Glorious losers

head home

LONDON, July 2 (AFP): Eng-

British Airways sent a con-

land shrugged off a national

hangover to welcome its World

Cup heroes home on Wednes-

corde to Nantes to fly the glori-

ous losers home. The team's fol-

lowers returned more slowly,

leaving some of their number

rested at the stadium for possi-

ble offences, none of them seri-

ous, such as suspected theft of

after the defeat by Argentina,

eight more England fans were

held. It was not clear how

many, if any, were subse-

elsewhere. There were fights,

broken windows and, in Poole,

a wrecked television set in a

home laid the blame for their

team's failure squarely on the

shoulders of midfield star

David Beckham. A few days ear-

for his inclusion in the team.

lier, the nation had been baying

by Wayne Slatcher, 23, and his

uncle David Slatcher, 39, from

Reading, Berkshire, each had

paid touts in St Etienne 280-

pounds for their tickets. "It was

Beckham who cost us the game

He just lost his cool," they said

"he kicked out and deserved to

go but he should never have

Lynne, 26, arrived to comfort

his parents at their home.

which is under siege by re-

porters, soccer ambassador Sir

Bobby Charlton yesterday stood

up for the shamed footballer

saying: "don't throw him to the

Who will resurrect

American dream

Carlos Alberto Parreira, Carlos

Queiroz and Bora Milutinovic

are at the top of the list to be-

come the next coach of Ameri-

ca's soccer team. US Soccer Fed

eration president Alan Rothen-

Sampson's resignation "appro

priate" and said he's not inter-

dinner in Paris on Wednesday

night with Milutinovic, the US

coach from 1991-95 and the

coach of Nigeria in this year's

would be the three interna-

tional coaches who obviously have the most knowledge of our

players; our structure, the coun-

try. There's no question about

that," Rothenberg said. "They're

on the list automatically. After

that, we start talking with peo-

ple we know less about. I think

the single most important thing

not impose any fines against

Rothenberg also said he will

Bora, Queiroz and Parreira

Rothenberg called Steve

hiring an American. He had

berg said Wednesday.

ested in

tournament.

UNDATED, July 2 (Internet)

But as Beckham's sister

done it.

The mood was summed up

Dejected fans returning

quently released.

During trouble in St Etienne

Seven England fans were ar

behind in French custody.

Comeback kings riding high

NICE, France. July 2 (AFP/ Internet): Evergreen skipper Jurgen Klinsmann and coach Berti Vogts on Wednesday laughed off the critics hovering vulture-like above the German camp and said the European champions were on track to win a fourth World title.

Klinsmann, at 33 in scintillating form with three goals to his name already, said people were just jealous of Germany's ability to keep on winning matches they appeared to have

"People are envious of our ability to turn around seemingly hopeless situations and give our all right to the last whistle, something many teams just can't do," said Klinsmann.

Not for the first time Germany have been dubbed the fighters after first recovering from 2-0 down against Yugoslavia to draw and then overturning Mexico's lead in the final 15 minutes to win their second-round face-off 2-1. It's something German sides

have been doing for years and they've got it down to a fine art. "It's true we have a particular mentality -- we never give up fighting," said Klinsmann when asked what was the German se-

When we are behind we don't let it get to us -- on the contrary it gives us a boost.

Vogts, looking to join Sepp Herberger, Helmust Schoen and Franz Beckenbauer in the German coaching pantheon of World Cup fame, said rival teams had a very high opinion of German football.

Vogts has been fighting to avoid being buried under the torrents of criticism which the German media and former stars traditionally aim at German national coaches.

But he pugnaciously told reporters to "go and sit in the shade for a minute" and think about what they were writing.

Brazilians face From nade 13

Ominously for Denmark, though, the Brazilians may be peaking at the right time. Coach Mario Zagallo believes their second-half performance against Chile was their best of the tournament.

"My players were able to develop the style of play that like," Zagallo said. "Now I'd like to see us play a whole game like

Zagallo has said he believes the way to beat the Danes is to attack them down the flanks.

"From what I know of the Danes, we are going to hit a traf fic jam if we try to play the game through the middle, down the central corridor," he said. "We will be trying to outflank

Zagallo is an unabashed admirer of the Danes effi-

"Their win against Nigeria was proof of their fine quality." Zagallo said.

The Brazilian coach may give wing backs Roberto Carlos and Cafu more freedom to joint the attack on the overlap, while Ronaldo's central striking partner Bebeto may play in a wider role in a bid to pull apart the tight Danish defence. "We will need to use the

whole field and move well," Zagallo said. The Brazilian team looks to

have two weaknesses the Danes could exploit.

Centrebacks Junior Baiano and Aldair may be fragile against fleet-footed attackers who run at them at angles presenting players like Brian Laudrup with an enticing invitation - while veteran goalkeeper Claudio can be suspect when put under pressure.

Taffarel is, ironically, set to beat the World Cup appearances record for goalkeepers in Friday's match.

The 32-year-old, who has won 108 caps, will be playing in his 16th World Cup game, one more than compatriots Gilmar and Emerson Leao.

Moreover, the team is not entirely trouble-free. Ronaldo complained of knee pains and skipped practice Tuesday, although he trained Wednesday and was listed to start.

Reports conflicted on the cause of the pain and whether it hindered Ronaldo's mobility and his explosive standing start. In practice, he grimaced and put his hand to his knee during wind sprints.

"It's a slight pain," Ronaldo told Brazilian Globo Television. "It hurts when I strain. when I sprint or when I stop

suddenly. Ronaldo's fitness has been a major topic of conversation in Brazil after a team doctor this week told reporters he believed the 21-year-old was overweight. "I can take the pain. During a

game, I'm so concentrated that I forget it hurts," Ronaldo told Ronaldo, who has so far scored three goals during the

tournament, said he had not taken pain-killing drugs but would agree to injections if nec-

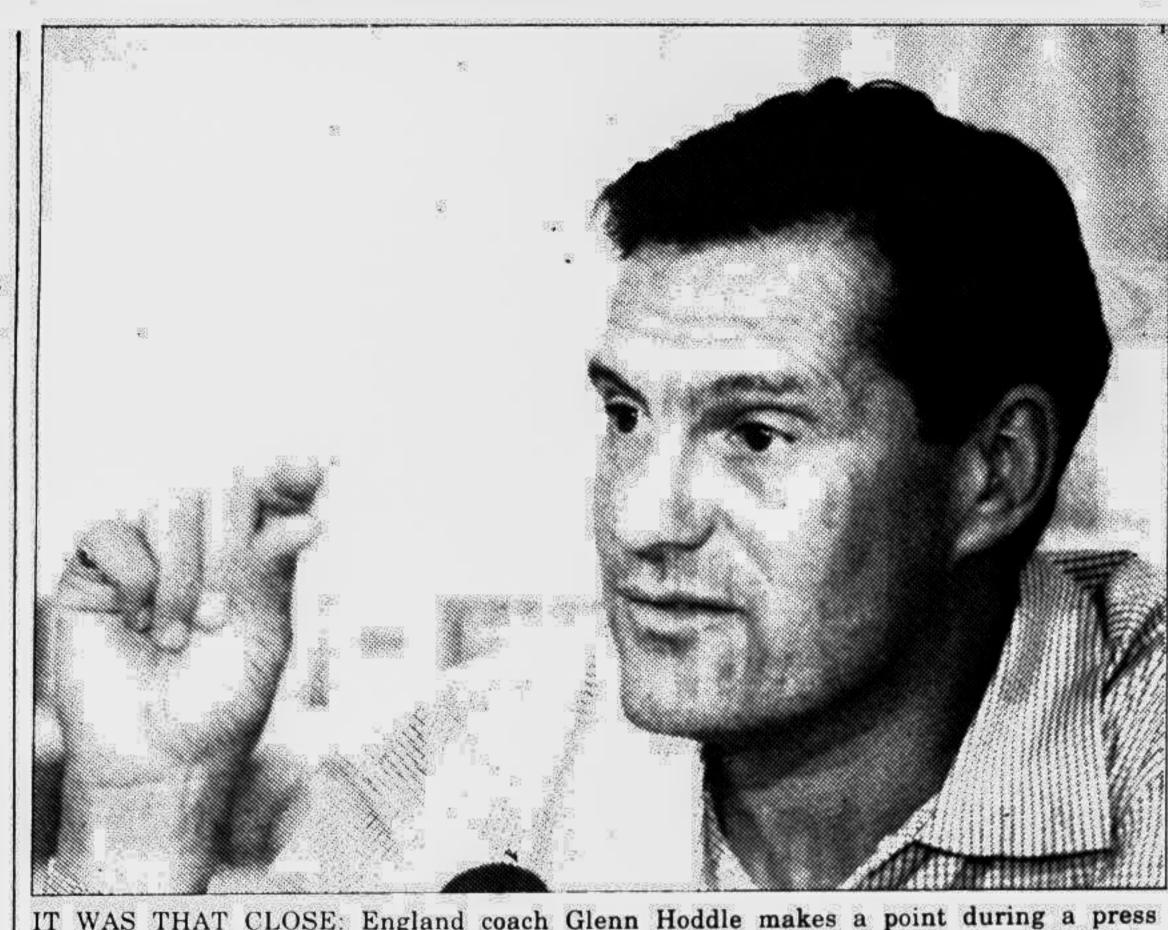
"If it was needed to stay in the World Cup then I would take them," he said. "The World Cup is worth any sacrifice."

Battle of the best

From page 13

player said. So how has Schmeichel mentally prepared himself in the build-up to facing the world's best player, leading the world's best attack in the world's best team?

"I don't dare think about it. I have been playing golf and relaxing. If I spent the whole of this week thinking about Brazil and all their great players, I would probably be terrified by Friday."



IT WAS THAT CLOSE: England coach Glenn Hoddle makes a point during a press conference at La Boules on July 1 after the second round loss to Argentina. -AFP photo

the Englishman's tear of the penalty

London, July 2 (The Guardian/ Internet): It is the footballer's loneliest moment: the sudden death of the penalty shoot-out, when the team dynamic falls away and leaves him drawing on every fibre of his being; his national grit; his reservoir of imperial mettle which John Barnes last night said turns English players into "Trojans.

Trojans when they win, that is. So what does it say about the national character when they lose? Is there some cancerous part of the English psyche

Someone, somewhere must be writing a thesis on it: the role of the English character in the muffed penalty shoot-out.

"The national character definitely came out in that game. says Professor Cary Cooper, a psychologist at Manchester University's Institute of Science and Technology. We bottled it.

right? "No - I mean it came out in the way we showed so much courage. It was really about bulldog England. When [David] Beckham was sent off and we were one man down that is when the national character came out."

So where was bulldog England when David Batty's saved

Hagi has had

enough

BUCHAREST, July 2: Roma-

nian captain Gheorghe Hagi.

hailed as the country's most il-

lustrious soccer player of all

time, officially announced his

retirement from the national

"The time has come to quit,"

Hagi told a news conference the

day after the national side re-

turned home after their 1-0 de-

feat by Croatia in the World Cup

and an end and the end has

come to my activity on the na-

tional team. I think I have ac-

complished my duty to my

country's national team. It's

time to give up my place to

In eastern Europe's only

Latin country, where debate and

argument are a matter of

course, commentators were

unanimous in upholding Hagi

as the best player in Romanian

in 54 matches over 15 years, ac-

cumulated a record 115 caps

Hagi, 33, captained Romania

younger players," he said.

football history.

and scored 33 goals.

"Any story has a beginning

in France.

team today, reports Reuters.

penalty shot us out of the World Cup? Tony Gleadell is a leading consultant in sports psychology who has worked with the national golf team and specialises in the 'closed skills' of the penalty shoot-out: "It is not necessarily a cultural problem. he says. "Certain sports people are not good at closed skills and if you pick the wrong guy you are in trouble. I don't think Batty is particularly gifted at

"When you get to the penalty shoot-out it is all about individuals being able to cope with the pressure," says Professor Cooper. You may as well roll a

Not exactly, says Dr Richard Cox, a lecturer in sports psychology at Herriott Watt University. Not only can individual nerves be short circuited with practice - but the level of those nerves might be informed by certain cultural idiosyncrasies: "It is dangerous to start dwelling on the importance of how many people are watching you. You've got to put intellectual blinkers on and the most important thing is to fix on where you want to put the ball. Alan Shearer is the best example of someone who is totally self assured in terms of what he is going to do with the ball."

