



Uruguay's Diego Forlan gears up for a volley during their Group B match against Ecuador at Elias Aguirre Stadium in Chiclayo city on July 10.

Argentina back on

FROM PAGE 13
"We didn't win because we failed to score any of our chances and the opponents had two chances, of which they converted one," Bielsa told reporters with exactly the same blank expression he wore after the win over Ecuador.

"Argentina did enough to win the game but we didn't overcome an obstacle, having done enough to have overcome it, and that is normal in football," he added, staring blankly at the ground.

Lavolpe also came into the Copa under pressure and has announced that his current job will be his last coaching a professional team. But he appeared to have no regrets about beating his homeland.

"I was born in Argentina but I've been in Mexico for 25 years," he said. "Mexico has given me a lot."

URUGUAY 2; ECUADOR 1

Uruguay coach Fossati, however, had mixed feelings after the win over Ecuador -- the country where he spent the last year coaching Liga de Quito before being appointed in April.

Several of his former Liga players were on the opposing side.

"On the one hand, it's given me enormous happiness to win at last. On the other, we were playing against a country to which I'm very grateful and for which I have a lot of affection," he said.

Striker Carlos Bueno scrambled the winner in the 78th minute, his second goal in successive games.

Forlan had put Uruguay ahead in the 61st minute with his ninth goal in 18 internationals but substitute Franklin Salas equalised in the 73rd.

Uruguay captain Paolo Montero, who has made his international comeback at the tournament after a two-year absence, picked up one of his routine suspensions when he received his second yellow card in consecutive games in the first half.

Uruguay and Mexico have four points each, Argentina three and Ecuador none.

Domenech the favourite

REUTERS, Paris

Raymond Domenech, the French under-21 coach, will beat former internationals Laurent Blanc and Jean Tigana in the race to succeed Jacques Santini as France's national coach, according to sports daily L'Equipe.

Santini, appointed after the 2002 World Cup, announced just before Euro 2004 that he would leave at the end of the tournament to join English premier league Tottenham. His successor is to be named on Monday.

"It's nearly done, Domenech will succeed Jacques Santini", L'Equipe reported on Sunday, quoting leaks from the French football federation's (FFF's) council and general assembly that met behind closed doors in Clermont-Ferrand on Friday and Saturday.

Blanc and Tigana have been regarded as the favourites for the job by the French media.

All the best

REUTERS, Geffen

Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy married his love Leontien Slaats on Saturday in the southern village of Geffen where he started his soccer career.

The Manchester United forward was afforded a corridor of honour by the current juniors of local side Nootgedacht with whom he started out as a footballer at the age of six.

United manager Alex Ferguson witnessed the ceremony, as did Dutch players Jaap Stam, Ronald Waterreus and Paul Bosvelt.

Netherlands' assistant boss Willem van Hanegem and Olympic swimmer Pieter van den Hoogenband were also present.

On the village square, a crane held up a large shirt in the Nootgedacht colours as the pair arrived in a white Rolls-Royce limousine decked out in white and red roses. Local shopkeepers had put up goodwill messages in their windows.

Rehhagel not willing

Football

REUTERS, Berlin

Greece coach Otto Rehhagel turned down the chance of returning home to coach Germany, Franz Beckenbauer said on Saturday.

"I had a long conversation with Dr. Rehhagel and unfortunately he turned us down," former Germany captain and coach Beckenbauer, who heads a commission at the German Football Association (DFB) charged with finding a successor to Rudi Voeller, told ZDF.

"That means, he will fulfil his contract to stay with Greece until 2006."

Mass circulation Bild newspaper reported on Saturday that the DFB was dangling a 2.5 million euros per year contract before

Rehhagel -- the biggest pay cheque in DFB history.

The DFB is struggling to find a successor to Voeller, who resigned



OTTO REHHAGEL

as national coach following Germany's exit in the group phase of Euro 2004.

Former Bayern Munich trainer Ottmar Hitzfeld, who had expressed

interest in the job in recent months and was the firm favourite, turned down the offer last week, saying he was not in the right state of mind to accept.

A string of leading candidates have also said they would not be ready to lead the side into the 2006 World Cup, which Germany is hosting.

German newspapers have begged Rehhagel, affectionately dubbed King Otto, to return home and rescue his own ailing national side. But Greece's football federation had already insisted the 65-year-old would stay in his current job.

