



Tottenham and England midfielder Aaron Lennon (C) fights for the ball with Arsenal's Kolo Toure (L) and Alexandr Hleb during their Premiership match at the White Hart Lane Stadium on Saturday.

Jenas spikes Gunners

AFP, London



Jermaine Jenas ensured Arsenal's tortuous week had a sting in the tail as his dramatic injury-time goal gave Tottenham a 2-2 draw against their fierce rivals on Saturday.

The England midfielder sent a spectacular 25-yard drive skidding into the bottom corner with virtually the last kick of the game, just when Arsenal were preparing to celebrate their third win in a week.

The visitors had already overturned Robbie Keane's first-half goal thanks to strikes from Ivory Coast international defender Kolo Toure and Togolese international striker Emmanuel Adebayor, but they had no answer to Jenas's extraordinary intervention, more than four minutes into stoppage time.

It was a suitably unhappy ending to a unsettled few days at the Emirates stadium, which is still absorbing the impact of David Dein's shock departure as vice-

chairman and the subsequent speculation over the future of Arsene Wenger.

The French manager must now wait a little longer to see his side seal a place in next season's Champions League, while Spurs -- thanks to Jenas -- can now tackle their late charge for UEFA Cup qualification with more relish.

There was little hint of the drama to come in a tepid first half, which lacked all the usual fizz and sparkle of a north London derby.

Arsenal, initially shorn of their creative fulcrum, Cesc Fabregas, through a virus, struggled to make any headway against a tightly-packed home defence while Spurs looked equally barren.

There were some neat touches from Dimitar Berbatov, who almost punished William Gallas for an early error by lobbing over Jens Lehmann only for the ball to drop wide of the open net, but that initial foray aside, the visitors remained reasonably unflustered until they fell behind in the 30th minute.

The circumstances were all too familiar for Wenger, who has seen his side leak countless goals from

set-pieces this term.

Once again, his defenders failed dismally to deal with a Jenas corner, which was headed down by Michael Dawson and over the line by the lurking Keane.

The Frenchman's consternation was compounded shortly afterwards when Freddie Ljungberg hobbled off to be replaced by Fabregas, but the Spaniard's introduction appeared to lift the visitors.

They came agonisingly close to snatching an equaliser moments before half-time, when a clever one-two between Emmanuel Eboue and Alexander Hleb ended with the Ivory Coast defender smacking the post with a cross-shot.

The interval did nothing to disrupt Arsenal's rhythm and the second period quickly turned into a siege.

Toure made the woodwork shudder again with a thumping effort from Fabregas' corner, Adebayor clipped the top of the crossbar with a looping header and when Gilberto saw a ferocious 20-yard drive deflected narrowly wide,

Wenger must have feared his side's perennial profligacy was going to cost them again.

Not so. In the 63rd minute, Toure comfortably evaded the dozy Pascal Chimbonda to meet Fabregas' in-swinging free-kick at the back post. He scuffed his first-time shot, but the ball bobbled in regardless.

By now, the momentum was with Arsenal and an increasingly bedraggled Spurs began to creak. Julio Baptista, sent on as a substitute, might have made an immediate impression but dragged a 20-yard shot side, but Arsenal were not to be denied.

With 13 minutes remaining, Tom Huddlestone conceded a needless free-kick tight by the right-hand touchline. Fabregas swung over an inviting cross and Adebayor, left alone eight yards out, headed neatly into the net.

That appeared to be that, with Spurs showing no hint of being able to conjure an equaliser until stoppage time, when Jenas produced his unlikely party-piece to snatch a point.

Ferguson fears for Ronaldo

AFP, Manchester



Sir Alex Ferguson fears Cristiano Ronaldo could be targeted by Middlesbrough as Manchester United attempt to tighten their grip at the head of the Premiership.

The Portuguese winger has found himself at the centre of a series of controversies during three fractious meetings between the two clubs this season including a trio of hotly disputed penalty decisions that have gone United's way.

And Boro winger James Morrison was sent off in the club's FA Cup replay for taking a wild hack at Ronaldo as the United man attempted to run down time in the dying seconds of a 1-0 win.

That incident triggered an outburst from Morrison's team-mate George Boateng who claimed the Portuguese could expect to get hurt if he continued to embarrass his opponents with his skills.

United manager Ferguson

admits he is disappointed the FA did not take action against Boateng and is now concerned his side's hopes of challenging for the league title, Champions League and FA Cup could be hit if Gareth Southgate's side adopt an overly physical approach to the game.

"I'm fearing the worst myself about what could happen. I must say that, because we've got important games coming up and I don't think they'll be messing about," Ferguson said.

"I think they have a paranoia about the boy and I think they will be aggressive towards him.

"I don't think Cristiano will be bothered by it. But it's unfortunate and what surprised me was that the FA didn't write to Boateng about his remarks because I think that was really provocative.

"I think the fantastic quality Ronaldo has is that he is prepared to hold the ball at any moment and in any tight situation because of the skill he has. He wants to hold the ball and to attack defenders. That's what he is in this world to do. It's then up to the referee to decide whether players who are kicking him are fouling him.

"It sets the game up with a different tone tomorrow, that's the problem. I don't know who the referee is but I think the important thing is to express ourselves in the normal way, play our football and hopefully that takes us to the win we need."

And he added: "I haven't thought of leaving Cristiano out. Simply because we want to win the league and so we want our best players out on the pitch. And I'll be playing my strongest team tomorrow."

Ferguson is desperate for his side to sign off with a victory and maintain the three point advantage over Chelsea before his team resume their Champions League challenge against AC Milan at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

The Scot admits United have turned the tables on Jose Mourinho's side in the Premiership and while he remains hopeful over repeating the 1999 treble success, Ferguson admits that recapturing the domestic league title for the first time in four years remains his number one priority.

"You start the season hoping you are going to win a major trophy

and there is a possibility we can win none of them," he said. "With an immense amount of luck we could win three. But if we win the league, I'll be happy with that."

"I think Chelsea maybe expected us to be on their tails this season. I think they expected us to be the main challengers, Jose said that early on. So we have turned that around and they are chasing us so I couldn't ask for a better position to be honest."

"You've always got to enjoy this part of the game. We are involved in everything which is terrific. And that's the best thing for me, I'm enjoying watching them. Over the years no matter which team has won the league there has always been moments of nervousness but they seem to be enjoying it which is good to see."

"Any time we have done well we have always had a bit of luck. I think that the luck we need now is to keep this group fit again for the rest of the season and if we can do that then we have a really good chance. I know Jose was praying we got injuries and we got them, so we did him a favour that way but hopefully there's no more."

Beckham returns to Real squad

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid midfielder David Beckham has been called up for the squad's crucial match at home against Valencia on Saturday after being sidelined for six weeks due a knee injury.

The former England captain has not played since he suffered a strain to the lateral ligament in his right knee in a game against Getafe on March 4.

Beckham, who turns 32 next month, returned to group training with his Real Madrid teammates on Wednesday for the first time since he was injured.

The Spanish league title is Beckham's last chance to win a major trophy with Real before he joins the Los Angeles Galaxy in August.

Nesta ready for C'Ron

INTERNET, undated



Alessandro Nesta is not afraid of facing Cristiano Ronaldo and insists Manchester United should be worrying more about Kaka.

The Portuguese starlet wreaked havoc in the 7-1 drubbing of Roma, but Milan hoped to avoid the same fate in next week's Champions League semi-final at Old Trafford.

"I faced him two years ago and at the moment he really is at the top of his game," noted the experienced defender.

"It will be tough, but you can stop Cristiano Ronaldo with organisation and by closing him

down immediately.

"We watched the Roma game and that night everything went United's way, scoring seven goals with as many attempts. Those are special evenings, but in the first leg you could not see such a vast difference between the sides, so we will go there looking for the win."

Nesta instead believes that Sir Alex Ferguson is the one who should be concerned at taking on arguably the best player in the world right now -- Champions League top scorer Kaka.

"We have many world class players here who are going strong, for example such as Kaka, so we have important factors working in our favour," he told 'Sky Italia'.

The first leg will be in Manchester -- the same stadium

where the Rossoneri last lifted the trophy in 2003, beating Juventus on penalties in the Final.

"It will be difficult to play at Old Trafford, as they have a remarkable crowd that gets fired up easily. This clash is worth a great deal, as our team has been criticised and penalised from all sides, so reaching another Final would be a marvellous feeling."

Milan had originally been excluded from the Champions League due to the Calciopoli scandal, but an appeal saw them go through the Preliminary Round.

The Italians are the only side who made it to the quarterfinals both last season and in the current campaign.

Macedonia warned

AFP, Geneva

Football's world and European governing bodies warned Macedonia on Friday that it could be thrown out of international competition if the president of the Macedonian football federation is replaced.

FIFA and UEFA said in a joint statement that "a small number of football delegates" held a meeting on April 14 to discuss the replacement of Macedonian footballing chief Hari Hadzi-Risteski at an "elective conference" next month.

The two governing bodies warned that the "any decision or actions taken by such an illegal body against the duly elected leadership... would not be recognised either on a national or an international level."

"Such illegal actions are serious violations of FIFA and UEFA statutes and may therefore lead to the suspension of the Football Federation of (Macedonia) and a consequent ban on participation in any international competition," they added.

The governing bodies had called on the Macedonian government to stop interfering in the country's football association, after its offices were closed and some of officials detained for questioning in January. The warning was repeated last month.

FIFA and UEFA on Friday called on the Macedonian football family to "unify and solve its problems through internal dialogue rather than through illegal actions."

Macedonia currently lies fifth in qualifying group E for Euro 2008 with seven points, six points adrift from group leaders Croatia and four points behind closest rivals England.

Werder back on top

AFP, Berlin

Werder Bremen leapfrogged above Schalke 04 to top the German first division with a comfortable enough 3-1 win over lowly Alemannia Aachen on Friday.

Schalke though have the chance to move back in front on Saturday when they take on Cottbus at home.

Werder got an early shock after just two minutes when Aachen launched a swift counter-attack that resulted in Sergio Pinto netting.

After that it was all one-way traffic from the home side but some poor finishing from Miroslav Klose, Torsen Frings and Diego let them down.

The inevitable equaliser came through Daniel Jensen on a pass from Frings after 50 minutes and five minutes later Werder went ahead through Markus Rosenberg.

Diego added a third in extra-time with an extraordinary effort from 50 metres out after the visiting goalkeeper had charged off his line to take part in a corner kick at the other end of the field.

Srichapan to wed Miss Universe

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's tennis hero Paradorn Srichapan is engaged to a former Miss Universe and the couple are expected to tie the knot in Bangkok later this year, reports said Saturday.

Paradorn, 28, and Natalie Glebova, a 25-year-old Canadian beauty, have "developed a special relationship" and they will announce their engagement at a news conference in Bangkok on Tuesday, the English-daily Nation said.

The couple will tie the knot by the end of this year in "one of the most celebrated weddings of 2007," the paper said, while the Thai-language Daily News said the wedding would likely take place in November.

Paradorn, the former world number nine, and Glebova were first seen together last year when she kissed him as a reward for beating Britain's Tim Henman in the quarter-finals of the Thailand Open, the Nation said.

Glebova, who won the 2005 Miss Universe title in the pageant held in Thailand, is also popular here. She has visited a temple-turned-hospice for AIDS patients and has worked as a "brand ambassador" for the kingdom's Singha beer.

Paradorn was long Asia's top-rated men's player before sliding out of the world's top 50 for the first time in five years in 2006. He has also become a staple of gossip magazines as he used to date Thailand's pop diva Tata Young.

Mourinho gets Kenyon support



AFP, London

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon made a fresh attempt on Friday to quell speculation over the future of manager Jose Mourinho by insisting the club would not force him out.

Mourinho's relationship with Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich has reportedly broken down but the Portuguese coach has said he wants

to stay in London until his current contract expires in 2010.

Kenyon insisted Friday that the club was of the same view, despite a widespread belief that Mourinho will not be in charge next season.

"Jose's got a contract until 2010 and we're not going to sack him," Kenyon told Chelsea TV. "He's got the full support of the board and that is really important, I just hope that addresses (the speculation)."

"We've been linked with something like 14 managers now I think, but we've not got a list and we're not

looking."

Abramovich's absence from many recent matches has fuelled reports that he is disenchanted with the style of Mourinho's Chelsea, although a rapprochement was just as quickly predicted when the two men shared a hug after the club's FA Cup semi-final win over Blackburn last weekend.

That win kept Chelsea on track for an unprecedented clean sweep of all three domestic trophies and the Champions League.

Wenger unsure of future



AFP, London

Arsene Wenger added to the uncertainty over Arsenal's future on Friday when he refused to discuss his personal plans beyond the expiry of his current contract at the end of next season.

The Frenchman's long-term future at the club has been thrown into doubt following this week's abrupt departure of former vice-chairman David Dein, his closest boardroom ally at the Emirates stadium and the man who brought Wenger to London in 1996.

Dein ended his 24-year association with the club on Wednesday in a move widely linked to boardroom divisions over how to respond to takeover overtures from American tycoon Stan Kroenke.

And, in his first appearance before the press since that dramatic development, Wenger reiterated his huge disappointment over the departure of "a man of class and intelligence."

Pressed on his own future, Wenger would only say: "I said I committed to the club and to the contract to 2008."

"I will try to give my best as long as I am here. I have one-and-a-half years on my contract -- therefore I always feel we have the interest of our fans in mind."

"I will always give my best for the club and I am committed to do that."

He added: "I do not want to speak about beyond my contract because I think it is important to concentrate on the short term and to the end of the season."

Those remarks will cause alarm among Arsenal fans who would be devastated to see Wenger, the most successful manager in the club's history, walk away.

Although he insisted he has good relations with all members of the Arsenal board, Wenger made it clear how much he would miss Dein, with whom he worked closely on transfers.

"It is a disappointment and a big loss," he said. "David always at heart had the best interest of the club."

Despite those regrets, Wenger said he was determined to complete his mission of establishing Arsenal as one of the biggest clubs in Europe playing his brand of technical, entertaining football.

"We have many young players and I want to develop this team and go as high up as we can," he said. "I don't want speculation; you could talk about the consequences a lot."

Wenger's comments came after Arsenal legend Ian Wright claimed that Dein's departure had unsettled the players, including skipper Thierry Henry, as much as the manager.

"I know the players aren't happy. I know Thierry's not happy," Wright said.

"We're talking about a man (Dein) who goes into the dressing room after every single game, shakes every player by the hand and who knows all the youth team players."

"I know this for a fact that the manager and the players are 100 percent behind David Dein, and I can see real repercussions coming off the back of this."

"David Dein was not going to try



PHOTO: AFP

Bremen striker Miroslav Klose (L) and midfielder Torsten Frings congratulate each other at the victory over Aachen in their Bundesliga match at the Weserstadion in Bremen on Friday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Street address?	1 Allied group
4 Snakes	2 Nevada city
8 Get ready to travel	3 The yoke's on them
12 Superman	4 Convent superior
13 Medicoe	5 Viewpoint
14 One side of the Urals	6 Segment
15 Indivisible	7 Icy treat
16 Undraped	8 Trattoria
17 Marquee name	9 Spot of wine?
18 Focus	10 Farewell
21 Superlative suffix	11 Richard of "Home Improvement"
22 Support system?	12 Not so much
23 Reacts	13 Minimal change
26 Rep.'s rival	14 Catcher's aid
27 Existed	15 Soggy
30 Tend texts	16 Ross and Rigg
31 Lustrous black	17 Chair
32 Amahl's night visitors	18 Rendition
33 Bart, to Homer	19 Handies
34 Symbol of intrigue	20 "Hit me" request
	21 Hydrox
	22 look-alike
	23 -- do-well
	24 Characterization
	25 Rainbow
	26 Sow's remark
	27 Inquisitive

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CRYPTOQUIP

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G T Y W O X L F N G T Y S Q S M

Yesterday's Cryptquip: TV SHOW CONCERNING A DUO OF COPS IN FLORIDA WHO PRODUCE CLAMPS FOR CARPENTERS: "MIAMI VISE."

Today's Cryptquip Clue: G equals T