

Brazil not worried about Messi

INTERNET, Sao Paulo



Brazil are not too worried with Argentina star Lionel Messi ahead of their World Cup qualifier on Saturday.

Brazil coach Dunga said on Wednesday he does not plan any special defensive scheme to try to contain the Barcelona playmaker when the rivals meet in Rosario.

"Every player deserves attention," Dunga said after Brazil's practice at the Granja Comary training camp just outside Rio de Janeiro. "You can't mark only one player and let 10 others remain free."

Dunga praised Messi's skills and recognized the dangers he can create, but said Brazil has to play its own game and not worry too much about the opposing players.

"It's natural to have some precautions," Dunga said. "But we have to play like we normally do."

Messi has told Argentine media that although both teams have great players, he thinks Argentina has what it takes to beat the Brazilians. Messi, who is from Rosario, says he is motivated,

and reportedly scored five times in practice on Wednesday.

Saturday's match is key to Argentina, which is only fourth in South American qualifying for next year's World Cup in South Africa. Brazil leads the group with 27 points, one more than Chile and three more than third-place Paraguay. Argentina has 22 points, and a loss could put the team in danger of missing out on football's biggest showcase for the first time since 1970.

The top four nations automatically qualify, while the fifth-place nation will face a playoff with the fourth-place finisher in the CONCACAF region.

Although Argentina was under the most pressure, Dunga said he doesn't expect the Argentines to play overly aggressive or violently. But some of the Brazilian are bracing for a physical match.

"As always, they will be playing hard," Brazil striker Robinho said. "We know they will give all they have to beat us."

Brazil haven't beaten its rival in World Cup qualifiers in Argentina since 1995. Dunga is also trying to match Carlos Alberto Parreira's 1993 mark of four consecutive wins in World Cup qualifying.



PHOTO: AFP

Germany captain Michael Ballack (R) jogs with teammates during a training session in Cologne on Thursday.

Trezeguet leaving Juve

Football

AFP, Rome

Former France forward David Trezeguet said on Thursday that he will leave Italian giants Juventus at the end of the season.

Trezeguet joined Juve from Monaco in 2000 after scoring the golden goal winner for France in the European Championship final against Italy that summer.

He has scored more than 160 goals for Juventus and is the highest scoring foreigner ever to have played for the club.

However, the striker of Argentine heritage has since lost his place in the Juventus first team and started only one league match last season, while this season he has yet to figure.

He was widely rumoured to be on his way out during the summer but stayed at the club where he has a contract until 2011.

However, now he says he will cut that short by a year, completing exactly 10 years at the Old Lady of Turin.

"I have made my story at this club. Sooner or later everything has to come to an end," he said.

"Nothing has changed in my relationship with the club and I've never asked to leave."

"My contract has never been a problem. It's a decision I have taken a little while ago and I will return home with my family."

The 31-year-old Trezeguet, who is married with two children, did not specify if that would mean the end of his career, or if going home meant to France or Argentina, where he began his football career at Platense.

"I don't know, now's not the time to talk about that because we are only at the second match of the season," he added. "I want to finish my story with Juventus by winning something."

Trezeguet won two French league titles with Monaco and two Serie A titles -- and a Serie B crown -- with Juventus.

His best season came in 2002 when Juve were champions and he was named both Player of the Year and Foreign Player of the Year, as well as finishing as the joint top scorer in Serie A.

He also enjoyed success on the international stage, winning the World Cup with France in 1998 and the European Championship two years later.

However, he was part of the Juve team that was stripped of its 2005 and 2006 Scudetto crowns for match-fixing and relegated to Serie B.

Unlike many other big-name players, though, Trezeguet stayed loyal to the team and helped them bounce back up to Serie A at the first attempt.

Now, though, he has been shunted down the striker pecking order behind Amauri, Vincenzo Iaquinta and Alessandro Del Piero.

