

# Gerrard too hot to handle



AFP, Liverpool

Steven Gerrard rubber-stamped his long-term commitment to Liverpool with a hat-trick as the European champions launched the defence of their Champions League crown with a comfortable 3-0 win against Welsh champions Total Network Solutions on Wednesday.

Liverpool captain Gerrard, whose on-off decision to leave the club was finally resolved by him signing a new four-year contract last Friday, netted two first-half goals and a strike one minute from full-time to give the home side a healthy lead ahead of next Tuesday's first qualifying round second-leg.

UEFA's decision to allow Liverpool to defend the trophy that they won so remarkably against AC Milan just 49 days ago came at a price, with Rafa Benitez's team forced to enter at the first qualifying stage alongside Europe's minnows.

Although Liverpool's early appearance at this stage was a result of their failure to claim a top four finish in the Premiership last season, they were always unlikely to be troubled by whoever they were paired with in the first round and TNS, Welsh double winners last season, struggled to compete with the home side.

Ken McKenna's team may have been the dominant force in Welsh football in recent seasons, but the Llansantffraid-based outfit went into this game having never won a competitive European fixture and that statistic was hardly likely to change at Anfield.

Still, Liverpool manager Benitez, who handed a debut to 6million pound goalkeeper Jose Reina - leaving the goalkeeping hero from the final Jerzy Dudek to watch from the stands - warned his players against underestimating TNS, claiming that their lengthier pre-season build-up would ensure that they were fitter than his team.

If that was the case, it did not show as Liverpool cruised into a commanding 2-0 lead by half-time courtesy of two Gerrard goals in a one-sided opening 45 minutes.

A week ago, the Liverpool captain - whose two goals opened Liverpool's account in last season's Champions League opener against Sturm Graz - was in turmoil over his future at the club, with Chelsea waiting in the wings to seal a 35million pound purchase of the England midfielder.

However, having opted to commit his future to Anfield by rejecting the Premiership champions, Gerrard appeared untroubled and a man at ease as he put his team in control of the tie.

The game was only eight minutes old when Gerrard scored

Liverpool's first goal of the season following a quick three-man movement involving John Arne Riise, Anthony Le Tallec and Fernando Morientes.

Morientes's lay-off teed up Gerrard ten yards from goal and the midfielder side-footed past goalkeeper Gerard Doherty to open the scoring.

TNS struggled even to escape their own half as Liverpool continued to press forward at every opportunity and it was no surprise when Gerrard doubled the home side's lead on 21 minutes.

Defender Steve Evans was unable to clear Morientes's through-ball and Gerrard dispossessed the TNS man before lofting the ball over keeper Doherty from 18 yards.

McKenna's team tightened up following Gerrard's second and Liverpool began to find the no-hopers a tougher proposition as their own chances dried up.

Morientes should have extended Liverpool's lead when he headed over from six yards on 68 minutes and Gerrard, hunting a hat-trick, almost scored a stunner when he volleyed over from 30 yards moments later.

Former Real Madrid forward Morientes spurned three more golden chances before Gerrard sealed a stunning personal performance by netting his third of the game with a left-foot strike from 20 yards.

# Vieira almost Juventus'



LONDON

Juventus expect to sign Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira Thursday afternoon, one of the club's key officials today confirmed.

"We are on the verge of signing him," said Juve general director Luciano Moggi. "The deal should be completed this afternoon."

The Bianconeri have ruled out a move for Vieira's Arsenal teammate Robert Pires, however, with Moggi emphatically stating: "We are not interested in Pires."

Reports in the Italian press this morning suggested Vieira will sign a four-year contract after the clubs agreed a fee of £9.6m, but Moggi would not confirm these details.

Apart from Arsenal chairman Peter Hill-Wood admitting he had heard of the Juventus interest in Vieira and saying it was still his gut feeling the bid would be turned

down at a board meeting next week, there has been no response from the Gunners.

Vieira was on the brink of joining Real Madrid a year ago but the London club's commitment to keeping him despite a £25m-plus deal was a big factor in him changing his mind at the last moment.

This time, neither vice-chairman David Dein nor manager Arsène Wenger have publicly stated their desire to retain Vieira still has two years to run on his contract at Highbury.

Meanwhile, the future of Vieira's Arsenal and France team-mate Pires is less clear. Pires's representative Stephane Courbis yesterday insisted that Juve want him and dismissed suggestions that Turkish side Galatasaray that were close to capturing the player.

"Right now, Juve are the only interested party," said Courbis, "We have not had contact from Galatasaray." Internet Source

# Pietersen KOs Thorpe



AFP, London

Kevin Pietersen was handed his first call-up to an England Test squad here Thursday as the selectors named their 12-man party for next week's first Ashes Test at Lord's.

The South African-born Hampshire batsman averages 87 in one-day internationals and on Tuesday scored a dashing 74 against the world champions in Australia's eight-wicket win at The Oval.

Pietersen, an unorthodox batsman, came in for Surrey left-hander Graham Thorpe, at 35 10 years his senior, and a veteran of 100 Tests.

"I am delighted. I said I would be the happiest man in the UK and when I got the call it was a special feeling," Pietersen told reporters at Lord's here Thursday.

"I have big shoes to fill in Graham Thorpe, he has been a great cricketer for England and could still be," added Pietersen who scored three one-day

international hundreds in South Africa during the northern winter.

Thorpe intends to coach in New South Wales during the next Australian season - when England are in India - and has said this term will be his last as an international cricketer.

"Ultimately, we have opted for Kevin because of the form he showed against Australia (in the one-day internationals), his excellent first-class career (he averages just over 52 with 21 hundreds) record and the energy and enthusiasm he brings to the England dressing room," said David Graveney, England's chairman of selectors.

However, he added: "The selectors do not view this decision as marking the end of Graham Thorpe's international career."

## SQUAD

Marcus Trescothick, Andrew Strauss, Michael Vaughan (captain), Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Andrew Flintoff, Geraint Jones, Ashley Giles, Matthew Hoggard, Simon Jones, Stephen Harmison, Chris Tremlett.



## Did U Know?

The first one-day international (ODI) was played between traditional rivals Australia and England at Melbourne on January 5, 1971.



**David Shepherd**  
(Former English cricket umpire)  
"I felt very flattered. But I didn't want it really. There's enough hype going on these days. Players are the stars. The game of cricket is for players not umpires."  
When he was requested to officiate in the Lord's Test.

# Mourinho again!



AFP, London

The Football Association (FA) blasted Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho on Wednesday for his claims that Premiership rivals Arsenal received preferential treatment.

The Blues manager insinuated Tuesday that the presence of Gunners vice-chairman David Dein on the FA's board had implications for Chelsea and that Arsenal have been given an easier ride with the Premiership fixture list.

The FA hit back, describing Mourinho's comments as "unnecessary, unhelpful, bad for the image of the game and inaccurate" and said that they would be examining them to decide what action to take.

"The FA is extremely disappointed with the comments made by Jose Mourinho to the media yesterday," an FA statement said.

"At a time when the football

authorities are collectively striving to improve behaviour at all levels of the game, some of those views expressed by Mourinho are unnecessary, unhelpful, bad for the image of the game and inaccurate.

"The Arsenal Vice-Chairman David Dein is one of four members of The FA Board representing the FA Premier League. The four Premier League representatives are elected by the 20 member Premier League clubs (including Chelsea) to represent their views within The FA.

"We would like to state categorically that Mr Dein does not have any involvement within The FA's Disciplinary or Compliance functions. It should also be made clear that he is not a member of The FA's Disciplinary Committee.

"Therefore, Mr Dein does not have any input into any decisions to charge individuals or clubs with breaches of FA rules, nor in any judgement or punishment administered by a Disciplinary Commission.

"If any club or official has any comment or complaint to make

about the role of any individual within the game, there are channels available to do this through clubs to the football authorities not by individuals in a press conference.

"The FA is currently studying the comments made by Mr Mourinho."

In May, Mourinho was fined 200,000 pounds by the Premier League over the Ashley Cole tapping-up saga - Chelsea were also fined 300,000 pounds - after a complaint by Arsenal but he insisted his club got a raw deal.

Later Wednesday, Chelsea stepped up the war of words by issuing a statement supporting Mourinho.

"We have seen the statements issued by the Football Association and the Premier League in response to comments made by Jose Mourinho," said the statement.

"We are very aware of our responsibilities to uphold the image of the game and do not want to get involved in conflict with either the FA or the Premier League, neither does Jose.



RIO DE JANEIRO

Gilvan de Souza, father of Brazilian international Robinho, said Wednesday that he does not understand why Santos President Marcelo Teixeira did not meet his word and let his son go to Real Madrid.

"Teixeira promised us to let him (Robinho) decide about his future after Liberators Cup. I don't know why he did not meet his word. But I expect the issue be decided as soon as possible," said De Souza to the local media.

Robinho's father said his son is willing to become a member of Real Madrid.

"Madrid is a place that allows to have better living conditions than Sao Paulo. There language also

helps and there is more security, which is always important for a family," he said.

De Souza also confirmed there were other teams showing interest in Robinho.

"English clubs Arsenal and Chelsea, Holland's PSV Eindhoven, and Benfica of Portugal have been interested in my son. But considering the hard work that Real Madrid has done, Robinho is sure that Real is the only club he would like to play with," said Robinho's father, adding that he agreed with his son.

"I agree with my son and we would like to give up some percentage we would receive for the transfer.

Maybe this would make it easier for Robinho to leave for Spain," said De Souza. Internet Source

# Kottan's first day

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The fresh legs of Ismail saw the substitute chase a long ball on the right flank and pass it back to Monaem who picked Robin on the top of the box with a fine low cross. Sandwiched by two defenders, Robin just got the time to flick a first-time right-footer that went in off the sidebar for his third league goal, ensuring their second win in the run.

After the defeat -- Mukti-joddha's third -- to Youngmen's, the only side without any foreign player which lost 10-0 to Sheikh Russel in the biggest defeat in the history of Premier League, Kottan was simply shocked.

"We did not have key players for suspension and injury and the substitutes were just not fit. Rony got cramp soon after scoring and the others were also not good enough," he said blasting the reserve players.

"Moreover, Iqbal's challenge far out of the goal was unnecessary that got him the red card. It cost us great," he added.

Red card: Iqbal (Muktijoddha)  
Yellow cards: Shiplu, Monaem (Youngmen's)

## TEAMS

**YOUNGMEN'S:** Shiplu, Mamun, Ariful, Shipon, Monaem, Masud

(Rony), Chanchal, Dhiman (Ripon), Rajan, Robin and Nayan (Ismail).

**MUKTIJODDHA:** Aminul, Titu, Iqbal, Harry, Belal, Haris (Riad), Biddiyut, Pappu, Arman, Amin Rana (Al Arman) and Rony (Enamul).

Referee: Abdul Hannan.

# Chappell slams Indian media

PTI, BANGALORE

Talking tough, the Indian cricket team coach Greg Chappell on Wednesday slammed sections of the media for putting the home outfit in a "negative" light.

"I am appalled at the amount of negatives that's put out there in the marketplace about this Indian cricket team," the 56-year-old former Australian Captain, who took charge of the Indian team last month, commented in response to a question.

The question -- whether India has the "killer instinct" like the Aussies -- annoyed the batting great.

"You keep asking me this question; many members of the media keep asking me this question," he said.

# Vaas keeps SL afloat

**FROM PAGE 16**  
trapped leg-before by Vaas in the day's third over.

Banks, who shared a seventh-wicket stand of 81 with Chanderpaul, made 32.

## SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and the West Indies at the Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo on Thursday:

**WEST INDIES:** First innings (over-night 271-6)

Joseph lbw b Wijekoon 28  
Marshall lbw b Vaas 10  
Morton b Muralitharan 43  
Deonarine c Sangakkara b Malinga 12

Chanderpaul lbw b Vaas 69  
Smith lbw b Malinga 4  
Ramdin b Wijekoon 56  
Banks b Malinga 32

Powell c Jayawardena b Malinga 3  
Best b Vaas 4  
Lawson not out 4  
Extras: (lb-7, nb-13) 20

