

World youth soccer Germany hold Brazil

AUCKLAND, Nov 17: Brazil were forced into a tough quarter-final against in-form Paraguay when they were held to a 0-0 draw by Germany in the under-17 World Soccer Championship on Wednesday, reports AP.

Australia went above Brazil to finish top of Group C, this tournament's Group of Death, with a 1-0 win over Mali, as Scott McDonald scored on the counterattack on 20 minutes.

Brazil were outplayed by Germany, who missed out on the last eight after finishing with a loss and two draws. A win would have been enough to give the Germans a playoff spot and eliminate Brazil and the European players were reduced to tears after having the better of the chances.

Brazilian goalkeeper Robinho spared his team with two outstanding saves late in the game while the South Americans couldn't find a way past German stand-in keeper Dennis Ellhoff, who was named player-of-the-match.

Brazil's failure to win let Australia take command of the group, playing against a Mali outfit which showed dogged resistance in successive 0-0 draws against Germany and Brazil and also had a chance to qualify.

Mali had three clear chances in the first half but were caught out on the counter from Australia's sole breakthrough.

"All the European teams (Germany, Poland and Spain) are gone, but the poor shepherds from Australia are still here," said Australian coach Les Scheinflug.

"I'm proud of the kids. They played with a lot of determination and never looked like giving in. I said from the start that this was a tough group, but they wanted it more than the other teams."

Paraguay, needing only to not suffer a massive defeat to fall from top place in Group D, played out a 2-2 draw with Burkina Faso to finish unbeaten.

Qatar finished second in the group with a 4-0 win over Jamaica, which failed to earn a point and conceded 10 goals for the tournament.

Jamaica dug in until Waleed Rasoul opened the scoring in 51 minutes with his first of two goals. He got the second on 63 minutes while Bilal Abuhamad and Meshal Bodawood completed the routs as Jamaica had Stewart sent off.

Innocenti not so innocent!

MILAN, Nov 17: Bari defender Ducio Innocenti was banned for four matches on Tuesday after being convicted on video evidence of breaking an opponent's cheek-bone in a clash that the referee missed, reports AFP.

Perugia's Renato Olive finished up in hospital after being elbowed in the face by Innocenti during their Serie A match on November 6.

Olive has announced plans to take legal action against Innocenti, claiming the blow was a deliberate assault as neither man had possession of the ball.

Innocenti is the third player to be convicted this season on the basis of video evidence, after Fiorentina midfielder Sandro Cois (elbow) and Perugia's new French winger Ibrahim Ba (head-butt).

Off the pitch, the incident led to a series of verbal attacks by Perugia chairman Luciano Gaucci on the match referee, Bari chairman Vincenzo Matarrese and indirectly his brother Antonio Matarrese, a vice-president of both the game's ruling bodies, UEFA and FIFA.

In the wake of his comments, Gaucci now faces disciplinary proceedings from the Italian footballing authorities and the threat of legal action from Vincenzo Matarrese for defamation.

Give WADA freedom

SYDNEY, Nov 17: Sports ministers from 26 countries called on the International Olympic Committee today to shed its traditional secrecy and distance itself from a newly-formed World Anti Doping Agency, reports AFP.

An International Drugs in Sport Summit expressed support for WADA but called on the IOC to move the body out of the Swiss city of Lausanne, open its doors to representatives of public authorities, publish minutes of meetings and organise worldwide random tests of athletes.

The Summit also approved a Canadian proposal to set up a steering committee to monitor WADA's progress.

"It's not another structure, it's not another body. There were some countries that felt that they had to do their homework and participate more profoundly in the process of setting up WADA," Canadian Sports Minister Denis Coderre said.

