

### Poborsky takes Ola's place

ROME, Jan 7: Lazio on Saturday had to temporarily withdraw Ghanaian youth player Daniel Ola from their first-team squad to accommodate new Czech signing Karel Poborsky, reports AFP.

The move will raise eyebrows as Ola was hoping to become the first black player to play for the Roman outfit since Dutchman Aron Winter left the club five years ago but the club hope to restore the African to their pool of players soon.

The signing of Poborsky from Portuguese giants Benfica brought Lazio's quota of non-European Union players to six, breaking the limit of five imposed on any Serie A squad (a maximum of three can play in a single match).

Ola was the obvious candidate to be withdrawn as the other four - Hernan Crespo, Marcelo Salas, Dragan Stankovic and Juan Sebastian Veron - are all first-team regulars.

Lazio hope that Poborsky will soon be granted EU status - that has recently occurred with AC Milan's Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko. Inter Milan's Turkish forward Hakan Sukur and Lazio's own player Pavel Nedved, also a Czech.

Once that happens the way would be clear for Ola to be restored to the first team squad.

### Ballack has a crush on Real!

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, Jan 7: German international midfielder Michael Ballack of Bayer Leverkusen will play next season with Spanish giants Real Madrid if ongoing talks come to a sound conclusion, said German press reports here Saturday, reports AFP.

The 24-year-old Ballack, who is currently under contract with Leverkusen until 2005, will be transferred for 20 million euros (19.1 million dollars) if talks between his manager Michael Becker and Real sports director Jorge Valdano end amicably.

The intended move follows Ballack's recent declarations of love for the European champions. "I feel good at Leverkusen, but a move to Real is the dream of every professional player. For my part, I'm open to all offers coming from Real," Ballack said.

Leverkusen manager and former German national coach Bert Vogts, however, is less enthusiastic about losing the young defender and said that the club, who currently sit fourth in the league, would do everything in their power to keep Ballack.

### Tardelli seeks Divine aid

MILAN, Jan 7: Inter Milan's beleaguered coach Marco Tardelli admits he is turning to religion ahead of Sunday evening's San Siro derby match with AC Milan, Corriere dello Sport reported Saturday, reports AFP.

Tardelli arrived at Inter in October following the sacking of Marcello Lippi - the ninth coach in big-spending chairman Massimo Moratti's five-year reign - but the sleeping giants of Serie A have shown little sign of stirring and Sunday's match is being touted as crucial for the coach.

Tardelli said he often relived the memorable goal he scored in Italy's 3-1 World Cup Final win over West Germany in 1982 in Madrid.

"As a sportsman I would like to relive the night of the World Cup, and as a man I like to relive the birth of my children with whom I believe I have a beautiful relationship," he said.

"But the pains of a public man must remain private if you are to go forward - everyone suffers equally. "I have dreamed to infinity about that night in Madrid but then I wake up and find day has come too quickly. Money is not everything - religion, in contrast, is very important. "I pray in difficult times even if that is not right."

### Batistuta's recovering

ROME, Jan 7: AS Roma's Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta arrived back from his winter break in Buenos Aires Saturday and immediately underwent tests on the injured knee that has been troubling him for most of the season, reports AFP.

Batistuta, 31, whose place will be taken by Vincenzo Montella in the team that will play Atalanta in Bergamo on Sunday, has been given an extended break by the Italian First Division leaders in the hope that the recuperation will avoid any need for surgery.

Judging by the results of the tests that policy appears to have paid dividends, according to Roma doctor Mario Brozzi. "This two weeks of rest have had the effect we desired," said Brozzi.

"Now he will start to work on the (training) pitch again and we will evaluate the reaction of the knee to the effort."

Brozzi added that at present there was no prospect of an operation for the Argentinian hitman, who has been in superb form for the Serie A giants this season.



Goran Tomic (L), Vicenza's Croatian recruit, trying to control the ball during a Serie A encounter against Bari at Vicenza on January 6. - AFP photo

## Serie A Classic draw at Turin

MILAN, Jan 7: Historic rivals Juventus and Fiorentina fought out a thrilling 3-3 draw in the Italian First Division at Turin's Stadio Delle Alpi Saturday night - but that result could leave Serie A leaders AS Roma the weekend's biggest winners, reports AFP.

Both Juventus and Fiorentina will feel they could have taken all three points after they both squandered the chance to kill the game off when well in control.

Fiorentina had soared into a 2-0 lead after 17 minutes with goals from Enrico Chiesa and his Portuguese strike partner Nuno Gomes, but then a scrambled effort from Juve skipper Antonio Conte and a brace from Filippo Inzaghi - the second a superb volley - had the Turin giants 3-2 to the good.

But minutes later in-form Chiesa struck again from a freekick to grab a share of the spoils for Fiorentina whose Turkish coach Fatih Terim believes are themselves capable of mounting a title challenge.

Terim said: "We started very well and caught them on the counter-attack twice but they scored from a scramble and that made the game very difficult for us. But it was a great match, well done everybody."

His Juve counterpart Carlo Ancelotti said: "We played well after a start when we were chasing the game. We were not far away from winning this game. We are in good health."

But if Juventus are in good health then Roma must have never felt better. Although the draw saw second-placed Juve trim Roma's lead to five points the capital club now have a chance to extend that lead to eight when they play third-placed Atalanta on Sunday.

Juventus-Fiorentina is something of a grudge match but the sheer quality of the football took over almost from the kick-off.

The first goal came after four minutes from Chiesa after Juventus defender Michele Parmatti inadvertently deflected Portuguese playmaker Manuel Rui Costa's pass into the former Italian international's path.

The second was a fine counter-attack goal from Nuno Gomes who beat Juve's Dutch goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar with some style.

But Juventus reduced arrears 13 minutes before the interval when their veteran skipper Conte bundled the ball home after a goalmouth scramble.

Three minutes into the second period it was all square. Filippo Inzaghi was fouled by Fiorentina goalkeeper Francesco Toldo who was lucky to escape with a yellow card but the Juventus striker was less forgiving than the referee and duly converted the penalty.

Minutes later Inzaghi surpassed himself, volleying home a cross from Parmatti. But just as the Zebras looked home and dry, Fiorentina hit back.

Chiesa and Rui Costa lined up a freekick but it was the former Italian international who lashed the ball past van der Sar.

Earlier Saturday Vicenza recorded a 1-0 victory over fellow Italian First Division strugglers Bari to boost their survival fight as the Serie A season resumed after the Christmas break.

After 11 minutes Vicenza went in front through defender Giacomo Dicara with what proved to be the deciding goal when he headed home an Antonino Bernardini freekick.

Vicenza produced most of the movement and their loan signing from Sampdoria, Carmine Esposito, given the red and white number nine jersey made famous by 1982 World Cup hero Paolo Rossi, linked up well with fellow striker Luca Toni.

Bari had come to Vicenza with their teenage prodigy Antonio Cassano under the scrutiny of several of the biggest clubs in European football with Martin and Jason Ferguson - brother and son respectively of Manchester United boss Sir Alex - among the crowd.

But Cassano had little opportunity to put himself in the shop window with Vicenza's Croatian defender Stjepan Tomas keeping him under tight surveillance in a textbook marking operation while Toni will also have impressed the visiting scouts.

The rest of this weekend's programme is being played Sunday with Roma's trip to Atalanta and the Milan derby between AC Milan and Inter the two highlights.

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### Primera Liga Dely Valdes downs Bilbao

MADRID, Jan 7: A first-half double from Dely Valdes earned Malaga a 2-1 victory at home to Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish First Division yesterday, reports Reuters.

The Panamanian international striker scored a controversial opener on 16 minutes, sweeping home after Dario Silva looked to have used a hand in charging down a clearance from goalkeeper Inaki Larena.

