

WORLD CUP USA '94

Brazil beat California heat

FRESNO, California, June 13: Brazil were given a foretaste of the conditions they face in the World Cup finals when they beat El Salvador 4-0 on Sunday in heat which made good football simply impossible, report agencies.

Romario, Bebeto, Zinho and Rai scored for Brazil in the friendly match in which the conditions proved to be more testing than the opposition.

Most of the game was played at walking pace under a scorching sun which made even watching a torrid experience. The game kicked off at 1 pm local time — the scheduled start time for their Group B matches in Stanford, which has a similar, though slightly cooler climate.

Brazil defender Ricardo Gomes pulled a thigh muscle in the first half and is almost certain to miss Brazil's opening game against Russia on June 20.

Striker Romario also limped off in the first half with the recurrence of a groin strain but team sources said he would recover in time for the game against the Russians.

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Ferreira put midfielder Rai on the bench after his disappointing performance in Wednesday's 8-2 win over Honduras.

Brazil took only nine minutes to break through the Central American defence when Romario scored.

His goal was a gem. The Barcelona striker collected Bebeto's pass between two El Salvador defenders, slipped both of them with an electric turn and then ran on to blast the ball past Carlos Melendez from 20 metres.

Bebeto hit the second six minutes later from a penalty

after Jorginho was pulled down.

Rai was brought on at half-time for an out-of-sorts Mauro Silva and responded by setting up the third after 51 minutes. His perfectly-weighted chip from the right found Zinho, who scored with a volley from

Overmars showed a brilliant turn of speed in orchestrating the first two goals before another 37th minute strike from midfielder Frank Rijkaard finished off the scoring.

The Dutch had virtually all the game against the Canadians, who looked jaded in their fourth match in eight days. It was not the sharp team which drew 1-1 with Brazil in Edmonton last Sunday and made world champions Germany work hard for a 2-0 victory in Toronto last Wednesday.

At Mission Viejo, California, Gheorghe Hagi's free-kick rocketed from 20 meters (yards) out late in the second half salvaged a 1-1 tie for Romania against Sweden in both team's final World Cup tuneup.

Hagi, a forward who plays for Brescia in Italy, blasted a powerful driver over the Swedish defensive wall in the 75th minute that left Swedish backup goalie Lars Eriksson without a chance.

"The whole team doesn't depend on me," Hagi insisted after his 22nd goal in 82 international games. "This game showed we'll have a good level of play during the World Cup."

Klas Ingesson had scored off a rebound 11 minutes into the second half to give Sweden a 1-0 lead. Ingesson, a midfielder who plays for Dutch PSV Eindhoven, beat goalie Bogdan Stelea from close range after Roger Ljung had taken the initial shot after a corner kick from Stefan Rehn.

At Oxnard, Cameroon tuned up for their World Cup opener with a 2-1 loss Sunday to the Los Angeles Salsa professional team.

The match was the final exhibition for Cameroon before they open Cup play against Sweden next Sunday at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.



BEBETO on the edge of the penalty area. The indignity of starting on the bench seemed to do Rai a world of good and in the 62nd minute the Paris St Germain player scored Brazil's fourth with a diving header from Bebeto's left wing cross.

HOLLAND WARM UP WELL

In Toronto, winger Marc Overmars made a goal and scored another as the Netherlands warmed up for the World Cup finals with a convincing 3-0 victory over a tired looking Canada.

The Ajax Amsterdam player, who has been competing with Feyenoord's Gaston Taument for the place on the right, was inspirational as the Dutch played some typically entertaining football in their last test before the tournament.



Dutch international Frank Rijkaard (R) clears the ball from Canada's Geoff Auger during a World Cup prep match in Toronto on Sunday. The Netherlands won 3-0. — AFP photo

US, amateurs among pros?

MISSION VIEJO, Calif., June 13: Italy's players celebrated their second-off to the World Cup at the presidential palace in Rome. United States players celebrated at a black-tie dinner in a shopping mall.

The World Cup truly is a contrast of national lifestyles, reports AP.

With the scenic backdrop of Bath and Body Works, Gyms, the Bombay Company and Sweet Factory, more than 1,000 people came to honour the US players at the Mission Viejo Mall Saturday night.

Many were in tuxedos and evening dresses for the Mission Viejo Soccer Foundation's "Black and White Ball." Being that it's California, some wore shorts. The players and coach Bora Milutinovic chose in-between, wearing blue Hart, Schaffner and Marx blazers.

"Above all, I'm most proud of this group of young — and in Bora's case, old — men for the way they represented the United States on and off the field," said Alan Rothenberg, the US Soccer Federation president. "As they move on and win the next seven games they play, I know they'll do that."

If the United States wins their next seven games, they would win the World Cup for the first time. Odds-makers says it's a 66-1 shot, down from as much as 2,000-1 four years ago.

The odds aren't the only improvement, according to US players. They like the atmosphere a lot better, too.

"This time, they're staying at the Dana Point Resort, a luxury hotel just 15 minutes from training camp. In 1990, they moved into the Italian Olympic training centre in Tirrenia,

which was like a prison for white-collar criminals. "Walking around or going to practice, you'd see all these guys with machine guns," midfielder Tab Ramos remembered this weekend. "That whole thing was terrible. I don't know who had to pick that facility."

Players were isolated from their families and girlfriends, who stayed at a hotel about a mile away. Players weren't allowed to have guests in camp.

But the guards — including Carabinieri para-military police — were sometimes persuaded to ignore coach Bob Gansler's instructions.

"Equipment usually worked," defender Paul Caligiuri recalled.

Mission Viejo in many ways is similar from Tirrenia. The training camp is near the beach and it's about a one-hour drive from the site the United States will play two first-round games. Then, it was in Tuscany by the Ligurian Sea. Now, it's Orange County by the Pacific Ocean.

But while Tirrenia had cafes and bars, Mission Viejo has malls. US players posed for pictures and signed autographs during Saturday night's dinner. The 30-minute highlight film of the team's 1 1/2-year stay in Mission Viejo was so dull that many players left their tables and milled around to talk with fans even as their images were shown on the screen above the stage.

Goalkeeper Tony Meola, the US captain, thanked the Mission Viejo Soccer Foundation for putting up with the players. Those who weren't with clubs in Europe and Mexico have been training in this Orange County community south of Los Angeles.

"Early on, the requests were simple, like where's the nearest mall or Italian restaurant," Meola said. "As time went on, we asked to get out of parking and speeding tickets."

The relative obscurity of the players was pointed out by the dinner program, Caligiuri, who scored the goal that qualified the United States for the 1990 World Cup, was spelled "Caligiuri." Defender Cle Koolman's first name was spelled "Cley" and Ramos' club in Spain was spelled "Real Botis" instead of Real Betis.

Tight security marks Swiss arrival in USA

DETROIT, June 13: Switzerland's World Cup squad arrived in Detroit on Sunday, ignoring fans and media as they were whisked to their luxury hotel by a phalanx of police cars, reports Reuter.

The side who drew 0-0 with Bolivia in Montreal on Saturday, were given the kind of escort that Soviet-era leaders dreamed about on their short trip to the luxurious Marriott Oearborn Inn Hotel.

Police swarmed over the property and at one stage security guards scuffled with a small group of waiting journalists and threatened to arrest them unless they left.

"The mandate of the Swiss delegation and the hotel management is that there should be no reporters. Fans would also have been asked to leave," said hotel representative Matt Goretta.

The Swiss, under Enormous domestic pressures to perform well after reaching their first world Cup finals for 28 years, will play their first two opening Group A games at the indoor Pontiac Silverdome Stadium north of Detroit.

Sacchi, Italy yet to settle

NEW YORK, June 13: Coach Arrigo Sacchi's World Cup tactical plan brings the best out of striker Giuseppe Signori but does not seem to suit the rest of the Italian team quite so well, reports Reuter.

Signori's third goal in three games since being pushed up into the forward line gave Italy a 1-0 win over humble Costa Rica in a warm-up match on Saturday but the result could not disguise another disjointed display.

With the eagerly-awaited World Cup opener with Ireland just six days away, Sacchi is still tinkering with his line-up in the hope of hitting on the winning formula.

The balds headed coach switched from his trusted 4-4-2 formation to a more adventurous 4-3-3 last month to enable Signori to play in the striking role, the Lazio man so craves.

But the change has raised more questions than it has answered with Sacchi undecided on who to play as his right attacker and on the composition of his midfield.

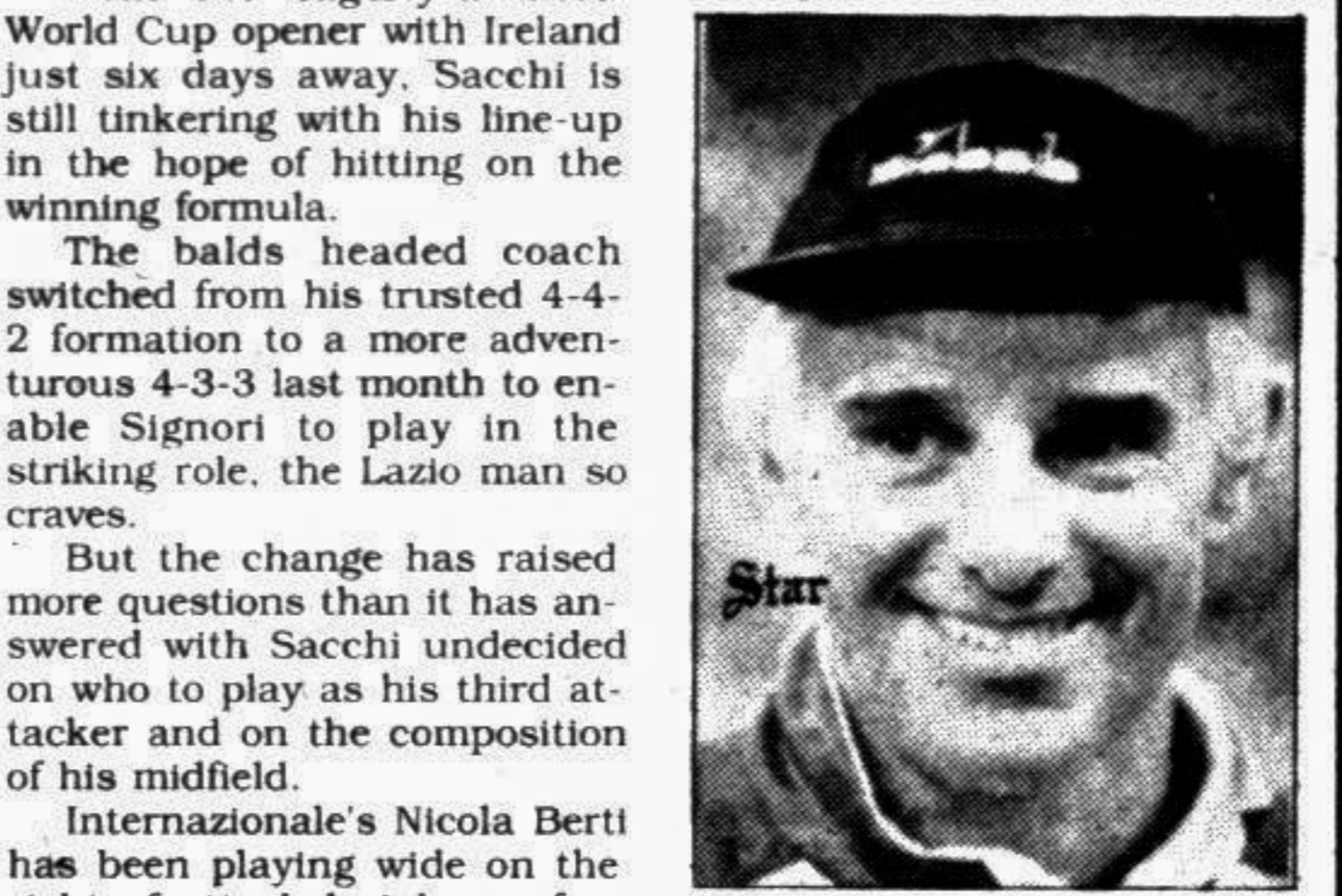
Internazionale's Nicola Bertini has been playing wide on the right of attack but he prefers to battle it out in the centre of midfield and has appeared unhappy stuck on the wing. It was hard to fathom why Sacchi had ignored 33-year-old AC Milan attacker Daniele Massaro, who is playing better than at any stage in his career.

Massaro, scorer of a series of vital goals in his club's Italian league and European Cup double triumph this year, came on at half-time against Costa Rica and immediately injected energy and zip into the attack.

His inclusion for the three-times world champions against Ireland would now appear certain.

The midfield puzzle is a harder one to solve.

Sacchi started off with Demetrio Albertini, Dino Baggio and Albergo Everti as his trio against Costa Rica. Roberto



ARRIGO SACCHI Donadoni replacing Baggio at halftime. That switch surprised many Italians for Sacchi has always said the tall, powerful Dino Baggio was one of his key players, comparing him to Dutch master Frank Rijkaard, whom Sacchi coached at Milan.

Tickets make 'em angry

CHICAGO, Illinois, June 13: Thousands of World Cup tickets remain unsold just five days before the start of the event — and fans unhappy with their tickets are heading to the courts, reports AFP.

The opening match between defending champions Germany and Bolivia at Chicago's Soldier Field is sold out, but there are still thousands of tickets available for matches in Dallas, Texas, and Detroit, Michigan.

"We don't want people sitting with bunches of tickets in their desk drawers," said World Cup spokesman Jim Trecker. "We don't want to see empty seats."

PROFILES: BELGIUM

BRUSSELS, June 13: Following are brief profiles of Belgium's World Cup squad:

- GOALKEEPERS:**
- Michel Preud-Homme. Age 35. Benfica; 51 caps; undisputed top keeper for nearly a decade; perfect positioning; reflexes barely slowing with age; won first cap in 1979 but came to fore only after joining Mechelen in 1987; turned down transfer to Japan last season because he feared losing team place; recently signed with Benfica.
 - Philp de Wilde. 29. Anderlecht; 4; Preud-Homme's heir apparent; outspoken and self-confident; helped save Belgium from elimination for fourth consecutive World Cup finals with brilliant display in final qualifier against Czechoslovakia.
 - Dany Verlinden. 30. Club Brugge; 0; at 1.75 metres relatively short for a keeper but athletic; impressive in past two seasons; first appearance in squad seen as long overdue.
- DEFENDERS:**
- Philippe Albert. 26. Mechelen; 30; tall, uncompromising defender also renowned for clear runs at goal; rugged play earned him poor reputation early in career but later silenced critics by developing into major star; injured for four months this season; suspended for opening match against Morocco.
 - Michel de Wolf. 36. Anderlecht; 37; oldest player in the squad; low-profile but tenacious tight maker who is at best against small, agile strikers; taking part in third World Cup finals.
 - Georges Grun. 32. Parma; 69; versatile defender who can attack strongly on the wings; exudes confidence with relaxed playing style and smooth ball control.
 - Marc Emmers. 28. Anderlecht; 33; midfielder in his early days but later pulled back into defence; uncertain of regular place after some shaky performances as libero in qualifying campaign; says he plays best as offensive midfielder.
 - Vital Borkelmans. 30. Club Brugge; 10; fast attack-minded left back; struggled to regain form after serious knee injury ruled him out for four months last season but is now quickly approaching his best level; former mine-worker.
 - Dirk Medved. 25. Club Brugge; 13; unspectacular but versatile and efficient; no other candidates seemingly available to fill right back position; Van Himst sees him as a possible future libero.
 - Pascal Renier. 22. Club Brugge; 1; biggest surprise call-up; sober but efficient marker who came to the fore only this season; prevented all his direct opponents in the Belgian first division championship from scoring.
 - Rudi Smids. 30. Antwerp; 12; indomitable left back; has never disappointed Van Himst.
- MIDFIELDERS:**
- Franky van der Elst. 33. Club Brugge; 61; versatile, driving defensive midfielder who is a certain starter in his third World Cup finals; workhorse who reads game exceptionally well; started 1986 World Cup as libero but removed after row with keeper who said he was too lightweight for the position.
 - Enzo Scifo. 28. Monaco; 64; most talented and inventive Belgian player, once criticised for playing too selfishly and slowing down game but now team's undisputed conductor and tactician; had disappointing spells with Internazionale Milan and Bordeaux; recovered poise at Auxerre and matured at Torino and Monaco; leading scorer for Belgium with 15 goals.
 - Lorenzo Staelens. 30. Club Brugge; 19; smooth midfield partnership with Van Der Elst both for club and national side; Belgian player-of-the-year; a certain starter in Van Himst's line-up.
 - Danny Boffin. 28. Anderlecht; 19; nicknamed "speedy" for his spurts down left wing and agile dribbling near the corner flag; seemingly tireless runner who developed into key player at Anderlecht after transfer from FC Liege, also plays on right; described by Van Himst as "a coach's perfect player".
 - Stefan van der Heyden. 24. Club Brugge; 3; technically strong offensive-oriented left winger for whom this World Cup may come too soon but whose playing style has impressed coach.
 - Eric van Meir. 26. Charleroi; 2; blossomed spectacularly in recent months; strong and swift player who can handle offensive and defensive tasks; still a third division player three years ago.
- FORWARDS:**
- Marc Degryse. 28. Anderlecht; 48; Mercurial player with excellent technique, who is listed as striker but fills midfield position at his club; hides endurance behind a frail appearance; Anderlecht's leading player but has less sparkling role in national team where he backs up strikers and assists Scifo; back on form after injury.
 - Alex Csernatynski. 33. Mechelen; 30; taking part in second World Cup finals, 12 years after first appearance; performs erratically but is a fighter who weighs heavily on defence; hailed in Belgium for vital goal in away qualifier against Czechoslovakia which seen as key to reaching finals.
 - Josip Weber. 90. Cercle Brugge; 2; Croatian-born newcomer who became Belgian national in March; leading scorer for third year in row in Belgian first division; brilliant at spotting cracks in defence.
 - Luc Nills. 27. PSV Eindhoven; 25; stylish but controversial forward renowned for his technique; prolific for club; with sparkling goals from impossible angles and dead balls.
 - Marc Wilmots. 25. Standard Liege; 23; powerful and good positional sense; hard working, explosive player whose tireless work makes up for limited technical skills; often called into midfield at his club; Belgium's leading scorer in qualifying campaign with five goals; hobbies include boxing.

