

FA fines Cole

AFP, London

The Football Association on Thursday fined Ashley Cole and warned him to behave in future after he wrote a critical tweet about the governing body related to the John Terry-Anton Ferdinand racism hearing.

"Chelsea's Ashley Cole has been fined £90,000 (111,000 euros, \$145,000) after he admitted an FA charge in relation to a Twitter comment which was improper and/or brought the game into disrepute," the FA said in a statement on its website.

"Cole, who had requested a non-personal hearing, was also warned as to his future conduct."

The England defender earlier this month angrily described the FA as a "bunch of twats" after the FA cast doubt on his evidence at the hearing into claims that his team-mate John Terry racially abused QPR's Anton Ferdinand.

The left-back deleted the post, issued an immediate apology and even said "sorry" in person to FA chairman David Bernstein. But it was not enough to prevent a disciplinary charge.

Terry was handed a four-match ban and fined £220,000 for using a racial slur against Ferdinand during Chelsea's match with QPR in October 11 and on Thursday announced that he would not appeal the punishment.

Polish fans in hot water

AFP, Warsaw

Two Poland fans who became overnight Internet stars after invading their national stadium's waterlogged pitch ahead of a cancelled World Cup qualifier against England will on Thursday learn whether they face time behind bars for their antics.

The two men, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, were arrested on Tuesday in Warsaw's Kazimierz Gorski Stadium after managing to slalom around pursuing stewards amid a deluge.

One of them managed a sliding belly-flop in the water, as fans in the packed 58,000-capacity arena roared him on.

A tongue in cheek video of the fans, set to the music of the television series "Baywatch", had already drawn over 605,000 views on Youtube by Thursday. Supporters have also set up a Facebook group under the joke banner "Free the Heroes of the National Swimming Pool".

Under Poland's anti-hooligan legislation, the duo and a third fan who also invaded the pitch could face up to three years in prison, community service or a fine.



STAR Cricket
Champions League T20
Delhi Daredevils v Auckland Aces
Live from 9:30pm

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News



GP Federation Cup
SEMIFINAL
Sk Russel v Mohammedan
Time: 5:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu



Poland defender Kamil Glik (R) heads home the equaliser during their 2014 World Cup qualifier against England at the National Stadium in Warsaw on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Rooney stays upbeat Terry won't appeal ban

AFP, Warsaw



Steven Gerrard and Wayne Rooney believe England will still qualify for the World Cup despite Wednesday's 1-1 draw in Poland but admit the performance in Warsaw was far from perfect.

Both teams saw their preparations thrown into chaos when the 2014 qualifier was postponed on Tuesday because of a waterlogged pitch and re-arranged for Wednesday.

However Poland coped with the conditions far better as they came from behind to earn a point in a tie they were unfortunate not to win.

"It was a difficult game, a difficult pitch," admitted Manchester United striker Rooney.

"We weren't at our best but we dug in and got a draw. We know we can play better but this is a difficult place to come so it is a decent point."

England remain top of Group H, a point clear of Montenegro, and are clinging to those kind of positives following a disappointing display which saw Rooney's first-half goal cancelled out by a second-

half header from Kamil Glik.

"We knew it was a tough group, but we're still confident," said Rooney.

"We believe in ourselves and we believe we are the best team in the group, so we are confident of qualifying. Hopefully we will win the rest of our home games and have a great chance."

England captain Gerrard echoed his teammate's sentiments; but also praised Poland for a spirited display despite missing inspirational captain Jakub Blaszczykowski through injury.

He said: "I thought Poland dealt with the conditions and played to the conditions slightly better than us. That's the reason we didn't get three points."

"We did OK until we scored but never built on the one-goal lead. We never passed the ball well enough, for whatever reason."

"I'm happy to be top but slightly disappointed not to have a few more points on the board. But I don't think Montenegro and Ukraine will come here and take maximum points."

England have eight points from four games but second-placed Montenegro have a game in hand and can go top of the group if they beat San Marino next month.

Football

REUTERS, London

Chelsea's John Terry will not appeal against his four-match ban and 220,000-pound (\$355,700) fine for racially insulting Queens Park Rangers defender Anton Ferdinand, the player said in a statement on Thursday.

