## Leroy denies Lyon

#### Football

AFP, Paris

Jerome Leroy's late equalizer for Marseille in a 1-1 draw at Lyon prevented the hosts from taking provisional top spot in the French league on Tuesday night.

Leroy's 76th minute goal. which cancelled out Lyon's 51st minute penalty by Brazilian Sonny Anderson, was scored by one of the slowest headers ever to find the net in top class football.

Lyon keeper Gregory Coupet scrabbled for the ball, but it's painstakingly slow flight left him completely bamboozled to earn the Riviera side a point.

Earlier, William Gallas fouled Steve Marlet in the area, who had been fed by an Anderson backheel, to give away a penalty. Anderson fired the ball to the

right of keeper Damien Gregorini. who dived to his left, to put Lyon in front.

In the day's other fixture, Rennes won 3-0 at home in a midtable battle against St Etienne, heavily embroiled in the false passport scandal which has been sweeping European clubs. Senegal's Makhtar N'Diaye found the net twice for the Brittany club.

Marseille remain in 15th spot, just one place ahead of the threeteam relegation zone, and Lyon also staved where they are in third. a point behind leaders Lille and Nantes, who meet on Wednesday.

Marseille coach Javier Clemente believed his side should have won the fixture after a goal which he claimed was not offside. "A Marseille victory would have been the right result," he said.

Monaco win appeal,

French champions Monaco, who

were deducted two league points

after former Chilean defender

Pablo Contreras was found to have

played with a false Italian pass-

port, have won their appeal

against the sanctions, Monaco

president Jean-Louis Campora

Monaco were initially de-

ducted the points on January 30

after Contreras' passport turned

cessful appeal with the French

league (LNF) the Principality side

Meanwhile the same commis-

remain in 12th position 11 points

sion ruled that the points for the St

Etienne-Toulouse match, won 1-0

by St Etienne on December 2,

should be awarded to Toulouse

due to St Etienne's involvement in

St Etienne duo Alex of Brazil

and Ukrainian goalkeeper Maxim

Levitsky, now at Spartak Moscow,

false Portuguese and Greek pass-

Later on Tuesday, St Etienne's

other Brazilian Jose Aloisio was

suspended for a month, with a

two-month suspension to be acti-

vated for another offence, for us-

place, look to gain three points,

while St Etienne should lose the

three points awarded to them for

that December 2 win, and three

other points in the form of sanc-

tions, instead of the seven-point

sanction initially inflicted follow-

ing the guilty verdict on Alex and

St Etienne, however, have

submitted an appeal and, for the

moment, neither Toulouse nor St

Etienne will change position in the

French league table.

AFP, Rome

Toulouse, struggling in 16th

ing a false Portuguese passport.

the false passports scandal.

ports respectively.

Levitsky.

However after Tuesday's suc-

announced Tuesday.

adrift of leaders Lille.

out to be false.

St Etienne docked

points

AFP, Paris

A Skoro header, which went narrowly wide, was also the best

left hand post a minute before the from a long cross from the left by Anderson seconds after the restart,

Lyon had the best of the match chance of the goalless first half, in the second half but it was Marfollowing a cross from the left by seille who found the net. Leroy Yugoslavian midfielder Jovan controlled a pass from Stankovic with his chest following a Djamel Lyon also had other chances to Belmadi freekick before heading score, the best coming from Mar- into the net to earn a point.



WORLD FOOTBALL BRIEFS

The Italian Football Federation

(FIGC) have referred Udinese di-

rector general Pierpaolo Marino

and club secretary Sigfrido Mar-

catti and four players to their dis-

ciplinary committee in relation to

The players concerned are all

Latin American - they are Brazil-

ian trio Alberto, Jorginho and

Warley and Paraguayan Da Silva.

Warley has since returned to Brazil

the club of 'the use of false pass-

ports apparently issued by Portu-

guese authorities in the aim of

tered non-European players'.

REAL LRGEND

CAREER

Madrid

SANCHIS TO END

The FIGC indictment accuses

where he is on loan at Gremio.

the bogus passport scandal cur-

rently afflicting the game.

