MILAN, Sept 23: French winger Ibrahim Ba made Italian soccer history on Wednesday when he earned a four-match ban for head-but ting an opponent to the floor on his debut for Perugia last weekend, reports AFP.

Ba became the first footballer here to be pun ished on the basis of video evidence alone, after the incider it in Saturday's match against Cagliari went unnoticed by all four match officials.

For Italy's disciplin ary au-thority, the attack on C'agliari's Fabio Macellari was serious enough to warrant a lengthy ban - although the verdic't was criticised by Perugia president Luciano Gaucci.

"They've picked on us to begin experimenting with a new rule," he said. "I didn't expect it, even though Ba did an absurd thing and deserved to be pun-ished. But that should have come from the referee and not TV evidence.'

Gaucci summed up: "I t's like awarding a penalty which the referee didn't see it.

The club chief said that Ba was due to be fined by the club, irrespective of the disciplinary verdict.

Ba made a public apole gy on Monday for the incident, while Macellari said he had for given the Frenchman, who only arrived at Perugia last week on loan from champions AC: Milan, determined to play his way into the French national si de.

## 'Animal' popular for the wrong

#### reasons

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 23 Brazil international striker Edmundo has long had to live with a reputation for being a party animal but the Vasco da Gama forward is now also having to come to terms with being a gay icon for Brazil's homeisexual community, reportis

Edmundo, a heterosexual who earned the nickname "animal" for his well-documented hedonistic approach to life, has topped a poll in a Brazilian gay magazine as the man the readers would most likely to see posc naked.

The magazine poll came in the wake of Sao Paulo coach Cesar Carpeggiani announcing that he would sack his reserve goalkeeper Roger, who posed nude for G Magazine, if the photos are published.

The row has already boosted the magazine as the publicity from the Roger row has made front page news.

The magazine's editor Joao Andrade, eager to capitalise on the publicity, organised a poll to see which sportsman the magazine's readership most wanted to bare all.

The winner was Edmundo, a substitute in Brazil's 1998 World Cup Final defeat by

France. Andrade said: "This row has been the best publicity we could have had. Our readers are daily asking for more photos of sport stars and the absolute top of the list is Edmundo, even more than famous models and tv ac-

Andrade said they had approached the former Fiorentina star to pose for the magazine but as yet had not yet received a

Andrade added: "Footballers are becoming a fetish for our readers."

Other sportsmen suggested by readers include world superfeatherweight boxing champion Acelino 'Popo' Freitas, who has turned down a request to pose nude saying it was not the appropriate moment.

Sprinter Andre Domingos, and footballers Vampeta and Dinei have already posed for the magazine as has volleyball star Lilico, who, unlike the others, has publicly admitted he is homosexual.

### Peru turn to Maturana

LIMA, Sept 23: Francisco Maturana, who resigned his post as coach of Costa Rica earlier this month, has been appointed manager of the Peruvian national team through 2002 World Cup qualifying. Lander Aleman, president of the Peruvian federation's national team commission announced, reports AP.

"He is a capable coach, with a great international career." Aleman said Wednesday in making the announcement.

Maturana, a Colombian, replaces Peruvian coach Juan Carlos Oblitas, who resigned after the Copa America in July. where Peru were eliminated by

#### Mexico in the second round. Magpie in Boro's nest!

WORTHING, England, Sept 23: A fan of English soccer club Middlesbrough was facing the shock of his life on his return from honeymoon on Wednesday after friends painted the outside of his house in the colours of local rivals Newcastle United. reports AFP.

Pete Curry and bride Jo were due to jet home to their address in Worthing, West Sussex, after spending their honeymoon in Mexico.

But awaiting them was a house painted black and white and with the front door bricked up with breeze blocks.

Friends also boarded up ground-floor windows and hung a giant Newcastle banner from

the roof. The prank was organised by Curry's friend, Newcastle fan

Paul Bristow. "He is always winding me up, saying when I go away he will paint my house red and white (Middlesbrough's colours).

Bristow said. "When he went on honeymoon it was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to get him."



Fiorentina's Christian Amoroso (R) staves off the challenge from Barcelona's Spanish international Luis Enrique during their Champions' League fixture at Nou Camp on September 22.

# Barca too hot for Fiorentina

CHAMPIONS

BARCELONA. Sept 23: Barcelona raced to the top of Champions League Group B on

Wednesday with an impressive 4-2 win over Italy's Fiorentina to give the Catalan club a maximum six points from two games, reports

Fiorentina were out for the count at the Nou Camp stadium after Barca hit them with two goals inside the opening ten minutes in front of an 85,000 crowd.

