

Goal-line technology at World Cup

AFP, Paris

World soccer chief Sepp Blatter has revealed goal-line technology will be used in the 2006 World Cup to avoid any controversy over whether a side has scored or not. Blatter said adidas was aiming to get a system in place for the finals, which begin on June 9 2006 which involves balls being fitted with electronic chips which send bleeps to a device in the referee's ear when the ball has crossed the line. "I am convinced it will be ready for the World Cup," he told E! Europe sports daily. FIFA are to experiment with the technology at the world under-17 championship in Peru from

September 16 to October 2.

But he ruled out the use of video, pointing to the controversy surrounding Liverpool's goal against Chelsea in the second leg of their European Cup semi-final as a reason why TV cameras should never be used to help referees on goal-line disputes.

"They had 12 cameras there and you could not see. We believe the human side of the game should be kept," he added.

He said they had revised their selection and training of referees after cases of "appalling" refereeing at the 2002 World Cup finals.

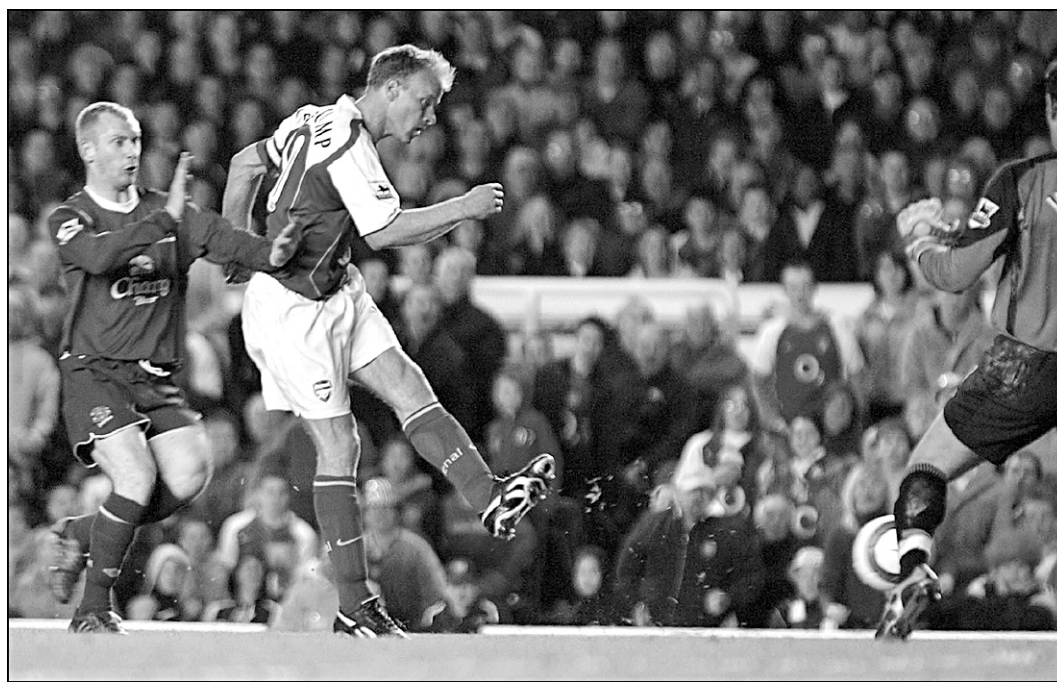
Teams of referees and linesmen, who regularly work with each other, have been put together for the tournament and are already attending regular training seminars in Germany.

"They will only work in trios that have been pre-selected. We have been tough on them so that there is uniformity of the interpretation of the laws. I take part of the responsibility for last time. I hope we will have the best referees on the market and avoid the kind of situations we had in 2002."

Blatter believes the 2010 World Cup in South Africa is set to make more money from TV rights than next year's tournament.

"The projection is that the interest in the market will be higher than the value obtained in Germany in 2006. The World Cup ratings are higher than the Olympic Games and people realise it is a good product with teams with national identity which is no longer the case in most clubs.

"The market also trusts the organisation of the South Africans."



OLD IS GOLD: Arsenal's Dutch maestro Dennis Bergkamp (C) scores his side's sixth goal against Everton at Highbury in London on May 11.

Dennis becomes a selection menace

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger is flatly refusing to commit himself to keeping Gunners legend Dennis Bergkamp at Highbury next season.

The Dutch master produced a superb display at the heart of Arsenal's performance as the English Premiership runners-up crushed Everton 7-0 in their penultimate league game, scoring one and creating three.

The former Netherlands forward, 36, is desperate for a new one-year contract with Arsenal before retiring.

But despite his ripping Everton to shreds, Wenger remained tight-lipped over Bergkamp's chances of being rewarded.

"Dennis is 36 years of age and you can't base a season on his contribution any more," Wenger said after watching the fourth-placed Toffees capitulate at Highbury on Wednesday, thanks to Bergkamp's majestic efforts.

"You cannot say he will play 50 games. He can still play 20 to 25 games very well.

"He accepts that already. He has to feel that he wants to be part of us and that he wants to continue and I have to make my mind clear also.

"I can understand with the fans that he is highly loved and he deserves it. But I have to make my decisions," Wenger warned.



THAT'S HISTORY! Superstar Ronaldo (L) and Daniella Cicarelli walking hand in hand during better times. The couple announced that they were splitting on Wednesday.

Ronaldo, Cicarelli split

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil and Real Madrid striker Ronaldo has split up with fiancée Daniella Cicarelli less than three months after the couple threw a lavish engagement party at a secluded castle outside Paris.

"The footballer Ronaldo and the television presenter Daniella Cicarelli officially inform that they are separating and they reserve the right not to give any more details about the episode," said a statement issued by a spokesman for Cicarelli.

The couple threw the party, which cost an estimated 700,000 euros (896,000 pounds), near Chantilly on February 14.

Although it was billed as a wedding, Ronaldo could not marry 23-year-old Cicarelli because he had not been divorced for a full year from his first wife, Milene Domingues.

Ronaldo and Domingues were married in 1999 and have a child named Ronald.

PREMIERSHIP

Gunners bomb Everton

Football

AFP, London

Dutch master Dennis Bergkamp staked his claim for one final contract as the Gunners demolished Everton 7-0 at Highbury here on Wednesday.

The former Netherlands striker, 36, is eager for a further season with Arsenal and his sublime hand in scoring one and creating three Gunners goals may be enough to convince boss Arsene Wenger he deserves an extended spell.

The imperious victory, played out to chants of "One more year" for Bergkamp, ensures the Gunners head into their final English Premiership game and the FA Cup final against Manchester United in top form.

Netherlands forward Robin van Persie scored eight minutes in and French international winger Robert Pires headed in three minutes later.

Captain Patrick Vieira chipped a third on 37 minutes before Pires struck his 14th Premiership goal with 50 minutes gone.

In his final appearance at Highbury, Brazilian Edu scored a 69th minute penalty, Bergkamp struck himself on 77 minutes and substitute Mathieu Flamini made it seven after 85 minutes.

"I feel it's a symbol of our season. We were always scoring goals; now we've 86 goals, that is tremendous. Tonight's game showed we have improved our defence because we conceded too many goals and the last few months we haven't conceded so many and that is the difference," said Wenger.

Everton boss David Moyes was so distraught with his team's showing he simply said: "I'm embarrassed by tonight's performance. It's been a great week for Everton Football Club. No criticism of the players but tonight as a manager, I'm totally embarrassed with what

happened. That's all I've got to say."

Arsenal are guaranteed to finish second in the Premiership, which earns a Champions League group stage spot next season, while Everton will finish fourth, enough for a qualifying round place.

But on this humiliating showing, the Toffees are woefully short of the standard required at Champions League level.

England centre-half Sol Campbell returned to the Arsenal side and France striker Thierry Henry, out since April 9 with a groin problem, came off the bench for the second half.

Both will be keen to prove their fitness ahead of the May 21 FA Cup final in Cardiff.

A back injury forced Everton's Australia midfielder Tim Cahill to miss out. Arsenal wasted no time in picking the visitors apart.

Bergkamp advanced but delayed his pass until his countryman Van Persie charged into the box, a perfectly-weighted through-ball allowing him to sidefoot a shot past Everton's former Arsenal goalkeeper Richard Wright.

Bergkamp took a further three minutes to play the through-ball that set up the second.

Jose Antonio Reyes ran to the goal-line with Bergkamp's pass before pulling the ball back for Pires.

