

## Sacchi sticks to his guns

ROME, Sept 14: Three months after Italy's early elimination at Euro '96, which caused a nationwide sensation, coach Arrigo Sacchi said Friday he did not regret his choices and the tactics which proved unsuccessful in England, report agencies.

Sacchi told a press conference that he planned to use most players from the disappointing European expedition in the upcoming World Cup qualifying games.

Italy take on Moldova and Georgia next month in the initial games of a qualifying group also including England and Poland.

"The European group (of players) is reliable. I must only consider their current form... I will also look at the English league (where some Italian internationals are currently playing)," Sacchi said, referring to stalwarts Roberto Di Matteo and Fabrizio Ravanelli.

Sacchi, however, accused the media of "summary justice" and making him a scapegoat for his side's humiliating elimination.

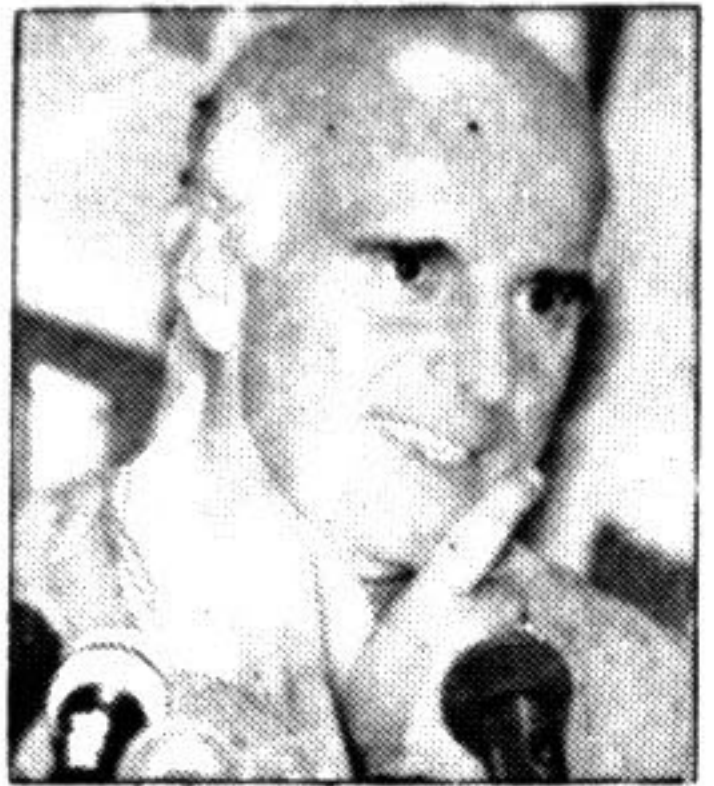
"The summary justice in the media that was aimed at turning me into a scapegoat and which failed to point out the positive things we showed in England," Sacchi told the con-

ference at Rome's Olympic Stadium.

"When a team wins, it's everybody's merit; the players, the coach, the organisation," he said.

"And when a team loses, it's everybody's fault."

The Italian media had called for Sacchi's head after the debacle. He was lambasted for not including key players in his starting line up against even-



ARRIGO SACCHI

tual finalists the Czech Republic, a match the Italians lost.

But he has managed to weather the summer storm, aided by an indissoluble two-year contract he signed just before Euro '96 and a power vacuum within Italy's national soccer federation.

Last month Raffaele Pag-

nozzi was named "extraordinary commissioner" of the federation after Italy's clubs failed to find a replacement for Antonio Matarrese, who resigned after the poor showing in Euro '96.

Newspapers have reported that Pagnozzi had no choice but to retain Sacchi for at least the remainder of 1996.

Barring Italy failing to qualify, Sacchi is likely to stay on until the end of his multi-million dollar contract which includes the 1998 World Cup in France.

Asked if the absence of midfielder Di Matteo and strikers Gianfranco Zola and Pierluigi Casiraghi contributed to Italy's defeat against the Czechs, Sacchi said: "I'm not sure we would have won if they had started."

He said his biggest error was not to have noticed a drop in his players' concentration after Italy beat Russia 2-1 in their first game.

