

## Kaiserslautern buy Czech mates

COLOGNE, Germany, May 22: The 1998 Bundesliga champions Kaiserslautern swooped to sign Czech international duo Petr Gabriel and Vratislav Lekven from Sparta Prague on Sunday just a day after the end of their domestic campaign, reports AFP.

Kaiserslautern, known as the Red Devils and whose fifth place finish guaranteed them a place in next season's UEFA Cup, signed the pair on four-year contracts for a combined fee of 9.3 million marks (4.3 million dollars).

The 27-year-old Gabriel, a defender, has 11 caps to his name while Lekven, a 26-year-old forward, has played three times for the national team.

Their signings will counter-balance the probable departure of 30-year-old Swiss playmaker Ciriaco Sforza to champions Bayern Munich.

## French rookie moving to Bayern

MUNICH, May 22: French youth international Willy Saganol will undergo a medical with German champions Bayern Munich Monday as part of the final stages of his transfer from French champions Monaco, the German outfit's manager Uli Hoeneß revealed, reports AFP.

"We have reached agreement with Monaco," Hoeneß told, DFB television.

Bayern are believed to be ready to shell out 6.8 million dollars for the 22-year-old Monaco defender, who arrived in the Bavarian capital on Monday to undergo tests and finalise the deal.

Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer has been keen to sign the young French player. "He's a player that we like a lot," he said recently.

## Indonesia to host 2002 Tiger Cup

HONG KONG, May 22: Indonesia have been awarded the right to hold the 2002 Tiger Cup by the Asian Football Federation four years after civil unrest forced the nation to relinquish hosting the event, reports Reuters.

The regional body said Indonesia would stage the Cup, subject to meeting the required standards. Cambodia were named as hosts for the competition in 2004.

Meanwhile, the AFA have finalised the "dates" for this year's Tiger Cup, to be played in Thailand in November.

The competition, featuring the 10 member nations of the Association of South East Asian Nations, will kick-off on November 4 with the final to be held on November 18 in Bangkok's Rajamangala Stadium.

Singapore are reigning Tiger Cup champions after they defeated Vietnam 1-0 in the final in Hanoi in September 1998. The draw for this year's competition is in Bangkok on July 10.

## Olympiakos Greek champions

ATHENS, May 22: Olympiakos won the Greek league title here Sunday when they secured a 1-0 away win to Xanthi, reports AFP.

The reigning champions had a four-point advantage over second-placed Panathinaikos. It was the fourth consecutive Greek First Division league title for Olympiakos with one game remaining.

## PM opens

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corded a hearty reception by some 20 schoolgirls. Clad in their sky-blue and yellow dresses, the girls danced and sang to welcome the PM.

Earl Sheikh Hasina unveiled a mural of Sultana Kamal at the front of the Sports Complex. Sultana Kamal, the slain wife of Sheikh Kamal, was the first 'Women Blue' of Dilkha University.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader, president of Women's Sports Association Rafia Akhter Doly and general secretary Sultana Ferdous Ara also addressed the function, attended by more than 3000 sportsmen, organisers and sports-lovers from all over the country.

In his address Obaidul Quader said that money was not at all a problem for the development of sports and for the training of the sportsmen.

He disclosed that Bangladesh would take part in the next women's cricket and football World Cups.

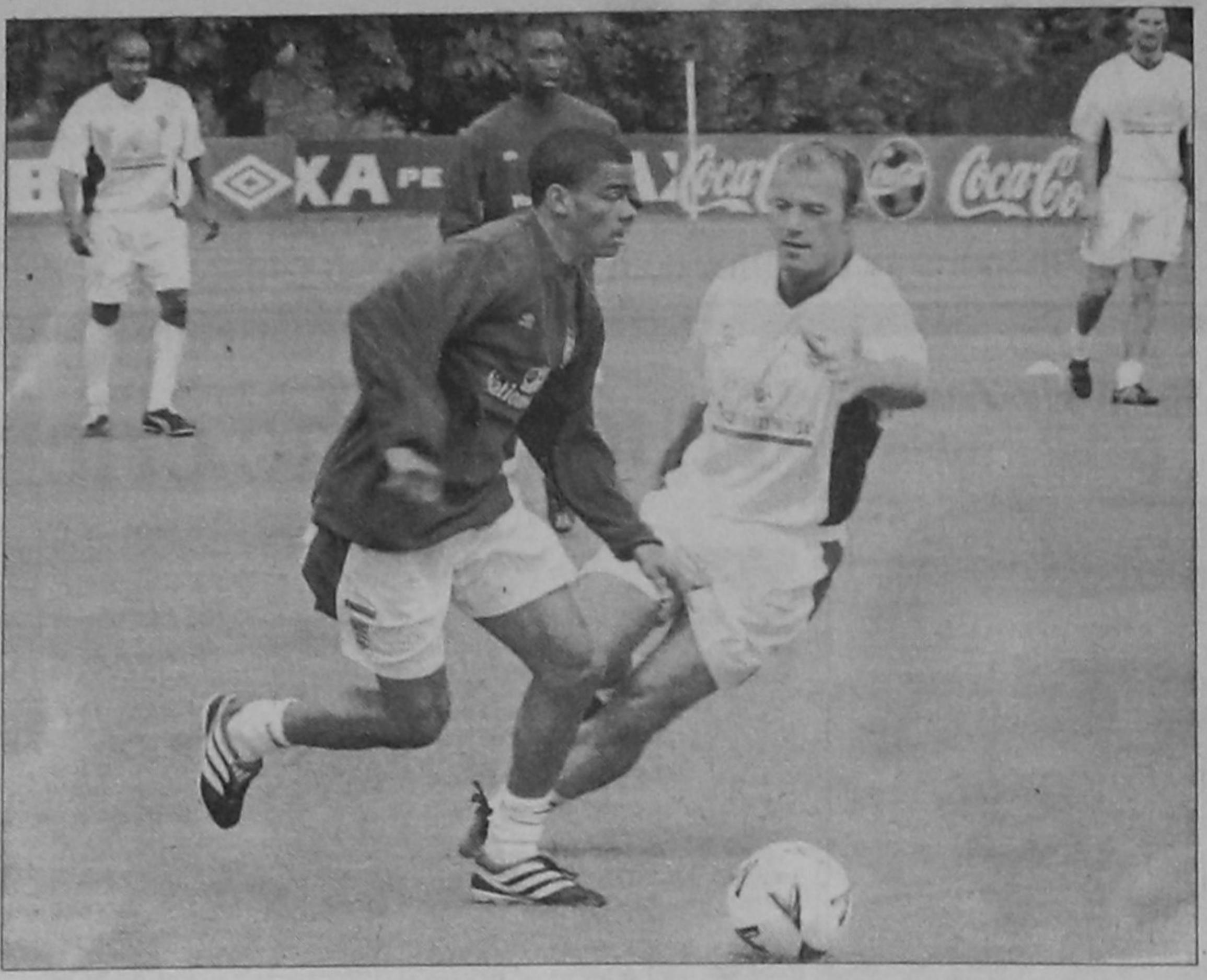
## D'pur, Chuadanga

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the meet.

Gazipur beat Dhaka 3-0 in Narsingdi, Kushtia beat Rajbari 2-1 and Jhenidah defeated hosts Gopalganj 3-2 in Gopalganj. Both hosts Moulvibazar beat Habiganj 2-0 in Moulvibazar and Bogra defeated Chaitanabaganj 2-1 in Naogaon.

Besides, Gaibandha drew 3-3 with Natore while the other match of the zone between Rajshahi and Sirajganj was abandoned due to rain.

At Jamalpur, Sherpur played to a one-all draw with Netrakona.



England defender Kieron Dyer (L) trying to keep striker Alan Shearer at bay during a training session of the national squad at Bisham Abbey yesterday. — AFP photo

## Keegan worried about Owen

## Barry gets surprise call up



London, May 22: Aston Villa defender Gareth Barry was called up to the senior England squad ahead of the Euro 2000 finals being co-hosted by the Netherlands and Belgium next month, the Press Association reported Monday, reports AFP.

Barry, 19, was due to report for duty Monday night along with the three other squad members who appeared in the FA Cup final - club team-mates defender Gareth Southgate and goalkeeper David James, as well as Chelsea midfielder Dennis Wise.

The left-sided centre-back had been placed on standby along with midfielder Frank Lampard last week when coach Kevin Keegan announced his provisional 28-man squad for the tournament.

Barry had been due to join the England under-21 squad leaving for their own European Championships in Slovakia later this week until he received the late call-up from the senior

party. It will provide the perfect tonic after Villa's defeat to Chelsea at Wembley on Sunday where they lost 1-0.

The reasons behind Barry's inclusion were not immediately clear but Leeds left-winger Jason Wilcox was not involved in

England's training session on Monday morning. With the squad already having a lack of naturally left-sided players it may be Keegan is looking to the Villa man as cover for Wilcox.

Other reasons for the call-up may be linked to the recent concerns over the fitness of Jamie Redknapp, Steven Gerrard, Gary Neville and Tony Adams.

Keegan was meanwhile also assessing the fitness of strikers Michael Owen and Robbie Fowler after they received a boost with their involvement in a friendly with Liverpool against Irish XI on Sunday.

Liverpool lost 4-2 but their goals were scored by England internationals Owen and Emile Heskey, while Fowler not only made the opening for Heskey but also played for 63 minutes.

Fowler has not played a full senior match with his club Liverpool since September due to an ankle injury, and Owen has admitted to worries over his recurring hamstring problems.

"I will sit down with Michael and ask him truthfully what he thinks about his fitness, I'll do the same with Robbie and if I feel either of them aren't right then I wouldn't hesitate in telling them to aim for the 2002 World Cup qualifying campaign," Keegan said.

MICHAEL OWEN

## Friendly against Brazil

## Giggs relishing the prospect



CARDIFF, May 22: Welsh winger Ryan Giggs is relishing the prospect of coming face to face with the four-time world champions when Brazil bring their illustrious samba-style here tomorrow, reports AFP.

The Manchester United hero prepares to take on the world's number one side in front of 72,000. It will be great for the fans, and great for us players, too."

Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo has recalled 34-year-old Romario to the squad which will also take on England at Wembley on Saturday.

Welsh coach Mark Hughes will certainly need the talents of Giggs as the world's 101st rated country takes on the best.

Giggs added: "You can't get any bigger than playing against Brazil in front of 72,000. It won't be the biggest game I have ever played in, but certainly it will be right up there with the best, even if it is a friendly international."

"They took players on. It's something you don't forget and I feel that they've influenced millions of boys the world over for many, many years. You don't forget them."

Few Welshmen will forget that day when a Dean Saunders strike gave them an incredible 1-0 win over the South Americans.

Giggs may have six championship medals and a European Cup triumph among 12 major honours in his stunning career, but the chance to play against his boyhood heroes still brings a twinkle to his eyes.

"I've played against top Brazilians for United. Roberto Carlos against Real Madrid, who unfortunately won't be here because of the European Cup Final, Rivaldo for

a boy. My first memories of

them were watching their 1982 World Cup side. I saw them on TV and just remember thinking how wonderful they were."

"They had one player, Eder, who played on the left and was left footed like me. He stood out for me because he was in my position. His skill was wonderful. I used to try to do the things he did, and from then on I was hooked on Brazil."

"Their skill on the ball, how they took players on. It's something you don't forget and I feel that they've influenced millions of boys the world over for many, many years. You don't forget them."

"It will be a privilege to face Brazil in Cardiff, and I know all the team are looking forward to it. It will be great for the fans, and great for us players, too."

Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo has recalled 34-year-old Romario to the squad which will also take on England at Wembley on Saturday.

Giggs has been in irresistible form for his club side Vasco da Gama this season, finding the net an incredible 36 times in 31 matches — an extraordinary statistic even by his standards.

But defender Roberto Carlos will be absent because he is representing Real Madrid in the Champions League final on Wednesday while attacking left back Athirson, talented midfielder Alex and striker Ronaldo Gaucho are all omitted at the request of their busy clubs.

Valderrama to finish in the MLS



EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey, May 22: Colombia's Carlos Valderrama, hampered by time

passing by and the dimming of the spotlight, vows to finish his career with Major League Soccer's Tampa Bay Mutiny, reports AFP.

"I would like to stay," Valderrama said. "I feel good here. My family likes it and I love the people. This will be the end of the road for me."

The creative 38-year-old midfielder, whose contract expires at the end of the season, gave no indication on when he will retire.

"I don't know what to expect. I would like to re-sign but I can't get into that right now," Valderrama said. "I don't know how many years I still want to compete. I can't think about this right now. I want to focus on the team."

Valderrama, the all-time MLS assist leader with 74, is still a force in the United States league. He leads the league in

assists and recorded his 100th point Saturday in Tampa Bay's 3-2 over-time loss to the Metros.

It is a great feeling to score 100 points but more importantly I want my team to be successful," he said.

"The Kid" who has been playing in the MLS since its formation in 1996, said the competition had enjoyed an increased

level of play on the field. "The players are more technical than they used to be," he said. "The youngsters are being trained very well. If they continue their progression and keep their young players, the United States will have a very talented group very soon. I think they already do."

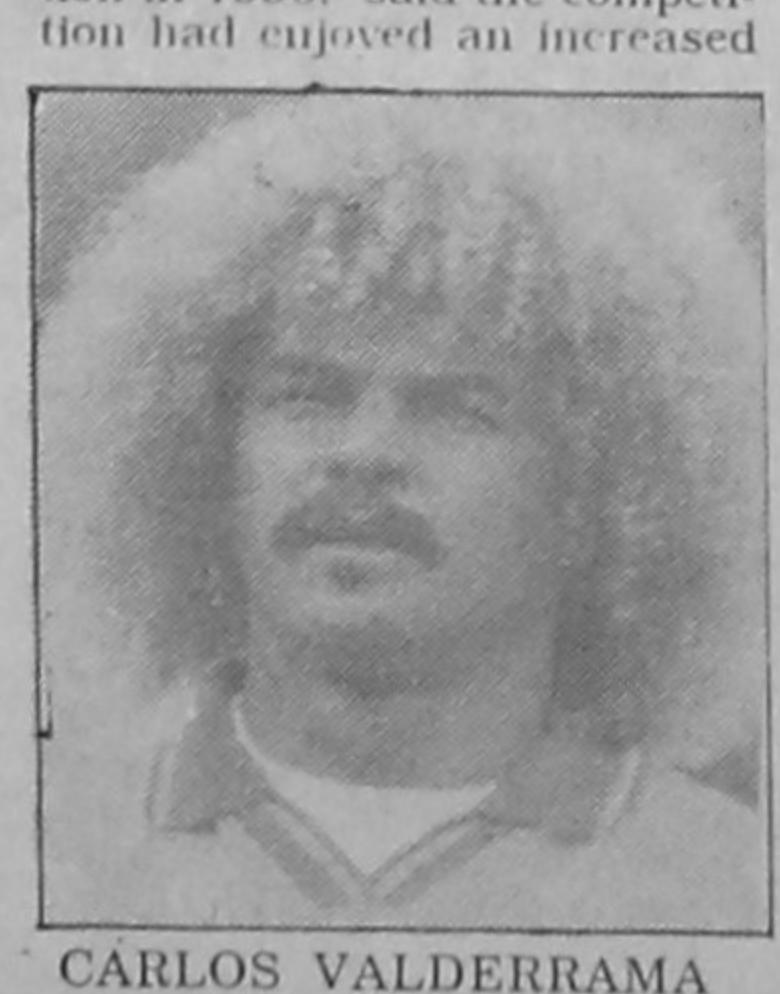
Valderrama, a three-time World Cup veteran and former captain of Colombia's national team, began his career in 1981 with Union Magdalena of Colombia's First Division. Three years later he was transferred to Millonarios then to Deportivo Cali.

In 1988, he was dealt to French First Division club Montpellier for 1.5 million dollars. He won the French Cup in 1990 and helped the club reach the quarterfinals of the UEFA Cup two years in a row.

Jim Goodwin, Brian McColgan and Ryan McCann made their debuts while John Kennedy, Mark Fotheringham and Simon Lynch got their first starts.

Lynch celebrated with a 52nd-minute goal before Mark Burchill added a second in the 65th, with Eyal Berkovic missing a first-half penalty.

Elsewhere Scottish Cup finalists Aberdeen won 2-0 at Dundee while Kilmarnock beat St Johnstone 3-2.



CARLOS VALDERRAMA

## Kewell to give internationals a miss

SYDNEY, May 22: Acclaimed Leeds United midfielder Harry Kewell will not play for Australia in next month's football internationals against Paraguay following a rift with tournament organisers, reports AFP.

His Australian manager Berni Mandic told Australian Australian Press Monday from Zagreb that Kewell would not be playing in any internationals run by the International Entertainment Corporation.

Kewell is apparently upset over alleged comments by IEC director Dominic Galati on Australian television that some of Australia's top players had demanded 150,000 dollars (87,000 US) in appearance fees to play against Manchester United here last July. Mandic said Kewell believed the inference was that he was one of those players.

"Because of that he won't play in any games run by the IEC until he gets an apology," Mandic said.

An IEC spokesman refused to be drawn on the conflict, saying Kewell's availability was an issue that had to be resolved between the player and Soccer Australia.

Mandic, who also manages Australia's Glasgow Celtic striker Mark Viduka, said Scotland's leading goalscorer would also miss the three matches in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne because he was still recovering from an ankle injury.

Soccerco coach Frank Farina will use the matches in Sydney on June 9, in Brisbane three days later and in Melbourne on June 15 as a build-up to a tournament in Tahiti.

The squad will fly to Tahiti after the Paraguay games to play in the Oceania series, with the winner of that tournament qualifying for the lucrative Confederations Cup.

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