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POWER TMT

THINK TOMORROW

NEW BALL FOR KNOCKOUT ROUNDS

Adidas Football yesterday revealed the official match ball for the knockout stage. The Telstar Mechta, translating as 'dream' or 'ambition' in Russian, comes with a vivid red design inspired by the colours of Russia, as well as the rising heat of knockout-stage.



ADvancEd

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SPORT



It was a haze of ecstasy for Argentina and their supporters around the globe as La Albiceleste pulled off an incredible escape, beating Nigeria 2-1 at the Saint Petersburg Stadium yesterday to set up a mouth-watering clash against France in the round of 16.

World of Endless Dreams...

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TODAY'S MATCHES

S KOREA

V

GERMANY

Time: 8.00pm

MEXICO

V

SWEDEN

Time: 8.00pm

SERBIA

V

BRAZIL

Time: 12.00am [Thursday]

SWITZERLAND

V

COSTA RICA

Time: 12.00am [Thursday]

ALL TIMES BST

## We achieved our goal, says Deschamps

AFP, Moscow

France coach Didier Deschamps insisted his side had "achieved their goal" on Tuesday, after a 0-0 draw with Denmark in Moscow secured top spot in Group C.

Deschamps made six changes to the starting XI that beat Peru 1-0 and his side happily played out a mutually beneficial stalemate with Denmark, which saw the Scandinavians reach the last 16 for the first time since 2002.

"The goal is achieved. It was difficult for us too, because the teams have been very well prepared," the 1998 World Cup-winner told French TV channel TF1.

"Facing blocks [of defenders], staying tight, it's never easy. I made changes as well, which hurts team cohesion but it's good for all the players to feel involved."

A 2-1 victory over Australia and the win against Peru had already seen France into the knockout rounds, but they have been unconvincing so far in Russia despite being one of the pre-tournament favourites.

Antoine Griezmann was again a peripheral figure, failing to complete a pass to strike partner Olivier Giroud.

"There was no need to take any undue risks," said Deschamps. "The result suits both teams even if we had the opportunity to win this game."

চিনি

১০০ ভাগ আখের চিনি

ঝরঝরে, স্বাস্থ্যকর, স্বচ্ছ ও দানাদার

আইসক্রিম সিম্পলি গিস্টি করে

## Matt Ryan's family adventure to Russia

AFP, Sochi

There is no chance of Mathew Ryan getting homesick at the World Cup -- the Australia goalkeeper has paid for 27 members of his family to come out to Russia and support him and the Socceroos.

"It is the first time other than my mother and my sister that I've paid for my family to come across and watch," Ryan said on Monday, ahead of Australia's crucial final group game in Russia against Peru.

"Obviously a World Cup doesn't come around every so often, so the chance to share something like this with them, it was a no-brainer."

"I asked my family members if they were interested, if they were able to come across, and half of them said yes, so half of them are still at home. It's a little better for the bank account I guess!"

The 26-year-old goalkeeper from New South Wales has had his family in tow as he played in both of Australia's matches so far, a narrow 2-1 defeat at the hands of France and then a 1-1 draw with Denmark.

"There is nothing better than being able to treat your family well and look after them and I'm very fortunate and thankful to football for allowing me to do that," said Ryan, who now plays for Brighton and Hove Albion in the Premier League.

His entourage ranges from his three-year old cousin to his grandfather, who is in his 70s.

It is a larger group than Bert van Marwijk's entire squad of 23.

"Fortunately the life I live now enables me to try to give back to them a little bit, and for me to share this experience with them is going to be something I'll remember for the rest of my life," said Ryan.



Argentina legend Deigo Maradona could not contain his emotions after watching La Albiceleste score in their crucial Group D match against Nigeria yesterday.

## France, Denmark unite in boredom

REUTERS, Moscow

It might not deserve a place alongside West Germany and Austria's infamous "non-aggression pact" at the 1982 World Cup but the 0-0 draw that steered France and Denmark into the second round certainly had the similar scent of collaboration.

That game ended amid farcical scenes 36 years ago, when Germany and Austria cooked up the 1-0 result that sent both through at the expense of Algeria, prompting the change in World Cup rules that resulted in the last two games of each qualifying group being played simultaneously.

On Tuesday France had already secured progress while the Danes knew a point would be enough in Moscow -- even if Australia pulled off a surprise win over Peru 1600km away in Sochi.

The Danes were certainly in no mood to risk defeat by pushing for a win they did not need to qualify. The encounter was tame enough in the early stages but once Peru had moved into a 2-0 lead late in the first half the game staggered almost to a halt as, after 36 matches, Russia's all-action World Cup registered its first goalless draw.

France and Denmark supporters knew that the 0-0 was good news and, hardly surprised by what was unfolding, displayed pockets of cheerful resistance. The neutrals, however, were left frustrated that it was their lot to find themselves watching the dulllest game of the tournament.

France had rested several regulars, giving goalkeeper Steve Mandanda his first taste of tournament action. Yet he did not have a save to make, other than charging swiftly from his line to reach a through ball fractionally ahead of Christian Eriksen in a rare Danish attack.

Denmark keeper Kasper Schmeichel was similarly under-employed as France's star-studded team failed to test him, with Antoine Griezmann again looking off the pace before he was substituted 20 minutes from time.

GROUP C		M	W	D	L	GD	Pts
	FRANCE	3	2	1	0	2	7
	DENMARK	3	1	2	0	1	5
	PERU	3	1	0	2	0	3
	AUSTRALIA	3	0	1	2	-3	1

The patience of the crowd finally cracked with 15 minutes left when Denmark looked to launch a counter-attack only for the man in possession to realise that virtually every one of his team mates had decided to stay in his own half and wish him the best of luck on his own. Boos, jeers and whistles rained down from the stands, along with chants of "Russia, Russia" as the game played out its tepid final exchanges.

## Argentine fans head for Kazan!

AL-AMIN from Saint Petersburg

When Argentina were gearing up for their do-or-die game against Nigeria, their fans were seen busy at the counters of Saint Petersburg's central rail station.

The counter number 20 and 21 are allocated for the travelling fans to buy advance ticket for any destination in Russia. The long queue in those two counters were actually dominated by the Argentine fans, who were seeking tickets to Kazan, which will host one of the eight Round of 16 games. It will actually host the match between Group C winners and Group D runners-up on June 30, which means if Argentina won the game against Nigeria and made it to the last sixteen, they will play France in Kazan.

This was a morning rush in the Mayakovskaya station, where fans turn up when they fail to get a ticket on-line or want ticket at the last moment. There were about fifty Argentina fans desperately looking for a ticket to Kazan, anticipating their beloved team would beat Nigeria and make it to the last 16.

There were also a few Nigerian fans in the mix looking for the ticket to the same destination, which is 815 miles from Moscow -- an 11.5-hour-ride if it is not a high-speed train. It was interesting to see the Argentine fans taking a gamble despite the fact that their team's fate lay on them beating Nigeria and the other group game ending in their favour.

But when asked they looked confident and said 'nothing can stop the Albiceleste' from heading to Kazan.

Argentina are just not another team in the World Cup. They have got obsessed followers at home and an equally strong following across the world, Asia in particular. An early exit for Argentina is also disaster as far as business is concerned. The World Cup will lose the glamour that Messi and his men bring. Let's hope Argentina get hold of a ticket from Saint Petersburg to Kazan like their ever-trusted loyalists.

GARDEN FRESH

তাজা ফলের স্বাদেব তৃপ্তি!

আপনেই ভালো!

GARDEN FRESH

From the House of Danish