

## Greek challenge for MU

**UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE**  
AFP, Paris

Given their poor away form in Europe over the past two seasons Manchester United face the stiffest examination of their Champions League resolve on Wednesday as they step into a Greek cauldron to face Olympiakos at the Spiros Louis stadium.

United threw away the lead to lose at Deportivo La Coruna in their last outing and extend their record of never winning a away Champions League match against a Spanish side - although they ironically won the trophy in 1999 at Bayern Munich's expense in Barcelona.

It will not have escaped coach Sir Alex Ferguson's attention that Olympiakos not only have some of the most vociferous fans on the continent but that the Greeks are in desperate need of points following their loss at Lille.

In addition, they earlier bagged a useful 2-2 draw at Deportivo, who are the current group leaders with four points from two games.

United have a point less after failing to impress either in Spain or at Old Trafford when they needed a - since last Saturday at least - trademark late strike from David Beckham to see off stubborn Lille.

Lille's subsequent win over Olympiakos had proved the old adage that there are no easy matches around any more even in so bloated a competition as this.

United's problem all season has been their leaky defence and they have been linked with Parma defender Fabio Cannavaro.

Both Nicky Butt and Wes Brown face fitness checks ahead of the game but Welsh winger Ryan Giggs should return after a thigh strain.

Skipper Roy Keane is available despite a domestic ban following his recent dismissal at Newcastle.

United's French defender Mikael Silvestre meanwhile has claimed he feels like he is being cast in the role of scapegoat for United's defensive weakness.

Silvestre told Sunday's News Of The World: "We've let in a lot of goals already this season which I have been blamed for but I believe they've been coming through the middle of the field."

"But it is me who has paid the price and I am very bitter."

If Olympiakos and United cancel each other out, Lille could take advantage and move to the top of the group if they can beat Deportivo in France.

Deportivo are hampered by the loss of defender Manuel Pablo Garcia, who broke his leg in the recent derby with Vigo.

Lille are joint top of the French league this season and are unbeaten in their nine games.

Bruno Cheyrou and Dagui Bakari have been terrorising domestic defences and were instrumental in cementing the win over Olympiakos which proved they are by no means overawed by their opening foray into the tournament.

Holders Bayern Munich managed an impressive win in Moscow



Barcelona's Dutch internationals Michael Reiziger (L) and Patrick Kluijver exercises during a training session at the open-air installations of Barcelona on October 8.

**WEDNESDAY'S FIXTURES**  
(All kickoffs 1845 GMT)

<b>Group E</b>
Celtic (Sco) v Rosenborg (Nor) Porto (Por) v Juventus (Ita)
<b>Group F</b>
Barcelona (Spa) v Lyon (Fra) Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) v Fenerbahce (Tur)
<b>Group G</b>
Lille (Fra) v Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) Olympiakos (Gre) v Manchester United (Eng)
<b>Group H</b>
Feyenoord (Ned) v Bayern Munich (Ger) Sparta Prague (Cze) v Spartak Moscow (Rus)

over Spartak in their last outing to make up for a goalless home draw with Sparta Prague and now travel to Feyenoord as they pursue their dreams of winning Group H and edging closer to a repeat of last season's triumph.

Bayern hope to give German football a shot in the arm after the country's failure to beat England to an automatic World Cup slot and received a boost when skipper Stefan Effenberg, Mehmet Scholl, Carsten Jancker and Jens Jeremies all resumed training following injury.

However, their return to the squad is still some days away and coach Ottmar Hitzfeld is likely to keep faith with the team which did so well in Moscow, save for injured Croatian star Niko Kovac, whose place is set to go to Swiss international Ciriaco Sforza.

Spartak travel to Prague, who already have four points following their draw in Munich and a 4-0 thrashing of Feyenoord.

The Russian champions are on a high as their players scored all four goals in Saturday's 4-0 win over Switzerland which earned automatic qualification for the World Cup finals.

Forward Vladimir Beschastnykh hit a hat-trick while Spartak skipper Yegor Titov added a freekick.

