



PHOTO: STAR

Brothers Union's Iqbal chases Farid of Dipali Jubo Sangha during their Federation Cup encounter yesterday.

# League Cup Heskey's double act

Football

REUTERS, London

England striker Emile Heskey struck twice as League Cup holders Liverpool overcame 10-man Blackburn Rovers 4-3 in a see-saw match at Ewood Park to move into the fourth round.

Heskey, who also missed a late penalty, netted with headers after 49 and 61 minutes, both from crosses by Senegal's El Hadji Diouf.

Rovers paid for having defender Lucas Neill sent off against Liverpool for the second time this season.

Newcastle suffered the shock of the night when they lost 2-1 at home to first division leaders West Bromwich Albion, for whom Lee Hughes scored an extra-time winner.

At Ewood Park, Neill was red-carded for a professional foul

after he clipped the heel of Liverpool striker Florent Sinama-Pongolle to concede the 41st-minute penalty from which Danny Murphy made the score 1-1.

The Australian was sent off in Blackburn's 3-1 home league defeat by Liverpool in September after he broke Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher's leg with an ugly tackle.

After creating Heskey's two goals, Diouf also made Liverpool's fourth for Harry Kewell 11 minutes from the end. Late strikes by Barry Ferguson and Dwight Yorke, who also scored the game's opening goal, flattered Rovers.

West Brom went in front through a Shola Ameobi own goal at St James' Park before Newcastle's Laurent Robert forced extra time. But Hughes pounced in the 101st-minute to eliminate the premier league

side.

Chelsea overcame a gutsy challenge from second division strugglers Notts County 4-2 in an entertaining clash of the prince and the pauper at Stamford Bridge.

Icelandic Eidur Gudjohnsen scored twice but County, who are in administration, fought well and Tony Barras briefly made the score 1-1 in the first half.

Spaniard Gaizka Mendietta grabbed his first goal for Middlesbrough in a 2-1 win at first division Wigan Athletic.

Striker Bobby Zamora scored his first goal for Tottenham Hotspur in the first minute of extra time as they beat visitors West Ham United of division one 1-0.

Portsmouth won 4-2 after extra time at first division Nottingham Forest, Aston Villa beat Leicester City 1-0 and Everton were also 1-0 winners over Charlton Athletic.

# Smith says sorry

Football

REUTERS, London

Leeds United's Alan Smith has apologised for throwing a bottle that hit a Leeds fan saying he hopes the incident will not damage his "special relationship" with the club's supporters.

The striker, who turned 23 on Tuesday, picked up a plastic bottle thrown by a supporter in the West Stand at Elland Road near the end of extra-time of Leeds' third round

League Cup tie against Manchester United which the visitors won 3-2. The bottle hit a young female in the crowd on Tuesday.

"I am sorry if I have offended any Leeds fans," Smith told the club's website.

"I have spoken to the family of the young lady concerned to make sure that she is alright and I have apologised.

"The family and I believe that this is the end of the matter. I only hope this will not damage the special relationship I have with the

Leeds United fans."

Smith threw the bottle just after Eric Djemba-Djemba's 117th minute match-winner for United and Smith himself had just been booked.

The English Football Association (FA) said they would review video evidence and liaise with police before deciding whether to take any action.

The incident completed a miserable day for Leeds who earlier on Tuesday announced losses of 49.5 million pounds -- the highest ever reported by an English club.

# Robson to join Nigeria in Nov

Football

REUTERS, Abuja

Former England captain Bryan Robson will take over as coach of Nigeria's national team early next month, the country's soccer authority (NFA) said on Wednesday.

"We have done everything necessary for him to do his job effectively...Robson will arrive early November and he will go straight to work," NFA secretary-general Taiwo Ogunjobi told reporters in Abuja.

Earlier this month, the NFA named Robson, 46, its national coach for an initial six-month period.

Details of Robson's contract were not given but the NFA said the former Manchester United captain's immediate task was to take the side to next January's African Nations Cup in Tunisia.

Nigerian newspapers have reported that Robson's delay in starting work was because the NFA lacked the funds to pay his wages and allowances for the period of his

contract.

