

**Charlton still keen on signing Barnes**

LONDON, Feb 5 (Reuters/ Internet): Former England winger John Barnes could join English premier league strugglers Charlton Athletic after impressing manager Alan Curbishley in a friendly reserve match this week.

Curbishley said on Friday that even though Barnes, 35, has returned to Newcastle

United, he was still optimistic a deal could be struck next week.

Barnes, who played 79 times for England, has played only 23 minutes of first team soccer this season -- against Charlton in a 0-0 draw on the opening day of the season.

Curbishley said: "John is frustrated at not playing for Newcastle and we took the opportunity to see him and have invited him to come back again once he's sorted a few things out in Newcastle."

"Although he hasn't played for a long time, and it shows, you could see that he has supreme confidence, which is what we need."

Barnes, who started his career at Watford, spent 10 years at Liverpool before joining Newcastle in August 1997. But after playing in 39 matches last season, including a late appearance as substitute in the F.A. Cup Final, he is now clearly surplus to requirements at St James' Park.

**ROK, China in Dunhill Cup soccer final**

HO CHI MINH CITY, Feb 6: South Korea beat Iran 2-0 here Friday to set up a Dunhill Cup final clash with China, who put paid to the surprise run of hosts Vietnam, reports AFP.

China broke Vietnamese hearts with a 4-1 win earlier in the day to ensure their berth in Sunday's final against the South Koreans, who ran the Iranians ragged in the second half of their last-four encounter.

Iran's lack of fitness and the absence of suspended Mohammad Ali Karimi, sent off in their last group match against Vietnam for kicking the referee following the sending-off of Ali Asarian, showed as they were outrun and outflown by the five-time World Cup qualifiers.

The South Koreans missed several chances to add to their second-half goals from Seol Ki-Hyeon and Lee Dong-Gook.

Fervent home support was not enough to see Vietnam through to the final after their earlier 1-0 wins over Singapore and Russia.

China and South Korea are represented by their Olympic squads and, along with Iran, are expected to reckon in Asia's final round of qualifiers for Sydney 2000 tentatively scheduled for October-November.

**2006 World Cup Teixeira thinks six will be enough**

RIO DE JANEIRO, Feb 6 (AFP): Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) boss Ricardo Teixeira believes Brazil can count on at least six of the 23 FIFA executive committee votes that will decide which country stages the 2006 World Cup, it was reported Friday.

Teixeira believes the three Latin American representatives and the three from CONCACAF (the body governing North America, Central America and the Caribbean football) will back Brazil's bid. The South American country has already staged one World Cup in 1950.

With the European vote split between England and Germany and Africa split between five candidates, although South Africa is the leading contender, Teixeira remained bullish.

He said: "With the help of the private finance initiative and our own structures we will be one of the favourites."

"Our greatest asset is the prestige of the national team, which for six years has been top of the FIFA rankings."

**Tyson given 1 yr behind bars**

ROCKVILLE, Maryland, Feb 6: Former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson was sentenced on Friday to spend a year in jail for assaulting two motorists after a minor traffic accident, casting doubt on the future of his career, reports Reuters.

The 32-year-old fighter, long known as the bad boy of boxing, stood dumfounded before his attorneys as Montgomery County District Judge Stephen Johnson ordered him taken away in handcuffs, without bond, for what the judge called "potentially lethal road rage."

An audible groan swept the packed courtroom as Johnson imposed a sentence of two years imprisonment on each count, with all but one suspended. He also ordered Tyson to serve two years of probation after his release, pay all fines and charges, and provide 200 hours of community service.

Defense attorneys warned that Tyson's career may be headed for catastrophe, saying his boxing license could be revoked by the Nevada State Athletic Commission and he could be sent back to prison for four years in Indiana if the Maryland sentence was found to violate his parole for a 1992 rape conviction.

If he gets jail time for even one day, he is done, he is finished," Tyson attorney Paul Kemp told Johnson during a sentencing hearing that lasted nearly four hours.

The Nevada commission has a number of options open to it, ranging from doing nothing to revoking his license," Curt Hendricks, spokesman for the Nevada attorney general, said. Officials in Indiana had no immediate comment.

Tyson pleaded no contest in December to two counts of second-degree assault stemming from a minor three-car collision in nearby Gaithersburg, in which the Mercedes driven by his wife was rear-ended. The boxer allegedly jumped from the car and attacked the two other drivers, punching a 62-year-old man in the jaw and kicking another, 50-year-old man in the groin.

His attorneys claimed the blows were unintentional and

presented a string of witnesses including his wife, Monica, who tried to persuade the judge that the boxer was really a loving family man under stress because of financial difficulties and a stalled career.

Tyson himself declined to address the court but submitted a letter that was read by Johnson in court. "Jail time would mean I lose everything," the boxer pleaded.

Monica Tyson tearfully told the judge that her husband was a "good, kind person" who "doesn't deserve even a minute of incarceration."

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owed more than 14 million dollars to the internal revenue service and 8.1 million dollars to former trainer Kevin Rooney before getting paid 10 million dollars for his January 16 fight against South African Francois Botha.

Finkel also said cable television channel Showtime had a lien against all of Tyson's properties, and estimated that Tyson would need three or four fights to break even. Jail, he said, would mean disaster.

There is all likelihood that he would lose his license, which in this case would be tantamount to banning him from boxing," Finkel testified.

Tyson's attorneys, who were unavailable for comment after Friday's sentencing, have 30 days to file an appeal. Prosecutors said the fighter could be transferred from the Montgomery County Detention Center to a local half-way facility within five months.

"[Prison] is not going to help him, or anyone," Mexican-born Abimene Saucedo, the 62-year-old male nurse whom Tyson punched in the jaw, said after the sentencing, asked about the judge's description of Tyson's road rage. He added: "That came as news to me."

But prosecutors, noting Tyson had not admitted guilt by pleading no contest, said the boxer could have received much stiffer sentence had he been tried and convicted of assault, which is punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment.

"We feel this is absolutely a fair sentence," said prosecutor Carol Crawford, who had urged Johnson not to protect the "gross national product of Mike Tyson's but to demonstrate that the rich had to abide by the same justice system as everyone else."

"There's a big world out there, the state simply does not think this will be the end of Mike Tyson the fighter."

Tyson later appeared in handcuffs at the back of the Montgomery County District Court, where he was put into the back of a sheriff's security truck as cameras flashed and dozens of fans clinging to a chain-link fence called to the fallen sports hero.

Maloney is manager of British WBC heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis, who meets WBA and IBF titleholder Evander Holyfield in a unification bout in New York on March 13.

Maloney, also a fight promoter, felt the jail term meant Tyson would be finished for good "as any kind of fighting force."

"I don't think he is ever going to fight again," he told Sky News on Saturday.

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