A soccer ball with a human-like face is the central focus. It is surrounded by thick, expressive brushstrokes in blue, red, and black. The background is white with a subtle horizontal gradient.

FIFA  
World  
Cup  
France  
98

technical report



**XVI**  
**FIFA World Cup**  
**France 98**

10 June – 12 July

**Technical Report**



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<i>Prefaces</i>		Dr. João Havelange	4
		Joseph S. Blatter	5
		Lennart Johansson	6
		Michel Platini	7
<i>Facts and Figures</i>		Results and Classifications	10
		Basic data of France 98	12
<i>Tournament analyses</i>		Overall analysis France 98	15
		Technical/tactical analysis	25
<i>Analysis of achievements</i>		Team analyses	Places 17–32
		Africa (CAF)	Morocco
			South Africa
			Cameroon
			Tunisia
		Asia (AFC)	Iran
			Saudi Arabia
			Korea Republic
			Japan
		North, Central America and Caribbean (CONCACAF)	Jamaica
			USA
		South America (CONMEBOL)	Colombia
		Europe (UEFA)	Spain
			Belgium
			Austria
			Scotland
			Bulgaria
		The 16 title contenders	Places 1–16
			Argentina
			Brazil
			Chile
			Croatia
			Denmark
			England
			France
			Germany
			Italy
			Mexico
			Netherlands
			Nigeria
			Norway
			Paraguay
			Romania
			Yugoslavia
<i>Refereeing</i>	Volker Roth:	High refereeing standards	112
<i>Auxiliary Services</i>			
<i>Sports Medicine</i>	Sports Medical Committee:	Healthy condition	116
<i>Security</i>	Walter Gagg:	The organisation of security	120
<i>Fairplay</i>	Keith Cooper:	Is Fair Play realistic?	122
<i>Organisation</i>	Walter Gagg:	Good marks for the organisers	126
<i>Media</i>	Keith Cooper:	World Cup 98: A huge media event	128
<i>Mentale Fitness</i>	Ruedi Zahner:	The French were mentally prepared	130
<i>Sponsoring</i>		VIPs – Very Important Partners	132
FIFA Delegation France 98			133



Honorary FIFA President Dr. João Havelange

Any reference to France 98 cannot fail to arouse in me what is now becoming a familiar mixture of emotions.

On the one hand, there is gratification in the knowledge that this World Cup, the seventh of my term of office as President of FIFA, was if anything an even greater event than all those that had preceded it.

On the other hand, of course, there is the inevitable sadness that cannot be concealed at the fact that this was to be my final World Cup as President. As with so many things in life, the joy and the sorrow are mixed intimately together and require time to distinguish and to assess.

But despite all the melancholy of farewell, the ultimate sensation is of course one of delight. France is a land that has always been dear to my heart, and the welcome that

this magnificent country extended to us all was one of the finest features of France 98.

Whether in the stadium or in the city, whether watching live or on television, the warmth of the French people towards their guests was at times almost tangible. If there had been those who, before France 98, had wondered sceptically whether this great country would be able to offer such a generous welcome, they were proved categorically wrong.

The commitment of the French people to the success of -their- World Cup, well before captain Didier Deschamps lifted the gold trophy at the end of a memorable Final, was not least personified by the passionate role played by President Jacques Chirac, to whom I would like to reiterate here our heartfelt gratitude for his

untiring support for this great project.

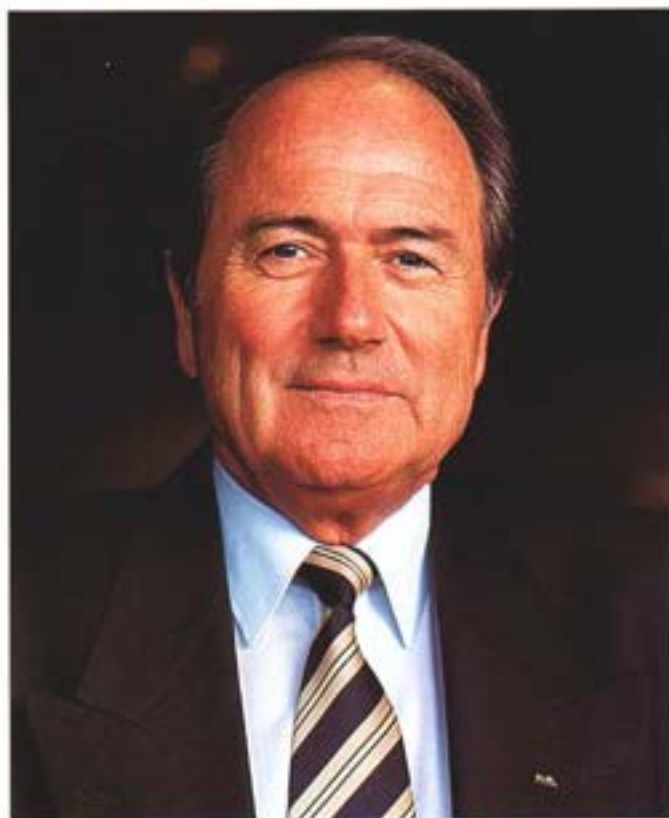
Another President also comes to mind, whose name evokes that same mixture of joy and sadness mentioned earlier. Fernand Sastre had been FIFA's friend and ally well before France embarked upon the adventure of the 1998 World Cup. But this was to be the crowning glory to his life's work in the service of football. Fernand Sastre's passing just a few days into the tournament he had done so much to create was the cause of great dismay, but even this was alleviated to some extent by the thought that he had, after all, lived to see the realisation of his great endeavour.

Into retirement I take with me the memory of great friends such as Fernand Sastre. I take also the image of players in the yellow shirts of my native Brazil holding

aloft a banner of thanks to me at the end of the Final in the Stade de France. I take the sound of roar of the crowd, the singing and the chanting, the smell of the grass and the tingle of excitement that was always there, at the start of every match.

All these sensations and more ran together in France 98. They will remain with me forever, as I am sure they will remain with everyone who witnessed this unforgettable competition.





FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter

The FIFA World Cup is football's shop-window. There can be no better promotional platform for the game than the world's biggest sports event. So it is essential for the overall health of our sport that when the World Cup takes place, it is a success.

Before and during the World Cup, FIFA was often asked how it would judge that success. Our reply was always the same: if the consumers, the public, are happy, then so are we. That satisfaction is the measure of our success.

In these very valid terms, the 1998 World Cup was an undoubted success. The reaction of the public and the media was overwhelmingly positive. For over a month, France 98 dominated the world's events, and emerged from the marathon with acclaim.

Thanks not least to television, the World Cup provided dramatic testimony to football's extraordinary universal appeal. Television audiences around the globe broke all records. For nearly five weeks, football was the number one talking point in homes, offices, bars, buses, even parliaments and royal palaces. What other phenomenon has ever attained such power to unite?

United we stand, divided we fall. How true the old adage is! Even before the World Cup had begun on 10 June, the football world was united at the FIFA Congress that traditionally precedes the start of the tournament.

This year's Congress was held under a special star, with the departure of that unparalleled servant of world football, Joao Havelange, and the election of a successor.

I was immensely proud to feel such an expression of consensus of world football opinion and support at the moment of my election. It strengthened my resolve to reinforce the ties that bind the football world together. The tournament itself, with its evident spirit of goodwill among teams and spectators alike, then served to reaffirm this solidarity.

France 98 showed the way that I intend my presidency of FIFA to pursue, emphasising the unity that exists within our sport, stressing the beauty and dynamism of the game itself, and making it accessible to the largest possible public.

These and the other many positive elements of our sport will be discussed in the following pages – together with the problem areas that we still have to tackle and resolve. I am sure that both

the casual reader and the serious student of this report will come to the same conclusion as I mentioned above: that France 98 was indeed a great success.



Lennart Johansson,  
Chairman of the FIFA World Cup Organising Committee

There had never been any doubt in my mind that the French Organizing Committee would put together a World Cup worthy of its status as the last of the century.

France has always been a stalwart of European and world football. It has accumulated expertise which already expressed itself in the splendid European Championship in 1984. And then, as now, the host nation emerged as winners.

On that occasion, Michel Platini organized the team around him on the pitch and Fernand Sastre was in charge of organization off the field. The same combination led the CFO dynamically into the realisation of a World Cup that was in almost every way bigger than any before it.

Bigger does not automatically mean better, but on this occasion it invariably was. Despite the complexities of

organisation caused by an expansion to 32 teams and, especially, by teams being no longer linked to one or two base venues, the tournament proceeded with impressive smoothness, a tribute to the men and women who had worked so hard to achieve just that.

Not only men and women, but boys and girls, too: the army of volunteers, many of them in their tender years, played a vital role in creating the efficiency and the atmosphere that characterised France 98 as a particularly congenial tournament, the way football tournaments are supposed to be.

Neither should we forget, when paying tribute to all those who contributed in one way or another to the success of the event, the expertise of the people who produced such brilliant television pictures that carried the atmosphere of the tournament to the farthest corners of the globe.

The World Cup is indeed becoming, increasingly, a television event. That is nothing more than a normal reflection of our times. But television can only portray the subject matter that it is there to be covered.

France 98 provided subject matter of a quality that made the world hold its breath. Above all, despite all the diving and pulling that will surely be mentioned elsewhere in this report, the players and their mentors exhibited commendable fair play under pressure – a spirit

nowhere better exemplified than on 21 June, FIFA Fair Play Day, which is also described in more detail on a later page.

And so to 2002. It is said before each World Cup that the previous one will be a hard act to follow. And that is particularly true of France 98.



Michel Platini,  
President of the French Local Organizing Committee

The problem with trying to assess the success of a football tournament is that ultimately that judgement depends upon the quality of the football itself. And football is notorious in the way that it divides opinion: some find it good, some find it less so. But such a subjective view of football is in itself an integral part of the game's special appeal – and so why should even the World Cup be different?

What is sure is, that while France 98 may not have produced any truly outstanding individual players, it revealed many very good teams and produced many very good matches. Players with the skill to play the ball were protected more than ever before, not least as a result of the new measures about the tackle from behind. And the course of the tournament was such that suspense was

maintained right to the end.

So in these terms, too, France can be more than happy with the biggest sports event in the nation's history. French pride would have been upheld even if the Final had been lost, but the comprehensive victory against Brazil was a very rich icing on a cake in the best French gastronomic tradition.

In the years when France was campaigning to host the 1998 finals, we used the slogan «All of France wants the World Cup». At times during the long preparation period, it is true that it was difficult to substantiate that claim literally. But as the event drew nearer, and certainly as coach Aimé Jacquet led Zinedine Zidane, Laurent Blanc, Marcel Desailly and their colleagues ever closer to their Holy Grail, the nation closed ranks behind them, urging them to a famous vic-

tory whose significance went well beyond the sporting and onto a wider, yet more important social plane.

It is true that some off-field incidents cast their shadow over the event for a while. But while we should never fail to learn the lessons of certain problems with ticketing (which are never completely to be avoided) or the unrest in Marseilles and Lens, neither should we allow them to detract from the overwhelmingly positive image and sensation that France 98 left behind, especially in France itself.

I cannot close these remarks without following the others who will have paid tribute, once again, to my co-president at the CFO, Fernand Sastre. Whatever France 98 may have achieved, it could never have been achieved without Fernand's wisdom and his organizatio-

nal insight. The conclusions of this report would have been far less positive had Fernand not been with us, all those years, to guide the tournament's destiny – and may it thus be a testimony to his work, and to the man himself.





«Le jour de gloire  
est arrivé ...»



CHAMPION DU MONDE



# Facts and figures

## Group A: Brazil, Scotland, Morocco, Norway

10.6.98	Saint-Denis	Brazil vs Scotland	2:1 (1:1)	Jose M. Garcia-Aranda, ESP
10.6.98	Montpellier	Morocco vs Norway	2:2 (1:1)	Pirom Un-Prasert, THA
16.6.98	Bordeaux	Scotland vs Norway	1:1 (0:0)	László Vagner, HUN
16.6.98	Nantes	Brazil vs Morocco	3:0 (2:0)	Nikolai Levnikov, RUS
23.6.98	Saint-Etienne	Scotland vs Morocco	0:3 (0:1)	Ali Mohamed Bujseim, UAE
23.6.98	Marseille	Brazil vs Norway	1:2 (0:0)	Esfandiar Baharmast, USA

1. Brazil	3	2	0	1	6:3	6
2. Norway	3	1	2	0	5:4	5
3. Morocco	3	1	1	1	5:5	4
4. Scotland	3	0	1	2	2:6	1

## Group B: Italy, Chile, Cameroon, Austria

11.6.98	Bordeaux	Italy vs Chile	2:2 (1:1)	Lucien Bouchardeau, NIG
11.6.98	Toulouse	Cameroon vs Austria	1:1 (0:0)	E. Gonzalez Chavez, PAR
17.6.98	Saint-Etienne	Chile vs Austria	1:1 (0:0)	Gamal Ghandour, EGY
17.6.98	Montpellier	Italy vs Cameroon	3:0 (1:0)	Edward Lennie, AUS
23.6.98	Saint-Denis	Italy vs Austria	2:1 (0:0)	Paul Durkin, ENG
23.6.98	Nantes	Chile vs Cameroon	1:1 (1:0)	László Vagner, HUN

