



Everton's teenage defender Dan Gosling (R) celebrates scoring the all-important goal against Liverpool in the closing stages of extra-time during their FA Cup encounter at Goodison Park on Wednesday.

Gosling sinks L'pool

AFF, London



Teenager Dan Gosling was Everton's hero as they knocked city rivals Liverpool out of the FA Cup with a 1-0 extra-time fourth round replay win at Goodison Park on Wednesday.

There were only two minutes of extra-time remaining when Gosling, who only turned 19 on Monday, curled the ball past Pepe Reina to end the interest of Liverpool, currently second in the Premier League, in this season's FA Cup.

A miserable night for Liverpool was made worse by the sight of inspirational captain Steven Gerrard going off in the first-half with what appeared to be a hamstring injury while Lucas was later sent-off for a second bookable offence.

Everton, sixth in the top-flight, will face Aston Villa in the last 16 after the team fourth in the Premier League beat Championship side Doncaster 3-1 in a fourth round replay earlier Wednesday.

"It's a great day for the club and all the fans," Gosling said. "I was thinking 'just shoot and get on target'."

In another replay, Derby came from 2-0 down to beat arch East Midlands rivals Nottingham Forest 3-2 and secure a glamour fifth round tie at home to English, European and world champions Manchester United.

Derby, who like Forest are struggling in the second-tier Championship, are managed by Nigel Clough, a former Forest forward.

Clough, whose late manager father Brian won the English title with both clubs back in the 1970s, left the post-match press conference duties to his assistant Gary Crosby, another former Forest player.

"He (Nigel Clough) doesn't look for any glory but he is incredibly pleased with the result and that is all he is interested in," Crosby said.

South Africa's Benni McCarthy was Blackburn's hero when scoring with just two minutes of extra-time remaining in their 2-1 all Premier League replay victory over Sunderland. Blackburn now face 1987 Cup winners Coventry in the fifth round.

Villa scored twice in the space of four minutes against Doncaster.

Steve Sidwell put them ahead in the 15th minute when he followed up after Neil Sullivan blocked Craig Gardner's initial shot and John Carew made it 2-0 with a 20-yard shot.

But Doncaster hit back on the stroke of half-time when Jason Price's miscued shot

beat Brad Guzan in the Villa goal.

However, Nathan Delfouneso settled the hosts' nerves by making it 3-1 with a header from Nicky Shorey's cross.

Sunderland took the lead when David Healy was ruled outside before beating Paul Robinson in the seventh minute.

But South Africa defender Aaron Mokoena drew Blackburn level with a spectacular 25-yard strike before his compatriot McCarthy headed home the decisive goal.

A see-saw match at the City ground saw Forest build an early lead.

Chris Cohen put the hosts in front in the second minute with a powerful shot before Nathan Tyson made it 2-0 from the penalty spot 12 minutes later after being brought down by Derby keeper Stephen Bywater, who avoided a red card.

But Derby got back into the game before the break with a powerful Rob Hulse header. Paul Green drew the Rams level on the hour mark before Kris Commons put the Rams in front against his old club.

The fifth round ties will be played on the weekend of February 14 with Arsenal's delayed fourth round replay at the Emirates against Cardiff taking place on February 16.

I want to stay: Beckham

AFF, Glasgow



Rossoneri, who've made no secret of their wish to hang on to the 33-year-old former Manchester United and Real Madrid playmaker, would undoubtedly do more for Beckham's hopes of appearing for England in the 2010 World Cup finals in South Africa than a return to the west coast of America.

However, as things stand, Beckham is due to head back to Los Angeles when his loan move expires on March 9.

But Beckham, after playing in the first-half of Milan's 2-2 friendly draw with Rangers here at Ibrox on Wednesday, made no secret of where his heartlay.



Milan striker Alexandre Pato (top) is slide-tackled by Rangers defender Christian Dailly during their friendly match at the Ibrox Stadium in Glasgow on Wednesday.

