

Anelka, Arsenal to part company

LONDON, June 22: Arsenal chairman Peter Hill-Wood admitted on Tuesday that unhappy French international striker Nicolas Anelka would be leaving the club, whom he helped win the Double in 1998, reports AFP.

Hill-Wood, an Old Etonian whose family have had links with the club for decades, also slammed the 20-year-old's behaviour in signing a four-year contract and then through a lucrative move abroad.

Thusfar, though, reported rival multi-million pound bids from Real Madrid and Lazio have so far fallen apart.

"We are not happy about it. The player, however, has said he does not want to play for Arsenal and that puts us in an impossible situation," Hill-Wood told the Sun newspaper.

"It is not a particularly good advert for English football when a player can sign a contract and then announce he is off."

Hill-Wood confirmed no transfer bid has yet been successful for Anelka but conceded nonetheless that the player's highbrow career is as good as over.

"One thing's for sure, Anelka will go. But to whom?" he asked rhetorically.

Since arriving at Arsenal for a knockdown 500,000 pounds from Paris St Germain two years ago Anelka has flourished on the field, collecting last year's PFA Young-Player-of-the-Year Award, but has constantly complained of being unhappy living in England.

Despite starting in Arsenal's 'Double' winning season he was left out of Alime Jacquet's eventually victorious World Cup squad -- he blamed his two Dutch teammates at Arsenal Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars for that omission, saying they refused to pass to him.

Two-decade man Bergomi leaves

MILAN, June 22(Reuters/Internet): Inter Milan have released captain and veteran Italy defender Giuseppe Bergomi after 22 years at the club.

"You all know that at Inter it's over for me after so many years," 36-year-old Bergomi said.

"I have spent more than half my life here. Inter has given me a lot -- prestige, fame, money -- I recognise this and I thank everyone," he said.

"I don't yet have any clear ideas for my future. If I had had more time I would have got myself organised, but I was only told two weeks ago. But I do still see myself on the pitch and not behind a desk."

He is taking time off to consider 'various offers'.

Japanese hero returns

UNDATED, June 22(Mail/Internet): The player who scored the most important goal in Japanese soccer history has been recalled to the national squad for this month's Copa America in Paraguay.

Masayuki Okano, whose 'golden goal' in sudden-death extra time against Iran in November 1997 booked Japan's first trip to the World Cup finals, was one of four players added to the Copa squad at late notice.

The other three were Masahiro Ando, a right-sided wing-back from Shimizu S-Pulse, and Jubilo Iwata teammates Hideto Suzuki, a combative central defender, and Takashi Fukunishi, a defensive midfielder.

The four to drop out were World Cup defender Eisuke Nakanishi and striker Tatsuhiko Kubo, both injured, and Olympic team members Shinji Ono and Atsushi Inagawa, both of whom are needed for Sydney 2000 qualifying games in Tokyo.

Okano, a speedy 26-year-old right-winger for Urawa Red Diamonds, has scored three times in 26 internationals but has not played for Japan since the World Cup in France.

He was on the bench for Japan's first game under French coach Philippe Troussier - a 1-0 victory against Egypt last October - but never got on, and was not considered for friendlies against Brazil, Belgium and Peru this year because he was training with Ajax Amsterdam.

Japan's players left Tokyo on Monday night to prepare for the biennial South American championship, where, as guests, they will play Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia in the first round.

Morace rewrites Italian history

ROME, June 22: Carolina Morace is joining what up until now had been exclusively a men's club: Coaching Italian pro soccer, reports AP.

The former star striker for the Italian women's team signed a two-year contract Monday with Viterbese of the Third Division. Morace, 35, will be the first female coach of a men's club in Italy at any professional level.

"In the end soccer is always the same, no matter who's playing," said Morace.

She scored 105 goals in 151 games for Italy, one of only three women in history to score more than 100 times in international play. Morace retired in 1997.

"Sure, my choice is important and courageous, but what counts is the brain, not the gender," said Viterbese owner Luciano Gauci. "Carolina has been in soccer for a lifetime, she knows it very well."



THE PHENOMENON GEARING UP : Superstar Ronaldo doing a zigzag with the ball during a practice session at Iguacu near the border with Paraguay. Four times world champions Brazil is training for the Copa America championship which begins on June 29 in Paraguay. —AFP photo

Suker in love with England

UNDATED, June 22(Mail/Internet): There is only one regret as Davor Suker bastes slowly in the sun on the Croatian coast, this week, he won't be going to Wimbledon.

Suker, winner of the Golden Boot as top scorer at last summer's World Cup, has been a frequent visitor to London this summer as he looks for a club to pay the blue-chip salary he feels he deserves.

