



BREAKING ENGLISH HEARTS: England based Dan Petrescu celebrates his strike that won the match for Romania on June 22. — AFP photo

Double agent Dan stuns lacklustre England

TOULOUSE, France, June 23 (AP): Dan Petrescu won the wrestling match, and Romania won the game.

Charging into the 6-year box to chase down Constantin Galca's pass in the 90th minute, the Romanian defender put his right arm across the neck of Graeme Le Saux — Petrescu's teammate on the English club Chelsea. Then Petrescu slid his left foot around England defender to poke the ball between the legs of goalkeeper David Seaman.

The goal won the game 2-1 and put Romania into the World Cup's second round.

"This is the greatest moment of my life," Petrescu said. "I scored a winning goal in the last World Cup, but compared to this feeling it meant nothing."

"I couldn't have asked more than to score a goal in the last minute against the country where I make my living. It was a truly wonderful feeling. I couldn't sleep last night but even if I could have, scoring a goal like that would have been beyond my wildest dreams."

The victory put Romania in first place in Group G and left England needing a win or a draw in their final first-round game against Colombia on Friday. The result also eliminates last-place Tunisia.

"Dan was trying to get outside me, but I couldn't get my foot in and I gave away a penalty," Le Saux said. "Then when I tried to stop him as he shot his elbow hit me in the face. I couldn't do anything about it."

Eighteen-year-old Michael Owen, who became the youngest player ever to score for England in a World Cup warmup against Morocco, appeared to save his team with an 83rd minute goal.



BADLY LET DOWN: An English child struggling to come to terms with the defeat against Romania at Toulouse. — AFP photo



The Daily Star

DHAKA WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1998

WORLD CUP '98 SPECIAL

Romanians rejoice

BUCHAREST, June 23 (Reuters): More than 50,000 Romanians, encouraged by their Prime Minister, chanted and danced in Bucharest streets early today to celebrate national team's win against England in the World Cup finals.

Within minutes of the final whistle in Toulouse, vast crowds poured into University Square, the traditional site of large gatherings, blown horns and setting off firecrackers.

For more than two hours revellers streamed through side streets and into the capital's principal boulevard, with children and teenage girls hoisted on shoulders.

"Romania, Romania" chanted clusters of fans, who formed large circles to dance the traditional Romanian hora or knelt on the pavement and then leapt up in unison.

Some shouted the name of Dan Petrescu, who scored in the dying moments of the game to seal the 2-1 victory and a place in the next round of the finals. It was Romania's second win in the tournament so far.

Many fans stripped to the waist because of stifling humidity following a downpour. Women wandered barefoot down a street increasingly strewn with broken glass as the night wore on.

At one point crowds banging plastic tubs and kitchen utensils packed the boulevard for more than one km to Union Square. Cavalcades of cars, passengers hanging precariously onto roofs, roared down

adjacent roads. Bucharest residents said it was the biggest crowd seen since exiled King Michael was allowed to return home in 1992 for the first time in 45 years.

A few dozen police watched the celebrations. There was no evidence of unruly behaviour.

The Bucharest emergency hospital said five people were treated for minor injuries.

After minor scuffles following Romania's victory last week over Colombia, the authorities were taking no chances.

Interior ministry troops guarded the British embassy. Police had warned against any excesses and officials said 5,000 officers were deployed throughout the city.

Romanian daily newspapers printed supplements to mark Monday night's victory.

"Cobra's dance hypnotises England," was the headline in Ziua, referring to the nickname of striker Adrian Ilie. "Romanian descends into the streets."

The daily praised Iordanescu as the man of the hour, hailing him as "Anghel — the angel." The daily Pro Sport singled out Dan Petrescu's last-minute winning goal with the headline: Dan-gerous: Death for England comes from the east.

The significance of goals scored by Petrescu and Moldovan — both playing in the English Premier league — was not lost on Romania Libera: "Englishmen Moldovan and Petrescu bring England to its knees."

Behind the scenes with Bora

PARIS, June 23 (L'ÉQUIPE/Internet): Bora Milutinovic often forgets his passport, his money, but he never leaves his video camera behind.

Because of some sense of decency, the anecdote took a long time to surface. But in the euphoria following their qualification for the second round, "Bora's boys" eventually talked about the video session that took place in their locker room just before the 3-2 opening match victory against Spain.

As the team was about to go on the pitch, a seemingly innocent Milutinovic said he had something he had forgotten to show them. He switched on the television and put a tape in the VCR. The players were intrigued at first, but they were quickly overwhelmed by emotion when they discovered images of their families, who'd stayed back home.

Garba Lawal, for instance, received encouragement from his brother Nasiro.

Tijani Babangida couldn't believe his eyes when he saw his sister Adama, who'd just had a baby at the Kaduna hospital.

The tape had just stopped when Daniel Amokachi, the team's natural leader, started talking. "Now we're at war! For our country and our families, we have to eat those Spaniards alive," he said.

In the 90 minutes that followed, the "Milu-Titanic" survivors, who'd been in a 5-1 wreck a week earlier against the Nigeria, in early May, he'd left Lagos for a 600-mile journey to the city of Kaduna, where Rashidi Yekini, Amokachi, Babangida, Lawal and Celestine Babayoro grew up. Since he didn't have enough time to travel around the very large country, he hired a cameraman to visit Taribo West and Uche Okechukwu's families.

"I taped an hour and a half, and I kept eight minutes," Milutinovic said. Eight minutes of prayers and encouragement that earned the trust of a group that was distrustful, even hos-

tile, better than any speech he could have made.

When Frenchman Philippe Troussier had been fired, in September, Nigeria's players openly said they wanted the return of Jo Bonfrère, who'd taken them to a gold medal at the Atlanta Olympics. But the Dutchman had made enemies at the Nigerian sports ministry and soccer federation.

Taking advantage of that situation, and of Nike's very active support, Bora Milutinovic became the team's 19th foreign coach. But his prestigious past — three World Cups with three different teams — didn't instantly earn him the trust of a team that has players with strong personalities who saw five coaches come and go in the past four years.

Milutinovic went on a tour of Europe to meet his players. During his three-day stay in Turkey, he had lunch with Amokachi.

"My twins liked him, so he has to be a good person," the most influential of the Super Eagles, who was also very close to the late head of state, Sani Abacha, muttered.

But the catastrophic preparation matches against Yugoslavia (0-3) and the Netherlands (1-5) generated distrust from the team's leaders. His choice of players, such as Stuttgart's Jonathan Akporobor's absence, and tactics, such as the defensive formation in Belgrade, baffled Amokachi, Augustin Okocha, Okechukwu and Sunday Oliseh.

The return to a formation of four defenders, one defensive midfielder, one offensive midfielder and four strikers, which was used during the Olympics, largely explains the Super Eagles' metamorphosis. But the eight minutes of tape they watched religiously before playing against Spain, those messages from the heart of Nigeria, also greatly contributed in making the most cunning coach come through.



IRRESISTABLE ILIE: Romania's mercurial Adrian Ilie (L) tries to evade a sliding tackle from England's Darren Anderton at Toulouse. — AFP photo

Spain vs Bulgaria: Make or break

LENS, France, June 23 (AFP): Having failed to live up to their pre-tournament billing as one of the favourites, Spain find themselves in the last-chance saloon as they take on Bulgaria here on Wednesday.

The "group of death" as Group D was dubbed after last December's draw in Marseille, has become just that for Spanish coach Javier Clemente, who has endured a tortuous two weeks here as his side lost to Nigeria then stumbled to a goalless draw against Paraguay.

With Nigeria's Super Eagles having already soared into the second phase, the Spanish, officially ranked second in the world behind Brazil, now face an undignified scramble to reach the last 16.

Clemente's reaction has been to adopt a low profile while he struggles to find a solution.

"I'm fed up. We're just not getting any luck, at his tournament, and we're in for a long struggle," said Clemente after the Paraguay stalemate. Former Dutch great Johan Cruyff, who led Barcelona to the 1992 European Cup during a hugely successful spell at the Catalan club, fanned the flames on Monday by accusing the Spanish camp of over-confidence.