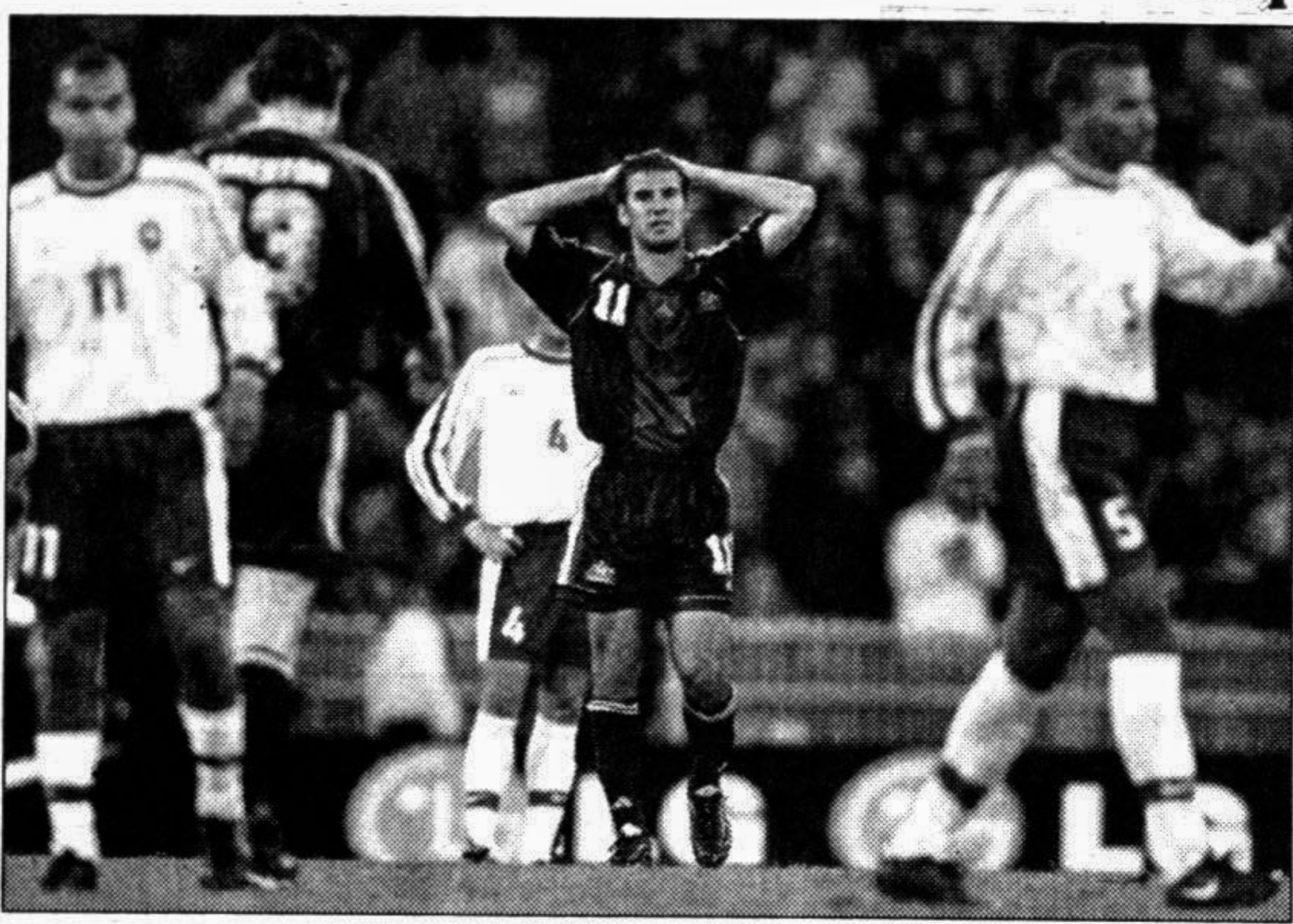
"It's about steering WADA in the right direction," Australia's Customs Minister Amanda Vanstone, the summit chairman, said.

Coderre said everyone supported and recognised the WADA initiative.

Don Verreen Jr, deputy director of the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy, said the three-day summit had gone a long way in satisfying the misgivings the United States had about WADA.

