

WORLD CUP USA



Today's World **Cup Fixtures**

Italy vs Bulgaria Brazil vs Sweden (For details see Page 1)

Brazil still top Sprint Soccer Poll

KANSAS CITY, Mo. July 12(AP): Results of the Sprint Soccer Poll, a weekly ranking of the top 10 national soccer teams worldwide as determined by a panel of international soccer journalists. through Monday, July 11. The rankings are based on a 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 system, with first place teams receiving 10 votes, second place receiving 9, etc. First place votes are in parentheses:

- 1. Brazil (33), 474 points
- 2. Italy (10), 386
- 3. Bulgaria, 349 4. Sweden, 313
- 5. Romania. 310
- 6. Netherlands, 260 7. Germany, 229
- 8. Argentina, 146
- Mexico, 97 10. Spain, 51

Also receiving votes: Belgium, 32; Ireland, 16; Nigeria, 16; and Switzerland,

LOS ANGLES, California July 12 (AFP): Monday's World Cup diary:

BEYOND WORDS

Sweden's Kennet Andersson was overcome by his side's advance to the World Cup semifinals, where they will meet Brazil.

"It's kind of a dream." Andersson said. "I can't explain it in English. I don't think I can explain it in Swedish, either."

BULGARIANS LIVING HIGH

Bulgaria's joy at reaching the World Cup semifinals is given an extra dimension by memories of the financial hurdles they have overcome.

Last year Bulgarian football officials could not even send coach Dimitar Penev to take a look at his foreign-based play-

"This is a beautiful stadium." Penev said when he first saw Giants Stadium, which is shared by the New York Giants and New York Jets American football teams. "I wish we could take it home with us."

SEATS AVAILABLE

Bulgaria's quarter-final victory over three-times champions Germany caught a lot of people by surprise.

World Cup organisers had made up a press-box seating chart for Wednesday's semi-final at Giants Stadium that allotted a big block of seats to German reporters.

Now the seats are going begging, with the Bulgarian press contingent consisting of just 36 reporters.

SO MUCH FOR SPORTSMANSHIP

As the clock ticked on Germany's bid for a fourth World Cup, Bulgarian coach Dimitar Penev noticed a change in the German team.

He pulled Hristo Stoichkov and Emil Kostadinov from the quarter-final against Germany. even though Bulgaria led by just one goal, to keep them *from getting hurt by German

"I took my men out because the German's style changed, Penev said diplomatically.

WILL BORA BE BACK?

Bora Milutinovic says he would be glad to stay at the helm of the US national foot ball team

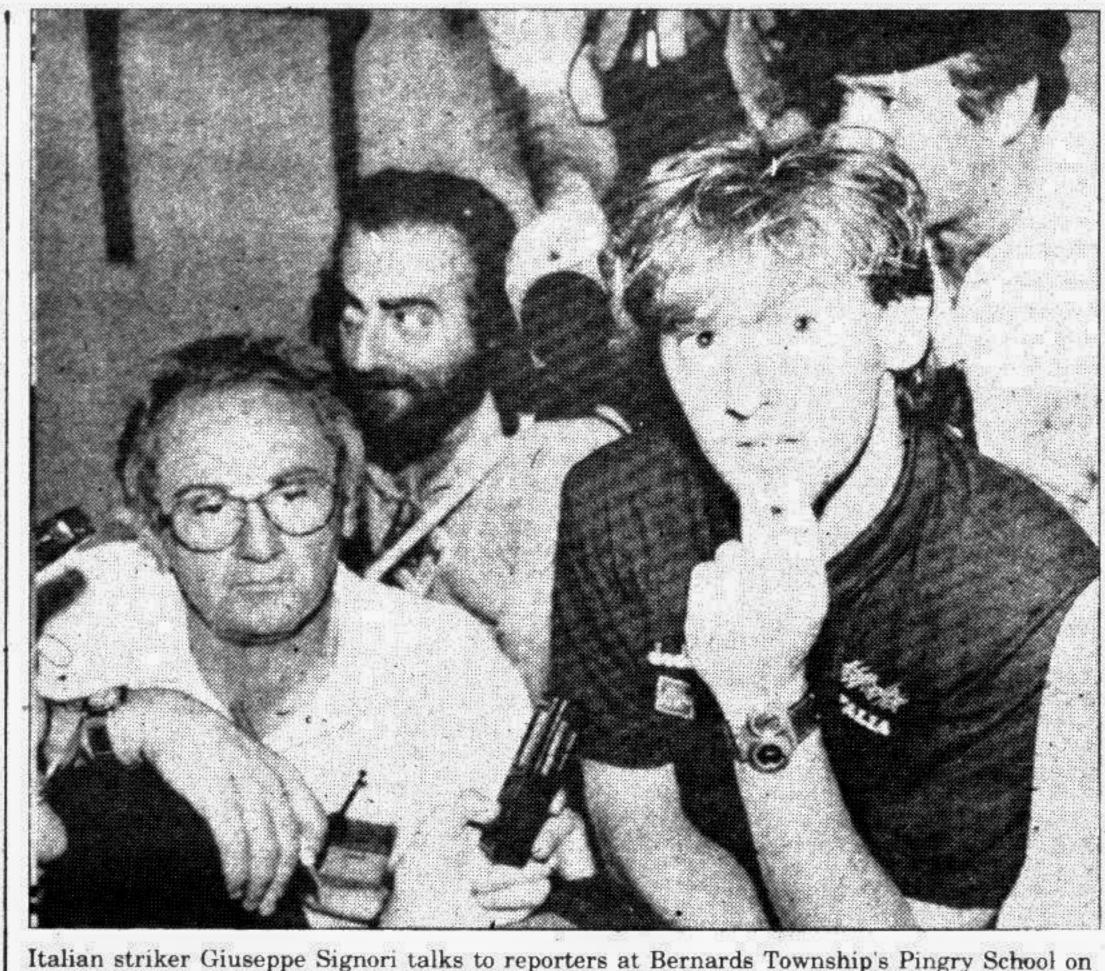
"It depends on who is going to be the new president," he said of the upcoming elections in the US Soccer Federation.

I do not think there is going to be a problem, but first we must see what the president wishes. I would very much hope to continue the work that we have just begun.

Grass at Giants Stadium to be sold

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey, July 12. The grass soc eer pitch at Giants Stadium will be dug up and sold to the public after Wednesday's World Cup semifinal between Italy

and Bulgaria, reports Reuter Venue director Charite Stilltano said on Monday the turf, specially laid for the World Cup at a cost of one million dollars, would go on sale on Thursday for between 10 and 20 dollars per square foot (between 10 and 220 dollars per square metre depending on how much sod was involved



July 11. Italy take on Bulgaria in the World Cup semifinals on July 13. -AFP photo

we diamy Italy on Bulgaria's hitlist

Germany.



EAST RUTHER-FORD, July 12: Giantkillers Bulgaria, who buried title-holders Germany on Sunday.

aim to sally former champions Italy on Wednesday and take their exhilarating World Cup challenge all the way to the final, reports Reuter. If Bulgaria, 50-1 outsiders

after the draw for the finals last December, can reproduce the inspiration which gave them a 2-1 quarter-final win over the Germans they have every chance against Roberto Baggio's Italy. Baggio rescued Italy with

last gasp goals against Nigeria in the second round and Spain in the quarter-finals when they had appeared to be heading for World Cup eclipse but escaped instead with a pair of 2-1 vic-

Italy, who lost their opening game against Ireland, have not shown the overwhelming form to match their proud traditions - much like the Germans who saw a 1-0 lead overturned by two masterly strikes by Hristo Stoichkov and Yordan Letchkov.

Stoichkov and Letchkov, notably abetted by attacking midfielder Krasimir Balakov. proved deadly to Germany and could give the Italian defence an equally torrid time, just as Spain did in the second half on

With the scalps of triple world champions Germany already on their belts, the lively Bulgarians are ready for further upsets in the Giants Stadium against the nation which won the trophy in 1934, 1938 and

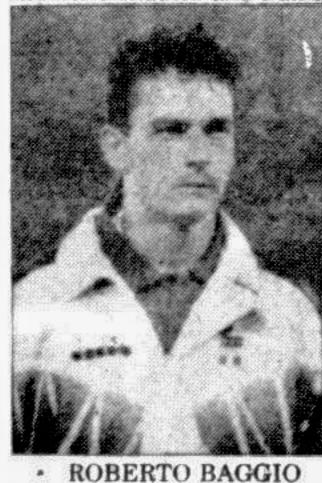
"Italy are a tricky team and

card to his name

in New York on Wednesday.

I'm expecting a very tough match." Bulgarian goalkeeper Borislav Mihailov said, but added: "I think we have real chance against Italy. They're not as good a team as

Balakov, by contrast, expects a harder time against Italy, a team drawing heavily on the talents of European Cup winners AC Milan from tough Paolo Maldini and Alessandro Costacurta in the heart of defence to the midfield skills of Roberto Donadoni and Daniele



ROBERTO BAGGIO

But the Baggios of Juventus - European footballer-of-theyear Roberto and no-nonsense midfielder Dino - may well be the men to make the differ-

Roberto equalised against Nigeria in the 89th minute and notched the winning penalty in extra-time and repeated the last-ditch heroics against Spain with the winning strike in the 88th minute.

Unrelated namesake Dino scored the opener against Spain and also produced the

goal in the 1-0 win over Norway, Italy's only victory in the first round.

Italy could recall right back Roberto Mussi, who has recovered from an ankle injury, and restore Giuseppe Signori - a substitute against Spain and provider for Roberto Baggio's decisive goal — to the starting line-up on the left of midfield.

Team chief Arrigo Sacchi has warned his players to beware of complacency. "This is a Wall Cup in which as soon as you hink you've won the match you end up losing it," he

Bulgaria have excellent players with good technique and are strong physically."

Bulgaria, who started as inauspiciously as Italy with a 3-0 hiding from Nigeria, had never won a match in the World Cup finals until this tournament but have now collected victories over Greece, former champions Argentina. Mexico and Germany.

Stoichkov scored in all those wins, including two penalties against Greece and the superb free-kick which precipitated Germany's downfall, and looks forward to more heroics against Italy.

"We've got nothing to lose and I think we're going to achieve as great a success as we did today," he said after the upset over Germany.

Letchkov, who converted the sport-kick which decided the second round penalty shoot-out with Mexico and headed the winner against Germany, is happy Bulgaria will be the underdogs against Italy. 13-8 second favourites behind

"We are the outsiders and we like being the outsiders,

FIFA rejects Brazil's appeal

LOS ANGELES, July 12: Brazil's appeal against a fourmatch ban on defender Leonardo was thrown out by FIFA on Monday, reports Reuter.

Leonardo was suspended from the rest of the World Cup after elbowing American Tab Ramos in the head in a second round match. Ramos was not expected to return to soccer for at least three months.

The defender said the blow was accidental and later apologised to Ramos. Brazil had hoped the ban might be reduced so he could play in the World Cup final if they qualify.

But FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter said: "FIFA's appeals panel rejected Brazil's appeal and decided the disciplinary committee had acted absolutely correctly in accordance with the video evidence against Leonardo."

Italy want FIFA to reconsider Tassotti's case

MARTINSVILLE, New Jersey, July 12: Italy's World Cup delegation will appeal the eight-match ban slapped on Mauro Tassotti and are to take no sanctions themselves against the player who broke Luis Enrique's nose in an offthe-ball incident at the end of the quarter-final against Spain. reports AFP.

"We feel very strongly that eight matches is an excessive penalty and we will appeal that decision," delegation chief Raffaele Ranucci said on Tuesday.

The Italians are furious that video evidence was used to condemn Tassotti but not taken into account when Gianfranco Zola was given a two match ban after being mistakenly sent off against Nigeria. "Since none of the four of



TASSOTTI

ficials at the match saw anything, we took it for granted that nothing would be done.

"FIFA have told us they decided to look at the video evidence on the basis of the report of a 5th official who was there to supervise the performance of the others." Ranucci said the player had

apologised to the team but was maintaining the clash was accidental.

Only a gun can stop Bulgarian forwards?

With a broad smile Sacchi quickly added that Italian defenders will resort to more orthodox means to control Hristo Stoichkov, Emil Kostadinov and Yordan Letchkov at Giants Stadium, where three-time World champion Italy and underdog Bulgaria will battle for a berth in the July 17 championship game.

training camp.

battle. The best way for stopping them would be a pistol. We will have to control them closely."

never won. Dino Baggio, the Italian midfielder who has tallied two goals in five games, said he had hoped to play the Bulgarians in the semifinals, "in the assumption they would be weaker than the Germans." last four

"After watching their quarterfinal game on television I

Saachi on stairway to heaven



ing Italian club AC Milan to huge success, Arrigo,

Sacehi says he had nowhere to go but up, reports AP. ' Now he's within two games

of sending his national squad up into the stands to collect a record fourth World Cup tro-Sacchi, 48, hails from the

same central Italian Emilia Romagna region that spawned Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, and he sometimes is accused of being a dictatorial

coach. Some Italian sportwriters dubbed him the "ayatollah of the bench."
But Sacchi defends his pen-

chant for what is known as total soccer, saying it won't work without total engagement by his players. "My schemes are demand-

ing and players must be in their best condition to accomplish them," says Sacchi, who occasionally explodes in irate outbursts on the sidelines. His on-the-field trademark

is an obsession for midfield "pressing" and quick moves of the forwards, also without the ball, to create scoring opportunities. In his last season with AC

Milan, he faced an open rebel-

lion by Dutch star striker Marco Van Basten, who objected to Sacchi's tough training and exhausting tactics. Sacchi says he decided to leave a richly-paid and successful job with Milan and

join the national team because

he needed fresh motivation.

"In every job, you need enthusiasm for going on. Idealism

other clubs to become Italy's

Sacchi took over the Azzurri, or "Blue Team," in 1991 with the mission of guiding them to the first World Cup win since 1982.

He succeeded Azeglio Vicini, who coached Italy to third place when it hosted the 1990 tournament but failed to qualify for the final round of the 1992 European Champion-

Sacchi's contract through



about dlrs 900,000 a year.

During this World Cup, he has generated criticism during this World Cup for less-thanimpressive play in the first round and provided more fodder for analysts with lineup changes, a Sacchi hallmark.

in the World Cup, but I offered my utmost engagement and that of the players," he said. "I'm used to cast up accounts at the end of the competi-

When AC Milan signed him in 1987 from a Second Division team, Sacchi had a difficult start in the major league before sailing unexpectedly to the Italian league title.

In the next three years, he led the powerhouse club owned by media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi to consecutive European Champions' Cup triumphs in 1989 and 1990. Milan also became world club champion and the European Super-Cup both years.

Cup finals was a bit of a struggle. Italy lost three points out of four to underdogs Switzerland but still won in their qualifying group by defeating Portugal in Milan last

In warmup matches for the World Cup, Italy lost to France and Germany and were unconvincing against Finland and Costa Rica.

Now Italy face upstart Bulgaria in the World Cup semifinals after squeaking through several times to avoid the upsets of seeded teams such as Argentina, Germany and the Netherlands.

He joined Parma in 1985

coming from little-known amateur teams and took the club from Third to Second Division in one season, revolutionising its tactics and play.

most successful if not most popular coaches. He often says that

Berlusconi, currently Italy's premier, is his talent scout.

PROFILES: ITALY

NEW YORK, July 12 (AFP): Following are the profiles of the likely Italian team to meet Bulgaria in the World Cup semifinals here on Wednesday. GIANLUCA PAGLIUCA: Age: 27, 20 caps. Height: 1.76m. weight: 72kg. Sent-off in Italy's sec-

ROBERTO MUSSI: 30, 3 caps. 1.8m. 73kg. The Torino fullback missed the quarter-final win over Spain on Saturday, but has resumed full training and should be recalled in place of AC

Milan's suspended Mauro Tassotti. ALESSANDRO COSTACURTA: 28, 25 caps. 1.78m, 74kg. AC Milan defender called into the national side by Arrigo Sacchi in 1991. In Italy's first 1994 World Cup qualifier two lapses on his

fullbacks. Playing today. Can to mark effectively but can move into attack very quickly. Still only 25, he is a veteran of the 1990 World Cup team.

ANTONIO BENARRIVO: 25, 12 caps. 1.70m, 65kg. Nicknamed Tom Thumb. Benarrivo is a workhorse in defence and attack. Made his international debut in September, 1993. He was a key figure in Parma's 1994 European Super Cup victory over AC Milan.

yet to hit the mark in the World Cup. perhaps because of nagging injuries that plagued him all DEMETRIO ALBERTINI: 22, 20 caps. 1.76m, 72kg. Though he limped off at half-time against Spain, the AC Milan midfielder has reportedly made a full recovery from the knock to his left leg. DINO BAGGIO: 22, 18 caps. 1.85m, 72kg. The 22-year-old midfielder, not related to his more

in Italy's 10-man victory over Norway in the first round and gave Italy an early lead against Spain. ROBERTO DONADONI: 30. 55 caps. 1.73m, 68kg. A fixture at AC Milan since his arrival in 1986 and was one of the stars of their 4-0 victory over Barcelona in the 1994 European Cup final. Good at setting up chances in the last third of the field.

famous namesake Roberto, has played a crucial role in Italy's move to the semifinals. He scored

ROBERTO BAGGIO: 27, 41 caps. 1.74m, 72kg. After a disappointing start to the Wold Cup, the 27-year-old came to life in the second round, scoring both goals in the 2-1 victory over/Nigeria to see Italy through to the quarter-finals. His 87th minute strike against Spain let the exhausted Italians avoid another, extra-time battle, and they will be looking to the country's most popular and highest-paid player for inspiration against Bulgaria.

