

Asian Cup

Thai player fails dope test

BEIRUT, Oct 16: A Thai footballer faces disciplinary action after failing a drugs test at the Asian Cup, a tournament official confirmed here on Monday, reports AFP.

The unidentified player tested positive for a banned substance after Thailand's 2-0 defeat against Iraq in Saida last Thursday, the official said.

"I can confirm that the player tested positive in his A sample," said the official, who asked not to be named. He did not state which drug the player had tested positive for.

The Thailand team management had been informed of the test result but no action would be taken until results from the player's B sample were analysed, the official added.

Lucky escape!

LONDON, Oct 16: An investigation was under way Monday into a double shooting in a bar where several Liverpool footballers were relaxing following their Premiership clash at Derby, reports AFP.

Two masked men wielding a pistol burst into Jalous Wine Bar in Liverpool at around 1030GMT Sunday night and shot two men in the legs.

There were no injuries among the six players - goalkeeper Sander Westerveld, defenders Sami Hyypia, Markus Babbel and Christian Ziege, striker Erik Meijer and German international midfielder Dietmar Hamann, who were later driven away in a mini bus.

The two casualties, both customers in the bar, were treated in hospital for their injuries, which are not thought to be life-threatening.

The gunmen, in balaclavas, escaped in a silver Vauxhall car, which was later found burned out in a nearby road.

"At this stage the motive to the shooting is not clear and police are appealing for anyone to come forward," said a spokesman for Merseyside Police.

Ex-detective given Brazil squad post

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 16: Brazil have named Antonio Lopes, who used to be a police detective, as a technical co-ordinator of the national team, reports Xinhua.

The new post was created by the Confederation of Brazil Football (CBF) after complaints that former coach Wanderley Luxemburgo had enjoyed too much power.

Lopes, currently in charge of First Division Atletico Paranaense, is expected to have a say in appointing the successor to Luxemburgo, who was sacked as national team coach last month after a disastrous Olympic campaign.

Bundesliga

Berlin hot on Bayern's heels

BERLIN, Oct 16: Bayern Munich's chances of retaining their Bundesliga title took a jolt Saturday when the Bavarians slid to an embarrassing 1-0 loss at Eastern German outfit Energie Cottbus, reports AFP.

In games played Sunday, Hertha Berlin continued their solid start to the season with a fine 2-0 away win at Hansa Rostock, while VfL Wolfsburg added to the woes of Unterhaching pasting the basement dwellers 3-0 on their own pitch.

Berlin stay fourth but only just behind third-placed Bayern on goal difference while Wolfsburg moved up to eighth place six points behind new leaders Schalke 04.

Primera Liga

Celta miss chance

MADRID, Oct 16: Real Madrid are sitting pretty at the top of the Spanish First Division Sunday, thanks to a 3-0 drubbing of reigning champions Deportivo La Coruna on Saturday night, reports AFP.

Celta Vigo missed out on a chance to regain the lead Sunday, when they were held to a 1-1 home draw against Alaves in a match that featured both goals within the first four minutes.

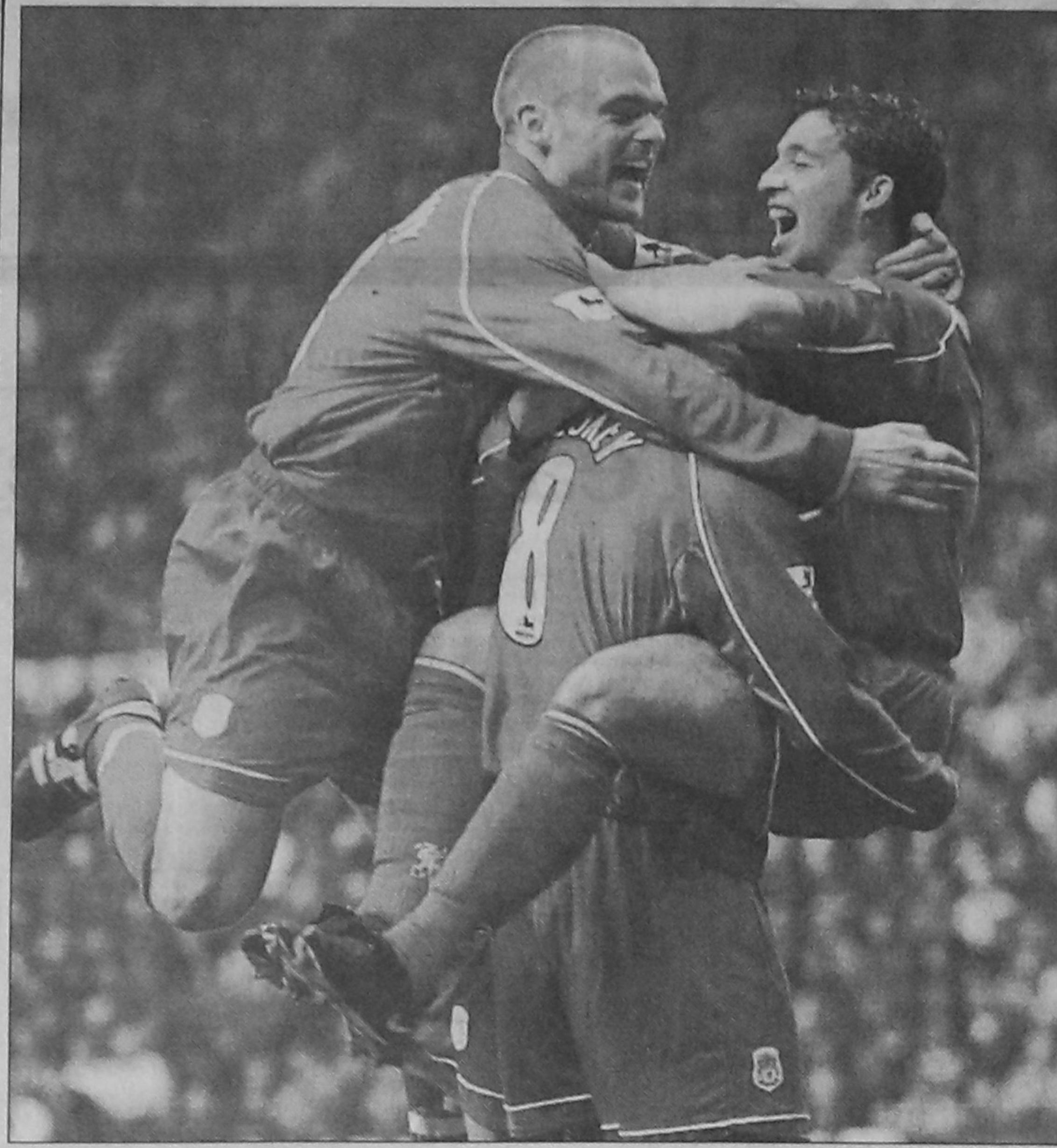
Other Sunday matches saw surprise strugglers Real Zaragoza unable to escape the relegation zone, playing out a dismal 0-0 draw at home to Villarreal, while Mallorca picked up their first league victory with a 2-1 win over Racing Santander moving up to fourth from bottom.

Numerous against Athletic Bilbao and Osasuna versus Oviedo both finished scoreless on an evening barren of goals after the goal-feast on Saturday.

WEEKEND RESULTS

Sunday: Osasuna 0 v Oviedo 0, Real Zaragoza 0 v Villarreal 0, Mallorca 2 (Luis 54, Carlos 86) v Racing Santander 1 (Rushfeldt 45), Numancia 0 v Athletic Bilbao 0, Celta Vigo 1 (Karpin 4) v Alaves 1 (Javi Moreno 2-pen).

Saturday: Villarreal 1 (Moles 64) v Valencia 1 (Juan Sanchez 59), Espanyol 0 v Rayo Vallecano 0, Real Sociedad 0 v FC Barcelona 6 (Rivaldo 2, 30-pen, Alfonso 17, 21, Luis Enri 36, Simao 40), Real Madrid 3 (Raul 18, Hierro 45-pen, Gutierrez 87) v Deportivo La Coruna 0, Las Palmas 2 (Oulare 77, Orlando 82) v Malaga 1 (Valecarr 60).

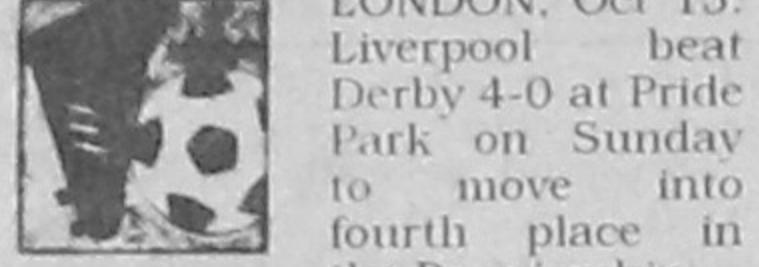


Liverpool's (L-R) Danny Murphy, Emile Heskey and Robbie Fowler celebrate after Heskey's strike against Derby County during their Premiership fixture at the Pride Park in Derby on October 15.

— AFP photo

Premiership

Hesky hammers Derby



LONDON, Oct 15: Liverpool beat Derby 4-0 at Pride Park on Sunday to move into fourth place in the Premiership.

England striker Emile Heskey scored his first hat-trick at this level, reports AFP.

But Liverpool's joy was overshadowed by a serious head injury sustained by Heskey's club and international strike partner Michael Owen.

In the 18th minute Owen fell in the box and sustained a blow to the back of his head from Chris Riggott while preparing to take a Gary McAllister corner.

It was Heskey who headed home to put Liverpool 1-0 ahead but delight turned to concern as Owen was carried from the field on a stretcher.

He later had to have stitches inserted in his head. Sky Sports reported that Owen was suffering "the effects of concussion".

and would be taken to a local hospital for an X-ray.

Liverpool were 1-0 ahead at half-time and nine minutes after the break Heskey scored his second with a fierce right-foot shot.

Played in by Robbie Fowler, on as a substitute for Owen, Heskey let the ball drop to his favoured foot and hammered his shot high to keeper Mart Poom's left from the right edge of the box.

Despite the loss of Owen the partnership of Heskey - roundly barked at the start by the home fans because of his Leicester connections - and Fowler must have been a bright spot for Liverpool's French manager Gerard Houllier.

On the hour the double act should have paid off again when Heskey streaked clear across the half-way line and fed the unmarked Fowler, who was only denied by a brilliant reaction save from Poom.

The result leaves Derby still at the bottom of the Premiership and the only team in England without a league win this season.

Heskey completed his hat-trick in the 66th minute when Derby's all-at-sea rearguard allowed England midfielder Nick Barmby to break down the right, and Heskey stretched to poke home rather fortunately with his left foot to put his side 3-0 up.

Czech international Patrik Berger increased Derby's woes 11 minutes from time with a brilliant fourth goal for Liverpool.

Barmby dummied Danny Murphy's low cross from the right and Berger pounced, rattling a 25-yard screamer into the roof of Poom's net.

Derby's fans once again made their displeasure known to boss Jim Smith as Liverpool turned the remainder of the game into exhibition stuff.

The result leaves Derby still at the bottom of the Premiership and the only team in England without a league win this season.

Real, Lazio, Gunners almost there



PARIS, Oct 16: European champions Real Madrid (Seco) v Lazio and England's Arsenal will be in the second phase of the Champions League.

way Tuesday as European giants attempt to bolster their hopes of reaching the second phase of the Champions League, reports AFP.

Lazio must face up to the loss of Argentine striker Hernan Crespo, who has a calf strain meaning that Simone Inzaghi and newcomer Claudio Lopez are set to form the striker tandem, backed by Juan Veron.

Real Madrid, meanwhile, are on a high as they take on German's Bayer Leverkusen having gone top of the Spanish

league on Saturday, a point clear of Valencia, with a rampant 3-0 success over Spanish champions Deportivo.

The French will be without Swiss international midfielder Patrick Muller, who has an ankle injury.

They will also likely rest French international midfielder Vikash Dhorasoo as he is only just recovering from an ankle strain, while defender Serge Blanc is out with a thigh strain.

The French will be without Swiss international midfielder Patrick Muller, who has an ankle injury.

They will also likely rest French international midfielder Vikash Dhorasoo as he is only just recovering from an ankle strain, while defender Serge Blanc is out with a thigh strain.

In Group D, French champions Monaco travel to Sturm Graz of Austria with both teams on three points, three adrift of Rangers and Galatasaray.

For a match they cannot afford to lose, Monaco will welcome back Argentine playmaker Marcelo Gallardo from a three-match suspension.

Defender Ousmane Dabo, sent off against Galatasaray, is also back - in his case from a three-match ban.

But Burundian striker Shabani Nonda is out after bruising a rib in Friday's win at Bastia.

Rangers manager Dick Advocaat, meanwhile, expects keeper German Stefan Klos to be fit to face Galatasaray despite missing the Premier League defeat at Hibernian.

Spartak now have to attempt to close the gap and finish off the hopes of tailenders Sporting Lisbon, who since squandering a two-goal lead on the opening night against Real have not impressed.

Leverkusen have been distracted by the row about the suitability of coach Christoph Daum to take over the German national coach's post next summer amid unsubstantiated allegations of drug-taking and involvement with prostitutes.

But a more tangible problem could be the loss through injury of former international striker Ulf Kirsten - as well as mediocre league form which currently sees Leverkusen only sixth.

Leeds travel to Turkey's Besiktas for a match which could make or break their campaign while Group H rivals AC Milan host Hamburg.

Bayern Munich host Paris Saint Germain need a result having lost in France while Manchester United will look to erase memories of last month's loss in Holland when they host PSV Eindhoven at Old Trafford.

English Premiership outfit Leeds travel to Turkey's Besiktas for a match which could make or break their campaign while Group H rivals AC Milan host Hamburg.

The Italians won their match in the Catalan capital and a third straight defeat could well see Barca tumble out prematurely - with Leeds benefiting.

"We will need him at his best again on Tuesday because although we won well against

Rangers manager Dick Advocaat, meanwhile, expects keeper German Stefan Klos to be fit to face Galatasaray despite missing the Premier League defeat at Hibernian.

Both goalkeepers Iker Casillas and defender Michel Salgado are highly doubtful for the European champions after both men suffered quadriceps strains in Saturday's 3-0 win over Spanish champions Deportivo Coruna.

Neither player trained on Sunday afternoon.

Cameroun international and Sydney Olympics gold medalist Geremi Ndip will replace Salgado on the right side of the defence if the Spanish international fails to get fit in time.

Real Madrid have a ready-made replacement for Casillas as well, with another Spanish international Cesar Sanchez set to start his first competitive game since joining the club in the summer from Villarreal.

Raul Gonzalez also missed Real Madrid's Sunday training session with a bruised back, but is expected to be ready to face the German visitors.

Del Bosque may also choose to make a tactical switch, replacing the lacklustre Brazilian midfields Flavio Conceicao and with Ivan Helguera, just as he did in the second half against

Recoba leaving Inter?

MILAN, Oct 16: Italian Serie A side Inter Milan and their Uruguayan striker Alvaro Recoba are set to go separate ways this week, the Italian press reported Monday, reports AFP.

Recoba has been stalling on signing a new contract for most of the year and his angry reaction to the jeers of the San Siro supporters in the 3-1 victory over Napoli at the weekend have fuelled reports that the association is about to end with reports that Juventus are prepared to make a bid.

Recoba tried to mend fences with the Inter faithful on Sunday's Domenica Sportiva programme, apologising for his surly behaviour the night before.

"Yesterday I made a mistake but I did nothing that was serious," he said. "I hope the fans will forgive me, and that they soon forget because sometimes you do things that a moment later you regret. This was one of those moments."

But if the Italian press is to be believed then Recoba has burnt his bridges with the club.

Inter chairman Massimo Moratti has already hinted he sympathises with the fans and also took a thinly-veiled swipe at the player's agent Paco Casal, believed to behind what the press maintains are exorbitant pay demands.

Inter and Casal are expected to meet Tuesday on what has been billed as the make-or-break meeting between the two parties.

Recoba replaced Irish striker Robbie Keane in Saturday's match - the first under new coach Marco Tardelli - but then engaged in a feud with the fans who jeered him on his entry.

Earlier this year he was unhappy about the fierce competition for places at Inter. Tardelli also has Keane, Turkey's Hakan Sukur and Chile's Ivan Zamorano contesting the forward positions while Christian Vieri is expected to return from injury before the end of the month and Ronaldo is also said to be progressing well after a long-term injury.

The press insist Juventus are interested in Recoba but he will also face stiff competition there for a starting berth from the likes of Alessandro Del Piero, Filippo Inzaghi, David Trezeguet and Darko Kovacevic.

Recoba completed his hat-trick in the 66th minute when Derby's all-at-sea rearguard allowed England midfielder Nick Barmby to break down the right, and Heskey stretched to poke home rather fortunately with his left foot to put his side 3-0 up.

Czech international Patrik Berger increased Derby's woes 11 minutes from time with a brilliant fourth goal for Liverpool.

Barmby dummied Danny Murphy's low cross from the right and Berger pounced, rattling a 25-yard screamer into the roof of Poom's net.

Derby's fans once again made their displeasure known to boss Jim Smith as Liverpool turned the remainder of the game into exhibition stuff.

The result leaves Derby still at the bottom of the Premiership and the only team in England without a league win this season.

Heskey completed his hat-trick in the 66th minute when Derby's all-at-sea rearguard allowed England midfielder Nick Barmby to break down the right, and Heskey stretched to poke home rather fortunately with his left foot to put his side 3-0 up.

Czech international Patrik Berger increased Derby's woes 11 minutes from time with a brilliant fourth goal for Liverpool.

Barmby dummied Danny Murphy's low cross from the right and Berger pounced, rattling a 25-yard screamer into the roof of Poom's net.

Derby's fans once again made their displeasure known to boss Jim Smith as Liverpool turned the remainder of the game into exhibition stuff.

The result leaves Derby still at the bottom of the Premiership and the only team in England without a league win this season.

Heskey completed his hat-trick in the 66th minute when Derby's all-at-sea rearguard allowed England midfielder Nick Barmby to break down the right, and Heskey stretched to poke home rather fortunately with his left foot to put his side 3-0 up.

Czech international Patrik Berger increased Derby's woes 11 minutes from time with a brilliant fourth goal for Liverpool.

Barmby dummied Danny Murphy's low cross from the right and Berger pounced, rattling a 25-yard screamer into the roof of Poom's net.

Derby's fans once again made their displeasure known to boss Jim Smith as Liverpool turned the remainder of the game into exhibition stuff.

The result leaves Derby still at the bottom of the Premiership and the only team in England without a league win this season.

Heskey completed his hat-trick in the 66th minute when Derby's all-at-sea rearguard allowed England midfielder Nick Barmby to break down the right, and Heskey stretched to poke home rather fortunately with his left foot to put his side 3-0 up.

Czech international Patrik Berger increased Derby's woes 11 minutes from time with a brilliant fourth goal for Liverpool.

Barmby dummied Danny Murphy's low cross from the right and Berger pounced, rattling a 25-yard screamer into the roof of Poom's net.

Derby's fans once again made their displeasure known to boss Jim Smith as Liverpool turned the remainder of the game into exhibition stuff.

The result leaves Derby still at the bottom of the Premiership and the only team in England without a league win this season.

Heskey completed his hat-trick in the 66th minute when Derby's all-at-se