"The trouble with Spain is in their heads. They thought they had it pretty much won before they arrived," Cruyff told Spanish television.

"They were over-confident. But they've not exactly disappointed me."

After all, Spain has never done anything at a World Cup, a somewhat harsh assessment as they did come fourth in 1950 and reached the last eight in both 1986 and 1994.

In the face of such a damning judgement, no wonder 48-year-old Clemente has battered down the hatches after the Spanish media blasted his decision to play a surplus defender against Nigeria only to concede

450 million 'hits' on WC website!

PARIS, June 23: The official World Cup website has scored with internet surfers around the globe, recording 450 million 'hits' since the tournament kicked off on June 10, cup organisers said on Monday, reports Reuters.

Some 10 million people from no less than 170 countries have visited the www.france98.com site, which carries results, news and quotes from leading players and coaches.

A peak was reached last Monday when 59 million hits — connections to the site — were registered.

three goals, then to make five change against the Paraguayans with little positive effect.

When the criticism reached a crescendo after the second game Clemente responded angrily: "I have got news for those people who are moaning that we are out of the World Cup. We are not."

He insisted: "If we keep on working as hard as we have been then lady luck will eventually shine on us. We are not giving up the ghost yet."

Clemente will resist making wholesale changes, but Hierro will likely move back and replace Abelardo at the back. And in midfield, Athletic Bilbao's Julien Guerrero is set to partner Luis Enrique and Amor, with Real Madrid star Raul given free rein as playmaker.

Alfonso and exciting Real newcomer Fernando Morientes

get the chance to form an attacking spearhead, which means Juan Antonio Pizzi and Etxebarria would start on the bench.

Bulgaria meanwhile are following the old Dutch handbook on how to divide yet still conquer at a World Cup — that is, gaining inspiration by sowing division in their own camp.

Strikers Hristo Stoichkov and Luboslav Penev face the

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Can Chilavert cope with Super Eagles?

TOULOUSE, France, June 23 (AFP): Caution will once again be the by-word for Paraguay when they tackle Group D Winners Nigeria here on Wednesday.

The South Americans have yet to score in the tournament

but they haven't conceded any goals either, and Paulo Casar Carpegiani's team go into the game knowing another shut-out will give them every chance of defying the odds and progressing to the second round — just as they did in 1986 in Mexico

when they were beaten 3-0 by England.

After two goalless draws Paraguay sit in second place in the group with two points, one more than Bulgaria and Spain, who clash in Lens on Wednesday. Both matches kick-off at 9 pm local time.

A third consecutive 0-0 draw for the South Americans against already qualified Nigeria would be enough to see them into the last 16 — but only if Bulgaria and Spain cancel each other out in their match.

On the face of it Wednesday's match pits the most exciting team in the competition against the most dour.

But with crowd-pleasing goalkeeper captain and freekick specialist Jose Luis Chilavert in their side, there is more to Paraguay than the statistics suggest.

Chilavert says the South Americans won't repeat Spain's mistake of under-estimating Nigeria.

Javier Clemente's pre-tournament group favourites lost their first match 3-2 to Bora Milutinovic's side, who had come into the final after a dismal run of friendly defeats.

"We won't make the same mistake as Spain," said Chilavert. "After all we're playing the best team in the World Cup at the moment."

Paraguay are hopeful that attacking midfielders Roberto Acuna and Miguel Benitez will have shrugged off the knocks they received in Friday's goalless draw with Spain in St. Etienne.

Carpegiani will hope his team can take advantage of the fact that the Nigerians, with a maximum six points after the wins over Spain and Bulgaria, are already looking beyond Wednesday's showdown.

"We reckon we can make it



IN LOVE WITH THE BALL: Mutiu Adepoju of Nigeria juggling with the ball in training at Ressons-sur-Matz on June 22. — AFP photo

IT'S DO-OR-DIE FOR SPAIN!

JOHN PLAYER GOLD LEAF LIGHTS

সর্ববিধ সস্তারকম : সুমান খাত্তার দ্বারা পরিচালিত