

Chelsea's Juve test

AFP, Paris



Holders Chelsea and Scottish champions Celtic can seal their places in the last 16 of the Champions League on Tuesday but they will have to do it the hard way by winning away from home.

Chelsea's task looks harder as they travel to Serie A leaders Juventus but Celtic's away form in the Champions League is woeful so they will have to repeat their outstanding performance in the home win over Barcelona against a talented Benfica side.

Bayern Munich, the side that Chelsea beat on penalties in last season's final, also have a tricky trip to Spanish side Valencia, in a rematch of the 2001 final which the Germans won in a penalty shootout.

Bayern and Valencia are locked on nine points apiece, but with Belarus side BATE Borisov breathing down their necks on six points and all but guaranteed three points when they host pointless and hapless French side Lille neither can afford a slip-up.

A win for either Valencia or Bayern would see the victor join the one side playing on Tuesday already assured of a place in the last 16, Manchester United, who are also certain to top their group.

Chelsea have made hard work of their group, with a fortunate last minute win

over the highly-talented Shakhtar Donetsk last time out setting them up nicely for the trip to Turin.

However, they come into it in the worst possible fashion having been beaten by West Brom, managed by former Chelsea coach Steve Clarke, on Saturday and having taken just two points from their last 12 in the Premier League.

Chelsea boss Roberto di Matteo admitted he would have to rein in his more expansive tactics he has used this season as his defence was becoming an increasing worry.

"We have played differently this season, but we might have to go a little bit tighter to win games and make sure we don't concede," he said.

"Maybe it is time to look at it, change it, and get a win. We have massive games coming up, but we have players with a lot of experience in these situations.

"We will look at the set-up of the team and maybe sacrifice a little of the attacking options."

With Shakhtar - who trail Juventus and Chelsea by a point - likely to come away with three points when they play minnows Nordsjaelland in Copenhagen, it is vital for the holders to take if not the win then at least a point from the Italian champions.

Celtic's victory over Barcelona restored the 'thunder' to Parkhead according to manager Neil Lennon, but that will be quickly forgotten should they fail to progress to the knockout stages.

FIXTURES

Tuesday (kick-offs 19:45GMT unless stated):
Nordsjaelland (DEN) v Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR), Juventus (ITA) v Chelsea (ENG), BATE Borisov (BLR) v Lille (FRA) (17:00), Valencia (ESP) v Bayern Munich (GER), Spartak Moscow (RUS) v Barcelona (ESP) (17:00), Benfica (POR) v Celtic (SCO), Galatasaray (TUR) v Manchester United (ENG).



Manchester United forward Wayne Rooney (2nd from L) attends a training session at their Carrington training complex in Manchester yesterday on the eve of their Champions League away match against Galatasaray.

PHOTO: AFP

Sevilla destroy Betis

AFP, Madrid



A first-half onslaught saw Sevilla set up a 5-1 win over Real Betis in a one-sided Andalusian derby due to the visitor's hapless defence on Sunday.

Jose Antonio Reyes and Federico Fazio both struck braces as Sevilla came out on top in the typically highly-charged clash. Ruben Castro hit a second half reply for Betis who also saw Ruben Perez dismissed while their misery was complete with an injury time fifth from Ivan Rakitic.

Sevilla have had an up-and-down season but they have a solid home record and this win puts them a point behind their city rivals in seventh.

Betis keeper Adrian San Miguel appeared half asleep as he gave the ball straight to Reyes under no pressure in the first minute and he slotted home. From there it got a lot worse for a Betis side that was always on the back foot.

Betis had their first choice defence with Paulao and Mario Alvarez at centre half who have generally a solid partnership but they were torn apart especially from the physical threat of Alvaro Negredo and the Sevilla defenders when they came forward for set-plays.

They left Fazio completely unmarked in the fifth minute and he

headed home a free-kick which already gave Betis a mountain to climb if they were to turn the match around.

The visitors were simply unable to keep possession and coach Pepe Mel took off midfielder Jose Canas for the more attacking Jonathan Pereira but it made little difference as Reyes got his second with Nelson this time at fault. Negredo headed against the crossbar and while the right back had plenty of time to clear the danger, he dawdled and Reyes nipped in to

RESULTS

Deportivo La Coruna 0 Levante 2 (Martins 40, Barkero 82)
Celta Vigo 1 (Park Chu-young 56)
Real Mallorca 1 (Hemed 22)
Getafe 2 (Ruano 74, Lafita 78) Valladolid 1 (Oscar 45)
Granada 0 Atletico Madrid 1 (Turan 61)
Sevilla 5 (Reyes 1, 32, Fazio 5, 43, Rakitic 90+1) Real

score. Fazio was again left free to head home the fourth after a deep cross from Reyes who has been in and out of the team this season but looked back to his best.

Frustration got the better of Perez who was sent off after two needless yellow cards but Betis did get on the scoresheet through Castro after 66 minutes.

Betis were not finished though with Rakitic adding the final goal a minute into stoppage time.

An Arda Turan strike gave ten-man

Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win away to Granada to keep them on the tail of leaders Barcelona.

Last season's Europa League winners have continued to grow under Diego Simeone's leadership and despite the strength of the top two in Spain they are just three points behind the Catalan side and have five more than city rivals Real.

Atletico needed to bounce back after suffering their first defeat away to Valencia and although they were far from their best against a lively Granada they did just enough to win.

Granada had more of the ball in the first half and took the game to Atletico with Youssef El Arabi a constant threat.

He forced Atletico keeper Thibaut Courtois into a block from close range on the half hour mark while the best chance fell to Gabriel Torje minutes later after a quick break but his shot was deflected by the hardworking Turan onto a post.

Atletico were always a danger in attack with Radamel Falcao eager to find the back of the net after failing to score in his last two games following his explosive start to the campaign where he was on target in his first nine league games.

It was Turan who broke the deadlock though as he converted a Jorge Resurrecion 'Koke' cross after 61 minutes and Atletico held on despite Mario Suarez being sent-off for a second yellow card.

Cagliari hold Inter

AFP, Milan



Cagliari turned on the style to hold Inter Milan to a 2-2 draw at the San Siro on Sunday as Fiorentina hammered 10-man Atalanta 4-1 at home to take over third place from Napoli.

After leaders Juventus were held to a scoreless draw at home to Lazio on Saturday Inter had a chance to close the gap on the Serie A champions.

But despite Rodrigo Palacio giving the hosts an early lead, a superb double from striker Marco Sau had the Sardinians in front and it took an own goal from Davide Astori for Inter to pull level.

Inter had several chances to score, notably through Diego Milito, in a lively second half.

But the Argentine striker missed two clear chances from close range and was denied a third time by alert Cagliari 'keeper Michael Agazzi.

In the closing minutes Inter piled on the pressure and were unlucky not to be awarded a penalty when midfielder Walter Gargano was hauled down inside the box.

Cagliari held on and in the end were worthy of a share of the points.

Inter handed Juventus their first defeat in 50 games two weeks ago but came up short in the Nerazzurro derby last week with defeat to Atalanta.

Stramaccioni was also red carded for

protesting towards the end of the game.

Inter's first draw in 13 matches left them in second place on 28 points, four adrift of Juventus but one ahead of Fiorentina and Napoli, who were held 2-2 at home by AC Milan on Saturday.

Fiorentina maintained their impressive push up the table under coach Vincenzo Montella with a one-sided win over their visitors from Bergamo.

The hosts took a fifth-minute lead when a freekick whipped in from the left evaded the entire Atalanta defence to land at the feet of Gonzalo Rodriguez, who slammed the ball into the net from close range.

Atalanta levelled just after the half hour when Giacomo Bonaventura slammed the ball home from close in after it had ricocheted around the Fiorentina area.

But Fiorentina regained the lead before the interval when Alberto Aquilani sent a sublime freekick from the edge of the area past static

'keeper Andrea Consigli. Atalanta were then reduced to 10 when Luca Cigarini hauled down Juan Cuadrado as the Colombian midfielder ran down on goal and Fiorentina made the visitors pay when Aquilani beat Consigli from close range following a corner in first half injury time.

Former Italy striker Luca Toni added a fourth goal with a header four minutes into the second-half to consign Atalanta to their fifth defeat of the season.

RESULTS

Siena 1 (Valliani 81) Pescara 0
Bologna 3 (Gilardino 44, Gabbiadini 44-pen, Diamanti 48-pen) Palermo 0
Catania 2 (Bernardo 51, 85) Chievo 1 (Andreolli 90+3)
Fiorentina 4 (Rodriguez 5, Aquilani 42, 45+2, Toni 49) Atalanta 1 (Bonaventura 32)
Inter Milan 2 (Palacio 10, Astori 82-og) Cagliari 2 (Sau 43, 66)
Udinese 2 (Di Natale 9, Pereyra 50)
Parma 2 (Marchionni 46, Palladino 89)
Sampdoria 3 (Poli 16, Bovo 36-og)



McLaren Mercedes's British driver Lewis Hamilton celebrates with the trophy on the podium after winning the United States Formula One Grand Prix at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hamilton crashes Vettel party

AFP, Austin



Lewis Hamilton upset Sebastian Vettel's hopes of clinching the drivers world championship in his 100th race on Sunday when he produced a dazzling drive for McLaren to win a thrilling United States Grand Prix.

For Vettel, finishing second from pole was a personal disappointment, but not enough to prevent his Red Bull team from winning the constructors title for the third successive season.

Fernando Alonso of Ferrari finished third after starting seventh on the grid -- thanks to his team's pragmatic decision to break the gearbox seal on teammate Felipe Massa's car.

That podium finish ensured that the title battle will go down to the wire at next weekend's Brazilian Grand Prix in Sao Paulo.

Vettel goes to Interlagos with a lead of 13 points. Vettel has 273 points and Alonso 260.

Hamilton, who started second on the grid, made the most of his superior outright speed to pass Vettel on lap 42 of the 56-laps race and claim the 21st victory of his career.

The 27-year-old Briton, who leaves McLaren for Mercedes next year, was intent on delivering another win for the team before his departure and did so with elan as he seized his fourth win this year.

Kimi Raikkonen, winner of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix two weeks ago, came home sixth ahead of Lotus team-mate Romain Grosjean.

Moratti hits out at refs

REUTERS, Milan

Furious Inter Milan president Massimo Moratti described Italian referees as "incapable" after his side were denied a late penalty in Sunday's 2-2 draw at home to Cagliari.

The Inter team, and coach Andrea Stramaccioni, declared a media silence after the stoppage-time incident.

"I can say that for three games in a row, we have had to deal with refereeing injustices, which have prevented us from getting the result," Moratti told the Mediaset Premium television channel.

"I cannot stay quiet in these circumstances," he said from the seat of his car after stopping to talk to reporters on the way out of San Siro. "That penalty was as big as a house"

"I don't think there's any plot against us, it's just that referees are incapable of doing their jobs."

Inter were furious after an alleged foul on Andrea Ranocchia in the penalty area failed to bring a spot kick and Stramaccioni was sent off as he led the Inter protests on the pitch.

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Yes (73%)
No (26%)
No Comments (1%)
Total votes: 168
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