

RINUS MICHEL'S: 1928 - 2005

Total football's father no more

Football

REUTERS, Amsterdam

Rinus Michels, the coach who invented the total football played with such verve by Ajax Amsterdam and Holland, has died aged 77.

He had undergone heart surgery in a hospital in the Belgian town of Aalst when he died.

Michels was one of Europe's finest coaches and took the Dutch national side, led by Johan Cruyff, to the 1974 World Cup final.

Michels was named coach of the century by soccer's world governing body FIFA in 1999 and, along with the gifted Cruyff, was responsible for Dutch football becoming synonymous with skilful, easy-on-the-eye soccer.

Michels, is one of very few European coaches to have led clubs and country to top prizes on the continent.

He piloted Ajax Amsterdam to the 1971 European Cup and Barcelona to the Spanish title in 1974, and he returned to the Dutch national side to win the European title in 1988.

After playing for the Dutch as a centre forward in the 1950s, Michels developed total football in the following decade.

The concept gave players freedom to move around the pitch and the confidence to swap positions - a defender could link up with the attack and wingers could drop back to defend.

Fortuitously, Michels' ideas coincided with a generation of skilled Dutch players led by incomparable playmaker Cruyff and including Ruud Krol, Jonny Rep and Johan Neeskens.

The Dutch side reached the 1974 World Cup final in Germany where they lost 2-1 to the more pragmatic hosts. The Netherlands, without Michels and Cruyff, also lost the 1978 final to Argentina.

Nicknames of the General and Iron Rinus demonstrated

that despite his innovative thinking, Michels was no pushover. Stocky, with hair cropped short and a square jaw, the Amsterdam-born coach kept the bearing of a military man.

He was a man of few words and believed "Soccer makes itself on the field".

Michels was born Marinus Hendrikus Jacobus Michels on February 9, 1928, near the Olympic Stadium in the year of the Olympic Games in Amsterdam.

He played five internationals for the Netherlands and scored 121 goals in his career after 269 games for Ajax Amsterdam with whom he won two Dutch titles.

After army service he became a sports teacher before embarking on his career as a coach.

He started training Ajax in 1964/5 and by 1971 they were European champions for the first time, beating Panathinaikos of Greece in the final at Wembley. They also won four Dutch titles.

At the heart of that side was Cruyff, one of European soccer's post-war jewels whose vision and sublime skill made Michels' concept of total football come alive.

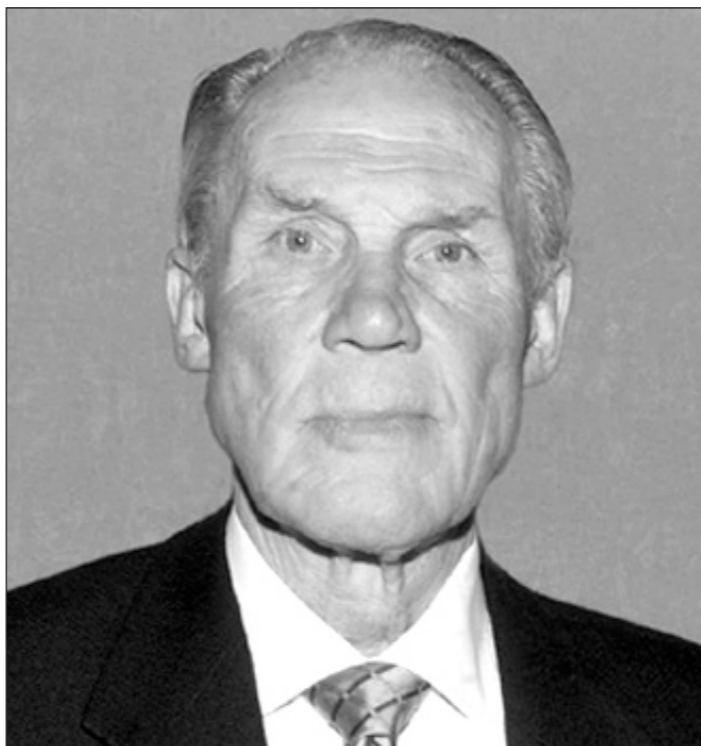
After Michels left for Barcelona later in 1971, he signed Cruyff and they won the 1974 Spanish title.

Michels moved to the Los Angeles Aztecs from 1978 to 1980 and Cologne (1980-1984) before finishing his club coaching career with Bayer Leverkusen in Germany in 1989.

A year earlier his tactical genius was finally rewarded at international level when the Netherlands beat the Soviet Union to win the European Championship, in the same Munich Olympic Stadium where they had lost the 1974 World Cup final.

This time his team was inspired by the trio of Ruud Gullit, Marco van Basten and Frank Rijkaard.

Van Basten, scorer of one of the most memorable goals in international soccer, is the current Dutch coach.



RINUS MICHEL'S

MICHEL'S FACTS

Factbox on Rinus Michels, FIFA's Coach of the Century who died on Thursday aged 77.

Marinus Hendrikus Jacobus Michels

Born: February 9, 1928 in Amsterdam.

1946-58: Played 269 times for Ajax and scored 121 goals. Was a member of their championship winning side in 1947 and 1957. Won the first of five caps for the Netherlands in a 4-1 defeat to Sweden in June 1950.

1975-1976: Becomes technical director at Ajax.

1976-1978: Returns to Barcelona and won the Spanish Cup with them in 1978.

1978-1980: Joins Los Angeles Aztecs

1980-1983: Moves to FC Cologne and lifts the German Cup in 1983

1984-1986: Technical director of the Dutch soccer association.

1986-1988: Returns as Dutch coach and leads a new generation of players to beat the Soviet Union 2-0 in the final of the European Championship for the country's only major trophy.

1988-1989: Ends his domestic coaching career with Bayer Leverkusen.

1990-1992: As Dutch coach his team are knocked out in the semi-finals of the 1992 European Championship on penalties to eventual winners Denmark.

1991-1995: Joins Barcelona, taking them to the Spanish title in 1974.

March-July 1974: Takes over as Dutch national coach and using his concept of "Total Football" the team reach the World Cup final where they lose 2-1 to hosts West Germany in Munich.

1975-1976: Becomes technical director at Ajax.

1976-1978: Returns to Barcelona and won the Spanish Cup with them in 1978.

1978-1980: Joins Los Angeles Aztecs

1980-1983: Moves to FC Cologne and lifts the German Cup in 1983

1984-1986: Technical director of the Dutch soccer association.

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1999: Named FIFA Coach of the Century

GERMAN CUP Four-star Pizarro

AFP, Berlin

Peruvian international striker Claudio Pizarro scored four goals as Bayern Munich crushed ten-man SC Freiburg 7-0 on Wednesday to book a place in the semi-finals of the German Cup.

The victory keeps Bayern on course for a historic quadruple with the German powerhouse wrapping up the League Cup in pre-season, sitting joint top of the Bundesliga and going strong in the last sixteen of the Champions League after beating Arsenal 3-1 in the first leg.

Bayern edged Freiburg 1-0 in the league on Saturday but there was nothing close about this match as Felix Magath's side netted five times in the first half with Pizarro scoring three of them.

Munich are 31 points better off in the Bundesliga than relegation-threatened Freiburg and it showed as Pizarro scored twice in the first ten minutes.

The Peruvian star completed his treble in the 39th minute curling a precise right-footed effort into the bottom corner.

After the break Bayern took their foot off the gas but Pizarro was hungry for more and netted his fourth of the match on the hour mark.

"I scored five in one game back in Peru but this is the first time I have scored four in Germany," said Pizarro.

German international captain Michael Ballack, back after two weeks on the sidelines, marked his return with a 27th minute strike and Dutch international Roy Makaay was also on target after 34 minutes.

On the stroke of half-time, Freiburg defender Youssef Mohamad then picked up a straight red card for tugging back Makaay and Freiburg's ten remaining players trudged off 5-0 down at the interval.

After Pizarro's fourth goal Iranian substitute Vahid Hashemian completed the scoring in the 76th minute with a rare goal before the final whistle arrived to the delight of Freiburg's downtrodden players.

Bayern, 11-time cup winners, join holders Werder Bremen, Bundesliga co-leaders Schalke 04 and outsiders Arminia Bielefeld in the hat for Sunday's draw.

In the past seven seasons only three teams - Bayern, Schalke and Bremen - have won the German Cup and the odds are on one of those lifting the cup again on May 28 in Berlin.

FA CUP

Spurs cruise to last eight

Football

AFP, Nottingham

Tottenham Hotspur secured the last remaining quarter-final place in this season's FA Cup with a 3-0 fifth round replay win away to Championship strugglers Nottingham Forest at the City Ground here Wednesday.

Two second-half goals by defender Noe Pamarot and striker Robbie Keane plus an injury-time header from Egyptian substitute Mido saw eight-times Cup winners Spurs book themselves an away tie against Premiership rivals Newcastle on March 1.

Forest and Tottenham were replaying after a 1-1 draw last month at White Hart Lane where a second-half goal from lifelong Spurs fan Gareth Taylor earned the East Midlands club a second chance after their teenage keeper Colin Doyle fumbled Jermain Defoe's 25-yard free-kick even though it was straight at him.

But for the replay Forest, beaten 2-1 in the final when Spurs last won the FA Cup in 1991, had Paul Gerrard back between the posts after suspension.

Tottenham head coach Martin Jol was forced to do without defenders Ledley King and Noureddine Naybet because of groin injuries after the victory against Fulham at the weekend although Thimothee Atouba returned following a knee problem.

Double European Cup winners Forest, battling to avoid relegation to the third tier of

English football for the first time since the 1950s went into the match unbeaten in six games but still six points shy of safety.

Keane could have put Spurs ahead in the 28th minute but former Everton shot-stopper Gerrard got down low to get a hand to the striker's goalbound shot after Frederic Kanoute had chested Reto Ziegler's cross into the Republic of Ireland forward's path.

But Forest almost had the lead on the stroke of half-time when Paul Evans, following John Curtis's cross, saw his shot well-parried by Spurs's England keeper Paul Robinson.

Goalless at half-time, Spurs piled on the pressure early in the second period with Kanoute's charged down free-kick sparking a goalmouth scramble.

Forest escaped on that occasion but their reprieve did not last long. On the hour mark French centre-back Pamarot beat Gerrard to Ziegler's inswinging corner and his glancing header flew in.

Gerrard though saved in quick succession from both Ziegler and Keane to keep the tie alive with 20 minutes to go.

But another Ziegler corner, flicked on by Michael Brown, was turned in by Keane on the goal-line to make the game safe for Spurs in the 72nd minute.

Keane might have had a second with four minutes to go when he burst through on goal only for the impressive Gerrard to block his shot.

And with under two minutes to go Forest's James Perch almost set up a lively finish when his sidefoot volley went narrowly wide of the far post with

Robinson helpless. But there was still time for the Londoners to grab a third when Mido was on hand to nod the ball in after Brown's powerful shot came back off the crossbar.

THE DRAW

Revised English FA Cup draw after Wednesday's fifth round replay:

Revised quarter-final draw
Newcastle v Tottenham
Southampton v Manchester United
Bolton v Arsenal
Blackburn v Leicester

Collina to end in June

AFP, Rome

Italy's Pierluigi Collina, the most widely known referee in the world, is set to retire in June, the Gazzetta dello sport reported on Wednesday.

Collina, who turned 45 on February 13, has not received the necessary exemption from world football's governing body FIFA to continue refereeing until the 2006 World Cup.

He will become a referee coordinator for the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), the newspaper added.

Collina, a financial adviser by profession, has been a referee since 1977, taking charge of his first Serie A match in 1991 and was awarded his FIFA badge in 1995.

He has been named five times world referee of the year and officiated at the 2002 World Cup final between Brazil and Germany.

Luxemburgo hits back

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo came to the defence of Ronaldo after the Brazilian striker was jeered by fans during his side's 3-1 victory at home to Real Betis on Wednesday.

"The people that jeered him today will be cheering him tomorrow," Luxemburgo told a news conference after the match.

"He worked hard, fought, went in search of the goal and tried everything, but sometimes in football no matter how hard you try, the ball won't go in the net," Ronaldo, who has not scored in the last seven league games, came in for heavy criticism from the Spanish media for arrival late for training after his recent Valentine's Day engagement celebrations in Paris.

The 28-year-old was in lively form at the Bernabeu and created several scares for the Betis defence, but was unable to end his recent scoring drought.

"I was very satisfied with his work out on the pitch and saw no reason to substitute him," Luxemburgo said. "The important thing is that he keeps on working and that way he will win over the fans again."

"Ronaldo has got a lot of experience and knows that if he gets two goals in the next game, the fans will applaud him and everything will be forgotten."

Ronaldo has been Real's top scorer in each of the two seasons since he joined the club from Inter Milan and is the club's leading striker in the present campaign with 11 goals, two more than Michael Owen.

Ronaldo's stolen stuff recovered

INTERNET SOURCE

Brazilian police have recovered memorabilia stolen from the house of striker Ronaldo's father in Rio de Janeiro in February, authorities said Wednesday.

A soccer ball used in the World Cup that Brazil won in the United States in 1994 and a shirt that the striker of Real Madrid wore in the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea were among the items, according to the police.

The local media have called the 2002 World Cup shirt a "valuable trophy" because it contains the signatures of all players on the Brazilian team, which won the 2002 World Cup in Tokyo in a 2-0 triumph over Germany.

Robbers stole the items from the apartment of Ronaldo's father while he was in France to attend his son's wedding, the police said.

Ronaldo's father owns a large collection of soccer items, including the first national team shirt Ronaldo wore and the shirt German goalkeeper Oliver Kahn wore in the 2002 World Cup final

PRIMERA LIGA

Real ease past Betis

Football

AFP, Madrid

Michael Owen hit his ninth goal of the season while Roberto Carlos hammered a perfect response to the Spanish terrace racists as Real Madrid beat Real Betis 3-1 on Wednesday to reignite their title dream.

The win cut Barcelona's lead at the top to six points after the leaders were held to a 0-0 draw on Tuesday by Espanyol.

Owen, handed a rare start by coach Wanderley Luxemburgo in place of club skipper Raul who has been hit by flu, opened the scoring after just nine minutes at the Bernabeu after a pass from Santiago Solari.

The Englishman had been paired with Ronaldo who had missed Saturday's defeat at Deportivo through injury but it was another Brazilian World Cup winner who got his name on the scoresheet next.

Roberto Carlos, named skipper for the night in the absence of Raul and who was the target of 'monkey chants' from Deportivo La Coruna fans at the weekend, showed no hangover from the abuse when he thundered in a free-kick from just 12 yards for the second goal four minutes from the break.

It was also the perfect way for the veteran defender to celebrate his 300th Spanish League appearance with the goal which came from an indirect free-kick played to him by David Beckham.

Owen was relishing his opportunity to impress and should have added a third when he was clean through on goal early in the second half but blasted over the top with just the keeper to beat.

Real Betis pulled one back on the hour mark through Edu, beating Cesar in the Real goal after regular keeper Iker Casillas had been injured in the first half.

But it only spurred Real into a higher gear and Ivan Helguera headed in a third just a minute later.

Villarreal moved into third place after a 2-1 win at home to Real Mallorca with former Manchester United striker Diego Forlan grabbing the winner six minutes from the end.

Forlan has found Spanish football far more to his taste as it was his 16th of the season, leaving him just two adrift of the league's leading scorer Samuel Eto'o.

Defending champions Valencia

and Sevilla, both chasing a Champions League spot for next season, battled out a 2-2 draw with Jesul giving Sevilla a 40th minute lead.

David Navarro, on the stroke of half-time, and Argentinian international Pablo Aimar, on the hour, then gave Valencia, who sacked coach Claudio Ranieri last week, a 2-1 advantage.

Julio Baptista gave Sevilla a share of the points with a 67th minute penalty.

TOP SIX

Spanish football league standings after Wednesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	26	18	5	3	50	18	59
Real	26	17	2	7	46	22	53
Villarreal	26	12	7	7	43	24	43
Sevilla	26	12	7	7	32	29	43
Valencia	26	11	9	6	40	27	42
Espanyol	26	12	6	8	32	28	42



Real Madrid's Brazilian superstar Roberto Carlos (No 3) celebrates with compatriot Ronaldo as Michael Owen joins in after Carlos had scored against Betis at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on March 2.

PHOTO: AFP