

Premiership  
Chelsea do the minimum

Football

REUTERS, London

Chelsea went top of the Premier League with a 1-0 victory at Birmingham City, while Manchester United got back to winning ways by beating promoted Norwich City 2-1 on Saturday.

Chelsea, who started the season by beating United 1-0 last weekend, had been struggling to break Birmingham down before substitute midfielder Joe Cole scored with a deflected shot.

Frenchman David Bellion and new striker Alan Smith, volleying a superb first league goal, set United on their way at Old Trafford before substitute Paul McVeigh pulled one back for Norwich to set up a tense finale.

Captain Steven Gerrard fired Liverpool to a 2-1 comeback victory over Manchester City, Newcastle United suffered their first home defeat of 2004 when they went down 1-0 to Tottenham Hotspur and 10-man Everton won 3-1 at Crystal Palace.

Fulham made a winning return to Craven Cottage, beating Bolton Wanderers 2-0 with both goals from Andy Cole, and striker James Beattie converted a stoppage-time penalty to give Southampton a dramatic 3-2 win over Blackburn Rovers.

Champions Arsenal are at home to Middlesbrough on Sunday, hoping to equal Nottingham Forest's 42-game

unbeaten run in the English top flight. As in last weekend's win over the FA Cup holders, Chelsea lacked sparkle but got the result Mourinho wanted.

Cole's 68th minute strike signalled an ideal return from injury, having been ruled out of the win over United and England's midweek friendly victory over Ukraine.

Though big-spending Chelsea had to battle hard for the points, Mourinho told Sky Sports News: "I wasn't expecting any different...I knew what was waiting for us.

"People still speak about money, stars and players coming from the moon, but I can tell you it's very difficult to have top players fighting like my players are fighting. Normally, top players are not ready to fight so much." Liverpool made heavy weather of their win, with French striker Nicolas Anelka giving City a first-half lead against his old club.

Czech forward Milan Baros, top scorer at Euro 2004, got his first of the season for Liverpool just after the break and Gerrard drove home the second with 15 minutes left, shortly before a red card for City defender Richard Dunne.

Liverpool's new Spanish coach Rafael Benitez summed up his first game at Anfield, saying: "The score is good, the team played well, the supporters enjoyed it and at the end I'm very happy."

Spurs rounded off a miserable week for Newcastle when new Cameroon

signing Thimothee Atouba scored a superb solo goal on the break after Jacques Santini's side had soaked up all the pressure.

Newcastle were hit by controversy after England midfielder Kieron Dyer refused to play on the right flank in last weekend's draw at Middlesbrough and was on the verge of being transfer-listed before apologising.

Manager Bobby Robson then lost his best defender when Real Madrid made an unexpected midweek swoop for Jonathan Woodgate, who was presented at the Bernabeu earlier on Saturday.

"I took a risk in putting Dyer on because I trusted our public. They didn't let me down," said Robson after using the midfielder as a substitute.

"He was a little bit wary as to how it would go but he was full of courage, he had it in his head that he would not let them down and he didn't.

"We've lost a game we shouldn't have lost in the first half, where we were clearly the better side."

Spurs' new manager Santini, whose side drew with Liverpool last weekend, said: "For a young team who want good performances, having two good results like these are very important for confidence."

Ligue 1  
Lens go atop

AFP, Lens

Lens emerged as surprise new leaders of the French first division Saturday after a series of upsets left the heavy-weight title contenders reaching for their headache tablets.

Mighty Paris Saint Germain were brought to heel by Toulouse, whose 2-1 win left the French capital side still searching for their first win of the campaign.

Newcomers Caen embarrassed Champions League finalists Monaco 1-0, while down on the south coast Nice were holding former European kingpins Marseille to a 1-1 draw.

Lens saw off another promoted side Istres 2-0 to leave them with three other sides - Toulouse, Marseille and Bastia - on seven points but ahead on goal difference.

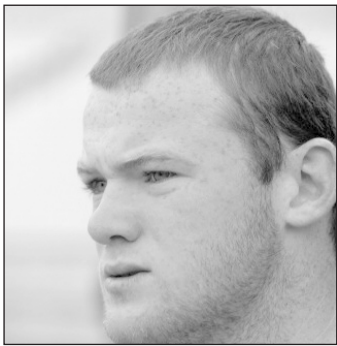
This quartet could be overtaken by fifth-placed Metz if they manage to beat three time titleholders Lyon to maintain their perfect start of three wins from three in Sunday's only fixture.

PSG's pretensions as serious championship contenders look a little thin after this latest defeat which follows an opening day reverse at Rennes and a 2-2 draw against Caen.

back-street brothel in Liverpool, northwest England, around 10 times, the Sunday Mirror said.

He paid 45 pounds (66 euros, 82 dollars) for each session of sex, including with a 48-year-old grandmother, dressed in a rubber catsuit.

Rooney, said to be worth 30 million pounds on the transfer market following his four-goal haul in Euro 2004, even spent one visit signing autographs in the brothel's waiting room, the paper said



WAYNE ROONEY

Football

REUTERS, Milan

Ukrainian Andriy Shevchenko hit a hat-trick as Serie A champions AC Milan beat Lazio 3-0 to claim the Italian Super Cup at the San Siro stadium on Saturday.

Shevchenko, top scorer in Serie A last season with 24 goals, scored twice in the first half and then completed his hat-trick with a thundering volley in the 76th minute of the annual pre-season game between the league champions and the Italian Cup winners.

The striker looked in peak form for the September 12 opening of the Serie A season and his team mates were solid and confident throughout a comfortable victory.

Lazio, whose serious financial problems meant they lost several experienced players and coach Roberto Mancini during the close-season, rarely

troubled a Milan defence anchored by two of their former players Alessandro Nesta and Dutchman Jaap Stam.

Milan looked the more dangerous from the outset and went close in the 13th minute when captain Paolo Maldini struck the crossbar with a powerful left-foot drive from a tight angle.

It was midfielder Massimo Ambrosini who inspired the opening goal in the 36th minute with a smart drag back to lose his marker and then a well-weighted cross to pick out Shevchenko who volleyed home from inside the area.

Seven minutes later and Shevchenko illustrated his eye for goal again, doubling Milan's lead with a firm header as he met a perfect cross from Maldini.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti, without Clarence Seedorf and Andrea Pirlo in midfield, handed Portuguese midfielder Rui Costa a deeper role in front of the defence and the experi-

enced playmaker looked at home in what is usually Pirlo's role.

As Milan strolled through the second half the only cheer from the Lazio supporters came when Paolo Di Canio made his return to Italian football after eight years, coming on as a 56th-minute substitute for Brazilian Cesar to begin his second spell with the Rome club.

Lazio coach Domenico Caso, taking charge of his first competitive game after replacing Mancini, would have been disappointed that neither Roberto Muzzi or Luciano Zauri could convert the two chances that came their way after the break.

Shortly after another debutant, Argentine Hernan Crespo, had replaced Jon Dahl Tomasson as Shevchenko's partner in the Milan attack, the Ukrainian completed his triple with a fierce volley from outside the penalty area.

The win gave Milan their fifth Italian Super Cup victory.



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United's new striker Alan Smith executes a scissor-kick against Norwich at Old Trafford on August 21.

Miracle team marches on

AFP, Athens



War-weary Iraq opened up a new chapter in their Olympic football fairy-tale on Saturday as they reached the semi-finals where they were

joined by Italy, Paraguay and competition favourites Argentina.

Overcoming fatigue brought on by a hectic recent international schedule and the emotional turmoil of the violence at home, Iraq beat Australia 1-0 in their quarter-final thanks to a spectacular overhead kick by Emad Mohammed.

The striker's 64th minute goal came after Australia failed to clear a cross, giving him the chance to execute his spectacular finish and send the ball just wide of diving goalkeeper Eugene Galekovic.

Seven minutes earlier, Iraqi goalkeeper Nour Sabri kept his team in the game with an equally exciting piece of play, doubling back to punch the ball off the line after Australia's John Aloisi had delicately lobbed it over his head.

The win extends the Iraqi team's emotional charge towards a second-ever Olympic medal for their country.

Abdul Wahid Aziz's weightlifting bronze in Rome in 1960 remains Iraq's only podium effort.

Mohammed said after the game that the conflict ravaging his country was a constant distraction for the team, but also a source of motivation as they wanted to give people back home something to smile about.

"We came here to play, to participate in the Olympic Games, but it's quite difficult to have our minds only on the game," Mohammed said.

"I come from a problem area where people have suffered a lot so I hope we gave a little happiness to our country."

Iraq's semi-final opponents will be Paraguay, who beat South Korea 3-2. Striker Fredy Bareiro was on target with two goals for Paraguay, while fellow forward Jose Cardozo scored the third.

The other semi-final offers a tantalising match-up between Argentina and Italy after the two teams reached the final four in contrasting styles.

The Argentinians were at their punishing best as they thrashed Costa Rica 4-0, with a hat-trick by Carlos Tevez the highlight of the night. Cesar Delgado scored the opening goal in the 24th minute.

Argentina were already the overwhelming favourites to win their first

Olympic gold, after storming through their preliminary group with a maximum nine points from three matches with nine goals scored and none conceded.

Italy, who lost to Paraguay in their final group game, left it until four minutes from the end of extra-time of a spiteful encounter with Mali to score the only goal of their quarter-final.

The Italians, coached by the legendary former international hardman Claudio Gentile, were given a rough ride by the west Africans, who missed an early penalty.

A match littered with an astonishing 71 fouls and nine yellow cards went into extra-time after the two teams finished 90 minutes locked at 0-

0. With penalties looming, Italy conjured up the winner.

AC Milan's Andrea Pirlo swept in a cross from the right and Parma's Cesare Bovo glanced a header into the net.

The semi-finals will be played on Tuesday, with the Italy-Argentina in Athens and the Iraq-Paraguay encounter in Salonika.

SEMI-FINAL LINE-UP

Italy v Argentina  
Iraq v Paraguay



PHOTO: REUTERS

LOVING IT! Iraq fans celebrate during their quarterfinal match against Australia at the Pankritio stadium in Heraklion on the Greek island of Crete on August 21.

Golden Henin

AFP, Athens



Justine Henin-Hardenne, who for most of the year wondered whether she would ever play again as she battled a debilitating

virus, completed a remarkable comeback when she won the Olympic women's tennis gold medal on Saturday.

The 22-year-old Belgian never looked as if she would lose as she ran out a 6-3, 6-3 winner over second seed Amelie Mauresmo of France.

She broke Mauresmo twice in each set to wrap up the win in 1hr 15min. The Frenchwoman never had a break point and could not compete with the tiny Belgian's powerful groundstrokes.

"I don't know how I'm going to celebrate but I certainly will," she said. "This is just amazing and at last I'm well and getting better the more I play."

Mauresmo said: "Of course I am a little sad because I would have loved to win gold. But still, it was incredible to be here, really amazing."

"Today I wasn't very mobile... was not hitting very freely and Justine, well, there was nothing I could do."

Henin-Hardenne has spent most of the year unwell and had played just two matches in four months before coming to Athens where she has now played six matches in a week.

That included a three-hour epic against French Open champion Anastasia Myskina of Russia on Friday night when she fought back to win after trailing 5-1 in the final set.

Four years ago she was playing in an obscure tournament in Luxembourg when Venus Williams was winning the gold medal in Sydney.

But in 2003 she won the French Open and US Open and in January this year the Australian Open.

Then sickness struck. She didn't play for six weeks prior to this year's French Open because of the

virus, similar to glandular fever, which left the normally hyperactive Belgian wanting to sleep all the time.

And at Roland Garros at the end of



JUSTINE HENIN-HARDENNE

May she was surprisingly beaten in the second round by Tathiana Garbin of Italy.

In her last match before Roland

Garros she was beaten by Mauresmo at Amelia Island, Florida.

But on Saturday there was never any doubt who would be the winner as the Belgian, watched by the IOC's Belgian president Jacques Rogge, demonstrated she was back to her best, moving in for the kill for an unanswerable smash.

Williams had been seeded to meet her in the quarter-finals but the American, the 2000-2001 US Open and Wimbledon champion, was knocked out in the third round by France's Mary Pierce whom Henin-Hardenne went on to beat comfortably.

The only top players missing from this tournament to test the Belgian were Serena Williams and Jennifer Capriati who pulled out with injuries and Maria Sharapova whom the International Tennis Federation overlooked by setting their entry deadline before she won Wimbledon.

Fernando Gonzalez, the 16th seed from Chile, won the men's singles bronze medal when he beat unseeded

That was Savage!

AFP, Birmingham

Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho wants controversial Birmingham midfielder Robbie Savage hauled up before the football authorities after his apparent elbow on Mateja Kezman.

Wales' blond battler Savage is no stranger to disciplinary action and Mourinho was left fuming after watching his side fight their way to a 1-0 win at St Andrews.

The Portuguese boss demanded the incident be reviewed by the Football Association's video panel after Serbia and Montenegro striker Kezman was apparently caught by the Birmingham marauder.

"I was really surprised when this blond player (Savage) hit Kezman like he did," Mourinho said.

"But at the end of the game it's not my problem. I hope the disciplinary committee can look at the video and decide."

The Chelsea boss said he was "more than upset or angry. I was really surprised because in English football I wasn't expecting such etiquette."

"If an elbow situation happens in my country, Italy, Spain or South America, then that is our culture."

"But you are, and you deserve to be, kings of fair play. That's why many people in the world are in love with your football," Mourinho added.

But City manager Steve Bruce stood by his tenacious midfielder.

"The one thing I know about Sav is that he is certainly wholehearted, but he wouldn't deliberately elbow anybody," insisted the St Andrews boss.

Rehhagel's formula

AFP, Berlin

Greece national coach Otto Rehhagel claims German youngsters need to switch off their gameboy consoles and focus on football if Germany are to triumph in the 2006 World Cup.

German manager Rehhagel, who coached Greece to Euro 2004 glory, claims the development of young players in his homeland has stunted as they are not fully focussed on football.

"The young players prefer playing with their gameboys," Rehhagel said in an interview with Bild am Sonntag. "No-one concentrates on sport anymore."

"In 1990 we won the World Cup with fantastic strikers such as (Jurgen) Klinsmann, (Rudi) Voller and (Karl-Heinz) Riedle.

"With some we have at the moment you have no idea where the ball is going."

Rehhagel, 66, stuck the boot in further by claiming that players are overhyped before they have really achieved anything.

"In the Bundesliga if someone passes the ball straight three times in succession he is hailed like a popstar," added Rehhagel.

"I always say: Work first and the rewards come later on."

The former Werder Bremen coach turned down the chance to succeed Rudi Voller as German manager but backed Jurgen Klinsmann's decision to implement a few changes - even if they are controversial.

Klinsmann, 40, came under fire for sparking a tug-of-war for the goalkeeper's jersey between Bayern Munich custodian Oliver Kahn and Arsenal's Jens Lehmann.

"At the start you have to be courageous," maintained Rehhagel. "I think it is correct that he has not set the number one goalkeeper in stone."

"It does not mean that Kahn will not play anymore. It is just that it will be based on performance."

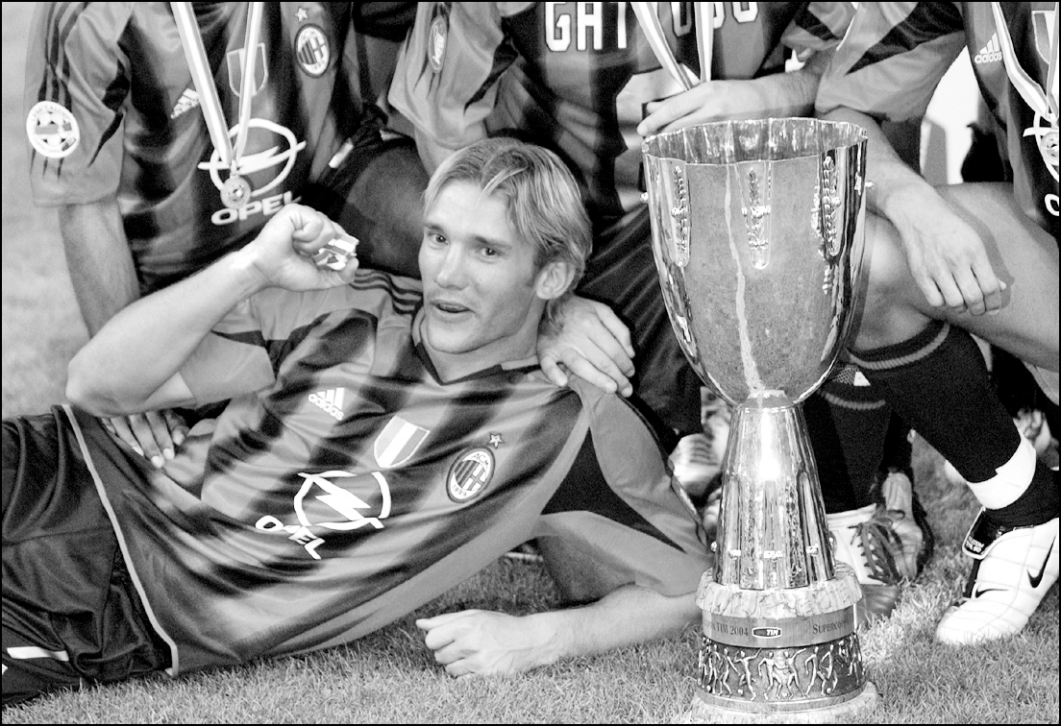


PHOTO: AFP

ONE MAN SHOW: AC Milan striker Andriy Shevchenko celebrates with the Italian Super Cup trophy after his hat-trick enabled his team beat Lazio at the San Siro Stadium in Milan on August 21.