

# Favourites predictably thru'

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE  
REUTERS, London

Chelsea, Anderlecht, Deportivo Coruna and Sparta Prague booked their places in the money-spinning Champions League group phase on Tuesday after coming through the third qualifying round unscathed. Chelsea were emphatic 3-0 winners over Zilina of Slovakia, securing a 5-0 aggregate victory, and Anderlecht were equally comfortable with a 1-0 win at Wisla Krakow in Poland that made them 4-1 winners over the two legs.

But Deportivo needed home advantage for a 1-0 victory over Rosenborg Trondheim, after the away leg in Norway had finished goalless, while a 2-2 draw on the night for Sparta Prague was good enough for a 5-4 win over Vardar Skopje.

Stamford Bridge rose to applaud Russian owner Roman Abramovich's latest recruit, Argentine striker Hernan Crespo, at half time before seeing Chelsea utterly dominate the second half, scoring twice on their way into Europe's most lucrative club competition.

A first senior goal for full-back Glen Johnson in the first half was followed by a rare header from German substitute Robert Huth in the 67th minute and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink wrapped up a 5-0 aggregate victory 10 minutes from time.

Just three minutes after coming on as a substitute, Huth rose highest at the back post to power Emmanuel Petit's corner inside Zilina goalkeeper Branislav Rzeszoto's righthand post.

Hasselbaink then latched on to Geremi's chip to blast the ball past Zilina's stranded goalkeeper.

Chelsea's main victory on the night however was both lucrative and glamorous matches ahead as they resumed their presence in the Champions League group stage following a four-year hiatus.

All this was achieved without

either Crespo or Adrian Mutu, who will now be eligible for the group stage, while Juan Sebastian Veron, Damien Duff and Wayne Bridge were also rested for the second leg.

Joe Cole was still given his full debut on the left flank and he was immediately in the thick of the

action, winning a succession of free-kicks as he took the game to Zilina.

It took a little magic from the boot of Cole to carve open the first chance in the 12th minute.

The midfielder slipped a pass to Hasselbaink on the edge of the box and the striker almost sent Eidur

Gudjohnsen, who scored in the first leg, through on goal.

Chelsea almost broke the deadlock after 21 minutes when Gudjohnsen got the slightest touch on a Hasselbaink corner from the left but the Icelandic international failed to find the net from eight yards.

Hasselbaink headed over from three yards out six minutes later and the goal Chelsea deserved finally came after 32 minutes.

Jesper Gronkjaer was fouled on the right and the resulting free kick was swung into the box by England international Frank Lampard.

The ball skipped off the head of Zilina defender Dusan Sninsky and fell invitingly for full-back Glen Johnson to head in at the back post.

Chelsea, who won the European Cup Winners Cup in 1998, were joined in Thursday's draw for the group phase by Anderlecht.

A late strike by Ivory Coast striker Aruna Dindane decided the Belgians' second leg game in Krakow, though the real damage had already been done in the first leg.

Deportivo had a 16th-minute goal from Albert Luque to thank for their passage, ending Rosenborg's bid for a record ninth consecutive appearance in the group stage of the competition.

The Norwegian champions hold the existing record with eight appearances.

Former Manchester United midfielder Karel Poborsky was again the key to Sparta's success as the Czech side saw off a gritty Macedonian challenge.

Poborsky, who scored twice in their 3-2 win a fortnight ago in Skopje, netted an equaliser after Slavko Georgievski gave the visitors a surprise lead.

Nigerian Bless'ng Chinedu Anyanwu restored Vardar's lead until substitute Libor Sionko levelled for Sparta in the 82nd minute.

The third qualifying round will be completed with Wednesday's 12 second-leg matches.



Chelsea's Glen Johnson (R) rises above Martin Durica (L) of MSK Zilina at Stamford Bridge in London on August 26.

