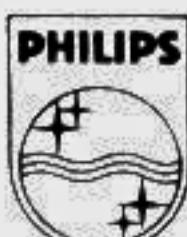


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Nigeria now on the map

dogged by administrative chaos.

For the second time in four days — Nigeria beat Brazil 4-3 in their semifinal on Wednesday — the African. South American clash produced captivating soccer.

ATHENS, Georgia, Aug 4: Exuberant Nigeria became the first African team to win an Olympic soccer gold medal when they scored a last-gasp and hugely controversial goal to beat Argentina 3-2 in the final on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The Nigerians who have delighted fans with their flair and attacking play, settled after a thrilling game when substitute Emmanuel Amunike broke an Argentine off-side trap to sweep the ball into the net in the 89th minute.

Argentina, who had twice been in front, protested in vain as Nigeria, who had never won an Olympic gold medal before Friday, celebrated their second

Earlier, Claudio Lopez and Hernan Crespo, with a hotly disputed penalty, had put Argentina ahead. But Celestine Babayaro and Daniel Amokachi had hauled the Africans back each time.

This win was important for football in the world because we saw that attacking football can win," said Nigeria's coach, Dutchman Johannes Bonfere.

"Our third goal was the best in the tournament for us because it won the medal," he said. "The referee made the right decision."

Argentina coach Daniel Passarella said: "It was a great final between two great teams. I'm very happy with our performance in this tournament. I don't want to talk about the referee or the game at the moment. It's too early."

Simply reaching the final was an unlikely feat for Nigeria, whose preparations were

Adding insult to injury

ATHENS, Georgia, Aug 4: Players and officials of the Argentine Olympic soccer team lost cash and valuables worth \$3,000 dollars when their Georgia hotel was burgled, team officials said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The robbery was discovered on Friday evening when the players returned to their base in Athens, Georgia, following a training session.

Rubin Moschella, an Argentine football association administrator, had \$5,000 dollars in cash stolen from his room.

Eduardo de Luca, who works for the South American soccer confederation, lost a further \$18,000 dollars cash in the break-in, officials said.

The thieves also broke into rooms occupied by four players, including defender Jose Chamot and Roberto Sensini, and stole valuables.



AFTER BRAZIL. ARGENTINA WHO? Lanky Nigerians celebrate Africa's first Olympic soccer gold after Argentina became the latest victim of their "never die" brand of football in the Olympic soccer final at the Sanford Stadium on August 3.

— AFP/UNB photo

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The Nigerian players, many of whom play in Europe, clearly have a big future, none more so than captain Nwankwo Kanu.

The Gangly Kanu, who was 20 last Thursday, is moving to Internazionale in Italy from Ajax Amsterdam, with whom he won the European Cup in 1995.

"Argentina is good, Nigeria is gold," Kanu said.

It really was a golden weekend for Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation of over 100 million people.

Their soccer triumph followed a shock long jump win by Chioma Ajunwa on Friday, which had given Nigeria its first ever Olympic gold.

Tennis maestro Ramamathan Krishnan also congratulated Paes on winning the medal.

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