



FURY IN BEIJING: (L) A Chinese fan is led away by a policeman. (R) Emotion spills on to the streets as angry supporters voice their frustration after watching the hosts go down 3-1 to Japan in Asian Cup final.

Beijing goes wild in rage



REUTERS, Beijing

Chinese fans vented their fury at the final whistle after Japan scored twice in a controversial second half to beat the hosts 3-1 in the final of the Asia Cup on Saturday.

Several hundred bottles were hurled on to the pitch and Japanese flags were burned.

Koji Nakata had given Japan a 2-1 lead in the 65th minute with a hotly disputed goal, the midfielder bundling in a Shunsuke Nakamura corner though replays showed he used his hand.

Keiji Tamada added a fine solo goal

in stoppage time to give the scoreline a flattering look for Japan after a tension-filled match laced with political and historical overtones.

China coach Arie Haan refused to collect his runner-up medal in protest at the officiating of Kuwaiti referee Saad Kameel.

"The first goal was from a free kick to Japan that should have gone to us, the second was handball and the third was after a foul on Sun Jihai," fumed the Dutchman.

"I didn't feel ready to take the medal. How can you win when this happens? I will say Japan have more experience, experience to make fouls the referee does not see."

Japan coach Zico praised his team for battling through the intimidation factor.

"It was important to stay calm against the hosts and 60,000 fans," said

the Brazilian. "Nobody thought we could win this tournament but we kept faith in ourselves and made it to the top."

Japan has been booed relentlessly during the tournament and it was subjected to similar treatment again, its national anthem drowned out by a cacophony of noise before kickoff.

The Japanese players were jeered as they celebrated but more than 6,000 security staff, including riot police, armed troops and SWAT teams, were on call to prevent violence.

Trouble flared outside the stadium after the match, however, with police in riot gear battling to restore order among furious Chinese fans amid wailing sirens and flashing police lights.

A bus carrying delegates was attacked, with bottles and garbage thrown, and police charged the crowd with batons and riot shields to clear a path.

Meanwhile, around 2,000 Japanese fans, heavily protected during the match by security officials, were locked inside the stadium for over almost three hours to save them from being attacked.

The road outside the Japanese embassy in eastern Beijing was also cordoned off, while there was a heavy police presence at the Japanese ambassador's residence in the northeast of the city and at the hotel where both teams are staying.

Chinese harbour bitter resentment over Japan's military invasion and brutal occupation of parts of the country from 1931 to 1945, when tens of millions died.

China, which has never won the

Rooney if not Vieira!



SUNDAY MIRROR, London

Real Madrid are ready to turn to Wayne Rooney if they fail in their bid to sign Patrick Vieira. The Spanish giants are growing frustrated at Arsenal's reluctance to sell their inspirational captain for anything less than 30 million pound.

Madrid are prepared to pay 25 million pound at most for the Frenchman -- and are willing to turn their backs on him if the Gunners fail to do business this week. That will leave Everton star Rooney as the club's number one target as president Florentino Perez attempts to fulfil his promise of bringing a fifth Galactico to the Bernabeu. The respected Spanish sports newspaper Marca claims contact has already been made between Real and the Rooney management team.

Their source said: "We have made our contacts.

In fact, it is our second approach. It was about six weeks ago we first

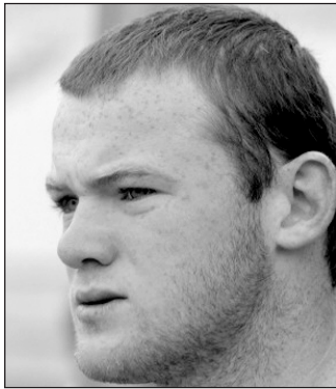
started thinking about the possibility of getting Rooney.

"The deal with Patrick Vieira is not signed and sealed yet, and we have 24 million pounds ready to spend." Rooney caught the eye of Perez when he made an emphatic impact on Euro 2004. And reports in Spain suggest Madrid will try to persuade Everton to sell their biggest asset, even though the club already boast a wealth of attacking talent.

Ronaldo and Raul are almost automatic selections for manager Jose Antonio Camacho while Fernando Morientes has returned from a season-long loan at Monaco. But Perez is committed to producing the next Galactico for the supporters who voted him in for another term as president earlier in the summer. And Rooney's four-goal haul in Portugal saw him become a huge hit with the Spanish press.

But the Sunday Mirror's revelations over the Everton star sleeping with a prostitute have been noted by Madrid officials who are eager to keep control of their player's private lives. They have been forced to cover

up for some of Ronaldo's off-field activities as his marriage broke down, while the huge media circus surrounding David Beckham's private life last season upset Real



WAYNE ROONEY

officials.

The club insider added: "We will have to weigh up what he can do on the field with his private life." Manchester United's reluctance to make an official bid for Rooney has given Madrid belief they can get their man, if the Vieira deal falls

through.

Boss Camacho would favour a more defensive player in the wake of the frailties at the back which meant Madrid failed to win a trophy last season. Vieira himself is desperate to move to Spain but Arsenal are aware how badly Real want the player and are holding out for what they believe is a fair price.

Madrid's interest in Rooney will surprise United who are understood to be confident of signing the 19-year-old when he leaves Goodison Park. Everton themselves insist they have not even spoken to United regarding a propose move for Rooney.

Boss David Moyes still remains hopeful of persuading Rooney to sign the new five-year contract on offer. Moyes said: "There has been no contact from Manchester United whatsoever - or from anyone else - regarding Wayne Rooney.

"We have had good conversations with Wayne and his advisors and they will continue. The situation can't go on much longer, but we are hopeful Wayne will stay."

Wenger vs Fergie, Real



AFP, London

Arsene Wenger has reignited his feud with Sir Alex Ferguson, setting the stage for another season of verbal jousting between the two most successful managers in English football.

Manchester United boss Ferguson managed to irk Wenger by suggesting that Arsenal's unbeaten romp through the last Premiership campaign owed a lot to good fortune, most notably when Ruud van Nistelrooy missed a last-minute penalty in a goalless draw at Old Trafford.

The Frenchman was predictably withering in his response.

"Nobody in England would dispute that the Arsenal team last season was a tremendous team and, for me, put in tremendous performances and never played negative football," Wenger said.

"Everyone has the freedom to judge the way we played. But I think, overall in the country, we got a huge recognition for not only what we did, but the way that we played.

"Even if it may be difficult to accept, I think everyone enjoyed the way we played the game. At least I did.

"Nobody else has done it and there have been some great teams in the history of English football -- Liverpool and Manchester United -- and they would love to have done it.

"I just defend what I think -- I am especially proud of what my team did. I would sign up today to do it again."

Wenger and Ferguson were due to cross swords once more on Sunday when their teams meet in the Community Shield and the



SIR ALEX FERGUSON

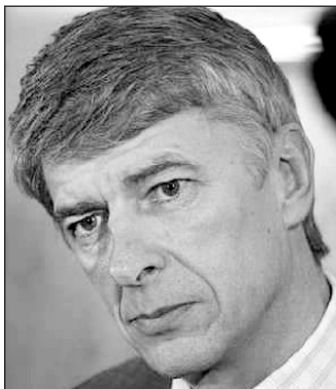
Frenchman said he was relishing the prospect of another season of on and off-the-field confrontations with the fiery Scot.

"We respect each other and I respect what he has achieved at Manchester United. But we are competitors. You can have respect but still fight and compete at the top level every year," he said.

Wenger is less enthusiastic about the prospect of losing his captain Patrick Vieira to Real Madrid, which remains a distinct possibility with the

new season due to kick off on Saturday.

"If it happened now, it would be a bad time," Wenger said. "When you face that news in May, you can look for players. But if you face that problem now or in January, then it's nearly impossible to find a replace-



ARSENE WENGER

ment."

Wenger then went on to make clear the extent of his anger over Real's tactics in the long-running saga.

"There is only one way to deal with the situation. That is to do it early enough and to do it straight to the club," he complained.

"It's always difficult to know how much they (Real) have been fair or unfair as there are always agents involved as well.

"But although there is something

true about it because they want him and approached us, that came out very, very late."

Wenger remains confident Arsenal can resist Real's approaches for Vieira again and does not believe the Spanish club will increase the offer they tabled last week.

But he admits Vieira has helped to generate the uncertainty by refusing to come out and say either that he wants to leave or that he is prepared to stay.

"I agree that the fans could come to the conclusion that Patrick has not reassured them," admitted Wenger. "But they are like you and me, they can be wrong.

"It's down to Patrick. We wait for his commitment. We do want him to go and then it's down to his commitment.

"I don't want the other players to convince him. You want him to be convinced that he identifies with what we have created together here and where we want to go.

"Patrick has been here for eight years and I have faced the same thing every summer. The worst summers I've had have been when we have been especially successful as it wakes up the appetite of other teams even more.

"Maybe we also gave the impression that we were in a bit of a financial struggle as we're building a new stadium and that we were weak. That was maybe the case six months ago, but it's not any more."

Questionable to the end



REUTERS, Beijing

The 2004 Asian Cup ended exactly as it had begun -- soured by controversy -- after Japan beat hosts China 3-1 in a politically-charged final.

Japan won their third Asian Cup title on Saturday after two hotly-disputed goals, provoking angry scenes in Beijing as Chinese fans hurled bottles, burned Japanese flags and fought pitched battles with police.

It brought an ugly end to an Asian Cup that was framed by blazing political rows that reached the highest levels of power.

Such was the animosity shown towards the Japan team by Chinese fans that a row erupted between the governments of both countries, each blaming the other for inflaming the situation.

More than 6,000 security staff were deployed in and around the stadium for the final, with riot police, soldiers and SWAT teams in position to prevent crowd trouble.

Emotions in China still run high over Japan's military invasion and brutal occupation of parts of the country from 1931 until 1945 when tens of millions died.

China coach Arie Haan angrily refused to collect his runners-up medal after three controversial Japanese goals,

including a blatant handball for Japan's second.

The tournament began on a sour note after a top Asian official accused Beijing fans of being rude in a public tirade following the opening match.

Peter Velappan, general secretary of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), also voiced doubts that Beijing could host a successful Olympics in 2008.

The backlash from the state-run Chinese media was swift and furious, forcing Velappan to make a face-saving apology.

However, it was too late to avoid serious embarrassment to the AFC.

The Asian Cup's credibility was further damaged by disciplinary problems on the pitch with 17 players sent off in 32 matches.

Three-time champions Iran were serial offenders, with four combined dismissals in their semifinal defeat and 4-2 victory over Bahrain in the third-place game.

Iran had also brought shame to the Asian Cup in the group stages when three defenders were suspended for violent conduct after a fiery 2-2 draw with Oman.

Mohammad Nosrati was kicked out of the tournament after stamping on an opponent, along with referee Abdul Rahman of Bahrain, who was sent home for failing to spot the incident.

However, a tournament plagued by controversy threatened to descend into farce when Japan beat Jordan in a penalty shootout that started at one end and finished at the other.

Japan, held 1-1 by Jordan after extra

time, reached the semifinals amid ugly scenes having persuaded the referee to switch ends after missing their first two penalties.

Jordan, dubbed the 'Greece of Asia' by their coach, missed four of their six kicks at the other end as their first Asian Cup campaign ended in heartbreak and bitter recriminations.

Meanwhile, Philippe Troussier became the first of two coaching casualties, sacked by Qatar after they were humbled 2-1 by Indonesia in their opening match.

The Frenchman's dismissal came four years after leading Japan to the title in Lebanon.

Dutchman Gerard van der Lem was also fired by Saudi Arabia after the three-times champions sensationally finished bottom of Group C.

Almost lost amid the problems was the achievement of tiny Bahrain, who reached the semifinals under Croatian coach Srecko Juricic.

Their success was in stark contrast to mighty South Korea, who crashed out in the quarter-finals just two years after their amazing run to the last four of the World Cup.

On a brighter note, Iraq brought a ray of hope to the war-torn country by battling to the last eight despite having to train alongside grazing sheep in Baghdad.

But the valiant endeavour of Iraq, Bahrain and Jordan failed to rescue the

The 'Hand' strikes again!

REUTERS, Beijing

It may not reverberate around the world in quite the same way as Diego Maradona's "Hand of God" but Koji Nakata effectively won the Asian Cup for Japan -- and broke Chinese hearts -- with a clear handball.

Japan beat hosts China 3-1 in Beijing on Saturday in a politically-charged final to claim their third Asian Cup title, provoking a furious reaction from Chinese fans.

Nakata scooped a Shunsuke Nakamura corner over the line in the 65th minute to give Japan the lead for the second time after the teams had started the second half level at 1-1.

Replays showed the midfielder had used his right hand to force the ball over the line, infuriating the Chinese players, coaching staff and a raucous crowd of 65,000.

The "Hand of Koji" could fuel as much heartache in China as Maradona's infamous goal at the 1986 World Cup has in England.

China coach Arie Haan claimed, with some justification, that all three Japanese goals were questionable and refused to collect his runners-up medal in protest at the officiating of Kuwaiti referee Saad Kameel.

Nakata himself said only: "I was trying to put it in with my chest."

Ligue 1

PSG start on wrong foot



AFP, Paris

Paris St Germain made the worst possible start to the start of their 30th year in the French top flight with a 2-1 defeat to Rennes.

Lyon claimed the first points in the first league game of the season on Friday with a 1-0 away win at Nice, however it is Lille who the defending champions will be chasing.

Lille top the table thanks to goal difference following a 2-0 home win over Auxerre, a result which will prove a relative shock to Guy Roux in Burgundy, although the wily Auxerre manager has lost a few key components in the off-season, most notably star striker Djibril Cisse to Liverpool.

Last season's Champions League finalists Monaco made a winning start, beating newly promoted St Etienne 1-0 thanks to a goal from new signing, Uruguayan international Ernesto Chevanton, who has the unenviable task of replacing Fernando Morientes.

Marseille grabbed all three points with both hands thanks to a timely extra-time winner courtesy of Gerald Batles, who

handed them a 1-0 home win over Bordeaux.

PSG meanwhile will be kicking themselves after their 2-1 defeat away to Brittany side Rennes, who took advantage of the Parisians' apparent transition as a number of new arrivals settle into the side.

PSG's Portuguese striker Pauleta, who has not played competitively since the Euro 2004 final, came into the match late to score their consolation goal - but by then PSG were already involved in a serious game of catch-up.

Rennes, who dominated the early period, grabbed the opener in the 22nd minute when Olivier Sorlin saw his cross-goal pass bounce off the PSG post and into the net.

Barely a minute later Rennes midfielder Alexandre Frei latched on to a long through ball from Olivier Monterrubio and hit a superb shot past Jerome Alonzo in the PSG net.

Stung into action, PSG nonetheless found it hard getting back on level terms. They should have found themselves further in the mire when the referee pointed to the spot for a foul on Frei, but Monterrubio's penalty kick in the 35th minute sailed high over the crossbar.

PSG's efforts to pull the score back took a knock when forward Daniel Luboja was

taken off injured. Pauleta came on, and waited barely 10 minutes before scoring from the penalty spot in the 41st minute.

After the interval PSG fought for the equaliser, with both defender Sylvain Armand and Pauleta seeing chances blocked by Rennes' Swedish international keeper Andreas Isaksson.

Rennes almost increased their lead in the second half, with Sorlin missing out when his shot hit the post in injury time.

Marseille meanwhile finished the night as one of eight teams to have claimed all three points from the first fixture of the season, thanks to Batles' late winner.

Marseille, the 1993 European champions who last season showed promising glimpses of their former greatness, will be hoping that this year they can end their trophy famine.

The demanding fans who brandished the banners at the Veldorado indicated they have waited long enough, and they looked set for another whitewash until Batles pounced four minutes into extra time.

Set up by Bruno Cheyrou, a recent arrival from Liverpool, Batles struck a 30-



Rennes' Brazilian player Adailton (Rear) vies with PSG's striker Fabrice Fioresse during their French Ligue 1 fixture on August 7. PSG lost 2-1.

Bundesliga

Deisler steals the show



AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich signalled their intention to wrestle back the Bundesliga crown from the grasp of Werder Bremen with midfielder Sebastian Deisler an inspiration in an opening 2-0 win at SV Hamburg.

Bremen defeated Schalke 04 1-0 24 hours earlier and Bayern responded with Felix Magath celebrating his first competitive match as their coach with three points at the AOL-Arena.

Magath rolled out the big guns with Brazilian World Cup winner Lucio and German international Torsten Frings - bought for a combined 21 million euros - in the starting line-up, but it was Deisler who stole the show.

German international Deisler, 24,

built on his sterling two-goal display in the 3-2 League Cup win over Werder Bremen with another stellar performance scoring a trademark free-kick for the second goal.

Deisler missed six months of last season after being diagnosed with depression but now seems to be back on track after a good pre-season.

Michael Ballack broke the deadlock on 22 minutes with Brazilian Ze Roberto backheeling the ball into his path and the German international rifled a shot into the bottom corner.

Hamburg had not defeated Bayern at home since 1996 and that run never looked like coming to an end as Deisler curled a free-kick over a suspect Hamburg wall and past the dormant Martin Piekenhagen in goal.

Reigning champions Werder Bremen needed a late goal from Paraguayan substitute Nelson Haedo

Valdez to steal the home win over Schalke 04.

The encounter was billed as a duel between Brazilian striker Ailton - returning to the Weserstadion in the colours of Schalke - and his five million euro replacement Miroslav Klose - but it was Valdez who snatched the headlines.

Valdez, 20, replaced German international Klose with 74 minutes gone and needed just nine minutes to have an impact prodding home a knockdown from Valerian Ismael in the 83rd minute to leave Ailton and Schalke deflated.

A power cut had delayed the kick off of the 2004/05 Bundesliga season by around 70 minutes but it was worth the wait for the bulk of the 43,000 fans at the Weserstadion who hope Bremen can build on their league and cup double last season.

While wins for Bremen and Bayern were expected the first shock of the

Bundesliga season occurred at the Westfalen Stadium.

Borussia Dortmund, who had the second best home record last term, fell to a 2-1 reverse against VfL Wolfsburg despite taking the lead through Brazilian Everthon on the half hour mark.

New Dutch manager Bert van Marwijk saw his first Bundesliga match end in defeat as Wolfsburg came from behind to notch a first ever win at Dortmund thanks to two strikes from Thomas Bradic (43,64).

Another team forced into a comeback was Bayer Leverkusen who needed a strike from Brazilian Franca at the death to claim a 2-1 win over Hannover at the BayArena.

Michael Tarnat, a recent recruit from Manchester City, put Hannover ahead with a blistering free-kick on the quarter hour mark but Bernd Schneider equalised in the 49th minute and