

'Money does'nt buy success'

AFP, London

Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson has fired a word of warning at rivals Manchester City that it will take more than pots of money to buy them success.

Just three days after crushing Portsmouth 6-0 in the Premier League, City were dumped out of the League Cup in a penalty shoot-out by lower division side Brighton.

Ferguson saw it as an important lesson for his local rivals.

"It's all very well having all the money but you can't buy everyone. It was proved in the summer," he said.

"We didn't want to sell Ronaldo, other clubs don't want to sell their best players, and there are only so many players you can buy."

Ferguson, who has reached 21 years as United manager, told the club's official magazine, Inside United: "Back in the 1950's Sunderland were called 'The Bank of England Team' - and they got relegated. There are no guarantees."

"You can buy 11 individuals - you can buy 11 Robinhos but it wouldn't be a team would it?"

"The art of management is building a team with balance, with certain characteristics that blend with each other - that's the most important thing."

Manchester City manager Mark Hughes, who played under Ferguson at Old Trafford, has been promised time to achieve success by the club's hugely wealthy new owners from Abu Dhabi.

But Ferguson added: "Mark Hughes will be faced with that situation having all this money and wondering what to do with it, and that can put you under a bit of additional pressure."

Boothroyd charged for language

AFP, London

Watford manager Adrian Boothroyd has been charged by the Football Association with using abusive language towards referee Stuart Attwell, the official who awarded a phantom goal during a Championship match against Reading.

Boothroyd now faces a disciplinary hearing and a possible touchline ban as a result of his conduct in the wake of Saturday's bizarre events.

Reading took the lead in the match after a Stephen Hunt corner was contested by Noel Hunt and John Eustace. The ball bounced over the touchline and although it was yards wide of the near post, linesman Nigel Bannister flagged for an own goal by Eustace.

Despite not a single Reading player appealing for the 'goal', 25-year-old Attwell awarded Steve Coppell's men a 1-0 lead.

Enraged by that incident, Boothroyd was later sent to the stand for contesting another of Attwell's decisions.

The match eventually finished in a 2-2 draw and the Football League has ruled out replaying it.

Atalanta fans banned

AFP, Rome

Atalanta fans have been banned from attending their team's trip to AS Roma on Sunday, the Rome prefect Carlo Mosca said on Thursday.

The fans have been banned for security and public order reasons.

"Considering the historical rivalry between the two sets of fans (the prefecture) has ordered the closure of the away section of the Stadio Olimpico with the possibility of using that same sector for a particular category of fans such as families, children, old people's associations," said a prefecture statement.

Security has been tightened at Italian grounds after Napoli fans rioted before and after their team's opening game of the season at Roma.

Away fans have been banned from several matches this season while Napoli's supporters are barred from travelling for the entire season.

Juninho suffers groin injury

AFP, Lyon

Lyon captain Juninho will miss Saturday's French league match against Nancy with a groin injury, the French club said.

The setback will likely see him left a major doubt for Tuesday's crunch Champions League clash at Bayern Munich.

The Brazilian midfielder's news was countered by that of Italian leftback Fabio Grosso, who will likely miss the Nancy match but be fit for the trip to Munich.

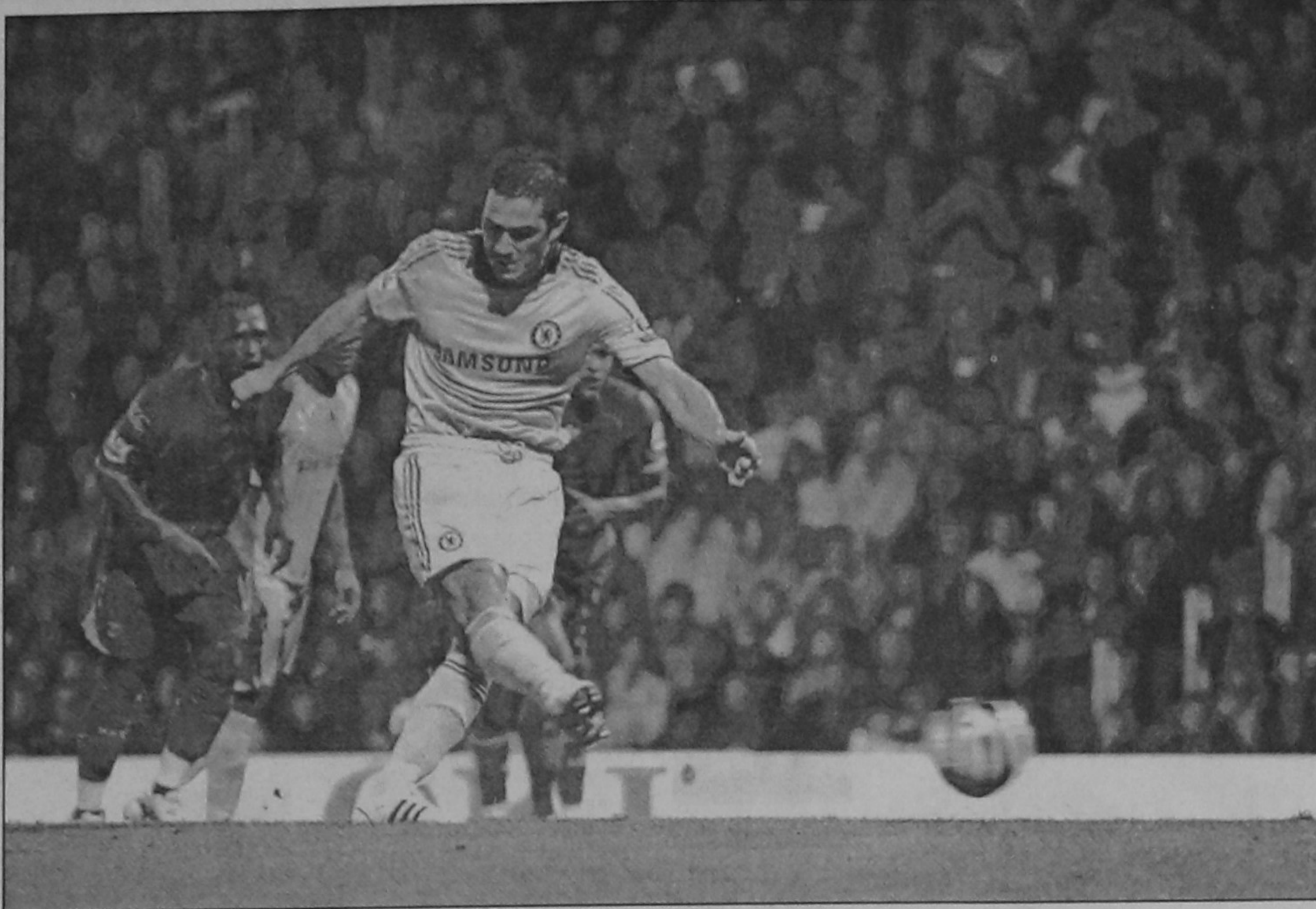


PHOTO: AFP

Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard scores from a penalty during their Carling Cup third round match against Portsmouth at Fratton Park on Wednesday.

City sent packing

Football

INTERNET, undated

Manchester City's new billionaire owners got a harsh taste of reality on Wednesday as the team were bundled out of the English League Cup by League One (third division) Brighton & Hove Albion on penalties.

The delayed second-round tie ended 2-2 after extra time before Brighton won the shoot-out 5-3 at the ramshackle Withdean Stadium on the Sussex coast.

In third round action, Chelsea cruised past Portsmouth, romping to a 4-0 victory at Fratton Park as coach Luiz Felipe Scolari's unbeaten start continued in style.

High-flying Aston Villa were also on the end of a shock, losing 1-0 at

home to Championship (second division) Queens Park Rangers. Holders Tottenham Hotspur enjoyed a morale-boosting 2-1 victory at managerless Newcastle United.

Blackburn Rovers beat Everton 1-0 in an all-Premier League clash at Ewood Park and Wigan Athletic won 4-1 at Ipswich Town to book their place in the fourth round.

Manchester City's new Abu Dhabi owners have vowed to make the club a force in English football and a 6-0 Premier League win over Portsmouth on Sunday increased the wave of optimism sweeping the club's long-suffering fans.

A much-changed side, without British-record signing Robinho, seemed on course for victory at Brighton but Glenn Murray's 89th-minute leveller sent the tie into extra time. Brighton went ahead through Joe Anyinsah before

Stephen Ireland made it 2-2.

Frank Lampard was twice on target for Chelsea as Portsmouth suffered another thumping, following Sunday's hammering by City.

The England midfielder put Chelsea ahead from the penalty spot before Florent Malouda made it 2-0 at half-time. Lampard killed off Portsmouth just after the break and Salomon Kalou completed the rout.

New Russia striker Roman Pavlyuchenko scored his first goal for Tottenham at a less than half-full St James' Park as the Premier League's two bottom sides produced a tame tie.

Damian Stewart provided the night's big surprise when he headed QPR's winner in the second half at Villa Park.

Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal all won their third-round ties on Tuesday.

'We are on right path'

AFP, Rome



AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti claimed his side were on track to getting back to form despite a hugely unconvincing 2-1 victory at Reggina.

"Maybe we weren't convincing or in control but we managed to be clinical when it mattered," said Ancelotti.

"Which ever, I'm happy with the victory because it keeps us on the right path. I'm sure our play will

improve ahead of the next game."

The rossonero's next game is the Milan derby against Inter and defeat would leave Milan seven points behind their city rivals in Serie A.

Milan signed seven players in the summer with Ronaldinho and Andrei Shevchenko their most high profile ones. Ancelotti has been pleased with Pato's development.

"I saw him moving well (against Reggina) and I'm happy that he's scored goals in two games in a row," he said.

"I have to admit that Reggina caused us some problems in the second half but thanks to (goal-

keeper Christian) Abbiati we managed to get through the difficult moments."

Borriello limped out during the second half, though, and will miss the derby.

"It's nothing in particular, we hope it's nothing serious, we just have to wait a few days," said Ancelotti.

"They're getting better. Even if you're not at 100 percent in terms of motivation you can still play," he added referring possibly to Ronaldinho's late night exploits recently after international duty with Brazil.

F1 increases escort demand!

INTERNET, undated

The arrival of high-flyers for the world's first Formula One night race in Singapore has ignited a boom in demand for social escorts, a published report said on Thursday. High-end social escort agencies are reporting a 20 per cent hike in business, with one agent saying he has booked a startlet for 40,000 Singapore dollars (29,850 US dollars) for six hours of work, according to The Straits Times.

Prince Wong, owner of Singapore Escort Services, declined to reveal the identity of the client or escort, but stands to collect about 9,000 Singapore dollars (6,764 US dollars) from the escort's fee.

"This is the best weekend this year," Wong was quoted as saying. Agencies said clients are picky, seeking escorts with a good family background and at least a university degree.

"They want escorts who don't look, sound or dress like escorts," said the owner of The High Society Club who wanted to be known only as Julien.

"They want people to think, 'what a nice girlfriend he has.'"

In his fold are airline stewardesses, insurance and property agencies, nurses, teachers and even a lawyer, the newspaper said.

Agencies made it clear that sexual services were not part of the deal and strictly between the escort and client to arrange.

Prostitution is not illegal in Singapore.

Croatia suffer FIFA wrath

AFP, Geneva

World football's ruling body FIFA on Thursday fined the Croatian Football Federation 30,000 Swiss francs after Croat fans racially abused England striker Emile Heskey during a World Cup qualifier.

FIFA warned that further infringements "would lead to more severe sanctions".

En route to an eventual 4-1 victory for England earlier this month, Heskey was taunted with monkey chants from a section of the Maksimir Stadium in Zagreb when he was booked for fouling Niko Kovac.

England's Football Association then took the case to FIFA.

It is not the first time Croatia's fans have been sanctioned for racist abuse.

Croatia had to pay a small fine during Euro 2008 for racist abuse from their fans during their game against Turkey.

Platini backs down

INTERNET, undated

UEFA president Michel Platini said he was too harsh with Arsene Wenger when he criticised the Arsenal manager for caring more about business than football.

"I have been too harsh with Arsene. I have been scolded by my dad who made him start (at Nancy). But when I talk about business, I mean attracting young players aged 13 or 14. I can't bear that," Platini said in an interview with French newspaper Sud-Ouest published on Thursday.

Former France playmaker Platini criticised Wenger this week when asked by another French newspaper about the Arsenal manager's calls for video refereeing.

Same horse, same tricks

AFP, Rome



Jose Mourinho has created a storm in the Italian media after failing to turn up for his post match press interviews following Inter Milan's 1-0 home win over Lecce.

The Portuguese coach was known for sending his number two Steve Clarke to press appointments during his time at Chelsea in England and he did likewise on Wednesday night asking assistant Beppe Baresi to talk to Sky Sport cameras and then the waiting written press.

But the move went down like a lead balloon with the Italian journalists used to almost unfettered access to coaches and they accused the former FC Porto boss of lacking respect.

It meant that Baresi was forced onto the defensive in his interviews, explaining the move.

"We don't want to offend anyone, we're doing a bit of job sharing. To become the best assistant coach in the world I also have to get some experience in front of the TV cameras," he said, before admit-

ting that he didn't even like talking to journalists.

The in-studio panel at Sky Sport seemed outraged by the move and complained bitterly to Baresi, even claiming that as he was not the head coach he wouldn't be able to answer questions about Inter's tactics.

The assistant looked impassive but then Lecce coach Mario Beretta also criticised Mourinho's no-show.

"I'm not sure it's a choice that's offended anyone. I don't want to teach anything to anyone but maybe he should show a little respect to the fans, journalists, coach and players of Lecce," he said of Mourinho before reminding him that Italy is not England.

"Every country has its customs. I also get my coaches to do interviews during the week but the match-day is a bit different."

Mourinho was up to his old tricks in every sense of the word against Lecce as his Italian champions struggled to break down stubborn opponents.

Sweden forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic almost broke the deadlock in the first half with a crashing freekick that came back

off the bar but Lecce held on doggedly.

Mourinho made a double substitution early in the second half, throwing on attacking Brazilian full-back Maicon and winger Ricardo Quaresma.

But with time running out he then stuck Argentine forward Julio Cruz on as a third striker -- alongside Ibrahimovic and Adriano -- hauling off left back Cristian Chivu to make way.

That left Inter with three forwards and two wingers on the pitch.

That paid off as seven minutes after entering the fray Cruz struck the only goal of the game, pouncing on an Ibrahimovic knock-down to hit home a crisp drive from the edge of the box.

It was an attacking tactical switch that Mourinho often used successfully at Chelsea when chasing a goal.

"We were up against a team that keeps 10 players behind the ball and were continuously doubling up (on our players)," said Baresi.

"For our part we were a bit slow but we wanted to win at all costs, so much so that we changed our system four times."

Inter take the lead

Milan win, Juve draw

INTERNET, undated



Inter Milan took the lead in the Serie A by beating promoted guests Lecce 1-0 Wednesday to move two points clear of Juventus, who drew 1-1 at home to Catania. In the fourth round of the league, Lazio beat Fiorentina 3-0 and lie joint second on nine points with Atalanta, who beat Cagliari 1-0 and trail 10-point champions Inter.

A free kick that Zlatan Ibrahimovic slammed against the bar was Inter's only first-half chance against Lecce, as Brazil striker Adriano failed to nod home two inviting crosses.

The guests' good defence seemed to work in the second half until substitute Julio Cruz surprised them on 78 minutes with a fast shot off an Ibrahimovic assist.

