



Another Greek tragedy on card

FOXBORO, Massachusetts, June 29: Another Greek tragedy is in prospect when the beleaguered European team come up against Nigeria in their final World Cup Group D game on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Greece do not have any points after 4-0 defeats to both Argentina and Bulgaria in their debut finals. They are as good as out of the tournament, clinging only to the slimmest of mathematical chances of a second-round place.

For a team who have yet to score, getting a bagful of goals in their last match would be a miracle.

The strong Nigerian forwards look too fast and skilful for the porous Greek defence, while the European side have not shown a tactical sophistication that could counter the Africans in the way that Argentina did when beating Nigeria 2-1 on Saturday.

More realistically, Greek coach Alketas Panagoulas is hoping for a better performance and at least one point.

"We are going for the best possible performance with the best possible line-up to have a decent game and get a tie. Maybe that would be (Greece's) first golden point of the World Cup," Panagoulas said.

He said he would make some changes from the side that lost to Bulgaria in Chicago on Sunday.

Veteran libero Stelios Manolas and 22-year-old striker Alexis Alexioudis are both doubtful starters.

Nigeria have no injury worries and Eintracht Frankfurt midfielder Austin Okocha, a late substitute against Argentina who has been recovering from injury, could get a start against the lightweight opponents.

Only a heavy defeat could jeopardise the Nigerian's chances of going through. They have three points from their 3-0 win over Bulgaria and a superior goal difference puts them in second place.

Their Dutch coach Clemens Westerhoven said: "We can't take Greece lightly, because it will be their last chance to win a match. We must go and beat

Nigeria 2-1 on Saturday."

Referee: Leslie Mottram (Scotland)

Kickoff: 2335 GMT (05:35 BST).

are used to heat. We'll probably play Belgium or the Dutch and they'll have the same problems as us.

Charlton lost his cool during that match and was banned from the touchline at Giants Stadium on Tuesday for insulting a FIFA official.

He watched the game from the main stand, communicating with assistant Maurice Setters by telephone.

"You get a good view from up there but obviously you can't get any physical contact with the players," said Charlton, who said he mainly asked Setters to tell his players to stop arguing with Colombian referee Jose Torres.

"I still don't really know what it (the ban) was for but we're all smiling and we're all happy," he added.

The huge and colourful Irish contingent in Giants Stadium broke it to joyous celebrations at the final whistle but it is the result rather than the match they will remember.

The attacking limitations of the two long-ball exponents were evident with scoring chances at a premium.

Norwegian striker Goeran Soerloth saw his shot spin off the top of the crossbar after a scramble in the Irish goalmouth in the 75th minute.

Ireland's John Sheridan almost scored with a splendid chip which landed on the top of the Norwegian goal 10 minutes from time but goalkeepers Pat Bonner and Erik Thorstvedt had few other anxious moments.

"I'm disappointed, we've worked very hard," said Norwegian coach Egil Olsen. "We needed a goal in that second half but Ireland had most of the possession."

Norway blew their best chance to secure qualification when they lost to 10-man Italy at Giants Stadium last Thursday.

NEW YORK, June 29: Judit Polgar, the world's highest ranked female chess player, knocked British grandmaster Nigel Short out of competition in the first round of the Professional Chess Association's speed chess tournament Tuesday, reports AP.

Polgar, 17, beat Short 2-0. The Hungarian teen-ager is the only woman in the 16-player event which began Monday.

"I am having a great time and really really enjoying myself," he said autographing a T-shirt for a fan. "I am the kind of player who can play well when I know that my team mates are supporting me and understand what I am trying to do."

"This team works with me. We are disciplined. We have a great understanding — and we are improving. You have not seen our best yet."

Hagi, scorer of 24 goals in 86 internationals, is closing in on two national records —

Ladislau Boloni's all-time appearance record of 108 internationals and Tulus Bodola's scoring record of 30 goals which has stood since 1939.

But there is one greater prize that Hagi will not allow himself of thinking about yet winning the World Cup itself.

No country from eastern Europe have been crowned champions, although Czechoslovakia (1934 and 1962) and Hungary (1938 and 1954) have finished as beaten finalists.

It is too early to think about the final because every match in the World Cup is now like a final itself.

"Every team in the second round is very good and you need luck. Football may be a science in one way but it is still a game and in games you need the luck to be on your side."

It is not even worth commenting about," said Hagi. "I told the referee the ball was not 10 yards back. I didn't tell him to book anyone."

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the opening round during which he has scored twice and looked in the kind of form that persuaded Real Madrid to pay 3.5 million dollars for his services after the 1990 World Cup."

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