

Traesch out too

AFP, Berlin

Midfielder Christian Traesch was on Tuesday ruled out of next month's World Cup with an ankle injury and joins Michael Ballack on the casualty list, the German Football Federation (DFB) confirmed.

"Christian will not be available for us at the World Cup," said assistant coach Hans-Dieter Flick at Germany's pre-World Cup training camp in north Italy.

"We all deeply regret this because Christian had proved himself in training and would have been in the final World Cup squad."

With Ballack also ruled out of the June 11-July 11 finals after suffering an ankle injury playing for Chelsea in England's FA Cup final 10 days ago, head coach Joachim Loew has lost yet another midfield option.

Alongside Stuttgart team-mate Sami Khedira, Traesch had been an alternative Loew was considering to replace Ballack at the heart of Germany's midfield.

The 22-year-old Traesch twisted his right ankle on Monday night just eight minutes into a Germany XI's 4-0 win over Italian third-division side FC Tyrol in a World Cup warm-up match at their north Italian training camp.

An MRI scan at a hospital in nearby Bolzano, north Italy, revealed the Stuttgart midfielder, who has two caps, has damaged ankle ligaments and can not train for the next 14 days.

Germany's first game is against Australia on June 13.

"It was a stupid situation, but it looks as though there is no tear in the ligaments," said Loew after Traesch tripped over while controlling the ball.

Apart from Bastian Schweinsteiger, Lukas Podolski and Piotr Trochowski, Loew is now lacking experienced midfielders.

Flick said they will not call up more players and are set to cut just two players from their provisional 25-man squad on June 1.

Despite the losses of Ballack and Traesch, midfielder Mesut Oezil still believes Germany will be a force to be reckoned with at the World Cup.

"It is a pity for the affected players, but our goal is still to bring the title home from South Africa. We will do everything to achieve that," said the Werder Bremen midfielder.

"You can't simply replace someone like Ballack and it also hurts to lose Christian."

"But I think we have a very strong team who can achieve our main goal."

Oezil says ex-Germany Under-21 midfielder Khedira can replace Ballack in the crucial defensive midfielder role.

"Sami can play in this defensive position, he has done it many times for his club and country,"

Loew must register his final 23-man World Cup squad with FIFA on June 1 and has yet to decide who will captain the side in Ballack's absence and whether Bayern Munich's Hans-Joerg Butt or Schalke's Manuel Neuer will start in goal.

Bayern Munich defender Philipp Lahm is favourite to take over as captain from Ballack.

Germany face Australia, Serbia and Ghana in Group D at the World Cup.



England defender Ledley King (R) celebrates his goal with teammate Peter Crouch during their international friendly against Mexico at Wembley on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Cape Verde hold Portugal

AFP, Covilha

Portugal suffered a blow to their morale ahead of next month's World Cup finals in South Africa on Monday as they were held to a 0-0 draw by minnows Cape Verde, ranked 117th in the world, in a friendly.

The 2006 World Cup semi-finalists star player Cristiano Ronaldo was a peripheral figure for the first hour of the match leaving the creative play to Nani and Fabio Coentrao.

However, their creativity was wasted as Liedson missed with two headers in the 17th and 26th minutes and Nani also was guilty of missing a golden opportunity when set up by a delightful backheel by Deco.

Ronaldo - whose first season at Real Madrid ended in disappointment with no trophies after his move from Manchester United - came more into the match after the hour mark and saw a fierce shot saved in the 61st minute while he also sent efforts wide in the 81st and 92nd minutes.

England trump Mexico

Football

AFP, London

A spectacular solo strike from Glen Johnson lit up an otherwise workmanlike performance from England as Fabio Capello's side notched up a 3-1 win over fellow World Cup qualifiers Mexico at Wembley on Monday.

Ledley King marked his first appearance in an England shirt since 2007 with the opening goal and Peter Crouch made it 2-1 goals in 38 internationals as England recovered from a shaky start to claim control of their final home friendly before they head for South Africa.

The West Ham striker, Guillermo Franco, responded for Mexico on the stroke of half-time but Johnson's lovely, left-footed effort, just after the interval, ensured the encounter finished with a scoreline that was morale-boosting if a little flattering for the hosts.

With Gareth Barry out through injury and Frank Lampard rested along with his FA Cup-winning Chelsea team-mates, Capello granted Michael Carrick and James Milner the opportunity to impress with starts in central midfield.

Neither man made a compelling case for promotion and that was also the case for

King, whose defensive lapses might have gifted Mexico a couple of first half goals.

Leighton Baines had a better night filling in for Ashley Cole at left-back in a starting line-up that suggests Theo Walcott, on the right wing, and Peter Crouch, alongside Wayne Rooney in attack, are in line to start England's World Cup opener, against the United States in Rustenburg on June 12.

England's first goal followed an opening period dominated by the Mexicans, who were unfortunate not to be denied an early penalty when Franco turned King in the box and had his shirt pulled by the Tottenham defender before he fired wide.

There was another moment of anxiety for the home supporters when Ricardo Osario's driven cross skidded across the goalmouth before King headed England into the lead.

Gerrard's corner from the left found Crouch at the back post and the striker's knockdown fell invitingly for his unmarked Tottenham team-mate to power a header past Oscar Perez.

Mexico were far from deflated by the setback however and should have equalised, just before the half hour mark, when Carlos Vela, left with only Robert Green to beat after Giovanni Dos Santos had escaped from King, saw his shot turned away by the West Ham goalkeeper's right glove.

Green looked beaten when Carlos Salcido clipped the outside of the post with a curling shot shortly afterwards.

But England were soon two goals clear with Gerrard acting as provider once again. The Liverpool midfielder's whipped delivery found Rooney and, although Perez was able to touch his header onto the crossbar, the ball fell back into the goalmouth and Crouch's leap allowed him to bundle it over the line.

Green further bolstered his case to be regarded as Capello's first choice in South Africa with another stop from Vela before Mexico's efforts were finally rewarded deep into first-half stoppage time.

Rafael Marquez's powerful header was cleared off the line by Baines but Franco was on hand to clip the ball past the Everton left-back.

England's advantage was restored, spectacularly, within two minutes of the restart. Having combined with Walcott close to the right touchline, Johnson cut inside at pace, evading a string of indecisive challenges on the edge of the penalty area before curling a left foot shot into the far top corner of the net.

Minutes later Pablo Barrera was booked for bundling Gerrard over as the Liverpool midfielder bore down on the penalty area in pursuit of Rooney's cute reverse pass.

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Mourinho's time is up

Football

AFP, Rome

Jose Mourinho's time as Inter Milan coach is over said the Champions League winners' president Massimo Moratti after having dined with him on Monday according to the Ansa news agency.

Moratti said that the 47-year-old Portuguese's attitude had been one that had already made his mind up to leave and take over at Spanish giants Real Madrid, who despite spending hundreds of millions on star players last summer ended up without a trophy.

Mourinho is seen as the obvious coach to turn to to deliver silverware having become the youngest coach to win the Champions League twice - he also won it with Porto in 2004 - and guiding Inter to an unprecedented treble for an Italian club of the Champions League, the league title and the Italian Cup.

"I believe yes," said Moratti responding to a question as to whether he thought Mourinho's work was finished at Inter.

"His attitude was that of somebody who believes he is going to Real Madrid," added Moratti, who said it had been an interesting discussion.

Mourinho's agent held talks with Real Madrid bosses in the Spanish capital on Monday over the Portuguese coach's possible move to the club from Inter Milan.

The agent, Jorge Mendes, who also represents Real's Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo, held talks for about 90 minutes with the club's director general Jorge Valdano and sporting director Miguel Pardeza.

Spanish sports dailies AS and Marca, reported on Sunday that Mourinho will sign a four-year deal with Real Madrid worth 10 million euros (12.5 million dollars) a year.

The stumbling block to the deal remains the talks with Inter Milan, who are demanding 16 million euros to let him leave the Italian side, they said.

His current contract with Inter Milan was due to expire in 2012 but has on several occasions expressed his dislike for Italian football.

Mourinho told Portuguese television station TVI on Sunday that the deal is almost a certainty but he wants to meet with Real officials first to get a clear understanding of what his role at the club would be.

"Things are practically ironed out. I want to meet the people, feel the pulse, know exactly what they want from me and the conditions, not the structures, because these I already know, to avoid any doubts when I begin my work," he said.

Spain don't like it

AFP, Madrid

Spain head to the 2010 World Cup finals in South Africa as one of the favourites to lift the trophy on the back of their Euro 2008 success but that tag does not sit well with their players or manager.

In the past Spain have often been the dark horses to win tournaments on the back of a strong qualifying campaign and up until recently had disappointed with their only major trophy being a European championship win back in 1964.

However, the Euro 2008 win in Austria and Switzerland has raised the expectation bar and a perfect 10 wins in World Cup qualifying along with a 35-match unbeaten run - equalling the record of Brazil - has persuaded bookmakers to put Spain down as one of the major contenders.

"We would like not to have this role of favourites but we have it and have to accept it," Liverpool forward Fernando Torres said in sports daily AS.

"In Spain we think we are at the centre of the world and always consider our-

selves the favourites.

"I live in England at the moment and the favourites are England and Spain. In France they are France and Spain, in Brazil they are Brazil and Spain. We don't like it but I guess it is inevitable."

Spain have one of the most comprehensive squads in world football and boast world class stars all over the pitch such as Torres, Valencia goal machine David Villa, Arsenal starlet Cesc Fabregas and Barcelona's creative midfield pair Andres Iniesta and Xavi Hernandez.

