

## Mourinho hates his social life

INTERNET, Undated

You might think that a man who believes he should be called "The Only One" would enjoy receiving special treatment when he walks the streets, but in the case of Jose Mourinho you would apparently be wrong. The Real Madrid manager says he is unhappy with his social life.

"If I could be a manager, a football manager, and the moment I leave the club or the moment the match finished, if I could switch off a light and become a person that nobody knows, I would do it," he said [to CNN].

"Because I hate my social life. I hate my social life. I hate not to be a normal father who goes with his son to the son's football match and being there with the other 20 fathers watching the match.

"I am in a football match of kids 10-12 years old and I have to be there, the people have to come for photos, the people have to come for autographs, the people have to come to insult me, the people have to go behind the goal of my kid and insult my kid of 12 years old."

That would be difficult to deal with for anyone, especially seeing your kids have to deal with it too. But on the plus side, being who he is means that he can blow his whistle and have Pepe obliterate these insult hurlers at any moment.

## Ibra rules out Messi

REUTERS, Paris

Lionel Messi does not deserve to win the next FIFA Ballon d'Or as he has only won one minor trophy this year, his former Barcelona team mate Zlatan Ibrahimovic said on Tuesday.

"Messi had a fantastic season but he has not won that much and he has already won the Ballon d'Or three times," Paris St Germain forward Ibrahimovic, who played with Messi in the 2009/10 season, told Eurosport on Tuesday.

"It depends whether you reward an individual or a collective work.

"Xavi is still playing at a high level, Iniesta also had a great season, they won the Euro while Messi has not won anything, just the King's Cup. Messi has won the Ballon d'Or three times, it's now someone else's turn to win it."

The Ballon d'Or, which was merged with the World Player of the Year award in 2010, will be awarded on January 7, 2013.

## What to WATCH

ESPN

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TEN Sports

UEFA Champions League

Arsenal v Olympiakos

Live from 12:45am (Thursday)

TEN Action

UEFA Champions League

Zenit v AC Milan

Live from 10:00pm

Ajax v Real Madrid



Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho (2nd from L) conducts a training session in Madrid yesterday on the eve of their Champions League match against Ajax Amsterdam.

PHOTO: AFP

# Crucial week for Real

AFP, Paris



Two-time Champions League-winning coaches Jose Mourinho and Carlo Ancelotti will be looking to guide Real Madrid and Paris Saint Germain respectively to a second successive victory in the group stages on Wednesday.

Both Mourinho and then Ancelotti failed to deliver European club football's premier trophy with Chelsea-galling for both that the relative novice Roberto di Matteo succeeded where they failed last season.

The pressure is very much on both men this time round as Mourinho, who has won with Porto and Inter Milan, has yet to deliver the trophy to Real - they have gone out in the semi-finals in the past two seasons.

Ancelotti, twice a winner with AC Milan, might be in his first Champions League campaign with the French side but their Qatari backers will be expecting a long run in the competition after laying out millions of euros on players.

Both have tricky away trips Real to Dutch giants Ajax and PSG to Porto.

While Real grabbed a late but deserved 3-2 victory at home to Manchester City in the first game, Ajax fell to a late goal away at Borussia Dortmund.

Since the victory over City Real have looked a different side to the one that had fallen eight points behind bitter rivals Barcelona in La Liga, and while the gap remains the same the 'meringues' have won both their subsequent league games, thrashing Deportivo La Coruna 5-1 on Sunday.

Mourinho will have to juggle his line-up as it is a crucial week with a

### FIXTURES

(kick-offs all 1845 GMT unless stated):  
Dynamo Kiev (UKR) v Dinamo Zagreb (CRO), FC Porto (POR) v Paris SG (FRA), Schalke 04 (GER) v Montpellier (FRA), Arsenal (ENG) v Olympiakos (GRE), Zenit St-Petersburg (RUS) v AC Milan (ITA) (1600), Anderlecht (BEL) v Malaga (ESP), Manchester City (ENG) v Borussia Dortmund

trip to Barcelona coming this weekend where defeat would dim their hopes of retaining their title after just seven games of the season.

The Portuguese handler, however, is not willing to choose a second string team against Ajax despite having beaten them in all four of their most recent Champions League encounters and not conceding a goal.

"Ajax are constantly having to rebuild their side but always seem to

find new and interesting players, men who want to make a name for themselves and fight for the cause," said the 49-year-old.

Ancelotti also has a key match to look forward to at the weekend, Sunday's always high-octane trip to historical rivals Marseille and with the chance of leapfrogging them at the top of the table if they win there.

However, the Italian has been at pains to keep his players minds focussed on the Porto game especially as they like PSG won their opening game, the Portuguese side beating Dinamo Zagreb 2-0 away while PSG thrashed Dynamo Kiev 4-1.

"This is a crucial match for us in terms of the Champions League group," said Ancelotti.

"If we win then we are in pole position to progress as one of the top two and further down the line it may allow me to rotate the squad a bit more."

## Ballack hangs up his boots

Football

AFP, Berlin

Ex-Germany captain Michael Ballack has retired from professional football, his manager Michael Becker confirmed on Tuesday, with the former Chelsea star currently without a club.

Having turned 36 at the end of last month, Ballack has been without a team after his two-year deal at Bayer Leverkusen expired in June.

Since leaving Leverkusen, Ballack had been reported to be negotiating with clubs in north America's MSL and Australia's A-League, but has decided to hang up his boots.

Ballack made the last of his 98 appearances for Germany when he captained the team during their friendly defeat against Argentina in March 2010 having made his national debut back in April 1999 against Scotland.

An ankle injury he suffered playing for Chelsea in the FA Cup final in May 2010 ruled Ballack out of the last World Cup in South Africa when he lost the captaincy of the national team to Bayern Munich's Philipp Lahm.



PHOTO: AFP

Former Miss Sport Croatia finalist and football coach Tihana Nemcic controls the ball during a photo shoot in Zagreb on Monday. Tihana, 24, a University of Zagreb faculty of physical education graduate, became the first female coach of Viktorija Vojakovac.

## Criscito to wear mask

REUTERS, St Petersburg

Zenit St Petersburg left back Domenico Criscito will wear a plastic mask to protect a broken cheekbone if he plays in Wednesday's Champions League Group C clash with AC Milan.

"I'll be ready to play tomorrow but head coach (Luciano Spalletti) will make a final decision," the Italy international told the club's website on Tuesday.

Criscito, who missed Zenit's 3-0 defeat at Malaga in their Champions League opener last month with a thigh injury, broke his left cheekbone in Saturday's 1-1 draw against Lokomotiv Moscow.

The 25-year-old, who joined Zenit from Genoa a year ago, said he knew Milan well from Italy's Serie A.

"I've played against them many times in the past, tasting both defeat and victories. Now, they have a young team that wants to prove itself," he said.

Zenit said Belgium midfielder Axel Witsel, who joined them for 40 million euros (\$52.59 million) from Benfica just before last month's transfer deadline, was available for selection after recovering from a pulled hamstring.

However, the Russians champions are still missing injured midfielder Sergei Semak and Portugal international Danny as well as Russia skipper Igor Denisov, who has refused to play for the club and demanded to renegotiate his contract.

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