

Players' chief slams Chelsea

AFP, London

Professional Footballers' Association chief executive Gordon Taylor has slammed Chelsea for their part in the acrimonious aftermath of William Gallas' transfer to Arsenal.

Taylor described as "totally unnecessary" the club's decision to issue a statement accusing Gallas of refusing to play and threatening to score a deliberate own goal if he was picked.

Taylor told BBC Radio Five Live's Sportsweek: "I just don't understand why Chelsea, when everything was done and dusted (should issue the statement).

"They were even allowed an extension to the transfer deadline, Chelsea supporters knew Gallas was unhappy, a deal was done that should have suited both parties and we move on."

Gallas finally got his wish to leave Stamford Bridge as a so-called make-weight in the deal which took England full-back Ashley Cole in the other direction.

But Taylor believes Chelsea have plenty of reasons to be grateful to Gallas, who played a major role in back-to-back Premiership titles, irrespective of their eventual falling-out.

Taylor added: "He (Gallas) is a good professional player who has done well for Chelsea and they should be remembering the part he played in winning two championships.

"It is just in the way it all got sorted out it got very messy. It is washing your dirty linen in public and sometimes in football we do that to too great an extent."

Lennon could face surgery

REUTERS, London

Tottenham Hotspur's teenage winger Aaron Lennon has a knee injury that could require surgery, according to Spurs manager Martin Jol.

Lennon, who played in both England's recent Euro 2008 qualifiers against Andorra and Macedonia, missed Spurs' 1-0 defeat at Manchester United on Saturday after getting injured in training on Friday.

"Maybe he needs an operation but maybe we'll give him another week's rest because it's only a small tear in his cartilage, so hopefully it will be okay," Jol told the club's website.

"It's a disappointment but we played without him in pre-season and others did well, so I'm confident we can play with the other players and get the results as well."

The 19-year-old's absence could also be a blow for England, whose Euro 2008 Group E campaign resumes on Oct. 7 against Macedonia.

Though so far used as a substitute, Lennon has added bite to England's right flank, having impressed at the World Cup after making his debut in a friendly win over Jamaica in June.



Lyon forward Sylvian Wiltord (top) goes airborne to evade a sliding challenge from Troyes defender Blaise Kouassi during their French Ligue 1 clash at the Gerland stadium on Saturday.

Lyon keep up the momentum

AFP, Paris



Champions Lyon beat Troyes 2-0 at their Gerland Stadium on Saturday night to keep up their momentum for a sixth successive French league title.

Brazilian Cris headed home before the quarter-hour mark and then his compatriot Juninho Pernambucano was rewarded for a fine performance by scoring a late goal from a freekick to earn the points for Gerard Houllier's men who have now won four of their five matches so far to top the table.

Lens, who won the title way back in 1998, had a resounding 3-0 win over Valenciennes with two goals from Aruna Dindane and, in the early game, Bordeaux got the better of Nice in a 3-2 victory with Jean-Claude Darcheville

twice on target for Bordeaux.

Bordeaux manager Ricardo however was already thinking of European action next week when they play their opening Champions League match in Turkey on Tuesday against Galatasaray.

"Galatasaray, that will be another match, and another problem but we will go over there attempting to win all three points," Ricardo said. "That is our aim to come back with a victory."

Lyon hung on well after the opening goal by Cris, following a Juninho corner, at the near post leaving the home fans in celebratory mood.

Juninho almost got a second goal himself later in the half when he found the target from a free-kick but Troyes keeper Ronan Le Crom managed to keep the ball away with a double-handed punch. Le Crom also had to make a fine save from John Carew after good work from France international Sidney Govou.

Portuguese midfielder Tiago also had a fine opportunity to double the score when he found himself with just Le Crom to beat but managed to miss what looked an easy chance.

Juninho finally got the second goal Lyon deserved when a superb freekick got a deflection off the head of Benjamin Nivet to easily beat Le Crom in the 87th minute.

Lyon are also involved in Champions League action next week with Real Madrid visiting the Gerland stadium on Wednesday.

Elsewhere Auxerre got the better of Monaco with a 2-1 victory thanks to goals from Benoit Cheyrou and Irenusz Jelen.

Nantes, the last team to win the league title before Lyon's winning run back in 2001, equalised through Dimitri Payet to earn a 1-1 draw at home to Lille.

Rafa wants 'nasty' Reds

AFP, Liverpool



Rafael Benitez has accused his Liverpool players of being 'too nice' and demanded defensive improvements after seeing Everton overpower his team in the Merseyside derby at the weekend.

Two goals from 8.5-million-pound striker Andy Johnson following Tim Cahill's first-half opener secured a 3-0 victory for Everton, their biggest home win against their city rivals since 1909.

With Liverpool due to face PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League on Tuesday and a trip to Chelsea in the Premiership next Sunday, Anfield manager Benitez admitted that his players must quickly overcome their defensive problems.

He said: "My players made far too many mistakes and they were just too nice from the very first minute. "They allowed themselves to be put under pressure by failing to deal with the long balls and Everton's first two goals came from mistakes."

"We may have dominated the second half and created over 20 chances, but when you concede three goals and lose to your rivals, you can never be happy."

"We kept 33 clean sheets last season and we have to get back to that way of defending as a team. We need to analyse why we have conceded goals so easily. We were very poor."

Everton outfought and outplayed their Merseyside rivals and the victory extended their unbeaten start to the season to four matches, three of which they have won.

Johnson's double strike took his tally to the season to four following his big-money arrival from Crystal Palace in the summer and manager Moyes admitted that the England forward is more than living up to his price tag.

Moyes said: "Andy's doing OK isn't he! He has nothing to prove to anybody, but he has come to one of the biggest clubs in the Premiership and you can see that the hunger to prove himself is still there."

"Maybe that hunger is there because he was let go by Birmingham and had to climb back up again. He did that by scoring so many goals for Crystal Palace in the Premiership, but having been relegated, he has now earned his big move."

"I said at the time that maybe 8.5 million wasn't that big a fee for him in this day and age. He still feels he has a lot to prove, though, but I just want him to do what he has done for the last three or four years and continue to score goals. He should feel like the king of Goodison after that performance."

Moyes admits that Everton had to ride their luck to claim the victory with Liverpool failing to take advantage of their many second half chances.

He said: "It was just our day because Liverpool had a couple of decent chances that could have gone in, but didn't."

"It's great to look at the table and be top, even if only for a few hours, but I just hope that in my time at Everton we will top on more occasions."

Liverpool defender John-Arne Riise was stretched off with an ankle injury after coming off worst following a challenge on Mikel Arteta, but Benitez played down fears of a lengthy lay-off.

He said: "It's the same ankle that John has injured before, but he should only be out for 10-15 days."

Juve held on Serie B debut

AFP, Rome

Juventus, who were banished to the Italian second division with minus 17 points for match-fixing, began their new life in Serie B with a disappointing 1-1 draw at 10-man Rimini on Saturday.

Playing outside of the top division for the first time in their history and with a new-look team following the departure of most of their star players, the fallen Turin giants made the breakthrough on the hour after a spell of Rimini pressure on the opening day of the season.

Pavel Nedved's shot was charged down, and midfielder Matteo Paro followed up with a low, right-footed drive which beat Samir Handanovic in the Rimini goal.

A seaside town on the east coast, Rimini were reduced to 10 men shortly afterwards when Domenico Cristiano was sent off for two yellow cards.

Yet despite being a man down, the home side equalised in the 74th minute.

A defensive misunderstanding between Jean-Alain Boumsong and Robert Kovac let Adrian Ricchiuti through, and his angled shot beat Gianluigi Buffon.

Bremen, Hamburg exit German Cup

AFP, Berlin

Holders Bayern Munich were given a scare by third division outfit FC St-Pauli before prevailing 2-1 in extra time in the first round of the German Cup on Saturday.

The 13th time Cup winners went behind to the minnows from the suburbs of Hamburg just after the half-hour mark after a goal from Timo Schuz.

Second half substitute Lukas Podolski levelled seconds after entering the fray but FC St-Pauli dug deep to force the game into extra time.

Bayern's Brazilian defender Lucio was then red carded for an elbow but the visitors grabbed the elusive winner in the 11th minute of extra time when FC St Pauli keeper Patrick Berger made a rare mistake when knocking Philip Lahm's cross into his own net.

Earlier top clubs Werder Bremen and Hamburg SV were embarrassed by lower league opposition.

Third division Pirmasens knocked out last season's runners-up in the Bundesliga Bremen 4-2 on penalties following a 1-1 draw after extra time.

And Hamburg also lost to third division opposition in Stuttgart Kickers on penalties, 4-3 in the shootout after the match ended 3-3.

And another Bundesliga club Energie Cottbus were eliminated 1-0 at second division Essen.

Pirlo turned down Real

INTERNET, undated

AC Milan midfielder Andrea Pirlo has revealed he turned down Real Madrid before committing to a new deal through to 2011.

"Real Madrid has tried for me," said the Italy international. "On the one hand there was an offer to join a new club, on the other was Milan."

"During as difficult a moment as that this summer, my will always has been to remain here. I will now have the possibility to close my career here."

Rotation costs Puyol place

INTERNET, undated

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard admitted yesterday that he left out Carles Puyol from their 3-0 win over Osasuna as part of a rotation policy.

Puyol missed the game and Rijkaard said: "There was no problem with Puyol. He is not injured."

"It is part of a rotation policy to give all players their time on the pitch."

"He remains being club captain."

Capello wanted another defender

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid coach Fabio Capello admits he wanted to sign a new centre-half before the summer transfer window shut.

"I requested a centre-half, but we did not find one," said Capello ahead of today's match against Levante. "(Jose) Reyes is another type of player, a different style."

"I wanted a defender and Reyes. Yes, we did not find the defender, but did get Reyes. They were both high-priorities. I already said the other day that we have made very good signings in just a very short time, because a team takes seven months to build."

Mourinho unworried over Sheva goal-drought

AFP, London



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho is prepared to give goal-shy Ukrainian Andriy Shevchenko as much time as he needs to adjust to life in the Premiership.

Shevchenko, 29, was expected to produce an explosion of goals after his 30-million-pounds move from AC Milan to Chelsea in the off-season.

He scored 173 in 296 games for Milan playing in the ultra-defensive Serie A, but Shevchenko has scored once in four Premiership games.

Mourinho leapt to Shevchenko's defence after a subdued performance in Chelsea's 2-1 win against Charlton on Saturday.

"I think he has adapted. The problem today was easy to see. He played a big game for Ukraine against Georgia on Wednesday and then travels to London," said Mourinho.

"He arrives at 6am on Thursday and, 48 hours later, he has a difficult game against a good team. We have no time to prepare and no time to work."

"The quality is there. It doesn't worry me. What worries me is that we have no time to work again before another important game."

Chelsea's Champions League campaign starts on Tuesday with a home game against Werder Bremen.

And Mourinho, speaking after his side beat Charlton 2-1 at Stamford Bridge, admitted he has fears over the players he has available.

Claude Makelele is expected to return for Chelsea after being rested from the Charlton game and Joe Cole is close to fitness after suffering a knee injury in pre-season.

Mourinho said: "We don't have a lot of players. We don't have many options to make changes. "I left Mako out to give him a rest and we will have one player back and fresh to play on Tuesday."

"I have doubts about Joe Cole. I don't think he is ready but we will see."

Inter Milan coach Roberto Mancini breathed a sigh of relief after his side survived a rousing second-half fightback to win 3-2 at Fiorentina on Saturday, the first day of the new Serie A season.

Argentine midfielder Esteban Cambiasso scored twice for the visitors in a one-sided first half, before Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic grabbed a third goal for the Italian champions.

But Fiorentina refused to throw in the towel and Luca Toni, last season's top scorer in Italy's top division with 31 goals, led the revival with two headed goals in an 11-minute spell.

Inter, who finished third last season but were awarded the championship after Juventus and AC Milan were found guilty of match-fixing, were made to suffer in the closing stages but held on for three precious points.

Asked why his team took their foot off the pedal, Mancini replied: "For an hour we were very good, but then I think there were several reasons for our lapse."

"Tiredness crept in and the heat made it difficult, but we also thought that the game was won. You can never afford to do that. We gave Fiorentina the chance to come back into the match."

Fiorentina coach Cesare Prandelli, whose team are already reeling from having to start on minus 19 points for their part in the match-fixing scandal, praised his players for not giving up the fight.

"We started badly, but then the lads reacted really well and we can build on that," he said.

With a massive points penalty, Fiorentina face a struggle just to stay up, but Prandelli said his team could ill afford to feel sorry for themselves.

"We mustn't look at the table. We are going to be bottom for some time. We can't afford to cry about our situation," he said.

In Saturday's early match, Roma defeated Livorno 2-0 at the Olympic stadium. Inter's match was preceded by a minute of silence as a mark of respect for Giacinto Facchetti.

The former Inter and Italy defender, a European Cup winner with the club in 1964 and 1965, died last Monday aged 64. Inter took the lead in the 11th minute in Florence.

After neat work from Olivier Dacourt and Hernan Crespo, Ibrahimovic found Cambiasso whose diagonal shot flew into the bottom corner.

Cambiasso headed home Inter's second four minutes before the break, nodding in a right-wing cross from Portuguese winger Luis Figo.

Cambiasso then turned provider in the 61st minute, setting up Ibrahimovic whose angled strike gave Sebastien Frey no chance.

Toni pulled one back seven minutes later when he stooped to head in Adrian Mutu's cross in the 68th minute.

And Fiorentina's hopes of snatching a point were raised 11 minutes from time when Toni buried Reginaldo's centre.

Roma, champions in 2001, also kicked off with a solid win. Daniele De Rossi opened the scoring with a swerving 20-yard shot just before half time, and Brazilian winger Mancini extended Roma's lead with a simple tap-in in the 54th minute after Rodrigo Taddei's shot had been parried.

Roma could even afford the luxury of a missed penalty, Francesco Totti blazing wide after Alessandro Grandoni was harshly judged to have fouled Mancini.



Fiorentina striker Luca Toni displays the golden boot that he received for winning the ESM European top scorer award, in the Franchi Stadium at Florence on Saturday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	36 Aspirin brand	55 Oast party	19 Silthery one
1 Big party	37 "Photograph"	DOWN	21 Exploit
5 "Mayday"	1 Brosnan role	23 Minimal	24 Mysterious
8 Pruritus	40 Libretto	2 Vicinity	letter
12 Killer whale	41 TV studio	3 Read bar	25 Stem codes
13 Name in China's history	45 Be patient	4 Popular food fish	26 Cupid's topic
14 Cherished dispenser	47 S	5 Blood-hound's clue	27 "Now then, where —?"
15 Conan of NPR	49 Teensy bit	6 Scull prop	28 Edge of a
16 Mess up	50 Sandwich treat	7 Witchcraft	35 Carton
17 Comes-tibles	51 Caviar, basically	8 That is (Latin)	36 Bikini half
18 1973 Elton John hit	52 Hold the scepter	9 Wonderland social	38 Board
20 Point	53 Hammer-stole	10 Girmalkin	39 Pinnacles
22 Jesse James	collabora- tor	11 Coll. credit	42 Needle case
contemporary	54 Coliffures	units	43 Rook partner
26 Terrible			44 "So be it!"
29 Prior to			45 Stir-fry vessel
30 Regret			46 Exist
31 Shopping center			48 Excessively
32 Might			
33 Sicilian spouter			
34 Bear, in Barcelona			
35 Clear the tables			

Solution time: 25 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

Y T S ROKD LHKO LGSOGAO
 P Y N O W G P B - S O B T P Y L I
 W K O W P G H W T A Y L N A G E L
 O R O K D B Y R O Y A I G E A .
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU KICKED A BAGGAGE CARRIER OUT OF THE COUNTRY, THEN YOU'D BE A PORTER DEPORTER.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals M

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.