Chasing a dream

AFP, Johannesburg

One-time football power Uruguay are on the verge of their first World Cup semifinal appearance in 40 years with African hope Ghana blocking their way at Soccer City here on Friday.

Before Brazil and Argentina, Uruguay were the dominant South American team winning two World Cups in 1930 and 1950, two Olympic Games gold medals and eight of their 14 Copa America titles. La Celeste's World Cup

THE KNOWLEDGE

All three of Diego Forlan's World Cup goals have come against African nations.

Asamoah Gyan is only the second African player to score four goals at the World Cup after Roger Milla (who scored five).

Uruguay are unbeaten in their last six World Cup games, keeping four clean sheets in the process.

fortunes have been in decline since their seismic 2-1 upset of Brazil in the 1950 final before 174,000 fans at the Maracana Stadium, Rio de Janeiro.

Uruguay reached the semifinals in 1954 and 1970, but on Friday Oscar Tabarez's team get their chance to reach the last four after a break of four decades.





Ghana, with all of Africa

behind them, are out to create

history of their own, but

Uruguay are surfing the wave

of South American success at

their four matches after an

opening scoreless draw with

France and in Luis Suarez and

Diego Forlan Uruguay possess

South Africa 2010.



The Ghana-Uruguay quarterfinal at the Soccer City stadium in Johannesburg today will see the key battle between Diego Forlan (L), the dangerous Uruguayan marksman, and Asamoah Gyan, who carries the hope of an entire continent.

VENUE

Soccer

TOT

Coach

Oscar Tabarez

4-3-3

RANKED 16

URUGUAY

13 20 10 14 13 20 12 12

47 53 49 51 41 59 46 54

URUGUAY v GHANA

Uruguay play Ghana in Johannesburg on Friday

FIRST TWO STAGES RESULTS

TACTICS

Goalkeeper <a>Midfielders

Defenders 🚇 Forwards

PREVIOUS HEAD-TO-HEAD RESULTS (a

No previous meetings

two of the most potent forwards in the tournament, while the defence, marshalled by skipper Diego Lugano, has only conceded one goal.

Ajax striker Suarez's curling They have won three of right-footer in the 80th minute of Saturday's last 16 match with South Korea earned Uruguay a last-eight spot, and also netted him the man of the match award.

Forlan hopes the strong South American presence in the quarterfinals will encourage FIFA to revisit their quota of finals places rather than force the fifth team in the regional qualifiers to play off against a Central American side.

Uruguay had to overcome Costa Rica to reach the finals.

"We have to show how strong South American football is and the strength of the qualifying programme. I hope in doing so we can have five places and not the current four-and-a-half for the next World Cup in Brazil," Forlan

Serbia Australia Germany U.S.A.

15 10 22 18 11 5 19 11

48 52 50 50 46 54 49 51

Milovan

RANKED 32

Tabarez has already finalised his team replacing defender Diego Godin and midfielder Alvaro Pereira with Mauricio Victorino and Alvaro Fernandez.

"Before we began this World Cup, we saw this great harmony among the players and I said to them, 'The people back home have aspirations, they have dreams and we have to deliver them'," Tabarez

"Our objective is to go as far as we can in this tournament."

Ghana are bidding to become the first African nation to reach the semifinals of the World Cup.

Ghana's 'Black Stars' are the lone flag-waver for Africa in the first World Cup staged on the continent and there is an emotional outpouring of support for them against Uruguay.

Ghana became only the third African team along with Cameroon (1990) and Senegal (2002) to reach the last eight at the World Cup when they downed the United States 2-1 in Rustenburg last Saturday.

South Africa 2010 was trumpeted as Africa's longawaited opportunity to host the world's greatest sporting showpiece, but only Ghana has survived after the demise of South Africa, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Algeria at the group stage.

Now after their fighting win over the Americans, the Black Stars have the opportunity to do what no other African team has previously achieved and progress to the semifinals of the World Cup.

It will be the first ever meeting between the two countries each other and both teams were not expected to be competing for a place in the semifinal against either Brazil or the Netherlands.

Ghana carry Africa's hopes

AFP, Johannesburg

World Cup boss Danny Jordaan said Thursday that Ghana carried the continent's hopes as it aimed to become the first African team in the semifinals, in the first tournament on African soil.

"We have the prospect of Ghana going beyond the quarterfinals, a place where no African team has been," Jordaan told reporters.

"This is what we have always wanted to achieve in this African World Cup," he said.

The Black Stars take on Uruguay on Friday, in a game that will grab the attention of the entire African continent.

Cameroon, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and the hosts South Africa all bombed out in the first round of the games.

Abedi Pele backs **Black Stars**

SOCCERNET

Ghana legend Abedi Pele has backed the Black Stars to beat Uruguay in Friday's World Cup quarter-final and ride the wave of continental support all the way to the final in Soccer City on July 11.

Pele, widely considered to be one of the greatest ever African players, is Ghana's alltime leading scorer and has an added interest in the finals in South Africa as his sons Ibrahim Ayew and Andre Ayew are competing for Milovan Rajevac's side.

"I am happy Dede (Andre) has done well," Pele said. "What is interesting is that I am still strong to see him play in a World Cup.

"It's been difficult at times, because when he steps on to the pitch, you don't know whether he is going to do well or not. So you can imagine the emotions.

"We have been doing some coaching on the phone. I also encourage Ibrahim to be patient so that, when his time comes, nothing can stop him."

And three-time African Footballer of the Year Pele insists that the Avew brothers and their team-mates are not only capable of beating Uruguay, but could become the most successful African side in World Cup history by making it to the final in Johannesburg.

