

### Ferrigno infuriates Modena

MODENA, Italy, Nov 23: The directors of Italian Third Division side Modena on Wednesday angrily rejected claims by Como captain Massimiliano Ferrigno that their midfielder Francesco Bertolotti must share some of the blame for the incident that has left him in a coma and Ferrigno facing criminal charges.

The news came on a day that Bertolotti's condition showed some improvement, reports AFP.

Both directors of Modena and Como, who have said Ferrigno will never play for the club again, have been united in their reaction to the events with fans of both clubs holding a vigil outside the Lecco Hospital where Bertolotti is being treated.

But Modena were clearly incensed by Ferrigno's version of events whereby the injuries were sustained in a fight rather than an unprovoked assault by him in the dressing room area half-an-hour after the game.

A Modena statement said: "We feel it is our duty to declare that the claims by Massimiliano Ferrigno, where he maintains he was involved in a scuffle with Bertolotti, are shamefully untrue and are unjustified even in the legitimate right (of Ferrigno) to defend himself (against allegations)."

Describing the line of defence as "incredible" Modena continued: "The evidence gathered, the witness testimonies and the objective medical findings gave in fact the certainty that our player has been the victim of an unprovoked, cold-blooded, determined assault."

Earlier on Wednesday the daily Modena update on 33-year-old Bertolotti, who had clashed with Ferrigno during the match, said he was showing 'discreet motor reactions' and 'spontaneous opening of the eyes'.

However, physicians treating the player are still reserving a prognosis on Bertolotti who was hospitalised Sunday after being assaulted in the dressing room area half an hour after the match won 1-0 by Modena's opponents Como.

The text of the bulletin, signed by Doctor Laura Chiappa, read as follows: "The patient passed the night in stable condition. In the morning there was a temporary suspension of pharmacological sedation so that the (patient's) neurological state could be evaluated."

"It was possible to observe a discreet motor reaction and the spontaneous opening of the eyes. The prognosis remains reserved."

Ferrigno was charged on Sunday evening by police with grievous bodily harm and failing to aid a person in distress.

### Vampeta says sorry

MILAN, Nov 23: Brazilian midfielder Vampeta apologised on Wednesday to his Italian First Division side Inter Milan for delaying his return to Italy after being on national service for a World Cup qualifier, reports AFP.

Vampeta, who earlier this month threatened to return to his former side in Brazil Corinthians - the reigning FIFA World Club Champions - if he did not win a place in the Inter starting line-up, showed remorse for his late return.

"I hope you forgive me being back a day late," he said.

"I have already apologised to the club and I will do the same to my team-mates at the Pinetina (Inter's training ground) tomorrow (Thursday)."

### Ronaldo's convulsions Zagallo contradicts doctors

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 23: Former Brazil coach Mario Zagallo openly contradicted team doctors here on Wednesday when he denied he was informed by them immediately that star forward Ronaldo had suffered convulsions prior to the 1998 World Cup final, reports AFP.

