



Homework is key: Abreu

INTERNET

While Germany and Spain are familiar foes in Wednesday's last-four clash, the Netherlands and Uruguay last played each other at the 1974 World Cup.

The Oranje won that game 2-0, and will be hoping for a repeat in 2010 on Tuesday.

Uruguay will be desperate to make it to their first final since 1950 -- when they lifted the Jules Rimet Trophy -- and will spend the next few days doing their homework.

"Oscar Tabarez has asked us to concentrate fully, not just in the matches, but also in training," said Sebastian Abreu, who scored the winning spot-kick in the South American's penalty-shootout win over Ghana with a cheeky chip down the middle.

"He is very satisfied with our work."

"Looking at Holland, we have watched a lot of videos on their team because we don't know too much about them."

"Holland and Uruguay play very similar football, but they have very good potential in their attack with very clever players like (Wesley) Sneijder and (Arjen) Robben."

"Tabarez has been talking to us about Robben and how to stop a player like him from going forward, but it's always different when you are on the field."

"So we know how to do it, but whether the actual execution actually comes off is another thing."



Paraguayan fans wait for the arrival of their national team at the parking lot of Silvio Pettirossi airport in Luque yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Van Marwijk being humble

AFP, Cape Town

Dutch coach Bert van Marwijk has warned his players to keep their feet on the ground and ignore the hype as they prepare for Tuesday's World Cup semifinal against Uruguay as firm favourites.

With expectations back in Holland building to a crescendo, Van Marwijk is keen to stress that with the biggest prize in world football at stake anything can happen.

"It will be a very dangerous match. I warned about this on the first day two years ago -- there's always the next game," he told reporters.

"The euphoria at home is massive at the moment and maybe it's good that we're so far away and can't witness it because we really need to focus on Uruguay and that won't be easy."

"They didn't reach the semifinal for nothing, so we have to really focus again and not think that we're already there."

Both sides will be missing key players for the Cape Town spectacle as a final looms against either Germany or Spain, but the statistics speak for themselves.

Under Van Marwijk the Oranje have been one of the best performing teams in the world.

They picked up eight wins from eight games in qualifying and have a 100 percent record from their five games in South Africa, which includes sending favourites Brazil packing.

It is a formidable achievement that should have Uruguay quaking in their boots, especially with the South Americans needing huge luck to overcome Ghana after being pushed to extra-time and penalties in their quarterfinal.

Before the tournament, the glory years of Uruguayan football were a fast fading memory, with their last semifinal 40 years ago and just two appearances in the last five World Cups.

But under Oscar Tabarez, who also steered them to the last 16 in 1990 in his first stint as coach, they have been rejuvenated and cannot be written off.

Known as El Maestro in his homeland, Tabarez is reliable, hard working and a man of

few words. He, for one, is not ready to throw in the towel.

"We are amongst the four best teams at this World Cup. This is something we would never have imagined before coming to South Africa," he said.

"My players are very united. I don't know how far we can go in the tournament. The Netherlands have some great players, but we cannot betray this group of players."

"If there is a glimmer of hope we must hang on. We will certainly not throw in the towel before playing that match."

"Holland will be very difficult -- but not impossible."

Uruguay though are handicapped by the loss of influential striker Luis Suarez, who misses the game after being red-carded for his deliberate goal-line handball that denied Ghana a famous victory.

Defender Jorge Ciri Fucile is also suspended while skipper Diego Lugano and midfielder Nicolas Lodeiro are injury doubts, heaping even more pressure on the shoulders of Diego Forlan.

In the Dutch camp, Ajax defender Gregory van der Wiel and Manchester City midfielder Nigel de Jong miss out after picking up their second yellow cards of the tournament against Brazil.

But everyone else is fit, with Arjen Robben and Wesley Sneijder the danger men.

Ahead of South Africa, Van Marwijk set his team a lofty goal -- the final or bust.

It was an optimistic target with the Netherlands last reaching the showpiece match 32 years ago when they lost to Argentina. Their only other appearance was in 1974 and they were beaten by West Germany.

But their confidence is high and Van Marwijk is quietly confident of lifting the trophy for the first time in their history.

