

Flops & Failures

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Lawal claimed the goal - the Opprobrium was heaped on Zubi who retired suitably castigated two weeks later after a goalless draw with Paraguay...

Bungles & Blunders

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Coach Glenn Hoddle said of Beckham's blunder, "I am not denying it cost us the game. Was it poetic justice when Ariel Ortega of Argentina was sent off in similar circumstances in the next round against Holland, responding to provocation from Dutch goalkeeper Edwin Van Der Sar?"

French women

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with two goals from Lizarazu and Henry and then one goal for Brazil for honour's sake," she said. A pre-World Cup poll showed 70 percent of French women were indifferent to the tournament...

Nike-Adidas

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referring to the French team. Adidas reckons it will sell half a million French shirts should France win and a rump of its image. Nike, the world leader in sports shoes, aims to overtake Adidas as leader in the football market by 2002...

Suker-punch

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threw into injury to be brought into the fray by Hiddink in an unlikely 2-4-4 formation at the re-start, and the Arsenal winger was soon causing trouble. An ineffective Dennis Bergkamp was the next to go, in favour of Pierre van Hoojdonk, as Hiddink pushed his men to score an equaliser against a Croatian side who were content just to sit on the result.

MATCH STATS

Table with columns for Goals, Shots on target, Shots off target, Corners, Fouls, Offsides, Red cards, Total yellow cards, and Attendance. Rows for NED and CRO.



ZENDEN TAKES OFF: Boudewijn Zenden, the Dutch juggernaut, leaps in the air while celebrating his brilliant strike against Croatia. - AFP photo

Speaking tactically

PARIS, July 12 (AFP/Internet): Well now that the shows over, how was it for you - tactically speaking, that is? At the risk of stating the obvious, the 32 teams at France 98 were hardly likely to reinvent the wheel at this World Cup any more than at previous tournaments...

Scoundrel or scapegoat?

PARIS, July 12: (AFP/Reuters/Internet): Slaven Bilic hit back at his tormentors here on Saturday night as the most hated man in France won the World Cup bronze medal. Croatia beat Holland 2-1 in their play-off, but the 45,000 crowd boomed and whistled when Bilic's name was read out from the team sheet after his altercation with Laurent Blanc...

'Champagne' WC Blasted by MP

LONDON, July 12 (AFP/Internet): France 98 was denounced by a senior British politician on Saturday as "a tournament of smoked salmon and champagne, VIP seating and credit card fatigue."

THE SCORERS

PARIS, July 12 (AP): Goalscorers in the 16th World Cup after Saturday's third-place play-off (penalties in parentheses): Six goals: Davor Suker, Croatia (1). Five goals: Christian Vieri, Italy, Gabriel Batistuta, Argentina (2). Four goals: Luis Hernandez, Mexico, Ronaldo, Brazil (1), Marcelo Salas, Chile (2). Three goals: Bebeto, Brazil, Dennis Bergkamp, Netherlands, Oliver Bierhoff, Germany, Cesar Sampaio, Brazil, Thierry Henry, France, Jurgen Klinsmann, Germany, Rivaldo, Brazil. Two goals: Roberto Baggio, Italy (1), Shaun Bartlett, South Africa (1), Salaheddine Bassier, Morocco, Phillip Cocu, Netherlands, Ronald de Boer, Netherlands, Abdeljilil Hadda, Morocco, Fernando Hierro, Spain (1), Patrick Kluijvert, Netherlands, Slobodan Komljenovic, Yugoslavia, Brian Laudrup, Denmark, Kiko Narvaez, Spain, Viorel Moldovan, Romania, Fernando Morientes, Spain, Ariel Ortega, Argentina, Michael Owen, England, Ricardo Pelaez, Mexico, Alan Shearer, England (1), Marc Wilmots, Belgium, Theodore Whitmore, Jamaica, Lillian Thuram, France, Robert Prosenicki, Croatia. One goal: Mutiu Adepolu, Nigeria, Sami al-Jaber, Saudi Arabia (1), Youssif Al-Thnyyan, Saudi Arabia (1), Darren Anderton, England, Celso Ayala, Paraguay, Tijani Babangida, Nigeria, David Beckham, England, Miguel Benitez, Paraguay, Laurent Blanc, France, Cuauhtemoc Blanco, Mexico, Craig Burley, Scotland, Jose Cardozo, Paraguay, John Collins, Scotland (1), Luigi Di Biagio, Italy, Edgar Davids, Netherlands, Youri Djorkaeff, France, Robbie Earle, Jamaica, Hamid Estili, Iran, Dan Eggen, Norway, Tore Andre Flo, Norway, Alberto Garcia Aspe, Mexico (1), Mustafa El Hadji, Morocco, Havard Flo, Norway, Ha Seok-ju, South Korea, Thomas Helveg, Denmark, Andreas Herzog, Austria (1), Victor Ikpeba, Nigeria, Adrian Ilie, Romania, Robert Jari, Croatia, Martin Jorgensen, Denmark, Emil Kostadinov, Bulgaria, Michael Laudrup, Denmark (1), Garba Lizarazu, France, Claudio Lopez, Argentina, Luis Enrique, Spain, Mehdi Mahdavi, Iran, Patrick Mboma, Cameroon, Brian McBride, United States, Benni McCarthy, South Africa, Sinisa Mihajlovic, Yugoslavia, Andreas Moeller, Germany, Peter Moeller, Denmark, Masashi Nakayama, Japan, Allan Nielsen, Denmark, Luc Nilis, Belgium, Pierre Njanka, Cameroon, Sunday Oliseh, Nigeria, Wilson Oruma, Nigeria, Marc Overmars, Netherlands, Predrag Mijatovic, Yugoslavia, Emmanuel Petit, France, Dan Petrescu, Romania, Hector Pineda, Argentina, Anton Polster, Austria, Leider Preclodo, Colombia, Raul Gonzalez, Spain, Kjetil Rekdal, Norway (1), Marc Ripper, Denmark, Ebbe Sand, Denmark, Paul Scholes, England, Jose Sierra, Chile, Skander Souayah, Tunisia (1), Mario Stanic, Croatia, Dragan Stokovic, Yugoslavia, David Trezeguet, France, Pierre van Hoojdonk, Netherlands, Ivica Vastic, Austria, Goran Vlavovic, Croatia, Yoo Sang-chul, South Korea, Javier Zanetti, Argentina, Boudewijn Zenden, Netherlands. Own goals: Sinisa Mihajlovic, Yugoslavia, Tommy Boyd, Scotland, Youssif Chippo, Morocco, Pierre Issa, South Africa.

Asian football crisis

PARIS, July 12 (AFP): Asia were the poorest continent at the World Cup with no team in the second round although Japan and Korea will be jointly hosting the 2002 tournament. Japan, South Korea, Iran and Saudi Arabia, who made the second round in USA '94 all fell in the group stages. If South Korea's Choi Yong-soo, top scorer in qualifying with nine goals, had been sharper in the box in their last group match against Belgium, the Koreans would have clinched that elusive first World Cup win. They have now played 14 matches in five World Cup finals without a victory, but the 1-1 draw was greeted as one by stand-in manager Kim Pyong-sok players and supporters alike. It was fitting that captain Yoo Sang-chul scored the equaliser for South Korea in the 71st minute. He was the glue that held the team together after the damaging defeats to Holland and Mexico and was the team's most consistent player in France '98. South Korea came into the tournament with the lofty goal of reaching the second round and in the reverend Cha Bum-Kun the nation felt they had the coach to deliver. But the country's one true footballing icon, whose 98 goals in 308 matches in Germany's Bundesliga is a record for an overseas player, was both foolish and naive in team selection and tactics. Japan's players stung by their poor performances at the World Cup finals, where they finished bottom of their group and without a point, look set to end their isolation from World Cup football and move to European Clubs. The players are determined to put on a better show when they co-host the 2002 World Cup with South Korea, and see moving away from the poorly rated J-League as a way of improving their skills and becoming more competitive at international level. Japan Football Association (JFA) secretary general Junji Ogura said that although European scouts had been watching several of the Japanese players in the first round their high salaries might discourage transfer deals. "But the players themselves may accept lower pay in order to gain experience," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised if several of the players do move abroad soon," he added. Target man Shoji Jo, whose poor finishing contributed to Japan's three straight Group H defeats and coach Takeshi Okada's resignation, admitted he would like to play abroad if an opportunity arises. Jo's quick rise forced out veteran striker Kazu Miura, who has played at Brazilian club Santos and Serie A side Genoa, leaving Okada's squad with no players with experience at foreign clubs. Goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, 22, said he was ready to play abroad "on a stage where I can improve my game." Saudi Arabia, who reached the second round in USA '94, were the first team to be eliminated from the World Cup this time and then suffered internal discord following the sacking of their coach. They may have drawn 2-2 with South Africa in their last game, but it was mere consolation for a team led by new boss Mohamed Al-Kharashi following the axing of Brazil's Carlos Alberto Parreira. Predictable comments in public have not been able to conceal the internal discord which culminated in a rift between players and officials following Parreira's sacking. The decision to get rid of Parreira was taken by Prince Faisal at a hastily called meeting in which the French capital after two crushing defeats in their opening group matches. But despite claims by some Saudi officials that his ousting had lifted team morale for their final group match against South Africa, there was growing criticism with in the Saudi camp. Saudi officials convinced themselves that by taking on Parreira a touch of Brazilian magic would rub off on them for the World Cup, also he was a known quantity. He had been in charge in 1988 when Saudi Arabia won the Asian Cup. He had also coached Kuwait in the 1982 World Cup, and the United Arab Emirates in the 1990 finals. The Saudis reached the last 16 four years ago and Parreira was left in no doubt that similar success was expected in France. As for Iran, Jalal Talebi's side sparked wild celebrations back home when they beat the United States 2-1 in Lyon to put themselves in with a chance of reaching the last 16 of France '98. Hundreds of thousands of Iranian men and women poured into the streets of Tehran and partied long into the night after the dramatic victory in once unthinkable scenes of public festivity. But Iran fell 2-0 to Germany in their final group game and were eliminated from the tournament.

The Fall Guys

PARIS, July 12 (AFP): When Japanese team boss Takeshi Okada fell in his sword after the defeat by Jamaica in Japan's last group match, three of Asia's four World Cup teams had put up the "coach wanted" sign at France '98. Okada, who rescued Japan from World Cup oblivion after he took over from Shu Kamo during last year's qualifying campaign, took responsibility for the strikers' failure to convert chances into goals. His resignation pre-empted any decision by the Japan FA on his future and saved him from the fate of South Korea's Cha Bum-Kun and Carlos Alberto Parreira of Saudi Arabia who were summarily sacked. Cha, Korea's only true footballing icon, paid the price for gambling on team selection and asking his players to man-mark those masters of the dribble and close control, Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars of Holland. His replacement Kim Pyong-Sok, whose only previous coaching experience was with a women's team, guided the side to a 1-1 draw with Belgium but said afterwards he had no interest in the job. With the highly-regarded Cha having failed, and been humiliated in the process, there will be no rush to take over the coaching job. Cha, who won two UEFA Cup medals while playing in Germany's Bundesliga during the 1980s, replaced former Asian coach-of-the-year Park Jong-Hwan after Korea's 6-2 loss to Iran in the quarterfinals of the 1996 Asian Cup. Parreira, on top of the world four years ago when he guided Brazil to victory in USA '94, was a victim of the fickle oil sheikhs who run Saudi football. They had convinced themselves that their talented, but fragile, side were world beaters and wanted a world beater to lead them. But France exposed the frailties in the Saudi team and their 4-0 win split the end of Parreira's time in charge. Parreira, who the Saudis expected to be a miracle worker, was not surprised at his sacking but expressed disappointment at his treatment. "I am not happy," he said. "But I feel comfortable with myself as a man and as a professional. I would have like to stay on until the end of the World Cup. I don't think that by changing the coach every week you build a very good team." Mohamed Al Kharashi was appointed as stand in coach and the players delivered a 2-2 draw with South Africa in their final match. Iran, whose win over the United States in the 'mother of all football matches' was celebrated long into the night in Tehran, are the only side from the Asian zone to have retained their coach throughout the World Cup. However, they have dismissed two managers since becoming the last team to book a place in France '98 by ending out Australia last December. Valder Vierra took them to the World Cup but was replaced by highly-regarded Croat Tomislav Ivic in January. But when warm-up matches went badly he was kicked out and Jalal Talebi led them against the Yugoslavia and the United States.

Zagallo the enigma

PARIS, July 12 (AFP/Internet): As a player he was known as the Little Ant, and as Brazil's veteran coach he is nicknamed the Old Wolf. Whatever you call him, Mario Zagallo remains an enigma. Some see him as a man who has taken the flair out of Brazil's players by subjecting them to a rigid tactical system. Others claim he has put the steel back into Brazil while allowing them to continue displaying their natural skills. Nearly 30 years on, the debate still rages about whether he merely inherited the magnificent 1970 World Cup team or whether he built it himself. Even the spelling of his surname gives rise to uncertainty. Half the Brazilian media use one "l," the other half use two. Zagallo himself says that two is correct. Zagallo, world champion as a player in 1958 and 1962, as a coach in 1970 and as assistant coach in 1994, has often contradicted himself. In 1970, he was in charge of a Brazil team whose style was acclaimed as the utopian example of how the game should be played - with artistry and talent, without fear and worrying about defence. Four years later, he coached Brazil at the West Germany World Cup but this time the South Americans, for the first time in their history, tried to adopt a European approach and few tears were shed when the Netherlands knocked them out. At last year's Copa America, Zagallo was alternately singing the praises of his team's attacking flair after a 2-2 win over Mexico and claiming that winning was the only thing that mattered after a 2-0 win over Paraguay. In that game, Brazil scored two early goals and then fell back into mass defence. This year, Brazil has at times played with reckless abandon, throwing both full-backs forward and leaving huge spaces at the back. At other times, the Brazilians have flooded their defence to protect one-goal leads and Zagallo has been seen replacing creative players, such as Leonardo, with defensive men such as Emerson. Such tactical behaviour has led to Zagallo being labelled a "Retranquero" - literally a double lock man. But he is not worried about what other people think of his coaching. "I don't like to please other people. I like to please myself," he said before the World Cup. Zagallo is normally a jovial person with an extraordinary patience when giving interviews, speaking to even his sternest critics. But it takes only the mildest provocation for him to launch into an impassioned defence of himself, in which he cites his career achievements time and again. After Brazil won last year's Copa America final, Zagallo rushed up to a Brazilian camera crew and, red in the face through a mixture of anger and excitement, shouted "now you're going to have to swallow me" to millions of television viewers. Asked once if he was in a bad mood, he replied: "Yes, I am. And I was in a bad mood in 1958. I was in a bad mood in 1962, in 1970 and in 1994." The real windup is to accuse Zagallo of not building the 1970 team himself. The Old Wolf took over three months before the start of the competition after Joao Saldanha was sacked for telling the military government to stay out of team affairs. Zagallo will go into intricate details of all the innovations he made to prove that the team was of his making. At 66, his appetite for soccer and for the collection of world titles still appears to be insatiable. Said assistant coach Zico: "I'm privileged to work with someone who is so popular and who loves football and loves his country like he does." Zagallo has hardly behaved like somebody who has seen it all before. Never mind



CLASSY CLARENCE: Dutch midfielder Clarence Seedorf (C) dribbles through two Croatians Stimac (No 4) and Suker (R) at Parc des Princes on July 11. - AFP photo