

# Heated rivalry resumes

AFP, London



Manchester United will relish the opportunity to inflict more pain on wounded foes Liverpool when the teams renew their heated rivalry at Old Trafford in the Premier League this weekend.

Liverpool won both league fixtures against United last season, triumphing 3-0 on their last visit to Sir Matt Busby Way in March, en route to finishing 20 points clear of their cross-county rivals in the final standings.

But the tables have since turned and while United go into the weekend in pursuit of a sixth consecutive victory -- a run that has lifted Louis van Gaal's side to third place -- Liverpool's confidence is at a low.

Having made a dismal start to their league campaign, Liverpool's season nose-dived further on Tuesday when they were eliminated from the Champions League in the group phase following a 1-1 draw at home to Basel.

Memories of last season's thrilling title bid are fading fast at Anfield, but midfielder Joe Allen says his side will draw encouragement from their last performance at Old Trafford when they make their return on Sunday.

"We had a fantastic result there last season, so we'll be looking to draw some confidence and inspiration from that performance and we'll go there and try to get the win," the Wales international told the Liverpool website.

## FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
(1500 GMT unless otherwise stated):  
Arsenal v Newcastle United (1730 GMT), Burnley v Southampton, Chelsea v Hull City, Crystal Palace v Stoke City, Leicester City v Manchester City, Sunderland v West Ham United, West Bromwich Albion v Aston Villa

**Sunday**  
Manchester United v Liverpool (1330 GMT), Swansea City v Tottenham Hotspur (1600 GMT)

**Monday**



Besiktas striker Cenk Tosun (C) celebrates his all-important goal with teammates during their Europa League encounter against Tottenham Hotspur at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Roma's Genoa test

AFP, Milan



Roma return reluctantly to domestic duty on Sunday with a tough trip to Genoa that has the potential to see leaders Juventus, at home to Sampdoria, stretch their Serie A lead to six points.

Roma's hopes of ending a four-year wait to join the Champions League last 16 were ended in a 2-0 defeat to Manchester City at the Stadio Olimpico.

Rudi Garcia's men finished third in Group A to drop into the last 32 of the Europa League, but amid their push for a first scudetto since 2011 a trip to Genoa could not have come at a worse time.

Having beaten Juventus and Milan at home, the latter victory coming last week, Genoa are up to a surprise third place above Napoli, Milan and struggling Inter.

Garcia is already thinking of next year's campaign in Europe and admitted on Wednesday: "To make sure we qualify for the Champions League we need to have a great season and that starts with Sunday's game against Genoa.

"The Europa League is a good competition and we'll try and go all the way, but our main objective is still Serie A."

Garcia has been defiant on Roma's intended challenge to Juventus, who have won the last three titles and secured their ticket for the Champions League knockout phase on Tuesday, and it has not gone unnoticed.

On the night Roma's last 16 hopes faded, former Juventus midfielder and current club board member Pavel Nedved stuck the boot in timely fashion.

"They talk while we get on with the hard work, and you can see the result of that,"

Nedved said in Gazzetta dello Sport.

Juventus defender Angelo Ogbonna is expected to step in for suspended Giorgio Chiellini for Sunday's early game at home to fourth-placed Sampdoria, whose relative success under Mihajlovic has not gone unnoticed.

Sampdoria sit 10 points behind Juve and only one point behind Genoa, prompting interest in Italy strikers Stefano Okaka and Manolo Gabbiadini from rival clubs.

Okaka has been linked to both Inter and Milan, while Gabbiadini - co-owned by Samp and Juventus - could join Napoli during the winter transfer window according to recent reports.

Sampdoria are unbeaten in five games including last week's 3-1 win away to Verona, prompting praise from former Italy coach Marcello Lippi, who spent 10 years as a player with Sampdoria and five at the helm of Juventus.

"Right now Juventus are easily the strongest team in Italy... but Sampdoria are having an extraordinary season, they can get any result against any team, including the upcoming one this Sunday," Lippi told Corriere Mercantile.

A week after their 1-0 defeat away to Genoa, Milan host Napoli at the San Siro looking for a win.

## FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
Palermo v Sassuolo (1700), Lazio v Atalanta (1945)

**Sunday**  
Juventus v Sampdoria (1130), Genoa v Roma, Parma v Cagliari, Udinese v Verona (all 1400), Cesena v Fiorentina (1700), Milan v Napoli (1945)

**Monday**

# Besiktas edge Spurs

AFP, Paris



Besiktas beat Tottenham 1-0 in the Europa League on Thursday to climb above the Londoners and win Group C on a night that saw the floodlights

fail twice.

In the final round of group games Tottenham only needed to draw to top the pile, but a 60th-minute tap in from the six-yard line from Cenk Tosun gave the Turks the game and the group.

Spurs ended runners-up and thereby go into the hat for Monday's draw along with the other top two finishers as well as the Champions League third placed teams, Olympiakos, Liverpool, Zenit, Anderlecht, Roma, Ajax, Sporting Lisbon and Athletic Bilbao.

Besiktas may end up paying a UEFA fine as the game was held up early in the first half for a full 17 minutes with the referee ordering the players off the Ataturk Olympic Stadium pitch.

The same thing then happened in time added after 90 minutes with another lengthy delay leaving fans to make the best of the darkness by holding aloft cigarette lighters and mobile phones.

Spurs were themselves were fined 15,000 euros by UEFA earlier Thursday for pitch invasion delays in their last Europa League game.

Everton were already certain to progress as Group H winners but

## RESULTS

Apollon Limassol (CYP) 0 **Villarreal (ESP) 2** (Gerard 35, Vietto 40)  
FC Copenhagen (DEN) 1 (Amartey 6) **Torino (ITA) 5** (Martinez 15, 47, 49, Amauri 42-pen, Silva 53)  
**Besiktas (TUR) 1** (Cenk Tosun 60) Tottenham Hotspur (ENG) 0  
**Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) 4** (Pjaca 14, 40, 50, Brozovic 48) Celtic (SCO) 3 (Commons 23, Scepovic 30, 82)  
PSV Eindhoven (NED) 0 **Dinamo Moscow (RUS) 1** (Ionov 90)  
Qarabag (AZE) 0 Inter Milan (ITA) 0  
Standard Liege (BEL) 0 **Feyenoord (NED) 3** (Toornstra 16, Boetius 60, Manu 88)  
**Sevilla (ESP) 1** (Suarez 20) Rijeka (CRO) 0  
Lille (FRA) 0 **Wolfsburg (GER) 3** (Vieirinha 45+1, Rodriguez 65, 89)  
Everton (ENG) 0 **Krasnodar (RUS) 1** (Laborde 30)  
**Napoli (ITA) 3** (Mertens 6, Hamsik 16, Zapata 75)  
Slovan Bratislava (SVK) 0

Roberto Martinez's reshuffled pack were beaten 1-0 at home by Russians Krasnodar, who were already out.

Guingamp were left as France's lone team in the next round after they won 2-1 at Greek side PAOK in Group K to finish second behind Fiorentina.

Celtic travelled to Croatia to take on Dinamo Zagreb in Group D knowing they'd finish runners-up come what may.

In the end the hosts were on top with Marko Pjaca hitting a hattrick as they ran out 4-3 winners.

Pajca's third was a brilliant long-range shot, after he'd rounded a

defender and produced a low strike for the first and fired home after getting to a loose ball first for the second.

Trophy holders Sevilla, who beat Benfica in last season's final, qualified second in Group G with a 1-0 victory over Rijeka of Croatia to make the cut behind Feyenoord, who ran out 3-0 winners at Standard Liege.

Salzburg ended up taking 16 points in Group D rounding off their romp with a 5-1 home win over Astra.

Zurich went into the last game in Group A knowing they had to beat Borussia Moenchengladbach but got thumped 3-0 in Germany.

Instead Spain's Villareal went through in second thanks to a 2-0 away win over Apollon in Cyprus.

Club Brugges clinched Group B by a point after a 2-1 win over Helsinki and needed the result as second placed Torino thumped Copenhagen 5-1.

Dinamo Moscow beat PSV Eindhoven 1-0 as both teams qualified from Group E with the Russians returning an impressive 18 points from six games.

Inter Milan were joined in the hat for Monday's draw by Ukraine outfit Dniproperovsk who climbed off the bottom of Group F with a 1-0 win over Saint Etienne.

That match was marred by violence ahead of the game with eleven French fans hospitalised.

Napoli won Group I with a 3-0 win over Slovan Bratislava while Young Boys overhauled Sparta Prague to come second with a 2-0 home win over the Czechs.

# Pepe hands out food

INTERNET

There may be a lot to dislike about Pepe the professional footballer, but it would appear that "Pepe the human being" is actually a thoroughly decent person.

Just as he did last January, the oft-maligned Real Madrid centre-half spent his Thursday night distributing emergency food parcels to the most disadvantaged residents of his local neighbourhood of Las Rozas, Madrid.

According to Spanish paper AS, Pepe, who apparently attempted to perform his charitable act with "the most discretion possible", paid for 9,000 kilos of food himself with each parcel containing staple items such as rice, flour and tinned vegetables and handed them out personally to the families in his neighbourhood.

## 'City for life'

AFP, London

Manchester City goalkeeper Joe Hart says he wants to spend the rest of his career at Eastlands as he prepares to sign a new contract with the Premier League champions.

Hart has been in talks over a lucrative new five-year deal for several months and City manager Manuel Pellegrini last week said he expected negotiations to be completed imminently.

The 27-year-old, speaking after his fine performance in Wednesday's 2-0 win at Roma helped City qualify for the Champions League last 16, has revealed the contract is now all but signed.

And England international Hart, who has won two Premier League titles with City, is adamant he has no intention of leaving a club at any time in his career.

"I love this place and I love everything about Manchester City," he said.

"I have been here for a long time. I feel like it is my club now and I want to be here as long as I can.

"As far as I am aware it is pretty much sorted. I leave it to the legal side to sort but I am very happy at this club and hopefully in the near future I will be signing that contract."



# Suarez happy in Messi's shadow

REUTERS, Barcelona



Luis Suarez is unconcerned at being overshadowed by Lionel Messi's scoring feats at Barcelona but remains angry about being labelled a "racist" and a "cheat" in England.

The former Liverpool striker has made more an impact with his assists since returning from a biting ban at the end of October while Messi has become the top scorer in La Liga and Champions League history.

"I have always been a goal scorer but I also like to help set up goals," Suarez told the Catalan newspaper Sport.

"I came here to score goals and not provide passes. I came because I had scored a lot of goals in the my career and above all at Liverpool but fortunately I have more to my game than just that.

"We don't just play for Messi but for everyone. We have players that we know can make the difference like Messi, Neymar and

(Andres) Iniesta. They are players that give you confidence when they have the ball at their feet."

Suarez said it was easy to play with Messi. "I am having a great time here. Obviously I want to score more goals but while the team is doing well then there is no problem. It is fantastic to play alongside the best player in the world," the Uruguayan added.

"On his own and with his skill he has ended all the doubts over the team and him."

Suarez, however, is unhappy at the way he was treated in England and the eight-match ban he received at Liverpool for racially abusing Manchester United defender Patrice Evra.

"For now I have to accept that I was accused of being a racist without any proof over what happened with Evra," added Suarez.

"Also of being a diver and throwing myself on the ground. It is lies."