

Worcs go six points clear

LONDON, Aug 9 (AFP): Yorkshireman David Leatherdale helped Worcestershire Royals put one over on the county of his birth in Sunday's top-of-the-table clash in Division One of the English National League.

Leatherdale's 54 helped Worcestershire pile up 228 for seven at Headingley as Yorkshire totalled just 143 all out in 37.2 overs to slip six points behind their one-day league rivals.

Bottom-of-the-pile Essex Eagles crashed against Kent Spitfires at Canterbury, going down to a five-wicket defeat, after making only 139 all out in 32 overs.

In Division Two, table-topper Sussex Sharks got the better of Durham Dynamos at Riverside but there was no way back for bottom club Durham, with Sussex taking less than 30 overs to wrap up an eight-wicket victory.

Somerset Sabres kept the pressure on Sussex at the top after a thrilling two-run victory in their rain-affected game against Middlesex Crusaders at Southgate.

Australian Justin Langer, coming in down the order at number five, was the man who almost carried the Crusaders to an unlikely victory. But, having hit a lightning 84, he was snapped up by occasional medium-pace Michael Burns.

In the County Championship match between Leicestershire and Warwickshire at Grace Road, Warwickshire's first innings subsided from 214 for four to 306 all out with Leicestershire opener Darren Stevens out for a duck before rain stopped play.

The final day of four between Gloucestershire and Hampshire was abandoned without a ball being bowled at Bristol.

Czech squad for friendly

PRAGUE, Aug 9 (AFP): Czech Republic squad announced here on Monday for friendly with Switzerland in Drnovice on August 18.

Goalkeepers: Ladislav Maier (Rapid Vienna), Pavel Srnec (Sheffield Wednesday).

Defenders: Marek Nikl (Nuremberg), Tomas Repka (Fiorentina), Jan Suchoparek (TeBe Berlin), Roman Tyce (1860 Munich).

Midfielders: Miroslav Baranek (Sparta Prague), Radek Bejbi (Atletico Madrid), Tomas Galasek (Willem II Tilburg), Pavel Horvath (Slavia Prague), Pavel Nedved (Lazio), Jiri Nemec (Schalke 04), Karel Poborsky (Benfica), Radomir Slonick (Banik Ostrava).

Forwards: Jan Koller (Anderlecht), Pavel Kuka (VfB Stuttgart), Vratislav Lokvenc (Sparta Prague), Rene Wagner (Rapid Vienna).

Slovakian team for Israel match

BRATISLAVA, Aug 9 (AFP): Slovakian squad announced here on Monday for friendly international with Israel to be played on August 18 in Bratislava.

Goalkeepers: Miroslav Koenig (Slovak Bratislava), Kamil Susko (Spartak Trnava).

Defenders: Marian Zeman (Vitessse Arnhem), Stanislav Varga (Slovak Bratislava), Jozef Valachovic (OD Trencin), Jaroslav Hrabal (Trnava), Roman Kratochvil (Inter Bratislava), Marian Suchanek (Inter Bratislava).

Midfielders: Robert Tomaschek (Slovak Bratislava), Vladimir Labant (Sparta Prague), Peter Dubovsky (Oviedo), Vladimir Kozuch (Tatran Presov), Marek Ujlaky (Spartak Trnava), Vladimir Leitner (Trnava), Peter Nemeth (Inter Bratislava).

Forwards: Jozef Majoros (Slovak Bratislava), Martin Fabus (Sigma Olomouc), Attila Pinte (Inter Bratislava).

Emerson clears

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looms as a threat in this month's home series against Australia.

The Australian team arrives in Sri Lanka on August 17 for three Tests and a one-day tournament against the host nation and India.

Emerson, left off the umpiring roster for the coming Australian summer involving India and Pakistan, says he had a doctor's certificate saying he was fit to continue umpiring but the ACB chose to ignore it.

Sri Lanka, led by former captain Arjuna Ranatunga, were threatening to quit the tour until Emerson was dumped.

Emerson during the interview also refused to reveal the identity of a senior Australian player who told him "100 per cent" of Test cricketers believe Muralitharan throws.

The England-Sri Lanka one-day last summer was the second time Emerson called Muralitharan for chucking — he made the same call in Brisbane three years before.

Babes now

From page 13
other areas, such as Mombasa, Nyanza province and Nakuru. We are hoping to get financial assistance to develop the game from the ICC so that we will be able to produce more cricketers in the country," says Harila Shah, vice chairman of the Kenyan Cricket Association.

Given that eight of the present squad of 15 are African compared to the single player — a Ugandan at that — who was playing club cricket in Kenya 15 years ago, the game has clearly come a long way.

Graveney goes on record



LONDON, Aug 9: England's chairman of selectors David Graveney played down suggestions today that he was a "crisis" meeting.

at a dinner on Sunday night with incoming coach Duncan Fletcher was a "crisis" meeting, reports Reuters.

"It was just an informal meeting," he said as the rain, which delayed the start of play on the final day of the third test against New Zealand, offered England the chance to escape from Old Trafford with a draw.

"It (the dinner) didn't quite live up to the billing it has been given in the media," Graveney said.

Graveney and Fletcher, who takes up his post on October 1 in time for the tour of South Africa, dined with England captain Nasser Hussain and the English Cricket Board trio of Lord Maclaurin (chairman), Brian Bolus (management advisor) and Simon Pack (international teams director) to discuss the team's current malaise.

"There is no defence in that we are not playing well but this is certainly not a crisis. It was just one of those chats," said Graveney.

"We were looking at what

happens at the Oval (in the fourth and final Test) and the future. It's always a balance between winning the next game and what happens over the next couple of years."

There has been growing concern over the way England have performed this summer.

In the world Cup, which they hosted, they failed to get beyond the first round and they have been outplayed by New Zealand, one of Test cricket's lesser powers, in the current series.

But Graveney's comments follow criticism not just of the players but of the selectors as well.

Mike Gatting and Graham Gooch, in particular, have come under fire for a conservative attitude which has been England recall the likes of Mike Atherton, Graeme Hick and Peter Such — all over 30 — at the expense of younger players such as Aftab Habib who was dropped after the first two Tests.

The recall of Hick, for the seventh time in an England career which began in 1991, has caused consternation especially as leaked reports that Graveney was against his return suggest a certain disharmony among the selectors.

"We are aware, and I am aware as chairman of the selectors that there are some priorities and I am not deaf to the cries of the public," Graveney said.

The public, meanwhile, may now be deaf of the cries of the selectors.

Just 4,000 turned up for the fourth day's play on Sunday at Old Trafford.

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FA await ref's report on Gullit

LONDON, Aug 9: The English Football Association (FA) were on Monday awaiting referee Uriah Rennie's match report before deciding whether to act against Newcastle United manager Ruud Gullit following Saturday's Premiership match at St James' Park, reports AFP.

The Dutchman blew his top at the referee after Newcastle lost their opening Premiership game of the season to Aston Villa 1-0 and had captain Alan Shearer sent off in his 100th appearance for the club.

Rennie showed Shearer, who will be 29 on Friday, a red card after deciding he had committed two bookable offences, both during aerial challenges with Villa's Colin Calderwood.

Shearer shook his head in disbelief as he saw red for the first time in his illustrious career.

Gullit, who guided Newcastle to a humiliating 2-0 defeat by Manchester United in last season's FA Cup final, couldn't contain himself after the final whistle when he marched onto the pitch to angrily confront the Sheffield official.

An FA spokesman said on Monday no action could be taken until Rennie's match report landed at Lancaster Gate.

Gullit raged after the defeat that he would be willing to pay any fine imposed by the FA because he knew he was right.

Kenwright targets Everton share

LIVERPOOL, England, Aug 9: Theatre impresario Bill Kenwright on Sunday confirmed he was in talks with Everton chairman Peter Johnson to buy his majority shareholding in the English Premiership club, reports AFP.

Kenwright claimed he had had positive discussions with Johnson and said talks would continue on Monday when he hoped to release further details.

In a statement, Kenwright said: "I can confirm that over the weekend I have had what I hope are positive discussions with Peter Johnson regarding the major shareholding of Everton Football Club."

"These will continue tomorrow and I hope to make a further statement soon after that," Kenwright, who lost out to Johnson in an earlier bid, has been trying to put together the funds to buy Johnson's 68 per cent holding in the club since last November.

Vice-chairman Kenwright has consistently said he would make a bid before the start of the new season, but he had struggled to find city backers to fund the move.

Johnson valued his holding at more than 50 million pounds (£75 million dollars) last year.

