

# Bielsa wants Beck to play



AFP, Buenos Aires

Argentina coach Marcelo Bielsa said Friday he hoped England captain David Beckham recovers from his broken foot in time to play against Argentina at this year's World Cup finals.

The Manchester United midfielder broke a bone in his left foot after a lunging two-footed tackle from Deportivo La Coruna's Argentinian defender Pedro Duscher in their European Champions League quarterfinal, second leg match on Wednesday.

Beckham has a chance of making a full recovery within six weeks, but he faces a race against time to

play a part in England's World Cup campaign and their Group F clash with Argentina in Sapporo, Japan, on June 7.

But Bielsa said it would be a better match if Beckham played.

"I am against getting any sporting advantage from the misfortune of others. I'd rather not have them," said Bielsa shortly before flying to Stuttgart for Argentina's World Cup warm-up match against Germany on Wednesday.

Bielsa said 26-year-old midfielder Beckham was a great player whose presence would make it a better match.

"He's a great player, I'd be sorry if he couldn't play," said Bielsa. "Rivalry is good and it is even better if your opponents are as strong as you. That's what we're looking for. It would be better with Beckham than without him. I hope he's there."

Beckham's injury and Duscher's tackle dominated the newspapers in football-mad Argentina here on Friday.

Duscher told some newspapers



MARCELO BIELSA

that the British press had tried to inflate the story because of his nationality and insisted that he had not deliberately injured the English player.

"They are blowing it up because I'm Argentinian," he said. "They are trying to make out that it was pre-meditated. But that would mean I'm a bad person, which I'm not."

"I'm sorry for what happened to Beckham but my conscience is clear because I didn't mean him any harm," Duscher added.

England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson said Friday that he was prepared to take a risk on Beckham to give him every chance of making the World Cup finals.

Eriksson said Beckham would travel to Japan if there was the slightest chance of him being fit to play.

## Lippi's dream

REUTERS, Rome

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi says he wants to become the Italy national coach one day.

Lippi, whose third-placed Juventus side face AC Milan on Sunday, has been under pressure in recent weeks after his expensively assembled side struggled to keep up with leaders Inter Milan.

But a 4-0 victory over Perugia last weekend coupled with Inter Milan's 2-1 home defeat against Atalanta put Juventus firmly back in the championship race.

"I would like to coach at Juventus for another three or four seasons then I won't coach another Italian team," said Lippi, quoted in Saturday's *Corriere dello Sport*. "I would really like to coach the national side."

Lippi celebrated his 54th birthday on Friday.

## Oh!

AFP, Tokyo

South Korean midfielder Oh Jang-Eun of FC Tokyo became the youngest player of the league to make a professional debut, although his side crashed to a 5-0 defeat to Gamba Osaka on Saturday.

Oh replaced Yukihiko Sato in the 54th minute and despite a run in with Masao Kiba that left him with an injury needing two stitches, played until the end. At 16-years and eight-months, Sato set a new J-League record.

"I wanted to learn football playing overseas. My dream is to join the South Korean national team in the future," said Oh.

The lead was kept by 1999 Asian club champions Jubilo Iwata, who stretched their match-winning streak to six straight wins with no defeats by beating defending champions Kashima Antlers 2-0.

Iwata collected a total of 17 points, two points ahead of Yokohama Marinos and three ahead of first-division League new-comers Vegalta Sendai, with all remaining unbeaten.

Yokohama defeated Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2-0 with Japan's international Shunsuke Nakamura scoring one goal and assisting for another in the 15th and 89th minutes.

Sendai will take on Urawa Red Diamonds at home Sunday.

Dutch midfielder Tarik Oulida's 37th-minute goal into the right corner was almost enough for Nagoya Grampus Eight, who defeated Kashiwa Reysol 2-0 after missing several scoring chances in the second half.

Kyoto Purple Sangha posted only their second win after returning to the first division by beating Consadole Sapporo 2-1 thanks to Usaku Ueno's goal in the 108th minute which ended sudden death extra time.

Vissel Kobe were held to a 1-1 draw by Tokyo Verdy.

## Both Real & Barca fined

AFP, Paris

Spanish giants Real Madrid and Barcelona, due to meet in the Champions League semifinals, have been fined on Friday after their supporters pelted the pitch with objects during this week's quarterfinals.

Football's European governing body UEFA fined Barcelona 136,400 euros (120,000 dollars) for their fans' behaviour during the victory over Greek side Panathinaikos at the Nou Camp on Tuesday. The match referee was among those hit by objects thrown from the stands.

UEFA's disciplinary committee also fined Real Madrid 81,840 euros after a Bayern Munich player was hit in the back by projectiles thrown by fans at the Bernabeu in Madrid on Wednesday.

Peter Schmeichel is to leave English Premiership side Aston Villa at the end of the season after the Birmingham club decided not to take up an option to extend his contract.

Villa manager Graham Taylor held talks with Denmark great Schmeichel, who made his name in England with Manchester United, and told him the club did not wish to extend his stay at Villa Park.

"When Peter joined Villa he had a verbal agreement that he would be the club's first choice," said former England boss Taylor.

"I was honour bound to comply with this agreement but, as the options on his contract had to be decided by May 1, I thought it was important to sort out this situation as soon as possible."

"There are four games to be played and Peter Enckelman will now come into the side. He has served his apprenticeship under both David James and Peter Schmeichel and deserves his chance."

"Peter Enckelman will play against Leeds on Saturday, with Boaz Myhill on the bench."



PHOTO: AFP

## PSG's hopes dashed

### Football

AFP, Marseille

Marseille dealt a blow to eternal rivals Paris Saint Germain's chances of qualifying for next season's Champions League when they won 1-0 here on Friday.

A 65th-minute goal from Belgian defender Daniel Van Buyten leaves Auxerre just one point behind the Parisians and will leapfrog them into third place if they beat Sochaux on Saturday.

Marseille's victory in front of 57,500 fans at a rain-soaked Velodrome stadium meanwhile moves them up to ninth position.

But the match lived up to its reputation for violence off the pitch. Fifty-two people including a policeman suffered minor injuries as fights broke out in the stands.

But PSG's attacks were repelled by veteran Marseille

defender Frank Leboeuf who had an outstanding game in central defence, thwarting PSG's Brazilian striker Jose Aloisio as he powered towards goal in the second half.

Former Everton striker Ibrahim Bakayoko wasted a good Marseille chance to score just before Van Buyten's winner when he completely missed his kick after being played in front of the PSG goal.

Dalmat produced a save from Letizi when his powerful shot was pushed away in stoppage time.

Marseille keeper Vedran Runje had to push away an inswinging corner in the dying seconds.

The south coast club's president Robert Louis Dreyfus told French television before the match that he was disappointed in the season for the 1993 European champions but he believed the foundations had been laid for a good team next season.

## Boro the odd side

### Football

AFP, London

Only Middlesbrough stand in the way of the first all-London FA Cup final for 20 years when they play Arsenal on Sunday.

In Sunday's other semifinal, another all-Premiership clash sees traditional London rivals Chelsea and Fulham, whose stadiums are a short walk apart, travel to Birmingham for a semifinal at Villa Park.

But it is Arsenal, last year's beaten finalists, who are favourites to go one better this time around.

Arsene Wenger's team are also leading the Premiership as they bid to complete the second 'double' of the Frenchman's Highbury reign following their 1997-98 dual triumph.

Arsenal are expected to win the Cup but Wenger said dealing with the pressure of expectation was nothing new for his side.

"We are good enough to know that being favourites means the situation can be difficult. I think we can handle that," he said.

Swedish international midfielder Freddie Ljungberg said he relished the pressure.