1. Italy	3	2	1	0	7:3	7
2. Chile	3	0	3	0	4:4	3
3. Austria	3	0	2	1	3:4	2
4. Cameroon	3	0	2	1	2:5	2

## Group C: France, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Denmark

12.6.98	Lens	Saudi Arabia vs Denmark	0:1 (0:0)	Javier Castrilli, ARG
12.6.98	Marseille	France vs South Africa	3:0 (1:0)	M. Rezende de Freitas, BRA
18.6.98	Toulouse	South Africa vs Denmark	1:1 (0:1)	John J. Toro Rendon, COL
18.6.98	Saint-Denis	France vs Saudi Arabia	4:0 (1:0)	Arturo Brizio Carter, MEX
24.6.98	Lyon	France vs Denmark	2:1 (1:1)	Pierluigi Collina, ITA
24.6.98	Bordeaux	S. Africa vs Saudi Arabia	2:2 (1:1)	Mario Sanchez Yanten, CHI

1. France	3	3	0	0	9:1	9
2. Denmark	3	1	1	1	3:3	4
3. South Africa	3	0	2	1	3:6	2
4. Saudi Arabia	3	0	1	2	2:7	1

## Group D: Spain, Nigeria, Paraguay, Bulgaria

12.6.98	Montpellier	Paraguay vs Bulgaria	0:0	Abdul Rahman Al Zeid, KSA
13.6.98	Nantes	Spain vs Nigeria	2:3 (1:1)	Esfandiar Baharmast, USA
19.6.98	Paris	Nigeria vs Bulgaria	1:0 (1:0)	Mario Sanchez Yanten, CHI
19.6.98	Saint-Etienne	Spain vs Paraguay	0:0	Ian McLeod, RSA
24.6.98	Lens	Spain vs Bulgaria	6:1 (2:0)	Mario Van der Ende, HOL
24.6.98	Toulouse	Nigeria vs Paraguay	1:3 (1:1)	Pirom Un-Prasert, THA

1. Nigeria	3	2	0	1	5:5	6
2. Paraguay	3	1	2	0	3:1	5
3. Spain	3	1	1	1	8:4	4
4. Bulgaria	3	0	1	2	1:7	1

## Group E: Netherlands, Belgium, Korea Republic, Mexico

13.6.98	Lyon	Korea Rep. vs Mexico	1:3 (1:0)	Günter Benkö, AUT
13.6.98	Saint-Denis	Netherlands vs Belgium	0:0	Pierluigi Collina, ITA
20.6.98	Bordeaux	Belgium vs Mexico	2:2 (1:0)	Hugh Dallas, SCO
20.6.98	Marseille	Netherlands vs Korea Rep.	5:0 (2:0)	Ryszard Wojcik, POL
25.6.98	Paris	Belgium vs Korea Rep.	1:1 (1:0)	M. Rezende de Freitas, BRA
25.6.98	Saint-Etienne	Netherlands vs Mexico	2:2 (2:0)	Abdul Rahman Al Zeid, KSA

1. Netherlands	3	1	2	0	7:2	5
2. Mexico	3	1	2	0	7:5	5
3. Belgium	3	0	3	0	3:3	3
4. Korea Republic	3	0	1	2	2:9	1





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## BASIC DATA

## Group F: Germany, USA, Yugoslavia, Iran

14.6.98	Saint-Etienne	Yugoslavia vs Iran	1:0 (0:0)	Alberto Tejada Noriega, PER	1. Germany	3	2	1	0	6:2	7
15.6.98	Paris	Germany vs USA	2:0 (1:0)	Said Belqola, MOR	2. Yugoslavia	3	2	1	0	4:2	7
21.6.98	Lens	Germany vs Yugoslavia	2:2 (0:1)	Kim Milton Nielsen, DEN							
21.6.98	Lyon	USA vs Iran	1:2 (0:1)	Urs Meier, SUI	3. Iran	3	1	0	2	2:4	3
25.6.98	Montpellier	Germany vs Iran	2:0 (0:0)	E. Gonzalez Chavez, PAR	4. USA	3	0	0	3	1:5	0
25.6.98	Nantes	USA vs Yugoslavia	0:1 (0:1)	Gamal Ghandour, EGY							

## Group G: Romania, Colombia, England, Tunisia

15.6.98	Marseille	England vs Tunisia	2:0 (1:0)	Masayoshi Okada, JPN	1. Romania	3	2	1	0	4:2	7
15.6.98	Lyon	Romania vs Colombia	1:0 (1:0)	An-Yan Lim Kee Chong, MUS	2. England	3	2	0	1	5:2	6
22.6.98	Montpellier	Colombia vs Tunisia	1:0 (0:0)	Bernd Heynemann, GER							
22.6.98	Toulouse	Romania vs England	2:1 (0:0)	Marc Batta, FRA	3. Colombia	3	1	0	2	1:3	3
26.6.98	Saint-Denis	Romania vs Tunisia	1:1 (0:1)	Edward Lennie, AUS	4. Tunisia	3	0	1	2	1:4	1
26.6.98	Lens	Colombia vs England	0:2 (0:2)	Arturo Brizio Carter, MEX							

## Group H: Argentina, Japan, Jamaica, Croatia

14.6.98	Toulouse	Argentina vs Japan	1:0 (1:0)	Mario Van der Ende, HOL	1. Argentina	3	3	0	0	7:0	9
14.6.98	Lens	Jamaica vs Croatia	1:3 (1:1)	Manuel Melo Pereira, POR	2. Croatia	3	2	0	1	4:2	6
20.6.98	Nantes	Japan vs Croatia	0:1 (0:0)	Ramesh Ramdhan, TTO							
21.6.98	Paris	Argentina vs Jamaica	5:0 (1:0)	Rune Pedersen, NOR	3. Jamaica	3	1	0	2	3:9	3
26.6.98	Lyon	Japan vs Jamaica	1:2 (0:1)	Gunter Benko, AUT	4. Japan	3	0	0	3	1:4	0
26.6.98	Bordeaux	Argentina vs Croatia	1:0 (1:0)	Said Belqola, MOR							

## Round of 16

27.6.98	Paris	Brazil vs Chile	4:1 (3:0)	Marc Batta, FRA
	Marseille	Italy vs Norway	1:0 (1:0)	Bernd Heynemann, GER
28.6.98	Saint-Denis	Nigeria vs Denmark	1:4 (0:2)	Urs Meier, SUI
	Lens	France vs Paraguay	1:0, 0:0 114' (golden goal)	Ali Mohamed Bujssaim, UAE
29.6.98	Montpellier	Germany vs Mexico	2:1 (0:0)	Manuel Melo Pereira, POR
	Toulouse	Netherlands vs Yugoslavia	2:1 (1:0)	José-Manuel Garcia Aranda, ESP
30.6.98	Saint-Etienne	Argentina vs England	2:2, 2:2 (2:2) Penalty kicks 4:3	Kim Milton Nielsen, DEN
	Bordeaux	Romania vs Croatia	0:1 (0:1)	Javier Castrilli, ARG

## Quarter Finals

03.7.98	Saint-Denis	Italy vs France	0:0, a.e.t. Penalty kicks 3:4	Hugh Dallas, SCO
	Nantes	Brazil vs Denmark	3:2 (2:1)	Gamal Ghandour, EGY
04.7.98	Marseille	Netherlands vs Argentina	2:1 (1:1)	Arturo Brizio Carter, MEX
	Lyon	Germany vs Croatia	0:3 (0:1)	Rune Pedersen, NOR

## Semifinals

07.7.98	Marseille	Brazil vs Netherlands	1:1, 1:1 (0:0) Penalty kicks 4:2	Ali Mohamed Bujssaim, UAE
08.7.98	Saint-Denis	France vs Croatia	2:1 (0:0)	José-Manuel Garcia Aranda, ESP

## Match for third place

11.7.98	Paris	Netherlands vs Croatia	1:2 (1:2)	Epifano Gonzalez Chavez, PAR
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## Final

12.7.98	Saint-Denis	Brazil vs France	0:3 (0:2)	Said Belqola, MOR
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## Ranking

- France
- Brazil
- Croatia
- Netherlands
- Italy
- Argentina
- Germany
- Denmark
- England
- Yugoslavia
- Romania
- Nigeria
- Mexico
- Paraguay
- Norway
- Chile
- Spain
- Morocco
- Belgium
- Iran
- Colombia
- Jamaica
- Austria
- South Africa
- Cameroon
- Tunisia
- Scotland
- Saudi Arabia
- Bulgaria
- Korea Republic
- Japan
- USA

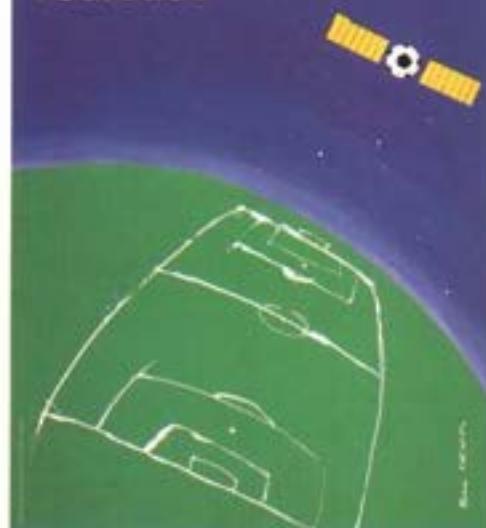


Coupe du Monde

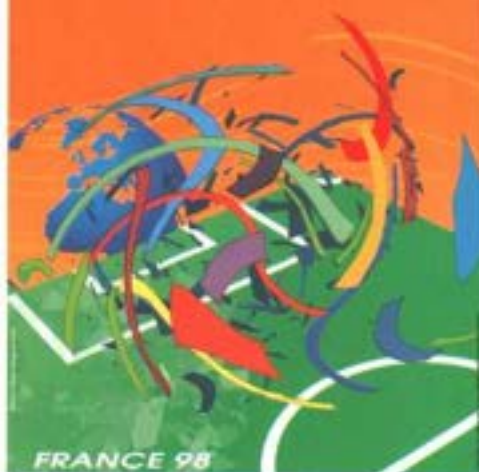


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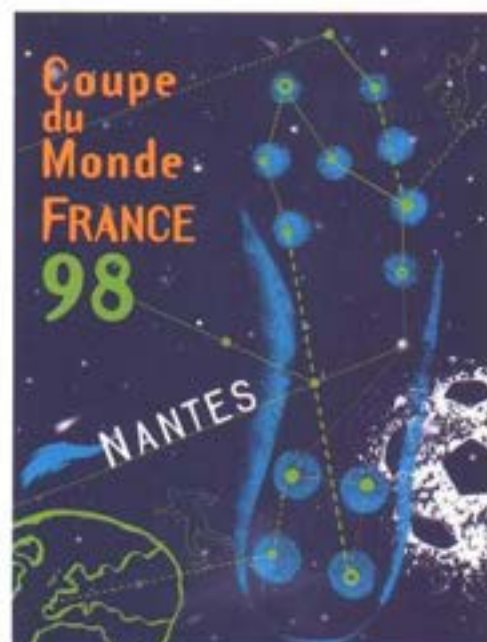
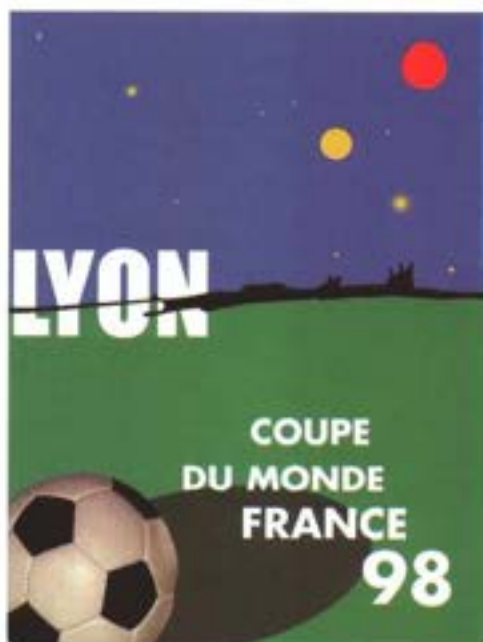
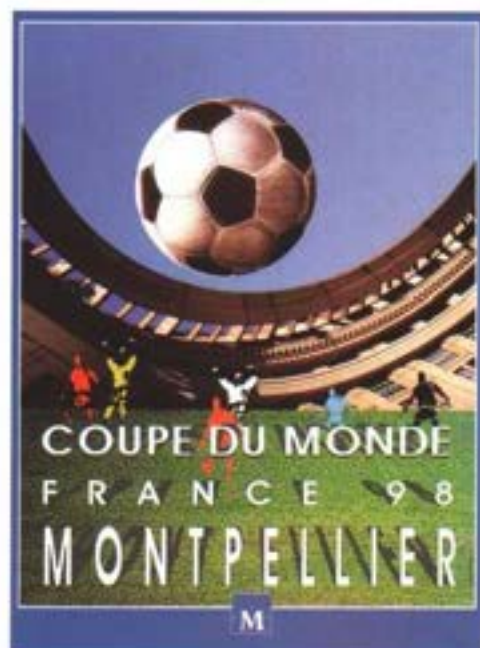
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France 98  
Toulouse



