

Qualifying under war's shadow



AFP, Paris

Against the gloomy backdrop of war in Iraq football will creep back towards centre stage Saturday for a raft of crucial Euro 2004 qualifiers.

England travel to Liechtenstein for a David versus Goliath contest which secured UEFA's go-ahead after initial security concerns about potential terror attacks connected with the Iraqi crisis.

While such threats off the field linger, on the field it is banana skins which Sven-Goran Eriksson's side fear as they have already endured a storm of criticism following their miserable home draw against Macedonia in their last qualifier.

Group Seven rivals Turkey are setting the early pace with three wins in three games and England, having thrown those two points away against the Macedonians, are aware another slip-up against also-ran opponents would derail their campaign.

Eriksson is determined that his charges will not concede further unnecessary ground as they head for Vaduz along with some 2,000 England fans - only 900 of whom are officially expected to get tickets.

Liechtenstein, whose entire population of 33,000 would only half fill Old Trafford, have only ever won one match. But they did manage a draw of their own against Macedonia and England will not be counting their chickens even if livestock grade behind the 3,500 capacity Rheinpark Stadium.

Eriksson has plumped for an injection of youth by drafting 17-year-old Everton striker Wayne Rooney, who made his debut as the youngest ever England player at 17 and 111 days in last month's friendly loss to Australia.

Newcastle's 20-year-old midfielder Jermaine Jenas, who likewise won his first cap against the Aussies, is retained and could even keep out clubmate Kieron Dyer while Chelsea defender John Terry is a new face.

With Sol Campbell injured Gareth Southgate of Middlesbrough is likely to come in and partner Rio Ferdinand at the back.

Liverpool's midfielder Steven Gerrard says England must not underestimate rivals who themselves drew at home to the Macedonians.

"England are expected to win this game comfortably but it's not as easy as it seems to come to a

place like this on a difficult pitch. It's a potential banana skin," Gerrard said.

Elsewhere in England's group, Macedonia, boosted by their 2-2 draw away to England, take on Slovakia while the Turks have a free weekend.

France, like their English counterparts, face a side they should beat easily in the shape of Malta and Les Bleus have home advantage in the northern town of Lens.

Robert Pires is set to miss out with an ankle strain but Zinedine Zidane, skipper in the absence of Marcel Desailly, is over a leg strain.

The French have found Group One a cakewalk to date. They thrashed Slovenia 5-0 in their last competitive tie and although they did lose a recent home friendly to the Czech Republic they have already swamped the Maltese away.

Table with 2 columns: Group and Match details. Includes fixtures for Saturday and Sunday.

Jacques Santini's side, the defending European champions, will therefore likely be in an enviable position of four wins from four starts when they head for Palermo to face Israel on Wednesday.

While England struggle to prove their pedigree under Eriksson few people would have put money on Wales beating them to next summer's finals in Portugal.

But Mark Hughes' Welsh dragons are on a roll after maximum points from their opening three games, including a home success

Independence Day Cup golf

SPORTS REPORTER

Sadiq Qudus won the men's title while Hiroko Kosaka clinched the women's crown in the Independence Day Cup Golf Tournament at the Kurmitola Golf Club Course yesterday.

312 golfers including 14 ladies and 16 juniors took part in the two-day meet. Chief of Army Staff and president of Kurmitola Golf Club Lt Gen Hasan Mashud Chowdhury distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest.

OTHER RESULTS

Senior winner: Maj Gen S Ameer Ali, Junior winner: Master Salim Khan, Team winner: Maj Gen Jamilul Din Ahsan, Sadiq Qudus, Air Cdre A T M Golam Kibria, Gp Capt M Mahbul Huq, Team runner-up: Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Mujtaba, Maj Gen S Ameer Ali, Brig Gen M Ismail Talukder, Gp Capt M Ali Akkas, Runner-up: Wing Cdre Mahbul Haq Khan, 2nd runner-up: K J Yoon, Nearest to pin: Maj Kazi Ashfaq Ahmed, Longest drive: Azam J Chowdhury.

WHIZZ KID-191

Sheikh Jawad Ibrahim (Evergreen Int'l School, Dhaka) Please produce your ID card and an attested passport size photograph while collecting the winner's prize from the Sports Desk of The Daily Star at 7:30 pm on April 6.

