

Jadeja, Laxman dropped

BOMBAY, Feb 27: India made two changes to the team which lost the Bombay Test against South Africa for the second and final Test of the series at Bangalore starting next Thursday, reports Reuters.

Former captain Mohammad Azharuddin and left-handed opening batsman Sadagopan Ramesh have replaced Ajay Jadeja and Vangipurappu Laxman, said Jaywant Lale, secretary of the Board of Control for cricket in India.

India lost the first Test on Saturday by four wickets.

Saurav Ganguly has been appointed captain for the one-day series, involving five matches, which starts March 9.

Test squad: Sachin Tendulkar (captain), Wassim Jaffer, Sadagopan Ramesh, Rahul Dravid, Saurav Ganguly, Mohammad Azharuddin, Nayan Mongia, Anil Kumble, Nikhil Chopra, Ajit Agarkar, Murali Karthik, Javagal Srinath, Thiru Kumar, Mohammed Kaif.

GKSP's cricket training

From Our Correspondent
GAIBANDHA, Feb 27: The new Gaibandha Kirta Shiksha Protisthan (no relation to BKSP) introduced a cricket training programme on February 20.

The local member of parliament launched the programme at the Gaibandha Shaadhinata Prangan. The function was presided over by the institute's director general Mizanur Rahman Chunnur.

Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Feb 27: Jubo Cricket School clinched the Metropolitan Cup beating Aminuddin Smriti Sangha by eight wickets in the final at the Rajshahi Collectorate playground today.

Winning the toss, Aminuddin collected 169 runs for all in the stipulated 35 overs with Nilrara scoring highest 71 runs followed by 23 from Babu.

In reply, Jubo Cricket School scored 172 runs for two wickets in 28 overs. Suman collected the highest 91 followed by 38 runs from Illas.

Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu distributed prizes.

NBL v'ball

Bangladesh Police registered the fifth victory in their seventh encounter of the National Bank Premier Division Volleyball League beating Bangladesh Bank Club by 25-19, 25-19, 25-18 at the Dhaka Volleyball court yesterday, reports UNB.

Earlier on Saturday, Titus Club recorded their seventh consecutive win in the Metropolitan Premier Division League beating Water Development Board by 25-16, 25-23, 23-25, 25-21 in a crucial match at the same venue.

In the First Division League yesterday, Chand Textiles beat Jibon Bima Corporation by 25-22, 25-22, 25-21.

Perugia goalie suspended

ROME, Feb 26: The disciplinary commission of the Italian Football Federation on Friday handed a two-year suspension to Angelo Pagotto, the goalkeeper of First Division side Perugia, for doping, reports AFP.

Should he

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Akram, 32, was not available for comment.

The recent injury leaves a shadow of doubt over Akram's career as he is reportedly having problems with the management of Pakistan's Cricket Board.

Earlier this month he stepped down as captain, surprising many in cricketing circles.

Akram said he wanted to concentrate on beating the wicket record and spending time with his family.

The second Test is scheduled in Peshawar from March 5 and the third in Karachi from March 12.

"A groin injury heals up only with rest and swimming and Wasim is doing that," Ahmed said.

Akram relinquished the captaincy after Pakistan were defeated 3-0 against Steve Waugh's Australia in the away Test series last month.

Pakistan were also beaten 2-0 in the finals of the tri-series in Australia in February.

Akram also missed the last two Tests of the series against Sri Lanka in 1995-96 which Pakistan lost.

Things can

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there as one of the best sides that has played the game.

Waugh rested high-scoring Matthew Hayden along with strike bowler Glenn McGrath from Saturday's match, sent big-hitting Andrew Symonds in at No. 3 and dropped Michael Bevan one spot to five.

Yet the batsmen maintained an astonishing pace that will be long remembered by the Christchurch crowd — and the feat was achieved without injured frontline batsman Ricky Ponting.

"The team is really growing together well and the bulk of this side can stay together for the next (2003) World Cup," Waugh said.

"All the guys are striking the ball very well and it's probably a unique experience at the moment and we're sort of feeding off each other."

"We had a team meeting before the game and we asked ourselves about 15 or 20 different questions about how we could improve different aspects of our game and I guess it showed."

