

FWA honour flattered Gerrard

AFP, London

Steven Gerrard said he felt "flattered" to be given a gala tribute dinner by England's Football Writers' Association (FWA).

Liverpool and England captain Gerrard, the FWA's Footballer of the Year in 2009, speaking before the dinner in his honour at London's Savoy Hotel on Sunday, said: "Tonight's award means a lot because these guys have followed me throughout my career, written about me whenever I have played, to receive this award from the Football Writers' Association is a very proud night for myself and my family."

"I feel very flattered and humbled to receive it."



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (R) shoots past Valencia defender Ricardo Costa during their Primera Liga encounter at the Mestalla on Sunday.

Sneijder joins Galatasaray

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan's Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder signed for Turkish side Galatasaray on Sunday for a fee believed to be in the region of 7.5 million euros, the Istanbul side announced.

Playmaker Sneijder penned a three and a half year deal which will keep him at Galatasaray until 2016 as the drawn-out transfer saga was finally completed.

The Gazzetta dello Sport reported that the player would earn around five million euros a season.

Sneijder was a key figure in the treble-winning season under Jose Mourinho in 2010.

But he fell out with the club this season after Inter asked him to accept a reduction in salary and extend his contract by one year to 2016 without a change in total salary.

PHOTO: AFP

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Yes (83%)

No (15%)

No comment (2%)

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Channel 9
BPL
Chittagong Kings v Rangpur Riders
Live from 2:00pm
Dhaka Gladiators v Durrone Rajshahi
Live from 6:00pm

STAR Sports
Australian Open
Men's & Women's Quarterfinals
Live from 6:00am

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 9:00pm
TEN Cricket
South Africa v New Zealand
Second ODI (D/N)

DAY'S EVENT

BPL
Chittagong Kings v Rangpur Riders
Time: 2:00pm
Dhaka Gladiators v Durrone Rajshahi
Time: 6:00pm
Venue: Sk Abu Naser Stadium,

Five-star Real

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid put their dismal first half of the season behind them as they tore Valencia apart for the first 45 minutes to win 5-0 and ease the pressure on coach Jose Mourinho.

Cristiano Ronaldo and Angel Di Maria both hit braces and Gonzalo Higuain was also on target in a first-half goal romp.

But there is still little hope of them retaining their title as they trail Barcelona by 15 points despite the Catalan side losing 3-2 against Real Sociedad on Saturday, their bitter rivals' first league defeat of the season.

They are also seven points off neighbours Atletico Madrid who beat Levante 2-0 earlier Sunday. Madrid arrived at the Mestalla having beaten Valencia 2-0 in a stormy Spanish Cup quarterfinal first leg tie in midweek.

There has been plenty of tension in the Madrid camp following their poor form but there were no repercussions from an argument between Mourinho and Ronaldo after the first leg of the cup.

Furthermore, Iker Casillas was preferred in goal to Adan Garrido who had controversially replaced the Spain international before being suspended.

Still they had important absentees at the back with Pepe, Sergio Ramos and Marcelo all missing and they faced a rejuvenated Valencia side under Ernesto Valverde who had won their previous three league games.

After a cagey opening spell Madrid were suddenly presented with a gift for Higuain which he failed to take advantage

of in front of goal.

He was left unmarked but side-footed an Alvaro Arbeloa cross wide from six yards.

Higuain was given the chance to make amends a minute later and this time made no mistake. Again it was a case of poor defending as Di Maria scampered clear and set up Higuain who slotted into the corner.

Valencia attempted to respond but they fell apart midway through the first half as their defence was once again exposed.

Keeper Diego Alves twice denied Sami Khedira and Raphael Varane headed wide from a corner before Di Maria got the second.

Ronaldo teased makeshift right-back Ricardo Costa, standing in for Joao Pereira, and crossed for the Argentine to tuck the ball home from close range.

Valencia were in disarray at the back and Ronaldo split them open again as he burst into the left of the area and beat Alves at his near post.

Ronaldo got his second after 41 minutes when he cracked in an Ozil pass from 12 yard and then Ozil was again the provider as he put Di Maria clear for the fifth still before half-time.

Valencia showed character to come back at Madrid after the restart with Pablo Piatti hitting the crossbar and Adil Rami had a header cleared off the line by Fabio Coentrao but Madrid remained organised and managed to keep a clean sheet.

Atletico Madrid equalled their best ever winning streak at home in La Liga in a memorable season for the club with their win over Levante.

Goals from Adrian Lopez and Jorge Resurrecion 'Koke' saw Atletico win their 12th straight league game at the Calderon and match the club record dating back to a run between the 1939-40 and 1940-41 seasons.

RESULTS

Valencia 0 **Real Madrid 5** (Higuain 9, Di Maria 34, 45, Ronaldo 36, 41)
Osasuna 2 (Echaide 26, Nino 61)
Deportivo La Coruna 1
(Camunas 90+2)
Valladolid 2 (Guerra 12, Oscar 74)
Real Zaragoza 0
Atletico Madrid 2 (Adrian 32, Koke)

Ibra guides PSG

AFP, Paris

Zlatan Ibrahimovic guided Paris Saint-Germain back to the top of Ligue 1 on Sunday, notching his 19th goal of the campaign to earn the title favourites a hard-fought 1-0 win at Bordeaux.

Ibrahimovic opened his account for 2013 with the game's decisive strike two minutes before half-time at Stade Chaban-Delmas as Carlo Ancelotti's side handed Bordeaux a first home loss of the season.

PSG had ceded first place to Lyon following a disappointing goalless draw against Ajaccio last weekend, but Sunday's victory saw the capital club usurp Remi Garde's outfit on goal difference with both teams locked on 42 points.

Defeat for Bordeaux snapped a six-game unbeaten run, leaving them in seventh place, 10 points off the pace.

A minute's silence was held prior to kick-off in honour of PSG's British performance director Nick Broad, who died Friday after he was involved in a car accident just outside the French capital.

The highlight of a dour opening half an hour saw referee Stephane Lannoy replaced by fourth official Benoit Bastien after succumbing to a thigh injury.

Napoli, Lazio held

AFP, Milan



Juventus reinforced their Serie A title defence thanks to a 4-0 win over Udinese as the Serie A champions opened up a five-point gap on title rivals Lazio and Napoli.

Napoli and Lazio went into their weekend's fixtures, respectively against Fiorentina and Palermo, trailing Juventus by three points.

However, Lazio were lucky to emerge with a share of the points thanks to an 84th minute penalty from Hernanes in a 2-2 draw at Palermo, while Napoli had Edinson Cavani to thank for their leveller in a 1-1 draw at Fiorentina.

In Sunday's late match, Roma were held to a 1-1 draw by Inter Milan at the Olympic Stadium to leave Inter fourth, but now nine points shy of the league leaders.

Juve started their 21st match of the league campaign missing key players including midfielders Andrea Pirlo and Claudio Marchisio.

However French teenager Paul Pogba stepped up to the plate to score a sensational brace and inspire his side to a 4-0 rout which has boosted their goal of a 29th league title.

Pogba, signed in the off-season on a free transfer from Manchester United, had already scored two sensational goals earlier this season.

And the 19-year-old broke the deadlock near the end of a frustrating first half for the hosts by unleashing a 30-metre screamer which hit the crossbar before

beating Daniele Padelli in the Udinese goal.

Antonio Conte's side were struggling to build on their lead in the early stages of the second half when Udinese were unlucky not to score on the counter.

But again Pogba came to the rescue, this time with a long-range daisy-cutter which slotted into Padelli's bottom corner to give Juve a 2-0 lead.

"It's the best night of my career," said Pogba, sporting a blond-tinted crest on his traditional Mohican-style haircut.

"Conte always tells me to try my luck from range, but I never thought I'd score two goals like that."