PROFILES: SWITZERLAND

GENEVA, June 13: Following are brief profiles of the 22 members of Switzerland's World Cup squad:

- GOALKEEPERS:**
- Stephan Lehmann. Age 30. Club Sion; Caps 5; more than 200 club appearances; last international appearance against Japan in March 1993.
 - Marco Pascolo. 28. Servette Geneva; 18; clean sheet in international debut against UAE, January 1992; with Martin Brunner largely sidelined through injury, established himself as regular goalkeeper and played in all 10 World Cup qualifiers; safe hands, unflappable.
 - Martin Brunner. 31. Grasshopper Zurich; 33; lost regular spot to Pascolo after Ireland friendly March 1993 due to spate of injuries; flamboyant and tends to be erratic; suspect against high balls.
- DEFENDERS:**
- Andy Egli. 30. Servette; 76; national captain until serious knee injury in friendly against Tunisia in March 1993 put him out of action for seven months; made remarkable comeback and returned to side against Czech Republic in April this year; rugged and uncompromising tackler; strong in the air; retires after World Cup and hopes remain in soccer as trainer.
 - Lain Geiger. 33. Sion; 93; succeeded Egli as captain; sweeper behind three-man defensive line for Sion and national side; one of best defenders in Swiss soccer; won cup medals with Servette in 1980 and 1983.
 - Dominique Herr. 29. Sion; 38; last international against Czech Republic in April; reliable, tireless mover, he scored winning goal in 2-1 victory against Sweden in August last year.
 - Marc Hottiger. 26. Sion; 40; scored the only goal when the Swiss upset Italy 1-0 in Bern in World Cup qualifier in May 1993; took Egli's spot as central defender when Egli was injured and held place since; coach Roy Hodgson rates him as best stopper.
 - Yvan Quentin. 24. Sion; 13; won regular club place in 1991-92 season after debut previous term; international debut September 1992 against Scotland in 3-1 win in world Cup qualifier.
 - Martin Rueda. 31. Lucerne; 5; won cup final medal with Lucerne in 1992.
 - Juerg Studer. 27. FC Zurich; 5; club captain; played dominant role in ensuring the club's first division survival in relegation play-offs.
- MIDFIELDERS:**
- Thomas Bickel. 29. Grasshopper; 40; club captain; hit the headlines in 1992-93 season when he asked national coach not to consider him for internationals, club struggling for first division survival at time; rejoined national side for key World Cup qualifier against Estonia in October 1993 and was outstanding in 4-0 win; voted player-of-the-year this season.
 - Georges Bregy. 36. Young Boys; 49; midfield general and free-kick specialist, he returned to the national side in the spring of 1992 after a five-year absence and a regular since; also retires after World Cup and hopes to continue as a trainer; gives steady and experienced leadership.
 - Sebastian Fournier. 22. Gion; 4; promising player who has impressed at league level; played with distinction which came on as substitute in friendly against Czech Republic in April.
 - Christophe Ohrel. 26. Servette; 27; industrious and good tackle; unbroken run with national side since 2-1 win over France in friendly, May 1992; scored in 4-0 win against Estonia in final World Cup qualifier; unusual hobby — astronomy.
 - Ciriaco Sporza. 24. Kaiserslautern; 22; moved to Bundesliga in 1993 from Grasshopper; unselfish player who sets up more goals than he scores; won league cup double with Grasshopper in 1990 and championship again next year; Swiss player-of-the-year in 1993.
 - Alain Sutter. 26. FC Nuremberg; 45; loaned to Bundesliga's Nuremberg in 1993 where quickly made name for himself; fast mover though inclined to be lazy when match appears won; powerful left foot; won double with Grasshopper in 1990 and recognised as one of best midfielders Swiss have produced.
 - Patrick Sylvestre. 25. Lausanne; 9; joined Lausanne from Lugano in 1993; debut in friendly against Sweden in August last year; strong and uncompromising tackler.
- FORWARDS:**
- Nestor Subiat. 28. Lugano; French Argentine descent; became Swiss citizen recently; prolific scorer, second with 17 goals in first division this season; won cup winners' medal with Lugano last season.
 - Stephane Chapuisat. 24. Borussia Dortmund; 36; hailed as the superstar of Swiss soccer and their best striker ever; 1991 Swiss footballer-of-the-year; badly injured in winter of 1990-91 and missed most of previous club Bayer Uerdingen's matches; was then loaned to Borussia Dortmund and later signed; 20 goals for Borussia in 1991-92 and 15 more next season; named player-of-the-year by Bundesliga captains in 1991; national debut aged 19; brilliant dribbler, lethal left foot and mesmerising turn of speed.
 - Adrian Knup. 25. VfB Stuttgart; 32; risen quickly to forefront; top marksman with 21 in 1990-91; scored 11 in as many internationals; voted player-of-the-season by trainers and players as result; scored twice in extra time to give Lucerne Swiss Cup in 1992 and then moved to Stuttgart for bargain 400,000 dollars.
 - Thomas Wyls. 28. FC Aarau; 4; fringe of national team for some time; industrious but uninspiring.
 - Marc Grassi. 25. Servette; 9; volatile, sent off for hitting opponent, resulting in seven-match ban which includes five matches of next season; joined Servette after winter break by forcing FC Zurich to transfer him when club was involved in relegation play-offs; talented dribbler with good positional sense.

SURPRISINGLY, EARTHQUAKE-HIT CHILE IS ACCORDED THE 1992 TOURNAMENT - THANKS LARGELY TO THE EFFORTS OF THEIR FA PRESIDENT CARLOS DITBORIN. SADLY, HE DOESN'T LIVE TO SEE THE OPENING CEREMONY IN SANITAGO.

WITH THE SNOW-CAPPED ANDES PROVIDING A SPECTACULAR BACKDROP, THE HOST NATION MAKE A BRIGHT START BY BEATING SWITZERLAND 3-1.

BRAZIL, PRACTICALLY UNCHANGED FROM 1958, ARE STRONGLY FIANCIED TO WIN AGAIN BUT THEY SUFFER A BLOW WHEN PELE HOBBLES OUT OF THE TOURNAMENT DURING THE MATCH AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

IN THEIR NEXT GAME, THE BRAZILIANS ENCOUNTER A FAMOUS WORLD CUP FIGURE. HUNGARIAN EXILE FERENC PUSKAS NOW WEARS THE COLOURS OF SPAIN.

BACK IN GROUP TWO - A POTENTIAL FLASHPOINT EMERGES BETWEEN CHILE AND ITALY WHOSE JOURNALISTS HAVE INSENSITIVELY SLATED THE HOST COUNTRY. IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE THE RESENTMENT BOILS OVER.

IN WHAT BECOMES KNOWN AS THE BATTLE OF SANITAGO, ITALY HAVE TWO PLAYERS DISMISSED WHILE CHILEAN SANCHEZ AMAZINGLY STAYS ON DESPITE BREAKING AN OPPONENT'S NOSE! CHILE WIN 2-0.

AFTER A RATHER DISAPPOINTING OPENING PHASE, THE QUARTER-FINALS PAIR CHILE WITH THE SOVIET UNION. A NIGHTMARE DISPLAY BY THE NORMALLY RELIABLE RUSSIAN GOALIE YASHIN LETS THE HOME TEAM GO THROUGH.

ALSO IN THE LAST EIGHT, ENGLAND GIVE BRAZIL A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY BEFORE SUCCEEDING TO THE HOLLERS. SUPERIOR SKILLS GARRINCHA'S BANANA SHOT SEALS IT.

