

# Tevez to lead line

AFP, Pretoria



In the qualifiers, however, his impetuous nature got the better of him in the shape of two red cards.

A scorer in the thrashing of Serbia four years ago in Germany, Tevez says he is raring to go.

"For the national side I play for the sheer love of the shirt and not for money. I love this shirt, my country and my people. I couldn't care less about the money side as I earn that in Europe," says the man who after starting out at Boca Juniors then came to prominence at Corinthians of Brazil before a controversial season at West Ham earned him a move to Manchester United.

The fans empathise all the more with Tevez in the knowledge he hails from a popular part of town in Buenos Aires dubbed 'Fuerte Apache'.

Tevez was one of the names chanted most loudly when the Argentine camp opened the doors to their first training sessions at Pretoria.

"They love me - and I love them," says the striker. "Maybe it is for my way of playing - or for my origins. I don't know."

Tevez stands to benefit if Maradona goes for a full-blooded 4-3-3 formation rather than a rather more tried and trusted 4-4-2, which would likely see him squeezed out by Messi and Real Madrid starlet Gonzalo Higuain.

Between them the trio netted more than 80 league goals last term for City, Barcelona and Real.

But they now have to click together on the World Cup stage.

Tevez appeals to Maradona in that he wears his heart on his sleeve and that endears him to supporters of the national side as they revelled in his eight goals, including one in the final, on the way to Olympic glory in 2004.

Argentina blew hot and cold in their World Cup qualifiers but if Carlos Tevez has his way Diego Maradona's men will go in all guns blazing in their Group B opener against Nigeria on Saturday.

By Tuesday the two-time champions' "bull of the pampas" was not a confirmed starter but the signs are that the albiceleste will step out with a three-pronged attack with the Manchester City forward in the mix.

He certainly warms the heart of his impetuous coach.

"Tevez is like a son for me. I felt that the moment I met him. He has a hunger and a passion for football," says Maradona of the man who left Old Trafford for the these days not so poor relation Manchester outfit, City, last year.

Now Maradona, under pressure to deliver after numerous false starts during qualifying - notably a 6-1 hiding in Bolivia - is due to send Tevez into action alongside Lionel Messi and Real Madrid starlet Gonzalo Higuain.

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He acknowledges that "we have great players (and) don't feel my place is assured."

All the less so given Argentina's embarrassment of striking riches which includes Diego Milito, author of both Inter Milan's goals in the Champions League final win over Bayern Munich.



## Brazil rout Tanzania

AFP, Dar Es Salaam

Brazil warmed up for a tilt at a sixth World Cup title on Monday with a 5-1 win over Tanzania in Dar Es Salaam on Monday with Robinho scoring a brace.

Robinho, who spent the second half of last season in his homeland with Santos after an unhappy spell with Manchester City, opened the scoring on 10 minutes and netted again in the 33rd minute.

Real Madrid playmaker Kaka scored the fourth after 76 minutes Benfica star Ramires having first made it 3-0 eight minutes after the restart and then added the fifth for Dunga's men in injury time.

Aziz headed in a consolation four minutes from time for the hosts, ranked 108 in the world.

The Brazilians thus underlined their form in their final warm-up which followed last week's 3-0 win over Zimbabwe.

At the finals, Brazil will compete in Group G alongside North Korea, Ivory Coast and Portugal.

# Jabulani is erratic

AFP, Sydney



quickly work out where the ball is going to be, and something different happens."

Leinweber, who heads the university's chemistry and physics school, simulated trajectories for the almost perfectly spherical Jabulani which took into account the aerodynamic impact of the ball's unique tiny ridges.

"Any sort of texture on the ball, or grooves that are on the surface of the soccer ball, that has a big impact on the nature of the air flow," he said.

"I think that's one of the key things that goalkeepers are experiencing. They say things like, 'The ball has lots of energy'."

The ball's English develop-

ers have defended the design, saying much of the criticism is due to unfamiliar effects arising from teams' high-altitude training ahead of the tournament in South Africa.

Leinweber noted: "If you want the goalkeeper to design the ball, they will give you an iron ball that sits at the centre of the field."



The research by Adelaide University's Derek Leinweber would appear to back up complaints about the "Jabulani" ball levelled by many goalkeepers, who say its swerving motion makes it impossible to track.

England goalkeeper David James has described new Adidas ball as "horrible", Spain's Iker Casillas says it is "rotten" and Gianluigi Buffon of Italy fears its "unpredictability" could ruin the World Cup.

Professor Leinweber said the players had a point, with his computer simulations showing it was faster than previous balls, while its rough surface made it more erratic.

"And ... they bend better," he told AFP on Tuesday.

"What it means is that the goalkeeper's intuition is just a little bit off."

"You see the ball coming towards you, you might

# Villa's money on England!

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Spain star David Villa believes that England have what it takes to win the World Cup in South Africa.

Villa has drawn similarities between the two countries, with Spain underachieving at major tournaments until their 2008 triumph.

The striker, who recently completed a move from

## Barry rested for opener

AFP, Rustenburg

England midfielder Gareth Barry was ruled out on Monday of his country's World Cup finals opening Group C match on Saturday against the United States.

The 29-year-old Manchester City star has been given more time by England coach Fabio Capello to recover from the ankle ligament injury he suffered on May 5.

"They [the England coaching staff] told me that I would not play against the United States in order to give me more time to recover," the former Aston Villa captain told.

"I will resume full training with the squad tomorrow [Tuesday]."

Barry, capped 36 times, was the only outfield player not used by Capello in Monday's final warm-up match against South African club side Platinum Stars.

His holding midfielder role was allocated to Liverpool stalwart Steven Gerrard, which should be the case also against the Americans.

England's second group game is against Algeria on June 18.

## Tabarez plots France upset

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Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez has admitted defeat in his country's opening game against France would make it very difficult for them to qualify for the second round of the tournament.

But quizzed by the media, he refused to be drawn on other possible permutations in Group A which also includes hosts South Africa and Mexico.

"I don't want to be distracted by this type of speculation because that's going away from reality and we're going to take it game by game," he said. "The aim is to beat France, and with all the respect we have for them we know how difficult that will be."

"What we will pick up from this first game will depend on our performance. We know that with less than five points it's difficult to qualify, but there have been teams in previous tournaments who have qualified with less than that."

"I think they have a perfect generation to make it to the final and they will surely be one of the teams to beat," he added.

"Individually, England have some of the best players in defence, midfield as well as attack. They have a great manager and a team that can perfectly well reach the final."

Villa singled out Wayne Rooney for special praise, and also revealed his respect for

Frank Lampard

and Steven Gerrard.

"I like a lot of their players but this season I would pick out Wayne Rooney. Frank Lampard also had a marvellous season and I have a special kind of admiration for Steven Gerrard."

England kick-off their World Cup campaign against the United States on June 12 and also face Algeria and Slovenia in Group C.

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# Referees human too

Football

AFP, Paris

"The ref was biased!"

How often have you heard that accusation, from a manager, player or fan, incensed by a penalty, red card or extra minute of injury time that helped the other side to score?

Professional referees are quick to throw back the charge as wrong, a slur or sour grapes.

But over the past decade, scientific studies have highlighted how the man in the middle can be swayed, albeit unconsciously, by crowd pressure.

In a landmark study, British researchers examined the effect of crowd noise on referee decisions.

They asked 40 county-level refs, their experience ranging from newly qualified to over 40 years, to assess a video of 47 challenges or incidents in a 1999 Liverpool-Leicester match.

Twenty-two of the volunteers watched the video with the Kop in full voice but without commentary, while 18 viewed it in silence.

Those who watched in silence were more certain about their decision, awarded more fouls against the home team and were likelier to determine that no foul had taken place.

Those who listened with the volume on were not likelier to award fouls against Leicester.

But, compared with the "silent" group, they did award 15.5 per cent fewer fouls against Liverpool.

And their decisions, it turned out, closely mirrored those of the match referee.

German statisticians analysed 3,519 German first division matches played between 1992 and 2003, accessing a data bank compiled by the company Innovative Media Technology and Planning (IMP).

IMP compiles reams of match facts and also gives its opinion as to whether the ref's decisions were correct.

It disputed five per cent of decisions on goals that were awarded to the home team, but only four per cent of goals awarded to the away side. If so, the home side had a 25 per cent greater chance of getting

a borderline goal decision in its favour.

As for penalties, only 65 per cent of home team penalties were considered justified by IMP, compared to 72 per cent for penalties awarded to the visitors.

Just as intriguing was this: refs were likelier to make a disputed ruling and award more stoppage and injury time to home teams trailing their opponents when the game was played in a stadium that had no athletics track.

FIFA says World Cup refs are the cream, undergoing arduous training to ensure decisions are fair.

But here's the question: Can referees avoid human

instinct?

Dutch researchers at Erasmus University this year analysed data from all fouls in seven seasons of the UEFA Champions League, the Bundesliga and the last three World Cups a total of 123,844 incidents of whistle-blowing.

When it came to ambiguous fouls, players who were taller were considered likelier to have caused the offence and shorter players were likelier to be considered a victim. This was also the case even when no fouls had been committed.

The findings tally with evolutionary research: we associate taller people with aggression or domination.

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