

Munich goes wild



AFP, Munich

An estimated 500,000 fans were on the streets of Munich on Thursday to welcome home the players of Bayern Munich, who won the Champions League on Wednesday, the first time the club have won the continent's top club trophy for 25 years.

The Bayern players, who beat Valencia in a penalty shootout after the final in Milan had ended 1-1 after extra-time, drove from the airport into Munich's main square, the Marienplatz, in a fleet of open-topped cars, signing autographs and giving handshakes to fans as they went.

Captain Stefan Effenberg and striker Carsten Jancker opted to wear the traditional Bavarian leather trousers, or lederhosen, for the victory parade.

On the balcony of the town hall, goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, who became the hero for Bayern after saving brilliantly on three occasions in the shoot-out, told the crowd: "After 25 years, the Cup is here again."

Bayern were also parading the trophy from their 17th German league title, which they wrapped up



PHOTO: AFP

Bayern Munich heroes Paolo Sergio (L) and Oliver Kahn displaying the European Champions trophy to the crowd from the balcony of Munich's Marienplatz on May 24.

on Saturday with a 1-1 draw against Hamburg SV.

The club's president Franz Beckenbauer, who as a player won three European Cups - the forerunner of the Champions League - with Bayern from 1974 to 1976, said: "Whether we are world champions, European champions or German champions, I've never seen such enthusiasm in Munich."

Around 32,000 Bayern fans

watched the match on a giant television screen in Munich's Olympic Stadium on Wednesday and 10,000 fans stayed up through the night to toast the team's victory.

Keegan new Man City manager



AFP, Manchester

Former England coach Kevin Keegan said he was ready to return to football after being unveiled Thursday as the new manager of Manchester City following a seven-month sabbatical after quitting the national team.

He will take over from Joe Royle who was sacked on Monday following City's relegation after just one year back in the Premiership.

Speaking at a press conference at the club's Maine Road ground the 50-year-old former England captain, who has signed a five-year contract, said: "I'm ready for it. I enjoy club management."

"I enjoyed every minute of the England job but my skills are more suited to club management. I want to build something that people want to be part of. I have done it at Newcastle and Fulham and that is my strength."

Like Newcastle, Keegan's new club are renowned for their passionate fans and he said few clubs could have matched the 34,000 crowd that

don't go near the main road," he joked.

City chairman David Bernstein insisted Keegan had been the club's top target to succeed Royle.

"In three days we've had over 20 serious applications for this job. However, we only had one target for this job and when we approached him he described it as a unique opportunity," said Bernstein.

Keegan's record at Newcastle and Fulham was "outstanding", he added, and he possessed "unique man-management and motivational qualities."

The chairman added that Keegan's football style would appeal to the club's supporters.

"He'll bring something the club has lacked for 20 or 30 years - real style and flair."

Keegan, 50, stood down as England coach after the 1-0 defeat against Germany at Wembley in October in a World Cup qualifier and admitted he was not up to the task of international management.

He had been heavily criticised for the national team's performance in the Euro 2000 finals last summer in Belgium and the Netherlands when England defeated Germany but lost to both Portugal and Romania.

have won no major trophies since and must live in the huge shadow cast by Premiership champions Manchester United.

At the start of the 1998-99 season City were in the English Second Division, the first time in their history that they had been outside English football's top two tiers.

However, under Royle the club clawed their way back although it needed a dramatic play-off victory to get them into the First Division at the end of the 1998-99 campaign.

City were in the Premiership for four seasons from 1992-93 to 1995-96 but failed to make a major impact.

Keegan has a good record in gearing up clubs for entry into the Premiership.

He took Newcastle back into the top division in 1993 and came within a whisker of landing the Premiership title in the 1995-96 season.

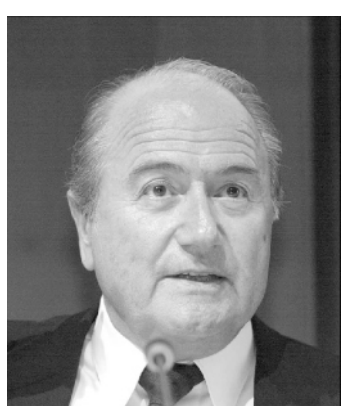
But he resigned in January 1997, establishing an unfortunate reputation for quitting when the going gets tough.

Fulham's tycoon chairman Mohammad Al Fayed tempted him to join Fulham, who he guided to the Second Division title, setting them

Blatter not too worried

AFP, Zurich

FIFA president Sepp Blatter on Friday downplayed the impact of the recent collapse of former sports marketing partners ISL-ISMM by saying predictions of financial



losses were over-estimated.

Swiss marketing company ISL-ISMM were declared bankrupt on May 21, with the fallout from the collapse - according to Blatter in Swiss daily Blick on Wednesday - expected to cost FIFA up to 100 million Swiss francs (56 million dollars).

However on Friday Blatter said earlier those estimates have turned out to be exaggerated.

"It will never be even around such an amount. Let us have all documents, let us analyse these documents," said Blatter at a press conference.

"I do hope we break even," he added.

Blatter earlier admitted that around 75 million Swiss francs (42 million dollars) given to ISL-ISMM ended up in a "secret bank account".

The money, which emanated from the sale of television rights, had been given to the bankrupt company by Brazilian television company O Globo.

The disappearance of the 42 million dollars would mean a reduction in the profits of FIFA's TV contracts, he acknowledged, but added the total sum of the 2002 World Cup TV contract exceeds 1 billion Swiss francs (561 million dollars) and that 650 million Swiss francs (364 million dollars) is already guaranteed.

ISL-ISMM previously held the commercial rights for the 2002 and 2006 World Cup finals although, according to Blatter those will probably now be obtained by German media group Kirch.

Blatter, who was recently criticised by UEFA president Lennart Johansson for a "lack of transparency" within world football's governing body, said:

"If one of the two (companies) cannot exercise its rights any more, there exists a 30-day option to enter the rights of the other."

"Kirch with the greatest probability will take over these contracts from ISL-ISMM," Blatter said.

Friendly ROK hold Cameroon

AFP, Suwon, South Korea.

South Korea and Cameroon fought out a 0-0 draw here Friday as Suwon celebrated the opening of its World Cup stadium.

Worryingly for organisers of next year's tournament, the stadium, which can hold more than 43,000 supporters, was far from full for a match both teams were using as a warm-up for the Confederations Cup, which starts next week.

South Korea's Dutch coach Guus Hiddink will probably have taken most satisfaction from the exercise as his younger players, who looked in the opening stages as if they were going to be completely outmuscled by a physically powerful Cameroon, gradually got into the game.

Albertz going home

AFP, Hamburg

German midfielder Joerg Albertz has left Scotland's Glasgow Rangers after five years and rejoined his former club Hamburg, the club announced here on Friday.

Hamburg agreed to play a club record of 4.4 million dollars to secure the services of Albertz who was a key player in the all-conquering Rangers sides of the late 1990s.

But he has had a disappointing season this year as Rangers have ceded ground to city rivals Celtic amid tales of dressing-room dissent.

Albertz played 99 times for Hamburg between 1993 and 1996 scoring 22 goals before he joined Rangers for four million dollars.

Serie A preview Capello's fingers crossed



AFP, Milan

Fabio Capello leads AS Roma into battle against his former club AC Milan Sunday evening knowing that by midnight he may have won his fifth Italian First Division title as a coach.

Should Roma win and contenders Lazio and Juventus slip up then Capello's side would be confirmed as Italian champions for the first time since 1982-3, earning the right to wear the "Scudetto" on their shirts next season.

The "Scudetto" (literally 'little shield') is the shield-shaped piece of cloth in the colours of the Italian national flag that the *Serie A* champions stitch on to their shirts the following season when they defend their crown.

Roma have not won it since the heady days 18 years ago when Italy were the newly-crowned world champions and World Cup heroes Bruno Conti and Francesco Graziani, Brazilian playmaker Paulo Roberto Falcao and a young midfielder called Carlo Ancelotti - now Juventus coach - were their star players.

Capello has had more success than Roma since then. He led AC Milan to four Scudetti and has also won the *Primera Liga* with Real Madrid and he will be hoping that his former charges will be in charitable mood at the Olympic Stadium on Sunday night.

That was not the case at the San Siro this season when Milan inflicted one of only three defeats on Roma

during this campaign and the visitors from the north must win to have any hope of a place in next season's Champions League.

Champagne on Sunday evening is the dream situation for Roma but the nightmare scenario is lurking just around the corner. If Roma lose and Lazio and/or Juventus were to win then the race for the Scudetto

Juventus, a further point back, host Perugia at the Stadio Delle Alpi. The visitors have exceeded expectations this season and will be no pushovers for the Turin side who lost the title to Lazio on the last day of last season - by losing unexpectedly to Perugia.

If all three title-chasers win then Roma would only need to win one of their two remaining matches to be confirmed as champions.

Fourth-placed Parma travel to relegation-threatened Lecce looking for three points that would all but seal their place in next season's Champions League alongside the leading trio.

Reggina, also in trouble and desperately in need of points, will be hoping to find visitors Bari in a demoralised mood after they were relegated last week.

Udinese host Napoli in another game with big relegation issues at stake while Verona, who are second bottom, know that only taking full honours will do at home to Bologna.

Vicenza, also in danger, travel to Brescia while Fiorentina entertain Atalanta.

All matches Sunday kick off in the evening to allow spectators, players and officials the chance to vote in local elections in Italy during the day.

FIXTURES (all 1830 GMT)
Sunday: AS Roma v AC Milan, Brescia v Vicenza, Fiorentina v Atalanta, Inter Milan v Lazio (at Bari), Juventus v Perugia, Lecce v Parma, Reggina v Bari, AS Roma v Milan, Udinese v Napoli, Verona v Bologna



FABIO CAPELLO would once more be blown wide open.

Defending champions Lazio, five points behind their arch-enemies with three games to play, play a demoralised Inter Milan at Bari with the Milan outfit being forced to play away from the San Siro because of the incident in the match with Atalanta where their fans vandalised a scooter within the stadium.

Argentinian talisman Juan Sebastian Veron returns for Lazio after serving a week's suspension.

Brazil are still quality



AFP, Tokyo

Brazil's coach Emerson Leao hopes that his Confederations Cup squad will bring his country back to the top of the world despite lacking such stars as Cafu, Rivaldo and Roberto Carlos.

"Ours is not a completely new team. It has veterans and its quality is the same despite changes in the names of players," Leon said in an interview published here Thursday.

"What is important is to bring our world ranking to number one," the 51-year-old former coach of the J-League Tokyo Verdy told the daily Sports Hochi daily.

France, which has lately slipped from the top spot in the world rankings for the first time in seven years, is also competing in the other half of the eight-nation cup contested by continental champions and hosts.

Leao's Confed team, which arrived here on Tuesday, also miss Ronaldo, another superstar survivor from Brazil's traumatic 1998 World Cup final defeat by France.

Ronaldo has been long sidelined from his Italian club Inter-Milan for an injury to his right knee.

"I am worried but I have heard from Ronaldo that he is steadily recovering. I believe that he will definitely come back in perfect

condition," Leao was quoted as saying. "His presence is indispensable for Brazil."

Brazil, now struggling to survive the South American World Cup qualifying round, will play Cameroon on May 30, Canada on June 2 and Japan on June 4 in the Group-A first round. France is



EMERSON LEAO bunched with Australia, Mexico and South Korea in Group B.

The tournament will be staged in Japan and South Korea as a dress rehearsal for the World Cup finals which the bitter regional rivals will co-host next year.

"The Confederations Cup is related to the World Cup," Leao said. "It features many matches and provides a good opportunity for training."

He said Brazil would aim to revenge their 2-1 loss to Cameroon in the Sydney Olympics quarter-finals.

Italian Cup final First leg Fiorentina's



REUTERS, Parma

An 87th minute header from Paolo Vanoli gave Fiorentina a 1-0 win at Parma in their Italian Cup final, first-leg match on Thursday.