"At the moment my lawyers are not talking to the Galaxy but I have expressed my desire to stay at AC Milan now and it's just down to Milan and Galaxy to come to an agreement," he said.

"I have enjoyed my time here (at Milan). I knew I would enjoy it but I didn't expect to enjoy it as much as I have."

Beckham, 33, has been in fine form since arriving at the San Siro, scoring twice for Milan to help the club into second place in Italy's Serie A behind city rivals Inter.

"I've expressed my desire to stay here for a while but at the moment I'm still a Galaxy player," Beckham said. "I respect the Galaxy and everything they have done for me. They have always been great to me."

Nevertheless, he added: "But I hope they can come to an agreement and it's down to the clubs now. At this point it's out of my hands. I've said what my feelings are to both clubs."

"It's nothing against the MLS and the football over there, because it's a game that will grow but it will take quite a few years."

"I'm still confident that will happen eventually, but I want to have a chance of being involved in 2010 and I believe my best chance of doing so is to remain here."

Juve sneak into semis

AFF, Rome

Juventus completed the Italian Cup semifinal line-up after beating Napoli in a penalty shoot-out at Turin's Stadio Olimpico on Wednesday following a 0-0 draw.

They will play Lazio in the last four while Serie A leaders Inter Milan face Sampdoria in the other semi.

In what was a largely dull match, Juve and Napoli barely mustered a single chance between them throughout 120 minutes.

The hosts did have the ball in the net in the last seconds of normal time through David Trezeguet but he was somewhat controversially ruled offside.

So the tie went to a shoot-out with veteran Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved the first to miss as his spot-kick was saved by Nicolas Navarro.

But Argentina forward Ezequiel Lavezzi saw his effort saved by Alex Manninger to level matters.

Momo Sissoko hit the bar to give Napoli another sniff at glory but both Matteo Contini and Walter Gargano skied their shots well over the bar to allow Juventus to progress to the next phase.

Scudetto still in reach: Buffon

SOCCERNET

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon believes his team can still win the Scudetto despite being seven points adrift of Serie A leaders Inter Milan.

The Bianconeri lost ground on Inter and were leapfrogged by AC Milan after last weekend's 3-2 defeat against Cagliari - their second consecutive loss.

Claudio Ranieri's men travel to Catania this week trailing Milan by a point.

"To be second or third doesn't worry me that much," said Buffon. "It is a temporary overtake by AC Milan."

"The only position that matters is the top spot and we need to reduce our deficit with Inter, starting this weekend. All of the top teams have struggled this year and we have been no exception."

"There are still many games to play and our chances of winning the title remain the same."

Gerrard blow for Reds

AFF, Liverpool

Steven Gerrard will miss three weeks of Liverpool's Premiership title campaign after picking up a hamstring injury in Wednesday's 1-0 FA Cup defeat by city rivals Everton, his club said Thursday.

"A scan today has confirmed a tear in the hamstring of Steven's left leg. He will be out of action for about three weeks," a club spokesman told Liverpoolfc.tv.

The 28-year-old limped off after just 16 minutes of the fourth-round replay at Goodison Park and now looks set to miss the club's next two league encounters against Portsmouth and Manchester City, as well as England's friendly against Spain next week.

Gerrard's absence is a big blow as Liverpool, whose last league title came in 1990, chase reigning champions Manchester United, who lead them by two points with a game in hand.

If United retain their title they will join Liverpool on 18 championships.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side have won the trophy ten times since Liverpool's last success.

Iraq sack Viera

AFF, Baghdad

Jorvan Viera has been sacked after just four months at the helm of Iraq's national football team for failing to win a game at the Gulf Cup, an Iraq football union official said on Thursday.

"The Union has found it appropriate to dismiss the coach for his lack of success in leading the team in the 19th Gulf Cup," Najeh Hamud, vice-president of the Iraqi Football Union told a press briefing in Baghdad.

