

Ballack to get coaching badges

AFP, Berlin

Retired ex-Germany captain Michael Ballack has said he is hoping to have a farewell game organised for him and has revealed he plans to get his coaching licence.

The former Chelsea star, who turned 36 in September, retired from professional football at the start of the month after his two-year contract at Bayer Leverkusen expired having made 98 appearances for Germany.

Ballack turned down a offer by the German Football Federation (DFB) to make his final appearance in the friendly victory over Brazil in August 2011, but the midfielder says he still wants a farewell match.

"I would hope so. Of course, I would like to say goodbye to the fans," Ballack, who spent four years with Chelsea, told Cologne newspaper Express when asked if he wanted a farewell match.

"I will at some point in the foreseeable future get my coaching licence.

"But whether or not I will be a trainer, I can't say yet."

Bayer Leverkusen's director of sport Rudi Voeller says he wants to see a special game organised for Ballack.

"Everyone had assumed Michael would continue to play," Voeller told Bild on Sunday, having also advised Ballack to get his coaching licence.

"Now we have to see whether we can organise a farewell match, it should be put together by the DFB, Ballack and Bayer."

But it looks unlikely the DFB will be involved in any plans after Ballack turned down their initial offer.



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Senegalese police escort Ivory Coast players, including Yaya Toure (R) as fans rampage at the Leopold Sedar Senghor stadium in Dakar on Saturday. The match was abandoned after home fans went on a violent rampage as their team slipped towards a humiliating defeat.

PHOTO: AFP

Fans shame Senegal

AFP, Johannesburg



Rioting supporters shamed Senegal this weekend as a 2013 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Ivory Coast was abandoned late in the second half.

Fires were lit using rubbish inside the 60,000-seat Stade Leopold Senghor in Dakar and stones, chairs and bottles hurled on to the pitch while footballers, coaches, officials and visiting fans sought centre-circle cover.

The fuse that lit anger among Senegalese supporters was a penalty converted by Ivory Coast captain Didier Drogba 15 minutes from time that gave the top ranked African nation a 2-0 lead on the night and a 6-2 aggregate advantage.

China-based Drogba, the elder in a 'golden generation' of Ivorian footballers chasing elusive Cup of Nations winners' medals, also scored the opener from a powerfully struck free-kick soon after half-time.

After a 40-minute delay while security officials battled to restore calm, the match was abandoned and Ivory Coast are sure to be awarded the tie and a place at the Cup of Nations tournament in South Africa next January and February.

Confederation of African Football (CAF) officials made no immediate comment on the violence, but Senegal are sure to face severe punishment with a number of options available.

These include forcing Senegal to play com-

petitive matches outside the country for a specific period and banning the country from a certain number of qualifying competitions for the premier African football tournament.

The disgraceful scenes in Dakar overshadowed a dramatic weekend of action with defending champions Zambia, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria and Tunisia securing places with another eight up for grabs later Sunday.

Morocco scored twice in the closing minutes through Youssef El Arabi and Nordin Amrabat before a sell-out 45,000 Marrakech crowd to thrash 10-man Mozambique 4-0 and banish memories of a shock two-goal first-leg loss.

Highly promising Spain-based midfielder Abdelaziz Berrada broke the deadlock before half-time and Mozambique had Almiro Lobo red carded after conceding a penalty, which Hocine Kharja converted to draw the teams level on aggregate.

It took a 20-penalty Kampala shootout to separate Zambia and Uganda with the visitors winning it 9-8 when Patrick Ocham missed. The home team won the return match 1-0 through a Geoffrey Massa goal.

Ghana travelled to Malawi sitting on a two-goal cushion and snatched the lone goal in Lilongwe after just three minutes when late call-up Afriyie Acquah scored his first international goal in his first start for the Black Stars.

Nigeria, one of several shock absentees from the 2012 Cup of Nations, booked a ticket to Johannesburg in style by whipping Liberia 6-1 in Calabar with Chelsea teammates Victor Moses (two) and John Obi Mikel (one) among the goals.

Zidane's exam

AFP, Paris

Former France captain Zinedine Zidane will take his first steps towards becoming a fully-fledged football coach when he sits the preliminary coaching exams this year.

In an interview with L'Equipe newspaper on Sunday, Zidane said: "I'll pass my coaching diplomas... we'll see later on for the professional coaching licence.

"You have to start with something and I'll start this year."

Zidane, who led France to World Cup glory over Brazil 14 years ago, even mooted the idea of eventually taking over as coach of the French national team.

'France win is no achievement'



Football

INTERNET, Undated

Shinji Kagawa has played down Japan's 1-0 victory over France, insisting his side have achieved nothing yet despite recording a famous win.

A late goal from the Manchester United midfielder saw Japan win in Paris but the 23-year-old has told his team-mates they have a lot to improve on before they are at a similar level to their opposition.

He told reporters: "It's an important result. Right now I'm in a tight spot with the team so I wanted to find some confidence. As a team we still have to improve, and it was

a friendly so (Franck) Ribery didn't start, so if you think about it calmly there isn't quite a sense of having achieved anything."

The visitors stole the victory with a counter-attack from a wasted set-piece from Les Bleus, and Kagawa revealed keeping the score level at half-time and waiting for an opening in the second period was always the game plan.

"We couldn't get the ball, and all of France's players are talented and skilled so we kept losing the one-on-ones," he said.

"In the first half our line got pulled back and we weren't able to attack, and we felt the pressure of playing away."

"We were confident we could move the ball around but then the game started and it wasn't that simple so more than anything it was huge for us to end the half scoreless."

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