

DHAKA FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2006

ITALY V UKRAINE

Sheva targets Italian hearts

REUTERS, Duisburg

Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko is the main threat to Italy's hopes of reaching the World Cup semi-finals but at least they know all about him.

Shevchenko, playing in Ukraine's first finals, was the darling of AC Milan fans during seven seasons in which he scored 173 goals and helped them win the Champions League and Serie A.

But he will not be thinking about that on Friday. "It will be very hard but during the game I will only be thinking about how to best play for Ukraine," he said.

His decision last month to

become Chelsea's record signing robbed the Italian league of one of its top players and former Milan team mate Alessandro Nesta knows exactly how good he is.

"There are few players like him in the world," said the Italy defender who misses the quarterfinal with a groin injury.

"To stop Shevchenko you have to be at 100 percent because he has very few weak points. You have to stick with him and be attentive for the whole 90 minutes," he added.

Shevchenko was equally complimentary about Italy.

"I would single out the whole team," he said when asked who were Italy's strongest players.

Nesta's absence and the suspension of natural replacement Marco Materazzi leaves Italy coach

Marcello Lippi with no option but to field the relatively inexperienced Andrea Barzagli alongside Fabio Cannavaro in the centre of defence.

Nesta, who hopes to return if Italy make the semifinals, was confident Barzagli would be able to handle the challenge.

"He is a young player but he has the advantage of being very cool under pressure and also a very

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TEAMS

Italy (4-3-2-1)

1-Gianluigi Buffon; 19-Gianluca Zambrotta, 6-Andrea Barzagli, 5-Fabio Cannavaro, 3-Fabio Grosso, 20-Simone Perrotta, 21-Andrea Pirlo, 8-Gennaro Gattuso; 16-Mauro Camoranesi, 10-Francesco Totti; 11-Alberto Gilardino.

Ukraine (3-5-2)

1-Oleksander Shovkovsky (72-0), 6-Andriy Rusol (26-2), 22-Vyacheslav Svidersky (8-0), 2-Andriy Nesmachny (53-0); 9-Oleg Gusev (29-1), 4-Anatoly Tymoshchuk (59-1), 8-Oleg Shelayev (23-0), 19-Maxim Kalinichenko (24-4), 11-Serhiy Rebrov (74-15); 7-Andriy Shevchenko (68-31), 16-Andriy Vorobel (56-7).

HEAD TO HEAD

Italy v Ukraine head-to-head record (FIFA records)

Italy leads 2-0 with one draw
 1995: Ukraine 0 Italy 2 (Kiev)
 1995: Italy 3 Ukraine 1 (Bern)
 2006: Italy 0 Ukraine 0 (Lausanne)

KEY QUOTES

Italy coach Lippi: "Ukraine are a very solid and compact side and, as we are doing with Totti, they are getting (Andriy) Shevchenko back to his best even if he did miss his penalty in the shootout against Switzerland."

Ukraine coach Blokhin: "The Italians are a tough team, particularly strong at the back. It will be difficult to create chances against them."



FIRE IT LIKE FRANCESCO: Italian forward Francesco Totti practises freekicks during a training session in Duisburg on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Lippi extremely 'lucky'

AFP, Duisburg

Italy have been slammed by the international press for their unspectacular World Cup performances, but the three-time champions are unfazed by their detractors.

"We are very proud to have come this far with the desire we have shown," said Italy coach Marcello Lippi at a press conference here Thursday on the eve of their quarterfinal against Ukraine in Hamburg.

"Now we have a great chance to go further and be one of the best four teams in the world. It would be fantastic."

Lippi believes the flack his team have taken for being less adventurous than Italian teams of the past is undeserved given their excellent form over the past year, including a 4-1 win over Germany and a 3-1 defeat of Holland in World Cup warm-up matches.

"In my opinion these comments have been exaggerated," said the 58-year-old whose team are unbeaten in their last 22 internationals.

"During the past year the press have been raving about our performances and now they are criticising us just because of the last couple of matches. I don't understand how their minds can change so quickly."

Lippi responded with heavy irony to suggestions that Italy have been very lucky to reach the last eight.

"Yeah, I've really had a lot of luck," he said.

"I lost Francesco Totti three months before the World Cup began and we weren't sure if he was going to recover in time."

"Then we lost Gianluca Zambrotta for 15 days, and then Gennaro Gattuso and Alessandro Nesta got injured. This kind of luck is unprecedented."

Lippi stressed the need for his

team to be aware of the whole Ukraine team and not only worry about striker Andriy Shevchenko, who terrorised Serie A defences for seven years with AC Milan before joining Chelsea last month.

"Obviously Shevchenko is their best known player, their most important player and a world class champion," he said.

"They have lots of good players and they are going to be a tough obstacle."

"After losing to Spain in their first match, they have won three games without conceding a goal."

If Italy beat Ukraine, they will face either hosts Germany or Argentina in the semifinals in Dortmund.

Italy have met Ukraine on three previous occasions. They beat them home and away in qualification matches for the 1996 European championships and the teams played out a goalless draw in a friendly last month.

TACTICS

Italy coach Marcello Lippi has altered his formation and personnel for each game so far. The most likely options are his original 4-3-1-2 with two strikers and Francesco Totti behind them or the 4-3-2-1 system that worked against Czech Republic using a sole striker with Mauro Camoranesi and Totti in advanced midfield roles. Ukraine are likely to stick with the 3-5-2 formation that has seen them progress this far, although Andriy Shevchenko will get a new strike partner because Andriy Vorobel has picked up a thigh injury and will miss the rest of the tournament.



MARCELLO LIPPI

OLEG BLOKHIN

ITALY

Defence: With the relatively inexperienced Andrea Barzagli partnering Fabio Cannavaro in the centre of defence, Cannavaro is likely to be given the job of marking dangerous Shevchenko.

Fullbacks Gianluca Zambrotta and Fabio Grosso like to get forward but have had limited opportunities so far. Grosso's run in the last minute against Australia that secured the decisive penalty may tempt Lippi to urge more overlapping from the pair.

Midfield: Regardless of how the forward line is organised, Lippi should stick with Andrea Pirlo in his deep, playmaker's role in front of the defence with Gennaro Gattuso and Simone Perrotta covering plenty of ground in their harrying roles.

Forwards: With a single striker, Totti will be free to play close to the front line but if Lippi opts for a more offensive lineup, with Alberto Gilardino and Luca Toni operating as a pair, then Totti will be expected to drift

deeper into midfield. Filippo Inzaghi is likely to start on the bench but is an option if the Italians need a goal in the second half.

UKRAINE

Defence: Ukraine benefit from the return after suspension of Vyacheslav Svidersky and Andriy Rusol, who are likely to be joined by Andriy Nesmachny in a three-man defence. Defensive midfielder Anatoly Tymoshchuk can be relied on as a solid, if sometimes reckless, tackler to help out at the back.

Midfield: Attacking midfielder Serhiy Rebrov is likely to return to the starting lineup after coach Oleg Blokhin dropped him to the bench for the last match after a weak showing against Tunisia.

Forwards: Blokhin will probably pair Andriy Vorobel with Shevchenko. Vorobel seems in favour with the coach and was chosen to start instead of Rebrov in the second round match against Switzerland.

WC BRIEFS

AFP, Berlin

Ukraine coach Oleg Blokhin was European footballer of the year and deservedly so in 1975 after picking up top honours with Dynamo Kiev and making more than a century of appearances for the former Soviet Union, spanning two World Cups.

His exploits, including eight league titles, earned him the sobriquet "major," though others in Kiev preferred the more affectionate "flea."

But with Ukraine having made the quarterfinals here on their debut, others have been referring to the eminence grise on the bench as the general.

"Why they should promote me I don't know," he smiled.

Trap-ped Blokhin made a brief slip of the tongue in looking forward to the quarterfinal with Italy.

When asked if he thought the Azzurri would field Francesco Totti from the outset Blokhin said: "that's Trapattoni's problem," referring to former Italian coach Giovanni Trapattoni.

"Sorry, I mean that's Lippi's problem," he corrected himself.

Extra large

Hamburg, which will host the quarterfinal clash between Ukraine and Italy, will see the

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Notice

Dear readers, Due to unavoidable reasons, the draw of The Daily Star-Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz 2006 Round 4 in Chittagong cannot be held today as scheduled. It will now be held on July 4.



PHOTO: AFP

IF YOU CAN SCORE HERE...Ukrainian footballers training on Wednesday in Potsdam ahead of their quarterfinal clash against Italy.

The Daily Star
RANGS TOSHIBA
 WORLD CUP QUIZ 2006

LCD TV
THIS CAN BE YOURS

2006 Round 5 (Bumper), Draw in Dhaka
 (See June 8 issue of the Star Sport for competition information, prizes and rules)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz Round 5 (Bumper) Ends July 09, 2006

Tick (✓) the correct answers

1. Whom did Ronaldo overtake as the leading scorer in the World Cup?	Muller <input type="checkbox"/>	Pele <input type="checkbox"/>	Fontaine <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Which player was shown three yellow cards in a World Cup match?	Simuric <input type="checkbox"/>	Deco <input type="checkbox"/>	De Rossi <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Who scored the 2000th World Cup goal?	Ze Roberto <input type="checkbox"/>	Joe Cole <input type="checkbox"/>	Allback <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Which World Cup champions failed to win it at home?	Italy <input type="checkbox"/>	Uruguay <input type="checkbox"/>	Brazil <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Who is this player?	Essien <input type="checkbox"/>	Drogba <input type="checkbox"/>	Saha <input type="checkbox"/>

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 5."

READ The Daily Star TO CATCH THE WORLD CUP FEVER

banglalink goal pick & win contest

how to participate:

how to pick your team?
 Write Message
 go to message option

type p#w<space> 1st 3 letters of country

Phone Number
 2006
 send to 2006

others will win them if you don't!

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

today's matches
 match1 : Argentina (arg) vs Germany (ger)
 match2 : Italy (ita) vs Ukraine (ukr)

NOKIA