



IT'S NOT QUITE OVER: Real Madrid's French superstar Zinedine Zidane (R) gears up for a shot against Wisla Cracow in Cracow on August 11 during their first leg Champions League third preliminary round match. Zidane announced on the day he was retiring from international football.

# Life goes on for France

**Football**  
REUTERS, Paris

Real Madrid midfielder Zinedine Zidane has retired from international football, new France coach Raymond Domenech said on Thursday.

The 32-year-old Zidane had been expected to confirm his retirement later on Thursday in a television interview, though Domenech usurped the announcement when he named a vastly overhauled squad, which did not include Zidane, for a friendly against Bosnia in Rennes next week.

"Zidane will not play for France

anymore. I'm sorry about it. I would have liked him to carry on. He thought he had to leave the place to young players," said Domenech.

Domenech, forced by the earlier retirement of Bixente Lizarazu, Lilian Thuram and Marcel Desailly, included seven uncapped players in the squad, while defenders Olympique Lyon's Anthony Reveliere and Paris St Germain's Bernard Mendy have just one cap each.

Only 10 players from the France side that lost their European title when they were beaten in the Euro 2004 quarter-finals by eventual champions Greece were named in the squad.

Domenech did include Liverpool

striker Djibril Cisse, who has returned to the side after serving a four-match ban.

Cisse missed Euro 2004 because of the ban he received for kicking an opponent in an under-21 international against Portugal last year.

Domenech took over from Jacques Santini and he will have to lead France through the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign.

**SQUAD**  
**Goalkeepers:** Fabien Barthez (Olympique Marseille), Gregory Coupet (Olympique Lyon)  
**Defenders:** Eric Abidal (Olympique Lyon), Jean-Alain Boumsong (Rangers), Patrice Evra (Monaco), William

Gallas (Chelsea), Gael Givet (AS Monaco), Bernard Mendy (Paris St Germain), Anthony Reveliere (Olympique Lyon), Sebastien Squillaci (Monaco)  
**Midfielders:** Alou Diarra (RC Lens), Rio-Antonio Mavuba (Girondins Bordeaux), Benoit Pedretti (Olympique Marseille), Robert Pires (Arsenal), Jerome Rothen (Paris St Germain), Patrick Vieira (Arsenal)  
**Forwards:** Djibril Cisse (Liverpool), Pierre-Alain Frau (Olympique Lyon), Sydney Govou (Olympique Lyon), Thierry Henry (Arsenal), Peguy Luyindula (Olympique Marseille)

## Tribute for Ailton

**AFP, Berlin**

Brazilian striker Ailton expressed his delight at becoming the first foreigner to be voted German footballer of the year after his 28 goals shot Werder Bremen to the Bundesliga title last season.

Ailton joins greats such as legendary Bayern Munich striker Gerd Muller, four-time winner Franz Beckenbauer (1966, 68, 74, 76) and 1990 World Cup winner Lothar Matthaus in the hall of fame.

"To make German history is amazing," enthused Ailton in magazine Kicker. "There are so many good players here in Germany. I have only been here a few years but the German people love Ailton."

Ailton, now at Schalke 04, received 216 votes out of 712 by sports journalists in a poll for the magazine Kicker, which has carried out the survey every year since 1960, pushing German international Philipp Lahm into second spot.

Winner of the past two seasons, Bayern Munich midfielder Michael Ballack, third this time around, backed the decision to choose Ailton.

"Ailton deserves this accolade," admitted Ballack. "It is something special as it is clearly harder to win for a foreigner than a German."

That sentiment was echoed by German national coach Jurgen Klinsmann who won the English equivalent back in 1995 at Tottenham Hotspur.

"To be named footballer of the year is something special, particularly for a foreigner," declared Klinsmann.

"I experienced that in England. It is twice as hard if you are not from that country."

Ailton, 31, still yearns for recognition by his native Brazil and hopes to be a surprise inclusion in the Brazil squad to face Germany in Berlin on September 8.

"Brazil play against Germany in September and I hope to be there," added Ailton.

The stocky striker has also stated his willingness to play for Germany despite national captain Oliver Kahn claiming it would be a farce as he is not German.

"If Klinsmann wants me he can count on me," he added. "It would be a great honour to play in the 2006 World Cup."

Previously Ailton wanted to play for Qatar in the 2006 World Cup qualifiers before FIFA introduced new legislation to block the move.

# FIFA all for Maradona

**Football**  
**AFP, Zurich**

World football's governing body FIFA said Thursday that it would be ready to help Argentine footballing legend Diego Maradona try a Swiss health clinic in his battle to recover from drug addiction.

A FIFA spokesman confirmed a report in the Swiss newspaper Le Temps saying that it could support Maradona's attempt to pull out of ill-health and cocaine addiction at a clinic in the southern Swiss lakeside village of San Nazzaro.

"This type of step is part of our policy of corporate social responsibility for the organisation," the spokesman at FIFA headquarters in Zurich said.

Argentine media reported that the Swiss clinic, which was a possibility along with others in Cuba, where

Maradona has already stayed.

The Alabardia psychiatric clinic in San Nazzaro, which is only a few miles from the border with Italy, said it had "almost concluded" negotiations on the football star's therapy.

"The head of our clinic is in Argentina where he met the family and doctor of Mr Maradona,"

Michele Mattia, a doctor at the Swiss clinic told the Swiss news agency ATS.

"We would be very honoured if he chooses our clinic, which is ready to welcome him and give him all the treatment and psychological help possible," he added.

A day's stay in a private room with treatment and board costs 650 Swiss francs (421 euros, 515 dollars).

Maradona's personal doctor Alfred Cahe said in Buenos Aires on Wednesday that the former football star could ask Argentina's president Nestor Kirchner to speed up legal steps that would allow him to leave the country.

Maradona was taken to hospital in Buenos Aires on April 18 with heart and lung problems and he nearly died while in intensive care.

After leaving, he was readmitted again shortly afterwards when his condition deteriorated. Maradona has been in a clinic since May 9.

# Van Basten sends a message

**Football**  
**REUTERS, Zeist**

Netherlands coach Marco van Basten left out Patrick Kluivert and Philip Cocu as he called up six new players on Thursday when he named his first squad ahead of next week's friendly against Sweden.

The most surprising name in the squad, which shows nine changes from Euro 2004, is Fulham striker Collins John who is preferred to Feyenoord's Dirk Kuijt.

The other new names are Ajax Amsterdam goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg, defender Jan Kromkamp from AZ Alkmaar, forwards Dave van den Bergh of Utrecht and Feyenoord's Romeo Castelen plus Arsenal winger Robin van Persie.

Van Basten explained that Kluivert has to establish himself at his new English club Newcastle United, while after talking to Cocu they agreed the midfielder would focus on getting fully fit after an ankle injury had disrupted his pre-season.

"Kluivert has had a poor preparation for this season and first has to prove at his club that he's scoring and that a spot in the squad would be a logical choice," said Van Basten, who decided at the end of July to take over from Dick Advocaat.

Manchester United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy and Chelsea's new winger Arjen Robben are out of action after being sidelined with a groin and foot injury respectively and Van Basten has opted for John over Kuijt up front for tactical reasons.

"We chose John because he plays more from the right side while Dirk Kuijt, who had a good pre-season and is developing well, is more a central striker. With (Pierre) Van Hooijdonk and (Roy) Makaay we already have two of those," said Van Basten.

Van Basten and his technical staff had a meeting last Tuesday with Advocaat, who resigned after the Dutch lost 2-1 in the Euro 2004 semi-finals to hosts Portugal.

**SQUAD**  
**Goalkeepers:** Edwin van der Sar (Fulham, England), Maarten Stekelenburg (Ajax Amsterdam)  
**Defenders:** John Heitinga (Ajax Amsterdam), Nigel de Jong (Ajax Amsterdam), Wilfred Bouma (PSV Eindhoven), Giovanni van Bronckhorst (Barcelona, Spain), Kevin Hofland (VfL Wolfsburg, Germany), Jan Kromkamp (AZ Alkmaar)  
**Midfielders:** Mark van Bommel (PSV Eindhoven), Rafael van der Vaart (Ajax Amsterdam), Edgar Davids (Inter Milan), Wesley Sneijder (Ajax Amsterdam), Denny Landzaat (AZ Alkmaar)  
**Forwards:** Pierre van Hooijdonk (Fenerbahce, Turkey), Roy Makaay (Bayern Munich, Germany), Robin van Persie (Arsenal, England), Romeo Castelen (Feyenoord), Collins John (Fulham, England), Dave van den Bergh (Utrecht)

"We requested a meeting with Advocaat and were pleased that he could tell us all about his last two years with the Dutch team," said Van Basten.

One other change made by Van Basten is the use of sports psychologist Erik Reep, who has been employed to give his support to the players and technical staff.

"I think this group needs a sports psychologist because all are playing on a high level and have to perform match after match," said Van Basten.

"In my days at (AC) Milan we used (one) and I have to say it worked out really well because you are judged and condemned after every match you play."

**Eto'o goes to Barca**  
**AFP, Barcelona**

Cameroon international attacker Samuel Eto'o has signed with Spanish giants Barcelona, the club said Thursday.

Eto'o, who has played for Real Mallorca since 2000, was the subject of bidding battle between arch-rivals Real Madrid and also French first division club Marseille.

Last week Barcelona president Joan Laporta reportedly offered 21 million euros for the 23-year-old, who has scored 54 goals in the Spanish league and was a member of the Cameroon team that won the African Cup in 2002.

# No hiccups for giants

**UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE**

**AFP, Paris**

The established order in European football was respected on Wednesday night with big clubs Manchester United, Real Madrid, Monaco and Inter Milan all set to reach the Champions League group stages.

United may have beaten Dynamo Bucharest 2-1 in Romania to virtually assure qualification but it was an uphill task all the way.

A late Fernando Morientes double ensured Real Madrid won 2-0 at Wisla Krakow and Monaco had an emphatic win with new recruits Mohamed Kallon, who scored twice, and Ernesto Chevanton getting on the scoresheet for a 3-0 victory at Slovenian club Nova Gorica.

Inter Milan got a useful 1-1 away result at FC Basel to make them firm favourites to go through to the lucrative group stage, worth upwards of 25 million dollars to the victors.

United overcame a host of absentees, a bomb scare and an early own goal on their way to victory.

An own goal by Angelo Alistar in the second half proved the winner after Ryan Giggs had levelled following Quinton Fortune's early own goal to put the Romanians ahead.

United, the 1999 champions, were up against it from the start. Ferguson's side, which suffered a bomb scare at their hotel on the morning of the game, had a whole host of absentees.

Ruud van Nistelrooy and Louis Saha were out injured and Cristiano Ronaldo and Gabriel Heinz were at the Olympic

games. Rio Ferdinand of course was still suspended, fellow defender Wes Brown was out injured, and Ole Gunnar Solksjaer looks to be out for the season with a serious knee injury.

After just 10 minutes however United were behind. Dynamo's Claudiu Niculescu fired across a low, cross-cum-shot which was blocked by Howard but the ball then made contact with the South African Fortune on the goal line before finding the net.

In the 38th minute, United were back in the game. Giggs, one-on-one with the keeper after an error by Alistar, knocked the ball into the net for the equalizer.

Though the match had been even early on in the second period, United managed to get what proved to be the winner in the 71st minute. United's Liam Miller got to the by-line and hit a dangerous ball across goal which made contact with Alistar on its way to the roof of the net to leave United players celebrating.

United had not played brilliantly but solid if not great performances from Keane, Scholes and Smith were enough to make United firm favourites to go through after the return match at Old Trafford in two weeks time where Bucharest must score at least twice.

Morientes' rich vein of form in the Champions League continued in Poland.

The Spanish international is back on duty with the nine-time European champions after a spell on loan to Monaco, the French club who with his help emerged as surprise finalists last season.

The fact that Morientes played here and is now 'cup-tied' will dampen

speculation that he is to be used in a rumoured deal involving Liverpool's Michael Owen moving to Real and Morientes being off-loaded to Anfield.

Morientes struck for the first time in the 72nd minute when David Beckham sent in a well-weighted cross in the 72nd minute.

He added a second on the stroke of full-time, converting a cross from Roberto Carlos to take Real into the home leg of the tie with a comfortable advantage.

Morientes started on the bench but his introduction after 68 minutes for playmaker Zinedine Zidane seemed to pour cold water on media speculation that Real were ready to let him go in part exchange for Liverpool striker Michael Owen.

New Real coach Jose Antonio Camacho confirmed as much after the match, saying: "There are no plans relating to Morientes leaving the club". Regarding a move for Owen, he added cryptically: "I've heard that the decisions have been made."

Until Morientes came on Real had looked sluggish and only threatened in spells against a Krakow team desperate to be the first Poles to reach the group stage since Widzew Lodz in 1998.

Real find themselves having to navigate the tricky qualification round after their 2003/04 season fell apart - they were knocked out of the Champions League in the quarter-finals by Monaco with Morientes inflicting part of the damage.

The team Real beat in the 2002 final, Bayer Leverkusen, look home and hosed for the next round after handing out a 5-0 drubbing to Czech side Banik Ostrava.

Brazilian striker Franca grabbed a

hat-trick with his compatriot, defender Juan, and Bulgarian attacker Dimitar Berbatov completing the rout.

Inter Milan, who failed to make it into the knockout stages last season, took a 19th minute lead against FC Basel via Adriano, the striker back from helping Brazil win the Copa America where he emerged as the South American championship's top scorer.

But the Swiss hosts were soon back on level terms when midfielder Benjamin Huggel scored six minutes later.

Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk look set for the group stages after thrashing Belgium's Club Brugge 4-1 at home.

The other five-goal thriller of the night came in Serbia and Montenegro where Red Star Belgrade beat PSV Eindhoven 3-2.

South Korean midfielder Ji-Sung Park put PSV ahead before former European titleholders Red Star retaliated through goals from Milan Dudic, Bosko Jankovic and Marko Pantelic. PSV's John de Jong reduced the deficit with less than half an hour to go.

Irish minnows Shelbourne meanwhile held Spanish giants Deportivo La Coruna to a goalless draw at Lansdowne Road to keep their European adventure alive

# Blazing Argentina

**AFP, Athens**



Montenegro.

Argentina fired off an ominous warning to their rivals in the Olympic football tournament here Wednesday with a six-goal walloping of Serbia and

their campaign.

"We were very serious, especially in the first half," the Valencia stopper said. "After this the good beginning for the tournament came. We did not expect our opponents to be like this today. We were very serious of this match."

The Argentinians have never won the Olympic crown but produced the sort of display that has prompted many observers to install coach Marcelo Bielsa's men as favourites.

Zitouni after Australian goalkeeper Eugene Galekovic failed to clear a high ball.

The ball was played back in from the right by substitute midfielder Mejd Traoui for unmarked Zitouni to volley home from the edge of the six-yard box.

Tunisia defeated the highly-fancied Nigeria to qualify for the Olympics in finishing ahead of both Senegal and Nigeria in Group A of Africa's Olympic



PHOTO: AFP

Argentina's new sensation Carlos Tevez (C) tries to break clear from Serbia's Marko Lomic (L) and Djordje Jokic (R) at the Pampeloponnisiako stadium in Patras on August 11.

The South Americans' 6-0 drubbing of their European opponents in Group C was the highlight of the opening matches in the competition, which got underway two days ahead of Friday's opening ceremony.

In other matches, host nation Greece were made to sweat before fighting back from two goals down to force a 2-2 draw with Group A rivals South Korea while Australia were held 1-1 with Tunisia in Group C.

The remaining match saw Mali and Mexico play out a 0-0 draw in Group A.

On Wednesday's evidence Argentina -- bidding to make up for their heartbreak in the 1996 Olympic final when they lost to Nigeria -- should be the team to beat in Greece.

Argentina's experienced captain and central defender Roberto Ayala said his team had wanted to get a solid start to

Manchester United rebel Gabriel Heinze played a starring role in the victory, the 26-year-old scoring once and setting up another.

Heinze, who was signed in the summer from Paris St Germain, was warned by Old Trafford boss Alex Ferguson to skip the Olympics or risk never playing for United. Cesar Delgado, Kily Gonzalez, Carlos Tevez (2) and Mauro Rosales were also on the scoresheet.

In Crete, Australia were fortunate to escape with a point from their Group C contest with African champions Tunisia.

Australia's Spanish Primera Liga over-age striker John Aloisi put the Olyroos in front in the final minute of the opening half, but Tunisia dominated the second half and were unlucky not to win.

Their equaliser came in the 69th minute through Esperance striker Ali

qualification competition.

The north Africans are competing at their fourth Olympic football tournament and have yet to progress past the first round, while Australia's best finish at the Olympics was fourth at the 1992 Barcelona Games.

South Korea were left kicking themselves in Salonika as Greece fought back to snatch a draw in Group A after the Asians had gone ahead through Kim Dong-Jin's clinical strike and Loukas Vyntra's own goal.

But Ioannis Toralidis halved the deficit with a rasping volley to set alarm bells ringing before Dimitrios Papadopoulos tucked home a penalty eight minutes from time to ensure a point.

# German eves blitz China

**AFP, Athens**



fashion Wednesday as the United States trounced hosts Greece 3-0.

Inspired by a four-goal performance from women's international footballer of the year Birgit Prinz, Germany showed they have the class to add the Olympic

title to their world title won last year.

It was a stunning defeat for China, 1996 silver medalists and once one of the strongest women's teams in the world but currently struggling to rebuild their squad after the retirement of legendary star Sun Wen.

In Heraklion, the United States didn't score as many but were no less convincing in their victory over the Greeks.

The United States dominated throughout, spending the entirety of the first half camped in Greek territory with the hosts struggling to gain possession.

It was not long before the Americans opened the scoring. Skipper and talisman Mia Hamm burst down the left

flank and whipped in a low cross for Shannon Boxx who swept home from six yards out on 14 minutes.

Five minutes later the US added their second when Abby Wambach looped in a perfectly placed header after good work down the left by Kate Markgraf.

Hamm, one of the few superstars in women's football, completed the scoring with a superb late strike.

In other matches Wednesday, Japan flew the flag for Asia after China's miserable capitulation with a 1-0 win over Sweden.

A solitary goal also handed Brazil a 1-0 victory over Australia