



LIFE IN THE FAST LANE! (L) Brazilian soccer idol Ronaldo chats with British supermodel Naomi Campbell during a private party in Sao Paulo on Wednesday. (R) Earlier in the day, the Real Madrid superstar posed for photographers as he sat on the driver's seat of an A1 Grand Prix racing car while Saudi Arabian Sheikh Maktoum Hasher Maktoum (Extreme R) and Brazilian former Formula One driver and businessman Emerson Fittipaldi looked on during an event to promote the new A1 Grand Prix racing series. The A1 series was founded and created by Al Maktoum, a member of the ruling family of Dubai. He has also assumed the position of Chief Executive Officer of the series. Ronaldo is the main investor of Brazil's team and Fittipaldi will be his manager in the pilot team.

Reply Adriano style

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro



Brazil striker Adriano has told Argentina to respect his nation's shirt

after accusing them of making provocative gestures on the eve of Wednesday's Confederations

Adriano scored twice to finish as the competition's top scorer with five goals as the world champions beat their archrivals 4-1 in Frankfurt.

He told Brazilian television that the two teams crossed during their training sessions at the Waldstadion on the day before the match and that world champions.

"They start making some gestures which weren't very nice," he said. "So maybe it's something for them to reflect and time for them to learn to respect the Brazil shirt."

Brazil's performance has left them as firm favourites to win a sixth World Cup next year and coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said it was time for Brazil to win the tournament as favourites rather than dark horses.

"The last three times we won the World Cup, in 1970, 1994 and 2002, nobody really believed in us beforehand," he

"We need to be able to arrive as favourites and win as favour-

'Don't cry for me Santos'

XINHUA, Madrid

Brazilian striker Robinho believes his transfer from Santos to Real Madrid is a fact and that is the reason why he sent a message on Thursday to the fans of the Brazilian club in an interview with a Brazilian television sta-

"I am very thankful with Santos, where I won two Brazilian titles, for what it did for me. I would have liked a lot to have reached the Copa Libertadores final, but that was not possible. Now we have to see the future," said Robinho while in Frankfurt (Germany) where the Brazilian national team Wednesday won the Confederations Cup 4-1 over

Robinho asked the fans of Santos to understand his decision to play in Europe, as he is thinking on personal security factors and his dream to play in the best soccer of the world.

He also said he wants to play in Real because in Spain there is soccer that is "very similar" to that of Brazil, and because the Spanish club has as its coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo, who last year led Santos to win the national league.

Santos and Real Madrid do not agree on the amount to pay for the transfer of the 21-year-old player, because the Brazilian club wants 50 million dollars, and the Madrid club is to pay half of that amount.

Nevertheless, Uruguayan Juan Figer, one of the representhe player said in remarks published Thursday by an Italian club that "Robinho is of Real Madrid" and his transfer will be made effective Monday.

Faruque's

but the challenge for us is not to hope for pulling off upsets against major teams, rather we need to aim at setting certain playing standards," he added.



Each year, 24 tons of Kent strawberries are





Todd Woodbridge

On his decision to quit tennis

WRAP-UP

A tasty appetiser

AFP, Frankfurt



The brilliance of Brazil, the artistry of Argentina and the guile of Germany were all on show at the

2005 Confederations Cup but was the tournament a success or a superfluous fixture pile-up?

From a sporting aspect the competition offered a lot, with 37 goals scored in the 12 group games and average crowds of 36,000 packing the venues. Fantastic goals, such as the left-

footed missile from Brazil's Adriano against Greece, or Riquelme's exquisite free-kick for Argentina against Germany, helped to attract in excess of 10 million viewers per match in Germany alone. Aside from the host nation the

seven other participants - Argentina, Greece, Mexico, Japan, Brazil, Tunisia and Australia - ensured a global audience and the tournament was broadcast to 170 countries. "The Confederations Cup is

becoming increasingly popular and has its own image and character." said Franz Beckenbauer, head of the 2006 World Cup organising committee.

For German organisers the competition was always a significant test for the main event in 12 months time but some questioned the wisdom of more fixtures after

The Sri Lankan cricket board is

disappointed over hosting a sec-

ond-string West Indian side for an

upcoming two-Test series and a

three-nation tournament also

involving India, an official said here

truth is its an internal matter and

theres nothing we can do about it,"

said Jayantha Dharmadasa, the

chairman of the Sri Lanka Cricket

to arrive Sunday to play Test

matches in Colombo (July 13 to 17)

and Kandy (July 21 to 25). India then

join the two teams for the one-day

tournament from July 30 to August

The West Indies were scheduled

"We are disappointed. But the

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

on Friday.

gruelling domestic seasons

Tournaments like the Confederations Cup should be abolished because the players are just too tired," said Brazil superstar

Real Madrid marksman Ronaldo chose to go on holiday instead of representing Brazil here.

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira did admit some of his top players were showing signs of fatigue but his team still managed to win the tournament, routing Argentina 4-1 in Wednesday's final. Some players were believed to

have played out of fear of losing

their spot for next year's World Cup but the passion was there for all to The disappointment of the losing semi-finalists Germany and Mexico was only bettered by Argentina who were crushed by their South

Frankfurt final. The next Confederations Cup hosts South Africa have a lot to live up to in 2009 as they prepare for the

American foes Brazil in the

World Cup a year later. National anthems sung with pride and colourful fans helped give the Confederations Cup some atmosphere and in that respect it was a huge improvement on the last competition in France two years

"The FIFA Confederations Cup is now a universally accepted and appreciated event," said FIFA

Top batsmen Brian Lara, Chris

Gayle and Ramnaresh Sarwan

were missing from the squad

announced on Thursday after a

sponsorship row involving players

Shivnarine Chanderpaul was

named captain of the squad having

as many as eight players currently

playing in Sri Lanka for the West

postponing the series, but it was not

possible because of a hectic sched-

ule. Doing so will also lead to other

complications." Dharmadasa added.

He also feared the absence of

"I am sure our sponsors are not

top players, especially Lara, would

have an adverse affect on sponsor-

going to like this, but then theres

hardly anything we can do as this is

beyond our control," Dharmadasa

"We looked at the possibility of

Indies-Ateam.

ship for the matches.

and the West Indies cricket board.

Selectors ignore Lara

Lankans express displeasure

president Sepp Blatter. "This competition is no longer simply a road

But Germany saw it as a chance to win over their demanding public and the World Cup organisers admitted they were more interested in fixing things before next year's The five stadia used in Frankfurt

Nuremberg, Cologne, Leipzig and Hannover all proved themselves worthy World Cup venues while training facilities, local transport and friendly volunteers were positives from this dress rehearsal. The emergence of pitch invaders was the main setback for organisers

with the sight of four stewards trying to catch an uninvited man in Germany's semi-final with Brazil leaving the hosts a touch embar-This was not an isolated incident

and German organisers will not want any pitch invaders or streakers at the World Cup.

This Confederations Cup has served as a nice appetiser for the main event in 12 months but its significance should not be overhyped.

No team has gone on to win the World Cup after Confederations Cup glory and if Brazil fall in football's biggest showpiece they are unlikely to regard the win here as a consolation prize.

"The Indians will be here for the tri-

Lara was a hit when the West

series after the Tests and hopefully

well be able to make up then," he said.

Indies toured here four years ago as

he piled up a massive 688 runs in

three Tests with three centuries at

an average of 114.66. But despite

his brilliant effort, the West Indies

A similar row was resolved in

time for a one-day series in Australia

earlier this year, but it resurfaced

before South Africa's tour of the

West Indies when some top players

Shivnarine Chanderpaul (captain),

Denesh Ramdin, Daren Powell,

Omari Banks, Kerry Jeremy

Deighton Butler, Sylvester Joseph,

Narsingh Deonarine, Dwayne

Smith, Tino Best, Jermaine Lawson,

Xavier Marshall, Runako Morton,

were forced to miss the first Test.

were drubbed 3-0.

SQUAD

Ryan Ramdass.

Inter, Vieri part ways

Inter Milan have released Italy striker Christian Vieri a year before his contract ran out.

has been forced out by Brazil striker



Adriano and Nigeria's Obafemi Martins

Australia, played for Torino, Atalanta Bergamo, Juventus, Atletico Madrid and Lazio and will be looking for another top-flight club.

Inter bought him from Lazio in 1999 for a then world record 45 million dollars which provoked the wrath of the Vatican at so much

Christian Vieri for his contribution to the history of the club over the past six years," the club said on their

Walking not

and it had showed he hit it, then who

to him for 15 to 20 seconds. He was a bit bewildered when he saw the

the umpire's job to make a decision.

But leading English umpire David Shepherd, recently retired from Test cricket and set to guit the

the 2003 World Cup semifinal against Sri Lanka, because he thought he had edged an Aravinda de Silva delivery into wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara's gloves.

Let's take

calls will peter out into whispers that will interest none. But this is also time to build in on the

questions remain.

Will Mohammad Ashraful carry on with the same gung-ho approach that will never justify his talent? What will happen to Shahadat Hossain Raiib who has been described by a coach as a confused wreck at the moment who does not remember what his action and run-up was like before he made it to the main team. His pace is nowhere close to where it was two months ago and the mauling at Lord's has shattered his confidence. What about Nafees Igbal? Hero against Zimbabwe but now without a place in the starting team. Why did the bowling, a matter of pride, never fire with the exception of Mashrafee-bin-Mortuza? And when will all those with amazing abilities believe in pursuing the same work ethic of their less talented yet more reassuring mates like Shahriar

Having rattled the best to a fair degree, Bangladesh now have a golden opportunity for scaring the iving daylights out of Sri Lanka, their next opponents. Pray that the hangover from England stays till

A brave, offensive Mercedes

AFP, Leipzig

opponents



Germany do not have a reputation for playing attacking football over the

years but Jurgen Klinsmann seems intent on winning the 2006 World Cup by outscoring In something reminiscent of

Kevin Keegan's era as England manager, Klinsmann has employed the 'if you score two we score three' approach on the basis of displays in the Confederations Cup. "We have a lot of fun playing way

we do and are always capable of scoring goals," said the Germany "Our emphasis is on attack and

we will stick by this policy." Germany were the tournament's top scorers netting 15 goals in their

five Confederations Cup matches to Mexico had only conceded one goal in their three group matches but shipped in four during

Wednesday's 4-3 third-place playoff defeat to Germany. It was another example of Germany's bold approach with two strikers supported by three attackina midfielders. Bastian Schweinsteiger, Michael

Ballack and Sebastian Deisler are A tally of 15 goals scored is not renowned for their defensive skills and with full backs Andreas Hinkel and Bernd Schneider rampaging forward Mexico were often outnumbered.

"We have scored more goals than we have conceded in this tournament," said captain Michael Ballack. "We have to stick by this policy and show our strength as an attacking unit." Under former manager Rudi

Voller defence was the backbone of success but a toothless attack saw Germany crash out of Euro 2004 at the first hurdle after just two goals in three matches.

Klinsmann's team bettered that tally in their opening 4-3 group win over Australia.

Fans in Leipzig then chanted the manager's name after the win over Mexico, incredibly by the same scoreline, showing their appreciation for the entertaining football.

"It is nice to hear the fans chanting my name," Klinsmann admitted. "I hope they are happy with our work

The goal glut has left fans on the edges of their seats but the defence has had the supporters covering their eyes in despair.

impressive but a concern for Klinsmann is the 11 conceded - and it could have been more. "We need to track back better as

a unit but we can work on that," he insisted Goalkeeper Oliver Kahn is used to keeping clean sheets at Bayern

Munich but ihis two Confederations

Cup games he has conceded six "To concede so many goals is not normal for Kahn," said Klinsmann. "Oliver was not at fault for any of the

goals so maybe it is a bit frustrating "Goalkeepers always like to keep clean sheets but I think Kahn can see how the team is progress-

With Bayern left back Philipp Lahm, Liverpool midfielder Dietmar Hamann and Borussia Dortmund centre back Christian Worns still to come back, Germany should be more solid for the World Cup but Klinsmann may have to sacrifice a

working extremely hard to try and

In the meantime he said

Bangladesh had provided the ideal

workout in what was a 'dead' match

with England and Australia already in

us any harm anyway, to be under a bit

of pressure at 83 for three was good

for us and will hold us in good stead

avoided the guard of honour as

Australia took the field after being

accused of swearing at one of the

child flag-bearers at Edgbaston -- a

match where he was hit in the chest

by Jones following a wayward shy at

the stumps. And Ponting said of his

opening batsman: "I think he has

been harshly treated. I think we are all

pretty disappointed with that but

those things behind and get on with

the cricket and concentrate on that."

"We get on with things, leave

And as for Hayden's flare-up with

Jones, Ponting maintained: "It is

something that happened in the heat

of the moment from both sides and

Matthew Hayden studiously

"To be able to chase 250 won't do

ensure they don't bowl them."

the final.

for Saturday.

Ponting wants final word

Cricket

AFP, Canterbury

Australia captain Ricky Ponting has insisted his bowlers will hit top form in this weekend's Triangular Series final after thev let Bangladesh off the hook here Thursday.

In the last group game of the tournament. Australia were set for a crushing win after reducing

the cricket world 12 days earlier by beating the world champions by five wickets in Cardiff, batted out their 50 overs on the way to posting a com-

with 11 balls to spare, Michael Clarke (80 not out) and Andrew Symonds (42 not out) securing a six-wicket win. But while Bangladesh may not

have had enough bowling to make the most of their batsmen's recovery, England possess the likes of Stephen Harmison, Andrew Flintoff and Simon Jones.

of it than we should have," Ponting admitted to reporters after Thursday's match

At Canterbury fast bowler Brett Lee saw his 10 overs go for 62 runs,

quick bowler Glenn McGrath back in the side for Saturday's Lord's showdown while spinner Brad Hogg, who missed Thursday's match with a virus, should also be available for

hope his attack can do something to stop the extras that have blighted their tournament thus far.

wides and no-balls -- the equivalent of more than two extra overs. Australia and England have beaten each other once apiece in

sundries with 14 of those coming in

On Thursday they conceded 23

the Triangular with Tuesday's match at Edgbaston a no-result washout. England had the upperhand in Bristol during a three-wicket win where the Australia attack gifted them nearly

three additional overs and were powerless in the face of Kevin Pietersen's whirlwind 91 not out. But it was a different story at the Riverside where the tourists were far sharper and meaner -- only nine

bowling extras given away -- in a 57-"We've bowled better at England in a couple of games than we have against Bangladesh.

"Bigger games tend to bring the best out of this team and certain players in our team and I think that has been proven over a long period of time so today will be forgotten about."

Ponting said.

"We've just got to get back to thinking about the basics of the game and our plans that we will have for the English batsmen.

"Not knowing a lot about some of the individual players in the Bangladesh side sometimes makes it a little bit harder to set fields and have certain plans. We'll probably have better plans for the England players when we get to play against

But he admitted he was concerned about the bowling extras. "The no-ball thing we see as being almost totally unacceptable in our "It's the most zero tolerance type

of thing in our team. We have bowled a few of those in the last couple of games and I know the bowlers are

one will face either last year's runner-up Andy Roddick, the American second seed, or Thomas Johansson, the 12th seed from Sweden, in Sunday's final.

hands of Mario Ancic on Centre Court in 2002, the year that Hewitt won the title. It was also Federer's eighth win in a row over the Australian, a run

stretching back to the Davis Cun semi-finals in 2003 when Hewitt fought back from a two-set deficit. Since that time it has been all

Federer with Hewitt managing to take just one set off the Swiss master in those seven meetings and that came in the quarterfinals here last

Federer. "It feels fantastic, I can't believe it. It was so smooth today and to win in straight sets is a huge relief. "This was my 35th win so maybe

completely outplayed. "I didn't go after it enough when I had the small

Venus flies family flag

WIMBLEDON

Venus Williams believes her blistering path to her fifth Wimbledon final is the perfect response to the army of critics who had written her off as a spent force.

The 25-year-old American ruthlessly destroyed defending champion Maria Sharapova 7-6 (7/2), 6-1 in Thursday's semifinal with a brutal display of powerhitting that was aimed at her detractors as much as the Russian

For two years, numerous obituaries have been composed for Venus and sister Serena with their vast array of other interests, as well as an alleged falling out of love with the game, cited as causes of their

But Venus, the champion here in 2000 and 2001, rammed those words back down their throats to reach her fifth Wimbledon final.

"I put tennis first in my life. I wake up in the morning, go to

practice, go to the gym, train and give my best effort," she said.

"The other things that I do

make me very happy. They com-

plement my tennis and make me work harder because I realise it's not easy in the real world." Saturday's final will be her first in a Grand Slam since she lost to

her sister here in 2003. It also means that for the sixth year in a row, there will be a Williams sister in the Wimbledon title match.

In the last two years, Venus's ranking slumped as she battled a stomach injury, went over 12 months without a title until she clinched the inaugural tournament in Istanbul in May and then suffered a humiliating third round loss to 15-year-old Sesil Karatantcheva in the third round of the French Open.

But she insists she never gave up hope of reaching another Grand Slam final. "There were times when I was

disappointed in how I played because I knew I could do better. But all things in good time

Everyone has their moment in the sun," she said. Williams, who will face either

Lindsay Davenport or Amelie Mauresmo in the final, also believes she is back to her fittest and healthiest in a long time. "I was fairly healthy at the

couldn't really serve properly. That threw my game off. "But being healthy gives me the opportunity to train. All last year I never had the opportunity to prepare properly because I was

never quite healthy.

French Open, but I did have a

shoulder problem from April so I

decisions to play tournaments, but that's in the past now. "I have had the opportunity this year to gather strength, find a rhythm and train. In 2004, I didn't have that chance. I would be in practice and say: 'Okay, today I've got to work on serves first

"I probably made a lot of bad

"Everyone has their trials and tribulations.'

because I'm probably not going to

last longer than an hour out there'

The 31-year-old scored 12 goals in 27 games for Inter this season but



CHRISTIAN VIERI

Vieri, who grew up in Melbourne,

money being spent on a sportsman. "FC Internazionale thanks

knows what would have happened." Ponting said he had talked to Gilchrist about the incident, "I spoke

Historically, walking has tended to be more of an English tradition than an Australian one, where the widely-held view has been that it is

first-class game at the end of the season, countered by saying: "Any player who stands at the crease knowing he is out is in my book a cheat!" Gilchrist famously walked during

FROM PAGE 12 status. In time the anti-Bangladesh

gains from the England tour without getting carried away with the relative yet significant successes because

Nafees Ahmed or Javed Omar?

September.

Bangladesh to 75 for five. But the Tigers, who'd stunned

petitive 250 for eight. Australia eventually got home

"We probably made harder work

Jason Gillespie's nine cost 49 and Michael Kasprowicz's nine yielded Australia will have rested veteran

But in the meantime Ponting will

nerves over the last 24 hours, but I slept well." the American said. "I had all the momentum and I thought the delay could have

worked against me but I as able to

Davenport takes

pull out a good service game when I needed it.' For 29-year-old Davenport the win means a first Grand Slam final since losing the 2000 US Open title to Venus Williams. The world No.1 has three Grand Slam titles to her name - one each at Wimbledon, the

But for 25-year-old Mauresmo,

the defeat is another bitter pill to

swallow in her quest for a first Grand Once again the question marks will be raised against her resolve. She had led by one set and 3-1 in

US Open and Australia.

And instead of persevering with the serve and volley game that had the slow-moving American backing off, Mauresmo retreated to the baseline where Davenport's heavier

groundstrokes worked in her favour.

the gathering gloom on Thursday

only to play two sloppy service

games that allowed Davenport back

The 29-year-old Davenport won her only Wimbledon singles title in 1999 defeating Steffi Graf. The following year she lost the crown to Venus Williams who laid the first stone in a four-year domina-

tion of the Centre Court by herself and sister Serena. Davenport and Williams have played each other 26 times since 1997 with Davenport 14-12 ahead including the last four encounters.

we'll just get on with playing.

Federer storms

The win was Federer's 35th

successive win on grass with his last

defeat on the surface coming at the

"I'm really pleased to be in my third Wimbledon final," said

t looks like I'm unbeatable on grass. I hope that the run won't be snapped on Sunday because I have won my last 20 finals." Hewitt admitted that he had been

opportunities," said Hewitt.

ordered for the Wimbledon Championships. AFP, London

(Australian tennis star)

"I decided to call it a day. I think that I've had a pretty good run. I really wanted to come here and go for 10 titles. Things didn't work out according to plan.

after the Wimbledon