

Tedesco named Belgium coach

Domenico Tedesco wants 'happy, motivated' Belgium after World Cup flop

AFP | Brussels

Domenico Tedesco said he wants to make Belgium's players "happy and motivated" after taking over as head coach on Wednesday.

The Belgian football federation (RBFA) said the 37-year-old Tedesco would succeed Roberto Martinez, who stepped down after Belgium failed to qualify for the knockout stage at the 2022 World Cup.

The Belgians were hampered by reported disagreements within the squad in Qatar as the "golden generation" scored only one goal in three games.

Star midfielder Kevin De Bruyne often cut a forlorn figure and said in an interview during the tournament that the team were "too old" to win the World Cup.

"De Bruyne was not smiling at the World Cup? If you say so, then it's clear that we have to talk with the players to make



Domenico Tedesco celebrates after a match (file photo)

them happy, but above all motivated," Tedesco told a press conference on Wednesday.

Former captain Eden Hazard retired from international football following the group-stage exit and key defenders Toby Alderweireld and Jan Vertonghen are 33 and 35 years old respec-

tively. "For me, age is not an important issue. What the players are able to do on the pitch is what interests me," added Tedesco.

The appointment had been expected since late January. The delay led to suspicion that Tedesco was considering the

” For me it is a great honour to be the new head coach of Belgium. I'm really looking forward to the task and I'm extremely motivated. I had a very good feeling right from the first conversation

DOMENICO TEDESCO

vacant Hoffenheim job. Barely 15 minutes after the RBFA announcement, the Bundesliga club tweeted they had hired Pellegrino Matarazzo.

The closest to a title a Belgium squad containing De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku, Thibaut Courtois, Vertonghen and Hazard, among others, came under Martinez was third place at the 2018 World Cup.

Martinez was appointed Por-



tugal coach on January 9.

Belgium were linked with an impressive list of potential candidates, including former assistant Thierry Henry, who the players reportedly supported but who did not apply.

Tedesco does not match the criteria laid out by the RBFA in an

advertisement on their website in December when they said they were seeking a coach with "the necessary international experience at top level" who was a "serial winner".

Former Belgium and Schalke coach Marc Wilmots was less than impressed when Tedesco was first linked with the job.

"He is a coach/computer. You have a suit and a laptop and it worked well. He finished second in the championship with Schalke, which is quite remarkable," Wilmots told Belgian television at the end of January.

"Be careful, he is a club coach. National teams are not the same thing. He won't have time to prepare his matches as he does at the club."

Tedesco attempted to play down Wilmots' comments.

"That's not the most important thing for me, compared to the human relationship with the players. I don't sleep with my laptop," he said.

Fantastic Friday at BIC set with Batelco Fitness on Track and Orange Media Open Track

TDT | Manama

A fantastic, fun-filled Friday awaits the public at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) with two of the most popular activities on offer at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East".

Fitness enthusiasts will first be able to get a workout in as BIC hosts the latest edition of the Batelco Fitness on Track in the morning.

Then, from the late afternoon and all through the evening, the Orange Media Open Track will be taking place, giving motor racing lovers a chance to satisfy their need for speed.

Both events are among the most highly subscribed at BIC and those interested in joining are advised to book in advance to secure their participation. This can be done on bahraingp.com or by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

Runners and cyclists will get an early start to the weekend with the activity taking place between 6am and 10am.

The running and cycling will take place on separate track layouts. Runners and walkers will be utilising the 2.550-kilometre Inner Track, while cyclists will be able to ride their bikes along BIC's 3.543-kilometre Outer cir-



Participants ride their bicycles on track at BIC (file photo)

cuit, with a dedicated area for children's cycling.

As in every Batelco Fitness on Track activity, the turnout has been tremendous from the local community; therefore, those interested in participating are advised to book online in advance on BIC's official website bahraingp.com or by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

All who register must pay upon booking. The cost to take part is BD2 for cyclists and BD1 for runners. Those under the age of 12 can participate for free if accompanied by a paying adult.

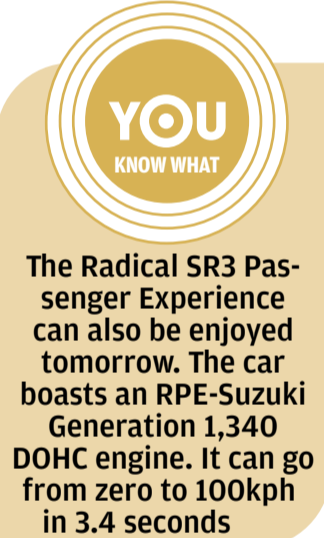
Meanwhile, the Orange Media Open Track later tomorrow will see participants explore the lim-

its of their cars or motorbikes within a safe, controlled and fantastically lit setting.

The activity will be held between 11am and 6pm, and a most memorable experience of taking on BIC's 5.412-kilometre Grand Prix circuit—the same raced on by Formula 1's top stars each year—can be enjoyed.

The timing is allowed for those taking part for the full day to enjoy their drive in various conditions, including under daylight conditions, at twilight as the sun sets on the desert race track, and at night under BIC's bright, state-of-the-art floodlights.

The cost to take part is BD115.500 for the full night and BD82.500 for half the evening.



A single session costs BD44. Customers who pre-book their slots can benefit from reduced rates. The full night would be just BD99, a half night BD71.500, and a single session at BD33.

In addition to the Orange Media Open Track, the Radical SR3 Passenger Experience can also be enjoyed tomorrow. This costs BD38.500. The Radical SR3 car boasts an RPE-Suzuki Generation 1,340 DOHC engine. It can go from zero to 100kph in 3.4 seconds.

For more information, visit bahraingp.com or call +973-17450000.

Ten Hag to keep faith with Martial, Weghorst



Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag shakes hands with Wout Weghorst after he was substituted (file photo)

AFP | London

Erik ten Hag insists he will keep faith with Anthony Martial and Wout Weghorst as the Manchester United forwards struggle with fitness and form problems.

Martial is sidelined by the latest in a long line of injuries, with a hip issue set to keep him out of United's clash with bitter rivals Leeds at Old Trafford yesterday.

The French striker has made only 14 appearances in all competitions this season and is yet to play a full game.

Martial spent the second half of last season on loan at Sevilla but failed to impress, with injuries once again a problem.

Yet United boss Ten Hag remains a fan of the 27-year-old and wants to give him another chance to prove his worth.

Weghorst is among those trying to make an impact in Martial's absence, but the Netherlands targetman has scored only one goal in six appearances since signing on loan from Burnley last month

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ERIK TEN HAG

"He is not always available, but also I see the other side when he is available. He was never 100 per cent this season but he had a big impact every time he is available, even when he is at 80, 85, 90 per cent," Ten Hag told reporters.

"So we do everything and Anthony Martial is doing everything. I think Anthony Martial is the player who has spent the most hours at Carrington this season, to recover, to get back, it is really a pity for him."

Weghorst is among those trying to make an impact in Martial's absence, but the Netherlands targetman has scored only one goal in six appearances since signing on loan from Burnley last month.

Venus 'overwhelmed' by hamstring injury, preparing for rehab grind

Reuters | New York

Seven-times Grand Slam champion Venus Williams faces a long spell on the sidelines due to a hamstring injury that ended her hopes of playing in last month's Australian Open but the 42-year-old is determined to get back on court at some point.

Williams was set to play in her 22nd Australian Open after being given a wildcard but the twice finalist sustained the injury while preparing at the Auckland Classic.



Venus Williams

"To be honest, I was super overwhelmed by the injury," Williams said on her YouTube channel. "I've been injured a

” This is the kind of injury that you have to let it rest a bit before you can start to do serious rehab ... You have to walk before you run and I'm starting to walk pretty good. Hopefully, I'll be running soon, but for now, I'll not be playing tennis

VENUS WILLIAMS

long time now and I couldn't believe I had to go back to rehab.

"After about a week, I started setting up my doctors appointments and started thinking about what was next for me and trying to really get a handle on how much time it'll take for me to get back.

"This is the kind of injury that you have to let it rest a bit before you can start to do serious rehab ... You have to walk before you run and I'm starting to walk pretty good. Hopefully, I'll be running soon, but for now, I'll not be playing tennis."