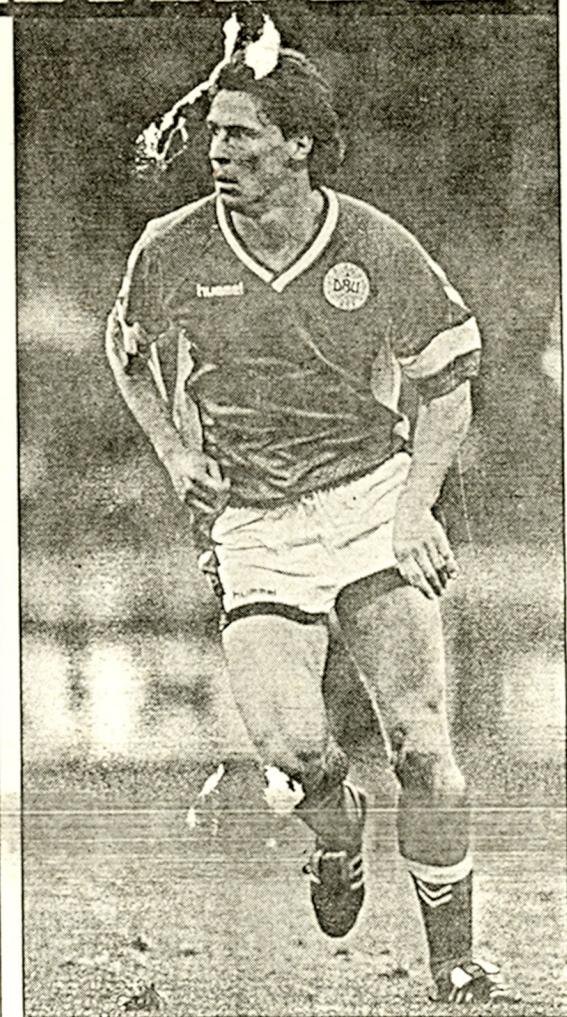


DYNAMITE



Left: Brian Laudrup has been involved in two costly moves although he's only 21. Above: Jan Bartram is the third player to call a halt.

Moller Nielsen also is hampered by his links to the old regime. Following Piontek was bad enough but as an insider he does not even have the benefit of a honeymoon period, and moving up from No. 2 to No. 1 is already fraught with problems in soccer management.

His lame duck leadership is perhaps illustrated by his reaction to the Laudrup rebellion: "I have told them they will be welcome back in the international squad if they change their minds. But they will have to come and ask. I won't be chasing them."

"Brian Laudrup has said I held a team meeting before the Yugoslavia game without him, but that's not true." The coach was entitled to a little more anger.

Nevertheless, there is much public sympathy for Moller Nielsen, and his job seems safe at present. The obvious contender to take over is former national team skipper Morten Olsen, who has had such success in

his first season of management at Brondby. Olsen believes it is far too early for him to think about such a step.

"At international level there are only a few matches a season and it is very difficult to keep a team's spirit and tactics. You need a lot of experience for this. Of course, if it happened in the future I would be very proud."

Candidate

One of Moller Nielsen's biggest problems is that he has no natural international leader on the pitch in the way that Morten Olsen was Piontek's right-hand man out on the park.

Lars Olsen is a fine player, but lacks authority. Goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel is one candidate to succeed as national team captain, but the obvious player they all respect for achievement is ... Michael Laudrup.

The talent certainly still exists for

Denmark to have a fine national outfit again. Schmeichel is world-class, while Jan Heintze, Flemming Povlsen, Kent Nielsen and John Jensen are good international players. But the Laudrup brothers provide the explosive spark, and can change a match in an instant of magic.

Striker Lars Elstrup, having a fine season with Luton in England, would benefit from the absence of the younger Laudrup.

But Elstrup said: "The success of the national team is more important than individuals."

Competition

"If I get the chance to have a regular place in the side that would be my privilege. But I would rather do that by winning my place in competition with all our best players. It cannot be good for Danish football to lose both Michael and Brian. Their talent is unquestioned."

"I'm not sure what is really behind their actions and their conflict with Richard Moller Nielsen. I hope it could be sorted out for the benefit of everybody."

That is the honest view of every Danish fan. And how ironic it is that while the once-devastating national side have fallen into disarray, there is finally a Danish club side, Brondby, among the best in Europe.

The Brondby managed by Morten Olsen. The Brondby who gave Michael and Brian Laudrup their first successes in soccer.

BOOKS

THE ULTIMATE World Cup statistics book has arrived. It's not English, German, French or Italian. Surprisingly, perhaps, it is in Polish. But such is the clarity of the statistical organisation that non-Poles need not feel deterred.

The Encyklopedia Piłkarskich (Mistrzostw Świata (or Encyklopedia of the World Cup) has been advertised in the Shop Window pages of this magazine and anyone wondering about the £25 direct sale price need not worry.

Statistician Andrzej Górzewski is a Katowice-born sports journalist who has taken endless pains to check his facts. That includes involving an army of friends and contacts around the world even obtaining birth and death certificates to nail the necessary information.

Each World Cup finals tournament has its chapter with all team line-ups, attendances, goal times, referees and substitution times. Even the coaching staffs of the finalist nations are listed.

The second section of the book is an alphabetical, biographical index of everyone who has taken part in the finals — players, managers and referees. It all adds up to a unique work.

The present edition of the book does not, fairly obviously considering the time necessary for the depth of research, include the 1990 World Cup. But we understand that will come in a later edition — as long as the present version attains the success it deserves.

Also on the statistical side, a strong recommendation too for the Italian publication *Dizionario del Calcio*. This is an offshoot from the *Gazzetta dello Sport*, the daily sports "pink" which provides unrivalled coverage of the Italian game.

The *Dizionario* provides biographical details for the world's game personalities, then deals with countries and leading clubs in A-Z order. The records section is worldwide and comprehensive. Copies can be obtained from the Rizzoli publishing house in Milan or, probably more conveniently, from Stig Forsingdal (another Shop Window regular in Luxembourg).

Gem

One further easily-assimilated statistical gem obtainable through Stig Forsingdal is the *Centenario do Futebol Portugues*, a facts and figures review of the history of Portuguese football. Another one for addicts.

Similarly excellent value — as ever — from Holland is *Voetbal 1990*, a sort of Dutch Rothmans and published as an offshoot of the weekly magazine, *Voetbal International*. Squads, internationals, transfers, appearances and goals — you name it, you'll find it.

Last but by no means least on the statistical front is the European Division One Clubs volume — a desktop-publishing production of loose-leaf sheets from Hardy Grune (Hagenweg 37, 3400 Göttingen, Germany). It is, simply, a rundown on all the clubs to have competed at first division level in Europe — plus all their odd name changes which accompanied them.

Back to the World Cup theme. The World Cup by Andrew Godsell (Nimrod Press) is a 563-page historical tome about you-know-what updated to include Italia '90. Unfortunately undermining the credibility of the book is the author's boast that this is the "first-ever full history of the World Cup." Where has he been all these years?

Personality corner provides Gazza — A Biography (by Robin McGibbon, Penguin Books), Scotland's For Me (by Andy Goram and Simon Pia; Sportsprint) and, in a class way out on its own, Trautmann — the biography of the former Manchester City goalkeeper, by Alan Rowlands (Breedon Books). Now this is a book of which the author should be proud! A great human story, painstakingly researched and honestly told.

* All Played Out by Pete Davies was fully considered last month in these pages by Brian Givillie. It is mentioned here just as a warning that some of the language contained within the book may not be considered particularly edifying — so think carefully before you buy as a present for someone else!

JONATHAN SHALLARD