



An Australian fan watches the game against Brazil on giant screen along with thousands others in Sydney on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kewell to face disciplinary panel

AFP, Berlin

Australia striker Harry Kewell will face a FIFA disciplinary panel over his rant at German referee Markus Merk after Australia's 2-0 World Cup defeat to Brazil, FIFA said on Monday.

Kewell remonstrated and jabbed his finger at Merk for some time before being pulled away by a team-mate and stalling off the field in Munich on Sunday.

FIFA's head of communications Markus Sieglar said: "FIFA is going to bring a disciplinary procedure against Kewell for repeatedly insulting the referee."

"A decision should be taken before Australia's final match."

"Kewell will have a chance to give his version of events."

The procedure is extremely rare for a player who did not receive a booking while on the pitch.

Kewell, who missed an open goal shortly after coming on as a second-half substitute, played down his altercation with the experienced official who took charge of the Euro 2004 final between Greece and Portugal.

"You're frustrated, you're losing the game, every referee puts up with it. I mean, it's part and parcel of the game. He knows there's no harm meant by it."

The Australians were furious that Merk pulled them up for 25 fouls against only nine for Brazil.

The Socceroos need to beat Croatia in their final Group F game on Thursday to be sure of going through to the second round, although a draw could suffice should Brazil as expected beat bottom of the table Japan.

Amokachi backs Ghana

INTERNET, undated

With the convincing performance from the Black Stars of Ghana against highly-ranked Czech Republic, Africans have thrown their weight behind the West Africans to reach the next round.

Former Super Eagles' forward, Daniel Amokachi, is also among Africans, who has backed Ghana to make it to the next round of the ongoing World Cup in Germany.

He told after the Black Stars of Ghana shocked their Czech Republic counterparts in a preliminary match that the West Africans cannot afford to lose against the United States of America in their last group game.

The ex-Everton man added that the Ghanaian win over world number team has thrown Group E wide open especially with the Americans holding the Italians to a 1-1 draw. He continued that Ghana's win did not come as a surprise to him, because he felt that the Black Stars did well in their first game against Italy, which they lost 0-2.

Aussies proud of Socceroos' show



AFP, Melbourne

The sleep-deprived green and gold army cheering Australia on through the early hours in their homeland on Monday were disappointed but not dejected at the Socceroos' battling 2-0 loss to Brazil.

More than 12,000 people braved the mid-winter chill in Melbourne's Federation Square to watch a big-screen telecast of the match, which kicked off at 2:00am Monday local time.

The boisterous crowd gave the Australians an ovation at the final whistle, expressing pride that football's minnows had stretched the five-time world champions in a hotly-contested tie.

"We definitely rattled them, they knew they'd been in a game," Socceroos fan Fabian Camerino told AFP. "It was great to see us in the World Cup against Brazil - the world champions - and we weren't intimidated."

The match was hugely anticipated in Australia, which has been in the grip of football fever since the Socceroos opened their first World Cup campaign in 32 years with a

come-from-behind 3-1 win over Japan.

Authorities in Sydney gave pubs and clubs special dispensation to stay open for the match and thousands of fans thronged to big screens at venues across the city, including Circular Quay, alongside the Sydney Opera House.

The World Cup's Australian broadcaster, SBS television, was hopeful viewer figures would exceed the 3.35 million recorded for Australia's win in the opening match.

In Melbourne's Federation Square, crowd numbers exceeded those seen at New Year celebrations, as fans scrambled onto chairs, tables and even the window sills of nearby office buildings to gain a big screen vantage point.

They crammed into the square hoping for a giant-killing victory, many draped in Australian flags or yellow Socceroos' jerseys, pounding drums and chanting "ole, ole, ole".

With mounted police on standby in case of trouble, they lit flares when the match kicked off, roaring "Socceroos" and cheering Australia's every touch in the early stages of the contest.

Even going behind to Brazil courtesy of an Adriano goal on the 49th minute did not silence a crowd ever hopeful the comeback

heroics of the Japan match could be repeated.

Fan Troy Brown said the final scoreline flattered Brazil.

"That was cruel," he said with a wince as substitute Fred's tap-in crossed the line to make it 2-0 on fulltime.

The prospect of a Socceroos team ranked 42 in the world taking on the defending champions caught the imagination of an Australian public more accustomed to cricket than football, generating saturation newspaper and television coverage.

Ahead of the game, a major sportswear company ran an advertising campaign featuring archive footage of Brazilian star Ronaldo's footballing wizardry along with the slogan "history's against us... stuff history".

Melbourne's Age newspaper published a list on its front page of 10 reasons why Brazil should lose, citing everything from their decision to shelter Great Train Robber Ronnie Biggs to the destruction of the Amazon rainforest.

It also concluded that after Brazil's five world cup triumphs "it's time they shared the glory around".

However, that was an argument that Adriano and Fred in Munich were having none of as their goals broke Australian hearts.

'Rooney return the key'



AFP, Cologne

Michael Owen believes the return of Wayne Rooney could hold the key to ending his World Cup goal-drought as the two strikers prepare to resume their partnership against Sweden.

Owen believes his failure to hit the target so far in Group B is down to England's over-reliance on long balls targeting the 6ft 7in striker Peter Crouch as much as poor form on his part.

But with the fit-again Rooney to return against Sweden, Owen believes England will shift to a style of play better suited to predatory talents that have netted him 36 goals in 79 internationals.

"If I get someone playing just behind me or in midfield with their head up then I come alive," said Owen.

"We're not going to be playing longer balls because Wayne and myself aren't that tall. So we'll try and keep it on the deck."

Owen is adamant he remains just as sharp as ever despite a five-month injury lay-off that appears to have taken an edge off his once famously searing pace.

"You're just not seeing it because we're not firing on all cylinders at the moment," said Owen. "If we're playing well I'll look as good as I've ever been." "It's just a case of us passing the ball and getting into the right areas for me to come alive."

Owen was hailed off by coach Sven-Goran Eriksson inside an hour against Paraguay and Trinidad and Tobago, prompting speculation that the Newcastle United striker's position in the team was under threat.

Eriksson though has made it clear that as far as Owen is concerned he is a firm believer in the old adage that form is temporary, class is permanent.

"I'm not worried about Michael, Eriksson said. "He will get better and it's better."

Neville feared World Cup KO

AFP, London

England defender Gary Neville feared his World Cup was over when he suffered a calf injury, his brother Phil said on Sunday.

The 31-year-old Manchester United star, who won his 80th cap in the opening 1-0 victory over Paraguay, missed England's unimpressive 2-0 Group B win against Trinidad and Tobago after suffering the knock in training and will be sidelined again for Tuesday's clash against Sweden.

He hopes to return to action during the knockout stages but England and Everton midfielder Phil admitted his brother was initially convinced he would miss the rest of the tournament.

Phil told the Sunday People newspaper: "When Gary first found out he'd torn his calf muscle he was devastated. He really thought after the first scan he'd be packing his bags and coming home, it was that bad."

"Gaz is honest enough to admit this will probably be his last World Cup and he wanted to show the rest of the world exactly what he could do. To lose that through injury would be almost too much for him to bear."

"England need Gaz fit because he brings so much experience to the right-back position and his understanding with Becks is key to our success. Knowing Gary, he'll fight until the last moment to play a part and he doesn't lose many fights."

Had Neville been forced out it would have been a second successive World Cup finals heartbreak, having missed the entire one in 2002 because of injury.

Perrotta doubt for Czech clash

INTERNET, undated

With Daniele De Rossi suspended, Simone Perrotta is also a major doubt for the Group E decider against the Czech Republic.

The former Chievo midfielder could barely run in the final 20 minutes of Saturday night's 1-1 draw with the USA, as he had taken a knock to the upper thigh and Italy had already completed their substitutions.

"Perrotta suffered a heavy bruise to his right thigh which also affected the sciatic nerve," explained chief medic Enrico Castellacci.

"It was quite a rough game overall and we had quite a few problems. Perrotta could still recover for Thursday, but we need 48 hours to see how the bruise is absorbed. Alberto Gilardino also had a slight sprain to his right ankle."

De Rossi will be suspended for that tie, which could see Italy top Group E, go through second or even be eliminated depending on the result here and in the Ghana-USA game, following his dismissal for elbowing Brian McBride.

A draw would be enough to see the Azzurri through to the knockout stage, but the Czechs also have problems to contend with. Tomas Ujfalus was sent off in the 2-0 defeat to Ghana and he'll be suspended, along with striker Vratislav Lokvenec. Injured forwards Milan Baros and Jan Koller are also unlikely to feature.

Lippi lined up for Real job

INTERNET, undated

Spanish newspapers claim Real Madrid will sign Marcello Lippi if Italy flop at the World Cup, while Antonio Cassano is again linked with Milan.

"As" suggests this weekend that the club is determined to bring in an Italian tactician during the summer. Presidential candidate Ramon Calderon has publicly pledged to sign Juventus boss Fabio Capello if he wins the elections, but another option is represented by Lippi.

The Coach is under pressure already after the Azzurri's disappointing 1-1 draw with the US and, matched with the Press focus on his part in the Calciopoli scandal, could decide to walk out on the job after just two years in charge.

It's reported that failure to reach the second round on Thursday would see Lippi sacked and the gates to the Bernabeu open for an announcement as early as next week.

Real Madrid are also in the news after "Marca" claimed that Antonio Cassano is set for a return to Serie A just six months after his switch from Roma.

The fiery former Bari man has failed to show his quality in La Liga, managing only a handful of appearances in which he was mocked by the local media for his weight.

It's not the first time he has been linked with Milan over the past few months, but now that the club has 30 million pounds from Andriy Shevchenko's sale to Chelsea, the swoop is more likely.

Soccer language is born



AFP, Berlin

Is the goalkeeper a fliegenfanger? Was that goal a Maradona? Should the ball be passed to the porteur d'eau or the trequartista?

No comprendo? Then you're obviously not fluent in socceranto, a football language hastily cobbled together by an English schoolboy and an American-Argentinian student.

They believe the game needs a common tongue to benefit both players and fans.

"Things are all very well when, say, Ecuador plays Costa Rica or Ghana meets the USA," said 16-year-old Ted Freedman, the English co-author of Socceranto: Birth of a Language.

"But what about when Japan plays Brazil or Ukraine meets Saudi Arabia?"

The 32 teams taking part in the World Cup share 18 official languages so, the authors argue, football needs an international tongue

that all recognise.

It's based on Esperanto, the world language invented in 1887, and football phrases, words and names drawn from throughout the world.

So a fliegenfanger is the word for a useless goalkeeper derived from the German word for flycatcher.

Maradona is the word for a goal scored with the use of the hand as in the Argentinian's infamous strike against England at the 1986 World Cup.

In midfield, the porteur d'eau would be the defensive holding player in the style of former French international Didier Deschamps, often condemned as a water carrier.

The trequartista would be more flamboyant, the playmaker, from the Italian, a player who operates between midfield and attack, three quarters of the way up the pitch.

"Soccer has become the most international game in the world and the most globalised industry," said co-author Ignacio van Gelderen.

"This is just the launch of a long-term project. Or, as we say in Socceranto, it's "early doors" (early in the game). We hope that Socceranto will develop in time

into a richer, more international, more distinct and fully-fledged language.

"We hope this World Cup will help."

Many of the phrases used are based on Brazilian names and, not surprisingly, used to describe flair and flamboyance.

A Ronaldinho is a no-look pass, a Kaka is a volley, a Pele, a bicycle kick and a Roberto, a banana kick, in honour of Roberto Carlos and Roberto Rivelinho.

Other players are in the dictionary but associated with times in their careers they would rather forget.

A Baggio is a missed penalty after the Italian star's bungled spot-kick in the shootout in the 1994 final against Brazil; a Caniggia remembers the Argentinian attacker who managed to get sent-off while sitting on the bench against Sweden in 2002.

Poor old Juergen Klinsmann, currently on a high for coaching Germany into the second round here, also makes the book.

A Klinsmann is a dive in memory of the German's playing days when he had a reputation for going down too easily in the penalty area.

France in despair



AFP, Paris

France's lacklustre 1-1 draw with South Korea drew negative reaction from the country's press on Monday with the front page headline of l'Equipe summing things up with headline: "Despair."

The major newspapers said France simply lacked the ability to hold on to their lead which has put them under pressure for their final Group G match against Togo.

"We're doing badly," said the front page headline of Le Parisien, adding in the inside pages: "Another draw which puts the Blues up against it."

"France must now beat Togo in

four days time by two goals and with Zidane suspended because they were not able to keep their grip on a match they controlled for long periods."

France Soir, whose front page headline read "A draw which brings tears to our eyes," following the 0-0 score against Switzerland, this time merely said "Nul" which is a play on words meaning both useless as well as a drawn result.

"The Blues World Cup journey perhaps came to an end against the Koreans. However by scoring early in the game, they seemed to be well on their way. But defensive shortcomings and lack of firepower up front ended it all."

"France chicken out," was the headline in La Liberation in its special supplement, adding: "Though they had more energy than against Switzerland, France finally cracked at the end of the

game. Qualifying for the second round is now more complicated."

L'Equipe merely described the drawn result on its front page as "despair," adding "a football match never finishes in the 60th minute," illustrating France's poor showing towards the end of the match.

France's regional newspapers were just as scathing on France's performance.

La Republique du Centre said France were poor and ridiculed the "official statements from team officials which said France were united, doing well and were getting stronger by the day."

The Haute-Marne newspaper said: "Those who were looking for a resurrection by the national team or some kind of turning point so they would forget their upheaval and poor form will now have to re-evaluate."

"The goose is not yet cooked, but it's starting to look pinkish."



South Korea fans, watching the match on a giant screen in downtown Seoul, celebrate their team's strike against France in the early hours on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Park goal triggers rush-hour frenzy



AFP, Seoul

Thousands of bleary-eyed South Koreans trooped to work Monday tired but happy after staying up all night to watch their team draw 1-1 with France in the World Cup.

"We have overcome," said the JoongAng Ilbo newspaper, showing a full-page colour photo of hero Park Ji-Sung and his teammates jiggling down the pitch in Leipzig, Germany.

Police said more than 700,000 supporters spent the night on the streets to cheer on the team in front of big-screen TVs. Millions more watched at home, with live broadcasts provided by all three major networks.

Park, the Manchester United midfielder, was the toast of the nation after his 81st minute goal tied the match, keeping South Korea's hopes alive of reaching the second round from Group G.

Some 300,000 fans, mostly young, cheered loudly all through the match even though Korea were behind 1-0 from the ninth minute. But an explo-

sion of joy erupted when Park hit the target.

"Park Ji Sung kicks off a morning of frenzy," read the headline in the biggest selling newspaper, the Chosun Ilbo, which delayed a print run until after the final whistle.

Other major newspapers put special editions featuring front-page photographs of man-of-the-match Park.

Some companies including Yahoo! Korea and ING Life were opening an hour late while some cancelled morning work to give the tired fans a chance to sleep it off, newspapers said. At least two schools in Seoul cancelled classes.

South Korea's Red Devil fans, decked out in red shirts, danced the night away, many wearing the most popular accessory for supporters -- toy devil's horns on headbands that light up at night.

More than 60,000 people crammed the World Cup stadium to the west of the city centre, many wearing shirts displaying the slogan "Again 2002."

Four years ago the national side reached the semi-finals of the World Cup when it was played on home soil.

World Cup support hit fever pitch in 2002, when millions took to the streets of Seoul and other cities to cheer on the national side. With

matches taking place overnight this time, police said that attendances at giant TV locations were expected to be smaller.

Even so the fans -- many of them students -- turned the central plaza in Seoul into a sea of red.

"It feels so good. Just like 2002," said Lee Kang, a Seoul office worker, on his way home after watching the match at the plaza.

He said that four years ago South Korea opened their World Cup account with a win and a draw -- and then went all the way to the last four.

"The South Korean squad has taken the same track as it did four years ago -- to reach the semi-finals," he said.

"I'm so happy, so happy. Let's get through to the round of 16," said Song Dong-Hyuk, 21, a college student in a Red Devil tee-shirt threading his way through the morning crowds.

South Korea is in Group G with France, Switzerland and Togo, and will play Switzerland in their last group game on Friday. They beat Togo 2-1 in their opening match on June 13.

Two teams from each group progress to the next round, and the match against Switzerland is likely to determine which two make the cut.