

Premiership Southampton stun Liverpool

Football

AFP, London

Liverpool saw their dreams of a first English Premiership title since 1990 take a blow as Southampton beat them 2-0 on Wednesday to give manager Gordon Strachan a far from unlucky result in his 13th match in charge.

Missing Michael Owen, who had an ankle injury, Liverpool were sunk by a James Beattie penalty and an own goal from Norwegian international John Arne Riise - with his first touch after coming on as a substitute - at the St Mary's Stadium.

After topping the Premiership table in December, Liverpool have now taken just six points from seven Premiership games, leaving them fifth and three points behind leaders Leeds with third-placed Arsenal next up on Sunday.

Southampton meanwhile are looking far more deserving Premiership occupants after adding

the scalp of Liverpool to that of their last opponents, Chelsea, and climbing to 12th in the table.

Man of the match Beattie said: "The confidence has been high and things are looking up."

Strachan paid tribute to his maturing team.

"Lucky I'm not superstitious, isn't it? It's a great victory for us, no doubt about it. We showed belief we could win tonight but I was scared they would give it away."

His opposite number Phil Thompson, still standing in for Gerard Houllier after his heart surgery, said: "There was a lack of concentration and it was just very very disappointing."

"The lads were trying but they didn't seem to be trying in the right way. The game was just going away from us all the time."

The breakthrough for Southampton came in the second half after central defender Sami Hyypia clearly caught Matthew Oakley on the thigh to concede a penalty which Beattie planted wide of Jerzy Dudek for his ninth

Premiership goal of the season.

The home side went two goals ahead in the 71st minute after a terrible defensive blunder from Riise - as he headed a Southampton cross over Dudek. The looping header almost looked as if it had been placed and gave the Polish international no chance.

Southampton had come close to scoring minutes earlier when Chris Marsden had a close-range shot blocked by Dudek after a goalmouth scramble.

Saints defender Wayne Bridge said: "After going one up, we put them under pressure and they made a few mistakes at the back."

In the first half, Liverpool's recent loan signing, French international Nicolas Anelka, had been a lively presence in tandem with Jari Litmanen.

Anelka's pace carried him clear of his markers and one beautifully pulled-back pass was met by Litmanen, whose shot was deflected and looped just over the home goal.

In the best early move, Beattie linked with Marian Pahars but the Latvian was unable to take the neat pass in his stride and the Liverpool defence cleared.

Litmanen then sent Vladimir Smicer clear on the left wing but from his cross, Danny Murphy tried to place his shot.

The lightning quick Pahars gave the Liverpool defence another problem in the 25th minute but as he twisted and turned to get a view of the Liverpool goal, Stéphane Henchoz dispossessed him.



Southampton's James Beattie (L), scoring from the spot against Liverpool at St. Mary's, Southampton on January 9.

English League Cup Hasselbaink fires Chelsea

Football

AFP, London

A double strike by Chelsea's Dutch international striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink gave his side a 2-1 win over London rivals Spurs in their League Cup semi-final first leg match here Wednesday and left the losers needing a miracle to repeat their win in this competition in 1999.

Hasselbaink's double extended Spurs' winless streak against their opponents to 26 and even with Spurs playing the second leg at home on January 21 it provides little succour as they have not defeated Chelsea at White Hart Lane since 1987 - the year their current manager Glenn Hoddle left the playing staff.

Spurs veteran former English international striker Les Ferdinand had briefly raised hopes of a come from behind win when he levelled in the 65th minute - after a mistake by John Terry who along with Jody Morris had started the match hours after appearing in court to plead not guilty to actual body harm.

However Hasselbaink, who had

opened the scoring in the 10th minute, sealed the first leg advantage with a thunderous 30 yard freekick following a foul by Ledley King which gave American 'keeper Kasey Keller no chance.

It could have been even worse

for Spurs as referee Alan Wiley failed to spot that Chelsea striker Mikael Forsell - who tried to stay up - had been tripped in the penalty area by Keller with seven minutes left and didn't award a penalty.



Chelsea's prolific Dutchman Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (R), exults with a fan after scoring against Tottenham Hotspurs in their English League Cup semi-final first leg match at Stamford Bridge on January 9.

Spanish King's Cup Deportivo, Bilbao on course

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Athletic Bilbao took a major step towards the last four of the King's Cup after a first half double from midfielder Tiko gave them a 2-0 win at Villarreal in their quarter-final first leg tie.

Deportivo Coruna also look to be in a strong position to make the semifinals after second half goals from Joan Capdevila and Roy Makaay gave them a 2-0 win over a defensive-minded Valladolid at the Riazor.

In the remaining tie pitting two sides outside the top flight against each other, Third Division Figueres took a surprise 2-0 win at second division Cordoba despite being down to ten men for the last 24 minutes.

Figueres defender Salas was sent off in the 66th minute for a bad foul between goals by team mates

Pena in the 52nd and Eloy six minutes from time.

The Catalan side, who have already taken the scalps of Barcelona and Osasuna in their cup run, will be the first Third Division side to make the semifinals if they win the tie.

