

Ramsey backs Wales to prosper in post-Bale era



Wales' Gareth Bale and Aaron Ramsey celebrate a goal (file photo)

AFP | London

Aaron Ramsey believes a new generation of Wales players can forge their own success after Gareth Bale's retirement.

Midfielder Ramsey is the new national captain, replacing former Real Madrid and Tottenham forward Bale, who called time on his career in January.

Bale, Wales' record goal-scorer and most-capped player, was not the only senior star to quit international football after the World Cup in Qatar.

Chris Gunter, Joe Allen and Jonny Williams also retired from Wales duty after a golden era that included a run to the Euro 2016 semi-finals.

Wales manager Rob Page is ushering in a new era and Ramsey is confident there are enough emerging youngsters to keep his country in contention during the Euro 2024 qualifying campaign.

Bahrain through to Asian beach soccer quarters

Kingdom's national team advance despite losing final preliminary round game to tournament hosts Thailand

● **Tanandon Praracha, Watchara Lepajit score for Thailand in victory**

● **Bahrain to next face Iran in knockout quarter-final, set for tomorrow**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain secured their tickets to the quarter-finals of the 2023 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup despite losing 0-2 yesterday to hosts Thailand in their concluding match of the tournament's preliminary round.

On target for the home team were Tanandon Praracha in the 20th minute, and then Watchara Lepajit fired in the Thais' second goal a minute from full time.

To add to the Bahrainis' woes, skipper Rashed Jamal was sent off in the 35th minute.

The nationals suffered their



Bahrain's Abdulla Abdullatif battles to keep possession against Thailand's Komkrit Nanan

first setback of the competition with the result but still made it through to the next phase as runners-up in Group A.

They finished behind the Thais, who had a superior goal difference, with both sides finishing on six points apiece.

Saudi Arabia were third in

their pool while Afghanistan last. The Saudis beat their Afghan rivals 4-2 on penalties in yesterday's other Group A fixture. The match was tied at 4-4 after extra-time.

Bahrain now move on to face Iran in the round of eight, while Thailand take on the UAE. Both

YOU KNOW WHAT

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The other two quarter-final games will be determined today after the conclusion of the Group C and Group D contests. Japan currently lead China, Lebanon and Indonesia on the Group C table while Oman top Group D ahead of Kuwait, Palestine and Kyrgyzstan.

Those quarters matches will be held on Thursday.

The semi-finals then follow on Saturday and both the gold and bronze medal games on Sunday, the concluding day of the championship.

Bahrain are one of 16 teams competing in the continent's premier beach soccer tournament, which has been organised and is being run by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

It also acts as a qualification competition for the 2023 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup, with the two finalists set to book their tickets to the global championship, along with the UAE, who qualified automatically as hosts. If the UAE are in the final, the bronze-medallists will make it through.

New Zealand demolish Sri Lanka to sweep Test series

AFP | Wellington

New Zealand claimed victory against Sri Lanka by an innings and 58 runs yesterday to secure a 2-0 Test series whitewash despite a late fightback from the visitors.

Sri Lanka notched just 164 in their first innings and were asked to follow on after the Black Caps declared at 580 in Wellington. They were then bowled out for 358.

"It was nice to get the win finished off, especially as the weather forecast wasn't great, which is part of the reason why we asked for the follow on," said New Zealand captain Tim Southee.

"It's been a pleasing few weeks in the whites with a number of guys stepping up at different times," he added with New Zealand on three straight Test wins including last month's thrilling victory over England to level that series 1-1.

New Zealand stuck to their task after Dhananjaya de Silva launched a fightback yesterday, passing 3,000 Test runs before being caught on 98, missing a



New Zealand's Blair Tickner celebrates with the teammates after the dismissal of Sri Lanka batter Dinesh Chandimal

“Losing the toss and being asked to bat and being able to put a score on the board was very pleasing to see, and set up the performance the bowlers produced over the last two days”

NEW ZEALAND CAPTAIN TIM SOUTHEE

10th Test century.

The home seamers had already sniffed victory when they broke his 76-run partnership with debutant wicketkeeper Nishan Madushka, who was caught just before the tea break.

The loss of de Silva signalled the end of the resistance -- Sri Lanka lost their last three wickets for 40 runs as the tailenders were picked off.

BETTER YOU KNOW

New Zealand came into the fourth day in a commanding position: Sri Lanka was 113-2 when play began, still 303 runs behind, and New Zealand found itself in a race to complete the win against the possibility of a rained-out final day

Southee and New Zealand seamer Blair Tickner did most of the damage with three wickets apiece.

After Sri Lanka resumed the day on 113-2, New Zealand's pace attack offered no respite in the first over of yesterday as Matt Henry's delivery saw Kane Williamson catch Kusal Mendis on 50.

Bangladesh-Ireland ODI washed out after record innings



Ground staff cover the pitch with plastic sheets

AFP | Sylhet

The second one-day international between Bangladesh and Ireland was called off due to rain in Sylhet yesterday after the home side posted their highest-ever ODI total.

The rain prevented Ireland from starting their innings after the hosts reached 349-6 thanks to Mushfiqur Rahim's century, the fastest ODI ton by a Bangladeshi batsman.

Match officials called the game off shortly after 8:30 pm (2030 GMT) with no prospect of the weather improving at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

Bangladesh, fresh from beating England 3-0 in T20s, are 1-0 up in the series with one match remaining on Thursday.

Mushfiqur was unbeaten on 100 off just 60 balls, while Najmul Hossain and Liton Das added 73 and 70 runs respectively.

YOU KNOW WHAT

The matches are useful practice on South Asian pitches for Ireland ahead of the ODI World Cup in India later this year, for which they are yet to qualify

This helped the hosts break their record of 338-8 set in only the previous match, which they won by 183 runs.

Sent in to bat first, Bangladesh began cautiously in slightly overcast conditions before Liton and skipper Tamim Iqbal grew in confidence to put on 42 runs.

Italy want to 'do well' in Euro qualifier for the late Vialli, Mancini says

TDT | Manama

European champions Italy want to "do well" against England in their first Euro 2024 qualifier as a tribute to late former striker Gianluca Vialli, coach Roberto Mancini said



Gianluca Vialli

yesterday.

Vialli, who died in January at the age of 58 following a long battle with pancreatic cancer, was Mancini's best friend and long-time strike partner in their playing days at Sampdoria in the 1980s and 1990s.

The former Juventus, Chelsea and Italy striker played a significant role in Italy's European Championship title-winning campaign in 2021, assisting Mancini, despite having been diagnosed in 2017.