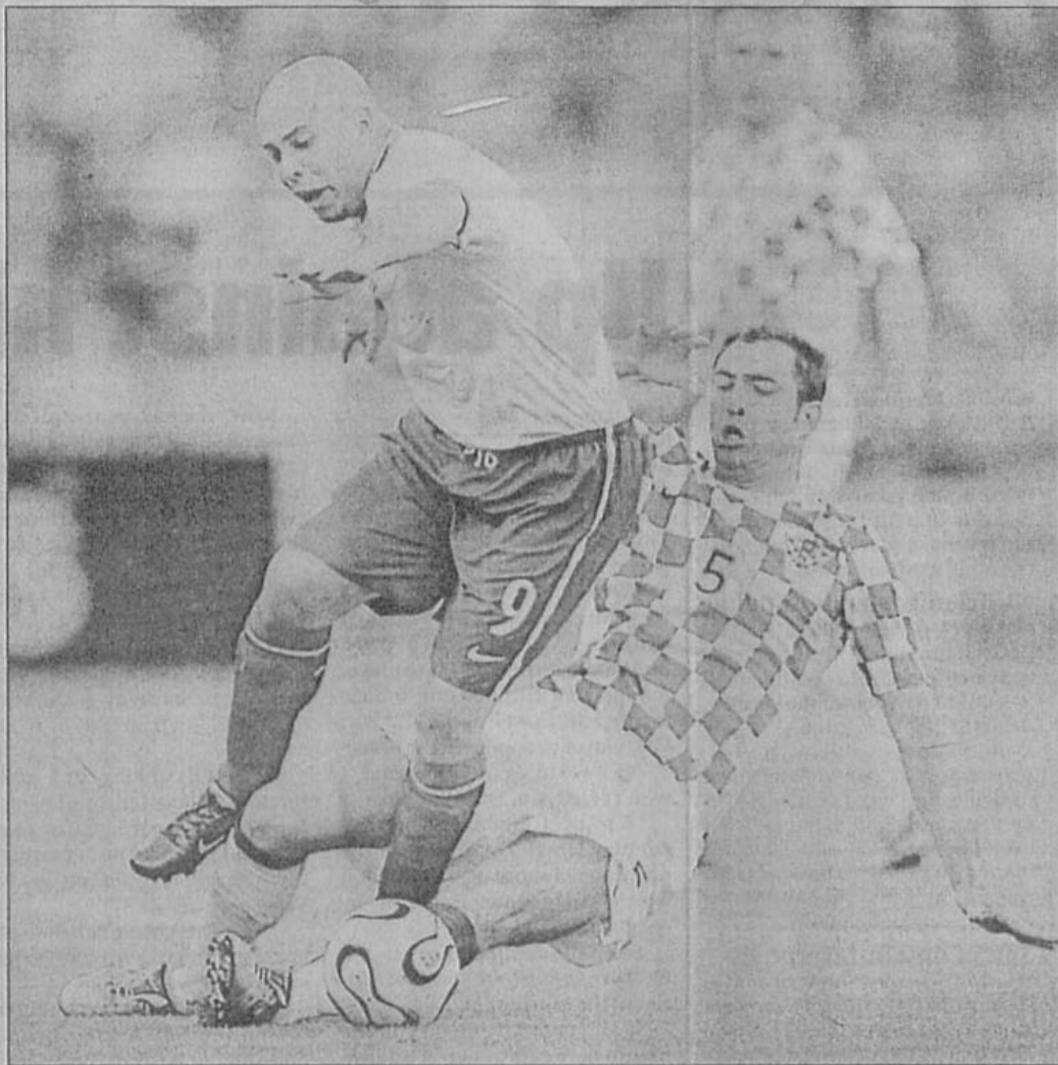


WORLD CUP QUOTES

AFP, Berlin
What they are saying at the World Cup:
'Ronaldo says he's yet to reach his ideal level of fitness.'



Brazilian forward Ronaldo (L) is tackled by Croatian defender Igor Tudor during their World Cup Group F game at Berlin Olympic stadium on Tuesday.

Critics sharpen Ronaldo knives



AFP, Berlin

Ronaldo's subdued display, for Brazil against Croatia in the champions' World Cup opener has rekindled the debate about whether he is fit enough to keep his place in the lineup.

barely 70 games in five seasons at Inter Milan.
Once there, the 'Phenomenon' blew away all the doubts in style with eight goals, including a pair in the final win over Germany.

David Beckham, but he admitted his striker was "lacking a little sharpness."
He has not been playing for the past two months and has had only two friendlies so it was natural he felt a bit heavy as it was very hot.

Tostao blasts bureaucratic Brazil

AFP, Brasilia

The Brazilian press on Wednesday expressed dissatisfaction with the nation's footballers following their narrow 1-0 win over Croatia in their opening World Cup clash the previous evening.

Les Blues not panicking



AGENCIES, Hamelin

Nobody in the France team seemed too concerned after a dull opener against Switzerland left the former champions waiting for a goal on the World Cup stage after nearly eight years.

leaders South Korea, who beat debutants Togo 2-1.
'It will not be easy but we have to win,' he said. 'They were in the (World Cup) semifinals the last time but they're not as defensive as Switzerland and they should allow us more space.'

Now we have to win against South Korea. It could be a tense match but great players and great teams must be able to raise their level on big occasions.
He also came up with a novel excuse for failing to score - dry grass.

Press lambasts sorry France



AFP, Paris

The French press on Wednesday were typically scathing in their assessment of Les Bleus' performance in their opening World Cup match, a 0-0 draw with Switzerland.

ideas, power and spontaneity, Les Bleus remain confident five days ahead of their clash with South Korea, who beat Togo 2-1.
On the inside, L'Equipe shows a picture of shrugging teammates Zinedine Zidane and William Gallas at loggerheads in the second half of the 1998 champions' inept display.

stifling heat in Stuttgart, Les Bleus lacked rhythm and decisiveness.
And in a final blow the newspaper piled on the pressure: "Already they have no room for error and must beat South Korea on Sunday."

No mystery this time

AFP, Berlin

Observers claim that Argentine team officials like to cultivate an aura of mystery during Argentina's major international outings.
But the media, World Cup officials and some locals have a less generous view of the squad's protected ways and haphazard sense of time at their base in Bavaria.



French midfielder Zinedine Zidane (L) vies with Swiss midfielder Johann Vogel during their Group G match in Stuttgart on Tuesday.

Heat taking its toll



AFP, Berlin

Even coaches who had prepared for every eventuality have been caught out at the World Cup by unexpectedly high temperatures in Germany.
The teams arrived in northern Europe under grey skies and temperatures so low for the season that Japan's players complained of being constantly chilly.

Hot conditions are nothing new at World Cups, especially when they take place in the European summer-time, but the speed of modern football means it takes a greater toll, experts say.
Hot conditions means players perspire more and are therefore at an increased risk of dehydration, so it is essential they take on liquids as often as possible.

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Which is why England players were furious when Mexican referee Marco Rodriguez tried to prevent them taking swigs from bottles on the sideline as the temperature hit 30 degrees Celsius when they beat Paraguay in Frankfurt on Saturday.

'We can make last 16'



INTERNET, undated

Dick Advocaat believes South Korea have a fighting chance of making the last 16 after storming back to defeat Togo.
The 2002 semifinalists were stunned when the African nation, new at this level, took the lead through Mohamed Kader.

spectacular goals from Lee Chun-soo and substitute Ahn Jung-hwan.
Advocaat said: "It is our first victory in the World Cup in Europe, and it is so important."
If you win the first game you have a chance to stay in the tournament. If you lose, you make it difficult for yourself.

the end.
"I took a lot of risks and worked hard.
It was fortunate to have worked out for us, but I think our luck was well deserved."
Advocaat praised Ahn, saying: "He made a difference, and I was pleased for him that he got on the scoresheet."

Bad guys busted

AFP, Sydney

Australian police said they smashed an Asia-based illegal World Cup betting operation Wednesday after arresting eight people in raids in Sydney.
New South Wales police said six Hong Kong men and two Malaysian women were arrested when officers from central Sydney and a special South East Asian Crime Squad swooped on three rooms in a city hotel early Wednesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptogram puzzle with a grid and a key: BLKHL ZBG FNLU STQ ZIJKH SDDI UQQP LSPFKFP KP JQGIDQU LGNUQU? HNTZ SPW TGW.