

Porto guarantee spot in style

PORTO, Portugal, Oct 27: Two early goals from Brazilian midfielder Deco handed Porto a second-phase berth in the European Champions League on Tuesday, setting up a 3-1 win over Norway's Group E strugglers Molde, reports AFP.

The win at the Das Antas stadium came on the heels of last week's triumph over seven-time European champions and group rivals Real Madrid, who likewise booked their passage after beating Olympiakos of Greece 3-0.

Porto, the 1987 continental champions who have won five consecutive domestic titles, made the perfect start with a Deco header inside the opening 40 seconds following a cross by Yugoslav winger Ljubinko Drulovic.

Deco then added a masterful swirling freekick on the half hour to make it 2-0 before Brazilian marksman Jardel, author of both Porto goals against Real a week ago, drilled the third past keeper Morten Bakke midway through the second half as 32,000 home fans erupted in celebration.

Soon after his goal, Jardel made way for veteran Jose Domingos.

Daniel Berg Hestad claimed a late consolation with a header for the Norwegians, who are set to claim the wooden spoon in the group.

Willem II hold Spartak

MOSCOW, Oct 27: Russia's Spartak Moscow were held 1-1 by Dutch side Willem II Tilburg in their home Champions' League Group G match here on Tuesday, reports AFP.

In pouring rain Spartak immediately seized the initiative, looking for an early opener, but the waterlogged turf at Moscow's Luzhniki stadium spoilt their early offensive efforts.

But in the 25th minute Spartak's attacking midfielder Artyom Bezrodny eluded Willems' defence, taking a pass from striker Alexander Shirkov and lobbing helpless goalkeeper Jim van Fesselm from the edge of the penalty box.

Spartak created several more scoring chances in the first period making seven shots on goal against none for the visitors, but failed to increase their lead before the break.

Willem II made a good start to the second half, pouring men into attack looking for an equaliser, but Spartak's Russian international goalkeeper Alexander Filimonov was equal to the task.

But Filimonov was unable to do anything in the 70th minute when Willem's striker Ousmane Sanou scored an equaliser after Spartak missed several clear chances to increase their lead.

Spartak's Yuri Kovtun was sent off.

Londoners impress Italian press

MILAN, Oct 27: Italian newspapers were paying tribute to Chelsea on Wednesday after the London club fought back to earn a 1-1 draw with AC Milan here in front of 75,000 fans at San Siro, reports AFP.

The Gazzetta dello Sport said that Milan's chances of qualifying for the second round were now extremely remote and that nobody in Europe these days was frightened of facing the Italian champions.

Comparing Milan's laboured manoeuvre with a broken-winded elephant, Italy's top sport's paper said Chelsea "could have scored other goals and overall played the better football".

The Blues had "splendidly taken what was owed to them" by equalising, it said, and warned Zuccheroni: "This team needs to be rebuilt from the foundations up."

Tuttosport said that Milan had tried everything "but came up against splendid and extremely tenacious opponents".

Chelsea were very well positioned on the pitch and were well supported by their Italian players and those who had previously played in Italy - all of whom wanted to put on a good display.

"Milan now risk going out of the Champions League and not even having the consolation of the UEFA Cup," the paper added.

The Corriere dello Sport said: "Milan suffered the punishment of hell in midfield, where Chelsea took control... while the Norwegian Fló was highly dangerous up front, and well supported by Deschamps and Wisse."

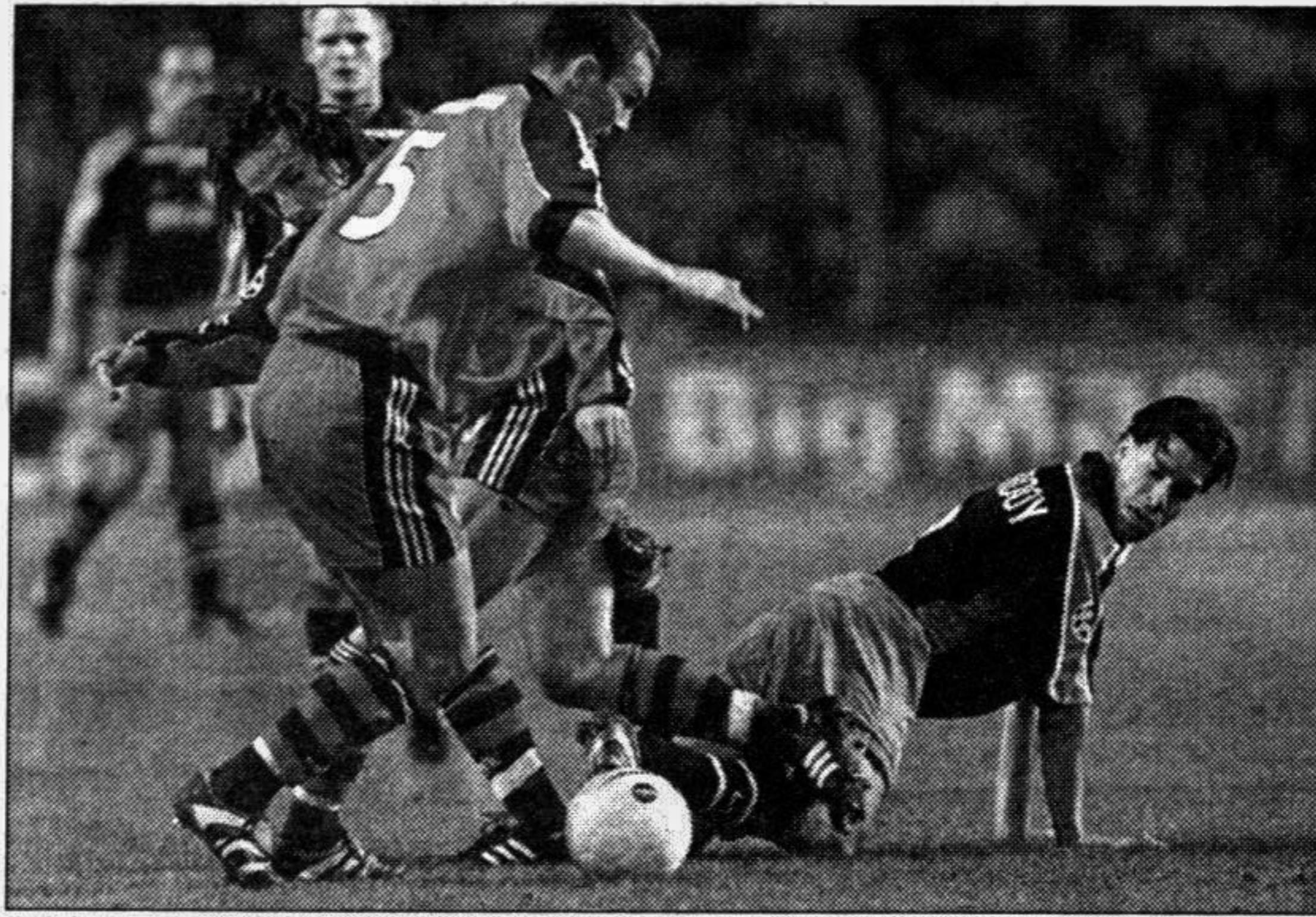
Booth to become Leicester's record signing

LONDON, Oct 27: English Premiership highfliers Leicester were poised Wednesday to smash their transfer record by signing Sheffield Wednesday striker Andy Booth, reports AFP.

The Foxes have agreed a fee worth up to 2.75 million pounds (4.55m dollars) with the Premiership strugglers for Booth, due to have talks with Leicester manager Martin O'Neill.

City, lying sixth in the table, desperately need additional firepower to boost the current strike force of Emile Heskey and Tony Cotttee, with only veteran Ian Marshall as back-up to the duo.

But the arrival of Booth, if he agrees personal terms, is not the forerunner to the departure of the in-demand Heskey, who has been linked with Premiership leaders Leeds and Liverpool.



PSV Eindhoven striker Ruud van Nistelrooy (R) is dispossessed by Patrik Andersson of Bayern Munich (No 5) during their Champions' League encounter at Eindhoven.

Sport

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated results of European Champions' League matches Tuesday:

Group E
At Madrid
Real Madrid (Spa) 3 (Raul 21, Morientes 64, Roberto Carlos 83) Olympiakos (Gre) 0

At Porto, Portugal
FC Porto (Por) 3 (Deco 1, 28, Jardel 58) Molde (Nor) 1 (Hestad 82)

Group F
At Glasgow
Rangers (Sco) 1 (Moore 60) Valencia (Spa) 2 (Mendieta 35, Lopez 45)

At Eindhoven, Netherlands
PSV Eindhoven (Ned) 2 (van Nistelrooy 40, Nills 57) Bayern Munich (Ger) 1 (Santa Cruz 51)

Group G
At Moscow
Spartak Moscow (Rus) 1 (Bezrodny 25) Willem II (Ned) 1 (Sanou 69)

At Bordeaux, France
Bordeaux (Fra) 0 Sparta Prague (Cze) 0

Group H
At Milan, Italy
AC Milan (Ita) 1 (Bierhoff 73) Chelsea (Eng) 1 (Wise 76)

At Berlin
Hertha Berlin (Ger) 1 (Rekda 35-pen) Galatasaray (Tur) 4 (Sukur 48, 66, Tugay 81, Okan 90)



AC Milan's Brazilian star Leonardo makes his way through two Chelsea players during their Champions' League fixture at Milan.

— AFP photo

PSV strike Bayern severely



EINDHOVEN, Netherlands, Oct 27: Bayern Munich club president and *émigré grise* Franz Beckenbauer slotted last season's Champions League runners up Tuesday after they slid to a demolishing 2-1 loss at PSV Eindhoven, reports AFP.

Bayern, three-times kings of Europe - but not since the mid 1970s - now have to ensure they beat Group F rivals Glasgow Rangers in their final opening phase match to reach the next round.

Beckenbauer suggested that if Bayern showed similar form to Tuesday they would not be going much further after goals from Ruud van Nistelrooy and Luc Nilis either side of half-time cancelled out a striker from teenage star Roque Santa Cruz.

PSV, despite a disappointing European campaign, showed in the first half why they are top of the Dutch First Division.

Van Nistelrooy sidefooted the hosts ahead after Belgian Nilis drew Bayern keeper Stefan Wessels and slid the ball to van

Nistelrooy who could hardly miss.

But Paraguayan striker Santa Cruz - the world's most expensive teenager - squared the match for the German champions six minutes after the interval from close range.

Nilis struck the winner for PSV, European champions in 1988, after 57 minutes with a rising left-foot shot that went in off the underside of the bar.

"I can't explain our lethargic showing," said Beckenbauer.

"We only really played how I think we should have done throughout in the final 20 minutes. Perhaps our players thought a draw would do."

"But the defeat changes nothing in essence - even before the match in Eindhoven we had to win the last match against Glasgow. So it's still in our own hands."

The Bavarians' amateur keeper Stefan Wessels, in for injured Oliver Kahn, kept the Dutch at bay and prevented a heavier defeat for the visitors with brilliant stops from Van Nistelrooy and Mark van Bommel. But he was helpless for the two goals.

PSV coach Eric Gerets had a special reason to be happy with the result, even though his side are out of the event, as nine years ago he was playing for Eindhoven when Bayern knocked them out at the quarter-final stage.

The match boiled over at the end as Bayern had midfielder Jens Jeremies dismissed after a clash by the PSV bench.

Gerets was angry that matters got out of hand in the final moments and claimed he saw one Bayern player kick out at a Dutchman.

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld admitted that "things got too emotional at the end. But my colleagues (Gerets) provoked the players. That should not happen."

"We should have got something out of the match but we were caught napping in the first half. Their second goal came from one of our lads being caught out of position."

"Things are still in our hands and if we don't come through then we won't have deserved to," added Hitzfeld, who led Dortmund to the European Cup in 1997.

Thereafter it was all Galatasaray and Sukur notched his second in the 66th minute to stun the 70,000 crowd at the Olympic stadium.

Kerimoglu Tugay stuck the knife further into the Germans' hopes with the third on 81 minutes and Buruk Okan completed a comprehensive victory with the fourth in the final seconds.

Hertha coach Jürgen Röber berated his side's collapse.

"I thought we deserved to go in front but then we made a bad mistake for their equaliser and were punished for it. Suddenly we were making mistakes we previously had not. But we're still in the running."

Galatasaray counterpart Fatih Terim drew comfort from the fact that a UEFA Cup place was still in the offing via third place in the group.

"We deserved to win this one and we have preserved our chance of a UEFA Cup spot."

The Turks cannot qualify but their stunning second-half showing leaves Group H wide open with Chelsea now top ahead of Hertha on goal difference with eight points following the Londoners' 1-1 draw at AC Milan.

If Chelsea draw at home to Hertha in their last match they will go through.

But if Hertha draw at Stamford Bridge they could well grab second spot ahead of the Italians, who must travel to Turkey with two points to make up.

Rangers' relief was short-lived. Two minutes into stoppage time Barry Ferguson lost possession and Lopez beat his man before sidefooting neatly past Klos to make it 2-0.

Rangers started the second half forcefully and gained their reward.

They still almost salvaged a point when, deep in stoppage time, Albertz slammed an angled drive just wide of the post but Valencia deservedly held out for a hard-earned victory.



— AFP photo

Glasgow Rangers' Michael Mols (C) tries to dodge past Valencia's Miroslav Djukic in their Champions' League clash at Glasgow.

Valencia book their place



GLASGOW, Oct 27: Spanish side Valencia secured a vital 2-1 win over Rangers at Ibrox on Tuesday, a victory which sent them into the second phase of the Champions' League, reports AFP.

Valencia's victory, courtesy of goals by Gaizka Mendieta and Argentine Claudio Lopez in the first half, now have nine points from four games in Group F.

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Second Moore managed to sidefoot the ball beyond Valencia goalkeeper Andres Palop from close range.

Advocaat immediately sent on hammer-footed German Jorg Albertz to try to force an equaliser which almost came when Rod Wallace grazed a post with his ability to pounce on unsuspecting defences.

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The Glasgow side forced successive corners and from the

left foot.

Rangers' manager Advocaat immediately brought on Russian star Andrei Kanchelski in an attempt to wrest back the initiative.

It made no difference.

Just before the interval Moore cleared Romanian Adrian Ilie's shot off the line after the typical snaking run by the player nicknamed 'The Cobra' for his ability to pounce on unsuspecting defences.

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A daily Mendieta wasted another clear chance soon after as Rangers appeared to run out of steam.

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STANDINGS

European Champions League tables after matches in Groups E-H played Tuesday (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

GROUP E

FC Porto 5 4 0 1 9 5 12
Real Madrid 5 3 1 2 7 6 10
Olympiakos 5 1 1 3 8 12 4
Molde 5 1 0 4 6 13 3

GROUP F

Valencia 5 2 3 0 7 4 9
Rangers 5 2 1 2 6 7 6
Bayern Munich 5 1 3 1 6 6 6
PSV 5 1 1 3 5 9 4

Valencia qualify for next phase

GROUP G

Bordeaux 5 3 2 0 7 4 11
Sparta Prague 5 2 3 0 9 4 9
Spartak Moscow 5 1 2 2 7 5 6
Willem II 5 0 1 4 7 15 5

Bordeaux and Sparta Prague qualify for next phase

GROUP H

Celtic 5 2 2 1 8 3 8
Hertha Berlin 5 2 1 3 7 4 6
AC Milan 5 1 3 1 4 4 6
Galatasaray 5 1 1 3 7 11 4

Bordeaux and Sparta Prague qualify for next phase

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