



Scary

EDEGEM, Netherlands, June 24: Antiterrorist police arrested a group of five armed, masked men close to the hotel housing the Yugoslav Euro 2000 players, team officials said on Saturday, reports AP.

No shots were fired and the players, who are due to face the Netherlands in the quarterfinal at Rotterdam on Sunday, didn't know anything about the incident, which happened late on Friday evening.

According to Yugoslav team security official Costa Vukovic there was security alert at about 10 pm. Five men armed with guns wearing masks were spotted on the edge of the forest near the hotel by a woman who was walking her dog.

Vukovic said that anti terrorist police came into the hotel to protect the players and five men were arrested in the forest. They had rubber bullets in their possession. They had stepped out of a German registered car and never got closer than some 200 metres (yards) from the hotel.

According to Vukovic, the five men claim they were playing war games. The players were told to go to their rooms on the first floor and turn their lights off. The whole incident took one hour and 15 minutes.

"It's a small incident because it ended this way," Vukovic said. "Five people came out of a German-registered car. A woman walking her dog saw them and phoned the police. Police were very quick to react. We didn't want to panic the players and told them to go to their room."

Dutch police were initially unable to comment on the incident.

Men of the matches

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, June 24(AFP): Two players - Thierry Henry of France and Erik Mykland of Norway - have twice won the UEFA man-of-the-match award during the group stages of Euro 2000.

Striker Henry was voted best player for France-Denmark and France-Czech Republic. Henry was rested for the third French game against the Netherlands.

Midfielder Mykland was selected by the UEFA panel for his play against Spain and Yugoslavia. There will be no more awards for Mykland, however, as the Norwegians were eliminated.

Portugal were the only country with three different players being cited - Luis Figo against England, Fernando Couto against Romania and Sergio Conceicao against Germany.

The UEFA panel is made up of Gerard Houllier of France, Bert Vogts of Germany, Jozef Venglos of Slovakia, Anghel Iordanescu of Romania, Rinus Michels of the Netherlands, Roy Hodgson of England and Andy Roxburgh of Scotland.

Man-of-the-match awards:

Belgium-Sweden Emile Mpenza (Bel)

Turkey-Italy Filippo Inzaghi (Ita)

France-Denmark Thierry Henry (Fra)

Netherlands-Czech Republic Pavel Nedved (Cze)

Germany-Romania Mehmet Scholl (Ger)

Portugal-England Luis Figo (Por)

Spain-Norway Erik Mykland (Nor)

Yugoslavia-Slovenia Zlatko Zahovic (Slo)

Italy-Belgium Francesco Totti (Ita)

Sweden-Turkey Fredrik Ljungberg (Swe)

Czech Republic-France Thierry Henry (Fra)

Denmark-Netherlands Frank De Boer (Ned)

Romania-Portugal Fernando Couto (Por)

England-Germany Alan Shearer (Eng)

Slovenia-Spain Raul (Spa)

Norway-Yugoslavia Dragan Stojkovic (Yug)

Italy-Sweden Henrik Larsson (Swe)

Turkey-Belgium Hakan Sukur (Tur)

England-Romania Dorinel Munteanu (Rom)

Portugal-Germany Sergio Conceicao (Por)

Yugoslavia-Spain Josep Guardiola (Spa)

Slovenia-Norway Erik Mykland (Nor)

Denmark-Czech Republic Vladimir Smicer (Cze)

France-Netherlands Edgar Davids (Ned)

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000

QUARTERFINAL PREVIEW

Holland v Yugoslavia: Get ready for the unexpected

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, June 24: Co-hosts Holland and unpredictable Yugoslavia meet here Sunday in a Euro 2000 quarter-final tie opposing two of the most talented yet rugged teams in the competition, reports AFP.

After Yugoslavia's 1-0 victory over Norway, coach Nils Johan Semb accused the Yugoslavs of "sabotage" following an often farcical second half replete with yellow cards and riddled with fouls, play-acting and off-the-ball incidents.

Vujadin Boskov's side were forced to hang on for the final five minutes of the match after the dismissal of Mateja Kezman in the 88th minute for an ugly foul on Erik Mykland precisely 44 seconds after he came off the bench.

In earlier matches, Sinisa Mihajlovic was sent off in their opening 3-3 draw with Slovenia and Slavisa Jokanovic is suspended for the Dutch game following his red card in the 4-3 loss to Spain.

It could be said both Yugoslavian footballers and press are finding it difficult to strike the right balance between asserting themselves and outright bad sportsmanship.

The Yugoslavian press slammed French referee Gilles Veissiere following the Spain defeat which saw the Yugoslavs let in two injury time goals.

The Serbian television station RTS said only "games other than sporting ones" would prevent Yugoslavia going further in the competition which was interpreted as a clear reference that they may be robbed by the referee.

When asked if he expected a physically tough contest, Rijkaard said at a press conference on Friday: "Yugoslavia have a certain way of playing and they go all out for the result. That is not a criticism and they have technical skills and everything a really professional team needs at the moment."

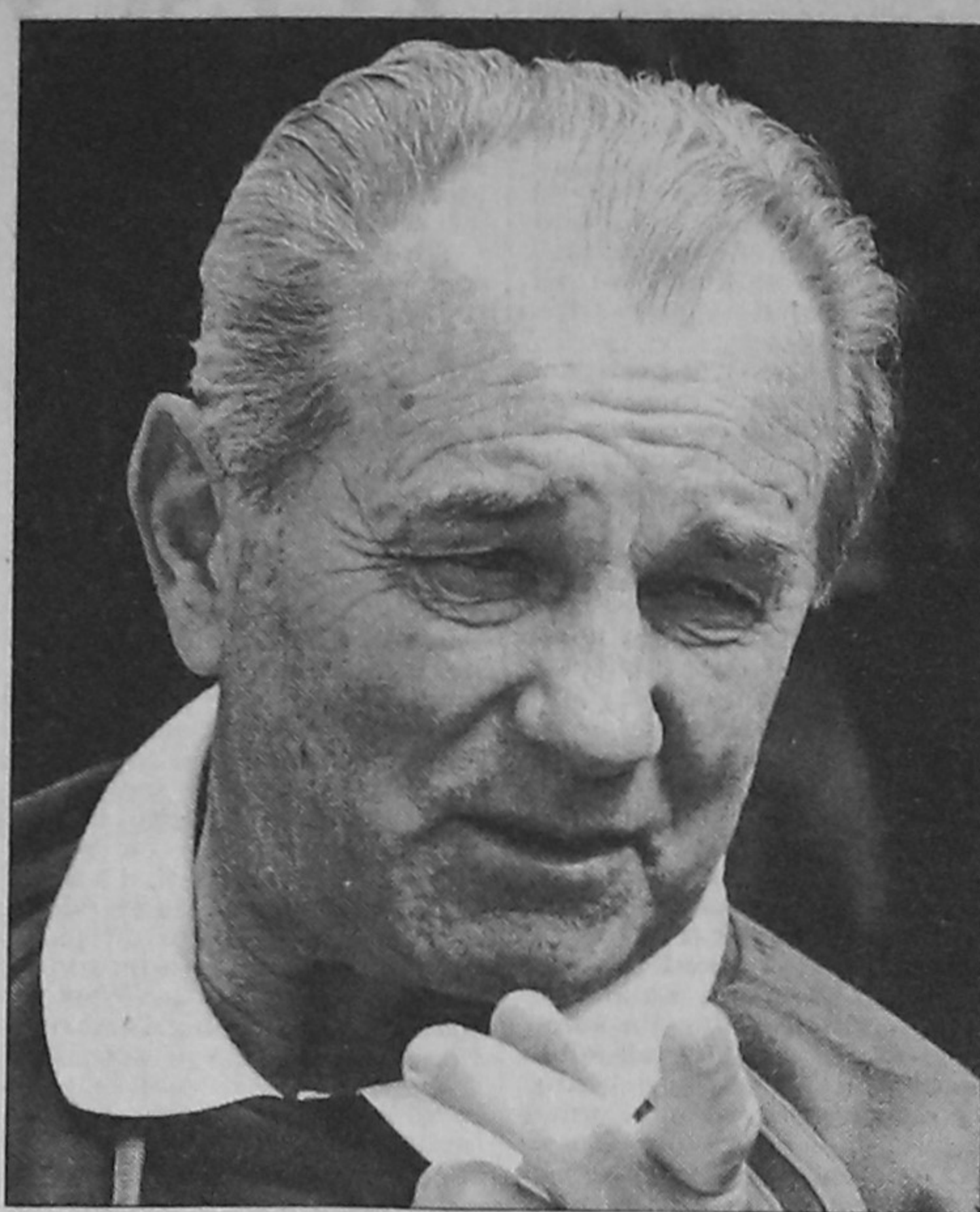
"I have to concentrate on our own team and give them advice not to react in the wrong way."

There is evidence in this fixture two years is not a long time in football. Holland's team for this game is only likely to have two changes from the 1998 team which played Yugoslavia, with Boudewijn Zenden and Patrick Kluijert likely to play instead of Clarence Seedorf and Marc Overmars.

Of the Yugoslavian 11 which started the 1998 game against Holland, losing 2-1 in Toulouse, eight are still in the current squad.

Rijkaard said of the 1998 game when he was assistant to coach Guus Hiddink: "I found it a very tense match. From what I remember we gave away the goal after letting Yugoslavia get forward too easily."

"We did not dominate that game but we won on will power



Vujadin Boskov, the Yugoslav coach makes a point during a press conference at Eddegem yesterday. —AFP photo

and team spirit."

Holland's probable line up is Van der Sar (or Westerveld) in goal, with Michael Reiziger, Jaap Stam, Frank de Boer and Arthur Numan in defence.

Paul Bosvelt has a slight chance of keeping Reiziger out of the right back position after his impressive showing against France. Numan is likely to get the left back spot, over talented ball player Giovanni Van Bronckhorst back from suspension, because of his defensive strength.

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

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

THEIR STATE

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands (AP): A look ahead at Sunday's Euro 2000 quarterfinal between the Netherlands and Yugoslavia.

THE NETHERLANDS
Injuries: Goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar should be back after missing the game against France. But midfielder Ronald de Boer is a doubt after straining his hip and groin.

Suspensions: None.

Worries: The Dutch will be concerned about Yugoslavia's never-say-die attitude. Tour-

nament top scorer Savo Milosevic will also be a handful. The Yugoslavs will also be out to avenge a 2-1 defeat at the 1998 World Cup.

Expectations: As host nation, the weight of expectation will again be huge in front of a packed Rotterdam crowd. Dutch fans don't want a mere win - they want style and panache. The Dutch camp hit out at the national media this week, saying it should stop its constant criticism and get behind the team.

YUGOSLAVIA
Injuries: Defender Goran Djorovic is out with a leg muscle injury. Midfielder Vladimir Jugovic, suffering from back spasms, is also a doubt.

Suspensions: Defender Slavisa Jokanovic is out after being sent off against Spain.

Worries: With injuries and suspensions taking their toll, Yugoslavia fears it could suffer against the Dutch. The team's preparations have also been overshadowed by concerns about its fans. One threw a coin at the referee against Spain, while two others ran onto the pitch in an apparent attempt to attack him.

Expectations: The fiery Yugoslavs seem to thrive on adversity and have often saved their best for when they've been reduced to ten men. It's sure to be red-hot in Rotterdam against the Dutch. But that could be just what they need.

Hefty fine on the Yugoslavs

ROTTERDAM, June 24: Yugoslavia's football federation has been hit Friday with a hefty 120,000 Swiss franc (72,400 dollar) fine by UEFA's disciplinary commission as a result of the crowd trouble that marred their midweek Euro 2000 match against Spain, reports AFP.

In a statement issued here the commission explained: "The decision was based on a series of incidents spotted during and immediately after the final whistle."

In particular the penalty was sparked by the 14 flares exploding onto the pitch and the three attempted attacks on French referee Gilles Veissiere following Spain's last gasp 4-3 win which dumped Yugoslavia out of the competition.

Two Yugoslav supporters threatened Veissiere after he'd red carded Yugoslavia's Slavisa Jokanovic in the 63rd minute and again after the final whistle.

The frenchman came under attack again as he made his way off the pitch, being hit full on the face by a coin.

The commission highlighted the "very bad conduct of the Yugoslav supporters, the throwing of dangerous objects and the potential danger prompted by the pitch invasion" as well as mentioning the six yellow cards and one red handed out to the Yugoslav players in the match itself.

Yugoslavia has up to midnight Saturday to appeal. The commission suspended Jokanovic for one match.

World champs still fairest

BRUSSELS, June 24(AFP): World champions France are also topping the UEFA fairplay league at the completion of the group stages.

Roger Lemerre's side have a coefficient of 8.17 points ahead of Portugal with 8.00 points and Spain with 7.92 points.

Bottom of the pile by a long way are Yugoslavia with just 5.75 points. The Yugoslavs notched up 12 yellow cards and three red in qualifying for a quarter-final against the Netherlands.

The UEFA coefficient takes account of red and yellow cards as well as a more subjective general measure of how the players are respecting the rules and etiquette of the game.

Both England and Turkey were discounted because of fan violence at their games.

UEFA fairplay standings after group stages:

1. France	8.17 points
2. Portugal	8.00
3. Spain	7.92
4. Netherlands	7.83
5. Italy	7.75
6. Sweden	7.67
7. Denmark	7.58
8. Romania	7.58
9. Slovenia	7.58
10. Belgium	7.50
11. Germany	7.42
12. Norway	7.17
13. Czech Republic	6.92
14. Yugoslavia	5.75

Leboeuf's advice

LONDON, June 24: French Euro 2000 defender Frank Leboeuf has Friday urged English footballers to move to foreign climes if they want to turn around the dismal form of the England team, reports AFP.

Leboeuf told the Press Association that - rather than cutting the number of foreigners in the English Premiership - England hopefuls should try life on the continent.

World Cup winner Leboeuf, who plays for Chelsea, said: "I think the solution for England is for their best players to go abroad and get more experience. That is the reason for France's strengths at the moment. Most of our players play abroad."

"But teams like Spain, Germany or England are struggling because most of their players are still in their country."

"(Zinedine) Zidane became a better player in Italy and it's the same for me and (Emmanuel) Petit in England."

"You get confidence and pick up different things, like in Italy there is great technique and in England they have great spirit."

Steve McManaman is a good example because after just one season at Real Madrid he has become a much better player."

Popescu out of tournament

BRUSSELS, June 24: Romanian defender George Popescu will miss the rest of the Euro 2000 finals after tearing a thigh muscle in the 3-2 win over England, a Romanian team source said Friday.

The Galatasaray player has been told he would have to rest the injury for four weeks before attempting to train again. The Euro 2000 final is on July 2.

Romania take on Italy in the quarter-finals on Saturday and Popescu's place has gone to Miodrag Belodedici.

Davids far from satisfied

HOENDERLOO, Netherlands, June 24: Dutch star midfielder Edgar Davids says he's unhappy with the Netherlands' performance so far at the Euro 2000 Championships, reports AP.

The Dutch, who won all three of their Group D matches, have not looked particularly convincing, and have been the brunt of harsh criticism from national media and former international players.

Davids, who was singled out by Dutch soccer legend Johan Cruyff for personal criticism during the Netherlands' 3-2 victory over France last Wednesday, agreed the team was not at their best.

"Honestly, I'm not really happy with the way we're playing," Davids said Friday. "It's okay and our results have been okay but we need to do more."

