

Under A-Vest!

ENGLAND'S stars have been told to keep their shirts on — after being caught out by Mirror Sport.

Daniele Dichio's goal celebrations for QPR — captured in our Score soccer pull-out at the weekend — has prompted the FA again to voice their disapproval of such extrovert and possibly provocative behaviour.

FA chief executive Graham Kelly has written to the leagues, managers and the players' union calling such action 'unprofessional, undignified and silly!'

ALL GREEK TO FERGIE



MANCHESTER United manager Alex Ferguson (above) has denied any contact with European Cup semi-finalists Panathinaikos over winger George Donis.

United scouts were said to have watched the 27-year-old in action last week against Legia Warsaw and it's believed they made a further check in Amsterdam last night when the Greek club beat holders Ajax 1-0 in the first leg of their semi-final.

Donis, who has 20 international caps, is recognised as the fastest winger in Greek football and his five-year contract with Panathinaikos ends this summer, which is sure to spark interest from several clubs.

But Ferguson said: "We're watching players all over Europe, but we have not been in touch with Panathinaikos."

Meanwhile Denis Irwin is on course for a comeback in the Manchester derby against City at Maine Road on Saturday — after taking to the water!

The Republic of Ireland full-back has had two weeks of intensive swimming since injuring a hamstring in the draw at QPR, which forced him to miss Sunday's FA Cup semi-final victory over Chelsea.

He said: "I'm confident everything will be fine for the weekend."

"I was doing some training on Monday, trained with the reserves yesterday and now I'm back in full training with the first team."

"I didn't over-stretch myself and I've been taking it easy kicking a ball again."

RESULTS

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP			
Leeds	(0) 1	South'pton	(0) 0
Deane	73		26,077
Liverpool	(1) 4	Newcastle	(2) 3
Fowler	2, 55	Ferdinand	10
Collymore	68, 90	Grinola	14
40,702		Asprilla	57

ENDSLEIGH FIRST DIVISION			
Stoke	(1) 2	Wolves	(0) 0
Sheron	3		16,361
Sturridge	59		

TOP POSITIONS					
	P	W	D	L	F A Pts
Sunderland	39	20	13	6	55 31 73
Derby	40	18	14	8	59 44 68
Crystal Pal	40	17	15	8	60 44 66
Charlton	38	16	14	8	52 41 62
Inswich	38	16	11	11	69 55 59
Stoke	38	15	12	11	50 41 57
Huddersfield	39	15	11	13	53 50 56
Leicester	39	14	13	12	55 56 55

SECOND DIVISION			
Swindon	(1) 3	Brighton	(0) 2
Thorne	44, 85	Milton	55
Alison	46	Rowe	69
		8,610	

EUROPEAN CUP — Semi-final, 1st leg: Ajax 0, Panathinaikos 1; Juventus 2, Nantes 0.

SPALDING CUP — Semi-final, 2nd leg: Macclesfield 2, Southport 1 (Agg. 6-5); Kettering 2, Bromsgrove 1 (2-3).

UNIBOND PREMIER — Hyde 7, Emley 2. Div One: Bradford PA 2, Atherton LR 2; Leigh 3, Gt Harwood 1.

PONTINGS CENTRAL — Div One: Bolton 3, Sheff Utd 0. Div Two: Bradford 0, Barnsley 1; Grimsby 3, York 1; Leicester 0, Blackpool 0; Man City 1; Sunderland 0; Mansfield 1; Huddersfield 2; Preston 1, Hull 0. Div Three: Chesterfield 1, Wigan 0; Lincoln 0, Walsall 2; Rochdale 0, Scarborough 1; Shrewsbury 6, Scunthorpe 0.

NIGEL CLARKE ON



Brilliant... never win

BREATHTAKING, exhilarating. A match that lit up the Premiership with its brilliance.

One of the greatest ever seen, decided in injury time after seven superb goals.

Kevin Keegan's gamble, constructed with a daring disregard for defence, in the end blew up in his face.

It now appears that his dream of the title is fast disappearing.

But what a way to go. His heart will be empty this morning. And those of the passionate Toon Army will be broken beyond repair.

For Keegan, it appears, knows no other way to play the game than to attack, go forward and get goals. To entertain.

