

Div III cricket qualifiers

Sports Reporter

The Third Division Cricket League qualifiers yesterday produced two brilliant centuries at different city venues.

At the City Club ground in Mirpur opener Faisal scored a superlative 132 to fashion a massive 121-run victory for Rangdhanu Sangha against Crescent Boys Club.

The undefeated 102-ball knock of Faisal enabled Rangdhanu to pile up a mammoth 255 for five in the stipulated 35 overs. He shared 107 runs for the first wicket with Raihan to lay the foundation of a big total.

Raihan, who scored a polished 43, later played the pivotal role of restricting Crescent Boys to 134, claiming four for 11.

At the Uttara Police Lines ground Tariq hammered a blazing unbeaten 101 off only 78 balls to help MM Cricket Academy to amass 242 for five in 35 overs.

The middle-order batsman clubbed a dozen fours and five sixes in his hurricane hundred.

In reply, Titan Boys were skittled out for 108 in 34 overs after some controlled bowling from Jaked, who took four wickets for 25 runs.

CCS Green also scored a facile five-wicket win over Dhaka Cricket Academy at the Mirpur Outer Stadium.

In a low-scoring affair CCS, chasing a paltry 56 of Dhaka Cricket, raced to 60 in only 7.2 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

CCS Green vs Dhaka Cricket Academy
Venue: Mirpur Outer Stadium
Dhaka Cricket Academy 56 all out in 24.3 overs (Nizam 13, Rubel 3/5, 3/11, Rabbir 2/13)
CCS Green 60 for 5 in 7.2 overs (Sozal 18, Asha 12, Kanirul 2/2)
Result: CCS Green won by 5 wickets.
MM Cricket Academy vs Titan Boys Club
Venue: Uttara Police Lines ground
MM Academy 244 for 5 in 35 overs (Tariq 101 not out, Maruf 64, Shahin 2/41)
Titan Boys 108 all out in 34 overs (Faisal 28, Solaghi 12 not out, Jaked 4/25, Rana 2/15)
Result: MM Cricket Academy won by 134 runs
Rangdhanu Sangha vs Crescent Boys
Venue: City Club ground
Rangdhanu Sangha 255 for 5 in 35 overs (Faisal 132 not out, Raihan 43, Imran 37, Uday 2/50)
Crescent Boys 134 all out in 34.4 overs (Tushar 27, Arfin 19, Raihan 4/11, Javed 2/19)
Result: Rangdhanu won by 121 runs

Ronaldo could be back soon

PARIS, Oct 7 (Reuters): Inter Milan's Brazilian striker, underwent tests on his injured knee here on Friday and could be back in action by January, his surgeon Dr Gerard Saillat said on Friday, reports AFP.

"Six months after the operation he's 90% cured, it's even ahead of schedule," said the world-renowned surgeon.

Ronaldo's friend and manager Roberto Paiva, who accompanied the player on his trip to Paris, claimed that Ronaldo could be trained again as of January, but emphasised that there was no rush.

"There's no pressure from Inter Milan, the Brazilian national team or the sponsor, Nike," said Paiva.

The former World footballer of the year arrived at a Paris clinic on Thursday for a meeting with Dr Saillat, who has performed two operations on the stricken knee, to establish a re-habilitation program.

The 24-year-old, still on crutches, is due to return to Portland, Oregon, to continue his recovery in "calmer surroundings" and continue with English classes.

Thai skipper misses warm up

BANGKOK, Oct 7 (AFP): A new striker is being called up to join Thailand's football squad after team captain Kiatlak "Zico" Senamuang failed to turn up for training in preparation for next week's Asian Cup, a report said Friday.

Zico, currently playing with English side Huddersfield Town, was given the all clear by the club to lead his national side in the tournament, but failed to appear at the team's training camp in Qatar, the Bangkok Post reported.

The Thai superstar, in search of a new signing, turned up for trials with First Division club Crystal Palace on September 27 but has not been heard of since.

Thailand Football Association president Vijit Getkaew was reportedly furious about Zico's no-show and said it appeared as though he was more interested in looking for a new club than playing for his country, the Post said.

The Asian Cup finals, which start on October 12 in Lebanon, involve defending champions Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait, China, Qatar, Thailand and Uzbekistan.

Keegan spells it out



LONDON, Oct 7: England coach Kevin Keegan has tried to play down the importance of Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Germany, the last ever match at Wembley Stadium, reports AFP.

"This is the first game of the qualifying campaign. It sets the standard but then comes another tough game against Finland in Helsinki," said Keegan.

"I have told the 11 players who I have picked, they know this is the opportunity to be part of something special."

Under-21 match Germany hold England

LONDON (Reuters): England's under-21 football squad drew 1-1 with their German counterparts on Friday in a group qualifier match.

England's Titus Bramble opened the scoring on the stroke of half time, but Germany pulled level in the closing minutes on a strike from Fabian Ernst.

England, who played much of the second half a man down after Liverpool's Stephen Wright received a red card at 66 minutes, next play Finland on October 10.

Other British teams fared less well in their qualifiers. Denmark downed Northern Ireland 3-0 and Norway beat Wales 2-0. In other matches, Portugal outclassed Ireland 3-1, France edged Austria 2-1, Italy and Romania ended level at 1-1 and Spain beat Israel 1-0.

Savio stays in Real

MADRID, Oct 7 (Reuters): Real Madrid striker Savio said he would not be joining English premier league club Chelsea.

"Even if they make an offer of 5,000 million pesetas (\$26.17 million) I am not going to leave Madrid," he said.

Real's sporting director Jorge Valdano had said on Friday he had met Chelsea officials and they had offered 2,400 million pesetas (\$12.56 million) for the Brazilian international.

Savio said he was tired of speculation linking him to a move from the European champions.

"The club can listen to any offer but it is certain that I am staying. I have an obligation to the fans and I am not going to move."

Bafana Bafana's big test

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 7: South Africa try again Saturday to defeat a major football power when they entertain France here in the Nelson Mandela Challenge, reports AFP.

The French are the fifth team among the top 10 in the rankings of world controlling body FIFA to visit Johannesburg, and Bafana Bafana (The Boys) are still awaiting their first success.

Brazil have won twice and the Netherlands once while Argentina and Germany drew with a country that has made rapid progress since three decades of racism-induced isolation ended eight years ago.

Hopes of a South African triumph at the 68,000-seat Ellis Park in central Johannesburg receded when inspirational captain and central defender Lucas Radebe withdrew with concussion.

This means Pierre Issa from French club Marseille and Denmark-based Frankie Schoeman must subdue the threat from quicksilver young French strikers Nicolas Anelka, Thierry Henry and David Trezeguet.

Issa is desperate to do well as he conceded an own goal when France beat South Africa 3-0 in Marseille during the group phase of the 1998 World Cup. France won the other previous meeting 2-1 in Lens a year earlier.

Barisal soccer

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Oct 7: Kheolar Kalvan Samity defeated 5 Star Club 2-0 in the lone match of the Abdur Rab Serniabat First Division football league at the Abdur Rab Serniabat Stadium today.

T&T Club will take on New Evergreen Club at the same venue tomorrow.

Keegan confirmed that Manchester United's David Beckham would start despite a knee injury worry but a groin injury to Liverpool midfielder Steven Gerrard meant he was ruled out.

"David Beckham is not a risk, Steven Gerrard would have been," Keegan explained.

Keegan added: "We have not over sold this game to the players - we have not had to, I think they know they have to lift themselves."

"The balance of the squad is good, there is a lot of experience in there. The winners are the 11 who are going to play but the substitutes will have a part to play. That is the way the modern game is."

"I don't think we need to build this game up. It is a game of football, it's against Germany but at the end it's three points in a World Cup qualifying campaign."

"The Germans appear to have got back some of the spirit that seemed to be lacking in Euro 2000. They are a big, strong, physical side and are well organised."

"They will come here fancying their chances to turn around the result in Charleroi. They have been a remarkably consistent side over the years and have always performed well in World Cups. But this is another game, another time."

"They have had in the past - as we have had - some fantastic players. We will look to 1966 and they can look to great times."

"Until we lay the ghost of 1966 everyone is going to talk about Moore, Hurst, Peters, Bobby Charlton. But they (the England players) can do something about that."

Kevin Keegan

WEMBLEY WELCOMES THE ENGLAND TEAM

WEMBLEY'S WARMTH: Star midfielder David Beckham standing inside the Wembley Stadium in London during a practice session of the England team on October 5.

—Internet photo

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WC qualifier Macedonia blank Azerbaijan

SKOPJE, Oct 7: Georgi Hristov scored a first-half double as Macedonia inflicted a 3-0 defeat on Azerbaijan in a World Cup European Group Four qualifier, reports Reuters.

Hristov opened the scoring in the 35th minute after Azeri Shaban Gueliyev missed a penalty after 16 minutes.

Toni Micevski set up the 19-year-old striker and Hristov's header surprised Azeri goalkeeper Dmitry Kravarenko.

Hristov got in front of his marker and slotted home from close range for the second goal three minutes before the break.

Arjend Bekiri flashed home the third 15 minutes from end. The Azeris were kept in check throughout the second half by the Macedonian defence.

Macedonia lost their opening qualifier 2-0 against Slovakia while Azerbaijan were beaten 1-0 at home by Sweden.

Sweden play Turkey and Moldova take on Slovakia today.

Real rub salt into Barca wounds

MADRID, Oct 7: Real Madrid took a snug potshot at rivals Barcelona on Friday when sporting director Jorge Valdano accused the Catalan club of making a rash of premature signings to compensate for the loss of Luis Figo, whom Real poached in the summer, reports AFP.

"I believe Barcelona are making political signings to compensate for the absence of Figo," Valdano asserted.

"The transfer of the Portuguese player provoked mountains of emotions," added Valdano.

He added that the 56 million transfer had meant that Barca "with cash in their pockets, moved too quickly to find a solution to (compensate for) his departure."

Noting that Barca were struggling after signing former favourite Ivan de la Pena, Valencia's Gerard and former Real striker Perez Munoz Alfonso.

Although the intention was to replace Figo "this has not happened," Valdano asserted.

He added that Barcelona's Brazilian maestro Rivaldo agreed with him having gone on record as saying that "we miss him."

In Valdano's view "that is an incontrovertible truth" although coming from him it's politically incorrect.

Kanu faces NFA's wrath

LAGOS, Oct 7: Arsenal striker Nwankwo Kanu will be sanctioned for staying away from the Sydney Olympics, the boss of the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) Dominic Okeya said here Friday, reports AFP.

"Kanu and the other players who refused to play for the country at the Olympics will not go unpunished," Okeya told reporters.

"We cannot afford the matter go like that so as not to set a bad precedent," he said.

The FA chief did not, however, disclose what kind of punishment would be meted out to the players - but top officials suggest they may be dropped from a couple of international games to serve as a deterrent to other players.

African footballer of the year Kanu had been named as one of the three overage players for Nigeria's defence of the soccer gold they won four years ago in Atlanta.

The striker, however, pulled out of the tournament at the last minute to concentrate on his club engagements.

Nigeria's Dutch coach Jo Bonfrere blamed FIFA for its inability to secure the release of players like Kanu for the Olympics and added that the absence of such players greatly affected Nigeria's chances at the game.

The NFA has already set up an eight-man panel to probe the country's poor performance at the Olympics. The committee has two weeks to submit its reports.

Romania to pay their respect

BUCHAREST, Oct 7: Romania's players will wear black armbands for Saturday's World Cup qualifying match against Italy in Milan as a mark of respect for Dymaro Bucharest midfielder Catalin Haidan, who collapsed and died during a match on Thursday, reports AFP.

The Romanian Football Federation said a minute's silence would also be observed before the match.

Haidan, 24, told a teammate he felt dizzy during the second half of a friendly against Santeramo Naval and then fell to the ground.

He was taken to hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival.

The cause of Haidan's death remains unclear but doctors' tests in Friday's autopsy suggest he died from a ruptured brain aneurysm.

He won eight caps and was on the Euro 2000 squad in the summer.

Chelsea chase after Jakanovic

MADRID, Oct 7: English Premiership side Chelsea have made a 4.7 million dollar bid for Deportivo La Coruna's Yugoslav international midfielder Savitsa Jakanovic, sports daily AS reported here Friday, reports AFP.

Chelsea and new coach Claudio Ranieri, who had spells at Valencia and Atletico Madrid, see Jakanovic as the man to replace Roberto Di Matteo, out for the season with a broken leg.

