



Benfica players celebrate a goal against Paris Saint Germain during their UEFA Cup match at the Luz Stadium in Lisbon on Thursday.

Lehmann to join Hertha

AFP, Berlin

Germany goalkeeper Jens Lehmann, whose contract at Arsenal is up at the end of the season, was reported Friday to be eyeing a move back home to Bundesliga side Hertha Berlin.

While Hertha don't have the financial means to pay Lehmann's reported four million euro annual salary the club hopes to secure a private investor to meet the outlay, according to the report in Friday's Bild newspaper.

If the move goes ahead the 37-year-old will replace Hertha keeper Christian Fiedler.

None of the parties concerned were willing to comment on the move to the newspaper but last month Lehmann told Kicker magazine that "the Bundesliga and Spain are the alternatives" if as expected he quits the Gunners.

Sevilla face Spurs in qtrs

AFP, Glasgow

Holders Sevilla take on Tottenham Hotspur in the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup, the draw for which was made here on Friday.

Sevilla remained on course to become the first side since Real Madrid in 1986 to successfully defend their title with a dramatic come-from-behind win against Shakhtar Donetsk on Thursday night.

Spurs, winners of the first edition of the UEFA Cup in 1972 and again in 1984, booked their place in the last eight by beating Portuguese side Braga in the fourth round on Wednesday.

Martin Jol's side are the only British club left in the competition after Newcastle were knocked out by AZ Alkmaar on Thursday.

The Dutch outfit's reward was a quarter-final match-up against Werder Bremen.

Werder's Bundesliga rivals Bayer Leverkusen, winners in 1988, face Spanish side Osasuna who enter uncharted territory as this is the first time they've made it this far in a European competition.

The final last eight pairing pits another Spanish side, Espanyol, against Benfica of Portugal.

The first legs will be played on April 5 with the return legs the following Thursday.

The winner of the headline tie between Sevilla and Spurs will face either Bayer Leverkusen or Osasuna in the first semi-final with the second semi contested by Espanyol or Benfica against AZ Alkmaar or Werder Bremen.

The draw was made in Glasgow where the final will be staged at Hampden Park on May 16.

UEFA Cup quarterfinal draw

AZ Alkmaar (NED) v Werder Bremen (GER)

Bayer Leverkusen (GER) v Osasuna (ESP)

Sevilla (ESP) v Tottenham Hotspur (ENG)

Espanyol (ESP) v Benfica (POR)

1st leg - April 5

2nd leg - April 12

Wenger charged by FA

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was Thursday charged with improper conduct for branding a linesman a liar in his side's stormy League Cup final defeat by Chelsea.

Wenger had claimed that the official had lied by saying in his match report that Emmanuel Adebayor, one of two Arsenal players to be sent off, had hit Chelsea's Frank Lampard.

The FA later insisted that the linesman had simply reported that Adebayor had been behaving aggressively and asked Wenger to explain the remarks apparently questioning the official's integrity.

That led to Thursday's charges, which are likely to result in Wenger being given a heavy fine.

Arsenal lost Kolo Toure, Adebayor and Emmanuel Eboue to suspension following the melee, while the club were also charged with failing to control their players, and could be fined as a result.

Striker Adebayor was also handed an additional one-match ban by the FA for his reaction to being shown a red card at the Millennium Stadium. It is not the first time this season Wenger has put himself in direct conflict with the powers that be at Soho Square.

A date for his personal hearing into the charge of improper conduct after a confrontation with referee Steve Bennett during the Portsmouth match at the Emirates Stadium in December has still not been finalised, while the Frenchman was fined 10,000 pounds (14,600 euros) and warned about his future conduct for a touchline bust-up with then West Ham manager Alan Pardew at the end of November's Premiership game at Upton Park.

Wigan manager Paul Jewell has also been charged with improper conduct and/or bringing the game into disrepute by the FA.

Becks dreams of England

Football

AFP, London

David Beckham, axed by England coach Steve McLaren following last year's World Cup, says he'd walk back from the United States if he was given the chance of playing for his country again.

The former England captain was tipped to be in line for a recall ahead of next week's Euro 2008 qualifiers against Israel and Andorra after a series of spirited showings for Real Madrid.

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MU face Bolton test

AFP, London

Manchester United's resilience a s

Premiership pacesetters will

come under scrutiny when Bolton visit Old Trafford on Saturday.

While Chelsea, who trail the

leaders by six points, will be

confident of securing maximum points at

home to Sheffield United, United

face a testing luncheon date with

Sam Allardyce's awkward squad.

Any slip-ups on Saturday will be

of added value because the upcom-

ing break for international matches

means that, after this weekend,

there will be no Premiership

matches until March 31.

United midfielder Paul Scholes

sits out the Bolton clash as the

second game of a three-match ban.

But the former England star insists

the Red Devils are in no mood to let

Chelsea get any closer to them.

"After not doing so well in the

Premiership over the last couple of

years, we are more determined than

ever to lift the trophy this year,"

Scholes said.

"We have not had that trophy for

four years now -- that's too long. It is

a trophy we desperately want to win

back."

Scholes could be one of half a

dozen United players missing this

weekend. Darren Fletcher, Mikael

Silvestre, Louis Saha and Ole

Gunnar Solskjaer are ruled out

through injury while Patrice Evra is

also a major doubt as well.

With Henrik Larsson now back in

Sweden, Ryan Giggs could be

pressed into service as an emer-

gency striker alongside Wayne

Rooney, with Park Ji-Sung occupi-

ng a wide role with Cristiano

Ronaldo.

Allardyce has seen his side's

form dip in recent weeks but the

Bolton boss always relishes cross-

swords with the league's big

boys.

"We have to try to get our act

together as my team have been

under-achieving," Allardyce said.

Liverpool's visit to Aston Villa on

Sunday will bring them up against

Antonel old boy Patrik Berger.

The Czech winger's days had

looked numbered at Villa Park after

he refused to play in a reserve

match in December and was loaned

out to Stoke after being fined by Villa

boss Martin O'Neill.

But the 33-year-old has recently

forced his way back into O'Neill's

plans and could yet win himself a

new deal at the club.

"Will Berger be given a new

contract? I wouldn't rule anything out," said O'Neill. "I have an open

mind. It has been a big turn-around

for him and at the end of it all, he is a

good player."

Liverpool striker Dirk Kuyt will

be aiming to improve a goal strike-rate

that he admits could be better.

Kuyt, who has found the net ten

times since joining from Feyenoord

last summer, said: "I expect to

have scored more by now than I have.

The boss gave me an 18-goal

target for the season when I joined

and I still believe I can achieve that

by the end of the campaign."

Peter Crouch will miss the match

as he is recovering from an opera-

tion on his broken nose.

look back and think of my time at the club as being anything other than successful.

"I have spent four years at one of the biggest clubs in the world, and I have been able to play with so many great players, Zinedine Zidane to name but one.

"Just to be on the same pitch as Zidane was an absolute honour for me. I have had an incredible time and will have no regrets at all."

It has been suggested in some quarters Beckham will pocket a staggering 12 million from his time in Los Angeles, rocketing him into the echelons of the highest-paid sports stars of all time.

Yet he insists money is not a prime motivating factor in his life and that his desire to play remains as strong as it has ever been.

"I always dreamt of wearing the number seven shirt for United and England, and I have achieved that. Everything else has been more than I could have ever dreamt about,"