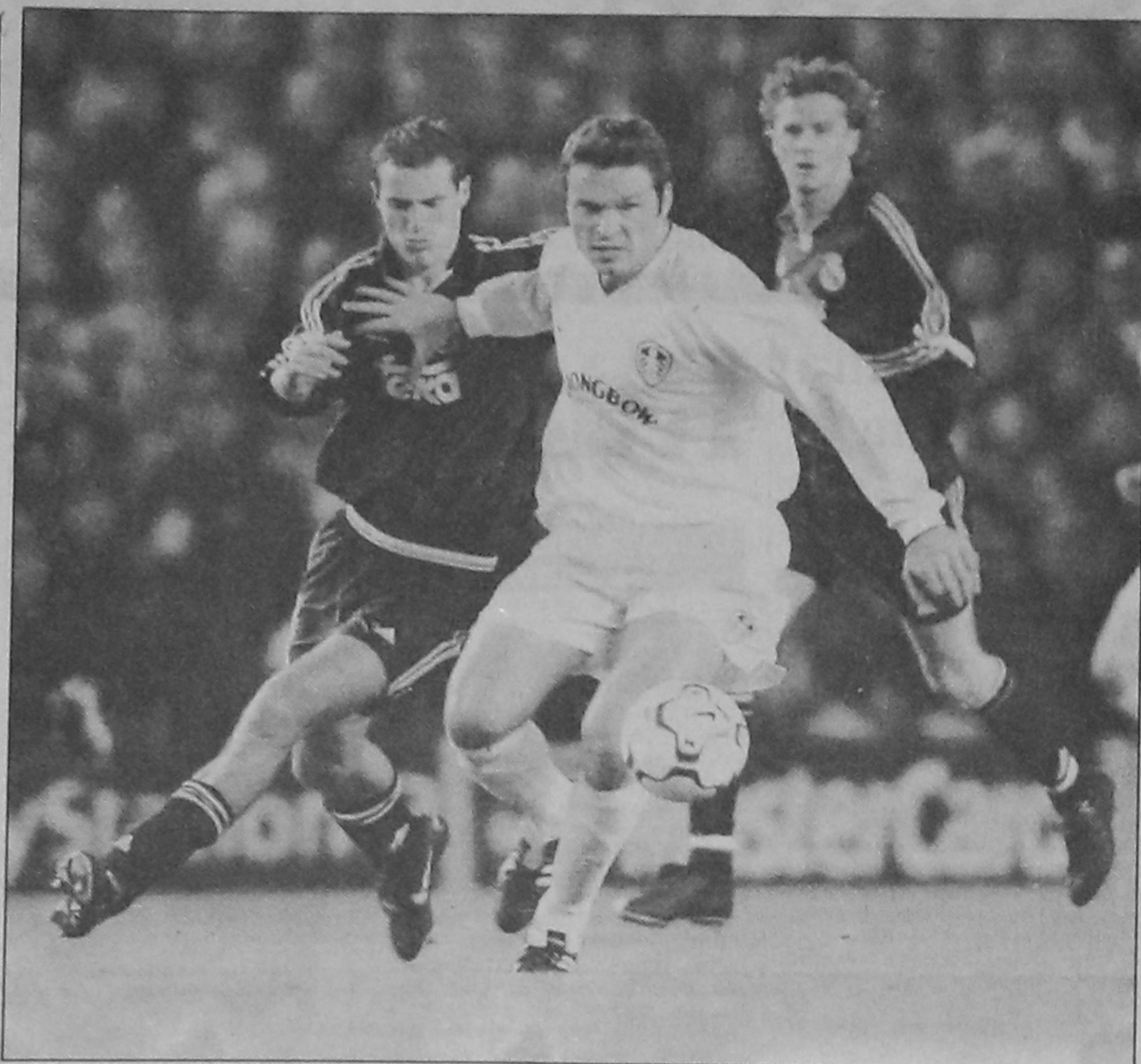
Zagallo's claims came to light under questioning by the Parliamentary Commission (CPI) investigating the contract signed by the Brazilian football federation (CBF) with American sportswear giant Nike.

During the questioning Zagallo again denied that Nike or the CBF had put pressure on him to make sure that Ronaldo took part in the final despite initial team sheets having Edmundo starting the match in his place.

Zagallo, recently appointed Flamengo coach, claimed that he was not informed by doctors Lidio Toledo and Joaquin da Mata until three hours after Ronaldo began to experience the convulsions.

His claims are in direct contrast to those of Toledo who said that Zagallo was told immediately about the health of Ronaldo who, after being taken to hospital, was released and allowed to play in the final against France.

The parliamentary inquiry was launched earlier this month to investigate a mammoth contract believed worth 180 million dollars, between the CBF and American sportswear giants Nike amid fears the clothing giant might harm the Brazilian game's interests and give the company too much say in where national team play and when.



