Etriker Adrian Ilie joined a worrying list of Romanian injured Tuesday following the side's World Cup debut against Colombia, reports AFP.

"These are serious worries and the doctors are working flat out to get the players fit for the match against England," said coach Anghel Iordanescu.

Romania meet England in Toulouse on Monday in their second Group G game and Hagi says he will definitely be fit. "I am in a fair bit of pain," Hagi said. "But the injury itself

is not serious and I have no doubt I will play." Hagi has an open cut and bruising behind his left knee which he suffered during the

Colombia game before he was substituted in the second half. Ilie, known as The Cobra. has pulled a muscle in his left

The Valencia striker said he expected to be fit in time for the England tie when he insisted that skill would overcome strength.

"England play a physical game but on Monday I think our technical ability will be more dangerous," said the man who scored in the 1-0 Colombia win. Midfielder Dorinel Munte-

nau, Constantin Gilca, goalkeeper Bogdan Stelea, and Livui Ciobotarui are all nursing injuries, mostly bruising. lordanescu said he was im-

pressed by England's 2-0 win against Tunisia on Monday. "They looked good and with players like Alan Shearer are very dangerous," he said. "We will have to be on our guard."

Paraguay's cause for concern

CLAPIERS, France, June 17: Worried by a weak attack, head coach Paulo Cesar Carpeggiani has several strikers to choose from for Paraguay's crucial World Cup Group D match against Spain on Friday, reports AP.

Carpeggiani has not announced any moves, but the top candidates for the job are Hugo Brazuela, Cesar Ramirez and Aristides Rojas.

The Brazilian coach was generally pleased with his team's scorelss tie against tough Bulgaria in its World Cup debut.

But he knows that to advance in the tournament's "Group of Death" Paraguay must find a way to score, which means ineffective striker Jose Cardozo will likely sit out the next match.

So low has Cardozo's stock sunk that he didn't even train with the starters in Monday's practice. And so weak was the Paraguayan attack against Bulgaria that their best scoring chance came on a free kick by goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert which was tipped over the bar by his opposite number.

Paraguay face a Spanish squad desperate for their first points of the tournament after their shocking 3-2 loss against Nigeria in their first match.

The Paraguayans meet the Nigerians in Toulouse a week from Wednesday. But before they can start thinking that far ahead they must first solve their scoring problems.

"We have to find a faster rhythm, defend better at midfield and not get desperate when passing the ball," Carpegginani

During recent practices he has been urging midfielders Roberto Acuna, Julio Enciso and Miguel Angel Benitez not to delay passes and to keep moving forward.

Japan's positive thinking

Al X-LES-BAINS. France. June 17: The Japanese are taking their 1-0 loss to Argentina at their first World Cup game as an alm ost-win, or at least a draw th. at slipped away, reports

That's why they are preparing to win the next one against Croatia Sa turday.

"It gave me confidence. Everybody told us we did well," said 22-yea, -- old striker Shoji

"It wasn't like: 'Can Japan play soccer?" said defender Yutaka Akita, who was unflinching against Argentine striker

Gabriel Batistuta. "I expected a bigger difference. Akita said the team proved they could hand le aggressive players who push forward and take the ball to the goal. And so why shouldn't they do better against Croatia, which moves

grinding down the opposing de-"We can handle ei ther way fine," Akita said.

more gradually, steadily

But Japan had lacke d the final touches to score. "That was the difference between Argentina and us. Unless you can score at that one oppor-

tunity, you can't win at the World Cup," Akita said. "There was a problem with

the finish in our offense. If we go with more confidence, we can do better," Jo said. "My level of playing went up. I'm surprise d But we all have to move up or le more level."

Coach Takeshi Okada said he plans to slightly change the offensive line against Croatia. Besides starters Jo and Masashi Nakayama, the forwards are Masyuki Okano and

Brazilian-born Wagner Lopes,

who was sent in toward the end

of Sunday's game along with midfielder Takashi Hirano. Also on the bench for midfield are Hiroaki Morishima. who scored for seven straigh. game since the opening of J-League this season; Teruyoshi Ito, who had the solitary goal in the 1-0 upset against Brazil in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics; as well as Shinji Ono, the only

teenager on Japan's squad.

Nantes.

