

125-yr-old mystery solved

REUTERS, London

A 125-year-old mystery surrounding the scorer of the world's first league goal has ended with the publication of a new book identifying James Kenyon "Kenny" Davenport of Bolton Wanderers as the man.

The world's first league fixtures took place on Sept. 8, 1888 when the English League began with five matches including Bolton Wanderers' home game against Derby County.

This season marks the 125th anniversary of the League and researchers were determined to establish the scorer of the first goal which had been widely credited as an own goal by Aston Villa's Gershom Cox against Wolverhampton Wanderers.

The breakthrough came when Robert Boyling, a researcher at a newspaper library, discovered an advert showing that the Villa match kicked off half-an-hour later than previously thought, at 3.30 pm.

The kickoff time of Bolton's match was always known to be 3.45pm and Davenport scored after two minutes.

Cox's own goal came after 31 minutes of the Villa match so could not have been scored until one minute past four.

"Everyone in Bolton knew exactly who Kenny Davenport was - a working class lad who was happy to be playing football for a living and also to represent his country."



Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim (C) hands over a cheque for Tk 20 lakh in aid of Savar's Rana Plaza building collapse victims to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon (3rd from L) and national cricketers (from L-R) Abdur Razzak, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Nasir Hossain and Mahmudullah Riyad look on at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday. The cheque is a fulfilment of the promise made by the national cricketers, who were in Zimbabwe when on April 24 Rana Plaza collapsed and claimed the lives of 1,129, to make a significant contribution to help those affected by the tragedy.

PHOTO: PMO

Ecuador striker dies suddenly

AFP, Quito

Ecuador striker Christian Benitez has died suddenly in Qatar at the age of 27, his agent Jose Chamorro said Monday.

Speaking to Ecuadorian Gama TV, Chamorro claimed Benitez, had suffered a heart-attack.

He had complained of abdominal pains and was transferred to a hospital, where he died on Monday, Chamorro said.

Benitez, who was top scorer in the Mexican league last season with Club America, had just signed for Qatari outfit El-Jaish and had travelled to the club to undergo a medical before completing his move.

Benitez was considered a key part of Colombian coach Reinaldo Rueda's Ecuador team.

Reina slams Liverpool

AFP, London



Spanish goalkeeper Jose Reina on Monday launched a scathing attack on Liverpool after accusing the club of forcing him to join Napoli on loan.

The 30-year-old started his season-long loan to the Italian side on Monday following several months of speculation over his future.

He was reported to be a target for Barcelona at the end of last season but a deal with the Spanish champions never materialised.

In the meantime, Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers signed Belgian goalkeeper Simon Mignolet from Sunderland.

With Mignolet on board, Liverpool were not keen to keep Reina, whose is reported paid £100,000 (116,000 euros, \$154,000) per week and the Premier League accepted a loan offer from Napoli.

Faced with the prospect of losing his place, Reina reluctantly agreed to be reunited with former Liverpool Rafael Benitez, who is now in charge at Napoli.

But Reina, who joined Liverpool from Villarreal in 2005, said he was disappointed to have been left with

little choice about his future.

"If I have one regret, it is the way that I am leaving," Reina wrote on his official website pepereina25.com.

"It is only natural that I would be disappointed that the Liverpool management agreed to loan me to Napoli without telling me first.

"I thought that I deserved better than that, even though I understand that difficult decisions have to be taken in football."

Reina conceded that he had told Liverpool he would have been keen to join Barca if a serious offer was made but was still surprised at the way he was treated.

Rooney backed to stay

AFP, Hong Kong



Manchester United legend Bobby Charlton expects striker Wayne Rooney to stay at the club and hopes he will go on to beat his goal-scoring record.

Rooney's future at Old Trafford has been in doubt since the end of last season when now-retired manager Alex Ferguson said the England forward had asked for a transfer.

Rooney denies that but is said to be "angry and confused" and has been the subject of a big-money bid from Chelsea. United say they do not want to sell the 27-year-old. Charlton, now a United director, told Sky

Sports in Hong Kong, where the club are on tour: "Wayne Rooney is a Manchester United player and I think that he will continue to be a Manchester United player."

"I don't like losing really, really good players and he is a really great player. "I was hoping one day that he might score as many goals as I had and that would have been really nice if it was at our club - and I'm still thinking that way."

Injury has kept Rooney out of United's pre-season tour of Asia and Australia, but United manager David Moyes on Sunday said the forward was on track to return for a friendly in Sweden on August 6.

Rooney's tally of 197 goals is 52 short of Charlton's club record.



USA players celebrate with the CONCACAF Gold Cup trophy after their victory over Panama in the final in Chicago on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Anti-racism app launched

AFP, London

Football anti-racism group Kick It Out on Monday launched a new mobile phone tool for fans and players to report racist or homophobic abuse, after a number of high-profile incidents last season.

The mobile phone application will allow fans and players to report abuse directly to Kick It Out, which will follow up the cases with the football authorities and, if necessary, the police.

"Part of the problems that were raised last season were players saying they had complained about an incident and nothing was done about it," said the organisation's chairman Herman Ouseley.

"Some of them never even found out about the outcome of their complaint, especially if it was not found in their favour because we had not been involved."

Gold Cup USA's

AFP, Chicago



Brek Shea scored in the 69th minute to give the United States a 1-0 victory over Panama in Sunday's title match of the Gold Cup, North America's biennial continental football championship tournament.

The Americans stretched their team-record win streak to 11 matches and claimed their fifth Gold Cup crown after previously taking the title in 1991, 2002, 2005 and 2007. Every edition of the event has been played on US soil.

"It's an unbelievable feeling," US captain DaMarcus Beasley said. "I'm at a loss for words. I'm so excited. This is what it's about, winning championships together."

With the victory, the US squad booked a date to face the 2015 Gold Cup champion to decide a berth at the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup in Russia.

The decisive moment came when a US centering pass was deflected toward the Panama goal. Onrushing Landon Donovan, the all-time US scoring leader, raced for the ball and attracted all attention from Panama's defenders.

But the ball rolled past Donovan's outstretched foot and toward the far side of the yawning goal, where Shea raced forward and tapped it across the line.

"I tried to shoot it. It wasn't my finest

moment," Donovan said. "But fortunately Brek was there to put it in."

"It has meant a lot to all of us. We had a dream and a goal and I think we once again showed the American experience."

Donovan, a three-time World Cup standout who has netted five goals in the tournament, has not played in a World Cup qualifier this year after having taken almost four months off between seasons for the Los Angeles Galaxy.

But the 31-year-old striker could be poised to return to the top squad for the next US World Cup qualifier on September 6 at Costa Rica and play a key role if the Americans, who top the qualifying table, reach the 2014 World Cup.

"We'll see for the World Cup," Donovan said. "We have a lot of guys who weren't here for the qualifying. We want to keep pushing each other and keep getting better and better."

Not all was good news for the US side, however, as Stuart Holden went off with a sprained knee.

Andreas Herzog served as the replacement coach in the match for US coach Jurgen Klinsmann, the former German international star who was banned for the match after being sent off in the 87th minute of the semi-final against Honduras for complaining to the referee.

It was a loss to Mexico in the 2011 Gold Cup final that prompted USA Soccer to dump then-coach Bob Bradley, now the coach of Egypt, and hire Klinsmann.

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