Suker was back in town again last week, with his stunning Spanish actress girlfriend, Ana Obregon, talking to possible employers, shopping at Harrods and generally reveling in all things English.

This week he will be on holiday at Brac, on the Croatian coast, with his international team-mates, Everton's former West Ham defender Slaven Bilic and Derby's transfer-listed Igor Stimac, who owns a nightclub in the area.

Suker and Ana will undoubtedly catch a few rays, swim a little and perhaps talk about the future with his good friend and host for the week, Spanish singing star Julio Iglesias.

There is no doubt about Suker's favoured destination for next season, as underlined by his third visit to London in recent weeks.

Between meetings with interested parties, Suker managed to take in Royal Ascot and a night out at the London Palladium - and he loved every minute of it.

"I love the English culture," he says enthusiastically through his interpreter. "I would have loved to have gone to Wimbledon but maybe next year, when I am with my English club."

"I have played and visited many countries but nothing like England. Going to Royal Ascot last week was like travelling back through time - like nothing I have experienced."

"Next year I go again, this time with one of those big hats."

On the face of it, though, you would have thought a player of Suker's undoubted ability and reputation would have been snapped up in England, but it hasn't happened.

Suker's CV is vastly impressive.

The Golden Boot winner following his six goals in the World Cup, third in the FIFA World Footballer of the Year poll and an astonishing 40 goals in 45 matches for Croatia - all in all a glittering record at the top level. So why no definite takers so far from the Premiership - this football land of milk and honey?

One reason is undoubtedly money. Sukerman's services do not come cheap, with some estimates rising to 40,000 pounds a week for the Croatian superstar.



DAVOR SUKER

Another possible reason for the top clubs' reticence is that he has earned something of a reputation for being difficult, following his time at Real Madrid.

Suker is adamant that is not so. "I spend three years at Real Madrid," says Suker, "and I have only one problem in that time. It is the only problem I have had in my whole playing career of 14 years."

Suker spent much of his time in Spain either out of the Real Madrid team or on the substitutes' bench. To be fair to him, though, he sustained a knee injury following the World Cup, which kept him out for some time.

Suker's problem came to a head when John Toshack arrived at the Bernabeu, particu-

larly after the striker and his Croatian team-mate Robert Jarni played in a friendly international against Italy.

On his return, Suker was apparently furious at Toshack's thinly veiled accusations about players who always seemed to be injured but who then recovered in time to play for their country - 'fifteen, love' as they say at Wimbledon, Davor.

Suker retaliated by making decidedly dubious allegations about Toshack taking commission on transfers and it all went swiftly downhill from there.

Girlfriend Ana apparently joined the fray and the bitchiness climaxed with Suker being banned from the club's training ground and suspended without pay.

It was the usual handbags-at-fifteen-paces stuff, made worse by the arrival, on the scene, of the Harrods teddy bear. Suker arrived back in Madrid from his first visit to London flourishing a Harrods bag containing, so he said, a present for Ana.

With that, out came the bear with the price tag still attached - 16.92 pounds.

Toshack, sensing his chance to make it game, set and match, insinuated that Ana was surely worth more than that and Suker retaliated by threatening to take legal action.

"I've never had a problem before," says Suker. "I just want to be happy with my next club and score more goals than ever before in my career."

"I want desperately to play in England. I like London but I would play somewhere else in the country. If it is right."

"I played here in Euro 96 and I have wanted to come back ever since. The stadiums, the fans, the passion - it is a personal thing to me. It is spectacular."

"I have pride in what I do and I want always to be the best. My heart is set on England but if not, I will go somewhere else," he says.

"I want to show England what I can do and, on my time off, I want to go to places like Ascot and this time, have a small bet."

"Oh yes, and I want just to ride about in black cabs all day. They are so different to anywhere else in the world. Now we know why Davor Suker wants 40,000 pounds a week."

Copa America Brazil team revised

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 22: Brazilian coach Wanderley Luxemburgo called up Gremio striker Ronaldo Monday to replace midfielder Edilson in the Copa America squad after the latter was thrown off the team, reports AFP.

Ronaldo should not be confused with the other player of the same name, who plays for Italian giants Inter Milan and is also in the squad. The 19-year-old Gremio player is known as Ronaldinho to avoid confusion - both players have similarly protruding teeth.

Luxemburgo had deplored Edilson's behaviour during the Sao Paulo Championship deciding match between Corinthians and Palmeiras -- the player provoked fighting on and off the pitch.

"Edilson's attitude is unacceptable and I can not justify his selection," Luxemburgo said. "He must pay the price for his attitude."