Hagi, Ilie injured Toulouse, June 17: Mid-field general Gheorghe Hagi and Ftriker, Adrian Ilia toined a Three Musketeers' ride again

MONACO, June 17 (AP): As players. Frank Rijkaard, Ronald Koeman and Johan Neeskens were unmissable members of a combined six

Dutch World Cup squads.

Now, their playing days over, they are just as vital to the Dutch cause at this World Cup.



JOHAN NEESKENS

Neeskens, now assistants to Dutch coach Guus Hiddink, form a link between players and management as Hiddink tries to prevent the kind of communication breakdowns that plagued the Dutch camp during Euro 96.

Dubbed "The Three Musketeers," they have a wealth of experience - and, most importantly, they have the respect of this pride of Dutch lions.

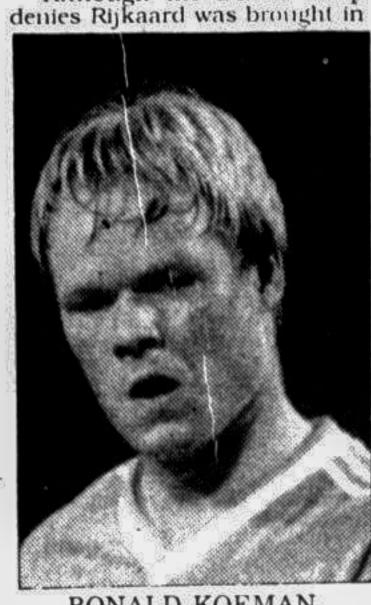
"In the past, you had trainers who had never played at a high level. You listen much earlier if Ronald or Frank says something," Dutch captain Frank de Boer said Tuesday.

"It is nice to have these explayers. You also have respect for them. That is very important, and you can learn things from them.

At Euro 96, the squad reportedly split along ethnic lines, with the black players accusing Hiddink of listening only to their white teammates.

As a player with Ajax Amsterdam in 1995, Rijkaard earned the trust of young black stars like Clarence Seedorf, Edgar Davids and Patrick Kluivert.

Although the Dutch camp



RONALD KOEMAN

specifically to improve morale among the black players, he gives the likes of Kluivert and Davids the impression that they have a friend in high places within the coaching staff.

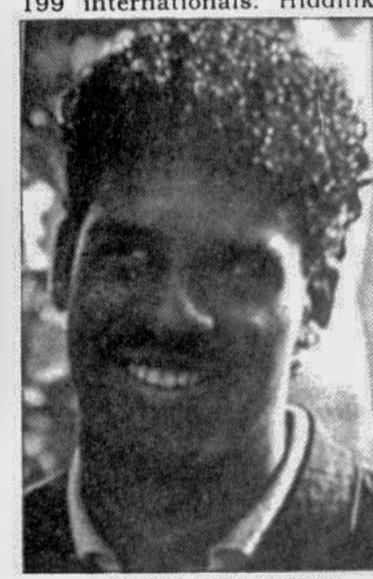
· Neeskens, one of the best Dutch midfielders ever, wrote World Cup history by becoming in 1974 the first player to score a penalty in the World Cup fi-

He also played in the 1978 World Cup final and, although the Netherlands lost both finals, few Dutchmen have more World Cup experience. Koeman too is rich in expe-

rience - only Ruud Krol with 83 has more Dutch caps than the former Ajax and Barcelona star's 78. And, like Rijkaard, he has played with or against many of the current Dutch side, having ended his playing days

"I think it is very good to have trainers who played at a high level," he said. "They can give the young players the benefit of their experiences in their careers."

Between them, Rijkaard, Neeskens' and Koeman played in 11 major tournaments and 199 internationals. Hiddink



FRANK RIJKAARD

never played for the national

In Dutch training sessions the assistants encourage and advise players, play in scrimmages and often take part in the fitness drills.

"It's good to keep in shape and to get close to the players, Koeman said.

On Monday, he spent 30 minutes alone with Seedorf advising the Real Madrid star about free kicks. Koeman had one of soccer's most fearsome free kicks. And despite Saturday's 0-0

draw with Belgium, Koeman is confident that the team spirit fostered in part by the presence of "The Three Musketeers," will ensure that the Netherlands qualifies for the second round. "We have a good group now

with a lot of qualities ... We all work together and that is im-

Curse of being Scots

BOREDEAUX, France, June 17 (AFP): Scotland's reputation as courageous World Cup losers was put on hold following an equaliser by Craig Burley which earned them a 1-1 draw against Norway to leave them a chance of second round qualification.

