

Hildebrand's rare chance

AFP, Munich

Germany's understudy goalkeeper Timo Hildebrand says he is looking forward to wearing the national shirt on Wednesday and hopes to take his chance to keep out Arsenal's Jens Lehmann.

Hildebrand, 28, has been behind Lehmann in coach Joachim Loew's pecking order since last summer's World Cup and the Valencia shot-stopper is relishing his chance with Lehmann suspended for Wednesday's Euro 2008 clash here against the Czech Republic.

Achilles tendon and elbow injuries last month have meant Lehmann lost his place in Arsenal's first-team.

And having picked up his second yellow card of the Euro 2008 qualifiers in Saturday night's 0-0 draw with the Republic of Ireland, Lehmann has left the German squad to train with his north London club.

But a superb performance in Dublin by Lehmann, as Germany booked their Euro 2008 place, means Hildebrand will have to produce something special at the Allianz Arena to keep his place for games against Cyprus and Wales next month.

"I am looking forward to taking my chance," said Hildebrand, who will win only his seventh cap after three in the German squad.

"The roles are clearly distributed with Jens as first choice, but I am pleased however that I will play the Czech Republic."

Johnson eyes

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"It's been a long ride, being 12th man last summer and with the World Cup stub, but it's been an exciting one for me and I've just enjoyed the whole experience," he said. "If I wasn't around the team (as 12th man), I wouldn't be in this situation now. If I was sitting back at home watching and not being around the guys, it would probably be a different story."

Johnson, who went to Chennai on a pre-season trip to the city's pace academy, has been surprised by his success in India. "I probably didn't expect to get as many wickets as I did," Johnson said. He has another chance to add to his collection during the seventh match in Mumbai on Wednesday.

Inzamam

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Tendulkar," said former teammate Wasim Akram.

"The lazy elegance, the craft, the sleepy walk and perfect timing -- all made him great. I think through his easy-going and calm demeanour he leaves behind a legacy," he said.

South African paceman Alan Donald also paid tribute.

"Bowling to Inzy was almost like bowling to a brick wall. Everything about him was unfazed, nothing could rattle him -- he was so solid," said Donald.

A versatile player, Inzamam mastered pressure situations, and 17 of his 25 centuries came in Tests that Pakistan went on to win.

Inzamam also became a role model for the team and a source of inspiration for younger players, said Ramiz Raja, a fellow former captain and now commentator.

"Being a respected player, he was a role model for the team, and younger players in the dressing room looked at him for inspiration and courage."

But he was often criticised for being overweight, and it was cited as a reason for being run-out on several occasions.

And in 2003, his career became a rollercoaster ride.

He made his highest ever Test score -- 329 against New Zealand at Lahore -- that year but then suffered a slump in form, scoring just 16 during Pakistan's first-round exit from the World Cup in 2003.

Inzamam was among players consequently dumped from the team, only to win his place back six months later. A match-winning century against Bangladesh on his home ground in Multan not only revived his career but promoted him to captain.

"The last phase of his career is incredible. He changed into a more active captain and barring the World Cup 2007 he ended his career in a satisfying manner," said Akram.

BCB revamps

FROM PAGE 12

For a no-ball (only foot-fault), the batsmen will enjoy a free-hit in the next delivery.

Meanwhile, media committee chairman Ahmed Sajidul Alam Bobby informed that three private TV channels have expressed their desire to telecast the matches.



Argentine striker Carlos Tevez controls the ball during a training session in Maracaibo on Monday. The second round of World Cup qualifiers, that began Tuesday, will continue today.

Integral night for big boys

AFP, Paris

England received a welcome boost, France have injury setbacks while Scotland manager Alex McLeish claimed his team were up against it to go through on the run-up to Wednesday night's Euro 2008 qualifiers.

England negotiate a tricky tie on an artificial pitch in Russia, France host Lithuania after a horrendous run to the Faroe Islands and Scotland have an important trip to Georgia as they look to consolidate their Group B lead.

With the qualifying competition for the finals in Austria and Switzerland finishing on November 21, each match is like a cup final for Arsenal in the Premiership, and three goals in the Champions League.

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England defender Ashley Cole however was on Sunday ruled out of the Russia game after he was carried off in a stretcher following a collision with Estonia forward Kaimar Saag at the weekend.

Striker Nicolas Anelka and defender Julien Escude will both miss France's match against Lithuania in Nantes because of injuries, team officials announced on Monday.

Anelka sustained a thigh injury in Saturday's 6-0 win over the Faroe Islands and he will head back to his English Premier League side Bolton for treatment.

Escude, who was injured before the game against the Faroes, has failed to recover and will play no part in the squad.

France need to win their final two games against Lithuania and away to Ukraine to be sure of qualifying for the finals.