WHIZZ KID-191 correct answers

- 1. Who clinched the Shahjalal Bank International Rating Chess title? Ans. Rajib. 2. New Zealand beat South Africa in a World Cup Group B match by: Ans. 9 wkts. 3. How many runs did Bangladesh score against South Africa in the World Cup Group B match? Ans. 108. 4. Bangladesh lost to Canada in the World Cup Group B match by: Ans. 60 runs. 5. Shane Warne has been banned for: Ans. 12 months.

What to Watch ESPN English Premier Football League Liverpool vs Leeds United Repeat at 11:00 am UEFA Champions League Olympique Lyonnais vs Inter Milan Repeat at 7:00 pm Western Union World Football Repeat at 11:30 pm STAR Sports Futbol Mundial Repeat at 10:30 am

Star Whizz Kid Competition 192 Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star Win attractive prizes Competition closes at 8 pm April 11, 2003 and draw shortly afterwards 1. Who was the man-of-the-tournament in the Cricket World Cup? Tendulkar, Ganguly, Lee 2. Who was the man-of-the-match in the World Cup final? Ponting, Bichel, McGrath 3. What was the lowest score in the World Cup? 36, 40, 43 4. What was the highest score in the World Cup? 359, 345, 394 Name: School Address: Phone: (If any)

Portugal's test by world champs

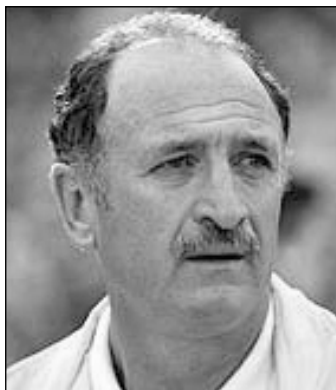


AFP, Lisbon

Luiz Filipe Scolari built Brazil into a team that conquered the world.

But on Saturday the Brazilian will try to turn the tables on his country as coach of Portugal, which is eager to erase the memories of its miserable World Cup performance when it went home after the first round.

Brazilian star Ronaldo acknowledges that Scolari is Portugal's trump card for the friendly game at the Antas Stadium in Porto as the Portuguese seek their first win against Brazil in 37 years.



LUIZ FILIPE SCOLARI



DECO

that," Benfica striker Nuno Gomes said of Deco. "He'll be another trump card for us."

Scolari is expected to scrap the three-man defence which was shaky against Italy.

During training over the past week, he tested a midfield set-up which looks formidable: Deco lining up alongside Real Madrid's Luis Figo, AC Milan's Rui Costa and Internazionale's Sergio Conceicao.

Scolari's also called up two rookies -- Nuno Ribeiro Maniche of FC Porto and Leiria's Jorge Fernandes Silva.

Portugal is looking for its 100th home win but goes into the game as the firm underdog. The last time it beat Brazil was at the 1966 World Cup when Eusebio scored twice against Pele's team.

Brazil has won 12 of the 16 meetings between the two countries, compared with two victories for Portugal.

The goal tally is also 34-9 in Brazil's favour.

PROBABLE TEAMS

Portugal: Ricardo Pereira; Paulo Ferreira, Fernando Meira, Fernando Couto, Rui Jorge; Francisco Costinha; Luis Figo, Rui Costa, Deco, Sergio Conceicao; Pauleta. Brazil: Marcos; Cafu, Luisao, Edmilson, Roberto Carlos; Kleberon, Gilberto Silva; Ronaldinho, Rivaldo, Ze Roberto; Ronaldo. Referee: Alon Yefet (Israel)

Caddick quits ODIs

FROM PAGE 8 "I'm glad Nasser hasn't thrown away the Test captaincy, because I think he's one of the best to take on the job for England."

Following perhaps England's most arduous ever winter - beginning with the ICC Trophy in Sri Lanka before the high-profile campaigns for the Ashes in Australia and then the World Cup - Caddick admits the hectic calendar does take its toll at times.

"It's been solid for the last 12 months," he said.

"International teams are playing a lot more cricket, and so winners will be a lot longer for the players.

"I've done nothing for three weeks - which is nice - but I start

training again on Monday, so it's back into the old grind and slog-ging away."

Defeats against India and Australia at the World Cup meant Caddick's one-day career did not finish on a high note.

But he is happy there are still plenty of good times for him to reflect on.

"I've had some great moments," he said.

"Coming through to beat Pakistan at Cape Town was probably a highlight - but unfortunately the game against Australia didn't go our way."

"But that's one-day cricket - nothing is decided until the final ball is bowled."

CADDICK BOX

Returns five for 16 at Lord's and five for 14 in the fourth Test at Headingley - including four wickets in an over and five wickets in 15 balls.

Named as one of Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year.

2001: Has a disappointing tour of Pakistan where he picks up just three wickets.

March - Bounces back with five wickets in the second Test win over Sri Lanka in Kandy and another four at Colombo as England come from behind to take the series 2-1.

Given another central contract for the 2001 season.

June - Finishes the drawn series against Pakistan with 14 wickets at a cost of 309 runs.

July - Takes five for 101 against Australia in the second Ashes Test at Lord's, but England still lose by eight wickets.

August - The Ashes ends on a low note as Caddick is hit for 146 without success in the final Test at the Oval. Finished with a total of 15 wickets.

October - Named in party for tour to India, but asks for more time to consider his participation following the terrorist attacks on the United States.

October 30 - Announces he will not go to India.

2002: January - Competes in the one-day series in India and New Zealand but plays only three matches as England prefer Matthew Hoggard.

March 30 - Claims four wickets on the first day of the final Test against New Zealand in Auckland and to become the ninth England bowler to claim 200 Test victims.

September - Following a summer when he suffered a side strain - which ruled him out of two Tests against India - chosen in England party for ICC Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka and Ashes tour of Australia.

O'Connor bids NZ

FROM PAGE 8 Zealand Cricket contract for this year.

O'Connor said the contract system was not a factor in his decision.

"When I first played first-class cricket I didn't think 'Aw gee, I could make a lot of money out of this,'" he said.

"I made up my mind a long time ago. And once I started thinking about it I looked at it with a bias for affirmation for what I was thinking."

"I was pretty determined to do well this year and I played as if I still wanted to play for New Zealand, to keep my name in the hat. But I still feel comfortable with my decision," he said.

O'Connor said he would be surprised if he played first-class cricket again.

The injury he suffered after the African tour and his time to recover over two summers were not really a factor in his decision, although he said it was while injured that he began to think about life after cricket.

"I never saw myself as having a long and illustrious cricket career, winning a county contract. That wasn't for me."

"I did what I wanted to when I set out in cricket and I'm thrilled with what I did," he said.

New Zealand selection chairman Sir Richard Hadlee was surprised by O'Connor's decision.

While giving nothing away about his thoughts of the chances O'Connor may have had of being part of the Sri Lankan tour, Hadlee did say that experience was an asset and at 29 years of age, O'Connor had that.

Too Green

FROM PAGE 8 Were arranged to help the selectors see the performance of the players before they name a 15-man Bangladesh squad for the forthcoming tri-nation series with South Africa and India.

SCORES IN BRIEF BCB GREEN: 280 for 6 in 50 overs (Nazimuddin 80, Rashedul 79, Tushar 51, Munir 3-62, Enamul jr 3-34)

BCB RED: 234 all out in 44.1 overs (Shahriar 52, Akram 52, Kadir 45, Arafat 2-21, Humayun 2-43, Ashraf 2-44)

Result: BCB Green team won by 46 runs.



IM Enamul Hossain Rajib (L) makes a move against IM Abdullah Al Rakib during their second round fixture of the final phase of the Professor Abdur Razzak 29th National Championship at the NSC chess room yesterday.

'Big Phil' wary Ronaldo!

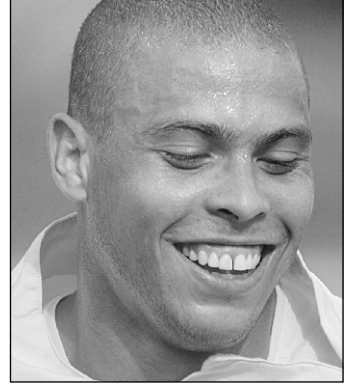


AFP, Lisbon

Brazilian star Ronaldo has said Brazil is in for a rough ride when it faces Portugal in a friendly on Saturday now that his former boss Luiz Filipe Scolari is in charge of the Portuguese side.

"With Scolari on the other side it is natural that we will have greater difficulties," he told reporters in Porto where the match will take place, sports daily A Bola reported Thursday. "Big Phil" knows us well.

Scolari, who is known as "Big Phil" to his compatriots, resigned as Brazil coach in August after steering his country to their fifth World Cup victory in June. The 54-



RONALDO

year-old took over as Portugal coach in January.

He is high in Portugal that Scolari will lead the national squad, which crashed out of last

year's World Cup in the first round after losses to the United States and South Korea, to victory in the Euro 2004 championship the country will host.

Since Portugal, as host nation, automatically qualifies for Euro 2004, Scolari has sought to line the squad up in competitive friendlies to prepare for the tournament.

But Ronaldo, who currently plays for Spain's European champions Real Madrid, said the stakes were high for Brazil as well as the team is looking to keep the prestige it won with its World Cup win.

"We are going to try to show our five-time world champion status before a team that is not going to make our job easy," he said.

Ronaldo scored both goals for Brazil in the 2-0 win over Germany in the World Cup final last June.

Bacher plan ignored



INTERNET, Johannesburg

World Cup director Dr Ali Bacher has revealed his proposals for the controversial second stage of the tournament were vetoed by the game's governing body.

The Super Six round attracted controversy because of a complicated system that allowed teams to carry points through from the group stage.

Minnows Kenya were almost guaranteed a semi-final place after New Zealand forfeited their match in Nairobi on safety grounds.

Bacher told the BBC Sport website he had suggested Super Six matches should be given added weight.

He explained: "An idea that I proposed which wasn't supported by the ICC was that you get two points for a win in the pool."

"You take them forward only if you have defeated a team that goes forward with you."

"But for the Super Six if you win a match there you should get three points because to me it's a more

important match."

The suggestions could be examined again by organisers of the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies.

Bacher expects two further teams to be added, taking the total



ALI BACHER

to 16, competing in a Super Eight second round.

He has accepted the 2003 tournament was too long at 44 days, but claims extra teams could make the format more efficient.

"You would probably end up

with four teams in four sections with the top two going through to the Super Eight," he went on.

"You would therefore have a shorter tournament."

Bacher argued Kenya, along with fellow associate members Canada, Namibia and Holland "brought a degree of freshness to the competition."

"I don't believe their presence undermined the integrity of this tournament," he said of the four sides.

"World Cups are about growing the game globally."

Bacher dismissed suggestions extra days could be set aside in case of rain in group matches.

West Indies' failure to qualify for the Super Six was down in part to their washed-out match against Bangladesh, when the four points on offer were shared.

"The theory is every match should have a reserve day," Bacher admitted.

"But organising an event in three countries with 15 towns and cities involved, logistically would have been a nightmare."

Akram or Mahmud?

FROM PAGE 8 clarify whether the Board would be ending Mohsin Kamal stint as Bangladesh coach and unveil plans for replacement.

The former Pakistan paceman took charge from Australian Trevor Chappell who was sacked mid-way through his tenure.

"We don't have that in our agenda for the day. As far as I know, his contract is up to April 30," Anam said.

No Real need for Beckham

AFP, Madrid

Spanish giants Real Madrid said Friday there was little likelihood of them making a reported 40 million pound (60 million dollar) bid for Manchester United star David Beckham.

"The possibility that Beckham will one day play for Real Madrid is very remote," said Real sporting director Jorge Valdano.

Steve Waugh

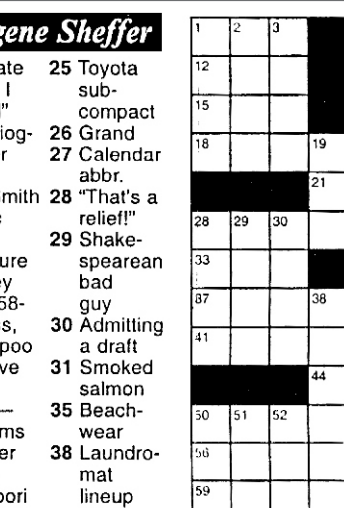
FROM PAGE 8 day team enabled him to shine for his state in his busiest season for the Blues since the early stages of his career.

NSW beat Queensland in the Sheffield Shield final to cap a memorable season.

In seven Sheffield Shield matches Waugh amassed 659 runs at an average of 50.69 including three centuries.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 44 Undeniably 46 Figure of speech 48 Freeway access 49 Figurine material 12 Romance 13 Medley 14 Curved 15 Work with bricks 16 Popular singer 18 Rock 20 Writer 21 Unre- paired 24 Helps a hood 28 16-Across hit 32 Rue the run 33 Uril novel, with "The" 34 Influential business-person in a gym? 37 "Zounds!" 39 16-Across hit 41 Fret 43 Accept



CRYPTOQUIP

P K H Q V X O O F R X C S N H Q W K N M W V K P U X W C K V K W S R K U M F P X Y S N N W N M U R X W N M V C S R K R K C U K Y Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE UNDERTAKER WAS SO BUSY LATELY THAT HE WAS STARTING TO GET BURIED IN HIS WORK. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals E