



## Carry-on incentive for Shearer

CHARLEROI, Belgium, June 18: England coach Kevin Keegan watched Alan Shearer's match-winning performance against Germany at Euro 2000 Saturday and promptly offered him the captaincy for their 2002 World Cup campaign, reports AFP.

Shearer has said that he will retire from international soccer after this tournament - but England coach Kevin Keegan made it clear he wanted the centre-forward to re-think his decision.

The Newcastle idol, top scorer at Euro 96, came in for heavy criticism during England's protracted campaign to qualify for these finals.

But Keegan took the opportunity to strike back at his skipper's tormentors during the post-match press conference - and also put a question mark over his skipper's decision to quit.

"Alan Shearer has answered his critics again, just give him two or three days before you start on him again in the English press, will you?" Keegan said, warming up to his theme.

"You've knocked him, you've pummeled him, you've questioned his right to be in the side, you've questioned his right to be captain. He's never ever given anything but 100 percent when he's pulled on that shirt."

"He did it again tonight. He got his goal and tried to prove a lot of people wrong."

"And when you look back at some of the pieces that the English journalists have written over the last year, you people are responsible for Alan Shearer retiring from international football."

"Not Alan, not me. You people are. Because nobody can take a pummeling like that and keep coming back for more. I don't care if he's the greatest boxer in the world, you haven't given him a chance some of you people."

"But he's never complained. I'm saying that for him. He'll come in here and say totally the opposite, because I think he's a man amongst men. And that's why he captains my England side."

"And if he changed his mind, he would captain my England side - if I'm still manager - when we start our campaign in the World Cup qualifying."

Shearer, still only 29, has no plans to retire from club football. Once the most expensive player in the world after a 15 million pounds (£23 million dollar) move from Blackburn Rovers to his home town club Newcastle he is still one of the top scorers in English football.

## Trap eying Ribbeck's job

BERLIN, June 18: Former Bayern Munich coach Giovanni Trapattoni has said he would be interested in succeeding Erich Ribbeck if he is fired as Germany's manager after the Euro 2000 finals, reports AFP.

The 0-1 loss to England on Saturday has left the Germans only a slender lifeline in the finals, and Ribbeck had already come under withering criticism from the press in the buildup to the tournament.

"It would be a great honour for me, if the German football Federation were to ask me" the 61-year-old Trapattoni told Welt am Sonntag.

Trapattoni also said he would be interested in taking over the Italian team, but he pointed out that Dino Zoff was under contract until 2002.

"I am not finished yet. The fire is still within me. Getting out there on the training field still gives me great pleasure," he said.

## Posh wants David to quit!

LONDON, June 18: England star David Beckham is under pressure from his Spice Girl wife Victoria to quit from football so as to spare the family the abuse and threats that have been heaped on them, the Sunday Mirror reported, reports AFP.

Citing a friend of Britain's most glamorous couple, the Mirror said Victoria Beckham, otherwise known as Posh Spice, was shaken by the treatment meted out to both her and Beckham after England's defeat against Portugal last Monday.

David Beckham was subjected to taunts from the crowd, and responded with a one-finger salute. His wife meanwhile was confronted by a drunken mob at the ground in Eindhoven, the Mirror reported.

"She and David have had so many problems with taunts and stalkers, it was all too much for her," the Mirror cited the family friend as saying. "She knows how much David loves his football but she wonders whether it is all worth it."

The family have previously been targeted by hate mail and death threats.

# EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000



SUPER-SUB: Costinha (L) of Portugal, who came in as a substitute against Romania, is ecstatic after scoring the match-winner in injury time on June 17. Teammate Gorge Costa joins in the celebration. — AFP photo

## Portugal leave it very late

ARNHEM, Netherlands, June 18: Portugal booked a place in the quarter-finals of Euro 2000 when substitute Costinha grabbed an injury-time goal to defeat Group A rivals Romania 1-0 here Saturday, reports AFP.

After a dire match where there seemed little prospect of a goal for either side Portugal won a late freekick in the fourth minute of injury time.

Luis Figo floated the ball into the Romanian penalty area and Costinha's header found the back of the net with Romania goalkeeper Bogdan Stelea stranded.

Costinha's strike was greeted with jubilation on the Portuguese bench and came as time had virtually run out - the fourth official had signalled for four minutes of injury time.

Romania only just had time to kick off before French referee Gilles Veissiere blew for time and now the Romanians need to beat England and hope Group A winners Portugal see off the German challenge if they are to progress.

