Japan FA defends Nishimura

The Japan Football Association (JFA) has defended referee Yuichi Nishimura's command of English after his controversial performance in the World Cup opener, according to a media report

Nishimura was slammed by Croatia's players and coaching staff after Thursday's 3-1 defeat by Brazil for awarding the hosts a soft penalty and for his alleged poor English.

After the game Croatia defender Vedran Corluca said: "It was embarrassing that the referee didn't speak English, he was speaking

Nichimura awarded Brazil a soft penalty in the 71st minute with the game finely poised at 1-1. Furious Croatian protests seemed to be lost in

insisted its referees are linguistically competent, the Wall Street Journal reported online. "Seminars are conducted in English whenever a referee is to take part in an interna

tional match organised by

FIFA," a JFA spokesperson was quoted as saying. Without commenting on Nishimura's display, the spokesperson admitted, however, that English tests were not included in the JFA's refereeing exams.



Brazil's squad trains ahead of their second group match against Mexico yesterday.

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Brazil v Mexico

Selecao eye last 16

Brazil striker Hulk insists revenge is not on the agenda as the World Cup hosts bid to all but secure their place in the last 16 against rivals Mexico on

Mexico shattered Brazil's dream of Americans 2-1 to claim the Olympic

they face the Mexicans at Fortaleza's

Castelao Stadium. It is the same venue where they met in the group stage of the Confederations Cup last year when Luiz Felipe Scolari's side claimed a 2-0

That success means a measure of revenge has already been exacted, and forward Hulk insisted that Brazil will only have one thing on their minds come kick-off on Tuesday.

"In the Confederations Cup we tried to think only about winning the game and it will be the same this time If we think about revenge it could cause us problems," said the powerful forward, who scored in the Olympic Friday.

Nevertheless, the Olympic defeat in that game, although Brazil are quite goal, although the last clash came in left its mark on him, Thiago Silva, familiar with his threat - he netted a Chile in 1962. Marcelo, Oscar and Neymar, the five brace in the Olympic final as well. members of Brazil's 2014 squad who
The hosts are more concerned by Herrera nor his counterpart Scolari are Mexico's left wing-back Miguel Layun, likely to make many changes to their

featured at Wembley. "Of course I was very sad. It is a the Club America player who was a starting line-ups for the game, medal that Brazil have never won and constant danger against Cameroon although the fitness of Hulk is a source we lost the final. Mexico are a very and who could cause problems for the of some worry for the latter after the good team. I just hope the Selecao, in right side of the Brazil defence, where Zenit St Petersburg player pulled out of the next Olympics (in Rio de Janeiro). Dani Alves was frequently caught out training early on Sunday with a

can win gold," said Oscar, one of the against Croatia.

standout performers in Brazil's open-Paulo on Thursday.

difficult as last year. In the World Cup after seeing the Selecao benefit there is an extra desire to win and I from a controversial penalty award hope we can do so again this time. against Croatia. Mexico are a very different side to "It is not something you can Croatia. They play the ball out from compete against. You have to accept the back well and are very good on the things and fight to try and prevent

eight members of the gold medal- four World Cups. winning 2012 team, also started their

Of greatest concern to Mexico, ing 3-1 win against Croatia in Sao however, would appear to be the potential of Turkish referee Cuneyt Of Tuesday's encounter, the Chelsea Cakir to be swayed by the pressure player added: "It will certainly be as from the passionate home fans,

star, voted Footballer of the Year for his Premier League performances, is set to return to the Uruguay team for the game in Sao Paulo after them from happening," said Mexico missing the 3-1 loss to Costa The current Mexico side, featuring captain Rafael Marquez, a veteran of Rica with a knee injury.

ous meetings, El Tri have been beaten

Neither Mexican coach Miguel

*no visible flakes with regular use

But despite receiving generous plaudits for his 31 Mexico must also attempt to goals in England last sea son, Hodgson believes the jury is still out on the

Suarez legacy. "You can be a great player in your league but to be recognised as one of the all-time greats you have got to do it at the World Cup, said Hodgson.

Hodgson piles

the pressure

he's a world class striker.

The 27-year-old Liverpool

Like Copa America champions Uruguay, England were also losers i their Group D opener, downed 2-1 by Italy in steamy Manaus.

Those results have left both sides' hopes of qual fication on a knife-edge, but Hodgson doesn't want his team to be distracted by the Suarez menace.

