

Mvila will appeal ban

AFP, Paris
France midfielder Yann Mvila of Ligue 1 outfit Rennes will appeal his 18-month international ban which rules him out of the 2014 World Cup finals, his lawyer told AFP on Friday.

"The decision to appeal was taken and a recorded delivery letter will be sent early next week," Mvila's lawyer Thierry Fillion said. On November 8 five France under-21 players including Mvila picked up lengthy international bans (the others until December 31, 2013 and Mvila until July 14, 2014) as punishment for breaking a night-time curfew between two key European championship qualifiers.

Mvila, 22-years-old, already had 22 senior caps times but was with the Under-21's after being warned over future conduct when he refused to shake coach Laurent Blanc's hand when substituted during their quarter-final defeat to Spain at Euro 2012.

The French Football Federation identified Mvila as the ringleader behind the ill-judged round-trip taxi-ride from the north coast port of Le Havre to a Champs Elysee nightclub in Paris.

The team had beaten Norway 1-0 the previous evening in a Euro 2013 play-off but suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of the Scandinavians 5-3 in the return.

France coach Erick Mombaerts was sacked after the loss.

The others were Rennes' Chris Mavinga, Wissam Ben Yedder of Toulouse, Real Sociedad's Antoine Griezmann and Mbaye Niang of AC Milan.

Robben breaks down again

REUTERS, Berlin
Bayern Munich's Arjen Robben has been ruled out of his team's upcoming matches in the Bundesliga and the Champions League after a minor muscle tear sustained while on international duty, coach Jupp Heynckes said on Friday.

Winger Robben, who only recently returned after a four-week absence due to a back injury, will miss Saturday's Bavarian derby against Nuremberg as well as the clash at Valencia in the Champions League next week.



Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud (L) celebrates his goal with teammate Theo Walcott during their Premier League encounter against Tottenham Hotspur at the Emirates Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Gunners blast Spurs

AFP, London



Emmanuel Adebayor made a nightmare return to the Emirates Stadium on Saturday, his 18th-minute dismissal proving decisive as Arsenal cruised to a 5-2 win over Tottenham Hotspur in the north London derby.

The former Arsenal forward had already fired his side into a 10th-minute lead when he jumped in on Gunners midfielder Santi Cazorla to earn a straight red card.

That transformed the game, with Arsenal establishing a two-goal half-time lead through Per Mertesacker, Lukas Podolski and Olivier Giroud.

Cazorla and Theo Walcott added to the tally after the break, with Gareth Bale claiming one back for the visitors.

The result provided a timely boost for Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, who has come in for growing criticism following a string of inconsistent performances.

For Tottenham manager Andre Villas-Boas, there was only frustration, as he suffered an embarrassing reverse in his first experience of this local derby.

The Spurs manager's decision to pair Jermain Defoe and Adebayor up front for the first time in the Premier League this season confirmed the visitors' intention to take the game to Arsenal.

And for the 17 minutes prior to Adebayor's dismissal, the plan worked perfectly.

William Gallas had an eighth-minute effort ruled offside, but two minutes later the visitors went ahead when Jan Vertonghen's routine long ball forward exposed the Arsenal backline.

Mertesacker and Bacary Sagna were both caught sleeping as Defoe beat the

offside trap before firing in a left-foot shot that Wojciech Szczesny could only palm into the path of Adebayor, who finished from four yards out.

It was the ideal start for the striker, but did nothing to calm him and eight minutes later, referee Howard Webb brandished a straight red card after he lunged in foolishly at Cazorla with his studs showing.

The momentum of the game shifted completely, with Tottenham immediately forced onto the back foot as Arsenal made the most of being handed an unexpected route back into the game.

It took the home side just seven minutes to level, with Mertesacker making up for his earlier error by heading home Theo Walcott's right-wing cross.

This time it was the Spurs defence that was all at sea, with Gallas guilty of allowing the Germany centre-back to rise unchallenged.

Spurs defences were breached again two minutes before the break when Podolski cleverly used Mikel Arteta's run as a decoy before turning and shooting beyond Lloris with the help of a deflection off Gallas.

Then, seconds before the interval, Arsenal well and truly took control when Giroud turned home Cazorla's left-wing cross at the near post.

Villas-Boas made two changes at half-time and switched to a back three in an effort to restore his side's attacking threat.

But it was Arsenal who soon established their dominance once again and when Cazorla made 4-1 on the hour, it was impossible to see a way back for the visitors.

Walcott and Podolski combined on the left before the German drilled in a low cross that found Cazorla unmarked at the far post.

Lille miss chance

REUTERS, Paris

Lille missed the chance to move level on points with Ligue 1 pacesetters Paris St Germain and Olympique Marseille when their recent fine run ended with a 2-0 defeat at Lorient on Friday.

Lorient, who had conceded 16 times in their previous four matches, triumphed thanks to goals midway through each half from Gregory Bourillon and Benjamin Corgnet.

Lille, who had won their last three league games, stay seventh with 20 points from 13 games, three points behind leaders PSG.

