

## Sport



French playmaker Zinedine Zidane, seen with the European footballer-of-the-year trophy, is flanked by his friends from Marseille after receiving the award in Paris on December 21.

## Ronaldo hails ZZ

RIO DE JANEIRO, Dec 22 (Reuters/Internet): Brazil's Ronaldo admitted on Monday that Frenchman Zinedine Zidane deserves to win FIFA's Player-of-the-Year of the Award.

"For everything he has done this year, Zidane deserves the recognition of FIFA," he told the Estado news agency after arriving in Brazil for a one-week break.

Ronaldo has won the award for the past two years but failed to live up to expectations at the World Cup finals and since then has been plagued by knee tendon problems.

Zidane, Ronaldo and Croatia's Davor Suker are on the short-list for the award by even Brazilian commentators say it will be a travesty if Ronaldo wins this time around.

During this week in Brazil Ronaldo is expected to have his troublesome knee treated by his private physiotherapist.

## Ribbeck names squad for U.S. tour

MUNICH, Dec 22 (Reuters/Internet): German national team coach Erich Ribbeck on Monday announced a provisional 26-man squad for a tour of friendlies in the United States in February.

The team includes two newcomers to the national team, striker Michael Preetz of Hertha BSC Berlin and Eintracht Frankfurt midfielder Bernd Schneider, and two youngsters from champions Kaiserslautern, Michael Ballack and Marco Reich.

A key omission is Bayern Munich midfielder Mario Basler who was criticised by Ribbeck for playing cards the night before a friendly against the Netherlands, during which he gave a poor performance.

Ribbeck said Basler was not left out for playing cards, but he would not give his reason for omitting him.

Christian Ziege and Oliver Bierhoff of AC Milan and Joerg Heinrich of AC Florence will miss the U.S. trip as it coincides with the restart of the Italian season after the winter break.

Germany plays two matches in Florida: on February 6 against United States in the Alltel stadium in Jacksonville and against Colombia in the Orange Bowl Stadium in Miami on February 9.

Ribbeck will name a smaller squad of 20 players before the trip takes place.

**The provisional squad is:**

**Goalkeepers:** Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich), Stefan Klos (Borussia Dortmund), Jens Lehmann (AC Milan)

**Defenders:** Markus Babel, Lothar Matthaus (both Bayern Munich), Jens Nowotny (Bayer Leverkusen), Marko Rehmer (Hansa Rostock), Christian Werns (Paris St. Germain)

**Midfield:** Michael Ballack (FC Kaiserslautern), Stefan Beinlich (Bayer Leverkusen), Dietmar Hamann (Newcastle United), Jens Jeremies (Bayern Munich), Andreas Moeller (Borussia Dortmund), Christian Nerlinger (Borussia Dortmund), Carsten Ramelow (Bayer Leverkusen), Marco Reich (FC Kaiserslautern), Lars Ricken (Borussia Dortmund), Bernd Schneider (Eintracht Frankfurt), Thomas Strunz (Bayern Munich)

**Forwards:** Marco Bode (Werder Bremen), Carsten Jancker (Bayern Munich), Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen), Olaf Marschall (FC Kaiserslautern), Oliver Neuville (Hansa Rostock), Michael Preetz (Hertha BSC Berlin), Alexander Zickler (Bayern Munich)

## Southampton sign Kachoul

SOUTHAMPTON, England, Dec 22: Moroccan international striker Hassan Kachoul, who scored in the 3-1 victory that lifted Southampton off the foot of the Premier League on Saturday, has signed a 2 1/2 years contract by the club, reports AP.

Hired from French runners-up Metz on a three-month deal, Kachoul has impressed Saints manager Dave Jones who has now signed the 27-year-old forward until June 2001.

## Zidane on top in Europe



PARIS, Dec 22 (Reuters/Internet): French World Cup-winning playmaker Zinedine Zidane was named the 1998 European footballer-of-the-year on Monday.

Juventus' Zidane collected 244 points in the annual poll organised since 1956 by France Football magazine.

Real Madrid's Davor Suker of Croatia, top scorer in the World Cup finals, was runner-up with 68 points and Inter Milan's Brazilian striker Ronaldo, last year's winner, was third with 66.

Liverpool's 19-year-old England forward Michael Owen was fourth with 51 ahead of Barcelona's Brazilian midfielder Rivaldo (45) and Fiorentina's Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta (43).

The 26-year-old talented midfielder, who scored with two headers in the 3-0 final victory over Brazil, was the fourth Frenchman to win the award after Real Madrid's Raymond Kopa in 1958, Juventus' Michel Platini from 1983 to 1985 and Marseille's Jean-Pierre Papin in 1991.

"I am proud and happy to succeed many football greats in receiving this honour," said Zidane in a ceremony screened live at the studios of television station France 2 on Monday evening.

"I owe this honour to the teams of France and Juventus. Without them, I would not have been able to achieve so much."

With seven French players in the first 20, it shows that the whole French team had a great World Cup.

Apart from his performance in the World Cup, Zidane helped Juventus retain the Italian championship and reach a third successive European Cup final in May.

This award, until 1994 only open to European players, was widened to include any player of any nationality playing in a European league from the 1995 edition won by AC Milan's Liberian international George Weah.

Zidane, who earned a UEFA

Cup runners-up medal for Bordeaux in 1996, grew up in the Marseille suburbs after his family came to France from Algeria in the 1960s.

A quiet, pensive character off the pitch, in contrast to his high-profile status while playing football, he has a different type of star quality to former World Cup heroes.

Known as "Yaz" to those close to him, he has never forgotten his roots and still has many friends in Marseille.

He believes it is his close family and friends who have helped him keep his feet on the ground despite his incredible footballing success and he dedicated this award to them.

Top 10 (player, nationality, club, points)

Zinedine Zidane (France) Juventus 244  
Davor Suker (Croatia) Real Madrid 68  
Ronaldo (Brazil) Inter Milan 66  
Michael Owen (England) Liverpool 51  
Rivaldo (Brazil) Barcelona 45  
Gabriel Batistuta (Argentina) Fiorentina 43  
Lilian Thuram (France) Parma 36  
Dennis Bergkamp (Netherlands) Arsenal 28  
Edgar Davids (Netherlands) Juventus 25  
Marcel Desailly (France) Chelsea 19

## PREVIOUS WINNERS

Winners of the European-footballer-of-the-year award, the Ballon d'Or, organised by France Football magazine:

Player	Club
1956 Stanley Matthews	Blackpool
1957 Alfredo di Stefano	Real Madrid
1958 Raymond Kopa	Real Madrid
1959 Di Stefano	Real Madrid
1960 Luis Suarez	Barcelona
1961 Enrique Omar	Sivori Juventus
1962 Jozsef Masopust	Dukla Prague
1963 Lev Yashin	Dynamo Moscow
1964 Denis Law	Manchester United
1965 Eusebio	Benfica
1966 Bobby Charlton	Manchester United
1967 Florian Albert	Ferencvaros
1968 George Best	Manchester United
1969 Gianni Rivera	AC Milan
1970 Gerd Mueller	Bayern Munich
1971 Johan Cruyff	Ajax Amsterdam
1972 Franz Beckenbauer	Bayern Munich
1973 Cruyff	Barcelona
1974 Oleg Blokhin	Dynamo Kiev
1975 Beckenbauer	Bayern
1976 Allan Simonsen	Barcelona
1977 Kevin Keegan	SV Hamburg
1978 Keegan	Hamburg
1979 Karlheinz Rummenigge	Bayern Munich
1980 Rummenigge	Bayern
1981 Paolo Rossi	Juventus
1982 Michel Platini	Juventus
1983 Platini	Juventus
1984 Platini	Juventus
1985 Platini	Juventus
1986 Igor Belanov	Dynamo Kiev
1987 Ruud Gullit	AC Milan
1988 Marco van Basten	AC Milan
1989 Van Basten	AC Milan
1990 Lothar Matthaus	Inter Milan
1991 Jean-Pierre Papin	Olympique Marseille
1992 Van Basten	AC Milan
1993 Roberto Baggio	Juventus
1994 Hristo Stolechov	Barcelona
1995 George Weah	AC Milan
1996 Matthias Sammer	Borussia Dortmund
1997 Ronaldo	Inter Milan



Ace striker Gabriel Batistuta displays the Argentina soccer team's new jersey during a ceremony in Buenos Aires on December 21.

## Germany replace France at Confeds' Cup

ZURICH, Dec 22 (Reuters/Internet): Germany will replace World Cup champions France as European representative at the Confederations' Cup, FIFA said on Tuesday.

Germany, the reigning European champions, accepted FIFA's invitation after the French Football Federation withdrew from summer competition, hosted by Mexico, because the July 24 to August 4 dates conflicted with UEFA club competitions and the start of the French national league.

The national leagues from several countries, including France, had openly challenged FIFA rules, saying they would refuse to release players from participating countries for national duty.

In an effort to secure the participation of the World Champions, FIFA changed the tournament dates January to mid-summer but the French Football Federation continued to refuse to take part.

Germany will take France's place in Group B, playing with Brazil, the United States and New Zealand.

Group A in Mexico City, will feature the hosts, Bolivia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

## Perpere appointed new PSG president

PARIS, Dec 22 (Reuters/Internet): Laurent Perpere was appointed as the new Paris St Germain president, owner French pay television station Canal Plus announced on Tuesday.

Laurent Perpere, who is the club's finance director, replaces Charles Bettier who quit on Monday after less than six months in the job following poor results.

PSG, one of the wealthiest clubs in France, were beaten 2-0 by lowly Lorient on Saturday and are 11th, 10 points from the bottom.

Bettier, formerly head of sports at Canal Plus, replaced Michel Denisot last July with the aim of winning the French title five years after the last success in 1994.

Last October, Bettier decided to sack coach Alain Giresse after the club were eliminated by Israel's Maccabi Haifa in the first round of the European Cup Winners' Cup and managed to score only six goals in eight league games.

## Aussies don't care about Olympics

SYDNEY, Dec 22: The number of Australians interested in watching the opening and closing ceremonies of the Sydney Olympics on television has dropped markedly in recent months, according to a survey released today, reports AFP.

Interest in viewing the opening ceremony had dropped to 43 per cent while only 36 per cent want to watch the closing ceremony.

## 'Barmy Army' go more barmy!

MELBOURNE, Dec 22: Members of the Barmy Army, the raucous fans who follow the English cricket team around the world, have lost documentary film footage after a theft at their Melbourne hostel, reports AP.

The footage and camera equipment worth an estimated 1,550 dollars were in a knapsack stolen from a backpackers hotel in Melbourne's south.

Paul Burnham, 34, of Twickenham, London, said Tuesday the video cassettes contained footage of test matches and the army's party at the old jail in Adelaide, held to raise funds for charity.

"We want it to make a movie, documentary type thing," he said.

"We are asking if anyone has got it, if it can be left somewhere because it is no use to them but we can't go back and play the tests again."

Burnham, who works for a company which bets on sporting events, said fellow army member Andrew Evans had taken time off his job as an engineer and was living on his savings while they worked on the documentary.

He said about 50 members of the "army" had made the backpackers hotel their headquarters during their stay in Melbourne for the December 26 Test, the fourth in the Ashes series.

## Whitney to lead Bradman XI

SYDNEY, Dec 22: Former Australian Test player Mike Whitney will captain the Bradman XI team in a one-day cricket match against England on New Year's Day, reports Reuters.

Whitney heads a team that also includes former Test player Greg Matthews, prolific Sheffield Shield run-scorer Jamie Siddons and Western Australia's Michael Hussey.

The match will be played in Bowral, South of Sydney.

Michael Hussey, Rodney Davison, Matthew Phelps, Jamie Siddons, Graham Cunningham, Shawn Bradstreet, Scott Thompson, Greg Matthews, Phil Emery, Mike Whitney (captain), Brett Lee, Wayne Holdsworth.

## Ben yet to live up to expectations

HOBART, Tasmania, Dec 22 (AFP): Ben Hollis started the current Ashes tour of Australia as England's next line Botham.

But it now looks as if he will finish his maiden senior tour still as long way short of coming anywhere near Botham.

The Surrey all-rounder has been hailed as one of England's greatest prospects ever since he burst onto the international scene with a brilliant 63 off 48 balls against Australia at Lord's during the 1997 one-day series.

Hollis' failure was underlined in comparison to the ruthless manner in which stand-in captain Michael Atherton scored a career-best 205 in the tour match against a young Australian XI here.

