



days to go



Did U Know?

Entry to the first World Cup in 1930 was by invitation, and 13 countries took part. At the time it took one month to cross from Europe to South America and back again by ship, and the great distance from European countries was one reason so few teams took part.



ESPN

World Cup soccer Mix
Repeat at 9:30 am
Cricket Programming
Super Selector
Repeat at 7:00 pm
West Indies vs India
First ODI
Live at 8:35 pm
STAR Sports
Cricket Programming
Super Selector

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Zinedine Zidane

(France superstar)
"The first round is going to be much tougher than it was in 1998 and the first game (against Senegal) will certainly be the most important of the whole competition."



Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
June 7, 2002 and draw shortly afterwards

- Serena Williams lifted the Rome Masters Series title defeating: Venus Hingis Henin
- What was the result of the World Cup warm-up match between England and South Korea: 1-0 2-1 1-1
- West Indies won the fifth and final Test against India by: 150 runs 155 runs 140 runs
- Name the Irish football captain who was sent home from the World Cup: Harte Jones Keane
- BKSP won the CityCell national youth cricket title

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (If any)



PHOTO: INTERNET

A LONELY EXISTENCE: Expelled Ireland captain Roy Keane arrives at the Saipan International Airport on his way home.

Axed Keane heads home

AFP, London

Disgraced Ireland captain Roy Keane was flying back to Britain on Manchester United's private jet Friday after being sensationally kicked out of his country's World Cup squad.

Keane, who was axed from the World Cup after a furious bust-up with Irish manager Mick McCarthy, left Saipan late Thursday and is believed to have boarded United's jet in Japan, the BBC reported.

The rest of Ireland's squad left their Pacific island camp of Saipan on Friday and have now touched down in Japan where they will be based throughout the first phase of the World Cup.

Keane's dramatic exclusion from the World Cup attracted blanket coverage here on Friday, with newspapers lining up to condemn the Manchester United player's behaviour.

Some newspapers reported that Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern had made a last-minute plea for a solution to the furore on Thursday.

Ahern's office had contacted Keane's advisers to see if there was a way to settle the row with his star player. Ahern had also suggested introducing Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson into the equation.

Keane was branded "a disruptive influence" by McCarthy after an explosive confrontation with the player.

Most newspaper applauded McCarthy's decision to kick Keane out - though Manchester United legend Paddy Crerand accused the Irish manager of "cutting off his nose to spite his face" by axing Keane.

Crerand admits he can understand why the player has been booted out of the squad, but feels there could have been another solution to the problem.

"I think Mick's cut off his nose to spite his face. Roy is the equivalent of Steven Gerrard and David Beckham rolled into one for Ireland."

"I thought Ireland had a decent chance of progressing because t h e y

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Murphy catches injury train Sinclair called back



AFP, Seogwipo

England's World Cup preparations were dealt yet another blow on Friday when midfielder Danny Murphy became the latest player to be ruled out through injury.

A scan at a hospital in England's South Korean training camp in Jeju revealed the Liverpool player had fractured a foot after a training ground collision earlier this week.

Murphy will be replaced by West Ham's Trevor Sinclair, who will fly back to the Far East from London later Friday, just two days after arriving back in Britain from South Korea.

The withdrawal leaves coach Sven-Goran Eriksson with a fresh headache, reducing his pool of fully-fit midfielders to just three - Paul Scholes, Owen Hargreaves and Joe Cole - ahead of Sinclair's arrival.

A glum-looking Eriksson was bravely trying to stay upbeat as he digested the latest blow to his plans at a press conference here Friday.

"I'm not fed up at all - I'm looking forward to the World Cup," Eriksson said.

"Of course it's a pity when you lose one player after another but England is a great football nation and we have a lot of good football players."

"Those coming in they will show the world that they should have been here from the beginning," said Eriksson, who has already seen Steven Gerrard ruled out through injury.

Captain David Beckham and midfielder Nicky Butt are both in the squad but short of full fitness.

Murphy's injury means Eriksson will be forced to revise his plans for Sunday's warm-up match against Cameroon in Kobe, Japan.

The England manager had initially hoped to use the game to bed down his strongest line-up in preparation for England's World Cup Group F opener against Sweden on June 2. That will not now be the case.

"A few weeks ago I was asked if I would field my strongest team against Cameroon and I said yes. Today I will say no - I can't, it's impossible."

"We're going to let more or less everyone play as we have done during all the friendly games because at this point that's the only way to do it."

As well as recall to the squad for Sinclair, Eriksson has placed two members of England's Under-21 squad on standby, Blackburn

midfielder David Dunn and Leeds striker Alan Smith.



DANNY MURPHY

Murphy's departure and the dwindling number of options avail-



PHOTO: INTERNET

WHAT? I'M IN AGAIN? Trevor Sinclair talks on his cell-phone at Heathrow Airport as he arrives back in London on May 23. Now it's about turn for him.

CUP CORNER



AFP, Seoul

World Cup organizers said Friday that tickets would be distributed on time in South Korea and Japan despite printing delays, but they have eased some restrictions on ticket use.

Japan is waiting for 188,000 tickets, according to FIFA, and South Korea But FIFA's ticketing sub-committee said in a statement the operation is "on track despite the fact that certain delays have been experienced regarding the delivery of the tickets to the fans in the two host countries."

The Korean World Cup Organising Committee (KOWOC) said the remaining 104,900 tickets out of 706,910 tickets to be distributed to fans in Korea were to be brought from Britain late Friday.

"We will have no problems handing out all tickets in time," Kim Yong-Jip, head for KOWOC's marketing bureau said after launching a special task force to settle complaints from ticket buyers.

Japanese World Cup organizers had expressed fears that they might be forced to ask thousands of fans to pick up their tickets on match days.

Japan and South Korea have complained about the delayed delivery of tickets by Byrom, a British firm handling ticket arrangements for FIFA.

Organisers have however decided to ease a stipulation that only the buyer whose name appears on a ticket should use it.

Kim said officials from FIFA, South Korea and Japan, the two co-hosts, had agreed tickets should preferably be used by the buyers but this is not compulsory.

FIFA ordered names put on tickets in a bid to block black market sales, which caused many complaints at the France '98 finals, and hooliganism. KOWOC said that up to May 22 it had sold 1.18 million tickets, 83.4 percent out of the 1.42 million tickets for the 32 games in South Korea. Tickets for games in Japan have virtually sold out.

Ticket subcommittee chairman David Will said in a statement: "Despite having experienced certain problems, all ticketing operations are on track and I am confident that thanks to the excellent cooperation of the local organising committees in Korea and Japan the system will work well throughout the event."

SEE-THROUGH ECUADOR!

Quito

World Cup finals debutants Ecuador welcomed a spy from Group G rivals Italy into their training camp at Tottori this week allowing assistant coach Conrado Coradino to watch a training session.

"He enjoyed the run of the place. Our coach 'Bolillo' Gomez believes there is nothing to hide," an Ecuador Football Federation statement said

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Team lists final Ireland one short

REUTERS, Yokohama

FIFA has named the official squads of 23 players for the 32 finalists at the World Cup, one week before the start, but Ireland are left with just 22 players after the expulsion of captain Roy Keane.

Keane, who was thrown off the Ireland squad on Thursday after a training camp row with manager Mick McCarthy, was named in the number six shirt on FIFA's official list.

All teams had to lodge their squads by midnight on Tuesday. As world soccer's governing body FIFA only allows changes to be made if a player is seriously injured, Keane cannot be replaced.

Of the 736 players named, a second one will also not be taking part in the finals.

English midfielder Danny Murphy, in the squad only because of the withdrawal through injury of his Liverpool team mate Steven

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MSC dethrone Abahani

NITOL-TATA NAT'L FOOTBALL LEAGUE

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club clinched the Nitol-Tata National Football League title defeating their bitter rivals Abahani Krira Chakra 6-5 in the tiebreaker at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The adrenaline-pumping final in front of a near packed holiday crowd went into shootout after the two most crowd-pulling teams failed to score in the 90-minute regulation time.

Mohammedan were lucky to win the cliffhanger after surviving a late second-half onslaught from Abahani.

The black and white supporters exploded when their substitute midfielder Tushar drove the eighth 12-yarder through the left-hand post of Abahani custodian Apel.

Abahani captain Arman Minah, who played so well in the League, returned as a villain last night when

FEEL THE FEVER



PHOTO: STAR

May be Japan or Korea is too far away, but even the Bandartilla locality in the port city of Chittagong is suffering from World Cup flu. Picture shows three top contenders - Argentina, Brazil and France - flags flying high.

the mercurial midfielder blasted the eighth spot-kick of his side wide over the right-hand post of experienced Mohammedan keeper Bijon Barua.

The marathon penalty shootout went into sudden death after both teams locked 3-3 in the regulation first five spot-kicks.

Jewel, Nakib, Alfaz, Masud Rana and Abdullah scored for Mohammedan while Ritu, Colley Barnes, Bidyut, Iqbal and Hasan converted it for Abahani.

The victorious Mohammedan received a cash award of Taka 5,000 and a Jeep. While a dethroned Abahani won Taka 3,00,000 for becoming runners-up.

President Prof AQM Badrudoza Chowdhury witnessed the final and gave away prizes among the winners.

But Abahani certainly deserved better result. They pushed the Mohammedan back to the wall with a series of offensive midway through the second session but failed to end the deadlock because of their poor marksmanship and some spectacular saves from Bijon.

The popular Dhanmondi outfit got four clear chances in the match but Iqbal, Kanchan and Nigerian Colly muffed up those easy sitters shooting wide off the mark.

Mohammedan got their only realistic chance shortly after the break when Alfaz came up with a scorching right-footer from the edge of the box, but the ball missed the near post by an inch.

The other highlight of the engrossing drama was the precise way referee Monsur Azad controlled the proceedings.

Yellow cards: Bijon, Abdullah, Abu Faisal (Mohammedan), Daniel, Nazrul and Bidyut (Abahani)

TEAMS

Mohammedan SC: Bijon, Jewel, Abdullah, Kaisar, Masud Rana, Monwar, Basudev Mondal (Tushar), Joy, Faisal Mahmud, Alfaz and Nakib.

Abahani KC: Apel, Titu, Nazrul, Sujon, Hasan, Iqbal, Arman, Daniel (Bidyut), Tanvir, Colly Barnes and Kanchan (Ritu)

Referee: Monsur Azad

Scolari chooses first XI



AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Faced with the daunting task of restoring honour to Brazilian football, coach Luiz Felipe Scolari is treating Saturday's friendly against lowly ranked Malaysia as a full dress rehearsal for their crunch World Cup opener against Turkey.

"Big Phil", as Scolari is popularly known, said a thumping win over Turkey on June 3 will be a crucial morale booster for a side still smarting from an embarrassing struggle through the World Cup qualifiers.

For that reason Malaysia, ranked 112th in the world, has become the whipping boy for the four-times world champions as they try to get their game back on track.

"Until today, we are 90 percent ready for the World Cup and we will use the friendly to make it to 100 percent," Scolari said.

"The first match against Turkey is the most crucial one and I am gearing up the team for that match."

Simulated match training during the week, as Brazil completed their World Cup preparations, has involved Scolari's starting line-up in a 3-4-3 formation against the remaining players using Turkey's 4-3-3 style.

At times Scolari pulled his strong-man captain Emerson off the pitch, reducing the side to 10-men in preparation for the possibility of a player being sent off.

Scolari has hammered home the need for teamwork in a game plan that swings between a lightning strike force and staunch defence.

Focus has also been on cementing the much vaunted "Triple R"

different tactics and this means there will be changes with every match we play depending on the opposition," he told reporters.

Although Brazil will be in full cry, Malaysian coach Allan Harris said his side would give "100 percent commitment" but there was no doubt about their responsibilities.

"We won't be too hard on them to ensure that the Brazilians won't suffer any injury as this is their last lap of preparation for the World Cup," he said.

Along with Turkey, Brazil has China and Costa Rica in Group C.

Brazil will fly to Busan in South Korea on Sunday.

THE BRAZIL STARTING 11 FOR SATURDAY IS:

Marcos (Palmeiras), Lucio (Bayer Leverkusen/Ger), Edmilson (Lyon/Fra), Roque Junior (AC Milan/Ita), Cafu (AS Roma/Ita), Emerson (AS Roma/Ita), Kleberson (Atletico Paranaense), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid/Spa), Rivaldo (Barcelona/Spa), Ronaldo (Inter Milan/Ita), Ronaldinho Gaucho (Paris Saint Germain/Fra).



PHOTO: INTERNET

THESE ARE JUST DUMMIES! Brazil coach Luis Felipe Scolari checks a free-kick wall during a training session at their Kuala Lumpur base yesterday.