



# No home comfort for Brazil

## Football

AFP, Goiania

Brazil, hosts of the next World Cup, were held to a 0-0 draw by the Netherlands in a rare home friendly on Saturday, with both goalkeepers responsible for the deadlock.

The teams' first clash since the Dutch beat Brazil 2-1 in last year's World Cup quarterfinals became bad-tempered towards the end and Brazil's Ramires was sent off in the 79th minute for a second booking after a foul on Arjen Robben.

Playing with a three-pronged attack of Neymar and Robinho either side of centre-forward Fred, Brazil had a strong second half but could not get past inspired, debutant Dutch goalkeeper Tim Krul despite creating a number of good chances.

Fred, who squandered most of them including the finish to a good move orchestrated by Neymar on the left in the 57th, left the field to boos from the fans at the Serra Dourada stadium

when he was replaced by the 21-year-old Leandro Damiao.

The Dutch, without injured Inter Milan playmaker Wesley Sneijder, who scored both their goals in the 2010 meeting, had two good chances in the first half with striker Ibrahim Affelay forcing two good saves from Brazilian keeper Julio Cesar.

"We had some normal difficulties in the first half, didn't manage to mark Affelay well and gave away good chances to Holland

### RESULT

Brazil 0 Netherlands 0

that obliged Julio to make two excellent saves," Brazil coach Mano Menezes told reporters.

The crowd booed when the teams came off at halftime but two good Neymar moves in less than five minutes after the break were enough to win back their support, though there were jeers again at the end.

"We improved a lot in the second half, were sharper with our marking... We created a high

volume of play, very clear chances, the ball ran along the goalline but didn't go in because football's like that," Menezes added.

"Our players were very tired and we couldn't play as well as in the first half. Brazil got stronger and stronger, and sometimes you have to play in defence," Netherlands coach Bert van Marwijk said.

"I think we were lucky and also had a great performance from our keeper, who was making his debut. In the end, a draw here against Brazil, for a small country like Holland, is not a bad result."

Since Menezes replaced Dunga as Brazil coach after the World Cup, Brazil had beaten the United States, Iran, Ukraine and Scotland but lost to major opponents Argentina and France. Saturday's match was Menezes' home debut.

Brazil are warming up for the Copa America in Argentina in July. They will host Romania on Tuesday in Sao Paulo in a match that also will be the official farewell game for former World Player of the Year Ronaldo.

## Neymar expected better

INTERNET, Undated

Brazil striker Neymar says he is disappointed that the Selecao were unable to beat the Netherlands in Saturday's friendly.

Despite the hype surrounding Brazil's first game on home soil for two years and a rematch of last summer's World Cup quarterfinal, the game failed to live up to expectations and finished 0-0. The main talking point was a red card for Chelsea midfielder Ramires, who was dismissed with ten minutes remaining.

Neymar told ESPN Brazil: "We did not fulfil our objective because we wanted to win. Our team deserved it for what we did in the second half but we squandered a lot of chances." The home fans were disappointed with their side's display and turned on them in the second half, and Neymar admitted it was not an enjoyable experience.

"Of course, nobody wanted to hear booing," he continued. "We should have scored a goal but we could not take our chances." On the subject of Ramires' red card, Neymar added: "We were a man short but I do not know if it was deserved or not - that is only down to the referee."

# Spain outclass USA

## Football

AFP, Foxboro

Villarreal striker Santi Cazorla scored two first-half goals and reigning World Cup champion Spain routed the United States 4-0 on Saturday in an international football friendly.

Cazorla found the back of the net in the 28th and 41st minutes, each time while unmarked at the top of the penalty area and scoring off deadly centering passes from Manchester City playmaker David Silva.

Alvaro Negredo took a pass from Xabi Alonso and raced through a struggling American defense to blast a goal past US goalkeeper Tim Howard in the 32nd minute. "It couldn't get any worse than it was in the first half," said Howard.

"When you play the best team in the world, they can make you look silly at times." Fernando Torres banked in a shot off the goalpost to his right from the heart of the penalty area in the 73rd minute for the final goal. Borja Valero split a defensive seam with a perfect lead pass to the Chelsea striker.

"We dominated, but we are also aware that they had important players who did not play," Spain coach Vicente del Bosque said.

It was the most lopsided US loss since Mexico blanked the Americans 5-0 in the 2009 CONCACAF Gold Cup final.

"If we win the Gold Cup in a couple of weeks, nobody will remember this," said Howard, who was the US captain.

The Spaniards, who boasted six players from Champions League winners Barcelona, improved to 4-1 all-time against the Americans, who upset Spain 2-0 in the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup semi-finals in South Africa in their last meeting to snap Spain's 35-match unbeaten streak.

The Americans were without veteran Carlos Bocanegra and star midfielder Landon Donovan. Donovan was ill but is expected to play against Canada.

Mindful of the upcoming tournament, Bradley kept several regulars out of the starting lineup and Spain dominated the attack and tempo from the start.

The Spaniards dominated ball possession with skillful passing and elusive movement away from the ball.

### RESULT

United States 0 Spain 4 (Cazorla 28, 41, Negredo 32, Torres 73)

# England battle to a draw

AFP, Paris



England were held by Switzerland at Wembley and veteran Republic of Ireland striker Robbie Keane rewrote the record books in Euro 2012 qualifying action on Saturday.

Keane became the first player from Britain or Ireland to score 50 senior international goals when bagging a double in his country's 2-0 win over Macedonia in Skopje.

The previous benchmark of 49 was held by Manchester United and England great Sir Bobby Charlton.

Keane plundered his 50th and 51st international goals in the eighth and 37th minutes. Macedonia were left to rue Ivan Trickovski's missed 40th minute penalty when his spotkick hit the crossbar.

Thrilled at his feat Keane said: "It means a hell of a lot. When I first started off Niall Quinn said I'd reach it so I'm delighted."

Ireland, level on points with Russia, 3-1 winners over Armenia with Tottenham's Roman Pavlyuchenko getting a hat-trick, and Slovakia, who beat Andorra 1-0, edged to the top of Group B on goal difference

In Lisbon Portugal gave their hopes of emerging from Group H a major boost with a 1-0 win over Norway.

Helder Postiga scored the crucial goal in the 53rd minute to move the Portuguese up level on 10 points with Norway and Denmark, 2-0 winners over Iceland in Reykjavik, with five games played.

Shock Euro 2004 winners Greece maintained their slender grip on Group F with a 3-1 win over Malta at Piraeus.

That fourth win out of six qualifiers put them on 14 points, one clear of Croatia and Israel, who clinched a precious three points in Riga with a 2-1 win over Latvia.

The visitors dominated the first half with goals from Yossi

Benayoun and Tal Ben-Haim's penalty, with Aleksandrs Cauna giving Latvia brief hopes of a comeback with a spotkick of his own, but they were unable to find an equaliser.

Fabio Capello's England held on to their Group G lead but only on goal difference after being held to a 2-2 stalemate by Switzerland.

Errors by goalkeeper Joe Hart threatened to embarrass England who had their work cut out after going behind via goals from Swiss midfielder Tranquillo Barnetta.

England fought back with a Frank Lampard penalty and a second half strike from substitute Ashley Young.

Their closest rivals Montenegro could have gone top of the group later but a 1-1 draw with Bulgaria in Podgorica kept them second.

Capello insisted that despite giving his players a holiday following the end of the Premier League season fatigue had played a significant part in his team's performance.

"The difference between the two sides was that we lacked energy, always the same problem," the Italian said.

"The Swiss were fresher. However, we ended up with a good result, I got a good reaction from the players in the second half but as always at this stage of the season we were without energy."

Swiss coach Ottmar Hitzfeld was satisfied with a point but admitted he was disappointed his side were unable to defend a two-goal lead.

"If I had been offered a 2-2 draw at Wembley beforehand I would have taken it," Hitzfeld said. "But we wanted to win. In the first 10 minutes we had more shots on goal than in our game against last game put together."

"There's a little bit of disappointment of course. If you're leading 2-0 in England there's hope that you can hold on. But there's no reason to reprimand the team. They did everything they could."

### RESULTS

<b>Group B</b> At Saint Petersburg, Russia <b>Russia 3</b> (Pavlyuchenko 26, 59, 73-pen) Armenia 1 (Pizzelli 25) At Bratislava <b>Slovakia 1</b> (Karhan 63) Andorra 0 At Skopje Macedonia 0 <b>Ireland 2</b> (Keane 8, 37) <b>Group F</b> At Riga Latvia 1 (Cauna 62-pen) <b>Israel 2</b> (Benayoun 19, Ben-Haim 43-pen) At Piraeus, Greece	<b>Greece 3</b> (Fetfatzidis 8, 64, Papadopoulos 26) Malta 1 (Mifsud 54) <b>Group G</b> At London England 2 (Lampard 37-pen, Young 51) Switzerland 2 (Barnetta 32, 35) At Podgorica Montenegro 1 (Dalovic 53) Bulgaria 1 (Popov 66) <b>Group H</b> At Reykjavik Iceland 0 <b>Denmark 2</b> (Schone 60, Eriksen 75) At Lisbon <b>Portugal 1</b> (Postiga 53) Norway 0
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# Eto'o puts Lions on the spot

## Football

AFP, Johannesburg

Inter Milan star Samuel Eto'o fluffed a late penalty as Cameroon were held 0-0 at home by Senegal and are in danger of missing the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations.

Eto'o banged his 88th-minute penalty against the crossbar, reviving memories of another late missed spotkick that cost Cameroon a place at the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

A point before a capacity 45,000 crowd in Yaounde kept Senegal clear at the top of Group E with 10 points followed by Cameroon (five), Democratic Republic of Congo (four) and Mauritius are pointless.

Cameroon created most of the clearcut chances with record four-time African Foot-

baller of the Year Eto'o prominent while New York-based Senegal goalkeeper Bouna Coundoul made several breathtaking saves.

The turnaround under local coach Amara Traore of Senegal, who finished fourth in 2006 then failed to reach the next two tournaments, has been the success story so far of the qualifiers.

The 'Teranga Lions' campaign got off to a perfect start with a Mamadou Niang hat-trick inspiring a shock 4-2 triumph in DR Congo and a 7-0 mauling of Mauritius in Dakar followed.

West Ham striker Demba Ba, an injury absentee in Yaounde, scored a last-gasp winner at home to Cameroon three months ago and another home win when the Congolese visit Dakar in September will clinch first place.

# Kissinger mulls FIFA role

## Football

AFP, London

Henry Kissinger is mulling over an offer from FIFA president Sepp Blatter to help clean up world football's governing body but said he needed more details before committing himself.

A lifelong football fan, the Vietnam War-era US secretary of state and national security adviser has been asked by Blatter to take part in a new group looking at ways to reform FIFA following months of corruption allegations.

"Yes, he's invited me, but he has not been specific except to say he wants to create a group of wise men to deal with some of the issues that have arisen," Kissinger, 88, told

BBC Radio here on Sunday.

"I am an avid football fan and have been all my life. I watch as many games as I can.

"If it can help the sport I would be willing to participate but I have to know who the other participants are and what the terms of reference are before I make a final commitment."

Blatter was re-elected unopposed as FIFA president on Wednesday after his lone challenger, Qatar's Mohamed Bin Hammam, withdrew amidst bribery allegations that led to him being suspended by the ethics committee from involvement in the governing body.

Kissinger, asked for his view on Blatter's election, replied: "I shouldn't comment on any of these details because if I should join this group then maybe it's among the issues that is going to be there."



Switzerland's Gokhan Inler (L) shoots at goal as England's Scott Parker tries to impede him in their Euro 2012 qualifier at Wembley on Sunday.

### SPORTS POLL

#### WEEKLY QUESTION

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### STAR Cricket

England v Sri Lanka

Second Test, Day 4

Live from 4:00pm

### TEN Cricket

West Indies v India

First ODI

Live from 7:00pm

### ESPN

Sportscenter India

Sports News

Live at 8:30pm



### Bangladesh League

Ctg MSC v Rahmatganj

Time: 4:00pm

Venue: Cox's Bazar Stadium

Sk Russel v Sk Jamal

Time: 4:15pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium