Injured Italian hardman Gennaro Gattuso admits he almost broke down into tears after being told that he would be sidelined for the next two weeks.

The Milan man was informed on Wednesday that he would miss the start of the World Cup Finals as aresult of a muscle problem which he picked up in Wednesday's 0-0 draw against Switzerland.

"When I came out of the hospital this morning I just wanted to cry, then I saw an old man in the street and realised there are more serious problems in this world," he

"I have to admit that I am deeply disappointed inside, but I have to stay positive for the rest of the

"Being sidelined for 10 to 15 days is an eternity for me, but I usually have a very quick recovery

Gattuso is now expected to miss the games against Ghana and USA, but is hoping to be fit for the Czech

There were suggestions that Gattuso may even be withdrawn from the squad, but both the Coach and the player have rubbished that

"I'll replace him on the pitch, but not in the squad," said Marcello Lippi. "He will stay with us. It's often better to pick up injuries now rather than in the competition."

Gattuso responded: "Even if Lippi decided to send me home then I would have chained myself to the team bus. You would have had to call the police to take me

Gattuso becomes the Azzurri's third injury victim with Gianluca Zambrotta and Alessandro Nesta

both set to miss the Ghana opener. "I've never been superstitious, but it does seem as if someone has cast a spell on us," the midfielder

Spain fight back against Croatia

AGENCIES, undated

A classy extra-time goal from striker Fernando Torres and a freekick from debutant Mariano Pernia earned Spain a 2-1 victory over fellow World Cup qualifiers Croatia in the final warm-up match for both sides.

Spain appeared to be heading for defeat after centre back Pablo Ibanez had nodded the ball into his own net when Niko Kranjcar had floated a seemingly innocuous ball into the area in the 14th minute.

But Pernia, making his first appearance in a Spain shirt after being called up to replace the injured Asier del Horno, made it 1-1 when his miscued free-kick made its way through a forest of defenders and crept past keeper Stipe Pletikosa at the far post just after the hour.

Torres looked to have spurned the chance to win the match for Spain 15 minutes from time, when he had a weakly struck penalty saved by Pletikosa, but he atoned for his error when he scored a fine ; individual goal in stoppage time.

The Atletico Madrid striker cut his way past two defenders and slotted the ball past Pletikosa and inside the post to give his side the win and stretch their unbeaten record to 22 matches.

France 3 China 1

French beat China 3-1 in their last warm-up match before World Cup in which striker Djibril Cisse broke his right leg which rules him out for the tournament.

David Trezeguet (30th minute) and Henry (second-half injury time) scored for France, which also got an own goal in the 89th minute when Yun Wang tried to clear a cross from Franck Ribery and sent it into the net from 15 yards.

Zhi Zheng converted a penalty kick for China in the 69th after he was tripped by Eric Abidal.

"We showed some good play going forward and had good movement in attack, but we did not finish that well," Domenech said. 'It was tough because we were holding back a bit and playing with one foot on the brakes. However, we were solid at the back."

Australia 3 Liechtenstein 1 Australia scored two goals in the last 15 minutes to beat Liechtenstein 3-1 in their last

The Socceroos open their World Cup play Monday against Japan in Kaiserlautern.

Playing without striker Mark Viduka, Australia dictated the pace but never led until Kennedy jumped for his header goal.

Liechtenstein was hard-pressed to get out of its own half early on, with few offensive options other than the long ball. The tactic worked after eight minutes, when Australia's Lucas Neill headed an own goal from a long-distance free-



Australia midfielder Tim Cahill (L) attempts to block a kick by Leichtenstein captain Daniel Hasler during their friendly in Ulm, Germany on Tuesday.

The teams were tied 1-1 until substitute Joshua Kennedy scored in the 75th minute. John Aloisi added another goal in the 82nd, tapping in a rebound off the goalpost.

"What I cannot stand is the lack of concentration in the first 20 minutes," said Australia coach Guus Hiddink, who also complained of "some very sloppy defence on one, maybe two posiMike Sterjovski tapped in one such cross in the 20th minute to

Australia winger Harry Kewell played 60 minutes after sitting out recent friendlies against Greece (1-0) and the Netherlands (1-1). Kewell injured his groin in Liverpool's FA Cup final win over West Ham last month.

Hiddink also rested goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer and several other

Injury ends Martyn's career

AFP, London

Former England goalkeeper Nigel Martyn on Thursday announced his immediate retirement after being told he needs an ankle opera-

The 39-year-old, who had been set to agree new terms at Everton, had not played since January due to a stress fracture.

