

Will Bergkamp fly?



AFP, London

Arsenal's non-flying Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp looks set to be used in a rare trip to the European mainland against Ajax in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Bergkamp, one of the most skilful strikers of his generation yet now in the twilight of his career, has made just one away trip to the continent this season, to Eindhoven in September because of his fear of air travel.

Though Arsenal are on a high from their 5-1 thrashing of Manchester City at the weekend, manager Arsene Wenger must do without injured Nigerian striker Nwankwo Kanu and needs Bergkamp's skills for this pivotal second phase fixture in Amsterdam.

Victory would give Group B leaders Arsenal eight points with two matches to go and a good platform from which to qualify for the quarter-finals.

Wenger was expected to ask Bergkamp to set off early by road and ferry to his former club with whom they drew 1-1 at Highbury last week.

In the other fixture in the group, AS Roma travel to Valencia knowing another slip-up will almost certainly spell elimination from the competition after three defeats in three games.

AS Roma president Franco Sensi said earlier this month that Fabio Capello will remain as coach despite the club's disastrous season.

"The faith I have in Capello is without question," Sensi told the Corriere dello Sport.

Roma captain Francesco Totti has recovered from back pain and will travel to Spain.

Totti, whose season has been plagued by injury, missed Roma's 1-0 defeat at home to the Spanish champions last week and Sunday's 2-1 league defeat at Udinese.

Capello also welcomes back Brazilian pair Walter Samuel and Emerson from suspension.

Strikers Vincenzo Montella and Marco Delvecchio are both injured, so Antonio Cassano is expected to play up front alongside Totti in a match Roma must win to keep alive their already slim hopes of Saturday.

Barcelona beat Inter 3-0 last Tuesday to set a new record of 11 consecutive Champions League victories and put themselves in the driving seat to reach the quarter-finals of Europe's top club competition.

Inter coach Hector Cuper said a strong defence was the key to upsetting the Spanish visitors, who have won three matches in a row under new coach Raddy Antic.

"We cannot afford to make the same kind of mistakes we made last week," Cuper said.

"If we do they will punish us. We must keep things tight at the back and we can build from there."

Uruguayan striker Alvaro Recoba, who was sent off 10 minutes from the end in Spain for an late tackle on Carlos Puyol, is suspended for the match, as is Colombian defender Ivan Cordoba.

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Meanwhile Dutch forward Marc



DENNIS BERGKAMP

making the last eight.

Valencia are third in the group on five points, behind Arsenal and Ajax only on goal difference.

Bobby Robson's Newcastle host Bayer Leverkusen after their Group A heroics from last week.

The 3-1 winning scoreline in Leverkusen's BayArena on Tuesday night has kept alive Newcastle's outside hopes of qualifying from Group A.

However they really need a repeat performance with all three points against the struggling Germans, who recently sacked coach Klaus Toppmoller, at St James' Park.

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Overmars will miss Barcelona's match against Inter Milan on Wednesday after suffering a tiny muscle tear in his left thigh.

Overmars was replaced by Luis Enrique in the 42nd minute of Barcelona's 4-0 win over Real Betis at the Nou Camp on Saturday.

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Juninho set to return

AFP, London

Middlesbrough's Brazilian World Cup winner Juninho will return to action on Tuesday night for the first time since injury wrecked his Premiership homecoming.

The 30-year-old was devastated when he ruptured his cruciate ligament in a pre-season tournament in Italy just days after securing a shock move back to Boro.

He returns Tuesday for a reserve-team match against Bradford - which will also see the return of Nigerian defender Ugo Ehiogu following a serious rib injury.

"We're delighted to see Juninho back in a Boro shirt," said manager Steve McClaren.

"His rehab has been long and hard for the little man. But he has been working extremely hard to regain full fitness, and I know he has been champing at the bit to play ever since he returned to training two weeks ago."

Juninho established himself as a crowd favourite on Teesside during his first spell with the club after a 4.75million pound (seven million dollar) move from Sao Paolo in November 1995.

Glamour is where Rio is

AFP, London

Manchester United hard man Rio Ferdinand may be poised to take over from David Beckham as English soccer's pinup.

Ferdinand, for whom Manchester paid Leeds last July a world record 30 million pounds (47 million dollars) for a defender, admits he likes showing off his body in tight, sexy gear.

And unlike most Englishmen, he doesn't stand at the bar drinking, he joins the girls on the dance floor.

"I love to wear figure-hugging gear," the 24-year-old told the Sun newspaper Tuesday.

"I love showing off my body. I've worked hard enough to get it this way."

"But I always draw the line at tight trousers. I always wear baggy jeans."

Rio, who earns 70,000 pounds (100,000 dollars) a week, has just signed a three-year deal worth millions with shirt-maker Ben Sherman.

"Fashion has always been in my genes. I think I inherited it from my dad, he's a tailor and always had a good eye for value, cut and fit and fancied himself suave," he added.

"But I've never been a slave to it." Beckham may be football's fashion king but Ferdinand may be poised to steal his crown.

However, he says he will never wear a hairband.

"Everyone has their own style and mine is street," said Ferdinand who wears his hair cropped short.

But the man who says is the only thing he wears in bed is boxer shorts, admits he loves dancing.

"I love music. But unlike most blokes I love dancing. I'm not a poseur, one of those blokes who just stands at the bar with a drink. I have some good moves, I took dance lessons as a kid."

It will be interesting to see how the fashion-conscious Italian fans rate the player when Manchester United take on Juventus in the Champions League later on Tuesday.

Nieminen knocked out

AFP, Copenhagen

Top seed Jarkko Nieminen of Finland was knocked out of the 400,000-dollar ATP Copenhagen Open on Monday in the first round of play by Belgium's Olivier Rochus, who won in two quick sets 6-3, 6-2.

Defending champion Lars Burgmuller of Germany opened the main draw tournament by defeating Austrian Jurgen Melzer 6-4, 6-4.

"It was a special feeling to go into the tournament as defending champion," Burgmuller said.

"I was a bit nervous and it was a peculiar situation. But I had practiced well here and I felt confident."

"I've had good experiences here in Copenhagen and then you usually play well when coming back," said the German, who evened the score to 1-1 in head-to-head meetings with Melzer.

In other matches on Monday, number three seed Karol Kucera of Slovakia had little trouble ousting Kristof Vliegen of Belgium 6-2, 6-3, while fourth-seeded Czech Radek Stepanek had to work harder to get past Frenchman Arnaud di Pasquale, whom he eventually defeated 7-6 (7/3) 3-6, 6-3.

Finally, local favourite and Danish wild card receiver Ramus Noerby, ranked 1,129th in the world, was clearly the underdog when he walked on court to play Czech Jiri Vanek.

But Noerby put up a good fight and Vanek, ranked 186, had to work hard for more than two hours to claim his 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 victory.

Goran's comeback ends in tears

AFP, Dubai

Goran Ivanisevic's comeback to the ATP Tour after 11 months on the sidelines ended in disaster when he was struck down by injury yet again here Monday.

The 2001 Wimbledon champion, who has set his heart on returning to the court where he achieved his greatest triumph, is again unsure of being able to do so after a damaged knee ligament forced him to quit in the first round of the one million dollar Dubai Open.

Ivanisevic, who has only just recovered from an operation upon a long-time shoulder injury, was forced to retire at 6-6 against Andrei Stoliarov after twice taking falls.

The first occurred in the 11th game when Ivanisevic hurtled the width of court trying to retrieve an angled volley on break point. One shoe appeared to stick to the synthetic surface and he almost performed the splits as he went down.

The Croatian star lay there for several seconds, limped to the players bench, iced his right knee, and was then given treatment for three minutes by the ATP trainer Doug Spreen.

