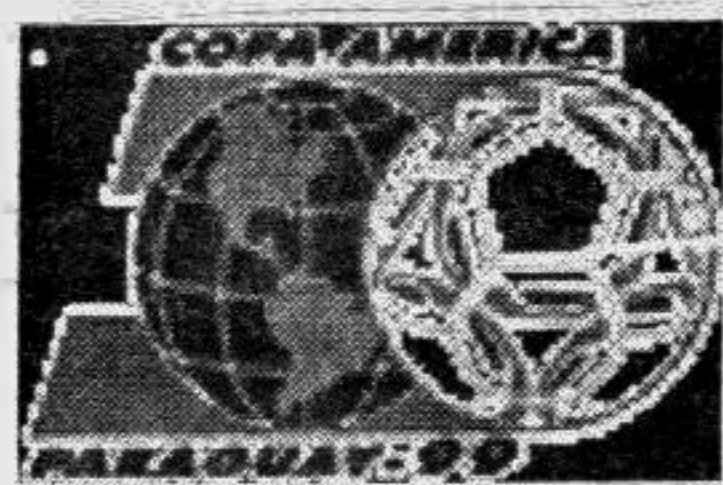


Managers' moment of truth



CIUDAD DEL ESTE, Paraguay, July 10 (AFP): Wanderley Luxemburgo and Marcelo Bielsa lead eternal rivals Brazil and Argentina into Copa America quarterfinal battle Sunday night, knowing that a hitherto gentle introduction to international management is about to turn into a white knuckle ride.

Luxemburgo took over the hottest seat in international football last year when Mario Zagallo in the wake of Brazil's 3-0 World Cup Final defeat by France, which was seen as a national disaster.

Zagallo, uniquely, was the one man to have been associated with all four of Brazil's World Cup triumphs.

A player in 1958 and 1962, Zagallo was coach to the legendary 1970 winners and was technical adviser to the 1994 champions coached by Carlos Alberto Parreira.

So Luxemburgo's appointment was truly a new start for the most successful team in World Cup history.

But now as the team enters the knockout stages of the Copa America — against their biggest rivals to boot — Luxemburgo knows he is doing the football equivalent of dipping his toe in the nearby Parana river.

If Argentina prevail in this clash of the continent's big fish Luxemburgo will undergo the media equivalent of being

thrown to the piranhas that infest the rivers in these parts.

The former Corinthians boss saw his team win all three Group B matches (against Venezuela, Mexico and Chile) but has enjoyed frosty relations with the ever-critical media.

But Luxemburgo has shown himself to be an assertive coach.

He has swept away the USA '94 old guard in the shape of Romario, Dunga and Taffarel. And he has dumped trouble-makers such as Edmundo, Leonardo and Edilson without ceremony.

He has put his faith in youth by pitching in newcomers such as Palmeiras midfielder Alex and Gremio striker Ronaldo Gauchito (also known as Ronaldo Assis or Ronaldinho).

But for the titanic encounter with Argentina he brings back experienced trio Rivaldo, Emerson and Cafu.

Skipper Cafu was bullish going into the clash, saying: "It is a classic, an eliminator and we want to win it."

Striker Ronaldo was equally determined, adding: "We know that there will be much provocation but we have been trained to avoid them and leave the field in triumph."

There could be hardly more appropriate venue for this match. The Paraguayan town of Ciudad del Este borders both Brazil and Argentina and neighbours one of the world's most spectacular waterfalls.

Luxemburgo may feel he is shooting the rapids but he may take comfort from the fact that his Argentinian counterpart Marcelo Bielsa is also negotiating his first tournament as national team boss.

Bielsa has already had to don his flak jacket once after

the comprehensive 3-0 Group C defeat by Colombia.

But history is on the side of Bielsa. While Brazil's record at world level is unmatched Argentina have eclipsed their rivals at continental level. Argentina have 14 Copa America titles — a figure matched only by Uruguay — while Brazil can boast only five.

