

Roma leave it late

AFP, Milan

Italy striker Pablo Osvaldo and Miralem Pjanic scored a goal apiece late in the second half to hand Roma a welcome 2-0 win at home to Torino on Monday.

Roma's promising start to the season has slowed of late and the Giallorossi went into their 13th game of the season on the back of a 3-2 defeat to Lazio in the Rome derby last week.

However Osvaldo beat Torino's Belgian 'keeper Jean-Francois from the spot in the 71st minute after Marquinhos had been felled in the box by Angelo Ogbonna and Danilo D'Ambrosio.

Torino's frustration by the decision was compounded when coach Giampiero Ventura was red carded for protesting. Roma piled on the agony minutes later when Bosnian international midfielder Pjanic's shot deflected off Torino's Alessandro Gazzi on the way past Gillet.

Juventus, who host Chelsea in a key Champions League Group H clash on Tuesday, remain top of Italy's Serie A with a four-point lead on Inter Milan.

Roma sit in sixth, 12 points behind Juventus and three behind fifth placed Lazio, with Torino in 13th.

Ref racism enquiry goes on

AFP, London

Referee Mark Clattenburg will miss a fourth successive weekend of Premier League action as the Football Association continues an investigation into 'racism' allegations against the official.

Chelsea complained to the FA the referee used a term understood to have been interpreted as racist towards Nigeria international John Obi Mikel during the 3-2 Premier League defeat by Manchester United on October 28.

Last week British police dropped their own separate enquiry into the incident, sparked by a complaint from the Society of Black Lawyers.

A police statement said: "No victims have come forward... Without a victim and/or any evidence that any offence has been committed, the matter cannot currently be investigated."



What to WATCH

Channel 9

Bangladesh v West Indies

Second Test, Day 1

Live from 9:30am

TEN Sports

UEFA Champions League

Arsenal v Montpellier

Live from 1:45am (Thursday)

TEN Action

UEFA Champions League

Zenit v Malaga

Live from 11:00pm

Man City v Real Madrid

Live from 1:45am (Thursday)

ESPN

Sportscenter India

Sports News



DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh v West Indies

Second Test, Day 1

Time: 9:30am

Venue: Sk Abu Naser Stadium,



PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo attends a training session at Madrid Sport City yesterday on the eve of their Champions League match against Manchester City.

Domenech slams Ribery, Nasri



Football

REUTERS, Paris

Former France coach Raymond Domenech, who led Les Bleus during their 2010 World Cup fiasco, has branded Franck Ribery a "diva", Samir Nasri a "symbol of selfishness" and said Nicolas Anelka "killed the group".

In his memoirs "Tout Seul" ("All by Myself") to be published on Wednesday, based on the diary he kept during his six-year spell as France coach from 2004 to 2010, Domenech assumes little responsibility for the World Cup debacle.

France players refused to take part in training to support Anelka at the World Cup in South Africa after the former Chelsea forward was dismissed from the squad for verbally abusing Domenech at halftime in the 2-0 group stage loss to Mexico.

"He killed the group," Domenech said of Anelka.

However, the former France coach acknowledges that everything was going wrong long before the incident and said he had been "mistaken" about the players he called up for the tournament, especially Ribery.

"He was prone to take offence at everything", Domenech writes about the Bayern Munich winger, who said last week his club was more important than France.

"A senior player at the 2008 Euro finals had warned me about Ribery but I gave him the keys of the team. What a fool I am..."

Domenech also takes a swipe at Samir Nasri and Karim Benzema, branded an "arrogant" person, who were both dropped from the squad before the World Cup.

Kagawa out for another month

AFP, Manchester

Shinji Kagawa, Manchester United's Japan midfielder, faces at least another four weeks out of action according to manager Alex Ferguson.

Kagawa has been sidelined since suffering a knee injury against Braga in the Champions League at Old Trafford last month.

Initially, Ferguson said he thought Kagawa would be back playing within four or five weeks.

But, speaking ahead of Tuesday's Champions League match away to Galatasaray in Istanbul, Ferguson told United's website: "Shinji's progress has been quite slow actually."

"He's not started any outside work and we're looking at another four weeks, which is disappointing."

Originally we thought three or four weeks -- now it looks like seven or eight weeks."

Becks quitting Galaxy



Football

AFP, Los Angeles

Football legend David Beckham says he will play his final game with the Los Angeles Galaxy when the Major League Soccer club hosts Houston in the MLS Cup match next month, but where he goes from there remains a mystery.

The 37-year-old former England captain and veteran of three World Cups notably did not mention anything about retiring from the sport.

"I've had an incredibly special time playing for the LA Galaxy. However, I wanted to experience one last challenge before the end of my playing career," Beckham said in a news release on Monday.

Beckham has scheduled a news conference in Los Angeles for Tuesday.

The football superstar has spent the past six seasons with the Galaxy, leading Los Angeles to an MLS Cup title last season when they defeated the Houston Dynamo 1-0.

Beckham and the Galaxy go for their second consecutive crown when they face the Dynamo in a repeat of last year's final on December 1 at the Home Depot Center.

Beckham said in a statement released

by the team that the game would be his last for the Galaxy, as he hopes to move on and eventually become a part-owner of an MLS team in the future.

"I don't see this as the end of my relationship with the league as my ambition is to be part of the ownership structure in the future," he said.

Beckham did not go into specifics about what he meant by "one last challenge" or what he plans to do next.

There have been reports out of Australia that their professional league was trying to woo him to make a move down under and there was an immediate statement of intent from Melbourne Heat with chief executive Scott Munn saying the club would make an offer. Beckham's name has also been linked to the Western Sydney Wanderers while the Central Coast Mariners, based north of Sydney, are similarly thought to be keen.

There has also been some interest from European clubs with Qatari-backed Paris Saint Germain having come close to signing Beckham earlier this year and he spent two short loan spells at AC Milan in 2009 and 2010.

A return to the Premier League in England, however, appeared to be highly unlikely.

Do or die for City

AFP, Paris



Manchester City's first tilt at Champions League glory ended in a heartbreaking group stage exit a year ago

having been drawn in a tough group - though the club then went on to lift the Premier League crown.

Many observers will feel lightning is likely to strike twice as the signs are this season could prove a virtual re-run of last.

City pipped neighbours United to the Premier League post in May and now lead their local rivals by a point after a weekend steamrolling of Aston Villa.

Sadly for Roberto Mancini's men, Wednesday's opponents Real Madrid are not Villa.

Jose Mourinho's side come to Manchester knowing they cannot risk leaving empty-handed as the nine-time champions seek to close the Group D door firmly shut on a City side who have taken just two points from their opening four fixtures.

It could have been so different for Mancini's side - they were on the brink of victory in the Bernabeu before Karim Benzema and Ronaldo overturned a 2-1 deficit in the last five minutes.

Instead of pulling off a win which would have left them a point clear of the Spaniards, City instead trail Mourinho's side by five points and group leaders Dortmund by six to stare another premature elimination in the face.

Mancini concedes that the odds

are stacked against City but after wiping the floor with Villa he knows the club are in the global spotlight on Wednesday and should make the most of the occasion.

"I think we have few chances to go through but it is important to do a good job," said the Italian.

Striker Sergio Agüero, on a hot streak with four goals in three games, says the team have to be single-minded as their mission is crystal clear.

"The truth is we have to win so we are going to go out and win however we can," said the Argentine forward. If the Dutch can beat the Germans

FIXTURES

Wednesday

Porto (POR) v Dinamo Zagreb (CRO),
Dynamo Kiev (UKR) v Paris Saint Germain (FRA), Arsenal v Montpellier (FRA), Schalke (GER) v Olympiakos (GRE), Anderlecht (BEL) v AC Milan (ITA), Zenit St Petersburg (RUS) v Malaga (ESP), Manchester City v Real Madrid

- and should Real lose - then Ajax would draw level on points with Mourinho's 'meringues'.

The Portuguese, hoping to end a barren decade for Real and become the first man to lead three clubs to glory after wins with Porto and then Inter Milan, reaches a milestone Wednesday as he will become at 49 the youngest coach to sit in the dugout for 100 Champions League matches.

Others to reach the ton-up mark are Carlo Ancelotti - aged 51 - Arsene Wenger (58), Ottmar Hitzfeld (58) and Alex Ferguson (62).

As City teeter on the brink, Arsenal

will hope to join Manchester United as English participants in the knock-out stages but the Gunners will at least need to beat French champions Montpellier at the Emirates while hoping that Schalke put Greek outfit Olympiakos in their place.

Schalke took four points off Wenger's side and lead Group B by a point from Arsenal - but Olympiakos are only a point further back after beating Montpellier.

If the Londoners drop points and the Greeks spring a surprise or even draw in Germany the group would be thrown wide open.

Arsenal have a curiously poor home record in the competition against French sides, with no wins in four previous encounters.

Visiting AC Milan will meanwhile look to hold off Belgium's Anderlecht and avoid falling at the group stage for the first time in 13 seasons.

Massimiliano Allegri's men only lead the Belgians by one point with Malaga having already wrapped up qualification after drawing in Italy.

Zenit St Petersburg will hope to stay in the mix by beating Malaga, who have piled up 10 points already in this their debut season.

Two-time European champions Porto have already qualified from Group A, likewise with 10 points on the board even before they host a Dinamo Zagreb side who have lost all four of their contests to date.

Paris Saint Germain should accompany the Portuguese to the last 16 as they have a five-point advantage over their Wednesday hosts Dynamo Kiev.

Joey rescues a draw

AFP, London

West Ham rescued a 1-1 draw against Stoke at Upton Park on Monday thanks to Joey O'Brien's first ever Premier League goal.

Republic of Ireland right-back O'Brien had never scored in the English top-flight despite a long career at that level with Bolton and now West Ham, but the 26-year-old chose the perfect moment to end his drought.

Sam Allardyce's side trailed to a goal early in the first half from Stoke striker Jonathan Walters until O'Brien slotted home from close-range three minutes after the interval to earn his moment as the unlikely hero.

O'Brien's intervention maintained West Ham's impressive start to the season and they remain seventh in the table, level on points with Arsenal, and above the likes of Tottenham, Liverpool and Newcastle.

Stoke's seventh draw from 12 league matches this season kept Tony Pulis's team clear of the relegation zone, although it also extended their winless run on their travels to 16 matches.

"We could have finished them off with more clinical finishing, but there is another point on the board for us and we have to settle for that," Allardyce said.

After all the pre-match talk that this would be a bruising battle between two sides who prefer the aggressive route-one approach, it was fit-

ting that Stoke's early opener arrived via a set piece rather than a intricate passing move.

Pulis's side took the lead in the 12th minute when Glenn Whelan's corner was met by Walters, who timed his run perfectly to drive his shot past Hammers goalkeeper Jussi Jaaskelainen and beyond Andy Carroll's attempt to clear off the line.

That was Walters' third goal of the season and Stoke could have been further in front before half-time when midfielder Steven Nzonzi lashed a fierce strike against the crossbar from long-range.

Just before that referee Chris Foy had turned down West Ham's penalty appeals after Geoff Cameron's push on Carroll.

But the hosts came out with more energy in the second half and Kevin Nolan should have equalised almost immediately when the midfielder's close-range header from George McCartney's cross was straight at goalkeeper Asmir Begovic.

Nolan didn't have worry for long though as West Ham equalised in the 48th minute when Gary O'Neil crossed from the right for O'Brien to flick home.

Allardyce's men came closest to winning it when Carroll flicked on Mark Noble's corner and Modibo Maiga pounced to fire in a shot that Begovic saved well.

West Ham United defender Joey O'Brien (2nd from L) is the toast of his teammates after scoring the equaliser against Stoke City during their Premier League encounter at Upton Park on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

