Sport

AFP, Tunis

Sfax on Thursday.

matches

Lions.

their last match.

The Daily Star

Spanish Kings Cup **Barca sent**

A late goal by substitute Yordi

Gonzalez earned Zaragoza a 1-1

draw and eliminated FC Barcelona

in a Copa del Rey second-leg

Zaragoza advanced to the last

Yordi's 85th-minute strike

leveled Barcelona forward Luis

Garcia's 14th-minute goal to oust

the Catalan club, which lost the

first leg at its Camp Nou stadium

The defeat is a massive blow

for Barcelona as it hoped to win

this year's competition to end a

drought without a major trophy,

which stretches back to 1999. Its

only realistic hope of silverware

this season now rests with the UEFA Cup, in which it has

Zaragoza will take on second

division Alaves in the semi-finals

of the King's Cup, while favour-

ites Real Madrid face Sevilla

according to the draw on Friday.

The games will be played over the

On Wednesday, Madrid elimi-

nated Valencia 5-1 on aggregate,

Sevilla knocked out Atletico de

Madrid 6-1, while Alaves won

through against Celta de Vigo 4-

reached the last 16.

next two weeks.

four on a 2-1 aggregate score.

quarterfinal Thursday.

packing

AP, Madrid

1-0.

Summit Cup golf held

SPORTS REPORTER

Group Captain A I M Shahanul Islam clinched the men's title while SWLee won the women's crown in

Summit Cup golf tournament at the Kurmitola Golf Club course yesterday.

A total of 311 golfers including 14 ladies took part in the meet.

Chief of Army Staff and president of Kurmitola Golf Club Lt General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury gave away prizes among the winners as chief guest. M Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group also attended the function

OTHER RESULTS

Senior winner: Abu S Alam, Junior winner: Master Ishan Shawkat Best Gross: Shawkat-uz-Zaman, Ladies Best Gross: M H Yoon, 2nd Best Gross: K J Yoon, Runner-up: Brig Gen Khan Md Nuruzzaman, 2nd Runner-up: Sqn Ldr Tejbir Singh, Nearest to pin: M Anis-úd-Dowla, Longest Drive: Riasat Anam, Winner Pro-Am Mohammad Sohid, Runner Pro-Am: Mohammad Chan Mia.

Ctg handball

CU CORRESPONDENT

Madarbari Mukul Mela and Blue Star Club emerged champions in men's and women's divisions respectively of the Dynastv Mahanagari Handball League arranged by Chittagong Mahanagari Krira Sangstha (CMKS) at the Dampara Police Lines ground yesterday.

Madarbari Mukul Mela defeated Lalkhan Bazar Ekota Sangha 36-31 in the men's division while holders Blue Star Club edged past Agrabad Nowzoan in the women's division 4-3.

Whip of Parliament Syed Wahidul Alam MP distributed prizes as the chief guest among the winners.

Chairman of sponsor Dynasty Group Jahid Akber Cwhowdhury was also present.

CJKSTT

Meanwhile, Satadal Club, Young Star Club, and Nabin Mela earned full points in the CJKS-Sinmin Mineral Water Table Tennis League at Chittagong Jila Krira Sangstha (CJKS) gymnasium.

shirt to hide the extra kilos he gained during his enforced layoff, Satadal Club defeated Nimtala Lions Club 3-0, Young Star Club beat Noapara Lions Club 3-1 and the 30-year-old from Calcutta emphatically closed out with an ace Nabin Mela trounced Madarbari to take the fourth seeds into Udyan Sangha 3-0. Sunday's final against Nenad Zimoniic and Elena Bovina. Paes was rushed to an Orlando

Pascual & Suarez pocket doubles crown

AFP, Melbourne

Top-seeded Spaniard Virginia Ruano Pascual and Argentinian partner Paola Suarez captured their fifth Grand Slam doubles title here Friday with victory at the



Participants of the Summit Cup golf tournament are seen with Chief of Army Staff and president of Kurmitola Golf Club Lt General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury (6th from left) at the KGC course yesterday.

