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## Milla may play against Brazil

LOS ANGELES, June 22: Roger Milla, the 42-year-old Cameroon striker, might still become the oldest footballer to play at the World Cup finals, reports reuter.

Milla, sidelined with a hamstring injury, did not train last week and was not called up for Cameroon's 2-2 draw with Sweden in Pasadena on Sunday.

But coach Henri Michel said Cameroon's hero of the 1990 finals in Italy remained part of his plans. "He is a reserve to be held back until times of need. He is like a kind of joker or trump card for us."

Milla said he would be fit for the Group B game against Brazil on Friday. "I can play, why not," he said.

"It will be a difficult game but I am hoping to get a chance."

The oldest player to appear in the finals to date is Dino Zoff, who captained Italy to victory in Spain in 1982 aged 41.

## Accolade for Zico

TOKYO, June 22: The Japanese government said today it was presenting Brazilian football star Zico with the Prime Minister's award for his contribution to Japan's professional football league, officials said, reports AFP.

Zico will be the first foreigner to receive the award which was established in 1966, the government officials said.

An award ceremony will be held at the Prime Minister's official residence Wednesday, they said.

Zico, whose real name is Arthur Anunias Colimbra, joined Japan's Sumitomo Hetal company football club in May 1991. The amateur club, now called Kashima Antlers, joined the country's first professional football league when it was inaugurated last year.

Zico will also be given an honorary citizenship by the city of Kashima, the home ground of the Kashima Antlers east of Tokyo, city officials said.

## Novelty earns FIFA praise

PASADENA, June 22: Three points for victory and the ban on tackles from behind have transformed the image of the World Cup finals UEFA president Lennart Johansson said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

"I am delighted with the innovations FIFA have made for the tournament," said Johansson, four years on from the negative play and low scoring of Italia 90.

"Awarding three points for a win has encouraged teams to play for the win."

"In the Sweden-Cameroon match on Sunday, Sweden equalised in the 75th minute to make it 2-2. Under the old system of two points for a win both teams would probably have settled for a point and the match would have petered out for the last 15 minutes."

"But neither team wanted to lose two points on Sunday and they both continued attacking right till the end."

"At the same time banning the tackle from behind has given the attacking players more time on the ball, and we have seen the benefits of that immediately. They are creating more, wrong-doers are being punished. It is good for the game and good for the fans."

But Johansson, also a FIFA vice-president, said the world governing body could still do more to improve the flow of play. "I think that any player rolling around in apparent agony and play-acting should be booked, and that referees should immediately give the yellow card for shirt-pulling."

"We are also seeing an improvement in the flow of games due to a less publicised change. The referees here are younger and fitter than before."

"The oldest is 45, the youngest two referees both turned 34 only in May. They can keep up with play. It is a subtle, change, but one that also helps the game more."

# Nigeria announce arrival

DALLAS, June 22: Nigeria showed they are ready to take on the best when they opened their World Cup campaign with a crushing 3-0 win over Bulgaria on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The African champions, displaying gazelle-like speed in attack, ran the Bulgarian defence ragged and each of their goals was superbly taken.

Bulgaria created several first half chances in the Group D match and Hristo Stoichkov had a superbly-struck free-kick ruled out because the referee had awarded an indirect kick.

Just before the end Amunike was carried off on a stretcher. Teammate Finidi George had also gone off injured in the 77th minute after a goalmouth collision with Trifon Ivanov, who was also helped off but returned.



**BULL IN LABYRINTH:** Not quite. Nigeria's top marksman Rashidi Yekini gives vent to his feelings after netting his side's first goal against Bulgaria. The African champions dumped Bulgaria 3-0 at the Cotton Bowl Stadium in Dallas on June 21.

Rashidi Yekini, Africa's greatest marksman, fittingly opened the scoring for the World Cup debutantes in the 21st minute and hugged the net in celebration.

With the African drums beating in the stand, Daniel Amokachi added a second just before halftime.

Emmanuel Amunike, the man whose two goals in the final won Nigeria the African Nation's Cup, added the third nine minutes into the second half.

