

Irish FA back McCarthy



AFP, Dublin

Republic of Ireland manager Mick McCarthy received a resounding vote of confidence over his decision to sensationally kick skipper Roy Keane out of his World Cup squad here Thursday.

A statement by the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) said McCarthy had axed Keane after receiving unanimous support from other players in the squad, coaches and officials.

Keane was sent home in disgrace from Ireland's World Cup training camp in Saipan after a clear-the-air meeting over comments made by the player in a newspaper interview degenerated into a slanging match.

McCarthy's decision left Ireland in a state of shock on Thursday, with stunned fans swamping radio station phone-ins and internet chat rooms.

ROK eye a shock



AFP, Paju

Last year France humiliated Republic of Korea at the Confederations Cup, but Korean captain Hong Myong-Bo has warned it will not happen again when the two meet again Sunday in their final World Cup warmups.

The World Cup co-hosts are growing in confidence after beating Scotland 4-1 last week and fighting back for a 1-1 draw against England on Tuesday.

Coach Guus Hiddink says his insistence on finding tougher opposition to prepare for the World Cup is paying off.

But for the moment, Korean minds are on the match with the defending world champions who were beaten by Belgium.

"We were routed by France at the

Cup Corner

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after Coradino visited the camp.

The two sides meet in the World Cup first phase on June 3rd at Sapporo, Japan. Croatia and Mexico are the two other nations in the group.

Coradino praised Ecuador, who came second in the ten-team South American qualifying group, after his 'spying' mission.

"Giovanni Trapattoni (Italy's coach) has great respect for Ecuador. He's quite worried by their game because of both the individual skills and their collective play," said Coradino.

"They are a very physical side and their speed seems to be their most lethal weapon," he added.

Ecuador have beaten Turkey, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Italian club side AC Milan in World Cup warm-up matches.

Keane heads

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were in one of the less difficult groups, but now without Roy it is going to be much harder," Crerand said.

Ireland face Germany, Saudi Arabia and Cameroon in Group E.

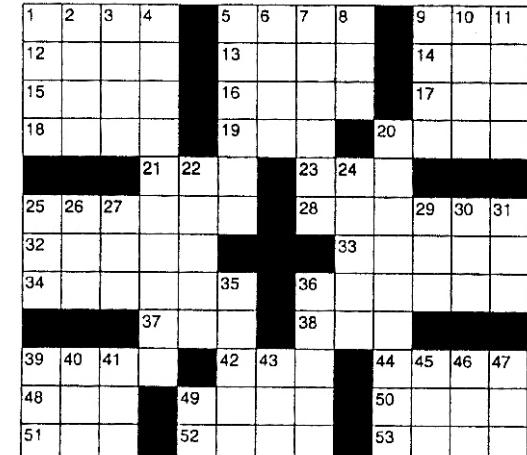
What to watch

FROM PAGE 13

Repeat at 12:30 pm
West Indies vs India
Fifth Test, Day Five
Repeat at 2:30 pm
World Cup Soccer Mix
Repeat at 8:30 pm

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 33 Emulate 52 Leak 9 Dutch 55 Hyper-
1 Cabbage Katarina slowly 10 colonist
recipe Witt 53 ventilate 11 Oratorio
5 Waxed 34 Spineless 54 Once
9 Nasty 35 Simmered 37 Sleep inits. 55 Views
12 Head 36 around 38 That girl 56 Means
along the 37 Soak up 39 Justifica-
runway 38 some rays tion
13 Beatles' 42 Tiger 40 Woods' 41 Gobel
meter- 42 Woods' 44 Office 41 Gobel
maid 43 Free 42 Role for 42 Part
14 Raw Red 44 Lancer 43 Angolina
rock 45 Illustra- 45 Pivot
15 the 46 tions 46 Line
Red 47 50 Exchange
16 Sore 48 51 Do the
17 Aachen 49 Hulabaloos 51 Right 6 Affluent
article 50 Exchange 52 Crop 7 Morals
18 Halloween cover 50 Premium 53 Vineyard 8 Method
19 Upsilon follower 51 Do the 54 Creations
20 Cafeteria Thing" 52 Premium 55 Crop
item 53 Right 6 Affluent
21 Ram's ma'am 54 Creations 55 Vineyard
23 Letter Solution time: 28 mins.
after 19. 55 Crop
Across 56 Affluent
25 Football 56 Creations
refs, 57 Vineyard
jocularly 58 Crop
28 Re pelvic 59 Affluent
bones 60 Crop
32 States with 61 Crop
certainty 62 Crop



CRYPTOQUIP

O U Z P Y Z A A R N Q Y V R F D
P D T Q D F O S P D N A N Z S N Z P U D F .

O V Z B D P R A Z F V O R P

F U D P Y F T V Z Y F R D B D N .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHY AM I ALWAYS
WEARING SHORT-SLEEVE SHIRTS? I BELIEVE IN
THE RIGHT TO BARE ARMS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals F

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.

The mushroom menace!



REUTERS, Tokyo

Irish Times made his position untenable.

"Two days ago Roy said he wanted to go, then he said he wanted to come back, we thought the issue was resolved but he pushed the boat out a little too strong both for the players and the manager."

"Roy is an experienced professional and deals with press every day of his life. Messages sent out by Roy have led to these circumstances," Delaney said.

"We have provided all the financial resources to give the team the best preparation and tried to ensure there was harmony in the camp."

"Unfortunately the remarks Roy made in the last 24 hours have led to these circumstances."

"Asked whether it would be possible to call up a player to replace Keane in the squad, Delaney added: "We will seek a dispensation from FIFA but it's most unlikely we will be able to do that."

"As for if Keane will ever play for the Republic again, Delaney added: "It's up to Roy Keane what he's going to do about his international career and I'm sure Mick has his own views."p

The decision of the manager in this matter is fully supported by the Association," the statement added.

At a press conference here Thursday, FAI honorary treasurer John Delaney said every effort had been made to accommodate Keane, who walked out of Ireland's squad on Tuesday only to back down hours later.

Delaney said Keane's stinging criticism of the Irish World Cup preparations in an interview with the

With nine matches arriving in venues around Japan before the ban takes effect, some vendors say turning their remaining inventories into cash should be a piece of cake.

"We'll get a lot of foreigners in here," said a sales assistant at Freak Brothers, a head shop in Tokyo's Roppongi nightspot.

"Stocks are getting low, but we're not putting up the price."

Roppongi's neon-bathed jungle of hostess clubs, brothels, sports bars and other watering holes is expected to act as a magnet for the hundreds of thousands of fans heading to the industrialised world.

"We get a lot of foreign customers anyway so I think we'll sell to soccer supporters," said the branch manager of Psychedelic Garden, a basement shop in Tokyo's Nishi-Shinjuku district.

Many visitors will no doubt be drawn to the psychedelic interiors of head shops such as Freak Brothers, which along with magic mushrooms and Peyote cacti, offer a range of pipes, bongs and whacky T-shirts.

Police said magic mushrooms were low on their list of possible headaches.

"I can't say people won't buy them and get high, but we're not too worried," said an official at Azabu Police Station in Roppongi.

"Most people who come to Roppongi will be tourists, not hooligans. Alcohol is more of a worry."

In a society not known for recreational drug use, Japan's laxity over magic mushrooms has been the exception to the rule.

Drug control is so strict that even some over-the-counter cough medicines are routinely seized by customs officers because of the stimulants they contain.

Japan's most high-profile drug bust was the 1980 arrest of former Beatle Paul McCartney at Tokyo International Airport for possession of 219 grams (7.7 ounces) or marijuana.

He was held in jail for nine days before being deported. If convicted, he could have faced up to seven years in prison.



PHOTO: INTERNET
THE PLAYERS' PRESIDENT: Russian President Vladimir Putin (Bent knee C) poses with the Russian World Cup Football squad at their base near Moscow on May 23.

Putin's best wishes



INTERNET, Moscow

he cherishes meeting with sportsmen who are entrusted to defend the country's honour.

Addressing the hockey players, the president said that the country supports hockey players from the bottom of its heart. Putin added that in different times many high-class sportsmen have played in hockey teams but failed to play as a united collective. But in the World Championship and Olympic Games Russians have succeeded in demonstrating team spirit, patriotism, strong will and have reached positive results.

The president also mentioned that he knew the reluctance of football players to meet the president together with hockey players because the latter have demonstrated good results, thus begetting unrealistically high expectations.

In their turn, Russian sports

leaders wished the soccer national team successes in the 2002 World Cup. Russian State Sports Committee Chairman Vyacheslav Fetisov said that the entire nation will follow Russia's first 2002 World Cup game on June 5.

Olympic Committee Chairman Leonid Tyagachev mentioned that it is big honour when the president comes to see off a team for the World Cup.

Russian hockey national team head coach Boris Mikhaylov thanked Vladimir Putin for supporting the team in the World Championship.

Russian soccer national team head coach Oleg Romantsev said that they will do their best to be greeted with congratulations after returning from the Far East.

Senegal pip Ecuador



INTERNET, Tottori, Japan

commentators said: "We must play the weaker countries, then we will win and can have a lot of confidence in the World Cup." But he added: "The experience was not good."

The coach said "there is no guarantee of good results in the group matches, but it does mean we are coping with the reality of international football."

South Korea's other Group D opponents are Portugal and the United States, but they have never won a World Cup match in five previous finals.

"I think the image of Korean football needed a little bit of a boost regarding the previous World Cups."

France arrive in South Korea on Saturday for the final days' preparation before starting the defence of the World Cup they won with a dramatic 3-0 win over Brazil four years ago.

Five players are carrying minor knocks but former world player of the year Zinedine Zidane is now with the squad.

Thierry Henry has injured ligaments in his right knee but France have stressed there is no doubt that he will play in the World Cup.

The other players with knocks are midfielder Alain Boghossian (ankle), David Trezeguet (knee), Philippe Christanval (knee) and Lilian Thuram (knee).

A major security operation is planned for the French team with 120 police to patrol their hotel base in eastern Seoul.

Star forward Elhadji Diouf, who turned the Ecuador defense dizzy all evening, sent a floating cross into Senegal's penalty area in the 69th minute which a disoriented Porozo knocked past his goalkeeper Jose Cevallos.

The goal came only a minute after Diouf could have scored himself, feigning an outside move before cutting back inside and curving a shot from 14 meters past Cevallos that bounced off the post.

"He can make the difference," said Senegal coach Bruno Metsu. "The team worked for him and it showed."

Senegal plays the biggest game

in the West African nation's history next week when it opens the World Cup against France. Denmark and Uruguay are also in Group A.

"This was a good test to see how far we stand," said Metsu. His defense, often wobbly over the past months, stuck together on Thursday, reducing goalie Tony Sylvia to a bystander for most of the match.

Ecuador plays Italy, Croatia and Mexico in Group G. Moving past the first round would be a major success for both countries.

Both teams fielded most of their top players but lacked determination and stamina as they strolled through the match before a crowd of 8,553 in a stadium surrounded by Tottori's rice paddies.

Every time Diouf touched the ball in action though, danger was imminent. He could well have earned a spot kick as early as the second minute when he appeared to be pulled down in the penalty area.

With deft flicks of the ball and one-touch skills, the Lens forward weighed heavily on Ecuador's defense throughout the game.

In the 25th minute, Pape Bouba Diop squandered Senegal's biggest scoring opportunity of the first half when he beat an offside trap but his angled shot went past the far post.

Ecuador almost scored in the 10th minute when Ivan Kaviedes was released on the left flank. Sylvia stopped his first attempt and Kaviedes' rebound bounced off the post.

"The competition is very difficult so we cannot announce it today," Bouzou said.

"All the referees chosen by FIFA are in top physical and mental form so it will be very difficult to choose for the match between France and Senegal."

Bouzou said the referee of the first match will have a particularly tough time because he must set the tone for the whole tournament and FIFA has ordered a clampdown on players who dive to get a penalty or an opponent sent off.

Some referees have called the play-actors a "cancer" in football.

"Whoever referees the France-Senegal match will have a tough task as he must officiate as FIFA wants for the whole tournament. He must set the example," said Bouzou.

Bouzou will become only the third referee to take part in three World Cups and as he is an established name there is pressure for him to get a top match.

The 42-year-old has been an international referee since 1987. He took charge of the third/fourth place match between Sweden and Bulgaria at the 1994 finals, the Brazil-Holland semi-final at the 1998 finals and the France-Japan final at the Confederations Cup last year.

They are scheduled to play Japan's second-division club Sagan Tosu in nearby Tosu later Friday before heading to the port of Kobe on Saturday for an friendly against England on Sunday.

Twelve players who have won the World Cup are also taking part -- 11 of the French side that won the trophy four years ago in Paris and Cafu of Brazil, who came on as substitute in the 1994 final.

This year's finals are being co-hosted by South Korea and Japan kick off on May 31 when France play Senegal in Seoul.

They launch their bid for Africa's first World Cup trophy on June 1 against Ireland in group E which also includes Germany and Saudi Arabia.

Deisler undergoes surgery

AFP, Munich

Crossed German international star Sebastian Deisler, his World Cup dreams shattered by a right knee injury, has undergone surgery in the United States, according to the doctor at new club Bayern Munich.

Deisler was operated on by Richard Steadman in Colorado, Bayern doctor Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wohlfahrt said Thursday.

Bayern, who have signed Deisler from Hertha Berlin, are set to issue a bulletin Friday on how the 22-year-old's operation went.

Deisler suffered the injury in last week's friendly win over Austria in Leverkusen.

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