

Brazil's test without super Rs



AFP, Montevideo
Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has warned that the world champions have enough fire in their reserves to survive without injured stars Ronaldinho and Roberto Carlos in South American World Cup qualifiers which get underway this weekend.

Brazil, riding a winning momentum, play Peru in Lima Sunday and three days later take on Uruguay in Curitiba in the third round of the region's qualifiers for Germany 2006.

The champions are the only unbeaten side following wins over Colombia and Ecuador, and Parreira is not worried that the absence of Ronaldinho for five weeks with a right leg muscle injury and Carlos with a left thigh problem will hamper their campaign.

"Our soccer has the conditions to overcome the lack of any player," said Parreira, who has drafted in Elano of Santos to replace Barcelona's Ronaldinho and Leandro Silva of Cruzeiro for Real Madrid's Carlos.

Parreira stressed that he was more interested in creating a good team spirit at their Granja Comary base, north of Rio, and above all reinforce the importance of finishing top of the table.

"We have to think big. To think about finishing the year in top spot," stressed Parreira who will be counting on Real Madrid star Ronaldo despite a looming divorce.

But he said that he was not taking Peru, now coached by compatriot



FULLY LOADED: Brazilian players Alex Alves (2nd,L) Rivaldo and Ronaldo listen to the instructions of coach Carlos Alberto Parreira (L) during a training session in Teresopolis on November 13.

Paulo Autuori, for granted despite a strike which has disrupted the country's first division.

"I'm worried about all the Peru players because they have experience and they have gained a new personality under the command of Autuori."

Parreira does not think that the strike declared by the Peruvian first division players will influence their performance in Lima.

"No player will hold back in the defence of his country's colours. I'm sure that the Peruvian players will go onto the pitch with a fighting spirit and try to do the best for the national side."

Peru, who beat Paraguay 4-1 and lost 2-1 to Chile, are midtable with three points, just behind Uruguay who have also notched up a win and loss but have scored the most goals so far in the campaign with six netted in their two games.

Second-placed Argentina host

Bolivia in Buenos Aires on Saturday before travelling to Colombia Wednesday.

Tailenders Venezuela and Colombia slug it out in Baranquilla Saturday.

Both are winless with Venezuela propping up the table after failing to score a goal, while Colombia have the worst defence so far.

Chile, sitting third, face Uruguay in Montevideo Saturday before hosting Paraguay three days later with coach Juvenal Olmos in an optimistic frame of mind.

"We hope to obtain the points I think we deserve after good performances in our last two matches," he said.

Olmos however is without five injured players - David Pizarro, Jorge Coins, Boris Gonzalez, Pablo Contreras and Carlos Ortega.

Rivaldo admits L'pool interest

AFP, Liverpool

AC Milan's want-away Brazilian midfielder Rivaldo has revealed he has held negotiations with Liverpool.

The 31-year-old Brazilian has previously stated he wants to stay in Europe and would like a move to the Premiership if possible.

"It's true that I had conversations with Liverpool, but the negotiations haven't finished yet, so I can't add anything else," Rivaldo said in Teresopolis, where he is training with Brazil for their next two World Cup qualifiers.

"Really at this point I'm not thinking about my future. I'm just waiting for this year to finish, to see what happens next."

Last month English Premiership side Tottenham turned down the chance to sign Rivaldo - mainly because of his reported wage demands of 50,000 pounds (80,000 dollars) a week.

AC Milan - who want him off their wage bill - agreed to a five million pound (8 million dollar) pay-off and to cancel his contract, which would make him a free agent.

His 150,000 pounds (240,000 dollars) a week wage in Italy makes him the world's highest-paid player.

Rivaldo, who has struggled to hold down a regular first team place with the European champions, can leave Italy once the transfer window reopens in January.

The former Barcelona star fell out with Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti because he has not been playing regularly in the first team.

Owen or Henry next

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid are out to make either Liverpool and England striker Michael Owen or Arsenal and France hitman Thierry Henry their next 'galactico' or superstar signing, Spanish media reported on Friday.

Under club president Florentino Perez, Real, seeking their tenth European Cup this season, have in the past four seasons followed a policy of one major signing each summer while in tandem operating a budding youth policy.

That strategy has brought Luis Figo of Portugal, France star Zinedine Zidane, Brazil's Ronaldo and England's David Beckham to the club since 2000.

Now, club officials, who had no comment to make on the latest turn of the rumour mill Friday, have boiled their next choice down to just two -- but will face massive opposition for either and will likely have to bid around the 50 million-dollar mark.

Former Real Madrid coach John Toshack has already singled out 23-year-old Owen as the man to give the 'meringues' a new dimension.

Owen himself hinted in midweek he may quit Anfield if Liverpool fail to qualify for the Champions League while the prolific forward's contract runs out in 18 months.

"I really need to be playing in the Champions League and that is something we have to remedy," Owen told reporters on Wednesday.

By contrast, 26-year-old Henry, whom AS magazine lauded as "the best player in the world of the Premiership," has tied up a deal with the Gunners until 2007.

According to Friday's edition of AS that could spark a Real campaign for his signature, linking him with compatriot Beckham in a line-up still more dazzling than a current vintage only third in the league after last weekend's 4-1 thrashing at Seville.

No way out for Kallon

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan's Sierra Leone forward Mohammed Kallon is facing a ban after the news here Friday that a second B sample has tested positive for banned steroid nandrolone.

Kallon originally tested positive after a random drugs test after Inter's 0-0 draw at Udinese on September 27. A second test on his B sample at a Rome laboratory here confirmed the presence of nandrolone.

The 24-year-old Kallon was suspended by the Italian Serie A club on the news of his first test and is now set to appear before the anti-doping commission of the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) and could also face an Italian football federation hearing.

Kallon is the second player from Italy to test positive this season. Also in September Parma midfielder Manuele Blasi was suspended for testing positive for the anabolic steroid norandrosterone.

Fleming out

AFP, Rome

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A classic friendly

Football

AFP, Gelsenkirchen

World Cup finalists Germany have a chance to find out how far they have progressed when they host reigning European champions France at the Arena Auf Schalke on Saturday.

While Germany struggled to find top gear in their qualification for the 2004 European championships in Portugal France were merciless winning all of their qualifying matches to underline why they are one of the strong favourites to prevail next summer.

France will certainly be a step up in class from Iceland, Scotland, Lithuania and Faroe Islands - Germany's opposition in the 2004 qualifiers - and German coach Rudi Voller wants his charges to show they are able to compete with the 2000 champions.

"A good performance against the favourites for the European championships is more important than the result," emphasised Voller. "But of course victory over France would be a great way to round off the year and put wind in our sails for Portugal."

His French counterpart Jacques Santini ventured: "A France v Germany game is never like the others."

"It's clearly going to have more of an impact if you beat Germany away than say Malta in Valletta.

"We need these big matches

regardless of whether they're friendlies or not."

Although Germany have home advantage it is France who are the bookmakers' favourites with the likes of Real Madrid playmaker Zinedine Zidane, Chelsea's midfielder terrier Claude Makelele and Arsenal's fleet-footed striker Thierry Henry in their ranks.

Three-time European victors Germany have also not beaten a recognised top team for over three years since Dietmar Hamann's goal downed England 1-0 in October 2000 in what was the final game at Wembley Stadium.

Since then Germany have lost to England (1-5), Holland (1-3), Spain (1-3), Argentina (0-1), Brazil (0-2) and Italy (0-1) although only the 5-1 loss to England in the 2002 World Cup qualifying campaign and 2-0 defeat by Brazil in the World Cup final were competitive matches.

France will hope to continue this trend and look for a repeat of their 1-0 victory over Germany in Paris the last time the two teams locked horns in February 2001.

While the visitors look at virtual full strength Germany are without long-term injury casualties Torsten Frings, Christoph Metzelder, Dietmar Hamann and Christian Ziege while Bayern Munich's Sebastian Deisler misses out with muscular problems.

Goalscoring midfielder Michael

Ballack is poised to play - much to the chagrin of his club Bayern Munich - and cannot wait to test himself against Makelele and Zidane.

Ballack's Bayern team-mate and German captain Oliver Kahn is laid up in bed with a stomach illness but is expected to play, while Bayer Leverkusen defender Jens Nowonty could make an emotional return after 19 months of international exile.

France's Bixente Lizarazu, who has a first hand knowledge of the German game playing alongside Ballack and Kahn at Bayern, believes Voller's team does not merit the accolade of second best in the world.

"The title of World Cup runners-up does not reflect the level of their team. Over the past five or six years they haven't been the second best team in the world."

Yet his teammate and another Bayern star Willy Sagnol, warned: "It's true perhaps there's a deficit in quality but if they're less tactically or technically sound the Germans do have this fighting spirit. They have a better culture of winning and of self-denial than rival teams."

While Saturday's encounter in Gelsenkirchen is a friendly match two football giants, who have won five European championships and four World Cups between them, will be keen to get the psychological edge and build confidence for next summer.



I WISH IT WAS THIS EASY! German custodian Oliver Kahn relaxes at Schalke Arena in Gelsenkirchen during a training session on November 14.

Last hurdle to finals



AFP, Paris

Ruud van Nistelrooy and Ryan Giggs, two key men in Manchester United's domestic success story, go their separate ways on Saturday hoping to translate their club form into international glory by leading Holland and Wales to the finals of Euro 2004.

Van Nistelrooy looks set to get the nod from Dutch coach Dick Advocaat to start his side's play-off first-leg clash against Scotland in Glasgow while Giggs has been pinpointed as the danger man by Russia ahead of their showdown in Moscow as Wales aim to qualify for a major finals for the first time since the 1958 World Cup.

Elsewhere on Saturday, Spain face Norway in Valencia, Croatia take on Slovenia in Zagreb while Latvia meet Turkey in Riga with the eventual winners of the five, two-legged ties booking their places in the finals in Portugal next summer.

Van Nistelrooy has not started for Holland since falling out with Advocaat over being substituted against the Czech Republic and the Dutch coach had been widely expected to opt for Barcelona forward Patrick Kluivert for the clash at Hampden Park.

But after watching van Nistelrooy destroy Scottish champions Rangers' Champions League chances with two

goals at Old Trafford earlier this month, Advocaat seems to have had a change of heart.

Scotland will go into Saturday's first leg hoping at least to give themselves a fighting chance of pulling off a surprise in the return in Amsterdam on Wednesday.

But their hopes of stifling the Dutch have not been helped by the withdrawal of Wolves midfielder Colin Cameron with a stomach injury.

In Moscow, Russia have identified Giggs as the man who could wreck their chances of reaching the finals.

"A player of such class demands permanent attention from the opponents' defence as he can make dangerous moves at any time," coach Georgy Yartsev said.

"Our defenders shall do their best throughout the 180 minutes to neutralise him."

Wales boss Mark Hughes, who suffered the agony of losing out to Italy in the battle for automatic qualification, insists that his team is more than a one-man team.

"We are more than just Ryan Giggs. We have threats in other areas and I'm quite happy they think they will have to pay special attention to Ryan because that should open up space for us in other parts of the field."

Injuries have deprived Hughes of midfielders Mark Pembroke and Simon Davies, as well as Newcastle striker Craig Bellamy.

Spain, European champions in 1964,

face Norway in Valencia with national coach Inaki Saez bringing in Deportivo La Coruna defender Cesar Martin.

"Norway have power in the air and Cesar, with his strength and ability to handle difficult moments, will come in handy," said Saez.

Croatia coach Otto Baric believes Dinamo Zagreb striker Niko Kranjcar could be the man to fire his side past Slovenia while, in Riga, Turkey face Latvia without controversial defender Alpay.

Some reports insisted that the former Aston Villa player was dropped by coach Senol Gunes as a punishment for his role in the bust-up with England's David Beckham last month in Istanbul.

However, the 30-year-old Alpay said he won't be playing at the weekend because he has a cold.

FIXTURES

(All local times except Peru v Brazil)

Saturday
In Asuncion
Paraguay v Ecuador (1920)
In Montevideo
Uruguay v Chile (1500)
In Buenos Aires
Argentina v Bolivia (2130)
In Baranquilla
Colombia v Venezuela (1510)

Sunday
In Lima
Peru v Brazil (03:00 am Bangladesh Standard Time on November 17, Monday)

Tuesday
In Maracaibo
Venezuela v Bolivia (1900)
In Santiago de Chile
Chile v Paraguay (2140)

Vermeulen

FROM PAGE 13

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the second Test between Zimbabwe and West Indies on Friday:

WEST INDIES: First innings 481 (Brian Lara 191, Wavell Hinds 81, Ramnaresh Sarwan 65; Ray Price 5-199)

ZIMBABWE: First innings (over-night 173-3)
Sibanda c and b Edwards 2
Gripper b Dillon 1
Vermeulen b Banks 118
Carlisle b Edwards 11
Wishart lbw b Collymore 96
Matsikenyer b Collymore 8
Taibu c Gayle b Collymore 27
Streak lbw b Dillon 3
Blignaut lbw b Dillon 31
Price not out 31
Mahwire not out 6
Extras: (b-17, lb-4, nb-15, w-1) 37
Total: (For 9 wkts) 371

Fall of wkts: 1-5, 2-10, 3-31, 4-185, 5-201, 6-279, 7-289, 8-302, 9-336.

