

# Roman Empire rocked



AFP, London

Chelsea crashed to their first defeat of the Roman Abramovich era here on Wednesday as Turkish champions Besiktas resurrected their own Champions League campaign with a shock 2-0 win at Stamford Bridge.

After a nine-match unbeaten run since the Russian oil tycoon began injecting his millions into west London, Chelsea's attempts to graft 100 million pounds of new talent on to an established squad finally came unstuck at the hands of Sergen Yalcin, whose two goals secured an unlikely victory for the Turks.

"When you make mistakes, you pay," Chelsea manager Claudio Ranieri said. "After 2-0 we tried to do something but they closed the space very well."

Chelsea's embarrassment of riches was underlined at the start of the match by the sight of Damien Duff squeezing on to the bench alongside two England internationals, Joe Cole and Wayne Bridge, and last season's first choice strikers, Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and Eidur Gudjohnsen.

By the time half an hour had elapsed however, Chelsea were contemplating an evening dominated by a more regular form of embarrassment with poor defending helping to gift the visitors two goals from their first two forays upfield.

Mansiz was the architect of the first goal. A quick free-kick caught Chelsea's back four and sent overlapping left-back Uzunmez Irahcane racing to the byline. His cross found Yalcin whose shot beat Carlo Cudicini with the help of a deflection off John Terry.

Much worse was to follow for Cudicini five minutes later when Besiktas's Colombian goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba punted a clearance deep into the Chelsea area.

First Marcel Desailly slipped then Cudicini contrived to miss the

ball altogether, presenting the portly playmaker Yalcin with the straightforward task of hitting an empty net to claim his second goal of the night.

On the evidence of what had gone before, Chelsea could justifiably feel hard done by. But they could scarcely complain having spurned the chances generated by their crisp approach work in the opening stages.

The best of them fell to Juan Sebastian Veron, who completely miskicked after a fortunate rebound from an opponent's legs left him with a clear sight of goal, 16 yards out.

Three minutes later Adrian Mutu's reverse pass allowed Frank Lampard to spring the Turks' offside trap but, after a poor first touch, the England midfielder was unable to finish.

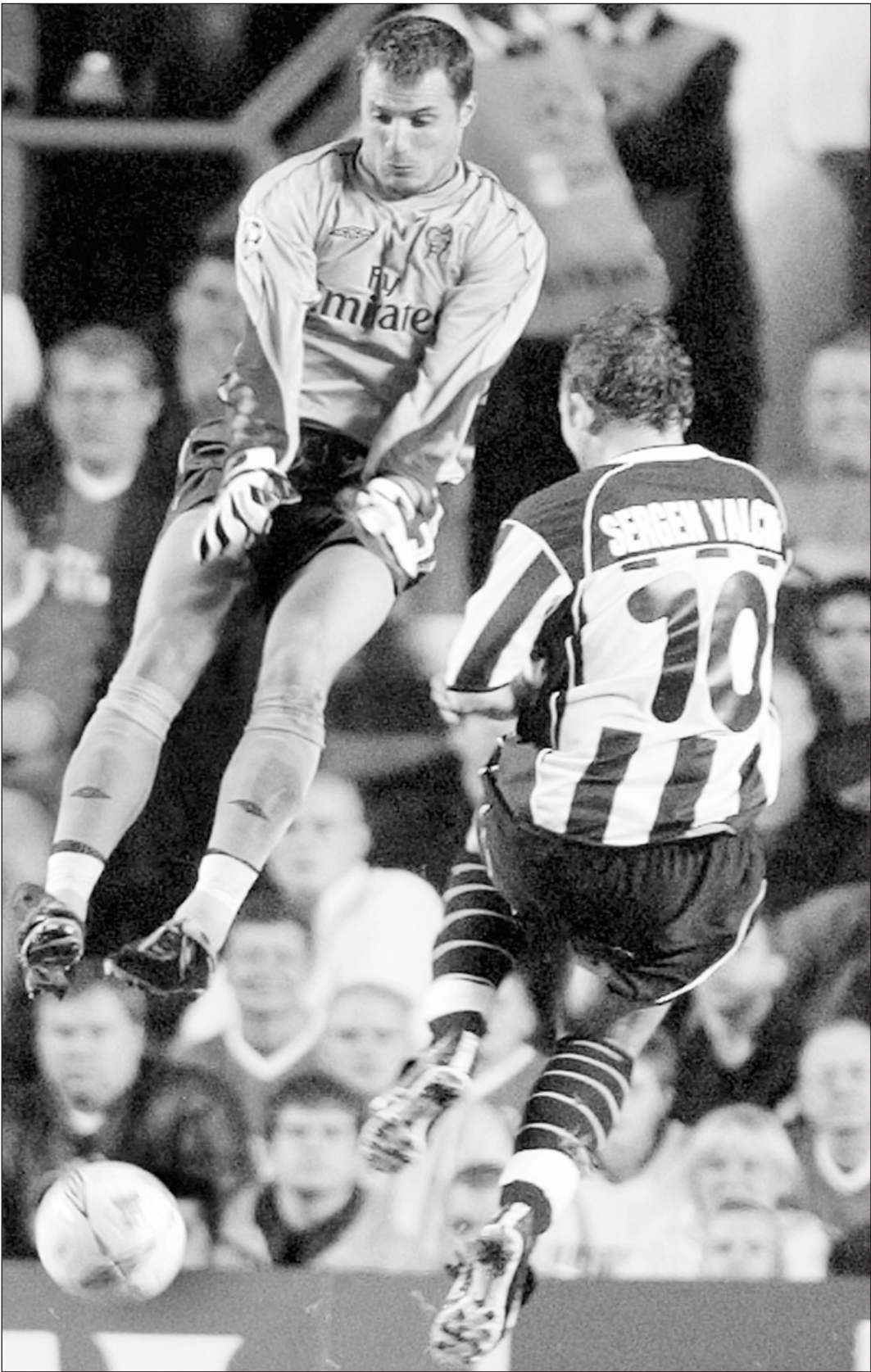
Chelsea's evening took another turn for the worse within a minute of the restart when William Gallas appeared to turn an ankle.

Having being forced to pull off the injured Celestine Babayaro early in the match and then introducing Duff and Hasselbaink in place of Hernan Crespo and Mutu at the break, Chelsea were forced to keep the French defender on the pitch and so were effectively reduced to ten men.

Fortunately, Besiktas were soon playing with a man down thanks to the red card Mansiz received for what the Portuguese referee harshly judged to be his second piece of time-wasting of the night.

The Turkey striker, who had been booked for kicking the ball away on the stroke of half-time, was dismissed five minutes after the break when he ignored an offside flag and the referee's whistle to race away and chip Cudicini.

Chelsea had the chances to preserve their unbeaten record but, as in the opening period of the match, their finishing let them down with Veron and Lampard, who failed to connect with a volley from the edge of the six-yard box, again the most notable culprits.



TERRIBLE GOALKEEPING: Besiktas' Sergen Yalcin (R) is about to scramble the ball home after an airborne Chelsea custodian Carlo Cudicini misses it completely at Stamford Bridge in London on October 1.

PHOTO: AFP

## Celta hold Milan

AFP, Vigo

Champions League holders AC Milan played out a 0-0 draw with Celta Vigo here on Wednesday that stretched the Italians' unbeaten record in the competition to seven games and suited the purposes of both sides.

Milan are top of Group H despite only claiming a point against Celta, whose players did not have the ideal preparation for their first ever home Champions League tie having boycotted team meetings in a dispute over win bonuses.

The Spaniards could have opened the scoring when Brazilian midfielder Vagner dragged a shot wide and Juanfran went close after latching on to Alessandro Nesta's defensive header and volleying narrowly wide.

But Aleksandr Mostovoi almost got Celta's bid off to a fine start after knocking the ball past Nesta, rounding him and unleashing a powerful shot that Brazilian keeper Dida managed to block.

As the rain fell, Milan could only produce one shot in the first period, when Kaka's drive was punched to safety by Jose Manuel Pinto.

The combined threat of Filippo Inzaghi, Andriy Shevchenko and substitute Rivaldo - playing his first match since being retained by Milan following a transfer request - failed to break down Celta in the second half.

In the best shot of the second half, Portuguese international Manuel Rui Costa finished off a Milan move with a curling shot that Pinto gathered with ease.

## Kadhafi parts with Juve

AFP, Rome

Saadi Kadhafi, son of Libyan leader Moamer, has resigned from the board of Juventus, the Italian Serie A club has confirmed.

Saadi's company Lafico (Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company) held a 7.5 per cent stake in the Turin club since October of last year.

His decision to end his involvement with the Italian champions paves the way for his long-awaited league debut. The 30-year-old midfielder signed a professional contract with Juventus' Serie A rivals Perugia in the summer, but has not yet played for the club.

The Italian Football Federation (FIGC) were reluctant to give Kadhafi clearance to play for Perugia as his ties with Juventus were seen as a conflict of interest.

A Libyan international and vice-president of his national sports federation, Saadi Kadhafi was linked with a move to buy cash-strapped Rome giants Lazio earlier this year.

# The Real class



AFP, Oporto

Real Madrid came from behind to cruise past FC Porto with a 3-1 victory in the Champions League group stage tie here on Wednesday.

With Raul only making a late appearance as a substitute and David Beckham absent with an injury, Real drew on their awesomely deep squad to dominate the UEFA Cup holders after trailing to a seventh minute goal from Costinha.

Ivan Helguera brought Real level and Santiago Solari gave Real a half-time lead before Zinedine Zidane, playing with a bandaged head wound, scored Real's third with an exquisite half volley.

Porto dominated the first 20 minutes and got an early reward when Real goalkeeper Iker Casillas could only palm away a free kick from

Deco and Costinha was well-placed to head it in.

Casillas prevented Porto going two goals ahead when he was at full stretch to save Derfeli's close-range shot.

But soon Real hit their stride and Helguera started and finished the move that produced Real's equaliser, moving the ball out to Zidane who found Solari. The Argentinian's cross was perfect for Helguera to nod the ball home, leaving goalkeeper Vitor Baia rooted to the spot.

Real missed a golden opportunity to take the lead ten minutes before half-time when Ronaldo failed to connect with Luis Figo's cross.

But it was not long before Roberto Carlos slid the ball to Solari, who side-stepped Baia before sliding the ball into the net.

There was a worrying moment for Real when Zidane's head made accidental contact with the knee of Ricardo Fernandes, leaving blood spurting on to the turf. But the

Frenchman was soon back on the field sporting a head bandage in time to play the final minutes of the half.

Porto's South African striker Benni McCarthy had the ball in the net just after the second half started, but he was flagged offside.

Real increasingly dominated as Porto shrunk into their own half and Figo probed continually down the right.

When he won a free-kick out wide he pulled it back for Zidane to meet on the bounce and his clean shot passed through a crowded goalmouth and into the net on 67 minutes to make it 3-1.

Both sides had further scoring chances and Casillas threw himself at an Edgaras Jankauskas header to deny Porto.

As Porto fans streamed out of the stadium exits, Raul replaced Ronaldo but his first attempt at goal was an uncharacteristically misjudged lob which was far too high.



Zinedine Zidane (L), with his head bandaged following a nasty cut, turning it on against FC Porto at Oporto on October 1.

PHOTO: AFP

## RESULTS AT A GLANCE

AFP, Paris

Results of European Champions League Group matches played on Wednesday:

### GROUP E

At Athens

Panathinaikos (GRE) 1 (Konstantinidis 88) Rangers (SCO) 1 (Emerson 35)

At Stuttgart, Germany

VfB Stuttgart 2 (Szabics 50, Kuranyi 52) Manchester United 1 (van Nistelrooy 67-pen)

### GROUP F

At Oporto, Portugal

FC Porto (POR) 1 (Costinha 7) Real Madrid (SPA) 3 (Helguera 28, Solari 37, Zidane 67)

At Marseille, France

Marseille (FRA) 3 (Drogba 62, 68, 85) Partizan Belgrade (SEM) 0

### GROUP G

At Rome

Lazio (ITA) 2 (S. Inzaghi 46, 61-pen) Sparta Prague (CZE) 2 (Sionko 26, Poborsky 35)

At London

Chelsea (ENG) 0 Besiktas (TUR) 2 (Sergen 24, 29)

### GROUP H

At Vigo, Spain

Celta Vigo (SPA) 0 AC Milan (ITA) 0

At Amsterdam

Ajax (NED) 2 (Sonck 11, 54) FC Bruges (BEL) 0

## Del Piero signs new deal

AFP, Milan

Juventus striker Alessandro Del Piero has quashed speculation about his future by signing a four year contract extension, the Italian Serie A club confirmed on Thursday.

Under the terms of the new deal, Del Piero, whose original contract was due to run out next year, will earn 7.9 million euros (9.2 million dollars) a year, which includes 2.3 million euros (2.7 million dollars) in advertising rights.

The 30-year-old Italy international is currently sidelined with a calf strain and is not expected to return to action until the end of October.

He suffered the injury in Juventus' 2-2 draw at home to Roma last month.

Del Piero joined Juventus from Padova in 1993.

Since he has been with Juventus, Del Piero has won five league titles (1995, 1997, 1998, 2002 and 2003), the Champions League (1996), the InterContinental Cup (1997), the European Super Cup (1997), the Italian Cup (1995), and four Italian Super Cups (1996, 1998, 2002 and 2003).

# MU stunned at Stuttgart



AFP, Stuttgart

Bundesliga leaders VfB Stuttgart belied their lack of European experience to inflict a 2-1 Champions League defeat on English champions Manchester United at the Gottlieb-Daimler Stadium Wednesday. Making their first appearance in Europe's premier competition since the 1992/93 season, when they were eliminated by Leeds after fielding four foreigners, Stuttgart rose to the occasion and quick-fire second half strikes from Imre Szabics and German international Kevin Kuranyi clinched a memorable win.

Ruud van Nistelrooy notched his 31st goal in the competition from the penalty spot but it was in vain as Stuttgart took the spoils against the 1999 Champions League winners.

Alex Ferguson laid the blame for the defeat on his defenders.

"We defended terribly for the two goals and if you defend badly in games of this nature you deserve everything that happens to you," said Ferguson.

"From a position of containing them we surrendered within minutes and allowed Stuttgart to become strong.

"We committed ourselves to winning balls we shouldn't have been winning, all we needed to do was drop off to the edge of the box and be patient.

"We kept risking the ball when we should have been playing for the away goal because if they come to Old Trafford that could be crucial. They should know the rules of the competition, so that was disappointing too.

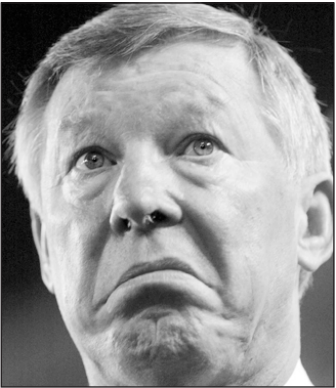
"Perhaps Ruud's penalty will be a lesson to us."

Ferguson said the next match, against the new Group E leaders Rangers on October 22, had risen in importance.

"We're going to be thinking of winning now," said the Scotsman.

Stuttgart coach Felix Magath said: "I am lost for words. To beat Manchester United in front of these great fans is unbelievable.

"This is one of the greatest



SIR ALEX FERGUSON

victories of my career."

Winger Alexander Hleb, who Ferguson had picked out as the danger man before the match, caused real problems early on for the visitors with his pace while the returning Paul Scholes was probing for Manchester United at the other end.

On the quarter hour mark some dazzling teamwork saw Dutchman van Nistelrooy race clear but he could only hit a tame shot at Timo Hildebrand in the Stuttgart goal.

However, Stuttgart were brimming with confidence and looked the more likely to score on home turf.

At half-time the tie was locked at 0-0 with the defences of both teams nullifying the attacking threat to the

extent that neither Hildebrand nor United goalkeeper Tim Howard had a notable save to make in the first 45 minutes.

However, straight after the interval the hosts almost took the lead with a whipped in corner that was completely misjudged by American Howard who was grateful to Scholes who cleared off the line.

It was a warning for the Premiership champions as Stuttgart took the lead on 50 minutes with Szabics racing through and curling a precise shot past Howard.

Worse was to come for a shell-shocked United two minutes later as Kuranyi scored his second goal in as many Champions League matches, circling the static defence to rifle home and send the crowd at the Gottlieb-Daimler into a state of rapture.

United needed to call on all their European experience in Germany and were handed a lifeline on 67 minutes.

Portuguese star Cristian Ronaldo was felled in the penalty area by Hildebrand and van Nistelrooy finished with aplomb.

Buoyed by the goal United surged forward but came undone on the counter attack as Rio Ferdinand chopped down Kuranyi in the area.

Howard produced a fantastic save parrying Fernando Meira's penalty to keep his team in the match.

However, Stuttgart showed why they have not conceded a goal in the seven Bundesliga matches so far to hold firm and record an emotional victory.

The Germans face Panathinaikos on October 22 in their next European game while United will look to recover in the 'Battle of Britain' against Rangers at Ibrox.

# Drogba buries Belgrade



AFP, Marseille

Marseille claimed their first points of the Champions League but had to fight for their 3-0 win over 10-man Partizan Belgrade here Tuesday in a group F match the hosts simply had to win.

Marseille began their campaign with a baptism of fire a fortnight ago, coming away from Real Madrid with a 4-2 defeat to leave them bottom of the pool.

However prolific forward Didier Drogba got Marseille - France's only winners of the competition, in 1993 - back on track with a second-half hat-trick in a second period where the visitors had to play with ten men.

Marseille started the match knowing that anything less than a win would end their hopes of gleaming 10 points from their group matches - the minimum required, according to manager Alain Perrin, if they are to advance any further in the competition.

But despite dominating the opening period, with Drogba, Steve Marlet and Egyptian forward Mido coming close to beating Radovan Radakovic, Lothar Matthaeus's energetic side made the French work throughout the first half.

In a blow to Matthaeus' work-manlike team, they were reduced to ten men on the stroke of half time when Delibasic was booked then sent off for simulating a foul in the penalty box - although the 22-year-old striker did look to have been held back by Daniel Van Buyten.

Despite being a man down Partizan came out all guns blazing after the interval - however Drogba



PHOTO: AFP

HATTRICK HERO: Olympique Marseille's Didier Drogba (L) rounds the goalkeeper to score the first of his three goals against Partizan Belgrade.

# Inzaghi double rescues Lazio



AFP, Rome

Lazio came storming back after trailing by two goals at half-time to earn a precious 2-2 draw at home to Sparta Prague in a stirring Group G Champions League clash here on Wednesday.

Goals from Libor Sionko and former Lazio star Karel Poborsky gave Sparta what appeared to be a commanding interval lead, only for Simone Inzaghi's double strike - his second a well-taken penalty - to snatch a point for the Italians.

Lazio, who won their first group match away to Besiktas, finished the stronger of the two teams, but Poborsky nearly nicked the winner with 15 minutes to go only to head over the bar from close range with only the goalkeeper to beat.

A draw gave Sparta their first point following their home defeat to Chelsea a fortnight ago.

Poborsky, who spent two seasons at Lazio before returning to his home-land last year, wore the captain's armband for the visitors.

Marek Kincl dragged a shot wide as the visitors stemmed the flow of Lazio pressure Sionko gave Sparta

the lead in the 26th minute.

Poborsky, enjoying plenty of freedom in midfield, dinked a ball towards the penalty box and the home defence stood and watched as Sionko stole in unmarked to stab the ball past Angelo Peruzzi.

The goal lifted Sparta's confidence and they increased their advantage nine minutes later as Lazio's defence went to sleep once again.

Sparta worked the ball from right to left for Lukas Zelenska whose drive from the edge of

the box struck Japp Stam before landing at Poborsky's feet, and the former Manchester United man tapped home from close range.

Lazio wasted no time at all in reducing the arrears at the start of the second-half. Stefano Fiore escaped his marker and picked out Inzaghi in the box with a neat flick and the younger brother of AC Milan's Filippo finished coolly with a low angled shot.

Sparta's confidence, which had paid rich dividends in the first 45 minutes, slowly ebbed away and they saw their lead wiped out completely in the 61st minute.

Inzaghi, who was needlessly hauled down in the box by Radoslav Kovac, dusted himself down and took the spot-kick himself which he tucked low into the bottom corner.

## Draw takes Rangers atop

AFP, Athens

Rangers top Group E despite being caught out by a late goal from 10-man Panathinaikos in their Champions League match here on Wednesday.

Rangers' Brazilian midfielder Emerson put the Scots in front in the first half and looked to be heading for maximum points, especially after Panathinaikos' Ioannis Goumas was sent off before the hour mark.

But substitute Pantelis Konstantinidis made it 1-1 with a goal a minute from time to leave Rangers on four points, one clear of Manchester United who crashed to VfB Stuttgart in Germany.

Rangers took a deserved 34th minute lead after Nuno Capucho outfoxed the Panathinaikos offside trap to go clear down the right, with his cross being bundled in by Emerson on the far post.

Rangers' fortunes improved further when substitute Giannis Goumas, who had only been on the pitch 11 minutes, was sent off in the 56th minute.

The Greek international defender, who had already been booked for a foul on Dane Peter Lovenkrands, was penalised for impeding Shota Arveladze as the little Georgian winger ran down the right flank.