



#### COACH

MARCO VAN BASTEN: The darling of the 1988 European Championship-winning team but the jury is out on his term as Oranje coach. He will leave his post after the finals and some would say it is not a minute too soon.

#### SQUAD

Goalkeepers: 1. Edwin van der Sar (Manchester United/ENG), 16. Maarten Stekelenburg (Ajax), 13. Henk Timmer (Feyenoord)

Defenders: 14. Wilfred Bouma (Aston Villa/ENG), 15. Tim de Cler (Feyenoord), 3. John Heitinga (Ajax), 4. Joris Mathijsen (SV Hamburg/GER), 12. Mario Melchiot (Wigan/ENG), 2. Andre Ooijer (Blackburn/ENG), 21. Khalid Boulahrouz (Sevilla/ESP)

Midfielders: 20. Ibrahim Afellay (PSV Eindhoven), 5. Giovanni van Bronckhorst (Feyenoord), 8. Orlando Engelaar (FC Twente Enschede), 17. Nigel de Jong (SV Hamburg/GER), 10. Wesley Sneijder (Real Madrid/ESP), 23. Rafael van der Vaart (SV Hamburg/GER), 6. Demy de Zeeuw (AZ Alkmaar)

Forwards: 19. Klaas-Jan Huntelaar (Ajax), 18. Dirk Kuyt (Liverpool/ENG), 9. Ruud van Nistelrooy (Real Madrid/ESP), 7. Robin van Persie (Arsenal/ENG), 11. Arjen Robben (Real Madrid/ESP), 22. Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink (Celtic/SCO).

TACTICS: Van Basten has tried 4-3-3 and that still looks the most likely with Nistelrooy spearheading the attack.

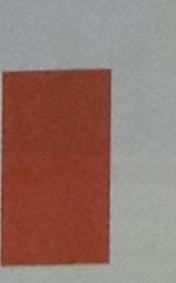
STRENGTHS: Individually the Dutch have immense talent and any one of Van Nistelrooy, Wesley Sneijder or Arjen Robben can win games on their own.

WEAKNESSES: The Dutch look dodgy at the back, tactically uncomfortable and still possess their traditional self-destructive streak. Oh, and they're in the 'Group of Death'.

VERDICT: First-round exit for the first time in 24 years.

## ITALY







#### COACH

ROBERTO DONADONI: The former Livorno coach was a surprise choice to succeed World Cup-winning boss Marcello Lippi but, after overcoming the retirements of Francesco Totti and Alessandro Nesta, he has the team looking organised and motivated.

#### SQUAD

Goalkeepers: 14. Marco Amelia (Livorno), 1. Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus), 17. Morgan De Sanctis (FC Sevilla/ESP)

Defenders: 6. Andrea Barzagli (Palermo), 5. Alessandro Gamberini (Fiorentina), 4. Giorgio Chiellini (Juventus), 3. Fabio Grosso (Lyon/FRA), 23. Marco Materazzi (Inter Milan), 2. Christian Panucci (AS Roma), 19. Gianluca Zambrotta (FC Barcelona/ESP)

Midfielders: 13. Massimo Ambrosini (AC Milan), 22. Alberto Aquilani (AS Roma), 16. Mauro Camoranesi (Juventus), 10. Daniele De Rossi (AS Roma), 8. Gennaro Gattuso (AC Milan), 20. Simone Perrotta (AS Roma), 21. Andrea Pirlo (AC Milan)

Forwards: 12. Marco Borriello (Genoa), 18. Antonio Cassano (Sampdoria), 11. Antonio Di Natale (Udinese), 7. Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus), 15. Fabio Quagliarella (Udinese), 9. Luca Toni (Bayern Munich/GER)

TACTICS: Donadoni usually operates a 4-3-3 system with Luca Toni as an out-and-out striker supported by Antonio di Natale and Mauro Camoranesi.

STRENGTHS: They have a good mixture of youth and experience, and quality throughout.

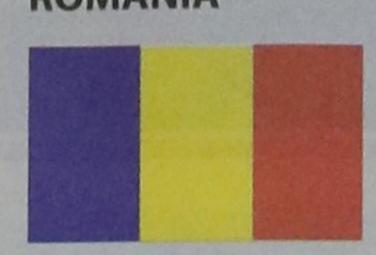
WEAKNESSES: The much lauded Italian defence could prove a weakness with the withdrawal of captain Fabio Cannavaro through injury. It will be left to relative newbies Andreas Barzagli and Giorgio Chilleni to slot alongside Marco Materazzi.

