AFP, Paris



France coach Raymond Domenech on Monday announced his World Cup squad

from which only one player, likely to be a defender, will be omitted in the coming days.

A 24-man squad, whittled down from a list of 30 revealed last week, will next week take part in a three-day training camp at altitude in the French ski resort of Tignes.

Domenech is scheduled to announce his definitive 23man squad on May 27, prior to their departure for a second training camp in Tunisia.

Among the most notable absentees from the 24-man squad are Marseille striker Hatem Ben Arfa and Lille goalkeeper Mickael Landreau.

Defenders Adil Rami and Rod Fanni, midfielder Yann Mvila and striker Jimmy Briand were also among the six players stripped from the 30-man squad. Among those retained were

Marseille midfielder Mathieu Valbuena, Bordeaux defender

AFP, Madrid

their jubilant fans.

four more," said Guardiola.

bitter rivals Real Madrid.

AFP, Paris

Uruguay.

Cambiasso.

click immediately.

'keeper Cedric Carrasso. Valbuena, known for his workmanlike qualities and diminutive size -- he stands only 1.63m tall -- was called up

## **SQUAD**

Goalkeepers: Hugo Lloris (Lyon), Steve Mandanda (Marseille), Cedric Carrasso (Bordeaux) Defenders: William Gallas (Arsenal/ENG), Eric Abidal (Barce-Iona/ESP), Bakary Sagna (Arse-

nal/ENG), Patrice Evra (Manchester United/ENG), Gael Clichy (Arsenal/ENG), Marc Planus (Bordeaux), Anthony Reveillere (Lyon), Sebastien Squillaci (Sevilla/ESP)

Midfielders: Abou Diaby (Arsenal/ENG), Alou Diarra (Bordeaux), Lassana Diarra (Real Madrid/ESP), Yoann Gourcuff (Bordeaux), Florent Malouda (Chelsea/ENG), Jeremy Toulalan

Strikers: Nicolas Anelka (Chelsea/ENG), Djibril Cisse (Panathinaikos/GRE), Andre-Pierre Gignac (Toulouse), Sidney Govou (Lyon), Thierry Henry (Barcelona/ESP), Franck Ribery (Bayern Munich/GER), Mathieu Valbuena (Marseille)

Pep salutes his players

Guardiola.

points.

them."

Maradona's X-factor

midfielder.

in Group B.

one who plays the best."

team can go all the way.

the life of a man," he said.

finals -- an Asian record.

job again in South Africa."

two finals. I know what it takes.

will be difficult for us."

be champions," said Puyol.

seven years at the helm.

Barcelona coach Pep

Guardiola saluted his players

for retaining the La Liga title,

but admitted he felt his team

should also be in Saturday's

Champions League final at

the Santiago Bernabeu.

Barcelona crushed Valladolid 4-0 on Sunday

at Camp Nou to lift their fourth league title in six

seasons and celebrate their title triumph with

treble with four trophies with the league, the

Spanish and European Super Cups and World

Club Championship but Guardiola felt the

absence of the Champions League left a bitter

winning three titles last season we have won

"It was a really tough season and small

details stopped us getting through to the

Champions League final in Madrid. We owe the

fans. We had to be in the final on Saturday but

Holders Barcelona were eliminated 3-2 over

two legs by Inter Milan at the Champions

League semifinal stage to miss out on a dream

final at the Santiago Bernabeu, the home of

and we hope to celebrate a Champions League

win again in Wembley (the venue for the 2011

Maradona.

players ever, the colourful and controversial 49-

year-old is sure to attract his fair share of head-

campaign, Maradona has overseen a marked

improvement since his side snatched a berth at

the finals in their last qualifying game against

The impressive nature of their 1-0 friendly

win in Germany in March prompted critics to

reassess their preconceptions about

Argentina's chances of success, while in

European Footballer of the Year Lionel Messi

Their squad is also thick with guile and

experience, despite the surprising omissions of

Inter Milan pair Javier Zanetti and Esteban

South Korea in the group phase and captain

Javier Mascherano believes there will be no

need to worry if the two-time champions don't

Argentina will face Greece, Nigeria and

they boast the world's best player.

Having endured a turbulent qualifying

lines in his new guise as national coach.

final) next season," said midfielder Xavi.

"As the coach said we owe you (the fans) one

Guardiola praised the fans for picking the many more years."

All eyes will be on Group B in

South Africa thanks to the

presence in the Argentina

dugout of one Diego Armando

The star of the 1986 World

Cup and one of the greatest

we aren't and we will try to win it next season."

"This is a day for great celebration and after

Barcelona followed up last season's historic

Marc Planus and Bordeaux for the first time in March 2008 before being sidelined by injury.

