

**JOHN PLAYER GOLD LEAF LIGHTS**

সর্ববিক্রম্য সত্যবিক্রম্যঃ ধূমপান হাফের জন্য সত্যিকার

**rules To kick Around:**

**rule #2** **Scoring:** To score a GOAL, a player must Kick or HEAD the ball into the goal, preferably THAT of the Opposing team.



LAMBADA TO A BAGPIPER'S BEAT: Two Brazilian dancers jive in to the music of a Scottish fan playing bagpiper in a pub at Sao Paulo, Brazil on June 10 while watching the opening match on TV. — AFP photo

**Hadji braves the pain**

MONTPELLIER, France, June 11 (Reuters): Moustafa El Hadji finally cast aside doubts about his fitness on Wednesday with a brilliant opening goal in Morocco's 2-2 World Cup draw with Norway.

All week the question that was continually asked at the Moroccan camp was how well the Deportivo Coruna midfielder had recovered from his broken toe.

And after 38 minutes of an entertain in clash at the Stade de La Mosson he showed everything was fine as he used his troublesome right foot to deadly effect to give his country the lead.

The game ended level at 2-2 but Hadji and several of his teammates emerged with their reputations very much enhanced.

"It still hurts" the rangy midfielder said with a big smile after Wednesday's game. But it was the least of his worries as he and his teammates celebrated an excellent point.

Hadji, born in Morocco but brought up in France, turned down the chance to play for his adopted country at under-21 level five years ago.

He has now emerged as one of Morocco's leading players and has no regrets about his decision. "It's my country — even though I only really know it through short holidays," he said this week.

"I'm prepared to play through pain to bring glory to Morocco."

He certainly did that on Wednesday, as his all-round display had Norway on the defensive for long periods.

Close dribbling, incisive passing and three stinging long-range shots marked him down as the Moroccan's most important creative force.

Under fire for a poor showing in the African Nation's Cup earlier this year, the 26-year-old was determined to make his mark in the country where he spent his formative soccer years playing for Nancy.

And such is the confidence in the Moroccan camp that there is a sense of disappointment that they did not inflict a first defeat on Norway since January 1997.

**44 arrested in Hong Kong**

HONG KONG, Jun 11: Hong Kong police arrested 44 people early Thursday morning suspected of illegally gambling on World Cup soccer matches, a police statement said, reports AP.

The statement said a 29-year-old man asked an undercover police officer to bet on the World Cup opening game between Brazil and Scotland in a bar Wednesday night.

**Of soulless samba and spirited scotch**

SAINT-DENIS, France, June 11 (AP): As the blue-and-white warpaint ran down his cheeks in the post-match pouring rain, the defiant Scott grinned and said he was sure his team would go far in the World Cup.

"We were brilliant. Classy. Our spirit showed," said Paul McGuinness, dressed in tartan green trousers and sporting a flaming red wig.

Not far away, a group of Brazilians, draped in national flags, trudged out of the stadium, downcast. "We were too defensive. Playing that way we won't win the tournament. We lacked soul," said Gina Souza.

Judging by reactions, it wasn't clear who had won the match.

In Wednesday's opening match of the World Cup, Brazil beat Scotland 2-1 to kick off their defense of the title with a victory.

Brazil's superior technique was clear throughout the match, but Scotland refused to be overawed, and a battling performance almost earned them a priceless point. But an own goal by Tommy Boyd in the second half settled the match.

But the two sets of fans reflected each country's ambition.

While Brazil is seeking a record fifth World Cup title, Scotland is hoping to get into the second round for the first time ever.

Coach Craig Brown said his team was "devastated" at conceding the late goal. But the Scottish fans were content, roaring with approval whenever their players, renowned for strength rather than skill, tried to play the Brazilians at their own flamboyant game.

"I was proud to wear Scotland's colors," said Johnny Dowell, decked out in Scotland's full blue-and-white kit. "We were playing the best in the world and if we keep it up, we'll qualify for the next round."

"We might not be the best, but we make up for it by battling and we shoot some style too."

Alex McCaig had paid 9,600 francs (1,600 dollars) for two tickets on the black market just before the game: "It was my first international match, but well worth it. Unbelievable. Our defense was better than Brazil's, but they were better up front."

"But on that form, we'll go far," he said in a bar heaving with Scots next to the Stade de France.

Brazilian coach Mario Zagallo said he was just relieved to

start off with a win, saying Scotland had been "a major obstacle."

Such words brought pain to the face of Sergio Nomme, from Belo Horizonte.

"Zagallo doesn't understand that we must play with flair, not defensively. We have to win the World Cup, and with style," he said. "That's how it is."

Commuting back to Paris, Paolo Tropeiro summed up his country's dilemma: "We were brought up on Pele and Zico," he said. "Okay, we won the World Cup in 1994, but it wasn't the Brazil we wanted to see."

"We want to win, there's no doubt. But we also want to thrill."

**MATCH STATS**

MONTPELLIER, June 11: Match statistics from Wednesday's world cup group A match between Norway and Morocco:

Goals	Mor	Nor
Shots on target	2	6
Shots off target	4	6
Corners	2	7
Fouls	11	8
Offsides	3	2
Red Cards	0	0
Yellow cards	1	0
Morocco yellow card:	Said Chiba	80

**Long-ball baffles them**

MONTPELLIER, France, June 11 (AFP/Internet): Norway cashed in on two goalkeeping blunders by Driss Benzekri to snatch a 2-2 draw with Morocco in their opening Group A match here on Wednesday night.

Egil Olsen's side ability to make the most of Benzekri's errors kept alive their hopes of reaching the second round of the competition for the first time in their history. The Norwegians had a string of chances at the end of the game to snatch victory but defeat would have been unfair on a Moroccan side who played with greater invention coming forward. Olsen admitted he had been caught out by Morocco's willingness to use the long ball-a tactic which his own team have used to great effect in recent years.

Morocco arrived in France with a reputation for slick, neat, technical football and Olsen confessed: "We were surprised and a bit confused tactically that they played long balls against us."

"We were not expecting that and we lost our shape a little for a while and were forced to

adapt... The end of the match was particularly hard, but we came back strongly towards the end of the match and stayed in the game. I'm not disappointed because we're still in the tournament with one point."

But Morocco coach Henri Michel said he was disappointed that his team had occasionally taken a more direct route towards goal.

Michel, who coached France at Mexico 86 and Cameroon at Italy 94, said he was annoyed

**Drug alert**

SOFIA, Jun 11: Drug traffickers are preparing to flood France with drugs during the World Cup, as hundreds of thousands of football fans descend on the country, an Interpol official in Bulgaria said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Ralf Mutschke, deputy head of the Interpol headquarters, said eastern European criminal gangs were collaborating with South American drug producers to reap the maximum benefit from the month-long tournament which kicked off Wednesday.

that Morocco had twice surrendered the lead.

"I am very upset that we conceded the first goal on the stroke of half-time and a second two minutes after we had regained the lead," said the Frenchman. "It's very, very disappointing to make silly mistakes after taking control of the game and give ourselves a good chance of victory."

The Norwegian goalkeeper and captain Frode Grodas admitted that the quality of the Moroccan play bothered them. "We were surprised by the Moroccans, who were very good physically. The most surprising fact was that they played Norwegian style football — long deep balls. We were a little tense since it was an opening match, but above all it was the quality of the Moroccan play that bothered us."

His star forward, Tore Andre Flo (9), was also of the same opinion: "Tonight we played against a very good Moroccan team. The result of the match reflects our inadequate attack. Our team was too defensive and we lacked speed on our opponents' long balls."

**Paraguay, Bulgaria to kick-off 'group of death'**

MONTPELLIER, France, Jun 11: Bulgaria, surprise semi-finalists in 1994, are preparing for a tough-tackling World Cup battle with Latin American outsiders Paraguay tomorrow, reports Reuters.

The Group D game will be a show down between two larger-than-life goal scorers with a provocative streak and much else in common, except that Bulgaria's Hristo Stoichkov is a striker while Paraguay's Jose Luis Chilavert plays in goal.

"We know that they play a very tough if not brutal game," Bulgaria coach Hristo Bonev said.

"We've been practising some hard tackling because we want our players to get up quicker than the Paraguayans."

A referee primed with a FIFA directive not to spare the red card for bad tackles and two of the loudest team leaders in world soccer could make for an explosive mixture between fast, counter-attacking sides at the Stade de La Mosson.

Stoichkov, who sent Bonev flowers to halt a bitter rift and win back a place at what may be his last big tournament, was joint top scorer at USA '94. He reckons he can breach Paraguay's defence and show Chilavert a thing or two about goal-scoring.

But the Paraguayan goalkeeper and outspoken captain, who like Stoichkov takes free kicks and penalties, could make as much of a mark at the other end of the pitch. British bookmakers have taken some bets on Chilavert to be the tournament's top scorer — albeit at odds of 1,000 to one.

With 40 career goals, the odds are a lot shorter on him becoming the first goalkeeper to score at the World Cup finals.

A good World Cup may be

important for the 31-year-old Velez Sarsfield keeper — his criticism of Argentina and advice he gave to Japan on how to beat them have angered the Argentinian lawmakers so much that they have demanded he be declared *persona non grata* in the country where he plays his club soccer.

