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Westerhof confident

FOXBORO, Mass., July 4: Nigerian coach Clemens Westerhof on Sunday gave his team only an even chance of beating Italy in the second round of the World Cup. At least that's what he said, reports AP.

He seems to be thinking beyond the Italians — to the quarterfinals and Spain.

When asked at a news conference to rate the Italians, the Dutchman began talking about the Spanish, who his "Super Eagles" will meet next if they beat the Italians.

A reporter suggested that Westerhof had gotten off the track.

"No, I am talking about Spain. That is our next opponent. I am thinking already about our next opponent, he said. "If we beat Italy, we meet Spain. If we beat Spain, we have Germany. It is normal. You have to think ahead."

Westerhof said Nigeria respects perennial European power Italy, but does not fear it.

"We are not afraid of them. We want to beat them. You must, otherwise you have to go home," he said. "We make our normal preparations and we are ready for the battle."

"We want to be the surprise of this tournament. And we respect everybody."

Westerhof said all his players were 100 per cent fit for Tuesday's clash with Italy, and have one edge going onto the game.

The team has trained and stayed near Foxboro through most of the first round, where it was beaten by Argentina 2-1 but rallied to defeat Greece 2-0.

"This is our hometown," Westerhof said. "That the only point we have that is a plus for us. People know us already. We are at the same hotel. The boys are happy in the hotel. The crowd knows us. The papers say we are the home team."

Hometown or not, the "Super Eagles" will find themselves adrift in a sea of Italian flags Tuesday, with Italian fans expected to vastly outnumber the Nigerians.

Westerhof didn't care.

"My boys like that. The more other colors they see, the more challenged they are," he said.

GOAL SCORERS

UNDATED (Reuters): Following are the World Cup '94 goal scorers after Sunday's matches:

6 goals — Oleg Salenko (Russia).

5 goals — Juergen Klinsmann (Germany).

4 goals — Martin Dahlin (Sweden), Gabriel Batistuta (Argentina).

3 goals — Kennet Andersson (Sweden), Romario (Brazil), Hristo Stoichkov (Bulgaria), Gheorghe Hagi (Romania).

2 goals — Florin Radu (Romania), Jose Caminero (Spain), Juan Golkotxeta (Spain), Ilie Dumitrescu (Romania), Georges Breyc (Switzerland), Adolfo Valencia (Colombia), Luis Garcia (Mexico), Fuad Anwar Amin (Saudi Arabia), Claudio Caniggia (Argentina), Hong Myong-Bo (South Korea), Daniel Amokachi (Nigeria), Rudy Völler (Germany), Philippe Albert (Belgium).

1 goal — Julio Salinas (Spain), Hwang Sun-Hong (South Korea), Soo Jung-Won (South Korea), Eric Wynalda (United States), Ray Houghton (Ireland), Marc Degryse (Belgium), Kjetil Rekdal (Norway), Roger Ljung (Sweden), David Embe (Cameroon), Francois Omam-Biyik (Cameroon), Rai (Brazil), Wim Jonk (Netherlands), Gaston Taument (Netherlands), Diego Maradona (Argentina), Rashidi Yekini (Nigeria), Finidi George (Nigeria), Emmanuel Amunike (Nigeria), Alain Sutter (Switzerland), Stephane Chapuisat (Switzerland), Adrian Knup (Switzerland), Ernie Stewart (United States), Dino Baggio (Italy), John Aldridge (Ireland), Bebeto (Brazil), Marcus Senter (Brazil), Dmitry Radchenko (Russia), Tomas Brolin (Sweden), Sami Al-Jaber (Saudi Arabia), Georges Grun (Belgium), Mohamed Chaouch (Morocco), Samson Stiasia (Nigeria), Jordan Lechko (Bulgaria), Daniel Borimirov (Bulgaria), Dan Petrescu (Romania), Harold Lozano (Colombia), Herman Gaviria (Colombia), Karlieh Riedie (Germany), Erwin Sanchez (Bolivia), Josep Guardiola (Spain), Daniele Massaro (Italy), Marcelino Bernat (Mexico), Fahd Al-Ghishyan (Saudi Arabia), Roger Milla (Cameroon), Saeed Owadran (Saudi Arabia), Hassan Nader (Morocco), Bryan Roy (Netherlands), Dennis Bergkamp (Netherlands), Nasro Sirakov (Bulgaria), Fernando Hierro (Spain), Luis Enrique (Spain), Aitor Begiristain (Spain), Abel Balbo (Argentina).

Own goal — Andres Escobar, Colombia (vs United States).



MARTINSVILLE, N.J., July 4: Italy are gearing up for the "real" World Cup following their labored second-round qualification, reports AP.

Defender-captain Paolo Maldini said Sunday: "A totally new competition gets underway now, and we are prepared to begin it all over again."

It's another World Cup from the second round, under the knockout system. Each game will be a final. I believe we can definitely do better under pressure," striker Giuseppe Signori said.

After much computation for points and goals difference in preliminary rounds, the verdict of second-round games is simple — the winners move into the quarterfinals, the losers go home.

The Azzurri, bitterly criticized for their less-than-impressive performances in matches against Ireland and Mexico, take on unpredictable Nigeria at Foxboro stadium Tuesday.

Three-time world champions Italy start as a favourite against the African champions but Maldini emphasized that he and his teammates will have to play with skill and imagination to earn a quarterfinal berth against Spain.

"We can't think to beat them on the physical plan. We must avoid the one against one, shoulder against shoulder play. We must catch them by surprise with quick moves. We must exploit the qualities of (Roberto) Baggio and Signori," Maldini added.

Baggio, the best world player of 1993, and Signori, the leading Italian league scorer, are talented forwards but have been shut out by rival defences so far and failed to produce offensive spark.

Italy's two goals in preliminary games were tallied by midfielder Dino Baggio — no relation to Roberto — and by substitute forward Daniele Massaro.



PAULO MALDINI

He was ready to play at the center of defence along with AC Milan teammate Alessandro Costacurta. If Sacchi decides that scheme, but the lineup for Tuesday's game still is up in the air.

Italian coach Arrigo Sacchi was likely to change some players and schemes for the game with the Nigerian "Super Eagles" but was tight-lipped about the starting lineup.

"I have the 11 in my mind, but I'll make a final decision after talking to doctors," Sacchi said. "Some players still are overly tired from the previous games and Dino Baggio must pass a fitness test. I must field 11 players in their best physical and psychological form for beating a tough team."

Dino Baggio, who recently signed with Parma, suffered a light left thigh strain during the game against Mexico in

Daniel Amokachi. Midfield play is master-minded by young Sunday Oliseh, who will play with Reggiana in the Italian league next season.

Coach Arrigo Sacchi, who with Baggio has borne the brunt of the Italian media's criticism for the unspectacular play, called the Nigerians "Supermen."

They are physically strong, and are not amateurs under the tactical point of view, Sacchi said. "They are in extraordinary form, and want to prove to the world that they are an emerging power, at Italy's expense."

We are psychologically prepared to play a tough team, I still believe we are superior, that we are a better team. We are determined to stay (through) in the competition."

Sacchi was expected to make some changes for Tuesday's game with Nigeria to improve both defense and offense.

Maldini, a regular left back, was likely to team with Alessandro Costacurta at the center of defence with a pair of quick backs, Antonio Benarrivo and Roberto Mussi, on the sides.

Veteran Daniele Massaro, a part-time forward usually fielded in the second half, was expected to start in front with Baggio and Lazim's striker Giuseppe Signori.

"We must not try to compete with them on the physical plan, we must not play shoulder-against-shoulder, otherwise we are going to succumb," Maldini said.

We must exploit the imagination, the quick moves of Baggio and Signori. Nigerian defenders can be caught by surprise."

Clemens Westerhof, the Dutch coach of the Nigerians, showed no inferiority complex with Italy, a long-time soccer superpower which is shooting for a record fourth world title.

"We like to play them. We respect them, but we are not afraid of them," he said. "We want to beat them. You must, otherwise you have to go home."

Italy look like the ideal opponent for a team willing to improve an international prestige so far based only on junior competitions.

Most Italian players noted that underdogs always pose psychological problems for the favoured team.

Fans can be understanding if you lose a World Cup match with Brazil. It could be different if we lose against Nigeria, which is a good but unheralded team," said Massaro, who scored Italy's goal in the 1-1 draw with Mexico.

They play a fast, physical game, with a sometimes suspect defence that is compensated for by a swift counter-attack led by Maldini and

Massaro.

Italians ready to take heat

Washington

He would be replaced by Antonio Conte of Juventus or AC Milan's Roberto Donadoni.

Rookie Roberto Mussi would start as right back, with Antonio Benarrivo moved to the left. Massaro, usually fielded in the second half, could start in the place of center-forward Pierluigi Castrovilli.

The vandalism prompted Madrid mayor Jose Maria Alvarez del Manzano to appeal to fans to share their joy in a civilised way if Spain win their quarter-final match Saturday in Boston against the winner of Nigeria-Italy match in Boston Tuesday.

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"I am not going to discuss that, I have more important goals in this world Cup," Maldini said.

The AC Milan defender noted that all World Cup teams had mixed performances so far, and no one was impressive.

"Germany was the most positive team, from the point of view of results, I'm certain they will go through in the competition, improving game after game, as usual," Maldini said.

The Germans already qualified for the quarterfinals by beating Belgium 3-2 Saturday.

Italy and Germany, 1982 World Cup finalist teams in Spain, are set to clash in the semifinals if both get through the quarters.

PROBABLE TEAMS

ITALY: 12-Luca Marchigiani, 8-Roberto Mussi, 4-Alessandro Costacurta, 5-Paolo Maldini, 3-Antonio Benarrivo, 14-Nicola Berti, 11-Demetri Albertini, 13-Dino Baggio, 20-Giuseppe Signori, 19-Daniele Massaro, 10-Roberto Baggio.

NIGERIA: 1-Peter Rufai, 2-Augustine Eguavoen, 6-Chidi Nwanu, 5-Uche Okechukwu, 3-Ben Iroha, 15-Sunday Oliseh, 12-Samson Siasia, 14-Daniel Amokachi, 7-Finidi George, 9-Rashidi Yekini, 11-Emmanuel Amunike.

Referee: Arturo Brizio Carter (Mexico)

Kickoff: 1705 GMT

Revellers aren't worshippers

MADRID, Spain, July 4: Spanish police are hunting for a stone arm broken off one of Madrid's best known monuments in the revelry following Spain's victory over Switzerland in the World Cup, reports AP.

The vandalism prompted Madrid mayor Jose Maria Alvarez del Manzano to appeal to fans to share their joy in a civilised way if Spain win their quarter-final match Saturday.

"We need fast backs to stop fast forwards. Mussi and Benarrivo are both fast," Sacchi said.

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It was not clear whether the fountain would be placed off limits in the event of a Spanish victory Saturday.

The fountain, located at the beginning of the sprawling Paseo de la Castellana, Madrid's main thoroughfare, was built during the reign of Carlos III in 1782. It has become one of the capital's most popular landmarks.

Cybele, or Great Mother of the Gods, was worshipped by the Greeks and Romans as the parent of gods, humans and beasts, and her cult was one of the most important in the Roman empire.

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STUDY IN CONTRASTS: Swedish forward Kennet Andersson stretches his arms in addition to a tell-tale grin as an unmistakable gesture of delight after his team's third and his second goal while Saudi defender Mohammad Al Khiali emulates his rival only in anguish. Swedes comfortably got past surprise pack Saudi Arabia 3-1 at the Cotton Bowl to find a place among

— AFP photo

Oil over troubled water

BOSTON, Massachusetts, July 4: The Nigerian Football Association put up a smokescreen on Sunday over a players' revolt that threatened to tear their World Cup squad apart, reports AFP.

Player discontent over win bonuses and team selection has exploded into an open confrontation with coach Clemens Westerhof.

Westerhof sparked the latest outburst when he ordered players to quit their hotel 30 miles south of Boston to escape "an invasion" of journalists.

They refused and the row brought everything to a head," said a source close to the Nigerian delegation.

The Nigerian FA and Westerhof denied there was any problem.

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