COUPE DU MONDE  
Saint-Etienne

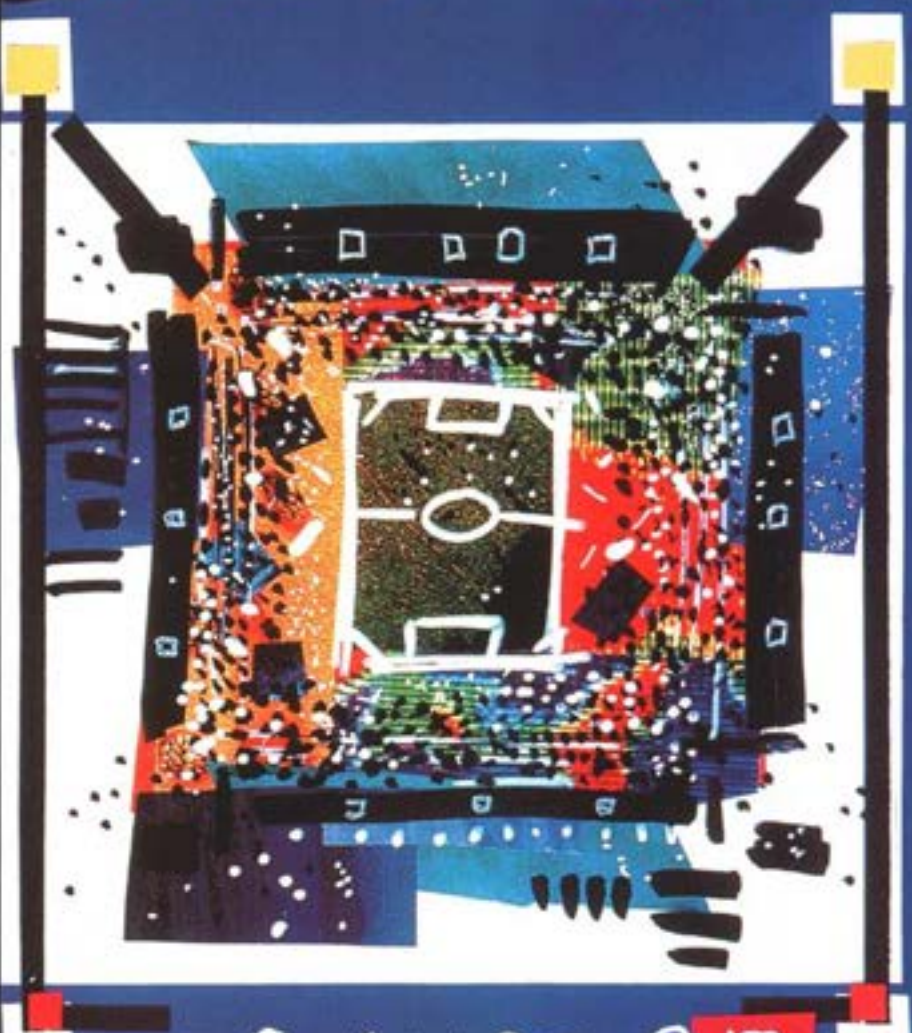


FRANCE 98





COUPE DU MONDE



FRANCE 98

BORDEAUX



Coupe du Monde  
France 98

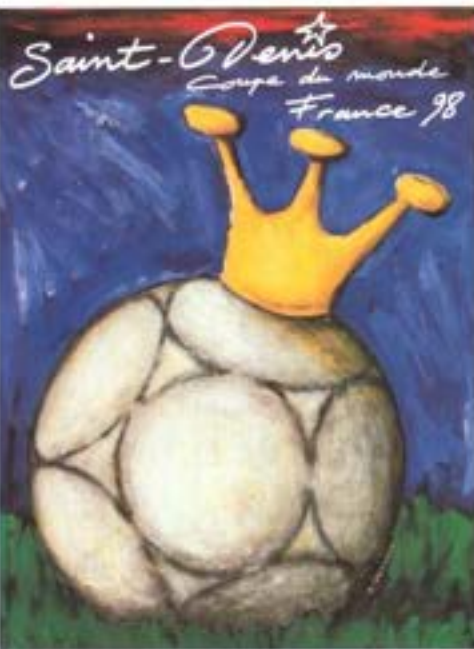
MARSEILLE



COUPE DU MONDE  
FRANCE 98.

LENS

COUPE DU MONDE FRANCE 98



## The Venues in Brief

**Bordeaux** – The Club: Girondins de Bordeaux; The Stadium: Stade Lescuré; Capacity: 35,200; Average per match: 31,800 (6 matches); In Bordeaux played Italy, Chile, Scotland, Norway, Belgium, Mexico, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Croatia and Romania.

**Lens** – The Club: Lens Racing Club; The Stadium: Felix Bollaert; Capacity: 41,275; Average per match: 37,050 (6 matches); In Lens played Saudi Arabia, Denmark, Jamaica, Croatia, Germany, Yugoslavia, Spain, Bulgaria, Colombia, England, France and Paraguay.

**Lyon** – The Club: Olympique Lyonnais; The Stadium: Gerland; Capacity: 44,000; Average per match: 39,100 (6 matches); In Lyon played Korea Republic, Mexico, Romania, Colombia, USA, Iran, France, Denmark, Japan, Jamaica, Germany and Croatia.

**Marseille** – The Club: Olympique Marseille; The Stadium: Vélodrome; Capacity: 60,000; Average per match: 54,857 (7 matches); In Marseille played France, South Africa, England, Tunisia, Netherlands, Korea Republic, Brazil, Norway, Italy and Argentina.

**Montpellier** – The Club: Montpellier-Hérault S.C.; The Stadium: La Mosson; Capacity: 35,500; Average per match: 29,800 (6 matches); In Montpellier played Morocco, Norway, Paraguay, Bulgaria, Italy, Cameroon, Colombia, Tunisia, Germany, Iran and Mexico.

**Nantes** – The Club: FC Nantes-Atlantique (FCNA); The Stadium: La Beaujoire – Louis Fonteneau; Capacity: 39,500; Average per match: 35,500 (6 matches); In Nantes played Spain, Nigeria, Brazil, Morocco, Japan, Croatia, Chile, Cameroon, USA, Yugoslavia and Denmark.

**Paris** – The Club: Paris Saint-Germain F.C.; The Stadium: Parc des Princes; Capacity: 49,000; Average per match: 45,500 (6 matches); In Paris played Germany, USA, Nigeria, Bulgaria, Argentina, Jamaica, Belgium, Korea Republic, Brazil, Chile, Netherlands and Croatia.

**Saint-Denis** – The Stadium: Stade de France; Capacity: 80,000; Average per match: 78,222 (9 matches); In Saint-Denis played Brazil, Scotland, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Austria, Romania, Tunisia, Nigeria, Denmark and Croatia.

**Saint-Etienne** – The Club: A.S. Saint-Etienne; The Stadium: Geoffroy Guichard; Capacity: 36,000; Average per match: 30,600 (6 matches); In Saint-Etienne played Yugoslavia, Iran, Chile, Austria, Spain, Paraguay, Scotland, Morocco, Netherlands, Mexico, Argentina and England.

**Toulouse** – The Club: Toulouse F.C.; The Stadium: Municipal; Capacity: 37,000; Average per match: 33,500 (6 matches); In Toulouse played Cameroon, Austria, Argentina, Japan, South Africa, Denmark, Romania, England, Nigeria, Paraguay, Netherlands and Yugoslavia.