Hull snap up Hesselink

AFP, Hull

Hull have recruited former Celtic striker Jan Hesselink to bolster their bid to stay in the Premier League.

The 30-year-old Dutchman was a free agent after leaving Celtic at the end of last season, so Hull were able to complete his signing outside of the transfer window, which closed on Tuesday. He has signed a two-year deal.

Phil Brown's side have been widely tipped to struggle this season after securing survival on the final day of their first campaign in the top flight.

Venogoor of Hesselink spent three years at Celtic Park, having previously played for PSV Eindhoven, and Hull chairman Paul Duffen said the club had beaten off significant competition to sign him.

"We've definitely wanted an experienced, top-drawer striker who scores goals and Jan has scored prolifically in top leagues in Europe," Duffen said.

"It's what we need. We didn't score enough goals last season. Going forward we have a lot of new talent and Jan will play his part in using his experience to settle them down."

"We've been looking at him since July and are really pleased we've turned his head."

"He's been looking at other big clubs in Europe but the Premier League is where he wants to come and play with us."

Brown turned to Venogoor of Hesselink after failing to sign Michael Owen, Daryl Murphy and Bobby Zamora.

The Hull boss did however manage to recruit Jozy Altidore on a season-long loan from Villarreal and the young United States striker has looked like a lively addition to the squad in his opening matches for the club.

Adler eyes No. 1 spot

AFP, Berlin



Goalkeeper Rene Adler insisted Wednesday he wants to make Germany's Number One shirt his own and finally settle the issue of who will be between the posts at next year's World Cup.

"I want to be number one," said 24-year-old Adler who will be in goal when Germany face World Cup 2010 hosts South Africa in Leverkusen on Saturday in a friendly.

"I know what I can do and as a sportsman you always have to aim for the highest possible goals."

"I will fight to the end to stake my claim."

Hanover's Robert Enke is coach Joachim Loew's first-choice and will be back in goal for next Wednesday's World Cup qualifier against minnows Azerbaijan in Hanover as Germany aim to stay top of their group.

Adler insists he does not want to travel to South Africa next summer as reserve goalkeeper, but no player has made the position their own since Stuttgart's Jens Lehmann retired after Germany lost the Euro 2008 final.

With five caps to his name, Adler has already shown he can do the job for his country having made his debut in the 2-1 win over Russia last October, but he made his last appearance in the 1-0 shock defeat to Norway in February.

The Bayer Leverkusen shot-stopper has the rest of the season to leap-frog Enke into the

first-choice role with fierce competition between his Germany rivals Manuel Neuer from Schalke 04 and Tim Weise of Werder Bremen.

Weise was the shock omission from the squad for the South Africa and Azerbaijan games, but Adler says it shows none of the goalkeeping candidates can afford to relax.

"It is frustrating when something like this happens to you, but after you get over it you have to go full gas again," said Adler.

Adler's rival Enke was back in training with the national team in Cologne on Wednesday having shaken off the ill-effects of 'flu while Chelsea star and Germany captain Michael Ballack has got over a groin strain.

Having struggled to a 2-0 win over minnows Azerbaijan in Baku last month, national team manager Oliver Bierhoff says Germany must raise the tempo for the entire 90 minutes against South Africa.

"We need to play with more self-confidence," said Bierhoff.

"We must show some passion and enthusiasm over the full 90 minutes and the team have to excite the fans again."

"We need to stamp our authority on the game against smaller opposition and lead from early on."

Germany are top of their World Cup qualifier group and wins over Azerbaijan on September 9 and Russia in Moscow on October 10 will guarantee them a place at next year's World Cup.

IN BRIEF

Ballack to decide future after 2010 WC

AFP, Berlin

Germany captain Michael Ballack, who will celebrate his 33rd birthday in three weeks, said Thursday he will decide if he will continue playing after the World Cup in June next year.

"I will decide after the 2010 World Cup if I will continue playing or if I will stop," the Chelsea star told the Express newspaper while preparing for Saturday's friendly against South Africa in Leverkusen.

"I will continue as long as I enjoy it and still have ambitions in the sport."

Ballack, who played in the 2002 World Cup final and the semifinal of the 2006 tournament, has scored 41 goals in 93 appearances for Germany.

Tug of war over Franchi stadium

AFP, Rome

Football and rugby are involved in a bizarre tug of war over Fiorentina's Franchi stadium due to a fixture clash.

The Italian football association announced on Tuesday that the Serie A match between Fiorentina and Parma would be held on November 21.

However, the date and stadium have already been booked for a rugby union international between Italy and world champions South Africa, for which tickets are already on sale.

Neither Fiorentina nor Parma have commented on the clash but a spokesman for the Italian Rugby Federation said all parties, which includes the city of Florence, which owns the stadium, were working on a solution.

One possibility is that the football match will be moved to either December 2 or 16 or the rugby match would have to be moved to another stadium.

Mutu unfit for France clash

AFP, Bucharest

Romania will face France in Saturday's World Cup qualifier without striker Adrian Mutu, who misses the trip to Paris with a right thigh problem.

Romania coach Razvan Lucescu had named Mutu in his squad for the France game and the qualifier against Austria four days later despite the forward missing his club Fiorentina's Serie A game at the weekend.

Despite taking part in training on Wednesday morning he was later declared unfit.

"The medical test conducted on Wednesday shows that Adrian Mutu's right thigh muscle problem has not improved, which rules him out of the games against France and Austria," the Romania Football Federation announced.

He is due to be replaced by Gheorghe Bucur, a striker with Romania first division side FC Timisoara.

FIFA hits Blues hard

Football

AFP, Paris

English Premier League club Chelsea have been fined and hit with a ban on registering players until January 2011 by world football's ruling body FIFA as punishment for their role in a contractual dispute.

The sanction follows a decision by FIFA's Dispute Resolution Chamber (DRC), which met on August 27 to rule on a contractual dispute opposing French first division club Lens to French player Gael Kakuta and London giants Chelsea.

The DRC found Kakuta guilty of breach of contract and also found Chelsea guilty of inducing the player to break his contract with the French club, which had lodged a claim with FIFA seeking compensation and demanding sporting sanctions both on the player and Chelsea.

A statement from FIFA said the DRC "found that the player had indeed breached a contract signed with the French club".

"Equally, the DRC deemed it to be established that the English club induced the player to such a breach."

As well as paying 780,000 euros in compensation to Lens, for which Chelsea are jointly liable, Kakuta has been sanctioned in accordance with article 17, paragraph 3 and 4 of the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

He has been effectively banned from playing in official matches for four months.

The statement added: "Chelsea are banned from registering any new players, either nationally or internationally, for the two next entire and consecutive registration periods following the notification of the present decision."

Abramovich in Tanzania

AFP, Dar Es Salaam

Chelsea football club owner, Roman Abramovich, is in Tanzania on a private visit that will include touring the country's game reserves, a tourism official said on Thursday.

"Abramovich arrived Wednesday. He is scheduled to visit Serengeti National Park and might scale Mount Kilimanjaro," Pascal Shelutete, spokesman of the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) told AFP by phone from Arusha.

He said the Russian billionaire, who arrived in a private jet, accompanied by his deputy, accompanied by his deputy was welcomed by Tanzania's deputy minister for trade Cyril Chami at Kilimanjaro airport. No details of the visit were given.

"Abramovich is essentially on a private visit, although he may have talks with some government officials during his stay," Shelutete said, adding that his aides have declined to disclose for how long he will be in the east African country.

Alonso planned his exit

AFP, London

Real Madrid midfielder Xabi Alonso has admitted he planned to quit Liverpool for the moment Anfield boss Rafa Benitez tried to sell him last year.

Benitez had wanted to off-load Alonso to Juventus in July 2008 to raise money to sign Gareth Barry from Aston Villa.

