

## Sport

## Hasselbaink denies Barca move

LONDON, Nov 16: Chelsea's hotshot Dutch international striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink on Wednesday dismissed reported interest from Barcelona and insisted he was staying at underachieving Premiership big spenders Chelsea, reports AFP.

"My mind is with Chelsea," said Hasselbaink, who cost Chelsea a record 15million pounds (22.5million dollars) when he signed from Atletico Madrid in the summer.

The 28-year-old, who has scored 10 goals for Chelsea this season, is understood to be the top target for under-pressure Barca coach Llorente Serra Ferrer, who has seen his side eliminated from the Champions League and lose to minnows Villareal in the league last Sunday.

Hasselbaink, who joined Chelsea after Atletico Madrid were relegated last season despite his 24 goals for them, did not rule out a return to Spain at some stage in the future.

"Barca are a phenomenal club but I'm not even thinking about leaving," he said.

"I have signed with Chelsea for five years. I don't know anything about interest in me from another team and I don't want to talk about it."

Barcelona are a great club with some excellent players - not all of them Dutch - but I can't say anything at the moment.

"I don't know anything concrete, although there are only two countries where I would play now - Spain and England."

## Tribute paid to Italian legends

TURIN, Italy, Nov 16: Players and fans of Italy and England Wednesday held a few moments silence in honour of two figures in Italian sport, who have both died, reports AFP.

The death of Edoardo Agnelli, a member of the Agnelli family closely associated with local football team Juventus and the Ferrari Formula One team, was reported earlier on Wednesday.

On Tuesday night Piero Pasinatti - a member of the 1938 World Cup winning squad coached by Italy's legendary team boss Vittorio Pozzo - also passed away at the age of 90.

Play was halted immediately after the kick-off of the friendly match between the teams at the Stadio Delle Alpi for a few seconds and the tribute was respected by both sets of supporters.

## Fernandez keeps Marseille waiting

MARSEILLE, Nov 16: French midfield legend Luis Fernandez said Marseille would have to wait at least until later this week before knowing if he will take over as coach at the crisis-ridden French giants, reports AFP.

The 41-year-old, capped 60 times and a member of the 1984 European Championship winning side and 1986 World Cup semi-finalists, held talks with Marseille president Robert Louis-Dreyfus, a source close to the 1993 European Cup winners revealed.

"It's just about signed," said the source, who added that Fernandez would probably come in as an interim coach.

However, Fernandez, who played for and later coached Paris St Germain, guiding them to the 1996 Cup Winners Cup trophy before leaving for Spanish side Athletic Bilbao, said no deal had yet been agreed.

Speaking to local radio station RMC Fernandez, while denying his visit, said Marseille would be given an answer this week, possibly at the start of next week.

If his answer is yes, Fernandez would replace Brazilian Abel Braga, who he played with at Paris St Germain in the 1980s.

Braga, who was brought in with much fanfare from Vasco da Gama in the summer but has made a series of disastrous signings and seen the side win just four times in 15 matches to leave them in 16th place, attempted to resign last week.

The 49-year-old was annoyed that too many people were interfering with team affairs - only for Louis-Dreyfus to convince him to stay.

According to another club source, Fernandez, who left Athletic Bilbao in the summer, could come in as a replacement for sacked sporting director Eric Di Meco until Braga officially leaves.

Cedric Dufoix, director of communication at the club, refused to confirm the approach made to Fernandez.

"The club is not in a position to announce such good news," he responded dryly.

However, the general feeling in Marseille is that Fernandez could be just the man to get the Marseillais out of the league.

On Wednesday the club's TV station, OMTV, dedicated a number of programmes which pertained to the eventual arrival of the French legend in the guise of general manager.



Brazil's Roque Junior (C) heads the ball to score the lone goal against Colombia in their World Cup qualifier in Sao Paulo on November 15. —AFP photo

## Roque Junior saves Brazil

MONTEVIDEO, Nov 16: Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay all chalked up vital wins Wednesday in South American zone World Cup qualifiers, reports AFP.

Argentina defeated Chile 2-0 away to stay top on 25 points from 10 games, while Brazil, 1-0 winners at home to thumped Peru 5-1, are level on 20 points in second place.

In the evening's other games, Ecuador kept up their hopes of qualifying for the finals in Japan and South Korea by notching up a rare 2-1 away win in Venezuela and Bolivia and Uruguay played out a goalless draw.

Ten teams are in the South American zone qualifier playing home and away against each other. The top four at the end of the 18 games go through to the finals, while the fifth-placed team plays-off against the winner of the Oceanian zone.

Brazil put in a mediocre performance but still managed to give new coach Emerson Leao a win with a last-gasp 1-0 victory over 10-man Colombia.

Central defender Roque Junior came to rescue of Leao, who took over when Wanderley Luxemburgo was sacked but had to sit in the stands as he is serving a 20 day touchline ban for abusing a referee, in injury time.

However, the Brazilians poor performance provoked widespread dissatisfaction from the Brazilian fans, who booed them at the end and yelled at them as nothing but a little team at the players.

Leao, though, defended his players performance.

The fans are perfectly entitled to show their displeasure if they feel the team is not playing well," he said.

However, it is a little unfair as they are only just starting out under my regime and the players cannot always produce a great performance.

"I thought they did well considering the boozing from the supporters and they gave everything in coming up with the win because the Colombians were not easy to break down," he added.

Roque's goal came just minutes after Uruguayan referee Jorge Larrionda had sent-off Colombian striker Jairo "The Tiger" Castillo for violent behaviour.

However, Leao, who was capped 109 times and was a member of four World Cup final squads, will have to incite his team to produce more attractive football if he is to improve where Luxemburgo, who came under fire for tactics as much for his poor professional form off the field, left off.

A lack of creativity, and imagination left the crowd with little to cheer in the first half.

and Junior's last-minute effort barely stopped the boo-boys from heaping further scorn on the Brazilians.

Injury-time Argentina were happy to come away from Santiago with a 2-0 win which maintained their five point lead at the head of the standings and left them as odds-on favourites to make it through to the finals.

Coach Marcelo Bielsa had to do without top strikers Gabriel Batistuta and Hernan Crespo, as well as Claudio Lopez and Diego Simeone, but a goal in each half from Ariel Ortega (26), a brilliant individual effort, and Claudio Husain (88) were enough to ensure victory.

Paraguay were in rampant form as they smashed five goals past hapless Peru, who have all but lost hope of reaching the finals.

The home side were already three goals up at half-time and two more in the second period sealed an easy win. Charismatic goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert

scored the last goal from the penalty spot four minutes from time.

Colombia's loss allowed Uruguay to move above them on goal difference thanks to a 0-0 draw against Bolivia at high altitude in La Paz.

The Uruguayans, who have always struggled to compete at La Paz's 3,600 metres above sea level underwent a 20-day acclimatisation period before the match.

That move appeared to pay off as they looked comfortable against the Bolivians right up to the final whistle.

In the final match of the day, Ecuador edged last-placed Venezuela 2-1 and put themselves in a position to reach the World Cup finals for the first time. The Ecuadorians were 2-0 up after just 22 minutes and they held off the Venezuelan attacks to earn three points.

The qualifiers now head for a winter recess, the next round of games being scheduled for March next year.



Chilean star Marcelo Salas (bottom) and Claudio Usain of Argentina taking a tumble after a collision during their World Cup qualifier in Santiago on November 15. —AFP photo

## STANDINGS

MONTEVIDEO, Nov 16: Standings in the South American zone qualifying group for the 2002 World Cup finals after Wednesday's matches. (played, won, drawn, lost, for, against, points)

	Argentina	10	8	1	1	22	8	25
Brazil	10	6	2	2	21	9	20	
Paraguay	10	6	2	2	18	9	20	
Equador	10	5	1	4	12	14	16	
Uruguay	10	4	3	3	12	7	15	
Colombia	10	4	3	3	8	7	15	
Chile	10	3	1	6	11	13	10	
Bolivia	10	2	3	5	5	14	9	
Peru	10	2	2	6	7	13	8	
Venezuela	10	1	0	9	6	28	3	

## USA can breathe easy now



WATERFORD, Barbados, Nov 16: The United States scored four second-half goals to beat Barbados 4-0 in a 2002 World Cup qualifier here on Wednesday to advance to the final round of Football Confederation qualifying, reports AFP.

The United States joined Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Honduras and Jamaica in the last round of the Caribbean and North and Central American regional qualifying.

"We obviously did not play a very good first half," said US coach Bruce Arena, who watched the game from the velodrome that surrounded the field because of a three-game ban from the team bench.

The US thought they had broken through in the 57th minute, but Chris Klein's goal was called back because Joe Max Moore was ruled to be off-side.

Despite his delight with the victory, Mathis was quick to caution that the job wasn't finished.

"He did all the work," Mathis said. "He played a great ball and I was able to finish it." Clearly more relaxed, the Americans began to assert themselves. Stewart hit a 16-yard rocket in the 73rd minute. Jones, a second-half substitute, connected from six yards four minutes later, subbed out late, closed out the scoring two minutes into stoppage time.

Goalkeeper Tony Meola knocked away Gregory Goodridge's 10-yard blast off the crossbar in the 49th minute, probably Barbados' best opportunity.

"We thought we could get a goal early," Barbados' coach Horace Beckles said. "If we had, it would have improved our chances. But it really had just come down to fitness. We had players who could not play a full game. I give credit to the United States."

Mathis got it right in the 63rd minute. He bolted down the right wing, beat his man and crossed the ball to Mathis in the penalty area. Mathis slotted home an eight-yard shot for his first international goal in four appearances.

"We have 10 more games ahead of us before we get to the World Cup," he said. "That's the final goal."

## RESULTS AT A GLANCE

PARIS, Nov 16 (AP): Results of Wednesday's international football friendlies.

**At Braga, Portugal**  
Portugal 2 (Figo 49, Jorge Costa 61) Israel 1 (Benayoun 85)

**At Seville, Spain**  
Spain 1 (Herrero 67) Netherlands 2 (Hasselbaink 74, Frank De Boer 84)

**At Glasgow**  
Scotland 0 Australia 2 (Emerton 12, Zdrilic 66)

**At Turin**  
Italy 1 (Gattuso 57) England 0

**At Dublin**  
Republic of Ireland 3 (Finnan 14, Kilbane 84, Staunton 90) Finland 0

**At Istanbul**  
Turkey 0 France 4 (Trezeguet 15, Wiltord 22, Miconi 44, Robert 74)

**At Tunis**  
Tunisia 1 (Bouaziz 67) Switzerland 1 (Cantuaria 19)

**At Copenhagen**  
Denmark 2 (Rommendahl 55, 65) Germany 1 (Scholl 82)

**At Warsaw**  
Poland 1 (Frankowski 61) Iceland 0

**At Skopje**  
Macedonia v Hungary \*match called off because of fog with Hungary leading 1-0

**At Bucharest**  
Romania 2 (Serban 3, Baracan 90) Yugoslavia 1 (Mihajlovic 87)

**At Rhodes, Greece**  
Greece 0 Slovakia 2 (D. Nemeth 18, P. Nemeth 72)

**At Tirana**  
Albania 3 (Vata 47, Bogdani 70, 90) Malta 0

## Ronaldo on the right track

CAPBRETON, France, Nov 16: Ronaldo's physiotherapist and his doctor were optimistic about the recovery of the footballer's knee, it emerged on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old has been convalescing since the beginning of the month in the French Atlantic town of Capbreton at the European Sports medical centre whose director Patrick Middleton told AFP about the stricken star's progress.

"There is no reason why Ronaldo should not play again, it's equally stupid to say he won't play again than to say he will. If he wants to play again there is nothing to stop him," Middleton.

"I've seen others with more serious knee injuries get back to fitness," he explained.

Remy Roulland, the physiotherapist working with Ronaldo expressed similar sentiments.

"I've seen both rugby and football players come back from worse positions," he said. "But there's work to be done on the mobility of the joint and strength."

The Brazilian is trying to live a quiet life out of the media glare and does not wish to give interviews.

Staff at the centre are said to be charmed by Ronaldo's simplicity and have asked him to play Santa Claus at the annual Christmas party for their children.

## Beckham shows captain's temperament

TURIN, Italy, Nov 16: England captain David Beckham won praise all round Wednesday after showing maturity in the face of provocation in Wednesday's 1-0 defeat at the hands of Italy in the Stadio Delle Alpi, reports AFP.

Beckham was hounded by the press and public in England after his sending-off for a kick on Argentina's Diego Simeone during the 2-2 draw in the 1998 World Cup which saw England eliminated from the World Cup on penalties.

Beckham was hounded by the press and public in England after his sending-off for a kick on Argentina's Diego Simeone during the 2-2 draw in the 1998 World Cup which saw England eliminated from the World Cup on penalties.

Beckham refused to retaliate when Italy's goalscorer Gennaro Gattuso appeared to aim a punch at him in an incident which Hungarian referee Sandor Puhil did not punish, declining appeals for a penalty and also refusing to send off Gattuso who minutes later scored the winner.

Beckham admitted: "I didn't react and if I had I would have been all over the front pages tomorrow."

Referring to Puhil's performance he said: "It was his last game and I did not think he wanted to go out as the referee who gave England a penalty in Turin."

Taylor praised Beckham's restraint, saying: "I saw something - an arm being waved or something - but all I saw was David getting away from it - and that's first class."

Asked about Beckham's general performance Taylor said: "I thought he got on well with his job. He did some wonderful things, a couple of lovely freekicks. I am very pleased with David and the majority of the team."

Asked about Beckham's restraint, Taylor said: "I saw something - an arm being waved or something - but all I saw was David getting away from it - and that's first class."

Asked about Beckham's general performance Taylor said: