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LOS ANGELES, July 12 (AFP): Memorable quotes from the 1994 World Cup.

"I did a lot of running and I thank the Lord for giving me such good legs." Diego Maradona after Argentina beat Nigeria. Later in the week Maradona was expelled from the tournament after he failed a dope test taken after the match.

"God is a Bulgarian." Striker Bristo (Bulgaria for Christ) Stochkov after Bulgaria beat Greece 4-0 to record their first ever World Cup final win in five appearances.

"Now I am sure God is Bulgarian." Striker Hristo Stochkov after Bulgaria beat Germany to go into the semifinals.

"This is a beautiful stadium. I wish we could take it home with us."

Bulgaria coach Dimitar Penev when he first saw Giants Stadium.

"Every team in the World Cup such as Germany, Argentina and Brazil started their traditions somewhere. Maybe this is the beginning for Bulgaria."

Coach Dimitar Penev after Bulgaria's shock win over Germany in the quarter finals.

"This is very exciting. It is totally different than what you normally see in Los Gatos, which is people walking down the street with dogs and strollers."

Los Gatos resident Judy van Kampen as she watched Samba dancing Brazilian fans taking over the town.

"I cannot evaporate in smoke."

Former West German World Cup player and coach Franz Beckenbauer after being told his presence at the tournament was intimidating current coach Bertie Vogts.

"If the United Nations are not able to stop assassinations, how can FIFA, with only its spoken power stop such cases."

FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter after being asked what football's governing body was going to do to stop a reputation of the murder of Colombian defender Andres Escobar, who scored an own goal, on his return home.

"I heard this noise in my head that was like a train going through and all I thought was, like, Oh my God, I'm going to die right here."

American Tab Ramos after he was knocked out by Brazil's Leonardo.

"It was just a dance of happiness. We do these dances all the time... at parties."

Nigerian Sunday Oliseh explaining why teammate Finidi George ran over to the corner flag after scoring, dropped on his knees, started barking and then lifted his leg.

"Soccer is life. The rest is just details."

"I am so sorry." Swiss referee Kurt Rothlisberger, one of the favourites expected to be awarded the final, after a disastrous performance in the Belgium-Germany match that saw him dropped from the list.

"It was an obvious penalty. The Belgium player was taken down by two German players in a sandwich."

FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter after Swiss referee Kurt Rothlisberger waved play-on.

"To be honest I thought my foot was a little high. Some referees let it go, others don't."

Irish defender Paul McGrath after he caught Holland's Frank Rikgaard in the head as he tried to head the ball clear.

"Bloody nonsense." Irish coach Jackie Charlton's reply to speculation that he was going to quit.

"Thanks for the own-goal." Colombian gunman before pumping 12 bullets in Colombian defender Andres Escobar.



Brazil's Dunga (L) and Romario relax by reading newspapers at the restaurant of the team's hotel in Fullerton, Los Angeles on July 11. The three-time world champions, in search of an unprecedented fourth title, meet Sweden in the semifinals on July 13. — AFP photo

Decor up against doricism

PASADENA, July 12: Brazilian fire and passion will carry them to their rightful place in a World Cup final for the first time in 24 years if they can avoid catching a surprisingly confident Sweden that can do even better than the 1-1 draw they obtained in Detroit, reports Reuter.

The Swedes are the only team to have held Brazil at the US finals but the South Americans' coach Carlos Alberto Parreira poured scorn on their prospects of a repeat.

"The last game was nothing more than a friendly," he snapped. "There was nothing at stake. This time we will be playing for a place in the World Cup final. This time we will be more adventurous."

Brazil, it is true, had already qualified for the second round when the first game was played but their forwards looked strangely inept, against the well-drilled Swedish defence and the Scandinavians have undoubtedly improved during the finals.

"Sweden mark well and they are very dangerous in the air," Parreira conceded. "They have four players who are 1.90 metres or more. We must stop them getting crosses into our area."

They are consistent, competitive and they never give up. It's not by chance that they are in the semifinals. They will be tight at the back and counter-attack.

Essentially, it will come down to a contest between Brazilian individualism and Swedish teamwork and Parreira knows he has the stars who can make the difference.

Brazil, the perennial crowd-pleasers of world soccer, lack the cohesive, fluid style of great sides of the past, such as Pele's 1970 World Cup-winning team.

But if they are missing the creative midfield automatically associated with a Brazilian national side, they are by no means short of individual flair and strikers Romario and Bebeto have already shown they are capable of deciding matches single-handedly.

Swedish coach Tommy Svensson knows these are the two he must control if his team are to reach their first World Cup final since 1958 when they lost, as hosts, 5-2 to Brazil of all people.

Unlike Parreira, Svensson believes the first meeting between the two did mean something. "It was psychologically important for us to play against them," he said. "We know we can score against them and we know we can stop them."

"I'm confident, especially as we are physically one of the strongest teams in the tournament."

Sweden have belied the popular belief that northern European teams cannot compete in sweltering heat and they appeared cool, calm and collected after their exhausting penalty shoot-out win after extra time against Romania.

But they will have to do without the experienced Stefan Schwarz, sent off against the Romanians, and may still be without a second key midfielder, captain Jonas Thern, who faces a late fitness test after a second round knee injury which has already caused him to miss one match.

The creativity of Tomas Brodin and the heading power of Martin Dahlin and Kennet Andersson, one of the revelations of the finals, are their assets on the counter-attack.

Brazil are likely to persist with an unchanged team which means Rai stands down again for Mazinho in midfield and Branco, free-kick hero against the Netherlands, continues in place of Leonardo, who lost an appeal against a four-match suspension on Monday and will take on further part in the finals.

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Dahlin doubtful

MARINA DEL REY, Calif July 12: Martin Dahlin grabbed his aching right leg and considered the unpleasant possibility of not playing for Sweden against Brazil in the World Cup semifinals, reports AP.

Cramps forced Dahlin out of Sunday's dramatic 5-4 shoot-out victory over Romania that sent the Swedes into Wednesday's semifinal at the Rose Bowl.

Dahlin is undergoing injections and massage while doctors decide if he's fit to play in the biggest game of his career.

"I think it will be a last-minute decision," Dahlin said, resting poolside at the team hotel that overlooks yachts anchored in this harbour community.

"Of course I want to play. I also have to be able to give 100 per cent or it's no use to play."

If Dahlin was feeling a bit down, he expected the arrival of his fiancée and mother from Sweden on Monday to boost his spirits.

His teammates are keeping him busy by giving him the nickname of O.J. Dahlin bears a slight resemblance to a young O.J. Simpson, the former American football star who is charged with the double murders of his ex-wife and her friend.

News about the O.J. Simpson case has transfixed Americans. Everyone from flight attendants to fans have noticed the resemblance to Simpson.

Fans in a Pasadena sports bar on Sunday shouted "O.J. O.J." whenever a close-up of Dahlin flashed on the screen.

"I don't mind," Dahlin said. "The flight attendants called me O.J. I said, 'Oh, no.' But they said take it as a compliment, he's good-looking. I didn't know who he was before I came here."

Brazil's penalty Phobia

LOS ANGELES, July 12: Brazil admit they dread the possibility of Wednesday's World Cup semifinal against Sweden being decided by a penalty shoot-out, reports Reuter.

The Brazilians have been involved in only two penalty shoot-outs in official competition — and have lost them both.

"We want to win in normal time because the penalty shoot-out is a lottery," said defender Marcio Santos.

The players have spent only a few minutes at the end of each training session practising penalties.

"I'm not going to prepare for this because whatever happens in a shoot-out is an accident," said coach Carlos Alberto Parreira.

Brazil lost their 1986 World Cup quarter-final against France 4-3 on penalties and lost 6-5 to Argentina in a sudden-death shoot-out in a Copa America quarter-final in Ecuador last year.

The Brazilians have been more successful at club level. Sao Paulo winning the 1992 South American Libertadores Cup in a penalty shoot-out against Newell's Old Boys of Argentina.

WC lacks creativity

LOS ANGELES, July 12: Individual flair has been in short supply at the World Cup finals, FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter admitted on Monday, and he called for better coaching at grass roots level, reports Reuter.

"There hasn't been enough individual skill. We have seen that teams have been playing attacking football, which is excellent," he said.

"But at school level we need to start coaching people with the ball and not just produce athletes and runners."

Blatter said he did not consider it significant that seven European teams had reached the quarter-finals.

"It was seven-one but it could easily have been five-three."

"Mexico only lost on penalties to Bulgaria and Nigeria were two minutes away from a win over Italy," he said.

"Nigeria put up a good performance and if they had been more experienced they would never have lost that game."

Svensson, a successful coach

LOS ANGELES, July 12: Swedish coach Tommy Svensson preaches tactical discipline, commitment and self-belief. It has proved to be the key to success for one of the most surprising teams in the World Cup, reports AP.

A former schoolteacher, Svensson has his share of memorable moments as an active player, including the Player of the Year award in Swedish soccer in 1969.

