

Rajshahi div sports

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Apr 18: Pabna emerged as champions in football and swimming and Rajshahi became champions in Kabadi in the Rajshahi Divisional Summer Sports competition for the children of 12-16 years.

The three-day long competition concluded last Sunday at the Rajshahi Physical Education College playground.

In the football final Pabna defeated Rangpur 3-0 and Rajshahi defeated Dinajpur in the Kabadi final 6-0.

Pabna became champions and Rajshahi runners-up by scoring 76 and 53 points respectively in the swimming.

Ashraf Islam and Amiul Islam of Pabna jointly became individual champions collecting 15 points each and Kanchi Lal Sharma of Rangpur became runner-up having 10 points in male group.

In the female group, Tania Amin of Rajshahi got 16 points to become champions followed by Sharifa Yasmin of Pabna with 12 points.

Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner Khan Shabbudin distributed prizes among the winners at the concluding function as the chief guest.

S Africa turns to Australia

BRISBANE, Australia, Apr 18: South African cricket officials have turned to Australia to help prevent another book-making scandal damaging the international game, reports AFP.

South Africa's United Cricket Board (UCBSA) managing director Allan Bachor has contacted the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) to discuss the procedures they introduced following the fallout from the Shane Warne-Mark Waugh controversy in 1998.

Switzerland friendly

Ribbeck's faith in veterans

BERLIN, April 18: German coach Erich Ribbeck, who on Tuesday announced a 21-man squad for their friendly match against Switzerland at Kaiserlautern on April 26, is relying on tried and trusted players, reports AFP.

Ribbeck called up Bayern Munich's Markus Babbel and Michael Scholl, plus Werder Bremen's Marco Bode who were all out injured for their last match against Croatia in Zagreb.

However Bayern Munich's Jens Jeremies is suspended after criticizing Ribbeck in a controversial episode which has dominated German football since the beginning of the month.

Lothar Matthaus, who holds the world appearance record, is included and is set to earn his 146th cap for Germany.

SQUAD

- Keepers:** Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich), Jens Lehmann (Dortmund)
- Defenders:** Markus Babbel (Bayern Munich), Thomas Linke (Bayern Munich), Lothar Matthaus (New York/New Jersey MetroStars), Jens Nowotny (Leverkusen), Marko Rehmer (Berlin), Christian Woerns (Dortmund)
- Midfielders:** Michael Ballack (Leverkusen), Stefan Beinlich (Leverkusen), Dietmar Hamann (FC Liverpool), Carsten Ramelow (Leverkusen), Mehmet Scholl (Bayern Munich), Dariusz Wozz (Berlin), Christian Ziege (FC Middlebrogh)
- Strikers:** Oliver Bierhoff (AC Milan), Marco Bode (Werder Bremen), Ulf Kirsten (Leverkusen), Oliver Neuville (Leverkusen), Michael Preetz (Berlin), Paulo Rink (Leverkusen).

WC qualifier

Gallardo returns to Argentina fold

BUENOS AIRES, April 18: Playmaker Marcelo Gallardo has been recalled to Argentina's squad for the April 26 South American World Cup qualifier in Maracaibo, Venezuela, Argentina's football federation announced on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Gallardo, who has 34 caps and scored 11 goals for his country, earns his first selection since September 7 last year when they lost 4-2 to Brazil in a friendly match at Porto Alegre.

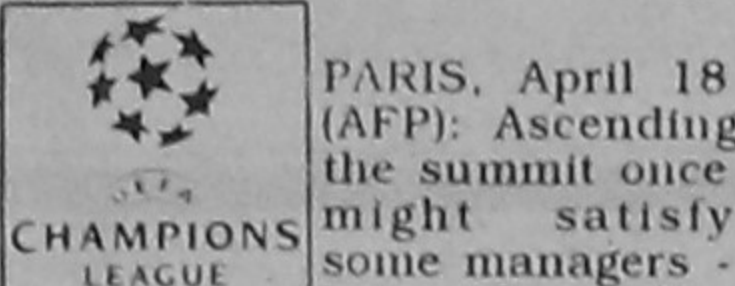
Gallardo has been in the news for controversy involving rivals Marseille, and has served a one-match suspension for his part, as well as being in the Monaco team which won the French league championship.

