



US striker Landon Donovan (L) hustles with Jamaica's Eric Vernan during their Gold Cup quarterfinal in Washington DC on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

FIFA vice-president resigns

Football

AFP, Paris

FIFA vice-president Jack Warner has resigned from all his positions in international football, the world governing body confirmed on Monday.

Warner, the influential head of the Caribbean, North and Central American federation (CONCACAF), was suspended last month over claims he conspired with Asian football chief Mohamed bin Hammam to buy votes in an attempt to topple FIFA supremo Sepp Blatter in the presidential election earlier this month.

"As a consequence of Mr Warner's resignation, all ethics committee procedures against him have been closed and the presumption of innocence is maintained," said a FIFA statement.

The 68-year-old Jamaican and bin Hammam were alleged to have offered \$40,000 cash gifts to the heads of CONCACAF's national associations at a Trinidad conference in return for their votes in the presidential election.

"Jack A. Warner has informed FIFA about his resignation from his posts in international football," the FIFA statement said.

"FIFA regrets the turn of events that have led to Mr Warner's decision.

"His resignation has been accepted by world football's governing body, and his contribution to international football and to Caribbean football in particular and the CONCACAF confederation are appreciated and acknowledged."

Panama ride on Tejada

Football

AFP, Washington

Panama booked their CONCACAF Gold Cup semifinal berth in dramatic style Sunday, beating El Salvador 5-3 on penalties after Luis Tejada equalized in the 90th minute.

Panama lined up another match against their Group C rivals the United States, who had second-half goals from Jermaine Jones and Clint Dempsey in a 2-0 victory over Jamaica in the quarter-finals of the regional championship for North and Central America and the Caribbean.

In the second match of the day's double-header at RFK Stadium, Tejada's 90th minute strike answered the penalty converted by Rodolfo Zelaya in the 78th for El Salvador.

Tejada converted in the penalty shoot-out, making the clinching shot after Nelson Barahona, Luis Renteria, Anibal Godoy and Amilcar Henriquez converted.

Panama goalkeeper Jaime Penedo stopped the first penalty he faced in the decider, from El Salvador's Dennis Alas.

"If things don't go your way in terms of soccer, you have to look for other ways to reach your goals," Panama coach Julio Dely Valdes said. "We have gotten a result in a way we're not used to.

"I think Panama never stopped fighting, and that's how we reached the goal, which is the most important thing going forward."

Both coaches were unhappy with some of the referee's calls.

Tejada's goal in the last minute of regular time first appeared to have been saved by El Salvador keeper Miguel Montes, but he was in the net and it was determined the ball crossed the goal line.

After a delay in posting the goal on the scoreboard, it was briefly taken down then put up again.

"It's an elimination that has been conditioned by human error made by the referees, which is OK because they are human and they can make mistakes," El Salvador coach Ruben Israel said.

Both Panama and El Salvador played extra time with just 10 men after Panama's Blas Perez and El Salvador's Luis Anaya were sent off after a scuffle at the end of regular time.

Panama will play the United States on Wednesday in Houston in a re-match of Panama's 2-1 Group C victory.

The USA advanced thanks to Jones' goal in the 49th minute and Dempsey's 80th-minute strike.

German-born midfielder Jones, making his ninth appearance for the USA, fired a shot from outside the area that was deflected by Jamaican defender Jermaine Taylor's outstretched leg past goalkeeper Donovan Ricketts.

The United States gained a man advantage after Taylor was sent off in the 67th minute for a foul on Jones.

The US made the most of the advantage with Dempsey's goal. A cross from Juan Agudelo found Dempsey alone on the left side of the goal. Ricketts came out to contest, and Dempsey eluded him and slotted the ball home.

"We just played good football," Dempsey said. "We were patient. We were confident. We moved the ball around well."

Agudelo had come on in the 12th minute for Jozy Altidore, who departed with a strained left hamstring.

Jamaica had reached the quarter-finals as the winners of Group B with victories over Grenada and Guatemala and Honduras.

But they had never beaten the United States and had never made it beyond the Gold Cup quarter-finals, trends they couldn't reverse on Sunday.

"I thought we were in the game until we gave up the first goal," Jamaica coach Theodore Whitmore said. "Even one man down, I think we were still in the game, still getting chances."

In Wednesday's other semifinal, Mexico will face Honduras.

Defending champions Mexico advanced with a 2-1 victory over Guatemala on Saturday, when Honduras defeated Costa Rica 4-2 on penalties after the two teams were level 1-1 after extra time at New Meadowlands Stadium.

The Gold Cup champions earn a berth in the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Villas-Boas all set for Chelsea role

AFP, Lisbon



Porto coach Andre Villas-Boas is set to succeed Carlo Ancelotti as coach of English Premier League side Chelsea, according to a report from Portuguese news agency Lusa on Monday.

Citing sources close to the talks, Lusa claims the London club have agreed to pay the 15-million-euro (\$21.35m) departure clause in Villas-Boas's contract.

A former assistant to Jose Mourinho at Chelsea, 33-year-old Villas-Boas led Porto to three titles in his first season at the club: the Portuguese league title, the Portuguese Cup and the Europa League.

In doing so, he became the youngest coach to win a European trophy.

The Blues are seeking to replace Ancelotti, who was sacked at the end of last season after failing to land any silverware, just 12 months after guiding the west London club to an historic double of league and FA Cup titles.

Porto, however, insisted that no offer had

been made to activate the release clause.

"So far this club has not received any communication that this clause has been exercised, nor of the agreement of the coach that is desired," a Porto statement read.

But Porto president Pinto da Costa admitted the club could not prevent their manager from leaving if the required financial conditions were met.

"Villas-Boas has a contract and a clause of 15 million euros," he said.

"If someone deposits 15 million euros into our account and he wants to go, we can not do anything because it is something that is contractually specified."

Although Chelsea made no official comment, reports suggest a £4.4m-a-year (\$7.1m) salary is on the table for Villas-Boas, who could bring Porto's Colombian star striker Radamel Falcao to Stamford Bridge with him.

Turkey coach Guus Hiddink has also been linked with a return to Chelsea, where he won the FA Cup as a caretaker manager in 2009, as well as former Fulham, Manchester City and Blackburn Rovers boss Mark Hughes.

Russia probes tasing

Football

AFP, Moscow

Russia probed its police on Monday after the national league's leading striker accused a crack security officer of zapping him with a stun gun at the end of a heated weekend match.

This season's top scorer Danko Lazovic -- a Serbian national team player who has netted nine goals in 14 games for Zenit Saint Petersburg -- complained of being attacked following his side's 2-0 away win at Volga Nizhny Novgorod.

The incident came as Russia ponders ways to improve notoriously lax security at its stadiums before it hosts the 2018 World Cup and represented the second complaint of violence by a foreign player this year.

The Volga region's Investigative Committee said it would question match security officers and witnesses to the alleged attack.

"An administrative decision will be taken based on the results of the probe," the statement said.

The Sovetsky Sport daily said the inquiry may stretch until next week.

Lazovic told his team's website he suspects the riot policeman may have mixed him up with a Zenit supporter because the incident happened after he had already stripped of his shirt.

The player walked away from the altercation -- which occurred while rival fan groups were hurling various objects and verbal abuse at each other from neighbouring stadium sections -- rubbing his side.

Russian football has taken repeated blows to its reputation because of at-times deadly match violence and match-fixing allegations involving all the top leagues.

Both the Kremlin and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin -- who was instrumental in beating out England for the right to host the 2018 event -- have vowed to improve the sport's image through thorough investigations of all misbehaviour.

Ballack furious

Football

AFP, Berlin

Michael Ballack, Germany's long-serving captain who was unceremoniously dumped last week by national trainer Joachim Loew, is angrily refusing to go away quietly.

"It was clearly and unambiguously agreed by both sides that I would be able to announce calmly my decision to retire (from international football) during the summer break," the 34-year-old midfielder said in a statement issued on Sunday.

Instead, it was the German Football Federation (DFB) who revealed last Thursday that the former Chelsea and Bayern Munich star was no longer part of the Germany squad after 98 appearances and 42 goals for his country.

Ballack, who had not played for Germany since March 2010 and who missed the World Cup due to injury, said he only found out about the DFB announcement an hour before the press release went out -- and by text message while on holiday.

He also disputed the version of events given by Wolfgang Niersbach, the general secretary of the DFB, who had said that Loew had told Ballack his career was over at a meeting on March 30.

Ballack, who now plays for Bundesliga side Bayer Leverkusen, said that he reached the decision himself in May to quit international football.

"I think it's a shame to have to again



read comments that are untrue and to which I have to react," Ballack said.

"The opposite was the case ... (Loew) told me in this meeting that I was on the right path after my injury and that he fully believed that I would definitely be able to get back into the national side.

"He encouraged me and told me not to throw in the towel."

The DFB said it hoped that Ballack would take part in a friendly against Brazil in Stuttgart in southwest Germany on August 10 for what it called a "worthy farewell" and 99th appearance -- and as captain.

Wunderkind stays with Schalke

AFP, Berlin

Schalke 04 said on Monday that 17-year-old Bundesliga wunderkind Julian Draxler has signed a four-year contract to stay at the German club until 2016.

Draxler first came to prominence in January by coming off the bench to score a spectacular winner in the quarter-finals of the German Cup, and has since won attention from Germany coach Joachim Loew, who called him a "great talent".

In the cup final against MSV Duisburg in Berlin last month, Draxler unleashed an unstoppable half-volley from just outside the penalty area in the 18th minute, which put his team on the path to their fifth cup success.

Since February, he has been combining football training with school studies in the shadow of Schalke's Veltins Arena stadium in Gelsenkirchen, western Germany.

Schalke had a disappointing season aside from their cup triumph, finishing 14th in the league and parting company with coach Felix Magath and with Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who is moving to Bayern Munich.

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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West Indies v India

First Test, Day 2

Live from 9:00pm

STAR Sports

Wimbledon Championships

First Round

Live from 5:00pm

ESPN

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Sports News

Live at 8:30pm



Bangladesh League

Abahani v Sk Russel

Time: 4:15pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium