

Aussies in
semis

Twenty-four carat Ronaldo



ROME, Dec 20 (Reuters): The image of Ronaldo in a smart jacket with a trophy in his hand is likely to become as familiar in the next few weeks as those of the 21-year-old grinners after scoring another goal.

For on Monday he will be named an European footballer-of-the-year for 1997 — just after winning World Soccer's world footballer-of-the-year title, with FIFA's world-player-of-the-year title sure to follow soon after.

The Brazilian has become the first South American to win the prestigious Golden Ball award for Europe's footballer-of-the-year from France Football magazine.

The latest honour — which follows his award for world-footballer-of-the-year in 1996 and European Golden Boot winner for being Europe's top

scorer last season — confirms beyond all doubt that he is currently the best player in the world and in a sense confirms his destiny.

He always knew he was destined for success — and that he would achieve it on the soccer pitches of Europe.

Ronaldo, who learned his trade on the city streets of his native Brazil, says the long trip across the Atlantic was obvious for a young South American with no money but plenty of talent.

"I was tiny when the first great Brazilian players started to come to Europe, a bit like the Italian immigrants before them, following their dreams," he said recently.

"I was six years old and I decided I'd come to Europe as soon as I could."

Ronaldo got his chance 11 years later when he signed for Dutch giants PSV Eindhoven from Cruzeiro, where he had already made his mark with 58

Then came Ronaldo's long, drawn-out transfer to Inter, which threatened to take the spark out of his game.

He complained openly about the interminable wrangling over his transfer fee and insisted all he wanted was to play soccer in what he regards as the world's most competitive league.

But that has not stopped Ronaldo scoring goals, 14 of them in 19 appearances which have helped take Inter to the top of Serie A and the qualifiers for the UEFA and Italian Cups.

The man Italian media call simply "il fenomeno" has proved once again he can adapt to a new league and new opponents and score goals on virtually any footballing stage.

At the same time he shuns the limelight with characteristic gentleness and diplomacy.

The one stage on which Ronaldo has yet to prove himself is the World Cup.

He was a member of the Brazil squad which won the tournament in the United States in 1994 but, aged 17, he did not get a game, something he cites as his greatest disappointment to date.

The way he responds to that setback when Brazil defend their title in France next year will reveal much about his strength of character.

The other item still missing in the Ronaldo Trophy room is a league championship medal.

He has a Cup Winners Cup medal from his season at Barcelona, a Copa America medal with Brazil and domestic cup winner's medals from three different countries — Brazil, the Netherlands and Spain.

"Time is the one thing I don't have," he said. "We thought of asking Father Christmas for more of it but I know even he can't help me. I never have time to be with my family, to see places, to relax with my friends. All that'll have to wait until I stop playing."

That may be every defender's wish but, for the time being, the 21-year-old from Bento Ribeiro shows no sign of slowing up.

RONALDO

goals in 60 matches.

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He enjoyed a spectacular start there, not only keeping up his virtual goal-per-game scoring record but doing so in style.

A typical Ronaldo goal in those first matches with the Catalans involved picking the ball up somewhere near the centre circle, running at the opposing defence at terrifying speed and, after shrugging off a series of attempts to scythe him down, slotting the ball under the goal-keeper in to the net.

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The British fighter was now on all 29 of his pro bouts and stopped 27 opponents inside the distance.

Kelley, a former WBC title-holder at the weight, has now lost two of 53 contests.

Hamed retains
WBO belt

NEW YORK, Dec 20: Britain's World Boxing Organisation (WBO) featherweight champion Prince Naseem Hamed retained his crown at the Madison Square Garden here Friday when he knocked out American challenger Kevin Kelley in the fourth round of a scheduled twelve round contest, reports AFP.

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Pajero Cup
golf held

The seventh Pajero Cup golf tournament was held on Friday at the Bhatiary Golf and Country Club in Chittagong. The event was sponsored by Rangs Limited, says a press release.

This year the tournament was participated by 68 players from home and abroad.

Brigadier Jahangir Khan, Commandant EBRC, teed off the meet in the morning.

M H Samad became champion and Jong Oh Bae runner-up respectively.

Later a prize-giving ceremony was held at the club in the evening. It was attended by H Ito, general manager, Mitsubishi Motors Corporation, Abdur Rouf Chowdhury, chairman and managing director, Rangs Group. Brig Kabir was the chief guest.

The ceremony was followed by a raffle draw which was conducted by Mrs Zakir Rouf Chowdhury.

OTHER RESULTS

Nearest to pin — M A Rahim; longest drive — Romo Rouf Chowdhury; best par's back nine — K Ebisawa; best par's front nine — Lt Col (Retd) M Iqbal Shah; best back nine — Saffat Rahman; best front nine — R Usui; 2NS best gross — Mohsin Ahmed; best gross — S S Rahman; lady winner — R Ebisawa.

Champions' Trophy
final scorecard

Scoreboard of the four-nation Akai-Singer Champions' Trophy final between England and West Indies in Sharjah on December 19:

WEST INDIES: 235 for seven (Charanderpaul 76, S Williams 55, Simmons 39 n.o., Hooper 34; M Fleming 3/42, Croft 1/40)

ENGLAND

A Brown c Chanderpaul b Rose 1
Stewart b Hooper 51
Knight run out (S Williams) 24
Hick c Hooper b Lewis 9
Thorpe not out 66
A Hollings st D Williams b Hooper 16
Esham b Walsh 4
Fleming run out (Simmons) 34
D Brown not out 4
Extras: 0-1, 1b-6, w-5, nb-81 30
Total: (For seven wkt in 48.1 overs) 239

Fall of wkt: 1-14; 2-89; 3-107; 4-107; 5-152; 6-165; 7-235

Did not bat: R Croft, D Headley

Bowling: O M R W
Walsh 9.1 1 39 1
Rose 10 0 36 0
Dillon 6 0 36 0
Simmons 4 0 25 0
Lewis 9 0 51 1
Hooper 10 0 35 2

Result: England won by three wickets

Man of the match: Graham Thorpe

Man of the series: Carl Hooper.

Boxing result

LONDON, Dec 20: South African Thulane "Sugar Boy" Malina recaptured the World Boxing Council (WBC) super-middleweight title on Saturday when he beat Britain's Robin Reid on points, reports Reuters.

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