

## Suker reminded of the reality

ZAGREB, Feb 9 (Reuters/Internet): Croatian coach Miroslav Blazevic has warned Davor Suker, top marksman at last year's World Cup finals, to beware of becoming one of soccer's fallen heroes.

Suker has been unable to command a regular starting place in more than two seasons with Real Madrid and Blazevic said on Tuesday: "Davor is in a delicate position now. He has to find new motivation to prove himself all over again."

"Even stronger characters were lulled into sleep by big and prolonged celebrations and later disappeared from the scene," Blazevic was quoted as saying in Split where Croatia, the beaten World Cup semi-finalists, play Denmark in a friendly on Wednesday.

"Remember for instance Italian (Paolo) Rossi, who disappeared after the World Cup in Spain (in 1982), not to mention (Mario) Kempes, who won the World Cup (in Argentina in 1978) but later could not win a regular place at Valencia."

Blazevic will be looking to Suker to provide much of the firepower against Denmark.

He scored with a superb lob in Croatia's 3-0 win over the Danes during the 1996 European championship.

Wednesday's friendly will be an important test for Croatia's championship qualifier for Euro 2000 against Yugoslavia in March -- the first encounter between the two sides since they emerged from the bloody collapse of the former Yugoslavia federation in 1991.

**Zimbabwe rejected as hosts for 2000 Nations' Cup**

ABIDJAN, Feb 9 (Reuters/Internet): Zimbabwe was told on Monday it would not be allowed to stage the 2000 African Nations' Cup finals because it had not met certain required targets.

Confederation of African Football (CAF) secretary general Mustapha Fahmy told a news conference that other national federations had until March 10 to apply to host the continent's biggest sporting event.

"We have decided to reject the application of Zimbabwe because it was not satisfactory," Fahmy said, listing problems with the timing and funding of work on stadiums and with facilities for television coverage of the event.

Fahmy, speaking after the CAF's executive committee met in Abidjan, said a decision on the venue for the finals would be taken in Guinea's capital Conakry on March 14.

Nigeria, hosts of the World Youth Cup in April, and Morocco, who have bid to stage the 2006 World Cup, are likely contenders given the short time scale.

Fahmy said the Zimbabwean authorities had not shown sufficient commitment to the funding of the renovation of three stadiums.

He said an inspection team had found no work had been started on a fourth stadium in Mutare which was earmarked for demolition and rebuilding.

The committee expressed regret that Sepp Blatter, president of world soccer's governing body FIFA, had floated the idea of a World Cup every two years before formally informing national associations.

Fahmy said CAF had to achieve a general consensus before taking a stand on the issue.

Sources close to CAF said the federation would take a decision on which African bid to host the 2006 World Cup it should support after April 1 when bidding countries must confirm their commitment to hosting the event.

Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa have all lodged bids.

## Sarajevo's intention

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Feb 9: Ravaged by war and bearing little resemblance to the city that staged the 1984 Olympics, Sarajevo wants to hold the Winter Games in 2010, reports AP.

The Bosnian Olympic Committee announced its intentions Monday, the 15th anniversary of the 1984 Olympics.

All the facilities built for those Games were destroyed by shells and gunfire that rained on the city during the war from 1992 until the end of 1995.

A recording of the worlds of International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch at the 1984 closing ceremony, "See you again, dear Sarajevo," was broadcast Monday.

What followed was a statement from Bogic Bogicevic, the head of the Bosnian Olympic Committee. "The candidacy for the Olympic Games 2010 will be officially announced."

