

## No amateurs in Club WC: Blatter

AFP, Yokohama

FIFA president Sepp Blatter on Sunday said he would work to throw amateur teams out of the Club World Cup after Auckland City's goalless showing here.

Auckland, representing Oceania after Australia joined the Asian confederation, finished bottom of the tournament after losses to Al Ahly and Jeonbuk Motors.

"We've invited the champions of all the continents but Australia has left the Oceania continent," Blatter told reporters.

"But when you have full professional teams in the competition then the sixth one must also be professional.

"This is not only my wish but it's the will of the FIFA president as long as I'm sitting in this chair."

Auckland City have won the New Zealand national league twice since being formed in 2004 but their team of teachers, drivers and bankers lost 2-0 to Al Ahly before being outplayed 3-0 by Asian champions Jeonbuk.

Oceania last year was represented by Sydney FC, who finished fifth.

## Wenger in trouble again

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger could face a touchline ban from the English Football Association after being sent off at half-time in Arsenal's 2-2 draw with Portsmouth.

The Gunners manager was sent to the stands by referee Steve Bennett after protesting that a free-kick awarded to Portsmouth for a foul by Gael Clichy — which led directly to the visitors' opening goal — should have been awarded the other way.

Wenger has already provoked the ire of the authorities this season, having been fined 10,000 pounds and warned about his future conduct last week for a touchline confrontation with the former West Ham manager Alan Pardew.

If Bennett mentions this latest incident in his match report — which is almost certain to do, as it resulted in Wenger spending the second half of Saturday's match in seats located just behind the Arsenal dug-out — then the FA could order him to miss parts of his side's busy Christmas schedule.

Wenger was anxious to play down the significance of the incident but he did admit confronting the officials in the tunnel.

"I complained for the free-kick because I didn't feel it was a free-kick but I didn't use any bad language," he said. "It didn't disturb me too much and I don't expect to be banned. Do you want me sent to jail?"

Harry Redknapp, the Portsmouth manager, was more forthcoming in his analysis of Wenger's latest tete-a-tete.

In addition to the Frenchman's tussle with Pardew in October, he became embroiled in a furious argument with Martin Jol, the Tottenham manager, during a heated north London derby in April and Redknapp believes Wenger finds it difficult to suppress his frustration when faced by adversity.

"The guys at the top are not used to losing, so maybe they find it hard to lose?" he said. "We can all be hospitable and lovely when we win but when we lose it's a different ball game."

"The rest of us are used to it: guys like myself have to accept it because our sides aren't good enough to win every week. The ones at the top probably get more frustrated in those situations."

## Barthez back with Nantes

AFP, Paris

World Cup winning goalkeeper Fabien Barthez has gone back on his decision to retire from football and has signed with French first division strugglers Nantes.

"Fabien is joining us," said Nantes chairman Rudi Rossillon on Sunday on French television.

Roussillon said that Barthez had signed a six months contract with an option to extend for a further year whether or not the club manage to avoid relegation from the top flight.

Barthez is France's most capped goalkeeper winning the World Cup in 1998 and the European title two years later.

He also played in the side that lost this summer's World Cup final to Italy but having left his club Marseille, he failed to find another team and announced on October 5 that he was quitting the game.

The prospect of helping out Nantes, however, proved too attractive to resist with the eight-times league champions currently second bottom of the league and staring in the face what would be a humiliating relegation.

Barthez said that he would not be available to play for Nantes until after the winter break later in January.

The former Manchester United player also indicated that he considered himself back in the running to play for the national side having lost his place to long-time rival Gregory Coupet after the World Cup.



A sprawling Wigan goalkeeper Chris Kirkland (L) manages to pry the ball away from the reach of Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor during their Premiership clash at the JJB Stadium in Wigan on Saturday.

## Gunners earn tough draw

AFP, London



Emmanuel Adebayor underlined his new-found significance to Arsenal by inspiring the comeback that earned his side a 2-2 draw with Portsmouth on Saturday.

The Gunners were sliding towards a first ever defeat at the Emirates stadium after strikes either side of half-time from Noe Pamarot and Matt Taylor when Adebayor — who had surprisingly started the afternoon on the bench — sparked a stirring second-half fight-back.

The Togo international halved the arrears with his sixth goal of the season and then played a pivotal role in Gilberto's equaliser as Arsene Wenger's side extended their unbeaten league run to four matches.

Adebayor's electrifying performance denied Portsmouth a famous victory, but their manager Harry Redknapp will still see this as an invaluable point.

Arsenal began the match fluently. Pompey keeper David James was soon summoned into action, the 36-year-old reacting brilliantly to block Robin van Persie's header,

and he frustrated the Dutchman again mid-way through the half when he parried his shot at point-blank range.

Not for the first time this season, Arsenal's youngsters were flustered by failing to seize an early advantage and Portsmouth began to exert control. Redknapp's team snapped into their challenges with greater urgency and, in first-half injury time, they were rewarded when Pamarot nodded in after David Thompson had struck the post.

But if Portsmouth were gifted their opener by typically shoddy Arsenal defending, their second just after the interval was entirely of their own making. After Thompson's cross-shot had not been properly cleared, Taylor — who is establishing a reputation for the spectacular — volleyed the bouncing ball into the top corner.

With a potentially crippling defeat looming, Wenger was spurred into action. Adebayor immediately replaced the ineffective Aliadiere and within 180 seconds the Togolese smashed in Walcott's cross from close range.

Arsenal smelled blood. Two minutes later, James could only slap away Kolo Toure's long-range drive and — after Adebayor's cross had caused havoc in the Portsmouth

penalty area — Gilberto slid in the equaliser.

Portsmouth still had half-an-hour of pressure to endure, and it was unrelenting. Adebayor was only denied a certain goal by a superb last-ditch tackle from Glen Johnson, while van Persie and Alexander Hleb both shot into the side-netting when well placed.

Obafemi Martins claimed a double for the second successive weekend to fire an improving Newcastle side to a 2-1 win over bottom side Watford.

Wins for Blackburn and Sheffield United piled the pressure on to West Ham, who will remain in the relegation zone even if they can beat Premiership leaders Manchester United at Upton Park on Sunday.

Sheffield United are now seven points clear of the drop zone after Rob Hulse claimed his fifth goal of the season to fire them to a 1-0 win at Wigan.

Blackburn are six points clear of West Ham thanks to a 2-1 win at high-flying Premiership newcomers Reading, former Arsenal winger David Bentley firing the winner six minutes from the end.

## Lehmann's WC note fetches million

AFP, Berlin

The crib sheet used by Germany and Arsenal goalkeeper Jens Lehmann to help him defy Argentina in the World Cup quarterfinal penalty shootout fetched one million euros (1.3 million dollars) late on Saturday.

The sweat-stained piece of hotel notepaper contained scouting notes on the Argentinian penalty-takers, telling Lehmann which way they would direct their spot kicks.

It was bought during a televised appeal for children's charities by the German energy producer EnBW.

Lehmann, who flew to Germany to hand over the note live on television straight after Arsenal's 2-2 Premiership draw with Portsmouth, said he was astonished by the amount raised.

"It is unbelievable, I never thought this piece of paper would capture people's imagination in such a way."

Lehmann studied the note carefully before each Argentinian spot kick, slipping it into his sock at the last moment.

He stopped penalties from Roberto Ayala and Esteban Cambiasso to help Germany win the shootout 4-2 after the match in Berlin's Olympic Stadium had finished 1-1 in extra-time.

## Hitzfeld to replace Doll?

AFP, Hamburg

Struggling SV Hamburg are set to sack manager Thomas Doll and bring in former Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld as his replacement, according to a report in the Hamburger Abendblatt.

Hamburg lie second from bottom of the Bundesliga with just one win all season and Saturday's 3-3 draw with Alemannia Aachen — when Hamburg led 3-1 — looks to be the final straw.

A six-week winter break represents the best opportunity for Hamburg to make a managerial change, should they want to, and experienced coach Hitzfeld has been mooted as Doll's successor.

Hitzfeld has been out of the game since leaving Bayern in the summer of 2004 although his track record is very impressive.

The 57-year-old won four German titles, two German cups and the 2001 Champions League crown with Bayern.

## Etienne move into third

REUTERS, Paris



St Etienne underlined their hopes of reviving their glory days when they eased past Valenciennes

3-0 on Saturday to move up to third in Ligue 1.

The once great club, who have not won anything since securing the last of their record 10 French titles in 1981, climbed two spots and are now on 31 points from 18 games.

St Etienne leapfrogged Lille, who had gone 10 matches without defeat but lost 2-0 at bottom club Sedan.

Lille drop a place to fourth, one point behind St Etienne.

Champions Olympique Lyon,

who top the standings on 46 points, will on Sunday visit Racing Lens, lying second 14 points back.

St Etienne were 2-0 up courtesy of goals from Brazilian forward Ilan and midfielder Pascal Feindouno when midfielder Christophe Landrin put the icing of the cake with a superb acrobatic volley on 84 minutes.

Midfielder Gregory Pujol and striker Nicolas Marin scored for Sedan, who recorded their second victory of the season by stunning Lille.

Monaco continued their recovery from a disastrous start to the season by beating Sochaux 3-0 with goals from Jerko Leko, Jeremy Menez and Yaya Toure to move up three places to 13th.

Surprise package Nancy climbed a spot to sixth by beating

Olympique Marseille 2-0 earlier on Saturday.

Midfielder Benjamin Gavallon opened the scoring for the home side from a free kick just before half-time and Brazilian forward Kim wrapped it up from inside the box on 71 minutes.

Easterners Nancy now have 29 points from 18 games, two more than Marseille, who drop a place to seventh.

Marseille sorely missed inspirational midfielder Franck Ribery, sidelined with a groin injury.

France striker Djibril Cisse started a match for the former European champions for the first time. The forward, who fractured his right leg in June, had made his Marseille debut as a substitute in a 2-1 win over Monaco last weekend.

## Schalke topple Bremen

AFP, Berlin



Schalke 04 replaced Werder Bremen and moved three points clear at the top of the Bundesliga with a 1-0 win over Arminia

Bielefeld on Saturday.

A 82nd minute goal from Zlatan Bajramovic helped Schalke to their 11th win of the season and heaped the pressure on Bremen, who must now beat VfL Wolfsburg on Sunday to pick up the honorific title of 'winter champions'.

"It was a fortunate win and somewhat curious because Bajramovic was injured just before he scored the goal," said Schalke manager Mirko Slomka.

"We have 36 points now and I think that is a club record at this stage so that says it all."

Bayern Munich have had the honour of being top at Christmas for the past two seasons, and although they will not do so this year the champions hit four unanswered goals against Mainz 05.

Bayern moved up to third, and did a good job of silencing Bremen's German international Torsten Frings, who had labelled Bayern "bring" on Saturday and taunted them for not scoring

enough goals.

Bosnian utility man Hasan Salihamidzic opened the scoring in the 31st minute heading in a corner after Mainz goalkeeper Christian Wetklo flapped at the cross.

Dutch forward Roy Makaay added a second goal moments before half-time with his sharp turn followed by a snapshot that rocketed in off the post.

Claudio Pizarro (64min) and Bastian Schweinsteiger (66) scored twice in the space of two minutes as Mainz demonstrated why they are bottom of the table.

Bayern coach Felix Magath said: "The first goal gave us more confidence and we dominated the match. My players were a lot more concentrated and energetic than they have been in recent weeks."

