

# WORLD CUP USA '94



THE AGONY OF DEFEAT: Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta (9) is comforted by assistant coach Carlos Merlo (2nd R) and trainer Ricardo Echavarria (L) after his country lost 3-2 to Romania in a World Cup second round match in the Rose Bowl Stadium on Sunday.

— AFP photo

## Today's World Cup Fixtures

Italy vs Nigeria  
Mexico vs Bulgaria

(For details see Page 1)

### Romanians rejoice

BUCHAREST, July 4: Romanians thronged the streets of central Bucharest early today in jubilant and noisy scenes to celebrate Romania's 3-2 win against Argentina in a World Cup second-round match, reports Reuter.

"Farewell Argentina, Sweden you're next to go," the crowds shouted. Romania take on Sweden in the quarter-finals in San Francisco — next Sunday.

The Bucharest crowds hugged policemen and commanded cars and trucks, dрапing them in huge tricolour flags, acclaiming: "Glory to them, glory to the (Romanian) tricolour team."

The crowds sang and danced to the rhythm of the local two-step dance "hora" as firecrackers went off with deafening noise. Witnesses estimated the size of the crowd at several hundred thousands. A police figure was not immediately available.

Local radio commentators reported with gusto the street fiesta, saying the joyous crowds in Bucharest's Central Victory Square was ten times more than those who went out on Romania's streets during the 1989 revolution.

Bucharest police chief General Nicolae Nitu, out with his troops to keep an eye on the crowds, said: "We are here in the street to savour the sweet happiness of this victory."

Similar street celebrations were reported from several cities across the Balkan country.

### Colombians don't want to return

MEDELLIN, Colombia, July 4: The killing of star defender Andres Escobar has sent a chill through the Colombia's World Cup team, reports AP.

Some players say they don't want to return, and the man who was to replace coach Francisco Maturana says he no longer wants the job.

Hernan Gomez, who had been an assistant coach, announced his decision Sunday, only 48 hours after agreeing to become head coach.

Gomez said he told Maturana he decided to accept an offer to coach Atletico Madrid of the Spanish League and he will go to Spain in the next few weeks.

Maturana and Gomez received death threats during the World Cup, forcing them to scratch Gomez's brother, midfielder Gabriel Jaime Gomez, from the game against the United States.

The players no longer feel secure in the aftermath of the parking-lot shooting Saturday in which six bullets were pumped into their teammate. Escobar accidentally kicked the ball into his own net during Colombia's 2-1 loss to the United States on June 22.

"I don't want to return to the squad if it means an error on the field will cost me my life," forward Ivan Valenciano said.

### Dumitrescu, Hagi throttle Romania through

## Argentina out of World Cup

PASADENA, Calif., July 4: Ilie Dumitrescu and Gheorghe Hagi masterminded the downfall of two-time champions Argentina Sunday as Romania gained a thrilling 3-2 triumph to reach the World Cup quarterfinals for the first time, reports AP.

Dumitrescu scored twice and Hagi hit the other in a match packed with thrills, goalmouth action and outstanding moves from both



ILIE DUMITRESCU

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Maradona, watching from the TV commentators zone, flung his arms up in the air in despair.

A minute before halftime, Hagi split open the Argentine defence and Dumitrescu should have made it 3-1. After rounding the goalkeeper and shooting goalwards, he could only watch as his miscued effort was cleared off the line by Fernando Caceres.

In the eighth minute, Batistuta tried to surprise Prunea with a powerful, swerving drive the keeper saved at the foot of the near post.

Argentina should have gone ahead in the 10th minute after a move the watching Maradona would have been proud of.

Dumitrescu had plenty of colleagues to aim at but fired a angled right foot from 35 meters that flew past Islas into the far corner of the net.

Argentina levelled five minutes later from the penalty spot.

The lively Batistuta turned two Romanian defenders wide on the left and was heading for goal when one of them, Daniel Prodan, pushed him over.

Batistuta took the penalty and drove it low and hard past Prunea.

Before the Argentines had the chance to take hold of the game, they were behind again.

Hagi sliced a pass between two defenders to the in-running Dumitrescu, who side-footed the ball first time between Islas the near post.

The Romanians went for Argentina's throat with a series of moves that would have brought more goals but

the brilliance of goalkeeper Islas.

He stuck out a foot to block a goalbound shot from Gheorghe Popescu and dived on his right to fist away a powerful shot from Ion Lupescu.

At the other end, Batistuta fired wide of the target from a good position in front of goal and then Balbo flung himself at a right wing cross to send a

goal instead of shooting from further out.

And, in the 58th minute, they fell further behind.

Argentina lost possession in Romania's half and Dumitrescu latched onto the ball.

With the Argentines chasing back and struggling to close the gaping holes in their defence, Dumitrescu held on to the ball until Balbo arrived from midfield. The two goal striker slid the ball outside to Hagi who hit the ball first time past Islas into the net.

Argentina claimed a penalty in the 68th minute when Simone went down. But Italian referee Perluigi Pairetto, who controlled the game well, gave a free kick outside the area and Batistuta's free kick was comfortably held by Prunea.

Fifteen minutes from the end of this pulsating game, Argentina scored again.

Caceres moved forward to fire a 30-meter shot that whistled through the Romanian defence and was too hot for Prunea to handle. The ball squirmed out of his hands and Balbo was there first to bulge the net with his followup shot from five meters.

Twenty-one other people were arrested for ticket touting, one for being drunk and one for trying to steal a beret off the head of a security guard at the match.

A small fight started behind the goals at the end of the second-round match which saw Argentina eliminated from the finals.

Empty water bottles, sticks were thrown at police and security officers, but no one was hurt in the incident.

A spokeswoman for the Pasadena Police Department said: "Luckily the disturbance was contained quite quickly and no one was hurt. But two Argentine fans were arrested, are now in the La county jail, and depending on their status, face deportation."

### TEAMS

#### ARGENTINA: Luis Islas.

José Chamot, Roberto Sensini (substitute: Ramon Medina Bello, 63rd minute), José Basualdo, Fernando Redondo, Oscar Ruggeri, Fernando Caceres, Diego Simeone, Gabriel Batistuta, Abel Balbo, Ariel Ortega.

#### ROMANIA: Florin Prunea,

Dan Petrescu, Daniel Prodan, Miodrag Belodedici, Gheorghe Popescu, Ion Lupescu, Tibor Salymes, Gheorghe Mihali, Dorinel Monteau, George Hagi (Constantin Galiga, 90th), Ilie Dumitrescu (Cornel Papura, 89th minute).

#### Referee: Perluigi Pairetto.

Italy

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### Defence mechanism

BUENOS AIRES, July 4: Argentines clutched at conspiracy theories on Sunday as they searched in consternation for excuses for their second-round knockout from the World Cup finals, reports Reuter.

Commentators and other Argentines blamed their 3-2 defeat by Romania on FIFA, soccer's governing body, after their inspirational captain Diego Maradona was booted out of the tournament for taking banned drugs.

"They didn't beat us on the pitch. We were beaten off the pitch, and that is what hurts my soul," said Maradona, who was commenting from Pasadena for Argentina's Channel 13.

Maradona took up commentating three days after FIFA ejected him from the tournament after finding traces of five performance-boosting drugs in a urine sample.

"You heard what Diego said, we were beaten off the pitch, somebody nubbed us," said Juan Carlos Morales, commentator for Radio America, which re-broadcast Maradona's words.

"I'm left with the feeling that we lost to a worse team," Morales said. "I can't believe it."

Speaking to Argentine television, coach Alfo Basile said the team was packing its bags to go home.

"This isn't the time to speak. It's over. The saddest moment is right now. In two days, this team has been wiped out," Basile said.

The comments echoed national disbelief that Argentina, twice world champions, had been knocked out so early in the tournament.

Minutes after the match, dejected fans slunk away from a plaza in downtown Buenos Aires where they normally gather for celebrations when their side wins.

"It's very quiet here. Everyone is going home to try to swallow this defeat," a fan said.

Argentina was almost shut down during the game. The streets of Buenos Aires were deserted, and parks that are normally full on Sunday's emptied as families hurried home to their television sets.

### 21 Argentine fans held

PASADENA, July 4: Two Argentine fans face deportation from the United States after being arrested when fighting broke out following their team's 3-2 World Cup defeat by Romania at the Rose Bowl on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Twenty-one other people were arrested for ticket touting, one for being drunk and one for trying to steal a beret off the head of a security guard at the match.

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