

National Sport In Brief

Hodgson expects rested stars will shine for Reds

Football

LIVERPOOL boss Roy Hodgson hopes a fully-refreshed Fernando Torres and Steven Gerrard will provide the spearhead for victory against Manchester United at Old Trafford tomorrow.

The pair were left out of Thursday's last Europa League 4-1 win over Steaua Bucharest along with a number of first-choice players.

Hodgson admits the match between the two north-west rivals has come earlier in the season than he would have wished but, by giving his star players maximum rest, the 62-year-old is confident they can put in a good performance.

"It is a difficult encounter always but it is a game which has thrilled people throughout the years and let's hope it is no different this time," he said.



CONFIDENT: Liverpool boss Roy Hodgson.

"There is no point in me or Alex (Ferguson) trying to build up the game because it has been built up anyway.

"The result will be very important. This is going to be an even league, more than half the table is currently separated by a point or two.

"But it is going to be a long haul for everyone this season before you get into a position where you hope you will end up.

"Games of this magnitude coming so early in our time here are not exactly ideal but I'm hoping we will give it our best shot."

Nadal enjoying best year

Tennis

RAFAEL Nadal's US Open triumph has guaranteed he will finish the season ranked number one in the world with more than two months of the calendar still to go.

The Spaniard completed the set of grand slam titles in New York and took his major tally to nine at the age of only 24.

That put him nearly 5,000 ranking points clear of new world number two Novak Djokovic, whose run to the final lifted him above Roger Federer, and out of reach of all of his rivals this year.

"It has been an incredible season - one of my best ever, if not the best," said Nadal.

Henson on Irish's radar

Rugby union

LONDON Irish have revealed they would be interested in signing Welshman Gavin Henson.

The 28-year-old wants a move to the London area, but Saracens, Wasps and Harlequins have all ruled out a move.

However, Exiles director of rugby Toby Booth said: "Of course we're interested in good players that become available.

"Someone's reputation doesn't really matter. The only question is - can you work with them?"

Henson has spent more than a year on unpaid leave from an Ospreys deal that ends in June, and wants to leave the Swansea-based team.

Yamauchi makes return

Athletics

MARA Yamauchi will lead the British challenge in tomorrow's 30th Great North Run following a rather less hectic build-up than the one she endured to her last race.

The 37-year-old saw a six-day travel nightmare scupper her hopes in April's London Marathon and went on to finish a weary 10th.

Yamauchi has not raced since and admits she goes into the north east half marathon unsure of how she will perform.

She said: "As this is my first race since London, I'm not quite sure what to expect."

Junior all-stars

Stones is master of the mind for county

Scunthorpe AC runner gets his race tactics spot on

Athletics

ELLIOTT Stones may not have set a personal best in the under-15 boys 1500 metres event, but he showed his competitors a side to him which has nothing to do with fitness, more about winning races.

The young Scunthorpe AC runner, who was part of an eight-strong contingent representing Humberside in an under-13/15 intercounties match, showed chess-like precision to steal a march on his rivals and secure first place.

With both the A and B races starting at the same time, it was a competitive field which took to the track to battle against not only their opponents but also a strong head wind which made it difficult to achieve a fast time.

Tactics reigned supreme, meaning a psychological scrap for Elliott.

But, as part of a pack of eight who had broken clear, the youngster showed restraint, holding position on the outside of the group before bursting clear with 300m left.

With no response from his rivals, Elliott pulled five metres ahead, stretching that advantage even further before passing the finish line nearly 20 metres in front.

Although nearly 10 seconds slower than his best, Elliott showed an encouraging maturity in terms of race tactics which will be beneficial in older age groups.

That was not to be the end of Elliott's day as, 30 minutes later, he lined up for the 400m leg in the medley relay.

Three of his club-mates joined him on Humberside duty in the under-15 boys, with Nathan Togun taking victory in the B event of the discus.

Nathan then leapt to a sixth place finish in the A grade long jump.

Taking part in the unfamiliar



BATTLE OF THE MIND: Elliott Stones (in yellow) was running for Humberside in an under-13/15 intercounties match.

javelin and shot putt, Scunthorpe AC hammer throwing record holder Anthony Gillatt managed sixth in the A grade javelin, adding a fourth place in the B grade shot putt.

Jacob Hammond joined Anthony in the javelin, coming third in the B event.

He was also involved in the 800m and, after little preparation following the javelin, he came sixth.

Earlier in the day Jacob came fourth in the B hurdles race.

The under-15 girls had two Scunthorpe representatives - Steph O'Connor and Ellie Standerline.

The former claimed a creditable second in the 100m B event before

smashing her personal best in the A grade 200m on the way to a runner-up finish.

Ellie managed sixth in the long jump B event and seventh in the B grade shot putt.

Both girls helped the 4x200m relay team to fourth.

Mitchell Bailes and Harry Mathieu-Raven were both selected for the under-13 boys.

Mitchell came seventh in the shot putt, and Harry ran the second leg for a 4x100m side who came fourth.

RESULTS
UNDER-15 GIRLS
100m: 2B Steph O'Connor, 13.2s.

200m: 2A Steph O'Connor, 26.2s.

SHOT PUTT: 7B Ellie Standerline, 6.40m.

LONG JUMP: 6B Ellie Standerline, 4.12m.

UNDER-13 BOYS

SHOT PUTT: 7B Mitchell Bailes, 5.06m.

UNDER-15 BOYS

90m HURDLES: 4B Jacob Hammond, 13.8s.

800m: 6B Jacob Hammond, 2m 28s.

1500m: 1A Elliott Stones, 4m 34s.

SHOT PUTT: 4B Anthony Gillatt, 8.70m.

LONG JUMP: 6A Nathan Togun, 4.99m.

DISCUS: 1B Nathan Togun, 26.99m.

JAVELIN: 6A Anthony Gillatt, 31.64m; 3B Jacob Hammond, 31.34m.

Scunthorpe Anchor enjoying life in the fast lane



FOX EIGHTS LOSING: Finley Fox was rewarded with a medal-laden haul.

SCUNTHORPE Anchor have been racking up the speeding tickets of late.

Although a cause for concern among drivers, in the pool it is something to cheer.

With that in mind, the coaches at Anchor will have plenty to smile about as 12 of their swimmers journeyed to the Rotherham Metro A/B grade Open Meet at Ponds Forge, Sheffield, and came home with a stack of tickets and a 22-strong haul of medals.

Leading the way for Scunthorpe - on the way to a second place team finish overall - was Finley Fox, as he claimed two gold medals, five silvers and one bronze in A grade times.

It appears life in the fast lane is going rather well for Finley as he chalked up another 11 personal bests, from 13 races.

Becci Foster jostled with Finley

Swimming

for centre stage as she chipped in with six medals herself in the B grade - two gold, two silver and two bronze as well as a host of personal bests, including a 10 second improvement in the 200 metre fly.

Becci and Finley also ended up sealing a spot in the top 10 overall, with Becci fourth and Finley sixth.

The rest of the squad managed to pick up eight more medals, with Scott Strong taking home two of them.

He collected a gold and bronze at B grade, with personal bests the byproduct of that.

Eleanor Chafer earned herself a bronze (B grade) in the 200m individual medley after achieving a five second personal best, while

Holly Williams came away with nine personal bests and A grade gold medals for the 200m fly and 200m backstroke after knocking 20 seconds from her previous times.

Sven Schygiol sealed a B grade gold and bronze in the 50m fly and 50m backstroke events.

Personal bests were taking a battering as the rest of the squad showed noticeable improvement.

Lauren Callaghan knocked 12 and 14 seconds off her 200m backstroke and freestyle times.

Michael Trueman achieved five bests from seven events and wiped 10 seconds off his 200m freestyle events.

Charles and Edward Kenny were also cutting their previous bests, which for Charles gave him a B grade second, and a 21 second improvement.