

# EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000



## TOURNEY TREATS

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

### EUSEBIO VISITS SAINT EUSEBIO

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

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 Recber 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 BRONCKHORST

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 dampen 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 criticisms 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: Dietrich Jol (Ned)  
Italy v Romania: Victor 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:

Gunther Benko (Aut)  
Hugh Dallas (Sco)  
Anders Frisk (Swe)  
Markus Merk (Ger)



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 he leads the world champions to victory 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 Juventus 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 Marseille-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 victory 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, a small, a nightwatchman, and Malika - a housewife and full-time mother to Zidane and his four siblings - in Marseilles.

And the former Cannes and Bordeaux star believes that those values were instrumental in the success that made him the 1999 FIFA World Player of the Year.

"In football you have to be generous. I give the ball to a team-mate 99 times out of 100 when I think he is in a better

position than me. My football is influenced by my father," said Zidane.

"My father is wonderful," said Zidane. "He taught me that if you are respectful to everyone you will earn respect."

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.

Zidane's idol as a youngster was Uruguayan star Enzo Francescoli, who was the hero of the Marseille club Zidane supported at the time.

He named his first child Enzo and also has another son Luca.

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.

1984 veteran. Goikoetxea was less carried away than his former team-mate, 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 instill 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."

Conspiracy theorists in Spain still believe the bookings of Maceda and Goikoetxea, who was dubbed 'the Butcher of Bilbao' when his tackle broke the leg of Diego Maradona in a match between Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao, was part of a plot to help the French win their first major trophy.

In fairness Spain's feat in finishing runners-up surprised many after an unconvincing qualification campaign although the side coached by Miguel Munoz did have a record-breaking 12-1 victory over Malta.

Many in Spain are already drawing parallels between that side and the one currently led by Camacho since he replaced Javier Clemente at the helm of the national team in 1998 after a disastrous 3-2 defeat by Cyprus.

In 1984 Spain saw off the mighty West Germany with a single goal from Antonio Maceda in the last minute.

And qualification for the quarter-final was sealed in Euro 2000 by two injury time goals from Gaizka Mendietza and Alfonso when Spain looked destined to live up to their reputation of choking on the big stage.

Maceda watched the match live back in Spain and said that Alfonso's late strike had rejuvenated him.

"Watching Alfonso hugging his team-mates after scoring

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

—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.

Keeper 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 on van der Sar: "He's 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 Arthur 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.

## Hair raising Carpathian tale!

BRUSSELS, June 23: Playmaker George 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 outstanding.

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."

## 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 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 France to book a quarter-final spot with 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 their 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 in important part in the

pers and by Johan Cruyff on television."

Davids was born in Paramaribo, the Surinam capital, but knew nothing of that tiny South American country as he left it for Holland aged 18 months.

As a small boy he used to play continually with his brother in the northern Amsterdam suburbs till, like teammate Patrick Kluivert, he signed up for his first football club Schellingwoude in the same area.

He has certainly known his footballing highs, earning with Ajax three league titles, a Dutch Cup, three Dutch Super Cups, a UEFA Cup, a European Cup, a European Super Cup and a World Club Cup.

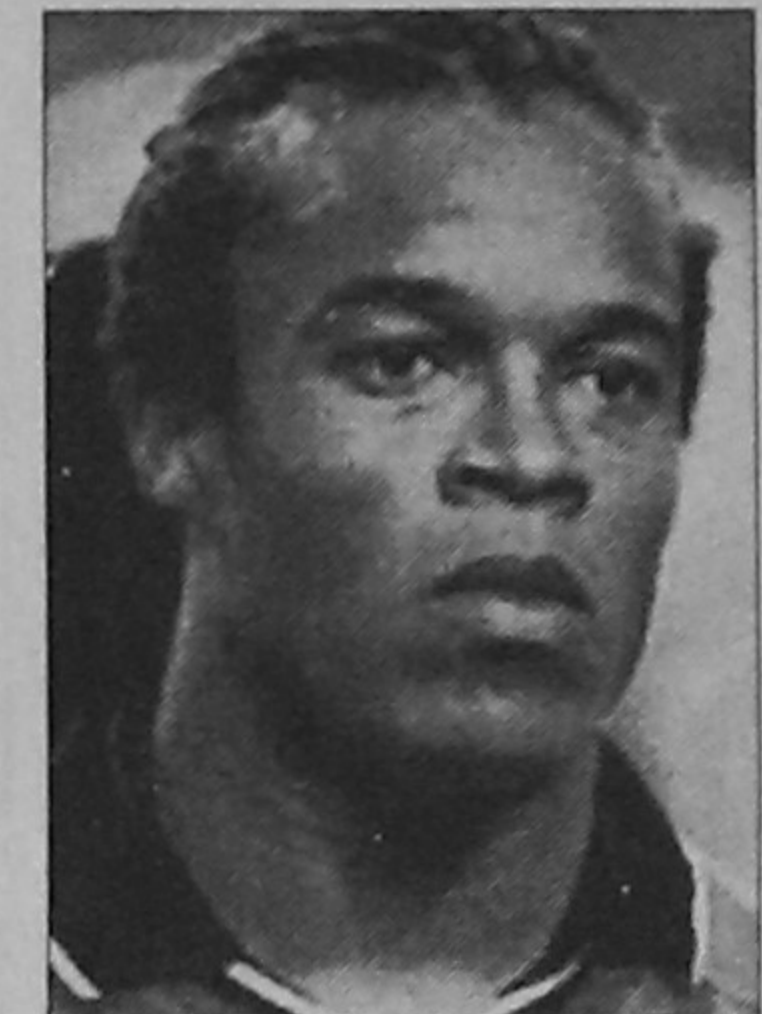
A year after Ajax won the European Cup in 1995 1-0 against AC Milan in Vienna, he actually moved to that Italian club but did not impress. Since moving to Juventus from there, he has been more successful.

