

## Kerry scores votes!

AFP, Brown Deer, Wisconsin

John Kerry put the boot into President George W. Bush on Friday, teaming up with two members of the US women's Olympic gold medalist football team who back his goal of snatching the White House.

The Democrat challenger dropped in for a "surprise" kickabout with a team of 13-year-old girls at a soccer pitch in the suburbs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as part of a bus tour across the key battleground state.

The girls screamed as Kerry, accompanied by the two stars Julie Foudy and Abby Wambach, climbed off his campaign bus, and mobbed the Democratic candidate as he turned on the skill, juggling the ball, and bouncing it on his head.

Behind the contrived photo-op was a serious purpose, an appeal by Kerry for the crucial middle class suburban women's vote he needs to win the presidency, a category of voters dubbed "soccer Moms" during the last election.

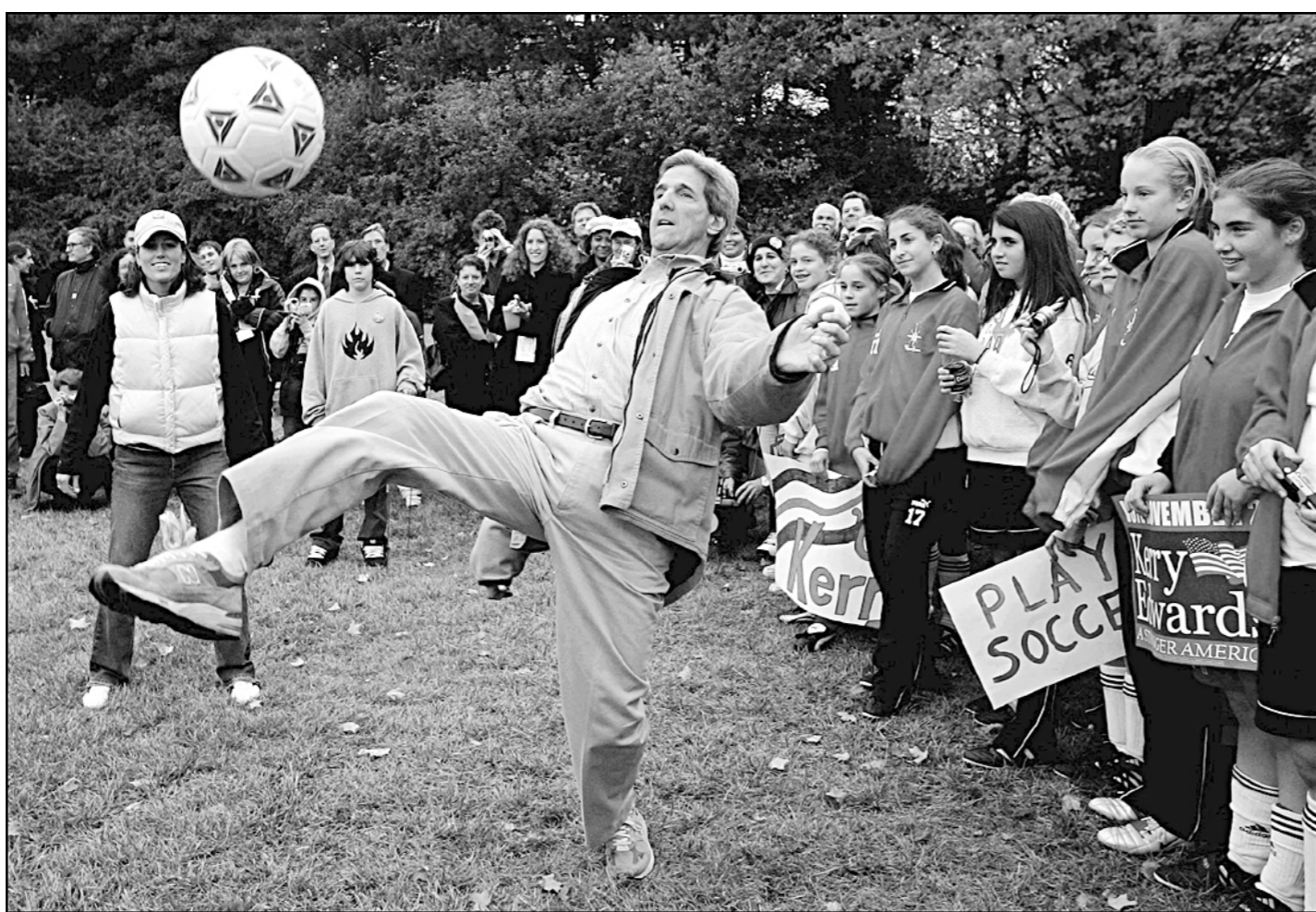
Millions of young American children play soccer and it is as popular with girls as boys, though the sport's popularity drops off sharply when players grow up, making the United States one of the few nations not in football's thrall.

"John Kerry and (running mate) John Edwards understand the importance of expanding opportunities for girls and women and that is one reason I am proud to endorse them today," said Foudy.

Wisconsin, in the American midwest, is a crucial state for Kerry as he battles Bush in the closing two-and-a-half weeks of the election campaign.

The state was carried by Democrat Al Gore in 2000, but the Republicans have included the state on the list of battlegrounds they are targeting in the election.

Kerry was to move on to another key battleground, Ohio, on Saturday.



SOME MORE VOTES ASSURED! Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry shows his soccer skills as US gold medal football team member Julie Foudy (L) and some other female players watch during a soccer clinic in Brown Deer, Wisconsin on October 15.

## Serie A

# Juve bring Messina down

AFP, Rome

Juventus opened up a five point lead at the top of Serie A after edging second-placed Messina 2-1 in a scrappy encounter in Turin on Saturday.

Marcelo Zalayeta headed the home side in front before Pavel Nedved volleyed in shortly after half time.

Surprise package Messina, back in the top flight after 40 years, reduced the deficit in the 69th minute thanks to a superb shot on the turn from Riccardo Zampagna, but Juve held on to their slender advantage for their fifth league win in six matches.

Fabio Capello's men head the table with 16 points from a possible 18, five ahead of Messina, whose defeat was their first of the season.

Defending champions AC Milan, who are six points adrift of Juve in third place, play on Sunday away to Cagliari.

Earlier on Saturday, Roma won 2-0 away to bottom club Livorno in the driving rain to move up into the top half of the table and end a run of four league games without a

victory. Zalayeta, enjoying a rare start in attack due to the absence of injured pair David Trezeguet and Alessandro Del Piero, made the most of his chance, putting Juve in front in the 26th minute.

Mauro Camoranesi's cross from the right picked out the Uruguayan striker whose powerful header gave Messina keeper Marco Storari no chance.

Czech midfielder Nedved increased Juve's lead nine minutes into the second half, meeting Zlatan Ibrahimovic's cross with an angled right-footed volley that went in off the post.

Juve looked comfortable until Zampagna netted his third goal of the season.

Messina pressed hard for an equaliser, but Juve's defence, marshalled superbly by Fabio Cannavaro, stood firm.

Roma captain Francesco Totti, who scored twice for Italy in Wednesday's 4-3 win against Belarus, opened the scoring on the half hour with a right-footed volley before Vincenzo Montella's second-half curler sealed the match in Tuscany.

Even a seven minute first half suspension due to a thunderstorm

failed to dampen Roma's spirits as the visitors won for the first time under Luigi Del Neri, who took over from Rudi Voller as coach on September 29.

Roma's win lifted them up to ninth on level points, while Livorno, promoted last season and back in the top flight after a 55-year absence, remain rooted to the bottom on two points.

Del Neri was happy to get the three points in atrocious conditions, but admitted his side still had a long way to go to resurrect their title challenge.

"The win was very good for morale, but we haven't done anything extraordinary," said the former Chievo coach.

TOP SIX										
Italian league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):										
Juventus	6	5	1	0	12	2	16			
Messina	6	3	2	1	11	7	11			
Milan	5	3	1	1	10	6	10			
Chievo	5	2	3	0	6	4	9			
Palermo	5	2	3	0	4	2	9			
Cagliari	5	3	0	2	7	6	9			

## Bundesliga

# Bayern home invaded

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich tasted their first home defeat of the season on Saturday with Schalke 04 grabbing a late 1-0 victory at the Olympic Stadium.

