

# ITALY VS FRANCE BATTLE OF THE GIANTS

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## Red card blitz on the cards

PARIS, July 2 (AFP): The Holland-Argentina quarterfinal showdown threatens to see a red card blitz after FIFA announced Mexico's Arturo Brizio Carter had been put in charge.

Dutch star Dennis Bergkamp escaped when Spanish referee Jose Garcia-Aranda in charge of the Holland-Yugoslavia second round match did not send him off when he stamped on defender Zoran Mirkovic.

But Carter, with a record five sendings off to his name during USA 1994 and France '98, does not balk at high-profile dismissals either.

He red-carded Italian forward Gianfranco Zola in America and French midfielder Zinedine Zidane in France last week for stamping.

Argentina will also have to clean up their act.

FIFA figures show that the 29 fouls Argentina committed against England in Tuesday's emotion-packed match makes them the dirtiest side at France '98.

They have now given away 86 free-kicks in four games to reach the quarterfinals.

Italy and France also face a

rough ride if they decided to tough it out in their match.

Scotland's Hugh Dallas has been given the whistle.

In his only match where he was in charge of Mexico against Belgium the no-nonsense referee sent off two players and booked three others.

Clearly FIFA are carrying out their bid to cut down on foul play.

Before the tournament started FIFA president Sepp Blatter ordered referees to enforce the rules.

When they failed in the opening three days Blatter, backed by Michel Platini, hit out at the men in black and told them to get tough.

The Brazil-Denmark match has been given to Egypt's Gamal Ghandour. While Ghandour has still to produce his red card he has dished out eight yellows.

Rune Pedersen of Norway is in charge of the potentially explosive Germany-Croatia clash. He has sent a Jamaican player off and booked four others in their group match with Argentina.



Brazilian supporters enjoying themselves during a Brazil Festival at the Parc des Princes in Paris on July 1. The programme which is a part of the country's 500th founding anniversary, was produced by former international Rai. — AFP photo

## The Italian connection

ROME, July 2 (AP): There's a decidedly Italian flavour to the World Cup quarterfinals — and not just because the country's beloved Azzurri are part of the Elite Eight.

Watch Zinedine Zidane, Didier Deschamps and Youri Djorkaeff work to create scoring opportunities for France when they face Italy in one quarterfinal Friday. Or Cafu and Aldair protect Brazil's net as Ronaldo heads to the other end against Denmark.

Or Gabriel Batistuta and Hernan Crespo strike shots for Argentina. Or Germany's Oliver Bierhoff rise to head a cross from Christian Ziege.

All those talented players are among the 54 left in France '98 who ply their craft with clubs in the prestigious Serie A, Italy's top league. That's 30 per cent of those still in the hunt for the championship.

And several others, including Dennis Bergkamp of the Netherlands and Bierhoff's strike partner Juergen Klinsmann, have spent time in Serie A.

The German Bundesliga has the second-greatest representation in the quarters, with 25 players.

Italy has contributed a lot. It has made us stronger," Deschamps said of the experience gained from playing here. He and Zidane have helped Juventus win two straight Italian league titles and when they line up at the Stade de France the opponents will include club teammates Alessandro Del Piero, Gianluca Pessotto, Fil-

ippo Inzaghi and Angelo Di Livio.

The influx of imports here is the result of several factors, including stockpiling with an eye to rigorous cup schedules and defections to national teams for World Cup qualifying.

Deep-pocketed owners such as media magnate and former premier Silvio Berlusconi (AC Milan), Fiat auto tycoon Gianni Agnelli (Juventus), and film

producer Vittorio Cecchi Gori (Fiorentina) spare little expense for success and find more and more funds from TV revenues.

The European Court of Justice's landmark Bosman decision in 1995 wiped out transfer rules and foreign player quotas, making it possible for clubs to stock rosters with "stranieri."

Last season, small-town Piacenza was the only one of 18 Italian clubs without a single foreigner.

Each of the World Cup quarterfinalists has at least two players now based in Italy, topped — aside from Italy itself — by Argentina with 11.

And the foreign legionnaires in Italy have made their marks so far.

In the round of 16, Argentina's two goals in regulation play in their epic clash with England came from Batistuta (Fiorentina) and Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan). Germany moved past Mexico on a winning goal by Bierhoff (Udinese). Edgar Davids (Juventus) fired in the go-ahead score in the dying seconds of a 2-1 Dutch victory over Yugoslavia.

While Serie A clubs have bought talent from abroad for a long time, only in the past few years have top Italian players started to move to foreign clubs. Coach Cesare Maldini's 22-man World Cup roster features just two players who play club ball outside of Italy.

But one, Christian Vieri of Spanish club Atletico Madrid, has been Italy's most consistent performer at France '98 and is tied for the World Cup lead with five goals.

