

FIFPro president blasted

AFP, London

Gordon Taylor, president of the international players' union FIFPro, on Sunday found himself under fire from two of English football's leading figures.

Premier League chief executive Richard Scudamore and FA vice-chairman David Dein are both furious with Taylor's stance in the bitter battle to reform Europe's transfer system.

Taylor is at odds with both football's world governing body FIFA and European equivalent UEFA.

UEFA and FIFA and the European Commission pledged on Friday to strike an agreement by March 5 but FIFPro reiterated their threat to throw the game into chaos, bringing about the attacks on Taylor.

FIFPro's latest proposals for reforming the transfer system is seen by many as a scheme to give players the right to break their contracts.

"Two months ago Gordon showed me a paper that had exactly the same proposals as ours," Scudamore told the Sunday Telegraph.

"But because the players are no longer driving the negotiations he has altered his position."

"Few players in this country have ever heard of FIFPro and Gordon has put himself in a very difficult position. It's completely hypocritical."

"Every time we seem to have reached agreement with FIFPro they try to go the extra mile."

"It's crass negotiating and they have been isolated by their own ridiculous position."

Scudamore has found an ally in Dein, the Arsenal vice-chairman.

"I have approached some of the senior players at Arsenal who state categorically they have not been consulted and they are totally unaware of the issues," said Dein.

"FIFPro are playing a dangerous game. The way they are going could administer the kiss of death to many of their members."

Zacc's back to the wall

AFP, Milan

Alberto Zaccheroni saw his defensive crisis mount Sunday two days ahead of the match with Paris St Germain in the European Champions League that could decide his fate as AC Milan coach.

A win at the Parc des Princes on Tuesday would help ease the pressure on Zaccheroni and put Milan well on course for the quarter-finals.

Milan needed an injury-time goal by defender Luigi Sala to snatch a 3-3 draw with Bologna at the San Siro on Saturday night.

But the goalscorer is the only defender Zaccheroni can definitely count on for the match with PSG who drew 1-1 with Milan at the San Siro Wednesday in a match many considered the French side should have won.

Skipper Paolo Maldini picked up a knock to his left knee and is an injury doubt while Brazilian stopper Roque Junior will be suspended as a result of the red card he earned against PSG for a professional foul on Nicolas Anelka.

Alessandro Costacurta is still injured while Georgian defender Kakha Kaladze is ineligible, having already played for Dynamo Kiev of the Ukraine.

"At the moment the only player I can count in defence is Sala," said Zaccheroni, who admitted his side were lucky to escape with a draw.

Luck seemed to be on Milan's side in the first half with Ukrainian goal machine Andriy Shevchenko scoring twice against the run of play and Bologna's Enzo Maresca having a penalty saved by Christian Abbiati.

But in the second period two goals from Giacomo Cipriani and one from Giuseppe Signori saw Bologna snatch a 3-2 lead before Sala's last-gasp leveller.

Better news emerged for Zaccheroni in the return of Gennaro Gattuso to boost an equally injured midfield but the former Glasgow Rangers player, who appeared as a substitute, did not seem match fit.

"We lost to many balls even though we had one man more (than Bologna) in midfield," said Zac, who led Milan to an unexpected Scudetto in his first season in charge (1998-9).

"Obviously we have physical problems. It does no good to consider this a point win or two points lost, we must accept what happened and prepare for the Champions League."

"Obviously a draw does not make me happy but I continue to have faith in this Milan."

The Italian press Sunday morning considered that Sala's goal had saved Zaccheroni's job but insisted that a poor result against PSG at the Parc des Princes would mean the end.



PHOTO AFP

Barcelona's veteran defender Josep Guardiola (R) under pressure from Deportivo La Coruna's Brazilians Emerson Moises and Donato during their Primera Liga clash at Barcelona on February 17.

Primera Liga

Barca stoop to champs

Football

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona slumped further behind in the Spanish league title race on Saturday following a 3-2 home defeat by reigning champions Deportivo La Coruna.