For all Chilavert's goal-scoring abilities, Paraguay's weaknesses lie up front.

A series of four defeats on a European warm-up tour including a 5-1 thrashing by the Netherlands, has not helped confidence at the back.

Brazilian-born coach Paulo Cesar Carpagiani's main task may be to restore the team work that earned Paraguay a surprise place in France and which has been denied by a series of rows.

"I insist Paraguay are fine. The recent results have not affected us and most importantly

we understand each other well and we work hard as a unit," he said, addressing the sceptics.

Niggling injuries to wing-back Fraciso Ayala and Real Zaragoza playmaker Roberto Acuna are also a worry.

Bonev, too, has had some work to do on team chemistry although he denied reports of a rift between the 1994 veterans that form the backbone of the team and the youngsters.

For the Bulgarians France is a happy hunting ground — Amil Kostadinov can recall his injury-time winner in Paris that put Bulgaria into the last World Cup finals at France's expense.

While not writing off Paraguay, Bonev sounded confident: "They occupy midfield very well and get back quickly. We have to be aware of our own strengths but not underestimate them."

VFB Stuttgart's Krassimir Balekov, the team's playmaker,

said he was conscious of the greater pressure on his team following the success achieved in 1994.

"I'm aware I have a huge responsibility. The game's going to be decided in midfield. We are ready for that battle and are going to do everything to win it."

**PROBABLE TEAMS**

**BULGARIA:** 1-Zdravko Zdravkov, 2-Radostin Kishishev, 3-Trifon Ivanov, 4-Ivaylo Petkov, 5-Ivaylo Yordanov, 6-Zlatko Yankov, 7-Emile Kostadinov, 8-Hristo Stoichkov, 10-Krassimir Balakov, 11-Iliyan Iliev, 9-Stoicho Stoilov.

**PARAGUAY:** 1-Jose Luis Chilavert, 2-Francisco Arce, 5-Celso Ayala, 3-Catalino Riverola, 20-Denis Caniza, 10-Roberto Acuna, 6-Edgar Aguiera, 15-Miguel Benitez, 16-Julio Cesar Enciso, 9-Jose Cardozo, 18-Cesar Ramirez.

**Thrill dies hard for Baggio**

BORDEAUX, France, Jun 11 (AFP): Roberto Baggio may have been through all this twice before, but starting the World Cup finals is still a thrill for the Italian idol.

The pressure and the adulation may be all old news to the 31-year-old, but he was still heading into their opener against Chile here tonight with a few butterflies in his tummy.

Baggio guided Italy almost single-handedly to the 1994 final against Brazil, but knows full well that he is starting again from scratch against Italy's major rivals in Group B.

"What's different is that this is another World Cup," he said simply. "Everyone knows what

happened over there (in the United States). Let's just hope we can make a good start to this one. Unfortunately it's against a very strong side."

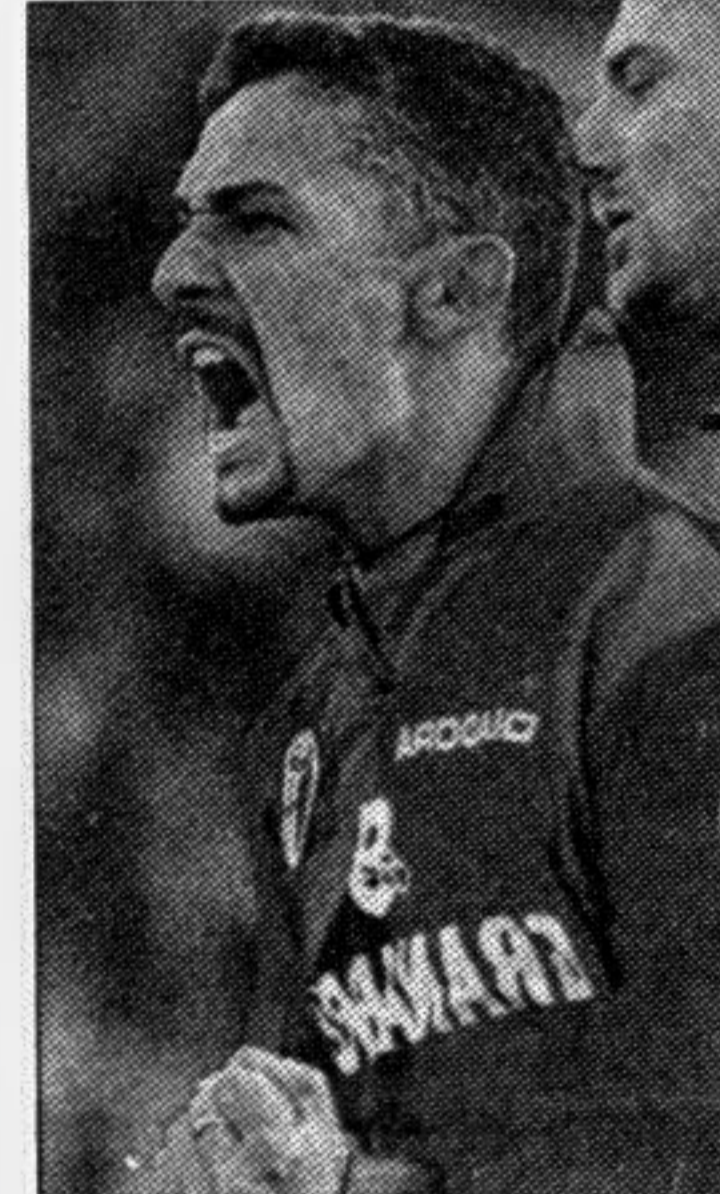
"We've watched a lot of their games and Chileans are not a team we are feeling relaxed about."

Stressing the team aspect, Baggio said: "I feel really fortunate to be in the side, and lets not forget that there are other players in it too. If we're able to do well, we'll have done it together."

Doing well here means beating a Chilean side who have two great strikers in Ivan Zamorano and Marcelo Salas, and who will not be under the



A header from Norway's Hennin Berg (C) travels towards the Moroccan goal while others watch with anxious anticipation during the second match of the opening day at the Stade de Mosson, Montpellier on June 10. — AFP photo



ROBERTO BAGGIO same amount of pressure as the Italians.

"What I think we all feel is a certain amount of tension, and of excitement," Baggio said. "I think that's only normal, given what we are in for here."

"The experience of playing in the first match is the same. I think even if you've played in two World Cups before, it's the first game and I reckon it's also the hardest."

"I've prepared well and I hope I still feel good about things after the match and by that I mean that we will have achieved something important."

As football becomes less about teams and more about individuals, Baggio knows that people expect him to leave his mark on the finals.

But after more than 10 years at the top, Baggio is used to dealing with people's expectations.

"At the end of it all, only a few players will be able to come away from these World Cup finals saying that they did well," he said.

Asked the 64,000 dollar question, if he wondered why he is still Italy's best loved footballer, he said: "I've never actually asked myself that. But it's something that makes me very happy."

**Raring to take the world on**

AIX-LES-BAINS, France, Jun 11 (AP): Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi may be only 22-year-old and a bit on the small side for a goalkeeper, but it would be plain foolish to count Japan's goalkeeper out at the World Cup.

Kawaguchi, though just 1.81 metres and 75 kilograms (6-foot-1 and 165 pounds), has plenty of fire. He is quick and wise. He says he's never been in better shape.

And he has picked up a thing or two from the Brazilians, who in contrast to the debuting Japanese, are vying for their fifth World Cup.

Kawaguchi and the entire team gathered around a hotel television to watch Brazil's 2-1 win over Scotland in Wednesday's tournament opener.

They were all rooting for Brazil, a nation that has greatly influenced Japanese soccer. Many Brazilians play in Japan's professional J-League, including Dunga and Cesar Sampaio.

"It's hard not to get involved when you know them," said Kawaguchi, who plays for J-League's Yokohama Marinos. "But we weren't for a moment worried about how things would turn out for Brazil."

Impressed "oohs!" went up when the Brazilians displayed their flash. What Kawaguchi remembers the most is Ronaldo dribbling up and taking a shot.

"Brazil came through in the end, as always," said coach Takeshi Okada.

Brazilian-born forward Wagner Lopes — living proof

personified of Japan's deep ties with the South American nation — was a little proud because he had predicted Brazil's 2-1 victory.

The next game would be even better," he told reporters.

As for Kawaguchi, his most important Brazilian these days is his 44-year-old goalkeeper coach, Mario, who a former Juventus player has been complaining recently that his leg hurts.

"Once practice starts, though, his expression changes," Kawaguchi said. "He has enormous mental strength."

No one watching him in daily team practices could imagine Mario in pain. He fiercely kicks the ball to the goalkeepers, again and again.

"Maybe not 500 times, but

almost 300 times," Kawaguchi said.

Mario's approach to soccer has been his inspiration. There is a lot to emulate for me."

Mario was also Kawaguchi's coach for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, the first time Japan went to the games in 28 years.

There, Kawaguchi made stop after stop to hold Brazil scoreless, helping Japan to a miraculous 1-0 upset against its mentors.

Perhaps, Kawaguchi is ready to do it again — this time, at Japan's World Cup opener against Argentina on Sunday.

"Mentally and physically, my condition is excellent," Kawaguchi added. "I look forward to seeing how I stand up against the best at the World Cup."

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