

## 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 on 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 in this 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 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 this 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.

Silvinho, 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-

fered 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.

Bavarian Munich striker Giovane Elber stabbed home the first in 63 minutes and then in the space of two minutes, brilliant strikes from Cafu and world footballer of the year Rivaldo finished the job.

England's Gary Neville, meanwhile, is looking forward

to pitting his wits against the best in the business at the Twin Towers on Saturday.

"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."

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.

Ronaldo and Edmundo 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 Scholes; Emile Heskey, Alan Shearer.

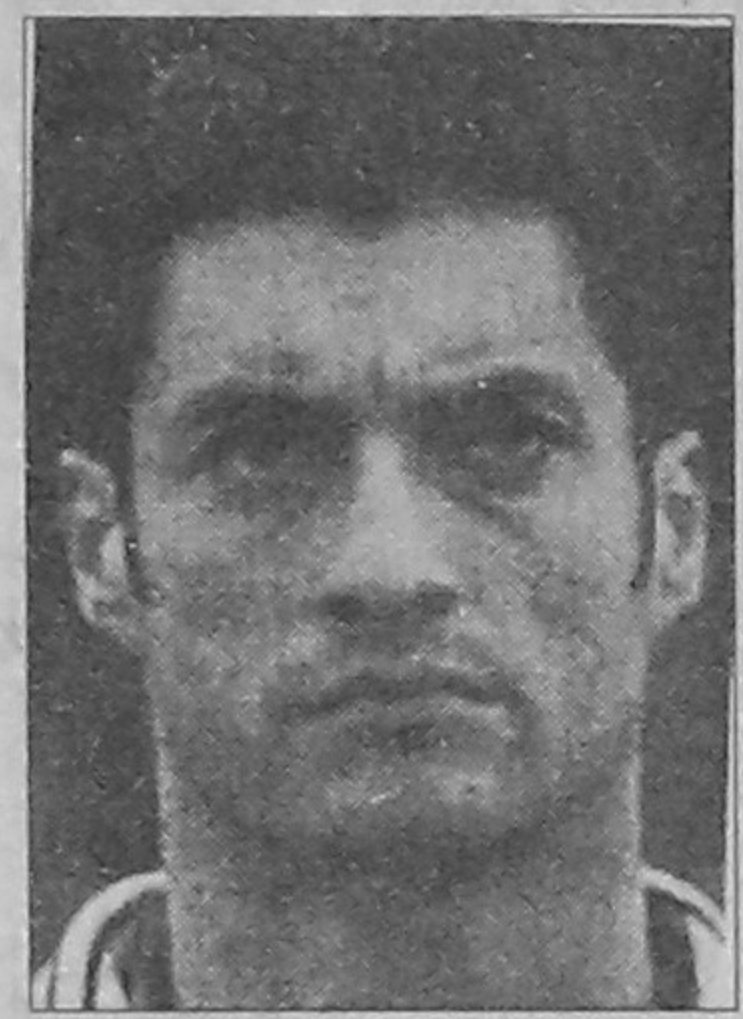
Brazil: Dida; Cafu, Aldair, Antonio Carlos, Emerson, Cesar Sampaio, Silvinho, Ze Roberto, Rivaldo, Amoroso, Franca.

## AFP EURO 2000 BRIEFS



### 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-



VITOR BAIA

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 Secretario, Jorge Costa and Nuno Rocha, along with Sporting Lisbon's Roberto Severo, Rui Jorge and Jose Vidigal.

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

Defenders: Roberto Severo, Rui Jorge (Sporting Lisbon), Carlos Secretario, 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).

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

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 titleholders Sporting Lisbon.

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

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 Secretario, Jorge Costa and Nuno Rocha, along with Sporting Lisbon's Roberto Severo, Rui Jorge and Jose Vidigal.

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

Defenders: Roberto Severo, Rui Jorge (Sporting Lisbon), Carlos Secretario, 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).

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

## Fascinating French Open



PARIS, May 26 (Reuters/AFP): The elite of women's tennis limped into Paris for the start of the French Open on Monday with the field wide open.

Top seed Martina Hingis had to withdraw from Rome earlier this month after aggravating a foot injury in Berlin while second seed Lindsay Davenport suffered a back injury in Rome and had to pull out of Madrid.

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 Dominiek 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 three-time French Open in her career was drawn in the same half of the draw as three-time French Open champion Monica Seles of the United States.

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

Australian Open champion Davenport is the same half of the 132-player draw as Ameri-

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.

She did return minutes later, supported by her mother Melanie Molitor, with tears streaming down her face but the episode left a bad taste.

The Swiss player - also a losing finalist in 1997 - can eradicate that nightmare with the crown this time around and has the best game to achieve it.

Hingis's excellent anticipation and tactical awareness should prove too much for Davenport's power play should the pair meet in the final.

The American may struggle to reach the championship match, though, as the Roland Garros clay will do much to negate her thunderous groundstrokes.

Third seeded Seles has become a crowd favourite with the Parisians but, as with fifth seed Conchita Martinez, her best days may be behind her.

Seles' fitness has improved all year, though, and the three-time winner has proved she has the guts and the guile to triumph here.

Mary Pierce has the game and the temperament to land big titles but the home crowd has never taken to the Canadian-born Frenchwoman and she is regularly unsettled by their reaction.

## 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 Toniito 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.

Half-time: 0-0.

Attendance: 12,000.

## Bayern apeals to Djorkaeff

CLAIREFONTAINE, France, May 26: Kaiserslautern's French international Yuri Djorkaeff said Thursday that he had received a tempting offer from German champions Bayern Munich and would make a decision on his future after Euro 2000.

The French team's top scorer, who is currently attending a two-week Euro 2000 training camp with the World Cup winners west of Paris, described his future with Kaiserslautern as "slightly strange".

"I'm still under contract for two years with my club. But we'll take a decision after the European championships," said Djorkaeff. "Bayern Munich have made the most serious and interesting of offers."

The 32-year-old World Cup winner, arrived at Kaiserslautern on a free transfer from Italian Serie A side Inter Milan in August 1999, and signed a three-year contract worth 1.85 million dollars a year.

However, he has been dissatisfied with the team and has made no secret of his wish to leave.

Injured since April 8, Djorkaeff blamed the lack of medical care at Kaiserslautern for missing the final two matches of the Bundesliga, in which Kaiserslautern finished fifth.

"If I had received the same treatment in Germany as I received from the French team medical staff I would have played these matches and we could have qualified for the Champions League," he complained.

And he said that if coach Otto Rehhagel were to leave the club that would push forward his decision to leave. "If he (Rehhagel) doesn't stay that will push my departure ahead," said Djorkaeff.

Although Kaiserslautern have insisted that Djorkaeff is not for sale the dissatisfied Frenchman said that he had had enough of Kaiserslautern and would like to return to city life with Bayern's Bavarian hometown of Munich proving increasingly tempting.

## Munich Sforza's next address

MUNICH, Germany, May 26: Bayern Munich have reached agreement with Bundesliga rivals Kaiserslautern on a three-year deal for Swiss international midfielder Ciriaco Sforza, Bayern manager Uli Hoeness said Thursday.

"We have reached an agreement with Kaiserslautern that will see Sforza rejoin us for next season," Hoeness told the German magazine Kicker.

Hoeness declined to reveal a transfer fee, but it is believed to be in the region of eight million Marks (3.7 million dollars).

Recently crowned champions of Germany for the 16th time, Bayern announced last week that they were interested in signing 30-year-old Sforza, who joined Kaiserslautern from Inter Milan in 1997. Before that he played for Bayern, Grasshoppers Zurich and several other Swiss sides.

Sforza, who has another year to go on his contract with Kaiserslautern, was keen to leave the Red Devils after deep personal differences with coach Otto Rehhagel which erupted publicly several times during the season.

The Swiss international will help Stefan Effenberg as a central playmaker but can also slip back into defence and play a libero role, a position left open at Bayern by the departure of Lothar Matthaus to New York.

Sforza, who played the 1995/96 season at Bayern before elbowing his way out of the contract to go to Inter Milan, upset Bayern officials with the manner of his departure but both sides have since talked out their differences.

"One shouldn't hold grudges," Bayern vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said. "I know what he did then was not right."



Real Madrid players and officials celebrate with the Champions' League trophy at the Bernabeu Stadium after arriving in Spain from Paris on May 25. —AFP photo

## Masters of Europe return home



MADRID, May 26: Real Madrid were accorded a homecoming Thursday fitting of their achievement in securing an eighth European Cup against Valencia in Paris 24 hours earlier, reports AFP.

The architects of that 3-0 Champions League victory over their compatriots were feted with a sea of flags and scarves fluttering in the wind as they appeared before their adoring public at the plaza de Cibeles in the Spanish capital Thursday night.

Paraded in an open-topped bus the team came straight from the airport where they'd touched down at 1700GMT.

Raul and Morientes, scorers of two of the three goals, then their teammates, climbed the

statue dominating the square - draping the structure with a Real flag and waving the spoils of their battle - the Cup itself - at the ecstatic hordes below.

The crowd - smaller than the day before - was a motley mix of businessmen in suits straight from the office, old age pensioners, mothers with children, their faces daubed warrior-like in the club's colours, and fans clutching their idols' shirts - with a number 3 for Roberto Carlos or 7 for Raul on their backs, all united in chanting "ole ole".

Thousands of supporters, sporting red hats in the shape of footballs, followed the side's cortege running down the paseo de Recoletos and 'paseo de la Castellana' - the main north-south route through the Spanish capital.

Thirty odd motorbike out-

riders from the civil guard with horns blaring flanked the team's bus as it made its way to their headquarters - the magnificent Santiago-Bernabeu stadium in the chic northern quarter of the city where a further 80,000 fans awaited them for the official reception expected to run late into the night.

The only slight sour note was the absence of two key members of the side - Nicolas Anelka and Christian Karembeu, called up for Euro 2000 training with the French squad in Clairefontaine near Paris.

The decision by the French Football Federation and national coach Roger Lemerre to summon the two Frenchmen the day after the final was attacked by Real Madrid's vice-president Juan Onieva as "lacking in sensitivity".

## Peace wins charity match



ROME, May 26: Israelis and Palestinians fielded a joint team in an all-star soccer match on Thursday to raise money for school Internet and soccer facilities to boost peace in the Middle East, reports Reuters.

Smiling Nobel peace laureates Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres watched from the stands of Rome's Olympic Stadium as the Israeli-Palestinian side took on a team of celebrities reinforced by Italian soccer stars and Formula One racing drivers Michael Schumacher and Giancarlo Fisichella.

Brazilian soccer legend Pele kicked off the match, which pitted the mixed Middle East team against a squad of Italian singers, including crooners Eros Ramazzotti and Gianni Morandi, with AS Roma's Japanese star Hidetoshi Nakata

and Inter Milan goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi among other famous faces.

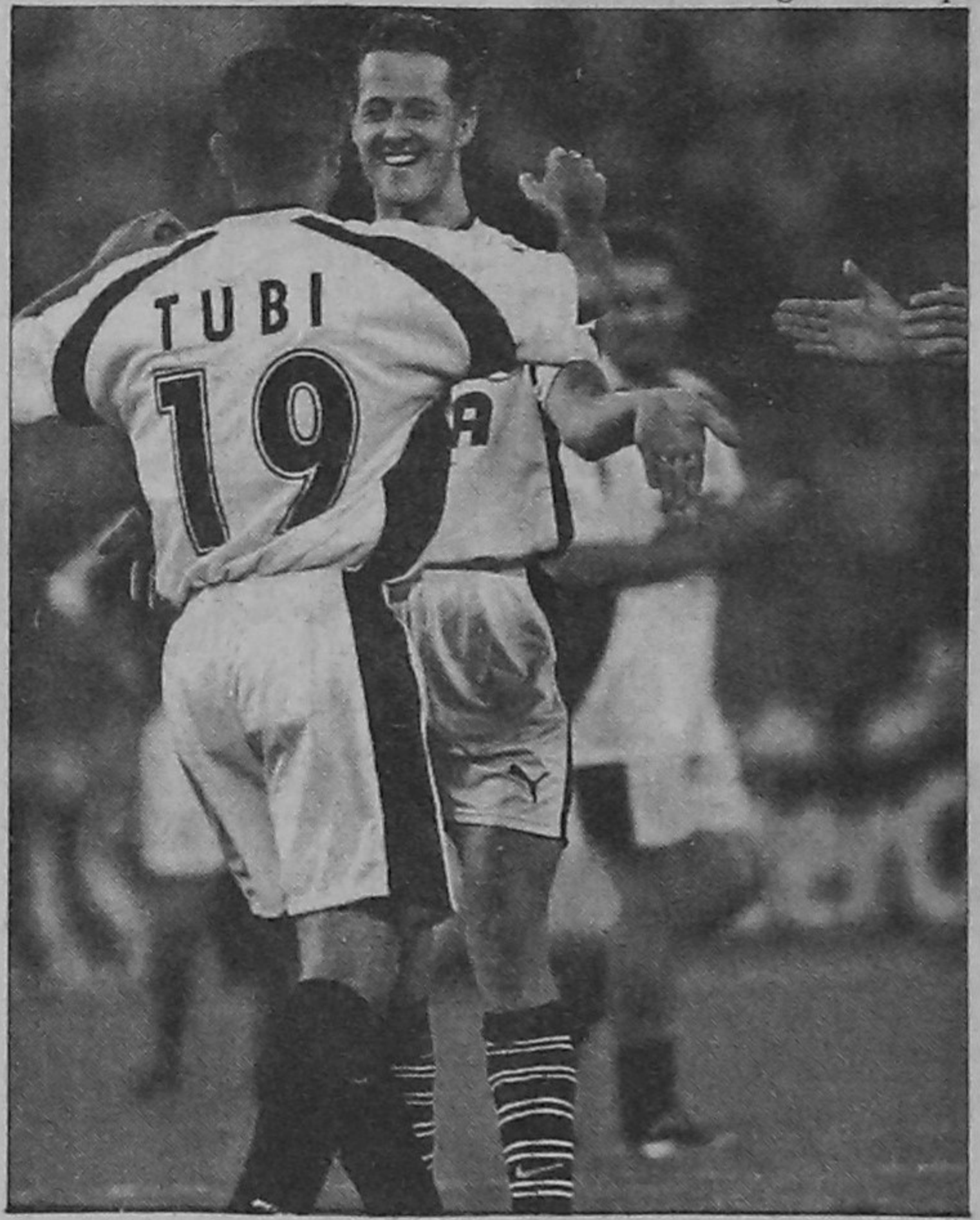
"I think it has never happened before... Let's play football rather than shoot bullets one against another," said Peres, a former Israeli premier and now regional cooperation minister.

