

Lippi to return in 2007

AFP, Rome

Marcello Lippi, who resigned as Italy coach shortly after their triumphant World Cup campaign this year, says he will look for another job in 2007.

"I will return to coaching next year," he was quoted as saying by Gazzetta dello Sport's website on Tuesday.

"Come February or March I will have a look at my options for a new adventure with a serious club, one that excites me. It's not important whether the club is in Italy or abroad."

Lippi began his managerial career in 1985 with Pontedera before spells at Siena, Pistoiese, Carrarese and Lucchese.

He then spent one season at Atalanta and one at Napoli before his big break in 1994, when he was appointed coach of Juventus.

Lippi led Juventus to the Serie A title in his first season and helped them become European champions in 1996.

Lippi resigned from Juventus in February 1999 after a poor start to the season and took charge at Inter Milan, where he stayed for a short and unhappy spell.

He rejoined Juventus in 2001 and enjoyed considerable success before accepting the Italy job shortly after the 2004 European championships.

FIFA ban Kenya

AFP, Zurich

FIFA confirmed Wednesday that Kenya has been thrown out of international football until a 28-point plan agreed earlier this year to tackle alleged government interference and other problems is fully implemented.

The decision by the world governing body's emergency committee to suspend the Kenya Football Federation was officially notified Wednesday in a letter sent to the KFF, FIFA said in a statement.

Sporting rules, the integrity of competitions, and FIFA's decisions were "regularly violated or ignored by members of the Kenyan football family", it added.

The latest move came a month after FIFA President Sepp Blatter complained that the situation in Kenyan football had deteriorated with disagreements between the top clubs and the prospect of two parallel leagues in Kenya.

Blatter gave Kenyan authorities a final deadline of October 18 to provide urgent confirmation, "not only in writing but in acts, that the KFF would fully implement the agreement signed in Cairo," FIFA said.

KFF general secretary Dan Omino, who believes that both he and his chairman, Alfred Sambu, have been unfairly targeted, last week claimed they had fulfilled all recommendations set by FIFA.

Omino said the problems affecting Kenyan football would continue. He said FIFA was applying double standards by relying on misinformation from some local football officials.

FIFA first suspended Kenya for three months in 2004 for government interference but the situation was reversed after the country accepted to draw up new statutes.

Best on bank notes

AFP, London

Former Northern Ireland and Manchester United footballer George Best is to be immortalised on one million limited edition bank notes, the Ulster Bank announced Thursday.

The five-pound notes featuring the legendary winger, who died aged 59 last November 25 from health problems linked to alcoholism, will be issued next month to mark the first anniversary of his death.

He will be featured in both his Northern Ireland and Manchester United strips.

Ulster Bank chief executive Cormac McCarthy said the initiative was a fitting tribute to the British-run province's most famous son and would be an affordable piece of memorabilia for fans.

"This is the first time that Ulster Bank has commissioned a commemorative bank note and by limiting the print run to a million notes, we feel this makes the initiative even more significant," he added.

Advance orders are being taken from November 13 with notes available for purchase from November 27.

Belfast City Airport was renamed George Best Airport earlier this year in another tribute to the footballer, who won the European Cup with Manchester United in 1968, the same he was voted European player of the year.



PHOTO: AFP

Diego Maradona fights for the ball with Milton Tyson Nunez during an exhibition match at the Olympic Stadium in San Pedro Sula on Wednesday. Maradona travelled to Honduras with a team of selected former Argentinian players to perform a 'showbol' show.

Big games, big results

Football

REUTERS, London

It was a big-game weekend in Europe's top leagues and when the dust settled Manchester United, Real Madrid, Werder Bremen, Olympique Lyon and Ajax Amsterdam were able to celebrate wins over fierce rivals.

Spain's Barcelona lost their unbeaten record in the worst possible way, a 2-0 defeat by Real Madrid in the Bernabeu.

Goals from Raul and Ruud van Nistelrooy hoisted Real to 14 points, alongside Deportivo Coruna, 1-0 home winners over Atletico Madrid with a header by Angel Arizmendi. Barcelona, who missed a host of chances, are joint top on 16 points with Valencia, who overcame Osasuna 1-0. Sevilla are third on 15 points after defeating Gimnastic 2-1.

ENGLAND

Manchester United and Chelsea continue to set the pace in the Premier League but Liverpool's chances of their first title since 1990 already look to have disappeared.

Chelsea's two big close-season buys Andriy Shevchenko and Michael Ballack were on target in a 2-1 home win over Portsmouth while Paul Scholes marked his 50th game for Manchester United with a goal in a 2-0 home victory over Liverpool.

The top two have 22 points, two clear of Bolton Wanderers, who won 1-0 at Blackburn Rovers but needed two penalty saves in the last four minutes by Jussi Jaaskelainen to earn the points.

Arsenal thrashed Reading 4-0 to move up to fourth on 17 points with

a game in hand. Liverpool are 11th, already 11 points off the pace.

ITALY

Inter Milan were held to a 0-0 draw at Udinese and the champions were joined at the top by Palermo, shock 2-0 winners at AC Milan thanks to goals from Marco Bresciano and Amaro.

Third-placed AS Roma needed a late equaliser from Francesco Totti to earn a 1-1 home draw with Chievo Verona.

Inter and Palermo lead on 15 points with Roma on 13 and Udinese, Atalanta and Livorno all on 12.

Atalanta produced the comeback of the weekend, recovering from 2-0 down to beat Sampdoria 3-2.

SERIE A TOP SIX

Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Barcelona	7	5	1	1	16	7	16
Valencia	7	5	1	1	13	5	16
Sevilla	7	5	0	2	15	9	15
Real Madrid	7	4	2	1	10	3	14
Deportivo	7	4	2	1	9	5	14
Zaragoza	7	4	1	2	16	10	13

SERIE A TOP SIX

Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Chelsea	9	7	1	1	15	5	22
Man United	8	6	1	1	17	5	19
Bolton	8	5	2	1	9	4	17
Portsmouth	9	5	1	3	13	5	16
Everton	9	4	1	4	15	8	16
Aston Villa	9	3	6	0	11	6	15

PREMIERSHIP TOP SIX

Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Inter Milan	8	5	3	0	16	9	18
Palermo	8	6	0	2	18	13	18
Roma	8	4	2	2	13	6	14
Udinese	8	3	4	1	10	5	13
Atalanta	8	3	4	1	13	10	13
Siena	8	3	4	1	9	7	12

LIGA TOP SIX

Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Real Madrid	7	5	1	1	16	7	16
Valencia	7	5	1	1	13	5	16
Sevilla	7	5	0	2	15	9	15
Real Madrid	7	4	2	1	10	3	14
Deportivo	7	4	2	1	9	5	14
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ROTATIONS

Reigning champions Barcelona remain at the top of the Spanish first division, although only by the slimmest of margins, and they will be looking to stay there by beating

Recreativo Huelva on Saturday.

"We are leading the league and we are calm but it can't always be a fantastic year," said Barcelona's Ludovic Giuly on Thursday, alluding to their less-than-sparkling form in recent weeks.

They lost 2-0 at their bitter rivals Real Madrid last Sunday and they have been notably short of fire-power and inspiration up front since the long-term injury to Samuel Eto'o, last season's top scorer in La Liga.

"Although if he (Ronaldinho) is not on top form for one or two matches, or is sometimes a little tired, it's nothing to worry about. He's still the best player in the world," added Giuly, defending the two-time World Player of the Year.

Recreativo Huelva coach Frank Rijkaard is expected to continue his policy of

rotations ahead of their important Champions League match against Chelsea on Tuesday, and Giuly is likely to start alongside his Brazilian colleague.

Recreativo, last season's second division champions, have surpassed expectations so far and lie ninth after having won two of their three away games this season but they face a tough test in the Nou Camp stadium.

Spain's oldest club have four key players injured and coach Marcelino Garcia has called up defender Iago Bouzou and midfielder Rafael Barber for the first time this season.

Real Madrid's confidence rocketed to sky-high levels after their victory over Barcelona but quickly came crashing down to earth when they were held to a 1-1 draw by third division Ecija in the Spanish Cup on Tuesday.

They will have to avoid a similarly

complacent display at Gimnastic Tarragona on Saturday and no doubt coach Fabio Capello will have read his squad the riot act.

David Beckham is likely to be on

the bench again, which will be the seventh game out of Real's last nine when he has been left to sit among the substitutes, which will increase

FIXTURES

Saturday

(1600 GMT Kick-off unless stated)

Barcelona v Recreativo Huelva (1800)

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