

Sport

Klinsmann saves Spurs



LONDON, Apr 15: Jürgen Klinsmann nailed a spectacular 25-metre free kick with three minutes to play Friday to give Tottenham a 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace in the English Premier League.

The German striker hit a perfectly-placed drive: Curling the ball over and to the right of the Palace defensive wall and back toward the net to deflect off the underside of the crossbar and in. It was his 27th goal of the season.

Darren (Anderton) normally takes the kicks, but I went up to him and asked if I could have a go," Klinsmann said. "He was happy, so I just struck the ball and luckily it went in."

Klinsmann, subject of transfer rumours over the past week, was reticent to talk about his future with Tottenham, despite a contract that extends through next season.

The result satisfied neither team. Palace, who lost to Manchester United in a Football Association Cup semifinal replay on Wednesday, remained in the Premier League relegation zone, and seventh-place Tottenham failed to make up substantial ground in their UEFA Cup bid.

Another team in the relegation battle, Manchester City, jumped seven places in the standings with a 2-1 home victory over Liverpool.

German midfielder Murizio Gudino, on loan from Eintracht Frankfurt, scored the game-winner in the 73rd minute.

Nicky Summerbee also scored for City in the 18th and Steve McManaman equalised for Liverpool three minutes later.

The victory rocketed City from 18th to 11th in the 22-team league. Liverpool remained fifth.

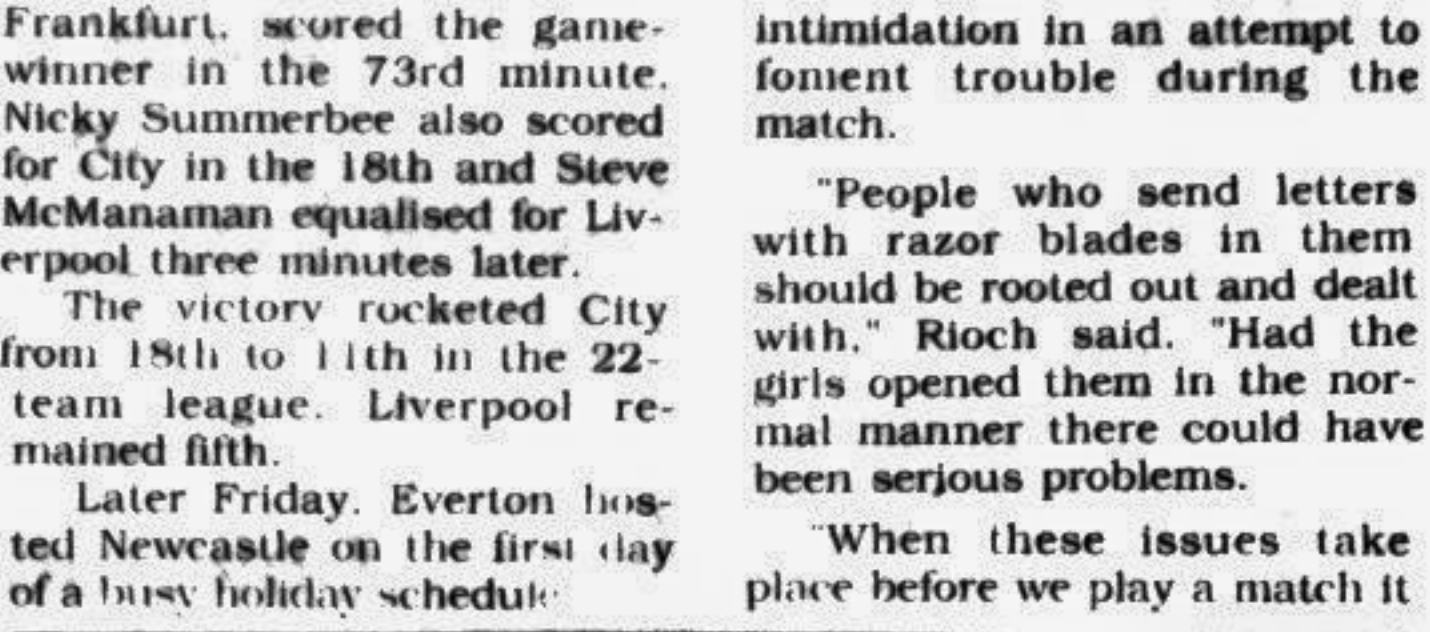
Later Friday, Everton hosted Newcastle on the first day of a busy holiday schedule.