Jakanovic, 32 and who has played for Partizan Belgrade, Oviedo and Tenerife, has struggled to hold down a first team place under coach Javier Irureta at Deportivo, champions last season.

He has lost his place in the pecking order to Brazilians Djalminha and Emerson, as well as Spanish international Valeron.

Haile won't run at Newcastle

LONDON, Oct 7: Ethiopian ace Haile Gebrselassie has pulled out of the Great North Run in Newcastle on October 22, reports AFP.

Gebrselassie, who aggravated a heel injury when successfully defending his Olympic 10,000 metres title, ruled himself out of his half-marathon debut.

"The Emperor", as he is nicknamed, insisted there was no way he would compete unless he was fully fit and said: "I could probably run the race and win it. But it would not be a fast time."

"What I want to be able to do is give the spectators something special to watch. So we shall have to wait for maybe another year."

Di Canio in hot water

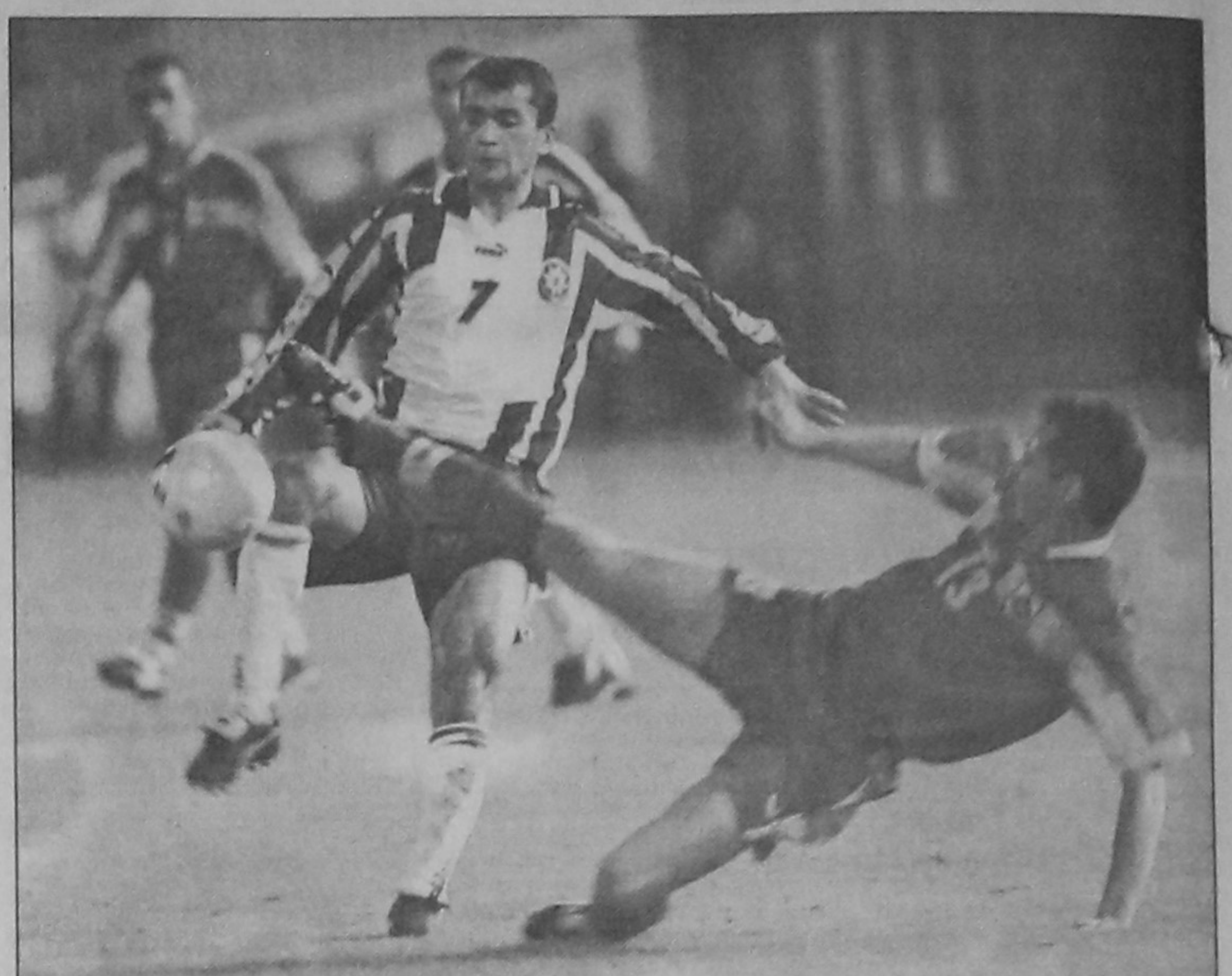
GLASGOW, Oct 7: Former Celtic chief executive Fergus McCann is suing West Ham striker Paolo Di Canio over comments in his new book in a bid "to teach him a lesson".

