

## Braschi to referee Champions League final

PARIS, May 23: Italy's Stefano Braschi was chosen Monday to referee the European Champions League final which takes place on Wednesday night, said a spokesperson for European football's governing body UEFA on Monday, reports AFP.

The final, between rival Spanish sides Valencia and Real Madrid, will be held at the Stade de France in Paris.

It will be assisted by three fellow Italians, Gennaro Mazzetti and Piergiuseppe Farnetti will have the roles of assistant referees while Domenico Messina will act as the fourth referee.

Theodore Theodoridis of Greece will be the UEFA delegate for the final and Dutchman Leonidas van der Kroft has been assigned the job as referee's assessor.

Braschi is considered to be the best Italian referee along with Pierluigi Collina.

At 43 years old, he has been refereeing since 1974 and has been officiating in international matches since 1996.

**Killing of Leeds fans**

## Five stand trial in Istanbul

ISTANBUL, May 23: Five Turks stood trial on Tuesday in the stabbing deaths of two British soccer fans, but faced lowered sentences after the prosecutor said they were provoked by Leeds United supporters, reports AFP.

The Turks face between nine and 15 years in prison if convicted of killing Christopher Loftus and Kevin Speight in violent street clashes in downtown Istanbul on April 5, the night before Leeds United played Turkey's Galatasaray in a UEFA Cup game.

## ICC asks

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Sri Lanka and the pair were subsequently fined.

Malik was clearly stung by the Australian reaction.

"Instead of questioning the paper's credibility they are questioning my credibility," he said.

"Just wait for a few days more and every question will be answered."

The latest allegations come just a month after the International Cricket Council announced tough new measures aimed at eliminating corruption which has tarnished the game's image.

They include the setting up of an independent Corruption Investigation Agency and life bans for any players or officials found guilty of match fixing or betting offences.

But former Test off-spinner Tim May, now head of the Australian Cricketers' Association, has warned that he is considering legal action over the latest claims.

"It's very important that your reputation remains intact. I'm fully aware of that and I say that with a very clean conscience," he said.

Cricket has again been under the microscope since former South African captain Hansie Cronje admitted receiving money from a bookmaker to provide information.

The ICC is awaiting a report from Pakistan following a judicial inquiry into allegations of corruption against players, including Malik.

## Bridgetown Test

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ulation catch after batting 149 minutes for 112 balls and eight fours.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the close on the fifth and final day of the drawn second cricket Test between West Indies and Pakistan at Kensington Oval on Monday:

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 253 (Yousuf Youhana 115; Courtney Walsh 52).

**WEST INDIES:** First innings 398 (Wavel Hinds 165; Saqlain Mushtaq 5-12).

**PAKISTAN:** Second innings (overnight 345 for seven)

M Wasim lbw b King 82  
Nazir c Adams b King 131  
Younis c Jacobs b King 23  
Inzamam c b and b Walsh 29  
Youhana c Adams b McLean 19  
Razzaq c (sub) Gayle b King 72  
Moin b Adams 14  
Akram c Hinds b Adams 0  
Saqlain b McLean 33  
Waqar not out 1  
Extras: (lb-4; w-1; nb-10) 15  
Total: (For 9 wkt dec in 153.4 overs) 419  
Did not bat: Mushtaq Ahmed.

Fall of wickets: 1-219, 2-232,

3-248, 4-294, 5-294, 6-341, 7-341, 8-411, 9-419.

**Bowler** O M R W

Ambrose 37 16 54 0  
Walsh 34 6 102 1  
King 29 9 82 4  
McLean 23.4 4 113 2  
Adams 26 9 51 2  
C'paul 2 0 13 0

**WEST INDIES:** Second in-

nings

Campbell c (sub) Afridi b Akram 8  
Griffith lbw b Waqar 5  
Hinds c Moin b Mushtaq 52  
Clauderpaal c M Wasim 16  
Adams not out 34  
Sarwan not out 11  
Extras: (b-1; lb-1; nb-4) 6  
Total: (For 4 wkt in 52 overs) 132

To bat: Ridley Jacobs, Nixon

McLean, Curly Ambrose, Reon

King, Courtney Walsh.

Fall of wkt: 1-15, 2-15, 3-41,

4-113.

**Bowler** O M R W

Akram 7 1 24 1  
Waqar 4 0 14 1  
Saqlain 21 12 28 0  
Mushtaq 20 5 64 2

**Result:** Match drawn.

**Man-of-the-match:** Wavel

Hinds.

## Real or Valencia?



PARIS, May 23: European football reaches its climax on Wednesday with a celebration of Spanish talent

as mighty Real Madrid and lower-profile Valencia compete in the Champions League final at the Stade de France, reports AFP.

The

tradition of seven-time winners Real Madrid, who need to win to play in the competition next year, squares up against Valencia whose last success on the continent was the 1980 Cup Winners Cup.

