

Terry survives massive scare

REUTERS, Cardiff

England and Chelsea captain John Terry escaped serious injury after being knocked out when he was accidentally kicked in the face by Arsenal's Abou Diaby during the League Cup final on Sunday.

With the score 1-1 in the 56th minute, the central defender stooped to get his head to a loose ball in the Arsenal area and his face took the full force of Diaby's attempted clearance.

He was motionless for several minutes while medical staff from both sides treated him.

Terry, who played in the final after a surprise recovery from a twisted ankle suffered in Wednesday's Champions League 1-1 draw with Porto, was fitted with a neck brace and oxygen mask and carried carefully from the pitch.

He was taken to hospital for tests but was able to return to the Millennium Stadium little more than an hour later -- still in his kit -- where he joined his teammates celebrating the 2-1 victory secured by two Didier Drogba goals.

Diaby told Reuters he was shaken by the incident, saying: "I was frightened. I wanted to clear the ball, he put his head there, and that's what happened.

"I haven't seen him yet but I want to see him to talk about it...and I'm glad he's alright."

Terry's fellow defender Wayne Bridge told reporters: "It looked very bad, and a few people were a bit emotional.

"I'm just buzzing that he was able to walk back into the changing room at the end. That's JT all over. He'll battle through anything... He's Mr. Chelsea."

Brawling clubs face censure

AFP, Cardiff

Arsenal and Chelsea face disciplinary action from the English Football Association after the mass brawl that marred their League Cup final clash on Sunday.

Arsenal duo Kolo Toure and Emmanuel Adebayor and Chelsea's John Obi Mikel were all sent off by referee Howard Webb in stoppage time of Chelsea's 2-1 win at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.

Toure provoked the fight when he pushed Mikel after having his shirt pulled by the midfielder. Adebayor was involved in the shoving match that followed Toure and Mikel's clash, but it appeared Emmanuel Eboue was more guilty after striking Wayne Bridge.

Togo striker Adebayor, who had to be led off by Arsenal physio Gary Lewin, insisted he did not deserve to be sent off, but he is likely to face punishment for initially refusing to leave the field.

Adebayor, Toure and Mikel are all likely to be handed three match suspensions, while Eboue could also be banned.

Both London clubs could also be charged by the FA with failing to control their players and could face heavy fines.

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger and his Chelsea counterpart both came onto the pitch to try to restrain their players in an extraordinary finale to a dramatic match.

Wenger said: "I am worried we will be punished. When the FA are involved it is always better to worry."

Mourinho admitted the FA are certain to act and he added: "If the players did something wrong they have to be punished and be suspended for one or two matches and we managers have to educate them, but it was not a violent game."

Didier Drogba's late winner won the Cup for Chelsea after he had earlier cancelled out Theo Walcott's first ever goal for Arsenal.

Viola sign Lupoli

AFP, Rome

Fiorentina have signed Italy under-21 international Arturo Lupoli from English Premiership side Arsenal on a five-year contract, the Serie A club confirmed on Monday.

The 19-year-old striker is currently on loan from Arsenal to Championship promotion hopefuls Derby County and will remain there for the remainder of the season before returning to Italy in the summer.

Lupoli joined Arsenal from Serie A side Parma in 2004, earning a contract with the north London club through a scholarship.

He made his Arsenal debut in a League Cup match against Manchester City in October 2004, and scored his first goals for the club against Everton in the same competition, netting twice in a 3-1 victory.

Lupoli scored on his debut for Italy's under-21 team against Luxembourg in December 2006.



PHOTO: AFP

Schalke midfielder Fabian Ernst (below) and Leverkusen midfielder Simon Rolfes took a tumble as they clashed during their Bundesliga match at the Veltins Arena in Gelsenkirchen on Sunday.

Schalke take a tumble

AFP, Berlin



Bundesliga leaders Schalke 04 slumped to their fourth league defeat of the season on Sunday when they were beaten 1-0 by Bayer Leverkusen.

