

PREMIUM DAIRY ICE CREAM

1950 ticket traded for 2014's

Joedir Belmont was supposed to be one of the estimated 200,000 people in attendance for the decisive 1950 World Cup match between Brazil and Uruguay. He had a ticket, but his mother was ill, so he skipped the match in order to tend to her. Belmont kept his ticket — a relic of Brazil's greatest sporting shame — and it has ended up serving him well. The now 85-year-old wrote to FIFA and offer to donate his unused 1950 ticket for display in its Zurich headquarters. In return,

PEANUT BUTTER CREAM

TASTE OF TOGETHERNESS
MI AMORE

DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 30, 2014
e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net

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TODAY'S MATCHES

FRANCE **NIGERIA**
Time: 10:00pm
Venue: Estadio Nacional

GERMANY **ALGERIA**
Time: 2:00am (Tuesday)
Venue: Estadio Beira-Rio



Costa Rica forward Bryan Ruiz celebrates his opening goal against Greece during their World Cup round of 16 match at the Pernambuco Arena in Recife last night.

PHOTO: AFP

Costa Rica make last 8 debut

REUTERS, Recife

Costa Rica reached the quarterfinals of the World Cup for the first time by beating Greece 5-3 on penalties on Sunday after conceding a stoppage time equaliser and playing 54 minutes with 10 men.

After the 1-1 draw following extra time, Costa Rica keeper Keylor Navas made a superb one-handed stop to keep out Theofanis Gekas's fourth spot-kick before Michael Umana fired high into the top corner to send the Central Americans into a last eight meeting with Netherlands.

"Last night, I dreamt, this, it seems untrue. I was relaxed because I dreamed it. I dreamed it but I didn't tell anyone. I felt very confident," said Umana.

"This is for my family. It's for the colleagues who got injured before coming here. They're not with us, but they gave us a hand on the pitch."

The Ticos, whose only previous appearance in the last 16 came in 1990, will play the Dutch in Salvador next Saturday.

An otherwise dire match was brought to life early in the second half when Bryan Ruiz calmly sidefooted Costa Rica ahead but defender Oscar Duarte was sent off on 66 minutes, allowing the Greeks to find a route back into the match.

With the clock ticking past 90 minutes, Navas could only parry a shot into the path of Sokratis Papastathopoulos who hammered it into the roof of the net.

After an uneventful first half, the spark the match needed to ignite into a spectacle arrived seven minutes after the restart.

The Greece defence parted to give Ruiz acres of space to sidefoot a Christian Bolanos cross into the net from 15 metres.

Yet their hopes of seeing out the match in routine fashion were scuppered when Duarte received his marching orders after a sliding tackle on Jose Holebas produced a second yellow card and opened the door for a Greek comeback.

The science of shoot-out

It will come as no surprise that goalkeepers have the upper hands, quite literally, with penalties. In fact, of the 361 penalties to be taken at the World Cup finals, 270 have been scored -- a conversion rate of 75 percent.

Kicks which are aimed at the top right of goal have an 88 percent success rate, closely followed by those played through the dead centre of goal at 83 percent. It proves that if you have the nerve to gamble that the goalkeeper will dive, you have a good chance of scoring.

Go low to the keeper's left or right and that is where trouble comes.

Research shows that penalty takers do actually aim for those low spots most often, with over a third of kicks aimed for those areas. But, as shown above, only 72 percent are converted.

It's quite rare for an international manager to trust in his defenders during a shootout; in fact, 77 percent of penalties taken in the first four rounds have been taken by midfielders and strikers. Defenders were only trusted with 26 percent of the total 361 spot kicks, but it may come as a surprise that they have a better conversion rate than midfielders: 74 percent to 71 percent. No shock that strikers are most trustworthy, with 83 percent of shots in the back of the net.

Photo of the Day

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Robben does it again Everyday won't be Saturday

REUTERS, Fortaleza

He may not have been on the scoresheet, but once again it was Arjen Robben who won the match for the Netherlands on Sunday with the tricky footwork that has brought so many goals and so much controversy over the years.

With the score at 1-1 and extra time looming against Mexico in the World Cup last-16 clash, the experienced forward dribbled the ball into the penalty area and drew a tackle from Mexico captain Rafael Marquez that was controversially deemed a foul.

The Netherlands scored the resulting penalty, cementing Robben's terrific tournament so far for Dutch fans but sparking outrage from Mexico's team and supporters who saw a dive.

"He cheated, it's sickening," said one Mexican fan amid a storm of reaction on Twitter. "The type of embellishment employed by Robben is exactly what drives Americans crazy," added a sympathetic U.S. football-lover.

Some incensed Mexicans called for retrospective punishment for Robben, in the same vein as a ban on Uruguay's Luis Suarez for biting. But his admirers said Robben had simply shown - with his pace, drive and knack of turning games - just why he is one of the greatest players in the world.

If Robben's arm-flailing fall was melodramatic, then so was Marquez's lunge ill-judged given just who was in front of him.

Followers of the balding 30-year-old's glittering career know that one way or another, with injection of pace, a mesmerising trick, or a theatrical tumble, time and time again for club and country he is the

man who decides games.

Robben began this World Cup in scintillating style with two goals against reigning champions Spain in a 5-1 drubbing that shook the supposed footballing order of Europe.

He also scored against Australia, putting him on three goals so far and no doubt aspiring to overtake current top scorer James Rodriguez of Colombia as the tournament progresses.

It has all been the perfect way for him to banish the haunting memory of the final four years ago, when he missed a one-on-one chance against Spanish keeper Iker Casillas that could well have given the Dutch their first ever World Cup.

The image of a disbelieving Robben, hands on head, remains one of the lingering memories of the 2010 World Cup.

He arrived in Brazil, however, at the height of his powers, with a string of injuries behind him and a confidence-boosting season as a key member of a great Bayern Munich side.

Robben's move to Germany in 2009 helped dispel much of the criticism that dogged his early career in England and Spain. Despite winning league titles with both Chelsea and Real Madrid, he had never really lived up to his billing as one of the most exciting attacking players in the world.

His characteristic ploy of cutting in from the right to fire a powerful shot off his left foot often ended in derision from fans when the ball flew over or wide.

But the move to Bayern and the appointment of former Barcelona manager Pep Guardiola in 2013 have seen him improve immensely and with a fit Robben pulling the strings, Bayern's dominance has not been limited to the domestic scene.

AL-AMIN

How do we define Brazil's victory over Chile in a hear-stopping last 16 match at Belo Horizonte on Saturday? The best we can do is to portray a picture of Julio Cesar at full stretch reaching for the ball, which fortunately for Brazil, struck the post and a relieved Selecaos lived to fight another day. Yes, Brazil needed that kind of luck, not once but twice, to cross the Chile hurdle in an explosive opening Round of 16 match. Cesar was a mere spectator when a Mauricio Pinilla thunder strike hit the upper-right bar with the end of extra time only 90 seconds away. And that could have easily sealed a famous victory for Chile. The South American lightweights were again denied by the woodwork in the nail-biting shootout when Gonzalo Jara's fifth and decisive kick struck the post. And the moment the ball struck the post and dribbled away the Brazilians reacted in a way as if they have just come out of a prison term in which they served for a seemingly endless 120 odd minutes. For the Chileans it was a sudden death. And their emotions were perhaps best described by a class VIII student Tahsin Rashid: "The tears that rolled down the Chilean cheeks felt like acid. The sting was as powerful as the throb of a bullet ant. The pain was an after-effect of the missed penalty by Gonzalo: the penalty which will haunt him for the rest of his life and the penalty which broke 18 million Chilean hearts."

It was a match people will remem-

ber for years to come; the way Chile fought and pushed Brazil to the edge. For Brazil it was yet another painstaking display, apart from the first 15 minutes when they displayed the aggression and hunger associated with the five-time world champions. But it died down with the progress of the game and to be frank, it was anything but complacency from a team where everyone looked inept. The defence was again vulnerable against the fleet-footed Chilean attack and the goal Brazil conceded was a classic example of childish defensive error. The biggest strength for Brazil had been their wingbacks and the presence of a midfield general that controls the

THIRD EYE

game. But these three ingredients are missing in the present Brazil line-up. They have three midfielders one can easily find in an average team. Luiz Felipe Scolari also has a bench full of average players. One wanders what would happen if Neymar picks up another yellow card. In a Brazil side no one has ever bothered who is actually standing under the bar because the gentleman often plays the role of a bystander. But thankfully they have got a world class goalkeeper in Julio Cesar, who saved the day for the hosts with one outstanding save during the match and two in the shootout. The 34-year-old may have passed his prime and now playing his trade in Major League

Soccer, Cesar's performance is something this Brazil team desperately needs to bury the 1950 'Maracanazo'.

Scolari said after the match that they need to win three more games to win the World Cup. But he is also aware of the fact that he has only five days to recover his physically and mentally drained side, which has not only played 30 odd extra minutes in energy sapping conditions but have also sustained a few injury blows and the suspension to Luis Gustavo, before their quarterfinal clash against a rather fresh and energetic Colombia.

The Colombians strolled to a 2-0 win against a Luis Suarez-less Uruguay with their wonder boy James Rodriguez scoring both the goals. His first goal, a left-footed volley, is not only the best goal of the tournament so far (though Tim Cahill or RVP might argue) but will go down as one of the best in World Cup history. The young striker received a ball on his chest about 25 yards outside the box. And when he received the ball his face was actually perpendicular to the Uruguay post. As he was controlling the ball he swivelled on his right foot and with the motion unleashed a pictures-perfect volley that crashed into the upper corner of the net, via a faint nick of the goalkeeper's outstretched hand and a deft kiss of the cross-bar. Rodriguez, a find of this World Cup, has now scored in every game, taking his tally to five from four matches, the leading goalscorer so far.

And Brazil beware, everyday won't be your lucky day.

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