SPÖRT

Latvia make an **Englishman** smile

Deep in sleepy south-west England, Latvia's progress to the finals of Euro 2004 was being cheered by at least one

Gary Johnson, the coach of humble third division side Yeovil, was in charge of the Latvian national team four years ago where he had current boss Alex Starkovs working alongside him.

"It's a magnificent feeling, a major achievement. Four years ago I took over the job of national coach and technical director. The brief was to put the Latvianson the European map," said Johnson.

"I took them to through the 2002 World Cup qualifiers and each month we progressed.

"So to see these boys - they were boys when I was in charge - get to a European championship so quickly is absolutely unbelievable.

"When I took over as national coach, Alex Starkovs took over with me. He was my number two. I set up the programme with him and he has carried it on.'

Latvia drew 2-2 with Turkey on Wednesday to give them a 3-2 play-off aggregate win and a place in the European finals for the first time



DARLING OF THE NATION: Latvian forward Maris Verpakovskis (R) is greeted by ecstatic fans upon his arrival at Riga airport on November 20. The Baltic state held celebrations yesterday for their national team whose 2-2 draw against Turkey in Istanbul secured the country's first appearance in the European Championships final next year in Portugal. Verpakovskis scored in that match.

Premiership preview

Gunners have job cut out

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal and their players have already shelled out a grand total of 265,000 pounds in fines as a result of the ugly fracas that erupted at the end of an illtempered draw with Manchester United

in September. On Saturday, the Premiership leaders will start to discover whether they will pay an even greater price for their indiscipline in the hard currency of

Bans imposed in tandem with the fines mean manager Arsene Wenger will have to do without captain Patrick Vieira, fellow midfielder Ray Parlour and $defenders\,Martin\,Keown\,and\,Lauren\,for$ an awkward trip to fifth-placed Birmingham.

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has claimed Arsenal got off lightly as part of a deal with the Football Association chiefs.

The likelihood of such connivance however is diminished by the fact that Vieira and Parlour will be absent for a match that a third central midfielder.

Gilberto, will also be missing. After playing for his country in Wednesday's World Cup qualifier against Uruguay, the Brazilian will not

Poorly prepared

According to the latest FIFA

rankings Bangladesh are 147th

compared to Tajikistan who are 180.

But the hosts ought to be reminded

that their opponents though lowly

on paper, nevertheless, narrowly

missed out on playing in Asian Cup

Goalkeepers: Aminul, Biplob;

Defenders: Rajani, Sujon, Nazrul,

Titoo, Hasan Al Mamun,

Mahmudul Hasan; Midfielders: Joy,

Arman, Parvez, Monwar, Motiur

Munna, Biddvut, Saiful; Strikers:

Alfaz, Farhad, Kanchan, Moni, Ujjal.

43 Hasp

47 Major

49 Actor

the moon 50 "Fish

tendent's 54 Take

holde

defense

contrac-

Handler

Punctur

52 Fashion

advan

tage of

patched

a dragon

masher

2 Albacore

3 Picnic

1 Rebuff a 23 Sermon

crashers 25 Trench

Solution time: 21 mins.

53 Back

55 Dis-

DOWN

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

FROM PAGE 13

TEAM

ACROSS

1 Unes-

corted

8 Corridor

12 "Clair de

13 Howl at

additive

15 Opposi-

16 Freeway

bridge

means of

designa-

18 Superin

entry

20 Defeat

21 Towel

22 Pres.

23 "Get

lost!"

26 Central

30 Debtor's

31 Tucker's

32 Triumph-

33 Tablet

36 Demon

38 Forefront

40 "Middle-

march'

letters

partner?

mono-

5 Individual

Sepp Blatter and Sultan.

have sufficient time to recover from the combined effects of the match, a 12hour flight to London and his jet-lag.

With the Gunners facing a must-win Champions League encounter next week, Wenger has decided in advance that Gilberto, who scored an own goal in Brazil's 3-3 draw, will have the weekend

"Gilberto will come back Friday afternoon and we have had bad experiences with players coming back," the Frenchman told Arsenal.com. "We play on Tuesday night at Inter

Milan so I don't think it will be a good situation for Saturday or the midweek Wenger admits the absence of

Lauren and Keown, who are beginning four and three-match bans respectively, has also given him a major headache. "We have no problem in offensive areas but I have a big problem in

midfield and at the back because Lauren, Parlour, Vieira, Gilberto, and own are not available In defence, Wenger has the choice of bringing in 18-year-old Justin Hoyte at

right back or moving Kolo Toure there with Pascal Cygan slotting in at centre back but in midfield he admits he is scraping the bottom of the barrel.

The only bright spot for the Arsenal boss is that title rivals Manchester United and Chelsea will also feel the jet

Cordoba's

sudden bye

Colombian goal-

keeper Oscar

 $C \ o \ r \ d \ o \ b \ a$

a n n o u n c e d

Thursday that he

was retiring from

the national side

for personal

reasons and not because of the crisis

Argentina here Wednesday but are still

bottom of the South American World

Cup qualifiers after losing their three

Colombia drew 1-1 against

within the team

Across

amount

28 Large

29 Conclu-

31 Proscrip-

34 Brings

35 Maze

37 Ham-

36 Nourish-

mocks'

occu-

39 Tureen

pants

acces-

sory **40** B.P.O.E.

sang

about

42 Summer-

time

43 Church

44 Elliptical

keet's

place

nized

48 Perfume

46 Recog-

desserts

furniture

Manilow

41 Show-

4 Japanese 26 Tease

enter-

instru-

ments

6 Almost

black

7 Socket

8 Occur

9 "Sad to

10 Mislav

17 Ex-

11 For fear

mayor

19 Kipling

hero

22 Society

24 Dove's

contents

5 Reed

Chelsea duo Hernan Crespo and Juan Veron were both involved in Argentina's 1-1 draw in Colombia and are unlikely to figure in Claudio Ranieri's starting line-up at Southampton.

Ranieri does however have Eidur Gudjohnsen and Damien Duff fresh and

Iceland's captain Gudjohnsen opted not to travel for his country's midweek friendly with Mexico in San Francisco while Duff scored a superb solo goal in Ireland's 3-0 win over Canada on Tues-

United striker Diego Forlan scored twice for Uruguay against Brazil but will have been back in England for less than 24 hours by the time his club kick-off against Blackburn in a lunchtime match at Old Trafford.

As a result, Ruud van Nistelroov is set to play his third game in eight days but after scoring a hat-trick for Holland in their 6-0 Euro 2004 play-off romp against Scotland on Wednesday, the Dutchman is sure to be flying.

Gary Neville is doubtful for United as a result of a niggling Achilles problem which he aggravated playing in England's friendly defeat by Denmark on

At the non jet-setting end of the table, Eddie Gray begins his stint as Leeds

"I took all week to make this deci-

sion," said 33-year-old Cordoba,

whose howler during Wednesday's

game allowed Hernan Crespo to give

tion away from what is happening, it's

something personal. I talked about it

with my family and yesterday I wanted

to have a great match against

Argentina to help the team forward,

added Cordoba, who plays for Turkish

The draw however keeps coach

Francisco Maturana in his post after

the Colombia boss had been ready to

 $call\,it\,quits\,if\,his\,side\,had\,lost\,again.$

"I didn't take it to turn all the atten-

Argentina a 1-1 draw.

leader's Besiktas.

CRYPTOQUIP

Y II P X D E Y , M Z C R W X D

GRDE CUF GPYHREX JFKN

FINISH UNDER THE WIRE

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A TIGHTROPE WALKER TOOK ONE FALSE STEP, I GUESS HE'D

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals O

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.

UYZNFN RD MYCU

caretaker manager with the kind of game his side must win if they are to escape relegation and potential financial meltdown - a home clash with

Gray's first act on taking over was to mend fences with Mark Viduka, who had publicly fallen out with former boss Peter Reid. Gray believes getting the best out of the Australian is the key to realising his ambition of making Elland Road an unwelcoming destination for visi-

"They are coming here thinking if we play properly we'll win the game, but I vant them thinking we're going to be under severe pressure for 90 minutes. That's what we've got to instill in the players again."

FIXTURES

(1500 GMT kick-off unless stated)

Saturday: Birmingham v Arsenal, Everton v Wolves, Leeds v Bolton, Leicester v Charlton Manchester Utd v Blackburn (1230 GMT), Middlesbrough v Liverpool, Newcastle v Manchester City, Southampton v Chelsea

Sunday: Tottenham v Aston Villa Monday: Fulham v Portsmouth

(2000 GMT)

Don't rush

match figures of 7-100 in his comeback Sheffield Shield match, in which South Australia defeated NSW

at Adelaide Oval. "From an Australian point of view it was (encouraging), from a NSW point of view not so great," Waugh said.

"But he bowled very well, deserved his wickets, and worked hard and worked into it nicely.

"He bowled a lot of overs, I don't think he was at 100 per cent pace but l think he worked into it well.' Another Test bowler on the injury

comeback trail, leg-spinner Stuart MacGill, in his second game back after a month off with a calf injury, was not in such good form in the SA-NSW match.

MacGill had match figures of 4-147 from 29.4 overs, which provided the SA batsmen with plenty of easy boundaries from half-pitched deliveries and full tosses, but Waugh said there were some promising signs.

"He was a little bit hot and cold in this match," he said.

"He hasn't bowled a lot before the last two weeks, then he's had a lot of bowling.

"One or two things were niggling away at him, he's got a sore toe.

"There were some encouraging signs there, but he wasn't consistent.'

Clash

FROM PAGE 13

England are the world's number one side, deservedly so after beating all their main rivals in the past year. They have also defeated the Wallabies in their past four meetings.

Most of the talk in Sydney this week has focused on England's reclusive flyhalf Jonny Wilkinson, who defied the elements to kick all England's points in the 24-7 win over France.

Obsessive is the adjective most commonly applied to Wilkinson, whose work ethic has been analysed relentlessly in the Australian media.

His critics say Wilkinson is no more than a left-footed Rob Andrew, the England flyhalf 12 years ago when Australia defeated England 12-6 at Twickenham, the only other time the two teams have met in a World Cup

Primera Liga preview

No time to act Goofy!

Football

In the week that Real Madrid inked a marketing deal with Disney, it was appropriate that the talk was of the reigning Spanish champions avoiding another Mickey Mouse display against Albacete on Sunday

Real's last outing two weeks ago saw them crash 4-1 at Sevilla, with jokes after Real went three down in 15 minutes that Donald Duck and Goofy could have done better than Beckham. Zidane and Ronaldo, and they need an emphatic win to restore morale and keep up their championship challenge.

Deportivo La Coruna lead the lead with 25 points after 11 games with Valencia, who travel to struggling Murcia on Sunday, and Real second and third respectively with 23 points but separated by goal difference.

"Everybody is saying that Albacete should be a push over but there have been enough surprises in the league so far this season. I just hope there is not another one on Sunday," said Real defender Francisco Pavon on Thurs-

The odds suggest Real, who have a perfect record in the Santiago Bernabeu this campaign, should have no trouble overcoming their relegation-threatened visitors, who have yet to get an away point

However, Real coach Carlos Oueiroz will have spent the past day or so pondering what to do about the centre of the defence now that it looks like all of his players on midweek international duty have returned unscathed. Michel Salgado will return at right

back after suspension with Pavon moving back into the middle of the defence alongside Spanish international Ivan Helguera, while Raul Bravo continues to deputise for the injured Roberto Carlos at left back. Deportivo may have a two point lead

at the top of the Spanish first division but their recent performances have been far from convincing and they only won their last game 2-1 thanks to two own goals by visiting Real Sociedad.

