

Cahill deserves a knighthood

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As Cahill scored a ridiculous first time volley from a 40 yard pass, only a minute after the Netherlands put their own into the back of the net, time stood still — people still trying to comprehend what they'd just seen — before the stadium erupted with the deafening cheers of Aussie fans. In that moment, Australia was inspired with hope that their team could really give the Dutch a run for their money, and Cahill was the hero of the moment, a triumph soon emphasised by a superb Mile ledinak penalty. But while Cahill's goal went down as one of the best of the tournament and live in the memory of Australian fans for many years to come, there are many more reasons to award him a knighthood. According to the Order of Australia, a knighthood or damehood is awarded for "extraordinary and pre-eminent achievement and merit in service to Australia or humanity at large."

So, if Tony Abbott's so keen to bring back the knights and dames, why not nominate Timmy Cahill? Cahill is Australia's top World Cup goal scorer, being the only Aussie to have scored in more than one World Cup. Cahill has in fact scored in three World Cup tournaments, with a total of five goals. Australia will play Spain in their final game without Cahill after he picked up his second yellow card of the tournament.

The Australian newspaper said the Socceros out-played, out-thought and out-ran the Dutch for large parts of the game. "Once again, Tim Cahill was a hero for the Socceros, scoring his fifth World Cup goal and surely etching his name as the country's greatest player of all time," the newspaper said.

Social media was abuzz, with Cahill the centre of Twitter attention. "Tim Cahill has now scored more World Cup goals (5) than Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and Wayne Rooney combined (4)," tweeted one Australian fan.

"The last time we'll see Tim Cahill at a World Cup. Thank you, now without a shadow of a doubt, our greatest ever," said another. He is also renowned for being down-to-earth, especially when meeting fans of all ages, and is always happy to give autographs and chat to people.



Italy's lone man up front Mario Balotelli (R) smiles during practice session in Mangaratiba on Tuesday. Azzurri fans wait to see if he can hold this smile today.

মানসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশী পণ্যের ব্যবহার
শিল্প বিকাশে সহায়ক

CROWN CEMENT
FOR SOLID FOUNDATION

ITALY V COSTA RICA

Azzurri wary of tropical terror

AFP, Natal

Italy look to reach the World Cup last 16 with victory over giant-killers Costa Rica on Friday but the four-time champions are wary of Recife's tropical conditions.

Tough-tackling Roma midfielder Daniele De Rossi has underlined Costa Rica's likely advantage in the sweltering conditions in Recife, where he said Italy were "dying from the heat" last year during the Confederations Cup.

Having made a blistering start to what is only their fourth World Cup campaign with a shock 3-1 win over Uruguay, the 'Ticos' would be forgiven for keeping the pace high from kick-off as they go in search of another upset.

"Italy have great players like (Mario) Balotelli and (Andrea) Pirlo, who controls all of their play, and we have a lot of respect for them," said FC Copenhagen midfielder Christian Bolaños.

"But we'll hope to benefit from the heavy climate. We are used to playing in those kinds of temperatures."

Italy, who crashed out at the group stage in 2010, launched their bid for a record-equalling fifth title with a crucial 2-1 win over England in Manaus last week in their Group D opener.

But the four-time champions were given notice following Costa Rica's shock win over 2010 semi-finalists Uruguay that a match they should have been widely expected to dominate may be more difficult than first imagined.



"They'll be fired up after their win," said De Rossi. "If they had lost 4-0 then we might have underestimated them, but now there's no chance of that."

However De Rossi added: "But I hope, and I'm sure, we can beat Costa Rica and secure our ticket to the second round."

A second win for Italy would provide a huge boost ahead of their final group clash against Uruguay, but coach Cesare Prandelli faces selection dilemmas.

AC Milan's Matteo De Sciglio, who normally plays at right-back, is not expected to recover in time from a thigh knock, while Andrea Barzagli and central defensive partner

Gabriel Paletta, who failed to convince against England, could both start on the bench.

Left-sided defender Giorgio Chiellini was tested by the pace of England's Raheem Sterling, so Prandelli must now decide how to reshuffle for a Costa Rican side that did plenty of damage down the right against Uruguay thanks to the pace of Fulham forward Bryan Ruiz.

As was widely expected against England, Pirlo orchestrated much of Italy's forward play although reports suggest midfield partner Marco Verratti could make way for Paris Saint Germain club-mate Thiago Motta.

Juventus midfielder Claudio Marchisio, who scored Italy's opener in Manaus, is expected to retain his place just behind lone striker Balotelli, who sealed the Azzurri's opening win thanks to a 50th minute header.

Doubts also remain on goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, who was sidelined for the England match due to an ankle injury which pushed Salvatore Sirigu into the spotlight.

Costa Rica midfielder Jose Miguel Cubero said his team had no intention of playing for a draw.

"When you play for a draw in football, you usually end up losing. We're going for the win against Italy," said Cubero.

"But we will have to cut out the mistakes that we made, especially in the first half, against Uruguay."

De Rossi will be hoping to avoid the kind of confrontations that saw him sent off against the USA in 2006.

Pepe punished for headbutt

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

FIFA on Thursday banned Portugal defender Pepe for one match and fined him for the head butt he carried out on Germany's Thomas Mueller in their World Cup clash.

A FIFA statement said that the 31-year-old Real Madrid defender, who was red-carded for the incident, had been fined 15,000 Swiss francs (12,300 euros).

Pepe's arm caught Mueller during Monday's Group H match and the German fell to the ground grimacing, Pepe infuriated at what he considered Mueller's playing then pushed his head onto the German's forehead and got an immediate red card.

Germany, already leading 2-0, went on to win 4-0.

Ox set for Costa Rica return

AFP, Sao Paulo

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain looks set to return in England's final World Cup group game against Costa Rica after recovering quickly from knee ligament damage, manager Roy Hodgson said Wednesday.

Hodgson said the highly rated Arsenal midfielder could potentially have played Thursday's game against Uruguay but must first rejoin full training.

The 20-year-old, who was injured on June 4, underwent his final individual training session without strapping on his knee at Sao Paulo's Corinthians Arena on Wednesday.

KEY STATS

Andrea Pirlo is one of three current Italy players who won the World Cup in 2006 along with 36-year-old goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon and 30-year-old midfielder Daniele De Rossi.

Italy have reached the final in two of their last four major tournaments as well as a semifinal appearance at last year's Confederations Cup.

Costa Rica have not made it past the group stages in the World Cup since 1990.

HONDURAS V ECUADOR

Clash of former coaches

REUTERS, Curitiba

Honduras and Ecuador, who lost their opening games, chase a vital World Cup victory on Friday in a game that will see both coaches plotting the downfall of their former teams.

In an unusual twist, Honduras are led by Luis Fernando Suarez, the man who guided Ecuador to the last 16 in 2006, their best showing at a World Cup.

Ecuador are coached by Reinaldo Rueda, who was in charge of Honduras in their 2010 World Cup campaign when they failed to make it past the first round and did not score a goal.

To add to the feeling of familiarity, both coaches are Colombians.

"I had great times in Honduras, but now I'm here and as always I must go for the win," said Rueda.

"Honduras are a great team, we all know their ability. They didn't start well, but they want and they need to win as much as we do," he added.

The two teams have never met in a competitive fixture but played out eight draws in 13 friendlies.

They will not be able to settle for cancelling each other out on Friday as both need to win to maintain a realistic chance of progressing from a group which also includes France and Switzerland.

"I must have had about four or five of their current squad when I was there so I do know something about them," Suarez said of rivals Ecuador.

'Ronaldo fully fit'

AFP, Campinas

Reserve goalkeeper Beto on Wednesday said Portugal can put their opening match horror show behind them and keep their World Cup hopes alive — insisting the reason Ronaldo is playing is that he is fully fit.

Real Madrid star and national captain Ronaldo, who came into the tournament on the back of knee and thigh injuries, failed to sparkle as his team sank to a 4-0 defeat in the Group G opener against Germany.

Beto said if Portugal played to their potential, they would beat the United States on Sunday.

"The best version of Portugal can beat the United States. We respect the USA as a very good team," he said.

"They have grown up over the last years so we have to respect them but we believe in ourselves, we believe in our work, in our quality so we have to be responsible, we have to be in the best condition to win this match and we believe it."

Beto insisted that Ronaldo was fit to play despite ongoing speculation about his fitness.

"Ronaldo didn't leave (training) early. He finished his training at the same time as the rest of the players," said Beto.

"Cristiano is 100 percent fit to play. Every match he starts to play, it's because he's fit to play," said the goalkeeper, who plays his club football for Sevilla.

"He loves football but his body is the most important thing for him, to be fit, to be healthy so if he starts the match it's because he's ready, he's fit."



Football players clashing on the field is nothing new, but what's unique in this picture is the men in question belong to the same team -- Cameroon.

Croatia KO Cameroon

AFP, Manaus

Striker Mario Mandzukic scored two second-half goals as Croatia knocked 10-man Cameroon out of the World Cup with a 4-0 rout in Manaus on Wednesday.

Croatia bounced back from their opening defeat to hosts Brazil to keep alive their hopes of progressing from Group A with an emphatic display.

But Cameroon were largely the architects of their own downfall after playing the last 50 minutes with 10 men after Alexandre Song's dismissal for a reckless punch to Mandzukic's back.

The Indomitable Lions seemed anything but as they imploded with full-back Benoit Assou-Ekotto even trying to headbutt team-mate Benjamin Moukandjo in the dying moments following an argument.

"I apologise for the result, it really hurts,"

said Cameroon's German coach Volker Finke.

"We had no control on the game and I didn't like the behaviour of my team."

"We have to look forward, this team has players for the future."

Croatia, for their part, could have doubled their score but at least did what they needed to.

Croatia 4 (Olic 11, Perisic 48, Mandzukic 61, 73)

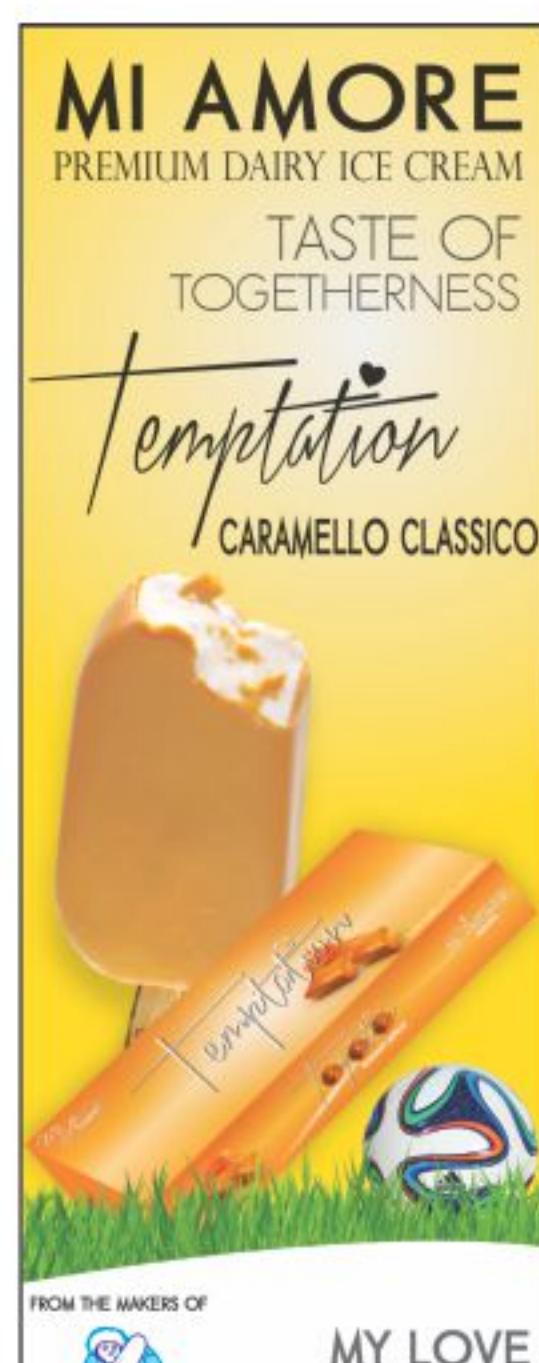
Veteran striker Ivica Olic gave them a 1-0 half-time lead before his Wolfsburg team-mate Ivan Perisic added a second ahead of Mandzukic's brace.