Indecision in the face of a penalty shoot-out is fatal Might not last night's performance be seen as a classic example of a nation on the dither? Gleadell thinks so. "Under pressure the old worry sets in and a footballer has conflicting images of where to put the ball. Should it go left or right? Indecision like this creates the likelihood of a miss or

So what would sports psychologists suggest to scotch such indecision? Dr Cox has a DIY plan: "I'm all for encasing the whole goal mouth in a wooden shield, with one meter

which could be moved to reveal a hole that would concentrate the player's shot. If he's been practising like that, when it comes to a penalty shoot-out, nerves and national characteristics just won't come into it."

But Professor Cooper insists that the national character did Batty and team proud last night. "When you lose with that kind of style and class, when the players hug and support each other and don't leave the pitch with their heads hanging. that's what tells you about the national character. That was not a loss, it was a victory."

PARIS, July 2 (AFP/ Internet): Former England great Sir Bobby Charlton has called on FIFA to stop the cheats. "I have never seen so many

people dive," fumed Charlton on Thursday.

"They all fall the same way. The head goes back, they roll over three times. It's a work of art. The moment they get touched by a defender down they go. They practise it," he

Now Charlton wants FIFA to use television to catch and pun-

ish the play actors. "The day after every match a commission should study a video of the matches and if it shows that someone took a dive they should be banned for one

"Obviously you can't change the result of a match, but if a player cheats he should be punished. You have to be strong about it. For example Maradona should never have been allowed to play in the 1990 final after his hand-ball goal against England," said Charl-

He was also critical of the referees and the way they are applying the new law over tackles from behind.

A TRUE LEADER: Jose Luis Chilavert (L), Paraguay's

highly inspirational captain and goalkeeper, acknowledges

the fans applause after disembarking at Asuncion's Silvio

Patirossi Airport on July 1.

"I like the new law. It stops people being ruthlessly hacked down. But referees seem to be afraid to make a common sense decision on when to apply a yellow card or a red card. They feel they will be protected by FIFA if they show a red card.

Spectators are being deprived of seeing some of the best players in the world. I just hope they do not ruin the World Cup. said Charlton.

But Charlton admitted that England sensation Michael Owen could never have scored

his stunning goal against Argentina if the new rule had not been in place. "In the past Owen could not

have scored like that. The Argentine defence would have pulled him," he said.

He also gave rave reviews to the Liverpool teenager. "We are going to hear a lot

more of him. He is so fast, certainly faster than most, and has such good control," enthused Charlton. "He is the revelation of the World Cup to date. Michael Owen will be a big

players who spoke out against

Sampson's decisions during the Americans' last-place finish in the 32-nation field. Last Friday, a day after the tournament-ending loss to Yugoslavia. Sampson and general manager Tom King had said fines against the veterans would be forth-

coming.

is a record of success."

"We have to look ahead and not behind," Rothenberg said. Sampson, the first American-born coach to lead the United States in the World Cup. got the job in 1995 after Rothenberg fired Milutinovic

and Parreira and Queiroz turned it down. Rothenberg was unsure whether to keep Sampson on af ter World Cup qualifying, waiting until just before the draw to give him a contract extension through 1998.

OZOIR-LA-FERRIERE, France. July 2 (AFP/ Internet): Brazilian veteran goalkeeper Claudio Taffarel doesn't really know whether to laugh or cry at this his third World Cup -- he's playing in a side where he's almost never in the spotlight.

The eyes of the watching world are almost permanently focused on the last third of the field, but at the other end of the pitch to the goal defended by the 32-year-old, who has won 108 caps and who will beat the World Cup appearances record for keepers in Friday's quarterfinal against Denmark.

Assuming he plays, it will be Claudio Andre Mergen Taffarel's 16th World Cup tie, one more than compatriots Gilmar and Emerson Leao. And he hopes that for once

his achievement will gain him the recognition he craves. "In Brazil people are crazy about football. But they dream

about wearing a number nine or number ten on their shirt. If you're a goalkeeper you just don't exist," he sighs. How many people remember his stop from Italy's Massaro in the final four years ago or his

save from Baggio's volley? Not as many as remember the goalscoring exploits of Ro-mario and Bebeto, which hogged the headlines. And Taffarel says that's just

Brazilian logic. "In Brazil only strikers count -- a goalkeeper is bad if he lets in a goal, even if his team has won by six goals." The young Taffarel preferred basketball and volleyball, but

also dreamed of scoring goals

But at 18 off he went for a

rather than stopping them.

-AFP photo

trial at Porto Alegre, who gave him a chance -- as goalkeeper. He went on to play in Europe

with Parma and Reggiana, having along the way won a little fame by taking Brazil to the 1988 Olympic final by saving three penalties in a shoot out against Germany. That stood him in good stead

for the 1994 shootout in Pasadena against the Italians. But his Italian league adventure misfired after the World

Cup when he found himself out of favour with his club and unemployed, playing in an amateur team -- as a striker. In fact Italy never really

agreed with Taffarel, who had an unhappy World Cup tournament there in 1990, even if he won the Italian Cup with Parma two years later.

Football-mad Hun Sen

TAKHMAU, Cambodia, July 2 (AFP/ Internet): Cambodian strongman Hun Sen, a devoted football fan, said Thursday he was spending much of his time in the early stages of his country's election campaign watching the World Cup.

"This is the time to watch the World Cup," the powerful second prime minister told reporters here at his country estate outside the capital after meeting Japanese diplomats. "I am spending a lot of time

watching football matches and if I can't watch the late game, I tape it and watch the next day," he said, referring to evening games in France which are aired live in Cambodia at 2:00

WORLD CUP NOTEBOOK

PARIS, July 2 (AFP/ Internet): Snippets of the World Cup:

HAIL BABY OWEN

England may have gone home, but the world's press have hailed Michael Owen for his brilliant goal against Argentina.

Italy's La Gazzetta dello Sport dedicated almost two pages to the 18-year-old Liverpool striker, comparing him with the 17-year-old Pele, who starred in Brazil's, 1958 triumph.

The whole world is agog at baby Owen," said the Gazzetta, who compared the teenager with Ronaldo.

Owen's brilliant strike against Argentina confirmed his superstar status.

Non-travelling England fans kept the home fires burning But it's his goal against Ro-mania in the 2-1 defeat on June with outbreaks of violence in unlikely places. Police made 22 which has put him in the arrests in Peterborough, Poole history books. Weymouth, Bournemouth and

That effort made him the third-youngest ever scorer at a World Cup at 18 years 190 days. Pele holds the record at 17 and 239 days for scoring against Wales in 1958.

Mexico's Manuel Rosas was the second-youngest at 18 and 93 days when he netted against Argentina in 1930.

POSH APPEAL

David Beckham's Spice Girl fiancee Victoria "Posh Spice" Adams appealed to England fans not to make him a scapegoat for the team's defeat by Argentina.

Beckham's sending off early in the second half left England to struggle on to the penalty shootout with ten men and was generally condemned for his behaviour in the British media.

But Adams pleaded to fans: "Please don't hate him. He doesn't deserve to be the most hated man in Britain. He more than anyone wanted England to go all the way."

And she added: "I am as upset as everyone in Britain."

BAN FOR CRAIOVEANU Romania's Gheorghe

Craioveanu picked up a twomatch suspension after his side's defeat by Croatia for verbally abusing Argentinian referee Javier Castrilli at the end of the match, FIFA revealed. Craioveanu, a second half

substitute for Gheorghe Hagi will miss his country's first two qualifiers for Euro 2000, hosted by Belgium and Holland. His outburst also cost him

5,000 Swiss francs (3,200 dol-

MAYBE IT'S THE ACCENT

make errors.

With so many different people from so many different countries, it is not surprising that the translators sometimes

But there must surely be some mistake Kenny Dalglish's post-match comments recorded on the France 98 website after the England v Argentina match. According to the report, the former Scotland international's opening remarks were: "I'm

English, so I'm very disappointed." Possibly Dalglish's strong Glaswegian accent confused

MIO GOL, MIO BAMBINO

Italy's Christian Vieri, the best striker seen so far in France 98, would not be drawn on which of the five goals he has scored was the best.

"Goals are like children," he said. "They are all beautiful.

LESS BORE DRAWS

FIFA statisticians want you to know -- there have been less bore draws at this World Cup, with just three so far giving a below average total of just 5.5 percent.

In 572 matches in World Cup history the average of goalless games is 8 per cent.

There were no scoreless matches at all in the first five tournaments and England and Brazil were the first who couldn't unlock each other's de-

fences in 1958 in Sweden. At France 98, Paraguay's matches with Spain and Bulgaria ended goalless as did Holland's clash with Belgium.

LAUDRUP PRAISES ROMARIO

Denmark's Michael Laudrup has praised Brazil's 1994 World Cup striker Romario, with whom he played at Barcelona a iew seasons ago.

