

Zagallo bids football bye

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Veteran Mario Zagallo, the only man to have won the World Cup four times, has resigned as coach of struggling Brazilian giants Flamengo and said he was ending his 53-year career in football.

The 70-year-old, who led Brazil at the 1970, 1974 and 1998 World Cups, threw in the towel with four-times Brazilian champions Flamengo, who claim to be the country's best-supported club, teetering on the brink of relegation.

In another twist, Flamengo immediately announced that his replacement would be Carlos Alberto Torres, who was captain of the 1970 World Cup-winning team coached by Zagallo.

Torres scored possibly the most replayed goal of all time when he hit the last goal in the 1970 final as Brazil beat Italy 4-1 to clinch their third world crown and keep the Jules Rimet trophy.

Zagallo had offered his resignation on Monday but club president Edmundo Santos Silva asked him to carry on. However, "The Old Wolf" said Thursday's 3-1 defeat by Sao Paulo in the Brazilian championship was the final straw.

"I should have left the club in June when we won the Carioca (Rio de Janeiro state) championship," he said.

"But I couldn't miss the chance to coach Flamengo in the Brazilian championship. I could have gone on but my strength ran out."

"I'm not one to run away from a fight but I was feeling worn out."

Zagallo said any future involvement in the sport would be restricted to commenting or working as a technical director. "I haven't decided but I don't want to be a coach any more," he said.

Zagallo said he made the decision as he was driving to the club's training ground. "I thought, should I or shouldn't I," he said. "My wife still doesn't know. I came with my suitcase ready for Sunday's game."

Flamengo are 25th in the 28-team championship with three games to go. The bottom four teams go into the second division next year.

Critics say Zagallo has lost control over the team in which Yugoslav midfielder Dejan Petkovic



PHOTO: INTERNET

A file picture of Mario Jorge Lobo Zagallo, taken on his 70th birthday in Duque de Caxias near Rio de Janeiro on August 9 this year, shows the Brazilian coach blowing out candles on top of a huge cake during the party.

and Brazilian international Edilson have been publicly feuding for several weeks.

But they also point out that Flamengo directors have done nothing to back their coach or bring order to the squabbling in their team.

Zagallo began his career with America, a small club in Rio de Janeiro in 1948.

A left-winger, he was in the Brazil team that won the World Cup in 1958 in Sweden and in 1962 in Chile.

He won the same tournament as coach in 1970 and as assistant to

Carlos Alberto Parreira in 1994, having returned to Brazil after several spells of coaching in the Middle East.

After the 1994 tournament, Zagallo was again made Brazil coach in his own right and led them to the runners-up spot in France three years ago. He was sacked afterwards and returned to club coaching, first with Portuguesa and then Flamengo.

Zagallo was also Brazil coach in 1974 when the team finished fourth.

Turk-Greek bid for Euro 2008

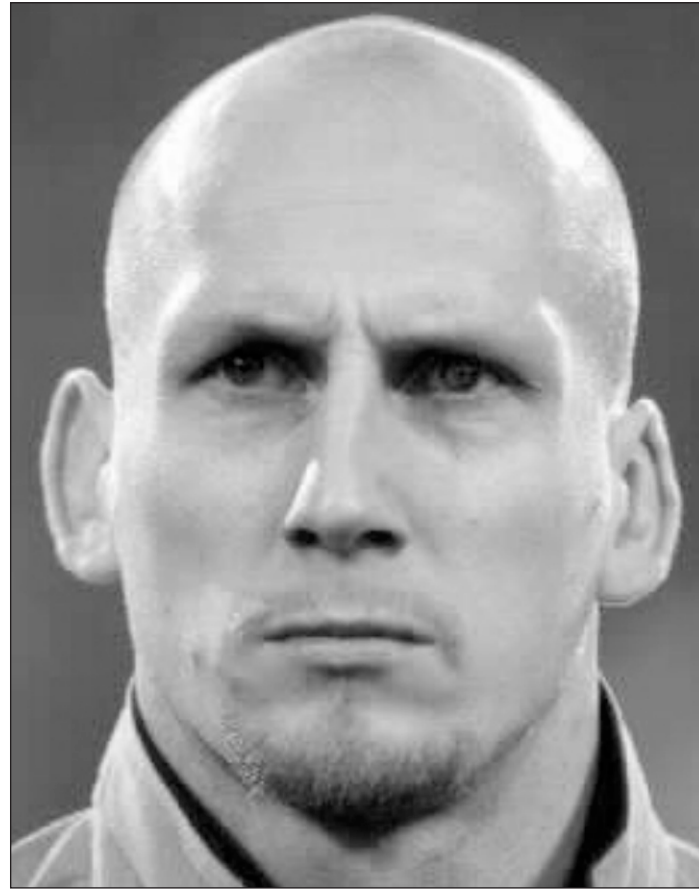
AFP, Istanbul

Traditional rivals Turkey and Greece put the final touches on their bid to co-host the 2008 European football championships on Friday in a move aimed at further improving recently thawed bilateral ties, Anatolia news agency reported.

A letter to European football's ruling body UEFA announcing the bid was signed by the two countries' football federations after talks here, and was to be sent next Monday, said Ata Aksu, the deputy chief of the Turkish football federation.

"This is a historic moment. This agreement is very significant for the further rapprochement between the peoples of our two countries," Aksu said after the signing ceremony.

Greek football federation head Vassilis Gargatsis, for his part, said: "We do not think to only bid together. We will work very hard together until the end and we will win (the organization of) this event."



JAAP STAM

Stam in nandrolone

Football

AFP, Rome

Lazio's Dutch defender Jaap Stam has tested positive for the banned anabolic steroid nandrolone, the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) said here Friday.

Stam, who controversially left Manchester United for Lazio for 22 million dollars in August, was tested following the October 14 match between Lazio and Atalanta.

In line with regulations the CONI laid down last June, Stam is now suspended with immediate effect. The B test, which used to follow on automatically from the first test, will now only take place at the player's request.

The CONI laboratory in Rome detected traces of norandrosterone and noreticoclanolone, both derivatives of nandrolone in the Dutch defender's urine sample.

The 29-year-old Stam is the latest in a line of professional footballers who have tested positive for the drug - and he is not the first from Lazio.

Last season, the club's Portuguese international captain Fernando Couto was banned by

FIFA for ten months after he also failed a test for nandrolone but later had the suspension reduced to four months.

FIFA also banned Juventus star Edgar Davids while, last June, Italian football chiefs suspended Parma defender Stefano Torrisi for the same reason.

But Davids, who tested positive last March, had his original five-month ban reduced in September by a month by the Italian authorities.

Last July, the court of appeal of European football's governing body UEFA reduced a one-year nandrolone suspension imposed on Barcelona's Dutch international Frank de Boer, who tested positive for the drug in March.

UEFA said while the positive test stood, they believed it was "more than probable" that de Boer "absorbed the banned substances by contaminated food supplements" although the level of nandrolone in his urine sample was registered at four times the permitted level.

Davids reportedly suggested a cough mixture may have been the cause of his positive test.

Two other players from Italian sides, Bari's Belgian goalkeeper Jean Francois Gillet and Parma's Stefano Torrisi, also had bans reduced.

Irish welcome heroes

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

AFP, Dublin

Hundreds of fans waited throughout the night to greet the Republic of Ireland's World Cup heroes as they landed just before dawn here following a seven-hour flight from their play-off triumph in Tehran.

Mick McCarthy's men clinched a place in the World Cup finals for the third time in their history despite losing 1-0 to Iran on Thursday in the second leg of their European/Asian play-off.

The Irish went through to the finals in Japan and Korea next summer courtesy of their 2-0 first leg win in Dublin on Saturday.

McCarthy told reporters that after giving a lengthy post-match interview in Tehran he received a pleasant surprise from him triumphant

players. "On of the nicest touches about all this for me was being applauded back in the dressing room by the players when I finally got there at the end of the game," he said.

"I should have been with them earlier because this was their moment but I was ambushed for an interview before I could join them.

"We've come a long way and had to et over the disappointment of not finishing top of our qualifying group and getting to the finals automatically."

McCarthy said that booking their place for next summer's finals made up for not qualifying for the 2000 European championships in Holland and Belgium and the 1998 World Cup in France.

"My life has been put on hold with these qualifiers and you never forget the feeling two years ago and two years before that when we didn't quite make it," he added.

"But this time the family don't have to worry. There is no grumpy

old man coming home."

McCarthy and the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) are set to open talks about a new contract for him soon after the World Cup draw takes place in Korea on December 1.

His current agreement runs until February but there is every indication from both sides that he'll be given a fresh deal for the next two years taking in qualification for Euro 2004 in Portugal.

Ireland will be among the top seeds on their recent record and McCarthy said: "I'd love to go there but I'm not trying to force anybody's hand over a new contract. I've approached nobody in the FAI."

Brendan Menton, chief executive of the FAI said: "We're very relaxed about Mick wanting to leave things for a few weeks."

"After the World Cup draw when FAI officials come back from Korea, I think we will conclude matters fairly quickly."

Silva relief for Soccerroos

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

AFP, Melbourne

Australia are relieved to have one less impediment to their path to the World Cup finals with confirmation that star striker Dario Silva won't be playing for Uruguay in their playoff decider here next week.

Silva, the Uruguayan scorer in their 1-1 South American qualifier draw against Argentina on Wednesday, will miss Tuesday's play-off against Australia at the 95,000-capacity Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The Spanish-based striker is suffering from a dislocated left shoulder which he picked up after clashing with the Argentine goalkeeper during the tie.

Silva was Uruguay's top scorer in the South American qualifiers with five out of his team's 19 goals.

"His misfortune is someone else's fortune," Soccerroo coach Frank Farina said Friday.

"It's good news. He is arguably their best striker, so for him to be missing is an advantage for us."

Uruguayan coach Victor Pua

played down Silva's absence, saying upon arrival here Friday he had at his disposal a "good total team" and Silva's replacement Richard Morales de Nacional was a "good player".

The Uruguayans said their understanding was that yellow cards picked up in previous qualifying matches would not carry over into the two-legged playoffs against Australia.

That came as a relief to Farina, who earlier this week said further cautions would mean automatic suspension for four of his players previously booked - captain Paul Okon, midfielders Brett Emerton and Josip Skoko, and defender Tony Popovic.

"If that's the case it's very good news," said Farina.

"This is our third World Cup qualifying group, so for them (the yellow cards) to continue would have been a little bit naughty."

Pua said he had watched footage of Australia's matches in the World Cup, Confederations Cup and against France last week, and had a healthy respect for his opponents.

Defender Washington Tais of Spanish club Real Betis said: "We must not confuse ourselves and

think that Australia is easy."

Pua's squad was welcomed at Melbourne airport by over 50 local Uruguayans beating drums, dancing and cheering.

Uruguay will host the return on November 25 in Montevideo's imposing Estadio Centenario, the venue for the first World Cup final in 1930.

"It's going to be tough," said Farina. "We're bound to get a hostile reception in Montevideo but the players we have are used to playing in that sort of atmosphere now."

Former England and Australia manager Terry Venables says the Soccerroos can overcome Uruguay to qualify for the finals in Japan and South Korea.

Venables, in charge of Australia in 1997 when Iran overturned a two-goal deficit to draw in Melbourne and qualify for France 98, says Australia will learn from the heartbreaking experience.

"There is more all-round strength available now," El Tel told Friday's Australian newspaper.

"They also have three years more experience. There is no reason why Australia should fear any team and certainly not these South Americans."

Monaco, Marseille in misery

Football

AFP, Monaco

Ailing French giants Monaco and Marseille remained dangerously close to the relegation spots here Friday after drawing 1-1 in a mediocre encounter.

Marseille Cote D'Ivoire international striker Ibrahim Bakayoko equalised with his fourth of the season in the 70th minute to wipe out a controversial penalty converted by Shabani Nonda in the 54th.

Monaco, who have beaten Marseille just twice in their last 11 home encounters and that was back in 1997, are just five points off second from bottom Sedan, who play leaders Lens on Saturday, while Marseille are only four points above the relegation zone.

Marseille coach Tomislav Ivic, who has been given three matches by general manager Bernard Tapie to improve his side's fortunes, may well have more to enthuse about

than his Monaco counterpart Didier Deschamps, who was meeting the side he won the 1993 European Cup with for the first time since he took over the reins in the summer.

However Tapie believed it was more a defeat than a point gained. "With three points for a win now a draw is as good as a defeat," said the man under whose presidency the club reached the high of the European Cup and the low of being relegated for his involvement in a matchfixing scandal.

Bakayoko shot home shortly after coming on as a substitute from just inside the area after Pascal Nouma had won the ball off Alex Nyarko in the 70th minute.

Nonda benefitted from a decision by the referee who blew for a penalty after he appeared to fall over his own feet rather than being tripped by Joseph Yobo when chasing in on the ball to tap into an open goal.

However the Burundian-born Congolese international striker accepted his gift by shooting past Vedran Runje for his seventh goal of the season.

Nouma should have levelled a

minute later when he rose with the goal at his mercy but instead his header went well wide of the post.

A dire first-half had seen only two clear chances when Brazilian Fernando header from Frank Jurietti's cross was goalbound till a terrific leap by Flavio Roma touched it over the bar for a corner in the 45th minute.

Fortunately for the crowd it appeared to spark some urgency into the match and Monaco, who were missing injured Argentine playmaker Marcelo Gallardo, created their best chance in injury-time when Dado Prso escaped into the box on the right but his weak shot was easily gathered by Runje.

FRENCH TOP SIX

French league table after Friday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):
 Lens 13 8 4 1 21 11 28
 Lille 13 7 5 1 16 9 26
 Lyon 13 7 3 3 25 13 24
 Auxerre 13 6 5 2 20 1 3
 23
 Bordeaux 13 5 6 2 9 521
 Sochaux 13 5 5 3 19 1420



PHOTO: AFP

Marseille's Abdoulaye Meite (L) and Monaco's Dado Prso are in pursuit of the ball during their French First Division match on November 16.

Football

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's international forward Atsushi Yanagisawa scored twice to lead Kashima Antlers to a 4-0 win over Verdy Tokyo and secure the second-stage title in the J-League football on Saturday.

With one more game each left in the second stage, Kashima stood with 13 wins against one defeat for 36 points for an unreachable lead for second-placed Jubilo Iwata.

Iwata, the first-stage winners, whitewashed Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1-0 for their 12 wins against two defeats for 32 points in the 16-team competition.

"My players did their job really

well, I owe everything to them. I'm really happy that we won the title on our home ground to give our home fans a great joy," said Kashima's Brazilian coach Antonio Carlos Cerezo.

For Kashima, last year's triple champions with victories in the J-League, J-League Cup and the national championships, it was their fifth stage title since the inauguration of the professional league in 1993.

Kashima already made it certain at the end of the first half with Koji Nakata opening the scoring in the 10th minute and Yanagisawa added two more in the 27th and 44th minutes, the latter on a penalty.

Brazilian midfielder Bismarck added an insurance goal in the dying moments.

Real party plans

Football

AFP, Madrid

Eight-time European champions Real Madrid on Friday unveiled their centenary celebrations for next year.

Club president Florentino Perez said the team would play a friendly against Japan, another against a world select and a third match against Mexico in New York with the dates as yet unspecified.

Perez added there would be at least one special event for each week of the year and said there would also be a match between Real veterans and a world veteran eleven, as well as concerts from tenor Placido Domingo and crooner Julio Iglesias, who had a trial as a goalkeeper at the club prior to taking up the microphone.

Further highlights will be a basketball match between Real and the All Magic Stars including Magic Johnson, while the Tour of Spain cycling race will make a detour to the Bernabeu stadium when it passes through the capital.

The motto of the celebrations for the 28-time Spanish champions will be "El futuro sigue en blanco" (the future remains white) in honour of the club's famous kit.

"It will be a homage to our supporters, a tribute to the world to Real Madrid and from Real Madrid to the football world," Perez said.

Blazevic's bleak future

AFP, Tehran

The fate of Croatian Miroslav Blazevic as coach of the Iranian national side remains in the balance after his team's loss to Ireland in Thursday's World Cup playoff and ahead of weekend talks with the Iranian Football Federation.

"We will have to have a meeting at the Federation either this Saturday or perhaps Sunday with Blazevic to see if he is staying or leaving," said a Federation spokesman, who noted that Blazevic's contract "expires at the end of January 2002."

Terim denies Turkey job

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

AFP, Istanbul

Fatih Terim, the sacked Turkish coach of Italian giants AC Milan, on Friday denied that he was interested in taking over from Senol Gunes to lead Turkey at the 2002 World Cup finals.

Gunes' position as national coach has been shaky despite securing Turkey's place in the World Cup for the first time in 47 years.

"I am not a candidate for any position. Moreover, I will be against any move that could offend a valuable coach such as Senol Gunes," said Terim in a written statement.

"Today the duty of any Turk is to support Senol Gunes. The flag in this competition is in his hand and it will continue to rise in his hand," he added.

Turkey crushed Austria 5-0 in a play-off match here Wednesday, winning a berth in the 2002 World Cup finals for the first time since 1954.

But the victory was clouded by bitter remarks by Gunes who signalled, in a press conference immediately after the match, that he could quit.

The low-profile Gunes, who took over the national team after soccer legends Terim and Mustafa Denizli, had been mercilessly criticized by the media throughout the qualifiers.

"I hope that what was done to me will not be done to those who will

succeed me," Gunes said. He is expected to make a detailed announcement next week.

Turkey's qualification came as yet another sign of its rising football status following Galatasaray's victory in the UEFA Cup in 2000 under Terim and the national team's advance up to the quarter-finals at the European Championship the same year under Denizli.

Strike talks still on

AFP, London

Talks aimed at averting a players' strike will continue next week after an all-day meeting on Friday failed to achieve an agreement.

Players' union leaders met officials from the Premier League, Football Association and Football League in London for discussions on the dispute over television cash.

FA spokesman Paul Newman said: "Talks took place all day today and they will continue next week. We have no further comment to make at this stage."

The Professional Footballers Association (PFA), which represents all professional players in England, voted last week in favour of strike action if the various domestic football authorities failed to give them five per cent of their combined television income.

That would amount to 35 million pounds (50 million dollars). So far they have been offered 16.6 million pounds (23.9 million dollars) by the leagues.