

Scottish Cup final

Rangers aim at double

GLASGOW, May 26: Rangers midfielder Jorg Albertz has warned the Scottish Premier League champions against complacency on Saturday when the Ibrox outfit take on basement club Aberdeen in the Scottish Cup final, reports AFP.

The Glasgow giants finished another successful season an amazing 57 points ahead of the Pittodrie club and are clear favourites to complete the double with victory at Hampden Park.

But the German star insisted there would be no chance of the Cup holders taking Ebbe Skovdahl's side lightly.

Albertz said: "Everybody knows this is a Cup final and it is a totally different game from the league."

"I think Rangers when they are at their best can compete with a lot of clubs in Europe, but this is a cup final against Aberdeen."

"You can see in the different leagues as well it's not always the favourite or the stronger team on paper who wins the game."

"There have been some surprises in the French cup and in the German cup and we know what we will have to cope with."

Aberdeen will be up for it, they will have nothing to lose so will go for broke, but we have everything to lose."

Aberdeen manager Skovdahl believes Dons' supporters can rise above the ticket allocation fracas to raise the roof of Hampden Park against Rangers in the Scottish Cup final.

Pittodrie fans were left incensed by the Scottish Football Association's decision to give them 7,000 less tickets than the Ibrox side for the final.

But Skovdahl is convinced the Aberdeen support can still urge the team to victory over Rangers - despite the numerical disadvantage.

He said: "We saw at the Scottish League cup final against Celtic, if (the allocation) encouraged our supporters even more."

"Nobody understands why it couldn't be split 50-50. But it is a political thing that I won't interfere with. It is just my opinion."

"But we will have achieved something if our fans make as much noise as half of Hampden Park."

"I don't know if it is because I'm with Aberdeen but I thought our fans made more noise than the Celtic fans."

Botham smells a rat

London, May 26: Ian Botham says cricket is rotten to the core and wants independent judges to probe the match-fixing scandal which has tarnished the sport's reputation for fair play, reports Reuters.

"I think corruption goes all the way to the top," Friday newspapers quoted the former England all-rounder as saying.

"Someone, somewhere is doing a very good job covering this up. If not why haven't they launched a proper enquiry?"

"But let's have it done by people from countries which know nothing about the game and who will not be influenced by the names involved," the Daily Mail quoted him as saying.

"Anything less is not going far enough."

Botham said he was shocked when he heard about Cronje's involvement "but then you start putting things together in your mind and wondering why did this happen in that match or this in another? And you can't explain it."

He said players faced enormous temptations with huge amounts of money being "banded about" but did not believe that any English players had been involved.

The only way they could have fiddled a match over the last few years was to win one," he said.

Navratilova beaten

MADRID, May 26: Martina Navratilova's serve let herself and partner Mariaan De Swardt down severely and condemned them to defeat in the doubles quarter-finals of the Madrid women's open on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Navratilova, making her comeback after a 5-1/2 year absence from the WTA Tour, and her South African colleague lost 6-3, 7-6 to the unseeded Spanish pairing of Gala Leon and Maria Antonia Sanchez Lorenzo.

The root of their downfall was Navratilova's erratic serve, which had already been exposed in Tuesday's first round match.

She lost it in the third game of the first set and then three times in the second set.

The 43-year-old Czech-born American left the court shaking her head at her inability to find her form from the baseline and did not give the usual post-match media conference.

Nor did she speak to reporters as she left the court, looking downcast en-route to the dressing rooms.

Wasim escaped

From page 13
have already said they would like him back next season.

"We would like to take the view that someone is innocent until proved guilty and we understand there are no claims that he was involved in match-fixing."



Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo (L) talks to superstar Rivaldo before the start of a practice session at Wembley in London on May 25. Brazil meet England in a friendly international today.

—AFP photo

England's ultimate test



LONDON, May 26: Brazil head for Wembley on Saturday to face an England team eager to impress

coach Kevin Keegan ahead of the summer's Euro 2000 championships, reports AFP.

"We know that our match against England will be tough," Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo told SkySports.

"It will be a severe test for us because we are aware that England are in full training now building up to the European Championships."

"For us it will be a big challenge and I believe a good game to watch."

Competition for places is also fierce among the South Americans who are involved in an important 2002 World Cup qualifier against Peru in Lima on June 4.

Keegan, who made his debut for Brazil in Tuesday's 3-0 win over Wales, was one of the star performers at the Millennium Stadium, standing in for Roberto Carlos who was busy helping Real Madrid win the Champions League final in Paris.

The Arsenal defender said he expects England to pose a far greater threat than the one of

feared by Wales in Cardiff. "It's an unpredictable game and I don't know which way it will go," said Silvinho.

"We know the English team are well prepared for this game and so are we but it's going to be a very difficult game."

Brazil's technical co-ordinator Marcos Teixeira was also full of praise for the English style of play.

"Everyone who saw England play in the last World Cup knew they could have made the final," said Teixeira.

"They have a good team. They play a lot like Brazil because they touch the ball a lot more, try not to cross as much as they did in the past but I think they are getting even better and are one of the top teams in the world."

Keegan watched Brazil in Tuesday's clash and saw the four-time World Cup winners overcome a spirited Welsh side with three goals in a breathtaking 10-minute spell.

Bayern Munich striker Giovani Elber stabbed home the first on 63 minutes and then in the space of two minutes, brilliant strikes from Cafu and world footballer of the year Ronaldo also found the target to wrap up victory for the visitors.

TEAMS

England (probable): David Seaman; Gary Neville, Martin Keown, Tony Adams, Philip Neville; David Beckham, Paul Ince, Dennis Wise; Paul Scharles; Emile Heskey, Alan Shearer

Brazil: Dida; Cafu, Aldair, Antonio Carlos, Emerson, Cesar Sampaio, Silvinho, Ze Roberto, Rivaldo, Amoroso, Franca

—CHLOE FORTIN/REUTERS

AFP EURO 2000 BRIEFS



CLAREFONTEAINE, France, May 26: Real Madrid's French internationals Nicolas Anelka and Christian Karembeu joined the French national squad at their Euro 2000 training camp here Thursday.

French coach Roger Lemerre called up the duo after they helped their club to their eighth European Cup title with a 3-0 victory over Spanish rivals Valencia Wednesday night.

The 22-strong French squad are currently undergoing two weeks training west of Paris, but Lemerre will not officially release the final line-up to European football's governing body UEFA until the June 1 deadline.

Anelka's place in the French team was in doubt because of ongoing problems with Real, while Karembeu's Euro 2000 hopes looked bleak because of injury problems and an indifferent season at his Spanish club.

In Euro 2000 France have been drawn in the "Group of Death" alongside co-hosts Holland, third-ranked in the world, the Czech Republic and 1992 champions Denmark.

The 1-1 draw on Sunday after extra time demanded a re-

BAIA MAKES THE TEAM

LISBON, May 26: Portugal coach Humberto Coelho on Friday named FC Porto goalkeeper Vitor Baia among the seven final players to join the 15-

play.

Porto goalkeeper Baia made his return to the pitch for Thursday's match following a long lay-off after surgery to his right knee in December.

Baia's recall means that he will now have a chance to attempt to equal the record number of appearances in the national team which is held by his former teammate Joao Pinto with 70 caps.

Three other Porto players were also selected - Carlos Secreto, Jorge Costa and Nuno Rocha, along with Sporting Lisbon's Roberto Severo, Rui Jorge and Jose Vidigal.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Vitor Baia (FC Porto), Pedro Espinha (Vitoria Guimaraes), Joaquin Silva (Sporting Braga)

Defenders: Roberto Severo, Rui Jorge (Sporting Lisbon), Carlos Secreto, Jorge Costa (FC Porto), Abel Xavier (Everton/Eng), Fernando Couto (Lazio Rome/Ita), Dimas Teixeira (Standard Liege/Bel)

Midfielders: Paulo Sousa (Parma/Ita), Rui Costa (Fiorentina/Ita), Luis Figo (Barcelona/Spa), Sergio Conceicao (Lazio Rome/Ita), Francisco Costa (Monaco/Fra), Paulo Bento (Oviedo/Spa), Jose Vidigal (Sporting Lisbon)

Strikers: Joao Pinto, Nuno Gomes (Benfica), Ricardo Sa Pinto (Real Sociedad/Spa), Pedro Resendes (Deportivo La Coruna/Spa), Nuno Rocha (FC Porto)

—CHLOE FORTIN/REUTERS

VITOR BAIA

strong team already announced earlier this week for the Euro 2000 football championships this summer.

The names of the final 22 were announced following Thursday's replay of the Portuguese Cup final in which former Portuguese champions Porto won 2-0 against newly-crowned First Division title-holders Sporting Lisbon.

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can rival Venus Williams, the fourth seed.

Williams' younger sister Serena, the US Open champion, withdrew before Friday's draw was made, citing a knee injury that has kept her on the sidelines for the past six weeks.

Venus Williams plays her opening match against Jana Kandar of Germany.

Twelfth seed Anke Huber pulled out of the Strasbourg tournament with an Achilles injury while major draw-card

Hingis and Davenport will both face Belgian opponents in the first round of the women's singles when the second Grand Slam event of the year begins on the red clay of Roland Garros.

Hingis was Friday drawn to play Sabine Appelmans in her opening match, while second-seeded Davenport will face Dominique Van Roost.

Hingis, who has won all three Grand Slam events outside the French Open in her career, was drawn in the same half of the draw as her capitulation in the final last year against Steffi Graf.

Twelve months ago, the Swiss was taught a lesson in both tennis and on-court etiquette by the now-retired Graf in an explosive final on Paris's Centre Court.

Having totally commanded the first set and served for the match at 5-4 in the second set, Hingis was badly unsettled by a baseline line call.

Hingis and Seles will meet in the semifinals providing they avoid upsets. Seles, who won the Italian Open title in Rome earlier this month, opens her campaign against Silvia Talaja of Croatia.

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Porto lift Portuguese Cup

LISBON, May 26: Deposed Portuguese champions Porto gained a measure of revenge when they beat the successors to their crown Sporting Lisbon 2-0 in the Portuguese Cup Final replay here on Thursday.

In a typically bad-tempered affair, which saw eight players booked and Lisbon's Tonito sent off for a second bookable offence three minutes from the end, Porto went ahead early in the second-half.

Their Brazilian playmaker Clayton took advantage of a rare misjudgement by Lisbon's Danish international 'keeper Peter Schmeichel, who was one of the four Sporting players to find his name into the referee's book, to slot home in the 48th minute.

Clayton's compatriot Deco wrapped up the match just over a quarter-of-an-hour from the end when he fired home a free-kick.

Friendly

Kuwait shock AC Millan

KUWAIT, May 26 (Reuters): Kuwait stunned Serie A giants AC Milan 2-0 in a friendly at Kuwait city today.

Scorers: Bahar Abdullah 67 83pen.

Halftime: 0-0.

Attendance: 12,000.

The last time the two teams met at Wembley was in the Umbro Cup in June 1995. Graeme Le Saux scored from a brilliant long range effort to put England in front but Juninho levelled the scores with a spectacular free-kick.

"This is the right preparation, to play the best," the 25-year-old defender told Britain's Evening Standard.

"In a couple of weeks we are going to play the best teams in Europe and the fact is that none of them will be as good as the opposition we are up against on Saturday."

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