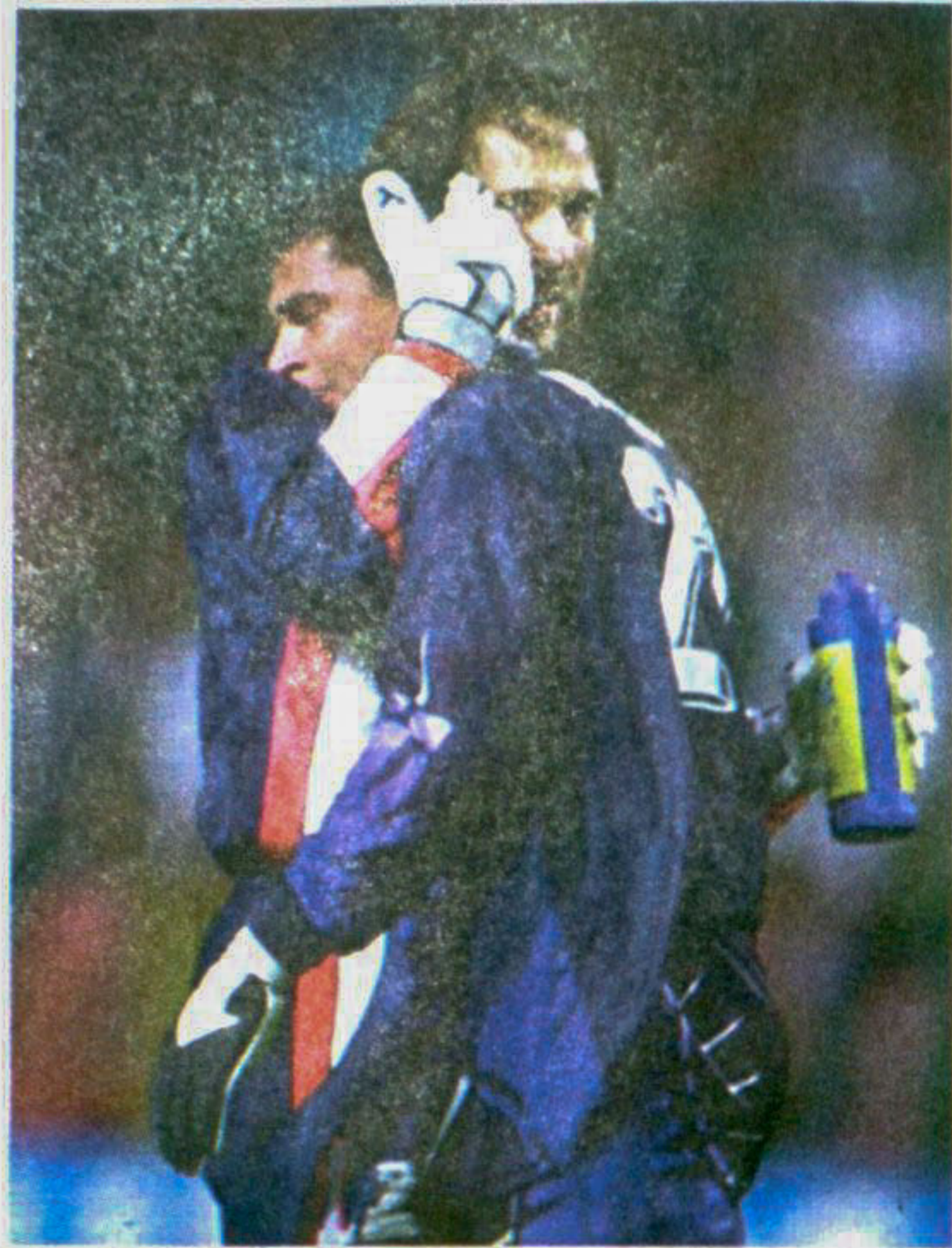




The Daily Star

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WORLD CUP '98 SPECIAL



Farid Mondrago (R), the Colombian goalkeeper, being consoled by his opposite number David Seaman of England at Lens.

ENGLAND BREAK OUT OF JAIL

LENS, France, Jun 27 (AP): Was that really England out there?

Darren Anderton powered an angled shot that almost took the roof off the net. And David Beckham bent a 30-metre free kick round the Colombian wall and inside the left hand post.