People who send letters with razor blades in them should be rooted out and dealt with," Riich said. "Had the girls opened them in the normal manner there could have been serious problems."

When these issues take place before we play a match it intimidates in an attempt to foment trouble during the match.

Abahani's Russian recruit Alexander scored a consolation goal midway through the opening session capitalising on a defensive lapse.

In the other semifinal, fancied Mohun Bagan came from behind to prevail over Mohammedan Sporting with defender Satyabrata Bhowmick scoring the golden goals in the dying minutes of the extra time after both the teams failed to break the 1-1 deadlock in the regulation time.



RIGHT ON TARGET: Jürgen Klinsmann, the Tottenham striker swivels to fire a left-footer towards the Crystal Palace goal during their English Premiership tie at Selhurst Park in London on Friday. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

In Division One, Pat Nevin's 34th-minute goal moved Tranmere into second place as the Rovers beat Bolton 1-0.

After the game, Bolton manager Bruce Rioch revealed that his team this week had received threatening mail containing razor blades. The letters suggested the club's Irish players would be the target of

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Airlines Gold Cup East Bengal drub Abahani

CALCUTTA, Apr 15: Striker Sisir Ghosh began the Bengal new year with a brilliant hat-trick as East Bengal drubbed Abahani Krira Chakra of Dhaka 5-1, while Mohun Bagan struggled hard to suppress a spirited Mohammedan Sporting 2-1 in the extra time, to enter the final of the Capstan 10th All Airlines Gold Cup football tournament at the Salt Lake Stadium here today, reports PTI.

After leading 2-1 at the interval, Sisir Ghosh slammed in his third goal early in the second session while the speedy Manoharan pumped in two goals in quick succession to leave the Dhaka outfit in a daze.

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In the other semifinal, fancied Mohun Bagan came from behind to prevail over Mohammedan Sporting with defender Satyabrata Bhowmick scoring the golden goals in the dying minutes of the extra time after both the teams failed to break the 1-1 deadlock in the regulation time.

The two arch-rivals East Bengal and Mohun Bagan will battle for supremacy in the final to be played on Monday.

According to a press release issued here by the Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF) yesterday, Bangladesh sauntered past both Jordan and hosts, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with an identical 3-0 margin before winning the third against the Pacific-Oceania by 2-1.

As the top finisher from the group will earn a right to move into the next round, Bangladesh's fate now lies in their last two engagements against Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

They are scheduled to meet Lebanon today while the outcome of yesterday's match against Saudi Arabia is yet to be known.

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Chittagong beat Dhaka 15-9, 15-6, 15-6 in the morning while Naogaon defeated Tangail 15-8, 2-15, 15-4, 15-2 in the afternoon.

On the inaugural day on Friday, Dinajpur beat Chittagong, Tangail defeated Gaibandha and Naogaon overcame Rajshahi, all by 3-1 sets. In another match, Rajshahi outplayed Gaibandha 3-0.