His tour has so far yielded just 26 runs from five first-class innings since he injured his groin in the opening match against an ACB Chairman's XI at Lilac Hill in October, while his two wickets have cost 56 apiece.

"He's never really got going into the tour," conceded coach David Lloyd.

"We would put him down in the all-rounder category who is pushing for a place, and he's not actually doing that."

He's a little bit behind with match practice through being unfit for a fair amount of time. He doesn't give to much away and doesn't give to many signs that he frets to much."

"We understand that he's had injury problems and he's the one player who is playing catch-up, but when he has an opportunity he really has to cash in."

But Lloyd stressed Hollis' laid-back manner should not be wrongly perceived as an indication that his disappointing tour and his eagerness to succeed has not affected him.

"There are no visible signs of frustration with a bat flung or glove thrown or kicking at something. He is one who sits and reflects and goes quiet and then comes out of it — but he needs to kick on," said Lloyd.

## Aston Villa ride on Charlton defender

LONDON, Dec 22: An own goal by Charlton defender Richard Rufus barely three minutes into the match sent Aston Villa back to the top of the Premier League Monday after a 1-0 win at struggling Charlton, reports AP.

There seemed no danger when Dion Dublin crossed the ball into the Charlton area and Rufus, with plenty of room and time to clear, watched in horror as the ball bounced awkwardly off his thigh and rolled past startled goalkeeper Sasa Ilic for what proved to be the only goal of the game.

It meant Villa, who lost the leadership to Chelsea on goal difference on Saturday, regained a three-point lead with all the teams level on 18 games. Villa has 36 points, Chelsea 33 and third place Manchester United 31.

Charlton, who have slipped to fourth from last after a promising start, had chances to level, Andy Hunt heading just too high before half time and Shaun Newton shooting just past the post in the second half.

## Associated Press' ten best

LONDON, Dec 22 (AP): France's stunning victory over Brazil in the World Cup final was the runaway winner as the top international sports story of 1998 in a worldwide poll of Associated Press subscribers.

France also produced the No. 2 story of the year, but this one provoked more shame than celebration: the doping scandal which decimated the Tour de France cycling race.

More than 100 media outlets from around the world submitted ballots, selecting their top 10 stories. Points were awarded on a sliding scale, ranging from 10 for a first-place vote to one for 10th place.

The poll was conducted before the scandal over allegations of bribery in the election of Olympic host cities — a story which would have certainly finished high in the balloting.

But there was no surprise in the top story.

The World Cup triumph by host France, climaxed by a 3-0 victory over favourite and defending champions Brazil in the final, captured 45 first-place votes and received a massive total of 639 points.

Far behind in second with 369 points — including seven first-place votes — was the Tour de France fiasco. The race was virtually wrecked by a series of arrests, raids and seizures which uncovered systematic

doping among teams and riders. The Tour de France scandal opened the gates to drug revelation in other sports and served as a catalyst to new global initiatives to crack down on doping.

Italian rider Marco Pantani's victory in the Tour de France was almost a footnote in the overall picture, finishing 14th in the poll with 93 points.

Finnish driver Mika Hakkinen's Formula One championship, clinched in a season-ending duel with Michael Schumacher, was voted the No. 3 story with 289 points. Hakkinen was almost killed in a crash three years ago.

While France's World Cup victory dominated the voting, Brazil's flop in the final and the mystery surrounding Ronaldo (he suffered alleged convulsions before the match and was left off the initial lineup sheet) garnered significant interest, too — finishing No. 4 with 243 points.

In fifth place with 204 points was the sudden death of age 38 of former Olympic sprint champion and world record-holder Florence Griffith Joyner. While there was speculation that her death could be linked to long-term effects of steroid use, doctors ruled that she died of a seizure unrelated to drugs.

Among other top-vote getters were the world records set by distance runners Haile Gebrselassie and Hicham el Guerrouj; the turmoil in European soccer over a proposed Super League; and Sepp Blatter's election as FIFA president.

Michael Jordan is another American superstar with global appeal, and his guiding of the Chicago Bulls to a third straight NBA title and his possible retirement from the game came in sixth with 143 points.

Media magnate Rupert Murdoch's one billion dollar bid to buy English soccer giants Manchester United — a record price for a sports franchise — was No. 7 with 124 points. The deal is still contingent on the approval of British regulators.

The Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, last February — which were deemed a great success despite weather problems and the trashing of dorm rooms by US hockey players — was No. 8 with 108 points.

In ninth place with 105 points is the NBA lockout, which threatens the entire 1998-99 season.

There was a tie for 10th place with 102 points: Pete Sampras crowning as the top-ranked men's tennis player for a record sixth year; and Norwegian cross-country skier Bjorn Dali's record on eight career winter Olympic gold medals.

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## Bosman compensated



BRUSSELS, Dec 22: Belgium's Soccer Federation said Tuesday it will award 16 million Belgian francs (463,900 dollars) in damages to Jean-Marc Bosman, ending an eight-year legal battle for the former player whose fight for justice led to a ruling that revolutionised soccer in Europe, reports AP.

"With this agreement, the various parties wished to end elegantly this affair ... in order to focus in a positive manner on the new football challenges at the eve of the year 2000," the Federation's secretary-general, Jan Peeters said in a statement.

Bosman, who said earlier this month he hoped for an out-of-court settlement by the end of the year, is immensely relieved, his lawyer said.

"Even if this is not a huge amount, it is very important because it allows him to stop being the Bosman affair and to return to being Jean-Marc Bosman," Bosman's lawyer Jean-Louis Dupont quoted his client as saying.

Bosman gained fame as the man who challenged Europe's soccer authorities before the courts when his transfer from Belgium's FC Liege to France's Dunkirk was blocked.

On Dec 15, 1995, Bosman won his case when the European Court of Justice ruled that the system of transfer fees after contracts had expired was illegal. So were the limits on European Union foreigners.

The Bosman ruling set a precedent, releasing players from the control of clubs with the end of a contract and effectively creating free agency, while allowing clubs to field as many EU players as they liked.

But the case didn't end there for Bosman. The ruling went back to the appeals court in Belgium, where Bosman's case became logjammed. Bosman has been out of work for the past three years, having quit competitive soccer because he could not live off his salary.

Dupont said Bosman's last wish before turning the page now is that players around the world will respond to a "Thank You Jean-Marc Bosman" operation launched earlier this month by a local sports and union rights organization.

The organisation called on all First Division players in the 15 EU nations to donate the bonus of one game to Bosman in a show of solidarity. So far not one cent has been given, Dupont said.

Bosman hopes there will be a response. He wants to use most of the funds to set up a foundation for young players who don't make it into the professional world and have no one to turn to.

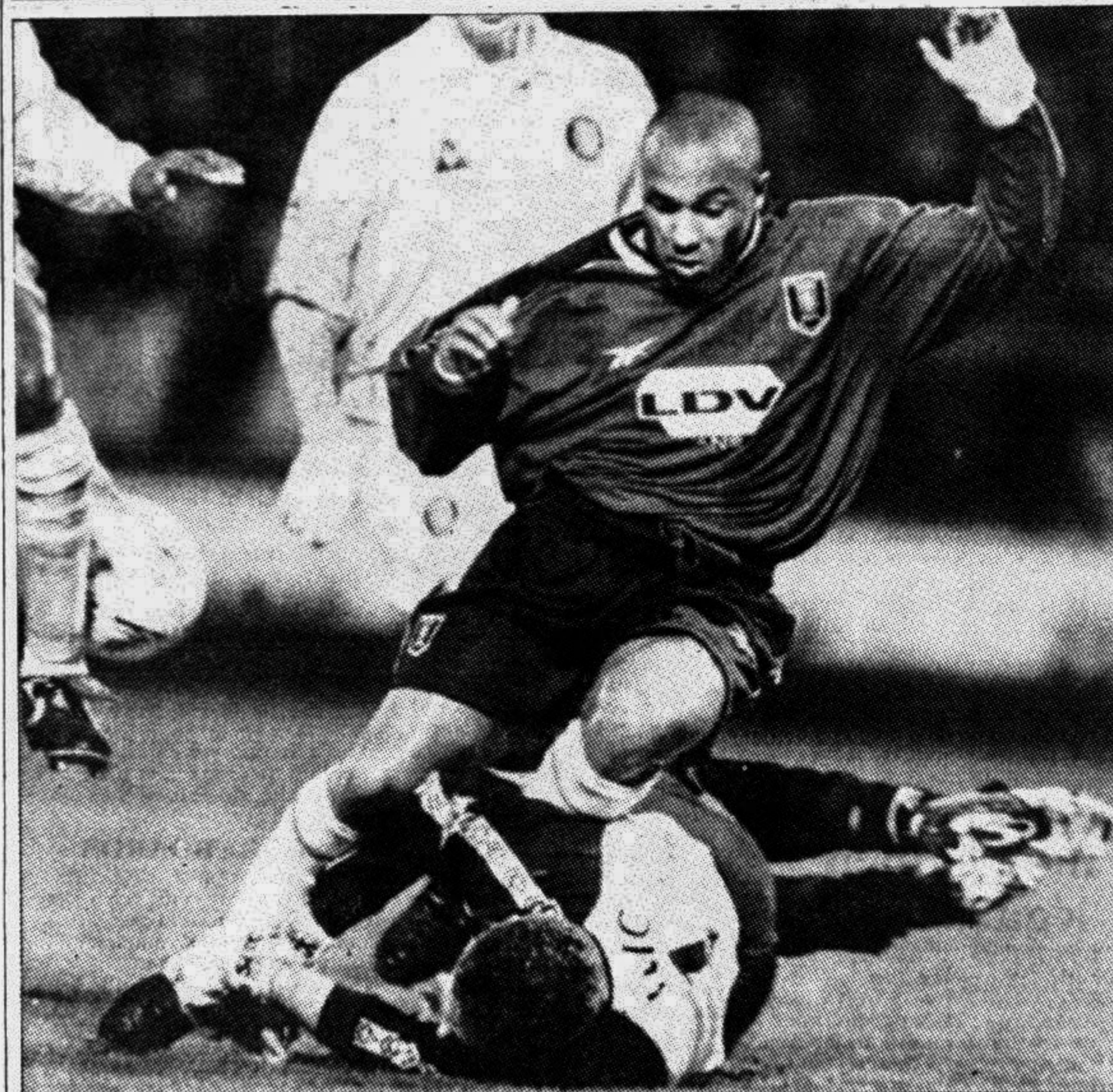
"Nine out of 10 young players from Africa or South America who get tried out when they're 14 or 15 years old don't make it into the football world, and often they end up on the streets," Dupont said.

## Shameful!

LONDON, Dec 22: Chelsea soccer coach Graham Rix, who is No. 2 to manager Gianluca Vialli, appeared in court on Tuesday charged with having sex with a girl under the age of 16, reports AP.

Rix, who made 17 appearances for England when he was an Arsenal player, also faces three charges of indecent assault on the same girl, who was reported to have been age 15 at the time of the alleged offenses.

No pleas were taken and the case was adjourned until Jan 12. Rix, 41, married with four children, was allowed conditional bail, the condition being that he does not attempt to contact the alleged victim.



A goalmouth scramble during the Aston Villa v Charlton encounter of the Premier League in London on December 21.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Old-style "shush"	1 Japanese horse-racing author
6 Foe of the Dark Night	2 One of Liz's exes
11 Rum recipe	3 "Who am I — argue?"
12 Put on a pedestal	4 Without
14 Equal in duration	5 Stingy
15 Tsy-bitsy	6 Sleep-wear
16 Stevens or Ballou	7 Garfield's pal
17 Ignominy	8 "—Tiki"
19 More, to Marcello	9 Bursts
20 Reed instrument	10 Call it a night
22 Numerical prefix	11 Georgia
23 4ths: abbr.	
24 Foolish	
26 Just says no	
28 Gumshoe	
30 Vast expanse	
31 Hardly ornate	
35 He of the good life	
39 Frilly	
40 Spigot	
42 Olympic sled	

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## CRYPTOQUIP

BRP OYSIC UBSYAKUUN  
HPAUKZP CICK K  
ABJYJCICJBIPKHV  
YVZPKUUNKOBCKCYBR.  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: I'VE HEARD THAT TELEPHONE OPERATORS ARE INCLINED TO HAVE CONNECTIONS.  
Today's Cryptquip clue: R 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.