Leeds United's Australian international Mark Viduka holding off Helgeira (L) Real Madrid at Elland Road on November 22. --AFP photo

### Real show real class

LEEDS, England, Nov 23: Reigning champions Real Madrid of Spain were too strong for an under-strength Leeds United on Wednesday, beating the English Premiership club 2-0 in their opening Champions League Group D second round match at Elland Road, reports AFP.

After a goalless first half, in which Leeds and England defender Jonathan Woodgate hit a post, Madrid, a record eight times champions of Europe, turned on the style.

In the first ever meeting between the two clubs, the 37,000 sell-out crowd were silenced after 66 minutes when Real captain Fernando Hierro leapt high above the Leeds defence to head home Luis Figo's right wing corner.

Three minutes later the visitors increased their lead with Spanish international striker Raul slotting home the excellent Guti's precision pass.

It is the first time in their history that Leeds have ever been beaten by Spanish opposition on home soil.

Leeds, whose 1-1 draw with AC Milan in the first phase condemned Barcelona to the less prestigious UEFA Cup, lost heart after the second goal and failed to trouble the Real defence.

United hope to strengthen their defence on Thursday by completing the 18 million pound (26 million dollar) signing of West Ham defender Rio Ferdinand - a world record for a defender.

Leeds coach David O'Leary admitted his young team were beaten by the better side.

"You have got to hold your hands up in football and tonight we were beaten by the better team," he said. "We were outclassed."

"We battled in the first half but always knew they were classier and in the second half their class told."

The rebound then fell to Gary Kelly but from 10 yards he failed to find the target, hitting Madrid defender Ivan Campo on the goaline and allowing Real to breathe a sigh of relief.

Figo, the world's most expensive player, who cost the club 35 million pounds (50 million dollars) to bring him to Madrid from rivals Barcelona was then booked for diving.

McManaman fizzed a drive over the bar after 20 minutes, much to the delight of the home crowd, who booed him all night because of his time spent with bitter rivals Liverpool.

Real's best chance of the first half came five minutes later when McManaman played a delightful defence-splitting pass to pick out Raul but the Spaniard's low shot was turned brilliantly round the post by Robinson at full stretch.

Real's 19-year-old goalkeeper Casillas had to be alert to prevent Leeds from taking the lead seven minutes from the interval. Bowyer found space on the right wing and his curling cross was met by Dominic Matteo's head but his effort cannoned off the young keeper.

Raul attempted to chip Robinson eight minutes after the break but the Leeds goalkeeper, who had strayed off his line, scuttled back to collect the ball with one hand.

Leeds were finding it hard to make any headway and it came as no surprise when Real finally took the lead in the 66th minute.

Another breakaway involving Carlos, McManaman, Raul and Figo ended with the Portugal international driving in a shot which was blocked by the legs of Robinson.

And from the short corner, Figo's whipped-in delivery was headed beyond Robinson by Hierro for his first Champions League goal this season.

Two minutes later the game was put beyond Leeds' reach as Guti put Raul through and he finished with style to score his second goal in European competition this season.

### Gunners taught a lesson

MOSCOW, Nov 23: Russian champions Spartak Moscow came from a goal down to stun English Premiership giants Arsenal 4-1 in front of 84,000 delirious fans here on Wednesday in their Champions League Group C second round match played in freezing conditions.

Three of the recently crowned champions goals came from their Brazilian strikers Marcao, who grabbed two, and Luis Robson, while captain and Russian international midfielder Vegor Titov scored the fourth.

Brazilian defender Silvinho, who was only cleared to play on Tuesday night as he was carrying a slight injury, scored Arsenal's goal against a Spartak side who have won eight of the last nine domestic titles.

The Gunners, who were desperately understrength in midfield missing French pivot Patrick Vieira and the non-flying Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp, got off to a lively start and their left back Silvinho netted the opener just two minutes into the game after French striker Thierry Henry's pass from the left.

Spurred on by that the visitors created a set of chances but failed to increase their lead in the opening quarter-hour.

Spartak then got back into the game and Marcao levelled when he fired home past Austrian keeper Alex Manninger from 15 yards out having seized on Silvinho's headed clearance.

Marcao put the Russians into the lead seven minutes into the second-half when Cameroon midfielder Jerry-Christian Tchuisse crossed the ball in and Robson headed down past



Arsenal's Argentine international Nelson Vivas (L) and Spartak Moscow's Jerry-Christian Tchuisse locked in a tussle at Moscow on November 22. --AFP photo

### Diego wants to end against Brazil

BUENOS AIRES, Nov 23: Diego Maradona would like to say farewell to football as a player by turning out one last time for his country against Brazil in the 2002 World Cup qualifiers at Buenos Aires in September 2001, it emerged on Wednesday, reports AFP.

"I want to go to sleep and wake up playing for the national side," said Maradona in a report by sports daily Ole, adding: "I'm always ready to be picked."

"You have to respect the (Argentine) shirt. So if it (my dream) is possible, Marcelo (Bielsa, the Argentine coach) would have to make me train every day for a month," added the 40-year-old Maradona.

The former Boca Juniors, Napoli and World Cup star, famous for his hand of God goal against England at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, is currently receiving treatment for his drug addiction and heart problems.

Maradona, who also said he would like to be considered for FIFA's player of the century award, said however he was under no illusions.

"I'm very proud that people asked me to play in this match (against Brazil), but it's players like Amar, Riquelme and the 'burrito' Ortega who should be fighting for the number 10 shirt," he confirmed.

MUNICH, Germany, Nov 23: German champions Bayern Munich lived up to recent poor league form as they relied on a goal from German international midfielder Jens Jeremies which took a decisive deflection to give them the edge in their first leg home encounter against French side Lyon, reports AFP.

Jeremies scored in the 55th minute as unmarked he met Steffen Effenberg's corner but his header was going straight until it took a deflection off defender Jeremie Brechet.

Lyon had the lion's share of chances in the first half, procuring a number of occasions to score, beginning after only 30 seconds when on-form forward Steve Marlet crossed from the right for Sonny Anderson.

The Brazilian striker, marked closely, could only manage a lame header as he was dragged to the ground and Munich's international goalkeeper Oliver Kahn collected.

Bayern replied two minutes

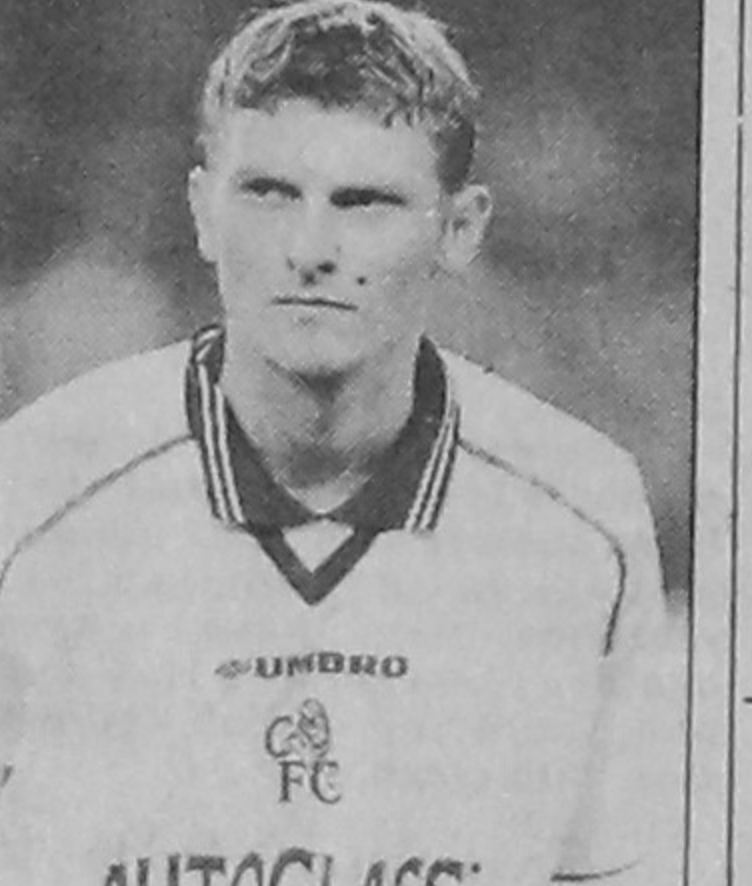


Michael Tarnat (L) of Bayern Munich tackling Lyon's Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson at Munich on November 22. --AFP photo

### Flo breaks Scottish record

GLASGOW, Nov 23: Rangers completed the record-breaking signing of Norwegian international striker Tore Andre Flo here Thursday, reports AFP.

The Scottish champions have paid Chelsea 12million



Tore Andre Flo

pounds (18million dollars) for the 27-year-old, who has put pen to paper on a four-and-a-half-year deal.

That eclipses the previous Scottish transfer record of 6million pounds (9million dollars) - the fee Celtic paid Chelsea for striker Chris Sutton in the summer.

Flo was training Thursday morning with his new teammates and was expected to be paraded in front of the media at an 11.00 press conference at 14.15GMT.

### Dauids calls for Zidane's protection

TURIN, Italy, Nov 23: Juventus midfielder Edgar Davids Wednesday called on referees to protect his French team-mate Zinedine Zidane from unfair harassment by opposing players, reports AFP.

Dutch international Davids was speaking as Juventus ended a policy of not speaking to the press.

That policy was enforced following Juventus' exit from the Champions League which was largely due to the Turin giants being deprived of the services of both Zidane and Davids in their closing first phase match in Athens with Panathinaikos of Greece.

Both were sent off in the match with German outfit Hamburg SV with Zidane's red card - his second of the competition - earning him a five-match ban.

But Davids, to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare's tragedy King Lear, believes Zidane is more sinned against than sinner.

He said: "Many opponents try to provoke Zizou because of the two suspensions he has had this year. Even at Brescia last Sunday (0-0) Zidane was fouled so often, too often and it was very good that he did not react."

### 'Dalmatian Eagle' flies to Marseille rescue

MARSEILLE, France, Nov 23: Crisis-ridden French giants Marseille received a rare boost on Wednesday when former Lebanese national coach Josip Skoblar - known as the Dalmatian Eagle - agreed to head up their scouting and recruitment department in preference to becoming Croatian national coach, reports AFP.

The Croat, who holds the record for the most goals ever in a French season with 44 for Marseille in 1970-71, will also be responsible for keeping the board of directors informed of any internal rumblings among the playing staff.

### Lacklustre Bayern win

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later when Brazilian Giovane Elber was gifted a free header on goal after a cross from the left, but the German champions' best effort of the half sailed past Coupet's right-hand post.

Awarded a free kick 30 yards out in front of goal, Bayern midfielder Michael Tarnat then saw his powerfully-struck shot saved by Coupet.

On the half-hour mark, powerful Lyon midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe saw Kahn punch his powerful 18-year shot out for a corner.

Foe then kept Kahn on his toes two minutes later when his header was parried by the blond keeper.

Inspired, Lyon came out confident after the break, and Pierre Laigle led the way unleashing a powerful volley from the edge of the area but Kahn saved it.

That was Lyon's eighth shot on goal, seven of which had been on target but that statistic almost became irrelevant as Elber was given space on the left to shoot, with Coupet getting a hand to send it out of play.

Lyon were again unlucky to

see a powerfully-volleyed shot simply punched away by Kahn, but breathed a sigh of relief at the other end as Thorsten Fink, leading through on goal and touched slightly by a defender, was shown the yellow card for his effort to win a penalty.

A sign of both sides' effort to improve the goal margin was the introduction of respective forwards - Tony Vairelles for Lyon and the giant Carsten Jancker for Bayern.

Jancker played his part in midfield, before being brought down, as Elber gave the unmarked Alexander Zickler a chance to double the score, but Coupet ran out and lay down to block the shot.

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, whose side has lost its last two Bundesliga matches, was left less than impressed.

"We played dreadfully in the first-half and could not even create a chance," he said.

