

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 21, 2006

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DOWN THE WORLD CUP LANE



Pele: The greatest of them all

AGENCIES, undated



Pele. The God of football. "O Rei". Whatever the name, the memory is the same - of a world-beating superstar - a record-breaking footballing icon.

Above and beyond everything else Pele, was a genius who was constantly reinventing the game of football.

Brazil's living legend Pele won an unprecedented three World Cups and is widely recognized, along with Argentina's Diego Maradona, as the best footballer of all time.

The striker's 1,285 goals from 1,321 official matches made his club Santos a household name and the Brazilian side that won those World Cups in 1958, 1962 and 1970 the benchmark for any other nation that has pretensions of footballing greatness.

The smiley Pele has enchanted the world wherever he has been and has won respect since retirement, working as an ambassador for the United Nations and sports minister for Brazil.

During his heyday he had breathtaking speed and technique, tenacity, great physical power and an extraordinary eye for goal.

He was the son of professional footballer nicknamed "Dido", and got his nickname at age three after mispronouncing the name of a goalkeeping friend of his father (Bile) as Pele.

He grew up in the region of Sao Paulo, where he was spotted by former Brazilian international Valdemar de Brito, and invited to join local club Santos.

He scored on his debut in September, 1956, in a match against Corinthians, the first of hundreds for the club.

He also scored on his Brazil debut eight months later in a 2-1 loss to Argentina.

At his first World Cup in Sweden in 1958, Pele gave the world glimpses of his talent when he scored a hat-trick in the semi-final against France and another two in the final as an impressive Brazil stormed to a 5-2 victory over Sweden.

Thus, aged just 17 years and eight months, he became the youngest player to win a world title. He so enchanted the watching Swedes that they used to touch his face to convince themselves that he was real!

After a baptism of such fire the world awaited the return of Pele in the 1962 edition but tragedy struck. He was injured early even though he did score a goal in the only match that he played. Although Brazil went on to win the World Cup, for Pele it was a phony victory as he played little part in it. His teammates, particularly, Garrincha was the inspiration behind the success

but Pele still only 21 had a long career ahead of him.

However, an almost similar story ensued in England in 1966. By now Pele was a marked man and he again left the field on a stretcher, hacked down in Brazil's third game against Portugal. This time, though, he was forced to watch from the sidelines as his team was knocked out of the competition. Pele was so

incensed at the treatment that he swore never to play another World Cup.

But in 1970 Pele began the Mexican World Cup at the heart of one of the greatest football teams ever to walk out onto a pitch.

Alongside the likes of Carlos Alberto, Jairzinho, Rivelino and Gerson, Pele shone like a leading man on a stage designed specially

for his talents as Brazil marched imperiously to their third title, crushing Italy 4-1 in the final.

Pele got the opener in the final but is better remembered for a deft pass that set up Carlos Alberto for the fourth, a goal constantly shown on television due to its masterful teamplay.

As it was Brazil's third World Cup final!
SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR FILE

The pinnacle of the greatest career. After the final in 1970, some local headgear costs Pele the shirt off his back.

Owen backs himself as saviour

REUTERS, London

England will head for the World Cup knowing that supporting Michael Owen and striking at opponents from deep will be the key to success without Wayne Rooney.

As coach Sven-Goran Eriksson sweats on next Thursday's scan on Rooney's broken foot, few expect the striker to recover in time for the group stages in Germany -- if he makes the finals at all.

The 20-year-old's injury will clearly place an extra weight on Owen's shoulders as England look to come through Group B games against Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, and Sweden.

Fortunately for Eriksson, Owen's track record shows that pressure does not faze a 26-year-old who is now looking forward to his third World Cup.

"It doesn't really affect the way I play," Owen told reporters. "If anyone plays for England on a regular basis and for top Premiership teams

like Chelsea, Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal -- you've got to be able to handle pressure.

"There are massive games every week let alone a Champions League final like Arsenal were playing in. Pressure comes with life."

Rooney is joined on the roster by 17-year-old Theo Walcott, who has not played in Arsenal's first team since joining in January, and Peter Crouch.

Asked about England's goal potential, Owen told reporters at a training camp in Portugal: "That's why I think we've got such a good squad of players."

"You've got to have more than one or two matchwinners and we've got Wayne, Frank Lampard, Stevie Gerrard, David (Beckham), Joe Cole -- people who can turn a match with one bit of magic or a great goal."

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SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

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SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

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"I learned a lot of things. Most of all, I have been recognised by the difficult Italian press after six years in Italian football."

Cruz knows all too well how

Hamann hangs up international boots

INTERNET, undated

Liverpool midfielder Dietmar Hamann has retired from international football after being overlooked for Germany's World Cup squad.

He won 59 caps and scored five goals, among them the last ever goal at the old Wembley Stadium when Germany beat England in an October 2000 World Cup qualifier.

Hamann made his international debut against South Africa in 1997 and his last appearance was against Holland in August last year. In 2002 he played for Germany in the World Cup final!

The 32-year-old was also an FA Cup winner with Liverpool last weekend but admits he expected to be omitted by Germany boss Jurgen Klinsmann.

"It's not really a big surprise to me I wasn't in the squad," he said on www.liverpoolfc.tv.

"I haven't spoken to the manager for the last three months so I didn't think there was much chance of me being included."

"That's it for me now at international level. I'm 32 now and this would have been my last tournament."

Last August he made his debut for the senior side against Hungary - for

The Messi-ah?

INTERNET, undated

The imposing figure of Diego Maradona looms large for every aspiring Argentinian footballer - but there is one individual who truly plays in the great man's image.

He may only be 18 but Lionel Messi's performances for Barcelona, arguably the best side in Europe, suggest South America has unearthed its latest superstar.

While neighbours and fierce rivals Brazil have a rich tradition of genius, Argentina's top players have relied on technical rather than individual brilliance.

For Argentina, Maradona was the exception rather than the rule and now, 20 years after he inspired them to World Cup glory at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, he has a worthy heir.

Argentina's success at the World Under-20 Championship last summer was virtually a one-man crusade, Messi scoring six times, twice from the spot in the final win over Nigeria, to finish top scorer in the tournament.

Last August he made his debut for the senior side against Hungary - for

those looking for omens the same opposition when Maradona took his bow-amid a flurry of expectation.

As if to extend the comparison it was the kind of start befitting Maradona in his own impetuous youth.

Only two minutes after coming on as substitute, Messi was dismissed by referee Markus Merk for allegedly elbowing Hungary defender Vilmos Vanczak.

Bursting through from midfield in

His actions may have been

contrary to modern football's interpretation of the spirit of the game but his spirit for the game shone through.

To Argentinians, the Spanish-raised player had seized the moment in his brief cameo, craving the chance to create and displaying

frustration at being denied.

Argentina coach Jose Pekerman spoke for the nation when he said: "I congratulated Messi because he went out to play his football."

That is something he has done with aplomb for Barca since having dual nationality granted last September - he had previously been restricted due to the presence of three other non-EU players at the Nou Camp.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3



LIONEL MESSI

Bitterness drives Cruz on

INTERNET, undated

Julio Cruz will use his bitterness at missing out on Argentina's last two World Cup squads to fuel him at this summer's tournament.

The 31-year-old Internazionale striker narrowly missed out on selection for France '98 and Japan/Korea four years later but has finally been handed what he admits will probably be his only chance to star on football's biggest stage by current head coach Jose Pekerman.

"It is a revenge for me, as I could've played another World Cup but I was never selected," Cruz said. "I think this could be my last chance."

"Despite fulfilling my dream, this will not change anything in my life. I am like this always."

Cruz admits previous disappointments meant he did not dare believe he would be on the plane to Germany and even turned off his mobile phone on the day of the squad announcement to avoid tormenting himself.

"The same day Jose Pekerman announced the World Cup squad, I turned off my cellular phone," the former Banfield, River Plate, Feyenoord and Bologna striker said.

Cruz need not have worried after outscoring Inter team-mate and Brazil striker Adriano this season.

"I had a nice season," he said.

"I feel more mature than during the tenures of Marcelo Bielsa (Argentina's coach in 2002) and Daniel Passarella (1998)."

"I learned a lot of things. Most of all, I have been recognised by the difficult Italian press after six years in Italian football."

Cruz knows all too well how

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



Round 2, Draw in Khulna

Competition Information, Prizes and Rules

Information

- A. The Daily Star Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz 2006 is a series of competitions on World Cup Soccer being held in Germany from June 9 to July 9.
- B. There will be FIVE rounds of competition.
- C. Each round will have a separate draw with attractive prizes from the house of RANGS TOSHIBA as per announcement.
- D. Participants of all the FIVE rounds will automatically qualify for the Bumper Draw which will have even bigger prizes.
- E. For each round, a set of questions including a photographic quiz will be published in The Daily Star.
- F. Names and addresses of all prize winners will be published in The Daily Star.
- G. Winners will have to collect their prizes from The Daily Star office after satisfactory authentication of their identity.
- H. Any taxes or levies, as per law, for all the above prizes will have to be borne by the prize winners.

PRIZES UP FOR GRABS

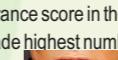
Prize	Item	Model	Winner
1st	One 21" Toshiba Bomba Flat TV	21C28DE	YOU
2nd	One Toshiba Refrigerator	GRM-19BPT	YOU
3rd	One Toshiba Washing Machine	VH-7200	YOU
4th	Ten Canon Cameras	BF-800	YOU
5th	Twenty Toshin Irons		andYOU

QUIZ SCHEDULE

Round	Starts	Answers must reach by 8pm	Lucky Draw for prizes
1 Rangpur	May 05	May 18	May 23
2 Khulna	May 19	June 01	June 02
3 Sylhet	June 2	June 15	June 16
4 Chittagong	June 16	June 29	June 30
5 Dhaka(Bumper)	June 30	July 09	TBA

The Daily Star Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz, Round 2 Ends June 01, 2006

Tick () the correct answers

1. The only player to have appeared in three World Cup final matches is: Matthaus Maradona Cafu
2. The 2006 World Cup final will be held in: Munich Frankfurt Berlin
3. How many goals did France score in the 2002 World Cup? 5 3 0
4. Which Asian nation made highest number of appearances in World Cup finals? Iran South Korea Saudi Arabia
5. Who is this player? </