

WORLD CUP USA '94

Today's World Cup Fixtures

- Group E**
Ireland vs Mexico
- Group B**
Brazil vs Cameroon
Sweden vs Russia

Unruly Argentine reporter

BOSTON, June 23: An Argentine television reporter was fined 125 dollars on Wednesday for public disorder after his country's opening World Cup game, reports Reuter.

A consular official said a judge at Foxboro, the match venue south of Boston, gave reporter Eduardo Palucci the option of a trial at a later date or the fine after his arrest following Argentina's 4-0 win over Greece on Tuesday.

Palucci scuffled with security officers who tried to block his cameraman as he was trying to film the Argentine team bus leaving the stadium.

A spokesman for the World Cup organisers said the European Broadcasting Union would decide whether the reporter could continue his work during the tournament. The cameraman, thought at first to have also been arrested, was not.

WC snippets

UNDATED, June 23 (AP): Wednesday's results — United States 2, Colombia 1, Switzerland 4, Romania 1.

Star of the Day — US goalkeeper Tony Meola, who did not allow a score against Colombia until the last minute.

Quotes of the Day — "It's incredible, it's historical, it's very cool." — US defender Alexi Lalas on the upset of Colombia.

"Today the death certificate of Colombia is written. Now, we only need somebody to sign it." — Colombia coach Francisco Maturana.

History — The United States won for the first time at the World Cup since their 1-0 victory over England in 1950, the biggest upset ever in the tournament.

Strike — Cameroon's players are threatening to strike for their game with Brazil on Friday because they have not been paid. The Cameroon Federation says it has nearly \$1 million to disperse to the players Thursday and the strike will be averted. FIFA warns of long-term sanctions should the strike go forward.

WORLD CUP TOP SCORERS

UNDATED, June 23: List of goalscorers after Wednesday's games at the World Cup, reports AP.

- 3 goals:** Gabriel Batistuta, Argentina.
- 2 goals:** Florin Raducioiu, Romania; Juergen Klinsmann, Germany; Juan Antonio Poyatos, Spain; Gheorghe Hagi, Romania; Georges Bregy, Switzerland; Adolfo Valencia, Colombia.
- 1 goal:** Julio Salinas, Spain; Hong Myung-bo, South Korea; Seo Jung-won, South Korea; Eric Wynalda, United States; Ray Houghton, Ireland; Marc Degryse, Belgium; Kjetil Rekdal, Norway; Roger Ljung, Sweden; David Embe, Cameroon; Francoise Omam-Biyik, Cameroon; Thomas Dahlin, Sweden; Romario, Brazil; Ral, Brazil; Foad Amin, Saudi Arabia; Wim Jonk, Netherlands; Gaston Taument, Netherlands; Delgado Maradona, Argentina; Rashidi Yekini, Nigeria; Daniel Amokachi, Nigeria; Emmanuel Amunike, Nigeria; Alain Sutter, Switzerland; Stephane Chapuisat, Switzerland; Adrian Knup, Switzerland; Ernie Stewart, United States.
- Own goals:** Andres Escobar, Colombia (for United States)



OVER THE MOON: Defender Alexi Lalas leaps into the air after the hosts USA recorded a historic victory over fancied Colombia during a World Cup Group A tie at the Rose Bowl Stadium in Los Angeles on Wednesday. The Americans, who won 2-1 tasted their first victory in the Cup finals since 1950 when they stunned England 1-0. — AFP photo

Ministers rush to US with cash to make Cameroon team play

SAN FRANCISCO, June 23: Desperate Cameroon sent another government minister to California on Thursday to seal a near one-million dollar pay settlement with the country's World Cup soccer squad and avert strike threats, reports AFP.

The players, who say they have not been paid for two months and apparently rejected a first offer of 535,000 dollars this week, are threatening not to play Friday's Group B game against Brazil in San Francisco.

But in Yaounde a leading government official said the country's minister of communications, Augustin Kountchou, had now left the Cameroon capital "in catastrophe" with a further 455,000 dollars, made available by the country's President Paul Biya.

Last weekend Kountchou announced the players would be receiving a 10,008 dollar bonus for playing in the World Cup with an extra 5,000 dollars per win.

The Sports Minister, Bernard Massoua II, sent to the United States to settle the dispute.

However, reports say that when he turned up in California earlier this week with 535,000 dollars in his luggage the deal was rejected by the players.

"They said it was good but not good enough," said federation president Maha Deher. A fax from the players to government officials back home then brought the strike threat.

Goalkeeper Joseph-Antoine Bell, who led a pay strike just before the 1990 World Cup in Italy which cost him his place in the side, said on Wednesday that he hoped a compromise could be worked out quickly to the dispute.

"A player strike is a possibility, but I hope it will not come to that. I do not want to talk any more of money. I want to keep it out of my mind. I hope the matter will be resolved," said Bell, who claimed that money from the 1990 finals has still not been paid. FIFA are not getting involved in the dispute but their press officer, Guido Tognoni, said a strike could mean a long-term from their competitions. However, he added: "We have full faith Cameroon will play on Friday. They are not crazy."

Caeroon's coach, former French international Henri Micheal, says persistent squabbling over money is hurting his team's chances.

"They are losing their confidence. They need a guarantee before we play Brazil if we are to have any chance," said Micheal. "The matter is in the hands of the Cameroon state and not the federation. But I am optimistic about finding an amicable end to the problem."

Though Cameroon's success of Italia '90 made some rich, a large proportion of the cash was allegedly never given to players nor ploughed back into helping grass roots football in Cameroon.

Testing time for Parreira

PALO ALTO, June 23: Brazil, forced by injuries to field a makeshift defence, are taking nothing for granted against Cameroon in the World Cup Group B match on Friday that promises a feast of skill and flair, reports Reuter.

Brazil showed fluency and grace in sweeping aside Russia 2-0 in their opening match, but the Indomitable Lions roared in their own first game before Sweden fought back for a 2-2 draw.

Brazilian coach Carlos Alberto Parreira is warning against over confidence against the team who upset fellow South Americans Argentina and Colombia in the World Cup four years ago.

"We have to be careful. They are a very dangerous team. They have good players who are creative and who have the courage to dribble," he said.

Parreira said Cameroon were more dangerous than Sweden or Russia because they were less predictable than the Europeans, and he urged caution over Brazil's impressive start as they seek their first World Cup title since 1970.

"We are only one-seventh of the way there. It is very early for any euphoria," he said.

Cameroon, who beat Argentina 1-0 Colombia 2-1 on the way to the quarter-finals in Italy in 1990, acknowledged they faced a momentous task against Brazil but said they could pull off another shock.

"We know that Brazil are a team of 11 brilliant individuals who are used to playing together and are one of the favourites. It's a very difficult task," Cameroon's French coach Henri Michel said.

"But I think Cameroon have some chance because we have a lot to gain. If we get a favourable result, we can qualify for the second round," he said. "I think Cameroon can cause the Brazilian team some problems."

Cameroon's preparations continue to be disrupted by a dispute over money which Michel says has made it hard to concentrate on the match.

His most likely tactic is to rely on counter-attack and hope striker Francois Omam-Biyik's pace and skill will come up trumps. Against Sweden he scored once and looked sharp, almost snatching a second goal which could have buried the Swedes.

If he fails, 42-year-old Roger Milla will be on the substitutes' bench waiting for a chance to repeat his goal scoring feats of 1990. He has declared himself fit after shaking off a leg injury.

Parreira's biggest concern is that central defender Ricardo Rocha has been ruled out by a pulled thigh muscle picked up against Russia.

His place alongside Marcio Santos at the heart of the defence goes to Aldair, of Italian club Roma, who himself missed seven months of last season through injury.

Ricardo Gomes, first choice central defender and captain, had to fly home because of injury before the tournament started and Mocer of Benfica was ruled out by a liver ailment.

But Parreira played down the blow to a side who will be otherwise unchanged.

"We have plenty of good players in this position and anyone of them can step in and fulfil their role. We are not asking them to do anything they cannot do," he said.

BRAZIL: 1-Taffrel, 2-Jorginho, 13-Aldair, 15-Marcio Santos, 16-Leonardo, 5-Mauro Silva, 8-Dunga, 9-Zinho, 10-Ral, 7-Bebeto, 11-Romario.

CAMEROON: 1-Joseph Antoine-bell, 6-Thomas Libih, 3-Rigobert Song, 13-Raymond Kalla, 15-Hans Agbo, 14-Stephen Tatau, 10-Louis Mfede, 8-Emile Mbouh, 17-Marc Viven Foe, 19-David Embe, 7-Francois Omam-Biyik. Kick-off: 2000 GMT (0200 BST).

Soccercide

BANGKOK, June 23: The 1994 World Cup soccer claimed its first fatality in Thailand when a gambler, distraught over the result of the Netherlands-Saudi Arabia match, hanged himself from the ceiling of his home, a news report said Wednesday, reports Xinhua.

The Daily News said Sayan Jandee, 26, returned to his home in the Bangkok suburb of Samut Prakan Tuesday in a bad mood after watching the match on television.

The paper quoted his wife as saying he had lost more than 10,000 baht (about 400 US dollars) on a bet that the Dutch team would beat the Saudi team by two or more goals.

The Netherlands did win, but only 2-1 in the Group F game played in Washington Monday.

Sayan used a nylon rope to hang himself from a ceiling beam in his home, police said.

Zagalo on Nigeria

SAN JOSE, Calif, June 23: Highly respected Brazilian coach Mario Zagalo said African teams have made tremendous progress but are still tactically naive, reports Reuter.

Zagalo, Brazil's World Cup winning coach in 1970 and assistant coach at the current finals, said he was extremely impressed with the Nigerian side which beat Bulgaria 3-0 in their World Cup debut on Tuesday.

"They were exciting to watch and it will be tremendous for world football if they make the next round," he said on Wednesday.

"But even though they won 3-0 and they played some excellent football, they still showed some naivety."

"They have difficulty when the opposition has the ball and sometimes they gave the ball away for no reason at all."

He said Cameroon played in a similar style, though with less strength and speed and more ball control.

"They come at you with six or seven men but there's not so good without the ball. That's one of their weaknesses," said Zagalo.

Colombians castigated

BOGOTA, June 23: Colombia's World Cup loss to the US team prompted shame at home and ridicule in other South American countries, reports AP.

"There's a lesson to draw from this: you should not praise players and teams that much before they really win something," listeners to Peru's Radio Programas heard.

"Colombia were a total disaster and the United States won deservedly," commentator Victor Costa said on Argentina's Radio Continental station after the 2-1 US victory Wednesday.

"National Shame" cried the headline in Thursday's edition of the Occidente daily the Cali, Colombia.

Colombian television commentators said the team looked lost on the field.

Leonardo Veliz, a former Chilean international turned TV commentator, ripped into the "clumsy" Colombian defence.

There was some leniency. "The Colombians lacked luck, which is essential in soccer," Victor Morales said on Argentina's Radio Continental.

But Julio del Puerto said on Venezuela's Radio Cardinal the real reasons lay elsewhere.

The Colombians suffered the curse of their 5-0 victory over Argentina in World Cup qualifying," he said. "The victory made them feel as if they were the world champions already and they did not prepare properly for the competition."

"They rather worried about having the best jerseys and making thousands of Valderrama-style wigs to bring to Los Angeles," del Puerto said, referring to the blond dreadlocks of Colombian midfielder Carlos Valderrama.

Irish want to wrap it up

ORLANDO, June 23: Hard-running Ireland, who knocked former champions Italy off their stride,

aim to overpower Mexico on Friday and charge into the second round of the World Cup ahead of time with a second successive win, reports Reuter.

Ireland's World Cup odds shortened dramatically after Saturday's 1-0 victory over 1982 champions Italy.

But they face a dangerous Mexican side who are filled with the urgent purpose of survival after already suffering one defeat in Group E.

Mexico were dealt a body blow by Norway, who scored a late goal after the Mexicans had come desperately close themselves.

Manager Jack Charlton, who guided Ireland to the 1990 World Cup quarter-finals, would like to secure a place in the last 16 before the final group game against Norway and says his team are in the mood to do so.

"They're looking forward to the game on Friday and, with an opportunity that we can qualify out of this group after two games, that's a great incentive for them."

"That's what we're going to be trying to do," he said after a training session at the Citrus Bowl stadium on Wednesday.

Charlton expressed admiration for Mexico earlier in the week.

"They work very hard at running and closing you down quickly. They have a nice way of getting players forward," he said.

"I'm not happy about the game against them. They know they have to win to stay in the competition. We know we have to get a result."

Worries have receded about the fitness and health of striker Tommy Coyne, taken ill after suffering from extreme dehydration in Saturday's game, and midfielder Ardy Townsend, the team captain who has been afflicted by a reach on the leg.

Mexico coach Miguel Mejia Baron said his players had responded well to their reversal and trained hard. "They have good morale and as a group they believe they have the quality to succeed."

"We will try to win but the Irish team is one I respect very much. They've been together a long time. They have a lot of experience."

Mejia broke with precedent on Wednesday and named 13

from whom the starting line-up will be chosen.

Midfielder Alberto Garcia Aspe returns after missing the Norway game through suspension and tall striker Carlos Hermerosillo may be preferred to the old master Hugo Sanchez to add height and aggression to the attack against the rugged Irish defence.

Mejia gave no clue to his final choice but defender Raul Gutierrez and midfielder Luis Valdes, both substituted in the Norway game, are not among his 13.

PROBABLE TEAMS

Ireland: 1-Packie Bonner, 2-Denis Irwin, 14-Phil Babb, 5-Paul McGrath, 3-Terry Phelan, 8-Ray Houghton, 7-Andy Townsend, 10-John Sheridan, 6-Roy Keane, 11-Steve Staunton, 15-Tommy Coyne.

Mexico: 1-Jorge Campos, 14-Joaquin Del Olmo, 2-Claudio Suarez, 3-Juan Ramirez Perales, 5-Ramon Ramirez, 6-Marcelino Bernal, 4-Ignacio Ambriz, 10-Luis Garcia, 8-Alberto Garcia Aspe, 7-Carlos Hermerosillo or 9-Hugo Sanchez, 11-Luis Alves.

Referee: Kurt Roethlisberger (Switzerland)

Kick-off: 1630 GMT (2230 BST).



US forward Ernie Stewart (C) celebrates with his teammates Tom Dooley (L) and John Harkes (R) after scoring the match decider against Colombia in a World Cup Group A encounter at the Rose Bowl Stadium in Los Angeles on Wednesday. USA won 2-1. — AFP photo

Colombians all but buried

DALLAS, June 23: Colombia's shock 2-1 defeat by hosts the United States on Wednesday left Peru's pre-finals favourites teetering on the brink of World Cup elimination, reports Reuter.

The South Americans, strongly fancied by many after their 5-0 away win over Argentina last year in a World Cup qualifier, need a series of results to go their way if they are to clinch a place in the last 16.

The Colombians, who came into the World Cup with just one international defeat since 1991, lost their opening match 3-1 to Romania and must now beat Switzerland in Palo Alto on Sunday to stand a chance of lifeline third place in Group A.

With three points for a win now in force, both the Swiss

and the Americans are out of reach on four and the Colombians' only hope is to win and join Romania on three points.

To snatch third spot they would then have to rely on the United States beating Romania in Pasadena on the same day — and even that might not be enough as goal tallies would then come into play.

Romania currently have a 4-5 record of goals for and against and Colombia stand at 2-5. A 1-0 win for Romania and a 1-0 defeat to Colombia, for example, would still leave Colombia bottom of the group and out of the competition by virtue of having scored fewer goals.

Even assuming everything went their way and they did place third their prospects of going through as one of the four best third-placed teams from the six groups would not be good.

A study of the last three World Cup finals tournaments — those with a 24-team format — shows only three teams in that period would have made it through on three points, using the present system of calculation.

Colombia might not like to be reminded that the Soviet Union found themselves in a similar predicament after two matches in the 1990 finals in Italy after starting out as one of the more fancied sides.

Despite winning their final match 4-0 over Cameroon it was too late to avoid elimination as bottom team in their group.

The Swiss and Americans can rest easy. No team reaching four or more points under the current rules would have found themselves out of things in any of the previous tournaments.

Adrian Knup proves a point

DETROIT, June 23: Adrian Knup proved he's the world's most effective striker. Switzerland proved they could finally win again in the World Cup finals, reports AP.

Knup, in his World Cup debut, scored Switzerland's third goal in a 4-1 whipping of Romania in a Group A game Wednesday that virtually clinched the Swiss a second-round spot.

Knup had a 0.62 goals-per-game average going into the World Cup, the best among strikers with at least 20 internationals.

He was inches away from a second tally, almost skimming the ball with his head as

Georges Bregy's free kick sailed in for the 4-1 in the 72nd minute.

"I showed how good I can be."



ADRIAN KNUP played for Stuttgart last season and now is moving to Karlsruhe, another German club and his fourth in the last four years.

Switzerland were hesitant in the opening phase. Alain Sutter, who has been signed by German champion Bayern Munich, put the Swiss ahead at 16 minutes but George Hagi scored for Romania in the 36th to leave the game level at halftime.

Switzerland replied with a powerful second half to overwhelm Romania, who had beaten Colombia 3-1 in their opener.

Knup, who missed the opening game against the United States with a sprained ankle, said the whole team was disappointed with that performance.

ARGENTINA FACE POLAND IN THE FIRST GROUP B FIXTURE. WITH LUIGUE INJURED MUCH IS EXPECTED OF FELLOW STRIKER MARIO KEMPE ON HIS OLD STOMPING GROUND AT ROSARIO

KEMPE DELIVERS THE GOODS HE SEES OFF THE POLES WITH TWO EMPHATIC FINISHES

BRAZIL ARE THE OBVIOUS CHALLENGERS TO ARGENTINA BUT OVERCOME BY FEAR OF LOSING THE TEAMS PLAY OUT A SCRAPPY AND OFTEN BRUTAL 0-0 DRAW

NOW GOAL DIFFERENCE WILL DETERMINE THE FINALISTS. BRAZIL, KICKING OFF EARLY, BEAT POLAND 3-1. ARGENTINA KNOW THEIR TARGET. THEY MUST SCORE FOUR TIMES AGAINST PERU

STANDING IN THEIR WAY IS ECCENTRIC PERU. KEEPER QUIROGA. THE MADCAP GOALIE HAD BEEN BOOKED AGAINST POLAND FOR FOULING IN THE POLISH HALF OF THE PITCH

THE ATMOSPHERE IN ROSARIO IS FIFTH HEAVEN. WORRY THE HOSTS EARLY ON BUT IN THE 21ST MINUTE KEMPE BUSTLES THROUGH TO SHOOT ARGENTINA AHEAD

THE FANATIC ARGENTINIAN PUBLIC COULDN'T CARE LESS THEIR HEROES ARE IN THE FINAL. AND BUENOS AIRES IS BUZZING