"England have just got to bowl straight," Brown, a former England one-day international, told AFP.

"And with the form they're in, especially James Anderson (who took 4-29 against Pakistan), that should not be a problem."

"India do tend to struggle when the ball goes round in the air as it does at Durban."

England, though, have a couple of injured batsmen to worry about.

Hospital scans on Michael Vaughan's strained right calf Monday were clear but the Yorkshire star has had serious calf problems before.

And Madras-born Hussain has been suffering with a stiff neck although both he and Vaughan are expected to be fit.

Another factor in Wednesday's match could be the crowd.

Durban has a huge Indian population of its own and thousands of fans have been flying in from the sub-continent as well, turning the fixture into a 'home' match for Ganguly's men.

However, Indian crowds can turn on their heroes if they are under-performing. Whether they inspire or intimidate either side remains to be seen.

LINE-UPS (from): Nasser Hussain (captain), James Anderson, Ian Blackwell, Andrew Caddick, Paul Collingwood, Andrew Flintoff, Ashley Giles, Stephen Harmison, Matthew Hoggard, Ronnie Irani, Nick Knight, Alec Stewart, Marcus Trescothick, Michael Vaughan, Craig White.

INDIA (from): Saurav Ganguly (capt), Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Javagal Srinath, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Dinesh Mongia, Parthiv Patel, Sanjay Bangar, Ajit Agarkar, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif.

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (Rsa) and Simon Taufel (Aus)

TV umpire: Asoka De Silva (Sri)

Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (Sri)

Getting over Shane



AFP, Johannesburg

World champions Australia returned from their hit-and-run mission to fortress Bulawayo on Tuesday with their fourth successive World Cup win under their belts.

With their 10th one-day win in a row secured, the question being asked is: "Who needs Shane Warne?"

When the legendary leg-spinner boarded a plane for Melbourne two weeks ago with the shame of a failed drugs test hovering over him, there were many who believed that he was taking his side's World Cup hopes with him.

But four games later and a place in the Super Sixes assured, Warne man of the match in the final at Lord's the four years ago and now banned for a year is becoming a distant memory.

"It was a good win," said skipper Ricky Ponting after his side's seven-wicket triumph over Zimbabwe.

"Our batting was good and it didn't do us any harm to have a

tough game. It will do us good."

Australia next face Namibia at Potchefstroom on Thursday before concluding their first round campaign against the old enemy England in Port Elizabeth on Sunday.

One man determined to make the most of those games is Brad Hogg, the man who has benefited immensely from Warne's misery.

The left-armed took three wickets against Zimbabwe, including that of dangerman Andy Flower, and is reveling in the spotlight of being his team's frontline slow bowler having forced his way into the World Cup squad after replacing Warne in the one-day series against England and Sri Lanka.

"I remember when Warne got his shoulder injury," recalled the 31-year-old Hogg, a former postman.

"I was shocked. It's not something you want to see. But I knew I was probably in with a shout although I'd prefer to be playing a game with Warne rather than the rest of the attack strangle the life out of the opposition, the batsmen dance on the corpse."

"It was good that Damien Martyn

and Darren Lehmann had some time in the middle and they were under a fair bit of pressure," said Ponting of his two batsmen who enjoyed a 92-run partnership for the fourth wicket against Zimbabwe.

Lehmann hit the winning boundary to move to 56 not out, while Martyn remained unbeaten on 50.

"Partnerships are the key to victory for us," explained the captain.

Vice-captain Adam Gilchrist meanwhile, made sure that the Aussies left Zimbabwe with diplomatic links intact despite limiting their visit to a shorter time as possible.

They had arrived under the escort of a helicopter gunship in Zimbabwe's second city and left, 30 hours later, saying all the right things.

"There were a lot of contentious issues surrounding this game and about us coming here but I'd like to say that our thoughts are with the people of Zimbabwe who are going through some very difficult times," Gilchrist said after his innings of 61 from 65 balls.

Time to wake up



REUTERS, Johannesburg

It may be time for Inzamamul Haq to go out and eat his way through a restaurant menu.

The Pakistan batsman, fourth on the list of one-day international run-scorers, came to the World Cup in the best physical shape of his life, having shed 12kg (1st 12lbs) from his imposing frame.

But he has struggled to hit the ball off the square in South Africa and his two-ball duck against the Netherlands in Pool A on Tuesday he failed to move his feet to a full-length delivery left him with 10 runs in four innings.

In his previous effort against England, he was caught first ball after being squared up by an away-

swinging delivery.

Perhaps Inzamam's recent dieting and gym work, in an attempt to cut down on injuries, has been too draconian.

European golfers Colin Montgomerie and Darren Clarke have both blamed dips in form in recent seasons on sudden weight loss, which they say affected their balance and hence their swings.

Flaws in fundamental technique, however, coupled to lack of confidence, are almost certainly the root cause.

Few of Asia's most renowned batsmen, in fact, have fared well at this World Cup, struggling to acclimatise to South African pitches offering bounce and sideways movement.

"As far as application levels go with regard to sub-continent teams, there's a lot to do," former India batsman Sunil Gavaskar told South

African satellite broadcaster Supersport on Tuesday.

On Monday, Sri Lanka went down to Kenya by 53 runs in one of the World Cup's great shocks. The Kenyans had termed the pitch "a batsman's paradise" but Aravinda de Silva was the only Sri Lankan to get past 25.

Skipper Sanath Jayasuriya said: "We looked like amateurs... This is my and the team's worst day in cricket."

Blangladesh, meanwhile, have batted so poorly that they even lost to Canada in their opening game.

Captain Khaled Mashud said on Wednesday: "I'm low on morale at the moment and most of the guys are low."

India, meanwhile, appear to be improving but their one big batting test to date saw them killed for 125 by Australia at Centurion.

Never-ending

FROM PAGE 16 main scapegoat, with supporters and former team mates calling for his sacking.

It is hard to know who to blame for this national angst but it is clear that South Africans are masters at heaping pressure on themselves.

They also appear to be much less brazenly self-confident than they might appear to outsiders, a fact ruthlessly played upon by Ricky Ponting's Australians.

Despite Australia's clear cricketing dominance they have beaten South Africa in eight of their last 11 one-dayers and five of their last six Tests. South Africa's media has constantly crowed that, should Shaun Pollock's side win the March 23 final, they would become the first hosts to win the cup.

The team have also been regularly reminded that Francois Pienaar's rugby union side united the nation by winning the 1995 World Cup on home soil, while the soccer team won the African Nations Cup.

Pienaar, indeed, addressed Pollock's team just before the cricket tournament, while there were also meetings, supposedly inspirational, with President Thabo Mbeki and Nelson Mandela.

The players have done themselves no favours either.

When things started to go wrong, with Pool B defeats by West Indies and New Zealand, batsman Herschelle Gibbs inadvisably suggested that the late Hansie

Cronje's leadership was being missed.

It did not appear to have occurred to Gibbs that, in so doing, he was undermining Pollock.

On Monday, the under-siege South African team retreated from the public gaze in an attempt to regroup at home with their families.

It may prove a crucial decision, before the hosts take on Sri Lanka on March 3 in Durban. That game will almost certainly decide whether they reach the Super Six stage.

On the face of it, Pollock's men should be favourites, having brushed the Sri Lankans aside 4-1 in a recent one-day series.

In the current climate, however, anything seems possible.

One thing is certain. When the South African team re-emerge in a couple of days, the public's high expectations will still be waiting for them.

The pressure is pervasive, according to Clinton Gahwrie, the team's psychologist, even at the most mundane of evening functions.

"It's almost a no-win situation," he told the Sunday Times. "They sign autographs and attend functions and almost by definition they're going to disappoint people because they aren't going to fulfil all their demands."

