

Sport

Di Matteo steals United's thunder

LONDON, Jan 17: Chelsea clung to their lead at the top of the English Premiership on Saturday but as he jettied off for a surprise break in Tenerife, player-manager Gianluca Vialli must have cast an envious eye towards Manchester United's white hot strike force of Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole, reports AFP.

While Chelsea needed a late wonder goal from midfielder Roberto di Matteo to give them a 2-1 win over Coventry — United's goal-greedy front pair simply gorged themselves in a 6-2 demolition of Leicester.

Yorke scored a hat-trick to take his season's tally to 16 while Cole is only one behind after grabbing two at Filbert Street.

It's the kind of partnership that wins championships and one that Vialli, who is down to his bare bones in attack, can only dream of.

With Pierluigi Casiraghi, Tore Andre Flo and Gustavo Poyet on the long-term injured list, Vialli has only himself and Gianfranco Zola to choose from up front.

Chelsea's Italian boss was not fooled by Di Matteo's winner, which settled a bad-tempered match at Stamford Bridge that was marred by an amazing touchline scuffle involving more than 15 officials and substitutes from both dug-outs.

Coventry manager Strachan and Chelsea kit-man Aaron Lincoln were both dismissed by referee Jeff Winter and are likely to face a misconduct rap.

On the pitch Darren Huckerby, scorer of two successive hat-tricks before Saturday, chipped Coventry ahead after nine minutes before Frenchman Frank Lebeouf wallopped in a 25-metre equaliser for the home side in first-half injury time.

Coventry had a strong penalty appeal turned down in the second half and, after the touchline mayhem had subsided Di Matteo crashed in a fierce shot deep in injury time to extend Chelsea's unbeaten run to 21 games.

Chelsea's unbeaten in 21 games, now have 43 points, two clear of United, with Aston Villa, who play Everton on Monday, a further point adrift.

With champions Arsenal fourth on 39 points after spoiling Ron Atkinson's return to frontline management by winning 1-0 at bottom club Nottingham Forest, this year's title race, is one of the most open in years.

Liverpool's Robbie Fowler continued his rehabilitation with a hat-trick as the Merseysiders crushed Southampton 7-1 at Anfield.

Fowler was on target after 22, 37 and 47 minutes, taking his league goals tally to 101.

with Dominic Matteo, Jamie Carragher, Michael Owen and Dave Thompson completing sorry Southampton's humiliation.

City ground a little over an hour before kick-off sporting a sun tan and a grin the width of Nottingham's Trent River. He should have felt quite at

accused Spurs' French winger David Ginola of constantly diving in an attempt to win penalties. "For somebody with so much



Action from Saturday's Premiership encounter between Manchester United and Leicester City. United won 6-2. — AP/UNB photo

United, who thrashed West Ham 4-1 last weekend, were simply unstoppable at Filbert Street as they tore Leicester to pieces.

Yorke gave them the lead when he converted Denis Irwin's cross from five metres out after 10 minutes. Leicester hit back with a spectacular Theo Zagorakis effort before half-time but in the second period United turned on the style.

Cole scored twice in 14 minutes before Yorke grabbed his second from an acute angle after 63 minutes to kill the game.

Steve Walsh pulled one back for Leicester before Cole whacked a shot against the bar and Yorke gobble up the rebound to complete his hat-trick.

Dutch defender Jap Stam rounded off the rout with his first goal for the club in the final minute.

Atkinson stroke into the home after his Barbados holiday judging by the amount of sand on a desperately poor pitch but the charismatic 59-year-old marred his triumphant parade in front of the Forest fans by walking to straight to the away dugout by mistake.

His new charges didn't do much better as Arsenal dominated from the kickoff and grabbed all three points when defender Martin Keown bounced a header into the net from a corner after 34 minutes.

Typically 'Big Ron' refused to be downcast afterwards, pointing to a gritty second-half fightback which saw Forest all but end their run of eight successive defeats when they take on Roud Gullit's Newcastle at The Valley.

