

Owen waltzes into history

'Battle of Britain' guaranteed



AFP, Liverpool

Michael Owen scored the critical opening goal in Liverpool's 2-0 UEFA Cup victory over Auxerre on Thursday night to equal Ian Rush's club record of 20 goals in Europe.

Owen ran up to a through ball from Danny Murphy midway through the second half and, running straight at the keeper, touched the ball into the net for his 20th European goal in 41 matches.

Welshman Rush was Liverpool's top targetman during their glory years in the late 70's and early 80's when they won three European Cups but now Owen has matched his goal-scoring exploits.

A modest Owen said afterwards when questioned about his record-breaking performance: "It's just satisfying to get into the next round."

Liverpool will now face Celtic in a Battle of Britain quarter-final fixture after the Scots got past VfB Stuttgart despite losing 3-2 in Germany.

Murphy scored a 30-year second goal thanks to a spectacular gaffe by Auxerre keeper Fabien Cool who failed to save a shot aimed straight at him.

Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier picked arguably his strongest side in a bid to secure the Anfield side's place in the last eight.

Gerrard and Murphy were



PHOTO: AFP

OWEN IS COOLER! Liverpool superstar Michael Owen places the ball into the net past Auxerre's goalkeeper Fabien Cool at Anfield on February 27.

paired in central midfield with El Hadji Diouf down the right and John Arne Riise on the left.

It meant Dietmar Hamann had to settle for a place on the bench, although Stephane Henchoz returned to central defence.

Auxerre, as expected, had French international sensation Djibril Cisse back to lead the attack after suspension, the only change from Guy Roux's side from the first leg with Benjamin Mwaruiri dropping to the bench.

Liverpool looked nervous and uncertain as they defended their

slim, 1-0 lead from the first leg in France.

On 34 minutes, Riise laid the ball back to Murphy, whose instant flick with the outside of the boot set up Emile Heskey for an eight-yard header that flew just over the cross-bar.

But one flash of class from Cisse was always likely to change the situation, and it almost came on 38 minutes when he emerged on the left of the box to unleash a low drive that just missed the far post.

In the second half, Liverpool finally got the goal they desperately

needed but had barely looked like achieving.

Owen took a Murphy pass, fractionally onside, strode on and lifted the ball gently past Cool and into the bottom corner.

The tie was ended as a contest in the 73rd minute when Gerrard fed Murphy some 30 yards out and the tough midfielder's well-struck drive was too hot for Cool to handle.

Houllier could now start thinking about Sunday and Manchester United in the League Cup final and Henchoz was taken off to allow Igor

Biscan into defence.

Owen almost added another just before the end when he hurled himself at Vladimir Smicer's cross and lifted his shot over the bar.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated UEFA Cup fourth round, second leg results on Thursday:

AEK Athens (Gre) 0 Malaga (Spa) 1 (Sanchez 28)

Malaga win 1-0 on aggregate
Besiktas (Tur) 4 (Pancu 41, Ronaldo Guiaro 61, Ahmet Dursun 66, Ilhan 70) Slavia Prague (Cze) 2 (Dostalek 77-pen, Hrdlicka 84)
Besiktas win 4-3

VfB Stuttgart (Ger) 3 (Tiffert 38, Hleb 75, Mutzel 87) Celtic (Sco) 2 (Thompson 13, Sutton 15)
Celtic win 5-4

Anderlecht (Bel) 2 (Jestrovic 69, 80) Panathinaikos (Gre) 0

Panathinaikos win 3-2

Liverpool (Eng) 2 (Owen 66, Murphy 73) Auxerre (Fra) 0

Liverpool win 3-0

Denizlispor (Tur) 2 (Martin 52, Ozkan 58) FC Porto (Por) 2 (Deerlei 42, Clayton 84)

Porto win 8-3

Wisla Krakow (Pol) v Lazio (Ita)

postponed due to frozen pitch 1st leg: 3-3

Boavista (Por) 1 (Avalos 85) Hertha Berlin (Ger) 0

3-3 on aggregate, Boavista go through on away goals

QUARTER-FINALS ON MARCH 13/20

Besiktas (Tur) v Wisla Krakow (Pol) or Lazio (Ita)

Malaga (Spa) v Boavista (Por)

Celtic (Sco) v Liverpool (Eng)

FC Porto (Por) v Panathinaikos (Gre)

Primera Liga preview

Real focus on home front

AFP, Madrid

Having acquired a lifeline in their bid to retain the Champions League, Real Madrid now switch their sights to domestic matters and a win at Alaves on Saturday is vital if they are to keep up the pressure on league leaders Real Sociedad.

The 1-1 draw at Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday, thanks to an injury time equaliser from second-half substitute Javier Portillo, settled nerves and now means qualifying for the Champions League quarter-finals is entirely in their own hands.

On the home front though Madrid must rely on their Basque rivals slipping up if their hopes of ending the season as Spanish champions are to reach fruition although Vicente Del Bosque knows that a victory at Alaves could reduce a fit of the jitters at Sociedad.

With Raul Gonzalez doubtful due to a badly bruised foot, Del Bosque may decide to give Tuesday's hero Portillo just his second league start.

One man definitely missing on Saturday is French international midfielder Claude Makelele. Jose Maria Gutierrez is his likely replacement.

Luis Figo will also face a late fitness test after straining a muscle in his right leg against the Germans.

An absentee for Alaves will be the suspended Luis Helguera, depriving the encounter of a fraternal clash with his brother and Real Madrid defender Ivan.

Real Sociedad this week celebrated four months on top of the Spanish first division and they intend to hang on to their pole position at Valladolid on Sunday.

They lead with 47 points from 23 games but Real Madrid and Valencia are only two points in arrears, with the European and world club champions ahead of the reigning Spanish champions on goal difference.

Valencia will be hoping to recover from the shock of their 3-0 home defeat by Roma in the Champions League on Wednesday but must be wishing they had an easier trip than to fifth-placed Celta Vigo on Sunday.

However, Celta have problems of their own. Injuries and suspensions mean that the Galicians only have 16 members of their first team squad available, and that number could drop further with Brazilian midfielder Vagner doubtful.

Barcelona's winning streak in the Champions League came to an end on Wednesday and their six game undefeated run in all competitions since Radomir Antic took over at the helm of the Catalan club could be under threat at Osasuna on Sunday.

Despite their lowly position, Osasuna have beaten both Real Madrid and Valencia at home this season.

Barca have also been seriously weakened after two critical injuries in the Italian capital. Philip Cocu damaged ligaments in his left knee that will take around three months to mend while Carles Puyol suffered a double fracture of the right cheek bone and will be out for a month.

FIXTURES

Saturday: Espanyol v Real Mallorca (1900 GMT), Athletic Bilbao v Recreativo Huelva (1915), Alaves v Real Madrid (2030)
Sunday: Celta Vigo v Valencia (1600), Osasuna v Barcelona (1600), Racing Santander v Deportivo La Coruna (1600), Valladolid v Real Sociedad (1600), Villarreal v Rayo Vallecano (1600), Atletico Madrid v Malaga (1700), Real Betis v Sevilla (1930)

Serie A preview

All roads lead to Turin



Football

AFP, Rome

Joint leaders Juventus and Inter Milan come face to face on Sunday night at the Delle Alpi stadium where the winner will claim sole ownership of first place in Italy's Serie A.

Both teams have 48 points from 22 matches, two more than third-placed AC Milan who welcome Atalanta to the San Siro earlier in the day.

Juventus must pick themselves off the floor after Tuesday's 3-0 humiliation at home to English giants Manchester United in the Champions League.

Despite enjoying plenty of possession and hitting the wood-work twice, Juventus fell victim to United's swift counter-attacks which exposed their flat-footed defence.

Juve's defeat means they still have a lot of work to do to join United in the quarter-finals.

Luciano Moggi, Juventus' general director, said he hoped the lesson dished out by United would make his players doubly determined to see off Scudetto rivals Inter at the weekend.

"This was certainly a defeat that will leave its mark," said Moggi after Tuesday's match in Turin.

"The important thing about losing is that you learn from it and improve.

"Let's hope we can put things right on Sunday."

Juventus vice-president Roberto Bettiga said the match against Inter was important but not decisive.

"The game is significant as both teams have a great tradition and in the last couple of years there has been something at stake between us," said the former Juventus and Italy star.

"But last season showed us that you must also win matches against the so-called smaller teams if you want to win the title. You need to be wary of these exploding mines."

Bettiga said he was not overly concerned by the threat of Italy's leading goalscorer Christian Vieri, who despite not scoring in the Champions League this season has netted 21 times for Inter in Serie A.

"Vieri is confident in front of goal, that goes without saying," Bettiga added.

"But games are not decided by one player alone and on Sunday he will be up against the (joint) best defence in the league."

Inter coach Hector Cuper's biggest headache is finding 11 fit players for Sunday's clash.

