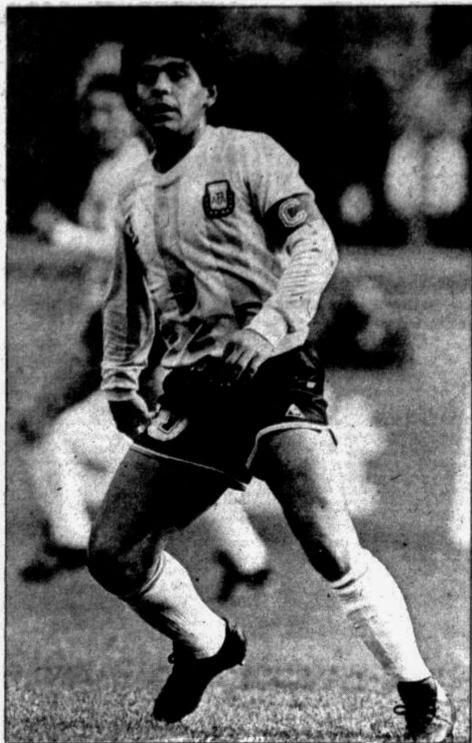


Maradona wants another shot at World Cup

LONDON, Oct 7: Argentina's prodigal soccer son Diego Maradona wants another shot at the World Cup, the game's top prize he won with his country in superb style six years ago, reports Reuters.



DIEGO MARADONA

And national team boss Alfio "Coco" Basile, hoping since he took charge in late 1990 for a Maradona return, is excited at the prospect of putting the soccer genius back on the international stage.

"He wants to come back right away and we want him as soon as he's ready," said Basile, who believes Maradona would improve his team's chances of reaching the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States.

"It's wonderful news, not just for me, but all of Argentine football," Basile said after watching Maradona's promising club return with Sevilla of Spain last week after a year and a half in obscurity.

"He showed his touch of class, those touches (of the ball) that set him apart from other players," he said in an interview under the stands at Sevilla's Stadium on his way to congratulate Maradona after the friendly against Bayern Munich.

"We will be discussing between the three of us, Sevilla coach Carlos Bilardo, Diego and myself, when Diego can play his first match in the national team again."

Bilardo, Basile's predecessor who guided a Maradona-inspired Argentina to two successive World Cup finals, has landed the task of nursing his "football son" back to match fitness.

Results would seem to indicate that Basile, who beat Argentina's 1978 World Cup captain Daniel Passarella to the national team job, does not need Maradona.

He was moulded a fine side, unbeaten in 18 matches and winners of the South American Championship last year.

But, as for tonight a coach as he was player, Basile does not for a moment believe Argentina are immune to defeat and he is aware of Maradona's influence on a team.

"Diego is a special case due to what he means to the team and its players," Basile said.

Uscar Ruggeri, the defender who took over as captain from Maradona, said he was wearing the armband only on an interim basis, pending the World Cup skipper's return.

Basile may well end up in a stronger position than, Bilardo, inserting Maradona into a well established team, rather than building one around him like his predecessor.

Results have helped Basile unite Argentine fans under one flag following years of acrimony between the followers of the country's two World Cup winners, Usar Menotti and Bilardo.

Menotti, World Cup winner in 1978 and champion of Argentine attacking traditions, often spoke out against Bilardo's espousal of European-style tactics which, Maradona apart, kept his players' attacking instincts in check. Bilardo answered his critics with victory in the 1986 World Cup when Maradona was at the height of his powers. But his side flopped in two successive South American Champion-

ships and were extremely lucky to reach the 1990 World Cup final.

Basile's first year of success in 1991, culminating in the Copa American triumph, was forged with a predominantly attacking game more akin to Menotti's.

But the success had a negative side. A team including only two foreign-based stars was split asunder when wealthy European clubs snapped up other previously unseen talent.

Striker Claudio Cnigga and midfielder Diego Simeone, now with Maradona at Sevilla, were already with Italian club.

Babriel Batistuta, who has hit 10 goals in 10 matches for Argentina, was transferred to Fiorentina, while tall midfielder Dario Franco, who headed the equaliser in a 2-2 draw with England at Wembley in May 1991, went to Real Zaragoza of Spain.

Playmaker Leo Rodriguez moved to France first and now plays for Atalanta in Italy, while Ruggeri, once of Real Madrid, left Velez Sarsfield for promoted Italian club Ancona.

Like with Menotti and Bilardo before him, getting his full squad together has become a major problem for Basile.

Basile, who won nine caps as a defender with Racing Club and Huracan, was out of work when appointed by Argentine Football Association president Julio Gronzona in December 1990.

He had coaching experience with both his former clubs as well as Velez Sarsfield.

As a player with Racing Club he won the South American club title and then the Intercontinental Cup in an infamous three-match final against Glasgow Celtic in 1967.

He was also a member of the Argentine champions Huracan in 1973 under Menotti, whom he later helped as a "spy" before and during the 1978 World Cup.

Argentina are preparing to defend their South American title in Ecuador next year before playing their World Cup qualifying games against Colombia, Paraguay and Peru.

Liverpool manager Graeme Souness paid tribute to rush by saying: "Ian is the best goal-

ter I have ever seen. If he played for England he would have received far more plaudits than he has done."

Liverpool, battling to emerge from their worst start to a season for 39 years, had to overturn a 1-0 deficit after Trevor Hebbard thrust Chesterfield ahead in the eight minute.

But Liverpool, who trailed 3-0 at one stage of the first leg at Anfield, soon put paid to the home side's ambitions of an upset.

Don Hutchison equalised after 19 minutes, strikes by Jamie Redknapp and Mark Walters put Liverpool on top and Rush sealed the win with his landmark goal.

Heart troubles Jeremy Bates

SYDNEY, Oct 7: British number one tennis player Jeremy Bates has undergone heart tests and may be forced to cut back his gruelling tennis schedule, he revealed Tuesday, reports AFP.

Robert Karns, State Athletic Commission physician, examined Paez in Los Angeles on Tuesday and said the boxer wouldn't be able to resume training for at least two weeks.

If Leeds go through it will set up an unofficial British championship clash, with the first leg at Elland on October 21 and the equally lucrative return at Elland Road a fortnight later.

Silver added: "Our view is that everyone in British football is right behind Leeds united and anxious to see us do well in the European Cup."

The last few days had become a farce, so we are pleased that the situation has been resolved, we can get on with playing football and stop playing politics."

Saudi Arabia lift Asian jr crown

SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates, Oct 7: Saudi Arabia beat South Korea 2-0 to win the final of the Asian Junior Football Championship here yesterday, reports AFP.

Both teams go through to the World Junior Championships in Australia next year.

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Chairman Leslie Silver said: "It is in the best interests of British football that this matter is settled as quickly as possible."

Newell saves the day for Blackburn

LONDON, Oct 7: Mike Newell spared Blackburn from the humiliation of being knocked out of the English League Cup by Second Division Huddersfield on Tuesday night by firing the Premier League leaders to a 4-3 extra-time victory, reports AFP.

The striker tucked the ball home in the 107th minute to earn Blackburn a 5-4 aggregate success after they had appeared to be strolling into the third round.

Goals by England striker Alan Shearer and American international Roy Wegerle inside 55 minutes seemed to set Blackburn up for another romp after their 7-1 league demolition of Norwich last weekend.

But Huddersfield had other ideas. Garry Barnett, Iwan Roberts and Simon Ireland netted to put them on the verge of a League Cup shock, only for Shearer to force extra time in the 83rd minute with his 15th goal of the season.

Queen's Park Rangers came even closer to defeat, needing penalties to end the brave effort.

fort of First Division Grimsby after extra time had left the sides locked at 3-3 overall.

Grimsby won the second leg 2-1, but lost 6-5 in the shoot-out when Grimsby forward Tony Rees missed and QPR defender Alan McDonald found the target in sudden death.

Neil Woods had sent the tie into extra time after QPR forward Dennis Bailey had cancelled out Tony Watson's opener for the First Division side.

Wimbledon had an uncomfortable time as well on the way to round three.

They lost 1-0 at home to Second Division Bolton in front of a meagre 1,987 crowd, the lowest home crowd in the competition for a top-flight side.

Tony Philliskirk had provided Bolton—trailing 3-1 from the home leg—some hope of causing an upset.

Liverpool looked like suffering an even more humiliating defeat when Trevor Hebbard fired Third Division Chesterfield in front after only eight minutes, but the Mersey Sider recovered in style to romp home 4-1 and 8-5 on aggregate.

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