



Security personnel pass by a banner promoting the draw of the World Cup 2002 at the Bexco Centre in Pusan, South Korea on Thursday.

Security stricter than ever



FIFA will consider stricter security measures for next year's World Cup finals after the launch of the US anti-terrorism campaign, the world body said Thursday.

A security committee of football's international governing body, FIFA, started reviewing heightened precautions taken by World Cup hosts South Korea and Japan at a meeting here.

FIFA president Joseph Blatter said "the World Cup is not the first to be held against a background of difficult security circumstances."

according to a FIFA statement. He expressed confidence in measures taken by the two countries.

South Korea announced after the September 11 attacks in the United States that it would order no-fly zones over the 10 World Cup stadiums in the country.

It will also put thousands of extra police and troops on duty around stadiums and at airports and ports. South Korea and Japan are both part of the US-led anti-terrorism coalition formed after the attacks on New York and Washington.

The world body's decision-making executive body will take a new look at the precautions at a meeting on Friday.

And a special workshop of security experts from participating

nations will also be held in Pusan on Sunday, after Saturday night's draw for the finals which will decide whether teams are based in South Korea or Japan for the first round.

More than 1,000 police are on duty at the Pusan convention centre for the draw with military sniffer dogs searching the premises for bombs.

FIFA secretary general Michel Zen-Ruffinen told reporters: "South Korea and Japan have taken very comprehensive measures. There has been a lot of cooperation between the two hosts and with police and intelligence agencies from the participating nations."

"There will no doubt be extra measures. Some will announce and some will be kept confidential," he declared.

Di Canio fairest of 'em all



AFP, Pusan

West Ham striker Paolo Di Canio is to receive FIFA's 2001 Fair Play Award in recognition of an exceptional act of sportsmanship during an English Premiership match last season.

The Italian, previously best known for pushing over a referee during a match, was praised around the world for giving up an easy chance to score a crucial goal to ensure that the injured opposing goalkeeper could receive treatment as quickly as possible.

His action was recognised again on Thursday when FIFA's Fair Play committee decided to give him their annual award for 2001.

West Ham were tied 1-1 in a match with Everton at Goodison Park when Di Canio made the gesture that transformed his image from sinner to saint.

As the game entered its final moments, Trevor Sinclair crossed for Di Canio, who had the goal at his mercy.



PAOLO DI CANIO

expect the praise I am getting now," he said.

"I saw the goalkeeper doubled over. I saw his knee twisted in the wrong direction. With outfield players it is different, we occasionally have a fall. But I guess he is heavier and got his studs caught in the pitch."

"I could hear him screaming in pain and I understood right away it was serious. That is why I was yelling at Trevor Sinclair to stop so Paul could get some medical attention."

"Would I have scored? You can't say for sure, but without the goalkeeper and a big, wide open goal, I'm sure I'd have had a good chance."

FIFA on Thursday also announced it would award a Fair Play diploma to teenage Ghanaian player Sumaila Abdallah, who saved an opponent's life by giving him the kiss of life after he was knocked unconscious.

Both Abdallah and Di Canio are to receive their awards at a FIFA Gala in Zurich on December 17, when the world player of the year will receive his award.

Official song sandwiched!



REUTERS, Pusan

Saturday's World Cup finals draw is likely to be split into two parts with a performance of the World Cup official song interrupting the two sections.

Tentative plans released by South Korean organisers show that a performance of the official song will take place after the eight seeded

teams and the other 11 European nations have been drawn.

The draw, which takes place at the BEXCO exhibition centre in the South Korean port of Pusan, will then resume with the last 13 teams from Asia, Africa and the Americas. A 90-minute programme, televised live to most parts of the world, will start at 0900 GMT and feature presentations about South Korea and a performance by the Pusan Philharmonic Orchestra.

The draw itself is scheduled to start at 0955 GMT and finish at 1028 GMT.

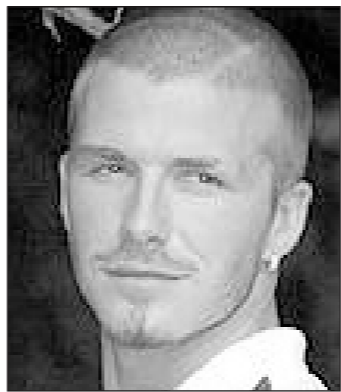
Beckham doesn't fear Argentina



REUTERS, London

England captain David Beckham, who was sent off against Argentina at France 98, is hoping to face the South Americans again after Saturday's draw for the 2002 World Cup finals.

Beckham kicked out at midfielder Diego Simeone in the 47th minute of



DAVID BECKHAM

their second-round clash, earning a red card. England were subsequently beaten in a penalty shoot-out.

"I would love the chance to play against the Argentines again for obvious reasons," the Manchester United midfielder told the club's website.

Aside from wanting to settle a score with one of the tournament favourites, Beckham said England had nothing to fear from the other top nations in the draw in Pusan, South Korea.

England have missed out on a top-eight seeding, but can draw comfort from a historic 5-1 victory over Germany in Munich during qualifying in September.

"When you beat a team like Germany, the confidence you gain is immense," Beckham said.

"So if we were playing a France or an Italy or an Argentina tomorrow, there'd be no fear."

England officials said on Wednesday the team's second-tier seeding had not come as a surprise, as the organisers' decision was based on teams' performances in the past three World Cups and England had failed to qualify for the 1994 finals.

Woman ref to draw



AFP, Pusan

A female referee could upstage the soccer legends who will carry out Saturday's draw for next year's World Cup finals.

Lim Eun-Joo, who officiated at the Sydney Olympics and is a full-time referee in the Korean men's league, is one of two women chosen by South Korea to take part in the gala ceremony in Pusan on Saturday night.

FIFA will announce the international stars who will draw the teams into different groups just before the ceremony, organisers said.

Former World Cup winner Pele of Brazil, former French captain

Michel Platini and Holland's greatest player Johan Cruyff are all in Pusan for meetings and other activities around the draw for the finals to be co-hosted by South Korea and Japan from May 31 next year.

Six Koreans will take part in the show.

Apart from Lim, a former South Korean women's international, there will also be top actress Song Hye-Gyo.

The rest are men: football international Hong Myong-Bo, who is expected to take part in his fourth straight finals next year, FIFA vice president and organising committee co-chairman Chung Mong-Joon, Park Young-Seok, the first Korean to climb Mount Everest without oxygen, and Cho Hun-Hyun, a leading player of baduk, the Korean version of the board game 'go'.



Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari (L), shares a light-hearted moment with his Costa Rica counterpart Alexander Guimaraes upon their arrival at the Marriott Hotel in Pusan on Thursday. They arrived here to attend the final draw for the Korea-Japan 2002 World Cup that will be held at the Bexco Centre on Saturday.

Scolari an English fan!



AFP, Pusan

Brazil coach Felipe Scolari believes England are capable of mounting a serious challenge at the World Cup, despite FIFA's decision not to name them as one of the top seeds.

Scolari, here to attend Saturday's draw for next year's tournament in Japan and South Korea, also warned that his own squad should not be written off on the strength of their rocky qualifying

campaign. "Everyone agrees that France and Argentina are the favourites but England are a big team and they could surprise a lot of people," Scolari said.

A dismal qualifying campaign in which the boys from Brazil lost an unprecedented six matches has seen Scolari's squad's chances of lifting the country's fifth World Cup all but written off in many quarters.

But with six months until the big kick-off in Seoul on May 31, Scolari said he was confident he could mould a competitive outfit around a nucleus of stars that include Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos and

Ronaldo, who was sidelined from the qualifiers by injury but now looks to be on the road to recovery.

"Any time Brazil enters a tournament it has to win. Anything less is regarded as a failure," Scolari said. "Once the tournament starts, it does not really matter who is the favourite -- if anything I would prefer not to be the favourites."

Despite stumbling through the qualifiers, Brazil were named on Wednesday as one of the eight seeds for the tournament, along with Argentina, holders France, co-hosts Japan and South Korea, Germany, Italy and Spain.

England's relatively poor record in recent World Cups cost them a place among the seeds, despite the fact that they finished above Germany in their qualifying group.

But the FIFA ruling has been shrugged off by England coach Sven Goran Eriksson, who said he had not expected a spot among the seeds.

"We are a good team and we can have a good finals," he said.

The Swede however admits that he will be hoping Saturday's draw does not leave England facing one of the tougher teams in their first round group.

"France, Italy and Argentina are the favourites, so I would just appreciate it if they are not in our group," he said.

Brazilian football legend Pele, who is also here for the draw, is another who believes England could challenge, especially if Liverpool striker Michael Owen is firing on all cylinders.

"There is no doubt that Owen can become the best in the world," he told the BBC.

Pele does not however have much faith in Scolari's ability to turn his national side around.

"At the moment Brazil have a coach who plays defensively and that is not the Brazilian way," he said. "I hope between now and the World Cup he puts together a team that plays like Brazil."

Only medical stand in Fowler's way



AFP, London

Liverpool's English international striker Robbie Fowler on Wednesday agreed personal terms for a deal which will tie him to Leeds United until 2006 but he must still pass a stringent medical.

Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale said 26-year-old Fowler was unlikely to complete the transfer until Thursday.

Ridsdale told the Leeds club website that Leeds reached had agreed personal terms with Fowler in a deal which reports suggest will involve Leeds paying fellow English Premiership club Liverpool around 11 million pounds (15.4 million dollars).

"We've agreed terms with Robbie and he will now have a medical which should be completed by tomorrow (Thursday) afternoon," said Ridsdale.

"Although we agreed the fee would remain undisclosed, we cannot stop people from speculating."

Fowler said the time had come to leave his home town club, where his relations with caretaker manager Phil Thompson had become strained.

Speaking on the Leeds website (www.lfc.com), Fowler said: "I have had nearly 15 years with Liverpool and eight wonderful years in the Liverpool team. But I think it must be obvious to everyone that the time has come to move on. "It was always going to be a difficult decision to leave Liverpool, because even if I have my own reasons, the fans there were a powerful reason for me to stay. "But Leeds are a great club, and the chance to be part of what is



ROBBIE FOWLER

happening at Elland Road was too good to miss, particularly under the current circumstances.

"I'm not interested in recriminations, but I think this is the best thing now for me and for Liverpool."

Thompson who had a much publicised training ground clash with Fowler earlier this term insisted it was the player's decision to leave Liverpool.

"Of course I'm disappointed to see him leave. "It wasn't our decision to let him go. Robbie wants to go and to see a

Parry confirmed that manager Gerard Houllier, who is recovering from emergency heart surgery, was fully involved in the move.

"There is always a risk in these situations that a player will sit tight for the remainder of his contract and still go to one of your rivals free. It is better to get a substantial fee," Parry said.

Thompson said: "I do wish him well. People have made a big thing about the bust-up Robbie and myself had and I can't get away from the fact that it did happen."

"Robbie missed a few games after that but there isn't a problem between the two of us."

"We get on very well, we come from similar backgrounds and I like to think we appreciate one another for what we do. It's the people who are blinded by press talk who think we don't get on."

"Robbie was at the training ground this morning and everybody who was there could see there's no problem."

Fowler's imminent arrival is likely to cast a cloud over the future of Leeds' temperamental striker Alan Smith, who was sent off for the fifth time in just over two years during Sunday's 1-1 home draw with Aston Villa.

O'Leary described Smith's disciplinary record as "a disgrace".

O'Leary believes Fowler's impending arrival was another clear indicator of just how far the club have progressed since he took over at Elland Road.

Fowler's capture represents the most significant signing in O'Leary's three-year reign, underlining the club's determination to become Premier League champions this season.

"It tells you how far we have moved on when people like Rio Ferdinand come here and now with

Robbie Fowler willing to join us as well," said O'Leary.

"A couple of years ago I don't think Robbie would have considered coming here, but if we can sign him, at the price we have got him for, then he will be another quality addition."

At just 26, Fowler would appear to have plenty to offer, with O'Leary adding: "If he rediscovers the form he showed around a year to 18 months ago then we will have bought another quality player to add to those we already have here."

"The prospect of Fowler playing for us excites me. Over time, if we can train him and fit him in to our way of playing then he is somebody who can score a lot of goals for us."

Meanwhile, Liverpool legend Kenny Dalglish said he was shocked that the four-time European Cup winners sold Fowler.

