

Pele bucks up Brazilian booters

BRASILIA, Sept 11: Pele, in his capacity as special minister for sports, signed a measure Tuesday that will enable soccer players to become free agents before reaching 32, as is currently the case, reports AP.

The measure partially repeals Brazil's Law of the Pass, something like baseball's former reserve clause and should help players receive the lion's share of their transfer fees that are now paid to the teams.

Under the new rules set to take effect Jan. 1, 1997, soccer players will be allowed to become free agents at 26.

The measure also eliminates a requirement that players stay with one team for 10 years before becoming eligible for free agency.

"It's a revolution in soccer without any doubt. It's the first time that the problems in soccer are really being discussed," said Pele, whose given name is Edson Arantes do Nascimento, upon signing the measure.

Originally envisioned to allow players to become free agents at 24, as a compromise with Brazil's soccer teams the measure gradually lowers the age a player is eligible for free agency to 24 by 1999.

Players who are under contract, however, are not eligible for free agency until their contracts expire regardless of their age and that should create a trend towards longer contracts.

Under the new rules, teams with which players began their careers are entitled to 15 per cent of any future transfer fees.

Havelange unhappy

MADRID, Sept 11: FIFA president Joao Havelange says he is unhappy with the place given to soccer at the last two Olympics and wants the sport to make more money from the Games, reports Reuter.

"The Games are in one city and the stadiums are 400 kilometres away. Something isn't working," Havelange said in an interview published on Tuesday by the Spanish sports daily Marca.

"The federations pay to take their players and put on a party for somebody else. Football alone had more spectators than the rest of the sports but we don't receive anything in exchange," he said.

Asked if soccer should be taken out of the Olympics, Havelange said this was a matter for the FIFA executive.

Havelange was also on the offensive against the European community, whose ruling in favour of Jean-Marc Bosman has meant the emigration of large numbers of players.

Speculating that the ruling could create a Spanish national side composed entirely of Germans, Havelange said that controversies over the game were used to divert attention from other problems.

There are 15 million unemployed. That's why they talk about football," Havelange said. He said soccer moves 250 million dollars a year and employed 200 million people worldwide.

Havelange made clear he supported national teams against clubs in conflicts over availability created by the cross-border transfers.

"If clubs don't want to let players join their national sides then they should sign them," Havelange said. "We are studying the creation of a single (international) calendar."

Havelange said that, given "health and intellectual condition," he might seek to continue when his mandate as FIFA president expired in 1998.

And for Diego Maradona, one of his fiercest critics during 22 years in the post, Havelange had conciliatory words.

"I've never done anything but help him," he said.

'Socceroos' in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 11: Australia's national soccer squad arrived here Tuesday looking to fuel their country's already intense sporting rivalry with South Africa, reports AFP.

Australian coach Eddie Thomson, who arrived with his "socceroos" to play three African squads in the Simba Nations Cup, said he expected intense football against South Africa's Baifana Baifana.

"There is an intense rivalry between South Africa and Australia in both rugby and cricket, and I know our soccer encounters will be as intense," Thomson said.

"There will be no love lost between the two countries. We are not on a holiday camp here, and hopefully people in South Africa will remember us for the type of soccer we play," he added.

The round-robin tournament sees Australia play Ghana in the port city of Durban on Saturday, and South Africa the following Wednesday in Johannesburg. Australia's final match is against Kenya in Pretoria on Sept 21.

Thomson complimented South Africa's improved performances since the teams last met two years ago.

