

First comes first for Trap



Italy coach Giovanni Trapattoni believes his side can catch Group Nine leaders Wales and qualify automatically for next year's European championships in Portugal.

The Azzurri defeated Finland 2-0 in Sicily on Saturday but still remain five points behind Wales, who thrashed Azerbaijan the same day.

"I am optimistic, I always have



GIOVANNI TRAPATTONI

been," said Trapattoni.

"You can make all the calculations you like, but the truth is we have to win our remaining four matches, above all our match against Wales (in September).

"We must make sure we don't drop points and hope they (Wales) slip up.

"I am only thinking about finishing first and I am convinced we can make it."

Winners of the group are guaranteed qualification, while the runners-up must take part in a two-legged play-

off.

After one win in their previous three qualifiers, Italy could not afford further mistakes against the Finns, and they did not disappoint a partisan crowd in Palermo.

Two first-half goals from Christian Vieri settled a one-sided contest, with Italy showing the kind of form that took them to the European championship final in 2000 which they were unlucky to lose to France.

Vieri's lethal finishing was matched by the sublime skills of Roma captain Francesco Totti, who set up both of his teammate's goals and bemused the visitors with the range and accuracy of his passing.

Trapattoni lamented the injuries to Vieri and Totti earlier in the season which had prevented the Italy coach from playing the pair together for nine months.

"The real regret is that we did not have these two world class players available for the entire qualifying campaign," he said.

"Totti is in excellent form and his quick mind and feet give opponents problems. When he plays like that he is one of the best in the world.

"Vieri is a great finisher but he has other qualities too. He is quick and strong and brings others around him into play."

Former Italy coaches voiced their pleasure at a resurgent Italy, whose next qualifier is away to Finland in June.

Cesare Maldini, in charge of the national team between 1996 and 1998, said: "When Totti and Vieri are fit, we can achieve almost anything, just like we did in Palermo."

Trapattoni's predecessor Dino Zoff, who led Italy to the 2000 European championship final in Holland, said: "It was a great performance, inspired by Totti. He was the light but he had a strong team behind him."

Carlos staying cool

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on the case.

But recently football's governing body did ban Portugal midfielder Joao Pinto from all matches for four months after he punched referee Angel Sanchez in a World Cup match against South Korea last year.

Waugh boost

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being what they should be," Waugh added in a Herald Sun newspaper column on Monday.

"We are the benchmark for other teams to aspire to, due largely to a thing called professionalism which is what we all pride ourselves on."



ESPN

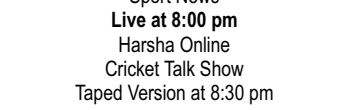
English Premier Football League
Bolton Wanderers vs Tottenham Hotspur
Repeat at 6:00 pm

Western Union World Football
Repeat at 8:00 pm

Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports
Sportsline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm

Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show
Taped Version at 8:30 pm



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

Class

School Address

Phone: (if any)

Rivaldo in the news!

Football

AFP, Liverpool

Brazilian World Cup winner Rivaldo has moved quickly to dismiss talk that he wants to leave AC Milan.

On Sunday an English tabloid newspaper quoted the former Barcelona playmaker as saying he was keen on joining English giants Liverpool.

However Rivaldo insisted Monday the paper made the story up and that he was perfectly settled at Milan.

"I have no intention of leaving Milan as I am very happy here," said the 30-year-old former European Footballer of the Year.

"I have not spoken to any English journalists lately. The last contact I had with an English journalist was two months ago at an event organised by my sponsor, and on that occasion I gave no indication that my future was away from Milan."

English tabloid the News of the World had quoted Rivaldo as saying:

"If I could choose my next team, and if they want me, it will be Liverpool."

"It would be an honour for me to wear their red shirt and I would regard it as a dream to play alongside Michael

Owen."

But Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier has revealed he would not sign a player such as Rivaldo because of the risk involved.

Rivaldo, 30, reportedly said he had watched Liverpool play this season and believes he can help their cause.

"The other day I was watching them play Chelsea and I could not stop watching their midfield. I have a few ideas about how I could fit in."

"I have decided that I want one or two seasons in England before the end of my career and I want it to be at Liverpool."



RIVALDO

Ridsdale leaves hot seat

Football

AFP, London

Leeds United parted company with their under-fire chairman Peter Ridsdale on Monday as the English Premiership side geared up to fight off relegation.

Ridsdale's departure accompanied interim results for the six months ending on December 31, 2002, which showed the club lost 17.2 million pounds before tax while the total net debt to the end of last year was 78.9 million pounds (120 million dollars).

