

### Jordi demands clarification

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 18: Manchester United forward Jordi Cruyff asked the club to fight to clear his name today after newspaper reports claimed he had helped Barcelona United's Champions League match on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Cruyff angrily denied suggestions he helped Barcelona, his former club, because he was unhappy at being left out of the United team by manager Alex Ferguson.

Cruyff has only made one substitute appearance for United so far this season, playing the last 20 minutes of the Charity Shield curtain-raiser against Arsenal on August 9.

One newspaper report said Cruyff, the 24-year-old son of Dutch legend Johan, told Barcelona goalkeeper Ruud Hesp secret team information on the eve of their match which ended a thrilling 3-3 draw.

An angry Cruyff refuted the reports, saying "I never spoke to the Barcelona players about United."

"I am absolutely disgusted with the stories I saw saying that I had helped Barcelona. My name has to be cleared, very, very cleared."

"I don't know what the normal procedure is but I will be asking the club to look into it for me."

"I am disgusted and furious about it. If Hesp has said something I am furious with him but I don't think he said it."

Cruyff revealed his Old Trafford teammates and Ferguson laughed off the reports, but he said he was still embarrassed.

### Canada's apology

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 18: Canada's field hockey team has apologised and offered to pay the estimated US 25 dollars damage it caused after a disputed loss at the Commonwealth Games, reports AFP.

The Canadian players were angered by an umpiring decision by Scotland's David Wallis that allowed Malaysia to take a winning 2-1 lead in their match late Thursday. The Canadians surrounded the umpire after the match and were the subject of a police report after causing damage to their dressing room.

Canadian team spokeswoman Teresa Moore said the damage was minor and was done because the players were locked out of their dressing room and feared crowd violence.

A crowd of almost 20,000 pelted the playing field with bottles after the match as the Canadians remonstrated with Wallis.

"Because of the bottle throwing, the players were desperate to get into the locker room but the door was locked shut because their belongings were inside," Moore said Friday.

The goalie (Mike Mahood) ran at the door with his stick up, there's a slight dent in the door and a sign also got knocked over. The damage was accidental and (Mahood) wasn't a happy camper. They definitely felt threatened by the bottle throwing."

Moore said any disciplinary action was a matter for the team's coach but added the team would stay at the village through to the end of the Games.

"As far as we're concerned, the matter is over," Moore said. "We are 100 per cent behind the team. It was a very unfortunate incident and the players are contrite but every time someone does something wrong you can't just abandon them."

Moore said the team sent a staff member in to take still and video footage of the damage done. She said stadium officials had estimated the damage at about 100 Malaysian ringgit (about US 25 dollars).

## SIX NO TRUMPS

### A K Sayeedul Huq

A VERY GOOD HAND ASSESSMENT BY WEST (Hand # 97)

North	South (D)
♠ 10X ♥ 9X ♦ J88X ♣ KJ7XX	♠ K78 ♥ KX ♦ AQXX ♣ Q109X

West	East
♠ AQXX ♥ 108XX ♦ K10X ♣ 8X	♠ J98X ♥ AQJXX ♦ XX ♣ AX

Bidding

South	West	North	East
1 Diamond*	Pass	1 Heart**	Double
1 No Trump	Pass	2 Clubs	2 Hearts
3 Clubs	4 Hearts	Pass	Pass

\* Artificial  
\*\* Artificial, 0-6 HCP.

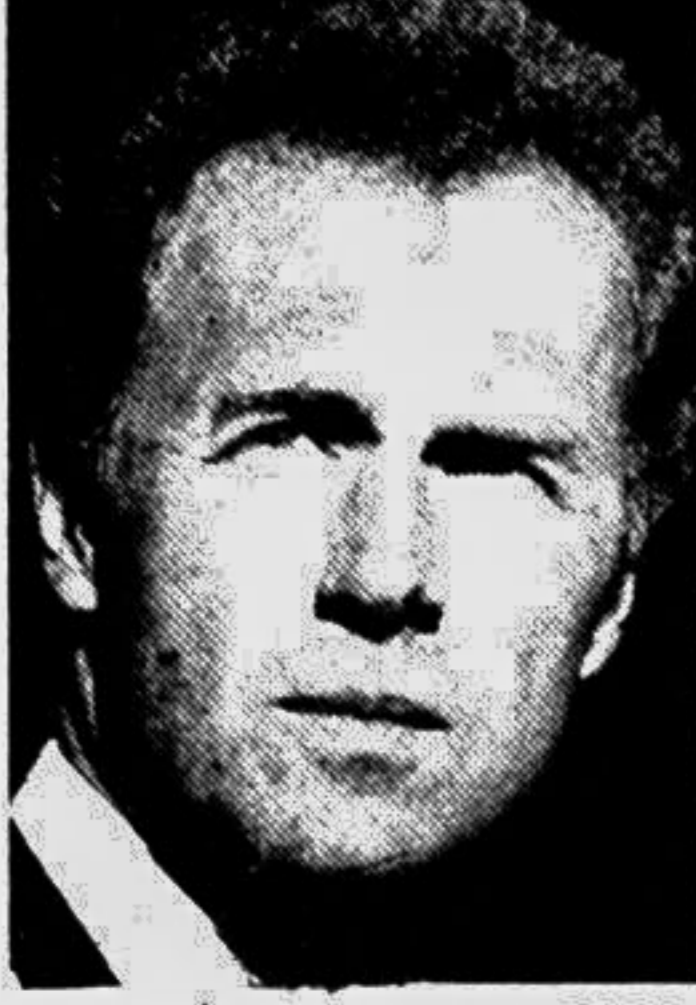
With 14 HCP Wouth opened the bidding artificially and partner showed 0-6 High Card Points. East doubled for take out but West intervened with one No Trump. In the absence of a five-card suit, West passed. (The partnership understanding was that the first bid of a suit would indicate 5 cards.) North bid 2 Clubs and when East bid 2 Hearts, West raised it to 3 cards. Though West had only 9 HCP, he rightly assumed, in view of South's opening bid, that West's King of Diamonds and both the Ace-Queen of Spades were winners. A good hand assessment enabled West to book a game contract.

### THE PLAY

South led a small Club. The declarer won North's King with the Ace. He then played a small Spade toward the Queen which held when South played low. The Ten of Hearts was led from the dummy which was lost to the King of South who then cashed the Queen of Clubs. Next South played the Ace and another Diamond. Dummy won the trick and a Heart toward the Ace cleared the trumps. Next when the Jack of Spades was played South covered and the dummy's Ace won the trick. But when the Ten of Spades appeared from the North hand, all was clear. Four Hearts were made.

## Kaiser might lend a helping hand Ribbeck taking his time

BONN, Sept 18 (Reuters/Internet) - New Germany head coach Erich Ribbeck has delayed his announcement of his squad for the forthcoming European championship qualifiers because he still needs time to study candidates.



FRANZ BECKENBAUER

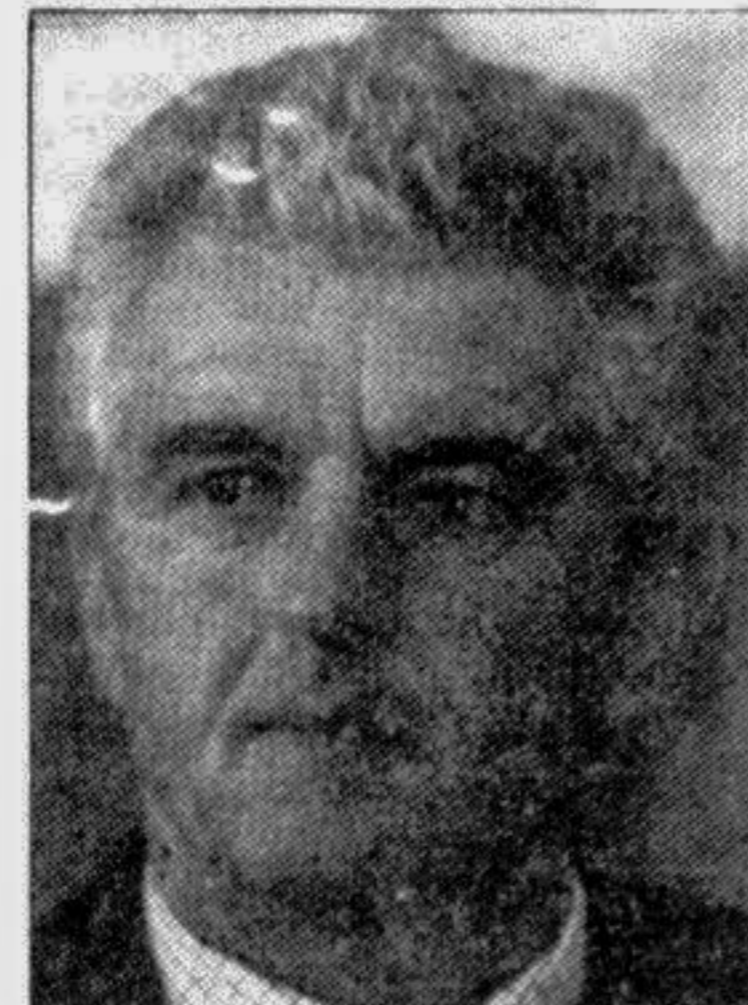
Ribbeck, who was expected to unveil his squad for next month's matches against Turkey and Moldova on Monday, will now do it on September 28, the German Soccer Federation (DFB) said in a statement released on Friday.

Ribbeck, appointed last week after Bertl Vogts suddenly stepped down, has already said he will recall veteran libero Lothar Matthaus. The 61-year-old former Bayern Munich coach has said he will talk to several other members of Germany's old guard cast aside by Vogts, notably midfielders Thomas Haessler and Andreas Moeller. Both play for Borussia Dortmund and Ribbeck will be watching from the stands when the 1997 European Cup champions are away to Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday.

Germany start their qualifying campaign for Euro 2000 away to Turkey on October 10. They will visit Moldova four days later.

DFB chief Egidius Braun proposed the appointment of Beckenbauer as national team director at a meeting of the DFB's executive committee on Friday. Kicker said in a report on its website.

Beckenbauer led West Germany to World Cup victory as captain in 1974 and coach in 1990. The DFB was unavailable for immediate comment.



ERIC RIBBECK

## Bernabeu awaits the 'super clash' Focus shifts to league duties

PARIS, Sept 18: Spanish fans are eagerly awaiting a Champions League aftershock this weekend as Real Madrid prepare to take on eternal rivals Barcelona, who deprived them of the league title in May, reports AFP.

As ever, the whole of Catalunya will get right behind Barca while Spaniards have a slightly more ambivalent attitude to Real, the reigning European champions.

But a third nation will also be tuning in with more than a little interest to see if Barca can repeat last year's 3-2 win in the Bernabeu.

That nation is the Netherlands, because both Real and Barca have gone double Dutch this season with Dutch coaches — and a gaggle of players.

Barcelona's Louis van Gaal arrived from Ajax to replace Bobby Robson last year, and not content with winning the title with keeper Rudolf Hesp, and defenders Michael Reiziger and Winston Bogarde, has just brought in 14 million dollar man Patrick Kluivert, Philip Cocu and Boudeijun Zenden.

And Real opted to hire Dutch team boss Guus Hiddink after mercifully showing the door to Jupp Heynckes, even though he took them to glory against Juventus in May.

Real's other Dutch connection is Clarence Seedorf, who scored in Wednesday's midweek win over Inter Milan.

So strong are the Catalan giants links with Ajax — from where they once procured ultra-successful former boss Johan Cruyff — they have earned the nickname Barca Jax.

The authoritarian Van Gaal has been brushing up on his Spanish — and no doubt his Catalan — to work his way deeper into the hearts of the club's ever-demanding fans.

Barca have made a curious start — a 1-0 win and a draw in the league before Wednesday's pulsating 3-3 draw at Old Trafford.

But Van Gaal insists: "If we play like we did in the second half against Manchester United and don't keep giving the ball away then we can win."

Fans of both clubs generally want wins over each other even more than the title itself. Both together would be a bonus, a win over the other in the European Cup final a dream.

Atletico Madrid's former Middlesbrough star Juninho meanwhile complained he is a marked man after picking up yet another injury in Tuesday's UEFA Cup tie against Obilico of Yugoslavia.

"I know football is like that but I'm sick of all these injuries," said the diminutive midfielder after taking a whack on the ankle which could keep him out of a date with Espanyol.

"Tuesday I was fine, almost 100 per cent, and now I've taken another knock. I've had enough," protested Juninho, who missed the World Cup with injury following a dreadful tackle by Vigo's Michel Salgado.

Elsewhere, Zaragoza, who have started impressively, face unfancied Alaves, while Athletic Bilbao, disappointed with their Champions League home draw against Rosenber, play promoted Extremadura.

Table-toppers Bordeaux travel to what will be a white-hot Stade Velodrome on Sunday night to play Marseille, unbeaten but who lost ground after drawing with Rennes last week.

Bordeaux's Sylvain Wilford may have taken all the early plaudits for his goals-a-game exploits so far. But Christophe Dugarry, who made his name with Bordeaux before joining Marseille via AC Milan and Barcelona, warned he was back on top form after a mixed start which prompted him to shun the media.

"I didn't want to talk before showing my worth on the field and getting back to my best," said the French international striker.

Dugarry was criticised during the World Cup for his poor scoring record but he answered his critics with the French goal in the Euro 2000 qualifier in Iceland earlier this month and has scored twice in the league to date.

Sunday also sees an intriguing clash between Paris Saint Germain, who lost their last home outing, and Monaco, unbeaten and one of three teams with Marseille and Lyon on 11 points, four adrift of Bordeaux.

Lyon could close the gap to a single point on Saturday when they take on champions Lens, who will welcome back Cyrille Magnier, ruled out of Wednesday's draw with Arsenal with ankle trouble.

"We learned a lot from the Arsenal game and hopefully we can translate that into our league showings," said Lens coach Daniel Leclercq, nicknamed 'The Druid'.

Lens will have to do without big striker Pascal Nouma who is suspended.

GERMANY Bayern Munich have the ideal opportunity to put their shock Champions League defeat at Denmark's Brondby behind them when the Bundesliga's top side play third-placed Hamburg on Sunday afternoon.

Hamburg have not had a happy time of it at the Olympic Stadium, with recent visits resulting in 6-0 and 6-1 defeats, while Bayern have won the last four encounters.

But the northerners are unbeaten so far, as are Bayern. Nurnberg, the other unbeaten side, have a home clash with reigning champions Kaiserslautern on Saturday, when Bayer Leverkusen and Borussia Dortmund, who both reached the last eight of last year's Champions League, meet in Leverkusen.

## Top guns under pressure

ROME, Sept 17 (AP/AFP): A week into the season, and already Serie A coaches are having a tough time.

Criticism from club owners or players is nothing new, but rarely are top teams looking for answers so early. The finger-pointing is going on across the Italian League, including at two-time defending champions Juventus of Turin and title contenders Internazionale of Milan, Lazio of Rome and AC Parma.

None have had an easy start — only Juventus won their league opener, barely — but all can take solace from the schedule. Sunday's second round provides mediocre opposition: Juventus host Cagliari, Lazio host Bari, Parma travel to Venezia and Inter host Piacenza in the night game.

Inter (Champions League) and Parma (UEFA Cup) both lost their European cup debuts this week, while Juventus managed only a draw. The Juventus general manager, Luciano Moggi, and one of the team's owners questioned coach Marcello Lippi's strategy after the team's 2-2 home game against Turkey's Galatasary. Striker Filippo Inzaghi, who was pulled after scoring for Juve on an acrobatic bicycle kick, also wondered aloud whether Lippi had erred.

On paper, his powerful club should not have trouble with Cagliari, which was in the Second-Division last season. Then again, so was Perugia, which gave Juventus fits on Sunday in a game that ended 4-3.

Juve's defence is in shambles, with starters Paolo Montero, Mark Iuliano and Ciro Ferrara all sidelined by injury. Cagliari may have to play without their top player, veteran forward Roberto Muzzi (one goal, one assist last week in 2-2 draw with Inter), who skipped practice Wednesday with a leg injury.

Lippi's counterparts at Parma — first-year man Alberto Malesani — and Inter are under even more pressure.

owner Massimo Moratti, though that doesn't necessarily mean the coach's job is very safe. Moratti, who's invested millions of dollars to provide Simoni with a talented roster, was quite critical of the team's performance and their tactics in a 2-0 loss Wednesday to Spain's Real Madrid.

"Unfortunately, we didn't play well, we put on an ugly show and we didn't win," Moratti said. "We could have played this game differently. We were too conservative."

### Peruzzi takes the stand

TURIN, Sept 18: Juventus' international goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi was interviewed by a state prosecutor here on Thursday as part of an enquiry into drug use in Italian soccer, reports AFP.

Magistrate Raffaele Guariniello, who has interviewed seven other current and ex-Juventus players in recent weeks, is following up suspicions voiced by AS Roma coach Zdenek Zeman.

Peruzzi, banned for a year in 1990 after failing a dope test during a spell with Roma, spent two hours with the judge.

He was followed in by ex-Torino striker Ruggiero Rizzitelli and former Italian soccer federation president Antonio Matarese.

The interviews came as Italy's national team captain Paolo Maldini called for tougher doping controls.

## Tour of Zimbabwe Harbhajan, Mohanty in Prasad, Kanitkar out

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: Indian cricket selectors today brought in Debashish Mohanty and Harbhajan Singh to replace bowler Venkatesh Prasad and all-rounder Hrishikesh Kanitkar in a 14-man squad for a tour of Zimbabwe, the United News of India (UNI) said, reports Reuters.

Mohammad Azharuddin will lead the team and Ajay Jadeja will be his deputy, the news agency said.

The Indian team is scheduled to play three one-day internationals on September 26, 27 and 30 and a Test match from October 7 to 11.

J Y Lele, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said there could be some changes in the team for the Test match.

"We are playing the one-dayers first and if the selection committee wishes it can make some changes in the squad for the Test match," Lele said.

THE TEAM: Mohammad Azharuddin (captain), Ajay Jadeja, Saurav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Robin Singh, Ajit Agarkar, Javagal Srinath, Anil Kumble, Navjot Singh Sidhu, Rahul Dravid, Nayan Mongia (wicketkeeper), Harbhajan Singh, Debashish Mohanty and Rahul Sanghvi.

## Steve supports cricket at C'wealth

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 18: Australian captain Steve Waugh called for cricket to remain in the Commonwealth Games as he prepared for Saturday's gold medal showdown against South Africa, reports AFP.

Waugh, who has spent most of his free time watching other sports, said he had been thrilled to soak in the atmosphere of the Games and hoped cricket will be played at Manchester in 2002.

"It was great to introduce a non-Olympic sport like cricket here, and the two-week stay here has convinced me that it has a future at the Games," he said.

Crickets, rugby, netball and field hockey were introduced for Kuala Lumpur but with a limit of four team sports set by the Commonwealth Games Federation, reports that soccer maybe introduced by Manchester have unsettled many representatives.

The only note of discontent, Waugh said, was the reluctance of other countries to send their best cricketers to Kuala Lumpur.

"Australia fielded its national team because we were serious about winning the gold. It would have been a great advertisement for the game if the best players were around."

The International Cricket Council's refusal to grant official status to the inaugural cricket event, robbed the Games of much of its glamour.

England did not field a team because it clashed with the end of the domestic season. But there were also reports that it was because players were not being paid to take part.

India made a token gesture in sending four national stars including master batsman Sachin Tendulkar, while Pakistan, South Africa and Sri Lanka rested most of their top players.



Paraguayan team Cerro Porteno's Fabien Caballero (L) preparing to shoot during the match against Flamengo of Brazil in the Mercosur Cup in Asuncion, Paraguay on September 17. — AP/UNB photo

## Wistful MacLaurin

LONDON, Sept 18 (Reuters/Internet) - England cricket boss Lord MacLaurin believes England have a strong chance of regaining the Ashes this winter, despite Australia's current ranking as the world's best team in test cricket.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chairman said that Alec Stewart's team will travel to Australia next month "with a real chance of success".

MacLaurin, greatly encouraged by England's performances this summer against South Africa under the captaincy of Stewart, can identify a new-look team of much greater character and determination, who is very positive and the.

"In Alec, we have a captain whole team is now playing with a great deal of guts and character. I think it'll be a very interesting series down under and we certainly don't go to Australia without a lot of hope," MacLaurin told Reuters in an interview.

"I think a lot will depend on whether (Shane) Warne's fit as he's a world-class bowler and could make the difference between the sides. But we're playing much better cricket now and

I think we're in there with a real chance."

One area where MacLaurin had some concern was with the collective consistency of the top six batsmen: "The first two or three get runs but we haven't been consistent enough after that."

"I mean, we've got six batters there and, if they're world-class, they should score a tremendous amount of runs...they really should. We've had too many mini-collapses with four, five and six getting out far too cheaply. We've got to work on that - which I think we can do."

MacLaurin is cautious about the challenge posed by Mark Taylor's Australian side: "They're a good side and they've got strength in depth. They'll take some beating."

But to go to Australia and to stuff the Aussies there would be marvellous - absolutely marvellous! And I really believe we go with a certain amount of hope."

MacLaurin may be satisfied with the recent return in England's international performances but his crusade to improve the English domestic cricket structure remains unfinished.

## Denilson feels the heat

MADRID, Sept 18 (Reuters/Internet) - While much of Spain's attention this weekend is focused on Real Madrid's game against Barcelona, Sunday's bottom of the table clash between Real Betis and Racing Santander will provide an important clue as to how one of the other title favourites are progressing.

Betis, currently languishing in 17th place in the Spanish league after picking up just one point from their first two games, were expected to be challenging for league honours this season. But their big-name team have underperformed badly so far - with the biggest name of all among the worst offenders.

Brazilian winger Denilson, brought in this season at a cost of \$35 million, has made a fitful start to his Spanish career and the criticism has started to rain on him ahead of Sunday's league visit to Santander.

"It hurts a lot," Denilson admitted on Friday. "I don't like it when the people speak badly of me. But really it's people who don't understand football who are criticising me

the most. The team are not playing well so they just focus on the most expensive player."

Betis's hopes of doing well this season have not been helped by a lack of stability in the dressing room - Vicente Santander clash.

Sunday's game is likely to be another tough test for the Seville-based club as Santander showed they can defend well in their opening-day draw with Barcelona. They are at full strength going into the game and will be confident of causing problems to a defence that again looked frail in a 1-0 UEFA Cup defeat to Danish side Vejle.

With things not going well at the club Denilson has been asked to play a more defensive role, tracking back on opposition attackers. But the Brazilian insists: "I'm going to continue playing my own game. I came to Spain to play this type of football. Betis knew that and I'm not going to change now. If people say I'm an individualist then that doesn't bother me."

### Sino supremacy

BEIJING, Sept 18: China stamped their authority with a swaggering performance, leaving only one gold for their rivals to vie at the CISM 46th Military Pentathlon World Championships ended on Wednesday, reports Xinhua.

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 41 Satisfy 45 Wax 30.5 cm 24 Inauguration  
4 Enevaltes 48 Target of 3 Legend 25 recitation  
8 -- above Jenner's vaccine 4 Sandbox 25 Picture of health?  
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FACT GOY BTWO  
HUMOR PA  
STAGE ARISES  
OWN TITFORTAT  
FIG AREA NASA  
AGE TIEER STEIN

Yesterdays answer

Solution time: 28 mins.

CRYPTOQUIP  
S J ZUVFAIV HJLF IJ  
LZVZI TUIV TUS KUAHFV  
ZU BHJEZST BJE BKU  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: I SUPPOSE IT'S TRUE  
THAT RUNNERS BOTH BREATHE AND DRESS IN  
SHORT PANTS.  
Today's Cryptquip clue: U equals N  
The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one  
letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O,  
it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short  
words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to  
locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.