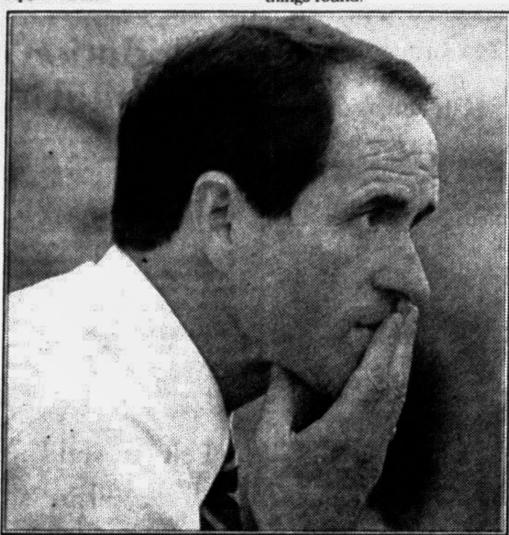
"Clive Barker did a fantastic job with the team. Once we saw the video-tapes, it came as little surprise to us that South Africa won the African Nations Cup," he said. "You have come on in leaps and bounds and we hope we can learn from each other."

Australian official Charlie Caruso said he hoped the relationship between the two countries would be strengthened during the tournament.

Graham's new lease of life



LEEDS, London, Sept 11: George Graham returned from disgrace and a 19-month exile from soccer on Tuesday to take over at Leeds United, resuming his career as one of the most successful modern managers in Britain, reports Reuter.



GEORGE GRAHAM

The 51-year-old Scot, banned from the sport last year for 12 months for accepting illegal payments over transfer deals, was named by Leeds as manager 24 hours after the sacking of Howard Wilkinson.

Graham, whose new team lost 4-0 at home to Manchester United on Saturday, precipitating Wilkinson's departure after

"The one guarantee I can give people is that we aim to be challenging at the top of the table and going for trophies."

"I had some success at my previous club and while I never promised we would win things, I did guarantee we would be trying."

Graham won six trophies in his reign as manager of Arsenal

between 1986 and 1995 — the championship and League Cup twice and the FA Cup and European Cup Winners' Cup once each.

Arsenal sacked him in February last year for accepting illegal payments from soccer for a year by the Football Association.

On the face of it, Graham looks ideally suited to Leeds, a club which has never rid itself of a 30-year-old image for seeking success through ruthless efficiency rather than by spectacular play or inspiration.

Graham's trophy-winning sides always carried the same reputation and the "boring Arsenal" jibes were not levelled at them just by fans of arch-rivals in north London Tottenham Hotspur.

Graham has long been something of a soccer contradiction. As an elegant but somewhat languid attacking midfielder player, he won the nickname 'stroller,' which has always stuck with him.

But he was an integral part of the Arsenal side which won the league and Cup double in 1971 and was good enough to win 12 caps for Scotland.

He also played for Aston Villa, Chelsea, Manchester United, Portsmouth and Crystal Palace. He moved into coaching with Queens Park Rangers and Palace, then into management with Millwall in 1986.

He may have detested training as a player but as a manager he rapidly became known as a strict disciplinarian who insisted on the qualities of running and hard work above all else.

Graham turned down the chance to resurrect First Division Manchester City last month after they parted company with Alan Ball and has made it clear he has accepted Leeds because they have money he can use to rebuild the team.

Graf may skip Leipzig

LEIPZIG, Germany, Sept 11: US Open champion Steffi Graf may miss a home event in Leipzig starting this month because of the attention surrounding her father's tax evasion trial, the organizer said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

"She is still top of the entry list. But I have my doubts because the tax trial in Mannheim is likely to cast a shadow as far as Leipzig," tournament director Ivan Radosevic said.

Peter Graf went on trial last week with a family tax advisor charged with evading tax worth 19 million marks (13 million dollars) on his daughter's earnings between 1989 and 1993.

world number one Graf, who clinched her 21st Grand Slam title three days after her father's trial began, is still under investigation in the affair but has not been charged.

Bailey's mouth faster than his legs!

NEW YORK, Sept 11: A proposed October match race between Michael Johnson and Donovan Bailey to determine the world's fastest man apparently fell apart on Tuesday when the Canadian 100 metres world record holder shot down the idea, reports Reuter.

A California-based promoter was set to stage a 150-metre showdown on October 6 at Toronto's Skydome that would have paid the winner 1 million dollars.

Johnson, America's Olympic hero who obliterated the 200 metre record in Atlanta in a stunning 19.32 seconds, was apparently set to go.

