

Setback for Argentinian football

AFP, Buenos Aires

Argentinian league football suffered a new setback on Sunday when fears for player safety prompted the cancellation of the Racing and San Lorenzo league game just before the kick-off.

Dozens of angry fans prevented Racing players from getting on their bus outside the team hotel in protest at the decision of the Argentinian Football Federation (AFA) to have the match played behind closed doors.

The supporters chanted: "You can't play without fans" as the team failed in their attempt to reach the La Plata ground in the city.

The game was ordered to take place without anyone in the stands following violence at the Racing v Independiente match last week.

San Lorenzo fans vented their rage by chaining the doors of the stadium.

The Argentinian league has been dogged by constant violence between fans.

As a result, measures have been taken to have all games played behind closed doors with only season ticket holders allowed to watch the action.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Borussia Monchengladbach midfielder Eugene Polanski (L) screams in agony after being tackled from behind by Hanover midfielder Vinicius during their Bundesliga encounter at Borussia Park on Sunday.

Bielefeld stretch unbeaten run

INTERNET, undated



Arminia Bielefeld stretched its unbeaten run to eight games after being held to a 0-0 draw at home by Wolfsburg at the Schuco Arena while Hannover upped the pressure on coach Jupp Heynckes by consigning Monchengladbach to a home defeat.

Arminia, who last suffered defeat against Bochum on September 24, slipped to sixth in the Bundesliga table, two places above Wolfsburg, which extended its own unbeaten streak to six games.

Former Bulgaria international Marian Hristov made his return to the Wolfsburg squad following a calf injury while in-form goalkeeper Simon Jentzsch passed a late fitness test to start after suffering a hand injury.

Wolfsburg, which holds the best defensive record in the league, showed great resilience against attack-minded Bielefeld which was restricted to just two clear-cut chances in the first half.

Artur Wichniarek looked to hand the home side an early lead as the striker skipped past Wolfsburg defender Uwe Mohrle, but was denied by Jentzsch.

Arminia defender Radim Kucera wasted the best chance of the first half with 25 minutes on the watch. Facundo Quiroga was forced to clear off the line after Bernd Korzynietz's chipped free kick had been knocked into his path by Sibusiso Zuma.

Zuma attempted a spectacular bicycle kick and long-range effort midway through the second half but failed to find the target, while Kucera headed wide from Jorg Bohme's clever flick.

Substitute Hristov was handed Wolfsburg's best chance as he was put through by Mike Hanke, but the midfielder only managed to collect a yellow card after colliding with Arminia goalkeeper Mathias Hain.

Jentzsch ensured a point for Wolfsburg with seven minutes remaining as Wichniarek broke clear but the goalkeeper won the battle to keep the scores level.

A low-quality encounter between two of the Bundesliga's struggling sides, Hannover and Borussia Monchengladbach, was decided in a favor of the visitors, 1-0, thanks to Hanno Balitsch's second-half strike.

Hannover have not won at home all season, but this was its third win on the road and the result lifts them out of the bottom three and behind Monchengladbach on goal difference alone.

The match took a while to get going and Hannover's Steve Cherundolo had the first opening of the game 24 minutes in, when he mishit a Michael Tarnat cross from the left.

Gladbach's diminutive marksman Oliver Neuville couldn't quite stretch his neck enough to reach an inviting Michael Delura cross soon after, and then Delura brought a decent stop out of Hannover goalkeeper Robert Enke.

Neuville's volleyed cross from the right found Nando Rafael in space, but his cushioned finish skimmed the post.

A goalless half dominated by

midfield play drew to a close when Hannover's Arnold Bruggink failed to force Gladbach goalkeeper Kasey Keller into anything more than a regulation save from distance.

But five minutes after the interval, the deadlock was broken when former Germany Under-21 midfielder Balitsch controlled Tarnat's pass and let fly with a daisy-cutter from 18 yards out that found Keller's bottom left-hand corner.

Going behind forced Gladbach into taking the game to their opponents, who had done the hard part by nicking a goal and were now content to protect their lead.

Rafael's left-wing cross was met by a header from Kahe that flew narrowly off target and then Rafael himself was wayward with a shot from 16 yards.