Seedorf linked with Inter

MILAN, Aug 9: Inter Milan are in talks with Real Madrid in a bid to bring Dutch international midfielder Clarence Seedorf to Italy, Italian press reported today, reports Reuters.

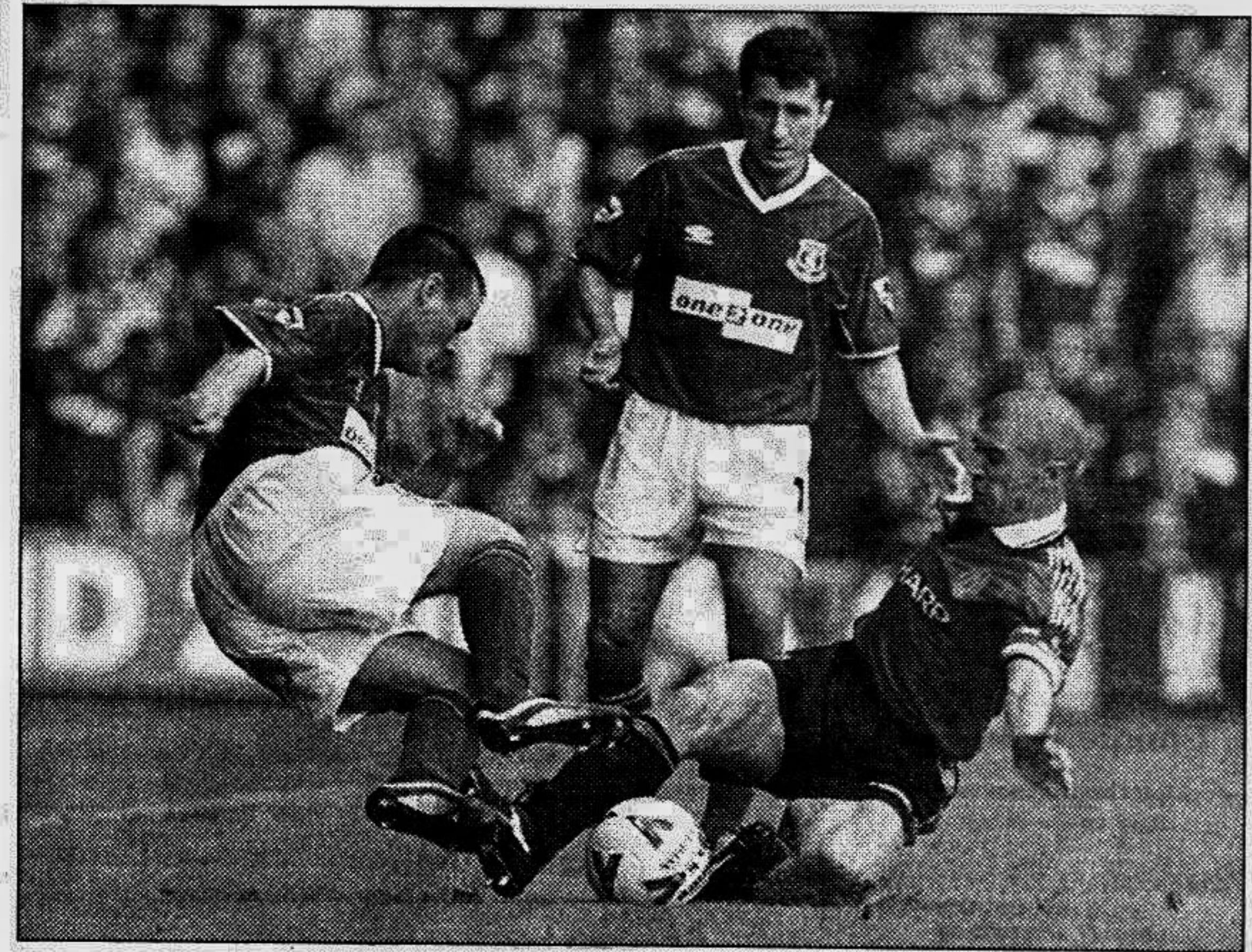
The Daily Gazzetta Dello Sport said an Inter official had met with Seedorf's father, who acts as his agent, on Sunday, and was due to meet Real Madrid President Lorenzo Sanz to discuss a possible deal.

Sanz has repeatedly said that he wants to keep Seedorf at Real but the player seems determined to leave.

Seedorf has been unsettled at Real since the arrival of John Toshack as coach, midway through last season.

"There is no point me being here while John Toshack is the coach," he told the daily AS newspaper on Thursday.

Seedorf played in Italy, for Sampdoria, before his move to Real three years ago and has frequently stated his desire for a return to Serie A.



Manchester United skipper Ray Keane (R) makes a sliding tackle on Everton's Mitch Ward during their Premiership encounter on August 8. — AFP photo

Stam's error costs MU



LIVERPOOL, England, Aug 9: Manchester United were kicking themselves after Dutch defender Jaap Stam's 86th-minute own goal gifted Everton a 1-1 draw at Goodison Park in the English Premiership yesterday, reports AFP.

United, who had won their last four games at Everton, went ahead after just seven minutes when Dwight Yorke, their 29-goal top scorer from last season, slipped the ball under Everton goalkeeper Paul Gerrard.

United created the better chances in a hard-fought encounter but were denied a deserved win by the otherwise outstanding Stam's error.

The result was particularly galling for Sir Alex Ferguson's treble winners after their expected title rivals Arsenal and Chelsea both won their opening games of the season on Saturday.

"We're kicking ourselves because we didn't finish them off," said Ferguson after emerging from a post-mortem with his players.

We had some good chances in the second half. But I thought our football was excellent at

times and I'm not disappointed with the performance.

United, with Ronny Johnsen, David May, Wes Brown and Gary Neville injured were relieved Stam was passed fit to play.

But Ferguson was without wide men Ryan Giggs and Jesper Blomqvist through injury.

Everton too had problems with transfer-seeking striker Francis Jeffers not even on the bench and a central defensive partnership of Dave Watson and Richard Gough boasting a combined age of 74.

The Gerrards were still adjusting their dentures when Paul Scholes almost scored for United after three minutes but stand-in goalkeeper Gerrard made a smart block to save Everton.

The Gerrard could do nothing four minutes later when Watson made a mess of his header and Andy Cole slipped in Yorke who fired United into the lead.

Everton hit back spiritedly and Don Hutchison headed against a post on the half-hour.

Hutchison was getting under Roy Keane's skin and the Irishman, back after an ankle injury, was booked for a heavy

challenge on the Everton striker which sparked an ugly

Everton almost equalised two minutes after the interval but United goalkeeper Mark Bosnich denied Hutchison and then Phil Neville and Henning Berg blocked follow-up efforts by Nick Barnaby and Kevin Campbell.

United's Ole Gunnar Solskjaer curled a long-range effort wide in response and just past the hour Keane's low drive was saved by Gerrard as the visitors began to play with more penetration.

With 18 minutes left Cole sprinted past Watson and released Solskjaer but the Norwegian's shot flew wastefully wide.

United were left ruing their profligacy with four minutes left when David Unsworth swung over a cross, Barnaby headed it across goal and Stam diverted it past Bosnich.

Substitute Nicky Butt rifled an effort inches wide as United tried in vain to retrieve their victory.

"You always need a bit of luck and we got that," said Everton manager Walter Smith.

"It came at just the right time for us. They are the best team in the country."

All-Africa Games football

Draw for finals held



JOHANNESBURG, Aug 9: Hosts South Africa were grouped with Algeria, Mali and Uganda when the draw for the All-Africa Games finals was made in Cairo at the weekend, reports AFP.

The other pool comprises Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritius and Zambia and matches will be played from September 9-19 at the Johannesburg, Orlando and Rand stadiums.

After the shock elimination of defending champions Egypt by Eritrea in the regional qualifying rounds, there is no obvious favourite for the quadrennial tournament.

Only Algeria, Mauritius and Zambia survive from the 1995 Games in Harare with Nigeria and Zimbabwe also failing to qualify, Guinea withdrawing and Congo not entering.

The advantage South Africa have of playing at home will be diluted by the absence of European-based Bradley Carnell, Benini McCarthy, Aaron Mokoena and Quinton Fortune due to club commitments.

Striker Hareapha Marumo, on loan to a Bulgarian club from Italian outfit Inter Milan, is the only foreign-based professional chosen by coach Ephraim Shakes Mashaba.

South Africa can call on five players who have represented the country at senior level — defenders Matthew Booth and Fabien McCarthy, midfielders Steve Lekoele and Junaid Hartley and striker Siyabonga Nomvete.

There is little to choose between the other Group 1 challengers with Mali slamming eight goals past Senegal in two qualifiers and Uganda overcoming Ethiopia, Kenya and Eritrea while Algeria received a bye.

A clash of dates with the African Champions League could rob Cote d'Ivoire of the teenage stars from ASEC and install Cameroon as the team to beat in Group 2.

Cameroon triumphed 4-0 in Rwanda and 3-0 in the Central African Republic en route to Johannesburg and that form suggests they could emulate the 1991 team and win an event re-

stricted to players born on or after January 1 1977.

All-Africa Games football finals draw at a glance:

Group 1 - Algeria, Mali, South Africa, Uganda

Group 2 - Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Zambia

FIXTURES

Group 1

Sep 9 - Algeria v South Africa, Mali v Uganda

Sep 11 - Algeria v Uganda, Mali v South Africa

Sep 13 - Algeria v Mali, South Africa v Uganda

Group 2

Sep 10 - Cameroon v Mauritius, Cote d'Ivoire v Zambia

Sep 12 - Cameroon v Zambia, Cote d'Ivoire v Mauritius

Sep 14 - Cameroon v Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritius v Zambia

Sep 16

Fifth, seventh-place playoffs

Sep 17

Semi-finals

Winners Group 1 v runners-up Group 2, winners Group 2 v runners-up Group 1

Sep 19

Final, third-place play-off

Matches to be played at Johannesburg, Orlando and Rand stadiums

Jeffers clears his position

LIVERPOOL, England, Aug 9: Everton's teenage striker Francis Jeffers has insisted money was not behind his decision to request a transfer from the English Premiership club, reports AFP.

The 18-year-old rising star was left out of Walter Smith's side which forced a 1-1 draw against Manchester United at Goodison Park on Sunday because of his shock request.

Jeffers instead watched the game at home on television and is this week set for showdown talks with Smith over his future.

"This isn't about money," he said. "All the talk about contracts and money is not the ball and end-all for me."

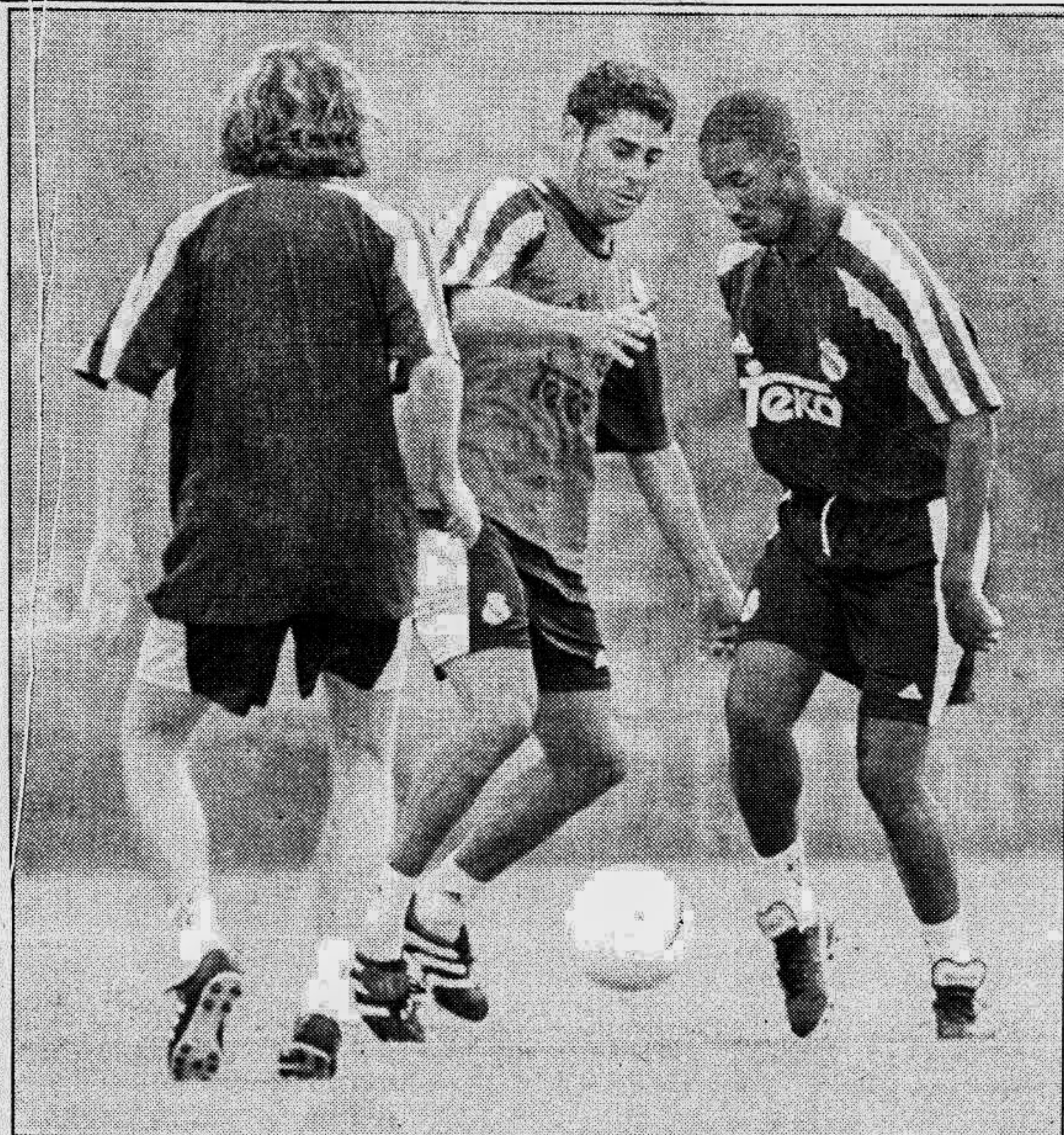
"My dream has always been to play for Everton, it has not been to earn thousands of pounds a week."

"I listened to the phone-ins at the weekend on the radio and it was upsetting because what was said about me I don't feel is true."

Jeffers was called into the England squad last season after he scored seven goals in 13 appearances for the troubled Merseysiders.

But he said: "I don't expect to walk into the team but I wasn't used much in pre-season and with a few other things it has left me wondering whether I'm wanted."

The teenager signed a new five-year contract last season but wants a clause inserted into his current deal to allow for it to be renegotiated when he has reached a set amount of games.



Real Madrid's Nicholas Anelka (R) trains with teammates Steve McManaman (L) and Fernando Hierro at their base in the Spanish capital yesterday. — AFP photo

World Cup 2006

Five on the warpath



ZURICH, Switzerland, Aug 9: The battle for the right to host the 2006 World Cup officially gets under way here on Monday when the five bidding countries formally present their case before FIFA president Sepp Blatter, reports AFP.

South Africa begin the race with a 30-minute presentation followed by Morocco and England.

Twenty-four hours later Brazil and Germany complete the campaign launch for the right to the world's biggest sporting event.

Although there are five entrants, most observers are convinced it will be a three-horse race between South Africa, Germany and England.

Blatter has made no secret of his desire to be the first man to bring the World Cup to Africa and South Africa are banking on former president Nelson Mandela to sway the 24 FIFA executive committee members who will decide the winner next summer.

But South Africa knows it faces a tough task to convince FIFA members that it will be able to meet all the standards set down.

Rivals England and Germany are quick to point out the growing crime-rate in South Africa and the economic prob-

lems facing the country. But both are so worried about South Africa that the two nations considered trying to reach a deal with South Africa - to pull out of 2006 and win European support for 2010. South Africa were uninterested and both England and Germany dropped the idea.

But the bitterest battle for 2006 is between the two European giants.

German football officials are still smarting over the fact that England even put a bid in.

Germany claims there was a gentlemen's agreement between themselves and English football officials nearly 10 years ago - giving England the European Championships in 1996 and allowing Germany to be the sole European representative for 2006.

When England first announced they would go for 2006, officials denied such an agreement ever existed. They have recently been less stident, saying that if such an agreement did exist it had been a mistake.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair is closely linked to England's bid and his former sports minister Tony Banks was appointed a special ambassador for the bidding committee.

Sir Bobby Charlton, Sir Geoff Hurst and Michael Owen will be among those putting England's case in Zurich.

The Germans have up to now put forward a less public cam-

paign than England, working instead in the background, getting to know the FIFA executive members.

Morocco's bid has prevented a united African bid but the African Football Confederation are still hoping that before next year's FIFA vote they will be able to present a single candidate.