



Chelsea forward Didier Drogba (C) is chased by fellow striker Salomon Kalou (R) as he runs towards two-goal hero Shaun Wright-Phillips after scoring against West Ham in their Premiership clash at Upton Park on Wednesday.

Maradona stable

AFP, Buenos Aires

Ailing Argentine football star Diego Maradona is in stable condition and will be discharged from hospital when he recovers from his latest bout of hepatitis, his doctors said.

Maradona, "is clinically stable and persists in his positive development," the private Los Arcos clinic in Buenos Aires said in a statement Wednesday.

He will stay there "a few more days until his hepatitis analysis normalizes completely," Maradona's personal doctor Alfredo Cahe told the Continental radio station.

The ex-Argentina World Cup captain and Barcelona star was rushed to the clinic six days ago

complaining of severe abdominal pain, just two days after being discharged from a different clinic where he was treated for two weeks for illness brought on by excessive drinking.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off

the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off

the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off

the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off

the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off

the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off

the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off

the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

He has seen his career on and off

the football pitch marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse and was also hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by cocaine overdoses.

Doctors said Tuesday Maradona had recovered enough to possibly allow him to continue his treatment for alcohol abuse at home. The clinic had earlier warned of abnormalities in his liver functions.

Arsenal will retain Wenger

Football

AFP, London

"I think it's well known that Arsene and David have got on very well over the past 10 years and I am certain that Arsene will miss him," Hill-Wood told Arsenal TV Online.

"However I believe the relationship that Arsene has with the rest of the board is good."

"He is on contract with us until 2008 and we very much hope that he will extend his contract beyond that, but we haven't got into talking details on that yet."

Doubts are being cast over the Frenchman's future following the departure late Wednesday of the club's vice-chairman David Dein, a close ally of Wenger and the man who was instrumental in bringing him to Highbury in 1996.

Hill-Wood also said that reports that Dein had left was linked to the question of the transfer funds available to Wenger were wrong.

"We've always made funds available to Arsene, he attends the board meetings, he understands the financial position. I can assure supporters that we will continue to provide funds when Arsene requires them," he said.

"We have a very good squad - young, maybe, but developing well and if Arsene wants to strengthen it we have the money to provide him with any reasonable purchases he wants to make."

Dein was a key figure in Arsenal's transfer dealings but Hill-Wood insisted that other "senior executives" would fulfil the role.

"We have a number of senior executives at the club. We haven't

formalised the arrangement yet but I'm certain that one or more of them will handle the matter of transfers in David Dein's absence," he said.

Dein's departure has sparked speculation that he was ready to sell his 14 percent stake in the club to Kroenke, who has already acquired 11 percent of the tightly-controlled Arsenal shares.

If that was to happen, Kroenke, the owner of Major League Soccer's Colorado Rapids, basketball team Denver Nuggets and ice hockey side Colorado Avalanche, would become the biggest shareholder in the Gunners, currently valued at \$420 million pounds.

But he would remain short of the 30 percent required to trigger an automatic takeover bid under UK corporate law and the remaining board members, who together account for just over 45 percent of the shares, have agreed to hang on to their stakes for at least the next year.

Analysts suggested that the stance of the board, led by chairman Peter Hill-Wood, made a takeover unlikely in the short term. But there is certainly scope for a power struggle which could put Wenger's future on the line.

Huge challenge for co-hosts

Football

AFP, Warsaw

worse in Ukraine.

And train travel is little better: it currently takes 43 hours, at best, to get from Gdańsk to Donetsk.

Lack of investment means it is too dangerous to use high speed trains on the aging tracks.

While booming low-cost airlines carry hundreds of thousands of Poles back and forth to western Europe every year, there are still no cheap links between Ukraine and Poland.

Outside major cities, particularly in Ukraine, good hotels are hard to come by - or at least in sufficient numbers to cater for tens of thousands of fans, journalists and football officials.

Polish football is also blighted by hooliganism.

Fears that Polish fans would cause trouble at last year's World Cup in neighbouring Germany led to a massive police operation in both countries, although in the end the hooligans stayed away.

At home, however, it could be a different story.

In addition, Polish football's image has been dented by corruption.

A two-year-old match-fixing scandal has led to more than 60 arrests, including several referees, a member of the Polish Football Association (PZPN) leadership and a string of club officials.

"There are serious investors, who are ready to invest up to 37 billion hryvnias (about 5.7 billion euros, 7.7 billion dollars) in the construction of airports, roads, hotels and improving sports infrastructure," he said.

Owen 50-50 for Chelsea

Football

AFP, Newcastle

pristine condition - and he has had a slight groin strain which he picked up in shooting practice at the end of last week.

"His groin is a bit sore, but that is what happens when players have been out for a long time, they pick up niggles in other parts of their body."

"At the moment, we are being very careful with Michael, as we would with any other player."

"He certainly has not been ruled out of the Chelsea game but, if in the end he is, then we will start looking to our next match at Reading."

Since suffering his injury, Owen, 27, has had two bouts of knee surgery in the United States and his only playing action has been 70 minutes in a closed-doors friendly against Scottish side Gretna last Tuesday.

Marseille set up a clash with Sochaux in next month's French Cup final with a 3-0 win over Nantes in their semi-final tie here on Wednesday.

French international Franck Ribery set the hosts on their way to their second consecutive Cup final after 28 minutes only to limp off the pitch at half time with a thigh problem.

Tifouli Maoulida doubled their account on 55 minutes with striker Djibril Cisse coming on as a late substitute and finding the net 14 minutes from time.

Marseille will be looking for their first title since 1993 on May 12 in Stade de France, and their 11th crown in a competition where they hold the record.

It will be their 18th appearance in the final. Last year they lost 2-1 to Paris Saint Germain.

Sochaux, competing in their fifth Cup final, will be bidding to win their first title in the event since 1937.

They booked their spot on Tuesday when two extra-time goals from Sochaux's Sébastien Grax and Jerome Leroy ended the dream run of fourth division Montceau.

Poland vows corruption clean-up

AFP, Warsaw

Polish Sports Minister Tomasz Lipiec on Thursday vowed to make Polish football graft-free by the time the country hosts the Euro 2012 championships with Ukraine.

"We want Polish football to be clean, and totally rid of corruption by 2012," Lipiec told reporters a day after Poland and its eastern neighbour beat Italy and joint bidders Hungary and Croatia in the race to host the quadrennial tournament.

"Measures to fight corruption are already under way and will continue. The first clubs have been punished," Lipiec said.

"We want to sort this problem out completely (by 2012). I'm convinced that we will manage it even earlier."

"The championships must take place in an atmosphere of fair-play," he insisted.

The image of Polish football has been tarnished over the past two years by a match-fixing scandal which has led to more than 60 arrests -- including several referees, a top official with the Polish Football Association (PZPN) and a string of club officials.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	39	Ashen	40	Spoon-bender	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58																		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30</td																																														