



TOURNEY TREATS

BRUSSELS, June 23 (AFP): Euro 2000 diary for Friday, the 14th day of Euro 2000.

EUSEBIO VISITS SAINT EUSEBE

ARNHEM, Netherlands: Portuguese football legend Eusebio Thursday paid a visit to a church here dedicated to the Saint after whom he was named, Saint Eusebe.

And the 1966 World Cup top scorer, a devout Catholic, used the occasion to deliver a timely sermon against football hooliganism.

"I want to tell the hooligans that they will never win, they will never beat football because sport is stronger than them," said the player recently voted one of the 10 top footballers of all time and who hails originally from Mozambique, once a Portuguese colony.

Eusebio also converted a penalty in an improvised goal outside the Church as he lent his support to a UNICEF campaign.

WHOLE TURKEY ON THE STREETS!

ISTANBUL: Turkey goalkeeper Rustu Rebeci has made a rather rash prediction should he and his team-mates defeat Portugal in Saturday's Euro 2000 quarter-final.

Rustu told Turkish daily Hurriyet that the street celebrations back home would surpass anything seen before in the football-crazy country.

We will beat Portugal and we will get 65 million Turks out onto the streets," pledged Rustu.

Given that the most recent census said that the Turkish population was 64,479,000 that will be something!

HOME COMING FOR VAN BRONKHORST

HOENDERLOO, Netherlands: Left back Giovanni van Bronckhorst, suspended for the match against France, is once again available for Holland at his home town of Rotterdam in Sunday's Euro 2000 quarter-final against Yugoslavia.

Van Bronckhorst picked up yellow cards against Czech Republic and Denmark but is now ready to regain the limelight in the familiar 51,000-capacity De Kuip stadium.

The 25-year-old, who made his debut against Brazil on August 31 1996, used to play at that venue for Feyenoord before moving to Scotland's Glasgow Rangers in the summer of 1998.

I'm really looking forward to playing in my hometown. It makes the game even more special," said van Bronckhorst after training at Holland's Hoenderloo base to the north of Arnhem early Thursday.

DOWNPOUR DOESN'T BOTHER 'EM

HOENDERLOO: A torrential downpour at Holland's training base Thursday failed to dampen the ardour of Frank Rijkaard's men, who had a light training session following their qualification for the Euro 2000 quarter-finals.

The downpour, which only lasted 10 minutes yet had the entire squad drenched, hopefully will not douse the spirit among one of the teams highly fancied to win the final in Rotterdam on July 2.

With seven goals scored and only two against, this equals the best attack and best defence in the competition so far, exactly the same as Portugal.

Holland are also in seventh heaven with all of those goals coming from Barcelona players - two from Frank de Boer, two from Patrick Kluivert, a further two from Boudewijn Zenden and another by Ronald de Boer.

Referees for rest of the tournament

BRUSSELS, June 23: The UEFA on Wednesday announced a list of eight referees for the remaining matches of the Euro 2000, reports AFP.

UEFA Referees Committee president Joseph Mifsud explained that the decision to retain eight referees for the remainder of the tournament should not be taken as a criticism of those who did not make the list.

The election was very hard to make because we had no real critics to make of the referees who are going home. Quite the contrary: they were very good. But we had to make a choice. Those who are staying in Brussels are not here as tourists but to work mentally, technically and physically."

The list of retained referees is:

Portugal v Turkey: Dick Jol (Ned)

Italy v Romania: Vitor Manuel Melo Pereira (Por)

Holland v Yugoslavia: Jose Maria Garcia Aranda (Spa)

France v Spain: Pierluigi Collina (Ita)

"Four referees, in addition to the above mentioned quartet, have also been retained to handle matches later in the tournament. They are:

Gunter Benko (Aut)

Hugh Dallas (Sco)

Anders Frisk (Swe)

Markus Merk (Ger)

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000

Sport



French stars Didier Deschamps and Laurent Blanc sprinting in practice at IJmuiden on June 22. —AFP photo

Zidane's Spanish dilemma

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, June 23: France's World Cup winning talisman Zinedine Zidane will doubtless enhance his status of national hero if the world champions see off Spain in Sunday's Euro 2000 quarter-final in Bruges, Belgium, reports AFP.

But a star performance against the Spanish might be less well-received in the Spanish playmaker's own home.

For Zidane's wife Veronique is from Spain and Zidane has already courted domestic disharmony the last time France and Spain met.

The Marseilles-born star scored the only goal in a 1-0 friendly victory for France against Spain in the Stade de France on January 28, 1998, the first match ever contested at the futuristic arena in the Paris suburb of St Denis.

Zidane baptised the Stadium with the only goal but it is his two headed strikes against Brazil that put France on the way to a 3-0 World Cup Final memory that have given the Stade de France - and Zidane himself - a place in the hearts of the French people.

Unlike many of France's World Cup winning stars Zidane remains a modest, even shy man who is less at ease with the media spotlight than other more extrovert members of the France 98 team like Fabien Barthez, Laurent Blanc

or Bixente Lizarazu.

Zidane believes in the virtues of humility and respect that he says were instilled in him by his Algerian parents Ismail, a nightwatchman, and Malika - a housewife and full-time mother to Zidane and his four siblings - in Marseilles.

He also remains close to his childhood friend from Marseille Malek - a frequent visitor to his Turin home once inhabited by Christian Vieri - but his best friend in football is his fellow 'Bleu' and former Bordeaux colleague Christophe Dugarry.

Some unkind commentators have suggested that Dugarry's prolonged career in the national team is because of his friendship with Zidane.

A probable line up at this stage could read van der Sar (or Westerveld) in goal, Michael Reiziger, Jaap Stam, Frank de Boer and Artur Numan in defence going from right to left.

Ronald de Boer (or Overmars), Phillip Cocu, Edgar Davids and Boudewijn Zenden would be in midfield, also right to left.

Up front, Dennis Bergkamp, criticized by legend Johan Cruyff on television for his performance against France, would keep his place alongside Patrick Kluivert in attack.

How Veronique, a former dancer, will react if her husband eliminates her mother country remains to be seen.

But she is known to be keen to return to her homeland and last year Zidane admitted that he wanted his next career move to be to either Real Madrid or Barcelona because his spouse was not settled in Italy.

If Zidane ends Spain's interest in Euro 2000 on Sunday then he might have to delay that move a little longer.

ZINEDINE ZIDANE

Camacho has a point to prove



JOSE CAMACHO

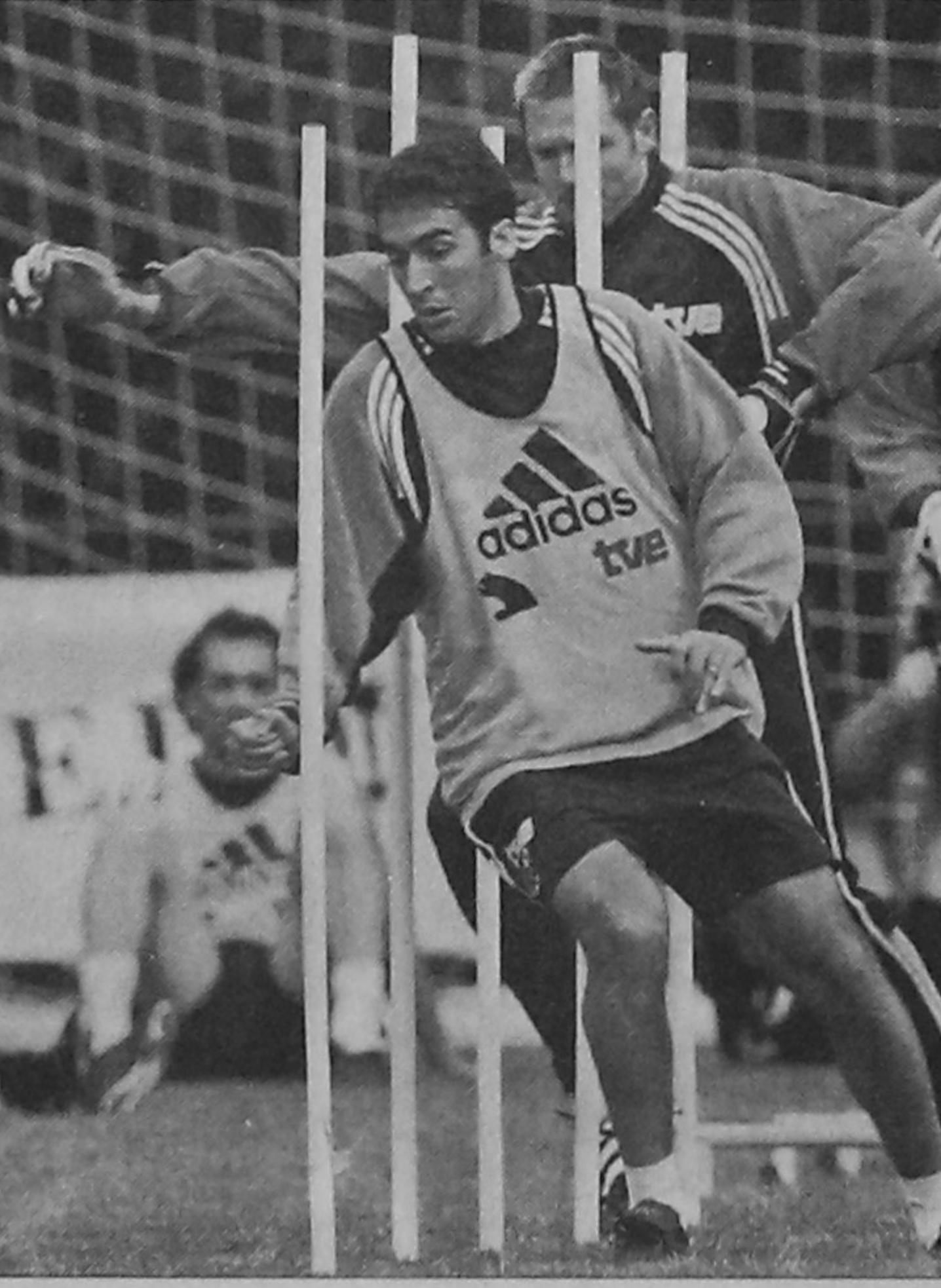
made me feel 16 years younger. It was a real tonic," said the

1984 veteran. Goikoetxea was less carried away than his former teammate, saying: "I lived this experience against (West) Germany in 1984 but the match with Yugoslavia was a more complicated affair."

Camacho, meanwhile, admits he is trying to instil the spirit of 1984 into his charges and now believes his team will prosper from being the underdogs for the first time in the competition.

Spain traditionally lose against theoretically poorer teams but also have the reputation of performing at their best against the big teams.

"I would rather be eliminated by the world champions," said Camacho, delighted to be relieved of the favourites tag. "It (being underdogs) suits us just fine."



Raul, the Spanish ace going through a zigzag routine during practice at Tegelen yesterday. —AFP photo

Ronald de Boer, Van der Sar struggling

HOENDERLOO, Netherlands, June 23: Injured players Ronald de Boer and Edwin van der Sar are still fighting to be fit for Holland's Euro 2000 quarter-final against Yugoslavia in Rotterdam on Sunday, reports AFP.

Coach Frank Rijkaard told a press conference at their training base in Hoenderloo on Friday that he would assess the situation on both players moment by moment.

Ronald de Boer, whom Rijkaard did not expect to train on Friday afternoon (1530 GMT), injured his groin in training on Tuesday and could be replaced on the right side of midfield by Marc Overmars should he not pull through.

Van der Sar could be replaced by Liverpool's Sander Westerveld who came in for the 3-2 victory over France in their final group D match on Wednesday.

The 29-year-old Juventus star injured his left leg in trying to save Michael Schonberg's 80th minute penalty in the co-hosts 3-0 win over Denmark in Rotterdam last Friday.

Rijkaard said van der Sar is still training separately and has not joined the group yet. As far as selection against Yugoslavia I have no clue whether he will be available.

"We will take the situation as it comes from moment to moment. It's difficult to tell what will happen in a couple of days time."

On Ronald de Boer, Rijkaard said: "He is making good progress and has been treated extensively. I will talk to the medical staff shortly before training. I do not expect him to train this afternoon."

A probable line up at this stage could read van der Sar (or Westerveld) in goal, Michael Reiziger, Jaap Stam, Frank de Boer and Artur Numan in defence going from right to left.

Ronald de Boer (or Overmars), Phillip Cocu, Edgar Davids and Boudewijn Zenden would be in midfield, also right to left.

Up front, Dennis Bergkamp, criticized by legend Johan Cruyff on television for his performance against France, would keep his place alongside Patrick Kluivert in attack.

How Veronique, a former dancer, will react if her husband eliminates her mother country remains to be seen.

But she is known to be keen to return to her homeland and last year Zidane admitted that he wanted his next career move to be to either Real Madrid or Barcelona because his spouse was not settled in Italy.

If Zidane ends Spain's interest in Euro 2000 on Sunday then he might have to delay that move a little longer.

ZINEDINE ZIDANE

Hair raising Carpathian tale!

BRUSSELS, June 23: Playmaker Gheorghe Hagi and his Romanian team-mates at Euro 2000 are getting up to some hair-raising antics at Euro 2000 - just like in the World Cup in France in 1998, reports AFP.

