

Sport

Sir Alex tips
Lazio for
Serie A

MONTE CARLO, Aug 28: Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson, who knows a thing or two about winning championships, tipped Lazio to win the Serie A title this season after the Italians won the European Super Cup on Friday, reports Reuters.

Ferguson, who led Manchester United to a treble of European Cup, English League and F.A. Cup victories last season said, "Lazio really impressed me. They were desperately unlucky last year when Milan pipped them on the last day of the season, but I think they will win Serie A this year."

The players work so hard, they have fantastic quality and I think they can go all the way. Like all Italian teams, they will be a real threat in the Champions' League as well this season."

Argentine Juan Veron, who was voted man-of-the-match for his contribution in midfield, added, "To play Manchester United is something, to actually beat them is something very special indeed. This is a beautiful victory for Lazio, and really gives us great heart for Serie A and for the Champions' League as well."

If we play them at some stage in the League, we will have great confidence."

Seedorf
sidelined

MADRID, Aug 28: Real Madrid midfielder Clarence Seedorf's unhappy start to the season took a further turn for the worse on Friday as he suffered a training ground injury that will keep him out of action for at least two weeks, reports Reuters.

The Dutch international, whose father and representative was at the Bernabeu stadium on Friday to discuss a possible transfer to Italy, took a nasty knock on his right knee after a clattering challenge from team mate Ivan Campo.

Seedorf and Campo came to blows during Real's build-up to the Intercontinental Cup match against Vasco da Gama in Japan last season.

However, there was no suggestion of any malice on Campo's part in this latest clash, which will have done little to improve dressing room harmony at the Spanish club.

Seedorf's father told reporters on Friday that he thought it would be for the best if the player now leaves Real Madrid.

Inter Milan are believed to be closest to clinching his signature, although Manchester United — who may have to replace Roy Keane before the end of the season — were linked as a possible buyer in the English press this week.

Real are asking 4,000 million pesetas (25 million dollars) for Seedorf, who has been unhappy at being left out of the starting line-up this season.

Coach John Toshack says that while Seedorf remains part of his plans, no player can be guaranteed first team football this season.

Ajax keep on
winning

AMSTERDAM, Aug 28: Ajax Amsterdam maintained their 100 per cent record with a comfortable 3-0 win over Cambuur Leeuwarden on Friday to cement their place at the top of the Dutch First Division, reports Reuters.

It was hardly an inspired display by the Amsterdammers but they were gifted the match through mistakes by the home side.

Two errors by goalkeeper Rob Hilbers, stand-in for injured regular Wim de Ron, and a mistake by defender Richard Elzinga led to the goals.

After six minutes Hilbers failed to hold a simple shot from just outside the box by Dani and he also allowed in a long range effort by Wamberto in the 87th.

In between, Elzinga failed to clear the ball and gifted a goal to Brian Laudrup in the 52nd minute, allowing him space to run through and score his third of the season.

Defending champions Feyenoord and PSV Eindhoven, who have won both of their matches so far, have the chance to catch up with Ajax today. PSV host Fortuna Sittard and Feyenoord face Heerenveen in Rotterdam.

IOC official's
tip for Osaka

TOKYO, Aug 28: Osaka, seeking to host the 2008 Olympics, has been warned not to break new rules by entertaining international Olympic Committee (IOC) officials during a sports congress, it was reported Saturday, says AFP.

The new guidelines for cities bidding for the 2008 Games will be released in December. IOC spokeswoman Marlina Gueorguieva said in a telephone interview with the Japan Times.

"Osaka should refrain from entertaining IOC officials. That includes the use of private money to entertain or promote the bid," she was quoted as saying from the IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The Japanese city is scheduled to host an annual general meeting of the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) in mid-October.

The association is headed by Kim Un-Yong, a South Korean IOC executive, who was almost expelled from the Olympic governing body for his role in the Salt Lake City bids-for-cash scandal.

Following the scandal, the IOC moved to revise the guidelines for bidding cities.

Wasim may return soon



KARACHI, Aug 28 (Internet report): Wasim Akram may make the team for the Toronto series against the West Indies if he is cleared by the Judicial Commission and the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) ad hoc committee.

The team for the three-match series would be announced in the second week of September.

Quoting chief selector Naushad Ali, the English language newspaper The News reported on Friday that since Wasim was an automatic selection as a player, he might make the squad at the last moment, that is if the commission and the PCB chairman cleared him.

"Though he is not among the camp probabilities and remains suspended, considering his status as a performer par excellence we'll keep our options open for him till the last moment."

World Cup captain Wasim, Ijaz Ahmed and Salim Malik were suspended by the PCB in the wake of the match-fixing allegations, but indications are that at least Wasim is going to make a comeback very soon. The chief selector also said that after the Toronto series, the

team which would be announced for the Sharjah tournament in October would be more or less the same for the



WASIM AKRAM

gruelling Australian tour.

"The nucleus will be there. Since the team is scheduled to fly to Australia after the Sharjah event, at most there will be a few changes in the team."

