

ENGLAND V PORTUGAL Looking to break Scolari jinx

AFP. Gelsenkirchen

England are determined to strike it third time lucky here Saturday by hurdling Portugal and their charismatic coach Luiz Felipe Scolari to reach the World Cup semifinals.

Twice in two tournaments under Sven-Goran Eriksson, England have been bundled out in the last eight, suffering the crushing disappointment of early exits at championships they had entertained hopes of winning.

The common thread linking those twin ejections at the 2002 World Cup and European Championship in 2004 is Portugal coach Scolari.

Unsurprisingly, Saturday's instalment has been billed as a duel between the larger-than-life Scolari and the passionless Eriksson, whose team have stumbled into the last eight without coming close to producing their best form.

Eriksson, who has insisted that England will be able to raise their game when it counts, may never have a better chance of getting the Scolari monkey off his back as Portugal struggle to regroup after suspensions to key players.

But if Eriksson sees Saturday's showdown as a personal shoot-out with his nemesis, he is not letting on in public.

KEY QUOTES

England coach Eriksson: "I'm not a man of revenge. It's not a word in my head."

Portugal coach Scolari: "Eriksson is a competent coach with a proven track record. Both of us have ability and respect for each other. A win or a loss (on Saturday) won't change that".

"I don't feel it's me against Scolari at all," he said. "It's England against Portugal, it's the quarterfinal of the World Cup, and it's important to win it. I think we can. Eriksson's pointed refusal to view

the contest as a time to settle a score with Scolari is partly his problem, according to the Swede's critics

A more formidable character would seek to use past defeats as a motivational tool to inspire his players Eriksson, however, does not do

revenge and makes no apologies for his reserved dug-out demeanour, which is in stark contrast to the arm-waving, gesticulating touchline histrionics of Brazilian Scolari. "I couldn't care less," Eriksson

said when asked if he was bothered by the unflattering comparisons of his management style to Scolari.

"I've heard it for 30 years. Every time you lose a football game, something is wrong with the manager. I have no intention of chang-

HEAD TO HEA

Portugal v England head-tohead record (FIFA records) England lead 3-2 with five draws 1961: Portugal 1 England 1 (Lisbon) 1961: England 2 Portugal 0 (London) **1966:** England 2 Portugal 1 (London) 1986: Portugal 1 England 0

(Monterrey) 1995: England 1 Portugal 1 (London) 1998: England 3 Portugal 0 (London) 2000: Portugal 3 England 2 (Eindhoven) 2002: England 1 Portugal (Birmingham) 2004: Portugal 1 England 1 (Loule)

History beckons Portugal

this time round against England

after being substituted in the Euro

2004 guarterfinal, acknowledged

the strength of an England team that

has stuttered its way through the

group phases (two wins and a draw)

and sneaked a 1-0 win over

they're a very good team and have

"I respect England. We know

But he stressed that games of

Ecuador in the second round.

really good players," he said.

7-David Beckham. 8-Frank Lampard, 16-Owen Hargreaves, 4-Steven Gerrard, 11-Joe Cole; 9-Wayne Rooney Portugal (4-5-1) 1-Ricardo; 13-Miguel, 16-Ricardo Carvalho, 5-Fernando Meira, 14-Nuno

2004: Portugal 2 England 2 (Portugal won on pens 6-5) (Lisbon)

ing. And if I haven't changed by now then I probably never will. Yet regardless of whether

> Eriksson's management is to blame. it is undeniable that England have been far less than the sum of their parts in four matches so far.

Having started the tournament lined up in 4-4-2, Eriksson is expected to persist with a 4-1-4-1 formation against Portugal.

With Gary Neville expected to return from a calf injury, Owen Hargreaves is likely to move into the holding role, allowing midfielders Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard licence to surge forward in support of lone striker Wayne Rooney.

David Beckham knows that another below-par performance could well spell the end of England's World Cup.

"It has to click," the England skipper said. "Because we're talking about the quarterfinal of a World Cup, the biggest competition in the world.

TEAMS

England (4-5-1) 1-Paul Robinson; 2-Gary Neville, 5-Rio Ferdinand, 6-John Terry, 3-Ashley Cole;

Valente; 8-Armando Petit, 18-Maniche, 11-Simao Sabrosa, 7-Luis Figo, 17-Cristiano Ronaldo; 9-Pauleta

"If it doesn't click now, we have to Now or never: sit back and look at why it hasn't done. There are certain times in Neville games where we have come SEE PAGE 20 COL 1 AFP, Baden-Baden

Gary Neville believes it's now or never if England are to end their 40-year wait

for World Cup glory and avoid being remembered as the nearly men of international football. In a rallying cry ahead of

Saturday's quarterfinal showdown with Portugal, Neville said it was time for England to justify the hype surrounding their bid for the greatest prize in football.

"I believe there is a time and a moment for players to deliver, and I believe it is Saturday," said the Manchester United defender, who is likely to start after recovering from a calf strain.

"If it is not I'll be talking to you on Saturday night and saying that you have found the measure of this team. There'll be no excuses.

have to hold our hands up and say, "I think Ricardo is good at stop-'we haven't delivered, that the talk ping penalty kicks. But it depends on about us being potential world champions was rubbish.' So this is it Figo also vowed to put his perfor us." sonal friendship with his England counterpart David Beckham to one

The straight-talking Neville represents the conscience of the England dressing room and has been an ever-present since making his debut in 1995.

While Neville believes the cur-

Captain confident

AFP, Buhlertal England captain David Beckham is tipping a physical game with tackles flying against Portugal on Saturday, and is quietly confident his team will

EC

Star sp 🚳 rt

prevail. Portugal's last game against the Netherlands saw 16 yellow and four red cards brandished as it

encounter with their bogey team in the quarterfinal clash. "The English mentality, we love physical games, we love games that

flying in so if it is like that then we will enjoy it," he said. "Whatever referee comes in is going to have a tough job because you have two teams that want to go

into the semifinals, who want to win this game and are very passionate. It'll have to be strong referee and I

The referee assigned to the match is Argentina's Horacio Elizondo, who sent off Beckham for a studs-up tackle six years ago in a match between Manchester United and Mexican side Necaxa.

fully fit squad following Gary Neville's recovery from a calf injury and are keen to put one over Portugal who bundled them out of the 2004 European Championships at the same stage. While the England captain wants

revenge, he insists that the past is the past and the players should not let it affect their performances. "We want to make it a different

result to when we last played them but as long as we concentrate on our game and are relaxed then hopefully we can change the result that we got against them last time," he said.

"But we've just got to forget what has happened in the past at the end of the day. We can't concentrate on past results, we are looking forward to the future and the future is Saturday.

"We need to go into it confident, relaxed. We can't think about anything that might happen after that because you can get carried away But we are quietly confident."

Beckham said he had the great est respect for the Portugal team and their charismatic coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, and knows they will play an attacking, open game which he hopes will allow England to also

referring to England's loss to

Portugal at the same stage in the

training on Wednesday after picking

up a thigh injury in Portugal's victory

over the Netherlands, and Neville

warned he was the sort of player that

needed watching every minute of the

playing against Ronaldo is you can

play brilliantly against him for 89

minutes, but he can still produce a

Wayne Rooney, also a

Manchester United teammate of

Ronaldo, would prefer if he was not

playing, if only to give England a

be nice if he could just miss our

game because he is a great player,'

for us - I have played with him week-

in, week-out for the last three years

and he is a handful for any team and

"Although I want him fit it would

"If he plays it will be a tough job

SEE PAGE 20 COL 5

better chance of winning.

magical moment in the 90th min-

"The difficulty any defender has

Winger Ronaldo, 21, resumed light

European Championships in 2004.

play better football. Great teams like this you can't stop them playing sometimes," he

said "They will have a lot of possession, of course, but it up to us to pass the ball around well. As a team and as players

we know we can do that and on a big stage like this it is important. "Portugal will pass the ball around well, because it is in their nature, so they will have a certain

amount of possession and hopefully we will too. England have been criticised for their lacklustre performances so far, which they have blamed on the heat and teams they have faced so far

being willing to get 11 men behind the ball and play a more defensive game Beckham admits they need to

play better and there can be more excuses, but he also called for the nation to get behind the team.

"Physically we have struggled in tournaments in the past, and in a couple of games in this tournament we have struggled physically becasue of the heat, but it is up to us to overcome that now," he said. "Let's have a bit of positivity and get behind the team.

AFP, Marienfeld

quarterfinal match.

Inter Milan last season when he found himself largely surplus to requirements at the Spanish giants.

mine," the 33-year-old told a press conference at the Portuguese training camp here on Thursday.

Madrid. I respect him as a player and I don't pay attention to his critics. "He always gives his best for his country. He's the captain of England

and one of the best players we have in football at the moment."

But Figo, whose last meeting SEE PAGE 20 COL 5

"If we fail on Saturday then we expect he is."

FREEING HIMSELF FOR ANOTHER TRADEMARK FREEKICK: England captain David Beckham doing push-up sideways during a training session at Mittelbergstadion in Buhlertal on Thursday. **Figo hoping** for victory

The Daily Star

Portugal captain Luis Figo has vowed to put his personal friendship with his England counterpart David Beckham to one side when the two teams clash in Saturday's

Figo played with Beckham at Real Madrid before he moved on to

"I spent a good time with him in

England go into the game with a

match

ute," he said

he said.

"David's a very good friend of

with England was not such a happy one for him personally even though Portugal won the Euro 2004 quarterfinal as he was substituted by Luiz Felipe Scolari, warned those sentiments would be put to one side come the weekend and a

descended into chaos, and Beckham is ready for a tough are high tempo with the tackles

vear-old Inter Milan playmaker. "Our last semifinal was in 1966.

Portugal have not made a World

Cup semifinal since the days of the

great Eusebio in 1966, but current

captain Luis Figo insisted his team

was focused on only getting a win

against England in Saturday's

opportunity for us." admitted the 33-

"There is certainly a historical

AFP, Marienfeld

quarterfinal clash

"We're very proud to be among the best eight teams in the world but we cannot think about being champions of the world, only the match against England.

"It's a great honour to be in this position right now, but we are going to the game just to win.

'The past is there to remember but it cannot really help over the 90 minutes on the pitch.

"We're showing a great mentality in this competition and we hope to beat England in all ways. They too have a great mentality but we have to show the greater."

Figo, who will be hoping for a happier outing for him personally

this magnitude came down to the smallest of errors. giants.

"These types of game are decided by small things. The most important thing is to concentrate throughout the 90 minutes so no mistakes are made.

attention to his critics.

Figo admitted that his side had not as yet practised taking penalty kicks, but had a word of praise for goalkeeper Ricardo, who scored in the penalty shootout victory over England in the Euro 2004 guarterfinal as well as saving Darius Vassell's spotkick, in the eventuality that it

came down to spot-kicks. "Until now we didn't practise them so much. Maybe today (Thursday) or Friday the coach will tell us to

requirements at the Spanish rent England team is the best he has played with, he is adamant that "David's a very good friend of mine. I spent a good time with him in Madrid. I

respect him as a player and I don't pay trot. "He always gives his best for his country. He's the captain of England and one of the best players we have

in football at the moment." But Figo warned that those sentiments would be put to one side come the weekend and a game that will see the winner play a mouthwatering semifinal against either Brazil or France.

"I just expect that on Saturday night I'll be more happy than him," smiled the Portuguese midfielder.

a lot of things at that moment.

Figo played with Beckham at

Real Madrid before he moved on to

Inter Milan last season when he

found himself largely surplus to

reputations will count for nothing it England falls in the quarterfinals for the third major tournament on the "We have to win if we want to be

recognised as a great England team," Neville said. "If we don't we'll be recognised as a nearly team, a team that had potential but didn't deliver.

"The measure of this team will be in this tournament. We couldn't have had a better preparation. We're two games away from a World Cup final. "Can we win the next two football matches? We have shown we SEE PAGE 20 COL 1



Cristiano Ronaldo and Luis Figo have been fingered as the main danger men by England as they prepare to take on Portugal in the World Cup quarterfinals on Saturday.

Ronaldo is set to come up against Manchester United teammate Gary Neville, with both men expected to have recovered from injuries, while Figo will pit his wits with former Real Madrid colleague David Beckham.

Neville knows he will have his hands full with Ronaldo's trickery. having watched him run rings around many a defender in the Enalish Premiership

"It's very difficult to play against Cristiano." he said

"With his quality, speed and skill you've got to get so tight to him so he can't begin to run. There are times during the game, because of the fact Portugal do keep the ball well, that he will get at you.

"We knew two years ago, with Simao (Sabrosa), Ronaldo and Figo, it's very important and we have to defend well one-on-one on Saturdav.'

Drop Beckham!

AFP, London

PHOTO: AFF

David Beckham should be dropped from Sven-Goran Eriksson's England team, Wigan chairman Dave Whelan said on Thursday.

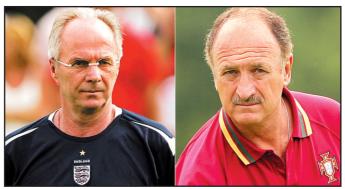
Whelan claims Eriksson should for the World Cup quarterfinal clash against Portugal in Gelsenkirchen longer worthy of a place in the side.

He also thinks Eriksson should abandon the traditional British 4-4-2 system and go for an attacking 4-3-3 formation instead.

Beckham scored the winner against Ecuador in the second round and also provided the cross for Peter Crouch's decisive goal in the Group B match against Trinidad

FACTICS

England seem set to retain a five-man midfield supporting lone striker Wayne Rooney despite their struggles with the system against Ecuador while Portugal will line up the same way behind Pauleta in a formation they have long used and perfected.



SVEN-GORAN ERIKSSON

and substitute Sol Campbell all looked

poor while a Terry error almost gifted

Ever-reliable right-back Gary Neville is set

to return after a calf injury and should link

well with former Manchester United team

shine as a unit, Lampard especially off-

Joe Cole has been an occasional threat

cutting in from the left while Owen

Hargreaves, set to get the holding role, is

solid enough but England have never

really looked comfortable away from 4-4-2.

Attack: In the absence of injured Michael

Owen everything will flow through

powerhouse Roonev who will be winning

his 33rd cap at the age of 20. He has

looked menacing and purposeful rather

than dangerous so far as he regains

Both sides will remember how the game

swung dramatically in Portugal's favour

If England fail to make progress then

Lennon to introduce from the bench

sharpness after his broken foot layoff.

quarterfinal.

Ecuador the lead in the second round.

England's most reliable performer.

beam with his shooting.

ENGLAND

LUIZ FELIPE SCOLARI

PORTUGAL

Defence: Central defence, traditionally an Defence: The back four have English strength, has been a worry in vulnerabilities but have proved rugged and Germany. Woeful defending at set-pieces determined, held the Dutch at bay and allowed Sweden to score twice in the 2-2 have conceded only one goal in four Group draw as John Terry, Rio Ferdinand games.

Centre backs Ricardo Carvalho and Fernando Meira will be happier trying to contain Rooney on the ground than Crouch in the air while fullbacks Miguel and Nuno Valente sometimes appear to enjoy getting forward more than holding position

mate David Beckham while fleet-footed Midfield: Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari has Ashley Cole on the left has probably been had to make adjustments to cover for suspended duo Deco and Costinha but his Midfield: England arrived in Germany regular squad rotation means that the new boasting "world class midfielders" in the men are also very experienced and should shape of Beckham, Steven Gerrard and slot in without too many dramas. Frank Lampard but the trio have failed to

Armando Petit will replace Costinha in the holding role while Simao Sabrosa should step in for Deco - though captain Luis Figo may be switched inside from the wing to provide the through balls on which Pauleta thrives

Maniche has been impressive so far, looks full of running and has two goals, while Cristiano Ronaldo, should he overcome a thigh injury, will need to be at his absolute best to get the better of Cole in a repeat of a battle within a battle that was one of the tactical highlights of the Euro 2004 quarterfinal.

If Ronaldo fails to make it then Tiago will come into the middle with Figo staying wide

when he went off injured in their Euro 2004 Attack: Pauleta took his tally to 47 goals in 85 games when he scored the winner against Angola but has been pretty well Sven-Goran Eriksson can throw on big shackled since. He knows his role well striker Peter Crouch and revert to 4-4-2 though and makes endless runs off the ball and also has the speed of winger Aaron to provide a target for the midfield quintet. SEE PAGE 20 COL 5



LOOKING BEYOND ENGLAND? Portugal's playmaker Luis Figo (R) and Simao Sabrosa stretch ahead of the team's training session in Marienfeld on Thursday. Portugal face off England in the quarterfinal in Gelsenkirchen today

hopefully we can keep him quiet on the day. Neville, who has recovered from

leave out Real Madrid star Beckham on Saturday because he is no

and Tobago.

But Whelan has been infuriated

by Beckham's inconsistent displays

and said Eriksson should act now. "He has to have the right team selection and the guts to drop David Beckham, but he hasn't," said the Wigan supremo.

"He believes in him, but Beckham is a luxury. He doesn't tackle and is never involved other than being a dead-ball specialist, and he is not a captain.

"We have been poor. Everybody in the land knows we haven't played to our potential, with the quality we have.

"He has to go for it now, play 4-3and let England play the way England can because I think we will win if he plays the right team."

Whelan also berated the Swede SEE PAGE 20 COL 5