> His achievement this time is all the more notable as he began the French league season mostly warming the Marseille substitutes bench.

The absence of Rami and the inclusion of only four central defenders suggests Domenech may call upon defensive midfielder Jeremy Toulalan to drop back a notch ifneeded.

If that is Domenech's longterm strategy Bordeaux defender Planus could become the 24th man and miss out on the trip to South Africa where each team has a maximum squad of 23.

Landreau meanwhile misses out for the second major tournament in a row, having been among the seven squad players dropped prior to the start of the Euro 2008. Carrasso now officially

replaces Landreau as France's third choice goalkeeper after Lyon stopper Hugo Lloris and Marseille 'keeper Steve Mandanda.

France, who lost to Italy in the 2006 World Cup final, are in group A with hosts South Africa, Mexico and Uruguay.

team up after that setback as they went on to

notch a league record 99 points to finish three

points ahead of Real Madrid in the league title

helped us after we lost that tie," added

points and we had to get 99 points to win the

season. They have a great squad and are capa-

ble of reinforcing the team for next season so it

rivals for Real for their own league record of 96

season but there can only be one team that can

hard to win this title with a huge points tally.

"I would like to thank the fans for how they

"Real had an exceptional season with a lot of

"I would like to congratulate Real for a great

Captain Carles Puyol also praised arch-

"We have to congratulate Real for a great

"Real made life tough for us but we fought

"It is really nice to celebrate this title in front

Guardiola has now won two league titles in

of our fans. We have had some difficult

moments and they really helped us get through

his two seasons in charge but there will be

change in the summer with president Joan

Laporta, the man that hired him, leaving after

players through the youth system and called on

the club to follow the blueprint for future success.

proven," said Laporta. "I hope it is followed for

Laporta has put the emphasis on bringing

"This is the model that works and has been

"In the long run what really matters is not

"Spain and Brazil look a cut above the rest

what the pundits say but how well you do dur-

ing that month," said the Liverpool holding

because they've both won trophies in the last

couple of years, but experience tells me that the

World Cup is won by the team that improves

through the tournament, not necessarily the

Maradona, meanwhile, is confident that his

"I tell my players that 30 days of sacrifice for

"An achievement like that is like touching

Argentina qualified despite a humiliating 6-

the sky. I played in World Cups and I reached

1 loss at altitude in Bolivia and a first ever home

qualifying defeat to Brazil, but underwhelming

pre-tournament form is something of a feature

2002, overcame a sluggish start under new

coach Huh Jung-Moo but eventually qualified

with two games to spare to reach their eighth

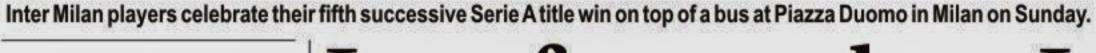
Death in Asian qualifying and we made it

through," said Huh. "We believe we can do the

"We were drawn in the so-called Group of

South Korea, semifinalists on home soil in

the chance to kiss the World Cup is nothing in



Barcelona

Liga" after they won a second

consecutive title with a record

lined the Catalan daily E

ons," said El Mundo. "Barce-

lona was crowned as the best

team in the history of La Liga."

crown on the final day of the

season Sunday with a 4-0

home win over Valladolid,

finishing the season with a

record 99 points out of a possi-

ble 114, three ahead of big-

spending arch rivals Real

European Super Cup, Spanish

Super Cup and a first ever

World Club championship

this season under coach Pep

"The Guardiola era contin-

"Title with record,"

"Barca wins the best

headlined the sports news-

league," was the headline in

Spain's leading daily El Pais,

while the Catalan paper La

Vanguardia said "Barca con-

champions of La Liga," said

sports daily Marca, which also

took aim at its favorite target,

Real Madrid coach Manuel

"You are fired Manolo," it

Real had splashed over 250

million euros to take the lime-

light away from Barcelona but

ended up empty-handed this

Japan's global

High-tech Japan has promised

to treat football fans world-

wide to ultra-realistic live 3-D

telecasts of World Cup

matches should it win the

The 550 billion yen (six

billion dollar) "Universal Fan

Fest" project is part of Japan's bid submitted to

football's world governing body FIFA on Friday, the

Japan Football Association

viewed by some 360 million

people at nearly 400 select

stadiums in FIFA's 208 mem-

ber countries, said JFA general

secretary Kohzo Tashima,

The images would be cap-

tured from 360 degrees by 200

high-definition cameras

during each match, to be

transmitted as three-

dimensional images, a tech-

nology that has been driven in

large part by Japan's electron-

ers the illusion of watching

The matches would be

said Monday.

bid committee.

ics giants.

the real thing.

right to host the 2022 edition.

3-D telecasts

promise

AFP, Tokyo

"Barca, the legitimate

quers the league of records."

The club also won the

"In seventh heaven," head-

"Champion of champi-

Barcelona retained its Liga

AFP, Madrid

99 points.

Periodico.

Madrid.

Guardiola.

paper AS.

Pellegrino.

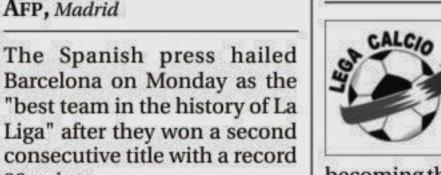
season.

ues," said Publico.

Spain hails



AFP, Rome



Inter Milan boss Jose Mourinho distanced himself from speculation linking him to Real Madrid after securing his second Serie A title on Sunday, insisting he's 'very far from

becoming the coach' of the Spanish giants. Mourinho has now led Inter to two out of three trophies as they go in search of a historic treble this season, with the Champions League final in Madrid on May 22 to come.

But Mourinho denied that following the final he would be staying put in the Spanish capital, although he did suggest that he has yet to make up his mind about where his future lies.

"In this moment I'm not selfish enough to be thinking about myself, I'm thinking only about Inter and my players," he said.

"After Madrid there will be time to be selfish for one, two or three days and to think about what will make me happiest from a professional point of view.

"But right now I can tell you 100 per cent that it's not true that I have one and a half feet at Real. Quite the contrary, I'm very far from becoming the Real coach."

However, he repeated he was unhappy with

"I didn't feel at home here but then there was no more time to think about it.

"Now, though, we have a historic week for Inter and I want to prepare the team as best I can and then to take a deep breath, to think about myself and what will make me happiest.'

While winning is not new for Mourinho, claiming a title on the final day of the season was, and he said it was something he doesn' want to repeat.

In his six championship wins (two each with Porto, Chelsea and Inter) over the last eight years, his teams had always secured the title before the final day. "I'd never won in the last match. I'd never

got to the final day of the championship and it really was the last minute because if Siena had scored it would have been over," he said before reiterating his claims that the powers that be had tried to prevent Inter from winning.

"We had the title in our pockets, we had a huge advantage but for different reasons everything changed.

"Us (coaches) and the players have some responsibility in losing the lead but not only us." He also explained why he had decided to

keep quiet for so long and boycott the press. "It was better not to speak because it always

said irate Real goalkeeper Iker Casillas.

often being substituted late in games.

Lyon with a huge reputation.

lightning quick counter attacks.

disjointed.

like individuals.

not kill off teams," said Guti.

of many individuals."

ended in disciplinary action. Even in this match I was at risk of not finishing it on the bench for something that was only a joke."

# Real spending in vain

The other 'Galacticos' didn't fare as well with

Brazilian maestro Kaka, a 68.5-million-euro

capture from AC Milan, struggling to show his

Kaka, 28, picked up the injury in the 1-0 loss

French international forward Karim

Benzema, 22, started the season in the first

worth with groin injuries disrupting his season.

to Barcelona on November 29 and was out for a

month and never really found his best form

Benzema arrived for 30 million euros from

XI but a lack of goals saw him join veteran Raul

on the substitutes bench as coach Manuel

Pellegrini ended up playing Ronaldo and

Spanish playmaker Xabi Alonso, a 30-

million-euro signing from Liverpool, was an

ever-present in the Real side with his clever

distribution a key factor behind Madrid's

bring attacking football and deliver trophies

but with so many new players Real were often

March deflated the club and directly after the

match Guti, often taking over the captain's

armband, criticised his team-mates for playing

"It has been shown that in big games we do

"The solution is to be more of a team instead

Statistics show that Real notched a record

points tally but the brilliance of Higuain and

The Champions League loss to Lyon in

The huge financial outlay was meant to

Gonzalo Higuain as the first-choice pairing.

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid spent in excess of 250 million euros on new talent in the summer with the target of dethroning Barcelona in La Liga and reestablishing themselves in Europe by winning the

Champions League at their Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

But the Spanish giants failed on both counts with a last 16 exit to Lyon ending their hopes of a dream European final at their Bernabeu stadium as the nine-time champions have failed to get past the first knockout stage for six successive seasons.

Defeats to Barcelona in both Clasicos meaning they have lost the last four - were pivotal in the title race as Barcelona notched a record 99 points to retain their crown and Real's own points record of 96 was not enough.

After watching arch rivals Barcelona win an historic League, King's Cup and Champions League treble in 2009, Real turned to the chequebook with incoming president Florentino Perez sanctioning an unprecented spending spree.

Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo was the big summer signing arriving for a world record 94 million euros from Manchester United as Real finally landed their man after 12 months of trying.

Ronaldo, 25, justified his fee with 26 goals and come the end of the season the media were talking about "Ronaldo Dependency" saying

he had become a one-man team.

ency. We are a team rather than individuals,"

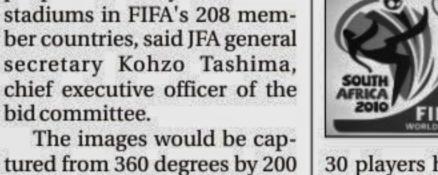
"There is no Cristiano (Ronaldo) depend-

## Ronaldo could not paper over the cracks and stop the jeers of the home crowd.

three matches are actually at sea level.

## English fly for Austria

AFP, London



Most of England's provisional 2010World Cup squad flew out to Austria for the first of two pretournament training camps in the altitude of the Alps.

Head coach Fabio Capello was accompanied by 24 of the 30 players he named in his provisional squad last week, the absentees being the five players

involved in Saturday's FA Cup final at Wembley and Gareth Barry, who is being treated for an ankle ligament injury. England will be based for most of the next

two weeks near the small town of Irdning at a training facility Capello frequented during his time as coach of Real Madrid.

The matches would be The players are due to return from Irdning shown on giant screens or, if on Sunday prior to their May 24 friendly with technological advances in Mexico at Wembley. They go back to Austria on coming years allow, pro-May 26 and wrap up their preparations with a jected like a real match onto friendly against Japan in Graz on May 30. the pitch itself, giving view-

Capello wants his players put through their paces in the thin air of the Alps because much of the tournament in South Africa will be played

at altitude, although two of England's opening

A medical scheduled for May 24 will deter mine whether Barry has a chance of being fit in time to make it worth including him in the final squad of 23 players which must be notified to sport Michael Meier said on FIFA by June 1.

Much of England's tactical work in Austria will focus on preparing for the possibility that Barry will not be able to fill the midfield holding | family and we accepted his role he has made his own under Capello.

The Italian is thought to be considering a switch to a three-centreback formation if Barry is ruled out.

That could propel either Ledley King, who has never played for England under the Italian, or Jamie Carragher, who has been persuaded to come out of international retirement for the tournament, into contention for a place in the side that will kick off England's opening match, against the United States in

Rustenburg on June 12. Capello must also make a decision on who is the best foil for Wayne Rooney in attack with Jermain Defoe, Emile Heskey, Peter Crouch and Darren Bent all competing for the role.

### Russia appoint Advocaat

AFP, Moscow

Russia on Monday named Dutchman Dick Advocaat as its new football coach, handing him the mission of overcoming the bitter disappointment of failing to reach the World Cup finals.

Advocaat replaces fellow Dutchman Guus Hiddink, who became a national hero in Russia for the team's stellar performance in the 2008 European Championships but then could not guide the team towards the South AfricaWorld Cup.

"Dick Advocaat will be appointed as the head coach of the Russian national side," the federation head Sergei Fursenko said in comments broadcast on state television.

"He is flying to Moscow and on Tuesday will present his proposals for working with the Russian football team," Fursenko said at a news conference in the southern city of Rostov-on-Don.

### Mexico edge Chile

AFP, Mexico City

Alberto Medina scored a first half goal to give Mexico a 1-0 win over Chile in their final World Cup warm-up match at home before heading to Europe to prepare for the finals which start on June 11

in South Africa. Medina found the target in the 13th minute at the Azteca Stadium in front of a

100,000 crowd. Mexico coach Javier Aguirre fielded a strong team, led by veteran playmaker Cuauhtemoc Blanco and Javier Hernandez, who

recently signed for Manchester United. Chile coach Marcelo Bielsa chose to go with a

more experimental lineup, including fringe players such as goalkeeper Luis Marin and forward Jaime Valdez. Chile were reduced to ten

men in the 60th minute when Manuel Ittura took down Andres Guardado from behind. Referee Mark Geiger red carded Iturra who had come on as a substitute only two minutes earlier.

## Maniche quits Cologne

AFP, Cologne

Portuguese midfielder Maniche will leave Cologne after just one season, the Bundesliga club's director of Sunday.

"Maniche wanted to go back to Portugal with his demand," said Meier. The 32-year-old has been

released from his contract, which was due to run until 2011, and is expected to join Sporting Lisbon.

He played 30 games in the Bundesliga last season and scored two goals. Despite having made 52

appearances for Portugal, Maniche has not been included in the squad for next month's World Cup in South Africa.

Bayern Munich star Franck Ribery (L) sits beside club chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (C) on the opening day of his appeal hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne on Monday.