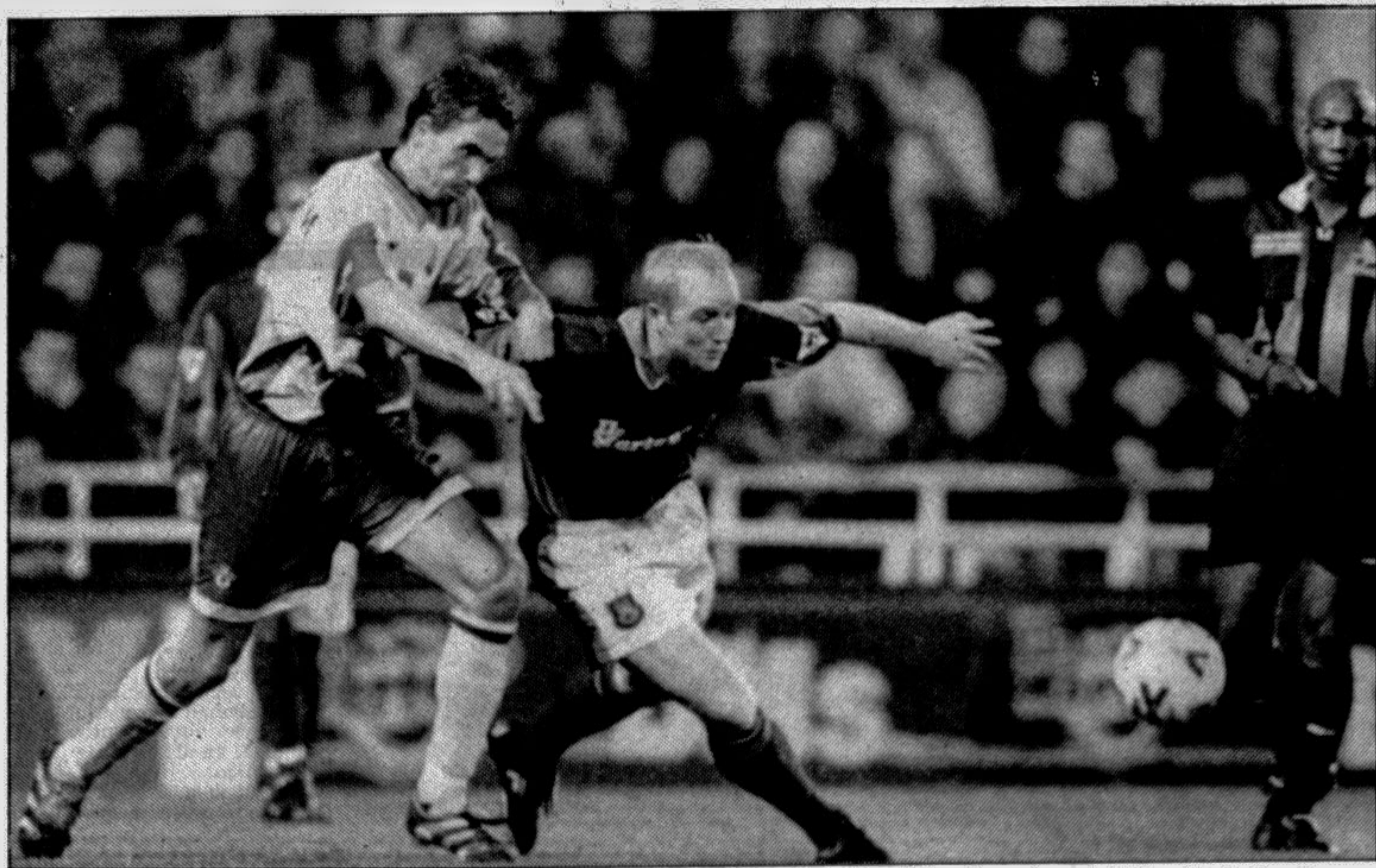


Wright sinks the Saints

LONDON, Sept 29: Ian Wright sent West Ham soaring up to fourth place in the English Premiership Monday night when he scored his fourth goal of season to sink visiting Southampton, reports AFP.



Action from the English Premier league match between West Ham United and Southampton at Upton Park, London on September 28. West Ham won by a solitary goal. — AFP photo

Southampton still without a win this season, have made their worst-ever start to a campaign after losing six of their opening seven games.

West Ham's defender Julian Dicks returning to Premiership action for the first time in 18 months after injury and surgery won the man-of-the-match award.

West Ham boss Harry Redknapp was delighted with the points but far from impressed by the way his team played.

SOCOG running short of cash SYDNEY, Sept 29: Sydney Olympic organisers said today they are exploring new ways of raising cash for the 2000 Games after the budget was revised to 2.5 billion dollars (1.475 billion US dollars), reports AFP.

Organisers want to sell companies the right to put their names on warm-up events and Games venues in the pre-Olympic year.

They're not conducted under Olympic sponsorship rules, Knight added.

The cost of staging the Games has increased by 128 million dollars (76 million US dollars) in the past year — one billion dollars (595 million US dollars) more than budgeted in 1996.

The New South Wales state government has ordered the organising committee to put aside any savings in the next two years to help pay for the swelling costs.

Knight has promised NSW taxpayers would not be left with any Games debt, saying SOCOG would not spend any money it had not raised.

But he said this would not mean a no-frills Games. "Not at all," he added.

Euro elites in for tough time

UNDATED, Sept 29(Reuters/Internet): Holders Real Madrid face a tricky opposition in the form of Spartak at freezing Moscow, pre-tournament favourites Inter Milan will have to do without superstars Ronaldo and Roberto Baggio, last year's quarter-finalists Dynamo Kiev have an easy tie against RC Lens, off-form Juventus take on giant killers Rosenborg, Barcelona are up against surprise group leaders Brondby while Ajax have much at stake against FC Porto when European top guns take the field in Champions League action on Wednesday.

REAL MADRID -- SPARTAK MOSCOW Real Madrid arrived in Russia with a bulging winter wardrobe, determined not to let Spartak or the local weather freeze them out of the group C encounter.

The Spaniards arrived on Monday minus injured World Cup top scorer Davor Suker, but with an array of hats, gloves and fleece jackets to combat near-freezing evening temperatures and a tonne of meat and vegetables to beat the erratic supplies the Russian capital is suffering because of the financial crisis.

Spartak, 2-0 winners over Sturm Graz in their opening group game despite a marathon day-long journey because of transport problems, are also missing injured first-choice striker Alexander Shirkov.

But after suffering their worst defeat in years on Saturday, 4-1 by city rivals CSKA, their attacking midfield line-up will be back at full strength and lacking for nothing in motivation.

Suker's strike partner Fernando Morientes will be fit for the European champions after a bout of flu while Brazilian winger Savio, so impressive in Real's 2-0 win over Inter Milan in the opening game in Seville, is also expected to recover after taking a knock in the league on Saturday.

Veteran defender Manuel Sanchis, who was rested in Real's 3-2 victory over Athletic Bilbao, is likely to return at all.

centre back in place of Ivan Campo. Raul's goal in Bilbao took his tally to five in four games but the young striker was hardly oozing confidence over Wednesday's match. "Moscow isn't an easy place to play. The playing surface and the climate will work against us," he said.

But a victory over Spartak would make us safe. We're on a good run at the moment and we need to take advantage of that."

Spartak, eager to redeem themselves after Saturday's rout which placed a doubt over their chances of retaining their Russian title, have chosen to play at the newly refurbished 83,000-seat Luzhnik Olympic Stadium.

INTER MILAN--STURM GRAZ Inter Milan will be without both Ronaldo and Roberto Baggio when they meet Austrian side Sturm Graz. They have been ruled out of the San Siro game by recurring knee problems.

Inter know only too well that they badly need a win to atone for a disappointing start in Serie A and the Champions League. Two weeks ago Inter were beaten 2-0 in a one-sided group C game against champions Real Madrid and on Sunday they struggled to beat lowly Empoli 2-1 in the league despite having a numerical advantage for more than an hour.

Coming after unconvincing performances in a 1-0 home win over Piacenza and a 2-2 away draw with Cagliari, Sunday's performance prompted a sharp rebuke from club owner Massimo Moratti. "We were lucky at Empoli and I thank heaven for having got away with it but we've got to learn to run fewer risks. I'd hate to think that this season's Inter will be the one we saw in the second half at Empoli," said Moratti.

Inter's experienced captain Giuseppe Bergomi accepted his boss's criticism but said: "The president would like to see us taking a knock in the league on Saturday."

Veteran defender Manuel Sanchis, who was rested in Real's 3-2 victory over Athletic Bilbao, is likely to return at all.

DYNAMO KIEV--RC LENS Ukraine's Dynamo Kiev, marked down as group favourites by Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger despite losing their opening game, are gunning for a win against RC Lens in their group E match.

The French, by contrast, have made a disappointing start to their domestic season and, despite holding Arsenal 1-1 two weeks ago, may be happy enough to take a point from the intimidating 82,000-seat Olympic Stadium in Kiev.

Dynamo, quarter-finalists last season after routing Barcelona and PSV Eindhoven to win the "group of death", are desperate to get back to winning ways after letting Greece's Panathinaikos come back to beat them 2-1 in Athens.

Lens will be no pushover, however, even though they lie just 13th in the French league after two consecutive defeats -- 3-1 at Lyon and 4-2 at home to Nantes after having two men sent off.

The French feel they have been lacking a leader since veteran defender Jean-Guy Wallemme left for Coventry. In his absence France winger Tony Vairelles has been asked to assume this role.

Dynamo's veteran coach Valery Lobanovsky, still hoping to add to his 1975 and 1986 European Cup Winners' Cup titles, can always rely on his pair of dangerous strikers, Andriy Shevchenko and Serhiy Rebrov.

Both are in top form and scored in Dynamo's last league outing -- a 3-3 draw against Tavria in Simferopol -- and will be looking to pick up the slack for their teammates.

ROSENBERG--JUVENTUS Zinedine Zidane's return could act as a much needed tonic for Juventus when they take on Rosenborg Trondheim.

Midfielder Zidane, scorer of two of France's goals in the World Cup final win over Brazil, has been sidelined by a knee injury.

He missed the Italian champions' 2-2 home draw with Turkey's Galatasaray in their opening group B game two weeks ago and was absent when Juve lost to Parma in a Serie A game at the weekend.

Juventus will be without goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi, suspended after being sent off against Galatasaray, Michelangelo Rampulla deputises.

Rosenborg, who drew 1-1 with Athletic Bilbao in their opening group game, are in buoyant mood after beating Molde -- their only rivals for the Norwegian title -- 2-0 at the weekend.

Juventus midfielder Edgar Davids said the Italian side, last year's beaten finalists, had to win on Wednesday to avoid the scenario of last season when they only just managed to win through from the group phase.

"We've got to play a great game and go for a win because we want to win this group. We don't want to run the risk of last year," he said.

"Rosenborg merit a lot of respect. They are currently in top form."

The Norwegian club's trainer Trond Solleisd said he would be happy with a draw on Wednesday.

BARCELONA--BRONDBY Injuries and ineptibility have contrived to limit the options of Barcelona coach Louis van Gaal for the group D match against Danish visitors Brondby.

The lengthy injury list includes Oscar Garcia, Albert Celedes and Miguel Angel Nadal.

Patrick Kluyvert, scorer of both goals in Saturday's 2-2 league draw with Celta Vigo, and Mauricio Pellegrino are the men sidelined through ineptibility.

Brazilian Sonny Anderson will return as the Barcelona target man in place of Kluyvert and van Gaal indicated he was considering recalling Nigerian teenager Gbenga Okunowo to the right back position and returning Luis Enrique Martinez to his more natural role as a central midfielder.

Rivaldo would then move out to the far left, leaving Dutch international Boudevijn Zenden to sit among the substitutes.

Brondby have arrived in buoyant mood thanks to their hosts' difficulties and their own 2-1 victory over Bayern Munich in their opening group D game.

AJAX--PORTO Ajax Amsterdam coach Morten Olsen realises the honeymoon is over but must be desperate for a win against visitors Porto to bring back some of last season's positive spirit.

Last year, in the league at least, his team seemed incapable of doing anything wrong. Now it is almost the opposite.

The personnel has barely changed -- veteran Michael Laudrup is the only significant player to have left, although the De Boer twins seemed on the point of going.

However, confidence has crashed and there is speculation that Olsen's days are numbered.

Comfort for Ajax came at the weekend with a 1-0 win over NAC Breda. The victory was unconvincing but it came after a loss and two draws and Ronald de Boer got his first goal this season.

"We won, which means the mental side was good. Moreover, we have filled up with confidence for Porto," Olsen said.

On the positive side, last year's top scorer Shota Arveladze has returned to the squad. However, they may miss the leadership of Danny Blind who is doubtful for Wednesday's match.

Ajax got a satisfactory point from their 0-0 draw at Croatia Zagreb but they need more at home. The neutrals too will want a lot more excitement than during that turgid encounter.

It's do or die for Parma, Betis

LONDON, Sept 29: Italy's Parma and Spain's Betis, two of Europe's big spenders, are in danger of being eliminated from the lucrative UEFA Cup. And it's only the first round, reports AP.

And Germany's Stuttgart thrashed two weeks ago at home 3-1 by Dutch leaders Feyenoord, are as good as gone entering the second leg -- one of 31 matches Tuesday across Europe.

Parma spent about 60 million dollars this summer on transfers. Seville-based Betis spent half that much on one player -- 35 million dollars for Brazilian Denilson.

So far, the investments haven't paid off as both clubs return home trailing 1-0. Parma, 1995 UEFA champions and '93 Cup Winners' Cup titlists, are in big trouble. The Italians are injury-hit, struggling on offense and, in Turkey's Fenerbache, face a club that's duo advanced.

Parma's top striker Enrico Chiesa is out with an ankle injury, and Croatian winger Mario Stanic is also hurt. Midfielder Dmo Baggio and defender Fabio Cannavaro are suspended on red cards.

History this time is either with -- or against -- Fenerbache. No Turkish team in 16 tries has eliminated an Italian side from European competition. Parma's last loss at home in cup play was five years ago. Since then Parma is 15-1-0 at Tardini Stadium.

"We want to write history by eliminating Parma," said Fenerbache spokesman Ali Yildirim. "We have the power to do that."

Fenerbache players are getting a substantial bonus -- reported earlier at 18,000 dollars -- for eliminating the Italians.

Betis, facing Danish side Vejle, is having what coach Manuel Ruiz de Lopera calls a "cursed September," which includes four league games without a victory, goals for 19th in the 20-team Spanish league.

The league (season) is long and there is still time to recover," he said. "But focusing up the UEFA Cup would have no remedy and serious consequences for Betis."

As for Denilson, he's yet to score in league play and newspapers are ripping him for his non-team style. To make matters worse, Betis' other striker -- Spanish international striker Alfonso Perez -- may miss the game with an injury.

If you needed an early favorite, it would be Feyenoord. The Rotterdam side has won all six to their league games and defends a 3-1 lead against Stuttgart. Brazilian attacker Timinho is injured, but Argentine striker Julio Cruz and Jon Dahl Tomasson should provide the scoring.

Despite crowd disturbances in the first leg in Germany, Rotterdam police are not expecting problems. "We do not think this is a high-risk match," police spokeswoman Laurie Hart said.

Fellow German side Bayern Leverkusen -- quarterfinalists last year in the European Champions Cup -- are also in jeopardy of exiting after a first-leg 1-1 draw at Udinese. The club is coming off a 1-0 league win over Schalke.

"We had a good start at Schalke, so we hope to win against Udinese," said coach Christoph Daum, who will be missing injured Brazilian midfielder Emerson.

Udinese is tied for second in Italy's Serie A and has five goals from Brazilian striker Marcio Amoroso -- the same number he scored last season. Udinese has never won away in the UEFA Cup.

In other key games on a crowded day: -- English Premier league leaders Tottenham take a 3-2 lead to Norway's Stromsgodset.

with disappointing 7-million-pound (11.5 million dollars) transfer Stan Collymore expected to get a last-ditch start in his bid to stay with the team.

Athletico Madrid, semifinalists last year in the European Champions Cup, takes a 2-0 lead to Obilic, Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav team is owned by Serbia's notorious warlord Zeljko Raznatovic-Arkan. Players have been banned from talking to reporters and their cellular phones have been confiscated.

Italian league leaders Fiorentina are up 2-1 in a tough match at Croatia's Hajduk Split. Fiorentina, alone in first place for the first time in 16 years, are rolling with six wins in six league and cup games. Gabriel Batistuta will have to play without suspended strike partners Rui Costa and Luis Oliveira. Hajduk has played three home games with Italian clubs and has won all three by 3-1 scores.

Red Star Belgrade goes to France's Metz with a 2-1 lead but will be without top striker Perica Ogrjenovic, who is suspended.

Germany's Schalke, 1997 UEFA champions, take a 1-0 lead to Slavia Prague. Slavia has scored only once in their last four matches.

Rapid Vienna hosts French league leaders Bordeaux after a 1-1 draw in France with the French needing a precious away goal to survive.

Olympique Marseille, playing their first European competition after a four-year absence, are 2-2 and playing at home to Sigma Olomouc of the Czech Republic. Marseille, No. 2 in the French standings, won the European Champions' Cup in 1993 but were ousted from European play in a match-fixing scandal.

England's Leeds are up 1-0 going to Portugal's Maritimo. It is likely to be the last match for coach George Graham, who is reported moving to London club Tottenham.

Fresh talents push for recognition

PARIS, Sept 29 (Reuters): A new generation of gifted players is knocking at the door of France's Euro 2000 side and a "kicking renewed interest in the French market that produced a World Cup winning team."

France's World Cup victory two months ago did not spark another mass exit of French players abroad only because majority of coach Aime Jacquet's squad were already playing for some of the best club sides in Europe.

The main exodus occurred two years earlier as France, preparing to host the World Cup, reached the semifinals of the European Championship in England.

A new wave of transfers abroad is a possibility, however, in the near future and probably before or right after the European Championship finals of 2000 in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Some prospective candidates are well known, such as Monaco's David Trezeguet and Thierry Henry, who have both already said they want to join bigger clubs in Italy or Spain.

The only determination of the rich principality club to hang onto the pair has prevented them from moving to AS Roma and Arsenal respectively.

Their 1997 World Youth Championship teammate Nicolas Anelka, who has already been picked in a French senior squad, managed the leap abroad as a teenager.

An agreement between Paris St Germain and Arsenal, including a transfer fee, enabled Anelka to slip the net of the French federation's regulations that stipulate an apprentice must serve his first professional contract with the club that produced him if it so wishes.

Teenager Peter Luccin has long moved on from his first team Cannes and in the off-season joined his home town club Olympique Marseille from Bordeaux.

Luccin is a step from full international honours after playing for France at youth and under-21 level.

"In two or three years, I'd like to try another championship. I can see myself playing in Spain at Real (Madrid) or Barca (Barcelona)," he said.

He is highly regarded by his experienced Italian teammate Fabrizio Ravanello, who said: "I'm convinced he's going to become one of the most important men in the team, he has the stuff of a great player."

Sylvain Wiltord, Vikash Dhorasoo and Tony Vairelles, all in their mid-twenties, are probably the trio closest to France's Euro 2000 team.

Tony Vairelles of champions RC Lens, a winger like Anelka who likes to roam across the front of the attack looking for openings, has already won his first cap.

An exciting start to the French league championship with leaders Girondins Bordeaux and Olympique Lyon in particularly good form has brought the names of Wiltord and Dhorasoo to the fore.

Wiltord, a converted striker who nearly joined Deportivo la Coruna from Rennes last season before signing for Bordeaux, is top scorer in the First Division with six goals in as many games.

France coach Roger Lemerre has been watching Wiltord closely, suggesting a call-up is just around the corner.

"I often talks about it but I know I've got to continue working with my club and that you can't get into the French team without earning it," he said.

Dhorasoo of Mauritian origin, sees his fine performances for second-placed Lyon as a stepping stone to both a big foreign club and the national side.

"Ever since I've been at Lyon, I've felt mature enough to knock on the door of the Blues," said Dhorasoo, who joined from Le Havre in the off-season.

Seen by some to be competing for the place occupied by Zinedine Zidane in the France team, Dhorasoo said: "Platani played with Giresse. Why couldn't I play with Zidane?" Dhorasoo said he did not feel ready yet for a move abroad. "A well-managed career has its stages," he said. Others have made the move sooner than expected.

Defenders Mickael Silvestre and Ousmane Dabo, both 21, have moved to Inter Milan from Rennes before the end of their first contracts but without a transfer fee having yet been paid.

Rennes has resigned themselves to the fact that neither player wanted to stay, but hope for a sizeable fee from the Italians. The world governing body FIFA is mediating. Silvestre plays in the French under-21 side that features other likely targets of big European clubs such as goalkeeper Mickael Landreau at 19 already his club's captain, and midfielders Stephane Dalmat and Daniel Moreira, who caught the eye during Lens' European Cup debut against Arsenal.

Who is to say that Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, having snapped up the brilliant Anelka, may not get his way again in his home country with Henry and a Dalmat or Moreira?

SIX NO TRUMPS

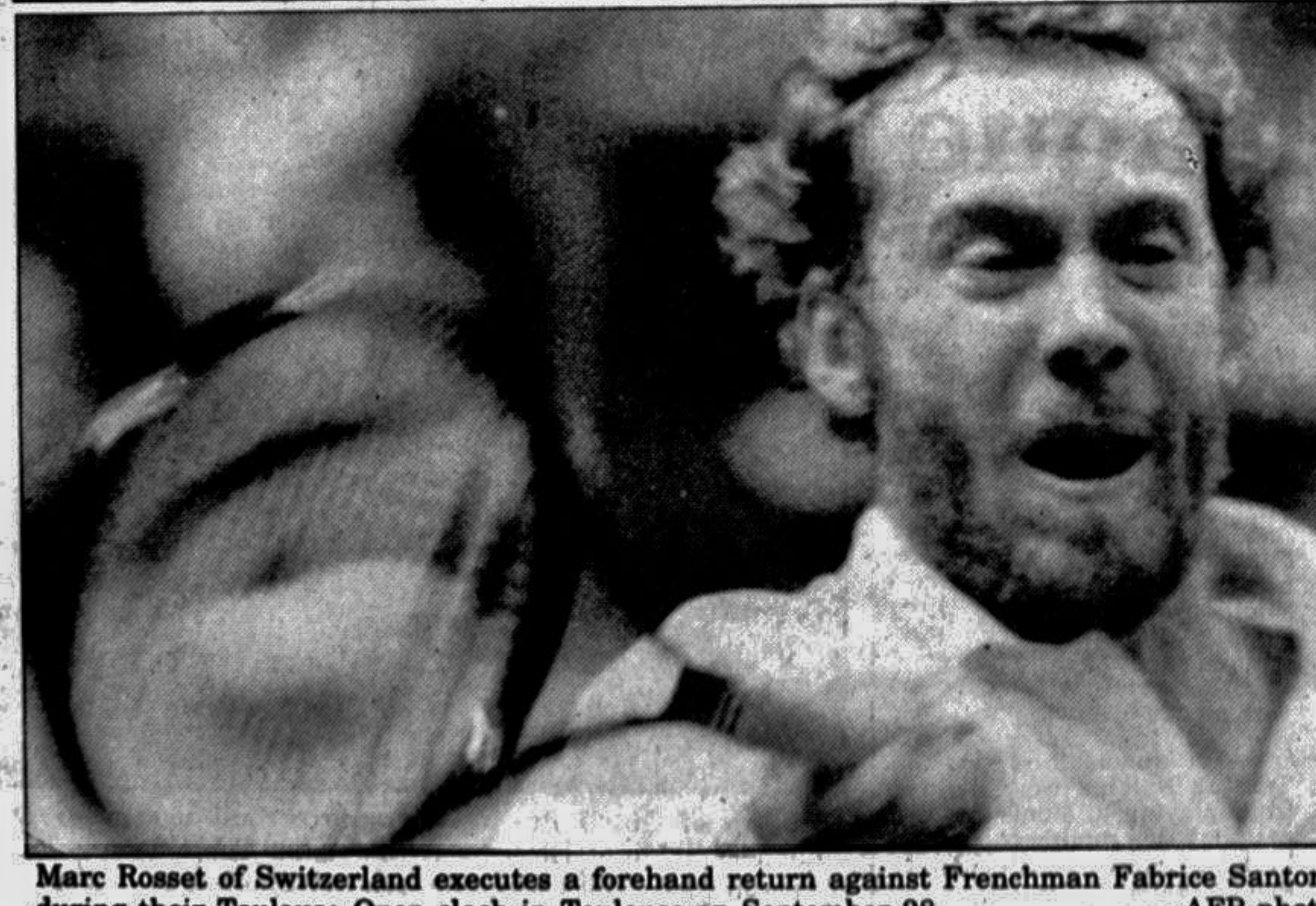
A K Sayeedul Huq DECLARER PLAYED THE HAND CAREFULLY (Hand # 107)

Table showing card distribution for West, North, East, and South (D) in a Six No Trumps hand.

Bidding: North South were vulnerable. South: 1 Spade, 2 Hearts, Pass. West: Double, Double, 5 Diamonds. North: Pass, Pass. East: 2 Diamonds*, 3 Diamonds, Pass.

* Artificial, showing 10-12 HCP. The first double by West was for take out and second double of 2 Hearts asked partner to bid his best suit between Club and Diamond.

THE PLAY: South opened the King of Hearts, which was won with the dummy's Ace. Missing both the King and Jack, the declarer decided not to finesse the Diamonds. He therefore led a small Diamond toward the Ace and on the continuation when the Jack appeared from the South he covered with the Queen and North took the trick with the King. North returned the Ten of Hearts which was ruffed by the declarer in the dummy. At this stage the declarer was not in a position to clear the trumps. So he led a small Club toward the Ace and returned the Club Ten on which South played the Queen. On winning the King of Clubs he cleared the trumps and slipped three Heart and one Spade losers on the good Clubs. Next he surrendered a Spade trick to South and made five Diamonds. A very neat play by the declarer.



Marc Rosset of Switzerland executes a forehand return against Frenchman Fabrice Santoro during their Toulouse Open clash in Toulouse on September 28. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a Cryptiquip section at the bottom right.