Laudrup, who won his 100th cap in Denmark's opening game against Saudi Arabia and who was superb in the 4-1 second round win over Nigeria, said: "Romario's absence from the World Cup is not just a blow for Brazil, but for the whole footballing world.

"He represents all that is good in football and he is one of those rare players I would pay anything to watch."

FRANCO-GERMAN EN-

COUNTER There will be a close encounter of the Franco-German kind on Saturday. July 11, when two teams composed of former French and German internationals will play a charity match to benefit French gendarme Daniel Nivel brutally attacked by German hooligans in

WORLD CUP IN THE AIR

Flag-carrier Singapore Airlines on Thursday offered pas-sengers on international flights the chance to watch World Cup soccer games.

the 1998 World Cup finals will be available on most SIA flights company said in a statement

The two semifinal matches, the play-off for third place and

WC AT A LOW

World Cup soccer fever may

According to the survey, published in the Washington Post Wednesday, barely 52 per cent of those polled knew that the World Cup was a soccer event and only 25 per cent knew it

was taking place. Of the 19 per cent who had watched a match on television, 24 per cent said they enjoyed the broadcasts "a good deal," 31 per cent aid they enjoyed them quite a lot" and 45 per cent not

ROYAL THEFT

Thieves took off with the royal luggage while Prince Albert of Manaco was enjoying the World Cup.

Three suitcases were stolen from the lobby of the hotel where the prince was staying while he was in Lyon to watch France play Denmark on June 24th.

The theft was reported to Lyon police. The contents of the suitcases were not disclosed.

Denilson's happy on the bench

OZOIR-LA-FERRIERE, France. July 2 (AFP/ Internet): Against Chile the fans were clamouring for him right from the team's nervous start, but Brazil star Denilson insists he's happy just to be at the World Cup even if he's spent most of it

on the bench. Still only 20, the Sao Paulo midfielder, who will join Betis of Spain next season for a world record 34.8 million dollars, has only started one match so far -the 2-1 defeat by Norway, and come on as sub in the other three.

Brazil's vociferous supporters want him in to give the team a more dynamic outlook but coach Mario Zagallo wants to keep him in reserve rather than put him alongside Ronaldo in an attack which would frighten

the life out of anybody. But Denilson is prepared to wait and not rock the boat -- for

"In some ways it's frustrating. But I think that pulling on the Brazilian colours at a World Cup at the age of 20 doesn't hap-

Moller to make the most of it

PARIS, July 2 (AFP/ Internet): Fate dealt Danish striker Peter Moller a kind hand when Colombian referee John Jairo Toro Rendon sent off first-team rival Miklos Molnar in a stormy 1-1 group phase draw against South Africa.

Had Molnar not been suspended for the second round clash against Nigeria last Sunday. Moller wouldn't have started and would be well back in the queue to face Brazil on Friday in the Danes' first quarter-final.

In the event, he arrived with a bang, scoring a fine goal after just two minutes and leading the line superbly for an hour before coach Bo Johansson brought on a fresh pair of legs in Ebbe Sand -- who promptly scored within 16 seconds.

Despite giving way to Sand. PSV Eindhoven striker Moller could be proud of his performance on his 12th appearance for the swashbuckling Scandinavians, who stunned the Nigerians by running out 4-1 win-* The 26-year-old was making his first start of the tournament

brilliantly with the irrepressible veteran Michael Laudrup. Moller joined PSV for 1.7 million dollars last summer from Brondby having previously had a spell in Switzerland with FC Zurich.

He started out with Aaolborg Boldklub and says he just hopes to convince Johansson to give him the chance to get at the Brazilian defence in Nantes on Friday.

pen to everyone so I can't allow myself to get uptight about the

place in the current pecking order as a replacement for Ronaldo rather than as a partner for the FIFA world player-

But circumstances have worked in his favour already with the withdrawal from the squad of Romario; Ronaldo's preferred sidekick. Although Zagallo has

plumped for Bebeto and been

slightest thing," he said.

of-the-year.

Denilson has accepted his

rewarded with two goals from 34-year-old. Denilson's good showing against the Chileans in setting up the fourth goal for Ronaldo means he has knocked

on the door loud enough for

Zagallo to hear. At training Wednesday, the youngster explained: "The professor (as the players call Zagallo) has been straight with me and done exactly as he said he would, bringing me on in all the games I've started as sub and I

have done what I can to respond

to his demands." "So I accept the situation. am privileged to be here and I am very happy."

for Italy

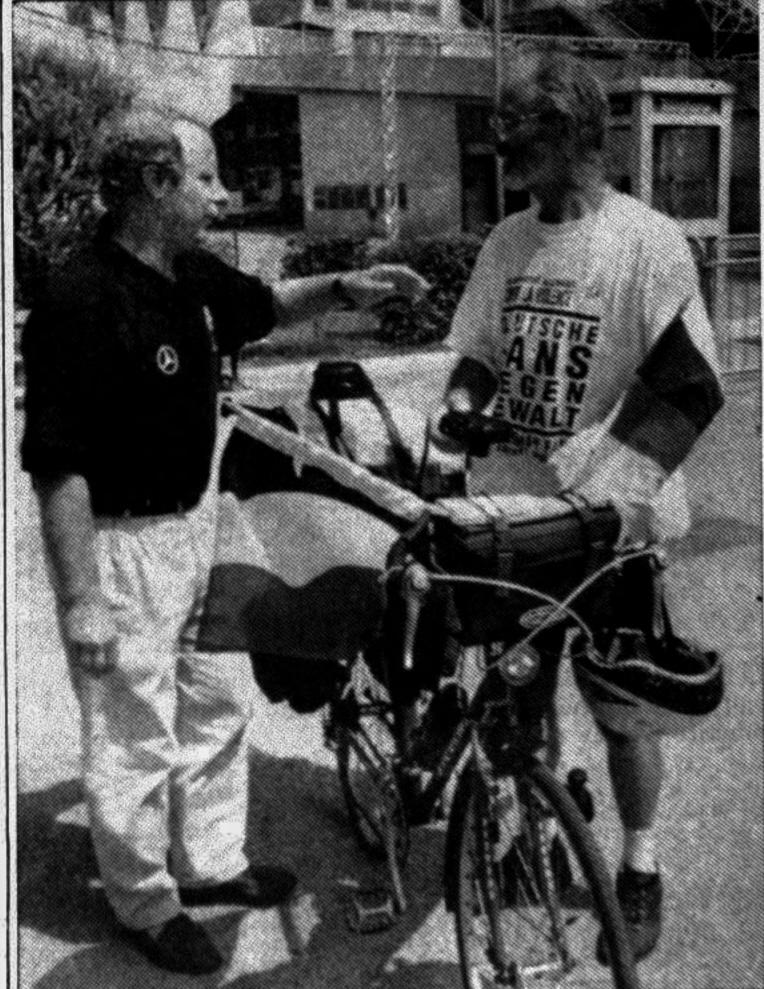
PARIS, July 2 (Reuters/ Internet): The Italians will be torn between laughter and tears if Friday's World Cup quarterfinal against France goes to extra

Italy have never lost a World Cup match in extra time. But they have never won one on penalties.

finals: by Spain and Czechoslovakia (1934), Norway (1938), West Germany (1970), Argentina (1990) and Nigeria and Brazil In four of those matches they

1938, the West Germans 4-3 in a memorable 1970 semifinal and Nigeria 2-1 in the United States four years ago.

But Italy's two experiences of World Cup penalties have both ended in tears. They lost 4-3 to Argentina in a shoot-out in the semifinal of the 1990 World Cup



SOME FAN! Alfred Schoering (R), a German, has followed the national side all over France during the World Cup on a bike and have already paddled some 2,300 kilometres. Here the 61-year-old is seen with coach Berti Vogts in front of the Charles-Ehrmann Stadium at Nice on July 1.

Full length matches from longer than three hours, the

the World Cup final match will be shown on flights from July 8 to July 14. Highlights from the tournament will also be shown.

EBB IN USA

be infecting vast regions of the world but the event is leaving Americans cold: A new survey shows that only 19 per cent of the US population had watched a match on television.

Bitter-sweet extra time

The Italians have been taken to extra time seven times in the

have won within 120 minutes. They beat the Czechs 2-1 in the final of 1934, Norway 2-1 in

Their quarter-final match against Spain in 1934 ended 1-1 after extra time and was replayed. Italy won the rematch

and lost 3-2 on penalties to

Brazil in the 1994 final.

but took to the World Cup stage like a duck to water, linking

-AFP photo