German international Gerald Asamoah headed home a 78th minute winner to shock the capacity 63,000 fans in Munich and take the wind out of Bayern's sails ahead of Tuesday's Champions League trip to Juventus.

"It is frustrating because one minute you think everything is coming together, then we lose a match like this," said Bayern captain Oliver Kahn. "We are off the pace in the league and that can't go on."

Schalke coach Ralf Rangnick opted for a three-pronged attack with Asamoah, Ebbe Sand and Brazilian Ailton, back after a four-match ban, and his ambition was rewarded when Asamoah stole in front of his marker to head home.

"Full credit to Schalke they stood firm and used their set-piece when it came along," added Munich's German international Michael Ballack.

Dutch international Roy Makaay went close to levelling five minutes later but Schalke held on for a memorable win. Schalke lie sixth after being revived by the arrival of Rangnick.

VfB Stuttgart were the big winners of the day with their 2-0 win extending their points cushion over Bayern and Werder Bremen.

German champions Bremen fell to a shock 2-1 reverse at promoted Mainz 05 despite taking the lead through Greece's Euro 2004 hero Angelos Charisteads.

Two goals in the final six minutes saw Bremen surrender three points and they are eight points adrift of table-toppers Stuttgart.

Matthias Sammer may have won two league titles and the 1997

Champions League with Borussia Dortmund but he showed there was no room for sentiment in football guiding VfB Stuttgart to a deserved win over old club Dortmund.

"That was an emotional game for me," confessed Sammer. "I am very fond of Dortmund but am still happy about the win. Tactically we were excellent and that was pivotal for the win."

Stuttgart moved to the Bundesliga summit with the victory, although VfL Wolfsburg can replace them with three points against Hannover on Sunday, as Sammer continues to make replacing Felix Magath look easy.

German international Andreas Hinkel (52) and Brazilian Cacau (68) ensured Stuttgart remain the only unbeaten team in the league.

After chasing Bremen for all of last season only to finish runners-up, Bayern manager Magath will be wary of letting his former club Stuttgart, six points ahead, move out of striking range.

It was a miserable weekend all round for Germany's Champions League hopefuls with Bremen, Bayern and Bayer Leverkusen all defeated.

Bayer crashed to a 3-1 reverse at Hertha Berlin and have now collected just one point on their travels this season.

Their confused fans are just glad that Tuesday's Champions League tie with Italian side Roma is at the BayArena and not in the Eternal City.

TOP SIX										
German football league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):										
Stuttgart	8	6	2	0	17	5	20			
Wolfsburg	7	6	0	1	13	6	18			
Mainz 05	8	4	3	1	13	10	15			
Bayern	8	4	2	2	12	10	14			
Bremen	8	4	0	4	16	10	12			
Schalke 04	8	4	0	4	9	12	12			

## Premiership booter tests positive

AFP, London

A footballer in the English Premiership has tested positive for a banned substance, the Mail on Sunday newspaper reported.

The report claimed the player, who was not named for legal reasons, tested positive after a test conducted by UK Sport.

The Football Association, who refused to comment, have said in the past that they intended to tighten their doping programme after Manchester United and England defender Rio Ferdinand's missed drugs test in 2003.

## Hong Kong furious

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong's football chiefs have fired an angry broadside at the game's Asian bosses after the city was warned against taking a dive against China in a match which could see the mainland team eliminated from the 2006 World Cup finals.

The local football association wrote to Asian Football Confederation chief Peter Velappan after he made the comments ahead of the city's qualifier clash with China in Guangzhou on November 17.

China must win by a wide margin to have any hope of travelling to Germany in 2006 and Velappan said if there was any "funny business, they will face the music".

The comment came after the Chinese-language newspaper Oriental Sports Daily urged the Hong Kong team to be gracious and give the motherland the game.

"There shouldn't be any suspicion on Hong Kong. Any doubt on Hong Kong is ridiculous," HKFA chairman Martin Hong told the Sunday Morning Post.

The letter sent to the HKFA complained that Velappan's comments would "damage the image and reputation of the HKFA and tarnish the image of the coaches and players who have worked so hard during the tournament".

