

WORLD CUP USA '94

Today's World Cup Fixtures

Group B
Brazil vs Russia

Group F
Holland vs S Arabia
(for details see page 1)

WC snippets

UNDATED, June 19 (AP):
Friday's Results — United States 1, Switzerland 1; Ireland 1, Italy 0; Romania 3, Colombia 1.

Starts of the Day:—Ireland's Ray Houghton, who scored his first goal for the national team in five years; Romania's Florin Raducioiu, who became the first player in this tournament to score two goals in a game.

History:—The United States and Switzerland played in the first indoor World Cup game, on grass in the Pontiac Silverdome; Ireland registered its first World Cup victory that did not require penalty kicks.

Quote of the Day:—“It was like in a dream. But it was no dream and we pulled it out.”—Ireland midfielder Ray Houghton.

Hagi happy

PASADENA, June 19: Romanian captain Gheorghe Hagi last week scored an outstanding goal in a World Cup warm-up match against Sweden when he bent the ball around a seven-man wall from a free-kick, reports Reuter.

During the week he scored two goals described as “technically absolutely brilliant”, in another warm-up against a college side in Los Angeles.

But Gheorghe saved his best for the big stage on Saturday with a 30 metres shot that sent the ball dipping and curling over Colombian goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba in front of more than 91,000 fans at the Rose Bowl, and led Romania to a thoroughly well-deserved 3-1 win in their opening Group A match.

The Romanian skipper said afterwards he had scored a similar goal before — from 45 metres for Real Madrid two years ago.

“Until today that was the best goal I had ever scored”, he said. “But this was something very special. Ever since I scored that goal for Real Madrid I have dreamt every day of doing it again.”

“And I thought I had a good chance today because Colombian goalkeepers always tend to stand off their line.”

The stoutly-built Hagi, whose dribbling skills and superb talent have earned him the nickname, “the Maradona of the Carpathians”, also said his performance against Colombia was one his best.

“Everything seemed to work, it was one of the best games of my life and I am very happy with my performance and the team's performance.”

Dubliners rejoice

DUBLIN, June 19: Dubliners defied a pub strike to celebrate their national side's stunning 1-0 World Cup victory over Italy with a staggering street party that continued into the early hours of Sunday, reports Reuter.

Motorists blew their horns, men and women kissed and hugged total strangers as revellers took to the streets to toast their team's first-ever World Cup victory.

The 1-0 win over Italy, sweet revenge for Italy's win by the same margin in the World Cup four years ago, seemed certain to unleash another round of celebrations when pubs re-open on Sunday.

The Dublin party began in earnest shortly after 9 pm (200 GMT) when Ray Houghton scored the only goal of the match. The cheers from pubs, restaurants and homes could be heard all over Dublin.

Irish own 'Big Apple'

NEW YORK, June 19: New York became a sea of green on Saturday as Irish fans exuberantly celebrated Ireland's dramatic victory over Italy, reports Reuter.

“I can go home in a coffin now after this win,” said Paul Rochford of Dublin.

All over New York and New Jersey, where the game was played before 74,000 fans, the Irish erupted into ecstatic celebration.

When Ireland scored what proved to be the winning goal, the stadium went wild, and Irish fans leaped to their feet, dancing, singing, cheering and embracing one another.

The Irish fans, dubbed “Jack's Army” after coach Jack Charlton, the English manager of the team and known as Ireland's favourite Englishman, seemed to have taken over the stadium with banners and flags and singing.



Delirious Romanian players swarm around Hagi (hidden) after the brilliant Romanian captain slotted in the second goal with a 30 yarder left footed curler. Hagi scored once and Engineered two goals as Romania pulled off an upset 3-1 win over fancied Colombia at the Rose Bowl Stadium in Los Angeles on June 19. —AFP photo

Hagi loads, Raducioiu fires

Romania ambush Colombia

PASADENA, Calif., June 19: Maybe Pele overestimated Colombia's potential just a little bit.

Striker Florin Raducioiu scored one goal in each half as Romania surprised Colombia 3-1 in a Group A game Saturday before 91,856 fans at the Rose Bowl, reports AP.

“We respected Colombia, but we insisted and wanted this victory,” said Raducioiu, who plays for European Champions Cup winners AC Milan in Italy.

“It was a very good victory because we beat a very good team that remains a favourite for this World Cup. Colombia have a very technical team with natural qualities. But today we played very well.”

Colombia, rated as the best of the 24 qualifiers coming into the World Cup by Pele started well but couldn't come back after falling behind 2-0 after 34 minutes against a defensive-minded team that relied heavily on counter attacks.

The first goal was a typical counter-attack goal. Raducioiu said. “My second goal



GHEORGHE HAGI

was the same. I just took the ball from the goalkeeper and put it into the net.”

Romania, who have the second youngest squad in the World Cup with an average age of 25.1, struck unexpectedly and fiercely after the Colombians carried the play for the first 15 minutes of the game.

Raducioiu scored on the Romanians' first chance after a brilliant individual move in the 15th minute that silenced the mostly pro-Colombia crowd.

Midfielder Gheorghe Hagi, another foreign-based player who is a star for Brescia in Italy, set up Raducioiu's both tallies and scored the second

for a 2-0 lead in the 33rd minute.

“It was a great victory for us,” Hagi said. “Colombia is a very strong team. We respected them. But all games are very tough. We have to be well prepared for each of the remaining games.”

Raducioiu's first goal came after a fast counter-attack. Hagi struck a deep pass from midfield to Raducioiu, who faked two defenders before firing a right-footed drive from 18 yards (metres) past goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba.

Hagi's goal was a gem. After noting that Cordoba had ventured too far from his line, Hagi hit a wonderful lob from about 35 yards over the helpless goalkeeper.

Ten minutes earlier, Hagi came close as he chipped a shot from long range that Cordoba had to dive to push away.

Wilson Perez set up Colombia's lone goal with a corner kick three minutes before half-time, bending a ball for Adolfo Valencia, who scored on a header from close range through heavy traffic.

Colombia, who had only lost twice since July 1991, had a golden opportunity to tie in the 61st minute as striker Faustino Asprilla broke down the right flank. But his close-range shot flew just wide of Steele's post.

Asprilla also had several scoring chances during the first 15 minutes on the game when the Colombians pressed hard for an early goal.

Carlos Valderrama, the 1993 South American player-of-the-year, did not play well in the first half, missing several easy passes. But Valderrama, who has been bothered by a slight injury in his right knee in the last three games, improved after the break.

Romania's clincher came with just three minutes remaining after Hagi struck another long pass up to Raducioiu. Cordoba came out to challenge him, but the Romanian striker tapped the ball past him and shot into the open net from a sharp angle.

Romanian coach Anghel Iordanescu said he feared Colombia because of their “very good results going into the World Cup and also because they played before 75,000 people. And not the least they have some players who are the best in the world.”

“But we played very intelligent and tactical,” Iordanescu said. “We knew how to close the principal players of Colo-

mbia. We knew how to cover the space. And our players gave the best.”

Saturday's game was the first game of eight scheduled for the Rose Bowl, leading to the July 17 final. On Sunday, Sweden take on Cameroon in both team's Group B opener followed by the United States' last two games in Group A, against Colombia on Wednesday and Romania on June 26.

TEAMS

COLOMBIA: Oscar Cordoba, Andres Escobar, Luis Carlos Perea, Wilson Perez, Luis Herrera, Gabriel Gomez, Carlos Valderrama, Leonel Alvarez, Freddy Rincon, Faustino Asprilla, Adolfo Valencia.

ROMANIA: Bogdan Stelea, Miodrag Belodedici, Dan Petrescu, Gheorghe Popescu, Daniel Prodan, Ion Lupescu, Gheorghe Hagi, Ionel Munteanu, Gheorghe Mihali, Florin Raducioiu (Cornel Papura, 89th minute), Ilie Dumitrescu (Tibor Selymes, 68th).

Referee: Jamal Al-Sharif, Syria.

MATCH STAT

Match statistics for Saturday's Colombia v Romania



FLORIN RADUCIOIU

World Cup, Group A game:		
	Colombia	Romania
Goals	1	3
Shots on goal	18	10
Fouls	20	12
Corners	8	4
Offsides	3	4
Yellow Cards	3	0
Red cards	0	1

GROUP A STANDINGS

World Cup, Group A standings after matches played on Saturday (tabulate under played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points)						
Romania	1	0	0	3	1	3
Switzerland	1	0	1	1	1	1
United States	1	0	1	1	1	1
Colombia	1	0	1	1	3	0

Double trouble

DALLAS, June 19: Spanish captain Miguel Angel Nadal and Bolivian star striker Marco Antonio Etcheverry were both suspended for two matches by FIFA today after being sent off in their team's opening World Cup matches, reports Reuter.

The ban, handed out by FIFA's disciplinary committee, means both will miss their remaining two first-round group matches.

Both countries were also fined 51,000 Swiss francs (3,500 dollars), the minimum automatic fine, for having a player dismissed.

Flight into death

WASHINGTON, June 19: Twelve people, most of them Mexican soccer fans, were killed Saturday when their chartered jet crashed in heavy fog at Dulles International Airport near the nation's capital, officials said, reports Reuter.

The privately chartered Lear jet smashed into a heavily wooded area in suburban Virginia about half a mile (three-quarters of a kilometre) south of a main airport runway at 6:26 am EST (1.026 GMT) according to airport officials and County Sheriff and Fire Departments.

All 12 people on board, including four children and two crew members, were killed, officials said. The cause of the crash was not yet known.

In Mexico City, a spokesman for Taesa Airline said the Mexican company's plane was hired to fly to Washington for a World Cup match. “They were going to see the World Cup,” said Jose Henoni. “It appears there was a lot of mist around the airport.”

Thousands of foreigners, including Latin Americans, who are passionate about soccer, have flocked to the United States for the World Cup. Mexico are set to play Norway Sunday in Washington.

The jet, which took off from New Orleans, Louisiana, early Saturday morning, crashed just short of the runway after aborting an initial landing attempt at the airport, which is about 35 miles (56 km) west of Washington.

Michael Zurik, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration, said the plane was coming around for a second landing attempt when radio contact was lost, six minutes before the aircraft went down.

The plane had taken off from Mexico City Friday evening.

Only soccer can do the trick

GENEVA, June 19: Rudy Millitsis invited friends from both countries to a World Cup barbecue Saturday, but his Swiss side came through after game against the United States, reports AP.

Millitsis, a bank employee whose wife is American, said he was disappointed with Switzerland's 1-1 tie in their opener against a US team that garnered grudging respect.

“The heat must have been really hard on them,” he said after the game at the indoor Pontiac Silverdome.

Local politicians stopped talking to watch Switzerland's first game in 28 years at the soccer championship. A former Romanian leader at an international meeting in the Swiss Alps took a break to check on the teams his country faces later in the tournament.

For US expatriates with divided loyalties, the result was a relief.

“I was so upset Switzerland had to play the United States—at least neither one lost,” said Michael Kanter, an American teacher at a Swiss international school.

He said the US team impressed him. “The Swiss really needed some amateur mistakes on the American side, and there were no amateurs,” he said.

Switzerland seemed to stop for the game. It was shown live on all three national television channels — with French, German and Italian commentary for the different regions.

Delegates to a Socialist Party convention in Bern paused proceedings to watch the game.

Swiss businessmen and foreign leaders — including Czech Premier Vaclav Klaus and former Romanian Prime Minister Petre Roman — rushed to a TV to find out the score during a break at an international conference at Crans-Montana.

In a Geneva pub, a man with a red-and-white Swiss flag painted across his face said he still hoped his team would win the World Cup.

“It's my dream,” he said.

Italy start on wrong foot

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey, June 19: Triple champions Italy made the worst possible start to their World Cup campaign on Saturday as an impressive Ireland team sent them stumbling to a 1-0 defeat, reports Reuter.

The thousands of green-clad Ireland fans at the Giants Stadium danced delighted jigs to celebrate one of the greatest wins in Irish soccer history.

The triumphant mood among the Irish soured as reports came through six people had been shot dead as they watched the match in a Northern Ireland pub.

Ireland coach Jack Charlton's team has few star names but he has turned it into a formidable force in his eight years in charge, they have scored a series of notable wins over more celebrated teams but none can match this upset.

The win has to be one of the best results in football. We beat the Italians 1-0,” said Charlton, a World Cup winner as an England player in 1966.

Ireland had lost all six previous meetings with Italy.

Their only other World Cup final appearance ended with a 1-0 defeat by Italy in the quarter-finals in Rome four years ago.

Italy's coach Arrigo Sacchi, under pressure from an Italian media baffled by his frequent changes in personnel and tactics, tried to play down the importance of defeat in a group which also includes Norway and Mexico.

“When you don't play all that well and maybe deserve a draw you sometimes end up losing,” he said. “We can and we must improve. We must be self-critical but also try to draw on the positive aspects of our performance because there were some good things.”



SHOT OF THE MATCH: Veteran Irish midfielder Ray Houghton connects a left footed volley of no conspicuous pace but good enough to catch a callous Pagliuca, the Italian goalie of position for the match decider in the gruelling Italy-Ireland Group E match at the Giants Stadium in New Jersey on Saturday. —AFP photo

Outnumbered and outscored

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. June 19: Whoever said Italy would have a home-field advantage playing their World Cup games at Giants Stadium didn't count on the Irish and their cousins in the United States, reports AP.

A green-clad sea of singing and chanting Irish fans filled more than three quarters of Giants Stadium on Saturday and turned Italy's supposed home game into an away match.

Spurred by the support, Ireland then put a damper on Italy's hopes for a record fourth World Cup and scored perhaps their biggest victory ever by riding a 12th-minute goal by Ray Houghton to 1-0 first-round victory.

“We were led to believe it was going to be a load of Italians and a few Irish,” Houghton said, referring to the crowd. “When we got here an hour and a half before the game we couldn't believe it. There were hardly any Italians here at all.”

Actually, it had been like that since the gates opened at 11 am.

It seemed four of every five fans were either wearing Ireland's green jersey or a T-shirt with the word “Irish” emblazoned on it. And if they weren't they carried an Irish flag or had their faces painted a combination of green, white and orange.

The Irish also hung banners from every possible spot in Giants Stadium, letting folks in Dublin, Letterkenny, Kilmore, Harold's Cross, Tuam, and Monkstown know they had made the '94 Tour across the Atlantic.

Sacchi had spoken about the strength of the Irish and his worst fears were realised when they took the lead in the 12th minute through a speculative shot by veteran Ray Houghton.

Houghton seized on a poor header by Italy captain Franco

Baresi and floated a left shot from 25 metres which swerved as it went over badly positioned goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca.

“I haven't scored for a long time but I think I repaid Jack's faith today,” said Houghton, whose place was under threat before the match.

“I felt a bit faint after the goal because all the lads were jumping on me,” added the Aston Villa man, who has scored just four times in 59 internationals.

The highly-rated Italians never found any rhythm with European footballer-of-the-year Roberto Baggio fitting in and out of the game.

Ireland played much better as a team, varying their familiar long ball tactics with some excellent passing and movement from their five-man midfield.

Captain Andy Townsend had a superb game at the heart of midfield while Paul McGrath was outstanding at the back.

The Irish should have doubled their winning margin but midfielder John Sheridan blasted a clear opportunity against the bar in the 72nd minute.

MATCH STAT
Match statistics for Saturday's Italy v Ireland World Cup, Group E game:

	Italy	Ireland
Goals	0	1
Shots on goal	14	12
Fouls	13	16
Corners	7	1
Offsides	2	8
Yellow cards	0	3
Red Cards	0	0

The tooting of car horns that is the mark of any major football engagement died down within minutes of Ray Houghton's winner.

Italian newspapers on Sunday did not spare their scorn for a national team they said played in an uninspired manner.

“Italy make their debut among the whistles,” ran a front-page headline across eight columns in Il Giorno newspaper.

The Turin-based La Stampa newspaper said the team's World Cup debut was nothing less than a “legendary fiasco”.

“I expected it would be 50-50 as far as the fans,” said Tom Skelly, 34, of Wellesley, Mass., near Boston. “But it's 85-15 and it's home field advantage for the Irish.”

“One didn't have to look into the stands to see the advantage. It could be heard in a series of never-ending chants that to the common ear sounded confused.”

“It's really only four chants,” Skelly said. “We've come here with four cousins from Ireland and they taught them to us on the way over in the bus from the (New York) Port Authority.”

“There's: Away, away, away, away... and ‘oooh-ahhh, oooh-ahhh Paul McGrath.’ And the rhythmic clapping and ‘Ireland’ and ‘You'll never beat Ireland.’ That's it.”

For the Italian fans, the makeup of the crowd was a major disappointment.

“The Irish really outdid us,” said Anna Gugliuzza of nearby Lindhurst.

“And they kicked our butts, too,” added Ralph Acanorfo of Carlstadt, N.J. who was attending the game with her.

The only thing that put a damper on the day for the Irish supporters was the 33-degree Celsius (91 Fahrenheit) temperature with 74 per cent humidity.

Alan Hoey of Dundalk, County Luth, Ireland looked drained as he walked toward a refreshment stand at halftime.

“This is very, very warm. It's unbelievable. It's like the other day when I left the airport; it's totally oppressive. It just gets you.”

But on this day, nothing got either Ireland of their fans.

Odds get better for Ireland

LONDON, June 19: Ireland, 40-1 outsiders just before the World Cup and 25-1 as the tournament began, are now down to 16-1 with leading book maker William Hill after Saturday's 1-0 win over Italy, reports Reuter.

That makes the country seventh favourites to win the Cup and could leave British bookmakers the prospect of up to a five million pounds (7.5 million dollars) payout.

Hill's spokesman Graham Sharpe said on Sunday: “We alone have a one million pound (1.5 million dollars) liability on the Irish winning.”

“It can only get bigger and the industry will be selling out up to five million pounds if they can pull it off.”

On Saturday, many Irish fans backed their team at 5-1 to beat the Italians. Shrewder ones got 9-1 about 1-0 score line.

Brazil remain favourites at 11-4 to win the trophy, with Germany at 4-1 and the Netherlands at 7-1. Italy have slipped from 5-1 to 8-1.