



Parma midfielder Nicola Sansone (2nd from L) scores the all-important goal during their Serie A encounter against Inter Milan at the Tardini Stadium on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Leg injury sidelines Alves

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona defender Dani Alves will be sidelined for 15-20 days after injuring his right thigh muscle during Sunday's 4-0 away victory over Levante, the club said Monday.

"Tests undertaken on Monday on the Brazilian player confirm a stretch in the right femoral biceps (muscle at the back of the thigh)," Barcelona said on its website.

Alves, who had just recovered from a similar injury in the left thigh, had to be substituted in the 14th minute of Sunday's game by Martin Montoya.

The injury means he will likely miss a December 16 clash with Atletico Madrid, who are lying second in La Liga just three points behind leaders Barcelona.

## Norwich lodge complaint

AFP, London

Norwich City confirmed on Monday that they have made a formal complaint to police over alleged racial abuse sent to Cameroonian defender Sebastien Bassong on Twitter.

Norwich said they had given evidence supplied by supporters to local police. Bassong was reportedly subjected to racist abuse on Twitter after scoring a last-minute equaliser in his side's 1-1 Premier League draw at Everton on Saturday.



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Second Test, Day 4  
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**ESPN**  
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Tottenham v Liverpool  
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# Inter miss chance

AFP, Milan



Inter Milan coach Andrea Stramaccioni has hit out after a 1-0 defeat to Parma ended the Nerazzurri's hopes of closing the gap on Juventus to just one point.

AC Milan gave city rivals Inter a huge incentive when they beat Juventus 1-0 at the San Siro on Sunday.

However Inter failed to capitalise, suffering their fourth league defeat of the season to collect just one point from their last three games in all competitions to drop to fourth place.

Stramaccioni, at 36 the youngest coach in Serie A, said: "We now have only one point from our last three games. We're not happy."

Inter laboured through an opening period in which Parma's French striker Jonathan Biabiany proved a threat throughout.

But after the interval Inter offered little resistance when Nicola Sansone went on a 40-metre run to beat Samir Handanovic for the only goal of the night.

Stramaccioni told www.inter.it: "We tried to take the game to a Parma team that was set out well, and Biabiany was a bit of a handful, but we didn't start badly."

"However, the second half was one of the worst we've played."

He added: "Our biggest regret is the goal we conceded. It was a bad mistake and we paid a heavy price for it. We were caught napping."

"It's not as if Sansone dribbled past our players, the team just opened up for him."

Inter are also involved in the Europa League but a second string side lost 3-0 to Rubin Kazan last week.

Stramaccioni hinted that both domestic and European commitments may now be taking a toll.

## Brazil deny Pep interest

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazilian Football Confederation president Jose Maria Marin on Monday dismissed reports the five-time world champions are going to sign former Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola to lead their 2014 World Cup campaign.

"There is a very little chance it will be a foreign coach. We have won five World Cups with Brazilian coaches and I don't think it will be necessary," Marin told the Terra website.

A source close to Guardiola said on Saturday that Brazil were the only team in the world that Guardiola was ready to coach after Mano Menezes was sacked on Friday following two and a half years in charge.

"The past is the past. We must now think about the future and it is the moment to analyse the ideal candidate who is going to lead a team that has picked up inconsistent results," added Marin.

During his time in charge, Menezes guided Brazil to just 21 wins in 40 matches, including the Olympic campaign where they lost to Mexico in the gold medal match.

# Rafa faces more wraths

AFP, London



Chelsea interim manager Rafael Benitez will face the wrath of his new club's fans for the second time in four days on Wednesday when they tackle London rivals Fulham in the Premier League.

The former Liverpool coach was roundly booed during Chelsea's 0-0 draw with Manchester City in his first game at the helm on Sunday and supporter groups have pledged to repeat their protests when Fulham come to Stamford Bridge.

Benitez has not been forgiven for his tenure at Liverpool, but he has repeatedly dismissed concerns about the animosity directed towards him by his new club's supporters.

