

Henry wants a break

REUTERS, Paris Arsenal captain Thierry Henry says he needs to rest for at least a month as he bids to recover from nagging injuries.

"I have to say stop for a month, maybe a month and a half, the time for the pain to disappear," the France striker, who said he was suffering from a sore left thigh muscle, told Monday's issue of French sports daily L'Equipe.

"After 60 matches in 2006, comes a time when your body tells you to stop and you have to listen."

Henry, who has struggled for fitness all season, missed his side's 3-0 home league win over rivals Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday because of a neck injury.

The prolific forward is suspended for the crucial Champions League tie away at Porto on Wednesday and could now sit out Sunday's league clash with champions Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Arsenal are third in the standings, 16 points behind leaders Manchester United with a game in hand.

Henry also dismissed British media reports he had argued with Arsenal manager Wenger during training.

"Yes, I did get angry about it because I can not help out my team on the pitch. It's something I find hard to accept. But I did not squabble with Arsene Wenger."



Schalke midfielder Levan Kobiashvili (R) tries to hold back Nuremberg defender Dominik Rheinhardt (C) from passing down the line to striker Robert Vittek during their Bundesliga match in Nuremberg on Sunday.

Schalke held at Nuremberg

AFP, Berlin Schalke 04 missed the chance to reclaim top spot in the Bundesliga after a 0-0 draw at FC Nuremberg on Sunday.

The point moves Schalke level on 30 points with Werder Bremen but the 2004 champions remain at the summit courtesy of their superior goal difference.

Bremen defeated Hertha Berlin 3-1 with German international Miroslav Klose scored twice to move to the top of the scoring charts with ten.

Bremen need a point against Barcelona on Tuesday to qualify for the Champions League knockout

stage and Schalke's slip means they go in with the boost of being league leaders.

Brazilian playmaker Lincoln again started on the substitutes bench as Schalke coach Mirko Slomka stuck by the old adage of never change a winning team.

"Even he has seen how well the team is performing," said Slomka. But without Lincoln Schalke could not carve Nuremberg open in a tight first half with no goals at the interval.

Slomka put Lincoln on in the 67th minute for the ineffective Hamit Altintop but it was to no avail as the visitors failed to make the breakthrough.

"I am not unhappy but not content as we could have led the table again," said Slomka.

Schalke stay second and will be

relieved that both Bayern Munich and VfB Stuttgart both slipped out.

Champions Bayern lost ground on Bremen after a 1-1 home draw with lowly Borussia Monchengladbach on Saturday and now trail Bremen by three points.

Bayern now turn their attention to Tuesday's match with Inter Milan in the Champions League where they aim to secure top spot in the group.

Stuttgart drew 0-0 with Mainz 05 on Friday but stay third two points adrift of Bremen.

The top four teams in the league are separated by a mere three points ensuring a frantic scramble for the right to be top for the six-week winter break.

Elsewhere Eintracht Frankfurt's Japanese international Naohiro

Takahara was the star man for his side on Sunday scoring all three in his team's 3-2 win over Alemannia Aachen.

Takahara opened the scoring in the 14th minute and added two more (43, 61) for a first ever hattrick in the German top-flight.

"Against Newcastle (in the UEFA Cup) it did not work out for me but these three goals are great for me," Takahara declared.

Table with 7 columns: Team, P, W, D, L, GF, GA, Pts. Lists top six teams: Bremen, Schalke, Stuttgart, Bayern, Hertha, Dortmund.

Second spot crowded out

AFP, Paris



Sochaux and Lille joined Lens in second place on Sunday as the battle for the 'other two' Champions League places

hottup in France. Sochaux beat ailing giants Marseille 1-0 while Lille won 3-1 at Nancy.

With champions Lyon running away with the league again this season, the real race is for second and third place and a spot in next season's money-spinning Champions League competition.

Rabiu Afolabi scored the winner for Sochaux with 13 minutes left to play against the increasingly troubled Marseille, who now have only two wins in their last 10 league matches.

But despite their lofty position, Sochaux coach Alain Perrin, formerly of Portsmouth, is not getting carried away.

"If we start to let things happen, or start thinking we can rely on teammates and each person can relax a little, all those are things that can pull the rug from under the feet of a successful team," said Perrin.

"Our work is psychological now to keep the pressure on this team to continue to perform."

Nancy took the lead early in the second half at home to Lille through Benjamin Gavanon.

But just past the hour mark Mathieu Bodmer restored parity and minutes later Mathieu Debuchy gave the visitors the lead before Souleymane Youla's injury time clincher.

On Saturday, Lyon broke another French record after a 1-0 win at Le Mans gave them their 14th win from the first 16 matches this season.

That win bettered the mark of 13 wins from the opening 16 contests set by Paris St Germain in the 1985/86 season. And incredibly it was Lyon's coach Gerard Houllier who was in charge of that team as well.

The victory moved Lyon on to 43 points but was due more to industry

than flair as former Arsenal forward Sylvain Wittord headed home a free-kick from Brazil midfielder Juninho just before the hour mark.

Lens won 3-0 at home to last seasons runners-up Bordeaux. Vitorino Hilton opened the scoring on 40 minutes and Daniel Cousin made the points safe on 57 minutes before Issam Jemaa's late cherry on the cake.

Struggling Monaco gave their beleaguered fans something to cheer about with a 3-0 coasting against Valenciennes.

St Etienne are fifth after a 2-0 win over Lorient, in which both sets of fans demonstrated their support for PSG's ultras.

Table titled 'TOP SIX' with columns: Team, P, W, D, L, GF, GA, Pts. Lists top six teams: Lyon, Lens, Lille, Sochaux, St Etienne, Nancy.

Hammers flirt with relegation

AFP, London



West Ham United's revival under their new Icelandic owners proved to be short-lived as

Everton's Leon Osman and James Vaughan claimed the goals that pushed the London club back down into 17th place just one point above the bottom three.

Alan Pardew's side had marked the takeover of the club with victory over Sheffield United last weekend but with new chairman Eggert Magnusson watching from Goodison Park directors' box, United slumped to a 2-0 away defeat to extend the club's disappointing start to the campaign.

Everton move seventh after weathering early West Ham pressure before taking control of the game through Osman's 52nd minute strike - his first league goal of the season in his 100th appearance for the club - before wrapping up the win when substitute Vaughan slotted home in injury time.

But while Everton manager David Moyes was left contemplating a push towards European qualification, opposite number Pardew was left in no doubt about the scale of the task facing him as he attempts to turn his

side's season around.

Carlos Tevez retained his place in the West Ham line-up despite his angry reaction to being substituted in last weekend's victory when the Argentinian stormed away from the stadium immediately after being replaced.

Pardew allowed Tevez's punishment to be decided by his teammates who decreed the forward should be forced to wear a Brazil shirt in training all week and face a fine of 1,000 pounds.

Tevez paid up but refused to be seen in the colours of Argentina's South American rivals and Alan Pardew confirmed the matter was closed by including the forward who responded with a display that should have seen the visitors in control of this game before half-time.

The former Corinthians striker has been slow to adjust to the Premiership but he was a constant threat to the home side in a one-sided first half, drawing a fine save from Everton keeper Tim Howard and setting up Lee Bowyer with a glorious chance to open the scoring in the 18th minute.

Gliding easily past the challenge of Joleon Lescott, Tevez pulled the ball back to Bowyer who stared in disbelief as Howard reacted superbly to turn the midfielder's first time shot over the bar.

West Ham's superiority was confirmed by their haul of ten corners inside the first hour but Everton finally began to make an impression through Andy van der Mejde and Andy Johnson who had both been hurriedly brought into the line-up after training ground injuries to Phil Neville and Mikel Arteta a day earlier.

Van der Mejde has endured a miserable time since his 1.8 million pounds transfer from Inter Milan in summer 2005 but he marked his first Premiership start of the season with a series of quality crosses deserved more reward.

Relieved at having reached half-time on level terms, Everton finally began to take control of the game and West Ham were forced to rue their earlier missed opportunities when the home side went ahead in the 52nd minute.

Striker James Beattie created the chance by chasing down a long ball that appeared to be going out and delivering a threatening cross that Jonathan Spector could only half-clear towards Osman on the edge of the box.

The youngster showed impressive composure to bring the ball down on his chest before volleying past Green before Vaughan ended west ham hopes in the final seconds.



Everton striker Leon Osman raises his arms in celebration after scoring a goal against West Ham in their Premiership clash at Goodison Park on Sunday.

Violence around Europe

Football

AFP, Rome

A police car in Florence was set ablaze by Lazio fans before their team's Italian league match at Fiorentina on Sunday.

According to the Ansa press agency the incident happened when two police officers came to the rescue of an elderly person who had been surrounded by a group of Lazio fans.

The two officers suffered minor injuries as the gang of thugs set upon them, throwing missiles including a bottle of inflammable liquid that exploded on hitting their vehicle.

Four fans were arrested after the attack.

It happened just a day after a fan was hospitalised after being stabbed

before the Roma-Atlanta match.

Atlanta fans had abandoned the bus they were travelling in when it became stuck in traffic to walk the rest of the way to the Olympic Stadium in Rome.

They came upon a group of Roma fans and a fight broke out.

There was also trouble at two Serie B matches over the weekend. Fans from disgraced giants Juventus clashed with police in Genoa on Friday night during the Genoa-Juventus match.

Four people were arrested and 15 injured during the clashes.

And in Naples on Saturday the referee stopped the match twice as fans pelted the pitch with missiles.

It is not just Italy that has been beset by violence this weekend.

A Turkish football supporter was stabbed in the leg by rival fans ahead

of the highly-charged Istanbul derby between the country's top two teams on Sunday, the Anatolia press agency reported.

The Fenerbahce fan was attacked by a mob of Galatasaray hoodlums in the Mecidiyekoy district, a known Gala stronghold on the European bank of the city.

The Fenerbahce fan and a friend were wearing their club's blue and yellow shirts.

The victim shot a pistol in the air before he was dispossessed of his weapon and stabbed in the leg, added Anatolia which said his life was not in danger.

Fenerbahce and Galatasaray are sworn enemies in the Turkish capital with Fenerbahce, at whose ground the match was to be played, hailing from the Asian side of the city.

Liverpool-Arsenal in FA Cup

AFP, London

Holders Liverpool and 2005 winners Arsenal were drawn together in the FA Cup third round after the draw was made on Sunday.

The two giants of the English Premiership will clash at Anfield in one of four all-Premiership ties.

League leaders Manchester United have also been handed a tough draw with Martin O'Neill's Aston Villa due to visit Old Trafford.

But the most intriguing tie of the round will take place at Chelsea with the visit of Macclesfield, who are led by former England, Manchester United and Liverpool midfielder Paul Ince, and who sit bottom of the English League system.

Werder fired up

AFP, Bremen



Werder Bremen's players can hardly contain their excitement ahead of Tuesday's Champions League battle with Barcelona as they bid to reach the last 16 and eliminate the holders.

Bremen, who lead the Bundesliga after a 3-1 win over Hertha Berlin on Saturday, are two points better off than Barcelona so a point at the Nou Camp will be enough to see the Germans progress while the Spanish champions must win to go through.

"It is a dream for every footballer to play in a game like this," said Brazilian playmaker Diego, a record six million euro signing from FC Porto.

"Two great teams are playing one another at the highest level and neither is the favourite. Barcelona are at home but we only need a point. It will be terrific."

After defeating Chelsea 1-0 in their last match Bremen have heaped the pressure on Barcelona but know that result will count for nothing should they lose in Spain.

"To have ten points after five games in this group is a real success," said Brazilian defender Naldo. "We would have been through in other groups but as it is we still need a point."

"We have not achieved anything yet but I am sure we can come through this test."

It is a huge game for both sides and Bremen sporting director Klaus

Allofs believes the Germans will win respect among their peers by eliminating the reigning European champions.

"We wanted to prove ourselves in Europe and want to put the Lyon setback to bed once and for all," said Allofs.

However holding Barcelona and their Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho to a draw on their own patch would be no mean feat.

"I refuse to think of the worst case scenario but I have to recognise that we are still the outsiders," said German international Torsten Frings.

"There are easier tasks in football than getting a point at the Nou Camp."

When the draw was made most people thought Chelsea and Barcelona would make the knockout phase with Bremen missing out and their manager Thomas Schaaf hopes to defy the odds again.

"We are still in with a shout of qualifying in a group everyone thought was already decided when the draw was made," said Schaaf.

"We have done so well and getting through in Barcelona would be the icing on the cake for us."

"It will be a full house at the Nou Camp and everyone is waiting for Barcelona to come through but lets just see what happens."

If Bremen qualify it would be the third successive year that they have reached the last 16 knockout stage of Europe's premier club competition.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 24 mins and a solution key at the bottom.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a key provided at the bottom: UK KURX ZUHDCVHX M H F O M R R U F M R R Z V R D Z W L V T D S V W R Z F M N

CRYPTOQUIP UK KURX ZUHDCVHX M H F O M R R U F M R R Z V R D Z W L V T D S V W R Z F M N COMCFM LHDCCN LDTTN. Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN TWO RILED GARBAGEMEN BAD-MOUTH EACH OTHER, DO YOU RECKON THEY ARE TALKING TRASH? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals T