Sports Reporter

Four Russian booters ar rived in the city to take part in the forthcoming Star First Division football league. Of the quartet three belong to Brothers Union and one to champions Abahani Krira Chakra.

The three Brothers players are Yuri Kudinov, Boris Ispirin and Yuri Vasiliev. The first two are strikers while Vasiliev can play the dual role of defender and midfielder

Luvzi Gyorgy, a stopper, was the first of the three Russian booters of Abahani to arrive in the city. The other two are due city on June 7.

IOC h'ball course from June 8

An Olympic solidarity course for the handball coaches begins at the conference room of National Sports Council on June 8, reports UNB.

Twenty-five leading handball coaches from across the country will participate in the programme, organised by the Bangladesh Olympic Association in cooperation with International Olympic Committee.

Ton van Linder, a leading trainer of the International Handball Federation, will arrive here on June 8 to conduct the 12-day course.

Old foes square up on green

AMMAN, May 31: Long-time enemies and political rivals are set to do battle on the soccer field as Asia's qualifying campaign for the 1994 World Cup finals hots up, reports Reuter.

Three countries have already progressed to the final qualifying round later this year. The other three places will be determined by mid-July.

Japan, North Korea and Saudi Arabia are likely to be joined by Iran, Iraq and South Korea in the deciding group where past wars and political rows could fuel passions on the

South Korea should complete the formalities to win opening round Group E next week, while Iraq take a healthy points lead into the second phase of Group A matches in China next month and are also favoured to qualify for the final round.

Iran are the favourites in their opening round group against Oman, Syria and Taiwan, which will be completed in mid-July.

South and North Korea played each other, without major incident, in the final round Asian qualifying tournament for the 1990 World Cup finals in

A year later they entered a joint team at the World Under-20 Championships in Portugal but subsequent strained relations, exacerbated by North Korea's refusal to allow UN inspection of its nuclear facilities, have curbed further sports unification bids. Iran and Iraq ended a bloody 10year war just three years ago but still actively support opposition groups in each others countries.

The Iragis are also at odds with Saudi Arabia over the 1991 Gulf War when American-led allied forces used Saudi Arabia as a base for attacks on Iraq.

Japan provided considerable financial and moral support for the allied war effort against Iraq.

Iran and Saudi Arabia have been involved in a diplomatic row in the last week over Iranian pilgrims' attempts to stage anti-western demonstrations at Mecca during the annual Haj: Several Iranian pilgrims were injured in clashes with Saudi police.

It all adds up to a potentially explosive soccer tournament. The top two finishers will earn a berth in the World Cup finals in the United States

But soccers world governing body FIFA is confident soc-

cer will triumph over politics. "Although we know it could be delicate situation, we are confident that football will help to heal the wounds of the past," general secretary Joseph Blatter said.

Blatter cited the recent Group E qualifiers in Lebanon, which has only just emerged from a long civil war.

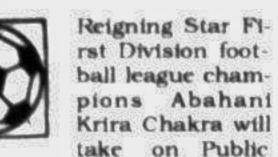
The tournament provided an opportunity for Christians and Muslims to come together in support of their national soccer team, he said.

"We are very happy that soccer has been able to provide the platform for peace. It is a very powerful symbol. We like to think that football brings harmony instead of strife."

The dates and venue for the final round of Asian qualifiers have not been finalised.

Abahani face PWD in the opener

Sports Reporter



Works Department (PWD) in one of the two inaugural matches of this year's 'twin' Senior Division football league scheduled to begin at the Dhaka Stadium from June 11.

For the first time in its history the Senior Division league will be played in two tiers simultaneously - one comprising the top ten teams of last year's unitary Star First Division football league and the other consisting of the last eight teams and the two new-

Bangladesh Boys and one time Senior Division outfits East End Club are the two teams who won the rights to rub shoulders with the less privileged equipes of the Star First Division football league. Both the leagues - one including the top ten or tagged as Premier Division league and the other classified as First Division football league will be held under the common banner of Star First Division league, named after one of the products of sponsors Bangladesh Tobacco Company (BTC) who entered into a three-year contract with the organisers. Dhaka Metropolis Football Association (DMFA). BTC took over from National Bank Limited, the previous sponsors,

LONDON, May 31:

FIFA are expec-

ted to decide this

three points for a

win in first round

World Cup finals matches in a

bid to make the showpiece

event more attractive, reports

tary of soccer's governing

body, is in favour of changing

the points system for next

year's World Cup finals in the

United States, and the issue is

marked for discussion at FIFA

FIFA's World Cup organising

meetings in Zurich this week.

committee and its decision-

making executive committee

may also discuss the thornier

issue of sudden-death extra

time, although Blatter said in

February it would not be intro-

duced at next year's World

ing he believes three points for

a win would encourage more

entertaining play and reward

teams that play attacking soc-

the 1994 World Cup are eager

sudden-death in this year's

world Youth Championship in

Group A match on Sunday to

put themselves firmly on the

march to the finals in the US

Iraq, playing in their first

soccer tournament since the

Gulf War three years ago, went

two points clear of Yemen at

the top of the group standings

at the end of the first round of

More importantly, the win

matches in this northern

put Iraq three points clear of

China, who will host the sec-

ond round of games next

month and now have to rely on

one of the group's three other

teams - Jordan, Pakistan and

Yemen - to halt Iraq's

progress to the final round of

Captain Ahmed Radi, who

missed a myriad of first-half

chances, scored the only goal

two minutes after the break,

shooting into an empty net af-

ter China's goalkeeper Xu Tao

had lost a chase for a loose ball

with Iraqi midfielder Monder

player from the Iraq squad at

the 1986 World Cup finals in

their victory, putting the

Chinese under constant pres-

sure in midfield and dominat-

tall forward Cai Sheng.

ing aerial battles with China's

total support from a 20,000-

strong crowd, most of them

expatriate Iraqis living in

Jordan. The crowd waved flags

and held up portraits of

China, the pre-tournament

favourites and third at last

year's Asian Championship,

lost a second successive game

after their shock defeat by

Jordan scored their first group

win by inflicting a 3-1 defeat

Earlier on Sunday, hosts

Yemen on Friday.

President Saddam Hussain.

They also enjoyed almost

Iraq more than merited

Radi is the only surviving

Jordanian town.

Asian qualifiers.

Khalaf.

next year, reports Reuter.

to see the change.

The American organisers of

FIFA experimented with

RBID, Jordan,

May 31: Iraq sco-

red a vital 1-0

win over China in

their World Cup

Asian qualifying

Blatter is on record as sav-

Sepp Blatter, general secre-

Reuter.

week to award

The other match of the opening day will be played between Fakirerpool Young

men's Club and 'old' babes East End Club. Mohammedans, whose bid to recapture the league diadem was cruelly cut short by a 1-2 defeat to arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra in the last match of Star First Division football league last year, will begin their quest for the title on the second day. Last year's run

ners up Mohammedans, bolstered by their recent annexation of the DMFA Cup will play their first match of this year's league on June 12. They will face Muktijoddha Sangsad. The day's other match will be between Farashganj Sporting Club and newcomers Bangladesh Boys.

Two top teams of the second tier of the First Division football league will be promoted to Premier League while the last two teams of the Premier League will be demoted to First Division league.

The ten Premier League teams are Abahani, Mohammedans, Brothers Union, Arambagh Krira Sangstha, Rahmatganj MFS, Agrani Bank, Victoria Sporting Club, Wari Club, Muktijoddha Sangsad and PWD

Fakirerpool Youngmen's Club, Farashganj SC, Dhanmondi Club, Dhaka Wanderers Club, BRTC, Eskaton Sabuj Sangha, Adamjee SC, Sadharan

FIFA attempt to make WC taky

Australia and gave approval to

the new Japanese league to use

sudden-death extra time and

penalty shoot-outs to decide

sudden-death may encourage

SEPP BLATTER

But at an International

coaches to try to win a match

in extra time rather than play

Football Association board

meeting in February he said

the only possible alternation to

soccer's laws for the 1994

World Cup would be the award-

instead of two during the

Iraq on course for WC finals

on Pakistan, who have lost all

STANDINGS

ings in the World Cup soccer

Asian Group qualifying tourna

ment (tabulated under mat-

ches played, won, drawn, lost,

4 3 1 0 16 2 7

4 2 0 2 8 2 4

4 1 2 1 5 6 4

4 0 0 4 2 21 0

8 7 1 0 19 6 15

Deadly delight

were fired in the stre-ets of

Baghdad after Iraq's 1-0 win

over China in the Asian quali-

fiers for the football World

Irbid in Jordan, put the coun-

try in a strong position for a

place in next year's finals in

America — in spite of the UN

riding round the streets of

Iraq well into the night cele-

brating the win that put Iraq at

the top of Group A of the Asian

live by Iraqi television and ra-

dio and several players were

shown declaring their deter-

mination to continue the

struggle to get Iraq into the fi-

strong praise to the victory.

The army daily Al Qadissiyah

said it was "A brilliant victory

by an Iraqi team put to the

Great Wall of China and opened

the first gates of hope," added

the government newspaper Al-

ing international sporting

events after the war. A qualifi-

cation this time — the group

will be decided with a second

tournament in China in June -

could put the US World Cup

hosts in an embarrassing posi-

Jumuriya.

"Our team has breached the

Iraq was banned from host-

test of one billion Chinese."

The officials press gave

The match was broadcast

Banner waving fans were

The Iraqi win on Sunday at

Cup, reports AFP.

embargo against Iraq.

first round of qualifying.

BACHDAD, May 31: Shots

goals for, against and points):

Following are group stand-

their four games in Irbid.

ing of three points for a win

safe for penalty kicks.

group round.

Group C:

DPR Korea

Blatter has said he believed

drawn games.

Bima KS, Bangladesh Boys and East End Club are the ten First Division league teams.

This year's league looked jeopardised few months back when players and DMFA got involved in a wrangle regarding the announcement of players' transfer. Things looked guite ominous when officials of Mohammedans and Abahani the two heavy weights of local football served an ultimatum expressing their firm resolve to abstain from transfer in no uncertain terms.

Predictably DMFA buckled under the cumulative pressure of the club officials who at one stage rustled up under the signboard of the Dhaka Metropolis Club Association to press forward their demands.

Although DMFA's yielding was a foregone conclusion the consensus among the officials helped germinate a salubrious decision to arrest the mega-inflation in country's soccer market. Taka four-lakh was fixed as the ceiling with players like Rumman Bin Wali Shabbir, Kaisar Hamid, Rumi Rizvi Karim managing the best bargain in an ambience of depression from the players' viewpoint. Observers, however, feel that after long last success-crazy club officials showed some gumption in trimming the sails of our mediocre footballers who only a year ago got away with astronomical fees in the guise of shamateurs.

In a series of meetings,

FIFA will also address the issue

of introducing professional

referees into the world's top

leagues, something Blatter has

been campaigning for since

widespread criticism of poor

refereeing performances in

the last World Cup finals three

rees are an important part of

football, but they are not

envoys from god. They must

become as professional as

players to bring the game into

has already given full support

to Blatter's vision and the ex-

ecutive committee is expected

to order some leagues to follow

Italy and draw up plans to in-

may also take steps to end the

growing conflict between clubs

and countries over releasing

soccer confederations to try to

set up a co-ordinated interna-

tional playing calendar to avoid

a continual clash between in-

ternational commitments and

may vote on its introduction on

Singapore 8 5 0 3 12 12 10

South Korea 4 3 1 0 7 0 7

Saudi Arabia 6 4 2 0 20 1 10

Hong Kong 4 2 1 1 6 7

The executive committee

8 5 1 2 22 8 11

8 1 0 7 6 19 2

8 1 0 7 4 18 2

4 1 2 1 3 3 4

2 1 21 4 8

6 2 2 2 16 7 6

6 0 0 6 1 46 0

8 7 1 0 28 2 15

6 1 1 19 4 13

0 4 13 7

4 0 3 1 4 5

4 0 1 3 4 9

major professional leagues.

Thursday.

Vietnam

Group D:

Bahrain

Lebanon

Group E:

Macau

FIFA has the backing of the

top players for internationals.

The executive committee

troduce professional referees.

FIFA's referees committee

line with society."

Blatter said recently: "Refe-

years ago.

Warne, May reign at Leicester

LEICESTER, England, May 31: Australian leg spinner Shane Warne snapped up two wickets with consecutive deliveries to start a Leicestershire collapse on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Warne and off- spinner May sent the county tumbling from 104 for two to 149 for seven on the rain-interrupted second day of their three-day cricket Robust batting by Peter

Hepworth, who struck six fours in an unbeaten 37, lifted Leicester to 168 for seven at the close, the Australians having declared at the overnight 323 for three. Warne was left in the out-

field for 42 overs on a wet and windy day before being called into the attack, but he swiftly made his mark.

Leicestershire had struggled to 104 for two but after his fourth and fifth deliveries Warne had reduced the home team to 104 for four, having Phil Robinson caught behind and bowling Ben Smith round his legs with one that turned appreciably.

Warne later dismissed Paul Nixon to end the day with three for 31 from 12 overs, bringing his tour haul to 16 first-class wickets, while May had three for 62.

May's first victim was opener Time Boon, lbw to a delivery that kept low, while his second dismissal accounted for James Whitaker and came during a phase in which three wickets fell with the total 104.

Australia's willingness to get out into the field, despite the wintry conditions and subsequent lack of atmosphere, showed their eagerness for flnal match practice before next week's opening Ashes Test at Old Trafford.

Viv shrugs off bitter memories TAUNTON, England, May

31: Viv Richards admitted he thought "long and hard" before agreeing to bury the hatchet with Somerset, who presented him with an honorary life membership on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Richards and his fellow ex-West Indies teammate Joel Garner were sacked by the English county amid great acrimony at the end of the 1986 season, with Ian Botham subsequently leaving the club in protest.

But the trio have now accepted honorary life memberships, and Richards was the first to receive his commemorative plaque during a presentation ceremony at the Taunton ground.

"I expect some people thought I might be ignorant by not accepting the offer," said the 41-year-old former West Indies captain, who is playing out his final season of county cricket with Glamorgan.

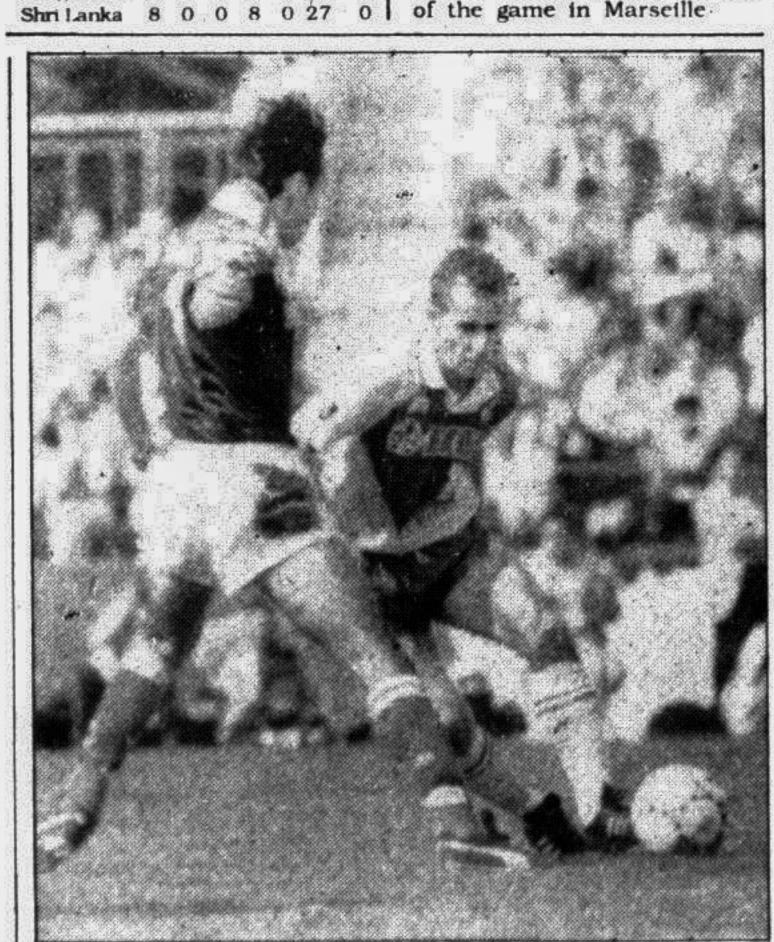
"I thought long and hard about it but told myself I was part of the structure here for

13-years. Richards, Garner and Botham were instrumental in Somerset's five trophy triumphs between 1979 and 1983 — the only successes in the club's 102-year history.

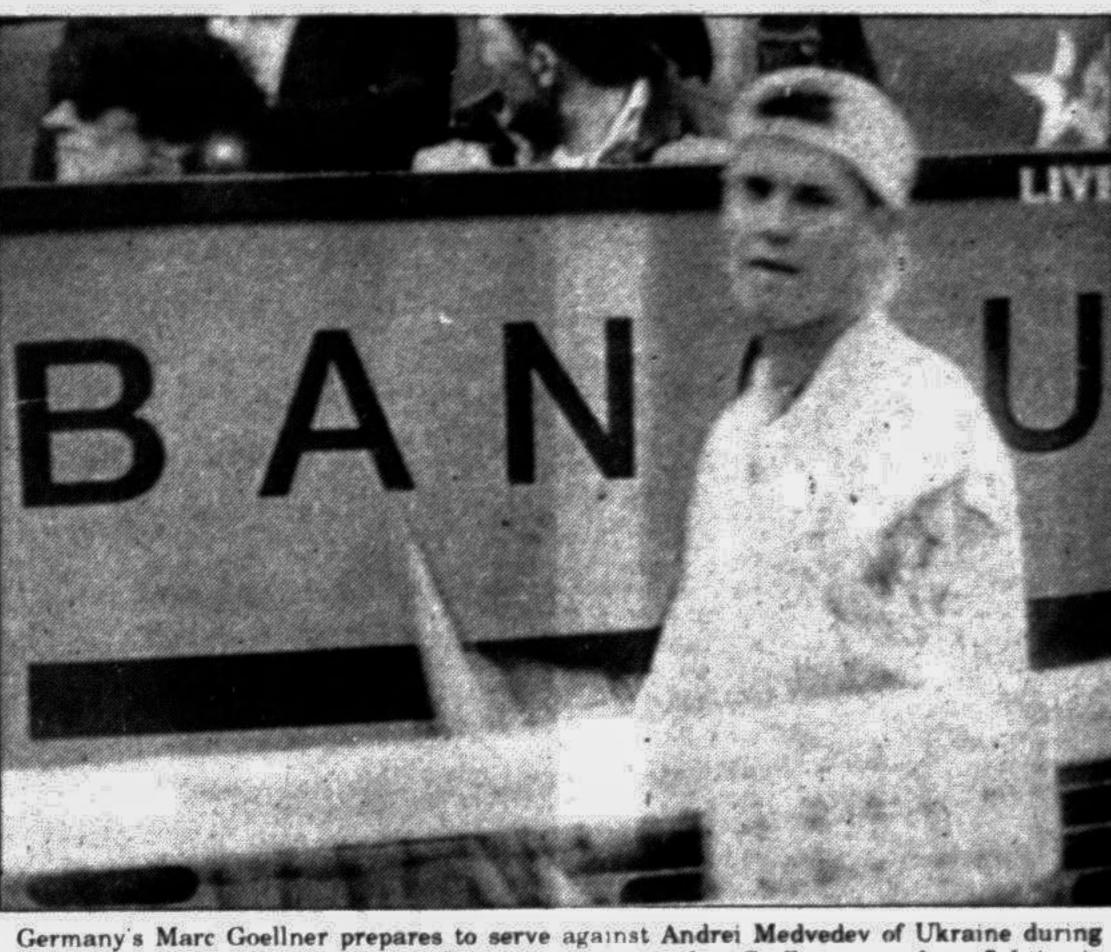
Rowdy PSG fans mar Marseille's day

MARSEILLE, France, May 31: Fourteen people were injured in the riots that marred Marseille's victory over Paris St Germain that won them a fifth consecutive French league title on Saturday, security sources said on Sunday, re-

ports Reuter. Paris fans hurled smoke bombs and missiles into sections of the Marseille supporters 15 minutes before the end of the game in Marseille



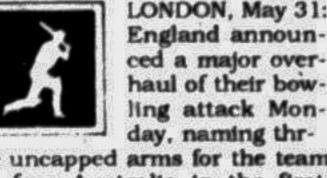
Former German international Pierre Littbarski (R) of Ichihara JEF United dribbles the ball past Takuya Jinno of Yokohama Marinos during the J-League soccer match in Yokohama on May 29. Littbarski scored once and assisted two other to lead JEF United to a thumping 5-0 - AFP photo victory.



their fourth-round encounter in the French Open yesterday. Goellner went down fighting in - Star TV photo a four-setter.

Gower, Botham left out

England name three rookies



ced a major overhaul of their bowling attack Monday, naming three uncapped arms for the team to face Australia in the first 'Ashes" Test, reports AP.

But the top of the batting lineup, which failed in four Test defeats over the winter, remained intact.

Essex pair Mark llott and Peter Such and Somerset's Andy Caddick lead the rookie contingent, along with Kent's Alan Igglesden, who has just one brief appearance in Test

The first "Ashes" Test begins Thursday at Old Trafford in Manchester.

Among specialist bowlers, only Chris Lewis and Phil Tufnell remain from the team that was swept by India and Shri Lanka during the winter

But by retaining the six batsmen, led by captain Graham Gooch, the selectors found no place for veterans David Gower and lan Botham.

Gower's omission from the India tour prompted protests from within the cricket community, and led to a special meeting to debate the selectors' decision. The 36-year-old Hampshire batsman is

England's all-time leading run producer in Test cricket. Botham, who recently an-

nounced he would retire at the end of this season, was another



GOWER... left out sentimental favourite left off the squad.

The selectors also ignored Gooch's plea to bring in specialist wicket keeper Jack Russell. Instead, Gooch's preferred opening batting partner Alec Stewart will be asked to was thought to have secured a place after his performance in the three one-day internationals earlier this month. Fellow left-hander Netl Fairbrother is

also missing, leaving six right-

keep wicket while batting

Surrey's Graham Thorpe, who

Also left off the team was

handed batsmen at the top of the lineup. llott, Such and Caddick were promoted after good performances for England's A team during a winter tour of

Australia. llott, a left-arm seam bowler, missed the entire 1991 season with a stress fracture of the back but the 22-year-old returned to form last year.

Such, 28, is a right-handed off-spin bowler, while the 24year-old Caddick, who played in the one-day internationals, is a right-arm fast-medium

Igglesden, a right-handed pace bowler, made his only previous England appearance in the final "Ashes" Test at the

Oval in 1989. The 12 selected are: Graham Gooch, Michael Atherton, Robin Smith, Mike Gatting, Graeme Hick, Alec Stewart, Chris Lewis, Alan Igglesden, Andrew Caddick, Mark Ilott,

Peter Such, Phil Tufnell.

Euro giants cling to crowns



AC Milan and their European Cup final conquerors Marseille both retained their res-

pective league titles with one game to spare this weekend, the French champions for a record fifth time in a row, reports Reuter.

With Porto also retaining the Portuguese championship on Sunday, the chances of a European Cup next season rich in former champions is strong as the other European leagues reach their climax.

Porto, European Cup win-

ners in 1987, clinched the ti-

tle with a 1-0 win over Beira Mar, the goal coming from Romanian striker Ion Timofte who also hit the only goal in a crucial victory over nearest rivals Benfica earlier in the sea-Real Madrid or Barcelona

are virtually certain of representing Spain, while Bayern Munich are in a neck-andneck race to the line with Werder Bremen in Germany next weekend. Former European champi-

ons Feyenoord Rotterdam, the leaders, and PSV Eindhoven are separated by one point going into their last matches of the Dutch First Division. Manchester United, the in-

augural English Premier League champions, are back in-Europe's senior club competition for the first time since they played the European Cup as holders in the 1968-69 sea-Glasgow Rangers, who

completed the treble with their Scottish FA Cup final win over Aberdeen on Saturday, had already ensured they stayed in the European Cup next season with their fifth straight Scottish league crown. Milan overcame their dis-

appointment at losing Wednesday's European Cup final to Marseille with a 1-1 home draw against Brescia that gave them their 13th league title as city rivals Internazionale crashed at Parma to go five points adrift. In possibly the last match in

Milan colours for both Ruud Gullit and Frank Rijkaard, Dutch stars prominent in their 1989 and 1990 European Cup triumphs, both goals came in the final eight minutes. Italy midfielder Demetrio

Albertini opened for Milan and defender Luca Brunetti equalised within two minutes.

Marseille's triumph was marred by rioting by visiting Paris St Germain fans during their match on Saturday, a 3-1 win that clinched the title.

Fourteen people, including 10 police, were injured and the match was stopped for several minutes. Marseille, the first French

Club to win the European Cup, needed only a draw. The win put them six points clear of PSG and Monaco.

After an equaliser from German Rudi Voeller, defender Basile Boli, who scored the only goal of the European Cup final, put Marseille in front with a superb header. Croatian marksman Alen Boksic made it 3-1 with his 22nd goal of the season.

Werder set up a nail-biting German Bundesliga finale when they crushed Hamburg 5-0 to overtake Bayern at the Andreas Herzog.

have only dropped three points all season, visit outgoing champions VFB Stuttgart.

Berlusconi, Capello hit back



AC Milan's title celebrations had bitter-sweet taste about them as club owner Sil-

vio Berlusconi and coach Fabio Capello hit back at critics who have labelled them an ageing side, reports Reuter. Milan's success in claiming

their 13th league title on Sunday and becoming the first team to successfully defend the Italian Championship since 1982, was marred by last week's defeat by Marseille in the European Cup final.

Said Berlusconi: Unfortunately for us we arrived in Munich in poor condition with too many important players such as (Ruud) Gullit, (Dejan) Savicevic and (Marco) Simone unavailable because of injury dini, (Jean Pierre) Papin and (Marco) van Basten, who himself admitted that he was only 50 per cent fit. "Nonetheless, Milan have

played very well and have achieved results and records that will be difficult to emu-Coach Capello lashed out

those who, in the wake of the European Cup final, had suggested Milan were over the

"We've been under attack in the last 10 weeks for an understandable loss of form, based on a series of injuries which prevented me pursuing the turnover policy (with

substitute players)," he said. "However, it is not right that this period of poor form

our great run. "It's as if our 11-point league advantage was a mere

European Cup was just a stroll. "We've been all dominant in Italy and in Europe, except for one 90-minute period for which there are mitigating

trifle, as if our 10 consecutive

games without defeat in the

circumstances," he said. But the critics were unrepentant after Milan's insipid 1draw at home to relegationthreatened Brescia ensured them the title. Closest rivals

Internazionale lost 2-0 to

Parma. Sports daily 'Gazzetta Dello Sport' declined to offer marks for the individual player's performances, arguing that they

had not done enough to be adjudicated.

top on a goal difference of one. Werder's fifth goal was scored in the last minute by Austrian

Bayern, who beat Bochum 3-1, appear to have the easier final match, away to 10thplaced Schalke. Bremen, strong at home where they

ROME, May 31: and having to send out unfit should wipe out all the rest of players such as (Paolo) Mai-