Amokachi also hit the post with a fierce drive from the edge of the penalty area a minute before his goal.

slammed the ball home.

The third goal was best. Ajax Amsterdam winger George sent a cross into the box and Amunike flung himself to meet with a diving header. George had his ankle strapped after being taken off.

Until the first goal, the match looked even, with the suspect Nigerian defence giving Barcelona striker Stoichkov and Emil Kostadinov plenty of space.

Porto winger Kostadinov had a shot superbly saved by goalkeeper Peter Rufai in the 11th minute when he twisted past a defender in the box and let rip. A minute later his cross to an unmarked Stoichkov in the box was cut out by Uche Okechukwu.

And the flailing leg of another defender denied Stoichkov when he had a free header in front of goal in the 10th minute.

But once the Nigerians took the lead, their confidence grew and they looked threatening on every raid and gave the Bulgarian defence a torrid time.

Substitute Mutiu Adegboye almost scored a fourth with his first touch in the 69th minute when his rasping shot was turned round the post by Bulgarian goalkeeper Borislav Mikhailov.

Referee: Rodrigo Badilla (Costa Rica)

Yellow cards: Nigeria — Emmanuel Amunike (74) Bulgaria — Yordan Lechkov (54)

**TEAMS**

**BULGARIA:** 1-Borislav Mikhailov, 2-Emil Kremenliev, 3-Trifon Ivanov, 4-Tzanko Tzvetanov, 5-Petar Hubechev, 20-Krasimir Balakov, 6-Zlatko Yankov, 9-Yordan Lechkov(10-Nasko Sirakov 59), 11-Daniel Borimirov(13-Ivaylo Yordanov 72), 8-Hristo Stoichkov, 7-Emil Kostadinov.

**NIGERIA:** 1-Peter Rufai, 2-Augustine Eguavoen, 3-Ben Iroha, 6-Chidi Nwanu, 5-Uche Okechukwu, 12-Samson Siasia(21-Mutiu Adegboye 68), 15-Sunday Olsheh, 7-Finidi George(13-Emeka Ezeugo 77), 14-Daniel Amokachi, 11-Emmanuel Amunike, 9-Rashidi Yekini.

MATCH STATS	
	Nigeria Bulgaria
Goals	3 0
Shots on goal	11 19
Fouls	15 10
Corners	5 10
Offside	2 2
Yellow cards	1 1
Red cards	0 0

**STANDINGS**

World Cup, Group D standings after Tuesday's matches (tabulate under played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against points):

Argentina	1	0	0	4	0	3
Nigeria	1	1	0	3	0	3
Bulgaria	1	0	1	0	3	0
Greece	1	0	0	1	4	0

# Super Eagles to soar higher

DALLAS, June 22: Welcome to showtime! This is an extravaganza of speed and daring, of overcoming the odds and fighting for the underdog, of dreaming to do well, and then planning to accomplish even more, reports AP.

It's accompanied by drums, rattles, chants and good will, with waving banners and even rap lyrics thrown in for good measure.

It's soccer, the Nigerian way, and it's provided one of the most pleasant and explosive surprises of the World Cup so far.

"Making their debut in soccer's world championship, Nigeria scored a 3-0 victory over a well-regarded Bulgarian team Tuesday night with a wide-open offence and the promise to do even more in later acts."

"My boys would like to play Brazil and Argentina," Clemens Westerhof, the Dutch coach of the Super Eagles from Africa, said. "Let them see what they can do."

Nigeria play Argentina, the 1990 cup runners-up, in Foxboro, Mass. Saturday. But to meet Brazil, a favourite to win the tournament, Nigeria will have to reach the later rounds. Westerhof says that's all within reach.

"We are not afraid of anybody," he said. "We came here to show that Nigeria can play football. We've had five years to build this team."

For the second World Cup in a row, an African team is one of the sensations of the early rounds.

Four years ago in Italy, Cameroon — the first team from Africa to make the cup finals — surprised the field with a wonderful blend of speed and exuberance and reached the quarterfinals.

Known as the 'Indomitable Lions', Cameroon were led by Roger Milla, an aging star whose spectacular goals and equally spectacular dances after them became an instant World Cup highlight film.

Cameroon are back this year, four years older and given little chance of matching that first-time performance. This time, it's Nigeria, a team of youthful experience.

Most of the players, such as scoring star Rashidi Yekini, play First-Division soccer in Europe. They won the African Nations' Cup this season for the first time since 1980 and are 21-9-11 in international competition since 1990.

They run. They gun. They showed the 44,132 fans at the Cotton Bowl that soccer can be as wide-open as the Dallas Cowboys' offense when Troy Aikman and Emmitt Smith are at their Super Bowl best — and a lot more exciting than some of the other local teams.

"Nigeria-Bulgaria was a better show than any NFL pre-season scrum," columnist Frank Luksa wrote in The Dallas Morning News.

Westerhof has tried to instill a sense of showmanship in his team. His knows this American edition of the World Cup is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for his team — and his sport.

"I told my boys they want entertainment in the USA — good football with action," the coach said. "It's showtime."

Back in Lagos, the only show for most people is a dark drama. The capital is tense as a military regime refuses to hand over power to a popularly elected government. The standoff has led to limited sanctions against Nigeria including a ban on direct travel to and from the United States.

So the Nigerian team — supported here by a small but boisterous crowd that broke into a chorus of "Whoops, There It Is" as their team left the field with a 2-0 halftime lead — is proud to be bringing some joy into the life of its nation.

After scoring Nigeria's first goal in its first World Cup game, Rashidi stuck his arm through the net and lifted them in prayer.

## Beenhakker blames Dutch players

WASHINGTON, June 22: The Dutch players and not coach Dick Advocaat's tactics were to blame for the ragged performance in the 2-1 win over World Cup outsiders Saudi Arabia, according to former coach Leo Beenhakker, reports Reuter.

They were very lucky to win at all, said Beenhakker after Monday's Group F game. The players were all poor. None did his job properly and as a result it was a very poor team performance by the Dutch.

"They can play much better but they will have to give more commitment to achieve anything," added the former Dutch boss.

Beenhakker, in charge of the Dutch during the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy and also briefly coach to Saudi Arabia for six months until February this year, said he was not surprised by the quality of the Saudi team performance.

They had the right tactics and they did a good job but the Netherlands played so badly it was easier for them. I have no idea why — you would have to live with the team to know the answer."

"I don't think it is to do with the system of using two wingers. That is a system that works very successfully for Ajax Amsterdam and for Barcelona. No. It was not the tactics which let the team down but the players."

The marking of opponents was the Dutch team's biggest problem. They gave them 10 or 15 metres to receive the ball in and to turn and get some speed up.

Beenhakker's criticism was not disputed by the players.

"They surprised us with their aggression and skill, even though we knew what to expect," said battle-hardened midfielder Jan Wouters.

"They had two strikers who were dangerous on the ball and we knew that. With our game we press hard and it means you give space away — at was the problem."

"But the main thing for us is that we have won three points. That was our priority. It wasn't easy but winning was important. Now we can relax a little before we play Belgium."

"It was no surprise really that the Saudis played that well. We allowed them to and it was our fault. We were not aggressive enough and I don't know why."

Dennis Bergkamp, one of the few Dutch players to shine in his free attacking midfield role, said: "I think our style is right. We like to attack and there is no better way to attack than with wingers. Is there? But, of course, we must use them."

Saudi striker Saeed Owairan, disappointed at losing, accused the Dutch of using "physical violence" in the second half to overcome the Saudis' skills.

"They prevented us from playing the way we wanted to. But on the whole we did well and now we want to play better still in the next match."

Fuad Anwar Amin, who headed Saudi Arabia ahead after only 19 minutes, said he was proud to have scored his country's first goal in the World Cup finals.

"We played to a plan set by our coach — we executed it as he asked. But we could not stand up to their physical strength in the second half."



Fuad Anwar Amin (2nd right) of Saudi Arabia nods the ball into the Dutch net to give the Asian underdogs a surprise lead during the Group F opener of the two teams at the RFK Memorial Stadium, Washington on June 20.

## Dutch subdue plucky Saudis

WASHINGTON, June 22: An 87th minute goal from substitute Gaston Taument steered the Netherlands to a face-saving but narrow 2-1 World Cup victory over a skillful and lively Saudi Arabia in their opening Group F clash on Monday, reports Reuter.

The Saudis making their World Cup debut, gave an unexpectedly high-quality demonstration of their talents and took the game to the Dutch for long periods after snatching an early lead.

Midfielder Fuad Anwar Amin was the scorer of their opening goal with a header from a free-kick by Abdullah Al-Dosari, but the Dutch, although shocked, did not cave in and they fought back with a tremendous second half performance.

Midfielder Wim Jol grabbed the equaliser with a perfectly struck 20-metre drive after 50 minutes and Taument, who came on as a 58th minute replacement for Marco Vermars struck the winner with only three minutes remaining.

The goal came when a deep cross from the left eluded the Saudi defence and their goalkeeper Mohammad Al-Deayea as he rushed out, leaving the Feyenoord winger with an unguarded goal into which to direct his header.

It was just about a merited result for the Dutch on a night when they were clearly taken by surprise by the force and skill of the Saudi team, they played deep and filled mid-field, but they produced many fluent moves and counter-attacked swiftly.

The Dutch had to dig into their resources of will power and strength at times to allow their marginal superiority to shine through in an open game of attacking soccer but in which five players were cautioned.

The Saudis had three booked and the Dutch two, a fair reflection of the play since the Saudis seemed to be as adept at the unruly side of the game as they were at the skill and technical aspects.

For Prince Faisal, the 'prince of youth' whose massive financial and emotional support for soccer instigated their first qualification for the finals, it must have been a night of mixed emotions.

His clever team, which made life difficult for the strong and more accomplished Dutch, played with great belief just as their Argentine coach Jorge Solari had said they would. Little-known before the game, they will now be seen at a real danger to their opponents Belgium and Morocco.

The Netherlands, runners-up in the World Cup finals of 1974 and 1978 and appearing in their sixth finals tournament, were never comfortable and needed their unquenchable spirit to emerge triumphant to the delight of their orange army of drum eating supporters.

For them, it was fortunate that Monday evening followed the coolest day in Washington for more than a week with the temperature falling to 27 Celsius by the end of the game.

Taument, with his dark flowing hair and sharp turn of pace and skill, was the clear match-winner. His more experienced teammates found it difficult to break down the Saudi rearguard until his late intervention.

Relieved Dutch coach Dick Advocaat said: "It was very difficult for us in the first half. We had trouble controlling the game in the opening 10 minutes. Saudi Arabia played better than us and it was only after that period that we were able to start to create any chances and to play any better."

"The second half was very different. We played much more aggressively and we out-played them and created a lot of chances. It was a difficult game for us and we had to wait until right at the bid to score the winning goal — but I felt it was a fair result."

Saudi coach Jorge Solari said: "Everyone thought the Netherlands would win but the found a lot more difficult than expected. They had the experience to fight back and to win. That was the difference."

## Graf, Stich sent packing

WIMBLEDON, June 22: In another stunning upset at Wimbledon, 120th-ranked Bryan Shelton routed No. 2 seed and 1991 champion Michael Stich 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 Wednesday, reports AP.

Stich joined fellow German Steffi Graf, the women's top seed and defending champion, as a first-round loser to an unseeded American. Graf's loss Tuesday to Lori McNeil was the first time a defending women's champion lost in the first round, and Stich became only the second men's No. 2 seed to lose that early.

But the men's top seed, defending champion Pete Sampras, preserved some sense of order with a brisk 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 second-round victory over fellow American Richey Reneberg.

"I never really gave him a chance to play his game," Sampras said.

Shelton, who had to win three qualifying matches to make the field, has never gotten past the third round of any Grand Slam and never before beat a Top Five player. But he totally outplayed Stich, who let his frustrations show with scowls and racket-tossing, then drew boos when he exited Court Two.

Stich, though ranked No. 2 in the world after Sampras, has struggled badly in recent Grand Slams. He lost in the first round of the 1993 US Open and the Australian Open this year, and was ousted in the second round of the recent French Open.

In other matches, 20-year-old Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the No. 15 seed, ousted last Dutchman Laurence Tierman in the completion of a marathon suspended match, 7-5, 6-7 (7-5), 7-5, 6-7 (7-5), 10-8. Another Russian, Andrei Olhovskiy, beat 16th seeded Arnaud Boetsch of France, 6-2, 6-3, 7-5.

France's Guy Forget, who missed the past five Grand Slams because of injuries, beat Doudg Flach, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2. But another veteran Frenchman, crowd-favorite Henri Leconte, withdrew with back problems five games into the fifth set of a battle with Spain's Alex Corretja.

Karim Alami became the first Moroccan ever to win at Wimbledon, upsetting Magnus Larsson of Sweden, 7-6 (7-4), 7-6 (7-3), 7-5.

In women's second-round matches, third-seeded Conchita Martinez beat Japan's Nana Miyagi, 6-1, 7-6 (7-3), and No. 6 seed Kimiko Date crushed Britain's Shirl-Ann Siddall, 6-2, 6-0.

No. 9 Lindsay Davenport, just back from her high school graduation in California, beat South African Tessa Price, 6-4, 6-2, and 13th-seeded Zina Garrison-Jackson beat Katarina Sfenikova of Slovakia, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4).

But No. 12 seed Anke Huber joined the ranks of German upset victims, falling to Ines Gorrochategui of Argentina, 6-3, 6-4. And No. 8 seed Natalia Zvereva of Belarus lost to Japan's Mana Endo, 4-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Gabriela Sabatini, the No. 10 seed, salvaged a 2-6, 6-4, 6-1 first-round victory over Austria's Judith Wiesner. And Helena Sukova, designated the 17th seed after the withdrawal of No. 7 Mary Pierce, beat American Tami Whitlinger, 6-7 (9-7), 6-2, 8-6.

With Graf gone, either Martina Navratilova, in her farewell appearance at 37, somehow wins her 10th Wimbledon crown. Or the Graf-Navratilova lock on the title ends after 12 years, and a brand-new champion emerges.



STEFFI GRAF

THEIR IS FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE SCOTS WHEN WINGER WILLY JOHNSTON FAILS A DRUGS TEST AND CATCHES AN EARLY PLANE HOME.



BUT SCOTLAND ALMOST PULL OFF A REMARKABLE TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY. GEMMILL'S CLASSIC SOLO GOAL GIVES THEM VICTORY OVER HOLLAND WHO GO THROUGH ONLY ON GOAL DIFFERENCE.



HOLLAND AT THIS STAGE ARE SHORT ON CONFIDENCE AND MISSING JOHAN CRUYFF. EVEN A SPECIALLY-COMPOSED SONG FAILED TO MAKE HIM RECONSIDER HIS DECISION NOT TO TRAVEL.



IN THE SECOND PHASE THOUGH, THE DUTCH BEGIN TO FIND SOME FORM. WILLY VAN DE KERKHOF ROUNDS OFF A 5-1 DESTRUCTION OF AUSTRIA.



HOLLAND THEN MEET WEST GERMANY IN AN ACTION-PACKED RE-Run OF THE 1974 FINAL. THE GERMANS LOOK TO BE SNEAKING A CRUCIAL VICTORY UNTIL RENE VAN DE KERKHOF, WILLY'S TWIN BROTHER, DANCES THROUGH TO EQUALISE.



OVERALL, THE HOLDERS HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTING. THEIR SLIM HOPES OF REACHING THE FINAL ARE DASHED BY TWO GOALS FROM AUSTRIA'S HANS KRANKL.



WITH 12 MINUTES LEFT ARE HAAN, AN ACCOMPLISHED LONG-RANGE MARKSMAN, UNLEASHES A NOWTIE TO CLINIC. HOLLAND'S PLACE IN THE FINAL CAN THEY GO ONE BETTER THAN LAST TIME?



