

The Daily Star

Premiership Solskjaer saves MU

Football

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United opened their Premiership campaign with a victory after a late goal from Ole-Gunnar Solskiaer broke West Bromwich Albion on Saturday

Solskjaer's 77th-minute finish sunk 10-man West Brom's hopes of securing a point at Old Trafford as United completed a troubled week with a 1-0 win.

United's win came on an incident-packed first day of the new season, with former England boss Terry Venables announcing his return to management in style as Leeds beat Manchester City 3-0 at Elland Road.

Venables' streetwise Leeds showed there was life after Rio Ferdinand with goals from new signing Nicky Barmby and one apiece from Mark Viduka and Robbie Keane

New-look City, managed by Kevin Keegan, another ex-England boss, went close with a 30-yard strike from Chinese defender Sun Jihai that hit the post while debutant Nicolas Anelka missed several chances

At Old Trafford, United boss Alex Ferguson was relieved to take all three points. "It was boiling hot, very hard on the players," he told Sky Sports.

"But we kept persevering and created a lot of chances. When you create so many chances you're happy to win 1-0.'

Premiership newcomers West Brom were holding United after 45 minutes at Old Trafford.

The Baggies conceded just 29 league goals in winning promotion to the top flight last season, and were looking just as difficult to break

down Ferguson's side Jason Roberts almost put them ahead but Roy Carroll made a nearpost save for United to deny him.

The sending off of West Brom's Derek McInnes turned the tide in United's favour in the second half. the midfielder given a red card for a

dreadful challenge on Nicky Butt. "They didn't know what to do about it," said Ferguson in agreeing that McInnes' dismissal had been a turning point.

United's winner finally came after a lovely piece of interplay involving Roy Keane and Paul Scholes, who laid off for Solskjaer to score his

League One



SURE SHOT! Ole Gunnar Solskjaer scores Manchester United winner against West Bromwich Albion during their Premiership clash at Old Trafford on August 17 August.

But young Tottenham midfielder

Matthew Etherington fired Spurs

level after the break, crashing a shot

in off the underside of the bar for his

Les Ferdinand then looked to

Wanderers' lead lasted only

seven minutes, however, as Louis

Saha was tripped in the box by

Gudni Bergsson before picking

Sylvain Legwinski then gave the

himself up to convert from the spot.

Cottagers the lead in the 33rd

pounding at home to promoted Nice,

have put Spurs on course for a win

with a 20-yard strike that eluded

minute winner.

spirit," Ranieri added.

Toffees 1-0 ahead

first league goal.

share of the points.

rary home, Loftus Road.

100th goal in a United shirt.

"Nine out of 10 chances he scores," said an admiring Ferguson. "He couldn't have picked a better moment to score his 100th goal."

"We could have scored seven or eight - Roy Keane could have had a hat-trick. But I'm happy with 1-0. You get the same points as winning 3-0." A dramatic game at the Valley

saw Chelsea battle back from 2-0 down to snatch a 3-2 win over Charlton "They had a good start," admitted Chelsea manager Claudio

Ranieri in an understatement. His pre-season prediction that his side cannot win the league

appeared to be borne out when Charlton surged into a 2-0 lead through goals by Paul Konchesky and Richard Rufus. Konchesky went from hero to

villain when he was sent off after half an hour for violent conduct. The Blues grabbed a lifeline two

minutes before the break when Gianfranco Zola applied a first-time finish to Dutch international Boudewijn Zenden's cut-back. But two goals in the final 10

ninutes turned the game in Chelsea's favour. First Carlton Cole grabbed the equaliser before Frank Lampard was on hand for an 89th-

minute before referee Alan Wiley "They had a good fighting spirit awarded a third penalty, this time Steve Marlet scoring. but we also have a good fighting

Legwinski made it 4-1, 12 min-Everton's 16-year-old striker utes from time to complete the Wayne Rooney made an instant scoring for Tigana's Frenchimpact on his Premiership debut flavoured side which looked sharp against Tottenham, laying on a pass after their Intertoto Cup experifor Mark Pembridge to put the ences.