Parma dominated possession but now face a tough task in the second leg in Florence on June 13 after Vanoli, a former Parma

player, headed home a Mauro Bressan cross three minutes from the end.

Parma had plenty of chances to take the lead but were unable to find a way past Fiorentina 'keeper Francesco Toldo.

Toldo almost gifted them an early opener when he mis-hit a clearance straight to Parma striker Savo Milosevic but he rescued the situation with a fine diving save from the Yugoslav.

The Italian international 'keeper was in action again two minutes before the break, doing well to parry a powerful Johan Micoud shot over the bar.

Parma striker Marco Di Vaio went close with a sharp header from

a Luigi Sartor cross a minute after the restart and then substitute Sergio Conceicao twice saw deflected shots tipped over by Toldo.

Even after Vanoli's goal, two minutes into injury time, Toldo pulled off his finest save to keep out a close-range drive from Micoud.

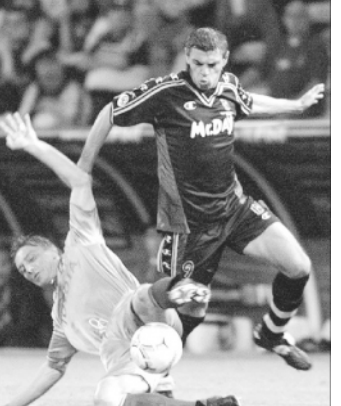


PHOTO: AFP

Parma's Yugoslav international striker Savo Milosevic (R) being tackled by Fiorentina defender Marco Rossi during the final first leg of the Italian Cup at Parma on May 24.

Primera Liga preview

It's Real's for the taking



AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid will be bidding to nail their 28th Spanish league title and first since 1997 when they play UEFA Cup runners-up Alaves at their Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Saturday night.

With three games left Real have a six-point advantage on second-placed Deportivo La Coruna and would wrap up the *Primera Liga* title if they grab the valuable three points over their ninth-placed league rivals.

But Vicente Del Bosque's weary star-studded outfit know they have a battle on their hands against the plucky Basque outfit, who matched UEFA Cup winners Liverpool in every respect last week before going down 5-4.

So Real could be faced with another agonising week of waiting.

The former European champions have been far from sparkling over recent weeks including the bitter blow of their Champions League semi-final defeat to eventual champions Bayern Munich.

But they bounced back from a string of losses last weekend to score a valuable 1-0 away win over city rivals Rayo Vallecano which moved them slightly closer to the title.

Real midfielder Ivan Helguera, who has been carrying a heel injury for the past few weeks, called on his team-mates to make a supreme effort to tie up the title.

"Let's make a huge effort and win the Liga at home and in front of our fans. Hopefully we'll finish against Alaves on Saturday. It won't be easy, but we have to give everything on our home turf."

"We all want the same thing, to celebrate the title and the end of the season, because we're tired," added Helguera.

His sentiments were echoed by striker Raul.

"We deserve to win the Liga. We've worked hard all season and have been playing well, except for three matches. The Bernabeu has been full, people have enjoyed these matches and in addition it's been some time since we've won

the Liga, if we win it will be something special."

Meanwhile, reigning champions Deportivo aren't going to hand over the title they won for the first time



RAUL last year without a fight, and will be bidding for a home win against relegation-threatened Valladolid.

And as Deportivo aim to collect the honours to curtail Real's striving for domestic bliss, Valencia - in third place on 62 points, 11 adrift of Real - travel to bottom table Racing Santander as they bid to keep in reach of a Champions League place.

Valencia, who went down 5-4 on penalties to Bayern Munich after an extra-time 1-1 draw at the San Siro stadium in Milan on Wednesday, will be desperate to get back in the thick of the action on the highest European stage.

Elsewhere, fourth-placed Real Mallorca, who are equal on points with Valencia, host Rayo Vallecano, with fifth-placed Barcelona aiming for an easy win as they host lowly Oviedo.

FIXTURES
Saturday: Real Madrid v Alaves, Las Palmas v Celta Vigo

Sunday: Athletic Bilbao v Malaga, Racing Santander v Valencia, Deportivo LaCoruna v Valladolid, Barcelona v Oviedo, Mallorca v Rayo Vallecano, Numancia v Espanyol, Villarreal v Osasuna, Real Zaragoza v Real Sociedad

Spain squad for qualifiers



AFP, Oviedo

Spain squad for the World Cup 2002 Europe zone Group 7 qualifying matches against Bosnia on June 2 at Oviedo and Israel at Tel Aviv on June 6:

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Iker Casillas (Real Madrid), Santiago Canizares (Valencia).

Defenders: Oscar Tellez (Alaves), Sergi Barjuan and Carlos

Puyol (both Barcelona), Manuel Pablo Garcia (Deportivo La Coruna), Fernando Hierro (Real Madrid), Miguel Angel Nadal (Real Mallorca), Juan Francisco Garcia "Juanfran" (Celta Vigo).

Midfield: Josep Guardiola and Luis Enrique (both Barcelona), Ivan Helguera (Real Madrid), Juan Carlos Valeron (Deportivo La Coruna), Ruben Baraja and Gaizka Mendietta (Valencia).

Forwards: Javi Moreno (Alaves), Diego Tristan (Deportivo La Coruna), Pedro Munitis and Raul (both Real Madrid).



PHOTO: AFP

Newly appointed Manchester City manager Kevin Keegan smiles while talking to the press at Maine Road, Manchester on May 24.

watched City's final home game of the season, even though relegation was already assured.

"There is a tremendous fan base and the club has underachieved in the past. This is a sleeping giant and it is my job to turn it around," said Keegan.

"I have had other opportunities but this is the only one that has appealed to me. They are one of few clubs I would have joined. This is a big club."

City have a reputation for hiring and firing managers at an alarming rate - Keegan is the club's 19th boss in 30 years - but he made light of the situation.

"As a kid your mum always says

At City he again finds himself managing a team where expectations of success, fuelled by plans to move into a new stadium set to be used first for the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester, remain high despite the reality of recent seasons.

For a brief period in the late 1960s and early 1970s City surpassed arch rivals Manchester United, winning the league title in 1967-68, the FA Cup in 1969 and the European Cup Winners Cup in 1969-70.

However, apart from an English League Cup triumph in 1976, City

on track to the Premiership before taking the England job after Glenn Hoddle's sacking.

Asked if he had something to prove after his England stint, Keegan said: "You always have a point to prove. I demand a lot of myself."

"Every time you go somewhere what you have achieved means nothing. That doesn't worry me. It is not an exact science."

"Just because someone has failed somewhere, doesn't mean they will fail somewhere else."

Zidane not moving



AFP, Rome

World and European champion Zinedine Zidane brushed aside speculation Thursday and confirmed his commitment to Italian outfit Juventus next season.

"I'm staying with Juve, that's it. If newspapers want to amuse themselves by putting me in other jerseys I don't know what to say," Zidane told Italian sports weekly *Rigore*.

The French playmaker has

become an integral part of the Italian side since signing in 1996.

And his key role was underlined Sunday when he inspired Juve to come from behind to beat Bologna 4-1 and stay in the three-way race for the Scudetto.

Juve, deprived of the battling qualities of midfielder Edgar Davids who is suspended pending his doping hearing, showed little sign of missing the dreadlocked Dutchman as Zidane stole the show, sometimes producing gasps of admiration from even the home fans.

According to Spanish press

reports Primera Liga giants Real Madrid have rekindled their interest in the French player after a previous failed attempt to lure him to Spain last year.

And Zidane, who will be 29 years old next month, said that he did not see himself playing in five years time.

"I'm certain that I won't play until I'm 35 (years old). Football is not only a passion when you're young. It's also pressure. I know that life exists outside football and I don't want to die for football," added Zidane.

Dutch Cup FC Twente's

AFP, Rotterdam

FC Twente beat Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven 4-3 from the penalty spot to win the Dutch Cup final after an extra-time 0-0 draw here Thursday.

Both teams were still scoreless after 30 minutes of extra time, with FC Twente taking the advantage from the spot to win their first Cup since 1977.

FC Twente thus win a qualifying place in the UEFA Cup, while PSV Eindhoven will dispute the Champions League.