

Real crush Sturm Graz

GRAZ, Austria, Nov 6 (Reuters/Internet): Real Madrid shrugged off an early setback to thrash Sturm Graz 5-1 in their postponed European Champions' League group C match on Thursday.

The win gave the defending champions nine points and top spot in group C ahead of Inter Milan and Spartak Moscow, who drew 1-1 on Wednesday, on seven points.

Graz are eliminated and are the only side of the 24 in the competition without a point after four games.

In a match put back from Wednesday because of a waterlogged pitch, Austria striker Mario Haas put Sturm ahead after just four minutes when he headed in a corner from Hannes Reinmayr.

But Real, who beat the Austrian side 6-1 in Madrid two weeks ago, hit back immediately when Christian Panucci lost his marker in the box and headed in a free kick in the seventh minute.

From then on there was only one team in it with Real taking the lead 15 minutes before half-time through Predrag Mijatovic and scoring three goals in the second half.

"Sturm's goal came from a standard situation. It never worried us," said Mijatovic, who scored Real's second with a free kick blasted through Sturm's defensive wall.

Panucci, who had been doubtful after twisting his knee in training, scored again in the second half along with Clarence Seedorf and substitute Davor Suker.

Real's coach Guus Hiddink said his side was already looking forward to their next Champions' League match against Inter Milan on November 25.

"We had respect for Sturm Graz but we were already thinking ahead to our next match, which is going to be very difficult."

"I do get scared sometimes thinking about it. We will have to be very concentrated."

Hiddink said his side had been too slow to close down Sturm in the first half. Ivica Kostelic twice came close to scoring for the home side in that period.

"I get worried when I see how open we played the first half today," Hiddink said.

"We were very open in the midfield but we managed to correct this and fill the gaps after the break to then dominate the entire second half."

Real took control with their superior passing game in the second half, with fullback Roberto Carlos making his trademark runs forward to set up his strikers.

Mijatovic was confident his team would qualify for the second round, following their victory over Austria's SV Ried.

"We have to keep calm against Spartak and Inter but if we continue playing as well as we have been in the Spanish league, then we should have no problem," he said.

League leaders Real beat Extremadura 5-1 last Saturday without captain Manuel Sanchez and Mijatovic.

UEFA Cup Draw for 3rd round

GENEVA, Nov 6 (Reuters/Internet): Draw for the third round of the UEFA Cup made on Friday.

AS Roma (Italy) v FC Zurich (Switzerland)

Monaco (France) v Olympique Marseille (France)

Grasshoppers (Switzerland) or Fiorentina (Italy) v Girondins Bordeaux (France)

Real Sociedad (Spain) v Atletico Madrid (Spain)

Olympique Lyon (France) v Club Brugge (Belgium)

Rangers (Scotland) v Parma (Italy)

Celta Vigo (Spain) v Liverpool (England)

Bologna (Italy) v Real Betis (Spain)

Matches to be played over two legs on November 24 and December 8.

Swedes pay tribute to retiring Brolin

STOCKHOLM, Nov 6 (Reuters/Internet): Swedish soccer fans sadly accepted Tomas Brolin's retirement on Thursday, paying tribute to the striker described as his country's best-ever player.

Brolin, who announced his retirement on Wednesday, was hailed a national hero after helping Sweden progress to the semifinals of the 1992 European championships and 1994 World Cup. He was capped 43 times for his country, scoring 26 goals.

During the early 1990s he also played an important role in Parma's rise to prominence in Italy and Europe, helping them win the Cup Winners' Cup in 1993.

However, after 1995 his career collapsed, with disastrous spells in England with Leeds and Crystal Palace, marred by rows with managers, injuries, weight problems and poor performances.

Swedish newspapers on Thursday said farewell to the 28-year-old Brolin by describing him as the country's best-ever player.

"Swedish football will never again reach Brolin's class," said columnist Mats Olsson in daily tabloid Expressen's eight page pull-out on the soccer star.

"Thanks Tomas."

"We will never forget when Swedish football for a time during the 1990s was the world's third-best team."



Chelsea's Gianfranco Zola (R) congratulates teammate Brian Laudrup after scoring what proved the decisive goal against FC Copenhagen in their Cup Winners' Cup clash on Nov 5.

Chelsea, Lazio in last eight

COPENHAGEN, Nov 6: Homesick Brian Laudrup knocked his probable future teammates out of Europe on Thursday when he headed the only goal as Cup Winners' Cup holders Chelsea earned a 1-0 victory at FC Copenhagen to win their second round tie 2-1 on aggregate, reports AFP.

It was Laudrup's first, and possibly last, goal for the English side as he contemplates a move to Copenhagen which could materialise next week.

Dane Laudrup headed in after 32 minutes after luckless Italian Pierluigi Casiraghi saw his effort clatter back off the crossbar from Graeme Le Saux's cross.

Big-spending Italians Lazio and Spanish high-fliers Mallorca also qualified for the last eight, while Maccabi Haifa became the first Israeli club to reach the quarterfinals of a major European competition following their victory over Austria's SV Ried.

Chilean ace Marcelo Salas booked Lazio into the last eight, scoring twice as they came back to beat Partizan Belgrade 3-2 away.

Mladen Krstajic put Partizan in front after 18 minutes but Salas converted a penalty just before the break to make it 1-1 after the first leg finished 0-0.

Lazio's Yugoslav midfielder Dejan Stankovic, returning to his native Belgrade, made it 2-1 before Salas put the outcome beyond doubt in the 76th minute with his second goal of the night.

Ivica Iliev headed in Partizan's second in the 86th minute, but at that stage there was no

way the Yugoslavs were going to score two more to defeat Lazio on the away goals rule.

Laudrup's goal was a moment rich in irony for the 29-year-old whose commitment to the Chelsea cause had been questioned prior to the match amid reports that he has already agreed a 10-year deal with FC Copenhagen.

Chelsea, so disappointing in the 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge a fortnight ago, did well to earn their passage through as they bid to become the first club to win the trophy two years running.

Spaniards Mallorca drew 0-0 at home with Belgian side Genk for a 1-1 aggregate scoreline but went through on the away goals rule.

Maccabi Haifa beat SV Ried 4-1 in Israel for a 5-3 aggregate win. The match started controversially with Maccabi Haifa's Ophir Kopel and Ried's Gunter Steinger dismissed in the eighth and ninth minutes.

Kopel had received his second yellow card and Steinger was penalised for a late challenge.

Alon Mizrahi opened the score in the 35th minute and Adoram Casey hit the second 17 minutes after the break.

Ried's Yugoslav midfielder Michael Amicic pulled one back in the 70th minute. But Yossi Ben Ayoun and then Ibrahim Duro in injury time completed Haifa's win.

Norway's Valerenga completed an incredible fightback victory to move into the last eight at the expense of Turkey's Besiktas, going through 4-3 on aggregate.

Besiktas raced to a 3-0 lead, 3-1 on aggregate, in Istanbul with goals in the eighth, 35th and 42nd minutes and looked

set to move through. Oktay Dereloglu turned and shot just inside the left hand post for their first goal then turned playmaker to set up Tayfur Havutcu, who raced into the area and scored with his outstretched left boot.

Then an Okтай header with pinpoint accuracy gave Besiktas a seemingly unassailable lead.

But Valerenga kept their heads. A Knut Henry Haraldsen header in the 63rd minute began the late rush of goals, then Kjell Roar Kaasa scrambled the ball home three minutes later.

Enough to see the Norwegians through on away goals.

John Carew put the result beyond any doubt by putting the winner into an empty net from an acute angle on the right to continue an incredible statistic for Valerenga caretaker coach Egil Olsen, who led Norway at the World Cup. Olsen has yet to lose a match with Valerenga since taking over on a temporary basis in August.

But former Real Sociedad coach John Toshack of Wales, now at Besiktas, could be in danger of the axe after this result.

Varteks Varazdin of Croatia were within three minutes of going out on a muddy pitch against Holland's Heerenveen until Miljenko Mumlek scored his second goal.

That gave Varteks a 4-2 home win after extra-time and a 5-4 aggregate victory.

Lokomotiv Moscow lost 1-0 at Sporting Braga to a goal by Croatian Mladen Karoglan, but the Russians still went through 3-2 on aggregate, while Greek side Panathinaikos earned a 1-0 victory at Apollon Limassol of Cyprus for a 4-2 aggregate win.

Battle of the Bavarians

PARIS, Nov 6 (AFP): Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich and second-placed 1860 Munich clash at the Olympic Stadium as German football focuses on an eagerly-awaited Bavarian derby at the weekend.

1860, long in the shadow of more illustrious neighbours Bayern, have a chance to upstage their city rivals although Bayern, five points ahead, will remain top regardless.

History may be against 1860, however, with their last victory against Bayern having come way back in November 1977.

Bayern's Carsten Jancker is suspended while 1860 will be without injured duo Marco Kurz and Guido Gorges for the game.

In France, unbeaten French league leaders Marseille, clash with fourth-placed Monaco at the Stade Velodrome today in one of the key fixtures in the title race.

In Spain, leaders Real Madrid on Sunday travel to lowly Alaves, who knocked them out of the Spanish Cup last year when they were in the Second Division.

Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer said: "We aren't favourites anymore, it's 50-50. They don't have the Champions League or the German Cup to play, they can relax and concentrate on the Bundesliga."

The two clubs are history makers in German football and have 187 head-to-head encounters to their credit. Bayern have won 95 and 1860 only 44.

Since gaining promotion four years ago, 1860 have knocked on the door several times but have still not managed a win against their neighbours.

Martin Dahlin, meanwhile, will make his debut for Hamburg at home to Schalke on Saturday. The Swedish striker, who switched from English club Blackburn Rovers last month, will team up with Ghana's Tony Yeboah, who has recovered from injury.

Eighteen months after winning the UEFA Cup, Schalke manager Rudi Assauer says there is no danger of his side being relegated. Although the

Royal Blues are drifting in 15th place.

Kaiserslautern travel to Freiburg after a 3-1 Champion win over PSV Eindhoven.

FRANCE: Marseille, with eight victories and three draws, are currently seen points ahead of fourth-placed Monaco but Marseille coach Roland Courbis wants to increase the gap to 10.

"If we win. That will be a 10-point gap," said Courbis. "And we would have to really crack if they clawed back that gap in the remaining 22 games," he added.

Courbis looks likely to keep changing the side, a method which has worked well so far. And there is a doubt who will play in goal between Germany's Andreas Kopke and Stephane Porato, who has played most of the French league games.

Kopke was superb in their UEFA Cup victory in midweek as Marseille went through with Lyon, Monaco and Bordeaux to guide France four teams in the last 16 for first ever time.

Tigana is helped in his efforts by the expected return of his world champions David Trezeguet and Thierry Henry.

In today's other match, Bastia host Lorient, whose president Louis le Gallo resigned in the week and who have a lot of doubtful players for the fixture.

Bordeaux, two points behind Marseille, host Toulouse who have keeper problems at the moment. Toulouse on Thursday signed 32-year-old out-of-contract Philippe Schuth till the end of the season.

Schuth will be in the squad it Bordeaux as the reserve keeper to Ivory Coast's Alain Gouamene, the usual replacement for injured number one Teddy Richer. Third keeper Fabien Audard is also out of the reckoning, having fractured his shin.

SPAIN: Mallorca and Barcelona, both a point behind the pacemakers, also have easy matches on paper. Mallorca, who were knocked off top spot by Real last weekend, meet 17th-placed Villareal and Barcelona, still reeling from their 2-1 Champions League loss to Bayern, travel to real Oviedo.

Fourth-placed Celta Vigo, who qualified for the last 16 of

the UEFA Cup at the expense of English Premiership leaders Aston Villa, are waiting for slip-up by the leading clubs so they can capitalise on their match against bottom club Extremadura.

And Athletic Bilbao, who earned a useful 1-1 European Champions' League draw against Juventus in midweek, travel to Real Sociedad for their Basque derby.

ITALY: Inter coach Gigi Simoni goes into Sunday's derby against AC Milan knowing that defeat could well cost him his job.

After Inter had slumped to their third consecutive Italian Serie A defeat last Sunday club owner Massimo Moratti told Simoni he had seven days and two matches in which to "prove his worth".

Inter performed more than adequately in the first of those two matches, drawing 1-1 away with Spartak Moscow in a European Champions' League tie. But Simoni's job remains at risk.

Inter come into the game in eighth position on 10 points, three behind fourth-placed Milan Juventus.

AC Milan captain Paolo Maldini, who will wear a protective face mask following surgery on a broken nose, is all too aware that recent history is against his side.

Milan have not won a league derby since a 2-1 win in March 1994.

AC Milan will be at full strength. Coach Alberto Zuccheroni's biggest problem will be choosing between goalkeepers Sebastiano Rossi and Jens Lehmann.

George Weah, Oliver Bierhoff and Leonardo lead the Milan attack with Dane Thomas Helveg, Demetrio Albertini, Christian Ziege and Zvonimir Boban forming an impressive, multinational midfield.

In contrast, Inter continue to have problems with Roberto Baggio, Youri Djorkaeff, Alvaro Midfielder Paulo Sousa is suspended.

Last season Inter had the better of the league derbies, beating Milan 3-0 in March after a 2-2 November draw.

Brian going to Copenhagen Dec 1

COPENHAGEN, Nov 6: Attacking midfielder Brian Laudrup will join Danish Super-league team FC Copenhagen from English Premier league Chelsea from December 1. Copenhagen managing director Flemming Oestergaard said on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Transfer negotiations were expected to end by November 9 with the signing of a contract and Laudrup, who has said he wants to return home to Denmark, would join FC Copenhagen on December 1, Oestergaard told a news conference.

Laudrup, 29, headed home the winner when Chelsea beat FC Copenhagen 1-0 in a European Cup Winners' Cup second round. Second leg match on Thursday. This put Chelsea, the cup holders, through to the quarterfinals 2-1 on aggregate.

Shane to play on Sunday

MELBOURNE, Nov 6: Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne will make his first-class comeback on Sunday after being selected to play for Victoria state in a one-day match, reports Reuters.

Warne has not played first-class cricket since undergoing shoulder surgery in May but is hoping to play at least part of the upcoming Ashes series with England.

Australian selector Allan Border said on Thursday that the selectors were closely monitoring Warne's fitness but did not want him to risk further injury by bringing him back too early.

Warne has played two club matches in the past fortnight, scoring a century in the first week then taking a wicket in the second.

World Youth Cup Nigerian preps not upto the mark

LAGOS, Nov 6: A FIFA health team inspecting Nigerian facilities for next year's World Youth Cup has cited inadequate emergency and laboratory facilities at match venues, reports Reuters.

"We need more of such facilities for visiting teams to take care of emergency situations during the tournament, the national news agency quoted team head Hoany Abdel-Rahman as saying on Thursday.

Health minister Debo Adeyemi gave an assurance that "Nigeria will be medically fit to take on the world during the championship."

The 1995 tournament switched from Nigeria to Qatar after FIFA decided health care and security arrangements were unsatisfactory.

Rothenberg bucks up Clash

SAN JOSE, California, Nov 6: Major League Soccer founder Alan Rothenberg on Monday toasted a brighter future for the San Jose Clash, the struggling team he and other investors are buying for a record 25 million dollars, reports AP.

Rothenberg was confident that the Clash, despite its last-place standing in the West Coast Conference, is ready to succeed on the field and in the stands.

"We intend to make this the stellar team in Major League Soccer and the showcase for how it should be done," he said at a news conference. "I think the pieces are in place. It's a great organization."

Rothenberg intended to boost marketing of the Clash, but planned no major changes during the nine remaining games this season.

The sale of the Clash, one of three teams run by the league, was announced July 31. The investor group Rothenberg heads also includes the Japanese advertising company Dentsu Inc, and Peter Ueberroth, former major league baseball commissioner.

The 25 million dollars price outstripped the 20 million dollars investors paid last year for the Miami Fusion.

Rothenberg, in addition to being a charter investor in the MLS, is a past president of the US Soccer Federation. He was commissioner of soccer for the 1984 Olympics, and head of the group bringing the 1994 World Cup to the US. He also owned the Los Angeles Aztecs of the North American Soccer League in the late 1970s.

His acquisition of the Clash is considered a much-needed boost for the team, which has won nine games and lost 14 this season. The team finished in next-to-last place in 1996 and at the bottom last year.

"He's a man of tremendous qualifications, tremendous clout, a man who will be tremendously useful to us," said Clash president Peter Bridgewater, who will remain with the team.

He, Rothenberg and others at the news conference opened a bottle of sparkling wine to celebrate the Clash's future.

The Clash, despite its dismal record, enjoys the sixth-highest attendance in the 22-team MLS. That's due largely to the San Jose area's Hispanic and affluent suburban residents, the sport's marketers.

But that attendance has slipped over the last year, a trend Rothenberg is determined to reverse.

Rothenberg said he would not change the way the team is promoted but would simply do it more aggressively.

Rafter, Henman bow out



PARIS, Nov 6: Australian Patrick Rafter held his head high as he crashed out of the Paris Indoor Open Thursday after losing a thrilling three-set showdown to his friend Todd Martin, reports AFP.

But if Rafter and Martin were all smiles when their two hours 45 mins confrontation ended in a 5-7, 7-6, 7-6 victory for the American — Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Britain's Tim Henman were hardly speaking.

The Russian's 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 victory over the British number one was soured when Kafelnikov accused his opponent of being unsporting.

Henman's temper had hardly been helped when he squandered a 5-1 third set lead and failed to convert a match point at 5-4 in a game in which he slammed down three aces.

But Kafelnikov became furious when the British player did not apologise after hitting a series of net cords.

"I got really mad and frustrated," he said.

"Tim and I are good friends — Graf to go on

LEIPZIG, Germany, Nov 6: Former world number one Steffi Graf announced Thursday that she had decided to continue her tennis career, reports AFP.

Earlier this year the 29-year-old admitted a series of injuries had forced her to consider quitting the sport.

But after winning her first match following a two-month injury lay-off on Tuesday, Graf said she had abandoned the idea of retirement.

"Tennis is my life. I have need of the fabulous emotion playing tennis gives me. No more talks about retirement. I will play in 1999," said the German, who has won 104 tournaments and 21 Grand Slam events.

"I am a fighter, I don't want to give in because of an injury," added Graf, who on Wednesday reached the quarterfinal of the 450,000-dollar WTA indoor tournament here by beating sixth-seeded Ai Sugiyama of Japan.

In the quarterfinals Martin

but he was hitting the net consistently and he never apologised once. I think I said something bad to him during one of the changeovers but hopefully we can put that on the side and still be friendly off the court."

There were no bad words between Rafter and Martin, however, they kept the Bercy fans on the edge of their seats with a string of glittering winners, applauded each other and warmly hugged after the match — Rafter just failing to make it after staging a rousing comeback from 2-5 in the final set.

After the match the Australian confirmed that he may not be able to play the ATP Championships in Hanover later this month.

Troubled by a nagging knee problem, Rafter said he would make a final decision after seeing a specialist on Friday.

"I'll make that decision tomorrow," said Rafter.

"It isn't something that needs surgery. It's a bruised meniscus and it just takes time. I'll have an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) tomorrow. I've already seen the doctor here and he's the best doctor around. We know what's wrong and exactly what's going on."

"I think this match tonight against Todd will have been a big Test and I will have to see how I pull up tomorrow, I'm probably going to be a little sore."

"But if I can pull up okay from this then I can definitely play three matches in Hanover. I'll just have to wait and see what the doctors say."

Should Rafter decide not to play in Hanover, Karol Kucera of Slovakia, Henman and Kafelnikov look almost certain to fill the vacant berths.

But Britain's number-two Greg Rusedski, who outplayed Jason Stoltenberg 7-6, 6-4, also has an outside chance of qualifying.

"Things are definitely looking up for me," grinned Rusedski after his win.

"I think I have a little bit of an outside shot at qualifying. But I'll have to do extremely well and continue to in a few more matches to even contemplate it."

In the quarterfinals Martin

faces fifth-seeded compatriot Andre Agassi who repeated his 1994 victory in the final over Switzerland's Marc Rosset when he scored a 6-4, 6-4 win.

Rusedski's ace experienced Magnus Gustafsson — a straight sets winner over Germany's Tommy Haas.

Kafelnikov's opponent will be world number-two Marcelo Rios of Chile, the 22-year-old South American left-hander, who has yet to lose a set at the tournament. Put out Vince Spadea of the United States 7-5, 6-4.

Rios is hoping to prevent Sampras from becoming the first player to top the rankings for a sixth consecutive year.

Kafelnikov and Rafter were not the only players to stage a third-set comeback.

US Open finalist Mark Philippoussis surged back after going 2-5 behind to beat seventh-seeded Karol Kucera of Slovakia 6-4, 5-7, 7-5. Philippoussis now plays either Sampras or Frenchman Jerome Golmard.

Fined for wearing jewellery!

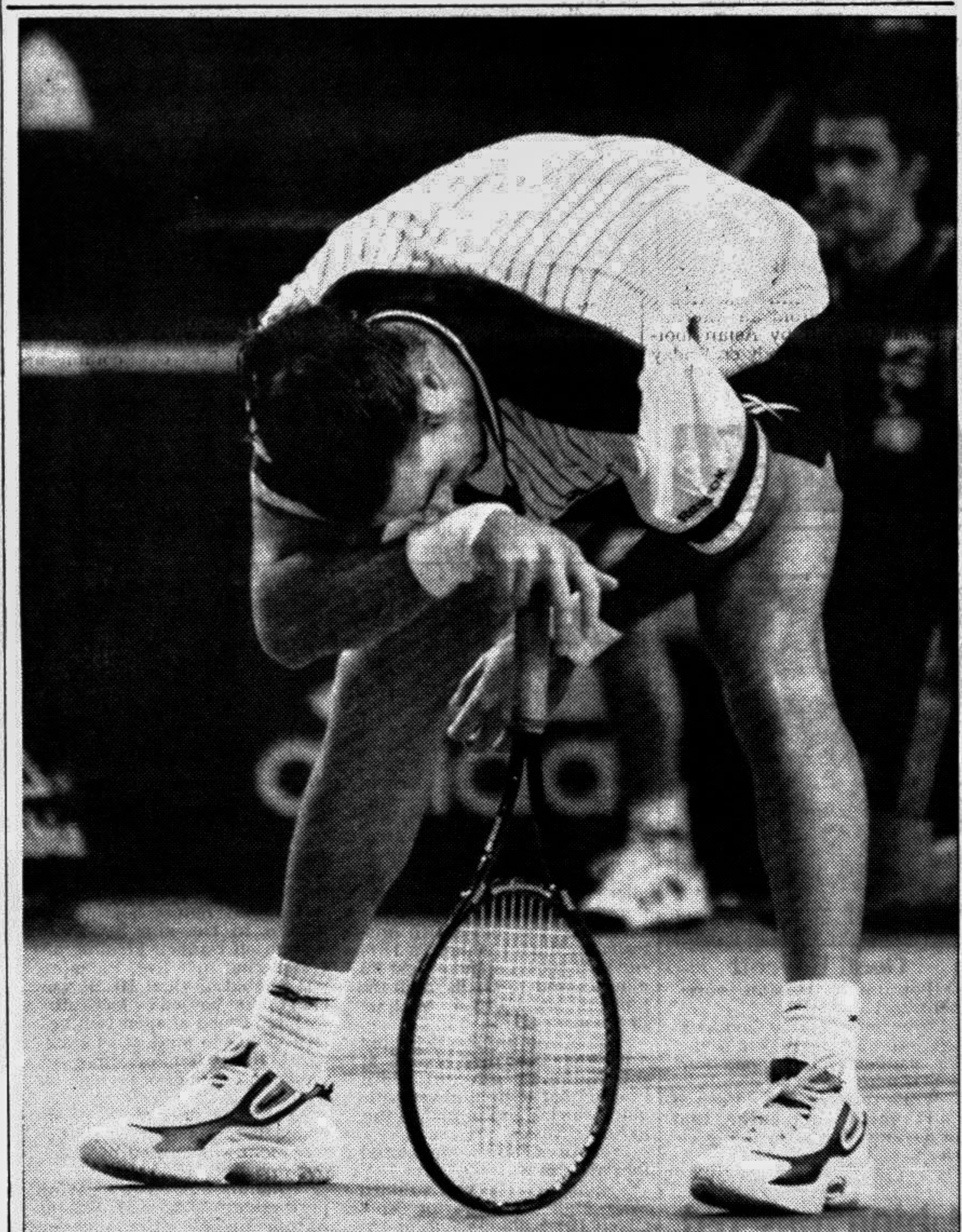
NOTTINGHAM, England, Nov 6: Nottingham Forest's French striker Jean-Claude Darcheville has been fined by the English Premiership club for wearing jewellery, reports AFP.

Darcheville was ordered to remove a gold earring by the referee during last week's League Cup clash with Cambridge.

It was revealed on Thursday that manager Dave Bassett subsequently hit him with a club fine. He said: "Jean-Claude showed a complete disregard for the rules that he and every other player knows."

"I feel quite justified in fining him for this. I'm irritated by it as it was embarrassing and made the club look a bit of a laughing stock."

There are notices all around the dressing room telling players that they can't wear earrings and necklaces on the field and he should have known better."



OH! No! Australian Patrick Rafter can't believe his luck after a decision went against him in the fourth round Paris Indoor Open encounter against American Todd on Nov 5.

— AFP/UNB photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. A crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. The grid is partially filled with letters. Clues include: Across 1: Upper limit; Down 1: Rafter's dad; Down 2: Pass the baton; Down 3: Radiowave resort; Down 4: Prohibit; Down 5: Sine-non link; Down 6: Eaves dropper; Down 7: Bean curd; Down 8: Desire; Down 9: Sweater variety; Down 10: One minute now; Down 11: Where to hide an ace?; Down 12: The Greatest; Down 13: Brooks of Harris; Down 14: Yule refrain; Down 15: Mom of Kelly and Bud; Down 16: La-la lead-in; Down 17: Chester; Down 18: Perch; Down 19: Speck; Down 20: Miss Piggy; Down 21: Rafter's answer; Down 22: Vessel; Down 23: "seven years"; Down 24: Lair; Down 25: Detroit dud; Down 26: Schleppe; Down 27: Trouble in River City; Down 28: Tintin; Down 29: People in general; Down 30: So bad it's good; Down 31: Moises of baseball; Down 32: Snaps; Down 33: Ship that fell to the Bonhomme Richard; Down 34: Earn; Down 35: Sigma follower; Down 36: Bigot of a sort; Down 37: Team; Down 38: Phil Spector; Down 39: Portrayal; Down 40: Despot; Down 41: A tribe of Israel; Down 42: Therefore; Down 43: Check; Down 44: pro nobis; Down 45: Swamp; Down 46: Half of doe.