

# Rovers gunned down

AFP, Blackburn



Theo Walcott and Andrei Arshavin fired Arsenal to a 2-1 win over Blackburn in a frenetic encounter at Ewood Park on Saturday.

Walcott put Arsenal ahead in the first half and, although Mame Diouf equalised for Rovers soon after, Russia winger Arshavin struck early in the second half to maintain the Gunners' unbeaten start to the season.

Blackburn manager Sam Allardyce had warned Arsenal that his side would adopt the exact same tactics that helped them to a 2-1 victory at Ewood Park on the last day of last season.

On that occasion, Rovers' physically dominated the visitors to force the win but this time it was Arsenal who came out on top as they refused to be cowed by Allardyce's words or his team's physical approach.

The first opportunity fell to Abou Diaby after just three minutes when his volley looked to be going in until Blackburn's Vince Grella cleared off the line.

Cesc Fabregas then did the same thing at the other end of the field when Ryan Nelsen's powerful header beat Manuel Almunia.

The Arsenal goalkeeper performed much better just 15 seconds later when he brilliantly clawed away an El Hadji Diouf scrambled effort at his back post.

After 15 minutes, Chris Samba went close as he used his height to power a Morten Gamst Pedersen corner goal-wards but it just went over the bar.

However, Blackburn were then stunned when Arsenal scored a brilliant team move which was finished off magnificently by Walcott in the 20th minute.

Arshavin found Robin van Persie with a simple ball and his turn and inch-perfect pass to Walcott gave the England international space down the right wing to cut back in and beat Rovers' goalkeeper Paul Robinson with a low shot into the far corner.

However, the lead lasted just seven minutes. Hadji Diouf charged down the left wing and found Mame Diouf inside the six-yard box and, after both Thomas Vermaelen and Gael Clichy allowed him too much room, on loan Manchester United striker Mame tapped into an empty net.

Arsenal's cause was then damaged further by the loss of van Persie who had to be substituted after a clattering challenge from Grella after 34 minutes.

Wenger was upset by the strength of the challenge although referee Chris Foy took no action.

After the interval, Arsenal regained the lead in fortunate fashion after 51 minutes.

Bacary Sagna's cross from the left wing found Fabregas on the penalty spot but he shot against Walcott.

However, the ball fell nicely for Arshavin and he drove past Robinson to make it 2-1.

The goal was Arsenal's cue to pour forward in search of a killer third and Maroune Chamakh should have at least hit the target when well placed but he fired wide.

Blackburn's first opportunity after the break fell to Nikola Kalinic after Vermaelen carelessly gave away possession but he shot well over.

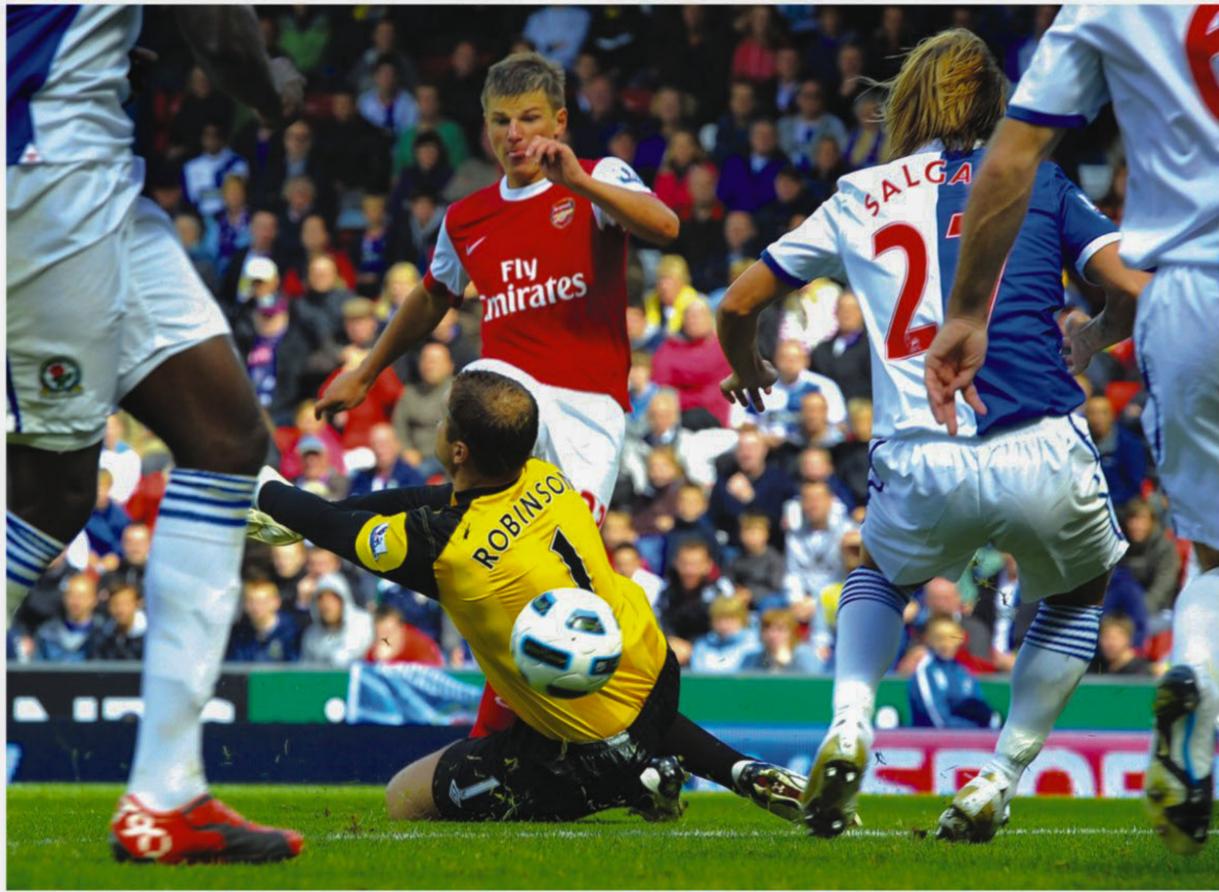
Despite the best efforts of both sides, and particularly Fabregas, who had a fine game, real chances remained at a premium.

