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WORLD CUP SPECIAL

Raymond drops 'stupid' seniors

France coach Raymond Domenech described the French players' refusal to train in protest of Nicolas Anelka's expulsion as 'unspeakably stupid'.
"We tried to convince the players that what was happening was irregular, that their actions were unspeakably stupid. I told myself this masquerade had to be stopped. No way would I back this action."
Under-fire Domenech promptly dropped Patrice Evra, Florent Malouda, Sidney Govou and Eric Abidal for the crunch South Africa game.

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Star SPORT

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 23, 2010 s@thedailystar.net



PHOTO: AFP

South Africa striker Katlego Mphela (R) slams the ball home past France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris (L) and defender Gael Clichy to make it 2-0 for the home side in their Group A match at the Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein yesterday.

Graceful exit for hosts, disgraceful for France

AFP, Bloemfontein

Hosts South Africa suffered World Cup heartbreak on Tuesday despite a stirring 2-1 win over 10-man France, crashing out of the competition on goal difference.

It means the Bafana Bafana are the first host nation to be knocked out in the first round of a World Cup despite finishing level on points with Group A rivals Mexico.

France coach Raymond Domenech saw his six year reign come to an end and admitted he wished France



SCORE BOARD
FRANCE 1 - 2 SOUTH AFRICA
MALOUDA 18, MPHELA 37

France (4-3-3): Hugo Lloris, Bacary Sagna, William Gallas, Sebastien Squillaci, Gael Clichy, Franck Ribery, Yoann Gourcuff, Alou Diarra (Sidney Govou, 82), Abou Diaby, Djibril Cisse (Thierry Henry, 55), Andre-Pierre Gignac (Florent Malouda, 46)

South Africa (4-4-2): Moeneeb Josephs, Tsepo Masilela, Aaron Mokoena, Anele Ngcongca (Siboniso Gaxa, 55), Bongani Khumalo, MacBeth Sibaya, Siphiwe Tshabalala, Steven Pienaar, Thanduyise Khuboni (Teko Modise, 78), Katlego Mphela, Bernard Parker (Siyabonga Nomvethe, 68)

Red Card: Yoann Gourcuff 25

KEY STATS	
France	South Africa
Shots (on target)	8(3) 21(8)
Corners	3 5
Possession	44% 56%
Yellow Cards	1 0

had played with as much spirit in their first two matches after a campaign marred by in-fighting and the players going on strike over the expulsion of Nicolas Anelka.

"They showed real heart, real fight, real generosity of spirit out there today," said 58-year-old Domenech, who appeared to get involved in a verbal altercation with opposite number Carlos Alberto Parreira at the final whistle.

"I feel great sadness that what has happened happened not only for myself but for the French people."

Roared on by a passionate crowd, South Africa took the lead on 20 minutes when Bongani Khumalo rose highest to head in a corner from the left swung in by Siphiwe Tshabalala, sparking scenes of joy among the yellow-clad fans.

The contest was given a dramatic twist midway through the first half when Yoann Gourcuff was sent off for using his elbow against MacBeth Sibaya with beleaguered French coach Raymond Domenech burying his face in his hands.

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Slovenia v England Time: 8.00pm Port Elizabeth

United States v Algeria Time: 8.00pm Pretoria


Ghana v Germany Time: 12.30am (Thursday) Johannesburg



TODAY'S MATCHES

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WORLD CUP POLL

Which team has impressed you the most?

Argentina 56%

Spain 18%

Brazil 15%

TOTAL VOTES: 161

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think Kaka's red card was justified?

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PHOTO: AFP

Uruguay striker Diego Forlan (L) fights for control with Mexico midfielder Israel Castro during their Group A match yesterday in Rustenburg.

The Enchanting Greece and the Exciting Encounters

The Greek football team is still in the race of second round and when this writing reaches you, the destiny of Greece in the 2010 World Cup Football will be written. Whatever the case is, the enchanting beauty of Greece is infinite.

Greece is considered the cradle of western civilization. It is the birth place of democracy, Western philosophy, the Olympic Games, Western literature and historiography, political science, major scientific and mathematical principles, and Western drama, including both tragedy and comedy. This legacy is partly reflected in the 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites that are located in Greece. A country which has seen the birth of civilizations experienced the might of Alexander the Great and presented the world with The Parthenon on the Acropolis of Athens, Greece is a must visit destination in a lifetime.

Coming back to football, exciting encounters are in store, as both England and USA, the "buddies" in world politics needs a clear victory over their oppositions to think about second round aspirations. Landon Donovan and Dempsey, the only two stand out footballers of the American outfit has a relatively easier time against Algeria. But the Englishmen are up against the surprise package Slovenia, who currently tops the group. It is simple, Rooney needs to score goals or Lampard or Gerrard, some one needs to put the ball in.

One thing is sure, some more world cup dreams will end today.

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