Halled as a hero after he guided the Iraqi national side to its first ever Asian Cup title in 2007, the Brazilian's coaching skills were called upon again in September, in hopes he could reverse the slumping side's fortunes.

But at the Gulf Cup held in the Omani capital Muscat in January the Iraqis failed to win a single game, finishing bottom of their group and even losing to lowly Bahrain.

Frings back, Poldi out

Football

AFF, Berlin

Chelsea star Michael Ballack and Bremen's Torsten Frings have both been recalled to the Germany squad to face Norway in a friendly next Wednesday, but there is no place for Lukas Podolski.

Frings's Werder teammate Mesut Ozil, 20, has been called up for the first time as has Hoffenheim's Andreas Beck, while Borussia Moenchengladbach teenager Marko Marin is in line to win his fifth cap against Norway.

Veteran Frings is back after being dropped from the starting side for the World Cup qualifiers against Russia and Wales last October which led to captain Ballack stating senior players deserve more respect and loyalty from coach Joachim Loew.

Ballack's comments sparked a public row with Loew, but the matter was later resolved after the Chelsea midfielder apologised.

Neither player was selected to face England in last November's friendly, which Fabio Capello's side won 2-1 at Berlin's Olympic Stadium, as Ballack was injured and Frings was not considered.

Meanwhile, after some impressive performances for Bremen, Ozil had to choose between Germany and Turkey, from where his family originates, and the Germany Under-21 star was delighted with his promotion to die Mannschaft.

"I am pleased about the invitation and hope to take my chance in the German national team," said Ozil on the German Football Federation (DFB) website.

"I know it is the correct choice. The decision was not an easy one to make, because my family and many friends originate from Turkey."

"It was not a decision against my Turkish roots. My family is now the third generation in Germany and I have always felt my chance lay with the DFB."

"So I hope I can continue my success with the Germany Under-21 team at the European Championships in Sweden this summer."

Loew had been waiting to see if Ozil would opt to play for Germany and the pair spoke last Friday.

"The Turkish federation have been trying to win over Mesut recently and he was in a difficult situation," said Loew.

"We understood and had to wait until he decided who he wants to play for."

"In a telephone call with me last Friday, he told me he wants to play for the Germany team."

"He is another candidate for the midfield and he will get his chance against Norway."

As well as midfielders Frings and Ballack, Bayern Munich defender Philipp Lahm is also back in the squad after injury, while Bayer Leverkusen's Stefan Kiessling has earned a re-call.

Kiessling's only international match appearance was in March 2007 against Denmark in the 1-0 defeat at Duisburg.

"Stefan has played very well so far in the Bundesliga and has earned his chance," said Loew.

But there is no place in the Germany squad for Bayern's Lukas Podolski, who is third-choice striker at Munich and has struggled with a back injury and illness this season.

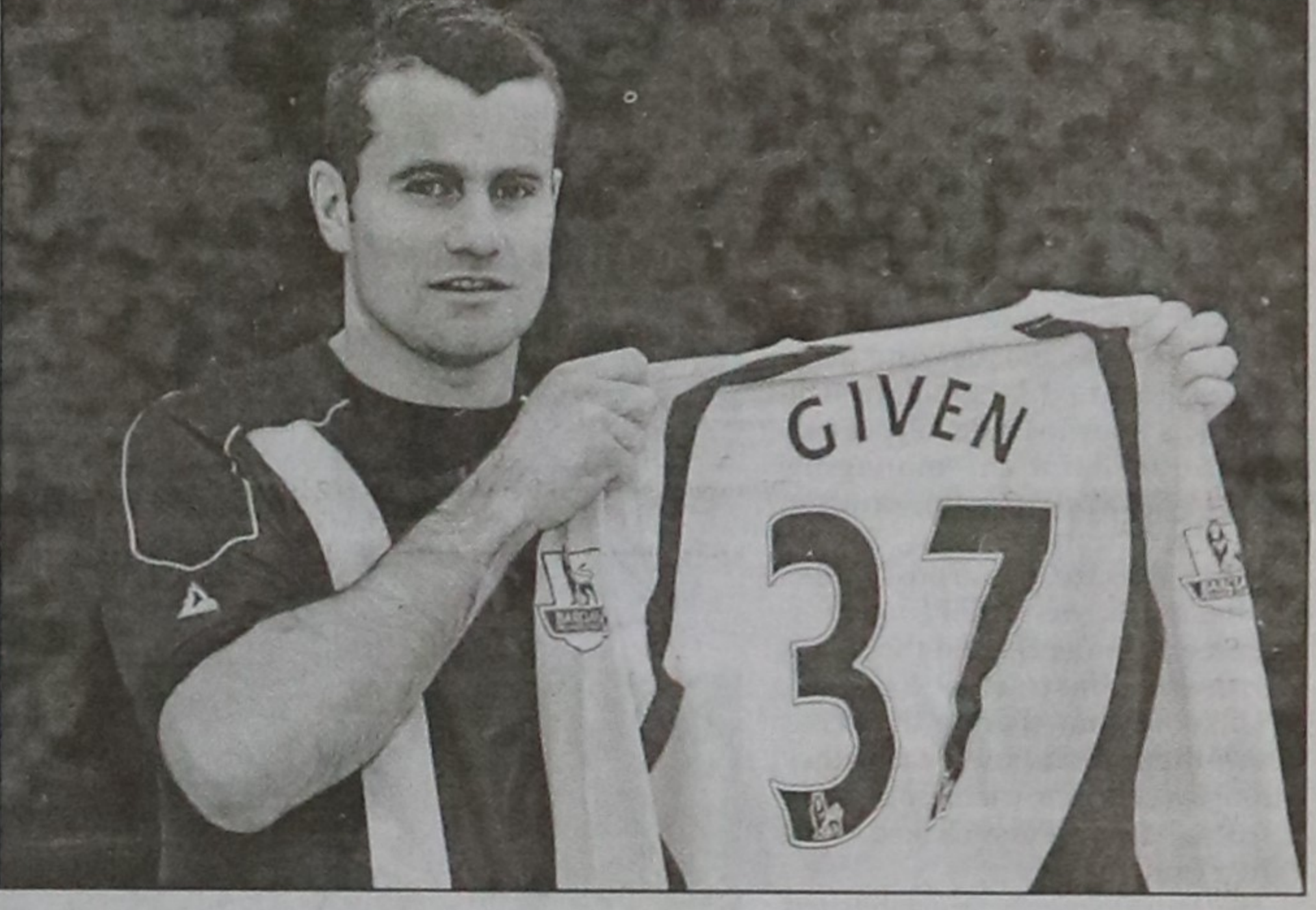
"The qualities of Lukas are undisputed and he played very well for the national team last year," said Loew.

"But for three months he has been injured and suffered illness, so regular training was not possible for him," said Loew.

"We want to give him time to get his form back and this game was too early for him."

"We hope he will be back for the World Cup qualifiers against Liechtenstein and Wales in Cardiff later this season."

SQUAD	
Goalkeepers:	Rene Adler (Bayer Leverkusen), Tim Wiese (Werder Bremen)
Defenders:	Andreas Beck (Hoffenheim), Arne Friedrich (Hertha Berlin), Andreas Hinkel (Celtic Glasgow/SCO), Philipp Lahm (Bayern Munich), Per Mertesacker (Werder Bremen), Serdar Tasci (Stuttgart), Heiko Westermann (Schalke 04)
Midfielders:	Michael Ballack (Chelsea/ENG), Torsten Frings (Werder Bremen), Thomas Hitzlsperger (Stuttgart), Marko Marin (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Mesut Ozil (Werder Bremen), Simon Rolfes (Bayer Leverkusen), Bastian Schweinsteiger (Bayern Munich), Piotr Trochowski (Hamburg)
Forwards:	Mario Gomez (Stuttgart), Patrick Helmes (Bayer Leverkusen), Stefan Kiessling (Bayer Leverkusen), Miroslav Klose (Bayern Munich)



Manchester City's new signing goalkeeper Shay Given poses with his jersey at their training ground in Manchester on Thursday.