Martyn, whose contract was due to expire this month, underwent a scan Wednesday and would have been offered a new deal if it proved positive.

Specialists, however, have recommended surgery to pin the bone and Martyn decided to call time on his playing career.

Martyn joined Everton from Leeds in September 2003 and made 100 appearances for the club.

Pochettino hangs up his boots

REUTERS, Madrid

Former Argentina international Mauricio Pochettino has brought his playing career to end, rescinding the last year of his contract with Primera Liga side Espanyol.

I thought it was the best thing for me and for the club. There is no other reason behind the decision and I don't know what I am going to do tomorrow," Pochettino was reported as saying on the Espanyol

The 34-year-old centre back was in his second spell at the Barcelonabased club with whom he won the King's Cups in 2000 and 2006.

He also played for Newell's Old Boys, Paris St Germain and Girondins Bordeaux. He was a member of the

the World Cup finals in 2002.

Argentina squad that competed at has strong reservations about

England face wrath of Ferguson



INTERNET, undated

Eriksson wants to play striker in group games; United manager breaks off holiday to vent anger at

An exhaustive day of medical checks, frayed tempers and delicate negotiations ended with Wayne Rooney landing back in Germany late last night for the World Cup. He described himself as "delighted" but Sir Alex Ferguson was vehemently against him going and will be dismayed by the disclosure that Sven-Goran Eriksson is toying with the idea of using the forward in England's final group match against Sweden on June 20.

No sooner had Rooney been reunited with his teammates at their Black Forest hotel - to whom his first words were reportedly "the big man's back in town" - than it transpired that Eriksson had informed his coaching staff that, fitness permitting, he would like to field Rooney for 30 minutes if England have already beaten Paraguay and Trinidad & Tobago to confirm their place in the first knock-out phase. Having scored a rare victory over Ferguson, Eriksson believes a second-half appearance could help Rooney's rehabilitation, particularly if there is little riding on the game.

England's head coach is not reckless enough to take such a decision without receiving the approval of the team's doctor, Leif Sward, but Ferguson will be full of foreboding at the mere suggestion. The Manchester United manager

Rooney taking any part in the tournament, never mind accelerating his recovery to make his comeback in only 12 days' time. Tellingly, some of Rooney's own representatives are also concerned that Eriksson may be gambling with his long-term fitness. The Swede is close to the end of his employment with the Football Association and there is a suspicion that he has become demob happy.

"There is a huge difference between running round a few poles and kicking a lightweight football around to having 13 stone of Argentine defender jumping on your recently broken foot," said one of the people involved in the process. "If Rooney gets injured in the course of the tournament then you can expect the mother of all Glaswegian explosions."

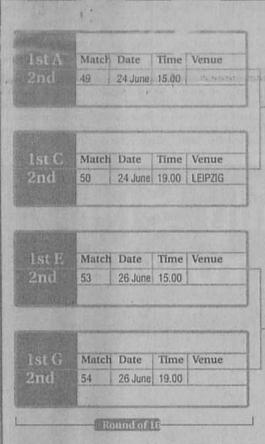
Breaking off from his holiday in the south of France, Ferguson voiced his misgivings in the strongest possible terms during a series of fractious top-level telephone calls to, among others, the FA executive director David Davies, but ultimately he was powerless to do anything more than request that his star player be treated with extreme caution. The FA will try to appease United and their manager by promising to update them on a

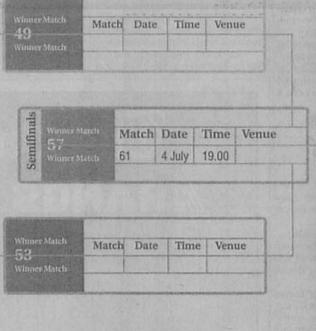
FIFA's regulations meant United could not withdraw their player, as Ferguson would have liked, but it says everything about the club's position that their first reaction to being told that Rooney's recovery was ahead of schedule was reportedly to request a second opinion.



Italian forwards (from L) Filippo Inzaghi, Alberto Gilardino and Francesco Totti warm up during their first training session in Duisburg on Thursday on the eve of the World Cup.

RLD CUP 2006 FIXTURES





Quarter finals

Poland Germany

Costa Rica

Ecuador



	Th	ird pla	ce play	off
aser fatch	Match	Date	Time	Venue
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55		15.00	DORTMUND	2nd
55 Match	27 June	15.00	DORTMUND	

NOTE: ALL TIMES ARE GMT. TO KNOW THE BANGLADESH STANDARD TIME PLEASE ADD 6 HO

Australia

MATCH	TIME	TEAMS	VENUE
JUNE 9		The Party of the Party of	
1	16.00	Germany: Costa Rica	MUNICH
2	19.00	Poland: Ecuador	GELSENKIRCHEN
JUNE 10		THE REAL PROPERTY OF THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TWO IN COL	ALCOHOL: NO.
3	13.00	England: Paraguay	FRANKFURT
4	16.00	Trinidad & Tobago: Sweden	DORTMUND
5	19.00	Argentina: Ivory Coast	HAMBURG
JUNE II	THE REAL PROPERTY.		
6	13.00	Serbia & Montenegro: Holland	LEIPZIG
7	16.00	Mexico: Iran	NUREMBERG
8	19.00	Angola: Portugal	COLOGNE
JUNE PAR		THE MELELENING IN THE	AND RESIDENCE OF STREET
A	13.00	Australia: Japan	MEN WEST COLUMN
KAISERSLAUT	ERN		
10	16.00	USA: Czech Republic	GELSENKIRCHEN
antique mana	10.00	Italy: Ghana	HANOVER
THINE IR.			Charles and the second
12	13.00	South Korea: Togo	FRANKFURT
13	16.00	France: Switzerland	STUTTGART
14 STATE OF THE STATE OF THE ST	19.00	Brazil: Croafia	BERLIN
TUNELL			NOT HERE SECTION AND ADDRESS.
15	13.00	Spain: Ukraine	LEIPZIG
16	16.00	Tunisia: Saudi Arabia	MUNICH
17	19.00	Germany: Poland	DORTMUND
JUNE 15	10.00	Foundam Costs Plan	HAMPURO
18	13.00	Ecuador: Costa Rica	HAMBURG
19	16.00	England: Trinidad & Tobago	NUREMBERG
20	19.00	Sweden: Paraguay	BERLIN
JUNE 16	12.00	American Carlos 2 Martin	CEI CENNIDONEN
21	13.00	Argentina: Serbia & Montenegro	
22	16.00	Holland: Ivory Coast	STUTTGART
23	19.00	Mexico: Angola	HANOVER

1st Round

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H	England							
majora .	Paraguay					1		
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MP W D L GF GA PtS

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	USA							
	Czech Republic							
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-	Croatia				1000	100		

Group G	Team	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PtS
	France							
	Switzerland							
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Group H	Team	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PtS
4	Spain					58		
-	Ukraine							
Manager .	Tunisia							
图	Saudi Arabia							

MATCH	TIME	TEAMS	VENUE
JUNE 17			SULVION TO SE
24	13.00	Portugal: Iran	FRANKFURT
25	16.00	Czech Republic: Ghana	COLOGNE
26	19.00	Italy: USA	
KAIGERSLAUT	ERN STATE		
27	13.00	Japan: Croatia	NUREMBERG
28	16.00	Brazil: Australia	MUNICH
29	19.00	France: South Korea	LEIPZIG
JUNE 19			THE MANAGEMENT
30	13.00	Togo: Switzerland -	DORTMUND
31	16.00	Saudi Arabia: Ukraine	HAMBURG
32	19.00	Spain: Tunisia	STUTTGART
WALTER ST	11,00	Goda Rioa, Fundo	
34	14.00	Ecuador: Germany	BERLIN
35	19.00	Paraguay: Trinidad & Tobago	DENGIN
KAISERSLAUT		rarayuay, minuau a muayu	
36	19.00	Sweden: England	COLOGNE
JUNE 21	15.00	Concuent England	MANAGEMENT OF THE PARTY OF THE
37	14.00	Iran: Angola	LEIPZIG
38	14.00	Portugal: Mexico	GELSENKIRCHEN
39	19.00	Ivory Coast: Serbia &	
Montenegro	MUNICH		
40	19.00	Holland: Argentina	FRANKFURT
JUNE 22	S. Commercial Commerci		
41	14.00	Ghana: USA	NUREMBERG
42	14.00	Czech Republic: Italy	HAMBURG
43	19.00	Croatia: Australia	STUTTGART
44	19.00	Japan: Brazil	DORTMUND
TONE CO	14.00	Ukraine Tumaki	
46	14.00	Saudi Arabia: Spain	DETILIT
KAISERSLAUT		oddu Arabia. Opani	
47	19.00	Switzerland: South Korea	HANOVER
48	19.00	Togo: France	COLOGNE