

Buchwald for Aachen

AFP, Aachen

Former World Cup-winner Guido Buchwald said on Tuesday he is delighted to be given his first coaching role in his native Germany after he was revealed as the new coach of relegated Alemannia Aachen.

The 46-year-old has signed a two-year contract with Aachen, replacing Michael Frontzeck, who resigned on May 12 after the club were relegated from the Bundesliga on the last day of the season.

"It was always my plan to coach back in Germany and I am glad it worked out that way," said the 76-times capped former defender.

Having made more than 400 Bundesliga appearances in a 17-year career, Buchwald's finest moment in the white shirt of Germany came in the 1990 World Cup final when he effectively stopped Diego Maradona, arguably the best player at the time, as Germany were crowned World champions.



PHOTO: AFP

Luc Dayan speaks at a press conference at the Stade la Beaujoir in Nantes on Sunday after he was nominated to replace Rudi Roussillon as the new president of the Nantes football club. Nantes, who had played 44 consecutive seasons in the French first division, were relegated this season.

No stadium ban on Denmark

Football

AFP, Copenhagen

European football's governing body UEFA will allow Denmark to play its next four matches at home, easing sanctions imposed after a fan attacked a referee in a game against Sweden, Danish news agency Ritzau reported on Monday.

UEFA last week awarded Sweden a 3-0 victory over Denmark for their June 2 Euro 2008 qualifier after the match had to be stopped just minutes from the end when a spectator assaulted German referee Herman Fander with the score

at 3-3.

As part of the sanctions, UEFA ordered Denmark to play its next four home matches more than 250 kilometres from Copenhagen - effectively forcing it to play abroad due to the country's small area and the lack of suitable stadia at such a radius.

But on Monday, after it was made aware of the problem, UEFA's disciplinary committee informed the Danish Football Federation (DBU) that Denmark would be allowed to play the matches within the country's borders.

"If one of the potential stadiums were to be located at a distance a little less than that indicated in the

decision, UEFA would approve this stadium, as long as it meets UEFA's security requirements," the committee wrote in a message to the DBU, Ritzau reported.

The committee stressed that it had always intended for the matches to be played in Denmark, the news agency added.

"In our most creative moments after the sanctions were handed down on Friday, we have of course toyed with the idea of playing at stadiums abroad ... but we are abandoning those plans now and awaiting the appeal before proceeding further," DBU spokesman Lars Berendt said in a statement.

UEFA also ruled in its initial

decision that Denmark's next match be played behind closed doors.

Denmark has said it plans to appeal the decision concerning the next four matches, which it considers particularly harsh.

However, it does not plan to appeal a 100,000 Swiss francs fine, nor the three-match suspension handed down against veteran Danish international Christian Poulsen for the red card he received from Fander in the 89th minute of the match for punching Swedish rival Markus Rosenberg in the stomach.

Beckham sits out training

INTERNET, undated

David Beckham was missing from Real Madrid's first squad training session of the week on Tuesday due to his ankle problem.

Beckham spent the morning recovering in the gym as he looks to be fit for this weekend's season-ending Primera Liga encounter with Real Mallorca, where Madrid could win the title.

The midfielder strained the internal lateral ligament in his left ankle while on England duty last week but, despite not being able to take a full part in training with Madrid on Friday, was able to play the whole of Saturday's Primera Liga match at Real Zaragoza.

However, the 32-year-old needed treatment on the joint late on in the 2-2 draw at La Romareda after pulling up while running with the ball.

Beckham was able to continue until the final whistle of that match, but the Madrid website reported after the game that the midfielder appeared to have suffered a relapse to his ankle problem.

The former England captain was one of four Madrid players to miss training on Tuesday because of fitness concerns, with Raul Bravo, Antonio Cassano and Miguel Torres also absent.

Midfielder Mahamadou Diarra is away on international duty with Mali and will also miss Sunday's game against Mallorca, where a win would see Madrid clinch their first Primera Liga title since 2003.

Beckham, who has yet to win a major trophy since joining Madrid almost four years ago, will be leaving the Spanish giants this summer to join Major League Soccer side Los Angeles Galaxy.