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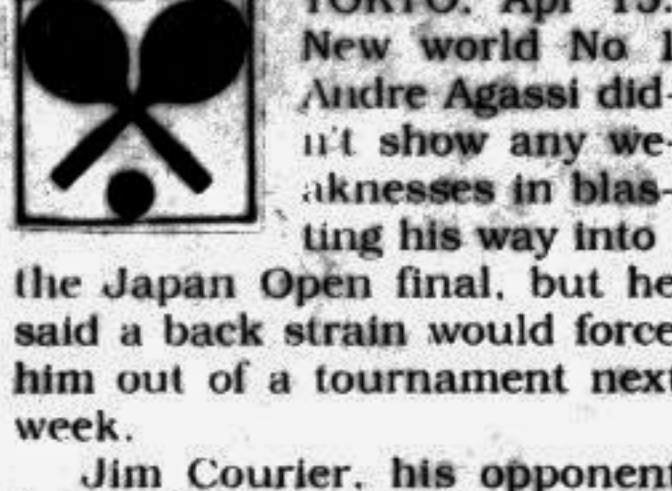
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Mohammedans batted first, made 196 for five in 38 overs.

Mohammedans' bowler Bobby captured three for only 16 runs.

It's an all-American final



TOKYO, Apr 15: New world No. 1 Andre Agassi didn't show any weaknesses in blasting his way into the Japan Open final, but he said a back strain would force him out of a tournament next week.

Jim Courier, his opponent in Sunday's final of the 1.2 million dollars tournament, said 72 per cent of his first serves to 56 per cent for Ferreira.

Agassi gained the No. 1 ranking on Monday, topping fellow American Pete Sampras after 82 weeks at the top.

"I'm sure that's his very confident because he's No. 1, and rightfully so," Courier said. "I'm very confident because I'm playing well right now."

Neither Agassi nor Ferreira had a break point until the 11th game, when Agassi created one with a forehand serve return winner. Ferreira then netted a backhand volley and Agassi served out the set.

Agassi broke again in the second set's first game after Ferreira had taken a 40-15 lead on three aces. At 40-30, Ferreira slipped while chasing along the baseline for an Agassi shot, hurt his foot and sent a backhand long. He then served two double faults, giving Agassi the game.

The foot gradually got better, Ferreira said, but Agassi broke again in the fifth game and won in slightly more than an hour before about 9,000 spectators.

"I feel like I'm hitting the ball well," Agassi said, but added that his doctor, coach and manager "have been concerned with me just finishing this week" because of the back strain he suffered in preparations last month for the US Davis Cup victory in Italy.

He said that after a couple of weeks of rest and treatment, he hoped to be back in action for a tournament in Atlanta May 1-7.

Courier, who has slipped to 15th from his No. 1 ranking in late 1993, overcame fellow American Michael Chang 6-4, 7-5 and said it felt good "getting over the hump beating a top player in a big match. I haven't done it in a while."

Chang is ranked sixth in the world, and was seeded second here. Courier is seeded fourth.

Ferreira, who now has lost five straight matches to Agassi, said his opponent was hitting as well as ever from the baseline and serving better than in their past battles. Agassi put in

he doesn't expect to gain any points from Agassi's back problems, reports AP.

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didn't depend so much on how well they were playing.

In the women's event, second-seeded American Amy Frazier advanced Saturday by beating qualifier Tang Min of Hong Kong 6-3, 6-3. Date beat compatriot Nana Miyagi in two quick sets Friday in the other semifinal.

Date beat Frazier 7-5, 6-0 in last year's final.

Tang, a native of China, had reached the semifinals by coming from behind to beat two Japanese seeds.

In an all-Japanese women's doubles final, 19-year-olds Miho Saeki and Yuka Yoshida overcame a 2-5 final-set deficit and beat No. 2 seeds Kyoko Nagatsuka and Ai Sugiyama 6-7 (5-7), 6-4, 7-6 (7-5).

The men's singles winner receives 156,000 dollars from total prize money of 1.2 million dollars. The women's division offers only a 25,000 dollars top prize.

at Wimbledon, paired with world singles number one Steffi Graf.

"I thought about it for months and I finally got the nerve to call her," Navratilova said. "She said yes immediately. I was jumping for joy over the phone."

Navratilova said she would not play at the French Open, but would consider playing doubles at the US Open. "I haven't thought about it," she said. "It's too far away."

The same is true of a possible 1996 Olympic bid.

"It's fun to stay sharp without having to play a tournament. It's the only way I could think about the Olympics," she said. "For me, they are a long way away."

Navratilova's US teammates will be Lindsay Davenport, Mary Joe Fernandez and Gigi Fernandez.

"It's nice to get that extra support from your teammates," Navratilova said. "I feel less pressure because I'm not all by myself. It's more fun. It's a change of pace, everybody relaxes and plays better."

Navratilova first played Federation Cup in 1975, helping Czechoslovakia to the title. She came as US citizen in 1981 and has played on US Federation Cup championship squads in 1982, 1986 and 1989.

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KAWANISHI, Japan, Apr 15: Hisayuki Sasaki birdied the last three holes en route to a 1-under-par 71 Saturday to keep the one-shot lead going into the final round of the 100 million yen (dlsr 1.2 million) Tsuruya Open gold tournament, reports AP.

Brazil blank Syria

DOHA, Apr 15: Eighteen-year-old Reinaldo scored three goals to lead defending champions Brazil to a 6-0 rout of Syria Thursday in their opening game at the World Youth Championship, reports AP.

Reinaldo, who plays for Atletico Miniera, scored twice in the first 24 minutes to spot Brazil to a 2-0 lead in the one-sided match. The victory puts Brazil atop Group A in the 16-nation tournament.

Qatar and Russia, the other two teams in the group, drew 1-1 Thursday.

Reinaldo opened the scoring in the 11th minute from the penalty spot after he had been fouled by Hassan Abbas. He scored his third in the 72nd.

Elder scored in the 68th minute, with Caio in the 70th and Murilo in the 80th.

Japan, who dominated the first half, equalized two minutes into the second half when Susumi Oki picked up a long pass from by Sotaro Yasunaga from the left wing and booted it home.

Chile, lackluster in the first half, regained their form in the second and started building up better attacking moves.

Their efforts were rewarded in the 67th minute when Rozental curled in a free-kick from 25 metres past the agile Japanese keeper, Seiji Honda.

But Chile's euphoria was short-lived as Nakata rifled a shot into the Chilean goal in the 87th minute.

"We're not happy with the result. We should have won the match," said Chilean coach Leonardo Veliz Diaz. "But we made so many mistakes."

Japan's coach, Koji Tanaka, said: "Our players played their real game only for about 10 minutes. That's not enough to win an international match."

Former champions Germany drew 1-1 with Cameroon in Group D.

Half-time score was 1-0. Germany, reduced to 10-men midway through the second half when Marcel Rath was sent off after a second caution, took an early lead through captain Eastern Hinz.

He converted a penalty in the 10th minute after Rath was brought down inside the area by Cameroon fullback Niend Wome.

Cameroon, who played a spirited game, scored a well-deserved equalizer in the 91st minute during injury time through Simo Augustin, who blasted the ball home from a goalmouth melee.

Simo Augustin of Cameroon was chosen man-of-the-match.

USSF sacks Milutinovic?

NEW YORK, Apr 15: Bora Milutinovic is out as coach of the US soccer team, the US Soccer Federation announced Friday that the most successful US national team coach since 1950 had resigned, but Milutinovic said he was fired, reports AP.

They have new ideas, new plans," Milutinovic said from his home in Laguna Niguel, California. "They have the right to decide what they like, but they also gave me their word, and they have to respect that."

Milutinovic, 55, led the United States to the second round of the World Cup last summer, coaching the Americans to their first victory in the tournament since 1950. He led the team to an upset of England in 1993 and a tie with Italy the year before.

"I'm very proud," he said. "We achieved good results."

Since last October, USSF president Alan Rothenberg had said he had oral agreement for Milutinovic to remain through the 1998 World Cup, and that the lawyers were putting the deal to paper. The coach's original contract expired Dec. 31.

