### Theo blitzes Celtic

Football

AFP, London

Theo Walcott made a point to England coach Fabio Capello as the Arsenal winger inspired his side to a 3-2 victory over Celtic that clinched the Emirates Cup on Sunday.

Walcott spent the close-season nursing a bruised ego after being left out of England's World Cup squad and the winger played as if determined to show Capello what he could have brought to the team.

While it is clearly much easier to shine in a pre-season tournament at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium than the World Cup, this was the kind of vibrant display that makes Walcott such a

formidable force at his best. He created goals for Carlos Vela and Samir Nasri and played a key role in Bacary Sagna's strike as well. On this evidence, Capello would be wise to recall Walcott for England's friendly against Hungary on August 11.

Despite Walcott's starring role, Celtic nearly snatched a draw as late goals from Daryl Murphy and South Korea's Ki Sung-Yueng set up a tense finish.

"Theo is determined, highly determined," said Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger. "The season will start in two weeks and I can't say who will have a great season. But I believe he is sharp physically, he worked very hard and is ready."

Celtic boss Neil Lennon added: "I wasn't happy with some of our defending. The manner and timing of the second goal just before halftime was poor and that is something we need to

"The third goal was just sloppy. But then we had a great comeback and some of the football we played in the last half-hour was fantastic."

With unsettled captain Cesc Fabregas not scheduled to return to training until later this week and Abou Diaby injured, Wenger picked youngsters Jack Wilshere and Emmanuel Frimpong in central midfield, while Manuel Almunia was back in goal after missing Saturday's game with Milan.

It was Arsenal who seized the initiative as they took the lead in the third minute.

Walcott curled a low cross into the six-yard box and Mexican forward Vela beat Celtic's unconvincing offside trap to slide his shot past Lukasz Zaluska.

Only a fine save from Zaluska denied Walcott the goal his display deserved when the winger's fierce free-kick was palmed over.

Wilshere also gave a confident performance and the teenager struck the bar twice in quick succession late in the first half.

Walcott won a corner on the stroke of halftime with another rampaging run and the Gunners increased their lead from Tomas Rosicky's set-piece as French defender Sagna drove a long-range shot past Zaluska's weak attempted save.

Wenger sent on new signing Marouane Chamakh and French winger Nasri at half-time and the pair combined with Walcott to increase Arsenal's lead in the 51st minute.

Chamakh's backheel gave possession to Nasri 20 yards from goal and he slipped a pass to Walcott, who cut the ball back for Nasri to clip a perfectly-placed shot into the far corner.

Lennon could at least take heart from the way his side fought back ahead of the second leg of their Champions League third qualifying round tie against Braga on Wednesday.

The Hoops, in severe danger of being knocked out of Europe after losing 3-0 in the first leg in Portugal last week, missed a penalty when Georgios Samaras blazed over after Wilshere fouled Marc-Antoine Fortune.

They didn't throw the towel in and reduced the deficit after 73 minutes when Murphy seized on a deflection to shoot past Almunia.

Ki got Celtic's second goal when he tapped in Fortune's cross with seven minutes left but there wasn't quite time to complete the comeback.



Arsenal midfielder Samir Nasri (C) shoots to score the second goal against Celtic during their Emirates Cup encounter at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

### Blues fall at Frankfurt

Football

AFP, Frankfurt

Nicolas Anelka played for the first time since being kicked-out of France's World Cup squad on Sunday but was unable to prevent Chelsea slipping to a 2-1 defeat against Eintracht Frankfurt.

Anelka was one of six World Cup players featuring for the Premier League champions along with John Terry, Ashley Cole, Paulo Ferreira, Florent Malouda and Salomon Kalou.

Individual errors cost Chelsea with goalkeeper Hilario making a hash of a clearance to give the German side the lead while a shirt pull by Branislav Ivanovic late in the game allowed the hosts to score from a penalty.

In between, Frank Lampard had levelled for the London side.

Eintracht were ahead after 24 minutes when Hilario lost the ball and allowed Patrick Ochs to score into an empty net.