But his biggest triumphs came as a coach. And nothing beats the semifinal berth against Brazil, which came after the Swedes edged Romania 5-4 in a thrilling penalty shootout in Sunday's quarterfinal at Stanford, Calif.

For Svensson, it was almost unreal.

"I have to pinch myself in the arm to feel if I'm dreaming," he said.

Svensson, 49, is backed up by a professional organization that has been one of the team's strongest assets since the 1990 World Cup in Italy, when Sweden went home early after losing all three first-round games by identical 2-1 scores.

Svensson is known for his methodical preparations that includes watching videotapes of his next opponent until the small hours.

Svensson always looks calm and collected on the sidelines, but he also has a spontaneous side.

Like cartwheeling after one of the Swedes' goals against Romania.

Like hitting the roof when a Brazilian journalist congratulated him on his performance in goal in the 1950 World Cup in Brazil.

"What do you mean? Do you think I look 70?" stormed the baldheaded coach.

Sweden's goalkeeper on the 1950 bronze-medal winning team was Karl Svensson, better known as Rio Kalle, no relation to Tommy. Svensson did play in the World Cup finals once in 1970, but the

Swedes were eliminated in the first round in Mexico.

Svensson was dubbed as a wonder boy when he made his debut as a half-back at age 16 for Oster of Vaxjo in the Swedish second division in

1961. Oster gained promotion to the first division in 1967 and Svensson, now a midfielder, helped the team win the championship one year later.

Svensson, whose father Stig was a long-serving president of the team, signed with Standard Liege of Belgium in 1971 and returned to Sweden two years later, ending his career with Oster in 1977 because of a knee injury.

He then became Oster's manager, helping the club win three Swedish first division titles, while still working as a schoolteacher.

In 1985, he started coaching a lower division team. After a successful stint with Norwegian first division team Tromso in 1988-90, Svensson replaced Olle Nordin as Sweden's national team coach in 1991.

Svensson revamped the programme, preaching a long-ball, defence-oriented style that has been described as cool, calculating, efficient, predictable and dull — in other words, quintessentially Swedish.

Svensson's first major tournament as a coach was a big success. As hosts, Sweden finished third in the 1992 European Championships after beating eventual champion Denmark 1-0 the first round before losing the semi-finals 3-2 to Germany.

That gave us all the confidence we needed, said Svensson whose team lost only one of 10 qualifying games for this World Cup and topped its group ahead of Bulgaria and France.

Svensson was an easy choice for coach of the year in Swedish sports in both 1992 and 93. Leading Sweden, a small country of only 8.3 million to the World Cup semifinals should be enough for a third straight award.

Sweden also won the 1948 Olympic tournament and reached the final against Pele's Brazil as hosts of the 1958 World Cup. But many observers rate the semifinal berth in the United States as the biggest achievement in Swedish soccer history because the competition is so much tougher now.

"I've experienced a lot as player and coach, but this beats everything," Svensson said Sunday after the finest moment of his career. "We were only two minutes away from winning in regulation, then one of our players (Stefan Schwarz) was ejected and we missed the first penalty in the shootout. Still, we came back to win. It was incredible!"

As expected, Svensson started his preparations for the semifinal right away at Stanford Stadium's locker room.

"I told the players to celebrate a few minutes. Then I asked them to do some stretching exercises, drink and look forward to Wednesday. We will be well prepared."

"We feel that we can beat any team that's left in the tournament. We tied Brazil 1-1 in the first round and it was a good experience. It showed that we can beat them. And we'll try to have that feeling on Wednesday."

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TOMMY SVENSSON

PROFILES : SWEDEN

LOS ANGELES, July 12 (AFP): Following are the profiles of the likely Swedish team to meet Brazil in the World Cup semifinals here on Wednesday.

Thomas Ravelli: Age: 34, 115 caps. Height: 1.85m, weight: 82 kg. Made his international debut in 1981 and will become Sweden's most-capped player against Brazil when he makes his 116th appearance. He was the hero of Sweden's quarter-final penalty shoot-out, saving two Romanian attempts for a 5-4 victory.

Roland Nilsson: 30, 66 caps. 1.8m, 75kg. Back in Sweden with Helsingborgs if after spell with Sheffield Wednesday in the English league. Nilsson's club honors include the 1983 and 1987 Swedish championship, the 1987 UEFA Cup, and the English League Cup in 1991. He made his international debut in 1986 and played in the 1990 World Cup.

Patrik Andersson: 22, 27 caps. 1.85m, 84kg. The defender most often assigned to shadow other teams' superstars. Andersson joined Borussia Muenchegladbach in Germany from Blackburn Rovers last November after a year with the English club. His performance this season was good enough to earn a contract that will keep him in the Bundesliga until 1996.

Joachim Bjorklund: 23, 26 caps. 1.83m, 82kg. Fastest defender on the Swedish side. Groin strain ruled him out of 1-1 draw with Brazil in the first round.

Roger Ljung: 28, 52 caps. 1.85m, 79kg. Left-back who captained Malmo when they won the 1986 and 1988 Swedish championships. Dangerous in the air. Scored Sweden's first World Cup goal against Cameroon with a far post header.

Joans Thern: 27, 51 caps. 1.83m, 79kg. Considered by many the best Swedish player of his generation, the gifted midfielder organises returns to the starting line-up after missing the quarter-finals with a knee injury suffered in the second round against Saudi Arabia, just moved from Napoli to Roma.

Hakan Mild: 23, 16 caps. 1.83m, 79kg. Skillful attacking midfielder. Mild played on the Swedish championship winning IFK Goteborg teams of 1990, 1991 and 1993 before moving to Servette in Switzerland last season.

Klas Ingesson: 25, 47 caps. 1.90m, 87kg. Tall midfielder who plays for PSV Eindhoven in Holland. Ingesson played on Sweden's 1990 World Cup team after making his international debut in 1989.

Martin Dahlin: 26, 33 caps. 1.85m, 84kg. The 1993 Swedish footballer-of-the-year. Dahlin has improved since his move to Borussia Muenchegladbach in 1991. Sweden's top scorer in World Cup qualifying, and has scored four goals in the finals despite missing a match through suspension. He was substituted in extra-time against Romania, but coach Tommy Svensson said Dahlin would be fit to start against Brazil.

Tomas Brodin: 24, 36 caps. 1.78m, 77kg. Scored a hat-trick in Sweden's 5-0 victory over Israel in World Cup qualifying to break a year-long goal drought with the national team. The Parma forward has scored two goals so far in the World Cup.

Kennet Andersson: 26, 29 caps. 1.93m, 91kg. Scored twice in the second round match against Saudi Arabia, including the late goal that put Sweden through to the quarter-finals. Just moved from Lille to Caen. Added to his total with an extra-time equaliser against Romania, then converted his attempt in the penalty shoot-out.

German keeper Bodo Illgner, coach Bertie Vogts blamed him for the two South Korean goals in their final Group C match that nearly saw the Asian side pull off the upset of the tournament.

Goalies, always on the edge

LOS ANGELES, July 12: Wanted goalkeeper for World Cup team. Ability to stop ball going in to net a major plus.

While goalscorers have been having a field day in the World Cup finals, team coaches have been driven to distraction by goalkeeping blunder after goalkeeping blunder, reports AFP.

Irish coach Jackie Charlton could only watch in dismay as Pat Bonner let a simple shot from Holland's Wim Jonk slip through his hands and trickle over the line.

At the time Ireland were only a goal down to the Dutch and still dreamt of getting through to a quarter-final confrontation with Brazil.

Things were even worse for

German keeper Bodo Illgner, coach Bertie Vogts blamed him for the two South Korean goals in their final Group C match that nearly saw the Asian side pull off the upset of the tournament.

Things did not get any better for the 27-year-old Illgner as the tournament went on. He was roundly blamed for Bulgaria's first goal when Hristo Stochkov bent a freekick over the wall and into the open net where Illgner was supposed to be.

The same fate awaited South Korea's keeper and captain Choi In Young. Coach Kim Ho did the unheard of when he substituted him at half-time during the match against Germany in the Cotton Bowl in Dallas.

The German jinx also struck Belgium's Michael Pre-

ud'homme who only days before had saved his team by holding the Dutch at bay with a masterly performance of goal-keeping.

A Preud'homme error midway through the first half allowed Rudi Voeller's header slip through his grasp to put Germany back in front. They went on to win 3-2. Leaving Preud'homme to rue his slip and the end of Belgium's World Cup.

Cameroon's Joseph-Antoine Bell, who was dropped four years ago in Italy when the African side stunned the footballing world by reaching the quarter-finals, discovered selection has its drawbacks.

He was criticised for his performance when Cameroon eked out a 2-2 draw in their opening Group B match against Sweden.



Swedish forward Kennet Andersson tries to cheat the ball down during the team's training session at Loyola University in Los Angeles on July 11. Sweden will meet Brazil in the semifinals at the Rose Bowl on July 13. —AFP photo