

WC RESULTS & STANDINGS

AFP, Berlin

World Cup results and standings after the conclusion of the group stage:

Group A
Germany 4 (Lahm 6, Klose 17, 61, Frings 87) Costa Rica 2 (Wanchope 12, 73) Poland 0 Ecuador 2 (C. Tenorio 24, Delgado 80)

Germany 1 (Neuville 90+1) Poland 0 Ecuador 3 (C. Tenorio 8, Delgado 54, Kaviendes 90+2) Costa Rica 0 Ecuador 0 Germany 3 (Klose 4, 44, Podolski 57)

Costa Rica 1 (R. Gomez 25) Poland 2 (Bosacki 33, 66)

Final standings
Germany 3 3 0 0 8 2 9
Ecuador 3 2 0 1 5 3 6
Poland 3 1 0 2 2 4 3
Costa Rica 3 0 0 3 3 9 0

Germany and Ecuador qualify for second round

Group B

England 1 (Garrard 4-og) Paraguay 0

Trinidad and Tobago 0 Sweden 0

England 2 (Crouch 83, Gerrard 90+1) Trinidad and Tobago 0

Sweden 1 (Ljungberg 89) Paraguay 0

Sweden 2 (Allback 51, Larsson 90)

England 2 (J. Cole 34, Gerrard 85)

Paraguay 2 (Sancho 25-og, Cuevas 86) Trinidad and Tobago 0

Final standings
England 3 2 1 0 5 2 7
Sweden 3 1 2 0 3 2 5
Paraguay 3 1 0 2 2 2 3
T&T 3 0 1 2 0 4 1

England and Sweden qualify for second round

Group C

Argentina 2 (Crespo 24, Saviola 38) Ivory Coast 1 (Drogba 80)

Serbia & Montenegro 0 Netherlands 1 (Robben 18)

Argentina 6 (Maxi Rodriguez 6, 41, Cambiasso 31, Crespo 78, Tevez 84, Messi 88) Serbia-Montenegro 0

Netherlands 2 (van Persie 23, van Nistelrooy 27) Ivory Coast 1 (B. Kone 38)

Netherlands 0 Argentina 0

Ivory Coast 3 (Dindane 37-pen, 67, Kalou 86-pen) Serbia-Montenegro 2 (Zigic 10, Ilic 20)

Final standings
Argentina 3 2 1 0 8 1 7
Netherlands 3 2 1 0 3 1 7
Ivory Coast 3 1 0 2 5 6 3
Serbia 3 0 0 3 2 10 0

Argentina and Netherlands qualify for second round

Group D

Mexico 3 (Bravo 28, 76 Zinha 79) Iran 1 (Golmohammadi 36)

Angola 0 Portugal 1 (Pauleta 4)

Mexico 0 Angola 0

Portugal 2 (Deco 63, C. Ronaldo 80-pen) Iran 0

Portugal 2 (Maniche 6, Simao 24-pen) Mexico 1 (Ponsessa 29)

Iran 1 (Bakhtiarzadeh 75) Angola 1 (Flavio 60)

Final standings
Portugal 3 3 0 0 5 1 9
Mexico 3 1 1 1 4 3 4
Angola 3 0 2 1 1 2 2
Iran 3 0 1 2 2 6 1

Portugal and Mexico qualify for second round

Group E

USA 0 Czech Republic 3 (Koller 5, Rosicky 36, 76)

Italy 2 (Pirlo 40, Iaquineta 83) Ghana 0

Czech Republic 0 Ghana 2 (Gyan 2, Muntari 82)

Italy 1 (Gilardino 22) USA 1 (Zaccardo 27-og)

Czech Republic 0 Italy 2 (Materazzi 26, Inzaghi 87)

Ghana 2 (Dramani 22, Appiah 45+2-pen) United States 1 (Dempsey 43)

Final standings
Italy 3 2 1 0 5 1 7
Ghana 3 2 0 1 4 3 6
Czech Republic 3 1 0 2 3 4 3
United States 3 0 1 2 2 6 1

Italy and Ghana qualify for second round

Group F

Australia 3 (Cahill 84, 89, Aloisi 90+2) Japan 1 (Nakamura 26)

Brazil 1 (Kaka 44) Croatia 0

Japan 0 Croatia 0

Australia 0 Brazil 2 (Adriano 49, Fred 89)

Croatia 2 (Sma 2, Kovac 56) Brazil 2 (Moore 38-pen, Kewell 78)

Japan 1 (Tamura 34) Brazil 4 (Ronaldo 45+1, 81, Juninho 52, Gilberto 60)

Final standings
Brazil 3 3 0 0 7 1 9
Australia 3 1 1 1 5 5 4
Croatia 3 0 2 1 2 3 2
Japan 3 0 1 2 2 7 1

Brazil and Australia qualify for second round

Group G

South Korea 2 (Lee Chun-Soo 54, Ahn Jung-Hwan 72) Togo 1 (Mohamed Kader 31)

France 0 Switzerland 0

France 1 (Henry 9) South Korea 1 (Park Ji-Sung 81)

Togo 0 Switzerland 2 (Frei 16, Barnetta 88)

Togo 0 France 2 (Vieira 55, Henry 61) Switzerland 2 (Senders 23, Frei 77)

South Korea 0

Final standings
Switzerland 3 2 1 0 4 0 7
France 3 1 2 0 3 1 5
South Korea 3 1 1 1 3 4 4
Togo 3 0 0 3 1 6 0

Switzerland and France qualify for second round

Group H

Spain 4 (Alonso 13, Villa 17, 48-pen, Torres 81) Ukraine 0

Tunisia 2 (Jaziri 23, Jaidi 90+2) Saudi Arabia 2 (al-Qathani 57, al-Jaber 84)

Saudi Arabia 0 Ukraine 4 (Rusol 4, Rebrov 36, Shevchenko 46, Kalinichenko 84)

Spain 3 (Raul 71, Fernando Torres 76, 90+1-pen) Tunisia 1 (Mnari 8)

Saudi Arabia 0 Spain 1 (Juanito 36) Ukraine 1 (Shevchenko 70-pen) Tunisia 0

Final standings
Spain 3 3 0 0 8 1 9
Ukraine 3 2 0 1 5 4 6
Tunisia 3 0 1 2 3 6 1
Saudi Arabia 3 0 1 2 2 7 1

Spain and Ukraine qualify for second round



Czech Republic were one of the biggest disappointment of the World Cup 2006. Playmaker Pavel Nedved (R) and his Czech teammates look dejected after their elimination following a 2-0 loss to Italy on Thursday in Hamburg.

Triumph, toil and trouble



AFP, Berlin

Rooney hobbled, Togo argued, coaches ranted, the Czechs disappointed, fans sweated and by the end of it, the world's deadliest striker with the bulging waistline had gorged on another record.

If the first round of the World Cup was low on shocks on the pitch, it was high on controversy off it while reputations melted in the 30-degree saunas of 12 German stadiums.

England's bid to win the World Cup for the first time since 1966 was played out in hospital clinics as much as on the pitch.

Wayne Rooney made an impressive recovery from a broken foot to play a bit part against Trinidad and Tobago, then huffed and puffed when he was taken off against Sweden.

Michael Owen's World Cup ended after a minute of the 2-2 draw with the Swedes with knee ligament damage as England reached the second round in stuttering fashion.

Skipper David Beckham also endured a less than productive opening stage with coach Sven-Goran Eriksson hinting the Real Madrid man was expendable.

"I'm here as the England captain in a very good situation. We're in the last 16, we're very confident. I'm not sat up here to discuss my own form, that's for you guys to do," snapped the former golden boy.

By contrast, Ronaldo, condemned as an overweight, over-rated has-been, rescued his reputation with one of the goals of the tournament; a dizzying exchange of passes which finished with a smart turn and drive to secure a 4-1 win over Japan.

The 29-year-old striker now has 14 World Cup goals; level with German legend "bomber" Gerd Muller at the top of the all-time list.

"You have to keep working and not lose heart," said Ronaldo.

Argentina, first round casualties in 2002, threw off the cynicism of old with a breathtaking display of attacking football, which demolished Serbia and Montenegro 6-0.

Juan Roman Riquelme and Lionel Messi look tough to stop.

Germany too proved many wrong winning all three Group A matches to move into the second round.

"It will help us get respect from opponents," said coach Jurgen Klinsmann.

Australia boosted their reputation as a nation of battlers by reaching the second round with the much-criticised Harry Kewell grabbing the equaliser in a 2-2 draw with Croatia.

"It's the most important goal for me so far in my career," said the Liverpool star.

Spain finally look like they now have the mental strength to add to their undoubted style while Ghana, making their finals debut, were the only African team to make the second round.

They did it in some style too with Michael Essien and Stephen Appiah to the fore, which was just as well in the light of the 'Togo fiasco'.

Togo's players threatened to boycott their match against the Swiss over a long-running row over bonuses while coach Otto Pfister resigned and was then reinstated.

France put Togo out of their misery with a 2-0 win which guaranteed Raymond Domenech's side a second round spot.

Biggest disappointments? The Czech Republic, ranked two in the world, found their ageing legs too heavy and despite the talents of Pavel Nedved and Tomas Rosicky, they are heading home.

Also on an early flight are Serbia and Montenegro who arrived in Germany split by internal divisions and bickered from first whistle to the last.

And by the end, Asia were in debt to Australia, the regional new boys, who made the second round after Saudi Arabia, Japan, South Korea and Iran were all left looking distinctly second-rate.

Blame it on the ref



AFP, Hanover

South Korean players angrily turned on Argentine referee Horacio Elizondo after the 2-0 loss to Switzerland sent them packing from the World Cup.

They were furious that Elizondo allowed Alexander Frei's 77th minute goal for Switzerland even though the assistant referee had clearly flagged for offside.

"It was a very, very strange decision," said Spurs defender Lee Young-Pyo.

"I saw the linesman hold up his flag and the referee also saw it. But he (the referee) allowed play to continue, we (the players) cannot understand why."

"I stopped (when I saw the flag) - Frei was offside."

Manchester United star Park Ji-Sung was one of a group of players who surrounded the linesman but their protests were to no avail.

"He (the linesman) told me to continue with the game," said the midfielder.

"We are upset at what happened. The defenders saw the linesman raise his flag so they stopped."

South Korea coach Dick Advocaat was equally as incensed as his players immediately after the incident but had calmed down by the time he spoke to reporters.

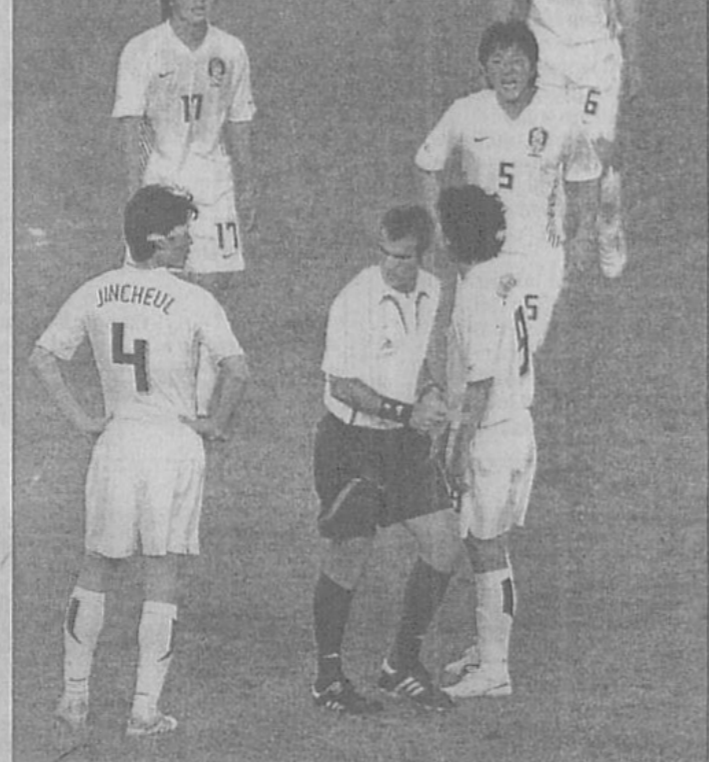
"The referee was quick to change his decision," he said.

"In principle, our player touched the ball on the way through (which played Alexander Frei) onside."

about it (at the time). People tell me he was not offside."

But Advocaat said that South Korea were denied a penalty in the first half when Patrick Muller handled in the box.

"It was a clear penalty," he said. "Most of the decisions did not go our way today. But that said, Switzerland deserved to win."



South Korean defender Choi Jin-cheul (L) and forward Ahn Jung-hwan (R) argue with Argentine referee Dario Garcia (C) during their World Cup match against Switzerland in Hanover on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Al-Jaber calls it a day

AFP, Kaiserslautern

Veteran Saudi Arabia striker Sami al-Jaber announced his retirement from international football on Thursday after the Gulf side were knocked out of the World Cup.

The 33-year-old was made skipper for the day, but was unable to lead his team to victory as the Saudis lost 1-0 to Spain and finished bottom of Group H.

"The match against Spain was the last international match for me," said Jaber.

"The decision is final. I have talked about it with the federation and they are right behind me."

Jaber played 163 times for Saudi Arabia and scored 44 goals.

He had originally retired as an international after the 2002 World Cup but was persuaded to return to help the team qualify for the finals.

His goal in the 2-2 draw with Tunisia in the opening Group H game meant he joined Pele, Diego Maradona and Uwe Seeler as the only man to have scored in World Cups 12 years apart.

French media relieved

AFP, Paris

French media were relieved after Les Bleus finally grabbed a berth in the last 16 of the World Cup but are still not convinced of their true potential.

"That feels good", was the main headline of sports daily L'Equipe on Saturday after France beat Togo 2-0 in their last group match. "It's done", said Le Parisien on its front page.

"France save their skin and invite themselves to third week by the back door," commented Le Figaro.

"The minimalist Bleus have done the minimum but they have done it. What a relief," wrote L'Equipe in its front page editorial.

"Les Bleus had to wait for an hour to score two goals... We shall wait for a few more days until Tuesday to see if they are up to what we can expect from a French World Cup team... Spain will be a different opponent than Switzerland and Togo."

"...the saviour is named (Patrick) Vieira," said the sports daily referring to the midfielder who on his 30th birthday scored the first goal and set up Thierry Henry for the second.

The Juventus player was handed L'Equipe's best mark, 7.5 out of 10. Winger Franck Ribery was awarded 6.5, Henry six and the lowest mark, 3.5, went to fullback Mikael Silvestre.

Blowing up!

AFP, Seoul

A 44-year-old South Korean football fan was booked here Saturday after inquiring about the phone number of the Swiss embassy, saying he would blow it up, police said.

The man, identified only by his family name Kim, called the emergency hotline used to report crimes and asked for the number after Switzerland beat South Korea 2-0 and knocked them out of the World Cup.

"What's the number of the Swiss embassy? I will blow it up," he was quoted as saying when he called the hotline.

Police booked Kim without physical detention after tracing him with the help of the telephone directory service. He is expected to have to pay hundreds of dollars in fines.

No inferiority complex



INTERNET, undated

Guus Hiddink was the coach of South Korea four years ago when the co-hosts famously dumped Italy out of the 2002 World Cup in the first knockout round. It was a glorious or outrageous game depending upon whether you are Italian or not; but leaving aside the controversy over some of the refereeing decisions, the fact remains that the wily Dutch tactician Hiddink surprised the strongly-fancied Azzurri that day.

And now Italy must face Hiddink again, though this time he's at the helm of Australia.

And he doesn't believe there's much chance of Italy underestimating the Socceros in Kaiserslautern on Monday.

"Italy underestimated South Korea that night (in 2002). After what they have seen of Australia in this competition, I do not believe there is any chance they will underestimate a team of mine again."

The Australians have given a good account of themselves in the group stage, beating Japan 3-1 with a sensational three-goal salvo in the last six minutes, going down with honour against champions Brazil and coming from behind twice to thwart Croatia and qualify in the tournament's most incident-packed game to date.

So the Socceros will have no inferiority complex when they take on three-times World Cup winners Italy. (Then again, when did any Australian sports team ever have an inferiority complex?)

Still, the vastly experienced

Hiddink is trying to dampen down the growing optimism around the Australian camp.

He insists Italy are strong favourites and believes their trademark tight defence will be a tougher proposition to break down than Brazil's was.

"We had a few opportunities against Brazil," he added. "Their goalkeeper had to make a couple of good saves."

"Italy are more experienced in their defensive play and I do not imagine they will give us the same number of chances."

Australia will be without suspended full-back Brett Emerton, while Italy (playing their first game since leading Serie A clubs Juventus, AC Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio were charged in the match-fixing scandal) are missing Daniele Del Rossi, who serves the second game of a four-match ban.

Despair for thousands



AFP, Seoul

Hundreds of thousands of bleary-eyed South Korean football fans went home dejected early Saturday after their Red Devils were knocked out of the World Cup.

Nearly 1.7 million people -- many of them sporting red t-shirts and horns in honor of the beloved national team -- massed before large-screen TVs set up across the country to watch the do-or-die match against the Swiss, police said.

But the team's 2-0 loss, which included a controversial goal by Swiss striker Alexander Frei, left the fans in despair after a sleepless night.

"Korea did well. But they failed to translate scoring chances into goals. I thought they would make it to the last 16 and cheered them really hard," said 25-year-old Sung Mi-Sun, barely holding back her tears.

In the capital Seoul, some 170,000 fans crammed into a square outside City Hall, shouting "Daehan Minguk" (Korea Republic) and cheering wildly before the crunch

game began.

Fans of the surprise 2002 World Cup semi-finalists had high expectations as goalkeeper and captain Lee Woon-Jae, one of the heroes of the 2002 campaign, made his 100th appearance for the national team.

But they fell silent only moments later as a powerful header from Philippe Senderos gave Switzerland a 1-0 half-time lead in the Group G match in Hanover.

The shock was short-lived and the loud, enthusiastic chanting soon resumed as the Red Devils attempted to create opportunities for a leveller.

But the South Korean hopes were again dashed and cheering turned to raucous booing as Frei, called offside by the assistant referee, slid the ball home anyway and referee Horacio Elizondo allowed the goal to stand.

As the final whistle blew on South Korea's defeat, the crowd heaved a collective sigh, some shed tears and several expressed anger at what they called bad officiating.

"They displayed their unbending spirit. They fought quite well," said Kim Young-Jin, a 50-year-old corporate worker.

"But the second goal was just ridiculous. The assistant judge raised the flag and it was absolutely no goal," he said as he prepared to leave

the square, picking up a copy of a newspaper he had sat on throughout the night.

A dejected 20-year-old sociology student, with dyed bright yellow hair and one ear pierced, rested on the curb with his friend, refusing to return home.

"I am so tired. I can't walk now," he said, his voice hoarse from shouting.

"They fought very well but they had no luck. The referees were not fair," he said, adding he came to claim a good spot to watch the match at 10 pm, six hours before kick-off.

The country's newspapers heaped praise on the players for their competitive spirit.

"Lost but we were happy in June," said the Chosun daily above a front-page picture of the assistant referee flagging Frei for being offside.

"South Korea looked stronger than ever... Only the goddess of luck did not smile at us," it said.

"The City Hall Square in tears... but we will dream again in 2010 in South Africa," the daily said.

For the Dong-A newspaper, the national squad was a source of pride, despite not making it to the knockout stages of the tournament.

"No matter what the results were, they fought well," it said.



SAMI AL-JABER

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Actor McBride
4 Peter Pan's pooch
8 History
12 Pos-sessed
13 Peacock-tail
14 Pat on the buns?
15 "— bel"
16 Apartheid
18 Rodent
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21 Brewery output
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28 Ignores the light
32 Robin Cook novel
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34 Spitzer of New York politics
36 "Les —"
37 Anger
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DOWN
5 Maiden-name
6 Arthur's sword
7 Sends out invitations
8 Elegantly worded
9 Matter-horn, for one
10 Witness
11 Anderson's rival
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17 A billion years
19 Handle clumsily
22 Model Macpher-son
23 Dexterity
25 "Dream Along With Me" singer
26 Eastern potentate
27 Demolish Cup
28 Cup-board-shelf lineup
29 Enos' granddad
30 Guri's discipline
31 McGwire rival
35 Tone properties
38 Marty Robbins hit
40 Fresh
42 Abner's adjective
45 Scrabble piece
47 Pronto, on a memo
48 Approaching
49 Pink-slipped