Standing next to Bielsa in the sights of the critics is Argentinian striker Martin Palermo.

Palermo is joint top scorer of the Copa with three goals so far alongside Brazil duo Ronaldo and Amoroso and Paraguay's teen wonder Roque Santa Cruz.

But his unprecedented three penalty misses against Colombia has earned him an unwanted place in the record books and has made him famous around the world for all the wrong reasons.

Palermo partly atoned for his triple trauma with a goal against Uruguay but the Brazil clash provides him with a real opportunity to silence his critics — and put two of his rivals for Copa America top scorer out of the picture.

The Boca Juniors said: "It is a special feeling to play in this encounter and furthermore we know it is crucial because whoever loses will go home."

Palermo sustained a black eye in the Uruguay match but Bielsa and the Argentinian doctors have indicated he will play.

Another boost for Bielsa is that playmaker Ariel Ortega is once again available for selection.

Ortega missed the group matches as he was serving a ban after being sent off in 1998's World Cup quarterfinal defeat by Holland.

However, defender Nelson Vivas is banned following his sending off against Uruguay.

Colombia, meanwhile, are strongly fancied to beat Chile in Sunday's other quarterfinal match.

Chile will have to do without suspended striker Marcelo Salas, who was sent off against Venezuela.

Colombia won Group C — "the group of death" — with style and have produced some of the best football of the tournament so far.

Young substitutes Johnnier Montano, only 16, and Edwin Congo and playmaker Arley Betancourt have produced some of the most creative moments of this Copa.

Coach Javier Alvarez has acknowledged his side are favourites and said: "We want to justify this condition and prove it with goals and football of the highest level and have a memorable evening."

SUNDAY'S MATCHES

Chile vs Colombia
12:30am BST
Argentina vs Brazil
3:30am BST

Star Sports television will be covering both of the matches live.

Three changes on Brazil side

FOZ DE IGUAZU, Brazil, July 10: Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo announced three changes to his team on Friday for Sunday's Copa America quarterfinal against Argentina, reports Reuters.

Luxemburgo said Joao Carlos would replace Odvan in the centre of the defence for Sunday's game. Flavio Conceicao would stand in for the injured Vampeta in midfield and Alex would lose his place to Ze Roberto, who played well in the team's final first round match against Chile.

Emerson Ferreira and Rivaldo, who missed the game against Chile through suspension, will return to the midfield while Ronaldo and Amoroso will again play up front.

Ronaldo, who was marked out of the game last time he played Argentina in a friendly just over one year ago, described South America's biggest international as "just another game."

He refused to talk about Sunday's opponents. "I'm only interested in Brazil," said Ronaldo, joint top scorer in the tournament with three goals.

Brazil have based themselves in the border town of Foz de Iguazu for the Copa America, travelling to host nation Paraguay only to play their matches in Ciudad del Este.

Palermo to play

ASUNCION, July 10: Argentine striker Martin Palermo will play in Sunday's Copa America quarterfinal against Brazil despite a nasty black eye, coach Marcelo Bielsa said on Friday, reports Reuters.

Palermo was unable to see through his bruised and swollen eye, injured when he was struck in the face during Wednesday's 2-0 win over Uruguay, as he faced the media on Friday.

Bielsa said the injury was responding to treatment and was not serious. "I'm sure he will play," he said.

Palermo has gone through an amazing cup of ups and downs.

He scored twice in the 3-1 win over Ecuador, missed three penalties in the 3-0 defeat by Colombia, and then scored again against Uruguay before going off injured.

Bielsa said he had not decided whether to play midfielder Ariel Ortega, who is finally available after completing a three-match suspension resulting from his sending-off against the Netherlands in the last World Cup.

Two other changes will choose between Ortega and Guillermo Barros Schelotto, Palermo's teammate at Argentine champions Boca Juniors, today.

Mauricio Pochettino will replace right-back Nelson Vivas, sent off against Uruguay.

