

PREVIEW: CROATIA v SWITZERLAND

Anything is possible



AFP, Lisbon

Croatia and Switzerland will be standing up for the small fry on Sunday when they meet in Leiria north of Lisbon in their opening Euro 2004 Group B match.

Given the eagerly awaited encounter between holders France and England the same day in Lisbon both the Swiss and the Croats will find themselves in the shadow of their more illustrious footballing cousins.

But both will also know that decisive results in both games would put the winner of their own clash at the Magalhães Pessoa stadium in a strong position to advance to the last eight.

The Croats came third at the 1998 World Cup but have struggled to live up to the reputation of that side and their coach, former Austria helmsman Otto Baric, dragged the side to the finals via the playoffs.

Live on ESPN at 9.55 pm.

PROBABLE TEAMS

**SWITZERLAND (4-3-1-2):** 1-Joerg Stiel; 2-Bernt Haas, 20-Patrick Mueller, 5-Murat Yakin, 3-Bruno Berner, 8-Raphael Wicky, 6-Johann Vogel, 18-Benjamin Huggel, 10-Hakan Yakini; 11-Stephane Chapuisat, 9-Alexander Frei  
**CROATIA (4-4-2):** 12-Tomislav Butina; 13-Dario Simic, 21-Robert Kovac, 3-Josip Simunic, 6-Boris Zivkovic; 19-Ivica Mornar, 10-Niko Kovac, 22-Nenad Bjelica, 7-Milan Rapacic; 9-Dado Prso, 11-Tomislav Sokota  
Referee: Lucilio Batista (Portugal)

"We respect our opponents, however, as they have played alongside each other for some time and are a cohesive group," said Baric, who Friday brushed aside worries about the absence through injury of goalkeeper Stipe Pletikosa, who tore a thigh muscle in training.

Second-choice shot-stopper Tomislav Butina replaces Pletikosa but Baric insisted: "Butina is an excellent goalkeeper. I have every confidence in his ability."

"I am feeling pretty relaxed

about things. I think we have done our homework."

Switzerland also have an injury worry and coach Jakob Kuhn is keeping his fingers crossed that midfielder anchorman Johann Vogel can recover in time from a thigh injury.

Another Swiss problem is their country's mix of languages -- something which could create a headache when swift instructions are barked in crowded penalty areas.

Defender Stephane Henchoz of Liverpool, noting the Swiss German, French, Italian and assorted dialects the squad speak said the issue was a source of some concern.

"It's a difficult thing to get used to and we do end up with the French-speaking players and the German-speaking players not mixing."

"It certainly doesn't help our chances."

Nonetheless, 61-year-old Kuhn says the Swiss believe they can spring an upset, even if their final warm-up saw them creep embarrassingly past minnows and neighbours Liechtenstein by the only goal last weekend.

Kuhn, nicknamed 'Kobi', says an attacking tandem of 34-year-old veteran Stephane Chapuisat, who played in the 1994 World Cup finals, and the highly rated Alexander Frei can steer them through the opening phase though Chapuisat has not scored since September 2002 in the national colours.

"I think the Liechtenstein business did us good though we are not creating enough chances or scoring enough goals," Kuhn admitted, though it was his decision not to include in-form Twente Enschede striker Blaise N'Kufo in the squad, selecting Johann Vonlanthen from the under-21 side instead.

"We are the outsiders - but that must spur us on," noted Kuhn, who arrived in Portugal with a huge shirt signed by thousands of Swiss fans in his luggage.

Both nations have one player suspended for Sunday, with Croatia missing Juventus defender Igor Tudor, while the Swiss will be without Grasshopper Zurich midfielder Ricardo Cabanas.

Switzerland's next match is against England on Thursday, when Croatia take on France.



Swiss defender Stephane Henchoz (L) and striker Johan Vonlanthen perform stretching exercises in Praia del Rey on June 11.

Everybody loves

tattooed and sporting some union jack shorts were enjoying a beer in the sunshine, perhaps the first of many.

China is not worried about hooliganism despite England supporters' trouble-making reputation.

"There will be no problems. They are great fans, very animated, very passionate. I hope lots come here," he said.

Tigers return

FROM PAGE 13 the game. I believe it was our best series."

The Bangladesh captain however admitted that the fragile top-order batting remained a cause of concern.

"This is an area we need to improve if we are to win games. The contribution from the lower order is a bonus for us but it is the top order that should deliver consistently" he added.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who accompanied the team on the tour, expressed his satisfaction despite the 1-0 defeat in Tests followed by a 3-0 whitewash in the one-dayers.

"The good thing is that the boys are now trying to win matches instead of just playing for pride. The fighting spirit in West Indies was tremendous, especially the way they fought in the first Test," said the former Bangladesh captain.

With their next assignment the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka next month, the chief selector said that he was thinking of a major change in the team.

"I never believed in chopping and changing rather I'm all for giving enough chances to a cricketer to prove his worth. A few might have played badly but I believe the team is not in a bad shape."

Italy's holy man



REUTERS, Lisbon

Italy coach Giovanni Trapattoni says dealing with the fragile feelings of his players makes his work seem closer to that of a priest than a football coach.

Trapattoni appears to have settled on his starting lineup for Monday's Group C opener against Denmark with the expected 11 taking part in Friday's training match against a local youth team.

As well as motivating those who are set to take the field, Trapattoni said he also had to think about the squad members who would not be playing.

"I am more of a priest than a coach, going to every room and talking to those who are playing and those who aren't. Today that sort of work is more important than 15 years ago," he told a news conference.

The deeply religious Trapattoni caused some controversy in Italy two years ago when he kept a bottle of holy water with him on the bench for every game.

But he conceded that he too was having trouble in making his selection choices given the impressive form in training of several of those not expected to make the team sheet.

"There are a lot of them giving me some difficulties in my choice by the way they are working, I'm thinking of (Massimo) Oddo, (Antonio) Cassano and (Gennaro) Gattuso," added Trapattoni.

Asked whether he felt he needed

to employ a psychologist to help his work with the team he said: "You need a psychologist-coach".

The Italy coach also laughed off talk of a rift between the team and the press following captain Fabio Cannavaro's scolding statement on Thursday when he criticised a "lack of respect" from the media.

"I hear the same sort of questions that you chaps provide when I go down to the bar for my coffee in the morning," said Trapattoni with a grin.



GIOVANNI TRAPATTONI

Italy's first team beat the youth side of Portuguese first division club Belenenses 5-0 in a one-hour work out with Christian Vieri scoring a hat-trick.

"We are ready, the lads are ready all we need to do now is to find the right stimulus for the match on Monday," he said.

Trapattoni was particularly pleased to see Vieri finding the net. "I was a bit worried about Vieri at the start (of the training camp),

he was a little bit out of sorts but you could see what sort of form he is in," said Trapattoni, who chose Argentine-born winger Mauro Camoranesi ahead of Stefano Fiore.

The second-string players also played for an hour in another game with third-choice keeper Angelo Peruzzi the only player missing the session.

Gaibandha TT

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Naheed Cotton Table Tennis tournament began at the Gaibandha Public Library Hall yesterday.

Eight matches were held on the inaugural day.

A total of 90 contestants from 20 clubs are taking part in the meet.

Australia wait

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Warne was scheduled to consult an English hand specialist on Saturday after which Cricket Australia said it would make a decision on his availability for the Tests against Sri Lanka.

Cricket Australia said that at this stage Warne has not been ruled out of the Tests but the injury was expected to take at least three weeks to heal.

The first Test against Sri Lanka starts in just under three weeks in Darwin on July 1.

Chief selector Trevor Hohns said it was too early to make a call on Warne.

"Shane phoned me overnight to inform me of the injury," Hohns said Saturday. "At this stage it's too early to determine whether he will or won't be available for the Top End tour."

"Cricket Australia medical staff need to talk to Shane and the medics at Hampshire to determine a course of action and the selectors will be guided by that advice."

If Warne was ruled out, Stuart MacGill, playing in England with Nottinghamshire, appears his most likely replacement.

Warne, the Hampshire captain, was struck on the hand by a delivery from former England Test fast bowler Darren Gough.

A spokesman for Cricket Australia said Warne was suffering a lot of pain on his follow through.

Just ask Kahn

REUTERS, Almanacil

Few believed Oliver Kahn when he predicted Germany could go a long way at the 2002 World Cup.

Now the Germany captain, who inspired the team to their surprise run to the final in Japan two years ago, is forecasting another German revival at Euro 2004.

"I have exactly the same feeling (as before the 2002 World Cup)," the Bayern Munich goalkeeper told reporters at the squad's training camp on the Algarve coast on Friday.

"I know people are sceptical about our chances but if we play as a unit and if every single player gives it his very best, everything is possible," he added.

History, Kahn said, could give Germany inspiration.

"A Germany team should never be afraid going into a tournament," he said.

"The past shows that we can get closely together, improve and be successful. That's exactly what happened in Japan and South Korea."

Like two years ago, Germany have failed to shine in the build-up to the tournament, with embarrassing recent defeats by Romania and Hungary.

Kahn himself has been through hard times since receiving FIFA's award for the best player at the 2002 World Cup.

Personal problems, including an affair with a barmaid while his wife was pregnant, and a few uncharacteristic blunders have opened up chinks in his armour.

Still an intimidating presence and the symbol of German efficiency, Kahn, who will turn 35 on Tuesday when the Germans play the Netherlands in their opening Group D game, believes he can rise to the occasion.

"I have worked very hard for this," he said. "Physically, I'm ready. Mentally, I think I am too but only matches will tell."

Kahn has upset his Bayern Munich bosses by saying he might consider leaving the club to try his luck abroad. German and British media reports have mentioned a possible move to Manchester United.

"Right now I want to fully concentrate on Euro 2004," he said on Friday. "We will talk about that later."

Germany coach Rudi Voeller said he fully trusted his captain.

"He is a lot more relaxed than a few months ago and I think that is because his private situation is less critical," Voeller said.

"I believe Oliver can be as important to us as he was two years ago."

EURO BAG



REUTERS, Faro

Spain coach Inaki Saez has set his side a tough task for the group stage at Euro 2004 -- to make certain of qualification in the first two games.

"I've said that what I really want is to have the place in the quarter-finals secured before we play Portugal," Saez told reporters on Friday.

"It would be useful for us to be able to rest some players and bring in others for some experience during the final match."

Iberian neighbours Spain and Portugal are strong favourites to reach the quarter-finals and the Spanish are hoping to make their Group game a friendly affair.

"It would be good if by the time the Portugal game comes along we're both all but there in the quarter-finals," said Raul, who is team mates with Portugal's Luis Figo at Real Madrid.

"For the moment, that's a long way away, though, and we just have to concentrate on the Russia game."

DESAILLY, TREZEGUET SET FOR STARTS

REUTERS, Santo Tirso

France captain Marcel Desailly looked to have fully recovered from a knee injury as the defending champions prepared on Friday for their Euro 2004 opener against England.

The heavy strapping on his right leg had disappeared and Desailly spent most of the session alongside fellow defenders Lilian Thuram and Bixente Lizarazu, who are certain to start in the Group B match on Sunday.

The 35-year-old Desailly, who retires from internationals after the tournament, twisted his knee last month and missed the 1-0 victory over Ukraine in Paris on Sunday.



Spanish football supporters stage a bullfight on a street in Faro, southern Portugal yesterday.

ENGLAND-FRANCE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES



REUTERS, Lisbon

Following is an analysis of the main strengths and weaknesses of France and England ahead of their Euro 2004 Group B match:

**GOALKEEPERS:** Fabian Barthez of France and David James of England are excellent shot-stoppers but both have an alarming tendency to let down their defences.

Barthez is prone to bad errors of judgment and eccentric mistakes as he is shown when given a straight red card for a crude foul in the UEFA Cup final.

James has a tendency to flap and to punch crosses and shots he should catch. The new ball being used in this tournament, which has an exaggerated swerve, could unnerve them both.

**DEFENCE:** There is not much wrong with a defence that has kept a clean sheet for almost 12 months and despite the slow creep of the years, France's ageing back line is still outstanding.

Central defenders Mikael Silvestre and Lilian Thuram - likely

to be picked instead of Marcel Desailly - are solid, full backs William Gallas and Bixente Lizarazu quick enough to turn defence into attack at a flash.

In contrast, England's defence looks shaky. John Terry is out of the game injured leaving Sol Campbell as the only recognised central defender. Jamie Carragher or Ledley King will be under intense scrutiny alongside Campbell.

Gary Neville forms a solid defensive partnership on the right with David Beckham and Ashley Cole likes to attack on the left. Campbell is a dominating centre-back but he can be vulnerable to pacy strikers running at him which is what his Arsenal club mate Thierry Henry will try and exploit.

**MIDFIELD:** The key battle area and expect the tackles to fly in during the first 10 minutes as Patrick Vieira and Steven Gerrard in particular fight to impose themselves.

Vieira's strength complements Zinedine Zidane's guile and invention although the English midfielders believe Zidane and Robert Pires can be put off their games by forceful tackling.

Zidane's Real Madrid team mate David Beckham remains one of the great crossers of a football and is a threat from free kicks. Gerrard is on top form and could

emerge as one of the tournament's outstanding players if England progress. He works tirelessly and if he manages to out-muscle Vieira, something very few achieve, he would give England a crucial edge.

The battle between Chelsea team mates Frank Lampard and Claude Makelele will also be intriguing while Paul Scholes will have to adapt quickly to his new role on the left.

**ATTACK:** An almost telepathic understanding between Henry and David Trezeguet since their days together as teenagers brings a unique flavour to the France attack. While the electric Henry is the scorer supreme for Arsenal, he often provides the passes for Trezeguet's goals for France - 28 in 51 internationals.

England's attacking force brings together Merseyside rivals Michael Owen (Liverpool) and Wayne Rooney (Everton), the past and present youngest-ever England scorers.

They sometimes fail to gel but Owen has recovered his sharpness after injury and Rooney his confidence, and both are capable of turning any match. Lack of height against the French defenders could be a problem for the English front two.

Kiwis take control

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Franklin, 23, in his first Test against England and only the third of his career, took four for 104. New Zealand using the overcast conditions to good effect.

England started Saturday on 225 for five, a deficit of 159.

Graham Thorpe was 30 not out and Matthew Hoggard nought not out.

After nightwatchman Hoggard fell for five, England lost middle-order star Thorpe for 45, the left-hander caught down the legside by McCullum off Franklin.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the third and final Test between England and New Zealand at Trent Bridge, Nottingham, on Saturday:

**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings 384 (Fleming 117, Styris 108, Richardson 73; Harmison 3-80)

**ENGLAND:** First innings (over-1225-5)

Trescothick c Styris b Franklin 63  
Strauss c McCullum b Cairns 0  
Butcher c Styris b Franklin 5  
Vaughan lbw b Cairns 61  
Thorpe c McCullum b Franklin 45  
Flintoff lbw b Cairns 54  
Hoggard c Styris b Franklin 5

Jones lbw b Styris 22

Giles not out 45  
Saggers b Cairns 0  
Harmison b Cairns 0

Extras: (b-2, lb-5, nb-12) 19

Total: (All out in 85.3 overs) 319

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-18, 3-129, 4-140, 5-221, 6-244, 7-255, 8-295, 9-301

**Bowler O M R W**

Martin 1.5 0 1 0

Cairns 23.3 5 79 5

Franklin 26.1 4 104 4

Mills 6 1 31 0

Oram 15 0 47 0

Styris 11 0 45 1

McMillan 2 1 5 0

**NEW ZEALAND: Second innings**

Richardson lbw b Giles 49

Fleming not out 35

McCullum not out 3

Extras: (lb-10, nb-2) 12

Total: (For 1 wkt in 30 overs) 99

To bat: Styris, Astle, McMillan, Oram, Cairns, Franklin, Mills, Martin

**Bowler O M R W**

Hoggard 5 2 19 0

Harmison 11 1 30 0

Saggers 6 2 14 0

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Legislation quantity  
4 Played Simon Says  
8 "The — on the Floss"  
12 Owl's query?  
13 "What's My Line?"  
14 Vacillate  
15 Actor Charles  
17 Wishes undone  
18 Thoroughfare  
19 Melody  
21 Take a shot  
22 Cartoonist Charles  
26 Durable ribbed fabric  
29 Pigs' digs  
30 Paulo preceder  
31 "... — o' kindness yet!"  
32 Method  
33 Night light  
34 Shell-game prop

**DOWN**

1 They do  
2 Fireside occurrence  
3 Go sight-seeing  
4 Slick  
5 Pepper-mint candy  
6 "Xanadu"  
7 The Carrington  
8 Christmas gift  
9 Debtor's letters  
10 Cautious solution  
11 Part of UCLA  
16 Costume  
20 Aloof  
23 Addict  
24 Myanmar neighbor  
25 Region  
26 Hemingway sobriquet  
27 — — tea  
28 Four-channel sound  
29 Clinton's instrument  
32 Smart aleck  
33 Indigent  
35 Dallas sch.  
36 Merchant  
38 Keen  
39 Flora and fauna  
42 Erstwhile elvers  
43 Apprehend  
44 "South Park" co-creator  
45 Country club employee  
46 A billion years  
47 Sinbad's bird  
49 Unclose, in poetry

**CRYPTOQUIP**

N P R S F M P V N A K W T ' F  
F G L W V V F M Z K S F A X  
T D C C V T " M P V Z L K L G V J S D G ?"  
S M A X W R P L F A X V J V W W

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A NEW SHARP CHEESE IS NOW MASS-PRODUCED IN SCOTLAND, CALLED LOCH NESS MUEINSTER.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals L

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.



State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman (2nd from R) takes questions from journalists during the Dhaka Reporters' Unity organised 'Meet the Reporters' programme at its office yesterday.

U-13 athletic

FROM PAGE 13

will conduct the camp which is arranged by Global Sports Partners.

The Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) selected 40 boys and girls from the recently concluded 21st National Junior Athletics meet and they have been asked to report to the federation on June 18 at 5pm.

Cousins go to war

FROM PAGE 13

Beckham, to suggest that England's collective strength can be greater than the sum of France's outstanding individual talents.

"The plan is to get right at France in the first ten minutes and not to be fazed by any of their players because I think we've got a great team," Beckham revealed ahead of his own reunion with Real Madrid teammate Zidane.

"Personally I think we've got a better team than France. Only in the game will that be proven and we've got to perform well on the day."

"If every player performs well then we have got a great chance of coming out on top and getting the win we want from the first game."

"We've got to forget how good other teams are. The French team is one of the best in the world and have got the best players in the world."

"But if our team all comes together at the right time, then we are definitely capable of beating anyone."

Eriksson expresses a similar sentiment, albeit with a proviso that a draw would still represent a very good result.

"The confidence in the squad is very, very big. I don't need to tell them that we can beat France if we have a good day. I think they know that."

Such confidence is in part born of the familiarity of the France players, with more than half of

their likely starting line-up earning their living in England.

There is not a single member of the England team who would dispute that Henry is currently the world's best striker, Vieira the most imperious