

Argentina won't change style

AFP, Herzogenaurach

Argentine stars Lionel Messi and Carlos Tevez said Tuesday the team will not change their style when they go up against three-time champions and hosts Germany in Friday's quarterfinal.

"Germany will be a tough nut to crack as they have great players but Argentina will play its game and keep the ball on the ground. That is the way through for us," said Barcelona starlet Messi as he insisted that the South Americans' mobility would allow them to edge the encounter.

Going up against the muscular Germans means that were it down to physique alone the Argentines, winners in 1978 and then at Germany's expense in 1986 but beaten by them in the 1990 final, would perhaps struggle.

"It was a fight we'd surely lose - but if we play our game to feet then we have a good chance of advancing," said Tevez.

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Merkel wants Klinsmann to stay on

AFP, Berlin

German Chancellor Angela Merkel heaped praise on national football coach Jurgen Klinsmann in an interview published on Wednesday and predicted Germany would reach the World Cup semifinals.

"He has done a wonderful job of preparing the Mannschaft (team) for the World Cup. I hope he carries on," she said.

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Ghana Africa's watershed

AFP, Dortmund

Ghana's World Cup dreams were shattered by reigning champions Brazil, but the Black Stars played well against some top football teams and served notice of what might happen on African soil in 2010.

A three-week Cinderella run ended here Tuesday in a 3-0 second-round loss to Brazil, but victories by the Black Stars over Euro 2004 semifinalists Czech Republic and 2002 World Cup quarterfinalists United States sent a message.

"In the future, I believe the Black Stars from Ghana will show you more in this competition," Ghana coach Ratomir Djukovic said.

Ghana's debutant World Cup team, an upstart collection that shocked the Czechs and outlasted the Americans with flair and speed as well as discipline, showing what they can accomplish ahead of the 2010 South African World Cup.

"It will be a different team but I think we can make it," said Ghana captain Appiah, a former Juventus midfielder.

"If you want to be the best, you have to play against the best."

"We do have the quality. Anything is possible."

No team faced a rockier four-team road than Ghana with Italy, the Czechs and US team and mighty Brazil.

To split four matches was enough to earn respect. Doing so with a physical side that led the Cup in fouls was even more

impressive.

Djukovic, a 60-year-old Serbian, might not be back for another World Cup run. He would not comment when asked about speculation he might take over Serbia's team, looking for a new coach in the wake of a winless World Cup performance.

Until the end of 2006, Djukovic is committed to Ghana.

"Maybe we will sit and discuss about a new contract until 2008 but at this moment, I cannot tell you anything about it," Djukovic said.

Finally fulfilling the promise shown by two under-17 world championship sides against the elite level, Ghana sent a message to rivals that the Black Stars are ready to challenge Cameroon and Nigeria for African supremacy.

"I'm very proud of our players," Djukovic said. "They fought from the beginning of the first match to the end."

Djukovic went from goat to genius as fast as it took the Black Stars to bounce back from a 2-0 opening loss to Italy and claim a 2-0 shock triumph over the second-ranked Czechs, then edge the Americans 2-1 to advance.

Africa's lone team in the final 16 surrendered a record 15th World Cup goal to Brazilian playmaker Ronaldo in the fifth minute and allowed another off a pass that deflected off a defender's leg.

The effort against Brazil came with 25-year-old star Michael Essien, a Chelsea midfielder, suspended for a match due to yellow cards.

WC BRIEFS

AFP, Berlin

Germany's all-action midfielder Torsten Frings says he is planning on adding to his already extensive collection of tattoos.

The sprawling collection of squiggles snaking down his right bicep -- including the Chinese star sign of his wife and two daughters -- and a smaller tattoo on his left arm are set to be adorned by further designs done by an old friend who has a parlour in the Netherlands, he told Bild newspaper.

Frings, 29, also commented on his day-off outfit, which included an MP3 player engraved with his nickname ("Sucker") which was given to him by Werder Bremen teammate Patrick Owomoyela as well as a 10,000-euro watch from jeweller to the stars Jacob and Co. "I don't really go for expensive things," Frings said, slightly unconvincingly.

Fashion advice!

Ghana coach Ratomir Djukovic watched the second half of his squad's 3-0 second-round World Cup loss to Brazil away from the bench after offering Slovakian referee Michel Lubos some fashion advice.

"It would be better for us if you put on a yellow jersey," the 60-year-old Serbian suggested, drawing an ejection moments after Ghana conceded a goal in first-half injury time.

"I was never sent off until today," said the vastly-experienced handler, who numbers Rwanda and Burma among his former teams.

Djukovic's ire was aroused after a cross from Brazil captain Cafu

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HARTAL IN BRAZIL! One of the busiest expressways of Sao Paulo, a Brazilian city, is devoid of any traffic during the World Cup round of 16 match between Brazil and Ghana on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Domenech hails golden oldies

AFP, Hanover

France coach Raymond Domenech playfully poured scorn on the notion that his team of aged stars should be more concerned about pipes and slippers than facing Brazil in the quarterfinals of the World Cup.

Despite the bulk of Les Bleus being the wrong side of 30 and averaging five years older a man they swept Spain aside 3-1 in Tuesday's last 16 encounter here to send France to Frankfurt for Saturday's dream last eight clash.

And at the heart of a victory that was as sweet as it was unexpected after France had made such heavywork of escaping their group were 34-year-old captain Zinedine Zidane and 30-year-old Patrick Vieira.

Domenech observed: "Patrick Vieira was written off, Zizou ought not to be playing... But our little team of oldies are still in there."

"They may be old but they are patient."

The perception before this tantalising match up was that Luis

Aragones' young bloods would prove too lively for Zidane and company but from the off France were matching them step for step.

Spain took a 26th minute lead when David Villa converted a penalty after Lilian Thuram, another member of the thirtysomething club, felled Pablo Ibanez.

But France, playing arguably their best football since Domenech took the helm after Euro 2004, hit back with Frank Ribery, the man they're saying will step into Zidane's giant shoes, levelling before the break.

France showed no signs of wilting as the game headed towards extra time with Zidane showing a level of fitness hitherto hidden in Germany.

His freekick in the 83rd minute put France into the lead for the first time with Vieira heading it home and then Zidane rounded off a memorable night with France's third in stoppage time.

"I'm happy for Zidane," said the 57-year-old manager.

"He's 34 and he was running

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French press praise heroes

AFP, Paris

The French press on Wednesday hailed their national team's achievement in rolling back the years and qualifying for the World Cup quarter-finals with a thrilling come-from-behind win over Spain.

Newspapers hailed the return of the much-maligned 'Captain Fantastic' Zinedine Zidane who orchestrated the 3-1 victory at the age of 34, eight years after leading France to the 1998 title.

Zidane had come under fire in the group stages for ineffectual performances and for getting himself suspended for the crucial first-round match against Togo.

But all is forgiven now.

"Giant!" screamed le Parisien with a full-page picture of a grinning Zidane after scoring the third goal in Hanover.

"Les Bleus are back: like the best moments of 1998, the French team brilliantly qualified for the World Cup quarter-finals."

"Thanks to goals from (Frank) Ribery, (Patrick) Vieira and a Zidane back to his best, (Raymond) Domenech's men will play a revengeful Brazil on Saturday."

Expectations have soared in every newspaper as they all made allusions to France's victorious 1998 campaign, when they beat Brazil in the final, and the successful European Championships challenge two years later.

"Happiness!" said sports daily L'Equipe, using a full-page picture of a pile of French players celebrating Vieira's goal.

France were "impressive and dominant, like in their glory years", it added.

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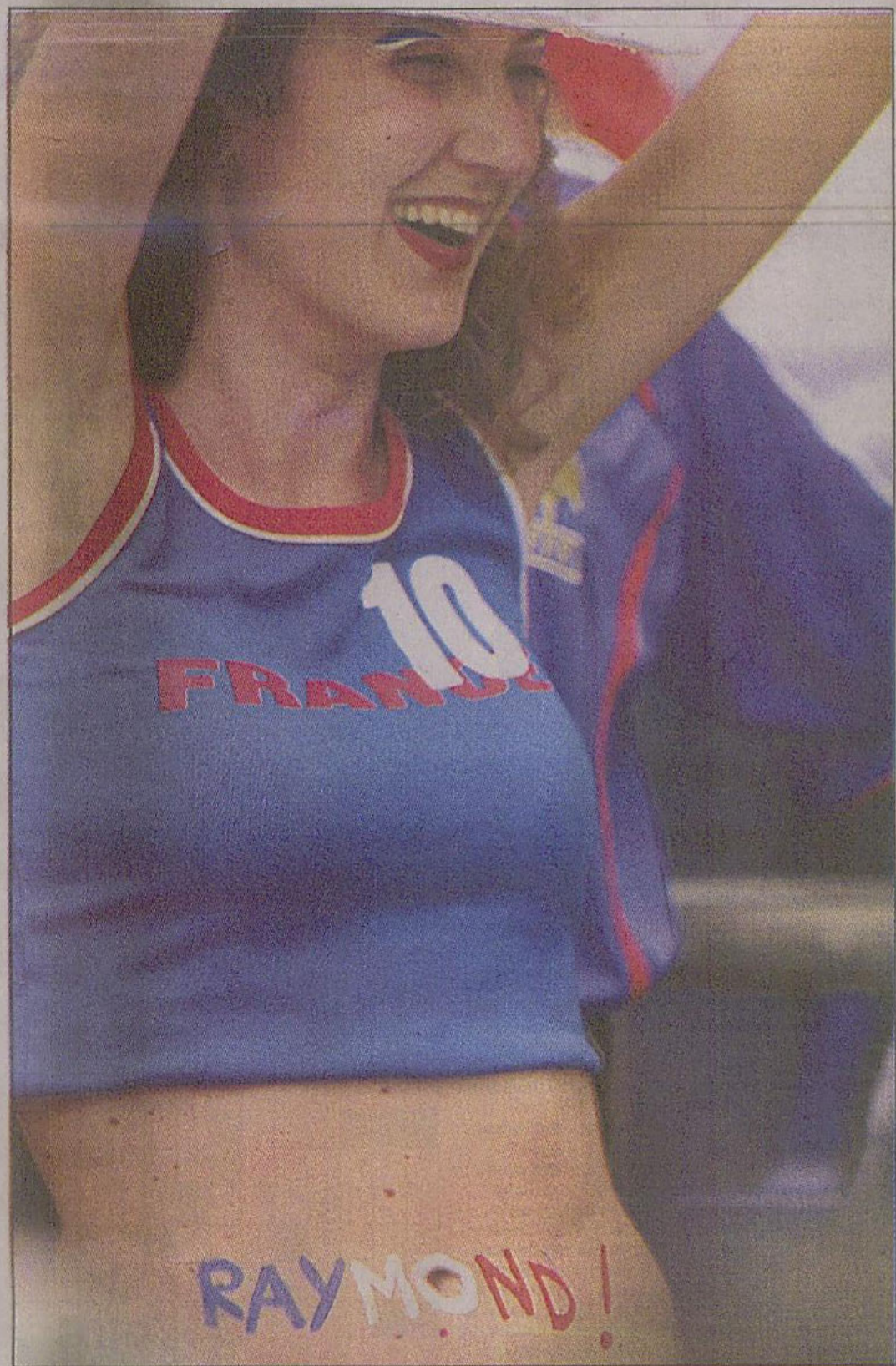


PHOTO: AFP

THE ONLY RAYMOND FAN? A supporter with French coach Raymond Domenech's name painted on her belly enjoys her time during the France-Spain encounter at the AWD Arena in Hanover on Tuesday.

The Daily Star
RANGS TOSHIBA
 WORLD CUP QUIZ 2006

.....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	Wanchope
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	Ali Daei
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	Massi

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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