



PHOTO: AFP

IS DAD WATCHING? An Irish fan (R) puts a Father's Day message on her head at Suwon yesterday.

MEXICO VS USA

No neighbourly love

REUTERS, Daegu

The long-running battle for footballing supremacy between neighbours Mexico and the United States is thrust under the global spotlight on Monday when they meet for a place in the World Cup quarter-finals.

Almost 70 years of intense, often fractious, rivalry has seen the sides meet 46 times, many of those in World Cup qualifiers, but never before in the finals.

Now, with Germany awaiting the winners, it really is time to see who are the kings of the CONCACAF region.

"It's going to be a battle," said U.S. midfielder Landon Donovan, who described relations between the two countries as "definitely not friendly".

"We know we can beat them and they know they can beat us."

The United States, who lost all three first round games four years ago, are bidding to reach the last eight for the first time since the modern format was introduced.

They reached the semi-finals in the first World Cup in 1930 with just

two wins, before losing 6-1 to Argentina.

They got through to this year's second round in somewhat bumpy fashion, beating Portugal 3-2, drawing 1-1 with South Korea and then losing 3-1 to already-eliminated Poland.

It was a performance that sums up their whole game -- inconsistent. If they play as they did in the first half against Portugal, when they raced into a 3-0 lead, they are capable of beating not only Mexico but many of those left in the tournament.

If they perform as they did in the early stages against the Poles, then their World Cup will end at around 5.30 p.m. local time (9:30 a.m. British time) on Monday.

The Americans are hoping their shocking start against Poland, when they trailed 2-0 after five minutes, will galvanise the side back to their best.

"Maybe it was a good wake-up call for us," said goalkeeper Brad Friedel, who saved his second penalty of the tournament late in Friday's match. "If we would have won we may have gone into the Mexico game a bit cocky."

Coach Bruce Arena said: "We will re-group, we'll be fine."

Arena said he had a great respect for Mexico, who the United States played twice in qualifying, with a win apiece, and then beat 1-0 in their last meeting in April.

"The rivalry is immaterial," he said. "You need to talk about Mexico in the World Cup...they have been one of the top teams here."

"We know their team well, they know us well and it's going to be a good game."

Arena faces a couple of selection quandaries as centre back Jeff Agoos will miss the game with a calf injury, while right back Frankie Hejduk is suspended after picking up his second yellow card against Poland.

Mexico, appearing in their 12th World Cup, are bidding to reach the quarter-finals for the first time outside their own country, having got there on home soil in 1970 and 1986.

Judging by their first round performances, they look well-

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PHOTO: AFP

NO POINT BOWING, YOU'RE STILL SECOND CHOICE! Mexico coach Javier Aguirre (R) and players Salvador Carmona (L) and Francisco Palencia (2nd from L) find reserve custodian Jorge Campos' antics interesting at Jeonju yesterday.

Shell-shocked Sweden

AP, Stockholm

Swedish fans packed into bars and restaurants were stunned Sunday when Senegal's Henri Camara scored a golden goal that sent Sweden out of the World Cup.

"Sweden should have won. They had so many chances," said 23-year-old Stefan Loof, leaning his head on a bar counter and holding a folded yellow-and-blue Swedish flag. "That last goal shouldn't have happened."

Camara, who earlier forced extra time with his goal in the 37th minute, blasted his left-footed shot off the inside of the keepers right post from just inside the 18-meter (yard) line in the 104th minute, giving Senegal a 2-1 victory.

Both sides had plenty of opportunities and Swedes watching on television roared with cheers worthy of a victory when Anders Svensson, who also had a pair of chances in the second half, rocketed a shot off the outside of the post in the 95th minute.

"During the first quarter, Sweden had a clear grip on the match and even created a pair of tidy goal chances," the tabloid Expressen said.

The daily newspaper said Senegal pressed harder in the second half and the Swedish squad was hurt by the absence of injured midfielder star Fredrik Ljungberg.

Loof said Sweden played its best

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PLUS-MINUS

Following is an analysis of the comparative strengths and weaknesses of Mexico and the United States:

MEXICAN STRENGTHS: Mexico coach Javier Aguirre has found a perfect balance in his side from back to front. Captain and defender Rafael Marquez has shown why Real Madrid have expressed an interest in him, Gerardo Torrado is the unsung pivotal figure in central midfield while talisman Cuauhtemoc Blanco has justified his reputation -- and significant ego -- in attack, often dropping deep into space and forming a dangerous partnership with two-goal Jared Borgetti.

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PHOTO: AFP

NO ILLEGAL MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS TO PASS! United States defenders Tony Sanneh (L) and Eddie Pope train together at Jeonju yesterday.

Last of the Latinos

REUTERS, Kobe

Uruguay and Argentina created chances but could not put the ball in the net. Paraguay scored goals but could not keep them out at the other end.

And by the time newcomers Ecuador had got over their nerves, it was too late.

Paraguay's last-gasp second round defeat by Germany on Saturday continued a frustrating World Cup for South America, which now has only one of its five original representatives still in the tournament.

Brazil, who struggled through the qualifiers and only made sure of their place in their last game, have been left carrying the hopes of the continent, just as they did at the previous two finals.

Though South American football has been far from disgraced, a marathon qualifying tournament and encroaching "Europeanisation" have both taken their toll.

The difficulty for South American football in maintaining its identity became clear when, after Uruguay's first round exit, coach Victor Pua said his team had "learned a lot."

In the early days, the rest of the world learned from the Uruguayans.

At the 1924 and 1928 Olympic Games, Uruguay revolutionised the

sport with a short-passing game which had never been seen in Europe. They also went on to host and win the 1930 World Cup -- snubbed by most European nations -- and repeat their success in 1950.

Since then, however, the rest of the world has caught up and Uruguay, with its small population, has lost its status as a major power.

The team missed out on the previous two World Cups and has not been beyond the quarter-finals since 1970.

Argentina and Paraguay, the latter coached by Italy's Cesare Maldini, also resembled European teams as they pumped crosses into the opposition's penalty area.

Even in terms of behaviour, there has been a levelling out with Europe and Africa now producing more tantrums and gamesmanship, once thought to be a South American characteristic.

Paraguay's Carlos Paredes was the only South American player to be ordered off the field in the first round although Rivaldo's play-acting to get a player sent off against Turkey left a sour taste in the mouth.

Most of the bad behaviour at this World Cup has come from else

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PHOTO: AFP

IT'S A CRUEL WORLD: A beyond console Sweden player after the second round loss to Senegal at Oita's Big Eye Stadium yesterday.

TVangle

SHAYAN KHAN

We may revel in the success of the lesser known teams of the world, but really, the exit of the superpowers has made this World Cup poorer. The second round started Saturday, and started in most mundane fashion. If everything had gone according to the script, surely we could have gotten a better game than the one we got between England and Denmark. And that too came after a drab affair between Germany and Paraguay.

It was almost predictable. Italy never realised their attacking potential under Cesare Maldini. And it is the same with Paraguay. Nelson Cuevas, after setting the pitch on fire in their last game, only got five minutes of action at the end. And even in that short time, he once again proved to be the Paraguayans' most dangerous player. He was not fully fit apparently, but didn't show any signs of it. Surely he could have played at least one half. Yes, if Paraguay had held on for just five more minutes and then

gone on to win it in extra time or penalties, there would be no scope for criticism. But they didn't and the point is, Paraguay would have had a better chance taking the game to the Germans, who themselves were not too adventurous, and did not have a single shot on target in the first half. If anything, the South Americans went closest, but most of them were long range efforts. Ayala did have a wonderful chance when he was left unmarked in the German penalty box though, but he finished like defenders usually finish when in such situations. High, wide and not so handsome. The second half was pretty much a continuation of the trends of the first. Germany defending tightly but attacking aimlessly, and Paraguay being restricted to shots from long range. Right at the end though, Germany got their goal


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Round 5, Draw in Chittagong on June 21

(Competition information, prizes and rules on June 7 issue)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Round 5 Ends June 20, 2002

Tick (Ö) the correct answers

- Record of most World Cup finals appearances goes to Joff Matthaus Milla
- Only country to play in every World Cup Argentina Brazil Germany
- Middle name of Diego Maradona is Alberto Armando Admundo
- Which WC final was decided in penalty shoot-out 1998 1994 1990
- Who is this?  Figo Raul Batistuta

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms).....Age.....
 Father's nameOccupation
 Address
 Telephone (if any)Signature Date.....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters. Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star. You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 5."

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