Portugal join Italy, France and Holland in the quarter-finals.

"It's a great joy to have given my team and my country a victory which takes them to the quarter-finals. It's fantastic. My header? I can't say anything in particular. I saw the ball coming and I just headed it well all the power I could muster," said Costinha.

Portugal's coach Humberto

Coelho said: "It was a very tough match for us. We had a lot of luck to score the goal in the last minute and to win the game."

"Our victory against England raised great expectations. Today's was a totally different match, however."

His Romanian opposite number Emerich Jenei said: "It was a match with two very evenly-matched teams. It was not much of a spectacle but it was interesting."

"Unfortunately we lost it in the last minute, in fact practically in the last seconds."

Goalmouth incidents were hard to come by in a match that was set to vie with the Turkey v Sweden 0-0 draw in Group B for the dubious accolade of most boring match of the tournament until Costinha's late decider.

Minutes before the goal Romanian inspiration Gheorghe Hagi produced a rare moment of inspiration in the second half with a long-range shot tipped over by Portuguese goalkeeper Vitor Baia in the 86th minute.

Hagi will be ruled out of the must-win fixture with England after picking up his second yellow card of the tournament and this match may well be the last of his illustrious career for the national team - he has said he will quit the Romanian team after Euro 2000.

Hagi, struggling with a groin strain, gave his all and apart from his chip he began and finished the best move of an otherwise mundane match - a five-man Romanian counter-attack

but could not keep his shot on target.

After 52 minutes Viorel Moldovan had come close to giving the Romanians the lead when his header from a Daniel Munteanu corner looked goal-bound before taking a deflection behind the goal for a corner.

The breathtaking Portuguese football that had defeated England 3-2 in their Group A opener was noticeable only by its absence and after 57 minutes Coelho made a double substitution with Ricardo Sa Pinto and Sergio Conceicao replacing Nuno Gomes and Joao Pinto.

His later replacement - withdrawing Manuel Rui Costa for Costinha - proved decisive although the goal came from route one rather than the fluent football that marked the England win.

Romania coach Emerich Jenei also made changes with Florentin Petre and Ionel Ganea replacing Dan Petrescu and Moldovan and Dumitru Rosu stepping in for Andrew Ilie.

Portugal had shaded the first half with Nuno Gomes firing an early shot wide after being set up by Figo.

In the second period Portugal fared less well and threatened rarely.

Fernando Couto set up a good opportunity for Sa Pinto but the striker headed straight at Stelea who had another poor game in the Romanian goal and whose positioning was questionable for Costinha's strike.

## English odds improve

LONDON, June 18: Bookies have slashed the odds on England winning the Euro 2000 title from 12-1 to 8-1 following the 1-0 win over defending champions Germany in Charleroi on Saturday, reports AFP.

Alan Shearer's goal has seen Kevin Keegan's side installed as fourth favourites by Ladbrokes, with their opponents, the defending champions, Germany in Charleroi on Saturday, reports AFP.

World champions France are the 9-4 favourites, with Holland at 5-2.

Italy, England's quarter-final opponents if they avoid defeat against Romania on Tuesday, are 9-2.

Full odds: France 9-4, Holland 5-2, Italy 9-2, England 8-1, Portugal 9-1, Spain 10-1, Norway 16-1, Belgium 20-1, Germany 33-1, Yugoslavia 40-1, Romania 66-1, Sweden 100-1, Turkey 150-1, Slovenia 150-1.

### GOALSCORERS

BRUSSELS, June 18: Euro 2000 finals scorers after Saturday's Group A matches - 2 - Zlatko Zahovic (Slo), Savo Milosevic (Yug), Thierry Henry (Fra)

1 - Bart Goor (Bel), Emile Mpenza (Bel), Johan Mjallby (Swe), Filippo Inzaghi (Ita), Antonio Conte (Ita), Okan Buruk (Tur), Laurent Blanc (Fra), Sylvain Wiltord (Fra), Frank de Boer (Ned), Viorel Moldovan (Rom), Mehmet Scholl (Ger), Paul Scholes (Eng), Steve McManaman (Eng), Luis Figo (Por), Joao Pinto (Por), Nuno Gomes (Por), Steffen Iversen (Nor), Miran Pavlin (Slo), Ljubinko Drulovic (Yug), Francesco Totti (Ita), Stefano Fiore (Ita), Karel Poborsky (Cze), Youri Djorkaeff (Fra), Patrick Kluivert (Ned), Ronald de Boer (Ned), Boudewijn Zenden (Ned), Costinha (Por), Alan Shearer (Eng)

## 450 arrests at Charleroi

CHARLEROI, Belgium, June 18: Belgian security forces arrested 450 predominantly English and German supporters before and during the Euro 2000 Group A encounter between the countries, the Mayor of Charleroi Jacques Van Gompel said Saturday, reports AFP.