Dely's second five minutes before halftime left no room for doubt, though, as he rode three challenges on a run to the edge of the box and cracked in.

Bilbao pulled one back two minutes after the break as Francisco Yeste side-footed in from Ismael Urzais's astute cross but despite increasing pressure as the game wore on they failed to find an equaliser.

Victory for Malaga moves them up to eighth place, with Bilbao staying down in 12th.

League leaders Valencia are in action against Racing Santander today. Real Madrid, behind Valencia in second place on goal difference, take on Alaves while fourth-placed Barcelona are at Real Oviedo.

### Hossam Hassan equals world record

CAIRO, Jan 7: Egyptian striker Hossam Hassan gained a world record-equaling 150th cap when he played in the 2-1 win over United Arab Emirates in a friendly yesterday, reports Reuters.

Lothar Matthaus, Germany's former captain, set the mark at Euro 2000.

Hassan, 34, and scorer of more than 50 international goals, will break the record on Tuesday if he is picked to play against Zambia in a friendly in Cairo - the first of six more internationals Egypt face this month.

Egypt have a home African Nations cup qualifier against Libya on January 14 then plan to meet China and Iran in a four-team tournament in Tehran on January 17-19. They also host North Korea in a friendly in Cairo on January 23 followed by a World Cup qualifier against Morocco on January 28.

Hassan and his twin brother Ibrahim shocked Egyptian soccer last year when they left Cairo club Al-Ahli for arch rivals Zamalek.

### Tackle on Vieira angers Wenger

LONDON, Jan 7: Arsene Wenger has slammed an horrific tackle by Carlisle midfielder Richard Prokask that could have wrecked Patrick Vieira's career as his second-placed Premiership side toiled for a 1-0 FA Cup third round win away to bottom of the Football League Carlisle on Saturday, reports AFP.

The Arsenal boss was seething after the two-footed lunge in the first half, which went unpunished by referee Steven Lodge and provoked a flare-up between both sets of players.

"I can show you his shin protector which is broken and full of blood," Wenger told the Press Association.

"I believe it was a very bad tackle and it was not punished. Vieira is such an important man in the midfield for Arsenal that I am scared some people go out just to try to do him."

"It happened last week at Charlton when a player was not punished and it happened again today.

"Every player can react sometimes in a stupid way and you have to forgive that. But on the other hand a player can end his career with that tackle."

Wenger, however, praised Vieira, who carried on after treatment, for keeping his composure after an incident which saw defender Nelson Vivas booked for his animated protests.

## FA Cup Near escape for Charlton

LONDON, Jan 7: Non-league Dagenham and Redbridge came close to producing one of the great FA Cup third round shocks here on Saturday drawing 1-1 with Charlton Athletic at the English Premiership side's Valley Ground, reports AFP.

Charlton were four minutes away from going out when substitute John Salako's deflected shot saved them from football humiliation after Junior McDougald's ninth goal of the season gave Dagenham a 42nd minute lead.

Alan Curbishley, the Charlton manager whose side are seventh in the Premiership, refused to take anything away from the team that are in the

"I don't want people saying how badly we did, or what we didn't do. It was a tremendous performance by them."

Non-league Kingstonsian triumphed with a 1-0 win against Southend - the first time the FA Trophy holders had reached the fourth round.

It was Kingstonsian boss Geoff Chapple's seventh football league victim as a manager although he quickly passed on the credit to his players.

"They were absolutely magnificent. I can't praise them highly enough, especially after the pressure they were forced to withstand in the second half," he said.

"Let's face it, we did not have a shot after the break but all my players defended as if their lives depended upon it."

Redknapp said: "Freddy has great ability. He's very quick and very talented. He's a quiet lad and I'm very pleased for him."

"I think we got a bargain because he's beginning to score a lot of goals for us."

FA Cup holders Chelsea beat Second Division outfit Peterborough 5-0, with Gianfranco Zola netting twice.

