

<div> <div>what to watch</div> <div>GOAL.COM</div> </div>	<div> <div>STAR SPORTS2</div> <div>Indian Super League</div> <div>Pune v Delhi</div> <div>Live from 7:20pm</div> <div>Primera Liga</div> <div>Bilbao v Cordoba</div> </div>	<div> <div>Live from 11:00pm</div> <div>Real Madrid v Celta de Vigo</div> <div>Live from 1:00am (Sunday)</div> <div>Deportivo v Malaga</div> <div>Live from 3:00am (Sunday)</div> </div>	<div> <div>STAR SPORTS 4</div> <div>English Premiership</div> <div>Newcastle v Chelsea</div> <div>Live from 6:45pm</div> <div>Liverpool v Sunderland</div> </div>	<div> <div>Live from 9:00pm</div> <div>Man City v Everton</div> <div>Live from 11:30pm</div> <div>STAR SPORTS1</div> <div>Serie A</div> </div>	<div> <div>Torino v Palermo</div> <div>Live from 1:45am (Sunday)</div> </div>
	<div> <div>DAY'S EVENT</div> <div>Dhaka Premier League</div> <div>Sk Jamal v Prime Doleshwar</div> </div>	<div> <div>Venue: KSOAS</div> <div>Legends of Rugganj v Mohammedan</div> </div>	<div> <div>Venue: BKSP-3</div> <div>Prime Bank v Partex</div> </div>	<div> <div>Venue: SBNCS</div> <div>Time: 9:00am</div> </div>	

Henry's last hurrah?

GOAL.COM

France coach Didier Deschamps has said he will think about the prospect of calling Thierry Henry up to the national team for a final time.

There have been increasing calls for the former Arsenal star to be recalled for a farewell appearance for Les Bleus in the friendly against Brazil in March, with Zinedine Zidane and Arsene Wenger amongst the big names to publicly back the idea.

Deschamps says it is a possibility to recall the 37-year-old, but added he would not rush into a decision.

"It has become such a big media subject," he told RMC. "Thierry Henry is a great player. He has marked the history of the France team, as have some others.

"It is worth thinking about. I'll take the time to discuss it with the federation president.

"After people have ideas, they end up in the press. I won't close the door but I don't want to put pressure on this issue.

"We will take the time to discuss it. This is not for tomorrow. It will keep going."

'Barca look bored'

GOAL.COM

Former Manchester United ace Paul Scholes believes that Barcelona are a "ghost" of the side they were, and are suffering from "boredom".

Barca failed to claim a single major honour last season and are now finding their feet under new boss Luis Enrique.