"The figures for the past half year are disappointing and reflect the fact that we missed out for the second year running on qualification for the Champions League," Ridsdale said in a statement.

And Professor John McKenzie, who took over from Ridsdale, said the club, which sacked Terry Venables 10 days ago after eight months as manager after the club had slumped to 16th in the Premiership, admitted he faced a challenge of avoiding relegation and balancing the books.

"The priority for the club is to focus on avoiding relegation then to balance the obvious need for even greater financial prudence and control with the ability to produce a football squad which has the capability of competing in the top echelon of the Premiership," he said.

"It will be a very tough challenge to take the business forward in this way

but it is one that I relish."

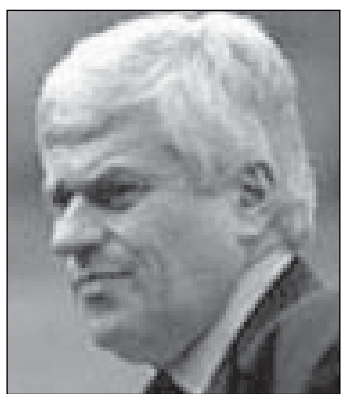
Ridsdale has been under heavy criticism from supporters after selling off a batch of star players to pay off debts.

"In a high profile role, where results are not up to expectation levels, you rightly expect criticism," he said.

"The intensity of personal criticism has led me to conclude that the best decision for myself, my family and the company is that I step down as chairman of the plc and football club and relinquish all executive responsibilities."

The club sacked Venables 10 days ago after just eight months in charge and replaced him with former Sunderland boss Peter Reid.

Venables took over from high-spending David O'Leary but he soon found the club was desperate to sell players to pay off their debts.



PETER RIDSDALE

Agassi prevails

Tennis

AFP, Key Biscayne

Two-time defending champion Andre Agassi won his third title of the year and the sixth Key Biscayne crown of his career Sunday with a stunning 6-3, 6-3 win over fifth seed Carlos Moya of Spain.

Agassi is 18-1 for the year, earning his eighth career Grand Slam trophy at the Australian Open in January and the San Jose, California, title in February.

"It's been incredible," said Agassi, "of his year thus far. It's hard to believe it's all still possible out there."

The victory was an historic occasion for Agassi, marking the first time in his career that the American has won a particular title six times. He has won the San Jose and Washington DC titles on five occasions.

Agassi was quick to make note that the win broke a tie with his wife Steffi Graf, who won a record five Key Biscayne women's titles before retiring.

"I finally beat her at something," Agassi quipped as he accepted his trophy.

In a rare and brief TV interview done during the match, Graf said she was "rooting" for her husband to break their Miami tie.

"It's nerve-wracking at times," said Graf, sitting with her mother, Heidi, and son, Jaden. "You know exactly what's going on out there. You just hope for the best. It's hard because you have to sit here and can't do anything."

Although Agassi declared the match of good quality, there was no doubt that he dominated the proceedings from start to finish.

He had an incredible first serve percentage of 71 to only 49 for Moya, which allowed Agassi to only have to concentrate on breaking the Spaniard's serve.

"Today was certainly a great day for me, serving wise," Agassi said. "I think specifically because it was breezy. Any

time you can get a good percentage of first serves in, especially on key points, in windy conditions, it's a big advantage."

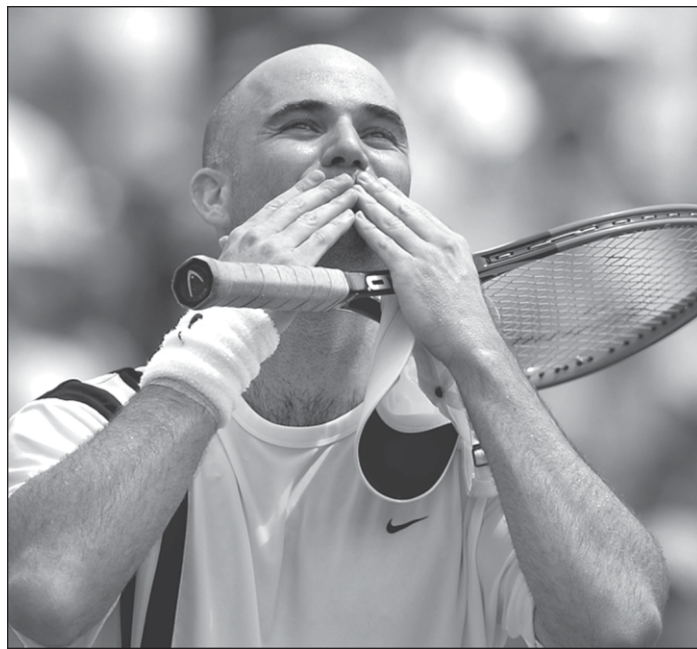
Moya, who moves to No. 4 in the rankings on Monday, thought he put in a subpar performance against Agassi, but also was quick to admit that the world No. 2 was tough to beat.

