

## Big Bonus for Spain if they win

AFP, Madrid

All the Spanish squad members will receive bonuses of 214,000 euros each should they beat Germany in Sunday's Euro 2008 final, the Spanish Football Federation announced on Friday.

The amount had already been decided on before the tournament, a federation spokesperson told AFP.

The Spaniards - impressive 3-0 winners over Russia on Thursday in the semifinal - are seeking their first title since winning the 1964 edition while the Germans are in line for their fourth European crown.

The federation spokesperson did not reveal how much the players would receive if they lost.

## Frings would play himself

AFP, Tenero

Germany midfielder Torsten Frings insists he would play himself in Sunday's Euro 2008 final against Spain if he was German coach - despite having a fractured rib.

The holding midfielder fractured it in the 1-0 group stage win over Austria on June 16, but just nine days later declared himself fit enough to come off the bench as Germany beat Turkey 3-2 in Wednesday's semifinal.

One of three current survivors from the 2002 World Cup final defeat to Brazil, the 31-year-old is desperate to play in Sunday's final in Vienna and has already told coach Joachim Loew to pick him.

"I feel absolutely fit, I hardly have any problems now and I am amazed how quickly I have healed," said Frings.

"I was a bit nervous playing in the semifinal, I worried how I would cope if I went down, but I am fit, raring to go and burning to play."

While he admits his place in the starting line-up comes with a certain risk - both to his own health and the team's aspirations to win a fourth European title - Frings said he would play himself if he was in Loew's shoes.

## Terim set to stay

AFP, Ankara

Fatih Terim is set to stay on as coach of Euro 2008 semifinalists Turkey according to the president of the Turkish Football Federation on Friday.

The 54-year-old coach had suggested that he would be stepping down and taking over a club outside of Turkey, after his side had lost 3-2 to three-time champions Germany on Wednesday.

However, Turkish football supremo Hasan Dogan revealed on the federation's website that Terim - who has coached two Serie A sides in AC Milan and Fiorentina - and him had a talk on the plane back from Switzerland.

"We spoke on the aeroplane. Fatih Terim is at this moment in charge of the national side... god willing he will be in 2010 (the year of the World Cup finals in South Africa) as well."

Levent Kizil, who is responsible for the national sides within the federation, also believed that the man known as the 'Emperor' would stay on adding that he had been under a lot of pressure when he had made his remarks about stepping down.

It was a view echoed by several newspapers.

According to mass circulation daily Hurriyet, Terim repeated his wish to step down at a meeting with the federation on Thursday, but met with a firm refusal from Dogan.

"We are very happy with you, we have confidence in you, our confidence in you has never dimmed and we want you to stay on till 2010," Hurriyet quoted Dogan as saying.

# Fabregas don't want to lose

AFP, Vienna

Spain's Cesc Fabregas says that he has no intention of letting Sunday's Euro 2008 final against Germany slip through his hands.

The Arsenal midfielder, who set up Spain's last two goals in Thursday's 3-0 semifinal win over Russia, knows all too well what it's like to fall at the final hurdle having lost out to Barcelona with the Gunners in the 2006 Champions League final.

And after the Russian rout which set Spain up for a tilt at their first major honour in 44 years he insisted: "Listen I know what it's like to lose a major final, I don't want to lose another one."

Coach Luis Aragones has preferred to start Xavi in midfield throughout this Euro with Fabregas



Spanish players celebrate at the end of the match after their stunning victory over Russia in the Euro 2008 semifinal at the Ernst-Happel Stadium in Vienna on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Aragones sounds a caution

AFP, Vienna

Spain coach Luis Aragones quoted former England striker Gary Lineker after his side thrashed Russia 3-0 to set up a Euro 2008 final against Germany on Sunday.

Goals from Xavi, Daniel Guiza and David Silva fired Spain to a comprehensive semifinal victory here against the team who had stunned Holland in the previous round.

But despite coaching the only side to have avoided defeat in this tournament, Aragones sounded a word of warning to his countrymen ahead of the final.

