

## Stoichkov set to coach Bulgaria

SOFIA, Oct 6: Bulgaria's national soccer player Hristo Stoichkov has been approved by the country's soccer federation as coach of the national team, sports officials announced Wednesday, reports AP.

The 33-year-old midfielder, considered in Bulgaria the country's most prominent ambassador to the world in recent years, will run the team together with sports manager Dimitar Dimitrov.

Stoichkov's career peaked during the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States where Bulgaria clinched its all-time best fourth place. The sturdy, left-footed player shared the leading scorer standings with six goals.

In 1994, he also collected the European-player-of-the-year award after helping Spanish soccer giant FC Barcelona to its fourth successive Spanish league title.

Two years later, he left Barcelona following numerous run-ins with former coach Louis van Gaal and returned to his native club of CSKA Sofia.

In 1998, he moved to Japan where he signed with Kashiiway Reysol of the J-League.

## Rijkaard names squad for Brazil

AMSTERDAM, Oct 6: Holland coach Frank Rijkaard Tuesday named the following squad to face Brazil in a friendly at Amsterdam on Saturday, reports AFP.

Manchester United defender Jaap Stam and Barcelona player Frank de Boer have withdrawn with injuries.

### PLAYERS

**GOALKEEPERS:** Edwin van der Sar, Sander Westerveld

**DEFENDERS:** Kees van Wonderen, Bert Konterman, Winston Bogarde, Aaron Winter, Marc van Hintum

**MIDFIELDERS:** Clarence Seedorf, Phillip Cocu, Giovanni van Bronckhorst, Jean-Paul van Gastel, Bouweijer Zenden

**FORWARDS:** Pierre van Hooijdonk, Rob van Nistelrooy, Patrick Kluivert, Dennis Bergkamp, Ronald de Boer, Peter van Vossen

## Injury worry for England

LONDON, Oct 6: Five first-choice England players missed training through injury on Tuesday ahead of the soccer friendly against Belgium on Sunday, reports AFP.

Captain Alan Shearer and defender Martin Keown both have ankle injuries, while Keown's Arsenal team-mate Tony Adams received treatment on an Achilles problem.

Manchester United midfielders Paul Scholes (foot) and David Beckham (hamstring) were also unable to take part in the training session at Bisham Abbey.

There was no immediate news on how serious the injuries were and all five players will be assessed again on Wednesday before a decision is taken on whether they should train or receive further treatment.

Given that the game at Sunderland's Stadium of Light is a friendly, coach Kevin Keegan would be unwilling to risk any players with slight injuries but it may be that some or all of the problems clear up before the game.

Gareth Southgate is the only recognised central defensive back-up to Keown and Adams in the 24-man squad after Jonathon Woodgate was unable to join up with the party due to a back problem.

## Walter wants Costa Rica job

SAN JOSE, Oct 6: Former Italy goalkeeper Walter Zenga on Tuesday applied for the vacant position as coach to the Costa Rican national team, reports AFP.

Al Dia newspaper revealed that Zenga had sent his application to the Costa Rican Football Federation (FEDEFUT) to replace Colombian Francisco "Pacho" Maturana, who controversially quit to become coach to Peru.

Last month Costa Rican officials claimed that Brazilian legend Mario Zagallo -- associated as a player, technical director and coach with all four of Brazil's World Cup triumphs -- had also applied for the vacancy.

Zagallo was Monday sacked as coach of Brazilian side Portuguesa, based in Sao Paulo, and could now immediately take up the Costa Rica job.

## Britain seeded in 2000 Davis Cup draw

LONDON, Oct 6: Great Britain's hopes of progressing in the 2000 Davis Cup were boosted on Tuesday when they were named as a seed for Thursday's World Group draw, reports AFP.

Britain are one of eight seeds in the 16-team elite group, meaning they will avoid the other seven strongest teams in the draw for the first round.

The other seeds are Australia, the United States, France, Spain, Russia, Slovakia and Germany.

British Davis Cup captain David Lloyd was furious his team were not seeded earlier this year when they were drawn against and ultimately beaten by the United States in the first round.



GOODBYE: Veteran Czech player Jana Novotna appears surprised during a ceremony in Filderstadt marking the ending of her tennis career. — AFP photo

## Novotna leaves a loser



FILDERSTADT, Germany, Oct 6: Jana Novotna retired from professional tennis after losing in the first round of the 520,000-dollar Filderstadt Grand Prix Tuesday, reports AFP.

The 31-year-old Czech, who has captured 24 singles titles during her 13-year career, was outplayed 6-3, 6-4 by Italian qualifier Silvia Farina in an hour and 25 minutes.

There were contrasting victories for wild card entries Jennifer Capriati, of the United States, and Anke Huber, of Germany. Capriati, enjoying a resurgence back up the rankings, upset Romanian Irina Spirlea 6-4, 6-1 to set up a second round meeting with top seed Martina Hingis.

Farina, who had lost all five previous meetings against the Czech, took advantage of her lack of mobility to break serve twice in the opening set. Novotna delighted the packed centre court crowd by recovering from 0-3 to 4-4 in the second

set, only to drop serve again to lose the match.

Afterwards Novotna stated that she had been advised by doctors to rest her ankle for six weeks in order for it to heal properly.

She said, "I'm relieved it's over. It was not easy coming to Filderstadt after announcing my retirement at the US Open, but it was a good decision to end my career here."

"I would have liked to win the match, but I had a difficult opponent. I have had so little training I knew it was going to be tough, but I am glad it happened against such a hard-working player."

Novotna will still compete in the end-of-year Chase Championships in New York if she qualifies for the 16-player field. The Czech is currently in 14th place, but almost certain to be overtaken in the coming weeks.

## Pele's son sentenced

SAN PAULO, Oct 6: The son of Brazilian soccer legend Pele was convicted of murder early Wednesday for taking part in a street car race that resulted in the death of a passing motorcyclist, reports AP.

Edson Cholbi do Nascimento, 29, was sentenced to six years in "semi-open" prison, which means he must sleep in the prison but may leave during the day to go to work.

Nascimento and Marcilio Marcellio Jose Marinho de Melo, 25 -- who also was convicted and sentenced to 6 years in semi-open prison -- were accused of racing their cars in Santos, a port town 48 miles (77 kilometers) southeast of Sao Paulo, when they struck and killed 50-year-old retiree Pedro Simoes Neto.

Although Melo's car was the one that hit Neto, Nascimento was found guilty for taking part in the race, which occurred in Oct 1992.

The pair will be free while they appeal the decision.

Prosecutor Octavio Borba de Vasconcelos began to present his case before a jury at 8 am Tuesday and, except for breaks for lunch and dinner, ran straight through to 1:00 am (0300 GMT) Wednesday.

Most Brazilian trials last around 24 hours, usually running through the night.

## Beckham sidelined

LONDON, Oct 6: A hamstring injury will prevent England's star midfielder David Beckham from taking part in Sunday's friendly against Belgium, it was announced Wednesday, reports AFP.

Beckham missed the opening day of training to receive treatment but was forced to return to Manchester United today after it became apparent the injury would not recover in time for the game at Sunderland's Stadium of Light.

The midfielder was one of five players to sit out training yesterday, along with captain Alan Shearer and defender Martin Keown who both have ankle injuries, Tony Adams who has an Achilles problem and Paul Scholes who is suffering from a foot injury.

Their injuries will be further assessed today and again later in the week before coach Kevin Keegan decides whether to call up any reinforcements, especially in central defence, where Gareth Southgate is the only cover for Keown and Adams.

Beckham's injury will be especially frustrating for Keegan, whose 25-man squad has now been reduced by two after Jonathon Woodgate of Leeds was unable to join up because of a back problem.

In Beckham's absence, Ray Parlour and Kieron Dyer would be the favourites to fill the right-sided role in midfield, although Trevor Sinclair could also fill in.

## Davis Cup

### Australian team after tests on Pat, Mark

SHANGHAI, Oct 6: Australia's Davis Cup finale line-up against France in December will be decided in the next days after fitness tests on Pat Rafter and Mark Philippoussis, coach Tony Roche said Wednesday, reports AFP.

As for his own future, Zidane meanwhile told L'Equipe newspaper that he had already planned out his retirement.

"I think I'll play for another two years," said the 27-year-old Frenchman. "After that, I'm going to look after my family. They deserve more than what I'm able to give them at the moment. It's hard for them."

Zidane is not the only Juventus player returning from injury and the operating table -- striker Alessandro Del Piero is also performing short of his true abilities.

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