

ALL SCORERS TO FEATURE ON FA CUP FINAL BALL

The names of 137 goalscorers from this season's FA Cup campaign will feature on the ball that will be used for Saturday's final between Manchester United and Chelsea on Saturday, the English Football Association (FA) said on Tuesday. United playmaker Alexis Sanchez and Chelsea winger Willian are among the names to be included as part of the FA's 'Ball for All' initiative to celebrate players from different divisions across the country that took part this season - the 137th edition of the competition. "Over 3,000 goals have been scored in this season's competition, from all levels of the football pyramid," FA's director of professional game relations Andy Ambler has said. "The 137 goalscorers from across the country are representative of all who have contributed to this season's competition." Liam Pullen, a player for Chipping Sodbury Town, scored the National League Step 6 side's first ever FA Cup goal this season and has also been named on the ball, which he will present ahead of kickoff at Wembley on Saturday. —REUTERS



(L-R) Germany assistant coaches Miroslav Klose, Thomas Schneider, head coach Joachim Loew, goalkeeping coach Andreas Kopke, assistant coach Marcus Sorg and team manager Oliver Bierhoff pose during a press conference at the German Football Museum in Dortmund yesterday.

'I want to take Italy back to the top'

AFP, Florence



New Italy coach Roberto Mancini on Tuesday said he wanted to restore pride in the national side six months after their shock failure to qualify for the World Cup.

"Not going to the World Cup is difficult for those who, like us, have always been cheering for the national team," Mancini told a press conference at the national training centre at Coverciano, near Florence.

"I feel the need to do something for the national team and think it's the right time for me. I want to build something for the years to come and bring Italy back to the top."

Italy have been without a permanent coach since Gian Piero Ventura was sacked after the four-time world champions failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1958.

Former Manchester City and Inter Milan coach Mancini signed a two-year deal on

His first match in charge will be a friendly on May 28 against Saudi Arabia in Switzerland.

Mancini said there would be "room for everyone" in his squad and that he planned to recall in-form Nice striker Mario Balotelli, whom he coached at Inter and Manchester City.

Balotelli has not played for his country since the 2014 World Cup.

"Even in difficult times, Italy can boast of having players of great quality. I will certainly also speak with Balotelli," said Mancini.

"He's a player that we want to see at the level he had during the Euro (2012 when Italy reached the final)."

He also said he would talk to recently retired Italy great Andrea Pirlo about joining his coaching setup.

In Mancini, Italy have a coach with a solid track record as a title-winner, with 13 trophies in club football.

He led Manchester City to their first English league title in 44 years in 2012, and won three Serie A crowns with Inter. He also won the Italian Cup with Inter, Fiorentina and Lazio.

FIFA WORLD CUP 2018

AFP, Undated

NEUER IN, GOETZE OUT

Injured Manuel Neuer was named in Germany's extended 27-man World Cup squad on Tuesday, but there was no place for Brazil 2014 winner Mario Goetze.

Neuer, Germany's captain and goalkeeper, has not played since September and still has to prove his fitness at a fortnight-long training camp in northern Italy, which starts next week.

The 32-year-old Bayern Munich star is one of four goalkeepers named by head coach Joachim Loew, who will have to cut four names when the final 23-man squad is submitted for the World Cup finals, which start on June 14 in Russia.

"Manuel is getting back into full training this week at Bayern Munich, that assures us that he can tolerate the full load in the training camp," explained Loew.

"Then we want to get a full idea, talk to him frankly and honestly, asking 'is it possible to play at the World Cup?'"

There is no place in Loew's squad for Goetze, who scored the winning goal in the 2014 World Cup finals, after an erratic season at Borussia Dortmund.

However, Loew pulled a surprise by handing a first call-up to Freiburg striker Nils Petersen, 29, the top-scoring German in the Bundesliga this season with 15 goals.

Yet there is no place for striker Sandro Wagner, Robert Lewandowski's back-up at Bayern Munich, who helped

Germany win the Confederations Cup in Russia last year.

Loew has also selected Mesut Ozil and Ilkay Gundogan despite the pair landing in hot water with the German FA over the weekend after the Premier League stars posed for pictures with Turkey President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Ozil is in the squad despite suffering from a back injury while Bayern Munich defender Jerome Boateng has also been called up even though he is currently sidelined by a groin injury.

Germany open their Russia 2018 campaign against Mexico in Moscow on June 17, the defending champions also facing South Korea and Sweden in Group F.

ARGENTINA INCLUDE ICARDI, DYBALA

Inter Milan striker Mauro Icardi and Juventus playmaker Paulo Dybala were given a World Cup boost after being included in a 35-man pre-selection squad for Russia 2018 on Monday.

Argentina coach Jorge Sampaoli included most of his big stars including Lionel Messi, Sergio Aguero and Angel Di Maria and will whittle his choice down to 23 names for May 21 when he will officially announce his 23-man travelling party.

Argentina are in Group B, which includes Iceland, Nigeria and Croatia.

LOEW EXTENDS CONTRACT UNTIL 2022

Joachim Loew has extended his contract as Germany head coach until

2022, the German FA (DFB) announced on Tuesday.

In the post since 2006, Loew, 58, who steered Germany to their 2014 World Cup triumph, has signed a two-year extension to take him through to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

NO COENTRAO, RENATO IN PORTUGAL SQUAD

Fabio Coentrao and Renato Sanches were missing from Portugal's 35-strong pre-World Cup squad named Tuesday by coach Fernando Santos.

The squad, which will be cut to 23 before the June 14-July 15 tournament in Russia, included Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo and other mainstays of the team that won Euro 2016, such as Pepe, William Carvalho, Joao Moutinho, Nani and Ricardo Quaresma.

Sanches, who became the youngest player to lift the Euro title, has endured a disappointing season, the 20-year-old loaned to Swansea, who were relegated from the English Premier League, from Bayern Munich.

Coentrao, one of the revelations of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and currently on loan at Sporting from Real Madrid, had ruled himself out of selection on Monday, saying he had had an "exhausting" season.

Portugal will face Spain, Morocco and Iran in Group B, and will play warm-up matches against Tunisia, Belgium and Algeria.

China or Japan for Iniesta?

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona captain Andres Iniesta says he will decide "next week" whether to continue his decorated career in either China or Japan.

The 34-year-old Barca icon is bringing the curtain down on his two-decade stay with the Spanish champions, with his last game for the club he joined at the age of 12 coming on Sunday.

"There are two scenarios, China or Japan, and each has its advantages," he told Spanish radio Onda Cero overnight Monday.

"There are some minor details to be sorted out, we're weighing everything up and will pick which one we decide is the best option."

The Spanish midfielder added: "Next week, when everything is over, we'll decide. Then, there's the World Cup, I want to get this resolved so that I can focus."

"One option is more advanced than the other..."

Last week both China's Chongqing Lifan and Japan's Vissel Kobe denied making big money moves for the Spanish star.

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Neymar spearheads Brazil's World Cup bid

Striker Neymar, who hasn't played since injury in February, was named as the star of a Brazilian team that coach Tite said has a good chance of winning the World Cup in Russia.

'Sorrow to happiness' - Afghans hope to lift spirits

Afghanistan's cricketers hope to lift a nation pounded by decades of conflict when they proudly take their place as only the 12th Test nation next month. The match from June 14 against India in Bangalore will cap one of the great sporting fairy tales after players from the war-torn nation rose from refugee camps to join cricket's elite.

Ex-Villa defender dies in car crash

Former Aston Villa and Trinidad and Tobago defender Jloyd Samuel was killed in a car crash in England, the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association (TTFA) said in a statement. The 37-year-old made close to 200 appearances for Villa.

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