### RESULTS AT A GLANCE

AFP, Paris

Champions League third qualifying round, second leg results on Tuesday (winners qualify for first round group stage):

**At Prague**  
Sparta Prague 2 (Poborsky 34, Sionko 83) Vardar Skopje 2 (Georgievski 30, Anyanwu 67)  
**Sparta win 5-4 on aggregate**

**At London**  
Chelsea (ENG) 3 (Johnson 32, Huth 67, Hasselbaink 79) Zilina (SVK) 0  
**Chelsea win 5-0**

**At Krakow, Poland**  
Wisla Krakow (POL) 0 Anderlecht (BEL) 1 (Aruna 84)  
**Anderlecht win 4-1**

**At La Coruna, Spain**  
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Luque 16) Rosenborg (NOR) 0  
**Deportivo win 1-0**

## Inter get Gonzalez

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan's lengthy chase for Kily Gonzalez ended Tuesday when the Italian Serie A side finally signed the attacking midfielder from Spanish club Valencia.

Inter confirmed the transfer on their official website but gave no financial details of the deal for the 28-year-old Argentine international. "In the last month it seemed I would join Inter, then it looked like I wouldn't," said a relieved Gonzalez.

"I've always had faith in the people that have worked on this transfer and I thank them greatly because my dream has come true.

"I can't wait to start and I know perfectly well what's expected of me."

Gonzalez said he was looking forward to teaming up with international colleagues Javier Zanetti and Matias Almeyda at the San Siro.

"They spoke to me about the affection of the Inter fans, the incredible number of season ticket holders and the very high expectations here. I'm looking forward to the challenge," he said.

Gonzalez's arrival will soften the blow of the imminent departure of striker Hernan Crespo, who is expected to sign for big-spending English Premier League club Chelsea this week.

Gonzalez will team up once again with Hector Cuper who left Valencia to coach Inter in the summer of 2001.

## Big Phil still dreams Brazil

AFP, Sao Paulo

Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, who led Brazil to their fifth world title last year, insisted Tuesday that his link with the South American footballing giants was not over.

Scolari said that he is committed to leading Portugal to the European championship title at home next year, but refused to rule out that he would lead Brazil to their title defence in Germany in three years.

"I can't say that I'm not going to return. Never say never," Scolari told the Jornal da Tarde here Tuesday. "This story that Brazil is dead for me is untrue.

"It would be worth all coming together again to relive that special moment (winning)," said Scolari.

Scolari said that he had received three offers from big clubs since he arrived in Portugal, including Spanish giants Barcelona, but that he was determined to see out his contract which runs out in August 2004.

"I would never abandon Portugal before the end of the European championship. I'm a man of my word. Yes, I received an offer from Barcelona, but I could not accept.

"My commitment is to a great campaign with Portugal. The European championship is more difficult than the World Cup. Now the result is the key, a coach lives on good results."

## Hierro joins Al Rayyan

REUTERS, Doha

Fernando Hierro, the former Real Madrid defender and Spanish national team skipper, has joined Qatar's Al Rayyan on a one-year contract, the club said on Wednesday.

The Spaniard arrived in Qatar on Wednesday after signing the deal with the club in Madrid earlier this week.

The former Real defender was sacked along with coach Vicente del Bosque after helping the side win the Spanish championship last season. He led Spain in the 2002 World Cup where they lost to co-hosts South Korea in the quarter-finals.

Hierro, 35, was ousted from Real after 14 years at the club during which he won three European Cups and six league titles.



Hernan Crespo jogs on the Stamford Bridge pitch after completing his move from Inter Milan to the Chelsea yesterday.

# Ranieri on cloud nine!

## Crespo completes move

AFP, London

Chelsea boss Claudio Ranieri hailed the signing of Argentine striker Hernan Crespo from Inter Milan on Tuesday as a crucial addition to his attacking options.

Crespo, who cost the club 16.8 million pounds (26.4 million dollars), was introduced to the Stamford Bridge crowd at during the half time interval of Chelsea's resounding 3-0 qualifying win over Slovak side MSK Zilina which clinched their berth in the Champion's League group phase.

The 28-year-old's signature brings Chelsea's summer spending spree to almost 100 million pounds, money that has been provided by the club's new owner, Russian oil

billionaire Roman Abramovich. "It was very important that I had another striker," said Ranieri. "I now have five strikers and I can pick two for every match."

"In September and October we play very few days and it's important to be able to give players rest," added the Chelsea manager.

Ranieri was impressed by the former Parma and Lazio player's Champion's league credentials.

"Crespo is very fast, he is very good in the air and he scores a lot of goals," said Ranieri.

"He scored nine goals in the Champions League last season."

The Chelsea manager acknowledged the role fellow Argentinian Juan Sebastian Veron could play in helping Crespo to settle at Stamford Bridge.

"Crespo and Veron have played together in the Argentinian national U21 side - there is a link there," said

Ranieri. "He now has a friend at the club who can explain things to him."

But Ranieri feels that Crespo has all the attributes to forge a successful career in the Premiership.

"I have spoken to him and I said: 'Your characteristics are good for English football,'" said Ranieri.

"He is a lion - he wants to fight in every match."

Crespo is the ninth new player to be signed by the London club since the summer began but the Chelsea boss was quick to dampen any exaggerated expectations.

"The target is to be like Real Madrid, Manchester United and Arsenal but realistically it is important to build the team, to build the group and to build the foundation," said Ranieri.

"And of course, it is better if you win."

# Beckham pumped up

AFP, Madrid

England star David Beckham vowed Tuesday to make his mark at Real Madrid by scoring his first goal during his debut at the Bernabeu stadium after a slow start since his arrival in the Spanish capital ten days ago.

Beckham gave a lacklustre performance during last week's goalless friendly draw at Valencia followed by an infuriating substitution in Real Madrid's 2-1 Spanish Super Cup first leg loss to Real Mallorca Sunday.

But the 28-year-old said there was more to him than his pop star image and he wanted to fulfil his dream of scoring on his first game in the Bernabeu stadium during Real's crucial Super Cup second leg game on Wednesday.

"I'd love to score in the Bernabeu. It's going to be the day of my debut before the Real Madrid fans and I really want to do well and win my first title with the club as well. Playing in the Bernabeu really means a lot to me," the England player said during his first press conference at Real Madrid.

Beckham could find his caused aided by the absence of Claude Makalele.

The French international, looking for either a sizeable pay rise or a transfer, provided some much-needed shape and bite on replacing Beckham last Sunday. But the 30-year-old claims to have a fever, which Spanish media has described as 'diplomatic'.

Beckham admitted that he could

have been more present on the pitch than he has been since his arrival at the Spanish champions, but he had no doubt that he could succeed in the number 23 jersey.

"If I didn't think I could succeed at Real Madrid I wouldn't have joined this team. I know that I can play much better than I have until now and I hope that I can start to improve in the coming games."

Beckham said that he had not asked coach Carlos Queiroz for an

"I don't speak about my father, nor my family, nor my hair. The most important is football and it will be the centre of my life in the next few years," he said.

"The pop star image that people have is something I don't care about at all. It's an idea people have," said Beckham, adding that he hoped that the frenzy surrounding him would calm down in Spain.

"The media have followed me everywhere since I arrived and I hope that this relaxes a bit and that I can live a little more relaxed. I'm in the best team in the world and living in an exceptional country," he added.

Real and Beckham in particular, were slammed by the Madrid media after a disjointed showing against Mallorca.

But on Wednesday's evidence the general feeling is that Beckham has been having to shoulder more than his share of the.

"Becks and Queiroz under the microscope," was how AS sports daily saw the situation ahead of the Mallorca game.

Yet the paper, having blasted the entire team after the first leg loss to Mallorca, stressed it would be a fallacy to blame Beckham's hype-filled arrival for the below-par showing both in that match and in a friendly a week earlier at Valencia.

"It doesn't seem fair to make Beckham pay for plates he didn't break," commented AS.

Queiroz says criticism of his side is water off a duck's back.

"I'm not too worried about the criticism. You can always learn from all points of view," he told reporters.



DAVID BECKHAM

explanation over his substitution during Sunday's game saying that "as a player you have to accept these decisions."

"I would have liked to play the 90 minutes, but he decides the changes (...). Sometimes you are called on to play sixty minutes and other times the entire match."

Beckham said that he had been overwhelmed by the welcome he had received from his teammates and fans, but refused to speak of his private life, pop star wife Victoria, and young sons.

## Marcos completes Parreria's zigsaw

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil's World Cup winning goalkeeper Marcos has been called up by coach Carlos Alberto Parreira on Tuesday to complete the world champions' squad for the first two matches of the South American qualifying zone for the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

Brazil kick their bid off with a trip to Colombia on September 7, at Barranquilla, then host Ecuador three days later at home in Manaus.

Parreira named a 17-man squad last week made up mainly of European-based players and on Tuesday completed the lineup with Palmeiras' Marcos, who was a member of the World Cup winning team last year.

Midfielders Diego (Santos), Renato (Santos) and Alex (Cruzeiro) and striker Luis Fabiano (Sao Paulo) are not in the squad but have been earmarked by Parreira for further international matches.

Parreira also said young Santos striker Robinho should get a call-up shortly.

"Robinho is a rare jewel in Brazilian football. We need players like him," said the Brazil coach.

# Premiership Vintage Sheringham

Football  
REUTERS, London

Newly-promoted Portsmouth went top of the English premier league after a hat-trick by Teddy Sheringham helped them to a 4-0 victory over Bolton Wanderers on Tuesday.

Sheringham, 37, started his scoring spree with a 57th-minute header and then struck twice in the last three minutes, the second a penalty, as Harry Redknapp's side demolished Bolton at Fratton Park.

A superb solo strike by teenage forward Wayne Rooney in the 72nd minute earned Everton a 2-2 draw at Charlton Athletic after Jason Euell had converted two penalties for the hosts.

Leeds United were held to a 0-0 draw by Southampton and there was another goalless deadlock in Leicester City's home game with Middlesbrough, for whom new signing Gaizka Mendieta made his debut.

Portsmouth have seven points from three games and lead second-placed Manchester City on goal difference. Champions Manchester United and Arsenal, who both play on Wednesday, and Chelsea have six points.

Though pleased with the outcome, Redknapp was still ruing the fact that his side conceded a 90th-minute equaliser in last weekend's 1-1 draw with Manchester City.

"We really could have had nine points," he told Sky Sports. "We were one minute away from winning at Manchester City -- and that would have been a fantastic start. But to have seven points has been a great start for us."

As for the recipe for Portsmouth's success, the former West Ham manager said: "We've got good spirit here, the lads all work hard for each other and we've got terrific support -- they (the fans) make a big difference. They're going to be so vital to us at home this year."

Sheringham, offloaded by Tottenham Hotspur at the end of last season after captaining the north London club, said: "To score four goals against any Premiership club

is brilliant and I think we fully deserved it."

By contrast, Bolton boss Sam Allardyce was seething at his side's performance, saying: "They have a responsibility to do more than what they're doing. They get paid well, they get looked after well. They have to show a lot more determination."

"Sometimes the game isn't about playing pretty football, it's about rolling your sleeves up and digging in and our defenders at the moment aren't that good at doing that."

"They're more interested in playing pretty little balls in to Jay-Jay Okocha, instead of heading balls out of defence," said the Bolton boss.



Portsmouth's veteran striker Teddy Sheringham is ecstatic during one of his goals against Bolton Wanderers on August 26.

# Elber accepts reality

AFP, Munich

Giovane Elber admitted Wednesday that he is ready to leave Bayern Munich with French titans Monaco and Lyon set for a tug-of-war for his services.

Coach Ottmar Hitzfeld gave Elber the green light on Tuesday saying the former Brazilian international should leave the Olympic Stadium and Elber has confessed that he feels the same way.

"The manager has said I can stay here if I do not find another club but I think it is best if I go," Elber said after training on Wednesday.

Champions League hopefuls Lyon and Monaco are the front runners for the top-scorer in the Bundesliga last season and general manager Uli Hoeness revealed a decision would be made on Thursday.

"A decision on whether Elber goes or not will be made by Thursday at the latest," Hoeness told German daily Bild. "Elber could earn more money at Lyon but Monaco have put together the better

package."

The 31-year-old Elber revealed that Monaco were slightly ahead in the race for his signature but was impressed by the efforts of French champions Lyon.

"I talked with Monaco and they have the priority although Lyon are also going to a lot of trouble," added the former VfB Stuttgart striker.

Monaco and Lyon are believed to have offered four million euros for the services of Elber with Lyon offering an annual salary of three million euros while Monaco have tabled a figure of 2.5 million euros per season.

Both teams will be keen for a swift deal as the deadline for Champions League registration is August 31.

Bayern manager Hitzfeld claims the 2001 Champions League victors are not pushing Elber out of the club because his contract expires in 2004 and they would lose the player for nothing, rather than receive a transfer fee.

"The financial side is not important," explained Hitzfeld. "The transfer fee is not that large."