Bailey, who lowered the 100-metre world record to 9.84 seconds in winning at the Olympics, declined the invitation.

"I think some time we'll race but it won't happen in 1996," Bailey told CTV, a Canadian television network.

But the Canadian sprinter angered the Johnson camp by saying he would "easily win" a race against the American, who made history by becoming the first man to win the 200 and 400 metres gold medals at the same Olympics.

"I don't think Donovan's legs are as fast as his mouth," Brad Hunt, Johnson's business manager, said in a telephone interview from his Boulder, Colorado, office.

"He said he was too tired to run this year, but his mouth is not too tired," Hunt said. "It's time to separate the doers from the talkers."

Hunt said Bailey was dodging Johnson.

"Michael has signed a letter of intent, but the conditions Donovan placed on the race were unbelievable. He didn't even want to call it a race to determine the world's fastest man."

After his amazing 200 metres performance at the Olympics, Johnson had been called the world's fastest man by many.

That upset Canadians since the mythical honour traditionally has gone to the Olympic 100-metre winner, prompting the idea for a match race between the speedsters.

Romanian Open misses Becker, Goran

BUCHAREST, Sept 11: Goran Ivanisevic pulled out of the Romanian Open tennis tournament with a shoulder injury today in a second crushing blow to organisers after the withdrawal of top seed Boris Becker the previous day, reports Reuter.

"He told the doctor he has had recurrent pains in his left shoulder since his US Open semifinal defeat by Pete Sampras on Saturday," tournament spokesman Mihai Rusu said.

Ivanisevic, the tournament's second seed, and fellow Croat Sasha Hirszon lost a doubles match 6-2, 6-4 to Romanian pair Ciprian Porumb and Gabriel Trifu on Tuesday.

Becker, the Australian Open champion, retired during his first round match when he was trailing 5-3 in the first set to unseeded Christin Raad of Norway on Tuesday with a recurrence of the wrist problem that put him out of Wimbledon.

The 28-year-old German said he felt "strong pull" in his tendon that he broke at the Wimbledon Championships.

The withdrawal of the two top seeds is a big blow to organisers of the 500,000 dollars clay court tournament who have struggled to attract top names after financial scandals in recent years.

Japan beat Uzbekistan

TOKYO, Sept 11: Japan boosted their confidence for their defence of the Asian Cup in December by beating Asian Games gold medalists Uzbekistan 1-0 in a friendly match at the national stadium on Wednesday, reports AFP.

"They are the Asian champions. They are really tough opponents to beat but fortunately, they were not in top form and we could fight squarely. We were lucky we scored the goal at the beginning," said Japan's coach Shu Kamo.

The only goal came in the sixth minute when Hiroaki Morishima hit back a rebound after keeper Pavel Bugalo punched back the shot by Kzuyoshi Miura on a Masakiyo Maezono pass.



Inter Milan's Maurizio Ganz, who scored the first goal, celebrates with teammate Ivan Zamorano (on shoulders) during their UEFA Cup first round match against Guingamp in France on Sept 10. Milan won 3-0.

Valencia baffle Bayern

LONDON, Sept 11: Spanish side Valencia — playing without new signing Brazilian Romario — thrashed defending champions Bayern Munich 3-0 on Tuesday in their UEFA Cup first round match, report agencies.

Munich — who won the cup last season defeating Bordeaux in the final — went down on goals by Argentina Claudio Lopez, Gabriel Moya and Vicente Engonga in a match in which Valencia coach Luis Aragones declined to suit up the moody Brazilian.

Aragones, whose club has two losses in its first two Spanish league games, was unhappy with Romario's casual effort in practices leading up to the match.

Engonga put Valencia ahead on a penalty early in the first period and midfielder Lopez made it 2-0 on a cross from Valeri Karpin in the 26th minute.

Moya scored on a header in the 47th minute to wrap up the win.

The German league leaders now have a mountain to climb when the two sides meet in the return match at home in two weeks time.

Apart from Bayern, other German clubs performed well as British sides Arsenal and Celtic found out to their cost.