However, Van Gompel added that "there were certainly less incidents than predicted" on the day of the game won 1-0 by England.

Most of the arrests were administrative - in other words unlikely to be pursued in the courts - but around 30 will lead to action from the Belgian justice system, the mayor revealed.

"One English fan is being remanded in custody and will be brought before the judge for hitting a compatriot," said Van Gompel.

Van Gompel said that there had been some light injuries and that the situation had been helped by the fact that German border guards had turned back 50 known trouble makers at the border while 31 Germans had been intercepted in Belgium before reaching Charleroi.

In the hours after the match ended, a few dozen English fans clashed with youths and Belgian police in the Brussels region.

Police said around 30 were detained after clashes between drunken fans and young Belgians of immigrant origin in the Bourse neighbourhood, a few hundred metres (yards) from the Grand Place in the centre of Brussels.

The police maintained a strong presence in the capital, and officers said they would remain on duty all night.

## Vanquished lament

CHARLEROI, Belgium, June 18: England did not deserve to beat Germany 1-0 here on Saturday, according to embittered German coach Erich Ribbeck, who now reckons his men were all but knocked out of Euro 2000, reports AFP.

Ribbeck's future as team chief will almost certainly come to an abrupt end this month unless he somehow conjures up a place in the last eight.

Between now and next week's final match against Group A winners Portugal, Ribbeck must find a way of delivering a winning line-up and overcoming the pain of Saturday night's defeat to the English.

"It's a defeat that hurts a lot, because we now only have a theoretical chance of qualifying for the quarter-finals by finishing second... with a very high probability that we are out of the tournament," Ribbeck said.

"We do have a theoretical chance, but we cannot reach the runners-up place by our own

means. We need Romania's help."

If they beat England and if we also win against Portugal with one more goal scored, then we'll just about make it."

However, in what sounded very much like sour grapes, he admitted the bitterness of a result which he claimed did not reflect fairly on the 90 minutes.

"The defeat is also bitter because I don't think we deserved to lose that game," he said. "In the first-half, we were the better team. We controlled the game and we let the opponents run after the ball."

"We lost because of a simple dead-ball situation which was the one and only opportunity which our opponents had to score. And they used it."

As for his own side, Ribbeck said: "We tried everything, we ran like hell but squandered the two or three opportunities we did have in the second half."

Meanwhile, Germany's defeated players were left stunned Saturday as a 34-year winning streak against England in com-

petitive fixtures was ended.

Before this match, England had played Germany 14 times since beating them in the 1966 World Cup final at Wembley. England had won just two of those matches, in 1975 and 1985, but they had not won in six competitive matches since then.

The most famous of those six losses were in the 1970 World Cup quarter-finals in Mexico, the 1990 World Cup semi-final in Italy and the Euro 96 semi-final, again at Wembley.

England also went some way to prove they can beat world class opposition at the highest level. Germany are only the second team they have ever beaten away from home in European championship finals.

The other team they have beaten was Spain in both 1968 and 1980, making just three victories on foreign soil in the finals of this competition.

Mehmet Scholl, who had the two best chances for Germany in either half, said: "We gave 200 percent. What more can we do? The English played better and better as the game went on and we just couldn't score and that made the difference."

"We just did not put away our chances and I had two of them. At this level, when you do that you get punished and that's what happened to Germany today."

Liverpool midfielder Dietmar Hamann continued the theme of missed opportunities. "We missed a few chances in the first half and then from then on we just could not put the ball in the net."

"I think certain players today would have to ask themselves about their performance."

Hamann picked out his Liverpool clubmate Steven Gerrard, who put in a good performance in midfield after coming on during the second half, as a real player of the future.

"I wished Steven all the best for the rest of the tournament. He kicks a ball well, heads well, runs well, in fact he can do everything and has a great future. He certainly played extremely well in this match and showed just what he can do," said Hamann.

Defender Thomas Linke, who started against Romania but was dropped for this match, said: "We played well in front and a few chances went begging. We had a small chance to win this match and never gave up hope but the English defended well."

Carsten Ramelow, who also did not appear in the game, said: "We were in with a fight but we just couldn't score."



A COACH IN TROUBLE: Erich Ribbeck the German coach leaving after a press conference at his team's Euro 2000 base in Vaals yesterday. — AFP photo

## Thugs get on everybody's nerve

LONDON, June 18: English newspapers were caught between laughing and crying Sunday following the dramatic Euro 2000 win over Germany and the thuggish behaviour of English soccer fans in Belgium, reports AFP.

The consensus was that the hooligans had brought shame on the nation and all but discredited England as a possible host for the World Cup in 2006. On the pitch most papers singled out game winner Alan Shearer as the man of the match.

All sections of the press laid into the hooligans, calling them all the names under the sun, after two days of clashes leading up to England's crucial tie with Germany resulted in hundreds of arrests and disgraceful scenes in Brussels and Charleroi.

"The drunken dregs of Britain," the News of the World screamed, calling the perpetrators

tors of recurrent street battles in the Belgian cities "home-grown hooligans who should never have been allowed out of Britain."

The violence, which resulted in scores of Britons spending a night in the cells before being flown home on Saturday, could jeopardise England's bid for the World Cup in 2006, several newspapers commented.

"The sight of armoured vehicles spraying high-pressure water jets at supporters as they hurled tables and chairs is likely to have dashed England's chances of holding the World Cup in 2006," The Sunday Times opined.

"It underlined our reputation as a country whose thugs cause mayhem and attack anybody they choose within 30 miles of an international venue."

The Independent on Sunday quoted former sports minister Tony Banks, who is promoting England's bid for the World Cup, as saying: "Obviously it is not helpful to our World Cup bid."

Other newspapers were more reflective, wondering aloud what the sight of lagged-up, shaven-headed brutes hurling plastic chairs in a European town square said about the country.

"We have become a nation of drunken, tattooed, crop-headed oafs," mused the Sunday Mirror in disgust. "They are overpaid, overindulged and unfortunately for continental Europe - over there."

The Sunday Telegraph saw something more sinister in the fact that it was the Germany match which England ultimately went on to win 1-0, that provided the catalyst for the violence.

"The England Germany game, it seems, was a magnet for hordes of English thugs - partly because they wished, in some warped way, to re-enact the antagonisms of the Second World War," it said.

The Observer meanwhile noted that it was not all one-way traffic from the English contingent, quoting a Belgian police chief as saying it was "multi-national mayhem".

Although it cited as many instances of English victims as villains, the paper concluded that it was British society that was to blame for turning out armies of mindless thugs.

"It is time we faced the facts. It is English society that produces slobbishness, violence and xenophobia."

On a purely footballing note the Telegraph was ecstatic. "At last!" it headlined. "Alan

Shearer ends a 34-year wait as England finally beat Germany in a major competition."

Man of the moment Shearer was also singled out by The Observer. "Keegan: It's Alan for 2002" and "I'd have him as my captain if he changed his mind for the World Cup qualifiers starting in September."

"Shearer's night of sheer bliss," wrote the Independent on Sunday which also quoted manager Kevin Keegan's blast at the press: "You people are responsible for Alan Shearer retiring from international football."

## Portuguese press thinking semis

LISBON, June 18: Portugal are en route to the Euro 2000 semi-finals following their 1-0 victory over Romania in Arnhem, that was the verdict of an euphoric Portuguese press on Sunday, reports AFP.

"Victory" was the frontpage headline in daily sports paper Record, which reckoned that the "semi-finals are in sight" thanks to Portugal's position at the top of group A.

Rival sports daily A Bola touched upon the "good fortune" which had allowed Portugal "just like 16 years ago to overhaul Romania in the final minutes to win through to the next round."

"A golden goal" headlined Correio da Manhã, which said that "Costinha's header delivered victory five seconds from the end."

## Heysel may be revisited

CHARLEROI, Belgium, June 18: English and Italian fans are likely to meet again in the former Heysel Stadium, scene of the 1985 tragedy which claimed the lives of 39 mainly Italian following England's 1-0 win over Germany at Euro 2000 here on Saturday, reports AFP.

England, whose victory followed 24 hours of violence in which a total of over 800 mainly English fans were arrested, need only a draw against Romania on Tuesday to finish as runners-up to Portugal in Group A. Italy are already assured of winning Group B.

The Euro 2000 draw already ensures that the Pool B winners and Group A runners-up will meet in Brussels at the now renamed King Baudouin Stadium.