The confidence Spain seem to have taken from the Euro success is notable but no-one knows whether the pressure of being favourites will weigh heavy on their shoulders.

Spain have never won the World Cup - with a fourth place finish their best in 1950 - but this is seen as their big chance to lift football's ultimate prize and the nation expects.

"Everybody in Spain thinks that anything except winning the World Cup is a failure," admitted national coach Vicente del Bosque. "I think that's nonsense and an extremism but, in the times we live in, it seems that extremism sells.

"And even though we don't agree, we can hardly say it doesn't make sense that we're singled out, given we're European champions and have won so many games."

Spain have been top of the world rankings for the first time in their history and have been handed a kind group with Switzerland, Honduras and Chile but the last 16 knockout stage could see them come up against Ivory Coast, Portugal or five-time champions Brazil.

"On paper we're favourites to go through, and I think that we have to try and finish top of the group," said captain Iker Casillas.

"The draw for the knockout rounds is tough, but if you want to reach the World Cup final then you have to go out and beat the best."

On paper Spain certainly look one of the strongest sides in the tournament, have a proven manager in del Bosque and real self-belief from the Euro 2008 triumph.

Spain were fancied to do well in the European championships but played without much pressure, however, at the 2010 World Cup finals they begin as firm favourites and hope to show they can handle it.

Veh named Hamburg coach

AFP, Berlin

Former Wolfsburg and Stuttgart coach Armin Veh was named on Tuesday as the new manager of Bundesliga side Hamburg.

The northern city side finished seventh in the league and reached the semifinals of the Europa League where they lost to Fulham, but they still sacked coach Bruno Labbadia.

The 49-year-old Veh signed a contract taking him on until June 30, 2012, the club announced on its website.

Veh won the Bundesliga title with Stuttgart in 2007 before leaving in November, 2008 to take over at Wolfsburg.

Spain train without Torres

AFP, Madrid

European champions Spain trained without star striker Fernando Torres in their first group training session on Monday as they prepare for the World Cup finals, which run from June 11 to July 11 in South Africa.

Torres, who scored the winning goal when Spain won Euro 2008 against Germany, trained on his own as he continues his recovery from undergoing a second operation in three months to repair damage in his right knee on April 18.

All his fellow squad members including Arsenal captain Cesc Fabregas - who has fully recovered from the broken tibia he sustained at the end of March - trained for over an hour.

Oscar Luis Celada, one of the squad's medical team, said he was optimistic that Torres would be fit for the opening Group H match against Switzerland on June 16 in Durban.

The Spanish will train at Las Rozas till Friday when they depart for Austria.

Aside from the Swiss Spain will also face Honduras and Chile in the finals.



Spanish players jog during a training session at the Sports City of Las Rozas on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

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ROUND 1, DRAW IN BARISAL ON JUNE 2

PRIZES UP FOR GRABS (ROUNDS 1-5)		PRIZES FOR BUMPER ROUND		
Prize	Item	Winner	Prize	
1st	One 8 CFT Toshiba Refrigerator	YOU	1st	One Toshiba 32" LCD TV
2nd	One Toshin 24" LCD TV	YOU	2nd	One 15CFT Toshiba Refrigerator
3rd	One Toshiba 21" Colour TV	YOU	3rd	One Toshin Heat & Cool AC (1Ton)
4th	One Toshin 21" Colour TV	YOU	4th	One Toshin 24" LCD TV
5th	One Toshin Microwave Oven (23L)	and YOU	5th	One 21" Toshin Colour TV

Prizes for the audience (For First Five Rounds)		Prizes for the audience (For Bumper Round)	
1st.	20L Toshin Microwave Oven	1st.	Toshin Washing Machine
2nd.	14" Toshin Colour TV	2nd.	21" Toshin Colour TV
3rd.	3 Toshiba DVD Players	3rd.	20L Toshin Microwave Woven
		4th.	Two Toshiba DVD Players

(See May 23 issue of the Star Sport for competition information and rules)

The Daily Star - RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Round 1 Ends May 27, 2010

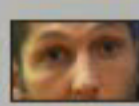
Tick (✓) the correct answers

- Who scored the first-ever goal in World Cup history?

Stabile	<input type="checkbox"/>	Laurent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monti	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- Who is the highest scorer in World Cup history?

Maradona	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pele	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ronaldo	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- What is the name of the official ball of the 2010 World Cup?

Teamegeist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fevernova	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jabulani	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- When did South Africa play their last World Cup?

1994	<input type="checkbox"/>	2002	<input type="checkbox"/>	2006	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- Who is this player? 

Materazzi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zidane	<input type="checkbox"/>	Figo	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)..... Age.....
 Father's name..... Occupation.....
 Address.....
 Telephone (if any)..... Signature..... Date.....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters.
 Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
 You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 1".

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