Moenchengladbach snatched a 3-2 win over the gunners at Highbury and Hamburg beat Celtic 2-0 in Glasgow.

Borussia took the lead after 37 minutes when Danish international midfielder Peter Nielsen sprung the Gunners' offside trap to feed Polish centre-forward Andrzej Juskowiak who slipped the ball past goalkeeper David Seaman.

Arsenal, who had earlier come within a whisker of taking the lead when John Hartson hit the post with a low drive, were shaken once again after the restart when stylish midfielder Stefan Effenberg poked home his side's second after sealed beat down his first effort.

The Londoners, who lost Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp after 18 minutes with a high injury, moved up a gear and Paul Merson crowned a fine performance by curling a superb

shot past Uwe Kamps to put them back in the match.

But Arsenal were stunned when Stephan Passlack rose majestically to head home a Christian Hochstatter freekick from the left and make it 3-1.

Although Ian Wright pulled one back in the dying seconds, Arsenal were unable to force the draw to leave the Germans hot favourites to reach the second-round of the competition.

Celtic could not have got off to a good start and found themselves trailing after just three minutes to a flying header from Hamburg's Lanky Carsten Baron.

The Scots were unlucky not to draw level when Jorge Cadate had a goal ruled offside during a purple patch in the closing stages of the first-half, but Markus Schoop drove home a second goal to stun the home faithful.

Aston Villa were another British side failing to click on the night. They could manage only a disappointing 1-1 home draw against Swedish part-timers Helsingborgs.

Tommy Johnson put the Premiership side into the lead after 14 minutes but Villa failed to capitalise on the perfect start and Peter Wibran drilled home a close-range equaliser nine minutes from the end.

By contrast Newcastle United thrived. They trounced Helsingborg's near-neighbours Halmstad 4-0 at St James Park with goals from Les Ferdinand and Faustino Asprilla inside the first 25 minutes and two more after the break from Belgian defender Philippe Albert and a Peter Beardsley gem.

There was no fairy-tale ending for Welsh minnows Barry Town who went down 3-1 away to Scottish opponents Aberdeen. Dean Windass opened the scoring after seven minutes and although Barry hit back through Richard Jones, further goals from Stephen Glass and Darran Young mid way through the second half gave the Scots a comfortable cushion for the second leg.

Earlier, two-times tournament winners Inter Milan opened their UEFA cup programme by brushing aside the challenge of French Novices Guingamp. Inter cantered to a 3-

0 win.

Guingamp, who came through the Intertoto tournament this summer to take their place in the competition for the first time, were clearly over-awed as Inter opened the scoring after 25 minutes through Maurizio Ganz.

The inexperienced French went further behind on 72 minutes when the visitors' French international striker Youri Djorkaeff converted a penalty following a foul on Chilean striker Ivor Zamorano by the home goalkeeper Angelo Hugues.

Swiss midfielder Ciriaco Sforza wrapped up the scoring three minutes from time for the Italians, who won the trophy in 1991 and 1994.

AS Roma won 3-0 at home over Dinamo Moscow as Uruguayan forward Daniel Fonseca scored twice in a game in which all goals came in the first half.

Jose Antonio Chamot scored a goal with six minutes left to give Italian club Lazio a 1-0 victory over France's Lens. The Argentine headed home off a freekick. Lazio played with 10 men from the 32nd minute when Giuseppe Vavalli was sent off on his second yellow card.

Italian striker Enrico Chiesa gave Parma a 2-1 home victory against Portugal's Vitoria Guimaraes on a goal in the 39th and the winner eight minutes from the end. Vitoria scored the equalizer in the 77th minutes when Brazilian forward Gilmar Esteven scored on a header.

Montpellier could only draw 1-1 at home to Sporting Lisbon and Metz settled for a 0-0 draw at FC Troy.

Espanyol had to fight to gain a 2-2 draw in Cyprus against Apollon Nicosia, while fellow Spaniards Tenerife only just edged Maccabi Tel Aviv 3-2.

