

Keenan focuses on defensive mindset

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Hockey Federation's (IFH's) high-profile Belgian coach Michel Keenan emphasised on the need for developing defensive behaviour among the players in a bid to build up a strong national hockey team.

Keenan expressed his opinion at a media briefing at the Bangladesh Hockey Federation yesterday, at the end of his seven-day trip to Bangladesh where he worked on the Asian Games-bound national hockey teams and the national U-16 team, who are going to play the Youth Olympics in China in August. He also conducted a course for local coaches.

The Belgian had also worked with the national hockey team prior to Bangladesh's engagement in the World Hockey League (Round-2) and according to the players, he had immense impact on the national team which beat China and fought neck-and-neck with mighty India and Ireland in early 2013.

"The development of the players has been very good. Development I mean in two ways -- the first is the physical part and the second one is the technical part as most Asian countries need to help their players develop the defensive behaviour which I also stressed on during my first visit here," said Keenan, who is scheduled to leave here today.

Having explained to build up the defensive behaviour, Keenan said a player can hardly play only three to four minutes with the ball during the game and the rest 66 to 67 minutes he has to defend the ball so it is very important for all players to develop their defensive skills, behaviour and general awareness of the game.

Keenan also urged the hockey federation to start inculcating defensive behaviour in age-level teams such as U-15s, U-16s and U-17s.



Algiers erupts ... Algerian fans, holding national flags, drive through the streets of the capital late into the night after their country defeated Russia on Thursday to qualify for the final 16 of the World Cup. PHOTO: REUTERS

Algeria doubly ecstatic

AFP, Curitiba

Algeria coach Vahid Halilhodzic said the country is ecstatic at not only making the second round of the World Cup for the first time but of getting a chance of revenge against Germany next Monday.

Bosnian Halilhodzic -- who has rewarded the loyalty of the Algerian football authorities for not sacking him last year despite a poor showing in the Africa Cup of Nations -- said the infamous 1982 match between Austria and neighbours the then West Germany remained ingrained in Algerians memories.

Thirty-two years ago Algeria were controversially eliminated from the World Cup on goal difference when West Germany -- whom the Algerians had sensationally beaten 2-1 in their group game -- and Austria played out a mutually beneficial 1-0 win for the Germans.

The match became known as 'the game of shame'.

Algeria set up what is bound to be a highly-charged game with a 1-1 draw with Russia on

Thursday to secure their historic qualification.

"We have not forgotten about it. Everyone talks about Algeria and Germany from 1982," said Halilhodzic.

"Thirty-two years is a long time, but I am very proud of what we have achieved tonight and we deserve to be here.

"Algeria played a heroic match and our qualification for the second round is perfectly deserved."

"This is the result of what we have done for the past three years, we have progressed a lot. This is the reward.

"I love it as a coach when I see my team fighting like this."

Halilhodzic, who played for the then Yugoslavia in the 1982 World Cup, admitted, however, that the present German side looks a formidable opponent.

"I saw the game against the United States [Germany won 1-0 on Thursday to top their group]. They are an outstanding team, so it will be difficult, indeed I would go further and say extremely complicated."

The Algerian press didn't care two hoots about that with the official Algerian agency APS

reaching for the skies in terms of hyperbole.

"Perhaps one has to go back to July 5 1962, and independence for Algeria [from France], in order to recall such fervour and such an explosion of joy," it rejoiced.

Halilhodzic, a much-travelled coach who numbers among his former employers Paris Saint Germain and Ivory Coast, said he did not believe that Algeria was the flag bearer for Arabic countries but for all those who cheered for the underdog.

"After our match against South Korea [a 4-2 victory which was their first at a World Cup finals since beating Chile in 1982], we received congratulations from all over the world," he said.


"Algeria has not only gained the sympathy of the Arab countries but also in my homeland of Bosnia, in Croatia... here in Brazil people appreciate our behaviour.

"There are better teams than ours, but this team has won a lot of supporters in these finals.

"Against Germany we will be the small team against the giants and the Brazilian fans will be on our side. We will do everything in our power

Maradona bites FIFA

REUTERS, Buenos Aires



Diego Maradona blasted FIFA's ban on Uruguay striker Luis Suarez as "criminal" and said world soccer's governing body might as well handcuff the striker and lock him up in Guantanamo prison.

"Who did Suarez kill?" Maradona said during his soccer commentary programme broadcast on Venezuela's Telesur and Argentine public television on Thursday night.

"This is football, this is contact," the Argentine legend said. "They may as well handcuff him and bring him to Guantanamo directly."

The controversial U.S. prison in Cuba, opened during the Bush administration, is heavily criticized by human rights groups for indefinite imprisonment of many detainees without charge or trial.

Temperamental 1986 World Cup winner Maradona, known for his flamboyant declarations, is echoing outrage in Uruguay, where many are fuming at a ban they deem exaggerated, hypocritical or outright biased.

Many abroad, however, were horrified by brilliant but volatile Suarez's biting of Italian defender Giorgio Chiellini on Tuesday.

Suarez was given longest sanction imposed at a World Cup by soccer's governing body on Thursday, suspended from all football-related activity for four months and banned for nine international matches.

But Maradona, who like Suarez emerged from a poor background to rise to global fame, fervently defended "Luisito" throughout the programme, at the end even unveiling a T-shirt with "We're with you Luisito" scrawled on the front.

"If he made a mistake, fine, they should punish him, but they shouldn't exaggerate, they shouldn't be moralistic," said Maradona, who is close to Cuba's former president Fidel Castro.

Leftist Uruguayan president Jose Mujica also phoned in to the programme, blasting what he saw as a move to sideline Uruguay from the tournament where many European heavyweights have bit the dust.

"We kicked out Italy, we kicked out England, how much money was lost there?," said Mujica, a 79 year-old former guerrilla. "We're Uruguay, we're very little. It was cheap [for them to do]."

The European establishment could not understand Suarez's tough street style, Mujica and Maradona opined.

"Incredible players are often born here in the heart of poverty," Mujica said. "They don't understand him because they don't want to and because they were born in another society with other resources."

Li crashes out, Novak survives

AFP, London

Chinese superstar Li Na crashed out of Wimbledon Friday in another twist to her love-hate relationship with the tournament while Novak Djokovic made the last-16 but only after surviving a painful fall.

Second seed Li lost 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/5) in the third round to Barbora Zahlavova Strycova of the Czech Republic with the defeat coming hot on the heels of her shock first round exit at the French Open.

In eight appearances at Wimbledon, the 32-year-old Li has still never got beyond the quarter-finals, comfortably her least successful Grand Slam tournament.

The match ended in bizarre circumstances with Li, facing match point, successfully challenging a forehand which had been called long.

Top seed Djokovic survived a shoulder injury scare to reach the fourth round for the eighth time with a 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 win over Gilles Simon, his seventh successive victory over the Frenchman.

Djokovic, the 2011 champion, needed a medical timeout to receive treatment and take a painkiller after hurting his left shoulder in a spectacular diving attempt to reach a Simon drive in the sixth game of the third set on Centre Court.

But the Serb overcame the scare to set up a clash with French 14th seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga for a place in the quarter-finals.

Djokovic admitted he was shaken by his fall and finished the match in some discomfort, but the world number two hopes the damage isn't severe enough to impede his chances of continuing in the tournament.

"Yes it was a sharp pain when I fell. It was an awkward fall. I was just hoping nothing was going on bad with the joint," he said.

"There was no damage in the joint, so I could play a few games after that. The muscle was still quite sore because of the impact, so all in all I'm just glad to get through."

Djokovic has won 10 of his 11 meetings with the big-serving Tsonga, including in the 2011 Wimbledon semifinals and the quarter-finals at the 2012 Olympic Games, which were staged at the All England Club.

Tsonga made the last 16 by beating Jimmy Wang of Taiwan, 6-2, 6-2, 7-5.

Kevin Anderson, the 20th seed, defeated explosive Italian 16th seed Fabio Fognini 4-6, 6-4, 2-6, 6-2, 6-1 to become the first South African man to reach the Wimbledon fourth round for 14 years.

Former women's world number one Wozniacki reached the last 16 for the fourth time with a 6-3, 6-0 win over Croatian 16-year-old Ana Konjuh, the world number 189.

Belinda Bencic, the 17-year-old Swiss won her delayed second round tie, 6-4, 7-5 against America's Victoria Duval and next faces third-seeded Simona Halep who clinched a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 win over Ukrainian qualifier Lesia Tsurenko.

French Open runner-up Halep will be playing in the third round for the first time.

Shaw most expensive teenager

Joins MU for \$51m

AFP, London

England left-back Luke Shaw became the most expensive teenage footballer in history after joining Manchester United from Premier League rivals Southampton in a four-year deal worth a reported £30 million (51m, 38m euros).

That figure surpassed the £25.6m fee United paid Everton for Wayne Rooney in 2004.

"Manchester United is delighted to announce the signing of Luke Shaw from Southampton Football Club," a United statement said.

The 18-year-old Shaw, whose contract contains an option for a further year, signed for United on Friday.

His arrival at Old Trafford meant United had announced an estimated £60m of spending in two days after completing their first signing since Louis van Gaal, currently coaching the Netherlands at the World Cup, became their manager after midfielder Ander Herrera joined from Athletic Bilbao for a reported £28.5m on Thursday.

"I am thrilled and excited to be joining Manchester United," the teenager said after passing a medical in a statement on United's website.

"I have been at Southampton since I was eight years old and I would like to thank them and the fans for everything they have done for me," added Shaw, who made 67 appearances for the south coast club since his debut in 2012.

Chiellini finds ban excessive

THEGUARDIAN.COM



Giorgio Chiellini, the Italian player bitten by Luis Suarez, has called the Uruguayan's subsequent ban "excessive" and fears it will lead to the player becoming alienated.

FIFA has banned Suarez from all "football-related activities" for four months after the clash, ruling the striker out of the rest of the World Cup and the start of the domestic season.

The biting incident, the third in which Suarez has been involved in his career, has also led FIFA'S disciplinary committee to prevent the player from entering any football stadium during the ban or from training with either Liverpool or the Uruguay national squad. Suarez has also been banned for nine competitive interna-

WI on top in decider

REUTERS, Bridgetown

Kraig Brathwaite and Chris Gayle led West Indies to 32 without loss, a deficit of 261 runs, at the end of the first day in the third and deciding Test against New Zealand in Bridgetown, Barbados on Thursday.

Brathwaite finished on 11 while Gayle was 18 not out after almost being run out for a duck and then smashing a straight six.

SCORES IN BRIEF
 NEW ZEALAND: First innings 293 all out (Neesham 78, Taylor 45, Williamson 43, Craig 46 not out; Benn 5-93, Holder 4-24)
 WEST INDIES: First innings 32 without loss (Gayle 18 not out, Brathwaite 11 not out)

Battle lost

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 employers themselves to take the day off to cheer on the red, blue and white. ESPN went onto release commercials that provoke goosebumps no matter which team you support. As Major League Soccer started to gain its full momentum, more and more Americans are leaning towards the beautiful game. And if this World Cup is not enough for them to embrace 'soccer', then I am afraid nothing will ever be to convince them. Maybe if you throw in cheerleaders and halftime

ইন্টারনেট স্মার্ট কার্ড



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