

## Angry Alex proves a point

INTERNET, undated

Alessandro Del Piero has admitted that his goal celebration in Italy's win over Germany was filled with more anger than joy.

The Juventus captain erupted after sliding the ball into the back of the net with the last kick of the game to see the Azzurri through to the World Cup Final.

"My celebration was more anger than joy at first, caused by many things it's better not to talk about now, but it turned into happiness for this Final," he said.

Del Piero has been something of an enigma during his international career after failing to reproduce his club form for the Azzurri.

But although he is no longer guaranteed a starting shirt for Italy, he's delighted that he is still of some use.

"Many times goals come out of difficulties and determination, so my enjoyment is tripled," he stated. "If you don't play much and still score, then that's extra special."

Del Piero was introduced in the second period of extra-time as the Azzurri looked to avoid going to penalties.

And he sealed the win by basically running the length of the field, without the ball, to ensure a memorable 2-0 victory.

"If it's balanced until four minutes from the end of extra-time, then it had to be tough. As the away side and with everything happening, we had it all against us," he added.

"I called for the ball from midfield! I was a long way back, but Gilardino did well to hold up the ball and hear me call again when I got closer."

## French fans kill Brazil supporter

AFP, Nairobi

Kenyan police said Wednesday they were searching for two men suspected of beating to death a fan of Brazil's World Cup team after the reigning football champion's weekend loss to France.

The 21-year-old Brazil fan died after being savagely attacked by the France-supporting suspects who allegedly chided and ridiculed the victim when the Brazilian side lost to the French on Saturday, police said.

The three had been watching the match at a popular video shop in a remote village in western Kenya when they began to fight over Brazil's 1-0 loss to France and the altercation spread into the street, they said.

The victim, Austin Ochieng Okello, was beaten unconscious and left on a footpath but then managed to stagger to a nearby home in Siaya village where he was found dead on Sunday, police said, citing witness accounts.

Siaya district deputy police chief Charles Gathiani said the assailants, who fled the scene but are known to villagers, would be captured and charged with murder.

"We have dispatched a team of officers to track them down with the help of the villagers," he told AFP. "They are known people and hopefully within two to three days they will be arrested."

## Ferdinand ashamed

AFP, London

England centre-back Rio Ferdinand said he was embarrassed to go out in public following his country's quarterfinal exit in a penalty shootout against Portugal.

"I'm gutted. I genuinely went into this tournament believing that we would get to the semi-finals at least - and I would have been disappointed with that," the 27-year-old Manchester United defender told Wednesday's Sun tabloid.

"It's embarrassing if I'm being honest. I was a bit embarrassed to set foot outside the door when I went shopping with my girlfriend Rebecca."

England's players and coach Sven-Goran Eriksson had claimed before the tournament they were genuine contenders to win the World Cup for the first time since 1966.

But the team failed to shine in its early matches and star striker Wayne Rooney was sent off in the quarterfinal before England lost on penalties to Portugal for the second time in as many major tournaments.

Ferdinand admitted: "If I was a fan I would be desperately disappointed. I would have expected more than what we gave them."

"We didn't do ourselves justice. Individually we have a lot of fantastic players but it's about being able to get in all departments as a team and we didn't do that."

"The whole way through the tournament the thing that let us down was that we didn't finish teams off."



PHOTO: AFP

Italy striker Alessandro Del Piero is over the moon after scoring against Germany in the World Cup semifinal at the Westfalen Stadion in Dortmund on Tuesday.

## 'Historic Italy'



AFP, Rome

Italy's march into the World Cup final at the expense of Germany was met with banner headlines in the Italian press on Wednesday.

The 2-0 extra-time win over the hosts in Dortmund was an historic one for the Italians "who could beat anyone - even the Martians", wrote the Roman newspaper Il Messaggero.

"The whole of Germany will be mourning this merited 2-0 win for Italy. But against Italy they (Germany) always lose. There is a reason for that and it is simply that Italy is stronger," the paper boasted.

It was the fourth time that the two countries had met in the history of the World Cup finals and the fourth time that Germany had failed to defeat their southern neighbours.

It was also the first time that the German national side had lost a match in Dortmund having won 13 out of 14 games in the football-mad western city since 1935.

"Historic Italy - we are in the final," was the front-page headline in the La Repubblica newspaper while the top-

selling Corriere della Sera went with "Germany beaten in extra-time - another match which will go down in history."

The country's main sports dailies, delighted to take a step back from the mood of gloom that surrounds the club game at home, which is mired in a wide-ranging match fixing scandal, were in festive mood.

"We love you," gushed the Corriere dello Sport in a large-type headline, while Gazzetta dello Sport celebrated with "Fly high Italy, fly high."

"We are great and we know it," Corriere dello Sport wrote in an editorial. "We have beaten the Germans, they will boycott our pizzas, but we have the taste and flavour of victory."

"It's a match that will go down in the annals of football, a semifinal that will stay in our hearts and in our minds and which has given us for the sixth time a place in the World Cup final," the paper concluded.

"They gave all they had and for that reason they won everything. The final, the glory and applause from around the world," wrote La Stampa.

The dramatic climax to the match with Italy's two winning goals coming at the end of extra-time saw Romans burst into wild celebrations.

Cries of joy rang out from apartments and cafes in the capital after Fabio Grosso and then Alessandro

Del Piero scored the decisive goals to take Italy into Sunday's final.

Minutes after the final whistle, a stream of cars and mopeds streamed into the streets, sounding their horns in joy, while supporters waved Italy's white, red and green flag.

Thousands of Italian fans had watched the match on a giant screen at the Circo Massimo in the heart of ancient Rome.

While most bars installed TV sets for customers to follow the action, the capital's venerable Peroni restaurant simply closed for the evening, informing customers in a notice outside: "Sorry, but Italy are playing."

The joyous reaction at the victory in Dortmund overtook the shock felt earlier in the day when the Italian Football Federation's prosecutor called for all four clubs at the centre of a match-fixing scandal to be thrown out of Serie A.

Prosecutor Stefano Palazzi called for Juventus to drop two divisions, and be stripped of its 2005 and 2006 titles, and for AC Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio to drop one division.

## Dark side of the moon



AFP, Rome

The Italian football world was in a bittersweet state on Wednesday with the joy of reaching the World Cup final mixed with the possibility of several top clubs being relegated for match fixing.

Italy's 2-0 win over Germany to reach the July 9 final in Berlin against either France or Portugal contrasted sharply with the court proceedings in Rome where Juventus, AC Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio are all in the dock.

On Wednesday it was the turn of the defendants to plead their cases in the trial at the Olympic stadium in Rome which has 25 individuals and four clubs under the spotlight for sporting fraud - influencing the choice of referees for Italian league matches in the 2004/05 season.

On Tuesday, Italian football federation prosecutor Stefano Palazzi requested Juventus be dropped to below the second division and that AC

Milan, Lazio and Fiorentina be relegated to the second division.

He also advocated the deduction of penalty points - 15 from both Lazio and Fiorentina, six from Juventus and three from AC Milan - which would be imposed at the start of next season.

Palazzi also asked that the last two Italian leagues titles won by Juventus be stripped from the club.

A final, binding decision however is not expected till the end of the week.

The former Italian football federation president Franco Carraro, who faces a five-year ban from all sporting activity, said on Wednesday: "I have never spoken to a single referee."

"I reminded federation officials, entrusted with designating referees for matches, to act responsibly in delicate situations," he added in reference to a recorded telephone conversation which was intercepted by the authorities in which Carraro allegedly asked a federation official to give a helping hand to Lazio on the pitch.

Lazio club president Claudio Lotito, threatened with the same punishment as Carraro, also contradicted the conclusions of Palazzi, claiming they only intervened to obtain referees of a

better quality.

Lotito said his repeated telephone conversations with federation vice-president Innocenzo Mazzini was a "sort of psychological dependence."

"He reassured me that the referees would be fair," Lotito said. "He was like a psychiatrist to me."

