

The dad-son dilemma

REUTERS, Sendai

Italy captain Paolo Maldini and his father Cesare can be forgiven for having divided loyalties at the World Cup.

The 70-year-old Cesare, former coach of Italy, is leading the Paraguay team in South Korea and Japan, and the two are keeping in touch.

"We keep in frequent contact and spoke after Paraguay's draw with South Africa," Paolo told reporters on Thursday.

"It is certainly a different experience to coaching Italy but while he is doing his job he is also rooting for Italy in our games," the 33-year-old added.

Cesare, 70, was Italy's coach at the World Cup in France four years ago when the 'Azzurri' were knocked out by the hosts and eventual winners in the quarter-finals.

That defeat cost him his job, and Maldini was restricted to a role of being chief scout at AC Milan until he took the reins of the first team as on a caretaker basis towards the end of the 2000-01 season.

Maldini senior was appointed coach of the south American side last December, and led his team to a 2-2 draw with South Africa in their opening World Cup game on Sunday.

"I've had a few problems with the telephones but, yes, of course I've talked to him more or less every day," Maldini said.

"I've spoken to (Italy coach Giovanni) Trapattoni too and they're all very well.

"It was great for me to see Italy win, not only because of my son Paolo but because it's my country," he added.

Paolo, Italy's most capped player with 123 appearances, is playing in his fourth World Cup finals and can break Lothar Matthaeus's record of 25 appearances in finals games if Italy reach the last four.



PHOTO: AFP

SYNCHRONISED TRAINING? South Africa footballers practise at the Daegu World Cup Stadium in South Korea yesterday.

SLOVENIA VS SOUTH AFRICA

Forget Zahovic

REUTERS, Taegu

A Slovenia team scarred by internal dissent will be seeking a touch of Irish magic when they face South Africa on Saturday in World Cup group B without their most influential player.

Like the Irish, Slovenia have sacrificed a key man, Zlatko Zahovic, in a bid to preserve squad unity after a bitter row with the coach.

But whereas the Irish bust-up between coach Mick McCarthy and captain Roy Keane took place before the tournament and the team has gone on to record two battling draws, Slovenia only decided to expel Zahovic on Thursday after a week of bitter rows with coach Srecko Katanec since their 3-1 loss to Spain.

Whether they can regroup in time to match a fired-up South Africa remains to be seen.

South Africa come full of belief after fighting back from two goals down to secure a 2-2 draw with Paraguay, midfielder Quinton Fortune converting an injury-time penalty to register his first goal for

his country in his 40th international. The Slovenian mood looks far less positive, battered by a week of divisive in-fighting and "harmful behaviour" that the federation blamed squarely on the fiery Zahovic.

Zahovic finally got the boot on Thursday, "with an aim of calming the atmosphere in the squad and putting all the energy to the following World Cup matches," according to the Slovenian soccer federation.

The row was only the latest clash between the stylish Benfica attacker and the coach widely credited with guiding the tiny nation of two million people to their first World Cup since Slovenia split from the Yugoslav

Federation in 1991.

Katanec is lucky enough to have a replacement for Zahovic's skills in the midfield. It was his substitution for Milenko Acimovic against Spain that rekindled Zahovic's long-simmering feud with the coach, and Acimovic looks likely to step in again.

South Africa, playing in only their second World Cup, are optimistic that defender Pierre Issa will recover from an ankle injury in time to play against Slovenia.

The 26-year-old twisted his right ankle in a 22nd minute challenge on Paraguay striker Roque Santa Cruz.

PROBABLE TEAMS

South Africa: (Formation 5-4-1; Jersey numbers in the beginning): 16-Andre Arendse; 2-Cyril Nzama, 3-Bradley Carnell, 4-Aaron Mokoena, 13-Pierre Issa, 19-Lucas Radebe; 6-Macbeth Sibaya, 7-Quinton Fortune, 12-Tebeho Mokoena, 15-Sibusiso Zuma; 17-Benni McCarthy.

Slovenia: (Formation 4-5-1; Jersey numbers in the beginning): 1-Marko Simeunovic; 6-Aleksander Knavs, 5-Marinko Galic, 3-Zeljko Milinovic, 19-Amir Karic; 7-Doni Novak, 8-Ales Ceh, 11-Miran Pavlin, 13-Mladen Rudonja, 18-Milenko Acimovic, 9-Milan Osterc.

Referee: Angel Sanchez (Argentina)

China's samba test

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Edmilson, who plays his trade with French side Lyon, was nervy and made several mistakes against Turkey, fluffing passes and giving away possession.

Scolari had said after that match that his defence must improve after leaving itself exposed at times from the long forward runs made by the likes of Cafu and Roberto Carlos.

The tall Polga also brings an added dimension for corner kicks, having a reputation as a dangerous opponent in the opposition box. He scored several times in the qualifying campaign.

Polga, one of the unheralded stars of Brazil's hit-and-miss World Cup qualifying campaign, said he was delighted to get off the bench.

"The coach hasn't asked me for anything special," he said. "For me it's just important to start the game."

Brazil's players are playing down talk of a possible big score against China.

"If we win 1-0 it will be an excel-

lent result for us, because we will get three points and take a big step towards qualifying," said Cafu, the team captain. "If we score four goals, all the better, but we have to score the first to get the fourth."

While Brazil will go into Saturday's match as overwhelming favourites Scolari said they were taking nothing for granted.

"Brazil has respect for China as it does for all the other teams in the competition," he added, referring to China's Yugoslav coach Bora Milutinovic.

"We would never consider China a weak team before the match. Bora's teams are always very well organised so we are being very careful."

Milutinovic, who has coached four different countries at the World Cup and has taken each one beyond the first round, has demanded more concentration from his team.

"For such a strong opponent we must improve our concentration and

as much as possible prevent the opposition from controlling the ball," he said.

"We must strengthen our tackling and formation. In the Costa Rica game, we lost the ball because our concentration was not good enough at some moments," said Milutinovic.

"But the match against Brazil is also a pleasure for us because everybody knows what it means to be able to play Brazil. We will improve our own ability and level as much as possible."

Milutinovic also has injury worries over midfielders Qi Hong and Li Tie and central defender Li Weifeng.

Scolari said he had no such headaches.

"Our squad is fully fit," he said.

SCORING CHART

AFP, Seoul

World Cup scorers after Friday's matches:

- 4 - Miroslav Klose (Ger)
- 3 - Jon Dahl Tomasson (Den)
- 2 - Fernando Hierro (Spa), Henrik Larsson (Swe), Fernando Morientes (Spa), Christian Vieri (Ita)

- 1 - Julius Aghahova (Ngr), Niclas Alexandersson (Swe), Francisco Arce (Par), Michael Ballack (Ger), Gabriel Batistuta (Arg), David Beckham (Eng), Beto (Por), Oliver Bierhoff (Ger), Cuauhtemoc Blanco (Mex), Sol Campbell (Eng), Sebastian Cimiric (Slo), Salif Diao (Sen), Pape Bouba Diop (Sen), Samuel Eto'o (Cmr), Quinton Fortune (Rsa), Ronald Gomez (Crc), Hasan Sas (Tur), Matt Holland (Irl), Sun-Hong Hwang (Kor), Junichi Inamoto (Jpn), Carsten Jancker (Ger), Valery Karpin (Rus), Robbie Keane (Irl), Thomas Linke (Ger), Brian McBride (USA), Tebeho Mokoena (Rsa), John O'Brien (USA), Patrick Mboma (Cmr), Raul (Spa), Rivaldo (Bra), Dario Rodriguez (Uru), Ronaldo (Bra), Roque Santa Cruz (Par), Bernd Schneider (Ger), Takayuki Suzuki (Jpn), Egor Titov (Rus), Valeron (Spa), Peter Van der Heyden (Bel), Marc Wilmots (Bel), Mauricio Wright (Crc), Sang-Chul Yoo (Kor).

Lady luck not French

REUTERS, Pusan

Lady Luck, a constant companion of France's soccer squad for the past four years, has packed her bags and left.

Nothing is going right for the world champions at the moment.

Their best player is injured, talented French strikers are hitting the woodwork rather than the net and the team's frustration means if something can go awry, it generally does.

How different all this is from the World Cup of 1998 when, as hosts, France were considered underdogs, yet still managed to win the title without any world class forwards.

A golden goal by defender Laurent Blanc helped France sneak past Paraguay to reach the last eight before a victorious penalty shoot-out sent them into the last four.

Even in the semi-final they were lucky. Lilian Thuram popped up to slot two goals any number nine in the world would have been proud of.

The scenario repeated itself in 2000 when France won the European championship.

In the quarter-finals, Spain striker Raul shot wide from the penalty spot only one minute from time and his side lost 2-1.

In the next round, Zinedine Zidane, in his very best, eliminated Portugal thanks to an extra-time penalty after defender Abel Xavier handled the ball inside the box.

The final against Italy was a genuine masterpiece of suspense with Wiltord equalising four minutes into injury time before substitute David Trezeguet volleyed home a golden goal winner.

Few French voices were raised then to mention that the European champions had been more lucky than dominant.

CUP CORNER

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any chance of making the second round, but Chirac is convinced with his support they can do it.

Chirac, in a personal message to Desailly made public by his press office, wrote: "You played a superb match against Uruguay and rediscovered the solidarity and the aggressiveness which are the force of 'Les Bleus', although unfortunately it hasn't yet been capped off with success."

"Of course, like all French people on Tuesday, I will be by your side for the Denmark match. We have high hopes that you can meet the challenge that awaits you."

Chirac's message was quickly followed up by a telegram from the French Minister of Sport, addressed to coach Roger Lemerre.

"Today France showed their true face even if there was no victory, the attitude was right," said Jean-Francois Lamour.

STOITKOV IS BORED

INTERNET, Sofia

Former Barcelona Bulgarian player Hristo Stoitkov considers the World Cup 2002 to be the most boring an uninteresting one during the last 12 years, Russian Information Agency Novosti reported.

"WC-2002 has nothing in common with the championships held in Italy (1990), USA (1994) and France (1998)," stated Stoitkov.

According to the former player, the biggest difference between this tournament and the previous ones, is that nowadays players are more focused on how not to fail, rather than how to win.

"Almost all the matches are rather boring. I am not impressed by any of the national teams so far. The professional level of the players is taking a turn for the worse year by year, and the stadiums practically stay empty," he added.

Stoitkov explained the present situation by the complicated championships the players had earlier faced in their countries. Even more, there are still a number of injured players - national team leaders, who are currently out of action.

The Bulgarian recalled Zinedane Zidane, who had a brilliant performance in the Spanish Championship this season, and said the French star would obviously secure his side's win in the WC-2002 opening match against Senegal if he were on pitch.

TALLEST BUDDHA

AFP, Seoul

South Korea on Friday unveiled the world's tallest gold-bronze Buddha statue which it hopes will help ensure a successful World Cup football tournament.

The 33-meter (109-foot) high cast, which was erected 12 years ago as a bronze, has been coated with gold at Beopju-sa, a Buddhist temple 180 kilometers (111 miles) south of Seoul, after 18 months of work, temple officials said.

Korean World Cup Organising Committee said co-chairman Chung Mong-Joon and other leaders attended the statue dedication ceremony aimed at praying for the successful co-hosting of the World Cup finals.

Bleeding Lagos

AFP, Lagos

Nigerians were angry and disappointed after the 'Super Eagles' became only the second country to be eliminated from the World Cup on Friday.

Sweden beat Nigeria 2-1 in Kobe in a crucial Group F match that the Africans could not afford to lose if they were to stay in the tournament.

The penalty awarded against us in the second-half was the turning point of the game," said Laura Osima, a marketing executive.

"The team played well overall but then effort does not mean result and the reality of it is that for the very first time Nigeria has failed to go beyond the first round."

Nigeria took the lead in the all-important first round game through leading scorer Julius Aghahowa but when Henrik Larsson converted his

second goal from the penalty spot, most Nigerians watching the game on television knew it would take something really special to get anything out of the encounter.

Most people had stayed at home to watch the game but as soon as it was over the bustling city of Lagos roared back to life with the usual noise and the notorious traffic jams.

"Rubbish! Rubbish!" screamed an angry pedestrian as it dawned on him that Nigeria had been knocked out of the soccer finals in Asia.

At the University of Lagos, shocked students threw bottles at passers-by and many refused to comment on the match.

People stood around in groups at bus stops and on the streets discussing the defeat and some anger was even directed at the Nigeria coach Adegboye Onigbinde for fielding a "half-fit" Nwankwo Kanu.

"Kanu should not have played. He is good player, no doubt, but I believe a fully fit player would have performed better than him in this game," said Lucy Overo, a housewife.

Yet even in defeat captain Austin 'Jay Jay' Okocha was praised for his performance as were youngsters Joseph Yobo and Christopher Justice.

Nigeria will face England Wednesday week in their final group match, now a meaningless fixture for the Eagles.

"We have to play for pride," said Jimoh Adegkunle.

"We may be out of the World Cup, but when it comes to playing against England we just cannot afford to lose to them. We will play our best game of the tournament against the English," he added.

Drained Danes

REUTERS, Taegu

Denmark were recovering on Friday after each player lost four litres of water playing in the scorching heat of South Korea in their World Cup group A 1-1 draw with Senegal.

The Danes top the group, also including world champions France and Uruguay, after the draw on Thursday. The match was played in sweltering conditions with temperatures reaching 30 degrees Celsius in the inland city.

Danish team doctor Mogens Kreutzfeldt said each player had lost four litres of water during the match and would take time to recover

before their crucial clash with world champions France on Tuesday.

A point for the Danes would be enough to take them through to the last 16 while the French must defeat them by two goals to ensure they avoid the ignominy of becoming the first defending champions since Brazil in 1966 to go out in the first round.

Morten Olsen's side left the Taegu Stadium on Thursday physically as well as mentally shattered, complaining that Senegal, who cancelled out Jon Dahl Tomasson's early penalty with a 52nd minute equaliser from Salif Diao in a strong second half display, were far more

used to the searing heat than they were.

"I can't imagine it could be any hotter. We're from the northern part of Europe and we are not used to heat like that," said Danish winger Jesper Gronkjaer.

Team mate Rene Henriksen added: "In heat like that we cannot play the way we want to. We just don't have the power."

Denmark had been upset before the Senegal clash when FIFA dismissed their protest at having to play the match in the early afternoon.

The game had originally been scheduled for a 2030 start but was switched because of television demands to broadcast France's match with Uruguay later in the evening.

TVangle

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mance had bright spots in it. They created a host of opportunities in the first half, but poor finishing let them down. Cameroon played their usual flowing football, and had the ball in the net twice in the first half, both ruled out correctly for offside. The second half started in similar fashion, and it was turning out to be a nice game to watch. The deadlock was eventually broken in the 65th minute, when Geremi found Samuel Eto'o with a sublime through ball, and the young striker finished well past Al-Daeyea. To be honest, despite all the chances Saudi created, the Africans always looked to have the game under control. Al Temyat had a lively game for the Arabs, but missed too many chances. In the end, Cameroon's greater belief in themselves saw them hold on for the win.

Without Zidane, France's game lacks pace, penetration and imagination. Even though Henry, Trezeguet, Wiltord all have pace to burn, there is no one to release them so that they can utilise that pace. Uruguay played a physical game in order to unsettle their opponents,

and it worked. Henry's sending off so early in the game did not help matters for the French. Going strictly by the book, it was a red card since he lunged in with two feet, but the referees have to maintain a level of consistency, as we see most tackles like that get only a yellow card. For the rest of the first half, France were not too adventurous. After the break though, they looked better with Trezeguet, Candela and Micoud all getting close to scoring, as Vieira and Petit started to dominate the midfield. For the Uruguayans, Alvaro Recoba looked the most dangerous player on the pitch, troubling man of the match Barthez on more than one occasion. He even rounded the French goalkeeper once, but got snatched at the finish. As the game opened up, it seemed we would get a goal. But it was not to be, and France are now left with the difficult task of having to beat Denmark by two goals to make sure of qualification. It is time for the world champions to show what they are made of.

Trap's simple target

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With the change, midfielder Cristiano Doni is expected to make way, with the versatile Christian Panucci moving to the left of midfield.

Croatia, semi-finalists four years ago, will draw strength from the fact that they are the only team in the group who have ever beaten the Italians -- in a European Championship qualifier in Palermo in 1994.

Trapattoni also fears they may come out fighting as they seek to put the Mexico loss behind them.

"They are coming into the game on the back of a defeat and they will want to show us and their fans that they don't deserve to be out.

"It will be a delicate match. We are dealing with a team which is frustrated at their defeat and who are technically strong," said the Italy coach.

Croatia will be without suspended defender Boris Zivkovic, who was sent off against Mexico, which could enable experienced defender Dario Simic to win back his place in the side after recovering from a calf injury.

Playmaker Robert Prosenecki was disappointing in the defeat by Mexico, but should retain his place providing ammunition for experienced strikers Davor Suker and Alen Boksic who also failed to impress in the opening game.

This is not, of course, totally unexpected.

Several teams over the past decade have threatened to break the mould and reach the latter stages of a World Cup at the expense of soccer's traditional powerhouses.

Croatia finished third in 1998, while in 1994 the world was only two results away from a final between Sweden and Bulgaria.

The 2002 competition is continuing that trend. This time the surprises might continue right through to the end.

Grand goal ritual

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stage. Fellow World Cup stars with a nose for goal have come up with a few eye-catching tricks of their own - but Aghahowa's routine is unrivalled and a virtual art form.