Arsenal, who once again played below par, had a closer encounter but survived 1-0 thanks to Sylvain Wilford's goal away to bottom of the Third Division Carlisle.

Ipswich kept up their fine Premiership form as they beat Morecambe 3-0, who had knocked out Second Division Cambridge United in the last round.

Striker Marcus Stewart's 14th goal of the season put the visitors into the lead in the 14th minute and then the similarly in-form Alan Armstrong made it 2-0 before Jermaine Wright added a third.

Elsewhere, perennial giant-killers Yeovil looked on course to create an upset against First Division Bolton before losing 2-1.

The non-league team have always been a handful in the Cup at home and they took the lead at Bolton's Reebok Stadium in the 25th minute through Warren Patmore.

However, Bolton - four times FA Cup winners and semi-finalists in both Cup competitions last season, equalised a minute before the break through John O'Kane and on the stroke of full-time Michael Ricketts made it 2-1 with his 10th goal of the season.

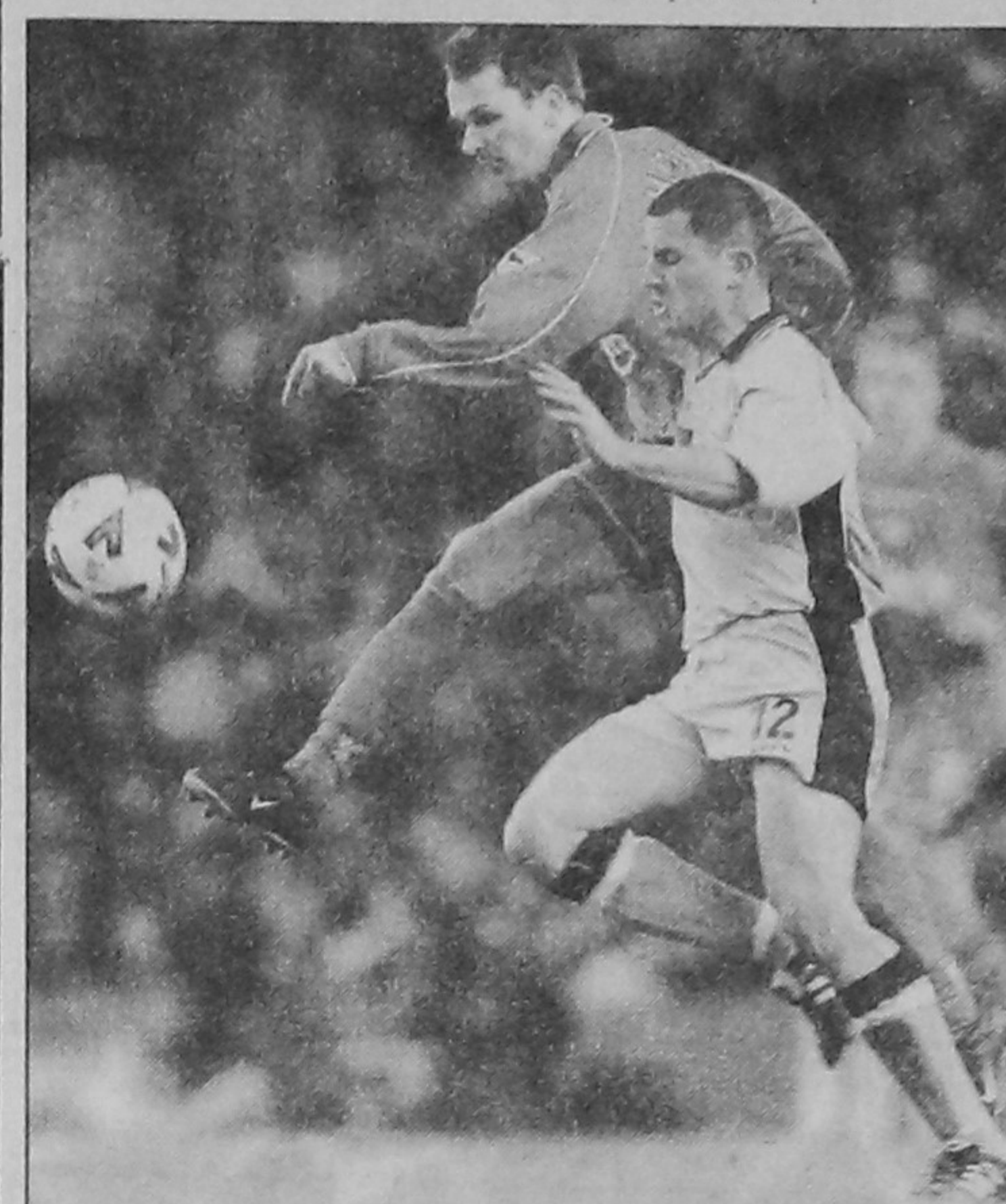
Everton, who faced Watford in a repeat of the 1984 FA Cup final, again walked off with a win. Back then Everton won 2-0 but this time First Division Watford took the lead when striker Tommy Mooney scored his 15th of the season in the 21st minute.