No, it wasn't Ronaldo or Alessandro Del Piero.

Anderton and Beckham were members of a team once ridiculed for its lack of flair and finesse. Now they're in second round of the World Cup and in the mood to stop Argentina making it to the last eight.

Although England needed only a draw to guarantee a place in the final 16, watched from the stands by royal fans Prince Charles and Prince Harry, Anderton and Beckham delighted a huge following of English fans at the Felix Bollaert stadium with first half spectaculars for a one-sided 2-0 victory.

The result meant that England finished second behind Romania in the Group G standings and will meet old foes Argentina in Saint-Etienne for a place in the quarterfinal.

The Colombians go home early for the second time in a row. Their disastrous 1994 performance led to the shooting to death of Andres Escobar, who scored an own goal in a loss to the United States, and was gunned down in his home town of Medellin.

If it hadn't been for acrobatic goalkeeper Farid Mondragon, the Colombians would have lost by an embarrassing scoreline. After making at least seven second half saves, Mondragon left the field in tears, consoled by his colleagues and England goalkeeper David Seaman.

"If we had taken our chances we would have won by four or five," coach Glenn Hoddle said. "It was a great performance from them. There were positive in the dressing room so I did not really expect any other result. All our players got 8-plus out of 10 tonight. We passed the ball extremely well and we defended the goal well."

Anderton, out of action for much of the last two seasons through injury, was happy to have made up for lost time.

"It may not have been one of my best goals but it was the

sweetest," the Tottenham player said. "It was a great result for all of us tonight but I always thought we would do well. This was a massive game."

Beckham, in his 15th appearance, was happy to hit the target for the first time.

"It was a great feeling, just nice to score my first goal for England," the Manchester United player said. "I knew it was my distance. As soon I got it just stepped up. I knew it was on target, I knew it was in."

"I just needed the chance to show what I could do," said Beckham who was surprisingly left out against Tunisia.

"England were the better team tonight, especially in terms of their attack," said Colombian coach Hernan Gomez. "Colombia didn't have much firepower tonight, even when we changed the tactics. We weren't able to open up spaces and England were also very effective in shutting down our play."

England put together a slick four-man move which ended with a tame side-footed shot from Graeme Le Saux in the 19th minute before taking the lead with a far more impressive finish.

The Colombian defence struggled to clear a right wing cross and the ball dropped to the unmarked Anderton, just inside the right side of the penalty box.

The Tottenham winger hammered the ball into the roof of the net from an acute angle with Mondragon powerless.

The second goal came in the 29th minute in equally spectacular style.

Paul Ince was brought down 30 metres from goal and Beckham produced one of his speciality free-kicks, curling the ball round the wall past the despairing dive of keeper Mondragon and inside the left hand post.

The keeper made four good saves in the first eight minutes of the second half. He arched his back to palm over a shot from Scholes, keep out a header and shot from Alan Shearer and then block another close-range effort from Michael Owen after defender Sol Campbell had run through the defence on a 30-metre run.



CHASED BY ALIENS! Mehdi Ben Sulmane of Tunisia runs away from three Romanian defenders at Saint Denis.

'Hand of God' haunts Hoddle

LENS, Jun 27 (Reuters): England's 2-0 win over Colombia on Friday has given them the chance to avenge their "hand of God" defeat to Argentina in the 1986 World Cup, one of the most painful defeats in their soccer history.

England coach Glenn Hoddle was especially looking forward to facing Argentina in the second round in St Etienne next Tuesday as he played in that World Cup quarter-final in Mexico City when Diego Maradona scored both goals in Argentina's 2-1 win.

The first was the infamous "hand of God" goal in which Maradona punched the ball home over the head of England goalkeeper Peter Shilton.

The second was one of the best goals ever scored in the tournament's history — a move that started when Maradona jinked past Hoddle in the centre-circle and ended with him rounding Shilton to score with a trial of England defenders in his wake.

"I played in that game. I remember it all very well," said Hoddle, moments after his much improved team had clinched their place in the second round.

Romania survive a scare

PARIS, June 27: Romania roused themselves from their slumbers to secure a 1-1 draw with Tunisia on Friday which clinched top spot in their group and set up a World Cup second round tie with Croatia, reports Reuters.

Striker Viorel Moldovan volleyed an equaliser in the 72nd minute, just five minutes after coming off the bench. The point gave Romania first place in Group G ahead of England and meant the Romanians avoid highly rated Argentina in the second round.

The Romanian players had dyed their hair bright yellow, one of the colours of the national flag, to celebrate their place in the second round already earned with two victories in their first two games.

Coach Anghel Iordanescu had apparently marked the achievement by shaving his head but he kept a baseball cap on all evening.

Romania made five changes to the team which started their impressive 2-1 win over England, missing suspended defender Iulian Filipescu and resting a number of other key players including strikers Adrian Ilie and Moldovan.

But any hopes of a summer stroll were swiftly ended as Tunisia, already eliminated after defeats at the hands of England and Colombia, took an early lead and dominated in the first half.

"We were very poor in the first half and our while game was disorganised. In the second half we played much more like our normal game," a relieved Iordanescu said.

"It clear that the lack of organisation was my fault as I'd changed five players," he added. Iordanescu said he had wanted to rest some of his squad and prevent others from picking up yellow cards which could have cost them suspensions.

As it is, Romania will not have any players suspended for Tuesday's game in Bordeaux.

"Playing against Croatia suits us much better because their game is much more like ours," he said.

Backed by noisy support in a packed Stade de France, Tunisia scored their first goal of the tournament after 10 minutes.

Romanian defender Charistian Dulca wrestled striker Adel See page 14

Appeal for calm in Colombia

BOGOTA, June 27: The brother of the defender murdered after scoring an own-goal in Colombia's World Cup nightmare of 1994 appealed for calm on Friday after Colombia again failed to advance to the tournament's second round, reports Reuters.

Santiago Escobar Saldarraga, brother of Andres Escobar who scored an own-goal against the United States in 1994 and paid for it with his life, admitted Colombians were likely to be angered by the side's dismal performance in a 2-0 loss to England.

But he called for respect and sympathy for the country's defeated team.

"Above and beyond being soccer players, these guys are human beings and they tried to represent our country with dignity," Escobar told local radio.

"Unfortunately, good results eluded the team this time around. But it's only a game in which you can lose, win or draw," he said.

Friday's loss was especially painful because it meant Colombia was the only one of

six Latin American teams in France that failed to advance past the first round.

"Some words of thanks should be going out to this squad and to the coaches," said Escobar, a former professional soccer player himself. "And we should start thinking about what the future may hold in store."

Andreas Escobar was shot dead shortly after returning home from the 1994 World Cup in which he put the ball in his own side's net, contributing to a 2-1 loss to hosts United States and Colombia's first-round exit from the tournament.

The gunmen who killed the 22-year-old Escobar outside a Medellin discotheque was widely reported to have told him "congratulations on the own goal," moments before pumping six bullets into his chest.

Several prominent members of Colombia's 1998 World Cup squad, including coach Hernan Dario Gomez, were reported to have received anonymous death threats before leaving for France.

REMAINING SECOND ROUND FIXTURES

- June 28: France vs Paraguay, Lens 8:30 pm (BST)
- June 28: Nigeria vs Denmark, Saint-Denis 1:00 am (BST)
- June 29: Germany vs Mexico, Montpellier 8:30 pm (BST)
- June 29: Holland vs Yugoslavia, Toulouse 1:00 am (BST)
- June 30: Romania vs Croatia, Bordeaux 8:30 pm (BST)
- June 30: Argentina vs England, St Etienne 1:00 am (BST)

(* All matches live on BTV)

Second round: Sense of security for seeds

PARIS, June 27 (AP): The World Cup quarterfinals beckon and the fancied teams are all avoiding each other.

Brazil and Italy both won their groups to make sure there won't be a repeat of the 1994 final in the second round. Now they won't meet again unless they both make it the final once more.

If the Brazilians beat South American rivals Chile at the Parc des Princes in round two on Saturday they will face the winners of Sunday's game at Saint-Denis between Olympic champions Nigeria, the only one of five African nations to make it to the last 16, and 1992 European titlists, Denmark.

A Brazil-Nigeria quarterfinal would bring together two teams with hugely talented attacks but suspect defences. Brazil have quality players like Ronaldo, Bebeto, Denilson up front with Leonardo, Rivaldo, Cafu and Roberto Carlos attacking from deep. The Nigerians, who downed a very strong Brazilian team in the Olympic semifinal two years ago, have Nwankwo Kanu, Victor Ikpeba, Augustine "Jay Jay" Okocha, Daniel Amokachi, Tijana Babangida and Rasheed Yekini among their attacking lineup.