No nonsense from Bayern

INTERNET, undated

Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge insists his club will not "play poker" in their attempts to sign Miroslav Klose.

The Germany international striker is hoping to leave Werder Bremen this summer but their manager Klaus Allofs maintain he's in their plans for next season.

And while French champions Lyon now appear to have joined the bidding for Klose, Rummenigge is not worried about missing out on his man.

Rummenigge told Bayern's

official website: "I see it as a flexing of muscles in an effort to drive up the price. Miroslav Klose has stated his intention to join us on 1 July 2008 at the latest.

"It was an unmistakeable statement, and any talk about Lyon is just made up. We've seen through this little game and we won't be put off by it.

"We're not prepared to play poker. We've tabled our bid, and the situation today is that we're unwilling to change our offer."

Rummenigge has also claimed the German giants are in no rush to push the deal through and are quite content to wait.

"No, we're taking a very relaxed approach," he added. "Why should we set a deadline? We're certain he'll be playing for us the season

after next.

"He might play for us next season, but that entirely depends on Werder Bremen accepting our offer."

If Klose does indeed join the club in the summer, Rummenigge accepts there will be some major departures.

He said: "Roque Santa Cruz has told us he would like to leave the club. We've informed him of the circumstances in which that could happen. We'll have to wait and see how it develops.

"Roy Makaay will be released if Miroslav Klose joins us straight away. That's what we've told his agent. And we'll send Julio Dos Santos out on loan for a season, which will give us a squad of 22 outfield players and two goalkeepers."

Thaksin still keen on City

AGP, Bangkok



Manchester City despite authorities freezing 1.5 billion dollars of his assets, his lawyer said Tuesday.

"It will not affect his intention to buy Manchester City," his lawyer Noppadon Pattama told reporters.

"The freezing of his money could delay any investment, for example to purchase Manchester City. But I don't think we'll have a problem. We

still intend to carry on with the deal. We will find a solution," Noppadon said.

In a statement late Monday, City confirmed they were uncertain as to the implications of the assets freeze and said the club was in discussions with Thaksin about the latest development.

A powerful anti-corruption team late Monday ordered a freeze on 21 accounts holding 52.9 billion baht (1.52 billion dollars) belonging to Thaksin and his family.

The money includes much of the profits from last year's sale of Thaksin's Shin Corp telecom giant to Singapore's Temasek Holdings.

The committee also ordered a freeze on an unspecified number of personal accounts held by Thaksin and his wife Pojaman, citing evidence that Thaksin had broken the law.

However, the order only affects banks in Thailand, and Thaksin's overseas assets are largely unknown.

Thaksin was ousted from power by the military last September and splits his time between a home in London and travelling around Asia.

Thaksin, 57, had been considered the front-runner in the Manchester City takeover, estimated at around 100 million pounds (197 million dollars).

How Sir Bobby's luck finally ran out

(Following is an excerpt from Brian Glanville's new book, England Managers, the Toughest Job in Football, in which the doyen of football writers gives his verdict on Bobby Robson and England's 1990 World Cup campaign.)

THE TIMES

England would be based in Cagliari, capital of Sardinia, where it was hoped the hooligans could be contained. Alas, there would be at least one bloody pre-match confrontation in which the English fans, by and large, were more sinned against than sinning. Gazza would go although, given his fragile character, it was distressing to see how insensitively Bobby Robson treated him. 'Daft as a brush', Robson called him, but, with the definitive exclusion of Glenn Hoddle, he was plainly England's one real hope of invention and surprise in midfield, with his supreme technique, his powerful right foot, his instant ability to sum up situations. Yet Robson stuck him on the left wing in a B-team international in Brighton and, shortly before the squad for Italy was announced, put him under ferocious pressure. Picking him for a friendly against the Czechs at Wembley, Robson insensitively announced that this was Paul Gascoigne's last chance.

In the tunnel before the start, Gascoigne was kicking a ball against the wall in his anxiety, but he went out, played superbly, had a hand in three goals and got one himself, with a glorious solo.

Holland, Egypt and the Republic of Ireland, still led by Jackie Charlton, would be England's group opponents in Cagliari. The opening match against the Irish was of a blinding sterility, which led one Italian paper to head its match report, 'No Football Please, We're British'. In a harsh wind, even Gascoigne found life difficult. Lineker scored a characteristically opportunist goal in eight minutes, taking the ball past the Irish keeper Packy Bonner with his chest, running on to score. Steve McMahon, on as a substitute, ineptly gave the ball away to Kevin Sheedy, who shot the left-footed equaliser.

Holland came next but this was a diminished Dutch team, beset by quarrels within the camp. Previously, in press conferences, Bobby Robson had insisted that the sweeper defence was utterly foreign to English footballers, and a four-in-line defence would be maintained. England's senior professionals now persuaded him otherwise, though in the event their caution proved excessive. Mark Wright, rehabilitated after his blunders against the Yugoslavs in 1986, filled the role capably but Terry Butcher found himself virtually playing at right back. The dynamic pace of Des Walker closed any gaps, though Bobby Robson had constantly criticised him for being reluctant to cross the halfway line. Further invaluable pace was given to the defence by little Paul Parker. In Katowice, Jacek Ziobor and Roman Kosecki, the long-haired little Polish wingers, had overrun the English backs.

It was yet another goalless draw but England deserved to win, making far the greater number of chances, with Gary Lineker, paired

up front with John Barnes hitting the keeper's body and missing a clear opportunity later. Gascoigne now was emphatically up and running. This was a revitalised England.

Press relations meanwhile were at rock bottom, the consequence of those tabloid 'revelations' about the two Robsons. Naïvely, Bobby gave free run of the England camp to a novelist called Pete Davies who rewarded him in his subsequent book with a string of indiscretions; many, such as Gascoigne's telephone rant at his girlfriend, of the kind which any professional sports journalist would have excluded. The news media's lack of reticence, however, appeared to have no obvious effect on the team's performance.

Against Egypt, England reverted to a four-in-line defence. Ultra cautious, the Egyptians hardly deserved the praise afforded them by Bobby Robson after the game. Mark Wright headed the only goal from a search-

ing free kick by Gascoigne and England were through to the next round.

Their opponents would be Belgium in Bologna, where, after 119 minutes England prevailed with a goal superbly and gymnastically struck by substitute David Platt, a late-developing attacker, discarded by Manchester United, groomed by Crewe Alexandra, burnished by Aston Villa. It was Gazza's free kick again from the left which enabled Platt to swivel and volley his goal. Once again, England played with a sweeper, which seemed somewhat redundant, since the Belgians used only one striker. Belgium twice hit the post. Barnes, after a splendid move, had a goal contentiously ruled out for a dubious offside.

Next, to Naples, where the opposition was the tournament's surprise package, Cameroon, none more so than their astonishing centre forward Roger Milla, aged (at least) thirty-eight, who was wont to come on and score as a second-half substitute. Cameroon had shocked Argentina by beating the holders in the curtain-raising game.

They very nearly beat England, too. 'A flat back four saved us,' said Bobby Robson, the following day. The point being that England had again started with a sweeper, in the shape of Wright. In the event, the three English centre backs served only to confuse one another. Though the abrasive Cameroon team had no fewer than four players suspended,



long, but now he transformed the right flank, while Paul Parker subdued Milla.

Eight minutes before time, Gary Lineker was brought down and equalised from the spot. Mark Wright, colliding with Milla, poured blood from a cut above his right eye and had to move out of central defence; it meant England played extra time with ten fit men. On 105 minutes, however, they won the game when an inspired pass by Gascoigne put Lineker through. N'Kono brought him down, but this time he would not escape. Another penalty, and Lineker converted it. So England were in the semi-final. 'We pulled it out of the fire,' exulted Bobby Robson. 'I don't know how, sometimes. We were depleted. Wright, Walker [both had injuries]. But the two midfield players [Gascoigne and Platt] worked marvellously hard, they ran for miles? Parker and Trevor Steven did very, very well. Parker jumped like a salmon, tackled like a ferret. We were told to go home after the first match. Well, I believe the country back home is dancing in the streets, now? because we're in the top four in the world in 1990? and I'm proud of that, because I stand up for our football.'

(...to be continued)