Bayern, who face Alemannia Aachen in the last 16 of the German Cup on Wednesday, moved ahead of VfB Stuttgart who could only manage a 0-0 draw against Energie Cottbus.

"We were the better team but we could not do much in the final third," acknowledged Stuttgart boss Armin Veh.

Stuttgart's draw means Schalke or Bremen will be top at Christmas for the six-week winter break.

There is no trophy for the winter champions, but the omens

are good -- the team who has been top at Christmas has gone on to win the title in ten out of the last 12 seasons.

Bremen won the title in 2004 when they were top at Christmas but it proved a curse for Schalke who lost the championship to Bayern in 2001 on the final day of the season.

Down at the bottom SV Hamburg had a day to forget throwing away two valuable points in a 3-3 draw with Alemannia Aachen.

Hamburg had led 3-1 but a spectacular own goal from defender Bastian Reinhardt -- a diving header a striker would have been proud of -- in the final minute handed Aachen a point.

"It was chaotic at the end and it is not something I have experienced before," said Reinhardt. "We were 3-1 up and should have won but instead we conceded two stupid goals, and mine summed it up."

Hamburg, the only founding member of the league never to be relegated, stay second from bottom of the table with just one win all season.

Borussia Muenchengladbach, who won three successive league titles between 1975-77, are another fallen giant in the drop zone lying third from bottom.

## Gilardino matches Mutu heroics

INTERNET, undated



Alberto Gilardino and Adrian Mutu bagged a brace apiece as Milan's last-minute equaliser held Fiorentina 2-2 at the Franchi.

The Calciopoli scandal and all that followed has left these two teams battling for 15th place rather than the Scudetto. The Rossoneri were in worse shape after six points in the last seven rounds, but Alberto Gilardino was given the nod despite missing a penalty in the 0-0 draw with Torino. Within the opening four minutes Gilardino had burst between the central defenders on ex-Viola midfielder Cristian Brocchi's assist and delicately lifted the finish over Sebastian Frey.

Kaka skipped past Per Kroldrup, but Dario Dainelli's sliding tackle proved decisive, while Fabio Liverani drilled wide from a promising position.

Fiorentina were allowed back into the game when Saccani pointed to the spot, as Kakha Kaladze mis-

timed his header to clear from Luca Toni, punching the ball off his chest. Adrian Mutu stepped up to convert hard past Zejko Kalac's right hand.

The Viola were pouring forward now in a fast-paced game, with Mutu causing particular problems for Dario Simic and Kaka testing Kroldrup in the one-on-one.

On the half-hour mark Kalac spilled a curling Mutu free-kick and Simic managed to clear before Riccardo Montolivo could pounce from six yards. The Australian goalkeeper also fumbled the resulting corner kick, although his defence was able to recover.

After the break Kaka drilled well wide and Kaladze dived in to charge down Toni's shot. Toni turned Marcos Cafu for another effort deflected out and Kalac plucked last year's Capocannoniere's looping header out of the air.

A corner came out to Cafu, whose shot and Simic's follow-up were well parried by a brave Dainelli. Gilardino's header was comfortably held, but Kalac got down quickly to push away Mutu's snapshot.

Toni's influence on the game was growing and his glancing header from a Manuel Pasqual cross skimmed the far post.

Kalac was again shaky as he only flapped at Toni's header, but made up for it with a desperate save on Jorgensen's follow-up from point-blank range.

Tomas Ujifalusi cleared a danger through ball off the foot of Kaka from 10 yards, but it was Fiorentina who took the lead 14 minutes from time.

It was a sweeping counter-attack sparked by Jorgensen and his pass went across Toni to the totally unmarked Mutu, who controlled the ball and side-footed it comfortably past Kalac.

Milan were laying siege to Frey's net and in the final minute a Yoann Gourcuff corner kick was touched on by Marek Jankulovski for Gilardino's flicked header from six yards.

In Saturday's late match, Udinese beat Cagliari 3-1 to jump five places to seventh thanks to goals from Giampiero Pinzi, Vincenzo Iaquinta and Christian Obodo.

## Iran ban to be lifted

REUTERS, Yokohama

World soccer's ruling body FIFA has decided to lift its international ban on Iran, FIFA president Sepp Blatter said on Sunday.

FIFA's decision came after 11th hour talks before Tuesday's draw for the 2007 Asian Cup finals.

"We have reached an agreement with the Iran football federation that allows Iran to participate in the draw for the Asian Cup," Blatter told reporters.

"It comes into effect from tomorrow. I put an embargo on it for today but I know you will not respect it. I hope our Iranian friends won't mind."

FIFA's executive committee suspended Iran from all international competitions last month because of government interference in running the game in the country.

A solution had looked beyond both sides with Blatter describing how FIFA had received "alarming phone calls" from the country.

However, emergency talks with the Islamic Republic of Iran Football Federation (IRIFF) involving FIFA and Asian Football Confederation chief Mohamed Bin Hammam yielded a breakthrough.

"I am grateful that the government of Iran understands that we are not interfering in national politics," Blatter said before Sunday's Club World Cup final in Yokohama.

"If you are part of the FIFA family then you have to observe FIFA regulations."

## Ljungberg on the sidelines

AFP, London

Freddie Ljungberg has been ruled out of Arsenal's Christmas programme after limping out of the Gunners' 2-2 draw with Portsmouth on Saturday with a hamstring problem.

The Sweden captain was on the pitch for only five minutes before he had to be replaced by Theo Walcott.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger confirmed after the match that he would need at least ten days to recover, ruling him out of next Saturday's home clash with Blackburn and the December 26 trip to Watford.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Plumbing problem

5 Energizes, with "up"

9 Mischief

12 Destroy

13 Wild a blue pencil

14 "The — Daba Honey-moon"

15 Certain Londoner

17 "Bang!"

18 Avant-garde

19 Urge

21 Sew loosely

24 Fine

25 Choir member

26 Purple shade

30 Main-lander's memento

31 Rarin' to go

32 Gorilla

33 D.A.'s opponent

35 Kept tabs on

36 Cod pieces

37 Basilica sections

38 "Ya got me"

40 Scandina- vian city

42 "A Chorus Line"

43 Mixologist

48 "Monty Python" opener

49 Grown-up nits

50 Medita- tor's exercise

51 Ph. bk. data

52 Cheese choice

53 Cat call?

2 Genetics abbr.

3 Driver's lic. et al.

4 Spud

5 Confined, with "up"

6 Whirlpool

7 Chart format

8 Picket-line partici- pant

9 "Maude": "All in the Family": "Mork and Mindy":

10 Reed instru- ment

11 Cry loudly

16 Before arrive

20 Follow

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

**DOWN**

1 Soon to arrive

16 Before arrive

20 Follow

**IRMA LAP SLOB REALTIME ATDE APPLIES REIN OCCUR LAIR ROTUND PLOT FOGLEAF SUM TILES GAP BANANAS MOVE OPEC AUGER STAGES BUS KING PEARTREE YETI URBANITE ERIN NAY TEAR**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
12					13				14			
15				16					17			
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21	22	23					24					
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25						26	27					
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38	39						40	41				
42							43	44		45	46	47
48										50		
51										52		53

**CRYPTOQUIP**

J M D C N P W R E G Y K P R D

T M D T L K H P N P W Z K J G K K

Q E C L . G ' X K E N H M E H

T P W Y X Q D R P C D N H P Q D Z C .

**Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF YOUR FARMED LAND PRODUCES NO CROP AT ALL, I RECKON SOMEBODY MADE AN ARABLE MISTAKE.**

Today's Cryptquip Clue: K equals S

The Cryptquip 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.



DEAD OR ALIVE? Fiorentina striker Adrian Mutu (bottom) is congratulated by teammate Marco Donadel after the former scored in their Serie A clash against AC Milan in Florence on Saturday.