"I'm a sportsman and if I go somewhere, I want to win. People might think that's arrogant, but we have proven we can beat Brazil, one of the best teams in the world," he said.

"If that's a fact, we should dare to say this, we should go for it."

Nadal may head for S Africa

AFP, London

Spanish Wimbledon winner Rafael Nadal said Sunday he would love to go to the football World Cup and watch Spain lift the trophy.

Nadal said he was due to have treatment on his troublesome knees ahead of the US hard court season, but might be able to jet out to South Africa to cheer on his compatriots.

European champions Spain play Germany on Wednesday in the semifinals.

"I would love to be there, it's my favourite sport," Nadal said after winning his second Wimbledon title.

"I have to think. I don't know, it's very far. If the World Cup was in Europe it would be much easier for me. But in South Africa, it's a very long trip so I don't know."

"I have to do treatment right now on the knees. I have to have serious work, the same time to try to be ready for the American season. So I don't think so. I'm going to see."

"But for me it would be a pleasure to be there. I am a crazy fan of football, and for sure a big supporter of our team. I am in contact with the players. I just wish the team all the best."

He added: "We won the European Cup with the football, and right now we are in semifinals in the World Cup. So we are in probably the best moment of our history in sport."

"That's very difficult to do. We have to know how difficult it is to be there and enjoy these moments, because it's going to be very difficult to repeat another generation like we have now."

Dhoni ties the knot

AFP, New Delhi

Indian cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni married his girlfriend of two years at a resort hotel in the north of the country, newspapers reported on Monday.

Dhoni, often described as India's most eligible bachelor, exchanged vows with Sakshi Singh Rawat at a private ceremony outside the town of Dehra Dun late on Sunday.

The surprise wedding, which came just a day after the couple were engaged, took place away from the glare of the Indian media but among the guests were Bollywood movie star John Abraham and teammates including Ashish Nehra, reports said.

Dhoni, 28, a flamboyant wicketkeeper and batsman, established himself in the national side in 2004 and is currently captain in all forms of the game.

Rawat was described by the Press Trust of India news agency as a 23-year-old hotel management student who has known Dhoni since childhood.

India's next games are on tour in Sri Lanka starting July 18.

Argentine fan released

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

An Argentine fan was released yesterday after 48 hours of his abduction from Jatira-Kunjanagar under Sadar upazila of the district.

The victim was identified as Al-Amin, 16, a student of class eight.

Sources said on Saturday night, 4 or 5 German supporters abducted Al-Amin from Mina Bazaar of Adhara union, after the Germans beat Argentina.

Later, he was kept locked in a room at Jatira-Kunjanagar till yesterday.

He was admitted to Munshiganj general hospital after he was rescued.

A general diary was lodged with Sadar police station in this connection.

The weight

FROM PAGE 17

With four-goal midfielder Wesley Sneijder pulling the strings, they look a well-balanced side, with goals conveniently coming from a wide variety of sources as rusty striker Van Persie plays his way back to full fitness.

Arjen Robben, whether by scoring, creating, or drawing fouls, is their key weapon and the winger can expect some very close attention from Uruguay's uncompromising defenders.

Unsurprisingly, Dutch coach Bert van Marwijk is treating the last surviving South American team with respect.

"This is a very dangerous game, they are fighters and we have to be very focused," he said.

The Dutch are without right back Gregory van der Wiel and midfielder Nigel de Jong, who are both suspended.

Kholid Boulahrouz and Demy de Zeeuw are the likely replacements though Ibrahim Afellay or Rafael van der Vaart could be in the mix.

Joris Mathijsen, a late withdrawal from the quarterfinal, is fit to play, as is Van Persie, who had a slight knock.

Uruguay need to be at their absolute best to have any

chance but suspensions and injury have hit them hard.

Striker Luis Suarez, who spent the last three years terrorising Dutch defences from Ajax Amsterdam, is banned for his match-saving goalline handball against Ghana, as is defender Jorge Fucile, who earned a second yellow card against Ghana.

