

Raul, Helguera boost Real



AFP, Paris

Real Madrid captain Raul has come through a fitness test on a niggling hip injury and will line up against Porto in the Champions League.

Real, who opened their European campaign with a 4-2 win over French side Olympique Marseille, will be without England captain David Beckham, nursing a foot injury after hurting his right foot when taking a freekick in the Spanish champions' 2-0 defeat to Valencia at the weekend.

And French star Zinedine Zidane looked less than fully-fit in last weekend's 2-0 defeat at Valencia.

But defender Ivan Helguera is back after a fortnight out with a knee injury to face a side Real consider their biggest rivals in Group F.

"Porto are one of the best sides in Europe, they're playing at home and will be going all out to beat us," said Brazil World Cup star Roberto Carlos.

Real's away record so far this season has upset coach Carlos Queiroz. They have lost twice, won one and drawn one.

"I can't accept us playing better at home than away," said Queiroz.

But the UEFA Cup winners, held 1-1 at Partizan Belgrade in their opening Champions League match, fear a Real backlash.

"Real have just lost so they couldn't be more dangerous," said Porto coach Jose Mourinho. "But we'll be really motivated."

Bundesliga leaders VfB Stuttgart play host to Manchester United and Brazilian defender Marcelo Bordon will be handed the job of stopping United's in-form striker Ruud Van Nistelrooy.

"He is a super striker," said Bordon. "But I would not say he is not the best. He is in the top ten."

The match at the Gottlieb-Daimler Stadium will be policed by more than 1,000 officers. Between 2,000 and 3,000 Manchester fans are expected to travel to southern Germany for the game which UEFA class as a potential risk.

Champions League newcomers Partizan Belgrade have warned French side Marseille to expect a surprise in the other Group F match.

Partizan put out Newcastle United in the qualifying rounds, and Newcastle's tormentor Ivica Ilijev

says the 1-1 draw with FC Porto in their opening match has boosted confidence.

"I know who the favourites are but we have already taken a point off Porto and why should we stop there," said Ilijev.

Partizan have leaked eight goals in six matches in the Serb championship, but with classy midfielder Sasa Ilic and striker Andrija Delibasevic.



RAUL

Table with fixtures: Champions League first round Group Phase fixtures on Wednesday; 2nd round of games GROUPE; At Athens Panathinaikos (GRE) v Rangers (SCO); At Stuttgart VfB Stuttgart (GER) v Manchester United (ENG); GROUPE; At Porto FC Porto (POR) v Real Madrid (SPA); At Marseille Marseille (FRA) v Partizan Belgrade (SEM); GROUPE; At Rome Lazio Rome (ITA) v Sparta Prague (CZE); At London Chelsea (ENG) v Besiktas (TUR); GROUPE; At Vigo Celta Vigo (SPA) v AC Milan (ITA); At Amsterdam Ajax (NED) v FC Bruges (BEL)

Partizan could cause trouble for Marseille's rearguard at the Velodrome stadium.

And coach Lothar Matthaus, who won a record 150 caps for Germany, has plenty of experience of international competition.

"We're ready to seize our chance at Marseille," said the 1990 World Cup winner.

Scotland's Rangers travel to Greek side Panathinaikos for their first European fixture since manager Alex McLeish signed a new four-year contract that will keep him at the Scottish treble winners until 2007.

Rangers made a dream start, winning their opening Group E tie against Stuttgart, while Panathinaikos were thrashed 5-0 by Manchester United.

But Rangers' Georgian striker Shota Arveladze is expecting a hostile reception in Greece.

"We know their supporters will try to intimidate us but we are used to playing in these situations and we will get on with it," he said.

In Group H, Rivaldo looks to be staying at AC Milan after he was included on their squad list to travel to Spain for their clash against Celta Vigo.

Milan announced on Friday that the 31-year-old Brazilian World Cup winner would be leaving following his inability to hold down a place in Carlo Ancelotti's side.

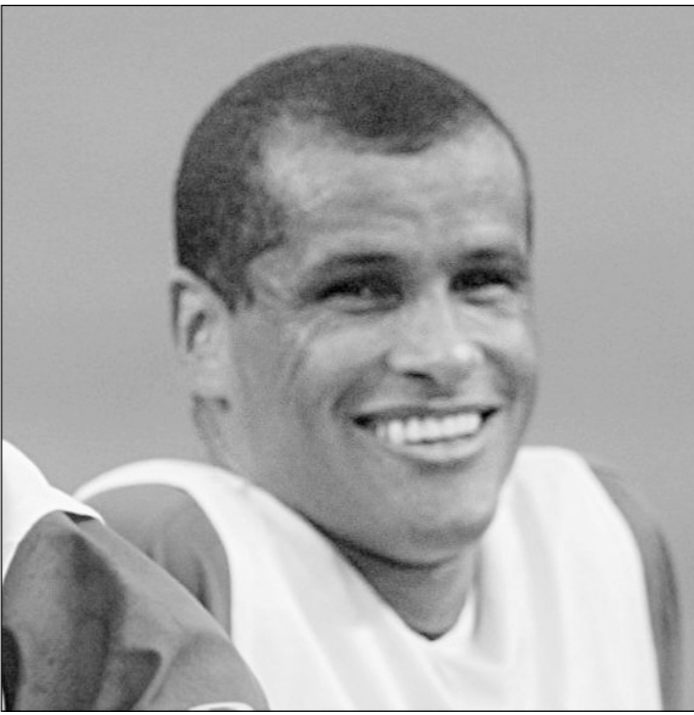
However, after a meeting with Rivaldo on Monday, Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani said: "Rivaldo is staying at Milan and tomorrow will leave with the squad for Vigo."

The 1995 winners Ajax of the Netherlands host Belgians FC Bruges with both clubs looking for their first win in Group H.

Ajax fell 1-0 at AC Milan and Bruges could only draw 1-1 at home to Celta Vigo in the first round of matches.

Chelsea's return to the Champions League got off to a great start with a 1-0 win at Sparta Prague thanks to William Gallas and should they claim all three points at home to Turks Besiktas they would be set fair to earn their berth in the last 16 knockout stage from Group G.

Lazio, who drew 2-2 at Empoli in Italian league action on Sunday leaving them in sixth place in the table, host Sparta Prague in the other Group F fixture.



RIVALDO

Milan retain Rivaldo



AFP, Milan

European champions AC Milan on Monday performed a dramatic U-turn on their decision to release Brazil international Rivaldo and opted to retain him until the end of the year.

And the 31-year-old former Barcelona star, who fell out with coach Carlo Ancelotti because he wasn't playing regularly in the first team, has been named in the Milan squad for Wednesday's Champions League clash away to Spanish side Celta Vigo.

"Rivaldo is staying at Milan," said Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani, who later confirmed the World Cup winner would remain at the club until the end of December.

Rivaldo came on to the San Siro pitch ahead of Sunday's league match at home to Lecce to say farewell to team-mates and fans.

Milan won 3-0 to go joint top of Serie A along with Juventus and Roma.

Milan won the Champions League and Italian Cup last season, but Rivaldo struggled to find his form and scored just five goals in 22 league appearances.

The softly spoken South American gave his reasons for wanting to leave Milan at a press conference on Friday.

"I just cannot accept that I have so few opportunities to show what I can do," he said.

"That became clear to me at Ancona (Milan's first match of the season) where I stayed on the bench during the whole game."

Rivaldo played a key role in Brazil's World Cup triumph last year, scoring the equaliser against England in the quarter-finals.

Last week at a game honouring legend Alfredo di Stefano, Brazil teammate Ronaldo suggested Rivaldo should join him and the galaxy of stars at Real Madrid.

Philips tennis Kibria enters girls' final

SPORTS REPORTER

Kibria Ayeda of Naogaon Tennis Club entered the under-16 girls' singles final of the Philips National Tennis Tournament with an easy 6-0, 6-0 victory over Firoza Haque from Narshingi in the semifinal at the National Tennis Complex yesterday.

In the men's singles matches, Amal Roy outplayed Mamun 6-2, 6-0, Laxman Lal beat Mizan 6-3, 6-4, Alamgir overcame Asmat 7-5, 6-1, Dipu defeated babu 6-2, 6-2, Dilip recorded a 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 win over Shah Newaz while Hira Lal beat Ranjan 6-2, 6-2.

In the Women's singles, Shifat Nusrat Baishakhy outplayed Naoirin Afroz 6-0, 6-0, Shathi Sarkar beat Misty 6-0, 6-0, Mushfiqa beat Reefat 6-3, 6-1 while Ishrat Sultana posted a 6-0, 6-1 win over Morjina.

Besides, eleven men's doubles matches and five boys' under-16 singles encounters were also held on the day.

The tournament resumes at 8:00am today at the same venue.



PHOTO: STAR BKSP's Robin in action against Taslim of Rajshahi during their clash in the Philips National Tennis Tournament at the National Tennis Complex yesterday. Robin won.

