

Pirlo out for weeks

INTERNET

Andrea Pirlo will be out for "two to three weeks," warned medical staff, so Andrea Cossu flies to South Africa with the squad as an alternate.

Cossu was already on stand-by when Mauro German Camoranesi picked up a knee injury, but the Juventus man is expected to be fit for the opener with Paraguay on June 14.

The same cannot be said of Pirlo, who pulled up during Friday's training session with a calf strain.

"We will take the medical tests one day at a time and keep a constant monitor on his situation," explained Professor Enrico Castellacci.

"For this type of injury you generally expect to be out for 15-20 days, but it depends on the individual physique of the player.

"We think he could recover for a few games. It's up to the coach to decide, as all we can do is give a medical opinion."

Four of the five players cut from Italy's final list of 23 have now left the training camp as planned.

Only Cagliari's trequartista Cossu remains, as he is considered an alternate for both Camoranesi and Pirlo.

He could also fly to South Africa with the squad on June 8, but Mattia Cassani, Marco Borriello, Giuseppe Rossi and Salvatore Sirigu have now left.

Benitez to join Inter?

INTERNET

There are reports Inter could appoint Rafa Benitez within 48 hours, sparking transfer bids for Liverpool's Javier Mascherano and Dirk Kuyt.

Benitez is now free to engage in negotiations after accepting an early termination by mutual consent with the new Anfield owners.

The Italian media are confident the Spaniard will pen a new deal with Inter within the next 48 hours, as President Massimo Moratti has given the all-clear.

"Benitez is a coach with real personality, just what we needed after Jose Mourinho," said Walter Samuel.

"He certainly knows how to work within a high-pressure locker room environment."

With Rafa, the tactician is also likely to bring other stars from the Liverpool squad.

According to the Corriere dello Sport, he has requested midfielder Mascherano and forward Kuyt to reinforce the squad.

Liverpool could be tempted into accepting a double 37-million dollar offer for both players.

"Benitez will really fit in with Italian football, as he is a very tactical person who studies the games carefully," Mascherano told the Gazzetta dello Sport.

"Will I follow him to Milan? I don't know anything about my future yet. I can only say that I spent some wonderful years with him and his style of football suits me perfectly."

The cash would be raised by selling Douglas Maicon to Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid for around 25 million pounds.

Lugano's big dream

SOCERNET

The South Americans take on France in their opening Group A match before facing hosts South Africa and Mexico, but it is only Uruguay's second World Cup in 20 years.

Nonetheless, skipper Lugano believes that anything can happen when the finals begin, refusing to rule out the possibility of a third World Cup title.

"Uruguay are going to put up a fight," Lugano said. "It's our dream and personally I believe that until someone beats us and puts us out of the tournament, no-one here will take that from their minds, that we can be world champions."

"Uruguay are not among the favourites because for years now we have not had performances that endorse this favoritism."

"There are six or seven teams who, individually and collectively, are superior to Uruguay, even though these teams could be Brazil, Spain, Italy, Argentina, in one game you can beat them as has already happened many times in the history of Uruguayan football."

Robben doubtful

Injures thigh in friendly win

AFP, Amsterdam



Arjen Robben is a doubt for the World Cup after injuring his left thigh in the Netherlands' 6-1 friendly win over Hungary on Saturday, Dutch coach Bert van Marwijk said.

"Arjen will not take the plane (to Johannesburg) with the team on Saturday night. It makes no sense for him to take the plane now," said van Marwijk, who revealed that Robben would undergo tests at a Dutch hospital.

"I'd rather have lost the match than lost Robben," added the Dutch manager, who said his star winger had sustained "a tear to the left thigh".

Captain Giovanni van Bronckhorst said: "I'm really very worried for him. He's walking with real difficulty."

Van Bronckhorst said the injury appeared to be "a serious injury".

Robben hurt himself while attempting a

backheel just three minutes from the end of the match against Hungary here and had to limp off.

The Bayern Munich winger had missed the Netherlands' two previous warm-up matches, against Mexico and Ghana, due to a hip problem.

He came on as a second-half substitute against Hungary and, playing in his preferred right-wing role, turned in a superb 40-minute showing in which he scored in the 64th and 78th minutes.

The Netherlands, finalists in 1974 and 1978, begin their World Cup campaign against Denmark - who lost 1-0 to South Africa in a friendly on Saturday - on June 14 before tackling Japan on June 19 and Cameroon on June 24.

"I have the possibility of replacing Arjen up to 24 hours before the match against Denmark," said van Marwijk.

"But I hope it doesn't have to be the case. Some treatments allow you to recover very quickly from this kind of injury."



PHOTO: AFP

England players jog during a training session at the Royal Bafokeng Sports Campus near Rustenburg on Saturday.

Captaincy curse strikes again

AFP, London



Fabio Capello was left contemplating how to fortify his defence after Rio Ferdinand was struck by the curse of England's World Cup captains.

Capello and company had been in South Africa for only a day when Ferdinand suffered ligament damage to his left knee in the final minutes of the squad's second training session at their Rustenburg base.

It was a hammer blow to Capello as the England coach saw his skipper limp out of the tournament in the most innocuous circumstances following a routine challenge.

Yet it is not the first time an England captain has been injured on World Cup duty.

In 1982 Kevin Keegan was limited to only a 26-minute cameo due to a back problem and four years later, Bryan Robson was forced out

of the tournament in Mexico after injuring a shoulder in his country's second group game.

Robson fared little better at Italia '90 as an Achilles injury left him languishing on the sidelines.

David Beckham at least took part in the 2002 and 2006 World Cups, but he suffered injuries in both tournaments that restricted his performances.

Now, with England's World Cup opener against the United States a week away, Ferdinand is the latest captain to give Capello a major headache.

"It is obviously bad news and everyone with the squad is very disappointed and sorry for Rio," Capello said.

"It was an accidental injury in training, but had nothing to do with the pitch."

Capello has called up Tottenham centre-back Michael Dawson after initially discarding him when he named his final 23-man squad.

Barca to press for Cesc

Football

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona are considering their next move in the bid to sign Cesc Fabregas after the English side rejected their offer of 35 million euros for the Spanish midfielder, Barcelona president Joan Laporta said on Friday.

"It is a price that we consider to be market value. Arsenal rejected it and now our technical secretary (Txiki Begiristain) should decide what will happen next," he told reporters.

"The lines of communication are still open. I am very confident that Arsenal will end up understanding the situation. For Cesc the best thing would be to complete the transfer as soon as possible, before the start of the World Cup."

"But I recognise that it will be complicated

because Arsenal are totally within their rights to stand firm and we have to respect that."

Arsenal on Wednesday rejected Barcelona's offer for the 23-year-old, who still has four years left on his contract with the English club.

Asked about the possibility of Fabregas "buying out" the remaining time on his contract with Arsenal, Laporta said: "I am not sure that Cesc would want to enter into that."

"We want to reach an agreement by talking to Arsenal rather than look at legal measures. We respect Arsenal a great deal and we will continue to talk and go down that path," he added.

Under FIFA's transfer regulations, players under the age of 28 who have served three years of a long-term contract can "buy out" the remaining time on their deal in order to move to another club.



PHOTO: AFP

Brazil forward Robinho plays with the ball during a training session in Johannesburg on Friday.

Hosts edge Denmark

AFP, Atteridgeville

Katlego Mphela scored on 76 minutes as World Cup hosts South Africa edged fellow qualifiers Denmark 1-0 in a warm-up on Saturday and stretched an unbeaten run to 12 games.

The striker called 'Killer' has been linked with Birmingham City and he pounced on a defence-splitting pass to fire the ball under the body of Stefan Andersen and settle a lively if overly cautious contest.

South Africa kick off the four-yearly tournament next Friday against Mexico at Soccer City in Johannesburg while Denmark face Netherlands - 6-1 winners over Hungary also on Saturday - three days later at the same stadium.

Kaiser glum on chances

AFP, Berlin

German football great Franz Beckenbauer said he was not optimistic about his country's chances of success at the World Cup, in an interview to be published in the German press on Sunday.

"Without Michael Ballack, it will be difficult. Our team is weakened," he told the Berlin newspaper Der Tagesspiegel.

"We'll have to work hard just to reach the semifinals."

Germany's preparations have been hit by the injured-enforced withdrawals of captain Ballack, goalkeeper Rene Adler, defender Heiko Westermann and midfielders Simon Rolfes and Christian Traesch.

Coach Joachim Loew's reorganised side hit back from a goal down to beat Bosnia-Herzegovina 3-1 in a warm-up match in Frankfurt on Thursday.

"We're never been artists on the pitch like the Brazilians," added Beckenbauer, who led his country to World Cup glory as first captain and then coach in 1974 and 1990.

Di Natale keeps faith

INTERNET

Antonio Di Natale tips Argentina for the World Cup, but "I believe in this Italy. We always have our say in the big events."

The Azzurri are preparing for their debut against Paraguay on June 14 and faced Switzerland on Saturday night in a friendly test in Geneva.

"I expect a special and difficult World Cup. There are many uncertainties, starting from the climate, so it'll be important to get accustomed to that as soon as possible," he told a website.

"I think the favourites are Spain and above all Argentina, who have not won in a long time. The revelations will be Ghana and the Ivory Coast."

Italy lifted the trophy in 2006, but preparations have been stuttering, including a 2-1 friendly defeat to Mexico on Thursday.