Provided the Italians down

Norway at Marseille Saturday, Cesare Maldini's improving team goes to Saint-Denis in the quarterfinal to meet either host France or Paraguay, who meet Sunday at Lens.

An Italy-France quarterfinal looks most likely from those matchups and that would mean the freescoring French welcoming back star forward Zinedine Zidane from a two-match suspension against some of his Juventus colleagues, including fit-again Alessandro Del Piero.

In the other half of the second round draw, Germany topped Group F to meet Mexico for a place in the last eight and second place Yugoslavia must face the Netherlands in a matchup of two teams who have a lot of talent but lack consistency.

Banned from the last World Cup as well as two European Championships because of the nation's involvement in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, the Yugoslavs made the quarterfinals on their last appearance in 1990 before going out to the eventual losing finalist Argentina in a penalty shootout after a 0-0 tie.

Germany, three-time winners and European champions who still have many of the players who won the title eight years ago, should have too

much experience for the Mexicans, who only made the last 16 Thursday thanks to a goal in the final seconds of injury time in a 2-2 tie with the Dutch.

The last two second round matchups were finalised Friday.

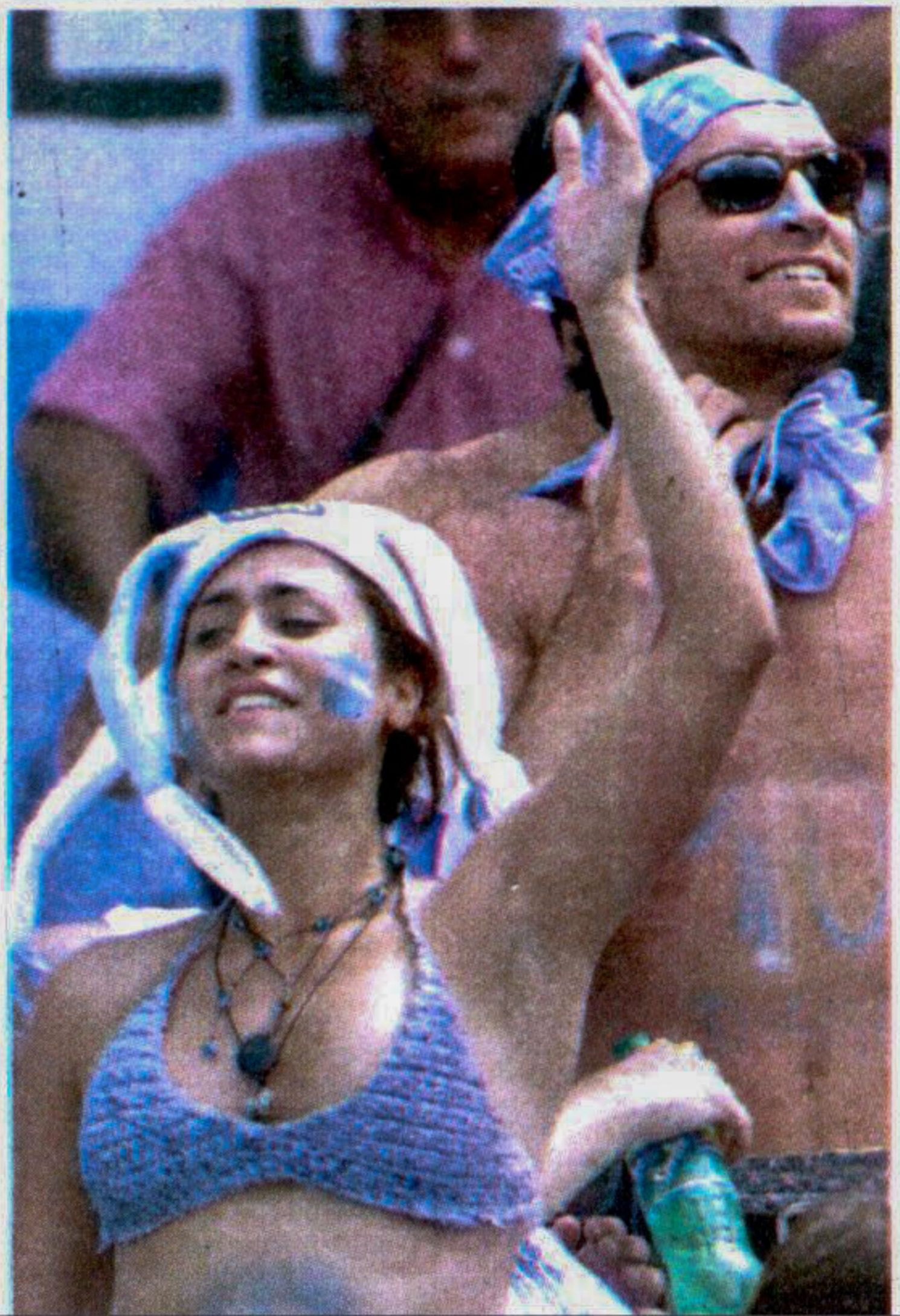
Argentina edged Croatia 1-0 in Bordeaux to finish top of Group H and will meet the runners up in Group G while the Croatians will face the Group G winners which was decided later Friday.

Romania have already made it to the second round but didn't know whether they would go into the last 16 as Group G winners.

The Romanians, with a three-point advantage, looked favourites to finish top and faced already eliminated Tunisia at Saint-Denis Friday while England and Colombia, both with three points, met at Lens to fight over the other second round place.

Romania drew 1-1 while England won 2-0. Argentina would now meet England in round two, thus avoiding Germany in the quarterfinal, but facing the winners of Netherlands-Yugoslavia.

Romania would meet debutants Croatia to set up a likely quarterfinal against the Germans.



A TOUCH OF ARGENTINA: Argentine fans having a merry time at Bordeaux on June 26.

Latinos lose machismo

PARIS, June 27 (AFP/Internet): The World Cup is a kinder, gentler competition this time round.

And Thierry Henry, France's 20-year-old sensation, thanks a decline in "nasty" Latin American machismo.

Thierry and all natural-born goalscorers ply their trade in a narrow band of hostile territory in front of an opponent's goal.

Defenders do their best, legally or illegally, to cut them down.

The fast, fleet-footed striker who has scored three World Cup goals for France believes that a blizzard of red and yellow cards handed out during the first round of the competition has drawn the teeth of even the most robust Latin American defences.

"The South Americans have a fairly nasty temperament," asserted Henry, who is expected to lead the French attack against Paraguay in Lens on Sunday.

"They are hard, and aren't reluctant when it comes to dishing out the hits," he said.

"But because of the red and yellow cards that are coming out, they seem to have left their Latin American machismo behind for this World Cup."

Paraguay are renowned for their determined and effective

defence. But Henry, one of the stars of Monaco's run to the European Cup semi-finals, has detected none of the aggression he associates with sides from Latin America.

He is right. Latin American sides are no longer on FIFA's black list for foul play.

Indeed, after the first round, Paraguay are top of FIFA's fair play list along with England and Iran. That table is based on the number of yellow cards handed out to teams and Paraguay has had three.

If the list were compiled on the basis of fouls committed by teams during the first three games of the tournament, Paraguay would outrank England and Iran for good behaviour and would certainly be considered a fairer side than France, who committed 56 fouls, to Paraguay's 45.

Argentina, once a side identified with machismo, were the victim of more fouls against them than any other side, a total of 74. Only 54 fouls were attributed to them.

None of the Latin American sides figure in the top bracket for fouls, though the rosy picture is marred by the 11 yellow cards handed out to Chile, more

than any other side in the 32-team first round.

Mexico's two sendings off were another blemish on the Latin American record, but six of the 11 other sides who had players sent off were European, including France.

Paraguay had for a long time been known as a dirty team, the poor relations of the Brazilian flair, relying on wumping tackles, kick and rush and a 10 man defence.

Paraguay's Brazilian coach Paulo Cesar Carpegiani reinvented Paraguayan football as a game of one-touch midfield control, backed by a solid defence rather than dependent on it.

The results came fast -- Paraguay qualified second to Argentina in the Latin American zone and reached the World Cup second round for only the second time on history. They have never gone further and were beaten by England in their only previous second round appearance in 1986.

Said Henry: "They no longer try to kick other teams off the park.

"Now they try to suck you in to their midfield and outflank you. They have to be outplayed by speed."

FRANCE GUNNING FOR GLORY!

JOHN PLAYER GOLD LEAF LIGHTS