

Waugh feels for fledglings

SYDNEY, Oct 14 (Internet report): Australian skipper Steve Waugh would like to see players from minnow nations - Kenya and Bangladesh - offered the opportunity to develop their skills in Australian club cricket.

Waugh told the Sydney Morning Herald that while the fledgling members of the world cricket fraternity were growing up, to improve, they needed proper guidance from the International Cricket Board and the established cricket nations.

"Some of these guys are very good players, but they need more experience," Waugh said. "They'd be very good club cricketers and I know some of them would love to come out here and play some cricket this season."

Waugh had a first-hand look at the Kenyans when Australia played them in a warm-up match before the start of the ICC Knockout Cup tournament, held in Nairobi. And he was suitably impressed.

"I just hope they get enough support to stay up to standard and keep improving because they've got a huge amount of talent, these sides," Waugh said.

"If you're going to expect these guys to be international-standard one-day cricketers and perhaps play Test cricket, they've got to play more one-day internationals. Either that or they've got to be covered for expenses to play grade cricket in Australia or wherever for six months," Waugh said.

ACB to monitor

Test form

MELBOURNE, Oct 14 (AFP): Australia's cricket selectors will monitor form in state matches before picking their side to play the West Indies in the first Test next month.

But chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns would not say if that meant they were looking for a replacement for the disappointing Mark Waugh.

"It's up to us to assess the importance of keeping this lot together but it's too difficult to talk about that until we see what happens in these games," Hohns said Tuesday.

"But there are a couple of players we would like to see score some runs or take some wickets."

Australia will be out to break the West Indies' world record 11 consecutive Test victories in the first Test here from Nov 23.

The Australian one-day team arrive home Wednesday after their disappointing ICC Cup tournament in Nairobi, amid fresh calls for selectors to end Mark Waugh's international career.

Bundesliga

Dortmund makes Sammer happy

BERLIN, Oct 14: Borussia Dortmund went top of the Bundesliga on Friday after a 1-0 home win over Freiburg achieved with a goal seven minutes from time by Jorg Heinrich, reports AFP.

A bumper crowd of 62,000 saw the match at the Westfalenstadion and coach and former German international star Matthias Sammer was delighted to see his side recover from a recent 4-0 hiding by local rivals Schalke.

"It's a real relief. Had we gone down to a third straight home loss people would have started saying we have a complex about home matches," said Sammer, whose side have been much happier on their travels to date.

"But we attacked for 90 minutes and deserved to win."

Borussia, European champions in 1997 since when they have endured a lean patch, have 16 points from eight games but Bayern Munich, on 15, can go top again Saturday if they get a draw or win at Energie Cottbus.

UEFA blasted

BRUSSELS, Oct 14: UEFA, European football's governing body, were denounced as hypocrites by players' representatives on Friday over their attitude to proposed changes in the football transfer system, reports AFP.

Members of the International Federation of Professional Footballers Associations (FIFPro) met the European Commission for competition, Mario Monti, and FIFPro vice-president Philippe Plat spoke of the "interia and hypocrisy" that characterised the game's authorities.

"UEFA and the national leagues make out they want to negotiate with us and the Commission to find a solution to the transfer question that complies with the law but in reality want to keep the status quo," he said.

FIFPro is pushing the line that footballers are workers like any others, who pay taxes and are protected by laws and have an equal right to freedom of movement.

For that reason, FIFPro has conceded to UEFA the possibility of accepting fines for players walking out on contracts before two years and even limiting salaries.

"Our propositions are very positive but UEFA and the national leagues want to stick with the current system. In light of that we no longer wish to discuss the matter with UEFA," Plat insisted. "Mario Monti isn't fooled by their hypocritical attitude."

"UEFA pretend to negotiate but we do anything to get their own way with the Commission."

Thais await Iran attack



BEIRUT, Oct 14: Damage limitation is expected to be the name of the game when an under-strength Thailand take on in-form tournament favourites Iran in the Asian Cup here on Sunday, reports AFP.

Thailand's English coach Peter Withe has spent the past two years attempting to instil a winning mentality amongst the Thais.

But even the former Aston Villa star is under no illusions about the scale of Thailand's task as the second round of Group A matches get underway.

"Certainly Iran have got a lot of good players and they have more experience than us," Withe told AFP.

"From that point of view it is going to be a very hard match for us. But we have to be positive otherwise there's no point in us playing," he said.

Thailand, beaten 2-0 by Iraq in a woeful opening match on Thursday, have so far looked like the weakest team in the tournament. Iran by contrast have been by far the most impressive, dispatching a 4-0 drubbing to Lebanon.

"They are a very good side."

and probably are the favourites for the title. You look at the players they have playing in Europe and you can see why that is," Withe added.

Thailand's sole European-based player Kiattisak 'Zico' Senanunth went on the missing list prior to the Asian Cup providing an unwelcome disruption to Thai preparations.

Although Kiattisak has so far failed to report for duty, Withe has kept a place open for the said.