SQUAD

- Keepers:** Roberto Bonano (River Plate), Pablo Cavallero (Espenoy/Spa)
- Defenders:** Mauricio Pochettino (Espenoy/Spa), Walter Samuël (Boca Juniors), Roberto Ayala (AC Milan/Ita), Roberto Sensi (Lazio/Ita), Juan Pablo Sorin (Cruzeiro/Bra)
- Midfielders:** Diego Simeone (Lazio/Ita), Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan/Ita), Cristian Gonzalez (Valencia/Spa), Gustavo Lopez (Celta Vigo/Spa), Matias Almeyda (Lazio/Ita), Juan Sebastian Veron (Lazio/Ita), Marcelo Gallardo (Monaco/Fra)
- Strikers:** Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina/Ita), Claudio Lopez (Valencia/Spa), Hernan Crespo (Parma/Ita), Ariel Ortega (Parma/Ita)

Jardel Bayern's worry

Delicious prospect at Old Trafford



PARIS, April 18 (AFP): Ascending the summit once might satisfy some managers - but not Sir Alex Ferguson, who is demanding a repeat from his Manchester United side in the Champions League ahead of Wednesday's quarter-final return against Real Madrid. For Sir Alex, United must set their sights firmly on a string of wins in the competition so they can take their place in history alongside a select group of clubs who managed to retain the trophy in Europe's premier club competition.

Real know all about that, having won the continental crown five times in a row between 1956 and 1960, while Bayern Munich - United's victims in last season's pulsating final - and Ajax managed three in a row.

Even if a hatrick would be asking a lot, United still want at least to emulate fellow English outfits Liverpool and Nottingham Forest, who each brought the trophy home twice in a row in a glorious period stretching from 1977 to 1980.

"You look at the history of the European Cup and the really memorable sides are the ones who have found out how to win it, then won it year after year," he said.

"Real Madrid five years on the trot, Bayern Munich three, Ajax three and Liverpool four times in eight years.

"Now we've got the chance to win it regularly. This may be a golden period for Manchester United, so we've got to take advantage because it may never come again," Sir Alex said.

Following a goalless draw at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium a fortnight ago United, just days away from a sixth Premiership crown in eight seasons, must be strong favourites - even if Real have been putting together a solid run in the Spanish League in recent weeks.

Ferguson says he wants his current side to dominate Europe for years to come - unlike United's previous great sides.

"Take my 1994 team. I loved them and they were a team of warriors - the (Bryan) Robsons, the (Paul) Inces, the (Roy) Keanes and Eric Cantona - the best player I've ever managed."

"Look at our 1968 team too - marvellous players who were getting old.

"They won it once, but they couldn't keep it up.

"We've got to set our standards by the big European winners. Then we'll find out where we rank as a great European club."

United, fresh from crushing Sunderland 4-0 at the weekend, will again have an embarrassment of attacking riches to choose from as Norwegian 'reserve' Ole Gunnar Solskaer scored two opportunistic goals on Saturday while Teddy Sheringham, their other executioner against Bayern, is also champ-

ing at the bit.

However, Ferguson is likely to keep faith with predatory pair Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke.

There is a doubt over Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich with Dutchman Raymond van der Gouw ready to fill the breach.

Real hope they have an ace up their sleeve in Nicolas Anelka as, despite his poor form, he had a good record against the Red Devils while with Arsenal, scoring four goals in six English Premiership encounters against United.

Anelka, back in the fold after three weeks on the sidelines for missing training - for which he was fined 350,000 dollars - helped his club triumph 1-0 at Real Zaragoza on Saturday by winning the decisive penalty converted by Raul.

Coach Vicente del Bosque is likely, however, to use Anelka as his joker in the pack and

The Bavarians are reeling, however, from losing their local derby Saturday against 1860 Munich, a result which allowed Bayer Leverkusen to go top of the Bundesliga.

To make matters worse, Bayern's French international defender Bixente Lizazu had to pull out of training on Monday with a groin strain and is rated a doubtful starter. Michael Tamat immediately went on stand-by.

Playmaker Stefan Effenberg is already out with a thigh strain and is expected to be absent for around a month.

"No one player can replace Stefan Effenberg," bewailed Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, who led Borussia Dortmund to the 1997 European Cup.

Responsibility for doing so is likely to be spread around Mehmet Scholl, Jens Jeremies, who scored an own-goal against 1860 Munich, and Thorsten Fink.

Porto coach Fernando San-



Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld speaking during a press conference in the German city yesterday. Bayern face Portuguese side FC Porto in Champions' League second leg quarterfinal today.

tos, hopes to welcome back defender Secretario, will rely heavily on Brazilian forward Mario Jardel, on target in a 2-0 weekend win at Santa Clara which sent the side to within two points of leaders Sporting Lisbon.

Real's Brazilian wingback Roberto Carlos, who should overcome a knee strain to take his place, insists the match is there for the taking with the Spaniards on a run of 11 matches without defeat.

"We can beat them if we play to our strengths," he insisted Monday.

The visitors will be without skipper and defensive linchpin Fernando Hierro, who is not ready to return from three weeks out with injury while Guti has an ankle injury and is unlikely to feature.

Bayern will meanwhile start with the advantage of the away goal when they host Porto in Wednesday's other quarter-final return, having drawn 1-1 in Portugal.

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Porto, who beat Bayern in the 1997 European Cup final, have won the league title for the past five seasons and nine times in the past 12 years.

But Paulo Sergio's goal for Bayern in the away leg, equalising Jardel's opener, has given the Bavarians a huge psychological advantage.

Jardel's phenomenal record of 122 goals in 119 games for the Portuguese since signing four years ago from Brazilian side Gremio of Porto Alegre is the visitors' only real hope of causing an upset.

"It's no secret - Porto's game is based around Jardel," admits Santos.



NEW SENSATION: Juventus' Yugoslav international striker Darko Kovacevic (R) is euphoric after scoring for a second time against Inter Milan during their Serie A fixture at the San Siro Stadium on April 16.

Kovacevic has arrived

MILAN, April 18 (AFP): Sheffield Wednesday may be heading for Premiership relegation, but a player they offloaded after only a few months Darko Kovacevic is the toast of Italian football this week.

Three crucial goals in two matches by the tall Yugoslav striker have earned Juventus six points and propelled them into a five-point lead at the top of the Serie A - just a month before the season ends.

It's a considerable feat for someone who was bought from Spain's Real Sociedad last summer as a reserve, for when either Filippo Inzaghi or Alessandro Del Piero were unavailable for duty.

Playing down his achievement, Kovacevic said: "I've been lucky enough to score these three goals, but it's the whole team who have played two great games for me... this really is a great group."

Kovacevic now looks destined for a regular first-team place next season, helped by the fact that Juventus will have

midweek European Champions League commitments as well as the Serie A.

Europe has already been a happy hunting ground for the 26-year-old. His 10 goals for Juventus in the UEFA Cup were key to a campaign which unexpectedly went off the rails in a heavy quarter-final defeat to Celta Vigo.

They also contributed to a remarkable scoring rate for someone in their debut season in the world's toughest league. A brace in Sunday's 2-1 win over Inter Milan at San Siro took his tally to 20 in 40 appearances for the Turin club.

However, since most of the time he's been a substitute, Kovacevic's true strike rate is nearly twice as good: the 20 goals have been scored in under 2,000 minutes of actual play - virtually a goal a game.

That performance is bound to secure him a lengthy stay in Italy, a rare piece of stability for the father of two and keen fan of Formula One and tennis.

Kovacevic's playing career started in Yugoslavia with two seasons at first division Proleter 1992-94. His 37 goals in 51

games earned him promotion to Red Star Belgrade, where he notched another 24 in his first season.

He moved to Sheffield in January 1996, but made only 16 appearances for the Premiership club - scoring four times - before moving to Real Sociedad that summer.

Kovacevic's three years in the Liga provided valuable experience and brought him to the attention of Juventus' new coach Carlo Ancelotti, who was determined to bring him to Turin.

That decision, helped by Kovacevic's eight goals in six UEFA Cup ties last season, has been fully vindicated.

"Next season, there'll be more room for him," promised Ancelotti, who lives in the same Turin apartment block as his protegee, as does the club's director general Luciano Moggi.

Moggi said on Sunday night: "We knew just how good he was when we bought him and I'm not surprised at all by what he's done. If anything, I say that Kovacevic can do even better than this."

Italian defences have been warned.

Leeds off limits for Turks

LEEDS, England, April 18: West Yorkshire Police advised Galatasaray supporters Monday to stay away from Leeds at the same time that the Turkish club announced they would be travelling with 11 members of an anti-terrorist squad, reports AFP.

Galatasaray fear reprisals following the stabbings of Leeds fans Kevin Speight and Chris Loftus the day before the UEFA Cup semi-final first leg in Istanbul nearly two weeks ago - four Turks have formally been charged with murder.

Turkey's Interior Minister Sadedtin Tantan confirmed the special force would travel after a request from Galatasaray, who won the first-leg 2-0.

Assistant Chief Constable Paul Garvin said: Our advice to Turkish fans is not to attend the match. We hope people will heed our advice.

Turkish supporters have no ability to buy legitimate tickets, so they have no reason to go to the ground other than for potential trouble and to risk injury to themselves. We would encourage Galatasaray fans not to travel.

"We are working closely with Leeds United. We want to see the match on Thursday go ahead safely."

"We do not want to see the image of Leeds as a city or Leeds as a club tarnished by bad behaviour and we encourage fans to behave responsibly."

Garvin added: "We intend to have a strong presence on the streets with the aim of ensuring the event passes off successfully and without incident."

"I hope the wishes of the families will be respected and that this match passes off as a peaceful and fitting memorial."

UEFA rejected calls by the Turks to move the game to a neutral venue and banned visiting fans from attending the match to prevent possible violence. Only 80 tickets were allocated to Galatasaray.

They have now asked for 40 additional tickets, saying they have faced a huge demand from Turkish ministers and lawmakers, who want to attend the game.

Tense atmosphere is anticipated at Elland Road in Thursday's second leg, with Galatasaray holding a 2-0 advantage.

Although fans from Turkey are being denied entry to the game, many Turks living in Europe who hold dual citizenship are expected to attend.

Zidane boosts Ronaldo's spirit

MILAN, April 18: World Cup winner Zinedine Zidane has paid a visit to Ronaldo in his Paris hospital room in a bid to cheer up the injured Inter Milan star, the club said here, reports AFP.

Ronaldo is recovering after his second knee operation in under five months after ripping a tendon in last Wednesday's Italian Cup final, first leg defeat to Lazio in Rome.

Zidane, who was suspended for Juventus' 2-1 win over Inter last weekend, spent 40 minutes chatting to the Brazilian and wishing him well at the Pitte Salpetriere hospital on Monday night, the Inter website reported.

Meanwhile, Ronaldo is expected back in Milan this weekend following last week's operation the club also revealed.

Ronaldo had tendon surgery a day after it snapped just seven minutes into his comeback appearance.

But a club spokeswoman told AFP: "He should be back on Friday, or Saturday at the latest."

Ronaldo will spend the first two months of his convalescence in Milan and then head home to Brazil.

Throughout the period of his recovery - estimated at seven to eight months - Ronaldo will have a monthly consultation with the surgeon who carried out both operations at the Pitte Salpetriere hospital, Prof. Gerard Saillant.

Ronaldo is said to have been touched when Inter team-mate Clarence Seedorf revealed a t-shirt after scoring his team's consolation goal in the 2-1 defeat by Juventus on Sunday.

The Brazilian had a picture of the Juventus star and had the slogan "Don't give up."



Galatasaray head coach Fatih Terim (R) giving instructions to his players during a practice session in Istanbul on April 17. Galatasaray will take on Leeds United in the UEFA Cup second leg semifinal at Leeds on Thursday.

Terim hoping for the best



ANKARA, April 18: Galatasaray coach Fatih Terim said he expected no trouble during the UEFA Cup semi-final second leg clash with Leeds United which will go ahead amid heavy security measures after the murder of two Britons in Istanbul.

"I believe the return game will be played in a secure atmosphere. I have no doubts over it," Terim told a news conference last Monday.

Terim however, blasted Turkish diplomats in London for not hiring guards to protect him during his visit to Leeds over the weekend when he was in attendance to see Leeds crash 4-0 at home to fellow UEFA Cup semi-finalists Arsenal.

Terim said: "We expressed our sorrow several times as a nation and as a club. But neither Galatasaray nor the Turkish nation can be held responsible for the incidents and the two murders."

Thursday's match at Elland Road is to be played without any Turkish spectators, under a UEFA ruling over security fears after the stabbing deaths of Kevin Speight and Christopher Loftus in Istanbul on the eve of the first leg, which Galatasaray won 2-0.

The Istanbul-based club had previously demanded the game

to be moved to a neutral ground on the grounds that Elland Road offered players very little protection from possible reprisal attacks from Leeds fans.

But the Galatasaray coach appeared to have shed his fears over the proximity of British supporters to the pitch at the Leeds home ground.

"I wish Ali Sami Yen (Galatasaray's home stadium) was like that. It changes the atmosphere of the game. Anyway, football games in Britain are generally played without incidents," Terim said.

He underlined the need to keep his players free of the turmoil and tension surrounding the game so that they can concentrate on advancing to the final.

"We all have to be careful as to what we say in the coming days. My players are aware that for the first time in history a Turkish team could play in the final," he added.

Galatasaray will be travelling to Britain with an 11-member anti-terrorist squad, which, according to the daily Milliyet newspaper, was waiting clearance from British authorities to carry light firearms.

If Britain does not give permission for arms, then the officers will carry tear gas, truncheons, handcuffs and bullet-

proof jackets, which will be worn by Galatasaray players prior to the game, Milliyet said.

The club's spokesman Ali Durust, meanwhile, told the all-news NTV channel that the team would take their own food, water and cook to Leeds.

In an interview published in the mass-circulation Hurriyet newspaper on Tuesday, Terim announced that the players will go to Leeds on Wednesday and board a plane back to Istanbul as soon as the game ends.

"We will go on to the pitch with flowers and we will be wearing black armbands," Terim told Hurriyet, as demanded by UEFA along with a minute of silence before the game as a mark of respect for the murdered Leeds fans.

Terim said that they had asked UEFA for permission to play in a black kit and added that the players would wear black trackuits before the game if the European body says no.

Galatasaray players had previously come under fire for not wearing black armbands during the first leg game when all Leeds players appeared with one.

Terim had defended himself by saying that the UEFA official at the game had rejected a Galatasaray request to wear armbands on the grounds that it would only increase tension in the stadium.

Wiltord taking a gamble



PARIS, April 18: French international striker Sylvain Wiltord put his place in his country's Euro 2000 squad at risk Monday night by raising the stakes in his dispute with his club side Bordeaux.

Wiltord, with four years left on his contract with the Girondins, poured more fuel on an already intense dispute by insisting in Tuesday's edition of France Football magazine he will leave the club in the summer - and wants the matter resolved sooner rather than later.

Wiltord, a likely choice for France's Euro 2000 squad, has been dropped for Bordeaux's last two matches after declaring himself unfit to face Sedan in a previous match.

France coach Roger Lemerre, who last month said Real Madrid striker Nicolas Anelka could not be selected for his country while he was suspended by the club, has not yet said if he will adopt the same policy with Wiltord.

