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Abahani v Old DOHS  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium  
Biman v Sk Jamal  
Venue: BKSP-2  
Bangladesh U-19s v England U-19s  
Fifth One-day