Mohammed Kallon, Domenico Morfeo and Stephan Dalmat were all crocked in Wednesday's 0-0 draw with Barcelona at the San

Siro, a result that left Inter's hopes of advancing to the last eight hanging in the balance.

Sierra Leone striker Kallon damaged his right Achilles tendon, while Morfeo and Frenchman Dalmat suffered thigh strains against the Spaniards.

The unfortunate trio joined Hernan Crespo, Matias Almeyda, Okan Buruk and Emre Belozoglu on the treatment table.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti believes his side have an advantage over title rivals Juve and Inter, having already clinched their place in the last eight of the Champions League on Tuesday.

"I'm pleased we have qualified because now we can concentrate fully on the championship, beginning with Sunday's game with Atalanta - this is our first thought," he said.

"In March we have three games at home and we hope to be in a strong position after that."

FIXTURES

Saturday (1400 GMT kick-off unless stated): Brescia v Bologna (1700 GMT), Parma v Modena (1930 GMT)
Sunday: AC Milan v Atalanta, Chievo v Torino, Juventus v Inter Milan (1930 GMT), Perugia v Lazio, Piacenza v Como, Reggina v Udinese, Roma v Empoli

Zimbabwe stay in hunt



ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

AFP, Bulawayo

Andy Flower and Henry Olonga's spirit of rebellion spread to the Queens Sports Club crowd here on Friday as Zimbabwe defeated the Netherlands by 99 runs to keep their World Cup dream alive.

After making 301-8, Zimbabwe restricted the Dutch to 202-9 off their 50 overs but the Pool A game was overshadowed by the controversy over the two players' ongoing anti-Robert Mugabe protest.

First, it was claimed that the Zimbabwe selectors had insisted on playing an unfit Douglas Hondo rather than reverting to obvious replacement Olonga as a continuing punishment for his black armband protest against the regime.

Then, as the Dutch began their reply, Flower left the field injured to be replaced by Olonga, serving as 12th man.

Both men were wearing heavy, think white armbands to extend their protest having been warned to desist with the black arm and wristbands by the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU).

Olonga's arrival was greeted with a huge roar from the 3,000-strong crowd before two protest banners were unfurled - one saying 'Mugabe equals Hitler' and the other claiming 'Zimbabwe Needs Justice'.

Some spectators started to sing as police moved in to confiscate the banners. One of the crowd said the

words to the song meant: 'We hate what you are doing to us.'

On the pitch, Zimbabwe skipper Heath Streak was named man-of-the-match for his 44 runs and 1-36 and said everything was coming together well in time for the crunch clash against Pakistan here on Tuesday.

"We planned to win and win well today," said Streak.

"The match against Pakistan is a huge game and we'll take a lot of positives from this win. We are bowling a lot straighter than we were and hopefully that will continue so we can give them a hard time."

The win kept Zimbabwe in fourth place in the table on 12 points just behind England on run-rate with Pakistan in fifth place on eight points.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Pool A match between Zimbabwe and the Netherlands at the Queens Sports Club on Friday.
ZIMBABWE
Wishart c Smits b Lefebvre 21
Vermeulen b K'burg 27
A Flower c Esmeijer b Schiferli 71
Blignaut c K'burg b Schiferli 30
Blignaut c K'burg b Schiferli 58
Streak c Esmeijer b de Leede 44
Marillier lbw b Lefebvre 1
Taibu not out 7
Extras: (lb-3, w-7) 10
Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs) 301
Fall of wickets: 1-24, 2-82, 3-135, 4-165, 5-245, 6-274, 7-281, 8-301
Did not bat: B Murphy, D Hondo
Bowler O M R W

Schiferli 10 2 43 2
Lefebvre 8 0 38 2
De Leede 7 0 69 2
K'burg 10 0 40 2
Esmeijer 9 0 60 0
Van Bunge 3 0 22 0
Mol 3 0 26 0

NETHERLANDS

Kloppenburger c Streak b Hondo 18
Schiferli b Streak 22
Zuiderent run out 15
Van Bunge lbw b Whittall 37
De Leede lbw b Murphy 1
Van Troost c Hondo b Murphy 26
Scholte c Blignaut b Murphy 7
Mol c sub (Olonga) b Marillier 23
Lefebvre b Marillier 30
Smits not out 5
Esmeijer not out 6
Extras: (b-1, lb-7, w-3, nb-1) 12
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs) 202
Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-49, 3-80, 4-85, 5-127, 6-128, 7-148, 8-190, 9-191
Bowler O M R W
Blignaut 10 1 30 0
Hondo 6 1 16 1
Murphy 10 3 44 3
Marillier 9 0 49 2
Whittall 5 1 19 1
Result: Zimbabwe won by 99 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Heath Streak.
Toss: The Netherlands
Umpires: Steve Bucknor (WIs) and Tyrone Wijewardene (Sri)
TV Umpire: Nadeem Ghouri (Pak)
Match referee: Clive Lloyd (WIs)

Betting frenzy

FROM PAGE 16

the country. But in Bombay, the stakes are much higher said Vagal. Vagal estimated the city has more than 100,000 punters and more than 100 bookies for cricket alone.

Careful not to stay in one place too long, the bookies use mobile phones in cars and vans. The bigger ones work out of posh apartments coding bets on computers. Some even check into five-star hotels to avoid suspicion.

Some 25 bookmakers have been arrested in a crackdown over the past two weeks but the sweep hardly created a dent in the business: the maximum fine is just 1,000 rupees and most of the arrested are released on bail, the officer said.

Indian bookies hit the headlines three years ago when allegations of match-fixing shook the cricket world.

Former South African captain Hansie Cronje, who died last year in a plane crash, admitted accepting 130,000 dollars in bribes from bookies to influence matches.

After the scandal broke, Indian cricket authorities banned former captain Mohammad Azharuddin and Test batsman Ajay Sharma over match-fixing allegations after an independent inquiry into a federal police report on corruption in cricket.

They deny any wrongdoing. Bombay police are particularly concerned about the power of the heads of organised crime gangs who have fled the country but run extortion and gambling rackets by 'remote control.'

"Big-time organised cricket betting is run and controlled by these gangsters based mainly in Dubai and Karachi," said a senior Central Bureau of Investigation

official. Besides raking in millions of rupees, the gangsters, some of whom are die-hard cricket fans, offer protection to big bookies.

"You can't even begin to imagine the kind of money we make," said a bookie who did not wish to be named. "Gold and diamond merchants here think nothing of sinking a few million rupees in bets."

W.H. Khan, a 24-year-old software professional, bets with one of the city's biggest bookies, a rich textile trader working out of buildings he owns in south Mumbai with private guards to ensure strangers do not stray in when a match is on.

To maintain a low profile in case his bookie is busted, Khan never bets more than 500 rupees a time. But he's hooked.

"It's like an addiction. When you win it's such a high."

It's only a sport

FROM PAGE 16

political issue it has nothing to do with Kashmir and missile testing."

The fact that Pakistan need to beat India to stay in the hunt for the Super Sixes has added extra spice to an already highly-charged encounter.

"I know it is a high voltage game as everyone is saying but I am sure that despite the hype, both teams will exhibit true sportsmanship and prove to be ambassadors of the game as well as their countries," said 68-year-old Khan, who was born in Bhopal in India before migrating to Pakistan.

Khan described Indian sports minister Vikram Verma's views that the World Cup match will not lead to a revival of cricket ties between Pakistan and India, as "disappointing."

"I am disappointed at his remarks and am always of the opinion that sports and politics should not be intertwined."

"Let the public sentiment be the judge and prove that cricket should go on."

Khan managed Pakistan team's last tour to India in 1998-99 despite threats of disruption from Hindu fundamentalists.

"We had a wonderful tour of India and despite the tension, we were treated like heroes everywhere."

No Indian team has toured Pakistan since 1989-90 after the Indian government banned bilateral ties in protest at Islamabad's alleged support to militancy in Kashmir.

Both the nuclear rivals have fought two wars over the disputed region and a third one was averted last year after millions of troops were deployed following an attack on the Indian parliament which New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-based militants.

Khan sees little chance of revival of cricket between the two countries.

"I feel at the moment the climate is not viable. If India leaves it to its cricket board and its people, the ties can be revived soon."

Veteran Pakistan bowler Wasim Akram agreed Saturday's match should not be treated as war.

"It's surely not a war. The players all have a good relationship and when we go out it's just a game of cricket," said Wasim, who led Pakistan on the tour of India three years ago.

"The tension is just because we don't play each other more often and once matches are revived the tension will be less," he said.

"It was the same hype before our match in the 1999 World Cup and I hope all ends well."

Battle within Battle

FROM PAGE 16

no respite from both ends.

Ganguly, the elegant left-hander, is tentative against genuine pace, and Shoaib is well aware of that. But the Indian captain's return to form with a century against Namibia augurs well for the team.

Ganguly's form will be crucial for India because he has the temperament and shots to succeed, having scored more than 1,000 runs against Pakistan with two centuries.

INZAMAMUL HAQ V HARBAJAN SINGH

Inzamam, Pakistan's premier batsman, appears to have lost his appetite for runs after shedding weight, having made just 10 runs in four innings so far.

But he remains one of the finest strokeplayers in the modern game capable of dominating both pace and spin. Like Tendulkar, Inzamam has the knack of working the ball in the gaps.

Inzamam has a reputation to defend since he is Pakistan's second-highest scorer against India after veteran opener Saeed Anwar, having made 1,449 with two centuries in 44 matches.

His duel with star Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh during the middle overs will be a match within a match. Inzamam has often driven the spinners to the brink of despair with his excellent footwork and timing.

Harbhajan will be the key in

India's scheme of things as he has the variations to keep the batsmen guessing. He has the ability to keep pressure from one end, forcing rival batsmen to take risks from the other.

This will be the turbanator's first one-dayer against Pakistan, reputed to play spin better than Australia or South Africa.

JAVAGAL SRINATH V SAEED ANWAR

The two ageing stars are looking to bow out of cricket with a bang and what better stage than an India-Pakistan game to do it.

Indian seamer Srinath may not have Shoaib's menacing pace, but relies on his experience to provide crucial early breakthroughs.

He is bowling remarkably well in the twilight of his career, having spared India's bowling blushes on the recent tour of New Zealand. On his old shoulders rests India's hopes of containing Pakistani stroke-makers.

Srinath is only other bowler in the Indian team besides Anil Kumble to bag more than 300 one-day wickets.

Anwar has always been a thorn in India's side since making a magnificent 194 at Madras in 1997, which remains the highest individual score in one-day cricket. The left-hander was recalled for the World Cup to provide experience at the top of the order but has failed to find form. The born-again Muslim, who sports a WG Grace-like beard, hopes he will rectify matters against India.

His bat does

FROM PAGE 16

his senior partner.

Ten days ago, Tendulkar did his one bit of talking by making an appeal to India supporters not to lose faith in the team after the nine-wicket drubbing against defending champions Australia.



BTV
Cricket World Cup 2003
Preliminary Round
Bangladesh vs Kenya
Live at 1:45 pm

ESPN
Taking Guard Day 21
WC Cricket Talk Show
Live at 12:00 pm
English Premier Football League
Newcastle United vs Chelsea
Live at 6:25 pm
&
West Ham United vs Tottenham Hotspur
Live at 8:55 pm
Primera Liga
Alaves vs Real Madrid
Live at 2:30 am (Sunday)
STAR Sports
Taking Guard Day 21
WC Cricket Talk Show
Live at 12:00 pm
Follow Through Day 21
WC Cricket Programme
Live at 10:00 pm



COMPETITION 191

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm March 7, 2003 and draw shortly afterwards

1. Who clinched the Shahjalal Bank International Rating Chess title?
Lovtu Rajib Zia

2. New Zealand beat South Africa in a World Cup Group B match by:
102 runs 9 wickets 5 wickets

3. How many runs did Bangladesh score against South Africa in the World Cup Group B match?
120 108 110

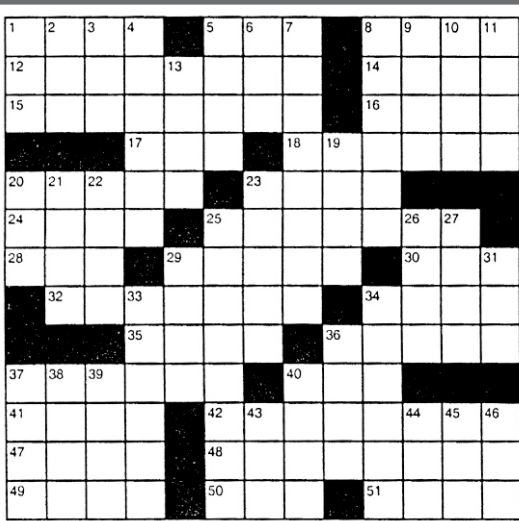
4. Bangladesh lost to Canada in the World Cup Group B match by:
120 108 110

Name

Class..... Roll No.....

School Address

Phone: (If any)



CRYPTOQUIP

V N U S ' P E V C G K Y F G
O I O O I E R H U Y S N V S
I H D V B I S E I C G R . V F Y G R R
V ' O K V O Q U - B D V P V B I E .

Saturday's Cryptquip: IF A FRENCH COIN WERE THROWN INTO A HEIR MUG, THE RESULT MIGHT BE FRANC-IN-STEIN.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: O equals M

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in