

# 'Klinsmann is right choice'

Football

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has leapt to the defence of coach Jurgen Klinsmann after he received discontented whistles during the club's annual general meeting.

"We are convinced Jurgen is the right coach for Bayern," Rummenigge told the club's AGM in Munich on Friday night after Klinsmann received whistles before Sunday's Bundesliga clash with Schalke 04 in Gelsenkirchen.

"He is a very modern and innovative coach, and we are convinced of the fact that we will celebrate plenty of successes with him."

Although Bayern were fourth before Sunday's game, some Bayern fans remain unconvinced Klinsmann is the right man after Munich's poor start to the league which saw them 11th last month after defeat to Werder Bremen and Hannover.

"We are already seeing improvement and his philosophy works," insisted Rummenigge. "We can be confident of the future."

Bayern captain Mark van Bommel said the German giants feel the pressure at the Munich club where failure is not an option.

"It is a requirement at Bayern that we win titles, third place is not the goal," said the Dutch hard-man.

Meanwhile, Bayern's Argentine internationals Martin Demichelis and Jose Ernesto Sosa admit they were impressed new national

coach Diego Maradona flew to see them.

The pair met Maradona in a Munich hotel for nearly an hour on Thursday as part of his tour of European-based players to discuss tactics in the run up to the 2010 World Cup.

Both players have both been called up for Maradona's first match in charge, the meeting with Scotland on November 19 at Hampden Park, Glasgow.

"He wanted to establish a personal relationship with us and outline his plans," said said Demichelis, who admitted Maradona was a child-hood hero.

"I've previously met Maradona, but that's the first time I've spoken to him for any length of time. That was a gift from football, and a moment I'll never forget."

"His presence is enough to motivate you to new heights. You can't ask for more than having the greatest idol and the last World Cup winning coach come to Munich just to see Jose and me."

"Around 80 Argentine players are performing at the highest level with European clubs. We could put out three or four strong teams. Making it into the national side is incredibly difficult."

The fact that Maradona came to Munich solely to see Demichelis and Sosa was a sign of the duo's importance, according to Bayern coach Jurgen Klinsmann.

"He's doing what I did four years ago," said ex-Germany boss Klinsmann, who also sought early contact with his best players after taking the national hot seat in 2004.



Real Madrid's Gonzalo Higuain (L) and Barcelona's Samuel Eto'o (R) are both ecstatic at scoring their fourth goals during their Primera Liga ties against Malaga and Valladolid respectively. Real rode on Higuain's goals to see off a spirited Malaga 4-3 at the Santiago Bernabeu while Eto'o was absolutely dominating in Barca's thumping 6-0 win at the Nou Camp on Saturday.



PHOTOS: AFP

# Kop ride on Keane

AFP, London



Rafa Benitez warned Robbie Keane he isn't guaranteed to keep his place despite a two-goal blast in Liverpool's 3-0 win over West Bromwich Albion.

Keane scored his first league goals for the Reds on Saturday but boss Benitez insisted the Irish striker will have to fight for his place now Fernando Torres is back from a hamstring injury.

Torres came on for Keane as a second half substitute at Anfield and Benitez said: "We have (Dirk Kuyt, Ryan) Babel, Torres and Keane. They have to fight for their position because there are only one or two places."

"But we were talking about Robbie playing well and scoring in the Champions League. He was working hard and deserved to score in the league."

"It is a very good situation for him because he will be more relaxed."

Benitez's side went ahead against Albion in the 34th minute when Steven Gerrard's astute pass picked out Keane and the Irish forward cleverly lifted his shot over Scott Carson.

Keane put Liverpool in total command in the 43rd minute when he slotted into the empty net after Carson rashly charged off his line before Alvaro Arbeloa

curled in the third goal in stoppage time.

Arsenal roared back into the Premier League title race as Samir Nasri's double clinched a 2-1 win over Manchester United.

French winger Nasri struck in each half at the Emirates Stadium to lift the Gunners above United into third place and within six points of leaders Liverpool.

Brazilian teenager Rafael Da Silva pulled one back with his first goal for United in the last minute, but the champions' first defeat against Arsenal in four meetings left Sir Alex Ferguson's team eight points off the top of the table.

"I knew it was a big game for the future of the team," Wenger said. "To keep in the race, you need to win big games like that and it is vital for a young team."

Ferguson added: "The number of chances we had was incredible. It was playground football. They attacked, we attacked but they got the goal that mattered."

Jermain Defoe's 90th-minute penalty snatched a 2-1 win at Sunderland to give Tony Adams his first success as Portsmouth manager.

French striker Djibril Cisse gave Roy Keane's side the perfect start in the fourth minute. But Portsmouth emerged revitalised after half-time and Algeria defender Nadir Belhadji, on loan from Lens, got his first goal for the club with a superb long-range effort in the 51st minute.

England forward Defoe completed the comeback when he stroked home a spotkick after El Hadji Diouf fouled Glen Johnson.

Louis Saha sparked a sensational fightback from Everton as the France striker set up a remarkable 3-1 win at West Ham.

Jack Collison, 20, had put Gianfranco Zola's team ahead in the 63rd minute when Craig Bellamy's pass picked out the Wales midfielder, who curled a fine finish past Tim Howard for his first Hammers goal.

But Joleon Lescott punished poor defending from the hosts to turn in Saha's cross seven minutes from full-time.

That set the stage for a dramatic finale as Saha's deflected shot two minutes later put Everton ahead. Saha then netted Everton's third goal in the 87th minute to seal a fourth away win for David Moyes' side.

Bolton climbed out of the relegation zone as Matt Taylor's second-half strike earned a 1-0 win at Hull.

After Hull had dominated the first half, Taylor gave Bolton the lead in the 50th minute with a dipping volley that crept past Boaz Myhill.

Stoke showed their battling qualities again as Tony Pulis' side ground out a 0-0 draw at Wigan in a dull game enlivened only by a row between City players Amdy Faye and Ryan Shawcross.

# Chelsea return to summit

THE GUARDIAN

Chelsea may have lost their bigger games of late but they continue to overwhelm mediocre opposition.

Nicolas Anelka scored twice in a comfortable 2-0 victory over Blackburn at a rain-soaked Ewood Park to make it five goals in two Premier League matches for him and return Chelsea to the top of the table.

Chelsea were dominant right from the start, testing Paul Robinson from a variety of angles and distances, yet when their first goal came in the 40th minute it was a complete fluke: Alex's long-range shot was going wide until it hit Anelka, and the ball trickled over the line with Robinson hopelessly wrong-footed.

Blackburn were better in the second half, and Jason Roberts had a gilt-edged chance for an equaliser when he turned away from John Terry to give himself a clear sight of goal but Petr Cech's looming presence blocked out the shot.

With less than half an hour remaining, Scolari stiffened the side by taking off Salomon Kalou and sending on Juliano Belletti.

It certainly had the desired effect as Anelka scored his second to put the game beyond Blackburn's reach.

Florent Malouda and Frank Lampard combined on the edge of the box, Lampard then stabbed a short pass to put Anelka in the clear and he finished with aplomb, lifting the ball over Robinson to make it 2-0. Only an excellent late save denied Anelka another hat-trick but nobody could deny that Chelsea deserved to collect three more points.

# ETO'O, HIGUAIN HIT 4 EACH Rivals go goal crazy

AFP, Madrid



Samuel Eto'o and Gonzalo Higuain both scored four goals in an incredible Saturday night of football as Barcelona thrashed Valladolid 6-0 while Real Madrid laboured to a 4-3 triumph over Malaga.

Barca romped to their eighth successive Spanish league victory to stay two points clear of defending champions Real at the summit.

With the help of the unstoppable Lionel Messi, Cameroon international Eto'o scored four times -- in the 12th, 30th, 42nd and 44th minutes -- in an unforgettable first half at Camp Nou before Eidur Gudjohnsen and Thierry Henry got on the score-sheet in the second period.

Eto'o seems to love the first 45 minutes having scored a 23-minute hat-trick in a 5-0 demolition of Almeria at the end of October and his quadruple against Valladolid means he leads the goalscoring charts with 13 goals in 10 games.

"The victory was the most important thing not how many goals we score," said Eto'o. "We produced a great performance tonight and are doing well."

"It wasn't easy as Valladolid are a good team and brave opponents."

Asked on how he would celebrate his four-goal haul Eto'o replied: "I will celebrate at home."

The African came off 15 minutes from time to a standing ovation as the home fans did Mexican waves to celebrate a thrilling win that could have been in two figures had Henry taken a glut of chances.

Barca are averaging more than three goals a game this season having scored 34 goals in their first 10 matches.

Earlier Argentine striker Gonzalo Higuain had fired Real to the summit with his own quadruple, including two penalties.

Real looked to be heading for an embarrassing home defeat to promoted Malaga after Sergio Ramos had been sent off for stamping close to half-time and Antonio Apono had fired Malaga into a 3-2 lead with a 70th-minute penalty.

But the 20-year-old Higuain, out to impress new Argentine coach Diego Maradona, rescued Real scoring the equaliser straight from the kick off and then a dramatic penalty winner on 78 minutes after his initial spot-kick had been saved.

"He (Higuain) is clearly playing in his favoured position (centre-forward) where he can use his speed and dribbling ability," lauded Real coach Bernd Schuster.

"I am delighted how things are going for him at the moment although I told him that he could change his penalty-taking style a little."

Higuain now has nine goals for the season and is set for a run in the team with Ruud van Nistelrooy sidelined with a knee injury.

Schuster showed his faith in Higuain, playing him ahead of captain Raul Gonzalez, who was dropped for the Malaga match after a poor display against Juventus.

Going behind three times will concern Schuster but the German preferred to focus on the spirit shown by his ten men.

"Despite having a man less we still went in search of the win," added the former Getafe coach. "Of course I would prefer to win in a different way but this victory is a great morale boost for the team."

Asked on Ramos's red card for stamping Schuster replied: "The red card surprised me and I don't want to say anything else."

After losing 2-0 to Juventus in their midweek Champions League home match, the Santiago Bernabeu public wanted a convincing display from their team.

They didn't quite get that but the three points will do for Real.

Schuster has been criticising referees throughout this season but Real certainly had their slice of fortune against poor Malaga with question marks over both of their penalties.

"I am disappointed not to have won," said Malaga coach Antonio Tapia.

# Diego not going to Juventus

INTERNET, undated

Werder Bremen director of sport Klaus Allofs has moved to end speculation linking midfielder Diego with a move to Juventus by claiming the Serie A club are not interested in the Brazilian.

Reports in Italy suggested Diego's agent had been in Turin last week for talks with the Bianconeri.

But Allofs revealed he has spoken personally with Juventus and been given assurances they are not interested in the 23-year-old.

"Juventus are not bidding for him," he told Premiere television.

"I have spoken to Juventus management - they actually came to us. Juventus are not interested and these are all only stories which keep being repeated."

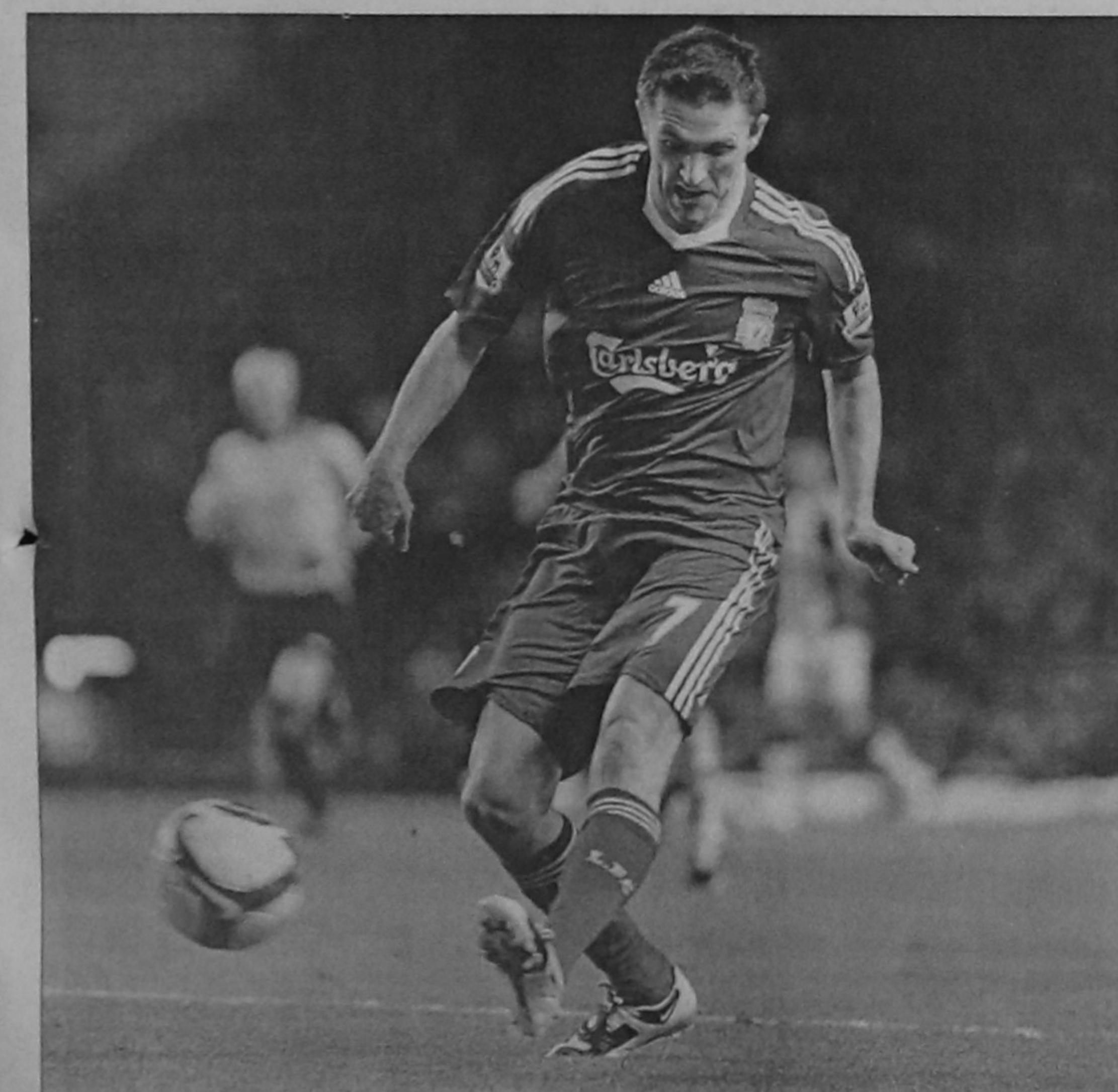
"Diego has a contract with us until 2011 and there are no considerations at Werder to let him leave before then."

Allofs believes the speculation is down to Bremen's current struggle for form and the assumption Diego is unsettled by it.

While admitting to being in a difficult phase, Allofs is not giving up on his players, who he believes will turn the corner despite another disappointing result on Saturday - a 0-0 draw at Bochum.

"Even if you qualify for the Champions League five times in a row, that doesn't mean it's so obvious it will happen again," he added.

"That is perhaps too ingrained in the minds of the players and they think everything will just fall into place."



Liverpool striker Robbie Keane strokes home his second goal during their win over West Bromwich Albion in their Premier League match at Anfield on Saturday.

# Own-goal stalls Roma recovery

AFP, Paris



An injury-time own goal by Roma's Cichinho earned Bologna a 1-1 draw at home to AS Roma, who were seconds from victory thanks to a Fernando Totti goal when they had lost their last four Italian league matches.

Talismanic Totti, injured for much of the season, looked to have scored the winner midway through the second half for Luciano Spalletti's men but Brazilian right back Cichinho headed into his own net as he tried to clear danger.

"We had difficulties playing our game but once we went ahead we had renewed energy," Spalletti told Sky Sport. "We were playing less well than against Chelsea though and the players were not in great condition. We could have won but unfortunately we conceded an own goal and we have to accept it."

In Saturday's earlier fixture, Torino beat Palermo 1-0 thanks to an 88th minute goal from Austrian striker Jurgen Saumel.

However it was Roma's attempt to get back to winning ways, particularly as they had beaten Chelsea 3-1 in midweek Champions League action, which took the spotlight in Italy on Saturday.

their losing run, they still lie in 17th spot in the league with just two victories from 10 matches for one of their worst starts in about three decades.

Bologna, in 18th spot, will have been happy to have salvaged a point for their new coach Sinisa Mihajlovic who took over from Daniele Arrigoni under whom Bologna had lost eight out of their previous 10 matches.

Captain Totti fired home with a fierce shot from the right side of the area in the 68th minute to earn Roma the lead though the match up till that point had been physical yet with no clear team on top.

In time added on at the end of the match, when Bologna were doing their best to earn the equaliser, Roma cracked to score an own goal to add to further woes of defender Philippe Mexes, with a muscular problem, and keeper Doni, hit on the head in an accidental clash with striker Marco Di Vaio, having to go off.

In the ensuing moments after a corner, Di Vaio's cross was rather spectacularly nodded into his own net by Cichinho, an impressive diving header while not appearing to be under any pressure from Bologna players.

In a week's time, Roma will be returning to action in their Olympic stadium and will be very motivated for victory as it is against arch rivals Lazio.

# Blues staying put at Bridge

INTERNET, undated

Chelsea have rejected fresh speculation that the club are ready to quit Stamford Bridge, as the club reacted swiftly to deny a newspaper report that they are looking to build a new stadium at a site in Battersea.

Chelsea have been linked with numerous stadium moves in the past, including nearby Earls Court, but the club will not sanction any new build until redevelopment of Stamford Bridge has been entirely ruled out.

A statement from Chelsea read: "This story is total nonsense. Chelsea is not actively considering moving to this site in Battersea."

"Chelsea has been linked with a whole host of high profile sites in London before, including this one."

"We are approached on a regular basis by developers and others with a commercial interest in driving up the price of property."

"The architects HOK have not been commissioned by Chelsea to build a stadium and do not work for the club. Their approach was unsolicited."

"Chelsea's position on stadium development is very clear. We will not be considering moving away from our present stadium until all possibilities of redeveloping Stamford Bridge are exhausted."

"Most people are well aware of the difficulties involved in redeveloping Stamford Bridge."

# Bayer throw away chance

AFP, Berlin



Bayer Leverkusen squandered their chance to take over at the top of the Bundesliga on Saturday as their 3-0 lead slipped to a 3-3 draw at

Karlsruhe.

With both league leaders Hoffenheim and defending champions Bayern Munich playing on Sunday, Bayer missed out on their fifth straight league win while Karlsruhe finally broke a five-game losing streak to share the points.

"I must take my hat off to Karlsruhe - even after my team went 3-0 up, they refused to give up," said Bayer coach Bruno Labbadia, whose side remain second.

"Everything was going well for us at that stage, but we didn't show enough tactical discipline and so in the end it was a fair result."

And his opposite number at Karlsruhe, Edmund Becker, said his side had shown real passion to turn the game around.

"Recent results had put us in a very difficult situation," he said.

"We knew what Bayer are capable of from their previous recent results, but at 3-0 down things were really hard for us."

passion and proved themselves."

Bayer got off to a flying start as Germany squad members Patrick Helmes and Stefan Kiessling scored goals in the first 17 minutes before a direct free-kick from Michal Kadlec on 24 minutes stunned Karlsruhe to leave the hosts 3-0 down.

But midfielder Antonio da Silva put Karlsruhe back in the game with a goal just before the break and a header from defender Tim Sebastian on 60 minutes put the home team right back in contention.

With Karlsruhe fighting for every drop of possession, Georgia striker Alexander Iashvili hit the equaliser ten minutes from time to share the points.

Hamburg moved back up to third with a 2-1 win at home to Borussia Dortmund and having been hammered 3-0 in the Champions League in midweek by Panathinaikos, Werder Bremen drew 0-0 with strugglers VfL Bochum.

A hat-trick from Brazilian star Grafite including a first-half penalty gave Felix Magath-coached Wolfsburg a 3-0 win at home to bottom side Energie Cottbus which put Wolfsburg up to sixth in the table.

Mid-table Cologne enjoyed a 2-1 win over Hannover on Friday night, while on Sunday, fourth-placed Bayern Munich are at Schalke 04 and leaders Hoffenheim play Hertha Berlin at the Olympic Stadium.