

## Drunken Irish duo disciplined

DUBLIN, Nov 14: Republic of Ireland internationals Phil Babb and Mark Kennedy were shown the yellow card by a Dublin judge Monday after damaging a policewoman's car during a drunken night out, reports AFP.

Former Liverpool defender Babb and Manchester City winger Kennedy spent a night in police custody after the incident while they were preparing with the Republic of Ireland squad for a vital World Cup qualifier against Holland in August.

They were arrested after rolling over the stationary vehicle as they walked through Dublin city centre in the early hours of the morning, causing damage to the vehicle.

Babb, aged 29 and now playing for Sporting Lisbon, and Kennedy, 24, both pleaded guilty to being drunk and disorderly, breaching the peace and criminal damage.

They were dealt with under the Irish Probation Act which means that, though they have no criminal record, the matter can be raised again should they commit another offence.

Policewoman Elaine Farrell told the court how she was on duty on Harcourt Street when she saw Babb and Kennedy walking towards her car, a green Volkswagen Beetle.

She told Dublin District Court: "They ran towards this car and they rolled across the bonnet which set the car alarm off."

The pair ran off and, after she turned off the alarm, Farrell followed them and found them getting into a taxi and arrested them.

Defence counsel Peter Charlton said the players had paid for the damage and apologized to Farrell.

He said they "deeply regretted" the incident, which was an example of "wild horseplay... rather than a piece of intentional criminal wrongdoing".

They had already been punished by being dropped from the Irish team for four matches.

## Zidane not going anywhere

ISTANBUL, Nov 14: French playmaker Zinedine Zidane on Monday brushed aside speculation that he was ready to quit Italian Serie A side Juventus, reports AFP.

Zidane was jostled by fans last week at Turin airport after being blamed for his team's European exit because of his sending-off against Hamburg SV which earned him a five-match ban.

But despite rekindling speculation that he wanted out by polling supporters on whether he should stay or go on his website, Zidane said that he had every intention of seeing out his contract with Juventus which he extended two months ago until 2005.

"Everyone is trying too hard to know if I'm having a crisis. We were eliminated from the Champions League, that draws reactions."

"All the players were targeted. The card was held against me. It disappointed the fans. For me the important thing is to go back on the pitch with self-respect," said Zidane.

"As for the survey, the question is badly put. It's a pity it's on my website. That says that I support it."

Zidane said: "Until now I've been happy. The only little sour note was the ban. But you have to accept it. There are highs and lows. I want to do well and win with Juventus."

And he added that he wanted to do well with the French team during Wednesday's international friendly against Turkey here, after missing their last two games against Cameroon and South Africa because of injury.

"The aim is to have a good match. You can't say that three draws in a row is a good record for the world and European champions. We're hoping to do better, we have to pull back a better," said Zidane.

## Best two without their best



MONTEVIDEO, Nov 14: Group leaders Argentina go into the tenth round of the Latin American World Cup qualifiers this weekend without several of their key players, reports AFP.

Five points clear of closest chasers Brazil and Paraguay, the Argentines take on seventh-placed Chile in Santiago, but make the trip without several of their stars.

Roman rivals Gabriel Batistuta and Hernan Crespo, currently plying their trades at AS Roma and Lazio respectively are out, with Batistuta suffering from laryngitis and Crespo a thigh strain.

Another Serie A pair Javier Zanetti of Inter Milan and Claudio Lopez of Lazio also miss the tie as does Marcelo Gallardo of Monaco, who has a groin strain.

The match could however prove to be a good chance for Chile to improve their position in the ten-team Latin American group where the first four teams automatically qualify.

The clash between second-placed Brazil and Colombia, in fourth, is tipped as the match of the round.

After a questionable start to their qualifying campaign struggling Brazil fired their coach Wanderley Luxemburgo, who also failed to impress at the Sydney Olympics.

Brazil have now climbed out of fifth place three rounds ago and sit second on 17 points thanks to seven goals in two games from recalled veteran striker Romario who failed to make the squad for France off.

Columbia, in fourth place on 15 points, will be looking to cause an upset Wednesday at Sao Paulo's Morumbi stadium and should take courage from the absence of Romario through injury.

Third-placed Paraguay will attempt to consolidate their position with a home tie in Asuncion against Peru, still struggling on eight points.

Paraguay coach Sergio Markarian, will be counting on colourful keeper Jose Luis Chilavert, not only to keep a clean sheet but to add to his 59 career goals from spot and free kicks.

Ecuador are favourites in their tie with bottom-placed Venezuela, Latin America's perennial losers, after a victory over closest rival Chile in the last round of matches put them in contention with Uruguay for the fifth spot that carries a play-off qualifying match with the winner of the Oceania group.

Uruguay coach Daniel Passarella, takes his side to the so-

called "Condor's nest", the Hernando Siles stadium at La Paz, Bolivia, 3,600m above sea level. Passarella and his side have spent 20 days in La Paz to acclimate to the altitude and for the first time during the campaign the Argentine will field more domestic based players than foreign based stars.

Uruguay won 1-0 in the corresponding fixture in Montevideo, but have not won in La

Paz for 40 years.

Bolivia coach Carlos Aragonés, is preparing to field an attack minded side led by his star player Erwin Platini Sanchez of Portuguese side Boavista.

Bolivia have won only eight points from nine outings so far and will need a string of good results to get back into the frame.



**DOUBLE DANGER** Brazilian aces Romario (L) and Rivaldo in practice at Sao Paulo on November 13 ahead of their World Cup 2002 qualifier against Colombia on November 15. Romario however picked up an injury during practice and won't be available for the game. --AFP photo

### STANDINGS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
played.	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	points)
1. Argentina	9	7	1	20	8	22					
2. Brasil	9	5	2	20	9	17					
3. Paraguay	9	5	2	13	8	17					
4. Colombia	9	4	3	8	6	15					
5. Uruguay	9	4	2	12	7	14					
6. Ecuador	9	4	1	10	13	13					
7. Chile	9	3	1	11	11	10					
8. Peru	9	2	2	6	8	8					
9. Bolivia	9	2	2	5	14	8					
10. Venezuela	9	1	0	8	5	26	3				

## A win at any cost for USA



BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Nov 14: Not since 1989 has the United States played a football match with so much depending on a victory, reports AFP.

If the Americans win here Wednesday against host Barbados, they would clinch one of the two remaining berths in 2001's six-team North American World Cup qualifying to decide three spots in the 2002 Finals at South Korea and Japan.

If the visitors lose or draw, the door is open for Guatemala to advance and knock out the Americans with a home victory over Costa Rica, sending the US team home in disgrace with the most disastrous failure in US football history.

Even after a 7-0 home rout over Barbados in August, US players and coaches are optimistically cautious when they talk about the match.

"It's going to be very difficult for us to play good soccer," Ramos said. "It will be bumpy. The only thing that will matter is the result. This hasn't been a good result for us."

Arena, who is serving the last of a two-game ban for his conduct after a loss

to Barbados, has experienced

problems getting a full

side together for training be-

cause his team has been elimi-

nated, said his country could

pull off an upset.

"The Americans can be beaten," he said. "We just need to have the right mentality and attitude on the field of play. If we are to win, then there has to be a turnaround of our way of thinking between now and Wednesday."

Team doctor Michael Prehys

had informed the club's manage-

ment and players of the diagno-

sis, who were shocked by the

news and "hope that Heiko

will recover as quickly as pos-

sible," Borussia Dortmund said.

The National Stadium field

here reportedly is in less than

optimum shape.

"It's going to be very difficult

for us to play good soccer," Ra-

mos was among the US

players who beat Trinidad and

Tobago 1-0 in 1989 to reach the

1990 World Cup Finals.

This is the first time in 12 years

that the Americans have

qualified for the World Cup.

Both Vietnam who finished

Group B and second-placed

Malaysia will now travel to Bangkok to play

the semi-finals.

While Vietnam breezed past

Laos, the Malaysians had to

ward off a gritty Singapore side.

Malaysian Ibrahim was elated with his team's victory.

"We lost to them early this

year and now we have finally

beaten Singapore. I think the

players played very well, espe-

cially in the second half.

They did not do so well in

the first half but after Singapore

missed the penalty, the Malay-

sians started playing much

better.

Henry arrived in France on

Monday but was sent home after team doctors examined his

groin strain.

Paris St Germain's Frederic

Delu, newly arrived from Bar-

celona, was called up to the

squad on Friday after Lyon's

Pierre Lajle dropped out with a

calf injury.

I am very happy and we

have now achieved our objec-

tive of qualifying for the semi-

final," said Ibrahim.

A grim Vincent Subramanian, the Singapore coach, said

that the bubble had to burst

sometime for Singapore. We

have been beating Malaysia

recently and now they have

beaten us ... thus the bubble has

now burst.

There is always great rivalry

and tension between the two

teams and it was a similar case

today. We played some good

&lt;p