

Pele fears the worst

AFP, Sydney
Brazil soccer legend Pele said Monday he feared the four-times world champions might be forced to play off against Australia to qualify for the 2002 World Cup finals.

The 60-year-old triple World Cup winner, here on a promotional trip, said three coaches in as many years and the continued unavailability of European-based players were proving major obstacles for Brazil.

"When you have as many coaches as we have had in such a short time and are never able to pick the same side for three consecutive matches, then you make things difficult for yourself," he said.

Brazil are currently fourth in the South American zone, two points ahead of Colombia. The fifth-placed team has to play off against the Oceania Zone winners, who are expected to be Australia.

"Australia have a good side. You have some very good players in England," he said. Emerson Leao, the latest Brazil coach, may get an early chance to test the Socceroos in the Confederations Cup in South Korea.

A run of dismal results for Brazil continued on Saturday with a scoreless draw against minnows Canada at the tournament, a dress rehearsal for the World Cup in South Korea and Japan.

Leao recently received the dreaded vote of confidence from the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) following an awful 1-1 draw with Peru in Sao Paulo.

The Brazilian press has speculated that Leao could be fired and replaced by Carlos Alberto Pereira, who led the South Americans to the 1994 World Cup.

Brazil's next big qualifying date is in Montevideo on July 1.

They also have to travel to run-away leaders Argentina and face a lung-busting examination at high altitude in Bolivia before tackling Paraguay, Chile and Venezuela at home.

"We have a tough task ahead of us," said Pele.

Strikers deny

FROM PAGE 13
skewed a clearance to Leandro. Fortunately for Japan, the ball did not fall kindly and the Fiorentina forward was unable to hit the target.

Tsuzuki made amends in the 15th minute with a courageous save at point-blank range after a low cross from wingback Ze Maria found Washington on the six-yard line.

The ball rebounded to Carlos Miguel but his follow-up effort was cleared off the line by Naoki Matsuda.

Ze Maria broke free on the right again in the 26th minute and flashed a powerful cross across the goalmouth into the path of Washington, who failed to hit the target with an empty net gaping in front of him.

Tsuzuki was almost caught off guard by Ramon's spectacular overhead kick from the edge of the area in the 32nd minute. But the young goalkeeper recovered in time to tip the ball over the bar.

Japan, who had been restricted to a couple of hopeful long-range shots, finally hit the target three minutes later but Nakata's low shot after a one-two with Yoshiteru Yamashita did not trouble Dida.

Nakata returned the complement five minutes later with a curling low cross but the lunging Yamashita failed to hit the target.

The Brazilians continued to dominate and Tsuzuki was relieved to see Fabio's long-range free-kick whistle past his post just before the break.

Japan coach Philippe Troussier acted to contain the threat from Ze Maria at the interval, replacing rising star Shinji Ono with the more defensive Koji Nakata on the left of midfield and forward Takayuki Suzuki with another midfielder, Hiroaki Morishima.

Substitute Robert came close to breaking the deadlock when his 78th minute cross floated over Tsuzuki and rebounded off the top of the bar.

Four minutes later, with the Japanese defenders visibly tiring, a mazy run by Washington ended with him squaring the ball to Leandro who blasted Brazil's best chance of the night over the bar from just 10 yards out.

The Brazilians pined on the pressure in the closing minutes, but the elusive goal was not to come.

TEAMS
Brazil: Dida, Ze Maria, Lucio, Edmison, Leomar, Leo, Fabio, Ramon (Julio Batista 63), Carlos Miguel (Robert 75), Leandro, Washington (Magno Alves 80).

Japan: Ryota Tsuzuki, Kenichi Uemura, Naoki Matsuda, Yoshihiro Hattori, Yasuhiro Hato, Teruyoshi Ito, Tomokazu Myojin, Hideroshi Nakata, Shinji Ono (Koji Nakata 46), Yoshiteru Yamashita (Masashi Nakayama 61), Takayuki Suzuki (Hiroaki Morishima 46).

Referee: Kim Nielsen (Den)
Att: 37,470

Argentina virtually assured



AFP, Montevideo
Argentina are all but assured of qualifying for the 2002 World Cup finals in South Korea and Japan following their 3-0 win over Colombia in a South American zone qualifier on Sunday.

Marcelo Bielsa's team need just two points from their last five games to go through as one of the four automatic qualifiers from the 10-team group.

The Colombia game was mired in midfield in the opening 20 minutes, but the Argentians broke loose in the space of 16 minutes.

Valencia striker Kily Gonzalez first crashed a shot from a tight angle past Colombian keeper Oscar Cordoba in the 22nd minute.

Claudio Lopez made it 2-0 after 35 minutes and three minutes later Lazio striker Hernan Crespo sent through by Juan Sebastian Veron held off a challenge from Mario Yepes to beat Cordoba.

Crespo was injured five minutes into the second half and was replaced by Boca Juniors striker Chelo Delgado.

Argentina seemed content to sit back on their big lead and Colombia created a chance through Aston Villa player Juan Pablo Angel, but he was thwarted by Celso Vigo keeper Pablo Cavallo.

At the other end, Cordoba made a succession of fine saves to keep the score at 3-0 for Argentina.

The defeat leaves Colombia struggling in their quest for a third straight World Cup finals as they are two points behind fifth place side Brazil who have a game in hand as they are on Confederation Cup duty in Japan and South Korea.

The fifth placed side plays off against the Oceania winner - near certain to be either Australia or New Zealand - for a place in the finals.

In the night's other game, Bolivia smashed five goals past Venezuela in a game opposing two sides who have next to no chance of qualifying.

In the final game of this round of matches, troubled Brazil will take on Uruguay in Montevideo on July 1. Defeat would leave them tottering on the brink of failing to qualify automatically.

According to the Sunday newspaper the 'News of the World' the head of the ACU, Lord Paul Condon, a former head of London's police force, told both the English and their Pakistan counterparts that there was a "potential threat by known corruptors to influence the series between the two sides."

A spokesman for the ICC told this news agency that they had nothing to add to the newspaper statement attributed to the ACU. "That position holds good and that is as much as we have to say at the moment."

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed they then warned their players for the need for "ever-present vigilance."

"The ECB was notified by the anti-corruption unit of a possible threat to influence the outcome of the first Test against Pakistan," a statement from English cricket's governing body read.

"As a result all of the England players were reminded of the need for ever-present vigilance and to report any suspicious approaches to the team management."

"As this match is confidential we are not prepared to comment on the specific nature of the threats."

Condon released a report into match-fixing on May 23, just days after England had thrashed Pakistan.

Cuper now Inter's?
Valencia coach Hector Cuper is to take over at Inter Milan on a two-year contract worth 3.5 million dollars a year, Spanish radio said Monday.

The radio reports said that the deal was done late Sunday at a village outside Milan. Cuper said on Friday that he was in talks with Inter.

Cuper took over at Valencia two years ago from Mallorca and took the club to back-to-back European Champions Cup finals, losing to Real Madrid and Bayern Munich.

But his defensive style of play and poker-face failed to endear him to the Valencia fans and he looked certain to leave even before the Bayern final.

What to watch
FROM PAGE 13
6:30 am
UK Domestic Cricket
Somerset vs Yorkshire
1:00 pm
Sportline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show
11:00 pm
(Tuesday)
Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show
8:30 am & 1:00 pm
Pakistan vs England
Second Test Day Five
Highlights
11:00 pm

England play
FROM PAGE 13
However, shortly before lunch, Pakistan struck when Waqar beat Michael Atherton's defensive stroke and bowled him middle-stump for 51, England 146 for one.

Former captain Atherton had faced 126 balls including eight fours in his 44th Test half-century and this was his fifth stand of 100 or more with Test cricket.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at tea on the fifth and last day of the second and final Test between England and Pakistan at Old Trafford on Monday:
PAKISTAN: First innings 403 (Inzamam-ul-Haq 114, Rashid Latif 71, Younis Khan 65, M Hoggard 3/79, D Gough 3/94, A Caddick 3/111)
ENGLAND: First innings 357 (M Vaughan 120, G Thorpe 138, A Razzaq 3/61)
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Extras: (b-2, lb-4, w-1, nb-2) 9
Total: (for 2 wickets in 80 overs) 196
Fall of wickets: 1-146, 2-174

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Lord's Test fixed?

AFP, London
The current Test series between England and Pakistan was thrown into turmoil Sunday after it was revealed the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) had warned English cricket authorities the first Test at Lord's may have been the focus of illegal bookmakers.

England won the first Test of the two match series by an innings and nine runs in under three days and are in the middle of the second Test at Old Trafford, Manchester.

According to the Sunday newspaper the 'News of the World' the head of the ACU, Lord Paul Condon, a former head of London's police force, told both the English and their Pakistan counterparts that there was a "potential threat by known corruptors to influence the series between the two sides."

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What to watch

FROM PAGE 13
6:30 am
UK Domestic Cricket
Somerset vs Yorkshire
1:00 pm
Sportline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show
11:00 pm
(Tuesday)
Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show
8:30 am & 1:00 pm
Pakistan vs England
Second Test Day Five
Highlights
11:00 pm

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Agassi, Hewitt in last eight

AFP, Paris
US third seed and 1999 titlist Andre Agassi survived a harsh examination before reaching the French Open men's singles quarterfinals on Monday, beating Argentine 16th seed Franco Squillari 4-6, 6-2, 6-4, 1-6 in 2hr 59min.

Agassi will now face France's Sebastien Grosjean, who earlier blasted his way past Spain's Galo Blanco, second round slayer of American Pete Sampras, 6-3, 6-4, 6-1.

Australian sixth seed Lleyton Hewitt reached the last eight, ousting Argentine Guillermo Canas 3-6, 6-7 (3/7), 6-2, 6-3, 6-3 in 4hr 12min.

Hewitt now faces Spanish fourth seed Juan Carlos Ferrero for a place in the semifinals and is now looking like a genuine title candidate as he bids to become the first Aussie men's champion here since Rod Laver in 1968.

On Sunday, Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the 1996 champion and seventh seed, continued his assault on Paris with an efficient 6-3, 6-4, 1-6, 6-4 win over Tommy Robredo of Spain.

The Russian plays top seed and defending champion Gustavo Kuerten in the quarterfinals.

Kuerten staved off a match point to beat qualifier Michael Russell of the United States 3-6, 4-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-3, 6-1.

The Brazilian has twice wrecked Kafelnikov's dreams in five-set quarters - and on both occasions he went on to lift the title.

Among the women, top seed Martina Hingis of Switzerland reached the quarterfinals with a 6-1, 2-6, 6-2 win over last home survivor Sandrine Testud.

Hingis now meets Italy's Francesca Schiavone, conqueror of Zimbabwe's Cara Black in three sets.

US sixth seed Serena Williams beat unseeded Nadia Petrova of Russia 6-3, 6-1 to set up a meeting with fourth-seeded compatriot Jennifer Capriati, who ousted another American, Meghann Shaughnessy, 7-5, 6-1.

Belgian 14th seed Justine Henin beat unseeded Austrian Barbara Schett 6-3, 6-4 to move into the last eight for the first time and the 19-year-old will now face 17-year-old Lina Krasnoroutskaya after the Russian swept aside Silvia Farina of Italy 6-2, 6-4.

Belgian 12th seed Kim Clijsters joined Henin in the last eight after beating Slovakia's Henrieta Nagyova 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

She now plays surprise package and Hungarian qualifier Petra Mandula, who ousted Italy's Rita Grande 6-2, 6-3.

Heavy-hitters' duel

AFP, Paris
When I played her, I really shouldn't have been playing. I was just out there," Williams said Sunday.

The French is her first tournament since that defeat. Knee tendinitis kept her sidelined for the next two months.

The 19-year-old former U.S. Open champion suffered from the lack of practice in her opening rounds, stumbling to a three-set victory over France's Sarah Pitkowski in her first match.

Williams hasn't lost a set since, and her fourth-round win over Russia's Nadia Petrova sent her into the quarterfinals at Roland Garros for the first time in three attempts.

Both Capriati and Williams are big hitters and the match is set to be a slugfest competition. Williams won their only match on clay at the German Open in 1999, more than two years ago. But Capriati has been the more consistent player so far this tournament and stands out as the favourite to reach the semifinals.

Whoever wins Tuesday's quarterfinal showdown will likely face top-seeded Martina Hingis in the semis.

The 20-year-old Swiss star dropped her first set of the tournament Sunday against Frenchwoman Sandrine Testud, before eventually winning 6-1, 2-6, 6-2.

Hingis plays unseeded Italian Francesca Schiavone in her quarterfinal match.

In the bottom half of the draw, No. 12 Kim Clijsters plays Hungarian qualifier Petra Mandula for a place in the semifinals. Mandula defeated one of the tournament favourites, No. 15 Jelena Dokic, in the third round.

The other quarterfinal pits Henin against 17-year-old Russian Lina Krasnoroutskaya.

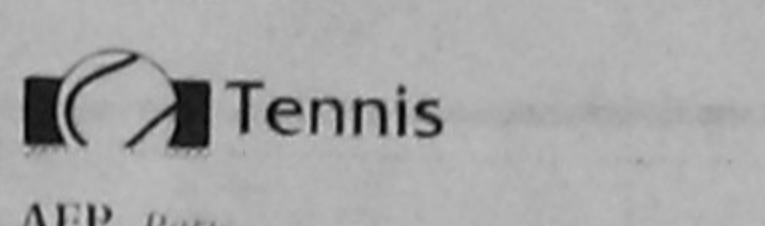
Reaching the quarterfinals is in itself a milestone for Capriati. She hasn't gotten that far at the French since 1993. She won only three matches on Paris' red clay from 1991-2000.

"I've had some great memories here," she said. "And a few bad ones."

But thanks to the breakthrough in Melbourne, the French Open seems less daunting now.

"It's not going to hold me back to think: Can I win a Grand Slam or not?" she said. "I did it."

Lions roar too late



AFP, Nigeria
Olympic and African champions Cameroon salvaged some pride Monday with a 2-0 win over outsiders Canada for a consolation victory in their last Confederations Cup tie.

Cameroon, already out of semi-final contention, controlled much of the game against the defensive Canadians, who had stunned the World Cup dress rehearsal by battling to a scoreless draw against Brazil Saturday.

After a frustrating scoreless first half, Cameroon struck in the 48th minute for the first goal of their three Group B matches in which they earlier lost to co-hosts Japan and a second-string Brazil, each by 2-0.

Nantes midfielder Salomon Olembe dribbled deep down the left wing and flicked a cross to Bernard Tchoutang to drive the ball home.

Cameroon coach Pierre Lechantre then unleashed Europe-based substitute strikers Patrick Mboma and Samuel Eto'o as his side continued to threaten towering Canadian goalkeeper Craig Forrest.

In the 83rd minute, Mboma finally showed his mettle as the African footballer of the year, sinking a left-foot penalty home after Olembe had been fouled in the area.

Canada missed a few opportunities with Nottingham Forest midfielder Jim Brennan shooting wide from an unmarked position near goal in the 24th minute, and Joel Epalle going high over Cameroon's keeper Jacques Songou in the 52nd.

But Cameroon were making most of the running, with Olembe in the eighth minute latching on to a clearance in midfield and dribbling into the danger zone, only to shoot straight into Forrest.

Jason Devos (c) of Canada is sandwiched between Cameroon defenders Raymond Kala (R) and Geremi Njitap at Niigata on June 4.

STANDINGS
Final standings and collated results from the group stage in the Confederations Cup after Monday's final matches in Group B (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Table with 3 columns: Team, W, D, L, GF, GA, Pts. Group A: France 3, 2, 0, 1, 9, 1, 6; Australia 3, 2, 0, 1, 3, 1, 6; South Korea 3, 2, 0, 1, 3, 6, 6; Mexico 3, 0, 0, 3, 1, 8, 0. Group B: Japan 3, 2, 1, 0, 5, 0, 7; Brazil 3, 1, 2, 0, 2, 0, 5; Cameroon 3, 1, 0, 2, 2, 4, 3; Canada 3, 0, 1, 2, 0, 5, 1.

Semi-finals, Thursday, June 7
At Yokohama, Japan
Japan vs. Australia (0800 GMT)
At Suwon, South Korea
Brazil vs. France (1100 GMT)

Hurricane Harbhajan

Cricket
REUTERS, Harare
India warmed up for the first Test in Bulawayo later this week with a 226-run victory against the CFX Academy with 13 overs remaining on Monday at the end of a three-day tour match.

India set the Academy a target of 384 in 66 overs, which the home team never looked like reaching.

Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh took six for 37 off 16 overs as the Academy were bowled out for a total of 157 to add to their 192 in the first innings.

Earlier, India resumed the day on 15 without loss and declared just before lunch on 128 for five.

Opener Sadagoppan Ramesh scored a fluid 52 including nine boundaries and then retired out, just as three Indian batsmen did in the first innings, to give others time at the crease ahead of the first test starting on Thursday.

India batted solidly in the match with three players scoring centuries in the first innings.

The Academy wanted out to salvage a draw but started badly as India's right-arm seamer Javagal Srinath dismissed their top three batsmen with just 25 runs on the board.

But a stand of 102 between Academy skipper Muleki Nkala and Barney Rogers held the inevitable defeat at bay for nearly three hours.

Nkala finally succumbed to the spin of Singh as he edged one to