

Seedorf heads for Newcastle?

LONDON, May 2: Dutch international midfielder Clarence Seedorf is set to join English Premiership club Newcastle after a bust-up with Real Madrid coach John Toshack, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old midfielder said Sunday that he has agreed to link-up with fellow Dutchman Ruud Gullit, who is the coach at St James' Park.

"I felt a lack of respect in Madrid for me," Seedorf said. "I need respect and I'll work hard for a man who will give that to me."

"I think Gullit will certainly give it. He and I developed a good relationship on a trip to South Africa last year. I have a lot of respect for him," he told the News of the World tabloid.

Gullit has been busy in recent weeks as he continues his rebuilding work.

Seedorf would cost around 5 million pounds while other likely targets include 3.5 million pound-rated Paris St Germain defender Alain Goma, Lazio's Croatian striker Alen Boksic, Blackburn goalkeeper Tim Flowers and Real Mallorca defender Elena Marcellina.

Newcastle are also still confident they can fight off interest from other clubs to seal the signing of experienced Dynamo Kiev defender Oleg Luzhny.

Thorpe's timely ton

LONDON, May 2: Graham Thorpe, sent home from England's tour of Australia with back trouble, proved his fitness in the run-up to the World Cup with a match-winning century for Surrey against Northamptonshire yesterday, reports Reuters.

"I have been confident of my fitness for a while but I felt I needed a big innings to prove to myself that I was back in the mood for international cricket," Thorpe said after hitting 138 not out in an eight-wicket win at Northampton's County Ground.

"I could not have had a better boost to my belief that England will win the World Cup."

Thorpe, 52, not out overnight, resumed his partnership with Ian Ward with the total on 112 for one as Surrey set off in search of the 301 they needed for victory.

Ward was out for 63 with the score at 177 but Thorpe and Alastair Brown (66 not out) added the 124 needed.

"My only concern was that under the cloud the pitch might green up and aid the pace bowlers but the pitch played well throughout," Thorpe said.

He faced 211 balls and hit two sixes and 20 fours in his 31st first class hundred.

Leicestershire, champions twice in the last three years, forced their second win of the season at home to Lancashire when their Australian pace bowler Michael Kasprowicz took the wickets of Andrew Flintoff, top scorer Nathan Wood (82) and former captain Michael Watkinson.

Wood, son of former England test opener Barry Wood, batted 4-1/2 hours and hit 12 boundaries before he was six out at 176. Flintoff was bowled by a ball which kept low. Leicestershire won by 107 runs.

Opening batsman Steve James hit 153 off 215 balls as Glamorgan made 341 for six to beat Sussex by four wickets. His 32nd first class century included 24 boundaries and came off 215 balls.

Middlesex beat Gloucestershire by two wickets with only five overs left to bowl. Promising batsman Owais Shah, who had taken three second innings wickets, led the run race with 60.

Somerset have dominated Yorkshire for three days but still require five runs on the fourth day after losing two wickets for 20 chasing 25 for victory in their second innings.

Raul ruled out

MADRID, May 2: Real Madrid striker Raul as today forced to withdraw from the Spanish team to face Croatia in a friendly international in Seville on Wednesday night, reports AFP.

Raul suffered a pulled muscle in his right ankle in a Spanish league match against Espanyol on Saturday and will be out of action for two weeks.

M'singh cricket

MYMENSINGH, May 2: County Nabin Club earned a dramatic one-run win against Mohammedan Sporting Club in the local First Division cricket league at the Circuit House ground today, reports UNB.

Batting first, County were all out for 100 runs with Rubel making 21. Munna picked up four wickets for 20 and Zakir three for 12 runs.

In reply, Mohammedan were dismissed for 99 with Munna contributing 29 runs. Sadi claimed three wickets for 12 runs while Babul and Raju took two wickets each for 12 and 17 runs respectively.

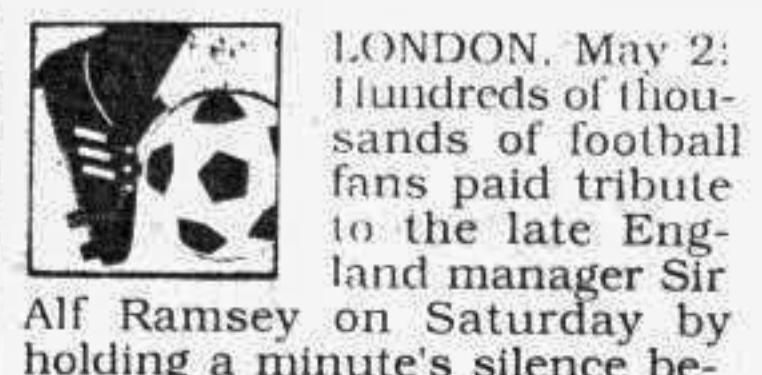
Meanwhile, Siraj Memorial Club earned a 5-0 victory over Al Helai Club in the First Division hockey league at the local stadium.

Halar-Decugis coasts

ZAGREB, May 2: Top-seeded Julie Halar-Decugis of France cruised into the final of the Bol Ladies Open Saturday, overcoming compatriot Sarah Pitkowska 6-3, 6-4, reports AP.

In the other semifinal, American Corina Morarua secured her third consecutive final with a convincing performance against Spain's Conchita Martinez Granados, 6-2, 6-0.

Sir Alf passes away



LONDON, May 2: Hundreds of thousands of football fans paid tribute to the late England manager he was never given the proper recognition for his unparalleled achievements.

The former England international said: "I was so disappointed that he was allowed to fade away. There is no way that he should be forgotten, and it would be a fitting tribute if they did something at the stadium."

Players who played under



SIR ALF RAMSEY

him described Sir Alf as a quiet, determined and brilliant manager.

George Cohen, England's right-back in 1966, said: "I am shocked and saddened. It is terribly sad for him."

Members of Sir Alf's 1966

side, including Sir Bobby Charlton and Alan Ball, have

led the calls for England's greatest manager to be recognised for all time when Wembley is renovated.

The most likely possibility is a statue, although instead there could be a room named in his honour at the new stadium.

FA spokesman Steve Double said: "We will be discussing in the coming week or so what can be done to provide a fitting

memorial for him."

Ball believes the new Wembley would be the perfect venue to commemorate a manager he was never given the proper recognition for his unparalleled achievements.

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