

French preview
Monaco focus
on home front

PARIS, Nov 10: A week of mixed fortunes in the Champions League means it's back to the European drawing board for French champions Monaco as Lyon join Paris St Germain in the second round of the competition, reports AFP.

That could prove a blessing in disguise for the stricken Monégasques who, sitting 11th in the league, have been handed an opportunity to concentrate on retaining their league title. Surly forward Marco Simone, who complained midweek of a lack of motivation in the Principality side, may yet be consoled by the fact that, as yet, no dominant leader has emerged.

Only six points separate surprise league leaders Sedan from 10th-placed Lyon, and with some of the less well-known teams such as Guingamp, Bastia and Lille convincingly holding their own, the race has really only begun.

That does not mean that title favourites Paris St Germain, sitting second, will be slamming on the brakes in their attempt to win back the top spot as they play host to fellow Champions League contenders Lyon.

A win would give Philippe Bergeroo's side, who have suffered two back-to-back league defeats, a much-needed boost.

It would also help to soothe the wounded ego of star striker Nicholas Anelka, who midweek complained openly about Bergeroo's tactics.

"When you look at it, our problem midfield is not new. We don't have a playmaker and with only one defensive midfielder in Pete (Lucini), it's impossible."

Anelka, however, is out of action for a week after picking up a thigh strain against Helsingborg of Sweden.

Paris SG's Brazilian hit man, Christian, will return after an abdomen injury, as will the now fully-recovered trio of Stéphane Dalmat (right ankle), Bernard Mendy (tendinitis) and Lurent Leroy (right ankle).

But despite the welcome returns, Paris should be wary of a Lyon side currently riding a wave of euphoria after reaching the second round of the Champions League for the first time.

And, with ex-Auxerre forward Steve Marlet currently showing signs of maturity in front of goal alongside Brazilian Sonny Anderson, Jacques Santini's side have the tools to take all three points at the Parc des Princes.

The Sedan-Marseille encounter was always going to be a thriller, given that Marseille sports manager Eric Di Meo was sacked last Saturday following in the footsteps of president Yves Marchand, who resigned only days earlier.

A Marseille defeat could seal the fate of a third member of staff, Brazilian coach Abel Braga, who was only persuaded to stay at the club after crunch talks with Marseille chief Robert Louis-Dreyfus on Thursday.

In the French press Braga had initially signalled his intention to resign following intervention in team affairs from the notoriously vociferous Marseille backroom staff.

A victory for Sedan would reinforce their placing, which until now has largely been deserved with some fine attacking performances, and goals aplenty from Belgian signing Tony Brogno.

Third-placed Bordeaux would have been looking forward to taking three home points against lowly Strasbourg, but that match could be postponed as Claude Le Roy's side, sitting 17th, have two key players picked for a France B away match to Bosnia.

That situation is also complicated by the fact that recently-signed Paraguayan international goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert is still sitting out a two-match ban.

Handed out while playing for former Argentine side Velez Sarsfield, after an appeal Bordeaux are waiting on a positive response from the Argentine federation.

Likewise, the Bastia-Nantes match, due to be played on Saturday, has been postponed until Monday night.

The Corsicans sit on equal points with Nantes and after a brief spell on top of the league, will be looking to pull ahead at their traditional stronghold of the Armand-Cesari stadium.

Current French champions Monaco crashed out of all European competition on Tuesday and must find motivation for what should prove a difficult Friday night encounter away to Saint Etienne, sitting in 15th place.

With domestic endeavours now a more realistic pursuit, Monaco can now begin to forget the internal squabbling in a team which has the talent, but somewhat less cohesion, to challenge for the title.

Saturday's remaining league fixtures are Metz-Guingamp, Lille-Auxerre, Rennes-Toulouse and Troyes-Lens.

Gaibandha soccer

From Our Correspondent
GABANDHA, Nov 10: The Senior Division Football League begins at the local stadium tomorrow under the arrangements of Gaibandha District Sports Association.

Eight teams - Natin Bangle KC, Azad SC, Jhankar KC, Bridge Road SC, Nabarin KC, UNO Club, Rauter SC and Eleven Star Club - are taking part in the league.

Owen lifts Liverpool



PRAGUE, Nov 10: England forward Michael Owen found the net within 20 seconds

of coming on as a substitute to ensure Liverpool's UEFA Cup survival against Czech Republic side Slovan Liberec Thursday night, reports AFP.

Anfield chief Gerard Houllier described Owen's great strike with his first touch after coming on with just nine minutes left as "one of my very happiest substitutions".

