

SEVERAL BRITISH CLUBS HUSHED UP ABUSE: LAWYER

LONDON: There are claims "several" British football clubs have used gagging orders to silence victims of sexual abuse at the hands of youth coaches, a lawyer working with victims has said. Chelsea have apologised to former player Gary Johnson, who was abused by late chief scout Eddie Heath, after waiving a confidentiality clause in a 50,000 pounds (\$63,850, 59,230 euros) agreement they made with him. Lawyer Edward Smethurst, who helped set up the Offside Trust for abuse victims, said players forced to sign non-disclosure agreements in return for compensation were coming forward "all the time". "Certainly, the allegations have been made by victims that confidentiality clauses have been used in rela-

tion to other clubs, but I'm not in a position to independently verify this," he was quoted as saying by British newspapers yesterday.

"It's unfolding as we speak. It's a number. It's several, (but) less than five." The Offside Trust, set up by abuse victims Andy Woodward, Steve Walters and Chris Unsworth, launched in Manchester on Monday. Since Woodward came forward three weeks ago to reveal he was abused by convicted paedophile Barry Bennell during his time at Crewe Alexandra, a wave of allegations has swept through British football. Eighteen British police forces are investigating claims of sexual abuse spanning four decades and lines of inquiry are reportedly being pursued at

55 clubs. Queens Park Rangers are the latest club to have been touched by the scandal, the London side revealing they have been made aware of allegations against former chief scout Chris Gieler, who died in 2004. "The club takes these allegations very seriously and will cooperate fully in any forthcoming investigation," the second-tier club said in a statement. "Any form of abuse has no place in football or society."

'HIGHEST LEVELS'

Smethurst, who is based in Manchester, said the same names were being repeated by abuse victims and some alleged abusers were still working at the highest levels of the sport. "There are specific allegations

against specific individuals, many of whom have been rumoured to be involved for a long time, some of whom still work in the senior echelons of football, and it's extremely worrying," he said. "There are certain names who are coming in who do come up repeatedly." England's Football Association announced on Tuesday that a new lawyer has been placed in charge of its internal review of the scandal. Barrister Clive Sheldon has replaced Kate Gallafent "in the light of the increased scope of the review" and "with respect to her other professional commitments". Sheldon's previous work includes a number of investigatory reviews involving matters of child protection and safeguarding. The FA also revealed the

terms of reference for its review, which will "commence immediately" but has no fixed deadline. "The precise number of players, alleged abusers and clubs as yet is unknown," the FA said in a statement.

"The FA has determined that it is necessary to instruct external leading counsel to conduct a review into what if anything the FA and clubs knew about these allegations at the relevant time (and) what action was taken or should have taken place."

"The FA continues to work closely with the relevant authorities and respects the ongoing investigation by the police being coordinated by Operation Hydrant into childhood sexual abuse in football." — AFP

RECORD-BREAKING NIGHT AWAITS AS MADRID HOSTS DORTMUND

MADRID: It could be a night of records at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium today. In addition to trying to win their Champions League group, Real Madrid and Borussia Dortmund will also be looking to make history when they meet in their final Group F match.

One draw and Madrid will equal the club's longest unbeaten run of 34 games in all competitions. One goal and Dortmund will match the most goals ever scored in the tournament's group stage - 20.

On a personal level, Cristiano Ronaldo can become the first player to score 100 times in European competitions if he is able to score twice. Madrid is in position to equal the unbeaten record set under coach Leo Beenhakker in the late 1980s. It would then be five short of Barcelona's Spanish record of 39 consecutive games without a loss, set last year.

Madrid hasn't been defeated since

worst mark since joining the Spanish club. **Here's a look at the groups playing today:**

GROUP E

Monaco has secured first place and Bayer Leverkusen is guaranteed second, but Tottenham needs at least a draw against CSKA Moscow at Wembley Stadium to finish third and earn a spot in the Europa League. "We haven't won yet at Wembley, we want to finish with a win and give something back to the fans," Tottenham midfielder Christian Eriksen said. The English side routed Swansea 5-0 in the Premier League this weekend to rebound from two consecutive losses.

Leverkusen will be without injured midfielder Kevin Kampl for the home match against Monaco.

"We would like to finish the group undefeated, which would be a first for us," Bayer coach Roger Schmidt said.

GROUP F

Madrid hosts Dortmund trailing the German side by two points, so only a victory will secure first place in the group.

But the defending champions arrive boosted by an eight-game winning streak at the Bernabeu in the European competition. Madrid has won 28 of their last 32 home matches in the tournament, with the only loss coming against Schalke in the 2014-15 season.

Dortmund will be without Mario Goetze because of a minor injury. "Winning the group would top off this outstanding opening round," Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc said. "It would be the icing on the cake."

In the other match, Sporting Lisbon needs at least a draw at Legia Warsaw to secure third place and a spot in the Europa League.

GROUP G

FC Porto has to beat Leicester to advance without depending on other results, but winning hasn't been easy for the Portuguese side recently.

The last-minute victory over Sporting Braga in the Portuguese league on Saturday was the team's first since Nov. 2.

Porto is second in the group, behind already qualified Leicester. It loses the head-to-head tiebreaker to FC Copenhagen on away goals, so if it fails to win and Copenhagen defeats Club Brugge - which has yet to win a point - the Portuguese side will be eliminated.

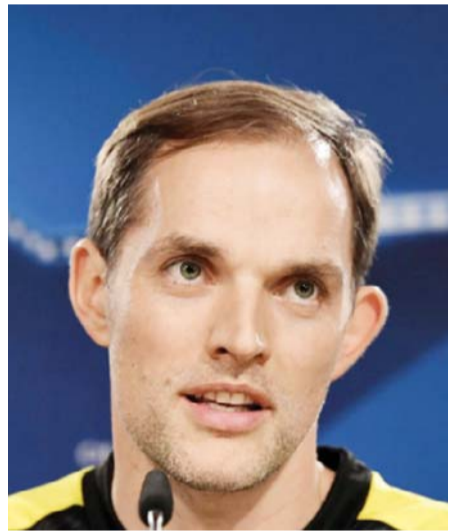
GROUP H

Lyon needs to beat Sevilla at home by a two-goal margin to advance and leave France with three teams in the last 16 for the first time. PSG and Monaco have already qualified.

"Few thought we would still be alive ahead of the last game," Lyon coach Bruno Genesio said. "We now have a final to play and to win." Juventus has already advanced and a win against Dinamo Zagreb will secure first place. — AP



BOSTON: Boston Bruins right wing David Pastrnak, right, shoots his game-winning goal over Florida Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo (1) during the overtime period of an NHL hockey game in Boston, Monday. The Bruins won 4-3. At right is Panthers defenseman Michael Matheson. — AP



MADRID: Dortmund's head coach Thomas Tuchel gives a press conference at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday, on the eve of the UEFA Champions League football match Real Madrid CF vs Borussia Dortmund. — AFP

April at Wolfsburg in the quarterfinals of last season's Champions League. Dortmund has a chance to become the fourth club to score 20 goals in the group stage. And if it scores two or more goals, it will surpass the mark set by Madrid in 2013-14, Barcelona in 2011-12 and Manchester United in 1998-99. Dortmund scored at least once in every group game so far, and it has a shot at the record thanks mostly to routs against Legia Warsaw - 6-0 in Poland and 8-4 in Germany.

Ronaldo's 100th goal has eluded him for some time - he hasn't scored in Champions League play since a 2-2 draw at Dortmund in September. Madrid scored 10 goals in the three matches since then, but none came from Ronaldo.