Alonso was disappointed to hear that Benitez was willing to let him go and resolved to leave when the right opportunity arose.

That finally happened when he joined Real for 30 million pounds (38 million euros) in August after revealing to Benitez that he wanted to leave the Premier League club.

"It was a very difficult decision for me to make," he told Sky Sports News. "After five years I have experienced wonderful nights at Anfield, I have experienced the support of probably the

best fans in the world.

"That's why I have always been very grateful and I will always have them in my mind and it has been a pleasure."

"Last year the club proposed me that I might have to be sold to find funds for new players."

"It was a difficult decision or difficult moment to accept that I accepted that as a professional and that moment probably changed my mind and I thought that maybe from that moment that maybe it was time for a change."

Alonso has since admitted that his relationship with Benitez deteriorated when he demanded to leave but the Spanish international reveals that their relationship was always a professional one.

"There has been a lot of rumours but I have always said that it has been simply a professional relationship," he said.

"I have always tried to do what he asked to do. What he asked of me on the pitch to do the talking on the pitch and that's that as far as that."



PHOTO: AFP

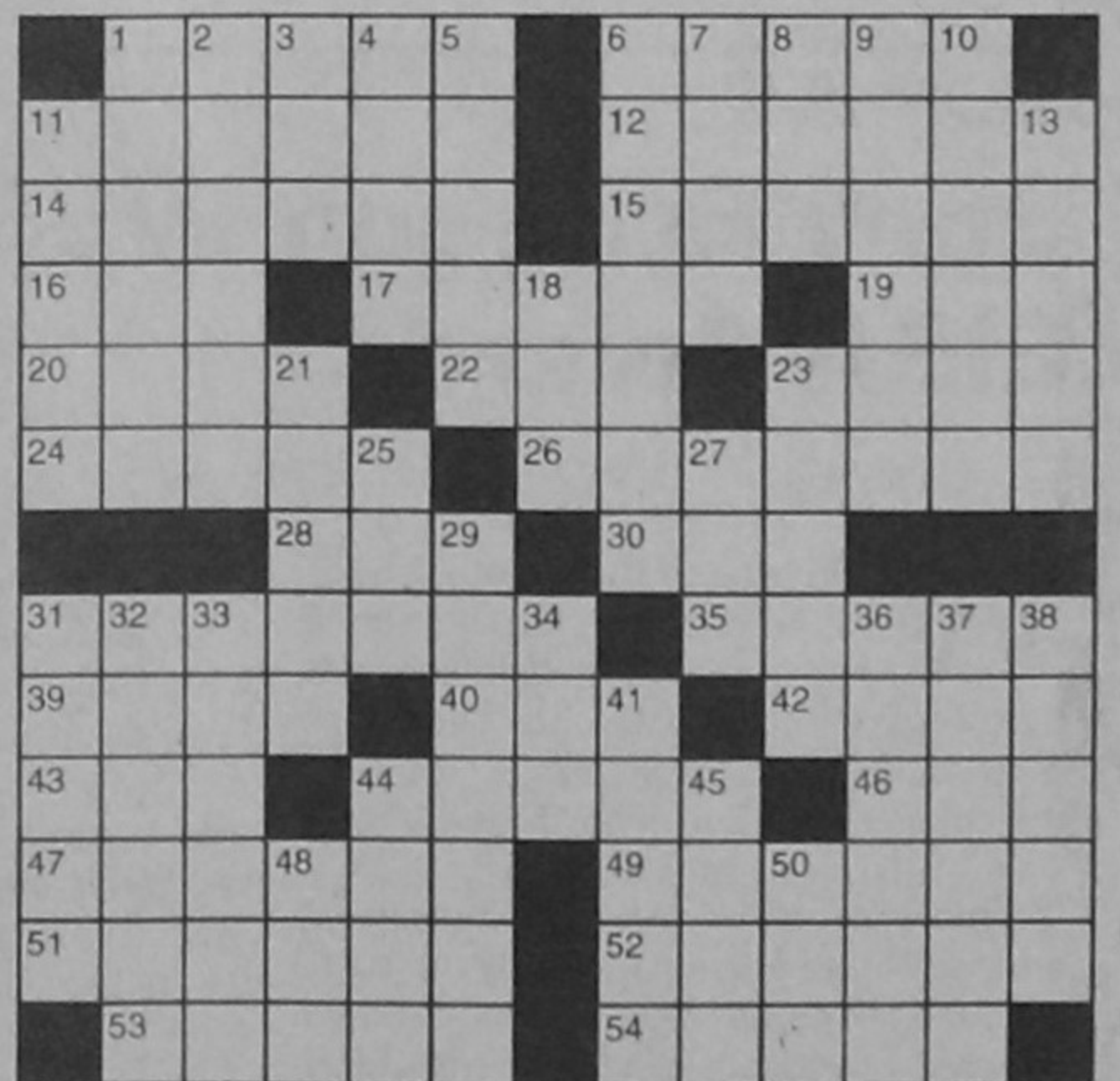
France midfielder Franck Ribery takes part in a training session in Clairefontaine on Wednesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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|--------|-------------------------|----|------------------------|------|--------------------|------------|---------------------|--|--|----|------------|----|------------|----|-----------|
| ACROSS | | | | | | | | | | 39 | Pivot line | 54 | Ceremonies | 13 | Hose woes |
| 1 | Bell creation | 40 | Emeril's interjection | DOWN | 18 | Comprehend | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Sales staffer | 1 | Less affluent | 21 | Hilton heiress | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | More offensive | 42 | Do surgery with a beam | 2 | "Yippeel" | 23 | Swing around wildly | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | TV networks, in a sense | 43 | Born | 4 | Approach | 25 | Accomplished | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Amman's nation | 44 | Trustworthy | 5 | Bert's roomie | 27 | Started | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | Shop talk | 46 | Bkpr. | 6 | Wheelies | 29 | Filleted | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Bobby of hockey | 47 | Singer Timberlake | 7 | Pinocchio, notably | 31 | Musical instrument | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | Severity | 49 | Close-fitting jacket | 8 | Mess up | 32 | "Every-body out!" | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Literary collection | 51 | Prompt | 9 | Wine and dine | 33 | Nap | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | Harvest | 52 | Small eggs | 10 | Swedish money | 34 | For example | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | Conger or moray | 53 | Pre-recorded | 11 | Greenland sight | 36 | Hen talk | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | Whip | | | | | 37 | Catches sight of | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | Wood nymph | | | | | 38 | Campus bigwigs | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | Bank employees | | | | | 41 | Primary study | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | Disen-cumber | | | | | 44 | Rickey flavor | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | Vase | | | | | 45 | Jeans-maker | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | As well | | | | | 48 | Gratuity | | | | | | | | |
| 35 | Chopped into cubes | | | | | 50 | Trench | | | | | | | | |

Solution time: 27 mins.

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------|
| AMBER | BAR | AMP |
| VALUE | ILL | LOY |
| AGORA | SLOWING | |
| WORST | REAM | |
| SKI | MAR | HANDY |
| AONE | TOPIC | |
| PIGSTY | ASKFOR | |
| CURST | SLAY | |
| MIGHT | USS | ORE |
| ANNE | ANYHOW | |
| GLOWING | ELIDE | |
| NAM | COO | LTINUS |
| AYE | END | LOGOS |



CRYPTOQUIP

SZHE CR VTNHEF UGNF "N
WEJR SHGT PJGCWTWAW
FHUNPEHT FTHUUHU," SGU
MZGM G VGUZNWE UMGHCHM?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: TWO WILD MEN ACTED AS THOUGH THEY WERE ROBBING THE COSMETICS COUNTER, BUT IT WAS ONLY A ROUGE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: R equals Y