VERDICT: One of the contenders for the crown.

## **ROMANIA**

COACH

SQUAD



VICTOR PITURCA: The former striker has moulded a strong team

which put Holland in the shade during qualification. His side look

Goalkeepers: 1. Bogdan Lobont (Dinamo Bucharest), 12. Marius Popa

Defenders: 2. Cosmín Contra (Getafe/ESP), 4. Gabriel Tamas

(Auxerre/FRA), 15. Dorin Goian (Steaua Bucharest), 5. Cristian Chivu

(Inter Milan/ITA), 3. Razvan Rat (Shakhtar Donetsk/UKR), 14. Sorin

Ghionea (Steaua Bucharest), 13. Cristian Sapunaru (Rapid Bucharest),

Midfielders: 7. Florentin Petre (CSKA Sofia/BUL), 11. Razvan Cocis

(Lokomotiv Moscou/RUS), 6. Mirel Radoi (Steaua Bucharest), 20.

Nicolae Dica (Steaua Bucarest), 8. Paul Codrea (Siena/ITA), 16. Banel

Forwards: 10. Adrian Mutu (Fiorentina/ITA), 9. Ciprian Marica (VfB

Stuttgart/GER), 21. Daniel Niculae (Auxerre/FRA), 18. Marius Niculae

TACTICS: In a group containing Italy, France and Holland, Piturca's

men can expect to be on the back foot. Expect them to line up in a 4-3-

STRENGTHS: The team have shown good spirit and look capable of

WEAKNESSES: A lack of tournament experience - their last was Euro

VERDICT: Unlikely to be thrashed by anyone, but massive outsiders to

1-2, with Ciprian Marica and Adrian Mutu up front.

adapting tactics during the course of games.

emerge from the 'Group of Death'.

Nicolita (Steaua Bucharest), 19. Adrian Cristea (Dinamo Bucharest)

22. Stefan Radu (Lazio/ITA), 17. Cosmin Moti (Dinamo Bucharest)

united and organised thanks to his exacting standards.

(PoliTimisoara), 23. Eduard Stancioiu (CFR Cluj)

(Inverness Caledonian/SCO)

2000.



#### COACH

RAYMOND DOMENECH: The former under-21 coach is never shy to offer an opinion, even if it alienates him from his players or peers. His record so far though is impressive.

#### SQUAD

FRANCE

Goalkeepers: 23. Gregory Coupet (Lyon), 16. Sebastien Frey (Fiorentina/ITA), 1. Steve Mandanda (Marseille)

Defenders: 3. Eric Abidal (FC Barcelona/ESP), 13. Patrice Evra (Manchester United/ENG), 5. William Gallas (Arsenal/ENG), 19. Willy Sagnol (Bayern Munich/GER), 15. Lilian Thuram (FC Barcelona/ESP), 14. François Clerc (Lyon), 17. Sebastien Squillaci (Lyon), 2. Jean-Alain Boumsong (Lyon)

Midfielders: 21. Lassana Diarra (Portsmouth/ENG), 6. Claude Makelele (Chelsea/ENG), 20. Jeremy Toulalan (Lyon), 4. Patrick Vieira (Inter-Milan/ITA), 7. Florent Malouda (Chelsea/ENG), 22. Franck Ribery (Bayern Munich/GER), 11. Samir Nasri (Marseille), 10. Sidney Govou

Forwards: 8. Nicolas Anelka (Chelsea/ENG), 12. Thierry Henry (FC Barcelona/ESP), 9. Karim Benzema (Lyon), 18. Bafetimbi Gomis (Saint-Etienne)

TACTICS: Domenech is expected to go for a 4-2-2-2 with the old guard of Patrick Vieira and Claude Makelele shielding the defence and Ribery and Florent Malouda providing the impetus.

STRENGTHS: France look potent going forward, with Thierry Henry set to be partnered by Lyon hotshot Karim Benzema with the pace and guile of Nicolas Anelka in reserve.

WEAKNESSES: Domenech has been criticised for being overly cautious in past tournaments despite the talent available to him, and Les Bleus must avoid being crippled by expectancy.

VERDICT: If they emerge from a fiendishly tough group, they are a good bet to reach the final.

# STARS

#### FRANCK RIBERY

(France): The Bayern Munich man has stepped into the role of superstar in the two years since he exploded onto the scene in the World Cup. He provides a talismanic presence with his searing pace, daring dribbles and impish creativity.

#### ZLATAN IBRAHIMOVIC

(Sweden): The Inter Milan striker had a good season in the Serie A winning the Scudettto. He possesses fabulous technique, an eye for goal and an explosive temper in equal measure. But if he is on song at the finals he could be one of the star attractions.

## FERNANDO TORRES

(Spain): The striker has made an instant impact with Liverpool and his searing pace, technique and finishing will make him one of the most feared forwards at the finals.

GIORGIOS KARAGOUNIS (Greece): Scored the opening goal at Euro 2004 in Greece's first shock victory over hosts Portugal four years ago and,

despite a fairly undistinguished few years in club football, he remains a key man for his country. Now with Panathinaikos after spells in Italy and Portugal, his enthusiasm and drive is vital to Greece.

#### ANDREI ARSHAVIN (Russia): His value to

Russia is in his versatility, being able to play in 'the hole' behind a lone striker or partnership, on the wing, or as a straightforward striker. Possesses superb pace and creativity and is coming

off a UEFA

with club side

Cup win

Zenith St

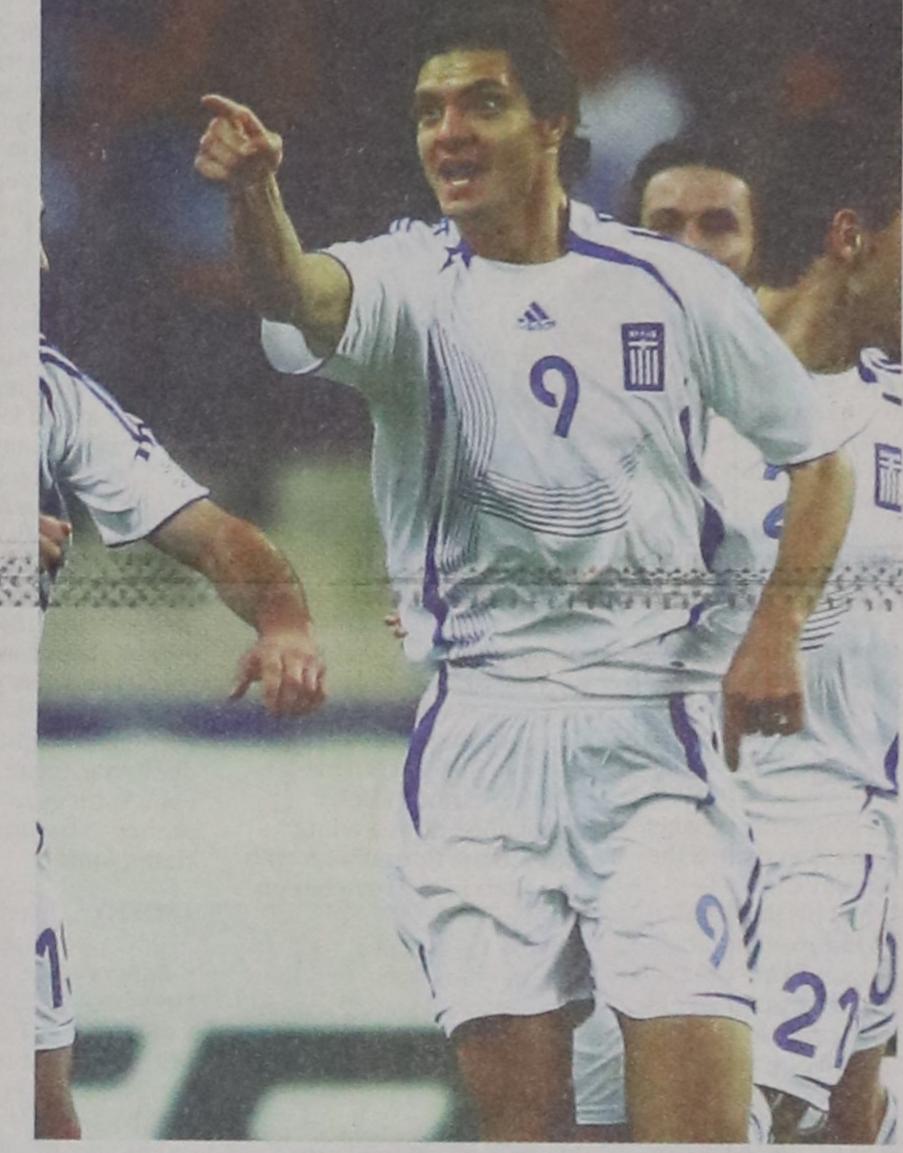
Petersburg.

Michael Ballack





Franck Ribery



Angelos Charisteas

## GROUP D

## **SWEDEN**





## COACH

LARS LAGERBACK: Lagerback has often been criticised for his negative tactics. Has worked for the Swedish federation since 1990.

#### SQUAD

Goalkeepers: 1. Andreas Isaksson (Manchester City/ENG), 12. Rami Shaaban (Hammarby), 13. Johan Wiland (Elfsborg)

Defenders: 4. Petter Hansson (Rennes/FRA), 2. Mikael Nilsson (Panathinaikos/GRE), 15. Andreas Granqvist (Wigan/ENG), 23. Mikael Dorsin (Cluj/ROM), 14. Daniel Majstorovic (FC Basel/SUI), 3. Olof Mellberg (Juventus/ITA), 5. Fredrik Stoor (Rosenborg/NOR)

Midfielders: 16. Kim Kallstrom (Lyon/FRA), 7. Niclas Alexandersson (IFK Gothenburg), 18. Sebastian Larsson (Birmingham/ENG), 19. Daniel Andersson (Malmo FF), 9. Fredrik Ljungberg (West Ham/ENG), 8. Anders Svensson (Elfsborg/NOR), 21. Christian Wilhelmsson (Nantes/FRA), 6. Tobias Linderoth (Galatasaray/TUR).

Forwards: 10. Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Inter Milan/ITA), 17. Henrik Larsson (Helsingborg IF), 11. Johan Elmander (Toulouse/FRA), 22. Markus Rosenberg (Werder Bremen/GER), 20. Marcus Allback (FC Copenhagen/DEN).

TACTICS: Lagerback is very much a safety-first coach. A stable 4-4-2 should be set up against Greece and Russia but expect a packed midfield against Spain. STRENGTHS: Ibrahimovic and Kim Kallstrom are the main creative

forces in the Swedish line-up and in Tobias Linderoth they have one of Europe's most underrated defensive midfielders.

WEAKNESSES: The Swedes looked uncharacteristically suspect at the back during qualification.

VERDICT: The last eight seems to be the extent of their progress.

## SPAIN





## COACH

LUIS ARAGONES: The controversial coach has been in charge since July 2004 and rescued a qualification campaign that seemed to be going off the rails as Spain claimed 25 points out of 27 having taken three out of the first nine available.

#### SQUAD

Goalkeepers: 1. Iker Casillas (Real Madrid), 23. Jose Manuel Reina (Liverpool/ENG), 13. Andres Palop (FC Sevilla)

Defenders: 15. Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid), 5. Carles Puyol (FC Barce-Iona), 20. Juanito (Real Betis), 18. Alvaro Arbeloa (Liverpool/ENG), 3. Fernando Navarro (Real Mallorca), 2. Raul Albiol (Valencia), 4. Carlos Marchena (Valencia), 11. Joan Capdevila (Villarreal)

Midfielders: 10. Cesc Fabregas (Arsenal/ENG), 6. Andres Iniesta (FC Barcelona), 8. Xavi Hernandez (FC Barcelona), 21. David Silva (Valencia), 12. Santiago Cazorla (Villarreal), 22. Ruben de La Red (Getafe), 14. Xabi Alonso (Liverpool/ENG), 19. Marcos Senna (Villarreal)

Forwards: 7. David Villa (Valencia), 16. Sergio Garcia (Real Zaragoza), 9. Fernando Torres (Liverpool/ENG), 17. Daniel Guiza (Real Mallorca)

TACTICS: Aragones has an embarrassment of riches in midfield, with the side expected to line up in a 4-4-2 formation. STRENGTHS: Spain have quality in depth, with a core of world-class

players - Iker Casillas in goal, Sergio Ramos in defence, Cesc Fabregas and Andres Iniesta in midfield and Torres and David Villa up front. WEAKNESSES: Spain have an awful habit of crumbling at big tournaments, and added to that is the fact a number of the players could be on their last legs after demanding seasons in La Liga, the Premier

League and the Champions League. VERDICT: Strong enough to get out of their group, but face an uphill battle against any of the big three from the other group.

#### GREECE





## COACH

OTTO REHHAGEL: The veteran German was feted for leading Greece to their shock triumph at Euro 2004 but has been criticised since for showing excessive loyalty to the players who triumphed in Portugal. Still remains a master tactician.

#### SQUAD

Goalkeepers: 1. Antonis Nikopolidis (Olympiakos), 13. Alexandros Tzorvas (OFI Crete), 12. Kostas Chalkias (Aris Salonika).

Defenders: 11. Loukas Vyntra, 18. Giannis Goumas (Panathinaikos), 5. Traianos Dellas (AEK Athens), 19. Paraskevas Antzas, 3. Christos Patsatzoglou, 15. Vassilis Torosidis (Olympiakos), 2. Giourkas Seitaridis (Atletico Madrid/ESP), 16. Sotirios Kyrgiakos (Eintracht Frankfurt/GER) Midfielders: 21. Kostas Katsouranis (Benfica/POR), 22. Alexandros Tziolis, 4. Nikos Spiropoulos, 10. Georgios Karagounis (Panathinaikos), 8. Stelios Giannakopoulos (Bolton/ENG), 6. Angelos Basinas (Real

Mallorca/ESP), 20. loannis Amanatidis (Eintracht Frankfurt/GER) Forwards: 14. Dimitrios Salpingidis (Panathinaikos), 23. Nikolaos Liberopoulos (AEK Athens), 17. Theofanis Gekas (Bayer Leverkusen/GER), 9. Angelos Charisteas (Nuremberg/GER), 7. Georgios Samaras (Celtic/SCO)

TACTICS: Rehhagel has steadfastly refused to update things from four years ago, so don't expect Greece to be involved in any thrillers as they try to wear teams down and feed off any scraps. The German coach favours a 4-3-3 formation.

STRENGTHS: Greece are still greater than the sum of their parts and are defensively solid. Apart from shipping four against Turkey, Greece conceded just six in their 11 other qualifiers.

WEAKNESSES: The sense is that the team have grown old together and that changes should have been made after the failure to qualify for the 2006 World Cup.

VERDICT: First-round exit behind Sweden and Spain.

RUSSIA





## COACH

GUUS HIDDINK: Enjoyed great success in club football with PSV Eindhoven and has since built a fabulous reputation as a tournament coach after leading South Korea to the 2002 World Cup semis and Australia to the 2006 last 16.

#### SQUAD

Goalkeepers: 1. Igor Akinfeev (CSKA Moscow), 12. Vladimir Gabulov (Perm), 16. Vyacheslav Malafeev (Zenit Saint-Petersburg).

Defenders: 22. Alexander Anyukov (Zenit Saint-Petersburg), 5. Alexei Berezutsky, 2. Vassili Berezutsky, 4. Sergei Ignashevich (CSKA Moscow), 8. Denis Kolodin (Dynamo Moscow), 3. Renat Yanbaev (Lokomotiv Moscow).

Midfielders: 15. Diniyar Bilyaletdinov, 7. Dmitri Torbinsky (Lokomotiv Moscow), 23. Vladimir Bystrov (Spartak Moscow), 18. Yuri Zhirkov (CSKA Moscow), 17. Konstantin Zyryanov, 14. Roman Shirokov (Zenit Saint-Petersburg), 20. Igor Semshov (Dynamo Moscow), 11. Sergei Semak (Kazan).

Forwards: 6. Roman Adamov (FC Moscow), 19. Roman Pavlyuchenko (Spartak Moscow), 13. Pavel Pogrebnyak, 10. Andrei Arshavin (Zenit Saint-Petersburg), 21. Dmitri Sychev (Lokomotiv Moscow), 9. Ivan Saenko (Nuremberg/GER)

TACTICS: Hiddink is set to line up in a 4-5-1 formation, with Arshavin floating behind Dmitri Sychev or Roman Pavlyuchenko.

STRENGTHS: Hiddink's vast tournament experience is their biggest weapon, and he is sure to generate a nothing-to-lose attitude among

his players. WEAKNESSES: Away defeats to England and Israel in qualification raise questions about their defence, and the feeling is they still lack quality, especially without star man Arshavin.

VERDICT: Hiddink's Midas touch in a tournament will surely come to an end. Out at the first hurdle.