### Penalty practice

SENLIS, France, July 2 (AFP/Internet): Less than 24 hours after England went out of the World Cup in a penalty shoot-out, Italy were busy practising spot-kicks in a closed-door training session here on late Wednesday.

Italy, who lost the 1994 World Cup final on penalties to Brazil, face tournament hosts France in Paris on Friday in an evenly-balanced quarter-final which could well go the maximum distance.

Italy have already been awarded one penalty at these finals, successfully converted by Roberto Baggio for a 2-2 draw in their opener against Chile.

Coach Cesare Maldini, who seems convinced that Friday's match at the Stade de France could be decided by a single dead-ball movement, was also putting his free-kick takers through their paces.

## Blame baby-faced Babeto

OZOIR-LA-FERRIERE, France, July 2 (AP/Internet): Barely 20 minutes into the game, the boos began drifting down from the stands. The target was the same as always: Babeto.

Nothing he did seemed to please the fans. Ronaldo's pass was off the mark? Babeto was out of position. A tough ball in traffic? Babeto blew it again.

The crowd chanted for Denilson, Edmundo — anybody, it seemed, except Babeto.

Four years after he teamed up with Romario to lead Brazil to a record fourth World Cup title, Babeto's prestige has sunk to a low point. His critics say he's too old, too slow, and undeserving of a starting spot on the Brazilian attack.

Coach Mario Zagallo doesn't agree. Babeto does everything asked of him, he says. In fact, Zagallo cites Babeto as an example for the often-static Ronaldo.

"Babeto at 34 moves like nobody else," Zagallo said. "But no one seems to see this."

After every game, reporters ask Zagallo if he plans to bench Babeto and start Denilson. The answer each time has been no. Babeto is fulfilling expectations and — for now — remains a starter.

But against Chile, Zagallo pulled Babeto early in the second half and sent in Denilson. Afterward, the coach said he preferred Brazil's play in the second half, even though the team scored three of its four goals in the first half.

Outside the locker room, Babeto didn't hide his frustration. "I just don't understand. The others make bad passes, but the fault is always mine," he said. "I'll take the first period a thou-

sand times if we score three goals."

Chief among the "others" is Ronaldo, and the lack of rapport between the two is one of Babeto's problems. The two-time FIFA player-of-the-year has a guaranteed spot in the lineup, so his partner — whomever he may be — must adjust.

The two got off to a bad start at the 1996 Olympics, when Brazil played poorly and finished third. Babeto complained that Ronaldo hogged the ball, while Ronaldo sniped that the team lacked leadership.

Although they made up at training camp, Ronaldo has said his preferred linemate was Romario, dropped from the squad with a calf injury on the eve of the Cup.

Babeto also clashed with Dunga. The team captain complained that Babeto was slow

setting up to defend a free kick. Babeto answered back, and Leonardo had to step between the two.

Babeto blames his woes on the partisan fans and press from Sao Paulo, Brazil's biggest city. He says they are against him because he plays for a rival team in Rio de Janeiro.

Still, it's true that Babeto is a step slower than in '94. He rarely makes the whirlwind charges of four years ago, or floats backward for his trademark volley shot.

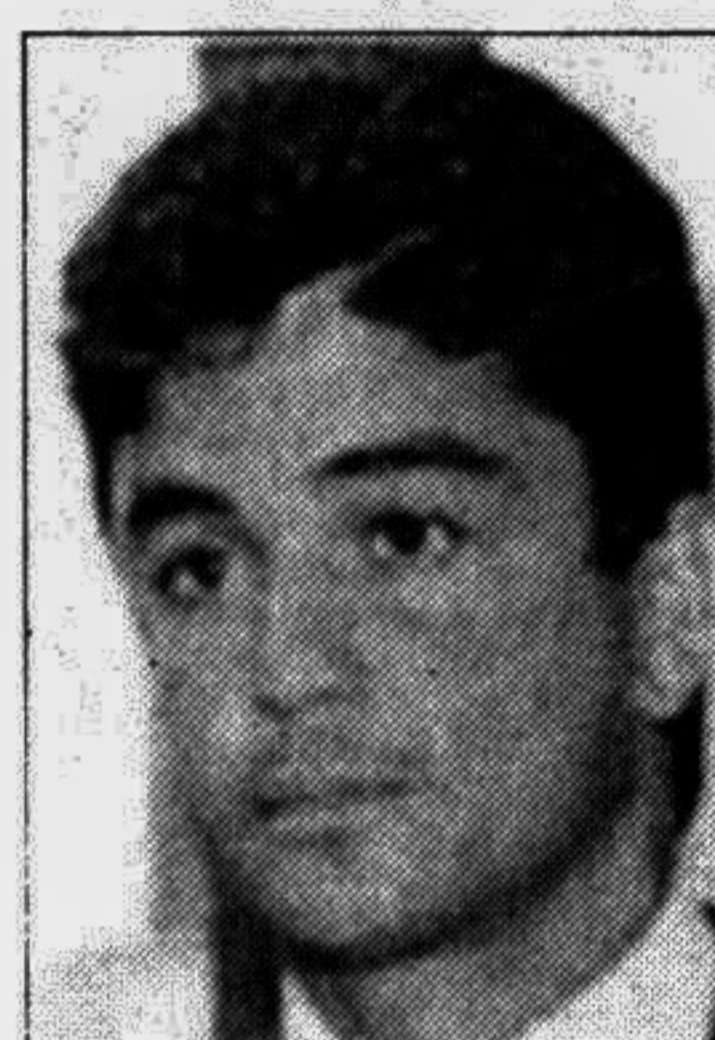
Instead, he plays for the team. His passing still is sharp, and he roams the field tirelessly to shake his defender and open spaces for teammates. He even was Brazil's top scorer in the first round with two goals.

