



Marseille maestro Franck Ribery (R) shrugs off a challenge from Paris Saint Germain midfielder Vikash Dhorasoo during their league match at Parc des Princes in Paris on Sunday.

Marseille ride on Ribery

PSG then had a dubious penalty of their own which captain Pedro Pauleta had saved by Marseille keeper Cedric Carrasso. But Pauleta was given another chance after Bre ordered him to take it again for another Marseille after the Portugal international didn't make any mistake this time around. Ribery, watched from the stands by Zinedine Zidane, the man whose boots he's tipped to fill for Les Bleus, then exploded onto the scene in the second half. First by his attack on the PSG defence shortly after the hour mark which helped win Marseille a second penalty with Yepes again judged to be the culprit. Landreau

manfully saved it though only for penalty taker Samir Nasri to tap in the rebound. Then by a brilliant bit of work down the left side when he rounded PSG defender Bernard Mendy to produce a peach perfect cross for substitute Mickael Pagis to volley past Landreau with only 60 seconds left on the clock. Zidane said afterwards: "Once again Franck made the difference by his acceleration and quality." As if getting one or in this case three over the 'auld' enemy wasn't satisfaction enough Marseille, who were avenging last season's Cup final loss to PSG, also found themselves back on top of the league. The only team unbeaten after

five matches Marseille are in command on goal difference from Lyon while PSG, who failed to answer their club president's pre-match call to "start the season proper against Marseille", were contemplating their third defeat of the new season which kept them on just four points in 15 places. Lens, who won the title way back in 1998, had a resounding 3-0 win over Valenciennes with two goals from Aruna Dindane and Bordeaux got the better of Nice in a 3-2 victory with Jean-Claude Darcheville twice on target for Bordeaux. Elsewhere Auxerre got the better of Monaco with a 2-1 victory thanks to goals from Benoit Cheyrou and Irenezus Jelen.

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Benitez keeps the faith

REUTERS, Liverpool

Liverpool goalkeeper Pepe Reina has been given the backing of his manager Rafael Benitez in the wake of his latest high-profile mistake. The Spanish international was at fault for Everton's third goal in Saturday's 3-0 Merseyside derby defeat.

Reina palmed Lee Cearsley's shot up in the air; then backtracking caught the ball under the crossbar. With his momentum about to carry him over the line, Reina released the ball, allowing Andrew Johnson to head home. That mistake followed on from slip-ups in the FA Cup final last May against West Ham, which Liverpool eventually won on penalties.

"I have a lot of confidence in Pepe Reina after he collected 33 clean sheets last season to improve on Ray Clemence's record for conceding fewest goals," Benitez told reporters on Monday. "We don't need to talk a lot about him because he's a very good goalkeeper."

Reina will keep his place for Liverpool's opening Champions League Group C clash with PSV Eindhoven on Tuesday. Benitez says his team need to improve their defending if they are to enjoy European success this season.

"We conceded three goals with three mistakes against Everton," he added.

"We need to improve our defence. Last season we were doing all these things perfectly and we need to start again and remember everything."

Asamoah subject to racist chants

AP, Rostock

Gerald Asamoah, who played on Germany's World Cup team, was the target of racist taunts during a German Cup game.

Asamoah, who was born in Ghana and is black, scored twice and set up three goals in Schalke's 9-1 victory over Hansa Rostock's development team Saturday.

"I thought these times were over," Asamoah said. "I felt hurt."

Asamoah has spoken about similar abuse at German stadiums. Such taunting has decreased, but Rostock is one of the places where it has happened before.

Rostock's general manager personally apologized to Asamoah, who declined an offer by his coach to be substituted at halftime.

"I wanted to go on playing and show them all," Asamoah said. Asamoah will return to Rostock for an exhibition game against Georgia on Oct. 7.

"Maybe they can make it up to him then," Schalke coach Mirko Slomka said.

Oddo proud to be captain

INTERNET, undated

Italian international Massimo Oddo says he's honoured to have been named as the new Lazio captain.

"I am proud of the armband and I will do all I can to honour it, despite our 2-1 defeat against Milan," stated the stopper.

"I thought that we played an excellent game, aside from the final result, we could have done better if we had kept our cool and showed our personality, but we proved we are a good team."

Oddo was paired with a move to Milan during the summer, but no transfer fee was agreed for the attacking full-back.

"Playing against Milan was very motivating for me, I was a Lazio player who gave all he could for his team," said the world champion.

"After all that happened this summer I am glad to be here, I can now look ahead and I know my future is here," continued Oddo, who was valued at 8 million pounds by Lazio chief Claudio Lotito.

The former Verona player was also asked to clarify his position after he criticised Francesco Totti's decision to wait until 2007 before making a final choice over his proposed international future.

"I only expressed my opinion," stated the former Milan youth product. "The Nazionale is something sacred for me and I would never give up on wearing the Azzurri jersey."

