



(L-R) Juergen Klinsmann, Carlos Alberto Parreira, Ricardo Lavolpe and Jose Pekerman.

Ballack gets his chance

AFP, Nuremberg



Germany captain Michael Ballack insists the hosts will have respect for the talent in the Brazil team ahead of the Confederations Cup semi-final here on Saturday, but not too much.

The likes of Per Mertesacker, Thomas Hitzlsperger and Lukas Podolski have only experienced the silky skills of Ronaldinho, Adriano and Kaka on the television, but Ballack insists the inexperienced youngsters will be more than a match for them.

"Brazil have some unbelievable players and of course we have respect for them," Ballack said. "But as soon as the whistle goes we will get at them and not sit back in admiration."

A 2-2 draw with Olympic champions Argentina in their final Group A match gave Germany a taste of the South American style and Ballack expects a similar game.

"Brazil have the same strengths as Argentina but we are well prepared," declared Ballack.

"We have watched them on video but that does not mean we were sitting down for hours in front of the television screen."

Germany coach Jürgen Klinsmann rested Ballack for the Argentina game and the midfielder finally has the chance to face Brazil in a tournament after the heartache at the 2002 World Cup.

Ballack scored the winning goal as Germany triumphed 1-0 over

South Korea to reach the World Cup final but missed the 2-0 defeat against Brazil due to suspension.

"The final was three years ago and that is a long time in football," said the Bayern Munich star.

"Of course I still think about it but three years has helped heal the pain."

While the Confederations Cup can not be put on a pedestal with the World Cup Ballack hit back at critics saying the competition had no value.

"Some people say the Confederations Cup is not a big trophy, but as far I am concerned it is an international title."

"It is just 12 months before the World Cup and I want to win this cup."

Ballack insisted Germany must be prepared to attack Brazil from the start but not be too hung-up.

"We will attack Brazil but are not going for a 4-3 or a 5-4 win."

Germany are averaging three goals a game in the tournament with Australia (4-3), Tunisia (3-0) and Argentina (2-2) all failing to keep out the German attack.

"We know we are in good shape and see what condition Brazil are in," added Ballack.

Brazil have been inconsistent in the competition so far and fatigue has been one reason put forward for the 1-0 defeat by Mexico and 2-2 draw with Japan.

Germany will hope Brazil's batteries are low thus improving their chances of reaching the Frankfurt final on June 29 and ending a miserable run against the big teams.

Farashganj

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TEAMS

ARAMBAGH: Shakil, Ghansa, Murad, Ramjan, Akram, Dulal, Imrul (Faisal), Kallol, Dominic (Rintu), Amirul, Arup, Felix and Walid (Rony).

Referee: Mansoor Azad.

Argentina's work cut out

AFP, Hannover

Argentina say they are ready to live up to their favourite's tag and advertise their World Cup claims against Mexico in the second Confederations Cup semi-final here on Sunday.

The game between the Group A runners up and Group B winners is being held in the shadow of the scandal involving Salvador Carmona and Aaron Galindo.

The Mexican players were sent home on Tuesday in disgrace on suspicion of having taken the banned steroid nandrolone.

While that is hardly the best way for Ricardo Lavolpe's team to prepare for Argentina on the plus side is the return of the talismanic Barcelona defender Rafael Marquez.

Marquez, recovering from a leg injury, had to sit out Mexico's wins against Tunisia and Brazil but was used as a substitute in their goalless draw against Greece.

"I'm proud of what my teammates have accomplished so far. It's a young side that's done well to adapt to the tactics adopted by the manager," said Marquez.

Mauresmo moves on

REUTERS, London

While storms gathered around Wimbledon on Friday there was nothing clouding the horizon of Amelie Mauresmo who moved into the fourth round with 6-0, 6-2 rout of American Shenay Perry.

Sixth seed Elena Dementieva, one of several Russian heavyweights in action on a muggy day, progressed with a 7-5, 6-1 defeat of American Mashona Washington.

