

THE WEEK S NEWS & GOSSIP FROM THE PREMIERSHIP

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Leeds United centre-back Michael Duberry, who fears the evidence he gave at Hull Crown Court might make him unpopular at Elland Road.

There were dramatic developments at Hull Crown Court last week where **Leeds United** stars **Jonathan Woodgate** and **Lee Bowyer**, plus two of Woodgate s friends, deny affray and causing grievous bodily harm with intent to Sarfraz Najeib, a student, in an incident outside a Leeds night club on January 12, 2000. Another Leeds player, defender **Michael Duberry**, denies along with Woodgate and two others conspiring to pervert the course of justice.

Duberry admitted that he had originally lied to police to protect Woodgate who, he claimed, had told him he had been involved in a fight with Asians in Leeds city centre. He also claimed he was advised by a club lawyer and

director in charge of discipline to stick to his story after saying he wanted to correct the version he initially told police.

Duberry said he lied to police repeatedly to stop his best friend and teammate Woodgate from getting into trouble. He told the jury he decided to give evidence against Woodgate only after much deliberation, and after talking to his parents and the Leeds manager **David O Leary**. When cross-examined by Woodgate's counsel, Duberry denied that he was motivated by hopes of replacing Woodgate, another central defender, in the Leeds first team, or collecting up to £500,000 as his share of a possible £5 million transfer fee if transferred to another club.

He said he fears he may suffer repercussions for giving evidence against Woodgate. I think I may come out of this looking bad for selling out my mate to save myself. The repercussion is that I might not be liked at Leeds United for saving myself by giving this version, but that is what I have to do. The trial continues.

The aftermath of **George Graham's** sacking by **Tottenham Hotspur** became more bitter last week when the deposed manager accused the club's new owners, investment company **ENIC**, of attempting to smear his reputation. A newspaper report said ENIC were concerned after finding £18,700 in cash in an office drawer at the club. Graham says the money was raised by fining players for minor breaches of discipline (such as arriving late for training) and was destined to be donated to charity. ENIC have launched an investigation into the cash discovery, although Spurs said they knew all about the fines procedure and the existence of the money.

The incensed manager, who was sacked by **Arsenal** in 1995 for financial irregularities, believes Tottenham are trying to denigrate his character as he pursues a £4 million settlement in compensation for unfair dismissal. This was a tremendous way of raising money for an extremely good cause [a children's hospice] while at the same time reinforcing club discipline and generating positive public relations for the club and the players. I am surprised the new owners should be expressing any concern about a scheme which the club was fully aware of and which was so beneficial.

A statement issued through Graham's lawyers said he was surprised and disappointed that, having supposedly sacked him for revealing confidential information, the club was once again prepared to run its affairs through the leak of internal information to the newspapers.

Regarding their managerial vacancy, Tottenham have said they are unlikely to appoint anyone until after the end of the season. Ex-Spurs stare **Glenn**

Hoddle remains the firm favourite with bookmakers to get the job, although his present employers **Southampton** are hoping he will decide to stay with them. Looking further afield, Italian **Marcello Lippi** is also thought to interest Spurs. Should Hoddle quit Southampton, ex-Saints player **Kevin Keegan** is one name being mentioned as a possible successor. There has been some speculation linking Graham, a Scot, with **Rangers**, should the Glasgow giants part company with **Dick Advocaat** for any reason.

While the managerial situation at Southampton remains a little uncertain, two of the club's key players have pledged their future to the Saints. Centre-half **Dean Richards** and striker **James Beattie** have both signed new contracts that will keep them at the south coast club for the next few years. However, Saints Moroccan striker **Hassan Kachloul**, who is out of contract in the summer, is a target for **Tottenham Hotspur**.

Spurs have also been linked with **Everton** striker **Francis Jeffers**, who has rejected a significantly improved offer from the Merseyside club. But another promising young striker, **Alan Smith**, has committed himself to his current club, **Leeds United**, until at least 2006. In doing so the 20-year-old has quadrupled his salary overnight from £4,000 per week to £16,000.

Leeds chairman **Peter Ridsdale** said, 'He's a young man who has done ever so well for us, so it is only right that he is paid properly. This emphasises our determination to look after and reward the home-grown players developed here.'

The transfer deadline for the current season came and went last Thursday, with few big moves completed. One that was involved **Manchester United**, who signed veteran Scottish goalkeeper **Andy Goram** from **Motherwell** as emergency cover for the injured **Fabien Barthez** and **Raimond Van der Gouw**. United, who had been given permission by UEFA to sign an emergency goalkeeper in advance of the Champions League quarter-final against **Bayern Munich**, wanted to recruit Goram on loan. However, Motherwell insisted on a nominal £100,000 fee in a leasing-type deal. He will return to Motherwell for one day only before becoming a free agent.

Goram, who is 36, began his career in England with **Oldham Athletic** and played for **Hibernian** before enjoying his most successful years with **Rangers**, where he won numerous Scottish club honours and international caps.

A rumoured move by **Manchester United** to secure the services of **Barcelona's Rivaldo** came to nothing, though United deny making enquiries. And **Benito Carbone** looked poised to leave **Bradford City** for **Middlesbrough** on deadline day, but the player's £40,000 per week wages proved too great an obstacle to Boro, so the deal was not completed. However, **Leicester City** did sign **Lee Marshall** from First Division **Norwich City** for £600,000.

Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, **Chelsea's** leading scorer, signalled a possible move when he voiced his dissatisfaction with the London club's achievements this season. Hasselbaink, who quit **Leeds United** two years ago, joined Chelsea for £15 million last summer. He has now said in a magazine interview: Sometimes I think I am in the wrong place at the wrong time. I'm not very lucky with the teams I choose to play for. One year I play for a team that is relegated, like **Atletico Madrid**, and next year I play for a team that goes nowhere, like **Chelsea**.

Meanwhile **Eric Cantona** has indicated his wish to become manager of **Manchester United** when **Sir Alex Ferguson** retires from the post in 15 months' time. Having rejected the chance to manage **Marseille**, he said, 'The club of my heart is not Marseille, it is Manchester. United really helped me to do what I had to do because French football is a world of sharks. I enjoy what I am doing at the moment, but if there is a proposition, of course, it would become my priority. It would be everybody's priority. It's the biggest club in the world.'



Jonathan Woodgate, the Leeds and England defender, who denies affray and causing grievous bodily harm with intent to a student outside a Leeds night club.

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