

## No surgery for Berbatov

INTERNET, undated

Tottenham manager Martin Jol insists striker Dimitar Berbatov will not require an operation to cure his groin injury.

The 10.8-million-pound summer signing from Bayer Leverkusen has been sidelined for at least a fortnight due to a minor tear in his groin.

But Jol refuted suggestions he will need surgery to rectify the problem which he picked up in last month's win over Sheffield United.

Berbatov missed the defeat to Manchester United, the victory over Slavia Prague in the UEFA Cup and last Sunday's goalless draw with Fulham.

But Jol declared: "I don't think it needs an operation. We have been pushing him and he has been pushing himself and then he had a setback."

"We treated him and then needed him again but he couldn't do it last week and it was the case again yesterday."

"He may take some time. He is not ready. It could take another couple of weeks. He still feels pain."

Spurs midfielder Danny Murphy returned to the side against Fulham and impressed Jol with his tidy control and passing.

Murphy, who left Liverpool for Charlton before moving on to Spurs, has found it difficult to settle at White Hart Lane.

But he will be relishing the prospect of returning to Anfield this Saturday and Jol maintains he can provide the creativity Spurs so desperately require.

He added: "Danny did pretty well against Fulham. You cannot say he is not a creative player."

"Last year, we had a settled team. Jermaine Jenas was the attacking midfielder player and Michael Carrick the holding player."

"Aaron Lennon was on the right and Teemu Tainio or Edgar Davids was on the left and that was the midfield for 80 per cent of the games."

"It's about chances and if he gets his chance he must grab it. He showed me last year that he is a good player. But Jermaine was always fit so he was playing there."

"He has played for us almost a year but, of course, it should be a motivation for him to do extra well because he still loves Liverpool."



PHOTO: AFP

The South Africa team that are taking part in the fourth Homeless World Cup practise in Cape Town on Wednesday. Fifty countries are taking part in the event to be held in the city from Sunday, what is seen as an organised attempt to transform lives.

# Only football on Lyon's mind

AFP, Paris



League pace-setters Lyon and Marseille continue their early season battle for supremacy this weekend

amidst the backdrop of an off-field dispute involving Francois Clerc.

The Lyon defender was fined 15,000 euros (19,000 dollars) and suspended for one match after signing contracts for both clubs earlier this year, according to press sources.

But according to the same information, Marseille have been hit with a 5,000-euro fine.

Clerc, who was in the final six months of his Lyon contract at the time, signed a pre-contract agreement with Marseille in February, before then re-signing for Lyon in May -- thus breaching league rules.

Marseille said they are baffled by reports that they too have been punished but will be looking to concentrate on their on-field activity this weekend.

More importantly for them was their success in holding on to France's golden boy Franck Ribery, who was chased by Lyon in the close season.

The Mediterranean joint-leaders travel to second-from-bottom Nantes on Sunday to play a team that have yet to win this season.

But they fired coach Serge Le Dizet this week and replaced him with Georges Eo.

Struggling teams are notorious for producing remarkably improved performances the moment a new man is at the helm as the players all try to make a good early impression.

And Marseille, who with 16 points and a +10 goal-difference from six matches are dead level with Lyon, will be wary not to slip up against a potentially tricky banana skin.

Lyon for their part host fellow Champions League qualifiers Lille, who are coming off the back of a shock home defeat to high-flying Toulouse last weekend.

Lille did bounce back in mid-

week with a 1-0 League Cup win at second division Istres, though, and Lyon goalkeeper Gregory Coupet is not expecting an easy ride.

With a trip to Steaua Bucharest coming up in midweek as well, this is an important few days for the five-in-a-row champions.

"We are going to play two very important matches, even allowing for the fact that, if you want to win the title, there are never any easy matches," said France's number one keeper.

Lille, who were expected to be one of Lyon's main title challengers, had started the season well until their reverse at home to Toulouse and now sit six points off the two leaders.

"I think we will put the pressure on. We can't afford to do otherwise," added Coupet. "We can put nine points between us (and Lille) just as they can cut it down to three."

"Nine points would be a significant gap."

