



Golden Ball list revealed

AFP, Johannesburg

Three Spaniards feature in the 10 players nominated for the player of the World Cup finals announced by world governing body FIFA on Friday.

Barcelona midfield duo Andres Iniesta and Xavi - voted the player of Euro 2008 - along with leading scorer David Villa, who joined Barca from Valencia prior to the tournament for 40million euros are the trio nominated from the World Cup finalists' team.

Their opponents The Netherlands by contrast provide two in the form of Bayern Munich winger Arjen Robben and Inter Milan playmaker Wesley Sneijder, joint top scorer along with Villa at the finals with five goals.

They are joined by Uruguayan striker Diego Forlan, scorer of four goals as the South Americans flew the flag for their continent in reaching the semifinals, and also Ghanaian forward Asamoah Gyan.

Gyan scored three times for

the African giants as they reached the last eight, but were deprived of a place in the semi-finals after a goalbound effort was illegally punched off the line by Uruguayan striker Luis Suarez.

Gyan missed the ensuing penalty in the last kick of the match and the South Americans won the penalty shootout.

Barcelona's Argentinian playmaker Lionel Messi features on the list despite failing to score here but he was at the heart of most of their creative

play up to their humbling by Germany in the quarterfinals.

Young German star Mesut Oezil and team-mate Bastian Schweinsteiger round off the list.

The list reflects the dominance of European teams at the tournament with two in the final - which will result in Europe triumphing for the first time outside their continent - and three of the four semifinalists.

The winner in 2006 was somewhat controversially French star Zinedine Zidane, who was anointed despite having been sent-off in extra-time of the final for headbutting Italian defender Marco Materazzi.

His successor will be announced after Sunday's final at Soccer City.

The young player of the tournament will also be announced after the final whistle with the three nominees.

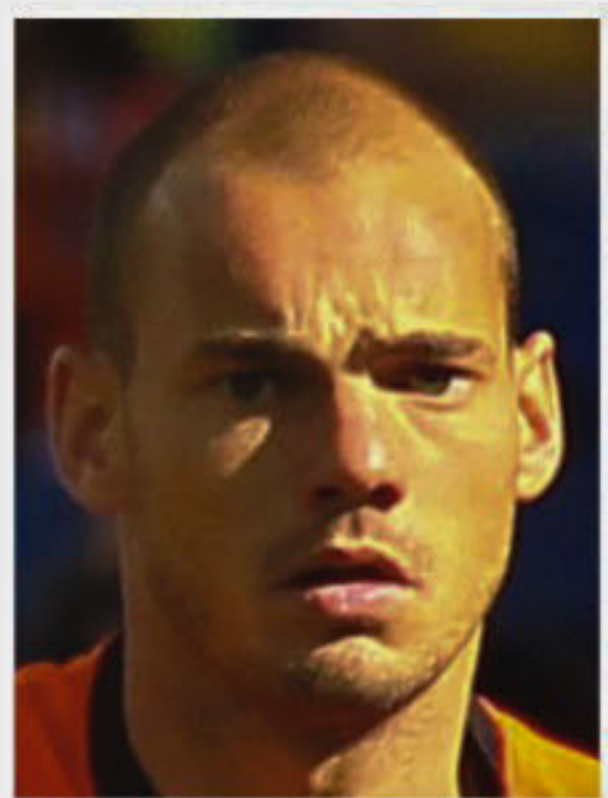
One is German attacking midfielder Thomas Mueller - who has scored four times in the finals and was sorely missed in the semi-final defeat by Spain - and another is Ghanaian Andre Ayew - son of former African player of the year Abedi Pele - who was badly missed by the 'Black Stars' in their quarterfinal as he was suspended.

The third nominee is Mexican Giovanni Dos Santos - on loan at Turkish side Galatasaray from Premier League outfit Spurs - who played in all four of his country's games at the finals.

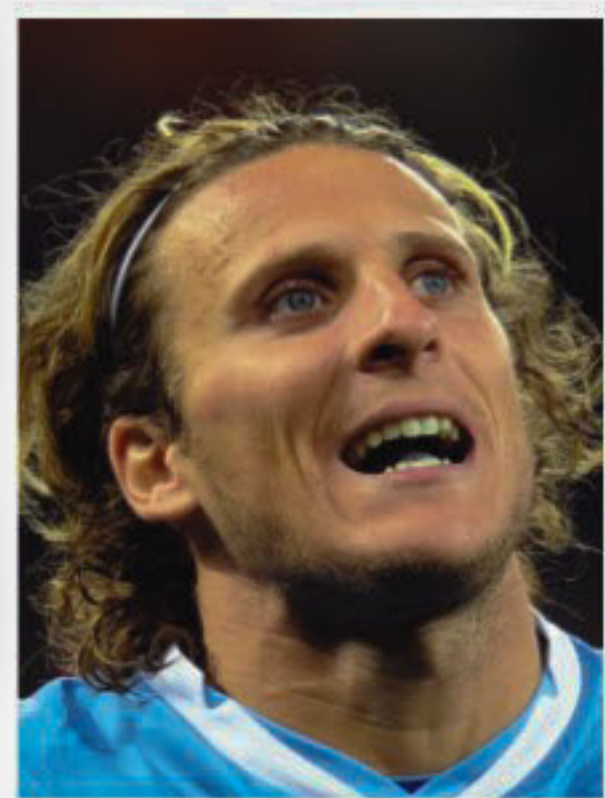
The three nominees were selected from a list of 35 players born after January 1 1989.



VILLA



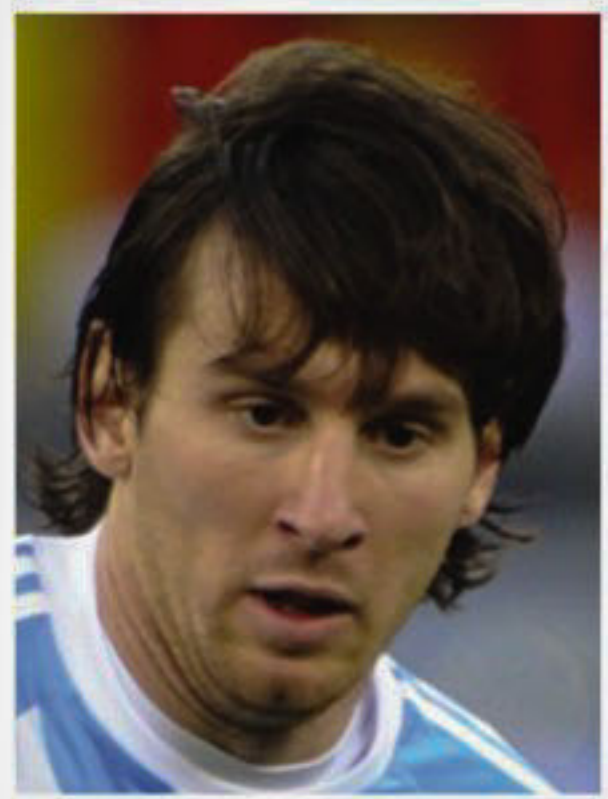
SNEIJDER



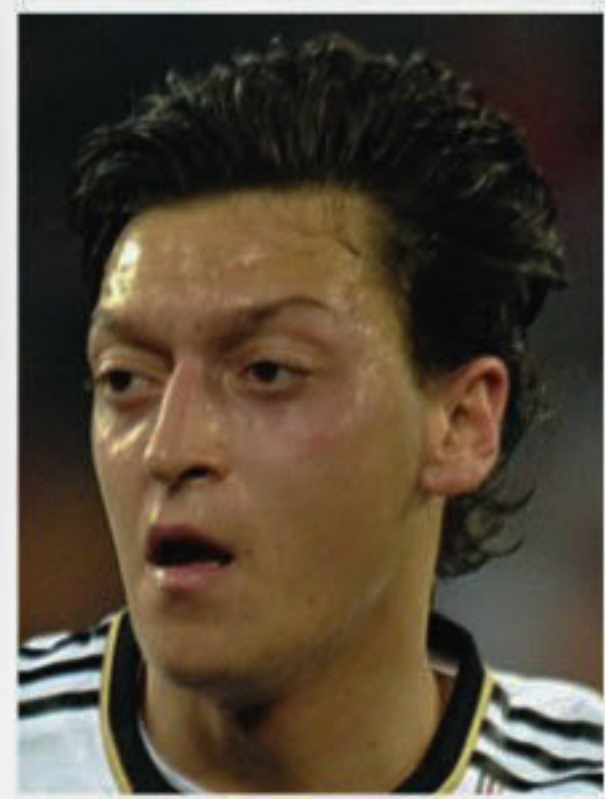
FORLAN



GYAN



MESSI



OEZIL

Cruyff started it all

AFP, Potchefstroom

Spain and Holland, who meet in Sunday's World Cup final, can both thank one man for inspiring their soccer style - Johan Cruyff.

Cruyff was in the Dutch side which lost the 1974 final to Germany, but his influence can be seen today on the Spanish just as much as on his own countrymen, thanks to his spell at Barcelona.

"I represent a time when beautiful football was entertaining - and moreover, successful," said the creative fulcrum of the Dutch side which wowed the world with their flowing "total football" three decades ago, whereby players could comfortably slip in and out of several roles.

Cruyff likes the current Dutch generation.

So, too, does Oscar Tabarez, whose Uruguay could not prevent Holland from edging them out in their semifinal to reach a third final after 1974 and 1978.

"They are all good players, technically gifted - (Mark) Van Bommel, (Wesley) Sneijder, (Arjen) Robben... and there are some who are very good technically allied

to incredible power, such as (Dirk) Kuyt. You have the impression the Dutch are permanently on the attack," said Tabarez.

The abiding Cruyff influence comes from spending a large chunk of his career in the colours of Barcelona.

He was there at his peak in the mid 1970s and then coached them for eight years, landing the Catalan club's first European Cup in 1992.

Current Barca boss Pep Guardiola - who led them to their third European crown in 2009 after another Dutchman, in Frank Rijkaard, had masterminded the second in 2006 - was a player under Cruyff.

Clearly something rubbed off as Barca landing an unprecedented six trophies in the season before last.

The Barcelona effect is now underpinning the Spanish success with seven of the starting line-up featuring in the semifinal win over Germany.

Current Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque is also a fan of the pass-and-move game which Cruyff likes.

That's where the two finalists interface with the Dutch influence on Barcelona going back four decades to when Rinus

Michels was coach at the Nou Camp and Cruyff was the playing star.

In more recent years, the Dutch influence has grown with the likes of Louis Van Gaal and then Rijkaard also coaching the side while a host of Dutch stars such as Johan Neeskens, 1992 Champions League-winning goalscorer Ronald Koeman, Cruyff's own son Jordi, Patrick Kluivert and the De Boer brothers playing for Barca.

Only with Rijkaard leaving in 2008 and the 2007 departure of current Dutch skipper Giovanni van Bronckhorst back to the Netherlands has the influence waned.

The Barca streak in the Spanish-set up is stronger than ever with Carles Puyol heading the winner against the Germans and Xavi Hernandez and Andres Iniesta pulling strings while David Villa has just joined the club from Valencia.

Keeper Victor Valdes - understudy to Spanish skipper Iker Casillas - says the club-to-country transition is quite easy.

"For the style that the coach wants us to play it's very similar - we try to move the ball around and that's rather like the Barca way of doing things."

Spanish team to be feted

AFP, Madrid

Whatever the result of the World Cup final on Sunday, the Spanish team will be honoured in a parade in an open-top bus through the streets of the capital, municipal authorities said Thursday.

"The city hall, together with the Spanish Football Federation, has organised a huge reception for the players as a sign of support and admiration," the city hall said in a statement.

The players will take an open-top bus through the Spanish capital on Monday evening, passing through some of its most famous landmarks, including the Plaza de Cibeles, where Real Madrid supporters traditionally celebrate their victories.

Spain beat Germany 1-0 on Wednesday, a result that took them through to a first ever World Cup final, against the Netherlands on Sunday.

"Whatever the result of the final, the capital will be honouring the team," the city hall said.

Xavi a modern great

TELEGRAPH

According to the brackets, Xavi Hernandez is an impostor. A pitch invader, or a camera-phone wielding fan. He is a lucky puppy, apparently, to be up there among the bold and the beautiful.

The other four, according to the brackets, are indisputable greats. There's Liverpool's Fernando Torres: big, blond and fast. Cristiano Ronaldo: big, orange and fast. Lio Messi: small, but also brilliant and also very fast. And finally the very tall, very fast, Kaka.

Hopefully, though, it's Xavi - small, slow and the scorer of very few goals - who'll be in the middle of the picture come gong season 2010. Because it's Xavi Spain's cerebral dictator, Chameleon Eyes, who like Clark Kent, can see through steel who's at the centre of everything that is so wonderful about Spain.

Because it is Xavi, chiefly, that makes Spain seem unbeatable. Xavi, above all, realises that the other lot won't score many if they don't have the ball. Ever. No one in the Spain side wastes possession,



XAVI HERNANDES

but Xavi is a zealot (for once, the stats don't lie - 464 completed passes in this tournament alone is more than England have managed in my adult lifetime).

Keeping the ball, of course, hardly constitutes a tactical revolution, but the way Xavi puts football's oldest principle into practice feels somehow revolutionary. His appreciation of space, his 360-degree awareness, his mastery of measurements, they are almost unique

in today's game.

It doesn't look good on YouTube, or in Nike adverts, but Xavi's method is proving to be mightily effective tool with which to win football matches. Indeed, should Spain win on Sunday, Xavi will have lifted two Spanish titles, the Champions League, the Club World Cup, the European Championships, and the World Cup, all in the space of two years.

Not bad for the bloke in the brackets.



IS THE FINAL EVEN NECESSARY? Paul the octopus squeezes inside a box decorated with a Spanish flag and a shell inside at the Sea Life aquarium in Oberhausen yesterday. The two-year-old cephalopod picked the winner for the Spain-Netherlands World Cup final after making six correct predictions of Germany matches during the tournament.

PHOTO: AFP

'We need to be at our best'

INTERNET

England were tipped to have a great tournament and went into their group matches against USA and Algeria as overwhelming favourites, but on both occasions they could only manage a draw.

Spain head into Sunday's final as strong favourites and Alonso, who plays for English Premier club Liverpool, knows that his team will need to be at the top of their game.

"Expectations were very high for England," said Alonso.

"One bad game and you are out. That is how it works in the World Cup and that should be a warning to us on Sunday."

Often unnoticed in a highly talented Spanish midfield that includes Xavi and Andres Iniesta, Alonso said it's a privilege to play with such quality players.

"It is a privilege to among this group of players," he said. "There is so much quality."

"I have always tried to give my best so I never worried that I would not find a way into the side."

"We have great competition and that is good for the team because it brings the best out of everyone."

"Whenever you are playing you have to be ready and whenever you are on the bench you have to believe you will come on."

Del Bosque rues finishing

REUTERS, Potchefstroom

Spain have not been clinical enough in front of goal at the World Cup, according to coach Vicente del Bosque.

The European champions, who play Netherlands on Sunday in their first World Cup final, have won five of their six matches by a one-goal margin, dominating their opponents for long periods without finishing them off and squandering a host of chances.

"Maybe we are lacking that bit of judgment in front of goal but that's the most difficult thing in football," Del Bosque said in an internet chat on the website of daily El Pais (www.elpais.com).

"The key thing is to keep faith with our concept of playing and our solid organisation," he added.

"Out of that organisation, the players' individual qualities should be able to be decisive."

With Fernando Torres, who returned from knee surgery shortly before the tournament, out of sorts, Spain have relied heavily on David Villa in South Africa, the Barcelona striker netting five of the team's seven goals.

Del Bosque dropped Torres for Wednesday's 1-0 semifinal win over Germany in Durban and replaced him with Pedro and he hinted that he was not planning to tinker with the starting line-up much for the final.

Pedro earned praise from Del Bosque and his team mates for his performance against the Germans, in which he kept Philipp Lahm busy and prevented the fullback from making many of his dangerous forays down the right wing.

"We have pretty much maintained a block of players in these six matches and I don't believe there will be many changes," Del Bosque said.

Viva Espana, says Paul

REUTERS, Berlin

Germany's oracle octopus Paul picked Spain to beat the Netherlands in the World Cup final on Sunday in a live television broadcast watched across Europe.

The two-year-old celebrity octopus, who has accurately picked the outcome of all six of Germany's World Cup matches so far, quickly tipped Spain to beat the Netherlands. It took him only three minutes to make up his mind.

"That was fast -- it looks like a clear-cut victory for Spain," said Tanja Munzig, spokeswoman for Sea Life in Oberhausen. She was surprised by his speed in picking Spain. For some matches it took Paul 70 minutes to decide.

The octopus, considered by some to be the most intelligent of all invertebrates, got the choice of picking food from two different transparent containers lowered into his tank - one with a Dutch flag on it and one with Spain's flag.

Reaction in Spain was swift, with the country's biggest selling sports daily website Marca.com running the headline: "The octopus Paul makes us champions".

The container Paul opens first is regarded as his pick. On Friday he wasted no time in diving for the container on the right side with

the Spanish flag on it.

Two German television networks interrupted their programming for live coverage of the two-year-old celebrity octopus's picks. Networks in Spain, the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe also broadcast Paul's decision live.

But after Paul accurately picked Spain to beat Germany in the semifinal, some Germans called for a public roasting of the oracle octopus. Newspapers and websites were filled with suggestions on how to cook and eat him.

Officials at Sea Life in Oberhausen have installed extra security to protect their octopus.

"Paul is in safe hands with us," said Munzig.

Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero was quoted in Spanish media reports saying -- in jest -- he was concerned about Paul's safety.

"I am concerned for the octopus... I am thinking of sending him a protective team," Zapatero said.

Spain's Environment and Fisheries Minister Elena Espinosa also said: "On Monday I shall be at the European Council of Ministers and I shall be asking for a (fishing) ban on Paul the octopus so Germans do not eat him."

The Daily Star

RANGS TOSHIBA

World cup QUIZ 2010

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BUMPER ROUND, DRAW IN DHAKA ON JULY 16

PRIZES UP FOR GRABS (ROUNDS 1-5)		PRIZES FOR BUMPER ROUND	
Prize	Item	Winner	Prize
1st	One 8CFT Toshiba Refrigerator	YOU	1st One Toshiba 32" LCD TV
2nd	One Toshin 24" LCD TV	YOU	2nd One 15CFT Toshiba Refrigerator
3rd	One Toshiba 21" Colour TV	YOU	3rd One Toshin Heat & Cool AC (1Ton)
4th	One Toshin 21" Colour TV	YOU	4th One Toshin 24" LCD TV
5th	One Toshin Microwave Oven (23L)	and YOU	

Prizes for the audience (For First Five Rounds)
 1st. 20L Toshin Microwave Oven
 2nd. 21" Toshin Colour TV
 3rd. 3 Toshin DVD Players

Prizes for the audience (For Bumper Round)
 1st. Toshiba Washing Machine
 2nd. 21" Toshin Colour TV
 3rd. 20L Toshin Microwave Woven
 4th. Two Toshin DVD Players

(See May 23 issue of the Star Sport for competition information and rules)

QUIZ SCHEDULE				
Round & Draw	Starts	Ends	Answers must reach by 12pm	Lucky Draw for prizes
Bumper Round, Dhaka	July 03	July 11	July 13	July 16

The Daily Star - RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Bumper Round Ends July 11, 2010

Tick (✓) the correct answers

1. Who was the highest scorer in 2002 World Cup?	Crespo <input type="checkbox"/>	Ronaldo <input type="checkbox"/>	Podolski <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Who headed in the last goal of World Cup 2006?	Materazzi <input type="checkbox"/>	Ballack <input type="checkbox"/>	Wiltord <input type="checkbox"/>
3. How many teams participated in the World Cup 1994?	24 <input type="checkbox"/>	30 <input type="checkbox"/>	32 <input type="checkbox"/>
4. What was the name of the official ball of World Cup 1970?	Maggpie <input type="checkbox"/>	Discogs <input type="checkbox"/>	Telstar <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Who is this player?	Milito <input type="checkbox"/>	Villa <input type="checkbox"/>	Melo <input type="checkbox"/>

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)..... Age.....

Father's name..... Occupation.....

Address.....

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

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.
 You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz Bumper Round"

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