But looking over his shoulder is Denilson, the 20-year-old dribbling dervish from Sao Paulo. His boyish grin and in-your-face style enchant fans, and — along with 21-year-old Ronaldo, he represents the future.

"Sure, fans like Denilson. His flashy soccer is pleasing, and he's an option to change the team," said team coordinator Zico. "But Babeto has the experience and the maturity to understand that."

In his third and final Cup, Babeto isn't ready to quit. "I'm 34, but with the head and the body of a kid," said Babeto, who was world champion for Brazil's 1983 junior team when Ronaldo was still in kindergarten.

The boos hurt more because it's unfair, he said. "I'm a world champion," he said. "I don't have to prove anything to anyone."



## Win at all costs

PARIS, July 2 (AFP): With France on course for their first ever World Cup triumph after winning all four matches so far, young striker David Trezeguet revealed today that the beautiful game must be put on hold.

With a tough quarterfinal against Italy in his diary for Friday at the Stade de France, Trezeguet insisted it was unrealistic to expect the teams to opt for champagne football ahead of getting a result.

All that really counts now is going through, against the Italians it's bound to be a tactical battle and very physical, explained the Monaco star who has become a regular in the side since replacing the injured Christophe Dugarry against Saudi Arabia.

"May be it's time to forget about playing pretty football. We might not necessarily produce a good game — but the game is about winning," he insisted.

The 20-year-old striker, who grew up in Argentina, clearly hasn't taken long to work out the win-at-all-costs rule which potential title-winners abide by at a World Cup once the serious business of the later stages begins.

"We want to win and we'd like to win by playing well. But playing well and losing? No, we can't go down that road."

"A 1-0 win over the Italians

as we obtained against Paraguay would do me just fine. They want to win, we want to win."

But Trezeguet did admit that, where possible, he would try to turn on the style, as has been the Monaco way under Jean Tigana, still touted as successor to French coach Aime Jacquet, who steps down after the World Cup.

"I didn't really enjoy the match against Paraguay. I didn't know whether to move back a little or stick close to their central defence and try to give them the run-around."

None of us really played that well and I suffered as much as any one against a team which was intent on defending in depth. That gave us a lot of problems.

But at this stage of the tournament that's what you're going to get. The key is to rise above that and find a way to win."

Skipper Didier Deschamps who knows the Italian squad inside out as an integral cog in the machine at Serie A Champions Juventus, agrees with Trezeguet that against Italy, the beautiful game must take a back seat.

"We have to remember one simple thing — we have to score one more goal than our opponents," he said.

## Owen-Beckham sponsor shock

LONDON, July 2 (AFP/Internet): England's youngest international footballer Michael Owen, 18, can name his price as sponsors queue up to sign on Britain's latest soccer hero.

Britain's media reported Thursday.

But as he basks in glory, teammate David Beckham was heading for the United States and consolation in the arms of Victoria Adams, his Posh Spice fiancé, as he counts the cost of his retaliation in the match against Argentina.

His sending off in the crucial World Cup clash which England lost in a penalty shoot out could cost him dear.

One of Beckham's sponsors Adidas, from whom he reportedly receives a 500,000 pounds (£830,000 dollars) a year endorsement, has pulled the plug on a multi-million pound British television advertising campaign featuring the 23-year-old Manchester United star.

Tony Stephens, agent for both players, was reportedly fending off sponsors for Owen with one hand and trying to hang on to others for Beckham with the other. The Times reported.

Owen, who picked up a one million pound bonus (£1.6 million dollars) for being England's joint leading scorer in

the competition, also has a six-year five million pound (£8.3 million dollar) deal with Umbro and a 15,000 pounds (£25,000 dollars) a week salary with his club Liverpool.

His estimated annual worth is around 1.75 million pounds (£2.9 million dollars), still far below the earnings of Beckham who reportedly collects around 8.1 million pounds a year (£13.4 million dollars).

Beckham picks up a 22,000 pounds (£36,500 dollars) weekly pay cheque from Manchester and has endorsement agreements with Umbro, Brylcreem and Pepsi which bring him in 4.7 million pounds (£7.8 million dollars).

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HE CAN AFFORD TO SMILE: England's brightest star Michael Owen waves towards the fans present at the Heathrow Airport in London upon the arrival of the World Cup squad on July 1. — AFP photo

## A history of rivalry

PARIS, July 2 (Reuters): France's goalkeeper Fabien Barthez will be anxious not to follow in the footsteps of predecessor Laurent D'Orto when France and Italy meet on Friday for the second time in a World Cup quarterfinal match.

The first time France hosted the tournament, 60 years ago, D'Orto earned a line in the soccer record books he could have lived without with arguably the worst goalkeeping blunder in any World Cup.

Instead of opting for a straightforward catch, he decided to push the ball away after a volley straight at him by Italian Gino Colaussi, unfortunately, he sent the ball sideways and crashed into the goalposts attempting to stop it falling into his own net. D'Orto never played for France again.

That was in the ninth minute and seconds later, France equalised through Oscar Heisserer. The home side then threw themselves into attack, allowing Italian star striker Silvio Piola far too much room.

In front of hostile crowd, Piola struck twice after the break to present his side with a 2-1 win at the Colombes Stadium, just outside Paris.

Italy went on to win their second successive trophy by beating Hungary 4-1 in the final.

The two countries have met on two other occasions in World Cup finals with Italy winning a first round match 2-1 in 1978 in Argentina and France taking revenge by claiming a second round tie 2-0 in 1986 in Mexico.

In the 1978 match in Mar Del Plata, France made a perfect start with diminutive striker Bernard Lacombe heading the ball past the great Dino Zoff for an early goal.

Italy dominated in midfield, Marco Tardelli subduing a young Michel Platini, and responded with two odd goals from Paolo Rossi and Renato Zaccarelli.

The Italians had to be content with fourth place that year, losing 2-1 to Brazil in the third place play off.

France's only World Cup victory over Italy so far came eight years later in Mexico City's Olympic stadium. Despite being hampered by injury, captain Platini showed his men the way by moving on to a Dominique Rocheteau pass to chip the ball over Italian keeper Giovanni Galli in the 15th minute.

Yannick Stopyra added another goal in the second half

when he drove in a Jean Tigana cross.

"We were twice as strong as they were then," said Platini, now the chairman of the French organising committee.

Blessed with talent that year, the French team later scored a memorable victory over Brazil in the quarterfinals in Guadalajara. Then, as they had done four years earlier, they fell to Germany in the semifinals.

Italy, who have appeared in all World Cup finals but two and have lifted the trophy three times — in 1934, 1938 and 1982 — have a far richer record in the event than France.

The best achievements by a French side came in 1958 with a third place in Sweden, where striker Just Fontaine set a record of 13 goals that still stands and in 1982 and 1986 with semifinal appearances.

The only other time France reached the quarterfinals was when they lost to Italy in the 1938 match.

"I'm looking forward to a match against our friends and neighbours," French coach Aime Jacquet said when he learned that France would play Italy again at the Stade de France on Friday.

But the relations between the two countries are not that simple, as Platini explained.

"Italy is another world," said Platini, who played in both the 1978 and 1986 matches and also shone in the Italian league during his five years at Juventus from 1982 to 1987.

"Even if French people like Venice or Florence, there is no love relationship between our two peoples," he added. "I felt that strongly when I lived there."

One of the reasons why Jacquet was calling the Italians friends is that several French players have followed Platini and signed for Italian clubs.

"We all improved a lot by playing in Italy," Deschamps said.

"We were good players when we arrived but now we are great players. In the Serie A, we became stronger physically, technically and mentally."

Italy, Platini said, have not changed that much since the times when he fought two World Cup battles against them.

"They're just like they used to be," he said. "They have great strikes and their defence is tough to breach, as always."

France, too look very much like their brilliant side of the early 1980s with plenty of artists in midfield and still no world class striker up front.

Deschamps said that France did not feel inferior to Italy in anyway.

eight in the World Cup for the first time.

"We had two men on the square last time mainly to keep an eye on traffic, we will probably send a few more this time but we don't expect any problem," the police spokesman said.

Some 45,000 attended the start of the Denmark-Nigeria television arrangement in Town Hall Square last Sunday, swelling to around 80,000 when the match turned into a runaway Danish victory, he said.

Big television screens are to be set up in main plazas in other major towns as well.

The Royal Palace said ruling Danish Queen Margrethe's French-born husband Prince Henrik would attend Friday's quarterfinal in Nantes, accompanied by Princess Alexandra, wife of the queen's younger son, Prince Joachim.

The palace declined to say what plans the queen had for the evening.

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