Micah trouble for City

Football

AFF, Manchester

Micah Richards, the Manchester City and England defender, has been arrested on suspicion of assaulting a teenager outside a nightclub, police said Thursday.

Richards, 20, was interviewed on Wednesday by officers investigating an incident in which an 18-year-old male was assaulted in the Manchester suburb of Hale in the early hours of December 24.

Richards was bailed until April 8 pending the completion of inquiries which will allow the police to decide whether he should face any charges.

The defender's arrest adds to a growing list of off-field headaches faced by City manager Mark Hughes.

The club's star player, Brazilian international Robinho, was arrested and bailed last month in connection with allegations of a serious sexual assault on a teenage university student in a Leeds nightclub. Robinho, 25, denies any wrongdoing.

Hughes had to fine Robinho last month for walking out on a club training camp in Tenerife and making an unauthorised trip to Brazil and the manager's relationship with another Brazilian, Elano, has been strained by the midfielder's public criticism of him.

The City boss has also had to contend with reports that one of his most promising young players, Michael Johnson, has become a regular at casinos in the city, which the 21-year-old denies.

Another headache for Hughes is the possibility that winger Shaun Wright-Phillips could be banned for three matches after he was charged with violent conduct for kicking out in retaliation at Rory Delap in Saturday's defeat at Stoke.

Delap was sent off for his initial foul but the referee failed to spot Wright-Phillips' petulant reaction.

Hughes accepts Wright-Phillips made a mistake but feels the retaliation was nowhere near as serious as Delap's initial tackle.

"By the letter of the law, Shaun retaliated," said Hughes. "But he had twice been kicked from behind. I don't think what Shaun did in response was violent conduct."

"It was a human reaction and I feel a three-game ban would be unfair."

City had until Thursday evening to appeal against the charge with the FA set to rule on Friday on whether to impose the ban.

Self-belief keeps him going

FROM PAGE 17

Pti adds from New Delhi, proud owner of the unique record of being the highest wicket-taker in both Test and ODI formats of the game, Muralidaran said it was his self-belief which kept him going.

The off-spinner put behind chucking allegations and cleared umpteen biomechanical tests before establishing himself as an all-time great spinner.

"I have always played as a team man. During hard times I kept fighting and tried to prove myself every time I went into the field. I never thought about past because if you keep on thinking about past, you cannot perform," said Muralidaran.

"You need to always keep faith in yourself, then only you can achieve great things in life," he added.

Muralidaran needed just one wicket before the match to complete a record double and

his biggest moment came in his 10th and last over when he had well-set Gambhir (150) caught by wicket-keeper Kumar Sangakkara.

The spinner's teammates rushed in from various parts of the field to congratulate him on the landmark, which is unlikely to be surpassed any time soon.

Muralidaran's closest competitor among current players is 35-year-old compatriot Chaminda Vaas (400 wickets), who has not been playing one-day cricket regularly in recent months.

The spinner said ahead of the match that winning matches for his team was more important than milestones.

"The important thing is to win the game. I am going to keep playing and the record will come some day. I am pretty happy with my form," said Muralidaran.

Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene recently said hard work was key to Muralidaran's success in both forms of the game.

"I think it's just purely hard work and the commitment and willingness to win matches for his team. That's something you have to admire about him," said the Sri Lankan captain.

"Everyone knows the amount of hard work he has put in over the last 16 years, going through a lot of hardship. That's an amazing effort for a guy who started as a fast bowler and then turned into an off-spinner."

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni had said before the start of the series that the "champion" Sri Lankan spinner would complete a bowling double against his team.

"He is a brilliant bowler and has been very consistent. He is a champion bowler," said Dhoni.