

World Cup cabaret

PARIS, June 30 (AFP/ Internet): Soccermania has hit Paris' legendary cabarets, with leggy dancers at clubs such as the Lido, the Moulin Rouge and the Crazy Horse sharing the stage with the World Cup.

At the Crazy Horse, home to one of the city's most extravagant troupes, dancers are strutting onto stage with the flags of the 32 teams that made it to the event and the shows have been rescheduled around the timing of the games.

The Moulin Rouge, home to the French Can-Can, has put up a big screen and built a football village in the cabaret at the foot of Montmartre.

President Bill Clinton's half-brother Roger, who came to town for this month's Iran-US match, was among the scores of visitors this month to the club founded in 1889 and immortalised in the works of Toulouse-Lautrec.

On the Champs Elysees, the Lido is serving up replays of the main matches as dessert with feather-clad dancers stepping in to fill the half-time pause.

"There are more foreigners than usual," said Crazy Horse spokesman Christophe Millant.

"For now its the fans but soon we hope to see the players," a spokeswoman for the Moulin Rouge said.



Yugoslavia's Predrag Mijatovic (L) is about to go down following a tackle from Dutch defender Jaap Stam at Toulouse on June 29. — AFP photo

# No frills forwards overshadow striking talents

PARIS, June 30 (AFP/ Internet): Forget the fancy footwork, the old-fashioned burly centre forward is making a conquering comeback at the World Cup. The new breed of no-frills hit-men includes big boys Olivier Bierhoff of Germany, Christian Vieri of Italy, David Trezeguet of France, Peter Moller of Denmark and even Cesar Sampaio, though not an out-and-out striker, still Brazil's top scorer.

With talents Alessandro Del Piero of Italy and Christophe Dugary of France having injury problems of different degrees and even Ronaldo not as impressive as many thought, it's the big-shouldered brigade who have come to the fore.

One English newspaper described Brazil as a team of two interior decorators (playmakers), two demolition experts (strikers) and six workmen (the others) — and Sampaio was included among the workmen.

Bierhoff, who topscored in Italy last season with 27 goals for Udinese earning a transfer to AC Milan, headed home Germany's winning goal against Mexico to put his side in the second round.

Burly Bierhoff, with an old-fashioned sense of where to be at the right time, is certainly not a Ronaldo who can beat two players before firing into the top corner.

But his last minute headers to complete tightback victories will have pleased coach Berti Vogts and his teammates just as much as any fancy footwork from more ball-playing strikers.

Bierhoff has consistently imposed his efficient and ruthless scoring in pressure situations. He hit the golden goal which won Euro 96 for Germany and here at the World Cup, in both the Yugoslavia group game and Mexico second round match, it was a Bierhoff header which won the matches.

Bierhoff may have left it late, the 80th minute against Mexico, when he beat napping defender Raul Lara for the header, but as we all know a result is a result.

Vieri of Italy is not a skillful player in the Alessandro Del Piero mould or even in the style of the still talented yet aging Roberto Baggio, who didn't come on against Norway despite warming up.

And Cesar Sampaio, who has denied he is leaving Japan and going back to Palmeiras of Sao Paulo, has scored three times, as many as twice world player of the year Ronaldo and one more than Bebeto.

Cesar Sampaio scored after just five minutes of action in France 98 when he headed home a Bebeto corner swung into the near post with Scotland's Craig Burley and John Collins both beaten to the ball.

Against Chile in the second round, Sampaio, also, hit an early goal. From a Dunga freekick on the left, he firmly headed home to leave Nelson Tapia no chance on their way to a 4-1 win.

Sampaio also hit Brazil's second when a Roberto Carlos freekick crashed into the Chile wall, bounced off Bebeto and fell for Sampaio who shot left-footed past Tapia.

So far the no-frills strikers have stolen a march on the taller boys to prove that second round efficiency is putting skill firmly in the shade.

He encourages us to take it easy and enjoy ourselves in between matches. "I like to take my mind off football and think about other things. It is not good just to think football, football, football."

"Since we have been here we have been playing a lot of golf or going to the beach or reading books and generally do anything with no connection to football."

"We've had our wives and girlfriends out here for a while which has been great because it makes you feel more at home and takes the pressure off."