Midfielder Nicolas Lodeiro is out of the tournament after fracturing a bone in his foot while captain Diego Lugano faces a race against time to overcome a knee ligament problem.

On the bright side, defender Diego Godin, who missed the Ghana match with a thigh injury, should be available.

In Suarez's absence, the slim shoulders of Diego Forlan, who hit the equaliser against Ghana for his third goal of the tournament, will carry his nation's weighty expectations.

Cavani

FROM PAGE 17 this game against Holland will be more balanced. We can win it.

"Holland's strength is their attack. Robben is having a great World Cup. But we have Forlan who is an extraordinary champion."

Neither genius nor clown

AP, Pretoria

The World Cup proved that Diego Maradona is no coaching genius. Nor was he the clown that some expected.

True, there were times when it wasn't possible to observe the Argentine coach without humming the theme song to Benny Hill. Picture, for example, the Argentine training session where Maradona pretended to beat up a member of his staff and theatrically acted as a target for his players to shoot a hail of balls at. He came out of it furiously rubbing the back of his head. Ho-ho, what a jester!

But as Argentina's victories piled up, there seemed to be method in Maradona's madness. No other team had Argentina's swashbuckling flair. With Gonzalo Higuain and Carlos Tevez slotting in goals and world player-of-the-year Lionel Messi supplying inspiration, passes and even leadership on the field, it was possible to ignore the holes in Maradona's defence and midfield. And not second-guess his decision to leave defender Javier Zanetti and midfielder Esteban Cambiasso at home.

Maradona's strategy, if it can be called that, was to outscore not shut out opponents. "Permanently on the attack" is how he lovingly described Argentina's style of play.

"We are here to give joy to the Argentines, to play as we like, in the way which makes us happy," he said.

What fun, but naive, too. Maradona used enthusiasm to compensate for his inexperience as a coach. He smothered his players with hugs and kisses before and after games because he had little else to offer in terms of tactical wizardry. The instructions he barked in practice were of the "Come on! Look alive!" variety, not useful nuggets of strategic insight. He talked about the need for "sacrifice, blood and courage" from players, not about playing formations. His players, in turn, praised the value of his experience of having competed in four World Cups, not his game plans -- if indeed there were any.

"Nobody ever told me where to play. So, I shouldn't have to tell Messi where to play either," Maradona said in the best example of his let-them-get-on-with-it approach.

He made no apologies for it. In fact, after three group stage wins, he was demanding apologies. "I'm not suggesting you drop your trousers, but it would be honest and great," he said -- from critics who had predicted Argentina could only flop with the former cocaine addict in charge, and waste its best chance in years of winning the World Cup that Maradona lifted as a player in 1986.

The upside of Maradona hogging the limelight in South

Africa with his large personality and entertaining and provocative news conferences was that he deflected attention from Messi and why the star forward wasn't scoring.

But the downside for Argentina was that Maradona failed, as he also did in World Cup qualifying, to make the most of Messi's lack of alternate plans B, C or D for when his A-plan -- attack, attack, attack -- failed to work, there was always the suspicion Argentina's exciting adventure could derail if its forwards could not score. Yet few suspected that Argentina and Maradona would be undressed quite so starkly as they were by Germany in the quarterfinals.

German manager Joachim Loew is his own greatest admirer. But it is also true that he thoroughly outthought Maradona, executing his game plan brilliantly -- just as he did against the England side of Fabio Capello, a coach more experienced than Maradona. Messi's attacking runs broke against the rocks of dogged, organised German defence, while the Argentine defence and Javier Mascherano in midfield were overwhelmed by the speed of the Germans.

Most importantly, the Germans played as a well-oiled team, finding each other with just the right pass at just the right time. Argentina, in contrast, looked like talented individuals who just happened to be wearing the same blue and white striped jerseys. As the German goals mounted up, 1-0, 2-0, 3-0 and finally 4-0, it grew increasingly clear that Maradona had no answer. He looked so sad on the touchline.

This World Cup would not have been as much fun without Maradona, without the sight of him pacing up and down as though he were still out on the field kicking every ball, living every emotion.

But it was always too much to expect that he would be the same genius as a coach as he was as Argentina's greatest player.

