



## Late Own Goal Forces Chelsea Draw

Chelsea escaped from Liverpool with a 1-1 draw after the first leg of their Champions League semifinal on Tuesday, rescued by an injury time own goal from substitute John Arne Riise.

According to Reuters, Dirk Kuyt had given Liverpool the lead after 43 minutes when he fired between goalkeeper Petr Cech's legs and with almost five minutes of injury time played, it looked as though Liverpool would take a deserved lead to Stamford Bridge for next week's second leg.

However with Austrian referee Konrad Plautz looking at his watch; Chelsea substitute Salomon Kalou lofted one last high ball into the Liverpool penalty area.

Riise, who had replaced the injured Fabio

Aurelio after 62 minutes, stooped to try and head the ball clear, but instead headed it past helpless goalkeeper Pepe Reina and into the roof of his own net.

It gave Chelsea a share of the spoils they hardly deserved as Liverpool dominated for long periods but were denied by some outstanding saves from Cech.

With time almost up it looked as though the seventh meeting between the teams in the Champions League in the last four seasons was about to end in a 1-0 score line for the fourth time.

Instead this match became the first to produce two goals and leave the tie on a knife-edge with Chelsea the slight favorites to advance to the final in Moscow on May 21.

Meanwhile, Manchester United defender Nemanja Vidic is a doubt for Wednesday's Champions League semifinal first leg against Barcelona after going down with a stomach bug.

According to AP, the Serb missed training at the Nou Camp on Tuesday and Spanish media said he had been taken to the Hospital de Bellvitge late in the evening for an assessment of his condition.

Manchester United was unavailable for immediate comment about the player.

Fellow defender Wes Brown is also likely to face a late fitness test after he only briefly took part in Tuesday's training session, jogging around the pitch rather than joining in with the rest of his team mates.

## Djokovic Advances At Monte Carlo

Novak Djokovic advanced to the third round of the Monte Carlo Masters by defeating Ivan Ljubicic 6-3, 6-3 Tuesday.

According to AP, the Australian Open champion broke Ljubicic at love in the eighth game of the first set for a 5-3 lead and clinched the set with an ace.

Using a two-handed backhand to counter Ljubicic's booming serve, Djokovic saved two break points in the eighth game of the second set but was rarely troubled.

"I came up with a straight-set win, which is very important for me at the start of the clay-court season," Djokovic said. "I played my best tennis in the most important moments, and that's what actually matters most."

The Serb will meet Andy Murray, who beat Filippo Volandri of Italy 6-4, 6-1.

"I had to adapt my game a little bit," Murray said. "I managed to do that with some important points in the first set. I probably made him come to the net quite a few times as well, with short slices and drop shots."

Murray is expecting a more difficult match against Djokovic.

"Novak is No. 1 in the (ATP) race and won the first Grand Slam of the year," Murray said. "So it's going to be tough."

## Beijing Games Go Online Again

Organizers of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games will try again to sell tickets online. The final batch of domestic-market tickets--1.38 million--will go on sale beginning May 5, organizers announced on Wednesday. Tickets will be sold at Bank of China outlets and on an official website, with sales closing June 9. The Beijing Olympics open on August 8.

According to AP, overwhelming demand for tickets caused a computer system to crash after just a few hours when the previous sales phase opened six months ago, forcing organizers to revert to a lottery system.

The system was also used in the initial phase of domestic ticket sales. "Well, we have only 100 days to go before the opening ceremony. We don't have enough time for a lottery drawn," said Zhu Yan, director of the ticketing center for the Beijing organizing committee. "We don't have time for that to be done."

Zhu tried to give assurances that 'fake or counterfeit tickets' would be difficult to produce and would be detected. Forgeries could present a problem in China, where counterfeiting of goods from DVDs to heart medicine is widespread despite repeated crackdowns.

## Bayern Fail to Persuade Lahm

Bayern Munich has withdrawn the offer of a new contract to Philipp Lahm after failing to reach agreement with the Germany defender, who said on Tuesday he was eager to move abroad.

Lahm's existing deal runs out at the end of next season and Bayern said in a statement that talks on an extension had not been successful.

Bayern must now decide whether to sell him at the end of this season or risk losing him on a free transfer in 2009.

Lahm, 24, who scored the first goal of the 2006 World Cup and is a regular for Germany, has been linked with Barcelona in local media reports.

"My plan is to leave Bayern before I'm past my peak," Lahm said in an interview with Stern magazine.

"I played for two years at Stuttgart and I'm in my third year at Bayern, the biggest German club. The logical next step is to go abroad."

Asked if he could leave at the end of this season, Lahm said: "That's quite possible."

Bayern, who won the German Cup on Saturday and have a 10-point lead in the Bundesliga with five matches to play, are already working on plans for next season.

On Tuesday they agreed to sell forward Jan Schlaudraff to Hanover 96 for an undisclosed fee.

## News in Brief

### Moradi to Officiate At Olympic Football

Iranian international football referee, Masoud Moradi will officiate in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

According to the organizers, Moradi will be assisted by his compatriot Hassan Kamranifar and Iraqi Subhi Adib in the competitions.

Moradi had earlier refereed the 2003 FIFA Confederations Cup in France but did not participate in the 2006 World Cup Germany because his assistant was unprepared.

The 43-year-old has been a FIFA international referee since 2000.

### Iran-Bulgaria Friendly Scheduled

Bulgaria will play a friendly against Iran's national team next month, the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) has announced.

The BFU said that the Bulgarian national team will have two friendly matches with Iran and Bosnia ahead of the 2010 World Cup qualifiers, Bulgarian website Sofia Echo reported on Tuesday.

The match with Iran will be held in Tehran on May 23, while Bulgaria will host the game with Bosnia on August 20, the BFU added.

Iran's Football Federation (IFF) has not yet confirmed the report.

Bulgaria did not qualify for the 2006 World Cup in Germany and Euro 2008 in Austria and Switzerland. Bulgaria's best World Cup performance was in the 1994 World Cup in the US, where it finished fourth.

Meanwhile, the IFF announced on Monday that the Iranian national football team will play a friendly with Congo on May 25 ahead of its World Cup qualifying match against UAE in Tehran.

### Pienaar Agrees to

### Permanent Everton Deal

South Africa midfielder Steven Pienaar has agreed a permanent move to Everton worth £2.05 million (\$4.09 million), the Premier League club announced on Tuesday.

The playmaker has impressed since moving from Bundesliga club Borussia Dortmund on a season-long loan last summer resulting in the Toffees agreeing to a three-year deal keeping him with the club until July 2011, AFP reported.

"Steven has done well for us. He is one of the reasons our football has improved. He is a really good football player," said Everton manager, David Moyes of Pienaar who has been a key figure in the club's progress to the League Cup semifinals and the last 16 of the UEFA Cup.

With Everton now hanging on to fifth place in the Premier League, he has scored twice in 35 appearances.

The 26-year-old had been linked with Arsenal, Newcastle and Valencia in recent weeks but his first choice was to stay at Goodison Park.

The South African had recently expressed his concern that a long-term deal was taking too long to sort out, and he feared the agreement Everton had with Borussia Dortmund would run out before the fee had been agreed.

Pienaar was initially a star pupil with Ajax Amsterdam's South African feeder club Ajax Cape Town before moving to Dortmund, where his career stagnated before Everton took him on loan.

### Former Sonics Owner Undoing Team Sale

Former SuperSonics owner Howard Schultz filed suit Tuesday to undo his sale of the team to an Oklahoma City-based group led by Clay Bennett, saying Bennett lied to him by insisting he planned to keep the NBA franchise in Seattle.

The lawsuit, filed in US District Court, seeks to deprive Bennett's group of "the fruits of its deception" by rescinding the sale, and described Bennett's actions as "fraud." Schultz and his co-owners never would have sold the Sonics if they thought the new owners would move them out of town, AFP wrote.

Starbucks Corp. Chairman Schultz is asking a judge to hold the team in trust until an "honest buyer" can be found who will keep the team in Seattle.

A spokesman for Bennett declined to comment Tuesday. Bennett's Professional Basketball Club bought the team from Schultz in July 2006, and Bennett publicly insisted he planned to keep the Sonics in Seattle. On July 16 of that year, he wrote a side letter to Schultz denying any intentions to move the Sonics or the WNBA's Seattle Storm. "It is our desire to have the Sonics and Storm continue their existence in the Greater Seattle area," Bennett wrote, according to Schultz's complaint.