To score three in the Anfield fortress should be enough to win any game.

They led 2-1, and 3-2, could have tried to shut up shop and kill the game.

But because of the way they play, Newcastle allow teams to come at them.

And Liverpool didn't need a second invitation. They threatened at times to overwhelm Newcastle in a second half that set the pulses racing.

The Magpies hit back on the break, and might have scored twice when they could have elected to shut up shop.

Robert Lee got a marvellous opportunity that would have rewarded United's daring play.

But Newcastle are not good enough at the back to withstand the kind of pressure Liverpool poured on them.

That was proved by Pavel Srnicek's mistake for the third goal, when he didn't come quickly enough, and the way he was beaten on the near post for the winner.

For all their brave and passionate football, a bitter disappointment for United.

To come back from a goal behind after only two minutes was a test of their nerve, their resilience and, more important, their hunger for the confrontation ahead.

They could have cracked. They didn't, and Keegan's stub-



COLOMBIAN GOLD BEND! Newcastle's South American ace

Liverpool 4, Newcastle 3

born belief in playing it his way looked like being richly rewarded.

Again he left out Keith Gillespie, but there was so much attacking play from both flanks that Newcastle were able to score twice in the first 15 minutes.

If ever a team proved its courage and self belief, it was Newcastle. And Liverpool matched the fever of their football with wonderful, enterprising play of their own.

It stoked the atmosphere to boiling point, Anfield a theatre of passion and pure quality.

Some of the passing, and the pace of the football, was heart-stopping in its intensity. New-

castle's desperation to win the game ended up being their undoing.

But what they have shown us is football that delights the soul.

It confirms Keegan's place as the most charismatic manager in the Premiership.

But what he wants to be is a winner. And have something to show for it.

Perhaps better tactics would have got him the vital points away from home that would have made Newcastle uncatchable.

But he refuses to betray his beliefs.

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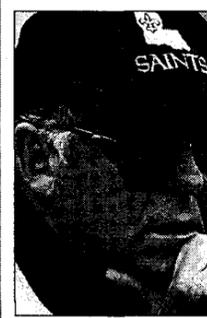
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WE WON'T PANIC SAYS



MERRINGTON: Battler

SAINTS boss Dave Merrington refused to panic after his team plunged deeper into relegation trouble.

Merrington, who spent two years on the coaching staff at Elland Road, had no happy return as Brian Deane's 73rd minute header gave Leeds the points.

Merrington said: "I was disappointed that we didn't stick our chances away, but pleased with the players' attitude and

Wet-look Wilko

By JOHN EDWARDS: Leeds 1, Soton 0

effort. Perhaps someone younger than I am would be getting edgy, but I am a bit long in the tooth to let anything bother me.

"You can cause panic in the dressing-room if you give off the wrong vibes."

The victory was a much-

needed boost for Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson, who has been a target for the boo-boys in the Leeds crowd.

He said: "I was very pleased for the players after the difficult circumstances they have gone

★ THE MATCH OF THE DECADE but it will title, Kev!



STAN-TASTIC! Collymore hits the winner

Sink the Tyne tanic!

► **From Back Page**
points out of the last 18, but Keegan insists he won't be changing his attacking principles.

This defeat leaves them two points behind leaders Manchester United, with a game in hand, while Liverpool have closed the gap on the Old Trafford side to five points.

Keegan said: "It was a classic — never mind the result."

"We shall go on playing this way and in spite of what people say we will go on playing the same players. And if we don't win anything then so be it. We carry on playing this way or I go."

"Conceding four goals will give our critics a field day but we'll bounce back. We've got good characters in the team and a good staff behind them."

Wire

"It's a great result for Manchester United and it could be that neither of those two great teams out there tonight will win the title."

"But it's not over yet. This one will go right down to the wire."

Collymore's goal 80 seconds into injury time gave Liverpool their victory.

Robbie Fowler continued his hot streak by putting Liverpool ahead after just 97 seconds only for Les Ferdinand and David Ginola to give Newcastle a half-time lead.

Fowler equalised with his 35th goal of the season only for Faustino Asprilla to put Newcastle back in front a minute later. Collymore equalised in the 67th minute and then shattered Newcastle with his winner.

