



CANT STOP ME: Portugal's Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari (2nd from L) celebrates his record 11th straight World Cup win after his side ousted Holland from the World Cup on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Scolari stays undaunted

Gelsenkirchen pitch partly replaced

AFP, Berlin

AFP, Nuremberg

Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari said Portugal still had enough firepower for their World Cup quarterfinal with England despite the ravages of the stormiest match in World Cup history.

Deco and Costinha are out with red cards, Cristiano Ronaldo limped off injured but Luis Figo survived punishment despite headbutting during the incident-packed last-16 win over the Netherlands.

But Scolari, who turned down an offer to coach England before the tournament, said his squad could cope.

"We have enough players on the bench," he said.

"I have 21 now with a will that I've never seen in a Portuguese team, and sometimes that will overcome the quality that England has."

He said he was hopeful Ronaldo would recover in time for Saturday's clash.

"Cristiano Ronaldo has five or six days to recover. We hope he will recover and I have good players and I'm going to prepare a team to face England," the coach said.

Scolari is no stranger to overcoming England after masterminding their quarterfinals demise

in the last two major tournaments, first with Brazil in 2002 and then with Portugal at Euro 2004.

But he said the two wins -- in both of which his teams came from behind -- did not give him a psychological edge over England boss Sven Goran Eriksson.

"Just because I beat him once or twice doesn't mean I'm better than him," Scolari said.

"I think the two of us have good capabilities. We respect each other."

He said he had snubbed England's advances because he was still employed by Portugal at the time.

However Scolari, who has subsequently admitted interest in coaching England, said he had not decided what to do when his contract runs out after the World Cup.

"I'm a coach of the old school -- I fulfil my contract and I have to fulfil my contract right till the end of the World Cup, even if I was honoured to be invited by England," he said.

"I'm happy to have stayed with Portugal until the end of my contract."

The Brazilian extended his record World Cup winning streak to 11 with a virtuoso display of gamesmanship against the Dutch, preserving a slender 1-0 lead despite

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

New turf has been laid in the goalmouths at the Gelsenkirchen stadium where England will face Portugal in a World Cup quarterfinal on Saturday, the organisers said on Monday.

But the area around the penalty spots did not require attention, Organising Committee spokesman Gerd Graus said.

"The turf has been changed where the goalkeeper stands and only partly in those areas," Graus said.

The Gelsenkirchen stadium, known as the AufSchalke Arena, has been a cause for concern because yellow patches have developed on the turf.

The organisers blamed the design of the stadium for preventing enough light reaching the grass. The ultra-modern ground has a sliding roof, but it has been open for the four games it has hosted so far.

England blamed the poor state of the penalty spots for their defeat to Portugal in the Euro 2004 quarterfinal.

David Beckham claimed his spot-kick in the penalty shootout went over the bar because the turf was rutted in the Stadium of Light in Lisbon.

"When I planted my foot the ball just lifted," he said.

Ivanov the terrible Holland, Portugal in hall of shame

REUTERS, Nuremberg

Russian referee Valentin Ivanov was given a resounding vote of no confidence by players, coaches and even FIFA president Sepp Blatter after he lost control of Portugal's 1-0 win over Netherlands on Sunday.

Ivanov produced his yellow card 16 times and his red card four times as both teams were reduced to nine men in their second round clash -- a record for any World Cup.

The previous record was 18 cards -- two players were sent off -- in a 2002 World Cup finals match between Cameroon and Germany.

This increased the number of red cards for the ongoing tournament to a record 23 just midway through the second round and five days before the quarterfinals begin on Friday.

Portugal, who had two players sent off, five cautioned and also lost winger Cristiano Ronaldo through an injury inflicted by a high tackle, meet England in Gelsenkirchen on Saturday.

"I consider that today the referee was not at the same level as the participants, the players. There could have been a yellow card for

the referee," Blatter told Portugal's SIC television channel.

"This was a game of emotion, with exceptional drama in the last instant, with a deserved winner," he added. "It was a great show with intervention by the referee that was not consistent and (had) lack of fair play by some players."

Ivanov, a 45-year-old music-loving teacher, attempted to establish his control from the start when he cautioned two Dutchmen in the opening seven minutes.

But instead of gaining command of the game, he sent the contest into a spiral of chaos as Portugal took a 23rd minute lead, thanks to a well-taken goal by Maniche, and defended it with every trick in the professionals' book.

In the end, Ivanov sent off Costinha and Deco of Portugal, each for two yellow cards, and Khalid Boulahrouz and Giovanni van Bronckhorst of the Netherlands, both also for two cautions.

He also handed out yellows to Portugal's Maniche, Petit, Luis Figo, Ricardo and Nuno Valente and the Netherlands' Mark van

Bommel, Wesley Sneijder and Rafael van der Vaart.

"I must say it was a pity that there was no football in the second half," said Dutch coach Marco van Basten.

"The referee made a mess of it and Portugal used all their experience, all their tricks and time-wasting. We just couldn't play. It was chaos and it should not happen this way at a World Cup."

Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari defended captain Luis Figo, who was cautioned for butting Mark van Bommel in a scrap to grab the ball when the Dutch were refusing to hand it back.

Van Bommel said: "They were not any smarter than us, but the referee let them get away with it."

"If Figo butts you, and he only gets a yellow card, and then minutes later he 'delivers' Boulahrouz's second yellow when, already, he should have been in the dressing room... Well, they are crucial mistakes that shouldn't be made at a World Cup."

But Scolari said Figo only did what a committed player should do when goaded by his opponents, adding "Jesus Christ said he would

turn the other cheek but Figo is not Jesus Christ. I thought he was more correct than the Dutchmen."

Scolari refused to accept that his side tricked their way to victory and van Basten, when asked about his own team's physical style and their role in the chaos, said: "If they are talking about fair play, they should look at themselves first."

Ivanov, however, has received full backing from his most loyal fan, father and former top international striker Valentin Ivanov Sr.

The elder Ivanov, who played in two World Cups in 1958 in Sweden and 1962 in Chile, where he was the joint top scorer, said his son did a good job.

"It was a very difficult game to officiate and I think he handled himself quite well considering the circumstances," he told Reuters in a telephone interview on Monday. "It was a very intense match, both teams were considered title contenders, thus no one wanted to lose and go home."

"The referee tried to set the tone right from the start to keep tempers under control by showing yellow cards. If he didn't do it, the match

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

WC BRIEFS

AFP, Berlin

The stadium door at Leipzig which French star Zinedine Zidane kicked in anger after being substituted during the 1-1 group draw with South Korea is to be kept in its damaged state as a "souvenir" of his visit, the stadium director of football says.

"I initially was going to ask FIFA to reimburse us for this damaged door," said Winfried Lenz.

"But on reflection we are going to preserve this door deformed by a kick from one of the greatest ever footballers."

Zidane is to retire after the World Cup but after France beat Togo in his absence he now is set to come back to face Spain in the last 16.

Anti-English

Police in Scotland are investigating claims that fans ripped down England flags from a house north of the border and set them alight. Alexander Clark, an English cleaner who has lived in the Scottish town of Stonehaven for 20 years, found his ruined flags dumped near a bus-stop.

"I am just really angry about it. This is obviously anti-English. I have always flown my flags and I get banter but no-one has gone this far before."

Street World Cup

Teams from Ghana and Nigeria will

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



TRIGGER-HAPPY: Combo of pictures showing Russian referee Valentin Ivanov giving marching orders to (L-R) Bronckhorst, Costinha, Boulahrouz and Deco during the Holland-Portugal round of 16 match at Nuremberg. Ivanov showed a total of 20 cards, an unwanted World Cup record.

PHOTO: AFP

The Daily Star
RANGS TOSHIBA
 WORLD CUP QUIZ 2006

Plasma Fridge

.....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

- Who scored the first goal in the 2006 World Cup? Klose Lahm Wanchope
- The smallest nation to have played in the World Cup finals is: Trinidad & Tobago Cameroon Jamaica
- Which Asian player scored in three World Cup finals? Nakata Sami Al Jaber Ali Daei
- Which World Cup final match ended goalless during the regulation time? Italia '90 Argentina '78 USA '94
- 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."

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

today's matches

match1 : Brazil (bra) vs Ghana (gha)
 match2 : Spain (spa) vs France (fra)

banglalink you, first!