Spartak may field teenage keeper Maxim Kabanov as Ukrainian first choice Maxim Levitsky is only just back from elbow surgery.

In Group E, which contains three former European champions, Juventus travel to Porto while Celtic host Norway's Rosenborg.

Juve, aided by their dubious late penalty against Celtic which secured a 3-2 win in Turin, lead the way with four points with the Scots level pegging with Porto on three

points after beating the Portuguese in Glasgow.

Juventus had to settle for a draw at Rosenborg but assuming they win that return would be more or less satisfied with a point at the Estadio das Antas.

The Zebras' coach Marcello Lippi will have to rejig his midfield with Czech Pavel Nedved suspended but Dutchman Edgar Davids is back from a ban.

Davids may be on his way as he is the reported bait in a deal with Arsenal, who may take him and a healthy cash adjustment for Frenchman Patrick Vieira.

Celtic are romping towards another Scottish title after beating Rangers last week and can clearly afford to leave nine million-dollar striker John Hartson on the sidelines.

Hartson's way is barred by Chris

But the competition is a boon for coach Martin O'Neill as he can afford to keep the Welsh international as the ace up his sleeve.

Celtic have been angered, meanwhile, by UEFA's refusal to scrub the booking given to defender Joos Valgaeren at Juventus.

German referee Hellmut Krug booked Valgaeren and awarded the spot kick which beat the Scots after Nicola Amoruso went down like a sack of potatoes in the box.

The Italian later said he had "made the most of it" but UEFA ruled Monday the card against Valgaeren would still stand.

Finally in Group F, Barcelona, who saw their Primera Liga unbeaten record go up in smoke Saturday at Deportivo, host French side Lyon, going great guns domestically and who hope to see their former Barcelona striker Sonny Anderson take his place.

Anderson scored a brace in a friendly on Friday against Parma on his return from a month out of action with a thigh injury.

Barca lost ground with their loss last month at Bayer Leverkusen, who also won at Lyon to take command in the group and who now host Turkey's Fenerbahce.

Barcelona and Lyon have three points to date and the onus is on the Catalan club to ensure they win their home encounter. Fenerbahce appear down and out as they have yet to garner a point.

Leverkusen are, meanwhile, likely to rest Zoltan Sebeson and fast Turkish international Yildiray Baskurk, who scored the Germans' equaliser against Barcelona.

These matches were originally scheduled for last month, but were postponed due to the terrorist attacks in the United States.

PHOTO: AFP

## Palmeiras' Indian nightmare!

AFP, New Delhi

Brazilian football club Palmeiras flew home on Tuesday threatening action against Indian officials after their bid to win a tournament final ended in a brawl.

Palmeiras were leading 1-0 against local club East Bengal in the final of the Indian Football Association tournament in Calcutta on Sunday when on-field violence between players forced play to be abandoned.

The Brazilians took cover in the dressing room as chairs rained from the stands, and refused to play on unless players were guaranteed a security cover.

With organisers unable to decide the fate of the match, the Brazilians claimed they had won the tournament and purchased a trophy from a local shop to mark their "victory."

"We would have liked to take home the real trophy, but as that is not happening, we are taking a symbolic trophy," said Palmeiras spokesman, Martin da Silva.

"It does not matter what the organisers decide because we know we are champions."

"Everyone is blaming us for not resuming the match, but we were not given any assurance about the safety of the players after the free-for-all."

"Eight of our players and the launderer received injuries, hit either by the opposition or the police," Da Silva said.

Palmeiras will report the incident to football's world governing body, FIFA, the spokesman added.

Local organisers said they were unable to give a verdict because "video replays" of the match were not available.

## Owen to return in days

AFP, London

Liverpool and England striker Michael Owen revealed Monday he will return to full fitness in "days not weeks."

Owen sustained a hamstring injury against Tottenham two weeks ago and was initially expected to be on the sidelines for at least a month.

However, the forward has now targeted a swift return to action after encountering no fresh problems on his return to light training.

"It's much better than was first thought. They were saying four, five or six weeks but I should be back sooner than that," he told the club's official website.

"Obviously I've done no sprinting yet but I am feeling no problems after jogging. It's a matter of days not weeks now."

Owen could be back in time for Liverpool's Champions League clash away to Dynamo Kiev next week.

## ROK prepare for the worst

**2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN**  
AFP, Seoul



Lee Moo-Young, commissioner general of South Korean Police Agency, speaks at a press conference in Seoul on October 9 where he announced even tighter security measures for next year's World Cup finals.

South Korea will impose even tighter security for next year's World Cup finals after the United States and China were added to the competing teams, the national police chief said Tuesday.

After the September 11 suicide strikes on New York's World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon, South Korea has already announced measures such as no-fly zones over the country's 10 World Cup stadiums.

But National Police Agency commissioner general Lee Moo-Young said the qualification of the United States and China and the US-led air strikes on Afghanistan "clearly add to the need to strengthen security. We clearly need to take action to step up and strengthen security."

Even with China and the US securing places in the 32 nation event at the weekend, Lee said he did not think there would be major difficulties policing the tournament.

After terrorism was added to the threat of hooliganism, South Korea and Japan will put on one of the biggest police operations ever mounted for the 31 day event starting in Seoul next May 30.

Following the US-led strikes on Afghanistan in reprisal for the terror attacks on New York and Washington, all South Korean police were put on top alert Monday with special protection for all US targets in the country, where 37,000 US troops are based.

But the Korean World Cup Organising Committee (KOWOC) spokesman said it was going ahead with a match against the US team in December to open a new stadium.

"It would be only natural that we will have to look at preparations again after the US qualification," said a KOWOC spokesman, while declining to give details.

But the spokesman said the United States were still expected to play South Korea on December 9 for the official opening of the World Cup stadium at Sogwipo on the island of Cheju. "We are maintaining the date," he said.

South Korea and Japan will take a final look at preparations to guard teams after the December 1 draw for the finals which will decide which country the 32 teams will start in.

But the national police chief said the 800 players at the tournament and 15 top dignitaries for FIFA, the

international football federation, will get personal guards.

"There will be no problem," Lee told AFP. "From the time they get off the plane until the time they get on it again to leave Korea they will be protected."

In Tokyo, a spokesman for the Japanese World Cup Organising Committee also said no major security problems were expected from the US qualification.

South Korea held a review of preparations after the September 11 attacks on the US using hijacked airliners.

Among a general heightening of security will be the establishment of no-fly zones over the 10 South Korean stadiums to counter suicide plane hijackers.

SWAT teams and joint police-military forces will be on duty at stadiums. There will also be special guards on sensitive installations near stadiums such as chemical plants and power stations.

Immigration procedures will be tightened at airport and ports and the national intelligence chief has said South Korea already has a list of 1,500 potential terrorists who will be stopped from entering the country.

Meanwhile, a US women's golf tour event that was to be held in South Korea next week has been cancelled because of concerns after the US strikes on Afghanistan.

The 1.5 million-dollar LPGA CJ Nine Bridges Classic tournament was to have been held October 19-21 on the resort island of Cheju.

But the US LPGA and the South Korean sponsors decided to cancel the event due to safety concerns, said Woo-Do-Geun, a tournament promotion manager in Seoul. "The tournament has been delayed for one year due to security concerns," he said.

PHOTO: AFP

## Brazil plan in advance

**2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN**  
AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil will arrive at La Paz just a few hours before their 2002 World Cup qualifier against Bolivia to limit the effects of altitude, the Brazilian football confederation (CBF) said on Monday.

The Brazilians will immediately return to their training camp following their November 7 fixture to prepare for their November 14 final CONMEBOL qualifier against Venezuela.

The CBF added they would play Venezuela in the Sao Luis stadium in the Maranhao state in the north east of Brazil.

Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari will name two player lists for these matches, those that play in foreign countries on October 22 and the local players on October 28.

Edilson and Rivaldo scored for Brazil meanwhile in a 2-0 victory over Chile on Sunday to increase their chances of qualifying for South Korea and Japan. Brazil are now in fourth spot, two points ahead of fifth-placed Uruguay.

Four teams qualify automatically for the finals with the fifth-placed team meeting Oceania winners Australia in a two-leg play-off for a further World Cup place.

PHOTO: AFP

## Germans dreading the prospect

**2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN**  
REUTERS, Berlin

rounded on his teammates for their post-match reaction.

"It was quiet, as if nothing had happened. Surely I wasn't the only one that was enraged by our missed



OLIVER KAHN

chance. The others seemed to be just getting on with their day," Kahn said.

Top-selling newspaper Bild condemned the entire team, except goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, as "Flaschen" or losers.

The newspaper pictured the outfield players in bottles to be skittled over - "Flaschen" also means bottles.

Werner Lorient, coach at 1860 Munich, said part of the problem was that the present generation of German players were spoiled.

"Everything is done for them. They don't even have to find a flat...the club does that," he said.

"Some believe the national side's plight is so bad they would be better off not going to the finals."

Former international Paul Breitner said failure to qualify would provide an opportunity to cut off the dead wood and rebuild for 2006, when Germany hosts the World Cup finals.

Others are suggesting radical new solutions, such as having the national youth team playing in the

second division.

However, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, who played for the national side in the 1970s and 1980s, said now was not the time for criticism.

"There's no point questioning everything. Now's the time to save what can be saved."

"German football must stand together in solidarity," said Rummenigge, a member of the task force created to salvage German soccer after the team's dreadful showing in Euro 2000.

Beckenbauer also reminded his compatriots that Germany were on the point of failure in 1989 following a qualifying match against Wales.

A year later they were holding the World Cup aloft.

## Houllier warns Gerrard

AFP, London

England powerhouse Steven Gerrard has again been warned about his off-field behaviour - this time from his boss at Liverpool Gerard Houllier.

The 21-year-old hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons when he was spotted in a bar in the early hours of the morning in the week leading up to England's crucial World Cup clash with Greece.

Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler and former Anfield favourite Steve McManaman also came under fire for a separate incident.

Houllier told the Daily Mail: "What happened in the week added pressure on the players and on the team and it was not the best climate in which to play such an important game. All the focus should be on the game."

"You are not sure to succeed in this job, but you are absolutely sure to fail if you are not 100 per cent focused."

## FIFA's play-off worry

**2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN**  
AFP, Paris

American and British attacks on Afghanistan.

"All the indications are if anything happens with the crisis it'll be a one-off game on neutral territory," McCarthy told the BBC on Sunday.

The conflict in central Asia is also having repercussions in Australia where Soccercoos' coach Frank Farina also expects FIFA to change the dates of the play-off matches with the yet-to-be-determined fifth-placed South American team.

Australia's likely play-off opponents Uruguay are likely to appeal to FIFA to change the date of the first leg of the tie, scheduled for November 18 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

FIFA has ruled that all World Cup qualifiers must be completed by November 25 one week before the draw for the finals is to be made in South Korea, but the final round of the South American qualifiers finishes just four days before the Melbourne match.

"I'm not expecting any favours from FIFA and I'm expecting them to change the date from the 18th (of November)," said Farina.

Meanwhile, Blatter did his magic in Africa no harm at all when he announced that every nation, with the exception of South Africa, will be granted free TV access to next year's World Cup finals.

The FIFA chief made his announcement on a three-day trip to Tunisia - and it would have been met with envious eyes in Europe where the battle of TV rights is being fought with as much vigour as the qualifiers on the pitch.

In Britain, the BBC and ITV, the two terrestrial broadcasters, are locked in a bitter argument with Germany company Kirch who own the TV rights in Europe for the event.

The two companies have offered 81 million dollars while Kirch are reported to be demanding three times that amount for the tournament.

For the Irish, it's a case of perming any one from five - Saudi Arabia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Uzbekistan are all in contention, but McCarthy said he expects the format for the play-off to be altered in the wake of the