Bowler O M R W
Hinds 6 2 18 0
Edwards 15 3 48 2
Dillon 30 10 55 2
Collymore 24 5 70 4
Banks 38 1 102 1
Gayle 6 1 23 0
Sarwan 7 0 34 0

Toss: West Indies
Umpires: R Koertzen (RSA) and S Taufel (AUS)
TV Umpire: I Robinson
Match Referee: G Viswanath (IND)

FIXTURES

Play-off matches for Euro 2004:

Saturday (1st leg)
At Riga
Latvia v Turkey
At Glasgow
Scotland v Holland
At Zagreb
Croatia v Slovenia
At Moscow
Russia v Wales
At Valencia
Spain v Norway

2nd legs: Nov 19

NZ to assess

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Snedden said officials were gathering as much information as they could about the threat and "until we've really gone through that process it's a bit difficult to know" if the tour will go ahead. He said a decision would be made by Sunday or Monday.

New Zealand's ambassador to Iran, Niels Holm, who is also accredited to Pakistan, described the email as "vaguely threatening", the Dominion Post reported.

He said it was not unusual, particularly in Pakistan.

"It's the sort of thing that if you saw it painted on a wall you wouldn't pay a blind bit of attention to it."

The Black Caps cut short their tour of Pakistan following the bombing last year and the country became a no-go zone for other cricketing nations until Bangladesh toured in August this year, and South Africa followed last month.

Both tours came off peacefully although South Africa avoided Karachi and the northwest city Peshawar on the grounds of risk and the team was flanked by presidential-level security squads.

"Security is perfect. Recently South Africa toured Pakistan and played five one-day games and three test matches, so that's not a problem," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) spokesman Samiul Hassan said.

The revised New Zealand itinerary, due to start on November 22, also avoids Karachi.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP
Y O V M Z T Y Z X Y K Z T K N Y
X V M V T Y B D H V T T V P S
I X Z S P E S D H B S D : " S B B ' N
E V B B Y O S Y I V T P N E V B B !
Saturday's Cryptoquip: DID YOU HAPPEN TO CATCH THE NEWS REPORT ABOUT THE ATTIC? IT WAS THE TOP STORY.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals L
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.

100% MSC

FROM PAGE 13
Wasim, Aminul and Mahub Mustafa.
Referee: Hannan Miron.
SHEIKH RUSSEL-DHAKA WANDERERS

Away at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, youthful Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra, who played without their foreign recruits, bounced back to seal a semifinal place after comfortably beating Dhaka Wanderers Club 3-0.

Milon put Russel ahead in the sixth minute when the striker placed the ball from a curling free-kick by Asif which kissed the side bar before finding the target.

Wanderers then conceded an own goal seven minutes later when defender Shaheen tried to clear a Bulbul cross.

But there was no stopping Bulbul adding the third in the 55th minute. After snatching the ball from a Wanderers midfielder he then ran half way up the pitch dodging past two opponents defenders and fired a spectacular left-footer from the top of

Be an Aussie

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what cricket is all about at the highest level," Tendulkar added.

"It will make them better and much tougher cricketers for sure.

"The ball is going to bounce a lot at a decent pace there. One has to be prepared to play shots and be aggressive.

"You've got to be strong square of the wicket. If there is a chance to score runs, you can't take a time to just stay there.

"There should not be a breather in your innings."

The 30-year-old, who hit test centuries during both previous tours to Australia, said India's batsmen had been more keen on survival rather than attack three years ago.

India have had a poor build-up for the tour and the selectors have delayed naming a squad following three successive one-day defeats in a home triangular series.

The hosts face New Zealand in Saturday's last group game to decide who meets Australia, who have dominated despite the absence of their front-line bowlers, in the final on Tuesday.