

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.

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.

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



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

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

(the Dutch beat them 2-0) when he played 4-4-2.

Argentina coach Marcelo Bielsa lived up to the motto hanging on his wall in his office - The possible has already been done.

"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.

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 performance.

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

"It was the same in the second-half 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 dispossessed 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.

Trapattoni 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 minutes.

The teams were drawing 2-2 before Jan Koller put the Czechs 3-

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 was on target for South Korea.

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 to go.

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

NANDOR HIDEKGUTI 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 79.

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

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 Ferenc 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

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

discover this new challenge, help Bolton stay in the Premier League and regain my place in the international set-up for the World Cup."

Allardyce believes Djorkaeff can play an important role in helping Wanderers retain their top-flight status.

"Signing a player of Youri's calibre and class underlines our determination to stay in the Premiership," Allardyce said.

"He is an outstanding world-class player and a World Cup winner, and perhaps the biggest signing in the club's history."

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

The transfer fee for the move to the northern English club, currently 17th in the Premiership and fighting relegation, was not immediately revealed.

FRIENDLY RESULTS AT A GLANCE

AFP, Paris

Results from international friendly matches on Wednesday:

At Barcelona, Spain Spain 1 (Morientes 40) Portugal 1 (Jorge Costa 30) At Catania, Italy Italy 1 (Del Piero 62) United States 0 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) Norway 0 At Riyadh Saudi Arabia 0 Denmark 1 (Sand 17) At Rijeka, Croatia Croatia 0 Bulgaria 0 At Salonika, Greece Greece 2 (Fissas 54, Karagounis 85) Sweden 2 (M. Svensson 31, Selakovics 64) At Paphos, Cyprus Faroe Islands 1 (Arge 24) 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 down 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 finals.

Mboma will not require a work permit as he holds a French passport.

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.

Beckham worry for MU

AFP, London

English Premiership champions Manchester United could be without inspirational playmaker David Beckham when they face French counterparts Nantes in next Wednesday's Champions League clash.

The 26-year-old England skipper, who created the goal in Wednesday's 1-1 draw with Holland, finished the Dutch clash with

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".

"The World Cup is in 100 days, so we are working hard to make the first World Cup in Asia a big success," Chung told Reuters Television.

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

when they were beaten 2-1 by Uruguay in a friendly in Montevideo on Wednesday.

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 FIFA World Cup finals which will run from May 31 to June 30 with 32 nations taking part.



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 Yong-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.

Djorkaeff relishing the task

AFP, London

French international Youri Djorkaeff completed his move from Kaiserslautern to Premiership side Bolton on Wednesday on a three-month 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 pre-season but was considered surplus to requirements by coach Andreas Brehme.

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

me. "(Bolton manager) Sam Allardyce visited me in Germany, he



YOURI DJORKAEFF

told me he relied on me, and told me I would be in the first-team.

"I want to score goals and I've never felt as fit. I am really eager to

discover this new challenge, help Bolton stay in the Premier League and regain my place in the international set-up for the World Cup."

Allardyce believes Djorkaeff can play an important role in helping Wanderers retain their top-flight status.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 39 Blackjack component 4 Weir 7 Assaulted 12 Brewery product 13 Italian article 14 Phantom's ballwick 15 Steven Tyler's daughter 16 Church-keg, e.g. 18 Actor Vigoda 19 "In & Out" star 20 Vocalize 22 Feedbag 23 One of the Three Bears 27 Cabin component 29 Beavers' place 31 Auto stylo 34 O. Henry twist 35 Dumb-founded 37 Comprehensive 38 Oil paint holder

Crossword grid with numbers 1-38 indicating starting positions for words.

DOWN 1 Big affairs 2 Suspect's out 3 Bug number in St. Ives 4 Evade 5 Not digital 6 Craze 7 Trust 8 Gorilla 9 Lair 10 "All the Things You—" star 11 Pitch 17 Not fooled by 21 Donut coating 23 Ricardo's pal

24 In olden days 25 Calendar abbr. 26 Randomly selected 28 Inseparable 30 Carnival setting 31 Perched 32 Aussie bird 33 Brylcreem dosage 36 Appointment 37 Sub-families 40 Dance props 42 Vote out, on "Big Brother" 43 Lofty nest 44 Dealer-ship offer 45 Altercation 46 Shootout 48 Type measures 49 Go off course 50 Compass dir. 51 "Bird — Wire"

Solution time: 28 mins. PAC DEMO PUGS IDA EDIT ATIT CATA PULT TALE AGO KET CHAM CAR SSS HAH AIS A EAG P ECOS RI CH MOP DAIVE DIATSE BAR TIEN RUM DEPART CARAMEL GAL ORAL CATACOMB MITND CHAR GAY PIATS AIRLO SIEE

CRYPTOQUIP

ABPS CWR AGSU UW OPU YWKPUBHSO QBGSOPE GYG EHTPZ BP QGS ZPGNNC KGJP AGTPY

Yesterday's Cryptquip: I'VE OBSERVED THAT PLAYING WITH WILD PIGS CAUSES YAWNING. THEY'RE SUCH BOARS.

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