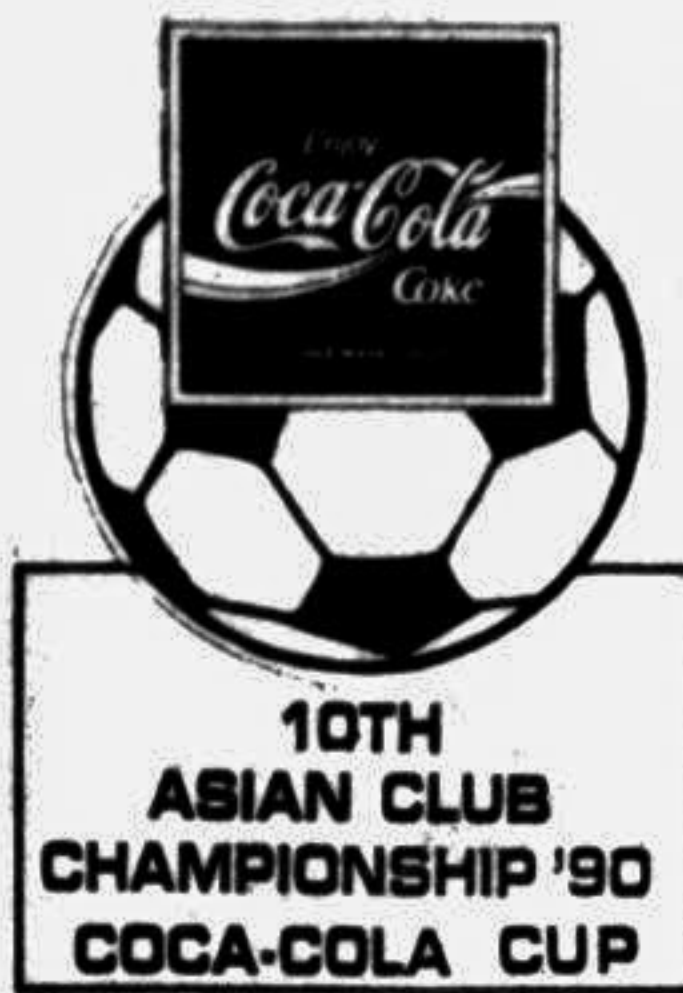


Defending champs top Group A



football championship beating PS Pelita Jaya of Indonesia by a solitary goal in the concluding robin league match at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Sun Wei got the match-winner in the 27th minute of play, scoring a fine goal from a difficult angle with a firm left-foot.

The win gave Liaoning three points from their two games — having held Al-Nasr of Oman to a 1-1 draw Monday in the three-team Group A.

Pelita Jaya, who had beaten Al-Nasr 3-0 in their first robin league encounter last Saturday, finished runners-up in the group with two points. Al-Nasr managed just one point.

It was a dull affair at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday with hardly a thousand people come to watch. Liaoning, resting some of their first eleven players for the semis, appeared to take the match rather lightly, confident of reaching the semis because even a draw would have sufficed to take

them through.

However, the Chinese didn't appear too keen to meet Esteghal in the semis and in order to avoid that possibility applied just the amount of effort necessary to win the match with the minimum degree of fuss.

For their part, the Indonesians, too, must have been as keen to avoid meeting the Iranians and despite conceding that early goal kept trying for the equaliser but all their attempts were successfully thwarted by the efficient Chinese defence.

Liaoning will meet Group B runners-up April 25 of North Korea in the first semifinal of the tournament on Friday, July 28.

The semifinals are scheduled for a 5:00 pm kick-off.

The final is scheduled for July 29 at 7:00 pm with the third-place deciding match to precede it with a five o'clock start.

End of a long wait

TOKYO, July 24: America's Konishiki, the world's biggest sumo wrestler, usually disposes of his huge Japanese opponents in less than a minute, but it took him four years and a thousand phone calls to win his slim fashion model fiancée, reports Reuter.

Konishiki, who at 236 kg (519 pounds) is the heaviest of the 39 grapplers in Japanese sumo wrestling's First Division, announced his engagement to Sumika Shioda on Tuesday. She is less than a fifth of his weight.

Konishiki, the first foreigner to reach sumo's second highest rank of 'ozeki', or champion, met stiff opposition during the courtship.

"I was totally against this marriage at the beginning," said Shioda's father. "It's obvious if you look at his dimensions."

Shioda would not reveal her weight but photographers estimate that at less than 170 cm (five feet nine inches) tall she would tip the scales at about 45 kg (99 pounds).

"It wasn't like love at first sight," Konishiki, 27, told a news conference. "But I thought she was a very nice person from the beginning and I called her every day."

Shioda, 26, clad in traditional kimono, spoke little during the news conference.

She said she first thought the towering Konishiki "very fearful."

"But his daily telephone calls convinced me that he was actually a good man."

Konishiki, whose ring name means 'little brocade,' said his next professional goal was to achieve the highest rank of 'Yokozuna,' or grand champion.

Konishiki, born at Isanoe in Hawaii, finished the 15-day Nagoya tournament on Sunday with a score of 12-3 — the second best result in his division.

The six divisions in modern professional sumo comprise about 770 wrestlers who fight six tournaments a year. The next one will be in September and the last one of the year in November.

Pair of the month bridge

The pair of the month duplicate bridge contest of Dhaka Metropolitan Bridge Association, a two-session meet with pre-qualified players only, will be held tomorrow (Friday) at 3:30 pm sharp at the Bangladesh Bank Club premises, states a press release.

The following pairs/players will be eligible to participate.

- Farouk and Rafiq, T R Chowdhury and Quddus, M A Mannan and Rezaul Haq, Das and Halm, Topu and Musa, Dr M Ali and Bashar, Com Quddus and Aminullah, Kamal and Ivan, Md Israai and B A Khan, Yakub and F Huq, M W Haque and Feroze Ahmed, Huda and Kabir, Dr Khosh Mohammad and Kalimullah, N O Saha and Abul Hossain, Robi and Habib, Farooq and Barua, M A Quddus and Wahab, Ismail and Jalil, Shamsul Alam and Waheed, Mr and Mrs Nasir, L H Bhutyan and S Z Khan, M Huq and Jahir, Raju and Russell, M H Chowdhury and F A Aziz, H Kabir and Aziz, B Rahman and R Rahman, Dr Malek and Dr Anwar, Momtunillah and Asad, Shahabuddin and Salahuddin; Individual: Saleh Ahmed, Mobin, Lemon, Mizan, Anwaruddin, Vatnager, Ibrul, Enayet, N Islam, H Rahman, Hanzala, Econ, Hasan Ali, Mohiuddin, Aminul Islam and A Monsur.

BDR basketball

The inter-sector basketball competition of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) began at the Mymensingh Sector ground yesterday, a BDR press release said in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Mymensingh Sector Commander Lt Col A F M Nur Uddin inaugurated the competition in which 11 sectors of BDR are taking part.

Lusis confesses using drugs

HELSENKI, July 24: Former Olympic javelin champion Janis Lusis said he had used drugs, although not when achieving his best results, a Finnish newspaper reported on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Lusis, who won a gold medal for the Soviet Union at the Mexico Olympics in 1968, was quoted by the Ilt-Sanomat newspaper as saying, "I used them, too," in reference to banned substances.

The newspaper said Lusis immediately added: "However, I made my best results without substances."

Lusis did not say when he had used the drugs or specify what he had taken.



An Esteghal defender thwarts one of several Mohammedan forays into their goal in Tuesday's crucial robin league match of the 10th Asian Club Cup championship at Dhaka Stadium. —Star photo

MSC rue what might have been

Sports Reporter

Local heroes Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club bowed out of the 10th Asian Club Cup soccer tournament with a 4-3 win over Bangkok Bank Sports Club in their last robin league match at the Dhaka Stadium Tuesday evening.

The result, which left the local lads with an unbeaten record, gave them three points from their three drawn robin league engagements. But these weren't enough to take them through to the semifinals of the seven-nation meet. That privilege went to the North Korean champions April 25 who finished runner-up in the four-team Group B, behind Esteghal Club to whom they had lost 1-2 on the opening day of the tourney July 19. A 4-3 win over Bangkok Bank Sports Club Tuesday afternoon gave them three points from three games — they had drawn goalless with Mohammedans last Sunday — but a better goal difference than Mohammedans. April 25 scored five and conceded four while Mohammedans scored two and conceded as many.

Esteghal, who are the only other side in this tournament with an unbeaten record, topped Group B with five points from three games and will meet Indonesian champions PS Pelita Jaya in the second semifinal Saturday. Pelita Jaya finished runner-up in the three-team Group A with two points from two games, having beaten Al-Nasr of Oman 3-0 and losing by a solitary goal to

defending champions Liaoning Club of China yesterday.

The Mohammedan players, officials and fans must have been a mortified lot at the end of their exciting clash against Esteghal Tuesday evening. And all of them must have rued the innumerable missed opportunities in their opening match against Thai champions Bangkok Bank Club last Friday.

The 1-1 scoreline of that match hardly reflected the superior performance of the black-and-whites in almost every department of the game. Had Mohammedans not sat back on their early lead, and had their forwards not muffed up at least three to four golden chances, Mohammedans would surely have played in the semifinals.

On Tuesday, too, Mohammedans wasted several good opportunities and their solitary-goal lead, which lasted almost up to the 66th minute of the 90-minute encounter, was allowed to be neutralised by a silly goalkeeping error on the part of an otherwise dependable Sayeed Hassan Karan.

Mohammedans, who took the field against their Iranian opponents as the obvious underdogs, were fully aware of the fact that they would have to win the match to make the last four. The 4-3 win by the North Korans over the Thais in the day's earlier encounter left Mohammedans little choice.

According to the mathematics of the situation, Mohammedans had the easier task of going for an outright win or

the more difficult, nay impossible, task of playing out a 5-5 draw. The latter option, though mathematically probable, was impossible in footballing terms unless both sides were willing to risk serious reprisal from the Asian Football Confederation and the FIFA for acting out a charade, or a "fixed game", in common parlance.

Mohammedans chose the easier option and from the very kick-off they appeared to be playing for a win. Their players managed in enthralling an expectant, near-capacity holiday crowd with some beautiful ball skills and speed, the latter a more encouraging feature of their game.

Imtiaz Ahmed Naquib, who found goalscoring so natural in the recent Olympic qualifying round, should have put his side ahead in the 17th minute when fellow-forward Ghous set him up with a beauty but the lanky striker failed to provide the finishing touch.

Mohammedans got their lead in the 26th minute when their captain Kaiser Hamid beautifully headed home after Roxy had nicely chipped the ball following a quickly taken corner kick pass from the fleet-footed Shabbir. Kaiser, who had pushed up just for heading from the corner kick, gave no chance to Esteghal goalkeeper Ahmed Reza Abedzadeh who only a minute earlier had done well to punch away a vicious shot from Mohammedan right-back Ahsanullah Mantu (1-0).

Mohammedans continued to threaten the Iranian defence and maintained their pressure for another forty minutes or so. But just when a Mohammedan victory was looking like a distinct possibility, the Iranians got their equaliser.

About 25 minutes from time, Abdul Samad Marfavy ran down the right and played the ball to Abbas Sarkhab who, in turn, touched it on to the path of an unmarked Golam Reza Nazeggar at the top of the box. The red-haired Iranian, who played with credit for the local giants in the NBL league not too long ago, ironically sealed his former club's fate by placing the ball into the Mohammedan net with a gently taken shot that sailed over Kanar. The Mohammedan goalie was caught totally unawares, not even anticipating the shot (1-1).

Although that goal dashed Mohammedans' semifinal hopes, their youthful forwards, bolstered by the late substitutions of Mizan and Mamoon Joarder, kept striving for that elusive dream until the very end.

It was a fine way to go out for the local giants, yet one wished they hadn't messed up their chances against the Thais.

Three Iranians — Mehdi Fonuny, Abdul Samad Marfavy and Shahin Bayani — and two Mohammedan players, Roxy and Barun Dewan, were shown the yellow cards by UAE referee Salem Saeed.

Li hattrick April 25's joy

Sports Reporter

North Korean champions April 25 ensured their passage into the semifinals of the Asian Club Cup soccer tourney with a 4-3 win over Thai champions Bangkok Bank Sports Club in their last Group B encounter at the Dhaka Stadium Tuesday afternoon.

The teams were locked in a 2-2 stalemate at halftime.

The hero for the Koreans on the day was substitute Li Chang Gyu who scored the first hattrick of the 11-day tournament. Li netted in the 30th, 35th and 61st minutes. The other Korean goal was scored by Choi Won-nam in the 49th minute.

Bangkok Bank, needing a win as badly as the Koreans to make the semifinals, shot into the lead in the 29th minute through Cheotchal Suwannang,

for whom it was the first of two goals. That goal seemed to open the gates to a goal glut with the Koreans replying almost immediately when Li Chang made it 1-1 in the 30th minute.

Li made it 2-1 for the Koreans five minutes later but Bangkok Bank skipper Anan Pansang made it 2-2 just three minutes afterwards.

Four minutes into the second session Choi Won-nam again gave the Koreans the lead which was consolidated in the 61st minute by Li through his hattrick.

Undaunted by the two-goal deficit, the Thais kept pushing and their efforts were rewarded in the 74th minute when Cheotchal made it 4-3.

But that was to be the last goal in this goal-filled game as

the April 25 defence held on to their one-goal lead until the final whistle.

The Thai cause wasn't helped by the fact that they had to play with ten men after captain Anan Pansang was sent off by Singapore referee Rajamanicham two minutes from time.

The win gave April 25 three points from their three robin league engagements that included a goalless draw with Mohammedans and a 1-2 loss to Esteghal. It also gave them the second semifinal spot from the four-team Group B, ahead of Mohammedans, on a better goal difference.

Bangkok Bank finished with just one point from their inaugural match against Mohammedans which they drew 1-1.

Gooch likely to play at Edgbaston

BIRMINGHAM, England, July 24: England's worries over the fitness of captain Graham Gooch ahead of the fourth cricket Test against West Indies receded today when he was reported to be recovering from tonsillitis, reports Reuter.

"Graham has had a good night's sleep, his temperature is down and he's looking and feeling a lot better this morning," said physiotherapist Laurie Brown.

"He wants to go to the ground today and, as usual with Graham, I'm having to tell him to take things easy."

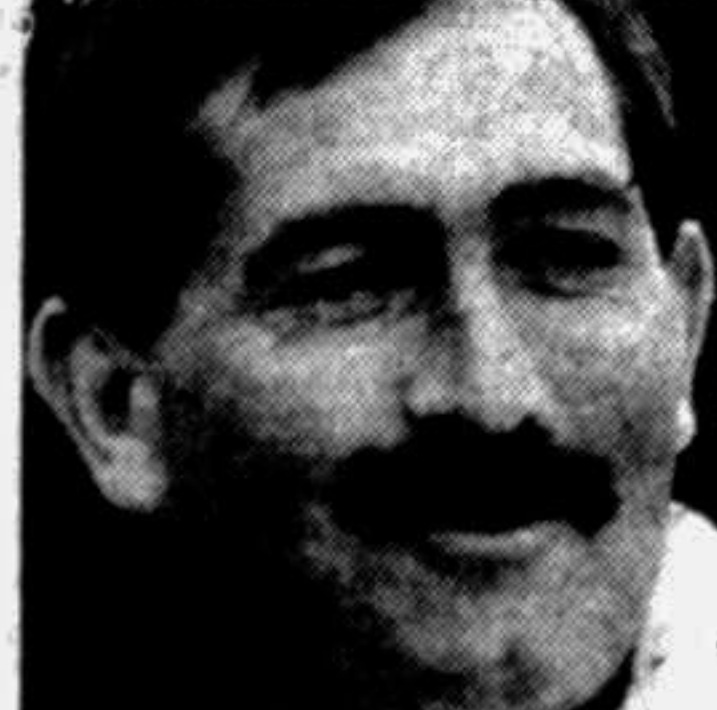
"My only real concern at the moment is that he does not pass the illness on to one of the other players, so I'll suggest he waits until after the other lads have finished before

doing his bit of practice."

The Test begins at Edgbaston on Thursday with the sides level 1-1 in the five-match series.

MORRIS CALLED UP

An earlier report said, Glamorgan opener Hugh Morris was called into



England's squad for the fourth

Test against West Indies at Edgbaston on Monday following a gloomy update on Robin Smith's finger injury, reports Reuter.

Robin has told us that his injured finger is still troubling him and obviously there is sufficient doubt for us to call in Hugh, said Chairman of selectors Ted Dexter.

Smith is due to report to Edgbaston on Tuesday for more treatment on the right index finger injury, originally sustained before the third Test when he was hit by West Indian fast bowler Curtly Ambrose while playing for Hampshire.

He was already scored 281 runs in five innings in the series and his absence would be a huge blow to England.

Morris will make his Test debut if he plays on Thursday.

Cook runs riot

LONDON, July 24: Rain disrupted play on the first day of the country championship matches on Tuesday but could not prevent South African ace Jimmy Cook running riot at Northampton, reports AFP.

Cook hit his sixth first class century of the season to punish Northamptonshire for putting Somerset into bat. Maintaining concentration, despite three stoppages for rain, Cook is unbeaten on 173, steering the visitors to 266 for two off 88 overs at the close.

Andy Babington, the bowler rejected by Sussex, tormented his old country with the bat at Cheltenham.

In just 30 balls he crashed five sixes and three fours to reach 58, putting on 78 runs in eight overs with David Gilbert to enable Gloucestershire to end their innings at 283 off 79 overs. Tony Wright had laid the foundation with 70 but Adrian Jones (five for 84) and Tony Dodecaide (five for 130) restrained the flow.

Hampshire opener Chris Smith is within sight of his sixth century having made 92 out of 151 for one from 54 overs against Derbyshire.

Smith lived dangerously on a slow pitch. He was dropped on four, survived a concerted appeal for a catch behind one run later and was close to being run-out in the 90s.

Calypso cricket



SYDNEY, July 24: An Australian Test cricket had sex with 30 woman during the 1991 tour of the West Indies, according to a book launched in Sydney on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Many of the Australian team found it hard to resist "the call of the party life," says the book, "Calypso cricket". One even spent the night before the fifth Test with a woman.

Australia lost the Test series, played between March and May, 2-1.

Australian sports journalist and author Roland Fishman, who accompanied the Australians on the tour, said parodying was not the sole factor behind the Australian loss.

"I think some of the players' performances suffered, but I think there are a lot of other factors. I think they should have been a lot more positively. They tended to be a bit negative," Fishman told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation on Tuesday.

Australian captain Alan Border and Test wicket-keeper Ian Hely have denied the book's allegations.

"It's just a cheap shot at trying to sell his books," Border told reporters.

But Fishman, who was given such special privileges on the tour as access to the Australian players dressing rooms, stands by the sex allegations.

"It's not a beat up. The claim are not made up. I just quoted the conversations I had with two players," Fishman said.

Fishman said the allegations that a player had sex with 30 women was made to him in Barbados by another player shortly before the tour ended.

"The thing that amazed me was they were amazed that I was amazed," said Fishman. "They just said sex just part of touring."

"I think the differences is, I put it in my book and other journalists just tell their friends about it."

Fishman said he has not claimed the tour was a sex orgy.

"You have young men in their twenties and thirties in an exotic, exciting land where it's one never-ending party — everyone wants to be their friend and buy them beers," he said.

"I didn't say they were grossly irresponsible and I don't say it was a boozy, sex romp orgy. I am saying it was just saying it was a part of the tour and its a factor," Fishman said.

Americans underline strength

SHEFFIELD, July 24: Swimming coach Karen Moe Thornton said the Americans would be a threat right across the board at the World University Games.

They proved her right, reports AP.

While other countries relied on a few individual stars, the US team had strength in depth, scooping nine golds, 11

silvers and 11 bronzes to collect the most medals.

Thornton, coach to the US women's team, also was right in predicting the Chinese women would be a big danger. They collected eight of their team's nine golds.

The US men were 6-7-5 and the women 3-4-6 and the medals were spread across the team.

While China's came from two men and five women, the

US success was shared between 13 men and eight women.

Williams Schwenk in the 200 meters backstroke, Brian Pajer in the 100m breaststroke, Raymond Carey in the 200m butterfly and Greg Burgess in the 200m individual medley all won.

The other two golds went to relay teams in the 400m freestyle and medley events.

Graf, Capriati slate Seles

NOTTINGHAM, England, July 24: Steffi Graf and Jennifer Capriati helped propel their countries

into the second round of the Federation Cup on Tuesday and then heaped more criticism on the head of absent world number one Monica Seles, reports Reuter.

Graf, in particular, went on the attack over Seles' late decision to withdraw from the event through injury, only to play in a lucrative exhibition tournament in New Jersey the next day.

"You just can't do it there are a few things that aren't quite right about it," said the Wimbledon champion.

"It's strange. I don't know what kind of injuries she's got but it is not possible to let her play an exhibition event if she

says she can't play the week after."

Capriati, who beat Seles in the final of the exhibition tournament on Sunday, said beating a world number one looked fine to her. If she was hurting she shouldn't have played.

Seles was fined 20,000 dollars and Capriati 2,500 dollars by the Women's Tennis Association for playing in the unsanctioned tournament.

US move up

In rainy Nottingham, where local folk hero Robin Hood was also expert at taking money off the rich, Capriati and Zina Garrison dodged the showers to give defending champions the United States victory over the Netherlands.

Capriati beat Dutch opponent Manon Bollegraf 6-2, 6-3 with minimum fuss but



MONICA SELES

Garrison required some help from the weather before beating Nicole Pietrangeli 7-5, 6-4. Jagerman, celebrating her 24th birthday, had a set point

in the first set and led 4-2 in the second when rain started to fall.

When the players returned, it was a different story. Jagerman never got started again and Garrison won four games in a row to pave the way for a 2-0 win.

Because of the weather delays, some "dead" doubles rubber were cancelled by the tournament organisers.

Graf and her German teammates were not affected, cruising to a 3-0 win over Greece.

Austria also beat Portugal 3-0 but Spain, Britain, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia only needed 2-0 margins en route to the second round.

Eighth seeds Italy were surprisingly tied 1-1 with Israel with the deciding doubles rescheduled for Wednesday.

Seles may be barred from Barcelona

NOTTINGHAM, July 24: Monica Seles could be barred from the 1992 Barcelona Olympics because of her late withdrawal from the Federation Cup tennis tournament that starts Monday, reports AP.

The world's top-ranked female player officially pulled out Saturday from the Yugoslav team in the 32-nation competition, saying she was "not in the form I want to be in."

The International Tennis Federation also said Sunday that Martina Navratilova and Gabriela Sabatini will be ineligible for the 1992 Olympics because they are skipping the Federation Cup.

A player must be in good standing with her national federation and with the ITF to qualify for the Olympics, and that depends in part on making herself available for the Federation Cup.

An official of the Yugoslav Tennis Federation said Sunday that Seles was still in good standing with his group.

But ITF officials said her Olympic eligibility depended on Seles proving she was unable to play in the Federation Cup because of injury, and said they awaited a doctor's certificate.

"If it is accepted that her withdrawal for this event was due to injury, then she would be eligible to play in the Olympics," said Debbie Jevans, director of women's tennis for the ITF.

Seles, who played in an exhibition tournament this weekend in Mahwah, N.J., had been sidelined for several weeks by shin splints and a stress fracture in her left leg.

Seles, 17, said Saturday "the leg is fine," but that she did not want to play two consecutive weeks on hard courts. She is scheduled to play in a tournament in San Diego starting July 29.

Helm Grimm, chairman of the ITF's Federation Cup Committee, said "of course I have many doubts about what's going on," but admitted it would be difficult to ignore a medical certificate saying Seles was injured.

Grimm added that Sabatini and Navratilova "definitely cannot play" in next year's Olympics.

Maradona faces criminal trial

BUENOS AIRES, July 24: An Argentine judge has found soccer star Diego Maradona responsible for drug possession, clearing the way for a criminal trial, a court official said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The official said federal judge Amelia Berraz de Vidal had decided that the evidence

gathered since Maradona, 30, and two friends were arrested on April 26 in a Buenos Aires flat was sufficient to bring them to trial on charges of drug possession.

If convicted, Maradona could be sentenced to a maximum of two years in prison.

In Argentina, a judge weighs evidence to decide whether formal charges should be brought against a defendant.

The judge also oversees the trial, decides on guilt or innocence, and imposes a sentence.

No date has been set for Maradona's trial. The judge also is examining evidence against Maradona on a charge of supplying cocaine to others for free.

The court official, who asked not to be identified, said the judge had confirmed

Maradona's preventive arrest, a decision that would not affect him since he was freed on bail after spending a day in jail.

If found guilty of supplying drugs to others, the former Argentina skipper could face up to 12 years in prison.

Maradona, who also faces drug charges in Italy, is undergoing drug rehabilitation treatment.