He conceded that the selectors had discussed the concept of having separate Test and one-day sides — a theory suc-

cessfully employed by Australia and Sri Lanka. "It's too early to say anything, but we've in our minds some players for this purpose. Most probably we might have separate teams for Test and one-day games on the Australian tour."

He also stated that selection for Sharjah and Australia would be based on the performances of the players in the national one-day championship starting from September 20. "All players, including the ones who go to Toronto, will have to appear in the tournament to be eligible for selection."

To a query, he said the purpose of recalling players like Aamir Sohail and Rashid Latif to the national camp starting from September 2 in Lahore was to give them a chance.

But, a report of The Dawn hinted that the hopes of wicket-keeper Latif were about to be shattered as the selectors allegedly decided to stick with Moin Khan arguing that only one wicket-keeper would be selected in the 15-man squad.

The former captain faced a similar treatment from the previous panel of selectors when he was invited for training camp for the Indian tour but ignored completely.

Surrey in sight of title



LONDON, Aug 28 (Internet report): Surrey crushed Derbyshire by nine wickets to chalk up their

11th PPP County Championship victory of the season and place one hand on the title.

Derbyshire resisted stubbornly before lunch at Derby on Friday but the dismissal of Stephen Titchard in the final over of the morning session opened the door.

From 90 for one the hosts collapsed to 196 all out, although a half-century from skipper Dominic Cork at least forced Surrey to bat for a second time.

Once again the chief destroyers for the runaway leaders were pace bowler Martin Bicknell and Pakistan spinner Saqlain Mushtaq, who shared nine wickets in Derbyshire's second innings and 16 in the match.

Surrey now need only eight points from their remaining three matches to bring the championship pennant to The Oval for the first time since 1971.

Derbyshire were always going to struggle to bat through the final day unless they got some assistance from the weather.

Two players, Ian Blackwell and Paul Aldred, were handicapped by injuries and battled with a runner. But Adrian Rollins and Titchard made Sur-

rey wait in the morning.

Resuming on 28 for one they took the score to 90 with few alarms until a quicker ball from Saqlain took the edge of Titchard's bat three balls before lunch.

The former Lancashire batsman had grafted through 42 overs for his 37, but no one else could match the application shown by him and Rollins.

Robin Weston made only three before he was trapped lbw by Bicknell pushing forward without playing a shot, but Rollins completed his half-century when he swept Saqlain for his 11th four after 189 minutes in the middle.

But he then lost concentration and skied a pull to mid-on and was caught for 53, which signalled the end of Derbyshire's chances of holding out.

James Pyemont completed a nightmare championship debut as he became only the third player in Derbyshire's history to collect a king pair when he edged Bicknell into his stumps.

Bicknell claimed his fourth victim of the innings and his 56th of the season when he moved one away to bowl Matthew Cassar, and although Phil DeFreitas swung Saqlain for six over mid-wicket, the off-spinner had the last word.

DeFreitas was adjudged lbw for 10 as he offered no shot to a ball that straightened, and when Karl Krikken was snared at silly mid-off for six Surrey

moved in for the kill.

Aldred was dropped at deep square leg but Ian Salisbury took his first wicket of the game when he had him caught behind for a single in his next over.

Cork made sure Derbyshire went down fighting, lifting Salisbury over long-on for six and with Blackwell took the game into the final session.

Cork pulled Saqlain for another six to reach his 50 and make Surrey bat again but in the same over he went for another big hit and was stumped for 53.

That left Surrey to score just one run and they lost Darren Bicknell lbw to the first ball from Cork before Ian Ward struck the winning single.

Defending champions Leicestershire meanwhile seem determined not to surrender their crown without a fight and they beat Gloucestershire by 225 runs at Grace Road.

At the Riverside, Durham lifted some of the gloom over Tyneside by moving into seventh place in the table and eight points clear of the relegation zone after beating Middlesex by six wickets.

Essex were denied the chance of achieving a badly needed win against Somerset at Chelmsford in the most frustrating of circumstances.

Replying to Essex's mammoth 544 in the first innings, Somerset were 256 for nine in the second innings — still 42 behind — at close of play.



Kaiserslautern's French striker Youri Djorkaeff is tackled by Silvio Meissner of Arminia Bielefeld during their Bundesliga clash on August 27. —AFP photo

FIFA ponders options

NEW YORK, Aug 28: FIFA members have informally discussed a proposal to settle Asia's threat to boycott the 2002 World Cup under which a South American team would play a European counterpart for a berth while Asia would play Oceania for another, CONCACAF general secretary Chuck Blazer confirmed Friday, reports AP.

Blazer, a FIFA executive committee member, said he doesn't know where the idea originated, but first heard about it last month at the FIFA Confederations' Cup in Mexico.

"I don't have a problem with the concept," Blazer said. "The bigger question is how do we settle the overall issue of determining World Cup berths. How does this sort itself out?"

The proposal would have the fifth-placed finisher in South American qualifying play the 14th-placed finisher in Europe for a berth in the 32-team 2002 finals field.

The Oceania qualifying winner, which was to have played the No 5 South American team for a berth, would instead play the fifth-placed Asian team.

On Thursday, FIFA president Sepp Blatter said he would meet Asian Football Confederation president Sultan Ahmad Shah of Malaysia "in the next two weeks" to discuss Asia's boycott threat.

There will be no Asian boycott, Blatter said in a statement. He said he "will have clarified the situation before

the Executive (Committee) meets in Las Vegas on October 1 and 2."

The issue stems from the Asian Football Confederation's demand for five guaranteed places in the 2002 finals, which is to be co-hosted by South Korea and Japan.

In the original allocations approved by the FIFA Executive

unprecedented occurrence — that two places for its remaining 43 members was insufficient.

It threatened to boycott qualifying earlier this year, a situation FIFA thought it had settled when — just before the Women's World Cup final — UEFA offered to have its 14th-placed team play the fifth-placed Asian side for a berth.

The AFC said it still was not satisfied and protested by walking out en masse from the FIFA Extraordinary Congress in Los Angeles and reiterated its threat to boycott qualifying if its demand was not met.

FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren in Zurich, Switzerland, had no comment on the rumored proposal, saying it was up to the Executive Committee.

Blazer said that since Europe already had offered the playoff proposal, he has no problem with the idea.

"If the South Americans and the Europeans have no problem with it, I certainly wouldn't," he said.

However, Blazer said, he also continues to hear the AFC linking the 2002 World Cup berths with those for 2006, a matter he won't agree to since he thinks CONCACAF's teams will do better in 2002 and put the confederation in a better position to get more berths itself.

Also, many FIFA members still are upset for the Asian members' walkout from the congress.

There should not be a gain which results from that, Blazer said.

Illy on throwing

LONDON, Aug 28 (Internet report): Ray Illingworth is urging cricket's lawmakers to act now to prevent more players slipping through the net and "throwing" their way to successful bowling careers in the first-class and even Test match arena.

The former England captain and chairman of selectors has said the International Cricket Council should determine what is what without further delay.

The off-spinner of yesterday has also welcomed the review of Law 24.2 which he believes is incomplete.

He was speaking after months of controversy over the action of Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan — but it was a player of an older vintage that the ex-Yorkshire and Leicestershire all-rounder chose as his example of how a player can take unfair advantage of the existing law.

The biggest example was Sonny Ramadhin, Illingworth claimed. "I was always unsure about his action, but he was never called. Then a few months ago he himself said that he always threw it all the time. It is a very sad state of affairs, especially when you are talking about people who have taken hundreds of wickets."

Illingworth's suspicions these days centre on bowling techniques in the eastern reaches of the cricketing world and the fragility of law that makes no mention of how the shoulder can be legally used to impart spin.

The law states you can bowl with a bent arm all the time if it is not straightened in the action. But what is does not mention is the shoulder. I believe a lot of bowlers in the Far East are using the shoulder."

It will not be enough, though, just to update the existing law, according to Illingworth.

Illingworth advocates that any player under suspicion should submit his action for scrutiny in the nets and should bowl in a sleeveless shirt to ensure no illegalities of the upper arm action can be concealed under clothing. "The only way to do it — if it is going to be done properly — is to go into the nets and make the player take his sleeve off and show his whole arm action and shoulder as he bowls."

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"We won't know how bad it is until he is X-rayed back in Rome tomorrow," said Eriksson.

"It hasn't diminished the impact of this victory though. I am delighted we have beaten Manchester United. It lifts our morale for the Italian League and Cup battles ahead and I am delighted to be going home with another Cup. There is plenty of room in our trophy cabinet for even more."

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Giuseppe Pancaro picked up the running with a swift break down the left, before hoisting a cross to Roberto Mancini who headed the ball on to Salas. The Chilean chested it down and

Hamburg goalie Hans-Joerg Butt compounded Schalke's agony by stopping a weak penalty from Schalke's Dutch striker Youri Mulder in the 69th minute.

Hamburg now top the table with seven points from three games, but with the bulk of this weekend's matches still to play, they are likely to be toppled from their perch.

In the evening's other match, promoted Arminia Bielefeld won 2-0 at Kaiserslautern to go third.

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Lazio captain Alessandro Nesta receives the UEFA Super Cup from Prince Albert of Monaco after beating Manchester United 1-0 in Monaco on August 27. —AFP photo

Super-sub Salas sinks MU



MONACO, Aug 28 (Reuters/AFP): A superbly-crafted 35th minute goal from Chilean substitute Marcelo

Salas gave Italians Lazio a deserved 1-0 win over European champions Manchester United in the UEFA Super Cup at the Stade Louis II on Friday.

And afterwards, Lazio's Swedish coach Sven-Goran Eriksson admitted: "I am surprised that he played as well as he did and scored such an outstanding goal. He has only been back in training for 10 days after playing in the Copa America, that's why he started on the bench."

I didn't think he had the strength to run for an hour. He was very important to us in the end."

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