

Sport

Uzbeks rout Bangladesh

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh suffered a crushing 6-6 defeat at the hands of Uzbekistan in their opening Group Three encounter of the 12th Asian Cup qualifiers in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

According to a faxed message last night, the leaky Bangladesh defence in absence of star defenders Jewel Rana, Masood Rana and Hasan Al-Mamun, let the Uzbeks score three in each half.

Uzbekistan mostly composed of Europe-based players went ahead in the 22nd minute and struck two more in the 40th and 44th minute.

The Central Asians completed the rout with goals in the 51st, 65th and 75th minutes.

Bangladesh will face UAE in their next match tomorrow.

Fakhrul steers Ctg to safety

Sports Reporter

Fakhrul Alam hit an unbeaten 84 to rescue hosts Chittagong Division after a top order collapse against Khulna on the first day of their National Cricket League clash at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

The middle-order bat clobbered 11 fours in his 170-ball unconquered innings to guide his team to 264 for nine at close.

Sent into bat, Chittagong stuttered to 67 for four in the 28th before Fakhrul came in to pair with Haroon-ur-Rashid. Fakhrul and Haroon, who scored a timely 57, steadied the rocking boat, putting on 66 runs for the fifth wicket.

With Haroon departing at 133, Fakhrul found another wily partner in tail-ender Walid Abedin, who blasted a breezy 52 off 57 balls.

Fakhrul shared an invaluable 83-run with number nine batsman Walid. That crucial partnership helped Chittagong to post a respectable score after three of their batsmen returned to pavilion scoring ducks.

Jamaluddin was the most successful Khulna bowler with a haul of two for 68.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the first day of the National Cricket League match between Chittagong and Khulna began at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

CHITTAGONG: First Innings

Tareq c Nuruzzaman	0
b Khairuzzaman	0
Nafees b Jamaluddin	34
Haroon c Khairuzzaman	0
b Azimul	57
Rezaul run out	0
Faisal run out	0
Fakhrul batting	84
Akbar c Raju b Jamaluddin	4
Hafid c Niaz b Shahin	15
Walid c Selim b Niaz	52
Niazuddin c Raju b Tareq	11
Alamgir batting	0
Extras: (b-3, lb-3, nb-6, w-5)	17
Total: (For 9 wickets in 91 overs)	264
Fall of wickets: 1-0; 2-59; 3-62; 4-67; 5-133; 6-148; 7-172; 8-255; 9-264.	

Bowler

	O	M	R	W
Khairuzzaman	10	3	26	1
Tariqul	20	6	47	1
Niaz	6	1	28	1
Shahin	23	7	50	1
Jamaluddin	23	6	68	2
Azimul	9	2	38	1

Asia Cup hockey

Bangladesh versus SL

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh, fresh after their creditable draw against China on Saturday, will desperately look forward to registering their first win in the 34th Asia Cup hockey championship when they take on a lowly-rated Sri Lanka in Kuala Lumpur today.

Bangladesh, who lost to Korea (4-0) in their Group A opener, displayed a spectacular turnaround, holding China 1-1.

Bangladesh will take on former world champions Pakistan in the last group league match tomorrow.

Warne applauds Saqlain

HOBART, Australia, Nov 21: Australia's star leg-spinner Shane Warne says he ranks Pakistani Saqlain Mushtaq above Sri Lankan Muttiah Muralitharan as the world's best off-spinner, reports AP.

Warne was a first ball victim of Saqlain on day two of the second Test at Bellerive Oval, clean bowled by the Pakistani's "doosra" — a ball which breaks the wrong way.

Nicknamed the 'Sheikh of Tweak' because of his ability to turn the ball at alarming angles, Warne's wrist spinners stand him alongside Saqlain and Muralitharan as the greatest slow bowlers of the modern era.

Warne has 342 wickets from 77 tests, Saqlain 103 from 43 and Muralitharan 218 from 25 matches.

"You think about the two best off spinners going around and you think of Muttiah and Saqlain," said Warne, who took 5-110 in Pakistan's second innings of 392 on Sunday.

"I think Saqlain is probably a better bowler than Muttiah. The way he bowls his wrong'un, it's just a very good delivery and there is no real change of action, he bowls it excellently and he can land it pretty consistently, too."

"You think of off spinners over the years and you think of them tying up an end and may be getting a couple of wickets for you but these guys, Saqlain and Muttiah, they're lethal weapons."

Saqlain, 22, is only starting out and the mysteries of his "doosra", the Urdu word for his wrong'un, are likely to beguile batsmen for years to come.

SA beaten by brainpower?



CAPE TOWN, Nov 21 (Internet report): The IQs of South African cricketers and rugby players should be measured to establish whether they have enough grey matter to compete against the Australians.

This controversial opinion was aired by the respected sports science guru, Professor Tim Noakes speaking at the opening of South Africa's first Institute of Life Enhancement, the only one of its kind in the world.

Noakes has just returned from attending conferences on sports medicine in New Zealand and Australia. He said he was once again struck by Australia's current pre-eminence in world sport and he asked himself what South Africans must do to be able to compete with them.

In rugby but especially in cricket, many players this year did not measure up to standards. In my view this must firstly be ascribed to the complex emotional demands of international sport.

"South African cricketers spent 320 days away from home last year and only 40 at home. Nobody can keep up such a schedule for long."

"Unless we address this and other aspects urgently, key players will crack at crucial moments. My point is, and I'm referring specifically to the Australian example and their excellence in Olympic sports, that we have to pay much more attention to detail."

"We do not pay as much attention to detail as do the Australians. I think we are pig-headed and stupid in this. We have to address this matter."

"In future we will have to test the intelligence of our management teams to see if they are up to competing with the Aussies who are a very intelligent people," Noakes said.

Noakes added that technology would also play an increasingly important role in sport in the future. After seeing the latest sport technology during his visit to Australia, he became convinced that South Africans would only remain competitive if they stayed abreast of technological developments.

"Technologically speaking our professional sports like rugby and cricket are reasonably advanced. We just have to pay more attention to detail."

"But the Aussies also showed us that amateurs have to be supported through sponsorships to enable them to practise like the professionals."

"The problem seems to be that the people in charge of creating the blueprints for the future of our sports do not have the necessary expertise to make the decisions they need to make," he said.

Noakes expressed the hope that people will wonder at South Africa's achievements at the Olympics in 50 years' time and that we will then be able to tell them that they were achieved through privatisation and the development of sports science and medicine at community level.

Serie A

Welcome win for Fiorentina



MILAN, Nov 21 (AP/Reuters): Defender Alessandro Pierini, making up for the scoring drought of Argentine strikers Gabriel Batistuta and Abel Balbo, headed in the deciding goal to give Fiorentina a 1-0 home win against Perugia in a Serie A match Saturday.

The third victory of the season — the first in league matches in nearly two months — lifted Fiorentina to ninth in the league after ten matches (3-4-3).

Perugia's record worsened to 4-1-5.

Another late goal, by striker Roberto Muzzi in the 88th minute, rallied Udinese to a 2-1 win against Bologna.

After Danish midfielder Martin Jorgensen failed to convert a controversial penalty kick for Udinese, Bologna scored the opening goal through captain-defender Michele Parmatti in the 62nd.

Center-half Andrea Sottile, on an offensive raid, headed in the equaliser in the 81st and Muzzi, a second half substitute, tallied the game winner and his fifth season goal with two minutes left at the Friuli stadium.

Udinese picked 15 standings points (4-3-3) while Bologna was left with 13 points, in a three-way tie with Fiorentina and Perugia.

The night match at Udine was the only other First-Division game to the day.

Sunday's action of Week 10 featured big matches between title contenders — AS Roma vs Lazio and Juventus vs defending champion AC Milan.

League leader Lazio entered Sunday's round with an unbeaten record of 6-3-0 and 21 points, three ahead of second-place Juventus.

At Florence, Perugia's second consecutive loss was somewhat undeserved as the visiting team controlled play for long periods and produced the best scoring chances.

Fiorentina's keeper Francesco Toldo made decisive saves on short range shots by Perugia's Japanese star Hidetoshi Nakata and Italian striker Nicola Amoroso during the second half.

Nakata was one of the best players in the match at the Artemio Franchi arena.

The late goal by Pierini, who headed in from a few metres a long cross, cooled down Fiorentina fans who had jeered and whistled at home players at the end of the first half.

Fiorentina's uncertainties against a low-ranked opponent

rang an alarm bell in view of Tuesday's tough Champions League match against defending champions Manchester United.