German Interior Minister Otto Schily has urged Germans to be more progressive and consider giving the role to a non-German, citing Rehhagel as a model for success.

"If a German can win with the Greeks then so can an Englishman, a Frenchman or a Dutchman with Germany," Schily told Bild.



Dutch super-striker Ruud van Nistelrooy kisses his bride Leontien Slaats after their wedding ceremony at the townhall in the Dutch village of Heesch on July 10.



FLORENTINO PEREZ

Perez on course

REUTERS, Madrid

Florentino Perez is heading for a landslide victory in his bid to be re-elected as Real Madrid president according to early exit polls on Sunday.

A poll run by Spanish sports daily Marca showed that of 700 club members who had voted on Sunday morning, 661 said they had voted for Perez, 25 for former president Lorenzo Sanz and 14 for third candidate Arturo Balasano.

Perez was already reported to have gained 11,034 postal votes from the 65,197 club members entitled to vote in the election, while Balasano had garnered 34.

Sanz, who had tried to have the election postponed because of what he said were irregularities in the way Perez had collected postal votes, had registered none.

Perez, who won a surprise victory over Sanz four years ago, was in confident mood.

"I would be very surprised if I lost," he told sports daily AS on Sunday.

"The club members know what my aims are and they know that if they support me Real Madrid will construct a team that will make history by recruiting the best players in the world every year."

He made no promises about which new players he might sign, but has admitted that he has been negotiating with European champions Porto to bring in defender Ricardo Carvalho and midfielder Costinha.

Polling ends at 1800 GMT, with the result expected to be announced within three hours.

Pizarro's Copa over



REUTERS, Lima

Peru captain Claudio Pizarro is out of the Copa America after suffering a head injury during Friday night's 3-1 win over Venezuela, team doctor Ramon Aparicio said on Saturday.

"He's not going to be able to carry on," Aparicio said in a radio interview. "He needs one month's rest."

Aparicio said that Pizarro was taken to hospital complaining of dizziness and nausea in the early hours of Saturday morning after suffering the blow in the 76th minute of the group A match.

The Bayern Munich striker went back on to the pitch and was sent off 10 minutes later for a second bookable offence.

Aparicio said Pizarro, who scored from a penalty as Peru drew 2-2 with Bolivia in their opening match, had briefly lost all feeling in the right side of his face.

Peru have four points from two games and have all but mathematically qualified for the last eight. They face Colombia in their final group match on Monday, when Pizarro would have been serving an automatic one-match suspension.

His injury is a bitter blow for the hosts and a personal disappointment for Pizarro himself who has never fully managed to produce his best form for his country, scoring an unremarkable 10 goals in 38 outings.

Pizarro, 25, made his professional debut for Deportivo Pesquero at the age of 17 in 1996 and spent two seasons at the club, which has since changed location and been renamed Deportivo Wanka.

He then moved to Alianza Lima, one of the country's big three clubs, in 1998 and made his mark the following season with 18 goals in 22

matches, including five in a 7-1 win over Union Minas.

Werder Bremen snapped him up in mid-1999 and he scored 29 Bundesliga goals in two seasons for them.

That performance attracted attention from several top clubs and he moved to Bayern Munich, where he has played for the last three seasons, scoring 15 Bundesliga goals in each of his first two seasons and 11 this year.

Pizarro's international career, which began against Ecuador in 1999, has been somewhat frustrating and he scored only twice in the 18-match qualifying campaign for the 2002 World Cup as Peru failed to reach the finals.

His ambition is to lead Peru to their first World Cup since 1982. The team are seventh in the 10-team South American qualifying group from which the top four qualify directly and the fifth plays off against the winners of the Oceania region for another place.



FINAL COPA ACT: Peruvian striker Claudio Pizarro (R) argues with referee Ruben Selman, after being sent off from the field, in the home team's match against Venezuela in Lima on July 9. The Bayern Munich player was hospitalised in the early morning of July 10 for a concussion and small fracture he suffered during the match.

Why did he have to say it!

AFP, London

"These are nervous moments," BBC football commentator John Motson said, all of 69 seconds into England's Euro 2004 quarter-final against Portugal. Back at home, bookmakers groaned.

Motson's swift lapse into sporting cliché ended up costing one bookmaker firm tens of thousands of pounds (dollars, euros), thanks to a quirky bet about which of a series of phrases the commentator would trot out first, the Sunday Times reported.

Online betting firm Paddy Power gave punters a choice of possible options from Motson, a long-standing BBC television football commentator with a highly distinct turn of phrase, who had no idea about the bets.

The favourite, at odds of 10-1, was "boy wonder", a reference to teenage England striker Wayne Rooney, who had already scored four goals in the preliminary stages of the tournament.

David Beckham fans could place bets at 16-1 on Motson referring to him as "Captain Marvel" before any of the other phrases, while the more cautious could take a 25-1 punt on: "What will Sven be saying at half-time?", a reference to England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson.

Also at 25-1, the brave could bet on Motson holding out until almost the end of the game on June 24, before starting to talk about "dreaded penalties" to decide the game.

Paddy Power spokesman Darren Haines told the Sunday Times that the company had reckoned on "nervous moments" also being saved up until late in the match.

"You'd think it'd be the kind of thing you'd say before a penalty shoot-out or in the final seconds, hence the generous price" of 40-1, he said.

Fortunately, the bookmaker had better luck with a similar set of bets on Clive Tyldesley, the commentator for independent station ITV, when it showed the Euro 2004 final between Portugal and Greece.

Tyldesley managed to hold out until 33 minutes before referring to the "golden generation", a reference to Portugal's crop of now 30-something stars centred around Luis Figo, on offer at a relatively meagre 10-1.

David's to Inter

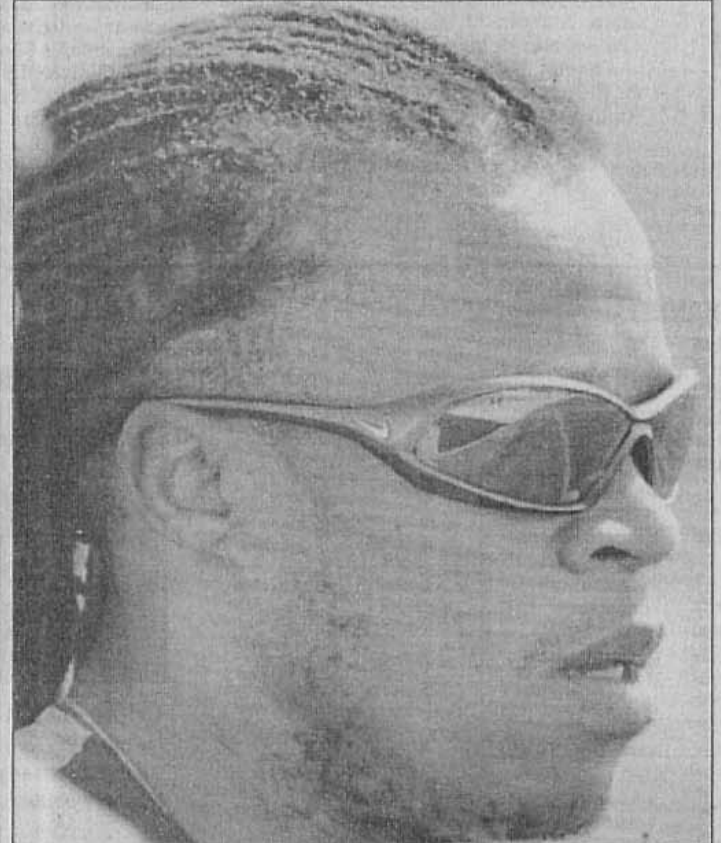
Football

REUTERS, Rome

Dutch international Edgar Davids has joined Inter Milan, the club announced on Sunday.

The 31-year-old midfielder, a member of the Dutch Euro 2004 squad, signed a three-year deal with the Serie A giants after his loan period with Barcelona finished at the end of last season.

"We're delighted. Davids' qualities as a player are well known, but I'd like to underline what he managed to achieve at Barcelona in a few months," Inter president Giachinto Facchetti was quoted as saying on Inter's website.



EDGAR DAVIDS

"He demonstrated that he had the drive and enthusiasm to drag a team up the table to a second-place finish that seemed impossible."

Barcelona were in the bottom half of the Primera Liga when Davids joined them in January on a six-month loan after failing to reach agreement on a new contract with Juventus.

His previous clubs also include Dutch side Ajax and AC Milan.

Davids is the latest in a series of high-profile close-season acquisitions by Inter.

The Italian club have already added Argentine midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron and Boca Juniors defender Nicolas Burdisso as they attempt to win their first Serie A title since 1989.

Barca getting Silvinho

REUTERS, Madrid

Barcelona have agreed an initial deal to sign Brazilian defender Silvinho from relegated Celta Vigo.

"We have reached an agreement with Celta to sign Silvinho, although we have yet to confirm the agreement with the player, something that may well happen this week-end," Barca sporting director Txiki Begiristain told the club's website on Saturday.

Barca said that the 30-year-old left back would sign a two-year contract with the club with an option to extend the deal for a further two seasons.

They added they expected the player to undergo a medical on Monday.

Spanish media said Barca would pay around two million euros (\$2.48 million) plus a performance-related bonus to Celta for the versatile defender.

Silvinho began his career with Corinthians in his home city of Sao Paulo in 1995. He joined Arsenal in 1999 but after an impressive first season he lost his place to Ashley Cole and decided to accept a move to Celta for an undisclosed fee in August 2001. He has been a regular in the Celta first team for the last two seasons but the club has been keen to offload players following their relegation from the top flight.

While Arsenal registered Silvinho on the basis of his Portuguese passport, Celta classified him as a Brazilian.

But Begiristain said that the agreement with Barcelona was conditional on the defender obtaining Spanish citizenship so that he would not occupy one of the club's three berths for non-European Union players.

If the deal goes through, Silvinho will be the fifth new player to join the Catalans since the end of last season.

Earlier this week they signed Portugal playmaker Deco. They have also recruited Sweden striker Henrik Larsson, French midfielder Ludovic Giuly and Brazilian defender Juliano Belletti.

Ref couldn't take it

AFP, London

English Premier League referee Paul Taylor played their first game back at their refurbished Craven Cottage home but it ended in farce and controversy and led to the referee storming out in anger.

The friendly with Watford had to be abandoned at half-time as a 0-0 draw as a row over substitutions clouded the pre-season meeting.

By then, both sides had used six replacements as permitted under new FIFA regulations, but so as not to contravene the rules, the match continued as an exhibition game with a linesman replacing referee Peter Walton who walked out.

The mediocre draw finished with a huge 27 substitutions having been made.

"I think the rule is absolutely ludicrous," said Fulham secretary Lee Hoos.

It is imposing a significant health and safety risk on players who have been back in training for one week to have to play 90 minutes.

"I would urge all football fans to write to FIFA President Sepp Blatter asking him to change this rule for pre-season friendlies."

Fulham have played at the ground on the banks of the River Thames since 1896 but have been in exile at Queens Park Rangers' Loftus Road stadium, also in West London, for two seasons.

Fulham chairman and Harrods owner Mohammed al-Fayed felt the historic ground, which still features a cottage in one corner, was incompatible with long-term Premiership football and sold a 15 million pound (28 million dollar) option to build on the site to a property developer as the club sought a more commercially viable home.

But no suitable site emerged and Al-Fayed spent 5.4 million pounds upgrading the Cottage to Premiership standards for a three-year stay as they continue to seek a new ground.

The capacity is a little over 22,000 - still the smallest in the Premiership - but for safety reasons was reduced to half that for Saturday's visit of Football League Championship side Watford.

Home calling Sven

Football

REUTERS, Bastad

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson has expressed interest in coaching his native Sweden in the future, the Swedish daily Aftonbladet reported on Sunday.

Speaking at a leadership seminar in Bastad in the south of Sweden, Eriksson was asked if he would like to coach Sweden.

"Yes I would," he replied. "But before that I'd like to go back to club football."

"I am enjoying myself in England and Tommy Soderberg just quit (as Sweden coach), so they probably won't change coach for a while," Aftonbladet quoted Eriksson as saying.

Sweden, who lost to the Netherlands in the Euro 2004 quarter-finals, are coached by Lars Lagerback, whose co-coach in Portugal, Soderberg, has since taken charge of the Swedish under-21 side.

Eriksson's contract with England expires in 2008.

The Swede took charge in February 2001, since when England have lost only three competitive matches -- a 2-1 quarter-final defeat by Brazil at the 2002 World Cup, a 2-1 Euro 2004 Group B loss to France and a penalty shootout defeat by Portugal in the Euro 2004 quarter-finals.

"Now I'm looking forward to the World Cup qualifiers and our making it to the (2006) World Cup," said Eriksson. "Then we shall win the final there (in Germany)."