

## Gerrard, Carragher pen new deals

AFP, London

Liverpool's Steven Gerrard and Jamie Carragher have given manager Rafael Benitez a post-Champions League boost by signing new four-year contracts with the club.

Club captain Gerrard and vice-skipper Carragher have signed deals which extend their stay at Anfield until at least 2011.

Carragher told the club's official website, www.liverpoolfc.tv: "I am very pleased. Obviously we are both local lads and I've always said I wanted to stay here for the rest of my career."

"I have signed for four years and hopefully I can still be a regular in the team. That's the aim anyway."

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

## Liverpool blame UEFA

AFP, London

Liverpool officials have stepped up their attacks on European governing body UEFA for its claims that the club's fans are the worst behaved in Europe.

Club co-owner Tom Hicks in particular blasted the UEFA spokesman William Gaillard saying he "doesn't know what he's talking about."

UEFA president Michel Platini is to present a report to British Sports Minister Richard Caborn in Brussels later Tuesday which is believed to be highly critical of the behaviour of Liverpool fans in the last four years.

In particular, the report targets the conduct of Liverpool fans in Athens before the Champions League final against AC Milan last month.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Platini to meet sports minister

AFP, Paris

UEFA president Michel Platini will meet with British Sports Minister Richard Caborn on Tuesday to discuss the behaviour of Liverpool fans at last month's Champions League final in Athens.

UEFA spokesman William Gaillard said Tuesday that such was UEFA's concern about the behaviour that Platini wants to pass on a report into the Liverpool fans to the British minister.

"It's a little report on what happened in Athens," said Gaillard, who said the meeting would take place at the inauguration of a new exhibition in Brussels.

"It will be informal," he added. News of the report had previously angered Liverpool bosses and Caborn retorted: "UEFA must

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## Thaksin mum on City deal

AFP, Bangkok

The lawyer of Thailand's ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra, who is bidding for Manchester City, remained tight-lipped on Tuesday on a report that a deal was close.

The BBC said Manchester City were in "advanced discussions" that could lead to an offer being made for the English Premier League football club, adding it would release a statement to the London Stock Exchange.

Thaksin's lawyer, Noppadon Pattana, said the deal was proceeding "well" but declined to comment on the report.

"So far I learn that the deal is proceeding well. (But) I can't give any details on this issue. Thaksin instructed me not to talk about this matter unless it's final," Noppadon told AFP.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Veteran Roux takes over Lens

AFP, Lens

Guy Roux, who retired after 43 years as Auxerre coach two years ago, announced on Tuesday that he is to make a comeback in charge of French first division outfit Lens.

The 68-year-old Roux is one of the best-known figures in French football as much for his managerial skills as his outspoken comments and television punditry.

He took unfashionable Auxerre out of the second division to win the French league title in 1996 along with four French Cup triumphs in 1993, 1996, 2003 and 2005.

Against the odds the club also reached the quarterfinals of the prestigious Champions League in 1997.

Roux will replace Francis Gillot

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



Russian superstar Maria Sharapova is ecstatic after beating compatriot Anna Chakvetadze in the French Open quarterfinal at Roland Garros on Tuesday.

## Not quite tennis

AFP, Paris

Maria Sharapova talked bananas, Anna Kournikova once discussed her bra while Balkan politics, Shakespeare, vegetable

shopping and the plight of refugees have all been aired at the French Open.

Today's Grand Slam contenders have to be as well-versed in international affairs as they are in forehands and backhands if they are to satisfy the international media.

No subject is taboo and it's in the bearpit of the compulsory news conference that the probing is carried out.

The more daring the question, the more colourful the response and, hopefully, the more eye-catching the headline the following morning.

Not surprisingly, Sharapova, the world's most famous sportswoman, is relied on as a major source of snippets.

But the Russian wasn't happy

when celebrations of her US Open title last year were overshadowed by a fruit.

"I believe my life is not about a banana," said Sharapova after her New York win over Justine Henin degenerated into questions over why her coaching team had been waving a banana.

Was it a hidden code? Was it a breach of the coaching rules? Or was it simply a hint to eat, erm, a banana?

"My career is about winning a tennis match. And right now, I'm sitting here as a US Open champion, and the last thing I think people need to worry about is a banana."

If it was fruit in America, it's vegetables at Roland Garros for Sharapova who, after another routine victory, found herself discussing grocery shopping.

"The first time I was absolutely lost," she said recalling a trip to her local supermarket.

"Now I've got it under control. I know where the vegetables are, where my favorite cheese is, I've got it all going."

Sharapova sits in the hotseat once occupied by equally glamor-

ous predecessor Anna Kournikova.

The Russian beauty once held a news conference in the run-up to Wimbledon to launch a new line of bras, posing sultrily to tempt the photographers.

However, she refused to talk about her private life after being linked with ice hockey players Sergei Fedorov and Pavel Bure.

"Let's just talk about bras," was her reply, declaring her love life off-limits.

This year's French Open has seen the tradition once again flourishing.

Marat Safin even talked Shakespeare.

A reporter wanted to know whether he had seen a production of Hamlet.

"There are a lot of interesting monologues and he's asking himself to be or not to be," pointed out a journalist.

The Russian was not to be fooled.

"Well, I'm 27 years old. So it's not really a question of to be or not to be. This kind of question is for the age of 22, without winning a

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## Klose slams Frings

AFP, Berlin

German striker Miroslav Klose slammed his national and Werder Bremen teammate Torsten Frings on Tuesday over comments he made to the German press that Klose should quit the Bundesliga club.

The 28-year-old Klose - top-scorer at last year's World Cup - has been under pressure since failing to score in Germany's 6-0 rout over minnows San Marino on Saturday and has been linked with a multi-million euro transfer to Bayern.

And Frings, 30, stirred things up by saying he believes Klose wants to leave Bremen and his priorities lie elsewhere, which drew his teammate's wrath on the eve of Germany's Euro 2008 clash with Slovakia.

"Those who really know Torsten will know he changes his opinions like the wind. When the wind blows in a different direction, he will contradict what he said before," Klose told daily German paper the Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

Frings, who had himself been

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

## 'Brazil has WC right'

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil has the "right" to host the 2014 World Cup because of its rich footballing heritage and the fact that the last tournament held there was in 1950, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Monday.

Brazil, five-time World Cup winners, are the sole candidates to host football's showpiece finals in 2014 that have long been earmarked for a South American country.

"Brazil, because it has the world's best football and because it organised its last World Cup in 1950, has the right to host the World Cup," the president said in his weekly radio broadcast.

Three other World Cups have been held in South America: Uruguay 1930, Chile 1962 and Argentina 1978.

World footballing chiefs had clearly signalled their preference for Brazil in recent months, saying they were prepared to hold an accelerated process if only one candidate was ready to host the finals in 2014.

But the Brazilian bid has faced sharp criticism at home amid warnings that the country's infrastructure is not up to scratch.

## Henin, Sharapova in semis

AFP, Paris



French Open on Tuesday in straight sets.

Henin, 25, gave US star Serena Williams a lesson in clay court tennis which had the Australian Open champion once again smashing her racket in frustration at the Philippe Chatrier centre court as she fell 6-4, 6-3 to the top seed.

The Belgian was joined in the final four by three first time French Open semifinalists including Sharapova who defeated Russian compatriot Anna Chakvetadze 6-3, 6-4.

"I pretty much stood back and let her take advantage of me. I feel violated," said eighth-seeded Williams. "All she had to do was show up."

Henin next meets Jelena Jankovic, with reigning US Open champion Sharapova facing off against Ana Ivanovic, the first time

that two women from Serbia have reached the semifinals of a Grand Slam event.

Jankovic, 22, brushed aside Czech sixth seed Nicole Pietrangeli 6-3, 7-5 as Ivanovic, 19, battled past last year's runner-up Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia 6-0, 3-6, 6-1.

However, the eagerly awaited match between Henin and Williams, considered by many the final before the final of this year's tournament, never lived up to expectations.

The centre court clash also marked the first time Henin and Williams have played at Roland Garros since their controversial semifinal in 2003 when Henin defeated the defending champion in three sets.

The American left the court in tears after being jeered by the partisan Paris public who had swung behind the underdog after a series of controversial incidents.

She had the same jeers ringing in her ears this time as she again smashed her racket in frustration after losing her opening service game in the second set.

"I think they were definitely for

Justine, but it doesn't bother me," said Williams.

"Nothing worked today. I don't think I've ever played so bad in a quarterfinal of a Grand Slam."

Henin, who missed the Australian Open as she was dealing with the breakup of her marriage, refused to put her victory down to her opponent's poor form.

"I thought I just did a good job," said Henin. "I did everything I could to control the match. I didn't let her come back."

"It's my first Grand Slam of the year so I didn't know what to expect," added Henin, who has won the title here in 2003, 2005 and 2006.

But despite being the favourite the five-time Grand Slam winner said she was expecting a tough challenge from Jankovic whom she has beaten in all five of their previous meetings.

"It's going to be another difficult match. I'm one of the oldest on the circuit now. Tennis is evolving and new players are coming through," she added of a player who is just three years her junior.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

## FedEx Express rolls on

AFP, Paris



Roger Federer dropped a Grand Slam set for the first time since the 2006 US Open but still powered into the French Open semifinals

on Tuesday with a 7-5, 1-6, 6-1, 6-2 win over Spain's Tommy Robredo.

The top seed overcame the rare second set lapse to romp to his eighth consecutive win over the Spanish ninth seed.

Federer will now take on either Russian fourth seed Nikolay Davydenko or Guillermo Canas, the 19th seeded Argentinian, for a place in the final.

Earlier on Monday, double defending champion Rafael Nadal smothered the battling instincts of Lleyton Hewitt to move into the French Open quarterfinals and a

clash with close friend and 1998 champion Carlos Moya.

Nadal, bidding to emulate Bjorn Borg by winning three Roland Garros titles in a row, defeated Australian Hewitt 6-3, 6-1, 7-6 (7/5) in a fourth round tie which only lived up to the pre-match hype in the third set.

In Monday's other fourth round matches, Serbia's Novak Djokovic eased past Spain's Fernando Verdasco in straight sets.

He will face unseeded Russian Igor Andreev, who came from a set down to beat Marcos Baghdatis, for a semifinal place.

"It will be nice to play Carlos. He's playing well and coming back," said Nadal who turned 21 on Sunday.

"I'm happy to see him in the quarterfinals but I hope he stops there."

Nadal's Roland Garros record now stands at 18 wins in 18 matches and the outcome of Monday's clash,

a repeat of last year's fourth round match which the Spaniard won in four sets, was never in doubt.

Hewitt dropped serve twice in the first four games of the opening set, managing just four points in the process.

The Australian saved three set points as he broke back to trail 3-5 but then undid all his good work by handing the set to Nadal in the ninth game when he was broken for the third time.

The second set was even more one-sided with Nadal reeling off five games on the trot to open a two sets lead.

Hewitt's tenacity kept him in the tie and he sent the third set into a tiebreaker as Nadal was serving for the match at 6-5.

Hewitt, a former Wimbledon and US Open champion, nipped

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

## England's acid test

AFP, Paris



England, and in particular their manager Steve McClaren, face a make or break test against Estonia in Tallinn on Wednesday.

Victories for their three main Euro 2008 qualification rivals on Saturday left England fourth in group E and trailing leaders Croatia by five points.

Worse still, Israel and Russia are both three points ahead of one of the continent's traditionally strong teams - and England have looked anything but that during this qualification campaign.

With their three rivals also playing on Wednesday, England are

desperate for three points from their trip to thus far winless, pointless and goalless Estonia.

Anything else would almost certainly signal the end of McClaren's year in the England hot-seat, and quite probably England's hopes of making the European Championships in Austria and Switzerland next year.

So desperate is England, and McClaren's, situation that the manager was forced to go back on his decision to drop David Beckham from his thinking since the end of last year's World Cup.

Beckham has been inspirational for Real Madrid in the second half of the season as the Spanish giants have bounced back into their domestic title race.

The LA Galaxy-bound midfielder was one of England's star performers in Friday's friendly 1-1 draw with Brazil and is expected to play a pivotal role in Estonia.

"Beckham did very well against Brazil," said midfielder Frank Lampard.

"He has always got that killer ball he can put into the danger area from free-kicks which can make a goal. There was also a nice balance across the midfield. He was very disciplined on the right and was supplying good balls."

McClaren seems likely to leave the midfielder untouched, with Lampard and Steven Gerrard together in the middle, flanked by Beckham and Joe Cole, but he

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



Rafael Nadal of Spain slides in to force a backhand during his fourth round encounter against Lleyton Hewitt at the French Open in Roland Garros on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

EURO 2008 - Qualifiers																											
19 matches to be played June 6th																											
Local time: GMT + 2																											
<b>GROUP A</b>	<b>GROUP B</b>	<b>GROUP C</b>																									
<table border="1"> <tr><th>Played / F / A / Points</th></tr> <tr><td>1. Poland 8 15 6 19</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Portugal 7 15 5 14</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Serbia 7 10 4 14</td></tr> <tr><td>4. Finland 7 7 5 11</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Belgium 7 5 8 7</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Kazakhstan 7 4 10 5</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Armenia 6 2 7 4</td></tr> <tr><td>8. Azerbaijan 7 3 16 4</td></tr> </table>	Played / F / A / Points	1. Poland 8 15 6 19	2. Portugal 7 15 5 14	3. Serbia 7 10 4 14	4. Finland 7 7 5 11	5. Belgium 7 5 8 7	6. Kazakhstan 7 4 10 5	7. Armenia 6 2 7 4	8. Azerbaijan 7 3 16 4	<table border="1"> <tr><th>Played / F / A / Points</th></tr> <tr><td>1. France 8 14 2 18</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Italy 6 11 6 13</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Ukraine 6 8 6 12</td></tr> <tr><td>4. Scotland 6 11 6 12</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Lithuania 6 4 5 7</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Georgia 7 13 13 6</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Faroe Isles 7 2 25 0</td></tr> </table>	Played / F / A / Points	1. France 8 14 2 18	2. Italy 6 11 6 13	3. Ukraine 6 8 6 12	4. Scotland 6 11 6 12	5. Lithuania 6 4 5 7	6. Georgia 7 13 13 6	7. Faroe Isles 7 2 25 0	<table border="1"> <tr><th>Played / F / A / Points</th></tr> <tr><td>1. Greece 6 10 4 15</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Turkey 6 16 6 13</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Bosnia-H 6 13 14 10</td></tr> <tr><td>4. Norway 6 13 6 10</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Hungary 6 7 10 6</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Malta 6 5 14 4</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Moldova 6 3 13 2</td></tr> </table>	Played / F / A / Points	1. Greece 6 10 4 15	2. Turkey 6 16 6 13	3. Bosnia-H 6 13 14 10	4. Norway 6 13 6 10	5. Hungary 6 7 10 6	6. Malta 6 5 14 4	7. Moldova 6 3 13 2
Played / F / A / Points																											
1. Poland 8 15 6 19																											
2. Portugal 7 15 5 14																											
3. Serbia 7 10 4 14																											
4. Finland 7 7 5 11																											
5. Belgium 7 5 8 7																											
6. Kazakhstan 7 4 10 5																											
7. Armenia 6 2 7 4																											
8. Azerbaijan 7 3 16 4																											
Played / F / A / Points																											
1. France 8 14 2 18																											
2. Italy 6 11 6 13																											
3. Ukraine 6 8 6 12																											
4. Scotland 6 11 6 12																											
5. Lithuania 6 4 5 7																											
6. Georgia 7 13 13 6																											
7. Faroe Isles 7 2 25 0																											
Played / F / A / Points																											
1. Greece 6 10 4 15																											
2. Turkey 6 16 6 13																											
3. Bosnia-H 6 13 14 10																											
4. Norway 6 13 6 10																											
5. Hungary 6 7 10 6																											
6. Malta 6 5 14 4																											
7. Moldova 6 3 13 2																											
<b>GROUP D</b>	<b>GROUP E</b>	<b>GROUP F</b>																									
<table border="1"> <tr><th>Played / F / A / Points</th></tr> <tr><td>1. Germany 6 27 3 16</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Czech Rep. 7 15 4 14</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Ireland 7 12 8 13</td></tr> <tr><td>4. Slovakia 6 15 11 9</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Wales 6 8 9 7</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Cyprus 6 9 16 4</td></tr> <tr><td>7. San Marino 6 1 36 0</td></tr> </table>	Played / F / A / Points	1. Germany 6 27 3 16	2. Czech Rep. 7 15 4 14	3. Ireland 7 12 8 13	4. Slovakia 6 15 11 9	5. Wales 6 8 9 7	6. Cyprus 6 9 16 4	7. San Marino 6 1 36 0	<table border="1"> <tr><th>Played / F / A / Points</th></tr> <tr><td>1. Croatia 6 16 4 16</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Russia 6 11 1 14</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Israel 7 15 7 14</td></tr> <tr><td>4. England 6 9 2 11</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Macedonia 7 6 7 7</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Estonia 6 0 11 0</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Andorra 6 1 26 0</td></tr> </table>	Played / F / A / Points	1. Croatia 6 16 4 16	2. Russia 6 11 1 14	3. Israel 7 15 7 14	4. England 6 9 2 11	5. Macedonia 7 6 7 7	6. Estonia 6 0 11 0	7. Andorra 6 1 26 0	<table border="1"> <tr><th>Played / F / A / Points</th></tr> <tr><td>1. N. Ireland 6 10 7 13</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Sweden 5 9 4 12</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Spain 6 11 6 12</td></tr> <tr><td>4. Denmark 4 7 2 7</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Liechtenstein 6 4 16 4</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Iceland 6 5 10 4</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Latvia 5 4 5 3</td></tr> </table>	Played / F / A / Points	1. N. Ireland 6 10 7 13	2. Sweden 5 9 4 12	3. Spain 6 11 6 12	4. Denmark 4 7 2 7	5. Liechtenstein 6 4 16 4	6. Iceland 6 5 10 4	7. Latvia 5 4 5 3	
Played / F / A / Points																											
1. Germany 6 27 3 16																											
2. Czech Rep. 7 15 4 14																											
3. Ireland 7 12 8 13																											
4. Slovakia 6 15 11 9																											
5. Wales 6 8 9 7																											
6. Cyprus 6 9 16 4																											
7. San Marino 6 1 36 0																											
Played / F / A / Points																											
1. Croatia 6 16 4 16																											
2. Russia 6 11 1 14																											
3. Israel 7 15 7 14																											
4. England 6 9 2 11																											
5. Macedonia 7 6 7 7																											
6. Estonia 6 0 11 0																											
7. Andorra 6 1 26 0																											
Played / F / A / Points																											
1. N. Ireland 6 10 7 13																											
2. Sweden 5 9 4 12																											
3. Spain 6 11 6 12																											
4. Denmark 4 7 2 7																											
5. Liechtenstein 6 4 16 4																											
6. Iceland 6 5 10 4																											
7. Latvia 5 4 5 3																											
<b>GROUP G</b>	<b>Qualifiers</b>																										
<table border="1"> <tr><th>Played / F / A / Points</th></tr> <tr><td>1. Romania 6 12 4 14</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Netherlands 6 8 2 14</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Bulgaria 6 9 3 12</td></tr> <tr><td>4. Belarus 6 9 13 7</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Albania 6 5 6 6</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Slovenia 6 5 10 4</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Luxembourg 6 1 11 0</td></tr> </table>	Played / F / A / Points	1. Romania 6 12 4 14	2. Netherlands 6 8 2 14	3. Bulgaria 6 9 3 12	4. Belarus 6 9 13 7	5. Albania 6 5 6 6	6. Slovenia 6 5 10 4	7. Luxembourg 6 1 11 0	<p>2 September 2006 - 21 November 2007</p> <p>The top two teams in each group qualify for the final phase</p>																		
Played / F / A / Points																											
1. Romania 6 12 4 14																											
2. Netherlands 6 8 2 14																											
3. Bulgaria 6 9 3 12																											
4. Belarus 6 9 13 7																											
5. Albania 6 5 6 6																											
6. Slovenia 6 5 10 4																											
7. Luxembourg 6 1 11 0																											
<table border="1"> <tr><th>GMT</th></tr> <tr><td>Norway - Hungary 1700 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Bosnia-H. - Malta 1815 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Greece - Moldova 1830 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Germany - Slovakia 1830 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Sweden - Iceland 1815 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Liechtenstein - Spain 1830 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Latvia - Denmark 1800 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Bulgaria - Belarus 1700 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Luxembourg - Albania 1830 GMT</td></tr> <tr><td>Romania - Slovenia 1845 GMT</td></tr> </table>	GMT	Norway - Hungary 1700 GMT	Bosnia-H. - Malta 1815 GMT	Greece - Moldova 1830 GMT	Germany - Slovakia 1830 GMT	Sweden - Iceland 1815 GMT	Liechtenstein - Spain 1830 GMT	Latvia - Denmark 1800 GMT	Bulgaria - Belarus 1700 GMT	Luxembourg - Albania 1830 GMT	Romania - Slovenia 1845 GMT																
GMT																											
Norway - Hungary 1700 GMT																											
Bosnia-H. - Malta 1815 GMT																											
Greece - Moldova 1830 GMT																											
Germany - Slovakia 1830 GMT																											
Sweden - Iceland 1815 GMT																											
Liechtenstein - Spain 1830 GMT																											
Latvia - Denmark 1800 GMT																											
Bulgaria - Belarus 1700 GMT																											
Luxembourg - Albania 1830 GMT																											
Romania - Slovenia 1845 GMT																											

SOURCE: AFP