

Rangers face the Parma test

PARIS, Aug 10: Expensively-assembled Glasgow Rangers will be aiming to avoid a repeat of last season's European disaster when they face Italian ace Parma in a European Champions League qualifying round, first leg match at Ibrox, Park on Wednesday night, reports AFP.

The Scottish champions held Parma 1-1 at home last year before losing 3-1 away and the Italians went on to win the UEFA Cup.

Rangers will certainly be keen for revenge with a lucrative Champions League place at stake for the winners.

While Rangers have scoured the world for talent and their starting line-up usually features only one or two Scots, Parma - at a disadvantage because the Italian league season has not yet started - are also big spenders.

Despite having sold midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron to Lazio and Enrico Chiesa to Fiorentina, Alberto Malesani's side remain formidable opponents.

Ariel Ortega, another Argentine signed from Sampdoria, replaces Veron, while Marco di Vaio, signed from relegated Salernitana, will deputise up front in both games against Rangers in the absence of injured Brazilian Marcio Amoroso, an off-season signing from Udinese.

Rangers have Dutch fullback Arthur Numan missing through injury and a doubt about midfielder Neil McCann, but coach Dick Advocaat still has a veritable league of nations to choose from.

Among those who starred in Saturday's 4-0 Scottish Premiership win over Hearts were Dutchman Michiel Molis, American Claudio Reyna, German Jorg Albertz, Italians Lorenzo Amoroso and Sergio Porrini, Australians Tony Vidmar and Craig Moore, German goalkeeper Stefan Klos and Finnish striker Jonatan Johansson. Several other internationals await in the wings.

History is very much on

Parma's side. Of 24 meetings between Scottish and Italian clubs in European competition, the Scots have come out on top on just five occasions.

While Rangers were whipping four goals past Hearts, Chelsea were swamping Sunderland by the same scoreline in their opening English Premiership match of the season.

The big-spending Londoners, like Rangers, base their team largely on foreign talent, with only two or three Englishmen as starters. The Italian Gianfranco Zola and the Uruguayan Gustavo Poyet were their stars against Sunderland.

Third in last season's Premiership, Chelsea appear to have an easier task than the Scots in their qualifying-round contest - opening with a home game at Stamford Bridge against the Latvians of Skonto Riga.

Skonto are the de facto Latvian national team and have no mean pedigree against British sides, having ousted Aberdeen from the UEFA Cup five seasons ago.

They have won the Latvian league every year since it was reformed in 1992 - a warning that Chelsea's all-stars cannot afford any complacency.

Olympique Lyon of France also know they will need to be wary against Slovenian champions NK Maribor, who scored a surprise victory over Belgian champions Genk in the previous round. The pair meet in Lyon on Tuesday night.

Lyon have plenty of punch up front, where their new-look forward line combines French international Tony Vairelles, scorer of three goals in the opening two league matches, with the experienced and dangerous Brazilian Sonny Anderson.

Midfielder Pierre Laigle, who has a knee injury, is a doubtful starter, however, and may be replaced by David Linares.

"We know that this is a match where every one of our players will have to be prepared to chase back and win back the ball," said Lyon coach Bernard Lacombe. "Maribor are a team

with plenty of technical ability - as is always the case with players from the former Yugoslavia."

Maribor though will have to make do without midfielder Memmet Dragusma, prevented from travelling to France because of a problem with his visa.

Among the other matches featuring big name teams, Germany's Borussia Dortmund travel to play FK Teplice in the Czech Republic and the Italians of Fiorentina play Poland's Widzew Lodz.

Croatia Zagreb meet MTK Budapest, while Hertha Berlin have a rather easier-looking clash with Anorthosis Famagusta of Cyprus.

Dynamo Kyiv of Ukraine, Champions Cup semi-finalists last year and unlucky to be involved at this early stage, have an away trip to Aalborg of Denmark on Wednesday night.

European Champions League third qualifying round, first leg matches scheduled this week:

Tuesday
Lyon (Fra) v Maribor (Slo)
Wednesday
Chelsea (Eng) v Skonto Riga (Lat)

Rapid Vienna (Aut) v Galatasaray (Tur)
Aalborg (Den) v Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr)
Fiorentina (Ita) v Widzew Lodz (Pol)

FK Molde (Nor) v Real Zaragoza (Spa)
Croatia Zagreb (Cro) v MTK Budapest (Hun)

Glasgow Rangers (Sco) v Parma (Ita)
Zimbru Chisinau (Mol) v PSV Eindhoven (Ned)
Brondby IF (Den) v Boavista (Por)

Spartak Moscow (Rus) v Partizan Belgrade (Yug)
Hertha Berlin (Ger) v Anorthosis Famagusta (Cyp)
AEK Athens (Gre) v AIK Solna (Swe)

Hapoel Haifa (Isr) v Valencia (Spa)
FK Teplice (Cze) v Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
Sturm Graz (Aut) v Servette (Swi)

Return matches: Aug 24-25

FA waiting for refs report

LONDON, Aug 10: The English Football Association (FA) were yesterday 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.

Hamman out of qualifiers

COLOGNE, Germany, Aug 10: Liverpool's German midfielder Dietmar Hamann expects to miss Germany's next two European championship qualifying games against Finland and Northern Ireland next month, reports AFP.

Hamann injured his right ankle against Sheffield Wednesday in the first round of the English Premier League and flew from Merseyside to Munich Sunday to have it looked at by Bayern Munich and national team medic Doctor Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wohlfahrt.

The player himself predicts two or three torn ligaments and a rest period of up to six weeks which would rule him out of the two Euro games on September 4 and September 8.

Germany trainer Erich Ribbeck had wanted to fall back on Hamann for the European ties after his side played so poorly this month at the Confederations Cup in Mexico suffering heavy losses at the hands of Brazil and the United States.

Hamann, who crossed to Liverpool from Newcastle United this season, ruined his ankle after just 25 minutes in Liverpool's 2-1 win over Sheffield Wednesday.

Vogts may coach German juniors

COLOGNE, Germany, Aug 10: Bert Vogts could be on the verge of returning to active duty 11 months after stepping down as coach of Germany's troubled national team, reports AFP.

He wants to rejoin the German Football Federation (DFB) helping to groom young players, a task he performed between 1979 and 1990 before taking over the seniors team from Franz Beckenbauer after its 1990 World Cup triumph.

"I had an interesting conversation with Franz Beckenbauer a few months ago," Vogts said in an interview with Monday's Rheinische Post newspaper.

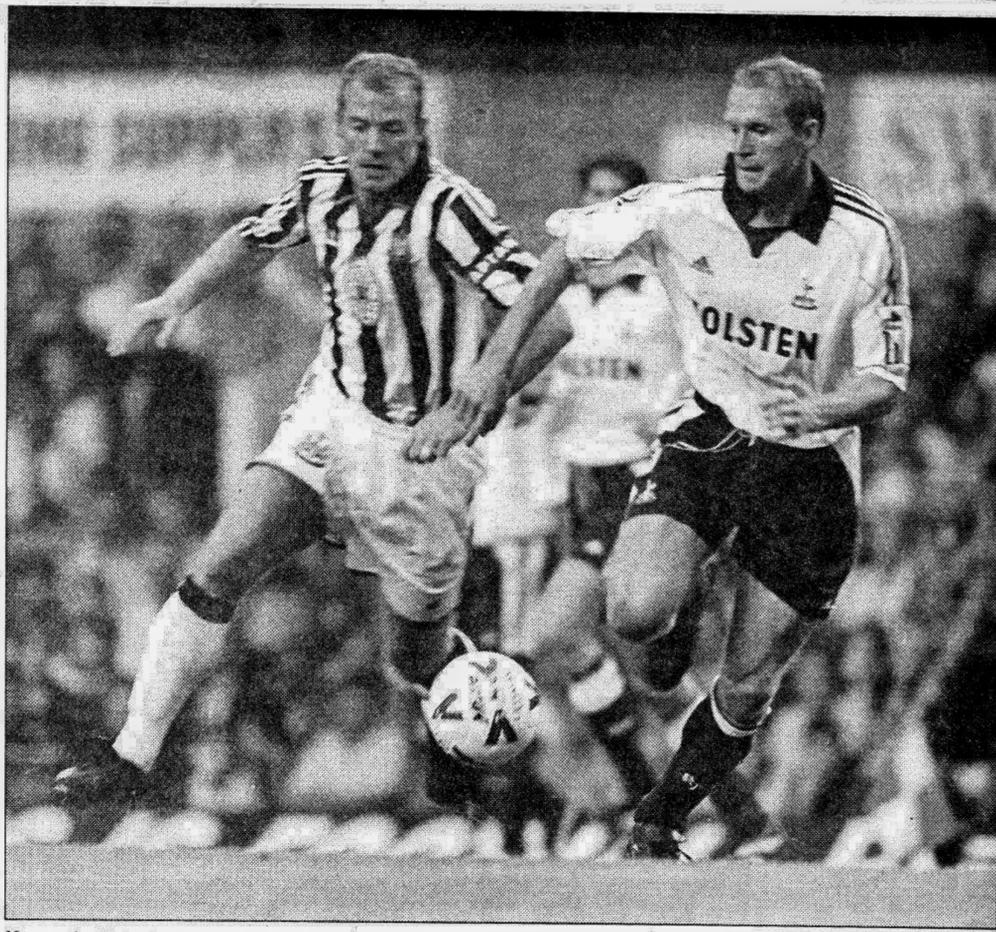
"The (youth planning) concepts have been with the DFB for seven or eight years now and are still waiting to be implemented. Franz reckons it is about time the plans got dusted off."

Vogts has been in charge of numerous DFB youth teams since he retired from active football in the late 1970's and has complained for years that Germany's promotion of young talents has been lacking.

"I was always madly in love with the game and I'm still madly in love with it," he said. "His kicking was never great, but it didn't cost us any goals did it?"

"He's all right and there's no problem. As long as he knocks it clear out of the road, we've no problem with it."

Bosnich also suffered a slight groin injury, although Sir Alex claimed it was nothing serious and that he should be fit for Wednesday's game against Sheffield Wednesday at Old Trafford.



Newcastle United's England striker Alan Shearer (R) trying to go past a Tottenham Hotspur defender during their English Premiership encounter at White Hart Lane on August 9. —AFP photo

Spurs sink Newcastle



LONDON, Aug 10: Steffen Iversen, Les Ferdinand and Tim Sherwood scored the goals as Tottenham Hotspur rallied to beat Newcastle United 3-1 in their English Premiership match at White Hart Lane on Monday night, reports AFP.

Spurs, who lost to London rivals West Ham in their season opener on Saturday, had to recover from a slow start before consigning Ruud Gullit's disappointing Newcastle to their second defeat in 48 hours.

Peruvian international Norberto Solano shot the Magpies ahead with a classy, 16th-minute strike from the edge of the penalty area, but the London club quickly got back on level terms.

Iversen powered home a thundering header from a corner just before the half-hour to answer and Ferdinand then grabbed the lead just before halftime.

Ferdinand shot home from close range against his former

club after Mauricio Taricco linked with Sherwood to send in a perfect low cross.

Iversen, who scored nine goals in five pre-season games, earlier struck ferociously from a Darren Anderson corner after Newcastle had ruled the exchanges early on and deservedly gone in front through Solano.

Spurs lost Ferdinand to an injury at halftime but French star David Ginola was pushed forward from midfield to join Norwegian Iversen up front and the Londoners remained just as dangerous.

Sherwood made it 3-1 in the 61st minute when the shaky Newcastle defence crumpled.

Anderson floated in a free-kick from the left flank and when the visitors failed to clear, Sherwood glanced the ball past goalkeeper Steve Harper with his head.

Newcastle did get the ball in the net with 13 minutes remaining, but England striker Alan Shearer was ruled to be offside before his close-range strike.

Spurs, though, nearly made it four eight minutes from time when Harper had to move briskly off his line to thwart former Liverpool midfielder Oyvind Leonhardsen, on as a substitute.

English Premiership table after Monday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Chelsea	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
Tottenham	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Wimbledon	1	0	0	3	2	3	
Arsenal	1	0	0	2	1	3	
Liverpool	1	0	0	2	1	3	
Aston Villa	1	0	0	1	0	3	
Bradford City	1	0	0	1	0	3	
Southampton	1	0	0	1	0	3	
West Ham	1	0	0	1	0	3	
Everton	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Manchester Utd	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Derby	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Leeds	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Watford	1	0	0	1	2	0	
Leicester	1	0	0	1	2	0	
Sheffield Wed	1	0	0	1	2	0	
Coventry	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Middlesbrough	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Newcastle	2	0	2	1	4	0	
Sunderland	1	0	0	1	0	4	

Hamann out for three months

LIVERPOOL, England, Aug 10: Liverpool's German midfielder Dietmar Hamann will be out of action for three months after undergoing an ankle operation in Germany on Tuesday, reports AFP.

The Merseysiders' 8 million pounds (12 million dollars) summer signing injured his right ankle against Sheffield Wednesday in the first round of the English Premier League on Saturday.

He flew from Merseyside to Munich on Sunday to have it looked at by Bayern Munich and national team medic Doctor Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wohlfahrt.

Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier said: "It is a big blow for us. Didi has torn his posterior ligaments. He has had an operation and will be out for between 10-12 weeks."

"He is disappointed, but he is naturally strong. He knows these things happen sometimes."

Hamann's injury creates an unexpected opportunity for Liverpool's young fringe midfielders Danny Murphy, Steven Gerrard and David Thompson, who came on as substitute for Hamann at Hillsborough.

China dominate AFC awards for July

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 10: China's women's team have been named Asian Football Confederation (AFC) team of the month for July after their second-place finish at the World Cup, reports AFP.

The AFC also nominated the team's coach, Ma Yuanan, as coach of the month for guiding the side to the final against the United States in Los Angeles.

China's star striker Sun Wen - who finished the Women's World Cup as joint topscorer - clinched the player of the month award.

A brilliant individual run and clinical finish by Masahi Motoyama of Japan in last month's Olympic qualifiers in Tokyo, won the AFC's goal of the month.

Keane keeps everyone guessing

LONDON, Aug 10: Republic of Ireland midfielder Roy Keane was chewing over Manchester United's final contract offer on Monday, reports AFP.

Sir Alex Ferguson is desperate to hang on to the midfielder, and has encouraged the club's board to ease United's rigid pay structure which seems to have hampered negotiations.

But if the Treble winners were to decide to sell Keane, they could move for a quick deal before the Champions League deadline on August 31.

Keane, speaking to the club's official radio station Century Radio, said: "We reached the end of contract negotiations last Wednesday night and the club have put their final offer to me."

"It isn't an easy decision for me to make. I have to take a lot of things into consideration with it being my last contract."

"I could talk about it all day but there are a lot of private matters involved in it."

"As I've said, a decision will be made, if not by the end of this week definitely by the start of next week and the fans will be the first to know."

"I won't be hiding anything. I'll just be as honest as I can and

Besiktas fire coach

ISTANBUL, Aug 10: German trainer Karl-Heinz Feldkamp has been sacked by top Turkish side Besiktas after a row over his health, the Anatolia news agency reported on Monday, reports AFP.

"We have cancelled his contract. We thank him for his work in the past five months," Besiktas chairman Suleyman Seba said.

Besiktas executives were angered when Feldkamp said last week that he was not fit enough to be on the pitch with the team because of his heart condition and asked to serve the club instead as an adviser.

Former German international Hans-Peter Briegel will step in to take over as manager until a new coach is found, Seba said.

when I do make up my mind the Manchester United fans will know first."

Meanwhile, Ferguson has played down Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich's jittery performance on his Premiership debut for United.

