



French players led by Franck Ribery (top) participate in a mountain trekking session as part of their training in the city of Tignes in the Swiss Alps on Wednesday.

Gang behind Vieira burglary

A pan-European car-jacking gang is believed to be behind a weekend burglary at the Riviera home of Juventus midfielder Patrick Vieira...

France aim to bury ghosts of 2002

game against the Danes, and an ineffective old guard. Raymond Domenech was handed the task of reconstructing France from the ashes of Asia...

deepest Asia, the far reaches of China, or a forgotten island. He added with a grin: "The United States isn't a bad destination either. They don't know what football is there!"

Asked if his contract stipulated a specific target at the 2006 finals he said: "Since I read my contract the first time I signed it I don't know where I put it. The other day I looked for it but couldn't find it."

Pires moves to Villarreal

Robert Pires is leaving Champions League finalists Arsenal for a two-year deal with Spanish side Villarreal, the French winger confirmed Thursday.

The Kids' Cup

Theo Walcott might have been dismayed by the mixture of scorn and shock that greeted his elevation to England's World Cup squad but he shouldn't be too concerned.

Dyer arrested for indecent assault

Newcastle midfielder Kieron Dyer was arrested after a woman complained that he had indecently exposed himself.

Rui returns to Benfica

Brazil's Ze Roberto is leaving Bayern Munich after four seasons and plans to continue his career outside Germany, the midfielder said on Wednesday.

Vidmar retires

Ex-Rangers, Middlesboro and Cardiff defender Tony Vidmar has been forced to retire from football due to a serious heart condition.

Milan official under the spotlight

An AC Milan official has for the first time become directly involved in a match-fixing affair in a new twist to the Italian football scandal which has been raging the past few weeks.

Toni a la Toto Schillaci?



Sixteen years ago Italy turned to Salvatore "Toto" Schillaci as their World Cup striker despite the Sicilian's lack of international experience...

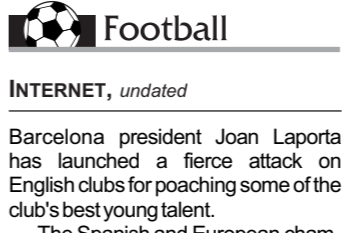


LUCA TONI

north Italian side, but slipped into obscurity during his second, hitting the target just twice.

opposites. Toni's job was to put his 1.93-metre frame at Baggio's service, working as a targetman or muscle to add the finishing touch to moves or give his partner more space...

Laporta slams English for poaching



Barcelona president Joan Laporta has launched a fierce attack on English clubs for poaching some of the club's best young talent.

seven million euros (around £4.8million) in our youth team this season," said Laporta during a coaching clinic in the Canary Islands.

The player's parents had put pen to paper on a Barca contract on his behalf in 2003 - the club's youth players have to sign an amateur contract...

Scolari's chance for history



Global speculation linking Luiz Felipe Scolari with the job of England coach dominated the world's sporting headlines at the end of April until the 57-year-old Brazilian said he did not want the job.

became very guarded about his future plans. He may stay, he may go and nothing will be decided until after the finals appeared to be the new message from Lisbon.

he has been an international manager. At club level in Brazil though, he was famous for his heightened sense of "gamesmanship"

While he would have made history by becoming the first Brazilian to coach the national team of the motherland of football, he can still make history in the World Cup by becoming the first man to win the competition with two different countries.

After what looked like a realistic chance of moving to England collapsed, the Portuguese FA and Scolari

he made his name at Brazilian side Gremio, who won several titles, including South America's Libertadores Cup.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 36 Parka feature employee 37 Singing well 9 Birds' milieu hatchet 12 Farm fraction 13 Grant or Jackman 14 Mad Hatter's affair 15 "Vanily Fair" writer 17 Slishly fishery 18 Charlie Brown's nemesis 19 Pigs 21 Rued the run 24 Quantum particle 25 Burden 26 Unaccomplish-remark

Cryptic crossword grid with letters filled in and empty squares for solving.

CRYPTOQUIP

BAJP ODY PD ZDPRJS BNPW WD TJ NP JPHKSDPXJPWNZKGW, GD XJ XKRAW GNO ODY' HJ T J P P M J - P N W Y S J M . Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF AN ARTIST LIKED SKETCHING ESCALATORS, I GUESS HE WOULD DRAW A LOT OF STAIRS.

The Cryptquip 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.