The crowded midfield stifled most creativity and even the introduction of Blackburn playmaker David Dunn failed to provide the inspiration the home side needed to get an equaliser.

Arsenal continued to get forward when they could and a Walcott effort from long-range just went over the top of Robinson's crossbar with 13 minutes to go.

With nine minutes remaining, Dunn squandered a chance as he shot straight at Almunia while Michel Salgado also blasted over.

Blackburn had two penalty claims turned down when Hadji Diouf was impeded in the box while Arsenal then broke immediately to the other end but Jack Wilshere missed from six yards.



Arsenal forward Andrei Arshavin (C) scores the winning goal past Blackburn Rovers goalkeeper Paul Robinson (on the ground) during their Premier League encounter at Ewood Park yesterday.

## Micho staying at Bayern

AFP, Munich

Argentina's out-of-favour defender Martin Demichelis will stay at Bayern Munich and fight for his place, his agent told German television on Saturday.

The 29-year-old found himself surplus to requirements last Friday when Bayern lost 2-1 to Wolfsburg as he discovered just before kick-off he had lost his place at centre-back to Germany's rising star Holger Badstuber.

The Argentina star boycotted the game in protest and later told reporters he wanted a transfer out of Munich before the transfer window closes on Tuesday at midnight, but his agent said he is asking the impossible. "Barring a miracle, Micho (Demichelis) will stay at Bayern and fight to win his place back," his agent Adrian Vicente told sports channel Sport1.

"Bayern Munich want a transfer fee of ten million euros, which rules out a quick solution by Tuesday night. "Furthermore, Bayern have ruled out a loan to another club."

## Magpies take Ben Arfa on loan

AFP, Newcastle

Newcastle signed France winger Hatem Ben Arfa from Marseille on a season-long loan on Saturday.

Magpies' boss Chris Hughton had been keen to land Ben Arfa for several months and has finally managed to persuade the French champions to let him leave on loan with a view to a permanent transfer next year.

The 23-year-old had also been linked with a switch to German club Werder Bremen, but he insisted he was always keen to move to the Premier League team.

"It was always my first choice to come here and I'm delighted to be here," he said.

"I've paid real attention to the history of the club and the great players to have played for it, and particularly the supporters and I want to showcase my skills in Newcastle.

"All I'm waiting for is to show what I can do in front of the public in Newcastle. A lot of my friends in France already know the fans' reputation.

"The stadium has an ambience that is unique and I feel very lucky to have this opportunity."

Ben Arfa started his career at Lyon after graduating from the French football academy at Clairefontaine.

He has won eight caps for France, scoring twice, and is regarded as one of the most naturally talented players in the country.

## SuperCup Atletico's

Football

AFP, Monaco

Atletico Madrid defeated Champions League winners Inter Milan 2-0 on Friday to lift the European SuperCup, delivering an early-season body blow to coach Rafael Benitez.

After a disappointing first half, Europa League winners Atletico opened the scoring in the 62nd minute through Jose Antonio Reyes with Sergio Aguero grabbing the second eight minutes from the final whistle.

Benitez, who has taken over from Jose Mourinho in the Inter hotseat, then endured the further misery of seeing Diego Milito's 90th-minute penalty saved by goalkeeper David de Gea.

"I think we played well at the start, but then lost control," said Benitez.

"The players were a little tired and didn't have the physical intensity to worry a team of such talent.

"I will have to change things after Mourinho. How much time will it take? I don't know. We won the Italian SuperCup with the same type of game against Roma, but we lost the European SuperCup tonight against Atletico.



Atletico Madrid players celebrate with the SuperCup after winning the final against Inter Milan at the Louis II Stadium in Monaco on Friday.

## Liverpool shift focus

AFP, Liverpool



Fabio Aurelio has warned Liverpool to forget their European exploits and concentrate on the Premier League after labelling Sunday's home fixture with West Brom as a must-win game.

Roy Hodgson's team were made to toil in the second leg of their Europa League play-off at Turkish side Trabzonspor on Thursday before two late goals secured a 3-1 aggregate win that saw them into the competition's group phase.

Friday's draw pitched them into a group with Italian side Napoli, Romania's Steaua Bucharest and Utrecht of the Netherlands.

Aurelio, who played in the match in Turkey, said that Liverpool's victory, without key players Steven Gerrard and Fernando Torres, showed that the team has character to bounce back.

But the Brazilian full-back says that Liverpool must follow it up with victory against newly-promoted West Brom after a poor start to the Premier League campaign.

Last Monday's emphatic 3-0 defeat at Manchester City left Hodgson's side with one point from a possible six after two games.

"It was very important to qualify and get into the group stage of the Europa League," said Aurelio.

"Now we need to focus and try to recover as quickly as we can because we have an important

"Physically, tactically they were much stronger and had more time than us to prepare."

Atletico coach Quique Sanchez Flores was delighted with his team's performance.

"We really wanted this and the performance was great," said Flores. "We were the stronger side."

In a poor first 45 minutes, when neither de Gea or his Inter Brazilian counterpart Julio Cesar had a shot to save, Aguero was unlucky to have a penalty appeal turned down.

At the other end, Wesley Sneijder and Samuel Eto'o were both off target.

Reyes gave notice of the danger he posed in the 58th minute when he curled in a goal-bound shot which was well-saved by Cesar.

But Reyes was celebrating just four minutes later when he took the ball past Maicon before beating Cesar at his near post.

Aguero then had a shot cleared off the line by Inter's Romanian international Cristian Chivu before Diego Forlan saw two efforts stopped by Cesar.

The Argentine striker grabbed the second goal of the night after being set-up by Simao.

Inter's misery was complete when Milito had his penalty saved after Goran Pandev had been fouled in the box.

## Roma seal Burdisso move

AFP, Rome

AS Roma have signed Nicolas Burdisso from Inter Milan for eight million euros, the capital-based club said Saturday.

The 29-year-old had a highly successful loan spell at Roma last season and earlier this week turned down an offer from Juventus.

Roma will pay the fee over three seasons while Burdisso will earn 4.5 million euros a year, the club said.

Burdisso was part of the Argentina squad that reached the quarterfinals of the World Cup in South Africa.

His younger brother Guillermo, 22, has already joined Roma on loan from Rosario Central, with an option on a permanent transfer at the end of the season.

## Juventus sign Quagliarella

AFP, Rome

Juventus on Friday announced that they have signed Italy international striker Fabio Quagliarella on a season-long loan with an option to buy from Serie A rivals Napoli.

Juventus are paying 4.5 million euros to take Quagliarella on loan for the 2010-2011 campaign and will be able to make the move permanent for a further fee of 10.5 million euros.

The 27-year-old striker will be paid two million euros per season, according to Italian news agency Ansa.

Quagliarella has played 22 times for Italy and scored five goals, including a delicate chip in their 3-2 defeat by Slovakia at the World Cup.

Juve moved for Quagliarella after being thwarted in their attempts to sign Udinese captain Antonio Di Natale.

## 'Fabiano too expensive'

AFP, London

Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp claims his bid to sign Luis Fabiano from Sevilla could be scuppered because the Spanish club are asking for "crazy money" for the Brazil forward.

Redknapp confirmed on Friday that Spurs had asked Sevilla if they would be willing to sell Fabiano, but the Premier League club have been discouraged by the 25 million pounds (30.4 million euros) asking price.

Redknapp believes that fee is too high for a 29-year-old who will be out of contract and therefore available on a free transfer at the end of this season.

"I think the chairman's enquired," Redknapp said. "He's a player that I like but I think they're talking crazy money for him, for a player that age."

"One year left on his contract, I think he's got."

"In excess of 24 million pounds or 25 million pounds, the figures don't stack up. That wouldn't be a goer, not for that sort of money."

## Bayern humiliated

AFP, Berlin



Defending champions Bayern Munich suffered a shock defeat in only their second German league game of the season on Friday as they were stunned 2-0 by 10-man Kaiserslautern, the Bundesliga's new boys.

Having won the second division last season, Kaiserslautern beat Cologne last weekend and have now claimed the scalp of defending champions Bayern with goals by Ivo Ilievic and Srđjan Lakić, who has now scored three goals in two games.

In injury time, striker Ilievic was sent off for a second yellow card, but it did little to spoil Kaiserslautern's party.

"We wanted to stand up to Bayern," said Ilievic. "We implemented the game plan well and deserved to win. We made life difficult for Bayern."

Champions League finalists Bayern were punished for a lethargic opening 45 minutes at Kaiserslautern's notorious Betzenberg stadium.

"Over 90 minutes we were the superior team and had the better scoring chances," insisted Bayern defender Philipp Lahm.

"We shouldn't have lost like that today. If you lose, you have done some wrong and we have to accept that."

Munich's Thomas Mueller wasted a golden

chance to put his side ahead when Bastian Schweinsteiger's pass put him one-on-one with Kaiserslautern keeper Tobias Sippel on 24 minutes but he fired just wide.

Bayern were then floored by two goals in less than two minutes with Ilievic playing a huge part in both.

The first came when defender Florian Dick got the better of Franck Ribery and knock in a cross which striker Adam Nemeš left for Ilievic to fire past Bayern goalkeeper Hans-Joerg Butt on 36 minutes.

Seconds later, the Croatian then supplied the final pass which split the Munich defence and allowed Lakić to slot past Butt for his third Bundesliga goal in two games after his pair against Cologne last weekend.

Munich stepped up their efforts after the break, but between them forwards Ivica Olic and Miroslav Klose squandered a string of chances while Ribery and Schweinsteiger were frustrated by Kaiserslautern's cast-iron defence.

With an hour played, left-back Contento made way for Croatia's Danijel Pranjić and Toni Kroos came on for striker Olic and the Germany midfielder nearly scored on 66 minutes when he fired straight at the goalkeeper.

With 15 minutes left, Brazilian defender Rodnei wasted a chance to make it 3-0 to Kaiserslautern when he headed wide, but the hosts were not to be denied a famous victory as their fans began the party on the final whistle.

## Ibra's agent blamed

Football

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona on Friday threatened to terminate the contract linking them with Mino Raiola, the agent of their striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic, after he criticised club coach Pep Guardiola in the press.

"The executive committee of the FC Barcelona board of directors would like to publicly denounce the conduct over the last few days of the agent of our player Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Sr Mino Raiola, whose declarations have put into question the honour and moral integrity of our coach Josep Guardiola," read a statement on the Spanish champions' website.

"These declarations have affected the relationship between the coach and the player and as a result the willingness of the player to fulfil his obligations.

"As such the declarations are a flagrant breach of the contract which Sr Raiola's company have with the club for representation and management.

"Our legal department is therefore consid-

ering the possibility of rescinding this contract and the cessation of the annual payment Sr Raiola's company receives from the club as part of this agreement."

Barcelona were responding to an interview with Raiola that appeared in Friday's edition of the Marca sports daily, in which he described his client's position at the club as "surreal".

Ibrahimovic has four years to run on his contract but has seemingly fallen out of favour with Guardiola since the arrival of Spain international striker David Villa from Valencia earlier in the summer.

In an interview with Italian TV channel Sky Sport 24 on Wednesday, Ibrahimovic claimed he had only spoken to Guardiola twice in six months.

The tall, skilful Swedish forward joined Barca from Inter Milan last year and is in talks with AC Milan about a return to Italy.

Raiola told Sky Sport 24 earlier on Friday that Ibrahimovic's move to the seven-time European champions was close to completion.

"The baby is nearly born and we are in the eighth month of pregnancy," Raiola said after a meeting with Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani during a marathon three-day session of negotiations in Barcelona."



Barcelona's new signing Argentinian midfielder Javier Mascherano gives two thumbs up outside Nou Camp yesterday.