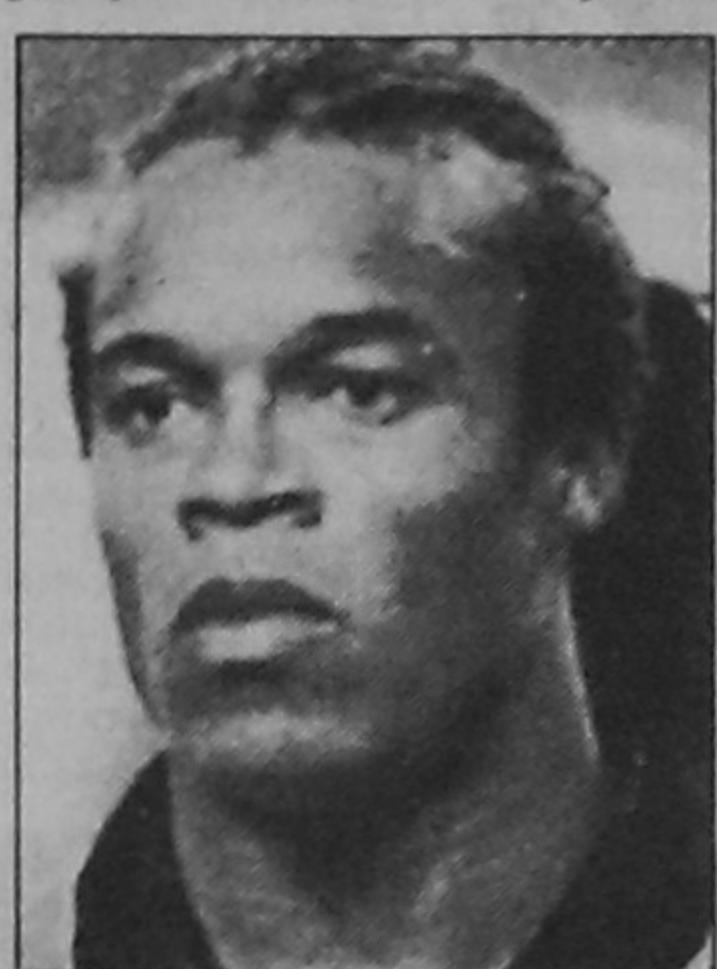
"I still feel we're the best team but we haven't played the best games," he said. "I'm not happy with that. We certainly can do more."

The co-hosts barely scraped through their opening match with a lucky 1-0 victory against the Czechs, beginning strongly only to collapse in the second half and just nicking the victory thanks to a lucky, controversial last-minute penalty kick in the final two minutes of the game.

Against 1992 champions Denmark, the Dutch struggle to

find their pace and were held to 0-0 in the opening half, before a solid second half performance earned them a 3-0 win.

Playing against a French team composed of mostly reserve players in their final group match Wednesday, the



EDGAR DAVIDS

Dutch conceded two unnecessary corner-kick goals before rallying back to win 3-2.

Now the team must face tough Yugoslavia in Sunday's quarterfinal in Rotterdam.

By winning Group D ahead of reigning World Cup champion France, the Netherlands retained home advantage and avoided packing up their camp in Hoenderloo to move to Bel-

gium for the knockout phase.

Ironically, it is home advantage that has created an undercurrent of tension on the Dutch team, Davids suggested, because playing at home has proved as much a heavy burden as an honour.

Dutch fans are traditionally demanding, and have had particularly high hopes for the national squad after the team showed such promise at the World Cup two years ago, reaching the semifinals before losing in a penalty shootout to Brazil.

Davids said the team is under pressure to deliver attractive football.

"Of course there is more pressure than two years ago at the World Cup," Davids said. "The funny part is that it's because we play in our own country, supported by our own fans."

"And also because we played so well two years ago and now everybody expects us to win this time around. They always do. They always want so much."

Davids said it was important for the players to prove themselves to the Dutch public, heavily influenced by the endless criticism in local newspapers and national television. But it wouldn't be easy, he added.

"We will try to show how great a team we have and what great players we have," Davids said. "And the only way to show that is to win the tournament."

Keown condemns Keegan's tactics

LONDON, June 24: Central defender Martin Keown has blamed "inept tactics" for England's early exit from Euro 2000, reports AFP.

England coach Kevin Keegan claimed the fundamental reason why his side failed to make the quarter finals was the players' inability to pass the ball well or keep possession.

But Arsenal defender Keown reckons England's tactical shortcomings were responsible for defeats against Group A rivals Portugal and Romania.

Keown told The Sun: "There is a need for honesty. The bottom line is we were inept tactically. We were exposed against teams we could have beaten."

Keegan was widely criticised for his tactics after England's 3-2 defeat in their opening match against Portugal.

England, who went into the game with a 4-4-2 formation, took an early 2-0 lead but were being overrun in midfield and Keegan's failure to change tactics aided Portugal's comeback.

Keown's outburst will come as a hammer blow to Keegan, who places great importance on the loyalty and support of his players.

The morning after England's 3-2 defeat against Romania, Keegan stressed how much it meant to him to have the backing of his players - and admitted it would be a problem if any of them broke ranks to criticise him.

He said then: "It's nice when the FA back you, it's nice when the fans get behind you - they've been terrific in the stadiums - but if any one player said anything detrimental about a coach you've got a problem."

Keegan felt after the Romania game that he still had the support of his players but underlined what it would mean if he lost it.

He said: "It means everything to me. If the players don't back you then you might as well go. I would go into Lancaster Gate and say 'here is my resignation'."

It remains to be seen how

Keegan will react to Keown's criticism of England's tactics in the tournament, which is tempered by praise for the England coach's willingness to keep faith with players who are into their thirties.

Keown said: "I know the England boss believes no matter what your age, young or old, if you can do it for him you'll be picked. I know because I've developed as an international under his guidance."

But Keown riles at the suggestion that England's lack of progress in Euro 2000 can be put down to technical shortcomings.

Keegan was widely criticised for his tactics after England's 3-2 defeat in their opening match against Portugal.

England, who went into the game with a 4-4-2 formation, took an early 2-0 lead but were being overrun in midfield and Keegan's failure to change tactics aided Portugal's comeback.

Keown's outburst will come as a hammer blow to Keegan, who places great importance on the loyalty and support of his players.

The morning after England's 3-2 defeat against Romania, Keegan stressed how much it meant to him to have the backing of his players - and admitted it would be a problem if any of them broke ranks to criticise him.

He said then: "It's nice when the FA back you, it's nice when the fans get behind you - they've been terrific in the stadiums - but if any one player said anything detrimental about a coach you've got a problem."

Keegan felt after the Romania game that he still had the support of his players but underlined what it would mean if he lost it.

It remains to be seen how

Keegan will react to Keown's criticism of England's tactics in the tournament, which is tempered by praise for the England coach's willingness to keep faith with players who are into their thirties.

Keown said: "I know the England boss believes no matter what your age, young or old, if you can do it for him you'll be picked. I know because I've developed as an international under his guidance."

But Keown riles at the suggestion that England's lack of progress in Euro 2000 can be put down to technical shortcomings.

Keegan was widely criticised for his tactics after England's 3-2 defeat in their opening match against Portugal.

England, who went into the game with a 4-4-2 formation, took an early 2-0 lead but were being overrun in midfield and Keegan's failure to change tactics aided Portugal's comeback.

Keown's outburst will come as a hammer blow to Keegan, who places great importance on the loyalty and support of his players.

The morning after England's 3-2 defeat against Romania, Keegan stressed how much it meant to him to have the backing of his players - and admitted it would be a problem if any of them broke ranks to criticise him.

He said then: "It's nice when the FA back you, it's nice when the fans get behind you - they've been terrific in the stadiums - but if any one player said anything detrimental about a coach you've got a problem."

Keegan felt after the Romania game that he still had the support of his players but underlined what it would mean if he lost it.

He said: "It means everything to me. If the players don't back you then you might as well go. I would go into Lancaster Gate and say 'here is my resignation'."

It remains to be seen how

Crozier moved quickly to stress that no pressure will be put on Keegan to make any changes to his backroom staff.

Crucially, Kevin has had, and will continue to have, full responsibility for selecting the England team, its tactics and its performance on the pitch.