Sunday's game will be the third time in the last four Copa tournaments that Brazil and Argentina have met at the quarter-final stage.

Both matches went to penalties, with Argentina winning in 1993 and Brazil winning two years later.

Gruigol new Betis boss

SEVILLE, Spain, July 10: Argentinian coach Carlos Gruigol was named officially Friday as coach to Spanish First Division outfit Real Betis. He replaces former Spain national team coach Javier Clemente, reports AFP.

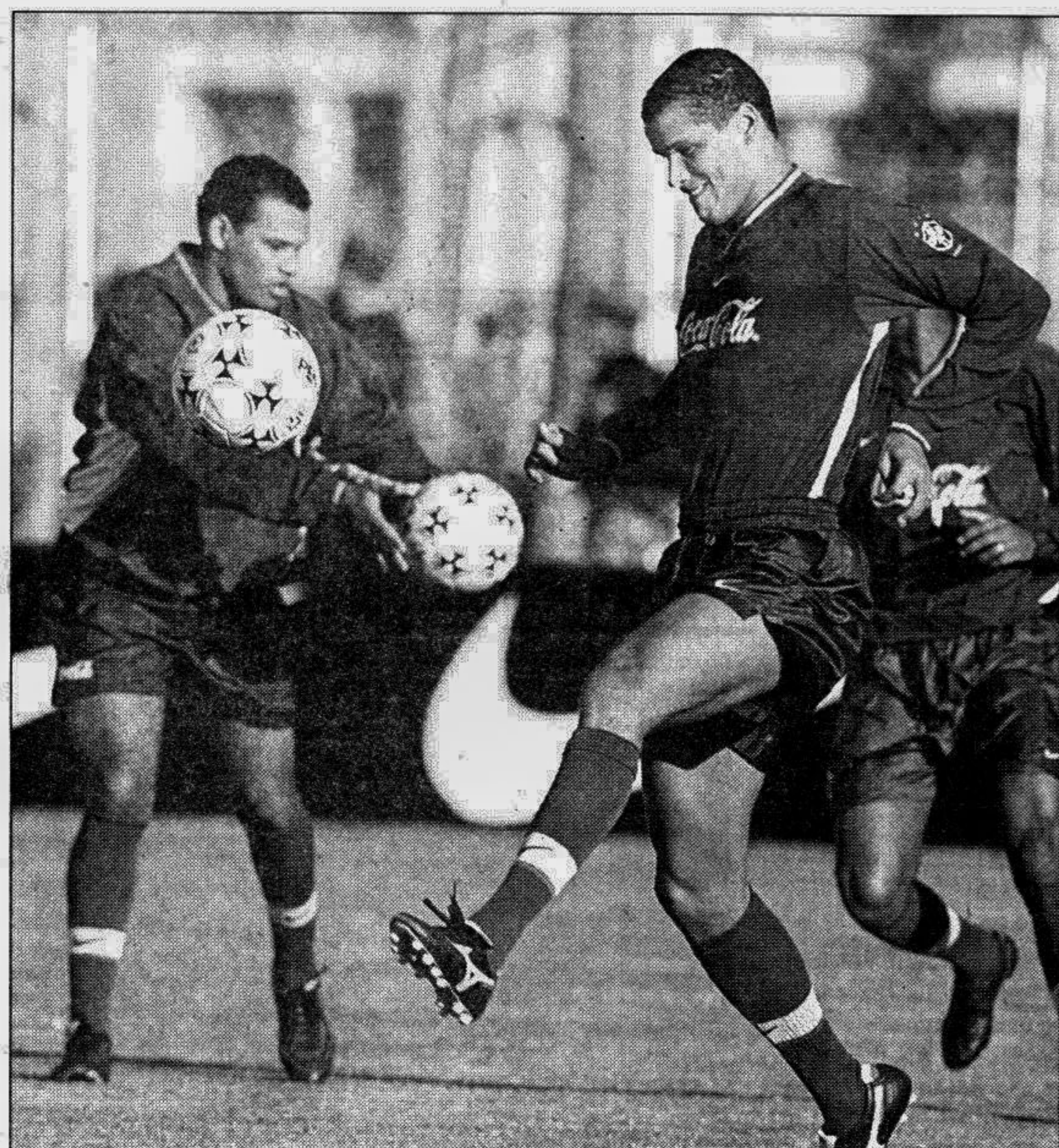
Gruigol, 64, is nicknamed "El Maestro" and has a two-year deal with the Seville-based club.

He refrained from making any promises other than insisting he wanted a good season with Betis and wanted to lead them to the upper reaches of the Primera Liga.

Betis finished only 11th in the Spanish first division despite a huge pre-season spending spree including a then world record 37 million dollars purchase of Brazilian midfielder Denilson.

But the club was already struggling when Clemente took the job, shortly after parting company with the national team after a poor World Cup and a 3-2 European Championship qualifying defeat by Cyprus.

The Basque never really settled in Seville and fell out with Denilson, and another foreigner, Paraguay's Celso Ayala,



Brazilian star Rivaldo (R) works with the ball at training session on July 9. Brazil take on Argentina tomorrow. — AFP photo

Aime's best seller

CLAIREFONTAINE, France, July 10 (AP): A year after France's World Cup triumph stirred

the most intense national pride since the Liberation, the man who masterminded the victory is still grabbing hearts with his best-selling memoir.

Aime Jacquet says the success of his book, "Ma Vie Pour Une Etoile" (My Life for a Star), currently No 1 on France's non-fiction best-seller list, comes as a bigger surprise than the World Cup victory.

"When I took on the job, I promised the (football federation) president, the team would win the World Cup. I knew I could do it," Jacquet, 57, said in an interview at the national coaching centre where he is technical director.

"But as for the book I'm not a writer, and had to be talked into it."

The deeply personal memoir has sold more than 300,000 copies since May and has generated intense publicity for the quiet, no-nonsense coach who quit after last year's World Cup final.

The 300-odd pages give readers an intimate look at how

Jacquet prepared the French team by putting the players in a "bubble" for 63 days at Clairefontaine, a 19th century estate that is now home to the French Football Federation national training centre.

The book was therapy for Jacquet, who admits he fell into a deep depression in the weeks following victory.

"The incredible pressure, the

lack of sleep, living like a monk finally caught up with me," he said. "Writing helped get me out of it."

It also helped him "turn the page" with no regrets.

"You can never say 'never,' but I'm finished with top-level competition. One thing is sure: I'll be watching 2002 World Cup from the stands," Jacquet said, conceding he might one day be tempted by an offer to coach a foreign national team.

In a country still somewhat bound by class, Jacquet's personal journey from factory worker to international celebrity is as inspiring as his World Cup triumph.

He was born in Sall-sous-Couzan, in central France, the son of the village butcher who taught him to clean tripe and take animals to slaughter. He quit school after the seventh grade for vocational training. As a teen, he worked as a lathe operator, while juggling his passion for soccer.

"I was a pretty good player, but never a great one," he wrote with characteristic modesty. In fact, with Saint-Etienne, he won five French championship medals and twice played for the French national team.



AIME JACQUET

Totti, Capello's main man

MILAN, July 10: Fabio Capello, the man who guided AC Milan to four league titles in

five years, is counting on AS Roma playmaker Francesco Totti to make him once again king of the Serie A, reports AFP.

Capello was the toast of Italian football before leaving in 1996 for Spain, where he immediately led Real Madrid to championship success.

Now back in a coaching job after a year off, following a disappointing comeback season in 1997-98 at Milan, Capello is looking forward to his new life at Roma — where he was once a midfielder in his playing career.

"The first thing I want to do is talk to the players, to listen to them and to study things," he

said.

"We might play with three defenders or with four, but the one certainty is that Totti will be playing behind the forwards, who will be (Vincenzo) Montella and (Marco) Delvecchio."

As for the team's 22-year-old skipper, he added: "Totti has the right age to be a leader, he's someone that leads from the front and everyone follows. He is an enormous talent."

"I watched him with the national team (last season) as a television commentator and was really enthusiastic about him. And I'm sure I will be again, this time from the dug-out."

The other main hope will be Montella, bought for more than 25 million dollars from Sampdoria. The striker averaged 21 goals in his first two years in Genoa, but was held back last

season by a prolonged injury.

"He's one of Italy's best forwards and now he's in the national squad," said Capello. "He had a few problems, having been injured, but when he came back, he started scoring straight away. He's got goals in the blood."

The coach said there were still a few moves to be made on the transfer market, with the club currently aiming for Marco Assuncao, a 24-year-old Brazilian midfielder, rated nine million dollars by his club, Santos.

But there were no doubts about Capello's goals for next season.

"We're aiming for the top," he said told Friday's Gazzetta dello Sport. "The number one objective is to win the championship."

2 Mexico booters test positive, out of Copa

ASUNCION, July 10: Mexico's Raul Lara and Paulo Cesar Chavez have been suspended for the rest of the Copa America after failing a doping test, the South American Football Confederation (CSF) said on Friday, reports Reuters.

The CSF said in a statement that midfielder Lara tested positive for testosterone and forward Chavez for testosterone after the 2-1 defeat by Brazil on July 3.

The perplexed Mexican team backed their athletes.

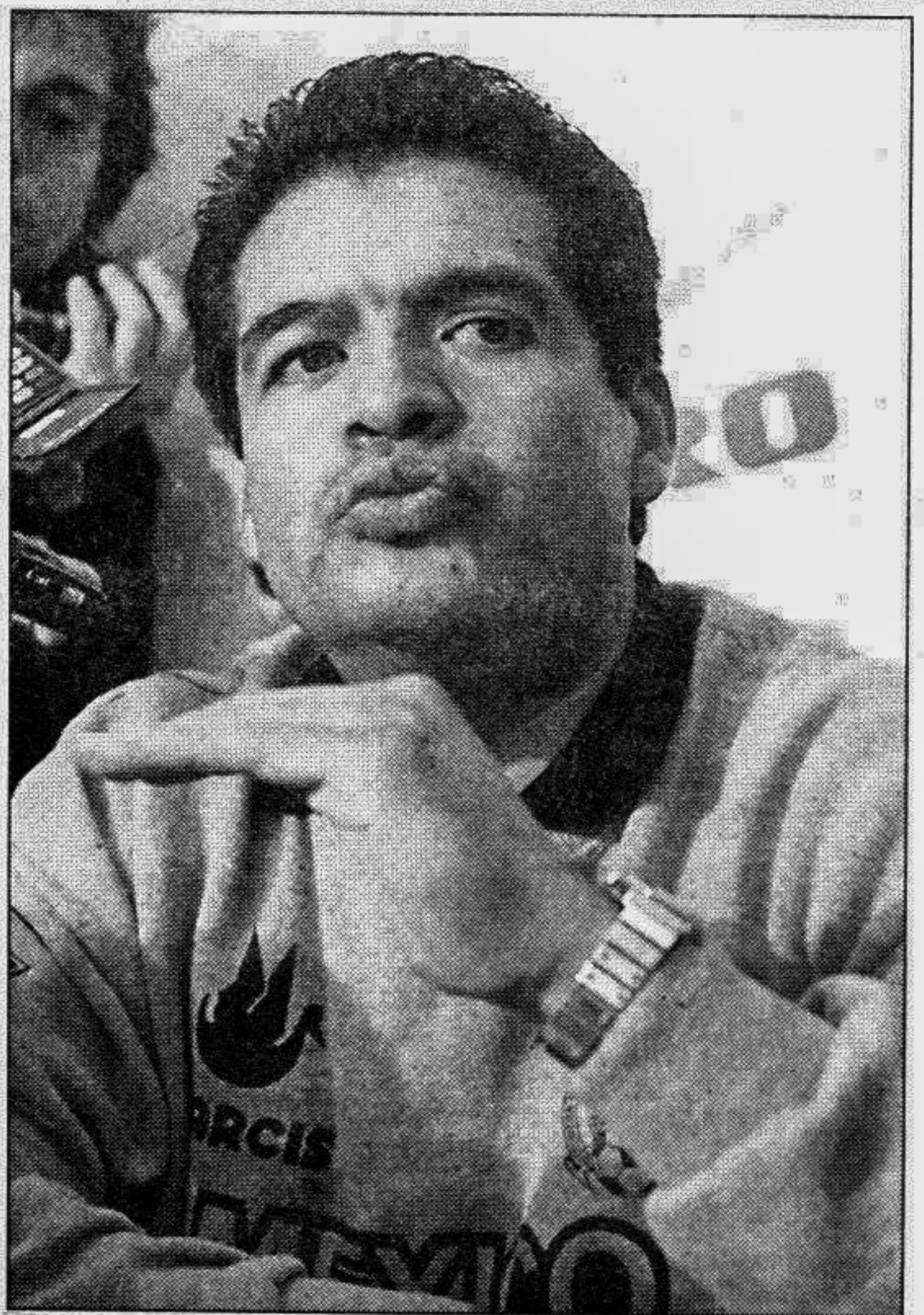
"I want to make clear that both have a brilliant track record and we have known them for years," said Mexican team official Hugo Kiese.

Team doctor Jose Luis Serrano said such substances can be produced naturally by the human body. "High levels can be produced by various causes," he said.

He said the team had been out of Mexico for six weeks and said it was possible the players' diet had been contaminated with the banned substances.

He said it would be very difficult and unlikely for the players to administer the substances to themselves.

He added, "These substances are very complicated to manipulate and would require a high degree of specialisation to administer."



Mexican team doctor Jose Luis Serrano addressing a press conference in Asuncion July 9. — AFP photo

Beckham not going Down Under

MANCHESTER, July 10: England international David Beckham will miss Manchester United's two match tour of Australia despite threats it would cost the club half their four million Australian dollars (£2.67 million US) fee, reports Reuters.

United manager Alex Ferguson confirmed on Friday that Beckham would not be in the squad.

Ferguson, who will also miss the trip to accept his knighthood from the Queen at Buckingham Palace on July 21, said the club never intended to include Beckham on the Australian tour, although he could fly out to meet up with the squad for the China and Hong Kong leg of the trip.

Beckham has been allowed to return late to pre-season training following his wedding to singer Victoria Adams of the Spice Girls.

"David was told at the end of the season that he had to be back on July 12," Ferguson said, playing down British newspaper speculation that he and the player had fallen out over the issue.

"I think obviously some attempt had been made by one of his or his bride's agents to get an extension to his time off but we couldn't do that because he needs to get fit for the new season."

"I spoke to David last week and he understood. There is not a bust-up on my part. We considered all the players and when they should come back. David played his last game on June 5 and the 12th of July was the latest we could possibly have him back."

"He's had 37 days off now which is almost six weeks and he needs to get fit. He was never going to Australia at the start and there are no plans for him to go. Whether he goes to the second leg in China and Hong Kong depends on his fitness."

The news will leave the promoters two matches between United and Australia's national team fuming as they said they have an agreement stating Beckham would play.

"We've tried to be nice but we've been forced to get tough," said Dominic Galati, managing director of the promoters. "It's not the honeymoon anymore, it's a two million Australian dollar penalty instead."

They (United) are being paid more by us than they've ever received for an overseas tour and we feel they should honour the contract."

Udinese coach sacked

UDINE, Italy, July 10: Italian UEFA Cup hopefuls Udinese sacked Francesco Guidolin as their coach on Friday and appointed Luigi De Canio as his successor, reports AFP.

