

Ronaldo's present

FROM PAGE 13
The star-studded European champions are currently celebrating their 100th anniversary and the result banishes the memory of their shock defeat two years ago when they came to Tokyo as favourites and crashed to Boca Juniors of Argentina 2-1.

It was a third world club title for Real, following their victories in 1960 and 1998. The nine-time European champions were losers in 1966 to Penarol of Uruguay 2-0 in the other appearance. "It was sort of pending for Real to win the Inter-Continental Cup, and further more, it was a special year for the club as this is the 100th anniversary, so I'm really happy about it," said Real coach Vicente Del Bosque.

"I'm glad that we were able to prove our team is better than them." Meanwhile, Figó said: "Ronaldo could have scored a few more goals, but the most important thing was the team won, so I'm happy about it."

Three-time Copa Libertadores winners Olimpia, who also had hoped to celebrate the club's 100th anniversary with a win here, failed to regain the world title they won in 1979.

Olimpia coach Nery Alberto Pumpido said: "We had three chances to score in the first half and we couldn't take them. That's why we were beaten."

"Of course, I was disappointed because we lost. But I think we could show Olimpia's game as representatives of Paraguay against the dream team, the number one team in the world who are full of star players."

SQUADS

Real Madrid: Iker Casillas, Fernando Ruiz Hierro (capt), Roberto Carlos, Ivan Helguera, Michel Salgado Fernandez, Zinedine Zidane (Santiago Hernan Solari 86), Luis Figó, Claude Makelele, Esteban Matias Cambiasso (Francisco Pavon 89), Ronaldo (Jose Maria Gutierrez 82), Raul Gonzalez
Olimpia: Ricardo Javier Tavarelli, Juan Ramon Jara, Nelson Fabian Zelaya, Nestor Daniel Isasi, Julio Cesar Caceres, Pedro Juan Benitez, Fernando Gaston Cordoba (Richard Martin Baez 66), Julio Cesar Enciso (capt), Sergio Daniel Orteman, Miguel Angel Benitez (Mauro Caballero 81), Hernan Rodrigo Lopez

Don't be a cry-baby!

Football

AFP, London

Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier has told Jerzy Dudek to "be strong" following the goalkeeper's error that gifted Manchester United a goal in their 2-1 league win on Sunday.

Dudek's howler saw him let a routine backheader from Jamie Carragher go straight through his legs, allowing United striker Diego Forlan a simple tap in from close range.

Houllier admitted the Poland international broke down and wept in the dressing room afterwards.

"He was very tearful after the game. But I will tell him not to think about it and to get on with things because we will help him," the Frenchman explained.

England Under 21 international Chris Kirkland will be between the

posts Wednesday for Liverpool's League Cup match against Ipswich at Anfield.

Houllier has insisted it was always his intention to rest Dudek for this match but Kirkland now has a chance to cement his place in the team for Saturday's Premiership match away to Charlton.

But Houllier, not wanting to add to the pressure on Dudek, said: "The game is about mistakes and sometimes these things happen. Nobody will blame him."

"We finished second last season and that was partly down to his work and talent."

And Houllier said Dudek's recent troubles, which included letting in a long range shot against Fulham, came with his position.

"It is something that all goalkeepers go through from time to time, but he has got to live with that and be strong to overcome it."

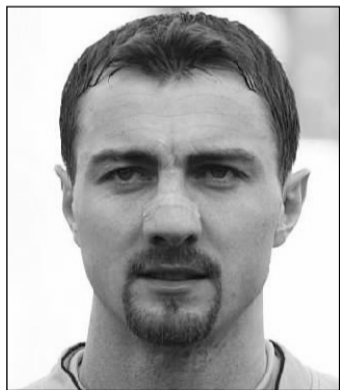
"Mistakes cost games and they have cost us a lot of points lately, but we will get out of that together."

"We need a good win now because confidence comes from winning games and keeping clean sheets."

"It was a real setback for Jerzy and the team against United."

"But we are not going to start pointing at him. We missed passes, we missed chances, we didn't play particularly well, it's not just him."

"We had good and bad spells during the game, but it's just disappointing that it came on the back of a really good midweek result in Europe (against Vitesse Arnhem in the UEFA Cup) and we felt we had turned the corner."



JERZY DUDEK

League One preview Time running out for Fernandez

Football

AFP, Paris

Under-fire Paris Saint Germain coach Luis Fernandez could find himself on the scrapheap on Wednesday if his misfiring team lose to defending champions Lyon.

Fernandez, who celebrated two years in the Parc de Princes hotseat on Tuesday, is fighting for his job after the weekend's 3-1 defeat at Monaco left them in tenth place, seven points behind the leaders Lyon.

Despite not having won a league match since October 26 and claiming just one point in five matches, Fernandez has cut a defiant figure in the lead up to the match, even attracting the dreaded vote of confidence from president Laurent Perpere.

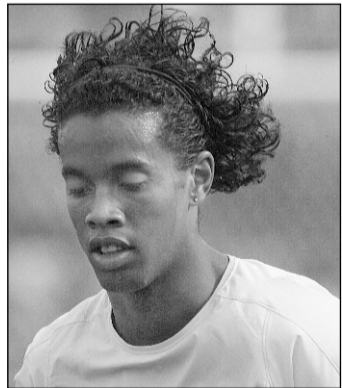
"I don't want to relieve Luis Fernandez of his duties, that's not the issue at the moment," the club supremo said on Sunday.

However, on Tuesday, French sports newspaper L'Equipe claimed that the club has already opened negotiations with veteran Argentine coach Carlos Bianchi to take over the reins in a deal worth 150,000 euros a month.

Bianchi is a former PSG player having turned out for the club from 1977-1979 and has experience of coaching in the country having been in charge at Reims and Nice.

Fernandez said on Tuesday that he wants his team to prove that they can perform at the highest level.

"We will be facing 11 lions in the arena. I want to have 11 warriors out on the pitch," said the coach whose relations with Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho are said to be strained. Worryingly for him, his predecessor



RONALDINHO

Philippe Bergeroo also lost the confidence of some of his players and a 5-1 defeat at the hands of Sedan sparked his departure in 2000.

"I am not at all worried. The players, coaches and club officials are all in the same boat."

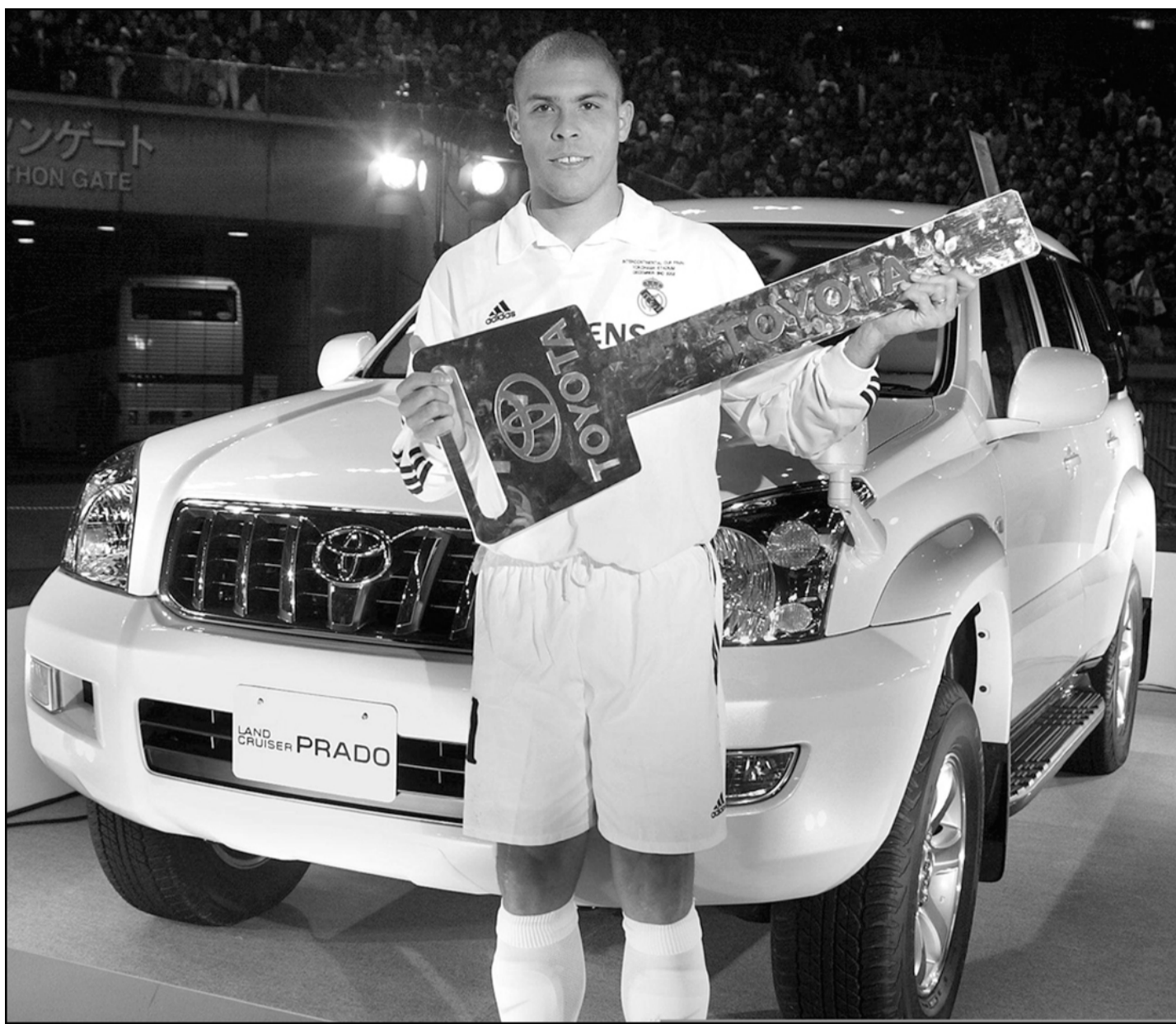
"I am currently the coach of PSG and I'm proud of that. The sack is for coaches who lose. And with the media attention focused on Paris, you live that pressure," said Fernandez after the defeat in Monaco.

Fourth-placed Marseille take on Sochaux in fifth and welcome back influential defender Sebastien Perez who has been out since the start of the season.

Meanwhile, Guingamp, who are a surprising third face Nantes.

FIXTURES

Wednesday: PSG v Lyon, Marseille v Sochaux, Bastia v Sedan, Guingamp v Nantes, Lille v Auxerre, Strasbourg v Rennes, Troyes v Lens, Montpellier v Monaco, Le Havre - Bordeaux



ANOTHER ONE FOR THE SHOWCASE! Real Madrid Superstar Ronaldo poses with the Most Valuable Player prize presented by Toyota Motors after world club championship victory at Yokohama International Stadium yesterday.

Falling in love with Forlan!

Football

INTERNET, Manchester

Sir Alex Ferguson is backing Diego Forlan to keep on laughing in the faces of his critics.

The Uruguayan striker was the butt of cruel jokes not so long ago - but is providing his own killer punchlines now.

And, after his double in Sunday's 2-1 win over Liverpool, Ferguson believes Forlan is in the right form to produce another cracker against Arsenal this weekend.

The United boss insisted: "There was never any question marks over him for me. The seeds of what he could do were always there."

"The two goals against Liverpool are sure to help him but, to be fair, he never let his head go down while he wasn't scoring."

"We knew it was going to come, we could see it in training. He has two quick feet and has that great quality of always wanting to score. He'll take shots from everywhere."

Fergie splashed out £7.5million to get Forlan, 23, from Independiente back in January.

The Uruguayan managed just ONE goal in his first 34 appearances for the Reds, - a last-minute penalty in the 5-2 Champions League victory over Maccabi Haifa.

He earned himself the nickname Diego Forlori as chances went begging. But after a burst of four Premiership goals in just over a month, he looks more like the player Fergie put so much faith in.

Forlan earned United a point in a 1-1 draw against Aston Villa in late October, followed that up with a stunning late winner against Southampton and now two at Anfield.

Ferguson said: "He's shown he can score all sorts of goals. It was a tremendous shot against Southampton."

"Against Liverpool, his first might

have been a gift but he still had to be there to take the chance quickly. And he hit the second really well."

Ferguson insists that he is not surprised by how long it has taken for the South American to settle into life in the Premiership.

The United boss added: "He was only 22 and it does take time to adjust coming from South America to English football."

"But he has adjusted well. He speaks the language and is very

been right behind the lad - as have the rest of the players."

Forlan was mobbed by his teammates at Anfield as they celebrated a victory that puts them right back in the Premiership title race - six points behind the Gunners ahead of Saturday's Old Trafford showdown.

Defender Mickael Silvestre revealed: "Gary Neville has told Diego he is a legend now!"

"We are really pleased for him. He works really hard."

Wenger's men will have their feet up after their third-round defeat by Sunderland.

He said: "Arsenal can have a comfortable week off while we will have a real competitive match."

"But I see this as a chance to keep the momentum going."

"The Arsenal game will look after itself because there is no question that it is a big game."

"But we first have to turn our attention to Burnley because I do



DIEGO FORLAN

popular as well."

Indeed the Old Trafford faithful stuck by Forlan through his bad patch and Ferguson believes there is a good reason for that.

He said: "The supporters here have always recognised and appreciated a trier. They have always

England right-back Neville had four stitches in a gashed foot on Sunday and misses tonight's Worthington Cup fourth-round trip to First Division Burnley.

But Fergie revealed he will not put out a weakened team at Turf Moor - even though Arsene

not want any embarrassment there.

"A year ago I might have made a few more changes, but with all the injuries I have at the moment I don't think I will be able to."

Giggs MU's for life

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United midfielder Ryan Giggs has said he would rather give up playing football altogether than leave Old Trafford for another club.

Reports last week suggested Inter Milan were ready to table a multi-million pound bid for the Wales star when the transfer window opens again in January.

However, the 29-year-old - who has been an integral part of Alex Ferguson's side for more than 10 years - maintains he has no intention of leaving Manchester.

"I love playing for United," he said. "I am a United supporter, it's as simple as that."

"I am settled here and I have no ambitions to move away. This is one of the biggest clubs in the world and I can fulfil any dreams I have here."

"The day I don't enjoy playing for United is the day I give up football."

Giggs is quoted by the Daily Mail as claiming: "Why should I want to play for another club?"

"I have enjoyed so much success here and I believe that it will continue."

Newcastle won't appeal

Football

AFP, London

Newcastle United announced on Monday they had decided not to appeal against the two-match UEFA Champions League suspension imposed on their captain Alan Shearer.

The ban was imposed following a clash with Inter Milan defender Fabio Cannavaro in Newcastle's 4-1 home defeat last week.

Former England international Shearer was accused of elbowing the Italian, and UEFA said officials had made their decision after taking "into account provocation in the form of shirt-pulling leading up to the incident."

The English Premiership club said they would consider an appeal, but have now decided to accept the ban and said Shearer could be punished by the club.

United Chairman Freddy

Shepherd said on the club's website: "Following careful consideration and in full agreement with the player and manager, the club have decided not to appeal against Alan Shearer's two-match ban from UEFA Champions League matches."

"If any disciplinary action is taken, this will be dealt with privately between the club and player."

Shearer will miss the trip to Barcelona on December 10, as well as the away game against Bayer Leverkusen on February 18, meaning Newcastle manager Bobby Robson faces the prospect of starting with the inexperienced strike partnership of Shola Ameobi and Lomano LuaLua.

Meanwhile Craig Bellamy, who is automatically suspended for the game against Barcelona in the Nou Camp following his sending-off in the Inter game, will be the subject of discussion at the next meeting of the UEFA Control and Disciplinary Body on December 17.

Lucio injury serious

REUTERS, Berlin

An injury to Brazilian World Cup defender Lucio has turned out to be more serious than first thought, his German club Bayer Leverkusen said.

Leverkusen doctor Thomas Pfeifer said that a scan of his injured left ankle had discovered a painful contusion as well as a haematoma. He said that he would not be able to determine how long Lucio would be out of action until the swelling from the haematoma was reduced.

On Saturday coach Klaus Toppmoeller said Lucio would need surgery on his foot and was expected to be sidelined until January, when the Bundesliga resumes after its traditional winter break.

The Leverkusen coach is already without four key players. Juan, Jens Nowotny, Zoltan Sebesen and Pascal Ojigwe all missed Saturday's 3-2 defeat by Hamburg SV that left last season's runners-up in 13th position.

Indefinite ban on Bosnich

Football

AFP, London

Chelsea's decision to suspend goalkeeper Mark Bosnich indefinitely following an alleged positive test for cocaine has been strongly criticised by England's Professional Footballers' Association (PFA).

Mick McGuire, deputy chief executive of the players' 'union', told Monday's edition of the London Evening Standard that Chelsea's action against the Australian amounted to a breach of contract.

In the standard contract given to all players in England is a clause stating that a club's maximum sanction is a fine of two weeks' wages or a 14-day ban.

McGuire said: "I can only suggest Chelsea feel it's dragged on a bit and wanted to leave it open-ended. But a club can't suspend a player for longer than 14 days. They should check the contract."

Bosnich, who tested positive for cocaine following a random drugs test earlier this month, has had his salary of 40,000 pounds (64,000 dollars) a week suspended indefinitely and with immediate effect.

He has not yet been found guilty of cocaine use -- something which depends on the results of his 'B'

urine sample. If it is also positive he faces a one-year worldwide ban from football.

Chelsea have so far refused to comment on the ban, saying it is an internal matter but McGuire added: "I have seen the letter to Mark. The club have suspended him for an indefinite period until they get the results of the second test."

"No sensible club would sack a player without a second test. Chelsea understand that would be entirely inappropriate."

Bosnich, now 30, was once rated as one of the top goalkeepers in the English Premiership, making his name at Aston Villa before joining United on a lucrative Bosman free transfer in June 1999.

But his career at Old Trafford, where he once played as a youngster, was blighted by injury and a high-profile bust-up with boss Alex Ferguson which contributed to him ending up as fourth-choice keeper at the club.

He was allowed to leave Old Trafford on a free transfer at the start of 2001 and landed a lucrative deal with Chelsea.

But a torn thigh muscle cost him his place in the first team and Carlo Cudicini has since established himself as the first choice while Bosnich has been seen more regularly at London nightspots than inside Premiership stadiums.

Premiership

Nothing working for Hammers

Football

AFP, London

West Ham fans staged angry protests after an injury-time winner from Southampton's Rory Delap allowed the club to lose control, allowing Southampton's Rory Delap a shot which James was able to block.

The West Ham keeper then spilled a powerful shot from Fabrice Fernandes but no Southampton player was on hand to poke the ball home.

In a match that started late because the visitors' coach had lost its way, Southampton started slowly and West Ham wasted two clear chances in the opening quarter of an hour.

An inspirational Paolo Di Canio lobbed a pass into the area towards Jermain Defoe, but his acrobatic volley flashed well wide.

Within moments, Trevor Sinclair glanced a completely free header wide.

Then, Ian Pearce burst into the area after Southampton lost the ball in midfield and was denied by Antti Niemi's spectacular one-handed stop.

Southampton's best chance of the first half came when James Beattie pulled away from his marker but headed a cross wide of James' post.

As the rain began to fall, the second half started dully until Joe Cole's low shot forced Niemi to drop neatly to his knees.

Defoe then broke down the right and though his powerful shot from a narrow angle was beaten away by Niemi, his teammates clearly believed he should have crossed the ball instead.

To the sound of a standing ovation, Di Canio was substituted with a quarter of an hour left to play and his teammates' concentration appeared to depart with him.

Confused Van Gaal

Football

REUTERS, Barcelona

Barcelona's fourth defeat of the Spanish league season at Real Sociedad on Sunday left coach Louis van Gaal expressing doubts about the quality of his players for the first time.

The Catalans have won all nine of their European games so far this season but their domestic form has been a different story, with their 2-1 reverse at Real Sociedad leaving them in 10th place, 10 points behind the table-topping Basques.

"I don't know if it's a question of quality," van Gaal mused in the wake of the defeat.

"In the past I've put the bad goals we've conceded down to bad luck but it could be to do with talent."

"I don't want to believe that there's a lack of quality in the team but when we make errors of this kind you start to think it could be a

possibility."

Sociedad's two goals were both scored by Darko Kovacevic and both were the product of defensive mistakes. The Yugoslav was left unmarked to head in the first and was later able to reach the ball for the second thanks to Fernando Navarro's slip.

"It can't go on," van Gaal warned. "We can't keep making the same mistakes."

"The situation is worrying but there are a lot of games still to be played."

Barcelona finished a thoroughly dispiriting game with nine players, after midfielders Thiago Motta and Marc Overmars were sent off, both, apparently, for comments made to the referee.

Van Gaal was left all but speechless by those two decisions, which dashed the side's hopes of staging a late comeback.

"Everyone saw what happened with the two red cards," he sighed. "There's no point even making a comment."