

Maradona guarded about national team role

REUTERS, Havana

Soccer great Diego Maradona, who was offered an advisory job on Argentina's 2006 World Cup team on Thursday, said he did not see a role for himself on the team he led to glory in 1986.

"I'd rather stay at home than be a decorative figure who decides nothing," he said on Cuban television.

Argentine Football Association president Julio Grondona said there was a place for Maradona on the national team, though his exact role has not been defined.

Maradona said he would speak to Grondona, but did not see much future in the offer.

"I don't want to get in anybody's way. I am not clear about what my role could be," he said, adding that Argentina coach Jose Pekerman should be free to select his own players.

The former Argentina captain said world champions Brazil were odds-on favorites to win the Cup in Germany.

"Brazil is one notch above everyone else," he said.

ENGLAND FRIENDLY Argentine squad announced

APP, Buenos Aires

Argentina squad for friendly international against England in Geneva on November 12 announced by coach Jose Pekerman:

SQUAD

Keepers: Roberto Abbondanzieri (Boca Juniors/ARG), Leonardo Franco (Atletico Madrid/ESP)

DEFENDERS: Roberto Ayala (Valencia/ESP), Gabriel Milito (Real Zaragoza/ESP), Juan Pablo Sorin (Villarreal/ESP), Diego Placente (Celta Vigo/ESP), Fabricio Coloccini (Deportivo La Corogne/ESP), Walter Samuel (Inter Milan/ITA)

MIDFIELDERS: Sebastian Battaglia (Boca Juniors/ARG), Daniel Bilos (Boca Juniors/ARG), Maximiliano Rodriguez (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Juan Roman Riquelme (Villarreal/ESP), Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan/ITA), Esteban Cambiasso (Inter Milan/ITA), Mario Santana (Palermo/ITA), Luis Gonzalez (FC Porto/POR), Martin Demichelis (Bayern Munich/GER)

STRIKERS: Javier Saviola (Sevilla/ESP), Julio Cruz (Inter Milan/ITA), Hernan Crespo (Chelsea/ENG), Carlos Tevez (Corinthians/BRA)

It's not Langer

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Asked how confident he was of playing, he said: "No doubt, 100 per cent."

"It'll probably be a bit sore for a while. I'm not trying to be a hero but it's only pain, mate."

Buchanan said: "It's going to be pretty important that we try to settle the side as quickly as we can."

Langer was one of the few batting successes in the failed Ashes campaign against England last month, topping Australia's averages with 394 runs at 43.77.

With 22 centuries and 7,023 runs in 94 Tests at an average of 45.90, he is Australia's eighth-highest scorer.

SL need

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given away his wicket. Sanath Jayasuriya has found ways to get himself out even against deliveries he would smash to the fence nine times out of ten. Chaminda Vaas has taken an almighty pounding.

TEAMS

INDIA (probable): Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Venugopal Rao, Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Jai Prakash Yadav, Ajit Agarkar, Harbhajan Singh, Murali Kartik. Supersub: Sree Santh.

SRI LANKA (probable): Sanath Jayasuriya, Kumar Sangakkara, Marvan Atapattu, Mahela Jayawardene, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Russell Arnold, Upul Chandana, Farveez Maharoof, Chaminda Vaas, Muttiah Muralitharan, Nuwan Zoysa. Supersub: Dilhara Lokuhettige.

Shitoryu body elected

SPORTS REPORTER

Film star Masar Parvez Rubel was nominated president and Nazmul Hasan Avi secretary in the 21-member executive committee of the Bangladesh Shitoryu Do-Union.

The committee was re-structured for next three years in its annual general meeting on Saturday. The meeting also decided to hold the Sixth National Shitoryu Karate Championship shortly.



PHOTO: AFP

LET US FIX YOUR NOSE! AC Milan's Alessandro Nesta (L), Jaap Stam (2nd R) and goalkeeper Dida (C) confront Juventus' Romanian international Adrian Mutu at the San Siro stadium in Milan on Saturday.

SERIE A

Milan conquer Juve

Football

APP, Milan

AC Milan ended Juventus' 100 per cent league record in style with a 3-1 victory over the Serie A leaders on Saturday.

Carlo Ancelotti's side blew away the reigning champions with three first-half goals as Milan recorded their seventh straight win and cut Juve's lead to just two points.

Clarence Seedorf's deflected drive put Milan ahead before Kaká's unstopable half-volley and an Andrea Pirlo free-kick left Juve on their knees at the interval.

David Trezeguet pulled one back for the visitors in the 76th minute.

Juve, who won their first nine matches for the best ever start in Serie A, have 27 points from their 10 matches played, while second-placed Milan have 25.

Inter Milan are eight points off the pace in third place after they were held to a 2-2 draw at Sampdoria in the day's early match.

Seedorf said his goal was the key to victory as it forced Juventus, whose mean defence had conceded just two league goals before the match, to open up.

"It gave us the upper hand and meant Juventus couldn't just sit back," said the 29-year-old Holland international.

"There was more space, particularly down the wings, and we made the most

of the chances. Our defence were excellent, too.

"It showed that we are at least on a par with Juve."

French midfielder Patrick Vieira returned to Juventus' starting line-up after recovering from a groin strain, while third-choice keeper Antonio Chimenti was handed the gloves in the absence of injured pair Gianluigi Buffon and Christian Abbiati.

Juve captain Alessandro Del Piero made way for Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who partnered Trezeguet in attack.

Milan's leading striker Andriy Shevchenko, injured in a Champions League match 10 days ago, failed to even make the bench.

Juve fell behind in the 13th minute to the delight of the vast majority of the 80,000 fans packed into the San Siro.

Seedorf cut in from the left and exchanged passes with Alberto Gilardino before shooting right-footed from 20 yards. The Dutchman's effort wasn't particularly well struck but it clipped Vieira's outstretched toe and looped over Chimenti.

Capitalising on every Juve error and moving the ball upfield with speed and precision, Milan underlined their superiority in the 26th minute.

Pirlo's free-kick caused panic in the Juve defence and Brazilian midfielder Kaká hooked the loose ball into the top corner.

Juve's hopes of a comeback were extinguished a minute before half-time.

Chimenti appeared to have Pirlo's

25-yard free-kick covered but he allowed the ball to escape his grasp and Juve went in at the break with a mountain to climb.

Milan, whose defeat in the same fixture last season practically handed Juve the title, were caught napping 14 minutes from time when Trezeguet raced on to Vieira's sublime chip and goalkeeper Nelson Dida let the Frenchman's half-volley slip through his fingers.

The goal proved to be a momentary blip for Milan who have been in imperious form after taking just four points from their first three matches.

In the early match in Genoa, Aimo Diano struck twice for Sampdoria only for Esteban Cambiasso and Ivan Cordoba to reply for the visitors, with all the goals coming before half-time.

Inter, beaten 3-2 by Roma on Wednesday, pushed hard for an equaliser but Sampdoria came closest to sneaking victory when Emiliano Bonazzoli's header struck the crossbar six minutes from time.

TOP SIX

Italian football league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Juventus	10	9	0	1	19	5	27
Milan	10	8	1	1	21	8	25
Inter	10	6	1	3	20	10	19
Fiorentina	9	6	1	2	20	11	19
Palermo	9	4	3	2	17	14	15
Cheio	9	4	3	2	12	9	15

Total: (For 9 wkt/s in 50 overs) 243

Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-23, 3-49, 4-108, 5-155, 6-203, 7-206, 8-224, 9-243

Did not bat: Bond

Substitute: Oram

Bowler O M R W

Pollock 10 0 23 0

Ntini 10 0 37 3

Nel 10 2 47 2

Langeveldt 10 0 76 1

Kemp 7 0 40 0

Smith 3 0 15 0

Toss: South Africa

Umpires: S Bucknor and B Jerling

TOP SIX

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

Real	10	6	0	4	21	11	18
Ocasuna	9	6	0	3	12	10	18
Getafe	9	5	2	2	16	12	17
Celta	10	5	2	3	14	10	17
Barcelona	9	4	4	1	19	10	16
Sociedad	9	5	1	3	15	14	16

Real are top every game and I wouldn't swap him for any other player in the world. I don't know a weak point where he can improve - I just hope he carries on playing like this."

"He is the best player in the world

- because he plays every game. There

are other great players in the world of football but they play well once a

game of the season.

"It's only in England that he gets

the recognition he deserves in terms of winning individual trophies.

"We scored with two counter-attacks and that's football, you can talk about many things but we came here and won, and that's not easy to do at Betis," added Luxemburg, after a game that only came to life in the final 20 minutes.

Real travel to Norway on Sunday

ahead of their Champions League

match with Rosenborg, with

Beckham expected to return to

action after missing out on his first

game of the season.

Betis have now lost their last four

matches, starting with their 4-0

loss to Valencia.

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