



Mainz midfielder Mimoun Azaouagh (C) is challenged for the ball by Stuttgart defender Matthieu Delpierre (R) during their Bundesliga clash at the Bruchweg stadium in Mainz on Friday.

Henry denies bust-up

INTERNET, undated

Thierry Henry admits he left the Arsenal training ground upset on Friday, but has denied having a bust-up with boss Arsene Wenger. Saturday morning's papers were full of reports of an argument between the pair over Henry's omission from the side to play Spurs in the North London derby. But the French striker rubbished claims that he wanted to play against Wenger's will. He claims he's been playing injured with a sciatic nerve problem for most of the season, and now will have a rest to get himself fully fit.

He told Sky Sports: "I'm never happy when I miss a derby game against Spurs. I just want to make the point that I'm starting to get tired of all this. I saw the stories this morning, based on unproven facts. "It's true to say I left the training ground upset because I'm going to be out for a little while to get myself fit. "I've been trying to go out to play and help the team, but sometimes that's not always the best thing. I'm going to take a bit of a break." Once again denying Saturday's paper reports, he added: "Unless you're David Blaine or psychic, you can't know what happened."

Feyenoord face sanctions

AFP, Paris

European football's governing body UEFA confirmed that they have opened an enquiry into the violence which marred Thursday night's UEFA Cup tie between French side Nancy and Dutch outfit Feyenoord. The match at Nancy's Marcel Picot stadium was interrupted in the 79th minute when tear gas drifted onto the pitch after police tried to control rampaging Dutch fans in the stands. Play eventually resumed and Nancy secured a 3-0 win in their Group E tie over the two-time UEFA Cup winners to advance to the round of 32.

"We're waiting for the report Monday from the UEFA delegate present at the match and we will open an enquiry," UEFA spokesman William Gaillard told AFP. "We should know the decision (of the disciplinary commission) in ten days before the next round of UEFA Cup matches (on December 13)." Gaillard added: "The seriousness of the punishment will depend on the date of the last sanction taken against the club. "We thought that this type of incident was a thing of the past. Some clubs no longer have control (over their supporters). It's true that Feyenoord have 'a past' in the Netherlands and Europe." By the time of the interruption, Nancy had taken a three-goal lead through Sebastien Puygrenier, an Andre Bahia own goal and Monsef Zerka's penalty. Feyenoord were reduced to ten men by Royston Drenthe's dismissal on the hour. Feyenoord were hit with a closed door ban by UEFA for clashes in Basel, Switzerland last year and an inquiry is currently underway after a Blackburn player was sprayed with beer in a recent UEFA Cup tie.

Stuttgart held at Mainz

AFP, Mainz

VfB Stuttgart wasted the chance to move to the top of the Bundesliga table after a disappointing 0-0 draw with relegation candidates Mainz 05 here on Friday. A win would have seen Stuttgart temporarily replace Schalke 04 at the summit but the draw means they are still a point behind the leaders, although they do nudge Werder Bremen out of second. "We had a chance to go top but we did not take it," said German international Thomas Hitzlsperger. "I suppose it is good that people expect us to get more than a point as it shows how far we have progressed. "We just hope to get back to winning ways next weekend." For Mainz, who prop up the

German table, it was a vital point in their bid to beat the drop. Mainz beat English giants Liverpool 5-0 in a pre-season friendly and that is threatening to be the highlight of their season. Former Stuttgart striker Imre Szabics should have scored against his old club after just five minutes but the Hungarian international missed an open goal side-footing over when it appeared easier to score. "A 0-0 against Stuttgart is not so bad but we could have had so much more," said Mainz goalkeeper Christian Wetklo. "We missed the chance to take the lead early on and that would have made it much easier as we could sit back and play on the counter attack more." Stuttgart are averaging almost two goals a game this season but they looked out of sorts as an attacking force. Indeed the other good chance

Oliveira vows to shine

Football

INTERNET, undated

AC Milan striker Ricardo Oliveira is determined to make amends for his disappointing start to the season when his team travel to Cagliari on Sunday. The Brazilian forward finally ended his goalscoring drought in his team's midweek Coppa Italia 2-1 triumph against Brescia, a result that allowed the Rossoneri to progress through to the quarterfinals of the competition. "For a striker it is important to score goals," said Oliveira, who joined the Rossoneri in the summer from Sevilla. "I hadn't scored in 844 minutes and it's too long for a striker. "This had never happened to me before." Lack of goalscoring has been Milan's main weakness this term. The departure of Andriy Shevchenko to Chelsea in the

summer has left a big void at the Rossoneri camp. Carlo Ancelotti's men have managed to score 12 goals in 13 Serie A games while their attacking trio Oliveira, Alberto Gilardino and Filippo Inzaghi have only contributed one goal apiece. Rumours of Shevchenko's possible return to the San Siro in January have been brushed aside by the Italian club but it has added more pressure on Oliveira. "I know I have to continue to work hard and better times will come my way," he said. "I really think we have been unlucky. "We have hit the post numerous times and we've had lots of players out injured." Things appear to be looking up for AC Milan. Last weekend's 1-0 triumph against Messina, courtesy of captain Paolo Maldini's header, brought to an end a four-game winless run in Serie A for the Rossoneri. The result has lifted the pres-



Brazil legend Pele (C) poses with (From L-R) former Austria football star Andreas Herzog, Austria's Football Federation President Friedrich Stickler, Head coach of the Austrian team Josef Hickersberger and German legend Uwe Seeler during his visit at the Vienna Sport festival in Austria on Friday.

Barca, Juve on Klose trail

INTERNET, undated

Barcelona and Juventus are reportedly pondering a summer move for Germany striker Miroslav Klose. The Werder Bremen hitman will be the biggest danger to Barca's hopes of retaining the Champions League next Tuesday when the two teams meet in a crucial group game. But according to German daily Bild Klose - winner of the Golden Boot at the World Cup finals - could be playing for Frank Rijkaard's team next term. Klose is a player who always has appeared in the lists of Barca targets, although the last serious contact took place three years ago when he was at Kaiserslautern. Juventus - despite currently playing in Italian Serie B, have also been credited with an interest into Klose as a replacement for David Trezeguet who has turned down an offer of a new contract. I would like to decide my future as soon as possible so I can focus only on football," Klose told Bild. "We have to see if Werder will meet my requests," added the international, who has made no secret of his desire to appear in a foreign League. However, Bremen are desperate to keep their star man. "Klose has not yet told us what his plans are. Our will is that of keeping him here, but obviously he has various requests - everything is possible," declared Werder's director general Klaus Allofs.

Real bid for 'Gooch'

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid have made a bid for Standard Liege defender Oguchi Onyewu before the transfer deadline in August. The USA international almost joined Middlesbrough during the close season but he did not enjoy the best of World Cups and has been rebuilding his reputation in the Jupiler League. The strapping 24-year-old, nicknamed 'Gooch', has clearly impressed Real scouts and a move could be in the pipeline for the former Metz centre back. "A transfer is now open to discussion," admitted Standard coach Michel Preud'homme to Het Laaste Nieuws. "It was a fabulous offer (from Real) but we did not let Onyewu leave then because we had no time to bring in a replacement." Ironically, if Real did sign Onyewu, it could pave the way for Middlesbrough to make Jonathan Woodgate's loan move to The Riverside permanent.

Benfica pip Sporting

REUTERS, Lisbon

Benfica kept up the pressure at the top of the Portuguese League by beating old rivals Sporting 2-0 on Friday in a morale-boosting victory ahead of next week's decisive Champions League match at Manchester United. The result takes Benfica into third place with 22 points, four behind Sporting, on 26, but with a match in hand. Porto stay on top with 28 points from 11 matches. Benfica went ahead in the so-called 'Portuguese Derby' in the second minute when defender Ricardo Rocha headed home a corner from captain Simao Sabrosa. Benfica, who had not won at Sporting for two seasons, grabbed the second goal when Simao Sabrosa fired in an angled shot from the right after receiving a neat pass by Italian winger Fabrizio Miccoli after 36 minutes. Miccoli almost made it 3-0 when he hit the bar with a shot from outside the area. Both teams finished with 10 men as Sporting's Brazilian defender Polga was shown a second yellow card in the 80th minute and Benfica captain Nuno Gomes was sent off for fouling Joao Moutinho two minutes later. Benfica goalkeeper Quim denied Sporting a consolation goal with a superb save to keep out Yannick's close range effort two minutes from the time.

