

Sport

Rangers' duo's international dreams revived

GLASGOW, Aug 17: Glasgow Rangers goalkeeper Stefan Klos and midfielder Jorg Albertz were offered international lifelines by the new German management team on Thursday, reports AFP.

Interim manager Rudi Voller and assistant Michael Skibbe have taken over from former coach Erich Ribbeck who quit after Germany's poor showing at Euro 2000.

Under Ribbeck the team made an early exit this summer following defeats by England and Portugal in the group stages.

And Skibbe has pledged to watch the duo in the near future to assess a return call-up to the national side.

"I intend coming to watch Rangers play very soon to see Stefan Klos and Jorg Albertz," said Skibbe.

"Klos is an amazing goalkeeper and a very special kind of person as well. I have known him since he was 14 and I have watched his development."

"I've never been surprised that he has reached the level he is at now with Rangers."

The only reason he has not been picked for Germany so far is the strength of opposition in that position.

"Jorg has done well too and I intend to have a look at them as we start World Cup qualifying."

Kanu, Babayaro to join Olympic team

LAGOS, Aug 17: Nigerian internationals Nwankwo Kanu of Arsenal and Celestine Babayaro of Chelsea will join the Olympic team "as soon as practicable", the spokesman for the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) said Wednesday.

"Kanu and Babayaro have said they will join the Olympic team as soon as practicable, even though (coach) Jo Bonfrere would wish they are in camp without any further delays," NFA spokesman Austin Mgbolu told reporters here.

Mgbolu also said that the arrival of AC Milan defender Taribo West at the Dutch camp of the team has "brightened Bonfrere who has been worried about the absence of his key players".

The NFA official, however, said the association will respect the wish of Super Eagles captain Sunday Oliseh not to feature at the Olympics.

Defending Olympic champions Nigeria have been locked in battle with the English clubs of Kanu and Babayaro over their release for the Sydney Olympics.

The NFA spokesman announced that Nigeria will play two friendly matches against South Korea as part of their build-up to the games, playing in Seoul on August 30 and September 1.

Taliban trying to get IOC ban overturned

ISLAMABAD, Aug 17: With time running short before the 2000 Olympics open in Sydney next month the ruling Taliban is still trying to get an International Olympic Committee (IOC) ban overturned, reports Reuters.

An annual sports budget of about 30,000 dollars a dress code that bans the wearing of shorts, a civil war and severe restrictions on women would appear to weaken Afghanistan's case for taking part in the Games.

Despite these problems, officials from the ruling Taliban have appealed to the International Olympic Committee to overturn a suspension that effectively stops Afghan athletes from competing in Sydney next month.

The IOC suspended the Taliban's Olympic Committee last year, saying the body had no control over sports in the country, but it offered to try to find ways for any athletes from the war-torn country to compete as individuals.

Second one-dayer

From page 13
playing in New Zealand.

Australia won the second game before losing the series 2-1 and Buchanan felt the travel from Sri Lanka would have sapped South Africa.

The tourists also came here straight after a Test series against Sri Lanka and Buchanan said it took a little time to adjust to the faster pace of the limited-overs format.

While confident his side would rebound immediately, Ford admitted the absence of strike bowler Allan Donald was causing some short-term pain.

Donald has not played for South Africa since March, missing this trip because of English county commitments with Warwickshire.

A fiery competitor, Donald would give South Africa the same sort of lift in morale and combativeness that Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne provide Australia.

"Particularly when you take our Hansie (Cronje, the sacked captain), it makes the absence of Allan quite serious," Ford said.

"It really is a pity we haven't got him around, but maybe in the long term it is good for South African cricket we've had to serve for a while."



Paraguayan striker Roberto Acuna (L) unleashes a shot to score against Argentina during their World Cup 2002 CONMEBOL zone qualifier at Buenos Aires on August 16.

- AFP photo

Qualifying race wide open**Argentina held at home**

midfielder Pabito Aimar for the latter to fire home from close range.

Driven on by Juan Sebastian Veron, Argentina pushed forward in search of the winner, but Chilavert's replacement Ricardo Tavarelli made a strong effort.

The Peru-Venezuela match was a hard-hitting affair with the home side getting the best of the play, but being unable to capitalise on their chances.

Roberto Palacios finally broke the deadlock in the 70th minute when he rifled home from a tight angle after the Venezuelan goalkeeper Gilberto Arbelaez had parried his first effort.

That was enough to ensure three points for Peru and maintain their slim hopes of qualifying for the finals.

The next round of matches is on September 2-3 with the top tie being Chile-Colombia in Santiago. The other ties are Paraguay-Venezuela, Uruguay-Ecuador, Peru-Argentina and Brazil-Bolivia.

STANDINGS

MONTEVIDEO, Aug 17 (AFP): Standings after Wednesday's matches in the South American zone qualifiers for the 2002 World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea.

	Played	won	drawn	lost	for	against	points
Argentina	7	5	1	1	16	6	16
Colombia	7	3	3	1	7	4	12
Uruguay	7	3	2	2	7	5	11
Brazil	7	3	2	2	9	9	11
Paraguay	7	3	2	2	8	8	11
Chile	7	3	1	3	11	9	10
Ecuador	7	3	1	3	9	9	10
Peru	7	2	2	3	5	5	8
Bolivia	7	1	2	4	4	9	5
Venezuela	7	1	0	6	5	17	3

U.S. all-time list

John O'Brien, who replaced the injured Armas in the final minute of the opening half, scored on his first touch of the match from 10 yards only 29 seconds into the second half for a 4-0 bulge.

Tab Ramos, who replaced Claudio Reyna in the 53rd minute, connected from 22 yards for the Americans' fifth goal in the 72nd minute and Stewart got into the act, scoring from six yards in the 74th minute.

Moore closed out the scoring, knocking in Cobi Jones' right-wing pass from six yards in the 82nd minute.

With a two-man advantage, the U.S. did just about anything it wanted.

Despite the poor reviews we had in our first two games, we could be in pretty good shape if we get three points against Guatemala (on Sept. 3)."

Asked about the huge goal differential, Arena replied, "We did not make a point to try to embarrass Barbados. We wanted to treat them with respect."

Barbados coach Hector Beckles had no problem with the huge goal margin.

"The Americans had their space and they utilized it," he said.

Joe-Max Moore scored two goals and set up third for the U.S., which tied their largest margin of victory in international matches.

With the game only 15 seconds old, Moore took a 22-yard shot. The ball sailed wide left but the message had been sent: The U.S. would attack early and often.

"That was the gameplan," Arena said. "The game was pretty fast in the first 15 minutes. It tired Barbados out a little bit and frustrated them."

Defender Eddie Pope gave the U.S. a 1-0 lead in the 14th minute. Earnie Stewart swung a corner kick to Pope in the middle of the penalty area and

gustav Hurdle was given his marching orders by referee Joe Pineda of Honduras for pinching Cobi Jones in the 38th minute.

Only three minutes later, the Barbadians found themselves two men down after midfielder Eric Laveine was red-carded for his vicious foul on Chris Armas in the midfield. Armas, who strained the MCL on his left knee, will be sidelined at least three weeks.

"Trinidad and Tobago rose to 3-0 for nine points, regaining a three-point bulge on second-place Mexico in Group C."

The next round of matches, set for the first weekend of September, also include Panama at Mexico and Canada at Trinidad and Tobago in Group C. El Salvador at Honduras and Jamaica hosting St. Vincent/Grenadines in Group D and Barbados at Costa Rica in Group E.

Irwin's night spoiled by Weah

LONDON, Aug 17: Manchester United veteran Denis Irwin picked up 500,000 pounds (750,000 dollars) from his testimonial match Wednesday night as the champions beat local rivals Manchester City 2-0 at Old Trafford - but the Republic of Ireland defender is a serious doubt for Sunday's Premiership opener after picking up an ankle injury, reports AFP.