"The type of behaviour doesn't just provoke one's opponent but also the spectators and it is hard to control things once they get out of hand."

Luxemburgo, who lost Palmeiras midfielder Cesar Sampaio and Vasco da Gama's Juninho from his squad on Sunday through injury, will announce Edilson's replacement later on Monday.

Marcos Paulo and Alex were called up to replace the two injured players.

FINAL SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Carlos Germano, Dida.

Defenders: Cafu, Evanilson, Serginho, Roberto Carlos, Joao Carlos, Antonio Carlos, Cesar, Odvan.

Midfielders: Vampeta, Ze Roberto, Emerson, Flavio Conceicao, Rivaldo, Leonardo, Marcos Paulo, Alex.

Forwards: Amoroso, Christian, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho.

Vieri has a check-up

MILAN, June 22: Christian Vieri, the world's most expensive footballer, underwent the mandatory medical check-up here on Tuesday, the final step in his 50 million US dollar move from Lazio to Inter Milan in Italy, reports AFP.

The 25-year-old forward, who spent 10 of his formative years in Sydney before returning to fame and fortune in Europe, confirmed his intention to stay in Milan for the five years of his contract.

"Milan is a big and beautiful city and I'm changing once again, but this time I intend to stay because I want to settle and to win something with Inter," said Vieri.

Inter bosses have pushed back the date for the official presentation of their new star.

After his medical Vieri will join his friend Filippo Inzaghi of Inter Serie A side Juventus for holidays.

Vieri's record transfer fee sparked controversy with the Vatican's daily newspaper saying in was "an offence against poor people" and that no-one was worth that much money.

Sunday prayers answered

ROME, June 22: Ajax Amsterdam's Nigerian international midfielder Sunday Oliech confirmed Monday he had chosen Juventus rather than Roma as his next club, reports AFP.

Oliech denied claims by Roma's president Franco Sensi that he had given a verbal undertaking to join the capital outfit.

Oliech told radio Radio: "I chose Juventus because for me it is the best solution but I can not tell you the exact reasons at the moment."

Referring to Sensi's claims that the Bianconeri had gazzumped Roma, Oliech commented: "When I give my word I keep it. I simply told him that I needed a bit of time to reflect. No-one can decide where I should go without my agreement."

Hayley considers Olympic comeback

SYDNEY, June 22: Australia's dual Olympic medalist Hayley Lewis will decide next month whether to bid for a third Games appearance after a three-year absence from competitive swimming, reports AP.

Lewis, 25, last swam competitively at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics where she failed to make the 400m and 800m freestyle finals.

She subsequently entered triathlon events and took time off to have her first child, who is now 14 months old.

But Lewis said Tuesday she would contest the 400m and 800m at a grand prix meeting in Brisbane next month, with emphasis on the 800m, before deciding on a possible bid for next year's Sydney Olympics.

"I'm going to see how I go there, if I swim pretty well I think I will keep going," Lewis said.

"But if I'm not enjoying it and I don't feel like I should be there, then I'll stop."

Lewis won a silver medal in the 800m and bronze in the 400m at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, captured five medals over two world championships including a 200m free gold medal in Perth in 1991 and won five events at the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland.

Australia has failed to unseat a dominant female distance swimmer since Lewis and she admitted that had motivated her to resume training.

Deschamps joins Chelsea

LONDON, June 22: English Premiership side Chelsea have signed France's World Cup winning captain Didier Deschamps from Italian giants Juventus for three million pounds on a three-year contract, reports AFP.

Deschamps, in terms of honours, is the most successful French footballer in history -- as well as his World Cup medal, he has won the European Cup

with two different teams -- Marseille and Juventus, with whom he also won the World Club championship.

He also has won more French caps than any other footballer.

He is a former teammate of Chelsea coach Gianluca Vialli and is also the roommate when on international duty of the London side's central defender and fellow French World Cup winner Marcel Desailly.

Desailly and Deschamps were colleagues as teenagers at

the famous youth academy of French first division side Nantes.

Deschamps had five seasons with the Canaries before moving on to Marseille where he had two spells, sandwiching a single season at Bordeaux.

When the Marseille team broke up, in the wake of the match-fixing scandal that led to their demotion and the eventual imprisonment of their disgraced former president Bernard Tapie, Deschamps moved to Juve.

French First Division side Monaco had been the favourites to land 30-year-old Deschamps but in the end Chelsea clinched his signature.

Chelsea's managing director Colin Hutchinson said: "It's an interesting one. We had tried to sign him two years ago. At that time we failed. He has decided it is time to move on from Juventus having won everything in the book."