Liverpool had to battle for their lives in Bohemia, losing their first leg lead early on and finally running out 3-2 winners - 4-2 on aggregate - thanks to goals from England stars Nick Barmby, Emile Heskey and Owen.

Houllier said of Owen: "It was an excellent, clinical finish. When one of your substitutes scores within 20 seconds of coming on, it's a very happy substitution from my point of view."

The Frenchman also recalled how Owen has done similar things for England: "I remember him doing just that when he came on against Belgium, and of course he did the same to France, but I'm trying to forget that one!"

"Substitutions are very important in this sort of game, they can win you the match and change the balance of the game, and that's what Michael did."

"He has been recovering from the head injury he got at Derby for the last three weeks, and he's only been back in normal training since Monday."

"I didn't feel he was quite ready to start the match, but he made a pretty impressive impact when he did get on."

Houllier accepted that Liverpool didn't play to their full potential, and said: "Some of our players did not reach the levels I want from them."

"But you always know European ties are going to be real fights. Slovan defended heroically, we should have done better with the chances we had, but Slovan gave us a very difficult game."

"They did the same at Anfield, they defend so well and we took a long time to break them down. But we are through and I'm happy with that."

"We had the worst possible start, losing our lead from the first leg, but we got level very quickly and finally managed to claim the goals to end their battle."

"All the goals came from my England players, and that makes me very proud to say that."

UEFA CUP 3RD ROUND LINEUP
Teams that have qualified for the 3rd round of the UEFA Cup, the draw for which will be made Friday in Geneva:

Qualified from European Champions Cup
Bayer Leverkusen (Ger),

Hamburg (Ger), Glasgow Rangers (Sco), Barcelona (Spa), Olympiakos (Gre), Rosenborg (Nor), PSV Eindhoven (Ned), Donetsk (Ukr).

Qualified from UEFA Cup 2nd round
1860 Munich (Ger), Hertha Berlin (Ger), Werder Bremen (Ger), Stuttgart (Ger), Kaiserslautern (Ger), FC Brugge (Bel), NK Osijek (Cro), Liverpool (Eng), Espanyol (Spa), Rayo Vallecano (Spa), Alaves Vitoria (Spa), Celta Vigo (Spa), Bordeux (Fra), Nantes (Fra), AEK Athens (Gre), PAOK Salonika (Gre), Inter Milan (Ita), AS Roma (Ita), Parma (Ita), FC Porto (Por), Feyenoord (Ned), Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus), Lausanne (Swi), Slavia Prague (Cze).

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Juve players
feel the
wrath

TURIN, Italy, Nov 10 (AFP) - Juventus players were given a hot reception from supporters at Turin airport Thursday following their elimination from the European Champions Cup, reports AFP.

French World Cup star Zinedine Zidane was a particular target for the fans as he missed the key match Wednesday against Greek side Panathinaikos because of a five-match suspension.

Zidane went over to remonstrate with the supporters who were hurling insults at him and ended up in a shoving match with them.

Uruguayans Daniel Fonseca and Paolo Montero then stepped forward to protect Zidane and punches were thrown before police moved in to restore order.

Juventus crashed out of the European Cup in losing 1-3 to Panathinaikos.

Israel friendly
Portugal name
squad

LISBON, Nov 10 (AFP) - Portugal coach Antonio Oliveira named the following squad Thursday for the friendly against Israel on Wednesday, November 15 at Braga's Primeiro de Maio stadium:

Goalkeepers: Joaquim Silva (Sporting Braga), Jorge Silva (Salgueiros Porto).

Defenders: Jorge Costa, Secretario (FC Porto), Beto, Dimas (Sporting Portugal), Fernando Couto (Lazio/Ita), Fernando Meira (Benfica), Cabral (Benfenseis Lisbon).

Midfielders: Rui Costa (Fiorentina/Ita), Paulo Sousa (Panathinaikos/Gre), Sergio Conceicao (Parma/Ita), Bino (Sporting Portugal), Simao Sabrosa (FC Barcelona/Spa), Helder (Deportivo La Coruna/Spa).

Forwards: Joao Pinto, Sa Pinto (Sporting Portugal), Luis Figo (Real Madrid/Spa), Paulista (Bordeaux/Fra).

Liverpool striker Emile Heskey (R) bursting past Petr Johana of Slovan Liberec during their UEFA Cup second round second leg match on November 9. - AFP photo

Rivaldo in search
of solace

BARCELONA, Nov 10: Barcelona's Brazilian forward Rivaldo believes his side's exit from the Champions' League means they will now have to win the UEFA Cup to ensure the season does not end in embarrassment, reports Reuters.