At the other end, Bruggink tested Keller with a powerful shot, while Gladbach substitute Inusa watched his deflected drive whistle past the right-hand post as the clock ticked down.

Two minutes into injury time, Hannover sub Christoffer Andersson fed Jiri Stajner on the corner of the area and his curling effort was palmed aside by Keller in the last action of the game.

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Schalke	13	8	2	3	23	15	26
Werder	13	7	3	3	33	18	24
Stuttgart	13	7	3	3	26	19	24
Bayern	13	7	2	4	21	16	23
Hertha	13	5	6	2	23	18	21
Bielefeld	13	5	5	3	22	14	20

Daum returns to Cologne

AFP, Cologne

Christoph Daum has performed a u-turn and agreed to become the new coach of German second division side FC Cologne.

The 53-year-old Daum initially turned down Cologne as he recovered from a throat operation but changed his mind and signed a contract until June 2010 on Sunday.

Daum, who coached Cologne between 1986 and 1990, will take charge of the team for the first time during the league match with MSV Duisburg on December 4.

"I'm looking forward to this challenge. Cologne has huge potential," Daum said in the Kolner Express.

Daum is a controversial figure in German football having ruled himself out of the running for the national team job in 2000 after admitting to taking cocaine.

However his record as a coach is impressive having won the German title with Stuttgart in 1992 and three Turkish league titles, with Besiktas in 1995 and Fenerbahce in 2004 and 2005.

Three-time Bundesliga champions Cologne are languishing tenth in the second division after starting the season as promotion favourites and the club recently parted company with Swiss coach Hanspeter Latour.

United plan holy trinity tribute

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United are to honour three of their greatest players with a statue of George Best, Denis Law and Bobby Charlton.

The death of legendary Northern Ireland forward Best last year led to calls for some kind of permanent memorial to his career at Old Trafford.

At present the only statue currently near the ground is that of Sir Matt Busby, manager of the celebrated 1960s United side which featured the 'holy trinity' of Best, Law and Charlton in attack, although a clock on the East Stand honours the victims of the Munich air disaster of 1958.

However, United have now commissioned sculptor Philip Jackson to create a statue featuring Best, Scotland great Law and Charlton, a member of the England team that won the World Cup in 1966 and it is hoped the result will be unveiled in 18 months' time.

"Too often, we feel we have to wait until our heroes have passed away to recognise their talent," said United chief executive David Gill.

"So we are very excited that this statue will honour the efforts not only of George Best, whose death came tragically early in his life, but also two of the game's finest forwards - Denis Law and Bobby Charlton."

Marseille banish dark memories

AFP, Paris



Mickael Pagis scored for Marseille in a 1-0 victory over Valenciennes on Sunday in the first meeting between the teams

since the 1993 match-fixing scandal which saw Marseille demoted.

There was no sign of any banners at the stadium in Marseille referring to the incident although the French league game must surely have brought up unhappy memories of the infamous episode.

Pagis ensured the three points on the hour with the win lifting Marseille into sixth place in the table but a huge 14 points behind leaders and defending champions Lyon.

"It was a good chance for Pagis and after that we defended well," said Marseille coach Albert Emon.

"All the players should be congratulated. The fans expected victory. After the goal we lost a little confidence and gave the ball away too quickly."

The result of the 1993 scandal saw both teams relegated from the first division in an incident whose effects rumbled on for years after-

ward. Valenciennes have only just returned to the top flight since they paid a heavy price for helping Marseille fix a match during the 1993 season. Marseille finished top of the tree that year but were later stripped of their title and relegated.

Although it took Valenciennes 13 seasons to return to the top flight, they were never a big club in the first place and arguably it is Marseille who have been hit the hardest.

At the time they boasted names such as Didier Deschamps, Fabien Barthez, Marcel Desailly, Alen Boksic and Rudi Voller.

They claimed the Champions League crown that year, the first French club ever to do so, and were regarded as one of European football's heavyweights.

But it was in fixing their final and decisive fixture of the domestic season against Valenciennes, in order to concentrate on the European final against AC Milan, that Marseille's demise began.

Despite heading back to the top flight just two years after their enforced relegation, Marseille have never since won their domestic title and are a long way from being able to put up a sustained challenge to Lyon, the dominant force in France.

On Saturday, the runaway lead-

ers and reigning champions Lyon left it late before an own goal by Sedan earned them a 1-0 away victory.

The victory came after a difficult period for Gerard Houllier's side who lost to Rennes last weekend, laboured to victory over Valenciennes as well as suffering injuries to strikers Fred, Karim Benzema and Sidney Govou.

However the own goal by Nadjim Abdou in the 79th minute means Lyon lead by 12 points from second-placed Lille, third-placed Lens and Nancy, in fourth spot.

In other matches, Paris Saint Germain were beaten 2-0 at their Parc des Princes stadium by Bordeaux following goals by Brazilian Wendel and Lilian Laslandes, while Monaco, recently in bottom spot, are now fifth from bottom following a 2-2 home draw with Lorient.

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Lyon	14	12	1	1	30	10	37
Lille	14	7	4	3	20	12	25
Lens	14	7	4	3	21	14	25
Nancy	14	7	4	3	13	9	25
StEtienne	14	7	3	4	23	18	24
Marseille	14	7	2	5	20	13	23



PHOTO: AFP

Olympique Marseille forward Samir Nasri (L) tries to evade the sliding tackle of Valenciennes defender Eric Chelle during their Ligue 1 encounter at the Stade Velodrome in Marseille on Sunday.

Kaiser effusive on Gomez

AFP, Stuttgart

When a legend such as Franz Beckenbauer, a World Cup winner with West Germany in 1974, heaps praise on a young player people tend to listen and everyone is talking about VfB Stuttgart's promising striker Mario Gomez.

Bayern Munich president Beckenbauer heaped praise on the German Under-21 international this week saying he was a natural poacher who should be called up to the national team at once.

"I can't deny that I'm not flattered when a footballing great such as Franz Beckenbauer says good things about me," Gomez said in Die Welt newspaper. "It shows that I'm on the right track."

"I am delighted with how things are going. I am 21 and am playing my best ever football."

"I'm gathering experience with every game and the goals breed confidence but I can still improve certain areas of my game and will be much better in three years."

With eight goals this season Gomez, 21, is joint top scorer in the Bundesliga and his strike against Bayern on Saturday enhanced his burgeoning reputation.

With just eight minutes gone Gomez, who is half Spanish, pounced onto a pass from Cacau before sprinting away from Daniel van Buyten and dispatching a clean strike past goalkeeper Oliver Kahn.

Bayern went on to win the game through goals from Roy Makaay and Claudio Pizarro but Gomez caused problems throughout with his height and turn of foot.

The qualities of Gomez persuaded Stuttgart coach Armin Veh to loan problematic striker Danijel Ljuboja to Hamburg at the start of the season and it looks a wise move.

Bayern coach Felix Magath has been monitoring the progress of 'Super Mario' and recently admitted he could become a Bayern player in the future.

Gomez has refused to fuel the speculation preferring to concentrate on Stuttgart who are enjoying a fine season and lie second in the table.

"It is not an issue for me that is why I extended until 2011," he said. Despite the pleas of Veh and Beckenbauer, Gomez has yet to be called up to the German national team with manager Joachim Low unwilling to experiment with the Euro 2008 qualifying campaign in full flow.

"It doesn't bother me that I've not been called up. It is nice just to be mentioned," Gomez said. "I watched the World Cup and it goes without saying that one of my ambitions is to make it into the Germany side by the time the 2010 World Cup comes around."

Fiery draw at Blackburn

AFP, Blackburn



Blackburn midfielder Tugay went from hero to villain as Tottenham's Jermain Defoe salvaged a 1-1 draw at Ewood Park.

Tugay scored a stunning goal to put Blackburn ahead but the Turkish star was then sent off after giving away the penalty that led to Defoe's second half equaliser.

A fiery encounter reached a spiteful conclusion when referee Phil Dowd dismissed Tottenham's Hossam Ghaly for an elbow on Michael Gray and also sent Spurs boss Martin Jol to the stands for his furious reaction to that decision.

Rovers striker Shabani Nonda had the ball in the net in the seventh minute but his effort was ruled out for offside.

Tugay's technique and vision remain unsurpassed at Ewood Park and Spurs found out exactly why in the 23rd minute.

Gray caused panic in the Tottenham defence with a deep cross that Morten Gamst Pedersen flicked on and, when Ledley King's headed clearance dropped to Tugay on the edge of the penalty area, the

midfielder lashed an unstoppable volley past Paul Robinson.

Defoe almost emulated Tugay's strike late in the first half when he caught a loose clearance with a dipping volley that flashed just over the crossbar.

Mido had a glorious chance to equalise on the stroke of half-time when he broke the Blackburn offside trap, only to scuff his shot wide with just Brad Friedal to beat.

However, Tottenham were level in the 62nd minute.

South Korean defender Lee Young-Pyo sent a long pass over the Blackburn defence and Ghaly burst through before Tugay's despairing lunge sent him crashing.

Dowd doubled the agony for the former Rangers star by deciding the foul warranted a red card. Defoe waited calmly for Tugay to trudge off before side-footing his spot-kick past Friedal.

Ghaly was shown a red card in injury time for an elbow on Gray that sparked a flashpoint that also saw Jol sent to the stands for protesting furiously as the match ended in acrimony.



PHOTO: AFP

Blackburn Rovers midfielder Tugay (C) questions the linesman after he was sent off for a foul on a Tottenham player during their fiery Premier League encounter at Ewood Park on Sunday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Auction **36** Mini-plateaus **59** Egos' counter- **16** Comedian **20** Fat **21** Sorero **22** Curved molding **23** In the style of "The Barber of Seville" composer **27** Chatter away **7** Mistake **8** Drooped **29** Shopping center **30** Puncturing tools **32** Tiny amounts **10** Basin **34** Authoritative command **37** Quest **39** 1978 Burt Reynolds movie **42** Sleep soundly? **44** Through **45** Crushing blow **46** From the beginning **50** Carpenrly tool **51** Baseball stat **52** Tease **53** "Help!"

DOWN

1 Tavern **2** Wedding response **3** Two, in Tijuana **4** Creating a fillet **5** Reproach **6** Witness **7** Mistake **8** Drooped **9** Longtime "Hollywood Squares" celeb **11** Look-alikes, in an idiom **12** Brouhaha **13** "Tosca" or "Turando!" **14** Buy now, pay later **15** Julius or Ethel of WWII **17** Shark's spydrom **18** Russian venue **19** Lascivious lookers **21** Ring around the sun **24** Paper quantity **25** Past **26** Show-biz job **28** Eugene O'Neill's genre **31** For fear that **33** Water barrier **35** Sketch

Solution time: 24 mins.

ANSWERS:
 1 AUCTION 2 WEDDING 3 TWO 4 FILLET 5 REPROACH 6 WITNESS 7 MISTAKE 8 DROOPED 9 LONGTIME 10 BASIN 11 LOOK-ALIKES 12 BROUHABA 13 "TOSCA" OR "TURANDO!" 14 BUY NOW, PAY LATER 15 JULIUS OR ETHEL OF WWII 17 SHARK'S SPYDROM 18 RUSSIAN VENUE 19 LASCIVIOUS LOOKERS 21 RING AROUND THE SUN 24 PAPER QUANTITY 25 PAST 26 SHOW-BIZ JOB 28 EUGENE O'NEILL'S GENRE 31 FOR FEAR THAT 33 WATER BARRIER 35 SKETCH 36 MINI-PLATEAUS 37 QUEST 38 "PHOOEY!" 39 1978 BURT REYNOLDS MOVIE 40 FAT 41 MID. 42 SLEEP 43 DAN 44 THROUGH 45 CRUSHING BLOW 46 FROM THE BEGINNING 47 "HOW LOVE THEE?" 48 BLACK CUCKOO 49 HISTORIC "HOLLYWOOD SQUARES" CELEB 50 CARPENRLY TOOL 51 BASEBALL STAT 52 TEASE 53 "HELP!"

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57			58					59		

CRYPTOQUIP

C O P J F R E P M D D N R I Q Y M P
 I C D D S S O P L S E D X Y
 O Q S S L . F S N R C J X D M P F X Y
 I S N E H M S N D S O I S N E H M .
Saturday's Cryptoquip: TOWN IN NORWAY WHERE FOLKS ARE KNOWN TO TAKE MALLET TO EASTER FLOWERS: LILYHAMMER.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals O

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.