

Leeds chairman reported

AFP, Leeds

Leeds chairman Ken Bates has been reported to the police after he published the address of a former director of the English Championship club.

Melvyn Levi is involved in a dispute with Bates over the legality of a share issue, and has complained to the police after the former Chelsea owner published Levi's address in a Leeds match programme.

In the article, Bates claims that Levi has cost the club investors, as well as damaging the club with his legal dispute.

Bates wrote: "At this difficult time we should all be pulling together, but have an enemy within, Melvyn Levi.

"Perhaps you would like to ask him to justify his behaviour, which is damaging to Leeds' prospects of advancement. Mr Levi lives at...."

Levi complained to the authorities after Leeds' 3-2 defeat to Sheffield Wednesday at the weekend, and said: "I will not allow Bates to get away with what he did.

"He is encouraging fans to come around to my house after describing me in the worst possible terms.

"It's totally disgraceful. I can't understand why he's singling me out. I haven't spoken to him for more than a year.

"He should concentrate on sorting out the many problems within the club, rather than persecute me in language that the Nazis would have used."

Bates is quoted in the Daily Mail as responding in typically defiant terms: "Levi is lucky I didn't put in his telephone number. I'm still waiting for his writ. If he's got a problem, he should speak to me direct."

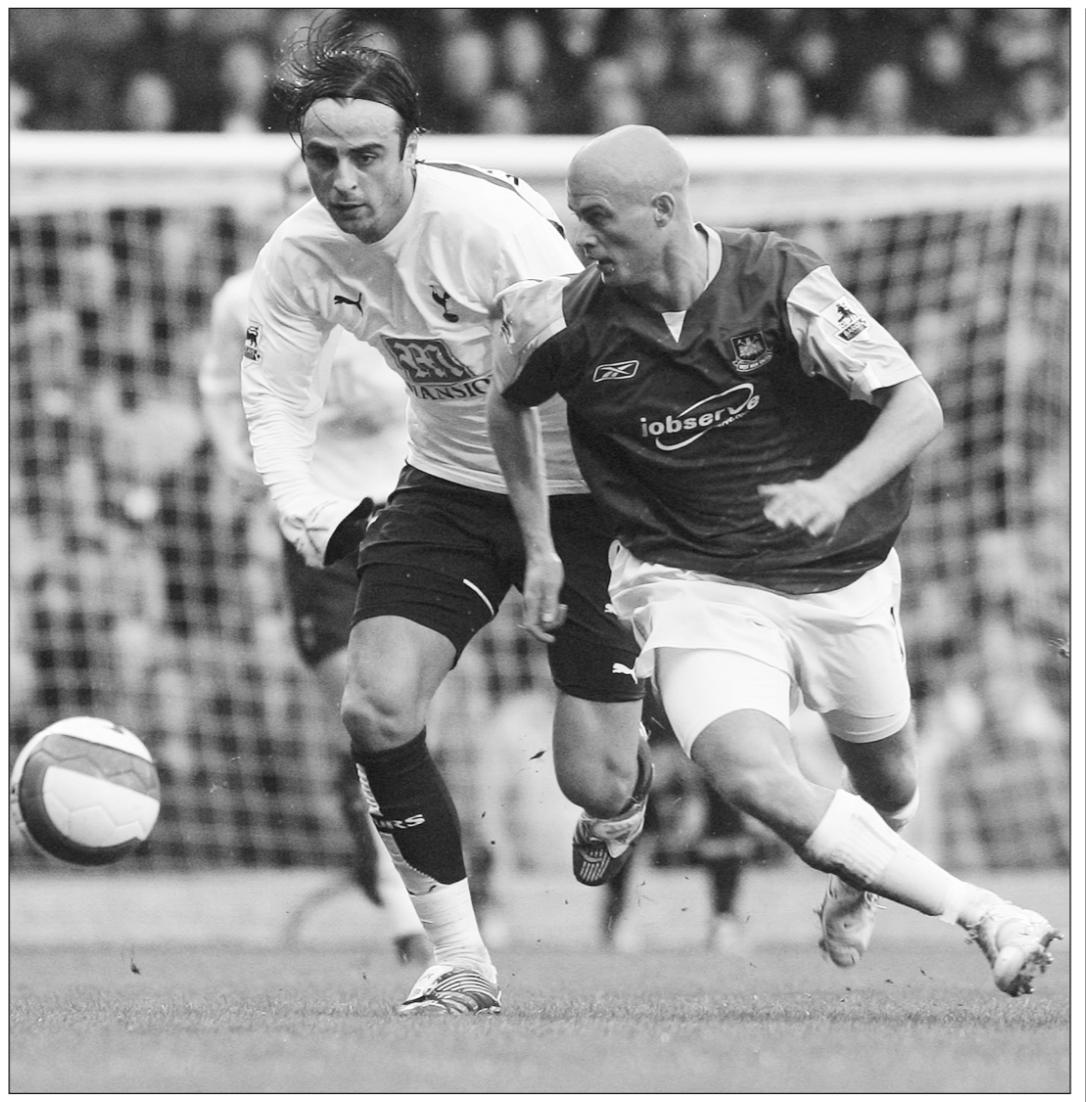


PHOTO: AFP

Tottenham striker Dimitar Berbatov (L) and West Ham midfielder Paul Konchesky battle to reach the ball during their pulsating Premiership tie at Upton Park on Sunday.

Spurs win a thriller

AFP, London



Alan Curbishley admitted his job could be on the line as West Ham slipped closer to relegation after a dramatic 4-3 defeat against Tottenham.

Curbishley's beleaguered side are bottom of the Premiership and 10 points from safety after somehow contriving to lose their fifth successive match.

The Hammers led 2-0 and 3-2 at Upton Park, but Spurs scored twice in the final minutes to win one of the most exciting games of the season.

West Ham owner Eggert Magnusson has already sacked Alan Pardew this season after he failed to get immediate results following the Icelandic businessman's takeover, so Curbishley knows he is not safe from the axe.

He said: "I am not immune to anything. We all know what football is about. Nothing surprises me anymore in football. I don't fear anything, that's life."

"We are going through every emotion. When you are in this situation, where you haven't won for a long while and you get yourself into a winning position, perhaps you don't know how to close the game out."

"It is a massive disappointment. But we have got to keep going. We can't give up."

Curbishley's impressive track record at Charlton suggests he deserves time to turn around a club that appears to be descending further into crisis by the day, but whether Magnusson agrees is another matter.

He will not have been impressed by reports last week that suggested several of Curbishley's players are involved in high-stakes card schools that have caused unrest in the dressing room.

As if that wasn't bad enough, Anton Ferdinand caused more negative headlines on Sunday.

The England Under-21 defender was reported to have disobeyed Curbishley by flying to America last month for a birthday party, even though all the players had been told not to leave England during a four-day break.

Ferdinand had apologised to Curbishley for his trip to South Carolina, but he will still be fined as the manager tries to impose some discipline on the team.

"I didn't know about the Anton Ferdinand thing until Saturday," Curbishley said. "He played because I had picked the team and we had trained hard all week."

"I have spoken to him briefly. All the players were told they couldn't leave the country. He will be disciplined. I asked him yesterday if it was true and he said it was and apologised."

West Ham had the perfect start on Sunday when Mark Noble drove

home a fierce strike from the edge of the area in the 16th minute.

Carlos Tevez increased their lead when he looped a free-kick over Paul Robinson in the 41st minute to claim his first goal for the Hammers.

Tottenham hit back when Aaron Lennon won a penalty in the 50th minute and Jermain Defoe stroked the spot-kick past Robert Green.

Martin Jol's men equalised through Teemu Tainio in the 63rd minute when the Finn scored from 10 yards after a superb mid-air volleyed pass from Lennon.

Curbishley must have thought West Ham were going to end their run of 11 matches without a win when Bobby Zamora headed home Tevez's free-kick in the 85th minute.

But Dimitar Berbatov curled a superb free-kick past Robinson and over Paul Konchesky on the line four minutes later and Paul Stalteri won it for Spurs in stoppage time when he tapped in after Green spilled Defoe's shot.

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Hughes salutes McCarthy

AFP, Bolton



Blackburn manager Mark Hughes praised M C -Carthy's courage after the South African striker's penalty double clinched a 2-1 win at Bolton.

McCarthy had missed from the spot against Bolton earlier this season, but he was still brave enough to step up when Blackburn were given two penalties at the Reebok Stadium on Sunday.

The former Porto striker won his duel with Bolton keeper Jussi Jaaskelainen to convert both second-half spot-kicks and take his goal tally for the season to 18.

Nicolas Anelka got one back for the hosts late on but Blackburn held on to extend their unbeaten run to five matches.

Hughes admitted he admired McCarthy's character and said: "I would never take penalties. You have

got to have that belief and it is difficult to do it in a game where emotions are running high and the adrenaline is flowing."

"Benni grabbed the ball and he wasn't going to allow anyone else to take them. You need mental strength, courage and belief in your own ability to do that."

Blackburn are quietly enjoying another successful season under Hughes. They knocked Arsenal out of the FA Cup on Wednesday to set up a quarter-final against Manchester City next weekend and victory over Bolton increases their chances of landing a UEFA Cup spot.

But Hughes believes Rovers are not getting the plaudits their performances deserve.

He said: "It was a tale of two penalties we didn't need to give away. The game didn't have much going for it until those two incidents and we tried to get back into it but you can't give yourselves that much to do."

"It is our own fault for giving two ridiculous penalties away."

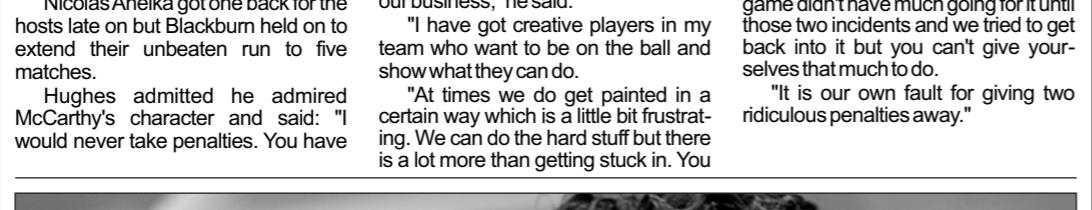


PHOTO: AFP

Valencia midfielder Ruben Baraja ponders a question during a press conference at the club's headquarters on Monday ahead of their crucial Champions League tie against Inter Milan on Tuesday.

Nolan stays with Bolton

AFP, Bolton

Bolton captain Kevin Nolan has signed a new four-year contract with the English Premiership club.

Nolan's decision to commit his future to the club is a boost for Sam Allardyce in the wake of yesterday's 2-1 defeat at home to Blackburn.

Bolton now trail fourth-placed Arsenal - who have two games in hand - by five points.

Nolan's decision to stay will come as a relief to manager Sam Allardyce who feared the Liverpool-born player might want to leave to improve his chances of making the England squad.

Nolan, though, stated that was never an issue.

"Ever since I've been at Bolton I've never thought that I would have to leave to get international recognition," he told the club's website, www.bwfc.co.uk.

"Even though we are not a big city club, we have done fantastically well over the last four or five years.

"We are continuing to grow and getting better and better and I am glad that I will be a part of it."

Aussies confident about Cahill

AFP, Sydney

Interim national coach Graham Arnold says he is confident injured Everton midfielder Tim Cahill will be fit to play for Australia in the Asian Cup in July.

Cahill, a key member of the Socceroos, is expected to miss the rest of the English Premier League season after fracturing a metatarsal in his left foot at the weekend.

"I believe that he's got a similar injury to what (England striker) Wayne Rooney had before the World Cup last year," Arnold told reporters Monday.

"It's probably an 8-10 week injury, so if that's the case he'll probably miss the rest of the season for Everton."

"I've had contact with Timmy himself and he's trying to be quite positive about it all and says he'll be ready for the Asian Cup."

"But we've got a bit of time on our side for him to get ready."

Cahill landed awkwardly in the first half of Everton's 1-1 draw at Sheffield United at the weekend.

It is the second time this season Cahill will spend a lengthy spell on the sidelines after only recently returning from an 11-week knee injury.

Australia are in a Bangkok-based pool also including Thailand, Oman and Iraq for the Asian Cup, with their first game against Oman on July 8.

Sheringham for A-League?

AFP, Sydney

Sydney FC is talking with former England international Teddy Sheringham to become the Australian A-League club's new marquee signing, reports here said Monday.

The former A-League champions have been without a star overseas signing since the departure of Trinidad international Dwight Yorke and a brief flirtation with Italian Benito Carbone last year.

Out of favour at West Ham under new boss Alan Curbishley, Sheringham, 41 next month, has discussed the approach with former Manchester United team-mate Yorke and is believed to have received a glowing reference, reports said.

Sydney's chief executive George Perry confirmed the club had opened discussions with Sheringham and insisted that despite his age he would be a superb acquisition.

"He's still playing at the top level and is by any standards an excellent player," Perry told the Daily Telegraph newspaper.

"He obviously has a wealth of experience and his presence would put bums on seats. He comes highly recommended and I think he would create a buzz around the club."

"We don't think he's too old. He's stayed very fit and he has a presence about him."

"He'd be a great ambassador for the club. But he's only one of a half dozen we're talking to."

The newspaper said Sheringham has yet to make up his mind on a switch to Australia, and as yet has received no firm offers to play elsewhere.

Sheringham holds the record as the oldest English Premiership outfield player.

According to the Daily Telegraph, Sydney turned to Sheringham, who also had spells with Tottenham and Portsmouth and scored 11 times in 51 appearances for England, after Charlton's former Dutch international striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink rejected a 1.5 million dollar (1.17 million USD) salary package.

Lyon seek European solace

AFP, Lyon

Lyon will try to put Saturday's crowd trouble in their derby match at St Etienne behind them as they tackle Roma in the Champions League last 16, second leg on Tuesday.

Lyon's match at their near-neighbours was held up for 20 minutes after fans threw smoke bombs onto the pitch with the home side 3-0 down early in the second half.

Lyon could be facing sanctions from the French football league if their fans are found to have had any part in the incident and this European fixture will be a welcome distraction as the five-in-a-row French champions bid to reach the quarter-finals for the fourth year in a row.

Lyon are the favourites after holding Roma to a 0-0 draw in the first leg in Rome's Olympic Stadium in a match that was instantly forgettable.

Neither side go into the game in particularly good form. Roma have only one win in their last five games and drew at bottom side Ascoli in the Italian league on Saturday.

Lyon have been highly inconsistent since the turn of the year. Last season they fell cruelly to

although after a run of two points from five league games they have since recorded two impressive away victories and a come-from-behind home draw against Sochaux.

One problem Lyon face is an unsettled side with coach Gerard Houllier constantly tinkering with his starting 11.

He will have to do so again as key midfielder Jeremy Toulalan is suspended from the second leg against Roma after being one of a record number of bookings for a Champions League match in the first leg.

Some in the French press had suggested that Lyon's stuttering form was due to a loss of confidence but defender Anthony Reveillere believes his team never lost their self belief.

"Our confidence, we never lost it. And this victory (against St Etienne) has given us even more ahead of a very important match against Roma," he said.

Lyon have been one of the most consistent sides in Europe over the last few years despite failing to get past the last eight three years in a row.

The last two seasons they have topped a group containing Spanish giants and record nine-time winners of the competition Real Madrid.

Last season they fell cruelly to

Italian opposition as they conceded two late goals against AC Milan to go out in the quarter-finals having dominated over two legs.

Roma's recent Champions League history has been far from glorious but Brazilian midfielder Mancini believes Lyon will bring the best out of them.

"In the last few matches we haven't seen the real Roma and we will have to be fully focussed against Lyon if we are to qualify for the quarter-finals," he said.

"We can win in Lyon. I am confident about our chances because we always succeed in getting results in difficult situations."

Mancini's fellow Brazilian Rodrigo Taddei is expected to be fit for the match despite missing the last two league games through illness and injury.

Taddei, who played in the 0-0 first leg draw at the Olympic stadium, was laid low by a fever after the 3-0 home win against Reggina on February 25 before suffering a thigh strain.

But Italian media reports said Taddei was almost certain to start in France on the right-hand side of a five-man midfield with Francesco Totti likely to play as a lone striker.

Priorities changing for Chelsea

AFP, London



Ashley Cole believes Chelsea must concentrate on winning the Champions League as their hopes of retaining the Premiership begin to fade.

There is a growing realisation at Chelsea that the title is almost certain to be won by Manchester United this season and, with Porto visiting Stamford Bridge on Tuesday for the second leg of their second round tie, Cole admits it is time to focus on

Europe. United maintained their nine-point lead over second-placed Chelsea with a crucial win at Liverpool on Saturday and, although the reigning champions have a game in hand, Sir Alex Ferguson's side are playing with enough resolve and desire to suggest they are ready to end their four-year wait for the title.

So progress to the Champions League quarter-finals is essential for Jose Mourinho and his players if they are to meet the expectations of owner Roman Abramovich, who has made it clear he wants to see his club dominate in Europe as well as in England. Mourinho has already proved his



PHOTO: AFP

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho makes a point during a