And Aragones claimed that his calm exterior masked the emotion he was feeling within, before then quoting Lineker.

"I'm not very expressive, I feel very happy inside but I'm not an extrovert," said the 65-year-old known as the 'Wise Man of Hortaoleza'.

"But really I feel happy for the players, for the fans and for my family. I even have a grandchild here who moved me to tears."

"I don't express my feelings,

you'll never see me do that, I'm not a very festive person, I don't celebrate much, just like I don't get depressed when we lose."

"But I'm very happy for the team because they deserve to be champions but there's one more hurdle because there are the Germans."

"And as Lineker said: football is a simple game, 22 men chase a ball for 90 minutes and at the end, the Germans always win."

Aragones started with his preferred starting XI but was forced into making a change 10 minutes before the break as striker David Villa injured a leg.

The Spain coach opted to bring on midfielder Cesc Fabregas rather than a like for like forward in Guiza, but the move paid dividends.

"With (Fernando) Torres and Villa (in attack) we had a few problems with how to control the midfield," he said.

"But with Cesc we had another midfielder so as a team we passed the ball well and it's difficult to stop us."

Russia couldn't stop Spain's midfield five from darting around and creating space but another of their problems was that star man

Andrei Arshavin was kept quiet, failing to spark some life into his teammates.

"We knew how he plays in a free role and in every area there was someone supposed to keep tabs on him," explained Aragones.

"Whenever he left (defensive midfielder Marcos) Senna behind, someone else was there or when he went out onto the wings, someone was there and ready for him."

"He's an excellent player, very fast but there's other players in the Russian team that I like as much as him."

Aragones could have one problem ahead of the final as Villa looks like he may have to sit it out with injury.

But his coach didn't seem too concerned, particularly given how well Spain played when they replaced the forward with Arsenal midfielder Fabregas.

"David Villa is injured and I don't know if he will play in the final. As for Fabregas we know how well he can play."

"He's a young guy but we have other players who are performing just as well."

## Special ball for final

AFP, Vienna

The balls set to be used for Sunday's Euro 2008 final between three-time champions Germany and 1964 winners Spain have been called "Europass Gloria" announced sports equipment giant adidas on Friday.

The 30 balls will be coloured silver and carry the name of the two finalists with the date and time of the match.

Meanwhile the trophy that the victorious captain - either Germany's Michael Ballack or Iker Casillas of Spain - will lift will be heavier by 2 kilograms than the one that Greek skipper Theodoros Zagorakis raised in the Euro 2004 edition.

The trophy, which bears the name of Henri Delaunay, former secretary-general of the French Federation and the inspiration behind the championships, weighs 8kg and measures 60 centimetres.

"We were more or less on the same level for an hour but we couldn't keep it up."

"That was also their plan to make us tired, very tired so we couldn't mark as well and couldn't play as well in the second half."

Hiddink had no complaints after his team had exceeded all expectations in reaching this stage

AFP, Rome

Italy's World Cup winning coach Marcello Lippi returned to the post on Thursday.

The 60-year-old replaces Roberto Donadoni, who was sacked earlier on Thursday after Italy were beaten by Spain in the Euro 2008 quarterfinals.

"Marcello Lippi will return as coach of Italy," read a statement by Italian Football Federation (FIGC) president Giancarlo Abete on their website.

"He will replace Roberto Donadoni."

The FIGC said that Lippi - who has not held a coaching post since taking Italy to the penalty shootout win over France in the 2006 World Cup final - would be unveiled at a press conference in Rome on July 1.

## Semifinal drew record TV audience

AFP, Madrid

Spain's 3-0 demolition of Russia in the Euro 2008 semifinal drew a record television audience of more than 17 million viewers, a media and marketing firm said on Friday.

At 22:26 pm (2026 GMT) on Thursday, when David Silva scored a third goal, there were 17.15 million viewers watching the game in Spain, Barlovento Comunicacion said on its web site.

It was the highest audience for a television broadcast since figures were first compiled in Spain, home to 46 million people, in 1992.

