

Azlan Shah Cup

ROK, Aussies split points

IPOH, Malaysia, May 6: Asian Games champions South Korea today fought back from a one-goal deficit against Australia to equalise 1-1 in the dying minutes of their match in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament, reports AFP.

Defender Shin Seok-Kyo scooped in the equaliser one minute from full time after tournament favourites Australia led 1-0 through Paul Lewis in the 56th minute.

The faster and fitter Koreans had the better share of the attacks but their attempts were foiled by an in-form Australian keeper Dreher Lachlan.

Korea had four penalty corners to show for their dominance while Australia had none.

Both teams started out on a fast pace. The Aussies had a chance to lead in the 10th minute but Lewis' point-black shot from the top of the semi-circle was saved by keeper Koo Jin-Soo.

The Koreans, who beat defending champions India 2-0 Sunday, rallied and were awarded two penalty corners in the 16th and 17th minutes but they squandered both chances.

ACB to launch bigger show

MELBOURNE, May 6: An eight-a-side tournament to be played as an abridged form of the one-day game was launched by the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) today, reports Reuters.

Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and India will join an Asian invitational side for the competition in Kuala Lumpur from July 12-14.

Matches are predicted to last about two hours, with each side bowling 14 overs. Hits over the boundary are worth eight runs instead of the normal six, and batsmen will have to retire once they score 50.

Australia will field two teams in the competition, drawn largely from the ranks of the country's six Sheffield Shield sides, the ACB said.

Former Australia captain Allan Border, who retired from first-class cricket in March, will play for the Asian invitational side.

ACB chief executive Graham Hall said: "By introducing a fast, participant version of our game, cricket is looking after its grassroots and strengthening the sport at international level at the one time."

The tournament in Malaysia will be followed by three similar events in Australia over the following three weekends featuring the country's six state sides, the ACB said.

Kamsky accepts

ELISTA, Russia, May 6: American grand Master Gata Kamsky has agreed to play the World Chess Federation's championship match in Russia, the federation's president said Sunday, reports AP.

Kamsky's father said last month that his son would refuse to play without guarantees of personal safety and prize money.

The young Kamsky will play Russia's Anatoly Karpov for the championship in Elista, capital of the region of Kalmykia on the Caspian Sea, said the federation's new president, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, who also is president of Kalmykia.

The federation, known by its French acronym FIDE, has scheduled the match to start June 1 in Elista.

Ilyumzhinov told reporters Sunday that Rustam Kamsky, the 22-year-old chess player's father and manager, would arrive in Elista on Tuesday, the ITAR-Tass news agency said. The report did not say when his son would arrive.

The report also did say whether Rustam Kamsky's concerns had been met.

Under FIDE rules, a national chess union is responsible for any FIDE event held on the territory of its country, including organization, prizes and fees as well as the players' safety and conduct.

ITAR-Tass said prize money for the tournament stood at two million dollars.

Workers Stadium yet to impress Venables

BEIJING, May 6: England soccer coach Terry Venables inspected the pitch at Beijing's Workers' Stadium at the weekend but has yet to say if it is good enough for a match against China, officials said today, reports Reuters.

"It's not clear yet whether the pitch will be okay. It seems there are some problems," an official of the Chinese soccer association said.

English approval of the pitch was a condition for the friendly international on May 23, a vital outing in the run-up to next month's European Championships, Venables told Reuters on Sunday.

As coach of the host nation, Venables — who will resign after the European Championships — is under extra pressure to win England's first major trophy since its 1966 World Cup win.

Chinese experts and officials have hailed the Workers' Stadium pitch as one of the finest in China, but five hours after inspecting it at half-time during a Chinese Division A match Venables said no decision had been made on whether the turf passed English muster.



David May (No 12) of Manchester United heads home the first of his team's three goals against Middlesbrough during a Premier League match in Middlesbrough on May 5. United ensured their 10th league title with this win (3-0).

— AFP/UNB photo

Man United conquer Premier league



LONDON, May 6: Manchester United crushed Middlesbrough 3-0 on Sunday to win the English league title in style after their only rivals Newcastle United were held to a 1-1 home draw by Tottenham, report agencies.

David May headed his first goal of the season, Andy Cole scored against his former club with a spectacular overhead kick only 30 seconds after entering the game as a substitute and Ryan Giggs hammered the third from 25-yard left-foot to give the Reds the title for the third time in four years and the 10th time in their history after one of the closest and most thrilling championship races of recent times.

The result meant Alex Ferguson's team finished with 82 points from the 38 games and Newcastle, who once had a 12-point lead, had 78.

It also kept alive their hopes of winning an unprecedented second English league and cup double as they face Liverpool in the F A Cup final next Saturday.

Newcastle had to beat Tottenham and hope that Ferguson's men lost at Middlesbrough, to win the title for the first time for 69 years.

It's the hardest league in the world to win," Ferguson said after his team had collected the trophy again. "It took a long time to win it but we had a tremendous run, winning 16 out of 17 games to put us back in the frame."

"When we were 12 points behind, we knew we had to

start winning games. We got our defenders back and started doing that. The win at Newcastle in March was vital."

Roy Keane, voted man-of-the-match, said: "When we were 12 points behind, we thought it was all over really. But we knew Newcastle would slip up. We just kept plugging away."

"We always came to win the match and we knew if we won today we had the title no matter what happened in the other game."

TWO-IN-ONES	
Teams that have won the English FA Cup and the English First Division league in the same year:	
1889 — Preston North End	
1897 — Aston Villa	
1961 — Tottenham Hotspur	
1971 — Arsenal	
1986 — Liverpool	
1994 — Manchester United	

ter what happened in the other game."

Sir Bobby Charlton, a member of United's 1968 European cup-winning side and now a director at Old Trafford said: "It was a bit nerve-wracking. But it has been a great year for the younger players — and the older players. I'm really so pleased for everybody at the club. I shall enjoy it all summer."

Disappointed, Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan said: "We are still trying to build a team as good as them. Our congratulations go to Manchester United."

ester United and their supporters who did well to catch us. Everyone talks about our collapse but they did tremendously well to catch us."

Peter Beardsley of Newcastle said: "All credit to Manchester United. They've done it in style and they probably deserved to win it overall."

While there was ecstasy for the Red half of Manchester there was nothing but gloom at Middlesbrough after Manchester City were relegated on goal difference, despite fighting back from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Liverpool.

Liverpool took the lead when Steve Lomas put through his own net after only six minutes and went 2-0 ahead with a stunning shot from Ian Rush, scoring his 229th and last league goal for the club before leaving after 15 years at the end of the season.

City came back with a 71st minute penalty from German striker Uwe Rosler and a 78th minute equaliser from Kit Symons, but results elsewhere condemned them to drop out of the top division for the first time since 1989.

Sheffield Wednesday, Coventry and Southampton, who could all have been relegated, were saved by City's result. Wednesday finished on 40 points with Coventry, Southampton and Manchester City all on 38, meaning City went down on goal difference.

Coventry, never relegated since they went up to the old First Division in 1967, survived after a 0-0 draw at home against Leeds.

Southampton stayed up

after drawing 0-0 with Wimbledon and Sheffield Wednesday remain in the top flight after a 1-1 draw at West Ham.

City go down with already-relegated Queens Park Rangers and Bolton who ended the season with a 3-0 defeat at Nottingham Forest and a 2-1 loss at Arsenal respectively.

Arsenal's win — thanks to two goals in the last eight minutes from David Platt and Dennis Bergkamp — mean they pip Everton, Blackburn and Tottenham for a place in next season's UEFA Cup.

Fourth place Aston Villa, which also is in the UEFA Cup after winning the League Cup, tumbled 1-0 at Everton, whose scorer was Joe Parkinson. Everton moved up to sixth.

Last year's champions Blackburn scored a 3-2 victory at Chelsea to take seventh place. After Chelsea's Dennis Wise had given the home team the lead, Rovers came back with goals from Tim Sherwood, Billy McKinlay and Graham Fenton. John Spencer replied for the Blues, which slipped just below half way to 11th in Glenn Hoddle's last game as manager before he becomes England coach in July.

Sunderland and Derby, already sure of promotion to the Premier league, ended the season with defeats. Sunderland went down 2-0 at Tranmere and Derby slipped up 3-2 at West Bromwich Albion.

The four teams to contest the playoffs for the third promotion place are Crystal Palace, Stoke, Leicester and Charlton.