Total: (All out in 88.4 overs) 285  
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-72, 3-95, 4-109, 5-113, 6-192, 7-273, 8-276, 9-281

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	16.4	4	35	3
Malinga	14	1	71	4
Wijekoon	10	1	49	2
Muralitharan	29	8	56	1
Herath	14	1	52	0
Jayasuriya	5	1	15	0

**SRI LANKA:** First innings

Atapattu b Powell	1
Jayasuriya c Smith b Lawson	3
Sangakkara c Ramdin b Banks	34
Jayawardena c Morton b Powell	3
Samaraweera c and b Lawson	11
Dilshan c Smith b Banks	32
Vaas b Smith	49
Wijekoon c Joseph b Best	12
Herath c Ramdin b Lawson	24
Muralitharan b Lawson	36
Malinga not out	5
Extras: (lb-6, nb-11)	17
Total: (All out in 57.3 overs)	227
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-7, 3-32, 4-47, 5-91, 6-93, 7-113, 8-149, 9-215	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	13	5	31	2
Lawson	14.3	3	59	4
Best	11	1	47	1
Banks	16	3	70	2
Deonarine	1	0	9	0
Smith	2	0	5	1

**WEST INDIES:** Second innings  
Joseph c Jayawardena b Muralitharan 2  
Marshall lbw b Vaas 2  
Morton lbw b Vaas 0  
Deonarine not out 5  
Chanderpaul not out 0  
Extras: (b-8)

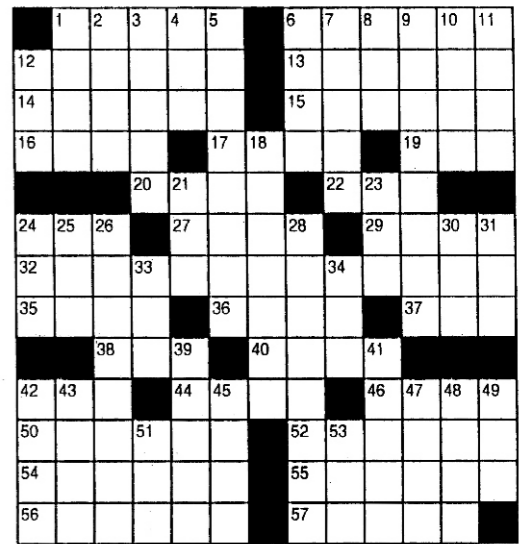
Total: (For 3 wks in 10.2 overs) 17  
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-3, 3-15

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	5	1	4	2
Malinga	3	2	1	0
Muralitharan	2	1	2	1
Jayasuriya	0.2	0	2	0

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 "The Stranger" author  
6 Sweet  
12 Silk tree  
13 Poet  
14 Critter  
15 Heavy  
16 Salon  
17 As well  
19 Scepter  
20 Farm  
22 "The Pooh"  
24 Didn't pay yet  
27 Flaccid  
29 Skewer  
32 "Range"  
35 Needy  
36 Paddock  
37 Front  
38 Singer  
40 Shaving mishap  
42 Simile

**DOWN**  
4 Cabin  
5 Each  
50 "White Fang" writer  
52 1962  
53 John Wayne  
54 Per  
55 Philip Nolan  
56 Usurers  
57 Considers  
1 Movie  
2 Eastern  
21 XXXI  
3 Mell  
Lazarus  
23 Blond  
12 Orient  
18 One of a large, obedient group  
21 XXXI  
quintupled  
23 Blond  
comic strip  
12 Orient  
ing aid  
18 One of a large, obedient group  
42 "Sad to say,..."  
43 Ex-fresh  
45 Individual  
47 Conceal  
to steal  
48 Raw  
minerals  
49 Greek  
consonants  
51 Aachen  
article  
53 Tin  
Man's prop



## CRYPTOQUIP

Q D H D E C C V H Q Y Q T E  
Y E C C F L E Q P G L J T J U P Q  
S C E V F E P K H Y L E Y G E V

Q L E U J Y L J D S S J P L E T K .  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A NOTORIOUS GANGSTER BECAME A PSYCHOANALYST, SHOULD HE BE NAMED PRETTY BOY FREUD?  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals P

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.