Six minutes later Juve striker Mirko Vucinic made it 3-0 when Padelli parried the Montenegrin's innocuous close-range effort over his own body and into the net.

And with 10 minutes to play, second-half substitute Alessandro Matri made it 4-0 when he latched on to a Vucinic through ball to nutmeg the onrushing Padelli.

Despite his side missing a number of key players, including Antonio Cassano, Diego Milito and Walter Samuel, Inter coach Andrea Stramaccioni had hoped to strut his stuff at Roma, where he was once employed as youth academy coach.

However Inter were left to play catch-up when Roma were awarded a controversial penalty after American midfielder Michael Bradley came down softly under a challenge from Andrea Ranocchia.

Francesco Totti stepped up to give the hosts a 22nd minute lead and score his first home league goal against Inter since October 2004.

RESULTS

Fiorentina 1 (Roncaglia 33) Napoli 1 (Cavani 42)
Chievo 1 (Paloschi 56) Parma 1 (Belfodil 40)
Siena 1 (Bogdani 71) Sampdoria 0
Pescara 0 **Torino 2** (Santana 4, Cerri 41)
AC Milan 2 (Pazzini 65, 82) Bologna 1 (Mexes 84-og)
Genoa 0 **Catania 2** (Bergessio 4, Barrientos 86)
Atalanta 1 (Stendardo 57) Cagliari 1 (Canini 2-og)
Roma 1 (Totti 22) Inter Milan 1 (Palacio 45+1)

Saturday

Palermo 2 (Arevalo Rios 70, Dybala 71)
Lazio 2 (Flocari 10, Hernanes 84-pen)
Juventus 4 (Pogba 41, 66, Vucinic 72)



PHOTO: AFP

Tottenham Hotspur striker Clint Dempsey (L) celebrates his late equalising goal against Manchester United during their Premier League tie at White Hart Lane on Sunday.

Clint pegs MU back

AFP, London



A stoppage-time goal by Clint Dempsey saw Tottenham Hotspur snatch a 1-1 draw at home to Manchester United on Sunday that prevented the Premier League leaders from restoring their seven-point lead.

United had taken the lead through Robin van Persie in the 25th minute and looked set to hold on for a narrow victory until Dempsey scrambled the ball home from close range in injury time at a snow-sprinkled White Hart Lane.

The result means that second-place Manchester City are now five points behind United, while Spurs finish the weekend trailing third-place Chelsea by four points and leading Everton by the same distance.

It was only the fifth time this season that Alex Ferguson's side have failed to take maximum points from a league game and they have taken just a point from Spurs, who prevailed 3-2 at Old Trafford in September.

Persistent snowfall in north London had put the fixture in jeopardy, but the game survived a pitch inspection 70 minutes prior to kick-off and as the game got under way, the snow had started to ease.

Spurs looked to take the initiative,

Dempsey seeing a volley blocked by Nemanja Vidic and the recalled Scott Parker shooting over from 22 yards, but United threatened first when van Persie headed straight at Hugo Lloris.

United started the game with Wayne Rooney on the bench but there is always danger when van Persie is around and in the 25th minute the Dutchman struck for the 10th time in as many league games to put the visitors ahead.

Danny Welbeck drifted in from the left before spraying the ball wide to England colleague Tom Cleverley, and his curling cross was headed in at the back post by the leaping van Persie.

Spurs resumed their assault on the United goal but both Jermain Defoe and Gareth Bale were thwarted by agile saves from De Gea, who readjusted well to block the Welshman's deflected shot shortly before half-time.

A clear sight of goal arrived for the hosts in the 78th minute, but when Lennon sent Defoe clear, his former West Ham United team-mate Rio Ferdinand slid in from nowhere to prevent an equaliser with a vital block.

It seemed Spurs were destined to leave empty-handed, but with the final whistle beckoning, Dempsey thrashed a loose ball into the bottom-left corner to give United's pursuers a glimmer of hope in the title race.