



Marseille forward Djibril Cisse (R) is over the moon after scoring against Rennes during their Ligue 1 clash at Rennes on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Le Guen at PSG bench

AFP, Paris

Former Rangers boss Paul Le Guen was named Monday as the new coach at struggling Paris St Germain, taking over from Guy Lacombe.

The club's website said that the 42-year-old Le Guen would take over "with immediate effect."

Le Guen lasted for only an unhappy seven months at Ibrox before leaving "by mutual consent" on January 4.

He is a former defender with the Paris club who have slumped to 17th place in the French first division under Lacombe after losing 1-2 at home to Valenciennes on Saturday.

Le Guen met Monday with PSG officials including president Alain Cayzac and a press conference has been scheduled to follow that.

Lacombe only took over at PSG in December, 2005 replacing the sacked Laurent Fournier, but the former Sochaux coach has been unable to reverse the side's slumping fortunes and recent defeats have triggered fears of relegation.

Le Guen had a successful spell of management with Lyon winning the French league title three years before taking time off from the game.

To general surprise he replaced Alex McLeish as Rangers coach on a three-year deal in June, but the club got off to its worst start ever in the Scottish Premier League and an open dispute with popular club skipper Barry Ferguson brought his brief tenure to an abrupt halt just after the new year.

Pellegrini extends with Villarreal

REUTERS, Madrid

Villarreal coach Manuel Pellegrini has signed a one-year extension to his contract which will keep him at the club until 2008, the Primera Liga side said on Monday.

The 53-year-old joined Villarreal from River Plate in 2004. He steered the modest club to the quarterfinals of the UEFA Cup and third place in the Primera Liga to earn their first Champions League place in 2005.

Last season they made it to the Champions League semi-finals, where they fell 1-0 to Arsenal, and finished seventh in the league.

They have struggled this season, however, and are currently 11th in the Primera Liga.

Levante sack Lopez Caro

REUTERS, Madrid

Struggling Primera Liga side Levante sacked coach Juan Ramon Lopez Caro on Monday after a poor run of form left them 17th in the table.

"After recent results Levante have decided to change the coach who started with us back in July," a statement said on the club's official Web site.

Levante were thumped 3-0 by neighbours Valencia on Saturday and had only one win from their last 10 games in all competitions.

Lopez Caro joined the promoted club in July when he suddenly switched from Racing Santander, whom he had joined at the beginning of June from Real Madrid.

He had been promoted from the youth team to replace Vanderlei Luxemburgo at Real Madrid in December 2005 and steered them to second in the table and a place in the Champions League group stage last season.

Cisse lifts Marseille

AFP, Paris



Liverpool
reject Djibril
Cisse bagged
his second
goal in a
Marseille shirt
to help his new
side to a 2-0

win at 10-man Rennes on Sunday and into third place in the French championship.

Cisse, on loan from the Merseyside giants but desperately trying to rebuild his career, opened the scoring in the 57th minute when he finished off a smart pass from Franck Ribery.

Toifilou Maoulida added the second for Marseille in the last minute of the match but the contest had been all but finished just before halftime when Rennes had

Stephane Mbia red-carded.

The win put Marseille into third place in the table with 33 points, but 17 behind runaway leaders Lyon.

On Saturday, Lyon had slumped to only their second league defeat of the season as the five-time champions as well as fallen giants PSG caught a severe winter chill.

Lyon lost 2-0 at Toulouse but their title rivals failed to take advan-

tage with second-placed Lens and Lille, in fifth, battling out a 1-1 draw while fourth-placed Sochaux lost 1-0 at Auxerre.

Despite the defeat, Gerard Houllier's Lyon are still well on course for a sixth successive crown as they boast a 14-point lead over Lens at the top of the table.

Toulouse went into Saturday's match having suffered three successive defeats with two on home turf and had failed to find the back of the net in all three.

But they picked up their first home win over Lyon in 14 years to a goal on the hour mark by Achille Emana with Johan Elmänder adding the second nine minutes from time.

"Toulouse deserved to win," admitted Houllier.

"They were more aggressive and wanted it more in the second half. We deserved to lose, it's as simple as that."

At the other end of the table, Paris Saint Germain coach Guy Lacombe admitted that his side are now fighting for survival after suffering their eighth loss of the season against modest Valenciennes.

The Parisian giants are in freefall, one place above the relegation zone in 17th position, after

suffering a 2-1 home loss against a team with the worst away record this season and reduced to ten men.

"What we can say for certain tonight is that now we're fighting for our top flight survival," said Lacombe.

The Parisians' leaky defence conceded two second half goals after Valenciennes were reduced to ten men when Patrick Paauwe was given his marching orders for a second yellow card six minutes into the second half.

Lacombe admitted he had been expecting a win against Valenciennes, promoted last season, and who arrived in Paris des Princes with nine away defeats.

But striker Steve Saviden lifted the visitors with a header after 61 minutes with midfielder Sébastien Roudet adding the second three minutes from time. Pauleta pulled one back with an injury time penalty.

Second-placed Lens, meanwhile, were held 1-1 in their northern derby against fourth-placed Lille.

Brazilian striker Jussia pulled Lens level after 83 minutes after Michel Bastos had given the visitors the lead after 70 minutes.

Capello explains axing

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid coach Fabio Capello said it was a joint decision to discard David Beckham for the rest of the season after he decided to join Los Angeles Galaxy.

"It was the technical team, which includes me, my assistant Franco Baldini and sporting director Predrag Mijatovic, who took the decision," Capello told a news conference on Sunday.

"If a player has a contract (with another club) it isn't right that you continue to treat him as just another player."

The former England captain turned down a contract extension at Real and announced on

Thursday his new deal, which will take him to the United States at the end of the season.

Capello responded the following day, saying the 31-year-old would only train with the squad and not play for his last six months in the Spanish capital.

Beckham watched from the stands on Sunday as Real beat Real Zaragoza 1-0 to climb within two points of leaders Sevilla.

At a tense news conference Capello was asked what the difference was between Beckham deciding to leave while still under contract to the club and the Italian's decision to join former club AC Milan a decade ago while still Real coach.

"The difference is the American league starts in April and mine didn't. I told the club president first and that's a little

different. Also I hadn't actually signed the contract," he said.

When reporters tried to ask more questions about Beckham, Capello added: "I think we've talked enough about Beckham."

The Real coach also asked to be forgiven for a rude gesture he twice made to some fans sitting in the stands near the dugout as he left the pitch at the end of the game.

"I want to apologise for what I did. Since the first day I arrived there have been two people behind the bench who have continually offended me and today it went too far," he said.

"They are the same ones that were here ten years ago, but I shouldn't have done what I did," added Capello.

