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**UEFA Champions League Group A - Chelsea 2:0 Werder Bremen**

**By Steven Cronin**

Jose Mourinho these days is a man under pressure.

Following two fruitless years in Europe the Chelsea boss knows it is the Champions League that club owner Roman Abramovich craves the most.

Failure to deliver in this year's competition could prove fatal for the 'Special One'.

The start of this season has seen a somewhat more humble Mourinho, gone for the moment the brash arrogance that has accompanied the man ever since his arrival fresh from guiding Porto to Champions League glory.

Watching him interviewed in recent weeks I get the impression that his failure to dominate Europe despite the biggest budget in world football has brought the Portugeezer back down to earth a little.

Maybe the realisation has dawned upon him that he is not quite as good as he thinks he is and that he is only human after all.

The game itself was a cagey affair, exploding into life when Michael Essien pounced on a German defensive error and stroked the ball past the goalkeeper and into the net.

Werder Bremen had their moments, the nearest being Klose's header that beat Petr Cech but cannoned back off the crossbar.

The game was made safe with twenty minutes remaining after Didier Drogba was bundled over in the penalty area.

Normal spot-kick man Frank Lampard stepped aside, instead handing the ball to German midfield maestro Michael Ballack who duly proceeded to smash the ball into the net.

The power and accuracy of the German's finish suggested Lampard may well have handed over the spot-kick duties for good.

Lampard hit a great shot with just ten minutes remaining but was unfortunate to see his effort crash back off the inside of the post.

Despite a low par performance Chelsea will be grateful for the three points which puts them level at the top of the group with last year's champions Barcelona.

Steven Cronin writes the hottest English Premiership Football news, results and opinion at

[http://www.sargas.co.uk/english\\_premiership\\_football](http://www.sargas.co.uk/english_premiership_football)

## **English Premiership Football 2006–07 - Blackburn 0:2 Chelsea**

**By Steven Cronin**

Champions Chelsea bounced back to winning ways but it was a hard fought victory against a plucky Blackburn side that mirror the fighting spirit of their manager Mark Hughes.

A second half Didier Drogba goal confirmed the win and helped to steady the ship after a less than convincing start to Chelsea's season.

Two defeats from their first three matches, including a last minute reverse against a Middlesbrough side struggling to find their feet under the inexperienced leadership of Gareth Southgate had threatened to raise the alarm bells of the millionaires from Kings Road.

Indeed it was Blackburn who looked the likelier to score during the early exchanges, Robbie Savage relishing the opportunity to mix it with the talented Michael Ballack.

But Chelsea's grip on the game tightened as the half wore on and they were rewarded with a penalty on the half hour as John Terry was unceremoniously hauled to the ground in the area.

Frank Lampard, released from the shackles that plague England's penalty takers, strode forward and confidently struck the ball into the net, though fortunate that a stronger hand from Brad Friedel in the Blackburn goal would have kept the ball out.

Blackburn huffed and puffed in the second half but the wind was taken from their sails by the strength of Didier Drogba.

The Chelsea striker powered his way into the box and unleashed a ferocious shot that left the helpless Friedel clutching thin air.

The defeat leaves Blackburn rooted to the foot of the Premiership as the pressure begins to mount on boss Mark Hughes.

A disappointed Hughes said "I felt John Terry went down very easily. The penalty completely changed the game.

"If we go down that road we're going to have three penalties in every match. There was no chance it was a penalty.

"We had a real claim when Jason Roberts had his shirt pulled. Overall we were much the better side."

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