PHOTO: INTERNET

Real Madrid superstar David Beckham goes for the free-kick against Real Salt Lake during their friendly in Salt Lake City on Saturday.

Madrid win battle of the Reals

Football

AFP, *Salt Lake City*

Ruud van Nistelrooy celebrated his first goal since signing for Real Madrid with a first half penalty in the Spanish giant's 2-0 friendly win over Real Salt Lake here Sunday.

The Dutch striker joined Real last month on a three year contract from Manchester United worth a reported 15 million euros.

Van Nistelrooy's position at United had become untenable after he fell out with manager Sir Alex Ferguson after he reacted badly to losing his first team place at the end of last season.

The 30-year-old took the first step to repaying his new team's investment when stepping up to convert a 45th minute spot kick awarded after Salt Lake defender Willis Forke's dubious tackle on Antonio Cassano from behind.

Van Nistelrooy, who was left out of the Holland squad named last week for Wednesday's friendly against the Republic of Ireland, then set up Real's second when in the 64th minute he back-heeled to Robinho who shot past Salt Lake keeper Jay Nolly.

Salt Lake had not helped their chances when Atiba Harris picked up a red card for a sliding tackle on Sergio Ramos shortly after the break.

The American side's coach, John Ellinger, was upbeat despite the loss.

"I don't know how you can be disappointed," he told the club's official website.

"The first half was fantastic," he added.

"Even with the whatever-it-was that allowed Ruud to make his goal, but for us, it was a great day."

Parreira's SA job in jeopardy

AFP, *Rio de Janeiro*

South Africa's hopes of tempting Brazil's former World Cup winning coach Carlos Alberto Parreira to take over their national team have hit trouble, media reports claimed on Saturday.

O Globo television said that negotiations have stalled over the exact nature of Parreira's responsibilities.

"Carlos Alberto Parreira will not manage the South African team," reported the Panorama Deprtivo.

"The idea of South African officials was to take a coach to occupy the most important function -- the technical organisation of the 2010 World Cup.

"The Brazilian will not sign a contract for such a post and will not go to Johannesburg as planned next week."

But O Globo added that the talks could restart if the South African Football Federation made a new proposal.

Sources have also said that Parreira has been linked to the coaching vacancy with the United States as well as with Brazilian club side Fluminense.

It was reported just two weeks ago that Parreira had agreed a deal to take charge of the 2010 World Cup hosts.

Parreira, who resigned as Brazil coach following the team's disappointing quarterfinals exit at the hands of France at the World Cup in Germany, is expected to be in Johannesburg in the next two weeks.

The veteran coach guided Brazil to glory at USA 94 and has coached Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia at other World Cups.

'Door not closed on Becks'

Football

INTERNET, *undated*

New England manager Steve McClaren has not completely ruled out a recall to the team for axed former captain David Beckham. The Real Madrid midfielder was left out of McClaren's first squad who face Greece at Old Trafford next week as the team move in a "different direction."

McClaren set out his stall as the new boss last week by controversially dropping Beckham, who had become an institute in the England side under previous manager Sven-Goran Eriksson.

Beckham's reaction to the news was to say he will stand and fight for his place - a sentiment typical of the player - and McClaren was forced to acknowledge the fact that Beckham will not easily let the issue lie.

"It's not the England manager's decision to end anyone's international career," McClaren said.

"While David says he has the passion to play for England, I have to respect that and I will monitor the situation in Madrid. I will never say never."

Beckham stepped down from the captain's role in the aftermath of England's failed World Cup bid in Germany this summer, but stated he still wanted to be considered for selection.

But McClaren's first big decision at the helm of the national side put paid to those aspirations, for the time being at least.

"I would not say it was hardest decision I've made," McClaren added.

"It would have been hard if I didn't have the relationship I've got with him and if I didn't have the respect I have for him.

"It was a big decision but one I felt I had to make for the future."

McClaren also had strong words of praise for two youngsters, saying that Wayne Rooney could "most definitely" be a future England captain and that Theo Walcott - omitted from the squad - "has a bright future."

"He is a fantastic character," McClaren said of Rooney. "He is still very young but he wants to be the best player in the world and, ultimately, I know he will want to be captain of England.

"Theo Walcott is a very good player, he has a bright future and a future playing for England," he added.

"But what he needs now is that experience he needs to play regularly at this level.

"We will give him that opportunity at under-21 level and, hopefully, he will break through and we will see him at senior level again."

Ambrosini brings down Atletico

INTERNET, *undated*

Milan earned a prestigious 1-0 friendly victory away to Atletico Madrid on Saturday night thanks to Massimo Ambrosini's lone strike.

The Rossoneri already impressed in their 1-0 Champions League preliminary round win against Red Star Belgrade earlier this week and continued their warm-up in the Teresa Herrera Trophy in La Coruna.

It was an even first half and the Italians improved after the break, taking the lead when Ambrosini turned in a Yoann Gourcuff corner kick from close range.

The midfielder was already celebrating his return to the Azzurri squad after two years with a call-up for the upcoming friendly test against Croatia.

Kaka played for the final 25 minutes and Milan seemed to be in control, especially as Fernando Torres said to be a main transfer target for the San Siro side was extremely quiet.

Thuram to master his own destiny

Football

AFP, *Paris*

Veteran French defender Lilian Thuram said that he will decide whether he carries on playing international football and not coach Raymond Domenech.

The 34-year-old World Cup and Euro 2000 winning star tells the Journal du Dimanche that he would see if he was still at the level required to carry on, even though he was outstanding at the World Cup where France only lost to Italy in a penalty shootout in the final.

However he was left out of the squad for the friendly with Bosnia-Herzegovina ostensibly because his new club Barcelona want him to play in the Spanish Super Cup against Espanyol on Thursday.

"The answer as to my international future rests with me," said Thuram, who is perhaps best remembered for his two goals turning the 1998 World Cup semifinal from a 1-0 deficit to Croatia to 2-1.

"And I think the coach will respect my decision if it is negative.

"They cannot force me to come back," added Thuram, who like Zinedine Zidane and Claude Makelele came out of retirement to help France qualify for the World Cup finals.

Thuram, who moved from Juventus after they were demoted for match fixing, said he was not sure if he would still be at the level he was during the World Cup finals.

"It will be a decision taken after a lot of thought," said Thuram, who has indicated in the past that he would like to go into politics.

"The problem is to see if I can remain at a high level.

"At the World Cup I probably was, but that is not to say I will always be capable of staying at that level."

Thuram, France's record caps holder with 121, admitted that there was a big chance Domenech would get in touch with him before the Euro 2008 qualifier with Georgia on September 2.

"Even if before the World Cup, he (Domenech) selected me without asking me, it would be logical that we talk about it this time.

"It is important not to be stupid after all."

Porto lose Emanuel

AFP, *Lisbon*

FC Porto captain Pedro Emanuel will undergo surgery over the coming days after he tore his left Achilles' tendon Saturday while warming up for a pre-season friendly, the Portuguese champions said.

The 31-year-old suffered the injury before FC Porto's 1-0 away victory over English side Manchester City, the club said on its Internet site.

FC Porto did not give an estimate for how long the recovery period would be but Portuguese sports daily Record said other players who suffered a similar injury in the past had been sidelined for over a year.

The Portuguese premier league will begin its 2006-07 season on August 27.

FC Porto have been without a coach since Dutchman Co Adriaanse resigned from the post on Wednesday reportedly due to a rift with the club's management.

Venables the right man for Rooney?

Football

AFP, *London*

England manager Steve McClaren believes right-hand man Terry Venables can unlock the dazzling talents of Wayne Rooney in the same way that he solved the Paul Gascoigne engima in the 1990s.

Rooney and Gascoigne, the heart of the English side managed by Venables which made the Euro 96 semifinals, are similar in both their talents and the disciplinary demons which have dogged them.

"Wayne Rooney is one of those special talents. You get the comparisons with different players and Terry has worked with Paul Gascoigne and got the very, very best out of Paul Gascoigne," said McClaren ahead of his first test as national team boss, a friendly with Greece in Manchester on Wednesday.

"We're hoping we can get the best out of Wayne Rooney as well. He will benefit. I know that.

"He's experienced for such a young lad but he's still got a lot to learn."

Venables is back in the England set-up for the first time since he stepped down as manager after taking the team to the last four of Euro 96.

McClaren said: "I wanted the person with the football knowledge - both technical and tactical - who could give me the best advice, test me with new ideas and whose opinion I would value."

The England boss has also brought two of his former Middlesbrough colleagues onto his staff - coach Steve Round and sports psychologist Bill Beswick.

"I wanted to bring Steve Round on board. He's a very good young coach, coming through the system with potential to be one of the best in the country."

Former basketball coach Beswick will be on hand to offer advice to McClaren, his coaches and his players about mental preparation and coping with the pressures of international football.

McClaren said: "A lot of games are won and lost on the mental side of things. It's a big side of the game at the elite level.

"I've been exploring it since I came in to coaching. I've been working with Bill for 10 years now. He's worked at England under-21 and under-18 levels and he's worked at Derby with Jim Smith.

"I wouldn't have brought him on board unless he could benefit the team and the staff."

Ayala facing Valencia rap

REUTERS, *Madrid*

Valencia said they had opened disciplinary proceedings on Sunday against Argentine international centre-back Roberto Ayala for his criticisms of the club last week.

Ayala railed against club president Juan Bautista Soler and sporting director Amedeo Carboni for failing to honour a promised contract extension and accused the two men of having cheated him.

"I wanted to stay here until the end of my career but that dream had now disappeared because certain people did not keep their word," Ayala told a news conference on Friday.

"It hurts that I have been cheated by a club for which I have given everything.

"I was forced to take this decision and I have told both the coach and president that I want to leave."

Valencia responded by accusing the 33-year-old of being more interested in money than playing for the club.

"I profoundly lament these comments that have come at a most inopportune moment," Carboni told the club's Web site.

"At the same time the comments have opened our eyes and strengthened our desire to count on players who are truly committed to the club and less interested in cheques."

Ayala, who joined Valencia from AC Milan in 2000, is under contract with the club until the end of the season.

Regional rivals Villarreal are interested in signing the former Argentina captain, but Valencia have said they will not negotiate over the player.

Ayala sat in the stands as his side beat AS Roma 2-0 in a pre-season friendly at the Mestalla on Saturday.

Lyon vow to bounce back

INTERNET, *undated*

French champions Lyon vowed to fight back from their disappointing 1-1 draw against Toulouse on Saturday, after Gerard Houllier's side conceded a late goal to drop their first points of the season so far. Bordeaux, Lyon's opponents next weekend, currently occupy the top spot in Ligue 1.

"This negative experience will help us," said midfielder Florent Malouda, who netted with just eight minutes to go at the Stade Gerland on Saturday.

But his goal was cancelled out by a Fabinho strike in injury time to see Lyon slip to third place in the table after two games played, behind 100% Bordeaux and Nancy.

All eyes are now firmly focused on next Sunday's clash with Bordeaux

"We will not lose in Bordeaux," Houllier promised.

"We have lost the yellow jersey but it will give us motivation to get it back quickly."

Ominously for the rest of the division, Lyon have yet to recall some of their World Cup stars to the line-up, and Houllier believes his side still has plenty in reserve.

"There are players who have been training since early July and there are the ones who played the World Cup and are three weeks late in the training programme," he said.

Milan can win it all: Seedorf

INTERNET, *undated*

Milan must start the new season with an eight-point handicap, but Clarence Seedorf still believes they can win the Scudetto.

"We'll have to wait and see what happens. I don't think Milan are dead and buried. We can fight and be competitive in every tournament," insisted the Dutchman.

The penalty from the original Calciopoli verdict had been 15 points, but that was reduced to eight on appeal and the club was allowed in to the Champions League preliminary round.

It would seem their transfer strategy hangs on whether they'll qualify for the European competition proper, as they currently lead Red Star Belgrade 1-0 and travel to Serbia on August 23.

"The club knows what to do and will make the necessary adjustments," added Seedorf. "We did well against Red Star in the first leg, but will be in much better shape physically for the decider. The 1-0 win was a great result in the circumstances and we are convinced we can score an away goal, too."

The delays have hit their transfer policy, though, as targets Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Hernan Crespo were snapped up by rivals Inter this week.

Several other options to replace Andriy Shevchenko have been bandied about in the Press, from Atletico Madrid man Fernando Torres to former Nerazzurri star Ronaldo.

LIGUE 1

Nancy on top

Football

AFP, *Paris*

Monaco's troubled start to the season continued on Saturday as the Principality club tumbled to their second straight defeat, finishing once again with 10 men.

Sierra Leone striker Mohammed Kallon was the villain this time, being sent off in first half stoppage time for flinging an elbow at Vincent Hognon as the Monegasques lost 2-1 at home to St Etienne.

After two matches, the team that beat Monaco on the opening day of the season, Nancy, sit pretty at the top of the league after a stunning second half comeback to win 3-1 at home to Sedan.

Last season's runners-up Bordeaux are in second, behind Nancy on goal difference, after a 1-0 win at Lorient courtesy of Johan Micoud's first goal for the club.

Champions Lyon conceded a last gasp equaliser at home to Toulouse to draw 1-1 while Paris St Germain lacked any spark of invention as they were held to a dull 0-0 draw at Valenciennes.

But it is the woes at Monaco that grabbed the headlines as the once mighty Mediterraneans find themselves rock bottom after two games.

Guinean midfielder Pascal Feindouno opened the scoring for St Etienne in the 12th minute with a delightful volley.

Frederic Piquionne doubled the lead 18 minutes from time and although Monaco pulled a goal back from the penalty spot through Lopez Gerrard, after a dreadful dive by Croatian forward Jerko Leko, there was no way to rescue the match.

Nancy were facing defeat with just 12 minutes left at home to the league newcomers but a late surge, begun by a Benjamin Gavanon free-kick that left Sedan goalkeeper Patrick Regnault flat-footed, secured three points.

Just two minutes later Gaston Curbelo completed the quick-fire turnaround and in the last minute substitute Tosin Dosunmu put the gloss on the victory.

Despite still missing many of their World Cup stars, Lyon dominated against Toulouse and were repeatedly denied by goalkeeper Nicolas Douchez -- the man whose presence at the club has frustrated France World Cup goalkeeper Fabien Barthez's hopes of returning to play for his home town team.

The breakthrough for the champions came in the 83rd minute as Florent Malouda, a first half substitute, knocked home a rebound from Brazilian striker Fred's header.

But another Brazilian ensured the honours would be shared as Fabinho slotted home from six yards two minutes into time added on.

Former Werder Bremen playmaker Micoud scored just before the break to maintain Bordeaux's perfect start to the season.

Playing in only his second match since returning to the French league, Micoud latched onto a through ball to hit a cool volley low into the bottom corner.

Bordeaux should have won by more against their nine-man hosts, who had Mikael Ciani and Yazid Mansouri sent off in the second half.

The other three games all ended in draws. Nantes scored a late goal to earn a 1-1 at Nice, Troyes came back from 2-0 down for a 2-2 at home to Le Mans and Auxerre were held 1-1 at Sochaux.

Marseille entertain Rennes on Sunday and Lens travel to Lille.

Germany coach aims at Euro glory

Football

REUTERS, *Berlin*

Germany coach Joachim Loew believes the attacking momentum Germany achieved at the World Cup can carry them through to victory in Euro 2008.

"The confidence we got playing with, and even dominating, some of the best teams in the world will stay with us and we can use it to our advantage," Loew said on Sunday.

"The expectations are high, but I expect there will also be enough realism as well.

"Now we want to harvest at Euro 2008 what we failed to get -- that means the European title," he said at his first news conference since replacing World Cup coach Juergen Klinsmann.

Boldly outlining his goals before his first match in charge, a friendly against Sweden in Gelsenkirchen on Wednesday, Loew said he would stick to the attacking game that worked well at the World Cup where Germany finished third.

"We had a good World Cup but we didn't achieve what we set out to do," Loew said. Italy beat Germany 2-0 after extra time in their semi-final.

"We want to bring the European title back to Germany," said Loew, taking up where Klinsmann left off by setting high targets and ignoring the risk of facing ridicule later.

Germany start their campaign for Euro 2008, which will be hosted jointly by Austria and Switzerland, on Sept. 2 against Ireland in Stuttgart.

Loew, only the 10th full time Germany head coach since 1923, said expectations have risen dramatically as a result of Germany's good World Cup performances after an at-times rocky run-up to the tournament they hosted.

"I'm not afraid or nervous at all ahead of the first match," he said. "Not a lot has changed -- except of course that I'll now be the first once criticised if things don't go well."

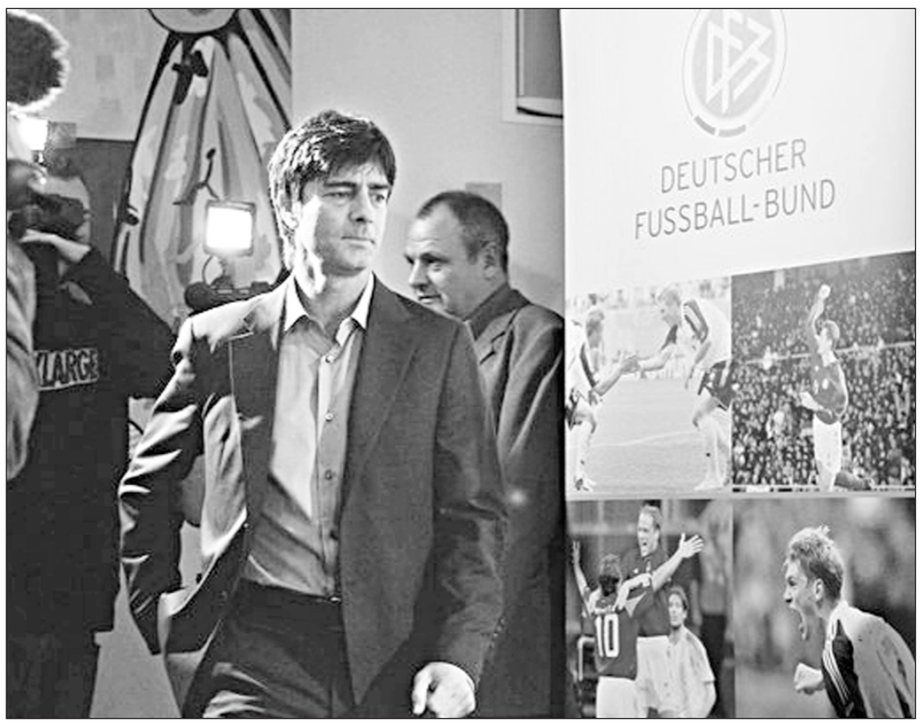

PHOTO: AFP

The new German coach Joachim Loew arrives at a press conference in Berlin on Sunday ahead of the friendly match against Sweden on Wednesday in Gelsenkirchen.

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

ACROSS

1 Goblet feature
5 Energy
8 Bygone VHS alternative
12 From one end to t'other
13 Nucleic compound, briefly
14 "So be it"
15 Deserve
16 Check-cashers need two
17 Raced
18 Guru's sine qua non
20 Follow closely
22 Automotive president?
26 Pelts
29 "Little Women" woman
30 One of us
31 Domesticate
32 Reverence
33 Bog material
34 Matterhorn, for one
35 Commotion
36 Nourishes
37 Automotive president?
40 In excess of
41 Simplified speech
45 Put one over on
47 Before
49 Grown-up nits
50 PC operator
51 Dubbed one
52 Incessantly
53 Pub missile
54 Hot tub
55 Start over

DOWN

1 Do a slow burn
2 Siamese
3 Blunders
4 Everyday
5 Meat rating
6 Conclusion
7 Hobby
8 Fundamental
9 Staffer
10 Ball-bearing item
11 Moreover
19 Out of use, in the dict.
21 Whatever amount
23 — averages
24 Burden
25 "Phooey!"
26 Unescorted
27 Hardy cabbage
28 Wrong
32 E-mail info
33 Street merchant
35 Brewery product
36 Calendar abbr.
38 Dodge
39 Phantom's territory
42 Relinquish
43 On the rocks
44 Infamous emperor
45 Flop
46 "Home of the brave" (Abbr.)
48 Sartorial problem

Solution time: 25 mins.

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	B	U	D	S		S	I	O	U	X		
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	G	U	I	S	E		G	N	A	R	S	
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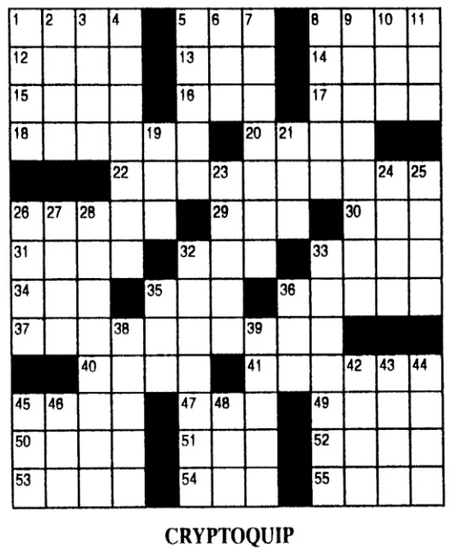

CRYPTOQUIP

YEG JZIGY XUMIZAD ZA OPQU YOJGY YU NPSE QEOQ YEG XOAQY QU SEOADG EGM AONG QU JZYO SOMM.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU'RE THRILLED TO SEE SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY, I'D SAY THAT'S RELATION ELATION.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals O

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.