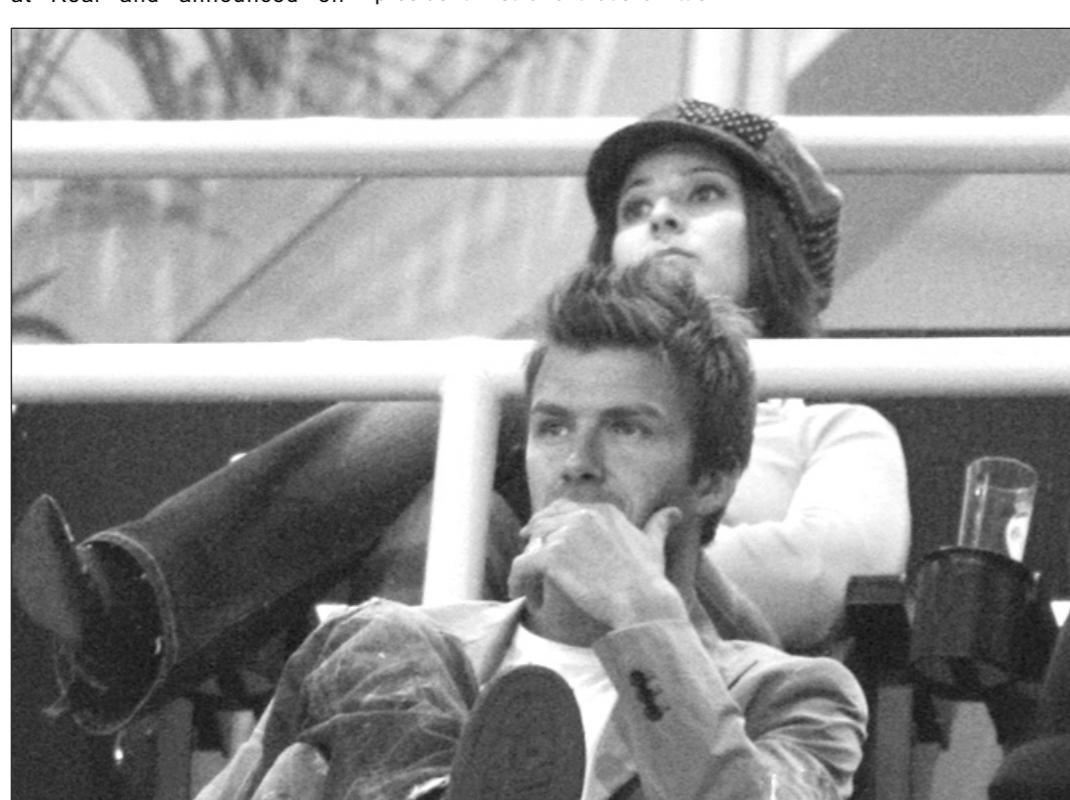


PHOTO: AFP

A forlorn David Beckham watches from the stands the Primera Liga clash between Real Madrid and Real Zaragoza at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday.

Adebayor in quit threat

AFP, Lome

Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor on Sunday threatened to quit his Togo international career in the next six months.

The 22-year-old said he is depressed by the state of the game in Togo which has been dogged by one crisis after another and derailed their debut World Cup appearance.

"If things don't improve in the next six months, I could stop my international career," said Adebayor in an interview given to the FIFA website.

"While I am prepared to give everything to my country, if they cannot organise things well, I will have to make a decision that is best for my life."

Togo endured a miserable World Cup finals in Germany.

Disputes over bonuses led to the temporary resignation of German coach Otto Pfister and the intervention of FIFA, who bypassed Togolese officials and paid the players directly.

FIFA later fined the national association 80,000 dollars for bringing the game into disrepute after threatening to boycott a World fixture against Switzerland.

Togo lost to the Swiss and were also beaten by South Korea and eventual runners-up France in the worst showing of the African representatives, on and off the pitch.

They have been through three coaches in 12 months and Adebayor had a spectacular fall-out with former boss Stephen Keshi at the African Nations Cup in Egypt at the start of 2006.

"What happened in the World Cup was unfortunate, but our action (threatening to boycott a Group G game against Switzerland) forced people to realise that things have to change in Togo," said Adebayor.

"That period was difficult for me and I regret what happened."

Moyes reveals Cahill concern

AFP, Liverpool

David Moyes admitted Tim Cahill is not yet back to full fitness despite the Australia midfielder making a first team return for Everton in the 1-1 Premiership draw with Reading.

Cahill has been out for 11 weeks with a knee ligament injury and Everton manager Moyes had intended to use the player for only part of the game against last season's winners of the second-tier Championship title.

But with the Merseysiders trailing to a Joleon Lescott own-goal, Moyes revealed he felt he had no choice but to keep Cahill on during Sunday's clash here at Goodison Park.

"Tim looked very tired because he carries a lot of responsibility in the team and he is nowhere near fully fit," Moyes said after his side moved up into seventh place in the table.

"But he is one of our goalscorers so I had to keep him on the pitch even though I could see he needed a rest."

"He has been out for 11 weeks and he hasn't even played a reserve game. But it was right to bring him back because he is so important to us and he gave the whole side a lift."

