

Australia leave Kewell out

AFP, Sydney

Coach Pim Verbeek said Sunday he will not be calling up Liverpool star Harry Kewell for Australia's opening World Cup qualifier with Qatar in Melbourne this week.

'We are still in it'

AFP, Portsmouth



Chelsea manager Avram Grant is refusing to rule his side out of the Premier League title race despite witnessing them slip to six points behind leaders Arsenal after a 1-1 draw at Portsmouth.

"We are in four trophies and had won nine games in a row before today. We have been playing attractive football and hopefully that will continue."

Germany midfielder Michael Ballack had already had a header cleared off the line when Anelka opened the scoring ten minutes into the second half.

Portsmouth felt they should have had a penalty when Claude Makelele appeared to handle Milan Baros's cross.

Referee Howard Webb angered home supporters and players alike by waving away their appeals and Florent Malouda launched a swift counterattack.

Malouda's left wing cross was headed across goal by Joe Cole for Anelka to finish neatly from six yards.

Portsmouth put their feelings of injustice behind them when Defoe took advantage of some unusually poor Chelsea defending to mark his seven-million-pound transfer deadline day arrival from Tottenham with a goal.

Goalkeeper David James played a hopeful long ball up field and Baros attracted Alex and Tal Ben Haim to the ball before heading for Defoe to find the bottom right corner of Petr Cech's goal from 12 yards.

Chelsea could even have fallen to only the third defeat of Grant's Stamford Bridge reign had Defoe not chipped wide of the goal when

one-on-one with Cech 11 minutes from the end.

Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp agrees with Grant that the 2006 champions are still in contention to reclaim their crown, once Lampard and John Terry return from injury and Michael Essien, Didier Drogba and Saloman Kalou from the African Nations Cup.

Redknapp, celebrating a first point against Chelsea in ten Premier League games, said: "Chelsea have got five world class players out and still won nine on the spin."

"When all those players come back they can go on a run again. The Championship is nowhere near."

"It was a great game and both teams were going for it. It could have gone either way. "Jermain took his goal well and it was good for him. He had another couple of opportunities and given a few more games he may have tucked them away."

In a further boost for Chelsea, Grant revealed England midfielder Lampard should be back in contention for the Liverpool match and forthcoming Champions League, FA Cup and League Cup games after six weeks out with a knee problem.

Grant said: "Frank is better and might play against Liverpool."

Spurs switch is perfect: Hutton

INTERNET, undated

Tottenham new boy Alan Hutton admits he is living out the dreams of every young Scot after making his Barclays Premier League debut against Manchester United.

The Scotland right-back completed his 9 million pound move from Rangers on Wednesday and went straight into the Tottenham team for yesterday's White Hart Lane clash.

Carlos Tevez's late strike denied him a winning start, as Tottenham had to settle for 1-1, but Hutton relished the occasion and, having hesitated initially over the move, is glad he opted for the Premier League challenge.

He said in the News of the World: "I definitely feel I've made the right choice to come down here to a massive club and look forward to playing in games like this every week."

"It's what every young boy from Scotland probably dreams of doing. Leaving Rangers was a big step for me but overall I'm glad I came here."

"Now I'm just looking forward to all the games coming up and playing against all the other great players down here."

Hutton, 23, returns to Scotland for a training camp with the national team which sees the players meet new head coach George Burley on Sunday night and train over the next two days.

He has no doubt the move to Tottenham will be a success, and insists his price tag should not be a factor.

"I didn't feel the pressure of the fee to be honest," Hutton said. "I believe in myself and I know what I can do."

Neuville injured

REUTERS, Berlin

Germany striker Oliver Neuville has pulled out of Wednesday's friendly away to Austria because of a foot problem but captain Michael Ballack will join the squad despite his head injury.

Ballack needed stitches after a clash of heads in Chelsea's 1-1 draw with Portsmouth on Saturday but he remains in line to make his first international appearance since March 2007, the German Football Association said in a statement on Sunday.

Coach Joachim Loew will not be calling up a replacement for Neuville, leaving Mario Gomez, Miroslav Klose and Kevin Kuranyi as the three out-and-out strikers.

Hamburg slip up

AFP, Berlin



Hamburg boss Huub Stevens endured an afternoon he was keen to forget as his side slipped back to fourth in the German league while Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld lamented his league-leading side's Jekyll and Hyde performance.

Hamburg's 1-1 draw at home to Hanover means they are now six points behind leaders Bayern and back to fourth as Bayer Leverkusen claimed third spot with late 3-2 win at Energie Cottbus.

"I want to completely forget the first half very quickly," said Dutch coach Stevens.

"We made the opposition look good and showed no passion."

"After the break, we played much better and managed to pick up a point."

Only Werder Bremen, who play on Sunday, are within touching leaders of the Munich side, but are three points behind.

Bayern had to survive a fightback in Rostock on Friday before the German giants came

away with a 2-1 win to open a three-point gap at the top.

Bayern cruised into a 2-0 half-time lead courtesy of goals from Franck Ribery and Luca Toni.

But coach Ottmar Hitzfeld's side made a nervous start to the second-half as their defence leaked an early goal by Rostock's Enrico Kern.

"I'm very pleased we've taken the three points, but we showed two sides to our character" said Hitzfeld.

"We played very well in the first half and should have been further ahead, but we lost our way after they pulled one back and our opponents grew in stature."

"It would have been a lot easier for us if we hadn't conceded the early goal after half-time."

"I'm happy with our fighting spirit but not with the football we played."

On Saturday, Bayer Leverkusen had German striker Simon Rolfes to thank after he converted a late penalty to give his side victory and a place amongst the top three with a 3-2 win at struggling Energie Cottbus.

A penalty by Hanover's Hungarian midfielder Szabolcs Huszti just before half-time gave his side the lead in Hamburg before Croatian striker Ivica Olmec bagged

his eighth league goal of the season as Hanover had Sergio Pinto dismissed late in the game.

There was a goal feast in Duisburg as the league's bottom side drew 3-3 win over mid-table Borussia Dortmund.

After Duisburg stormed into a 2-0 lead, Dortmund fought back with a second-half goal by German international Sebastian Kehrl, before Romanian midfielder Mihai Tararache made it 3-1.

With 20 minutes left Diego Fernando Klimowicz headed home for Dortmund to make it 3-2, before his injury time strike made it 3-3.

Nuremberg stay in the bottom three after their 2-0 defeat at Karlsruhe, who are up to fifth.

Hertha Berlin were humbled 3-0 at home to Eintracht Frankfurt which leaves both sides in mid-table, while Arminia Bielefeld were beaten 1-0 at home to VfL Wolfsburg.

With Bayern's main title rivals Werder Bremen hosts VfB Bochum, the pressure is on Thomas Schaaf's side to pick up the win which would put them level with Bayern.

And in Sunday's other game, defending champions VfB Stuttgart are at Schalke 04, Germany's only surviving Champions League contenders.

Blizzard greets Thai players

REUTERS, Tokyo

Thailand's soccer players, normally accustomed to tropical heat, awoke to blizzard-like conditions on Sunday after arriving in Japan for a World Cup qualifier.

The Thais touched down in Tokyo late on Saturday with temperatures rapidly dropping and overnight, the Japanese capital had been covered in a thick blanket of snow.

"There was a blizzard. There's snow on the ground so we're training indoors," team manager Kittirat Na Ranong told Reuters ahead of Wednesday's 2010 World Cup qualifier in Saitama.

"It's definitely not what we're used to back home but we've been training in Manchester the past two and a half weeks. It is very cold and wet there so we're well prepared."

"We've had the best physical and mental preparation. We're confident of a good performance here."

PSG see off minnows

AFP, Paris

Paris Saint Germain made it into the last 16 of the French Cup on Saturday, a 3-1 win ending the dreams of fifth division Le Poir-sur-Vie, while holders Sochaux also advanced.

Le Poir were roared on by some 8,000 fans from their small town south of Nantes - the match being played in Nantes' own Beaujoire Stadium.

But PSG, keen for an eighth Cup success amid a dismal league campaign, went about their business professionally and won with goals from Bernard Mendy and a double from Ivorian striker Amara Diane.

"We weren't too hot in the first half but got better thereafter," said PSG coach Paul Le Guen.

Poivre counterpart Stephane Mottin admitted he was sad that the adventure was over, but saluted his players.

"I am frustrated but the adventure was always going to stop one day. I am proud of my lads."

Urged on by playmaker Charly Charrier, the part-timers held their own until the 52nd minute, when Mendy latched onto a pass from Peguy Luyindula and sidestepped keeper Mickael Carraque to fire into the empty net.

Poivre responded valiantly and had the temerity to equalise inside two minutes when Jonathan Teillet dug out a loose ball after good work from Djilali Bekkar to fire past PSG's former Nantes keeper Mickael Landreau.

PSG reasserted their authority when Diane struck twice in three minutes, the first a low shot on 74 minutes and then a magisterial finish after a neat one-two with Clement Chantome to wrap up a hard-earned victory.

Another fifth division side, Lyon-Duchere lost out to the only goal, scored for top flight Lille by

Nicolas Fauvegue, meaning the minnows will not now get a chance to face league champions and city neighbours Lyon in the next round.

Lyon themselves face fourth division Croix de Savoie on Sunday, which also sees ten-times winners Marseille meet Monaco in the tie of the round.

Sochaux had to go to penalties, as they did in last season's final win over Marseille, before putting out Montpellier with keeper Teddy Richert, the hero of the trophy match, saving the decisive kick following a 1-1 stalemate.

Sochaux had Kandia Traore red-carded before Montpellier Geoffrey Jourden likewise took an early bath, forcing striker Souleymane Camara to take his place between the sticks for the nerve-shredding finale where his lack of goalkeeping experience was exposed.

On Friday, Metz shrugged off their rock-bottom league standing to win 3-0 at neighbours Strasbourg.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার. নং-পবি/প্র-১/১-৬৩/৯৭/৫৩. নোটিশ. ১) Mr. Ashraf Uddin Ahmed (Senior Assistant Chief) Student of Ph.D in Economics University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia.

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