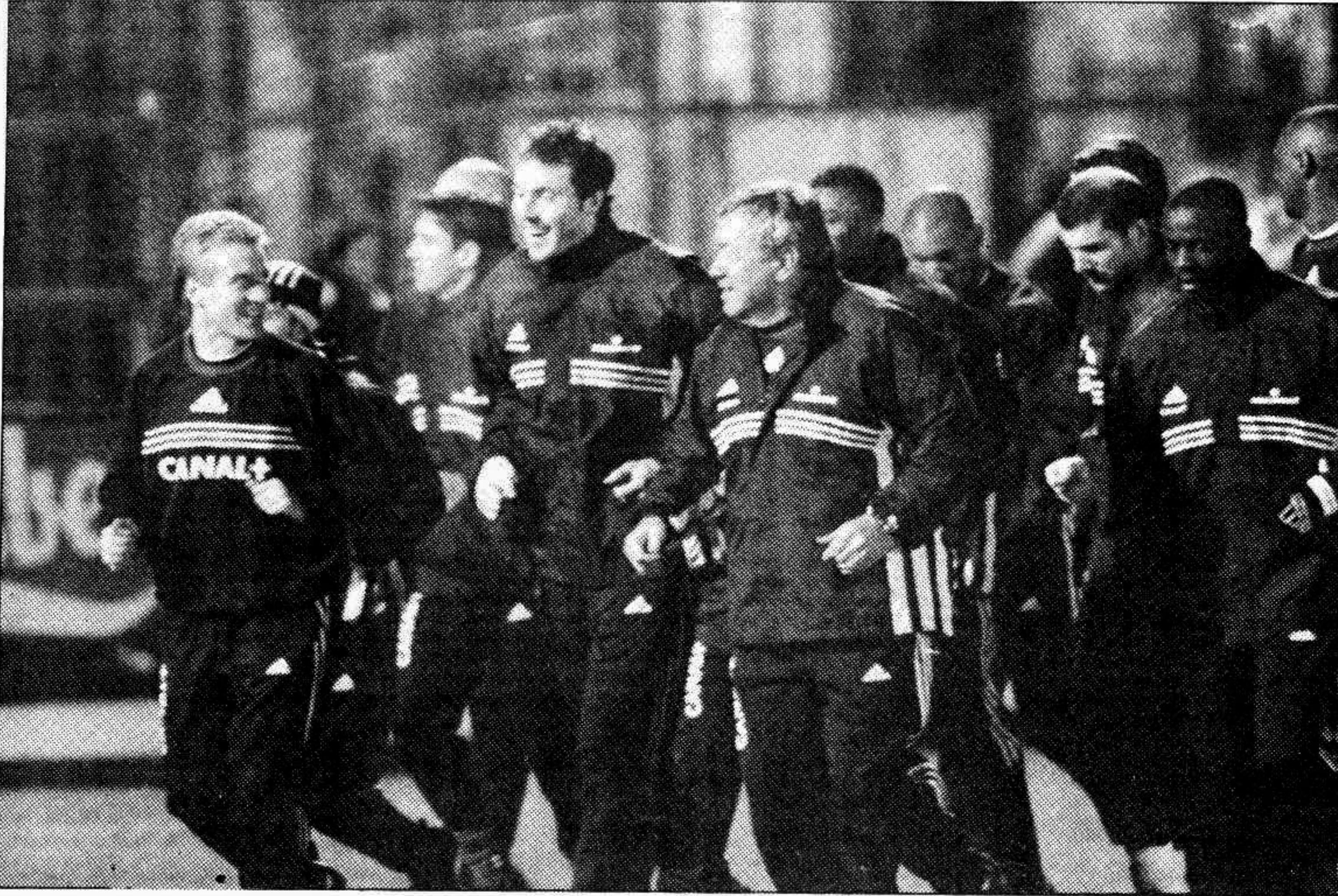
Bogicevic later said that Sarajevo's candidacy would be officially submitted to the IOC at the end of March.

The site of the 2006 Winter Olympics will be determined in June and the 2010 Games in 2003.

"I'm for it," said Sadik Hadzisadikovic, 64. "All of these ruins would be repaired. It could again be a tourist's paradise," he added.

Now, the only foreign visitors to Bosnia are those who come to help rebuild the country. And they are the ones who visit the former Olympic sites on both sides of the boundary that divided Sarajevo under the 1995 peace agreement.

The partitioning of Bosnia into the Bosnian Serb republic and the Muslim-Croat federation left many Sarajevoan skiers deprived of their favourite mountain Jahorina, now under Bosnian Serb control.



The French national squad warming up for a training session at Harrow Borough Stadium in London on February 8 ahead of their February 9 friendly international against England at Wembley. — AFP photo

## Berger for 'foreignism'



LIVERPOOL, Feb 9 (Reuters): Liverpool midfielder Patrik Berger has hit back at claims that the foreign influence is harming the English Premier League.

On the contrary, he says, it is improving coaching and playing standards and bringing a breath of fresh air to the English game.

And Berger believes the tactical awareness of foreign coaches and the preparation techniques they have brought to their clubs will help English sides banish their poor European form.

The Czech international admits to being "surprised" by the lack of tactical team talks given by former Liverpool manager Roy Evans and he has welcomed the way new coach Gerard Houllier has altered the approach at Anfield.

"He has changed a lot," Berger says. "He brought some things here from Europe. He has different training ideas, more tactics and a lot more discipline."

"All this is normal in Germany, France, Italy and Spain but now he's bringing these things here."

He added: "England is one of the best leagues in the world but that is maybe the problem why the English teams are usually out of the UEFA Cup or Cup Winner's Cup quite early. It is because they don't study what other teams can do."

Berger points to the way Gianni Vialli at Chelsea and Arsene Wenger at Arsenal have changed the traditional way of thinking in English football and seen their teams turn into title winners and contenders as a consequence.

"I think the coach's influence at these places has been a major help for English football," he says.

Houllier's presence at Anfield has certainly been of great assistance to Berger.

The 25-year-old was set to leave the club in the summer under Evans.

After starting his Liverpool career with a flurry of goals, which enhance a reputation built on a runners-up medal in Euro '96, his form tailed off and the writing looked on the wall when he was allowed to miss key club games so he could fly home.

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"In the summer, you can go. I would have gone somewhere else but Liverpool said, 'No, so I came back and worked hard and started a new chapter.'

He then moved to AC Milan where he linked up with the man who would become his coaching mentor -- Arrigo Sacchi.

When Sacchi left Milan to coach the Italy side, Ancelotti followed him and was his right hand man in the early 1990s.

From there, he moved into coaching his own right, guiding Reggiana from Serie B to Serie A in the 1995-96 season before moving into the big time with Parma.

He took the small town side into the European Champions' League two years ago but was dismissed at the end of last season after the club failed to win a trophy.

Like Sacchi, he believes in strict 4-4-2 formations and tends to build teams based on work rate and co-operation rather than flair and gifted playmakers.

His appointment has been criticised by many Juventus fans but he has appealed for a period of grace.

"Let the fans judge me on my results," he said last month when he was formally appointed.

**Top twenty**

MONACO, Feb 9 (Reuters/Internet): Leading rankings (with points) issued by the ATP Tour on Monday:

1. Sampras	3,744
2. Corretja	3,530
3. Kafelnikov	3,350
4. Rafter	3,264
5. Moya	3,178
6. Rios	2,969
7. Agassi	2,845
8. Henman	2,608
9. Kraijcik	2,537
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11. Kufera	2,261
12. Martin	2,152
13. Enqvist	2,104
14. Philippoussis	1,898
15. Ivanisevic	1,895
16. Costa	1,817
17. Johansson	1,761
18. Pioline	1,738
19. Mantilla	1,650
20. Siemerink	1,619

pointed as Lippi's successor.

Lippi angrily quit within minutes of Sunday night's defeat.

"If the problem with this team is me, then here's my resignation. Let's see this team without the Lippi problem," he said. "I've tried to do everything possible to wake this team up but I've failed."

His exit brings a remarkably successful era to an end.

He guided Juventus to three league titles in his four and a half seasons at the club as well as three consecutive European Cup finals, a UEFA Cup final and an Italian Cup title.

Lippi has reportedly reached a deal to coach Inter Milan next season but neither the club nor the coach has confirmed the reports.

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name as a player at AS Roma in

## Sport

# Kumble's killer cocktail



NEW DELHI, Feb 9 (Reuters/Internet): Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble said he bowled a cocktail of pace, spin and bounce to earn his remarkable 10-wicket haul against Pakistan.

He and England off-spinner Jim Laker are the only players in Test history to have taken 10 wickets in a match.

Kumble achieved the feat in New Delhi on Sunday. Laker's 10-wicket haul came at Old Trafford, Manchester, in 1956. "All I had to do was pitch the ball in the right areas, mix up my pace and spin and trap the batsman," Kumble told the Hindustan Times on Tuesday.

Kumble's wicket-by-wicket account:

**Shahid Afridi:** At that point it was important for us to get the breakthrough. The Pakistani openers were cruising and had already put on more than 100 runs. I pushed one through flatter and Afridi got a big nick for Nayan (Mongia) to do the rest.

**Ijaz Ahmed:** He has always been known to be a candidate for a leg before verdict. I wanted to pitch the ball right up to him and hit him on his toes. I delivered it quicker too.

**Inzamamul Haq:** It was not a wicket-taking ball at all but he got an inside edge to it and dragged it on to the stumps. It was a big wicket because he

could have been a sticky customer.

**Yousuf Youhana:** I was aiming to get him to play half-cock. The ball was low and in line with the stumps and it seemed like he was not looking to play it, his bat was tucked so far behind the bat.

**Moin Khan:** I tried to push him back with some short balls but he handled those well. Then I bowled a slow leg break and the ball pitch did the rest, getting the batsman to hit the ball on the stumps.

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