



Juventus midfielder Arturo Vidal (R) celebrates one of his two goals against Roma during their Serie A encounter in Turin on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

Juventus take control

AFP, Rome

LEGA CALCIO

Juventus took control of the Serie A title race with a 4-0 victory over Roma on Sunday as AC Milan slipped up again in a 1-1 draw at home to Bologna.

It was Juve's sixth win in a row and opened up a three-point lead at the top with five games left.

They also have a better head-to-head record than the rossoneri meaning Milan need to make up four points to hold onto their scudetto crown.

Arturo Vidal scored a brace and Andrea Pirlo added the other as Juve killed the game before the half hour mark with Claudio Marchisio rounding off the scoring after the break.

Vidal arrived in the right place to finish from Paolo De Ceglie's cross on four minutes and the Chile midfielder hit an unstoppable shot from Mirko Vucinic's pass four minutes later to double the advantage.

Just before the half hour mark the game was over as Roma goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg was harshly judged to have brought down Marchisio in the box.

To add insult to injury he was sent off, even though there were two covering defenders and Marchisio, who seemed to hang his leg out to be caught by the keeper, had clearly lost the ball.

Substitute goalkeeper Gianluca Curci saved Pirlo's spot-kick but the Italy midfielder kept his cool to slot in the rebound.

Marchisio added the fourth with a precise low shot from outside the box.

RESULTS

Cesena 2 (Santana 26, Rennella 28)
Palermo 2 (Bertolo 20, Silvestre 45)
Fiorentina 0 Inter Milan 0
Genoa 1 (Del Grosso 79) **Siena 4**
(Brienza 17, 37, Destro 19, Giorgi 49)
Juventus 4 (Vidal 4, 8, Pirlo 29,
Marchisio 52) Roma 0
Lazio 1 (Matuzalem 82) Lecce 1
(Bojinov 90)
AC Milan 1 (Ibrahimovic 90) Bologna 1

Lost football found in Alaska

BBC ONLINE

A football swept away by last year's tsunami and found on a remote Alaskan island is to be returned after its teenage Japanese owner was identified.

Sixteen-year-old Misaki Murakami's name was written on the ball that was swept out to sea in March 2011.

David Baxter found it more than a year later on Alaska's Middleton Island, 70 miles (112km) from the mainland.

Mr Murakami told Japanese media he was sure the ball was his and would be happy to have it back.

"I'm very grateful as I've so far found nothing that I'd owned," he told broadcaster TBS on Sunday.

Do or die for Barca

AFP, Barcelona



Chelsea are bracing for a Barcelona onslaught here Tuesday as the wounded Catalans bid to recover from domestic disappointment by reaching their third Champions League final in four seasons.

The holders -- stunned 1-0 by Chelsea in last week's semifinal first leg -- completed a week to forget on Saturday when a 2-1 defeat to Real Madrid at Camp Nou effectively handed the domestic title to their bitter rivals.

Chelsea will hope to exploit any lingering hangover from Saturday's traumatic reverse to Real as they attempt to avenge their agonising elimination to Barca at the same stage three years ago.

Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola refused to hit the panic button after his side's loss to Real, expressing confidence that his players would be able to raise themselves again for the visit of Chelsea.

"We'll see on Tuesday if these two

defeats have affected us, we have to rest now and then pick ourselves up and see if we can find a way to beat such a physical side as Chelsea," Guardiola said.

Guardiola acknowledged however that Chelsea, who rested eight members of the side which started the first leg in Saturday's 0-0 draw with Arsenal, were likely to be the fresher of the two teams.

"They have managed to rest some players and we have not, but as I say we'll get some rest and start again," Guardiola said.

"I have not been disappointed with our play in these two defeats and we'll forget them now and prepare well for Tuesday."

Chelsea, too, are unlikely to lose sight of the fact that they were comprehensively outplayed for much of the first leg.

Interim Chelsea coach Roberto Di Matteo is under no illusions about the scale of the task in front of his side.

"It's going to be a high-intensity game, mentally as well, with pressure," Di Matteo said. "Every player that's going to go on the pitch is at risk."

Yet Di Matteo is hopeful that the drive of Chelsea's senior citizens -- John Terry, Frank Lampard, Ashley Cole, Petr Cech and Drogba were all outstanding in the first leg -- augurs well for Tuesday.

"The personal ambition of these players comes through in these games," Di Matteo said. "You can see the drive and also quality that these players have."

"They want to show it and I think there is a good group of players here that have shown it in the past and are now continuing to show their great strength."

Another standout performer in the first leg was Gary Cahill, who is finally starting to show the sort of form which persuaded the club to sign him from Bolton in January for around £7 million.

Cahill and Terry have conceded just one goal in the five games the two have started together in central defence, with another clean sheet coming against Arsenal at the Emirates on Saturday.

Trio get crucial boost

AFP, Madrid



Valencia, Atletico Madrid and Athletic Bilbao all collected wins in La Liga on Sunday, providing crucial boosts ahead of their Europa League semifinals involvement on Thursday.

Third-placed Valencia beat nine-man Real Betis 4-0 at home with goals from Jonas Gonzalves, Sofiane Feghouli, Roberto Soldado and Pablo Piatti to stay on track for a Champions League place next season.

Betis had Jose Dorado sent-off in the second-half for pulling over Feghouli as the last defender, while Jorge Molina followed him into the dressing-room with two minutes remaining for protesting.

Valencia are now six points ahead of city rivals Levante in fifth place and with only four games left are close to assuring Champions League qualification for next season.

The result also means Valencia will go into

the second-leg of their Europa League semi-final at home to Atletico in good spirits as they look to turn around a 4-2 deficit.

Turkish international Arda Turan hit two spectacular strikes to improve Atletico Madrid's hopes of European football next season as they beat rivals Espanyol 3-1.

Diego Godin put Atletico ahead on nine minutes with a powerful header before Didac Vila crashed home an equaliser to make it all square at the interval.

Turan's match winning performance began with an acrobatic finish to a Juanfran cross on 59 minutes to restore the home team's lead.

Two minutes later, he took down a long pass from Godin before twisting and turning through the Espanyol defence and hitting a shot that sneaked past Cristain Alvarez in the Espanyol goal.

The win puts Atletico into seventh position, three points behind Malaga, who currently hold a Champions League place, and level on points with Athletic Bilbao in sixth who beat Racing Santander 1-0.

RESULTS

Granada 1 (Jara 18) Getafe 0
Real Sociedad 1 (Vela 86)
Villarreal 1 (Senna 42)
Racing Santander 0 **Athletic Bilbao 1**
(Toquero 12)
Atletico Madrid 3 (Godin 9, Turan 59,
61) Espanyol 1 (Didac 19)
Valencia 4 (Jonas 6, Feghouli 63,

SPORTS POLL

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

Pune v Delhi

Live from 4:30pm

KKR v Deccan

Live from 8:30pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India

Sports News

Live at 8:30pm

English Premiership

Aston Villa v Bolton

Live from 1:00am (Wednesday)

TEN Cricket

West Indies v Australia

Third Test, Day Two

Live from 8:00pm

TEN Sports & TEN Action

UEFA Champions League

Barcelona v Chelsea

DAY'S EVENT

National Cricket League

(Four-Day Match, Day Four)

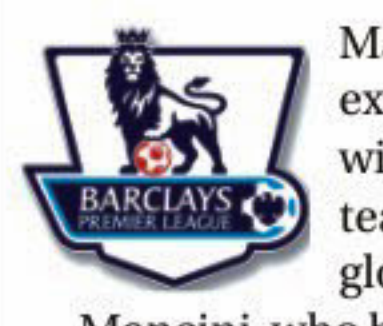
Sylhet v Rajshahi

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

Khulna v Dhaka

Mancini still negative

AFP, Wolverhampton



Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini expects his side to lose their key title clash with Manchester United despite seeing the team revive their quest for Premier League glory.

Mancini, who has repeatedly played down City's hopes of being crowned champions of England for the first time in 44 years, saw his men move to within three points of United with a 2-0 win away to Wolves on Sunday.

Goals from Sergio Aguero and Samir Nasri meant City, whose win relegated Wolves, could now go top on goal difference with two matches then remaining if they beat United at Eastlands next Monday after the champions were held to a shock 4-4 draw by Everton at Old Trafford earlier Sunday.

"We will talk about one team winning the title on Monday night (April 30) if we beat them," said Mancini.

"I probably expect us to lose to Manchester United. Their players are used to playing under pressure every year. But we don't have any pressure as we have no chance of winning."

Most observers believe Mancini is merely trying to lift the pressure off City and trying to deflect it onto Sir Alex Ferguson's men by insisting United have already won a 20th English title.

But whether Mancini really believes what he's saying or not, he is sticking to his guns all the same.

"I'm standing by what I said," Mancini insisted. "We are still three points behind. I'm smiling because we can finish well this season."

"We've won three (successive) games and now we have a derby. We want to play well for our supporters," added Mancini, whose side were eight points adrift of United just a few weeks ago.

"I don't think we played as well as we did against Norwich and West Brom," conceded Mancini. "We only played so-so."

"Congratulations to Sir Alex for his season and his title!"

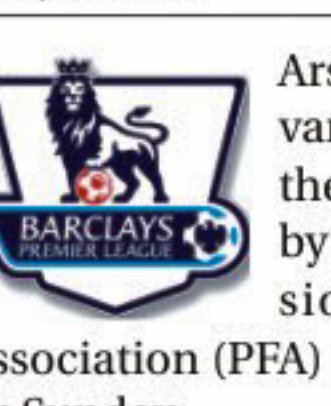
Terry Connor, the Wolves manager, broke down at the post-match press conference after the realisation of relegation set in.

"They've been doing that for quite a while now," said a tearful Connor. "They gave everything they've got to give but after 35 games we found it too difficult."

"It's emotional and very raw for the staff, players and supporters for the club. I'll find the next few days really tough."

Van Persie EPL's best

AFP, London



Arsenal striker Robin van Persie was named the Player of the Year by England's Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) at a ceremony here on Sunday.

The 28-year-old Dutch international has scored 27 Premier League goals so far this season -- his best return for the north London club -- and was proud to be honoured by a poll of top-flight players.

"If other people are saying it, it is special, but it is even more special if your opponents are saying it," he said.

"It is very special because you are playing against them week in week out and every single player does everything to win and in the end if they make up their minds that I'm the best player it is a big honour."

Van Persie added none of his success would be possible but for the contribution of his fellow Gunners.

"Without them I could not have achieved it," he said. "For example

Theo Walcott, he has given me more than 12 assists and I do really appreciate that."

Van Persie was originally deployed as a second striker by Arsenal after signing from Feyenoord in 2004 in a role made famous by fellow Dutch forward Dennis Bergkamp during his time with the club.

But despite his own initial doubts, van Persie has relished the role of leading Arsenal's attack since being switched to the centre forward position by manager Arsene Wenger.

"Now I am (confident). To be fair, when I first went there I wasn't really as confident and I wasn't really sure I

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Joe Hart (Man City/ENG); Kyle Walker (Tottenham/ENG); Vincent Kompany (Man City/BEL); Fabricio Coloccini (Newcastle/ARG); Leighton Baines (Everton/ENG); David Silva (Man City/ESP); Yaya Toure (Man City/CIV); Gareth Bale (Tottenham/WAL); Scott Parker (Tottenham/ENG); Robin van Persie (Arsenal/NED)

could do it. It took a bit of time but after a couple of months a slowly realised I could do a good job there."

Tottenham Hotspur and England full-back Kyle Walker won The PFA Young Player of the Year award and the 21-year-old couldn't quite believe he was receiving the honour.

"I was a bit surprised because defenders don't normally get these awards and get the limelight as much as the centre-forwards," he said.

"If you look at the people I was in with then it is a great honour to get the award and hopefully there is more to come."

Both Walker and van Persie were included in the PFA's Premier League Team of the Year, which featured four players from title-chasing Manchester City.

England goalkeeper Joe Hart, defender Vincent Kompany and midfielders Yaya Toure and David Silva all featured in a side where Wayne Rooney was the only representative from champions Manchester United.

West Brom stun L'pool

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool's miserable home form continued on Sunday when they allowed West Bromwich Albion, managed by former Reds coach Roy Hodgson, to grab a 1-0 victory at Anfield.

Peter Odemwingie grabbed the winner 15 minutes from time to leave Liverpool with just one win at home in the Premier League in 2012.

They have also now dropped 27 points at Anfield in the current campaign. They are currently in eighth place in the table, while West Brom, who celebrated their first win at Anfield for 45 years, moved into 10th.

Kenny Dalglish's side, missing skipper Steven Gerrard, were left to regret wasting a host of opportunities and seeing two efforts come back off the woodwork.

Dirk Kuyt, Luis Suarez, Maxi Rodriguez and Andy Carroll all missed good chances, while Daniel Agger had a close-range shot turned behind by West Brom goalkeeper Ben Foster.

At the other end, Liverpool keeper Jose Reina, returning after a three-match suspension, saved well from Chris Brunt and Liam Ridgewell.

In the second half, the woodwork saved West Brom when Jordan Henderson smashed a shot against the crossbar before Kuyt had a shot deflected onto a post.

