



DOWN THE WORLD CUP LANE



# USA 1994: Brazil conquer the New World

AGENCIES, undated

If FIFA hoped that awarding the World Cup to the land of the dollar would at last crack the supposedly lucrative United States market, it was a triumph of hope over experience. But at least the infrastructure wasn't bad. What visitors were likely to see were matches played in well-appointed stadia, with excellent transport facilities, catering services and communications, an experienced and minimal police presence, and the highest average crowds in World Cup history. If the price was allowing a mediocre USA team free entry, it was worth every cent.

Of the stronger countries, a reunified Germany had a new coach but rather too many old players, though Klinsmann was in his pomp and Sammer a powerful recruit from East Germany. Brazil were without four regular central defenders but others simply stepped off the conveyor belt, and Romaria had just scored 30 times in 33 league games for Barcelona as well as the two goals that sent Brazil through at Uruguay's expense. Italy, who'd rather staggered over the finishing line, were still strong at the back but again in search of a reliable goalscorer.

A talented French team (Papin, Cantona, Ginola) stayed at home after losing their last two home games to very late goals, the first against Israel, the second in the very last minute, thanks to a misjudgement by Ginola. Nothing much was expected of their conquerors Bulgaria.

Argentina had gone 31 matches without losing, which included winning the Copa America twice in a row, but a 5-0 home defeat by Colombia made them recall the 33-year-old Maradona to help them squeeze through in a play-off, beating Australia with a deflected goal. Colombia, still led by Valderrama, with Asprilla a new threat in attack, were naturally included among the favourites.

So far, for the first time, were a team from Africa. Nigeria had just won the African Nations Cup with a blend of skill and raw power that people had been expecting from the continent for years. Yekini, Ikacha, Amunike and Amokachi were expected to become big names in the forthcoming month.

Certainly more so than Saunders, McAllister or Carlton Palmer. For the first time since they entered the World Cup, none of the four United Kingdom countries reached the finals. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all finished fourth in their groups, while England's five wins included four against Turkey and San Marino. Their new manager Graham Taylor picked

some shocking players and 'a pig's arse of a team' (his words, everyone's opinion) against Norway, who won 2-0. So did Holland, in the decisive match, thanks to a referee who should have sent Ronald Koeman off for a professional foul but let him stay on to score from a free kick. In Taylor's last

match in charge, England conceded a goal in the first nine seconds against San Marino, which said it all.

The Republic of Ireland were there again, still playing the same way under Jack Charlton but qualifying on goal difference and unlikely to figure at the sharp end of the tournament, espe-

cially as it was being played in fearful heat and humidity (FIFA again scheduled some noonday kick-offs). Nigeria, we were allowed to suppose, would be rather less apprehensive.

After twenty years as president,

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PHOTO: AFP FILE

THE DIVINE MISTAKE: Brazilian goalkeeper Claudio Taffarel dives the wrong way as Italian forward Roberto Baggio's penalty kick goes over the crossbar during the shoot-out in the final of the World Cup 17 July 1994 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.



## BITS AND BOBS

### VDV injured again

REUTERS, Amsterdam

Rafael van der Vaart suffered a fresh ankle injury when the Netherlands resumed their World Cup preparations on Monday.

The SV Hamburg midfielder was sidelined during Saturday's 1-0 win over Cameroon and abandoned Monday's training session after a ball struck his recently-operated-on ankle.

Coach Marco van Basten told reporters: 'It is obvious that his ankle is not comfortable and we will have to see how serious this injury is.'

The Dutch meet Mexico in another friendly on Thursday.

### Klose flies home

REUTERS, Geneva

Germany striker Miroslav Klose has left his team's training camp in Switzerland to fly home to Bremen for private reasons but will rejoin the team later on Tuesday before their match against Japan.

Germany's SID sport news agency quoted Klose's agent Alex Schuett on Tuesday saying that the Werder Bremen striker flew home to Bremen from Geneva on Monday evening for "very private reasons".

There were no further details, and it was not immediately clear whether Klose would play or not, SID said.

Klose is one of coach Juergen Klinsmann's key players for the World Cup and has been in good form in recent months. The rest of the team will leave their Swiss base on Tuesday and set up camp in Duesseldorf.

The World Cup kicks off on June 9.

### Positive reinforcement for Ukraine squad!

REUTERS, Moscow

Ukraine's players have been promised quality time with their wives if they reach the World Cup semi-finals.

Asked if he would allow his players to have sex with their wives and girlfriends during the month-long tournament, Ukraine coach Oleg Blokhin

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said: "I would personally send my players to see their wives if we reach the (World Cup) semis."

"Those who don't feel like it, I'll just drag to their wives. Take my word for it," Blokhin told Russian daily Sport-Express on Tuesday.

Ukraine, playing in their first World Cup finals, have been drawn in Group H along with Spain, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.

The World Cup kicks off on June 9.

### Alarm over prostitution

AFP, Paris

Members of France's five main political parties raised the alarm Monday over the risk of large-scale forced prostitution on the sidelines of next month's World Cup in Germany.

Church and pressure groups in Germany fear that as many as 40,000 women and girls, mainly from eastern Europe, could be coerced into the sex industry during the June 9-29 event.

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The Central Council of Jews in Germany is planning to hold a protest at the World Cup football match between Iran and Mexico in Nuremberg on June 11, the German press reported on Tuesday.

"We will hold a demonstration to show our opposition to the politics of Iran and its president," the secretary general of the council, Stephan Kramer, told Die Freie Presse newspaper in Chemnitz.

Hardline Iranian President

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

has called for Israel to be wiped from the map

and has repeatedly denied the

Holocaust.

In the interview published in Der

Spiegel magazine this week, he said: "I

will only accept something as an

absolute truth if I am fully convinced."

The president is a football sup-

porter but his spokesman said on

Monday that he would not be coming to

Germany to watch Iran's national

side compete in the World Cup.

The Iranians are playing in Group

D in the first round of the tourna-

ment, against Angola, Mexico and Portugal.

The city of Frankfurt on Tuesday

said it wanted to ban a planned pro-

test by neo-Nazis in support of

Ahmadinejad during the Iran v

Portugal match being played there on

June 17.

A final decision was expected to be

taken next week, a spokesman for the

city council said.



PHOTO: AFP

A passenger walks past a replica of the World Cup Stadium Munich, illuminated in white at the Munich airport on Tuesday. Inside there will be screens to follow the World Cup matches. The installation will travel to Milan, Paris and Rio de Janeiro in the next three months.

## Zambrotta to miss opener

INTERNET, Florence

Italy defender Gianluca Zambrotta will miss his national team's World Cup opener against Ghana on June 12.

The Juventus utility man sustained a muscle injury in his left thigh during training last weekend and will need at least two weeks to recover.

"If everything goes well, he will come back in 15 to 20 days," Italy team doctor Enrico Castellacci said. "In a week's time, he will have another test done but we are calm and optimistic."

Zambrotta, who is a regular player in Marcello Lippi's squad, could recover in time to face the United States on June 17.

Although doctors have ruled out a ligament damage, Zambrotta will need to have a scan and is unlikely to travel to Gena with the rest of his teammates for the warmup friendlies against fellow World Cup qualifiers Switzerland on Wednesday and Ukraine on Friday.

There was more bad news for Lippi on Tuesday with Roma midfielder Simone Perrotta unable to finish training, having picked up a knock on his right knee.

The clash in Geneva will allow Lippi to test the fitness of some of his players.

However, Lippi is set to rest Roma captain Francesco Totti, who recently recovered from a serious leg injury.

"Totti is improving and he is undergoing specific training to gain more strength in his injured leg," Lippi said.

AC Milan's Andrea Pirlo is the favorite to replace Totti at the heart of Italy's midfield, with Roma's Daniele De Rossi set to be relegated to the bench.

Against Switzerland, Italy will play with a 4-3-3 formation, with Alberto Gilardino, Luca Toni and Alessandro Del Piero set to form the Azzurri's attacking line.

## Santa Cruz battling to be fit

AFP, Asuncion

Paraguay's star striker Roque Santa Cruz is nearing full fitness from a injured right knee but is still unable to play a full part in training, the team doctor has said.

The 24-year-old Bayern Munich player sustained a cruciate ligament injury to the joint in October last year and has been on the sidelines ever since.

He joined the Paraguay training camp at Flachau in Austria and team doctors told Paraguayan media that he was on the right track to play in his country's vital World Cup Group B opener against England in Frankfurt on June 10.

"After six days of physiotherapy his right knee is stable and the pain he was feeling has 90 percent disappeared," said head doctor Osvaldo Pangrazio.

"We will continue to treat the injury in the same way and make a new evaluation on Friday," he added.

The South Americans will also take on group rivals Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago.

## Jewish group to protest in Iran match

AFP, Berlin

The Central Council of Jews in Germany is planning to hold a protest at the World Cup football match between Iran and Mexico in Nuremberg on June 11, the German press reported on Tuesday.

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## Kranjcar no 'daddy's boy'

INTERNET, undated

Most fathers dream of watching a son play for his country in the World Cup but it has taken Croatia midfielder Niko Kranjcar some time to finally convince his doubters that his place in the national side is not at least partly due