

### African Champions League Louisienne pip Dynamos

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 23: African Champions League giant-killers Saint Louisienne of Reunion created another shock on Sunday with a 1-0 win over Dynamos of Zimbabwe.

Malagasy Flavien Ralaitraika snatched the winner after just six minutes at Saint-Louis with a powerful header that goalkeeper Gift Muzadzi could not hold following a corner.

Dynamos, runners-up to ASEC of Cote d'Ivoire last year, were unlucky midway through the second half when a shot by recent signing Joseph Makuwe rebounded off the post.

Saint-Louisienne became the first club on the French-governed Indian Ocean island to reach the group phase with victories over Red Star of Seychelles, DSA of Madagascar and Sundowns of South Africa.

Mighty Tunisian outfit Espérance outclassed ASEC 3-0 at home in the other Group 2 first-round match through goals from Maher Kanzari, Edith Agye and Walid Azaiez.

Revenge was particularly sweet for the only club to have won the Champions League, Cup Winners Cup and CAF Cup as they were humbled 3-1 by ASEC in the Super Cup this year.

Redouane al-Haimeur scored after only three minutes to give 1997 champions Raja Casablanca of Morocco a 1-0 victory over Hearts of Oak from Ghana in the Moroccan commercial capital.

Al-Ahly of Egypt, winners of a record six Pan-African competitions, started and finished impressively as they snatched a 3-2 triumph over Shooting Stars in Nigeria.

Mohamed Said gave the crack Cairo outfit a sixth-minute lead and Mohamed Gouda and Walid Salah struck in the closing stages of the Group 1 clash after goals from Tony Alege and Hassan Santos had edged Stars ahead.

After six rounds of mini-league action stretching to November, the group winners meet over two legs to decide who represents Africa in the inaugural world championship in Brazil during January.

African Champions League results

### Div I football

Dharmodhi Club beat Victoria Spangli Club 4-3 in a super-four match of the Metropolitan First Division football league at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, reports INB.

After a barren first half, Prashanta put Dharmodhi ahead in the 47th minute. However, Hasan equalised the margin for Victoria after eight minutes.

But one minute later Bulbul again put Dharmodhi in front while Gul Mohammed levelled the score in the 71st minute. In the 76th minute, Rubel netted the third goal for the winners and after three minutes Ekram completed the rout.

Hanif reduced the margin for the losers just before the last whistle.

In the day's other match, Prantik KC defeated BRTC SC by a solitary goal at the same venue.

Makbul netted the all-important goal in the 27th minute.

### Israeli h'ball squad in Qatar

DOHA, Aug 23: A 22-member Israeli sports delegation arrived in Qatar yesterday to participate in a World Youth Handball Championship hit by controversy over several Arab countries pulling out of the competition, reports Reuters.

"We are glad to be here," said Israeli coach Shelly Bar-Sela as he arrived at Doha International Airport.

"This is a purely a sports event and we are sorry that Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have opted out of the game," he told Reuters.

Around 20 teams had qualified to participate in the event which begins on Monday and ends on September 6.

### Satisfaction in Kiwi land

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Successful coach behind Warren Lees (1990-93) with 26 wins from 60 matches, a win ratio of 43 per cent.

Howarth said England now had to go back to square one and introduce new faces for its tour of South Africa in November.

"They've got to do this to try and gain some credibility back from the public point of view," he said.

Reid pointed to a large number of all-rounders in the New Zealand side as a difference between it and England.

Spinner Daniel Vettori may have batted in the tail but Reid noted the 20-year-old delivered important half centuries.

# Unfazed by Thorpe news



LONDON, Aug 23 (Internet report): News of Graham Thorpe's withdrawal from the winter tour affected neither his batting nor England's team spirit, David Graveney has said.

Following England's 83-run defeat by New Zealand at the Foster's Oval and newspaper reports that Thorpe has decided to quit touring in favour of more time with his family at home, Graveney said the announcement had not come at the best time, but it had little effect.