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Jamaican Deon Burton hit an 84th-minute winner at Pride Park as Derby beat Blackburn 1-0, while first half goals by teenager Alan Smith, his third goal in two games, and Lee Bowyer gave Leeds their 2-0 victory against Middlesbrough at Elland Road.

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Hinds hammers hundred

KINGSTON, Jan 17: A sparkling maiden first-class century from Wavell Hinds put Jamaica in a strong position against defending champions Leeward Islands at the close of the second day Saturday of the Bussa Cup at Sabina Park, reports AP.

The left-handed Hinds hit 126 to spur the Jamaicans to an imposing 298 for five and a lead of 152. Hinds, a member of the West Indies A team that recently returned from India, storked 14 boundaries and one six in an innings that lasted just five minutes shy of seven hours.

With captain Jimmy Adams, who made 72, Hinds featured in a 160-run partnership for the third wicket.

Adams hit seven boundaries before being dismissed by left-arm spinner Anthony Lake. He was one of three wickets to fall in the final session, which was easily the most fruitful period for the visitors.

Adams, a West Indies Test discard, is eyeing a recall to the senior team for the upcoming series against Australia.

Scoreboard at the close of the second day of the four-day Bussa Cup cricket match between Jamaica and the Leeward Islands at Sabina Park on Saturday:

LEEWARDS: First innings 146 (D Joseph 62; N Perry 7-49) JAMAICA: First innings (overnight 60 for 1)

Table with 5 columns: Player, Runs, Wickets, Overs, Extras. Includes names like Garrick, Williams, Benjamin, Samuels, Quinn, Hinds, Cornwall, Adams, Joseph, Waldron, Powell, Keene, Gayle, Ford, Extras, Total, Fall of wickets.

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes names like Benjamin, Quinn, Tuckett, Lake, Waldron, Cornwall.

Karembu walks away with the award

SYDNEY, Jan 17: Christian Karembu has been voted 1998 Oceania footballer of the year after his outstanding successes with Real Madrid and World Cup champions France, reports AFP.

It is the second time Karembu, originally from the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia, has been handed the award by regional officials and media after taking the title in 1995.

Karembu, a 27-year-old midfielder, had a season to remember last year when he won a European Cup winner's medal with real and was a member of the French World Cup championship squad.

Among other players to poll were Australians Stan Lazaridis (West Ham), John Aloisi (Coventry City) and Ned Zelic (Munich 1860).

Celta too good for Mallorca

MADRID, Jan 17: Celta Vigo stormed back to the top of the Spanish First Division Saturday after scoring an impressive 4-2 victory over Mallorca in driving rain, reports AFP.

Russian striker Valery Karpin twice brought Celta back into the match after they had gone behind.

His first equaliser came when he hammered home a swirling shot after a neat pass from French international Claude Makelele three minutes after Ariel Lopez had put Mallorca clear.

He then levelled the score at 2-2 five minutes after Biagini had put Mallorca clear with a 51st minute penalty.

Yugoslav defender Goran Djorovic scored the vital third goal for Celta four minutes from time, soaring above a tired Mallorca defence, and Israeli frontmaner Haim Revivo put the match beyond doubt with a goal in injury time — slotting home a 20m free-kick.

Celta now top the table with 34 points — two points more than Mallorca.

U-20 soccer final phase from today

MAR DEL PLATA, Argentina, Jan 17 (AP): It will be the familiar cast of characters: Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay.

Between them, they have qualified and played in a total of 24 World Cups for under-20 players.

And when play begins Monday among six teams in the final phase of the South American U-20 Championship, they will lead the fight for the fourth berths in the World Youth Championship scheduled for April 3-24 in Nigeria.

But they will also have Paraguay, who have played in four U20 World Cups, and Peru, who have never made it to the finals.

And Paraguay may be the biggest surprise of all. Led by Roque Santa Cruz, and his two goals, Paraguay finished atop Brazil with one undefeated record in Group B from the first round (3-1-0).

But the usual suspects are again the favourites. Defending world champions Argentina were the only side to win their four first-round matches.

Known as the "Pekerberos" for their coach Jose Pekerman, outscored opponents 12-1 and was led by tournament leading scorer Luciano Galletti, who has five goals.

Hat hooligans

SYDNEY, Jan 17 (Reuters/Internet): New South Wales Police Minister Paul Whelan has called for cricket hooliganism to be included on the agenda at the next national conference of state police ministers.

Whelan said on Sunday he planned to call for uniform national laws at the next conference, to be held in April.

The problem came to a head on Friday night when unruly crowd behaviour marred an international one-day cricket match between Australia and England in Melbourne.

Play was halted for five minutes after spectators threw beer bottles and golf balls during a Mexican wave. One object hit the knee of England fieldsmen Mark Ealham.

Sydney has tough penalties for drunken and offensive behaviour at sporting events, including a \$5,500 fine for pitch invasions.

"There's no reason why people can't go to the cricket and have a good time," Whelan told local radio.

"But pitch invasion and throwing beer up into the air during the Mexican wave cannot be tolerated and should be stopped."

About 40,000 people attended Sunday's match between Australia and England, with 130 police and 100 extra ground security staff patrolling the ground.

Jenny eyeing another mark

SYDNEY, Jan 17: Olympic gold medalist Jenny Thompson has another world record in her sights after setting a new record in the 100-metre individual medley Saturday, reports AFP.

The American has set a new world record at every short-course swimming meet she has competed in recently and expects this week's event in Hobart to be no exception.

Thompson broke the 100-metre individual medley at the World Cup shortcourse meeting in Sydney, shaving .02 of a second off the world mark set by Slovakian Martina Moravcova one month ago.

Her time of 1:00.41 gave Thompson her third world shortcourse record in weeks. She set the 50-metre and 100-metre butterfly marks at College Station, Texas last month.

"I guess I'm on a roll," the five-time Olympic gold medalist said. "The one goal I verbally set myself before I came here was that I wanted to get that record. I have come close to it before so I knew it was within reach."

Thompson said she was setting her sights on Chinese swimmer Le Jingyi's 100-metre freestyle record during the Hobart leg of the World Cup series which begins Monday.

"Maybe in Hobart, I definitely think it's attainable and I love to do that in a new way, at some point," she said. "I'll just go in with the same attitude. I'll just try and improve what I've done in all my swims."

Garcia's repeat triumph

LAS VEGAS, Jan 17: Roberto Garcia looked like a beaten fighter as he struggled from the canvas after a 12th-round knockdown, reports AP.

Blood was flowing from a cut around his right eye and his left eye was swelling around his left eye.

A few minutes later, though, his arm was raised in victory, the IBF junior lightweight title still his after a bruising 12-round fight with two-time former champion John John Molina.

Garcia's dominance in the early rounds proved to be the difference Saturday night as he retained his 130-pound (59 kilos) title with a unanimous decision over Molina.

All three judges scored the fight 115-112 for Garcia, who defended his title for the second time and remained unbeaten in 32 fights. Molina dropped to 45-6.

The fight was the final bout on the undercard of Mike Tyson's return to the ring against Francois Botha at the MGM Grand hotel.

Garcia, 129 1/2, of Oxnard, California, battered Molina early and appeared on his way to an easy victory. But he was cut around the right eye in the third round and Molina out-boxed him late.

In the final round, a right hand put Garcia down 45 seconds into the round, but he was up quickly and the fight continued. Molina, 130, of Puerto Rico, went down for the only

time with 4 seconds left in the fight from a low blow and the fight was stopped briefly until he recovered.

In another bout, Zab Judah knocked down Wilfredo Negron three times in the fourth round to win the interim IBF junior welterweight title.

Vince Phillips is the IBF 140-pound (63 kilos) champion, but has had trouble making the weight. If he ends up vacating the title, Judah would become the champion.

"Make the weight or get out," Judah said after stopping Negron.

The left-handed Judah out-boxed Negron from the opening round, but it wasn't until after an unusual incident that put Judah on the canvas late in the third round that he began to hurt Negron (17-4).

Referee Joe Cortez stopped the fight briefly after Judah, moving his head low, got it caught between Negron's legs and was taken to the canvas. Judah complained of getting a knee to the head in the process.

Judah (19-0, 14 knockouts) buckled Negron's legs with a right hand early in the fourth round, forcing an 8-count. He then knocked him to his knees with a series of four head punches for a second knockdown.

Cortez finally stepped in to stop the bout after three more big punches to the head at 1:44 of the third round. Both fighters weighed 139 1/2 (63 kilos).

"I was over anxious at first," said Judah, of Brooklyn, NY. "The fight should have ended much earlier, but once I calmed down, I pulled together and took care of business."

Former WBC champion Goya Vargas of Mexico was too much for Ghana's Ben Tackie in a lightweight bout that went 12 rounds.

Vargas (39-6-1) was busier and landed far more punches than Tackie (18-1), who did manage a flash knockdown in the final round. Vargas, 135, won by seven points on the scorecard and five on two others. Tackie also weighed 135.



Wimbledon's new signing John Hartson is shown a yellow card on debut against Tottenham Hotspur on January 16. Hartson joined the club in a 7.5 million dollar (12.5 million dollars) move from London rivals West Ham on Friday. — AP/UNB photo

Marseille manage a draw

PARIS, Jan 17 (Reuters/Internet): Olympique Marseille kept three points ahead of Girondins Bordeaux before their big French league clash when they snatched a 1-1 draw with a late goal by substitute Titi Camara at Rennes on Saturday.

Bordeaux, down to 10 men from the 38th minute when defender Francois Grenet was sent off, also came from behind to draw 1-1 at Montpellier as French international striker Lilian Laslandes equalised in first half injury time.

The next first division match for the two leading sides involved in a two-horse race since November is their potentially decisive clash at Bordeaux's Parc Lescure World Cup ground on January 29.

Nantes, 2-0 winners at home against bottom club Toulouse, are third, 14 points behind the leaders with Rennes fourth a further point adrift.

Marseille looked like the home side at Rennes, such was their control of the ball and commitment to attack.

Yet they fell behind after 12 minutes when Rennes central defender Dominique Arribage rose to a long free-kick by Anthony Revellere and sent a looping header over Marseille goalkeeper Stephane Porato and into the top far corner.

Arribage was on the pitch for only five more minutes, needing to be substituted after a recurrence of thigh muscle problems which almost forced him to miss the match.

In the 20th minute, Porato prevented Marseille from going further behind with a fine save at the feet of nippy Burundi striker Shabani Nonda.

Camara equalised only a few minutes after coming on for Christophe Dugarry, taking a defence-splitting ball from Robert Pires and placing it low and wide of goalkeeper Christophe Revault.

Revault denied Marseille victory with a superb diving save from a Laurent Blanc free-kick seven minutes from time.

Bordeaux fell behind to a ninth-minute Franck Silvestre goal, the defender glancing a header home past goalkeeper Ulrich Rame.

But Rame, called up for the first time by France for their international friendly against Morocco on Wednesday, saved Bordeaux in their worst moment seven minutes from the interval.

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But Ouedec, sold by PSG after he failed to score a single goal for them in the first half of the season, had his penalty saved by Rame.

Laslandes then glanced Yohan Micoud's cross past debutant goalkeeper Stephane Cassard, signed by Montpellier from Le Havre during the winter break, to send the teams in level at halftime.

Bordeaux's former Montpellier defender Herve Allicarte had a goal disallowed for offside in the 63rd minute.

Laslandes hit the bar with a brilliant chip from the edge of the box in the 76th minute as Bordeaux made light of their numerical disadvantage in their bid to reduce the gap with Marseille.

Grenet was one of three players sent off in six matches.

Bastia's Polish midfielder Piotr Swierczewski was shown the red card in the 54th minute of his side's 1-1 draw at Le Havre for elbowing Yann Soloy in the face.

Lorient midfielder Christophe Le Gri's dismissal three minutes before halftime for a second bookable offence at Auxerre opened the way for a 5-0 victory by the home side, who went three up in the opening seven minutes of the second half.



RC Lens' Vladimir Smicer (C) shrugs off Monaco's Frank Dumas during their French First Division match on January 16. — AFP photo

ATP may follow IOC's pattern

MELBOURNE, Jan 17: The Association of Tennis Professionals will seek to double the sports' current penalty for doping to two years, bringing them into line with International Olympic Committee guidelines, reports Reuters.

An ATP spokesman said the players council today approved a resolution calling for the current 12-month suspension for any player found guilty of using a class one drug to be doubled.

The resolution will now be passed to the ATP board, which is expected to ratify the rule change. It would then go before the International Tennis Federation.

The two-year ban would be imposed on first offenders found guilty of using drugs such as steroids, including the steroid nandrolone, which was detected in reigning Australian Open champion Petr Korda during last year's Wimbledon championships.

Korda escaped suspension, but was forced to forfeit prize money and computer ranking points earned at Wimbledon, where he made the quarter-finals.

The 30-year-old Czech won a reprieve after satisfying the ITF's independent appeals committee that there were exceptional circumstances in his case.

The ITF announced last week it would challenge the appeals committee's decision on the grounds that it had misapplied the rule governing exceptional circumstances. The ITF

appeal is to be heard by the court of arbitration for sport in Lausanne.

At a meeting on Saturday night, the world's leading male players dismissed talk of possible protest action over Korda's positive drug test and will await the outcome of court cases.

ATP tour chief executive officer Mark Miles rejected Australian media speculation about a possible player boycott of the Australian Open, which begins in Melbourne on Monday.

After the three-hour annual players' meeting, which Korda attended without addressing his fellow players, player representative Todd Martin rejected the boycott talk as a media "concoction".

A grim-faced Korda, the Australian Open champion, left the meeting without speaking to the media.

Martin added that the players respected Korda for attending the meeting and that the majority had no problem with the Czech defending his only Grand Slam title.

"I think most of us do want to know the exceptional circumstances and it's just a matter of convincing the general player body that we need to wait until the end of the appeal system and then we'll know everything that's happened," Martin said.

After that, Korda would be allowed to play on if his innocence was established, he said.

"If not, if he's found guilty at that point then he will both receive his prize money and his points from the tournaments he

has played since the test was taken last July and he will take his 12-month, or whatever length, suspension."

Some players, including Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman, had spoken out against Korda over the past two weeks while others, including dual US Open champion Pat Rafter, urged caution until the fullfacts were known.

Unfair farewell for Klinsmann

BONN, Jan 17 (Reuters/Internet): Former Germany captain Juergen Klinsmann said on Sunday he had been refused an official farewell game by the German Soccer Federation (DFB).

"I really would have loved to bid farewell before the fans in Germany but the DFB has refused," Klinsmann told German sports news agency SID.

"I'm sad and bitterly disappointed," Klinsmann, 32, has played 108 times for Germany. He retired after last year's World Cup finals in France and now lives in the United States.

The DFB informed Klinsmann by fax on Friday that he would not be granted an official farewell game.

"There will be no more farewell games for internationalists," said DFB vice-president Franz Beckenbauer, adding that only Lothar Matthaus would have one when he retired.

The Bayern Munich libero has a record 130 caps for Germany.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. Includes crossword grid, clues for across and down, and a cryptogram puzzle at the bottom.