



Arsenal's Swedish international Fredrick Ljungberg celebrates his second goal against Manchester City.

Premiership Lethal Ljungberg

Football

AFP, Manchester

Sweden's Fredrick Ljungberg fired home two of Arsenal's goals in a 4-0 thrashing of Manchester City on Wednesday to keep them firmly in the English Premiership relegation zone.

France's Sylvain Wilford and Nwankwo Kanu of Nigeria hit the other two for second-placed Arsenal, who are now 13 points behind pacesetters Manchester United.

This was City's 11th home league defeat in the Premiership and relegation is looking increasingly likely as they languish second from bottom.

Arsenal, in contrast, showed no ill-effects from their FA Cup victory against Tottenham on Sunday and were comfortable winners.

They stormed into a two-goal lead after just nine minutes and were never in danger after that blistering opening spell.

Keeper Carlo Nash made his debut between the posts for City. But

Nicky Weaver's replacement could not have had a worse start. Arsenal went ahead in the eighth minute when Ashley Cole's cross was miscued by Wilford. But the ball broke nicely for Ljungberg, who knocked it sweetly past Nash.

A minute later City, struggling to

Joe Royle after blunders in successive games by Weaver. But the keeper was again left exposed in the 17th minute when Arsenal scored a third.

Ljungberg got his second goal of the game with a delightful chip over Nash after Kanu had threatened the

Arsenal were knocking the ball about with the style and composure of a side lying second in the table.

City, in contrast, were struggling to string two passes together and that three-goal blast had knocked the wind out of their sails.

The only time they threatened Arsenal in the opening stages was when Shaun Goater escaped his marker when Danny Tiatto delivered a corner. However, his header sailed over the top.

Arsenal went 4-0 ahead after 37 minutes to leave the City supporters disconsolate. Some even headed for the exits.

Wilford split the defence with a back heel into the path of Ashley Cole. Unselfishly he delivered the ball to Kanu, who was able to turn in acres of space and fire a shot beyond

Nash.

The game was briefly interrupted in the second half when two streakers, male and female, raced on to the pitch before being collared by stewards.

The irony was not lost on the City fans; they had seen their team laid bare by Arsenal.

Premiership's top six

After Wednesday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Man United	32	22	7	3	70	22	73
Arsenal	32	17	9	6	53	29	60
Leeds United	32	16	5	11	48	37	53
Liverpool	32	15	8	9	48	38	53
Sunderland	32	14	8	8	51	32	50
Sunderland	32	13	10	9	37	32	49

get out of the relegation zone, found themselves two down.

Ray Parlour made space down the left and picked out Wilford, who turned quickly. He drilled a shot through Richard Dunne's legs, leaving Nash unsuspected.

Nash was drafted in by manager

himself on the edge of the area but skied his shot into the crowd.

French League Cup Monaco fix date with Lyon

Football

AFP, Monaco

Monaco will face Lyon in the League Cup final at the Stade de France on May 5 after their 2-0 home victory over Second Division Niort at the Stade Louis II here on Wednesday.

A goal in either half from Italian striker Marco Simone and Argentine midfielder supremo Marcelo Gallardo was enough for the Monegasque aristocrats to breeze past a plucky but visibly less talented Niort.

The match was of crucial importance to Monaco's season as an eventual tournament victory represents their only realistic hope of

automatic UEFA Cup qualification next season.

"We did everything for this victory and were delighted with it," Monaco keeper Stephane Porato said after the match.

"It was difficult to pick ourselves up from the defeat at the weekend but to be honest we all feel renewed after the break," added Porato in reference to Lyon's last gasp 2-1 league victory over Monaco on Saturday.

Niort could have taken the lead early on when Samba N'Diaye ran through on Porato in the 23rd minute, but he came out well to narrow the angle and the striker fired into Porato's shins.

Simone's goal in the 26th minute

resulted from a speculative cross from Philippe Leonard on the left that the Niort keeper tried to punch clear only for the ball to balloon toward Simone.

The Italian's miscued header ballooned back into the air but flew over the keeper and just under the bar.

Gallardo's goal on 62 minutes though was pure class. The Argentine international received a cross-field ball from Simone, controlled it with his chest and lobbed the keeper from 35 yards.

Monaco had several chances to increase the score but 2-0 was enough for the struggling League champions to book a revenge date with Lyon.



Shabani Nonda (R) of Monaco and Niort captain Pascal Braud chasing the ball during their semifinal of the French League Cup in Monaco on April 11.

Radebe sad

AFP, London

Leeds United defender Lucas Radebe spoke of his sadness Thursday at the death of at least 43 football fans killed in a stampede at Ellis Park, Johannesburg on Wednesday.

Nine people were in critical condition and another 89 were still being treated at three Johannesburg hospitals Thursday morning after thousands of would-be spectators surged into an already full stadium Wednesday evening in a bid to watch a derby match between the country's two most popular teams, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates.

Radebe, the South Africa captain and former Chiefs player, told the BBC: "When people lose lives like that at a football game it is really, really sad."

"What happened was absolutely a disaster for all the families of all those people who died - a tragedy."

"I spoke to a couple of players and they could not believe what was happening."

"When Kaizer play Orlando Pirates, there is more than 100,000 people who want to come to watch the games."

"Football has grown since we were re-admitted to international football, and when games like this come up everybody wants to go."

"Everything has to be perfect. Things like this have been avoided at all costs."



Barriers lie in the road outside Ellis Park rugby stadium in Johannesburg on April 12, where a soccer stampede killed 43 people.

Football tragedies in the past 15 years

AFP, Paris

After the tragedy at a football match in Johannesburg Wednesday which left at least 47 people dead, following is a list of the previous tragedies at football stadiums in the past 15 years:

1985: Bradford (northern England). A fire in the main stand during a match between Bradford and Lincoln City kills 56 people. The blaze, apparently sparked by a cigarette butt, broke out just before half-time and engulfed the entire wooden stand in a few minutes.

1985: Mexico. Ten people are killed and 30 seriously injured before the final of the Mexico Cup between Nacional Universidad and America. A panic in the crowd led to a stampede at the entrance to the huge Olympic Stadium.

1985: Heysel Stadium, Brussels. Barely three weeks after the tragedy in Bradford, 39 people are crushed to death before the European Champions Cup final between Juventus of Turin and Liverpool. Fights had broken out in the stands between rival fans, and English supporters said a wall collapsed under pressure from spectators who were attempting to flee the clashes. English clubs were banned from European competitions for five years as a result of the tragedy.

1988: Katmandu. More than 100 people are killed and 300 injured in a stampede during a match in Nepal's National Stadium. The tragedy occurred when spectators rushed to find shelter from a powerful hail storm, but found the doors closed.

1989: Hillsborough Stadium, Sheffield, England. A total of 96 Liverpool supporters are crushed to death and around 300 injured during the semi-final of the FA Cup between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest. The tragedy occurred when police opened the doors at one entrance to allow around 2,000 people without tickets to enter the stadium, crushing others in the stands.

1991: Orkney, South Africa. Clashes during a friendly match between two rival clubs, the Orlando Pirates and the Kaizer Chiefs, left 40 people dead and 50 injured. The violence broke out after the referee disallowed a goal.

1992: Furiani Stadium, Bastia. Fifteen people are killed and 1,300 injured when a temporary stand collapses during the semi-final of the French Cup between Bastia and Marseille.

1996: Mateo Flores Stadium, Guatemala. Ninety people are killed and 150 injured in a crush of spectators during a World Cup qualification match between Guatemala and Costa Rica. The stadium was built to accommodate 45,000 people, but held around 60,000.

1996: Tripoli, Libya. Eight people are killed and 42 injured during clashes between supporters of rival clubs.

July 9, 2000: Harare. At least 13 people are killed when spectators rush to leave the national stadium after police set off tear gas grenades during a World Cup qualification match between Zimbabwe and South Africa. The police had intervened to stop spectators from throwing objects onto the pitch after a goal by South Africa.

April 11, 2001: Johannesburg. At least 47 people, among them women and children, are killed when thousands of fans desperate to see a game between South Africa's two most popular teams storm an already packed stadium.

Redondo on way back

AFP, Milan

AC Milan's Argentinian midfielder Fernando Redondo is slowly making his way back into first-team contention after a season-long injury nightmare - but is still unlikely to return before the end of the current campaign.

Redondo, who joined the San Siro club after inspiring Real Madrid to victory in the 2000 Champions League Final, saw his first season after a season-long injury nightmare - but is still unlikely to return before the end of the current campaign.

And judging by his remarks in the Italian sports press Thursday, he will not be able to return before the end of the season on June 17.

"I can't say when I will return," said Redondo, who is yet to kick a ball in his rehabilitation programme.

"I ask that question myself, they are asking it in Argentina but I am better. It's not important when I return but how I return."

He is at present concentrating on running.

"I am running well and in particular I am running uphill. Running uphill is very good for me," said the 31-year-old.

Scottish Premiership Flo taking Rangers to Europe

Football

AFP, Glasgow

Tore Andre Flo scored two first-half goals in a 2-1 win at Kilmarnock on Wednesday to all but seal Rangers' place in next season's European Champions League qualifiers.

Garry Hay grabbed a late consolation goal for the home side, but it could have been so different, had former Ibrox favourite Ally McCoist not had a first-half penalty saved by Stefan Klos.

The victory puts Rangers nine points clear of third-placed Hibernian - but that is scant consolation after a disappointing, trophy-less season in which great rivals Celtic march on towards the domestic clean sweep.

Kilmarnock snatched a goal back from nothing in the 74th minute when Frederic Dindeleux found Hay in the box and he drilled an unstoppable drive past Klos.

Rangers continued to press for the killer goal and Flo almost bagged his hat-trick when Wallace crossed to the far post and the tall striker fired just wide.

minute when referee Eric Martinidale controversially pointed to the spot after Kevin McGowne had gone down as Rangers tried to defend Mark Reilly's free-kick.

Justice was done, however, moments later when Ibrox legend McCoist, who is set to hang up his boots at the end of the season, stepped up.

Rangers goalkeeper Klos pushed his effort on to the post and he even got up to make another great stop to deny Andy McLaren's follow-up shot.

In the dying seconds of the half, Rangers deservedly doubled their lead when Fernando Ricksen sent the ball across the face of the goal, and Innes again failed to put the ball behind, leaving Flo with the easiest of tap-ins for his second of the night.

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Nakata keen on MU

Football

AFP, London

Japan international Hidetoshi Nakata on Thursday said he would relish the chance to play for Premiership leaders Manchester United.

The 24-year-old midfielder has struggled to make an impact with Serie A leaders Roma this season and admits he may have to move on to resurrect his career.

"I can understand that the Roma coach Fabio Capello is reluctant to change a winning team, but if I continue to be left out, I will have to seriously consider my future," Nakata told the Daily Star here Thursday.

"Money and prestige is one thing, but the most important thing for any

footballer is playing and enjoying yourself."

"It is the World Cup in my country next season and I do not want to be on the sidelines."

"I know that I am loved by Manchester United and I would love to play in England and the Premiership. Playing for United would be an ideal situation."

Napoli ban revoked

AFP, Rome

Napoli won their appeal against a ground closure order Wednesday and no longer have to play their forthcoming match with Brescia on neutral territory in Palermo, Sicily, ANSA news agency reported.

Record-breaker Thompson eyeing Europe

Football

AFP, London

World-record breaking Soccerroo Archie Thompson said on Thursday that he is keen on a move to Europe before the end of the year.

Thompson netted 13 times as Australia shattered their own world record with a 31-0 rout of minnows American Samoa in their Oceania World Cup football qualifier on Wednesday night.

Two days earlier the Soccerroos thrashed group rivals Tonga 22-0 in a world record score.

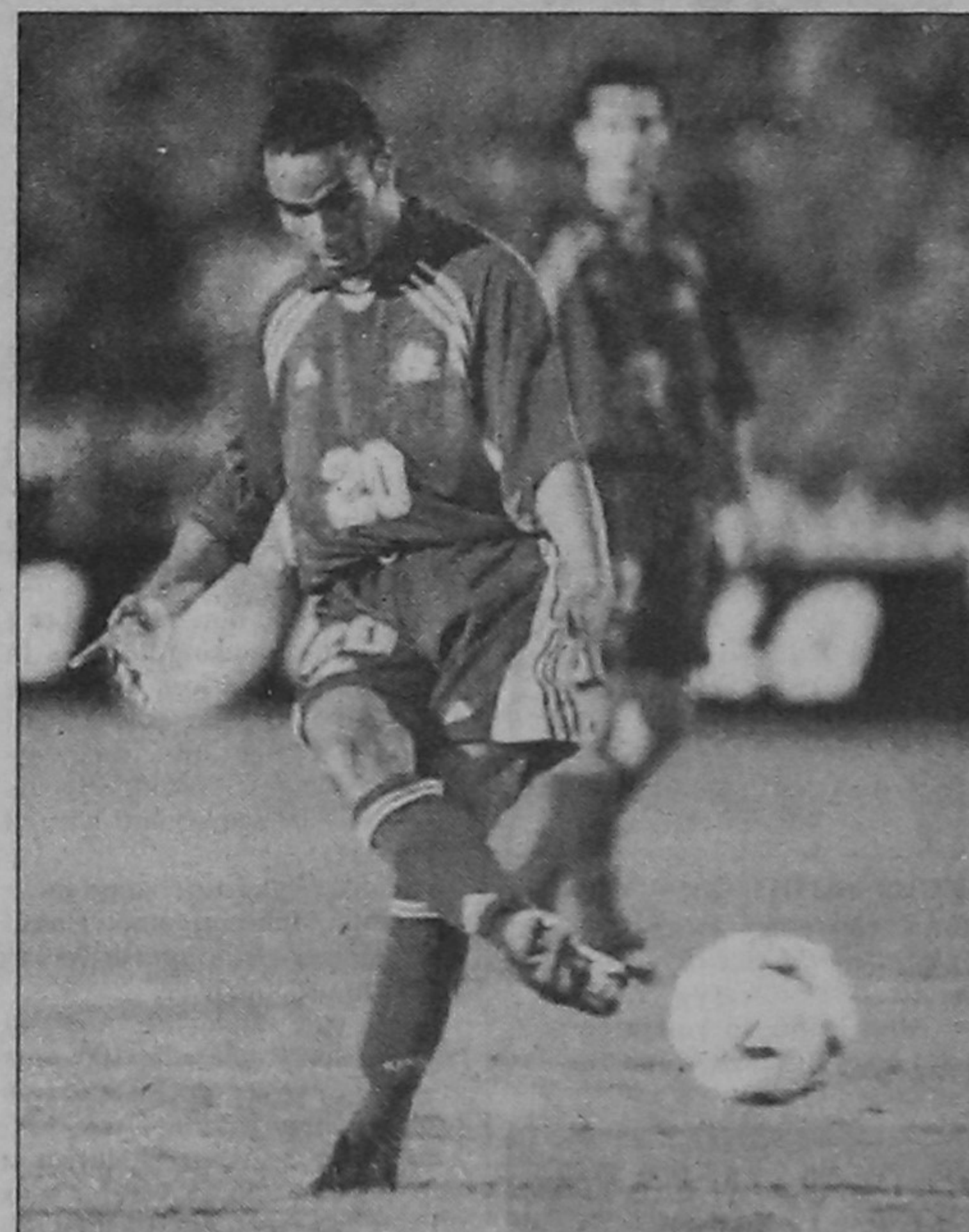
Thompson, who had only scored one international goal before Wednesday's scoring avalanche, eclipsed the 10 goals scored by Sophus Nielsen of Denmark in the 17-1 win over the French 'B' team at the 1908 London Olympics.

The Marconi Stallions striker revealed he has already had interest from Belgian champions-elect Anderlecht.

"I'd love to come to Europe," the 22-year-old told PA International.

"I've been over for a trial at Anderlecht and they were very interested in me and hopefully this will lead to something."

Thompson joined the Stallions in the close-season after his former club Carlton went bankrupt, but he intends to make it a short-term



Archie Thompson scoring one of his record 13 goals against American Samoa in their Oceania group qualifying match for the 2002 World Cup, in Coffs Harbour, Australia, on April 11.

move. "My goal at the moment is to go overseas, whether to Germany, England or wherever," he said.

Thompson has grabbed 12 goals

this season to rank among the league's top scorers, but it is Wednesday's 13-goal haul that has launched him to instant worldwide acclaim.

Argentina rest Batistuta

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Striker Gabriel Batistuta was left out of Argentina's squad for this month's World Cup qualifier away to Bolivia which was announced on Wednesday.

Argentine media speculated that AS Roma, Batistuta's Italian club, had argued that their prized striker could afford to miss the game as Argentina are almost certain to qualify for the World Cup. Batistuta's place was taken by Real Zaragoza striker Juan Esnaider, who has made three international appearances and scored three goals. There were no other major surprises



GABRIEL BATISTUTA five points. The top four quality for the World Cup and the fifth team

plays off against the Oceania winners. The match will be played at Bolivia's Hernando Siles stadium at 3,600 metres above sea level. Argentina lost 2-0 on their last visit their for a World Cup qualifier.

SQUAD
Goalkeepers - German Burgos (Mallorca), Pablo Cavallero (Celta).
Defenders - Roberto Ayala (Valencia), Eduardo Berizzo (Celta), Nelson Vivas (Arsenal), Walter Samuel (AS Roma).
Midfielders - Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan), Claudio Husain (Napoli), Diego Simeone (Lazio), Juan Pablo Sorin (Cruzeiro), Juan Sebastian Veron (Lazio), Pablo Aimar (Valencia), Marcelo Gallardo (Monaco).
Forwards - Juan Esnaider (Real Zaragoza), Hernan Crespo (Lazio), Claudio Lopez (Lazio), Gustavo Lopez (Celta).