When Havard Flo scored just after the break and Norway held their own for a period in the second half, it looked as though Scotland might be the first team to pack their bags and go home.

But Celtic midfielder Burley clearly was not interested in reinforcing Scotland's unfortunate record in World Cup finals. In fact, he scored a glorious goal from a cross by David Weir, who had only been on seven min-

"There was a moment when I thought we would have to take the flight back home," Scotland boss Craig Brown said afterwards. But with one point, we're still in it and we'll fight on till

the very end." Scotland will need an enormous amount of character to try and put their poor World Cup final record out of their minds when they play Morocco

in St Etienne next Tuesday Scotland must surely win to have a chance to go through.

Scotland's defensive record is good and during qualifying they only conceded three goals. But they have now let in as many in just two games in the finals and will need to plug the gaps before the Morocco fixture. The complexion of the game

might have changed had referee Laszlo Vagner of Hungary given Scotland a penalty after 17 minutes when Liverpool defender Stig Bojernebye appeared to foul Gordon Durie right on the line of the area. And as Scotland's Tommy Boyd said afterwards, if the foul is directly on the line it's a penalty.

Burley looked much better in midfield, a position he plays for Celtic, than at right-back where he played against Brazil. In fact, when he pushed up into an attacking midfield role, it was

then that he scored and had another great chance.

Despite Scotland's loss, they now at least have a whole week's rest. In Euro '96, when they were just edged out of qualifying for the quarterfinals by Holland, they were forced to play three matches in 11 days. Scotland have not won a game since qualifying last Oc-

tober and face a daunting task against the Moroccans. It is Scotland's eighth World Cup appearance but they have never gone beyond the first round. Brown is determined to change all that it was. Brown who took Scotland to their first European Championship fi-

Thankful Teddy

ESCOUBLAC, France, June 17: Teddy Sheringham said on Tuesday he was relieved that Glenn Hoddle's faith in his ability had not wavered even though the England striker was caught drinking in a Portuguese nightclub two weeks ago, re-

ports Reuters. Sheringham, 32, who played in Hoddle's England team against Tunisia on Monday. admitted he had feared losing his place as Hoddle had dropped Paul Gascoigne from his squad for failing to work at getting

himself fit "It is true, I had doubts about starting during the last couple of weeks," he said. "I felt very relieved when I was picked to play. At the time of the incident didn't worry about it affecting things, but I did in all the hul-

labaloo afterwards." Sheringham added that he did not feel any additional threat because of the excellent form of 18-year-old Liverpool

striker Michael Owen. "He is not a spur to me," he said. "He is an outstanding talent and people want to see him play. But for me the spur is not him, but that I want to play for

England. "Michael and I are opposites. That makes defenders think, I play a very different way."

'EL PHENOM' TURNS PROVIDER: Striker Bebeto (hidden in the centre) scores Brazil's

third goal from a pin-point Ronaldo (L) pass during their June 16 match against Morocco at

Blackburn defender Colin Hendry was looking forward to playing Morocco.

"We now need to beat Morocco and we know we are capable of it," he said.

However Scotland should be worried, following Brazil's thrashing of Morocco a few hours after their game, that the South Americans take it easy against Norway in their last game as they have already qual-

Some may say that Brazil, who were also the first team to qualify for the second round in USA '94, might ease up against Norway or put out a reserve side in an attempt to recuperate players. That could prove disastrous for Scotland.

However that is out of their hands and Scotland's Christian Dailly promised they would give their all against the north Africans.

"We will give 150 per cent," he said. "We know we can beat them." Thousands of fans in Bor-

deaux were celebrating they were still in the competition and the town was full of blue and white flags hours after the game as it was the evening be-

However Dan Andrews from Fife, celebrating in the town centre and who watched the game on television, was not optimistic about Scotland going through.

"It's great we're still in and I've already had a few too many beers in celebration.

"But we won't go through. I think Scotland have played in seven World Cup finals and were ousted on goal difference five times. It's just part of being Scottis that we never qualify."

A pessimistic Scottish public could be just the spur Craig Brown and his players need to motivate themselves to prove the doubters wrong.

Surely all Scots will be hoping for a second round fixture and hoping that fate does not intervene and cause more misfortune against Morocco.

- AFP photo

Onus on Bergkamp

MONACO, June 17: While his Dutch teammates relaxed, Dennis Bergkamp was hard at work on the training field Tuesday fighting to be fully fit for the Netherlands' next World Cup first round match, reports AP.

Bergkamp is badly needed in the lineup, with other first-string striker. Patrick Kluivert, banned on a red card. Before coming on as a sec-

ond-half substitute in Saturday's disappointing 0-0 draw with low countries rivals Bel-gium, Bergkamp had been out of action for six weeks following a hamstring injury.

The Dutch want a big win Saturday in Marseille against Group E minnow South Korea to make up for what they see as two missed points against Bel-

Given a morning off by coach Guus Hiddink, other players were on the golf course or tennis court or browsing the chic boutiques of Monte-Carlo while Bergkamp was sweating it out in training.

"I need it," Bergkamp said of sacrificing a free morning in favor of more had work. "But I

feel good. It's going well."
Hiddink said he was working on Bergkamp's acceleration - which left English defenders floundering in his wake this season as Bergkamp scored 16 league goals for his club, Arse-

"We are working on his explosive bursts," Hiddink said. "He trained yesterday evening behind closed doors. we're going to have a hard training session this evening and then again tomorrow."

After losing Kluivert to a two-match ban following his red card against Belgium, the Dutch are keener than ever to see Bergkamp back.

He now looks a certainty to start the South Korea match, but Hiddink doesn't yet know if he will finish it.

"We don't know if he can play an hour or one and a half hours," he said. "But with yesterday, today and tomorrow, we should have him back with us again."

Thais in the throes of WC fever

BANGKOK, June 17: Hundreds of youths went on the rampage at a detention centre in northeast Thailand in the early hours of today after officials prevented them from watching a World Cup soccer match on television, police said, reports Reuters.

About 400 teenagers smashed furniture, televisions and windows at the Nakorn Ratchasima detention centre, 250 km (152 miles) northeast of Bangkok, when guards ordered them to turn off their television at the start of the Brazil-Morocco game.

At least three people were injured in four hours of battles that followed as guards and 200 riot police tried to restore order. police Major Witaya Thongloh told Reuters.

The protest leader said the guards punched his face after he refused to switch off the television," Witaya said.

The violence eventually ended after local reporters intervened to mediate between the two sides and report the youths' grievances.

The violence only calmed down after reporters were allowed into the centre for the full coverage," Witaya said. Thailand has been gripped

by football fever over the last week, with millions glued to their television sets watching the World Cup tournament in France. Despite being six hours

ahead of France (seven hours ahead of GMT), many Thais have stayed up trough the night to watch their favourite teams. Brazil, which has a large following in Thailand, beat Morocco 3-0.

Witaya said Thai detention centres had been ordered to relax their rules during the rest of the World Cup to avoid a repetition of violence. "I am very happy the inci-

dent is now under control, but I also regret that I and my subordinates missed the match," he

Zico Akira's Idol

AIX-LES-BAINS, France June 17 (AP): Japan defender Akira Narahashi learned two important lessons from Zico while the Brazilian great was with his J-League team Kashima Antlers. First, to be always humble.

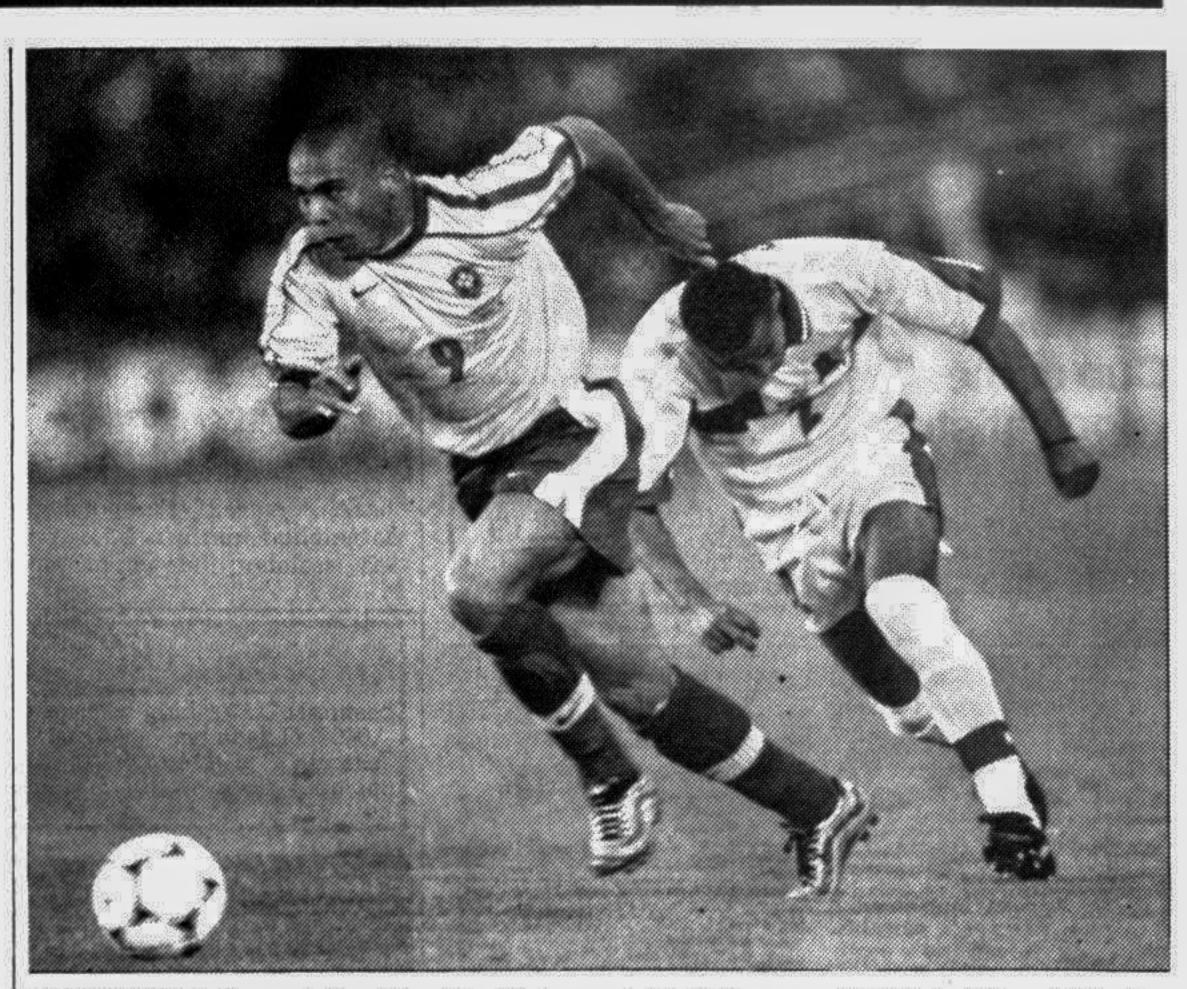
Second, to always keep aiming for the highest. And Narahashi has learned them both well. In a team of nice guys, he is easily the nicest, never too busy or stuck up to answer a ques-

And, when World Cup novice Japan go against Croatia Saturday, Narahashi is going to be taking a shot for his first goal as a member of the national

"It's going to feel so great to score on such a great international stage," he said Tuesday. "Croatia are one or two notches above us, so I plan to run, run, run for the full 90 minutes, whether the ball comes to me or not."

Japan lost to Argentina 1-0 in their opener Sunday and desperately need a win against Croatia, if they hope to advance past the first round. Narahashi said he looked

forward to playing against defender Robert Jarni, who has a stunningly powerful and accurate free kick.



FOLLOW ME: Superstriker Ronaldo (L) leaves behind Moroccan Abdelilah Saber at Nantes - AFP photo on June 16.

FRANCE '98 SIDELINES

UNDATED, June 17 (AP): A awarded Italy a decisive penalty soccer fan could win 1.2 million

the World Cup. A spokesman for bookmaker William Hill said two 60,000pound bets had been placed at odds of 10-1 at separate William Hill shops.

pounds if the Netherlands win

William Hill and rivals Ladbrokes both said England fans were not putting money on England to win the World Cup even though the 2-0 win over Tunisia on Monday shortened the odds from 10-1 to 8-1. In more betting news,

British Sports Minister Tony Banks placed a 1,000-pound bet on England to win the World Cup. The money for the bet was supplied by Ladbrokes, and the money will go to charity if England win.

IRAN'S POLITICS Iran has sent five generals of the Pasdaran revolutionary guards to France for the Iran-United States soccer match on June 21, according to a fax released by Iran's top exiled

armed opposition group, Iraqi-

based Mujahedeen. "The generals are accompa-nied by a group of special forces from the guard corps. By send-ing them to France, the regime seeks to prevent extensive participation of Iranian refugees and supporters of the Mujahedeen in the World Cup games," said the fax from Mujahedeen's France based na-

tional council of resistance. The statement also alleged that Iranian diplomats had met with French authorities to demand that opponents of the Iranian government be banned from going to games.

ITALIANS ANGRY AT HAVELANGE

Italian officials were puzzled by reports that Joao Havelange criticised the referee who

kick in last Thursday's World Cup match against Chile. The Italian news agency

ANSA on Monday quoted Havelange as saying that referee Lucien Bouchardeau made "an unlucky mistake" ruling that Chile's Ronald Fuentes deliberately played the ball with his hand. Bouchardeau awarded Italy the late penalty, converted by Roberto Baggio for a 2-2 "I can't believe he made such

remarks, he's a very cautious man," said Italian Federation president Luciano Nizzola. Havelange is retiring as president of world soccer governing body FIFA at the end of

the World Cup. "The Chilean defender clearly hit the ball inside the penalty area," said Italian captain Paolo Maldini. "It was a kind of hands that 50 per cent of referees usually punish."

referee, on his World Cup debut, "was more nervous than we players before the kickoff." Midfielder Dino Baggio said he was afraid that the controversy may have negative effects

Maldini also said that the

"I'm afraid that Italy risk penalty against Cameroon in 13 is was open to offers from Eurothe next match as a compensation for the alleged favours received in the match with Chile,"

Dino Baggio said. Christian Vieri said the controversy was groundless. "It was penalty, without any doubt. I can't understand criticism on the referee," he added.

BT FALL IN FOR A WHILE

British Telecom lines went quiet during Monday's World Cup match between England and Tunisia.

BT said 16 million fewer calls were made in a 2 1/2-hour span before and during the

game than were made during the same period a week ago. However, the number of calls jumped by 100,000 when Alan

Shearer scored England's opening goal in the 2-0 victory. MANSOURIAN TO

Midfielder Alireza Man-

Iranian player in Germany's Bundesliga, he announced Tuesday. Mansourian, 27, said he would be joining Hamburg after

BECOME THE 4TH

sourian will become the fourth

the World Cup. Mansourian, who entered Sunday's game against Yugoslavia in the 68th minute, said he had been due to join Dortmund, but that his plans

had changed.

Pejman Nozad, editor of Toop, a US-based magazine that specialises in Iranian football, said Mansourian should have been more effective in the game against Yugoslavia, which Iran lost 1-0.

"I think he was trying to show off for talent scouts rather than playing for the team that Meanwhile Iranian goal-

keeper Nima Nakissa said he pean clubs after the World Cup. "I will definitely leave Iran after the World Cup to play in the European league," said

Nakissa, 22. "I will take every offer seriously," he said. Nakissa stood guard at the Iranian goal for main goalkeeper and captain, Ahmad Reza Abedzadeh, who was out

with a bad knee. Iran's three star strikers, Ali Daei, Khodada Azizi and Karim Bagheri, play in the German

Bundesliga Daei has signed up to move from Armenia Bielefeld to Bayern Munich, and Azizi has said he is open to offers from a

Spanish team.

ABSORBING ANECDOTES

PARIS, June 17: Facts and figures from World Cup final matches Monday and Tuesday:

Brazil's 3-0 win over Morocco means they have kept a clean sheet in 12 of their last 17 matches in World Cup finals. In 29 games at the last six finals. only two teams have managed to score more than one goal against the Brazilians — Italy who beat them 3-2 in 1982 and the Netherlands who lost 3-2 in the United States four years

The last time Brazil played an African team was four years ago when they beat Cameroon, also by 3-0 and also with a third goal scored by Bebeto.

Morocco have now lost five of their last six matches in World Cup finals. Their only respite was the 2-2 draw with Norway last Wednesday in Montpellier. Norway's 1-1 result with Scotland was their third draw

0 with Ireland in their last game in the United States four years ago. * * * Scotland have won only one of their last 10 games in the finals and just four altogether in 22 matches at the eight tournaments they have qualified

first time.

Juregon Klinsmann, who grabbed the second goal in Germany's 2-0 win over the United States, netted his ninth goal at World Cup finals and became the 17th player to score in three tournaments. Klinsmann has scored six goals in Germany's last six games in finals.

With all teams now having played their opening matches. 37 goals have been scored in 16 games, a modest average of 2.31 per match.

32 teams have still to score. * * *

Spain are the only top seeded team to have lost their first match. They went down 3-2 to Nigeria. The Netherlands and Italy drew their openers but the other five top seeds all won.

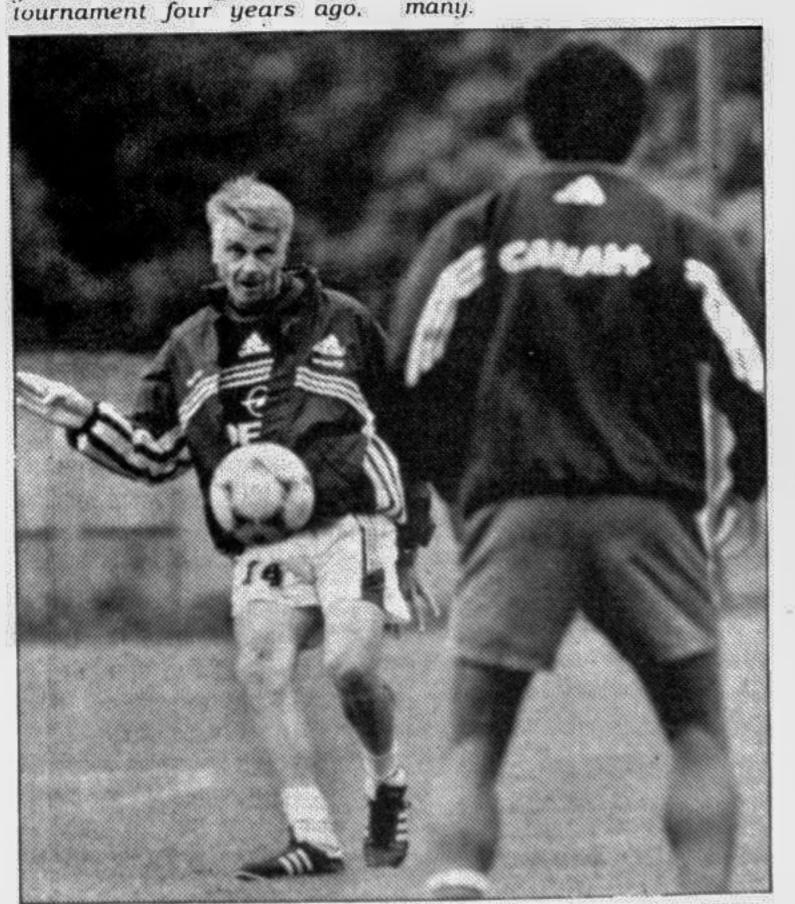
It was the first time Germany had won a match at the finals by a margin of two goals or more in 11 games, dating back to their 5-1 victory over the United Arab Emirates in

The United States lost their third match in a row without scoring a goal. Their last two games, when they hosted the

were 1-0 defeats to Romania and Brazil, the Americans have lost 10 of their last 13 games in finals.

2-0, have kept a clean sheet in 11 of their last 17 matches in World Cup finals. It was their first win by two goals or more since 1986 when they beat Paraguay 3-0.

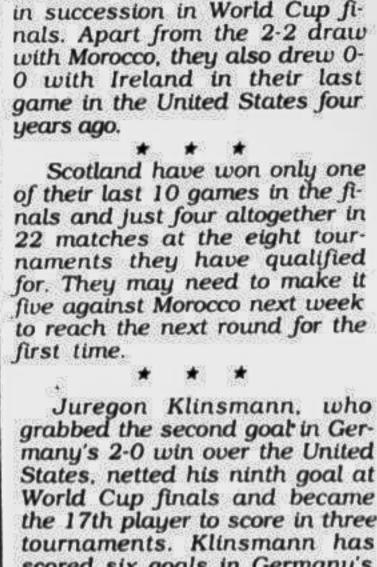
It was the first time Tunisia had conceded more than one goal in a match at the World Cup. In their only previous appearance 20 years ago, they beat Mexico 3-1, lost 1-0 to Poland and drew 0-0 with (West) Ger-



LENDING A HELPING HAND: French coach Aime Jacquet practices with a squad member at Clairefontaine - AFP photo on June 16.

teams at the tournament with three goals each. Eleven of the

England, who beat Tunisia



France, Nigeria, Croatia and Mexico are the top scoring