SPÖRT

Mates stand by 'devastated' Ferdinand

Threaten Turkey boycott



All England's Euro 2004 squad players were reported Wednesday to be set to boycott Saturday's crucial qualifying match with Turkey unless Rio Ferdinand was rein-

Newspapers said the players, including captain David Beckham, were furious with Football Association chiefs over the decision to drop Ferdinand for failing to take a drugs test.

And Manchester United were reported to be set to withdraw their other players from the squad and take the FA to court over the Ferdinand ban.

"I know some of the players are very unhappy with the situation, Ferdinand's agent Pini Zahavi told the Sun.

The Times said the four other Manchester players -- Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and the Neville brothers, Gary and Phil -- plus Beckham, Michael Owen, Sol Campbell and David James met FA

late Tuesday. But when they failed to convince him to change his mind the rest of the squad voted to pull out of

The FA put out a statement denying the players were threaten-

ing to strike. "David Beckham would like to make it clear that at no time did any players threaten to leave the squad," they said.

But that came before the later meeting of all the players.

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson has admitted the FA did not consult him about the decision to drop Ferdinand.

Ferdinand, meanwhile has hit back. In a statement released late Tuesday, the 24-year-old World Cup star claimed he was "devastated" to miss out on Saturday's match in Istanbul and denied he had ever taken any kind of drug, recreational or performance-enhancing.

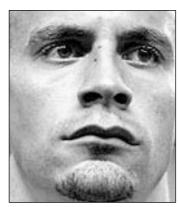
Manchester United, and the players' union, the Professional Footballers Association, accused the English Football Association of convicting Ferdinand without a trial.

Eriksson also made it clear he had opposed the decision to exclude Ferdinand from the squad, before reluctantly accepting that he would have to do without one of his automatic first-choice players.

Confirmation of the loss of Ferdinand was compounded by growing signs that striker Owen will not have recovered from a leg injury in time to play in England's biggest match since they lost to Brazil in last

summer's World Cup quarter-final.

Despite the objections of Eriksson, the English Football Association (FA) ruled it would be "inappropriate" for Ferdinand to play against Turkey following his failure



RIO FERDINAND

to take a random drugs test last

Ferdinand maintains he forgot to provide the requested sample at Manchester United's training ground on September 23 because he was preoccupied with moving

United have backed Ferdinand's version of events and said the player had taken and passed a test within 36 hours of the initial request. But the FA said Ferdinand's

and Matthew Upson. Between them, Terry, 22, and

action appeared to represent a Upson, 24, have started only seven full serious breach of their anti-doping internationals. The more experienced Jonathan Woodgate, Gareth rules, laying him open to disciplinary Southgate and Martin Keown are all action which could lead to a ban of injured

Eriksson said Owen, who suffered an injury in Liverpool's defeat by Arsenal on Saturday, maintained a 50-50 chance of playing.

The Liverpool striker who has scored 24 goals in 53 England appearances, is having intensive physiotherapy in an attempt to accelerate the healing process for a split in the lining between the fibula and tibia bones in his lower right leg.

Eriksson acknowledged that Owen would not be able to train before Friday at the earliest and has called up Aston Villa's Darius Vassell as cover.

To add to England's problems, Campbell was due to appear Wednesday before an FA disciplinary hearing on charges of kicking Manchester United's Eric Djemba-Djemba in the Community Shield match in August.

Eriksson was asked if he could have been similar cases in the past imagine a worse build-up to such an essential game. "It's difficult to find sanction and their names have not one," the Swede said.

England need a draw in Turkey to qualify automatically as Group 7 winners but defeat would still give them a chance via a play-off.



San Sebastian de los Reyes' goalkeeper gathers the ball before Real Madrid's Portillo (L) can get to it during their Spanish King Cup match at Nuevo Mata Piñonera stadium of San Sebastian de los Reyes, near Madrid on October 7.

Real, Barca sail thru'

A Raul lob after 28 minutes set

Real on their way and a low left foot

shot from Javier Portillo added to

their tally 11 minutes after the break

before Estaban Cambiasso com-

pleted a routine win with three

Barcelona needed a Ronaldinho

Fresh rape scandal

Leeds booter in custody

Football

AFP, London

A player for English Premiership club Leeds United was Wednesday being questioned by police in connection with an alleged serious sexual assault on a 20-vear-old woman, local media reported.

West Yorkshire Police only confirmed two men arrested in connection with the alleged attack in Leeds on Monday were still in custody, with no mention of Leeds United, although the club has pledged to cooperate fully with the investigation.

BBC radio and the Press Assocation reported Wednesday that one of the men is a Leeds United player who was arrested at

The 17-year-old schoolgirl at the

centre of the Premiership gang rape

scandal on Tuesday spoke of her

determination to bring her alleged

The youngster, her father and older

But they insist the players must be

The alleged victim a Catholic

school sixth former says she con-

sister have told media guru Max

Clifford they do not want to sell her

Rape probe

Football

THE SUN, London

attackers to court.

the team's training ground on

The other man being questioned in connection with the attack is not a footballer, according to the press A second Leeds player was

reported to have been questioned by police on Tuesday but has not been arrested. A statement issued by the club

Tuesday night said: "Leeds United Football Club has been advised by West Yorkshire police of an ongoing investigation, and in line with club policy full cooperation has been extended to the police".

The case in Leeds is not connected to an investigation being carried out by London police into allegations from a 17-year-old girl that she was gang raped by several footballers in a London hotel

Grosvenor House Hotel. She says that

three Premiership players, two from

one club and one from another. She

bears the bruises caused when she

29. has claimed he was the man the

girl consented to have sex with and

that she had enthusiastic group sex

made it clear to Clifford yesterday that

they were devastated by Meikle's

claims and stuck by her version of

model, looked tired and drawn yester-

day as she set off from a relative's

London home for the meeting with

The alleged victim, a slim part-time

But the teenager and her family

accused them specifically of rape.

was held down during the assault.

The girl has reportedly named

The alleged victim says she still

Party organiser Nicholas Meikle

'Victim' vows to fight

up to four raped her.

with three more men.

The Universe is a football!

A team of astrophysicsts have taken a kick at the conventional view that the Universe is flat and endless, suggesting instead that the cosmos is shaped like.. The notion of a Universe made of

curved pentagon-shaped panels is derived from a satellite mapping of the radiation that was released by the Big Bang billions of years ago and which still washes through space in the form of microwave energy.

The study, led by New York researcher Jeff Weeks, is based on a reading of of temperature fluctuations

at the extreme range of the microwave scale, recorded across the sky.

These fluctuations do not fit in with the "Standard Model" of a flat, always expanding Universe, they report in

Thursday's issue of Nature, the weekly British science weekly. "In an infinite flat space, waves from the Big Bang would fill the Universe on all length scales" in the microwave

band, they argue. They suggest that only a "dodecahedral" -- the posh word for a soccer-ball shape - could contain this kind of energy release.

qualifier with England. "We have been given a list of

"Those who try to come will be sent right back.'

conveyed to airports, sea ports and border gates, and added that five British police officers would arrive in Turkey on Thursday to help identify potential troublemakers at Istanbul

outside the stadium, while riot police would be deployed in strategic spots in the city.

Saturday's match and has urged



up to two years.

said in a statement.

taking drugs.

"Given the seriousness with

which the FA views breaches of its

doping control regulations... the FA

has concluded that it is inappropri-

ate for Rio Ferdinand to be available

for selection for England." Barber

moned to a hearing next week to

account for his actions, denied ever

this situation and I want to take this

opportunity to categorically state

that I have never used drugs or

condoned the use of drugs in sport

or in society," Ferdinand said in a

were "deeply troubled" by the way

the FA had handled the matter and

hinted they were taking legal advice.

FA officials acknowledge that there

where players have escaped any

Ferdinand's exclusion could not

have come at a worse time for

England, who will travel to Istanbul

with just three recognised centre-

backs in Sol Campbell, John Terry

Manchester United said they

The player, who has been sum-

"I am absolutely devastated by

known English troublemakers from entering the country for Saturday's potentially-explosive Euro 2004

the country," Istanbul police chief Celalettin Capa said Wednesday

Capa said the list had been

Istanbul's Asian corner.

has not taken up any tickets for

supporters to stay home, but British police are worried that a hard core of hooligans are determined to travel A senior official from the Turkish

Football Federation, Selami Ozdemir, said Wednesday that Turkish fans will be allowed to enter the stadium only after presenting ID Tensions have been brewing

since April 2000 when two Leeds fans were stabbed to death in a street brawl in Istanbul ahead of a UEFA Cup match. England go into their final group

game with a one-point advantage over Turkey and will qualify if they avoid defeat. Turkey, third in last year's World

Cup, have never beaten England and have drawn only once in nine matches since 1984. They lost 2-0 at Sunderland in April when England's victory was

tarnished by pre-match violence. two pitch invasions and the racist taunting of the Turkish fans by the home support. England were fined a record

70,000 pounds (111,000 dollars) by UEFA after that match and have been warned further misbehaviour from their fans will result in them being thrown out of the Euro 2004

record in the 50m backstroke (0: 28.94). His colleagues Karar

Samedul Haq bagged the gold in the 100m breaststroke (1:08.85), Jewel Ahmed in the 200m butterfly (2:15.37) and Hamid Ripon in the 400m freestyle (4:33.14). Besides, Rana, Ripon, Munmun

finishing first with a new national

Spanish Cup

Football

David Beckham and Zinedine

Zidane were among a clutch of stars

rested as Real Madrid sent out a

virtual reserve team to swamp

second division San Sebastian de

los Reves 3-0 on Tuesday to reach

the last 32 of the Spanish Cup.

Dazzling Dolly

AFP, Madrid

FROM PAGE 13

timing of 5:35.34.

Ahmed and Siddigur Rahman teamed up to clinch the 4X200m freestyle riley (8:27.77) gold.

Bangladesh Army captured one old in 50m freestyle (Harun Ur Rashid) and Bangladesh Ansars got the other gold of the day in the women's 4X200m freestyle with Kamala Akhter, Labani Akhter Jui, Lavli Khatun and Lipi Akhter winning

However, it was quite unfortunate for the swimmers because although they put up their best in setting new records, those will not go into the record books as they were all manual timings

Faisal's double

SPORTS REPORTER

Faisal Mokammel clinched a double in the Jatiya Press Club table tennis competition as he won both the singles and doubles titles yesterday. He beat Yousuf Pasha 21-10, 21-16 in the final of the men's singles on

the last day of the competition. He earlier paired with Rounal

Hossain for the doubles title.

Meanwhile, the three-day spade trump competition begins today at

England wary

appears much more realistic than it would have done even a few weeks

Colombo-born and Australiabred, Whatmore was never much more than a useful international player. But his ability as a coach is unquestioned.

tic approach seems ideally tailored for Bangladesh. As against their most recent opponents, he will set them limited, confidence-building goals which will allow them to feel like winners even in defeat.

England may have dreamt up the game, but Whatmore helped reinalmost as magical a trick.

goal six minutes from time to see off lead through Tiko. second division minnows Gramanet League leaders Valencia were in 1-0 while Diego Tristan's solitary action at second division Castellon strike with eight minutes remaining in a late match. was enough to give high-flying

minutes remaining.

winner in the 400m freestyle with a crease. He was kept silent by On the other hand, Rubel Rana Vettori, who often bowled a defenclinched the first gold for Navy sive lea-stump line to deny the

> batsman freedom to play strokes. Frustrated. Tendulkar drove a Styris delivery away from the body to be caught in the slips, much to the disappointment of nearly 5,000 spectators who braved the heat and dust in anticipation of a long knock from their idol.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming used his limited bowling resources well to put India on to the backfoot before Dravid and Laxman propped up the innings with their attractive knocks.

The tourists bagged two in the post-lunch session, with Vettori holding a return catch to account for Chopra before Styris got rid of Tendulkar.

Chopra impressed more with his staying prowess than stroke-play, batting 158 minutes for his 42. Hard-hitting opener Sehwag was

the lone batsman to be dismissed in the morning session after scoring a 32-ball 29. He was trapped legbefore off a Tuffey delivery which cut in sharply off the pitch.

Sehwag looked in hurry, going for shots early in his innings in order to spoil the rhythm of new-ball bowlers Tuffey and Jacob Oram. The aggressive opener cut Oram

for a four and then slashed Tuffey for a six over third-man, the ball crossing over the boundary-line after fielder Craig McMillan got a hand to

Sehwag failed to curb his strokes

Dravid defies NZ chance, pulling and driving Styris for two successive fours. His flourish,

Deportivo La Coruna a win by the

same scoreline at second division

Torrelavega thanked two goals from

Javi Delgado as the second division

outfit knocked out top flight Athletic

Bilbao, who had taken a first-half

In a minor shock Gimnastica

neighbours Compostela.

however, did not last long. Dravid and Laxman then saw to it that India did not the squander the advantage of winning the toss on a good batting pitch with their solid

unbeaten knocks.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the opening Test between India and New Zealand at the

Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad on Wednesday: INDIA: First innings

Chopra c and b Vettori Sehwag Ibw b Tuffey Dravid not out Tendulkar c Astle b Styris 56 Laxman not out Extras: (lb-3, nb-1) Total: (For 3 wkts in 90 overs) 249 Fall of wicket: 1-35, 2-107, 3-134 To bat: Ganguly, Patel, Kumble, Harbhajan, Zaheer, Balaji

0 **Bowler** 3 Tuffev 21 77 22 7 50 Oram 41 15 Stvris 23 64 Vettori 6 McMillan 6 Wiseman 0 8 0

NEW ZEALAND: Fleming, Richardson, Vincent, Astle, Styris, McMillan, Oram, Hart, Vettori, Tuffey, Wiseman

Umpires: David Shepherd (England) and Rudi Koertzen (South

The exodus from Zimbabwe cricket continues unabated with the news that the former national captain Brian Murphy has now left the country.

Murphy has taken up a post coaching and playing cricket at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Murphy, 26, is the eighth international player to leave Zimbabwe

cricket prematurely during 2003. Guy

Whittall called it a day because of injury problems, but the others still had time in the game ahead of them had they chosen to continue playing. Part of the reason is the current political and economic situation at home, but there are also many who

Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU). Andy Flower and Murray Goodwin have both spoken out recently to criticise the ZCU for their management of players, and with such an exodus of experienced players the board does need to take

Murphy, captain of Zimbabwe briefly in 2001-02 until his tenure was cut short by a chronic finger injury, had a fairytale start to his international career.

Heavy fine on Pollock AFP, Rawalpindi

International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Clive Lloyd Wednesday fined former South African captain and pacer Shaun Pollock his full match fee for showing dissent but exonerated vice captain Mark Boucher on lack of evidence. Australian umpire Darrell Hair

against a rejected appeal during the third one-day international won by South Africa Tuesday by 13 runs in the eastern industrial city of Faisalabad. "Pollock has been fined under

complained Pollock showed dissent

conduct after he showed dissent," a Pakistan Cricket Board spokesman Pakistani fielder Shoaib Malik had

complained that Boucher used abusive language after he was walking back to the pavilion following his dismissal.

Javed Miandad and South Africa's Eric Simons and managers Haroon Rasheed of Pakistan and South African Cassim Docrat. "There was no evidence found

ated," according to the decision announced in the garrison city of



show

40 Augusta

41 Experts

44 Caustic

stuff

47 Kareem

45 Diving

VUEYOKUBIW

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU PUT LOTS OF GRAVY ON MASHED POTATOES, YOU COULD HAVE A SMOTHERING INSTINCT.

"JYGE TYLK.

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.



1.000 hooligans. These people will absolutely not be allowed to enter

Turkey has set up intense secu-

The English Football Association

with the girl, her father and sister. We did not discuss details of the night at "They were simply here to discuss

media issues. They need guidance about how to handle the situation. "I have had hundreds of women through my doors over the years wanting to sell stories. This young lady

She arrived a short time later for the

informal chat at Clifford's London

office. He said later: "I had a meeting

is not among them. "While we did not discuss any details she stands by everything she has told the police. I have been very impressed by the family.

They are dealing with this situation with great dignity and courage.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals S The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for

Turkey on lout alert



AFP, Istanbul

Turkish authorities plan to bar 1,000

rity measures for the match at the Sukru Saracoglu stadium in Capa said 5,000 police oficers would be on duty both inside and

Henin advances

Tennis

REUTERS. Filderstadt

Justine Henin-Hardenne began her quest to capture the world number one ranking by the end of the week with a patchy 6-0, 7-6 second-round win over Spain's Conchita Martinez at the

Filderstadt Grand Prix on Tuesday.

fellow Belgian Clijsters from the top spot, threw away a 5-2 lead in the second set before she eventually tamed former Wimbledon champion Martinez 7-1 in the tiebreak. "It's good in the first match to be

had a bye in the first round.

ested a little bit," said the Belgian, who

first set, nearly perfect, and then at the

"I was playing unbelievable in the

end of the second set she started Daniela Hantuchova defeated playing better. American qualifier Lisa Raymond 6-3 "Conchita has a lot of experience 6-4 to set up a second-round showand she knows how to turn a match. I down with top seed and defending helped her a lot and wasn't aggressive champion Kim Clijsters but Jelena Dokic's miserable season continued enough but I finally came through in with yet another defeat. the tiebreak.



Belgium's Justine Henin-Hardenne plays backhand against Spaniard Conchita Martinez at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Filderstadt on Tuesday.

The 49-year-old Whatmore is already used to working miracles. In 1996, he coaxed Sri Lanka to an unlikely World Cup final victory over the mighty Australians.

His intelligent, almost paternalis-

vent its one-day format seven years ago, beating England handsomely in the quarterfinals on the way to the World Cup trophy. Reinventing Bangladesh's fortunes would seem

Murphy quits Zimbabwe

CRICINFO, Harare

According to Max Ebrahim, Zimbabwe's convenor of selectors.

are unhappy, justifiably or otherwise, about their relationship with the

a long hard look at why so many are

level II of the ICC Players code of

Lloyd held a hearing after Tuesday's match with Pollock, Boucher, two coaches Pakistan's

against Boucher so he was exoner-

sented to sex with one man. But she claims seven more men, including Premiership stars, then walked into the room at London's CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer ACROSS 1 Hoose gow 5 Nitwit 9 OTB

punished.

13 Gumbo 15 Fibs 17 Inquire 18 Between 19 Host 21 Burgs 24 Uncon 25 "That's a

26 Subject "Word Freak' 30 Singer DiFranco 31 Transparent wrap

32 DDE's opponent 33 Guardian 35 Barrette 36 Duel too