Lorient, who kept only their second clean sheet of the season, move up a place to 10th with 18 points.

PSG, who lead Marseille on goal difference, take on in-form Stade Rennes at the Parc des Princes on Saturday.

At the Moustoir, Lorient went ahead in the 24th minute when defender Bourillon headed home from a Yann Jouffre free kick.

Lille came close to equalising early in the second half but Fabien Audard produced a great save to keep out Aurelien Chedjou's header.

A remarkable year

Football
AP, Buenos Aires

Lionel Messi's season has ended with Argentina's national team. It's been quite a run.

Messi's transformation in 2012 was remarkable. The man who couldn't score for his country suddenly equalled Gabriel Batistuta's 1998 record of 12 goals in a year. Messi needed only nine games, while Batistuta had 12.

Messi has always scored for Barcelona, but he only began to deliver for Argentina this year. Between March 2009 and October 2011, he failed to find the net in 16 matches: seven World Cup qualifiers, five at the World Cup, and four in Copa America, the continental championship.

The criticism was unrelenting, with reports suggesting he was either unpatriotic or unable to handle the enormous pressure placed on him in football-mad Argentina.

Messi has clicked with Argentina coach Alejandro Sabella, who took over 15 months ago after Sergio Batista was fired following the team's quarterfinal exit at Copa America.

"Messi is capable of breaking all the records, as incredible as that seems," Sabella said. "For a player like Messi, with his physical talent, football knowledge, technical ability - and his head - everything is possible."

Messi was overwhelming in 2012, pushing his career total for Argentina to 31 goals. He trails Diego Maradona by three. Next in line is Hernan Crespo with 50 and Batistuta with 56. It's possible - perhaps unlikely, but this is Messi - that he could break all of those records as soon as the

2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Messi made it clear when Sabella took over that he wanted to play with two forwards in front of him: Sergio Aguero and Gonzalo Higuain. Sabella obliged, and the player known as "La Pulga" (The Flea) delivered.

In a season of many highlights for Argentina, the apex was a 3-0 victory over Uruguay, the defending South American champion, in World Cup qualifying last month. Messi scored two goals and received repeated, thunderous ovations from a sellout crowd in the western city of Mendoza.

The year was also marked by the birth of Messi's first child, Thiago, born November 2 to his girlfriend Antonella Rocuzzo.

The low point probably came a few days ago in Argentina's 0-0 draw against Saudi Arabia in Riyadh. Messi played poorly, as did his teammates. They looked burned out, and the tone was probably set by Messi's arrival on Monday, when security guards were unable to control the chaos, with one soldier inadvertently pointing the barrel of a rifle at him.

Of course, Messi is also prospering with Barcelona.

He has scored 76 goals this calendar year for Barcelona, putting him only nine shy of Gerd Mueller's record set 40 years ago. He passed Pele's mark of 75 last weekend.

"At this point in history there is no longer any difference between what Messi delivers for Barcelona and what he produces for the national team," said Miguel Angel Bertolotto, a reporter with the daily newspaper Clarin. "With his unequalled play, he has shredded all doubts."



PHOTO: REUTERS

LA Galaxy superstar David Beckham (2nd from L) sits courtside with his sons Cruz (L), Romeo and Brooklyn (R) during the NBA basketball game between the Los Angeles Lakers and Phoenix Suns in Los Angeles on Friday.

Moyes in no rush

AFP, London



Everton manager David Moyes says he is in no rush to sign a new contract with the club, despite his side's impressive start to the Premier League season.

Moyes' current deal is due to expire at the end of the campaign but he says he is happy to wait to see how the season pans out before committing himself to a new contract.

"No doubt I will be asked the question every week, but I'm in no great hurry," Moyes said on Friday.

"I just want the season to go on, see how we do and overall, if we do well, it will make things a lot easier.

"I want to see how we are progressing and also I don't want supporters to get too sick of seeing the same manager all the time.

"I am not (concerned), but I can understand maybe people will be.

"I can understand why at this time people would say it is quite close but all I can say is, I've been here over 10 years now, we've worked really hard together with the club, and we'll continue to do so.

"I have a great relationship with the chairman (Bill Kenwright). We speak every day and when the time is right, we will sit down and see what we are going to do.

"It might be we wait until later in the year before we sort things out."

Everton are fourth in the table ahead of Saturday's away game at Reading.

Asked if he was excited by his side's form, he said: "Quite, but not madly.



- ESPN**
Primera Liga
Deportivo v Levante
Live from 5:00pm
- Serie A**
Inter Milan v Cagliari
Live from 8:00pm
- English Premiership**
Fulham v Sunderland
Live from 10:00pm
- Primera Liga**
Granada v Atletico Madrid
Live from 12:45am (Monday)
Sevilla v Real Betis



- National Cricket League**
(Four-Day Match; Day 3)
Rajshahi v Chittagong
Venue: Sylhet Divisional Stadium
Khulna v Dhaka Metro
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra
Sylhet v Barisal
Venue: Barisal Divisional Stadium
Dhaka v Rangpur