

France hungry

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mouse game of stealing matches with a sudden rapier thrust.
It failed at Euro 96.
It failed here.
Jacquet served up the night's main course in the 65th minute when he sent Henry and Trezeguet.
But still the souffle did not rise.
However both Henry and Trezeguet stepped up to dispatch their penalties with aplomb and book a further World Cup helping next week in the semi-finals.
The French must now ensure they learn the lessons from three previous failed attempts to serve up a memorable semi-final dish.
Jacquet must find which attacking blend will prove most effective against either Germany or Croatia - more likely Germany.
Henry and Trezeguet can feed off each other.
Whether the two will blend into a World Cup flavour that will score goals is a problem that is causing Jacquet indigestion.
But Jacquet has to get past the main course without choking on sauerkraut, as France did in 1982 and '86.

His royal

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ond half, Rivaldo then settled the match, picking up the ball in the Danish half, advancing on the Danish penalty area and then beating Peter Schmeichel with a low drive from 25 metres.
The second goal was a great pass by Ronaldo, Rivaldo recognised.
Ronaldo, asked about his unexpected role as provider instead of goalscorer, replied: "It's part of the game. I saw Bebeto and Rivaldo making good runs and I was fortunate enough to get the pass right and set up the goals."
Rivaldo had come into the competition under something of a cloud, having been stuck with a reputation for failing to perform wearing the famous gold shirt of the four-times world champions.
He had been labelled as greedy in some quarters - a tag he rejected the day before the game - and was out in the cold for a year after being made the scapegoat for Brazil's failure to win the gold medal at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.
Excellent performances for Barcelona in the Spanish championship, plus a rather fruitless search by coach Mario Zagallo for a midfield playmaker, led to another chance in mid 1997, after he had been overlooked for the Copa America.
Wearing the number 10 shirt, once by Pele, adds to the pressure.
But Rivaldo has shrugged off the problems, showing a strength of character that some doubted he possessed.

Azzuri lick

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Piero, could give Italy the cutting edge his coach seemingly so reluctant to contemplate.
"Football is suffering," Maldini said as he prepared for the flight back to Rome. "Football is suffering and joy - but lots of suffering."
star ever to come out of Romania. He has scored 33 goals in 114 games for his country.
"Romania goes on with or without me. The important thing is to win," said Hagi, wiping away tears, as he spoke Thursday to a crowd of 10,000 who roared his name at a soccer stadium in Bucharest.
But the man nicknamed "the Maradona of the Carpathians" isn't leaving football completely, having vowed to fight corruption in Romania football.
Laudrup, another creative midfielder player, also became a superstar despite coming from a country that rarely hits the international heights.
The 34-year-old Dane has scored 37 goals in 102 games for his country, and has an unmatched record of winning league titles with four different European powerhouses, Juventus, Barcelona, Real Madrid and Ajax.

Ode to the

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Laudrup helped steer Denmark to a quarterfinal clash against Brazil with two goal-making passes against Nigeria.
It could be a fantastic ending for me", Laudrup said before Friday's match. "First, winning the double in the Netherlands with Ajax and now to be in the quarterfinal. It's a fantastic result for Denmark already."
Laudrup, too, might not be finished with soccer altogether.
"First I will rest for a few months, but I'm only retiring from professional football," he said. "Maybe I'll regret it. You never know. I can't say because I have never quit before."
Valderrama, the 36-year-old midfielder for the Miami Fusion of the Major League Soccer in the United States, might be best remembered around the world for his dyed-orange bouffant locks, which he displayed long before the current fad for outlandish hairdos.
But players and coaches say that would be an injustice for a player who has been central to lifting the status of Colombian football on the world stage, scoring 12 goals and creating dozens more in 110 games for his country.
"Carlos is like the perfume that one wears and that people come to know you for," said Francisco Maturana, the former national coach. "It's intelligence, mental quickness. He may have a lot of defects, but I can only think of his virtues."



MAY THE LORD HELP US: Two anxious Brazilian fans keep their fingers crossed while watching the quarterfinal against Denmark on TV at Sao Paulo on July 3. — AFP photo

A five-goal thriller

From Dr Nizam
NANTES, July 4: Was the Nantes quarterfinal best game of France '98 so far? Definitely one of the most entertaining. Five goals after a famine of sorts in the earlier France-Italy clash was feasted by the noisy house at Beaujoire Stadium.
Barring the Ronaldo-Rivaldo combo to bring about Brazil's lead first time round, all the other four goals were virtual private art work. Moments of individual brilliance raised the roof at Beaujoire and Roberto Carlos must feel sorry for creating one from a fit of acrobatics that simply did not belong on a football pitch, not the least on such an occasion.
But for the sixth minute mishap in the second-half that was set play for Brian Laudrup to display his striking power, Carlos was one of Brazil's big men on the ground.
Ronaldo, sad to say, was once again ordinary by his scale which now seems like a lost legend. Not once could the so-called world's best player penetrate with the ball a defence manned by the unknown Danes. Of them Marc Rieper was prominent in the opposite box, particularly the final minute of regulation time when fine header of Soren Colding's cross fancied the bar over Tallarel.
However, such was the character of yesterday's game, Brazil found an opportunity to break on the counter and in injury time almost pulled off the fourth goal if Peter Schmeichel had not been in Giovanni's way. Earlier, Rieper should have done better with Helveg's heart-stopping minus.
Rivaldo was on heat. Acknowledging Ronaldo's measured pass, that caught the defence napping, he found the Danish net with a left-foot whopper. But his finest moment was reserved for later when he got the match-winner. With the Danish defence bracing its defence for a Brazilian one-two, Rivaldo surprised everyone with a 30-yard drive that beat Schmeichel's fingers by a mile but grazed the inner bar by a whisker.
Bebeto scored similarly but in the opposite post after a 15-yard dash again to stretch the Denmark keeper and bring Brazil back into the game.
Leonardo was off on the day and was replaced by Emerson and perhaps Zagallo should have done the switch much earlier. The Denmark being phys-

WORLD CUP NOTEBOOK

PARIS, July 4 (AFP): World Cup notebook: France's win on penalties in their quarterfinal against Italy marked a World Cup milestone. FIFA communications director Keith Cooper said Friday.
"It's the first time a host nation has won a penalty shootout at the World Cup," he said.
Hosts Italy were knocked out on penalties by Argentina in 1990 and Mexico suffered the same fate at the hands of Germany in 1986.
He said 123 spotkicks had been taken in penalty shootouts and 97 scored, or 78.8 per cent. In normal play, 144 penalties had been taken at the slightly better score rate of 122 or 84.7 per cent.
HOW TO STOP CARLOS
Brazil's wing-back Roberto Carlos is a constant headache to opposing teams with his jet-propelled runs down the left flank.
The Real Madrid left-back is most famous, however, for his extraordinary ability to bend free-kicks into the opposing goal.
Norway coach Bo Johansson found an antidote, however, during the World Cup quarterfinal in Nantes. Knowing that Roberto Carlos needs a long run-up for his free-kicks, he simply stationed a player between the Brazilian defender and the ball. And as long as the player is 10 metres from the ball, it's perfectly legal. Roberto Carlos, finding his run-up blocked, simply decided against taking the free-kick.
RECORD TV VIEWERS IN DENMARK
A record television audience of 2.8 million Danes out of a total population of 5.2 million watched the World Cup quarter-

HK cops arrest 4 gamblers
HONG KONG, July 4: Hong Kong police arrested four people today on suspicion of illegally gambling on World Cup matches, a police spokesman said, reports AFP.
The four, aged between 27 and 50, were arrested in an ambush in Yaumatei, and betting slips worth some 27 million Hong Kong dollars (\$3.5 million US dollar) were seized by police.
The four were later released on bail ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 dollars.
On Monday, police arrested eight people and seized a book registering betting amounts totalling about 58,000 Hong Kong dollars.
Two cities
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Denmark is still the best despite it all," said a youngster, one of thousands waving the Danish flag.
"It was a great evening and the best I've ever seen but it would have been even better if we had won," a middle-aged woman said.
French custodian Fabien Barthez (top) retrieves the ball while being challenged by Italian striker Christian Vieri during their quarterfinal clash at Saint-Denis on July 3. — AFP photo

Owen, a billion dollar man?

LONDON, July 4 (AP): England's 18-year-old World Cup star Michael Owen could become soccer's first billionaire, the Daily Mirror reported Friday.
The Mirror estimated the value of Owen, who scored one of the most spectacular goals of the tournament during England's second-round loss to Argentina, had soared to at least 50 million pounds (\$83 million dollars).
The paper quoted Peter Draper, a spokesman for sportswear manufacturer Umbro, as saying Owen could become a billionaire.
Umbro signed Owen to a six-year deal three weeks ago, when the Liverpool star was not even a starter in Glenn Hoddle's World Cup team.
"It is possible (Owen) could be the 'Michael Jordan' of football," Draper said, referring to comparisons between the striker and the Chicago Bulls superstar.
"Is that boy next door image image that promises to be his passport to the biggest fortune in footballing history," Draper added.
The Mirror also quoted leading soccer agent Pine Zaravi as saying he was asked to put a value on Owen last year by Italian team AC Milan.
"There was unofficial interest from Milan and they would not have hesitated in paying 27 million pounds (44.8 million dollars) in fee and salary," he said.
Zaravi said the asking price for Owen would have to start at 50 million pounds (\$83 million dollars) since the World Cup.

France parties

PARIS, July 4: Tens of thousands of French supporters took to the streets on Friday evening to celebrate their national team's penalty shootout victory over Italy and their place in the World Cup semifinals, reports Reuters.
Police estimated some 40,000 people were thronging the fashionable Champs Elysees boulevard, dancing and hugging each other in excitement.
Cars raced through the capital honking their horns and crowds poured out of cafes and draped blue, white and red tricolor flags over passing vehicles.
People were singing the Marseillaise and chanting "We won, we won."
"At the end, I was a bit tense," said Sandrine, 27, following the penalty shootout which France won 4-3 after the match ended 0-0 after extra time. "For me, it was a bit like a horror film."
Hundreds of police were on hand in case the celebrations got out of hand but the atmosphere was good-natured and no arrests were reported.
"It's the first time I've been to Paris. I came specially to the Champs Elysees to see this," Briton Joe McDaniel, 53, said. "It's unbelievable, amazing. It's exactly how I hoped it would be if France won. The French are fantastic."
Marseilles, a crowd of around 3,000 watched the match on a giant screen at the Prado Beach Complex and after the shootout spilled into the surrounding streets.
Marseilles' Stade Velodrome, a mile from the beach, became the focus of fans' attention and hundreds milled around outside waving flags and cheering.

FA keeps faith in Hoddle

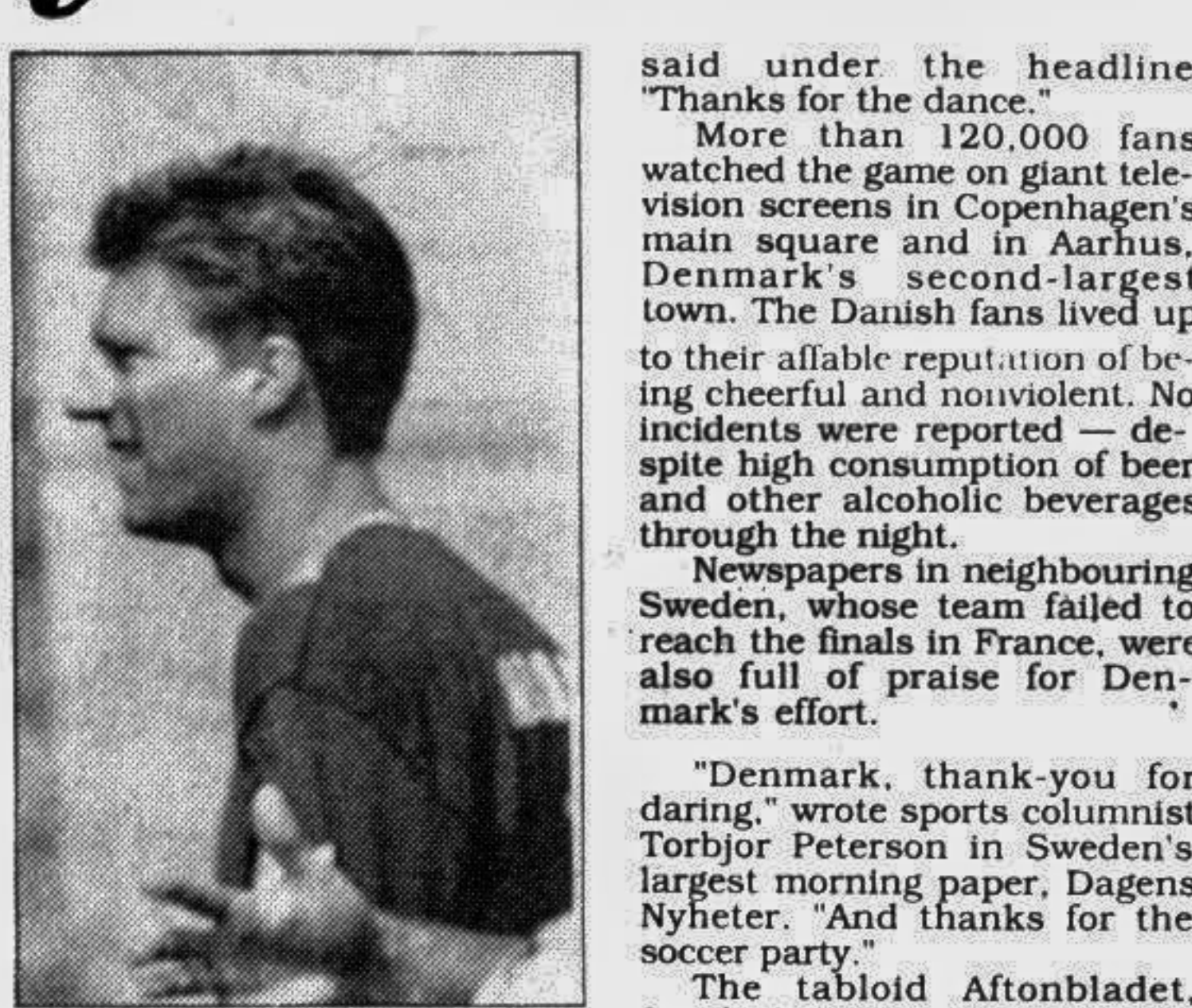
LONDON, July 4 (The Daily Mail/Internet): Glenn Hoddle's FA bosses want him to lead England into the next World Cup in 2002.
He might even stay in the post until the 2006 World Cup, which England are hoping to stage, despite the team's second-round exit from this year's competition at the hands of Argentina.
Hoddle signed a four-year deal when he took over from Terry Venables in June 1996, but he may be offered a new agreement that could substantially increase his £250,000-a-year salary.
FA chairman Keith Wiseman said: "There is no doubt in my mind that England will win the World Cup under Glenn Hoddle. We have complete confidence in him and with the job he is doing."
Wiseman said the reaction of the crowd on the England team's return home showed how highly the fans thought of them.
" reflected our mood and how we think of Glenn. The frustration is that we came back knowing we were so close," he said.

Sacking spree

TUNIS, France, July 4 (Reuters/Internet): Ali Selmi, who took charge of the Tunisian World Cup squad after coach Henry Kasperczak was sacked during the first round, was himself dismissed on Friday.
Both he and another deputy coach Ali Rached were sacked at a meeting of the Tunisian Football Federation called to discuss the restructuring of the national squad.
Selmi led Tunisia to a 1-1 draw against Romania in his only match in charge. They had lost their opening two first round matches and finished bottom of their group.

Goodbye Michael!

COPENHAGEN, July 4: Danish newspapers on Saturday bid farewell to playmaker Michael Laudrup and lauded the 'red-and-whites' valiant effort against Brazil in the soccer World Cup quarterfinal, reports AP.
Denmark's 3-2 loss to the world champions was "The world's most beautiful defeat," said Berlingske Tidende.
Jyllands-Posten said it was "An elegant good-bye to the World Cup."
Newspapers splashed superlatives across their front-pages.
"Thanks and goodbye," the tabloid Ekstra Bladet headlined across its front page, next to a photo of Laudrup, considered one of Denmark's best players ever. The 34-year-old had earlier announced he would retire after 17 years on the Danish side.
"Oh Gods, Michael Laudrup would have deserved to lift the World Cup trophy in Paris on July 12. But that's how soccer is. The match should have been a final, with a different winner," Ekstra Bladet said.
It added that the Danes, who reached the quarterfinals after a convincing 4-1 win against



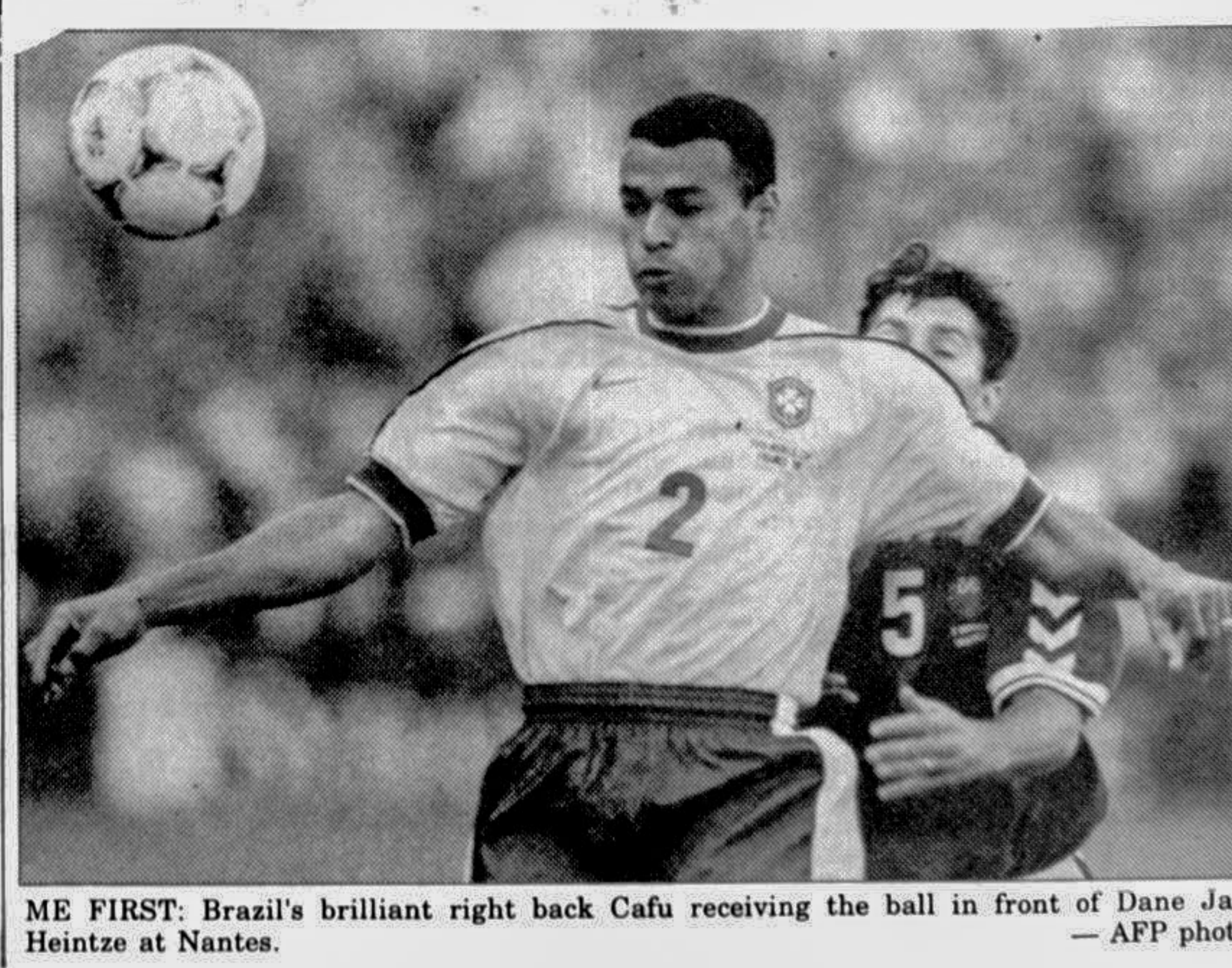
MICHAEL LAUDRUP
said under the headline "Thanks for the dance."
More than 120,000 fans watched the game on giant television screens in Copenhagen's main square and in Aarhus, Denmark's second-largest town. The Danish fans lived up to their affable reputation of being cheerful and nonviolent. No incidents were reported - despite high consumption of beer and other alcoholic beverages through the night.
Newspapers in neighbouring Sweden, whose team failed to reach the finals in France, were also full of praise for Denmark's effort.
"Denmark, thank-you for daring," wrote sports columnist Torbjorn Peterson in Sweden's largest morning paper, Dagens Nyheter. "And thanks for the soccer party."
The tabloid Aftonbladet, Sweden's largest paper, printed several pages about the Danish team. The main story's headline was "The beaten heroes" and "Denmark - you are the best losers of all time."
Aftonbladet's rival, Expressen, was also gushing in its accolades. "So close Denmark - Thanks for the party..."



ITALY'S HEART ABOUT TO BE BROKEN: Luigi Di Biagio's powerful drive on its way to hitting the bar during penalty shoot-out of the quarterfinal game against France on July 3. — AFP photo

Four years later, memory of Escobar lives on

PARIS, July 4 (SportsLine WorldWide): On a dirt field in New York's Flushing Meadow Park on Thursday morning, Miguel Cuellar will address several hundred budding soccer players about a good and decent man he once knew.
He will tell them about the man's character, about what type of soccer player he was, about how he lived, and just as important, how he died. Cuellar will then ask for a minute of silence for his fallen countryman, Andres Escobar.
Thursday is the fourth anniversary of the death of Escobar, who was gunned down outside a Medellin, Colombia, nightclub on July 2, 1994, after accidentally scoring an own goal in the World Cup. Escobar, who was 27, was shot 12 times as one of the gunmen shouted, "Goal! Goal!" Sepp Blatter, now FIFA president, called that Saturday "the saddest day I have ever witnessed in football."
Escobar's only crime was that he tried too hard to stop a US offensive foray into his penalty area on June 21, 1994. John Harkes sent a low drive from the left wing intended for Ernie Stewart. But the ball never got there. Escobar, in a sliding attempt to clear the ball out of harm's way, accidentally directed the ball into his own net for the Americans' first goal of what was to become a 2-1 upset.
The US team eventually went on to the second round. The Colombians went home in disgrace after being eliminated several days later.
Cuellar, a 47-year-old sales manager for Duggan's Distillers who lives in Queens, N.Y., had started a youth soccer club -- the New York Inter Soccer Institute -- earlier in 1994. On July 2, he awoke early to listen to radio from his native Colombia. He was expecting folk songs. What he heard was shocking -- the details of Escobar's death. Cuellar was so shaken he woke his wife and later that day decided to re-name his fledgling club the Andres Escobar Soccer Institute.
The Institute, which is now 190 players strong in age groups from four to 14 for boys and girls, plays in the green and white of Escobar's old club, Nacional.
"He was a gentleman and outside the field," Cuellar said. "That's what we want to tell the kids."
"Soccer is only a game to enjoy. You have to learn to win, lose or draw. Some people can't deal with losing a game."
Escobar's cousin, Ernesto Bencosmo, a 12-year-old left wing who is a convert from baseball, has played with the club for three years. "He was a good player," Bencosmo said. "I didn't think there was any reason for his death because many players have scored goals for the opposing team."
Last winter, an eerie scenario took place during an indoor tournament. Ernesto Bencosmo scored an own goal, just like his cousin.
"I looked at him. He looked at me," Cuellar said. "After the game I told him to forget about it. It has happened before to other players and it will happen again. I didn't want him to get too deep into it."
Bencosmo will be one of the players at the park Thursday;



ME FIRST: Brazil's brilliant right back Cafu receiving the ball in front of Dane Jan Heintze at Nantes. — AFP photo