



PHOTO: AFP

HERO NUMBER ONE! South Koreans send a message to their beloved national coach Guus Hiddink at Daejeon on June 18.

## The Guus revolution

REUTERS, Daejeon

Four years ago Guus Hiddink masterminded a 5-0 destruction of South Korea by a star-studded Dutch team at the World Cup in France.

On Saturday, the self-effacing Dutchman leads South Korea into its first quarterfinal against Spain, underscoring the extraordinary turnaround he has engineered in just 18 months.

"We are normal, humble, hard-working people," Hiddink said after the hosts beat Italy 2-1 on Tuesday, a feat even he described before the match as "almost the impossible."

The perception of what is possible for South Korea has changed completely since Hiddink's focus on fitness produced a side that attacks for a full 90 minutes of fast, physical soccer.

Ahn Jung-hwan was a player who "could not play 20 minutes of football at a high level" in Hiddink's words before the striker improved his conditioning and won a start against Portugal in the group stage.

Ahn, slight but skilful, played for 117 minutes before heading home the golden goal that sent the Italians packing.

"I was tough on him ... now he

has strong stamina," the coach said. Hiddink has described the South Korea attack as "controlled, not blind attack" in a phrase that neatly sums up the transition the side has made.

He waited until late in the Italy match before throwing on five forwards as the defensive Europeans tried to safeguard a 1-0 lead and he was rewarded for his bravery with an 88th-minute equaliser.

"I would prefer to lose 2-0 than not try to go for the draw," he said, praising his players for the control and patience they showed ahead of their last-minute goal.

Hiddink, 55, had spells with PSV Eindhoven -- with whom he won the European Cup in 1988 -- Fenerbahce and Valencia before taking over the Dutch side in 1995. He took them to the semifinals and then coached Real Madrid and Real Betis.

He took over the Korean side in 2000 and spent the first year fending off criticism of his choice of tough teams for friendlies as the dispirited South Koreans showed woeful finishing and took their lumps, trouncing 5-0 twice by France and the Czech Republic.

South Korea had not won a single World Cup match in five appearances spanning 48 years and the prospects for 2002 looked bleak.

But the unflappable Hiddink insisted exposure to top sides was

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PHOTO: AFP

COME INTO MY ARMS! Brazil coach Luis Felipe Scolari during practice at Hamamatsu yesterday.

## Showstopper Scolari

REUTERS/AFP, Hamamatsu

He rants, he gesticulates, he curses, he swears. Sometimes, his face becomes contorted with sheer exasperation and he appears as if he will either pass out or explode.

Of the 32 coaches at the World Cup, none seem to live the tensions of the touchline with such intensity as Brazil's Luiz Felipe Scolari, known to most of his compatriots simply as Felipao (Big Phil).

A charming, likeable man off the field, Scolari -- who has rescued Brazil from the doldrums and turned them into World Cup favourites -- is

transformed as soon as the referee's whistle starts a game.

His theatricals are a show in themselves, so much so that Brazilian television stations often keep a camera focused on him for the entire game.

Yet the sanitised surroundings of the World Cup, combined with the responsibility of leading his country, appear to have taken the wilder edge off Big Phil.

Back in his native Brazil, Scolari earned a reputation as a master of gamesmanship and for pushing the rules to their limits.

When he was a club coach at

Palmeiras, he was once accused of ordering the club's ball boys to throw spare balls onto the field. The idea was to disrupt the opposition's attacks as they pressed for an equaliser late in the match.

Scolari was also a specialist in standing on the touchline and bullying referees and linesmen, who are subject to political pressures behind the scenes in Brazil and are more easily intimidated than when the entire world is watching.

On one of the occasions that Scolari was sent off for his behaviour, millions of television viewers witnessed him inviting the referee to settle matters in the car park afterwards: "I'll wait for you outside, mate," he yelled as the touchline cameras homed in.

Reporters were also fair game, and at least two complained that they have been punched by him in separate incidents.

Brutally honest, Scolari publicly berated his players for not committing enough fouls and said his fellow coaches all did the same. "The truth is that I'm stupid because I tell the truth while the others lie," he said.

Scolari has already been sent off

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## FIFA XI

REUTERS, Yokohama

Diego Maradona, Argentina's 1986 World Cup hero, received most votes in FIFA's Internet poll of fans to select a World Cup dream team.

More than one-and-a-half million fans worldwide voted in the poll, conducted by the official FIFA website, FIFAworldcup.com, with Maradona receiving 111,035 votes. Brazil's Pele, who played for three World Cup-winning teams, won 107,539 votes and Zinedine Zidane, who scored twice for France in their 1998 triumph, came in third with 80,527.

### DREAM TEAM

(Formation: 3-4-3)

Lev Yashin (Soviet Union); Paolo Maldini (Italy); Franz Beckenbauer (West Germany); Roberto Carlos (Brazil); Roberto Baggio (Italy); Zinedine Zidane (France); Michel Platini (France); Diego Maradona (Argentina); Romario (Brazil); Johan Cruyff (Netherlands); Pele (Brazil)

## Cup odds

AP, London

Brazil, Spain and England are the British bookmakers' favourites to win the World Cup after Tuesday's elimination of three-time champion Italy.

William Hill rated Brazil at 12-5, with Spain at 3-1 and England at 100-30. Germany was fourth favourite at 7-2, followed by Senegal and South Korea at 16-1, Turkey at 20-1 and the United States at 25-1.

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## Rage rages on

AFP, Rome

Italy's newspapers cried foul Wednesday as they struggled to find the words to express the nation's anger at Ecuadorean referee Byron Moreno, who bears the brunt of the blame for their team's World Cup exit.

Nothing short of religious language will do for La Repubblica, which sets the scene for a 13-page lament by recounting "the Way of the Cross of our national team" as it stumbled its way through the finals, ambushed at every turn, it seems, by bad refereeing.

Moreno is "The card-wielding executioner", while there is little criticism of the team who lost 2-1 to South Korea on Tuesday, with an extra-time 'golden goal'.

Criticism of the team comes a distant second to an outpouring of bile against the match officials as the paper enumerated the perceived sins against Italy, one of the pre-tournament favourites.

The sending-off of the golden boy of Italian football, Francesco Totti, who was controversially penalised for diving, or 'simulation', draws particular criticism.

"If a player is sent off for a simulation that wasn't, if another (Damiano Tommasi) scores a valid goal but is given offside, if that is the fifth valid goal disallowed in three matches, you don't have to be a conspiracy theorist to know that something stinks."

Corriere della Sera makes no bones about it, dubbing the four-yearly festival of football hosted by Japan and South Korea "the dirty World Cup".

"Italy has been thrown out of the dirty World Cup, where referees and linesmen have been used like mercenaries," it wails.

"Never in the history of the World Cup have so many injustices been committed against one team."

La Stampa, the Turin daily which is part of the same Fiat empire as leading Italian club Juventus, blasts the tactics and team choices of Italy's veteran coach Giovanni Trapattoni, who it said was "ripe for retirement even when he took over".

"The part played by Mr Moreno, who has the appearance of a depressed cow, is doubly odious," said the paper.

The headline in the Rome daily Il Messaggero blasts the referees who have officiated at Italy's matches in the tournament.

"They aren't referees, but the thieves of dreams."

"Robbers" screams the banner headline of Italy's main sports daily Corriere dello Sport. Its main rival, La Gazzetta dello Sport, settles for "Shame".

The portly Moreno gets a bashing for his weight in all the papers. La Repubblica called him "a fat little toy with bulging eyes".

It also quotes Serse Cosmi, manager of unfashionable Perugia where the golden-goal scorer Ahn Jung-Hwan plays for the reserves, as saying: "He's the only referee with cellulite on his face."

"We should be refereed by the best, not by a guy who is 20 kilos overweight," Italian defender Alessandro Nesta was quoted as saying.

## German secret

REUTERS, Sogwipo

Harmony and pride are the two main reasons for Germany's speedy recovery from its worst crisis, one of many surprises in a World Cup of upsets.

"We all stand closely together and we all share the same dream," Germany captain Oliver Kahn said as the triple world champion was warming up for Friday's quarterfinal against the United States.

The troubled heavyweight had entered the tournament with lower expectations than usual, coach Rudi Voeller naming the knockout stages as its minimal aim after it struggled to qualify and then lost a handful of valued players through injury.

Polls kept showing that many fans in the soccer-mad nation feared another early exit after the team disappeared from the last two World Cups in the quarterfinals and made an embarrassing departure after the first round of Euro 2000.

"Many players in the team were at Euro 2000 and were eager to show that it was not the real Germany then," said goalkeeper Kahn.

"There are also several players who will never play a World Cup again and want to make the most of it. That's a great motivation."

Just as that famous Gary Lineker phrase about football being a game between two teams over 90 minutes which the Germans win at the end no longer seemed to apply, the traditional powerhouse recaptured their winning ways and are now dreaming aloud of making the Yokohama final on June 30.

"That's what we all want and we all believe we can make it," said midfielder Jens Jeremies, who had made unwanted headlines by describing the state of the national team as "miserable" in the build-up to Euro 2000.

Germany's run so far strongly suggests that it is a merciless winning machine again, like in the good old days.

First came a record-breaking 8-0 demolition of Saudi Arabia, followed with a 1-1 draw with a battling Ireland side.

Then it fought with 10 men for a brave 2-0 win over Cameroon before proving it could also win ugly like in the past with a sluggish performance for a 1-0 victory over Paraguay in the second round.

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PHOTO: INTERNET

CUP OF HEARTBREAK: A desolate Italian fan at the stands of Daejeon Stadium after the loss to South Korea on June 18.

## Ticket touts' time

AFP, Tokyo

Ticket touts are estimated to be making thousands of dollars from fans desperate to watch the final World Cup matches and football authorities said Wednesday it was very difficult to stop black market deals.

A quarter final clash between tournament favourites Brazil and England on Friday is being heralded as the World Cup final that should have been, with black market prices for tickets to the game spiralling out of control.

"My best mate is flying out here especially to watch the England-

Brazil game," said Graeme Baldwin, a trainee lawyer working in Tokyo.

"I have not been able to get a ticket for him down the official channels so we will have to buy them off the black market. He is prepared to pay up to 1,500 dollars," he said.

The face value of tickets to the match range in price from 125 dollars to 300 dollars but have sold out, apart from small allocations for the respective national football associations, forcing people to turn to the black market where tickets are fetching between 700 and 1,200 dollars, fans said.

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## Irish champions

REUTERS, Dublin

Celebrating as if they had won the World Cup, thousands of Irish soccer fans turned out to greet their national team on Tuesday as they arrived home after a gut-wrenching second round penalty shoot-out defeat by Spain.

A huge crowd estimated at around 100,000 people gathered in Dublin's Phoenix Park for a celebratory concert in honour of the "Boys in Green", whose spirited performance throughout the tournament had fans bursting with pride and emotion.

"It's very humbling, it makes you proud to be Irish," said coach Mick McCarthy, appearing on stage with his squad of 22 players.

"Whether you are in Korea, in Japan, or back here, you are the best fans in the world," forward Damien Duff told the cheering crowd.

Ireland were knocked out of the World Cup on Sunday, losing 3-2 on penalties following a 1-1 draw after extra time.

"It's lovely people want to turn out to greet us and celebrate," said McCarthy at Dublin Airport earlier, as he stepped off the chartered airliner from South Korea.

"I wish we were still in the tournament, but now it's over we are glad to be back."

The celebratory mood was in sharp contrast to the gloomy start to the tournament, when McCarthy sent home captain and world class midfielder Roy Keane following a bitter row between the two men over the squad's preparations for the tournament.

The bust-up divided Ireland into pro-Keane and pro-McCarthy

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### CUP CORNER

REUTERS, Ulsan

Spain need to score twice against South Korea in their World Cup quarter-final on Saturday to bring up their 900th international goal.

According to figures released by the country's football federation, Spain have scored 898 goals in official internationals.

The 800th was bagged by Raul in a 9-0 win over Austria in March 1999.

#### FERGIE PULLS FOR ENGLAND

INTERNET, London

Sir Alex Ferguson is tipping England to beat Brazil and go on to win the

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**NO MATCHES TODAY**

QUARTERFINALS START TOMORROW



PHOTO: AFP

'IRELAND IS PROUD OF YOU': Irish fans cheer the country's World Cup squad upon their homecoming at Phoenix Park, Dublin yesterday.