"I am very happy that we qualified for the quarterfinals. It's a huge improvement given that we got knocked out in the second round in the last World Cup. The whole of South Africa and Africa is behind us and we have no choice but to go fur-

"Football is not mathematics. We are strong and so are Uruguay. The game can go either way. This gives us the confidence that we can go further. I see Ghana going all the way to the final."

Pele admitted that while he has been delighted with the Black Stars progress, the failure of any other African sides to qualify from the group stages is a huge disappointment.

Bastian fires warning

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REUTERS, Erasmia

Germany must beware of Argentina's attempts to provoke them during Saturday's World Cup quarterfinal, German midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger said on Wednesday.

would be looking to throw the Germans off their game and urged his teammates not to be drawn into any provocation. "It starts before the match,"

Schweinsteiger said Argentine players

Schweinsteiger, a member of the squad that beat Argentina on penalties four years ago to move into the semifinals of the 2006 World Cup, told reporters.

"If you see how they gesticulate, how they try to influence the referee. That is not part of the game. That is a lack of respect. They just are like that," said Schweinsteiger.

Several players and coaches from both teams clashed immediately after Germany's

victory on penalties in 2006 in an incident that briefly overshadowed the hosts' joy of advancing to the last four.

Germany and Argentina have also met twice in a World Cup final, with the former winning in 1990 and the latter coming out on top four years earlier.

"We should not be provoked by them," Schweinsteiger said.

"I hope the referee will pick up the feeling of who is provoking whom. We saw that again in their match against Mexico at halftime."

There was a heated exchange between the Argentina and Mexico benches at halftime of their last 16 match after Italian referee Roberto Rosetti let Argentina's first goal stand despite being clearly offside. Argentina won 3-1 to advance.

"This behaviour shows their character and mentality," Schweinsteiger said

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'Ballboy' Mueller prefers to wait

AFP, Erasmia

Diego Maradona thought Thomas Mueller was a ballboy when they first met, a demeaning snub which has fired-up the German star to plot Argentina's downfall in Saturday's World Cup quarterfinal.

The 20-year-old Bayern Munich midfielder scored twice in Germany's 4-1 hammering of England last Sunday and is a contender for the tournament's best young player.

But he was virtually unknown outside of Germany when he made his debut in a 1-0 friendly defeat to Argentina in Munich in March and attended the post-match press conference as his

country's great new hope alongside the Argentina coach. Maradona joked he thought the ballboy had arrived and felt so slighted that he stormed off and refused to return until the German left the stage to him alone.

But with three goals at this World Cup already and a Champions League final appearance, plus the German league and cup double, under his belt, Mueller is now a household name and sure to cause Argentina problems in Cape Town on Saturday.

"Now I have won two titles and played in the Champions League with Bayern, so a few things have changed," said Mueller. He is too young to remember Maradona as a player, but he saw

the midfield maestro play in former Germany captain Lothar Matthaeus' testimonial game in 2000 and was greatly impressed. "He was overweight at that time but what he did with the ball

was amazing, something I have rarely seen," he said. "As a coach I can't judge him but the results and the convincing way Argentina are playing means he is doing things right."

When Germany last played Argentina in the World Cup quarterfinals at Berlin's Olympic Stadium four years ago, Mueller watched the game with friends on a giant screen in Munich and well remembers the 4-2 penalty shoot-out win.

"I remember us winning through sheer will power and I haven't forgotten the scenes after," he said, referring to the skirmishes between players from both teams on the pitch after Germany's Jens Lehmann saved the final penalty.

"We mustn't be provoked," warned Mueller ahead of this weekend's clash in Cape Town, before joking: "I won't mind a fight afterwards if we have won."

Kimberley behind Uruguayans

REUTERS, Kimberley

When the Uruguayan squad left their hotel in Kimberley to head for the World Cup quarterfinal with Ghana in Johannesburg, staff and guards at the gate bid them farewell singing "Shosholoza".

It is an old South African rail-gang song that has been adopted by soccer and rugby fans and urges: "Go Forward, Go Forward". The gesture was all the more poignant as not only did Uruguay

trounce hosts South Africa earlier in the tournament but they take on the sole surviving African side in Friday's match. A small group of Kimberley residents waved farewell to the Uruguayans from across the road as the bus left the hotel on

traditional "matte" tea. The mining city and the squad have clearly bonded.

Charmaine Visser, manager of the Victorian Guest House, was wearing a sky-blue Uruguay scarf given to her by coach Tabarez when they met. Hair salon owner Philinda Golden said she had trimmed

Forlan's blond locks during his stay. "The country is supporting Ghana, because they are African, but in this city, everyone is for Uruguay," Philinda said.

The Daily Star MRANGS TOSHIBA World cup **QUIZ** 2010

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QUIZ SCHEDULE

The Daily Star -RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Round 5 Ends July 02, 2010

Ends

June 23

July 02

July 11

the Star Sport for competition information and rules)

June 15

June 24

July 03

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3rd. 20L Toshin Microwave Woven 4th. Two Toshiba DVD Players

Answers must reach by 12pm Lucky Draw for prizes June 25 June 29 July 04 July 06 July 13 July 16

Tick (\checkmark) the correct answers How many goals did Fernando Torres score in WC qualifying? How many teams participated in the first World Cup in 1930? 3. Which was the first team to not score in the World Cup final? 4. Who is the only player to have scored goals for two different teams in the World Cup finals? 5. Who is this player? Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)..... Father's name..... ...Occupation.....

Telephone (if any)......Signature.....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters. Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215. Sylhet readers can also drop entries at Rangs Toshiba Showroom, Dorga Gate, Sylhet. You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 5".

READ The Daily Star TO CATCH THE WORLD CUP FEVER

Wednesday evening for the airport, the players clutching flasks of