Lille are sixth, level on points with Lens and St Etienne, while the season's three big surprises -- Toulouse, Nancy and Le Mans -- sit

a point above and just five off the top.

Nancy travel to capital giants Paris St Germain on Saturday with the Parisians hoping to continue the improvement of their last two matches.

PSG are struggling down in 14th place with just seven points but following a home defeat to Marseille two weeks ago, they did win at Monaco last weekend and followed that up with a League Cup victory over Lorient.

Monaco, precariously hovering in 17th spot -- one above the drop zone -- and on a measly four points, face a tough trip to Lens as they look to kick-start their campaign.

### FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
Auxerre v Sedan, Bordeaux v Troyes, Le Mans v Sochaux, Lyon v Lille, Nice v Valenciennes, PSG v Nancy, Rennes v Saint Etienne, Toulouse v Lorient  
**Sunday**  
Lens v Monaco, Nantes v Marseille

## Tactical work does Chelsea good

INTERNET, undated

Frank Lampard expects Chelsea's new signings to look more at home after a week of tactical work with Jose Mourinho.

Andriy Shevchenko and Michael Ballack are among the new recruits who have still to pick up the rhythm of Mourinho's system.

Lampard, 28, said: "We are happy to have had a long week with no midweek games. It's come at a good time for us to work hard."

"We've been able to work tactically over the last couple of days."

"We haven't had that chance before and the new players have only really been able to train with us on the day before games."

"We have had game-game-game and now it's the chance to work hard."

Ballack will miss Saturday's derby at Fulham as he starts his three-match ban for a red card against Liverpool.

Arjen Robben is back after a calf injury and is poised to start his first game since the Premiership opener against Manchester City.

Mourinho claims the Dutch speedster, who returned as a substitute against Liverpool on Sunday, will offer his team a different dimension in attack.

The Chelsea boss said: "We need him to give us more solutions. When he came on against Liverpool he scared them because he is very fast and they had to keep three players back because of him."

## Henry fit for Sheffield clash

INTERNET, undated

Arsenal striker Thierry Henry has warned Sheffield United he is fit and aiming to score early at the Emirates Stadium.

The prolific Frenchman has missed the Gunners' last two matches, including Sunday's win at Manchester United, with a foot injury.

With the Blades visiting this weekend, Arsenal are now looking to build some momentum after a shaky start to their Barclays Premiership campaign.

Henry told Arsenal TV Online: "I am fit again and can play. The foot injury stopped my progression but I have to be ready."

"We just have to score early then finally we can use the width of the pitch and try to play the game that we can."

Arsenal's title chances were written off in some quarters after the team failed to pick up a win in their first three games but Henry is not concerned about the critics.

He added: "I think it was a big one (the Manchester United win) but some people were saying Manchester United were tired and had a difficult game against Celtic in the Champions League."

"Yet we played away in the Champions League and had to go away again. Sometimes we don't get the credit we deserve but whoever we have got we just need to get three points."

## Bosnia coach in resignation u-turn

AFP, Sarajevo

Bosnia's coach Blaz Sliskovic has decided to stay on despite offering to stand down after his team's defeat to Hungary in a Euro 2008 qualifier.

"I had enough time to think it through and I decided to stay in this position," he said during an emotional press conference on Friday.

The Bosnian football association said on Tuesday it would not accept his resignation and voiced its "absolute support" to the 47-year-old who was appointed in January 2002.

Sliskovic resigned earlier this month following 3-1 loss to Hungary in a Euro 2008 Group C qualifier, citing moral reasons.

But, on Friday Sliskovic was more optimistic.

"We had a bad day when Hungary defeated us, and I think that things will start looking better with the forthcoming matches against Moldova and Greece."

"I believe that regardless of this defeat we can qualify for the European championships," he stressed.

He ended his 20-year-long career as a player in 1998 after spells with Bosnian side Velez Mostar, Hajduk Split of Croatia, Marseille in France and Pescara in Italy.

Sliskovic also played 26 matches with the national team of the former Yugoslavia, before the federation broke up in 1991.

Since the end of Bosnia's 1992-95 war, the country's national football team has failed to qualify for either the World Cup or European Championships.

# Romario in Adelaide switch?



AFP, Rio De Janeiro

Brazil legend Romario is mulling over a move to Australian team Adelaide United, the 1994 World Cup winner said on Thursday.

"We have had a first telephone conversation with Adelaide United and we will have another next week," said the former world player of the year in an interview with TV Globo.

"I will see what happens. It is a possibility but there is nothing yet concrete."

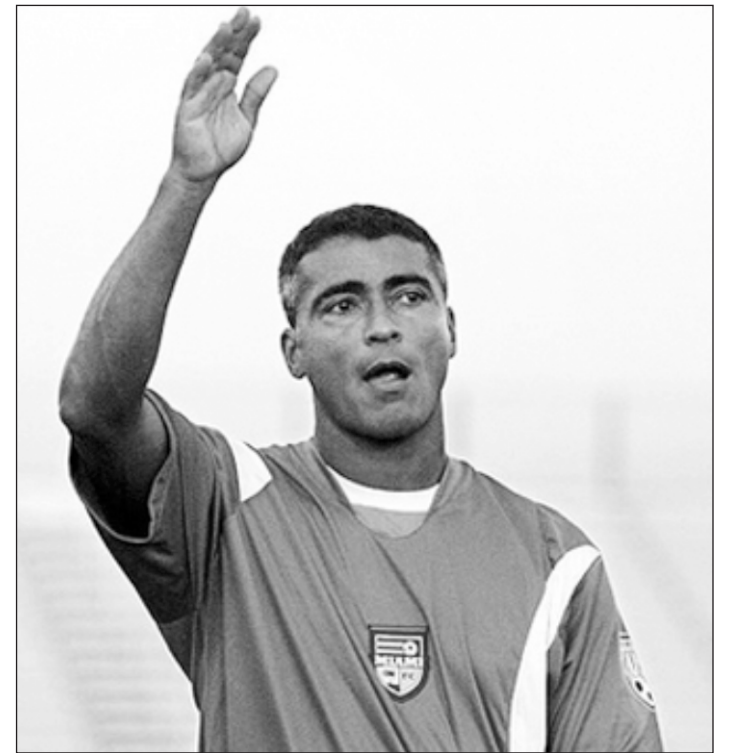
The 40-year-old striker was speaking after returning to Rio on vacation after a spell with Miami FC in the United States' second division, or minor league as it is known.

"I don't know what I'm going to do this year, nor in 2007," added Romario. "For the moment I will return to the United States in October to play in some friendly matches."

President of Romario's former Rio club Vasco de Gama, Eurico Miranda claimed in August that the player would be re-joining the club where he made his professional debut, for the fourth time.

"Romario will come back to Vasco once his situation in the United States is sorted out," said Miranda.

"His one thousandth goal and the end of his career will happen



ROMARIO

here at Vasco."

According to the player, he needs to score 18 more goals to reach the 1,000 mark for his career, although official figures on his professional goals put him at the 507 mark -- still a phenomenal total.

Romario has graced Barcelona,

Valencia and PSV Eindhoven during a 21-year career that also saw him play for three of Rio's biggest sides -- Flamengo and Fluminense being the other two -- as well as taking in a brief spell in Qatar.

# Derby stakes high for Hamburg, Bremen

AFP, Berlin



SV Hamburg and Werder Bremen were mooted as title challengers at the start of the season but both need a morale-boosting win in Saturday's north German derby to kickstart their campaign.

Last season's Bundesliga runners-up Bremen lie ninth after losing two out of their first four matches while Hamburg, third last season, are languishing fourth from bottom without a win to their name.

The Champions League participants both tasted defeats last weekend to raise the importance of the local derby.

Hamburg are set to hand a debut to Argentina captain Juan Pablo Sorin, a three-million-euro signing from

Villareal, after the defender overcame a calf injury.

Bremen, who lost 3-2 to Stuttgart last weekend after going two goals up, will have a debutant of their own in German international defender Per Mertesacker.

"Now is the time to stop talking and start acting," said Bremen manager Thomas Schaaf.

Fortunately for Bremen and Hamburg reigning champions Bayern

Munich -- the overwhelming favourites for the title -- are also far from their best and lost 2-1 to Arminia Bielefeld as they slipped to third.

Bayern host promoted Alemannia Aachen on Saturday and the visitors will be wary of a backlash.

With Bayern stuttering, Hertha Berlin have surged to the summit for the first time since 2000 courtesy of a 2-0 win over Schalke 04 last time out.

Hertha travel to Mainz 05 on Saturday but Argentine striker Christian Gimenez, scorer of both goals against Schalke, called for caution.

"We should not be talking about the title after four matches. It is far too early," said Gimenez, on a season's loan from Marseille.

Indeed the German top-flight is so tight that one of 12 teams could be the league leaders after the weekend's fixtures.

### FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
SV Hamburg v Werder Bremen, Hannover v Bayer Leverkusen, Mainz 05 v Hertha Berlin, Schalke 04 v VfL Wolfsburg, Bayern Munich v Alemannia Aachen, VfB Stuttgart v Eintracht Frankfurt  
**Sunday**  
VfL Bochum v Arminia Bielefeld, Energie Cottbus v FC Nuremberg

# Agent to sue over bung claims

AFP, London



One of the agents at the centre of the BBC's investigation into corruption in English football

has denied ever making illegal payments or bungs during transfer deals.

And Peter Harrison says he plans to join Bolton manager Sam Allardyce in taking legal action against the BBC over the way he was portrayed in this week's Panorama programme.

"I've never given bungs. I've not given a bung to Sam Allardyce. I shall be suing the BBC," Harrison told the Daily Express on Friday.

The Football Association is to investigate the claims which also target Allardyce's son, Craig.

Allardyce senior was accused by Harrison and another agent of taking bribes to allow transfers involving their clients to go through smoothly, while Craig, a former agent himself, was secretly filmed saying he could give

access to his father in return for cash.

Harrison does not deny that he has made payments to Craig Allardyce, but insists that is not unusual as sometimes several agents can be involved in a deal.

"Yes, I have paid Craig. I've never denied it."

"But Craig is a FIFA agent and in some deals there can be as many as four or five agents, so why shouldn't I pay Craig?"

He added: "I haven't heard from the FA. I shall be carrying on as an agent and I shall be doing whatever the FA want me to do," he said.

As for whether Craig Allardyce might then pass money on to his father, Harrison dismisses the suggestion as "preposterous".

He said: "I wouldn't know that. Why ask me? You would have to ask Craig and you'd have to ask Sam. But I know the answer. It is preposterous, just so ridiculous."

In a separate development Friday another agent has reported that he was asked to pay a bung by a Premiership manager.

Jon Holmes, the chief execu-

tive of SFX, one of Europe's leading agencies, has said he has been asked for illegal payments by three managers during his 30 years in the business.

Holmes told The Sun: "In my career three managers, one of them currently operating in the Premiership, have intimated to me they would like a kickback."

"One, for example, suggested that he would send a player my way but asked if he would benefit from doing so."

"Was that asking for a bung? I thought so and walked away from the situation as I did from others."

The BBC journalist who carried out the expose for Panorama has said he may be ready to name a second Premiership manager as part of his investigation.

Journalist Alex Millar claims a manager agreed to collect a suitcase containing 50,000 pounds (75,000 euros) -- with a second instalment to follow -- from a hotel but changed his mind.

Millar told the Daily Mail: "It was a big blow as we thought we were going to get it on film and people could see the type of thing

that goes on.

"If you don't catch a manager then some people will say we haven't quite made it."

"We are currently discussing how we will provide information to the FA and what exactly we will give them. But we will be as helpful as we can be."

Tuesday's expose also saw Harrison talking to Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp about his interest in signing Blackburn defender Andy Todd.

The programme claimed its footage was part of an attempt to 'tap up' the player, a contention dismissed by Redknapp.

"I don't think there is anything in it that I need to worry my lawyer about," he said on Thursday.

"From my point of view it was farcical. What was I doing on there? I don't know. It's history now and I want to move on."