

World youth soccer Germany hold Brazil

AUCKLAND, Nov 17: Brazil were forced into a tough quarterfinal 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 Elhoff, 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.

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

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

"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 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 on 51 minutes with his first of two goals. He got the second on 63 minutes while Bilal Abuhanda and Meshal Bodawood completed the routs as Jamaica had Stewart sent off.

Innocenti not so innocent!

MILAN, Nov 17: Bari defender Duccio 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's 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 continents 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.

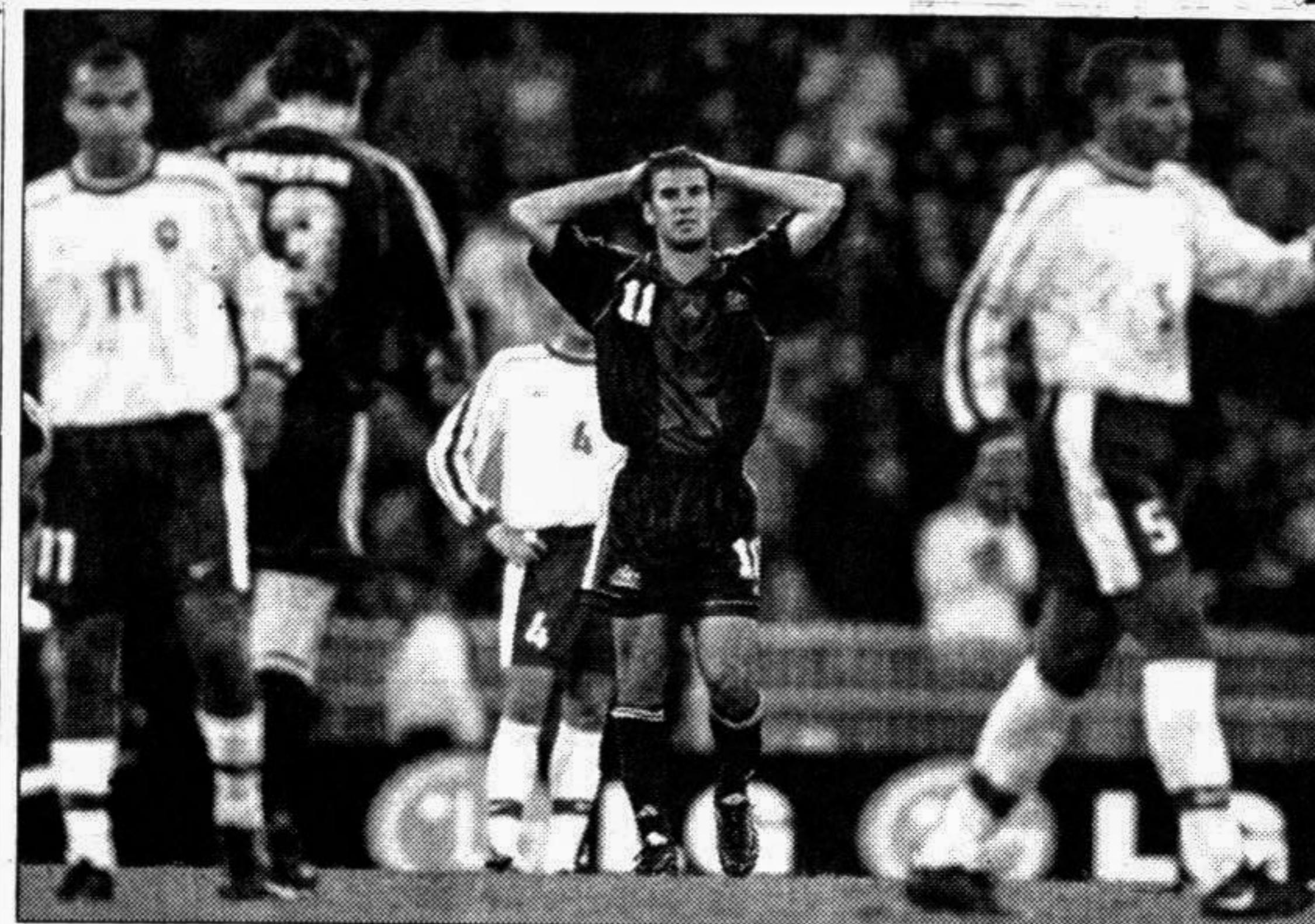
"It's about steering WADA in the right direction," Australia's Customs Minister Amanda Vanstone, the summit chairman, said.

Coderre said everyone supported and recognised the WADA initiative.

Don Vereen 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 from striker Fabio Junior earned the Brazil under-23 team a 2-2 draw 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 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.

However, goalkeeper Alexandre covered brilliantly saving with his legs.

But the Socceroos lost their

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 were level with five minutes left to disappoint the near-80,000 crowd.

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

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But the Socceroos lost their

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

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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, Athirino, Adriano, Mozart, Warley, Lincoln, Denilson.

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	839
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	611
24. Morocco	611
25. Israel	609
26. Austria	609
27. Ukraine	608
28. Tunisia	597
29. 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

Volatil Lorant handed two-match ban

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

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."

"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 station.

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

"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 another step in their efforts to improve the image of German football. Germany's FIFA referee Bernd Heynemann was also in favour of settling a firm example in Lorant's case.

It 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 Lorant 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."

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The PSV Eindhoven player said he had had positive discussions with national coach Robert Waseige but before making his decision, wanted to make sure he had fully recovered from an ankle operation he had a few months ago.

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

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 Mascari and the Argentine Football Association.

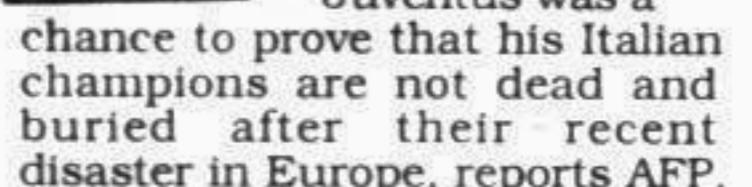
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Bierhoff for a fresh start



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.