

## 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 years 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 stuff, 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 howling 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 batsman will enjoy a free-hit in the next delivery.

Meanwhile, media committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby informed that three private TV channels have expressed their desires 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 journey 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 those teams on the verge of sealing their berth.

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.

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 in 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."

"The loss of possession is the same, there are the same number of headers and tackles and it doesn't bounce high. It is a flat pitch and there is absolutely no excuse."

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 Saagat at the weekend.

Striker Nicolas Anelka and defender Julien Escudé 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.

Escudé, 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.

As for Scotland, Saturday's 3-1 victory over Ukraine in Glasgow,

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."

"Italy and France are still the favourites to qualify but we can still do it and will give everything to try and make it."

The 2002 World Cup semi-finalists Turkey have a home clash against arch rivals and reigning European champions Greece in Istanbul in a top-of-the-table Group C clash. Greece lead the pool by four points from Turkey who will surely be highly motivated for victory to keep them on course.

Other top nations in action include Holland who host Slovenia in Group G, already-qualified Germany who entertain the Czech Republic in Munich from Group D, and Portugal who make the long trip to Kazakhstan in Group A.

## 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.

Klose, 29, has already scored just eight goals in seven league games this season but the top-scorer at last year's World Cup has been out for three weeks with injured knee ligaments.

Having come through training on Saturday, Klose is expected to return to partner Italian World Cup winner Luca Toni against Bochum and between them the Bayern pair have 16 league goals already this season.

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.

previous game, kept one end intact before becoming the ninth man out in the 47th over, caught by James Anderson at third-man off Broad.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
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.

## 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.

Fabregas, 20, who spent his early career at Barcelona, has already scored four goals in eight matches for Arsenal in the Premiership, and three goals in the Champions League.

## SA seal series

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It was left to Younis to save Pakistan from defeat, adding 161 runs for the second wicket with Kamran Akmal (71) and another 89 for the third wicket with Yusuf.

The South African pace-cum-spin attack failed to dislodge Younis and Akmal in the three-hour first session, which was extended due to Friday prayers.

Younis, who made 126 in Karachi, reached his century with a push for a single. He hit 14 boundaries in his century which took 253 minutes.

He was finally dismissed caught behind off Jacques Kallis after a fighting 35-minute knock.

Yusuf, who made only 25 in the first innings, held the fort after Pakistan lost Younis and Inzamam in quick succession and negotiated the second newball without any trouble.

Shoaib Malik ended unbeaten on 20.

The two teams start a five-match one-day series with the first match here on October 18.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

Scoreboard of the second Test between Pakistan and South Africa at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Friday:

**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings 357 (Prince 63, Kallis 59, Boucher 54; Kaneria 4-114)

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 206 (Akmal 52; Ntini 3-42, Harris 3-57)

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Second innings 305-4 decd (Smith 133, Kallis 107 n.o.)

**PAKISTAN:** Second innings 316 for 4 in 107 overs (Akmal 71, Younis 130, Yusuf 63 n.o., Inzamam 3, Malik 20 n.o.; Harris 2-60).

**Result:** Drawn.

**South Africa won the two-Test series 1-0.**

**Man-of-the-match:** Jacques Kallis.

**Man-of-the-series:** Jacques Kallis.

## Akhtar signs

FROM PAGE 12

The 32-year-old Akhtar has apologised for hitting Mohammad Asif with a bat after practice three days before the start of the inaugural Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa last month.

Pakistan team manager Talat Ali, who reported the incident to the PCB last month, had also recommended counselling for the troubled paceman whose ban dates back to the matches in the Twenty20 World Cup.

Ashraf said the ban and fine -- the biggest ever imposed on a cricketer at international level other than in match-fixing -- should set an example for all players.

"We have set an example as Akhtar has got the maximum possible punishment and he has accepted them. Akhtar has accepted his mistake and we hope that such a sad incident will not happen again," said Ashraf.

## India to play

FROM PAGE 12

Michael Clarke in Nagpur.

## TEAMS

**INDIA (probable):** Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh, Robin Uthappa, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain/wicketkeeper), Irfan Pathan, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, Rudra Pratap Singh.

**AUSTRALIA (probable):** Adam Gilchrist (wicketkeeper), Matthew Hayden, Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Voges, Michael Clarke, Andrew Symonds, James Hopes, Brett Lee, Brad Hogg, Nathan Bracken, Mitchell Johnson.

## GERMANY FIRST TEAM IN EURO 2008

# S America start WC journey

## Football

INTERNET, undated

Europe and South America must play the same game of soccer because so many Latinos make the big time with European clubs. Yet the calendars are out of kilter.

On one continent, 42 nations competed Saturday - and just one, Germany, confirmed a place in the finals of Euro 2008. On the other, 10 countries on Saturday and Sunday began the long qualifying haul toward the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

One man's quality stood out like a beacon: Juan Roman Riquelme, who stroked in two immaculate free kicks in Buenos Aires, leading Argentina to a 2-0 victory in a feisty match against Chile.

This is the same Riquelme, the man with the beautiful touch and the mournful expression, who seems to have become an outcast in Europe. He was sold by agents to Barcelona in his youth, moved to Villarreal, shone there but fell out with the coach, and loaned out to Boca Juniors.

He inspired Boca to the coveted Copa Libertadores title last spring, but finds no permanent abode on either side of the Atlantic.

Villarreal and Boca haggled over the price, but left Riquelme in the lurch. Atletico Madrid tried and failed to agree on terms to buy him.

Riquelme is left rotting in Villarreal's surplus yard. No club, no coach, seems convinced that the man's temperament is worth his talent.

Conversely, curiously, the last two coaches of Argentina's national side think the opposite. Jose Pekerman, and now his successor, Alfio Basile, pick Riquelme as playmaker, and ask

the rest, including Lionel Messi, Carlos Tevez, Javier Mascherano, to blend their skills with his.

There are decent judges around the globe who rate Messi the most outstanding player in the world right now. On Saturday, Messi was fine, but Riquelme eclipsed him.

Twice in the first half, from either side of the penalty box, Riquelme struck searing free kicks. One lifted and curled and confounded Chile's goalkeeper, Claudio Bravo. The second, from 30 meters, was hit bullet-straight, and confounded Bravo. Both found the same spot in the top corner of the net. Game over.

"I was in luck," Riquelme said. Basile said before, and after, the match that it had never been a gamble. "Other people can think what they like," said Basile. "A player of Riquelme's standard does not forget how to play football."

Unwanted and unused in Spain, he trained well and sustained his belief in himself.

Across the ocean, a more collective version of the sport holds sway.

Germany, without key players, organized themselves to an efficient, spirited, goalless draw in Dublin that confirmed their passage to the finals in 2008, and eliminated Ireland.

Poland, Croatia, Romania and Greece moved solidly toward qualification.

Russia, England, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Spain are gaining ground on places for the finals.

Italy and France, the winner and runner up of the World Cup last year, are in a dogfight. Both won Saturday - Italy with a laboured 2-0 scoreline over Georgia in Genoa, and France trouncing the Faroe Islands, 6-0, in Tshavn.

For the French, getting there through the fog around the

island proved more troublesome than overcoming the hapless Faroe part-timers. Thierry Henry notched his 41st goal for Les Bleus to equal, in his 95th international, the scoring record set by Michel Platini in 72 games.

Still, the French and the Italians face uncertainty. Scotland, who started as the minnow of their Group B, have grown and grown. They beat France home and away, and they now have home advantage over Italy next month. On Saturday, they extinguished the last hope Ukraine had of qualifying, winning 3-1.

There is no special individual in Scotland. The gelling of journeymen - players working for the cause and for one another - is their strength.

With 51,366 supporters in Glasgow, the Scots ran a fading Andriy Shevchenko and his countrymen out of the tournament. Shevchenko scored, but a headed goal from Kenny Miller and a sweetly placed shot from Lee McCulloch punished lazy Ukrainian marking at set pieces. James McFadden's goal in the second half confirmed the victory, and consigned Oleg Blokhin, the Ukraine coach, to resignation.

The resolve of the Scots, and the lack of it among the Ukrainians, was arguably the most significant performance of the European weekend. Scotland's problem is that McCulloch and Garry O'Connor are suspended and out of the next match in Georgia on Wednesday, while five more Scots are injured.

"We've taken a massive step toward qualifying," said the coach, Alex McLeish, "but it may have come at a cost. That's why it's" difficult for small countries to get above the giants in world football."

# De Rossi eyes 'final'

AFP, Rome

Italy midfielder Daniele De Rossi said Monday he is already looking to the world champions Euro 2008 qualifying match against Scotland next month in Glasgow as a 'final'.

"Yes, it's a final, even if it isn't the same as for the World Cup," said De Rossi, 24, a world champion with 27 caps and four goals.

"Basically, to qualify is easier than it seems: we must win in Glasgow," he said Monday.

"The Scots have not lost at home in this group, and we have never

won in Glasgow in our entire history. But we can end this jinx, easily."

"We are the world champions, our opponents don't have the same stature. We must impose ourselves and try to make our ability count. It would be terrible to not go to the finals."

Scotland are leading Group B with 24 points, ahead of Italy on 23 and France on 22 points.

De Rossi recalled the difficulties of playing at Hampden Park during the 1-1 draw with Scotland for the World Cup 2006 qualifications.

"The atmosphere was amazing, electric. When the whole stadium started singing a hymn I had goose

bumps," he said. "For the Scots, the national team is like a club, they have groups of organised supporters, they always play in the same stadium."

De Rossi will be the captain on Wednesday for the friendly match against South Africa at Siena when many of the first team will be rested after the 2-0 win against Georgia in Genoa on Saturday.

If Italy win in Glasgow on November 17 they will qualify for Euro 2008 in Switzerland and Austria, provided they do not lose four days later when they host the Faroe Islands, who have lost all of their ten matches.

# Nazrul quits from national

FROM PAGE 12

out of 30 attended a light training session yesterday as the national football camp resumed at BKSP after the Eid vacation.

The camp was scheduled to restart on October 15 but the booters got an extra day's leave as the Eidul Fitr was observed on Sunday.

Bangladesh are preparing for their away match against Tajikistan, on October 28 in Dushanbe.

Nayeemuddin, who helped Bangladesh put an end to their losing streak against Tajikistan, felt

that the boys are confident after the draw at home.

Bangladesh's previous meetings against the former Soviet state resulted in 0-2, 0-2 and 6-1 defeats.

"The draw did a great deal to boost their morale. Now we want to have as much match practice as possible because we have very little time in hand," Nayeemuddin told yesterday from BKSP over phone.

"We have trained for quite some time and now need to play games."

However, the BFF would not be able to stage any matches in this short period.

"I know this and we have to use

our own resources," said the former India coach and international.

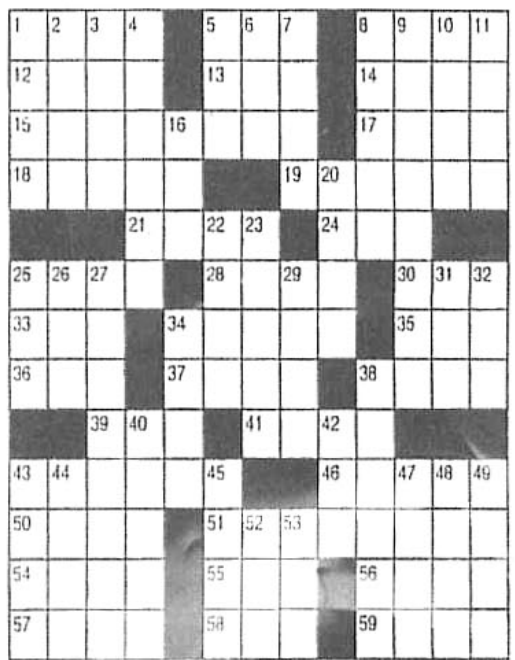
He is expected to use the players for game practice once the weather clears.

"We expected the Tajiks to play a game of better standard. But they have proved a rather ordinary side. It's not impossible to get a good result against them against if the players stick to the instructions. Whatever, we will fight like we did in Dhaka," Nayeem added.

Bangladesh will need to beat Tajikistan or draw at least 2-2 to enter the Asian qualifying rounds for the South Africa World Cup.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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