Belgium's Anderlecht, finalists in 1970 and 1984, meanwhile, have to overturn a 1-1 deficit following their first-leg trip to Albania Vlladikavkaz.

Suad Katana gave the Belgians a fifth minute lead, but Igor Yanovski equalised for the Russians after 21 minutes while Yuri Shelia hit the winner just after the break.

Dinamo Tbilisi, who lifted the Cup Winner's Cup back in 1981, had a 35th minute goal from Gocha Jaramauli to thank for their 1-0 win away to Torpedo Moscow.

Feyenoord of Holland won 1-0 away against CSKA Moscow thanks to an 80th minute goal from new signing Kees van Wonderen and Ukraine's Dinamo Kiev beat Neuchatel Xamax of Switzerland 2-1 to set up an intriguing second leg in Switzerland.

Portuguese side Boavista were involved in a classic game of two halves in Denmark at Odense.

The Danese netted two penalties in as many minutes right on half time through Hemmingsen and then Pedersen.

But Sacha Simic pulled one back on 53 minutes. Nuno Gomes grabbed a 75th minute equaliser and, in a frenetic finale, Tavares hit the winner on 82 minutes.

Appeal to Kohl

FRANKFURT, Germany, Sept 11: The president of the German football federation Egidio Braun Tuesday called for Chancellor Helmut Kohl to adopt preventative measures against hooligans in the wake of recent incidents in Poland, reports AFP.

Five German football supporters were convicted on Monday for disturbances caused during a friendly against Poland at Zabrze, in the country's south, last Wednesday.

Four were fined, while two were handed a six month suspended prison sentence.

The federation president pointed out that Interpol Krakow, the German embassy and the local police were aware of the dangers posed by the hooligans in question.

Artistry in articulo mortis



RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 11 (Reuter): For the past month, Brazilians have been subjected to scenes of undiluted brutality and sickening violence on their television screens as early as four in the afternoon.

Brazilian television stations are among the world's leading clients for Hollywood's more blood-thirsty productions, offering viewers endless car chases, explosions, scenes of torture, machine-gun fights and ninyas by the thousand.

But the thrugery which has crept over into the primetime slots is very much a local production, the Brazilian soccer championship.

Brazilian domestic football is not for the squeamish. The national team has always been associated with moments of skill and magic but fans watching a domestic clash between two leading clubs are more likely to see players lunging at each others' legs with reckless two-footed challenges.

Some teams have even been accused of employing a "Rota" system in which their defenders take it in turns to kick the opposition's best player instead of getting a man-to-man marker to do it. This reduces the chances of the same defender picking up two yellow cards.

"The violence in Brazilian football today is a disgrace," said former international Gerson, now a television commentator.

The source of his anger was a clash between leading clubs

Flamengo and Corinthians, a game symbolic of the rest of the competition.

In the very first minute, Flamengo's lightweight striker Savio was knocked over by a vicious challenge from behind by Corinthians defender Alexandre Lopes.

Yet in a decision which critics say is indicative of Brazilian refereeing, the giant defender got away with only a yellow card.

Savio, advised by national team coach Mario Zagalo to cut down on dribbling to save his shins from further punishment, hinted later that he had been hit on an already-injured ankle.

"FIFA (international soccer's governing body) say that players should be sent off for that type of offence but you try getting that into the heads of our referees," Gerson said. "This refereeing is a joke."

"All that has to be done is to send the offender off. It does not matter whether it is the first minute or the first second. But the referees here overlook everything and the disciplinary tribunals overlook everything too."

Last week, a national news programme asked the coaches of top clubs to elect the most violent players in Brazilian soccer. The winners included midfielders Amaral and Ze Elias, two regular Brazil internationals.

"It was a sequence to make your hair stand on end," said soccer critic Fernando Calazans, referring to the clips that accompanied the vote. "The

scenes proved that the fouls are increasingly targeting the legs of the opponent."

While the coaches acted as the jury on this occasion, many feel they should be facing the interrogations. Coaches are accused of complaining about violence when it is against their own players but ignoring it when it is carried out by them.