Wright blocked the shot from the edge of the penalty area but Pires reacted first to the rebound, directing a header against the bar which dropped into the goalmouth.

The Gunners then dominated possession, Everton suffering long spells of slick Arsenal passing.

Bergkamp made it three telling passes, playing the ball into Vieira's stride as he broke into the box and chipped over the sorry Wright.

The Everton stopper, second choice behind Nigel Martyn, proved his worth three minutes before the break, beating away a Van Persie free kick then Reyes' follow-up.

Wenger threw on Henry and

Flamini for Vieira and Van Persie for the second half, while awful Everton replaced James Beattie with Marcus Bent to no effect.

Arsenal increased the pace as Pires pounced to make it 4-0 five minutes after the interval.

An Henry pass on the edge of the penalty box, heading away from goal, ricocheted off Lee Carsley and bounced perfectly for Pires to break into the area and tap in from 10 yards.

Carsley was Henry's luckless victim once again when a chipped cross hit the midfielder's upper arm.

Edu was urged forward to take the spot-kick, and scored with Wright getting a hand to the effort as heived left.

Bergkamp increased the Everton's embarrassment with Arsenal's sixth, controlling a high ball on his thigh in the penalty box before passing the ball beyond Wright.

Flamini tapped in a Reyes cross from five yards to complete Arsenal's biggest win under Wenger in his nine-year reign before the Gunners performed a well-earned lap of honour.

However, despite this glittering league win, the FA Cup final remains Arsenal's only chance to earn some meaningful silverware for their efforts this season.

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Carlos sorry for shirt gesture

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Roberto Carlos says he regrets giving his shirt to the former leader of Real Madrid's radical Ultra Sur fans moments after the group displayed an anti-immigration banner.

"I made a mistake of presenting the shirt at that moment," the Brazilian fullback told Punto Radio late on Wednesday. "I wasn't aware of the controversial events that had occurred during the game."

The Real Madrid leftback gave former Ultra Sur leader Jose Luis Ochaíta his shirt following his side's 5-0 victory over Racing Santander on Saturday.

Ochaíta was banned from stadiums for three years in 1998 for trying to attack the referee in a Real Madrid-Barcelona basketball game and was among eight Ultra Sur arrested in Germany in the same year for displaying Nazi flags and swastikas prior to a Champions League match.

Spanish daily El Pais said that the shirt was to be used in a raffle to raise funds to subsidise trips made by the group's members to away matches.

During the match the group had displayed a large banner behind one of the goals reading: "They invade us, they kill us. Justice for Spain, justice for Manu."

Manu refers to a youth who was fatally stabbed in a Madrid suburb, reportedly by a Dominican.

Spain's government-run Antiviolencia Commission has recommended that Real be fined 3,001 euros for not preventing the entry and display of the banner, which was later removed by a security official from the club.

"I've suffered a lot of racist abuse at many grounds," said Roberto Carlos. "Of course I think they were wrong to display the banner, but I didn't see it when I

"It is a decision if he wants to continue first. There's nothing better than sitting face to face and having a frank exchange of views on what we want to do," he said.

The non-flying Dutchman has played 36 times this season, hitting seven goals in the process.

Bergkamp has been told of his value to Arsenal in developing their new crop of youngsters.

Talented starlets like Gael Clichy, Jeremie Aliadiere, Philippe Senderos, Mathieu Flamini and Arturo Lupoli have fitted on the fringes of the first team and Wenger has fielded virtual youth sides in the League Cup.

A new generation is hovering on the touchline at Highbury but Bergkamp is adamant he is not there to coach and wants to fight for his place.

Wenger is hinting those players may come to the fore next season and with any signings made in the interim, Bergkamp could find himself pushed down the pecking order.

"Every season is a new start and what is most important is that we stick to what we want to do," the Frenchman signalled.

"We have many young players and they cope well and they accept well the way we want to play. There's a good understanding and the team is growing and that's the basis for next season."

Real movie a hit already

Football

REUTERS, Cannes

A feature film mixing documentary-style footage of Real Madrid soccer stars with fiction became the talk of the Cannes film market on Wednesday as soon as its existence was revealed.

"Real, The Movie" is a 90-minute film set for release in July that weaves together five fictional characters from around the world with real-life footage from on and off the pitch of stars David Beckham, Zinedine Zidane, Ronaldo and Raul.

"There's been an unbelievable amount of interest," said Simon de Santiago, director of production for the Spanish distributor Sogepaq, which holds the worldwide rights.

The film's very existence seemed to surprise buyers at Cannes' "Marche du film" -- the world's biggest film market, with 8,281 participants from 2,977 companies in 79 countries.

"Is this the place with the Beckham film?" asked one harried buyer before lining up for an appointment.

A short clip being aired at the stand included fictional scenes of a Japanese teenage girl obsessed

with Beckham having problems with her envious boyfriend, and a boy in Senegal who is a devoted Real fan even though he has never even seen them play.

In New York, a teenage girl suffers an injury playing soccer similar to one sustained by Ronaldo, and in Caracas a boy learns a secret from his grandfather about the club.

The producers hope the allure of one of the world's richest and most successful clubs and the glamour of its players will pull in a worldwide audience, but de Santiago insisted it was no cynical venture.

"Soccer is a universal game and Real Madrid is the biggest brand there is."

He said the segments involving the Real Madrid players, which make up about 40 minutes of the film, were not staged.

"There was no interference and they were not asked to act, but they obviously have an important presence," he said.

Officials said the segments were mostly filmed during the team's tour of Asia last year. Many scenes show the players in training and undergoing physiotherapy.

The film was co-produced with the club's own Real Madrid TV, and is now in post-production.

Kaiser's choice

AFP, Buenos Aires

West Germany's 1974 World Cup victor Franz Beckenbauer has tipped Germany, Argentina and Brazil as favourites to win the 2006 World Cup.

"Argentina and Brazil are currently, and as they have been in the past, two of the strongest teams in the world. No doubt both are candidates to win the World Cup," Beckenbauer told Wednesday's edition of La Nacion de Buenos Aires newspaper.

But the head of the World Cup organising committee added: "The only team that has already qualified is Germany (as host nation) and I certainly believe that we also have a good chance."

Argentina top the South American qualifying group with 28 points from 13 matches, having lost only once, while Brazil lie four points behind them in second place.

Beckenbauer, who also won the 1990 World Cup as coach of Germany, rated Brazilian duo Ronaldinho

and Ronaldo, Argentinians Andres D'Alessandro and Hernan Crespo, Ukrainian Andrei Shevchenko and Germany's own Michael Ballack as the best players in the world at the moment.

"It will be magnificent to see them in our stadia next year," he said.

Ganguly got a middle-level ban: Mani

PTI, Dubai

International Cricket Council president Ehsan Mani has defended the six-match ODI ban on India captain Sourav Ganguly and urged the national boards to respect the verdicts of the match officials.

"Once we set up a process, we must respect the integrity of that process. If we try to change it each time because someone does not like the decision, then it will be meaningless," Mani was quoted as saying by Gulf News on Thursday.

Mani said the ban on Ganguly was in accordance with the regulations approved by the member countries and as such the punishment was neither mild nor harsh.

"As per the rules, one can be banned for minimum of four matches or a maximum of eight matches. Ganguly got a middle-level ban," he said.

Ganguly was banned for six one-day internationals following India's slow over rate twice during the home series against Pakistan.

Her teammate Farhana Parveen Tumpa, however, won followed up her doubles title with the mixed doubles crown. Tumpa, pairing with Hamlet, beat Biman duo Mahabub and Rumi 11-9, 10-12, 11-3, 11-6, 11-3.

Reaz Mahmud Rocky, who also won double crown, received the Sachin Chaki trophy for the player of the tournament. On the concluding day, the Ansar lad bagged the boys' singles title beating Narail's Shovan 11-4, 11-3, 11-9 and 11-7. Earlier, he took both the boys' team and doubles titles.

The men's doubles crown went to Biman's 11-time singles champion Mosaddekul Rakib and his junior partner Hamlet, and his recent walkover against last year's runners-up Nasimul Hassan Kachi and Pavel Biswas Pappu. Pappu did not appear due to his illness.

Anjan Chowdhury Pinto, managing director of the sponsor Square Toiletries, distributed trophies as chief guest.

AKC end trophy

FROM PAGE 16 with a fine left-footed drive inside from the box also after a solo run just three minutes before the final whistle.

Bangladesh Football Federation president SA Sultan distributed trophies after the final.

Red cards: Tipu (Abahani) and Rachid (Russel).

Yellow cards: Ibrahim, Shawkat (Abahani) and Sharif (Russel).

TEAMS
ABAHANI: Nizam, Obaidur, Pradeep, Shawkat, Lajuk, Ujjal, Joy, Ndem, Parvez, Ibrahim and Farhad (Tipu).

RUSSEL KC: Biplab, Aminul, Deen Mohammed, Pradeep, Mishu (Yusuf), Hanif, Sharif, Tanveer, Egr, Adil (Maruf) and Rachid.

For Mostafa life

FROM PAGE 16 10-12 and 11-7 win over Bangladesh Biman's Rumi. It was a solace for Saleha who missed out in the doubles after winning the team event for Ansars.

Her teammate Farhana Parveen Tumpa, however, won followed up her doubles title with the mixed doubles crown. Tumpa, pairing with Hamlet, beat Biman duo Mahabub and Rumi 11-9, 10-12, 11-3, 11-6, 11-3.

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Atapattu skipper until August end

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka Thursday named Marvan Atapattu as the captain of the national team for the forthcoming series against West Indies and a triangular tournament that will also involve India.

The other members of the squad were not immediately announced by Sri Lanka's interim board managing the sport.

India and Sri Lanka will clash in at least eight one-day internationals in August.

India will join the West Indies and hosts Sri Lanka in a tri-series August 2-14 before Sri Lanka travel to India two days later for five more one-dayers.

Woolmer tells Akhtar to be fit

CRICINFO, undated

Bob Woolmer confirmed that Shoaib Akhtar was left out of the squad purely on fitness grounds and urged him to regain his full fitness by playing first-class cricket.

Shoaib had said he was confused about the reasons for his exclusion from the squad chosen for the West Indian tour and had demanded an explanation from the selectors regarding the same.

"There is no personal agenda involved here," Woolmer was quoted as saying in the News, a Pakistan based daily.

Tigers' strong first

FROM PAGE 16

Shahadat then took over, tempting Knappett into hooking his second delivery, which resulted in a top edge to Omar at fine leg.

He then knocked out Amit Suman's middle stump and Monty Panesar also went for nought when a leg-cutter had him caught behind.

The final wicket went to left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique, who tempted last man Glen Read into a sweep shot and trapped him lbw.

Bangladesh's next game is another three-day warm-up against Sussex at Hove starting May 15.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at tea on the third and final day of the three-day match between Bangladesh and British Universities at the Fenner's ground in Cambridge yesterday.

BANGLADESH: First innings 381 all out in 109.1 overs (Javed 167, Ashrafu102)

BRITISH UNIVERSITIES: First innings (overnight 190-5)
Smith c Ashrafu b Tapash 13
Maiden c Shahrar b Mashrafe 20
Akram c Bashir b Shahadat 21
Brown lbw b Rafique 12
Friedlander lbw b Tapash 1
Parker c Mashud b Mashrafe 65
Knappett c Javed b Shahadat 73
Palladino not out 13
Suman b Shahadat 0
Panesar c Mashud b Shahadat 0
Read lbw b Rafique 4
Extras: (b-4, lb-5, w-1, nb-6) 16
Total: (All out in 67.5 overs) 238

Fall of wicket: 1-20, 2-52, 3-60, 4-62, 5-82, 6-216, 7-222, 8-227, 9-227

Bowler O M R W
Smith 2 0 8 0

Mashrafe 17 4 52 2
Tapash 14 2 69 2
Shahadat 15 2 33 4
Rafique 16.5 2 47 2
Ashrafu 3 0 16 0
Rajin 2 0 12 0

BANGLADESH: Second innings
Javed c Parker b Panesar 39
Nafees c Knappett b Panesar 46
Shahrar Nafees not out 39
Bashir not out 16
Extras: 0
Total: (For 2 wickets in 43 overs) 140

To bat: Ashrafu, Rajin, Mashud, Rafique, Mashrafe, Tapash and Shahadat.

Fall of wickets: 1-66, 2-95

Bowler O M R W
Suman 9 3 21 0
Palladino 3 1 6 0
Panesar 19 6 55 2
Friedlander 5 0 40 0
Read 5 1 10 0
Smith 2 0 8 0

Indian coach's