



Did U Know?

Italy's Vittorio Pozzo became the first coach to win two World Cup titles (1934, 1938), as did the two players to play under him in both Cups, Giuseppe Meazza and Giovanni Ferrari.



Otto Pfister
(Togo football coach)
"Germany have no chance. I don't think they can even get to the (2006 World Cup) final, or even the semifinal."

DAY'S EVENT

Asian Games Hockey Qualifier
Iran v Oman (10:00 am)
Sri Lanka vs Chinese Taipei (12:00 pm)
Bangladesh v Hong Kong (4:00 pm)
Venue: Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium

Piyer powers Barisal

SPORTS REPORTER

A four-wicket win over Barguna enabled Barisal to move into the final round of the Dhaka Bank Under-19 National Youth Cricket Championship at the Barguna Stadium yesterday.

Opting to bat first, Barguna were bundled out for only 78 runs with Piyer capturing four wickets. It took Barisal just 17 overs to chase down the target, but they lost six wickets in the process.

Hayat took six for 32 as Naogaon skittled Nilphamari for just 120 runs at the Natore Stadium.

Naogaon almost made a meal of the chase, but they finally went on to win by three wickets.

Narayanganj sailed past Gazipur by eight wickets at the Faridpur Stadium, while Rajshahi rode on a hat-trick by Sharik to beat Pabna by 124 runs at Bogra.

At Mymensingh, Kishoreganj also won easily, when they out-classed Munshiganj by 151 runs.

POLICE ATTACK ON JOURNOS

Probe committee submits report

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The investigation committee to determine the damage of police atrocities on the on-duty journalists during the Bangladesh-Australia Test match in Chittagong last month, submitted the probe report to Information Minister M Shamsul Islam yesterday.

Joint secretary Mir Mosharruf Hossain, who is leading the committee, recommended compensation worth 1.43 million taka to the twenty journalists who were wounded or lost equipment.

Describing the police barbarity at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on April 16 as 'undesirable', the information minister thanked the probe committee for submitting the report promptly.

School soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Six matches were played across the country in the bangalink tiger trophy National School Football competition yesterday.

At the Nail Stadium, Poura School and Dumuriya Secondary

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DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 19, 2006

Barca bloom late

AFP, Paris



Late goals by Samuel Eto'o and substitute Juliano Belletti allowed Barcelona to overcome ten-man Arsenal 2-1 in a Champions League final of extraordinary drama at the Stade de France here Wednesday.

Arsenal, who shrugged off the 18th-minute dismissal of goalkeeper Jens Lehmann to take the lead through Sol Campbell's 37th-minute header, came within quarter of an hour of pulling off what would have been one of the most unlikely triumphs in the tournament's history.

But after Thierry Henry had squandered his second glorious chance of the evening, the exhausted Gunners were floored by two late sucker punches, Eto'o's close-range finish and Belletti's equally well-taken strike in the space of four minutes proving enough to secure the Catalan club's second European Cup, 14 years after Ronald Koeman's free-kick decided the 1992 final at Wembley.

For all the pre-match commitments to the creation of a spectacle worthy of the occasion, there was a hint of caution in the way both sides lined up.

Arsenal left Spanish winger Jose Antonio-Reyes out of the five-man midfield that had proved so effective earlier in the tournament.

Rijkaard's concern to shield a sometimes suspect defence was reflected in the inclusion of Marc van Bommel at the expense of the more creative Andres Iniesta.

For the 17 and a bit minutes in which the two sides were playing on equal terms, Arsenal had done enough to suggest their pre-match status as underdogs had been overstated.

In fact, Wenger's men came agonisingly close to claiming the lead inside two minutes, when Henry gathered Emmanuel Ebou'e's cross on the edge of the six-yard box.

A superb first touch carried the Arsenal captain away from Rafael Marquez but Barca goalkeeper Victor Valdes got just enough of a contact on his stabbed shot to send it wide.

Henry's frustration was evident in the venom he injected into his next shooting opportunity, forcing Valdes into a good near post save.

Ludovic Giuly provided Barca's first effort on target, Ronaldinho sent a long-range free-kick narrowly over the angle of post and bar and Deco thumped a 20-yard effort straight at Lehmann.

Barca were beginning to find their rhythm and it did not come as a total surprise when Ronaldinho's pass sent Eto'o clear of the Arsenal back four, forcing Lehmann to sprint off his line.

It was a race the German was always going to lose and Arsenal were fortunate that his outstretched glove caught Eto'o's boot inches outside the box.

Giuly rolled the loose ball into the net but Norwegian referee Terje Hauge had already blown for the foul.

Arsenal responded to the inevitable red card by taking off Robert Pires to make way for Manuel Almunia and Barcelona's chance of taking the lead went begging when Ronaldinho chipped his free-kick inches wide.

Barcelona began to turn the screw but it was Arsenal who were to take the lead after Ebou'e's surge into the box was checked by Carlos Puyol.

The Barcelona captain was fortunate to escape a caution but Arsenal exacted punishment from the resulting free-kick, chipped casually into the area by Henry.

Campbell's run went untracked and the England centreback was unchallenged as he rose to steer his header past Valdes.

A sense that this could be Arsenal's night grew in first-half stoppage time, when Eto'o turned Campbell superbly inside the box only for Almunia to make a brilliant reflex save, his touch just enough to deflect the ball onto the post.

Rijkaard's response was to send on Iniesta in place of the Brazilian

Edmilson for the second half, and the Spain midfielder's first contribution was to provoke another fine save from Almunia, diving low to his left.

By the hour mark, when van Bommel was replaced by Henrik

Larsson, Barcelona were playing with four forwards ahead of two attack minded midfielders.

But it was Arsenal who looked the more likely scorers as the desperate Catalans began to leave

gaps at the back.

Hleb cut inside from the right of the area and sent a left-foot drive a

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Barcelona's Brazilian defender Juliano Belletti is about to score the winning goal during the final of the Champions League against Arsenal at the Stade De France in Paris on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

The perennial gatecrasher



AP, undated

From Roger Milla and Cameroon's "Indomitable Lions" in 1990 to South Korea's Red Devils four years ago, upsets abound at the World Cup. At least one sleeper almost always emerges.

In a sport where the margin of victory can be as little as a blown call, a shot off the goalpost or an own goal, some of the less-heralded countries might wind up this year's surprise and knock off one of the game's powerhouses.

"Anything can happen in football, so if we're among the 32 best teams in the world, at some point we will get the opportunity to reach the quarterfinals or the semifinals or the final," Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba said. "Or we will be eliminated in the first round because the level of the competition is really high and the teams that reach this far are the best."

The Ivorians, one of four African teams making their debut at the World Cup, have a tough draw with Argentina and the Netherlands in their first-round group. They also have the talent to pull off a shocker or two.

Along with Drogba, who stars at Chelsea, the team also will have European-league veterans Bonaventure Kalou, Kolo Toure, Aruna Dindane and Didier Zokora.

Ivory Coast is not alone as a potential sleeper.

Guus Hiddink, who coached South Korea to a stunning run to the semifinals in 2002, is at the helm of an Australian squad making only its second World Cup appearance. Led by a contingent of English-based players, the Socceroos are hoping to advance from a group that features Brazil, Croatia and Japan.

"I know that the team is not settling down and just participating. This team is so eager to get a surprise to get into the second round," Hiddink said.

Other teams that should not be overlooked: Ukraine, led by AC Milan's star striker Andriy Shevchenko and Paraguay with Bayern Munich striker Roque Santa Cruz.

Ukraine, coached by former Soviet star Oleh Blokhin, lost only once in qualifying for its first World Cup. Ukraine needs Shevchenko, considered one of the best goal scorers in the world, to be fully recovered from a knee injury to make a long run in the tournament.

While the final is usually dominated by a few traditional powerhouses -- Germany, Brazil, Italy, Argentina and the Netherlands have accounted for all-but-one appearance in the title game since 1970 -- it's often what happens before the last match that is so memorable.

And that's what gives hope to some of the tournament's biggest underdogs.

"Every weekend all over the world, smaller, so-called weaker teams beat stronger teams," said Trinidad and Tobago coach Leo Beenhakker. "If Northern Ireland beat England, why can't Trinidad. We have the right to the same ambition on the field as any other team."

Consider these teams in the past five World Cups:

2002: South Korea hadn't won a single match in five World Cup appearances before co-hosting the tournament with Japan four years ago. Decker out in their fluorescent red jerseys and supported by their singing fans, the South Koreans shocked European powerhouses Portugal, Italy and Spain on the way to a fourth-place finish, the

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The force behind the fever



AFP, Paris

It was the Brazilian star Pele who described football "the beautiful game" but many anthropologists tend more to the view of the great Dutch coach Rinus Michels: "Football is war."

Any extra-terrestrial eager for a glimpse of some extreme aspects of Homo sapiens need only do a swift tour of Germany, the globe's sports bars and living rooms during the World Cup.

For a month, the alien will find the Masters of Planet Earth in a state of tribalistic regression.

Many will daub their faces and don the shirts of their national teams. Office workers, hairdressers and grannies will wonder at Ronaldinho's dancing feet, marvel at David Beckham's dead ball skill or argue about referees.

If there is victory, millions will be uplifted. Complete strangers will hug. National divisions will be temporarily healed. The winning players will be placed on the eternal pedestal of the hero, showered with love and gold.

If there is defeat, there will be

nationwide mourning. The team that a few days before was lauded as cherished sons will be shunned as if leprous, and a vicious hunt for scapegoats will begin.

Pumped on jingoism and alcohol, otherwise peaceful taxpaying citizens may become hooligans for a night, or wake up to find they have had their butt tattooed with the name of some soccer star.

What is it about football that triggers this extraordinary behaviour?

Sandy Wolfson, principal lecturer in sports psychology at Britain's Northumbria University, says soccer touches on a unique nexus of nerves, a combination of human interaction, culture and genes.

Our response to football is as old as human society itself, she suggests.

"It's got a really strong tribal element," says Wolfson, herself a dedicated fan of Newcastle United.

"There's probably a genetic component of wanting to be part of a group. As humans, certainly in our more primitive days, it was imperative to be part of a group in order to survive.

"Along with that, there was also a hierarchy within the group, so that you tended to follow the most masterful or skilful individual who would become your leader. So that may be transposed now onto your football team. That means you get this in-

group, out-group mentality, in which you align yourself with your fellow fans."

But for this to work, an individual has to be within a group, says Wolfson.

Face-painting, chanting, jubilation and commiseration are not individual pursuits, which is why most football fans want to be with other people for a big match, says Wolfson.

"There is a contagion effect," she explains. "You only need to get a few people excited in order to get caught up with it. It could be that it happens more with football than with other sports because there are simply more people around who love the sport."

Cambridge University historian Stephen Tompkins says there are some striking parallels between football and religion. Both provide staging, ceremony, faith, chants and totemic clothing to provide inspiration and a sense of community.

French sociologist Emile Durkheim uses similar language. He described mass events as a "congregation" that almost literally project people out of themselves, causing them to behave in ways that, at normal times, they would have considered unthinkable.

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Bangladesh winning

SPORTS REPORTER

A solitary goal by Maksudul Alam Habul was enough for Bangladesh to edge out Singapore to maintain a solo lead in the Jamuna Bank Asian Games qualifying round hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With the unbeaten run in five matches, Bangladesh now have 13 points, a point ahead of Hong Kong, who also won by a single goal over Chinese Taipei (nine points) in the day's second match.

Oman raised their tally to 10 points to hold the third position with a 1-0 win over Sri Lanka, who remained on three points from five matches.

To become champions, Bangladesh need only a draw against Hong Kong in their last match on Friday.

Back to the day's match, Maksud scored the all-important goal in the 31st minute when he

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh goalscorer Maksud Alam Habul celebrates his winner against Singapore during the Asian Games Qualifying round match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

'Brazil will not win'

"Brazil are favourites and with that tag they can't win. Favourites always lose. In 2002, it happened to France. In 1990, Argentina lost the final match against Germany. In 1982, Brazil were favourites and lost against Italy and Holland are always favourites and always lose."

-- Brazil legend Pele

--INTERNET, undated