She could face compatriot Anastasia Myskina in the fourth round, which would be a repetition of the 2004 French Open final.

Svetlana Kuznetsova, who beat Dementieva in the US Open final last year was given a fight against 16-year-old Czech Nicole Vaidisova, the fifth seed scraping through 7-5, 6-7, 6-2.

The 25-year-old Mauresmo, whose failure so far to land a grand slam title is one of the game's great puzzles, has blossomed in the sunshine this week.

In full flow Mauresmo is a joy to watch and the outclassed Perry, ranked 159 in the world, was a spectator for the first eight games as winners thundered off the Frenchwoman's racket.

BDR, BJMC

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh Army 3-2 in the final while Bangladesh Air Force finished third with a 3-1 victory over Bangladeshi Police.

In the women's event, BJMC recorded their seventh success outplaying Pabna 3-0 in the final.

Rajshahi beat Rajbari 3-0 to finish third.

Singing

FROM PAGE 12

But he is as down to the earth as he has been when it comes to facing the reporters, which is perhaps the most difficult job for him.

"I just want to forget what I have done in the last two innings. I know I will start from zero again and my initial target is to score 15 runs so that I can settle in the middle," said Ashraful, who has now become the hot topic even among the English reporters.

This is also going to be the first time Ashraful faces firebrand Australian bowler Brett Lee.

"I played against him in Tests but never played in the one-dayers. He bowls really quick but I think that's not going to be a problem," said Ashraful, who destroyed England fast bowler Steve Harmison on way to a 21-ball 50.

Aussie service resumes

FROM PAGE 12

But a partnership worth 79 ended when Solanki, on 34, clipped Hogg low to mid-wicket where Australia captain Ricky Ponting took a diving catch.

England were now 85 for four with Kevin Pietersen, whose whirlwind 91 not out overpowered Australia on Sunday, the new batsman.

But England's biggest hitters were only together for 14 balls as Flintoff, for the third match in a row and second time in as many games against Hogg, holed out driving down the ground.

His 44 came off 61 balls with six fours.

And on 19 any hopes of Pietersen repeating his Sunday heroics ended when he was caught by Michael Hussey, running round the mid-wicket boundary, off Symonds, to leave England 123 for six.

Australia play Bangladesh at Old Trafford on Saturday before the Tigers face England again on Sunday at Headingley.

ENGLAND: 209 for 9 in 50 overs (Solanki 34, Flintoff 44, Pietersen 19, G Jones 23, Gough 46; Lee 2-27, McGrath 2-31, Hogg 2-19).

Result: Australia won by 57 runs. **Man-of-the-match:** Andrew Symonds. **Toss:** England

STANDINGS

Triangular series table after Thursday's match (played, won, lost, no result, tied, bonus points, total points, net run-rate):

England 4 3 1 0 0 2 17 +1.409
Australia 3 1 2 0 0 2 8 +0.264
Bangladesh 3 1 2 0 0 5 -2.225

RESULTS

June 16: England beat Bangladesh by 10 wickets, The Oval

June 18: Bangladesh beat Australia by 5 wickets, Cardiff

June 19: England beat Australia by 3 wickets, Bristol

June 21: England beat Bangladesh by 168 runs, Trent Bridge (d/n)

June 23: Australia beat England by 57 runs, Riverside (d/n)

Four men, one sweetheart

AFP, Nuremberg

This weekend's Confederations Cup semi-finals are being contested by teams managed by vastly different personalities with, it would seem, only one point in common - football.

One is the eternal student who never set foot in a university, another a noted seascapes painter and amateur photographer, the third a chain-smoking coffee-guzzling Tom Selleck doppelganger, the fourth a poker-faced master tactician.

Step forward Jürgen Klinsmann, Carlos Alberto Parreira, Ricardo Lavolpe, and Jose Pekerman.

Klinsmann, who at a mere 40 is very much the baby of the quartet, is an acutely bright, positive, free-

thinking soul, prone to driving a Beetle convertible down the open road in his adopted homeland in the United States.

The 1990 World Cup winner's appointment as coach of the Mannschaft last summer had the same effect as a tornado sweeping through a sleepy country town.

Not a man constrained by convention he has injected vital new life to a weary national side that was going nowhere, fast.

The gamble in appointing a man whose only previous coaching experience was riding on a Greyhound bus in California has paid off handsomely - witness Germany's showing here this month.

The knives that were being sharpened to attack him by among others the big-selling Bild newspaper have had to be put away as Klinsmann's young attacking side has woosed a nation hungry to once again experience the sweet taste of success.

He's married to Debbie, a model who when she first met him a few years ago was deceived by his boyish charm and offered to buy him a Coke, thinking he was an impudent student.

Little did she know the recipient of her generosity was one of the world's most successful and wealthy footballing greats.

At the other end of the experience spectrum one finds Parreira, the unfailingly 62-year-old who is in his third spell as Brazil coach.

Nothing seems to faze the man who when he is not winning World Cups is to be found at his easel or behind a camera lens.

Parreira has put on two exhibitions of his paintings, saying at the latest showing: "I know the only reason I've been asked to do this is because I'm coach of Brazil but it makes me very proud."

"I find painting relaxes me, gives me tranquility."

Parreira's devotion to the game is

such that a few years ago he was offered and accepted the task of trying to rehabilitate Fluminenses, the Argentinian club that had fallen on hard times in the third division.

He led them to the third division championship and promotion before moving on to pastures yellow and green.

Just as Klinsmann's CV is blank in the column previous 'Previous managerial experience' Parreira's is pages long having guided Brazil to 1994 World Cup success and also guided Kuwait and the UAE to sup at football's high table.

Staying in South America the wily grey-haired Pekerman turned down the Argentina job when he was first offered it in 1998 preferring to continue the work he was doing as youth coach.

Subsequent events may have led Maradona to reassess that opinion.

Pekerman, 55, has three pets - Qatar, Malaysia and Argentina - named after the countries where he won his three World Youth Championships in 1995, 1997 and 2001.

Lavolpe, who with his hangdog expression and bushy moustache bears more than a passing resemblance to the actor Tom Selleck, also

receives a dollar for every time he smiles - Pekerman keeps his emotions under wraps.

And while he may be revered by the Argentina players and fans Pekerman's appointment as successor to Marcelo Bielsa in September last year left Diego Maradona for one distinctly unimpressed.

But it's hard to find fault with a coach who has led Mexico to a 21-match unbeaten run.

A master student of the game, the third goalkeeper in Argentina's 1978 World Cup winning side has been known to spend an evening out in a restaurant rearranging the glasses and cutlery on his table to explain his latest tactical ideas.

A chain smoker, the 53-year-old was handed a cup of coffee on the training ground the other day only to inquire dryly of one of his backroom team: "How do you expect me to enjoy a coffee without a cigarette?"

After leading Mexico to the CONCACAF title the Argentina-born coach has made sure by his results that he is no longer the butt of criticism.

had a host of critics notably Mexico's most famous player, Hugo Sanchez.

The feud between the two men reached such a point recently that Lavolpe challenged him to a televised debate.

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Robinho is destined for Europe

AFP, Bergisch Gladbach

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said on Thursday it was inevitable that the new star of Brazilian football, Robinho, would move to a European club soon.

"I think it is high time to end the hypocrisy in all of this. This story about the transfer of Robinho has been running since December," Parreira said at the team's training base where they are preparing to face Germany in the Confederations Cup semi-final on Saturday.

"I think it is inevitable that sooner or later, Robinho will be another Brazilian player to leave the country."

The coach said the 23-year-old forward from Pele's old club Santos had not told him about his future plans and he had not asked.

Robinho is widely rumoured to be in negotiations to join the star-studded cast at nine-times European champions Real Madrid.

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