Shortly before Lotito spoke, Fiorentina's honorary president Diego Della Valle, facing a five-year suspension, refuted the allegations that his club was involved in match-fixing in exchange for remaining in the top flight.

"There was no rescue mission for Fiorentina," Della Valle said. "We just never gave up," before adding his only aim was to get the best quality referees, not to get favourable decisions from them.

The deliberations were set to continue on Wednesday afternoon with testimony from the clubs represented by their lawyers.

## Fiorentina victims of the system!



REUTERS, Rome

Italy's match-fixing trial resumed on Wednesday with Fiorentina owner Diego Della Valle claiming his club were victims of a system rather than part of it.

Champions Juventus are battling to avoid relegation to the third division at Italy's biggest sporting trial, while three other clubs - AC Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio - are fighting to stay in the top Serie A.

All are charged with sporting fraud. The tribunal returned to work the morning after Italy's national team, packed with Juventus and AC Milan players, dramatically reached the World Cup final by defeating hosts Germany in Dortmund.

"I think we all experienced a lot of joy last night, let's hope it continues," tribunal president Cesare Rupert said as he opened proceedings.

"Here, we will continue to try to do our job as well as we can. That way it will be a victory for everyone."

Della Valle, one of 26 officials also

facing charges in Rome's Olympic Stadium, said referees had mistreated Fiorentina.

"We thought that maybe the referees' errors were down to psychological pressures. We didn't know there was a system," he said. "Fiorentina were victims of this system."

Della Valle, who bought Fiorentina in August 2002 when it was languishing in Italy's fourth division after going bankrupt, faces a charge of sporting fraud for conspiring with FIGC officials to rig matches.

FIGC prosecutor Stefano Palazzi has asked the tribunal to ban Della Valle from football for five years. All four clubs and 26 officials facing charges deny any wrongdoing.

The charge against Della Valle revolves around a meeting he had with former FIGC official Paolo Bergamo, who conducted the draw that assigned referees to Serie A matches during the 2004-05 season - when the club narrowly avoided relegation.

"When we said we were worried about hostile referees, Bergamo told us that mistakes happened, and that he could put us into the part of the draw

that got the best referees to avoid referee mistakes," Della Valle said.

Former FIGC president Franco Carraro and Lazio president Claudio Lotito also spoke in defence of themselves.

Palazzi is expected to respond to the defendants' speeches later on Wednesday. Lawyers representing the accused will then launch their defences.

The scandal began in early May with the publication of intercepted telephone conversations between former Juventus general manager Luciano Moggi and senior FIGC officials, discussing refereeing appointments during the 2004-05 season.

Palazzi said Juventus should be relegated "below Serie B". The tribunal has said it aims to deliver its verdicts on July 10, the day after the World Cup final in Berlin.

Those found guilty can appeal but the appeals process must be finished by July 27 - the deadline set by European soccer's ruling body for the FIGC to submit the list of teams for next season's Champions League and UEFA Cup competition.

## Autuori, Luxemburgo linked for Brazil hotseat

AFP, Sao Paulo

Paulo Autuori, coach with Japanese outfit Kashima Antlers, and former incumbent Wanderley Luxemburgo, currently with Santos, are in the frame to replace Carlos Parreira as coach of Brazil, media reports said on Tuesday.

Estado de Sao Paulo daily reported that "Autuori (will be) coach and Parreira executive coach" in a reshuffle following the five-time world champions' World Cup quarterfinal exit at the hands of France.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) is set to reserve judgment on who should occupy the hotseat until after the World Cup ends with Parreira, who led the Auriverde to the 1994 trophy, having thus far not indicated he intends to stand down.

Luxemburgo was in charge between 1998 and 2000 but was forced to step down after a poor Sydney 2000 Olympic campaign.

Rio daily O Globo said that "whoever takes on the job will have to start regenerating the squad for 2010," when the World Cup is held in South Africa.

Autuori won the Copa Libertadores with Sao Paulo in 2005 having previously coached the Peru national side for two years.