Vicente Del Bosque's Madrid side have already beaten last year's finalists Manchester United and Bayern Munich in their last two ties and on paper are favourites against Hector Cuper's men.

Yet the striking power of Claudio Lopez, set to move to Lazio for about 36 million dollars after the final, and the skill and industry of Basque-born skipper Gatzka Mendieta, could tip the balance Valencia's way.

Cuper may introduce 21-year-old defender Gerardo Garcia, due to the suspension of Italy's Amedeo Carbone, or could field Joaquin Bjorklund.

It's certainly been a long season for Valencia who had to qualify from the preliminary rounds.

"I believe we have an equal chance of winning the final," Cuper told Tuesday's France Football magazine. The humble and low-profile Cuper, who took Mallorca to the Cup Winners Cup final last season, would become the first Argentine coach to win Europe's premier trophy should Valencia win.

Injury problems have loomed for Madrid concerning four players from their last league game against Real Valladolid.

Hierro, who played in his first match for two months after hamstring problems, has already ruled himself out of the match.

Brazilian striker Savio has a left knee problem, Frenchman Nicolas Anelka took a knock to his right knee and defender Michel Salgado has damage to his right ankle.

Anelka, dubbed Madrid's miracle man on the front page of Tuesday's France Football, took half a season to score a goal, then fell out with his teammates, skipped training to earn a suspension and a huge fine.

Yet his goal at Bayern Munich earning Real their final appearance has brought him hero status in the capital city.

At least their other key players in Raul, who scored twice at Old Trafford, and Argentine

players, who are already under enough pressure," said Sanz.

The demand for tickets has, of course, been phenomenal for both clubs who have each been allocated 17,000.

Police had to intervene on several occasions to calm people down and prevent scuffles as people queued outside Valencia's stadium.

Real Madrid decided to have a draw among the 40,000 of their supporters who requested tickets and there have been long queues at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium to get the forms for the draw.

There are many reasons for Spanish success. Firstly the Bosman ruling in December 1995, which made players free

same media coverage as a ministerial appointment by the government.

Barcelona and Real are covered by literally dozens of journalists and a third of television news is football-related.

During this media bombardment, the players, who benefit financially yet suffer from relentless pressure, have their lives continually under the microscope.

That scrutiny will continue for Wednesday's final.

Italy's Stefano Braschi has been chosen to be referee and will be assisted by three fellow Italians, Gennaro Mazzetti and Piergiuseppe Farnetti will have the roles of assistant referees while Domenico Messina will act as the fourth official.

— Internet photo

versailles, France, May 23: Real Madrid coach Vicente Del Bosque and club idol Raul said a milestone had been reached in Spanish football on the run-up to Wednesday's European Champions League final at the Stade de France, reports AFP.

Del Bosque and striker Raul were speaking at a press conference at their Trianon Palace hotel headquarters in Versailles on Tuesday.

"I do not believe in national boundaries and do not like to look inwards towards Spain but I feel it's an enriching experience for Spanish football and of course very good for the clubs."

He took the time to praise the only Englishman in the squad Steve McManaman who has been an integral part of their run to the final.

"As a player and as a person

I'm very happy with McManaman," Del Bosque added. "He has reached a very good stage in his personal development and these are very good times for him and I'm very happy to have him in my squad."

Brazilian Roberto Carlos said it was the great spirit in the side which had brought them this far. "The difference we have made this year is down to our spirit. Other teams are only defensive but we are out to win."

"After two years we are here in the final again and we hope to make many people happy by winning. We are out to score goals and this is our major objective."

He denied the players were feeling the pressure because they had to win to qualify for the Champions League next year after finishing in a UEFA Cup spot in the league.

"We feel this is an enormous responsibility but we are ready for it."

Alluding to their crushing defeat at the hands of Bayern Munich in earlier rounds and the problems with unsettled French striker Nicolas Anelka, Raul added: "There have been difficult times on the road to get here and we have been in a tough spot. But we are now in a very open situation where we can win the Champions League."

"This has been a wonderful time for Spanish teams and the fact there will be a Spanish champion makes it a great event. And, of course, don't forget Barcelona almost made it."

Del Bosque, cautious by nature, gave nothing away about tactics or how they would play the match. "I cannot give you a good analysis on that but I think we will play a good game and our team will win."

He knows what the player is up against having played for Real Madrid in the 1981 final. "Real Madrid have a lot of experience in this competition but Valencia have never won it."

— Internet photo

versailles, France, May 23: Real Madrid coach Vicente Del Bosque speaking to reporters during a briefing in Paris yesterday. Valencia take on fellow Spanish side Real Madrid in the European Champions' League final at St. Dennis today. ESPN will telecast the match live at 00:30 am BST, Thursday.

VERSAILLES, France, May 23: Nicolas Anelka's transformation from public enemy number one to hero was yet further confirmed by Real Madrid coach Vicente Del Bosque on the eve of Wednesday's European Champions' League final at St. Dennis today. ESPN will telecast the match live at 00:30 am BST, Thursday.

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