Bilbao's Tiko notched the first of his two goals on 17 minutes after he picked up a fine 30-metre pass from team mate Julen Guerrero. The midfielder then checked inside a defender before firing into the far corner with his left foot.

Four minutes later he grabbed his second. This time Santi Ezquerro carved open the ragged Villarreal defence, drew keeper Javier Lopez Vallejo and left Tiko with a simple tap-in to make it 2-0.

Jorge Lopez led the Villarreal search for a goal in the second half, but once defender Quique Alvarez was sent off for his second booking in the 73rd minute they lost momentum and Bilbao held on for a comfortable win.

Despite opting for an attacking

line-up of Makaay, Diego Tristan and Djalminha, Deportivo found it hard going against Valladolid and only had one clear shot on goal in the first half.

But the Galician side sprang into life immediately after the break as unmarked defender Capdevila clipped the ball from a corner barely a minute after the restart.

A quarter of an hour later Makaay extended the home side's lead with a top class finish.

Substitute Aldo Duscher, who had brought the sluggish midfield to life, threaded a pass through the crowded Valladolid defence to his team mate and the Dutch international hit home with the outside of his foot.

Real Madrid effectively booked their place in the semifinals after they strolled to a 4-0 win over city rivals Rayo Vallecano in their first leg match at the Bernabeu on Tuesday.

The second leg ties are due to be played on January 15-16.

Italian Cup Juve, Parma in last four

Football

REUTERS, Rome

Nicola Amoruso scored a hat-trick as Juventus outplayed Atalanta 4-2 in their Italian Cup quarter-final first leg at the Stadio Delle Alpi.

Corrado Colombo gave Atalanta the lead with a superb overhead kick from Daniele Berretta's cross after 13 minutes.

But Amoruso hit back one minute later with a superb effort from the edge of the area and then gave the home side the lead, after 57 minutes, following a fine build-up by Enzo Maresca.

Uruguay forward Marcelo Zalayeta added a third after another neat pass by Maresca, only for Berretta to hit back almost immediately.

Colombo was then sent off for dissent after 76 minutes and Amoruso earned the match ball with his third from the spot after being fouled in the box by Atalanta goalkeeper Davide Pinato.

Earlier, Parma held out for a 0-0 draw at home to Udinese at their Stadio Ennio Tardini to book a place in the last four.

Having drawn 1-1 in the first leg at Udine Parma therefore qualify and can now look forward to a semi-final date with Brescia whose 3-0 (4-0 aggregate) victory over Serie A champions AS Roma on Tuesday had ensured their passage.

There was little to excite the sparse crowd at Parma who fielded a number of players who are out of first-team favour including Japanese midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata.

Nakata, who is stalling on a loan move to Brescia despite the agreement of both clubs, again found it difficult to make an impact.

The only incident of note came in

the 90th minute when Udinese's Giampiero Pinzi was sent off for a wild lunging tackle at Parma's Brazilian player Junior.

The closest either side came to scoring was when Parma's Marco

Di Vaio - with 12 goals the Italian First Division's joint top scorer - was denied by a fine save from Udinese goalkeeper Morgan De Sanctis.



Marcelo Zalayeta (L), Juventus' Uruguayan international, taking control of the ball during the Italian Cup quarterfinal against Atalanta at Turin on January 9.

French League Cup Bierhoff Monaco's hero

Football

AFP, Paris

A wonderful goal by German international striker Oliver Bierhoff two minutes from the end handed Monaco and their manager Didier Deschamps a 2-1 win over Marseille in their League Cup clash Wednesday and a place in the last eight. It gave Deschamps welcome respite after a tough opening to his managerial career since he hung up his boots last year after guiding France to the 1998 World Cup trophy and the Euro 2000 title - and the win was all the sweeter as it came over the side with whom he won his first European Cup in 1993.

In Wednesday's other match relegation-threatened Lorient pulled off a surprise 1-0 win at home to their First Division rivals and title-chasing outfit Auxerre with a goal from their leading marksman Jean-Claude Darceville, who with his back to goal turned and saw his right-footed shot go in off the post in the 55th minute.

However it was Bierhoff who stole the show as he came on as a second-half substitute, having missed last Saturday's 2-1 win over PSG through an ankle injury, and gave Deschamps a real boost with a powerful shot that gave Marseille's outstanding Croat goalkeeper Vedran Runje no chance.

Marseille's Brazilian playmaker Andre Luiz had put his side back on level terms in the 76th minute when he converted from the penalty spot after his former club-mate Cyril Rool had brought down Ibrahim Bakayoko.

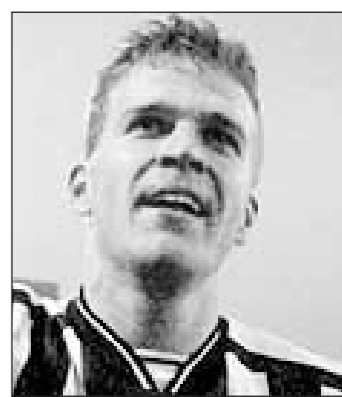
Monaco, last season's finalists, had been in the driving seat from early on in the encounter with Argentine playmaker Marcelo Gallardo once again - like against PSG - pulling the strings and they were rewarded with a deserved goal right on half-time.

Congolese striker Shabani Nonda went down in the area under a challenge by Fabien Laurenti, promptly picked himself up and scored the penalty.

On Tuesday Bordeaux beat Lyon on penalties to earn a place in the quarter-finals and steal a march on many people's favourites for the French League title.

The match, 1-1 after extra time, finally went Bordeaux's way 4-2 on penalties to give Elie Baup's men, just sixth in the league, a boost against their second-placed opponents.

In the pick of the night's other



OLIVER BIERHOFF

fixtures, Paris Saint Germain beat Guingamp 3-1 with two goals from their Brazilian striker Ronaldinho and Bastia had a 3-1 away win at French league champions Nantes, who had beaten the Corsican side 2-0 only on Saturday in the league fixture.

In a repeat of the 2001 French Cup final, Strasbourg beat Amiens 2-0 away at the Licorne stadium, though their Paraguayan keeper Jose-Luis Chilavert had a lot of work to do to repel Amiens in the first half.

Rennes easily beat Second Division side Le Havre 2-0 and Nancy against Chateauroux was postponed because of a frozen pitch.

Kadhafi jr. explains Juve connection

Football

AFP, Tripoli

The son of Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi believes that his new business link-up with Italian First Division club Juventus could help Libya qualify for the 2006 World Cup, Gazzetta dello Sport reported Thursday.

Al Saadi Kadhafi, who said he hoped to expand his interest in the Turin club to 20 percent, also revealed he was set to appoint former Genoa coach Franco Scoglio, who has experience in Tunisia, as coach to the Libyan national team.

On Tuesday it was announced that the Lafico (Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company) group of the Kadhafi family had reached an agreement to take a 5.31 percent stake in the club which was floated on the Italian stock market.

And Kadhafi junior, 28 and himself an accomplished footballer, believes that as well as cementing links between the two countries it will help his country's football development.

Speaking to the paper at the Football Expo in Cannes, France Kadhafi said: "The current deal is not just a financial operation. Libya believes in sport and in youth and Juve will help us develop the enormous potential of our football, including structures, facilities and technology."

"We are very keen to qualify for the 2006 World Cup and on Friday I will be in Milan to sign a four-year contract with Franco Scoglio who will coach our national team."

Scoglio would replace another Italian Eugenio Bersellini who was recently sacked.

Al Saadi Kadhafi, like his father a colonel in the Libyan army, cited the historic relations between his country and the Agnelli dynasty which founded the Fiat car company and

owns a majority shareholding in Juventus.

In 1976 Lafico took a stake in Fiat. "We have excellent relations with the Agnelli family," said Kadhafi.

"Our actual stake is only a starting point and eventually we would like a 20 percent share in the club - Juve needs the extra investment and we believe we have made an



AL SAADI KADHAFI

excellent investment." A picture of Al Saadi Kadhafi kicking a football in a Juventus shirt some years ago was presented as evidence of his leanings towards the club known in Italy as the 'vecchia signora' (old lady).

Declaring himself a fan of Dutchman Edgar Davids and Gianluca Zambrotta but not of Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved, Kadhafi said he still regretted the departure of Frenchman Zinedine Zidane, whose parents are Algerian immigrants, to Real Madrid in the summer.

"Juve have always had excellent players. Look at (Michel) Platini, Roberto Baggio, Alessandro Del Piero and Zinedine Zidane. But Zidane joining Real Madrid upset me as a fellow Arab and a Muslim even if I back the club's decision to take a new direction," said Kadhafi.

Uruguayan ref thrown out

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

AFP, Montevideo

A Uruguayan referee designated to officiate at this year's World Cup finals has been ruled out of the competition after being found guilty of corruption by his national federation on Wednesday.

Jorge Larrionda and four other referees - Gustavo Mendez, Oliver Viera, Carlos Lopez and Fernando Cresci - were stripped of their status as international referees for six months after a three-month investigation into the allegations of corruption.

The Uruguayan federation (AUF) issued a warning to five other referees after the investigation.

England for ROK warm-up

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

AFP, London

England are aiming to play South Korea in a pre-World Cup friendly during a training camp in the co-host country before moving to Japan for the start of the tournament, a report said on Wednesday.

England will be based on the South Korean island of Jeju for

more than a week as they acclimatise to conditions in the Far East ahead of the finals, which begin at the end of May.

During their stay in the city of Seogwipo, South Korea are their intended opponents for a friendly before they switch to Japan, where all their competitive games will be played.

Sven-Goran Eriksson's side are also expected to take part in another friendly, probably against an African side such as Cameroon, just before their opening group

game against Sweden on June 2.

Tadao Murata, director general of the competitions bureau of the Japanese World Cup organising committee, told the Evening Standard newspaper: "We have had a letter from the English FA."

"This notifies us that they intend to play South Korea on Jeju before they come to Awaji island on 25 or 26 May."

"They have also asked about the possibility of playing a Japanese team before their first game against Sweden on 2 June."