

Ward ton puts Surrey on top

LONDON, Aug 25 (AFP): Run-away English County Championship leaders Surrey made a commanding start to their match against Derbyshire at Derby on Tuesday.

After being put in by home captain Dominic Cork, Surrey moved on to 285 for five.

The Surrey total included a maiden championship century for opener Ian Ward and 89 from England batsman Graham Thorpe.

Leicestershire, meanwhile, are under pressure after being bowled out for 214 against Gloucestershire at Grace Road.

Gloucestershire finished the day on 92 for two in reply.

Australian Michael Kasproutz top-scored with 61 for Leicestershire - and also took the wicket of Gloucestershire opener Robert Cunliffe.

Gavin Hamilton claimed five for 30 and Craig White returned figures of four for 44 as Yorkshire took early command against Nottinghamshire, who were all out for 184.

Yorkshire were then in desperate trouble at 39 for five before White (36) and Hamilton (23) led a middle-order fight-back of sorts. At the close Yorkshire were 100 for seven.

There were half centuries from Owais Shah and Mark Ramprakash as Middlesex were bowled out for 222 against Durham at the Riverside but by the close of play, Durham had progressed to 55 for no wicket.

There was a career-best haul of four for 46 for Essex paceman David Thompson as Somerset were dismissed for 249 at Chelmsford.

Piran Holloway top-scored with 60 and then Essex steered their way through the first over to finish four without loss at the close.

At Southampton, Sussex were 102 for two at stumps in a rain affected game against Hampshire.

No play was possible because of rain in the other three matches.

Seedorf will cost 25 million dollars

MADRID, Aug 25: Real Madrid have rejected a 20-million-dollar offer from Italian Serie A outfit Inter Milan for Dutch international Clarence Seedorf and have put a price tag of 25 million dollars for his transfer, the Spanish daily AS here on Tuesday, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old midfielder has made no secret of his dissatisfaction with John Toshack's side particularly after spending 90 minutes kicking his heels during last Saturday's opening day Spanish league win at Mallorca.

"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."

Italian sides Juventus and AS Roma are also reported to be interested in recruiting the Dutch player.

However, Seedorf remained tightlipped on Tuesday. "I haven't spoken to any Italian club, but I don't know about approaches that by agent may have made," he told journalists.

Seedorf arrived at Real in 1996 from Italian Serie A side Sampdoria.

Swedish team For Euro 2000 qualifiers

STOCKHOLM, Aug 25 (AFP): Sweden coach Tommy Soderberg on Tuesday announced his squad for the Group Five Euro 2000 qualifiers against Bulgaria on September 4 and Luxembourg on September 8.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Magnus Hedman (Coventry/Eng), Magnus Kihlstedt (Brann/Nor)

Defenders: Patrik Andersson (Bjorn Munich/Ger), Joachim Bjornklund (Valencia/Spa), Pontus Karmark (AIK), Teddy Lucic (Bologna/Ita), Roland Nilsson (Helsingborgs), Gary Sundgren (Zagreb/Spa)

Midfielders/Forwards: Niklas Alexandersson (Sheffield Wednesday/Eng), Daniel Andersson (Bari/Ita), Kennet Andersson (Lazio/Ita), Henrik Larsson (Celtic/Scot), Fredrik Ljungberg (Arsenal/Eng), Haakan Mild (IFK Gothenburg), Johan Mjallby (Celtic/Scot), Yksel Osmanovski (Bari/Ita), Jorgen Pettersson (Kaiserslautern/Ger), Stefan Schwarz (Sunderland/Eng), Magnus Svensson (Viking/Nor), Par Zetterberg (Anderlecht/Bel).

Campbell prepared to wait

LONDON, Aug 25: England defender Sol Campbell said Wednesday that he has decided to put talks on a new contract with English Premiership side Tottenham Hotspur on hold until the end of the season, reports AFP.

The centre-back's decision comes only a week after Manchester United skipper Roy Keane announced he was delaying his decision on his own future until the close season.

"Tottenham have made me an offer which I've been considering. However, I now feel that contract negotiations should be left until the end of the season so that I can concentrate on playing for Tottenham and, hopefully, for England," said Campbell.

Big job beckons Buchanan



cricket team following the resignation of Geoff Marsh, reports AFP.

Marsh will quit at the end of the current Sri Lankan tour on October 4, forcing the Australian Cricket Board to find an interim substitute for the three-week tour of Zimbabwe from October 7.

Australian captain Steve Waugh, who will be consulted about the new coach, is believed to support Buchanan although former Australian wicket-keeper and New Zealand coach Steve Rixon has indicated he is also interested.

Both Buchanan and Rixon were interviewed as potential replacements for Bob Simpson before Marsh was appointed after the 1996 World Cup.

Other names mentioned in the media have included Allan Border, Rod Marsh and Greg

Chappell. Buchanan, who has guided Queensland to two Sheffield Shields and two one-day crowns in his five-year reign, has a clause in his state contract letting him out if the national job is offered.

The Queensland Cricket Association has said it won't stand in his way.

"Certainly if I was asked I would love to consider it," Buchanan said of the 250,000 dollars (162,000 US) a year job. Buchanan is known as a thorough and player-friendly coach and has gained a reputation for bringing the game into the computer age, plotting each batsman and bowler ball-by-ball to identify strengths and weaknesses.

In the five years Jeff Thomson was Queensland coach before Buchanan the team won nothing.

Rixon, who ended his three-year reign as New Zealand's most successful Test coach with Sunday's series win over England said he could be interested but was looking forward to a break in the short term.

"I thought last time was the right time to be honest," he said. "I need a few weeks to get settled down."

Border, an Australian selector, said he was happy doing occasional coaching stints with Australia A and the under-19 side.

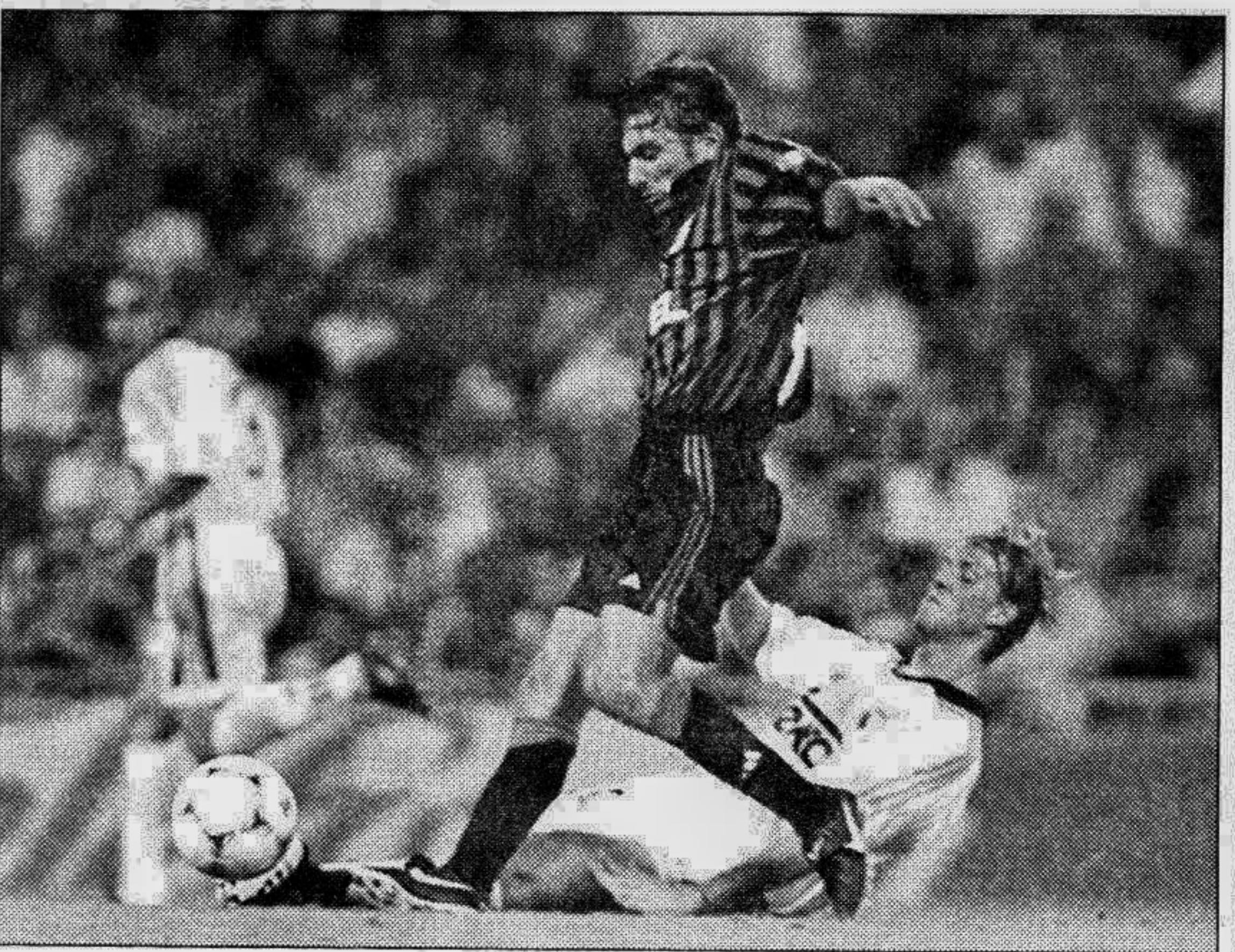
"My initial reaction is not to say no," he said. "A lot of things have to fall into place to put my hat in the ring."

Marsh resigned to spend more time with his family - wife Michaelle and children Shaun, 16, Melissa, 14 and Mitchell, seven - after 14 years with the national team as player and coach.

He said he hoped his successor would come from the ranks of the current State coaches.

"There's a couple of guys out there that I think would do a great job," Marsh said. "You have only got to look at the coaches in the (Sheffield) Shield."

"I think those guys have prepared the players for the Australian team and the three years that I have been coach they have done a magnificent job."



Jose Maria Gutierrez "Guti" (R) of Real Madrid making a sliding tackle on an AC Milan player during a friendly at Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu Stadium on August 24. Real won 4-2. — AFP photo

Offence, the Italian obsession

ROME, Aug 25 (AP): It's all about attack.

Gone, seemingly, are the days when Italian soccer clubs prided themselves on rugged defense, wearing down opponents in 0-0 or 1-0 matches and living by the mantra, "You can't lose if you don't allow any goals."

As the new Serie A season gets set to kick off this weekend, the secret to success now appears to hinge on putting the ball in the net one more time than the other guys. Or, "You can't win if you don't score."

Defending champions AC Milan decided their title-winning arsenal of Oliver Bierhoff, George Weah and Leonardo (who combined for nearly 40 goals) wasn't sufficient, and added Dynamo Kiev star Andriy Shevchenko for 41 billion lire (22 million dollars).

AS Roma led the league with 69 goals, but spent 50 billion lire (27 million) on striker Vincenzo Montella, Fiorentina had Gabriel Batistuta, who averaged 20 goals per season since 1994, but added Predrag Mijatovic and Enrico Chiesa.

Chiesa's former team, AC Parma, made up for his loss by signing Marcio Amoroso, the Brazilian who led Serie A with 21 goals for Udinese last year, and Salernitana's Marco Di Vaio, one of a crop of young Italian talent at the forward position.

The biggest deal was Internazionale of Milan's world-record 90 billion lire (48.5 million dollars) transfer of Christian Vieri from Lazio of Rome. Lazio didn't replace him with Frenchman Nicolas Anelka - after a summer-long saga - but did land Kennet Andersson from Bologna and Simone Inzaghi from Piacenza and finally has Croatian star Alen Boksic healthy.

Each of these signings will help those clubs compete for the title. But the most important "acquisition" of the offseason might prove to be the Juventus getting a healthy Alessandro Del Piero back.

Del Piero, 24, ripped ligaments in his left knee during a match in November and missed the rest of the season.

With a surgically repaired knee and a new contract that pays him 10 billion lire (5.5 million dollars) annually, he has been impressive in summer exhibitions, showing plenty of the flair that made him one of the world's most feared strikers.

In the annual pre-season Berlusconi Trophy match pitting powerhouse Milan and Juventus Tuesday night (Aug 17), Del Piero led Serie A before he was injured; without the striker, the storied club tumbled to a seventh-place finish.

Del Piero and Golden Ball winner Zinedine Zidane (who had knee surgery in May) can return to form, Juventus - bidding for a fourth crown in six years - is the team to beat.

The club also has Filippo Inzaghi (averaging 18 goals a season the last three years) up front and a versatile and deep midfielder, Dutch keeper Edwin van der Sar and Nigerian midfielder Sunday Oshieh arrived

from Ajax of Amsterdam, replacing Angelo Peruzzi (off to Internazionale) and Didier Deschamps (to Chelsea), respectively.

Coach Carlo Ancelotti, who had mixed success at Parma, took over last season when Marcello Lippi resigned. If Ancelotti relaxes his system enough to let players like Del Piero, Zidane and Dutch midfielder Edgar Davids create on the fly, Juventus can return to the top after last year's flop.

Lippi will have his hands full at his new employer, Internazionale, who again have revamped their roster with little rhyme or reason. Yes, Vieri is a great player, and his power is the perfect complement to Ronaldo's grace and pace. But the team is top-heavy with forwards - Roberto Baggio, Chile's Ivan Zamorano, Uruguay's Alvaro Recoba and Under-21 star Andrea Pirlo would all start on most other European clubs - and the team failed to address their most pressing need: help

everything players in Juan Sebastian Veron and Nestor Sensi, Argentines who both went to Lazio.

The loss of Vieri hurts Lazio, which will miss his goals and leadership. The club did keep the league's best defense (31 goals allowed in 1998-99) intact, but "keeper" Luca Marchegiani is past his prime.

Coach Sven Goran Eriksson still has to guard against the sort of late-season collapse that thwarted title bids each of the past two years. Last season's disaster - Lazio led the standings for three months but was overtaken by Milan with a week left and lost the title by a single point - still hurts.

With Montella joining Francesco Totti and Marco Delvecchio in a strong attack, and a proven winner finally at the helm in Fabio Capello, who coached Milan to four titles in five years earlier this decade, Roma's future looks bright. But there are holes at midfield, where Luigi Di Biagio is coming off a poor year, and it will take time for the revamped defense to settle in and Capello's new system - wholly different from predecessor Zdenek Zeman's - to take hold.

Milan, who surprised everyone by winning last season's title after consecutive middle-of-the-pack finishes, will have a hard time repeating. Captain Paolo Maldini and fellow defender Alessandro Costacurta are both on the decline, and depth is a problem everywhere but at the forward position.

Torino should be the season's pleasant surprise, returning to Serie A after a three-year absence. Emiliano Mondonico is a solid coach, and the club picked up veterans Fabio Pecchia and Andre Cruz over the summer, adding experience to a lineup that already featured strikers Gianluigi Lentini - in the midst of a career renaissance - and Marco Ferrante, who found the net 27 times last season.

The biggest drop-off might happen at Udinese, who went from third place in 1997-98 to sixth last year, and then lost five starters in the offseason.

Peternac faces weight penalty

MADRID, Aug 25: Croatian international Alen Peternac may be penalised by his team, Spanish first division side Real Valladolid, because of a 3kg (6.6 pound) weight gain, a team official told the Spanish daily newspaper Marca on Tuesday, reports AFP.

"He doesn't lead the life of a sportsman. We don't know if it is because he doesn't sleep enough or he sleeps too much," the official said.

Peternac, who did not play during last weekend's 1-0 defeat against Numancia, hotly defended himself against criticism for exceeding his normal weight of 77kg.

"They can't penalise me because I didn't want to extend my contract," said the 27-year-old striker.

Euro 2000 qualifiers

Czech squad announced

PRAGUE, Aug 25 (AFP): Czech Republic coach Jozef Hovanec on Tuesday announced his squad for the group 9 Euro 2000 qualifiers at Lithuania on September 4 and at home to Bosnia-Herzegovina on September 8.

TEAM

Goalkeepers: Ladislav Maier (Rapid Vienna/Aut), Pavel Svrnec (Sheffield Wednesday/Eng)

Defenders: Marek Nikl (Nuremberg/Ger), Karel Rada (Slavia Prague), Petr Vizek (Slavia Prague), Tomas Repka (Fiorentina/Ita), Jan Suchoparek (TB Berlin/Ger)

Midfielders: Miroslav Baranek (Sparta Prague), Radek Belbi (Atletico Madrid/Spa), Patrik Berger (Liverpool/Eng), Pavel Nedved (Lazio Rome/Ita), Jiri Nemec (Schalke 04/Ger), Karel Poborsky (Benfica/Port), Radomir Slonick (Banik Ostrava)

Strikers: Jarl Koller (Anderlecht/Bel), Pavel Kuka (Stuttgart/Ger), Vratislav Lokvenc (Sparta Prague), Vladimir Smicer (Liverpool/Eng), Pavel Verbir (FK Teplice), Rene Wagner (Rapid Vienna/Aut)

Real down AC Milan

MADRID, Aug 25: Clarence Seedorf scored what will almost certainly be his last goal for Real Madrid while Steve McManaman notched his first as the Spanish side eased to a 4-1 win over AC Milan in a friendly yesterday, reports Reuters.

Seedorf, who is on the point of a move away from the Bernabeu after falling out with coach John Toshack, proved a point to the Welshman as he burst through after 28 minutes to force the ball home after a Raul Gonzalez shot was blocked.

His goal came 16 minutes after Ivan Gattuso had scored a brilliant opener for the Italian champions, firing in a volley from the edge of the area after Andriy Shevchenko's shot had been blocked.

Brazilian substitute Saviio Bortolini put Real ahead on 72 minutes, following up a Roberto Carlos free kick that Sebastiao Rossi was unable to hold.

But the best was still to come for Real as McManaman came off the bench to seal a deserved victory.

The former Liverpool winger, who had struggled to impose himself during pre-season games, showed good awareness and a nice finish 10 minutes from time to score from close range after neat work with Ferriando Morientes and Michel Salgado.

McManaman also had a hand in Real's fourth as he did well to recover a deep cross from the left, finding Morientes who in turn squared for Ivan Helguera to sweep in.

Ajax rope in Romanian star

THE HAGUE, Aug 25: Romanian international teenager Christian Chivu on Wednesday signed a six-year deal with Dutch first division side Ajax Amsterdam, reports AFP.

The 18-year-old defender, currently with Romanian first division side Universitatea Craiova, made his debut in the national side who played against Cyprus last week.

Ajax recruitment manager Danny Blind described Chivu as "a very strong defender who would fit in perfectly with Ajax's style of play."

The Dutch side has been on the look out for a left back for several months.

CSKA, Kryvyi advance

PARIS, Aug 25: Two goals from Ivan Litara and a brace of penalties helped Bulgarian side CSKA Sofia send Portland of Northern Ireland crashing out of the UEFA Cup on Tuesday night, reports AFP.

CSKA Sofia won the home leg of their first qualifying round series 5-0 to storm through 8-0 on aggregate.

The Irish League part-timers already trailed 3-0 from the first leg and were totally outclassed in Sofia.

CSKA took the lead through a questionable penalty scored by playmaker and captain Milen Petkov in the 14th minute and from then on they coasted to a comfortable victory.

Two stunning 25-metre free-kicks from Litara on 27 and 49 minutes killed the game off as a contest. Roumen Hristov and Genadi Simeonov then rounded out the scoring.

Also advancing were Kryvbas Kryvyi Rig of Ukraine, who won 2-0 away to FC Shamkir of Azerbaijan for a 5-0 aggregate triumph.

Oleg Smakov scored both the goals - in the 22nd and 67th minutes.

The remaining first qualifying round, second leg matches will be played on Thursday night.

Collated results of UEFA Cup first qualifying round, second leg matches played Tuesday:

At Baku: FC Shamkir (Aze) 0 Kryvbas Kryvyi Rig (Ukr) 2 (Smakov 22, 67)

Kryvbas won 5-0 on aggregate

At Sofia: CSKA Sofia (Bul) 5 (Petkov 14-pen, Litara 28, 49, Hristov 60-pen, Simeonov 78) Portland (Nir) 0

CSKA Sofia won 8-0 on aggregate



Lee Handrie (R) clearing the ball before Clint Easton of Watford during their English Premiership tussle at Vicarage Road, Watford on August 24. — AFP photo

Leicester blank Boro



LONDON, Aug 25: Leicester stunned high-flying Middlesbrough 3-0 at the Riverside Stadium on Tuesday night, while Aston Villa won 1-0 away to promoted Watford to join Manchester United on top of the English Premiership standings, reports AFP.

Powerful striker Emile Heskey struck in each half and Tony Cottee grabbed the other goal as Leicester completely dominated Bryan Robson's expensively-assembled Middlesbrough side.

Heskey netted in the 35th and 83rd minutes and veteran Cottee in the 38th.

Leicester punished some poor defending when Neil Lennon curled a left-wing free-kick into the penalty area and Heskey rose unopposed to head past goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer.

Then, seven minutes before halftime, Steve Guppy crossed from the left and Cottee sent a diving header flying into the net from inside the six-metre

box. Heskey's second goal seven minutes from time summed up a poor night for the Teessiders as they were brought back to earth with a bump on a night when they could have led the top flight for the first time in 20 years.

Villa joined United on 10 points - although they have played one match more - after their win at Vicarage Road. Mark Delaney scored the only goal of the match in the 68th minute.

Watford must have felt themselves unlucky to lose after a series of saves from goalkeeper David James kept the visitors in the match in the first half.

The former Liverpool keeper produced a particularly superb stop from Michel Ngongue's goallbound header after 26 minutes.

It took an inspired strike from Delaney to clinch the win. There appeared little danger as Clint Easton attempted to head clear but the ball dropped perfectly for the former Cardiff

right back, who struck a sublime first-time right-foot volley past the helpless Chris Day from the edge of the area.

James then made sure Villa took all three points by turning away Tommy Mooney's late volley that threatened to salvage a draw for the home side.

English Premiership standings after Tuesday night's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Manchester United	43109 210
Aston Villa	53117 310
Tottenham	43018 5 9
Middlesbrough	53027 7 9
Chelsea	32107 2 7
Leicester	52128 6 7
West Ham	32105 3 7
Leeds	52126 5 7
Arsenal	42115 4 7
Liverpool	42044 4 6
Watford	52034 5 6
Southampton	42026 6 6
Wimbledon	41219 5 5
Coventry	41213 3 4
Bradford City	31122 4 4
Everton	41278 4 4
Sunderland	41236 4 4
Newcastle	40136 1 1
Derby	40132 7 1
Sheffield Wednesday	40133 9 1

Intertoto Cup final round 2nd leg

Cheers for Montpellier, Hammers, Juventus



PARIS, Aug 25: French side Montpellier silenced a 52,000 crowd as they edged the fancied Germans of Hamburg SV in the final round of the Intertoto Cup on Tuesday night to seal a place in the UEFA Cup, reports AFP.

Montpellier rallied to score a 1-1 draw in the away leg for a 2-2 aggregate scoreline, held on throughout extra time and then won a penalty shootout 3-0.

Veteran Ghanaian striker Tony Yeboah put Hamburg ahead with a 22nd-minute header but Montpellier's Olivier Sorlin then made it 2-2 on aggregate when he beat the offside trap and scored the equaliser with 20 minutes remaining.

Two other French clubs - Metz and Rennes - bowed out at the final stage of the Intertoto Cup.

Metz won their away leg 1-0 against England's West Ham, but the Londoners came out and triumphed 3-1 in eastern France on Tuesday night for a 3-2 aggregate victory.

In a match marred by ugly scenes involving the English club's supporters, West Ham took control of the game with first-half strikes from Trevor Sinclair and Frank Lampard, before Metz lifted their hopes of advancing to the UEFA Cup with a fine 69th-minute strike.

That was something new for us and we were made to suffer as

a result. Too many times it ended up three against three. Certain covering movements in defence just didn't work.

"We'll have to see about remedying this, but we'll still stick to our way of play, there's no doubt about that," he said.

Ancelotti has little choice but to play with three men at the back. French star Zinedine Zidane is guaranteed a play-making role behind the two strikers, Alessandro Del Piero and Filippo Inzaghi, and the team cannot do without a solid four-man midfield behind them.

However, Zidane has few doubts about Juventus' state of health as they prepare for their season debut against Reggina on Sunday.

"We were in real trouble in the beginning and had to overcome a lot of problems," said the two-goal hero of the 1998 World Cup final.

"But I think that winning this place in the UEFA Cup is a signal to all the other teams in the Italian championship: Juventus are here and everybody else is going to have to watch out."

Collated Intertoto Cup final round, second-leg results on Tuesday:

At Hamburg: Hamburg SV (Ger) 1 (Yeboah 22) Montpellier (Fra) 1 (Sorlin 70) aet

Teams level 2-2 on aggregate: Metz (Fra) 1 (Jestrovic 69) West Ham United (Eng) 3 (Sinclair 24, Lampard 43, Wanchop 80)

West Ham won 3-2 on aggregate

At Rennes: Rennes (Fra) 2 (Diouf 20, Nonda 90) Juventus (Ita) 2 (Conte 29, Zambrotta 73)

Juventus won 4-2 on aggregate

Montpellier, West Ham and Juventus qualify for UEFA Cup

way past Christian Bassila of Rennes during their Intertoto Cup match at Rennes on August 24.

— AFP photo

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