A Folha daily said that the CBF chairman (Ricardo Teixeira) says he alone will take the decision -- "good news for Luxemburgo, who is financially more viable than Luiz Felipe Scolari."

Scolari led Brazil to the 2002 World Cup but is now with Portugal, whom he has taken to the semifinals for the first time in 40 years.

On Monday, the Portuguese Football Federation said it was close to securing a new contract with Scolari.

Scolari took the helm of the Portuguese national team in January 2003 just six months after he led Brazil to a record fifth world title in Japan and South Korea.

He himself has rejected any speculation with a return to Brazil and intends to lead the Portuguese into Euro 2008.

## Lavolpe calls it quits

AFP, Mexico City

Mexico's World Cup coach Ricardo Lavolpe is to stand down from the position and instead take up a managerial job in Europe, Mexican Football federation chief Alberto de la Torre said late Tuesday.

Lavolpe's target in Germany had been at least to get Mexico to the last eight, but he failed to achieve that as his side lost 2-1 to Argentina in the last 16 round.

## Blatter planning 2nd ref

INTERNET, undated

FIFA president Sepp Blatter wants to pursue the idea of using two referees in matches in the near future.

Several officials have come in for criticism at the World Cup in Germany with a number of high-profile incidents taking the attention away from the match itself.

Blatter believes bringing in a second referee will help eradicate mistakes and reduce controversy.

"At the beginning there was a reluctance to consider the system," said Blatter. "Then we had tests conducted in Malaysia and Sao Paulo, Brazil, with encouraging results, but an unsatisfactory reaction in Norway and Italy."

"But now we are facing a situation in the game where the pace is such that we must ask if there should be a further experiment."

"We observe the situation in ice hockey, for instance, with two referees and two assistants on a much smaller arena and they have no (personality) clashes with the players because they know the game."

## A deserved win: Zambrotta

INTERNET, undated

The Juve player praised the performance of the Azzurri's midfielder.

Gianluca Zambrotta explained what the Italian national coach told them to do to win the match against Germany.

"We deserved to win. Before the match Lippi told us that we should play like we did so far and to reproduce the same mentality shown in the previous matches."

Zambrotta is especially happy with his performances so far during this world cup.

"I think that I am at the peak of my maturity, I'm more expert than before and now I hope to continue like this, not only on a personal level, but also on a group level with this great team."

## Capello joins Real Madrid



AFP, Madrid

Fabio Capello was confirmed as the new manager of Spanish club Real Madrid on Wednesday.

Capello resigned from Italian side Juventus on Tuesday after losing patience with the match-fixing scandals currently engulfing the Serie A champions.

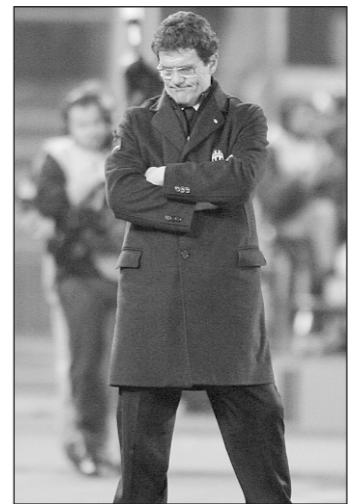
The Italian will be unveiled at the Bernabeu on Thursday with new president Ramon Calderon stating Capello will sign a three-year deal.

A statement on the club's website confirmed: "Fabio Capello will be the next coach of Madrid. He will arrive in the Spanish capital in the next few hours and look over the facilities at the club."

"It is expected he will be presented to the media at 12pm (local time) on Thursday."

Calderon believes former Roma

boss Capello, who managed Real for one season in 1996-97, is the man to



FABIO CAPELLO

end the club's recent trophy drought and he told Sky Sports News: "He will

be here for three years. He is a winner and this is very important at this club after three years without a title."

Spanish newspaper AS had earlier reported: "Fabio Capello will arrive in Madrid on Wednesday and will be presented as the new coach on Thursday. He will sign for three years but the last year can be terminated by either party."

El Pais said it was Real's new sporting director Pedja Mijatovic who announced the imminent arrival of Capello.

According to Marca, Capello will be out to strengthen Madrid's midfield and is targeting Lyon's Malian Mahamadou Diarra and Brazil's Emerson of Juventus in an attempt to end their three trophyless seasons. Capello is also reportedly on the trail of Arsenal's Cesc Fabregas.

And AS added Real will next week begin their quest to sign AC Milan's Brazilian Kaka, whose signing was part of Calderon's election manifesto.

## A few old men riding into golden sunset



AFP, Berlin

Pele in 1958, Geoff Hurst in 1966, Maradona in 1986, Ronaldo in 2002.

The first three quarters of a century of World Cup action has been marked by the heroics of stars who thrilled and personified a generation.

Pele's stunning exploits aged 17, when he followed up a hatrick against France with a double in the final over Sweden propelled the man from Tres Coracoes christened Edson Arantes do Nascimento into the history books.

Hurst's exploits in becoming the only man to net a World Cup final hatrick brought lasting global fame and, as interest in the tournament has gone truly global thanks to modern media technology, so Maradona and Ronaldo are now among the most recognisable faces on the planet.

This year has been rather different. With the 64-match programme just three games away from being completed, the 18th tournament has been marked by two trends.

The first is the disappearance of a raft of star-studded veterans who have graced the game over the past three editions and who are now leaving the stage.

The 30 somethings are led by genial Frenchman Zinedine Zidane, who having surely pushed former Real

Madrid teammate Raul towards the World Cup retirement door on Wednesday do the same to another ageing former Real colleague, Luis Figo of Portugal.

As Zidane and Figo bring down the curtain on their international careers they will go the same way of England's David Beckham, who as well as finishing off his World Cup career in the exit to Portugal may even have played his last game in England white.

Roberto Carlos and Juninho have already said "adeus" - goodbye - to Brazil, and Ronaldo will be too old to make the squad for a fifth time in 2010, as will veteran defender Cafu.

As the old guard fade away, so the young guns to whom the future must belong have been called on to show their mettle.

But not many have risen to the challenge most notably Brazil's ball-juggler Ronaldinho who failed miserably to live up to all the expectations.

For more than a few, the 2006 event ended in ignominy - not least for England star Wayne Rooney, the 20-year-old who, having battled back miraculously from a broken metatarsal to play in the tournament ended it with a red card for stamping on Portugal defender Ricardo Carvalho's groin.

Compatriots Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard tried but failed to assume Beckham's authoritative (if not effective) mantle and Lampard's disappointing campaign ended with the penalty miss against the Portuguese led by 2002 nemesis Luiz Felipe Scolari.

In the words of England's 1966 terrier Alan Ball, Sven-Goran Eriksson's big-name players "fell short."

Of the budding youthful brigade, Germany have been able to showcase striking prospect Lukas Podolski, the 21-year-old who will get to strut his stuff with Bayern Munich next season after benefiting from his partnership with the more experienced Miroslav Klose.

Defender Philipp Lahm has also impressed - though primarily for his stunning opening goal of the event.

For Portugal, Cristiano Ronaldo is the most talented of the post "golden generation" which has enjoyed the twilight of the Figo years - but his mark on the tournament will largely revolve around his intervention in the Rooney sending off - and the satisfied wink to the bench which followed.

The likes of Robinho and Kaka only shone fleetingly for a disappointing Brazil side - they could hardly hope to match Pele's grand entrance - but at least France have found a potential heir to Zidane in 23-year-old Franck Ribery.

It will not have escaped Pele's notice that in a year where he reached 65, the age equated in most industrialised societies with drawing a pension, one of the teenagers who might have taken the tournament by storm started and ended it on the bench while another spent the duration invisibly sidelined.

It therefore will fall to a 23-year-old Lionel Messi of Argentina and a 21-year-old England hope named Theo Walcott to blossom on South African fields in 2010 as a new generation belatedly takes shape.



LIONEL MESSI: Star of 2010 World Cup!

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