De Canio was in charge at Serie B club Pescara last season and came close to winning promotion to the top flight. He now has less than 10 days to prepare for the start of his new club's pre-season training camp.

Guidolin, who had been linked with a move to Spain, had only been coach here for one season, securing the UEFA Cup place after beating Juventus in a post-season play-off and nearly sneaking into the Champions League.

In a statement, the club cited a breakdown in their personal rapport with Guidolin as the reason for his dismissal.

Unofficially, Udinese's owner Giampaolo Pozzi did not appreciate his coach's prolonged flirt with Real Betis.

Before joining Udinese, Guidolin had secured Vicenza's first ever trophy in the club's history, the 1997 Italian Cup, and then taken them to the semi-finals of the European Cup Winners Cup, before losing at Stamford Bridge to Chelsea, who went on to lift the trophy.

Wednesday buy PSV striker

LONDON, July 10: English Premiership side Sheffield Wednesday have bought PSV Eindhoven striker Gilles de Bilde and Ajax centre forward Gerald Sibon in a deal worth 5 million pounds (£8 million dollars), reports AFP.

The players agreed four-year contracts on Saturday after two days of negotiations at Hillsborough.

De Bilde, 28, a Belgian international was elected his country's player of the year in 1994 and made his name at Anderlecht before moving to Holland.

He has scored 67 League goals in just over 100 games for three different clubs, Eendracht Aalst, Anderlecht and PSV Eindhoven, the former club of Wednesday midfielder player Wim Jonk, and is regarded as a skillful crowd-pleaser as well as a goal-scorer.

Sibon, 25, is a tall centre forward rated as strong in the air and the sort of striker who could complement de Bilde.

Sibon has hit 51 goals in just over 100 games for FC Twente, Venlo, Roda and Ajax and recently turned down a move to Dutch Premier side AZ Alkmaar.

Manager Danny Wilson will be hoping the two new recruits can provide the firepower that his team lacked last season.

Wednesday secretary Alan Sykes said: "We are delighted that we have got the players which strengthens the squad significantly for next season and puts us in a stronger position to compete in the Premiership."

Wednesday received a further boost as Italian striker Benito Carbone is set to return to the club on Monday after missing the start of pre-season training because of illness.

Passarella now Uruguayan



ASUNCION, July 10 (AFP): Argentinian national hero Daniel Passarella insisted Friday he had put his glory days with his native country to one side as he embarks on the task of leading once-mighty Uruguay back to the upper echelons of world football.

Passarella's remarks came just 24 hours after his new team had suffered a 2-0 Copa America defeat at the hands of the nation he had coached in France '98 and skipped to World Cup victory on home soil in 1978.

The Argentine was appointed Uruguay coach in May but he has left team selection and tactics in the hands of youth team coach Victor Pua for the Copa America.

Passarella's brief is to qualify for the "Celeste" (Sky Blues) for the 2002 World Cup — they did not make the final stages of USA '94 or France '98 — and he has allowed Pua to lead the young squad in Paraguay.

Ranked 74th in the world, behind Trinidad and Tobago, Mali and Gabon — the two times world champions broke the bank to appoint Passarella as they look to get rid of the unwanted tag of world football's fallen giants.

Passarella, on a reputed monthly wage of 70,000 dollars,

told AFP: "I am Uruguay's number one fan and if they play Argentina I want Uruguay to win."

"I am coaching Uruguay at present and I want them to win every game they play because I am very professional."

Uruguay lost to Argentina and Colombia but beat Ecuador in Group C to seal a quarter-final tie with host nation Paraguay as one of the two best third-placed teams.



DANIEL PASSARELLA

Passarella conceded he would always remember fondly his time as a player and as coach with the Argentina national team.

He said: "Obviously I have not forgotten my roots, or what happened over such a long period of time in the Argentinian team. I had the joy of leading the world champions (as a player), of having made many

friends and of having travelled much with the national team."

