

Napoli snap Juve run

Football

AFP, Rome

Juventus' record-breaking 43-match undefeated run came to an end on Sunday when Napoli won the Italian Cup 2-0.

Serie A champions Juventus saw their hopes of a league and cup double shattered by two second-half goals, with defeat particularly painful for skipper Alessandro Del Piero, who was playing the last match of his 19-year career with the club.

Uruguayan striker Edinson Cavani opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 62nd minute when goalkeeper Marco Storari brought down Ezequiel Lavezzi.

It was Cavani's 33rd goal of the season.

Seven minutes from time, Napoli's first Italian Cup triumph since Diego Maradona's team won the 1987 double was assured when Goran Pandev launched a lightning counter-attack before playing in Marek Hamsik, who slotted the ball into the corner.

Juventus striker Fabio Quagliarella was sent off in the last minute for elbowing Salvatore Aronica in the face.

"It's almost unthinkable to beat Juventus over 90 minutes when they hadn't lost all season. It was an achievement within an achievement," said Napoli coach Walter Mazzarri.

In a tight first-half at the Olympic Stadium, Juve believed they should have been awarded a penalty when Claudio Marchisio was clipped by Aronica as he was about to shoot.

Chances remained few and far between until the 63rd minute when Napoli were awarded a penalty after Lavezzi had nipped between Leonardo Bonucci and Andrea Barzagli and Storari brought him down.

Del Piero was substituted shortly after, bringing an end to a career which had featured 705 matches and 289 goals.

Napoli keeper Morgan de Sanctis saved a Leonardo Bonucci volley at the base of the near post while an Andrea Pirlo free-kick came off the defensive wall as Juve pushed for an equaliser.

Napoli then seized their chance to bury the game when Juventus were caught cold on the counter and Hamsik coolly shot across Storari and into the far corner.



Napoli striker Edinson Cavani is ecstatic after scoring the opening goal against Juventus during their Italian Cup final at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Schweini sorry for snub

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger on Monday apologised for not shaking the hand of German President Joachim Gauck after the German club's Champions League defeat to Chelsea in Munich at the weekend.

A photo of a vacant-looking Schweinsteiger, the losing team's silver medal in his hand, walking past Gauck's extended hand without even looking at the president featured in most German newspapers on Monday.

Schweinsteiger missed his penalty kick in the decisive shootout as Chelsea won 4-3 on penalties after the tie had ended 1-1 after extra-time.

"It's absolutely not the case, it's a misunderstanding," Schweinsteiger said in a statement issued through the Bavarian club of the apparent snub.

"If you put yourself, even a little bit, in my situation and if you look at the photo, you can see I'm completely in my own world after such a disappointment.

"I was shocked, disappointed, like paralysed. I just didn't see the president's hand."

"I'm sorry I gave another impression at that time. I want to apologise to the president for that."

Torres not happy

AFP, Undated



CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Chelsea striker Fernando Torres has cast doubt over his future at the newly-crowned European champions, labelling this past season as the most difficult of his career.

The £50million Spain international, who hit just six league goals this season, told Spanish sports newspaper AS that he was extremely disappointed not to be in the starting line-up for Saturday's Champions League final against Bayern Munich.

He added that he wants clarity over his role in the team.

"This season I have felt things that I hadn't felt before. I feel that I have been treated in a manner I did not expect, not the way they said when I signed for the club," Torres said.

"We have had many conversations and now the season is finished we will talk to see

what happens with my future because what I have gone through this year is not the role for which I came.

"There have been many highs and lows, many times I felt lost. I wasn't sure what to do, I felt like I didn't know where to be."

Torres was an 84th-minute substitute at the Allianz Arena on Saturday, earning the corner from which Didier Drogba equalised but did not take a penalty in the shootout.

Despite his limited contribution in Saturday's showpiece, Torres admitted Chelsea's improbable run to the Champions League title helped soothe his personal pain after a challenging year with the west London outfit.

"A victory like the one in Munich makes up for it, but I want someone to tell me what will happen in the future," he said.

"Right now I feel that football is worth it but I have been through some very bad times, the worst of my career. I don't want to relive them."

Montpellier's maiden title

AFP, Paris



LFP

Montpellier claimed the first French league title in their history after winning 2-1 at Auxerre on an extraordinary final day of the season on Sunday, after a game twice delayed due to protests by the home fans.

Second-placed Paris Saint-Germain did all they could by winning 2-1 at Lorient, and the delays at Auxerre meant that Rene Girard's side had to endure a nervous wait before their title success was confirmed.

Montpellier finished the season three points clear of PSG in the final standings, which gave the southern club -- 14th in Ligue 1 last season -- their first major honour since the 1990

French Cup.

There was no hint of the drama to come when Auxerre broke the deadlock in the 20th minute at Stade Abbe Deschamps, with Olivier Kapo heading home from a corner.

A defeat was the only means by which Montpellier could have been denied the title but they equalised in the 32nd minute when John Utaka converted a low right-wing cross from Souleymane Camara.

The Auxerre fans' protest at their relegation -- which saw them throw tennis balls and toilet rolls onto the pitch -- began at the start of the second period and forced the players to return to the changing rooms.

When play resumed, Montpellier were 19 minutes behind the Lorient-PSG game, and with PSG winning, the leaders were left living on their nerves.

Goalkeeper Geoffrey Jourden repelled a powerful drive from Delvin N'Dinga before flares thrown by Auxerre's fans obliged the players to leave the pitch again and led to a second delay lasting around 20 minutes.

With PSG's players watching on television from Lorient, riot police began to clear the protesting fans from the stand behind the Montpellier goal and play was able to resume.

There were still 16 minutes to play, but Utaka calmed the visiting fans' nerves in the 76th minute when he swivelled to slam home his second goal and take the title to Stade de la Mosson for the very first time.

Montpellier's Olivier Giroud finished as the top scorer in Ligue 1, ending the season level with PSG's Nene on 21 goals but prevailing by virtue of having scored fewer penalties.



Chelsea's Russian owner Roman Abramovich (C) sits amongst the players as they parade through the streets of west London on an open-top bus following their Champions League victory on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Anelka threatens to quit Shenhua

Football

AFP, Shanghai

French striker Nicolas Anelka has threatened to leave Shanghai Shenhua, a state-backed newspaper said Monday, in a sign relations with his Chinese club may have soured.

Speaking in an interview with the Xinmin Evening News, Shanghai's main evening newspaper, Anelka criticised a lack of support from the club.

"If there is still no one to support me and (they) continue to play little tricks behind my back... then I will quickly decide whether or not to retire," he said, in comments published by the newspaper in Chinese.

"This will be decided on what happens in the next few weeks."

Shenhua could not be reached for comment on the report.

Anelka, the most high-profile foreign footballer to sign for the Chinese league, joined Shenhua in January on a two-year contract for a reported salary of 234,000 euros (\$307,000) a week.

But Shenhua now rests near the bottom of the standings in China's Super League.

The club fired French head coach Jean Tigana, another high-profile foreign import, last month and named Anelka "player-coach" and former DR Congo national manager Jean-Florent Ikwange Ibenge as "acting" head coach.

Anelka said he was basically serving as head coach and would find it difficult to accept someone taking over his responsibilities.

"In substance, I exercise the power of head coach, since I decide the players' list and handle daily training," he said.

Heartbreak for Berezutsky

REUTERS, Moscow



EURO 2012

POLAND-UKRAINE

Fullback Vasily Berezutsky will miss the 2012 European Championship after failing to recover from a hip injury, Russia coach Dick Advocaat said on Sunday.

"Berezutsky won't be able to regain his form in time for the tournament," Advocaat told reporters following the opening day of Russia's training camp.

Berezutsky, who along with his twin brother Alexei played at Euro 2008, where Russia reached the semifinals, has been out since hurting his hip last month.

"Unfortunately, the injury turned out to be worse than was first diagnosed," said the CSKA Moscow central defender.

"I still feel discomfort when I try to run and I don't want to jeopardise my team by going to the Euros unprepared."

Villas-Boas won't be rushed

AFP, London

Former Chelsea boss Andre Villas-Boas insisted Monday that he won't be rushed into a decision on his future.

The 34-year-old, whose former club Chelsea won the Champions League at the weekend, has been linked with the Liverpool job since Kenny Dalglish's departure.

Villas-Boas was quoted by The Independent as saying: "I'm still choosing the right project and that decision will take the necessary time."

The Portuguese also congratulated his successor at Chelsea, Roberto Di Matteo.

Benzema spearheads attack

AFP, Paris



EURO 2012

POLAND-UKRAINE

It was a mark of the progress that Karim Benzema has made over the last 18 months that his inclusion in France's preliminary squad for Euro 2012 did not raise a single eyebrow.

After failing to make an impression as France limped out in the group phase at Euro 2008, he was left out of Raymond Domenech's squad for the 2010 World Cup following a debut season at Real Madrid in which he scored just nine goals.

Now, though, he is the undisputed leader of the French attack, having spearheaded Madrid's first league title success in four years and established himself as one of the most deadly

marksmen in the European game.

"I feel full of confidence and physically, I'm in top shape," he said earlier this year. "That's why I'm now trying things that I would never have dared to try before."

Benzema has been France's number nine in-waiting ever since he made his Lyon debut as a 17-year-old in a 2-0 win at home to Metz in January 2005.

Already a member of the France team that had triumphed at the Under-17 European Championship in 2004, Benzema was eased into one of the greatest club sides in French football history and found silverware tumbling into his lap.

Lyon won the league in his first four seasons, and he ended the 2007-08 season as both Ligue 1's top scorer and the UNFP (National Union of Professional Footballers)

Player of the Year.

There was another season at Lyon -- 23 goals, 17 in the league -- before he decided to fly the nest and join Madrid in a transfer worth 35 million euros (\$45m).

Laurent Blanc had replaced Domenech as France coach and immediately put his faith in Benzema, but the striker remained on the periphery at Madrid.

The breakthrough arrived midway through the 2010-11 campaign, when Higuain was sidelined by a slipped disc and Mourinho had no choice but to turn to the brooding figure with the shaven head on the substitutes' bench.

Finally assured of his place in the team, Benzema responded, developing a quick understanding with Ronaldo and finishing the season with 26 goals in all competitions.

SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION
Do you think Richard Pybus is a good choice as Bangladesh coach?
Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote
Follow The Daily Star Sport on [twitter](https://twitter.com/dssport)
www.twitter.com/dssport

What to WATCH
SET Max
Indian Premier League
Delhi v KKR
Qualifier-1
Live from 8:30pm
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News

DAY'S EVENT
Bangladesh Premier League
Mohammedan v Abahani
Time: 6:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Team BJMC v Brothers Union
Time: 4:00pm