The result leaves Niko Kovac's Croatia third in the table, just one point behind joint leaders Brazil and Mexico. Cameroon are bottom with no points.

Croatia now face Mexico in Recife on Monday for a place in the last 16.



Opposite attractshere is a proof



MI AMORE PREMIUM DAIRY ICE CREAM TASTE OF TOGETHERNESS temptation CARAMELLO CLASSICO



INFO ZONE

HEAD-TO-HEAD

ITALY

M W D L

1 1 0 0

COSTA RICA

M W D L

1 0 0 1

LAST MATCH: COSTA RICA 0-1 ITALY

(11 JUNE, 1994 INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY)

KEY PLAYERS

ANDREA PIRLO

JOEL CAMPBELL

109

13

1

CAPS

GOALS SCORED

WC GOALS

34

10

1

TEAM FORMATION

4-1-4-1

Sirigu

4: Abate, Barzagli, Bonucci, Chiellini

1: De Rossi, 4: Pirlo, Marchisio, Veratti, Candreva

1: Balotelli

5-4-1

Navas

5: Diaz, Gonzalez, Umana, Gamboa, Duarte

4: Borges, Tejada, Bolanos, Ruiz

1: Joel Campbell

HEAD-TO-HEAD

FRANCE

M W D L

36 15 9 12

SWITZERLAND

M W D L

36 12 9 5

LAST MEETING: FRANCE 0-0 SWITZERLAND

(13 JUNE, 2006 FIFA WORLD CUP)

KEY PLAYERS

A GRIEZMANN

GRANIT XHAKA

4

3

0

CAPS

GOALS SCORED

WC GOALS

26

4

0

TEAM FORMATION

4-3-3

Lloris

4: Sagna, Varane, Koscielny, Clichy

3: Cabaye, Matuidi, Pogba

3: Valbuena, Benzema, Griezmann

4-2-3-1

Benaglio

4: Lichtsteiner, Von Bergen, Djouour, Rodriguez

2: Inler, Behrami

3: Shaqiri, Xhaka, Stocker

1: Sferovic

HEAD-TO-HEAD

HONDURAS

M W D L

13 3 6 4

ECUADOR

M W D L

13 4 6 3

LAST MEETING: ECUADOR 2-2 HONDURAS

(20 NOVEMBER 2013, INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY)

KEY PLAYERS

JERRY BENTGTON

ENNER VALENCIA

44

19

0

CAPS

GOALS SCORED

WC GOALS

11

5

1

TEAM FORMATION

4-5-1

Dominguez

4: Parades, Guagua, Erazo, Ayovi

5: A Valencia, E Valencia, Castillo, Noboa, Montero

1: Calcedo

4-2-3-1

Valladares

4: Beckeles, Bernardes, Figueroa, Izaguirre

2: Najjar, Garrido

3: Garcia, Costly, Espinoza

1: Bengtson



AFP, Fortaleza

BOATENG BOYS MEET AGAIN
Brotherly love will be forgotten on Saturday when Germany's Jerome Boateng faces his sibling once more at a World Cup with Ghana's Kevin-Prince Boateng predicting a 'fight to the death'.

The half brothers were both born in Berlin to separate mothers, but in 2009, Schalke's Kevin-Prince, 27, opted to play for the country of his father.

He turned to Ghana having become discouraged by a perceived lack of opportunities even after the brothers had made a single appearance in the same Germany Under-21 team.

The brothers normally have daily contact via SMS or telephone, but there has been radio silence as they prepare for the Fortaleza clash in Group G. "We've had no contact recently, each of us is just concentrating on himself," said Bayern Munich's Jerome Boateng.

MESSI AUTOGRAPH

HUNTER DETAINED

Brazilian security services on Wednesday detained a man who sneaked into Argentina's World Cup training camp to seek Lionel Messi's autograph, witnesses said.

The 33-year-old Brazilian was spotted jumping onto the pitch as more than 200 journalists gathered for a team press conference at the America stadium near Belo Horizonte, an AFP photographer said.

Last week, the same man was pictured receiving a t-shirt from Messi after cleaning his boots at the training camp. The man told police he wanted to get the shirt signed.

The man was seen crying as security forces forced led him away.

TARDY SON SAVOURS DEBUT

It was hardly the way South Korea's Son Heung-Min wanted to celebrate picking up the man-of-the-match award after a sparkly World Cup debut in a 1-1 draw

with Russia.

The 21-year-old Bayer Leverkusen star's evening took an unexpected turn when he was hauled in for an anti-doping control after the Group H game in



Cuiaba on Tuesday night. Without going into details 'the procedure' took longer than anticipated, and by the time Son emerged his colleagues and the team bus had long since departed

the Arena Pantanal.

So Son was left behind on one of the landmark nights of his career, forced to head back to the Korean hotel alone in a cab.

Before finally taking his leave of the stadium, the pacy attacking midfielder, who moved from Hamburg to Leverkusen in a 10 million euro deal in 2013, gave a glimpse of what the whole experience of playing for his country on the world's greatest football stage had meant to him.

"It's like a dream, I tried to sleep before the game, but I couldn't."

"I was a little bit nervous. And then happy that I performed well in the first game."

DEMPSEY BECOMES DEUCE
US star Clint Dempsey, who scored one of the fastest goals in World Cup history this week, hopes to record another hit with an upcoming rap album, a report said Wednesday.

Under his artist name Deuce, the 31-year-old spent two weeks in

Los Angeles recording the 13-track album "The Redux" with friend and rapper XO, according to the Wall Street Journal (WSJ).

"We just were having fun with it and it ended up being an album," it cited Dempsey as saying, adding that the album is due for release "in the months ahead."

The soccer star, who has recorded before, improvised and turned out to be very good. This surprised some "because he's a soccer player, and people automatically expect it to not be good," said executive producer Mike Chehade.

"I'm not saying he's Eminem, but he's definitely qualified," he added.

A representative for the footballer did not immediately respond to request for comment on the WSJ report.

Dempsey scored after only 30 seconds against Ghana at the World Cup on Monday, stunning their long-time African rivals in a match which the USA went on to win 2-1.

'Brazil still favourites'

AFP, Sao Paulo

Uruguay striker Edinson Cavani Wednesday insisted Brazil were still favourites for the World Cup despite their disappointing 0-0 draw with Mexico.

Neymar-led Brazil were repeatedly denied by inspired Mexican goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa in a result which prompted worries about the capabilities of Luiz Felipe Scolari's team.

But Cavani, who counts Brazilian captain Thiago Silva, and squad members Maxwell and Lucas, among his Paris Saint-Germain team-mates, backed the five-time champions to bounce back.

"Brazil are still the favourites because of the way they play, and they are the team which has won the World Cup five times," he said.

"They're still the favourites. They have wonderful players who are more than ready to cope with this kind of situation."

However, manager Oscar Tabarez downplayed any expectations of a repeat of the 1950 defeat when Uruguay stunned Brazil 2-1 at the newly built Maracana stadium.

"We never had that aim," said Tabarez, whose team lost their first game and will play England on Thursday, when asked about a potential rematch in the final.

"Our aim was to be a difficult team to beat and that is still our objective now. Our main objective is to win against England and try to remain in the championship."