"If I spend the whole of this week thinking about Brazil and all their great players, I would probably be terrified by Friday."

Denmark face world champions Brazil in Nantes on Friday in one of the biggest games in their history, but their Swedish coach Johansson says that he will not be changing Denmark's training schedule.

"We will prepare for Brazil exactly as we did for Nigeria and all our other matches," says Johansson.

"We will relax and regain our strength, but we will not be doing any extra training, we are just going to carry on enjoying ourselves as we have done so far."

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**Kohler in fitness battle**

NICE, France June 30 (AFP/ Internet): Central defender Jurgen Kohler missed training here Tuesday and is battling to overcome a calf injury in time for Germany's quarter-final in Lyon on Saturday.

The Borussia Dortmund veteran injured the calf during his warm-up for the second round game against Mexico in Montpellier on Monday and had to sit out the second round tie.

# Saudis turn to Pfister again!

RIYADH, June 30: The Saudi Football Federation announced Monday that German Otto Pfister has been named to head the Saudi national football team, replacing Brazilian Carlo Alberto Parreira, reports AFP.

The official SPA news agency quoted the federation as saying in a statement here that Pfister would be assisted by Saudi Mohammad al-Kharashi.

Parreira, 55, was let go on June 20, six months after his nomination to head the Saudi team, following the team's 1-0 defeat by Denmark and 4-0 by France.

The Saudi team was the first to be eliminated in the first round of the World Cup.

The federation also said it had approved plans by a committee to allow Saudi professional footballers to play abroad to gain experience, subject to certain conditions.

The conditions include: requiring them to be at least 21 years old and to have already played for a professional club in the kingdom.

# 'Zidane could flop'

PARIS, June 30: Legendary French midfielder Michel Platini today punctured French World Cup hopes, saying gifted striker Zinedine Zidane could flop on his return from two-match ban, reports AFP.

Zidane's return has given France the belief that they will beat Italy and book their place in the semifinals on the way to their first World Cup victory.

Zidane sat out their last group game against Denmark and their 1-0 second round win against Paraguay following his sending off in the second group game against Saudi Arabia for stamping on skipper Fuad Amin with 20 minutes to go.

France laboured with great difficulty to a last-gasp Golden Goal win over Paraguay and Zidane ran onto the pitch to celebrate with teammates knowing he was likely to gain selection and see more World Cup action against Italy.

Zidane's playmaking skills for Juventus and France make him one of the best players in the world. Yet, like in Euro '96 when he was disappointing, a long, hard domestic season might take its toll.

Zidane has played on the losing side in European finals the last three years. First for Bordeaux in the UEFA Cup against Bayern Munich just before Euro '96, then twice in the European Cup for Juventus, against Dortmund in 1997 and Real Madrid just last month.

# Injured French cop recovering

LILLE, June 30 (AFP/ Internet): A French gendarme who was severely injured in a savage attack by German hooligans nine days ago is still in a coma but his condition has improved, doctors said Tuesday.

A hospital statement said Daniel Nivel, a 43-year-old father of two, was in a "light coma", the lowest state of coma in a four-point scale, and that his condition was "evolving satisfactorily."

Nivel was the target of a vicious assault by a group of German hooligans on June 21 in the northern city of Lens after a World Cup match between Germany and Yugoslavia that was marred by violence by neo-Nazi German thugs.

# Untimely return

LAGOS, June 30 (AFP/ Internet): Officials of Nigeria's Super Eagles, who crashed out of the World Cup after a shocking 4-1 drubbing by Denmark on Sunday, will arrive in Lagos on Tuesday, a local paper reported.

The group are due to fly in during the afternoon from Paris, the Post Express newspaper quoted officials as saying.

However, few players are likely to be among the group.

# ROUND 2 RESULTS

Italy 1	Norway 0
Brazil 4	Chile 1
France 1	Paraguay 0
Denmark 4	Nigeria 1
Germany 2	Mexico 1
Holland 2	Yugoslavia 1

# English foresee a win

From Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed in London

JUNE 30: England are relying on divination, superstition and wizardry to overcome Argentina in tonight's pre-quarters of the World Cup '98 at St Etienne in France. Twenty-eight million Englishmen are expected to watch the game live on TV. And on this morning's breakfast show Uri Geller came up with the perfect potion to vibrate them up. Uri who? Uri is a mindologist or the person who bends spoons with mental concentration. One wonders why he makes something look so difficult when it can be done so very much more easily with the bare hands. Will England also take the roundabout route to stop Argentina's journey beyond Tuesday? Only time can tell.

The shrewd Geller asked viewers sitting at home to line the extended palm of their hand with the crystal and the England logo that he was holding on TV, and focus their mind on the game while chanting "Win England Win" thrice. Uri predicted a 1-0 win for England obviously with Alan Shearer doing the honours. I could sense Glen Hoddle feeling a bit restless because with Uri's conjuration, who needs an expensive coach?

But Hod got the nod from the Argentine manager Passarella who was all praise for his tactical moves. Passarella thought England reached the last sixteen because they were "very technical" and credited manager Hoddle for the way he changed England's traditional game. "England have a team of dynamic personalities with good attacking players," said Passarella who dubbed tonight's clash as a classic international. It is a rich compliment coming from a man for whom England have a lot of respect as one of the greatest defenders. And it is Passarella's defence that have England have to pierce tonight while making theirs water-tight.

To do that the England manager is all set to start against their Falklands rivals with the same line-up that excelled opposite Colombia in the final Group G match last week. That precisely means a first-team

prize for David Beckham and Michael Owen while David Batty, Teddy Sheringham and injured Gareth Southgate cheer from the bench.

It is just as well for Hoddle because opinion polls here suggest that Owen is considered the best English player in France so far with a vote of 29 per cent, followed by Beckham on 19. Sol Campbell and Darren Anderton polled 15 and 14. An added stimulant for Posh Spice as an overwhelming 72 per cent thought Beckham's goal was the best of France '98. Just a reminder — the pollsters were all responding to a question on British TV.

England will be succumbing to superstitions if not anything else when they don their all-white kit for the St Etienne match. It is the same colour which Alf Ramsey's men wore in their quarterfinal thirty-two years ago when England won the World Cup. "It's a nice kit and in 1966 it was a good omen," said Hoddle. Meanwhile, Ramsey's health condition at a Ipswich hospital where he was admitted after suffering a mild stroke a few days back is said to be "unchanged". Captain Allan Shearer was in good spirits for tonight's clash and said an England win would perk up 78-year old Ramsey.

Hoddle, who was a player in the fateful squad of 1966, would like to purge twelve years of frustration with Argentina. Former England defender Terry Fenwick admitted that he was haunted by Maradona's two goals in that World Cup, not forgetting to appreciate the wizard's second goal against England. "We had to take 1986 in the chin but we can bounce back," said an optimistic Hoddle.

England hope to take advantage of Argentina's lack of height in defence as their centre-backs are not the biggest and physically not the strongest. Their five feet ten inches should be an area of interest, according to David Sexton, who was asked by Hoddle to prepare a dossier on the Latin Americans.

Should England fail to beat lights of Serie A where he suffered a miserable first few months.

He was unable to get a place on the substitutes' bench left alone in the team before a rash of injuries gave him his chance to impress the Italian side as well as enhance his World Cup clout.

Jorgensen, who thanks his Udinese and Denmark teammates Thomas Helveg for helping him through that difficult period, has been relishing every moment of France 98.

"I expected to play about five minutes or so as substitute, but I've now started in four games in a row," says Jorgensen.

"It's been an incredible experience for me and I think I have acquitted myself despite playing out of my natural position."

Jorgensen now faces the toughest challenge of his career in Nantes on Friday when he comes up against Brazil — and Roberto Carlos on the left flank.

"Roberto Carlos was not so attacking in the first couple of matches but against Chile you saw how dangerous he was coming forward," says Jorgensen.

"But on a positive note it means that every time he comes forward there will be space for me to attack."

And Jorgensen, who worked for his father's coach company

the height after extra time, they have been preparing for the inevitable penalty shoot-out. Seaman has been practising from being shot at from closer to the spot while the kickers have been trying to net from further up. Hoddle quashed all doubts whether this will confuse the players come the moment of truth by saying that this will help in building confidence.

England will need a lot of it when the Russian roulette begins because Argentina has the advantage. Passarella's team was eight players who take penalties for their clubs. On the other hand, England are playing by penalty defeats in Italia '90 and Euro '96 when they lost to Germany in the semis.

Over at St Etienne, ten fans, unbelievably one of them English, was arrested last night for throwing bottles and glass in skirmishes involving local youths. English fans were buying thirty-pound tickets at six hundred pounds in the thriving black-market. In matches involving other countries illegal trading of these tickets reach a high of fifty pounds. But the size of the twenty-thousand strong band of English fans following England in France is dwindling as it was getting expensive to travel and near-impossible to get hold of a ticket. With England given only two thousand plus tickets, even a small following of ten thousand English supporters should keep the underdog market thriving.

Despite media hype in print and particle, English punters are putting their money on Argentina's Gabriel Batistuta to score first at 10-3. Shearer (11-2) and Owen (6-1) are good bets followed by Argentina's Abel Balbo, Ariel Ortega, Claudio Lopez, Marcelo Gallardo and then would you believe? Sheringham.

Even if England lose tonight, which no one here seems ready to contemplate, they might be consoled by the fact that they lead Norway and Yugoslavia in FIFA's Fair Play Award which Bobby Brown's boys won in 1990.

As for me, I propose a 2-1 defeat for England. Move over Uri.

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# QUIPS & QUOTES

PARIS, June 30 (AFP): What they are saying at the World Cup.

"Thank God I didn't." Dutch coach Guus Hiddink planned to substitute Edgar Davids, who scored the last minute goal in Holland's 2-1 second round win against Yugoslavia.

"We were expecting to play extra time, but that goal changed our plans. We gave a kick an opportunity, but that's the way the game goes. Conceding a goal like that happens to the team that lose concentration."

Yugoslavia coach Slobodan Santrich.

"It was lucky not to get a red card for stamping on (Sintisa Mihajlovic)." Dutch coach Guus Hiddink, scorer of Holland's first goal, said.

"I think we will meet Argentina in the quarter final as they have two very good strikers."

Marc Overmars, the Dutch winger, believes Argentina will beat England in the second round match Tuesday.

"We are getting better all the time and we pulled it around. We didn't want to go home just yet."

German coach Berti Vogts after the 2-1 win second round over Mexico.

"We just did enough." Germany's Oliver Bierhoff, who scored the winner.

"The bad news is we lost — good news is that we played well."

Mexico's coach Manuel Lantieri.

"It's just a great experience. Three months ago I wasn't even playing regularly at my club than boom, I played a few good games and I'm in the national squad. I was really shocked."

Croatia's Australian-born Anthony Seric, aged 19.

"I know that I am not leaving you with any good memories. But that is for you to decide. All I know is that I have always tried to carry the Brazilian flag high wherever I have been in the world."

Brazil veteran captain Dunga, telling Brazilian journalists he will retire after the World Cup.

"Zinedine has been like a caged animal sitting on the bench during the matches, and in Lens during the Paraguay match I thought he would explode he was so revved up and frustrated."

French coach Aimé Jacquet on striker Zinedine Zidane, suspended for the last two matches, who will return for the quarter-final against Italy.

"I haven't been Del Piero's World Cup. But let's hope it's Vieri's World Cup. I haven't come here to make it Del Piero's World Cup."

Striker Alessandro Del Piero, Italy's highly rated World Cup flop.

By any means

From page 16 cal, which is why they have qualified for the World Cup and the last 16.

# Danes bask on the beach

TOULON, France, June 30 (AFP/ Internet): Walk into the Danish training camp and you could be excused for thinking the World Cup is just one long holiday.

While other teams fill their time between matches by analysing videos of their opponents or having squad seminars on tactics, the super-relaxed Danes are lying on the beach or enjoying a round of golf.

But it is not that Denmark do not take their football seriously; they believe that genuine relaxation is a central part of preparation for big matches.

The Danes, who face Brazil in the quarter-finals, established their laid-back reputation at the 1992 European Championships when the squad was called together at the last minute following the expulsion of war-torn Yugoslavia from the tournament.

The players were scattered on beaches all over the world, thinking that their season was over.

But the holiday atmosphere continued as the Danes, feeling they had nothing to lose, went on to a sensational triumph.

Their training camps and press conferences are always friendly and welcoming — even when the Danish newspapers have been heavily critical of the team as they were in Denmark's poor build-up to France 98.

Unlike other teams such as England, who ration the availability of their players to the media in a strictly controlled press briefings, the Danes are allowed to mingle freely with journalists — and tell them exactly what they think.

Goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel believes that the relaxed approach has been one of the key factors in Denmark's emergence as a major force in world football since the early 1980s.

"We've always been relaxed in the Denmark squad," says the Manchester United star.

"I am sure the Germans are constantly thinking and talking about football all day long, watching endless videos of their opponents and analysing them."

"But I do not want to do that and it's just not the Danish approach. We believe relaxation is an essential part of preparation."

# 'Tickets impossible'

COPENHAGEN, June 30: After watching their team pull off the seemingly impossible feat of defeating Nigeria in the World Cup, Danish soccer fans now face the really impossible: getting tickets for the quarter-finals, reports AP.

The Danish soccer association received more than 20,000 calls by early afternoon Monday from people desperately seeking tickets for the July 3 quarterfinal against Brazil.

Denmark earned the berth by trouncing Nigeria 4-1 on Sunday.

But the 1,237 tickets allotted to Denmark were snapped up long ago by fans who believed their team would make it that far.

For countless Danes, the ticket headache came on top of real headaches incurred during a night of victory celebrations.

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TOUGHER THAN THE REST: Germany's lively 37-year-old veteran Lothar Matthaus (R) wins the ball from Mexico's Jesus Arellano at Montpellier. — AFP photo

# FIFA say no to video

PARIS, June 30 (AP): FIFA on Monday reaffirmed its opposition to the use of videotape replays to decide controversial calls in games, a reaction to a lawsuit filed by an association of former African players demanding that two World Cup matches be replayed because of disputed referees' decisions.

The association of Former African Footballers in France filed its suit in a Paris court Friday, asking the court to review calls in games between Cameroon and Chile, and Brazil and Norway.

Cameroon and Chile drew 1-1 after a goal by Cameroon was disallowed and Norway beat Brazil 2-1 on a 89th-minute penalty.

If the goal had been allowed to stand, Cameroon would have reached the second round. Conversely, if the penalty had not been called against Brazil the game would have ended in a draw, a result that would have sent Morocco into the Round of 16.

The association demanded that if errors were proven, the games should be replayed.

The court that heard the petition said that the association had no standing to sue and immediately threw out the case.

Appearing on France 2 television on Monday, FIFA president Sepp Blatter said that videotape replays had no place in the officiating of matches, adding that referees were not to blame for the elimination of African countries.

"We can't attribute that to refereeing," Blatter said. "It is necessary to find fault within your own camp. It's much too easy to give a red card to the referee when things don't go the way you want."

"We are not going to make video superior to the referee. If we remove human error from football we also remove the emotion, the passion," Blatter said.

However, Blatter said that he supported the introduction of professional referees, adding that resistance to the idea comes from referees themselves.

Hungarian referee Laszlo Vagner disallowed a goal that would have given Cameroon a 2-1 lead over Chile, calling Patrick Mboma for pushing a defender. Replays showed contact, but no clear foul.

The 1-1 draw that followed meant that Chile advanced and Cameroon was out.

That sparked attacks in the Cameroon capital of Yaounde by black fans who owned businesses and harsh words from the government.

The same day, Esse Baharmast of the United States whistled Brazilian defender Junior Baiano for a foul on Norwegian forward Tore Andre Flo.

Initial replays failed to show a clear foul, though photos taken from the Norwegian television network NRK showed Baiano clearly grabbing the jersey of Flo in the penalty area.

Kejtil Rekdal converted the penalty for the Norwegian victory, pushing Norway past Morocco, which at the same time was beating Scotland 3-0.

Anger in Africa has been growing ever since.

Lance Weir of the African Football Confederation said its teams had been singled out for "special treatment" and expressed "profound indignation and many regrets" that the rules were not evenly applied.

"Faced with this situation, all of African soccer suffers from a profound unease. A feeling that her representatives are undesirable on the grandest stage of soccer on the planet," CAF general secretary Must