Dalglish, who managed Liverpool to the English league title and FA Cup double in 1986, told the Daily Mail that he was surprised the Reds let go a class striker.

Dalglish, who formed one half of a formidable strike partnership with Liverpool's greatest goalscorer Ian Rush, said: "The departure of Fowler saddens me but does not surprise me. What did come as a shock was that the club should agree terms with Leeds, one of their chief rivals for the championship."

"It seems to me like handing the opposition an advantage and I only hope that fate does not deal Liverpool a cruel hand over the next few weeks in the shape of an injury to one of their remaining strikers."

"Leeds know what they have got - a very good striker. They have bought class and this purchase will add considerably to their title credentials this year."

Guardiola again fails drugs test

AFP, Rome

Brescia's Spanish midfielder Josep Guardiola tested positive for the anabolic steroid nandrolone for a second time, in a match two weeks after the first case, the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) announced Wednesday.

The former Barcelona star gave a positive result for the banned substance at the Italian First Division match between Lazio and Brescia on November 4.

Guardiola was recently provisionally suspended pending a



JOSEP GUARDIOLA

disciplinary hearing into another positive test for the same substance during the Piacenza-Brescia match on October 21.

CONI announced that the test conducted after Lazio's 5-0 victory had revealed "the presence of nandrolone (norandrosterone) superior to two nanograms per millilitre and noreticosterone".

On Friday Guardiola, signed by Brescia earlier this season after being freed by Barcelona, had angrily refuted that he had taken banned products.

"I am disappointed, but I'm certain I'll succeed in proving my innocence because I believe in everything I've done since I turned professional," said Guardiola, at the time referring to the result of the Piacenza-Brescia test.

Italian Cup

End of the road for pretenders



AFP, Milan

Italian football minnows Como, Messina and Siena all saw gallant Cup runs ended at the hands of Serie A sides Wednesday.

That combination of results means that of the non-First Division sides only second division Sampdoria still have a chance of a place in the last eight of the competition.

However given they will be trying to overturn a 3-1 deficit at Turin against Juventus it looks like an unlikely scenario for the Geno-

based side.

Como, who have surprised many by going top of Serie B after winning promotion from Serie C in a play-off last season, had high hopes of reaching the quarters and were defending a 1-0 lead at Brescia, having eliminated Fiorentina in the previous round.

But the home side's Albanian striker Igli Tare soon levelled the aggregate score.

Tare later missed a penalty ensuring the match went to a shoot-out but it was Brescia who prevailed at the expense of the Lakesiders.

Siena had also had hopes of a famous scalp having restricted Lazio to a 2-1 scoreline in Rome but a goal from Argentinian Hernan Crespo - the only goal in the second

leg - quickly banished any hopes of the home fans.

The Lazio fans had done their bit by forcing the match to be interrupted for 45 minutes by poor visibility because of flares let off by them.

Sicilian outfit Messina won 2-1 at Parma but that was not enough to overturn a 2-0 first-leg deficit even though Parma finished the match with only nine men after a sending-off and a late injury.

AC Milan completed their passage with a 0-0 draw at Perugia having settled the tie with a 3-0 victory in the first leg while on Tuesday champions AS Roma qualified, a 3-0 triumph over Piacenza earning a 4-2 aggregate scoreline.



AFP, Paris

British doctors have sounded a warning about using the right-sized football for junior players, saying adult-sized balls are to blame for a plague of wrist fractures among young goalies.

A hard whack from an adult ball, which weights up to 450 grams

(one pound), can be enough to damage or break the wrists of a youngster making a save, they report in December's issue of the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

The research is based on a study of 1,920 patients who attended a fracture clinic at a British hospital over a 17-month period.

Twenty-nine wrist fractures were seen in 28 goalkeepers who had been trying to make a save. One of the goalies had fractured

both wrists on separate occasions.

In almost three-quarters of the incidents, an adult (size 5) ball had been in play. A junior-sized ball (size 4) had been involved in only 14 per cent of the breaks.

The doctors, from the University Hospital in Nottingham and University Hospital Aintree in Liverpool, urge coaches to use the appropriate-sized ball and teach young goalies the right posture for making a save without damaging their wrists.