

Ireland united against Keane



REUTERS, Niigata

Ireland's World Cup squad do not want disgraced former captain Roy Keane to return to their campaign, they said on Tuesday.

The players issued a statement to end any lingering hopes that Keane, who was sent home last week after a "slanging match" with manager Mick McCarthy at their training base in Saipan, might return.

"Regrettably, the manner of Roy's behaviour prior to his departure from Saipan and the comments attributed to him since have left the staff and players in no doubt that the interests of the squad are best served without Roy's presence," the statement said.

"The players bear no malice to Roy on a personal level and are looking forward to a successful World Cup campaign and the continued support of our loyal supporters both home and abroad."

The words will act as a huge vote of confidence for McCarthy, whose actions in dismissing Keane were criticised by some fans.

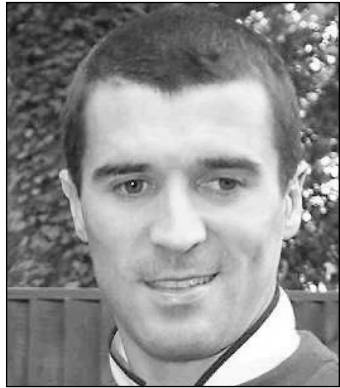
Earlier, after Keane told Irish television channel RTE on Monday that it was up to McCarthy to make the first moved towards reconciliation, McCarthy demanded a per-

sonal apology from the midfielder.

"I haven't had a phone call from Roy or heard from him at all," McCarthy was quoted as saying by Ireland spokesman Brendan McKenna.

Asked if he would take Keane back if the Manchester United player apologised for his outburst, McCarthy said: "That's just a hypothetical question."

He added: "This (issue) is very



ROY KEANE

frustrating...I don't like it being conducted through the media.

"I know Roy has been on television, but he hasn't spoken to me or any of the squad. Everyone knows where I am.

"I want the best for Ireland and for all the players."

McCarthy, whose side face Cameroon in their group E opener in Niigata on Saturday, is waiting to hear directly from the midfielder.

McCarthy said he had not seen the television interview, only that he

had heard "bits of it."

Reports say the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) were planning to fax a transcript of the interview to Ireland's team hotel at their training base in Izumo.

Keane, unhappy at his team's training facilities on the Pacific island of Saipan last week, launched a tirade of abuse at McCarthy in a meeting called to clear the air.

The 30-year-old is now back at home in England while behind-the-scenes moves take place in a desperate attempt to get him reinstated.

However, McCarthy has already insisted that he would consider his own position if Keane made a return to their World Cup squad.

Although he was unrepentant in the television interview, Keane said he understood that McCarthy had little choice but to send him home.

He also added that it would still mean a lot to him to represent his country at this year's finals in South Korea and Japan, which begin on Friday.

Another of Ireland's senior players, Niall Quinn, wrote in a column for the Guardian newspaper on Tuesday: "Roy's tirade of abuse last Thursday was a step too far...once it had finished and Roy had left the room I was the first person to speak.

"I asked if the situation was retrievable but even the greatest optimist on the planet would have known it wasn't. We the players knew that we had to back Mick McCarthy 100 percent and that's what we're doing."

Sven supports No. 10 ruling

AFP, Tsuna

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson has backed FIFA's decision to ban Argentina from retiring Diego Maradona's number 10 shirt as a tribute to the country's greatest ever player.

Eriksson said he could understand the logic behind FIFA's decision, which has angered some of the current Argentine squad, and insisted that Maradona did not need the gesture to preserve his legacy.

"Maybe FIFA thinks in the long term," he said. "If you do that, many countries have their big, big heroes, and it will end up that they cannot use many numbers between one to 23.

"I don't think it is that difficult a decision. Maradona will always be Maradona and no-one can take away what he has done."

Playmaker Ariel Ortega will wear the number 10 shirt for Argentina in the tournament as a result of FIFA's decision.

Maradona is to be in South Korea for the World Cup as a commentator but has been refused access to Japan because of his previous convictions for drug use.

Caniggia knows it

AP, Naraha

Argentine forward Claudio Caniggia, struggling to shake off a knee injury, acknowledged Tuesday that he is almost certain to miss Sunday's Group F game against Nigeria.

"Unfortunately I've suffered a setback," he said while watching Argentina play two friendlies against Japanese club sides. He added that it would be "very difficult" to be available for selection by the weekend.

Caniggia, 35, injured his knee playing for Glasgow Rangers in the Scottish Cup final in May. Initially, doctors feared he would miss the World Cup finals.

Coach Marcelo Bielsa played Caniggia in Argentina's final warmup games and it looked as though he had forced his way into the team after an absence of six years. But he suffered a reaction during a training session on Saturday, and has been sidelined ever since.

His right-wing position is now most likely to be filled by Ariel Ortega.

That's price

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Watanabe, flipping through a soccer-ball shaped notepad to show off the autographs she got, said Alessandro Del Piero of Juventus was her favorite Italian player.

Asked why, she said: "The way he plays." Then, after a pause and a giggle, added, "Of course it's his looks too."

Locals fans have been disappointed at the Italian team's reclusiveness, especially after miscommunication with city officials forced the cancellation of a practice session that was to have been open to the public.

But a few players visited a school for the handicapped Monday, and the Italian soccer federation sent a delegation Tuesday to coach local kids in efforts that could smooth over hurt feelings.

Scolari's playmaker

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two months, although Rivaldo has guaranteed he will be ready to start against Turkey.

"I feel recovered," he said Tuesday. "If the coach calls me now I can play."

Klebersom, a mobile midfielder with a good outside shot, hasn't repeated the strong performances that earned him a spot on the cup team.

Klebersom isn't Scolari's first choice for the defensive midfield position previously held by Gerson, Alcao and Dunga. The original starter was Gilberto Silva, another up novice, now on the bench.

On Tuesday, Brazil practiced with Juninho Paulista in the slot, and he team gauled in quickness, quality and offense. The big question is whether the diminutive Juninho can play the defense equired of the position, or whether Scolari will keep him as a late-game option.

If Scolari opts for a more naturally defensive midfield, he could go with veteran Vampeta in the position. A last-minute call-up, the Corinthians midfielder has the passing skills and the versatility to adapt to the task.

Still, at the end of practice, Scolari moved Rivaldo to the eerve team and gave the starting spot to Denilson, one of the standouts of Brazil's recent games.

Scolari has admitted he is torn between giving Denilson a starting spot and using him coming off the bench. Rivaldo's slot would be perfect for Denilson, and the Betis striker even plays a little defense -- one of Rivaldo's shortcomings.

For now, Scolari isn't saying. "I have to test variations," he said. "When I need to change the team, they have to be ready."

Hierro calls for Real spirit



AP, Ulsan

Winning cups almost comes natural to Fernando Hierro playing with legendary soccer club Real Madrid. But this, his fourth World Cup, may be his last opportunity to win even one with the Spanish international side.

Fresh off winning a record ninth European Champions League cup for Madrid last month, Hierro, 34, believes his club experience and that of his teammates will help Spain finally snap its negative run in international tournaments.

"We're coming on a high after winning the European cup," he said Tuesday. "We've all come determined to do something great here. We've won something very important for our club, the ninth cup... this feat and the high we've come on make us much more determined and better prepared for the World Cup."

Spain boasts four other Real Madrid stars besides Hierro, including the team's first keeper, Iker Casillas, and star forward Raul Gonzalez.

Hierro also believes that this Spanish side will benefit from the experience of players from other Spanish teams that have been leaving their mark in Europe in recent years.

"Spanish football in the past four years, with clubs like Barcelona,

Madrid, Deportivo and Valencia, has been at the top of European competition. This should help us take on the World Cup with more experience."

Spain, playing its 11th World Cup, will be battling to throw off its reputation as an underachiever. Its initial aim is to get past the hurdle of the quarterfinals, something it hasn't done for 50 years. The only trophy it



FERNANDO HIERRO

has ever won was the 1964 European Championship.

Hierro feels this time is different. "This is a team that wants to win, that has a lot of hopes that once and for all it will be able to do something in the World Cup finals."

Another problem plaguing Spain for a half century is its inability to win its first game in international tournaments.

Spain takes on Slovenia in its inaugural match on Sunday. It then plays Paraguay and South Africa.

"We have a dream of changing that first game which historically has never gone well for us," said Hierro, who despite being a defender is the Spain's leading scorer with 27 goals in 85 games.

"It's a key issue in a group with so few teams. It calms things down going into the second and third games. We're optimistic we can win the first game. We have to play it as if it were the only match, to win it no matter what."

Hierro has painful memories of the last World Cup when after twice taking the lead against Nigeria in its opening match, the side slumped in the final quarter and went from leading 2-1 to lose 3-2. It was eventually eliminated after the first round.

"You always think back over things, but it's in the past. You can't resolve that now," said Hierro. "Now, we just want the competition to start as soon as possible."

But neither does Hierro think Sunday's match against Slovenia will be a piece of cake. The two sides met in Euro 2000 when Spain had to fight bitterly for a 2-1 win.

"They're like us, they practically haven't changed since Euro 2002 and are with the same coach," he said. "That game we won 2-1 but there's no comparison. This time it's a case of the first game and who is superior."

"Slovenia is a rival with the experience of a European championship and now it's in a World Cup, which shows it must be doing good work... We're going to encounter a difficult team."

Old man Heintze



AP, Namhae, South Korea

Denmark captain Jan Heintze may be the ripe old age of 38 but he is still the hardest working Dane at the squad's training ground.

"I have to tell him to take a break sometimes," says coach Morten Olsen, who was Denmark captain when Heintze made his debut 15 years ago.

Heintze will be the oldest player in the 2002 World Cup, two weeks older than Russian keeper Stanislav Cherchessov and a month more than England's David Seaman -- another goalie.

The player, a speedy left back who tackles hard but plays with poise, admits he sometimes forgets how old he is.

"I don't feel my age," Heintze says, dripping with sweat after Denmark's 2-1 win over Tunisia Sunday. "I'm not having problems keeping up with the younger guys and I even feel I have enough energy left to maybe pass on a little of what I have learned through the years."

For Olsen, Heintze's contribution to the team goes well beyond his ample experience. The coach, who also kept his career going into his late thirties, says his captain is pivotal to the team.

Blank Argentina

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Cavallero's clearance and the rebound skimmed the Argentine bar.

Near the end, Cavallero had to make a diving save to push out a volley from Asari and was beaten when Brazilian Guimaraes headed just over his bar minutes later.

Crespo came close with two chances.

Bielsa exhorted his players several times from the touchline to refrain from protesting against refereeing decisions.

"Keep calm," he shouted. "Don't complain, come on, quiet, get on with the game, don't worry about those things."

Batistuta, vying with Crespo for the central striker's role in Bielsa's

Swedes' day out

AP, Miyazaki City

The Swedish World Cup squad had its first day off on Tuesday with some players opting for a round of golf and others for a fishing trip in the Pacific Ocean off the southern Japanese island of Kyushu.

Henrik Larsson, the Celtic star who loves playing links golf in Scotland, and a half-dozen other players went golfing at the swank Aoshima Country Club in the morning. The beautiful course overlooks the Pacific.

Larsson is one of the team's best golfers and is scheduled to play a celebrity tournament in Sweden after the World Cup with former U.S. President Bill Clinton, ice hockey star Peter Forsberg of NHL champion Colorado Avalanche, former alpine ski greets Ingmar Stenmark, Alberto Tomba and Franz Klammer and other athletes.

Among those who went fishing Tuesday were Fredrik Ljungberg, Arsenal's goalscoring hero who led the Gunners to a Premier League and FA Cup double this season.

The Swedes are not expected to get a full day off for activities like this during the remainder of the World Cup. On Wednesday, the team has scheduled a closed practice at Rugby Field, its training base in Miyazaki City.

The opening Group F match for Sweden is Sunday against England -- coached by popular Swede Sven-Goran Eriksson -- at Saitama, outside Tokyo.

Cops' first catch!

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south of Seoul, where the game was held.

After smuggling one fan inside, Kim came out with both credentials and then took another inside, the official said on condition of anonymity.

Kim allegedly bought the credentials from a South Korean couple for 60,000 won (dlsr 46) in front of the stadium before Sunday's match, the official said. Police were also looking for the couple.

It was not immediately known whether Kim smuggled more fans into the stadium. Kim had 2 million won (dlsr 1,540) on him at the time of arrest, the official said.

The "STAFF A" credentials, which allows access to all parts of the stadium except the VIP zone, were issued by the Korea Football Association to one of its marketing agencies, the official said. Police withheld the name of the agency.

The credentials, which cannot be sold or lent, did not contain photographs, the official said.

Security is a major concern for World Cup co-hosts South Korea and Japan following the Sept. 11 terror attacks in the United States. The co-hosts evenly split 64 matches of the May 31-June 30 tournament.

