



Italy's ace striker Christian Vieri (R) scoring his second goal past Finnish goalkeeper Antti Niemi at Palermo's Renzo Barbera Stadium on March 29.

England on track, Germany stumble



AFP, Paris

England did the bare minimum on Saturday in beating tiny Liechtenstein 2-0 to stay in the hunt for a place in the finals of Euro 2004.

Goals in either half from Michael Owen and David Beckham just about disguised a patchy showing which left coach Sven-Goran Eriksson admitting that luck was on his men's side as they cut the gap on Group Seven leaders Turkey to two points.

Next Wednesday's home encounter with the Turks at Sunderland will now go a long way to deciding who wins the group and gains an automatic ticket to the finals in Portugal.

"At least we got the three points. There was maybe a bit of a lack of concentration towards the end of the game. We gave them a couple of chances," Eriksson had to concede afterwards after his side won through with Owen's header on the half hour and Beckham's trademark freekick on 53 minutes.

Rampant Wales earlier had a much smoother ride as Mark Hughes's side made it four wins out of four by crushing Azerbaijan 4-0 in Cardiff.

France were in equally dynamic form, crushing Malta 6-0 to top group one with a maximum 12 points, a double from stand-in skipper Zinedine Zidane helping the reigning champions on their way.

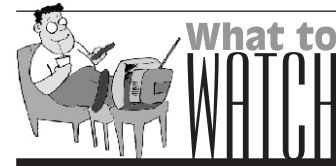
But World Cup runners-up Germany had a night to forget, being held 1-1 at home by Lithuania in group five, which cost them top spot to Scotland, 2-1 winners over Iceland, on goal difference.

Wales opened the scoring after just 13 seconds.

Newcastle striker Craig Bellamy, in hot water for an alleged assault on an Asian nightclub doorman, took the advice of Hughes and club manager Sir Bobby Robson to channel his aggression in more positive fashion, his effort going in off visiting skipper Tarlan Akhmedov.

Bellamy's clubmate Gary Speed headed the second on 40 minutes after Mark Pembroke whipped in the cross and Celtic's in-form John Hartson headed in the third seconds before the break from a Ryan Giggs cross.

Manchester United winger Giggs netted the fourth himself seven minutes after the restart.



ESPN
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Repeat at 9:30 pm
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Brazil's Brazilian blow



REUTERS, Oporto

Deco Souza crowned a spectacular debut for Portugal with the winning goal in a 2-1 victory over his native Brazil on Saturday -- their first over the south Americans since 1966.

Substitute Deco converted a set piece in the 82nd minute after Brazil's Roberto Carlos was sent off for shoulder charging Israeli referee Alon Yefet in protest over the award of a free kick to Portugal.

It was also trainer Luiz Felipe Scolari's first win in charge of Portugal, and came against the team he fashioned into world champions for a record fifth time less than a year ago.

Portugal lost 1-0 away to Italy last month in Scolari's only other game in charge. As Euro 2004 hosts Portugal qualify automatically and have only friendlies to play before the tournament.

"This was not about me, but the fans, who haven't had a win over Brazil for 37 years," said Scolari.

"That's history, I want them to make history and to score. Moreover, I want them to have a big chance to be remembered in 2004, not just as (world youth champions) in 1991."

Scolari also praised Deco, who played in front of what was largely a home crowd at the Antas stadium, where his playmaking has done much to give his club Porto their

overwhelming lead in the Portuguese premiership.

"He had to come on, and was going to come on. He even slotted into a position that wasn't his. But as Rui (Costa) was really inspired, Deco helped out," added Scolari, who was wary of starting the untried Deco alongside veteran Costa.

"He will help us out, on the wing, in the middle, wherever. That's the spirit I want in the team."

Portugal took the lead in the eighth minute when Sergio Conceicao crossed to Pauleta who evaded a challenge from Brazil captain Cafu to poke the ball inside the right post.

The home side settled into a confident passing game after that, yet all the scoring chances in the remainder of the first half went to Brazil.

Rivaldo failed to score with only goalkeeper Ricardo Pereira to beat and Roberto Carlos twice hit the woodwork with powerful shots from 25 metres.

Ronaldo was also wasteful when he chipped weakly into Ricardo's hands from close range.

Tempers became frayed in the second half as both sides were guilty of clumsy tackles on a wet pitch.

But Ronaldinho levelled for Brazil in the 65th minute, converting a penalty after Portugal winger Simao Sabrosa, playing in place of Luis Figo, had brought him down.

Rain curtails

FROM PAGE 8

Victoria SC v Brothers Union	
Venue: BKSP	
BROTHERS UNION	Firstinning
Salahuddin	Salimb Sabbir
Shahriar	Razzak
Masroor	batting
Halim Shah	batting
Extras: (b-8, lb-1, nb-1)	
Total (For 2 wks in 29 overs)	93
Fall of wickets:	1-48, 2-92.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Saiful	6	1	21	0
Mushfiq	8	1	26	0
Razzak	6	0	25	1
Sabbir	6	1	11	1
Manzarul	3	2	1	0

City Club v Uttara SC

Venue: DCS	
UTTARASC	
Shahriar	Saifulah
Muniruzzaman	C Kadirb Tareq
Shafiqul	Saifulah
Faisalb	Saifulah
Sumon	C Tareqb Jmaluddin
Monirul	batting
Rashed	Kadirb Tareq
Arman	lbwb Saifulah
Debaratla	C Jamaluddin Saifulah
Aslam	batting
Extras: ((b-4, lb-3, nb-4)	
Total: (For 8 wks in 33 overs)	87
Fall of wickets:	1-2, 2-41, 3-58, 4-71, 5-71, 6-79, 7-84, 8-87.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tareq	9	1	19	2

Sultan defensive

FROM PAGE 8

NSC act in the parliament. That's why we thought of holding an AGM and ask AFC to give us more time.

"But the AGM was not required as the AFC later extended the date up to April 30 in December," Sultan said.

Top-ordered

FROM PAGE 8

his career. The 24-year-old is the lone Bangladeshi player to have scored a hundred in one-day international.

The return of Javed at the top also reflected a change of heart by the selectors, who ruled the doughty right-hander out of the World Cup squad ignoring popular demand.

Though the 26-year-old has never been a spectator's delight with his limited stroke play, but Javed is matchless when it comes to occupying the crease. He is only the second player in the history of Test cricket to carry the bat through an innings.

For Tarek Aziz it is the second call-up in the senior team since he made his debut in the one-day home series against Pakistan in 2002.

The tri-nation tournament that also involves India will start on April 11. After the one-day meet, South Africa will play the first Test in Dhaka starting on April 24. The second Test in Chittagong starts from May 1.

SQUAD

Khaled Mahmud (captain), Javed Omar Belim, Mehrab Hossain, Mohammed Ashraf, Habibul Bashar, Akram Khan, Alok Kapali, Tushar Imran, Khaled Mashud (wicketkeeper), Sanwar Hossain, Mohammed Rafique, Taposh Kumar Baishya, Monjurul Islam, Tarek Aziz Khan and Talha Jubair.



PHOTO: AFP

Portugal's Rui Jorge (R) checks Brazil's Cafu during the friendly at Antas Stadium in Porto on March 29.

Points to ponder

FROM PAGE 8

suspect actions in premier league.

6. Audio and video classes will enrich a player's knowledge about the game and his opponents. Video analysis will pinpoint the weaknesses and strength of each of our players and as well as their opponents. This will immensely help our players, both physically and mentally, while playing against other Test playing nations.

7. Each players should have his batting, bowling and fielding recorded so that they can see for themselves what kind of mistakes they are making and how to rectify it. This has to be compulsory during a match and practice session. Perhaps, a technical analyst (with a cricket background) should be employed to take care of this aspect.

8. Overseas coaches should be in charge of all age group teams but local coach should train the national team. Local coaches should be sent abroad on regular basis so that they get to know about new method of training and technology.

9. Bowling machines should be used in practice of all age groups, schools, colleges, clubs and national team. We do not have genuine quick bowlers but we need to practice against very fast deliveries, which is only possible by the bowling machine. Bowling machine is also capable of bowling all kinds of deliveries i.e. fast, medium, slow or any kind of spin.

10. Discipline in the team must have to be maintained strictly. Strict measures should be taken against an indiscipline player, even if he is the best cricketer in the team.

11. Set aside politics and personal interest in the Board. Everyone should together for the betterment of the game.

The reality is that cricket in Bangladesh will not improve overnight, nor in a few years. It will take years of sincere efforts and dedication to achieve that goal. We need reform cricket managers (Board), then the clubs and finally the players. -- (The writer is a former Bangladesh opener)

Champions

FROM PAGE 8

and there's some very good young players - Sarwan, Samuels, (Chris) Gayle, (Wavell) Hinds, then you've got (Shivnarine) Chandepaul, Lara, (Carl) Hooper and (Ridley) Jacobs there so it's an excellent batting side.

"This (Jermaine) Lawson looks like a good bowling prospect and then you've got Merv Dillon and we've come across a few other bloopers.

"They're going to be a lot tougher than people give them credit for and we certainly won't be underestimating them.

"They went through a tough phase for a few years there and they've rebounded fairly well and they seem to be more together.

"(Chairman of selectors) Viv Richards seems to have quite a bit of say in West Indies cricket, which is good for them, and world cricket needs them to come back."

Whether the Windies can defy the odds and upset Australia in four Tests probably hinges on how Waugh's team copes with its grueling schedule.

"Realistically the (World Cup players) haven't had a lot of cricket so I don't think tiredness will be a factor," Vaughn said. "It's more the homesickness factor and being away from Australia. That's the toughest thing to overcome."

Batsman Damien Martyn will miss the start of the tour after fracturing his right index finger while fielding during the World Cup tournament.

Nat'l school hockey

UNB, Dhaka

Newcomer Nasirabad Govt High School of Chittagong maintained their winning run in the Metro Group National School Hockey Tournament final round beating Police Lines High School of Faridpur 1-0 at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

River View High School of Rajshahi defeated Arjat Arjaran High School of Kishoreganj 5-1 in the day's other match.

Zim agreed

FROM PAGE 8

(England) are looking to tour Zimbabwe in October 2004 and we are looking forward to the tour," Hogg said.

"England have learnt from their experience," he added. "They expressed regrets and I'm sure they don't want a repeat of the World Cup situation."

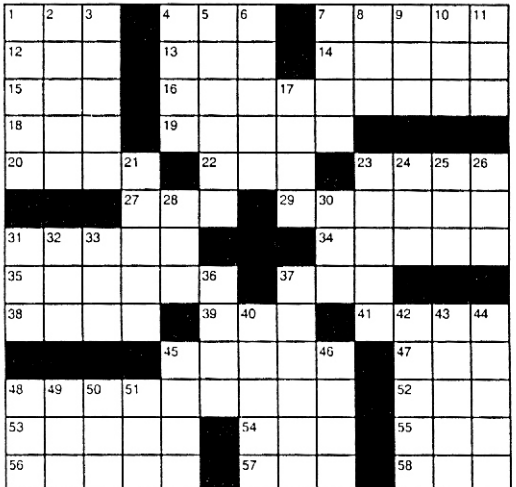
Hogg said Zimbabwe were still disappointed by England's decision not to play their match in Harare on February 13.

"We do feel let down," he said. "We gave every assurance about security and it was proved quite categorically that everything was fine and they could have come to Zimbabwe."

Zimbabwe are due to play two Tests in England, at Lord's and Chester-le-Street, Durham, and a one-day tournament against the hosts and South Africa.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38 Beyond control	57 Computer network	17 Linguist
1 Kept an appointment with	39 Kyoto sash	58 Chang's brother	21 Polical
4 Moreover	41 Reunion attendant	45 "Auto Focus" subject	23 Old-time market-place
7 Embankment	47 Literary collection	48 News-stand array	25 Mole, e.g.
12 Parisian pal	49 Under the clock	4 --- mater	24 Mole, e.g. a moment
13 Zodiac sign	50 "Tosca" or "Turandot"	5 Within reach	26 Hankering
14 Just the same	52 Predetermined	6 Theological belief	28 Mimic
15 Lapidary's item	53 Pump up the volume	7 Hideaway	30 Oklahoma city
16 Sherlock's glass	54 Pump up the volume	8 Sprite	31 --- Little "Teapot"
18 Inseparable	55 Sticky stuff	9 Sundial notation	32 Rotating part
19 Iron clothing?	56 "Animal House" role	10 --- out a living	33 Swelled head
20 Likelihood		11 Always	36 Singer
22 Ovine remark			Amos
23 Wan			37 Hollywood industry
27 El			40 Hackneyed
29 Heckle or Jeckle			42 Humongous
31 Become frost-bound			43 Civil War victors
34 Senior member			44 Armageddon nation
35 Attractor			45 Autocrat
37 One for the road?			46 Home of "Sports-Center"
			48 Cattle call
			49 Likely
			50 Comprehensive
			51 Exist



CRYPTOQUIP

V B O G Y M S R E R U B W V S B
K F U R F E B W F K C G R N B U
E O M K W I U T K W K W F K G F
C R T N B Y Y R U N K I O U R ?
Yesterday's Cryptquip: NEW FILM DETAILING HOW PEOPLE MIGHT RESPOND TO CROW CALLS: "CAWS AND EFFECT"

Today's Cryptquip Clue: M equals T
The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.