Primera Liga

Real outclass Barca



MADRID, Feb 27: Brazilian star Roberto Carlos and French international striker Nicolas Anelka laid the foundations as Real Madrid downed arch-rivals Barcelona 3-0 in the Spanish league on Saturday night, reports AFP.

Fullback Roberto Carlos gave Real the lead — and delighted a sellout crowd — with a 35m free-kick that powered its way past Barca goalkeeper Francesc Arnau after just five minutes.

Anelka, playing for the first time since January 10, then ended his league scoring drought in the 23rd minute.

Back in action after a knee injury, he pounced to stab the ball home after the keeper had blocked a shot from Fernando Morientes with his feet.

Anelka scored three goals during the World Club Championships in Brazil but had not scored in the league since his 35 million dollar move from Arsenal last year.

He was clearly delighted to get off the mark in such a crucial game.

Real made certain of victory in the 53rd minute when Morientes claimed his 15th goal of the season with a piece of clinical finishing.

Morientes got the ball in the box, controlled it brilliantly and then shot home on the turn.

Real's form delighted not only coach Vicente del Bosque but also the 84,000 pro-Real fans.

They chanted "Ole, Ole" as Real strung together several series of passes in the second half.

The match was hard-fought as is always the case in clashes between the two teams. Real defender Aitor Karanka picked up a yellow card for a wild challenge as early as the fifth minute, while players from both teams engaged in an early pushing match that was sparked off by a piece of petulance by Barcelona's Brazilian star Rivaldo.

Referee Ansuategui Roca did a good job in keeping the players' minds on the game, however, finishing with only four bookings.

The Madrid side's joy was only slightly tempered by the sending off of Guti late in the game for a second bookable offence.

Real always looked the hungrier, more determined outfit — and that was reflected in the score.

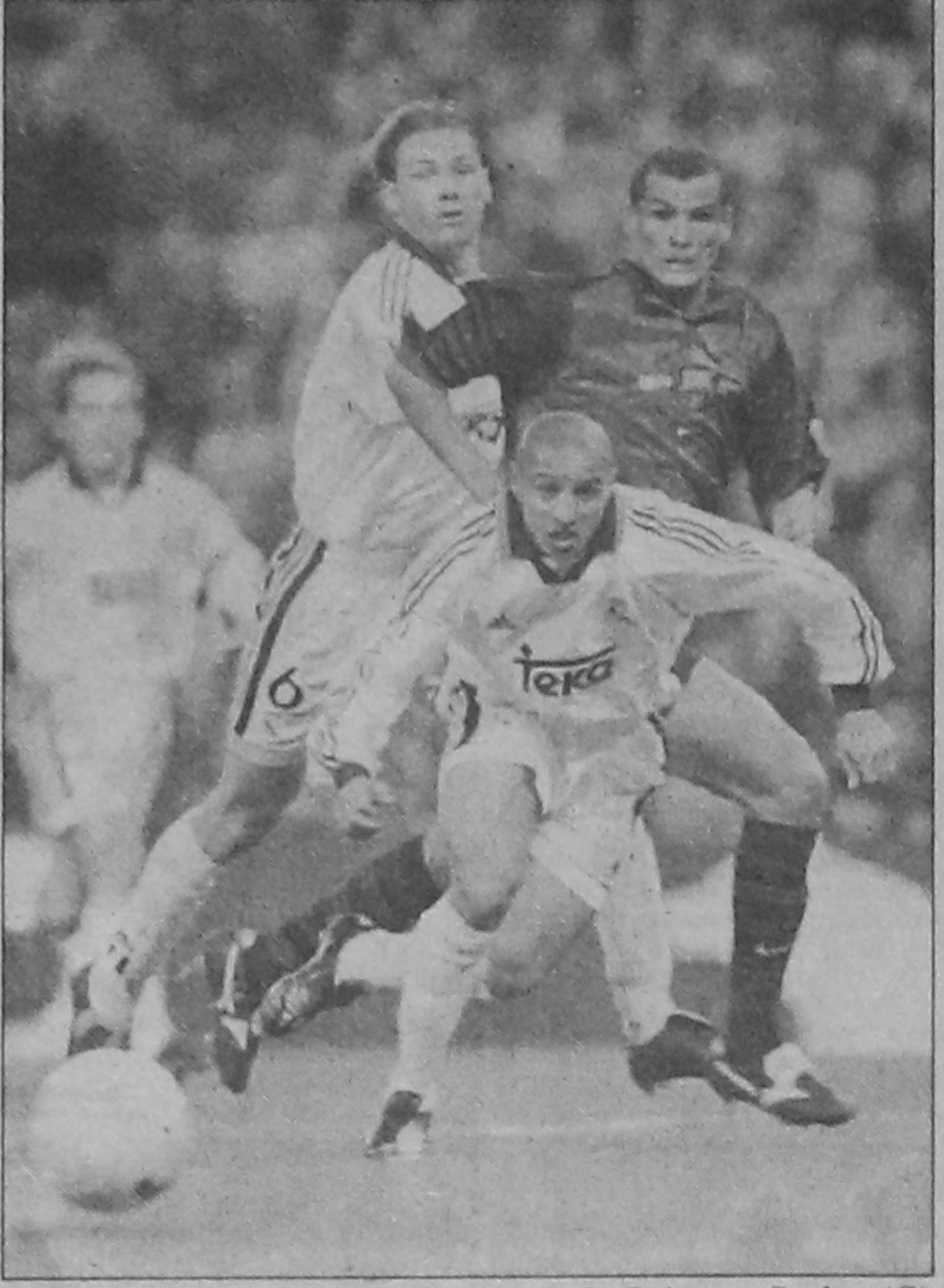
The win saw Real power

their way into second place in the championship, just three points behind leaders Deportivo La Coruna — although they have played one more match.

Deportivo now have 46 points from 25 games to Real's 43 from 26. Barcelona are third with 41 points from 26.

In the only other match played Saturday, Valencia won 2-1 at Numancia to move into sixth spot on the table.

The win saw Real power



Real Madrid's Brazilian thunder-bolt Roberto Carlos (C) looks on anxiously as Barcelona's superstar Rivaldo (R) slips in a pass during their Primera Liga clash at Madrid on February 26.

— AFP photo

Scottish Premiership

Aberdeen thrash Hibs

GLASGOW, Feb 27: Aberdeen crushed Hibernian 4-0 at Pittodrie on Saturday to move four points clear of Kilmarnock at the foot of the Premier League table and close the gap on eighth-placed Dundee to just one point, reports AFP.

The hosts stormed into a 3-0 lead by the interval with goals from Arild Stavrum, Cato Guntveit and Russell Anderson.

Stavrum added another in the second period as the home side recorded their biggest home win of the season to stretch their unbeaten run to an impressive eight games.

Defender Danny Griffin was St Johnstone's hero after his 51st-minute strike set up a 2-0 win in the Tayside derby against Dundee United.

Griffin's breakthrough lived up to a dull game and Steve Lowndes injury-time goal wrapped up the points for the Saints.

Kilmarnock are in deep trouble at the foot of the table despite collecting a battling point at Hearts.

Bobby Williamson's side fought for a deserved draw at Tynecastle, but Aberdeen's demolition of Hibs cast the Ayrshire side further adrift at the bottom.

Hearts, however, do have the consolation of leap-frogging their city rivals and moving into fifth place in the table.

Dundee, meanwhile, host league leaders Rangers on Sunday.

Nilis Villa bound?

LONDON, Feb 27: Aston Villa have been linked with Luc Nilis after the veteran Belgian international hinted he maybe tempted by a move to the Premiership, the Press Association reported on Sunday, reports AFP.

The 32-year-old striker is currently playing for Dutch giants PSV Eindhoven but says he has spoken to Villa boss John Gregory.

"I know little about Villa as a side, or any of their players, but I am told they are a very ambitious club," said Nilis, who has also attracted interest from Rangers and Sheffield Wednesday.

"I have spoken to the manager and he feels I can do a good job for him."

Serie A Lazio hot on Juve's heels

ROME, Feb 27: Lazio scored a 2-1 win over Udinese on Saturday afternoon to close to within one point of leaders Juventus at the top of the Serie A standings. Juventus play fourth-placed Roma on Sunday.

Goals from Italian international defender Paolo Negro and ace Chilean striker Marcelo Salas put Lazio 2-0 up before Thomas Locatelli scrambled a late consolation goal for the visitors.

There were several clashes between Lazio supporters and police after the game — and three policemen suffered minor injuries, according to a police spokesman.

One supporter was arrested after the clashes, which saw fans throw missiles at massed groups of police.

Lazio's ultra right-wing supporters also defied efforts to stamp out racism in the Italian league by repeatedly shouting insults at Udinese's Ghana player Mohammed Gargo during the game.

The only other game scheduled for Saturday an evening fixture — saw Fiorentina stun sixth-placed Parma with a 4-0 away win.

Fiorentina's goals came from Argentine striker Abel Balbo, Portuguese star Rui Costa (2) and Yugoslav international Predrag Mijatovic.

The rest of the 23rd round will be played on Sunday, including the Juventus-Roma clash.

reduced the deficit for Kaiserslautern, scoring their only goal in the 79th minute.

On Sunday, ninth-placed Borussia Dortmund play against sixth-placed Munich 1860 and Unterhaching play Schalke 04.

Bundesliga

Leaders wallop Frankfurt



BERLIN, Feb 27: German First Division leaders Bayern Munich held on to their advantage in the Bundesliga following a 4-1 home demolition of Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday, reports AFP.

There was little movement in the Bundesliga table with the three top clubs all maintaining their positions with victories.

Alexander Zickler scored twice to help Bayern five points clear of second-placed Bayer Leverkusen, who fought back from a goal down to beat Hertha Berlin 3-1.

Third-placed Hamburg also secured a 2-1 home victory over Kaiserslautern, who dropped to fifth place behind Werder Bremen, who held VfL Wolfsburg to a 2-2 draw at home.

Zickler put Bayern in front after 34 minutes, giving them a lead going into the second half, while Brazilian midfielder Paulo Sergio made it 2-0 from the penalty spot early in the second half in the 46th.

Austrian midfielder Thomas Reichenberger gave the visitors some hope with a goal in the 49th minute but Zickler gave Bayern a two-goal lead with his second in the 63rd minute.

It was another Brazilian, Giovane Elber, who finally sealed Bayern's win five minutes from time in the 85th minute.

The Munich club, who celebrate their centenary this weekend, ended a run of three straight victories for relegation-haunted Eintracht under new coach Felix Magath.

Brazilians also played a decisive role in the victory of Bayer Leverkusen.

Hertha Berlin club opened the scoring in the ninth minute thanks to Marko Rehmer, German striker Ulf Kirsten equalised in the 13th minute and in the 24th minute Brazilian midfielder Ze Roberto gave his side the lead.

Paulo Rink completed Leverkusen's victory four minutes later.

It was a magnificent return to the pitch for Kirsten following a long absence through injury and also marked his 150th Bundesliga goal.

Hamburg, despite being reduced to 10 men from the 33rd minute following the sending off of Danish international Thomas Gravesen for a foul, put the breaks on Kaiserslautern's rise in the Bundesliga, despite the valiant efforts of in-form French international Youri Djorkaeff.

The scoring was opened by Hamburg by Roy Prager in the seventh minute, but the Hamburgers were helped by a controversial penalty for a foul by Kaiserslautern's Swiss international Ciriaco Sforza.

Hamburg goalkeeper Hans-Jorg Butt took the penalty in the 63rd minute — giving him his ninth penalty success this season.

Sweden's Jorgen Pettersson

Perugia's player banned for doping

ROME, Feb 27: The disciplinary commission of the Italian Football Federation on Friday handed a two-year suspension to Angelo Pagotto, the goalkeeper of First Division side Perugia, for doping, reports AFP.

Pagotto, 26, tested positive for cocaine following a league match against Fiorentina on November 20 last year in Florence.

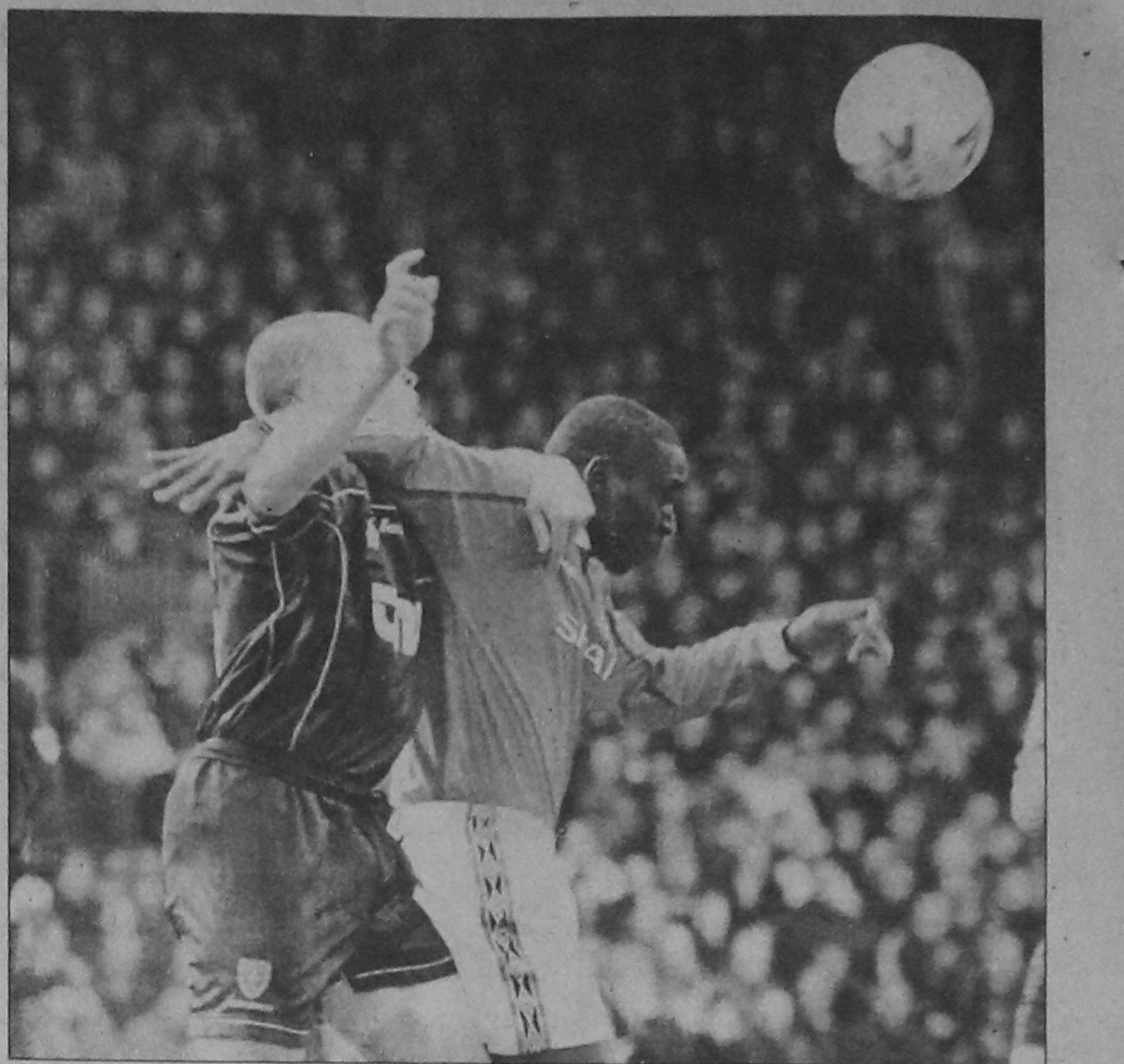
A second test at a doping laboratory in Lausanne, Switzerland, confirmed the initial analysis.

Pagotto is the third player from the Serie A to be suspended for taking cocaine and his ban is the longest



Marcelo Salas, Lazio's Chilean international, heads during a Serie A encounter against Udinese at Rome on February 26.

— AFP photo

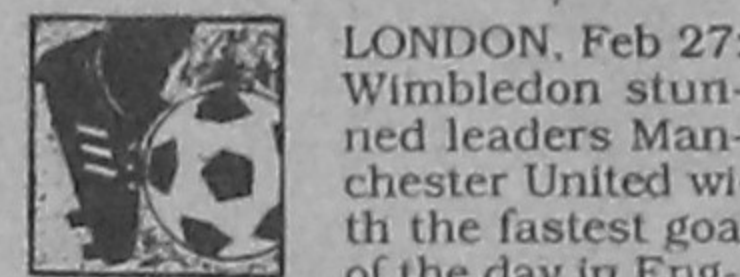


Manchester United striker Andy Cole (R) under pressure from Wimbledon's Chris Willmott during their Premiership fixture at Selhurst Park on February 26.

— AFP photo

Premiership

Wimbledon hold MU



LONDON, Feb 27: Wimbledon stunned Manchester United with the fastest goal of the day in England as the Treble winners had to settle for a point in a thrilling 2-2 draw at Selhurst Park on Saturday, reports AFP.

Jason Euell put Egil Olsen's side in front after just 74 seconds but Dutchman Jordi Cruyff levelled on the half hour.

Wimbledon were back in the lead after a poor clearance from keeper Mark Bosnich allowed Alan Kimble to set up Carl Cort in the 62nd minute.

But United came storming back and Welshman Ryan Giggs went on a 60-yard run before picking out England striker Andy Cole who equalised 10 minutes from the end.

Sir Alex Ferguson praised the battling qualities of his United side for their comeback but singled out Giggs for a dazzling display on the left wing.

Ryan Giggs was marvellous. He is in great form and he was penetrating with or without the ball, threatening all the time," said Ferguson.

"Giggs running at a defence puts them on the back foot."

While Giggs excelled on the left, David Beckham returned in central midfield after being dropped against Leeds last Sunday following an training-ground bust-up with Ferguson.

Asked about Beckham's display, the United boss simply responded: "He did all right, fine."

Ferguson was more forthcoming about the way his side hauled themselves back into the game twice against a Wimbledon side displaying all the determination instilled in them during chairman Sam Hammam's 22 years at the club.

The Wimbledon supremacy sold out of his stake in the club

on Friday.

Wimbledon manager Egil Olsen insisted that Hammam relinquishing control of the club had not affected their performance.

"That did not have any impact on the game. Sam was here and was as enthusiastic as he always is. I don't think the players thought about it very much," said Olsen.

Arsenal ended Southampton's mini-revival under new coach Glenn Hoddle with Fredrik Ljungberg scoring twice in a 3-1 win.

The Swedish international netted in the 22nd minute before Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp scored with a rare header nine minutes before the break.

Although Dean Richards pulled one back for the Saints in the 61st minute Ljungberg's sealed the win seven minutes later.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger admitted to a feeling of relief after his side earned their first win in February.

"That was more like an Arsenal performance, but the best word to describe how I feel is relief," said Wenger.

"If we had lost again it might have shown that this team cannot react any more and that would have been terrible for the rest of the season."

Sheffield Wednesday, thrashed 8-0 at Newcastle earlier in the season, went down 2-0 this time to put them in desperate trouble in the bottom three.

Kevin Gallacher opened the scoring in the 11th minute before Alan Shearer made the game safe four minutes from the end.

Bradford made it nine home games without defeat thanks to an equaliser from Dean Windass against Aston Villa.

Paul Merson gave the visitors the lead after 33 minutes before the former Oxford striker earned a priceless point 14 minutes from time.

Frenchman Marcel Desailly put Chelsea in front against bottom of the table Watford after only 84 seconds.

Graham Taylor's side battled back and levelled through Allan Smart six minutes before half-time only for youngster Jon Harley to earn Chelsea maximum points with a bullet header with 25 minutes to go.

Coach Gianluca Vialli was full of praise for his young English full-back who has deputised brilliantly for the injured Graeme Le Saux.

"I'm very pleased for him. He has taken his chances well and done a great job for us," said Vialli.

He's a very offensive player and has got to work a little bit on the defensive side of his game. But he has time to get better. He needs to make mistakes and with more experience he will improve even further."

Sunderland are now eight games without a win after a 1-1 draw with Derby and it took a 62nd minute effort from Alex Rae to earn a point after Malcolm Christie — playing non-league football last season — netted his fourth goal after 60 minutes.

Nicky Barrmy scored a hat-trick at Upton Park where Everton demolished West Ham 4-0.

The former Middlesbrough striker struck in the eighth, 64th, and 67th minutes and set up the fourth for American Joe-Max Moore after 71 minutes, his sixth in seven games.

Tottenham broke a goal famine at the end of the fourth attempt to end a run of three straight defeats with a 1-0 win at Coventry, Chris Armstrong netting the winner after 82 minutes.

French First Division

Lyon blank Marseille



PARIS, Feb 27: Lyon leapfrogged Paris St Germain to move into second spot behind runaway leaders Monaco after a fiery 2-0 home win over Marseille in the French league Saturday night, reports AFP.

Referee Alain Sars was kept busy dishing out 10 yellow cards and sending off a player from each side.

Lyon's goals came from their expensive strike pairing — Tony Vairelles, netted in the 23rd minute, and Sony Anderson.

The prolific Brazilian international pounced on shabby defensive work by the French liverside to slot the ball past second-choice keeper Stephane Trevisan, standing in for suspended Stephane Porato, in the 53rd minute.

The win lifted Lyon to within 10 points of title favourites Monaco, who play Strasbourg on Sunday.

Third-placed PSG had to rely on a last-minute equaliser to grab a point in a 1-1 draw at home to Nancy while Auxerre lost ground with a 2-0 defeat at Bastia.

Veteran, Irish striker Tony Casciaro, 36, had put Nancy — trounced 3-0 by PSG in the French Cup last weekend — ahead with an 84th minute penalty, but the French capital side's skipper Eric Rabesandratana levelled the score in the dying seconds.

PSG's Brazilian striker Christian had earlier fluffed a penalty — his shot scotching skywards.

PSG paid a heavy price for the point, with their ex-Everton striker Mickael Madar and Nigerian defender Godwin Okpara joining their already sorry injury list.

"We're on the razor's edge,"

said coach Philippe Bergeroo bleakly.

Bergeroo is already having to face life without skipper Ali Benatia (off for a month) and Jimmy Almerino (out for the rest of the season).

Auxerre, lying third on Saturday morning, slipped two places after a brace of goals from Pierre-Yves Andre maintained Bastia's 100 percent home record this season.

Reigning champions Bordeaux, inspired by some inch-perfect passes from Christophe Dugary, hammered Nantes 3-0 with all their goals coming in the last 20 minutes.

Sylvain Wiltord broke the stalemate on 73 minutes, followed 12 minutes later by Sylvain Legswinski with Johan Micoud producing a fine solo effort for the third.

There was a fiery 1-1 draw between Metz and fourth-placed Sedan, both goals coming from penalties. Referee Dominique Fraitais incurred the wrath of Metz manager Joel Muller for handing out nine yellow cards and sending off a man apiece in the last five minutes just for good measure.

The referee ruined the game, He thought it was Easter, giving out presents," Muller moaned.

Metz could be forgiven for wondering if they'll ever get another clearcut result, this being their 15th draw of the season.

Metz took the lead from a Frederic Meyrieu spot-kick after a Luis Satorra foul on Louis Saha.

The scoreline remained like that until eight minutes from time when, against the run of play, Sedan were awarded their penalty after a handball by the aptly named Gunther Van Handenhoven. It was converted by Olivier Quinot and Sedan leapt up the standings.

In other matches, Montpellier, anchored to the foot of the table, grabbed a point in a 1-1 draw against Lens.

St Etienne, meanwhile, had to batten down the hatches in order to hang on to a 1-0 lead, the fruit of a fifth-minute strike by Lionel Potillon, away to Troyes after Tchirissoua Guel was sent off with half an hour to play.

Rennes battled back after going a goal down to visitors Le Havre to win 2-1. Benoit Le Bris getting the decider in the 88th minute.

Monaco, meanwhile, will be hoping to give their French international striker David Trezeguet the perfect wedding present when they play Strasbourg.

The 22-year-old Monaco player married his Spanish-born fiancée Beatrice Villava, also 22, in a civil ceremony in the Town Hall on Saturday followed by a religious ceremony in Monaco Cathedral.

But, bucking convention, Trezeguet spent his wedding night not with his bride but with his Monaco teammates in Strasbourg.

Dugary fractures left hand

BORDEAUX, France, Feb 27: Bordeaux striker Christophe Dugary is set to be in plaster for six weeks after fracturing his left hand against Nantes in the French league on Saturday night, reports AFP.

The injury shouldn't prevent him lining up against Metz on Sunday in a French Cup game, the south western French club, said.