

## Venables could still return as England coach

LONDON, Feb 28 (Reuters/Internet): Terry Venables could return as England coach if Kevin Keegan decides not to stay in the job, according to a senior Football Association (FA) official.

"Nobody is saying that Terry Venables will not be the next England coach," Sunday newspapers quoted Noel White, chairman of the FA's international committee, as saying.

"He could do a good job. The baggage that he had around on the last time seems to have gone away."

Venables coached England from 1994 to 1996, taking the team to the European championship semifinals. He then resigned to concentrate on mounting legal cases and subsequently coached Australia and English first division Crystal Palace.

White said the FA would prefer second division Fulham boss Keegan, who has agreed to take over for the next four games only, as number one choice to stay on as England coach.

However, Keegan, who replaced the sacked Glenn Hoddle, has made it clear that he intends to step down and White said a successor was being sought.

"We can't envisage the part-time situation continuing for the rest of the Euro 2000 campaign," said White, who added he had an English candidate in mind.

"We're looking for someone to come in full time when these four games are over. I think we have to go through the due process of appointing another person."

"We want to have that person ready for when Kevin finishes. If Kevin changes his mind after the three qualifying games, it will be too late, unfortunately."

White added what amounted to a job description for the successful candidate to take over from Keegan: "He must be a good team manager and motivator, have respect from his players, have respect in the game and, ideally, played for his country, though he may just have missed out for some reason. It has got to be a tip-top appointment."

## Corinthians victim of questionable calls

SAO PAULO, Feb 28 (Reuters/Internet): Corinthians had two players sent off in a controversial 1-0 defeat by Palmeiras on Saturday as the two Brazilian clubs began their South American Libertadores Cup campaign.

Corinthians were livid both at the Palmeiras goal, scored from a highly questionable free kick in the penalty area, and at having what would have been a late equaliser disallowed.

Paraguayan full-back Francisco Arce's 58th minute winner came after compatriot and Corinthians captain Carlos Gamarra made a superb tackle in the penalty area.

The ball was picked up by goalkeeper Nei and the referee judged that a deliberate back pass had been made.

Five minutes from time Marcelinho Carioca had the ball in the net for Corinthians but was adjudged to be offside. Television replays appeared to show he was onside.

when the ball was played.

Marcelinho swore at the linesman, was sent off and left the field making a gesture which means robbery in Brazil.

Palmeiras, whose players were angered during the week after coach Luiz Felipe Scolari publicly accused them of being overweight and handed the media lists of each player's weight, had the better of the game.

Neither side have won the Libertadores before, although Scarsi led Gremio to the title in 1995 and has three of that side in the Palmeiras squad.

With the top three teams qualifying from the group both will still fancy their chances in group three which also comprises Paraguayans Cerro Porteno and Olimpia.

## Keegan a la Hoddle?



LONDON, Feb 28 (Reuters/Internet): England have hired and fired coaches this month but the hands of the faith healers are proving harder to shake off.

Less than two weeks after Kevin Keegan took over from Glenn Hoddle, whose links with faith healer Eileen Derry sparkled controversy and derision, the new short-term manager found himself linked on Sunday to a hands-on healer.

"Revealed: Keegan sent players to faith healer," declared the Sunday Times newspaper in a front-page headline. The article revealed that the incident happened more than two years ago, when Keegan was at Newcastle United.

Derry meanwhile appeared on a BBC television show to publicise a new book and further denounce the media for their treatment of Hoddle.

The Sunday Times said that Keegan, who has agreed to take on the England job for four games while remaining at the helm of second division Fulham, had used faith healer Betty Shine for two injured players at Newcastle.

The players were named as England captain Alan Shearer, who joined Newcastle in 1996, and midfielder Steve Howey.

Betty Shine was very serious about what she did and she felt she could help Alan's groin and my calf. Kevin possibly believed in her but it didn't work for me or Alan," said Howey of the treatment.

GLENN HODDLE

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## Sun shines at World GP finals

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei, Feb 28: Sun Jun of China retained his men's title at the world Grand Prix badminton finals today by overturning the rankings to beat Peter Gade-Christensen of Denmark 15-11, 15-8, reports Reuters.

Sun, the world number two, beat the top-ranked Dane 15-11, 15-8 to become the first man to retain the Grand Prix title.

The first game was close with neither able to dominate early. Sun started the brighter by taking a 6-1 lead but Gade-Christensen fought back to draw level at 11-all.

Peter was a bit off-form and I was able to take advantage of that.

Gade-Christensen, obviously disappointed, said: "I did not play well and I didn't get a chance to. Sun played extremely well and he deserved to win today."

"I am disappointed because it's not every day you get to the Grand Prix finals. It may never

happen again so I am quite sad."

In another final, South Koreans Kim Dong-Moon and Ra Kyung-Kim proved too much for England's Simon Archer and Joanne Goode as they claimed the mixed doubles title with a convincing 15-6, 15-9 win.

The all-Chinese women's singles final ended with Zhang Ning outplaying Da Yun 11-8, 11-7, after having beaten favourite Ye Zhaoying in Saturday's semifinals.

The men's doubles went to Indonesians Deny Kantono and Budi Ariantho Antonius after a wonderful performance took them past teammates Tony Gunawan and Haryanto Halim 15-11, 15-5, 15-11.

The Chinese women's doubles pairing of Ge Fei and Gu Jun retained their title without having to hit a single shuttlecock as Danish opponents Marlene Thomsen and Rikke Olsen were unable to play due to Thomsen's back injury.

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Coetzer cruises into final

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However, she lost the next two and Coetzer tied the match at 4-4. Coetzer, the No. 3 seed, won the next two games to take the set, then won the second set in 24 minutes.

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