McCann, who earlier this week criticised his successor at Celtic, Allan MacDonald, is furious at the Italian's allegations that he had broken his word, reports AFP.

McCann, now living in America, claimed in a statement that both Di Canio and Dutch striker Pierre van Hooijdonk had made false statements about their time at Celtic.

He said: "I am taking Paolo Di Canio to task over his recent false and damaging remarks. Legal papers will be served."

It is important that individuals such as Di Canio are not allowed to get away with misleading the public and particularly the Celtic support. I also have a personal obligation to defend my reputation."



Macedonian defender Gerasimovski Marjan (R) takes tumble while trying to clear the ball against Gurbanov Mahmud of Azerbaijan during their World Cup qualifier at Skopje in Macedonia on October 6. — AFP photo

Healy gets serious

BELFAST, Oct 7: Northern Ireland striker David Healy has already scored against the great Peter Schmeichel in training - but this time the Manchester United youngster wants to do it for real in Saturday's World Cup showdown with Denmark at Windsor Park, reports AFP.

Healy and Schmeichel were teammates at Old Trafford until the Danish international goalkeeper left Manchester for Portugal two years ago to join Sporting Lisbon.

"I was only a young apprentice at Old Trafford when Peter Schmeichel was at the club," said Healy, who at 21 is 15 years younger than the great Dane.

"Everyone knows how much he was rated and how much he helped the club to success."

"I played against him in training a few times and as far as I recall scored a few times but Saturday will be completely different."

"He is Denmark's main man and will do everything he can to stop us winning or scoring."

"Hopefully though I can get a chance and put it past him."

Gray subsequently scored to help Northern Ireland record a 1-0 win in their opening Group

Three clash.

There has been much debate about whether manager Sammy McIlroy should employ another forward to help Healy, who looked isolated against the Maltse.

Healy said: "I think another front man would help me but I am happy to go with the manager's decision. He has helped me in international football to date and I know that will continue."

"We're all up for the match with Denmark. They are a strong nation but maybe not as good as in the past and hopefully with a big crowd behind us we can get another win."

"I'm always buzzing after a Northern Ireland win. That's how I want to feel on Saturday."

Blackburn's Damien Johnson is McIlroy's only injury concern after the winger picked up a groin strain last week during Rovers' League Cup tie at Portsmouth.

Denmark got off to a winning start in their opening match in Reykjavik in September with a narrow 2-1 win against Iceland.

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McCann has instructed his

magazine, the Cologne prosecutor has opened an investigation into fraud after a jailed property developer, Heinz Kress, accused Daum of not paying for a property the Bayer Leverkusen coach recently acquired on the Spanish island of Majorca.

According to Monday's edition of Der Spiegel, Kress said he was still waiting for Daum to pay him several million marks.

Another weekly magazine, Focus, also weighed in by reporting that Kress' lawyer had given Daum until October 11 to pay his client two million euros (1.8 million dollars).

In addition, Focus said another complaint had been lodged against Daum in Palma, Majorca, by a Spanish property developer, Jaime Fernandez Abad, for the alleged non-payment of 194,000 euros in commission.

Daum is set to take over as German national coach next June 2001 from stand-in boss Rudi Voller, but he has spent the past few days mired in allegations about his private life from, among others, Bayern Munich manager Uli Hoeness.

Hoeness has alleged Daum took cocaine and was involved in prostitution rackets.

Daum is suing Hoeness for defamation and has vehemently denied any involvement with drugs.

He is set to agree to undergo a hair analysis and make pub-

lic his medical records arising from nasal surgery in an attempt to prove the allegation that he took cocaine is an unfounded smear.