Germany go on a rampage

'Death Group' trio held



Three of the nations in the World Cup's Group of Death failed to pull off psychologically boosting wins in friendlies on Wednesday as all of them had to settle for draws.

England will probably be the happier of the three as they drew 1-1 away with Holland and probably should have shaded it, while Argentina had to come from behind to scrape a similar scoreline with the not so highly-regarded Welsh and Sweden twice let a lead slip to

be held 2-2 in Greece. Elsewhere two of the other highly-fancied teams for the finals, Spain and Portugal also shared the honours with a 1-1 draw in Barcelona.

Luis Figo will hardly have pleased the home fans who have never forgiven him for leaving for Real Madrid by creating the Portuguese goal with the freekick that Jorge Costa headed home.

Three of the traditional European heavyweights did win.

World and European champions France beat Romania 2-1, Italy edged the United States 1-0 and the Germans went on a rare goalfest with a 7-1 walloping of Israel as Miroslav Klose scored a hat-trick.

Four of the darker horses from Europe for the World Cup won, the Republic of Ireland beating fellow qualifiers Russia, and landed a nice blow ahead of their meeting in the Euro 2004 qualifiers.

Poland saw off Northern Ireland 4-1 on neutral territory in Cyprus and both Belgium and Denmark won 1-0 over Norway and Saudi Arabia respectively - the Danes' scorer being the suitably named

A superb goal by debutant

share of the spoils as he became the 176th player to score on his maiden appearance but only fourth in the last 10 years

The 21-year-old, who has played just 36 Premiership matches for Aston Villa, scored with a bicvcle kick in the 61st minute to cancel out Patrick Kluivert's fortuitous goal in the first half which was about the only time the Dutch threatened the English goal.

The youngster got the thumbs up from coach Sven Goran Eriksson, who employed a 4-3-3 formation for the first time.

'Vassell was excellent as it was his first game in the senior team,"

Eriksson said. Eriksson, who handed Vassell, Michael Ricketts and Wayne Bridge their debuts in the starting line-up, revealed he had used the 4-3-3 (the Dutch beat them 2-0) when we played 4-4-2.

In-form Newcastle marksman Craig Bellamy put Wales ahead in the first half only to be pegged back by Julio Cruz's 62nd minute level-

The Millennium Stadium's retractable roof was closed so the Argentines could experience the same conditions they will encounter when they meet World Cup rivals England in the Sapporo Dome in Japan in June.

Argentine coach Marcelo Bielsa lived up to the motto hanging on his wall in his office - The possible has already been done. The impossible is what we are doing now. But for miracles we need time - by playing up the level he had expected of the Welsh. "I never thought this would be easy," he said.



Wales' Craig Bellamy celebrates his strike against Argentina at Cardiff on February 13.

strategy because he had no opportunities to try it last year.

"We had 10 matches last year but I never felt it was the right time to break up the traditional 4-4-2," he

"However we wanted to do it tonight and I am delighted we did because the players adjusted well. "It was a much better perfor-

mance today than it was last August

"I was not surprised by their (the Welsh performance) but I still think with the possession we had we should have scored two more goals," he added.

First-half goals from Patrick Vieira and his former Arsenal midfield partner Emmanuel Petit settled a solid night's work for the French, playing their first match since last November.

Romania, who missed out on a place in Japan and South Korea after failing in the play-offs last year. scored a spectacular late consolation goal through substitute Ion Ganea.

French coach Roger Lemerre cut a bemused figure at the end despite a pretty impressive perfor-

"The first 20 minutes we were pretty bad but we pulled ourselves

"It was the same in the secondhalf when we were poor for the last 20 minutes and the last five minutes so bad it could have been fatal.

"However it was a good test against such a technically gifted side as the Romanians and we will be better for it," he added.

A second-half goal from substitute Alessandro Del Piero earned Italy their victory but left coach Giovanni Trapattoni far from a happy man.

Trapattoni showed his concern at their first-half performance by making no less than four half-time substitutions and it was three of those replacements who linked up for the vital goal. Gianluca Zambrotta dispos-

sessed David Regis and fed Chievo striker Massimo Marazzina who was well placed to score but instead unselfishly squared to Del Piero. who netted from close range.

Tranattoni said: "Some people treated this game in too friendly a manner and that's not the right way to do it. They were much faster than us in the first half and they got people forward in numbers.

"1-1 would have been a fairer result.'

Arena said that the quadruple substitution made all the difference, saying: "We missed our opportunity in the first half. The four players at half-time made all the difference.

Spain struck back after Jorge Costa's opener when the current hottest scoring property in Europe Fernando Morientes shot home



DARIUS' DREAM DEBUT: England's debutant Darius Vassell equalises with a side-volley past Dutch keeper Edwin Van Der Sar at Amsterdam Arena on February 13.

from close range for his sixth goal in two matches.

Spanish coach Jose Antonio Camacho, who will be hoping he can at last end Spain's reputation for performing below expectations at major finals believed that with more accuracy up front they could have nicked it.

"We should have won, there were some good moments but we lacked that bit of luck we needed to score a goal," he said.

The most thrilling finish on the day came in Cyprus in a match between two teams not making the trip east in the summer. The Czech Republic beat hosts

Cyprus 4-3 in Nicosia to win the Cyprus four-team tournament with three goals coming in the last four

The teams were drawing 2-2

2 ahead in the 86th minute. Two minutes later Michalis Constantinou levelled the score at 3-3, but with less than a minute on the clock Liverpool's Vladimir Smicer made it 4-3.

World Cup co-hosts South Korea went down to a 2-1 defeat against Uruguay in Montevideo. Sebastian Abreu scored twice for the home team and Kim Do-Hoon

Mexico's World Cup preparations took a knock as they lost 2-1 to Yugoslavia in Phoenix, Arizona. Jesus Mendoza's 75th minute goal came too late to save Mexico, even though the Yugoslavs had Dejan Stankovic sent off with 10 minutes

Paraguay scraped a 2-2 home draw with Bolivia in Asuncion thanks to a last-minute equaliser

NANDOR HIDEGKUTI 1923 -2002

He taught England a lesson



AFP, Budapest

Hungarian football legend Nandor Hidegkuti, centre forward of Hungary's "Golden Team" of the 1950's, died of heart disease in a Budapest hospital Thursday aged

Hidegkuti, who had already been admitted to hospital with heart problems in October, played with Ferenc Puskas in the team that shot Hungarian football to world fame in the 1950's.

It is no exaggeration to say that Hidegkuti changed the course of soccer history in 1953 when Hungary became the first overseas side to defeat England at home.

Hidegkuti scored a hat-trick on a chilly, foggy November afternoon at Wembley Stadium as the "Magical Magyars" demolished England 6-3.

With the complete understanding and inspiration of coach Gusztav Sebes, Hidegkuti lined up wearing a number nine on his shirt, which could only mean one thing -- he would be playing as the target-man centre-forward

But Hidegkuti totally confused England playing more like an attacking centre-half who switched from wing to wing from deep lying positions. England had no answer to these never-seen-before tactics.

Not only did he combine the traditional speed of a centre forward and with a blistering shot despite his slim frame, he could read the game brilliantly and passed with all the elegance and accuracy of a real world-class master.

On the day of the England-Hungary match, he pulled the

AFP. London

England centre-half Harry Johnston, who believed his job was to mark him, so deep, that huge gaps were left at the back for the inside forwards Sandor Kocsis and Ference Puskas to exploit almost at will.

Hidegkuti and his team mates' display at Wembley left a deep impression on-then England captain, the late Billy Wright, who said: "The Hungarians produced some of the finest, most brilliantly applied



NANDOR HIDEGKUTI

football it has ever been my privilege to see "The ball did precisely what they

wanted. They were relentless. They were superb. From that day on, teams began to

change their tactics too and many of them began to play with deep-lying centre-forwards, or at least, forwards who did not play rigidly in one set area of the field as they had done before. That is why he is so important to the development of the game.

The deep-lying centre forward role was developed at Hidegkuti's only club MTK Budapest in the early 1950s with great success and then used by the national team.

Talking in 1997 in his book

"Puskas on Puskas, the great Ferenc Puskas recalled: "He was a great player and a wonderful reader of the game. The development of the

the central role was our mastersitting in the forward-midfield, making our telling passes, dragging the opposite defence out of shape and making those fantastic runs himself

> the 1954 World Cup final against West Germany in Berne.

streak with a dramatic 3-2 victory.

tional soccer history.

until he retired.

His last international appearance, was fittingly, at the top, when he played in Hungary's opening match in the 1958 World Cup in Sweden against Wales.

FRIENDLY RESULTS AT A

AFP, Paris

Results from international friendly matches on Wednes-

At Barcelona, Spain Spain 1 (Morientes 40) Portugal 1 (Jorge Costa 30) At Catania, Italy Italy 1 (Del Piero 62) United

At Paris France 2 (Vieira 1. Petit 27)

Romania 1 (Ganea 88) At Cardiff Wales 1 (Bellamy) Argentina 1 (Julio Cruz 62)

At Dublin Republic of Ireland 2 (Reid 3, Robbie Keane 20) Russia 0 At Kaiserslautern, Germany Germany 7 (Klose 49, 51, 64, Hamann 62, Bierhoff 69,

Asamoah 74, Ricken 77) Israel 1 (Kahn 27-og) At Amsterdam Holland 1 (Kluivert 26) England 1 (Vassell 61)

At Valetta Malta 3 (Mallia 35, 54, Mifsud 90) Moldova 0

At Amman Jordan 3 (Al Shagran 33 Semrin 47-pen, Salim 82)

Lithuania 0 At Limassol, Poland Poland 4 (Kryszalowicz 6, 66, Kaluzny 11, Zewlakow 69) Northern Ireland 1 (Lomas 17)

At Hesperange Luxembourg 0 Albania 0 At Brussels Belgium 1 (Tanghe 82)

At Riyadh Saudi Arabia 0 Denmark 1 (Sand 17) At Rijeka, Croatia

Croatia 0 Bulgaria 0 At Salonika, Ğreece Greece 2 (Fissas 54, Karagounis 85) Sweden 2 (M. Svensson 31, Selakovic 64) At Paphos, Cyprus

Faroe Islands 1 (Arge 24)

English Premiership champions

Manchester United could be without

inspirational playmaker David

Beckham when they face French

counterparts Nantes in next

Wednesday's Champions League

The 26-year-old England skip-

per, who created the goal in

Wednesday's 1-1 draw with Holand,

finished the Dutch clash with

Liechtenstein 0

Sunderland take Mboma on loan

AFP, London

Sunderland on Wednesday signed Cameroon's former African Player of the Year Patrick Mboma on loan until the end of the season, the English Premiership club confirmed on Wednesday.

The 31-year-old, who is a virtual certainty to be leading the attack for Cameroon at this year's World Cup finals, has agreed terms and will be available to make his debut in the derby game against Newcastle on February 24.

Mboma, who was a member of the Olympic winning side in 2000, joins from Italian Serie A side Parma, where he failed to hold dow a regular first team place. Mboma, who also had a spell in

Japan, scored three goals in the recent African Nations Cup but missed his country's final success over Senegal on Sunday because of a foot injury picked up in the quarter

Mboma will not require a work permit as he holds a French pass-

Ronaldo set for mid-march return

AFP, Milan

Brazilian striker Ronaldo is recovering well from his latest injury and will be back in contention in mid-March. his club Inter Milan announced on Wednesday.

The club allowed Ronaldo to go to Brazil for treatment to a pulled leg muscle - and be guest of honour at the Rio de Janeiro carnival - after he was injured during Inter's Italian league match with Piacenza on December 23.

Inter announced that the former World Player of Year's return date had been established after club doctor Franco Combi carried out tests on the player in Rio.

"We have worked out a technical and physical rehabilitation programme and everything is going well," said Combi.

Cup put on display



REUTERS, Seoul

The World Cup trophy has gone on display in South Korea with just over 100 days until the opening match of the 2002 finals in Seoul.

Chung Mong-joon, head of Korea's football association and a

vice president of world soccer's governing body FIFA, said he hoped the trophy's exhibition would "promote a World Cup football boom in Korea"

first World Cup in Asia a big success," Chung told Reuters

The cup was unveiled in Seoul shortly after the Korean team suffered a further blow to confidence

"The World Cup is in 100 days,

so we are working hard to make the

when they were beaten 2-1 by Uruguay in a friendly in Montevideo The loss followed a defeat at the

hands of Canada that saw them finish a disappointing fourth in the CONCACAF Gold Cup in California earlier this month.

Korea and Japan co-host the nations taking part.

FIFA World Cup finals which will run from May 31 to June 30 with 32



FIFA vice-president and co-chairman of the Korean Organizing Committee for the 2002 World Cup Chung Mong-joon (L), holds the World Cup trophy with Lee Yon-taek (R), a co-chairman of KOWOC at the committee's headquarters at Seoul on Thursday. South Korean singer Kim Heung-gook (2nd L) and the head of Korean Overseas Culture and Information Service, Sin Joong-sik (2nd R) are also seen.

By Eugene Sheffer 24 in olden 25 Calendar 26 Randomly selected 30 Carnival 31 Perched 33 Brylcreem dosage 36 Appoint families 42 Vote out,

CRYPTOQUIP

CWR AGSU U W EHTPZ.

KGJP

AGTPY

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I'VE OBSERVED THAT PLAYING WITH WILD PIGS CAUSES YAWNING. THEY'RE SUCH BOARS. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals W

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the 50 Compass puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error,

Djorkaeff relishing the task Football Bolton stay in the Premier League

YOURI DJORKAEFF

told me he relied on me, and told me

never felt as fit. I am really eager to

"I want to score goals and I've

I would be in the first-team.

French international Youri Djorkaeff completed his move from Kaiserslautern to Premiership side Bolton on Wednesday on a threemonth contract. The attacking midfielder has joined the English strugglers until the end of the season after being

released from his contract with the German club. The Frenchman, who has notched 29 goals in 76 international appearances, joined Kaiserslautern from Inter Milan in the 2000/01 preseason but was considered surplus

Brehme Djorkaeff, 33, told Bolton's official website: "I decided to sign for Bolton because the club really want

to requirements by coach Andreas

Allardyce visited me in Germany, he

"(Bolton manager) Sam

play an important role in helping status. determination to stay in the

Premiership," Allardyce said. "He is an outstanding worldclass player and a World Cup winner, and perhaps the biggest signing

"From the club's point of view, it shows our great determination through long and protracted negotiations in getting our man."

relegation, was not immediately revealed.

GLANCE deep-lying centre-forward strategy,

"He was perfect for that role

the 4-2-4 system with Hidegkuti in

Hidegkuti won 68 caps and between 1945 and 1958 including

Hungary were the hot favourites and the title seemed theirs for the taking as they raced into a 2-0 lead after only eight minutes. But the Germans fought back and ended Hungary's four-year unbeaten

Two years later the 1956 Hungarian revolution brought to a close one of the greatest chapters in not only Hungarian but also interna-

Unlike some of his colleagues who went overseas, Hidegkuti stayed in Hungary and continued to play for MTK and the national side

He later became a successful coach, but will forever be remembered for that day one November when he changed the face of world

discover this new challenge, help

and regain my place in the interna-

Allardyce believes Djorkaeff can

tional set-up for the World Cup."

Wanderers retain their top-flight "Signing a player of Youri's calibre and class underlines our

in the club's history.

The transfer fee for the move to the northern English club, currently 17th in the Premiership and fighting

Beckham worry for MU

Football AFP, London

> other side." he said. "I will just have to see how it is in the morning, but it certainly feels bad at the moment. I'll have to go into the club (Manchester United) in

> but I also got a heavier kick on the

"At this moment I don't know the extent of the damage. But it is really swollen, so I'll just have to wait and

strapping on his left ankle and he admitted while he wasn't aware of the exact iniury he was in agony. "I got a kick on the same ankle that I had got a kick on the other day (Premiership match with Charlton) -

the morning and see what they say.

35 Dumbfounded 37 Comprehended 38 Oil paint

27 Cabin Solution time: 28 mins compo nent 29 Beavers place 31 Auto stylo **34** O. Henry twist

CROSSWORD

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