"I hope Italy can go far. The team is very united, there are players with talent and we always have our say in the big events. I believe in this Italy side."

It is also a special tournament for Di Natale, who won the Capocannoniere crowd with 29 Serie A goals this season.

"I hope to do well. I've come to this World Cup at the right age, so myself and the Azzurri can do something incredible."

Bastos injured in training

AFP, Johannesburg

Brazil left-back Michel Bastos was forced out of World Cup training on Friday after injuring his right ankle in a challenge with a teammate.

The 26-year-old Lyon player, who is expected to start for Brazil at the tournament, appeared unable to put his weight on his right foot and was carried from the training pitch by members of the squad's medical staff.

No further information on either the nature or the seriousness of the injury was revealed by the Brazil management.

Five-time champions Brazil begin their World Cup campaign against Group G underdog North Korea here on June 15.

Domenech worried

AFP, Saint-Pierre



France coach Raymond Domenech admitted he was concerned after seeing his

team slump to a 1-0 defeat against China in their final World Cup preparation match here on Friday.

Domenech's side bossed possession for long periods of the game but lacked a cutting edge and were ultimately undone by a wickedly dipping free-kick by Deng Zhuoxiang in the 68th minute - his side's first shot on target.

After a 2-1 win over Costa Rica and a 1-1 draw with Tunisia, it means France will go into their World Cup Group A opener against Uruguay on June 11 in underwhelming form.

"There are always reasons to worry when you lose a match," said Domenech.

"There are days like that, that make you think you should have done better. We're always worried when we don't score a goal."

Defeat to China, ranked 84th in the world, brought France's World Cup preparations to an unhappy conclusion but Domenech sought to play down the significance of the result.

"We were against a team that did what they needed to do to frustrate us. We were lacking freshness and spontaneity," he said.

"Something was missing. I'm not saying it's not worrying, but I also say that it's only a warm-up match."

"In front of goal, spontaneity and freshness make the difference and we were lacking there. We have a week of work ahead of us."

Stunned into life by Deng's opener, France laid siege to the China goal in the latter stages and were only prevented from equalising by a combination of inspired goalkeeping from Zeng



PHOTO: AFP

French defender William Gallas reacts at the end of their international friendly against China at the Michel Volnay Stadium in Saint-Pierre on Friday. France suffered a stunning 1-0 defeat to China.

Cheng and some profligate finishing.

Sidney Govou, Thierry Henry, Andre-Pierre Gignac, Abou Diaby and Yoann Gourcuff all had late efforts saved, while centre-back William Gallas miscued when presented with an unprotected goal deep into injury time.

France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris, one of the team's most consistent performers in recent months, was embarrassed by Deng's winning goal, as his free-kick dipped sharply to leave the Lyon man

floundering.

The Jabulani match ball designed for the World Cup has received criticism for its lightness from a number of high-profile players and coaches, and Domenech said it was likely to cause havoc in South Africa.

"This ball is a ball for scoring goals. You just have to shoot at goal," he said.

Asked for the evening's low points, Domenech said: "That (Uruguay coach Oscar) Tabarez watches and finds them himself."

The Daily Star

RANGS TOSHIBA

World cup QUIZ 2010

...THIS CAN BE YOURS

ROUND 3, DRAW IN RAJSHAHI ON JUNE 16

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

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

QUIZ SCHEDULE		Answers must reach by 12pm		Lucky Draw for prizes	
Round & Draw	Starts	Ends			
1. Barisal	May 19	May 27	May 29	June 2	June 2
2. Chittagong	May 28	May 05	June 07	June 11	June 11
3. Rajshahi	June 06	June 14	June 15	June 29	June 29
4. Khulna	June 15	June 23	June 25	July 04	July 06
5. Sylhet	June 24	July 02	July 04	July 06	July 06
Bumper Round, Dhaka		July 03	July 11	July 13	July 16

The Daily Star - RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Round 3 Ends June 14, 2010

Tick (✓) the correct answers

1. Who is the captain of France in this year's World Cup?	Henry <input type="checkbox"/>	Evra <input type="checkbox"/>	Gallas <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Pele scored his first World Cup goal against	Wales <input type="checkbox"/>	Sweden <input type="checkbox"/>	Italy <input type="checkbox"/>
3. How many World Cup matches did Gary Lineker play?	18 <input type="checkbox"/>	15 <input type="checkbox"/>	12 <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Which stadium will host this year's World Cup final?	Ellis Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Soccer City <input type="checkbox"/>	Mandela Bay <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Who is this player?	Lucio <input type="checkbox"/>	Marquez <input type="checkbox"/>	Branco <input type="checkbox"/>

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. Rajshahi readers can also drop entries at Rangs Toshiba Showroom, Alo Patti More, Rajshahi. You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 3".

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