



Did U Know?

It is the first time in European Championship and World Cup history that the two teams who played the opening match have also met in the final.



What to Watch

ESPN

West Indies vs New Zealand
NatWest Tri-Series, 8th ODI
Live at 3:45 pm

Australia vs Sri Lanka
First Test, Day Four
Live at 5:55 am (Sunday)

STAR Sports

Wimbledon Championships
Women's Singles Final,
Men's & Mixed Doubles Finals
Live at 6:30 pm

TEN Sports

RoboBank Hockey
Third Place Decider
Live at 9:00 pm



Talk Turkey



Habibul Bashar
(Bangladesh cricket captain)
"If we put in our best efforts, there is always a chance for us to win."

Star Whizz Kid COMPETITION 214

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star. Win attractive prizes. Competition closes at 8 pm July 9, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards.

- How many Test matches will India play against Bangladesh in December?
Three Two Four
- Who is Pakistan's new cricket coach?
Miandad Woolmer Marsh
- Who won the Rating chess title?
Rajib Rakib Reefat
- Who is the youngest scorer at UEFA Euro 2004?
Rooney Vanlanthen Ronaldo
- Who scored the first goal at Euro 2004?
Zidane Karagounis Figo

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

Pioneer soccer

SPORTS REPORTER
The Shingpur Ceramics Pioneer Football League was marked by three hat-tricks yesterday at different venues.

Shahin scored three goals to inspire Great Wall SC to a 3-1 victory over Noor SC in the west zone at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

In east zone, Jatrabari JS thumped Nazirabazar KC 4-1 at the Dhupkhola ground, thanks to Masum's treble. Another east zone match between Dhaka Junior SC and Red Sun SC ended in a goalless draw.

Wahidul Islam stole the show with a three-goal effort as Islambagh Lucky Seven JS blanked Dragon KC 3-0 in a south zone match at the Mirpur Outer Stadium where Dipta TFA beat Bangladesh Sports Coalition 2-1.

Heart-stopping, heart-breaking

AFP, Prague

The Czech Republic's heartbreaking defeat by Greece in Thursday's Euro 2004 semi-final was not one for the faint of heart declared one Czech paper on Friday.

The press congratulated the Greeks on their surprising 1-0 victory over the tournament favourites - thanks to a silver goal by Traianos Dellas in the last minute of the first-half of extra-time - but also their team for playing the best football of the tournament.

"It was a match capable of inducing a heart attack," opined 'Dnes' while regretting the first-half exit because of a knee injury of the Czechs' 'Lion hearted' European player of the year Pavel Nedved.

"It was a rough battle, the toughest one the Czechs had during the tournament."

"It is a tragedy for this team. But we pay homage to the opponent," it added.

The daily 'Sport' struck an almost poetic note.

"The gold medal was in our hands. But Czech euphoria was silenced on Thursday just before midnight by sadness," it wrote while adding on the positive side the team had gone further in the tournament than the so-called giants like England, France, Spain and the Germans not to mention the Italians.

"A tragic defeat in extra-time," wrote 'Lidove Noviny'.

However it added an optimistic note.

"Soon, the sadness will dissipate and we will come to appreciate our bronze medal."

Scolari's secret!

AFP, Lisbon

Euro 2004 hosts and finalists Portugal are astral travellers as they close in on what would be their first ever trophy success at senior level, with coach Luiz Felipe Scolari seeking extra inspiration from Brazilian psychologist Regina Brandao.

Brandao has been giving compatriot Scolari advice from her base in Sao Paulo and according to Portuguese daily Tal e Qual has provided a regular sounding board for the man who led Brazil to the 2002 World Cup.

"Since the Euro started we have spoken five or six times. Normally he calls me up the day before a match and we spend hours talking," Tal e Qual quoted Brandao as saying.

She added that Scolari was convinced her specialist psychological aid had helped the Brazilians in 2002 and that he wanted the effect to rub off on Portugal.

Former England coach Glenn Hoddle had an unhappier experience with team psychologist Eileen Drewery prior to the 1998 World Cup, when his insistence that she play a role was greeted with general derision.

Rude Ruud

AFP, Lisbon

Dutch master striker Ruud van Nistelrooy celebrated his 28th birthday by being charged by UEFA with insulting Swedish referee Anders Frisk after the Netherlands lost 2-1 to hosts Portugal in Wednesday's semi-final.

The Manchester United star confronted the official after he blew the final whistle and will be dealt with by UEFA's control and disciplinary body on Friday.

Van Nistelrooy had a good tournament leading the Dutch line selflessly as he operated as the lone striker scoring four times.

Meanwhile UEFA fined the French Football Federation 6,600 euros after their team were late leaving the dressing room for both the start and the second half of their quarter-final defeat by Greece.



DESTINY'S CHILD! Greece's defender Traianos Dellas (L, No. 5) heads in the 'silver goal' at the Dragao stadium in Oporto on July 1.

PHOTO: AFP

MSC win Ctg derby

Football

CU CORRESPONDENT

Holders Mohammed Sporting Club stayed on course to defend their title when they crushed arch-rivals Abahani 3-1 in a high voltage CIKS-Elite Paint Premier Football League match at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

With two rounds to go, Mohammed remained top of the table with maximum 21 points. Abahani's hopes of re-entering the race were dashed after suffering their first defeat.

They slipped to third place with 14 points. City Corporation Ekadash are currently second with 16 points.

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Action from the NFL services zone final between Bangladesh Police and Bangladesh Air Force at the Kamapur Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Women's final today

WIMBLEDON

AFP, London

At 22 years old, Serena Williams is hardly a veteran but in Saturday's Wimbledon final she will go up against a player five years her junior.

Russian 17-year-old Maria Sharapova is the second youngest Wimbledon finalist in the Open era behind Martina Hingis and her explosive arrival among the elite of the sport represents a genuine threat to the Williams dynasty.

On the face of it Serena, bidding to become the first woman to win three straight Wimbledon titles for the first time since Steffi Graf from

1991-93, should have too much power and grass court savvy for the leggy blonde debutant.

But the six-time Grand Slam winner and top seed says she is taking nothing for granted against Sharapova.

"She's tough, solid on both sides and she's really focussed. And we both pump our fists a lot," she said.

"I don't think experience will be a big factor. I remember when I was young, I was really determined to fight and win."

"When I played my first Grand Slam final (US Open 1999) you really run on adrenaline."

"Maybe if it was 7-7 in the third set a little more experience would kick in, but I think it all boils down to talent. She has enough experience

already."

Sharapova, playing in just her second Wimbledon, fought back from a set down in her last two games and she closed out American veteran Lindsay Davenport in impressive fashion in their semi-final.

She has confidence a-plenty and a steely determination that evokes memories of Monica Seles at her best.

"I have worked hard and believed in myself, but I never expected to do so well at such an early age -- to get to the final," she said.

Speaking prior to Williams' thrilling three-set win over France's Amelie Mauresmo in the other semi-final, Sharapova said she would have

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3 hosts go forward

SPORTS REPORTER

Three host teams advanced to the final round of the fourth Nitol-Tata National Football League yesterday.

Najirpara Krira Chakra of Chandpur, Jhenaidah Mohammed Sporting Club and Bagerhat's Unmochon Club emerged champions in their qualifying zones to reach the 12-team finals in addition to Bangladesh Air Force, who won the services zone qualifiers at Kamapur Stadium on the penultimate day of qualification.

They join Narshingdi's Kacharipara Krira Chakra and six automatic qualifiers Mukti Jodha Sangsad, Mohammed Sporting Club, Abahani, Brothers Union and Sheikh Russell Krira Chakra -- all from Dhaka -- and Chittagong Mohammedan in the final phase.

The remaining finalists will be decided after today's zonal final between Panchagarh Brothers Union and Naogaon Prabaha Sangha at Natore.

At Chandpur Stadium, the local boys from Najirpara ousted Cox's Bazar Brothers Union 3-0 in the tiebreaker after a goalless draw in regulation time.

In the battle of two Mohammedans at Jhenaidah Stadium, an 11th minute strike by Ripon helped the hosts edge their namesake from Chuadanga 1-0.

Khulna Mohammedan were not so lucky as they bowed out of the tournament with a solitary goal defeat to Bagerhat league champions Unmochon at Bagerhat Stadium.

In Dhaka, Bangladesh Police's amazing run ended when they crashed out of the competition losing 5-4 to Air Force in the shoot-out after their 90-minute final ended 1-1.

Police earlier eliminated three-time finalists and services zone favourites Bangladesh Army in the second round.

Deadly beauty

BBC ONLINE, London

The golden mane of hair, the long legs, Russian Wimbledon finalist Maria Sharapova is the new Anna Kournikova -- isn't she?

Yes the 17-year-old blonde bombshell's glamorous looks - not to mention all that on-court grunting - have had heads turning at Wimbledon.

And yes they both turned professional at the tender age of 14 after being groomed in Florida.

And I will hand it to you both signed lucrative modelling contracts to supplement their on-court income.

But there the comparisons must end.

On Saturday Sharapova will face top seed Serena Williams for the Wimbledon crown -- Kournikova never got beyond the last four at a Grand Slam.

Sharapova is the first Russian to reach the Wimbledon final in 30 years and the youngest since Martina Hingis, who won aged 16 in 1997.

But should we really be surprised by her prolific rise to the top? Probably not.

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Silver Dellas

UEFA Euro 2004 PORTUGAL

AFP, Oporto

Traianos Dellas was the unlikely hero who headed the decisive silver goal that gave Greece a dramatic 1-0 victory over the Czech Republic and a place in the final of Euro 2004.

The 28-year-old central defender, who can't hold down a regular first team place at Italian first division club Roma, struck in injury time of the first period of extra time on Thursday to send the Greeks into their first ever final.

Otto Rehhagel's men, 150-1 outsiders at the start of the tournament, will meet hosts Portugal in Sunday's final, the team they defeated in their first group match.

Dellas could be forgiven for basking in his own glory after scoring his first ever goal for his country, but modestly turned the spotlight on the team as a whole for shutting out a Czech side that had scored 10 goals in four matches.

He acknowledged that he had a little help from above too.

"In the end, God gave us this victory... As I went to take my position during the corner, I looked at the clock. It showed 14 minutes and 36 seconds."

"And I told myself let it happen now. And it went OK. I believe somebody listened to me, and the goal went in," said Dellas.

"I believe we played very intelligently in freezing out the Czech Republic," he said.

"The start of the match was hard as neither team wanted to lose this game and we tried our hardest not to concede a goal."

"We managed to pull off a win in extra-time. We believed in ourselves from the beginning and we deserved this result."

"Tonight belongs to everyone here and in Greece who watched the match."

Dellas insisted Portugal would be a tougher nut to crack than when Greece beat them 2-1 in the competition's opening match, but refused to rule out another upset for the host nation.

"Portugal are very strong. We beat them in the opening match but a lot has changed since then and the final will be completely different. They're stronger now, but they'll find out that we are too," he said.

Dellas was a member of the Greece side that lost the European under-21 championship final to Spain in May 1998, but it took him three years to make his senior international debut in a friendly against Croatia in April 2001.

He was outstanding in the seven Euro 2004 qualifying matches he played in, patrolling a defence that kept five clean sheets.

Dellas spent time with Greek first division sides Aris Salonika and AEK Athens, either side of a unhappy spell at English first division side Sheffield United in 1997.

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Greek tragedy for Czechs

UEFA Euro 2004 PORTUGAL

AFP, Oporto

Traianos Dellas' silver goal gave Greece a dramatic 1-0 victory over the Czech Republic and a place in the final of Euro 2004 here on Thursday.

Otto Rehhagel's side, who beat 2000 champions France in the quarter-finals, will meet hosts Portugal in Sunday's final in a rematch of the tournament-opening match won by Greece.

With the scores deadlocked, Roma defender Dellas met Vasilios

Tsiartas' corner at the near post in the final minute of first-half extra-time and planted a firm header into the net for the former Sheffield United star's first ever goal for his country which took Greece into their first ever final.

Rehhagel could scarcely believe the adventure was continuing especially after the camp had been destabilised by stories over him claiming all the glory, one of the top clubs AEK Athens going bankrupt and the players wanting more than was previously agreed regarding bonuses.

The fairytale continues. It is unbelievable what my team has achieved today," said the 65-year-old German known as King Otto for

his success during a 14-year spell with Werder Bremen.

"In the final against Portugal, who will want to avenge their defeat to us on the opening day, we will be the outsiders again, but in football anything is possible."

"Anyway whatever happens, we will be the real winners of Euro 2004."

His Czech counterpart Karel Bruckner reflected on how his side's good habits had lapsed for a second and they had paid for it cruelly.

"It's strange after three years of being a coach and 30 matches we conceded the first goal from a corner kick in the last seconds."

"It just goes to show how dangerous the last minute of matches are."

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WHEN THE MUSIC STOPPED: Czech striker Jan Koller (L) presses his head against the bar while two teammates stare in disbelief at the end of the semifinal against Greece.

PHOTO: AFP

Those popping eyes will be missed

Football

AFP, Lisbon

Pierluigi Collina refereed the last international match of his career when he took control of the Euro 2004 semi-final between the Czech Republic and Greece on Thursday.

The Italian widely regarded as the best referee in the world is 45 next February and so reaches the compulsory age for retirement at international level.

However his last international match ended in suitably dramatic style as Traianos Dellas headed in a



PIERLUIGI COLLINA

silver goal winner in the dying seconds of the first-half of extra-time to give them an historic 1-0 victory.

The bald-headed Italian with the characteristic staring eyes refereed the 2002 World Cup final between Brazil and Germany but is bowing to German official Markus Merk in the final of Euro 2004 on Sunday.

Collina may be too old for UEFA and FIFA's liking, but he has been consistently linked with a role officiating matches in the English Premiership.

He has declined to comment on the rumours of a future role in England.

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