"I had no intention of attacking the player," noted Oddo. "But it needs to be a final decision, one that Totti is sure of."

West Ham face Argentine dilemma

AFP, London



West Ham manager Alan Pardew admits he doesn't yet know how to get the best out of new signings

Carlos Tevez and Javier Mascherano.

Pardew left the Argentina stars on the bench for the start of his sides 1-1 draw against Aston Villa at Upton Park on Sunday despite the clamour to see the new arrivals from Corinthians make their debuts.

Tevez finally made his first appearance after an hour but, one superb burst of skill and acceleration aside, the striker was kept comfortably under wraps by Villas defence.

Mascherano however was denied any chance to make an immediate impact as he spent the entire match watching from the sidelines.

Pardew may leave the duo out

again for Thursdays UEFA Cup tie against Palermo and conceded that, although his surprise signings are among the best young players in the world, it will take time to work out how to integrate them into his side.

He said: "I honestly don't know how they fit in and how they will evolve into the team yet. That's the same with all new players who come in, not just them."

"It was the same with Marlon Harewood and all the guys I've brought here. It takes time to get to learn what players do well and what it needs to work on."

"It wasn't a statement of intent to leave them both on the bench. It was a football decision. The guys who played at Liverpool in our last match had done a fantastic job."

"I'm relieved the circus is over. There was a bit of baggage that accompanied the team from midweek after the signings and I think we suffered a bit with that."

"Without a doubt it did affect us in the first half. We looked a bit

sluggish and apprehensive and that's not what we are about.

"The new signings are the cream on the cake, but the cake has to taste nice in the first place."

With speculation mounting that Media Sport Investment, the company that sold West Ham the rights to sign Tevez and Mascherano, is moving closer to a 100 million pounds takeover of the Premiership club, Pardew was keen to make it clear that he is still calling the shots.

He added: "At the minute we are in a state of flux. There could be a takeover but I am going to protect the integrity and history of this club."

"From the Trevor Brooking era to the Tony Cottee era through to the current crop, we've always played the right way and acted the right way. That is something that must not change."



West Ham United's new signings Carlos Tevez (L) and Javier Mascherano warm up prior to their Premiership match against Aston Villa at Upton Park on Saturday.

RvN rues penalty miss

REUTERS, Madrid

Ruud van Nistelrooy was left rueing missed chances despite getting off the mark for his new club Real Madrid with a hat-trick in Sunday's 4-1 win at Levante.

The former Manchester United striker opened the scoring in the 17th minute, added a second just after the break and made up for missing an 85th-minute penalty with a third in stoppage time.

"It was a good day and an important win because we have a tough game against (Olympique) Lyon in the Champions League on Wednesday," the Dutchman told reporters after the game.

"We have gained confidence but I missed a penalty, which is really bad, and the keeper stopped another good chance of mine."

We don't fear Real: Malouda

INTERNET, undated

Lyon midfielder Florent Malouda is relishing the prospect of facing Real Madrid for the second straight season.

The French Champions were drawn alongside the Spanish giants in Group E and meet in the opener on Wednesday.

The two sides met last season, with Lyon coming out 3-0 victors at the Stade Gerland, and Malouda is confident of a similar result again. Lyon remain unbeaten after five Ligue 1 games and Malouda insists they will not fear coming up against Real.

"Our start has been great in Ligue 1," Malouda told AFP. "Real Madrid will be another story."

"It is going to be a different competition and a wonderful match."

"We have to keep our minds right and start the match like we did last year."

"We respect Real, but we don't fear them."

Malouda admits he remains unsure what to expect from Real after a number of changes over the summer.

Fabio Capello has replaced Juan Ramon Lopez Caro as coach and the Italian tactician has added a number of new faces.

Among those arriving at the Santiago Bernabeu was former Lyon midfielder Mahamadou Diarra.

Malouda added: "Judging them is difficult, it is too early, but I can say their recruitment has been good."

"They are stronger, their defence is better."

"It will be a special moment to face Mahamadou, neglecting what he did for OL would be scandalous."

"I don't know yet if the team miss him, but he has been replaced."

Oliviera delighted with debut

Football

INTERNET, undated

New-signing Ricardo Oliveira was ecstatic after scoring on his debut for AC Milan during the 2-1 victory over Lazio in the Serie A opener.

"How exciting to score at the San Siro," Milan's official website quoted Oliveira as saying to the club channel following Sunday's game.

Oliviera substituted Italy striker Alberto Gilardino in the second-half on Sunday, steering a marvellous header home to register Milan's second goal and secure three important points.

He almost doubled his tally in the closing stages when he danced his

ways past three defenders but his low drive was blocked by veteran keeper Angelo Peruzzi.

"We did well tonight. I had an opportunity to for a great shot, but the keeper did extraordinary well," he said.

"To be useful to my teammates is great and it's important to me personally. Playing with guys like Inzaghi, Kaka and the other Rossoneri make it easy."

The 26-year-old Brazilian joined Milan from Real Betis on the last day of the transfer window after playing the second half of the last season on loan to Sao Paulo.

Milan hope he can fill in the boots of Andrea Shevchenko, who signed for Premiership champions Chelsea in the summer.

With his pace and class against Lazio, Oliveira left his boss happy after the game.

"Oliviera demonstrated quickly that he has a strong presence," Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said.

"He is a smart guy, he is well-rounded and that is exactly why I think he will be useful."

He was also credited by his mates. "Oliviera scored straight away and we are happy," said Filippo Inzaghi, who scored Milan's first goal.

"He has proven what he can do, that will be important for him and his morale."

Veteran Dutchman Clarence Seedorf said: "I am happy for Oliveira, his goal unblocked the result."

Henry bias made Cole leave

AFP, London



England full-back Ashley Cole has admitted that Arsenal's love for star striker Thierry Henry contributed to his decision to leave the club for Premiership champions Chelsea.

Cole said that while the club and its fans did everything to make sure Henry stayed at Highbury, he felt like the "invisible man".

The 25-year-old left-back also revealed how he "haggled" over 5,000 pounds (9,300 dollars) after Arsenal had dropped from their original weekly salary offer, and had his loyalty questioned by the club's backroom staff.

However, in an extract from his book serialised in The Times, the difference in how he was treated compared to Henry appeared to be one of the main reasons for him to seek a transfer.

"The club made Thierry feel wanted and special, wooing him, winning and dining him, speaking in public about how much they want him to stay, going on a deliberate charm offensive," said Cole.

"But me? I didn't have one dinner, one meeting or one phone call from anyone. That's not sour grapes, it's just a sad truth. The truth is that the Gunners had done nothing all season to hold on to me."

He added: "My worst fears were confirmed when, as Thierry and I sat in the centre circle after the final whistle, his name was sung from the rooftops while my contribution was recognised by a deafening silence."

"As his chants faded away we waited for mine. And we waited. And there was nothing. They're not bothered about me," I said, resigned to the fact. It was like I was the invisible man."

Cole was offered a new 60,000 pounds (112,000 dollars) a week deal in 2004 but when negotiations opened, the figure had dropped by 5,000 pounds, with the defender adding: "At a board meeting held two days before our 1-0 away defeat at Bolton in January, it was decided the maximum offer should be 55,000 pounds a week."

"I don't believe the board gave a damn about keeping me. It preferred to haggle over a difference of 5,000."

Cole's relationship with the club deteriorated to the point of fitness coach Tony Colbert questioned whether he was telling the truth about a thigh injury.

He added: "That's when he said it, 'what do you expect me to do, Ash,

when you tell me you're okay and then come in here like you've just been shot? Be honest with me, are you just making out that it's worse than it actually is because you've got an eye on the World Cup?"

"That was it. I blew my lid. 'What!' I shouted, barely able to keep a lid on it, 'I need to play for Arsenal to go to the World Cup, so why would I hold back? The more I hold back, the less chance I've got of going to Germany! And you are insulting me!'"

"For me it was one more person at the club doubting my loyalty. And it was the final straw."



ASHLEY COLE

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions. Clues include: 1 "O Sole", 4 Comical, 8 Overly, 12 Venomous, 13 Count, 14 Neighborhood, 15 Chest-nut's, 17 Venue, 18 Bleak, 19 Flat, 20 Ain't got, 22 Debauched, 24 Canyon, 25 Reins, 29 Pi follower, 30 Unclear, 31 Shell-game, 32 Withholds, 34 Classroom, 35 Finished, 36 Thickly, 37 Palatal, 40 Hawk, 41 Streamlet, 42 Showing, 46 - Domini, 47 Gilpin of, 48 Have bills, 49 Slender, 50 Did laps, 51 CSA, Holyfield, 1960s, Drovers', RADIUS's, Miles of, Chances, Seat of, church?, Ram's, Society, AOL, Nonunion, Update, equipment, Locks, Goof up, Pub, potato, Vocation, Met, melody, Clothing-store, department, Senate, staffer, Forbidden, Caspian Sea, Tarzan's, RADIUS's, neighbor, Miles of, Chances, Seat of, church?, Ram's, Society.

Cryptogram puzzle grid with letters and numbers. The solution is: SH Z KYTH WSMTC WGTZD JTGICALZQ ZDDTLDSAL DA USCYTC YT JGTJZGTC, SC DYZD DTLUTG AMTL KZGT? Yesterday's Cryptogram: I AM VERY SURE SOMEONE LIKE GOLD-MEDALIST GREG LOUGANIS KNOWS EVERY DIVE IN TOWN. Today's Cryptogram Clue: D equals T

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