Peter Schmeichel's replacement looked ill at ease in the 1-1 draw on Sunday against Everton at Goodison Park as he fluffed his kicks and flapped at the odd cross.

"We knew Mark Bosnich

from when he was a kid here," he said. "His kicking was never great, but it didn't cost us any goals did it?"

"He's all right and there's no problem. As long as he knocks it clear out of the road, we've no problem with it."

Bosnich also suffered a slight groin injury, although Sir Alex claimed it was nothing serious and that he should be fit for Wednesday's game against Sheffield Wednesday at Old Trafford.



Dutch international striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (C) meeting his new mates at Atletico Madrid during a training session at the club's Vincent Calderon stadium on August 9. —AFP photo

Matthaeus feels let down



COLOGNE, Germany, Aug 10: Bayern Munich's elder statesman Lothar Matthaeus, who at 38 is the Bundesliga's oldest player, is annoyed at the way he has been treated by club management, reports AFP.

"I have been roughly dealt with at times and it hurt," complained Germany's 1990 World Cup winning captain in Munich's TZ newspaper Monday.

"I really feel like those up stairs on the top floor (at Bayern) have left me hanging. Internally they always tell me that I am right but in public I am always made the scapegoat."

"I was always portrayed as a fool who just blabs away without thinking first. So, I have decided that from now on I am only going to think about myself."

Matthaeus plans to end his career in the United States and will switch to the New York/New Jersey MetroStars at year's end when the Bundesliga enters its mid-season winter break.

Close friend and Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer is still hoping

Baichung in Div Two Bury

CALCUTTA, Aug 10: The Indian football community yesterday hailed the achievement of star footballer Baichung Bhutia who is set to become the first Indian to play as a professional with a European club.

"It is a great news for Indian football and would serve as a huge encouragement for other youngsters. It would inspire and motivate them," former national captain Chuni Goswami told PTI here.

I had expected him to turn out for a First Division club in England. But even Second Division is not bad. If he can prove himself, then we may see him play the Premier League next year," the former dashing striker said.

The nimble-footed Bhutia was set to sign a three-year contract with English Second Division club Bury based in Greater Manchester.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

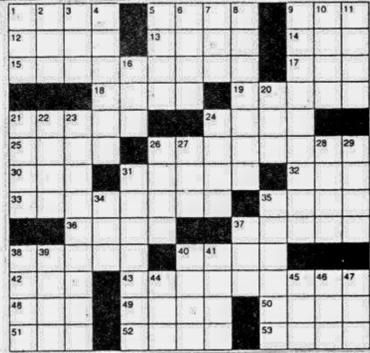
ACROSS
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31 Morrison's band
32 Branch
33 Robots
35 Respond to rep.
36 There's a small charge for them
37 Carriages

DOWN
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4 Nairobi native
5 Say "woof"
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7 Dell order
8 Huxley's matter
9 Exclaim your
10 Soak up rays
11 Talk like letters
16 Com serving
20 Prefix re
21 Melt's territory
22 Sported
23 Remove completely
24 Vikings' landing site
26 - de Boulogne
27 Staff
28 Unyield-ing
29 Purps up the volume
31 Asinine types
34 Caviar base
35 Red-brown pigment
37 X-ray alternative
38 Long sandwich
39 Shake-speare's river
40 - monster
41 Portent
44 Once around
45 Melody with a kick
47 Dawn goddess

Solution time: 22 mins.

SOAP OPERA
DINA BOBO
AUDITION AMEN
PROPERTY BARE
BATHING STRINGS
TISON KNESSIT
GOT SNARE OTIP
FOLIAGE HITRE
GHOULS LATIER
ROAD ACTIVITY
ASHE CHISELIER
FEUD KIR SEAS

Yesterday's answer



CRYPTOQUIP

H MTHIJ MTC EGIJ HE EGST W
EKWDM WIHKWU; WVMCD WUU.
HM TWE W UAM AV ESCIME.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: BEFORE HE HAD DINER, THE ORTHOPEDIST OFTEN SAID, "BONE APPETIT!"
Today's Cryptquip clue: S equals E

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.