

Italy Euro v'ball champs

ATHENS, Sept 17: World champions Italy twice rallied from one set down beat the Netherlands 13-15, 15-10, 11-15, 15-12, 15-11 Saturday and retain their European volleyball championship, reports AP.

It was the second time in two years Italy outlasted the Dutch for a major title. Italy, who have won 46 of the 73 meetings between the two nations, also beat the Netherlands in Turkey, Finland, to win the 1993 European title.

Playing before a crowd of 6,000, Italy led 10-5 in the first set before the Dutch rallied. Then it was the Italians turn to rally, coming back from a 5-0 deficit in the second set. After they split the next two sets, Italy led from the start of the fifth, needing only 13 minutes to wrap up a 2-hour and 45-minute match.

Earlier, Yugoslavia routed Bulgaria 15-4, 15-4, 15-6 to take third place, an impressive finish considering it was the country's return to competition since UN sanctions were eased.

In other games, Russia trounced Poland 15-5, 15-9, 15-1 for fifth place and host Greece beat Germany 15-11, 15-4, 13-15, 10-15, 15-10 for seventh.

The top five finishers have secured a berth in the next championship in the Netherlands in 1997.



Veteran Rudi Voeller (R) of Bayer Leverkusen struggles to take control of the ball from Eintracht Frankfurt's Markus Schupp during their team's German First Division league match in Leverkusen on Sept 16. Voeller scored once in his team's 2-0 victory. — AFP/UNB photo

Liverpool lash Blackburn

LONDON, Sept 17: Liverpool took full advantage of a dispirited Blackburn Rovers on Saturday, condemning the Premiership champions to a 3-0 crashing at Anfield, reports AFP.

All the damage was done in the first half as Jamie Redknapp, Robbie Fowler and Stan Collymore made it another black day for Rovers, whose misery was compounded by the sending off of Henning Berg after 52 minutes.

Blackburn nonetheless, have lodged a complaint, with manager Ray Harford adding: "Knowing Henning like I do, I feel that booking was harsh but I have spoken to the referee and he has agreed to look at it on video."

Berg said: "I did not touch him. This happened to me last season and I am sick of it."

If Berg was sick then Blackburn, outclassed in midweek in the Champions League, were positively informed in a match delayed for 10 minutes due to a fire alert. There was no dampener, however, as Liverpool then set the Anfield turf alight.

Liverpool manager Roy Evans said: "We were sensational in the first half with our passing and movement."

"The game was easy for them in the second half and today we have seen the best and worst of us."

But Newcastle remain top of the table after another sparkling performance, cruising to a 3-1 victory over bottom side Manchester City.

Peter Beardsley opened the scoring from the penalty spot after 17 minutes, and Alan Ball's men must have known it was not to be their day when right-back Richard Edgill was sent off seven minutes later.

Robert Lee (38 minutes) and Les Ferdinand (59) his fifth goal of the season wrapped up a comfortable victory before the match ended on a brighter note for City with a debut goal from new signing Gerry Creaney.

Keegan, so critical of his side after their defeat at Southampton last week, said this week's response had been everything he had asked for.

"People always criticise English football," said the Newcastle boss. "But if you were to bottle the first 15 minutes, throw it away and have it found in 200 years you'd never see anything better."

"It had everything great skill and teamwork and fantastic goalkeeping and I was so pleased with the way we dominated the game."

Manchester United stayed right on Newcastle's heels with a 3-0 win over outclassed Bolton at Old Trafford. Paul Scholes scored twice for United, while Ryan Giggs continued his impressive form after injury by notching his second goal in successive League games after 34 minutes.

It was also a day to forget for midweek European heroes Leeds, who went down 3-1 at home to QPR and had central defender John Pemberton sent off for two bookable offences.

Dany Dichio grabbed two goals for Rangers, sandwiching England under-21 Trevor Sinclair's 39th minute effort. David Wetherall notched a consolation for Leeds a minute before time.

Aston Villa moved up to third-two points behind the leading duo with a 2-0 triumph over Wimbledon.

It was nowhere near as convincing as the 7-1 scoreline in last season's corresponding fixture, but goals from Mark Draper and Ian Taylor ensured Villa's jinx over the Dons continued.

Teddy Sheringham was Sheffield Wednesday's chief tormentor at Hillsborough where Tottenham came from behind to win 3-1.

The England striker had a major hand in all three Spurs goals and would have had a hat-trick but for Wednesday defender Ian Nolan putting the ball in the net himself on the hour mark.

It was a day of celebration at Stamford Bridge on Chelsea's 90th birthday as Glenn Hoddle's men scored three times in the last 17 minutes to see off Southampton.

Ruud Gullit scored his first goal in this country just a minute before the end to add to Frank Sinclair's 74th minute opener but there was still time for Mark Hughes to make it 3-0 in the final seconds.

"We scored three excellent goals and finished worthy winners," said Chelsea manager Glen Hoddle. "They were two excellent volleys by Mark and Ruud, but Frank's goal was a good goal. It was scored when the pressure was on but for a centre-half he kept his head extremely well."

But Hoddle acknowledged: "Ruud is going to be a happy man tonight after getting off the mark and Mark's finish was his speciality... a lovely goal."

Hungary, Italy in water polo WC final

ATLANTA, Sept 17: Tibor Benedek led Hungary with four goals in an 11-6 victory over the United States, and top-ranked Italy withstood a Russian comeback to win 6-5 Saturday and advance to the finals of the IX Water Polo World Cup, reports AP.

Italy will meet Hungary for the gold medal on Sunday, and the United States and Russia will play for the bronze in the tournament at the Georgia Tech Aquatics Centre, site of the 1996 Olympics water polo competition.

Croatia and Spain also qualified for the Olympics with victories Saturday and will meet Sunday to decide the fifth and sixth-place finishers. Spain defeated Greece 5-3, while the Croatians topped The Netherlands 9-7.

The top six finishers in the World Cup qualify for the 1996 Games. The United States, as host country, was assured a spot anyway.

Italy were led by the scoring of Roberto Calcaterra and Alessandro Bobo, with two goals each.

Gullit said: "It was an important goal because it was the goal we needed to be secure."

"I was pleased with the team performance and with the crowd. They were very enthusiastic and gave us that push we needed. We hope to have that every game."

In a bizarre match at Highbury, West Ham's substitute goalkeeper Les Sealey was handed the task of trying to equalise Ian Wright's 75th minute penalty for Arsenal which turned out to be the winner.

Sealey's striking role was Hammers manager Harry Redknapp's final throw of the dice as he had used his two other substitutes after the 66th minute dismissal of Julian Dicks.

But it was all in vain as Arsenal achieved their first home League win of the season — although Wright had missed from the spot in the first half after being brought down by Dicks.

Arsenal boss Bruce Ruch said: "Although the winning goal came from a penalty it was satisfactory because we worked hard and passed the ball better today than we have been doing."

"Ian Wright showed great spirit putting it away after missing the first penalty, which I thought he also struck well — but wide."

Middlesbrough continued their fine start to the season with a 2-1 win over Coventry — coming from behind with goals from Steve Vickers and Jan-Aage Fjortoft after Brazilian Marques Isaias had given the sky blues a 47th minute lead.



Karen Botha of South Africa leaps into the air to take bronze in the long jump final at the All-Africa Games in Harare on Sept 16. The Springbok was later suspended from the Games after she had tested positive for performance-enhancing steroids. — AFP/UNB photo

FIFA happy with French stadia

PARIS, Sept 17: FIFA is fully satisfied with progress on the 10 French stadia which will host the 1998 World Cup finals, reports AFP.

Keith Cooper, FIFA's media director, said Saturday there was a "highly positive" reaction from a delegation which visited France last week.

"In contrast to the United States where it was necessary to adapt the stadia, here one has ready-made football grounds with competent people running them who are used to hosting big matches each week," Cooper said.

The main stadium in the Paris suburb of Saint Denis, which will host the tournament final, is currently under construction.

Metz stay in title race

PARIS, Sept 17: Unbeaten Metz Sank Monaco 1-0 in the principality on Saturday to threaten leaders Paris St Germain at the top of the French League, reports Reuter.

Metz, who scored with a 29th minute volley from Robert Pires, are now on 19 points, only one behind the Parisians, who travel to Montpellier today.

If the victory confirmed Metz's solid start to the season, it climaxed a dreadful nine days from Monaco, who have now lost their last three matches.

The team coached by former France international midfielder Jean Tigana lined up against Metz after suffering reverses against PSG in the League and Leeds United in the UEFA Cup.

To add to Tigana's woes, midfielder Sylvain Legwinski was sent off in the second half and will miss Monaco's next league match.

Tigana had to field Monaco's fourth goalkeeper this season, Stephane Porato.

