

Cubans want WC participation

AFP, Havana

Football is suffering in Cuba because it comes low on the priority list way behind the Caribbean island's top sport of baseball, according to respected coach Roberto Hernandez.

"When Cuba is left on the World Cup sidelines for so many years it is the result of many accumulated mistakes over decades. Our football is suffering from the syndrome of (people) forgetting" about it," Juventus Rebelde newspaper quoted Hernandez as saying.

"The country gives priority to sports in which we are strong, but football remains in the shadows," Hernandez said in the interview Sunday.

In an article entitled "Why are we not at the World Cup?" Juventus Rebelde looked into his allegations.

"We are living the emotion of the 2006 World Cup in Germany but Cuba is not there," the paper said, noting the poor quality of the Cuban league in a country which traditionally prefers baseball.

The paper also complained at what it termed "insufficient institutional aid which keeps us on the outside looking in at such events."

Juventus Rebelde noted that Cuba was the first Caribbean country to participate at a World Cup - in France in 1938 "where the team reached the quarter-finals after overcoming the strong Romanian team to shock the football world."

In their next - and thus far last - World Cup match the Cubans went down 8-0 to Sweden.

Lampard a Terry fan

INTERNET, undated

Frank Lampard says his Chelsea teammate John Terry would be a good choice to take over as England captain after David Beckham announced he was stepping down on Sunday.

"John has many strengths - not just as a player but as a man. He's a great leader at Chelsea and a great player for England," said Lampard.

"John is a very strong character. He helps others around him and has that strength of character, which means he's not just concerned about himself, but everything that will benefit the team."

"John also exudes an air of confidence in the way he plays. He sets standards for people around him. He is also a good mixer when we are away like at a World Cup."

Rossi extends United deal

INTERNET, undated

Italian starlet Giuseppe Rossi has been handed a new contract by Premiership giants Manchester United, the club confirmed on Tuesday.

"We are delighted that he has signed a new contract. He represents the future of the club," said boss Sir Alex Ferguson.

"Last year he had a remarkable season and he is developing all the time. Giuseppe is a fantastic talent and we see a great future ahead."

Rossi has put pen to paper on a two-year extension which means he is now committed to the Old Trafford outfit until the summer of 2010.

The American-born striker signed for United in July 2004 after impressing in the youth ranks of Serie A club Parma.

Ferguson has gradually introduced him to first team football in England and although he has made just six starts, he has scored four goals for the outfit.

"It is great to have extended my contract with the best team in the world," said the teenager. "I just hope to keep progressing and developing my career."

Rossi could feature more heavily in the new campaign given the uncertain future of Holland ace Ruud Van Nistelrooy at the club.

USA line up Klinsmann

AFP, London

The United States are in talks with Germany coach Juergen Klinsmann to lead their national team to the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, it was reported here on Tuesday.

Although Klinsmann has already dismissed speculation linking him with the job, the Daily Telegraph claimed preliminary contact has been made with the man who has defied the odds to take Germany to the semifinals of the World Cup.

Klinsmann lives in California, his wife is American, and he is viewed as the ideal man to replace Bruce Arena who is leaving the United States hotseat to return to club management.

The newspaper claimed that the Americans will put a deal on the table that exceeds the 1.5 million pounds a year Klinsmann earns with Germany. That would be three times what they have been paying Arena.



German midfielder Torsten Frings arrives at the tarmac of the Dortmund airport on Monday, a day before the semifinal clash against Italy.

Capello resigns as Juve face relegation

Football

AFP, Rome

Juventus coach Fabio Capello resigned on Tuesday in the wake of the Italian match-fixing scandal after the club was set to be relegated at least two divisions.

Earlier in the day, the Italian football federation prosecutor Stefano Palazzi called for the relegation of AC Milan, Juventus, Lazio and Fiorentina on the third day of a trial where 25 people are also suspected of sporting fraud.

Capello, who has just turned 60, is expected to take over the reins of Real Madrid for a second spell following Sunday's election of new Real Madrid president Ramon Calderon.

Capello took over at Juventus on May 28 2004, succeeding Marcello Lippi who is now the Italian national coach.

Palazzi requested Juventus be dropped to below the second division and that AC Milan, Lazio and Fiorentina are relegated to the second division.

He also deducted penalty points - 15 from both Lazio and Fiorentina, six from Juventus and three from AC Milan - which will be imposed at the start of next season.

Juventus' equity on the Milan stock market immediately dropped 7.59 percent following the prosecutor's request.

Palazzi has also asked that the last two Italian leagues titles won by Juventus are stripped from the club.

On the same day that Italy face Germany in the World Cup semi-final, Palazzi did not disappoint those who demanded any wrongdoing be punished severely.

Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said the recommended punishment on his club was "absurd" and "inappropriate," adding that "The world of sport has an absolutely unacceptable political will and agenda."

Luciano Moggi and Antonio Giraudo, Juventus' top officials during the 2004/05 season, are threatened with being excluded from all sporting activities for five years. Fiorentina's Diego Della Valle and Claudio Lotito of Lazio were also facing five-year suspensions.

AC Milan official Adriano Galliani, who recently resigned as president of Italy's professional football league, is set to receive a two-year ban and Franco Carraro, who recently resigned from the Italian football federation presidency, is facing a five-year suspension.

After two days of discussions, Palazzi dramatically changed his tone on this third day.

He described the system which helped top clubs influence which referee they had for their matches as "sophisticated" and "intelligent."

"There is irrefutable proof that there

were interventions (by Moggi) on the designation of referees in the 2004/05 season, the only year which this trial is dealing with," added Palazzi.

He continued that AC Milan official Leonardo Mani also influenced linesmen, asking them to get involved in contentious offside decisions.

Referring to the four clubs, Palazzi spoke of repeated and multiple lobbying to FIGC officials "not to get higher-quality refereeing but to get the referees they wanted."

The prosecutor also spoke of a telephone conversation between the recently-resigned FIGC vice-president Innocenzo Mazzini and a Fiorentina official Sandro Mencucci, in which the club needed to do to stay in the first division.

Fiorentina just managed to stay in the first division in the 2004/05 season with the same number of points as relegated Bologna.

The trial was to continue on Tuesday afternoon with testimony from the accused.

Earlier on Tuesday, Italian football federation official Paolo Bergamo resigned.

The lawyer of Bergamo, one of two officials involved in designating referees under suspicion in this trial, announced his client was stepping down from his role at the FIGC.

Platini disappointed at quality of play



AFP, Berlin

Former French star Michel Platini has said he is disappointed with the standard of football shown at the World Cup.

Platini, who shone for his country in the 1982 and 1986 World Cup finals where twice they reached the semi-finals only to be beaten by West Germany, made his comments to German football magazine Kicker.

"There have been some good matches and some not so good, but in general I think the standard

of football has not been particularly high," he said.

"A lot of that has to do with the



MICHEL PLATINI

enormous pressures that are being placed on the players.

"When I was active for example in 1984 (the year that France won the European title) I would be talking to one single journalist while nowadays there are a pack of reporters following the players."

The 51-year-old Platini singled out Brazilian star Ronaldinho, the world player of the year, who he said had been way below his best in his country's games in Germany.

He also took aim at the World Cup referees who he accused of being too ready to hand out yellow and red cards.

"Football is a man's game and it surprises me that as soon as there is the smallest of fouls, a yellow card is brandished," he said.

Totti sympathises with Frings

INTERNET, undated

Germany has had to make late tactical changes ahead of Tuesday's World Cup semifinal with Italy after FIFA banned midfielder Torsten Frings for throwing a punch at the end of his team's win over Argentina.

Just as Francesco Totti was punished at Euro 2004 after TV images captured him spitting in the face of a Danish opponent, FIFA examined television replays after Germany's win on penalties over the South Americans in the last eight.

Totti, Italy's playmaker and arguably their most dangerous player, knows Frings' absence means he will have to contend with someone else defending against his darting runs from the midfield into the final third.

"I'm sorry for Frings," Totti said. "He was supposed to mark me but I guess it could be a slight advantage for us that Germany will not have him."

"Whoever takes his place will nevertheless want to prove his worth."

Goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon was surprised that Frings only found out his punishment on the eve of the game.

"We certainly didn't request this ban," he said. "I guess if they have punished him it's because they had to. He who makes a mistake must pay."

"It's unfortunate because Frings was the only German player that I know how he takes his penalty kicks."

Germany favourites in Britain

AFP, London

In the absence of England in the World Cup semifinals, Germany were the favourites to win the tournament at British betting shops on Tuesday.

The hosts were quoted at between 6/4 and 7/4 at the main high street bookmakers, with France second favourites at between 7/4 and 9/4.

Germany face Italy in Dortmund on Tuesday while France and Portugal clash in Munich on Wednesday in the second semifinal.

Italy were the third favourites at 3/1 to win the tournament outright with England's conquerors Portugal last at between 11/2 and 13/2.

Despite England being knocked out on penalties by Portugal, the fun has not stopped at British betting shops.

Paddy Power is taking bets on the first of the England team's WAGs (wives and girlfriends) to announce their pregnancy after the World Cup final.

Midfielder David Beckham's pop star wife Victoria, already a mother of three, is the 9/4 favourite, followed by striker Wayne Rooney's 20-year-old fiancée Coleen McLoughlin at 10/3.

William Hill are taking bets on the next England manager after Sven-Goran Eriksson's replacement Steve McClaren, with Manchester City boss Stuart Pearce the 6/1 favourite followed by former Charlton manager Alan Curbishley.

Beckham is 7/2 never to play for England again after resigning the captaincy.

And England are 5/2 to lose on a penalty shoot-out in the 2008 European Championships.

Neo-Nazi group banned

AFP, Berlin

A German state on Tuesday banned a neo-Nazi group that made nationwide headlines for a flyer in which it targeted racist slurs against a Ghanaian-born football player for Germany's national side.

Joerg Schoenbohm, the interior minister in Brandenburg state surrounding Berlin, said he outlawed the far-right organization "Schutzbund Deutschland" (Protection Alliance Germany) for inciting racial hatred and pulled its website from the Internet.

The decision came after police raided 14 sites including homes and a printing press and seized property belonging to the group including tens of thousands of propaganda brochures, stickers and other neo-Nazi paraphernalia.

"With the ban, we are sending a clear message in the fight against organized right-wing extremism and showing that we are an open, welcoming country," Schoenbohm told reporters.

"There is no place in our country for neo-Nazi propaganda and racial hatred."

In May, a regional court in Berlin banned the flyer attacking Germany player Gerald Asamoah at the request of the German Football Association.

Corporate World Cup!

AFP, Berlin

Although the World Cup final is still days away and the outcome anything but certain, leading makers of sportswear and equipment such as Nike, Adidas and Puma were already claiming Tuesday to be the winners in the month-long mega-tournament.

"There is no doubt whatsoever that Adidas is the winner of the 2006 World Cup," the German group's chairman, Herbert Hainer, said.

Last week, only half-way through the championships, the group trumpeted that it had exceeded all of the targets it had set itself for the World Cup in terms of sales and still saw room on the upside.

Archival, US giant Nike, claimed to be "well on the way to becoming number one" in football, said the group's European spokesman Charlie Brooks.

The brand had also beaten expectations "both commercially and in terms of communication with the consumers", even if Brazil, Nike's flagship team and perennial favourite, were beaten by France on Saturday.

"What happens in the last week doesn't affect communication with the consumers" or have much influence on the brand's image, Brooks said.

Nike has sold 2.4 million replica

shirts of its eight teams, with Brazil accounting for more than half.

Similar comments were heard from Puma, where only one of the 12 teams under contract, Italy, got as far as the last eight.

"The one (the sporting performance) has nothing to do with the other (the sales performance)," said Puma spokesman, Ulf Santjer.

The brand had similarly beaten its targets, he said.

In the end, however, "there will only be one left. That's the way it is," Santjer added.

The rival groups each had their own spin on how they have fared during the tournament.

Puma claimed to be "the most visible brand", by being present in "more than half" of all matches.

For Nike's part, "38 percent of goals were scored with Nike boots, that's more than any other brand," said Brooks.

As for Adidas, the adulation of German supporters for their home team has turned into a veritable gold mine, with more than 1.5 million replica shirts of the German national team being sold, three times more than expected. And 450,000 replica French team shirts have also been sold.

In all, Adidas said that football-related sales amounted to 1.2 billion

euros (1.5 billion dollars) this year.

Adidas is an official sponsor, supplier and licensee of the World Cup and is sponsoring six national teams in the tournament, including host country Germany.

It has also sold more than 15 million of its "Teamgeist" World Cup match balls, compared with 6.0 million of the replica ball for the 2002 tournament.

Rival German supplier Puma - both Adidas and Puma originally came from the same company - sponsored the teams of five African countries, namely Angola, the Ivory Coast, Tunisia, Ghana and Togo.

Ghana, which was the only African team to get further than the first round, "won fans' hearts," said Puma spokesman, Santjer.

Indeed, Puma was the preferred brand of Africans and that could stand it in Europe ahead for the next World Cup in South Africa in 2010, he said.

US giant Nike has only been in football since 1994 and wants to beat archival Adidas in the sport.

It is sponsoring the Portuguese team which meets France in Munich for the semi-final on Wednesday.

But while Nike saw the 2006 World Cup as a great commercial opportunity, "football isn't only the World Cup," Brooks said.

Thuram calls for focus



AFP, Hameln

Lilian Thuram has warned France of the danger of approaching Wednesday's semifinal with Portugal believing they've already reached the World Cup summit with their heroics in Frankfurt against Brazil.

"No one expected us to win against Brazil and now everyone imagines seeing us in Berlin (for Sunday's final). Unfortunately that can have an effect on the group."

"If we lose our momentum it'll make things tricky, but I don't think that will be the case," les Bleus' most capped player with 119 appearances insisted here Monday.

"We haven't come this far to lose in the semifinals."

Thuram, 34, spearheads France's iron defence which has only leaked two goals while Portugal have conceded just one.

And given the prize at stake the Juventus coach predicted a tightly contested affair in Munich.

"I think it'll be a very closely fought match with the final waiting behind it," said Thuram, whose previous experience of a major semifinal with Portugal

at Euro 2000 ended with several Portuguese players being severely punished for violent behaviour after a controversial penalty award against them in extra-time.

"Portugal like us are very strong defensively, it could be harder than Brazil."

"We'll be out to do the same as in the quarterfinal, we've got to try and reduce the opposition's space."

Thuram is one of six in Raymond Domenech's side sitting on yellow cards including himself and captain Zinedine Zidane meaning a booking will rule them out of Sunday's final in the event of victory in Munich.

But Thuram urged the group walking the yellow card tightrope to put it at the back of their minds when they step out onto the pitch.

"The important thing is not who plays in the final but that France makes it so if we start to worry about getting booked then we won't play to our proper level."

Thuram, who is retiring from international football for the second time after the World Cup having already quit the national team after Euro 2004 only to answer coach Raymond Domenech's SOS to return last year, was asked if he'd been surprised at Zidane's stunning return to form against Spain and Brazil.

"Surprised? No, Zizou played like the great Zidane."

While for veterans like Thuram, Zidane, Fabien Barthez and Claude Makelele this signals their last shot at being crowned world champions for the baby of the team, Frank Ribery, it's only the beginning.

And the 23-year-old midfielder, appearing at the same press conference, spoke of his good fortune at being given the opportunity to play alongside Zidane in the master midfielder's final hours wearing the numberten shirt.

"I was a kid on the streets when Zidane and France won the World Cup eight years ago."

"It's enormous, extraordinary - everyone would like to play alongside Zidane. It's like a dream."

"I tried my hardest to get to the World Cup by playing well for Marseille and I'll always remember being here with Zidane."

"Players like Zizou, Thierry (Henry), Claude and Fabien have taught me a lot - it's not been easy for me, I'm young in my first World Cup, and I have to thank them," reflected Ribery who is another on a yellow card.

"I won't be thinking about picking up another booking," he said.

"I'll play like I did against Spain or Brazil, without asking questions."

Mysterious phrase from French



AFP, Hameln

Gloria Gaynor's iconic disco classic "I Will Survive" was used by France as their anthem on the march to the 1998 World Cup title - eight years on it's a phrase rather than a song that is inspiring Zinedine Zidane and the rest of les Bleus in Germany.

But precisely which one will remain a closely guarded secret within the confines of Raymond Domenech's squad until after their World Cup campaign reaches its conclusion.

"We've got a phrase not a song this time," reveals Lilian Thuram.

"It's a phrase which holds the team together. You'll find out what it is at the end of the competition, perhaps one of the players will divulge it," the Juventus defender told a press conference here

Monday 48 hours before France's semifinal against Portugal.

"It sums up the mood of the group," added Thuram who believed humility was the key characteristic of France's buzzing 2006 World Cup side which has charged into the last four with two giant performances over Brazil and Spain.

"There's a humility in the side, each player is ready to forget himself for the others."

"We play in a block - once you have that success comes with it."

"The players respect each other, in some teams you find players aren't prepared to make an effort for others."

"Take Greece at Euro 2004, they didn't have any big stars but they showed a united front and look what happened."

Another ingredient Thuram maintains is behind France's presence in the last four is discipline.

"If you look back at our Euro 2004 performance we didn't have a disciplined side, sometimes we played any

old how. A coach can talk for hours about discipline but he has to have players who are receptive to what he's telling them."

Thuram echoed Domenech's feeling that France's lacklustre opening skirmishes with Switzerland and South Korea were due to a collective fear of repeating the dreadful showing in the 2002 World Cup.

"I think there was a trauma, a fear that we didn't want this World Cup to end up like that (when the defending champions crashed out in the first round without scoring a goal)."

"Then when we qualified from our group there was a liberation which meant we could start playing at our true level."

"Little by little we're continuing our journey, we're improving. Now we've got to overcome our next test. We haven't come here to lose in the semifinals."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	40 See 50-Down	DOWN	13 Whiney's engine-building partner
1 Having its ups and downs?	42 Rue the run	1 It gets into hot water	18 "Awe-some!"
6 Tribal emblem	43 Anger	2 Division of a cricket match	21 Unlawful acts
11 Montenegro	44 Ignore the cue cards	3 Rumsfeld's org.	23 Winter warmer-upper
12 Become communicative	46 Glass of NPR	4 Vicinity	5 "—"
14 Cater to people's weaknesses	47 Wood-shop machine	5 "—"	25 Dundee denial
15 Look Kyoto	49 Temper	6 Cross-piece	27 Crony
16 Cumberbund	51 Post-perfor-mance	7 Colorful fish	29 Ten squared
17 Pirate's cry	52 Heinz	8 Hamilton's bill	31 Alpbomb
19 Can's neighbor	53 "—"	9 Provides	32 Immoderate
20 Diatribe	54 Enjoy a TV show	10 Granola's kin	33 Offactory offender
22 "My ___ Gal ___"		11 Fern-to-be	34 Neighbor of Ger.
23 High-lander			36 Sour
24 Incline			37 Separate wheat from chaff
25 Passbook figure			38 Core
28 "Go, team!"			41 Chuck-will's— (nocturnal bird)
30 Cul-de-			44 Cliff dwelling (Var.)
31 Mechanical			45 Rum cake
35 Disinclined			48 Bambi's Aunt Ana.
39 Doggy-bag fill			50 Wife 40-Across, later

Solution time: 27 mins.

ADMIT	FOE	MAL
GOUDA	TIN	ODIA
ATRIA	GA	BUSTLES
ABSTRACT	IT	IT
TILE	POLL	LAYER
ACES	RAGER	
PRESENT	HEATON	
ALERT	RIB	BREW
SADE	MURALS	
HUSTLES	SALON	
ERE	EAT	WIDE
GALL	ANY	ONSET

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11					12				13
14					15				
16				17		18			19
20		21		22				23	
24			25		26		27		
		28		29		30			
31	32	33		34		35		36	37
38				40		41		42	
43				44				45	46
47		48				49		50	
51						52			
								54	

CRYPTOQUIP

W E A Q T ' D B R Q V F

E U F V V Q C G F W I Y T V . W

R T B K K C B Q C U B Y Q T U Z

K F A Q T ' B U B D B U - G B F Z B Z .

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN SOMEONE PULLS A BALLISTIC WEAPON BEHIND THEM, I SUPPOSE IT COULD BE A MISSILE TOW.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: D equals V.

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals H, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.