Manager Steve McClaren meanwhile vowed there would be no

Symonds smashes India

FROM PAGE 12

"Hogg turned out to be a crucial bowler for the Aussies. It is very difficult to get runs against him under pressure. His wrong-un is especially causing a lot of trouble," Dhoni said.

Earlier, man of the match Symonds shrugged off the controversy over his alleged racial abuse by Indian fans in the previous game as favourites to qualify along with the Croatians from Group E.

Manager Steve McClaren meanwhile vowed there would be no

excuses for England if they fail to adapt to the synthetic surface at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium.

Having already put three goals past Guus Hiddink's side on their previous encounter last month and now extended their winning streak in competitive combat to five games, which have yielded 15 goals including, finally, one for Wayne Rooney, England can approach their challenge in confident mood.

McClaren said: "The pitch is not an issue. We have looked at research extending over 100 matches and there is no difference to a grass pitch at all. The game is no different."

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England skipper John Terry looks set to play in Russia after flying to Moscow with the rest of the squad on Monday.

The Chelsea centre back, who missed Saturday's 3-0 win over Estonia with a knee injury, returned to training on Monday morning and was given a green light to travel for a match where victory would seal England's place in next year's finals.

An England spokesman said Terry had, "come through the session with no problems. He will continue to be monitored by the England medical staff and assessed for any reaction."

A draw would leave them needing a point from their final qualifier, at home to Croatia next month, while a defeat would leave Russia as favourites to qualify along with the Croatians from Group E.

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which kept them a point ahead of World Cup winners Italy and two in front of defeated finalists France, came at a high price.

Lee McCulloch and Garry O'Connor picked up bookings which mean they are suspended for the Georgia match, while injuries to Scott Brown and Alan Hutton ruled the Celtic midfielder and Rangers full-back out too.

McLeish believes these losses could prove crucial to his side's Euro 2008 dreams.

The Scotland boss said: "The win over Ukraine came at a high cost, but this is what happens when you are a small nation."

"It is inevitable that you will pick up suspensions and injuries when you play a number of games in a campaign and it makes our task that little bit tougher."

"We are not in a particularly strong position now with the injuries and suspensions we have. We are neck and neck with the top two teams in the world so it's going to be very hard for us."

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Argentinian midfielder Jose Sosa also took part in training after a long injury lay-off and should be in contention to face Bochum, but Brazilian star Ze Roberto was missing with a dose of flu.

The butter-fingered Indians dropped three catches and allowed the visitors to slam 102 runs in the last 10 overs.

Murali Kartik was the most economical bowler, conceding 37 runs in nine overs with one wicket, while Sreesanth had a miserable outing, giving away 64 runs off his eight overs with just one wicket in return.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Scoreboard of the sixth one-day international between India and Australia on Sunday:

AUSTRALIA: 317 for 8 in 50 overs (Gilchrist 51, Ponting 49, Symonds 107 n.o, Hopes 39; Zaheer 2-62).

INDIA: 299 for 7 in 50 overs (Ganguly 86, Tendulkar 72, Pathan 29, Dhoni 26, Uthappa 44; Johnson 2-39, Hogg 4-49).

Result: Australia won by 18 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Andrew Symonds.

Klose to return

AFP, Munich

Miroslav Klose, the Bundesliga's joint top-scorer, is expected to return for Bayern Munich on Saturday when the league leaders tackle VfL Bochum.

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Scoreboard of the fifth and final one-day international between Sri Lanka and England on Saturday:

SRI LANKA: 211 all out in 48.1 overs (Perera 30, Jayasuriya 26, Sangakkara 26, Silva 73, Vaas 15; Sidebottom 2-41, Broad 3-36).

ENGLAND: 104 all out in 29.1 overs (Cook 28, Pietersen 28, Bopara 16 n.o; Vaas 2-36, Malinga 2-24, Fernando 6-27).

Result: Sri Lanka won by 107 runs.

Series result: England clinched five-match series 3-2.

Silva, who scored 67 in the

S AMERICA WC QUALIFIERS

Tuesday 16 October
Venezuela v Argentina
Wednesday 17 October
Bolivia v Colombia
Paraguay v Uruguay
Chile v Peru
Brazil v Ecuador

Real after Fabregas

AFP, Madrid

Spain's Cesc Fabregas, who has shone with Arsenal in the Champions League, is a target for Real Madrid for the 2008-2009 season, the sports daily AS said Tuesday.

The paper carried comments by Real president Ramon Calderon on Saturday following Spain's 3-1 defeat of Denmark in a Euro 2008 qualifier.

"Cesc is one of the best," Calderon said.

AS said the Real manager Bernd Schuster is aware of Calderon's interest in the midfielder for next season.

Prior to his election by Real's board last year, Calderon promised to get Fabregas, Arjen Robben and Kaka for the club.

The Dutchman was bought from Chelsea last summer for 35 million euros (50 million dollars), but AC Milan has refused to part with its Brazilian star.

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