Throughout the match with Corinthians, Flamengo coach Joel Santana could be heard cursing the violence of his opponents and the leniency of the referee, thanks to a microphone near the Flamengo bench.

But when asked about a challenge by Flamengo midfielder Alessandro Mancuso that dispatched Corinthians playmaker Souza to the treatment table before halftime, Santana replied: "Mancuso is macho."

Souza is expected to be out of action for 15 days while Mancuso received a yellow card only.

Three Flamengo players were included in the list of leading perpetrators. The club's latest signing is defender Junior Baiano sacked by German club Werder Bremen after receiving a 10 match ban for punching an opponent in a Bundesliga match.

Tiger Cup soccer

SINGAPORE, Sept 11: Malaysia and Thailand qualified for the semifinals of the inaugural Tiger Cup competition here Tuesday, with Thailand 1-0 win eliminating hosts Singapore, reports AFP.

Tournament favourites Thailand never looked like losing despite being kept scoreless by Singapore until the 68th minute.

Striker Natpong Sritong secured the top spot in Group A for the South East Asian Games champions when he found the net from a Dusit Chalmersan free kick.

It was a much easier final qualifying round for Malaysia who booked their place in the knock-out phase with a comfortable 6-0 win over Brunel.

Five of Malaysia's goals came from substitutes with Anuar Abu Bakar and M Chandran scoring twice in the second-half.

K Sambagamaran claimed his fifth goal in four games to open the scoring in the third minute when he latched onto a cross from man-of-the-match Zawi Noor.

Malaysia went into the half-time break two goals up thanks to Samsurin Abdul Rahman's header eight minutes before the break after a defensive mix-up between Brunei captain Liew Chuan and his goalkeeper.

Thailand finished top of Group B and they will face the runners-up in Group A, which will be decided today when Indonesia take on Vietnam and Laos play Burma.

Abedi Pele joins Bundesliga

BONN, Sept 11: German Bundesliga side 1860 Munich signed Ghanaian striker Abedi Pele on a free transfer from Torino on Tuesday in an attempt to solve a crisis up front, reports Reuter.

Pele, 33, a member of Olympic Marseille's 1993 European Cup winning team, is intended to replace 1860's top striker Olaf Bodden, sidelined with a viral infection.

"We want him to do what he does best. He can Dribble, stay on the ball, he's quick, he has a good eye and he can pass. He can set up goals and he can score them," said 1860 trainer Werner Lorant.

Cantona in a stew



LIVERPOOL, England, Sept 11: Eric Cantona has been sued by a man who claims he was assaulted by the Manchester United star during a brawl at a hotel two years ago, reports AP.

The case is scheduled for a private hearing before a judge at Liverpool County Court next week, court officials confirmed Tuesday.

Tom Doyle, a 38-year-old Liverpool salesman, alleges that Cantona attacked him at the Moat House International Hotel in Chester in May 1994.

The incident allegedly occurred as the French striker and other Manchester United players were celebrating after a day at the horse races.

The Daily Mirror reported that a brawl broke out after Cantona's teammate Paul Nice, now with Inter Milan, was taunted by drunken racists who poured beer over his head.

The paper said Doyle was suing Cantona for undisclosed damages.

A court spokeswoman, who declined to give her name, said the case would be heard by district judge David Gee on Sept 18.

"It is a private matter to be heard in chambers," she said. United attorney Maurice Watkins is representing Cantona.

make any further comment. It wasn't immediately clear whether Cantona and Doyle will appear in court for next week's preliminary legal round if the case goes to a full hearing later, it would be held in open court and Cantona would likely be called to testify.

The alleged incident occurred before Cantona's notorious Kung Fu-style attack on a Crystal Palace fan in January 1995. That incident led to an assault conviction, a sentence

of 120 hours community service, a 10,000-pound (15,000 dollars) fine and an eight month ban from soccer.

Since then, Cantona has stayed out of trouble. Last season, he returned from his suspension to lead Manchester United to the Premier League and FA Cup titles.



The action is being defended, but with a case pending I don't think it's appropriate to