Pope John Paul, who made an historic visit to Israel and Palestinian ruled areas earlier this year, praised the event.

"May this 'match of the heart' encourage you, dear friends of different nations and diverse culture, to get to know each other better... In this friendly match solidarity and peace are above all the winners," he said.

The match ended 6-5 to the Israeli and Palestinian team.

Before the match, Palestinian Authority President Arafat, Peres and Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi



German Formula One car racer Michael Schumacher, who was captaining the Israeli-Palestinian team, congratulates teammate Tubi (L) after the latter scored in the All Stars for Peace Football match at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on May 25. —AFP photo

## Yugoslavia blank China



BEIJING, May 26: Yugoslavia warmed up for next month's European Championships with a fortunate 2-0 win over a lively Chinese side in a friendly at Beijing's Workers Stadium here Thursday, reports AFP.

Goals in either half from Mateja Kezman and Juventus' Darko Kovacevic sealed the victory, but the Yugoslavs had goalkeeper Zeljko Cvetic to thank for keeping them in the game.

Coached by globetrotting Yugoslavian coach Bora Milutinovic, China played some neat passing football from the centre of the pitch and their pace forwards troubled the visitors throughout the match.

China started brightly, forcing a series of early corners with captain Hao Haidong caus-

ing all kinds of trouble in the Yugoslav defence.

But fellow striker Su Maozhen had the best early chance.

After some slick interplay in midfield, Su jinked past two players on the edge of the Yugoslav penalty area and fired low and hard just wide.

The Yugoslavs took time to settle on the bobbly Chinese pitch, but began to take control at around the 20 minute mark.

The opening goal arrived from nowhere on 22 minutes, when Kezman pounced on some sloppy defending in the Chinese penalty area and poked home from six yards.

China continued to cause the visitors trouble with Su and Hao constantly probing up front and wingback Gao Yao commanding the left flank almost unchallenged.

Twice before halftime Hao sprung a leaden-footed Yu-

goslavian defence but on both occasions he was foiled by goalkeeper Cvetic.

At the interval Yugoslavia made a string of substitutions which were to prove crucial.

Real Zaragoza striker Savo Milosevic and Kezman were replaced by Fiorentina's Pedrag Mijatovic and Juve's Kovacevic.

Initially the second half followed the same pattern as the first, with China enjoying much the better of the early exchanges.

Hao forced two good saves from Cvetic in succession on 47 minutes, while from the resulting corner Li Tie headed powerfully over the bar with the Yugoslavian defence nowhere to be seen.

Thursday's match was the second meeting between the two sides this year. Yugoslavia won a friendly in Belgrade 1-0 earlier this year.