The Portugal forward has averaged a goal per game in the Champions League while playing with Madrid, with 80 goals from as many matches. He has scored only two in this season's group stage, his



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's Argentine manager Mauricio Pochettino (3L) tackles English striker Harry Kane and English defender Kieran Trippier during a training session at Tottenham Hotspur's Enfield Training Centre, north-east of London, yesterday. — AFP

PASTRNAK'S PRETTY GOAL GIVES BRUINS 4-3 WIN OVER PANTHERS

BOSTON: David Pastrnak scored his second goal of the game 2:23 into overtime and the Boston Bruins continued their recent success against the Florida Panthers with a 4-3 victory on Monday night. Pastrnak got his team-leading 15th goal by cutting in from the left wing, shifting around goaltender Roberto Luongo and tucking in the game-winner. David Backes and Tim Schaller also scored for the Bruins, who are 15-2-1 in their last 18 games against the Panthers. Tuukka Rask stopped 27 shots to raise his record to 14-4-1 this season and 17-3-1 in his career against Florida. Jaromir Jagr had a goal for the Panthers, the 754th of his career, and Luongo finished with 32 saves. Florida's Jason Demers slipped a shot under Rask, tying it with 1:29 to play, after the Bruins had moved ahead when Backes tipped in Ryan Spooner's shot for the go-ahead goal with 6:52 remaining. Aleksander Barkov also scored for the Panthers.

CAPITALS 3, SABRES 2, OT

Marcus Johansson scored the tying goal late in the third period and got the winner midway through overtime to lift Washington past Buffalo. The goals were Johansson's third and fourth in his last five games. He has 11 for the season. Jay Beagle added the Capitals' first even-strength goal in three games, as Washington snapped a three-game losing skid. Braden Holtby made 31 saves in the victory, the Capitals second over the Sabres in an 11-day stretch. Kyle Okposo scored his team-leading eighth goal of the season to give the Sabres the lead in the second period. Zemgus Girgensons also scored early for Buffalo, and Robin Lehner made 30 stops for the visitors.

BLUE JACKETS 4, COYOTES 1

Sam Gagner had two goals and two assists to help Columbus beat Arizona for the second time in three days. Nick Foligno and Zach Werensky also scored for the Blue Jackets, who won for the fourth straight time and ninth of their last 12. Columbus picked up its 500th win in franchise history in sweeping the two-game season series with the Coyotes. Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 17 shots for Columbus. Arizona backup goaltender Louis Domingue had 30 saves, two days after the Blue Jackets hammered starter Mike Smith with a franchise-record 60 shots in a 3-2 shootout victory in Phoenix. Arizona struck first 9:28 into the game when Alex Goligoski fed a pass on a power play to Tobias Reider, who slammed it past Bobrovsky's glove side from between the circles.

PENGUINS 8, SENATORS 5

Bryan Rust had his first career hat trick, Sidney Crosby added his NHL-leading 17th goal and Pittsburgh raced past Ottawa. Evgeni Malkin and Phil Kessel each had a goal and two assists for the Penguins, and Matt Cullen and Justin Schultz also scored. Pittsburgh scored six times over the final 32 minutes after spotting the Senators a 4-2 lead. Matt Murray made 17 saves after coming in for an ineffective Marc-Andre Fleury in the second period. Pittsburgh has won three straight overall and improved to 7-0-2 in its last nine against the Senators. Matt Stone had a goal and two assists for Ottawa. Erik Karlsson, Mike Hoffman, Mark Stone and Dion Phaneuf also scored for as the Senators lost in regulation for just the second time in its last eight games. — AP

NHL results/standings

Boston 4, Florida 3 (OT); Pittsburgh 8, Ottawa 5; Washington 3, Buffalo 2 (OT); Columbus 4, Arizona 1.

