



US stars Venus (L) and Serena Williams pose with their trophies after beating compatriot Lisa Raymond and Samantha Stosur of Australia in the Wimbledon Women's Doubles Final at the All England Tennis Club in London on Saturday.

Sisters clinch doubles title

AFP, London

Serena and Venus Williams completed their Wimbledon domination on Saturday by clinching the women's doubles title with a 6-2, 6-2 win over America's Lisa Raymond and Samantha Stosur of Australia. It was the sisters' third Wimbledon doubles title to add to their 2000 and 2002 victories and seventh Grand Slam trophy as a team.

The win, in only 59 minutes, came just hours after Venus had defeated her sister 7-5, 6-4 to clinch her fifth All England Club singles title.

WTA pleases Navratilova

AFP, London

Nine-time Wimbledon champion Martina Navratilova believes that Venus Williams's fifth All England Club title proves that the women's tour is in good health.

Navratilova hit back at critics who argue there is a lack of genuine competition at the top level of the women's game, a problem acutely emphasised by the shock retirement of former world number one Justine Henin.

"Things on the women's side have been a strange recently because Justine was the favourite in every match she played but suddenly she retired and there was a hole," Navratilova told the BBC after seeing Venus beat sister Serena 7-5, 6-4 in the final.

"Maria Sharapova played great at the Australian Open but she's been stagnating. Ana Ivanovic won the French Open but then totally deflated here at Wimbledon.

"But the all-Williams final shows women's tennis is looking in good shape because we've got two superstars back in the fold and they could end up number one by the end of the year.

"The women's game is wide open now and whoever is going to be a Grand Slam champion will have to play great tennis and earn it rather than win by default because somebody else is not playing well."

Navratilova added that even though the American sisters now play a light tour schedule, they have proved that they are still forces to be reckoned with.

"A couple of years ago you thought to yourself, 'Venus is finished; maybe Serena can make a comeback but Venus is probably going to focus on her fashion interests or do something else,'" she said.

"But here she is winning back-to-back Wimbledon titles. Despite what many detractors have said, it's obvious that both girls are still enjoying the game and want to get back to the top, which breathes new life into the women's game."

Hamilton wins British GP

AFP, Silverstone



Lewis Hamilton streaked to British Grand Prix victory on Sunday, delivering a masterful drive in wet conditions to delight a vociferous home crowd and reignite his world title challenge.

Consistent rain saw nearly all the drivers spin at some stage of the race and though BMW's Nick Heidfeld produced a good drive to finish second and Rubens Barrichello was third, no one could come close to Hamilton who won his home race by a staggering 68.5 seconds.

The British McLaren driver produced an excellent start and a superbly aggressive opening stint to take the lead early on, before going on to close the race out maturely.

The victory brings 23-year-old Hamilton his first points since winning at Monaco back in May and moves him up into a three-way tie at the top of the world championship.

Hamilton now shares top spot with the Ferraris of Kimi Raikkonen who finished fourth at Silverstone and Felipe Massa who took no points from a nightmare race.

Heikki Kovalainen was fifth in the other McLaren, Fernando Alonso took sixth and Jarno Trulli and Kazuki Nakajima were the others to pick up points.

After solid rain throughout the morning, conditions brightened up somewhat for the race but a wet

track and gusting winds still made for troublesome start conditions.

Hamilton made the best start of all, shooting around the outside to squeeze into second from fourth on the grid and briefly touching wheels with pole-sitter Kovalainen.

Mark Webber, his Red Bull starting from second, suffered an early spin and ended up right at the back of the field.

Kovalainen led his teammate and Raikkonen after the first lap but Hamilton immediately began to apply serious pressure on the leader, forcing him to defend desperately over the next four laps.

Such a sustained attack proved impossible to repel and Hamilton slipped past Kovalainen to take the lead on lap five.

As the home crowd cheered their hero another Brit, David Coulthard, collided with Sebastian Vettel's Toro Rosso and both drivers ended up in the gravel and out of the race.

It was an unfortunate way for Coulthard to finish his final British Grand Prix - the Red Bull veteran having announced his retirement earlier this week.

Kovalainen slid into a spin on his tenth lap and allowed Raikkonen through into second where he would steadily cut the gap to Hamilton until the first round of pit stops.

On lap 21 of the 60 lap race Hamilton and Raikkonen entered the pits together with the Briton emerging by a whisker, with his lead intact.

Raikkonen's pit crew controversially decided not to change tyres, a decision that saw the world champion lose significant time to the leader and also to those behind.

As Raikkonen's tyres continued to deteriorate he fell further and further off the pace and after finally cutting his losses and taking new tyres he had fallen to 11th place.

The rain began to fall solidly just after the halfway point of the race and Hamilton, Raikkonen and Renault's Nelson Piquet each aquaplaned off the track - the first two temporarily and Piquet for good.

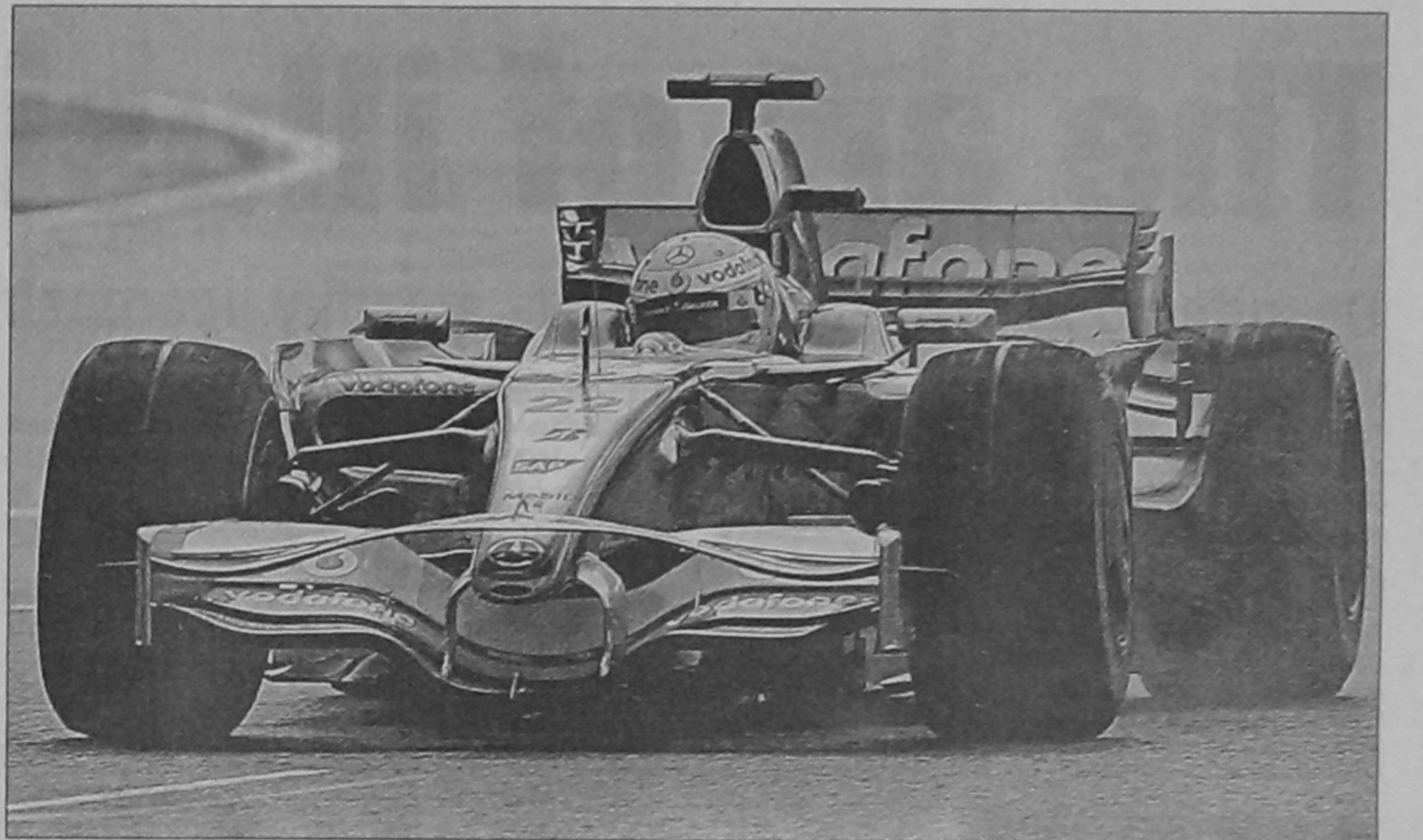
As havoc reigned, BMW's Robert Kubica span off and out of the race and was soon joined by Jensen Button.

Honda's Barrichello was now fitted with the extreme wet tyres and lapping way faster than anyone else, he worked his way up into third place behind Hamilton and Heidfeld who had steadily manoeuvred into second.

The leader stopped for a second time on lap 37 but, with the rain beginning to clear, prudently not opted for extreme wet tyres.

With 10 laps to go Hamilton had opened up a lead of over a minute and he went on to lap everyone behind third placed Barrichello in a supreme display of dominance.

Raikkonen staged a late charge to take fourth while Heidfeld and Barrichello cruised to welcome podium finishes.



Lewis Hamilton of Britain drives his McLaren Mercedes during the Formula One British Grand Prix at the Silverstone racetrack on Sunday.

Deco wants Lampard to stay

INTERNET, undated

New Chelsea signing Deco has urged Frank Lampard to snub a move to Inter Milan and claims to pair can operate together in the same team. Portugal international Deco, 30, who arrived at Stamford Bridge from Barcelona in an £8million deal last week, is confident the pair would link up well in the Blues midfield.

He told The People: "I think I can be compatible with Lampard on the pitch."

"That is, of course, something that the trainer has to decide - he is in charge. But I have seen a lot of Chelsea games on TV, and together Frank and I can create a lot of danger for other teams."

Stadium named after Cantona

AFP, Tignes

Former French international footballer Eric Cantona on Saturday inaugurated a football stadium named after him in the French town of Tignes, local authorities said.

French champions Lyon train at the facility, as do the French national team, but it recently underwent a facelift and former Manchester United hero Cantona was on hand to open the renovated ground.

The turf has also been relaid, staff said, with Lyon currently in town to prepare for the new season.

Cantona, 42, was in Tignes for his Euro Beach Soccer tournament which he runs with brother Joel, with the Savoy resort hosting an annual event.

The temperamental Cantona played for Auxerre, Martigues, Marseille, Bordeaux, Montpellier and Nimes before helping propel Leeds United to the English title in 1992.

He then left for Manchester United the following season and in five years at Old Trafford was an inspirational figure in United's rise back to the top of the English game.

Cantona, who won 45 caps for France but was not included in their 1998 World Cup-winning squad, launched a new career as an actor following retirement along with his beach soccer franchise.

Gunmen kidnap Yobo's brother

INTERNET, undated

Gunmen have kidnapped the older brother of Everton and Nigeria defender Joseph Yobo as he made his way home from a nightclub.

Norum Yobo was one of three men taken from their car at gunpoint in Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Barry C Lakara and Ifeanyi Nwa have since been released but Norum Yobo is still being held, it is thought because of his brother's high profile.

The kidnapping took place in the B-Line area of Port Harcourt at around 4am on Saturday morning after the trio had attended the Illusion Nite Club.

No group has claimed responsibility. Details of the incident have been confirmed by Cyril Dumite, deputy chairman of the People's Democratic Party, the ruling party in Rivers State.

The kidnapping came on the same day Ocean Boys Football Club, from Rivers State, won the Nigerian FA Cup.

Venus targets record

AFP, London



Venus Williams admitted she would love to go on and match Martina Navratilova's record of nine Wimbledon titles after overcoming sister Serena to notch up title number five at the All England Club.

At 28 and with a history of recurring injuries, the American does not have time on her side on that score.

But the tennis she produced to overcome Serena 7-5, 6-4 in a high-quality final on Saturday suggests she can at least hope to match Steffi Graf, the most recent of three women to have claimed seven titles here.

"To match Martina - that would be the ultimate," she said. "It is not easy - her career spanned three decades and I'm not sure if I have that much time. But if I did I would definitely dream of that."

Saturday's win was only the second time Venus has emerged victorious over her younger sister in the seven Grand Slam finals they have contested, and she acknowl-

edged that particular head-to-head statistic was something that had fired her up for this encounter.

"The times I lost to her here (in the 2002 and 2003 finals), I tried my best but she put a ton of pressure on me. I remember her hitting my best serves back for winners and she just played better than me."

"There was not much I could do and I did not want that same trend to continue so that it become six and one. I've carved a little tiny notch. Now it is two and five and I am working on it."

Venus, who has won two US Open crowns as well as her five Wimbledon titles, struggled to live with the ferocious hitting of her younger sister in the opening stages of the match.

But after overturning an early break to level things up at 4-4 in the first set, she always looked the more likely to clinch a victory that she wrapped up in one hour and 51 minutes when Serena pushed a backhand wide.

"On the first match point I had, she hit a serve that was untouchable, that was classic Serena Williams," she recalled. "She was going for it to the end, so when I saw her shot go wide, I just thought

'oh my God, it's five.'

The competitive edge to the match, which confounded those who suggested the sisters rarely produce their best tennis against each other, was underlined when Serena drilled a forehand straight at her big sister's midriff in the third game of the match.

At that stage, the younger sibling was dominating and Venus admitted she was just hanging on, waiting for her chance.

"It was a Wimbledon final, I expected her to be all over everything I put out there. I did not really think a lot, I just kept playing," she said.

"It was not looking that great at 3-1 and 4-2 (for Serena) but when it got even it got a little bit closer."

"When the match is that close it is more exciting to win but I'm definitely in tune with my sister's feelings. You can never detract from winning Wimbledon but I was definitely thinking about how my sister is feeling."

"At no point am I able to forget that it is Serena on the other side of the net. I have the ultimate respect for her game. If I was playing anyone else I would not have had to face what I had to face today."

Wenger furious at transfer system

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has vented his frustration over the transfer system, saying it encouraged footballers to become financial "mercenaries".

The London club have already lost the services of star midfielder Mathieu Flamini, who turned down a new pay offer in the close season before moving to AC Milan on a free transfer.

"If I had the power to change anything basic in football, it would be the transfer system which makes mercenaries of players," the French boss was quoted by the News of the World as saying.

"If they are bad ones, they stay and, if they are good, they think only of leaving."

He added: "I have fought for them to earn a very good living, but I impose respect for their contract upon them."

Wenger's words come as the club are working hard to retain the services of Emmanuel Adebayor and Belarus star Alexander Hleb, both recently linked with big-money moves to Italy and Spain.

Last month Adebayor warned the Arsenal board that if they wanted to keep him they would have to increase his salary, saying: "I am still under contract to Arsenal but it's up to the directors to satisfy my demands or I'll leave."

Wenger will no doubt find some support in the unlikely form of rival Alex Ferguson, whose top

Portuguese star Ronaldo been linked with a move to Real Madrid for an estimated 86 million euros (135 million dollars).

But the Frenchman warned that due to cost of the move to the Emirates Stadium two years ago, Arsenal have now become a selling club.

"The strategy of the club is to sell every year and to buy less expensive players," he said on Sunday.

"We manage at Arsenal to maintain all our football ambitions - national and European - while having to free up - for 17 more years - an annual surplus of 24 million pounds to pay for our stadium."

"The club's strategy is to favour the policy of youngsters ahead of stars and to count on the collective quality of our game."

Turkish football chief dies of heart attack

AFP, Istanbul

The head of the Turkish Football Federation died on Saturday after suffering a heart attack while holidaying in the southwest of Turkey, the federation said.

Hasan Dogan, 52, was having a meal with national coach Fatih Terim in the popular resort of Bodrum when he was hospitalized with a cardiac arrest, said a statement on the federation's Internet site.

Dogan, a prominent businessman, had been the head of the federation since February this year and last month saw the national team make it to the semi-finals of the Euro 2008 championships for the first time ever.

He was married with two children.

United after Huntelaar

INTERNET, undated

Ajax striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar has claimed Manchester United are "very interested" in signing him.

Contract talks between Ajax and Huntelaar recently broke down, leading to fresh speculation that the 24-year-old could be set to depart the Amsterdam Arena this summer.

A number of top European clubs - including United, Arsenal and Real Madrid - have been linked with a swoop for the Holland international following his impressive form in the Eredivisie.

Ajax are hopeful the forward may reconsider his decision to turn down their latest contract offer, however Huntelaar has claimed that United are monitoring his situation closely.

"I love clubs with great history like Ajax, I also love United," Huntelaar told Dutch reporters. "It's a club that makes me dream, especially as Ruud van Nistelrooy played there and did great things with them."

"I know certain English clubs are following me, like Manchester United, who are very interested in me."

'Ronnie rejected City'

Football

INTERNET, undated

Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani claims Ronaldinho has rejected a lucrative offer from Manchester City despite the Premier League club offering twice what Milan can.

Milan and City have both vigorously pursued the signature of Ronaldinho this summer after Barcelona announced they were open to offers for the Brazil playmaker, but the Rossoneri are short on cash and have admitted they cannot compete financially with City's offer.

However, the player himself has said publicly that he would prefer a move to Milan or even Chelsea, and Galliani claims he has made good on that claim by turning down a higher wage - reportedly up to 250,000 euros a week (£197,963) - from City to focus instead on a move to Milan.

"Ronaldinho has rejected the offer of Manchester City despite them offering twice as much as we can," he told Italian newspaper La Stampa.

Galliani added that the main stumbling block in any deal to bring him to Milan would be Ronaldinho's wages, not the transfer fee.

"He is not in the plans of (Barcelona coach Pep) Guardiola, so he has a more favourable price," he said. "But the problem is the wages."

For us to be able to afford him the transfer fee would have to be close to nothing."

Galliani has raised the possibility of signing the 28-year-old on loan in order to make the deal more affordable, but admitted: "It depends on Barcelona."

Milan have hinted at financial problems this summer, repeatedly stating that they can only afford to make one major signing and that they are unable to compete with major clubs in England and Spain for top players.

However, they have resisted any urge to sell players, despite what Galliani described as an "astronomical offer" from Chelsea for Kaka.

"An astronomical offer came in from Chelsea for Kaka, and (Andrea) Pirlo has received more than one request," he said. "But by the way, neither Andrea nor his agent have ever come to us asking for more money."

Milan have also been linked with Arsenal's Emmanuel Adebayor, but Galliani admitted the club's financial situation made a deal unlikely.

"Adebayor is thinking about Milan, as are (Didier) Drogha and Ronaldinho, but if I let Barcelona take him it's not because I'm crazy," he said. "It's difficult to compete with those who are making more money than you and who benefit from a more advantageous tax system."

"A year ago Milan offered Henry the same money as Barcelona, but in Spain he takes home 50 per cent more. In the 90s we stopped (Marco

Van Basten from going to Barcelona and were able to bring in (Jean-Pierre) Papin too. Things are less competitive now. (Arsene Wenger) has told me he wants 45 million (euros), which is an impossible amount."

The financial restrictions on Milan have led to frustrations among their fans, already unhappy at their failure to qualify for next season's Champions League.

Some have even been seeking to force owner Silvio Berlusconi to sell, but Galliani sent a message to those fans, insisting the club was doing all it could and that Berlusconi's support remains imperative.

"We do not have a transfer kitty stashed away here," he said. "Despite failing to qualify for the Champions League, the club is strengthening the squad and increasing the wages. This means we'll be 44 million euros in the red without Berlusconi's help."

"The fans should be happy, as all we'd need to do in order to wipe out our debts is sell Kaka and Andrea Pirlo. Instead they won't move, so if that's not a show of love for this side, I don't know what is."

"It is incredible that the supporters are not celebrating the arrival of Marco Borriello, who scored 19 goals last season, the fact Alexandre Pato can finally play a full campaign, Mathieu Flamini from Arsenal and World Cup winner Gianluca Zambrotta."

"As a fan, I too hope something else will happen, but Milan have already reinforced their squad."

Poland ready to step in

Football

REUTERS, Warsaw

Poland is prepared to provide six of the eight venues needed for Euro 2012 if co-host Ukraine is not ready in time, Polish sports officials told local media on Saturday.

Earlier this week UEFA president Michel Platini gave Ukraine three months to prove its preparations for hosting the event were on track.

"We are hoping Euro 2012 will be co-hosted by Poland and Ukraine as planned, but the risk factor must be assessed and a contingency reserve prepared," Polish Sports Minister Miroslaw Drzewiecki told news channel TVN24 on Saturday.

"Our reserve is the fact that we are building not four but six stadiums, so we can sleep peacefully no matter what happens."

Polish daily Gazeta Wyborcza said a contingency plan to hold the tournament at six Polish venues instead of the originally planned four was being considered by tournament organisers, citing unidentified UEFA sources.

Television reports also showed Polish Football Association president Michal Listkiewicz adding that alternative venues were being given consideration by what he termed "the UEFA family".

"This is a big group of UEFA activists, politicians and other VIPs for whom Euro is also a round of business meetings and banquets, and only Polish cities are capable of providing the necessary attrac-

tions," Listkiewicz said.

Earlier this year and again last week, both countries were warned they might lose the right to co-host the tournament because of delays in building and upgrading much-needed infrastructure including stadiums and transport networks.

Last Wednesday, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk gave the visiting Platini his personal assurances that his country would have everything ready on schedule by 2011.

Eight venues are due to stage the matches. Warsaw, Poznan, Wroclaw and Gdansk in Poland and Kiev, Donetsk, Lviv and Dnipropetrovsk in Ukraine.

The two reserve stadiums Poland's Drzewiecki referred to were in Chorzow and Krakow, both in the south of the country.



Spanish international goalkeeper Iker Casillas (L) autographs a ball at Patabamba community in Cusco, Peru on Saturday. Casillas supports an educational program of an international NGO in this place.