

BOLT WEARS ARSENAL SHIRT

Usain Bolt has made no secret of his support for Manchester United but fans would have been puzzled to see him wearing an Arsenal shirt on Thursday morning. Fortunately for Red Devils supporters, the Jamaican sprinter was only donning the Gunners home kit as part of a bet. Bolt paid the price for United's 3-0 hammering by Arsene Wenger's side on Sunday after agreeing to a bet with Mexican television presenter Patty Lopez de la Cerda. The 29-year-old took to Instagram to post the video of him wearing the Arsenal kit alongside Lopez de la Cerda. **-MAIL ONLINE**



Blatter, Platini banned

Hayatou takes temporary reins of FIFA

AFP, Zurich

FIFA's ethics watchdog on Thursday suspended the two most powerful men in football, Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini, for 90 days in a sensational new blow to the sport's scandal-tainted governing body.

Secretary-general Jerome Valcke was also suspended for 90 days while South Korean tycoon Chung Mong-Joon, a candidate for the FIFA presidency along with Platini, was banned outright for six years.

While FIFA said the suspensions were "provisional", the action almost certainly signals the end of the reign of FIFA president Blatter and deals a major blow to UEFA leader Platini's hopes of taking over.

Issa Hayatou head of the Confederation of African Football, a Blatter ally, was put in charge of the multi-billion dollar body.

FIFA said Blatter, who has been its president since 1998, had been "relieved of all his duties" during the 90 days.

Blatter is under investigation by Swiss prosecutors for criminal mismanagement.

The four football powerbrokers "are banned from all football activities on a national and international level. The bans come into force immediately", a statement said.

Lawyers for Blatter said he was "disappointed" the ethics watchdog had failed to follow its own rules by not letting him give evidence.

"President Blatter looks forward to the opportunity to present evidence that will

demonstrate that he did not engage in any misconduct, criminal or otherwise," said a statement by Zurich lawyers Lorenz Erni, Erni Brun Forrer and US-based Richard Cullen.

Blatter and French football legend Platini have faced mounting pressure since Swiss prosecutors started their investigation on September 25.

Platini, who has run UEFA, has been named in the investigation because of a two million dollar

Platini must consider whether he "can maintain" his candidacy for FIFA.

The suspensions can be renewed for another 45 days when they run out in January, which would take the exclusion until just before the FIFA election to be held on February 26.

Chung, who was also fined 100,000 Swiss francs (\$100,000) would be automatically ruled out of the presidential race.

The scion of the Hyundai

Seven FIFA officials were detained at a Zurich hotel two days before Blatter was reelected for a fifth term on May 30.

As the storm grew, Blatter announced that he would stand down, but only when the election is held. Rivals have accused him since of seeking to cling to power.

Blatter said in an interview with a German magazine this week that he was determined to stay until February 26. "I am convinced that evil will come into the light and

FIFA has "flouted" its own rules.

Platini said he had still registered his official papers to be a candidate in the FIFA race on Thursday. The deadline is October 26.

Chung said on Monday at a London sports convention that he was the victim of a "smear" campaign by Blatter who he described as "a hypocrite and a liar".

He threatened legal action against Blatter for "embezzle-



SEPP BLATTER



MICHEL PLATINI



CHUNG MONG-JOON



JEROME VALCKE

payment he received in 2011. The Frenchman has denied any wrongdoing and demanded an inquiry into the circumstances of the investigation against him.

Platini registered his candidacy Thursday for the February 26 vote to find a successor to Blatter. But it will be up to an electoral commission to decide now whether he can stand, officials said.

German Football Federation Wolfgang Niersbach said Blatter should resign definitively and

family was found to have contravened rules while lobbying for South Korea's bid for the 2022 World Cup which was awarded to Qatar in a controversial 2010 vote.

Chung has threatened to take legal action over the ban.

FIFA's crisis has been mounting since May when US authorities issued charges against 14 FIFA officials and sports marketing executives over more than \$150 million in bribes given for broadcasting and marketing contracts.

good will triumph," he said.

Platini and Chung have said they are victims of a campaign, which they suspect comes from within FIFA, to derail their bids to become FIFA president.

Media across Europe had predicted that the 90-day suspensions would be made. Platini called it an "insidious" leak that appeared to come from an official FIFA source.

He said it "is essentially an attempt to damage my reputation" and that

ment" by not declaring his salary and also in case he was stopped from running in the election.

Prince Ali bin al Hussein, a former FIFA vice president from Jordan, and Zico, a former Brazilian footballer and sports minister, are also in the election.

Observers have predicted that the crisis could bring forward another candidate, with Tokyo Sexwale of South Africa widely touted.

Sexwale, a former associate of the late Nelson Mandela, is head

Jordan stun Socceroos

AGENCIES, Amman



Australia have succumbed to an inspired Jordan side 2-0 in Amman, losing their first World Cup qualifier on the road to the 2018 World Cup.

Hasan Abdel-Fattah's 47th minute penalty stunned the Socceroos before Hamza Al-Dardour sealed a famous victory for Jordan with six minutes remaining.

The result repeated Australia's defeat in the Jordanian capital during their previous qualifying campaign - and gives Jordan the top spot in Group B that also features Bangladesh, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan played out a 2-2 draw with Kyrgyzstan yesterday.

While the result is undoubtedly a setback to their qualifying hopes, Australia retain control of their destiny. The Socceroos have four matches remaining - including three at home and the other in Bangladesh the first group stage and four victories would secure passage.

Meanwhile, Iraq captain Younis Mahmoud rescued a point for Iraq with a last-ditch penalty as the former Asian champions drew 1-1 with Vietnam in Hanoi.

Palestine also needed a late equaliser as they drew 1-1 with Timor Leste in Group A, while North Korea dropped their first points in Group H when they were held to a goalless draw by the Philippines in Pyongyang.

In Dili, Timor Leste were on the verge of a famous win over Palestine, who are 40 places above them in the FIFA World Ranking, when Ramon Saro headed them ahead in the 54th minute.

However, Palestine salvaged a point when substitute Ahmed Abu Nahyeh hooked the ball in from close range in the second minute of stoppage time to keep them in third place in Group A behind leaders Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

North Korea's perfect start in Group H came to an end when they were surprisingly held 0-0 at home by the Philippines.

In other early matches on Thursday, Singapore downed Afghanistan 1-0 in Group E with a 72nd minute header by Khairul Amri, while goals by Hassan Maatouk and Abbas Atwi gave Lebanon a 2-0 win over Myanmar in a Group G game in Bangkok.

Maldives picked up their first points in Group C after withstanding a late fightback to win 4-3 at Bhutan.

Ahmed Nashid's opening goal and an Ali Ashfaq hat-trick gave the visitors a four-goal advantage before Bhutan reduced the deficit in the final five minutes.

A rocky start for Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

Country's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman got off to a moderate start in the Yeangder Tournament Players Championship after playing a par 72 in the first round at the Linkou International Golf and Country Club in Taipei yesterday.

Siddikur -- who had a good start with a three-under-par 69 on the opening day of the Mercuries Taiwan Masters and eventually finished seventh -- failed to continue last week's momentum as he shared the joint 48th position at the close of the first round.

The two-time Asian Tour champion played a bogey in the second hole, before bouncing back strongly and playing three successive birdies in the fourth, sixth and eighth holes. However, he played bogeys again in the 15th and 17th holes.

Lin Wen-Tang and Hung Chun-Kang of Taiwan shared the lead after playing five-under-par 67.

Keita out for 5 more weeks

AFP, Rome

AS Roma's Malian midfielder Seydou Keita, who has already been out of action for two weeks, faces another five weeks on the sidelines as he recovers from a right thigh injury, the club announced Wednesday.

"Tests revealed there has been significant progress in the healing but he will still be out for approximately five weeks from today (Wednesday)," the club said in a statement.

Keita, 35, has enjoyed spells at Marseille, Barcelona and Valencia, winning two Champions League titles, three Spanish championships and the French Cup in a glittering career.

Rooney to miss last two Eng qualifiers

AFP, Watford



England captain Wayne Rooney will miss his side's last two Euro 2016 qualifiers against Estonia and Lithuania due to an ankle injury, manager Roy Hodgson revealed on Thursday.

The striker, who last month became England's all-time leading goal-scorer, has missed three days of training after injuring himself during Manchester United's 3-0 defeat at Arsenal in the Premier League last Sunday.

In his absence, Chelsea centre-back Gary Cahill will captain Hodgson's side against Estonia at Wembley on Friday, with England having already qualified for next year's tournament in France after winning all of their eight Group E games to date.

"It's a disappointment for Wayne, of course," manager Hodgson told a press conference at England's team hotel in Watford, north of London.

"He's not the type of player who likes to miss a game, but unfortunately he received a

knock against Arsenal late in the game.

"We've been waiting for the ankle to settle down. It's settling down very well, but we don't want to risk him tomorrow (Friday).

"He's got lots of important Manchester United games ahead and I would be devastated if we pushed him out there and something happened to increase the problem with the ankle, so we've decided it's better if he doesn't play in this game."

Hodgson described the injury as "minor". Rooney, 29, will remain with the England squad this week, but Hodgson said that he will not travel to Lithuania for their final qualifier on Monday.

Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane, Leicester City's Jamie Vardy and Arsenal's Theo Walcott are competing to take Rooney's place up front against Estonia, but Liverpool's Danny Ings is a doubt with an ankle complaint.

Rooney eclipsed Charlton's 49-goal mark with a penalty in a 2-0 win at home to Switzerland and will be presented with the memento by the 1966 World Cup-winner before kick-off.

Messi to face tax fraud trial

AFP, Barcelona



Argentina and Barcelona star Lionel Messi and his father Jorge are to stand trial on three counts of tax fraud that could carry prison sentences, a Spanish court confirmed on Thursday.

In a court filing, the judge in charge of the case rejected a request by the public prosecutor to try only the footballer's father.

The pair were accused in 2013 of defrauding the taxman out of 4.16 million euros (\$4.69 million) in taxes related to Messi's image rights between 2007 and 2009 through the creation of fake companies in Belize and Uruguay.

No date has been set for the trial, which will take place in Vilanova i la Geltru, a town 50 kilometres (30 miles) south of Barcelona.

Prosecutors had asked for the case against the four-time World Player of the Year to be dropped as the alleged fraud was in their estimation carried out by his father, who has managed his son's affairs since he was a child.

They asked for Jorge Messi to be handed an 18-month prison sentence and a fine of half the defrauded amount. However, lawyers acting on behalf of the tax authorities pleaded for the player to also be tried and for both defendants to face a 22-month prison sentence.

Klopp set for Liverpool job

AFP, London

Jurgen Klopp agreed Thursday to become Liverpool's new manager and was expected at the club later in the day, British media said.

The English Premier League side have been looking for a new boss since Brendan Rodgers was sacked on Sunday. The former Borussia Dortmund coach had been the hot favourite from the start.

Sky television said Klopp, 48, had agreed to become manager. The Daily Mail newspaper said Klopp would sign a three year deal under which he would earn more than four million pounds (\$6.1 million) a year.

Several of Rodgers' backroom staff -- including Gary McAllister and Sean O'Driscoll -- left Liverpool on Thursday in anticipation of the new manager arriving.

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