"I think I didn't play a good match," said Moya, a former French Open champion who won his 12th career title at Buenos Aires last month.

"He put a lot of pressure, he played great, but if I wanted to win this match, I had to serve very well and today, I didn't. Also, my return has been very bad."

Agassi was particularly pleased that his serve was on because a shoulder injury had prevented him from playing the season's first Tennis Masters Series event at Indian Wells earlier this month.

"To be honest, I'm just so relieved



Andre Agassi of the United States blows kiss to the fans after beating Spaniard Carlos Moya at the Key Biscayne final yesterday.

Houllier said: "Don't get me wrong, Rivaldo is a fantastic player, but bringing in high-profile players is not the way I work."

"They cost a lot of money for a limited number of years and I don't like that kind of risk."

Houllier also revealed he would not be making wholesale summer changes.

He said: "We don't need four or five players, my plan is to bring in just one or two."

"What has happened this season has not broken my belief in this team. I know there are areas we need to improve and sometimes this season we have lacked creativity."

"I trust my players and have no hesitation in saying that our time will come."

Rivaldo joined Milan on a free transfer in the summer after falling out with now departed Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal, who insisted on playing the striker out of position.

This season the Recife-born star has been playing in his more familiar role for Milan but has failed to make a major impact at the San Siro, scoring just five times in Serie A.

Milan are currently third in the league, five points behind leaders Juventus, and are in quarter-finals of the Champions League.



Maldini extends Milan stay

AFP, Rome

AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini has signed a one-year extension to his existing contract, the Italian first division club confirmed Monday.

The 34-year-old, who has spent the whole of his career at Milan, agreed a deal that will keep him at the Serie A club until the end of June 2005.

He has won six Italian league titles, three European Cups and two Intercontinental Cups with Milan since making his debut for them as a 16-year-old in 1985.

Maldini, Italy's most capped player, retired from international football after last year's World Cup in Japan and South Korea, his fourth appearance in the finals.

Considered the world's best defender in the 1990s, Maldini finished his international career with a record 126 appearances.

Lewis given ultimatum

BBC ONLINE, London

Lennox Lewis can fight Mike Tyson but he must follow that with a mandatory defence against Vitali Klitschko, according to the WBC.

Ruben Martinez, vice-president of the WBC, for whom Lewis is the heavyweight champion, said that the 37-year-old has until 30 June if he wishes to fight Tyson.

Lewis would then have 120 days to fight Klitschko, who is the mandatory contender for the Englishman's title.

A proposed fight in April between Lewis and Klitschko was postponed.

It is believed that Tyson, who was comprehensively defeated by Lewis last summer, wants a couple more fights before entertaining thoughts of a rematch.

Target top spot

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"I've thought about it a few times, I know the other guys probably haven't as yet but once we get over to the West Indies that will be one of the motivating factors," he said.

Waugh heads into the series in tremendous form after a great domestic season while left out of the Australian World Cup-winning team.

The 37-year-old campaigner was keen to play the April-May Test series, while most teammates would more than likely be wanting to get away from cricket upon arrival in Jamaica.

Back home for only six days from South Africa, the one-day team has been on the road since last August.

But Waugh doesn't expect any excuses: "They realise positions are hard to come by and once they get in there you have got to make the most of it."

He said pacemen Brett Lee and Glenn McGrath would most likely be rested for the only warm-up game before the first Test in Guyana on April 10, but a near-Test line-up was likely to play in the opening game.

Fast bowler Jason Gillespie was expected to be fit for the first game

while batsman Damien Martyn was remaining home to have a test on his injured finger later this week and, if passed, would head over to the Caribbean before the first Test.

Team vice-captain Ricky Ponting said tiredness would not be an issue once in the West Indies.

"We feel pretty good. The one-day side has had its last function today so the World Cup celebrations are all over and done with," said Ponting, who led the World Cup team.

"As Stephen said we are looking forward to getting back and putting our white clothes on again and playing some very good Test cricket."

Four years ago Australia drew 2-2 in the Caribbean as Brian Lara blasted three centuries to finish the series on an average of 91.

SQUAD
Stephen Waugh (captain), Ricky Ponting (vice-captain), Andrew Bichel, Adam Gilchrist, Jason Gillespie, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hogg, Justin Langer, Brett Lee, Martin Love, Darren Lehmann, Stuart McGill, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath and Ashley Noffke.

Gazza's instant impact

FROM PAGE 8

The Englishman is already a firm favorite with Tianma supporters and last week they presented him with a gilded sheep's head as a gift to prove it.

The club needs all the help they can get, though, even from a Gascoigne well past his prime. It finished bottom of the B-league last season with a record of four wins, seven draws and 11 defeats.

Gascoigne won 57 caps for his country and helped England reach the semifinals of the 1990 World Cup in Italy, famously shedding tears at their exit on penalties to Germany.

However, the ball skills and vision which made him probably the most gifted player of his generation were also held back by injuries, a volatile temper and sporadic bouts of heavy drinking.

After missing out on the 1994 World

Cup when England failed to qualify, Gascoigne had high hopes of another renaissance at the 1998 finals in France but manager Glenn Hoddle had found a new generation of midfield talent and denied him a squad place.

Gazza reacted typically emotionally, according to Hoddle's account, trashing his hotel room and his international career was over at the age of 31.

In recent years, he has tried manfully to conquer his demons but, after Everton released him a season ago, no other Premier League club came calling, and a humiliating search for permanent employment followed.

After failing to find a berth in Britain, he tried his luck in the United States but returned home after being rejected as too unfit and slow for Major League Soccer.

Scott new WTA Tour chief

AFP, Key Biscayne

The WTA Tour announced the appointment of Larry Scott to the position of Chairman and Chief Executive Office for the women's tennis tour on Saturday at the NASDAQ-100 Open.

Scott, 38, joins the WTA Tour after an 11-year role as the Chief Operating Officer and President of ATP Properties on the men's tour.

"I am very excited about accepting the position of Chairman and CEO of the WTA Tour, and I am enthusiastic about the prospect of leading and growing a global organization whose members represent the best of professional tennis and the highest level of achievement by women in the sports world," said Scott, who signed a five-year agreement with the WTA Tour.

"I am eager to work toward maximizing the unique power of the WTA Tour product - the players and the tournaments - and bridging the divide between tennis' governing bodies in a way that will be in the best interests of all members of the tennis family and the sport as a whole."

Scott replaces Kevin Wulff, who left the tour in January after only a year as CEO of the WTA Tour.

The ATP announced on Friday that there won't be a change at the helm of their tour with CEO Mark Miles voted an extension of his contract through 2005.

Rajib takes

FROM PAGE 8

Mehdi Hasan Parag, Reefat drew with International Master Abdullah Al Rakib, Fide Master Shekh Nasir Ahmed beat Fide Master Rezaul Haque, Md Monjur Alam beat Fide Master Taibur Rahman Sumon, Shawkat Hossain Pallab drew with Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon.

Mixed bag

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to look after the administrative side of the team.

But when asked whether it was a wise move by the Board, Faruque was quick to disagree.

"I think the concept of manager should be looked from a broader perspective. Manager should have the ability to involve himself with the technical aspect of the game too," he said.

Faruque came up with two very important notions in defence of his idea.

"Firstly, a manager is very important for a team like us because our players always under-perform at the top level. And the manager who knows the mentality of our cricketers can play a vital role to get the best out of them."

"Secondly, a cricket manager can play an important when it comes to deal with a foreign coach," said the soft-spoken right-hander who led Bangladesh to the ICC Trophy in 1994.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	35 Extremist	3 Squad	24 Sticium
1 Automaton (Abbr.)	36 Columnist Smith	4 Western event	25 Romanian coin
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21 Sapporo simoleon?	53 Reply (Abbr.)	20 Bill's co-adventurer	37 Confound Hellspes?
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30 "The Color of Money" props			43 Normandy town
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32 Locate			
33 Ostrich's cousin			
34 Illustration (Abbr.)			

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CRYPTOQUIP

W Z P A G K D C T K W W P H R W P C
W M J P P R W Z P V M E J T H Y W Z
Y X Z Y T R D Y T M X E P V V I G W
Z P L M V P C

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WOULD THE PERSON WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUTTING GRAIN IN SILOS BE A FOLDER FIGURE?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals D