

Olyroos there anyway

AFP, Athens



Australia jostled with gold medal favourites Argentina to play their way into the quarter-finals of the Olympic football competition at Karaiskaki Stadium here Tuesday.

The Olyroos went down 1-0, but still clinched a place in the last eight for a second time through superior goal difference to nudge out Group C rivals Tunisia, despite the north Africans' 3-2 win over Serbia Montenegro in Patras.

Mali and South Korea progressed to the quarter-finals from Group A after a 3-3 draw in Saloniki, while Mexico missed out despite a 3-2 win over hosts Greece.

Australia are likely to face Iraq in the quarter-finals on Saturday, while Argentina could face Portugal.

Argentina won through a beautifully-taken ninth-minute goal from Wolfsburg midfielder Andres D'Alessandro after deft leapup passing from Luis Gonzalez and Mauro Rosales.

"We took the match very seriously, despite the fact that we had already qualified for the next stage," D'Alessandro said.

"We scored once to secure the win but we didn't play as we should. I was expecting us to play better football today."

The dazzling South Americans threatened more goals against the hard-pressed Australian defence, but the Craig Moore-led Olyroos grittily held their ground and created several of their own chances to pinch a draw.

New Everton signing Tim Cahill missed with a point-blank header in the final minute of injury-time which would have given the Australians a fighting draw.

But the qualification came at a cost with skipper Moore and Cahill, two of Australia's three over-age players, suspended from the next game after picking up their second yellow cards of the tournament.

Australia's fierce tackling did not go down well with Egyptian referee Esam Abd el Fatah, who yellow-carded four Australians and three from Argentina.

Tunisia won in the final minute through Ali Zitouni after Serbia

Montenegro had fought back to 2-2.

Tunisia had a penalty taken six times through a series of encroachments into the penalty area by both teams before Mohamed Jedidi finally converted.

But it was all to no avail for Tunisia, who drew 1-1 with Australia in their opening pool game last Wednesday.

A Tenema Ndiaye hattrick put Mali 3-0 up after 55 minutes but the South Koreans roared back to grab a draw through two goals by Cho Jae-jin (57th and 59th minutes) before a 64th-minute own goal by Mali defender Adama Tamboura.

The draw was enough to deny Mexico their chance to play in the quarter-finals despite a 3-2 win over Greece in Volos.

Rafael Marquez and Omar Bravo put the Mexicans 2-0 ahead after 70 minutes, before Ioannis Tsalikidis brought the home fans to their feet with a 82nd-minute penalty.

But Bravo got a second goal four minutes from time to restore Mexico's two-goal buffer before Ieroklis Stolidis got a injury-time consolation goal for the Greeks, who finished the tournament with one point.

A new world order



Football

AP

It didn't take long for the new coaches of three soccer powers to make their marks.

Italy's Marcello Lippi dropped Alessandro Del Piero for Wednesday's exhibition game at Iceland, the Netherlands' Marco van Basten left out Dutch career scoring leader Patrick Kluivert for the match at Sweden and Germany's Juergen Klinsmann replaced Oliver Kahn as captain with Michael Ballack for the game at Austria.

In the first games for European nations since Greece won the European Championship last month, new French coach Raymond Domenech must make due against Bosnia without Zinedine Zidane, the reigning FIFA player of the year, who announced his retirement from the national team last week.

first has to prove at his club that he's scoring and that a spot in the squad would be a logical choice." Kluivert, who recently joined England's Newcastle has 40 goals in 79 appearances for the Dutch.

Klinsmann, who helped Germany win the 1990 World Cup, dropped Kahn as captain because he wanted "a player who is connected to all parts of the team and will take the reins in his hands when the going gets rough." Germany gets an automatic berth in the 32-nation field because it is the host nation.

The opening day of European World Cup qualifying has four games: Armenia at Macedonia, Finland at Romania, Estonia at Liechtenstein and Luxembourg at Slovakia. Most of the larger nations start qualifying Sept. 4.

In start of the semifinals of the North and Central American region, the United States is at Jamaica.

World Cup champion Brazil plays an exhibition game at Haiti to promote

and my dream is about to be realized."

Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is scheduled to attend the game at Port-au-Prince's renovated 15,000-seat Sylvio Cator Stadium, along with President Jorge Batlle of Uruguay, which also has troops in the U.N. force.

Initially, organizers considered inviting fans to turn in guns for admission, but the plan was abandoned due to concerns it could be seen as rewarding criminals. Tickets for average seats ranging from \$3-\$10 -- still a considerable amount in a country where many subsist on less than \$1 a day.

"Politics and soccer don't usually mix, but I think soccer players should participate in more humanitarian actions," Ronaldo said on Tuesday in the neighboring Dominican Republic, where players practiced ahead of the game. "The best thing is to see all the kids playing in the streets. If I can make a lot of goals so they'll have a good time, I'll do it."

England plays Ukraine in its first



PHOTO: AFP

GOLDEN GIFT FROM THE GOLDEN BOY: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (L) receives a pair of golden football boots from superstar Ronaldo (R) while first lady Marisa Leticia watches in Santo Domingo on August 17. Brazil face Haiti on Wednesday in Port-au-Prince in a friendly called "Game for Peace" which Lula da Silva will attend.

"Del Piero doesn't have any particular problem," said Lippi, who replaced Giovanni Trapattoni. "It's just that at the moment, I believe it's better that he improves his general condition. He'll be taken into consideration again once he's done that."

Van Basten, who took over from Dick Advocaat, said "Kluivert has had a poor preparation for this season and

peace in a nation still recovering from the rebellion that led to the Feb. 29 ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Haiti is ranked 95th in the world.

"Whenever Brazil plays anyone else, anywhere in the world, we root for Brazil," Haiti defender Bruny Pierre Richard said. "My dream is to play with Ronaldo or play against Ronaldo,

game since coach Sven-Goran Eriksson faced criticism from the British press when it was revealed he and Football Association chief executive Mark Palios had affairs with a 38-year-old FA secretary. Palios resigned and Eriksson was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Luis Aragonés coaches Spain for the first time, against visiting Venezuela in Las Palmas.

Nigeria led after a 25th-minute goal from US-based striker Mercy Akide popping in a rebound off a powerful header, but the Swedes claimed victory through goals by Hanna Marklund in the 68th minute and Malin Mastroem five minutes later.

Sweden will now play Australia in a quarter-final on Friday after the Aussies finished third in Group G following a 1-1 draw with world number two United States.

The Americans led through an 18th-minute strike by midfielder Kristine Lilly but Australia lifted in the second half and equalised through midfielder Joanne Peters eight minutes from time.

The United States will take on Japan in the quarter-finals.

Germany were too strong for Mexico winning through goals by Petra Wimbersky in the 20th minute and Birgit Prinz in the 79th minute.

Nigeria will play Germany in another quarter-final after finishing second in Group E.

Brazil swamped hosts Greece 7-0 with Cristiane scoring a hatrick to set up a match in the last eight with Mexico on Friday.



PHOTO: AFP

MY GOD, HE CAN FLY! Mario Perez (L) of Mexico watches Konstantinos Nempeglaras of Greece hanging in the air during their match at Panthessaliko Stadium in Volos on August 17.

How Bizarre!

AFP, Patras

Tunisia rounded off their Olympic Games football campaign in bizarre fashion here on Tuesday when they were forced to take the same penalty six times in their 3-2 win over Serbia and Montenegro.

With the Group C match level at 1-1 and in the dying stages, Tunisia were awarded the spotkick for a foul in the box.

Up strode experienced striker Mohamed Jedidi to take the kick and he scored confidently into the corner.

At least, he thought so. Referee Charles Ariotima from Tahiti ordered the penalty to be taken again and again after Tunisian players were accused of encroachment as Jedidi twice more found the net successfully.

Jedidi then had the fourth kick saved by Nikola Milojevic.

Again Ariotima was unhappy claiming that it was the Serbian players who had drifted into the 18-yard area and the Europeans were accused of the same offence on the fifth kick which again was stopped by Milojevic.

Incredibly, the 25-year-old Jedidi kept his nerve to legally convert the sixth kick.

The drama was all academic however as neither side managed to reach the quarter-finals.

"It was the first time in my life that I had taken a penalty kick so many times," Jedidi said.

Sweden avoid Germany

AFP, Athens

Sweden scored twice in five minutes to beat Nigeria here on Tuesday and avoid facing gold medal favourites Germany in the quarter-finals of the women's football competition.

The Swedes won 2-1 and took Group E on a countback after Nigeria and Japan finished on one win each and level goal difference in the pool.

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Vieira handed the armband



Football

AFP, Rennes

First Arsenal, now his country - Patrick Vieira has accepted "with pride" an invitation to captain France through the upcoming 2006 World Cup qualifiers.

The Gunners' skipper said his style of captaincy would fall between that of Didier Deschamps, who guided France to 1998 World Cup success, and his predecessor Marcel Desailly.

"Dede (Deschamps) was a captain who really got involved with everything, while Marcel on the other hand stepped back a little bit from all that, he was more relaxed. "I see myself as between the two of them."

Vieira, in Rennes with the France squad which will face Bosnia-Herzegovina in a friendly here Wednesday, said he'd had no hesitation in accepting the captain's armband when he was approached by

coach Raymond Domenech.

"I love responsibility," the midfielder said.

"So when the coach told me I was going to be captain of course I accepted.

"It's a huge personal satisfaction. "Ever since I was made Arsenal captain it's given me a lot. It's helped me make progress. I hope that'll also be the case with the France team."

However it is Fabien Barthez, appointed Vieira's second in command, who will lead 'Les Bleus' out on Wednesday as the Gunners' general sits out the game with an injury.

In his role as stand-in captain Barthez appeared at a pre-match press conference with Domenech and his performance behind the microphone left many reporters puzzled and bemused.

Appearing offhand and reticent the shaven-headed former Marseille goalkeeper virtually refused to talk about the new-look France team which features seven new caps.

When tackled on his position as one of the last representatives of France's World Cup winning side after the retirements of Bixente Lizarazu, Laurent Blanc, Marcel Desailly and Lilian Thuram all the 33-year-old would say was: "I've only been here for 24 hours."

"I'm not really ready to talk about all that, we'll have time to come back



PATRICK VIEIRA

Football stops in Denmark

AFP, Copenhagen

Danish footballers have hung up their boots after announcing strike action Tuesday to protest at a rule by the game's ruling body FIFA concerning the transfer of players under 23 years old.

Around 800 footballers playing in the country's professional leagues are up in arms following the collapse of negotiations between their union and their employers.

The players are opposed to FIFA's rule which states that when players under 23 years old are transferred, the club which formed the player - even if he is no longer under contract with them - are entitled to a "training payment".

The dispute has resulted in players not turning up for training, with many affirmed they will refuse to play in domestic, European or international matches.

The only exceptions are foreigners playing in the league and amateurs, who are not syndicated to the players' union.

In response, the Danish football union (DBU) told AFP it had "decided to postpone all competition across the various professional and amateur leagues while the conflict continues".

The Danish players' union is opposed to the FIFA ruling which, according to them, contravenes the Bosman ruling which opened the way, via a European Court ruling, for the free movement of European players across the continent.

For the president of reigning champions FC Copenhagen, Flemming Oestergaard, however, the strike action is "incomprehensible".

to that later".

When asked about the atmosphere in the squad which is meeting for the first time he confined himself to saying that the mood was "very good, the newcomers too".

Tapping his fingers on the table behind which he was sat he then told his bemused audience that "he didn't know much about Bosnia, apart from Konjic (defender who is injured and won't even be playing) with whom I played alongside at Monaco".

Domenech was moved to defend Barthez' apparent disinterest.

"He's already fixed on the game. There's no ambiguity, no worries. He wants to continue (playing). He's never been very expressive with the media, nothing's changed in his behaviour."

Vieira, another survivor of the class of 1998, also stepped in with a word of reassurance.

"Barthez has already given a lot to the France team and he still has a lot to give."

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Fabio (Vasco da Gama), Julio Cesar (Flamengo)

Defenders: Belletti (Villareal, Spain), Maicon (Monaco, France), Cris (Cruzeiro), Luisao (Benfica, Portugal), Roque Junior (Bayer Leverkusen, Germany), Juan (Bayer Leverkusen, Germany), Gustavo Nery (Werder Bremen, Germany), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid, Spain)

Midfielders: Edmilson (Barcelona, Spain), Gilberto Silva (Arsenal, England), Julio Baptista (Sevilla, Spain), Alex (Fenerbahce, Turkey), Renato (Sevilla, Spain), Diego (Porto, Portugal), Edu (Arsenal, England), Juninho Pernambucano (Olympique Lyon, France)

Forwards: Adriano (Inter Milan, Italy), Luis Fabiano (Sao Paulo), Ronaldinho (Barcelona, Spain), Ronaldo (Real Madrid, Spain), Robinho (Santos)

Benitez admired Nunez

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool coach Rafael Benitez unveiled his latest signing, Real Madrid midfielder Antonio Nunez, on Wednesday.

Nunez, who is expected to start against Manchester City on Saturday, arrives at Anfield as part of the reported 12 million euro-deal that took Michael Owen to Real.

Benitez admitted he had been a long time fan of the 25-year-old, who scored one goal for Real in his 10 month spell at the Bernabeu.

"In Spain you know almost all the players at Real Madrid well. When I was at Valencia I was looking for a man like this. My idea was the same here and we had this opportunity to sign him."

"Michael Owen has gone now and we can't do anything more than sign a good player," he said.

Nunez, signed on a three year deal, claimed it was tough leaving the side he'd supported since his childhood.

"It was difficult leaving Real because I was happy there. But this is my team now and this is the only thing to think about."

Galacticos who?



Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid's "galacticos" will have to get used to spending more time on the bench this season according to coach Jose Antonio Camacho.

"In every game there will be one or two players who think they are going to play but won't because others will

be doing their job well and will have earned their place in the side," Camacho told Spanish sports daily Marca on Wednesday.

"During the course of the season, though, there will be plenty of chances and there will be a role for everyone in the team."

Camacho said he was not upset by the club's decision to recruit English striker Michael Owen when he had called for reinforcements in defence, but made it clear that he expected his request to be met before the beginning of the season.

"Football is now a very different game," he said. "Real Madrid have a policy of trying to make a world-wide impact so they sign players to achieve that aim."

"I'm convinced that the team has

certain gaps that need to be filled and we are looking to do that, but it is not as easy as it seems."

"I don't mind waiting though and I'm sure we'll sign another player before the league season begins."

Inter Milan and Italy defender Fabio Cannavaro is reported to top Real's list of potential new recruits, but the club have also been linked with Argentine centre back Fabricio Coloccini who is owned by AC Milan.

Real's opening Primera League match is at Real Mallorca on August 29.