Flawless Federer FROM PAGE 13

hunt the ball down. Far from opening defensively, though, Ferrero patrolled the baseline looking for the smallest of openings, pummelling the ball into

armour.

touch rescued him, a delicately floated backhand forcing the the smallest of gaps in Federer's Spaniard off balance and he missed as Federer eased 4-1 ahead. Little could separate the men in the first set. Federer fought off

Another piledriver of a forehand three break points in the seventh gave Federer another break and a game, fighting back from love-40 to l lead, leaving Ferrero to thump nose ahead once more. his racket into his left thigh in fury Again Ferrero drew level, unerrand frustration.

ing in his accuracy. In the 10th game, Federer

pounced. Unloading on the Spaniard's serve he cracked a series of returns and on his first set point, an under-pressure Ferrero flicked a forehand long. Opening up the second set, Federer kept the heat on, drilling a serve at the Spaniard to hold as Ferrero simply shrugged his shoul-

ders and returned to his seat. Clearly rattled, Ferrero was broken instantly, hooking a crosscourt forehand into the tram-

lines before falling behind 3-0. Dressed all in black, the Spaniard tore a bandage from his

FROM PAGE 13

be cancer.

left thigh at the next changeover, desperate for anything to change hisluck.

A clutch of solid first serves after yet another heavy serve.

Paes' comeback

more often missing than not -- but managed to stay with the Swiss early in the third set. His fragile confidence was

finally shattered in the seventh game when Federer broke him for a fourth time in total, tearing a return back onto the Spaniard's toes.

allowed him to get on the score-

board for 3-1, and buoyed, he set

about the Federer delivery with

However the Swiss player's deft

Two minutes later the Swiss was

Out of ideas and with patience

two sets up after less than an hour

and Ferrero could only stare into

wearing thin, the baseliner

attempted ever more audacious

drop shots and angled volleys --

renewed vigour.

space.

Serving comfortably he moved to 5-3, one game from victory and he made no mistake, forcing Ferrero to return a forehand long

no TV...and the athletes weren't

allowed outside their rooms, so I

has built a reputation for his giant-

killing Davis Cup exploits, produc-

ing big wins against players such as Goran Ivanisevic and Wayne

the common man are out there

supporting you, you can't help but

"It's magic representing 1.2 billion people. They are the wind

put your heart into it," he said.

"When the president down to

guess there was me.

Ferreira

Chelsea sign Parker

AFP, London

Chelsea have signed Charlton midfielder Scott Parker for 10 million pounds, the west London club confirmed on Friday.

As part of the deal Chelsea striker Carlton Cole will remain at Charlton on loan until the end of next season

The fee for 23-year-old Parker, who has recently broken into the England squad, takes Chelsea's spending since Roman Abramovich bought the west London club last summer to a total of 121 million pounds.

Problematic Eagles!

AFP, Monastir

Nigeria's troubled African Nations Cup campaign took another turn for the worse on Friday when three members of their squad were kicked out for alleged indiscipline.

Chelsea's Celestine Babayaro, who was already carrying an injury Portsmouth striker Yakubu Aiyegbeni and Victor Agali of Bundesliga side Schalke 04 were all told to leave the team's base here.

"We have decamped three players this morning. They are Celestine Babayaro, Victor Agali and Yakubu Aiyegbeni," said Nigerian Football Association general secretary Taiwo Obunjobi.

"They broke camp rules. They were suppose to be in bed after team players last night but they were not. They only returned to the hotel early this morning.

"We have informed the team through the captain, Austin 'Jay Jay' Okocha, and have received the approval of the Sports Minister and it was decided that discipline must be maintained and the players involved leave the camp immediately."

Solano now Villa's

AFP, London

Nolberto Solano joined Aston Villa in a 1.5 million pounds (2.7mn dollars) move from English Bronze medallist in singles at Premiership rivals Newcastle. the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, Paes

Peru winger Solano, 29, signed a two-and-a-half year contract with Birmingham-based Villa.

Solano, 29, a fans' favourite at St James' Park since arriving in 1998 from Boca Juniors in a 2.5m pounds (4.5m dollars) move, has started over 200 games for the north-east club.

But Solano, known for his offfield hobby of trumpet playing, has fallen out of fayour with Newcastle manager Sir Bobby Robson this season.

He upset his manager in October when he walked out of the

club after being dropped from a

Premiership game against

Nolberto Solano joined Aston

Villa in a 1.5 million pounds (2.7mn

dollars) move from English

Former England footballer Paul

Gascoigne escaped serious injury

Premiership rivals Newcastle.

Close shave

for Gazza

AFP, London

Middlesbrough.

Lions roar with Mboma

Trunisia 2004

grabbed the first hat-trick of the

tournament as defending champi-ons Cameroon handed out a 5-3

drubbing to Zimbabwe in a thrill-

ing African Nations Cup clash in

are bidding for a third successive title and fifth in all, on top of Group

C with four points from two

Algeria also have four points

after beating old enemy Egypt 2-1

in Sousse but they have an inferior goal difference to the Indomitable

Despite their defeat Egypt, with three points, can still qualify for the

quarter-finals but they would have

to get a result against Cameroon in

Zimbabwe, playing in their first finals, are eliminated.

The 33-year-old Mboma, who

was only called into the squad at

the last moment because of gov-

ernment pressure, also became the

tournament's top scorer with four goals as he led his side's fightback

from being a goal down against the plucky Zimbabweans.

Mbami grabbed the other two

goals while Zimbabwe's own veteran marksman Peter Ndlovu

If league leaders Real Madrid win a

record 30th Spanish title in May, one man who coach Carlos

Queiroz will owe a particular debt of thanks to is his utility player Santiago Solari.

In his time at Real, Solari has played everywhere on the field

except goalkeeper and right back, and at Valladolid on Sunday it looks likely that he will be

employed as a makeshift left back.

without Brazilian World Cup win-

ner Roberto Carlos at left back as he

is still struggling with a hamstring strain, and his usual deputy Raul

"I will play anywhere the coach wants me to," said the modest and popular Solari recently.

hearts and minds of both his team-mates and the club's critical fans

with his commitment to the Real

cause, after his move across the Spanish capital from local rivals

"He is one of the most impor-

tant members of this squad. One of

Atletico in the summer of 2000.

The Argentine has won the

Bravo is suspended.

Real will almost certainly be

Football

AFP, Madrid

Primera Liga preview

Paris Saint Germain's Modeste

The victory put Cameroon, who

"We conceded a goal at the start of the match so it wasn't easy for us," said Cameroon coach Winfried Schafer. Veteran striker Patrick Mboma

"But my players were quick to react. Mboma has three of the five goals - that's good for him and the team.

Ndlovu had given Zimbabwe a shock lead after just eight minutes. Wilfred Mugeyi floated in a left-wing cross and the Sheffield United striker got between two defenders to head powerfully into the corner with goalkeeper Idriss Kameni stranded in no-man's land.

But Zimbabwe, who had also taken the lead against Egypt before losing 2-1 in their opener, paid a heavy price as Cameroon hit them with three goals in the space of 14 minutes.

Mboma levelled after 31 minutes when he rifled-home Eric Djemba Djemba's half hit shot éfore Mbami made it 2-1 nine minutes later when he slotted the ball home after a fine one-two with Mboma.

On the stroke of half-time, Mhoma was back on the scoresheet with his second of the match when he poked the ball over the line from Jean Makoun's clever

Cameroon were pegged back within a minute of the restart when skipper Rigobert Song was adjudged by referee Abubakar Sharaf to have brought down loel

Bosque's point.

starting line-up.

The Real coach could leave out

the inconsistant Pavon anyway, and continue with Alvaro Mejia in

the centre of defence after the 22

year-old newcomer from the

reserves made an impressive

league debut against Villarreal last

from their trip but Valladolid may not be quite the pushover their

Real in their grim Jose Zorrilla stadium four years ago, and the

depressingly industrial surround-

The 2001-02 champions will be

modest 10th position suggests.

once at home this season.

Real will need all three points

Valladolid last lost at home to

fitness tests.

Saturday.

scored twice to take his tally to Luphahla. three in two matches. Up stepped Ndlovu to bury the

spot-kick to give Zimbabwe hope. The fourth goal arrived in the 65th minute when Mboma completed his hat-trick knocking in a cross from Timothy Atouba while, two minutes later, Mbami hit the fifth with a stunning 25-yard drive. Esrom Nyandoro then hit a

spectacular 30-yarder for a Zimbabwe consolation.

The match in Sousse between bitter North African rivals Egypt and Algeria was classified 'high risk' by the organisers due to the ferocity and violence associated with recent meetings between the

As a result, a European referee, Luxembourg's Alain Hamer, was put in charge along with assistants, Frenchman Jean-Philippe Izzo and Tiejun Liu of China.

Algeria, backed by a huge contingent of 10,000 fans inside the stadium, absorbed relentless pressure in the second half and scored a smash-and-grab winner four minutes from the end through substitute Achiou Hocine.

The goal will go down as one of the best of the tournament as Hocine ran more than half the length of the pitch to score.

Algeria finished the game with ten men after Mamar Mamouni, who had scored the 12th minute opener for his team, was sent-off. Egypt had pulled level in the

Frank Rijkaard's Barcelona 25th minute through Ahmed Belal. failed to take advantage of the good start provided by Garcia's goal, a spectacular volley from

outside the area. The early goal briefly boosted Barcelona, and goalkeeper Cesar Wind beneath Real's wing State a good save to keep out Dutch striker Patrick Kluivert's goalbound shot nine Kluivert's goalbound shot nine minutes later.

Zaragoza suddenly burst into action in the 28th minute with forward David Pirri's fierce shot blocked by advancing Barcelona goalkeeper Victor Valdes, and Argentine midfielder Luciano Galletti hitting the post seconds ater.

But Barcelona resumed con-trol and Dutch midfielder Edgar Davids _ recently loaned from uventus -- came close to netting his first goal for the club in the 34th with a low shot which was saved by Lainez.

had more faith in Antic.

Nevertheless, after an erratic first half of the season, Rijkaard seems to have guided Barca out of the doldrums - although they play host to Albacete on Sunday without the suspended pair of Michael Reiziger and Ronaldinho.

ings seem to affect visitors

(2030)

Saturday (kick off GMT): Atletico

He has played in 19 of Real's 21 league games this season but has only started three of them. However, the ever-reliable Solari is usually the first man to pull off his track suit and start warming up when Queiroz sees a hint of fatigue from one of his stellar

Further changes may be forced upon Queiroz as Francisco Pavon and Zinedine Zidane both face late

Frank Rijkaard was the choice of Barcelona president Joan Laporta after he decided that Antic's face did not fit at the Catalan giants - but there may have been times in the last six months when he wished that he

FIXTURES

Sunday: Murcia v Real Zaragoza

(1600), Real Sociedad v Racing

Santander (1600), Valladolid v Real

Madrid (1600). Villarreal v Espanyol

(1600), Real Mallorca v Athletic Bilbao

(1600) Barcelona v Albacete (1800)

Deportivo La Coruna v Sevilla (2000)

Madrid v Osasuna (1830), Malaga v Valencia (1830), Real Betis v Celta Vigo

Saturday.

goal chances.

adversely as they have only lost Real lead the chase for the

But following the Brazilian's replacement by midfielder Luis

Another familiar figure to return Solari's statistics prove Del to the fray this weekend will be new Celta coach Radomir Antic, this time after a slightly longer absence after Barcelona declined to renew his contract at the end of last sea-

The 53-year-old Serb was signed up by the struggling Galician club on Wednesday. Antic's sixth Spanish first division eam are currently one place above the relegation zone, and he will be at the helm at Real Betis on

However, Barcelona failed to ive up to its promise in a second half which was short on incident as both sides struggled to create

Barcelona's attacking power was hit when Kluivert was replaced by Argentine substitute Javier Saviola in the 51st after being injured by a tackle by Argentine defender Gabriel Milito.

Garcia came closest to giving Barcelona an aggregate lead with another volley in the 70th after Ronaldinho, who had been below his best, sprang to life with a surging run.

Enrique Martinez in the 77th,

Barcelona lost its last hope of

Barcelona's fate was sen-

tenced five minutes from time

when Milito headed back a cor-

ner and Yordi, a halftime substi-

tute for striker Goran Drulic,

inspiration.

volleyed home.

Australian Open.

Ruano Pascual and Suarez drew on all their experience to down Russian duo Svetlana Kuznetsova and Elena Likhovtseva in straight sets, winning 6-4, 6-3 in 1hr 15min at the Rod Laver Arena.

The duo cemented their place as the top doubles partnership in women's tennis with a clinical victory over the Russians, who looked vulnerable whenever Likhovtseva was on serve

Howard won't FROM PAGE 13

Mugabe.

ACROSS

tion

4 Tally

1 Proscrip

7 Barney's

11 Venusian

13 Watering

symbol

hole

14 Easter

15 Wash

16 Prompt

17 Compe-

tent

20 Soother

22 Diving

bird

remover

flavoring

location

member

34 Pantheon

36 Summer

time

pest

39 17th-

41 Soda

37 Entertain

century

art style

holde

28 Run play-

fully

32 Liqueur

33 Earring

24 Frost

18 Impudent

vessels

"The one thing I wasn't willing to do then was to try and stop the Australian team going and thereby expose the Australian team to the risk of penalty and therefore disadvantage the Australian team in the competition," he said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

3 Bright

star

5 Apply

6 Fear

7 Early

1980s

prime-

8 Leaf vein

9 Right

10 Turn

angle

blue?

12 Oscar's

home

19 Cadence

syllable

21 Meadow

23 Frat party

item

25 Five (Fr.)

call

time soap 30 Touch

4 Jennings

network

crudely

big-time

43 It came to

Earth in

March

ardize

55 Saharan

56 Differently

57 Mr. Baba

opposite

2001

44 Jeop-

46 Evade

50 Mock

53 Turf

58 Stet

59 Worm.

60 Sweet

61 Ashen

DOWN

1 Future

tulip

2 Some-

there

where out

Solution time: 24 mins.

often

potato

mirror and saw all the (extra) weight," said Paes, whose goal for 2004 is to play in his fourth Olympics in Athens.

come back when I looked in the

hospital last August after complain-

ing of severe headaches and his

condition was initially suspected to

However, India's Davis Cup

It took a lecture from his father to

captain was diagnosed with a para-

sitic infection of the brain, which

was treatable with drugs.

convince Paes to play again.

I would play in four Olympics, so I had no choice. The six months out gave me a breather and now I'm as

hungry as ever. Paes turned down the chance to join Dutch soccer club PSV Eindhoven as an under-12 in order to concentrate on tennis and, like his parents, represent India at the

Olympics. His father, Vece, won Olympic bronze in field hockey at the Munich Games in 1972, while his mother Jennifer played basketball. "Soccer was my love but I came from a family that represented India

at the Olympics. I was actually conceived at the 1972 Olympics in Munich during the troubles with the Palestinians," said Paes.

"Everything was shut down for four days. No newspapers, no radio,

26 Jacob's

27 Anaton

28 Thick

29 "Dream

31 Plagia

38 Yalie

40 Disen-

42 English

45 Caffeir

47 Carey

48 Arizon

49 Parad

51 Chicke

52 Omega

preceder

Poorly

50 Civil

35 It'll hold

BU, Old DOHS enter final "But my father said I'd promised

"I had very little motivation to U-13 cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

beneath my wings."

Brothers Union handed Mohamme-dan Sporting Club a 50-run defeat at the Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday to reach the final of the Dhaka Metropolis Under-13 Cricket Tournament yesterday. Brothers Union Under-13

cored 175 all out in 40 overs and they wrapped up Mohammedan for 125 in 33.4 overs.

The Brothers Union team faces Old DOHS in the final today at the DOHS ground.

They defeated Indira Road KC by six wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium in the other semifinal

39.3 overs and Old DOHS replied with 219-4 in 38.3 overs

vehicle, police said. Gascoigne told The Sun: "I just

ran into the back of the van. I'm fine, but I am a bit shaken up."

Gascoigne admitted defeat in his bid to make a comeback to top flight football with Wolverhampton last November.

Gascoigne, 36, was the star of England's 1990 World Cup campaign and has been without a club since leaving Chinese second division outfit Gansu Tianma in June following a reported relapse into the alcoholism that has blighted his career.

the hardest working players in training, and in matches, always championship with 46 points, two ahead of Valencia who have not enthusiastic, always giving 100 per scored in their last two league cent, never complaining," said former Real coach Vicente Del outings

Bosque. "At almost any other team he would walk into the starting line up. But this is Real Madrid and I orn only hour the starting and I

hoping to end that sorry situation at Malaga on Saturday, and their coach Rafa Benitez has David Albelda and Amadeo Carboni back after both players were suspended can only have 11 players on the field at any one time," added Del for the shock 1-0 home defeat to Osasuna last Sunday.

Premiership preview **Merseyside derby time**

Football

AFP, London

Bosque.

You do not have to dig very deep to understand why Everton manager David Moyes admits he has yet to enjoy watching his side playing Merseyside rivals Liverpool.

former Celtic defender, Moyes understands better than most the passions that can inflame a football-mad city on derby days and a record of one draw and two defeats in his time at Goodison Park is one that gnaws away at his

pride. "It is true that I have not enjoyed the derbies because we have not won while I have been manager," the Scot admitted ahead of the two clubs' 170th

the strength of last week's FA Cup meeting, at Anfield on Saturday. win over Newcastle "The games I've been involved with have been tighter than Manchester United will seek to

maybe the results show, but results in the derbies is what

mance, its about getting the points, getting the win because it's important for lots of other reasons as well.'

When Liverpool won the corresponding fixture at Goodison 3-0 back in August both clubs were looking forward to promising seasons.

Revitalised by Moyes, Everton were confident of building on last year's seventh place while Liverpool were hoping the arrival of Harry Kewell would help them mount a sustained challenge for the title.

Those early season hopes have given way to a more painful midwinter reality for both sets of fans. Everton, having mysteriously failed to reproduce the elan which marked their performances in Moyes first full season in charge, lie only four points above the relegation zone.

Liverpool's title aspirations had been crushed by October, leaving Gerard Houllier's side in a desperate race for fourth place and the final Champions League qualifying spot.

The stakes for both sides on Saturday are high, as Moyes will-ingly acknowledged. "It is an important game because we need the points but I am sure, for many reasons, Liverpool will be thinking the same.

With Liverpool finally approaching full strength follow-Charlton will seek to consolidate their grip on fourth place without Chelsea-bound midfielder Scott ing Michael Owen's return from injury, Houllier's side will go into the match as slight favourites on Parker at home to Bolton, for

whom new signing Steve Howey could make his debut in defence.

Fellow Champions League aspirants Fulham entertain Tottenham while Newcastle travel to Birmingham.

At the bottom, Leeds entertain Middlesbrough while four of the other teams facing the threat of relegation are involved in crunch clashes -- Leicester taking on Midlands rivals Aston Villa and second-from-bottom Wolves

travelling to Portsmouth. Third-placed Chelsea are not in action until Sunday when they travel to Blackburn with winger Damien Duff doubtful for the return to his former club.

EIXTURES

(1500 GMT unless stated)

Saturday: Birmingham v Newcastle, Charlton v Bolton, Fulham v Tottenham Leeds v Middlesbrough, Leicester v Aston Villa, Liverpool v Everton Manchester Utd v Southampton (1230 GMT), Portsmouth v Wolves Sunday: Arsenal v Manchester City, Blackburn v Chelsea

Van Nistelrooy signs fresh MU contract

AFP, Manchester

Ruud van Nistelrooy has signed a In Saturday's other games, new contract with Manchester United that will keep the Dutch striker at Old Trafford until 2008, the English Premiership champions said Thursday.

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TED ANT					
NI					
I					
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The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

when he was involved in an accident, police said Friday. The ex-Newcastle and Spurs midfielder was driving a four wheel drive BMW in Gateshead when he ran into the back of a parked truck

Indira Road made 218 all out in

after swerving to avoid another

As a native Glaswegian and



Students of Mastermind take part in a 'dress as you like' competition during their annual sports day at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

vou're after.

"It is not really the perfor-

put their off-the-field distractions to one side when they entertain Southampton in a lunchtime clash at Old Trafford.

Three points would put United back on top of the table, at least for the 24 hours before Arsenal receive Manchester City at Highbury.

After a week in which there have been more tactics discussed in the Old Trafford boardroom than on the club's Carrington training ground, a return to the top would be most welcome for Sir

Alex Ferguson. The United boss is embroiled in a feud with the club's biggest shareholder, Irish racing tycoon John Magnier. Pressure from Magnier was widely seen as having resulted in Ferguson being forced to sign a new 12-month

rolling contract this week, rather than the four-year deal he had been offered at the end of last year.

The affair has triggered an angry reaction from many United fans and Ferguson can count on a show of support from the Old Trafford faithful on Saturday.

Ferguson's main selection dilemma is whether to hand 12million-pound signing Louis Saha his debut alongside Ruud van Nistelrooy.

another at some stage.

The French striker was bought from Fulham mainly as back-up for the prolific Dutchman but Ferguson will inevitably experiment with them alongside one



PHOTO: COURTESY