Bosnich going Nowhere?

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 17: Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson on Thursday dismissed reports that Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich could be on his way to Spanish football, reports AFP.

"It's a load of nonsense. Mark is going nowhere," Ferguson said.

Speculation arose because Bosnich has dropped down the pecking order at Old Trafford since the arrival of 4.5 million pound (7.2 million dollars) signing of Italian Massimo Taibi, who stands by to make his home debut against Wimbledon on Saturday.

Bosnich played for United reserves on Wednesday after being a substitute for Tuesday's Champions League draw against Croatia Zagrab when Raimond van der Gouw was in goal because Taibi was ineligible.

The former Aston Villa keeper has been linked with Spanish club Real Zaragoza but manager Ferguson says he is anxious to keep all three keepers at the club because competition for places will mean all will have to be "on their toes".

Southampton to part with The Dell

SOUTHAMPTON, England, Sept 17: English Premiership club Southampton are set to sell The Dell and move to a new stadium they intend to build on a disused gasworks, reports AFP.

The club have agreed to sell The Dell to developers Barratt Homes for 5 million pounds (8 million dollars) and pay 4.3 million pounds for the gasworks in the St Mary's district of the city which they plan to turn into a 32,000-seat stadium.

The Premiership club's stadium sale will need approval by shareholders in Southampton Leisure, the stock market listed company which owns the football club.

The total cost of buying and converting the gasworks site will be 30 million pounds.

Gullit, Gregory fined

LONDON, Sept 17: Former Newcastle United manager Ruud Gullit was fined 5,000 pounds ($8,083) on Thursday for comments to a referee at a Premier League match last month before he quit the club, reports Reuters.

Aston Villa manager John Gregory was fined 2,000 pounds by the Football Association for his comments to referee Uriah Rennie during the match at Newcastle.

Charlton -Inter exchange programme

LONDON, Sept 17: English First Division club Charlton have joined forces with Italian giants Inter Milan in a unique player exchange programme, reports AFP.

Charlton's managing director Peter Varney has signed a three-year deal with Inter which he believes will benefit both clubs.

"It is an agreement on two levels," Varney said on Thursday.

Middlesbrough welcomes Juninho back

MIDDLESBROUGH, England, Sept 17: Brazilian star Juninho flew into England on Thursday and claimed he was looking forward to having a second crack at the Premiership with Middlesbrough, reports AFP.

The little midfielder signed autographs for waiting fans at Teesside airport, and immediately donned a Middlesbrough scarf.

Shameful

TEL AVIV, Sept 17: Russian officials who were supposed to officiate at Thursday's UEFA Cup first round, first leg tie between Israel's Hapoel Haifa and Club Brugge of Belgium were replaced at the last moment by UEFA for drinking the day before the game, reports AFP.

Sir Bobby completes Egypt mision

CAIRO, Sept 17: England's 1966 World Cup star Sir Bobby Charlton left here Thursday after a two-day trip to promote his country's bid to host the 2006 tournament, reports AFP.

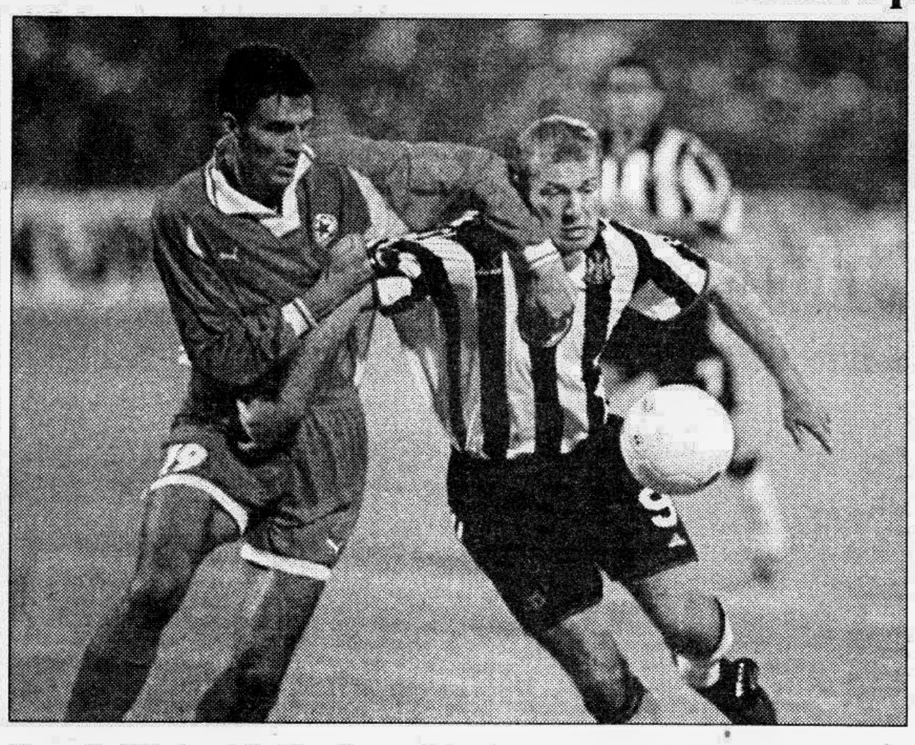
Sir Bobby said England was the best prepared country to host the World Cup and could stage the championship tomorrow if it wanted, with plenty of modern pitches and new hotels.

The former Manchester United star met the secretary general of the Cairo-based African Football Confederation, Mustafa Fahmi, during his stay.

He also tried to play down the threat of hooliganism which has haunted the English game in recent decades.

The relative lack of violence when England hosted the Euro '96 finals was a glowing testimony of the country's ability to curb fan violence, the former soccer star told journalists at the British embassy.

Sir Bobby also met Egyptian football officials to see how Egypt could benefit from England's football experience.



Newcastle United captain Alan Shearer fights for possession with CSKA Bulgaria's Ivo Trenchev during their UEFA Cup encounter in Sofia on September 16. —AFP photo

UEFA Cup

Boost for Magpies, Atletico

PARIS, Sept 16: England's Newcastle United and Spain's Atletico Madrid both posted their first wins of the season in the UEFA Cup first round, first leg to provide much needed tonics for their long-suffering fans, reports AFP.

Holders Parma are facing a tough battle in their second leg in Ukraine after they could only beat Kryvybas Kryvi Rih 3-2 while fellow Italians Bologna and Juventus fared better with 3-0 and 5-2 wins respectively over Zenith St Petersburg of Russia and Cypriots Omonia Nicosia respectively.

And Roma were even better with statistically the performance of the night, drubbing Portugal's Vitoria Setubal 7-0.

In fact it was a less than auspicious night for Portugal with their other representatives also suffering.

Sporting Lisbon's Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, a member of Manchester United's European Cup winning side last season, tasted the other side of the coin as his new side crashed 3-0 to Norway's Viking Stavanger. Benfica lost 1-0 at home to Dinamo Bucharest while Beira Mar also succumbed on home soil to Holland's Vitesse Arnhem.

But it was a different story in Sofia for Newcastle against CSKA. Goals by Peruvian Nolberto Solano and Georgian Temuri Ketsbaia gave Newcastle their long overdue first scalp of the season in only their second match under the leadership of Bobby Robson.

It was Newcastle's first victory in 15 matches and a huge morale boost for a team whose worst start to a season for 106 years has seen them stuck down at the bottom of the English Premiership.

Robson, who replaced Ruud Gullit two weeks ago, saw his side take the lead after 51 minutes when Peruvian Nolberto Solano bent a neat free-kick over the wall and past CSKA keeper Nenad Lukic.

Newcastle began to flow forward and Georgian Ketsbaia, on for the injured Duncan Ferguson, wrapped up victory after 77 minutes when he collected a Kieron Dyer pass, turned inside his marker and chipped over Lukic.

The visitors had almost taken the lead after 19 minutes. Gary Speed met Solano's free-kick with a powerful header but saw Lukic tip the ball onto the bar.

Newcastle had the woodwork to thank six minutes later when Frenchman Alain Goma half cleared Hristov's corner and CSKA skipper Milen Petkov thundered in a 30-metre drive which rattled the bar.

Their were other solid performances from English sides with Tottenham sinking Moldova's Zimbru Chisinau 3-0 at home and West Ham prevailing by the same scoreline against Croatia's Osijek.

Atletico Madrid may have lost their first three Primera Liga fixtures in Spain but a 3-0 home triumph over Turkey's Ankaragucu was just what the doctor ordered.

Paraguayan defender Carlos Gamarra put Atletico on track with the first after 42 minutes and then Dutchman Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, signed from Leeds after a protracted wrangle, made it 2-0 on the stroke of half-time.

Igor Paunovic effectively killed the match with a third in the second period.

But Parma, who have also had a poor season so far, take a slender 3-2 lead to the Ukraine in the knowledge they have already conceded two away goals.

After conceding a 5th-minute opener to Kryvybas Parma, the holders, took a 3-1 lead thanks to a brace from Marco Di Vaio and one from Dino Baggio only for Alexandr Monarov to make it 3-2.

Juventus made short work of their opponents in Cyprus with two goals from Filippo Inzaghi and one apiece from Darko Kovacevic, Juan Esnaider and Alessandro Del Piero.

And Bologna, semi-finalists last season, produced a compelling performace in Russia to see off Zenit St Petersburg 3-0 with evergreen striker Giuseppe Signori bagging a brace.

Not to be outdone were Roma, who spanked Vitoria 7-0. Brazilian Aldair started the rout with Russian international Sergei Alenichev notching a hat-trick.

A goal from Adrian Nastase was enough for Dinamo Bucharest to pull off a memorable 1-0 win against Benfica in the Stadium of Light. Benfica coach Jupp Heynckes has bitter sweet memories of his last European campaign with Real Madrid.

In 1998 he led them to their seventh European Cup - and their first for more than 30 years. He was promptly thanked by being shown the exit door.

Greek sides also had a night to remember with Panathinaikos, AEK Athens and PAOK Salonika all recording away victories.

Celtic's prolific Swedish striker Henrik Larsson bagged both goals in his side's 2-0 home win over Hapoel Tel Aviv.

But other Scottish side's had less satisfactory nights. Kilmarnock were drubbed 3-0 at Kaiserslautern whose French World Cup winner Youri Djorkaeff bagged his first goal for the German outfit.

And St Johnstone were on the wrong end of the same scoreline in Monaco, whose Italian striker Marco Simone scored twice.

An indication of Monaco's dominance can be measured by the fact that Saints' goalkeeper Alan Main was man of the match.

Premiership preview

Big three in goal hunt

LONDON, Sept 17: England's three Champions' League representatives bid to get back on the goal trail this weekend in the Premiership after each drawing a blank in midweek, reports AFP.

Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea were all relatively happy with their goalless draws against Europe's finest but nothing less than three points will do on Saturday.

Premiership leaders United, who perhaps had the worst midweek result in drawing 0-0 at home to Croatia Zagreb, play host to Egil Olsen's Wimbledon still nursing a whole team's worth of injuries.

Arsenal were impressive in Italy against Fiorentina. They would have won but for Nwankwo Kanu's missed penalty and they visit Southampton in good heart.

Chelsea were also unlucky not to beat Italian champions AC Milan in an entertaining draw at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday. Promoted Watford are their hosts on Saturday.

United were without 11 players through injury against Zagreb and Ferguson's squad will be stretched to the limit on Saturday against Wimbledon, who will scrap for every ball at Old Trafford.

Ferguson, whose side are six points clear of five teams in joint second place, learned this week that captain Roy Keane has suffered a setback in his recovery from a hamstring injury and will be out for at least another week after hurting his knee.

Italian Massimo Taibi should make his home debut in goal after missing the midweek game through ineligibility.

Utility player Phil Neville is still trying to shake off a mystery virus he picked up while on a day-trip to neighbouring Bury, while South African midfielder Quinton Fortune could well make his first start after impressing in two recent subsitute appearances.

Nigerian Kanu was in tears after his spot-kick failure in Florence but he will remain Arsenal's penalty-taker - for now.

"I'll get over it," said the flamboyant African. "The best way to do that is by scoring from the spot next time."

Non-flying Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp, who handed over the penalty-taking duties to Kanu after a string of misses last season, arrived safely back in his taxi from Florence and is raring to go at The Dell against improved Southampton.

Chelsea manager Gianluca Vialli has been boosted by the news that defender Frank Leboeuf did not fracture a rib as feared against Milan.

Liverpool's optimism was punctured by last Saturday's 3-2 home defeat by United, but they will at least have England striker Michael Owen ready to start alongside Robbie Fowler for the trip to Leicester.

However, Czech winger Vladimir Smicer is out of action for 10 days after sustaining a hamstring injury in his team's 5-1 League Cup win at Hull on Tuesday. Skipper Jamie Redknapp is also doubtful with a foot problem.

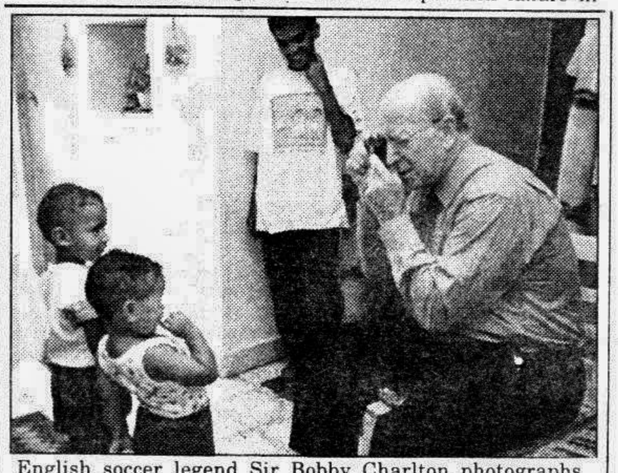
Brazilian midfielder Juninho could make a second debut for his old club Middlesbrough at Leeds United on Sunday if he passes a medical and completes his loan move from Atletico Madrid in time.

Also on Sunday, St James' Park will witness a real dogfight as Bobby Robson's second-bottom Newcastle United, who have made their worst start to a season for 106 years, play host to table-proppers Sheffield Wednesday. Both sides have one point, four adrift of third-bottom Bradford.

Weekend's Premiership Fixtures:

Saturday (1400 GMT kick-offs): Aston Villa v Bradford, Derby v Sunderland, Leicester v Liverpool, Manchester United v Wimbledon, Southampton v Arsenal, Watford v Chelsea.

Sunday (1400 GMT kick-offs unless stated): Everton v West Ham, Leeds v Middlesbrough **(1500 GMT)**, Newcastle v Sheffield Wednesday, Tottenham v Coventry.



English soccer legend Sir Bobby Charlton photographs two Egyptian children at a SOS orphanage in Cairo on September 16. The 1966 World Cup hero was in Egypt on a two-day visit where he met African Football Confederation secretary general to promote England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup. —AFP photo

Full strength Socceroos to face Brazil

SYDNEY, Sept 17: Australia will have a near full-strength squad for their two football internationals against Brazil here in November, national coach Frank Farina said Friday, reports AFP.

The internationals, in Sydney on November 14 and Melbourne on November 17, will be Farina's first games in charge of the Socceroos and he wants all of his top players to be available.

"At this stage we have confirmation from 16 of the (European) clubs that our players are involved in. They are all keen to represent their country," Farina said Friday.

"Against Brazil we will have virtually a full strength Australian team."

Farina and assistant coach Graham Arnold leave for England this month to talk with British-based Socceroos and show them their plans of future matches.

Farina said Australia had the talent to reach the 2002 World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea and it was now up to him to justify his appointment in the wake of the brief Terry Venables era.

"I think we will qualify for the next World Cup, hopefully we've got the team, we've definitely got the talent, that's for sure," Farina said.

Among Farina's priorities will be to get guarantees that high-profile Socceroos, Mark Bosnich, Harry Kewell, Mark Viduka, Paul Okon and Ned Zelic will get a release from their European clubs to play against Brazil.

Football fracas!

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 17: A Brazilian championship match descended into chaos when the goalkeeper of one team refused to give the ball back after conceding a penalty, reports Reuters.

The Atletico Mineiro-Vitoria match was interrupted for nearly 10 minutes on Wednesday as police attempted to separate feuding players and officials and the fight re-started as soon as the final whistle went.

The chaos began when Atletico, trailing 2-0, converted a penalty midway through the second half to bring themselves back into the game.

Atletico strikers Lincoln, who scored the goal, and Valdir rushed to pick the ball out of the net but Vitoria goalkeeper Fabio Costa got there first and refused to hand it over.

Fabio Costa then aimed a karate-style kick at Lincoln, leading to a massive fight which ended with Lincoln and Vitoria mdifielder Otacilio being sent off.

Vitoria held out for a 2-1 win but Atletico players were incensed when only four minutes of injury time were added on.

When the game ended, several Atletico players attacked Fabio Costa, knocking him to the ground despite the intervention of police.

A similar fight three months ago led to the Paulista final between Palmeiras and Corinthians being abandoned in the 76th minute. None of the players involved in that incident was suspended.

Tyson to fight on Oct 23

LAS VEGAS, Nevada, Sept 17: Overweight and deep in debt, Mike Tyson faced the public here yesterday and showed he has a long way to go before he can even consider being a world boxing contender again, reports AFP.

The embattled former heavyweight champion spoke to formally announce his latest ring return, a 12-round bout here October 23 against fellow American Orlin Norris — Tyson's first fight in more than 10 months.

Nicol reaches the pinnacle

CAIRO, Sept 17: Canny and accurate in his stroke play Scotland's Peter Nicol beat Egypt's Ahmed Barada, 15-9, 15-13, 15-11 to win the Al-Ahram World Open Squash Championship here Thursday, reports AFP.

Losing finalist for the last two years, Nicol, who hails from Inverurie in Scotland, made it third-time lucky to become the first British world champion.

Only once during the whole match off 66 minutes was Barada able to seriously question Nicol's authority.

That was when he led 11-7 in the second game but he held the upper hand only briefly.

So strong was Nicol's response that he took seven points in a row and another effort by Barada to regain the initiative was only partially successful.

Nicol said: "I played as well I did because I was totally relaxed. It does not bother me at all that the big crowd was wholly behind Barada. I just focused on what I had to do and got on with it."

More than just a game for Zola

LONDON, Sept 17: Gianfranco Zola was bursting with pride on Thursday after dishing out a footballing lesson to his compatriots from AC Milan in the European Champions' League, reports AFP.

Chelsea's 33-year-old Italian playmaker tormented the five-time winners all night in the 0-0 draw at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday and almost scored the goal his display merited when he hit a post in the second half.

"I'm a very proud man," said the former Parma and Napoli star.

"Behind this game was the fact that I wanted to be competitive with a big team in Europe again.

"It was an important game for me as it showed that I can still compete at high levels and do my job. I love football and I love challenging myself against big teams and big players.

"Of course, I always have something to prove. The day that I don't have anything to prove to anyone, I will probably stop playing.

"I will just try to score more goals because at the moment, that's what we need.

"But it was a big occasion and I like the way I reacted to the atmosphere. Now when I play in other games, I'm going to be even more convinced that I can do well."

Even more importantly perhaps, Chelsea as a team proved a significant point to themselves just as much as to those watching the match either in the stadium or on television.

After all, previous incursions into Europe in the Cup Winners' Cup largely pitted them against second-rate opposition and there is a steep learning curve to address when moving into the Champions League.

GIANFRANCO ZOLA

With not only Zola but also French pair Marcel Desailly and Didier Deschamps in world-class form, Chelsea showed they were more than a match for the Italian champions.

The London side can now approach not only their Premiership campaign but also their remaining Group H games in the San Siro and against Hertha Berlin and Galatasaray with increased confidence.

"It was a great performance from the team. We were very good tactically and technically. We wanted to see our reaction against a big team like AC Milan and I think it's been positive," said Zola.

"This team has done very well in the last three or four years and now we're playing against the best teams in Europe.

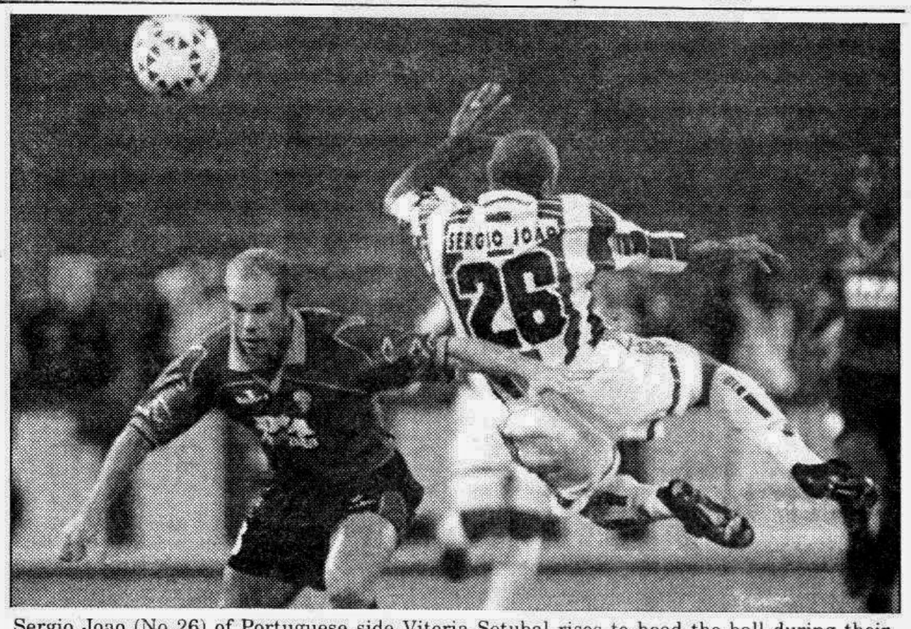
"This is a new stage for the team and the club, and to start the Champions League with a performance like that is the best way to encourage everybody to perform confidently."

Captain Dennis Wise, the only Englishman in Chelsea's starting line-up, certainly agreed after his first ever Champions League match.

"At first we didn't know what to expect. We knew we had to start off and press them so we did that and felt very comfortable with it," he added.

"It was very quick. We've played in Europe but the quality of a team like AC Milan is so much higher. The opposition are so much better but we proved that we can compete with them and it's good for us on a confidence basis.

"It just shows how far this club has come."



Sergio Joao (No 26) of Portuguese side Vitoria Setubal rises to head the ball during their UEFA Cup clash against AS Roma of Italy in Rome on September 16. —AFP photo

Serie A preview

Inter take on weary Parma

MILAN, Sept 17: Inter Milan will be looking to add to the woes of *Serie A* rivals Parma when the two sides meet at San Siro this weekend, reports AFP.

Parma were the toast of national football last season when they won the Italian Cup, the UEFA Cup and a place in the European Champions League qualifiers, after mounting a serious bid for the *Serie A* title.

This season, everything has been going wrong. The team started out by losing their new 30 million dollar Brazilian striker Marcio Amoroso through injury, they were dumped out of the qualifiers by Glasgow Rangers and both their *Serie A* matches so far have ended in disappointing draws.

Now they face the most exciting team in Italy of the moment, with Christian Vieri all but recovered from a muscle strain and strikê partner Ronaldo due for a late fitness test.

Parma coach Alberto Malesani, who could be in trouble if his team take a beating at San Siro on Sunday night, said: "We missed out on the Champions League.

"Now we have to concentrate on other objectives for the season, which are not that minor since we are talking about the league title."

Amoroso, who made his comeback as a late substitute in Thursday night's UEFA Cup tie, should join two Argentinians in Parma's attacking manouevre, striker Hernan Crespo and playmaker Ariel Ortega.

However, the three men will be taking on a defence which has kept a clean sheet in both its previous league games.

Inter boss Marcello Lippi will probably turn to winger Francesco Moriero to add extra bite to his attack after an inspired display as a substitute in last weekend's 0-0 draw with AS Roma.

Roberto Baggio and Yugoslav midfielder Vladimir Jugovic are still battling against injury in a bid to make their first appearance this season.

Neighbours and reigning champions AC Milan will be hoping for an easier time against Bari after being put through the paper shredder by Chelsea in midweek.

Bari have no star players but they are very well organised by coach Eugenio Fascetti and are notoriously difficult to beat. Only three teams in Italy lost fewer games than Bari last season.

Juventus, who are still waiting for Alessandro Del Piero and French playmaker Zinedine Zidane to come into form, are at home to Udinese, while neighbours Torino are down in Rome against Lazio.

The match could well be played in an eerie silence as Lazio fans have promised to keep quiet in protest at what they claim is the high cost of tickets for their team's away matches in the Champions League.

Club president Sergio Cragnotti, angry at the abuse he has received from the supporters, has said he will boycott the match in a protest of his own.

Fiorentina, still reeling from their clash with Arsenal in the Champions League, face much easier opposition in the shape of newly-promoted Verona.

Fiorentina's tie with the Gunners may have finished 0-0 but the scale of the moral defeat has prompted coach Giovanni Trapattoni to impose a press ban until the weekend, while he considers re-shaping the team.

Fabio Capello's AS Roma are away to Venezia with skipper and playmaker Francesco Totti back in the side after missing their UEFA Cup tie through suspension.

***Serie A* fixtures this weekend (1400 GMT unless stated)**

Saturday: Perugia v Cagliari, Bari v AC Milan **(1930 GMT)**

Sunday: Bologna v Reggina, Fiorentina v Verona, Juventus v Udinese, Lazio v Torino, Piacenza v Lecce, Venezia v AS Roma, Inter Milan v Parma **(1930 GMT)**

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

ACROSS

1 "Bravo!"
4 Donkey
7 Demolish
11 Construction piece
13 Potentially will
14 Fairy tale preposition
15 Inca territory
16 Wrestling win
17 Requisite
18 Gordon Sumner's stage name
20 Crazy
22 Harvest goddess
24 Show dissimilarity
28 Confuse
32 Tolerate
33 Body sci.
34 Thither
36 Plankton ingredient
37 Church tax
39 Maneuvered a kayak
41 Takes the helm
43 Guy's mate
44 "You've Got —"
46 Bach's output
50 "Star Wars" knights
53 San Francisco's — Hill
55 "It's Impossible" crooner
56 Off base
57 Sticky stuff
58 Was no stranger to
59 Tackle box item
60 Agent
61 Rds.

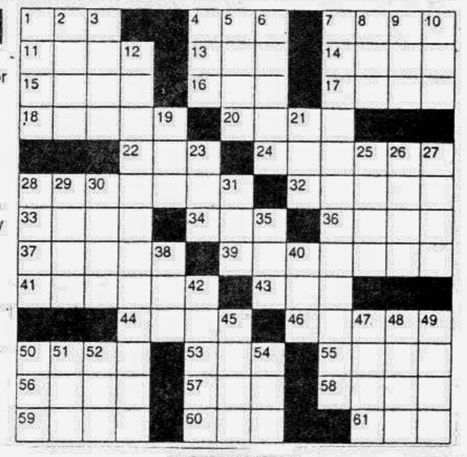
DOWN

1 Sartorial problems
2 Drive the getaway car
3 Mata —
4 Pump up the volume
5 Take to the seas
6 Ecclesiastical councils
7 Losing streak
8 Gorilla
9 "Sesame Street" Muppet
10 Lineman
12 Unexceptional
19 Coll. transcript stat.
21 OSS successor
23 Crafty
25 Pervade completely
26 Advantage
27 Patronize the library
28 Crazy
29 Condominium, e.g.
30 Destiny
31 "Alloy —"
35 No Derby winner, this
38 History chapter
40 Weir
42 Warbles
45 Aerobatic maneuver
47 Miller's "All My —"
48 "— a man with seven wives"
49 Kine
50 Rattle
51 One female animal...
52 ...and another
54 Tarzan's son

Solution time: 22 mins.

	A	L	O	O	F				P	U	R	S	E	
F	L	A	V	O	R				A	T	O	L	L	S
R	E	T	A	P	E				R	A	C	I	N	E
A	X	E		S	A	R	A	H		D	I	E		
N	I	L	E		K	I	D		S	E	N	D		
K	A	Y	A	K		D	E	S	T	R	O	Y		
				G	E	M		S	E	E				
M	O	N	E	Y	E	D		Z	I	P	U	P		
O	D	O	R		A	U	K		N	E	V	A		
L	I	T		S	N	O	O	P		E	U	R		
L	O	A	D	E	D		R	I	D	D	L	E		
S	U	T	U	R	E		E	N	D	E	A	R		
	S	E	D	E	R		A	S	S	E	S			

Yesterday's answer



CRYPTOQUIP

R V N T K T U A E F F N Y H K K Y F Z O T R K A Y Z N R V O R V N H O F F R E Z U N Y.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: I HEAR THAT IRASCIBLE LIBRARIANS ARE KNOWN TO BLOW THEIR STACKS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals D

The Cryptoquip 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.