

Nesta ruled out

SENLI, France, June 24: Italy's young defender Alessandro Nesta was ruled out of the World Cup with a torn knee ligament...

Yugoslavs

From page-16
round for years ago, when they hosted the tournament. Coach Steve Sampson's tactics have been naive and the Americans must be reeling his decision to omit experienced midfielder Johan Harkes...

The American squad is a combination of players from the domestic MLS competition and of players from around the world... Defender David Regis, a Frenchman, plays in Germany and was only granted American citizenship last month...

Regis barely speaks English, while several other American players speak with accents, including South African-born midfielder Roy Wegerle and German-born defender Thomas Booley... Football is very much a secondary sport in the United States...

Both teams will train at the stadium today.

Lady luck's

From page-13
gentina in the 1990 World Cup was another debatable decision. Scotland can cite any number of hard-luck stories to explain their never having qualified for the second round in eight attempts...

Holland had the bad luck to face the hosts on both occasions. Even a first-minute penalty for Holland against Germany in 1974 ultimately did not matter much, and then Argentina were triumphant in Buenos Aires...

Flonaldo

From page-13
fourth in the world by FIFA going into the tournament. The game actually meant little for Brazil, who took the lead in the 78th minute...

After victories over Scotland and Morocco, the team already was qualified in first place in Group A. Norway, with two points going in, needed a win to qualify after Morocco jumped to four points with a 3-0 victory over Scotland in their final match...



Bebeto (R) scoring the only goal for Brazil against Norway on June 23. —AFP photo

Chile chew over champions

NANTES, France, Jun 24 (AFP): Chile proved they are more than a two-man team when they toughed out a 1-1 draw with Cameroon to advance to the second round for the World Cup for the first time in 36 years...

Salas, who needs one goal to become Chile's all-time record goalscorer, and his strike partner Zamorano are the undoubted stars of the side, but they also rely on the hard work of their less-heralded teammates...

Asian stars: From zeroes to heroes

PARIS, June 24 (AFP): Influential Japanese midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata and Mehdi Mahdavi of Iran, a total footballer in the Franz Beckenbauer mould, arrived at the World Cup as relative unknowns...

formance wiped out that stain. Nakata, whose dyed red hair symbolises his rebellious nature, has been an overnight success for Japan. He made his debut just a year ago, after an apprenticeship in the youth and Olympic sides...

gone largely unnoticed but there was no way Asian football could ignore his two goals against China in Dalian. He left three defenders in his wake before rifling a shot into the top corner of the net...

Blunders upset Sepp

PARIS, Jun 24: FIFA president Sepp Blatter has called the World Cup referees' chief to a meeting after watching Cameroon score a hat-trick of disallowed goals and Norway beat Brazil with a contested penalty on Tuesday, reports AFP...

David Will of Scotland is president of FIFA's referees' commission. Hungarian referee Laszlo Vagner refused Francois Omam-Biyick three goals against Chile any one of which would have qualified Cameroon for the second round...

Quips & Quotes

UNDATED, June 24 (Reuters): What they're saying at the World Cup. 'Just call me Flonaldo.' Tore Andre Flo, Norway's opening scorer against Brazil. 'I don't have a problem with the referees but FIFA does.' Brazil coach Mario Zagallo on Norway's controversial penalty award...

Ince 50-50

SAINT-ANDRE DES EAUX, France, June 24 (AFP): England midfielder Paul Ince has only a 50-50 chance of being fit for Friday's crunch encounter with Colombia at Lens...

A fight to the death

TOUR DU PIN, France, June 24 (AFP/Internet): Colombia coach Hernan Dario Gomez is predicting a 'fight to the death' in the final Group G game against England in Lens on Friday...

'The English are a bit like the Germans,' he said. 'They just keep battling away and never give up.' 'Our match against them will be a real fight to the death.'

Bilic to miss Argentina clash

VITTEL, France, June 24 (AFP/Internet): Croatia central defender Slaven Bilic is set to miss the Group H table-topping decider with Argentina, it was announced here on Wednesday...

Boring Belgium

From page-16
'I know there has been a lot of criticism about our strikers but you must respect them. For such an important match I have to go for experience and their commitment will be total,' said Leekens...

Leighton costs Scots dear

ST ETIENNE, France, June 24: A nightmare performance by goalkeeper Jim Leighton sent Scotland crashing to a 3-0 defeat by Morocco in their final match of France '98 here on Tuesday, reports AFP...

opening the scoring in the 14th minute when Gordon Durie got between Moroccan goalkeeper Driss Benzekri and defender Lahcen Abrami to head John Collins free-kick just wide...

Abdel Jalil Hadda to chase. The striker outpaced Hearts David Weir and as Leighton came out to narrow the angle he chipped the ball over him. The Aberdeen keeper managed to get his fingertips to it but the ball spun into the back of the net...

In the end it was academic as Norway's surprise 2-1 win over Brazil meant that neither side could have qualified. But the manner in which the Scots concluded their eighth unsuccessful attempt to get beyond the first round at a World Cup finals was nevertheless bitterly disappointing...

Morocco's superior technique and pace meant they always looked like emerging victors. Bu their task was made much easier than it should have been by Leighton's positioning errors on the Moroccan's first two goals...

A minute later, Gordon Durie burst free on the left and curled in a cross with the outside of his right foot. Kevin Gallacher got in front of the lunging Benzekri but just failed to connect for what would have been a certain goal...

The Scots were dominating territorially but with their moves frequently breaking down, Morocco always looked the more likely to score and only Colin Hendry's superb late tackle on the edge of the box prevented Bassir bursting free again...

Any hope Scotland had of staging a comeback disappeared six minutes later when Burley was shown the red cards for a wild hack at Bassir from behind. The Scots battled bravely with ten men but the inevitable gaps at the back meant a third goal was always on the cards...

A different ball game

AIX-LES-BAINS, France, June 24 (AFP/Internet): Japanese striker Masashi Nakayama has found the World Cup a very different level to the J-League, where he scored four successive hat-tricks, and believes he needs to change his style of play for Friday's final Group H match against Jamaica in Lyon...

English onus on Owen

LA BAULE, France, June 24 (AFP/Internet): Teenage striking sensation Michael Owen is poised to start for England in their crucial World Cup Group G match against Colombia in Lens on Friday...

ever happened," said Hoddle, who has previously been fiercely pro-Sheringham. "Even before we got to the tournament, I felt that Colombia played very square at the back, with a flat four, and against that sort of system it was where Michael's pace can be so useful for us..."

"It was always earmarked that he'd be nursed into the World Cup. 'If he'd played two games and hadn't scored people would've been saying he's not ready.' 'It was right that we've nursed him before we've come here. He got off the mark in Morocco and that gave him a lift.'

Owen, at 18 the youngest member of the England squad, was in fine form when he came on as a substitute in England's 2-1 loss to Romania on Monday, scoring the team's only goal and looking a vast improvement on the pedestrian Teddy Sheringham...

Hoddle, who being a former Tottenham Hotspur player has shown a sentimental keenness in selecting either current or former Spurs players instead of more obvious in-form players, stubbornly refuses to accept Owen should have been in England's so far lacklustre starting line-up from the start of the tournament...

"He's come on and scored against Romania, so now if we start him his confidence is going to be sky-high. That's a little hint of what's been in my mind about him." Sheringham, who was severely censured by Hoddle for dancing the night away in a Portuguese nightclub prior to the tournament, has sensed his place in the side is at risk after a series of below-par performances...

Beckham blurred by 'posh' spice

LA BAULE, France, June 24: England coach Glenn Hoddle said Tuesday David Beckham was not focused on the World Cup finals, reports AFP...

media to talk over his disappointment last week. But Hoddle said he had long chat with Beckham. "He certainly looks more focused now and came on a did very well for us against Romania," he added...

"It doesn't hurt me when I hear the fans chanting for Michael, but I have to put my hands up and admit I didn't play well against Romania. 'I don't know now why. I guess it was just one of those things. But I am not stupid. Michael did very well when he came on.'

Stinga blow for Romania

PARIS, June 24 (AFP/Internet): Romania midfielder Ovidiu Stinga is out of the World Cup and has returned to his Dutch club PSV Eindhoven for treatment to the knee ligaments injury he picked up in Monday's 2-1 win over England...

Stinga is out of the World Cup and has returned to his Dutch club PSV Eindhoven for treatment to the knee ligaments injury he picked up in Monday's 2-1 win over England. Romania coach Anghel Iordanescu said Wednesday he might ring the changes for Friday's match with Tunisia as he has seven players on one yellow card and several players are carrying injuries...



Yugoslav captain Dragan Stojkovic (L) trains at Saint-Galmier on June 23. —AFP photo

Credit goes to Mijatovic

PARIS, June 24: FIFA's technical committee has awarded the first goal in last Sunday's Yugoslavia-Germany match to Predrag Mijatovic, reports AFP...

Dejan Stankovic had claimed the goal but FIFA decided on Tuesday he did not get a contact when he jumped for the ball with German goalkeeper Andreas Kopke. FIFA also confirmed that Stinea Mihaljovic scored an own goal when Michael Tarant's free-kick struck him in the ball and was deflected into the Yugoslav net for Germany's first...

POINTS TABLE

Group A and B World Cup tables after Tuesday's matches: (Played Won, Drawn, Lost, Goals For, Against, Points)
GROUP A
Brazil 3 2 0 1 6 3 6
Norway 3 1 2 0 5 4 5
Morocco 3 1 1 1 5 4 4
Scotland 3 0 1 2 2 6 1
GROUP B
Italy 3 2 1 0 7 3 7
Chile 3 0 3 0 4 4 3
Austria 3 0 2 1 3 4 2
Cameroon 3 0 2 1 2 5 2
'Italy and Chile qualify for second round.