

Award fills Mueller with pride

Football

AFP, Herzogenaurach

Germany midfielder Thomas Mueller has admitted he was a proud man to finally get his hands on the Golden Boot award as the top-scorer from the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

The 21-year-old scored five goals and three assists to finish July's tournament as the top-scorer ahead of fellow hot-shots Spain's David Villa, Dutchman Wesley Sneijder and Uruguay's Diego Forlan.

The quartet all scored five goals, but Mueller's three assists earned him the award and the Bayern Munich dynamo was also voted the best young player of the tournament as Germany finished third in South Africa.

The Bayern star collected his Golden Boot from Adidas headquarters here and admitted he was humbled to win against such high-profile names.

"Of course, it all happened because of the team performance in South Africa," said Mueller.

"But it is a bit special to win an individual title.

"It fills me with personal pride to be mentioned in a list with such big names."

Having tasted World Cup success, Mueller says his goals are now to reach the Champions League again with Bayer Munich this season and to help Germany to more success on the international stage.

"Reaching the Champions League final again is the goal this season," he said.

"And with the national team, you have to think about Euro 2012 and the 2014 World Cup."



(L-R) Golden Boot winner Germany striker Thomas Mueller, Golden Ball winner Uruguay striker Diego Forlan and Golden Glove winner Spain goalkeeper Iker Casillas pose with their respective awards during the 2010 World Cup award ceremony in Herzogenaurach on Tuesday

PHOTO: AFP

Crespo sinks Fiorentina

REUTERS, Milan

Substitute Hernan Crespo scored twice late in extra-time to give Parma a 2-1 comeback win over Fiorentina in the Italian Cup last 16 on Tuesday.

After a goalless 90 minutes and first half of extra-time, the game burst into life when Mario Santana struck for visitors Fiorentina after Gaetano D'Agostino's shot had come back off the post.

Veteran Crespo equalised immediately when his shot went through the hands of goalkeeper Vlada Avramov and two minutes later the resurgent Argentine grabbed the winner.



STAR Cricket

Australia v England
Third Test, Day 1
Live from 8:30am

TEN Cricket

South Africa v India
First Test, Day 1
Live from 2:30pm

Wolves after Van Bommel

AFP, BERLIN



BUNDESLIGA

Bundesliga side Wolfsburg want to sign Bayern Munich captain and Holland midfielder Mark van Bommel during January's winter break, according to German daily Bild on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old Dutchman is under contract at Bayern until June 2011, but extension talks with the German champions have produced no results so far and Wolfsburg want to lure the Dutchman away, according to Bild's sources.

Wolfsburg need a defensive midfielder to bolster their team in the middle of the park and van Bommel would be a good option, according to Wolves manager Dieter Hoeness.

"We always want players who have an edge to them," Hoeness told Bild.

"As for van Bommel, I would be happy to have someone like him in the team."

Van Bommel, who played in the World Cup final defeat to Spain in July, has won 67 caps for the Netherlands and has said he wants to play at the highest level until at least Euro 2012, which will be held in the Ukraine and Poland.

According to Bild, Wolfsburg have already tried to lure Bayern midfielder Anatoliy Tymoshchuk and Schalke's Jermaine Jones, but van Bommel is their new target during January's winter break.

"Wolfsburg has a good team," van Bommel told Bild.

"Of course, there is much speculation about transfers at the moment, but I don't want to contribute to that."

Under ex-England coach Steve McClaren, 2007 German champions Wolfsburg are 14th in the German league and three points from the relegation zone.

Mazembe stun Internacional

Football

REUTERS, Abu Dhabi

TP Mazembe became the first African team to reach the Club World Cup final with a shock 2-0 win over Internacional of Brazil on Tuesday.

Goals by Mulota Kabangu and Dioko Kaluyituka stunned the South American champions as the team from DR Congo lived up to their nickname Tout Puissant (all powerful) to reach a final against Inter Milan of Italy or South Korea's Seongnam.

The African champions and their exuberant small band of fans who had played their brass music throughout the match joined in wild celebrations and dancing at the edge of the pitch.

"This win means a lot of things. All of Africa should be proud of these players. They have an enormous heart," the team's Senegalese coach Lamine N'Diaye said.

"After the opening 20 minutes Inter began to doubt. At halftime, with the score 0-0 our chances were intact. I said to the players the match was theirs for the taking, they had to go and find it," he told the post-match news conference.

The win saw Mazembe become the first African team to beat a South American side in the competition and a Brazilian side beaten for the first time in 13 matches at the Club World Cup in



PHOTO: AFP

Mazembe winger Dioko Kaluyituka holds up his boot after scoring the second against Internacional during the Club World Cup semifinal in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

seven editions since it was started by FIFA in 2000.

International coach Celso Roth said: "We had great expectations of this World Cup and greater responsibility having already won it once. It's a huge disappointment, we had chances, we dominated a lot but we lost."

"Our problem continues to be that we dominate but can't finish." International won the trophy in Japan in 2006.

Kabangu put Mazembe ahead eight minutes into the second half when he was allowed space to take a headed pass and volley inside the far post past a static Renan.

Speedy winger Kaluyituka made the win safe for Mazembe five minutes from time when he turned a defender twice on the left before placing a low shot between the diving Renan and the near post.

Inter dominated the first half but were left to rue a string of missed chances, the best coming when keeper Muteba Kidiaba saved point blank from striker Rafael Sobis.

After the interval the impressive Kidiaba, who had led a prayer before kickoff with his team mates kneeling on his goalline, was on hand again to save again from Sobis.

Substitute Guiliano, who scored crucial goals in Internacional's Libertadores Cup campaign, looked to have made the breakthrough in the 70th minute only for his low shot to be turned away by the diving Kidiaba.

Anderson pens new deal

AFP, Manchester

Brazilian midfielder Anderson has extended his Manchester United contract until June 2015, the Premier League leaders announced on Wednesday.

Former Porto player Anderson, who has signed a four-and-a-half-year extension to his present deal after returning from injury problems this season told www.manutd.com: "This is the best club to be at and would like to thank everyone for the great support I have received over the years."

"I am looking forward to winning many more trophies with this club and I am so pleased to have signed a new contract."

Anderson, who arrived at Old Trafford from Portugal in 2007 as a teenager, took time to adjust to what was a peripheral role with the English giants but has turned in several fine displays this season.

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

Do you think the Tigers should play another series before the World Cup?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote

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SAFF Women's Football Championship

Pakistan v Afghanistan

Time: 2:30pm

Venue: Cox's Bazar Stadium



PHOTO: AFP

French legend Zinedine Zidane kicks the ball during the Match Against Poverty at the Georgios Karaiskakis Stadium on Tuesday.

Maradona not in frame

SOCCERNET



BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Leicester City manager Sven-Goran Eriksson says he has no intention of quitting the club in order to replace Sam Allardyce at Blackburn Rovers, with the Premier League side further insisting that Diego Maradona is not a contender for the job.

Eriksson, who famously agreed to join Rovers in 1997 before backtracking and taking charge of Lazio, is reported to be a possible contender to take over at Ewood Park.

But having only joined Leicester in October, the former England manager remains committed to succeeding at the Walkers Stadium.

"Everyone wants to get into the Premier League, but I think we can do that with Leicester," he told the Leicester Mercury. "I am happy here and I am not interested in any other jobs."

"I can sign tomorrow for three, four or five years if the owners want. But I am sure they want to see what is happening this season and next season - and that's fair. What the owner wants in that time is the Premier League."

Venky's, the Indian poultry company

that owns Rovers, had stated an interest in former Argentina coach Maradona, but Rovers owner Anuradha Desai has now insisted they will not be approaching him.

"This is something that because we have offices everywhere somebody spoke about, but it is not true. There is no connection," Desai told BBC Five Live. "This is something from before we got into the EPL - he knows one of our friends, but nothing beyond that."

"He is not being considered, not now and forever for the future. I can assure you there is nothing we have to do with Maradona."

Spain at the zenith

AFP, Paris

World Cup winners Spain will finish the year as FIFA's world number one, following up their triumph in South Africa with a perfect start to their Euro 2012 qualification campaign.

The team they beat in the final in Soccer City, Johannesburg, the Netherlands, are in second place with resurgent Germany in third.

South American rivals Brazil and Argentina are fourth and fifth with England in sixth.

RANKINGS

1. Spain
2. Netherlands
3. Germany (+1)
4. Brazil (-1)
5. Argentina
6. England
7. Uruguay
8. Portugal
9. Egypt (+1)

Clubs deny fixing claims

AFP, Berlin



BUNDESLIGA

Allegations of match-fixing in Germany's Bundesliga were on Tuesday denied by both clubs involved after claims implicated a top-flight game between Energie Cottbus and VfL Bochum.

Both teams, who now ply their trade in Germany's second division, reacted with surprise to claims from Italy suggesting their Bundesliga match on February 20 2009 may have been fixed.

In that match Bochum beat Cottbus 3-2 with a controversial 79th-minute penalty.

Cottbus were relegated at the end of the season, while Bochum stayed in the top flight by two points.

The German Football Federation (DFB) have also issued a statement saying they have no concrete evidence of match-fixing from the game, despite investigations.

Both Cottbus and Bochum have said they are shocked after Italian sports daily newspaper Gazzetta dello Sport carried claims from an anonymous former player at one of the clubs who said he had known the match result from the start.

The source of the claims is said to have made the allegations in a conversation monitored by Italian authorities prior to the player's arrest as part of a match-fixing probe.

"We were surprised to be confronted with this outrageous allegation," said Cottbus president Ulrich Lepsch on Tuesday. Lepsch said the club may now take legal action.



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester City striker Carlos Tevez (C) jogs with teammates during a training session at Carrington yesterday on the eve of their Europa League encounter against Juventus.

Tevez back in training

AFP, London

Want-away Manchester City striker Carlos Tevez returned to the club's training ground on Tuesday as scheduled, Britain's Press Association reported.

The Argentina striker sat out the weekend victory against West Ham, which emphasised City's title credentials, as he was banned.

But following the win, it was revealed Tevez had handed in a written transfer request - which has been rejected by the club.

It is understood he is unlikely to travel to Turin on Wednesday with the squad ahead of the Europa League match against Juventus.

Manager Roberto Mancini apparently made that decision before the weekend, knowing the game was a dead rubber, with City and Lech Poznan already through to the next stage of the tournament and Juventus eliminated.