When Frenchman Didier Deschamps moved to Chelsea, Davids made the midfield running role his own in support of Zinedine Zidane, also of France.

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 newspa-

## Waiting for Dennis' menace

HOENDERLOO, Netherlands, June 23: Non-flying Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp, ruled out of the 2002 World Cup in Japan and Korea for his fear of aeroplanes, has helped Holland soar into the Euro 2000 quarter-finals in what is his last major event in an orange shirt, reports AFP.

Bergkamp is to retire from international football, hopefully for him following victory in the July 2 final in Rotterdam.

The 31-year-old Bergkamp, who plays his club football for English side Arsenal, has won 77 caps and scored 37 goals and is one of few footballers whose style can be genuinely described as elegant.

He had decided to retire for personal reasons and because of his well-documented fear of flying which forced him to take trains to matches in Europe.

Bergkamp's aeroplane fears date back to a rough ride he had between Chicago and Miami during the 1994 World Cup Finals in the United States.

When asked how much it meant to him to qualify for the group in his last major event, he said after training at Hoenderloo on Thursday: "It's special of course. It's a good thing to get to the next stage because it would have been a big blow to have gone out in my last competition."

Answering criticism from some quarters, he said with a tongue in his cheek: "Maybe we need to play better football, yet drop points. What can I say?"

"After the first game we

started to play better football. I think our win over the French must have hurt them because we came from 2-1 down. For us it was a great game."

His winning formula for the rest of the tournament was simple. "You cannot waste goalscoring chances and you must not give goals away."

Bergkamp was a slight liability against the Czechs which



DENNIS BERGKAMP

they fortunately beat 1-0. Dutch coach Frank Rijkaard said Bergkamp's roaming from his position on the right in the second half of the Czech game created space for their opponents to exploit.

Bergkamp did tire towards the end of the match and it was probably a good decision by Rijkaard to substitute him by Aron Winter for the last quar-

ter-hour in their next two matches against Denmark and France.

Bergkamp was forever dangerous around the French area and even had a slight effort rebound back off the crossbar midway through the first period.

The Arsenal striker is surely one of the most gifted players to have hit the international scene during the 90s, winning his first cap in September 1990 against Italy.

His ball control is exemplary and has a striker's positional instinct in front of goal.

Like most great players, he can win the match with one piece of skill, with no better illustration than his superb strike against Argentina in the quarter-final of the 1998 World Cup.

He controlled, with the deftest of touches, a ball coming at an awkward angle above his shoulder as he ran into the box. This fabulous piece of skill set himself up perfectly to score from an acute angle on the right and earn Holland a semi-final against Brazil.

He first hit the headlines with Dutch club Ajax before going on to win a UEFA Cup winners medal with Inter Milan and then played in Arsenal's Double winning side.

It remains to be seen whether the non-flying Dutchman can make his team soar once more to the dizzy heights of a European championship win, his predecessors having captured the crown 12 years ago.

## Matthaeus gives a piece of his mind

COLOGNE, Germany, June 23: Lothar Matthaeus dished out some harsh criticism Thursday, blasting his German teammates' lack of character at Euro 2000 while former Germany player Thomas Helmer laid some of the blame at the veteran libero's own feet, reports AFP.

The inquest into the dismal Euro 2000 performance of the outgoing champions continues to reverberate around Germany.

"We really have to take a long hard look at the players' character," Matthaeus said in Kicker magazine.

"We are better off selecting a player who goes about his stuff with heart and who is proud to play for Germany."

Never again can a German team be allowed to take the field where each individual earns millions but isn't prepared to give his all. It is a downright disgrace and totally lacking in character when some of those involved choose to get drunk after such a catastrophic game and such a poor tournament."

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 stop some players returning to the German team's Dutch headquarters and drinking their blues away until the early hours of the morning.

Journalists there reported hearing drunken revelry from within the Vaals hotel.

Matthaeus is bitter that his unrivalled international career should end under such a cloud.

He was singled out for fierce criticism when he dragged himself through the opening match against Romania with a thigh muscle injury which hadn't healed completely after two weeks rest and never found his rhythm again.

That set the tone for the



LOTHAR MATTHAEUS

tournament and the 39-year-old Matthaeus - along with the rest of the team - failed to recover.

The infamous Portugal game was Matthaeus' last for his country and marked his 150th cap, a world record, although he hasn't had time to savour it.

"This sort of milestone was something I should have been able to feel proud about," Matthaeus growled. "I didn't give a damn though after all the bitching of the last two weeks. If I had known how it was going to be I would never have made my come back."

Former Bayern Munich club mate Thomas Helmer who was also a member of the German team which won the 1996 European title believes Matthaeus should shoulder some of the blame himself.

Writing in the national daily Die Welt Helmer accused the New York based libero of pulling the team down with him.

"Everyone (in the team) thought Lothar should not have been allowed to play. But no one dared say that in public. For me it would have sent out the right signal if Lothar had voluntarily dropped himself from the team," Helmer wrote.

"The whole thing reminds me of the 1998 World Cup. Lothar's presence held back other players. They couldn't develop and play their own game."