An English hooligan being put into a prison van by security personnel following clashes at Charleroi prior to England's Euro 2000 match against Germany on June 17. — Internet photo

### PREVIEW

## Belgium v Turkey: Co-hosts' chance to book ticket

BRUSSELS, June 18: Home advantage and teamwork could yet make co-hosts Belgium the surprise package at Euro 2000 with victory in their final Group B game against Turkey on Monday securing a place in the knock-out stages, reports AFP.

A point may even be enough should Sweden fail to beat Italy. The Italians have already booked their place in the last eight after successive wins against Turkey and Belgium respectively.

But Robert Waseige's men can join the Squadra Azzurra in the quarter-finals for the first time since 1980 if results go their way.

In that year Belgium made it all the way to the final in Rome only to be beaten 2-1 by Germany.

Belgium, whose fans will occupy the majority of the 51,000 King Baudouin Stadium, can benefit from playing in front of their own supporters.

In just over 12 months in charge, Waseige seem to have brought stability to the national side after taking over from George Leekens last summer.

The 61-year-old authoritarian coach has transformed the team into a formidable unit which on its day is capable of beating anybody.

In recent friendlies they drew 5-5 with Holland in a topsy-turvy match in the Belgian capital, beaten Italy 3-1 away from home, and narrowly lost 2-1 to England.

"I need a well-balanced team that can collectively do the job I want it to do," said Waseige, whose team lacks any well-known stars.

"It is better to have that than four or five individuals who may be brilliant but not necessarily conducive to the team."

Turkey, meanwhile, need to win to have any chance of staying in the tournament and in Belgium of all countries they have a mountain to climb.

The Turkish press are already sharpening their knives after the team's 0-0 draw with

Sweden last Monday was met with a blistering attack by the mass-circulation daily Millyet.

"We cannot play football and we cannot win matches. Now we need what would be a miraculous win over Belgium," it said in its post-mortem.

The draw left Turkey languishing at the bottom of the group with just one point from two matches.

"We played really bad, even worse than against Italy," the paper went on to say. Italy defeated Turkey 2-1 last Sunday in the opening Group B match.

Turkey's poor performance was due to "inadequate preparations" and coach Mustafa Denizli's inability to get the team

working as a unit, the liberal daily Radikal wrote.

Turkey lost all three group matches at Euro 96. Its first appearance in the Euro finals but expectations for Euro 2000 have been high with the victory of Galatasaray in the UEFA Cup last month.

Belgian midfielders Nico Van Kerckhoven and Gert Verheyen together with defender Philippe Leonard have all shrugged off minor injuries and coach Waseige can pick from a fully fit squad.

Unit Davala is the only concern for the Turks with a foot injury while Leicester midfielder has overcome a troublesome ankle and is available for selection.

### TOURNEY TREATS

BRUSSELS, June 18: Euro 2000 diary for Sunday, the ninth day of Euro 2000:

**NORWAY SO BORING!**

BRUSSELS: Sports channel Eurosport is staying on air all night during the Euro 2000 finals to allow viewers to express their opinions by e-mail. Any interested can e-mail their message to the Eurosport address and it will be relayed across the TV screen. Most are messages of team support, but others are more ironic: "Having trouble sleeping? Watch a Norway game. It's better than a sleeping pill," went one such.

**HAGI FOR MANAGER**

WOLVERTEEM, Belgium: Romania's "player of the century" Gheorghe Hagi is already being touted as a possible national team manager. The 35-year-old Hagi has pledged to retire from international football after the Euro 2000 finals although he is still on the books of Turkish side Galatasaray. Romanian team manager Emerich Jenei said of the player: "My dream is to see Hagi succeed me. We should be able to arrange that. I'm not a bad teacher you know."

**HEALTHY ATTENDANCE**

ROTTERDAM: A Total of 339,100 spectators attended the first 10 matches of the Euro 2000 finals an average of 33,900 fans. Grounds were on average 91 percent full on tickets sales of 95 percent of capacity. Belgium's two games against Sweden and Italy drew the biggest crowds.

**LEMERRE ATTENDS FATHER'S FUNERAL**

WAVRE, Belgium: French coach Roger Lemerre will take a brief break from the action at Euro 2000 on Tuesday to attend his father's funeral. Maurice Lemerre, 86, died overnight Friday shortly after his son had guided the world champions into the quarter-finals. The French coach drove to be at his father's bedside after the game with the Czech Republic, but he was dead by the time he got there.

**THE 'ORANJE' UNDERTAKER**

BRUSSELS: A Dutch undertakers company has on offer coffins embossed with the national colours. The only requirement is that the (future) customer has to die during the Euro 2000 finals which finish on July 2. After that it's back to business, as usual.