The only good news for the Fiorentina defense was the return to action of Moreno Torricelli following a eight-month absence due to torn knee ligaments.

Torricelli was fielded as substitute in the second half and had a much applauded 35-minute performance.

Batistuta struggled during the first half and had scoring chances in the final minutes.

Perugia's keeper Andrea Mazzantini denied the Argentine striker his would-be sixth season goal.

Perugia ended the match one player down following the ejection of defender Mauro Mi-

lanese who received his second caution in the 85th minute.

"We won a crucial match against a tough opponent," Commented Fiorentina's veteran coach Giovanni Trapattoni. "We could have solved our psychological problems and can look forward to Manchester United."

We made a meal of it today but we also showed we have character," said Trapattoni.

"If we made mistakes it's because we were in too much of a hurry to win. It was a game which could have finished in a number of ways but I'm relieved we were the ones who won. It gives us a lift before Tuesday."

"Anyway," he joked, "Manchester United will be less bothersome than Perugia."



Perugia's Japanese playmaker Hidetoshi Nakata (R) trying to get the better of a Fiorentina defender during their Serie A encounter at Florence on November 20.

— AFP photo

French First Division

Lyon stay a point ahead



PARIS, Nov 21: Brazil's Sonny Anderson converted a late penalty to give Olympique Lyon a 1-0 home win over Racing Lens and keep them top of the French First Division on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Anderson, the champion

Asia Cup tennis from Nov 24

NEW DELHI, Nov 21: World's top doubles duo of Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander Paes will lead India's challenge in their quest for a third straight title and continental supremacy, but the absence of leading players from other competing nations has taken the sheen out of the ATP Asian Cup tennis tournament to be held here from November 24 to 27, reports PTI.

India, who have won the first two editions of this event, will again start favourites with both their Davis Cup stars leading the campaign in the 84,000 third edition of the Asia Cup, now sponsored by MTNL.

Paes and Bhupathi who are now playing in the World Doubles Championship at Hartford, US Prahlad Sinath and Syed Fazeluddin will constitute the Indian team with Jaideep Mukerjee the non-playing captain.

Former national champion Sandeep Kirtane has been named reserve, tournament director Anil Khanna announced today. The top seeds will get a bye into the semifinals of the tournament which will be played on a knockout format.

onship's top scorer, took his tally to 12 with his fourth goal in three matches after Lens defender Jose Pierre-Fanfani brought down France winger, Tony Vairelles.

Lyon have 31 points, one more than Monaco who beat Sedan 2-1 at home with first half goals from Mexican defender Rafael Marquez and midfielder Sabri Lamouchi.

AJ Auxerre are third, a point further back, after an upset 1-0 away victory, only their second of the season, over Olympique Marseille.

Paris St Germain are fourth on 27 points after beating Bastia 2-0 at home on Friday.

At Marseille, Auxerre winger Steve Marlet scored the only goal midway through the second half to send the home side to their second defeat at the Velodrome.

Auxerre had lost their two previous matches.

Marseille's angry fans chanted for coach Roland Bouris's resignation just four days ahead of their team's Champions League second phase opener at home to favourites Lazio.

"I would have done the same thing in their place," Courbis said. "We've again missed the boat by losing a match that could have allowed us to get back among the leaders."

Marseille's Pierre Issa said: "When the team conceded so many points at home (14 in nine matches), the crowd naturally take it out on the trainer. It's unjust because it's us, the players, who are mainly responsible."

France's Champions League teams after Girondins Bordeaux lost 2-1 to St Etienne on Friday before their trip to Spain's Valencia.

Auxerre soaked up almost constant but ineffective Marseille pressure and scored with their first chance of the second half in the 71st minute.

Issa and fellow defender Sebastien Perez got a each other's way going for a long, high ball out of Auxerre's half by playmaker Stephane Carnot and Marlet slipped past them to beat goalkeeper Stephane Porate with a low shot.

Marseille's best chance came from a first half corner when Auxerre goalkeeper Fabien Cool did well to block strike Florian Maurice's shot from close range at the far post.

Germans to stay in Vaals

BERLIN, Nov 21: Reigning champions Germany will be based in the Dutch city of Vaals at next year's European championship finals in Belgium and the Netherlands, the German Football Federation (DFB) said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Vaals, only five kilometres from the German border, is also near Belgium. A DFB spokesman said the town offered outstanding training facilities.

Germany, who will be one of the four seeded teams for next month's draw for the finals, will use the nearby Maastricht airport to travel to matches during the tournament runs from June 10 to July 2.

Windies 131 for four

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad, Nov 21: Sylvester Joseph hit an undefeated 56 to lead West Indies A to 131 for four in reply to India A's 226 on the second day of the opening four-day unofficial cricket Test in Port-of-Spain Saturday, reports AP.

Joseph, a 21-year-old from Antigua, batted just over three hours, and faced 132 balls. The compact right-hander struck six fours, most of them lofted drives over mid-off and mid-on against the spinners.

Joseph shared in a 64-run third wicket stand with his captain Jimmy Adams, who made 35. Adams batted 79 minutes and faced 75 balls before he appeared unlucky to be given out caught bat pad off the persevering left-arm spinner Murali Kartik.

Fast bowler Doda Ganesh made the initial breakthrough for India by removing Trinidadian favourite Daren Ganga for eight, caught down the leg-side by wicketkeeper Samir Dighe.

Jamaican teenager Brenton Parchment made 15 on his first-class debut before he was well caught at short leg by Mohammad Kaif off left-arm spinner Rahul Sanghvi.

Left-handed Chris Gayle was the last West Indies wicket to fall before play ended because of bad light with 10 overs still due to be bowled.

The Jamaican played a rash drive at Ganesh and edged a catch to the wicketkeeper after scoring just one.

Earlier in the day, the West Indies A fast bowlers combined to dismiss India A for 226 minutes before lunch.

India A, resuming on 179 for five, added 47 runs just under two hours in the morning. The West Indies pace trio of Dwight Mais, Goldwyn Prince and Nixon McLean, as they had done on day one, never allowed India's batsmen to take command.

The overnight pair of Mohammad Kaif and Samir Dighe stretched their sixth wicket stand of 74, the best of the innings, before Kaif provided a wicket-keeper's catch of Mais.

The 18-year-old Kaif was second highest scorer of the innings behind opener Gagan Khoda's first day 50. Kaif's 40-spanned just under three hours, occupied 161 and included two fours.

Headley may return home

CENTURION, South Africa, Nov 21 (Internet report): England seamer Dean Headley's tour of South Africa may be over due to a suspected stress fracture of the back.

The Kent bowler is fearing the worst from a scheduled further consultation with a Johannesburg back specialist.

Headley has bowled just 10 balls on tour since limping out of the opening match against Nicky Oppenheimer's XI and has had a cortisone injection in an attempt to speed his recovery.

But his failure to improve in the last week persuaded physiotherapist Dean Conway to send him for further scans, which revealed that Headley required two or three months rest.

"The surgeon recommended eight to 12 weeks rest and the frustrating thing is that he is pretty much pain free doing everything except bowling," confirmed Conway.

If Conway's suspicions prove correct, Headley will be flown home and Yorkshire fast bowler Chris Silverwood, drafted in as cover from the A squad, will become a full-time member of the squad.

Asian women's football China defend title

BAOCELOD, Philippines, Nov 21: China's women's football team defended their title in a one-sided match in this central Philippine city, reports AFP.

In a tame end to the two-week, 15-nation 12th Asian Women's Football Championships, China bagged their seventh straight crown by scoring all their goals in the first half, dictating the tempo from start to finish.

The Chinese lost no time in scoring, with Wang Liping drawing the first blood on the 17th, volleying from 15 yards in front of the Taiwanese net.

Skipper Sun Wen acted as a decoy for the Taiwanese defense, allowing teammates to score, with two goals credited to Liu Yin.

Liu scored one with an impressive header from the left off a right cross pass by Sun in the 43rd. She added another six minutes later with a point-blank smash from the left.

The pace slowed in the second half, but the outclassed Taiwanese could not pierce the suffocating defense of their mainland rivals.

Earlier Sunday, North Korea quelled a second-half rally by Japan to take the third place, 3-2.

North Korea took command early, with Pak Jong Ae scoring in the 11th minute from a pointblank off a cross pass.

Japanese goalie Nozami Yamago had a busy day repelling three clear attempts in the first half, but was not ready when Jin Poh-hyul connected on a follow-up in the 28th following a penalty box scramble.



Brazil's star of the day Leonardo (R) being felled by a Paraguayan defender during their U-17 World Championship quarterfinal yesterday.

— AFP photo

Under-17 World Cup

Brazil romp into last four



AUCKLAND, Nov 21: Australia and the United States will meet in a battle of Under-17 World Cup semi-finals debutants after Australia downed Qatar in a quarterfinal on Sunday, reports AFP.

Australia and the United States will face off in their first World Cup semifinals appearances while previous finalists Brazil and Ghana will battle it out for the other finals berth on Wednesday.

Australia beat Qatar 1-0 while Brazil sparked into life with a comprehensive 4-1 win over Paraguay in the other match Sunday.

Defending champions Brazil stormed into the semifinals with a hat-trick from Leonardo (eds: one name) at Dunedin.

Both sides approached the early minutes of what became a

passionate and physical struggle with caution, until Brazil launched its attack.

Leonardo stepped up for the first goal in the 26th minute, and scored again 11 minutes later after receiving a delicate lob from defender Carlos Henrique. His third came in the 56th minute.

In the other match Sunday, Joseph Di Iorio, who came on for Australia after halftime, scored with a shot from the edge of the area after Qatar could not clear a corner.

Qatar started strongly, but Australia was on top for most of the first half.

Qatar came back into contention for about 10 minutes midway through the second spell, but was unable to commit enough players forward to break the Australian defence.

On Saturday, Ghana beat Uruguay 3-2 in extra time after

a golden goal to Ishmael Addo, and the United States saw off Mexico 3-2.

After four matches in Auckland, the United States were anticipating an even encounter against Australia in Christchurch on Wednesday.

"We played in a tournament in Christchurch 12 months ago which featured New Zealand, South Africa, Korea, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands, so we felt pretty comfortable going down there," coach John Ellinger said.

"I don't know much about the United States, but they look big, they have a solid back four and they seem to be improving as the tournament goes on."

"They look a good balanced side right through and they seem to be coached well. As a unit they play very well and I think we match up well as teams."

Barca's third in a row!



BARCELONA, Nov 21: Barcelona suffered their third successive Spanish First Division defeat on Saturday, losing 3-1 at Valencia in a game in which both sides were reduced to 10 men, reports Reuters.

Louis van Gaal's misfiring side were two goals down within 35 minutes as Claudio Lopez and Adrian Ilie both took advantage of serious lapses in the visiting defence to supply expert finishes.

Boudewijn Zenden pulled one back a minute before half-time, finishing with a bang after a neat move involving fellow Dutchmen Ronald de Boer, Patrick Kluijver and Philip Cocu.

In the second half Barcelona were camped out in the Valencia half but, without Brazilian superstar Rivaldo, they were short of ideas in attack and created few clear opportunities, despite the sending-off of Valencia's Daniel Fagioli on 75 minutes.

With a minute to go Gerard Lopez wrapped up the points for

Valencia, taking advantage of further hesitation in the Barca defence to stab in from close range.

Matters took a further turn for the worse for the Catalans in injury time when Dani Garcia was sent off for a foul on Valencia keeper Andres Palop.

Valencia moved up the table from 18th to 11th, while Barcelona stayed fifth and could be five points off the title pace come tonight.

In Saturday's other game, Athletic Bilbao went one better than Valencia, holding on to beat Atletico Madrid 4-2 despite having two players sent off.

Joseba Etxeberria and Julien Guerrero gave Bilbao a commanding lead before Rafael Alkorta saw red for a foul on Juan Carlos Valeron in the area.

Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink reduced the arrears from the spot but against the odds the home side then went further ahead through Carlos Garcia and Santiago Ezquerro with a penalty.

Atletico eventually came back with a poacher's goal from

Veljko Paunovic but the Madrid club failed to break through again even after Bilbao were reduced to nine men when Josu Urrutia was sent off with four minutes to go.

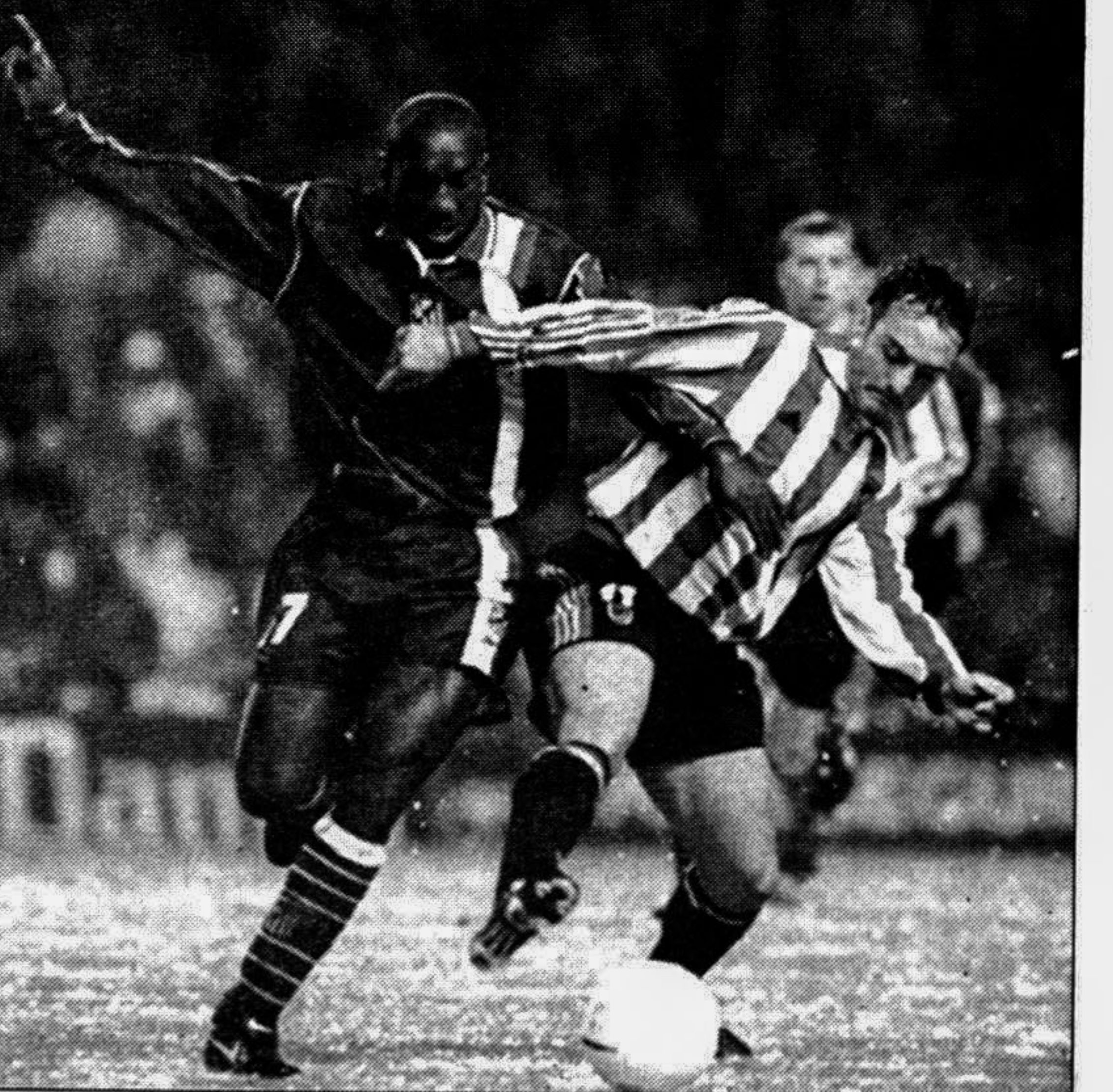
Barcelona's defensive frailties, increasingly evident of late, will worry Van Gaal as he prepares for the second group stage of the Champions League.

With tough games against Hertha Berlin and Sparta Prague in the next three weeks Barca have been hit by injuries to Winston Bogarde and Abelardo Fernandez, both central defenders.

On Saturday, Frank de Boer, Sergi Barjuan and Michael Reiziger formed a three-man backline which was ill-equipped to deal with the pace of Lopez and Ilie.

And time and again in the first half the defence was left exposed by a midfield that failed to track back.

Gaizka Mendietia, who turned in another fireless game in midfield, ran the match for Valencia, setting up the opening two goals which effectively settled the match.



Atletico Madrid's Dutch striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (L) being checked by Athletic Bilbao's Lacruz during their Primera Liga fixture at Bilbao on November 20.

— AFP photo