



Mexico players are jubilant after beating USA to clinch the Gold Cup title at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hiddink was first choice

SOCCERNET

Guus Hiddink was Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich's first choice to succeed Carlo Ancelotti at Stamford Bridge, according to agent Cees van Nieuwenhuizen.

Last week, Chelsea took decisive action over the manager's job, appointing former Porto boss Andre Villas-Boas after meeting the 33-year-old's £13.3 million release clause.

However, Van Nieuwenhuizen claims that Hiddink was approached first, with only his insistence on honouring his contract as Turkey manager preventing him from returning to Chelsea, where he won the FA Cup during a caretaker spell at the club in 2009.

"Every now and then they talk, they [Hiddink and Abramovich] see each other, and Guus would say: 'I have a contract so it's no use considering a position for me at Chelsea.' I think Abramovich has respected that position," Van Nieuwenhuizen said in The Observer.

France open WC with a victory

AFP, Sinsheim

France opened their 2011 World Cup with a hard-earned 1-0 victory over Nigeria here Sunday thanks to Marie-Laure Delie's goal in a crucial Group A encounter.

A near sell-out crowd of 25,475 in Sinsheim saw a number of good chances but no goals until Delie's goal in the 56th minute gave France three points in the group with Nigeria remaining on zero.

The game at Rhein Neckar Arena was considered a near must-win for both sides with two-time reigning champions and hosts Germany must likely to advance as the other team from Group A to the quarter-finals.

France were the dominating team right from the start, especially on the left side through Louisa Necib - for whom the Nigerians had no answer.

Mexico glitter in Gold Cup glory

Football

AFP, Los Angeles

Mexico won a sixth CONCACAF Gold Cup title by rallying to score four unanswered goals and defeat the United States 4-2 in Saturday's championship game at the Rose Bowl stadium.

Pablo Barrera scored his second goal of the game in the 50th minute to break a 2-2 deadlock and Giovanni Dos Santos added an insurance goal in the 76th minute for the Mexicans, who trailed 2-0 after only 23 minutes.

"There's no better moment than victory," Mexico coach Jose Manuel de la Torre said. "Everything else is in the past now."

Mexico won their second title in a row in the biennial North American regional tournament, defeating the United States in the final as they did in 2009, and qualified for the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Mexico's Javier Hernandez, who plays for Manchester United in the English Premier League, was named the Gold Cup Most Valuable Player. Hernandez led this year's tournament with seven goals.

Mexico and the US team have won 10 of the 11 Gold Cups contested since the tournament took its current form in 1991.

Dos Santos netted one of the prettiest

RESULT

United States 2 (Bradley 8, Donovan 23), Mexico 4 (Barrera 29, 50, Guardado 36, Dos Santos 76)

goals of the tournament, dancing around US goalkeeper Tim Howard, who had charged out of his net after a loose ball, then spun past two stunned defenders and chipped the ball over a leaping Eric Lichaj into the upper right corner of the net.

The Americans played well defensively in the tournament until they came

up against the explosive Mexican attack. American captain Carlos Bocanegra said there was confusion among the US defenders Saturday.

"It was an overall frustrating night," Bocanegra said. "Defensively we weren't good enough."

A sold-out crowd of 93,420 at the Rose Bowl was the largest ever for a Gold Cup game in the USA. The pro-Mexican crowd was clad mainly in green and cheering loudly for the visitors despite the match being played on US soil.

American fans tried to get chants of "USA, USA" going in the first half but they were quickly drowned out by the "El Tri" supporters with a chorus of "Ole, Ole".

Michael Bradley scored in the eighth minute and Landon Donovan added another goal in the 23rd minute as the Americans jumped out to a 2-0 lead. Donovan's goal was his 13th in Gold Cup play, giving him the all-time tournament lead.

"You're worried and you don't want to become disorganized," de la Torre said. "The United States was playing well. They surprised us with the first goal. We pushed too far up in the second goal. Fortunately, we were able to maintain our calm."

Barrera then scored his first goal in the 29th minute and Andres Guardado, who was playing with an injured left ankle, netted the equalizer in the 36th minute, setting the stage for a second half dominated by the Mexican squad.

Barrera put his 17-yard shot just inside the right post to snap Howard's tournament shutout streak at 351 minutes.

Guardado tied it by pouncing on a loose ball about five yards out to tie after Dos Santos started the play with a pass from the right side that bounced off Lichaj.

"Our back line couldn't figure it out," Bocanegra said. "They spread us out and we weren't all on the same page."

Moussa wants big move

SOCCERNET

Toulouse midfielder Moussa Sissoko is in negotiations with Lyon, Liverpool, Newcastle and Inter Milan, according to his agent.

France international Sissoko, 21, was linked with a number of high-profile clubs last summer but said he was happy to remain at Toulouse.

However, he revealed in March that he was ready to move on, and agent Bacary Sanogo has revealed talks are taking place with a number of clubs around the continent.

"The link with Lyon is serious, but it is not the only one," Sanogo told Goal.com. "There are also negotiations with Liverpool, Newcastle and Inter. Things should seriously move next week."

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

Do you think Sanath Jayasuriya should've been picked?

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

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STAR Sports

Wimbledon Championships
Fourth Round
Live from 5:00pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm

DAY'S
EVENT



Bangladesh League
Abahani v Brothers Union
Time: 4:15pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

'Bayern will win title'

Football

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich begin preparations for the new season on Monday with Germany star Thomas Mueller insisting the Bavarian giants will wrestle the German league title back from champions Dortmund.

Bayern's star-studded squad will regroup in Munich on Monday under new coach Jupp Heynckes after suffering a disappointing season which left them without any silverware.

While Dortmund dominated the German league for most of last season, Bayern failed to make an impact in the Bundesliga having also been dumped from both the German Cup and Champions League.

But Mueller, the top-scorer at the 2010 World Cup, said Bayern will be back to their best when the Bundesliga resumes on Friday August 5.

"We will be champions next season, no doubt about it," said Mueller, with Bayern set to host Borussia Moenchengladbach on the season's opening weekend.

Heynckes takes charge after Dutch coach Louis van Gaal was sacked earlier this year when Bayern were struggling to claim a Champions League spot, a minimum requirement

for Munich's CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

"One is obliged to speak of success when you are at Bayern Munich," said 66-year-old Heynckes who is on his third stint with the German giants having coached them from 1987 to 1991 and briefly in 2009.

Bayern face a play-off early in the season to be sure of their Champions League spot, but captain Philipp Lahm has higher goals.

"With our quality, our goal should be to do the league and cup double and reach at least the quarterfinals of the Champions League," Lahm told Bild.

Bayern will start the season with Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who signed for 25million euros from Schalke between the sticks and are chasing the signature of

defender Jerome Boateng from Manchester City.

Bayern have plucked striker Nils Petersen from second division Energie Cottbus and ex-Schalke star Rafinha from Genoa.

Turkey midfielder Hamit Altintop has left for Real Madrid and after a season on the bench, Germany striker Miroslav Klose will play for Rome's Lazio in Serie A.

After playing Euro 2012 qualifiers at the start of June, Bayern's Germany stars will return on Friday and a training camp is planned on Lake Garda for July.

Zidane heaps praise on Varane

SOCCERNET

Zinedine Zidane has backed Raphael Varane to be a success at Real Madrid and believes he could become the next Laurent Blanc.

Defender Varane is expected to complete a move from Lens to the Bernabeu early next week with Zidane, who is an advisor to Madrid president Florentino Perez, instrumental in luring his countryman to Spain.

Zidane is confident the 18-year-old will blossom under Jose Mourinho after comparing him to former France centre-half, and current Les Bleus boss, Blanc.

Zidane said: "He is a very promising player and was an obvious target for a club such as Real Madrid seeking talent. He is a player I like very much and in many ways resembles Laurent Blanc. I haven't seen many players like that."

Tevez back

Football

INTERNET, undated

Striker Carlos Tevez, who seemed to be out of Argentina's Copa America plans little more than a month ago, has been named in the hosts' 23-man squad for the tournament.

There were no surprises among coach Sergio Batista's selections, posted on the Argentine Football Association's website five days after their last warm-up - a 4-0 rout of Albania at the Monumental.

Batista dropped three home-based players from those named in his provisional squad - Boca Juniors defender Luciano Monzon, Lanus midfielder Diego Valeri and Estudiantes winger Enzo Perez.

Goalkeeper Juan Pablo Carrizo of River Plate, on loan from Lazio, is the only man in the squad to have played his club football in Argentina this season.

Tevez was dropped by Batista last year over a no-show for a friendly against arch-rivals Brazil in Qatar which Argentina won 1-0 with a goal by Lionel Messi.

However, the coach and player had a heart-to-heart and Tevez, who last season became the first Argentine to finish as top goalscorer in the Premier League, was included in Batista's provisional 26-man squad on June 1.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers:

Sergio Romero (AZ Alkmaar), Mariano Andujar (Catania), Juan Pablo Carrizo (River Plate)

Defenders:

Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan), Pablo Zabaleta (Manchester City), Nicolas Burdisso (AS Roma), Nicolas Pareja, Marcos Rojo (both Spartak Moscow), Gabriel Milito (Barcelona), Ezequiel Garay (Real Madrid)

Midfielders:

Javier Mascherano (Barcelona), Esteban Cambiasso (Inter Milan), Lucas Biglia (Anderlecht), Ever Banega (Valencia), Fernando Gago, Angel Di Maria (both Real Madrid), Javier Pastore (Palermo)

Forwards:

Lionel Messi (Barcelona), Gonzalo Higuain (Real Madrid), Carlos Tevez (Manchester City), Diego Milito (Inter Milan), Sergio Aguero (Atletico Madrid), Ezequiel Lavezzi (Napoli)