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Colourful Spanish fans at the Feliz Bollaert in Lens. — AFP photo

## Nonchalant Nigeria look ahead

TOULOUSE, France, June 25 (AFP/Internet): It will doubtless only increase the pain in Spain, but Nigeria coach Bora Milutinovic wasn't even concentrating on Wednesday's clash with Paraguay here.

In fact, he wasn't even thinking about the second round encounter with Denmark at the Stade de France in St. Denis on Sunday.

"We've got a very important match coming up in Nantes," the wily old Serb said after watching his second-string team crumble 3-1 to Paraguay.

When somebody pointed out that Nigeria's second round match was at the Stade de France, Milutinovic smiled knowingly. "I mean the match after Denmark," he said.

A quick glance at the World Cup draw showed what he was talking about. If Nigeria, who had already won Group D before Wednesday's match, beat the

Danes, they will face mighty Brazil, assuming Mario Zagallo's side see off Chile.

All of which made Wednesday's game against Paraguay an utter irrelevance for Milutinovic — never mind that the hopes of Spain and Bulgaria as well as the South Americans depended on it.

As it was, Paraguay earned the win they needed against a lacklustre Nigeria side lacking seven first-choice players, rendering Spain's 6-1 demolition of the Bulgarians — their biggest World Cup finals victory — a waste of effort.

Ironically it was Bulgaria's coach, not Spain's, who before Wednesday's games had asked FIFA to ensure Nigeria did not ease off against Paraguay.

Milutinovic, of course, has seen it all before, having coached Costa Rica, Mexico and the United States in World Cup tournaments.

For once, the Serb has at his disposal a team gifted enough to go all the way, and he will stop at nothing to preserve his players for the battles ahead.

"I'm sorry for Spain but my only concern is Nigeria and Africa," he said. "We had four players either on yellow cards or suspended and then we had two injuries," he said when asked why he had fielded such a weakened team for the Paraguay game.

Jay-Jay Okocha, Victor Ikpeba and Mutiu Adegboju were the players omitted by Milutinovic because he did not want them to risk earning a second yellow card and a suspension. Captain Uche Okechukwu was suspended for the Paraguay game, while Finidi George and Celestine Babayaro were also rested.

Daniel Amokachi did not play after Milutinovic said the ex-Everton striker hurt himself in the warm-up and Sunday Oliseh was substituted at half-time.

The result? Paraguay's Celso Ayala scored in the first minute, and

## Vogts vote of no confidence

FRANCE, June 25 (The Guardian/Internet): On the pitch Germany have struggled to create any threat. Off, it has been a different story.

Not only did their coach Berti Vogts threaten to quit on Monday but yesterday the players met without him to discuss the unimpressive win over the United States and the equally worrying 2-2 draw with Yugoslavia.

Germany go into this afternoon's crucial group game with Iran needing a draw or win to qualify, but also a performance to satisfy their critics.

Jürgen Klinsmann led the meeting, which may remind the German Football Federation (DFB) that it has a replacement leader in its ranks should Vogts jump or be pushed.

Certainly Vogts is a worried man. After an unconvincing qualifying campaign he wrote to every player telling them to get their act together. But the message obviously did not get through. After the Yugoslavia game he accused the team of forgetting they were playing in the World Cup.

When on Sunday the DFB suggested the team might pull out of the tournament after German thugs in Lens left a French policeman in a coma, Vogts threatened to quit in protest.

Cynics said he actually wanted guarantees about his position after the World Cup.

Certainly several players have disappointed Vogts, notably inexperienced ones such as Jens Jeremies and Dietmar Hamann. So the 37-year-old coach, obviously, whose career seemed over three years ago, will start against Iran. Vogts also indicated that the experienced midfielder Thomas Helmer, back from injury, would play.

The way Germany salvaged a draw against Yugoslavia after being 2-0 down suggests that they still have the ability to get a result when they need one. But Iran also hope to qualify. Now a place in history is within their grasp: a win over Germany today would prevent the three-times World Cup winners from going beyond the first round for the first time in 60 years.

## Amokachi doubtful

TOULOUSE, June 25 (Reuters): Nigerian striker Daniel Amokachi aggravated an injury to his right knee during the warm-up for the 3-1 World Cup defeat against Paraguay on Wednesday and said it was too soon to tell how long he would take to recover.

## Romanians relax

ST DENIS, Jun 25 (AFP): The temptation may be too much for Romania coach Anghel Iordanescu, whose side have already reached the World Cup second round and will top their group if they draw or beat Tunisia here Friday.

The coach and his players are already thinking ahead to which of either Argentina or Croatia they would prefer to meet in Bordeaux on June 30 for their second round game, with the majority hoping to avoid Daniel Passarella's side.

The Tunisia game presents Iordanescu with a tempting opportunity.

He can rest his stars and allow his walking wounded men to nurse their injuries, ahead of the knock out stage.

More important, Romania need to steer clear of the minefield of further suspensions. With five players already carrying one yellow card from their previous games, another booking would mean an automatic ban from the second round.

Against England, whom they beat 2-1, midfielder general George Hagi picked up a yellow card after only four minutes and Gheorghe Popescu, Liviu Ciobotariu, and Ilan Filipescu followed him into the referee's notebook.

Filipescu was already booked in the 1-0 win against Colombia and is suspended for the Tunisia game. Dorniel Munteanu and Dan Petrescu were also booked in that game.

Players with one booking benefit from an amnesty after the first round, but those with two from different games are automatically suspended.

Iordanescu has vowed to beat Tunisia, but with nothing at stake, he may be considering fielding a considerably weakened team to do the job.

"We have a few injuries and some problems with yellow cards," he said. "That complicates selection."

Midfielder Ovidiu Stinga, who came on as substitute in Romania's first two games, is out of the World Cup and has returned to his Dutch club PSV Eindhoven for treatment for a knee ligaments injury sustained against England. Sweeper Gabriel Popescu has a bruised nose and striker Adrian Ilie a bruised foot.

Tunisia hardly loom large on the horizon for Iordanescu and his side who are determined to do better than their 1994 predecessors who played brilliantly in the United States only to lose on a penalty shoot-out to Sweden in the quarter-finals.

Petrescu, who scored the winning goal against England, said: "We think we can go a long way in this competition. We are better than in 1994."

Tunisia, beaten by England and Colombia, are deeply demoralised and since Tuesday have been thrown into even deeper disarray by the abrupt dismissal of their coach.

If Romania either beat or draw with Tunisia they top Group G and play the runners-up in Group H, either Argentina or Croatia.

## Caniggia feels cheated

BUENOS AIRES, June 25: Diego Maradona's old strike partner Claudio Caniggia accused Argentine coach Daniel Passarella on Wednesday of unfairly keeping him out of the side for reasons which have nothing to do with soccer, reports Reuters.

"Any other coach would have selected me for sure, but unfortunately it's this guy Passarella and apparently for me it is impossible to play for the national team," the 31-year-old Caniggia, capped 52 times, told Argentine Radio.

"I was not called up for reasons which don't have anything to do with football," he said.

Asked to explain, he replied: "Caniggia doesn't pay any money to anyone. He doesn't have a manager."

Caniggia appeared in the 1990 and 1994 World Cups and formed a deadly strike partnership with his friend Maradona.

But the blond striker has spent more time posing in glossy magazines with his statuesque wife than on the pitch in recent years, and his form dipped before sparking back into life for Boca Juniors this season.

Argentine newspapers also published a less welcome mugshot of Caniggia taken by Miami police just before Passarella announced his squad late in May.

Caniggia was accused of switching the price tag on an expensive pair of shoes but said it was a misunderstanding.

Caniggia angrily dismissed the suggestion that Passarella had overlooked him because he tested positive for cocaine in 1993 when playing for AS Roma. He received a 13-month ban.

"Let's not mess around. It would be ridiculous for me to be left out for such an old incident," he said.

But he said the coach's famed love of discipline was aimed at cutting difficult stars from the team.

Passarella — a former hard man defender who captained Argentina's 1978 world champion team — was named by Argentine soccer authorities to instill order after the unruly Maradona was booted out of the 1994 Cup for testing positive for a prohibited stimulant.

Among his first moves was a ban on players, who like Caniggia, had long hair or earrings, as well as homosexuals.

"When he (Passarella) took over, he started going on about all that hair and earring business with those rules no one in the NBA (US basketball) could play at all," Caniggia said.

But with Gabriel Batistuta and Ariel Ortega drilling in five goals against Jamaica, Passarella's has no reason to regret his selection decisions.

## Argentina face the enfant terrible

L'ETRAT, France, June 25 (AFP): Argentina coach Daniel Passarella, who says he will step down as national coach after the World Cup, is going into Friday's final Group H match with Croatia in Bordeaux looking for a win.

A draw will ensure Argentina finish top of the group and face the winners of the England-Colombia clash in St Etienne on June 30.

But Passarella prefers to keep up the momentum of winning.

"I don't like taking the foot off the accelerator. It's best if we're all focused on winning our games. If you ease up it can be dangerous," Passarella has only one injury doubt.

Defender Roberto Sensini is carrying a thigh strain and could be rested, while Passarella may not risk stopper Jose Chamot, who is on a yellow card.

Argentina's disciplinary record here has been excellent — like England, and Colombia they have picked up only on yellow card.

Javier Zanetti of Inter Milan and Hector Pineda of Udinese both trained on Wednesday after treatment for bruised knees.

Croatia should be at full strength after their injury doubts cleared up.

Skipper Zvonimir Boban appears to have won his race against time to be fit and Croatia coach Miroslav Blazevic said Wednesday both defender Slavan Bilic had also recovered from a groin strain.

Boban missed Croatia's 1-0 victory over Japan after tearing a left calf muscle in training last week.

If Croatia beat Argentina they will play either England or Colombia in the second round instead of Romania.

But Blazevic refused to look that far ahead.

"The only thing I am concentrating on is our game against Argentina, it is going to be very difficult. They are one of the favourites," he admitted.

"They may not have been too impressive when they played Japan but against Jamaica they showed just how good they are," he added.

Passarella says he will step down even if Argentina win the trophy. Argentine football association president Julio Gronдона said Wednesday.

"We have put him under no pressures to win this Cup," Gronдона said.

Passarella has had an often stormy relationship with his FA, as well as the players, and Gronдона appeared to be in no hurry to make him change his mind.

"If he wants to go I can't stop him," he said.



Gabriel Batistuta, Argentina's goal machine, trains at L'Ettrat on June 24. — AFP photo



Taribo West (L) the Nigerian defender under pressure from Paraguayan Jose Cardozo at Toulouse on June 24. — AFP photo

## Bulls bow out

LENS, June 25 (Reuters): Spanish coach Javier Clemente paid tribute to goalkeeper Antoni Zubizarreta on Wednesday as Spain pulled off their biggest World Cup win ever and simultaneously crashed out of the tournament.

"I would like to say from the depths of my heart farewell to the best goalkeeper in the world," he said after Spain beat Bulgaria 6-1 but went out largely because of a goalkeeping error by Zubi in an earlier game.

"I think he can tell you how he feels tomorrow, not just as a goalkeeper but as a person, despite the fact that he's often been misunderstood and maltreated by the press.

"Perhaps you don't realise what you put him through."

Zubizarreta, a basque like Clemente, had announced his retirement before the World Cup started and is due to join the coach as an assistant in the national team.

On Wednesday, as in the 2-2 draw with surprise qualifiers Paraguay, the veteran barely put a foot or hand wrong as Spain ran riot against a weak Bulgaria. But his mistake against Nigeria in the opening 3-2 defeat proved deadly.

Wednesday saw defiance and defeat, Spain determined to throw everything at their opponents.

They climbed the heights and plunged to the depths of despair in the space of 90 minutes of passionate, thrilling and ultimately entirely futile football.

Spain, as so often in their past, had promised much but only given of their best when it was too late. Often criticised for lacking the mentality or toughness of true champions, they paid for their poor start.

Clemente should have been heartbroken but, if he was, he was not going to let reporters be witnesses.

He congratulated Nigeria and Paraguay, the two teams to qualify from Group D, on reaching the second round and stoutly defended his players from any hint of criticism.

Above all, Clemente kept his dignity. "Sad, but life goes on," was how he described his feelings. Then he went away and lit a cigarette.

The win, better even than the memorable 5-1 second round thrashing of Denmark with Emilio Butragueno scoring four in 1986, ended with Spain's worst World Cup showing in 20 years.

Their fate was out of their hands and when Paraguay beat

## Lessons to be learned

MARSEILLE, France, June 25 (AP Internet): Brazilians gaped to explain their stunning 2-1 loss to Norway, a word they used often was "lesson."

This will serve as a great lesson to us not to lose our concentration," coach Mario Zagallo said.

"There's no question we all learned a lesson from this," added a subdued Bebeto. So what did defeat teach the defending world champions, as they head into a Round of 16 game with Chile on Saturday?

Lesson One probably is: It isn't over until it's over.

Brazil coasted until the 83rd minute of the game Tuesday night in this Mediterranean seaport. As the crowd jeered their slow, methodical play, the Brazilians turned up the pressure just enough to score, with Bebeto heading in a cross from Denilson in the 78th minute.

It seemed more than enough. For Brazil, already qualified in first place in Group A, the game didn't change the standings. And while the Norwegians needed a win to qualify, they seemed incapable of reaction.

But Norway's lone striker, Tore Andre Flo, wasn't ready to quit. In the 83rd minute, he evened the score with a shot from the left side after a back-breaking dribble on fullback Junior Baiano. Then he was the beneficiary of a penalty called against Baiano, which Kjell Rekdal converted in the 89th.

"There was a relaxation, a let-down in concentration," said Zagallo. "We lost a game that was won."

"We forgot everything we know how to do well, which is move the ball," said team captain Dunga.

Another lesson from the Norwegians: Soccer isn't fair. Brazil was superior and probably deserved a better fate. Even if it wasn't art — much of it was downright boring — the Brazilians nevertheless controlled the tempo and tried in vain to lure the Norwegians into a more aggressive attack.

"We didn't let the Norwegians do anything," Rivaldo said the first 80 minutes.

"We were better, we created the chances, we deserved to win," added Bebeto.

"We felt infinitely superior," agreed Junior Baiano.

A third lesson: Play cool, play smart.

Brazilians let the boos get under their skin. Even after Bebeto's goal, they wanted to put on the showtime fans have come to expect. "It wasn't enough," Baiano said of the 1-0 lead. "Foolishly we wanted to humiliate our opponent, score a lot of goals, and at the end we were beaten."

"We should have just traded passes in the midfield and let the Norwegian fans boo," said Zagallo. "But one goal wasn't enough for us and we went looking for the second."

That's the same lesson Brazil got in the 1982 World Cup and apparently didn't learn.

A brilliant team led by Zico.

Socrates and Falcao wasn't satisfied with a 2-2 tie against Italy that would have qualified Brazil for the quarterfinals. In pursuit of victory, the team took a third goal on a counter-strike and was eliminated.

Brazil still isn't satisfied with the minimum. For soccer lovers, maybe that's a good thing.

For Armando Nogueira, a sports commentator of the O Estado de Sao Paulo newspaper, "Brazil suffered a relapse and became the lackluster and melancholic team it was before the World Cup."

"A Ridiculous Brazil Gives Norway Its Berth as a Gift," read the newspaper's headline.

"Brazil played very badly, without courage or determination," said commentator Jose Trajano of the sports news daily Lance.

The newspaper also sharply criticised referee Esse Baharmast with a front page headline that read "Thief — American referee conjures up a penalty and hands Norway its victory."

Lance quoted former referee Arnaldo Cesar Coelho as saying that "by inventing a penalty, he (Baharmast) defeated two teams, Brazil and Morocco."

But Folha de Sao Paulo quoted goalkeeper Taffarel as saying that Junior Bahiano pulled the shirt of the Norwegian Tore Andre Flo. "The judge was right," Taffarel said, according to the newspaper.

Brazil's defeat deprived Morocco of a berth in the tournament's second phase despite its stunning 3-0 win over Scotland.

"Sorry Morocco," read the headline in Brasilia's Correio Brasiliense newspaper.

## Burley banned

PARIS, Jun 25: FIFA's disciplinary committee suspended Scotland's Craig Burley for two matches here on Wednesday, which will mean him missing their first two European Championship qualifiers starting in September, reports AFP.

Burley, who scored in Scotland's 1-1 draw with Norway, was banned for being sent off in Tuesday's 3-0 loss to Morocco.

The Scottish player of the year, who inspired Celtic to the title, will miss the trip to Lithuania, whom they play on September 5, and the home match with Estonia on October 10.