

**Raducioiu
finally says
yes**

BUCHAREST, Feb 25 (Reuters/Internet): Brescia striker Florin Raducioiu has relented after more than two years of appeals and agreed on Thursday to rejoin the Romanian national side's campaign to qualify for the 2000 European championships finals.

"I need Romania's national team," Raducioiu said by telephone from the Italian city. "I'm ready to fight again for a place in the national team's attack."

Romanian coach Victor Pituca also called up uncapped Dorin Mitrata of Dutch side Heerenveen to replace unfit Andrelech defender Tibor Selymes.

Raducioiu, 29, won 41 caps and scored four goals in the 1994 World Cup finals in United States. He agreed to calls from Pituca after long spurning his volatile predecessor Anghel Iordănescu.

Raducioiu scored in his last appearance for the national side when Romania lost 2-1 to Spain in the 1996 European Championships in England.

He will launch his comeback in a friendly against Estonia in Bucharest on March 3 and a second friendly a week later at home against Israel.

Romania currently lead group seven with seven points from three matches, one ahead of Slovakia and Portugal.

Their next European championship match is at home against Slovakia on March 27 and away to Azerbaijan four days later.

Squad:

Goalkeepers: Tiberiu Lung (Universitatea Craiova), Bogdan Lobont (Rapid Bucharest)

Defenders: Dorin Mitrata (Heerenveen), Julian Miu (Steaua Bucharest), Cosmin Contra, Liviu Cioabă, Daniel Florea (all Dinamo Bucharest)

Middlefielders: Gheorghe Popescu (Galatasaray), Dorinel Munteanu (Cologne), Denis Serban (Valencia), Laurentiu Rosu, Ionut Lutu, Eugen Trica (all Steaua Bucharest)

Forwards: Florin Raducioiu (Brescian), Adrian Mutu, Adrian Mihalcea (both Dinamo Bucharest), Ionel Danielu (Steaua Bucharest)

Moenchengladbach desperate for a win



BOHN, Feb 25 (Reuters/Internet): Borussia Moenchengladbach, one of the greatest clubs in German soccer history, cannot afford to lose again against fellow strugglers Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday if they are to remain in the Bundesliga.

"I still believe we can escape relegation," said midfielder Michael Frontzeck, who rejoined Moenchengladbach from SC Freiburg last December, "but we must beat Eintracht."

Bottom-placed Moenchengladbach, remembered for winning five German titles and

Interesting!

CIVITAVECCHIA, Italy, Feb 25: The president of a semi-professional Italian soccer team resigned on Wednesday and was replaced by his 18-year-old son, reports Reuters.

Mario Auriemma said he was quitting Serie D side Civitavecchia to concentrate on a crusade against doping and corruption in soccer, ANSA news agency reported.

Auriemma has made several allegations concerning bribery and drug taking in Italian football.

He has twice been summoned before Turin magistrate Rafaella Guariniello who is conducting an extensive probe into doping. He is due to testify a third time next week.

Auriemma's son Raffaele is a rare example of a player-president, having made a fleeting appearance for Civitavecchia earlier this season.

lifting the UEFA Cup twice in the 1970s, were looking for a fresh start against champions Kaiserslautern last weekend.

They put up a brave fight in their first match after the winter break but still lost 2-0 in front of their fans to drop six points behind 17th-placed Nuremberg.

"We're not in the second division yet," said Frontzeck, hoping for a burst of pride away to Eintracht, who are a miserable 16th and also badly need points to remain in the top flight. "If we keep on playing like we did against Kaiserslautern, we will win matches."

Moenchengladbach's efforts to stay in the first division, which they have not left since being promoted in 1965, should receive a boost from one of the club's heroes, Berti Vogts.

This club gave me everything and now it's time for me to pay them back, said Vogts, who is expected to join the club's board of directors next week.

Vogts, who stepped down as national team coach last September, played over 400 matches for Moenchengladbach in their glory days, from 1965 to 1979.

Moenchengladbach's main rivals then were Bayern Munich, who are in a totally different class now as they top the standings with a comfortable 10-point lead on second-placed Bayer Leverkusen.

The leaders, who crushed MSV Duisburg 3-0 last weekend, will be at full strength when they visit Hansa Rostock on Saturday and should pick up three more points.

"If we keep on playing like that, with that same mentality, we will be very hard to beat," Bayern keeper Oliver Kahn said after the match at Duisburg.

Bayern's match against Rostock will be their final warm-up before next week's awaited all-German European Cup quarter-final battle against Kaiserslautern.

The Red Devils, who beat Bayern to the title last season, are currently third. They entertain VfB Stuttgart on Friday.

Leverkusen, who will be happy if they hold on to second place and the ticket to the Champions' League it offers, face a tricky task away to Hamburg on Saturday.

"We're not the top favourites and it is very unlikely that we will stop them from winning the title," admitted Leverkusen manager Reiner Calmund. "The best we can do is finish second."

Batistuta resumes training

FLORENCE, Italy, Feb 25: Fiorentina striker Gabriel Batistuta returned to the training pitch on Wednesday for the first time since he twisted his left knee in a league match earlier this month, reports Reuters.

The Argentine, top scorer in Serie A this season with 18 goals, spent the session jogging, prompting hopes he might return to action sooner than expected.

England midfielader Anderson had given Spurs the lead eight minutes earlier with a 30-metre strike which flew in off a post past a startled Nigel Martyn.

Leeds contributed much to the excitement of the second half and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink was unlucky with a fierce shot which came back off the inside of the post.

Spurs are away to first division Barnsley in the quarter-finals.

Frenchman Louis Saha, playing in place of flu-hit England striker Alan Shearer, earned Newcastle a home tie against Everton by scoring the second goal.

A second half penalty by Gaizka Mendieta finally gave Valencia a 4-3 win on the night and 7-5 victory over both legs.

Barcelona's opponents in last year's final Mallorca, also went out of the competition, beaten 1-0 away by Deportivo Coruna and losing 2-1 on aggregate.

Argentina striker Claudio Lopez picked up an inch-perfect Mendieta pass after 23 minutes and danced around Barcelona goalkeeper Ruud Hesp for Valencia's first goal.

Miguel Angel provided the service for Lopez's second strike 12 minutes later and again Hesp was left standing helpless as the fleet-footed Valencia player found the net.

Angulo got on the scoresheet himself two minutes before the break after Frank de Boer instilled a clearance and the ball spun straight to his feet.

Goals from Rivaldo and Os

Toshack back again at Real



ISTANBUL, Feb 25 (Reuters/Internet): Much-travelled Welshman John Toshack is to coach Real Madrid for the second time, replacing sacked Dutchman Guus Hiddink.

His new job was confirmed by the Spanish champions on Wednesday as he left Turkey's Besiktas after a disappointing 18 months in charge.

Real said he would be officially presented in Madrid on Thursday and be in charge for Saturday's league match in Seville against Real Betis.

A Besiktas spokesman told reporters: "John Toshack has reached an agreement with Real Madrid. He gave his resignation to the board and the board accepted it."

Real had earlier sacked Hiddink after just seven months in charge. The writing had been on the wall since the 3-0 league defeat by big rivals Barcelona 10 days ago and a 1-0 loss at home to Athletic Bilbao on Sunday saw them drop to sixth place.

The Besiktas spokesman said they expected 600,000 dollars to release Toshack from his contract which was to have run until June 2000.

Toshack led Real Madrid to the league title in 1990 but was sacked early the following season. The former Liverpool and Wales striker has frequently been in dispute with directors at his Turkish club.

In October, Toshack announced he was on the verge of resigning over hefty fines on players imposed by the directors. The Istanbul side are currently third in the first division.

Toshack began his coaching career at Swansea City, taking the Welsh club from the English fourth division to the top flight.

After five years at Swansea he moved to Portuguese club Sporting Lisbon and then Spain's Real Sociedad, where he stayed for four years before his first spell at Real Madrid.

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