"We are all 100 percent behind Kevin because he is the best person for the job. His ability, charisma and inspiration command the support of us all."

Euro 2000: Romanian president put on hold

BUCHAREST, June 24: Romania's players have declined an offer from President Emil Constantinescu to meet with them for a pep talk prior to the final. He is flying from Bucharest to support the side and had planned to meet with the players beforehand, the Prosport daily said.

But instead they have requested that the meeting take place after the game, no matter what the result is, it added.

Thailand arrests 192 people in Euro 2000 gambling spree: report

BANGKOK, June 24: Thailand has arrested 192 people in a crackdown on the gambling spree sparked by the Euro 2000 soccer championships, a report said Saturday.

The Nation newspaper said 31 bookmakers were among those arrested so far, 11 days into the tournament.

Police last month predicted 1.0 billion baht (25 million US) would be wagered on Euro 2000, which has captivated Thai sports fans.

Earlier this month, a Thai court sentenced a soccer bookie to ten months in jail, in an unprecedentedly swift hearing aimed at stamping out gambling during the championship.

It was the first time a jail sentenced had been handed down for the offence.

Punting on football is not allowed here but one bank study estimated that Thais will wager more than 520 million dollars on Euro 2000 matches alone.

TOURNEY TREATS

UNDATED, June 24 (AP): Euro 2000 diary for Saturday, the 15th day of the tournament:

ANELKA FRIEND OR FOE?

Nicolas Anelka didn't exactly endear himself to his Real Madrid teammates last season. And he doesn't intend starting now.

Anelka is praying he is picked by coach Roger Lemerre to play against Spain in Sunday's quarterfinal so that he can get one over his teammates.

"I'm delighted to be coming up against the Spanish. I will score. I know them well and they are good players - but it would be just too great to beat them," he said in comments written on his personal website. "It wouldn't be the first time the sulky striker has had the last laugh."

While at Arsenal, Anelka scored twice against England at Wembley in France's 2-0 victory. He said after that he had enjoyed silencing England's Arsenal contingent who he said had been crowing that the English would win.

Anelka, Spanish soccer's record signing at 23 million pounds (\$34.5 million dollars), was banned from playing for the club earlier this season after refusing to train. He was ostracized by many of the team's senior players, but bounced back with a goal in both legs of the Champions Cup semifinal against Bayern Munich, a competition the Spaniards went on to win.

But there probably won't be many handshakes after Sunday's game.

"Players from Real will be there... and that's why I'm ultra-motivated," Anelka said. "I like these tense games where there's a lot at stake. These are the moments where you surpass yourself."

BLIND MAN

Edgar Davids security glasses have become a security blanket.

The 26-year-old Juventus midfielder, who underwent surgery to treat the glaucoma in his right eye last September and has been wearing the goggles ever since, had been given the green light by doctors a couple of weeks ago to give up his protective eyewear on the pitch.

Spectators had caught a rare glimpse of the "pitbull's" eyes when Davids had shed his special glasses for the Netherlands' 3-0 victory over Denmark in the opening round.

But feeling vulnerable without his goggles, particularly after receiving a ball in the face, Davids has started wearing them again.

While it had felt peculiar to play with them at first, Davids said he now feels "strange" without them.

Davids had the surgery after drug treatment failed to arrest the disease, which is marked by increased pressure within the eye and can lead to blindness.

The glasses dim the light and do other more technical

things," Davids said.

The "more technical things" seem to include filtering the stares of the outside world.

During a press conference at the team's base in Hoenderloo, Davids donned his sunglasses as he walked into the media tent from outside.

ALL BUT KRALJ

Fans of Dutch champion PSV Eindhoven will be roaring on the Oranje against Yugoslavia in the quarterfinal of Euro 2000 on Sunday even though the only player on the field from their club will be trying to stop them scoring.

Ivica Kralj, who joined PSV from Portugal's FC Porto, will be in goal for the Yugoslavs at the De Kuip Stadium and the 1.97-metre (6-foot-5) "keeper could feel a lonely man in Rotterdam.