

LIVERPOOL V BAYER LEVERKUSEN
Germans a real threat



AFP, London

Liverpool will not be underestimating the challenge of Bundesliga leaders Bayer Leverkusen when the teams meet in the first leg of the Champions League quarter-finals at Anfield on Wednesday.

But Thompson admitted his players were confident of making the semi-finals and setting up a possible mouth-watering clash with Premiership rivals Manchester United.

squad with a lot of quality players - if they carry on like this, they'll probably win the Bundesliga.



Arsenal's Swedish international playmaker Freddy Ljungberg (C), trying to make his way through two Charlton defenders at the Valley in Charlton on April 1.

Premiership
Gunners too hot



AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger lavished praise on his players for ending Charlton's 12-match unbeaten run against London sides this season with a comprehensive 3-0 victory at the Valley on Monday.

the season. At Pride Park, John Gregory's hopes of saving Derby from the drop suffered a major setback when Robbie Mustoe's 12th minute goal gave Middlesbrough a 1-0 win.

score his first goal for the club four minutes from the interval. Tomasz Radzinski settled Everton nerves when he made it 2-0 when his shot took a deflection off Paul Warhurst.

Table with 6 columns: Team, Played, Won, Drawn, Lost, Goals For, Goals Against. Lists Arsenal, Liverpool, Man Utd, Newcastle, Chelsea, Leeds.

CUP CORNER



AFP, Tokyo

Spectators at football's World Cup finals will not be allowed to bring plastic drink bottles, umbrellas and confetti into stadiums, organisers said Tuesday.

The Japanese and South Korean World Cup organising committees said "stones, bottles, cans, PET bottles with caps attached, sealed paper packets, frozen substances or other objects which may be considered as intended to be thrown" were banned.

The rules for spectators at stadiums and other World Cup facilities also prohibit bringing in umbrellas, "with the exception of folding umbrellas judged harmless by the security personnel".

Not surprisingly firearms and knives were also listed as banned objects.

Takahisa Ishida, security director for the Japanese organising committee JAWOC, told reporters that confetti would be prohibited "because they hamper competition when scattered in enormous volume".

It is the first time that the World Cup finals are being held in Asia and in a co-hosting scheme. Both Japan and South Korea are braced for their first encounter with European football hooligans during the month-long finals which kick off on May 31.

The organisers have banned people from taking alcoholic beverages into the stadiums, but beer will be sold in the venues in limited amounts as a US brewer is one of the worldwide sponsors of the 2002 finals.

WORLD CUP PIRACY!

Beijing. Following the triumph of China's footballers in qualifying for their first World Cup finals, one of the country's other success stories - counterfeiters - have got in on the act, state media said Tuesday.

In the first documented case of pirated World Cup 2002 products in the country, police in the southern city of Shenzhen seized a series of illicit commemorative copies of the tournament trophy, the Xinhua news agency said.

A special anti-piracy task force in the bustling commercial centre adjoining Hong Kong found 60 forged Cup trophies, 54 semi-finished ones and six sets of production moulds in a company warehouse.

The raid followed a tip off by football's world governing body FIFA about sham World Cup merchandise being produced.

The finished trophies were inscribed with logos such as "FIFA World Cup" and "Everlasting Memory of 2002 World Cup", Xinhua said.

China's qualification for the World Cup finals, to be held jointly by South Korea and Japan, prompted a national outpouring of joy in the soccer-mad nation late last year.

Millions of fans are now hoping the wily leadership of charismatic Yugoslav coach Bora Milutinovic - himself immortalised on innumerable souvenirs - can help the inexperienced side avoid humiliation in the first round group stage, where they will face Brazil, Turkey and Costa Rica.

Piracy and counterfeiting, especially of computer software, music and films, is rampant in China despite repeated high-profile crackdowns.

JAPAN EXPECT GDP BOOST

Tokyo. Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) would get a 0.3 percentage point boost in the April-June quarter from its co-hosting of the World Cup soccer finals, a research institute said Tuesday.

"The economy will benefit by about 370 billion yen (2.8 billion dollars), boosting GDP by 0.1 percentage points on the year and 0.3 percentage points for the April-June quarter," said a study by the Dai-ichi Life Research Institute Inc.

The study cautioned however that it was not clear whether the effects would be offset by decreased spending in other areas as Japan's economic woes continued.

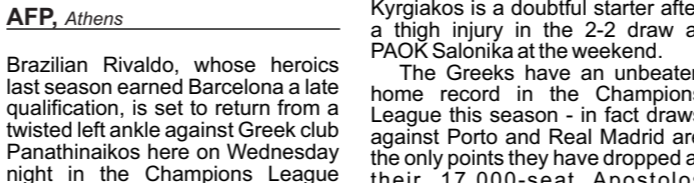
"With the rise in the unemployment rate, and decrease in salary bonuses, the income situation is getting worse, and it is possible an increase in spending on World Cup spending will result in cutbacks in spending on other items," it said.

Dai-ichi Life Research's forecast was based on the assumption that soccer matches would draw a total of 1.6 million domestic and foreign fans.

It predicted spending directly related to the World Cup in Japan would reach 233 billion yen.

Total economic windfall would be 369 billion yen, the institute said.

PANATHINAIKOS V BARCELONA
Rivaldo back for Spaniards



RIVALDO

place in Spain and once more struggling to qualify for next season's competition.

Panathinaikos defender Sotiris Kyrgiakos is a doubtful starter after a thigh injury in the 2-2 draw at PAOK Salonika at the weekend.

The Greeks have an unbeaten home record in the Champions League this season - in fact draws against Porto and Real Madrid are the only points they have dropped at their 17,000-seat Apostolos Nikolaidis Stadium so far.

Coach Sergio Marcarian praised Barcelona, and added: "Anything can happen from the quarter-finals but I have great faith in my players and I see no reason why we cannot reach the final in Glasgow (May 15)."

Panathinaikos club president Angelos Filippidis said: "It is a major success for us and for Greek soccer to be among the best eight teams in Europe. We have to give it our all."



BRAZIL'S ATTACKING TRUMP-CARDS: Inter Milan's Ronaldo (L) and Paris Saint Germain's Ronaldinho.

Scolari's favourite Ro-Ro



AFP/AP, Rio de Janeiro/Milan

Both Ronaldo and Ronaldinho will figure in the 23-strong Brazilian squad for this summer's World Cup finals, coach Luiz Felipe Scolari has said.

Scolari told Radio Gaucha on Monday that he had been impressed with their budding partnership during the 1-0 win over Yugoslavia in a friendly match last Wednesday.

In that match, Ronaldo played his first game for Brazil in over two years, but lasted just the first 45 minutes before being substituted.

"Ronaldinho can be used either as a second striker or as a playmaker," said Scolari.

But the Brazil coach said he had no intention of buckling under pressure from the fans who want to see former star striker Romario being brought back into the squad.

Scolari said that Romario's free-wheeling attitude and poor training habits had not changed and that therefore he would not be considered for a recall.

Meanwhile, Ronaldo will likely return to Internazionale's lineup Thursday against Dutch club Feyenoord in the UEFA Cup semifinals, an Italian newspaper reported.

The two-time FIFA player of the year has not played for Inter since December due to recurring knee

problems.

Ronaldo scored four times Monday in a training game with Inter teammates and coach Hector Cuper now plans to use him in the European competition, Milan sports daily Gazzetta dello Sport reported Tuesday.

Cuper had been hesitant to use the 25-year-old superstar in the Italian league, saying he was not yet in shape.

Ronaldo returned to action earlier this season following a two-year injury absence due to a torn right knee ligament and then was hurt again in December.

Nearly 2,000 fans watched Ronaldo Monday in the practice match at the team's training site, Gazzetta reported.

Lippi's future uncertain?



REUTERS, Milan

Juventus general manager Luciano Moggi has insisted that coach Marcello Lippi's future at the club is not under discussion but the Italian media have begun to speculate on the coach's possible replacement.

Juve's title aspirations faded on Saturday when they drew 1-1 at home to Lazio, leaving them six points behind leaders Inter Milan with just five games remaining.

Asked whether Lippi would be staying with Juventus, Moggi told the daily Gazzetta dello Sport on Tuesday: "Certainly, there is no



MARCELLO LIPPI

reason for a change of mind on that score. He was taken on for a long-term programme which initially does

not depend on results".

Lippi's current contract with Juventus runs until the end of the 2002-2003 season.

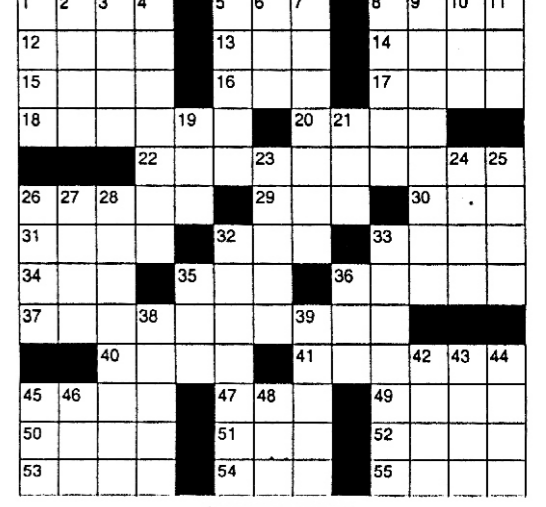
Should Juve fail to make up the ground on Inter it would be their fourth consecutive season without a major trophy, although the Turin club have reached the final of the low-key Italian Cup.

Moggi put the blame for Juve's failure to keep the pace in the Champions League and Serie A on the series of injuries throughout the campaign.

"When you get tons of injuries, as has happened to us this season, how can you hit your targets?" said Moggi.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Venetian blind part 5 Western st. / 8 Urban blight 12 Gyro holder 13 "Today I - man" 14 Hardy cabbage 15 Biblical kingdom 16 Seekers of AWOLs 17 Loosen 18 Destruction 20 Auctioneer's call 22 "Casino Royale" song, with "The" 26 Strobe easily 29 Ump 30 Abner's adjective 31 "Sad to say, ..." 32 Accomplished 33 Hayseed 34 Wire measure 35 Brooks or



CRYPTOQUIP
G U N V A N R P I R G I L J
V A P I G Z P G Z L J I
I N J Z V O V N A . P G ' Z R O D D N T
" G U N V L D P R N T P Z V O G R U . "
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I IMAGINE A SCRABBLE TOURNAMENT COULD BE THOUGHT OF AS A WAR OF WORDS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals P
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 puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.