**UDINESE REFERRED** 

TO DISCIPLINARY

COMMITTEE

Lyon's Marc-Vivien Foe (L) and Lucas Bernardi of Marseille are in pursuit of the ball during their French First Division fixture on February 6.

World football briefs on Wednes-

Europe's middle-of-the-road clubs

said here on Wednesday they want

to see the UEFA Cup changed

from a knockout format to a group

system like the Champions

at the headquarters of the conti-

nent's football governing body

UEFA, however rejected the idea

of reviving the Cup Winners Cup,

UEFA general secretary

want to retain the current format

France's Jean Fournet-Fayard,

president of UEFA's competition

commission, added many middle-

they do not play enough European

games and want a group system

like the Champions League.

in the Champions League but

want a reform of the UEFA Cup.

Gerhard Aigner said: "Most clubs avoiding the maxim limit of regis-

played for the final time in 1999.

About 60 club representatives.

SMALL CLUBS WANT

TO MODIFY UEFA

**CUP FORMAT** 

NYON, Switzerland

League.

were found guilty of playing with of-the-road clubs are claiming

#### Best needs time to recover

AFP, London

Football great George Best is battling back well from pneumonia, his business manager said Mon-Skoro had headed home in-off the let, who shot on to the crossbar | day while warning that his client could need at least four weeks to

make a complete recovery. Manchester United and Northem Ireland legend Best, 54, had a "comfortable" night Monday at Belfast City Hospital, where he was being treated, according to manager Phil Hughes.

"He is continuing to improve and feeling a lot more perky than he was, but he still has this cough and rasping in his throat," he said.

"I'd say it will be at least another week before he gets out, but it could be three or four before he is completely over this."

The illness has meant that Best had to cancel a number of engagements, and has also delayed work on a Manchester United video and a new autobiography, due out in May.

The star was admitted to hospital on Friday after developing a chest infection.

Best, a commentator with Sky TV, lives with his wife Alex near the fishing village of Portavogie. County Down, south west Ireland.

Hughes added: "If he had his way, he'd be back in the studio by Saturday. But he knows he is going to have to rest once he gets home

Best, famed as much for his AFP, London hard-drinking lifestyle as for his phenomenal football skill, was a star for Manchester United in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Trafford club win the European Cup for the first time and that same year he was voted European Footballer of the Year.

said he would be retiring from

end his career with a record few

players in history could match at

On the domestic front, he has

won seven Spanish league titles,

(85/86, 86/87, 87/88, 88/89, 89/90,

94/95 and 96/97), two Spanish

Cups (88/89 and 92/93), five

Spanish Super Cups (88/89,

89/90, 90/91, 93/94 and 97/98)

won two European Cups (97/98

and 99/00), one Intercontinent

Cup (1998) and two UEFA Cups

ence: "There is nothing left for me

to win. Even in my wildest dreams,

I never thought at the start of my

career I would have won so many

Real Madrid side of the 80's in-

cluding Emilio Butragueno, Mi-

guel Gonzalez "Michel", Rafael

Martin Vazquez and Miguel

Sanchis has also played 48

Sanchis is the last of the great

At international level, he has

Sanchis told a press confer-

and one League Cup (84/85).

(84/85 and 85/86).

Pardeza.

Real Madrid captain Manolo San- times for the full Spanish side, 16

chis, a virtual legend after 18 sea- times at under-21 level and twice

sons at the club, on Wednesday for the Olympic team.

The 35-year-old defender will

football at the end of this season.

club level.



Middlebrough's Keith O'Neil (L) fights for possession with Gareth Ainsworth of Wimbledon during their FA Cup clash at Middlebrough on February 6.

### Reds befriending Yankees!

Football

English Premiership champions Manchester United were Wednesday poised to unveil a lucrative In 1968 he helped the Old marketing deal with baseball's New York Yankees in a multimillion-dollar marriage of sport and business.

The coup would cement United's position as the world's wealthiest football club and give it unprecedented access to the huge US market.

According to apparently wellinformed reports in Britain and in the United States, United and YankeeNets, the company that owns the Yankees, will form a "super club" able to package itself to potential sponsors and TV net-

On a more basic level, they would sell each other's merchandising, such as souvenirs and kits. United's share price shot to the top of the London Stock Exchange's leader board Wednesday on reports of the deal, which was expected to be announced in New Kenyon spoke recently of the York later in the day.

cent to 225.75 pence, as the club possible. would "announce details of a mar- one of the club's most famous keting alliance" at a press confer- former players and now a director, ence in New York later in the day. were in New York for the press press speculation here.

It did not specify with whom. conference. Reports here put the value of

the deal at tens of millions of dollars at the very least and potentially billions. It follows United's record-

breaking tie-up last year with sportswear giant Nike. That 13year deal, the most lucrative sponsorship and merchandise package ever, is worth 302.9 million pounds (440 million dollars, 475

million euros). The expected United-Yankees link marries two of the biggest, richest, best supported and most successful clubs in the world.

United has been England's dominant soccer club in the past decade, winning six of the last eight Premiership titles and on course for another, and is an everpresent threat in the lucrative European Champions League.

pounds on the stock market, it is also probably the world's most popular club with lucrative fan bases across the world, particularly in Asia.

United chief executive Peter club's desire to "break into the US Its share price jumped 5.6 per- markets" and this deal makes that

confirmed in a statement that it He and Sir Bobby Charlton, other leading soccer clubs such as

As for YankeeNets, it owns the AFP, Milan National Hockey Yankees. League's New Jersey Devils and the New Jersey Nets of the National Basketball Association.

baseball's most famous club having won a total of 25 World Series crowns, including three of the last | ing a bogus passport. They are understood to be

capitalised at about 600 million dollars, making them the wealthiest baseball team in the United

According to a global brand

valuation study released last week Manchester United are second in the world's top 10 sporting franchises behind the Dallas Combons of American football, and the Yankees are fourth. The survey by brand consul-

Valued at some one billion tancy FutureBrand put United's global brand value alone at 259 million dollars, with the Yankees

Last year, YankeeNets signed a commercial tie-up with this year's American football Super Bowl finalists the New York Giants.

Once the deal between United and the Yankees is sewn up, the next step is likely to be to invite Italy's Juventus and Real Madrid of Spain into the fold, according to

FA Cup

#### Wimbledon stay alive

AFP, London

Battling Wimbledon kept their hopes of a famous cup double over Middlesbrough alive with a gritty display in a 0-0 draw at the Riverside Stadium on Tuesday.

Terry Burton's First Division outfit held their own against the Premiership opponents in an uninspiring fourth round encounter to book a replay at Selhurst Park, where they have already dumped the Teesiders out of the League Cup this season.

The result was due at least in part to the brilliance of keeper Kelvin Davis, who made stunning saves from Croat Alen Boksic and Hamilton Ricard - although it was a gutsy all-round performance which meant they can still dream of a last 16 clash with Wycombe Wanderers.

Playing in front of just 20,625 spectators. Boro at least extended their unbeaten run under coach Terry Venables to 11 games, but there was little else to cheer on a night when they looked short on ideas and quality when it mat-

#### Bogus passport holder Recoba returning home

Inter Milan's Uruguayan striker Alvaro Recoba arrived at Milan's Malpensa airport Tuesday evening The Yankees are arguably to return to his homeland, hours after being quizzed by magistrates who have charged him with hav-Recoba, who last month signed

> him the highest paid player in Italy, will not be able to return to Italy until he has regularised his situation. Recoba arrived at Malpensa

a contract which reportedly makes

from the northern town of Udine where he had been quizzed by magistrate Paolo Alessio Verni for two hours.

The 24-year-old was due to fly to Buenos Aires before getting a connecting flight to Montevideo.

#### West Ham sign Lamperini

LONDON, Internet

West Ham signed Italian teenager

Alessandro Zamperini on a free transfer from Serie A leaders AS Roma on Friday.

Manager Harry Redknapp said he had signed the highly rated 18vear-old defender after he impressed in a closed doors match at Upton Park.

#### Hitzfeld extends contract

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich coach Ottmai Hitzfeld is set to sign an extension to his contract which will link him with the club till June 30 2004, the club said in a statement on Tues-

president Franz Beckenbauer for a contract which outstrips his old his left knee, leaving him on the one, due to expire on June 30 2003. | sidelines as his new club made the the statement added. The exact details of the deal are yet to be finalized.

"We have done some very good work the last few years and I like i at the club," said 58-year-old Hitzfeld, who has been with Bayern since 1998. "I consider an extension to my

existing contract as proof that the club has confidence in me. I'm looking forward to my future years Hitzfeld, who led Borussia

Dortmund to the European Cup title in 1997, is generally consid ered to be a prime candidate to become Germany's international coach at some stage

### Football

AFP, Rome

Brazilian midfielder Emerson is emerging as the perfect hangover cure for Italy's newly-crowned 'winter champions' AS Roma. The midfielder joined Roma

from German oufit Bayer Leverkusen in the summer but in Hitzfeld agreed terms with club | August during the pre-season he ruptured a cruciate ligament on early-season running in Serie A, establishing an eight-point lead at one point.

> almost six months and undergoing rehabilitation the man from Pelotas - full name Emerson Ferreira da Rosa - has come back to bolster the 'capolista' (league leaders) just as they appeared to be faltering. A home draw against bottom

> club Bari and a 3-2 defeat at AC Milan saw Roma's lead dwindle to three points as Emerson was judged still not match-fit. But Emerson, 25 in April, has

played in the two most recent matches with Napoli (3-0) and Parma (2-1) that have seen Roma recover their early season form

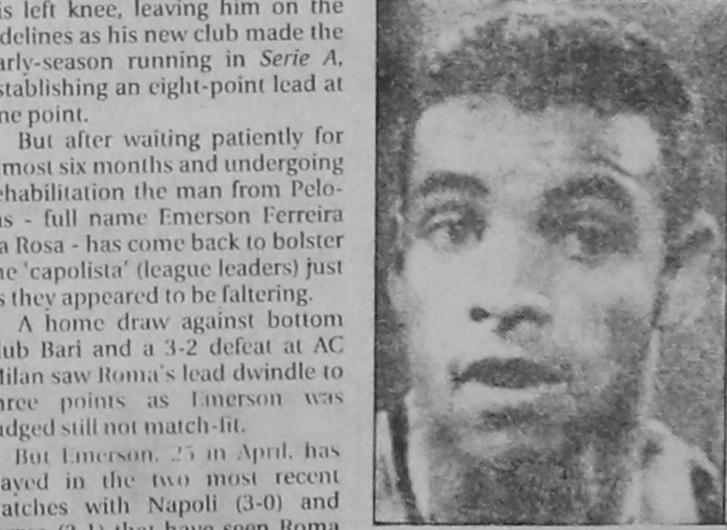
title of winter champions, a purely with every game." symbolic accolade bestowed on the team that tops Serie A at the new weapon, saying: "All he needs

Roma's tonic called Emerson

has restored the 'giallorossi' as ferent positions but I think he is a clear favourites for the real title.

halfway point of the season.

It is almost like signing a new roles. player for Roma and the player is happy with his progress, saving: "I am satisfied with my perform-



and extend their lead to six points. ances and I think I have played That has seen Roma earn the like I ought to. I am getting better

Capello is also pleased with his to do now is find his rythm - I am Perhaps more importantly it going to have a look at him in difvery capable player in several

> Emerson is being compared as the successor to another Brazilian Paulo Roberto Falcao, the playmaker in the last Roma side to win the Scudetto in 1982-3.

Falcao is still revered in Rome for his role in that team alongside the likes of Italy's 1982 World Cup winners Bruno Conti and Francesco Graziani and Carlo Ancelotti, now coach to Juventus.

Like Falcao he is a superb passer of the ball with great technique but with Capello liking to play Francesco Totti behind a front pairing of Gabriel Batistuta and Marco Delvecchio Emerson is taking on a more holding role with Roma - he is also an accomplished tackler.

If Roma win that clusive title in June then the moment Emerson helped swady Labro Capello's ship will be seen as one of the key moments in the campaign.

#### Cheju's chief attraction dootball governing body, UEFA,

FIFA president Sepp Blatter (L) makes a point while UEFA chief Lennart Johansson looks on during their talks

with the Swedish government on the soccer players' transfers issue in Stockholm on February 6.

and his AS Roma counterpart Franco Sensi met Treasury Minis-AFP, Sogwipo, South Korea

ter Vincenzo Visco Tuesday to discuss their interest in purchas-The two Roman clubs are cur- but is going to have one of the rently co-tenants at the Stadium | most stunning stadiums ever used

Set in former mandarin groves between an extinct volcano and The publicly-owned stadium is | centuries old fishing villages, the due to be auctioned off and the | Sogwipo World Cup Stadium will be a personal triumph for Kang Sang-Joo, mayor of the island's

Kang took on powerful central government bureaucrats who laughed at the bid to host matches acquire the stadium together with for the 2002 finals on an island best known for welcoming honeymoon couples to its beaches.

step forward but there is a long dent of the influential European

said during a recent visit to Cheju



that Sogwipo was one of the most beautiful settings for a football match he had ever seen.

Behind the stadium is the 1,950 meter (5,900 feet) Mount Halla, which last erupted several thousand years ago but still dominates the island. Down the slope, every morning dozens of elderly women put on diving gear to go swimming around the rocky coast for sea cucumbers and shellfish.

But Kang, who has had to raise more than 100 million dollars to build the stadium, admitted as he watched seven-day-a-week work to get it finished that it has taken a lot of determination.

A rangled mass of steel and huge construction cranes cover matches, does not have a profesthe pitch. The project is scheduled sional football team. Even the Scoul, Suwon, Taegu, Taejon, to be ready in December, but it island's best amateurs rarely get a Ulsan and on Cheju.

will be one of the last finished for the finals, to be co-hosted in South Korea and Japan starting May 31 next year.

South Korean engineers have had to dig a 20 metre (66 feet) deep hole for the stadium to reduce the impact of the subtropical sea winds on the star footballers when they visit next

Even now there are doubts whether the sunken pitch and roof over the top will give enough protection from the winds and sum-The setting is not the only

strange aspect about the stadium. Cheju, which will host three chance to play on the South Korean mainland. Justifying a 42,256 seat stadium

been one of the toughest jobs for mayor Kang. "The government did not want us to hold the matches, we had to fight," he said in an interview with AFP. There was a lot of fierce lob-

bying with public petitions. Seogwipo only got on the list of 10 South Korean venues for the World Cup finals when it agreed to bear the full cost of 109 million dollars, despite the country's fi-

nancial troubles. South Korea is spending two Cheju. billion dollars on new stadiums in

In the end, the government loaned about one third of the cost which will have to be paid back after the tournament, said Kang, AS Roma's Japanese midfielder for the city of 86,000 people has who will face local elections just | Hidetoshi Nakata could be given a before the World Cup finals start.

Ahn, said: "The stadium is not for me. It is for the young people, I don't care."

But the mayor insisted "the people are behind this, they want on a left leg injury which he picked this." He added: "We have hosted up in Sunday's 2-1 victory at summits between South Korean Parma and was duly prescribed leaders and (former US) president | treatment for strained adductor Bill Clinton and (Chinese) Presi- muscles. dent Jiang Zemin, this will bring more international attention on

About 8,000 seats will be taken Chonju, Inchon, Kwangju, Pusan. - out of the stadium after the World Cup circus leaves. What will happen then?

#### Nakata's fingers crossed

AFP, Rome

rare start in Sunday's Italian First One of the fisherwomen, Mrs Division match with Bologna due to injury doubts over star playmaker Francesco Totti.

Skipper Totti underwent a scan

Nakata, who has featured little in Roma's lineup since joining the club from Italian Serie A rivals Perugia, came on as a substitute for Totti on Sunday after he came off injured in the 85th minute.

# Final. dium would be sold.

way to go."

Rome giants meet minister over stadium purchase

ing the Olympic Stadium. that hosted the 1960 Olympic Games and the 1990 World Cup

Lazio president Sergio Cragnotti

minister is poised to name the minimum price at which the sta-"It's an important project." said Cragnotti. "And now we are waiting for a public auction to the Roma president and to have

The South Korean island of Cheju has no professional football team in the World Cup finals.

main city.

our stadium. Today we took a little But Lennart Johansson, presi-