"The issue has always been how do you demonstrate independence, transparency and accountability," he said.

"The IOC has to distance itself from WADA. There was a lot of what went into WADA that wasn't inclusive, critical voices that were not there," he added.



Australian striker Paul Agostino (C) contemplates a miss during the second international friendly against Brazil at Melbourne yesterday. — AFP photo

Socceroos fail to hold lead



MELBOURNE, Australia, Nov 17: A goal four minutes from fulltime drew with the Australian national team at the Melbourne Cricket Ground here Wednesday night, reports AFP.

Australia led 2-0 after a brace of goals from German-based striker Paul Agostino in the 11th and 61st minutes and appeared set for a comfortable victory.

But the Brazilians hit back through Ronaldinho in the 75th minute with a header and Fabio Junior in the 86th minute.

The goals conjured memories of the 1997 World Cup qualifier against Iran when Australia collapsed and lost a similar lead in the last 20 minutes.

utes and lost on the away goals rule.

Brazil won the opening match 2-0 in Sydney last Sunday with goals by Alvaro and Alex.

Mark Viduka, who came into the side after shaking off a thigh injury, gave the Socceroos a defined target man and the Brazilians a headache.

Viduka took a Kevin Muscat pass in his stride, clipped it over the Brazilian defence and Agostino headed home to give Australia an early lead.

Viduka, originally from Melbourne, tore through the heart of the Brazilian defence after just 35 seconds, brushing aside challenges and drilling a shot goalbound.

However, goalkeeper Alexandre covered brilliantly saving with his legs.

But the Socceroos lost their

grip on the game in the final stages and Brazil surged home.

Denilson hit a tempting cross, Ronaldinho was on it in a flash heading home after 75 minutes and Australia was reeling.

Ronaldinho then turned provider finding Fabio Junior with a looping cross and the Brazilians were level with five minutes left to disappoint the near-80,000 crowd.

TEAMS

Australia: Zeljko Kalac, Kevin Muscat, Craig Moore, Paul Okon, Tony Vidmar, Josip Skoko, Mark Viduka, Paul Agostino, Steve Laybutt, Brad Maloney, Danny Tiatto.

Brazil: Alexandre, Michel, Jean, Milton, Marcos Paulo, Athirson, Adriano, Mozart, Warley, Lincoln, Denilson.

Anelka's threat to Real



MADRID, Nov 16 (AFP): "If they loan me out I'll not return."

Real Madrid's unsettled French striker Nicolas Anelka was talking a tough game Tuesday as he threw down the gauntlet to a growing army of doubters.

The 20-year-old former Arsenal star has yet to score since his record transfer last summer and Real's rumour mill has been working overtime amid reports that the club may be looking at a loan swap with compatriot Zinedine Zidane of Juventus.

Other rumour mongers say Anelka is on his way to either Inter Milan, Lazio or possibly Marseille - and the moody striker wants to know where he stands.

"If they want to sell me they had better tell me straight away. If they loan me out I'll not return, that much is clear," insisted Anelka in an interview with AFP.

"The moment they have no confidence in me I'll be off - there's no point staying around," he added.

Anelka only managed to get his move to Real after much to-ing and fro-ing in the summer and he almost ended up in Italy, having always said he preferred Spain.

"I don't want to go to Juve," insisted Anelka. "It's not for them to decide but for me. I have not come here to muddy the waters but to play for Real Madrid."

Anelka, who began his career with Paris Saint Germain, left Arsenal for 22 million pounds and signed a seven-year deal with Real but has had a nightmare start in a struggling side, failing to find the net.

He recently complained that the team's way of playing under Welsh coach John Toshack did not suit his game.

"I am not scoring and on top

of that I am not playing in the right position," said Anelka, who has only made seven appearances to date and spent much of his time on the bench.

"I am playing on the right whereas everyone knows my place is in the middle so don't then ask me to get scoring goals."

"If they'd told me you're going to be playing on the right I wouldn't have come here," Anelka stormed.

Anelka is not the first big-name player to suffer such a problem as a similar situation

developed at Barcelona when former England striker Gary Lineker was moved out to the right flank under Johan Cruyff. Lineker promptly moved back to England - an unlikely scenario for Anelka.

"We are playing a system with just one man up front to poach in the area," said Anelka, referring to Spanish international Fernando Morientes, whom the Frenchman rates highly - but Anelka says that's not his style.

"I have never scored goals like that - I hate scoring goals in that fashion," said Anelka, who found the net 19 times last

season for Arsenal - usually on the counter-attack.

"For me I need the ball played in deep," he explained.

"Don't ask me to change my game - I won't do so even if my goals account at the end of the season is zero," Anelka insisted.

Anelka, now ensconced in a house in a swanky Madrid suburb, hit out at the club for in his view not making the best of him.

"Real Madrid took me on, they paid 30 million dollars but then they don't play me in the best conditions. I just don't understand it."

"If I ever leave here they will make themselves look ridiculous - and me too. Everyone will say you bought him for all that money and he's done nothing."

Anelka said he was not in contact with any other clubs but added for things to work out club tactics would have to change to suit his needs.

"If they are using tactics around a penalty area poacher they can't have watched me properly," said Anelka, who was embroiled in more controversy last week when he did not travel to join France's under-21 side blaming an injured knee.

The French international failed to turn up at the squad's training camp in Clairefontaine last Thursday but said then that Real Madrid had failed to tell him about the under-21s call-up.

"I got this call-up when everyone knew I had been injured for two weeks. Then I see the papers asking if I am really injured - that's like saying they don't believe me," Anelka stormed.

"I am quite calm about things - I just want to get over my injury."

But he added significantly that an under-21 call-up was beneath his lofty status.

"Everyone knows that I don't have any motivation to play for the under-21s," he admitted.

Bierhoff for a fresh start



MILAN, Nov 17: Oliver Bierhoff claimed on Tuesday that this weekend's clash with Juventus was a chance to prove that his Italian champions are not dead and buried after their recent disaster in Europe, reports AFP.

Milan's defeat to Galatasaray in the Champions League was a crushing blow to a team who had made success in Europe a top priority in their centenary season. The 3-2 loss also cost them the consolation of a UEFA Cup place.

Now they travel to Turin for a match which shares top billing with the Rome derby in the Serie A this weekend and promises a real test of their mettle.

"Playing Juventus now could give us a special lift," said Bierhoff. "A good result there would give me more confidence in what we're doing."

"Victory would mean that Milan aren't dead, that we're still up there and that we're ready to fight."

The German striker claimed that Milan's exit from the European scene had not caused trouble among the players or with coach Alberto Zaccheroni.

"The team are with Zaccheroni," he said. "We all know we've made some mistakes along the way, otherwise things wouldn't have gone badly in the Champions League."

"But what's encouraging is

that there hasn't been a hunt for scapegoats," he told the Gazzetta dello Sport.

Pride, but also a better position in the table will be at stake at the Delle Alpi on Sunday night. With Lazio three points clear at the top, Juventus and Milan are second and third in the table, separated by a single point.

Juventus centre-forward Filippo Inzaghi would dearly love to widen that gap after a goal drought that started on September 19.

"I'm tired of talking about it and tired of defending myself," he said bitterly. "I just want to look ahead."

"We know that we're a good team, our place in the table is proof of that. But now it's time

to find out just how far we can go and the month ahead will tell us that."

"We've four big matches in the league, two with Olympiakos in the UEFA Cup, plus Napoli in the Italian Cup," he said.

If Juventus are to meet the challenge posed by AC Milan, let alone the others, Inzaghi and strike partner Alessandro Del Piero will have to rediscover their old skills.

"Nobody is looking for excuses," he told Tuttosport. "The fact of the matter is that we're not on top form. But even though it might take time, and effort, we'll get there."

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France go second

PARIS, Nov 17: World champions France have overtaken the Czech Republic to go second to Brazil in the latest FIFA rankings released on Wednesday.

