

## Lehmann slams arrogant Kahn

AFP, Stuttgart

Germany's first-choice goalkeeper Jens Lehmann has slammed his predecessor in the national number one shirt Oliver Kahn and emphasised his dislike for the Bayern Munich captain.

"He takes himself far too seriously and thinks he is very important," Arsenal keeper Lehmann told German weekly magazine Der Spiegel.

Lehmann replaced Kahn as Germany's goalkeeper during last summer's World Cup in Germany and the Bayern Munich man has not played for his country since.

Kahn, who is recovering after elbow surgery in the United States last week, said in a recent interview that he "doubts there will be another era of famous goalkeepers in the German shirt".

The epistolical Kahn only holds goalkeeping legends such as Sepp Maier, Toni Schumacher, Bodo Illgner or even himself as worthy of a golden era of world-class players in Germany's number ones shirt.

"I don't like it when someone glorifies themselves," said 37-year-old Lehmann, who is on the bench at Arsenal even though he has recovered from his own elbow and achilles tendon injuries.

Kahn has previously said the German national team's goalkeeper has to be the first-choice shot-stopper for his club.

"You don't have a chance to win your place in the German side if you can't hold down your place with your club," said Kahn.

Lehmann aims to win back his Arsenal shirt after next Saturday's Euro 2008 qualifier against the Republic of Ireland in Dublin followed by the showdown with Group D rivals the Czech Republic four days later in Munich.

Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger says he will "have him back in the side" after the Euro 2008 games with Spanish goalkeeper Manuel Almunia currently wearing the north London club's number one shirt.

## Mancini eyes improvement

INTERNET, undated

International coach Roberto Mancini believes there is still room for improvement from his players despite the 2-1 win over Napoli which allowed them to stretch their lead at the top of Serie A.

Julio Cruz grabbed both goals for the defending champions, who remain unbeaten this season after seven matches.

The win moved them four points clear of Juventus, and although that gap could be reduced when the Turin club meet Fiorentina on Sunday, Inter will still head into the international break at the top of the standings.

Yet despite the victory, Mancini was concerned his team were too wasteful in front of goal.

"We didn't make a brilliant start because they (Napoli) were well positioned on the pitch, but then we took the game into our hands and stepped up a gear," he told the club's official website.

"At that point we created many chances and could have scored more goals in the first half. With all the chances we created, we have to try and kill off games, 2-0 might not have been enough."

"However, we played well and there were some wonderful moves."

## Anelka waiting for a big club

INTERNET, undated

Nicolas Anelka has revealed he is "waiting for a big club" to come calling.

Bolton's top scorer, who only signed a four-year contract extension at the end of August, has been the star of what has otherwise been a difficult season for the Trotters.

Sammy Lee's men lie second bottom of the Barclays Premier League, having won just one of their eight league games this term.

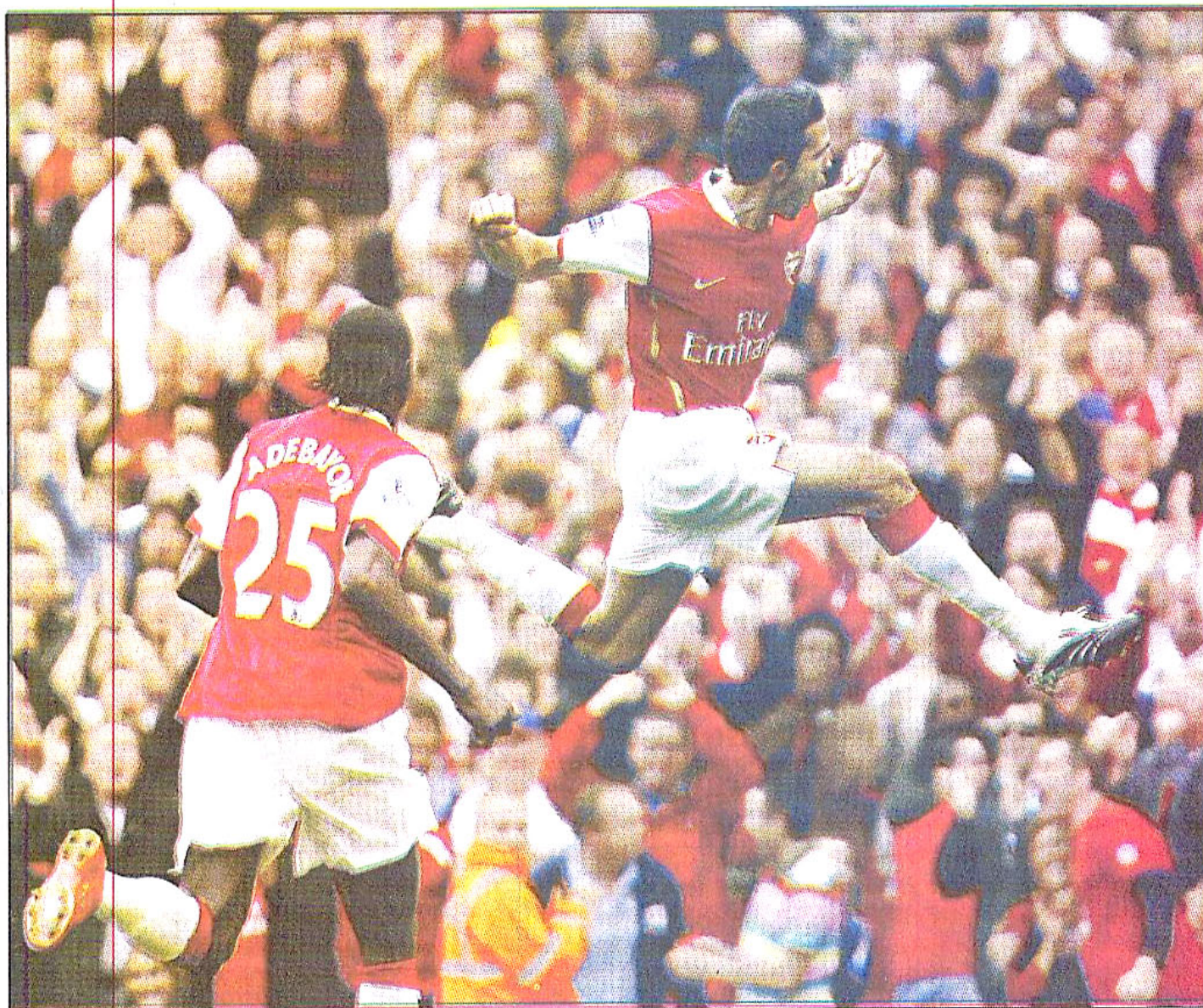
Anelka joined Bolton last summer but rumours of a move away have persisted despite the France international committing his future to the club.

Having previously played for the likes of Arsenal, Liverpool and Real Madrid, the striker admits he yearns to play for another of the giants of the game.

"Of course I still have ambition," he said in the Guardian.

"It's a long time that I have been waiting for a big club. I'm not about to hide it; it's the truth. I know my game and I know my qualities. I know all the players who are at Chelsea, Arsenal, Manchester United, Barcelona and I know I'm at their level."

"I've played with them and I know I don't have anything less than them. It's just the fact that I have to play and wait, I have to have a lot of patience. I've been waiting so there it is."



THE FLYING DUTCHMAN: Arsenal striker Robin van Persie (R) goes airborne to celebrate his opening goal against Sunderland in their Premiership clash at The Emirates Stadium on Sunday.

## Heartbreak for Ashton again

Football

AFP, London

England coach Steve McClaren will have to plan without Dean Ashton as he prepares for crucial Euro 2008 qualifiers against Estonia and Russia.

Ashton suffered knee ligament damage during West Ham's 1-0 defeat at Aston Villa on Saturday and Hamers boss Alan Curbishley admitted the striker is almost certain to miss the matches on October 13 and 17.

McClaren's attacking options are dwindling. He could have done without seeing his back-up target man injured as he is already without Wigan forward Emile Heskey, while Michael Owen may have to play even though he is far from fully fit after a groin operation.

It is terrible luck for Ashton who has yet to make his England debut after suffering a serious ankle injury while training with the national team in August 2006.

"Dean has hurt his medial knee ligament," Curbishley said. "I

would think he is very doubtful for England. He couldn't really run near the end so I imagine that is it for him.

"It's a big blow for England but it's also a big blow for us as we have injuries aplenty up front."

"It all depends how badly he has hurt his ligaments. We will have to wait and see but I would say things are looking a bit tight for the next two weeks."

"You feel sorry for the lad because he has had his fair share of bad luck and has worked ever so hard to get himself back fit and playing."

McClaren will send out a very different England team against Estonia from the one that beat Russia 3-0 in their last match.

He is considering leaving out three of his first choice defence to avoid the risk of John Terry, Rio Ferdinand and Ashley Cole getting bookings that would rule them out of the crunch trip to Russia.

The trio are all one yellow card away from suspension and McClaren said: "It is a consideration. I have to ask myself do I want to risk losing someone."

"It means picking a team for Estonia is not an entirely straightforward issue, there are other factors involved as well."

"Clearly though, our priority is to win and avoid dropping points at home as we did against Macedonia. If we do that, what happens in Russia is irrelevant."

McClaren must also decide whether to bring back Frank Lampard at the expense of Gareth Barry.

Lampard is fit after a thigh injury and McClaren admitted he had been disappointed to lose the Chelsea midfielder for the last two matches.

But Barry produced two excellent performances in those games and gelled well with Steven Gerrard - something that Lampard has never managed.

McClaren said: "Frank gives us another option because he is a midfielder player who can score goals, which is something we have spoken about before," McClaren said.

"He was man of the match against Germany in August but no

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## Cruz brace fires Inter

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan's Julio Cruz scored both goals in a 2-1 victory over Napoli at the San Siro on Saturday night to consolidate their lead at the top of the Italian championship.

Roberto Sosa earned a late score for the visitors but it did not stop Inter notching up their third straight

victory to motor four points ahead of Juventus, who play at third-placed Fiorentina on Sunday.

Inter were flying high after their 4-1 win at Roma and 2-0 Champions League victory against PSV Eindhoven, although Douglas Maicon was suspended.

The first goal came in the 20th minute when Sweden's Zlatan Ibrahimovic drew four defenders to him and nutmegged Paolo Cannavaro for the totally unmarked Argentinian Cruz to

side-foot home from seven yards.

Then 16 minutes later, Cruz scored his second, springing the offside trap on a long ball forward from the centre circle, then chesting down and smashing a left-foot finish into the far corner from just inside the box.

However it was Napoli who scored a goal five minutes from time. Substitute Sosa got between two defenders and placed a slow but precise lobbed header into the far corner.



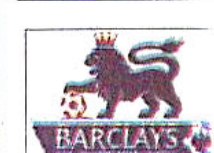
Inter Milan striker Julio Cruz (L) rides the challenge of Napoli defender Matteo Contini during their Serie A match at the San Siro in Milan on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

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## Van Persie guns down Black Cats

AFP, London



League on Sunday, the Dutch striker's second goal of the afternoon finally seeing off Sunderland in a five-goal thriller at the Emirates Stadium. Roy Keane's brave side had fought back from two goals down and gave the Gunners more of a fright than any other side had managed to so far this season.

But van Persie's 80th-minute strike was sufficient to give his side a 3-2 win and lift them back above Manchester United, who had held top spot for less than 24 hours after their win over Wigan at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Arsene Wenger made just one change to the side that won away to Steaua Bucharest in the Champions League in midweek, bringing in Abou Diaby in place of Emmanuel Ebou, who dropped to the bench.

Sunderland were without an away win this season and made no changes to the line-up that was beaten by Blackburn last week at the Stadium of Light.

Having won their previous nine matches in all competitions, Arsenal were confident of regaining top spot and their belief was reaffirmed when they raced into a 2-

0 lead.

The Gunners went ahead in the seventh minute when Grant Leadbitter was penalised for a foul on Cesc Fabregas.

Arsenal initially felt aggrieved because Diaby had curled in a brilliant finish just seconds after referee Rob Styles blew for the foul.

It was only a brief reprieve for Sunderland however. From the free-kick, Van Persie rifled home an unstoppable shot, the ball flying directly over the head of Scotland goalkeeper Craig Gordon and in off the crossbar.

Seven minutes later Arsenal doubled their advantage when Philippe Senderos took advantage of more hesitant defending to stab Emmanuel Adebayor's cross beyond Gordon.

The visitors were fortunate not to fall three goals behind six minutes later when Diaby swept home Alexandr Hleb's cross, only for the goal to be ruled out for what appeared to be a very debatable offside flag against Mathieu Flamini.

Keane had said in the build-up to this game that he was determined that his side would put up stiff resistance, and signs of an unlikely comeback were apparent when former Celtic winger Ross Wallace scored to put them back in it.

Arsenal keeper Manuel Almunia raced out of goal to halt Kenwyne Jones, but the rebound

fell kindly for Wallace, who finished in tidy fashion.

It was Sunderland who emerged for the second half with more purpose as they went in search of an unlikely point. And three minutes after the break their high tempo was rewarded with an equaliser from the head of Trinidadian striker Kenwyne Jones.

Liam Miller's cross was headed past Almunia by Jones and suddenly the Black Cats had their hosts pinned against the rack for the first time this season.

The equaliser perhaps came a shade too early though, as Sunderland began to sit back in an attempt to close in what would have been a valuable point.

They survived a scare 13 minutes from time when Hleb's cross found substitute Theo Walcott at the far post only for the youngster to miss his kick horribly.

But Walcott made amends by finally unlocking Sunderland's brave resistance after 80 minutes, turning superbly in the box and then sliding a neat pass to van Persie, who steer his finish past Gordon with the outside of his left boot.

There was still time for Walcott, who is still looking for his first Premiership goal, to strike the inside of Gordon's right-hand post and for Sunderland defender Paul McShane to be given a straight red card for a two-footed challenge on Hleb.

## Seven shooter Alves

AFP, The Hague

Brazilian international striker Afonso Alves went on a goal spree Sunday, scoring seven of SC Heerenveen's nine goals during their 9-0 win over Dutch league rivals Heracles Almelo.

The record number of goals scored during a single match in the Dutch league is held by former Feyenoord striker Henk Schouten who netted nine in April 1956 against De Volewijckers.

Alves had already a hat-trick after eighteen minutes of play - netting in the 10th, 17th and 18th minutes. He then went on the rampage adding four more in the space of nine minutes (68, 70, 74 and 77).

He was the top Dutch scorer last season with 34 goals.

But this was only his second match this season amid rumours that a transfer was imminent after clashing with team bosses.

Alves, 26, started his career at Atletico Mineiro in Brazil before joining Swedish side Malmo in 2004, arriving at Heerenveen the following year.

## Zola turns down Chelsea role

THE GUARDIAN

Gianfranco Zola has rejected an approach to join Chelsea's troubled coaching staff. Regarded by Chelsea supporters as one of the club's finest ever footballers, the former Italy international was sounded out about working alongside the manager Avram Grant but, after checking with friends at Stamford Bridge, elected not to involve himself with the Israeli's unpopular regime.

It is the second time Zola, currently joint coach of Italy's Under-21 team, has resisted the lure of Roman Abramovich's millions. In the summer of 2003 he refused to renege on an agreement to sign for hometown team Cagliari, ignoring the Russian's attempts to increase his salary generously to keep him at Stamford Bridge.

Though Zola is keen to coach in English football, he turned down the opportunity to return to Chelsea after consulting with former team-mates. He is understood to have been told that Grant has failed to win over much of a squad still upset by Jose Mourinho's enforced departure, and that it would not be wise to associate himself with a man whose training regime, team selection and close relationship with the owner have come under serious question.

Such is the discontent with Grant's accession that one senior player considered making himself unavailable for selection for last week's Champions League game at Valencia to facilitate a January transfer to another major European club. Though that individual played in the end, the sombre reaction of several of his teammates to Wednesday's impressive 2-1 victory over the Spaniards was another indicator of their present unease.

## Espanyol upset Valencia

AFP, Madrid



A 2-1 defeat to Chelsea in the Champions League on Wednesday had deflated confidence in the Valencia camp but five successive league wins meant they could have gone top of the table with victory over Espanyol.

Captain Ruben Baraja gave Valencia the perfect start scoring after just four minutes but Albert Riera, called into the Spain squad

for the first time this week, produced a brilliant equaliser on 20 minutes before Garcia struck his fourth goal of the season late on to deepen Valencia's misery.

It was Espanyol's first victory at Valencia's Mestalla Stadium since 2001 and Valencia, only a point behind leaders Real, must now regroup.

Valencia handed a league debut to giant Serbian striker Nikola Zigic, a towering 6ft 7in, who joined from Racing Santander for 18 million euros in the summer.

Zigic's mere presence seemed to unsettle the Espanyol rearguard and in the fourth minute they took the lead with Baraja sneaking in behind Zigic to power in a header from David Villa's corner.

Villa almost doubled Valencia's lead in the 12th minute with

Cameroon goalkeeper Idriss Kameni producing a great point blank save.

Six minutes later Villa hobbled off with an injury to his left ankle that will concern Spanish coach Luis Aragones ahead of Spain's vital Euro 2008 qualifier against Denmark next Saturday.

Aragones called Espanyol midfielder Riera into the squad for the first time this week and he showed why with a fantastic goal on 20 minutes.

Riera controlled the ball expertly on his chest and smashed a left-footed volley home for the equaliser.

Raul Tamudo hit the post for Espanyol sixty seconds later with Valencia's defence all at sea.

Substitute Joaquin went close

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CIRCUS SHOW: Espanyol striker Luis Garcia (R) performs a somersault after scoring a late winner against Valencia at the Mestalla on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Hamilton crashes out

EUROSPORT, undated



chaotic wet-dry Chinese Grand Prix as Lewis Hamilton crashed out in the pit-lane while lying second and failed to claim the world championship.

The 27-year-old Finn's fifth win of the season means that the season-ending Brazilian Grand Prix is now a three-way tie fight between the trio, with Hamilton four points ahead of his McLaren teammate Alonso and seven ahead of Raikkonen.

With a rain shower hitting the Shanghai circuit just four minutes before the start of the race, the entire grid took the wise decision to switch to intermediate tyres.

None of the chaotic scenes affected Hamilton's concentration as he made a great getaway to lead

into the first corner from Raikkonen's Ferrari.

Alonso passed Massa for third but was re-taken at turn three to establish an order that remained unchanged until the first round of pit-stops.

Hamilton was, as expected, the first of the big names to pit as he came in with a seven second lead on lap 15.

Significantly the McLaren team left him on the same set of intermediate Bridgestones that he started the race on, but changed those on Alonso when he pitted, as did Ferrari for both drivers.

The outcome was that Raikkonen, who made his stop five laps after Hamilton, halved his deficit to the championship leader and remained around three seconds behind for the next ten laps.

McLaren's tyre decision would come back to thwart Hamilton though as the track began to dry out on lap 26. His began to overheat

with his left-rear in particular losing so much rubber that the tyre's canvas was clearly visible to all.

The affect was excessive oversteer that caused him to lose three seconds a lap to the Finn, allowing Raikkonen to close right onto his tail.

After a hairy moment on lap 28 when the pair ran side by side exiting turn three, Raikkonen finally grabbed the lead next time round as Hamilton slid wide at the sixth corner.

After losing eight seconds on his first lap behind the Ferrari, McLaren elected to call him in for a set of dries. But disaster struck for the Briton as he came into the pit-lane too quickly and speared off into the gravel at the tight left-handed entrance.

Despite gesturing to the marshals to push him back onto the tarmac, Hamilton's car was bogged

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