

## Balotelli receives Euro boost

AFP, Rome

Mario Balotelli will be an integral part of Italy's European Championship squad in Poland and Ukraine in June, national team coach Cesare Prandelli said on Saturday.

The temperamental Manchester City forward's participation had been called into question following his latest indiscretion, when he received a three-match ban for being sent off against Arsenal.

Prandelli originally said he would look into the incident, sparking rumours he would leave Balotelli out due to the 21-year-old's disciplinary problems.

But now the Italy coach insists he cannot do without the enigmatic star.

"I liked the fact he took responsibility and what he said after the recent event with City," Prandelli told an Italian news channel.

"I like people who face up to things. I never thought of leaving him out, he's a fixed part of the national team."

Another player who Prandelli is keen to take with him in June is AC Milan's Antonio Cassano, who still needs to prove his fitness following his recent return to action after heart surgery.

"We can get him back," said Prandelli. "His enthusiasm is contagious and I need him."

## Zlatan rescues sloppy Milan

REUTERS, Milan

Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored a last-minute equaliser as sloppy AC Milan drew 1-1 with Bologna on Sunday and dropped two precious home points in race for the Serie A title.

Gaston Ramirez put Bologna ahead in the first half and, although the defending champions had Daniele Bonera sent off for a second bookable offence in the 82nd minute, Ibrahimovic levelled with his 24th league goal of the season.

Milan have 68 points from 33 games, level with leaders Juventus who were at home to AS Roma later on Sunday (1845).

Third-placed Lazio also dropped two home points when they conceded an injury-time equaliser in a 1-1 draw at home to relegation-threatened Lecce.



Borussia Dortmund players (L-R) Moritz Leitner, Mario Goetze and Mats Hummels celebrate after they clinched their second consecutive Bundesliga title with a win at home against Borussia Mönchengladbach on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Two on the trot

Fascinating Dortmund clinch title

REUTERS, Berlin



Borussia Dortmund were heralded as a "fascinating" team on Sunday after clinching their second successive Bundesliga title, keeping them on course for a domestic double.

Dortmund won the title with two matches to spare after beating Borussia Mönchengladbach 2-0 on Saturday, setting a league record after going 26 straight games without defeat.

They will complete a sparkling season next month if they beat Bayern Munich in the German Cup final in Berlin.

"Dortmund are worthy champions because the

team has this commitment that fascinates even neutral observers. After winning the title in 2011 you never had the impression that they would take it a bit easier," said German football association (DFB) president Wolfgang Niersbach.

Dortmund, whose last

### PAST WINNERS

2011/12 Borussia Dortmund  
2010/11 Borussia Dortmund  
2009/10 Bayern Munich  
2008/09 VfL Wolfsburg  
2007/08 Bayern Munich

defeat was back in September, also produced a near perfect second part to the season, winning 13 and drawing two in 15 games.

Thousands of fans poured onto the streets of the Ruhr valley city on Saturday to celebrate their title, honking car horns and

spraying beer.

"I am very impressed by the unity of Borussia," German coach Joachim Loew told reporters.

"Between coach team, officials and fans there is such a strong bond. The team played in this season with great intensity and will and were very consistent especially in the second half of the season."

"It is impressive how this young team won the title for the second straight time."

Dortmund, who have the second highest attendance in Europe with 80,000 fans per game behind Barcelona, refused to buckle in the title race, despite trailing Bayern at the halfway mark.

"It is their particular strength to get points against their biggest Bundesliga rivals," said Germany manager Oliver

STANDINGS							
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Borussia Dortmund	32	23	6	3	71	23	75 champs
Bayern Munich	32	21	4	7	71	21	67
Schalke 04	31	18	3	10	66	41	57
Borussia Mönchengladbach	32	16	8	8	46	24	56
VfB Stuttgart	32	14	8	10	60	42	50
Bayer Leverkusen	32	13	9	10	47	43	48
Hanover 96	31	11	11	9	39	43	44
Werder Bremen	32	11	9	12	46	52	42
Hoffenheim	32	10	11	11	38	41	41
VfL Wolfsburg	32	12	5	15	42	56	41

Bierhoff after Dortmund beat Bayern, third-placed Schalke 04 and Gladbach, in fourth, in consecutive league games in the last weeks.

Bayern also paid tribute to Dortmund.

"Dortmund played a very good season, they showed class and consistency and are deserved 2012 German champions," said Bayern CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge in a statement.

"Bayern congratulates the team, the coach and the Borussia Dortmund officials for their title victory."

Loew has at times been criticised for making limited

use of Dortmund players in the past two years but he told Bild newspaper on Sunday this could change for the Euro 2012 this summer.

"There will surely be more than just (defender) Mats Hummels and (playmaker) Mario Goetze. I also do not rule out that there are even more Dortmund players in the starting eleven."

Dortmund players Kevin Grosskreutz, Marcel Schmelzer, Sven Bender and Ilkay Guendogan - who have already won international caps - are in the running for a spot on Germany's Euro squad.

## 'I saw two Parkers, then I fell'

Football

THE GUARDIAN

Fabrice Muamba has spoken for the first time about the cardiac arrest he suffered at White Hart Lane on March 17, when his heart stopped beating for 78 minutes. The Bolton midfielder said that he felt no pain but that he felt dizzy and was seeing double.

"I had no pain whatsoever. No clutching at my chest or tightness like you see when people have heart attacks in movies," he told the Sun. "I felt dizzy but it wasn't normal dizziness - it was a kind of surreal feeling, like I was running along inside someone else's body."

"Then I started to see double. It felt almost like a dream. I could see Spurs players running around in the distance and two Scott Parkers and then two Luka Modrices. The last thing I heard was our defender Dedryck Boyata screaming at me to get back to help out in defence."

"He obviously had no idea what was happening to me and neither had I. I just felt myself falling through the air then felt two big thumps as my head hit the ground in front of me then that was it. Blackness. Nothing. I was dead."

The 24-year-old was "dead" for 78 minutes following his collapse but has already been discharged from hospital, having had an electronic device implanted in case his heart stops again.

## Ronaldo no choker

REUTERS, Barcelona



LFP

Cristiano Ronaldo may have finally shaken off the tag of big-game flop after he scored a dramatic winner for Real Madrid at bitter rivals Barcelona on Saturday, all but wrapping up the Spanish.

Ronaldo's 73rd-minute strike was his third goal in his last three visits to the Nou Camp and extended his La Liga record tally this season to 42, one more than Barca forward Lionel Messi, who succeeded Ronaldo as World Player of the Year.

Messi, who had scored 13 times in 18 previous 'Clasicos' compared to five in 15 for Ronaldo, had a quiet night by his high standards and cut a forlorn figure at the end of the game as the Real players celebrated wildly.

The win, a first for the club in eight league games against Barca, put them seven points clear of their bitter rivals with four matches left and within touching distance of a first La Liga title in four years.

Ronaldo, who now has 54 goals in all competitions this season to Messi's 63, had earned a reputation as a player who failed to perform in important matches but Saturday's exhibition will help dispel that image.

"It was a very important goal because it earned the three points for us," the Portuguese told reporters.

"I have scored the last three games I played here, but the key to the match was the team," added the 27-year-old, who became the world's most expensive player when he joined Real from Manchester United three years ago.

"The seven-point lead leaves us in a comfortable position, but we have to remember that the next games are also key."

"The team is in good shape, on form, happy, filled with desire and aware of its responsibilities."

"Cristiano is the best player in the world," Real assistant coach Aitor Karanka, standing in for his boss Jose Mourinho who again declined to speak to the media, told a post-match news conference on Saturday.

"Cristiano is always there when you need him," former Real striker Emilio Butragueno, now a club director, said in an interview with Spanish television.



PHOTO: REUTERS

I GOT THIS: Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo is in good voice after his winner in the El Clasico against Barcelona at the Nou Camp on Saturday.

## If you don't succeed, try nine times

REUTERS, Barcelona



LFP

It took him nine attempts but Jose Mourinho finally got to taste sweet victory as a visiting coach at Barcelona's Nou Camp on Saturday when his Real Madrid side snatched a dramatic 2-1 success in the lair of their arch rivals.

The colourful Portuguese, who again declined to speak to the media after the game, had compatriot Cristiano Ronaldo to thank for netting the 73rd-minute winner on a rain-lashed night in the Catalan capital as Real moved seven points clear in La Liga with four games left.

Club president Florentino Perez hired Mourinho to end Barca's Spanish and European domination and there was a sense after Saturday's result that a shift in the balance of power between the two world powerhouses could be imminent.

Real have to overturn a 2-1 deficit at home to Bayern Munich on Wednesday if they are to reach next month's Champions League final and if holders Barca can get past Chelsea, who beat them 1-0 in London this week, they will face a swaggering Real side filled with new confidence in another mouthwatering 'Clasico'.

The former Porto, Chelsea and Inter Milan manager got his tactics spot on in Saturday's La Liga clash, comprehensively outwitting Pep Guardiola for only the second time in 10 meetings in all competitions since he arrived from Italy two years ago.

Guardiola's decision to start with inexperienced B-team winger Cristian Tello backfired and he waited too long before bringing Cesc Fabregas, Alexis Sanchez and Pedro off the bench.

Mourinho appeared to have learned a lesson from his former club Chelsea, who managed to contain a dominant Barca in much the same way in Wednesday's Champions League semi-final first leg at Stamford Bridge.

## 4-4 draw leaves Utd on the edge

REUTERS, London

Manchester United and Everton fought out an astonishing 4-4 draw at Old Trafford on Sunday as United blew the chance of moving eight points clear of Manchester City.

Everton, who opened the scoring through Nikica Jelavic after 33 minutes, trailed 3-1 and then 4-2 before salvaging a point with a Steven Pienaar equaliser six minutes from time. It was the sixth goal in a 25-minute second half spell.

United now have 83 points from 35 games compared to City's 77 from 34.

United wiped out Everton's lead and went 3-1 ahead themselves with goals from Wayne Rooney, Danny Welbeck and Nani with 60 minutes played.

Marouane Fellaini made it 3-2 after 66 minutes before Rooney struck to make it 4-2 after 69 minutes. Jelavic made it 4-3 after 83 minutes before Pienaar completed the scoring one minute later.

**SPORTS POLL**  
Should Bangladesh tour Pakistan?  
They shouldn't go now 48.3%  
They should go 39.3%  
**TOTAL VOTES: 145**  
**WEEKLY QUESTION**  
Who has impressed you the most in the IPL?  
Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote  
Follow The Daily Star Sport on **twitter**  
www.twitter.com/dssport

**What to WATCH**

**SET Max**  
Indian Premier League  
Rajasthan v Bangalore  
Live from 8:30pm  
**ESPN**  
Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm  
**TEN Cricket**  
West Indies v Australia  
Third Test, Day One  
Live from 8:00pm  
**TEN Action**  
La Liga  
Osasuna v Malaga  
Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

**National Cricket League**  
(Four-Day Match, Day Three)  
Sylhet v Rajshahi  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur  
Khulna v Dhaka  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium