



PHOTO: AFP

RONALDO SCORING, PARREIRA SMILING: Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira (L) laughs off with Ronaldo during a practice session at Betgisch Gladbach Stadium on June 20.

## Bruckner offered contract extension

AFP, Westerburg

Veteran Czech Republic coach Karel Bruckner is to be offered a two-year contract extension despite his team crashing out of the World Cup at the first hurdle, the national federation's vice-president revealed on Friday.

Vlastimil Kostal added he believed they could 'reach an agreement with Bruckner which would take him up to the 2008 European championships.'

'I think that we are going to agree a new deal with the coach,' Kostal told Czech agency CTK shortly before he and the squad left for Prague.

'We will iron out the details in the next fortnight.'

Bruckner failed to spark his team into the same form as they showed in reaching the Euro 2004 semi-finals.

However, he was handicapped by injuries to his two leading frontmen Milan Baros and Jan Koller.

He risked Baros in the final match with Italy, a 2-0 defeat, but the leading scorer from Euro 2004 was clearly not match fit and was replaced in the second-half.

Bruckner, a former Under-21 team coach, was also burdened by the toll age had taken on 34-year-old Karel Poborsky and even the 33-year-old former European player of the year Pavel Nedved.

He indicated earlier on Friday that he would be willing to stay on if he was offered an extension of his present deal, which runs out after the tournament finishes.

'My contract is up. But if I receive a proposal to extend it, I will accept,' he said.

England kick-off at 4pm on

## 'Brazil on title track'



INTERNET, undated

Defending champions change the players but will not change the style in knockout phase.

Carlos Alberto Parreira believes Brazil are on track to retain the World Cup after their demolition of Japan. The coach made five alterations to the line-up that defeated Australia and Croatia, and the changes paid off as the Brazilians put on their best display of the tournament to beat the Zico-coached Asian champions 4-1.

Parreira said: 'We have played the same way, we have just changed the players and that's important in a World Cup, in the last 16 or the last eight.'

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## 'World Cup starts here'

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before do realise that chances as well as this don't come that often,' he said.

'We're an English team, playing in Europe, playing in Germany, the weather's been great for us most of the time. Everything is right.'

'That doesn't happen very often. In four years time it's going to be in South Africa, four years after that maybe Australia or South America and we're talking about different climates.'

'So this is an opportunity we don't want to waste.'

Beckham has seen his place in England's starting line-up called into question but is defiant in the face of the criticism of his performances so far in the tournament.

'I'm not going to sit here and talk about my form because it's not for me to sit here and talk about David Beckham.'

'It's for me to sit here and talk about England going into the last 16 of the World Cup,' he said.

It is clear though that Beckham is irritated by the suggestion that he does not offer the

we don't play now until Tuesday and we have no injuries. All the players are ready to play.'

Roberto Carlos and Cafu made way for Cicinho and Gilberto at full-back while Emerson, Adriano and Ze Roberto were also rested, to be replaced by Gilberto Silva, Juninho and Robinho in Brazil's final group match. Ze Roberto made a brief appearance as substitute for Kaka.

Gilberto and Juninho both scored along with Ronaldo, whose two goals put him on a total of 14 in World Cups overall, equalling Gerd Muller's record.

The holders now face Ghana in the last 16 and Parreira feels the convincing win over the Japanese -- even though Brazil had already earned a spot in the knock-out phase before the game -- was important for his team's continued progress.

'The next game and the last eight are important games,' he said. 'We have had 45 days outside Brazil and everything starts to get monotonous but with this result we

have sparked our game to life.'

'It was important to have this game going into the last 16. I'm not worried about which team we play because Brazil is going to be well represented and Brazil will have a team that will reach our goal, which is to win the World Cup.'

Parreira, Brazil's 1994 winning coach, paid tribute to the Ghanaians after their 2-1 win over the United States earned them a place in the second round at their first World Cup.

'Now we play Ghana and they are a very good team,' said Parreira, who coached the west Africans' national team almost 40 years ago. They played a wonderful first game against Italy and beat the Czech Republic in a very nice way, so it's going to be a nice game. They play very fast football and they're going to be a difficult opponent.

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