"Just by drawing the line they are going to displease people... It's a catch-22 situation."

If South Africa do survive to make the second stage, they will run into

the all-conquering 1999 champions.

The Australians have never been shy about offering the odd sledge former captain Steve Waugh liked to call it "mental disintegration".

Pollock and his batsmen should not be too surprised if Ricky Ponting's side greet them to the crease with never-ending references to that missing Edgbaston run.

Rain in Durban on Monday forced the cancellation of England's net practice at Kingsmead as they prepare for the floodlit Pool A match against India on Wednesday.

Indian heads

FROM PAGE 16

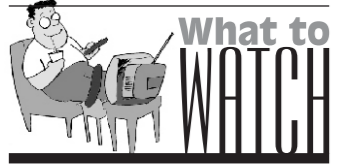
applying pressure while I keep it tight at the other end," Caddick said.

"Jimmy has been great and bowled brilliantly in the last few matches. If he can continue to do that, then all I've got to worry about is doing my job and keep it really tight so he can attack even more."

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They have also done their homework on impressive young fast bowler James Anderson, who took four for 29 in England's shock 112-run victory over Pakistan in Cape Town on Saturday.

"You can't really say until you face him in the middle," said Wright. "But we have a few batsmen who can put pressure on any bowler if they settle down."



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ESPN Taking Guard Day 18 WC Cricket Talk Show Live at 5:00 pm Sportscentre Hindi Sport News Live at 8:30 pm UEFA Champions League Ajax vs Arsenal Live at 1:30 am (Thursday)

STAR Sports Primera Liga Real Madrid vs Valladolid Repeat at 10:30 am English Premier Football League Everton vs Southampton Taped Version at 1:30 pm

WC Cricket Talk Show Live at 5:00 pm Sportline Tonight Sport News Live at 8:00 pm Follow Through Day 18 WC Cricket Programme Live at 10:00 pm



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Bevan to go up

FROM PAGE 16 disappointing to come out of the game (against Zimbabwe).

"We've played four games and he hasn't had a bat yet so we'll have to look at that," he added.

Bevan remained philosophical about his lack of opportunities after watching his team mates pass Zimbabwe's score of 246 for nine with 15 balls to spare.

"The top order is performing extremely well and that is helping us win games," he told reporters.

"This is not new territory for me. It happened in 1996 when I didn't get a bat until the semifinals (of the World Cup)."

"There is no doubt I will get my opportunity to play a batting role soon," Bevan added.

The likely elevation of Bevan is not the only thing Australia have to consider before Thursday's match in Potchefstroom.

Off spinner Nathan Hauritz is scheduled to link up with the squad on Tuesday night after being drafted in as a replacement for Shane Warne, and depending on how he feels after the 14-hour flight from Australia he may come into contention.

If he can shake off his jet-lag, it would make sense to play Hauritz against Namibia because after that Australia play England on March 2 in a match that could decide who tops the group.

Following that game the Super Sixes start and although Hauritz is arriving after a season of domestic cricket, it would be tough on him if he had to play in a big game late in the tournament without previous match

practice.

Hauritz, along with all rounder Ian Harvey and pace bowler Andy Bichel, will come into contention to face Namibia if Australia look to rest fast bowlers Glenn McGrath and Jason Gillespie, who have both played all four matches.

Batsman Jimmy Maher was the other man who missed out against Zimbabwe and he will also be hoping for an outing, although he knows that with all the batsmen keen to find some form for the Super Sixes, his opportunities may be limited.

Australia returned to South Africa straight after the match against Zimbabwe on Monday, landing in Johannesburg and then driving to Potchefstroom.

The squad will have the day off on Tuesday before training again on Wednesday for the Namibia game.

Night club FROM PAGE 16 Bangladesh at Kimberley. Team manager Jeff Crowe forwarded his report about the incident to NZC on Monday, but chief executive Martin Snedden delayed its release to clarify some points.