

We can lift the trophy: Totti

INTERNET, undated

Francesco Totti, Fabio Grosso and Luca Toni all warn the Azzurri are ready to go all the way and lift the World Cup.

"Now we have a very important semifinal, but as far as I can see we're only a small step away from going all the way to the objective we'd set ourselves before the tournament," said the Roma star.

"It's pointless denying it or hiding away: we want to win the World Cup. We have always believed in our chances and none of us are going to stop now, starting from myself. This is going to be one of those exciting, emotional games that every player dreams of taking part in. We have the chance to make that dream come true."

The 3-0 victory over the Ukraine opened the doors to an intriguing semifinal against hosts Germany in Dortmund.

"Germany are a tough, difficult and organised side, but if you asked me if I wanted another side, then I'd say no. I'm happy to take on the Germans. Besides, we'd love to win for all the Italian ex-pats who live and work in Germany."

Totti's form has been in the balance after three months out with a fractured ankle and he thanked Coach Marcello Lippi for leaving him on the bench for most of the Australia match.

"After a lot of hard work, I am finally back to my old self. I've started doing my tricks again and hope to keep improving all the way. I must thank Lippi, as until the second round I had been playing a lot and the rest did me good."

Totti isn't the only Italy player whose confidence is growing as they enter the final four in the World Cup.

"We want to go straight to the Final," added Grosso. "We are among the four strongest teams in the sport and now is where it gets interesting. We don't want to stop now, as we had a tough start, but remain united and solid."

Florentina striker Toni finally broke his goal duck with two goals in the quarterfinal and is eager to keep going.

"At a certain stage, I began to wonder if I'd end this World Cup without scoring. Now that I've broken through and everyone keeps reminding me of Paolo Rossi's 1982 tournament, perhaps I won't stop now. We can hope."

Pablito was the subject of a great deal of criticism in the early games, but went on to score decisive goals in the final three matches of the competition to lift the trophy. However, Toni took the opportunity to hit back at some of his own critics.

"It's too easy now to come here and praise me. I felt the lack of confidence around me and I was picked on by the media and fans."

Klinsmann given ultimatum

AFP, Berlin

Theo Zwanziger, the president of the German Football Federation (DFB), said Sunday that Germany manager Jurgen Klinsmann would be given time to consider his future after the World Cup but must make a decision by August 16.

German chiefs pleaded with Klinsmann - who has guided the hosts into the semi-finals of the World Cup - to sign a contract extension prior to the finals but the 41-year-old coach said he wanted to discuss the situation with his family.

"The only timeframe is our first international against Sweden on August 16," Zwanziger told Bild am Sonntag.

"After the end of the World Cup on July 9, Klinsmann would have five weeks to decide whether he extends his contract."

Klinsmann took over the job in August 2004 and is contracted until the end of the World Cup finals.

The DFB want Klinsmann to sign a two-year extension to guide the team towards Euro 2008 in Austria and Switzerland.

Former Inter Milan and Tottenham Hotspur striker Klinsmann has admitted he is having a lot of fun in the job but said his family - who are based in the United States - would have the final say.

Germany chiefs have been impressed by Klinsmann's work with the national team over the past two years and have vowed to continue his policy of nurturing young talent and playing attacking football - whether he stays or goes.

"Klinsmann has installed a philosophy in this team and that needs to continue as we owe it to the fans - even if there is the risk it sometimes doesn't work," Zwanziger said.



Italian coach Marcello Lippi (C) walks past striker Luca Toni (L) and playmaker Francesco Totti during a training session in Duisburg on Saturday.

Germans fear Lippi's boys



INTERNET, undated

It's an all-European final four and Germany's Oliver Bierhoff and Rudi Voller admit they're worried at the prospect of facing Italy.

"If they play the way they can, the Azzurri really are frightening," confessed former Milan, Udinese and Ascoli star Bierhoff. He is now the assistant manager to German boss Juergen Klinsmann and advised how to take on the Italians.

"The only way to beat them is to really attack them from the start," he told newspaper 'Frankfurter Allgemeine' ahead of Tuesday's semifinal in Dortmund.

Another ex-Serie A star, both as a player and Coach, is former Roma

tactician Rudi Voller. He was called in by 'Bild' to explain the Italian way.

"Gianluigi Buffon is insurmountable. Luca Toni is not just the man who scored 31 goals for Fiorentina this season, but is also a powerful physical figure upfront. As for Francesco Totti, watch out for his sheer class. This player has recovered from a serious injury and is quickly recapturing his form," noted Voller.

Even the German captain Michael Ballack, who had been linked with Inter before choosing a record-breaking contract with Chelsea, conceded his concern. "I am worried about the way Italy play and how to break them down," he told 'Bild'.

"And now we find Toni-goal in the semifinal," warned 'Bild' in their editorial. "These are the opponents who have always made us quake! We really wanted to avoid the Azzurri, as we've never won against them in a World Cup. They have Toni and Totti

backed by a wall."

Meanwhile, the simmering tension between the Azzurri camp and newspaper 'Der Spiegel' seems to be subsiding. This week the editorial called Italian males 'parasites, Mamma's boys and slimy,' prompting Francesco Totti, who said he was beaten up by an Italian as a child or his wife is cheating on him with an Italian Stallion."

Last morning's edition contained a measured response from vice-director Ruediger Ditz. "I can understand Gattuso's angry reaction. Those who shell it out must be prepared to take it in return."

Meanwhile, the more superstitious among the Italians are already looking to the fact only European teams are left in the semifinals just like in 1982. Back then Italy saw off Poland and Germany beat France before the Azzurri lifted the World Cup trophy in Madrid.

We want more: Metzelder



AFP, Berlin

Host nation Germany is still basking in the glory of their World Cup quarterfinal penalty shootout win over Argentina on Friday but defender Christoph Metzelder said the team was not resting on its laurels.

Three-time winners Italy are up next for Germany in Tuesday's semifinal in Dortmund and the hosts are hungry for more success.

"Our target is to be world champions. We are happy with what achieved but it is not enough for us. 25-year-old Metzelder said at Sunday's press conference.

"As hosts we have a great chance. We have used the atmosphere and developed as a team. We have a lot of confidence and I think the other teams can see that."

Metzelder, a member of the 2002 team that reached the final but who suffered a string of injuries following it, expects the Italy game to be like the Argentina duel with a rock solid

backline backed up by lethal forwards.

"I believe Italy will be similar to our Argentina game. They are a good team with a strong defence and very dangerous strikers.

"They beat us 4-1 last time but we know there are two different teams now. Our motivation is to reach the final not revenge."

Italy defeated Germany 4-1 in Florence back in March but this time Jurgen Klinsmann's team have home advantage and Dortmund is a fortress for them.

Germany have never tasted defeat in Dortmund winning 13 of their 14 internationals at the venue.

Metzelder plays his club football on the ground for Borussia Dortmund and expects a red-hot atmosphere on Tuesday.

"I do not know why we are so good in Dortmund," confessed Metzelder. "It is a big venue and the people live and breathe football."

"It will be some atmosphere on Tuesday - one to remember."

Tim Borowski, one of the successful penalty takers against Argentina, expects a real battle against Italy who he says are master tacticians.

"I think it is difficult to play against Italian teams because they have great

tactical nous," Borowski said.

"They were not great at the beginning of the finals but they came through. It will be tough but I think we have enough experience to combat them."

"I think you can see in the player's eyes that we want to reach the final. We are in a semi-final which is a big step but we are not getting overconfident."

Top scorer Miroslav Klose, who leads the World Cup goalscoring charts with five, and captain Michael Ballack are both expected to be fit against Italy despite suffering from severe cramp against Argentina.

"Michael (Ballack) and Miroslav (Klose) can both play on Tuesday," confirmed Germany assistant coach Joachim Low.

"Miro collided with the goalkeeper and had calf pain and later cramp but he is fine."

"Michael ran all game and played with cramp against Argentina but he will be ready for Italy."

FIFA investigating Rooney red card

AFP, Berlin

England striker Wayne Rooney is to be investigated by FIFA after he was sent off in England's World Cup quarter-final defeat against Portugal.

"Wayne Rooney got a direct red card so he will automatically be suspended," a FIFA spokesman told a media briefing here.

"It will be a disciplinary case and as with any player (who gets a red card), the committee will decide on the penalty."

The Manchester United player was shown a red card after appearing to stamp on Portugal defender Ricardo Carvalho in the second half of Saturday's match in Gelsenkirchen.

England's 10 men hung on without him but went on to lose in a penalty shootout

English rally around Rooney

AFP, Baden-Baden

England's players have rallied round heartbroken striker Wayne Rooney, refusing to blame him for being sent off in their quarter-final penalty loss to Portugal.

The Manchester United forward was given his matching orders for stamping on Ricardo Carvalho in the 62nd minute with the game evenly poised at 0-0.

He made the matter worse by shoving Cristiano Ronaldo after the Portuguese winger waded in to protest with the referee. Some people have blamed Ronaldo for inflaming the situation, although he has denied this.

"People will say that the referee gave the red card because I spoke with him. This is not true. I spoke with him to say it was a foul, but I only said it was a foul, not a red card," said Rooney's United colleague.

Television pictures appeared to show him winking towards his bench after the incident.

David Beckham, who along with Rooney and Ray Wilkins are the only England players ever to be sent off in a World Cup, said Rooney should not be blamed.

"I haven't even seen the incident on TV. But I do know that ten seconds before there were two players on his back. If the referee had seen that he couldn't have sent him off," he said.

Beckham was sent off against Argentina in a second-round clash in 1998 by Danish referee Kim Milton Neilsen and was roundly criticised by England's unforgiving media.

He hopes it doesn't happen to Rooney, England's finest talent, who experienced the worst night of his international career.

"Will he be vilified like me? Who knows. But I hope not. Wayne is the future of the team. He'll pick himself," he said of the 20-year-old who has had so much expectations placed on his shoulders.

Gary Neville, who is Rooney captain at United, said the striker was heartbroken but would get over it.

"He is a colleague at club and international level and we hope the sending-off won't be as bad as it looks," he said.

"I know Wayne is a strong character and whatever comes of it, and he is heartbroken, there will be people around him who will have been through it all before."

Rooney has been a marked man since returning from injury in the group stages to boost what had been England's flagging campaign, and had been targeted in the three matches he had played.

While his temperament was again called into question with his push on Ronaldo, midfielder Steven Gerrard said he should not be made the scapegoat for England's failure to make the semi-finals.

"Wayne had been fantastic. He has done so much for the team," said the Liverpool captain.

"I haven't seen the incident, but I'll give him a big hug because I love him. He'll get not blame from us. There were three men around him before the sending-off."

His dismissal came just as England were taking control of the match as they attempted to reach their first World Cup semi-final since 1990, and barely 10 minutes after a tearful Beckham went off injured.

Down to 10 men, England battled but lost on penalties with Ronaldo twisting the knife by converting the match-winning spot kick.

Gattuso conquers Germany



INTERNET, undated

Gennaro Gattuso has become the symbol of this World Cup for Italy and has urged Marcello Lippi to stay on the Azzurri bench for many more years.

The battling midfielder's honesty, hard work and charisma have won over the media both on and off the field and he was the star in yesterday's Press Conference. Some of the local journalists even suggested he is the symbol of this tournament after Ronaldinho's exit with Brazil.

"A comparison like that is an insult to football!" he joked. "With all due respect, I can play well and win back the ball, but the class and spectacle of Ronaldinho are things I can only dream about. As for Italy, there are real symbols like Luca Toni, Andrea Pirlo and

Francesco Totti who make the difference. I'd like Alessandro Del Piero to be decisive, as he's someone who emerges as time goes on and never gives in."

The Milanista was FIFA's Man of the Match following the 3-0 quarterfinal victory over the Ukraine and the Germans see him as a key player in Tuesday's clash in Dortmund. His tough tackling style could cause problems, however, as he is on a yellow card and another booking would rule him out of the final.

"I will play with my usual style and it'll be a test of maturity. In fact, I'd gladly sign away my chances of playing the final if it meant Italy were there on July 9. Having said that, it's not as if I'm looking for a card with a Rambo bandana round my head. If the referee waves a yellow at me, I might just have to eat it!"

Gattuso had perhaps not been Lippi's first choice for the midfield, but Daniele De Rossi's four-match ban opened up the door for him to

put in a series of gritty performances. With talk that the Coach will leave his post after the World Cup, regardless of the result, he asked for this to be a starting point and not a finish line for the squad.

"Where does my grit come from? It's like asking Totti where he gets his quality. I really can't explain it. This team really reflects the figure of its Coach, all the way from the spirit to the style of play. You can see he's the leader. He doesn't set any rules for us, even though it may not seem that way from the outside, because his personality is so strong that you can't help but respect him," explained 'Rino'.

"Lippi puts such desire into his everyday work that it's only right he remain as our Coach, especially after all the success we've had in the last two years. There's no point discussing it now, though, as we have to concentrate on this semifinal. At the end of the day, the only man who can make that decision is him."

Scolari hails 'warrior spirit'



AFP, Gelsenkirchen

Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari said a newly acquired "warrior spirit" had been behind his team's dramatic World Cup quarter-final victory over England.

The charismatic 57-year-old Brazilian coach said Portugal's toughness in adversity was responsible for helping them hold their nerve in the penalty shoot-out that saw them win 3-1 in front of 40,000 baying England fans.

Scolari, who coached Brazil to World Cup glory in 2002, paid generous tribute to England, who fought for much of the match with 10 men as the two sides finished locked at 0-0 after extra-time.

But Scolari - who saw his unbeaten record in the World Cup finals extended to 12 successive matches - reserved his most lavish praise for his Portuguese players after a contest he described as "electrifying".

"The spirit of this team is remarkable," Scolari said.

"This is a new Portugal team and it's a new spirit. It's a warrior spirit. This is what we were missing in the past."

"We had great technical players but now we have added a warrior spirit and that was important for us today."

Scolari's victory was his third over England in consecutive tournaments, having overseen their demise at the last World Cup and Euro 2004, both also quarter-finals.

The Portugal coach, who had been poised to take over from Sven-Goran Eriksson before changing his mind and turning down the job in May, expressed admiration for England's rearguard action.

"It was an electrifying match and I have to congratulate England for their part in it. With only 10 players for so long they gave an incredible performance," he said.

"We tried to take advantage of the extra man but England closed us down very well. They just didn't give us any room at all. In fact it was just like we were playing 11 men."

Although Scolari described the shoot-out as a lottery, he gave credit to Portugal's goalkeeper Ricardo, who

saved three spot-kicks. That, rather than the weight of England's poor record in shoot-outs, had been behind the triumph.

"Penalties are a lottery. That's the truth of it. You can't blame the English players because they hit the target," he said.

"But I want to give praise to Ricardo. He had the skill to dive the right way and make the saves. He was the reason that we won the penalties, not the ghosts of the English."

Portugal will now face either Brazil or France in Wednesday's quarter-final in Munich, but Scolari was cagey about the prospect of possibly facing his homeland in the last four.

"If I didn't have to play the semi-final and go straight to the final I would be happy. But I'm not thinking about Brazil yet," he said.

Scolari also refused to be drawn on the controversy surrounding Wayne Rooney's dismissal. Asked for his opinion of the 62nd-minute dismissal of the Manchester United player, Scolari brushed off questions.

"I don't have to give an opinion," he said. "If the referee gives a red card, it was a red card. That's his decision."



Portuguese winger Cristiano Ronaldo (L) is being hugged by teammate Fernando Meira after he converts the final spotkick against England to book a place in the semifinals in Gelsenkirchen on Saturday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Plug of tobacco
 - 5 Satchel
 - 8 Help hoods
 - 12 "That smarts!"
 - 13 "When We Were Kings" subject
 - 14 Scruff
 - 15 Curved molding
 - 16 N.J. neighbor
 - 17 Notion
 - 18 Crafty
 - 20 Spry
 - 22 Wye follower
 - 23 Actor
 - 24 Rubik's baffler
 - 27 1964 Supreme chart-topper
 - 32 — pro nobis
 - 33 La-la leader
 - 34 — the ramparts ...
 - 35 Backed
- DOWN**
- 1 Talks lovingly
 - 2 Grant or Down's
 - 3 Maple genus
 - 4 Breathe with difficulty
 - 5 They're written off as uncol-lect-ible
 - 6 Pub request
 - 7 Country singer
 - 8 Critter
 - 9 Bitterness
 - 10 Duel tool
 - 11 Sartorial problem
 - 19 Lindbergh book
 - 21 Wall climber
 - 24 Miller Sebastian
 - 25 Grecian container
 - 26 Criticize severely
 - 28 Exist
 - 29 South Dakota national park
 - 30 Be idle (Sl.)
 - 31 Before
 - 36 A gazillion
 - 37 Actor Stephen
 - 38 Glossy paint
 - 41 Dorothy's auntie
 - 42 Show-room sample
 - 43 Medley
 - 44 Attract
 - 45 Wild and crazy
 - 47 Garfield's pal
 - 48 — De-classified School Survival Guide
 - 51 Computer language
- Solution time: 25 mins.**
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| FACT | ISM | TOBE | TOBE |
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| GOO | BRIAN | NET | TOBE |
| GOAR | APES | DIES | TOBE |
| AL | FEAR | TOBE | TOBE |
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CRYPTOQUIP

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 R V P P , H Y E G R X P P H V H Y E G !
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A PERSON
 FORMULATES A METHOD TO COLOR HAIR, YOU
 COULD CALL IT A "DYE-IT PLAN."

Today's Cryptquip Clue: U equals H
 The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.



Germany defender Metzelder walks past an array of dummies dressed in German outfit to arrive at a press conference at the ICC centre in Berlin on Sunday.