

Hand of God

From page-13

him with a gashed shin and searing pain in his already fragile ankle.

"I was incensed by it. We've been talking for three months about tackling from behind, he does it right in front of the referee and doesn't get sent off."

Hamilton Richard, who plays in England with Middlesbrough and came on as a second half substitute was full of praise for England afterwards.

"I know they were criticised for losing to Romania, but they showed tonight they are a very good team, while we did not play so well," he said.

"I have heard that (Argentinians) Gabriel Batistuta and Ariel Ortega might also be moving to England after the World Cup so they will get quite an education on Tuesday. It is going to be a classic."

Romania survive

From page-13

Sellimi to the ground and Skander Souayah converted the resulting penalty.

Tunisia this week sacked coach Henry Kasperczak and placed Ali Selmi in temporary charge. He was delighted with their first half performance as they speedily counter attacks constantly carved open the Romanian defence.

Selmi said: "The first half was the best half we have played in the competition. In the second half the Romanians were stronger and much better organised and they deserved a draw."

Jordanescu was forced to bring experienced sweeper Gheorghiu Popescu off the bench after just half an hour in a bid to bolster his struggling defence. Popescu had been left out as he was one of the players on one yellow card.

David vs Goliath

From page 16

However, soccer romantics will pull for Paraguay in this David vs Goliath matchup.

Qualification itself set off celebrations in one of the poorest South American nations, and any additional advancement in the World Cup would be considered a miracle.

After being held scoreless in the first two games, Paraguay exploded with three goals in its decisive match against Nigeria. They scored the quickest goal of the Cup within the first minute and, with wide-open play, added two more.

"Finally, the goals came," said midfielder Miguel Angel Benitez.

They will need to come again.

The last time the two teams met was at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden when France prevailed 7-3. France went on to take third place.

A glitch

From page-16

against Mexico in 1986 are still in the team — Lothar Matthaeus and Olaf Thon.

And it is precisely these two who are in the centre of a storm, brewing in the German ranks.

Thon came into the World Cup as No 1 libero, with Matthaeus as his understudy.

But Matthaeus, the 37-year-old veteran in his fifth World Cup, wasn't going to be happy on the bench forever. Against Iran, both were starters. Thon as libero, Matthaeus in midfield.

At halftime, Thon was left in the dressing room, Matthaeus moved into libero and Dietmar Hamann came into midfield. That helped Germany score two quick goals and secure the victory.

"I wasn't very pleased, I was angry," Thon said of his substitution. "I was surprised and disappointed and I didn't understand the substitution."

Matthaeus, who scored one goal in the penalty shootout against Mexico in 1986, looks set to remain as libero and is quickly assuming the role of leader on the field, something Germany appeared to be lacking in early games.

"Olaf was upset and I can understand him," Matthaeus said. "But he has to have respect for other players. He must also understand how I feel." Midfielder Thomas Haessler missed Friday's practice because of a sore Achilles tendon. But he is expected to be fit for Mexico.

After training Friday morning, the Germans were given off until Saturday 10 am.



BEGINNING FOR ONE, END FOR THE OTHER: Colombia's veteran playmaker Carlos Valderrama (L) exchanges shirts with England's upcoming star David Beckham after their Group F encounter at the Felix Bollaert Stadium on June 26. — AFP photo

Clammer and clatter as managers take a tumble

LONDON, June 27 (The Guardian/Internet): During a particularly dull Euro 96 encounter between France and the Czech Republic, Big Ron voiced the opinion that "what this needs to get it going is two of the big lads to really clatter into one another."

Over the next fortnight the big lads are going to be colliding with increasing regularity, but there has already been plenty of clattering in France. Mostly it has been the sound of tumbling managers.

Coaching a team during a major tournament is a tricky balancing act, especially if you are teetering from the moment you arrive. Whereas some bosses are so confident of their position as to be able to flaunt it — how else to explain Mario Zagallo's penchant for that baggy polyester jacket (the world's first shell-kaftan) or Egil Olsen's Larry Grayson-style specs on a string — others are not so lucky.

Cha Bum-Kun had looked wobbly from day one. Possibly he was feeling the pressure of working for a national federation whose catchy slogan reads: "There is no wall so strong that South Korea cannot break through it." Immediately after his side's 3-1 defeat by Mexico, the South Korea coach addressed the media through a FIFA interpreter. Commenting on Ha Seok-Ju's sending-off, Cha apparently said: "We took the lead but moments later the match official has awarded us a mega-penalty." He lasted another eight days.

Carlos Alberto Parreira of Saudi Arabia looked about as

happy as a Brazilian managing a team whose star player was suspended for 18 months after taking part in an alleged drinks party. Could be expected to. Like Cha Bum-Kun, Parreira got the boot after only two matches. His successor Mohamed al-Kharashi's opening statement, "We are ready and we are going to do our best. God help us," perhaps sounded more confident in the original Arabic.

Attempts to inject pragmatism are never popular among fans, whose belief in their team is based on faith rather than realism.

Troussier made a promising start, washing his hands in the blood of a freshly slaughtered goat. In South Africa this is thought to bring good luck (except for goats, obviously). From then on, things have gone downhill. Troussier has been likened by the press to a bulldozer, but his opening gambit of the tournament — accepting the post of Sheffield Wednesday manager apparently before it was even offered to him — hardly seemed likely to instil discipline in his squad.

It got worse. South Africa were hammered by France and then had their match with Denmark ruined by a Colombian referee who appeared to be

using the occasion to make a desperate cry for help. A few days later Troussier expelled Brendan Augustine and Naughty Mokoena from the squad for returning to camp at 6am. In the middle of the turmoil he found time to say that he would not return to work in France directly after quitting South Africa because, "like a diver, you have to respect the different decompression stages." Mmm.

Other managers clearly shipping water during the group stage included Hristo Bonev, the ageing Teddy boy from Bulgaria whose decision to substitute Stoichkov at half-time in his team's crucial clash with Spain was either incredibly brave leadership or a suicide attempt.

Herbert "Curly" Prohaska's lucky yellow tie brought even less good fortune for Austria than Toni Polster's Rudi Voller hairstyle, and Colombia's chubby-cheeked Hernan Dario Gomez had the foolish idea that being national team boss allowed him to lose his temper with Tino Asprilla.

Happily, despite the pressure, one manager has found time to provide us the funniest moment of the competition so far.

Yugoslavia's Slobodan Santra's celebration after Stojkovic's goal against Germany was a five-yard sprint which culminated in him grimacing and clutching his right hamstring. The laughter rolled around the hangar-like press centre in Lyon for five minutes afterwards, uniting journalists of more than 30 nations in the common bond of mockery.

Criticism did the trick

PARIS, June 27 (AFP/Internet): England coach Glenn Hoddle might be basking in the glory of England's qualification for the second round of the World Cup after Friday's 2-0 win over Colombia, but to many it was a case of him succumbing to public pressure that got them through.

The scrappy way in which England qualified for the second round from a relatively easy group will have reawakened memories of 1986 and how Bobby Robson had finally selected the right team only after pressure, injury and suspension made him do so.

In a further eerie reminder of that tournament, England went on to face Argentina in the knockout stages, though this time it is in the second round and not the quarter-finals where Maradona's mixture of the 'Hand of God' and sublime skill intervened to eliminate them.

Robson, who went on to guide England to the 1990 semi-finals, must have had a wry smile on his face when Manchester United midfielder David Beckham's superb goal gave

brought to bear on the former Spurs and Monaco midfielder's selection policy.

To add to the impression that Hoddle was running after the ball rather than in control of it he also sent on Owen's Liverpool teammate Steve MacManaman in the Colombia game, again after receiving a blast from the press for not playing one of the more creative forces in the squad.

The difference in England's performance from the two previous ones was astonishing and though it is a credit to Hoddle for finally putting out the best team that he has at his disposal it was more a case of him being in charge but not in control.

Outbursts by Manchester United coach Alex Ferguson and Liverpool supremo Roy Evans evidently had an effect, no matter how forceful the denials, but the public outcry over the omissions of Owen, Beckham and to a lesser extent MacManaman also must have influenced the England camp.

All this mirrors to an uncanny extent England's first World Cup finals under Bobby Robson in 1986.

England looked to have an easy group, just as they did here, with Morocco, Poland and Portugal hardly world powers, but England contrived as ever to disappoint with an opening loss to the Portuguese and a fortunate scoreless draw with the Moroccans.

Robson, who had got the job by making minnows Ipswich one of the top clubs in England, had been heavily criticised for not selecting Peter Beardsley to start alongside Gary Lineker, and there were also calls for the Everton duo of Trevor Steven and veteran Peter Reid to come into the side.

Robson had refused to countenance this but events forced his hand as Ray Wilkins was suspended for being sent off against Morocco and captain Bryan Robson was forced out of the tournament with a shoulder injury.

The rest is history as Steven, Everton teammate Gary Stevens and Beardsley set up Lineker for his hat-trick, which earned them qualification and turned the team from a pedestrian side into an attractive unified unit.

Hoddle says he has learnt a lot from the mistakes of his predecessors but if this campaign is anything to go by he has repeated those errors.

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Cameroon the card champs

PARIS, June 27 (Reuters): Collated list of red and yellow cards by country after the end of the 48 group games on Friday:

Country	Red	Yellow
Cameroon	3	6
Denmark	2	8
Mexico	2	7
France	1	7
South Africa	1	7
South Korea	1	7
Bulgaria	1	6
Belgium	1	4
Jamaica	1	4
Saudi Arabia	1	4
Scotland	1	4
Netherlands	1	2
Chile	0	11
Croatia	0	8
Japan	0	7
Nigeria	0	7
Romania	0	7
Spain	0	7
Tunisia	0	7
Germany	0	6
Austria	0	5
Colombia	0	5
Italy	0	5
Argentina	0	4
Brazil	0	4
Morocco	0	4
Norway	0	4
United States	0	4
Yugoslavia	0	4
England	0	3
Iran	0	3
Paraguay	0	3

Europe on top again

PARIS, June 27 (AFP/Internet): Europe has 10 of the 16 second round teams — as they have had in the last three World Cups.

There were 15 European finalists when the tournament started and Spain, quarter-finalists in 1994, are the only seeded country to fall by the wayside.

Norway, Italy, France, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Yugoslavia, Romania, England and Croatia are through to the last 16.

Five out of six South American sides, compared with only two four years ago, advanced.

Latin American representative Mexico made it into the second round for the second tournament running.

Only Nigeria, of the five African finalists, qualified.

None of the four Asian countries, compared with one of two in 1994, survived the first 48 matches which produced an average of 2.62 goals a game.

FIFA out of Africa

PARIS, June 27 (AFP/Internet): FIFA president Sepp Blatter implied Saturday that Africa would have to wait beyond 2006 before staging the continent's first World Cup.

Once again, this year's World Cup has seen a first round cull of African sides with just Nigeria reaching the second phase from a total African entry of five teams.

But it is primarily the logistical drawbacks which concern Blatter, although he said in principle the logical approach would be to go to Africa, following the co-hosting by South Korea and Japan of the 2002 event.

But Blatter, while backing the rotation idea, suggested Africa was not quite ready to see off European bids from Germany and England.

"If the basic conditions are fulfilled then at that point I would say we should have a clear look (at Africa). But anyway this is a decision for the executive committee — not a presidential decision."

Blatter said, appearing to distance himself from the issue for the time being.

South Africa is putting together a bid and North African countries such as Tunisia and Morocco also have designs on staging the World Cup, as has Nigeria. But on issues of infrastructure and organisation FIFA believes they would fall far short compared with rival bids from Europe.

Asia watch

PARIS, June 27 (Internet): World Cup games involving Asian teams were put under a special "match-rigging watch", a source told AFP here Saturday.

Illegal gambling on football matches is a huge underground industry in Asia and several players have been jailed and banned from football for accepting bribes to throw games.

Members of gambling syndicates have stayed in the same hotels as players during major Asian tournaments, causing concern for football authorities in the region.

"FIFA were alerted to the possibility of (gambling syndicates) turning up in France," said the source. "Very discreetly the teams and security people were asked to keep a look out. Nothing untoward has been reported."

Hong Kong's anti-corruption force shocked Asian football officials during the World Cup when they exposed an international match-fixing scandal.

Six Hong Kong players are under investigation for fixing First Division matches and a World Cup qualifier between Hong Kong and Thailand which the Thais won 2-0.

International Chan Tsz-kong faced a holding charge of conspiring to win for himself and others 200,000 Hong Kong dollars (26,000 US dollars) from a bookmaker by dishonestly causing the Hong Kong football team to lose two goals in a World Cup Asian qualifying round.

Peter Velappan, the general secretary of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) who has been at the forefront in the fight against match-fixing, called for life bans on players found guilty of rigging games.

Asia and Africa are losers, says Vogts

NICE, France, June 27 (AP): German coach Bert Vogts would like to revert to the old World Cup format of having groups in the second round, and said Europe should receive more slots in the finals.

"European soccer is the winner of this World Cup, while Asia and Africa are the big losers," Vogts said Saturday. "Europe and South America have confirmed their strengths."

"FIFA should see how many European teams qualify for the finals," Vogts said of the governing body of world soccer.

He said the number of European teams in the finals should be raised from 14 to 16, half of the teams in the finals.

Ten European nations have advanced to the round of 16, along with five South American teams and only one African — Nigeria.

Vogts said the new 32-team format was fine, because it brought in some "refreshing teams."

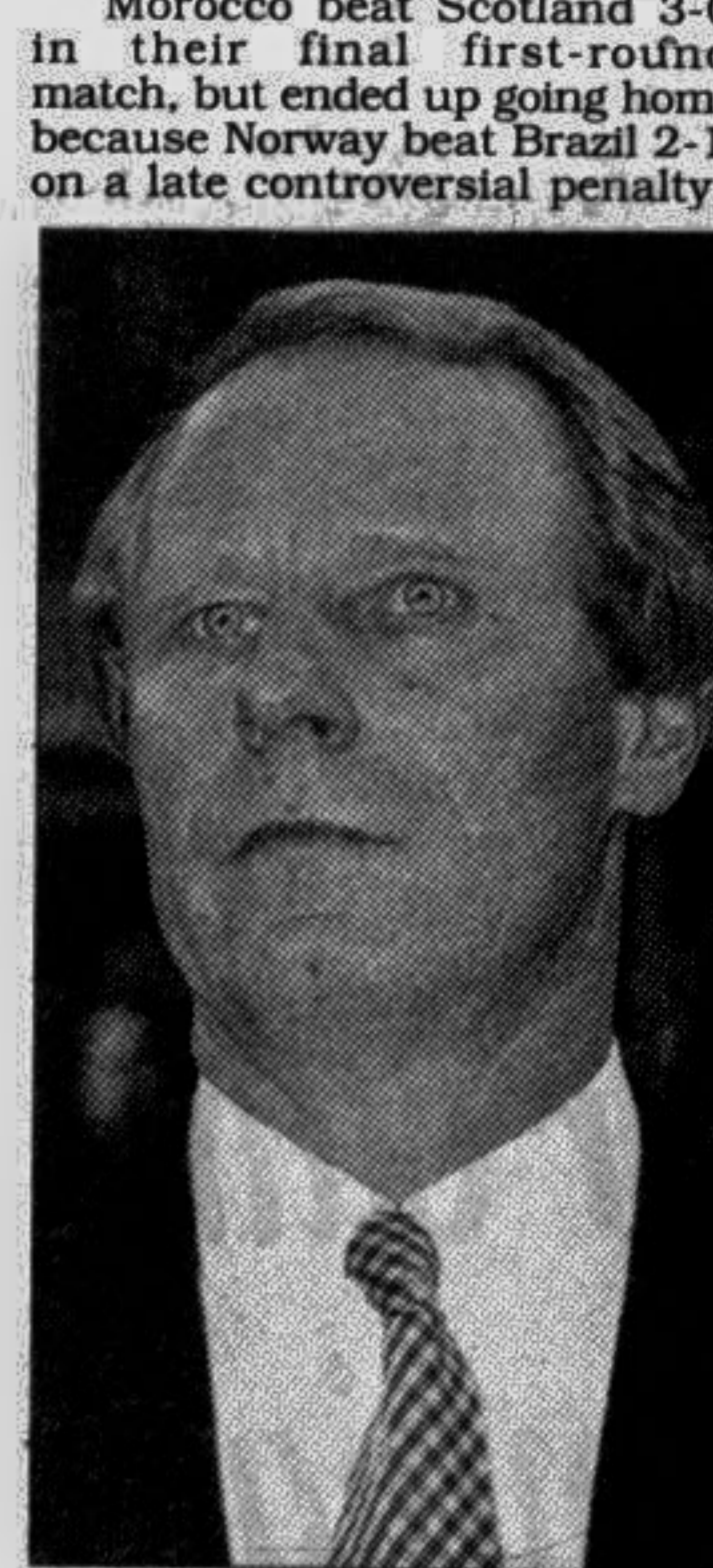
"But we should then have four groups of four teams in the second round, with the winners going to the semifinals," Vogts said.

"Clock at England-Argentina, one of the favourites will have to go home before the quarterfinals," Vogts said. "It could happen on a refereeing error."

"Look what happened to Mo-

rocco, they played beautiful soccer and ended up going home because of a false decision, perhaps because the referee wasn't at the right place," the German coach said.

Morocco beat Scotland 3-0 in their final first-round match, but ended up going home because Norway beat Brazil 2-1 on a late controversial penalty.



BERTI VOGTS

England and Argentina are clashing in one of the round of 16 matches.

"If you think that you will see better and more offensive soccer in the second round because of the knockout system, you'll be disappointed," Vogts said.

"I don't think it would be boring. You can afford to lose one game and still advance to the semifinals and that could be very exciting," Vogts said.

The World Cup format has been changed several times, as more and more teams were allowed into the finals.

The last time the World Cup used a group format in the second round was in 1982, with four groups of three teams and the winners going to the semifinals.

In 1974 and 1978, the second round consisted of two groups of four teams, with the winners going to the final.

Before that, with fewer teams, two top-placed teams from four groups would go straight into the quarterfinals.

Because of the number of teams in the first round, 32, a group format would be perfect for the second round, Vogts said.

"Having groups of three teams is not so good because one team is always idle. But with four teams, it works and you could fit it into the same number of days," Vogts said.

Tunisia head home happy

PARIS, Jun 27 (AP): They came, they played, but they didn't come close to conquering.

Tunisia's World Cup soccer team won't be returning home to a hero's welcome. But after the team's 1-1 draw with Group G winners Romania, they won't have to face the humiliation of a scoreless World Cup either.

"I only hope that the Tunisian people forgive us for the slow start and — that they can be proud of the way we finished the match," said striker Adel Selmi.

A 20-year absence from the World Cup left Tunisia in the unenviable position of being the underdogs in a group that included such powers as England, Romania and Colombia.

And, by the team's own admission, there was no serious hope of advancing much beyond the second round.

After losing 2-0 to England in their opener, a more perplexing 1-0 loss to Colombia followed. Tunisia's fate was sealed and Polish coach Henry Kasperczak was fired. Without a

chance to advance, Tunisia suddenly was playing for pride alone.

Kasperczak's replacement, Ali el-Selmi, said the match would be an effort "to honour Tunisian and Arab football with a good performance against a strong team."

Tunisia achieved that objective by scoring a goal and holding the Romanians to a draw.

"The first half time was the best moment we had out of the three matches," said el-Selmi after the match.

The performance was a marked improvement over the two previous matches where Tunisia looked like they had a hard time functioning as a team. In the match against England, their defence showed serious weaknesses. In the showdown against Colombia, the defence got their act together, but the offence failed to pull their end.

A frustrated Sami Trabelsi, team captain for those two matches, complained that it was unfortunate that the team

had to pay the price for differences in abilities between the defence and offence.

"In the first match against England, we were playing at a disadvantage, against a team that had more experience. Against Colombia, we weren't able to put our best foot forward," said striker Sellmi, who plays for FC Nantes.

The shortcomings were not evident against Romania, especially in the first half of the match where Tunisia proved capable of dominating a match, but also playing the way its players said they can — with skill.

"I think we played a match which can be a source of pride for Arab soccer," Sellmi said after the Romanian match.

Trabelsi said, "We did not succeed in showing the real Tunisian soccer in this World Cup until the very end, when it was too late. We were lacking at first in physical stamina, in technique."

And while the result of the match against Romania showed to players and fans alike that Tunisia are capable of holding their own against strong teams, Trabelsi believes that a more valuable lesson was learned.

"Most important is that we gained experience, confidence and the knowledge that with more practice, we will be able to put on a stronger performance in the next Cup."



SUPERSONIC: Michael Owen (R) of England outstripping Colombia's Jorge Bermudez at Lens on June 26. — AFP photo

Blatter sticks to current concept

PARIS, June 27 (AFP/Internet): FIFA president Sepp Blatter ruled out cutting back on the number of World Cup finalists on Saturday.

"We'll stay with 32 countries. We won't change the system for 2002," he said when asked if there was any point in holding a tournament for 32 teams when the same countries invariably dominate.

"It's true, the big countries are dominating again," he said. "There are no so-called minnows but we won't change the system."

Blatter also said Japan and Korea would operate the same system as France '98 of having teams playing in different cities, although for the first round Korea and Japan would have 16 teams each based in their countries.

English fans fare better

CALAIS, France, June 27 (AFP/Internet): They were billed a hooligan horde, itching to lay waste to northern France, but in the end, England's fans left for home fighting nothing but boredom and sleep.

The delirious joy of beating Colombia 2-0 in the town of Lens and qualifying for the next stage of the World Cup faded quickly as fans poured from the stadium and flowed through the town with nothing to do but leave.

Nowhere to drink, nowhere to eat, and no escape from the row after row of helmeted CRS riot police.

"What is this? This is St!" a bare-chested, tattooed shaven-headed man snarled as he surveyed the CRS men outside the Lens train station after the match.

But there was no appetite for a fight.

Sober and tired, hundreds of young English men simply sprawled on pieces of grass, looking glumly at the train tracks.

When the special train direct back to waiting ferries in Calais did arrive, the most feared fans in the world boarded meekly and went straight to sleep. The loudest noise in the carriages was snoring.

The day had started with the English in high spirits and the French residents and police in Calais, Lens and Lille nervous.

Knowing that alcohol had been banned, the English went to get a head start, boozing on the trains leaving London early in the morning, boozing on the ferry across the Channel, and trying, with mixed results, to smuggle booze in past the police on arrival.

The result for some was that they peaked hours before the match had even started.

On a special train from Calais to the match in Lens, a young man could be seen lying on the floor, surrounded by his vomit, and an English Saint George's flag. Several others complained bitterly of hangovers.

The French security operation was especially bleak for the thousands of fans who crossed the Channel without tickets, hoping either to find one on the black market or to watch the match on television and soak up the atmosphere in a bar.

Andy Wimm, a 31-year-old transport supervisor, said he had been unable to find either a ticket or a television screen in Lens.

So he went to nearby Lille,

where the bars had been open earlier in the day but found out that riot police had just moved in and closed them down.

After that, he tried to return to his hotel in Calais to watch the game on television there, but was unable to get a train in time. So he missed the match.

"We came over here and we didn't even see the match on TV," he said. "It was pretty depressing."

His brother, 26-year-old postman Mick Wimm, said he could accept the alcohol ban, but that a big screen showing the match should have been allowed in Lens. "That's all we needed."

Yes, they could have just herded us into a field and put up a big screen," Andy Wimm said, adding that the English drinkers in Lille had been well behaved until the French police began closing down bars.

Anne Laure, landlady of the Windsor hotel in Calais, said some bar and restaurant owners may regret having obeyed the alcohol ban.

"It's a balance. You have to weigh up between the money you would have made and the possibility that if they'd had alcohol they'd have broken everything," she said. "I think it's better to be prudent."



MOLDOVAN TO THE RESCUE: Romanian striker Viorel Moldovan celebrates his equalizer against Tunisia on June 26. — AFP photo