Passarella conceded: "I am nonetheless a fan of Argentina. I worked there with diligence and I am going to do the same in Uruguay, to give the best to people, players, the press, the federation bosses. Sometimes this can succeed, sometimes not."

Highly-successful youth coach Pua — he led Uruguay to the 1997 under-20 World Cup Final in Malaysia where they lost, ironically, to Argentina — has been working with a very young team in Paraguay with Passarella keen to blood many of the youngsters at senior level.

Passarella explained: "We have tried to give experience to the young footballers who have been working with Victor for some years, we have qualified (for the second phase) and now we play on a level playing field with everyone — with the aristocrats." But Passarella confirmed the Copa was only a means to an end, saying: "The risk for us is not qualifying for the World Cup. This is the objective."

Looking forward to the quarter-final with Paraguay, Passarella said: "They are missing their most important player, the goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert (who refused to play in the Copa)."

One of the candidates to win the tournament, Paraguay will play with the spectators on their side but this could be counter productive because the pressure and the responsibility will be on them to get a positive result. We, however, do not have this problem."

Arsenal boss blasts MU

LONDON, July 10: Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger on Thursday slammed rivals Manchester United's decision not to play in the FA Cup, saying that they were killing the championship for the sake of business, reports AFP.

Wenger expressed his astonishment that the prestige of the FA Cup was being risked for the sake of the unknown World Club Championship in Brazil for "business and political" reasons, and insisted a compromise solution could easily have been reached.

He maintained that the strength of United's huge squad meant that they could have fielded two separate teams — one in Brazil and one in the FA Cup — or have been given a bye through to the fifth round.

And he warned that the Football Association's ruling to offer Sir Alex Ferguson's side an exemption from the FA Cup could hand them an unfair advantage in the Premiership title race.

The decision by the United board not to defend the trophy which the club won against Newcastle at Wembley in May was taken after substantial pressure being placed on them not to risk England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup.

Wenger was not directly critical of his counterpart Ferguson but nevertheless directed his fire at both the club and the FA.

The Frenchman declared: "It's a bad decision. The FA Cup is famous worldwide and for such a prestigious club like Manchester United to be out of the competition is just untrue, it's not normal."

There is no impasse. They could have played on December 30 or 31 and had a replay on January 18, or they could have been pushed straight through to the fifth round. Why not, if they won the trophy last year?"

"To go to play a business tournament that nobody knows

about and to be out of the FA Cup is just unbelievable. I'd love to be in the same situation as them and to play in the FA Cup. They have two squads anyway and can buy one or two more big players. If you have as many players as they do, there was a solution to be found."

"Basically it's slowly killing the FA Cup and why? At the moment, it's for business and

Wenger, who confirmed that Arsenal would be playing their Champions League home ties at Wembley again next season, described the suggestion by sponsors AXA for United to play their FA Cup fourth round tie while out in Brazil as "crazy."

He added: "This is an advantage to United but that's not the main reason why I don't agree with the decision."

"It's more because I think there's not the same prestige. Next year they might say it's two teams from each country and then the two best teams from the country don't play in the FA Cup."

"It's difficult to defend a competition when the team that was so successful in it last season is not in it any more."

"And what for? A tournament in Brazil that nobody knows about."

Robson offered England youth job

LONDON, July 10: Former England coach Bobby Robson is to return to the England set-up as a mentor to the new generation of England coaches, reports AFP.

The 66-year-old Robson makes his comeback nine years after leading England to the World Cup semifinals.

His part-time role involves assisting six new Football Association coaches in running the junior and youth sides.

The six, Peter Beardsley, Peter Reid, Stuart Pearce, Clive Allen, Nigel Spackman and Nigel Pearson, will work alongside FA technical director Howard Wilkinson and the other full-time members of the Lancaster Gate coaching staffs.

FA spokesman Adrian Bevington said here on Saturday: "Bobby has a vast amount of experience and that can only be a benefit to the coaching structure. He will operate as a mentor to the coaches."



ARSENE WENGER