Mercurial Portuguese midfielder Luis Figo snatched the first after a neat dribble and shot and Luis Enrique weighed in with the second to leave Fiorentina, who dropped two home points last week against Arsenal, reeling.

Although Gabriel Batistuta pulled one back five minutes after the break following a neat freekick routine. Brazilian playmaker Rivaldo scored a third for Barca on 68 minutes with a penalty and then scored again with a solo run to wrap up the points for the Spanish league champions.

The penalty came after Luis Figo had been brought down by Tomas Repka and Pasquale Padalino. Enrico Chiesa's 79th-minute

strike for Fiorentina was mere window-dressing for the dejected Italians, who were held at home in their first match by With Arsenal seeing off Swe-

den's Solna, the Gunners and Barcelona are now clear favourites to advance to the second phase.

Barcelona fans, demanding a better showing than opening phase eliminations in each of the past two seasons, were in good voice from the start having already enjoyed a crucial away success - 2-1 against Swedish side AlK Solna.

It was an unhappy evening for Fiorentina's former Real Madrid star Predrag Mijatovic who had hoped to put one over on his former Primera Liga rivals having never managed to score in half a dozen previous appearances at the Nou Camp.

With six points on the board, Elarca coach Louis van Gaal now has a platform on which to build as he plots Arsenal's downfall next week - the next instalment of his masterplan to emulate Johan Cruyff's European Cup-winning exploits of 1992 with the Catalan giants.



Dennis Bergkarnp takes a shot at the AIK Solna keeper Mattias Asper in their Champions' League match on September 22, - AFP photo

# Arsenal leave it very late

LO'NDON, Sept 23: Goals in stoppage time by Thierry CHAMPIONS Henry and Davor Suker gave Arse-

nal a dramatic 3-1 victory over Sweden's Alk Solna at Wembley in Group B of the Champions' League on Wednesday.

Arsenal totally dominated the first half and took the lead with a 27th-minute goal by their own Swede Fredrik Ljungberg only for AIK captain Krister Nordin to produce a shock 52nd-minute equaliser for the Swedes, who are coached by Englishman Stuart Baxter.

Just as the visitors looked to have earned a point, French substitute Henry, who scored superb late winner against Southampton on Saturday, drilled in Arsenal's second.

Henry then set up Croatian striker partner Suker for the third as Arsenal belatedly made their superiority count to record their first victory following the 0-0 draw at Fiorentina last week.

Arsenal, despite being without the suspended Ray Parlour and injured Frenchman Emmanuel Petit in midfield, started purposefully and Dutch winger Marc Overmars whipped in an early cross which Suker headed wastefully wide.

Suker and Bergkamp played a delightful one-two after nine minutes but the Dutchman couldn't beat Mattias Asper in the AIK goal.

AIK, who were once beaten by Arsenal at Highbury 8-0 50 years ago, looked happy to soak up the early pressure and Asper was again called upon after 20 minutes, this time to save a fierce Bergkamp free-kick.

Asper stopped another Overmars effort soon after and the breakthrough was not long

Patrick Vieira surged forward and Bergkamp played in Ljungberg who finished neatly with the outside of his foot.

Ljungberg, Suker and Bergkamp combined again as Arsenal threatened to double their lead and Asper fumbled the Dutchman's effort before scrambling back to prevent the ball crossing the line.

Alk had little to offer in attack, a wayward cross-cumshot from ex-Newcastle striker Andreas Andersson just before half-time proving their best effort of the opening period.

But the Swedes silenced Wembley seven minutes after half-time when they scored out

of the blue.

The Arsenal defence spurned

# Draw keeps Rosenborg atop

TRONDHEIM, Sept 23: Norway's Rosenborg Trondheim remained just ahead of Germans Borrussia Dortmund at the top of the Group C table after a 2-2 draw with Feyenoord in their Champions League clash, reports AFP.

Danish striker Jon Dahl Tomasson, a flop at Newcastle two seasons ago, gave the Dutch visitors a 12th-minute lead only for John Carew to square the match nine minutes later.

Less than sixty minutes later Cote d'Ivoire striker Bonaventure Kalou put the Rotterdam outfit back in front but two minutes later Carew struck again.

several chances to clear before Ola Andersson slipped a simple ball through to Nordin who calmly beat Arsenal's Austrian keeper Alex Manninger from 10 metres.

 Arsenal appealed desper-ately for offside but Winterburn was playing Nordin on the far side of the area and the Swedish contingent in the 71,227 crowd rubbed salt in Arsenal wounds with a rendition of "You're not singing anymore" in perfect English.

The goal breathed confidence into the Swedes and Arsenal, who had won only one of their previous three Champions' League games at Wembley. suddenly looked shaky.

Bergkamp settled their nerves when he bent another free-kick millimetres wide and Arsene Wenger decided to bring on Nigerian Nwankwo Kanu and Henry as he sought a win-

It was defender Martin Keown who came closest though, crashing a header against the underside of the bar with 15 minutes left.

It wasn't the one-way traffic of the first half though and Daniel Tjernstrom was blocked by Nigel Winterburn as the Swedes threatened to inflict further damage. . Arsenal then had a penalty

appeal turned down when a David Ljung appeared to handle and Henry missed a sitter when set up by Suker. But the Frenchman was the toast of the capital in stoppage

time when Kanu created chaos

and toed the ball to Henry who fired under Asper's body. AIK poured desperately forward and were caught again on the break by Henry and the former Juventus striker unselfishly passed to Suker who completed Arsenal's late show.

#### RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated results of European Champions League matches played Wednesday: Group A

At Rome Lazio (Ita) 2 (Negro 70, Salas 71) Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr) 1 (Rebrov 68-pen) At Maribor, Slovenia

Maribor (Slo) 0 Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 2 (Zivkovic 82, Kirsten 90) Group B At Barcelona Barcelona (Spa) 4 (Luis Figo 6, Luis Enrique 10, Rivaldo 68, 70-

pen) Fiorentina (Ita) 2 (Batistuta 50, Chiesa 79) At London Arsenal (Eng) 3 (Ljungberg 27, Henry 90, Suker 90) AIK Solna

Group C At Dortmund, Germany Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 3 (Moller 40, Bobic 53, 65) Boavista (Por) 1 (Bento 44) At Trondheim, Norway Rosenborg Trondheim (Nor) 2 (Carew 21, 24) Feyenoord (Ned) 2

(Swe) 1 (Nordin 52)

At Zagreb Croatia Zagreb (Cro) 1 (Sokota 64) Marseille (Fra) 2 (Bakayoko 5, Perez 77)

(Tomasson 12, Kalou 22)

Group D

At Graz, Austria Sturm Graz (Aut) 0 Manchester United (Eng) 3 (Keane 17, Yorke 32, Cole 33)

Leverkusen

blank Maribor MARIBOR, Sept 23: Slovenian Giantkillers Maribor put up another brave display only for Germany's Bayer Leverkusen to snatch the spoils with two late goals in their Champions' League Group A match on Wednesday, reports

Boris Zivkovic put Bayer in front after 82 minutes and then German international striker Uli Kirsten made it 2-0 in stoppage time to send Leverkusen to the top of the group.

# Marseille edge Croatia Zagreb

ZAGREB, Sept 23: A superb volley from Sebastien Perez put Marseille into the driving seat in Champions League Group D here on Wednesday, wrapping up a 2-1 win at Croatia Zagreb after the tightest of tussles, reports AFP.

With games against holders Manchester United to come. Marseille, who began with a 2-0 home success over Sturm Graz of Austria, had to ensure they maintained their good start with an away success - and Perez's tremendous strike set the best possible seal on the evening for the visitors.

Marseille made the perfect start, Stephane Dalmat, a summer signing from Lens, haring down the left and sending in a perfect low cross for Ibrahima Bakayoko to sweep home from 12 metres after minutes.

Graz drew level on 64 minutes through substitute Tomislav Sokota, who fired home from close range.

Marseille gathered their resources for a final push, however, and Perez, who had a spell with Blackburn in England a year ago, volleyed a brilliant winnner.

Marseille coach Rolland Courbis, under fire for his team's poor start to the season they won just two of their opening six matches - elected to give a run out to Malian striker Seydou Kaita alongside former Everton man Bakayoko in place of regulars Fabrizio Ravanelli and Florian Maurice.

"There have been question marks over us and we had a few rocky periods but we rose above them and battled hard for a good win," said Courbis afterwards.

#### Beckham awaits his fate

LONDON, Sept 23: Manchester United midfielder David Beckham could yet be punished for his apparent kick at Sturm Graz's Tomislav Kocijan during Wednesday's Champions League game in Austria, reports AFP. The England international

caught Kocijan with his right boot during the second half of the Treble winners' 3-0 win in the Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadion because the Sturm midfielder had obstructed him.

Referee Alfredo Trentalar ge took no action at the time, but if the Italian official includes the incident in his match report to ruling body UEFA then Beckham could be censored.

thing could happen if the incident is included within the referee's match report. "Referees must submit their reports within 24 hours of the game and it is possible that he

A UEFA spokeswoman said

today: "It's possible that some-

has written something. "If he has then the matter will be considered by our disciplinary committee, which meets weekly for Champions League games.

Beckham could also be sanctioned if Sturm complain within 24 hours of the game, but that seems unlikely because coach Ivica Osim was at pains to play down Beckham's kick. The UEFA spokeswoman

said: "If one of the clubs makes a report within 24 hours it will be considered, but otherwise if nothing is mentioned by the club or the referee the matter will be closed." Beckham, who was widely

criticised in the British media today over the incident, has been dogged by suggestions that he has a suspect temperament ever since he lashed out at Argentina's Diego Simeone at last year's World Cup and was sent off.



Manchester United skips over a lunging tackle by Sturm Graz's Franco Foda during their Champions' League encounter at the Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadium on September 22.

- AFP photo united storm Sturm Graz

CHAMPIONS

Sept 23: Holders Manchester United made up for their dropped poi-Ints against Croatia Zagreb by steamrollering Austria's Sturm Graz 3-0 here on Tuesday to take a huge step towards a place in the second phase of the Champions League,

reports AFP. Graz made a bright start in the Group D encounter, pushing United back into their own half as the Austrians set about banishing memories of their poor showing in last week's 2-0 defeat by Marseille.

But United kept them at bay before taking the lead against the run of play after 16 minutes. David Beckham drove a freekick awarded for a foul by Franco Foda on Dwight Yorke. but Irish midfielder Roy Keane, back in the side after recovering from hamstring and knec trouble, reacted quickest to

Sturm keeper Kazimierz Sidorczuk. Yorke headed home the second on the half-hour to knock the stuffing out of the Austrians

despatch a ferocious half-volley

into the net off the the bar past

following a Beckham corner. Within two minutes the Trinidadian international had fed Andy Cole on the counterattack for the third as United

cut the Austrian defence to rib-For his second foul la The England striker finished

with aplomb to make it 3-0 as the reigning champions began to swagger against opponents who were clearly unable to draw any strength from playing at their Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadium as United played the Terminator role to perfection. United coach Sir Alex Fergu-

son was delighted with the vic-"We're pleased to get our first win and I thought the first half was very very good.

"I thought our attacking play was great and I thought Yorke and Cole were excellent. They were always a threat to them, Sir Alex enthused.

"It gets us off the mark and we have now got four points." he

"Now we need another seven from our four games to qualify." Sturm, who had taken a solitary point from their previous seven Champions League games, were determined to make life difficult for their illustrious visitors - and with more luck could have goneahead after six minutes.

Gunther Neukirchner broke down the right and crossed to the back post where Tomisiav Kocijan forced a decent stop from Raimond van der Gouw, who was preferred once again to Mark Bosnich. That mini crisis averted,

United turned the game around

completely to leave the Aus-

trian double winners training

Sturm rallied briefly with a shot on the run from Jan-Pieter Martens which failed to trouble Van der Gouw, who then had to react smartly to push away an Ivica Vastic free-kick for a corner before flipping a Roman Mahlich effort over the bar.

After the action-packed first-half the second period proved an anti-climax but United were untroubled as Ferguson's men held on to their solid lead to kickstart their campaign after the frustration of the goalless draw with Za-

There was an ugly moment at the start of the second half when Beckham appeared to aim a kick at Tomislav Kocijan but Ferguson claimed he did not see the incident and Sturm coach Ivica Osim claimed he did not have a good view of the inci-

the incident at the beginning of the second half but I think it's just part of the game and it actually helped stimulate our team and the spectators as Ferguson pointed the finger at Graz's Roman Mahlich over a

Osim said "I didn't really see

later incident which resulted in him and Beckham getting booked. "I think the lad tried to go for him (Beckham) and tried to get him booked and the referee

knew he had to balance it after

booking the Sturm Graz player

# by booking Beekham as well." El Matador' Lazio's hero

in their wake.

CHAMPIONS

ROME, Sept 23: Lazio substitute Marcelo - "The Matador" Salas lived up to his

LEAGUE Jnickname here on Wednesday night, scoring the winner as the Italians roared back from a goal down to beat Dynamo Kyiv 2-1, reports AFP. Salas provided the killer touch as a deadlocked tie in Group A saw three goals in the

through the second half. Dynamo striker Serhii Rebrov drove home a 68th minute penalty, but defender Paolo Negro rose to head Lazio's equaliser in the 70th and Salas rifled home the winner just two minutes later.

for, against, points):

Remaining matches:

Dynamo Kiev v Lazio

Remaining matches:

Arsenal v Fiorentina

Borussia Dortmund

Remaining matches:

Boavista v Feyenoord

Feyenoord v Boavista

Borussia Dortmund v Feyenoord

Feyenoord v Rosenborg Trondheim

Fiorentina v Barcelona

September 29: Lazio v Maribor Teatanic

Bayer Leverkusen v Dynamo Kiev

Dynamo Kiev v Bayer Leverkusen

Maribor Teatanic v Dynamo Kiev

September 29: Barcelona v Arsenal

October 27: Barcelona v AIK Stockholm

November 2: AIK Stockholm v Arsenal

October 19: Arsenal v Barcelona

Alk Stockholm v Fiorentina

Fiorentina v AIK Stockholm

October 19: Maribor Teatanic v Lazio

October 27: Lazio v Bayer Leverkusen

November 2: Bayer Leverkusen v Maribor Teatanic

September 29: Rosenborg Trondheim v Borussia Dortmund

October 19: Borussia Dortmund v Rosenborg Trondheim

October 27: Rosenborg Trondheim v Boavista

November 2: Boavista v Borussia Dortmund

September 29: Croatia Zagreb v Sturm Graz

Manchester United v Olympique Marseille

Olympique Marseille v Manchester United

October 27: Croatia Zagreb v Manchester United

November 2: Manchester United v Sturm Graz

October 19: Sturm Graz v Croatia Zagreb

Sturm Graz v Olympique Marseille

Olympique Marseille v Croatia Zagreb.

Bayer Leverkusen

Group A

Lazio

Maribor

Group B

Arsenal

Barcelona

Fiorentina

AIK Solna

Group C

Rosenborg

Feyenoord

Boavista

Group D

Marseille

Man Utd

Sturm Graz

Croatia Zagreb

Remaining matches:

Dynamo Kiev

space of four minutes midway

After drawing 1-1 with Bayen Leverkusen last week, Lazio are looking good for a place in the second round, joint top on four points with Germans.

"I'm pleased with our position in the group table now," said Lazio coach Lazio coach Sven Goran Eriksson. "We've got Maribor at home next Wedneday week and we have to try to win it." Salas was on a similar wave-

club's history, had most of the

length, saying: "I'm happy. This was a really difficult match and we won it. The coach has to decided who plays and who doesn't - the important thing is to be ready. Lazio, playing their first home European Cup tie in the

**STANDINGS** 

after matches played Wednesday (played, won, drawn, lost, goals

Standings in Groups A-D of European Champions League

early possession but failed to find their rhythm or keep their temper - four of them being booked in the first-half. But they turned on the style in the second half and Dynamo. though well-organised at the

back, eventually cracked under the pressure. The hosts' first chance came in the 16th minute when Yugoslav super-boot Sinisa Mihailovic blasted in a trademark 22-metre free-kick which goalkeeper Olexandr Shovkovsky tipped onto the crossbar and

Pavel Nedved, Lazio's most enterprising player, was the next to try his luck but a low

drive flashed wide of the post. He missed a golden opportunity in the 29th minute when Roberto Mancini deftly headed a long ball into his path and the Czech midfielder ballooned his shot from about six metres.

But Nedved was back for

more five minutes before the

break, curling a shot just beyond the right post with Shovkovsky at full stretch. Dynamo's sole chance of the half came in injury-time, when defender Kakha Kaladze steered a powerful free-kick over the Lazio wall and keeper Marco

Ballotta just managed to palm the ball over. Lazio showed a lot more fight when they came out for the second half, and were nearly

rewarded immediately. . Alen Boksic gave the Ukrainians a fright after two minutes when Mancini pounced on a defensive error and hooked the ball over to the far post where the Croatian's header was turned round the post for a

Two minutes later, Yugoslav Dejan Stankovic latched onto Nedved's overhead kick but his tightly-angled shot at an nearopen goal hit the base of the post and flew into the side-net-

Mihajlovic, whose free-kick goal last week earned Lazio their draw at Bayer Leverkusen. tried again on the hour but his effort cannoned back off the

Dynamo wall.

Sergiy Konovalov won a dubious penalty when Mihajlovic was judged to have brought him down in a sliding tackle and Rebrov tucked the spot-kick into the left-hand corner in the 68th minute.

For the home fans, though, the nightmare scenario lasted just two minutes, when Mihajlovic chipped the ball into the penalty area and Negro's glancing header sent it past Shovkovsky and inside the right-hand post.

The Olympic stadium exploded, and the celebrations had barely subsided when Boksic broke down the left and crossed to the far post where Salas chested the ball down before hammering it past the keeper.