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Beckenbauer impressed by Germany

AFP, Berlin

Franz Beckenbauer on Sunday described Germany as the "perfect team" and said they will be favourites to defeat Spain in Wednesday's World Cup semifinal.

"This team, it's the masterpiece of Joachim Loew. He has placed his mark on its make-up and created a perfect team," Beckenbauer, a World Cup winner as a player and a coach, told the German Football Federation's official website.

"I have rarely seen such mastery of the game from a German team. Perhaps only in the 1970s and the World Cup winning team of 1990."

Beckenbauer was speaking the day after Germany had routed Argentina 4-0 in the quarterfinals of the World Cup, the third time in South Africa that the team had hit four goals in one game.

"In the past, we would say that you had to leave the beautiful game in the dressing room, but this team shows that it is not a contradiction and that you can play well and win."

Beckenbauer believes his compatriots will be favourites to defeat European champions Spain and reach the World Cup final when they meet in Durban on Wednesday.

"Germany have an advantage over Spain, who haven't yet shown the form that they did when winning the Euro 2008 title," he said.

"They haven't yet looked very convincing and struggled to snatch victory in the quarterfinals against Paraguay."

Fabregas to play through pain

REUTERS, Potchefstroom

Spain midfielder Cesc Fabregas is prepared to have a pain-killing injection in his sore shoulder to be available for the European champions' World Cup semifinal against Germany on Wednesday.

"It's painful but when you are up for it it's fine," he was quoted as saying in Monday's edition of Sport newspaper.

"I am ready to get an injection in order to play," he added. "If (coach Vicente) Del Bosque needs me I'll be there."

Fabregas sustained the injury in Saturday's quarterfinal victory against Paraguay after coming on as a substitute shortly after halftime to replace Fernando Torres.



PHOTO: STAR

A colourful rally in connection with The Daily Star-Rang's Toshiba World Cup Quiz was brought out in Sylhet yesterday. The fifth round draw of the quiz takes place at Sylhet auditorium at 4:00pm today.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Relinquish
5 The D in DJIA
8 Faction
12 Credit card name, for short
13 "... rose — rose"
14 Operatic solo
15 Richly sweet
17 Victory's opposite
18 Charged bit
19 Hypnotic state
21 Treaties
24 Strait-laced
25 Capri, e.g.
26 2010 Oscar-winning film
30 Greek cross
31 Working-class member
32 Expert
33 Plausible but untrue
35 Burn somewhat

DOWN

2 Ostrich's kin
3 —
4 Moines
6 Stir up
7 "My Heart Will Go On"
8 Kind and courteous
9 Arm or leg
10 One part of ENT ...
11 frugality
12 Deli sausage
13 Press
14 Platter
15 Relaxation
16 One of the Cyclades
17 Ore.
18 Wedding show?

Solution time: 21 mins.

LEE CALIF SOB
OVA OBESE AIR
SARTORIAL RNA
POSTED CORA
ABA REV WASPS
LORD SAD STYE
MEDIA NEW IRA
IAMB CANCEL
CONSUL EGO
ALI SARAN WRAP
VIA ERASE AGO
EION DEFER HEX

21 Quarries
22 Promptly, on a memo
23 Professor Plum's game
24 Exultant
26 Mentors' charges
27 Newspaper page
28 Caspian Sea feeder
29 Aching
31 Slapstick arsenal
34 Hangel and Gretel's trail
35 Peaceful protests
37 Moment
38 Coconut provider
39 Director Kazan
40 Piratic potables
41 "There's Something About —"
44 Knock
45 La-la lead-in
46 Patriotic chant
47 Stitch

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CRYPTOQUIP

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R J O H Q D P O S T D J P J , B U R Q H

A T O X I O J S O O C D W M S D Q Q U S J ?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: IN THE LIONS' NAVAL SERVICE, IS ONE OF THEIR COMMISSIONED OFFICERS CALLED THE ROAR ADMIRAL?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: O equals E

What to WATCH

ESPN

FIFA 2010 World Cup
FIRST SEMIFINAL
Uruguay v Netherlands
Time: 12:30am (Wednesday)