The result meant their lead at the top was cut to four points with Stuttgart, who drew 0-0 with Hertha Berlin on Friday, remaining in second place while Werder Bremen stay third, but seven points behind, after drawing 2-2 with rock-bottom Borussia Moenchengladbach on Sunday.

Leverkusen, who booked their place in the UEFA Cup last 16 in mid-week by knocking out Blackburn Rovers, secured the three points at Schalke thanks to a goal three minutes from time by striker Stefan Kießling.

Werder had been on course for all three points against relegation-haunted Moenchengladbach but Nando Rafael levelled in the fourth minute of injury time.

Cameroon international Patrick Wome put Werder ahead in the 11th minute but Michael Delura levelled six

minutes later. Croatian import Jurica Vranjes restored Werder's lead in the 84th minute before Nando's late equaliser for the Bundesliga's bottom club.

Bayern Munich shrugged off their midweek Champions League defeat at Real Madrid to beat Wolfsburg 2-1 on Saturday to hand coach Ottmar Hitzfeld a morale-boosting win.

German international striker Lukas Podolski scored from a 26th-minute penalty, his second goal of the season, after a foul by Alexander Madlung on Claudio Pizarro who had been picked ahead of Roy Maakay.

Mark van Bommel added the second nine minutes into the second half with a 18-metre drive. Cedric Makladi scored a 79th-minute consolation for Wolfsburg.

The win left Bayern in fourth spot, nine points behind leaders Schalke,

TOP SIX								
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts	
Schalke	23	15	4	4	40	22	49	
Stuttgart	23	13	6	4	41	26	45	
Bremen	23	13	4	6	55	32	43	
Bayern	23	12	4	7	35	27	40	
Nuremberg	23	8	12	3	32	19	36	
Berlin	23	9	7	7	33	35	34	

and on course to grab a place in the Champions League next season should they fail to overturn a 3-2 deficit to Real in the second leg of their last 16 clash.

"The most important thing was the three points to keep us in contention," said Hitzfeld.

"We were a little bit uncertain in defence at the start but after that we worked well. We deserved this win."

Stuttgart wasted a golden chance to close the gap on Schalke 04 on Friday when they were held to a 0-0 draw by Hertha Berlin.

Hertha, who defended strongly and in numbers, were happy to take a point especially after midfielder Ashkan Dejagah was sent off in the dying minutes.

The Berlin side were also indebted to goalkeeper Christian Fiedler who pulled off a fine save in injury time to keep out the dangerous Mario Gomez, whose mood would not have been helped by having a 12th-minute strike on goal ruled out for hand ball.

Stuttgart went into the match stripped of the talents of skipper Fernando Meira and Antonio da Silva both injured while influential Mexican defender Pavel Pardo was suspended.

Liverpool snap up Voronin

AFP, Liverpool

Ukrainian star Andriy Voronin has signed for English Premiership giants Liverpool on a four year contract the club announced on Monday.

The 27-year-old 40-times capped international strike partner of Chelsea's Andriy Shevchenko will cost nothing when he leaves German side Bayer Leverkusen at the end of the season as he will be a free agent.

Voronin, who has scored five goals in his 40 international appearances, has spent most of his career in Germany playing for Cologne, Mainz and Borussia Monchengladbach.

The signing of Voronin, who was part of the Ukraine team that reached the World Cup quarter-finals last year, puts pressure on former England international Robbie Fowler retaining his place in the squad despite scoring twice on Saturday in the victory over Sheffield United.

But with Dirk Kuyt, Craig Bellamy and Peter Crouch also vying for places up front Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez refused to discuss a new deal for the 31-year-old Fowler.

"He's a really good finisher, still the best we have, and I sometimes think that if we could have Bellamy running at defenders and carrying the ball 20 yards, then turning into Fowler with the goal in sight, it would be perfect," the Spaniard told the club's website.

"If you create chances for him, you know you can rely on his finishing and that is a very important quality to have.

"We have four very good strikers, all with different skills. You can make the most of Peter Crouch's aerial ability, Dirk Kuyt works hard between the lines and Bellamy runs behind defences.

"We can talk about Robbie's future at a later date but, if he scores every time he plays over the next few months, you never know."

Voronin's transfer is the first under the new regime of American tycoons George Gillett and Tom Hicks, who agreed a takeover of Liverpool earlier this month.

Mancini to sign new deal?

INTERNET, undated

Roberto Mancini had agreed to a new three-year contract with Inter, according to the latest reports in Italy.

The Coach's contract with the Nerazzurri expires in June, but President Massimo Moratti had repeatedly stated that there were no problems, as they only needed to find the time to sit down and talk.

However, recent rumours had suggested that the chief was starting to lose his patience and was considering the idea of looking for a replacement, with Jose Mourinho one of the possible candidates.

According to the weekly newspaper ControCampo, the former Lazio tactician has agreed to a three-year deal with Inter, finally ending the rumours of his possible move to the Premiership.

The new deal was allegedly finalised last Friday during a meeting and the official announcement is expected to arrive before the second leg of the Champions League game against Valencia on March 6.

The club and the Coach have also reportedly discussed the plans for the future strengthening of the squad, which might include Thierry Henry and Javier Saviola, as well as goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon.

The Nerazzurri earned their 17th successive Serie A victory with a 5-2 win over Catania, remaining 14 points clear at the top ahead of Roma, despite the Giallorossi beating Reggina 3-0.

FIFA punishes Burkina Faso

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Burkina Faso have been found guilty of using two over-age players in an Olympic qualifier and had their 2-0 win over Ghana turned into a 3-0 defeat, world soccer's governing body FIFA said on Monday.

Burkina Faso used over-age players Saidou Mady Panandetiguiri and Fousseini Traore in their first-leg victory in the first round of African qualifiers for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Ghana will host the second leg on March 25.

Panandetiguiri, who plays for Belgian club Lokeren, and Traore were born before the age deadline of January 1, 1985.

PSG SLIP AGAIN

Nancy hold Lens

AFP, Paris



A last-gasp goal from Nancy's Youssouf Hadji held second-placed Lens to a frustrating 2-2 home draw as Paris Saint Germain's revival proved short-lived as they slumped to a 2-0 loss to Saint Etienne in French league action on Sunday.

An Aruna Dindane header (17) and a Seydou Keita penalty on 24 minutes cancelled out the sixth-minute goal of new Nancy signing Marc-Antoine Fortune.

But a drop in momentum in the second half allowed mid-table Nancy come back and Hadji struck in the final minute of regular time with a header following a superb free kick from Benjamin Gavanon.

After last week's goalless draw at Monaco, Lens, who trail leaders Lyon by 13 points, now have a four-point edge over Toulouse who moved third following their 3-0 drubbing of Marseille on Saturday.

Lens coach Francis Gillot was furious as his side, who qualified for the UEFA Cup last 16 in mid-week, let two points slip through their fingers.

"It's unforgivable if we want to stay high. It's frustrating to lose two points like that in the final minutes.

"We deserved to score two or three in the second period and it was our opponents who succeeded. It shows that very little separates the teams and the championship will be tight until the end," he said.

Meanwhile, Paris Saint Germain's recent wins over Nice and Troyes were soon forgotten as they suffered their sixth loss at home this season, leaving them just one place above the relegation zone in 17th position.

Damien Perquis opened for Saint Etienne with a header after 31 minutes with a bicycle kick from Araujo Ilan giving the visitors a 2-0 lead just before the break following a excellent pass from Bafetimbi Gomis.

Saint-Etienne overtake Lille as they move to fifth.

Bordeaux got back to winning ways with a 2-1 win against third-from-bottom Valenciennes.

Fernando converted a penalty after 24 minutes following a Geoffrey Doumeng handball with Jussie netting the second two minutes from the break as Bordeaux move to sixth place just two points behind Toulouse.

Thomas Dossevi pulled one back for Valenciennes seven minutes from time.

Champions Lyon hold their 13-point lead after two last-minute goals to snatch a point at home to Sochaux on Saturday, denying

their visitors a place in the top three.

Sochaux took a 2-0 lead in the first half through goals from Alvaro Santos and a Karim Ziani penalty before the half-hour mark.

Lyon's Czech striker Milan Baros reduced the arrears just before the break but when Sebastien Grax restored the visitors' two-goal advantage four minutes from time, the game seemed to be over.

But a Sylvain Wittord strike in the last minute followed by Brazil midfielder Juninho's stoppage-time penalty rescued a point for the five-in-a-row champions.

Relegation-threatened Nice climbed out of the drop zone and heaped more misery on Lille with a 2-1 victory at home after both sides were reduced to 10 men.

Sedan remained bottom despite an impressive 2-0 win at Rennes while Fabian Barthez and Nantes stayed second from bottom after a 1-1 draw at home to Auxerre.

TOP SIX									
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts		
Lyon	26	18	4	4	47	21	58		
Lens	26	12	9	5	40	29	45		
Toulouse	26	12	5	9	30	28	41		
Sochaux	26	10	6	30	28	40			
Saint-Etienne	26	11	6	9	41	33	39		
Lille	26	10	9	7	32	25	39		

Adebayor baffled by red

AFP, Cardiff

Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor insisted he should not have been sent off after the mass brawl that marred his side's 2-1 League Cup final defeat against Chelsea on Sunday.

Togo international Adebayor was dismissed, along with team-mate Kolo Toure and Chelsea's John Obi Mikel, following a fight in stoppage time at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.

Referee Howard Webb showed Adebayor a red card for clashing with Chelsea left-back Wayne Bridge, but it is believed Emmanuel Eboue may have been the guilty party.

Adebayor, who had been sent on as a substitute minutes earlier, maintained he was just acting as a peace-maker and said: "I had just come on, we were 2-1 down and I remember

that Kolo had the ball, and someone was pushing him -- he fell down.

"He was getting really angry and wanted to exchange words with the player.

"I just ran over there to breakdown everything, trying to stop Kolo and also (Emmanuel) Eboue.

"I think (Wayne) Bridge came on to me. I cannot remember if I pushed him or not. At that moment, you have a lot of things in your head.

"If you see one Chelsea player behind you, you think he is going to maybe hit you. The referee said I hit somebody, but I cannot remember that.

"I was just trying to stop everything and I got the red card. It is not fair, but that is football."

Adebayor, who faces a three-match ban, was so angry with the decision that he initially refused to leave the pitch, with Arsenal physio Gary Lewin coming on to escort him to

the touchline.

"As a footballer, in a big final like this, I do not want to leave my teammates," Adebayor said.

"I want to fight to the end of the game and, when I saw the red card, of course I was nervous.

"My reaction after the card did not mean I wanted to hit the referee -- I just wanted to know why he gave me the red card.

"I was just trying to tell him that, when I came there, it was not for fighting, it was for breaking down people getting angry with each other.

"People told me I had to go, and I said I just want to ask the referee why he gave me a red card. I do not think I did anything wrong."

Mikel, whose tackle on Toure sparked the initial confrontation, also protested his innocence. "I am really sorry about what happened but I didn't deserve the card."



PHOTO: AFP

Swiss Tennis great Roger Federer sits in the cockpit of a helicopter before an aerial tour in Dubai on Saturday. Federer overtook Jimmy Connors of the United States yesterday by remaining 160 consecutive weeks as world number one.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS										DOWN									
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CRYPTOQUIP

FAQ INLUB QLDQINI AUT

IQ LUPBQT PB UTNYQJKQBKQ

DQIDQFXUYW, JN FAQW

KUYQQT APL KBNJFUBF-FQQB. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE THE BUTTER PAT WAS WINNING BIG AT THE CASINO, IT PROCLAIMED "I'M ON A ROLL!" Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals E