English fans riot in Germany

AFP, Berlin

English football fans rioted in the German city of Cologne overnight Wednesday ahead of Tottenham's UEFA Cup match against Bayer Leverkusen, police said.

A group of about 80 fans smashed up the interior of a pub. causing damage costing 5,000 euros (6,450 dollars) and a car was

One English supporter was hurt in the incident.

Police said a group of up to 500 English fans had remained in the centre of Cologne until the early hours of Thursday morning.

Visiting fans normally gather in the pubs and bars of Cologne before making the short journey to the industrial city of Leverkusen, where the match was to take place on Thursday evening.

Police said no trouble was reported in the northern German city of Bremen, where English Premiership champions Chelsea lost 1-0 to Werder Bremen in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Nihat out for six months

AFP, Madrid

Villarreal's Turkish international striker Nihat Kahveci is facing six months on the sidelines after picking up a serious knee injury, the Spanish side announced on Wednesday.

Nihat ruptured a cruciate ligament to his left knee in a training ground collision with teammate Javi Venta earlier in the day.

The Turkey international joins two other Villarreal players --Argentina's Gonzalo Rodriguez and France's Robert Pires -- who are facing long spells out of action after suffering similar problems

Last season's Champions League semi-finalists, who are placed ninth in the Liga, posted confirmation of Nihat's problem on its official website.

'Premiership too physical'

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina forward Carlos Tevez says he has been surprised by the physical side of English football since his move to West Ham United in August.

Tevez and compatriot Javier Mascherano have struggled to adapt since their surprise transfer to the London Premier League club from Brazilian champions

"English football is very physical and you have to be very quick," he said in an interview with Argentina's

Radio Mitre on Wednesday. "Mascherano and myself knew it would be difficult and we have to be

"I knew it would be different but not this much. You don't see much dribbling here, you only get one

touch otherwise they eat your legs. "There aren't any small defenders, they're all big. And you have to be 100 percent, otherwise you don't

"It's made me improve as a player," he added. "In South America, you stand out by having good technique, but not here. I'll have to be patient and keep learn-

Boro keep faith with Southgate

REUTERS. London

Former England defender Gareth Southgate has been allowed to stay as Middlesbrough manager until the end of the season, the Premier League said on Wednesday.

Rules stipulate that Premier League managers must have started or hold the UEFA Pro Licence to work in the top flight but Middlesbrough argued that Southgate's 57 international caps had made it difficult for him to complete the badges.

He was given special dispensation at the start of the season until mid-November and that has now been extended.

"Given the specific circumstances in relation to Gareth Southgate's situation and his subsequent undertakings, the Board has consented to Middlesbrough FC's request (for him to continue as manager)," a Premier League

Former captain Southgate retired as a Middlesbrough player and took over as manager in the close season from Steve McClaren, who left to coach England following Sven-Goran Eriksson's departure after the World Cup in Germany.

The 36-vear-old's first steps in management have not proved easy, with the club 14th in the Premier League with four wins from 13 games, albeit one against champions Chelsea in August.



Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard strikes the ball past the despairing dive of PSV Eindhoven goalkeeper Gomes during their Champions League match in Anfield on Wednesday.

Reds cruise at home

AFP. Liverpool



Steven Gerrard and Peter Crouch struck secondhalf goals as Liverpool made easy work of Dutch side PSV Eindhoven to

claim a 2-0 victory and top spot of Champions League Group C at Anfield on Wednesday.

The victory means that Rafa Benitez's team now travel to Istanbul to face Galatasaray next month with nothing at stake having made sure of group leadership with this comfortable win.

Although both sides had secured qualification to the last sixteen prior to this game, top spot was still up for grabs and the incentive of progressing into the next stage as group winners ensured that this clash had a significant edge to it.

And it was Liverpool that made the brighter start as they created numerous early chances to take the lead against the Dutch champions.

The Dutch striker Dirk Kuyt almost struck a blow against his countrymen as early as the fourth minute when he was released by winger Mark Gonzalez on the edge of the PSV penalty area.

The former Feyenoord forward took a quick touch before attempt-

Bavern Munich

still have work to

do to quarantee

top spot in their

Cham-pions

League group

after being held

to a 2-2 draw by

Spartak Moscow here on

On a near balmy November

night in the Russian capital with the

temperature unusually for this time

of year above freezing Bayern

turned up with their presence in the

which would have left them

untouchable with one match to go

by a feisty Spartak side -- winless

now in 22 Champions League

matches -- who still have an outside chance of a place in the

Bayern left the Russian capital

top of Group B on 11 points, five

clear of Inter, whom they host in

their final group match next

month, taking on Sporting later

need Inter to beat Sporting to

leave them going into their final tie

against the Portuguese club with

a UEFA Cup place still in the

Spartak remain bottom and

But they were denied the win

last 16 already secured.

Wednesday.

UEFA Cup.

Wednesday.

ing to beat goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes, but his effort lacked accuracy and it flew narrowly over the

Peter Crouch then wasted a good chance at the far post when he headed Steven Gerrard's cross into The Kop, but Liverpool's hopes suffered a blow moments later when Spanish midfielder Xabi Alonso was injured by a reckless challenge from PSV's Csaba Feher.

Alonso attempted to play on with the knock, but he lasted only seven minutes before manager Rafa Benitez replaced him with the Dutch winger Bolo Zenden, who used to play fopr PV.

The loss of Alonso did not affect Liverpool's attacking efforts, though, and Gonzalez headed another chance wide before Crouch narrowly failed to get on the end of Gerrard's curling cross into the penalty area. It was wave after wave of

Liverpool attacks, but PSV somehow held firm as the home side created further opportunities through Gerrard and Crouch. Zenden saw Gomes do well to save his powerful 30-yard strike,

with skipper Igor Titov forcing

Oliver Kahn -- playing his 99th

Champions League appearance -

- into an early save and they took

the lead just after the quarter of an

man to put the hosts ahead, his

well taken free-kick floating past

the Bayern wall before thudding

into the bottom left hand corner of

tional's first Champions League

goal in 17 appearances and the

first Bayern have conceded in this

minutes when Claudio Pizarro

picked up a pinpoint pass from

Christian Lell which could have

easily come out of his idol Roberto

Carlos' repertoire over on the left

looped over the heads of a trio of

Spartak defenders to catch third-

choice keeper Aleksei Zuev

unawares to put the 2001 champi-

his off-pitch troubles -- he's fallen

out badly with his national coach

and lost his licence after being

caught drink driving -- well and

The long-haired Peruvian put

Pizarro's glancing header

Bayern trailed for all of six

season's competition.

ons back all square.

That was the Ukraine interna-

Maxym Kalinichenko was the

while Crouch headed agonisingly over the crossbar from Steve Finnan's cross shortly before half-time, but by that stage, Liverpool had also lost Gonzalez to injury with an apparent muscle

hour mark.

Kahn's net

For two teams contesting the right top the group, neither Liverpool nor PSV suggested that they possess the quality to remain in the competition beyond the first knock-out stage.

While Liverpool's attacking forays were predictable, PSV's were practically non-existent.

The visitors looked capable of escaping with a draw, however, as they continued to frustrate the home side well into the second-half and full-back Carlos Salcido almost netted a remarkable goal for PSV when he shot over the bar from 50 Liverpool's territorial dominance

deserved to be rewarded with more than a solitary point, though, and when the breakthrough finally came, it was from the best move of Kuyt created the chance when he received Steve Finnan's ball

Gerrard as he burst into the penalty area The Liverpool captain took the ball in his stride and he slotted it

and brilliantly turned Alex 20 yards

out before laying the ball off to

past Gomes from ten yards. With the game drifting to a conclusion, Crouch doubled Liverpool's advantage when he headed in from close range one minute from time.

Feisty Spartak hold Bayern truly behind him when producing

Spartak started the brighter Bayern's second. With sublime control the red hot striker produced his fourth Champions League goal in five matches when his right-footed shot from 25 metres out sailed past Zuev to complete Bayern's

first half fightback. Kahn's big match experience served the visitor's well in the closing seconds before the break to keep the visitor's in front as Spartak swamped the Bayern

After the interval Titov went tantalisingly close to restoring parity with his header off Mozart's corner narrowly edging Kahn's far

Then in the 72nd minute the Russians bagged a deserved equaliser. Radoslav Kovacs saved the

day for Spartak, the Czech Republic defender putting aside personal discomfort after the ball had slammed into his groin off a corner to shoot at close range past Kahn at the second attempt.