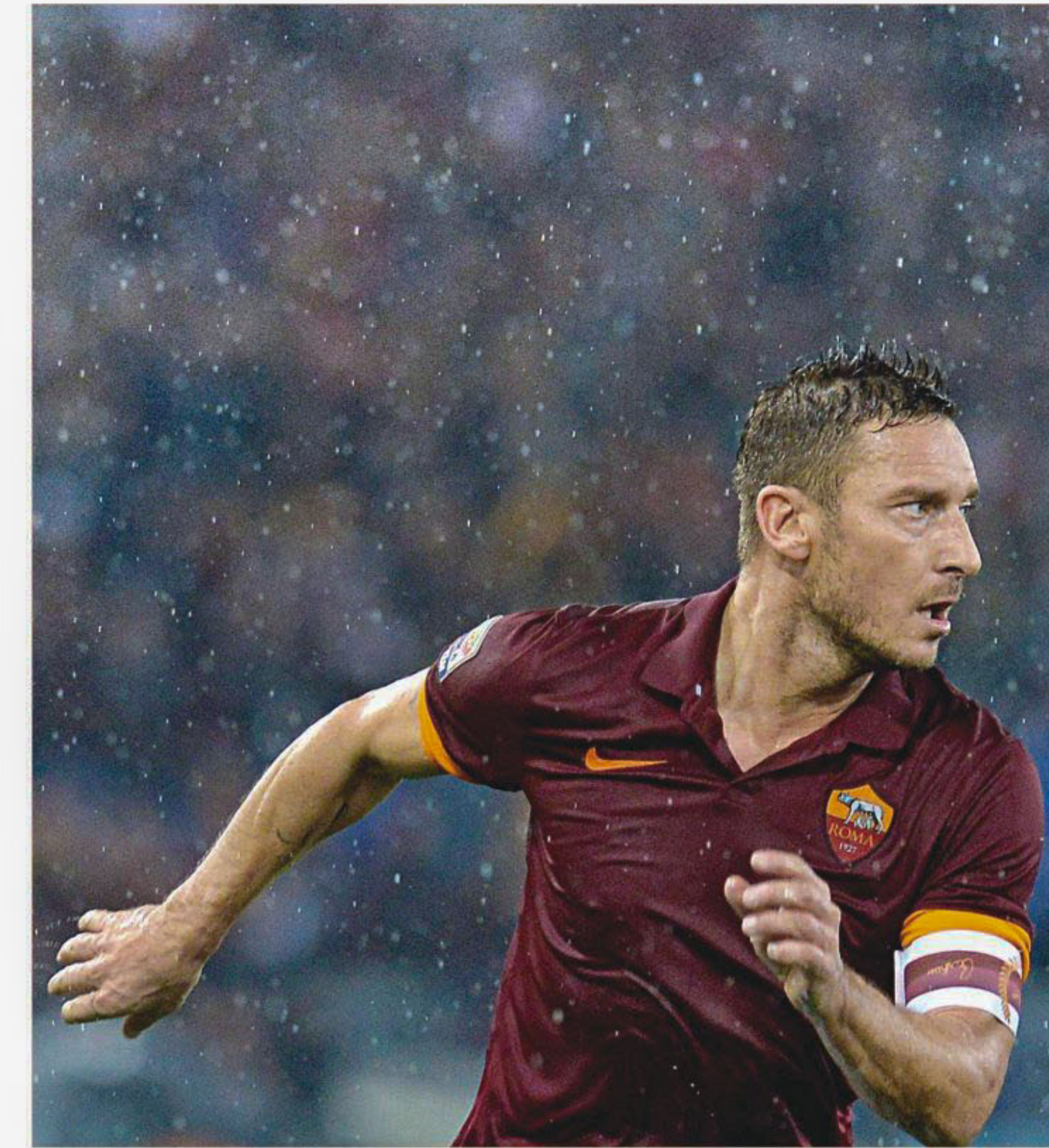
Scholes went to watch the Blaugrana in person at the Mestalla last weekend and was distinctly unimpressed by the attitude of the players during a 1-0 win that came courtesy of a last-minute goal from Sergio Busquets.

"For much of the game I felt they were a ghost of the side they had once been," the former England international wrote.

"They still pass the ball relentlessly, but that old drive and tempo are not nearly as urgent. The breathtaking speed and penetration have gone.

When I try to find a way of summarising the attitude of the team, I keep alighting on the word "bored".

"It just seems the most accurate way to describe the way the team seem to treat the style of football that once made them the best side on the planet."



Totti sets sight on Piola landmark

REUTERS, Rome



Francesco Totti turned 38 in September but Roma's leader still has two burning ambitions before he retires -- to lead the capital side to another Serie A title and overtake Silvio Piola as the league's all-time scorer.

His angry reaction to being substituted during the second half of their home game against Torino last month showed that his passion and commitment still runs deep.

"I'd be a liar if I said that I don't think about it (setting the goal record). I know it won't be easy, but nobody believed I could have scored as many goals I have," he wrote in the Corriere Dello Sport on Friday.

Totti has scored two goals so far in the league in nine games he has played this season and two more in the Champions League.

He stands at 237 Serie A goals, 37 short of former Italy international Piola.

In his last three seasons Totti has been able to suck on his thumb, his unique way of celebrating goals, 28 times.

At current pace, he would have to play four more seasons, including this one, to realistically have a shot at Piola, who scored 143 of his goals for Roma's rivals, Lazio, between 1934 and 1943.

"There are no secrets to my longevity," Totti said. "I lead a professional life and my desire to keep playing is the same I had when I started."

Totti hopes that Roma's new stadium will be ready by 2016.

It's heating up

AFP, London



With the frantic Christmas fixture schedule looming on the horizon, Chelsea and Manchester City will look to consolidate their positions as Premier League pace-setters in this week-end's matches.

The two teams enjoyed breezy wins in mid-week, Chelsea beating Tottenham Hotspur 3-0 and City winning 4-1 at Sunderland, and while the London club remain six points clear of the champions, both sides look a class apart.

Chelsea visit Newcastle United on Saturday, when they will attempt to set a new club record by extending their unbeaten run in all competitions to 24 matches.

Jose Mourinho's side will welcome back top scorer Diego Costa after he sat out the Tottenham game through suspension, although he was barely missed in Wednesday's match at Stamford Bridge.

"We know that we can score at any time," said French striker Loic Remy, who scored Chelsea's third goal against Spurs after replacing Didier Drogba in the second half.

"The squad is really strong and that makes the difference between us and the other teams. We will keep going to try and keep the distance from our closest opponent."

Newcastle have gone two games without victory, having previously won five matches in a row, but they have been beaten only once at home this season -- by City on the opening weekend.

Following a poor run of results, City appear to have rediscovered the form that swept them to last season's title, having won their last four games in all competitions, scoring 12 goals in the process.

The second game of that run was a rousing 3-2 win at home to Bayern Munich in the Champions League that gave Manuel Pellegrini's side a fighting chance of reaching the last 16 ahead of next week's show-

down with Roma.

Ahead of Saturday's home match with Everton, Stevan Jovetic said that the victory over Bayern could prove a turning point in City's campaign.

"Honestly, in the Champions League we have not played well this season, but the game against Bayern helped us a lot," the Montenegro forward told the club website.

"Now we are in a very good moment, but we must continue like this because we are playing every three days and that can change."

Third-place Southampton lost ground on the top two after going down 1-0 at Arsenal on Wednesday and now find Manchester United breathing down their necks ahead of the two sides' confrontation at St Mary's on Monday.

United currently trail Chelsea by 11 points but although midfielder Marouane Fellaini is eager to bridge that gap, he acknowledges that Louis van Gaal's side must first safeguard their position in the top four.

"I think we wait for a mistake (from the leading teams), but we have to look after us," he said after his side's 2-1 win at home to Stoke City.

"After Boxing Day (December 26), we have a lot of games and we have to keep winning. Southampton as well, they are better in the table than us and we'll see on Monday as well."

FIXTURES

Saturday

(1500 GMT unless otherwise stated):

Hull City v West Bromwich Albion, Liverpool v Sunderland, Manchester City v Everton (1730 GMT), Newcastle United v Chelsea (1245 GMT), Queens Park Rangers v Burnley, Stoke City v Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur v Crystal Palace

Sunday

Aston Villa v Leicester City (1600 GMT), West Ham United v Swansea City (1330 GMT)

Monday

(2000 GMT):

Pep, Joachim welcome goal-line tech

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola and Germany's Joachim Loew have both welcomed the decision to introduce goal-line technology into the Bundesliga for next season.

The 18 clubs in Germany's top-flight on Thursday voted to use the Hawk-Eye system, which notifies the referee if the ball has crossed the goal-line, for the 2015/16 season.

"If I find any technical change or innovation good, then it's goal-line technology," said Loew, who coached Germany to their fourth World Cup title in Brazil in July.

"Everything else I don't really like, as the game should be left the way it is, but that's not the case with goal-line technology.

"There have been many refereeing decisions which have led to lots of discussions, so if you can get a quick and clear decision on a goal, then that's good."

Bundesliga clubs had originally voted to reject goal-line technology last season, but a fresh proposal from champions Bayern Munich led to a 15-3 vote from Germany's top 18 clubs to adopt the system.

"It's a good decision, I agree with it," said Guardiola on Friday.

AFP, Madrid



La Liga leaders Real Madrid will look to continue their sparkling form with a record-equalling 18th consecutive victory in all competitions as they host Celta Vigo on Saturday.

The European champions surpassed their previous club record of 15 straight wins with victory over Malaga last weekend and, following a 5-0 Copa del Rey thrashing of Cornella in midweek, Los Blancos now have Barcelona's Spanish record stretch of 18 victories from the 2005/06 season in their sights.

Madrid have now scored 64 goals on their winning streak, conceding only nine, but they know they will face a stern test against a Celta side that took all three points at the Camp Nou last month and secured a draw away to Atletico Madrid in September.

James Rodriguez's double against third-tier outfit Cornella meant that he is the only Madrid player to score in four competitions this season and his impressive start to life in the Spanish capital has not been lost on manager Carlo Ancelotti.

"He is demonstrating his quality and showing great attitude during this period. We are delighted with him and he'll definitely improve," the Italian said.

"I really like his attitude because he is humble and that is important. Having a humble player with his quality is a perfect ingredient for the team."

Cristiano Ronaldo was given a rare night off on Tuesday, but the World Player of the Year will return looking to continue his lethal form in front of goal, having netted 20 goals in just 12 league appearances thus far.

Jese Rodriguez, who made his comeback from a nine-month injury layoff in midweek, could also feature in La Liga for the first time this season, while Sami Khedira, who was forced off with concussion, should also be fit.

No Christmas party for QPR

AFP, London

QPR boss Harry Redknapp has banned his players from holding a Christmas party this year, demanding his struggling side concentrate instead on preserving their Premier League status.

The London side are second bottom in the table and face a crucial December set of fixtures that include games against Burnley, West Brom and Crystal Palace.

"I'm not into Christmas parties, not for footballers," Redknapp said ahead of the weekend clash with fellow relegation candidates Burnley.

"I think it's more aggravation than it's worth. It's a changing world out there and there's always someone out there with a camera on their phone."

"I haven't spoken to them about it, they haven't mentioned anything about a Christmas party. I think they understand the pitfalls of going out."

Real eye new record

Barcelona host Espanyol in the Catalan derby on Sunday as they look to keep pace at the top of the table and build on their run of six successive victories.

Andres Iniesta, who had not featured since limping off in the 3-1 Clasico reverse in October, made his comeback as the Blaugrana swept aside Huesca 4-0 on Wednesday evening in the Copa del Rey, scoring his first goal in eight months in the process.

"It's never easy to come back after so long, but I felt fine and that's the most important thing. I was able to play without feeling any trouble and that's calmed me down a lot," said the Spain midfielder.

Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, Neymar, Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets will all return having sat out the trip to Aragon, while Claudio Bravo is expected to start in goal.

Champions Atletico Madrid can, temporarily at least, leapfrog Barcelona as they travel to struggling Elche on Saturday.

Back-to-back home wins over Malaga and Deportivo have seen the champions remain in contention to retain their title, four points behind city rivals Real, but their indifferent away form this season will be put to the test at the Martinez Valero.

After struggling to break down a resilient L'Hospitalet side in the first half in Cup action on Wednesday, the introduction of Antoine Griezmann at the break provided the spark that Diego Simeone's side needed.