The ever-dependable Raul meanwhile ensured Real Madrid's bandwagon continued to roll as he hit the only goal in a 1-0 success at the Bernabeu stadium against tallenders Santander.

Valencia scored a 2-0 win in the late match at Las Palmas to move above Barcelona into third spot with goals from Juan Sanchez and new Argentine starlet Pablo Aimar.

Real, with 51 points from 23 matches, have a four-point lead over Deportivo while Valencia are a further five points back.

Barcelona are 11 points behind Real and their title hopes seem to have faded altogether for this season as they continue to trail way behind their bitter rivals having already flopped in the Champions League which Real are looking to retain this season.

Brazilian Djalminha opened the scoring on six minutes for "Super Depor" but Barca roared back to level through another samba star, Rivaldo, who netted



PHOTO AFP

An anxious moment in the Hamburg D during their Bundesliga fixture against Borussia Dortmund at Hamburg on February 17.

Bundesliga

Tumbling top three

Football

AFP, Berlin

Germany's top three sides all lost on Saturday to leave reigning champions Bayern Munich slightly less sheepish than their immediate rivals as the Bavarians emerged with their two-point lead intact.

Bayern's loss was near neighbours Unterhaching's gain, as the latter's 1-0 win achieved through a 57th-minute Miroslav Spizak goal lifted Unterhaching out of the bottom three.

Spizak profited from a monumental error from defender Jens Jeremies to net the only goal of the game and spark delirium among Unterhaching's fans in the 16,000 sellout crowd at the Hachinger Sportpark.

Bayern, missing suspended midfielder Stefan Effenberg, thus suffered their sixth league defeat of the season.

But they remain in command

with 42 points from 22 games after second-placed Schalke 04 went down 2-1 at Werder Bremen and third-placed Bayer Leverkusen lost by the same margin at Hansa Rostock.

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld could only reflect on missed chances.

"We had the chances to win it but when you underperform you don't win. And we didn't deserve to win," was his curt assessment.

Werder Bremen thanked Peruvian star Claudio Pizarro for a spectacular opener against Schalke and Fabian Ernst scored off a deflected freekick on 27 minutes before a 34,000 crowd at the Weststadion before league top scorer Ebbe Sand scored a 66th-minute consolation following good work by Andi Moller.

In completing the double over Leverkusen, eastern German side Rostock provisionally moved out of the bottom five ahead of former European champions SV Hamburg, who face fourth-placed Borussia Dortmund in the night

match.

A win would move Dortmund level on points with Schalke and Leverkusen.

Leverkusen squandered the lead given them midway through the first half by veteran striker Ulf Kirsten's ninth goal of the season as Victor Agali promptly levelled and then Steffen Baumgart headed a 56th-minute winner to boost Rostock's hitherto miserable home record.

The hosts had to play out the final five minutes with ten men after Kai Oswald was sent off for dissent.

Freiburg are meanwhile making an unlikely run for a European spot after a 2-0 win at Energie Cottbus achieved with a double from Frenchman Regis Dorn, leaving Volker Finke's side unbeaten in ten outings.

Cottbus's fifth home reverse sees them back in the drop zone.

French First Division Super-sub Bakayoko

AFP, Paris

Former Everton flop Ibrahima Bakayoko was elevated to hero status by Marseille fans Saturday after coming off the bench to score the only goal of the game at the Stade Velodrome over bitter rivals Paris Saint Germain.

Struggling former European champions Marseille left Bakayoko on the bench to start with, leaving the burden for goals on the broad shoulders of another ex-Parisien, former world player of the year George Weah.

And it was Weah's through ball to Bakayoko which produced the goal that handed Marseille three precious points to boost their fight against the drop, though they remain in the bottom five, a point behind PSG.

PSG coach Luis Fernandez elected to leave Nicolas Anelka on the bench and deploy Brazilian striker Christian as a lone target man, only bringing Anelka on when it was far too late.

The match looked to be heading for stalemate until Weah produced a moment of inspiration.

Running into what seemed a cul-de-sac in the inside left channel he flipped a perfect through ball into Bakayoko, who poked the ball past PSG goalkeeper Lionel Letizi to spark pandemonium on the terraces.

PSG's 12th league defeat not only leaves them just six points outside the drop zone but July 10 points away from a European place, despite a 70-million-dollar outlay on new players last summer.

They have won just twice in Marseille in 25 years and not since 1988.

And with reigning champions Monaco beating Bastia 2-1 in the principle PSG now slide below the Monegasques into 12th spot.

Lille meanwhile maintained their unlikely bid for the title by winning 1-0 at Guingamp to stay a point clear of Sedan, 2-0 winners at St Etienne.

Lille, for whom Dagui Bakari was on target after 38 minutes, have 47 points from 27 games to 46 for Sedan and 44 for Nantes, who host tallenders Strasbourg on Sunday.

Nantes can go joint top should they win that one.

Sedan thanked second half efforts from Moussa N'Diaye and Philippe Celdran for their win at troubled Saint Etienne, who are floundering after their loss of six league points over the passports scandal.

"Les Verts", ten times French champions, are second bottom with three points to make up on Toulouse.

Lyon lost ground in the title race after they could only manage a 1-1 draw at Toulouse, Victor Bonilla of Colombia blasting home his 14th goal of the season after Lyon's Brazilian star Sonny Anderson had netted his 13th six minutes before the break with a low drive.

Lyon keeper Gregory Coupet saved his side several times while Bonilla hit the bar in the first half having got past Lyon's Brazilian defender Jose Edmison.

The tide turned Toulouse's way when Edmison was red-carded for a second foul on Bonilla midway through the second half.

Christophe Delmotte did volley against the woodwork for Lyon but Toulouse were determined to claim at least a point and did so when Bonilla cracked in a sizzling effort on 84 minutes to become league top scorer.



PHOTO AFP

Ferdinand Coly (R) of Lens locked in an aerial tussle with Julien Escude of Rennes during their French First Division game on February 17.



PHOTO AFP

Dean Sturridge (L) of Leicester City shielding the ball from Bristol City's Matthew Hill during their FA Cup fifth round tie at Filbert Street on January 17.

FA Cup

Spurs make Graham proud

Football

AFP, London

Tottenham manager George Graham heaped praise on his youngsters Saturday after the north London club booked their place in the English FA Cup quarter-finals with a 4-0 win over First Division Stockport.

Ledley King, 20 gave the home side an early lead before 21-year-old Simon Davies scored his first goal for Tottenham since joining from Second Division Peterborough.

"Mike Flynn turned a cross into his own net a minute before the interval and a second half strike by Davies completed a comfortable victory at White Hart Lane."

"There are still aspects of the game that Davies has to learn but when he breaks from midfield he will nearly always hit the target," said Graham.

"The Spurs boss was also impressed by King and another home grown talent Luke Young. 'I thought they were both outstanding,' he said."

Graham was also happy that his side put on an attacking display after being heavily criticised for their defensive approach to recent Premiership matches.

"Of course the result is pleasing but there were a lot of good things in our performance as well," he said.

"We have laid a base defensively over the last few weeks and now we are starting to work in

midfield and attack. Hopefully we will get a bit of praise from people now."

Ironically, Welsh international Davies was only on the field because Oyvind Leonhardsen was forced off after 15 minutes following a crunching challenge from Flynn.

"That's football," said Graham. "Somebody gets an opportunity and the young boy seizes his today. You dream of these things and that's why it's a game that we love."

West Ham booked their place in the quarter-finals after beating Premiership strugglers Sunderland 1-0 at the Stadium of Light.

French striker Frederic Kanouté scored the only goal of the game 14 minutes from time to take Harry Redknapp's men through to the last eight after the visitors had dominated a tight fifth round encounter.

But West Ham's veteran defender Stuart Pearce played down his side's chances of going further in the competition.

"Our name is in the hat. Let's just leave it at that," said the 38-year-old former England international. "We had a very tough game today and the whole competition has been tough for us."

Premiership Leicester beat Second Division Bristol City 3-0 to reach the quarter-finals for the first time in 19 years.

Second Division Wycombe, the lowest side left in the competition, came back from being 2-0 down at half time to earn a replay

in a thrilling 2-2 draw at Adams Park.

Wycombe manager Lawrie Sanchez was responsible for the most famous moment in Wimbledon history when he headed the winner against Liverpool in the 1988 FA Cup Final.

Wimbledon boss Terry Burton collared his old friend Sanchez after the game and told him: "You lucky so-and-so."

Lancashire rivals Bolton and Blackburn drew 1-1 in the all First Division clash at the Reebok Stadium.

Tranmere, who knocked out Premiership strugglers Everton in the last round, put their league form behind them with a battling performance in a 0-0 draw against Premiership outfit Southampton at The Dell.

Arsenal take on cup holders Chelsea at Highbury on Sunday without captain Tony Adams and England midfielder Ray Parlour who are both serving suspensions.

Arsene Wenger's men are desperately trying to get Adams' long-time England partner Martin Keown fit. Keown has been out with knee trouble for the past month.

But Wenger may have to settle in the end for a central defence partnership of Gilles Grimandi, who deputised for Keown in the 1-0 Champions League win in Lyon on Tuesday, and Latvian Igor Stepanovs.

Manchester City will be hoping Steve Howey can soldier on despite a hairline fracture on his toe to play against Liverpool in Sunday's fifth round tie at Anfield.

Serie A

Sala to Milan's rescue

Football

AFP, Rome

A last-gasp goal from Luigi Sala saved a point for AC Milan on Saturday in the Serie A in a thrill-

ing 3-3 draw with Bologna at the San Siro.

The result left the Milanese in joint fifth with Udinese, who earlier beat Verona 2-1 with Stefano Fiore and Christian Emanuel Diaz on target either side of half time.

Massimo Oddo scored a late penalty for the visitors.

Milan had only themselves to blame for slack defending as they squandered a two-goal lead given them with a brace of first half goals Andriy Shevchenko, the first a right foot shot from the edge of the box, the second a smart finish from an Ibrahim Ba cross.

Bologna's teenage striker Agostino Cipriani reciprocated with a double strike of his own on 55 and 75 minutes and then for-

mer international forward Beppo Signori turned the match on its head with a third goal for Bologna in the 81st minute.

Stung into a furious finale Milan, held at home in the Champions League in midweek by Paris Saint Germain, made their late pressure tell as Sala brought Alberto Zaccheroni's men level in injury time.

It could have been worse as Milan keeper Christian Abbiati saved an Enzo Maresca penalty just before half time.

Leaders Roma will attempt to put their UEFA Cup flop against Liverpool behind them on Sunday with a home win over Lecce, while second-placed Juventus travel to rock-bottom Bari.

STANDINGS

AFP, Milan

Italian league table after matches played Saturday (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

AS Roma	18	13	3	2	35	14	42
Juventus	18	10	6	2	32	15	36
Lazio	18	10	4	4	33	20	34
Atalanta	18	8	6	4	22	15	30
Udinese	19	9	1	9	33	31	28
AC Milan	19	7	7	5	30	29	28
Perugia	18	7	5	6	25	22	26
Parma	18	7	5	6	21	18	26
Fiorentina	18	6	7	5	30	25	25
Inter Milan	18	6	7	5	21	20	25
Bologna	19	7	4	8	23	24	25
Lecce	18	5	7	6	23	29	22
Brescia	18	4	8	6	22	23	20
Vicenza	18	5	4	9	19	29	19
Verona	19	4	6	9	22	33	18
Verona	18	4	5	9	20	30	17
Napoli	18	4	2	12	13	31	14
Roggina	18	4	2	12	13	31	14
Bari	18	3	3	12	16	31	12