Daniel Van Buyten had a late chance to snatch the three points for Bayern but Zuev was up to the danger to send Bayern home frustrated.



Bayern Munich striker Claudio Pizarro is all smiles following his two-goal haul against Spartak Moscow in their Champions League clash in Moscow on Wednesday.

Ferdinand in nightclub brawl

AFP, London

West Ham United defender Anton Ferdinand was charged with assault and violent disorder on Wednesday following an incident outside a nightclub, police said.

The 21-year-old English Premiership star, younger brother of Manchester United and England centre-half Rio Ferdinand, was involved in an alleged fight outside the east London club last month.

A spokesman for London's Metropolitan Police said: "Anton Ferdinand, 21, a professional footballer, of Mottingham, southeast London, appears on bail at Redbridge Magistrates Court on Friday charged with ABH (actual bodily harm) and violent disorder following an incident outside Faces nightclub on Cranbrook Road, Ilford, on October 2."

Ferdinand's representatives eleased a statement confirming the England under-21 international had "Anton looks forward to having the

opportunity to explain in court the incident and nature of his actions on the night in question," it read. "He maintains his innocence and

believes his actions were justified and that because of this he believes he has not done anything wrong." Struggling West Ham, 16th in the

Premiership table, declined to com-

A product of the Hammers' celebrated youth academy, Ferdinand made his debut in August 2003 and has played 113 times for the east London club, scoring three goals.

Black night for Ballack

REUTERS, Bremen

Michael Ballack suffered insult and injury on his return to Germany on Wednesday when Chelsea suffered a 1-0 defeat at Werder Bremen in the Champions League.

The Germany captain, hailed by crowds as a hero earlier this vear as he helped the World Cup hosts reach the semi-finals, was booed off the field when he had to go off with a gashed calf in the 77th minute at the Weserstadion.

He was then criticised by coach Jose Mourinho, who expected more from the player he signed from Bayern Munich at the end of last "I don't think Ballack played a

good game," Mourinho told a news conference. "Sorry, but sometimes that happens. It's not a problem, he just didn't play a good game." It was an unhappy night all round for Ballack, who failed to challenge

Per Mertesacker as he scored the Werder goal and then missed an easy chance for the equaliser. Television pictures showed his calf was red and bloody at the end of

the game, although Mourinho said the injury was not serious. He and Didier Drogba, who was

also taken off injured, should be fit to face Manchester United in the Premier League on Sunday.

"(The injury to) Ballack is nothing special," the Portuguese coach said. "It's just painful and it happened because a player put his studs into the muscle. Didier has something in the ankle but nothing serious and he should in theory be ready for Sunday."

Villa to miss Real clash

INTERNET, undated

Valencia striker David Villa, who was forced off in the first half against Olympiakos in midweek with a thigh injury, is almost certain to miss the vital Liga match with Real Madrid at the weekend.

Los Che welcome the capital club to the Mestalla on Sunday, needing to win to avoid losing touch completely with the teams at the top end of the table.

Despite Valencia having already secured qualification for the knockout stage of the UEFA Champions League. Sanchez Flores fielded a full-strength side and paid the penalty when Villa pulled up hurt. The Valencia boss was upbeat

however, claiming that the 2-0 win over their Greek opponents on Wednesday will give his team the advantage over a Madrid side who could only draw at home to Lyon. "This win will raise the team's

spirits and improve our self-esteem before Real visit us," he insisted. Right-back Miguel meanwhile

illustrated the horrendous run of injuries from which the club is currently suffering, with Edu, Raul Albiol, Emiliano Moretti, Asier del Horno, Carlos Marchena, David Albelda, Jaime Gavilan, David Navarro and Vicente all missing from the first team squad.

"Everything is happening to us," Miguel lamented. "The last three or four weeks have been tough with so many injuries. It's not a good spell, but we will overcome it."

Werder were too tall: Mourinho



Giant Germans were too much for Chelsea to handle on the set pieces, coach Jose Mourinho said

Wednesday after his side were beaten 1-0 by Werder Bremen in a Champions League Group Amatch.

"We knew the most difficult situations would be the set pieces because they have four or five players (around) 1.98 metres or two metres tall and we only two or three players strong enough in the air to cope with it," Mourinho said.

He had watched in dismay as Werder's 1.98-metre tall Per Mertesacker beat Michael Ballack to a Torsten Frings corner for the match winner.

"When a team has five players around two metres tall) and another has just Ballack, John Terry and (Didier) Drogba, the other team will try to dominate every set piece."

Mourinho said that as unhappy as he was about Chelsea's first loss in Group A, he was nevertheless pleased by the fact that the narrow defeat was enough to secure a spot in the knockout round.

"It's a defeat. You are never happy with defeat," Mourinho said. "But it's a defeat that delivers us into

the second stage of the competition. "In this very difficult group to be safe in the next round, to be comfortable, to be the first in the group, to be qualified is an achievement. That's very important."

He also criticised Slovak referee Michel Lubos's decision to award Werder a free-kick after Frings appeared to fall over his own feet. which preceded the corner

Mertesacker scored from.

"The linesman is right there and doesn't call it but the referee is 30 metres away and decides to give a free kick," Mourinho said.

"That's life. That's my life in this competition. Since I won (the Champions League with Porto), I have not had very good luck with decisions."

Werder coach Thomas Schaaf praised his team for learning from their past mistakes -- such as allowing Barcelona a late equaliser earlier this season -- and said they had out-

fought Chelsea all over the pitch. "We got off to a very good start and did very well in the one-on-one situations the full 90 minutes," he said. "Chelsea are obviously a strong side but we didn't let up and kept them out of our penalty box. We took the battle to them."

Shakhtar stun Roma

INTERNET, undated



1-0 victory at RSK Olimpiyskiy kept their ÚEFA Champions League hopes alive while denying their opponents the opportunity to book their

Shakhtar Donetsk

stunned Roma as a

place in the next round. In a game they dominated, the Ukrainian side took advantage of a distinctly lacklustre Roma side to claim their first victory of the campaign thanks to a goal from Romanian forward Ciprian Marica. It was a bright start from Shakhtar,

who, with their hopes of making the second round hanging by a thread, showed no signs of fear after their 4-0 drubbing at Stadio Olimpico in Yet the Ukrainians were unable to create anything, and within a few

Right back Marco Cassetti was given the chance to make something for the Italians following a brilliant through-ball from the half-way line after 11 minutes, but he was unable to capitalise and the

minutes had handed the initiative back

opening faded away. That was the story of a difficult first

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period for both sides, where forwards were frequently restricted to halfchances. The best opportunities belonged to Shakhtar, who began to dominate the half.

Serbian international midfielder Igor Duljaj in particular was quilty of spurning a gilt-edged chance after he meekly put a free header from close range straight into Roma keeper Doni's arms.

Brandao also came close on occasion, powerfully heading a cross at Doni and later just failing to put the ball in the back of the net when Fernandinho broke through, although the second effort was adjudged off-

Roma appeared unperturbed by Shakhtar's efforts, emerging for the second half looking content to hold on for the point they needed, but gaps in their defence started to show as the lively Ciprian Marica twice threatened to make something. And on 61 minutes, the Romanian

some neat build-up play around the box gave him the space to power a sublime Jadson cross past the helpless Doni, and while Roma appealed for offside, it was to no avail.

The goal eventually sparked Roma

into action, who, for the first time in the

game, began to show some sense of

was rewarded for his efforts when

But they were unable to create anything of note and it was Shakhtar's Brazilian midfielder Jadson who again caused the problems, driving through the Italian back line only to see Doni claim the ball from his feet

Shakhtar withdrew their best two performers in the game late on, with Nigerian forward Julius Aghahowa coming on for Marica after 75 minutes and Brazilian midfielder Elano coming on for his compatriot Jadson on 80

forward and consistently threatened Doni's goal, with Fernandinho's blistering drive from the edge of the area especially impressive. Roma never looked like claiming

But still the Ukrainians pressed

an equaliser, and substitute David Pizarro was given a booking in the closing stages after his dive in the Shakhtar penalty area was spotted by German referee Wolfgang Stark.

Shakhtar were almost able to make it 2-0 in the 93rd minute when Brandao pushed the ball wide of Roma's goal following a long throw in, but Doni made the save.



Shakhtar Donetsk player Ciprian Marica sets off to celebrate after his goal consigned rivals AS Roma to defeat in

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DEFINITELY BELONG TO A FAN CLUB. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals S

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.