The previous record of 16.2 million viewers was set during Spain's nail-biting quarterfinal win on penalties against Italy on June 22, the newspaper El Mundo said.

Spain faces Germany in Sunday's final hoping to win its first ever major international title since Euro 1964.

## Guus gracious in defeat

AFP, Vienna

Russia's Dutch coach Guus Hiddink admitted Spain had been the better side and deserved to be in the Euro 2008 final after his side's 3-0 defeat here on Thursday.

After a more cautious first-half Spain shook off the shackles in the second period and tore Russia apart with their crisp passing game.

And Hiddink, whose side had stunned Holland in the quarterfinals due to their physical condition, said that his team simply could not keep chasing shadows as Spain pinged the ball around.

"We lost against a very good Spain team," said Hiddink, who saw his hopes of a major final dashed again having taken Holland and South Korea to the 1998 and 2002 World Cup semifinals respectively.

"We were more or less on the same level for an hour but we couldn't keep it up."

"That was also their plan to make us tired, very tired so we couldn't mark as well and couldn't play as well in the second half."

Hiddink had no complaints after his team had exceeded all expectations in reaching this stage

of the competition - since the fall of the Soviet Union Russia had never even got out of the group stages of a World Cup or European Championships so reaching a semifinal represented something of a breakthrough.

"I'm disappointed we lost but we can be proud that we reached the latter stages and third place is a tremendous success but tonight we faced a strong side and they deserved to win."

Looking forward to the final Hiddink said it was difficult to separate Germany - who beat Turkey 3-2 in Wednesday's first semifinal in Basel, Switzerland - and Spain, although he admitted he had a softer spot for the Spanish, having had three relatively unsuccessful spells as a club coach there.

"I like teams who have the concept of playing an attacking game, who like to play, who enjoy the game," he said.

"I like to see players who like to play and Spain have a lot of experience and love to play football."

"They can create chances as well and of course they have a chance against Germany."

"Germany have some 'good games and they have some scrappy

games but they're always there where they want to be."

"This will be a match between a physically powerful team against a team that plays one-touch football - I can't predict who will win."

Before this semifinal a lot had been written and said about Russia's playmaker Andrei Arshavin, who suddenly found himself at the top of many big clubs' wanted list, but he failed to perform on the big stage.

Hiddink was not blaming the Zenit St Petersburg forward, though.

"When he did well in the Sweden game after being suspended (for the first two matches) and then also against Holland it's normal that the team and he got lots of attention," said the Dutchman.

"And then a lot of people are writing that he can be a top player in any league."

"He can but Spain focused on him and he had some difficult moments. But that's good for him to have a tough game and to see what he has to do to improve to survive in the big leagues."

"He's got the quality but it's good for him and for us to see the difficulties he has to overcome."

## Press laments exit

AFP, Moscow

Russian newspapers lamented Friday "the end of the fairytale" after their national team crashed out of Euro 2008 with a 3-0 defeat to Spain.

"The time for miracles passed very quickly," commented the official Rossiiskaya Gazeta.

"Last night we saw the end of a beautiful fairytale titled 'the Russian national team's participation in Euro 2008'," it noted.

The Russian team, following their surprise win over Holland in the

quarterfinals, found themselves quickly back down to earth in their semifinal matchup against Spain in Vienna on Thursday, never posing a serious challenge to the Spaniards who shut them out 3-0.

"The European fairytale is over for the Russian national team," echoed the popular daily Tvoi Den.

But it called on Russian football fans not to lose hope.

"There is nothing to be ashamed of by the performance of our lads in the championship. They gave us many reasons to be proud of them,"

it concluded. "One wants to hope that in two years at the World Cup that nobody will be able to stop us... We're ready to wait, Guus," the newspaper wrote, referring to the team's Dutch coach, Guus Hiddink.

The sports daily Sovetski Sport was also optimistic, writing that the Russian national team has "everything before it."

"They didn't make the finals, but they gave Russia faith in Russian football," wrote the newspaper.



A Russian fan sits dejected at Red Square in Moscow after watching his national team's exit from the Euro 2008 early on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP