

## English press write highly of booters

PARIS, Sept 3: "English football isn't dead" was just one of the glowing headlines British newspaper readers woke up to Sunday after England's impressive performance against France, reports AFP.

"Fighting England restore the faith" screamed the Mail on Sunday, praising the intense attitude of England but also the nature of the match which forced the proud French to battle for their lofty reputation as World and European champions.

The players were still bickering at the final whistle with Arsenal defender Martin Keown involved in an incident coming off the pitch with Marcel Desailly with the Premiership rivals continuing their feud in the tunnel leading to the dressing room.

The Chelsea centre-back who will face Keown again on Wednesday as his side host Arsenal, reacted angrily, live on French television, as the player who wears red boots seemed to brush into him as he was being interviewed.

"England spoil the French party" was how the Sunday Telegraph saw things in reference to the carnival atmosphere that was laid on for retiring internationals Didier Deschamps, Laurent Blanc and Bernard Lama.

"A real match with a dignified farewell" declared French daily Le Parisien in reference to the fighting spirit of both sides as well as paying tribute to the departing veterans.

The holiday's are over" was the headline on the front page of sports daily L'Equipe as England and France battled in a style more often seen in the Premiership than on the international stage.

Despite various combinations of present and former team-mates on both sides, there was no love lost between the players and friendships were firmly banished to the closet as victory seemed to be the only thing that mattered.

## Africa to know Nations' Cup hosts today

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 3: African Football Confederation (CAF) chiefs meet in Cairo Monday to decide which country hosts the 2004 African Nations' Cup, reports AFP.

The tiny West African states of Benin and Togo have submitted a joint bid, Tunisia and Zimbabwe are going it alone and Zambia may be joined by Malawi in another move to co-host the biennial championship.

CAF spokesman Dr Viken Djizmedjian said in Cairo Sunday it was still unclear whether Zambia would bid alone or be joined by eastern neighbours Malawi.

Tunisia appear favourites despite having staged the showcase of African football twice as they offer the political and economic stability often lacking among contenders.

## WI have

From page 8

Stewart to cut a ball that caught the top edge to be well caught at first slip by Campbell.

## SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard Sunday at tea on the fourth day of the fifth and final cricket Test between England and the West Indies at The Oval:

**ENGLAND:** First innings 281

**WEST INDIES:** First innings 125

**ENGLAND:** Second innings 125

Overnight 58 for two

Atterton not out 89

Truscottick c Lara b Ambrose 7

Hussain lbw b McLean 0

Thorpe c Griffith b Walsh 10

Stewart c Campbell 25

b Nagamootoo 25

Vaughan lbw b Walsh 9

Hick c Campbell b Walsh 0

White run out 18

Cork not out 1

Extras (lb-1, lb-6, nb-3) 10

Total (For seven) 169

Fall of wickets: 1-21; 2-29; 3-56; 4-121; 5-139; 6-139; 7-163.

**Bowler** O M R W

Ambrose 38 7 22 1

Walsh 32 15 47 3

McLean 20 5 53 1

Nagamootoo 19 7 29 1

Adams 7 3 11 0



French captain Didier Deschamps (C) trying to make his way through a couple of England defenders during their friendly soccer match at Stade de France in Saint Denis on September 2. —Internet photo

# Owen the spoil-sport



PARIS, Sept 3 (Reuters/Internet): World and European champions France had to settle for a 1-1 draw with England here on Saturday after a late equaliser by substitute Michael Owen.

Owen, angered at being left out of England's starting lineup, grabbed a close-range equaliser with four minutes remaining after the visitors were outplayed for long periods.

The friendly at the Stade de France here also saw French stars Didier Deschamps and Laurent Blanc make emotional farewells to international soccer.

Midfielder Emmanuel Petit gave France the lead, steering the ball home from the edge of the area in the 63rd minute after a masterful through ball from Zinedine Zidane.

Deschamps, the most successful captain in French history, was making his 103rd appearance, while Blanc earned his 97th and final cap.

They received standing ovations when replaced early in the second half - just minutes before Petit scored.

"It was special and maybe I realised that too late," said Deschamps. "I'm going to miss it enormously but I'm content to go out tonight. There is sufficient talent in this team that it can cope without us."

Blanc said he had felt very emotional when he left the field for the last time in a French jersey. "For me this was the match of great emotion," Blanc said.

"I'm not showing it but it is very, very strong inside. I could not dream of a better farewell, in this stadium in front of the country who invented football."

"I was thinking about a lot of things when I left the field - but my career goes on."

Deschamps, 31, will continue to play club soccer for Valencia and the 34-year-old Blanc will play on for Inter Milan.

French coach Roger Lemerre said: "The pair of them have made a very special contribution and it will be difficult for the French team to get the same results without them as we did with them."

Goalkeeper Fabien Barthez, who missed Saturday's match through injury, said the pair could have left too soon.

"It will be strange without them," Barthez said. "I feel they could have stayed longer because for me, on the pitch they are still 20 years old."

The pair, along with goalkeeper Bernard Lama, were presented to the crowd before the match.

England played with just Andy Cole up front, but held their own early on as Lama had to make several saves.

The French had early chances, too, and Nicolas Anelka and Deschamps both shot wide from good positions. Anelka was also unlucky not to earn a penalty for a clumsy challenge in the box from Martin Keown.

France began to cut loose in the 10 minutes before the break after Thierry Henry switched to wide on the right and tormented the England defence with several dangerous runs.

England had Tony Adams replacing retired Alan Shearer as skipper - although Adams was replaced at halftime and England clearly missed his calming influence.

England and both the World Cup and European Championship trophies were paraded around the ground.

Lama winning his 44th cap, made three characteristically acrobatic first-half saves to thwart an Andy Cole header and two dangerous strikes from Nicky Barmby.

France ripped England to shreds in the second half, but the resilience of his defence was good news for coach Kevin Keegan, who is trying to rebuild after England's first-round exit from the Euro 2000.

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## World Cup 2002 Chile, Paraguay take one step forward

MONTEVIDEO, Sept 3: Colombia and Paraguay improved their prospects of appearing in the 2002 World Cup finals with important wins in the latest round of South American qualifiers on Saturday, reports AFP.

Colombia, 1-0 winners away to Chile thanks to a 69th minute Jairo Castillo effort - who capitalised on a defensive error to shoot home with a fine overhead kick - are lying second a point shy of table toppers Argentina, with Paraguay a further point back in third after their 3-0 rout of whipping boys Venezuela.

Meanwhile, Carlos Pavez scored three goals to spark Honduras past El Salvador 5-0 at Honduras on Saturday in a 2002 World Cup North American semifinal qualifying match.

## Navratilova sees clearly

NEW YORK, Sept 3: Retired tennis legend Martina Navratilova made US Open history as the first person to play on all three stadium courts here and advanced to the third round of women's doubles despite forgetting her glasses, reports AFP.

Navratilova and Spanish partner Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario defeated 14th seeds Jennifer Capriati and Anna Kournikova 7-5, 6-0 in 62 minutes here Saturday.

"We put a lot of pressure on Kournikova's serve," Navratilova said. "Capriati doesn't like to poach much and we took advantage of that. I played better after 2-1 in the first set."

The 19-time Grand Slam finalist, one shy of Billie Jean King's all-time mark, became the only player to compete at Forest Hills, Louis Armstrong Stadium and the new Arthur Ashe Stadium in US Open events.

At 43, Navratilova is as old as her two doubles foes combined - 24-year-old Capriati and 19-year-old Kournikova.

Navratilova went down 0-30 to open the match on her serve, then walked over to the bench, telling the umpire, "I'm fine. I just forgot my glasses. Maybe now I will see the ball."

Sanchez and Navratilova won the next four points and cleared out their rivals with relative ease.

"I missed a volley and was like, 'Why can't I see that?'" Navratilova said. "I can see all right without them but I see better with them."

Sanchez noticed from the start that Navratilova was not wearing her glasses, but did not want to embarrass her partner.

"I was afraid to tell her she wasn't playing with the glasses," Sanchez said. "I didn't want to say anything to break her concentration."

Navratilova, who plans to play later this year in Japan, has played doubles at the French Open and Wimbledon earlier this year to end a five-year retirement. But she feels extra punishment on the Flushing Meadows hardcourts.

"I'm having to put ice packs on my whole body," Navratilova said. "The hard courts are hard. They take a toll on your body."

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## Dutch spared Irish blushes

AMSTERDAM, Sept 3 (Reuters/Internet): A thunderous blast from Giovanni van Bronckhorst and a softening of the Irish defence allowed the Dutch to claw back a two-goal deficit and draw their opening World Cup qualifier on Saturday.

Van Bronckhorst's long-range shot spared home blushes and those of new coach Louis van Gaal and gives the Dutch a month's breathing space during which they will hope their many injured stars will recover.

Ireland, who have had almost a year without competitive matches, came out aggressively and eager to make amends for the past three failed Euro and World Cup qualification campaigns.

A tight defence and the solid midfield of Roy Keane and Mark Kinsella provided a platform for Kevin Kilbane's bursts down the left flank and Robbie Keane's tireless running off front man Niall Quinn.

"It wasn't just the work effort but the manner in which we played. We took the Dutch on at their own game and passed the ball," said Irish coach Mick McCarthy.

Ireland, whose last tournament qualification was for the 1994 World Cup, took advantage of slack Dutch marking in the 21st minute, Robbie Keane heading in a Jason McAteer cross.

Then in the 65th minute McAteer sent the 10,000 travelling contingent wild as he played a one-two with Niall Quinn and thumped in with his left foot from the edge of the penalty box.

With such a platform, McCarthy was adamant the Irish should then have contained their group two opponents.

"It's a game we should have won, but I'd have taken a draw when we came here tonight," said McCarthy.

At the start of the week there were suggestions my players lacked respect for me and discipline," said McCarthy, in reference to Phil Babb and Mark Kennedy, booted out of the squad after their arrest in Dublin last weekend on charges of causing criminal damage.

"I pulled them together on Thursday and said I'd judge them on the field. Look at that performance. They all played very well and I'm proud of every one of them."

The Dutch lacked the likes of central defender Jaap Stam, bustling midfielder Edgar Davids and wingers Marc Over-

se and Boudewijn Zenden. They also seemed still bowed by their agonising semifinal exit in Euro 2000. Only late in the game did they find their rhythm.

In the first half we were very poor, lacking aggressiveness and unable to keep the ball," said Van Gaal.

Hope was rekindled when Irish disorder allowed Jeffrey Talan to head in a Ronald de Boer cross at the far post in the 71st minute. Seven minutes later Van Bronckhorst's rasping drive brought his side back.

The Dutch could then have stolen it when Patrick Kluivert was put through for a half-chance at the death.

Most of the more powerful nations in action on the opening day of the European qualifying campaign won, with Spain beating Bosnia 2-1 in Sarajevo, the Czech Republic winning 1-0 in Bulgaria and improving Poland beating Ukraine 3-1 in Kiev.

**SPAIN-BOSNIA**

Spain, quarterfinalists in Euro 2000, had to fight to win their opening group seven qualifier 2-1 in Bosnia with goals from Gerard (39) and Joseba Etxeberria (72). Elvir Baljic scored for the home side after 41 minutes.

**CZECH REP-BULGARIA**

The Czech Republic, who played well but were unlucky to be eliminated in the opening round of Euro 2000, scored a significant 1-0 win in Bulgaria thanks to a 73rd-minute Karel Poborsky penalty.

Eight of the 16 matches ended in away wins with only four countries taking full advantage by collecting three points at home.

As well as Germany the others were Turkey, who beat Moldova 2-0 in a group four match in Istanbul, Belarus, who beat Wales 2-1 in group five in Minsk and Finland, who beat Albania 2-1 in Helsinki.

But the Netherlands struggled against Ireland in Amsterdam, fighting back from 0-2 down to draw 2-2, while their fellow co-hosts of Euro 2000 Belgium were held to a goalless draw in Brussels by Croatia.

**MIXED BRITISH DAY**

It was a mixed night for the British nations with Scotland and Northern Ireland winning and Wales losing.

Scotland, who have qualified for seven of the last eight World Cup finals, left it late before making a winning start with an 89th-minute winner against Latvia in Riga on Saturday.

Norway, who had a disappointing Euro 2000 Championship where they were eliminated in the first round, continued to let down their fans with a 0-0 home draw against Armenia.

But, their Scandinavian neighbours Denmark came out successful as they beat Iceland 1-0. Russia overcame Switzerland by an identical margin.

Neal McCann scored his first international goal a minute from the end of full time to give Scotland a 1-0 victory in an evenly-balanced group six match.

It was an impressive victory for Craig Brown's team who weathered some intense Latvia pressure but finally did enough to seal all three points.

Northern Ireland scored a 1-0 win over Malta in Belfast in a group three match thanks to a late goal from substitute Phil Gray but Wales had a nightmare of a day.

The Welsh were making optimistic noises before the match about their chances of reaching their first finals since 1958 but crashed to a 2-1 defeat in Belarus and also had Craig Bellamy - who recently moved from Norwich to Coventry for six million pounds - sent off for elbowing an opponent.

Among other winners were Cyprus, who narrowly beat Andorra 3-2 in group two, the Czech Republic, who beat Bulgaria 1-0 in Sofia in group three, Sweden, who won 1-0 in Azerbaijan, in group four, and Poland, who beat Ukraine 3-1 in Kiev in group five.

Emmanuel Olisadebe, a Nigerian-born striker who became a naturalised Pole a month ago, scored twice in Poland's impressive 3-1 win which gave them a great start to their campaign.

Ukraine, with AC Milan's Andriy Shevchenko and Tottenham's Serhiy Rebrov leading their attack, were expected to give the Poles a hard time. But although Shevchenko scored for the home side, the Poles were well-deserved winners.

There was almost a huge upset in Andorra La Vella, where Andorra, the minnows of European soccer who have never collected a single point from a competitive match, led Cyprus 2-1 in the second half.

But Cyprus hit back to equalise 13 minutes from time through Marius Agathokleous and won the match with a last-minute goal from Michael Constantinou, who had put them ahead with a 25th-minute penalty.

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## More seeds slayed

NEW YORK, Sept 3 (AP): The latest hero in this melting pot of a US Open, and the next to face four-time champion Pete Sampras, is a South Korean qualifier from a small, rural town who speaks little English and whose only friend in New York owns a dry cleaning shop.

Hyung-Taik Lee, playing in his first major tournament fresh from a victory on the second-tier Challenger circuit

reached the round-of-16 Saturday by beating Germany's Rainer Schuttler 6-2, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.