

Duncan's cause for concern

REUTERS, Harare

Duncan Fletcher says he is concerned at the lack of experience in the England squad after conducting the first net practice of the visitors' Zimbabwean tour in Harare.

England will play five one-day internationals against Zimbabwe on the tour, seen as the start of their preparations for the 2003 World Cup.

Six members of the 16 man squad are uncapped, while between them captain Nasser Hussain and batsmen Nick Knight and Graham Thorpe hold 178 of the 260 caps shared by the squad.

"We've picked these youngsters to prove to us that they're good enough to play in the World Cup, and they've been given great opportunities," England coach Fletcher told reporters.

"Obviously, we've left some very good players behind who will have to be considered. Once this tour's over we will have to say these are the individuals we want and make sure they get that experience I've been calling for."

"I don't think there are enough games between now and the World Cup, but we've got to make sure we use those games very effectively."

Fletcher said England were scheduled to play 21 one day internationals from now to the World Cup. South Africa would play 31 from now to April next year.

"We are the babies in international cricket by a long way," Fletcher said. "By February this year, before we played Sri Lanka, since the 1999 World Cup England had played 21 one day internationals."

"The next side with the least number of games was Zimbabwe with 43. So everyone had twice as much experience as we had, and that's a huge problem".

IOC warns Athens

AFP, Vouliagmeni

The 2004 Olympics are safe in the hands of Athens despite growing concerns over delays in preparations for the event in the Greek capital, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said here on Friday.

Denis Oswald, the president of the IOC's coordination committee, told reporters that there was no intention of taking the Games away from Athens.

"The 2004 Olympics will take place in Athens," Oswald said after IOC officials spent three days in the country reviewing developments.

"But in November we want to see progress."

The IOC have told organisers of their concerns over accommodation and have demanded that more rooms be built to cater for the number of athletes at the Games.

"The IOC is focused on the fundamental needs of the athletes, so we cannot stress enough the importance of providing them with proper facilities and reasonable access to them," said Oswald.

There have also been concerns over progress at stadia being built for table tennis, rhythmic gymnastics, badminton and modern pentathlon with fears expressed that construction was falling behind schedule.

"These delays are the top priority for the IOC and measures have to be taken."

"We have been assured that in spite of the delays installations can still be delivered in time."

Oswald also told organisers he was disappointed that work on part of the route from the athletes village to the Olympic stadium had been cancelled.

Gianina Angelopoulos-Daskalaki, the president of ATTHOC, the organising committee in Athens, said that progress was being made.

"We need the government's support," said Angelopoulos-Daskalaki.

"Not just with words, but also with actions."

Saudis let opportunity slip



AFP, Riyadh

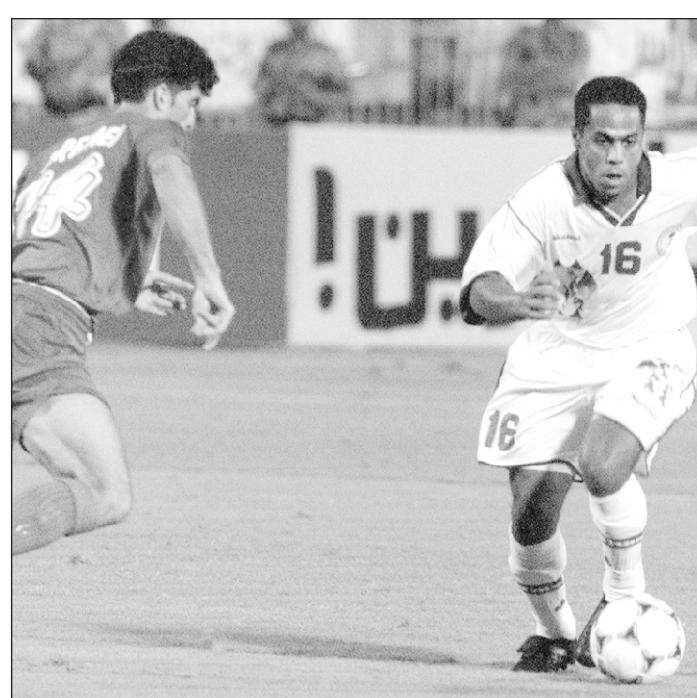


PHOTO: AFP

Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Shihani (R) is in control against Iranian Mjehad Khazerafi during their World Cup Asian Group A qualifying match in Jeddah on September 28.

mistake by the Saudi defence allowed Siros Dinmohammadi to equalise after Saudi defenders

match on October 5, while Iran host Thailand on the same day.

The result in Doha meant that if

STANDINGS

Tables from Asia's qualifying groups for the 2002 World Cup after Friday's matches:

**Winners of Group A and Group B qualify for the World Cup finals in South Korea and Japan.*

Runners-up in Group A and Group B play-off on a home-and-away basis with the winner qualifying to play the runners-up from European zone Group Two, either the Republic of Ireland or Portugal.

(Played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points)

GROUP A							
SArabia	6	3	2	1	11	6	11
Iran	5	2	3	0	6	3	9
Iraq	6	2	1	3	7	6	7
Bahrain	6	1	3	2	4	7	6
Thailand	5	0	3	2	3	9	3

GROUP B							
China	5	4	1	0	9	1	13
Qatar	6	2	3	1	9	5	9
Uzbekistan	6	2	1	3	10	10	7
UAE	6	2	1	3	6	8	7
Oman	5	0	2	3	1	11	2

Ahmed Khalil and Mohamed Nour had failed to clear a shot from Karim Bagheri.

Saudi Arabia are scheduled to play away against Iraq in their next

France was terrorist target at Euro 2000



AFP, The Hague

Dutch authorities foiled a terrorist attack on France's World Cup-winning football team during the Euro 2000 championships, the Dutch minister of interior affairs Klaas de Vries said.

According to press reports Friday, De Vries told parliament that Algerian Islamist militants were planning an assault on the French team in the tournament which was jointly organised by the Netherlands and Belgium.

"About ten people were involved. They were members of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), a dissident group split from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA)," Vincent Steen, a spokesman for the Dutch internal security services (BVD) told AFP.

The authorities in the Netherlands, Belgium and France made arrests on the basis of BVD

information. Because of the threat of an attack the French team changed hotels, Steen said.

Press reports said the attack on the French team had been planned to take place in the Dutch fishing village of IJmuiden.

On June 20, 2000, the security measures surrounding the French players were also stepped up with a Dutch police escort and the presence of members of the French elite security force RAID.

Of three suspected Islamist militants arrested in France in connection with the planned attack, one man, Abdel Mechat, has been placed under judicial investigation, which under the French legal system is the first step to formal charges.

Three suspects arrested in the Netherlands were released shortly afterwards through lack of evidence, Steen said.

France went on to win the tournament, adding the European title to the World Cup they won on home soil in 1998.

France are due to face Algeria in a friendly in Paris on October 6.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	36	Tortes'	56	Yellow- stone	11	Existed	20	Song- writer	12	13	14
1	Actor	toppers	herd	wed to	DOWN	Danny	Kaye	Flaccid	15	16	17
2	Jared	37	Noshed	wed to	2	Pennsyl-	22	Vania	18	19	20
3	Apple or	38	"Luck — pear	port	3	Bridge	24	Express	21	22	23
4	Talk a lot	39	Court	payment	4	1963	25	Man- handle	25	32	33
5	Press	group	40	Flaccid	5	1963	26	"Rope-a-dope"	34	35	36
6	Online	44	agent? 42 Mimic	21	2	Chiffons	27	creator	37	38	39
7	Online	44	Satiate	22	2	Brewed, as coffee	28	Triumphed	40	41	42
8	Online	44	auction	23	3	5	29	Get dressed in	42	43	44
9	Marathon	48	Equi- site	24	3	6	30	Work unit	44	45	46
10	Marathon	50	Olfactory	25	4	7	31	Bad (Prefix)	47	48	49
11	Obey	51	"Mis- erables"	26	5	7	32	Muffle	50	51	52
12	Raw rock	52	Gilpin	27	6	7	33	Spain and	53	54	55
13	Ill-gotten	53	"Frasier"	28	7	7	34	Portugal	56		
14	Chess	54	Un- favorable	29	7	7	35				
15	Graceful	54	votes	30	8	8	36				
16	Take a whack at	55	"Diana"	31	9	9	37				
17	Anger	55	singer	10	10	10	38				
18	Wall climber	55		11	11	11	39				
19				12	12	12	40				
20				13	13	13	41				
21				14	14	14	42				
22				15	15	15	43				
23				16	16	16	44				
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28				21	21	21	49				
29				22	22	22	50				
30				23	23	23	51				
31				24	24	24	52				
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