AFP, Manchester

Park Ji-Sung insists Manchester United fear no one ahead of the draw for the quarterfinals of the Champions League.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side will go into the hat along with Premier League rivals Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool along with Barcelona, AS Roma, Schalke 04 and Fenerbahce at European football governing body UEFA's headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, on Friday.

United's hopes of completing a treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup triumphs were wrecked last weekend when Portsmouth pulled off a shock 1-0 victory at Old Trafford to dump Ferguson's side out of English football's domestic cup competition.

But Park, 27, is adamant the defeat will only strengthen his teammates' resolve to advance in the Champions League and reclaim European club football's most prestigious trophy for the first time

"We don't mind who we play next," insisted the South Korea midfielder.

"Maybe it would be good for English football if we drew an English team but, for me, it doesn't matter.

"We don't worry about the opposition because we have good players and we've shown our quality this season. As long as we concentrate on our performance, we can beat

"In the last few games our starting line-up has been quite different but we're getting good results so we believe we can win the Premier League and Champions League."

Reigning English champions United are currently second in the table, two points behind leaders Arsenal, ahead of their match away to basement club Derby on Saturday.

Henry hates comparison

AFP, Madrid

France's Thierry Henry said Wednesday his performance at Barcelona is not comparable to his time at Arsenal since he has been assigned a different role on the pitch at the Spanish side.

While Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger chose to use the 30-yearold as a striker, Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard has deployed him on the right and left wing.

"I spent eight years at a club in a certain position and now I'm at another club, playing in another position in another tactical scheme. Stop comparing Barcelona's Henry with Arsenal's Henry," he told a news conference.

"This is the Henry you see here This is not an excuse, it is stating the facts," he said. "I'm not asking anything from

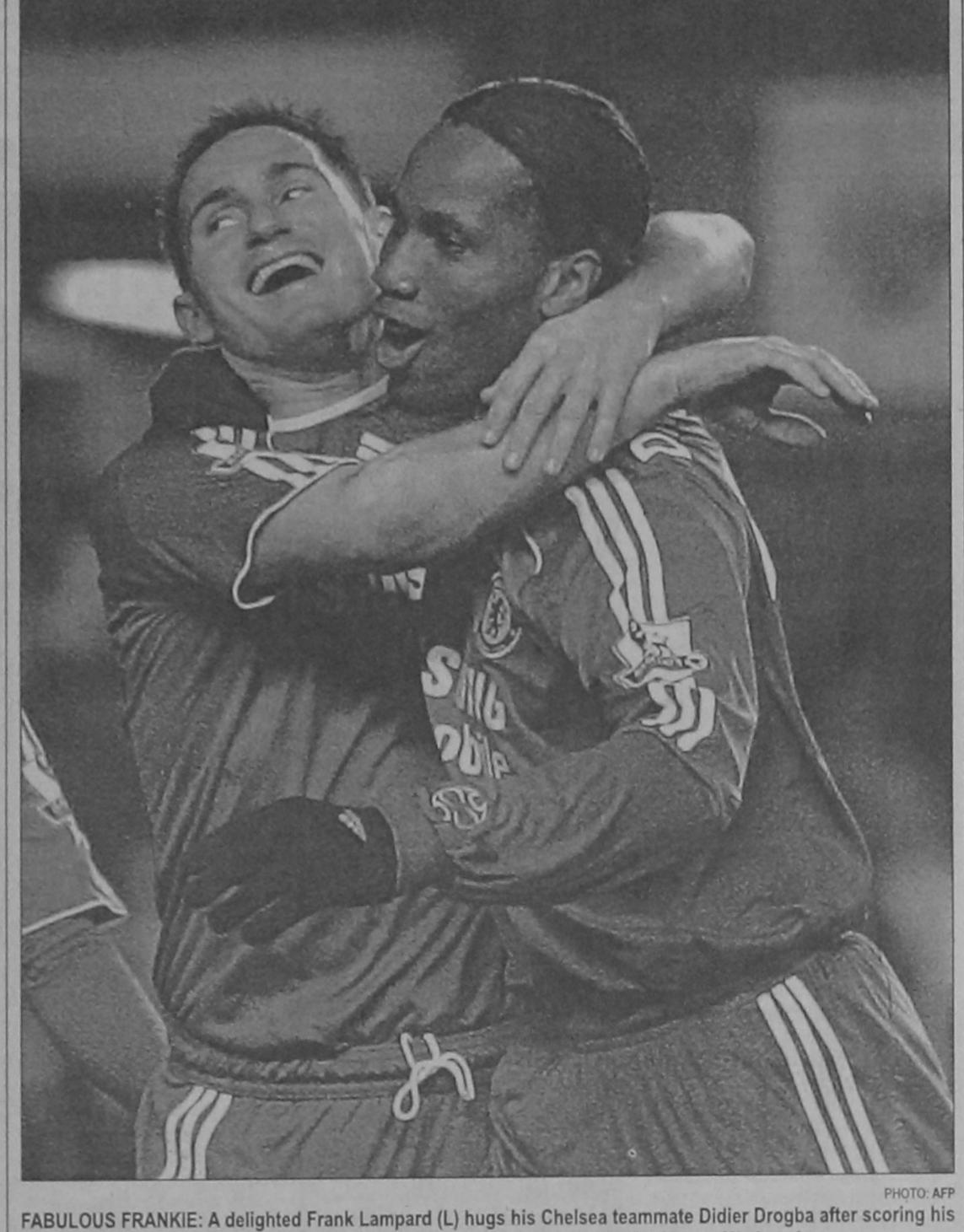
the coach or complaining. I respect the coach's decisions." Henry said his form recently

was not as good as he expected and said he has not been happy lately because he rarely sees his daughter Tea since his divorce from English model Claire Merry last year.

"A father who has only seen his daughter five times in the last eight months can't be happy. If I could see my daughter a little bit more, that would help," he said.

Henry dedicated his first goal since Tea was born in May 2005 by holding his fingers in the shape of the letter "T" and kissing them.

He has scored 13 times for Barcelona so far during his first season with the Catalan giants where he faces stiff competition for a sport in the starting line-up from Lionel Messi, Ronaldinho and Samuel Eto'o.



fourth goal against Derby County during their Premiership match at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday.

Chelsea demolish Derby

AFP, London



breathe a little Lampard came BARCLAYS to the rescue of

Wednesday.

Cup defeat at Barnsley, Grant knew another slip-up could prove fatal to his brief reign, but Lampard's goal Kalou and Joe Cole brushed aside Derby's feeble challenge at Stamford Bridge. Although beating the rock-bottom Rams will hardly convince the sceptics that Grant is the right man for the job, this was

sweep him to the sack. It may be premature to claim this as a turning point but Chelsea are now within five points of farpost.

the perfect way to at least stem the

Arsenal with a game in hand. With Arsene Wenger's league leaders due to visit Stamford Bridge in two weeks, the prospect of a title challenge emerging from Chelsea's chaotic campaign cannot be dismissed.

of the games in the league since I came here. It is enough to be close keep fighting," Grant said.

Grant made five changes to the team that lost at Barnsley. There was no place for Didier Drogba but Lampard was back after being

rested at the weekend.

If Grant could have hand-picked Avram Grant can the ideal opposition to face after his FA Cup embarrassment, Derby easier after Frank would have been top of the list.

been an exercise in futility and a his beleaguered manager with a miserable 23-match winless run advantage as his first-time shot four-goal haul in his side's 6-1 has left Paul Jewell's side certain to demolition of Derby on be relegated and in danger of yards. becoming statistically the worst After Saturday's humiliating FA team in Premier League history. Jewell said: "I've sat there for 90

minutes squirming in my seat. It was like a world heavy-weight spree and strikes from Salomon champion against a light-weight. "We can't compete with Chelsea close-range.

for ability but we can for desire. There's not enough of the players who have that."

start and were within a whisker of morale. taking the lead in the third minute tide of criticism threatening to when Kalou's reverse pass played in Lampard.

beat Roy Carroll only to strike the

Grant was finally able to relax in the 28th minute.

Joe Cole slipped a pass through to Lampard in the penalty area and he stumbled under Dean Leacock's challenge.

"We won more than 80 per cent minimal contact with Lampard but missed the ball as well and referee Chris Foy pointed to the spot.

Derby were completely out of side with a farcial second goal in easy.

the 42nd minute.

When Nicolas Anelka chased down Lampard's pass, Darren Moore waited for Carroll to clear, but the keeper opted for a despairing tackle Their return to the top-flight has which went straight to Kalou.

The Ivory Coast striker took full flashed into the empty net from 30

Chelsea showed no signs of easing up after half-time and a third goal arrived in the 58th minute.

Anelka's pass gave Joe Cole room to drill a low cross to Lampard and he tapped-in from

That was more than enough to seal the points but this was a chance for Chelsea to boost their Chelsea dominated from the goal difference as well as Grant's

The fourth goal was Joe Cole's in the 64th minute. Anelka sprinted clear of Derby's woeful offside trap The England midfielder's shot and although Carroll saved his shot, Cole was on hand to bury the

rebound. Lampard completed his hattrick two minutes later when his fine effort from the edge of the area

He wasn't finished there and claimed another with a low strike The Derby substitute made into the corner in the 72nd minute for his 17th goal of the season.

minute later.

bounced in over Carroll's dive.

Chelsea could be forgiven for one lapse in concentration and to first place. I can tell you we will Lampard picked himself up and David Jones pulled a goal back for calmly stroked the penalty past the visitors with a simple finish a

> It hardly mattered and Grant their depth and presented Grant's can only wish every game was this

Ronaldo not giving up yet

AFP, Rome

Former three-time world player of the year Ronaldo said Wednesday that it was too early to make a decision on his future in football.

The Brazilian suffered a rup tured tendon in his knee a month ago and faces at least nine months on the sidelines.

At 31 and with his weight and fitness having been called into question over the last few years, many doubt they will ever see Ronaldo running around a football pitch again.

Ronaldo himself, now recovering in Milan, told the club's TV channel that he could not be sure he would come back but that the possibility was keeping him moti-

"For now it's too early to talk about a decision, but I'm ready for this big challenge which is returning to play," he said. "I'm feeling better, the worst is behind me. I don't have any more pain and now I'm even managing to walk better.

"There's little time left now before I can remove the cast." Ronaldo suffered the same injury on his other knee in 1999 and missed the best part of 20 months of action. A similar outcome with

this injury would almost certainly end his career. Without him Milan were eliminated from the Champions League, a competition he has never won, by

Arsenal and sit down in fifth place

Messi to return to Argentina

REUTERS, undated

Barcelona have reached an agreement with the medical staff of the Argentine Football Federation (AFA) for forward Lionel Messi to return to Argentina to recover from the thigh injury he sustained during his side's victory over Celtic in the last 16 of the Champions League last week.

Barca said on their Web site (www.fcbarcelona.com) that the 20-year-old would return to the club at the end of the month to complete his recovery programme.

UEFA Cup results

AFP, Paris

Collated UEFA Cup results on Wednesday: Last 16, 2nd leg

At St Petersburg, Russia Zenit St Petersburg (RUS) 2 (Pogrebnyak 39, 78) Marseille

3-3 on aggregate. St Petersburg win on away goals rule At Hamburg, Germany

Hamburg SV (GER) 3 (Trochowski 53, Guerrero 64, van der Vaart 80) Bayer Leverkusen (GER) 2 (Barbarez 18, Gekas 55) 3-3 on aggregate. Leverkusen win

on away goals rule -At Munich, Germany Bayern Munich (GER) 1 (Lucio 9) Anderlecht (BEL) 2 (Akin 20, Iakovenko 35)

Bayern win 6-2 At Liverpool, England Everton (ENG) 2 (Johnson 16, Arteta 67) Fiorentina (ITA) 0 aet 2-2 on aggregate after extra time, Fiorentina win 4-2 on penalties

At Eindhoven, The Netherlands PSV Eindhoven (NED) 0 Tottenham (ENG) 1 (Berbatov 81) aet 1-1 on aggregate after extra time, PSV win 6-5 on penalties At Getafe, Spain Getafe (ESP) 1 (Albin 78) Benfica

Getafe win 3-1

Mancini not leaving Inter

Football

AFP, Milan

Inter Milan coach Roberto Mancini will not leave the Serie A side at the end of the season as he had announced, club president Massimo Moratti told the Italian

pressWednesday. Mancini made his announcement following the Italian champions' elimination from the daylater. Champions League on Tuesday night as Liverpool completed a 3-0 aggregate victory at the San Siro.

had a change of heart. "I've had a talk with Mancini,

who confirmed to me that he

year and to see out his contract and players of his decision. he wants to win the Champions League next season," Moratti told half months will be me my last on La Gazzetta dello Sport website.

The former Sampdoria and last two Scudetto titles and his team currently lead the Serie A table by six points.

When asked about the news on defeat had nothing to do with my Tuesday, Moratti replied "no comment" but he broke his silence a

"Mancini's words surprised me, I didn't expect it and even less so I believe thepeople close to him, "he said.

But Moratti said that Mancini Mancini stunned the football world by adding at the end of his post-match press conference that he had decided to leave the club striker Julio Cruz.

wanted to stay at Inter even next and had already informed his

"I think for me the next two and a

the Interbench," he said at the time. "After four years and even if I Lazio player has guided Inter to the have another four years on my contract, at the end of the season I'll leave Inter. I've already told the players. Tonight's (Tuesday's)

> His players also seemed stunned but many felt it was a knee-jerk reaction to another season of disappointment in the

> Champions League. "It surprised me a bit but I think we say many things in the heat of the moment," said Argentine

Pompey down Birmingham

AFP, Portsmouth



Jermain Defoe scored twice for Portsmouth as BARCLAYS the FA Cup favourites beat Birmingham City 4-2 to move into seventh place at Fratton Park here

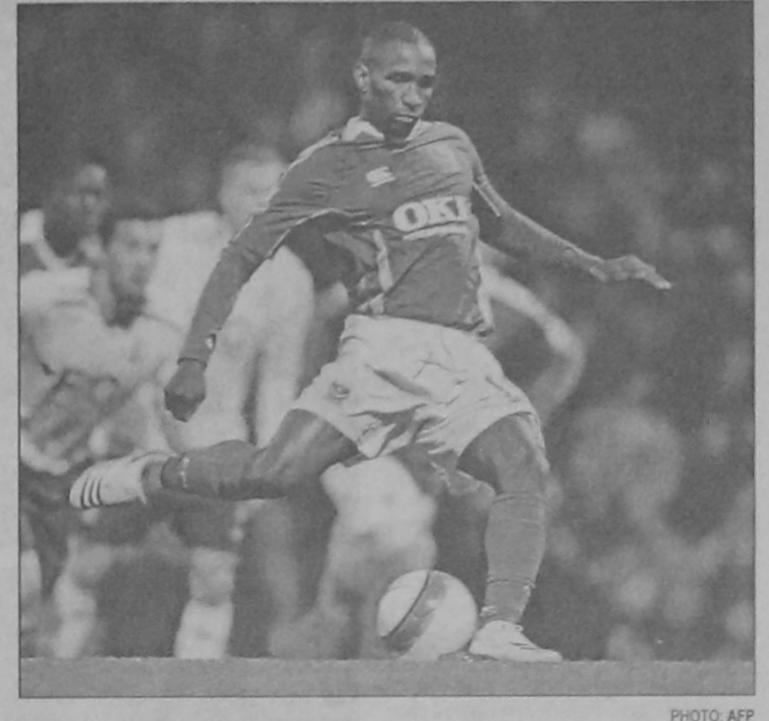
Wednesday. In their first match since their shock FA Cup win against Manchester United at Old Trafford; Defoe put Pompey 2-0 up in front of their own fans inside the first

nine minutes. But barely 60 seconds Fabrice Muamba pulled a goal back for Birmingham before Sebastian Larsson's free-kick five minutes before the break levelled the match at 2-2.

However, Hermannn Hreidarsson gave the south coast club the lead again in the 49th minute before Kanu, on as a substitute, ended Birmingham's fourgame unbeaten run with a diving header in the dying seconds to seal victory for Harry Redknapp's men. Defeat for Birmingham left them just a point above the relegation zone. Defoe opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the sixth minute, after Birmingham defender David Murphy handled a cross by Milan Baros.

Minutes later he scored a typical striker's goal, his fifth for the club since joining from Tottenham and 12th this season.

Birmingham keeper Maik Taylor did well to palm away Sulley Muntari's long shot and then blocked Baros's follow-up. But he clear a long free-kick from couldn't prevent England forward Defoe sliding in to pounce on the loose ball from close range.



Portsmouth striker Jermain Defoe scores the opening goal from a penalty during their Premiership tie against Birmingham at Fratton Park on Wednesday.

But Birmingham were back in ond penalty, when Ridgewell the game in the 10th minute when Liam Ridgewell headed on a appeared to trip Baros but their appeals fell on deaf ears. Larsson corner and Muamba stabbed a shot past in-form England goalkeeper David James. And James was beaten again

when, after Mikael Forssell was fouled on the edge of the box, However, Pompey were back in front four minutes after half-

time when Ridgewell couldn't

pounced on the loose ball.

have handled in the box.

- on for Forssell - came closest to equalising again, with a shot from Larsson's cross bringing a fine save from James, who earlier Larsson curled in a 40th minute Wednesday signed a new contractwhich will keep him at Fratton Park until the end of the 2009/10 season.

Pompey might have had a sec-

City substitute Cameron Jerome

Birmingham fought hard to get back on level terms before Kanu wrapped up the game when he Muntari and Hreidarsson headed in Pedro Mendes's cross for his first goal since October.

Boro hold Villa

AFP, Birmingham



BARCLAYS Cancelled out

Aston Villa a 1-1 Premier League Wednesday but a point did neither side's ambitions much good.

Struggling Middlesbrough, who face Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester United in three of their next four matches, were the better side for three quarters of the game at Villa Park and led through Downing's 23rd minute opener. But they remained five points

above the drop zone after Barry made no mistake with a penalty

However, Villa failed to signifi-Gareth Barry's cantly close the gap on fifth-placed second-half Everton and they are seven points off the UEFA Cup spot with nine games remaining.

Downing's fine opener to earn called for a reaction from his Middlesbrough players following draw with Middlesbrough here their shock 2-0 FA Cup defeat to Championship team Cardiff at the weekend and his side could have gone headtwice in the first 10 minutes.

from eight yards with Villa goalkeeper Scott Carson flailing at Emanuel Pogatetz's deflected shot chance and Villa cleared. and, after Tuncay turned Zat Knight and had a shot saved by Carson's post and two minutes Carson, Mido fired just wide.

Following another swift Boro the line from John Carew after breakaway, Egyptian midfielder

Downing opened the scoring midway through the opening period.

Knight's routine clearance

lacked power and flew straight to Downing. The England winger Manager Gareth Southgate had skipped past the centre-back and hit a low shot that Carson could not prevent flying into the corner. Ashley Young sliced wide as Villa finally manager a shot on goal after

27 minutes but Tuncay could have

added a second for Middlesbrough Firstly, Robert Huth headed over after spinning Martin Laursen on halfway, but the Turk lacked the pace to make the most of the Shawky drove inches wide of before the break, Mido cleared off

Young's free-kick was turned back after Luke Young was adjudged to Shawky drove narrowly over but towards goal by Shaun Maloney.

Bolton winning at Sporting Lisbon

PHOTO: AFP

Bad night for English clubs

cancelled out the Italian club's 2-0

But misses by Yakubu and Phil

Having been lucky to escape

Two goals from Zenit St

Marseille's conceded away goal

proved the deciding factor as they

Zenit's Dutch coach Dick

first-leglead.

Everton while with just a 2-0 defeat from the first-

Marseille's leg in Florence last Thursday,

AFP, Paris



England's night of UEFA Cup Jagielka in the shoot-out enabled action ended in Fiorentina to book their place in penalty shoot- the last eight -- despite being outout defeats for played by Everton throughout the b o t h game. Tottenham and

participation in Prandelli's Serie A high-flyers. European club action this season. Competition favourites Bayern Petersburg's Pavel Pogrebnyak sailed through at the expense of earned the Russian side a 2-0 vic-Belgian club Anderlecht but tory over Marseille to book their English hopes must now bank on quarterfinal berth on Wednesday.

on Thursday to have a presence in in the 3-1 first leg victory in France the quarterfinals. Tottenham came back from a 1- went out of Europe's second-tier 1 against PSV Eindhoven thanks to after a 3-3 aggregate scoreline. Dimitar Berbatov, bringing about extra time, but it was the Dutchmen who held on to win 6-5 of play on a difficult pitch," said in the shootout.

against the post condemned goodnews of this tie." Everton to their exit after they lost Fiorentina at Goodison Park.

O first leg deficit to level the tie at 1- club competition on away goals "I was really impressed by my players who showed a great quality

Andrei Arshavin started the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. 4-2 in a penalty shoot-out to move for the first goal in the 38th minute. He passed the ball to The English Premiership team Konstantin Zyrianov who set up had taken this last sixteen second- Pogrebnyak to beat the offside trap leg into extra-time after goals from and the striker shot past Marseille Andy Johnson and Mikel Arteta keeper Steve Mandanda.

Cisse could have got an equaliser four minutes later but the former top scorer in the French league, set on his way by Valbuena, fired straight at keeper Viacheslav Malafeev.

Zenit, who had the better of Marseille in the ball winning stakes, could have made the most of a poor spell by Gerets' side just after the break but later in the half Marseille lifted themselves and elimination Everton were fully aware of the task ended France's that they faced against Cesare Nianghada shot which just missed the Russians' goal. The second and decisive goal

> came in the 77th minute when Fatih Tekke got a touch to feed Pogrebnyak for his second strike, and, despite a late flurry from Niang and Cisse, it was the home crowd which celebrated victory. The defeat was even more bitter for the French as Marseille

defender Ronald Zubar com-

Russian fans directed against him

plained of racist chants by some

and black teammates Charles Kabore and Andre Ayew. "They threw a banana at us and Aiyegbeni Yakubu's spot-kick Advocaat. "The away goal was the made monkey sounds," complained the player from the French

> "It's not great. That makes the defeat worse, while they had everything to celebrate. We would have preferred that the match was stopped and the individuals removed."