Anelka, booted out of the French World Cup squad for a foul-mouthed rant at coach Raymond Domenech, was a low-profile figure in the first half with an early cross through the penalty area his lone contribution before being replaced at the interval.

Chelsea equalised just after the hour mark said Ancelotti.

courtesy of Lampard, who had only flown into Frankfurt on Sunday morning after illness.

Patrick van Aanholt ran down the left for Lampard to beat goakeeper Ralf Fahrmann.

Eight minutes from time, the home side claimed victory when Ivanovic was penalised for a tug on the shirt of a German player and Turkish star Halil Altintop converted the penalty.

Despite the defeat Chelsea coach Carlo Ancelotti insisted there were positives ahead of Wednesday's friendly with Hamburg and next weekend's Community Shield against Manchester United at Wembley.

Against Hamburg, Ancelotti is expected to put out the same side he hopes to field against United.

"We want to give more minutes to our players to prepare them for the game on Sunday. So I don't want to change the team, I want to use the team that will play on Sunday against Manchester United," the coach told www.chelseafc.com.

Wednesday's game may also see Didier Drogba return to action after undergoing groin surgery.

"We will have a look Drogba during training tomorrow and on Wednesday he could play against Hamburg. He is healing very quickly,"



Frankfurt striker Theofanis Gekas (L) vies with Chelsea forward Salomon Kalou during a friendly match at the Commerzbank Arena on Sunday.

## Huang makes Reds bid

Football

AFP, London

Premier League club Liverpool could be bought by a Chinese business tycoon within days, according to reports here on Monday.

Kenny Huang, head of Hong-Kong based investment company QSL Sports Ltd, is reported to be in talks with the Royal Bank of Scotland with the aim of taking full control of the club which has been up for sale since April.

"A deal has to be done before the transfer window closes (on 31 August)," a source close to Huang told BBC Sport.

"Huang has made a firm proposal. The club's board has to sanction the sale and it could be sewn up in days."

Huang is offering to clear Liverpool's debt to RBS and hand new manager Roy Hodgson funds to do business in the transfer window. The tycoon also plans to build the club a new

to buy Liverpool in 2008 because he felt a valuation of 650 million pounds was too high, and it is believed he now values the club at around 350

million pounds (423 million euros). The current owners, Americans Tom Hicks

pound package from two banks the following year but it left the 18-time English champions with a debt in the region of 105 million

2007 in a deal worth 218.9 million pounds.

pounds. The pair have had a difficult tenure at Anfield, with supporters regularly protesting at the level of debt taken on by the club after the

and George Gillett, bought the club in March

The pair refinanced with a 350-million-

buy-out, and new stadium plans. If RBS decide to turn down the proposal and no new viable bidders are forthcoming the bank has the option of calling in their loan in October, making it important for the Reds to

resolve the ownership issue as soon as possible. Huang, who is backed by one of the wealthiest investment funds in the Far East, was first

linked with a buyout at Liverpool two years ago. He is well known in China for his interests in baseball and basketball, and last year bought a 15 per cent stake in NBA side Cleveland Cavaliers.

Huang is believed to have already spoken to Huang reportedly turned down the chance senior figures at Anfield to express his seriousness about a buy-out and in the hope that his message filters down to help persuade top stars like Fernando Torres, who returned to training on Monday after his post-World Cup break, the club does have a better future.

#### Messi vows to deliver

AFP, Seoul

Argentinian star Lionel Messi promised Monday to deliver a good performance this week when his club, Barcelona, meet South Korea's all-star team in an exhibition match.

The match between the Spanish champions and an all-star squad selected by South Korean fans will be played Wednesday in Seoul to mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between South Korea and Spain.

"We will show a good play as many Korean fans have waited for us," Messi told reporters.

Messi had a disappointing World Cup in South Africa, with Argentina knocked out of the tournament by Germany in the quarterfinals.

"It was too bad I could not score a goal even with many chances during the World Cup, but I will try my best to score this time," he said.

"I had high expectations and I wanted to get to higher rounds but it was too bad. Now I'd like to only think about the

league.' Messi said the match in Seoul would be "a good opportunity to prepare for a new season".

His teammate Daniel Alves Da Silva said South Korean fans would enjoy watching "the games of the best club in the world".

"I've recovered much after the World Cup since it ended sooner than I thought," he added.

#### Aurelio back at Anfield

REUTERS, London

Brazilian defender Fabio Aurelio hailed his latest contract at Liverpool a new beginning after he re-signed for the Premier League club on a twoyear deal.

"I feel very pleased and proud," he said. "It feels like I'm signing for the first time -everything has changed so it's like a new beginning for me with new confidence and a newboss."

The 30-year-old left Anfield when his contract expired in May but was offered a chance to prove he was worth retaining by new manager Roy Hodgson and has agreed a deal until 2012.

"I asked the club to find out whether Fabio had found a new club," Hodgson told the Liverpool website (www.liverpoolfc.tv).

"When we ascertained that he hadn't, we invited him back to (the training ground at) Melwood so both myself and my staff, and the medical team could properly assess the player.

"We were both very impressed and I am delighted we were able to re-sign Fabio," he added.

Aurelio endured an injurymarred spell at Anfield after joining from Valencia in 2006 but said on Saturday he thought he was in good condition after training on his own in pre-season.

# Briand strikes at death

Prandelli may enlist duo

regular player in England than

as a reserve in Italy," Prandelli

A move has long been

mooted for Balotelli to City,

who are managed by his for-

mer Inter boss Roberto

considering calling up

Brazilian-born forward

Amauri Carvalho de Oliveira,

who recently obtained an

players he could draw from

ahead of the Ivory Coast game,

and that since the friendly is

Prandelli said there were 60

Prandelli also said he was

Mancini.

Italian passport.

Football

AFP, London

Lyon ended their pre-season preparations on a positive note as Jimmy Briand's fine finish secured a 1-1 draw against Italian giants AC Milan in the Emirates Cup on Sunday.

Claude Puel's side kick off their French league campaign against Monaco next weekend and they will go into the fixture in confident mood after a fluent display in the pre-season tournament at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium.

Despite trailing to a goal from Marco

Borriello early in the second half, Lyon hit back to level through Briand and could easily have finished as comfortable winners. It is two years since Lyon were last crowned French champions, but expectations are high

at the Stade Gerland after last season's strong finish in the league and an impressive run to the Champions League semi-finals. After fielding a reserve side for Saturday's 2-2 draw with Celtic, Puel sent out a strong line-

up as he looked for a morale-boosting win ahead of the Monaco clash. Lyon made a bright start and could have been ahead in the early stages when Miralem Pjanic tricked his way past two defenders

before driving a shot against the near post. Milan are only in the second week of their pre-season preparations but the Italians were still able to grind out a 1-1 draw against Arsenal

Football

Italy's new coach Cesare

Prandelli may enlist stars

Mario Balotelli and Antonio

Cassano for the team's first

match since its disastrous

exit from the World Cup, an

Italian sports daily reported

and Balotelli on the left,"

Prandelli told sports daily

Gazzetta dello Sport in an

they will play together in

London" in a friendly match

against Ivory Coast next

Sampdoria playmaker

Cassano, 28, had finally matured after getting married

Prandelli said he believed

Prandelli's predecessor

Marcello Lippi snubbed both

Cassano and Balotelli, Inter

Milan's teenaged forward, for

the 2010 World Cup in South

were embarrassingly bundled

out of the tournament after

three matches following a

shock 3-2 defeat to Slovakia

that left them at the bottom of

what had looked like a fairly

easy group, including

Paraguay and rank outsiders

the dismal showing on Lippi's

decision to tap experienced

but ageing players over young

19-year-old Balotelli's immi-

nent move from Inter Milan to

Manchester City would

improve his chances of play-

ing on the national team.