"The main thing is he hasn't suffered a reaction to the injury and he can continue to build up his fitness in training."

Bremen keen on Carew

AFP, Bremen

Bundesliga leaders Werder Bremen revealed Sunday they are interested in signing Norwegian international striker John Carew from French champions Lyon.

"It's an option that we're studying. He's a very interesting player and could be of use next season or when the championship returns (end of January)," said Bremen sporting director Klaus Allofs.

Carew has been with Lyon since 2005 and his contract runs until 2009, but the 27-year-old has made it known that he is interested in a change.

Despite the German press reporting that the French club are looking for a transfer fee of five million euros (6.4 million dollars) Lyon coach Gerard Houllier has insisted there is "no question" of Carew leaving.

Carew played for Norwegian first division side Rosenborg from 1999-2000, followed by Spanish outfit Valencia 2000-2003, Roma of Italy 2003-04 and Turkey's Besiktas 2004-05.

Werder Bremen with one of the best forward lines in the Bundesliga have been hit by injuries to Croat Ivan Klasnic and German youngster Aaron Hunt with Egyptian Mohamed Zidan failing to make an impact.

Magpies spur Tottenham show

AFP, London

Nicky Butt's second-half winner helped Newcastle United complete a fine recovery to record a 3-2 win over Tottenham at White Hart Lane here Sunday.

The former Manchester United midfielder had not scored for Newcastle since October 2004 but was on hand in the 73rd minute to seal only a third away win of the season for Glenn Roeder's side.

His winner came just over a minute after striker Obafemi Martins had drawn the visitors level with a spectacular shot, Newcastle moving up into 11th place as Spurs dropped down to eighth.

Spurs came out of the blocks quicker and Newcastle's feeble defending allowed Jermain Defoe to open the scoring, even though referee Steve Bennett should have pulled play back for offside.

Steed Malbranque broke clear down the left but when his neat ball into the box was met by Defoe, the England striker was shown to be

clearly in front of the defender. Tottenham have only tasted defeat twice at home all season and the kind of defending that allowed Newcastle an equaliser two minutes later had been more apparent on their travels than term.

The Spurs back-line failed to deal with a hopeful ball and teenage defender Paul Huntington forced the ball in off keeper Paul Robinson after his initial header had rebounded back to him at the far post off Antoine Sibierski.

Martin Jol's side had the better of the remainder of the first period but they could not convert their territorial advantage into goals.

Eight minutes into the second half it looked as if Spurs's early wastefulness would be forgotten when Bulgarian striker Dimitar Berbatov put them ahead once more in the 54th minute with his 11th goal of the season.

Aaron Lennon broke on the right and Teemu Tainio's first shot was blocked by Huntington, before Berbatov followed up with a downward effort which finished up in the top left hand corner

beyond Shay Given.

Again Tottenham had chances to increase their lead but a combination of some poor fortune and bad finishing denied them.

Newcastle had looked threatening for most of the afternoon, and in the 72nd minute Nigerian striker Martins produced a moment of brilliance out of nothing to plunder an equaliser for his side.

After exchanging passes with Sibierski, Martins was forced out wide by Michael Dawson but still managed to unleash a vicious 25-yard effort which flew past Robinson, giving the England goalkeeper no chance.

Duly inspired, Newcastle went on to claim their first win at White Hart Lane in five years.

Norberto Solano and Kieron Dyer combined on the right side of the pitch and released Butt on inside the penalty area.

The ex-England international, who was not known for his forward bursts even in his prime, won the race to the ball and slid it past Robinson to give his side a well-earned three points

Johnson Everton's saviour

AFP, Liverpool

Sylvester Stallone was at Goodison Park on Sunday to see Andy Johnson salvage a point for Everton in a 1-1 draw against Reading and narrowly miss out on a late comeback that would have done the actor's 'Rocky' character proud.

The Hollywood star was on Merseyside as a guest of Robert Earl, a major shareholder at Everton and the founder of the Planet Hollywood restaurant chain.

But after taking to the field waving an Everton