Liverpool boss Roy Evans said: "It was kamikaze stuff. The defences for both teams were poor and if we'd both played like that all season we wouldn't be where we are now."

Spirit

"But the entertainment value was up there with the best. And I can't fault the spirit and will to win of our players."

"We're right back in it now. We've never been the favourites but we've moved up on the rails."

Newcastle's spluttering run has coincided with the arrival of Asprilla.

But Keegan insisted: "Don't blame him for our demise in the last few weeks or David Batty."

"Give Tino some credit. He's a fantastic player. I've never managed a team that have played so well and got nothing out of it. If we went into every

ANSWERS

1. Jamaica, South Africa, Australia, Nigeria.
2. Wetherby, Beverley, Salisbury, Newbury
3. Middlesex, Surrey.
4. Jonah Lomu.

game like that we'd have the best away record in the Premiership.

"I wasn't happy with some of our defending for Liverpool's goals but we lost nothing in defeat."

"The game could have gone either way and credit to Liverpool they never give up — it was like the Liverpool of 20 years ago the way they kept at it to the end."

Luck

"They finished stronger than we did but the luck is not quite with us."

"But even in defeat I don't feel as disappointed as I should be because it was such a great game and there are a lot of positive things to take out of it."

"I went into the dressing room and told the players they'd done really well

and that each of them had got something out of it."

"I'm a great winner and I'll try to be a good loser. I think we deserved something. I don't know what admission price they charge here but I don't think anyone will be asking for a refund."

Collymore said: "This keeps the title race wide open."

"It was an open game with chances galore."

Steve McManaman said: "We thought we gave away bad goals but showed great resilience to come back. It's been a big week for us."

"Newcastle are a great team. They've had some hard weeks recently but they have the quality to reproduce their best again."

GAMES TO PLAY

NEWCASTLE: April 6 QPR (h); April 8 Blackburn (a); April 14 Aston Villa (h); April 17 Southampton (h); April 29 Leeds (a); May 2 Nottm Forest (a); May 5 Spurs (h).

MANCHESTER UNITED: April 6 Manchester City (a); April 8 Coventry (h); April

13 Southampton (a); April 17 Leeds (h); April 28 Nottingham Forest (h); May 5 Middlesbrough (a).

LIVERPOOL: April 6 Coventry (a); April 8 West Ham (h); April 16 Everton (a); April 27 Middlesbrough (h); May 1 Arsenal (a); May 5 Manchester City (a).



Faustino Asprilla swerves the ball past Liverpool keeper David James for their third goal

It was the most compelling advertisement for the English game, one that will be talked about for years. The kind of nerve-tingling football that jerks you to your feet.

But it doesn't win championships. Perhaps it never will.

Keegan's destiny might be that he will be remembered for what he didn't win, rather than for what he did.

It may prove to be his epitaph. For there is no way he will change now.

He has gambled on great players in the quest for a side that will fulfil his dreams...and those of a City who have taken him to their hearts.

The great entertainers may never top the bill. And that would be the cruellest fate of all to befall the man who believed...in fantasy.



TOON UP: David Ginola strikes Newcastle's second goal

DEFIANT SAINTS BOSS home and dry at last

through lately. At half-time I told them it was a case of staying patient and making more forward runs.

"That is what they did and they got their reward."

The Leeds boss finally delivered a winning line-up for the first time in seven matches. But he

only did it after a soaking from a burst pipe.

Wilko looked home and try when half-time substitute Deane put Leeds in front.

But water suddenly came gushing through a manhole cover, spraying gallons of water towards the Leeds bench before the leak was sealed.

There was never any danger of the floodgates opening on the pitch in a desperately flat first half dominated by Saints.

Then Wilkinson sent on giant striker Deane for 18-year-old Aussie full back Harry Kewell.

And he saw the move pay off as Deane claimed

the winner from a Gary McAllister corner. A dreadful blunder by John Lukic almost gifted Southampton a last-minute equaliser.

The Leeds keeper fluffed an attempted clearance from David Wetherall's back pass and presented substitute Chris Warren with the easiest of chances.

But Lukic recovered to make a point-blank save from Warren's six-yard shot.

FANTASY RACING

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in

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