"No such thing can happen during the World Cup. World Cup credentials, called accreditation cards, have photographs, barcodes and other sophisticated security measures," said Koh Young-sung, a spokesman for the security office at South Korea's World Cup Organizing Committee.

The latest arrest followed an incident in which South Korean organizers mistakenly issued a World Cup accreditation card to an American man on May 16, confusing him with a reporter for Britain's Sunday Mirror.

Fearing a possible terrorism plot, authorities hunted down the American who they suspected of posing as Paul Michael Smith to obtain the accreditation allowing access to all venues of the World Cup.

Police confirmed Monday that officials at the main press center in Seoul mistakenly issued the card to the American, Michael Paul Smith, because of similarities in the names.

Italians

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months over the fact that most players keep silent when their nation's song is played before matches. Gattuso swore left and right Tuesday that his team does know the words, but is sick of the whole issue.

"We sing the anthem every day, even two or three times a day when we're on the team bus," he said at the team's World Cup training camp. "But on the field we've decided not to sing, out of pride."

"It's time to put this behind us. It's time to give us a little love," the gritty AC Milan player said.

In fact, many Italians aren't crazy about the anthem, which some describe as "brutto" -- "ugly." And lots aren't sure of all the rousing words, which call on Italians to unite, ending with the line: "We are ready for death/Italy calls/Yes!"

Italy may call, but the team won't answer.

"On the field, pride will take over after all this pressure and publicity," Gattuso said.

"We've decided it, and so it will be."

British thugs

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Airlines flight and sent back to Istanbul, an immigration official said.

Japanese police have said there will be zero tolerance for troublemakers and have been in close touch with overseas authorities to prevent them from entering the country.

On Monday, a team of hooligan-spootters from the British police arrived to advise the Japanese police on tactics for dealing with fans and spotting potential troublemakers.

The World Cup kicks off in co-host South Korea on Friday and runs until the final in the Japanese city of Yokohama on June 30.

CUP CORNER

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complete the full 90 minutes of England's World Cup opener against Sweden.

They are offering odds of 1/3 that he will start and stay on the pitch until the final whistle. He is 9/4 to start but not go the full distance.

A red card, however, for the England captain is an outside bet at 50/1. He is quoted at 100/30 to score and 5/1 to be booked.

Beckham was sent off in England's last World Cup finals match at France '98 after kicking out at Diego Simeone after the Argentinian fouled him. The match finished 2-2 but the South Americans went through to the quarter-finals on penalties.

England are favoured to win the game on June 2 at 11/10 with the draw 9/5 and Sweden 12/5.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

41 Bender

43 Campus housing

44 Actress

46 Tell target

50 "At the ... last gleaming"

55 Jack-in-the-box part

56 Test the waters

57 Football shutout

58 Mex. neighbor

59 Stench

60 Tackle box item

61 Whale group

DOWN

1 Antenna type

2 Jessye Norman solo

3 Long skirt

4 llamas' kin

5 Oklahoma city

6 Chaps

7 Picks up the tab

8 Victor's wreath

9 Pompous sort

10 The woman

11 Under-stand

17 Tin Man's need

19 Tease

22 Scarlett's saga, for short

23 When to turn right, maybe

25 Chemistry set item

26 Advantags

27 Crucifix

28 Anything but that!

29 Beatles movie

30 Basin

31 London district

35 Belle's shade

38 Casino staffer

40 Mischievous

42 Samuel's teacher

45 Mr. Stravinsky

47 Advise

48 Actress Bonet

49 Dutch cheese

50 Seesaw quorum

51 Bankroll

52 "What can -- for you?"

53 Weed whacker

54 Piouette

Solution time: 25 mins.

AMES FANS FOB
ROTH IHOP AMI
FACECLOTH CAB
ARMY MEDS
TIAFFY TIO PRATE
REAS TIO PRATE
CREAMINUS LIT
PRESIDES TUNA
FINE MEETS
BLAND AJAX
RIOC FACEGARDS
ANT UNITINORA
YES LIDS STYX

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49

50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61

CRYPTOQUIP

H Q H D N I S I K B E E H C G I

Q B S P M B H E F K H U D B

U I D G P S F M U H D H E N B A G V

H D C I V H E U S A M D G I V ?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN YOU'RE OUT DRIVING LATE, YOU MAY VERY WELL BE BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: U equals G

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.