Alami makes Morocco proud

ATLANTA, May 6: Karim Alami became the first player from Morocco to win an ATP Tour event with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Nicklas Kulti on Sunday in the 328,000 dollars AT and T Challenge, reports AP.

Alami, who beat defending champion Michael Chang in Saturday's semifinals, relied on his impressive serve, which topped out at 203 kph.

In an earlier win over Argentina's Javier Frana, the Moroccan native, nicknamed "Air Alami" for his vertical leap, registered a serve at 209 kph (130 mph).

Alami, who received 43,000 dollars for the win at the Atlanta Athletic Club, recorded nine aces and won 81 per cent of his first serve points against Kulti.

"I've been working a long time to win my first ATP (Tour event)," he said. "I was really exhausted."

"I was lucky, I think, that he didn't push too much," he said. "That was the difference." Alami, ranked 78th on the ATP Tour computer prior to the match, got to the finals with the 6-4, 6-4 upset over Chang, who is ranked fourth. The loss ended Chang's 13-match unbeaten streak at the tournament.

Alami will mostly likely pass fellow Moroccan Younes El Aynaoui, ranked 55th, when the new ATP rankings come out Monday.

Winning is Martina's game

WESLEY CHAPEL, Florida, May 6: Martina Navratilova showed Sunday that she is a retiree in name only, reports AP.

The nine-time Wimbledon champion, who hung up her rackets two Decembers ago, slipped by active pro Zina Garrison-Jackson 6-4 in the one-set Virginia Slims Legends Tour event. Over the opening two Legends events this year, Navratilova is 3-1 in her singles matches.

"She could easily play on the Tour," Garrison-Jackson said of Navratilova. "The shots are still there. It's just a matter of consistency."

Although Garrison-Jackson rallied to even things at 4-4, Navratilova kept the pressure on and eventually wore out Garrison-Jackson.

The Legends Tour will be in Houston on May 18-19 for the third of six events.

Sampdoria stun Milan



ROME, May 6: Sampdoria striker Enrico Chiesa single-handedly brought newly-crowned champions Milan to their knees on the penultimate Sunday of the Italian season with two goals in a shock 3-0 win, report agencies.

The prolific Chiesa took less than 60 seconds to halt Milan's week-long celebrations of their 15th title, pouncing on Christian Karembeu's wayward shot to beat Sebastiano Rossi.

In the 35th minute the same player, linked with a move to Parma next season and expected to play a key role in Italy's European Championship squad this summer, unleashed a tremendous shot from 20 metres that flew into Rossi's top corner for his 22nd goal of the season.

Veteran playmaker Roberto Mancini completed Milan's third defeat of the season with a goal in the 39th minute.

At the San Siro, England's Paul Ince helped condemn Bari to Serie B with the opening goal in Inter's 3-0 win, but his side's hopes of a UEFA Cup place suffered a blow as rivals Roma thrashed Fiorentina 4-1 in Florence.

European Cup finalists Juventus booked their place in Europe next season with a 1-0 home win over Atalanta, courtesy of a Didier Deschamps goal, while third-placed Parma look certain to join them after a 1-0 defeat of relegated Torino.

The battle between Lazio, Roma, Inter and Fiorentina for

the remaining two places in Europe remains wide open with just two points separating the four clubs and one match remaining.

Lazio lead the pack, moving into fourth place ahead of Fiorentina on goal difference after Roberto di Matteo's first-half winner against Napoli at the Olympic Stadium.

But Roma are a point adrift in sixth place after coming from behind with two goals apiece from Argentina's Abel Balbo — both penalties — and Italy's under-21 striker Marco Delvecchio to defeat Fiorentina.

Roy Hodgson's Inter lie another point back, after Ince's 34th minute shot and efforts from Marco Branco and Maurizio Ganz dispelled Bari's last remaining hopes of staying up.

Bari join Padova Cremonese and Torino in next season's Serie B.

Although the championship has been decided in Italy and Ajax retained the Dutch crown, the title race goes on in Germany.

Bulgarian World Cup player Emil Kostadinov was the hero Saturday as Bayern Munich edged FC Cologne 3-2 to keep their Bundesliga title hopes alive.

Kostadinov, who rarely plays at Munich, fired two goals to help the Franz Beckenbauer-coached team stay points even with Borussia Dortmund in the end spurt of the race.

Barcelona saw their chance of a fifth Spanish league title in six years take a major blow Sunday, struggling to a 1-1 draw with Sevilla and falling

five points behind Atletico Madrid with three games to play.

Gabriel Moya silenced the crowd at Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium with his 23rd minute goal on a pass from Davor Suker to put Sevilla ahead 1-0. Jose Maria Bakero tied it on a 49th minute header, but it was not enough to halt Barcelona from falling behind a point behind Valencia into third.

Atletico stayed on course for their first league title since 1977, winning 3-1 at Compostela on Saturday. Valencia stayed four points behind, winning 1-0 at home over sporting Gijon on Saturday.

In the Dutch league, champions Ajax finished the season quietly with a 0-0 tie with Graaafschap and now are looking forward to their Champions' Cup showdown with Juventus in Rome May 22. Ajax, titlists three years in row, finished with 83 points from 34 games, scoring 97 goals and conceding just 24.

Despite losing 2-1 to Auxerre in Saturday's French Cup final at Parc des Princes, Nimes, who are scrambling to avoid relegation to the Fourth Division, could be up against the soccer giants of Europe in the Cup Winners Cup next season.

Auxerre are practically assured of the French league title with two matches to go and that would put the club in the Champions Cup.

Nimes, despite losing, would go to the Cup Winners' Cup tournament as their country's.

Games' soccer draw held



ATLANTA, May 6: The United States will play Argentina in Birmingham, Alabama, in the top contest on the opening day of the Olympic soccer tournament, a draw held on Sunday determined, reports Reuters.

Brazil, currently ranked first in FIFA's world rankings, is the top seed in the Group D pool, which includes Japan, Hungary and Nigeria. The Group D games will be played in Miami and Orlando, Florida.

Also playing in Orlando and Miami will be the Group B pool, headed by Spain and including Saudi Arabia and France. All of the other preliminary round matches will be played in Birmingham or Washington, DC.

Group C, with Ghana as the top seed, includes Korea and Italy. Portugal and Tunisia were drawn to enter Group A along with the United States

and Argentina.

Two teams have yet to be decided. A final regional qualifying tournament begins on Friday when El Salvador, Canada, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago play in the CONCACAF at Edmonton, Alberta.

The winner of the CONCACAF qualifying tournament will enter Group C with Ghana, Korea and Italy. The CONCACAF runner-up will play the Oceania champion Australia and the winner of that match will enter Group B with Spain, Saudi Arabia and France.

The United States, currently ranked 14th in FIFA rankings, will meet the 8th ranked Argentines on July 20 in Birmingham. The Americans stunned Argentina 3-0 last July.

American defender Alexi Lalas, who scored one of the goals in that match, said Sunday, "From a fan's standpoint, obviously USA versus Argentina

is wonderful for soccer, and I know it will be a good game. Obviously Argentina will want to exact some sort of revenge for the win that we had last summer."

A draw also was held on Sunday for the eight teams to comprise the first ever women's Olympic soccer tournament. Host team United States leads the Group E pool with Denmark, Sweden and China, which will play in Orlando and Miami. Norway, the top seed in Group F, will play matches against Brazil, Germany and Japan in Birmingham and Washington.

Gold and bronze medal matches of both the men's and women's soccer tournaments will be held in Athens, Georgia.

Most of the other Olympic events will be held this summer in Atlanta between July 19 and August 4. It will be the biggest Games ever, with just over 10,000 athletes from 197 nations taking part.

Italian Open from May 13



ROME, May 6: Steffi Graf was just reaching stardom when she defeated crowd favorite Gabriela Sabatini to win the Italian Open, reports AP.

That was 1987 and it turned out to be her last appearance in Rome.

Now the winner of 18 Grand Slam titles is back for this year's edition opening Monday, after the long absence blamed on misunderstandings with the Italian public, media and organizers.

She's also bringing in a perfect 11-0 tournament match record and two titles since returning to tennis in March following foot surgery in

December as she makes her European clay court debut in preparation for the French Open, the only Grand Slam played on clay.

In her path are No. 2 seeded Conchita Martinez, winner of the last three editions of the Italian, and No. 3 Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, who is in Graf's side of the draw.

The 926,000 dollars tournament has drawn four of the top five ranked women in the world, missing only Monica Seles, who has entered only a minor clay court tournament before the French because of an injured shoulder.

Pete Sampras leads a field of 18 of the top 20 ranked players in the 2.2 million dollar men's edition that opens May 13 at the Foro Italico.

Injuries have taken their toll among the women. In addition to the absent Seles, Graf's German rival Anke Huber pulled out because of a sore Achilles tendon and Sabatini dropped out with a muscle problem.

Jennifer Capriati, who made her European professional debut in Rome and now is trying to come back from drug problems, withdrew with a sore back.

Other top seeds include No. 4 Iva Majoli and No. 5 Magdalena Maleeva among the world's top 10.

It should be wide-open in the early rounds with attention centering on Italian hopeful Gloria Pizzichini, surprise winner Sunday in Croatia after upsetting Majoli in the second round.

During her last appearance in Rome, the noisy crowd made no secret of its preference for Sabatini. When a leading Italian newspaper called Graf "brutta," meaning "ugly," the German media made it an issue of national honor and urged Graf to keep away from Rome. She didn't defend her title.

There have been significant changes since Graf last played here.

The courts and the balls have been speeded up in response to complaints about the slow red clay, particularly among the big-hitting men.

After threats over the years to move the Open from its home beneath the green slopes of Monte Mario beside the 1960 Olympic complex, organizers have built a new center court which Italian officials are hoping will host tennis in the 2004 Olympic Games, for which Rome is a leading candidate.

The new stadium to be inaugurated Monday will seat 10,300 spectators, 2,000 more than the old center court.

Dosedel does it again

MUNICH, May 6: Slava Dosedel of the Czech Republic made Carlos Moya his latest upset victim Sunday, sweeping past the young Spaniard in three sets to capture the BMW Munich Open, reports AP.

The unseeded Dosedel, who had earlier ousted Goran Ivanisevic and Boris Becker, beat Moya 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 to win the 400,000 dollar tournament.

Dosedel, world No. 73, took control of the match when he whipped a half-volley deep into the left corner, which broke Moya's serve in the sixth game of the final set.

Dosedel took him prize money of 57,000 dollars for winning the tournament.



Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain exults after overcoming compatriot Conchita Martinez 4-6, 7-6, 6-0 in the final of the Hamburg Cup in Hamburg, Germany on May 5.

— AFP/UNB photo

Shearer's sternest test

LONDON, May 6 (Reuters) Alan Shearer needs to re-discover his scoring touch if England are to have a realistic chance of winning the European Championships.

For the player who can't stop scoring for Blackburn in the English Premier league has now gone 10 games without a goal for his country, the longest-ever sequence by an England centre-forward.

Shearer's goal drought has puzzled coach Terry Venables, who has nevertheless continued to pick him, but now doubting voices are being raised about whether Shearer should even be in the starting line-up.

Recently the argument has been academic. Shearer is recovering from surgery to a groin injury that forced him to miss the last few games of the domestic season and while he is convinced he will be fit in time to lead England's attack in their opening match against Switzerland at Wembley on June 8 there have been calls for Les Ferdinand, Robbie Fowler or Stan Collymore to replace him.

Apart from his recent drought for England, Shearer has scored goals throughout his career and another school of thought maintains that once he breaks his famine, the goals will start flowing again.

He announced his arrival as a 17-year-old with Southampton in 1987 by scoring a hat-trick against Arsenal on his debut — the youngest player ever to do so in the old First Division.

His appearance in the red-and-white stripes of Southampton completed something of a fairy story for Shearer, who like millions of boys dreamed of becoming a footballer.

In his case, though, the team he dreamt of playing for was his home-town club of Newcastle. He went for trials there as a 14-year-old, but the club put him in goal and never saw him play on the field.

They missed a talent who had scored 13 goals in one match for his school team a few weeks before and Jack Hixon, a Southampton scout in the north-east, persuaded him to leave home and sign for the Saints — located on the south coast 320 miles away.

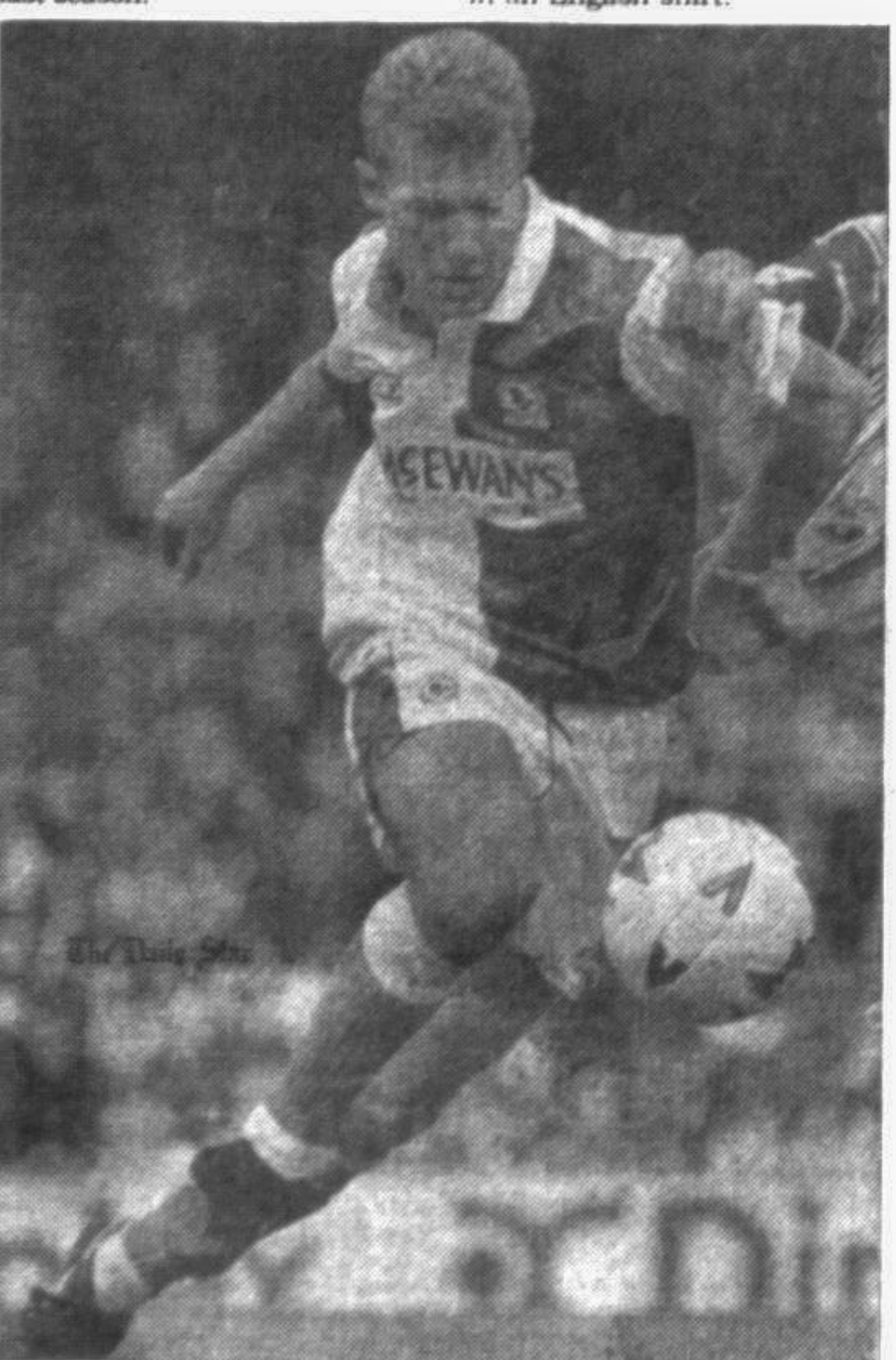
Looking back Shearer says now: "I had to leave my friends and family — and I was only 16. But if you want to be a professional footballer those are the sacrifices you have to make."

One man who also noticed the talent the young Shearer possessed was Kenny Dalglish, then manager of Liverpool, but



he was put off by the likely asking price.

Eventually Dalglish took Shearer to Blackburn for a then-British record fee of 3.3 million pounds (4.95 million dollars) in 1992 — a fee repaid many times over as Shearer's goals led Blackburn to the title last season.



ALAN SHEARER ... has a natural instinct for goals. Prolific at club level, disappointing for England.