But Ogunjobi disagreed, saying: "There is no dispute about getting the money to pay Robson because that is something we have concluded."

NFA officials privately say Robson would earn a monthly wage of 50,000 dollars -- a figure Ogunjobi neither confirmed nor denied.

He played down suggestions in the media that the NFA and sports ministry officials were in dispute over Robson's appointment.

"There is a mutual understanding of our roles and functions, so there is no dispute in appointing the coach," said Ogunjobi.

Robson has been out of coaching since 2001 when he left English premier league club Middlesbrough by mutual consent after taking them to the finals of three FA Cups and one league cup.

Nigeria, won the African Nations Cup in 1980 and 1994. They are drawn against unfancied Benin Republic and previous tournament winners South Africa and Morocco in the first round of matches.

# FA charges Ferdinand

Football

REUTERS, London

Manchester United and England defender Rio Ferdinand was charged with misconduct by the Football Association on Wednesday for "failure or refusal" to take a drugs test.

Ferdinand missed a random dope test on September 23 at his club's Carrington training ground, though he passed a test 36 hours after the scheduled one.

The FA had delayed making a decision on the case while it considered all the evidence, including Ferdinand's mobile phone records.

In a statement on Wednesday the FA said Ferdinand had been charged in relation to Regulation 1(c) of its Doping Control Regulations.

"Regulation 1(c) refers to 'the failure or refusal by a player to submit to drug testing as required by a competent official,'" the FA said.

Under the rules Ferdinand faces a possible two-year ban from playing. The 24-year-old has 14 days to respond to the charge and

Manchester United said in a statement on Wednesday: "The player will be responding to the charge and seeking a personal hearing in accordance with FA procedures."

World body FIFA has said it will wait to see what action the English FA takes before deciding whether to impose any punishment itself.

The missed test meant Ferdinand was excluded from the England squad for their decisive Euro 2004 qualifier in Turkey on October 11 on the orders of FA chief executive Mark Palios.

His omission was sharply criticised by United and the players' union, while Ferdinand's England team mates threatened to strike unless he was reinstated.

However, the FA refused to back down and the crisis was averted, only after the players said they had been let down by their governing body.

United paid an English transfer record 30 million pounds (50.72 million dollars) for Ferdinand when he joined them from Leeds United last year.

Born in Peckham, south London, Ferdinand started his career at West Ham United. He has won 33 England caps.

# Al-Fayed not selling Fulham

Football

SOCCERNET, London

Fulham chairman Mohamed Al-Fayed has insisted the club is not for sale.

The prime minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra visited Al Fayed last weekend and was in the stands as Fulham beat Manchester United at Old Trafford.

Shinawatra has since been quoted as saying he expressed an interest in buying the club, with Al-Fayed apparently not discouraging the suggestion.

But Fulham on Wednesday issued a statement dismissing Shinawatra's claims and insisting Al-Fayed will not sell the club.

Al-Fayed said: "The way Fulham are playing at the moment I can quite understand why it may be an

attractive proposition to some people in football.

"But this is a club I love passionately and I have no intention of selling it nor would I think about discussing offers."

A spokesman for the Thailand government issued claimed in a statement that Shinawatra was really interested in establishing a link with Fulham to help young Thai players improve.

The spokesman said: "The PM really wants to make a connection to send young Thai football players to be trained at Fulham Football Club."

"This is due to the PM being impressed with some of Fulham's star players and interested in Fulham's performance."

"I also believe the PM has not discussed investment in Fulham Football Club with Mr Mohamed Al-Fayed."



PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona's Brazilian playmaker Ronaldinho ( R ) fights for the ball with a Murcia player during their Spanish first division match on October 29.

## Primera Liga

# Deportivo defeated

Football

AFP, Madrid

Deportivo La Coruna lost their 100 per cent home record when they were surprisingly beaten 2-0 by struggling Real Mallorca but they hung on to the league leadership after Valencia were held to a 2-2 draw by Celta Vigo.

Mallorca put behind them a spate of dreadful performances to give Deportivo as good as they got and 15 minutes from time took the lead from a Samuel Eto'o penalty after Enrique Romero was adjudged to have pushed Fernando Correa.