"I was asking, 'What were they singing?'" he admitted after the City game.

"I don't care. I'm just focused on the game."

When informed what some of the fans had chanted, Benitez said it was to be expected after the barrage of questions he received from journalists when he was presented to the media last week.

"It was a surprise for you after the other day?" he asked reporters.

"Some of the fans will realise it's not the way to support their team."

Sunday's draw with City, in the first match since Roberto Di Matteo was sacked as coach, left the European champions five points below leaders Manchester United

in fifth place.

Chelsea have now gone five games without a league win, but Fulham's form has been scarcely better, with Saturday's 1-0 loss at Stoke City extending their own run of matches without victory to five as well.

The stalemate at the Bridge was only the second time in 31 matches that City have failed to score, but the defending champions will expect to fare better in front of goal at Wigan Athletic on Wednesday.

Wigan have the fourth most porous defence in the top flight and although they showed impressive

### FIXTURES

(1945GMT unless otherwise stated)

#### Wednesday

Everton v Arsenal, Swansea City v West Bromwich Albion, Tottenham Hotspur v Liverpool, Southampton v Norwich City, Chelsea v Fulham, Stoke City v Newcastle United, Manchester United v West Ham United (2000GMT), Wigan Athletic v Manchester City

resolve to beat Reading 3-2 on Saturday, City's forwards will view the trip to the DW Stadium as a good opportunity to get back on track.

With United just a point above City in the standings, midfielder James Milner has urged his teammates to show more killer instinct in front of goal.

"We have got things to work on," Milner told CityTV.

"We need to take our chances. We had a number of corners (against Chelsea) and chances that didn't go our way."

"When we are on top in games and

have territory and chances, we are not quite putting teams to bed like we should be."

For leaders United, who host West Ham United, the concern is the frequency with which Alex Ferguson's team have had to come back from behind this season.

Saturday's 3-1 win over bottom club Queens Park Rangers was the ninth time in 13 games that United have conceded the initiative in the Premier League since the start of the campaign.

Ferguson also has problems on the flanks, with Nani out with a hamstring injury and Antonio Valencia doubtful due to a hip problem.

"We'll see what Antonio is like today (Monday) and tomorrow," said Ferguson.

"We've got plenty of options in the midfield and up front -- it's just the two wide positions."

West Ham's fans will be under close scrutiny at Old Trafford, after allegations of anti-Semitic chanting in Sunday's 3-1 loss at Tottenham Hotspur prompted the Football Association to open an investigation.

There are eight top-flight matches on Wednesday, with fifth-place Everton out to prove their Champions League credentials against the team immediately below them, Arsenal.

High-flying West Bromwich Albion, third, travel to Swansea City, while Spurs host Liverpool, promoted Southampton welcome Norwich City to the south coast and Newcastle United visit Stoke.

# Major hurdles lie ahead

AFP, Rio de Janeiro



Brazil still faces major challenges to stage the 2014 World Cup, particularly with respect to transport and accommodation for the hundreds of thousands of fans, the FIFA secretary-general said here Monday.

"Your priority is to see Brazil win the World Cup, the priority of FIFA is to ensure a faultless organization of the event," Jerome Valcke said after the opening of Soccerex, a leading convention for the global football industry.

"We must work hard to make sure that the fans receive a very good welcome," he added, noting that the premier sporting event, which Brazil will host two years from now for the first time since 1950, will draw nearly 500,000 visitors from around the world. Without naming it, he pointed to one of the twelve Brazilian host cities where "there are 17,000 rooms while the (local) stadium has 45,000 seats."

"I would say that something is not quite right," he added. "The only solution would be to put three people in the same bed."

"We must work with that city to see when and how we are going to ferry these people from the stadium to the hotels, or to the next city where their team will play," Valcke said.



PHOTO: AFP

Brazil legend Ronaldo (R) receives a trophy from former player and coach Mario Zagallo during the opening of the Soccerex football convention in Rio de Janeiro recently.