"For the news about Thorpe to break out in the middle of a Test match was not the best way for it to be revealed. It's a distraction, but I don't think it affected the way Graham batted."

"It certainly did not affect the dressing room, but these things do make the job difficult. It's a situation where he's been on tour for a period of time and everybody realises the balance you've got to achieve between the responsibility you

have as parent and to your job. International sportsmen have to weigh this up."

"He has given up his position in the team, and someone will come forward to fill his place, but to fulfil our responsibilities, we must select from players that are available all the time."

Hussain added: "Graham has put himself in a position now where you have to discuss his future at all times. I think it was important to win this game and series and Graham featured highly in that plan."

"He told me on Wednesday night. To lose him is bit of a blow, but it does open the door for other people."

On Sunday, the 30-year-old Surrey left-hander said: "I have not taken this decision lightly and know exactly what it means."

"By giving up my place in the team I'm letting someone else in and I may never get back."

"But I have a young family and they come first. I need to achieve some balance in my life," he told the Mail.

Thorpe will miss the five-Test series against South Africa in order to spend more time with his wife Nicola, two-year-old son Henry and six-month-old daughter Amella.

Graham Thorpe

# Enraged English media



LONDON, Aug 23 (Reuters): English newspapers were at their most vehement today as they lambasted the nation's cricketers for their series defeat to New Zealand.

England's 83-run defeat on Sunday handed a 2-1 series victory to the tourists and put the country that invented the game at the bottom of Wisden's unofficial list of the nine test-playing nations.

The England players suffered the ignominy of being booed off the pitch at the Oval on Sunday after the last seven wickets went down for 39 runs to yet again snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

Fans who gathered on the outfield for the post-match presentation sang: "It's so bad it's unbelievable and we've got the worst team in the world."

It was the first time in 27 home summer series that no England batsmen managed a century and, coming just two months after the failure to reach the second round of the home World Cup, represented an all-time low.

Today's newspapers were falling over themselves in their attempts to describe the debacle.

"English cricket 1744-1999" read the front-page headline in the top-selling Sun tabloid, with a picture of a pair of balls ablaze on top of a set of stumps.

The picture, a parody of the original "death of English cricket" after the first home defeat by Australia in 1882 which introduced the concept of "the ashes", was backed up by an RIP notice and a two-page obituary.

In a list of 20 things to do with "the remains of our summer game", the Sun suggested the outfield at Lord's should be turned into a testing area for genetically modified crops.

The Mirror carried a banner two-page headline quoting former national hero Ian Botham's declaration that he was "Ashamed to be English" and the Daily Mail described the team as "Test dummies".

The broadsheets were no less damning in their condemnation with the Daily Telegraph committing five pages to the issue, including a two-page spread of letters from readers about the current state of the game.

The Independent used a headline quoting chairman of selectors David Graveney, who described England's batting as "Beyond belief."

The Times, one of few papers

to lead with Manchester United's Premier League soccer victory over Arsenal, declared "Miserable decline of England now complete."

Most papers had little sympathy for new captain Nasser Hussain, who said after the defeat he was proud of his team.

"Hussain cut a pathetic figure," said Chris Lander in The Mirror, while The Mail's Peter Johnson said the skipper's loyalty was "misplaced and ultimately self-defeating."

Graveney today said he would not resign and said selection of the squad to tour South Africa later this year, originally to be announced on Wednesday, would "probably take a little more time now."

The Lamb, chairman of the English Cricket Board, asked fans to be patient.

"We are not very good in terms of the bit that matters but there were a lot of good things in that game," he said on BBC radio.

Praise for the victors was buried deep in the reports, though The Times' cricket correspondent Christopher Martin-Jenkins said "patience, discipline and thoughtfulness came only from New Zealand."

# Disappointing Marseille



PARIS, Aug 23: Marseille continued their unimpressive start to the French season on Sunday with a less than inspiring goalless draw at Lens, the result leaving Roland Courbis' side with just one win from their four matches, reports AFP.

There was little to inspire a 40,000 crowd at the Stade Felix Bollaert even though the home side made most of the early running and carved out several chances with Daniel Moreire their main threat - although it was a Philippe Brunel effort which came back off the bar which was the nearest Lens came to a goal.

Robert Pires tried manfully to spark Marseille after the break and fellow World Cup winner Christophe Dugarry almost dragged an effort beyond Lens keeper Guillaume Warmuz, who grabbed the ball at the second attempt.

Courbis has talked darkly about leaving the club if thinly veiled criticism of his management style does not cease.

The outspoken coach has lost some credit following the pre-season sale of defensive linchpin Laurent Blanc to Inter Milan.

In Sunday's other match, Bastia shocked Nantes 2-1.

Marseille now place seventh with six points from four games, four less than resurgent Paris Saint Germain, who thanked a Bruno Rodriguez header Friday as they kept top spot despite a 1-1 home draw with Auxerre.

Auxerre captain Stephane Guivarch, who had a hapless time with previous clubs Newcastle and Glasgow Rangers, scored a superb goal in the first half to put the visitors ahead.

Reigning champions Bordeaux lost for the first time, 2-1 at Rennes, and now head a group of five sides on seven points.

It was Rennes' first win of the season, putting them in confident mood for their Interoto Cup match against Juventus next week.

French international Lilian Laslandes put Bordeaux ahead after just eight minutes from a Sylvain Wilford cross.

Three minutes before the break Elhadji Diouf equalized in a move started off by Christophe Le Roux and Yugoslav defender Nasa Saveljic, who turned out to error by the home side's continued pressure, put the ball past Ulrich Reue for the Rennes winner.

Monaco's David Trezeguet scored his fifth goal of the season from a metre out and Italy's Marco Simone scored twice to bring a useful 3-2 in at Montpelier, while Lyon skipper Alain Cavaglia scored in the final minute at Metz for a 1-0 win.

St Etienne's Brazilians Alex and Aloisio both scored in their 2-1 win against Nancy for their first victory of the season.

# Winning start for Barca



BARCELONA, Aug 23: Spanish champions Barcelona got their title defence off to a winning start yesterday as second half goals from Luis Figo and Dani Garcia earned them a 2-0 win at home to Real Zaragoza, reports Reuters.

After an unimpressive opening, Barca went ahead in the 75th minute when Figo controlled a high cross on his chest before sliding the ball home.

That was followed two minutes later by an equally fine finish from Dani, who turned in a fiercely struck cross from Sergi Barjuan at the near post.

During the course of the match, promising Barcelona winger Fernando Maceda was rewarded for his loyalty when he became the youngest Barca player in Spanish League history.

At the age of 17 years and four months, Maceda, who goes by the name of Nano, came on as a substitute for Rivaldo with 20 minutes left.

Barca coach Louis van Gaal called Nano into his first team squad after watching him star in the second leg of the Spanish Super Cup against Valencia, when he was preferred to Dutch international Boudevijn Zenden.

Nano now looks set for a bright future at the Nou Camp but it all could have been different if he had accepted a tempting offer from England's Premier League.

Nano was approached last season by Arsenal, who were impressed by his showing in the European under-16 championship and were prepared to offer him a lucrative deal at Highbury.

Van Gaal appeared resigned to losing him, reflecting ruefully that he would not be the first young player lured to Highbury.

But Nano finally decided to stay on at his home town club. "I'm delighted, obviously,"

Nano said after his brief appearance on Sunday. "It's very easy playing with so many great players around you."

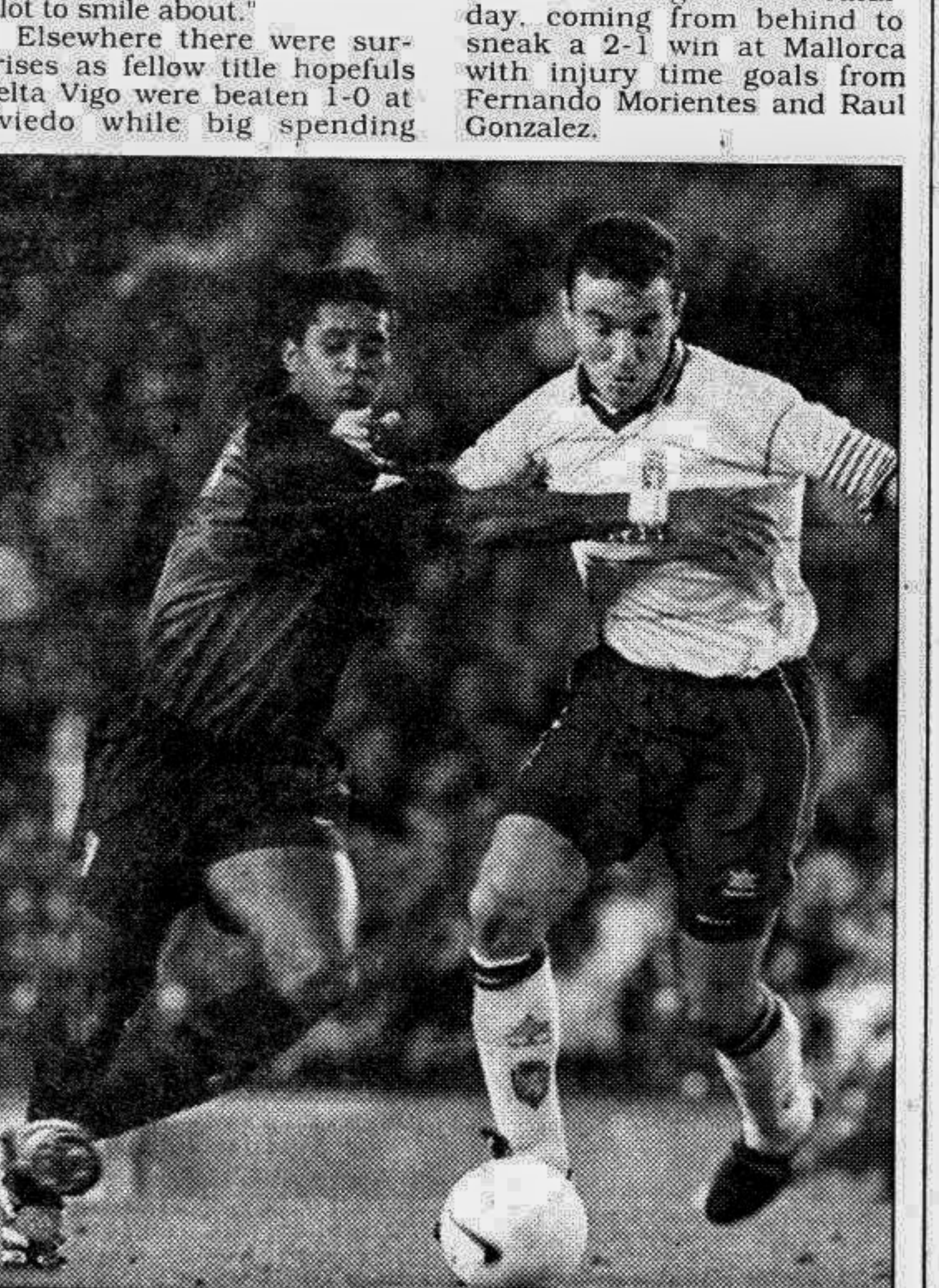
At least one of those players is betting on a great future for the 17-year-old.

"He's a wonderful talent," said Rivaldo, the man who made way for Nano on Sunday. "He's going to give the fans here a lot to smile about."

Elsewhere there were surprises as fellow title hopefuls Celta Vigo were beaten 1-0 at Oviedo while big spending

Atletico Madrid lost 2-0 at home to neighbours and relegation favourites Rayo Vallecano. Deportivo Coruna were worthy 4-1 winners at home to Alaves, with Roy Makaay netting a hat-trick, while Numancia beat Valladolid 1-0 and Sevilla and Real Sociedad drew 2-2.