"It was a serious error because we showed up on the pitch with a lack of determination and drive. To be excellent you have to be motivated; You can't think you have already reached your goal."

"Nevertheless, I think Italy were inferior to no-one in terms of the quality of our game. And I believe we played better than Germany, even if we managed no more than a draw."

## France asked to follow England's lead

PARIS, Sept 14: FIFA, soccer's governing body, has asked France to copy England and dismantle stadium fencing in fans for the 1998 World Cup finals, reports AFP.

England proved during the European Championships you could do it and World Cup crowds are not the same as crowds at club matches, where you get more problems," FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter said here after visiting the new Paris stadium being built to stage the World Cup final.

Fans are neither prisoners nor animals," Blatter added.

Jacques Lambert, the World Cup Organising Committee director, said he feared French fans might not resist the temptation to onto the pitch but he would not rule out any request.

FIFA might submit a request at their executive committee meeting at Barcelona in December.

Lambert said he was unsure if French law, which lays down that fans should be separated from the pitch by fencing, would have to be changed for the 10 grounds for the 1998 World Cup to be open.

England dismantled fencing after the 1989 Hillsborough tragedy when 95 Liverpool fans were crushed to death after a crowd surge trapped fans against steel fencing.

## Simmons seals Durham's fate

LONDON, Sept 14: Trinidadian Phil Simmons plundered 171 as county championship leaders Leicestershire brushed aside bottom club Durham by an innings and 251 runs inside two days, reports Reuters.

Simmons, who claimed a career-best six for 14 in Durham's first innings, hit two sixes and 23 fours from 170 deliveries.

He and Paul Nixon put on 284 — a record sixth wicket partnership for the county, beating the previous best of 262 set in 1911, before Leicestershire declared at 516 for six.

Nixon's unbeaten 103 included 12 fours.

Durham, without a championship victory this season, then made a dismal attempt at wiping out their first innings deficit of 390.

They lost West Indies Test opener Sherwin Campbell to the second ball of the innings and capitulated for 139, England fast bowler Alan Mullaly taking five for 27.

Darren Gough was another England paceman in fine form on Friday. His explosive burst carried Yorkshire to a two-day victory by an innings and six runs over Nottinghamshire at Scarborough.

In an inspired spell of 21 balls, Gough claimed four for six as Nottinghamshire were reduced to 83 for two, lost their last eight wickets for 34 runs.

Gough finished with six for 36 and a match haul of nine for 62.

Second-placed Surrey laboured to 273 for four off 101 overs in reply to Glamorgan's first innings 364 at Cardiff.

England batsman Graham Thorpe faced 159 balls in compiling the day's top score of 77.

## 'Bjorn is back in town'

STOCKHOLM, Sept 14: Bjorn Borg, Sweden's most successful tennis player, is to make a brief return to the sport in 'Borg Day' at his home town of Sodertelja in central Sweden, organisers said on Friday, reports Reuters.

The five times Wimbledon champion, who retired from Centre Court at the age of 27 after being beaten by American John McEnroe, will play against fellow Swede, 25-year-old Mattias Frisk, on October 5.

The gala day, called 'Bjorn is back in town', was organised by his hometown to honour the tennis player who turned 40 in June and still holds the record for successive Wimbledon wins.

The gala is a kind of thanks to Bjorn for the publicity he's given this city and the club during all these years," said Ulf chairman of Sodertelja Tennis Club.

He (Eckardt) said himself he never informed me about tax matters — particularly not of such a dubious or controversial nature," she said.

She said she had never been told of the details of what was happening to her earnings — believed to have reached over 100 million marks (66 million dollars) in total.

The player has always said she left her financial affairs in the hands of her father, a former used-car salesman who coached her and acted as mentor from the time she was four years old.

Graf said prosecutors had now come to the same conclusion.

"That's why they suggested dropping the case against me in return for payment of a fine," she said.

"The position now is that the authorities will wait for the outcome of the trial against my father and Eckardt, and then they will again discuss dropping the investigation."

She said she had nothing to fear from the trial.

"I am entirely convinced that no details can emerge in the trial which could suggest any guilt on my part because I have nothing to reproach myself for. After the trial there will hopefully be no doubts about my role in the matter," she said.

Graf announced she was now moving control of all her financial affairs to a new company and new manager in the family's home town of Bruehl.

"After my career finishes I aim with my company to become active in sports marketing. I'm thinking of managing other athletes and organising events," she said.



An AFP photo shows the new logo of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

## 2000 Games' logo unveiled

SYDNEY, Sept 14: Sydney launched the logo for the 2000 Olympics on national television on Saturday as Games organisers predicted 1.0 billion dollars (600 million dollars) merchandising bonanza over the next four years, reports Reuters.

The logo, featuring at its centre three aboriginal boomerang shape joined together in a stylised image of an athlete, was unveiled to a television audience as part of a Sydney harbourside ceremony attended by Prime Minister John Howard.

The Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) has predicted it will earn 100 million Australian dollars in copyright fees and royalties from domestic and international merchandising.

Products bearing the new logo will be available for sale from January 1, 1997. Major sponsors will also be able to use the logo from that date, the official start of the four year Sydney Olympiad.

"The logo is part of a very substantial marketing programme which will deliver about 1.0 billion Australian dollars in turnover. About 100 million Australian dollars will go to SOCOG," SOCOG marketing director John Moore said.

The design also features a stylised outline of the Sydney Opera House, the central feature of the logo used by the city in its bid for the Games. Its principal colours are blue, red and yellow to represent the ocean and Australia's arid interior.

"We wanted the logo to bring in our culture, our country and our background," SOCOG chief executive Mal Hemmerling said.

"It was also very important to us that the athlete should have centre place and that the athlete should be moving forward towards the new millennium," Hemmerling said.

A steel sculpture of the logo design has been erected next to the water at Darling Harbour in the city.

The use of the boomerang symbol, a curved throwing stick which aborigines traditionally used for hunting, was welcomed by aboriginal leaders, who are campaigning for land rights and social equality.

Aborigines, numbering 300,000 among Australia's 18 million population, are the nation's most disadvantaged group. Their life expectancy is 17 to 20 years less than white Australians, have higher rates of unemployment and health problems.

Some aboriginal leaders have threatened to disrupt the 2000 Games as a way of protesting against their people's plight.

SOCOG has estimated it will spend 1.87 billion Australian dollars on running the Games. The New South Wales state government, as underwriter, is committed to spend 1.9 billion Australian dollars on infrastructure.

Evander Holyfield, who won the WBA title fight, said he was in "top condition" and "has no intent of fighting again unless he is 100 percent."

In the last Bowe fight, Holyfield appeared to tire in the last half of every round before finally getting knocked out in the eighth round. He last fought when he stopped Bobby Czyz three weeks.

Holyfield's heart has been a concern since he lost the heavyweight title to Moore in April 1994. He was diagnosed then as having a non-compliant left ventricle, which is manifested by severe fatigue, and a small hole between the upper chambers of his heart.

He later said he had been diagnosed with a disease that can attack the lungs and heart, but then proclaimed himself cured by a faith healer.

Commissioner doctor Flip Homansky said the tests since that time have shown no sign of any type of heart disease besides a typical S-K reading that is normally associated with black males of his age.

"The data is still conflicting and has never been reproduced," Homansky said.

Man United fans seek UEFA action

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 14: Manchester United fans want action from UEFA after claiming they were subjected to violent treatment during Wednesday's European Cup match against Juventus in Turin, reports Reuters.

The English club's Independent Supporters Association intend to compile a dossier of fans' experiences after allegations of baton and tear gas attacks by police. The violent incidents were said to have occurred in the city centre and outside the stadium.

Supporters also claim they were searched before going into the ground and personal items such as loose change, keys and lighters were confiscated.

The association's chairman Johnny Flecks said that flares were directed into the United section of the stadium by Juventus fans and supporters were lucky to escape serious injury.

"We want the football authorities to launch an immediate investigation to ensure that similar events don't happen again during future European visits this season," said Flecks.

"We are compiling a dossier to give to UEFA and the (English) Football Association and want supporters who were involved in incidents or witnessed anything unpleasant to send us details."

"Lighted flares were thrown into the United section by Juventus fans and I understand that UEFA has specifically banned the use of fireworks within stadiums. The punishment apparently is ground closure."

"I would like to see what happens in this instance because flares were being set off all night."

## Ferguson keen to sign Nadal

LONDON, Sept 14: Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson confirmed on Friday that he has reopened negotiations with Barcelona for Spanish international defender Miguel Nadal, reports AFP.

Ferguson had attempted to sign the 30-year-old — dubbed during Euro '96 "the beast of Barcelona" because of his rugged challenges that has led to him being sent off several times — in June although negotiations proved fruitless.

"The dialogue has started again," said Ferguson, adding that the clubs have agreed a deal and now United want to talk personal terms with the player.

The 3.25 million pound (5 million dollars) deal was believed to have foundered initially due to Nadal's demand for 30,000 pounds a week.

United club chairman Martin Edwards said: "Money no longer seems to be the issue. We are simply awaiting a call from Spain to tell us we can proceed with the transfer."

"The matter is very much in the hands of the player. Originally, there was a problem with Nadal's advisors over personal terms."

"No, though, we understand Nadal has changed his mind. He wants to come to Old Trafford and we want to do the deal. Alex rates Nadal highly. He is a centre-back who can also play in midfield and is very experienced."

Nadal would not be eligible for the Champions League until the quarter-finals stages. United lost their opening group game 1-0 against holders Juventus in midweek.

## Spaniards in semis

BUCHAREST, Romania, Sept 14: Spaniards Carlos Moya and Alberto Berasategui easily won Friday to advance in the semifinals of the 500,000 dollars Romanian Open tennis tournament, reports AP.

Third-seeded Moya ousted countryman Francisco Clavet 6-2, 6-3. He became the tournament favourite after the first two seeds, Boris Becker and Goran Ivanisevic, withdrew because of injuries.

In the semifinals, Moya will play Romanian Andrei Pavel who defeated 6-3, 6-2 eighth-seeded Jiri Novak of Czech Republic.

Fourth-seeded Berasategui upset Ion Moldovan of Romania 6-4, 6-2. He will play Christian Ruud of Norway, who beat Romanian Dinu Pescariu, 6-2, 7-5.

Pescariu on Thursday ousted last year's finalist, Gilbert Schaller.

## MLS mission at stake

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey, Sept 14: (AP) Carlos Queiroz came to the US Major League Soccer to try to salvage a floundering club in the league's biggest market. His success may make him too expensive to keep.

The 43-year-old Portuguese coach said he has been offered a contract to coach Grampus Eight of Nagoya in the Japanese J-League, a deal club sources have said is worth \$2 million per year for two years.

"Nothing is decided," Queiroz said following his New York-New Jersey MetroStars' 3-1 victory over the Los Angeles Galaxy Tuesday night. "(Grampus Eight) don't want to rush me, they don't want to put a deadline, but they need a fast answer. They need to know."

MetroStars general manager Charlie Sullivan said there is no way the MLS club can match Grampus Eight's offer, but they have made one that is for three years and "four-to-five times" less than what the Japanese club has put forth.

"Carlos is very happy here," Sullivan said. "It will come down to a personal family decision. While our offer will clearly make him by far the highest-paid coach in the league to stay here, we need to be realistic."

"This (Grampus offer) could financially set him for life," Queiroz took over the MetroStars from Eddie Firmani, who resigned after a 1-2-5 start, and has guided the club to a 10-1-10 record and on the verge of clinching a playoff berth. He said Tuesday night he expects to make a decision within a few days.

"There are so many things (to consider)," said Queiroz, who would not comment on the specifics of the offer. "The environment, the country, the players, the family, the timing. I need to have time to sit and think about it."

In the last couple of days that the offer came in, I didn't have time to think about the impact the decision will have on my life."

Queiroz is obligated to the MetroStars through the end of the MLS season, which runs through the Oct. 20 MLS Cup championship game. Stillitano said he had not officially heard from Grampus Eight as of Tuesday night.

Grampus Eight's offer to Queiroz is to manage the club, that he is one of several candidates and nothing is decided, according to team spokesman Masaharu Teijima.

The Japanese club is looking for a replacement for Frenchman Arsene Wenger, who will leave the club after the J-League season at the end of the year to take over at English Premier League club Arsenal.

MLS commissioner Doug Logan said they hoped to keep Queiroz, but can't get into a bidding war for players or coaches.

"No one has said this league except with the fact that it would be run on prudent, sound financial basis," Logan said. "This league will not see 2-million-dollar coaches."

## Malaysia, Thailand in final

SINGAPORE, Sept 14: Malaysia showed that football is already well on the way to recovery after the bribery scandal that rocked the sport within the south east Asian nation less than two years ago, reports AFP.

Almost the entire national side were banned from playing the game following an operation that found over 100 players were involved in match-rigging on the eve of the Malaysia Cup final in 1994.

Now, though, Malaysia is back on the scene after reaching the final of the inaugural Tiger Cup.

## Tricksters cheat track stars' families

BEIJING, Sept 14: Tricksters posing as insurance salesmen have cheated the families of two of China's Olympic champions by selling them sham insurance policies, the China Insurance News said on Friday, reports Reuters.

The sister of star runner Wang Junxia, who won the women's 5,000 metres gold in Atlanta, paid 550 yuan (66 dollars) on August 5 to a middle-aged man who came to the family's home claiming to be an insurance salesman, the newspaper said.

On July 28, the parents of women's judo gold medalist Sun Fuming borrowed 1,100 yuan (dollars 132) to pay a middle-aged man who said his company would protect the champion against those who sought to take advantage of her, it said.

Neither salesman returned with the promised policies.

Police said they believed the same man could have been involved in both cases but had no suspects, the newspaper said.

## Romario throws another tantrum

VALENCIA, Spain, Sept 14: Brazil's World Cup star Romario marched out of training here on Friday after being dropped for the second time in a week by Valencia, reports AFP.

Coach Luis Aragones decided to stay with the team which



ROMARIO

beat Bayern Munich in the UEFA Cup in midweek for Sunday's league game at Real Zaragoza.

Romario, who had threatened to quit if he was not selected, refused to talk after this second blow to his pride.

Valencia paid a total of five million dollars, to Flamengo of Brazil and his former Spanish club Barcelona, for Romario.

## Little relief for Peter

STUTTGART, Germany, Sept 14: A German court on Friday lifted a detention order on tennis star Steffi Graf's father, but Peter Graf's father, currently on trial for tax evasion, but an appeal kept him in jail for the time being, reports Reuters.

Peter Graf's lawyer Kurt Himmelsbach said prosecutors in the town of Mannheim had appealed against the city court's decision to free him on bail, and a high court in Karlsruhe would have to make a final ruling. This was unlikely to happen on Friday.

Himmelsbach declined to say at what level bail had been set.

The multi-millionaire tennis star herself is still under investigation in the affair, but she said prosecutors were con-

sidering dropping the inquiry in return for a fine.

Peter Graf, 58, has been in jail in the southwestern town of Mannheim since August 1995.

He is accused, together with family tax adviser Joachim Eckardt, of evading 19 million marks (12.5 million dollars) of taxes on his daughter's income between 1989 and 1993, and could face up to 10 years in jail if convicted. Eckardt also stands to be freed on bail if the Karlsruhe court rules in his favour.



PETER GRAF

At the trial, which began last week, Graf said politicians and tax authorities had led him to believe they approved of his methods of reducing tax on his millionaire daughter's earnings.

Eckardt's lawyers told the court the world number one tennis player, who won the lat-

est of her 21 Grand Slam titles at the US Open in New York last week as the trial was beginning had been informed of the details of her father's tax schemes.

In an interview with the mass circulation Daily Bild on Friday, she called this accusation "old hat" and said it was based on second-hand information.

He (Eckardt) said himself he never informed me about tax matters — particularly not of such a dubious or controversial nature," she said.

She said she had never been told of the details of what was happening to her earnings — believed to have reached over 100 million marks (66 million dollars) in total.

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"After my career finishes I aim with my company to become active in sports marketing. I'm thinking of managing other athletes and organising events," she said.



Rafah Mahmoud al-Mouzain (L) of Palestine tries to overcome Al-Rajaa defender Mohamed al-Bakkari during their Arab Champions Cup clash in Cairo on September 13. AL—AFP/UNB photo