

Chelsea get tough draw

LONDON, Sept 26 (Reuters/Internet): Holders Chelsea earned a tough tie against league leaders Aston Villa on Saturday when FIFA president Sepp Blatter made the draw for the English League Cup.

Gianluca Vialli's multinational side, who beat Middlesbrough to lift the trophy at Wembley last season, will take on Villa in the second round at home at the end of October.

Middlesbrough also have a difficult tie against first division Bury while Liverpool entertain second division Fulham, now run by their former star striker Kevin Keegan.

Second-division Northampton, who put out West Ham in the first round, host another premier league team, Tottenham.

Ties, played on a single-match knockout basis for the first time, will take place in the week starting October 26.

Vogts' tips for Ribbeck

BONN, Sept 26 (Reuters/Internet): Former Germany head coach Berti Vogts has urged his successor, Erich Ribbeck, to look for new talents rather than relying on gifted but ageing stars such as Lothar Matthaeus.

"It would hurt me tremendously if extensive plans to promote young players, on which I had been working for years, were to gather dust in a drawer," Vogts told daily Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) in an interview released on Saturday.

Ribbeck, who took over after Vogts resigned suddenly earlier this month, has said he will recall several members of Germany's old guard cast aside by his predecessor, most notably Matthaeus, the 37-year-old Bayern Munich libero.

Vogts, who had been under intense media pressure since his men bowed out to Croatia in a World Cup quarter-final in France last July, said Ribbeck should look for fresh players.

"Ribbeck must first of all qualify the team for the 2000 European championship," Vogts told WAZ. "I can understand that he's aiming at short-term success and therefore wants to rely on experienced players but he must not forget to promote young talents if he is to rebuild the team."

Ribbeck will unveil on Monday his squad for two Euro '2000 qualifiers away to Turkey on October 10 and Moldova four days later.

Cuba's ultimatum

GENEVA, Sept 26: World champion Cuba has given 20 days to find out its lost trophy as the women's volleyball World Championship is slated for November, the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) said in Lausanne on Friday, reports Xinhua.

Just one month before the World Championship to be started in Osaka, Japan on November 12, title-holders Cuba cannot find the trophy, said FIVB who has made an urgent appeal to the Cuban Volleyball Federation to find the solid silver cup in time.

Until Cuba does find the prize cup, FIVB has frozen its earnings from the international body, an estimated 300,000 US dollars.

In April when lots were drawn for the championship, Cuban Federation president arrived in Japan without the trophy, saying he had forgotten it but would forward it at a later date.

SIX NO TRUMPS

A K Sayeedul Huq

(Hand # 104)

A GOOD PLAY BY THE DECLARER			
(Hand # 104)			
North	♦ S: A J X	♦ H: 6 X	♦ D: 10 X X
♦ C: 3 X X X	♦ Q: 8 X X	♦ A: 8 7	♦ C: A Q J 10 9 X
South	♦ S: 10 9 7 6	♦ H: A X X	♦ D: Q 8 X
♦ C: K 8 7			
West (D)	♦ S: Q 8 5	♦ H: 10	♦ D: A 8 7
♦ C: A Q J 10 9 X			
East	♦ S: K X X	♦ H: K Q J 8 7 X	♦ D: K J X X
♦ C: 6			

Bidding:

South	West	North	East
-	2 Clubs*	Pass	2 Hearts
Pass	2 No Trumps	Pass	4 Hearts
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* Strong Club suit.

Four Hearts were a good game contract because in No Trumps there could have been communication problems.

THE PLAY

South led from the top of the series, the Ten of Spades which was covered with the Queen. North won the trick with the Ace and returned the Jack. The declarer won the King, and played a small Heart toward the Ten in the dummy. He could not play the King of Hearts as he was afraid that an opponent could have four-card Hearts with Ace and Nine. South ducked. The declarer then thought of taking a Diamond finesse against Queen to come to the closed hand to play trumps. However, he abandoned the idea and opted for a superior play. He played the Ace of Clubs and on the Queen of Clubs he slapped his losing Spade when North played low. South won the trick but could not do any harm to the declarer. South played the Nine of Spades which was ruffed by the declarer with small trump. He then played the King of Hearts, South won the trick and played back another good Spade. The declarer was in control as he ruffed the Spade return, cleared the trumps and entered the good Club.

Australians to be asked to appear at commission



KARACHI, Pakistan, Sept 26 (Reuters/Internet): Australian cricketers are to be asked to appear before a Pakistani judicial commission probing match-fixing allegations during their last visit four years ago.

Ali Sibtain Fazli, the Pakistan Cricket Board's lawyer, said on Saturday Australian team manager Steve Barnard would be requested to "allow his players, particularly Mark Waugh", to appear before the next hearing of the commission on October 3.

"They are being asked to appear because the judicial commission has decided to re-open the Salim Malik case," he said.

When Australia toured Pakistan four years ago three of their players -- Shane Warne, Tim May and Mark Waugh -- accused Salim Malik of offering them a bribe to throw the Karachi test which Pakistan eventually won by one wicket.

Malik was initially exonerated of all charges but was stripped of the captaincy.

However, an interim report released by the PCB three weeks ago recommended that Malik, Wasim Akram and Ijaz Ahmad should not be selected until the investigations were completed.

Mark Waugh is the only one of the three players to have made the bribery allegations currently in Pakistan. Warne is sidelined after a shoulder operation and Tim May has retired.

Skipper Mark Taylor is expected to be asked to appear before the judicial commission.

"A recent report suggested

that Mark Taylor also knew about the offer (bribe)," said Fazli. "Therefore, his presence would also help the commission in reaching the bottom of this scandal."

Fazli said Malik and Ijaz and another Pakistani player, Aqib Javed, had already given statements to the commission.

The Italian who can expect a heavy sanction for his behaviour, angrily shoved the referee in the chest after being shown the red card in the 44th minute at Hillsborough, sending the surprised Alcock sprawling to the ground. Di Canio was sent off, followed by Arsenal's Martin Keown, for fighting in a mass brawl on the pitch. The match was 0-0 at the time.

Dutchman Wim Jonk and Arsenal's Frenchman Patrick Vieira, who was also booked, provided the spark when Jonk pulled Vieira's shirt as the Arsenal man went past him on the turn.

Vieira reacted angrily and Di Canio then became involved.

Gullit not after Flo

LONDON, Sept 26: Former Chelsea manager Ruud Gullit has revealed he has no intention of returning to his old club for players as he continues his revolution at Premiership Newcastle, reports AFP.

Reports this week suggested that Gullit might try to tempt Norwegian striker Tore Andre Flo, who has started just one of his side's seven matches this season, to travel north.

But Gullit who brought Flo to Stamford Bridge at the start of last season, said: "I am not interested in buying Tore. He's at Chelsea, and I'm not going to be involved in that."

"None of the speculation is true. I rate him as a very good player -- that's why I brought him to Chelsea. But I will not go to Chelsea and ask if they will sell him."

Gullit added that he had no intention of trying to buy any of the current Chelsea squad.

"I built that team and I don't want to be accused of demolishing it. That's why I won't go for players at Chelsea," he said.

Di Canio floors referee after sending off

LONDON, Sept 26 (Reuters/Internet): Sheffield Wednesday striker Paolo di Canio floored referee Paul Alcock after being sent off for violent conduct against Arsenal in the English premier league on Saturday.

The Italian who can expect a heavy sanction for his behaviour, angrily shoved the referee in the chest after being shown the red card in the 44th minute at Hillsborough, sending the surprised Alcock sprawling to the ground. Di Canio was sent off, followed by Arsenal's Martin Keown, for fighting in a mass brawl on the pitch. The match was 0-0 at the time.

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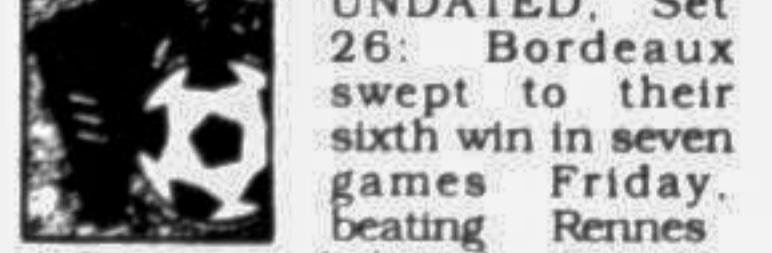
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Arsenal's Martin Keown (2nd from right) clashes with Paolo di Canio of Sheffield Wednesday during their Premiership match yesterday.

— Internet photo

Bordeaux keep on winning



UNDATED, Set 26: Bordeaux swept to their sixth win in seven games Friday, beating Rennes 4-0 to extend their lead at the top of the French First Division to four points, reports AP.

In the seventh round of the championship, Lyon drew 0-0 at Nancy to move second, level with Marseille, a 2-0 winner at Bastia on Thursday.

Bordeaux had little trouble maintaining their outstanding start to the season.

Striker Lillian Laslandes pressed his claim for a place in the national team in the 11th minute, profiting from lackluster Rennes defending to score from seven metres.

Silvain Wiltord, another inform Bordeaux striker, made the second in the 28th minute, carving open the visitors' defense before passing to 21-year-old Congolese midfielder Kiki Musampa, who scored his first of the season.

Musampa turned provider early in the second half, dribbling superbly on the right and finding David Jemmali who, unmarked, made no mistake from close range.

Wiltord completed the rout in the 58th minute with a 15-meter strike, his seventh goal of the season.

Lyon drew 0-0 at Nancy.

Nancy came closest, when Marc Zanotti shot just wide of the post when well-placed early in the match.

In an incredible match at the Felix-Bollaert stadium, Lens had two men sent off as it

fought back from 2-0 down against Nantes, before conceding two late goals to lose 4-2.

Lens, which visits Dynamo Kiev in the Champions' League Wednesday, got off to a disastrous start when Eric Sikora was sent off in the 13th minute for handball in the penalty area.

Christophe Leroux converted from the spot for the Canaries.

Nantes doubled the lead in the 31st minute for Nicolas Gillet head from a corner.

Tony Vairailles pulled one back just before the break, but Lens' cause looked hopeless when Cyril Rool was sent off in the second half.

Vairailles stunned Nantes by equalising soon after.

But Nicolas Savainaud scored again for the visitors as Nantes won to climb to fifth place.

Monaco moved to fourth with a 3-0 win at home to lowly Le Havre.

The 1997 champions opened

the scoring in the 24th minute when Robert Spehar played a deflection-splitting pass to David Trezeguet, who fired into the second half.

The win insured that 1860s overachieving players will earn two days off and a trip to the Oktoberfest underway in the city. Coach Werner Lorant had threatened to forbid any visits and add extra training if his charges lost.

Berlin, who entered the match in sixth place, have emerged as a power at home in Olympiastadion, but have not won the road.

Hamburg's Andrei Panadic scored in the 83rd minute on a header to carry his team to a 1-0 home victory against the nine men left on the field for Hansa Rostock.

The visitors had two players sent off for rude fouls.

In other matches Friday: Lorient 1, Metz 1; Strasbourg 2, Montpellier 1.

GERMANY: Surprising 1860

Munich put pressure at the top of the table on more famous cross-town rivals, Bayern Munich Friday with a 2-0 victory over Hertha Berlin in the Bundesliga.

1860, often overlooked by the two teams, picked up its fourth

win in six matches and closed to within two points of Bayern.

Bayern Munich, who have steamrolled to five wins to open the season, play Saturday.

1860 stunned Berlin, winner against several top Bundesliga clubs this season, with quick goals to start each half.

Monaco's Abderrahim Quakili split the Berlin defence in the second minute on a solo run, while Hendrik Herzog scored an own goal fighting off striker Bernd Hobsch just 56 minutes into the second half.

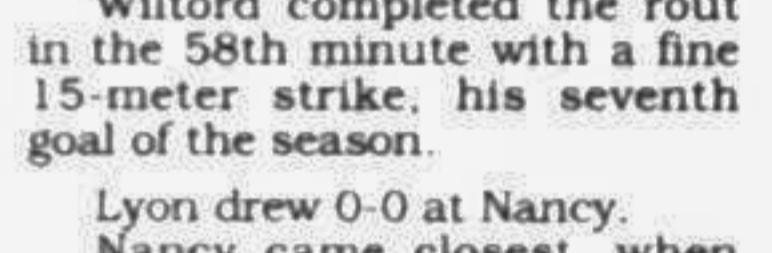
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2002 World Cup might kick off in May



ZURICH, Sept 26: The 2002 World Cup might begin earlier and feature a significant rules change designed to reduce the number of shootouts, reports AP.

FIFA, soccer's world governing body, said Friday the 2002 event, with Japan and South Korea serving as hosts, would remain in the customary period of June and July, but may open earlier in June.

Other bidders for the championship finals are Spain, Portugal and Switzerland.

Davies very ill

LONDON, Sept 26: Kevin Davies, Blackburn Rovers' record 7.25 million pounds signing from Southampton was admitted to hospital on Friday after being struck down with a mystery illness, reports AFP.

Roy Hodgson, manager of the English Premier League side, said Davies was "very ill" and out of football for the foreseeable future.

Davies missed Blackburn's Premiership defeat by Chelsea on Monday with what the club believed was tonsilitis.

But his condition has deteriorated, and Hodgson said: "Kevin has gone into hospital. It's a throat infection of some sort or other, but he is not well at all. We will wait to see what the medical people say."

That, in turn, could lead to more games decided in overtime, avoiding shootouts. Only one game in France '98, when the hosts