Real Madrid got their season off to a winning start on Saturday, coming from behind to sneak a 2-1 win at Mallorca with injury time goals from Fernando Morientes and Raul Gonzalez.



Barcelona's Dutch international Patrick Kluivert (L) battles with a Real Zaragoza player during their Spanish Primera Liga encounter on August 22. —AFP photo

# Seedorf feels ill at ease

MADRID, Aug 23 Dutch international midfielder Clarence Seedorf said Sunday he was unhappy at Real Madrid after spending 90 minutes kicking his heels during Saturday's opening day Spanish league win at Mallorca, reports AFP.

"I am irritated but calm. If the coach doesn't want me I will have to sort the problem out with the club as soon as I can," said Seedorf.

"I want to stay and for things to work themselves out but I don't see myself on the bench," he added.

"We will talk things over again Monday because I want a solution," said Seedorf, who joined Real three seasons ago and who is under contract for another season.

The player has fallen out with the club's Welsh coach John Toshack and previously said he was fed up - but the supporters appear to be on his side.

In a pre-season friendly, which Real lost 3-0 at Celta Vigo ten days ago with Seedorf again looking on from the sidelines, Real fans chanted "yes to Seedorf, no to Toshack."

# FA will act after refs report

LONDON, Aug 23: The controversial scenes at Highbury between Arsenal and Manchester United will be dealt with following the referee's report, the English Football Association (FA) said on Monday, reports AFP.

Patrick Vieira sparked off the ugly scenes when he clashed angrily with United match-winner Roy Keane.

The Frenchman appeared to butt his opponent as pressure mounted in the Premiership match which the champions won 2-1 thanks to two Keane strikes.

A fracas ensued, and Jaap Stam had to be restrained as he tried to get at Vieira - but referee Graham Poll took no action.

The official decided a stern lecture was sufficient as tempers reached boiling point in the fierce atmosphere created by the championship rivals.

"As in every case like this we must first look at the referee's report," said an FA spokesman.

Poll's account of the Highbury clash should arrive at the FA's Lancaster Gate headquarters within a couple of days.

Gunnars boss Arsene Wenger claimed he had missed the alleged butt by his star midfielder but may choose to discipline his French international after studying video evidence.

Wenger said: "I will have to look at the tape and see what happened and then maybe decide what action to take."

# Maldini out of action

MILAN, Aug 23 AC Milan and Italy captain Paolo Maldini will miss the start of the new season and his country's Euro 2000 qualifier against Denmark after breaking a toe bone, reports AFP.

Maldini saw a specialist in nearby Varese on Sunday after picking up the injury to the little toe of his left foot during Saturday night's Italian Super Cup defeat here to Parma.

The verdict was a three-week rest, forcing him to miss the champion's season opener on Sunday against Lecce, Italy's midweek qualifier in Naples on September 8 and Milan's second league game the following weekend.

# Hearts blank Aberdeen

GLASGOW, Aug 23: Hearts steamrollered over Aberdeen 3-0 in the Scottish Premier at Tynecastle on Sunday to leave the hapless Dons pointless and goalless at the foot of the table after four straight defeats, reports AFP.

The manner of their defeat was compounded by the sending off of Nigel Pepper - hit third in his Pittodrie career - following a set-to with Paul Ritchie three minutes from time.

The result moved Hearts up to third in the table, two points behind Celtic and five adrift of Rangers.

Gary McSwegan scored a hat-trick to increase the pressure on beleaguered Aberdeen boss Ebbe Skovdahl, who has swapped the thrill of the Champions League with Denmark's Brondby for what promises to be a long battle against the drop.

Aberdeen's strikeforce of Eoin Jess and Robbie Winters proved ineffective and Hearts ran away with the match in the second half.

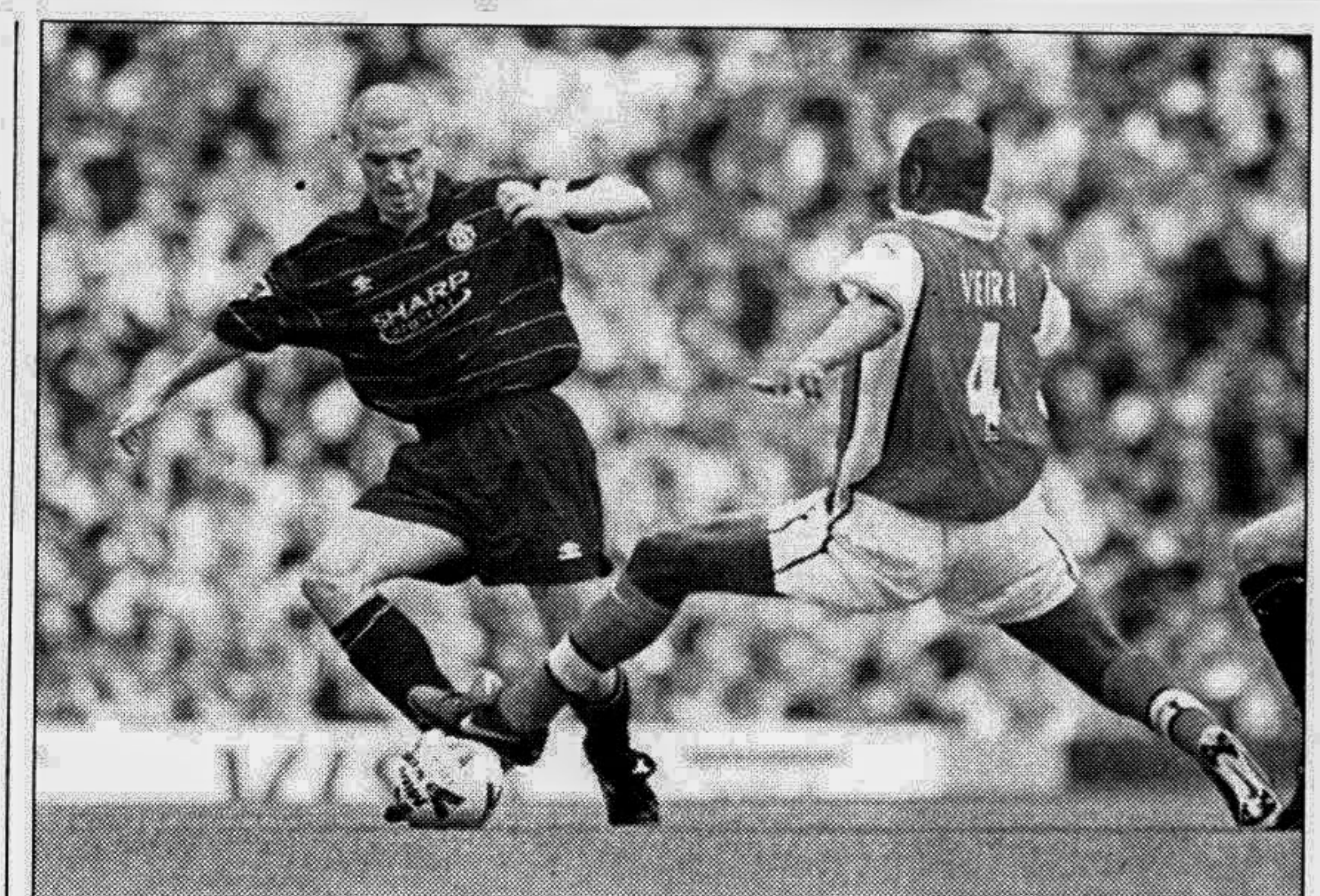
The hosts went ahead two minutes before the break as McSwegan made the breakthrough, and he struck twice more as the roof fell in on Aberdeen.

The home side began with a flourish as a long-range lob from McSwegan sailed narrowly off-target.

Aberdeen settled quickly into the match, however, and Pepper saw a well struck free-kick take a deflection off a defender before being scrambled to safety.

They looked quick and useful on the break early on and Winters dragged a shot wide after Andy Dow carved out the opening.

But Hearts then stepped up the pace and McSwegan's first goal knocked the stuffing out of the visitors.



Manchester United's inspirational skipper Roy Keane (L) dodges past Arsenal's Patrick Vieira in their crucial Premier League clash on August 22. —AFP photo

# Keane silences Gunners



LONDON, Aug 23: Roy Keane's two-goal haul was enough to earn Manchester United a 2-1 win over Arsenal at Highbury on Sunday and shoot them to the top of the English Premiership, reports AFP.

Fredrik Ljungberg's 41st minute goal gave Arsenal the lead at half-time during a high-speed first 45 minutes in which the London club piled on the pressure.

Roy Keane scored a superb equalizer, following a one-two with Andy Cole, in the 58th minute to bring last season's treble winners back into contention.

Keane's opportunist goal with two minutes to go ensured the Premiership, FA Cup and European Cup champions carried on the success to which they have become accustomed.

With just seconds remaining and United keeper Raimond van der Gouw desperately pinning the ball on his goal line, Martin Keown shot the ball into the net. The goal was disallowed, however, as the keeper was adjudged to have had the ball under control.

Keane said afterwards: "This win could make a difference if we beat them by a couple of points at the end of the season, but as the old cliché says there's a long way to go." He also denied he was on the move to another club, saying "at the moment there's nothing."

Keane has a year of his contract to run but has so far refused to sign an extension to his contract.

Croatia's Davor Suker at Holland's Marc Overmars had come on for Nigeria's Nwankwo Kanu and France's Thierry Henry as Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger made late changes up front.

Overmars had sat alongside new 3.5-million-pound (6-million-dollar) Croat striker Davor Suker, who was air-lifted direct to London from his country's 2-1 Euro 2000 win over Malta in Zagreb on Saturday - a sign of Arsenal's determination to beat the champions and earn an early psychological boost in the title race.

United boss Sir Alex Ferguson also changed his attacking options, bringing on Teddy Sheringham for Cole.

"It was quite an enthralling match to mind so to get out of it with a result is a good one," said Ferguson, who praised Keane for his focused performance.

He added that there was no news on van der Gouw, who was taken off on a stretcher, but said Raimond was very brave.

Wenger said: "United are a good side and are full of confidence but there's a long way to go."

In the first half, both goalkeepers made a string of breathtaking saves but the tangible difference at the end of the first 45 minutes was Ljungberg's sweet strike on the end of a link-up between Kanu and Dennis Bergkamp.

It was the Swede's first goal of the season, but his second against United, having scored on his debut as a substitute nearly a year ago in a 3-0 win over the side who were destined to go on and win the Treble.

But Ferguson also showed his positive intent with dangerous strikers Sheringham and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer as back-up on the bench to Cole and Dwight Yorke, whose attacking tendencies were supplemented on the field by the midfield selection of Paul Scholes ahead of Nicky Butt.

Scholes was booked for United after a reckless lunge at Patrick Vieira before Arsenal made the breakthrough four

minutes from half-time. Kanu fed Bergkamp who pushed the ball on for Ljungberg who drilled it into the corner from just inside the area before Stam could challenge him.

And it could have been 2-0 seconds later but for another brave block from van der Gouw who denied Bergkamp's close range jab after Kanu again unhinged United's defence.

There was still time for Kanu to hit another rocket - but this time straight at the goal-keeper.

Ray Parlour, benefiting from a lucky bounce and then a delightful flick by Kanu, fired the first chance of the second half just over the bar as Arsenal ended early United pressure with a swift break.

Then when Keown's long run out of defence helped to force a corner, Silvino's delivery from the right was flicked on by Kanu and Matthew Upson, the 20-year-old centre back deputising admirably for Adams, cracked a post with a volley.

United thought they had equalised in the 57th minute when Beckham's cross from the right was met by the head of Yorke who nodded through a crowd of players past Manning.

Cole, standing virtually on the line, touched the ball over the line - and was given offside.