Juve go top

REUTERS, Milan

Juventus went top of Serie B despite being held to a 1-1 draw at Genoa on Friday. Juve, demoted in the close season after a sports tribunal investigated allegations of match-fixing, are level with Napoli on 25 points but have a game in hand. Napoli play Frosinone on Saturday. Czech Pavel Nedved put Juve ahead in the 71st minute with a free-kick that was deflected off Genoa's Croatian midfielder Ivan Juric. Juric equalised two minutes later when he latched on to a through pass from Giuseppe Greco to slip the ball past Italy keeper Gianluigi Buffon. Nedved was sent off in injury time for a second yellow card after a foul on Francesco Bega.

United excited about Larsson

Football

INTERNET, undated

The shock arrival of Henrik Larsson will mark the end of Manchester United's extensive striker search until next summer. With his attacking options currently depleted, Sir Alex Ferguson has pulled off a major coup in securing Larsson on a three-month loan from Helsingborg. The 35-year-old Celtic legend will fly into England at the beginning of January and remain with the Old Trafford outfit until March 12 before returning to his native Sweden for the start of their domestic campaign. Larsson will provide valuable back-up to first-choice strikers Louis Saha and Wayne Rooney at a time when United hope to be mounting a serious challenge for honours both at home and abroad. And, while Ferguson continues to be linked with big-money moves for Fernando Torres and Darren Bent, the Scot is convinced now Larsson's arrival is certain, he will not need to look for any more forwards when the transfer window opens next month. "No, we won't be going for any other strikers," confirmed the United boss. "We have exhausted all avenues and this, without doubt, is the best option."

Wenger slams critics

Football

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger has hit back at critics of his youth-orientated policies with a robust defence of his record after a decade in charge of Arsenal. "I'm responsible, I do the job and I do it like I want to do it," Wenger tetchily insisted in response to a broadside from former Gunners boss George Graham. Graham claimed this week that the current Arsenal squad, beaten by Bolton and Fulham on their last two league outings, lacked leadership. But Wenger hit back by insisting that the critics were reacting to a temporary dip in form, while ignor-

ing the more positive bigger picture. "When you don't win games, everybody has an opinion," Wenger said Friday. "But if I look at the number of titles Arsenal has won in the last years, nobody has done better than I've done. "A lot of people are talking. In 2004 we have not lost a game, in 2005, we have won the FA Cup, in 2006, we have been in the Champions League final and now we lose two games and suddenly the club is collapsing, it is unbelievable." Graham had highlighted Arsenal's loss of Ashley Cole, Sol Campbell, Lauren, Patrick Vieira, Edu, Robert Pires and Dennis Bergkamp over the last two seasons and insisted: "Don't try to tell me they're going to replace them with kids and get the same results."



Sporting Lisbon's Uruguayan star Carlos Bueno (R) is nose to nose in argument with Benfica's Brazilian Leo (L) during their feisty Portuguese League clash at Lisbon on Friday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	41 Word's closing syllable	2 "Well" financed grp.	24 Cere-mony
1 Jazz style	45 Lint	3 Nuisance	25 Prognosticator
4 Mail co.	48 Geological era	4 Habitues' orders	26 Unwanted e-mail
8 Compos-sion	50 Skewed, to	5 Cause a stain on	27 Summon a beeper
12 Mimic	51 Puffed Scots	6 Memo-rized	28 Cupid's alias
13 Quarrel	52 Shirt type	7 Got angry	29 Shine up
14 Path for Hope and Crosby	53 Subse-quently	8 Senior moments?	30 Unkempt sleuth
15 Barbecue fuel	54 Automaker Ransom	9 Debtor's letters	31 Hardly the epitome of grace
17 Partially mine	55 "Not only that, but ..."	10 Pitch Gridiron meas.	32 "Eewww!"
18 Real		11 Gridiron meas.	33 Right angle
19 Branch		16 With haste	
21 Sickly		20 Roulette bet	
22 Gents' abbr.		21 Crimson Tide, for short	
25 Glasses		22 "M*A*S*H" cast member	
29 Become one			
30 Goller Michelle			
31 End a drive			
32 Scoundrel			
33 Charlie Brown's nemesis			
34 Past			
35 Carlton			
36 Change			
37 Mexican liquor			
39 Winter bug			
40 Columbus sch.			

CRYPTOQUIP

A K U J F J M K D H L E G -

G T L J S Q F X W V E Q M L T U V F T D

W D L T W D A E H K F X W M L X ? K D

Q L S B J X L M M D B B E B U D .

Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A SMALL CHILD FORMULATES IDEAS, I SUPPOSE PEOPLE COULD CALL THEM HIS TOT PROCESSES.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: W equals G

The Cryptquip 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.