

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 24, 2006



THE TOOTHY SMILE IS BACK: Brilliant Brazilian striker Ronaldo is all smiles after his record-equaling 14th World Cup goal against Japan in Dortmund on Thursday.

Phenomenon touches Bomber

AFP, Berlin

Brazil's Ronaldo confounded his many doubters with a predatory double against Japan which leaves him a goal away from becoming the top World Cup goalscorer of all time.

A neat header and a fine curling shot on the turn dispelled any notion that the 29-year-old Real Madrid striker has had his day -- and perhaps a few too many culinary indulgences -- as his contribution in the 4-1 win in Dortmund took him to 14 World Cup goals, level with German "bomber" Gerd Muller.

"I have been very patient. You have to keep working and not lose heart," said the superstar, who added that the support of his family "has carried me through the bad times," including another injury-ravaged season.

"I came to the finals in a much worse physical condition than my teammates (but) I feel better and better," he enthused after moving past Pele's Brazilian record of 12 World Cup goals to delight coach

Carlos Alberto Parreira.

"Ronaldo is getting better and better. He is a very special player," Parreira beamed, while Pele congratulated Ronaldo on his achievement.

"That will have been a weight off his shoulders," said Pele.

The 'Phenomenon' had cut an almost pitiful figure in arriving in Germany after an injury-ravaged season with Real, where he has not won anything since a 2003 league title, that success pre-dating the David Beckham era at the Bernabeu.

His lack of match fitness was compounded by a visible battle to keep his weight under control.

The whole topic became a matter of state a fortnight ago when Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva enquiring about the star's fitness before they opened their World Cup campaign with two unimpressive narrow wins over Croatia and Australia in which Ronaldo did very little.

Ronaldo responded angrily to Lula's doubtless well-meaning

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Aussies acclaim hero Kewell

AFP, Stuttgart

Coach Guus Hiddink and teammates Friday paid tribute to Harry Kewell whose most important career goal lifted Australia into the last 16 of the World Cup for the first time.

The Liverpool forward scored with 12 minutes left to give his team a 2-2 draw with Croatia which was enough Thursday to send the Aussies through to the knockout round as Group F runners-up behind champions Brazil.

Hiddink's team will face three-time world champions Italy in Kaiserslautern for a place in the quarterfinals on Monday.

Kewell has been battling a groin injury suffered in last month's World Cup, yet he still put in a man-of-the-match performance that inspired his teammates and was lauded by the coaching staff.

"Before the game I was thinking how to use Harry because he's not in his top game shape and I was thinking of bringing him on later," Hiddink said.

"But these games are special and these games need special players because they can make the difference."

Assistant coach Graham Arnold praised Kewell's work ethic to get himself fit enough to play a significant 90-minute role in Australia's

surprise qualification into the last 16 of the tournament.

"Harry has struggled in the last few weeks with fitness but it's a testament to the guy," he said. "He wakes up at seven in the morning, he goes to the gym, he works hard, he trains hard, he eats well, he does everything to be fit."

"If you talk to him he'll probably say he shouldn't be here with the injury he's had and it's testament to the guy he's given everything he can give physically to get here."

Captain Mark Viduka rates Kewell as one of the greatest players he has ever played with.

"I was so happy for him to score. For me Harry is definitely one of the best players I've played with," said Viduka, who plays as a lone striker for his country.

"I'm happy he's with us and I was so happy for him when the ball came in, it was like I scored. We were so relieved to get that goal and he was definitely man-of-the-match for me."

"He did such a good job and he makes it easier for me when I've got him around me because every time he gets it he looks for me and we look for each other."

Kewell described his history-making goal against Croatia as his greatest ever.

"That's the most important goal

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We did it for Africa: Essien

INTERNET, undated

Black Stars midfielder Michael Essien declared after defeating USA 2-1 to qualify for the second round of the ongoing World Cup finals that he and his teammates ensured their progress to the next round as a gift for Africans.

Essien said they had to put in their best against the hard-fighting Americans to ensure that they reached the next round.

But the Chelsea midfielder enforcer appealed to Africans to keep cheering them, as they have ensured that Africa has a team in the second round.

"We did our best today. We did it for Ghana and the whole of Africa so they should keep cheering us," said Essien.

Ghana became only the fifth African team after Cameroon, Morocco, Nigeria and Senegal to reach the second round at a finals.

However, the Ghanaians may have sacrificed their key player, Essien, for a second round berth, as he would miss their next match against the holders Brazil after his second booking in the match against USA.

Reacting to the prospect of missing Essien in their next match, Black Stars' Serbian coach Ratomir Djukovic said there is nothing they can do about the situation at the moment, adding that another player can substitute the Chelsea man.

"Yes, but what can you do. Always in these tournaments you have to have substitutes for any position," he said.

Tearful Japan face harsh reality

REUTERS, Dortmund

Japan bowed out of the World Cup in tears although with few excuses after fleetingly threatening to achieve the impossible against mighty Brazil.

Zico's last game in charge ended in a 4-1 defeat, the Brazilian telling his players they needed to be more professional in a brutally frank parting shot.

Needing to beat the world champions by two goals in Thursday's Group F clash, the Japanese took a shock lead through Keiji Tamada's sharp finish in the 34th minute.

Ronaldo's header in first-half injury time brought Japan down to earth again before normal service was resumed by Brazil after the break.

"We were taught a harsh lesson," a tearful Japan Football Association (JFA) chief Saburo Kawabuchi told reporters after the game.

"I have just seen Hidetoshi Nakata crying in the changing room. It's a bitter feeling and it brings home just how far we have to go."

Japan coach Zico had never seriously suggested during a turbulent four years in charge that he was capable of the sort of alchemy required to take his side beyond the group stage.

But many Japan fans blamed him for turning the team's so-called "golden generation" into base metal, hurling insults at the players and jamming the JFA switchboard with complaints.

Zico's task was hardly helped by Japan's astonishing late collapse as they lost 3-1 to Australia in their opening game.

A 0-0 stalemate with Croatia left Japan with a near impossible job to match their fine run to the last 16 as co-hosts of the 2002 World Cup.

Their showdown with Brazil was always likely to end in heartbreak for the Asian champions.

Nakata slumped to the wet turf sobbing uncontrollably for more than five minutes after the match, his team mates unable to get the midfielder to move.

"We all feel like that," said goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, easily Japan's player of the tournament. "We never recovered mentally after losing to Australia."

"I was upset at how we fell apart against Brazil but our tendency to panic has been there for all three games."

Zico blamed his side's inability to hold on to their lead against Brazil but in reality Kawaguchi had already made several incredible saves before Tamada's strike.

"Brazil's equaliser hurt," said the 53-year-old coach. "We left

ourselves with too much to do after giving away three daft goals to Australia. The players need to be more professional."



Australian forward Mark Viduka (L), forward Harry Kewell (10) jubilate after Australian defender Craig Moore scored a penalty during their World Cup match against Croatia in Stuttgart on Thursday.

WC BRIEFS

AFP, Berlin

German, Polish and English football fans are planning to take time out from the World Cup to lay flowers at the site of the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau, near the southern city of Munich, on Friday.

A German football supporters' club, "The Lions Fans against the Far Right", said it was arranging the event along with the "London England Fans" and Poland's "Never Again" supporters group.

The Nazis imprisoned more than 200,000 people at Dachau, of whom some 30,000 died.

Klose who?

Germany say they will afford Sweden total respect in their second-round clash even if the Swedes' only win over Die Mannschaft in 12 meetings came in the 1958 tournament on home soil. The Germans won their semifinal meeting 4-2 in 1974 and Bild newspaper is swaggeringly confident of a repeat.

On hearing that Swedish goalkeeper Andreas Isaksson had asked of Germany's top striker "who is Miroslav Klose?" Bild compared the Scandinavians to a furniture store.

"After the last 16 match the Ikea players will hopefully know who

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The Daily Star
RANGS TOSHIBA
 WORLD CUP QUIZ 2006

LCD TV
THIS CAN BE YOURS

2006 Round 4, Draw in Chittagong
 (See June 8 issue of the Star Sport for competition information, prizes and rules)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz Round 4, Ends June 29, 2006

Tick (✓) the correct answers

1. Who scored the first goal in the 2006 World Cup?	Klose	Lahm	Wandhopp
2. The smallest nation to have played in the World Cup finals is:	Trinidad & Tobago	Cameroon	Jamaica
3. Which Asian player scored in three World Cup finals?	Nakata	Sami Al Jaber	All Drael
4. Which World Cup final match ended goalless during the regulation time?	Italia '90	Argentina '78	USA '94
5. Who is this player?	Totti	Kaka	Messi

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms) Age

Father's name Occupation

Address

Telephone (if any) Signature Date

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters.
 Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star
 You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 4."

READ The Daily Star TO CATCH THE WORLD CUP FEVER

banglalink goal pick & win contest

how to pick your team?

Write Message: pw ger
 go to message option: type pw<space> 1st 3 letters of country

Phone Number: 2006
 send to 2006

in case of a draw?

Write Message: pw ger draw
 go to message option: type pw<space> 1st 3 letters of country<space> draw

Phone Number: 2006
 send to 2006

to know your accumulated points type 'pt' and send to 2006

today's matches

match 1: Germany (ger) vs Sweden (swe)
 match 2: Argentina (arg) vs Mexico (mex)

banglalink you, first!