First choice Fabien Abbrtetz has been out of action for months with a knee injury. Fabien Piveteau pulled a muscle against Leeds and Marc Delaroché was badly hurt in a clash of heads with defender Basile Boli, also against Leeds.

Reigning champions Nantes were held 0-0 by newly-promoted Guingamp.

All-Africa Games medals table

Medals table on Saturday at the end of day four of the All Africa Games in Harare. (Tabulate under gold, silver, bronze, total):

Country	G	S	B	T
Egypt	12	7	8	27
South Africa	10	14	10	34
Nigeria	8	5	5	18
Kenya	5	7	5	17
Algeria	4	5	7	16
Tunisia	4	4	7	15
Zimbabwe	3	2	4	9
Senegal	3	1	4	8
Mauritius	1	2	3	6
Ethiopia	1	0	5	6
Gabon	1	0	2	3
Sierra Leone	1	0	1	2
Burundi	1	0	0	1
Ghana	0	2	2	4
Ivory Coast	0	2	0	2
Cameroon	0	1	3	4
Burkina Faso	0	1	0	1
Central Africa Rep	0	1	0	1
Angola	0	0	2	2
Madagascar	0	0	2	2
Congo	0	0	1	1
Lesotho	0	0	1	1
Namibia	0	0	1	1

Chavez retains WBC crown

LAS VEGAS, Sept 17: Julio Cesar Chavez, showing the poise and patience of a champion in

his 98th fight, wore down David Kamau in the late rounds Saturday night to win a unanimous 12-round decision and escape with the WBC super lightweight title, reports AP.

Chavez overcame a first-round head butt that opened a gash over his left eye and the relentless pressure of Kamau to retain his 140-pound (63.5 kilo) title in a decision that delighted a highly partisan crowd at the Mirage hotel-casino.

It was the 96th win in 98 professional fights for Chavez, who also upped his mark in title fights to 31-1-1.

But it didn't come easy against the top-ranked Kamau, who used his speed and reach advantage to build up an early lead before tiring under the onslaught of Chavez in the later rounds.

Judge Larry O'Connell scored the fight 116-114, while Anek Hongtongkam favoured Chavez by a 116-112 margin. Judge Carol Castellano had Chavez winning 117-110. The Associated Press had the fight even, 114-114.

Chavez, bleeding from the cut over his left eye caused with seconds to go in the

first round, appeared frustrated in the early rounds against Kamau, native of Kenya fighting out of Los Angeles.

When he was butted, he grimaced and motioned to referee Mills Lane, who did nothing as blood began to flow from over the eye.

"What bothered me the most is the referee didn't interfere when I got butted," Chavez said.

Kamau, always on the move and the aggressor much of the time, controlled the early tempo of the fight, using his left jab to find the range and then throwing combinations that more often than not found their mark.

The 33-year-old Chavez, on the other hand, looked very much like a fighter feeling his age and the effects of 98 pro fights as he seemed unable to get off his punches when he had Kamau in range.

But the fight began turning in the middle rounds as Kamau began tiring and Chavez started landing more left hooks.

Chavez knocked down Kamau with a left hook in the eighth round, but Kamau was up quickly, arguing that he had slipped. By that time, however, Chavez appeared in control of the fight while Mamau was clearly tiring, fighting most of the time with his mouth open.

In the final round, how-

ever, it was Chavez going down, apparently from a left. Chavez was back up quickly and Lane ruled it a slip.

"I don't think I lost the fight," Kamau said. "In the 12th round I knocked him down."

Chavez, who earned \$1 million for the fight, stayed in line for his planned final two fights, the last one on May 5 against Oscar De La Hoya in what figures to be one of boxing's richest fights ever.

He failed, however, in his effort to tie a record set by Joe Louis of 22 knockouts in title fights.

Kamau, who like Chavez weighed the class limit of 140 pounds, earned 250,000 dollars, has biggest payday ever. It was the first loss for Mamau in 27 fights.

In another title fight on the card, Terry Norris retained his WBC super welterweight title by stopping David Gonzales in the ninth round.

Gonzales had gone down twice earlier and was withering under a barrage of punches when referee Richard Steele moved in to stop the bout at 2:59 of the ninth round.

It was the second title fight in four weeks for Norris, who regained the title Aug 19 by stopping Luis Santana in the second round.



Promoter Don King (L) holds up the hand of Terry Norris of the United States who knocked out compatriot David Gonzales in the ninth round of his WBC Super Welterweight Championship fight at the Mirage Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas on Sept 16. — AFP/UNB photo

Norris Gonzales' nightmare

LAS VEGAS, Sept 17: Terry Norris might look for a less durable opponent the next time

he fights two title fights in less than a month.

It took Norris nine round Saturday night to finally dispose of a game but outclassed David Gonzales and retain the WBC super welterweight title he won just four weeks ago from Luis Santana, reports AP.

Norris knocked down Gonzales twice but the challenger was still on his feet when referee Richard Steele moved in to stop the fight just as the bell sounded to end the ninth round.

Gonzales was taking a beating and desperately trying to hold on to Norris as Steele waved the fight to a close at 2:59 of the ninth round.

"I did what I had to do," Norris said. "I paced myself for this fight."

The fight was part of a card at the Mirage hotel-casino topped by Julio Cesar Chavez, who was defending

his WBC super lightweight title against top-ranked David Kamau.

Norris, who earned 200,000 dollars, wasted no time in showing his dominance against Gonzales, the WBC's No 12 contender who took the fight on only a week's notice.

He knocked down Gonzales with a left-right combination two minutes into the fight, but Gonzales got up quickly and managed to last the round.

Norris dominated the entire way but Gonzales fought gamely, landing an occasional right hand while trying to pressure the champion.

A big right hand by Norris early in the fifth round put Gonzales down again, but again he got up and finished the round on the attack.

"I didn't think he was going to get up," Norris said.

But the sheer multitude of punches, many coming from a stiff left jab, finally wore down Gonzales. He was almost defenseless when Steele finally moved in to stop the fight, much to the displeasure of the crowd.

"I felt the fight should be stopped no matter how much time was left," Steele said. "I knew they had four more rounds to go and I knew he couldn't go four more rounds."

Norris, 151, of Campo, California, improved to 40-6 with 25 knockouts. Gonzales, 152, of Houston, dropped to 40-5-1.

In another fight, former two-time champion Michael Carbajal was supposed to meet Mexico's Goya Garcia in a 10-round bout, but it was cut back to six rounds just before the fighters entered the ring.

As it turned out, Carbajal didn't even need that long. Carbajal knocked down Garcia in the first round and battered him at will before finally stopping him at 1:46 of the third round of their junior flyweight fight.

Carbajal, a former two-time champion, and Garcia, of Mexico, were to have fought a 10-round fight, but it was cut back to six rounds after some preceding bouts went the distance.

Karen suspended for doping

HARARE, Sept 17: South African athlete Karen Botha, wife of former Springbok rugby captain Naas Botha,

has been suspended from the All-Africa Games for using a banned stimulant, an organising committee official said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

He said the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa was expected to announce the suspension later and Botha faced an automatic three-month ban.

The official, who asked not to be identified, said it would affect the results of the long jump, in which Botha won a bronze medal, and the sprint relay, where South Africa won a silver and Botha had competed in the heats.

"Our understanding is that all along Karen Botha knew what the tablets she took were capable of doing," he said.

South African team doctor Ismail Jakoet said on Saturday Botha had tested

positive for the banned substance dextropropoxyphen.

"We are absolutely sure Karen took these pills unwittingly," Jakoet told reporters.

Botha told a news conference on Saturday the substance was contained in medication prescribed by a doctor for back pains and she had taken it for the first time in June.

"You know when you jump you get these back pains. I actually took these tablets knowing they would give me relief."

The organising committee official said Botha declared the medication she was under after she was asked for a urine sample.

South African officials have stood by Botha.

"I do not defend Botha but she did not deliberately use these substances," said South African head of delegation Muleki George. "I believe she is very innocent."

George said some countries taking part in the Games in Zimbabwe had a

grudge against South Africa, which is participating for the first time, because it challenged their traditional dominance of sport on the continent.

Nunez's nifty crown

WINSCHOTEN, Netherlands, Sept 17: Brazilian Valmir Nunez took advantage of near perfect conditions to take more than four minutes off his previous best and win the 100-kilometre (62.15-mile) World Challenge by more than two minutes, reports AP.

Nunez finished 10 trips around a 10-kilometre (6.2 mile) circuit in this northern Dutch town in 6 hours, 18 minutes, 9 seconds, beating his previous best of 6:22:13 and Alexey Volgin of Russia, who finished in 6:20:44.

Tom Johnson of the United States was third in 6:30:11, a new personal best by 11 minutes.