The Balearic island side added a second three minutes from time when Arnold Bruggink leapt on an opportunistic long ball and sent a looping shot from just inside the area over the head of Deportivo goalie Francisco Molina.

The victory was the Mallorca team's first win in 10 visits to the Galicians and their first points away from home this season.

The kick off of Valencia's game

was delayed by 10 minutes because Celta were caught in traffic on the way to the ground and the visitors also appeared to be going nowhere fast during the first half at the Mestalla stadium.

Valencia's Pablo Aimar headed the home side ahead four minutes before the break.

However, Celta woke up after half time and goals in the first 20 minutes from Magnolo Berizzo and Jesuli Mora turned the game around in their favour before Uruguayan striker Nestor Canobbio got his first league goal in the Spain to get Valencia a share of the points.

## TOP SIX

Spanish league table after Wednesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Deportivo	9	7	0	2	19	8	21
Real Madrid	9	6	2	1	20	9	20
Valencia	9	6	2	1	16	5	20
Osasuna	9	5	2	2	12	7	17
Barcelona	9	4	3	2	11	7	15
Athletic Bilbao	9	4	2	3	12	9	14



PHOTO: REUTERS

England and Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand leaves his home in Alderley Edge on October 29 to appear before an English Football Association hearing.

# Overmars fears Barca sell-off

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Barcelona's most expensive signing Marc Overmars believes that the Catalan club may be preparing the ground to sell him after he was left out of the squad for a third match in succession.

"I've been wondering what is happening," the Dutch international told sports daily Marca on Wednesday.

"I've got a year and a half left on my contract and it may be that the club want to sell me and think that now is the right time to do it."

Overmars joined Barca from Arsenal for 35.5 million dollars in July 2000, but has enjoyed little success since his record-breaking move and Dutch coach Frank Rijkaard overlooked the speedy winger for the third time in three games when he was left out of the squad for Wednesday's match at home to Murcia.

Hampered by a string of serious injury problems, Overmars has never been able to reproduce the

eye-catching form that brought him to the Catalan side's attention.

The former Ajax player believes that his sky-high price tag and the expectations that it created made it more difficult for him to settle at the club.

"They paid a lot of money for me, but they sold (Luis) Figo for even more," he said.

"In my first year I had some good

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MARC OVERMARS

# Bosnich held for assault

REUTERS, London

Former Manchester United goalkeeper Mark Bosnich has been arrested on suspicion of assaulting his former girlfriend, police have said.

Officers questioned the 31-year-old Australian at a west London police station after model Sophie Anderton, 26, was treated in hospital for bruising.

Scotland Yard on Wednesday said Bosnich, a former Aston Villa and Chelsea player, was released on police bail to December 4. Anderton, who made her name as the public face of underwear firm Gossard, was being looked after by friends, her spokeswoman said."She is shaken by the whole event, but is out of hospital and is fine," the spokeswoman said.

The Football Association suspended Bosnich from the game for nine months in April after he tested positive for cocaine last December.

Bosnich joined Chelsea in 2001 on a free transfer from Manchester United but made only seven appearances for the London club before his dismissal.

British newspapers said Bosnich split from Anderton last month after a series of rows

## Perugia set to turn to fairer sex

SOCCERNET, Rome

Perugia president Luciano Gaucci has claimed his club will open negotiations next week with a view to signing a leading woman player.

Gaucci revealed that representatives of the Serie A club would travel to Sweden next week to negotiate a deal either for Djurgarden's Victoria Svensson or Umea's Hanna Ljungberg.

Even by the standards of a club which has already made some audacious transfer coups, it would be an unprecedented move in world football to sign a woman, even though Svensson and Ljungberg are highly regarded.

Gaucci, who plans to play his new signing in Italy's Serie A, said: "We are going next week to Sweden to start negotiating the signing of either Svensson or Ljungberg."

"We will only sign one player. The length of the contract will be decided once we have spoken to the players and reached an agreement."



PHOTO: STAR

Indian Grand Master Surya Shekhar Ganguly realises he may have made a mistake against Bangladesh IM Enamul Hossain Rajib in their Asian Zonal Championship match yesterday.