

# Perryman's last wish

## Asian Super Cup final today



SHIMIZU, Japan, Dec 2: Former Tottenham and England defender Steve Perryman is hoping to end his Japanese coaching career on a high by guiding Shimizu S-Pulse to victory in the Asian Super Cup, the first leg of which takes place here on Sunday, reports AFP.

to lift the trophy following Yokohama Flugels in 1995 and J-League champions Jubilo Iwata last year.

Al Hilal will also be without a former star - international striker Sami Al Jabet, who became the first Saudi player to sign for a professional club in England when he joined first division Wolves in September.

They will also be without Khamis Owairan, who has been suspended by the Saudi football federation. Brazilian striker Sergio Ricardo who scored all four of the goals in the semi-final and final victories that took them to the Asian Cup Championship, who was only playing on loan from Galatasaray, and Kuwaiti striker Jasssem Al Houwaidi, who has a serious knee injury.

But national team goalkeeper Mohammad Al Daeyea, a veteran of two World Cups and the most capped active player currently in the Saudi side, is ready to avenge his side's loss to Japan in the Lebanon.

The second leg will be held in Riyadh on December 11.

It will be a rematch of sorts of the Asian Cup final in October in Beirut, where the Japanese national team defeated Saudi Arabia 1-0 to become the Asian champions for a second time.

However, both teams have suffered setbacks recently. Shimizu, the highest scorers in the J-League last season, managed to finish third in the domestic league first stage but then slumped to a lowly 13th in the second stage.

Their poor form meant defender Ryuzo Morioka was their only player to make it to the Japan squad for the Asian Cup. Brazilian midfielder Santos was allowed to leave at the end of the season.

Shimizu are seeking to become the third club from Japan to offer for the winners.

"The second leg is definitely my last game," said Perryman, who decided a couple of months ago not to renew his contract with the club.

"I'm sad to be leaving some good people, a good club and some good players after a very happy five years but, I've no doubt I have made the right decision."

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## Venables' Boro deal falls thru'

LONDON, Dec 2: Terry Venables will not be returning to management with Middlesbrough after talks broke down with the English Premiership strugglers on Friday, reports AFP.

The former England coach had been touted as a new face at the Riverside Stadium to help beleaguered boss Bryan Robson.

But Middlesbrough chief executive Keith Lamb admitted that talks had foundered over Venables' commitments to television, and that he would not be joining the club.

Lamb said: "We have concluded that Terry's present and future television commitments are incompatible with the role we were offering him here at Middlesbrough."

"We have now brought our discussions to a close. We wish him well in his role as a television football pundit."

"We can assure our supporters that everyone at Middlesbrough will now continue to focus on the Premier League challenge that lies ahead."

It now appears that Robson will continue in charge into next year. Middlesbrough are currently sitting third from bottom in the 20-team Premiership.

Before the announcement, Robson had said: "If (Venables) doesn't take a position here I would be in charge until the end of the season."

Shevchenko gets EU status

MILAN, Dec 2: Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko has been awarded European Union status, meaning his Italian Serie A side AC Milan will no longer have to field him as a foreigner, the club's vice-President Adriano Galliani said on Friday, reports AFP.

"AC Milan are happy to announce that the FIGC (Italian Football Federation) has today agreed to the request to add Andriy Shevchenko to the list of European Union players for Italian teams," Galliani said.

Shevchenko, whose request was granted on the basis of an agreement between the Ukraine and the EU, becomes the latest in a long line of players from non-EU backgrounds to be given such a status although the rules for such a move are confusing.

Galliani had recently joked that he would have to find the Ukrainian bachelor a wife from the EU.

But the move is bound to be seen as an attempt by the FIGC to stave off the threat of legal action made by Galliani after a recent court ruling in a case involving Nigerian player Ikeke Prince Ekeogu.



Espanyol's new Japanese signing Akinori Nishizawa (L) and club president Daniel Sanchez Libre show the player's jersey during his introduction to the press at Barcelona on December 1.

# Wenger voices his concern

LONDON, Dec 2: Arsene Wenger has questioned the validity of the Football Association's controversial video panel as he waits for the verdict on whether Arsenal's French midfielder Patrick Vieira will be charged with misconduct, reports AFP.

Referee Dermot Gallagher booked seven Arsenal players in the Gunners' 1-0 defeat at Leeds last Sunday but took no action against Vieira over two incidents which involved the hosts' Olivier Dacourt and Erik Bakke.

Even so the Football Association (FA) has called in its panel, comprising former players and other famous football figures, to recommend whether or not Vieira has a case to answer.

The panel, whose names are not made public when they sit on particular issues, was brought into operation before the start of the season to act on incidents which referees miss but which are shown up on television.

But Arsenal boss Wenger, who fears Vieira could be hit with another three-match ban, said: "I thought the idea of the panel was to make a judgement on something the referee misses."

"But I have watched the film of the Leeds game which seems to come up every 15 minutes on Sky Television, and it is clear that the referee's positioning in both incidents is perfect - spot-on."

"I have always said that video reviews are fine if all 10 games in a weekend are taken, but not just one."

"Second, if you are going to judge something which the referee has already seen you will have to make new rules."

The FA say that, five days after the Elland Road match, the recommendation from the video panel has not yet been received and that there will be no further announcement until Monday at the earliest.

But it is understood that Gallagher, criticised by Wenger straight after the match for being unfair with the number of bookings he handed out to Arsenal players, is not convinced there was any malicious intent in either incident.

Vieira is shown on film in a head-to-head confrontation with Norwegian star Bakke and flicking an outstretched foot from a sitting position towards his fellow Frenchman Dacourt.

No matter what the video panel decide, the final choice whether to charge Vieira is with FA chief executive Adam Crozier, and Wenger said: "I don't want to interfere in this matter until the decision comes out."

"All I can say is that I will be happy if Patrick is not charged but sad if he is."

It is understood that Wenger, who has an appeal lodged against his own 12-match touchline suspension imposed earlier this season, is in the mood to fiercely dispute any punishment that might be meted out to his midfielder.

Wenger has also expressed concern over the FA's decision to allow the video panel to act on incidents which referees miss but which are shown up on television.

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ARSENE WENGER

# Lennart expresses doubts

SEOUL, Dec 2: UEFA president Lennart Johansson said it may be too late for North Korea to stage matches in the 2002 World Cup finals.

"For me it is two minutes before twelve," Johansson said in Saturday's Korea Times in an interview at a symposium on the co-hosting of the 2002 finals by South Korea and Japan, reports AFP.

South Korea has offered to let the rival North take at least one match and world governing body FIFA has agreed. But North Korea refuses to give an answer.

The influential Swedish soccer official, chairman of the international organising committee for the 2002 finals, expressed pessimism however.

"If people try to be realistic, it will not be easy to all of a sudden, at such a very late moment, go with one or two matches in North Korea," he was quoted as saying.

"Think of the ticketing, the transportation, the accommodation, the media services and what have you."

"I would have loved it and I was very much in favour all the time. But time has passed by and for me, it's too late."

Johansson expressed confidence that the first joint hosted World Cup finals and the first staged in Asia would go ahead smoothly though he said there were concerns that there were not enough flights between Tokyo and Seoul.

"I'm sure we have made the right decision," he said, "history will prove that."

A FIFA delegation is to go to North Korea this month to study its football facilities. The world body's president Joseph Blatter has said he may go to Pyongyang next spring to discuss the possible joint hosting.

He has said a decision must be taken before the draw for the finals is made in the South Korean city of Pusan on December 1 next year.

North and South Korea have made a remarkable breakthrough in relations since a summit between their leaders in June. Athletes from the two sides marched together at the Sydney Olympics opening ceremony. And there has been a proposal for a joint team at the Asian Games in Pusan in 2002.

# Rivera enters the race

ROME, Dec 2: Italian football legend Gianni Rivera emerged on Friday as a possible compromise candidate to head the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) with the presidential elections for the governing body deadlocked, reports AFP.

A new vote will be held on December 18 after a meeting on November 20 failed to pick a winner despite four separate ballots in a contest between incumbent president Luciano Nizzola and his challenger Giancarlo Abete.

Abete upped the ante on Friday by proposing Rivera - a former President of AC Milan and a former Italian Senator - as a unifying candidate but the former 'Azzurri' international said he would only consider standing if unanimously supported.

Rivera said: "I am grateful for the nomination but I will not be available - as I have not been on other occasions - for a candidature against someone else or one that is not unanimous."

Rivera formed a great striking partnership with Luigi Riva. Rivera scoring 14 times in 60 appearances while Riva netted 35 in 42, but he was discarded for the World Cup final against Brazil in 1970.

While he enjoyed huge success at club level inspiring AC Milan, whom he had joined

aged 16, to 1962 European Cup glory at the home of football Wembley the World Cup rarely gave him the rewards he merited despite appearing in three finals.

He was involved in one of the most violent games of football ever to disgrace a World Cup final in 1962 the 'Battle of Santiago' against Chile, which the Italians ended with just

nine men, and then humiliated by North Korea four years later.

It looked, however, in 1970 that having scored in the quarter-final against Mexico, he replaced the ineffective Sandro Mazzola at halftime, and then the winner against West Germany in their epic semi-final win that he would at last reap just reward for his talent.

An AFP file photo of Cameroon forward Patrick Mboma who yesterday was voted the African-player-of-the-year by African Football Federation.



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## Sagnol can't believe it

PARIS, Dec 2: Bayern Munich's French international defender Willy Sagnol said on Friday he had been deeply shocked at seeing Marseille assistant coach Christophe Galtier take his place on the bench for the match with Bastia last Saturday, reports AFP.

Sagnol, who played for Monaco last year, was speaking out on his website against Galtier's appointment as fulltime assistant coach following the latter's involvement in the infamous Marseille-Monaco half-time tunnel fracas with Monaco's Argentine midfielder Marcelo Gallardo on April 8.

Sagnol said: "I'm profoundly shocked. I couldn't believe my eyes."

Galtier, who was drafted in as caretaker coach for last Saturday's away trip to Bastia but has reverted back to assistant following the appointment of Javier Clemente as coach, was suspended by the club last April for the assault on Gallardo.

Sir Alex hails Graham

LONDON, Dec 2: Sir Alex Ferguson has praised his old friend George Graham for keeping his nerve while under constant criticism from some Tottenham fans, reports AFP.

Ferguson claims the Tottenham boss will never be accepted by a section of the club's supporters because he managed their north-London rivals Arsenal and that they use that as a stick to beat him with when results go badly.

Graham has had to endure repeated calls for his head this season from some irate fans and Ferguson admires the way he has not flinched despite this intense pressure.

And the Manchester United manager believes Graham is now beginning to turn Tottenham around ahead of their visit to Old Trafford on Saturday.

"It's difficult for George with him having been at Arsenal and I think that's the crux of the matter as far as I'm concerned," said Ferguson.



Shunsuke Nakamura (L) of Yokohama Marinos is in quest of the ball against Kashima Antlers' Mitsuo Ogasawara during their J-League Final first round encounter in Yokohama yesterday. The match ended goalless.

# Wembley not cashing in

LONDON, Dec 2: Efforts to raise the 410 million pounds (£15 million dollars) needed to construct a 'new' Wembley Stadium are running into difficulties, it was revealed Friday, reports AFP.

Michael Constant, managing director of merchant bankers Chase Manhattan, is trying to collect the cash from the City of London on behalf of Wembley National Stadium Limited (WNSL).

Although Constant remains convinced that the money will be found for the ambitious project and that WNSL's business plan stands up, he has had a tough time convincing his hard-nosed counterparts in London of the strength of his argument.

Despite circulating WNSL's prospectus, the required funds have not yet been drawn in and demolition work on the 'old' Wembley, originally due to start in November, has been put back indefinitely.

named banks have pulled out of discussions altogether and with the overall repayment package - including interest - reaching the billion pounds (£1.5 billion dollars) mark, there are fears that the whole scheme will be dogged by the kind of negative publicity which has surrounded the ill-fated Millennium Dome.

"The problem for us is that we are not used to doing deals in public," said Constant.

"It is very hard for a bank to reach a deal with us when they are reading so many things about the whole scheme."

"Some that have not the attitude that it is not worth the risk no matter how much they stand to get back."

They want to know whether the business plan is robust enough. We believe it is but these concerns still have to be addressed.

"We are talking to WNSL and the Football Association and we are confident that we will get there. It will just take a bit longer than we expected."

WNSL officials still confidently predict that the entire project will go ahead as planned.

They have pointed out that the 30 million pounds (£45 million dollars) annual interest payment on the loan - should they receive it - is covered by long-term contracts with the Football Association, Football League and Rugby Football League for their major events to be held at the new stadium for the next 30 years.