

Feyenoord pair set to make Holland debuts

ARNHEM, Holland, Apr 28: Newly-crowned Dutch champions Feyenoord have provided two new caps in the national team to face Morocco here in Wednesday's friendly, reports AFP.

Jean-Paul van Gastel and Bert Konterman, who form Feyenoord's central defensive pairing, earn their debuts along with FC Utrecht striker Michael Mols, who will join Glasgow Rangers at the end of the season.

Dutch coach Frank Rijkaard said Vitesse Arnhem goalkeeper Sander Westerveld is also set to earn his first cap by replacing starting goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar for the second half of the game.

Only three players from Holland's last match against Argentina on March 31 will start this time -- Van der Sar, Kees van Wonderen and Marc Overmars.

The changes are mainly because Ronald and Frank De Boer, Phillip Cocu, Patrick Kluijvert, Michael Reiziger and Boudewijn Zenden are set to play for Barcelona in their centenary fixture against Brazil the same night.

SQUAD

Edwin Van der Sar (Ajax), Kees van Wonderen (Feyenoord), Jean-Paul van Gastel (Feyenoord), Bert Konterman (Feyenoord), Ruud van Hintum (Arnhem), Dries Boutsatta (AZ Alkmaar), Clarence Seedorf (Real Madrid/Spa), Giovanni Van Bronckhorst (Glasgow Rangers/Spa), Marc Overmars (Arsenal/Engl), Ruud Van Nistelrooy (PSV), Michael Mols (FC Utrecht).

Early exit for Yevgeny

PRAGUE, Czech Republic, Apr 28: Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who will become the top-ranked player in the world next week, lost to Richard Fromberg in three sets in the first round of the Czech Open Tuesday, reports AP.

Fromberg beat the Australian Open champion and the top-seeded Russian 6-4, 2-6, 6-4. But Kafelnikov will still take the No 1 spot from Pete Sampras, who is resting this week because of injury.

By being unable to defend his title in Atlanta, Sampras loses 172 ranking points.

Kafelnikov may become No 1, but he has been in anything but stellar shape since winning an indoor tournament in London in late February. Since then, he has now lost six straight first-round matches.

In other first-round matches, third-seeded Cedric Pioline of France beat Czech Republic's Jiri Novak 7-6 (8-6), 6-6 (7-4), and No 7 Nicolas Pietrangeli of Ecuador defeated Czech's Radek Stepanek 6-4, 6-4, eighth-seeded Andrei Ilie of Australia defeated Sebastian Prieto of Argentina 6-2, 6-4 and fourth-seeded Marat Safin of Russia lost to Czech qualifier Tomas Zib 1-6, 6-1, 7-5.

Tauziat, Van Roost scrape through

HAMBURG, Germany, Apr 28: Nathalie Tauziat and Dominique Van Roost had to survive tough first sets before advancing to the second round of the Betty Barclay Cup in Hamburg on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Fifth seeded Tauziat of France, who had won just three matches in her five previous tournaments this year, fell behind 2-4 against Russia's Elena Likhovtseva before rallying to take the first set.

In the second set, she dropped her serve in the opening game but then swept the next six to win 6-4, 6-1.

Tauziat spent the beginning of the year practising instead of playing in Australia, but instead of feeling fresh when she returned to match play she felt drained and uninspired.

"I had a tough season last year and took just one week off," she explained. "This year especially I worked very hard. I tried weights and was still tired in my head when I started playing again. I had no motivation. The weights didn't help me with my game so I've stopped, and now I've started to move much better."

Van Roost of Belgium also struggled to gain the upper hand against Germany's Barbara Rittner, but the sixth seed then took control to earn a 6-4, 6-0 victory.

Van Roost broke serve to lead Rittner 4-3, but then had to lead off seven break points in the next game. Having emerged from that test, Van Roost went on to take the first set and then allowed the dejected Rittner just two game points in the second.

"I had to win that game because I knew she can always fight and come back," said Van Roost of the eighth game of the first set. "That's what happened at Indian Wells last month. I was leading by a set and 3-1 and she came back and won."

Van Roost explained that she first had to find her feet on what is not her favourite surface.

"It was the first tournament for me on clay and I had to adjust my game," she said. "I'm not a real clay court specialist. I tried to be patient and be aggressive at the right time and I kept to my plan well, and in the second set I was very consistent and it was hard for her mentally."

Gazza ready to play

MIDDLESBROUGH, Apr 28: Troubled former England midfielder Paul Gascoigne is set for an emotional return for Middlesbrough at his hometown club Newcastle on Saturday, reports AFP.

The midfielder has been missing from the Teessiders' line-up since April 5 when he picked up a leg injury in the 3-1 home defeat of Wimbledon.

But Middlesbrough have dismissed stories that Gazza, who has been receiving treatment for stress, had been seen drinking.

"Paul has not been drunk, he has been training as normal," a Middlesbrough spokesman said.

"He is still getting treatment at the clinic and doctors there are happy with his progress."

"Paul has had a dead leg which has forced him to miss the last few games which he picked up when we beat Wimbledon 3-1."

"He played on through the game but it has got worse since then and it has kept him out of training a lot of the time."

"But he trained yesterday, he is training today and if there is no reaction to that, he will play for the reserves against Coventry tomorrow."

"Apart from possibly playing for the reserves, if he continues his progress, he could be in line for a return to the first team at Newcastle on Saturday."



REHANA ZAMAN ... gold in 200m

National Swimming Abdul Hamid sets two new records

Sports Reporter Abdul Hamid of Bangladesh Navy set two new national records as the Keya Cosmetics 18th National Swimming Championships began at the National Swimming Pool in Mirpur yesterday.

On the inaugural day of the three-day meet, Hamid won the 200m individual medley gold in 2 minutes 21.63 seconds, bettering the previous national record of 2 minutes 22.77 seconds. Asim Chicham of Bangladesh Army won the silver while MM Zaman of Navy clinched the bronze in the same event.

After winning the medley gold, Hamid was also instrumental when the four-man Navy team won the 4x100m freestyle relay with a new national record of 3 minutes and 51.12 seconds. The previous record in the event was 3 minutes and 51.19 seconds. Siddiqur Rahman, Monirul Islam and ace swimmer Ilyas Hossain were the other members of the team. Bangladesh Army and BKSP won the silver and bronze in this event.

Rehana Zaman of Ansars won the day's only women's gold by winning the 200m individual medley in 3 minutes 55.53 seconds. Her teammate Kamala bagged the silver while the bronze went to Sabura Khatun of Kushtha.

Apart from swimming, three golds in diving were also decided on the opening day with Bangladesh Army making a clean sweep. Rezaul Islam of Army won two golds in 1m and 3m spring boards while his teammate Shahidul Islam clinched the 5m platform diving.

Earlier in the morning, State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader inaugurated the championships. Bangladesh Swimming Federation president Rear Admiral M Nurul Islam was also present among other distinguished guests.

UEFA on violence

GENEVA, Apr 28 (Reuters/Internet): UEFA said on Wednesday it was confident there would be no repeat during Euro 2000 of last weekend's violence and hooliganism in the Dutch league.

In a press release, European soccer's governing body condemned the violence that occurred on Sunday in Rotterdam where rampaging Feyenoord supporters clashed with police.

It added that the actions represented a clear indication that certain groups still use football as a pretext for gratuitous violence.

But UEFA added it had complete confidence that Dutch and Belgian authorities were capable of running a smooth and safe Euro 2000 finals next year.

Dutch soccer fans are some of the most notorious in Europe with a long history of violent behaviour, but UEFA pointed out that supporters of the Dutch national team have been exceptionally well behaved.

At Euro 96 in England, Dutch fans received an award for the best group of supporters.

But with Euro 2000 just a year off, Sunday's rioting in Rotterdam, which will host the final, has sent a warning to Dutch and Belgian organisers, who responded to the violence by meeting on Monday to sign a joint security accord.

Sunday's unrest was the worse seen at a soccer match since last year's World Cup in France where police fought with English fans and local youths in Marseille.

A gendarme was left in a coma after being clubbed by a German fan in Lens near the Belgian border.

In a last ditch effort to control rampaging hooligans on Sunday, Dutch police opened fire on trouble makers, wounding four people.

Anelka hits out at PSG

PARIS, Apr 28: Nicolas Anelka, pleased with his English young player-of-the-year award, hit out at Paris Saint Germain for not showing enough confidence in young players, reports AFP.

Anelka, let go by PSG for just five million francs (about 810,000 dollars) in 1997 in a transfer coup by Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, has since become France's number one striker.

"I am very happy to be recognised by the players," Anelka said, quoted in France's sports daily L'Equipe on Wednesday. "Even if I didn't think anything of it before, it's always great to win such a trophy."

"I am now going to try to improve and win even bigger ones. Anelka advised PSG to put more emphasis on cultivating their youth. The Parc des Princes side were European Cup Winners' Cup champions in 1996 and runners-up a year later but have since plummeted to domestic mid-table obscurity.

Referring to his award, 20-year-old Anelka added: "This shows PSG that they have good youth players and they need to have confidence in them. I know there are others who are going to leave."

"Kelban and Fernandez are not playing although they deserve to. If confidence isn't shown in them when things are not going well, it's because they are not respected. "PSG have still not understood that young players can play in place of so-called stars. I like PSG but there are always strange things happening. Whenever a player arrives things go badly. It's completely the opposite at Marseille."

Barbadian PM says sorry

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Apr 28: Barbados' prime minister has apologised "to cricketing world" for a crowd-bottle-throwing incident that disrupted a one-day international between Australia and the West Indies, reports AP.

"I want to say I am sorry on behalf of the children and particularly young people in Barbados," Owen Arthur was quoted as saying in media reports Tuesday.

"Sunday's melee is not the type of example we would want our young people to emulate. ... It was simply not the kind of image that I would like to see mature adults projecting of Barbados in this technological age."

The prime minister, who made his comments late Monday while visiting a cricket project at a primary school, was at the game but left before an angry crowd, estimated at 14,000 reacted to a controversial run out of West Indies batsman Shervin Campbell, a Barbadian, by throwing bottles onto the outfield.

One bottle narrowly missed Australia captain Steve Waugh's head as he walked towards the pavilion.

Play resumed after 45 minutes when Campbell was reinstated. The West Indies won by eight wickets.

"I hope that it does not forever stand as a stigma against the good name of cricket in Barbados," Arthur said.

The incident in Barbados followed an April 21 incident in which hundreds of spectators invaded the field in the closing moments of the fifth one-day match in Georgetown, Guyana, prompting the referee to declare a draw. Guyanese President Janet Jagan apologised for that incident.

Earlier, Australian Prime Minister John Howard told reporters in Canberra that it was "quite distressing that mob violence and hooliganism in the Dutch league."

"Sports administrators around the world have got to show more leadership on these issues," Howard said.

On April 21, hundreds of spectators invaded the field in the closing moments of the fifth one-day match in Georgetown, Guyana, prompting the referee to declare a draw. Guyanese President Janet Jagan apologised for that incident.

The Australian board said it would seriously question a return to the West Indies for future Test and limited-overs matches following Sunday's incident.

West Indies Cricket Board president Pat Rousseau said Monday the body would start fining fans who invade the field. He also called upon countries in the Caribbean Community trade group to upgrade security at the region's cricket grounds.

"It's important that we put certain things in place to ensure the safety of players, and we will be lobbying Caricom for their support," Rousseau said.

International Cricket Council chief executive David Richardson on Monday said the federation will consider being more proactive regarding safety and security at matches and will discuss the issue at its meeting May 12-13.

"As far as setting up a ratings system for grounds, I'm lukewarm on that," Richardson said. "It's something we can consider, but these things happen so sporadically and unpredictably that it's difficult to work with something like that."

Richardson said the ICC had a data base on all the grounds and had been adding to it over five years. A referee also is appointed to each international and must consult with the local board on issues such as security and only go ahead once he is satisfied any concerns have been addressed.

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As for helping the next coach, Hodgson said: "I'm at Marcelo Lippi's disposition for anything. If he wants my opinion I'll give it. I know Marcelo and have a lot of respect for him."

Hodgson, who has been given a free hand over tactics and team selection, said he had no difficulty saying 'yes' to the chance to coach the likes of Ronaldo and Roberto Baggio.

"But I consider myself fortunate that over the last six years or so to have had great players when I was here last, when I was coach of the Swiss national team and also at Blackburn," he said.

Summing up, before heading out for his first training session here, Hodgson told AFP: "I can't turn a bad season into a good one, but I'd be disappointed if I came away feeling that I hadn't achieved something."

Hodgson has a week to turn things around, with the team facing AS Rome at the Olympic stadium on Monday night.

Hodgson back to Inter

APPIANO GENOVESE, Italy, Apr 28: A smiling Roy Hodgson made a surprise return as coach of Inter Milan on Tuesday, promising to do everything to get the Serie A strugglers into the UEFA Cup, reports AFP.

England's Hodgson, who quit Inter two games before the end of the 1998-97 season after losing the UEFA Cup final on penalties to Schalke 04, was given a month's contract as the club's fourth coach this season.

Inter president Massimo Moratti replaced Gigi Simoni in November with Romanian Mircea Lucescu, who quit last month. Goalkeeper coach Luciano Castellini, the man who stood in for Hodgson two years ago, then took over, but the team continued to plunge down the table.

Hodgson stepped down as manager of Blackburn Rovers last November following a string of poor results which left them at the foot of the English Premiership table.

The 51-year-old, recently suggested as a possible successor to England supremo Glenn Hoddie, also coached Switzerland to the 1994 World Cup finals.

Currently ninth with four games left, Inter have two options for reaching the UEFA Cup -- moving back up the table or winning a possible play-off with Bologna as the two losing semi-finalists in the Italian Cup; Parma and Fiorentina meanwhile hoping for the Champions League.

"It's a great pleasure to return to Inter and to try to do the best for the team," said Hodgson, who will later make way for Juventus coach Marcello Lippi, already booked for next season.

"The president asked me to give them a hand, and I was free and had no commitments. I hadn't wanted to take anything on between leaving Blackburn and next season. But after three or four months on holiday, I'm flattered to have the chance to work here."

"I'm here for one month and four matches, possibly five, and will do everything I can to win a place in the UEFA Cup...and we're going to need Ronaldo on form to manage that."

Majoli advances

BOL, Croatia, Apr 28: Making up for the absence of crowd favourite and fellow Croat Mirjana Lucic, Iva Majoli downed Zuzana Heidova of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-4 in the opener round Tuesday of the 142,500 dollar Bol Ladies Open, reports AP.



ABDUL HAMID ... gold in 200m



AWESOME, THREESOME, R-SOME! Superstrikers Rivaldo (front), Ronaldo (R) and Romario practicing during Brazil's practice at Nou Camp on April 27. Brazil play Barcelona on April 28. — AFP photo

Ronaldo's warning

MILAN, Apr 28: Ronaldo is threatening to quit Inter Milan after his car came under attack by angry fans at San Siro last weekend, reports AFP.

Inter were tipped to win the Italian championship this season, but instead are unlikely to even qualify for the next Inter-toto tournament.

Ronaldo's recurring tendon trouble and a complete collapse in morale, has left the team ninth in the Serie A and the fans furious at the seemingly

unstoppable run of defeats. Ronaldo, whose car was narrowly missed by a flying bottle on Sunday evening but hit by stones, has decided that if the fans who whistled him during the 3-1 defeat to Udinese don't start behaving, he could be on the way out.

Currently in Barcelona with Brazil for a friendly, he told the Gazzetta dello Sport: "I feel sad about it all, because it seems the fans have already forgotten the 34 goals I scored last season which helped us to win the UEFA Cup and qualify for the Champions' League."

"I don't expect eternal gratitude, but I think I've a right to a certain amount of understanding over the physical problems which have affected my form over the last nine months."

Challenged that ingratitude can be understood, he replied: "But violence can't. I accept being whistled, because that's the fans' right, and on that occasion, I deserved them."

"Analysing my performance against Udinese honestly, I played really badly, like the rest of the team. But what hurt me deep down in my soul was the assault as I left the stadium."

"The club has to intervene to prevent that scenes like that happening again... otherwise sooner or later something serious is going to happen."

And making clear his thinly-veiled threat, Ronaldo said: "In a climate of tension and fear like this, someone might also decide leave Inter. I'm a shareholder in Inter, which is a sign of my intention to stay."

But he added ominously: "I have not yet thought of leaving, but the future is something that you programme day after day, experience after experience. And every good intention has to be reflected in the facts as they stand."

Ronaldo said that a lack of discipline by the club, in dealing with locker room clashes had caused much of the trouble this season.

And he called on both the team and the fans for one last effort as they try desperately to book a place in European football next season.

"We're not resigned to finishing the championship like this, we too have our sense of dignity," he said.

"But now we're beginning to live in fear of our own fans, and that feeling paralyses us more than the harracking of the other team's supporters."

"The lack of security makes us commit even more errors. Obviously it's not going to be easy to make up for the 30 matches which have cost us a place in Europe in the last four of the season."

"But we'll only succeed in doing that if the crowd, the team and the club can be re-united."



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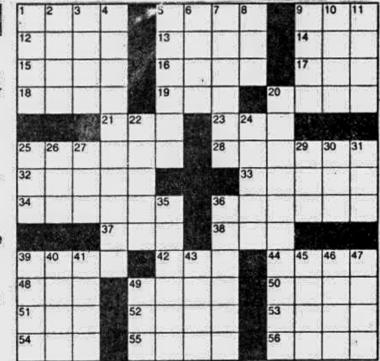
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Barcelona's Portuguese superstar Luis Figo (L) and coach Luis van Gaal discussing something during practice at Nou Camp on April 27 ahead of their friendly against four times world champions Brazil. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Make into crisp curls 5 Pocket bread 9 Run up the phone bill 12 Sluggish 13 Actor 14 -- Miss Brooks 15 The gamut 16 Report-card datum 17 Corroded 18 "Desafinado" saxophonist 19 Grass-hopper's rebuker 20 Florencia 21 Roulette bet 23 Copycat 25 The littlest Simpson 28 Passable 32 Strange 33 Australian tree-dweller 34 Count of Monte Cristo 36 Released, as emotions

DOWN 37 Scrap 38 Scepter 39 One of the king's men? 42 Habitual comb. form 44 Christiania, now 48 Galena or cinnamon 49 Pleased 50 Obsessed 51 Born 52 Additionally 53 All roads lead there 54 See 9 55 El -- Texas 56 1998 Coop-10 Jam
SOLUTION TIME: 27 MINS.
Yesterday's answer

CRYPTOQUIP
OUCO MGAI KCMCPUGOBEQ
LBQQ CQLCSE AMDK BZ
DZ SDG GZCZZDGPZIA
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I'M CERTAIN EVEN VEG-ETARIANS LIKE EATING ANIMAL CRACKERS.
Today's Cryptoquip clue: Z equals N
The Cryptoquip 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.