

## McClaren wants more from Gerrard

AFP, Manchester



England coach Steve McClaren insists Steven Gerrard has much more to offer his country as the Liverpool midfielder prepares to celebrate his 50th cap.

Gerrard will reach the milestone when he starts Wednesday's European Championship qualifier against Macedonia in Skopje.

He marked his 49th cap with a man-of-the-match performance in Saturday's crushing 5-0 victory over Andorra which he capped by scoring his 10th senior goal for his country.

Gerrard has come a long way since he was given his international debut by Kevin Keegan against Ukraine in 2000 just 18 months and only 44 games after his Liverpool first-team debut.

The 26-year-old is idolised by Liverpool supporters after captaining his club to European Cup success in 2005 yet Gerrard's critics insist he has struggled to transform his club form on to the international stage.

McClaren, who appointed Gerrard as England vice-captain last month, is one of the player's biggest fans, but admits he can get better.

The England coach said: "Steven has changed games for Liverpool and won the European

Cup.

"I want him to have the same impact for England than he does for Liverpool. I think Steven can get better."

"He has influenced a lot of games for Liverpool and I want him to transfer that to England."

Frank Lampard reckons Gerrard would have won more caps but for a string of injuries. The Chelsea midfielder, who has played two games fewer for his country than Gerrard, reckons McClaren is bringing the best out of him by playing him on the right-side of midfield.

Lampard said: "Steven's a fantastic player."

"He might have won more caps than that if it hadn't been for injury."

"He's playing very well at the moment and he has played the last couple of England games like he does for Liverpool."

"He is off the leash a little bit in that right-hand position and he is playing with all the quality we know he has got."

McClaren's first competitive match in charge following Sven-Goran Eriksson's exit threw up some interesting questions.

Peter Crouch and Jermain Defoe both took full advantage of their chance by scoring twice against Andorra in the absence of regular strikers Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen.

Owen is likely to be missing most of the season with a serious knee injury, but Rooney is available

for England's qualifier at home to Macedonia on October 7 after serving a two-match suspension following his red card in the World Cup quarterfinal defeat to Portugal.

Liverpool striker Crouch now has 10 goals in 13 appearances for his country while Tottenham's Defoe has three in 18.

McClaren refused to get involved in a debate about who is most likely to partner Rooney, who is expected to make an automatic return, next month.

McClaren, who labelled Crouch's record as 'phenomenal' added: "That issue is well down the line. It's a question for the future."

"Crouch is not lightning quick, but he is effective in other ways."

"He consistently runs 13 kilometres in a game, but I've seen him do 14 which is incredible for a striker."

"Jermain deserved his chance because of his performance against Greece last month."

"Strikers need goals for confidence and Jermain has always had that."

"He looks brighter and fresher and is playing well for the team."

England emerged from Saturday's game in Manchester without any fresh injury worries and could have Rio Ferdinand available for Wednesday.

The Manchester United defender is hoping to train on Monday after a toe injury forced him to miss out at the weekend.



SAMBA BACK WITH A BANG: Brazil players celebrate with Kaka after the midfielder scored a spectacular goal against Argentina at the Emirates Stadium in London on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Ronaldinho fit for Wales

REUTERS, London

Ronaldinho has recovered from injury and will play for Brazil in their friendly international against Wales in London on Tuesday, coach Dunga said on Monday.

Brazil meet Wales at White Hart Lane in their second match in London in two days following an exciting 3-0 win over arch rivals Argentina at the Emirates stadium on Sunday.

"Ronaldinho was disappointed not to be able to feature in the match against Argentina yesterday, but I am pleased to announce that he is now fit and will play in tomorrow night's match against Wales," Dunga said in a statement.

FIFA's World Player of the Year has recovered from a back injury he suffered in training with his club Barcelona last week.

"The Brazil football team has

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

## England will ignore racist chants

AFP, Manchester

England skipper John Terry insists the team will ignore any racist chanting when Steve McClaren's men face Macedonia in a Euro 2008 qualifier on Wednesday.

The Macedonian FA was fined by UEFA after England's black players were verbally abused during a Euro 2004 qualifier in September 2003.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

# Beautiful Brazil blank Argentina

### Football

AFP, London

Brazil midfielder Elano scored twice to inspire his country to a 3-0 friendly international win against old rivals Argentina in London on Sunday.

Five-time world champions Brazil may have been without renowned stars like Ronaldinho, Ronaldo and Adriano but that just gave the next generation a chance to shine.

The 88th meeting between these South American superpowers attracted a 59,032 crowd to Arsenal's new Emirates Stadium.

And the legions of Brazil fans were rewarded with a majestic display from young Real Madrid striker Robinho, two clinical finishes from the impressive 25-year-old Elano and a stunning solo effort from Kaka.

New Brazil coach Dunga said: "We managed to win against a fantastic team. It is a big rivalry and every game between us is a war."

"That gives us time to work but we cannot relax because we know how much expectation there is on the Brazil team."

"I'm starting to feel more like a coach now. I'm not eating well and I can't sleep. But I was missing that adrenaline in my life. Now I have a

challenge."

The Brazilian trio stole the thunder of Argentina's Carlos Tevez and Javier Mascherano, playing for the first time since their surprise transfer deadline-day switch to English Premiership club West Ham from Sao Paulo's Corinthians.

Although neither were at their best on Sunday, any West Ham fans watching to catch a glimpse of their new stars should have few fears about the impact they will make when they arrive at Upton Park on Tuesday.

Midfielder Mascherano reads the game well and made some vital interventions, while Tevez, a tenacious striker, showed occasional moments of class as well as becoming involved in a few altercations with his Brazilian markers.

Brazil, playing under coach Dunga for only the second time, were quickly into their stride and took the lead in the third minute with an intricately constructed strike.

Robinho swivelled neatly in midfield to create space for himself and threaded a perfectly weighted pass through to Elano.

The Shakhtar Donetsk player sprinted clear of Daniel Bilos, held off his despairing attempt to recover and planted his shot past Roberto Abbondanzieri at his near post.

Robinho has struggled to make his presence felt at the Bernabeu but here he looked capable of

conjuring a goal whenever he was in possession.

His elusive runs and nimble footwork consistently posed Argentina's defenders questions they couldn't answer. One piece of trickery reduced Mascherano and Fabricio Coloccini to lumbering challenges as they tried to halt him.

Argentina could have levelled when Clemente Rodriguez sent over a teasing cross in the 30th minute. Tevez rose above Gilberto to power a header toward goal, only for Gomes to save well.

But it was Robinho who went even closer moments later when he slalomd past two defenders before drawing a fine save from Abbondanzieri.

Robinho was popping up all across the Brazil forward line and he nearly created a carbon-copy of his side's opening goal just before half-time.

Once again he picked out a teammate charging down the wing but, unlike Elano, this time right-back Cincinno was off-target with his shot.

Argentina captain Juan Riquelme plays the game at a more leisurely tempo than Robinho but can be just as influential in his own way.

The Villareal midfielder was his side's most creative force and almost scored with a long-range free-kick that needed a sharp stop from Gomes as it arched towards

the left-hand corner of his goal.

Pablo Gabaleta was inches away from equalising in the 58th minute when he flashed a shot just wide after Luis Gonzalez's back-heel had given him a sight of goal.

That miss proved costly for Alfio Basile's side as Elano, winning only his fourth cap, scored his second goal for his country in the 68th minute.

AC Milan midfielder Kaka, on as a substitute, combined with Lyon striker Fred to set Elano clear and he kept his cool to score with a low drive from just inside the penalty area.

Kaka put the seal on a superb Brazil display in the last minute when he sprinted from inside his own half and out-paced Gabriel Milito before rolling a precise finish past Abbondanzieri.

Basile was magnanimous in defeat and said: "The result was not expected but it cannot be changed. It was my first match and I worked with the players for very little time."

"We only had 48 hours together. We need to work together for longer and that was reflected on the pitch."

"Brazil were very good and they didn't allow us many chances, but I'm not worried. This is just the beginning."

## FIFA sets Portugal deadline

REUTERS, Lisbon

FIFA has given Portugal's soccer federation until Sept. 14 to resolve a legal row over club Gil Vicente which has disrupted the start of the country's Premier League season, the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) said on Monday.

According to the FPF Web site, FIFA had decided to hold a meeting of its emergency committee to consider suspending the FPF from all international tournaments if there was no resolution by Sept. 14.

"This situation not only weakens soccer as well as affecting the integrity of competitions," the Portuguese federation cited FIFA as saying.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

## Lippi offered Italian job

INTERNET, undated

FIGC commissioner Guido Rossi is considering hiring World Cup winning boss Marcello Lippi as an Azzurri coordinator.

Lippi quit in the aftermath of Germany 2006 glory, but has yesterday been associated with a return to the Federation just days

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## Wales next for Samba boys

### Football

REUTERS, London

A match against a resurgent Brazil in London on Tuesday might not be what Wales needed after an unhappy start to their Euro 2008 qualifying campaign.

They will be hoping, however, that playing the brilliant Brazil side that beat arch foes Argentina 3-0 on Sunday will have a knock-on effect.

Wales, beaten 2-1 in their Group D opener in the Czech Republic on Saturday, meet Brazil at Tottenham Hotspur's White Hart Lane ground in the second friendly of the former world champions' London tour.

Dunga's new side rose from the ashes of Brazil's poor World Cup in Germany, where they went out in the quarterfinals, with a fine victory across north London at Arsenal's Emirates stadium.

Brazil's lightning attacks and clinical finishing against Argentina were a lesson the Welsh would do well to take in after squandering chances in Teplice on Saturday and then being left to rue a late winner for new cap David Lafata.

"It was a cruel defeat. We had worked so hard and defended well," said coach John Toshack, who

claimed the ball was moving when the Czechs took the free-kick that led to their winner.

"Unfortunately, we are not taking our chances and there is always pressure on the back boys. The scrappy shots go in and we are deflated again," goalkeeper Paul Jones was quoted as saying in The Times following Saturday's defeat.

"Maybe on Monday we will take the positives, our passing and movement was excellent."

Wales are preparing for their next qualifier at home to Slovakia on Oct. 7, while the South Americans are re-building ahead of next year's Copa America.

"As the coach of Brazil you try to win every single match and after beating Argentina 3-0 you still cannot relax," Dunga said.

"Dunga asked us for the determination to overcome a very difficult team," said two-goal midfielder Elano.

"I'm very happy to have done my bit for a victory we deserved because we played the better football," he told reporters.

Substitute midfielder Kaka, who scored a brilliant solo goal near the end, said: "I hope the team continue to win and erase that negative image left during the World Cup in Germany."



PHOTO: AFP

French legend Zinedine Zidane (C) signs autographs upon his arrival at the Gerland Stadium in Lyon for the Danone Nations Cup, the premier football competition in the world for children.

## Final rematch looms large

AFP, Paris



France and Italy go head to head in Paris in the clash of the titans on Wednesday in the latest round of Euro 2008 qualifying matches.

But although Italy are the new world champions, for a fourth time, it is France who head into the game in much the more confident mood.

Since lifting the World Cup in July, Italy lost a friendly 2-0 at home to Croatia last month, albeit playing a virtually reserve team, and were then held to an embarrassing 1-1 draw by minnows Lithuania at home on Saturday.

France, on the other hand, have recovered admirably from their World Cup disappointment, beating Bosnia-Herzegovina 2-1 away in a friendly and then dismantling Georgia 3-0 in Tbilisi on Saturday.

And with the Italian league yet to begin, many of the Italian players are lacking in match practice this season.

It should make France the overwhelming favourites for the game, a crucial one in Group B.

Italy coach Roberto Donadoni, however, will not be panicked into

any rash decisions.

"I'm not going to make any changes for the match against France," said Donadoni.

"I'm proud of the players and the whole squad."

"What happens if we return from the French game with only a point (after two matches)?" added

### FIXTURES

Wednesday

**Group A**  
Armenia v Belgium, Azerbaijan v Kazakhstan, Finland v Portugal, Poland v Serbia

**Group B**  
France v Italy, Lithuania v Scotland, Ukraine v Georgia

**Group C**  
Bosnia-Herzegovina v Hungary, Norway v Moldova, Turkey v Malta

**Group D**  
San Marino v Germany, Slovakia v Czech Republic

**Group E**  
Macedonia v England, Israel v Andorra, Russia v Croatia

**Group F**  
Iceland v Denmark, Northern Ireland v Spain, Sweden v Liechtenstein

**Group G**  
Albania v Romania, Bulgaria v Slovenia, Holland v Belarus

Donadoni when asked about possible defeat at the Stade de France.

"If that happens, I will answer after the match. But I could turn the question round and ask myself what if we came back with four points? It's great to play our World Cup final opponents again."

If France do have a worry, it is over the goalscoring form of star forward Thierry Henry, who has yet to score in five matches this season, although he seems far from bothered.

"I have said it before and I will say it again, that's the least of my worries if the team wins," insisted Henry.

"I am still not ready physically. Against Manchester City (where Arsenal lost 1-0) I could have scored four goals and I missed them all."

"Saturday I felt good in my legs. I am getting stronger."

France may be happy with their start but that cannot be said of the Netherlands who laboured to a sorry 1-0 win over Luxembourg in their opening match.

And they will have a far tougher test from Belarus in their next one.

Despite his team being weakened by injuries and suspensions,

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

## Italy mourn Facchetti loss

INTERNET, undated

Italian football was in mourning after Inter President Giacinto Facchetti passed away at the age of 64 on Monday.

The former defender had been



GIACINTO FACCHETTI

suffering from illness for some time and lost his battle earlier yesterday. Born in Treviglio, near Bergamo, Facchetti enjoyed a stunning career both at club and international level.

He became a legend with the Nerazzurri after making his debut in May 1961 and spending 18 seasons with the outfit until he hung up his boots in 1978.

A goalscoring left-back, Facchetti scored an amazing 75 goals in 634 games with the Inter shirt.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1