

IT'S TIME TO ROCK N' ROLL!

JOHN PLAYER GOLD LEAF LIGHTS

Hair raising hair-dos

PARIS, June 26 (AFP): Scotland's Craig Burley let fleeting World Cup success go to his head by dyeing his locks peroxide blond but he's not alone in the tournament's hip hair-do line up.

Several players are instantly recognisable on the park because of their way-out hairstyles although none, so far, have followed the example of their patriotic fans who have had national flags imprinted on their skulls.

Burley scored Scotland's equaliser against Norway and by the time he came out for the team's next match with Morocco his brown hair had been dyed white.

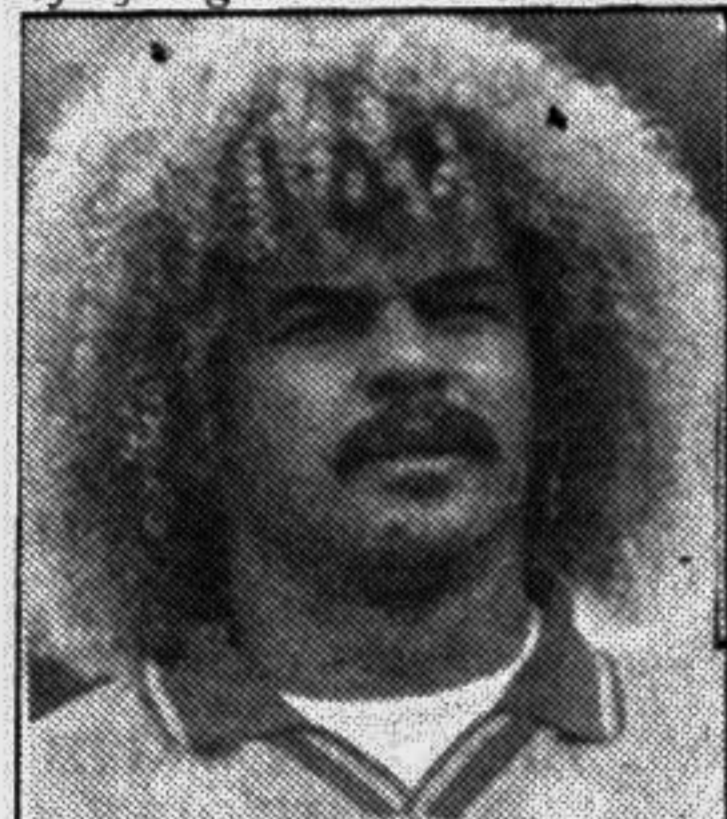
His new look perplexed commentators as he lined up in the centre of the park alongside Celtic teammate Tosh McKinlay, who also sports dyed hair.

Burley was the butt of several jokes, with Scotland fans suggesting he further disguise himself after he was sent off and the team fell to an embarrassing 3-0 defeat.

Nigeria's flamboyant defender Tarbo West is also the victim of a few wisecracks because of his flapping, green-beaded hair-green, of course, be-

ing the primary colour of the Super Eagles.

Midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata, a rebel against his own fame, has followed the trend among young Japanese to make themselves look more western by dyeing their hair red.



VALDERRAMA

Nakata is ribbed by several of his more conservative teammates because of his hairstyle but the ranks of the 'ultra nippon', who idolise the young midfielder, think he is 'way cool'.

South Korean goalkeeper Kim Byung-Ji was probably bet-

ter known for his zany hair-dos than his performances between the posts before he came to the World Cup. His hair-raising experience against Holland, when he conceded five goals, changed all that with Kim's anguished attempts to thwart Berkamp and co seen on television around the world.

But football's coiffure king is without a doubt, Carlos Valderrama of Colombia. The blond, bouffant look is as much the midfielder's trademark as his delightful control and passing ability, even though it does look like he's running about with a bird's nest atop his head.

While Burley, Nakata and Valderrama grab attention with their hair a growing army of players are wearing eye-catching boots.

Norway's Kjetil Rekdal tucked away the penalty that beat Brazil and broke Moroccan hearts with a yellow boot and Mexico's Cuauhtemoc Blanco introduced his 'bounce' trick clad in a pair of little white numbers.

But Nigeria's Ben Iroha is head and toes above the rest. He has a shaven-head and dazzling white boots.

Baggio's eyes on the prize

SENLIS, France, June 26 (AP): Penalty shootouts twice dissolved Roberto Baggio's dream of winning the world title. In his third and last World Cup, Italy's veteran star forward hopes to get the prize without going to the penalty spot.

"I have been dreaming so long about the world title, and I failed twice after coming very close to it. Now I'll try again. I hope not to suffer another bitter disillusion, because this is my last chance," Baggio said at Italy's training camp Thursday.

The 31-year-old striker, taken to France as a substitute for younger star Alessandro Del Piero, has been a key to Italy's qualification for the second round, scoring two goals and making decisive moves.

Baggio played a full match and tallied a late equaliser in the first-round opener against Chile. In the absence of Del Piero who was nursing a right thigh strain.

Baggio was rotated with his former Juventus teammate in

the next two games against Cameroon and Austria because Del Piero still was in questionable form after recovering from his injury.

"Every player wants to be in the starting 11, and I'm no exception. But I'm aware this is Del Piero's World Cup and I must be patient. Alex is expected to rival Ronaldo in France and it's fair for him to show himself," Baggio explained.

As Del Piero still seems unable to play a full match, the successful Baggio-Del Piero combination was expected to be continued in Saturday's match against Norway in Marseille.

"There is no rivalry, there are no secret pacts with Alex. Our common goal is to go as far as possible with the team. I will do my best," Baggio explained.

Baggio earned a last-minute call on the Italian team after scoring a personal record of 22 goals in the Italian league with low-ranked Bologna. He said he was playing his third World Cup

because of his stubbornness.

"I worked hard to come here, and I am working hard to win the title, at last," Baggio said.

His impressive performances in the last Serie A season earned Baggio a rich two-year contract with Inter Milan, where he will be teaming with Brazilian star Ronaldo.

One of the highest-scoring Italian strikers with 151 goals in 316 league matches, Baggio debuted on the Italian national team in 1988 and has tallied 27 goals in 49 games with the "Azzurris".

In the 1990 World Cup Baggio helped Italy to take third place, following elimination by Argentina in a penalty shootout in the semifinals.

Four years later Baggio's decisive goal vaulted Italy to the finals. But it was a miss by Baggio from the penalty spot which contributed to causing Italy's loss to Brazil in another World Cup shootout.

"I already kicked (and converted) a penalty against Chile

Simoes eyes Zagallo

LYON, France, June 26 (AFP/Internet): Ambitious Jamaica coach Rene Simoes, who has lifted the Caribbean island from nowhere to the World Cup finals in just three years, has made it clear that having coached one of the minnows he now wants the biggest job of the lot, to coach Brazil.

Simoes, who has also had offers from Brazilian, English and Spanish club sides, believes that at 45 he is well placed to take over from the 66-year-old Zagallo when the finals are over.

"The press in Brazil says I'll be the new coach for Brazil," the 44-year-old Brazilian said. "That's number-one on my list," he added.

However, Simoes said that speculation about his future had not distracted him from preparing his "Reggae Boyz" for their final match at these World Cup finals.

The Brazilian said that on a personal level it had been "very, very tough" to prepare his side for the match with fellow World Cup debutants Japan, as both seek their first points here on Friday.

It was to be his last chance to call the tune of the "Reggae Boyz" and the charismatic Simoes found it difficult to part with Jamaica after cultivating something "much, much stronger than any sports relationship".

Despite his likely departure from the coaching post Simoes looks set to retain his links with the island as he still owns two pieces of land and plans to build a house for his son in Jamaica while his second daughter has a Jamaican boyfriend.

"I think I'll not be separated from Jamaica completely," said the devout Christian who has "Jesus Saves" printed on his favourite T-shirt.

With a 20-year professional coaching career, including stints with Brazil's under-20 and under-23 sides, Simoes was hired by Jamaica's federation chief Horace Burrell as technical director in late 1994.

He has transformed the land of cricket and carnival lovers into a football force by bringing in discipline and tactical sense --- and about a dozen English-born players whose roots are in the former British colony.

But the imports have sowed some discontent among players and supporters to the very last.

The squad was devastated when they watched on television a British documentary broadcast the night before their first match in France which they lost 3-1 to Croatia on June 14.

Simoes said the film emphasised a gap between well-heeled pros, including such Premiership players as Wimbledon's Robbie Earle, who scored the goal in the Croatia match, and Derby Country's Deon Burton, and their home-grown teammates.

"It was shocking for the players. It broke the spirit of the team," he added.

Jamaica suffered an even heavier defeat in last Sunday's match with two-time champions.

Argentina, going down 5-0.

The master motivator, known as "Professor", has changed the approach of training to "let them try and enjoy it." The spirit was all but restored on the eve of the last match, Simoes said.



MEXICO AT HEART: A Mexican beauty displaying her passionate support for Mexico at Saint Etienne on June 25. — AFP photo

Vikings get second bite of Azzuri apple

MARSEILLE, June 26 (AFP): Norway get their second chance in four years to knock Italy out of the World Cup here on Saturday, when the two sides fight for a place in the quarterfinals.

Norway had a golden opportunity to send 10-man Azzurri packing in a group tie back at USA 94 in New York's Giants Stadium.

Now the side led by Chelsea ace Tore Andre Flo has a second bite at the cherry in Marseille's Stade Velodrome, with the spotlight very much on the men up front.

Much will depend on how Italy's re-shuffled defence copes with Flo, and whether Alessandro Del Piero can finally show the form which made him the most outstanding home player in the Serie A last season.

Norway performed the giant-killing act of the tournament so far by beating Brazil 2-1 on Tuesday night, after Tore scored an equaliser and then won a penalty in the closing minutes.

But the Chelsea star is taking nothing for granted when they try to repeat that feat on Saturday.

"It's going to be difficult, because Brazil were not obliged to win, while Italy certainly will be," he said. "But it won't actually be any more difficult because Brazil are the best team in the world."

"So I'm hoping to score at least one goal against Italy."

Olsen is meanwhile hoping to cancel out the most miserable moment of the 56-year-old's coaching life.

In 1994, Italy had already lost to the Republic of Ireland when they met Norway five days later. Another defeat would have sent Italy home in disgrace, and the game was only 20 minutes old when Gianluca Pagliuca made a slice of World Cup history by becoming the first goalkeeper to be sent off.

Coach Arrigo Sacchi then made it even easier for Norway with his most bizarre substitution ever, hauling off Italy's best player, Roberto Baggio, to make way for Lazio keeper Luca Marchegiani.

But Norway still couldn't score a winner. And 20 minutes from the whistle, Dino Baggio rose to head home a goal which set Italy on their long road to the final, and Norway on a long flight back to Oslo.

Olsen admitted this week: "It was the worst half an hour of my career as a football coach."

But looking ahead to Saturday, he added: "This is a second round tie and you're either in or out of the competition. I think that Italy will push forward, and we'll be waiting for them. I reckon they've got a 50 per cent chance of winning, and so have we."

Italy will be turning to Christian Vieri to increase that percentage, his four goals so far establishing the Atletico Madrid marksman as the joint top scorer at France 98.

By contrast, Del Piero knows he has to stop dithering and start delivering.

"The lack of goals isn't something that weighs on me in any excessive way," Del Piero claimed. "But obviously, it's something I do miss a bit. My job is to score and I'm not doing that yet."

"So far, this has been the World Cup of Vieri and Baggio, but I'm confident I can make my contribution soon."

Coach Cesare Maldini is ready to repeat the tactics used against Austria — first Del Piero and then Baggio at the end. But they are among the few near-certainties about Italy's starting line-up.

Dino Baggio and Luigi Di Biagio can sleep easy but the other midfield places are all up for grabs, while the fact that Norway play with a single man up front, Flo, means Italy are unlikely to play with a libero.

Giuseppe Bergomi would then be on the bench, while the loss of Alessandro Nesta would leave Fabio Cannavaro to man-mark Flo, Alessandro Costa- See page 14

Paraguayans .. who?

PARIS, June 26 (AFP/Internet): France captain Didier Deschamps said here on Friday that he and his team knew so little about Paraguay, who they meet in the second round on Sunday, that he was going to have to ask friends on the Italy team to give him inside information.

Indeed the French were so ignorant about their South American opponents that Arsenal midfielder Emmanuel Petit congratulated them on their first ever qualification for the last 16, when they in fact qualified for the second round as recently as 1986, and confused their only 'media friendly' player goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert with Colombia's former number one Rene Higuita.

Deschamps, who was rested for the 2-1 win over Denmark in Wednesday's final group match, said that it was vital that this French team did not repeat the same mistakes of previous national sides and underestimate their opposition.

"I am going to call my Juventus teammates in the Italy squad, who were in the team that beat them 3-0 in April, and ask them for information on their strengths and weaknesses," the 29-year-old said.

However, Deschamps may

not find his calls being answered as provided Italy beat Norway on Saturday they will face the winners of the France-Paraguay match and there is no doubt which side they would prefer to face.

"We breathed a sigh of relief when we heard that Paraguay had beaten Nigeria to qualify second in the group instead of Spain, but Italy will be feeling the same way as well, hoping that we slip up against them," Deschamps said.

A mixture of ignorance, optimism and confusion reigns in the host's camp as France, who haven't met the South Americans since Just Fontaine's four goals helped them to a 7-3 win in the 1958 World Cup, seek to avoid any unnecessary blunders as they come in sight of their first ever World Cup title.

"Paraguay will be a lot easier than Spain, that's for sure," said AS Roma defender Vincent Candela, who conceded the penalty that briefly pulled Denmark level.

However, Auxerre wing Bernard Diomede, who has started the last two matches, struck a more humble note, one more in tune with the feelings of coach Aime Jacquet.

"They're in the second round because they deserve to be," Diomede said.

Big mouthed Chilavert

TOULOUSE, France, June 26: Paraguay goalkeeper colossus Jose Luis Chilavert is promising to bring France to their knees in Sunday's second round showdown in Lens, reports AFP.

"Beating France in the second round is no problem," roared the free-kick taking 32-year-old captain. "They might be the host country but in this World Cup we can beat anybody, even the French."

"We've brought many teams to their knees... why not France we've got the best defence in the world."

They certainly didn't have 40 years ago at the World Cup in Sweden — the only previous time the two sides have met. France crushed Paraguay 7-3 and Just Fontaine pilfered a hat-trick on his way to setting the all-time record of 13 goals in a single tournament.

Of course, in 1958, Paraguay didn't have Chilavert, an inspirational figure who quite literally grabs his players by the scruff of the neck and shakes results out of them. Wednesday's 3-1 victory over

an admittedly second string Nigeria side provided a perfect illustration of the effect Chilavert has on his team.

After Celso Ayala had given them a shock first minute lead, Nigeria hit back with venom. Wilson Oruma equalised and suddenly Chilavert was under siege, plunging this way and that to prevent the Africans taking the lead as Paraguay's defence crumbled.

After 31 minutes the temperamental Velez Sarsfield stopper had enough. When another Nigerian attack broke down, Chilavert ran 30 yards out of his goal to scream at a teammate "he thought was slacking, grabbing him by the shirt and shoving him back into his position."

"At half-time I encouraged my fellow players — I told them I was very proud to have a team like ours, but that now we had to win," Chilavert said.

"We are confident even if we do suffer a lot at times but when we want something we always achieve our goal."

The Mighty Marcel

LENS, France, June 26: Methodical maestro Marcel Desailly is that well-oiled invisible cog hidden in an accomplished machine that has produced nine goals and a 100 per cent record for France in the World Cup so far, reports AFP.

At the peak of his career, Desailly is a comfortable person. Everything he does whether on or off the pitch is graceful, relaxed, contemplative and methodical.

But the gentle exterior hides a backbone of steel, a generous disposition is the last thing on display when Desailly takes the field.

He is one of the best defensive players in the world and a crucial element in France's drive for their first ever World Cup triumph.

Desailly once more is expected to take the stage when France play in Sunday's second round battle against Paraguay at Lens.

For six years with Marseille, Milan and France, Desailly has been one of the world's outstanding central defenders or sometimes defensive mid-

fielder, a role he played when scoring the last goal of AC Milan's 4-0 thrashing of Barcelona in the 1994 European Cup final.

Two days before the World Cup opener between Brazil and Scotland, Desailly, with the film star looks of a Carl Lewis or a young Muhammad Ali, signed a four-year contract with Chelsea.

One of only two players to win consecutive European Cups with different clubs, Desailly is professionalism personified. He won the cup with Marseille in 1993 and Milan the following season.

Paolo Sousa of Portugal managed the same feat in 1996 and 1997 when playing for Juventus then Dortmund.

He rarely says or does the wrong thing. When he signed for Chelsea hit the right note for the London club's fans.

"I'm looking forward to playing in England where the fans are so passionate and adore their football," said Desailly with diplomacy shortly after his 4.5 million pound (seven million dollar) signing.



GERMAN PASSION: A German couple gets intimate at Stade de la Mosson before the start of the game against Bulgaria. — AFP photo

Germans do the job

MONTPELLIER, France, June 26 (AP): Unspectacular, but effective.

Germany's vaunted pair of forwards, Oliver Bierhoff and Juergen Klinsmann, scored on a pair of headers early in the second half, using their supremacy in the air to power Germany into the second round of the World Cup.

The 2-0 victory over Iran on Thursday lifted the Germans to the top of Group F and a second-round meeting Monday with second-place Group E finishers Mexico, also in Montpellier.

Germany thus avoided having to play powerhouse rivals the Netherlands, who won Group E. The Dutch will meet Yugoslavia, who finished second to Germany on goal difference after beating the United States 1-0 in Nantes. Both teams finished with seven points.

"We wanted to be first and we achieved our objective," Germans coach Bert Vogts said. "We can't choose our opponents and Mexico have shined in this

World Cup. There are no easy teams in the second round."

The two precision goals highlighted a workmanlike performance for the European champions, who are seeking their fourth World Cup title.

"We can't be happy with our first half, but we managed to open up the game in the second," Vogts said.

Iran, who scored their first-ever World Cup victory over the United States on Sunday, were eliminated, along with the Americans.

"We played against a very experienced team, which is more physical and better technically than us. But this World Cup was a great experience for us and I hope it did a lot for the future of soccer in our country," said Iranian coach Jalal Talebi.

The game pitted Germany's methodical precision against Iran's swift counterattacks. Iran came out with a defensive strategy, choking the German offence and countering whenever possible. See page 14



THE BOMBER IN HIS ELEMENTS: German skipper Juergen Klinsmann (2nd from R) falls to the ground after his diving header had entered the Iranian goal on June 25. — AFP photo