

Sport

Djorkaeff puts rumours to rest

COLOGNE, Germany, Aug 2: French world champion Youri Djorkaeff finally turned up for training at Kaiserslautern Wednesday, ending rumours that he would not play a second season for the Bundesliga outfit, reports AFP.

Questioned about whether Djorkaeff would turn up or not this week coach Otto Rehhagel said with an uncertain grin: "Let's wait and see."

The 32-year-old midfielder, a celebrated member of France's Euro 2000 winning team, returned to the fray just 10 days before the new Bundesliga season kicks off.

It is still highly uncertain however that he will see out the season in Germany.

Asia to take on the World again

UNDATED, Aug 2 (Internet report): The third one-day limited overs match between Asia XI and the Rest of the World XI will be held in Mumbai either in December or January.

India's Free Press Journal reported on Monday that this will be the third match of the series, which began with Asia's single run victory in Dhaka and continued with the Rest of the World side's 15-run win over a depleted Asia XI at The Oval last weekend.

Quader helpless

From page 13
vincing. There exist some vested interests other than the lack of security and crowd. Are you fully convinced with their excuses?

Q: No, I'm not (convinced). They can easily play there. What I believe is that if they don't try and improve the standard of the game, crowd will automatically start losing interest. What happened in late 80s and early 90s? There were lots of crowds in Mirpur.

DSS: Recently you have said that BNS would only be used for international tournaments. Now, is it not contrary to your statement that BNS has also been given for local football league?

Q: This will happen in this season only. From the next year neither cricket league nor football league will be played at the BNS. It will be exclusively preserved for international tournaments. Cricket will also play their local league at the BNS for the last time this season. Local cricket league will be played at the Fatullah Stadium while football league will be played in Saidabad from the next season.

DSS: But you told the cricket world during our campaign for Test status that BNS is an exclusive cricket venue... But the reality was different. Wasn't it a cheating?

Q: I would not say it was a cheating. Well, if you say that I don't mind. I'm not ashamed of doing that because whatever I have done I have done it for the interest of my country.

DSS: But many think that those two stadia will not be ready before 2002.

Q: That's not true. Both the stadiums will be ready before next season.

DSS: But no football officials accompanied you when you visited Saidabad Stadium two weeks back.

Q: Yes that's true. At that time, the BFF officials were pressing for their demand to extend the allotment of BNS. That's why they did not go with me. But, believe me, they all are eagerly waiting to play in Saidabad.

DSS: Observers predict that the fate of the Fatullah Stadium would embrace that of Mirpur.

Q: I don't think so. Because the standard of cricket has gone up and the crowd would love to watch cricket wherever you play. In modern countries, stadiums are located outside the city. I hope cricket lovers would accept that.

DSS: Then what is your plan for Mirpur Stadium?

Q: No plans. It will be used the way it is now being used. Football will be played there occasionally. There are also athletics facilities in Mirpur. What football organisers want is BNS along with Mirpur. They will hold the insignificant matches in Mirpur and important matches at the BNS. They have also asked for the Army stadium for football. Besides, we have Bangladesh Games ahead, which will also be held at Mirpur.

Everybody think football should go to Mirpur. But football does not think in that line. They think they have been deported to Mirpur. It's a mental problem, and none can help them out unless they start thinking in right direction. BNS has become a matter of prestige to football organisers.

DSS: Don't you think that you should be realistic rather than being politicised while discharging your duties?

Q: Well that's not possible in Bangladesh. I am a minister of a particular political party. To go against the interest of my party is very tough.

DSS: You have spent four years at the post. Could you please explain us how were those days?

Q: It was a challenging job for me because I did lot of politics in my career, but never mixed with sports. Naturally, when I took over, I had a doubt about my being successful. It took some time for me to understand the sports arena as a whole. I also visited almost all the districts to know about the state of their sporting activities and the psychology of our local sports organisers.

DSS: Thank you for sparing us the time.

Q: Thank you too.

Rivaldo gets his way with Barca



BARCELONA, Spain, Aug 2: Stung by the departure of Luis Figo, FC Barcelona has managed to hold on to their other big superstar, Rivaldo, by raising his salary to more than 5.6 million dollars per year, news reports said Wednesday.

The deal, which more than doubles Rivaldo's salary and makes him one of the world's highest-paid soccer players, was reached late Tuesday in talks with Barcelona's new president Joan Gaspart.

The agreement retains the 15 billion peseta (84 million dollars) buyout clause included in Rivaldo's contract. The latter was not extended, and still runs through June 2003, newspapers said.

Neither Rivaldo nor Gaspart would talk numbers, but Spanish media put the Barca midfielder's new after-tax salary at more than a billion pesetas (5.6 million dollars per year).

Two sports dailies, Marca and As, put the figure at 1.1 billion

pesetas (6.2 million dollars).

Reports said Rivaldo had held out for as much as 1.3 billion pesetas (7.3 million dollars) but backed down in exchange for Barca's agreeing

to sweeten his contract and made clear that unless he got more money he would seek employment elsewhere.

Emerging from Tuesday night's salary talks in Barcelona, Rivaldo said: "I am pleased. I always said I was happy with Barcelona. This dispute surfaced, but I always believed I would remain here."

Gaspart blamed archrival Real Madrid for the latest bout of salary inflation in Spanish soccer.

Last month, debt-laden Real acquired Figo from the latest bout of salary inflation in Spanish soccer.

Gaspart said: "This has happened because of other people's earlier madness, but now it's all over. We are entering a more stable phase."

Prior to raising Rivaldo's salary, Barcelona rejected a transfer offer from AC Milan.

Rivaldo was to join the rest of the team Wednesday at their preseas training camp in the Dutch town of Hoenderloo.

RIVALDO

not to beef up his buyout clause.

Rivaldo, who transferred to Barcelona from Spanish club Deportivo in 1997, complained last season that then-president Jose Luis Nunez reneged on a

Robson's words for home-bound Juninho



LONDON, Aug 2: Middlesbrough boss Bryan Robson is to keep a close watch on his

midfielder Juninho, who is finally cutting his losses and returning home to Brazil on a year's loan deal with Vasco Da Gama, reports AFP.

The 27-year-old, still officially an Atletico Madrid player, has opted to return to South America after Boro refused to meet the asking price to make his temporary move to the Riverside Stadium permanent.

Robson paid out 1.5 million pounds (2.25m dollars) last season to hand Juninho a second spell on Teesside. But the Spaniards, who were relegated from their top flight at the end of last season, wanted another 5.9m (8.85m dollars) before they would hand over his registration.

Robson said: "I know many of our supporters are passionate about Juninho. I'm a big fan of his too - that's why I've brought him to Teesside twice."

"But given the 5.9m asking price, there are other players that we feel offer better value for money at the present time."

"Madrid would not move on the fee, and that's why I suppose there have been no offers for him."

"I think this is probably a good move for Juninho to go back to Brazil on a year's loan."

We will wish him well and we will monitor his progress over there."

Juninho said he hopes the little Brazilian ever since he made his 4.75m (7.125m dollar) move from Sao Paulo in November 1995 and set the Premiership alight.

His mercurial form during his first spell at the club took him close to the country's Player of the Year title in his first full season, with only Chelsea's Gianfranco Zola winning more votes.

But Boro's relegation to Division One after a whirlwind season which took them to both domestic cup finals saw Juninho head off to Spain for 12m (18m dollar) in a bid to keep his international career alive.

However, a broken leg cost him much of the first campaign and he was never really able to rediscover his best form.

Back at Boro the breathtaking form of Juninho's first English adventure largely eluded him, and he even suffered the ignominy of having to sit on the bench for a series of games as Middlesbrough were forced to dig deep to turn around a mid-season slump.

In all the South American started 29 games and appeared in another four as a substitute, scoring four goals. But apart from a late flourish he was unable to recapture much of the magic still firmly embedded in the memories of the fans.

JUNINHO

out for next season.

"I see this as a move which can kick-start my international ambitions again. I think this is the best move for me because of that."

FIFA's crucial Zurich meeting



ZURICH, Switzerland, Aug 2: The World Cup bidding process will be put under the spotlight during the first meeting of

world football's governing body FIFA here Thursday since the furore following the awarding of the 2006 World Cup to Germany, reports AFP.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who favours the rotation of the sporting event by continent and was backing the South African bid, will instigate a wide-ranging discussion into the selection process at the executive meeting.

The South Africans have already requested that Germany's victory in the race to host the 2006 event be examined by an arbitration panel.

But the FIFA president also wants the 203 national associations to discuss a readjustment in the composition of the executive committee to end the European stranglehold on power in football's governing body.

The executive committee meeting will be a tough test for Blatter, who plans to stand for second term in 2002, and is facing a stiff challenge after failing to deliver the vote for South Africa in Zurich in July.

Too much power lies with one confederation (Europe). We have to find a new balance, otherwise Europe will always find a way of organising World Cups," said Blatter.

Blatter said the same time will also be discussed.

I have hope that a solution can be found. It's a long, tough battle. We have four years before the next bid for a host for the 2010 World Cup.

This should not in any way diminish the achievement of the German bidders in attaining the success they had sought with a prolonged and highly convincing campaign that combined characteristic German thoroughness with style and imagination," said Blatter.

"Rather, the discussion is intended to be a first airing of views on how the established system may be modified to meet even the most exacting demands of equal opportunity and transparency."

South Africa contend that the final 12-11 outcome in Germany's favour should not be allowed to stand because Oceania delegate Charles Dempsey was mandated to vote for South Africa, but instead controversially abstained claiming he was put under intolerable pressure by unnamed figures on the fringe of the bidding process.

Whether Blatter gains support for his changes could set the scene for the 2002 race for FIFA's top job.

"A four year term is too little to carry out all the work. I want to achieve my aims. Yes, God willing, I will be there in 2002 to seek another term," he added.

During the executive committee meeting this week a decision will also be taken on who will host the 2003 women's World Cup between two candidates Australia and China.

SEPP BLATTER

During the last executive committee I told members what we have the proof that it is necessary to rotate the World Cup through the six confederations," said Blatter.

The principle of rotation, a limitation in the number of candidates by continent and the appointment of hosts for two successive World Cup tournaments.

DSS: Don't you think that you should be realistic rather than being politicised while discharging your duties?

Q: Well that's not possible in Bangladesh. I am a minister of a particular political party. To go against the interest of my party is very tough.

DSS: You have spent four years at the post. Could you please explain us how were those days?

Q: It was a challenging job for me because I did lot of politics in my career, but never mixed with sports. Naturally, when I took over, I had a doubt about my being successful. It took some time for me to understand the sports arena as a whole. I also visited almost all the districts to know about the state of their sporting activities and the psychology of our local sports organisers.

DSS: Thank you for sparing us the time.

Q: Thank you too.

Weah comes to Man City

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 2: Former World Footballer of the Year George Weah joined English Premiership club Manchester City on Tuesday and immediately set his sights on getting back into European competition, reports AFP.

Weah was released from his contract by Italian giants AC Milan last week, having failed to agree an extension to his loan period at Chelsea, and quickly agreed to a two-year contract at Maine Road.

The 33-year-old Liberian international had been negotiating with Fulham but the First Division club were unwilling to meet his wage demands.

Weah could make his debut in the friendly against Stockport on Saturday.

"I will come here and give everything and I think we will go into Europe," said Weah. "That is the aim and a club like this deserves to be in Europe."

"We have a young team who are already going to fight hard, we need to work together and I am looking forward to being part of the squad."

Delighted City manager Joe Royle confirmed that he was still hoping to sign West Ham's Costa Rican forward Paulo Wanchope for more than four million pounds within the next 24 hours.

Hagi key to Boloni's plans

BUCHAREST, Aug 2 (Reuters/Internet): New Romanian coach Ladislau Boloni wants to talk midfielder Gheorghe Hagi out of international retirement to spearhead the country's 2002 World Cup campaign.

GHEORGHE HAGI

Several Romanian players decided to quit the national team, some others are showing signs of ageing," Boloni said on Tuesdays.

"But the great loss would be (captain) Gheorghe Hagi's retirement. I'll try to make him change his mind."

Key defender Gheorghe Popescu has also announced he might not play for Romania in a friendly against Poland in Bucharest later this month. Midfielder Ionut Lupescu and goalkeeper Florin Prunea have also ended their international careers.

Boloni said he would continue to rely on exiles for the qualification tournament, as well as searching out young talent in the domestic championship.

"For the time being, I'll call at least 16 players from the 18-man squad from foreign clubs," Boloni said.

"In the longer run, my main aim is to build a balanced squad, with older and younger players."

"Even if young players are not skilled enough to face a strong squad like current European Cup finalists Italy, they must have a role in the national squad," Boloni said.

"Rather, the discussion is intended to be a first airing of views on how the established system may be modified to meet even the most exacting demands of equal opportunity and transparency."

South Africa contend that the final 12-11 outcome in Germany's favour should not be allowed to stand because Oceania delegate Charles Dempsey was mandated to vote for South Africa, but instead controversially abstained claiming he was put under intolerable pressure by unnamed figures on the fringe of the bidding process.

Whether Blatter gains support for his changes could set the scene for the 2002 race for FIFA's top job.

"A four year term is too little to carry out all the work. I want to achieve my aims. Yes, God willing, I will be there in 2002 to seek another term," he added.

During the executive committee meeting this week a decision will also be taken on who will host the 2003 women's World Cup between two candidates Australia and China.</p