

## AROUND THE WORLD

### FRANCE • Nantes reigns in Brittany

Defending champion Nantes scraped through to the French Cup quarterfinals with a 5-3 win over Second Division Gueugnon on penalties following a 0-0 tie.

France under-21 goalkeeper Mickael Landreau saved Gueugnon's fourth penalty to decide the Brittany derby.

Defender Jean-Marc Chanelet then converted Nantes' fifth penalty to eliminate unlucky Gueugnon, which beat 10-time champion Marseille in the second round.

Fourth Division Calais upset Second Division Cannes, the winner in 1932, on penalties following their 1-1 draw.

Cannes looked to have won the match when it broke the deadlock two minutes from the end of overtime through midfielder Sebastien Chabaud.

But Calais defender Christophe Hogard, victimized on the Cannes goal, equalized in the final minute, and goalkeeper Cedric Schille saved two penalties.

Calais is only the 13th amateur team to reach the quarterfinals since 1945.

### NETHERLANDS • Neeskens to join NEC

Johan Neeskens will quit his job as the Dutch national team assistant coach after Euro 2000 to become head coach of struggling First Division club NEC.

He will succeed Ron De Groot, who has been in the job only since the end of November.

Neeskens, who was also an assistant of Guus Hiddink during the 1998 World Cup in France, played 49 times for the Dutch national team, including World Cup final appearances in 1974 and 1978.

He spent most of his playing career alongside Johan Cruyff at Ajax and Barcelona.

He joined the NASL's New York Cosmos in 1979 and remained with them until their last season in 1984.

He was one of the first former internationals to complete the Netherlands' fast-track coaching qualification program.

He was passed over for the younger Frank Rijkaard as the coach of the Dutch national team for Euro 2000.



REUTERS/PHOTO

ABOUT THE ONLY RUSSIANS YOU'LL FIND IN CHECHNYA THESE DAYS ARE SOLDIERS (HERE PATROLLING IN THE MOUNTAINS).

### RUSSIA • Chechen team snubbed

The Russian soccer federation has rejected an application for a Chechen team to join its league.

"We have discussed it with the Russian government and sports ministry officials and decided that such a plan would be impossible to implement at this time," said Alexander Tukmanov, executive director of the Russian soccer federation. "In fact, who would want to go there to play while the war is still going on? Besides, we have rules stating that any team wishing to participate in the professional league must first qualify through local amateur competitions."

A team from Chechnya's Naursky district asked the Russian soccer league for permission to enter one of the six zones of the Second Division covering the North Caucasus region.

"We thought they could have registered us as an exception to the rule," a Chechen official said. "Our participation would have given our people a chance to return to peaceful lives and would have helped us restore friendly relations with our neighbors."

Chechnya's Terek Grozny competed in the Russian First Division until the war began in 1994.

Russia's Premier Division will have two clubs from the region for the first time this season.

Dagestan's Anji Makhachkala, which borders Chechnya, won promotion to the top flight last year and will join 1995 Russian champion Alania Vladikavkaz.

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### SPAIN • Coruna sinks on road

**First Division leader Deportivo Coruna's troubles on the road continued when it fell to Malaga, 1-0, and saw its lead over second-place Alaves reduced to four points.**

Deportivo, which had fallen, 5-1, in the UEFA Cup at Arsenal three days earlier, has not won on the road in league play since December.

Javier Irureta's team was undone by a Dario Silva strike after three minutes. Despite the bulk of the possession thereafter, it failed to get back into the game.

Irureta was nevertheless impressed by the way his team continued to fight for the draw and looked forward to better results away from home in the near future.

"I was pleased with the effort we put in," he said. "We're still the league leaders, and if we play like that away from home for the rest of the season, we'll win other games."

### SWITZERLAND • Players protest pick

**The Swiss Soccer Federation (ASF) has named Argentine Enzo Trossero as coach of the Swiss national team, ignoring protests from several players.**

Trossero, who guided Sion to the Swiss championship in 1992, will take over the post left vacant by Frenchman Gilbert Gress after completing his current contract with Independiente of Buenos Aires this summer.

The announcement of Trossero's appointment was greeted with dismay by several players, including captain Ciro Sforza, who had been backing interim coach Hanspeter Zaugg.

Earlier, Sforza had told the Swiss press, "Why look further when you have the answer at your door?"

Zaugg will remain in an interim role for Swiss friendlies against Norway in March and Germany in April.

The ASF had conducted an exhaustive search for a replacement for Gress after the two parties could not agree on a new contract.



ENRIQUE MARCARIANI/REUTERS

**ENZO TROSSERO (INSTRUCTING INDEPENDIENTE'S SEBASTIAN PENA) WILL LEAVE ARGENTINA TO BECOME THE NEW SWISS BOSS ON JULY 1.**

Grasshoppers coach Roy Hodgson, who guided Switzerland to the 1994 World Cup finals, and former Tottenham Hotspur manager Christian Gross, now back in Switzerland coaching Basle, were rumored to be among the leading candidates for the position. Both flatly turned down the job.

The 47-year-old Trossero failed miserably during his most recent stint at Lugano.

The fact that he doesn't speak German is viewed as a significant negative in a country with a strong German-language tabloid press.

Trossero becomes the fifth coach in five years to coach the Swiss, who failed to qualify for either the 1998 World Cup or Euro 2000 finals.

### MEXICO • Tigres loses nine points

**Tigres has been ordered to replay three First Division matches after irregularities were found in the transfer of Brazilian striker Donizete.**

The Mexican soccer federation declared void Tigres' matches against Atlante, Toluca and Monterrey, all of which it won.

Donizete has now been cleared to play for Tigres after joining the Monterrey-based club from Vasco da Gama.

It beat Cruz Azul, 3-2, on a pair of goals by Mexican international striker Luis Hernandez, leaving it third in Group 4 in the *Torneo Verano* but with three games in hand over its rivals.

Meanwhile, *Torneo Invierno* champion Pachuca continued its poor start. A 0-0 draw at Puebla left it last in Group 4 with seven points in eight games.

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**BOLIVIA • Dream start for Aragones**

**Bolivia gave new coach Carlos Aragones a perfect debut on March 5 by hammering hapless Haiti, 9-2, in a friendly international.**

Roger Suarez scored four goals, including a first-half hat trick that included two in the first seven minutes, as the South Americans ran wild.

Joaquin Botero scored a hat trick in less than 25 minutes during the second half, and Julio Cesar Baldivieso and Marcelo Carvallo helped themselves to a goal each.

Haiti was unable to cope with the thin air of La Paz and had a nightmare warmup for a World Cup qualifier at home against Dominica on March 11.

Aragones replaced Argentine Hector Veira, who lasted less than one year in the job.

**BRAZIL • Lopes gone after three years**

**Vasco da Gama has sacked coach Antonio Lopes, the man who led the Rio club to the greatest moment in its history.**

His three-year reign ended on March 2 amid a storm of internal discontent.

Vasco director Eurico Miranda announced the dismissal of the former police detective a day after watching his team trounced, 4-0, by Palmeiras in the second leg of the season-opening Rio-Sao Paulo tournament final.

Lopes took over Vasco, one of Brazil's most popular clubs, in October 1996.

EDMUNDO  
(LEFT) FIGHTS  
FOR THE BALL  
WITH  
PALMEIRAS'  
ANGEL IN THE  
RIO-SAO  
PAULO CUP  
FINAL,  
ANTONIO  
LOPES' LAST  
GAME WITH  
VASCO DA  
GAMA.



PAULO WHITAKER/REUTERS

His stint is an eternity in the volatile world of Brazilian soccer coaching, where staying at the same club for more than six months can be considered an achievement.

Under Lopes, Vasco won the Brazilian championship in 1997, then claimed the biggest title in its history when it won the Libertadores Cup, the South American club championship, eight months later.

That turned out to be the high point of Lopes' reign.

Disappointment followed at the end of 1998 when Vasco was beaten by Real Madrid in the Toyota Cup in Tokyo.

Vasco lost another major match in January when, despite home advantage, it fell to Brazilian rival Corinthians on penalties in the final of the inaugural World Club championship.

By then, the seeds of discontent had already been sown.

Last December, Vasco signed former World Cup hero Romario, even though he was not — and still is not — on speaking terms with club captain Edmundo.

Lopes also has had continual problems with gifted midfielder Felipe, criticized by the media for some apathetic performances.

**AUSTRALIA • Socceroos eye new home**

**Australian national team coach Frank Farina is hoping to use Britain as his team's base as a step toward playing more matches in Europe.**

The proposal calls for the Socceroos to stage future "home" games in England to reduce the traveling time and costs for their European-based players.

Farina raised the prospect of the Socceroos playing in England because the bulk of the team's top players, including Harry Kewell (Leeds United), Mark Bosnich (Manchester United) and Mark Viduka (Glasgow Celtic), play in Britain.

Australia rarely makes a profit on its home matches because of the cost of flying the players back from Europe to play in front of relatively small crowds.

The Socceroos' strong team and European style make them attractive sparring partners for leading European teams.