Rivaldo scored six goals in the opening phase of Europe's top club competition but could not prevent Leeds United piloting them to the runners-up spot in Group H Behind AC Milan.

The Catalans must now play in the UEFA Cup and the World and European Player-of-the-Year wants to see his side go all out to win the tournament.

"We had so many hopes for the Champions League and it's difficult to accept that we're out," he said.

"It's a big blow but the only option now is to fight as hard as possible for the UEFA Cup."

"If we go out of the UEFA Cup it really will be a disaster."

Barcelona, who have gone out at the first stage of the Champions League in three of the past four seasons, were due to find out later on Friday why their opponents would be in the third round of the UEFA Cup.

Voller in charge
until 2002

LEVERKUSEN, Germany. Nov 10: Bayer Leverkusen coach Rudi Voller confirmed at a Thursday conference that he will stay on as coach of the German national side until the 2002 World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea, reports AFP.

At the same conference Voller also said that his current reign as coach of the German Bundesliga side will end after Sunday's match against Frankfurt.

Voller, who hands the reins of Leverkusen over to former German national coach Berti Vogts, will however remain a sports director at Leverkusen until that contract expires in 2003.

The solution is absolutely perfect and I hope to have as much success as I have had before," said Voller, who in his new post will continue to be assisted by former Dortmund coach Michael Skibbe.

Voller was initially handed a temporary brief as national coach after Germany's dismal display in the 2000 European championships in Belgium and the Netherlands in June and July.

A desperate German Football Federation (DFB) after much soul-searching then found the man they hoped would remedy the malaise - Bayer Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum.

But instead of unearthing a gem of a coach who would take them convincingly to the world showpiece in two years' time, revelations about Daum's drug habits forced the bottom out of their plans.

Daum, due to take up his permanent national coaching post in June 2001, tested positive for cocaine after speculation in the German press forced him to prove his detractors wrong by volunteering a hair sample to a laboratory.

He then took refuge in the United States at the behest of Leverkusen's management.

Draw tough for everyone



GENEVA, Nov 10: English Premier-ship outfit Leeds United once again drew the short straw Friday as

they look to continue their backs-to-the-wall Champions League adventure into the knockout phase, reports AFP.

The draw here for the second phase of Europe's biggest club competition once again left them with a mountain to climb after a very difficult assignment in the first phase.

Having emerged from a pool including AC Milan of Italy and Barcelona of Spain, David O'Leary's young and injury-hit squad will have to do it the hard way again if they are to make it beyond the second phase.

Holders Real Madrid, defending Italian champions Lazio and Belgium's Anderlecht now provide another formidable obstacle in Group D for the side

from northern England. Two-times winners Manchester United fared better with

THE DRAW
GENEVA, Nov 10 (AFP): Draw for second phase of European Champions League held here Friday:

GROUP A
Valencia (Spa)
Sturm Graz (Aut)
Manchester United (Eng)
Panathinaikos (Gre)

GROUP B
AC Milan (Ita)
Deportivo La Coruna (Spa)
Paris St Germain (Fra)
Galatasaray (Tur)

GROUP C
Bayer Munich (Ger)
Arsenal (Eng)
Spartak Moscow (Rus)
Lyon (Fra)

GROUP D
Real Madrid (Spa)
Anderlecht (Bel)
Lazio (Ita)
Leeds United (Eng)

a draw that puts them in Group A alongside Austria's Sturm Graz. Panathinaikos of Greece with last season's runners-up Valencia of Spain perhaps United's biggest obstacle.

AC Milan's reward for edging Leeds to win their first phase group is a Pool B containing UEFA Cup holders Galatasaray of Turkey - seen by many as outside contenders to win the continent's premier competition. Spanish champions Deportivo La Coruna and French outfit Paris St Germain.

The third English side Arsenal are drawn in Pool C alongside Bayern Munich of Germany, Spartak Moscow of Russia and another French side Lyon.

Bayern vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said: "I think we can be happy. It's a difficult group but a group where we have a chance to qualify."

Premiership preview
Leeds' test at Stamford Bridge



LONDON, Nov 10: Fresh from European success in Italy, Leeds travel to west London to face bitter rivals Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Sunday looking for valuable points to close the gap on the Premiership pace-setters, reports AFP.

David O'Leary's depleted squad took their weary limbs to the San Siro Wednesday and held Serie A giants AC Milan to a 1-1 draw - a result which ensured the Yorkshire club advanced to the second phase of the Champions League.

The bad blood between Leeds and Chelsea stems from their meeting in the 1970 FA Cup final. A thrilling 2-2 draw, the first final in the competition's history to go to a replay - was a physical bone-crunching encounter, with several players setting scores behind the referee's back.

The latest chapter in a 30-year feud came last season when Chelsea's French defender Frank Leboeuf was sent off for stamping on Australian striker Harry Kewell. Leeds went on to win the match 2-0 and effectively ended the Londoners' championship hopes.

Leeds currently lie eighth in the table, nine points behind leaders Manchester United but with a game in hand, while Chelsea are three places below the Elland Road outfit with two

points less.

Claudio Ranieri's foreign legion, therefore, can leapfrog Leeds should they take all three points although they will have their work cut out against a side buoyant after their European exploits.

Belagued Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson takes his struggling side to Old Trafford to face leaders Manchester United Saturday, hoping to end a miserable run which has seen them take just 10 points from a possible 36.

Worryingly for Robson, United, with 27 points from 12 games, are formidable on home soil.

The reigning champions, who like Leeds and Arsenal booked their place in the last 16 of the Champions League on Wednesday night, have scored 22 goals at home on the way to taking 16 Premiership points out of a possible 18 at the 'Theatre of Dreams'.

But Middlesbrough can take heart from the fighting spirit they showed in last Saturday's 1-0 home defeat to Arsenal in which they were forced to play most of the match with 10 men following goalkeeper Mark Crossley's dismissal.

The North East club, who have yet to win at home this season, fare better on the road with their two victories this season picked up away from the Riverside Stadium.

Second-placed Arsenal, behind United on goal difference,

host bottom club Derby, without a win and rooted to the basement with just six points.

Despite their lowly position Jim Smith's men will be encouraged by their 0-0 draw against West Ham on Monday - their first clean sheet in the league this season.

Leicester, in third, take on sixth-placed Newcastle at Filbert Street, who will look to evergreen striker Alan Shearer to breach the Premiership's tightest defence.

Peter Taylor's side have conceded just seven goals in 12 games making them the surprise package under the guidance of the caretaker England manager.

Taylor will put his club commitments to one side after Saturday's match to focus on Wednesday's international friendly against Italy in Turin.

The former England under-21 boss will make way next summer when new coach Sven Goran Eriksson arrives from Italy to take the helm.

FIXTURES
Saturday (kick-off 15:00GMT unless stated): Arsenal v Derby, Aston Villa v Tottenham, Bradford v Everton, Ipswich v Charlton, Leicester v Newcastle, Manchester United v Middlesbrough, Sunderland v Southampton, West Ham v Manchester City.

Sunday: Chelsea v Leeds (16:00GMT), Liverpool v Coventry.

Bundesliga preview
Schalke await Bayern adventure



BERLIN, Nov 10: As Hertha Berlin retain a slim two-point grip on the league, Schalke 04, who showed good form at the start of the season, host the match of the weekend against German champions Bayern Munich, reports AFP.

Bayern are the only German team still involved in the Champions League, a fact they will attempt to hammer home on their visit to Gelsenkirchen this Saturday.

They finished top of their Champions League Group F, and despite recent elimination from the second round of the German Cup by lowly Magdeburg they returned to league form last Saturday with a 6-2 thrashing of Borussia Dortmund.

Schalke, who were beaten by an 87th-minute goal against third-placed Kaiserslautern last weekend, certainly have their backs against the wall, with only four points from their last five league matches.

The excitement is not all concentrated in central Germany, however.

Hertha Berlin, who many look upon as caretaker leaders of the Bundesliga, two points ahead of Bayern, take the road west Friday night to Borussia Dortmund, currently sitting in 8th position on 16 points.

After last week's lesson in football from Bayern, Dortmund are looking to restore some pride, an exercise which seems all the more likely given that Hertha Berlin have never registered victory there in their last seven outings.

Currently sitting third, Kaiserslautern head to Frankfurt, sitting ninth, on Sunday with designs on extending their stay at the top as challengers to Berlin and Bayern.

Bayer Leverkusen, meanwhile, who still hold on to fourth place despite the club being rocked by the recent Christophe Daum cocaine scandal, head to 13th-placed Friberg for what should prove a good opportunity to further their league cause.

Confirmation on Thursday

that current coach, ex-international Rudi Voller, will hand over the coaching reins to former national coach Berti Vogts