However, after Watford saw Robert Page red-carded, Everton equalised through Stephen Hughes eight minutes from time and Steve Watson provided the heartbreaker for the north London side to make it 2-1 in the last minute.

Liverpool beat Second Division Rotherham 3-0. Emile Heskey (2) and Dietmar Hamann the scorers although Croat midfielder Igor Biscan was sent-off for the home side.

In other matches featuring Premiership clubs Leeds beat Barnsley 1-0. Derby beat West Brom 3-2 and Manchester City held on to beat First Division Birmingham 3-2.

Leicester won 3-0 against York. Sunderland were held at home 0-0 by Crystal Palace. Coventry beat Swindon 2-0, and Southampton beat Sheffield United 1-0.



Dietmar Hamann (L), Liverpool's German international midfielder, volleys while being under pressure from Stewart Talbot of Rotherham during their FA Cup third round game at Anfield on January 6. - AFP photo

meanwhile, had to wait until the final minute to beat Third Division home side Leyton Orient 1-0.

Tottenham's dismal record of not having won away from home all season looked like being extended until Gary Docherty's last-minute winner.

French striker Frederic Kanoute was the toast of fellow London side West Ham in a five-goal thriller away to Walsall which ended 3-2 and had manager Harry Redknapp gushing.

Kanoute scored twice and set up the other West Ham goal for Frank Lampard.

## That's Tigana's style

LONDON, Jan 7(AFP): Fulham boss Jean Tigana may differ from a lot of football managers in that he does not have much to say, but when it comes to tactical communication, the subtle Frenchman is a sublime general, according to Fulham striker Barry Hayles.

Talking ahead of Sunday's FA Cup third round clash which sees First Division leaders Fulham face Premiership leaders Manchester United at Craven Cottage, Hayles said: "He (Tigana) doesn't say much really. All he does is pick the side and then he says 'go out and play'."

"If things aren't going right at half-time, he says a little bit, telling us - in English - to go out there and get on with it, but he still doesn't say a great deal."

"Most of the time, the players speak among themselves and get each other going."

While Fulham have admittedly rarely been behind during their ascent to the runaway leadership of the First Division, Hayles can recall just one ex-

ample of Tigana actually losing his temper in the dressing-room.

"In the match at Sheffield Wednesday, he came into the dressing-room and was very irate. That's the first time I've seen him say a lot at half-time," he added.

"I remember him dragging a piece of paper off the wall and he was scribbling away. It seemed to work though."

While Hayles confessed that the prospect of facing United was "frightening" after watching them demolish West Ham on New Year's Day, he revealed that Tigana was taking the game in his stride.

The Frenchman, who led Monaco to knock United out of the Champions League in 1998, "hasn't mentioned the Cup tie, to be honest," said Hayles, who is ruled out of the game through injury.

Hayles added: "He has just said it is another game to go out and try to win. We know the League is our priority so he just wants us to enjoy it."

Hayles, 28, has nothing but admiration for Tigana even though the Frenchman is different to any other manager he

has experienced in his rise through the ranks via Steveage and Bristol Rovers.

"I've had a lot of managers before and they would say a lot of stuff. He tends to show players where it's going wrong and tell them how to change it," he said.

Tigana has introduced a computer into the dressing-room to use for his pre-match talks in explaining the opposition's tactics, dangermen and set-plays before each game.

A fitness trainer also adopts the scientific approach favoured by the top Premiership sides and the club bankrolled by Harrods owner Mohammad Al Fayed now enjoy top class facilities.

But it's Tigana regime rather than the surroundings which have made the biggest impact.

"The main difference is the training," said Hayles. "It changes day in and day out, and we're enjoying it."

"The coaching is brilliant and he's made me more confident. If things aren't going right, he'll pull me aside and have a word with me. He'll tell me to be more aggressive in some respects."

## French League Cup Marseille shown the door

PARIS, Jan 7: Ailing French football giants Marseille crashed out of the League Cup on Saturday, humiliated 4-1 by Second Division Le Havre, but the Mediterraneans were not the only ones scratching their heads in despair, reports AFP.

Marseille, who were reduced to ten men when hardman defender Sebastien Perez was sent off, were a pale shadow of the side Spaniard Javier Clemente has managed to boost since his arrival in November.

Le Havre were always in command with veteran striker Alain Cavaglia, who won the French Cup last season with Nantes, the star.

Cavaglia scored a glorious opener and created the second before Marseille pulled a goal back through Brazilian striker Marcelinho's stunning freekick from 25 yards.

However, the Marseille defence were turned inside out for the third and salt was rubbed into a very open wound when 32-year-old Cavaglia rounded

off a fabulous match by converting a penalty.

Perez, who has been constantly linked with a transfer away from a club he has enjoyed about as much as he did in an unhappy spell at English side Blackburn Rovers, got his marching orders for a second bookable offence for violent play midway through the second-half.

Fellow southerners Toulouse followed in Marseille's wake, although a 1-0 defeat away to Second Division side Niort could be deemed as slightly less embarrassing.

Elsewhere, Bordeaux reiterated their recent league form of late to deny northern outfit Lille with David Sommeil scoring the only goal of the game for Elie Baup's side.

Auxerre, currently struggling in league terms in 12th place, had something to smile about as they put paid to Red Star's plans of another year in the limelight with two unanswered goals courtesy of Pierre Deblock and Djibril Cisse.

Red Star, once a force to be reckoned with in the French top

flight, currently play in the French league's Third Division and were unceremoniously bundled out of the competition last year following a gripping semi-final penalty shootout against eventual winners Gueugnon (9-8).

Guingamp, the surprise package of the French top flight this year, were handed a grim reminder of their roots - the Brittany side were only promoted this year - when Third Division Amiens left with a 3-1 scoreline in their favour.

