



Fulham striker Hugo Rodallega (2nd from L) heads in the winning goal during their Premier League encounter against Newcastle United at Craven Cottage on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Lacklustre Lazio

AFP, Milan

Lazio were lucky to escape with a share of the points from a lacklustre scoreless draw away to Bologna which left them three points behind third-placed Napoli in Serie A on Monday.

Lazio went into their 16th match of the campaign unbeaten in their last four fixtures and with a clean sheet in the last three away games.

But their bid to edge closer to the top three and pull three points clear of city rivals Roma were undone by an enterprising Bologna side which dominated the second half and were unlucky not to secure all three points.

Midfielder Antonio Candreva had the best of Lazio's chances in the first half but his long-range drives failed to worry Federico Agliardi in the Bologna goal.

It was after the interval that the hosts began to trouble Vladimir Petkovic's side, who remain in fourth, eight points behind leaders Juventus.

French midfielder Saphir Sliti Taider saw his well-worked shot blocked while under pressure in the Lazio area.

On the hour mark Bologna almost broke the deadlock when playmaker Alessandro Diamanti laid the ball off nicely for Tiberio Guarente, only for his first-time effort to creep wide.

At the other end Agliardi had to look smart to collect Candreva's near post

header from a corner.

But Bologna immediately carved open another great chance only to be left frustrated when striker Alberto Gilardino and Greek Panagiotis Kone failed to connect from close in when Taider whipped in a probing cross from the right.

With no sign of goals, Petkovic replaced Candreva with veteran German striker Miroslav Klose with 13 minutes remaining but it was Bologna who came closest, Gilardino seeing his angled left-foot drive parried by Federico Marchetti as Bologna threatened in Lazio's area.

RESULTS	
Sampdoria 0	Udinese 2 (Danilo 17, Di Natale 28)
Bologna 0	Lazio 0

Lazio's frustrations were growing and they were compounded when Czech striker Libor Kozak was red carded for a vicious challenge on defender Archimede Morleo.

Bologna pressed on and almost rewarded when second half substitute Cristian Paquato unleashed a curling drive which Marchetti did well to parry with a spectacular dive on full time.

Earlier, Udinese had Danilo and Antonio Di Natale to thank for a 2-0 away win away at Sampdoria which pushed them up to eighth in the table just behind a resurgent AC Milan.

Brazilian defender Danilo headed home from a corner at the far-post on 17 minutes and despite Sampdoria coming close the hosts were stunned 11 minutes later when Di Natale finished off the good work of Emmanuel Badu.

Evra fears Fergie wrath

AFP, London

Manchester United players cannot afford to blow their six-point lead in the Premier League because manager Alex Ferguson would sack them, according to defender Patrice Evra.

United pulled clear of defending champions and cross-town rivals Manchester City with a 3-2 win in a tempestuous derby at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

Last season, City capitalised to take the title when United let an eight-point lead slip over the final six games but Evra said there was no chance of a repeat in 2013.

"I think Ferguson is going to sack everyone if we did that," the French left-back was quoted as saying in a number of British newspapers on Tuesday. "I'm serious. It would not be funny, for the fans, for the players, for everyone."

"I remember what happened last year. We were eight points clear and in the end we lost the league, so a six-point lead means the league is not finished yet."

Fulham's winless streak over

AFP, London



Hugo Rodallega fired Fulham to their first win in eight matches as the Colombian ended his goal drought to seal a 2-1 victory over Newcastle at Craven Cottage on Monday.

Rodallega had failed to hit the back of the net since September, but the striker finally notched only his second goal since his pre-season move from Wigan with a second half header to kill off the Magpies.

It was sweet relief for both Rodallega and Fulham boss Martin Jol, whose struggling side had blown the first half lead given to them by Steve Sidwell.

Although Hatem Ben Arfa equalised for Newcastle early in the second half, Alan Pardew's team, were unable to avoid a fifth defeat in their last six Premier League matches.

They remain only four points above the relegation zone after a 14th successive away match without a win.

For Pardew, celebrating two years in charge of Newcastle, it was a miserable anniversary as Fulham took control on a freezing night on the banks of the River Thames.

Rodallega had the first sight of goal for the Cottagers with a bicycle kick, although his acrobatic effort failed to test Newcastle goalkeeper Tim Krul.

Newcastle's defence was far too open and the hosts were able to exploit those gaps to take the lead and end a five-hour

goal drought in the 19th minute.

Damien Duff was the provider as he released Sidwell into the penalty area and the former Chelsea midfielder's strike looped past Krul via a deflection off Mike Williamson.

Dimitar Berbatov should have doubled Fulham's advantage moments later when he surged through on goal but, with just Krul to beat, the former Manchester United forward shot too close to the Newcastle goalkeeper.

Berbatov threatened again after Krul could only palm Sascha Riether's cross to the Bulgarian, but once more he was unable to convert the chance as the Newcastle keeper recovered to save.

Pardew's team had more menace about them in the second half and French forward Ben Arfa, back from four matches out with an injury, produced a moment of inspiration to equalise in the 54th minute.

Fulham goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer must have felt relatively comfortable when Ben Arfa took possession just outside the right edge of the penalty area.

But the Australian was left flat-footed as Ben Arfa rifled a fine strike into the roof of the net via a deflection off John Arne Riise.

Krul was quickly off his line to block when Sidwell went charging through soon after, yet Fulham didn't have to wait long to take the lead.

In the 63rd minute, Duff whipped a teasing cross into the six-yard box, where Rodallega got in front of Fabricio Coloccini to head powerfully past Krul.

Ramos plans Real ending

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos revealed on Monday that he wants to finish his playing days at the Santiago Bernabeu, as he released a book about his ongoing career.

"I hope to take my retirement one day with Real Madrid," stated the Spanish international, who was part of the 2010 World Cup and European championship winning sides in 2008 and 2012.

"I am currently 26 and I am in the middle of my career but I hope to publish another book like this one and that people remember me as a man with 'heart, character and passion' (the title of the book)," said Ramos.

The back-four stalwart who can play both in central defence or at right-back arrived at Real from Sevilla in 2005 and has since gone on to win three Spanish titles and the Spanish Cup although the Champions League continues to elude the club since their last victory over Bayer Leverkusen in 2002.

Prosecutors seek Napoli sanctions

Italian football federation (FIGC) prosecutors on Monday demanded Napoli be docked one point and captain Paolo Cannavaro banned for nine months for their role in the "Calciopoll" match-fixing affair.

The same punishment has been sought for one other Napoli player, Gianluca Grava, as well as Napoli's former number two goalkeeper, Matteo Gianello.

The charges relate to attempts to affect the outcome of games, a practice which is linked to illegal betting rings.

Prosecutor Palazzi also demanded Napoli pay a fine of 100,000 euros.

Platini against goal-line tech

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

UEFA president Michel Platini Tuesday stood firm against the use of goal-line technology in Europe despite FIFA tests of Hawk-Eye and GoalRef at the ongoing Club World Cup in Japan.

The Frenchman said goal-line referees, used in various UEFA competitions since 2009, were a cheaper way of determining whether the ball had crossed the line and warned against allowing technology to encroach on the game.

He said it would cost 50 million euros (\$65 million) to introduce goal-line technology to UEFA's international and club competitions over five years.

"I prefer to give 50 million (euros) to grassroots than goal-line technology for perhaps one or two goals a year," he said at a press conference in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur.

"If the goal-line referee is one metre from the line and he has good glasses, he can see whether the ball is inside or not."

While fans have called for years for football to embrace goal-line technology to eliminate human error, Platini has repeatedly warned it will lead to technology encroaching into other areas of the game.

The debate came to the fore again at Euro 2012 -- where goal-line referees patrolled the sidelines -- when Ukraine were denied a goal against England, leading FIFA president Sepp Blatter to call for the new technology.

But Platini pointed to an offside infringement in the build-up and questioned where the line on introducing such technology would be

drawn. Asian Football Confederation acting president Zhang Jilong told the press conference the AFC would study the use of the technology at the Club World Cup before making a decision.

"This is something new. After the tests during the World Club Championships in Tokyo, we will see whether it can be adopted by all the competitions or not," he said.

The Club World Cup, involving the winners of continental club competitions, is running both Hawk-Eye and GoalRef at a cost of \$1 million over the eight-game competition.

The Hawk-Eye system uses between six and eight cameras while GoalRef uses magnetic fields to determine whether a ball has crossed the line. Both systems transmit their findings to devices that can be worn on officials' wrists.



PHOTO: AFP

Chelsea defender David Luiz arrives for a training session in Yokohama yesterday.

What to WATCH

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
TEN Sports
Copa del Rey
Cordoba v Barcelona
Live from 1:00am (Thursday)
Celta v Real Madrid

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Premier League
Soccer Club, Feni v Team BJMC
Time: 2:45pm