The former Rennes striker, who has four years left on his contract with the deposed French champions, told the

magazine: "It's sure that I will leave in the summer and I have never hidden that."

"Frankly they (the club) must understand I want to settle my future before Euro 2000. I know it is not easy but I want to put this behind me so I can concentrate on the Blues (France)."

Bordeaux president Jean-Louis Triard has not yet stipulated how long Wiltord's suspension will last, saying:

"Nothing is certain! We will take decisions in the light of how our relationship (with the player) evolves."

English club Arsenal and Italian giants Juventus are believed to be interested in the forward, who was top scorer in the French First Division last season when the Girondins lifted the title at the expense of Marseille on the last day.

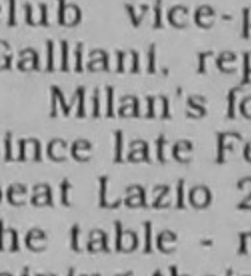
Wiltord was dropped for the French Cup semi-final with Calais, won 3-1 by the fourth division side, and has been blamed by many Bordeaux fans for contributing to that defeat by unsettling the club.

In fairness to both Calais and Wiltord Bordeaux still fielded French World Cup Winner Christophe Dugarry and likely France Euro 2000 selections Lilian Laslandes, Jean-Micoud and Ulrich Rohme in that match.

Yet they were still outclassed by a team featuring a cash-and-carry salesman Mickael Gerard, a painter and decorator Emmanuel Vasseur and Gregory Leleuvre, a campsite attendant.

Wiltord remained out of favour for the 3-0 victory over Le Havre in the French First Division at the weekend.

Milan make Galliani sad



MILAN, April 18: AC Milan may be Italy's champions but their recent form is worthy of relegation, says club vice-president Adriano Galliani, reports AFP.

Milan's form has plummeted since late February, when they beat Lazio 2-1 to go second in the table - raising hopes of retaining their league title.

But doubts have since been raised about coach Alberto Zaccaroni's future and whether the team will even earn a place in the Champions League preliminary rounds.

Currently occupying the last of Italy's four slots in the tournament, they trail Parma and are only one point ahead of AS Roma and neighbours Inter.

Trying to be upbeat, Galliani told the club's website: "The situation is not so tragic. Because if the season ended today, Milan would yet again be in the Champions League."

then, our points average has been one of relegation."

And he added: "Today, the disappointment is that we haven't been able to hold onto third place."

Looking at their rivals, he

Amavisca out of Euro 2000

SANTANDER, Spain, April 18: Spanish international Jose Emilio Amavisca of First Division side Racing Santander is out for the season after rupturing ligaments in his right knee, club doctors announced Monday.

The news is a blow for Spanish coach Jose Antonio Camacho who was counting on Amavisca for the Euro 2000 tournament that kicks off June 10 and is being co-hosted by Holland and Belgium.

The former Real Madrid player, capped 16 times for his country and a member of Spain's gold medal winning team at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, suffered the injury just eight minutes from time during the 1-1 home draw with Valladolid.

He is scheduled to undergo surgery on Tuesday, club medical officials added.

"Fortunately for us, the other teams going for a place in the Champions League haven't been doing that brilliantly either... let's not put our bandages on before we need to."

With AS Roma hosting Parma on Saturday, Galliani said: "Inevitably, one of them is going to drop points, or even both if they draw."

"We're going to Reggio Calabria (Reggina) where we absolutely have to win and make ground."

Galliani denied any rift with the coach, after he responded to reporters' questions about Milan's performance by telling them: "ask Zaccaroni."

The club's number two said: "I wasn't being critical - it was just a comment on the period we're going through. Together, we must all find out the reason why we are performing at this level."

"At Milan, everyone has their responsibilities, there's no confusion over roles, for Zaccaroni, who's the coach, it's the technical side.

"But as I say, my rapport with Alberto is very good," Galliani maintained. "We are in perfect harmony."