



Liverpool winger Harry Kewell (R) takes a tumble under the hefty challenge of Portsmouth midfielder Sulley Muntari during the Barclays Asia Trophy final in Hong Kong on Friday.

Bayern sweat on Ribery

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich face a race against time to have French midfield star Franck Ribery fit for Saturday's German League Cup final against Schalke 04, the German giants admitted on Thursday.

The 24-year-old midfielder picked up a knee injury in Wednesday's 2-0 win at VfB Stuttgart and Bayern boss Ottmar Hitzfeld is waiting to see if his new recruit

can play on Saturday.

As well as Ribery, Bayern's 19-year-old striker Sandro Wagner, who also scored against Stuttgart, is struggling with a knee injury.

"They are both doubtful for Saturday," said Hitzfeld.

And while summer signing Miroslav Klose is struggling to shake off a leg injury in time for Saturday's game, Bayern are also waiting to see if their midfielder Mark Van Bommel will be cited for a foul in Wednesday's win.

Video tape of the Dutch

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Heinze calls in lawyers

INTERNET, undated

Gabriel Heinze has employed Liverpool's legal team in a bid to force through his transfer to Anfield.

Manchester United have so far blocked a move to their great rivals, despite Liverpool reportedly meeting the Argentinian's get-out clause.

Sir Alex Ferguson has made it very clear that he doesn't want Heinze to make the switch, but the defender is equally determined to force through the move.

Liverpool consulted their legal advisors last week in an attempt to seal the deal, and now the Guardian reports that Heinze appointed Richard Green, the Anfield club's lawyer, to work on the move.

The latest move appears to outline Heinze's absolute determination to move to Liverpool, and if it doesn't work then he is likely to find himself marginalised to say the least at Old Trafford.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Asia Trophy Pompey's

Football

AFP, Hong Kong

Goalkeeper David James was the hero as Portsmouth withstood a Liverpool barrage before snatching the Asia Trophy title 4-2 on penalties here on Friday.

James saved spot-kicks from new signings Fernando Torres and Yossi Benayoun as the underdogs completed an unlikely win after almost constant pressure from the Champions League finalists.

In a dress rehearsal for the new Premier League season starting on August 11, Liverpool's new look attack laid siege to the Portsmouth goal without finding a way past the brilliant but unpredictable James.

The former England keeper had been in sparkling form in the semi-final against Fulham and he was again the key as Portsmouth held out against one-way traffic in the first half.

James saved twice from the lively Dirk Kuyt, first diving one-handed to his right and then intercepting the Dutchman's powerful header.

But the ex-Liverpool stopper, pushing for an England recall, lived up to his calamitous reputation when dangerous new striker Ryan Babel almost robbed him on the edge of the box.

Kuyt also flicked over cutely from a Harry Kewell cross and then powered a right-footed drive just too high after Jermaine Pennant broke free down the right.

Shortly after he latched on to a long ball, lost out to two defenders in the box but still almost prodded it past 'keeper James who held on gratefully to his left.

Pennant had earlier rounded the advancing James but miscued, while Portsmouth's Lomana LuaLua surprised Reina with a shot from a tight angle that bounced off his near post.

Torres and Kuyt almost combined to steal victory in the dying seconds but James was out quickly to smother the Dutchman's shot.

Portsmouth's John Utaka missed with the opening penalty but the error was erased by James, who dived to his left and then right to deny Torres and Benayoun.

Nico Kranjcar stepped up to slot the decisive kick and secure

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

MU end with a win

Football

AFP, Guangzhou

Manchester United new boy Nani wrapped up the club's Far East tour with a stunning goal in a 3-0 win against Guangzhou Evergrande.

Nani, Wayne Rooney and Lee Martin claimed the goals as United overcame stifling conditions in Guangdong Province to put a winning seal on their hugely successful tour of the region that has also seen stops in Japan, South Korea and tiny Macau.

Having won two and drawn one of their three tour games before this clash at the Guangdong Olympic Stadium, United boss Alex Ferguson opted to rest the likes of Edwin van der Sar, Patrice Evra and Cristiano Ronaldo in favour of United youngsters.

But England forward Alan Smith was absent from the starting line-up for the fourth game in a row, making it almost certain that the former Leeds striker will be on his way out of Old Trafford when they return to

England on Saturday.

With Smith on the bench again, Ferguson chose Rooney and Dong Fangzhuo up front and the pair linked well before Rooney put United ahead from the penalty spot on 18 minutes.

Rooney had already sent a 30-yard effort dipping over keeper Li Shuai's crossbar on six minutes before crossing for Dong to head narrowly over seven minutes later.

Star man Rooney broke the deadlock five minutes later, though, when he sent the keeper the wrong way from the spot after Chinese referee Wan Daxue had awarded a penalty following Oliveira's clumsy challenge on Michael Carrick.

The midfielder, who spent part of last season on loan at Scottish giants Rangers, cut inside from the left before unleashing a 30-yard effort that left the keeper totally helpless.

With the game won, Ferguson delighted the fanatical Chinese crowd by introducing Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo for the final 12 minutes, but the double footballer of the year could not add to the score during his brief cameo.

But the 20-year-old passed up on his trademark somersault celebration after being banned from performing the spectacular party trick by United boss Ferguson.

United almost started the second half without a goalkeeper after the referee whistled for kick-off before youngster Tom Heaton had even taken to the pitch to replace Polish stopper Tomasz Kuszczak.

But the Premiership champions could probably have played the whole of the second period without a keeper due to their control of the game and United extended their lead on 52 minutes when Martin netted a superb long-range effort.

The midfielder, who spent part of last season on loan at Scottish giants Rangers, cut inside from the left before unleashing a 30-yard effort that left the keeper totally helpless.

With the game won, Ferguson delighted the fanatical Chinese crowd by introducing Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo for the final 12 minutes, but the double footballer of the year could not add to the score during his brief cameo.

Simao signs for Atletico

AFP, Madrid

Benfica captain Simao Sabrosa, who had been targeted by Liverpool, was officially unveiled on Friday as a player of Spanish Primera Liga side Atletico Madrid for the next four seasons.

"I am going to work hard to help the club get where it should get, which is to top the league and win titles," the 27-year-old Portuguese international told reporters after he passed a medical examination.

"I am going to play as I did in Portugal so that Atletico is the best," he added.

Under the deal Benfica will get 20 million euros (27.3 million US dollars) for the attacking midfielder, a record transfer for the Portuguese club, and will have an option to take two Atletico players.

Liverpool made a move for Simao in August 2005 but the deal broke down just as the explosive winger was set to fly to Anfield for a medical after the English side refused to meet Benfica's asking price for the player.

Atletico had to fight off opposition

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

City rope in Petrov

AFP, Manchester

Manchester City manager Sven Goran Eriksson vowed to carry on spending after signing Bulgarian international winger Martin Petrov for 4.7 million pounds from Atletico Madrid.

The 28-year-old passed a medical on Thursday and will become Eriksson's fourth signing since he took charge at Eastlands once he is granted a work permit.

Eriksson is certain Petrov won't be the last new arrival. He has been given substantial transfer funds by City's new Thai owner Thaksin Shinawatra as he overhauls a squad that struggled in the Premiership last season.

The Swede has already brought in Rolando Bianchi, Geovanni and Gelson Fernandes and is lining up moves for Bayern Munich's Roque Santa Cruz and Racing Santander's Nikola Zigic.

Eriksson has no problem concentrating on non-English talent and said: "I don't think we are finished signing, there will be more new faces coming in different positions, whether they are English or not I can't say."

"I think that the new owner has shown that he means serious busi

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Partizan booted from UEFA Cup

AFP, Belgrade

UEFA decided on Thursday to ban Serbia's Partizan Belgrade from European competitions for a one-year period due to violence at last week's UEFA Cup qualifier in Bosnia, the club said in a statement.

"UEFA officials pointed out that, in the last five years, Partizan has been fined on 25 occasions out of 36 UEFA competitions matches, which made it crucial for Control and Disciplinary Body in reaching such a strong decision," the statement said.

Partizan Belgrade were also fined with 50,000 Swiss francs (30,200 euros, 41,500 dollars).

"This is the most severe blow in the 60-year long history of Partizan. The biggest loss. What could be worse?", the Serbian club Secretary General Zarko Zecevic said.

However, he added that "there's no fooling around with UEFA. Who does not play by the rules, should not compete. I hope that state prosecutors will do something" to punish hooligans for violence at football matches.

There was no immediate indication whether the club would

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Samba behind it all

AFP, Jakarta

Brazilian coaches Jorvan Vieira and Helios dos Anjos have been through the grinder these past three weeks getting their Iraqi and Saudi Arabian teams through to Sunday's Asian Cup final here.

"This is good for Brazil. It's a very special moment to have two Brazilian coaches in one final in Asia," Vieira said Friday.

"Maybe it might also happen one day in the World Cup because there are so many Brazilian coaches training national teams, but this is the Asian Cup and to have two Brazilians coaching here is very important and a powerful statement for us."

Vieira said the five-time World Cup champions represented a gold mine of football talent.

"Nobody expected that we would win the recent Copa America but we did it with a new generation, new players and new coach," he said.

Dos Anjos said of the Asian Cup final no-one predicted: "It has been a victory for Arabian football, especially for Iraq, because everyone knows what is happening there."

"These victories will bring happiness to the people of Iraq and of Saudi Arabia."

Yet in the macabre modern-day reality of Iraq, a cherished victory for their team will inevitably ignite more carnage on the convulsing streets.

When news reached Baghdad that Iraq had beaten South Korea on penalties in last Wednesday's semifinal in Kuala Lumpur, two car

bombs ripped through the crowds celebrating the victory, killing at least 51 people and wounding more than 126.

There are fears more bloodshed will follow as die-hard fans run the risk to celebrate a potent symbol of Iraqi unity.

Vieira, who has coached Arab clubs and international teams for more than 20 years and his family live in Morocco, has unified Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish players to become the pride of all Iraq.

"It's true that for me it's the most difficult job in my 13 years as a coach, for many reasons both on and off the field," he said.

"But it's a good experience. Life is a learning process and every day we learn something and when you stop learning, you stop teaching."

While the weight of national expectation is on Vieira and his players, dos Anjos has endured persistent criticism from Riyadh that his team have ridden their luck through the tournament rather than stamping their mark on it.

"I haven't coached Flamengo or Brazil so I'm not famous in Saudi Arabia so it's normal to have criticism but now they are starting to get to know me," he said.

"I just have to win games. I don't pay any attention to the criticism. You can ask my translator, I have never asked him to read an article in the Saudi press to me."



PHOTO: AFP

Henry scores on debut

Football

INTERNET, undated

Thierry Henry hit a late winner on his debut for Barcelona as the Blaugrana beat Dundee United in a pre-season friendly at Tannadice.

In the final minute of an entertaining encounter United defender Darren Dods pulled down Giovanni dos Santos, allowing the former Arsenal player - on as a second-half substitute - the opportunity to score from the spot.

United's debutant keeper Grzegorz Szamotulski saved the first effort but Henry followed up to knock the ball into the net.

"We have seen that he is an intelligent player and we have seen some good passes," Rijkaard said after the match.

"We have to take into account he has not played for a long time and it was his decision to go and play. He played well."

It could have been different if Barry Robson's 82nd-minute header had not been chalked off for a push on Barca defender Eric Abidal and if Lee Wilkie's last-minute header had not been

headed off the line by Julian Belletti, but in the end the classier side won through.

United gave a debut to keeper Szamotulski, the former Sturm Graz player who signed yesterday, and he was kept busy in a relatively entertaining first half.

The visitors quickly took control of the game and in the 14th minute Santiago Ezquerro casually swept a Xavi cross over the bar from eight yards out when more focus might have brought the opener.

Three minutes later, Dundee United midfielder Morgaro Gomis fouled Ronaldinho 25 yards from goal and the Brazilian flashed his right-footed free-kick off the outside of the post.

In the 80th minute Barcelona substitute Bojan Krkic went through on goal but hesitated with only Szamotulski to beat, allowing the Tannadice keeper to save at his feet.

In the 82nd minute United skipper Robson headed Steven Robson's cross in off the post but the cheers soon died down when the goal was chalked off for a push on Eric Abidal.

Then came the drama of Henry's debut goal and Wilkie's near miss.



PHOTO: INTERNET

TIMES ONLINE

Ferrari reacted with fury last night after an emergency hearing into the Formula One spy row resulted in McLaren Mercedes escaping without punishment. The FIA, the governing body of motor sport, gave Lewis Hamilton's team a 'let-off' over the possession of a huge dossier of secret technical information, a decision the Italian team were quick to condemn.

After hearing the announcement by the FIA's World Motor Sport Council (WMSC) in Paris, Ferrari said that it "legitimately dishonest behaviour in Formula One and sets a very serious precedent".

The angry reaction in Maranello came as Hamilton and Fernando Alonso, his teammate, were breathing a sigh of relief. The affair could have resulted in both