Hagi, suspended for the match with England, vowed to his team-mates that he would shave his head if they beat Kevin Keegan's men to ensure qualification without his help.

His team-mates duly obliged but they have now vowed to do the same if they beat Italy to reach the semi-finals.

In France 98 every single Romanian player emerged for the match with Tunisia with bleached blond hair - making identification a nightmare for watching journalists.

England were a joke' says Sousa

BRUSSELS, June 23: England's defenders at Euro 2000 were so bad that their clumsy antics reduced Portugal's Paulo Sousa to laughter, the playmaker said Thursday, reports AFP.

Sousa was on the bench when Portugal came back from 2-0 down to beat England 3-2 in their opening match in Group A, after outclassing Kevin Keegan's men in midfield with Luis Figo and Manuel Rui Costa out.

Figo scored one of the goals of the tournament as he advanced towards the retreating Tony Adams and cracked a 30-metre shot past the Arsenal defender and into the top right hand corner of the net.

Reliving the night on Thursday, Sousa told Italy's ANSA news agency: "The English were a disappointment. They've only got (Paul) Scholes and (David) Beckham - the rest of them are clumsy, slow and easy to get past."

"I was even laughing on the bench when I saw their defenders heading back towards their own penalty area rather than trying to tackle Figo or Rui Costa."

Portugal's next opponents are Turkey, in Saturday's quarter-final in Amsterdam.

"We mustn't underestimate them," he said. "They have real character and they never give up. Their only weakness is on the flanks - and that's where we have to attack them."

Germany finished bottom of their group and played possibly their worst game ever against a Portuguese second string side which coach Erich Ribbeck admitted had torn them asunder.

That 3-0 defeat and collective talk of being "ashamed" did

Not everybody pleased with Pitbull's antics

HOENDERLOO, Netherlands, June 23: Edgar Davids, known as Pitbull for his stocky, aggressive style, is once again at the centre of a storm at a European Championships amid a high profile career where his off-pitch notoriety is as well known as his tireless footballing presence, reports AFP.

The gifted midfielder with fire in his belly was described by colleague Dennis Bergkamp on Thursday as the "engine" of the team and he certainly covered every blade of grass in Holland's first three Euro 2000 games.

Yet the limelight, whether positive or negative, is once again firmly directed on this 27-year-old Juventus midfielder.

During Euro 1996 there was a split along racial lines in the Dutch camp after Davids was sent home by coach Guus Hiddink. A fuming Davids had had a very public row with Hiddink after he was left on the substitutes bench against Switzerland.

The Surinam-born Davids has this time been thrust into controversy after being criticised on television by Dutch legend Johan Cruyff for his performance in their 3-2 victory against Yugoslavia.

Cruyff, who played in the 1974 World Cup Final but refused to compete in the 1978 tournament in Argentina, said Davids should talk less and play more football after a match where the midfielder frequently made his views known to officials.

Ironically Davids won the official man-of-the-match award after Wednesday night's match and appeared to be one of his best players.

On Thursday Dutch coach

Rijkaard told a press conference after light training at their Hoenderloo base to the north of Arnhem: "I always support my players despite criticism. If there is any criticism I will let the players know where their failures are."

"I'm happy with Davids' commitment, fighting spirit and he's been very positive. He's worked hard for the team. I have great admiration for Davids both as a football player and as a human being."

"We must not be dragged down by all the negative criticism coming our way. We have to keep working hard to try and get good results."

Rijkaard added: "He (Davids) played an important part in the

A year after Ajax won the European Cup in 1995 1-0 against AC Milan in Vienna, he actually moved to that Italian club but did not impress. Since moving to Juventus from there, he has been more successful. When Frenchman Didier Deschamps moved to Chelsea, Davids made the midfield running role his own in support of Zinedine Zidane, also of Ajax.

Davids has not yet matched the same heights with Juventus as he reached with Ajax although they won the 1998 Italian title.

Davids had successful eye surgery for glaucoma in September last year and has to wear swimming goggles to protect the affected right eye, making him more visible than ever.

Fame follows his every move and a Euro 2000 title win on home soil would take him a step further to becoming a football legend like the Dutch heroes of the 70s and the 1988 European Championship-winning team.

EDGAR DAVIDS

second half last night. He has no doubt of his value to the team and I'm very happy with the role he plays.

"I don't think all the criticism has been negative. We will try to take advantage of criticism we received in the