An early crunching challenge from City's new star George Weah after just eight minutes eventually ended Irwin's participation in the match played in front of just over 45,000 fans.

Irwin was furious with former Chelsea star Weah and when he finally got to his feet the Irishman angrily brushed aside the Liberian international's apologetic arm round his shoulder.

The testimonial man carried on until United took the lead through Teddy Sheringham's fine curling 20-yarder from Andy Cole's pass before being replaced by Ronnie Wallwork eight minutes from half time.

Weah's challenge on Irwin set the tone for some very unfriendly exchanges between these bitter rivals.

But Cole slid in the second from a Nicky Butt pass with a minute to go as City failed to rile the reigning champions and Irwin came back on at the end with his three young children to say thanks to the fans and take a slow lap of honour.

Arsenal ban 37 fans

LONDON, Aug 17: Thirty seven Arsenal fans were banned from attending games at the club's Highbury ground this season following the violence that flared in Copenhagen, reports AFP.

The fans have been written to by the club after being picked out as troublemakers in photographs and on television footage.

The English Premiership club said that officials were still trying to identify a number of other thugs caught on camera ahead of the UEFA Cup final against Galatasaray on May 17.

Leeds United also plans to ban three fans identified as troublemakers in clashes with fans from the Turkish club in the semi-final of the same competition.

An Arsenal spokesman said: "We have banned 37 fans as a direct result of Copenhagen and they will not be welcome at Highbury this season."

Supporters of this club are generally very well behaved and this represents a very small minority."

The hooligans will be banned for at least one season with some barred for longer.

A Leeds spokesman said: "We have identified at least three troublemakers and they will be banned in due course."

World stars no match for France

MARSEILLE, France, Aug 17: World champions France, in their first game since being crowned European champions, crushed a FIFA world select side 5-1 here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Six weeks after their victory over Italy in Rotterdam they turned on the style for 60,000 fans in a match in aid of charity.

Juventus' new recruit David Trezeguet, who got the winner at Euro 2000, proved the star turn, the 22-year-old scoring a hat-trick.

Robert Pires and Nicolas Anelka capped off the night for 'les bleus' with Roberto Biaggio gaining a consolation for the world select team in the 78th minute.

France next turn out at the Stade de France in Paris against England on September 2 in what will be veteran defender Laurent Blanc's international farewell.

Many were also playing their first matches under new coaches and management teams so it was an important, if relatively low-key, "opening" night.

Tucked among those friendlies was the first



Michael Ballack (L) of Germany trying to go past Spain's Etcheverria during their international friendly at Hanover on August 16.

- AFP photo

International friendly**Vintage Germany spank Spain**

HANOVER, Germany, Aug 17: Germany dumbfounded their critics Wednesday evening when

they strolled to a 4-1 victory over Euro 2000 quarter finalists Spain, showing a new found sense of enthusiasm under debutante coach Rudi Voller, reports AFP.

Bayern Munich duo Mehmet Scholl and Alexander Zickler blew Spain out of the water with a pair of goals apiece while star Spanish forward Raul could an

swer only once.

A crowd of 35,000 turned up for the game, leaving 15,000 seats empty, but those watching - including England coach Kevin Keegan who will face Germany in a World Cup qualifier on October 7th - were treated to the rare spectacle of a German side which won back

some of the feel-good factor which has been absent for so long.

Voller is undoubtedly the big winner after this game.

He picked up a disgruntled and divided rabble of a side after Erich Ribbeck's belated post-Euro 2000 departure and, within weeks, has re-formed them. New rules of discipline have been laid down and a sense of roll up your sleeves honesty imposed.

"We showed unconditional desire," Voller said with relief.

"It's a basic quality if you want to play for your country or your club. They showed it tonight and I noticed at training in the last few days that that was what they wanted to do. Tonight was the last chance to make their apologies to the fans."

Despite the relatively small crowd size the rest of the nation

was watching Hanover expectantly on television and the pressure weighing on those on the field was obvious.

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