

## Scottish Premiership

## United victors in

## Dundee derby

GLASGOW, Dec 13: A goal two minutes from the whistle by Portuguese star Joaquin Ferraz handed Dundee United a 1-0 victory Sunday at Tannadice Park to claim the derby honours over city rivals Dundee in the Scottish Premier League on Sunday, reports AFP.

It was the second time Ferraz had broken Dundee's hearts as he also struck to win the opening day clash between the two sides.

Dundee had the most of the play but failed to punish a sluggish United display and it appeared neither side would find the way to goal in a match which seemed headed for a goalless draw.

Both teams looked badly short of goalscoring flair in a game sorely lacking in entertainment value even if it never wanted for commitment with some often frenzied tackling.

But with only a minute remaining, Ferraz found time and space on the left-hand side to surprise Dundee for the second time this campaign with a cruel blow.

The fortunate victory gained restores United to third in the table, but their hopes of a UEFA Cup berth surely still depend on who manager Paul Sturrock buys to replenish his forward line.

Dundee United again turned to youngsters Steven Thompson and Stephen McConologue in attack to somehow fill the void left by Billy Dods' departure to Rangers -- but both struggled to impress.

However Dundee defender Lee Wilkie was the main loser of the evening, suffering a nasty head injury which forced him to be carried off for checks after just 15 minutes.

## Keegan knuckles down

LONDON, Dec 13: England manager Kevin Keegan started an intensive search across Europe Monday for top-class opposition to face in preparation for the summer's Euro 2000 finals, reports AFP.

Keegan has already ensured that a friendly against Brazil is virtually confirmed at Wembley on May 27.

He must also find a smaller country or even club side to provide a final pre-tournament warm-up on June 3, with Malta - who have a vote on the 2006 World Cup host country - being a distinct possibility.

However, after being drawn against Germany, Romania and Portugal in Sunday's finals draw in Brussels, Keegan knows that is team need to face formidable Europe opposition on May 31 just before the tournament begins.

Germany had been one potential opponent -- with the Netherlands being another possible candidate -- but the Germans have been ruled out after England were pitted against them just five days after being drawn together in the World Cup qualifying draw.

"We won't be playing Germany now I don't think! Now we've got the draw we'll try and fix up that last game for the end of May," said Keegan.

## Raja lift African Champions' League

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 13: Outsiders Raja Casablanca of Morocco defeated Esperance of Tunisia in a penalty shootout on Sunday to become African champions for the third time, reports AFP.

The second leg of the Champions League final finished 0-0 at the Al-Menzah Stadium in Tunis and the Moroccans triumphed 4-3 on penalties to qualify for the first world club championship.

Raja will play Corinthians from hosts Brazil, Al-Nasr from Saudi Arabia and seven-time European champions Real Madrid from Spain between January 5-10 in Sao Paulo.

They also face Cup Winners Cup holders Africa Sports from Cote d'Ivoire next month for the African Super Cup, a trophy that eluded them two years when they lost a shootout against Etoile du Sahel from Tunisia.

Dismissed even by their coach, Argentine Luis Oscar Fullone, as no-hoppers, Raja succeeded where five other Champions League opponents of Esperance failed this year by holding them goalless in Tunis.

The Tunisians had scored two against Al-Mahalla of Libya, five against Al-Hilal of Sudan, three against defending champions ASEC of Cote d'Ivoire, five against Saint-Louisienne de Reunion and one against Dynamos of Zimbabwe.

Treatment also favoured star-studded Esperance as none of the six clubs held 0-0 at home in the first leg of previous Champions League finals survived.

Raja also needed penalties to succeed in 1989 against Mouloudia Oran of Algeria and in 1997 against Obusas Goldfields of Ghana, and they maintained a Moroccan record of never losing a Champions League final.

Royal Armed Forces trounced Bilibima of the Democratic Republic of Congo 6-3 on aggregate in the 1985 decider and Wydad Casablanca overcame Al-Hilal 2-0 in the 1992 final.

Raja will begin their defence of the cup next March against the winners of a preliminary round tie between Port Authority from Gambia and LPRC Oilers from Liberia.



## Sport

## Pele's self assessment

BRUSSELS, Dec 13: With just 19 days remaining until the new millennium, Pele said here Sunday that he was the greatest sportsman of the century, reports AFP.

The Brazilian legend also took a swipe at the modern game's highly-paid stars, whom he considers to be sporting mercenaries.

Few would question that the Brazilian legend is the greatest player in the history of football, the world's most popular sport.

And most would agree that Pele -- born Edson Arantes do Nascimento -- is one of a handful of sportsmen to dispute the title of the greatest in any sport. Heavyweight boxing legend Muhammad Ali and American athlete Jesse Owens are arguably his biggest rivals for that honour.

But Pele, here in Brussels for the draw for Euro 2000, was adamant he deserved the honour.

Asked who he would choose as his sportsman of the century, Pele replied: "I have to stay with Pele, no doubt."

"When someone has played for his country at 16, won a World Cup at 17 and scores more than 1000 goals they deserve it."

"Until you find someone else who has done that then it must be me."

Pele revealed that his own sporting idol was his father, who died last year. He played professionally for Atletico Mineiro in the Minas Gerais region of Brazil and his son quipped: "When I was young my goal was to score more than five goals in one half as he did. My father did that but I never managed to do it. I always matched myself against him."

The 59-year-old, born in Tres Coraçoes in Minas Gerais, scored 1279 goals in a 20-year career with Santos, New York Cosmos and the Brazil national team. He was a part of three Brazil World Cup-winning teams, being the key player in the 1958 and 1970 victories although his participation was limited through injury in 1962.

He was the victim of brutal defending in both 1962 and the 1966 tournament won by England.

Holland's fellow hosts Belgium open the tournament with a group B match with Sweden but have landed on their feet with Italy and Turkey, their other opponents although the Italians are never to be discounted.

Italy coach Dino Zoff had no complaints about the draw, saying: "It's a balanced group."

"We'll be meeting the hosts, Belgium, a team clearly to be feared. Sweden who qualified for the finals in great style and Turkey, a very tough team - as our club sides can testify."

Turkish club Galatasaray ousted AC Milan in the Champions League first phase and then Bologna in last week's UEFA Cup third round.

Turkish coach Mustafa Denizli told the Anatolia news agency that "we know it will not be easy - but we will fight until the end and we have the chance to qualify for the next round."

Swedish coach Tommy Soderberg was cautious in his response, saying "it could have been worse."

## No luck for joint hosts

## England, Germany inseparable



BRUSSELS, Dec 13 (AFP): If England coach Kevin Keegan has hard done by after being paired Sunday with eternal rivals Germany in the finals of Euro 2000 then he should spare a thought for counterparts Frank Rijkaard and Roger Lemerre, in charge of co-hosts Holland and world champions France respectively.

Certainly England's assignment -- they also play Portugal and Romania in Group A -- is a tough one. It came only five days after they were drawn alongside Germany in the qualifying section for the 2002 World Cup.

But Rijkaard, who makes his competitive debut as Holland coach in Euro 2000 and Lemerre, who had the unenviable task of succeeding World Cup winner Alain Jacquet, both know their jobs are on the line if they had been robbed 30

## GROUPS AT A GLANCE

BRUSSELS, Dec 13 (AFP): Following are the Euro 2000 groups:

## GROUP A

Germany, Romania, Portugal, England

## GROUP B

Belgium, Sweden, Italy, Turkey

## GROUP C

Spain, Norway, Yugoslavia, Slovenia

## GROUP D

Holland, Czech Republic, France, Denmark

The other two teams in that pool are the Czech Republic, runners-up in 1996 and with the best record in qualifying, and 1992 continental champions Denmark. That pool will inevitably be dubbed "the Group of Death".

Both Lemerre and Rijkaard tried to play down their misfortune in being thrown in at the deep end in their first major tournaments in charge.

Rijkaard, a key member of Holland's 1988 European Championship-winning team, said: "You always have to look very hard at your opponents, it does not matter who they are."

But the former Ajax and AC Milan midfielder is already under pressure following a dismal sequence of friendly results -- one win in 12 -- since he succeeded Guus Hiddink.

Lemerre too denied that he felt hard done by.

The man who was Jacquet's number two during that victorious France '98 campaign thought England's Group A was the most difficult pool.

He said: "Group A is a very difficult one."

"Our group is a very difficult one too but I hope we can win it. Holland are playing at home, the Czechs are always difficult opponents and Denmark are always ambitious."

France may be world champions but they were less than impressive in qualifying, yet Lemerre remained upbeat.

He said: "Denmark (late replacements after Yugoslavia were thrown out for political reasons) did not even qualify for the 1992 tournament and they won."

England and Keegan, meanwhile, set their sights on another high stakes clash with Germany in the Belgian city of Charleroi.

It renews one of the keenest rivalries in football but with Romania and Portugal also in Pool A both England and Germany -- also rival bidders for the 2006 World Cup -- are guaranteed three tough matches.

England coach Kevin Keegan tried to play down any element of need between the two former World Cup winners paired in Group A.

He said: "There are two teams that go through so I see no reason why both of us (England and Germany) can not go through."

I would not talk about revenge but about a great game of football. I said to Erich Ribbeck (German coach) 'Let the best team win.'

"With the individuals we've got like (David) Beckham, (Michael) Owen and (Alan) Shearer we have got a chance."

"Romania beat us in the World Cup and I have a lot of respect for the Romanian team."

Portugal are a great football side. Portugal play lovely football and that's what we are trying to do."

Keegan said Group D was his choice for "Group of Death".

Ribbeck said he was wary of facing England.

"I wasn't exactly hoping for England. We will have to make a huge effort to land one of the top two places," Ribbeck said.

The two countries have a long standing rivalry that -- given the two countries have been on the opposite side in two World Wars -- has sometimes been tinged with animosity.

In the modern era that rivalry on the football pitch really began at Wembley in 1966 when England beat West Germany 4-2 in the World Cup Fi-

nal.

The fact that England's crucial third goal scored by hat-trick hero Geoff Hurst was dubious ruled to have crossed the line by Soviet linesman Tofik Bakhrayev fuelled the controversy.

But since then the Germans have held the whip hand over England, progressing at their expense in the 1970, 1982 and 1990 World Cups.

Their victory on penalties in the 1990 tournament in the semi-final was repeated in the 1996 European Championships which made the victory all the sweeter for Germany as the match took place at the same Wembley Stadium where they then had been robbed 30

years earlier.

But the group is far from a two-horse race as Romania and Portugal are both formidable opponents.

Portuguese coach Humberto Coelho said: "We are here to play football not to pick who will play. It is normal that we will play good teams."

Spain's Group C will have a Balkan flavour with Yugoslavia, who saw off arch-rivals Croatia and Macedonia to qualify, being handed another grudge match with Slovenia although Norway also feature

in that group.

Yugoslav coach Vujadin Boskov will also be duelling with two of his apprentices.

He coached Spain coach Jose Antonio Camacho in the Real Madrid side that lost the 1981 European Cup Final to Liverpool and also had Slovenia coach Srecko Katanec on his books when in charge of Italy's Sampdoria.

Boskov was keen to play

down any suggestion that the Slovenia match could produce bad blood, saying: "It will be a great occasion against a team that has done exceptionally well to qualify."

Many believe Spain have the easiest pool but Camacho would have none of that.

He said: "The teams are quite even. We can not be happy or be sad but we just have to go ahead with every match."

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