"I love this part of the season," explained Ljungberg, who scored the opening goal in Arsenal's 2-1 FA Cup Final defeat by Liverpool last season.

"I like pressure and there is pressure on the games now," he said.

"Now you can see what it is possible to win and that is the real enjoyment of football."

Despite all the pre-match predictions of an Arsenal win, Ljungberg knows enough about a competition famed for upsets not to be taking the result for granted.

Villa manager Graham Taylor held talks with Denmark great Schmeichel, who made his name in England with Manchester United, and told him the club did not wish to extend his stay at Villa Park.

"When Peter joined Villa he had a verbal agreement that he would be the club's first choice," said former England boss Taylor.

"I was honour bound to comply with this agreement but, as the options on his contract had to be decided by May 1, I thought it was important to sort out this situation as soon as possible."

"There are four games to be played and Peter Enckelman will now come into the side. He has served his apprenticeship under both David James and Peter Schmeichel and deserves his chance."

"Peter Enckelman will play against Leeds on Saturday, with Boaz Myhill on the bench."

## CUP CORNER

### BELGIAN SIDE FOR SLOVAKIA

Brussels

Belgium coach Robert Wasey on Friday named a 30-man squad for his country's friendly international match against Slovakia here on April 17 as the side continue their build-up to the World Cup finals.

### SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Geert De Vlieger, Frederic Herpoel, Francky Vandendriessche

Defenders: Philippe Clement, Glen De Boeck, Eric Deflandre, Nico van Kerckhoven, Daniel Van Buyten, Marc Hendrikx, Peter Van Der Heyden, Eric Van Meir, Jacky Peeters

Midfielders: Bart Goor, Timmy Simons, Walter Bassegio, Danny Boffin, Stefaan Tanghe, Yves Vanderhaeghe, Gaetan Englebert, Bernd Thijss, Sven Vermaut, Johan Walem

Attackers: Marc Wilmots, Wesley Sonck, Gert Verheyen, Mbo Mpenza, Emile Mpenza, Branko Strupar, Michael Goossens, Peter Van Hout

### ECUADOR KEEPER WITHDRAWS

Quito

Ecuador's first-choice goalkeeper Jose Cevallos and centre forward Ivan Kaviedes have dropped out of their country's squad to face South Africa in a friendly match in Murcia, Spain, on Wednesday.

Cevallos has a thigh muscle injury and Kaviedes has a knee problem, the team doctor said on Friday.

Ecuador and South Africa are using the match as part of their build-up for the World Cup finals in which Ecuador are making their first appearance.

## Nigeria warm up against Jamaica

AFP, Lagos

Nigeria will face Jamaica in London on May 18 as part of their build-up for the World Cup finals, officials told AFP Friday.

"Jamaica were not originally listed for our warm-up matches but because of the need to try as many players as possible before the World Cup, we have now agreed to play them," said Edozie Enemuo, the marketing chief of the Nigeria Football Association (NFA).

Jamaica drew 2-2 with Nigeria in a friendly on the road to the 1998 World Cup.

The official told AFP that three days after the Jamaica friendly, Nigeria will travel to Dublin to tackle fellow World Cup finalists Republic of Ireland in another tune-up game.

He said the NFA is still waiting for a "reconfirmation" for the warm-up match against Yugoslavia on May 8 in Belgrade.

Yugoslavia had earlier called off the match but have since informed Nigeria they are willing for the game to go ahead.

Nigeria's 'Super Eagles' are drawn in a tough first round group in the finals in Japan and South Korea along with tournament favourites Argentina, England and Sweden.

They face Argentina on June 2 in their opening game.



PHOTO: AFP

Kuwait forward Faraj Lahib (L) is under pressure from Iran defender Said Lutfi during the last match of the Second West Asian Games football tournament in Kuwait City on Friday. Although the game ended 0-0, Kuwait won the gold medal. Syria collected the bronze medal.