

BRAZIL VS TURKEY

Mount Samba to scale

AP/REUTERS, Saitama

Surprising Turkey aim to avoid setting a record when they meet Brazil in the World Cup semifinals on Wednesday.

Having already lost 2-1 to the star-studded Brazilians in the first round group games, the Turks don't want to become the first nation to lose twice to the same team at the same World Cup.

Turkey face Brazil in Saitama in their first-ever World Cup semifinal -- the pinnacle of Turkish soccer history.

"We have used our right to lose one game in the World Cup," Turkey coach Senol Gunes told a news conference ahead of the match. "This time, we will make sure that Brazil use its right to lose one game too."

"In the first match, our target was to qualify and a draw would be enough. Tomorrow, our tactical approach we will only be for that game and we will play to win."

Brazilian goalkeeper Marcos, told about the Turks' virtually guaranteeing victory, shrugged it off.

"We're not worried about that at all. Every team we've played always says something to provoke us. We have proved on the field we are better."

This is the fifth rematch in World Cup history after West Germany-Hungary in 1954, Brazil-Czechoslovakia in '62, Italy-Poland in '82 and Brazil-Sweden in '94. But none of these ended in two victories for one team.

Brazil have won all their matches in the World Cup so far. After losing to Brazil in their opener, Turkey tied with Costa Rica 1-1 but still man-

aged to trail behind the South American powerhouse into the second round after a 3-0 victory over China.

The Turks returned to the 2002 World Cup after a 48-year absence and surprised many with their offence, strong defence and disciplined play.

"We did not get to the World Cup by chance, we've worked hard,"

Gunes said. "We will use our increasing trend in football and hunger of success against Brazil."

"Both teams are full of star players high in technical capability. But the side which is more willing to win will make the difference tomorrow, and that will be us. From the beginning to the end, we will fight to win. We want to beat Brazil."

Turkey went ahead against Brazil in the group game and AC Milan midfielder Umit Davala said his team won't sit back on a lead if they go ahead again.

"I think this game will be very difficult, both teams will play an offensive game to score," Davala said. "If we score, we have to keep attacking to find the second goal, if we withdraw to defensive lines than it would be difficult to beat Brazil."

Okan Buruk, who was sidelined two days before Turkey's first game against Brazil, has recovered. But Gunes said midfielder Hakan Unsal of Blackburn Rovers was still suffering from pain in his left knee.

"Hakan's injury is a bit serious, we will look into his situation after today's medical tests," Gunes said.

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RONALDO TRIED MY HAIRSTYLE AND GUESS WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM! Turkey's Umit Davala (L) shares a light-hearted moment with teammates at Saitama yesterday.



ONE HEADED GOAL COMING? Superstar Ronaldo and Edmilson (L) practice heading at Saitama yesterday.

FACTBOX

Facts and figures for Wednesday's World Cup semifinal match between Brazil and Turkey:

Match venue: Saitama, Japan
Match referee: Kim Milton Neilsen (Denmark)
Linesmen: Maciej Wierzbowski (Poland), Igor Sramka (Slovakia).
Kick-off: 5:30 pm (BST)
Coaches: Brazil - Luiz Felipe Scolari, Turkey - Senol Gunes.
World ranking: Brazil-2, Turkey-22
Squad average age: Brazil-26.22, Turkey-22.57
Most capped current player: Brazil - Cafu 109
 Turkey - Hakan Sukur 78
Population: Brazil - 173 million, Turkey - 66 million
World Cup 2002 results:
GROUP STAGE, BRAZIL
June 3, in Ulsan, South Korea
 Brazil 2 (Ronaldo 50, Rivaldo 87pen)
 Turkey 1 (Hasan Sas)
June 8, in Sogwipo, South Korea
 Brazil 4 (Roberto Carlos 15, Rivaldo 32, Ronaldinho 45pen, Ronaldo 55)
 China - 0
June 13, in Suwon, South Korea

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Brazil backache gone?

AP, Saitama

The rap on Brazil has always been shaky defence to go with a terrific offence. Maybe it's time to revise the maxim.

Playing with 10 players for the final 33 minutes of a gruelling quarterfinal match with England last Friday, Brazil used poise, defence and discipline for a 2-1 victory.

Brazil were so superior it almost seemed that England were the team a man down. The four-time world champions short-circuited the English attack, moving the ball with precision and pushing upfield.

"It's impressive the way we are playing, our mentality," said wing defender Roberto Carlos. "We know when to slow down the game, when to play out to the flanks, when to knock the ball into the woods. We're practically playing with our eyes closed."

Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari had a simpler explanation.

"It was just a case of getting the three middle defenders to do their job properly. Putting two guys on the side, the fullbacks to move freely and two guys in the midfield, helping," he said. "I must tell you they did the right job."

But it's a job Brazil have not always done well. Defence traditionally has been the team's weak link, and it forced the South Americans into an early hole in the quarterfinals on a defensive blunder by Luizao.

"Those free kicks usually are air balls, but this one came in fast and low," Luizao said. "I didn't try to do

anything, it just bounced away. I made a mistake, and all I could do was hold my head up and come back stronger."

The entire team did -- particularly after Ronaldinho, who set up the tying goal and scored the winner, was ejected in the 57th minute.

When he was expelled for a violent foul, things looked bleak. Throughout the tournament, Brazil's defensive lapses were downplayed as the attack stole the spotlight. But

playing short-handed meant the back line could be exposed as never before.

In Brazil's opening game, Turkey capitalised on a defensive breakdown to take a 1-0 lead, but Ronaldo and Rivaldo came back in the second half to save Brazil 2-1. The defence again looked tentative in a

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What's his next?

AFP, Saitama

Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari is being tipped to spring a surprise on Turkey for the two teams' World Cup semi-final here Wednesday by unveiling a new-look strike partnership.



PHOTO: AFP

LOVE HIM, HATE HIM BUT CAN'T IGNORE HIM: Brazil coach Luis Felipe Scolari supervising training at Saitama yesterday.

Scolari has been forced to reshuffle his attacking options following the suspension of Ronaldinho for his red card in the 2-1 quarter-final victory over England last Friday.

Most pundits had expected Scolari to replace the in-form Paris Saint Germain player with diminutive playmaker Juninho, dropped against England after playing in Brazil's opening matches.

But at a final training session here Tuesday, Scolari pulled Rivaldo back into a deeper midfield position and paired the exciting youngster Edison in attack with Ronaldo.

That could well be how Brazil's front two line up, though Scolari has not

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History against minnows

REUTERS, Saitama

History shows that it takes an established soccer heavyweight to knock four-times winners Brazil out of the World Cup.

Turkey, who have never won a major trophy and are playing in the tournament for only the second time, will try to buck that trend when they tackle the crowd-pleasing South Americans in an intriguing semi-final on Wednesday.

Brazil, the most successful side in World Cup history, won the tournament in 1958, 1962, 1970 and 1994.

Discounting the first two World Cups in 1930 and 1934 -- 10 Brazil players made their debuts in their 1930 defeat by Yugoslavia -- the list of teams to eliminate Brazil from the tournament reads like a who's who of great teams from yesteryear.

In 1938 Italy knocked Brazil out in the semi-finals with a 2-1 victory and went on to lift the trophy.

On home soil in 1950 Brazil only needed a draw in the final match against Uruguay, the 1930 winners, to clinch their first World Cup triumph.

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CUP CORNER

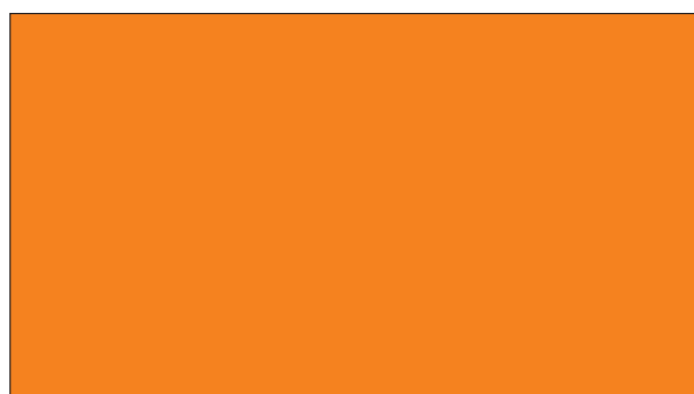
AFP, Wellington

A small series of wagers which initially amused New Zealand's state run betting agency are now shaping up as an embarrassing loss, the Evening Post reported here Tuesday.

If South Korea wins the World Cup an unknown Auckland, who made a series of extraordinary bets, will walk away with 62,500 NZ (\$1,000 US) dollars.

Totalisator Agency Board (TAB) bookmaker Mark Stafford told the newspaper that just before last Christmas an individual, who they do not know, went into each agency outlet in Auckland at 20 minute intervals and

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TODAY'S MATCH

Brazil vs Turkey
 Venue: Saitama
 Time: 5:30 pm

Turks no pushovers

AFP, Saitama

Brazil have been warned. The story behind Turkey's emergence as a global football power shares many of the same elements with the one which ended with France destroying them in the World Cup final four years ago.

As with France, a combination of root-and-branch reform of the country's footballing structures and the coming together of a talented gener-

ation of players with experience in Europe's top leagues have helped to drive Turkey from being the poor relations of European football to the verge of the World Cup final.

A country that only 15 years ago was humiliated 8-0 at home by England in a European Championship qualifier is now a potent force that is undoubtedly capable of ending Brazil's quest for a 5th world crown here on Wednesday. Senol Gunes, the coach who has

guided the Turks into the last four, says the country has never suffered from a shortage of skill. "Our players have always had the talent but they were not organised and they did not have the self-confidence they have right now."

Turkey's squad includes players who are on the books of top clubs in Italy, Germany and England, providing a body of experience that has been bolstered by the success of Istanbul's Galatasaray in European competitions over recent years.

There is little doubt however that it is the German connection that has been the biggest ingredient in Turkey's recipe for success.

The mass migration of millions of Turks to Germany in the 1960s has spawned a whole generation of players who have learnt their trade in the Bundesliga and helped accelerate the technical development of the national side.

Yildiray Basturk, one of the stars of the Bayer Leverkusen side that reached this season's Champions League final, AC Milan's Umit Davala and Ilhan Mansiz, the striker who scored the golden goal against Senegal in the quarter-finals, are all German-born and bred.

Gunes readily acknowledges the debt to Germany. "They are important for us because they have been given excellent training from an early age in Germany, and they have a very strong tactical awareness," he said.

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We love Brazil

REUTERS/AFP, Saitama

Turkey coach Senol Gunes says love, not revenge, will be the over-riding emotion when his team take on Brazil in their World Cup semi-final on Wednesday.

Brazil beat Turkey 2-1 in an ill-tempered first round match in which two



PHOTO: AFP

HEAR NO BRAZIL, FEAR NO BRAZIL: Turkey coach Senol Gunes gives direction during training at Saitama yesterday.

Turkish players were sent off, and Rivaldo was later fined for play-acting. But Gunes insisted on Tuesday that the re-match in Saitama would be played in the right spirit.

"We love Brazil," he said. "We have watched Brazil and cheered for them in every match. Revenge is for lesser people. Football will not allow that kind of thing to happen."

"Of course what Rivaldo did had nothing to do with fair play and I don't want my players copying him, but I don't expect the same thing to happen

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Alpay on altar

REUTERS, Saitama

Turkey defender Alpay Ozalan is prepared to sacrifice himself against Brazil again if it helps his country reach the World Cup final for the first time in their history.

The tall defender will miss the showpiece game in Yokohama on Sunday through suspension if he is booked in Wednesday's semi-final, having picked up a yellow card in the 1-0 second round win over Japan.

"If I have to get another yellow card to get us to the final I will not hesitate," said Alpay, one of two Turkish players sent off when Brazil won their group game 2-1 at the start of the tournament.

"But we are not thinking about yellow cards," he told reporters on Monday before training. "All we are thinking about is getting to the final. We will show great spirit on the pitch."

The group C game between the two teams on June 3 ended in controversy, with Brazilian striker Rivaldo feigning injury after being struck by the ball and Alpay's team mate Hakan Unsal getting sent off.

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