

LIKE THE
GODS

A portrait of Argentina legend Diego Maradona is on display during the opening of the Art Project 'Like the Gods', presented by the Museum of the Russian Academy of Arts and Italian artist Fabrizio Birimbelli in Saint Petersburg on Wednesday.



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FIFA WORLD CUP
RUSSIA 2018



SUPERSTITIONS OF
PLAYERS

JULIAN DRAXLER
(GERMANY)

Gives himself a spritz of scent before a big match. "Sometimes my teammates ask me if I'm not right in the head," the Paris Saint-Germain midfielder said.

"Every player has a ritual before a match and I usually hold my bag in my locker and I throw on two or three sprays of perfume. It gives me a feeling of happiness."

DELE ALLI
(ENGLAND)

Is using the same shin guards he has worn since childhood when he plays in Russia, hoping they bring the good fortune that has long eluded the Three Lions at international tournaments.

"I've had the same shinpads since I was 11. They are battered (but) I am very superstitious," the Tottenham midfielder told Fifa.com.

MARCELO (BRAZIL)
Always runs onto the pitch right foot first. The habit is so ingrained that during training in Rostov-on-Don he left the pitch and re-entered after realising he had accidentally led with his left foot.

"Everybody likes to enter with the right foot, right? I'm no different," he laughed when quizzed by reporters.



FRANCE 1:0 PERU

Kylian Mbappe (L) became the youngest French player to score in a World Cup, getting the decisive goal in a 1-0 win over Peru yesterday. The win means that France advance to the round of 16 while the winless Incas are eliminated.

PHOTO: REUTERS



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WORLD'S MOST PURIFIED CEMENT BRAND FROM SWITZERLAND



France through, Peru crushed

REUTERS, Yekaterinburg

France beat Peru 1-0 with a goal from Kylian Mbappe yesterday to book their place in the last 16 of the World Cup and crush the South Americans' hopes of progressing in their first appearance at the tournament for 36 years.

Mbappe's 34th minute goal made him France's youngest scorer in the competition, at 19 years of age - beating the record of David Trezeguet (20) - and took them to two wins from two games in Group C.

When Olivier Giroud's shot took a deflection off a defender and looped over goalkeeper Pedro Gallese, the teenager was on hand to tap in a simple chance.

"I have always said that the World Cup is a dream for any player and it was a dream for me too, it was a dream that came true and I hope there will be more days like this," Mbappe, arguably the best player in the world in his age bracket, said afterwards.

Meanwhile, coach Didier Deschamps responded testily "there's always an opponent" when asked by reporters

about France's failure to dominate and also about the strong pressure the Peruvians exerted in the second half.

"I wasn't nervous but I wasn't totally satisfied. We had 25 minutes when we defended too much, certainly, although we did it well. It's something we have to improve."

Goalkeeper-captain Hugo Lloris said after winning his 100th cap: "It's very satisfying because we've reached our objective. We need to hold onto first place by not losing against Denmark. Peru pressed right till the end, but we managed to stay solid and disciplined."

The result leaves France on six points and Denmark and Australia on four and one respectively after their

GROUP C		M	W	D	L	GD	Pts
FRANCE		2	2	0	0	2	6
DENMARK		2	1	1	0	1	4
AUSTRALIA		2	0	1	1	-1	1
PERU		2	0	0	2	-2	0

FIFA denies Amrabat claims

AGENCIES, Moscow

Referee Mark Geiger has "strongly refuted" claims he asked for the shirt of Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo at half-time of the clash with Morocco on Wednesday.

The allegation was made by Morocco midfielder Nordin Amrabat after a game in which American official Geiger made a number of calls that were questioned by the north Africans.

Amrabat told Dutch television station NOS: "I do not know what he is used to but he was very impressed with Cristiano Ronaldo and I hear from [Portugal defender] Pepe that he asked Ronaldo in the first half if he could have his shirt. What are we talking about? At the World Cup? It's not a circus here."

FIFA responded by backing Geiger and expressing their disappointment at Amrabat's outburst.

In a statement it said: "It is with regret and disappointment that, following yesterday's Group B game between Portugal and Morocco, FIFA has learnt of reports in the media concerning the referee Mark Geiger.

"It has been claimed that Mr Geiger asked for the shirt of the captain of Portugal during the half-time interval.

"Mr Geiger strongly refutes those claims and categorically states that such a request was not made.

"FIFA unequivocally condemns the allegations supposedly made by a member of the Moroccan team.

Morocco coach Herve Renard singled out Geiger in his post-match press conference, although stopping short of criticising him directly.

"I'd like you [the media] to be honest. Have a good look at the corner when Portugal scored and have a good look at what their number three is doing and write the truth," Renard said. "It's not up to me to comment on refereeing, I would ask you to have a look at the replays, the slow-motion clips, because a foul should have been seen."



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