"We forgot how to play and were content just to defend."

"At halftime I implored the players to raise themselves - they did just that and we got the goal," he added.

### Radzinski reddens Lazio

BRUSSELS, Nov 23: A late solo goal from Tomasz Radzinski helped Belgian champions Anderlecht snatch a 1-0 victory over Italy's Lazio - who were reduced to 10 men two minutes from the end - here on Wednesday in a Group D second phase Champions League clash, reports AFP.

The opening minutes.

After 12 minutes the Italian champions created their best chance yet when defender Giuseppe Favalli found Attilio Lombardo with a perfect cross but Lombardo headed straight into the arms of Anderlecht goalkeeper Filip De Wilde.

Anderlecht finally started to threaten and Radzinski twice found himself in a good position but first his shot was



Marcello Salas (R) of Lazio battling with Anderlecht's Olivier Doll at Brussels on November 22. --AFP photo

reckless. Doll then produced a reckless foul on Lazio substitute Roberto Baroni, earning the Anderlecht player a yellow card.

Mihajlovic produce a swerving freekick that just missed the target.

It was Anderlecht's turn to threaten next with Doll's freekick finding Koller whose acrobatic volley went wide with Nesta's challenge probably doing just enough to distract the Czech.

The Belgian side were now carving out the clearer chances and next Walter Passggio narrowly missed the target from distance before the men from Brussels had their best chance of the night.

Stolica did well to get behind the Italian defence but he screwed his shot wide with only Peruzzi to beat.

But then came Radzinski's goal, with Lazio's Dejan Stankovic failing on two occasions to equalise for the Italians before being red carded for a petulant reaction to a Gooor tackle.

Serie A outfit in the last 23 outings dating back to defeat at the hands of AS Roma 10 years ago.

Lazio's Swedish coach Sven Goran Eriksson - who will take over the England hotseat at the end of the season - refused to be flustered about going down to defeat.

"We knew they were a difficult team to beat at home - after all they beat Manchester United here," he said.

"Now it makes the next match against Leeds even more important," he added.

### Zamorano's lips stitched up

MILAN, Nov 23: Inter Milan's Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano Wednesday had 12 stitches inserted into a wound to his top lip sustained in training, the club's website confirmed, reports AFP.

Zamorano's injury was sustained in an accidental clash of heads with the club's young goalkeeper Marco Vairaldi and a 20-minute operation was performed by surgeon Marco Klingner in the company of club doctor Franco Combi at the Pius X Clinic at Milan.

It continued Anderlecht's remarkable home record against Italian teams in which they have not lost to a Serie A outfit in the last 23 outings dating back to defeat at the hands of AS Roma 10 years ago.

It was ample reward for a fine second-half performance by the Brussels team - tipped as rank outsiders in a tough group also containing England's Leeds United and eight-times European champions Real Madrid of Spain.

There seemed little danger after 83 minutes when Radzinski sprinted onto a long ball from Alin Stoica but the Canadian outstripped both Alessandro Nesta and Sinisa Mihajlovic to beat advancing Lazio goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi.

It proved a true game of two halves as Lazio bossed the first period and Anderlecht coming into their own in the second.

Lazio made the early running and Hernan Crespo and Pavel Nedved both went close in

hopelessly mishit and then Lazio skipper Nesta got back with a timely challenge just as the Anderlecht player prepared to shoot.

But Lazio still looked the more likely and they came closer than ever to taking the lead when their Yugoslav defender Mihalovic - a freekick specialist - saw his 30-yard freekick rattle the crossbar.

From the ensuing melee Lombardo held his bald head in his hands after firing wide when well placed to score. Then Crespo twice went close, first heading into De Wilde's arms before being caught marginally offside.

But Anderlecht threatened with their best chance so far, working the ball to Bar Gooor on the left but the Belgian international screwed his shot wide with only Peruzzi to beat.

Then Bertrand Crasson headed the ball straight into Peruzzi's arms when he should have done better.

After the break Anderlecht