

# Time to rebuild

Football

AFP, Paris

Half a season on from a World Cup where their respective teams largely failed to impress, England, Germany, Italy and France will use midweek friendlies to chart a course for happier times which they hope can materialise at Euro 2012.

England boss Fabio Capello, and German, Italian and French counterparts Joachim Loew, Laurent Blanc and Cesare Prandelli will be out to show that they are building solid foundations for the end of next season.

Europe's traditional powerhouses had won nine World Cups between them before Spain put them in the shade last summer in breaking their duck in South Africa.

Capello's charges, chastened in South Africa, now head to Copenhagen to meet Denmark on Wednesday.

With a Euro 2012 qualifier against Wales a month away, Capello will use the game against the Danes to see if young starlets such as Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere are ready to step up to the plate.

Wilshere is set to start alongside Chelsea veteran Frank Lampard with the latter's habitual sidekick Steven Gerrard missing out after injuring his groin in Liverpool's 1-0 win over Chelsea on Sunday.

With regular skipper Rio Ferdinand also injured Capello will likely choose Lampard or Wayne Rooney to wear the armband.

In attack, Rooney with partner Darren Bent, who has quickly found his feet with Villa since his big-money move from Sunderland.

Other attractive friendly dates include France meeting Brazil in a repeat of the 1998 World Cup final, while Germany go up against Italy, who suffered a debacle in South Africa, failing to get out of their group.

Germany at least finished third and will want to shine against the team that deprived them of a 2006 World Cup final on home soil in their most recent meeting

Prandelli brings back veteran goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon less than a month after making his injury comeback to bring some experience to the side and has also called in Inter Milan's Brazilian-born midfielder Thiago Motta.

Loew will have a pacy attack including wingers Mesut Ozil of Real Madrid and Bayern Munich's Thomas Mueller but Bayern Munich striker Mario Gomez is missing with a knee injury and ex-captain Michael Ballack is also sidelined so Bayern defender Philipp Lahm is set to skipper the side.

Loew has called up 18-year-old Dortmund starlet Mario Goetze, who made his senior debut in Sweden last November.

France bombed as badly as Italy at the World Cup but under Blanc the seedlings of recovery are taking root as witnessed by the win over England while he has stressed his authority by refusing to bow to political pressure regarding bringing back - or not - ringleaders of the summer rebellion protesting the disciplining of Nicolas Anelka.

He says selection is purely his affair - but has left out Patrice Evra, although for footballing reasons as the Manchester United man has fallen behind Barcelona's Eric Abidal in the left-back pecking order.

Brazil are also getting to grips with a new man at the helm after Mano Menezes replaced Dunga.

Menezes named a squad of purely Europe-based players and there was thus no place for livewire Santos forward Neymar, headlining the Under-20 South American championship in Peru.

World Cup stars such as centre-back Lucio, Real Madrid playmaker Kaka and striker Luis Fabiano miss out but striker Renauto Augusto of Bayer Leverkusen may start.

Spain, without gastroenteritis-stricken Cesc Fabregas, meanwhile welcome Colombia, while their conquered World Cup final rivals Holland host Austria and Argentina take on Portugal in Geneva.

## Cech best in Czech again

AFP, Prague

Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech became the Czech footballer of the year 2010 at a ceremony in Prague on Monday, winning the trophy for the third consecutive time and for the fourth time overall.

"I'll never grow tired of this, it's a great honour," said the 28-year-old Cech, with 78 appearances for the Czech national team, after being picked by players, coaches, officials and journalists.

"I'm glad my work has been valued as excellent, and I believe this is not the last time I'm here," added Cech, who won ahead of Arsenal midfielder Tomas Rosicky and Atletico Madrid defender Tomas Ujfalusi.

The ceremony was held two days before the 80th birthday of Czech midfielder Josef Masopust, the 1962 Ballon D'Or winner and playmaker of the Czechoslovak team that made it to the final of the World Cup in Chile in the same year.

The celebration lured scores of football celebrities to Prague, including FIFA boss Sepp Blatter and Portuguese legend Eusebio, while Brazilian icon and Masopust's rival Pele sent his congratulations in a video message played at the ceremony.

# Silver coin marks WC

SPORTS REPORTER



To make the ICC Cricket World Cup a memorable affair, the Bangladesh Bank yesterday released a commemorative Tk 10 silver coin through a brief programme at the National Sports Council.

Weighing in at 30 grams, the coin, designed by KG Mustafa has the World Cup 2011 logo on one side and a photo of the World Cup trophy on the other side.

The silver metallic has been priced at Tk 3000 and some 10,000 coins have been released and are now available for collection at Bangladesh Bank, Motijheel branch as well as Dhaka-based branches of different commercial banks.

Bangladesh is one of three host

nations and will stage eight matches in Dhaka and Chittagong including two quarterfinals.

It is the eighth commemorative coin released by Bangladesh Bank following coins to mark the Olympics, the seven Birshreshtha's, the Bangabandhu Bridge, the Silver Jubilee of Bangladesh Bank, Wildlife and Mother Language.

"We are proud of being a part of the cricket World Cup 2011, which is an important milestone for Bangladesh in the history of international sports," said Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Atiur Rahman during the coin releasing ceremony.

"We hope our cricketers will be able to draw the attention of the world by keeping their consistent performance to inspire the national cricket team along with all the sports loving people," said the governor.

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith revealed the cover of the commemorative coin while the BCB president and chairman of parliamentary committee on finance AHM Mustafa Kamal, chairman of parliamentary committee on youth and sports Jahid Ahsan Rassel, state minister for youth and sports Ahad Ali Sarker, sports and youth secretary Mahub Ahmed and designer KG Mustafa were among other presents.

Asked whether the coin is beyond the reach of the general people in term of price, Bangladesh Bank deputy governor Ziaul Hasan Siddique said that they have chosen the silver metallic because they wanted to give the coin long life and shine, but they would consider to release commemorative coins using usual metal as well.

### FIXTURES

Wednesday

Denmark v England, Holland v Austria, Germany v Italy, Argentina v Portugal, France v Brazil, Spain v Colombia, Iran v Russia, Turkey v South Korea, Croatia v Czech Republic



The two commemorative silver coins, designed by KG Mustafa and issued by Bangladesh Bank for the World Cup was released at the National Sports Council yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Dutch striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar (L) and midfielder Ibrahim Affelay practice during a training session in Katwijk on Monday ahead of their international friendly against Austria.

PHOTO: AFP

## Wolves sack McClaren

AFP, Berlin



Ex-England coach Steve McClaren was on Monday sacked by Bundesliga side Wolfsburg after just seven months in charge with his side just one point off from the relegation zone.

The 49-year-old became the first English manager to coach in the Bundesliga last August, but McClaren has been dismissed in the wake of Saturday's 1-0 defeat at Hanover, when he criticised star player Diego for missing a penalty.

McClaren's co-trainer Pierre Littbarski will take over as caretaker coach.

"We were no longer sure that we could work with Steve McClaren until the end of the season with some stability," said director of sport Dieter Hoeness in a statement.

"We have tried to make things work for as long as possible, but we have lost faith that we can bring success."

Having coached FC Twente to last season's Dutch title, McClaren took charge of the 2009 Bundesliga champions before the start of the season, but his team have struggled throughout.

Despite being given a vote of confidence and allowed to go on a spending spree in January, McClaren's sacking can be blamed on his team's league position of 12th -- just

a point keeps them from 16th and the bottom three.

"Our main concern now is to widen the gap between us and the relegation zone as soon as possible," said Hoeness.

After McClaren sold star striker Edin Dzeko to Manchester City in January for 34 million euros, he splashed Wolfsburg's cash in a bid to improve his team's faltering league position.

Attacking midfielders Koo Ja-Cheoul of South Korea and Venezuelan Yohandry Orozco, German international Patrick Helmes, Turkish international striker Tuncay Sanli and Jan Polak were all brought in.

But Saturday's defeat was the final straw as McClaren slammed Diego for disregarding the English coach's order to let German striker Patrick Helmes take an 80th-minute penalty, which the Brazilian then missed.

"The players argued about it like kids in a playground," said Hoeness.

"And because of that we were beaten in a match that we should never have lost."

McClaren was sacked as England manager after the Three Lions failed to qualify for Euro 2008.

He was dubbed 'The Wally with the Brolly' by the British media after using an umbrella during heavy rain at Wembley in November 2007 during his final game in charge when his team were beaten by Croatia.

### SPORTS POLL

#### WEEKLY QUESTION

Have the organisers done a good job with the World Cup preparations?

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#### Bangladesh League

Feni Soccer Club v Mohammedan  
Time: 2:30pm  
Venue: Feni Stadium  
Arambagh v Abahani  
Time: 4:00pm  
Venue: Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur

## Reina defends Torres

REUTERS, Madrid

Pepe Reina has defended the decision taken by his Liverpool and Spain team mate Fernando Torres to join Chelsea and urged fans of the Anfield club to remember the good times he brought them.

Torres incensed some Liverpool fans with his explanation that he joined Chelsea because he wanted to win trophies and some burned his number nine shirt in protest.

Goalkeeper Reina, who joined Torres at Spain's training base outside Madrid on Monday as they prepare for Wednesday's friendly against Colombia, said there was nothing to be done but wish the striker good luck.

"Football is like that, as players we come and go," Reina was quoted as saying in Spanish media.

"You have to understand his decision, he felt it was a good opportunity to continue developing."

"The club has to look forward and forget Fernando. He is not here anymore and we can't do anything but wish him a

lot of luck."

Torres had a miserable debut at home to Liverpool on Sunday, squandering several chances before being substituted in the 66th minute as Chelsea lost 1-0.

One travelling Liverpool fan held up a banner reading: "18 titles, five European Cups--is Chelsea a bigger club?" while another threw a Liverpool shirt bearing his name on to the Stamford Bridge pitch.

"It's logical that people don't understand it but I think they have to make an effort and remember what he did for the club during these past three and a half years," Reina said.

"He scored a lot of goals, he provided many entertaining afternoons of football and that is what we have to remember, the smile that he put on people's faces in many matches."

"In my case a friend is leaving, it's tough but football is like that."

"Yesterday at (Chelsea) was a bit strange but football has these situations."

"Today you are playing with a team mate and friend and the next you are playing against him but you have to wish him a lot of luck. He is trying to make things work out well for himself."

## Milito out for 6 weeks

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan's Argentinian striker Diego Milito will be out of action for six weeks after straining a hamstring the Italian club announced.

Milito sustained the injury in his side's 5-3 Serie A win over AS Roma on the weekend, when he was replaced in the 70th minute.

Inter now face the prospect of a Champions League quarterfinal against Bayern Munich on March 15 with only two available strikers, Samuel Eto'o and Goran Pandev, as newly-signed forward Giampaolo Pazzini is not eligible.

Inter coach Leonardo nevertheless had some comforting words for Milito.

"Diego mustn't worry about what has happened. He doesn't have to prove anything to anyone; he knows how important he is for Inter."



German midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger (C) blows a vuvuzela during an advertising shooting in Kaiserau on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP