



DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 9, 2006



PHOTOS: AFP

CAN THE BALL HEAR THEM ROAR? A combo photo shows (L-R) Italy center-back Fabio Cannavaro, the match ball of the FIFA World Cup Germany 2006 and France forward Thierry Henry.

KEY BATTLES

Six individual contests that could be the key to deciding Sunday's World Cup final between Italy and France:

Fabio Cannavaro v Thierry Henry

Exactly what the World Cup final should be about – a supreme defender and captain doing everything he can to shackle the tournament's most naturally talented forward, who will need to use all his sublime skills to find a way through. Cannavaro has been immense, leading by example and organising a defence that has been pierced only by an own goal.

His reading of the game, anticipation and pace leave him in his work, his vast experience helps him stay calm even in the most heated exchanges while his athleticism means he is rarely beaten in the air despite being just 1.75 metres tall. He faces the ultimate test in his 100th international in the form of the brooding brilliance of Henry, who scored the winner against Brazil in the quarterfinals and earned the penalty that beat Portugal in the semi-finals.

Henry's pace, delicate touch and vision mark him as a special striker and the battle for an inch of space inside the penalty area should be

engrossing.

Zinedine Zidane v Gennaro Gattuso

Zidane may be dreaming of a fairytale finale to his career but Beauty and the Beast might not be the story that he wanted to go out on.

This contest between the stylish creator and the dedicated destroyer is football in a microcosm and could be hugely important in deciding the outcome.

Zidane has improved with every round so he is now bestriding the pitch with almost all the majesty and arrogant superiority he displayed in inspiring France to their 1998 success.

He is the perfect target for Gattuso, a terrier of a midfielder who is massively committed, a brilliant tackler and tireless worker in front of the back four. Gattuso will revel in tracking Zidane's every move and making his presence felt.

Zidane knows there will not get a second's peace from the AC Milan workhorse and will need all his special tricks to get away from him.

Francesco Totti v Claude Makelele

The same battle in reverse as France's midfield bulwark bids to prevent Totti weaving his magic behind striker Luca Toni.

Totti has shown only glimpses of his best form at this tournament but is a high class operator whose passing opens gaps others do not even consider.

Makelele will seek to cut off those passes at source as he continues in a role he has trademarked – the unimpeachable, hyper-efficient defensive midfielder who hovers up loose balls and moves them on to more creative team mates.

Andrea Pirlo v Patrick Vieira

Pirlo has risen to the occasion and he peaked in the semi-final when his umpteenth probing pass finally opened up the German defence to set up Fabio Grosso for the breakthrough goal.

He likes to sit at the heart of midfield and spray passes short and long and one of Vieira's many special tricks to get away from him.

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Lippi on verge of record

REUTERS, Berlin

Italy coach Marcello Lippi is one win away from becoming the country's most successful tactician of all time, although he will need to end a bad run of results for him in finals.

A World Cup victory for the Azzurri against France on Sunday would ensure Lippi's place in Italian football history as a man who not only enjoyed success in Serie A and Europe but also claimed the ultimate prize in the game.

The last man to bring the World Cup home to Italy was Enzo Bearzot in 1982 and while he is widely respected for that achievement, unlike Lippi he didn't scale the peaks as a club coach as well.

Lippi took over Italy after their dismal performance in Portugal at Euro 2004 where they were eliminated in the group stage.

The silver-haired tactician successfully turned the Azzurri from a sometimes fractious collection of players into a team with an intense

collective spirit resembling that of his successful Juventus sides.

At the Turin club, Lippi won five Italian titles and took the club to four Champions League finals, winning the continent's top trophy in 1996.

Between 1994 and 1999 his Juve team, including players such as Gianluca Vialli, Roberto Baggio and Alessandro Del Piero, were permanent contenders in Serie A and in Europe.

But after their triumph on penalties against Ajax Amsterdam in the 1996 Champions League, Juve fell at the final hurdle in the next two competitions, losing to Borussia Dortmund in 1997 and Real Madrid a year later.

Viareggio-born Lippi then took on the challenge of restoring Inter Milan's fortunes but like those who went before and those who followed him he was unable to end Inter's struggle to win their first scudetto since 1989.

Without Lippi for two seasons, SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

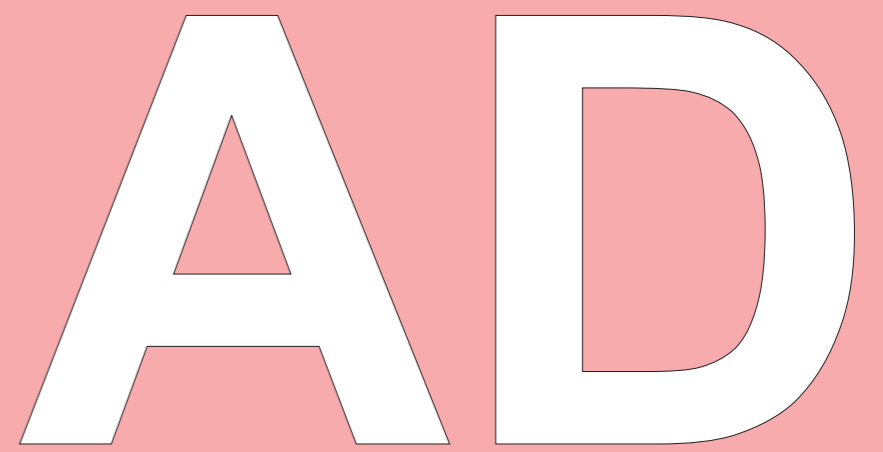


PHOTO: AFP

South African President Thabo Mbeki (L), UN Secretary General Kofi Annan (C) and FIFA president Sepp Blatter (R) pose with the World Cup trophy during the unveiling ceremony of the 2010 World Cup logo in Berlin on Friday.

WC BRIEFS

AFP, Berlin

The number of head injuries at the World Cup has been reduced because referees have taken a tough line on elbowing, FIFA Chief Medical Officer Jiri Dvorak said on Saturday.

There have been just 11 head injuries at the 62 games so far, compared with 25 at the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea.

"This is due to the fact that referees are sanctioning elbowing incidents with the red card," said Dvorak, who is a neurologist by profession.

The toughest penalty was handed down to Italy midfielder Daniele De Rossi, who was sent off and then banned for four international matches for elbowing US striker Brian McBride in the face in a first-round match.

Dvorak reported that the average number of injuries of any sort had fallen to 2.2 per match at this World Cup from 2.7 per match in 2002.

This was partly due to the three-week gap between the end of the club seasons and the start of the World Cup enforced by FIFA which had allowed previous injuries to heal properly, he said.

Oh rain!

Stormy weather left organisers with no choice but to cancel a concert planned for Friday night featuring mainly African artists to showcase South Africa's hosting of the 2010 World Cup, FIFA said. After weeks of hot weather, the German capital was battered by storms and torrential rain on Friday.

"The show was cancelled because there was a big risk for the participants and spectators. We had no choice and we greatly regret this," FIFA spokesman Markus Siegl said.

The "Football for a better world" concert was to have featured singers including Youssou N'Dour playing at the Fan Mile area in Berlin.

Final consolation

An 11-year-old German boy who suffered concussion when a car ploughed through Berlin's Fan Mile a week ago, has received two tickets for Sunday's final between France and Italy from the city's mayor.

"The final is a moment he will remember forever," mayor Klaus Wowereit said.

The boy was the most badly SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Round 5 (Bumper), Draw in Dhaka at the National Press Club on July 11, 2006
 (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

- Whom did Ronaldo over take as the leading scorer in the World Cup? Muller Pele Fontaine
- Which player was shown three yellow cards in a World Cup match? Simunic Deco De Rossi
- Who scored the 2000th World Cup goal? Ze Roberto Joe Cole Allback
- Which World Cup champions failed to win it at home? Italy Uruguay Brazil
- Who is this player? Essien Drogba Saha

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."

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