



PHOTO: AFP
Swiss star Martina Hingis bids bye to the fans at the Rod Laver Arena following her loss to Belgian Kim Clijsters in a classic quarterfinal clash at the Australian Open in Melbourne on Wednesday.

DeMerit seals Watford win

AFP, Watford



Jay DeMerit's header 20 minutes from time secured only Watford's second Premiership win of the season as the league's basement club beat Blackburn Rovers 2-1 at Vicarage Road here Tuesday.

Australia international Brett Emerton's 12th minute own-goal gave the hosts the lead before Rovers' South Africa striker Benni McCarthy equalised on the stroke of half-time.

But DeMerit scored the final goal when, after Rovers failed to clear a free-kick, he headed in from close range.

FIXTURES

Team	P	W	D	L	G/F	G/A	Pts
Man United	24	18	3	3	53	18	57
Chelsea	24	15	6	3	41	19	51
Liverpool	24	14	4	6	37	16	46
Arsenal	24	13	6	5	45	20	45
Bolton	24	12	4	8	28	26	37
Portsmouth	24	10	7	7	34	24	37

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Rovers' defeat was compounded when it was confirmed that Robbie Savage had suffered a broken leg following a challenge with Al Bangura.

The Welsh midfielder was hurt early in the second half and had to be carried off on a stretcher with a sprained knee.

Rovers manager Mark Hughes said: "We have just got news from the hospital that it is a break. How

severe it is, we don't know yet." Victory was Watford's first in the league since they beat Middlesbrough 2-0 at Vicarage Road in November. But this result still left them four points adrift of second-bottom Charlton and seven shy of safety.

Nevertheless, it represented a huge morale boost on a day when star player Ashley Young was sold to Premiership rivals Aston Villa.

Rovers had won five out of their last six matches in all competitions to climb into 10th place in the table and came into this fixture on the back of a 3-0 victory away to Manchester City.

Watford's spirit, however, has not been in question this season

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

for Tuesday's League Cup semi-final.

"I've been needing more power in my calf to join properly, but I have started full training again," Terry told Chelsea's match programme for Tuesday's League Cup semi-final.

"When Manchester United scored I thought that the game was over. But credit to Arsenal, they've given us another opportunity and it is time to put pressure on United now."

nal second leg match against Wycombe Wanderers at Stamford Bridge.

"I've managed to get some power back now. I still need to improve it and it's been taking longer than we thought. But I am delighted to be back involved with the lads."

Terry watched Chelsea lose 2-0 in the league away to Liverpool on Saturday from the touchline at Anfield.

But the Blues ended the weekend as they started it, six points behind United, after Arsenal's come-from-behind 2-1 win on Sunday.

"I'm disappointed that we lost at Anfield, obviously, and we need to pick ourselves up, but in a way that's already happened.

"When Manchester United scored I thought that the game was over. But credit to Arsenal, they've given us another opportunity and it is time to put pressure on United now."

The stats indicate that the American sixth seed has little chance against the rampant world number one in Thursday's marquee semifinal on Rod Laver Arena.

"A-Rod" has won only one of his 13 matches with the Swiss superstar and has to go back nine

matches to Montreal in 2003 for his last success.

Federer, the top ranked player since February 2004, is in his 11th successive Grand Slam semi-final, he hasn't drop a set in five matches here and is on a hot streak of 34 unbeaten matches.

He has tormented Roddick in recent years, denying the power-server three major titles in losses in the 2004 and 2005 Wimbledon finals and last year's US Open final.

But Roddick is tuning up the doomsdayers. He says there are signs that the gap between him and the incomparable Federer is closing.

"I've said for the past five or six months, the gap has either been closing a little bit or just he hasn't been extending it, which he's probably done the last three years or so. That's a good thing," Roddick said.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

team today. The support of this team and fans has been unbelievable."

Shevchenko's treatment has been central to a reported breakdown in relations between Mourinho and Roman Abramovich, Chelsea's billionaire Russian owner.

But Lampard praised the way Shevchenko had handled a difficult situation.

"You've got to give the man a lot of credit for his dignity because he hasn't come out and spoken too much."

Shevchenko was the only player ignored by Mourinho when he consoled his players as they walked off the pitch after Saturday's defeat against Liverpool, further fuelling talk of a rift between the Ukrainian and his manager.

But, despite not scoring since December 5, Shevchenko was granted a chance in a full-strength Chelsea side that also included Ricardo Carvalho, fit after recovering from a fever.

Shevchenko should have given Chelsea the lead after less than a minute when Ashley Cole's cross from the left picked him out, but he headed tamely wide from no more than six yards.

Wycombe had belied their League Two status when they battled to a 1-1 draw in the first leg at Adams Park.

But the breakthrough that Chelsea's dominance deserved arrived after 22 minutes and it was Shevchenko who finally delivered.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

"He did that, scored two goals, created some more. He was alive all the time while on the pitch. I think it's a step forward in the direction of how we want him to play and perform on the pitch."

"The team is happy with him. It's not just about me being happy with him."

Shevchenko, speaking in halting English, added: "Good game. I'm very happy to reach the final. It's important the team plays very, very well."

"I'm happy for the victory of the



PHOTO: AFP
Chelsea striker Andriy Shevchenko celebrates the first of his two strikes against Wycombe during their Carling Cup clash at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday.

Zanetti recalled to Argentina squad

Football

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina defender Javier Zanetti, surprisingly left out of the World Cup squad last year, was recalled on Tuesday for next month's friendly international away to France.

Coach Alfio Basile also named two uncapped players, including Real Madrid's recently-signed defensive midfielder Fernando Gago, in his attempt to break his duck in his second stint in charge of the team.

Argentina face the French in Paris on Feb. 7 in their third match under Basile, who replaced Jose Pekerman following the World Cup.

Their previous outings ended in a 3-0 defeat to Brazil and a 2-1 loss to Spain, both in friendlies.

The gravel-voiced coach was previously in charge for a three-year spell which ended at the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Zanetti, 33, won the last of his 102 caps in a 3-2 defeat by England in a friendly in November 2005 before falling victim to Pekerman's decision to revamp his squad with younger players for the World Cup.

Gago received his first call up one month after joining Real from Boca Juniors.

Midfielder Jonas Gutierrez, who plays for Real Mallorca, was

also given a chance to win a first

cap.

There was a rare call-up for Villarreal left back Rodolfo Arruabarrena, who has won six caps at the age of 31, while Atletico Madrid's 18-year-old striker Sergio Aguero was also named.

All the players in the 21-strong squad, which included 11 survivors from last year's World Cup squad, are based with European clubs.

Lionel Messi, Carlos Tevez, Juan Pablo Sorin and Pablo Zabaleta were unavailable due to injury.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Roberto Abbondanzieri (Getafe), Leonardo Franco (Atletico Madrid)

Defenders: Roberto Ayala (Valencia), Gabriel Milito (Real Zaragoza), Nicolas Burdisso (Inter Milan), Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan), Gabriel Heinze (Manchester United), Fabricio Fuentes (Villarreal), Rodolfo Arruabarrena (Villarreal)

Midfielders: Fernando Gago (Real Madrid), Aldo Duscher (Deportivo Coruna), Esteban Cambiasso (Inter Milan), Luis Gonzalez (Porto), Leandro Somoza (Villarreal), Pablo Aimar (Real Zaragoza), Jonas Gutierrez (Real Mallorca)

Forwards: Javier Saviola (Barcelona), Sergio Aguero (Atletico Madrid), Diego Milito (Real Zaragoza), Hernan Crespo (Inter Milan), Lisandro Lopez (Porto). (Writing by Brian Homewood in Rio de Janeiro)



PHOTO: AFP
Chilean dark-horse Fernando Gonzalez pumps his fist in celebration after winning a game on way to beating Spanish second seed Rafael Nadal in their Australian Open quarterfinal in Melbourne on Wednesday.

Roddick warns Federer

Australian Open

The Grand Slam of Asia/Pacific

AFP, Melbourne

As the saying goes there are lies, damn lies and statistics. Andy Roddick is hoping the weight of evidence won't prevent him from upsetting Roger Federer to reach the 2004 and 2005 Wimbledon finals and last year's US Open final.

The stats indicate that the American sixth seed has little chance against the rampant world number one in Thursday's marquee semifinal on Rod Laver Arena.

"A-Rod" has won only one of his 13 matches with the Swiss superstar and has to go back nine