

rules To kick Around:

rule Members:
#1 Each team consists of 11 players, 3 substitutes and one trainer who is required to chew his nails, spit, chain smoke and scream from the sidelines!

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COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-96
✓ Tick the correct answers
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Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
on June 12, 1998

1 Who will lead Brazil in the France World Cup?	Bebeto	Ronaldo	Dunga
2 What is the name of the mascot of France '98?	Panda	Footix	Chicken
3 The ball to be used in this year's World Cup is called	Tricolour	Questra	Astra
4 Which country in the World Cup will be captained by the son and coached by the father?	Finland	Italy	Spain
5 How many times IWM Rani Hamid has won the national women's chess title?	10	9	11

Name

Class Roll no.

School address

Phone: (if any)

SPORTS TALK



Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario
(Spanish tennis player)
"I just think she doesn't have respect. She cannot go in with that attitude."
On Serena Williams.

Okada's mixed signals

AIX LES BAINS, June 9: Japan's coach Takeshi Okada says his team will play to win against Argentina in their debut World Cup match on June 14, but they will have to maintain concentration for 90 minutes to achieve a shock result, reports Reuters.

"We'll try to win," said Okada as he prepared to take his players for an afternoon training session in the small town of Aix-Les-Bains, south-east of Lyon.

He promised Japan, in their first finals, would field an attacking team but said he would only announce his starting team to the players minutes before the match against Argentina.

Okada's game plan depends on whether team captain Masami Ihara recovers from the knee injury which has kept him out of Japan's last two warm-up matches.

But Okada is confident that the man he describes as his leader on the field will be fit. Ihara twisted his knee a week ago in Lyon near Geneva where Japan set up a training camp before coming to France.

"I don't think I will be able to perform better than I have until now so I will keep my condition and fighting spirit at 100 per cent," said Ihara on Monday.

Japan's captain was replaced in the recent friendlies by Toshihide Saito who will step aside assuming Ihara is fit.

Saito stressed the importance of concentration. "Argentina have players who are almost perfect," he said. "How long we can keep our concentration going will decide the game."

Japan's midfield star Hidetoshi Nakata, currently playing for Bellmare Hiratsuka in the J-League but rumoured to be attracting interest from Spanish club Espanol, also stressed the need to be focused in Japan's first match in Group H.

"It's important for our team to win in the World Cup, but the other important thing is to prepare my condition and do my best," said Nakata.

Japan thank Brazil for the fever

BAINS, France, June 9 (AFP/Internet): Japan's head coach Takeshi Okada thanked Brazil on Tuesday for making his country football crazy by providing top-flight players and coaches to the J-League.

"Japan is celebrating like crazy at home for its debut in the World Cup," Okada said on the eve of the opening of the tournament.

"Perhaps, the enthusiasm is greater than in any other country. The Japanese have respect for many Brazilian coaches and players in the J-League and their influence is tremendous", he said.

Indeed, his strike force includes a substitute, Brazilian-born Wagner Lopes of Bellmare Hiratsuka. The 29-year-old was naturalised and made the national team last year, in the middle of Japan's qualifying struggle, after playing for 10 years in Japan. He has scored three goals in international duty. Dunga, Brazil's national captain, has been the midfield marshal for the J-League Jubilo Iwata since his country won the 1994 tournament in the United States.

Cesar Sampaio, another midfielder for Brazil's World Cup squad, is also a playmaker for the Yokohama Flügels. Other imported J-Leaguers, also playing in France '98, include Yugoslav midfielder Dragan Stojkovic of Nagoya Grampus Eight, Cameroon striker Patrick Mboma of Gamaba Osaka and three South Koreans: Hong Myung-Bo, Ha Seok-Ju and Kim Do-Hoon.

Nigerian booters in mourning

PARIS, June 9: Nigeria's World Cup footballers were in a state of shock today following the death of the country's military ruler General Sani Abacha, reports AFP.

Abacha was a football fanatic who knew the players personally. Players received the news at different times during the day on Monday and it has but them in sombre mood on the run-up to their opening match against Spain in Nantes on Saturday.

"It's been a shock," said Besiktas player Daniel Amokachi. "None of the team could believe it. Some have suggested we should pull out of the event but I can't see the point of that. Abacha himself would want us to do well."

Their Yugoslav coach Bora Milutinovic, known for his few words, said: "We must respect the dead."

But it was back to business for the players at their Resson-Sur-Matz training ground in Picardie about 80-km north of Paris this morning.

The full squad, including stars Sunday Liseh of Ajax, Jay-Jay Okocha of Besiktas and Inter Milan's Nwankwo Kanu, were put through their paces.

However, Kanu, who has fought back from major heart surgery since winning the Olympics with Nigeria in 1986, has his own schedule and trained away from the rest of the squad.

Parreira hopes to have Midas touch again

PARIS, June 9: Carlos Alberto Parreira, coach of 1994 winners Brazil, will hope that his golden touch works again with new charges Saudi Arabia in France '98, reports AFP.

The Asian champions reached the last 16 four years ago thanks to wins over Morocco and Belgium but their route to the second round this time around is more perilous with hosts France, Denmark and South Africa also in Group C.

Their opening match is against the Danes in Lens on Friday and a good performance is essential if they are to enjoy similar success to 1994.

They have played a series of warm-up matches over the last month but the results have left Parreira, and the opposing coaches, with little clue about the team's true potential.

A goalless draw against England at Wembley on May 23 was followed by a 6-0 hammering at the hands of Norway four days later. Parreira called the draw "a big achievement" and was not too disheartened at the loss to Norway.

Goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Deayea, rated the finest goalkeeper in Asia, was sent off before Norway opened the scoring and Mohammed Al-Khilaiwi was also shown the red card.

Parreira and his squad moved into their training camp South of Paris in late May and have been trying to blend the passionate approach to the game which brought them success in the 1994 World Cup and the 1996 Asia Cup with a more pragmatic outlook.



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN: Brazilian former international Eder evades the attentions of France's Dominique Bijotat (L) and Dominique Bathenay during a friendly game in Paris on June 8. — AFP photo

Asia head over heels in football fiesta

HONG KONG, June 9 (AFP): The World Cup finals are going to be a bonanza for Asian broadcasters but office managers and 'football widows' fear for the worst over the coming month.

Due to the time difference with France, Asian fans will have to watch matches on TV in the early hours of the morning, then try to get through the working day unscathed before the next night.

"I don't know how the workers are going to be able to hold on to the scaffolding... it's really going to be a dangerous time," bemoaned a building site manager in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

"Can't they just tape it and watch it before they go to work," implored veteran World Cup widow Cha Wai-Leng in Hong Kong.

From June 10 to the July 12 final, the cry will be the same across Asia, from sleep-deprived spouses, tired neighbours and bosses worried about falling productivity, as well as falling workers.

While South Korea and Japan, co-hosts of the 2002 World Cup, plus Saudi Arabia and Iran are the only Asian teams in France, the region as a whole is football mad.

For some regional leaders the glow of the TV set will bring a welcome respite from the glare of the political and economic spotlight.

In Cambodia, the World Cup coincides with campaigning for the July 26 national election, but the football is expected to easily win the competition for viewers.

In Indonesia, deep in economic crisis, the pull of the game is so strong that political analysts foresee the kiss of death for the country's reform movement.

The early hour telecasts will affect the students who headed the drive to topple long-time President Suharto who stepped down on May 21.

Ahmad Noehori of the University of Indonesia admitted students would take portable TVs to campus to watch matches while "working on our next reform agenda."

Asian World Cup fever is strongest in Japan, in the finals for the first time, and it seems frenzied fans will do almost anything to get time off to watch matches.

One 32-year-old man is to the knot ahead of soccer's biggest event in order to get honeymoon leave.

"If I didn't do this I would not be able to take more than 10 days holidays," he explained.

In Shizuoka, Shigeki Sakurai, 31, quit his job with a car sales company after nine years, stunning his boss when he said: "I cannot miss the historic event of Japan making its debut."

Interest in Beijing far outweighs anticipating of the upcoming visit of Bill Clinton, the first by a US president this decade, and China's central television, which reaches more than one billion of China's 1.2

billion people will broadcast every game live.

Industrial production in China fell so much during the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States that the official Chinese media warned people to stop sleeping in after watching.

In many places in recession-hit Asia, hotel and bar managers are hoping to score a marketing goal.

In the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, the Hotel Equatorial has installed a 100-inch TV screen for 24-hour coverage with special room rates.

In Thailand, the state power operator will boost production to ensure no-one misses a minute.

Australia may have narrowly missed going to the finals, but immigrants from Italy, England, Scotland Yugoslavia, Croatia, Spain, France and Netherlands, will ensure very partisan support.

When Italy won in 1982, fans poured on to the streets in Italian areas of Sydney and Melbourne.

In South Korea, all three television stations will show live all group matches played by the national team against Holland, Belgium and Mexico.

Some 350 million Indians will watch the World Cup making for one of the biggest national television audiences, but skeptical fans are hoping there will be no all-too-familiar interruptions for news.

The French Open women's tennis final was the latest casualty when coverage of the crucial third set as delayed for three hours.

Sri Lanka seems the best place to escape its national television is concentrating on a cricket series between the Sri Lankan world champions and New Zealand the soccer will be recorded and soon later.

"It is not that football is boring, but people here are more interested in cricket because we are the world champions," a spokesman for the Erupavahini station said, seemingly oblivious of the football fuss elsewhere.

Speed prefers Shearer & Owen in attack

LONDON, June 9 (AFP): Alan Shearer and Michael Owen should be England's dream team partnership in the World Cup.

That's the verdict of Newcastle and Wales star Gary Speed, who has entered the debate surrounding England's best strike force for France '98.

Speed is now a teammate of Shearer's at Newcastle, and watched in admiration while he was still at Everton last season at the stunning progress of Liverpool teenager Owen.

"If it were my choice, I would go for Owen to partner Alan, the kid has all the pace going he's lethal, and I feel he would make the best striker partner for Shearer."

It's a difficult decision between Owen and Teddy Sheringham, but I'd go for Owen.

Owen's burst of pace can really produce something out of nothing, he can get past and away from defenders and that's going to be vital."

Speed, the Wales skipper, was just back from Tunisia, England's first World Cup opponents who beat the Welsh 4-0 in a friendly, and was preparing to sit and watch the World Cup finals in front of the TV set.

Hwang won't play against Mexico

PARIS, June 9: South Korea's hopes of winning their first World Cup match were dealt a massive blow today when veteran striker Hwang Sun-Hong was ruled out of their opening duel with Mexico on Saturday, reports AFP.

Hwang, who played in the last two World Cups, injured his knee in a warm-up match against China last Thursday and has failed to respond to treatment.

"It is a very grave situation for us," said coach Cha Bum-Kum, before a training session held south of Paris today. "Hwang has not recovered from the knee injury and he is definitely out of the first match against Mexico."

"I hope he recovers to play in the rest of the tournament — we will have to wait and see."

Hwang took no part in the training run and there was little indication from the coach about who would replace him in the starting lineup against Mexico in Lyon.

Cha had hoped to pair Hwang, who missed the qualifying tournament through injury, with in-form striker Choi Yong-Soo but his knee problem wrecked those plans. The 24-year-old Choi scored nine goals in the Asian qualifiers and Cha felt he would benefit from the service provided by veteran Hwang.

With talented Holland and Belgium in Group E, Cha had viewed the encounter with Mexico as his team's best chance to break their World Cup duck. The South Koreans are playing in their fourth consecutive World Cup finals but have not won in 11 matches.

Defence best offence?

OZOIR-LA-FERRIERE, France, June 9 (AP): Defence rarely springs to mind when the subject is Brazilian soccer. For Ronaldo and company, "D" stands for dazzle, dribble and daring.

But defence can win World Cups, as a typical Brazil proved in 1994. And as the team readies for its opening game against Scotland on Wednesday, defence is its chief worry.

Tactical indiscipline, blown coverage, the age and precarious health of its fullbacks contribute to the feeling that defence again is Brazil's weak link.

Asked where the team most needs work, coach Mario Zagallo said candidly that the main problem was "holes in coverage."

For team coordinator Zico, Brazil must "improve coverage and prepare the defence better. On the attack, we can always expect more because of the skill of our players."

The defence is anchored by three '94 veterans. Goalie Taffarel is back for his third World Cup, as is midfield bulldog Dunga. Fullback Aldair has shifted to the left side to make room for Junior Baiano, a newcomer to Cup play.

While Zagallo values experience, critics question the fitness of veterans for the grueling, five-week tournament.

Dunga, 34, is recovering from a leg injury but says he will be ready by Wednesday. Aldair was forced to leave an intra-squad scrimmage on Sunday with muscle pains.

Aldair's backup, Andre Cruz, also reported a pain in his left thigh and didn't train on Sunday. MRI testing showed no swelling or lesion, but his status for Wednesday is uncertain. Both Aldair and Andre Cruz were held out of practice Monday to nurse sore legs.

The defence has an extra burden because of the constant upfield charges by defenders Cafu and Roberto Carlos, both key offensive weapons. Junior Baiano and Cafu have had trouble coordinating, while Aldair and Dunga are a step slower than four years ago.

The defensive woes are nothing new. The back line looked shaky in Brazil's 1-0 loss to Argentina in April and in a 1-1 draw with Spain's Atletico Bilbao last week. In a 3-0 romp over tiny Andorra, the defence barely worked up a sweat.

"It was a practice, not a game," Zagallo admitted. "The defence wasn't tested at any time."

Even so, there were problems. Junior Baiano and Andre Cruz abandoned their positions to join the attack against the overwhelmed Andorrans, and an irritated Zagallo ordered them back.

In style and game philosophy, Brazil today is very different from the 1994 team that won an unprecedented fourth World Cup title in the United States.

In '94, coach Carlos Alberto Parreira erected a blockade of four players in the midfield. Mauro Silva, Dunga, Mazinho

and Zinho were an extra line of defence, leaving just Romario and Bebeto to provide both playmaking and scoring.

And it was defence that decided the final game, when Brazil held Italy to a 0-0 tie and Taffarel came up with a decisive save in the penalty-kick shootout.

But Brazilians didn't like Parreira's efficient-but-dull brand of soccer. Fans who recalled masters like Pele and Zico found it painful to watch the disciplined but limited Mazinho, a converted defender, and Zinho, who was dubbed "the floorwaxer" because he went around in circles. When Zagallo took over after the Cup, he promised to revive the "art soccer" of Brazil's glory years.

Today, in place of Mazinho and Zinho, Brazil has FC Barcelona teammates Giovanni and Rivaldo. While the team gains in creativity and scoring punch, it certainly will be more vulnerable when it loses the ball.

Brazil's fortunes could ride on midfielder Cesar Sampaio, also making his debut in a World Cup. He will have multiple duties to support the offense, block the midfield and cover the holes left by defenders.

"I'm a defender first, he said. "The World Cup will be different from exhibition games. Tactics are more important, because our opponents will play on our mistakes."

Meanwhile, Zagallo dismissed worries about the fragile defense, saying opponents will be too busy trying to contain Ronaldo, Bebeto and Co. to attack.

"No team will make the mistake of playing offensively with us," he said. "I'm sure that all will play on the counter-attack."

Norway working on weakness

LA BAULE, France, June 9: Check out Norway's set-piece statistics in competitive games and it's easy to understand why the "Drillos" spent much of Monday's practice session working out on free kicks, penalty shots and corner kicks, reports AP.

During its unbeaten qualifying campaign, Norway scored 12 of its 21 goals after a dead-ball situation — four on free kicks, four after corner kicks, three after throw-ins and one penalty shot.

"It was good to work on this during a closed practice session," said coach Egil "Drillo" Olsen. "There are no secrets in soccer, but we hope to be able to come up with a surprising set-piece trick."

In just one of their eight qualifiers, the 1-0 away win in Azerbaijan that was the clinching point to France, did the Norwegians fail to score off a dead ball situation.

Kjetil Rekdal, the midfielder who scored Norway's only goal in a disappointing '94 World Cup, had three goals, one of them a free kick and another one a penalty shot. He also set up five goals.

Rekdal is assigned to take possible penalty shots during this tournament and is one of many alternatives for free kicks outside the penalty area.

"We can still improve on free kicks," said Olsen. "We're missing a Maradona-type shooter. Unfortunately, we have no real free kick specialist on the team."

In the last warm-up game May 27 in Oslo, Rekdal had one goal as Norway routed fellow World Cup side Saudi Arabia 6-0.

"Compared to four years ago, we're naturally much more confident now," Rekdal said. "In the United States many players were chasing new club contracts. Now the situation is different. What we learned four years ago could be very helpful this time."

Another key dead ball man is Stig Inge Bjornebye, the Liverpool defender with the feared left-foot shot. He was involved in seven of the goals (four corners, two throw-ins and one free kick) in the qualifiers.

"Our goal should be to score even more on set-pieces," Bjornebye said. "And we will if we get many chances and it's working."

Bjornebye is one of 11 players on the squad who failed to qualify for the second round in the '94 Cup in the United States.

"We learned a lot from that experience," he said. "There were too many press conferences and too many sponsors meetings in the States."

Monday's training was Norway's last at their camp in Saint-Amand-les-Eaux west of Nantes before its Group A opener in Morocco on Wednesday. The squad will fly to Montpellier Tuesday, with an evening workout scheduled at Mosson Stadium.

Olsen said he will announce his starting lineup after that practice.

"I'm uncertain about one or two positions," he said.



FOOTBALL ON HIS MIND: An appropriately adorned Norwegian fan anticipates the start of the World Cup as Montpellier locals look on. — AFP photo