

Adriano scores first goal of season for Inter Milan

The seldom fielded Adriano was on target for Inter Milan as the Serie A champions won 1-0 over lowly Reggina to beef up their lead in the Italian league.

The 25-year-old Brazilian striker seemed close to his best form after a long period marked by personal problems and notched his first goal this season, slightly nodding a free kick from Luis Figo to trick keeper Andrea Campagnolo here Saturday.

After the 18th-minute lead, the reigning champions had no easy task on the rain-soaked pitch of Reggio Calabria, where the hosts often pressed them in their midfield creating numerous scoring chances.

Home strikers Fabio Ceravolo and Francesco Cozza twice missed from close range before Adriano's goal, largely due to the drenched pitch.

Adriano came close again on 37 minutes with a smashing free kick that Campagnolo blocked with great difficulty before Francesco Toldo stopped a spurt from the onrushing Ceravolo.

Reggina slowed down their pace and Inter ran less risk after the break, substituting Adriano with star Zlatan Ibrahimovic on 55 minutes.

Emmanuel Cascione on 70 minutes had a chance to level for Reggina but aimed a feeble drive that Brazilian Maxwell cleared off the goal line.

The champions almost doubled up when a Ricardo Cruz spurt was blocked by Campagnolo and Ibrahimovic had a fast drive deflected, while Cozza fired wide at last, equalizing chance on 90 minutes.

Inter now have 20 points from eight games, leading by five points Roma, who earlier Saturday drew 4-4 at home to promoted Napoli. Juventus, on 14 points, have a chance to leapfrog Roma Sunday as they welcome promoted Genoa.

(© IANS / India eNews)