

U-17 WC soccer

Mexico blank Thailand

AUCKLAND, Nov 11: Mexico scored an easy 4-0 win over Thailand while Uruguay, Poland, Spain and Ghana settled for draws Thursday at the under-17 World Soccer Championship, reports AP.

Sebastien Alvarez gave Uruguay a 1-0 lead in the 46th minute but Lukasz Navejs' goal in the 62nd minute equalized for Poland in their Group A match at Auckland.

Mario Alvarez scored a last-minute goal to give Spain a 1-1 draw with Ghana in the teams' opening Group B match at Napier. Ghana fed 1-0 just after halftime on Ibrahim Attiku's goal in the 47th minute.

Also at Napier, Mexico led 2-0 at halftime en route to their win over Thailand.

Juan Estrada scored in the sixth minute and Aaron Galindo in the 38th for the 2-0 halftime lead. Gustavo Ramirez, in the 55th, and Felix Grijalva, in the 77th, closed out the Mexico scoring.

Spanish coach Juan Santisteban Troyano accused Ghanaian players of faking injuries after their draw.

At times up to three Ghanaian players were rolling on the ground, and several, particularly goalkeeper Owusu Banahene, required multiple bouts of medical attention to relieve cramp.

Ghana's head coach Jones Attukayefo said his side was affected by jet lag.

"They are suffering from fatigue. We've done a lot of flying, we flew for three days to get here," said Attukayefo.

Ghana, holding a 1-0 lead deep into injury time after Attiku scored in the 47th minute, may have been the victims of their stoppage.

Spain stole the draw when replacement left midfielder Albert Crusat Domene rounded Ghanaian defender Razak Ibrahim and floated a cross for Alvarez to head past the goalkeeper.

Eight teams in the 16-team championship play their first matches Friday. Defending champion Brazil plays Australia and Mali takes on Germany in Group C matches at Christchurch, while Jamaica plays Burkina Faso and Paraguay takes on Qatar in Group D matches at Dunedin.

The United States opened the tournament Wednesday with a 2-1 win over New Zealand.

Le Tissier considers loan move

SOUTHAMPTON, England, Nov 11: Out-of-favour Southampton player Matthew Le Tissier says he may consider a loan deal away from The Dell in order to get first-team football, reports AFP.

"Le God," as he is known by the English Premiership club's fans, has failed to nail down a regular first-team spot this season following an Achilles problem at the start of the campaign.

After scoring in a recent reserve match against non-league St Albans, Le Tissier admitted: "It is not inspiring to play in front of a handful of people at St Albans, so maybe I need to go out on loan to get a few matches under my belt."



Superstar Ronaldinho listening to Brazil coach Vanderley Luxemburgo during a press conference at Sydney on November 10.

Sport

Laila stops Pennybaker

CHESTER, West Virginia, Nov 11: Laila Ali's second fight was much longer than her first. The result was the same, reports AP.

The 21-year-old daughter of Muhammad Ali stopped Shadina Pennybaker of Pittsburgh with three seconds left in their four-round bout Wednesday night before about 2,000 fans at the Mountaineer Race Track and Gaming Resort.

Ali said in the days leading up to the fight that she would knock out Pennybaker, a 28-year-old accounting student from Pittsburgh who was making her pro debut.

Yet she was unable to land any solid blows early and she appeared to plan out every move.

Early in the fourth round, Ali bloodied her opponent's lip and forced a standing-eight count with a series of blows to Pennybaker's head.

Ali finished with a flurry of left-right combinations that sent a Pennybaker reeling into the corner and forced the referee to stop the fight.

Pennybaker's corner was up-set over the stoppage.

The bout lasted much longer than Ali's debut, when she knocked out April Fowler in 31 seconds on Oct 8 in Verona, New York.

Ali's father, who watched her first fight from ringside, didn't attend Wednesday's bout. Veronica Anderson, Laila's mother, who was Ali's third wife, watched Wednesday's fight from ringside.

The bout was the fifth of a seven-fight card at the resort at the tip of West Virginia's northern panhandle, 50 miles (80.46 kilometers) northwest of Pittsburgh.

"I truly believe that Lennox had the opportunity in life-time to be the undisputed champion. He didn't take that chance because he said, 'I may get caught,'" said Holyfield in a series of unusually direct verbal swipes at the Briton.

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It's Holyfield's turn?

LAS VEGAS, Nov 11 (Reuters): If pressed, Lennox Lewis will finally admit, in hardly a revelation, that he should have done more to win, rather than get a draw in his first fight with Evander Holyfield last March. Reluctantly, he promises to do more in Saturday's rematch.

Holyfield, of course, says it's too late, Lewis had his chance but passed it up because he was afraid to take risks to become the undisputed heavyweight champion.

"Some people don't want to be uncomfortable," Holyfield said Wednesday about Lewis, the World Boxing Council champion, who in the opinion of most ringsiders did enough to win the first fight, even though with his talents and his opponent's sluggish performance he probably could have stopped Holyfield.

Well, actually Holyfield has — last March.

"At least I know the man for what he is," said Holyfield, not complimentarily. "I'm not a very conservative person. If I was conservative I'd still be in the ghetto. I have more skills than Lennox."

But then again, he said with a broad smile, "if I had his skills I might fight that way —

but we all have to take chances to be a winner," Holyfield said. "Some people just don't have the fortitude. Some people just don't have what's necessary to take chances to be the very best they can be. Boxing is a replica of what people are."

When first asked if he had been too cautious in the first fight in Madison Square Garden, Lewis simply said: "No."

But asked again moments later, the 34-year-old Briton said: "Maybe I was too cautious." This time, he said, "I'll be right in front of his face. He doesn't have to look for me."

Then Lewis seemed to grow with his posture and said that "the first round is going to be ferocious. I'm going to go after him, especially in the first round, and see what's got to offer. He's never seen a boxer like Lennox Lewis."

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conservatively, the way Lewis fought last March.

"I'm the undisputed champion of the world as I stand here. On Saturday, I'll pick up the belts," said Holyfield, yet again feeling compelled to add his religious take on himself. "I see myself as God's champion."

Holyfield, the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation champion, says he would like, but doesn't expect, Lewis to come straight at him Saturday. If he does, Holyfield says he will have an easier fight.

As they wrapped up their training and sessions with the media before their scheduled 12-round fight, both men appeared remarkably relaxed and confident.

Holyfield, who often rambles far afield in his responses was particularly cogent on Wednesday with direct, humorous and insightful responses that didn't need to be studied for their meaning.

Of course, in reading the jumbled, grimy tea leaves of boxing that could merely mean that Holyfield and Lewis have only learned to handle microphones and reporters better.



Promoter Don King (C) introducing Lennox Lewis (L) and Evander Holyfield to newsmen during a conference at a Las Vegas hotel on November 10. The boxers fight in an unification heavyweight bout tomorrow.

— AFP photo

Ronaldo in no-man's land



SYDNEY, Nov 11 (AP/AF): Soccer's world governing body FIFA has reportedly banned Australian Harry Kewell and Brazilian Ronaldo in the latest twist to the forthcoming two-match series in Sydney and Melbourne.

Kewell, who did not return home from England despite being selected, will have to miss Leeds United's Premier League match against Bradford next week, the Australian newspaper reported Thursday.

Ronaldo, twice voted world player of the year, has been banned from playing the second match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground next Wednesday after a dispute between his Italian club Inter Milan, FIFA and the Brazilian Federation, the newspaper says.

Brazil coach Wenderley Luxemburgo said Thursday he would not play Ronaldo in Sunday's first friendly international against Australia if FIFA prevented him from playing.

Ronaldo is caught in a tug of war between his national team and Italian club Inter Milan, who successfully appealed to FIFA to ban him from playing the second match at Melbourne next Wednesday.

Luxemburgo said if Ronaldo could not play in both Sunday's match at Stadium Australia and next Wednesday's fixture in Melbourne there was no point him staying and he should return to Italy.

Inter Milan argued that Ronaldo had already been released for his full quota of international appearances.

Ronaldinho boss sacked

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