Ox returns to training

AFP, Rio de Janeiro Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain'

chances of featuring in England's second World Cup game against Uruguay were enhanced on Monday when he took part in train ing at the squad's Rio de Janeiro base.

to World Cup Group D rivals Italy in Manaus on Saturday.

England boss Roy Hodgson The team may have lost their openin raised the stakes ahead of World Cup match, but Japanese fans won plaudits around the world after picking Thursday's potentially do-ordie World Cup clash against Uruguay by insisting that Luis Suarez has yet to prove

@2014WC Brazil showed photograph of Japanese supporters cleaning up after watching their team crash to a 2-1 loss to Ivory Coast, putting rubbish in big plastic

stadium yesterday after their defeat to the

Ivory Coast," tweets @2014WC_Brazil. and Kyodo News agency said Japanese fans have won praise from tournament hosts Brazil in local

"Despite defeat, the charisma of Japanese fans wins hearts in Brazil," Kyodo cited a local newspaper as reporting.

BARCA TALK Argentina striker Gonzalo Higuain on Sunday fuelled speculation of a possible move to Barcelona, saying he

Messi at club level.

"It speaks well of you as a player and it would make anyone happpy Asked about playing alongside Messi at the Camp Nou, Higuain added: would love to, obviously. I enjoy it here

with the national team." DANCING THE 'ARMERATION' Pablo Armero may have scored

Colombia's first goal at these finals but he is more likely to be remembered in years to come for his touchline celebratory jig The flying Napoli wing-back gave a demonstration of his own personal dance celebration he developed during his days with Brazil's Palmeiras, known as "The off his shirt to show off his honed torso. Armeration"

The frantic jiggle was something super-imposing the heads of Germany Armero came up with in tribute to the coach Joachim Loew, captain Philipp Lahm dance moves performed by Samba-reggae and Thomas Mueller on images of a shirtless group Parangole in their hit single Ronaldo's body in full celebration.

in response to a dance performed by the every celebration opportunity, that we are likes of Robinho and Neymar to celebrate stronger!", wrote Bild ahead of the Group

their goals for Santos, Palmeiras's Sao Gclash in Salvador. Paulo-based rivals. Parangole are from "We don't want to see his six-pack today, BELGIUM V ALGERIA

Red Devils set to dazzle World Cup

in their first finals

present in Brazil,

Algeria have failed t

score in their last fi

finals matches, a reco

they share with Bolivi

With 481 minutes

Zidane netted their la

goal in a 1-1 draw wit

Northern Ireland in

1986, the Algerians

could surpass the all-

time longest drought o

517 minutes, also

established by Bolivia

Exactly 60 years ago

in World Cup history

extra time.

4-4 with England after

played since Djamel

since 2002, Belgium came to the tourna-Belgium's vibrant young team are ment as bookmaker fifth favourites behin Brazil, Argentina Germany and Spain The only Arab natio

> blessed with players such as Chelsea mate Marouane Fellaini as well as stages. playmaker Eden Hazard, powerful Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, Key players for the north African keeping a clean sheet for striker Romelu Lukaku and outstanding while on loan at Atletico side include defender Madjid the first time since their Manchester City defender Vincent Madrid last season. Belgium have not appeared at a training on Wednesday after suffering ward Islam Slimani. major international championships an ankle injury in a bruising friendly

qualifying and will fancy their chances Christian Benteke.

team's training sessions in the build- powers. up to their match in Belo Horizonte.

important matches so players hit their think it's a still a bit too early to dream

training pitch have become more full- in France."

up on the training pitch ahead of the moment to make the difference."

South Korea but they impressed in missing injured Aston Villa forward said assistant coach Nourredine Argentina, installed as clear of matching their semi-final showing Belgium, also grouped with Russia is growing, you could see it (in friend-exciting debutants Bosnia The sole survivor from their 2002 qualify for the knockout rounds with Romania

first major tournament," he said. "I

Portugal defender Pepe (L) headbutts Germany forward Thomas Mueller before being sent off during their Group G match in Salvador yester-

Discipline is the key for Russians

Despite their impressive playing "Every player should be ready. There resources, Belgium will come up Iran and Nigeria laboured preparing to launch their World Cup are only 11 starting places and every- against a side looking to cause an upset to the first stalemate of a campaign against Algeria on body wants to be in the line-up but the of their own to go alongside their scintillating World Cup on Tuesday with competition hotting substitutes must be ready at any shock win over eventual finalists West Monday with a dismal 0-0

Coach Marc Wilmots can also call Despite that famous win, Algeria, still chasing their first vic-Seen as dark horses to lift the on young Manchester United sensa- taking part in their fourth World Cup, tory at a finals since 1998. trophy, the richly talented squad is tion Adnan Januzaj and his club team- have never gone beyond the group While Iran could take

Bougherra, midfielders Sofiane debut in 1978, the bore at Lukaku, who only returned to Feghouli and Medhi Lacen, and for- the Baixada arena stood "We have a young group which has Copacabana beach. since the 2002 World Cup in Japan and with Tunisia, will spearhead an attack talent, but is lacking a bit of maturity," With Lionel Messi's

Kourichi. "Match after match this team Group F favourites, and and South Korea, are expected to lies) against Armenia, Slovenia and still to come, the other two campaign is veteran defender Daniel ease but Manchester City captain 'We know that the first match is exit unless they can raise

van Buyten, who said there were some Kompany urged caution over their important, not vital, but important their game considerably. feisty tackles flying in during the chances of unseating football's super- especially for confidence. The group is Both teams were whislacking a bit of experience but they are tled and booed off the field "We have a young squad, it's their fearless and they have one important by the largely Brazilian "We're going to try to trouble this half that looked shockingly

peak at the right time," said the Bayern of the summit. For overall victory it's Belgian team, we're ready for it and meagre compared to the Munich player. "But the duels on the better waiting until 2016 and the Euros we've done everything possible to goal feasts served up else-

1st stalemate of a dazzling

IRAN O NIGERIA O

draw that left both sides

look destined for an early

Iran packed their

straight to opponents. ball in the back of the net after seven minutes in a keeper Alireza Haghighi Ogenyi Onazi then drilled a shot wide two

Iran came closest to the 33rd minute when save to beat out Reza from their first corner of the game.

miracle'

AFP, Yaounde

Cameroon skipper Samuel knee injury in time to play Croatia.

had a quiet game in Cameroon's 1-0 Group A games, conceding just two goals, the but people outside the country including a 4-0 hammering by Belo Horizonte, on Sunday.

Russians are making their first don't know us. What's important, Ghana in their final warm-up on "I am hoping the gods Eto'o told Cameroon

(FIFA.com) that while the squad While Russia have enjoyed a magical run to the semifinals on will always play my role as

Almond Split

My Love



INFO ZONE

TEAM FORMATION Zemmamouche Courtois 4: Alderweireld, Kompany, 4: Mandim, Medjani

Van Buyten, Vertoghnen Boughera, Ghoulam 3: Fellaini, De Bruyne, Witzel 4: Feghouli, Guedioura Bentaleb, Brahimi 3: Mirallas, Lukaku, 1: Taider, 1: Slimani HEAD-TO-HEAD

WC GOALS

BRAZIL 38 22 6 10 38 10 6 22

LAST MATCH: BRAZIL 2-0 MEXICO (19 JUNE, 2013 CONFEDERATIONS CUP

KEY PLAYERS



CAPS

WC GOALS **TEAM FORMATION**

4-2-3-1 Cesar: 4: Alves, Silva, 4: Aguilar, Rodriguez, D Luiz, Marcelo Marquez, Moreno, 4: Layun, Herrera,

2: Paulinho, Gustavo 3: Hulk, Oscar, Neymar 1: Fred

SOUTH KOREA RUSSIA M W D L M W D L 1 0 0 1

Vasquez, Guardado

2: Santos, Peralta

LAST MEETING: RUSSIA 2-1 SOUTH KOREA (19 NOVEMBER, 2013 FRIENDLY)

KEY PLAYERS







Akinfeev 4: Eschenko, Berezutskiy,

Ignashevich, Kombarov 2: Denisov, Shirokov 3: Faizulin, Dzagoev, Kokorin

4: Kim Chang Soo, Kim Yong Gwn Kwak Tae Hwi, Yun Suk Young 4: Lee Chung Young, Ki Song Yeung, Park Jeong Woo, Ji Dong Wan 1: Son Heung Min 1: Park Chu Young





hamstring problem.

GPH GPH ispat

Group A campaign in positive fashion, improve on a miserable record against

Oribe Peralta scored the only goal every time and have never scored a

beating Cameroon 1-0 in Natal on Brazil in World Cups -- in three previ-

BRAZILIAN BAURU

SINGER

GRUNDIG

Skyworth

LED TVs

and music are a way of life.

BARBEQUE UNDOES ENGLISH

English fans were beaten by a team of

locals in Manaus in a friendly football

Prior to the game the Brazilians had

Incidents of theft and robbery go down by

15 percent in Uruguay's

capital Montevideo

when the country's team

is in World Cup action, a

The dip in street crime

also took place during

Uruguay's World Cup

play-off double header

against Jordan, accord-

ing to economist Ignacio

Munyo, whose findings

were published by the El

However, simple

World Cup qualifiers

and friendlies do not

have the same crime-

Pais newspaper.

United States coach Jurgen Klinsmann

speaks fluent German and English and

but he got tripped up by Brazilian

Portuguese. At a press conference, he

"I almost made it, but then I gave up,"

new study shows.

JAPAN FANS WIN HEARTS

match aimed at shedding the hooligan up the trash in their stadium stand after reputation of Brits abroad. But there were charges of skuldugger levelled against the locals, made up of the Pictures posted on Twitter by fathers of children who play for a football school in the city.

fattened up their visiting opponents with a sumptuous Brazilian barbeque, after which the English, cheered on by the "Japanese fans clean their part of the British Ambassador to Brazil, were unable

to match their lively hosts. Iapan's Tokyo Shimbun newspaper WORLD CUP REDUCES CRIME

newspapers and on social networks.

HIGUAIN FUELS

By SINGER was happy to be linked to the Spanish

Speaking after Argentina's 2-1 World KLINSMANN GETS TONGUE-TIED Cup win over Bosnia at the Maracana Stadium, Higuain said he would relish the opportunity of linking up with Lionel has a strong grasp of French and Italian

for Barcelona," the Napoli striker said. opted not to use headphones which allow for translation when facing a question laughed the German after making a quick

"Any player would be pleased to play

GERMANS POKE FUN AT RONALDO German daily Bild poked fun at

Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo's 'six-pack' on Monday in the build-up to Germany's opening World Cup match The 29-year-old Ballon d'Or winner is renowned for celebrating goals by yanking

from a local journalist.

grab for the headset.

Bild mocked the Real Madrid star by "We want to show Portugal's superstar Armero adopted his arm-waving waltz who flexes his muscle-packed body at

the northern Bahia region where dance we want to see Loew and Co celebrate!"

Alexander Kerzhakov, the only "We know what we're capable of goals during the horror run. Just the way conservative coach member of the 2002 squad playing and if everyone plays to the best of in Brazil, told FIFA's official website their abilities, we will succeed." Russia, who since the break-up of progress to the knockout rounds of were comprised of domestic-based seamless build-up to Tuesday's home soil 12 years ago, has his work captain and especially as the the World Cup, are in fine fettle after players with no big stars, Russia still match at the Pantanal arena in cut out to rebuild their shattered big brother to push my an impressive 2014 qualifying had high hopes at the tournament. Cuiaba (2200 GMT), it would be no confidence before Tuesday, but there young teammates to victory.

day. Mueller scored a hattrick as Germany routed Portugal 4-0.

RUSSIA V KOREA

Minus creative midfielder Roman

Shirokov due to injury, Russia are

unlikely to play an expansive,

attack-minded game against South

Korea in their World Cup Group H

opener on Tuesday, focusing instead

on rigid discipline.

Fabio Capello likes it.

THE WORLD **CUP SELFIE** CONTEST 2014

hosted by South Korea and Japan.



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tournament," he said. "All of our disarray.

We haven't seen the" hand of God" in '86, but we have seen God playing for Argentina....we have seen the magic of Lionel Messi.

some small satisfaction in out like a suit salesman on

crowd of 39,000 after a first

defence as expected and Nigeria, with Emmanuel Emenike rarely posing a threat as the main target man for the African champions, squandered their chances with long balls to nowhere and passes The Super Eagles had the

goalmouth scramble but Ecuadorean referee Carlos Vera, perhaps harshly, ruled it out for a push on goalminutes later.

breaking the deadlock in goalkeeper captain Vincent Enyeama produced a fine Ghoochannejhad's header

I need a

Eto'o admitted Monday that he needs a miracle if he is to shake off a right in Wednesday's crucial World Cup clash against

The 33-year-old striker campaign in which they pipped "We are bidding to win this stretch to say the Koreans are in defeat to Mexico on Friday and was not even present at Winners of four of their last five players have been thriving in Russia, Losers of four of their last five, team training at Vitoria, near

appearance at the World Cup since though, is that our coach, Fabio Monday, South Korea can only cast grant me a miracle and that 2002 when the finals were co- Capello, knows us and our envious glances at their opponent's I am able to defend my defensive solidity having shipped 11 dear, beautiful country, Coach Hong Myung-bo, who Radio-Television (CRTV). skippered the Koreans on their













