

DHAKA SATURDAY JULY 1, 2006

Only passing on his mind

REUTERS, Paris

World Player of the Year Ronaldinho says he only thinks about passing the ball to the strikers and not scoring goals when he is playing.

"I don't think about scoring goals but about helping my team to win," the Brazilian ace told France's Le Parisien daily.

"My job consists of making passes to strikers. I concentrate on that."

Brazil will play France on Saturday in the World Cup quarterfinal between the last two world champions. France beat Brazil 3-0 to win the 1998 final in Paris before the South Americans regained the title in Japan four years later.

Ronaldinho said he has thought about the consequences of being eliminated in the quarterfinal.

"As I often say: in Brazil, coming second is the same as coming last," he said.

Brazil won their fifth title four years ago and has not lost a World Cup match since being stunned by the French in 1998 when Zinedine Zidane scored two goals.

Saturday's match could be the last for Zidane, who will end his glittering career after the World Cup.

"I admire Zidane a lot for everything he has brought to football. My team members respect him too," Ronaldinho said.

"He plays very well and off the pitch he's a good person. All that means it will be a big match, a very interesting one to play."

Chief defends his refs

REUTERS, Berlin

The head of FIFA's Referees Committee denied accusations of poor officiating at the World Cup finals on Friday saying the standard had never been higher.

There has been widespread condemnation in the global sporting media about the abundance of yellow cards and the record number of red cards shown in these finals.

Both FIFA president Sepp Blatter and German great Franz Beckenbauer, the president of the German World Cup organising committee, have also criticised the standard of refereeing this week.

High profile controversies involving English referee Graham Poll and Russian referee Valentin Ivanov have thrust match officials into the spotlight, but Angel Maria Villar, the Spanish chairman of the referees panel denied any serious problems.

"Ninety per cent of the refereeing has been at a very high level at this World Cup, a far cry from Korea and Japan in 2002," he said.

"We have far less serious injuries, and far more goals scored."

"Most of the matches have been played fairly in a great sporting spirit. We want a clean World Cup and we are achieving that."

"It is the World Cup of the assistant referee. More goals are being scored in situations where before the flag would have gone up and the goal not stood."

"Of course there have been errors -- but we are all human beings and we have the right to make mistakes."

He backed both Poll, who showed a yellow card to the same player three times before sending him off, and Ivanov, who sent off a record four players in a second round match which Portugal defeated the Netherlands 1-0.

Although both referees have now been released from their World Cup duties he praised both as "outstanding referees."

"Mr Poll is a great ref and a great man," he said, "who has admitted to a mistake. Mr Valentin is a great referee who showed the cards as he saw fit."

He said that ideas such as introducing sin bins for cautioned players, or looking again at whether a red card should be awarded after only two yellows were not matters for the referees to consider but for FIFA and the

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Scolari warns England

AFP, Marienfeld

Portugal will play with England in Saturday's quarterfinal clash with fire in their belly, coach Luiz Felipe Scolari warned.

"We will play with fire in our belly," Scolari told a press conference at the Portuguese training camp here.

"If we talk about the Portuguese fighting spirit and the English fighting spirit then you can see that we're going to have an emotional game, a tight game."

The Brazilian, who has master-minded quarterfinal wins over England in the 2002 World Cup with Brazil and Euro 2004 with Portugal, added that a win over the English would represent a career high.

"If we go through, it will be one of the best achievements of my career," he said.

In keeping with the much-played difference in coaching styles with English counterpart Sven Goran Eriksson, Scolari's most animated moment of the press conference came when asked what he would say to his players in the pre-match pep talk.

"I'm going to work with them, I'm going to tell them to enjoy it," he said.

"To enjoy playing a nice team like England, to enjoy the fact of being one of the eight best teams in the

world, to enjoy being in a World Cup quarterfinal, to have fun with it, take pleasure from it -- that's the main thing we want from Saturday."

But Scolari added that a free-flowing game of football was not necessarily top of his agenda. A similar thing could be said of England, who have failed to hit top gear while progressing to the quarterfinals.

"I'm a coach who likes to have results," he said. "I can't say I want to play beautifully. England has the results in this tournament and so do we."

"Those who played beautifully are out."

Asked for the secrets behind his two previous quarterfinal wins over England, Scolari was pragmatic: "There was no main reason."

"Brazil simply scored more goals than England in 2002 and Portugal were better in the penalty shoot-outs in 2004."

Scolari put his successful coaching philosophy down to being popular with players and association officials alike.

"I think I'm a good coach and I have good results. I'm a very good friend of the people I work with."

"I'm a happy person and 99 percent of the places where I've been, people have liked me."

"In Kuwait, where I spent three

years, Saudi Arabia, three years, Japan, one year, my homeland Brazil, and now Portugal, you can see for yourself that people like me."

Scolari, meanwhile, admitted that he is sweating on the fitness of key winger Cristiano Ronaldo.

Ronaldo resumed light training on Wednesday after picking up a thigh injury in the second round win over the Netherlands last weekend.

The Manchester United player caught a boot from Dutch defender Khalid Boulahrouz early in the ill-tempered 1-0 win and was replaced after 34 minutes.

He was not present during the first quarter-hour of Thursday's on-field training open to the media and also did not take part in Friday's open session.

"We don't know about Ronaldo," Scolari told a press conference at the Portuguese training camp. "We're still awaiting word on his fitness."

"I'll decide if he plays just a couple of hours before the match," said the Brazilian.

Scolari said the team would miss playmaker Deco and influential holding anchorman Costinha, out after being sent off in the win over the Netherlands, but added that he had full confidence in their replacements.

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WC BRIEFS

AFP, Berlin

A football fanatic is selling his role as best man on the ebay Internet auction site so he can watch TV coverage of England's quarterfinal match against Portugal on Saturday.

James Circus, whose online name is pokerchipsuk, is offering his seat at the top table at his friend's wedding in Essex, southern England, it was reported today.

Bidding has started at two pounds (three euros, 3.5 dollars) for the role, which includes a speech and meal, the Evening Standard newspaper reported.

He intends to turn up for the start of the wedding and carry out his duty handing the rings to the groom, then race off to the start of the match against Portugal, which starts in Gelsenkirchen just two hours after the ceremony begins.

Circus says on ebay that he will be returning from the pub at 7pm to resume his role, adding "at that point you will have to leave."

Law against patriots

Patriotic football fans in England could be fined up to 2,500 pounds (4,000 euros, 4,500 dollars) for flying the St George's Cross, with flags flown out of windows or at an angle technically illegal unless the owner receives formal planning permission from the local authority under a 1992 law.

Housing minister Yvette Cooper now intends to change the rules and said that she would be "shocked" if any council enforced the regulations during England's World Cup campaign.

The Local Government Association said that England's legions of flag-waving supporters are unlikely to face a fine.

Lucky charm

An old one pfennig coin has been helping Germany in their World Cup bid, having been buried under one of the goalposts at the Olympic Stadium, renovated in 2004.

According to German paper Bild, the coin -- scrapped on the introduction of the euro along with the Mark, was allegedly a lucky charm for former coach Rudi Voller on the way to the 2002 final in Japan.

Baby Gerrard

Ababy has been named in honour of England star Steven Gerrard after being born as the midfielder netted against Sweden. Gerrard Hodson weighed in at 8lb 7oz at Birmingham's Heartlands Hospital following his birth on June 20. His mother Wendy, who kept track of England's 2-2 draw with Sweden via a television in the delivery suite, already has four daughters. The 35-year-old charity worker, from Chelmsley Wood, told the Birmingham Mail: "As soon as the baby was born and we knew it was a boy we decided he had to be called Gerrard."

Hotels moan

Only 48 percent of hotels and restaurants in Germany say they are happy with World Cup turnover. A poll for the Infratest marketing organisation on behalf of the German tourism authority said that operators were finding that the tournament had not brought the rich pickings they had been expecting. However, earlier in the World Cup hotels said they had seen a higher than normal level of visitors across April and May.

Robots again

Two weeks on from the robot world cup in the northern city of Bremen another 'alternative' tournament is taking place in the football-mad western city of Dortmund. A total of 51 teams comprising students and scientists from 18 countries are competing -- only this time via computer.

Buyer for the globe

The 60-ton globe showing the outline of the planet superimposed on a football and on display at the Brandenburg Gate has found a buyer. The globe, standing 20 metres (65 feet) tall, has been sold for 300,000 euros to the Hamburg-based firm Medienpool Extra which intends to make it "the symbol of our sports museum," spokesman Alexander Extra said. Austrian artist Andre Heller created the item, which went on a German tour prior to the World Cup before coming back to Berlin, where it has hosted multimedia items about World Cup history. FIFA says one million people have visited the globe.



Portugal's Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari watches a ball during a training session at The Klosterforfte Hotel in Marienfeld on Friday.



WORLD CUP CATWALK: A German fan waits for the start of the mouth-watering quarterfinal of the hosts against Argentina at Berlin's Olympic Stadium yesterday.



2006 Round 5 (Bumper), Draw in Dha

(See June 8 issue of the Star Sport for competition information, prizes and rules)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz Round 5 (Bumper) Ends July 09, 2006

Tick () the correct answers

1. Whom did Ronaldo overtake as the leading scorer in the World Cup?	Muller <input type="checkbox"/>	Pele <input type="checkbox"/>	Fontaine <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Which player was shown three yellow cards in a World Cup match?	Simunic <input type="checkbox"/>	Deco <input type="checkbox"/>	De Rossi <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Who scored the 2000th World Cup goal?	Ze Roberto <input type="checkbox"/>	Joe Cole <input type="checkbox"/>	Allback <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Which World Cup champions failed to win it at home?	Italy <input type="checkbox"/>	Uruguay <input type="checkbox"/>	Brazil <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Who is this player?	Essien <input type="checkbox"/>	Drogba <input type="checkbox"/>	Saha <input type="checkbox"/>

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms).....Age.....
 Father's name.....Occupation.....
 Address.....
 Telephone (if any).....Signature.....Date.....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters.
 Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star
 You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 5."

READ The Daily Star CATCH THE WORLD CUP FEVER