Sparkling Juventus have eight points as they had to settle for a draw with Catania despite massive attacks and two efforts

that shook the guests' woodwork.

Juve had some difficulties as Catania's gritty start produced a dangerous wide volley from Argentinian Matias Silvestre on six minutes.

A ruthless Amauri, however, scored his third goal to put the Turin hosts one up on 15 minutes on his side's first attempt. The Brazilian nodded home a cross from young playmaker Sebastian Giovinco, who made his season debut.

Catania kept pressing hard, showing no respect for the powerhouse, but found Alex Manninger ready to block two more first-half attempts as he filled in for the injured Gianluigi Buffon.

A close-range effort from Amauri went begging on 51 minutes as did a similar attempt from Giovinco, before Gianvito Plasmatti levelled on 68 minutes thanks partly to a fumbled a clearance from Giorgio Chiellini.

Juve's furious pressing saw both Alessandro Del Piero and

Amauri nod against the bar on 70 minutes, before Juve incredibly missed more mouthwatering chances.

"In the last half hour we tried all we could, but the ball just did not want to get into the goal," said Juve coach Claudio Ranieri.

"Giovinco inspired many actions, and in other occasions we were unlucky and hit the bar. There were many missed chances. Hopefully, there will be games when just two chances will be enough to score."

AC Milan continued their recovery, beating Reggina 2-1 with goals from Marco Borriello and Brazil's Pato for a second win after two defeats, while Roma are still in trouble after a 3-1 drubbing suffered with 10 men at Genoa, whose Argentinian Diego Milito scored a brace.

Napoli won 2-1 in a southern Italy derby with Palermo to move level with Juve on eight points. Udinese won 3-0 over 10-man Bologna, Chievo and Torino drew 1-1, and Siena and Sampdoria drew 0-0.



PHOTO: AFP

Inter Milan striker Julio Cruz is jubilant after scoring against Lecce during their Serie A encounter at San Siro on Wednesday.

Smile back on Ribery's face

Football

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich midfielder Franck Ribery admitted Thursday he was a happy man after making his return for the German giants three months after tearing ankle ligaments.

The 25-year-old came off the bench for Bayern in the second half of their 2-0 German Cup win over Nuremberg in Munich on Wednesday night and helped set up Tim Borowski's goal on 69 minutes which sealed the win.

Ribery underwent surgery in June after damaging an ankle playing for France in their 2-0 defeat to Italy during Euro 2008, but said he had no problems with his foot after his 25 minutes on the pitch.

"I am glad to be finally back again," Ribery told German tabloid Bild.

"It was a strange feeling to be playing again, because I had never been injured for such a long period of time before."

"I am very relieved there are no problems, now I just want to get back to the old Franck Ribery as quickly as possible."

Ribery is now hoping to play for 90 minutes at Hanover on Saturday in the Bundesliga to prepare for Tuesday's visit of Lyon to the Allianz Arena for a Champions League game.

"We are pleased that he is back playing again," said Bayern coach Jurgen Klinsmann.

"It was important that he gets the feeling for the game and finds his rhythm again."

"He just has to find his match fitness again."

Atletico not letting Agüero go

THE GUARDIAN

Atletico Madrid coach Javier Aguirre has insisted Sergio Agüero will be staying at the club despite rumours linking the star striker with Manchester City. Aguirre said that the Argentinian is happy at Atletico and will honour his long-term contract.

"On the subject of him possibly leaving, he has a contract here, he is happy here and I'm sure that he is going to want to stay," said Aguirre. "Sergio, I truly believe, is going to do very good things here."

City are believed to have sent scouts to watch the 20-year-old play for Atletico against Getafe on Wednesday night. Agüero's contract still has four years left to run and is reputed to have a 40 million pound buy-out clause. That figure was set to deter potential buyers after the player's 16 million pound move from Independiente in 2006, but would not provide a significant hurdle to City's new owners.

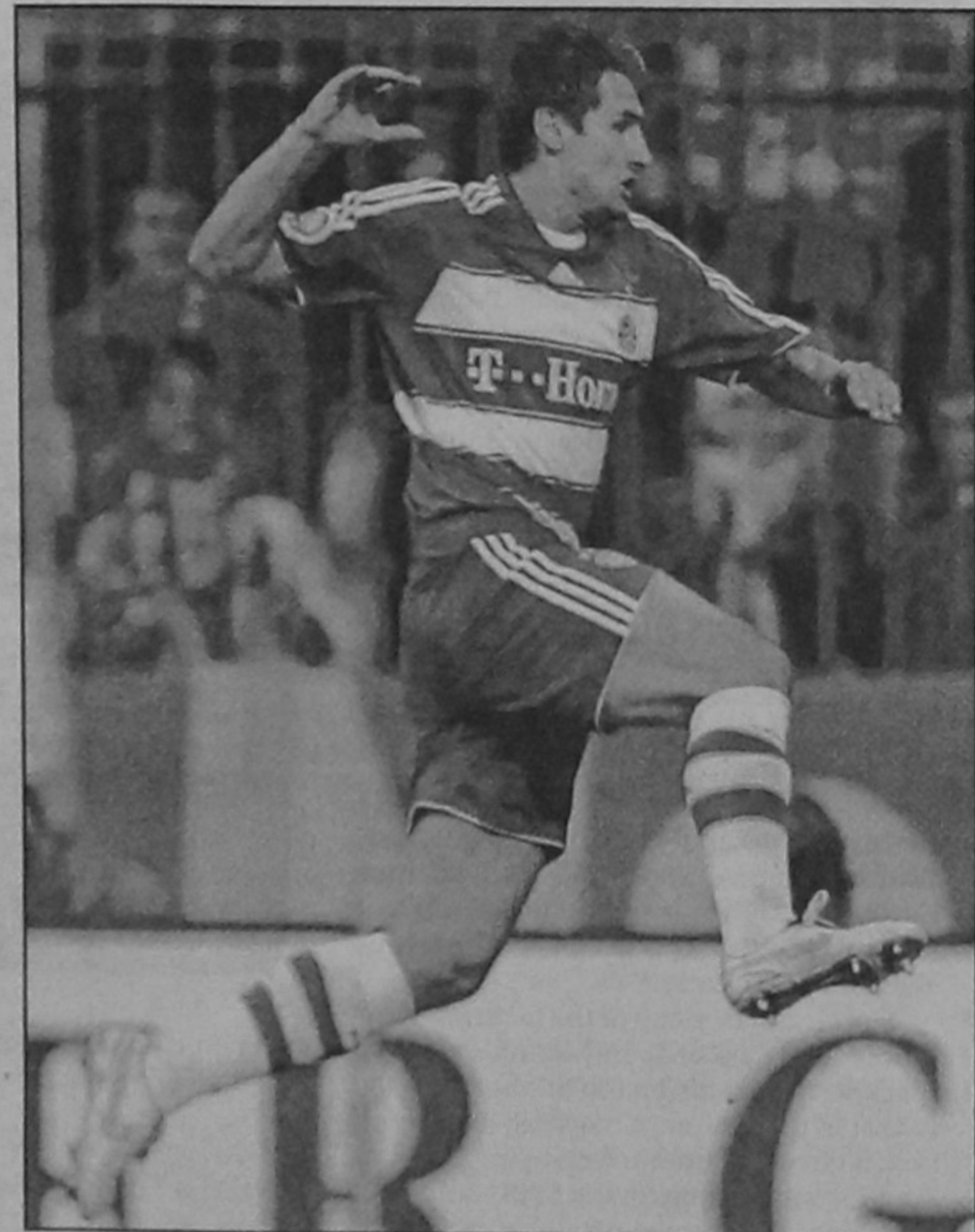


PHOTO: AFP

Bayern Munich striker Miroslav Klose jumps for joy after scoring the opening goal against Nuremberg during their German Cup second round tie at the Allianz Arena in Munich on Wednesday. Franck Ribery made his comeback for Bayern as a second half substitute during the game.