

No place for Owen

AFP, London

Michael Owen's chances of playing in the World Cup finals suffered another blow on Sunday when coach Fabio Capello snubbed the striker for next month's qualifier with Croatia.

The 29-year-old Manchester United player, who scored his first competitive goal for the English champions in last week's Premier League defeat of Wigan, is his country's fourth-highest goalscorer.

But Capello was not convinced enough by the striker's form to include him in the squad which faces Slovenia in a friendly at Wembley on Saturday or the Group Six qualifier with Croatia on September 9 where victory would guarantee England's place in the finals in South Africa.

Capello has instead decided to keep faith with Tottenham star Jermain Defoe, who has been in fine form this season.

Goalkeeper David James misses out for the third squad running after being forced to sit out Portsmouth's home defeat to Manchester City on Sunday.

In defence, the absence of Rio Ferdinand with a thigh strain has provided Manchester United teammate Wes Brown with a surprise return.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Ben Foster (Man Utd), Robert Green (West Ham), Paul Robinson (Blackburn)
Defenders: Glen Johnson (Liverpool), Wes Brown (Man Utd), Matthew Upson (West Ham), John Terry (Chelsea, capt), Joleon Lescott (Man City), Ashley Cole (Chelsea), Wayne Bridge (Man City)
Midfielders: Shaun Wright-Phillips (Man City), Aaron Lennon (Tottenham), David Beckham (Los Angeles Galaxy/USA), Gareth Barry (Man City), Frank Lampard (Chelsea), Michael Carrick (Man Utd), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), Ashley Young (Aston Villa), James Milner (Aston Villa)
Attackers: Wayne Rooney (Man Utd), Emile Heskey (Aston Villa), Jermain Defoe (Tottenham), Carlton Cole (West Ham), Peter Crouch (Tottenham)

Modric doesn't blame Bowyer

AFP, London

Tottenham midfielder Luka Modric insists he does not blame Lee Bowyer for the tackle that broke his leg.

Modric will be sidelined for at least six weeks as a result of the injury he sustained in a collision with Bowyer at the start of the second half in Saturday's 2-1 victory over Birmingham at White Hart Lane.

The 23-year-old will miss several of second-placed Tottenham's Premier League matches, as well as Croatia's crucial World Cup qualifier against England on September 9 at Wembley.

Bowyer has been no stranger to controversy throughout his career but Modric does not believe the Birmingham midfielder intended to hurt him.

"It was not a ferocious tackle but it hurt awfully and I knew something was wrong the moment it happened," Modric told the Sun on Monday.

Terry signs new deal

AFP, London

Chelsea captain John Terry signed a new five-year contract on Monday that ties him to the Premier League club until 2014.

Terry, 28, had been promised an improved deal when he rejected Manchester City's attempt to sign him during the close-season.

City were reported to have offered Terry around 200,000 pounds a week to move to Eastlands, but the England defender turned them down and is now likely to finish his career at Stamford Bridge after putting pen to paper on a contract worth a reported 150,000 pounds a week.

"Chelsea is delighted to confirm that John Terry has signed a new five-year contract that keeps him at the club until the end of the 2013-14 season," a statement on the club's website announced.

"This reaffirms both John's and Chelsea's long standing desire for John to be at Stamford Bridge for the rest of his playing career."

Ade impresses Hughes

AFP, Portsmouth



Manchester City manager Mark Hughes believes Togo striker Emmanuel Adebayor is flourishing again because he is happy to have found a club that appreciates him.

Adebayor wasn't missed by many at Arsenal when City paid 25 million pounds to sign him during the close-season after an acrimonious final 12 months in north London.

Arsenal fans were angered by Adebayor's constant flirtations with the likes of AC Milan, Barcelona and Chelsea, while several Gunners players hinted that the dressing room was a happier place without the forward.

But Adebayor has made a superb start to life with City and Sunday's bullet header at Portsmouth, which clinched a 1-0 win, took his tally to three goals in three games for his new team.

Adebayor's form has played an important role in fourth-placed City's 100 per cent start to the season and Hughes said: "It's clear to see he is happy where he is."

"He's enjoying playing with good players again and the fans love him. That maybe was missing from his life before."

"I thought he was superb. There was a lot said about Ade as a player and a person, a lot of it with a negative slant. You can only judge people on how you find them and he's come in and wants to be successful. Those negative things people said I haven't seen."

"He's enjoying the team he's in. He could be at the start of something special and wants to play a big part in that."

After spending over 100 million pounds to

strengthen his team since the end of last season, Hughes had to deliver immediately and there can be no questioning results so far.

The City boss believes the likes of Gareth Barry, Kolo Toure, Joleon Lescott and Carlos Tevez - who all followed Adebayor to Eastlands - have added a winning mentality to his squad.

"Last season we were in similar situations and at times we went under on those occasions," Hughes said. "I sense now that happens they thrive on it rather being apprehensive about it. That is a shift in mentality."

"We'll have stronger tests. I just sense that I have players who are confident. When you go into games against Arsenal (City's next opponents) you have to go in with confidence."

Portsmouth manager Paul Hart, meanwhile, was encouraged by his side's performance despite a fourth successive defeat that left them bottom of the table.

"I thought we played very well, I was pleased with the way we went about our job," he said. "I think we lacked a bit of forward movement because when we got behind them we caused them problems."

"It was a great opportunity (for David Nugent) to score at the end and I'm disappointed we didn't."

England goalkeeper David James was missing with bone bruising to his knee but he has also been linked with a move away from Pompey following the departure of high-profile players such as Glen Johnson, Sylvain Distin, Jermain Defoe and Peter Crouch.

"He's the best goalkeeper in England," said Hart, who insists his goalkeeper has not asked to move. "At the moment he's injured so you would think that would limit it."

Marseille hold Bordeaux

AFP, Paris



French champions Bordeaux saw their record of 14 consecutive league victories come to an end in a tight 0-0 draw with title rivals Marseille on Sunday.

But the point was enough to put them back on top of the table on goal difference from Paris St Germain and Lyon, who also have 10 points.

In a game of few opportunities at the Stade Velodrome, Marseille's Brazilian striker Brando saw a fierce drive come back off the post while Benoit Cheyrou hit the crossbar.

Bordeaux thought they had stolen the three points at the death, but Brazilian substitute Jussie's header from a Yoann Gourcuff corner was ruled out for a foul by Mickael Ciani on Marseille defender Taye Taiwo.

"For me, the end of the 14-match winning run isn't something I think about," said Bordeaux coach Laurent Blanc.

"It's the three wins this season that have come to an end, but three wins and a draw so far is a good start to the championship."

Marseille defender Souleymane Diawara said his team had been unfortunate not to take all three points.

"It's two points lost. We had lots of chances

but didn't take them. But we'll keep working. We showed that we are ready to go to war."

Earlier, PSG had briefly gone top with a 3-0 home win over Lille thanks to goals from Jeremy Clement, Peguy Luyindula and substitute Christophe Jallet.

Lyon are third after beating Nancy 3-1 on Saturday.

French international and former St Etienne striker Batefembi Gomis fired Lyon into a 37th-minute lead and in-form Argentine striker Lisandro Lopez, having combined with Miralem Pjanic to lay on the opener, clipped home a second five minutes after the restart.

Youssef Hadji gave Nancy hope when he reduced the arrears six minutes later but a swerving rocket from Manuel Bastos secured Lyon's third win in four games with 22 minutes left.

St Etienne finally got off the mark at home to modest Grenoble with Christophe Landrin scoring the only goal of the game midway through the first half.

Elsewhere, promoted Lens continued their solid start, building on two victories for one loss with a 2-2 home draw with Rennes.

Monaco lost touch with the top third of the table after a Vaclav Sverkos penalty was sufficient to give Sochaux a 1-0 victory over the principality side.

Hamburg go top

AFP, Berlin



A late penalty from Hamburg winger Piotr Trochowski put Hamburg top of the Bundesliga on Sunday and sealed a 3-1 win over Cologne.

Goals either side of half-time by Peru striker Jose Paolo Guerrero had put Hamburg 2-0 ahead, but Germany winger Trochowski's late spot kick made sure of the win to put the north German team ahead of Bayer Leverkusen.

With Bayern Munich's new signing Arjen Robben scoring twice in the 3-0 win over champions Wolfsburg on Saturday, Hamburg took their chance to keep their unbeaten record and go top.

The opening goal at Hamburg's HSH Nordbank Arena came after just 19 minutes when Guerrero was the first to react to a mistake in the Cologne defence.

With 66 minutes played Guerrero scored again while Cologne's super sub Adil Chihi hit a consolation goal on 76 minutes just two min-

utes after coming off the bench, but Trochowski hit a penalty with time running out.

Hamburg's victory means winless Cologne stay rooted to the foot of the table.

Earlier Werder Bremen went third after a 3-2 win over Hertha Berlin.

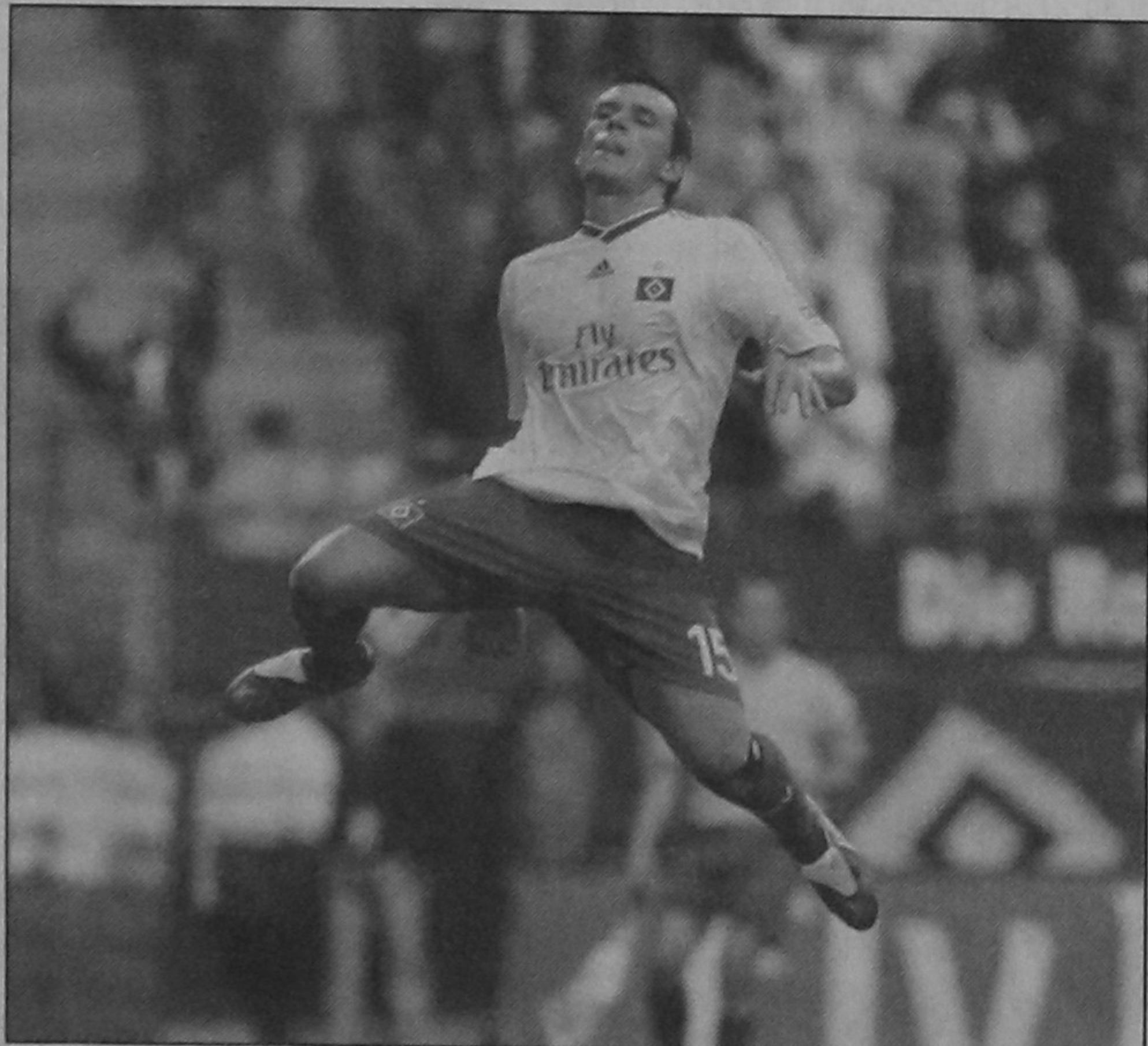
Second-half goals by Germany pair Mesut Ozil and Tim Borowski put Werder 2-0 up in the German capital before Berlin's Poland midfielder Lukas Piszczek pulled a goal back on 77 minutes.

Bremen made sure of the three points when Ozil then turned provider by setting up Brazilian defender Naldo on 83 minutes, only for Berlin's Patrick Ebert to hit his side's second at the Olympic Stadium in injury time.

"We had already had superiority in the first half, but we didn't show enough purpose," said Bremen coach Thomas Schaaf.

"I am happy about the result, we applied some good pressure and got the rewards."

The defeat leaves Hertha Berlin third from bottom of the table after their third straight league defeat in four games while Bremen are behind Hamburg and Leverkusen with seven points.



Hamburg midfielder Piotr Trochowski jumps for joy after scoring the third goal against Cologne during their Bundesliga clash in Hamburg on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

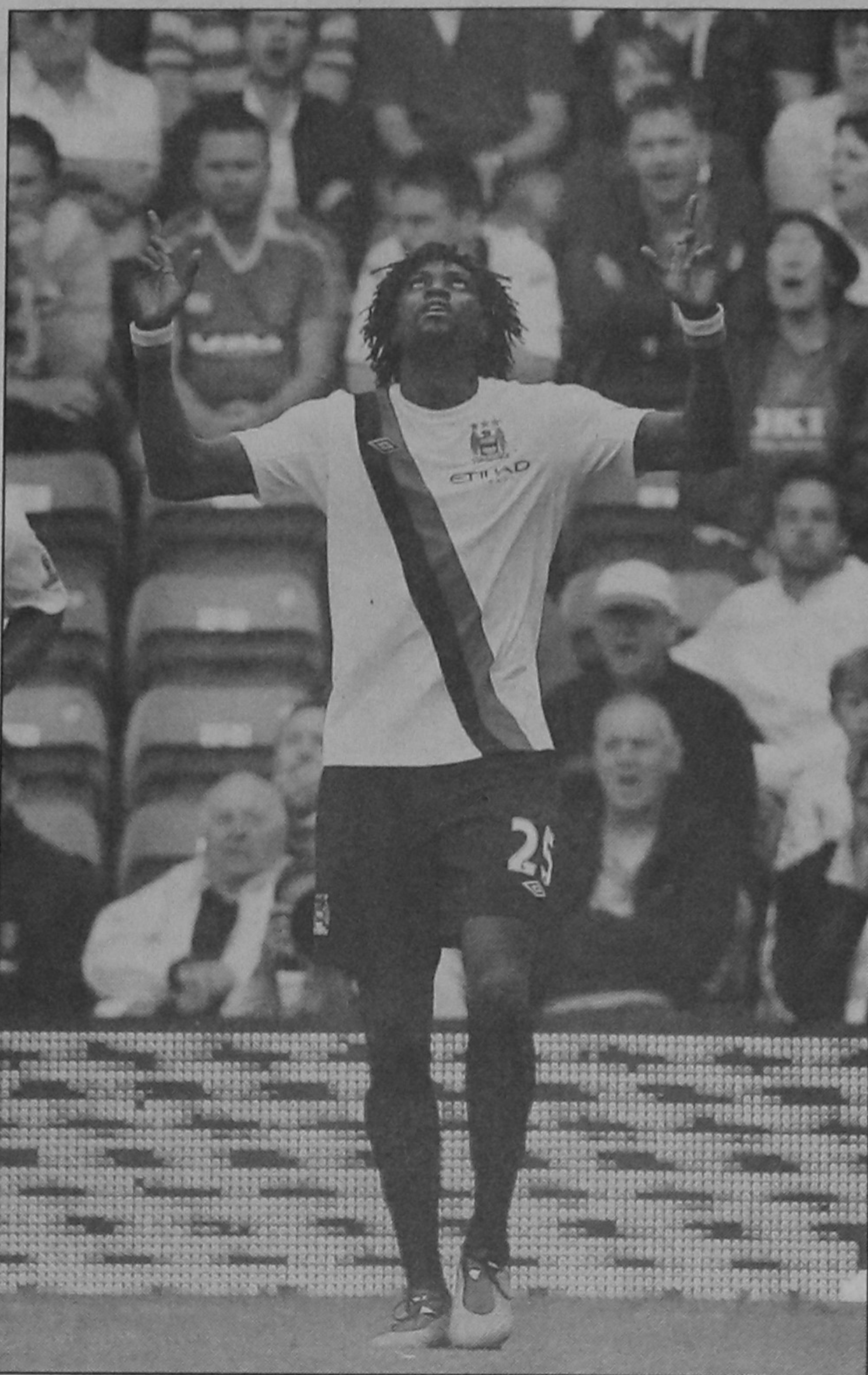


PHOTO: AFP

Manchester City striker Emmanuel Adebayor celebrates scoring the all-important goal against Portsmouth during their Premier League tie at Fratton Park on Sunday.

IN BRIEF

'Grosso needs miracle to join Juve'

AFP, Rome

Juventus would need a miracle to snatch Italy full-back Fabio Grosso from Lyon before the end of Monday's transfer deadline, according to the player's agent.

Grosso has spent two years in France but has been pushed out of the first team by the arrival of Frenchman Aly Cissokho from Porto and is known to be in Juve's sights.

But money is proving the stumbling block.

"Juve have made an offer that Lyon believe is too low. As the hours pass and the end of the window approaches, it gets harder to reach a deal," Beppe Bozzo told Rai.

"Grosso wants to return to Italy but it's down to Lyon. I'm not optimistic, it would need a miracle for this transfer to be completed today."

Wenger claims 'anti-football'

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger claims Manchester United tried to kick Arsenal out of their stride by playing "anti-football" in Saturday's 2-1 victory over the Gunners.

Wenger was infuriated by the way United set out to disrupt Arsenal's smooth passing game by flying into tackles with aggressive intent.

Although Arsenal collected six bookings and United were only shown three yellow cards, Wenger hinted that the champions' approach was a stark contrast to his own purist principles.

The French coach seemed to be particularly angered by United midfielder Darren Fletcher's challenges, but stopped short of accusing the Scot by name.

"I have seen a player who plays on the pitch only to make fouls," he said. "For me, this is a point that is more urgent than diving."

"The players who are never punished, who get out of the game without a yellow card. I think it is more anti-football than a player who did what Eduardo did."

"Look at how many deliberate fouls some players get away with. That's a bigger problem because it cuts the flow of the game. And people pay to see football, not free-kicks."

Asked if he was referring to Fletcher, Wenger just laughed and said: "Why do you say the name?"

Ballack calls for improvement

AFP, Berlin



Captain Michael Ballack says Germany need to raise their game if they are to seal qualification for next year's World Cup in South Africa.

Ballack's call to arms on Monday comes just over five weeks before the Euro 2008 finalists face Russia in a pivotal Group 4 qualifier in Moscow.

Germany go into that October 10 clash leading Guus Hiddink's Russians, who have a game in hand, by four points.

"We have to singularly improve our level of play if we want to be a candidate at the World Cup," the Chelsea midfielder told German news agency SID.

He added: "First of all we have to qualify, but if we make it through Germany will be one of the favourites based on our commitment and our good organisation which compensate for certain weak spots - that's how we reached the final at Euro 2008."

Looking ahead to the Russia game Ballack said: "We have to play at the same level as we did in the first leg (2-1 to Germany in October, 2008) and for the moment we're far off that."

Before Russia Germany face Azerbaijan in their next qualifier on September 9 with a friendly against 2010 hosts South Africa on Saturday.

"We have to play two good games to show that our top spot ahead of Russia is justified," added the Germany captain who went on to regret that none of his teammates played for other major European sides.

"It would be good if other Germany players could find their way to playing for big European sides. Germany didn't become world champions in 1990 by chance, seven of that side were playing in Italy."

Valencia beat Sevilla

AFP, Madrid



Cash-strapped Valencia started the new season on the right note with a 2-0 home win over rivals Sevilla who were reduced to 10 men following the dismissal of Frederic Kanoute.

Mali international Kanoute was sent off close to half-time for two dangerous aerial challenges and Valencia took full advantage with second half goals from Juan Mata and Pablo Hernandez.

Valencia were poor at home last season so this was the perfect start against one of their direct rivals for a Champions League spot.

"We have passed one test and will continue studying for the next one," said Valencia coach Unai Emery.

David Villa was expected to be one of the big name exits this summer with Valencia's financial troubles well-documented.

However, Villa saw potential moves to Barcelona and Real Madrid fall through and appears to be focussed on Valencia.

A cut-up Mestalla pitch meant neither side could play their fluid passing game but Valencia coped better with the conditions and were given a helping hand with the sending-off of Kanoute.

Seconds before half-time the former Tottenham striker collected a second yellow card for crashing into Carlos Marchena having already been booked for catching Bruno with a stray elbow.

"He should never have been sent off," fumed Sevilla coach Manolo Jimenez.

"My player (Kanoute) got to the ball and Marchena got there late."

Mata, a Barcelona target this summer, netted with a swing of his left boot two minutes after the break and Hernandez wrapped up the points with a fortunate shot that flew into the top corner.

Earlier on Sunday Atletico Madrid came

down off their Champions League cloud, crashing to a 3-0 opening day league defeat at Malaga.

Atletico had qualified for the Champions League, drawing Chelsea in the group stages, but their inconsistency suggests it will be another rollercoaster season.

Nabil Baha put Malaga ahead on 34 minutes and defender Manu added a second on his full league debut before Xavi Torres netted late on.

"It was our worst game since the pre-season," said coach Abel Resino. "We have to keep working to rectify these mistakes because the league has only just started."

Villarreal will expect to challenge Atletico for third spot, with Barcelona and Real Madrid expected to be first and second, and the post-Manuel Pellegrini era started with a 1-1 draw against Osasuna on Sunday.

Ernesto Valverde has taken over the reins from Pellegrini, who jumped ship for Real Madrid, but could not start with a win.

Valverde handed Brazilian forward Nilmar, a 12-million-euro club record signing, his debut in attack.

Winger Santi Cazorla put Villarreal ahead on 31 minutes but the lead was shortlived as Walter Pandiani equalised six minutes later.

"I thought we were going to win the match but we have to accept the point because at times Osasuna were better," confessed Valverde.

In other matches, Roberto Soldado scored a sensational hat-trick to fire Getafe to the top of the table with a thumping 4-1 win at Racing Santander.

Elsewhere Bilbao got over their Spanish Super Cup loss to Barcelona with a 1-0 home victory over Espanyol.

Japan international midfielder Shunsuke Nakamura, a free transfer from Celtic, made his Espanyol bow but it ended in defeat as Gaitza Toquero struck a 78th minute winner.

Jerez's first ever game in the Spanish top-flight - 62 years after their foundation - ended in a 2-0 reverse at Real Mallorca.

Dominguez earn first call-up

INTERNET, undated

Sebastian Dominguez have been given his first call-up to the Argentina national squad as coach Diego Maradona added seven home-based players to his party ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Brazil and Paraguay.

The defender of Argentinian champions Velez Sarsfield will join the Albiceleste along with teammates Nicolas Otamendi and Emiliano Papa, Boca Juniors midfielder Sebastian Battaglia, Lanus star Eduardo Salvio, Estudiantes playmaker Juan Sebastian Veron and Huracan midfielder Mario Bolatti.

Bolatti made his international debut earlier this month, when Argentina defeated Russia 3-2 in a friendly assured of a place at South Africa 2010 if they beat the Selecao in Rosario on Saturday.

He told Channel 7: "I will be as tough as all the matches we play against Brazil, but we beat them in illusion. We have the dream of playing the World Cup and we'll be almost in if we beat Brazil."

Newcastle midfielder Jonas Gutierrez has already left the squad due to injury. Argentina travel to Paraguay to visit the Guaranes four days after the Brazil match.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Juan Pablo Carrizo (Zaragoza/Spain), Mariano Andujar (Catania/Italy), Sergio Romero (AZ Alkmaar/Netherlands)
Defenders: Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan/Italy), Nicolas Pareja (Espanyol/Spain), Fabricio Coloccini (Newcastle/England), Gabriel Heinze (Marseille/France), Nicolas Burdisso (Inter Milan/Italy), Sebastian Dominguez (Velez Sarsfield), Emiliano Papa (Velez Sarsfield), Nicolas Otamendi (Velez Sarsfield)
Midfielders: Fernando Gago (Real Madrid/Spain), Javier Mascherano (Liverpool/England), Maximiliano Rodriguez (Atletico Madrid/Spain), Jesus Datolo (Napoli/Italy), Juan Sebastian Veron (Estudiantes), Mario Bolatti (Huracan), Sebastian Battaglia (Boca Juniors)
Forwards: Carlos Tevez (Manchester City/England), Lionel Messi (Barcelona/Spain), Sergio Agüero (Atletico Madrid/Spain), Diego Milito (Inter Milan/Italy), Lisandro Lopez (Lyon/France), Ezequiel Lavezzi (Napoli/Italy), Eduardo Salvio (Lanus)