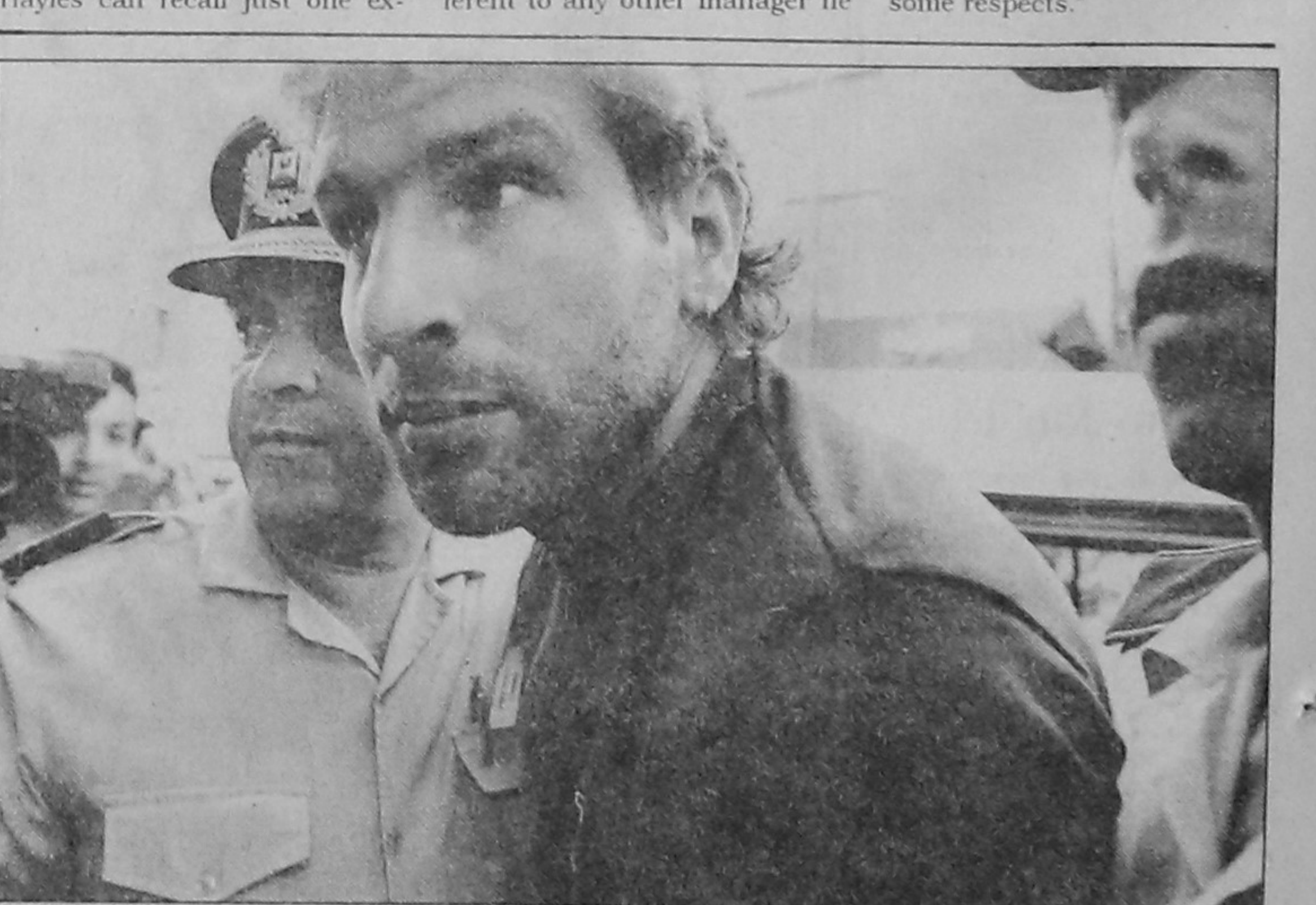
That was the end of the giant-killing for one day as Saint Etienne sailed away from Corsican side Ajaccio with a 3-1 win.

In one of the few ties to feature two teams from the top flight, drama was in plentiful supply at Sedan as visitors Lyon looked to add credence to their recent league resurgence.

On-form striker Sydney Govou, an under-21 international, handed Lyon a League Cup lifeline with a piercing header eight minutes from time to leave the 'Wild Boars' grunting at the eventual 2-1 scoreline.



Laurent Ciechelski (R) of Le Havre trying to prevent Marseille's Djamel Belmadi from getting to the ball during their French League Cup fixture at Le Havre on January 6. - AFP photo



Martin Palermo (C), Boca Junior's prolific striker, being escorted by policemen during a summit in court at Maldonado Uruguay on January 6. - AFP photo