



England striker Wayne Rooney (R) and Israel defender Tal ben Haim (C) clash heads over a disagreement during their Euro 2008 qualifier at the Ramat Gan Stadium in Tel Aviv on Saturday.

# McClaren under the cosh

REUTERS, London



0-0 draw with Israel in a Euro 2008 qualifier.

"One Holy Mess" declared the tabloid Mail on Sunday in a back page headline over a picture of a pensive McClaren walking off the field with his head bowed after Saturday's Group E game in Tel Aviv.

"Clueless" blasted the Observer. Newspapers highlighted fans booing and chanting "what a load of rubbish" and "you don't know what

you're doing" after England slumped to their worst scoring run in 26 years with just one goal from five games.

"Mac's Hell Aviv" said the Sunday Express, seeing Wednesday's match with Andorra in Barcelona as crucial to the manager's future.

"England lacked conviction -- and at times energy -- and a point against a side with some players who are not even household names in their own parish is nothing to celebrate," it said.

"Anything less than a rousing win (against Andorra) and McClaren can expect the noose to be tightened around his neck," added the newspaper.

"Isra-Hell" was the News of the World back page headline that said

McClaren "faces the wrath of the nation" after a game that dented England's chances of reaching the finals in Austria and Switzerland next year.

England are third in Group E with eight points. Croatia have 13 and Russia 11.

"Here was a timely reminder that England's performance in the last World Cup was actually abysmal," wrote Paul Wilson in the Observer. "This was simply more of the same, always the danger in giving Sven-Goran Eriksson's assistant his job..."

The Independent wondered whether England had in fact reached the point of no return. "Goalless and soulless: England on the brink," it declared.

The Sunday Times labelled the

match "Euro Trash" while the Telegraph saw "England's Flops".

"After this awful performance....

it promises to be a perilous journey for England manager Steve McClaren, who may not even reach the end of his personal road," added the Telegraph.

The papers were also critical of McClaren's post-match confusion, with the manager suggesting the game had been lost before correcting himself, and reported angry scenes in the dressing room.

"He ranted and raved at the players, who just sat there with their heads down. I had my say too," the Mail quoted captain John Terry as saying.

## Loew rests senior players

REUTERS, Berlin

Germany coach Joachim Loew opted on Sunday to release eight senior players, including captain Michael Ballack, from his squad to face Denmark in a friendly on Wednesday.

Germany secured a valuable 2-1 win over Czech Republic in Prague on Saturday, with two goals from Kevin Kuranyi giving them another big push towards qualification for Euro 2008.

The friendly against Denmark in Duisburg will be a chance to experiment for Loew. He decided he could rest Chelsea's Ballack, Arsenal goalkeeper Jens Lehmann, Bayern Munich trio Philipp Lahm, Lukas Podolski and Bastian Schweinsteiger, the Werder Bremen players Torsten Frings and Per Mertesacker and Bayer Leverkusen's Bernd Schneider.

Four players -- Clemens Fritz, Alexander Madlung, Christian Schulz and Paul Freier -- are due to join the squad back in Germany on Sunday and the DFB said there might be further call-ups.

Germany, who finished third at last year's World Cup, are in a good position to clinch a place at Euro 2008 in Austria and Switzerland after Saturday's win kept them top of Group D with 13 points from five matches.

The Czechs are second on 10 points, with Ireland also on 10 in third place but having played a game more. "We were up against first class opponents but we always said we were aiming for a win," Loew told reporters after a victory that came despite the absence of Miroslav Klose through suspension.

## United swoop for Deco

INTERNET, undated

Manchester United reportedly lining up a sensational 15million pound summer swoop for Barcelona's Deco.

The Catalan giants are planning to overhaul their squad at the end of this season and according to the News of the World Sir Alex Ferguson is planning to sign the unsettled Portuguese ace.

Deco has already hinted he wants a fresh challenge after three years at the Nou Camp and it is thought that bringing him to Old Trafford would help ensure Cristiano Ronaldo pens a contract with United.

Although Ronaldo's new deal is expected to be five years, there is still disputes over the pay with the player holding out for more than 100,000 pounds per week in the summer.

## Football

AFP, Gothenburg, Sweden

A double from Barcelona star Ronaldinho inspired Brazil to a 4-0 rout over Chile in a football friendly here on Saturday being used as a warm-up for this summer's Copa America.

Brazil coach Carlos Dunga was able to try out for the first time the strike force trio of Kaka, Ronaldinho and Robinho whom he is planning to use during their Copa America defence in Venezuela in June.

And the experiment proved positive as Ronaldinho opened the way for a foul by defender Alex von Schwedler on Gilberto Silva.

Brazil added their second after 31 minutes when Daniel Alves escaped

down the right and passed to AC Milan's Kaka, who finished off.

Ronaldinho -- who it has been suggested is trying to get out of playing in the Copa because he is exhausted after almost two years of incessant football -- doubled his account after 50 minutes with Bayer Leverkusen's Juan adding a fourth after 59 minutes.

"People are going to think that because we scored four goals we're going to win the Copa America or that we beat Chile because they played badly," said Dunga.

"But I don't think that the score reflected the reality of the match which was very tough and challenging," added Dunga, who captained Brazil to the 1994 World Cup trophy.

The result was a blow for Chile coach Nelson Acosta's whose side had surprised the five-time world champions by dominating the first ten minutes.

But after scoring Brazil soon got into their stride.

Chile had their best chance after 38 minutes when a Luis Figueroa cross from the right found Gonzalez, only for his header to be diverted out.

Second half substitute Valdivia lifted the Chileans but they could not find a way past the Brazilians.

The match finished in confusion after a pitch invasion by several young Brazilian fans who rushed onto the pitch in extra time to celebrate with their team.

"I don't believe that it was the fault of organisers," said Dunga.

"There were many security officials. But it happens that people come on to the pitch to have their minute of glory."

## France given racist greeting

AFP, Kaunas, Lithuania

France's savouring of a precious 1-0 win over Euro 2008 qualifying rivals Lithuania was tampered by the brandishing of a racist banner by the home fans here Saturday.

Nicolas Anelka's late strike saved France's blushes with barely 20 minutes remaining, allowing France -- and their coach Raymond Domenech -- some breathing space.

However much of the after-match talk in the dressing room centred on a banner with racist overtones and which appeared to be aimed at France's black players.

According to AFP reporters the banner bore a painting of Africa in the blue, white and red colours of France's national flag, emblazoned with the words: "Welcome to Europe".

French football federation president Jean-Pierre Escalettes did not see the banner but said it was an "unforgivable" gesture on the part of a section of the Lithuanian fans.

Most of the French players did not see it either, and some simply chose to ignore it.

"Someone told me about it but I didn't see it," said French midfielder Florent Malouda, who is from Guyana in the Caribbean.

"I was told what was on it, but I was just trying to concentrate on my match. The important thing is that our rivals didn't share the same opinion."

Another black player, William Gallas, added: "I don't know why they did it. For what reason?"

Lyon midfielder Jeremy Toulalan, who is white, said: "It's just not very intelligent. That's all I can say about it. I didn't see it either, but we all spoke about it in the dressing room."

Football's European ruling body UEFA, which comes down hard on violence and racism, could be forced to act in the coming days.

## Adebayor received death threats!

REUTERS, Lome

Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor said he was considering his international future after receiving death threats before Togo's 3-1 win over Sierra Leone in an African Nations Cup qualifier on Saturday.

Adebayor, who scored twice in the match in Lome, is a central figure in wrangles between Togolese players and officials over unpaid monies.

He told the BBC that he had received calls threatening his life and warning him to "play in the match or else."

Adebayor had earlier threatened not to play unless he and team mates received payments which they claim are still outstanding after their qualification for the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany.

"I am only trying to put certain things right and correct a few mistakes in Togolese football but it appears some people do not like it," he said.

"Now I am going to go back to Arsenal to think about my future. I have to protect my life and I have a family to look after."

Adebayor opened the scoring eight minutes before half time and also got the last goal of the Group Nine qualifier in Lome late in the second half.

Togo also scored through Belgian-based Adekambi Olufade while Sierra Leone pulled a goal back through Julius Wombay.

At last year's World Cup finals, Adebayor and his teammates rowed with their federation over payment before world body FIFA intervened.

## 'We are Robinson Crusoe'

INTERNET, undated

Claudio Ranieri has again tried to explain how perilous Parma's position is. "We are Robinson Crusoe."

The former Chelsea Coach is well known for his complex metaphors and has continued the trend since his return to Serie A.

Last week he finally picked up his first win on the Parma bench, taking them off the foot of the table, but the Gialloblu are still three points adrift of the safety zone.

"We are like Robinson Crusoe," assured Ranieri. "We are still stranded and afloat. Every beach we go through seems like the last, but there is always another straight after with the same stormy conditions."

Parma have suffered from many injury worries this season, but the tactician has clearly identified his Man Friday.

"If Domenico Morfeo can get into good shape, then I believe Parma can save themselves from the drop. However, our physical and psychological preparation in these final months will be decisive for everyone."

# Basten to ring changes

AFP, Rotterdam



The star-studded Netherlands missed a golden opportunity to virtually seal qualification for Euro 2008 after being held to a goalless draw by determined Romania here Saturday.

The Adrian Mutu-inspired visitors threatened to cause a late upset after causing problems throughout for Marco Van Basten's team, who were jeered off the pitch despite grabbing a point to remain top of group G three points ahead of Bulgaria, who have played a game less.

Van Basten later bemoaned his side's lack of creation in the midfield and admitted he could make changes in his starting 11 for Wednesday's encounter in Slovenia.

"It wasn't a good performance, although we didn't lose," said the Dutchman.

"We had problems in the midfield, we just didn't get on top of our game there at all."

It wasn't just at the end of the game that the hosts gave their suffering fans reason to moan.

Romania, known for their ability to score on the counter-attack, produced some of the game's best goal-scoring chances in the first half, through Dorin Goian after just three minutes and Ciprian Marica in the fifth and 28th minutes.

It took the Netherlands until the 35th minute to threaten scoring a goal, Arjen Robben hitting the target but failing to beat Romania keeper Bogdan Lobont.

The Dutch pressed on with a series of attacking forays which the visitors, despite missing star defender Cristian Chivu due to a broken nose, managed to contain with relative ease.

Lobont was also up to the task when midfielders Rafael van der Vaart, in the 36th minute, and Wesley Sneijder, 10 minutes later, tried their luck at goal.

Dutch desperation for a goal became more prevalent in the second half, but essentially their game lacked the kind of depth that would allow Klaas-Jan Huntelaar to shine.

As a result the Dutch centre forward was given relatively poor service from his midfield.

Van Basten added: "We tried different solutions to push the Romanians, even playing long balls. But our three forwards just didn't get the chance to play to their potential."

"Romania are a strong team, and they're not easy to push off the ball." In the final minute, Mutu even threatened an upset, coming close to giving the visitors a late lead.

Van Basten, one of the stars of the Dutch team which won the trophy in 1988, will be worried a few days ahead of their trip to Slovenia.

He added: "I'm confident in my team's abilities, but we will have to step up a gear if we want to beat Slovenia."

"I might have to make changes in the starting line-up but first of all I want to look at what went wrong tonight."

On Wednesday, Romania will also play host to Luxemburg while Bulgaria host Albania.

# Winning start for Parreira



## Football

AFP, N'djamena

Carlos Alberto Parreira made a winning start as coach of South Africa when the 2010 World Cup hosts cruised to a 3-0 triumph over Chad in an African Nations Cup qualifier here on Saturday.

Striker Surprise Moriri headed Bafana Bafana (The Boys) in front after 32 minutes and midfielder Delron Buckey struck the crucial second goal as the first half entered stoppage time.

Any doubt about the outcome ended with 14 minutes left in the hot, dusty Chadian capital when Sibusiso Zuma atoned for several first half misses by stabbing the ball into the net and completing the rout.

Victory lifted slow starters South Africa to the top of Group 11 with seven points from three matches after a 0-0 home draw with Congo and a gritty 1-0 win in Zambia last year.

Congo host Zambia in Brazzaville on Sunday and a two-goal win for the 'Red Devils' would lift them above Bafana Bafana because they would have scored more goals.

The 12 group winners are guaranteed places at the finals of the biennial tournament in Ghana next January and February with the best three runners-up also qualifying.

Parreira led his native Brazil to the 1994 World Cup title and quit after the defending champions made a quarterfinals exit to France in the same competition last year.

He promised South Africans

victory in central Africa, but stressed that beautiful Brazil-style football would come a distant second to securing maximum points as Bafana seek a seventh consecutive Nations Cup appearance.

And so it proved as the visitors adapted well to a hard, bumpy national stadium pitch and created numerous chances while restricting Chad to a few timid efforts that never troubled goalkeeper Rowen Fernandez.

A relaxed Parreira could even afford the luxury of taking off scorers Moriri and Buckley during the second half of a match halted for five minutes near the end when a piece of tile struck a Benin assistant referee.

## Nesta makes Milan comeback

INTERNET, undated

Alessandro Nesta and Serginho ended their injury nightmares by making their comebacks for the Milan Primavera team today and could face Roma.

"The test went well and now we are waiting for our Serie A return too," said the Italian international.

Serginho is yet to feature this season and some thought his career was over due to a serious back problem, while Nesta has been out of action for three months.

Both were fielded in Coach Filippo Galli's Primavera youth championship game against Cagliari on Sunday, in which the Rossoneri won 6-0. As there is no reserve team in Italy, injured players regain fitness with the youth side.

"If Carlo Ancelotti calls me, then I have no problem playing," added Nesta. "I feel ready to play and I cannot wait to extend my contract with Milan."

Ancelotti was in the stands and also seemed convinced that their injury nightmares are finally over.

"Both Nesta and Serginho went well after such long lay-offs. We will see how they work in training this week, but I believe they are ready for the game with Roma."

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Mournful wail  
5 Frequent-ly  
8 Rum cake  
12 Turkish title  
13 Grazing area  
14 Many paintings  
15 Retain best-neighbor  
16 N.J. neighbor  
17 Let fall  
18 Grant entry to  
20 Fissures  
22 John's Yoko  
23 Id counterpart  
24 Intensely excited  
27 Look up  
32 Ump  
33 Seek damages  
34 Poolroom prop  
35 And the rest  
38 Fork-tailed flier  
39 "A Chorus Line" song  
40 Perp. to vert.  
42 Hooky player

**DOWN**  
1 Tibetan herd  
2 Curved molding  
4 Pomernian, e.g.  
5 Historic Scandianavian language  
6 Fixed charge  
7 Body powder  
8 Small grocery store  
9 Service branch  
10 Absorb (ink)  
11 Venomous vipers  
19 Fashionable

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

LEWD INN BRAT  
ALOE DIE RAGE  
CARPOOLS OYER  
ENDOW SIMPER  
SLOG NOR  
APSE MUSK JILL  
NOH FUSK COV  
YEA ATTU GEME  
DOT OMAR  
SERIES FORCE  
OMAN CODICILS  
DUCK ONE EPOS  
ASHY TOW RATE



## CRYPTOQUIP

BTSXV U ZPTNW PMUP AUNQWPZ

PMJFCZ XJQW BUZMKUZJFZ

UFV KUPMJFC ZSJPZ KW

FUA W V " Z J F Q T N Z B J A " ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: CLASSIC FILM ABOUT A FELLOW ON A MISSION TO FIND THE WORLD'S BEST BREW: "THE BEER HUNTER."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals T



A fan is captured as he tries to show his respect to Brazilian forward Ronaldinho in the dying minutes of Brazil's friendly international against Chile in Gothenburg on Saturday.