He added: "The pleasing thing is he still has a great appetite for the game. He is a winner and he wants to win things in England and hopefully he will help Chelsea win trophies."

"There have been a lot of rumours that Didier would return to France if he left Juventus. It is still in his mind to play in France further down the road in his career," he told Chelsea's ClubCall.

Newcastle sign Marcelino

MADRID, June 22: Spanish international Marcelino Elena will be heading to Newcastle next season after signing a deal with the English Premiership outfit on Monday, reports AFP.

The Real Mallorca central defender, who played in the final of the Cup Winners' Cup and whose side finished third in the Spanish league, will move for just less than 6 million pounds.

Marcelino said: "My characteristics are suited to British football, which I have always admired. For me, it has been a fantasy to play in the Premier League."

"The market is a bit crazy nowadays, although it is not important how much I cost if I do well on the field."

He previously cost the Balearic islanders 200,000 pounds when he signed from Sporting Gijon.

Meanwhile, Czech international Radek Bejbi is set to extend his contract with Spanish side Atletico Madrid until 2003.

Hodgson too costly for SA

SYDNEY, June 22: Soccer Australia (SA) has ruled out Englishman Roy Hodgson to take over as coach of the national team, a television report here said Tuesday, reports AFP.

SBS TV said that Hodgson's financial demands had cooled the Australian federation's interest in the former coach of Inter Milan, Blackburn Rovers and the Swiss national side.

The report quoted Soccer Australia commissioner Tony Lobbzetta as saying the national body could not afford what 51-year-old Hodgson was seeking, with SBS putting his wage demand at 500,000 US dollars a year.

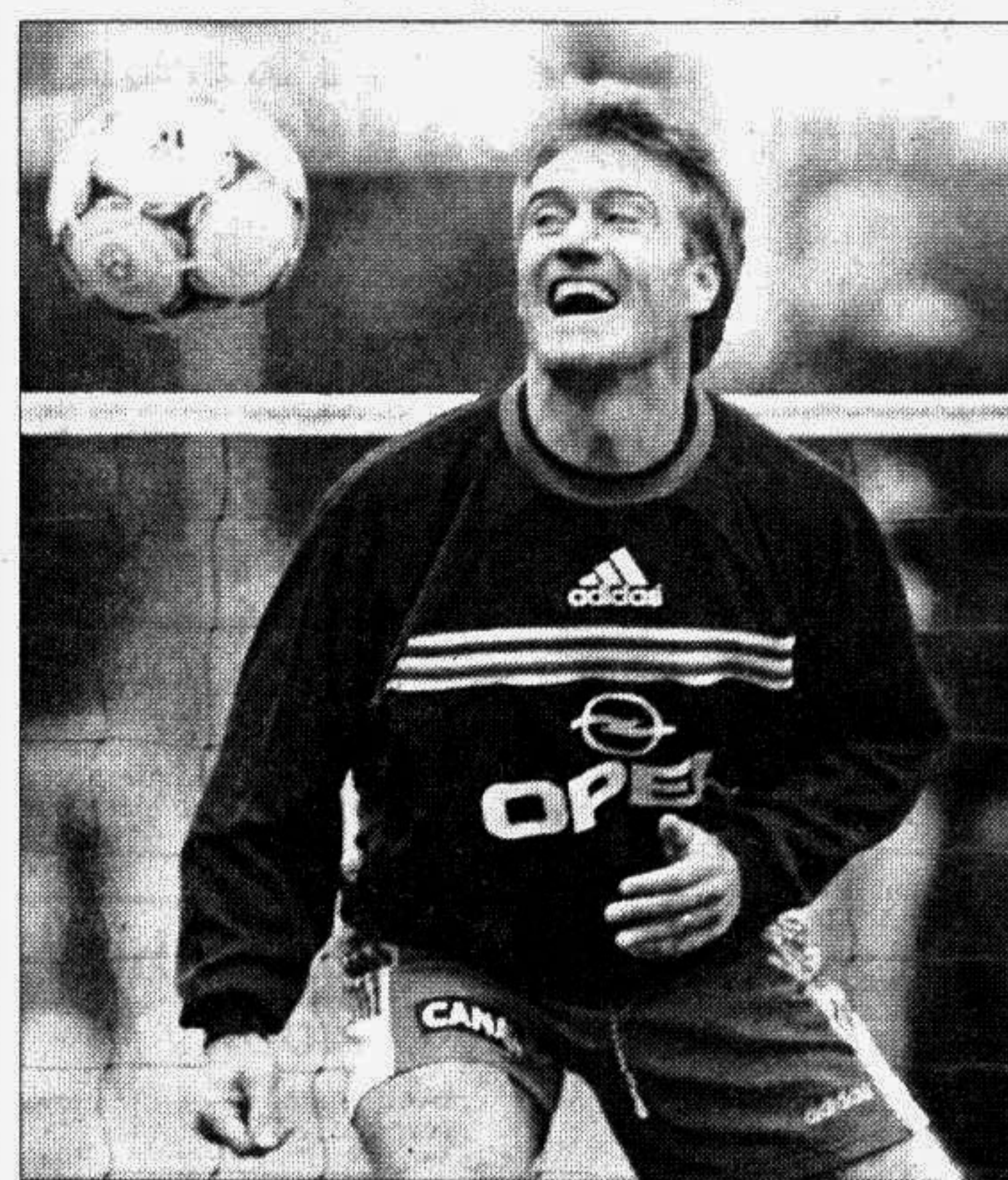
It is understood that Soccer Australia will now concentrate on domestic candidates to fill the coaching position, currently held by caretaker Raul Blanco, who is also a contender for the full-time post.

Those said to be in the running are former Chelsea, Glasgow Rangers and Feyenoord striker David Mitchell, Club Brugge and Bari forward Frank Farina and one-time Belgian and French-based striker Eddie Krnecic.

Hodgson spoke to Soccer Australia officials during a visit to Sydney earlier this month when he was acting as coach of the World Stars XI side that lost to Australia in a match to officially open Sydney's Olympic stadium.

Hodgson said on a previous visit to Australia: "Money's not the issue. If I wanted to earn the kind of money I've been making at Inter Milan or Blackburn, then I wouldn't even be considering a national coaching job."

Australia have been without a full-time national coach since last July when former England manager Terry Venables left with the Socceroos failing to qualify for last year's World Cup finals in France.



An AFP file photo of Juventus' French international captain Didier Deschamps who has reportedly signed for English Premiership giants Chelsea for 3 million pounds.

FACTFILE

LONDON, June 22 (AFP): Factfile on Didier Deschamps, who joined English Premiership side Chelsea from Italian giants Juventus Monday:

1968: Born in Bayonne in South West France on October 15.

1985: Makes French First Division debut for his first club Nantes against Brest.

1989: Wins first French cup against Yugoslavia in Paris (0-0). Joins Marseille. Scores first goal for France in 3-0 win over Scotland.

1990: Leaves Marseille for Bordeaux.

1991: Returns to Marseille.

1993: Skippers Marseille to European Cup.

1994: Joins Juventus.

1995: Becomes captain of national team after Eric Cantona is suspended following attack on spectator at match in England.

1996: Wins European Cup with Juventus.

1998: Skippers France to World Cup victory on home soil with 3-0 final victory over Brazil in final.

1999: Becomes most capped French international of all time. Confirms he will leave Juventus at end of season. Eventually chooses English Premiership side Chelsea after almost signing for Monaco.

Honours: World Cup winners medal (1998).

European Cup winners medals (1993 -- Marseille, 1996 -- Juventus).

French Championship winners medals (1990, 1992 -- both Marseille).

Italian Championship winners medals (1995, 1997, 1998 -- all with Juventus).

Italian Cup winners medal (1995).

European Super Cup (1996 -- with Juventus).

World Cup Championship winners medal (1996 -- with Juventus).

Higuaita in his elements

BOGOTA, June 22(Reuters/Internet): Maverick Colombian goalkeeper Rene Higuita celebrated his international recall by scoring from a free-kick for his club side on Sunday.

Higuita, included in Colombia's Copa America squad and announced on Friday, gave Medellin a second-minute lead when his shot took a deflection off a defender and deceived Atletico Nacional goalkeeper Miguel Calera.

It was the 49th goal of his career, most having come from penalties. Atletico Nacional later equalised to force a 1-1 draw.

Higuita last played for his country in a goalless draw away to Norway in 1997 and before that in the 1995 Copa America in Uruguay.

His international career appeared to be finished last month but he was recalled for a

friendly against El Salvador, only to be dropped a day later by the Colombian federation for demanding a special appearance fee.

But coach Javier Alvarez forgave Higuita after he agreed to be a substitute in the Copa America, which starts in Paraguay at the end of this month.

Higuita, who insists he invented the concept of the 'goalkeeper-sweeper', has made his name thanks to an eccentric style, frequently dribbling past opposing forwards in front of his own goal and saving shots with acrobatic overhead kicks rather than his hands.

His antics have sometimes backfired, causing him to concede embarrassing goals, and he has also been in trouble off the field.

In 1993, he spent six months in a Bogota jail on charges of breaking Colombian law by attempting to mediate in a kidnapping. The charges were later dropped.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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