Iran coach Jalal Talebi is expected to start with the team which overwhelmed hosts Lebanon during Thursday night's opener at Beirut's Sports City.

Talebi only had ten days to prepare his squad for the tournament, and wants to get the Iranians as quickly as possible before the second round knockout competition starts.

The performance of his substitutes on Thursday will have given him plenty of food for thought however.

Hamidreza Estili came off the bench to score two second-half goals, while former Asian footballer of the year Khodadad Azizi of the San Jose Earthquakes provided a sparkling 30-minute cameo, creating two of his team's goals.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

reporter in Britain, where he plays for First Division club Huddersfield Town.

The player denied allegations that he had lost his desire to represent his country.

"I have served my country for eight years and it has meant the world for me to play under the Thai flag. It made me feel bad that I had to receive the news about my playing in such a big tournament like the Asian Cup through the media," he said.

Iran coach Jalal Talebi is expected to start with the team which overwhelmed hosts Lebanon during Thursday night's opener at Beirut's Sports City.

Talebi only had ten days to prepare his squad for the tournament, and wants to get the Iranians as quickly as possible before the second round knockout competition starts.

The performance of his substitutes on Thursday will have given him plenty of food for thought however.

Hamidreza Estili came off the bench to score two second-half goals, while former Asian footballer of the year Khodadad Azizi of the San Jose Earthquakes provided a sparkling 30-minute cameo, creating two of his team's goals.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Huddersfield forward.

The former skipper of the national side told Saturday's Bangkok Post that he had never received a formal request from Thailand's Football Association to join the squad.

"I never received a document from the Thailand Football Association stating the need for my presence at the Asian Cup," he said.

Kiattisak said he only heard he might be needed for the Asian Cup through a football

Indonesia, Kuwait share points

TRIPOLI, Lebanon, Oct 14: Minnows Indonesia battled to a deserved 0-0 draw against title hopefuls Kuwait in an entertaining Asian Cup Group B match here Friday, reports AFP.

Indonesia - tipped as the tournament whipping boys - surprised the Kuwaitis with a spirited display to win a hard-earned point.

Goalkeeper Hendro Kartiko was the hero for the Indonesians, keeping the Kuwaitis at bay with a string of priceless saves in the first half.

Kuwait had threatened to run riot early on with shots flying goalwards at regular intervals.

Nohair Al Shammari was the first to test Kartiko, letting rip with a fine shot after 15 minutes.

Ten minutes later Kartiko pulled off his best save of the match, diving full-stretch to dip a 25-yarder from Osama Abdullah over for a corner.

Shortly afterwards Jassem Al Houwaidi got on the end of a floated through ball and hooked a sweet first time volley straight at the Indonesian goal.

But again Kartiko was equal to the challenge, parrying to safety.

As the Kuwaitis grew more frustrated by the limp-like man-marking of the Indonesians, the underdogs grew ever more adventurous and even carved out a few openings of their own.

On the stroke of half-time Kurniawan Dwi Yulianto skipped through a challenge and blasted a shot at Fahad Al Majidi, who did well to clear.

The second half followed a similar pattern, with Kuwait pressuring but failing to find a way through the resolute Indonesian defence.

Blanco out of action

VALLADOLID, Spain, Oct 14: Mexican international striker Cuauhtemoc Blanco will miss the rest of the season, his club Real Valladolid said on Saturday, reports AFP.

The Primera Liga club originally thought that Blanco could make it back for the final two months but the severity of a right knee injury, suffered on international duty in Mexico's 7-0 win over Trinidad and Tobago last Sunday, has ruled out any return before next summer.

Blanco underwent one-and-a-half hours surgery on Friday evening, with his cruciate ligament being repaired using tendons from a goose's foot.

"The operation went perfectly and he can soon start rehabilitation but I want to emphasise that it will be at least six months before he can return to action," Valladolid club doctor Fernando Baro said.

Blanco was scythed down late in the game by a brutal two-footed lunge from Trinidad defender Ancel Elcock, with the score at 6-0 and the Caribbean visitors losing all control.

The Mexican federation have petitioned soccer's regional federation CONCACAF to have Elcock banned indefinitely because of the nature of the challenge.

The acrimony between the two countries over the tackle will continue well into next year.

Both teams have already qualified for next year's CONCACAF final group stage, which will determine which three teams will qualify for the 2002 World Cup finals, and will meet twice more in the next 12 months.

Blanco, 27, joined Valladolid from Mexican First Division side America during the summer.

He has more than 40 caps to his name and was a member of the Mexican squad at France '98.

Claudia bids to revive career

GLASGOW, Oct 14: Argentinian striker Claudio Caniggia is hoping a successful spell at Scottish Premiership side Dundee will help in his bid for an international comeback, reports AFP.

The former Roma and Benfica star, expected to make his Dundee debut at Aberdeen Saturday, insists that despite being 33 he can break back into the Argentina team.

Caniggia, who played for Argentina in the 1990 and 1994 World Cups, said: "Yes, it is at the back of mind and I think I am still young enough to make it."

He told Sky Sports: "If I can play a certain number of games at this level and I play as I know I can play then I can get my place back."

Caniggia would have to oust the likes of Claudio Lopez and Hernan Crespo - both playing in Italy with Lazio - as well as Roma superstar Gabriel Batistuta.

But he added: "I know I can do it. It's a nice, new experience for me here. I have been in Italy for many years, in Argentina and in Portugal at a large club like Benfica."

"Now I am in Scotland and I don't know much about Scottish football but I am here enjoying it as my first impression is that I am with a very united group of friends."

Dundee boss Ivano Bonetti, who brought Caniggia to Scotland, said: "He wants to come back and play for his country and it's quiet here, there's no press and this is the perfect place for him to work."



HUMANE ZIDANE: France's international playmaker Zinedine Zidane holding a 5-year-old boy, Yann Tache who is suffering from leucodystrophia, during a charity programme called Everyone in Sneakers in Nancy on October 13. The programme was organised nationally to help sick children. —AFP photo

MLS Cup final today



WASHINGTON, Oct 14: Bulgarian playmaker Hristo Stoichkov tries to continue an 11-year champion ship streak here Sunday when he sparks the Chicago Fire against the Kansas City Wizards in the Major League Soccer Cup final, reports AFP.

About 40,000 people are expected at RFK Stadium to watch the regular-season co-champions duel for the United States football league playoff title.

The Fire bring the league's top offence against Major League Soccer Goalkeeper of the Year Tony Meola and Kansas City's league-best defence.

The rivals split two prior meetings this year, each winning on home turf. The Wizards doused the Fire 4-3 in March but Chicago took the rematch 3-2 in June.

Stoichkov also has the Fire poised to turn the US double by winning the US Open Cup title in addition to the league crown. The Fire will host MLS rival Miami October 21 for the Open Cup crown.

Should the Fire win either title, Stoichkov will continue a streak that has seen him win

domestic club titles for every team on which he has played since 1989.

"I said before the season this team had the capability to win both the MLS Cup and US Open Cup," Stoichkov said. "I enjoy challenges and teaching. But most of all, I enjoy winning."

Meola, 31, was a standout for the US World Cup team a decade ago but struggled last year with a knee injury after being traded from the MetroStars.

This season, Meola has been impressive. He had a 681-minute scoreless streak and 16 shutouts, leading all MLS goalkeepers with a .92 goals-against average on his way to a 15-7 record with nine drawn and his first league final.

"Any time you get to the final it has to be your best year," Meola said. "I couldn't be happier."

The Wizards' backline is also bolstered by MLS Defender of the Year Peter Vermes and rookie of the year nominee Nick Garcia.

Kansas City's attack is sparked by attacking midfielder Preki, who had a team-high 15 assists and made 95 shots on goal, and Danish Dynamite

Miklos Molnar, who had 12 season goals and has four in the playoffs. The Wizards are unbeaten when he scores.

Also key are left-side threat Chris Henderson, an American with nine goals, and Scotland's Mo Johnston, another 1990 World Cupper.

But the Fire burns for a second title in three years.

Stoichkov, 34, was second in voting for World Player of the Year in 1992 and 1994, the latter time after sparking Bulgaria's third-place World Cup run.

The former Barcelona striker was limited to 18 games by various injuries but has produced four goals and five assists in the playoffs after only nine goals and seven assists this season.

But one of his major contributions has been guiding younger Fire teammates such as Ukrainian Dema Kovalenko and American Ante Razov, the Fire's top scorer with 18 goals this season.

"God sent him here to help me become a better player and person," said Kovalenko, 23. Stoichkov's road roommate. "He's an emotional lift for everyone."

French First Division

PSG defeat Marseille



PARIS, Oct 14: Second-half goals from Robert and Christian kept Paris Saint Germain 100 per cent home record intact Friday as they secured a 2-0 win at the Parc des Princes over bitter rivals Marseille, reports AFP.

The two strikers eclipsed Nicolas Anelka, who was content to turn provider for Christian's injury-time effort while Robert had roused the 45,000 PSG faithful with the opening goal on the hour.

Those exploits proved rare highlights in a largely scrappy affair but PSG weren't complaining after recording their sixth win in six home league games.

More significantly, the win lifted the club to the top of the table.

PSG coach Philippe Bergeroo greeted the result as a significant obstacle overcome on the way to what the club hope will be a first league title in seven seasons.

"The players followed the tactical plan. They were aggressive to win the one-to-one duels and we waited for our moment," said Bergeroo.

At 1-0, Marseille started to settle down but it was important my lads didn't let it slip."

"It's important to take over the leadership and to remain unbeaten at the Parc des Princes," he added.

Marseille coach Abel Braga said PSG had got lucky as there had been little between the sides for most of the match.

"My keeper hardly had a shot to save while Letizi was the best player out there. It's tough if you don't take your chances. They were lucky," Braga said.

Jimmy Almerino did the spadework for the opener on 62 minutes, haring down the right flank and whipping over a lofted cross for Robert to head home at the far post and claim his seventh goal of the