FIXTURES

Saturday

(all times GMT)

Elche v Atletico Madrid (1500), Athletic Bilbao v Crodoba (1700), Real Madrid v Celta Vigo (1900), Deportivo la Coruna v Malaga (21:00)

Sunday

Rayo Vallecano v Sevilla (1100), Barcelona v Espanyol (1600), Villarreal v Real Sociedad (1800), Granada v Valencia (2000)

City join Real Down Under

AFP, Sydney



English Premier League champions Manchester City will join European champions Real Madrid at next year's International Champions Cup in Melbourne, organisers said on Friday.

Manchester City is the second team announced for the three-team tournament to take place at the 100,000-capacity Melbourne Cricket Ground from July 18-24.

The third team for the series has yet to be confirmed, but reports have linked Italian Serie A side Inter Milan.

Owner Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan has invested over £1 billion (\$1.5 billion) since acquiring Manchester City in 2008.

Since Mansour's arrival, City have won two Premier League titles, in 2012 and 2014, as well as the 2011 FA Cup and this year's League Cup.

Manchester City also have a stake in Australia's A-League after the club's Abu Dhabi-based owners purchased and re-branded Melbourne Heart as Melbourne City early this year.

"We are looking forward, once again, to being a part of the tournament," Ferran Soriano, chief executive of Manchester City, said in a statement.

"We are particularly excited to be visiting Melbourne, which is home to our sister club, Melbourne City."

With the securing of Real Madrid and Manchester City's huge box-office appeal, organisers are hoping to build on the local appetite for top European clubs after a crowd of 95,000 watched English Premier League Liverpool's 2-0 win over Australia's Melbourne Victory at the MCG last year.

Stramaccioni back for revenge

AFP, Milan



Former Inter Milan handler Andrea Stramaccioni has admitted the challenge of toppling his former club won't be easy when he returns to the San Siro for the first time since his sacking last year.

Stramaccioni became the youngest coach in Serie A two years ago when he replaced Claudio Ranieri in March 2012, but was sacked by the end of the following season when Inter struggled to a ninth place finish.

After a solid start, his Udinese side have taken only two points from their last five games and have dropped to ninth, 16 points behind leaders Juventus.

A trip to Inter would always be a tough prospect for the northerners, but they face a side that is beginning to find its feet under new coach Roberto Mancini.

Stramaccioni, 38, believes Inter, who drew 1-1 with Milan in the city derby two weeks ago, showed plenty of improvement even in a 4-2 defeat away to Roma last week.

"It will be a tough game because from the derby to Roma last week, Inter have shown they have improved," Stramaccioni told

reporters. "But we'll be going to the San Siro to play our game and with our heads held high."

On what is his second spell at the club, Mancini suffered his first defeat at the Olympic Stadium last week where he was sent off for dissent.

The defeat dropped Inter to 11th, 17 points behind leaders Juventus but only six behind Napoli in the third and last Champions League spot.

However the Italian, who won seven trophies including three consecutive scudetti with the club in 2004-2008, has been welcomed with open arms by a team desperate to finish third this season.

Defender Andrea Ranocchia believes Mancini's arrival has brought fresh energy and ambition to the club.

FIXTURES

(all fixtures 1400 GMT unless stated)

Saturday

Roma v Sassuolo (1700), Torino v Palermo (1945)

Sunday

Napoli v Empoli (1130), Atalanta v Cesena, Genoa v Milan, Parma v Lazio, Inter v Udinese (1945)

Monday



Paraguay's new manager Ramon Diaz speaks during his presentation in Asuncion on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Paraguay turn to Diaz

AFP, Asuncion

Paraguay have turned to record-breaking Argentine Ramon Diaz as their new coach, the country's football federation said Thursday.

The 55-year-old is the most successful coach in the history of Argentine giants River Plate.

"We have several challenges: the Copa America (in Chile in 2015) and the World Cup in 2018," said Diaz, who guided River to six Argentine titles and the 1996 Copa Libertadores.

"We're going to work hard in an organised manner to reach all our objectives."

Diaz has also coached Argentine giants San Lorenzo and Independiente, as well as Mexicans America and somewhat curiously, and briefly, Oxford United in England.