"It was very important for the strikers and midfielders to score." said former France international Tigana.

Disappointed Bolton boss Sam Allardyce said: "We have to be at our very best to get something out of the Premiership and a lot of our players weren't.'

Everton's new goalkeeper Richard At Ewood Park, under-pressure Wright, but a Tomasz Radzinski Sunderland manager Peter Reid strike secured a 2-2 draw and a saw the Black Cats earn a point with an impressive performance in their Bolton striker Michael Ricketts 0-0 draw against Blackburn Rovers. scored the first goal of the new

It also finished goalless at St season when he tucked in a fourth-Mary's, where Southampton drew minute penalty against Fulham, with Middlesbrough. making their debut at their tempo-

Defending champions Arsenal open their campaign at Highbury on Sunday against newly-promoted Birmingham, with Liverpool facing Aston Villa in the day's other fixture. Newcastle face West Ham at St James' Park on Monday.

Italian start

uncertain

Bundesliga **Bierhoff now Elber bombs Bielefeld**

AFP, Berlin

Arminia Bielefeld

Football

Bavern Munich, bidding for their

fourth Bundesliga title in five sea-

sons, raced to their first win of the

new campaign in style Saturday,

four goals from Brazilian Giovane

Elber helping them to a 6-2 win over

AFP, Rome

Chievo's

Italian Serie A side Chievo said Saturday they have signed German veteran striker Oliver Bierhoff from Monaco on a vear's contract. The 34-year-old, who made his

name with AC Milan and appeared for Germany in the World Cup final defeat to Brazil six weeks ago, had a miserable season in the French league with Monaco and was seeking a one-year deal elsewhere before retiring next summer.

Scottish Premiership Celtic's three in three

AFP, Glasgow

Reigning Scottish Premier League champions Celtic made it three wins out of three with a 5-0 thrashing of Dundee United at Parkhead here on Saturday

Goals from Jackie McNamara, Chris Sutton and Stilian Petrov meant the match was over by halftime

And late on in the second period strikers John Hartson and Henrik Larssson also found the back of the net

Now, even at this early stage it looks as if arch-rivals Rangers - who play Hibernian on Sunday - will be the only side capable of challenging Celtic. Glasgow giants Celtic might

have had three before McNamara opened the scoring in the 25th minute. Steve Guppy's pass found

McNamara unmarked and he in turn let fly with an unstoppable shot. Barely 60 seconds later a defen-

sive error gifted Celtic their second. Former Kilmarnock defender Jim Lauchlan failed to clear a Guppy cross and Sutton stpped in to score And in the 33rd minute Celtic had killed off the game at 3-0 when

Bulgarian Petrov pounced on a rebound. Wales forward Hartson's header from a Guppy cross made it 4-0 in the 78th minute. At this stage the only surprise

was that goal machine Larsson was not on the scoresheet but he made amends when, two minutes after Hartson's goal, he nodded in a Fernandez cross from close range.

In the day's other Premier League matches Dunfermline beat Dundee 4-2, Motherwell were 3-0 winners over Kilmarnock while Partick and Livingston shared the points in a 2-2 draw

Unheralded Bielefeld had roared to the summit on the opening day last weekend with a 3-0 win over Werder Bremen while Bayern laboured to a goalless draw at Borussia Monchengladbach.

But Bayern made amends as Elber, Claudio Pizarro and summer signing from Leverkusen Michael Ballack put Bielefeld to the sword before a 50,000 crowd.

Elber was full of tricks as he netted two headers, a goal with his left foot and another with his right as Ballack ran the show from offensive midfield

Elber headed the first on 18 minutes before Ballack's drive ten minutes later gave him his first league goal in a Bayern shirt.

Elber nodded in from close range after visiting keeper Mathias Hain saved an effort from Pizarro before Ballack drove home a right-foot drive and when Elber poached his second the contest was over four minutes before the interval

Polish striker Artur Wichniarek pulled one back seven minutes after restart hut

scored in the dying seconds as Bielefeld pulled things back to 6-2.

by Ballack

Bayern had revved up for the ame with a 3-0 waltz away to Partizan Belgrade in their Champions League third qualify-

Mamadou-Lamine Diabang

ing round and the three points came as a welcome tonic for coach Ottmar Hitzfeld.

in which we played today. Elber was

Bochum's Spanish international Thomas Christiansen smashed a hattrick in a 5-0 win over Energie Christiansen has made an

rants Kaiserslautern after comine

back from a goal down while

"I am delighted with the manner

Cottbus. incredible start having scored twice The win moved promoted

on the opening day at Nuremberg. Bochum provisionally to the top of the heap with eight goals scored and just one conceded in two spar-



JUST LIKE RONALDO! Bayern Munich's Brazilian striker Giovane Elber celebrating one of his four goals again Arminia Bielefeld trademark Ronaldo style in Munich on August 17.

man of the match - he proved once again what a handful he is," said Hitzfeld.' Bielefeld counterpart Benno Mohlmann admitted his side could

have suffered an even worse hiding "The margin of Bavern's win isn't high enough - they were all over us and 6-2 wasn't as high as it might have been," Mohlmann said.

Elsewhere, last season's runners-up Bayer Leverkusen held last season's champions Borussia Dortmund to a 1-1 draw, Diego Placente giving Leverkusen the lead midway through the first period but giant striker Jan Koller levelling

on the hour. Dortmund coach Matthias Sammer slammed his side, who could only draw last week with Hertha Berlin at home, for taking too long to warm up.

'We were too passive. We have to do better as you can lose a game the opening half hour." parted 1-1 with Hertha Berlin.

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Schalke scored a useful 3-1 success at fellow Europrean aspi-

kling wins Hansa Rostock, who beat

Nuremburg 2-0, and Schalke also have maximum points from their opening pair of fixtures. With Bochum in recent seasons

proving to be Germany's primary 'yo-yo' club - they often flounder after promotion - coach Peter Neururer preferred to see things from the point of view of six points nearer to staving off the dreaded

drop "We have six important points which bring us nearer our goal (staying up). We are on the right track - but we could have scored more goals today," Neururer said.

On Sunday, Werder Bremen host SV Hamburg and VfL Wolfsburg take on Borussia Monchengladbach.

South African striker Sean Dundee scored for the second week running as his VfB Stuttgart side

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lost, goals for, goals against, points):

season the French League One (First Division) is already proving as topsy-turvy an affair as last time out with the big sides struggling to find their form.

Champions Lyon maintained their unbeaten start with a 1-1 draw Friday at Marseille - but Paris Saint Germain squandered a two-goal lead Saturday against promoted upstarts Ajaccio at the Parc des Princes to draw 2-2 while early leaders Nantes slid to a 4-2 loss at Sochaux and had two men sent off.

Monaco, almost relegated last term, lost 1-0 at Bastia to hand coach Didier Deschamps' side a second straight defeat.

Last season's runners-up Lens thanked a Rigobert Song goal on the stroke of half-time to win 1-0 at struggling Sedan.

But for the time being they all have to bow to little Guingamp, who hammered Breton neighbours Rennes 3-0 with a brace from Florent Malouda and another from Christophe Le Roux, as well as Bordeaux, 1-0 winners at Montpellier with Alexei Smertin on target.

Rennes left out defender Julien Escude, who is refusing to train with the squad amid interest from Manchester United in acquiring his services.

The club's president Emmanuel Cueff earlier blasted United's offer of some 3.5 million euros for the 23year-old as an insult.

But as Guingamp celebrated going joint top with Bordeaux on seven points it was PSG who were left feeling almost as sore as Rennes - joint bottom with Troves. Sedan and Lille - after they let Ajaccio off the hook to leave themselves two points off the early pace.

PSG coach Luis Fernandez brought on Brazilian World Cup star Ronaldinho, previously rested after his exploits in Asia, midway through the second half with the hosts leading 2-0 through efforts from Martin Cardetti and Jose Aloisio - both goals coming right on the stroke of half-time

But Cvril Granon levelled five minutes after the Brazilian made his not so grand entrance and former Bordeaux man Herve Alicarte levelled with almost the last kick of the game.

Ronaldinho almost set up a third for PSG just before Alicarte's stunner - but Jerome Leroy fired against the post after taking his pass.

Nantes, champions two years Auxerre ago before a dismal campaign last Nantes time around saw them take more Lyon than two months to post a win,

Cetto and Mathieu Berson redcarded at Sochaux The hosts claimed the points with two goals from Benoit Pedretti and

No cheers for big guns

one each from Mickael Pagis and Wilson Oruma in the final few minutes.

Eric Djemba-Djemba had earlier looked as if they would be enough to secure a result for the Canaries but they imploded in the dying embers of the encounter Pedretti made it 2-2 and Pagis and Oruma completed the turn-

around Lille, who were starring in the

who registered their second win squad for next week's friendly match with Tunisia. for a 14th-minute lead but Ibrahim Bakayoko levelled after

Goals from Viorel Moldovan and 29 minutes at Marseille's Stade Velodrome.

Marseille were left to rue a string of missed chances as visiting keeper Gregory Coupet, also in the France squad for the trip to Tunis, performed heroics in the closing stages

Football On Friday, Lyon thanked Sidney Govou, just called into the France **REUTERS.** Milan

> Italy's Football League will decide on Tuesday whether to delay the start of the new Serie A season due to stalemate in talks over television rights.

With just two weeks to the start of the campaign, there are no signs of a deal over a highlights package for terrestrial television and almost half of Serie A clubs have been unable to agree terms with satellite television channels for rights to live coverage.

The uncertainty over income from television is adding to the already acute financial problems facing many Italian teams who are struggling to deal with rising debts.

Representatives of the eight Serie A teams without deals recently called for the start of the season to be delayed -- a move which until now has been rejected by the League

But in an interview with the daily Gazzetta dello Sport on Sunday, League president Adriano Galliani said the matter would now be on the agenda at an assembly of Serie A and B clubs on Tuesday.

"We will discuss this matter all together on Tuesday and until then no-one should make predictions. As president I hope only that whatever decision we take, we can reach it unanimously and that football knows how to show unity.

"The starting date has already been set, only the assembly of 38 presidents can vote for a postponement." said Galliani

Atalanta, Brescia, Chievo, Como, Empoli, Modena, Perugia and Piacenza have all been unable to reach agreement with either of Italy's two subscription satellite channels Telepiu and Stream.

The clubs are each demanding 10 million euros for the rights to live coverage of their home games this season while the two companies have offered only 4.5 million euros.

PHOTO: AFF

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State television company RAI, which has broadcast highlights of Italian games for 40 years, is also offering less than half the asking price for the rights to Sunday evening goal round-ups.

Last season RAI paid 88.8 million euros for first rights to Serie A and B goals and live coverage of Italian Cup matches.

tion and have offered 44 million, half of last season's figure, for the highlights package to league games.

RAI say they no longer have any

interest in the low-key Cup competi-

Unless a deal is reached in the

next 14 days fans risk missing out on the popular Sunday evening soccer show '90 Minutes' which has a reported average viewing audience of 6.5 million making it by far the most popular sports show on Italian television.

RAI's stance has infuriated the League but has won backing from the Italian government's Minister for Communications, Maurizio Gasparri, who says RAI, who are funded by public money, should not pay more than 50 million euros for the rights.

Gasparri said it is not the role of state television to help Italian football out of its current financial difficulties "I have given the example of

heroin. What do we do, give another dose because they are sick? Do we continue to overpay the footballers, buy another Ferrari for (Christian) Vieri and (Francesco) Totti or should we talk about a level of reorganisation?" Gasparri told the daily La Repubblica.

But Gasparri's intervention was criticised by Galliani who said the negotiations were between RAI and the League and not the government. "Excuse me, but the fee should

not be set by Gasparri who is a minister." said Galliani. The matter is politically sensitive

as Galliani is also vice-president of Kahn pulls out AC Milan, who are owned by Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's Fininvest company. Gasparri is a member of the rightist National Alliance, who are

part of Berlusconi's centre-right governing coalition. Berlusconi also owns Italy's

three national commercial television channels, the Mediaset group, but Galliani dismissed suggestions that the stalemate may allow Mediaset to take over the rights from RAI.

"I really don't think so. Mediaset has nothing to do with it. We have only one buyer and that is RAI," Galliani told La Repubblica.

Elber was on the end of a Jens Jeremies pass for Bayern's fourth after 66 minutes, having fed off the same colleague for his previous effort

> Despite completing his hattrick the Brazilian's appetite was not sated and after Pizarro has arrowed home his side's fifth on 81 minutes Elber leapt high to head home from a Mehmet Scholl corner flicked on



VfLBochum

Schalke 04

Hansa Rostock

Bayern Munich

SV Hamburg

1860 Munich

Wednesday's Champions League preliminary clash at Sporting Lisbon.

"Ronaldo will sign a contract with Real Madrid between today Saturday and tomorrow Sunday," insisted the

"The Brazilian forward has



already told Inter he doesn't want to stay in the team. The Spaniards will have to pay around 50 million

dollars for Ronaldo, plus the sell-on transfer of midfielder Claude Makelele," the daily wrote.

German league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn,

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It added that the deal "would be the biggest in world football." The Folha de Sao Paulo said that

"Ronaldo's agents are hoping for a transaction of between 50 and 60 million dollars.'

The daily meanwhile added that Ronaldo had bought a small island in a shoreline tourist paradise in Rio.

However, the Jornal da Tarde evening paper said it had been in contact with a Ronaldo agent, Rodrigo Paiva, who said there was "no possibility of a deal being closed this weekend."

Ronaldo is in Brazil at the moment ahead of Wednesday's friendly with Paraguay in the northern city of Fortaleza.

Liverpool target Munitis

AFP, Madrid

English side Liverpool have made a bid for Real Madrid's Spanish international Pedro Munitis, press reports said here Saturday.

Munitis' agent Javier Gonzalez said Liverpool had made a formal bid for the 27-year-old while Newcastle were also interested in signing the diminutive winger.

Gonzalez met Real's sporting director Jorge Valdano on Friday to discuss the future of Munitis, who has struggled to tie down a place in the Spanish giants starting line-up.

Gonzalez said several Spanish clubs had enquired about his client's availability but that Munitis was seeking a move abroad.

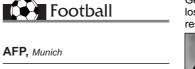
OLIVER KAHN

Germany reached the final before losing to Brazil, Lehmann was first

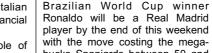


reserve to Kahn





win over Bielefeld.



AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Football

with the move costing the megabucks Spaniards between 50 and 60 million dollars, two Brazilian newspapers said Saturday.

Ronaldo insisted last Thursday that Real and his current club Inter Milan had not reached any agreement on a transfer and the man whose goals won Brazil a fifth World Cup six weeks ago said he was "a

long way off my best form." But if he had hoped those comments would dampen down the speculation Saturday's reports proved him wrong, the appers' suspicions aroused after Inter left

the 'Phenomenon' out of

Estado de Sao Paulo daily.



AFP, Paris

Football

After just three matches of the new

Ronaldinho Gaucho (L) Paris-Saint-Germain's Brazilian superstar, being

Standings in the French championship after Saturday's matches (played,

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League One's top six

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closely marked by Ajaccio's Fabrice Levrat in Paris on August 17.

won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

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Guingamp

Bordeaux

Nice

ruined their chances of a third straight win when they had Mauro Champions League a year ago, are rock bottom after taking a 3-0