But within a minute the champions were on terms and this time there was no dispute about the goal as Roy Keane played a slick one-two with Cole and deftly slotted past Manning from 10 metres.

Then Keane did it again with two minutes to go.

Ray Parlour lost the ball in midfield to Ryan Giggs. Giggs' pass deflected off Keown into the Irishman's path eight metres from goal and he once again found the net.

# Leverkusen dump Bayern



COLOGNE, Germany, Aug 23: Bayer Leverkusen lived up to their title aspirations on Sunday when Ulf Kirsten and Oliver Neuville hammered home two second half goals against Bayern Munich for a 2-0 victory, while Hansa Rostock shocked Kaiserslautern 4-2, reports AFP.

The 22,500 fans who sold out Leverkusen's Bay-Arena stadium witnessed a careful toe-to-toe battle of two high calibre teams. Reigning champions Bayern left their top strike duo of last season - Carsten Jancker and Giovane Elber - on the bench because of question marks over their fitness.

The first half saw few highlights but soon after the change of ends Paulo Sergio, formerly of Leverkusen, missed his chance to put Bayern ahead on his debut sending a header wide.

It was to be one of Bayern's few genuine chances up front.

At the other end Ulf Kirsten finally broke the deadlock after 79 minutes when he accepted a clever pass from Brazilian midfielder Emerson. Kirsten

had no trouble delicately lifting the ball over Bayern's diving keeper Bernd Dreher.

"It was a really annoying situation," Bayern defender Thomas Linke said.

"When you've got four guys playing defence in a line there are always problems. An opponent can sneak through when one of us isn't watching and Kirsten did it perfectly. I couldn't tell if he was offside - it was a case of each of us defenders relying on the other and somehow he got through."

Oliver Neuville killed off Bayern's last hopes when he calmly accepted a high ball on his chest in the 85th minute and, unchallenged, slammed it home from 15 metres off the underside of the crossbar.

"You have to do a lot of work beforehand to get a win against Bayern Munich," Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum said. "We had some luck along the way today but we had a bigger share of the play and, when you consider that, the victory was justified."

Bayern missed Lothar Matthaus in defence. His place in the side was taken by Thomas Strunz, but the back

unit - led by new Norwegian international Patrick Andersson - let itself down on two crucial occasions and both resulted in goals.

Sunday's loss leaves Bayern with just one point from their opening two matches and struggling.

Rostock bounced back from their 5-2 mauling in Berlin last week and dished out some punishment of their own to Kaiserslautern.

All six goals in Rostock's 4-2 victory fell before half time with defence a vague afterthought at both ends of the ground. Rostock's goals came through Timo Lange (5th - penalty), Matthias Breitzkreutz (29th), Victor Agali (31st) and Magnus Arvidsson (45th).

The only highlight for Kaiserslautern was the 32nd minute goal of French world champion Youri Djorkaeff - his first in the Bundesliga.

Kaiserslautern were brought back to earth with the bump Sunday when Hansa Rostock beat them - while Bayer Leverkusen and Bayern Munich fought out a scoreless draw which failed to live up to its big billing.

# Ronaldo raring to go



MILAN, Aug 23: Ronaldo has put a smile back on the faces of Inter Milan fans after returning to score twice in a friendly last weekend, reports AFP.

Inter slumped to their fifth pre-season defeat on Saturday against Serie A rivals Bologna, raising fears that new coach Marcello Lippi will be in trouble when the new season starts this weekend.

But Ronaldo returned from a month-long absence on Sunday to drill home two goals in a 7-0 victory over amateur side Pero and promised to be ready for their league opener with Verona.

"Even though it was only a training match, I'm glad to have scored," said the Brazilian.

"The important thing is that we all tried to help each other to score, and we succeeded in that. We had a few problems in the first half because they were really closed up at the back. But it went better in the second."

Inter are pinning most of their title hopes on the striker. The club's disastrous showing last season had much to do with Ronaldo's absence due to chronically inflamed tendons, which