DANIEL MASSARO: 33, 14 caps. 1.77m, 74kg. AC Milan forward scored two goals in the European Cup final victory against Barcelona.

Penev, no disciplinarian

MARTINSVILLE, N J. July 12: Likening a World Cup semifinal to a wild west shootout, Italian coach Arrigo Sacchi said Monday that a gun would be the best way to stop the livewire Bulgarian forwards in Wednesday's game, reports

"Offense is Bulgaria's strength and we will have to watch out for Stoichkov and Kostadinov, who are among the world best forwards and can lead devastating counterattacks." Sacchi said at Italy's

mising play. "It's going to be another His defensive skill was not enough to make Bulgaria an outstanding team. In five previous cups. Bulgaria played 16 games and

> Now, they are one game from the final, and will play Italy in Wednesday's semifinal at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. as the most surprising team to make the Mentally drained after

Sunday's victory sweat dropping from his face in the muggy catacombs of Giants Stadium, Penev's eyes began to twinkle when asked to de scribe what it meant to beat Germany, the monster team of the last two decades.

EAST RUTHER-

FORD, N.J. July

12: As a player.

Dimitar Penev

went to three

World Cup tourn-

aments and never

team upset defending cham-

pion Germany 2-1 in the

The happiest, Penev said,

was Nov 17, when Bulgaria

qualified for the World Cup

over France with a goal 10

seconds to go from Emil

for three Bulgarian cup teams,

earning the nickname

"Leadfoot" for his uncompro-

Penev was a tough defender

tasted victory.

ports AP.

quarterfinals.

Kostadinov.

"It's a great victory and a great day. Beating the world champion is a great thing, now the world will look at us differently," he said.

Penev, who turned 49

Tuesday, played at the 1966,

1970 and 1974 World Cup In his firt World Cup as tournaments, including a 5-2 coach. Penev has taken loss to Germany in 1970, and Bulgaria to the semifinals, recollected 90 caps, second on Bulgaria's all-time list. "This is the second happiest day of my life as coach," He was voted Bulgaria's Penev said Sunday after his



DIMITAR PENEV

most valuable player in 1967 His national team coaching career began three years ago with six straight wins.

But Penev had known success as coach before. He led Bulgaria's Communist days where he made his name as player, to five league and five cup titles after returning as coach in 1985, following two-year stint as coach in

Born in Miroviane, a village just outside the capital Sofia. Penev first played for Lokomotiv Sofia before joining CSKA, capturing nine league and five cup titles in 13 years as player.

As coach Penev began by

promoting a third-division

Dimitrovgrad team to the sec-

ond division, and later became an assistant coach at CSKA. This is where Bulgaria's sudden World Cup success has

its roots: Kostadinov and Hristo Stoichkov, Bulgaria's top strikers and stars, and the midfield star Yordan Letchkov, all began

their careers in CSKA and all

have been coached by Penev since their early days. All play abroad now, but the many years spent together have created a harmonious unit that doesn't need much

time go gel. The loose game plan devised by Penev is simple. The defence, made up mostly of home-based players, gets the ball to Letchkov or Krassimir Balakov in the midfield, and they try to find Kostadinov.

It is up to them to create something in the offence and their skill, speed and clinical finishing have carried Bulgaria through The team has great individtial class, with players able to

Stoichkov or Nasko Sirakov.

make decisive plays in a clutch situation and that's what Penev reites on Penev has a friendly relanonship with his players,

whom he has known a long time He is not a stickler for discipline and has found the right approach to Stoichkov, a star notoriously undisciplined and volatile.

PROFILES: BULGARIA

NEW YORK, July 12 (AFP): Following are the brief profiles of the likely Bulgaria team to meet Italy in the World Cup semifinal

Borislav Mihailov: Age: 31, 75 caps. height: 1.85m, weight: 78kg, His confidence has spread to

the rest of the team. Before the vital match against Argentina he announced it was now Bulgaria's

time to beat them after six previous failed attempts. Proved the skeptics wrong by shutting out the South American attack. One of the more solid goalkeepers of the tournament Trifon Ivanov: 28, 42 caps. 1.80m, 78kg. His blocked shot in the match against Germany helped propel his side into the semifinals for the first time in Bulgarian history. Recently joined Swiss First Division side Neuchatel Xamax. Needs to be careful against Italy. Already has a vellow

Tsanko Tzetanov: 24, 20 caps. 1.75m, 73kg. A member of Leveski Sofia, the 24-year-old defender has been steady without being spectacular throughout the tournament so far. Likely to find himself playing in western Europe next year Petar Hubchev: 30. 21 caps. 1.83m. 78kg. Another relative newcomer to national side. making his debut against Turkey in August 1991. Part of the Levski Sofia defence that coach

Dimitar Penev decided to place his faith in Rarely makes mistakes.

Has already collected one vellow card which may cramp his style.

Zlatko Yankov: 27, 31 camps. 1.83m, 80 kg. Another Levski member but one who has had a taste of football outside Bulgaria thanks to a brief stint with Valladolid in the Spanish league Not shy of joining the attack and his crosses can pose problems. Hristo Stoichkov: 28. 47 caps. 1.78m, 72 kg. Bulgaria's moody goal scoring hero who has proved he was worth every penny of the four million dollar Barcelona paid for him. His five goals so far has given Bulgaria their first ever World Cup finals win, first ever quarter-final berth and now semi final berth. Hristo, Bulgarian for Christ, insists God is a Bulgarian. Convinced his team

can pull off another miracle - this time by overcoming Italy. No one is laughing at his predictions anymore. Unlikely to be concerned by the one yellow card he has if past behaviour is anything to go by Ilian Kiriakov: 26 33 caps. I.68m, 69kg. One of only a handful of Bulgaria players who have gone to play in western Europe. The 27-year-old who plays for Lerida in the Spanish Second Division after a spell with Deportivo La Coruna in the First Division, is improving with each game

against both Finland and France. Is extremely dangerous from dead-ball situations. Quick to spot a gap in the defence. Yordan Letchkov: 27 19 caps. 1 78m. 73kg. Bulgaria's latest hero after his spectacular header sent Germany packing and most of Sofia taking to the streets in jubilation. Plies his skills in Germany for SV Hamburg after moving from Cska Sofia two years ago. Biggest weakness is his ability to be ordhant one moment while missing the easiest of chances, the next

Krasimir Balakov: 28 39 caps. 1.75m. 73 kg. Sporting Lisbon's top scorer, was all over the

field against Germany. Played a key role in Bulgaria making it to the finals, scoring vital goals.

year. He and a welrkov are one of the most feared strike forces, here. Nasko Sirakov: 32 60 amps. 1 85m, 82 kg. Plays third fiddle to Stoichkov and Kostadinov but has nevertheless played a major role in Bulgaria's surprising march to the semifinal. The 32 year add striker amother member of the Levski Sofia team is too old to cash in on his sides new found have but it word stop him from trying to make the final

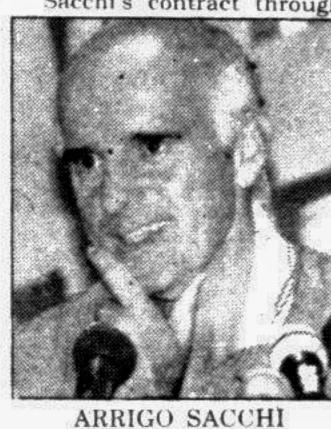
Emil Kostadinov: 26, 36 caps. 1.80m. 74kg. Along with Stoichkov one of Bulgaria's in

ternationally recognised starts. He scored the goals that sent France into mourning and Bulgaria

to America for the World Cup finals. Has a contract with Portuguese Champions Porto, until next

must say I changed my mind. They have a great physical condition and are extremely dangerous in counter attacks We can expect another tough game " Dino Baggio said.

is something that exists also in EAST RUTHERthe rich world of soccer," he FORD, N.J. July 12: After coachsays. "I rejected rich offers by



1996 is known to grant him

Sacchi is unruffled. "I never promised a victory

Qualification for the World November.

But Sacchi is used to exploits.

Sacchi still was little known when he joined AC Milan, where he became one of Italy's

ond group match against Norway. Pagliuca ceded his place in goal to Luca Mapchegiani, but returned in superb form in the 2 I quarter-final victory over Spain, stopping certain goal from Julio Salinas.

part led directly to both Swiss goals in a 2-2 draw. Keystone defender in USA. PAOLO MALDINI: 25. 56 caps. 1.85m. 77kg. AC Milan defender is considered one of the best

GIUSEPPE SIGNORI: 26, 21 caps. 1.71m. 68kg. Leading scorer in Italy for Lazio, Signori has