Prolific German star Miroslav Klose's forward smartsaul and Robbie Keane's Irish cartwheel are pretty good, by European standards.

But nobody does it better than the joyous Africans.

Roger Milla's Cameroon invented the corner flag dance routine with his fellow Indomitable Lions after doing what no side from their continent had done before - or since - by reaching the 1990 quarter-finals.

And Senegal have taken up the theme, gleefully dancing around the flag after Pape Bouba Diop's stun-

ning winner over France in the tournament opener.

Former Brazilian greats preferred a touch of romance.

Romario and Bebeto rocked their arms to simulate a baby's cradle after the latter's wife gave birth during the 1994 finals.

Aghahowa's delight is a far cry from what was surely the most sober celebration ever seen in the tournament's 72-year existence.

France defender Lilian Thuram had spent four years on the French team without ever scoring a goal.

As a fullback that didn't worry him too much - but he could only sink to his knees and stare in disbelief after scoring not one but two vital goals inside barely five minutes in the 1998 semi-final to floor Croatia.

FIFA's Disciplinary Code regulation G warns players against "leaving the field of play without prior

permission from the referee" at any time.

So Aghahowa makes sure he stays pitchside when he flips out - and that keeps everyone happy.

After the World Cup his priority will be to get noticed by a string of top European clubs.

"If I had an offer from a big club in Europe I would not hesitate," says Aghahowa, who arrived in Donetsk after a successful spell with Tunisian club Esperance.

Only when the Ukrainian winter arrives will this goal hero reacquaint himself with a life lived at sub-sero.

And dream of a move to warmer climes.

"England would be easiest for me. The language is no problem and the weather is better than Ukraine!"

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 39 Taught privately 41 Roar 43 Pistol 7 Milky 44 Unwilling to listen 11 Change noises for a five 13 — 14 Stromboli spillage 15 Gumbo base 16 Wildebeest 17 Sketched hiker's signal 20 Thin 22 Change the locks? 24 Window shades 28 Party on 32 Frighten 33 Yoked duo 34 Shrivel of tennis 36 Feast 37 Speak sheepishly?

DOWN 1 Heist 25 Twosome 26 Sea eagle 27 Burpee product 28 The Georgia Peach? 29 Wheel support 30 Whirl 31 Nosh 35 Stein 38 Pivouette pivot 40 Beat 42 Ballroom dance 45 Links 47 warning runaway? 48 Elbow counter-part 49 Paddock papa 50 Soap pad brand-name 51 Foreman foe 52 Cribbage scorer 54 Triumph

SOLUTION TIME: 24 mins.

ACROSS: 1 BABY'S SLITTING SPOT 4 "BAMI!" 7 MILKY GEMSTONE 11 CHANGE NOISES FOR A FIVE 13 — 14 STROMBOLI SPILLAGE 15 GUMBO BASE 16 WILDEBEEST 17 SKETCHED HIKER'S SIGNAL 20 THIN 22 CHANGE THE LOCKS? 24 WINDOW SHADES 28 PARTY ON 32 FRIGHTEN 33 YOKED DUO 34 SHRIVEL OF TENNIS 36 FEAST 37 SPEAK SHEEPISHLY?

DOWN: 1 HEIST 25 TWOSOME 26 SEA EAGLE 27 BURPEE PRODUCT 28 THE GEORGIA PEACH? 29 WHEEL SUPPORT 30 WHIRL 31 NOSH 35 STEIN 38 PIVOUETTE PIVOT 40 BEAT 42 BALLROOM DANCE 45 LINKS 47 WARNING RUNAWAY? 48 ELBOW COUNTER-PART 49 PADDOCK PAPA 50 SOAP PAD BRAND-NAME 51 FOREMAN FOE 52 CRIBBAGE SCORER 54 TRIUMPH

CRYPTOQUIP

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14

15 16 17

18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26 27

28 29 30 31 32

33 34 35 36

37 38 39 40

41 42 43

44 45 46 47 48 49

50 51 52 53 54 55

56 57 58

59 60 61

K A W P P J T N W Z Z S L W Q

K S Q W V V O V P W Z K T W A

L I T W O I X S K M J X C O S A I K M W X

W Z K W K J S X W A V N W C S X .

Saturday's Cryptquip: I REALIZED THAT WHEN UNCLE SAM SNEEZES, YOU MIGHT WANT TO SAY "GOD BLESS AMERICA."

Today's Cryptquip Clue: K equals T

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.