## Primera Liga

# Ronaldo salvages a point

AFP, Madrid

Brazilians bagged the plaudits in Spain's La Liga on Saturday as Deco, Brazil-born but a naturalised Portuguese international, fired Barcelona five points clear of the pack with the only goal in a derby win over Espanyol.

Ronaldo meanwhile poached his first league goal since the opening day of the season to end a personal drought of 586 minutes for the meringues to snatch a point for Real Madrid in a 1-1 draw at Betis.

The one point was more than Real deserved based on a pale first-half showing and although they recovered their poise after the break they remain just tenth in the table with ten points from seven games and could fall further after the remainder of the weekend programme.

Barca in contrast have 19 points from the same number of matches after Deco smacked in a ninth-minute effort which took a wicked deflection off Angel Morales after good work by Cameroon international striker Samuel Eto'o.

Barcelona, who largely shut up shop after Deco's goal, lead reigning champions Valencia by five points although Claudio Ranieri's men have a game in hand and meet Seville at home on Sunday.

Real Madrid coach Mariano Garcia Remon lamented poor finishing after his side were forced to rely on a trademark poacher's strike from Ronaldo in a fortuitous 1-1 draw at Real Betis on Saturday.

"Betis were the better side in the first half, but I think we had more than enough chances to win it," said Remon, who replaced Jose Antonio Camacho as coach last month.

The draw leaves Real marooned in midtable with ten points from their seven league matches this season and their performance did little to suggest they are in the mood to steamroller Dynamo Kiev in next week's make-or break Champions League encounter at the Bernabeu.

Iker Casillas in the Real goal was the busier of the two keepers as Betis went for the jugular and they smelt blood as several early chances went begging before the hosts, showing greater urgency in front of their home fans than their feted rivals, took the lead on the half hour.

Oliveira deftly swept home a first-time shot after a neat through ball from Fernando caught Real's defence napping.

Just when it looked as if Real

were on the verge of slumping to their fourth league defeat in seven games this season up popped goal machine Ronaldo to drill home in similar style after a one-two with Zinedine Zidane in the 65th minute as the visitors upped the tempo late on.

Raul thought he had put Real into a 28th-minute lead but his header from a floated pass by Luis Figo was chalked off for offside.

Figo and Zidane were called upon to rouse Real's engine room in

the absence of England star David Beckham, whose hairline rib fracture sustained in a World Cup qualifier against Wales last weekend will keep him out of action for over a month.

Beckham could theoretically return to action at the Bernabeu against some of his Real teammates as England visit for a friendly international against Spain on November 17 but the indications are that he will not feature.

Beckham's England teammate Michael Owen, on target for his country in midweek, was full of running in the second half after coming on in place of defender Walter Samuel but failed to break his Real duck.

Casillas had to perform heroics right after the restart in dropping to his left to keep out an Oliveira piledriver before Zidane almost snatched an unlikely win bonus for Real right at the death with a meaty effort which Tony Prats in the home goal did well to save.

Earlier, Deportivo La Coruna warmed up for next week's Champions League visit of Liverpool with their first home win of the season, by a wafer-thin 2-1 margin against promoted Getafe.

Javier Iniesta's Deportivo have struggled this season but goals from Sergio on 17 minutes and Victor 17 minutes from the end gave the northwesterners their third win this term to shunt them into the top half of the table.

Mario Cotelo netted in the final seconds for Getafe's consolation.

TOP SIX										
Spanish league standings after Saturday's late match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):										
Barcelona	7	6	1	0	14	3	19			
Valencia	6	4	2	0	15	6	14			
Sevilla	6	3	2	1	6	3	11			
Deportivo	7	3	2	2	9	12	11			
Malaga	6	3	1	2	8	5	10			
Atletico	6	3	1	2	6	3	10			



Superstar Ronaldo celebrates his equaliser in his latest style during Real Madrid's match against Real Betis at the Ruiz de Lopera stadium in Seville on October 16.



Liverpool's Czech forward Milan Baros (R) scores with Fulham's Carlos Bocanegra (C) and goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar watching at Craven Cottage in London on October 16.

## Premiership

# Chelsea's run ends

AFP, London

Arsenal tightened their grip on the Premiership title on Saturday as closest rivals Chelsea slumped to their first defeat of the season at the hands of Manchester City.

The champions, 3-1 winners over Aston Villa, were left five points clear of their London rivals after Nicolas Anelka's 11th minute penalty earned City a memorable victory and gave Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho his first taste of defeat in English football.

An extremely positive day for Arsenal also saw them extend their advantage over Manchester United - held to a goalless draw by Birmingham - to 11 points ahead of their visit to Old Trafford next weekend.

The win over Villa made it 49 matches unbeaten for Arsene Wenger's side in the Premiership and on Saturday's evidence United will struggle to stop them bringing up the 50 at Old Trafford on October 24.

Villa had the temerity to take the lead courtesy of Lee Hendrie's 25-yard strike in the third minute.

But normal service was quickly

resumed when Mark Delaney brought down Thierry Henry inside the area and Robert Pires sent Stefan Postma the wrong way with the resulting penalty to give Arsenal back on level terms.

Henry ensured Arsenal went in at the break with their noses in front after being played in by strike partner Jose Antonio Reyes and Pires wrapped things up 18 minutes from time.

It was not all good news for the Gunners however. Skipper Patrick Vieira was forced to limp off with a sprained ankle after a tackle by J'Lloyd Samuel which leaves him doubtful for next week's Champions League game against Panathinaikos.

As Arsenal were cruising past Villa, United struggled to get out of second gear against Steve Bruce's Birmingham, despite fielding over 60 million pounds of striking talent for the last half hour of the match.

Ruud van Nistelrooy spurned a good first half chance that might have given United the points but Birmingham fully deserved a draw which United boss Sir Alex Ferguson admitted had dented his side's title chances.

"Everybody is right to write us off

because we're a few points behind everyone but football is a funny game and things can change," the Scot said.

"We are capable of winning the league but we need to show the form that is capable of doing that. We're not doing that at the moment."

The win came at a heavy price to City defender Sun Jihai, with the China international facing a year on the sidelines after rupturing knee ligaments in a collision with Chelsea forward Eidur Gudjohnsen.

Sun, 27, left the City of Manchester Stadium on crutches and is expected to undergo surgery on his damaged joint as soon after he has been examined by a specialist.

"Jihai Sun has damaged both his cruciate and medial ligament and he will be out for a year," City boss Kevin Keegan confirmed.

"It's a shame because it was such an innocuous challenge and it's just one of those silly injuries that can happen in football."

"His contract is up at the end of the season and he won't be able to play again before it is up. I only hope the board show some heart and offer to extend it until next Christmas

so he at least has the chance to start playing football again."

Prior to City's heroics, Liverpool had produced the performance of the day by battling back from two goals down to beat Fulham 4-2 at Craven Cottage, despite finishing with only ten men on the pitch.

Portuguese forward Luis Boa Morte had scored twice in the space of six minutes to put Fulham in control with only half an hour gone.

But Liverpool were a side transformed after the introduction of outstanding Spanish midfielder Xabi Alonso at half-time.

A Zat Knight own goal put the Reds back into the contest five minutes after the interval and Milan Baros struck the equaliser with 19 minutes left.

By that stage Liverpool were unstoppable and despite having Spanish full-back Josemi ordered off, they went on to claim all three points courtesy of a deflected free-kick from Alonso and a last-minute strike from Igor Biscan.

Middlesbrough striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink claimed a hat-trick as Blackburn paid a heavy price for having Turkey midfielder Kerimoglu Tugay sent off before half-time at Ewood Park. George

Boateng also scored as Boro exploited their numerical advantage with four second half goals.

Everton's impressive start to the season continued with a late, late show against Southampton at Goodison Park. Both sides had appeared content to settle for a share of the points before Leon Osman popped up to score a winner that consolidates Everton's grip on third place in the table.

Norwich were left rooted to the bottom of the table and still searching for their first win of the season after a goalless draw at fellow Premiership newcomers West Brom.

Crystal Palace also remain mired in the relegation zone after going down to a 1-0 defeat at

TOP SIX										
English Premiership table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):										
Arsenal	9	8	1	0	29	8	25			
Chelsea	8	6	2	0	8	1	20			
Everton	9	6	1	2	10	7	19			
Bolton	9	4	3	2	14	11	15			
Middlesbrough	9	4	2	3	16	12	14			
Man Utd	9	3	5	1	9	7	14			