

doesn't want the dispute with Hegerberg to leave a cloud over the Norwegian team but was eager to stress she has "not given up" on the country's star player. # "We need to try to have a confidential relationship and just talk directly to each other so we can have common ground and maybe have her back after the World Cup," Klaveness said in a phone interview with the AP. "That's where we are now." # And so, the best player in women's soccer won't be gracing the biggest tournament in women's soccer. It's a black eye for FIFA -- the organizer of the World Cup -- considering Hegerberg won the Ballon d'Or last year and stands alongside Lionel Messi, a five-time winner of the men's award, as the current icons of the sport. # She is putting up Messi-like scoring numbers, too. # Thanks to her hat trick for Lyon in its 4-1 win over Barcelona in the Women's Champions League final, she has 44 goals in 46 appearances in that competition. In domestic games, she has 211 goals in 208 games. # Her goal tally for Norway -- 38 in 66 appearances -- is also extraordinary, considering she stopped playing for the team at the age of 21. # That Hegerberg saw fit to front a campaign by UEFA entitled "Time for Action" that was launched a month before the World Cup brought further exposure to the fight for greater equality. The United States women's team, in particular, has been at the forefront of that. # American players have filed a federal discrimination lawsuit against the U.S. Soccer Federation over equal treatment and pay. The players allege ongoing "