Terry, 31, was found guilty by a Football Association (FA) tribunal of using a racial slur towards Ferdinand during a Premier League match at Loftus Road in October 2011.

The centre back was acquitted in a court of law for the same offence and always maintained his innocence but apologised on Thursday for the language he used in his altercation with Ferdinand.

European champions Chelsea released a statement saying they had taken disciplinary action against the former England captain, but did not reveal the details of any additional punishment.

"After careful consideration, I have decided not to appeal against

the FA judgment," Terry said.

"I want to take this opportunity to apologise to everyone for the language I used in the game against Queens Park Rangers last October."

"Although I'm disappointed with



the FA judgment, I accept that the language I used, regardless of the context, is not acceptable on the football field or indeed in any walk of life."

The Chelsea captain will now miss Saturday's match against Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane, as well as two matches against Manchester United, including a League Cup tie, and a trip to Swansea City.

Borini set for foot surgery

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool's Italian striker Fabio Borini is to undergo surgery on a fractured bone in his foot and could face three months out of action, the club confirmed Wednesday.

Borini first sustained an injury to his foot in the Reds' 2-1 home defeat to Manchester United on September 23, Liverpool said in a statement on their website.

The club said the 21-year-old then "aggravated the problem resulting in a fracture" when on international duty with Italy's Under-21s ahead of their game against Sweden on Friday.

"Typically, an injury of this nature requires a three-month rehabilitation period," the statement added.

Borini, who joined Liverpool from Roma in the summer, has scored just once in 11 appearances for the English Premier League side.

His absence leaves the club with just one recognised striker in Uruguayan Luis Suarez.

City apologise to Balotelli's agent

Football

AFP, Rome

Mario Balotelli's agent says Manchester City contacted him to apologise for their perceived criticism of the controversial striker.

It was widely reported in Britain at the weekend that Balotelli had been warned he must set a better example with his behaviour on and off the pitch.

"I think that it's important to make a good example," City's chief football operations officer Brian Marwood was quoted as saying by several English newspapers on Sunday.

"I think - and we all know who we are talking about - that you will get people within the system who do not show the right values and the right behaviour."

But according to Balotelli's agent, Mino Raiola, Marwood said his comments had been misinterpreted.

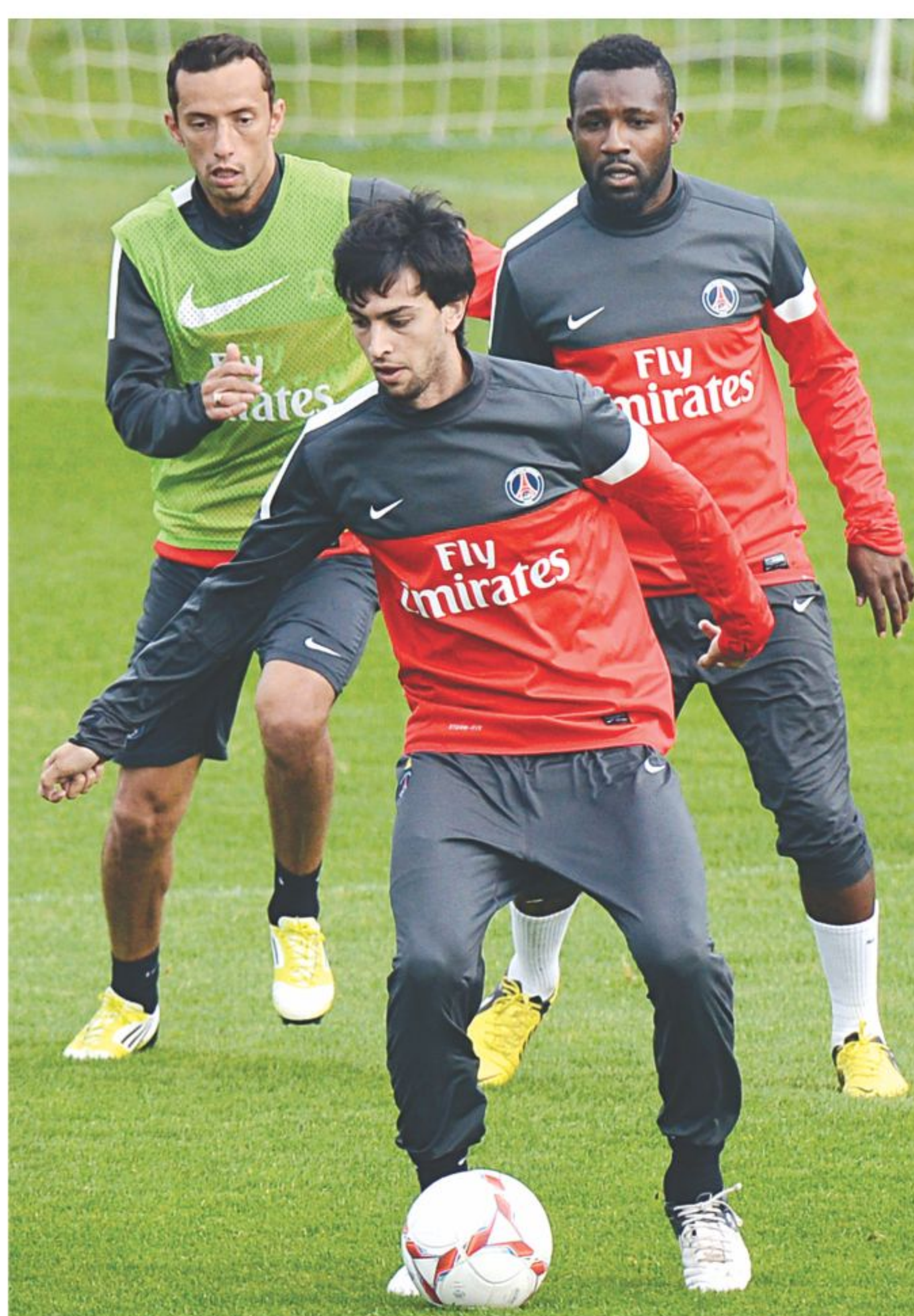
Raiola told Italy's Radio 24 on Wednesday: "Brian Marwood telephoned me and asked me to excuse him for these comments which were badly interpreted by the English press and Mario understands the situation, no problem."

Raiola added: "In England, journalists often twist things like that and their newspapers are only good for cleaning windcreens."

The Italian press did not escape Raiola's wrath either, the agent talking about "the highs and lows of the Italian press, sporting or not, towards Mario Balotelli. There is no balanced viewpoints...with him (Balotelli) everything is news."

Balotelli has been involved in a number of high-profile and often bizarre incidents since joining City from Inter Milan in 2010.

The 22-year-old has been involved in bust-ups with team-mates, threw a dart at a City youth team player and set off a firework in his own bathroom.



Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Javier Pastore (C) controls the ball as teammates Nene (L) and Siaka Tiene look on during a training session at the Camp des Loges yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Drogba set to return

Football

AFP, Shanghai

Former Chelsea star Didier Drogba was set to return from international duty Thursday and into a row at his Shanghai Shenhua squad that has seen teammates reportedly refuse to practise over unpaid wages.

Shenhua players were said by Chinese media to have protested on Monday over the pay dispute, turning up late for practice at the club's training ground and taking a leisurely stroll around a running track. Media reports have said payments to some players were skipped.

However, the team will play its next game on Saturday as scheduled, club and league officials said Thursday, in comments suggesting the dispute had been laid to rest.

Training had returned to normal after the one-day protest, a club official told AFP, declining further comment.

Drogba returns after scoring twice in Ivory Coast's Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Senegal on Saturday that had to be abandoned in the second half because of rioting fans.

A spokeswoman for the Chinese Football Association told AFP that a scheduled match between ninth-placed Shenhua and Changchun Yatai, who are two places higher, would kick off as scheduled on Saturday.

"The match will be on as planned," he said.

Chinese media have reported that Shenhua's chief investor Zhu Jun has threatened to withhold salaries of players unless he is granted majority control of the club.

It was not clear whether the threat was the reason behind the reportedly unpaid wages.

In a posting on his microblog on Wednesday, the flamboyant online gaming tycoon said he "solemnly respected and understood" the action by the players on Monday.

Previous reports had said that under a 2007 deal, Zhu's 28.5 percent stake in Shenhua would rise to around 70 percent if he invested more than 150 million yuan (\$24 million). He has reportedly spent 600 million yuan.