In such form, the Galicians will hardly relish their trip to the other end of Spain to play Real Betis, even though the mercurial Seville-based side's home form is actually worse than their away record.

One note of comfort for Deportivo is that Betis are in the midst of an injury crisis, deepened this week by Brazilian midfielder Denilson joining Washington Tais and Tote Lopez among the principal casualties.

Former international Ito Alvarez is also suspended for the visit of Deportivo.

Betis coach Victor Fernandez

started with the ineffectual Dani Martin in place of Tote when they lost 2-1 at Barcelona two weeks ago but the indications are that the erratic Martin Palermo may be given another chance

After their spluttering start, Barcelona have now gone four games without losing and moved up to fourth place but they will have to face Villarreal on Saturday without Ronaldinho, who tore a right leg muscle against Betis.

The fixture also brings Barca faceto-face with Argentine international midfielder Juan Ramon Riquelme, who was discarded by the Catalans at the end of the summer and loaned to

"I don't have any particular feelings of revenge. OK, there were plenty of things that happened that I don't want to talk about, and I'd prefer not to remember, and four months ago I thought I'd have been playing for Barca rather than against them, but I still had

reflected Riquelme

Behind Barca in fifth are Atletico Madrid, who boast the best current record in the Spanish first division after winning their last five games.

Atletico play at Valladolid, who themselves are unbeaten in four games, on Sunday and to acquire a bit of divine assistance in maintaining their best streak in eight seasons Atletico went to Rome on Wednesday for an audience with the Pope.

FIXTURES

Saturday (kick off GMT): Real Sociedad v Real Mallorca (1830), Real Betis v Deportivo La Coruna (1830), Villarreal v Barcelona

Sunday: Celta Vigo v Athletic Bilbao (1600), Espanyol v Sevilla (1600), Malaga v Osasuna (1600), Racing Santander v Real Zaragoza (1600), Valladolid v Atletico Madrid (1600), Real Madrid v Albacete (1800), Murcia v Valencia

Serie A preview **Turkey games** postponed

AFP, Paris

UEFA announced Thursday that next week's Champions League Group D tie between Turkish side Galatasaray and Italy's Juventus has been postponed until December 2 because of security

European football's governing body said that the decision was taken following Thursday's suicide bomb attacks against British interests in Istanbul which killed 26 people and The UEFA Cup second round

second-leg tie between Israel's Maccabi Haifa and Spanish side Valencia, due to take place next Thursday at the Alsancak Stadium in Izmir, has also been postponed. The new date and venue for the

match, which was moved to Turkey because of security concerns in Israel, has yet to be fixed.

"UEFA has decided to postpone the most imminent matches coming up in UEFA competitions in Turkey next week, given the seriousness of the incidents that took place in Istanbul this morning and the current confusion on the ground," said UEFA's director of competition operations,

"Over the next few days, we will be closely monitoring the overall security situation in Turkey, together with the relevant authorities, and will remain in constant contact with the clubs and national associations concerned regarding any forthcoming matches scheduled in Turkey."

English Premiership club Chelsea were waiting to hear if they will play their Champions League match against Besiktas next month in Istanbul.

Anderson

FROM PAGE 13 one-day international when they were bowled out for 88 -- their second lowest total.

Anderson had recently returned to the squad having missed the Bangladesh Tests because of a knee

Yorkshire's Matthew Hoggard who joins the rest of the Test squad, will provide fast-bowling cover for James Kirtley and Richard Johnson in Sunday's third ODI, also in Colombo.

Kirtley, Anderson's squash opponent when he sustained the injury, is now likely to stay on for the Test

Time to get FROM PAGE 13

eight matches against Australia and Pakistan.

Wright said it was crucial that skipper Saurav Ganguly and his men issued a statement of intent on the opening day of the first Test. The Indians are well aware of the

mistake then England skipper Nasser Hussain made last summer when he gave Australia the psychological upper hand by bowling first in Brisbane after winning the toss. Ganguly, who missed out most of the TVS Cup tri-series due to injury, is

one player whom the coach is desperately hoping will recover in time to "We are hoping that he will be alright before the tour begins," Wright

"It's a minor injury. He should even have no problem in playing the two three-day games ahead of the Tests."

For India, it will be vitally important that Ganguly remains fit to lead out the team given the tremendous fighting spirit that he manages to instill in the India's tour begins with a three-day

Queensland XI.

game against Victoria starting on Tuesday, before heading north for a final warm-up match against a

Tests for big boys Football "They are an organised side that

AFP, Rome

The top three in Italy, all boasting unbeaten records after nine matches played, face tricky away ties this weekend as Serie A returns to action following a two week break for international matches

Current league leaders Juventus visit $Modena, Roma\,travel\,to\,Bologna\,and\,AC$ Milan take on seventh-placed Chievo. Juve are on 23 points, two ahead of their two closest title rivals who are tied for second place. European champions Milan face the

sternest test in Verona where they have taken one point from the last two meetings, but they can take encouragement from Chievo's poor home record this Just one win in four at the Bentegodi

form which has brought three wins, but Milan striker Ion Dahl Tomasson said it would be a mistake to underestimate Luigi Del Neri's men well-drilled men. "We will be up against a team that plays some of the best football in Italy,"

said the 27-year-old Danish interna-

stadium has offset their superb away

"Del Neri is one of the most intelligent coaches around and his players know exactly what is expected of them. He has his game plan which the team

works hard for each other. The formula stays the same and has brought them relative success given their moderate "Its going to be really tough, but its

imperative we win so we don't lose ground on Juventus, who are looking really strong at the moment." Indeed they are, having won five out of their last six matches and secured a place in the last 16 of the Champions

League with two first phases still left to But on Saturday the reigning champions are up against an in-form Modena side, who under the tutelage of Alberto Malesani have won their last three home matches without conceding a single

Malesani, who guided Parma to UEFA Cup success in 1999, said his team are more than capable of giving the titleholders a run for their money. "We have nothing to fear," he said.

out crowd and we feel confident. The pressure will be on them.' Juventus coach Marcello Lippi is expected to recall veteran defender Ciro

We are playing at home in front of a sell-

Ferrara to the centre of his defence. Ferrara has been used sparingly this season, but the 36-year-old former Italy international has accepted that at the

bench, but I have a long way to go before

age of 36 he can't play in every game. "At my age you need to preserve your energy and spend some time on the

possible 27 this season.

Saturday: Modena v Juventus (1700

7 NZ rookies

FROM PAGE 13

Medium fast bowler Kerry Walmsley, who was also on that tour, has been recalled for the first time since and batsman Richard Iones, who was in India for the Test series only but was not used, gets another chance to shine.

"The absence of several established players has paved the way for some others and they will now get their opportunity," selection manager Richard Hadlee said.

"For the selectors this is exciting as we will now get to learn something about the new players' capabilities at international level."

SQUAD

Chris Cairns (captain, Canterbury), Tama Canning (Auckland), Craig Cumming (Otago), Chris Harris (Canterbury), Paul Hitchcock (Wellington) Richard Jones (Wellington), Hamish Marshall (Northern Districts), Michael Mason (Central Districts), Brendon McCullum (Otago), Jacob Oram (Central Districts), Mathew Sinclair (Central Districts), Darvl Tuffey (Northern Districts), Daniel Vettori (Northern Districts), Matthew Walker (Wellington), Kerry Walmsley (Auckland).

ITINERARY

Nov 29 - 1st ODI at Lahore (D/N) Dec 1 - 2nd ODI at Lahore (D/N) Dec 3 - 3rd ODI at Faisalabad Dec 5 - 4th ODI at Rawalpindi (D/N) Dec 7 - 5th ODI at Rawalpindi (D/N)

FROM PAGE 13 **SQUAD** Inzamamul Haq (captain), Imran

PCB

Farhat, Saleem Elahi, Yasir Hameed, Yousuf Youhana, Shoaib Malik, Abdul Razzaq, Azhar Mahmood, Moin Khan (wicketkeeper), Danish Kaneria, Shabbir Ahmed, Mohammad Sami, Shoaib Akhtar, Misbahul Haq, Junaid

BCCI to probe bribe scam

He was not selected in either team Kale, 30, a right hand batsman, represented India in a one-day international in Bangladesh in April but was ignored for the recent home series

The scandal is the biggest to hit Indian cricket since the match-fixing saga in 2000 which led to life bans on former captain Mohammad Azharuddin and ex-Test player Ajay Sharma and five-year bans for internationals Ajay Jadeja and Manoj

Kale, who faces a life ban if found

"All this is nonsense," Kale said.

"I come from a middle class family, do not have that kind of money to pay

Gavaskar's fear

pitches will depend heavily on mainstays Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid, while their own pace attack will be thin on experience and confi-

home series against Sri Lanka 'A'.

allowed to play in any official tournament till the probe was completed.

Prabhakar.

years and have been one of the leading scorers in domestic cricket, why should I resort to such things?

India's batting on faster Australian

from a groin injury, suffered on his return after a month's layoff because of a thigh injury. Fast bowler Javagal Srinath retired

a knee injury, leaving only Ajit Agarkar among the five pacemen with previous experience of playing down under.

the club he supported as a boy, but insisted sentiment will be pushed to one

calling it a day," he said

the coach's decisions."

a born and bred Roman.

"I dont know whether or not I will

have a place in the starting eleven, but

nobody here is assured of a place and

nobody minds. We all happily accept

Roma meanwhile come face to face

The gruff-voiced 'grandad' of Italian

football has always had a soft spot for

with their former coach Carlo Mazzone

"I am a Roma fan but I have to be professional," said the 66-year-old, "I hope they win the title this season, but right now I am thinking of Bologna. We desperately need three points and to take them from Roma, who are in

massive boost for morale." Bologna are currently fourth from bottom with just six points from a

tremendous form right now, would be a

FIXTURES

GMT), Inter Milan v Reggina (1930) Sunday (all matches 1400 unless stated): Ancona v Brescia, Bologna v Roma, Empoli v Parma, Lazio v Perugia, Lecce v Sampdoria, Udinese v Siena, Chievo v AC Milan

against Australia and New Zealand. Dalmiya said Kale will not be

guilty, has denied the allegations. "I have been playing for the last 10

FROM PAGE 13

Batsman Ganguly is recovering

this month after failing to recover from

India's selectors have been criticised for omitting left-arm spinner Murali Kartik, who bowled better than Harbhajan Singh and Anil Kumble in the one-dayers.

The first Test starts in Brisbane on

anyone. I am really shocked that a

thing like this has been said about me.

Indian captain Saurav Ganguly

defended Kale just before leaving for Australia with the rest of the senior squad on Friday. "I have known Kale for a long time and I don't think he is capable of doing

media, be it television or newspapers. Anybody could pass a statement on somebody. How far it is true is what is important. "I do not think a mere allegation

such a thing," Ganguly told reporters.

"Anything can come out in the

should be a problem for Kale unless the facts are established." More and Roy are part of the fivemember selection committee headed

by former Test wicketkeeper Syed

Kirmani. The remaining selectors in

the panel are Sanjay Jagdale and Kirti

Dalmiya revealed that the two selectors had reported Kale to him on Tuesday during the tri-series final between India and Australia at the

Eden Gardens. "I asked them to give me a report in writing which was then shown to the legal advisers of the board," he said. Kale, who began his first-class

career in 1993, has scored 6,806 runs in 84 matches, with an unbeaten 248 the best of his 24 centuries He also took three wickets with his

Strachan linked

to Leeds

right-arm off-spin bowling

AFP, London Crisis club Leeds United were

reported Friday to be set to make Gordon Strachan their new manager as soon as they reach agreement with Southampton over his pay-off. Nedia reports said Elland Road

chief executive Trevor Birch made an official approach to Saints supremo Rupert Lowe 48 hours ago.