Prandelli said he believed

Turks Balotelli and Cassano.

Many observers blamed

Reigning champions Italy

"Cassano could play centre

"But I can't say whether

AFP, Rome

Monday.

interview.

in June.

Africa.

New Zealand.

Monday, he said.

Massimiliano Allegri's team played a slow tempo for long periods but they sprang into life when Alexander Merkel flicked on toward Daniele Bonera, whose close-range volley brought a brave stop from Hugo Lloris.

It wasn't long before Lyon were back on the offensive and France striker Briand forced Marco Amelia to save with his legs after firing in a low shot from Gomis's pass. Lyon had been the better team in the first

half but Milan took the lead in the 55th minute. Borriello started and finished the move as the Italian striker chased a long pass over the

top of the Lyon defence, forcing Lloris to race out to block. Simone Verdi pounced on the loose ball and showed good composure to pick out Borriello, who was able to beat Jeremy Toulalan to the

pass and poke home from close-range. Briand was denied by Amelia as he raced into the penalty area, only for the Milan goalkeeper to make another block with his legs.

Ederson wasted a golden opportunity to equalise as the winger hammered a shot against crossbar with just Amelia to beat.

Lyon were finally rewarded for their pressure in the 79th minute when Pjanic crossed to the far post and Briand got in front of Massimo Oddo to power home a diving header.

Briand should have won it for Lyon in the closing stages but clipped his shot wide from close-range.

Ukraine.

Parma and AS Roma.

"very early... I will give priority

to those I know less well and

who have played the most."

#### the boos AFP, London

**Barry fears** 

Gareth Barry fears England's World Cup flops will spend a night on the boos when they return to Wembley for a friendly against Hungary next

Barry and his England team-mates suffered a miserable time in South Africa and were eliminated in the second round by Germany after winning just one of their four matches.

The Manchester City midfielder admits those poor performances could prompt an angry reaction from England's notoriously fickle fans as Fabio Capello's team play their first match the World Cup.

England supporters have turned on the likes of Ashley Cole, Frank Lampard, Owen Hargreaves and Peter Crouch in the past and it would be no surprise to hear a chorus of disapproval when the team runs out at Wembley next

"Yes, there will be a sense of trepidation before we go out at Wembley," Barry told The Sun.

Wednesday.

"You have seen the fans boo individual players before when anything has happened. "The team as a whole need

to earn the right to get the supporters back behind them." Barry knows it is vital that

After the Ivory Coast England get the fans back on their side as quickly as possigame, Italy will play Estonia ble in case the aftermath of the on September 3 and the World Cup failure starts to Faroe Islands on September damage their European 7 in qualifying matches for Championship qualifying the UEFA Euro 2012 champicampaign. onships in Poland and

"The whole nation was disappointed in the summer Formerly a Juventus and there will be all sorts of midfielder, Prandelli spent excuses and reasons why we five years coaching

didn't do better," he said. Fiorentina, twice taking them "But as a team we need to into the Champions League, get together behind the manhaving previously coached ager and rebuild the faith of

> the fans. "The Euro 2012 qualifying games start early next month and we really need that support, so hopefully they will be behind us.

#### Marchena moves to Villarreal

REUTERS, Madrid

Villarreal have signed World Cup-winning Spanish defender Carlos Marchena from La Liga rivals Valencia on a three-year contract.

"Villarreal and Valencia have reached an agreement under which Carlos Marchena will form part of the squad for the next three seasons," Villarreal said on their website (www.villarrealcf.es).

The Sevilla-born 31-yearold, who can play as a centre back or defensive midfielder, played for Valencia for nine seasons, winning two league titles and one King's Cup.

He has made 62 appearances for Spain, scoring two goals, and was part of coach Vicente del Bosque's victorious squad at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.



PHOTO: AFP

Former Italy superstar Roberto Baggio arrives at the FGCI head-"I will call up those actually quarters to discuss his possible inclusion in the technical staff of playing on their teams, so the Italian national team in Rome yesterday. prefer to see Balotelli as a