Western Conference							Eastern Conference						
Central Division							Atlantic Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Chicago	16	8	3	74	68	35	Ottawa	15	9	2	64	67	32
Minnesota	12	8	4	66	51	28	Boston	15	10	1	63	58	31
St. Louis	14	7	4	69	70	32	Tampa Bay	14	11	2	77	72	30
Nashville	11	9	4	71	66	26	Florida	12	11	3	63	67	27
Dallas	10	10	6	66	85	26	Detroit	12	11	3	65	69	27
Colorado	9	13	1	49	69	19	Toronto	10	9	5	72	77	25
Pacific Division							Metropolitan Division						
San Jose	15	9	1	60	51	31	NY Rangers	17	8	1	95	65	35
Edmonton	14	10	3	80	70	31	Pittsburgh	16	7	3	88	80	35
Anaheim	12	9	5	67	67	29	Columbus	15	5	4	77	53	34
Los Angeles	13	10	2	66	66	28	Washington	14	7	3	61	55	31
Calgary	13	13	2	71	82	28	Philadelphia	14	10	3	87	85	31
Vancouver	11	12	2	58	75	24	New Jersey	11	7	6	63	66	28
Arizona	8	12	4	57	76	20	Carolina	10	10	5	58	65	25
Eastern Conference							Atlantic Division						
Atlantic Division							Metropolitan Division						
Montreal	17	6	2	74	56	36	NY Islanders	9	10	5	62	71	23

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)

PORTO, SEVILLA HUNT FINAL KNOCKOUT BERTHS

PARIS: While Real Madrid and Borussia Dortmund grapple for top spot in Group F, twice former winners Porto and Sevilla look to clinch the two remaining spots in the Champions League last 16 today.

Portuguese giants Porto, European champions in 1987 and 2004, host Leicester City in their final group stage match wary of FC Copenhagen pipping them to second in Group G. Despite a woeful defence of their Premier League crown, Leicester are guaranteed to finish top of their section in Europe and avoid the likes of Barcelona and Atletico Madrid in the next round.

And the Foxes could well decide which team joins them in the knockout phase with Copenhagen, third in the group, trailing Porto by two points ahead of a trip to pointless Club Brugge. Porto halted a run of five straight draws courtesy of teenager Rui Pedro's 95th-minute winner over Braga at the weekend, ending a club record run of 520 minutes without a goal. "What matters is that we won three points and we are going to try to take advantage of this to continue to grow and believe," said Porto coach Nuno Espirito Santo.

"I believe the results haven't been showing what we do." Porto will secure their passage to the last 16 with victory over Leicester, but anything less will open the door for Copenhagen, who have a head-to-head advantage over the Portuguese on away goals.

"We kept a clean sheet, and now we just have to go Brugge and get a victory and then hope that Leicester do their job and beat Porto," said Copenhagen's Swedish international Erik Johansson after last month's 0-0 home draw against Porto.

Copenhagen, unbeaten domestically this term, stretched their lead in Denmark to 11 points on Saturday after securing an eighth

successive win with a 1-0 defeat of Randers.

LYON PLOT SEVILLA SCALP

Three-time reigning Europa League champions Sevilla are favourites to advance alongside Juventus in Group H, with Lyon needing to beat the Spaniards by at least two goals at Parc OL. Lyon's preparations were overshadowed by the ugly scenes that prompted Saturday's game at Metz to be called off after just 31 minutes with goalkeeper Anthony Lopes targeted by firecrackers thrown by home supporters.

The Portugal international, 26, was taken to hospital after suffering "traumatic hearing loss" in both ears but is expected to make a full recovery with no lasting damage.

His status for today's fixture is very much in doubt, but Lyon will draw encouragement knowing Sevilla-without manager Jorge Sampaoli due to a touchline ban-have lost on all three previous trips to France.

Sevilla's troubles away from home resurged in a 2-1 defeat at Granada over the weekend, with captain Vicente Iborra lamenting a sub-par performance. "It's clear it wasn't our best match and you pay for that," said Iborra. "I think we were a bit distracted by the Lyon game and now that we're here we must make the most of it and achieve qualification."

Sevilla may welcome back Samir Nasri from injury, while Juventus, a point clear at the top, will be expected to cement first place with group makeweights Dinamo Zagreb rounding out their fruitless campaign in Turin.

Dortmund are one shy of the 20-goal group stage record-achieved by three sides including Manchester United's treble-winning side in 1998-99 as well as the Real team that landed 'La Decima' in 2014 — ahead of their visit to the Santiago Bernabeu. — AFP