Scotland meanwhile, beaten by England in the Euro 2000 play-off on Saturday, are out of the top 20.

Craig Brown's side had scrambled up the table in recent months, but the 2-0 reverse at Hampden Park once again leaves them behind the United States and Slovenia, who recorded a shock play-off win against the Ukraine at the weekend.

The Scots are now rated 23rd, 12 places behind England, who have risen one spot thanks to Paul Scholes' double strike.

The Republic of Ireland's 1-1 draw with Turkey at Lansdowne Road saw them drop one place to 36th, while both Northern Ireland and Wales slipped two.

Northern Ireland are level with Canada in Joint 80th position but even Oman now rate above the Welsh, who are joined by Moldova in 93rd spot.

RANKINGS

Country	Points
1. Brazil	833
2. France	770
3. Czech Republic	768
4. Spain	758
5. Germany	739
6. Croatia	719
7. Norway	715
8. Argentina	715
9. Romania	714
10. Mexico	704
11. England	703
12. Italy	697
13. Yugoslavia	691
14. Denmark	682
15. Portugal	674
16. Sweden	670
17. Netherlands	656
18. Paraguay	645
19. Russia	641
20. Slovakia	634
21. USA	623
22. Chile	618
23. Scotland	617
24. Morocco	611
25. Colombia	611
26. Israel	609
27. Austria	609
28. Ukraine	608
29. Tunisia	597
30. Belgium	593

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35. Zambia	576
36. Rep. of Ireland	572
41. South Korea	551
52. Japan	517
60. China	493
80. Northern Ireland	435
85. Australia	432
93. Wales	401

Volatile Lorient handed two-match ban

FRANKFURT, Germany, Nov 16: Werner Lorient, 1860 Munich's fiery coach, was handed a two-match ban Tuesday for insulting a linesman, reports AFP.

The volatile German, who had threatened to resign if he was punished, was also fined 13,400 dollars for the outburst in the second half of his side's 1-1 draw with Bayer Leverkusen last month.

He was expelled to the stands by the referee after reportedly shouting: "You're all a miserable bunch, you've screwed things up for us again."

Lorient appeared before the German Football Federation tribunal to contest his charges and after the four-and-a-half hour hearing his solicitor said his client would lodge an appeal.

This is not the first time the 50-year-old coach's behaviour has landed him in hot water with the authorities. He has already been barred from the touchline twice leading to one-match bans on each occasion and fines totalling 16,100 dollars.

Last week Lorient back pedalled on threats that he would stand down if action was taken against him.

"I didn't say I would resign if I got a fine," he told Bavarian television. "It's only if they suspend me and I'm sticking by that. That's not something I can accept."

"I will have to sit down with the team and the club president to talk it over," he added. "If the players want me to stay then I'll consider it."

Yet after Tuesday's tribunal club president Karlheinz Wildmoser reported: "The club has solved the problem and persuaded the trainer to continue."

The federation's decision is an attempt in their efforts to improve the image of German football. Germany's FIFA referee Bernd Heynemann was also in favour of setting a firm example in Lorient's case.

Inter interested in Cordoba

BUENOS AIRES, Nov 17: Inter Milan have made an offer of some 15 million dollars for Colombian international defender Ivan Cordoba, officials at his current club, Argentina's San Lorenzo, said Tuesday, reports AFP.

San Lorenzo are holding out for 20 million dollars, though that would include a 15 percent fee for the player, as well as his agent Gustavo Mascardi and the Argentine Football Association.

In fact, San Lorenzo stand to gain only some 40 percent of the overall transfer fee after the other parties have pocketed their share.

Cordoba, Mascardi and an Inter official, Narcizo Pezzotti, met Monday night in Buenos Aires to discuss a deal ahead of Thursday's match pitting San Lorenzo against Brazil's Palmeiras in the first leg of the Copa Mercosur semi-final.

Inter face stiff competition from other clubs, including Real Madrid and Liverpool, for Cordoba's services.



Football great Pele (L) and wife Assiria spending some time at the lounge of Vienna's Schwechat airport on November 16. Pele has arrived here to attend a World Sports Award gala. — AFP photo

Hingis survives a scare



NEW YORK, Nov 17 (AFP/Reuters): World number one Martina Hingis fought her way into the quarter-finals of the WTA Tour Chase Championships Tuesday with a 7-6, 7-6 victory over France's Sandrine Testud.

But Hingis won't get a chance to avenge her US Open final defeat by Serena Williams, who withdrew from the season ending event Tuesday with a back injury suffered in practice.

The Swiss teenager, who took the court after a tribute to now-retired Steffi Graf, seemed in control after winning the first-set tiebreak and breaking Testud in the opening game of the second set. But Testud managed to save a break point in the third game and broke Hingis in the fourth game.

A rejuvenated Testud received treatment on her left hand following the fifth game, but it did not affect her game as she forced a set point with Hingis serving at 4-5. But Hingis prevented a third set with a backhand winner down the line and eventually held serve.

Testud took a 2-1 lead in the tiebreaker, but two straight backhand errors off her serve allowed Hingis to take a 3-2 lead.

Hingis built a 5-4 lead when Testud missed a backhand wide in the open court and was serving to close the match, but Testud hit a lunging forehand down the line to draw even.

However, a netted backhand by Testud gave Hingis match point at 6-5 and she closed out her sixth straight win over

Testud when the Frenchwoman hit a forehand long for her 32nd unforced error of the match.

Sixth seed Nathalie Tauziat won her opening match Tuesday after learning that she would not have to worry about running into American powerhouse Serena Williams in the quarter finals.

Following her 6-3, 7-6 victory over Amanda Coetzer of South Africa, Tauziat told French reporters that Williams had pulled out of the tournament.

Nineteenth-ranked Russian Elena Likhovtseva replaced Williams in the draw and Van Roost made the most of her lucky break and Williams' misfortune by cruising to a 6-2, 6-3 victory.

Van Roost reeled off eight consecutive games to end the first set and take a commanding 5-0 lead in the second before Likhovtseva halted the run and at least made the skinny 26-year-old work to close it out.

"For me it was a good chance. I'm a lucky winner," admitted Van Roost, who earned a quarter-final date with Tauziat and at least 65,000 dollars for getting past the first round.

Likhovtseva walks away with an unexpected 30,000 dollars in holiday spending money.

Tauziat played a near perfect first set and survived a less impressive second, avoiding a third set by taking the tie-break from Coetzer 8-6.

While many in women's tennis seem to peak in their teens and early 20s, Tauziat has played her best as an adult. She reached the semifinals here in

1997 and her first Grand Slam final at Wimbledon in 1998 and captured titles in Moscow and Leipzig after celebrating her 32nd birthday in October. She has achieved a career-high ranking of seventh in the world.

"She's playing with a lot of confidence. She's done great over the last two years," said Coetzer, who won her first four meetings with Tauziat but now has lost four in a row over the past two years. "I think she's just been on a roll."

For Coetzer, the match was her traditional cameo appearance in the season finale. The diminutive, hard-working South African has qualified for seven straight years but has not won a match since her first appearance at Madison Square Garden in 1993. In fact, Coetzer has not won a set in the tournament since 1994.

"I think it's just the level of competition," she surmised, adding, "It's probably not my best surface."

The level of competition was well beyond Coetzer in the first set as Tauziat dropped a total of just three points in five service games.

"I think she played a flawless set," Coetzer said. "I often don't start really sharp, but I never had a chance."

The second set was much tighter with the 11th-ranked Coetzer finding the range on her passing shots and Tauziat giving up many more chances on her own service games. Each player dropped serve twice on the way to the tiebreaker.

"The second set I start to play shaky a little bit and I think she played a little bit better too," said Tauziat.

"She is a fighter... I think I was lucky to win the second set."