Wishart in the runs for Zim

REUTERS, Melbourne

Craig Wishart smashed a century for Zimbabwe on Tuesday as the Africans drew their opening tour match against Perth grade side Rockingham-Mandurah.

Wishart top-scored with 116 in Zimbabwe's second innings of 255 for nine declared before the home team, chasing 282 to win, reached 135 for six by the close.

Zimbabwe had made an embarrassing start to the three-day game, being bowled out for just 149. However they dismissed their hosts for 123 and Wishart led a batting recovery on the last day after Zimbabwe had resumed on 107 for six.

BRIEF SCORES Zimbabwe 149 (S Ervine 41; D Wates 4-22, T Gilbert 3-35) and 255 for nine wickets declared (C Wishart 116, S Ervine 51) drew with Rockingham-Mandurah 123 (L Ronchi 44, Ervine 5-37, R Price 2-20) and 135 for 6 (Ronchi 47; Price 4-55, Ervine 2-21)

A Waugh bouncer



REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia captain Steve Waugh warned Zimbabwe's batsmen on Tuesday that they could get hurt in next week's first Test in Perth.

The Africans, ranked ninth in the International Cricket Council's Test Championship, will face the world's top-ranked team on a bouncy Perth wicket.

The WACA Ground pitch is famous for forcing touring batsmen to duck and weave against the Australia pace attack led by Jason Gillespie, Brett Lee and Glenn McGrath.

"Perth is a bouncy wicket. It's unique in world cricket and there is always a chance somebody is going to get hurt over there," Waugh was quoted as saying in Sydney's The Daily Telegraph newspaper on Tuesday.

"That was a fierce contest against England (in December last year). There is always that danger in Perth."

Lee bowled a bouncer in the

Forgetting

FROM PAGE 13 splints, while 34-year-old Surrey seamer Martin Bicknell played in the final two Tests of a five match series that ended in a 2-2 draw.

England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney, explaining the decision to call up Johnson, said: "Richard produced an outstanding performance against Zimbabwe at Durham in his first Test match and deserves an opportunity to press for a place in the Test side again."

"James Kirtley was our nominated stand-by bowler for the Test squad, but we have decided not to call on him at this stage in order to give him more time to recover from a shin injury ahead of the one-day series in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka."

England are due to play two Tests against Bangladesh in what is their inaugural five-day series against the Asian minnows with the first starting in Dhaka on October 21.

Miandad vows

FROM PAGE 13 series after the uncertainty over the tour," said the Pakistan coach.

The tour hit snag after South African cricket officials cancelled it over security fears, a day after a bomb blast in Karachi on September 19.

They, however, agreed to a revised tour itinerary after Pakistan dropped the troubled port city of Karachi and northwestern border town of Peshawar, from their itinerary.

The South Africans were reluctant to play at the two venues over security fears.

"We welcome them with open arms and it's a big learning opportunity for our young team," said Miandad.

He believed Pakistan's strength lies in bowling with express pacer Shoab Akhtar and Mohammad Sami and leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed and off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq.

"Bowling is our strength but we have to put enough runs on the board so that we could dictate terms," he said.

Pakistan overcame a chaotic start to the series after captain Rashid Latif resigned from captaincy citing personal reasons and Inzamam-ul-Haq replaced him.

The five-match one-day series gets underway with a day-night match in Lahore on October 3.

Unfinished

FROM PAGE 13 outraged by the attitude shown towards the probe by the player concerned and his club.

"How could they claim that the BFF office is not a safe place? This is really insulting," said Helal.

The general secretary informed that he has not yet seen the report. It will only be opened after BFF president SA Sultan returns to Dhaka from abroad.

Abahani's football secretary Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chhunu said that yesterday's development was unfortunate and didn't send the right signal.

"It will create a bad precedence in local football," said the hero of yesteryears.

BD back

FROM PAGE 13 under the supervision of Australian under-19 coach Richard McInnes.

England will arrive on October 8 to play their maiden series against Bangladesh. During their month-long tour, Vaughan's men will play two Tests in Dhaka and Chittagong and three one-day internationals.

S Africa land

FROM PAGE 13 commando elite force deployed.

Around 20 police vehicles escorted the bus taking the South African players to their hotel from the airport. Sniffer dogs were used to check the second floor of the hotel where the team is staying, while dozens of police patrolled outside the building.

"Around 150 commandos have been deployed to keep tight security around the team in the hotel and on the ground as they are our valued guests," deputy superintendent of police Salim Zia Agha told this news agency.

The South Africans are the first Western side to tour Pakistan for 16 months since New Zealand cut short their tour to the country following a suicide bomb blast outside their Karachi hotel in May last year.

Pakistan were forced to play two of their home series on neutral grounds after the West Indies and Australia refused to tour because of security fears last year.

SQUAD Graeme Smith (captain), Mark Boucher, Jacques Kallis, Shaun Pollock, Neil McKenzie, Jacques Rudolph, Robin Peterson, Andrew Hall, Alan Dawson, Makhaya Ntini, Charl Langeveldt, Andre Nel, Boeta Dippenaar, Herschelle Gibbs, Paul Adams.

Coach: Eric Simons Manager: Cassim Docrat

Gang-rape case gathers pace



SUN, London

Police probing an alleged gang rape by seven Premiership stars yesterday cordoned off an entire floor of the hotel at the centre of the claims.

Officers conducted forensic tests on the king-size third floor room where a 17-year-old girl says she was attacked by the footballers.

And colleagues seized a video of CCTV footage from the five-star hotel in London's West End for analysis by experts.

Meanwhile cops from the Met's Operation Sapphire specialist sex offences unit coaxed the tearful teenager into giving her version of the weekend's events.

The girl who had met the stars at a bar claims the seven players joined in a mass rape after she agreed to consensual sex with an eighth footballer, who plays for a different club.

She made the astonishing complaint 16 hours later at Marylebone Police Station in Central London.

Several of the stars are household names and one is a regular international.

None can be identified for legal reasons, but all face lengthy jail terms if convicted.

The Sun broke news of the startling allegations yesterday. And last night extra officers were brought into the top hotel to guard the room.

Six uniformed officers were on duty outside as forensic experts continued their fingertip search.

Detectives interviewed hotel staff who were on duty over the weekend, including a room service waitress who is believed to have taken a tray of drinks up to the stars.

Earlier, four cops had stood guard in the corridor, restricting access to hotel guests only.

Two plain clothes detectives stood close to the open room. Beside them on the floor were two plastic bags with "evidence" written across them.

When one of the officers was asked what was going on, he said: "I'm sorry, I'm not allowed to say."

CCTV pictures taken in the hotel, which has security cameras in reception and on most floors, may also prove vital in the police inquiry, it was claimed last night.

The hotel's own in-house security firm is co-operating fully with police.

A hotel source said: "The police asked to examine CCTV footage crucial in establishing what happened."

"A forensic team have been back into the room, which has been sealed off. Two women forensic scientists were carrying what looked

like tape used for collecting fingerprints.

"Police gave every impression they were taking this very seriously indeed."

Police sources said the alleged victim, who also claims she was subjected to an unnatural sex act, completed a detailed statement yesterday afternoon.

She has undergone a medical examination at a rape counselling suite and will take an HIV test.

Evidence found so far will be assessed today at a case conference involving Crown Prosecution Service officials.

More details emerged yesterday of the events prior to the alleged incident.

The seven players from one team met with the eighth Premiership star for a night out after a game.

The group are understood to have met the girl at the bar of another London hotel and gone on to a club before adjourning to the hotel where they had booked a number of rooms.

The teenager claims she was brutally attacked at the hotel.

One player is understood to have booked a number of the rooms in his name.

Police, alerted the following day, realised they would have trouble establishing which room each player stayed in. But officers hit on a clever ruse to identify each one.

The hotel manager agreed to deactivate the hi-tech key card entry system on each of the rooms locking the players out when they sought to get back in.

They were then forced to re-register in their own names to obtain a replacement room card, telling police who stayed there.

None of the players were aware police had been alerted when they checked out of the hotel and had no idea an investigation was already under way.

Officers swept all of their rooms soon after they left by taxi.

Yesterday onlookers told how the stars behaved like jocks in the bar of their five-star hotel before the alleged sex attack.

One was said to have screwed up a £20 note and thrown it over the bar as he jeered: "Here's double your wages."

Another worker at the £190-a-night hotel was allegedly told by a player: "I earn more in a week than you do in three years."

One staff source said: "They gave the impression that they had so much money they could say and do whatever they pleased and upset whoever they liked. But bar staff who had to serve them found themselves struggling to control their tempers. One male barman said he was at the point of punching them at one stage."

Yesterday the footballers at the centre of the allegations were in high spirits as they reported for training.

They laughed and skylarked with each other, despite the arrival of journalists attracted by rumours of the alleged rapists' identities.

One onlooker said: "They looked like they hadn't a care in the world."

However, bosses at the stars' club were locked in crisis talks.

The chairman, who rarely attends coaching sessions, was at the training ground before players arrived.

After meeting with other club officials for about an hour he left and the first team squad were put through their normal Monday morning paces.

The players and manager later refused to comment as they left the training ground.

One of the players rumoured to be at the centre of the alleged incident was driven to the club's stadium for a brief meeting.

Asked to comment on the rumours, he said only: "Nice one." It is understood he denies all involvement.

A friend of the player said: "He has a cast-iron alibi."

A police spokesman last night stressed the claims were only allegations which were at a very early stage of investigation.

He said a decision could be made as to whether to take matters any further "in due course".

Jamaica friendly Parreira at full force



REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira on Monday named a 20-strong squad including a phenomenal strike force of Ronaldo, Ronaldinho Gaucho and Rivaldo for a football friendly against Jamaica on October 12.

Parreira, who is fine tuning the five-time world champions' lineup for the 2006 World Cup qualifiers, has opted for mostly European-based players for the tie in the

could have put his international place in jeopardy.

"It's good for everyone, everyone wins," Parreira told a media conference.

Rivaldo looked short of match fitness when playing for Brazil earlier this month in their opening qualifiers for the 2006 World Cup.

Parreira also recalled winger Denilson, who had been left out for the 2-1 win in Colombia and 1-0 win over Ecuador.

Parreira added that he had considered picking veteran goalkeeper Taffarel, who announced his retirement this month, for a farewell international until hearing that the

English city of Leicester. The only home player selected is Flamengo goalkeeper Julio Cesar, with the Brazil coach also announcing the surprise return of Lyon midfielder Juninho Pernambucano and Middlesbrough's Juninho Paulista, along with young Parma striker Adriano.

Perhaps the most astonishing call-up is that of Roque Junior, who has made a nightmare start to his career in the Premiership with Leeds United.

They have conceded 10 goals in three matches since he arrived on loan from AC Milan while the World Cup winning defender has also been redcarded.

World Cup winner Rivaldo, who agreed to stay with the European champions earlier on Monday, kept his place despite being stuck on the substitutes' bench at his Italian club AC Milan.

Parreira said Rivaldo had made the right decision to stay at AC Milan, who last week had agreed to cancel his contract.

If Rivaldo had left Milan and become a free agent, he would not have been able to play for a new club for three months.

Brazil face two World Cup qualifiers in November - away to Peru and at home to Uruguay - and a lengthy absence from club football

could have put his international place in jeopardy.

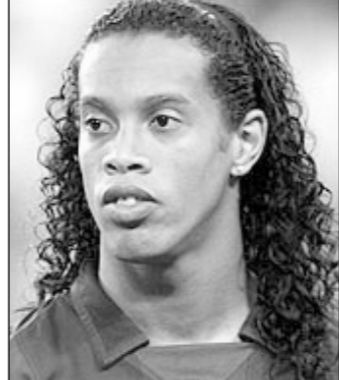
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RONALDO



RONALDINHO

37-year-old was not interested.

Taffarel played in the Brazil side which won the 1994 World Cup under Parreira.

"He likes to keep a low profile," said Parreira.

Brazil play Jamaica in Leicester on October 12.

SQUAD

(Flamengo), Dida (AC Milan, Italy) Defenders: Edmilson (Olympique Lyon, France), Lucio (Bayer Leverkusen, Germany), Roque Junior (Leeds United, England), Belletti (Villarreal, Spain), Cafu (AC Milan, Italy), Junior (Parma, Italy), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid, Italy) Midfielders: Emerson (AS Roma, Italy), Gilberto Silva (Arsenal, England), Juninho (Middlesbrough, England), Juninho Pernambucano (Olympique Lyon, France), Kaka (AC Milan, Italy), Ze Roberto (Bayern Munich, Germany), Rivaldo (AC Milan, Italy), Ronaldinho Gaucho (Barcelona, Spain) Forwards: Ronaldo (Real Madrid, Spain), Adriano (Parma, Italy), Denilson (Real Betis, Spain)

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword grid with clues for Across and Down.

Crossword grid with clues for Across and Down.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid.

CRYPTOQUIP A Q ' R R B O K Q P R B G Q T B Q H B V G K W A Q P Y R B Y K E K Z Z - D V P E V O P Y H B D A V I B Z P V I R Q P P Y G R T P Y Q . Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A PLUMBER IS DOING REPAIRS FOR YOUR KITCHEN SINK, HE MIGHT BE AT YOUR DISPOSAL. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals A The Cryptoquip 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.