Rothenberg issued a statement saying that Milutinovic resigned rather than accept a broader role that included more administrative work. Milutinovic said Rothenberg fired him during a meeting Wednesday.

A US Soccer Federation official, speaking on the condition he not be identified, said the sides couldn't agree on terms for the new deal. The official said Milutinovic wanted some of his payments to be made outside the United States.

"It's kind of sudden," US midfielder John Harkes said from England, where he plays with Derby. "I was just thinking that Bora was going to be there for the games this summer."

Carlos Queiroz, the coach of Sporting Lisbon in Portugal and the former coach of Portugal's national team, became the immediate favourite to take over. Earlier this week, the USSF offered Queiroz a job as director of technical coaching and youth player development.

Before taking over the Arsenal to visit Beijing

American team, Milutinovic led Mexico to the quarter finals of the 1986 World Cup and took Costa Rica to the second round of the 1990 World Cup.



Milutinovic led the United States to a record of 31 wins, 36 losses and 29 ties since replacing Bob Gansler on March 27, 1991. The high point was a first-round victory over Colombia in the World Cup.

I don't really think he changed anybody as an individual; he changed us a team," said forward Eric Wynalda, who plays for VfL Bochum in Germany's First Division.

"He brought in a belief to a group of people that we were good and we could be successful. The most important thing he did was that he brought a bunch of guys together and taught them to be a team — I wouldn't hesitate to say a family."

Milutinovic's last game was a 2-2 against Uruguay on March 25. He held his last practice Thursday in Mission Viejo, California, preparing the US-based players for an April 22 exhibition game against Belgium in Brussels. Just four players attended.

"He told us, 'If the contract's not signed, I can't go to Belgium,'" defender Paul Caligiuri said. "I think he wanted to stay here. I don't think he had hopes of moving. He was very up front, saying, 'this is life, this is what happens.'"

"It's shocking. It's definitely a big loss for US soccer. The coach became a great personality, and ambassador for soccer in the United States. He's brought this team a lot of success and credibility. We're basically giving that up for a new start again."

Paris Saint Germain striker Pascal Nouma (R) is challenged by Montpellier's Fabien Levivre during their French First Division match in Montpellier on April 14. Saint Germain trounced Montpellier 3-0. — AFP/UNB photo

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Martina has no regrets

AVENTURA, Florida, Apr 15: Martina Navratilova, who makes her return to elite tennis competition in 16 days, said Thursday she has no regrets about retiring from regular singles play on the WTA Tour, reports AP.

"It has been sort of a big relief," Navratilova said during an international conference call. "There are no tuggings at my heart strings. I'm quite happy where I am. I have no reason to come back."

Navratilova will be playing for the US team in the Federation Cup opening round against Austria here on April 22-23. This will be her first Fed Cup appearance since helping the US team win the 1989 title.

It will also be Navratilova's first competition since retiring from the WTA Tour last November after an opening-round defeat at the tour championships.

"The things I miss, I don't miss — the nerves and training and watching everything you do," Navratilova said. "Everything is tempered by optimum performance. I don't miss that. If I miss anything, it's being out there and performing our best. It's the blessing and the curse as well."

Navratilova has enjoyed snowboarding, something she never felt she could risk while on tour, and stretching her mind.

"I can read books, go to the movies and do pleasurable things for me instead of work on my tennis," Navratilova said. "Things are much more relaxed for me. I still have physical training I don't play as much tennis but I still do cardiovascular workouts, lift weights, play basketball here and there. If I miss a day, I don't panic because I don't have a tournament the next week."

Navratilova, who is 36-0 in Fed Cup play, would not play in July's possible second-round match against France or South Africa. But she might return if the US team reaches the November final. Either way, singles are not in her plans.

Navratilova will play doubles

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Sasaki stays in front

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