Number of goals scored:	171
Average per match:	2.67
Number of wins:	45
Number of draws:	19
Number of decisions by penalty-kicks:	3
Number of penalties awarded:	18
Number of games ending 1-0:	12
Number of games ending 0-0:	4
Highest score:	6-1
	(ESP vs BGR)
Number of goals scored by substitutes:	15
Number of goals scored by numerically inferior teams:	3
Number of games won by numerically inferior teams:	2
Number of wins after conceding 1st goal:	6

## Cautions and Expulsions

<b>Yellow cards:</b>	
– Group matches:	176
– Second and third stage:	74
<b>Red cards (second yellow):</b>	
– Group matches:	2
– Second and third stage:	2
<b>Red cards:</b>	
– Group matches:	14
– Second and third stage:	4
<b>Recapitulation:</b>	
– Yellow cards:	250
– Red cards (second yellow):	4
– Red cards:	18



**Average age of all the teams**

France 98	USA 94
27 years, 8 months	27 years, 3 months

**Youngest player**

France 98	USA 94
Samuel Eto'o (Cameroon)	Ronaldo (BRA)
Date of birth: 10.3.81	22.9.76

**Oldest player**

France 98	USA 94
Jim Leighton (Scotland)	Roger Milla (Cameroon)
Date of birth: 24.7.58	20.5.52

**Official FIFA Awards****Fair Play Award**

1. France and England

**adidas Golden Ball**

Golden Ball:	Ronaldo (BRA)
Silver Ball:	Davor Suker (HRV)
Bronze Ball:	Lilian Thuram (FRA)

**adidas Golden shoe**

Golden Shoe:	6 goals:	Davor Suker (HRV)
Silver Shoe:	5 goals:	Gabriel Batistuta (ARG)
		Christian Vieri (ITA)

**FIFA Award for the Most Entertaining Team**

France

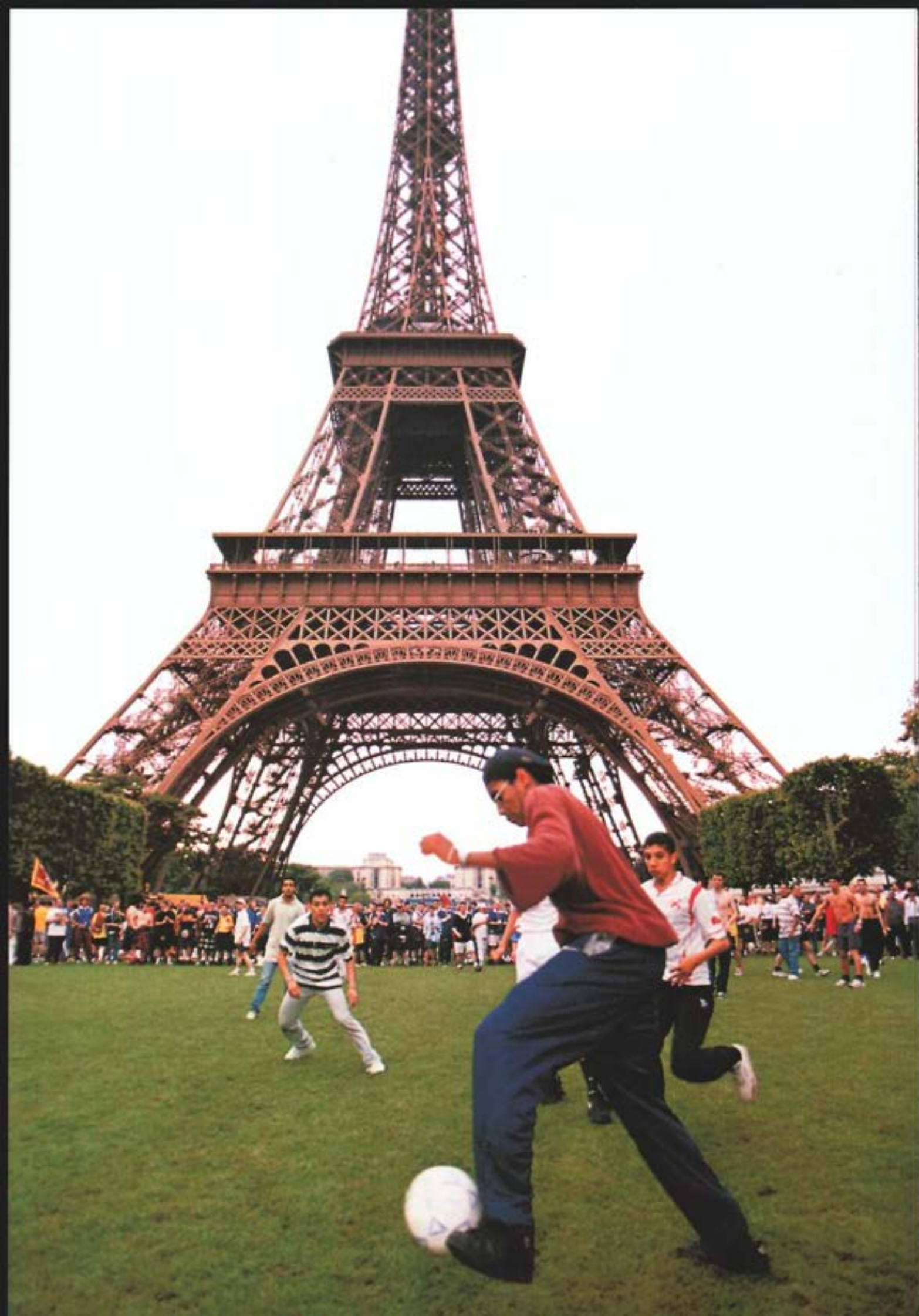
**Fastest Goal Award**

Celso Ayala (PAR) (against Nigeria on 24. 6. 1998)

**Jashin Award for the Best Goalkeeper**

Fabien Barthez (FRA)







# Overall Analysis

The seventh country to get its name on the list of World Cup winners is, of course, France. On 12 July, 80,000 spectators watched the French team defeat title-holders Brazil, thanks to two goals from their playmaker Zinedine Zidane and a third from Emmanuel Petit. Croatia, who beat Holland for third place, despite the better football coming from the Dutch, were the surprise team of the tournament.

Coach Aimé Jacquet was the architect of this French

success. While his tactical plan drew a lot of criticism from many of the fans of «The Blues», the course he steered was proved correct when the team achieved the greatest triumph in the history of French football. He managed to put the right team together for each match, instilled in them the tough mental attitude that enabled them to come back after a shock (and there were several) and never lose their composure. They also had that touch of luck that seems

to favour the deserving – for example in the penalty shoot-out against Italy or the Golden Goal that Laurent Blanc scored against Paraguay (the first ever in a World Cup final round).

The footballer of the future will have to be an all-rounder. This French champion team showed that at the top today it is necessary to be able to fulfil a number of roles. For example, playmaker Zidane was sometimes seen right back on the edge of his own penalty box helping out his

colleagues in defence, and moments later being in a scoring position himself at the other end. Another example would be Thierry Henry, nominally a striker, but he would drop back into midfield and then make a sudden burst down the right wing. Dunga too can be mentioned in this respect. Having been the

**Chile under fire:** although Cameroon went all out in their last game, they failed to pull off the win they needed to sweep them into the second round. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.







**Sensini (ARG, 6) doing battle in the air with Akita (17) and Lopes (12) from Japan. It would have taken very little for the Asians to have toppled the subsequent group leaders and create a World Cup sensation.**

driving force of the Brazilian team's attacks in 1994, this time he took over the role of the no-longer available Mauro Silva and operated as a screen in front of his own defence. The schooling of players for the future must equip them with a wide range of skills, to make it easier for them and their coaches to play a flexible pattern of football.

#### **Little change in the balance of power**

The increase in the number of teams from 24 up to 32 did not significantly alter the balance of power between the different continents. The big surprises that Africa or Asia might have provided did not come to pass, and

in fact it must be considered as a bit of a disappointment that not one of the teams rated among the outsiders was still around in the final phases of the competition.

#### **Europe (15 teams) remains the number one**

While youth tournaments (U-17, U-20) in recent years have indicated that Europe has some work to do at younger age levels in order to keep up, in the professional game teams from the old continent still dominate

the scene. Of the 15 European sides in the tournament, 10 earned a place in the second round and they accounted for six of the eight quarterfinalists. Three reached the semifinals and these ended up in positions 1, 3 and 4. Brazil's unique status of being the only non-European side to win the World Cup in Europe (Sweden 1958) was unchallenged.

After EURO 96, French coach Aimé Jacquet had carefully analysed the reasons for his team's elimination and prepared his squad this time in the light of that experience. He assembled a large team of assistants (in 96 he had had to attend to too many details himself), devoted a lot of attention to the choice of players number 15 to 22 in his selection (a far-sighted move that paid off well in view of the large number of injuries and suspensions) and intensified both the physical and mental aspects of the team's preparation. The French Association's training centre was the ideal place for putting all these plans into action in order to prepare the team for what was clearly going to be a difficult tournament for them.

On their first appearance at a World Cup final round, Croatia proved to be the big surprise. Nine of their first-choice players are engaged in the major European leagues (England, Italy, Germany and Spain) and they brought a lot of experience into the national side. The usual attributes that players from this part of the world demonstrate (individual skills, unpredictability) were backed up by teamwork and solidarity, as well as fierce pride and a desire to do well in the name of their young country.

The Dutch were among the most attractive teams in this competition. With the exception of their opening

game against Belgium they played the kind of attacking football that makes people everywhere want to watch them. The internal squabbling that had earlier centred around Edgar Davids (who proved to be one of the key figures in their success) was no longer a problem. The philosophy that has guided most of Dutch football at club and national level, as well as in all age categories, for some 25 years – technically skilled attacking play – was this team's policy too. Bad luck in penalty shooting against Brazil prevented the «Oranjes» from being even more successful.

Italy's performances in the group games did not augur well for the later stages of the competition. They depended too heavily on their excellent tactical disposition, their good organisation and the scoring ability of Christian Vieri (5 goals). Del Piero had recovered from his injury but it was clear that he was behind in his training programme. By contrast, Roberto Baggio proved to be more than just an alternative to the Champions' League finalist and next to Vieri was the one who provided most impulses in the Italian attack.

The high average age of the German side had been a topic for media discussion both at home and abroad. But it was not only the moderate temperatures that were responsible for them earning a safe place in the second round. Then, beginning against Mexico in the round of the last 16, they were forced to recognise that the opposition had made progress in both physical and tactical terms. In the quarterfinal, the strong counter-attacking Croatians took their revenge for a defeat by Germany in EURO 96. They inflicted a heavy defeat on Bertie Vogts' men, and



the justified expulsion of Worms after 40 minutes was not the only reason for the decisive outcome of this match.

As at EURO 92, Denmark provided a big surprise. While not too convincing in their group games, the Laudrup brothers motivated the team, first against Nigeria and then against Brazil, to perform at their highest level. While they just lost to the South Americans, they showed some technically refined football and provided moments of total surprise for their opponents. Under their Swedish coach Johansson and taking part in their first World Cup since 1986 they were responsible for some of the most positive moments of the tournament.

England confirmed the progress they have made under Glenn Hoddle, with their excellent organisation, strong individual players and a good mixture of experience and young talent (Owen). But a lack of control at decisive moments (Beckham's red card) and bad luck in the penalty battle against Argentina saw them eliminated earlier than they deserved.

Yugoslavia, Romania and Norway performed pretty much in accordance with expectations. The Yugoslavs under the guidance of coach Santrac showed both their best and their worst against Germany; playing confidently, with technical elegance and good team harmony they took a 2-0 lead, then they became anxious and full of nerves, allowing the opponents to pull back first one and then another goal. Then in the second round against Holland they lacked all their previous confidence and had little to offer, even though the goal that put them out came very late in the game. Romania came unscathed through the group games, and

perhaps it all had been a bit too easy, for when they ran into Croatia in the second round their concentration was not as sharp as it should have been. A penalty just before the end of the first half proved to be the decider. Norway confirmed their status as Brazil's bogey team by beating them in the final match of Group A, a repeat of their success in 1997, although it must be said that the Brazilians at that stage were assured of qualification. Then the superbly organised Italians proved to be too much for them. After Vieri scored early on the Scandinavians were unable to react strongly enough to alter the outcome of the match.

Of the Europeans, Spain turned out to be the big disappointment. Defeat in their opening match against Nigeria proved in retrospect to have been a decisive step on the road to early elimination. Surprisingly they failed to hold on when they were twice ahead, and it was indi-

vidual errors that finally cost them this game. After that they were not able to turn their fate around, achieving only a 0-0 against Paraguay, which meant that the sweeping 6-1 win against a disheartened Bulgarian team was of no avail.

A win in their final match against a collectively battling Korean side would have earned the Belgians a place in the last sixteen, but a lack of concentration in front of goal saw the game end 1-1, and with it their last hopes. Austria found themselves in the position of being on the verge of upsetting Italy and with a bit more spirit of adventure on their part might have achieved it. Before then they had pushed their luck to the limit, earning equalisers against Cameroon (91st minute) and Chile (92nd) almost as the referee was about to call time. The whole Scottish contingent proved an attraction for the tournament, with the team's fair play and their fantastic sup-

porters behind them all the way, but even this time round they could not conquer the jinx that always sends them home after the group games. Finally the Bulgarians: they performed disappointingly due to dissent within the delegation and a lack of form on the part of their key players – what a difference from their rousing efforts of 1994.

### South America's confirmation

It was expected that defending champions Brazil would at least reach the final once again. With a squad of players of their quality it would be difficult for them to be seen as anything other than favourites – a role they

**Colombia captured in a free-fall (Preciado [21] seen here in the match against England). The South Americans gave disappointing displays and never once seemed capable of qualifying for the second round.**







would have to live with. And Zagallo's men were up to the challenge right through to the final, but there they met a rampant French team and appeared surprisingly uncertain and uninspired themselves. The exact causes of this weak performance will probably never be known. Rumours that Ronaldo was unwell or injured may well have some substance behind them, but that a team of this class would be so affected by such an event is hard to imagine.

While Argentina's performance cannot be rated as disappointing, it did not fulfil the hopes of the many fans who travelled to France with them. Their opponents from the 1978 final, Holland, proved to be their departure

point in the quarterfinals, and to get that far they had made heavy demands on their quota of luck in going all the way against England in the match before and won only on penalties. In Ayala, Veron, Ortega, and also Gallardo, not to mention top scorer Batistuta, they had exceptionally talented players in the side who put their skills at the disposal of the team. Nonetheless they did not manage to make France 98 the big success which they hoped would make up for their unhappy showing in 1994.

Having last appeared in Spain in 1982, Chile were back again at the World Cup and hoped that they would qualify for the second round for the first time since 1962, when they had been the

host country. The manner in which they achieved this was perhaps lucky, but their place among the last 16 was fully deserved. After being undefeated in their group games (3 draws), the team and their officials were convinced that they could bring off a surprise against Brazil. But lapses of concentration in defence led to the Brazilians going ahead in the first half, and after that Chile never got back on terms. In Zamorano and Salas they had one of the most effective striking partnerships in the competition. Four goals (Salas) and two assists (Zamorano) testify to the good cooperation between these two players.

Among the personalities present in France was

**The German player, Oliver Bierhoff, tussling with the Americans, Dooley (5), Regis (6) and Pope. Transferred to AC Milan before the start of the World Cup and, with three goals to his credit, he proved to be his team's best goal scorer alongside Klinsmann.**

certainly the Paraguayan goalkeeper Chilavert. It was largely due to him that the team achieved a place in the second round, a success which by no means looked a formality in view of their group opponents. He was a firm favourite with the crowds due to his own impeccable performances and also to the positive influence he exerted on his team-mates. Apart from his efforts, it was the tactics and team organisation adopted by the team's Brazilian coach Carpegiani that



proved their greatest strength. The 3:1 win over the more highly rated Nigerians in the last group game was the high point of their achievement, though they held their own against the emerging champions France in the next match, only losing in the 94th minute of extra time.

Colombia were the weakest of the five South American teams by a good margin. Their style of play had little in common with what is considered good modern practice and totally lacked changes of pace, moments of surprise and driving impulse. Little wonder then that against the two European teams in their group, England and Romania, they were without a chance, and that their only success was a lucky 1:0 win over Tunisia.

#### Were the African teams over-rated?

Optimists (or were they dreamers) saw 1998 as the year when Africa would celebrate its first World Cup champions. The five teams representing the continent came to France with correspondingly high hopes, but none of them managed to live up to this expectation. Various factors contributed to this poor showing (last-minute replacements of coaches and thus alterations of playing systems, administrative oversights, over-estimation of their own ability), and compared to 1994 the overall performance was a step backwards rather than forwards.

Despite their qualifying for the second round, Nigeria's showing has to be rated as a disappointment. Technically skilled down to the last man, their eleven players looked like a group of individuals rather than a team. On the

one hand they had a bit of luck and some superb individual moments, on the other they made some glaring tactical and individual mistakes; the balance was enough to get them into the second round, but no further. There the tactically well-prepared Danes showed that they too had some individual brilliance and they exposed the weaknesses in the Nigerian side. To make it worse, the Nigerian keeper had anything but a good day and contributed to his team's elimination.

Probably the best African team was Morocco. Only Norway's surprising win against Brazil cost them a place among the last 16. Coach Henri Michel had the disappointment of seeing his team win their last group game against Scotland and

seeming certain of going through, only to hear that the latest score of 1:1 between Brazil and Norway had become 1:2, and that the Scandinavians had thus edged them out of second place. The Moroccans were devastated by this and were consoled by the Scottish fans (what an advert for fair play, as mentioned above) as well as their own. Morocco played complete football, with players of the necessary

**Hard times for Spain: once again the Spaniards performed below their usual standards and as a result found themselves taking an early plane home. Pizzi (9, in combat with Gamarra) was fielded only once and that was for barely an hour in the match against Paraguay. Even he failed to come up to coach Clemente's expectations.**



quality in their team to do this, as well as being tactically well drilled and ready to fight for victory. They deserved more than this early elimination, but lost their chance by not getting more than just one point from the first two matches (against Norway and Brazil).

The Frenchman Claude Le Roy was hailed as a national hero in 1988 when he led Cameroon to victory in their continental championship. Similar success was expected from him when he took over the «Indomitable Lions» shortly before the World Cup started. In view of their strong group opponents (Austria, Chile and Italy), this team, the youngest in the competition with an average age of 24 years and 1 month, had no great expectations to live up to and a chance to gain valuable experience. In fact, they could have achieved more than the two creditable results against Chile and Austria. A lack of concentration (e.g. letting the Austrian equalize in stoppage time) cost them a place in the second round. But this was a promising side, playing fresh and attractive football. The most memorable moment was Njanka's opening goal against Austria when he ran with the ball half the length of the pitch, leaving opponents in his wake and giving the goalkeeper no chance of stopping him either.

For South Africa, their first-ever qualification for a World Cup final round was a signal for great celebration at home, only dampened a little by their defeat against Egypt in the final of the African Nations' Cup in Burkina Faso. Expectations remained high, even though they too replaced the coach just before the World Cup, appointing another Frenchman, Philippe Troussier, to the position. But



an African championship is different from the World Cup – a lesson they had to learn. With a bit more luck they might have progressed further, but their overall performance would not really have justified a place among the best 16.

Finally, Tunisia. They managed to salvage some honour with a 1:1 draw against group winners Romania, and the team, coached by Henry Kasperczak, certainly had some fine players in its ranks. But less than optimal physical condition and a lack of international experience (out of the entire squad only four were with foreign [= European] clubs), meant that they were not up to the overall level of their group opponents.

#### Asia still waiting for a surprise

At international level, Asian teams are still waiting for a breakthrough. Even with their quota raised to four teams, they were still a long way from earning a place in the second round. Japan and Iran looked the best of the four, with the co-organisers of the World Cup 2002 playing quick attractive football. But they still lack players up front who can take advantage of the many chances that they create. Out of all the promising situations they developed all but one came to nothing, and it's simple football logic that whatever else you may do well, if you don't score goals you won't win. What they did well was to play as a team, right up to the opponent's penalty area, and this was backed up by their good physical condition and strict discipline in following the coach's tactical plan to the letter. But in addition to their (almost) total inability to put the ball in the net, they were a bit

naive in defence and seemingly unable to change the pace of their game – it was top speed all the time. They too lacked the much-quoted but still vital element of international experience.

In this respect, Iran were a little better off; they had three players who are regularly in action in Germany – Ali Daei (now with Bayern Munich), Azizi (1 FC Cologne) and Bagheri (Arminia Bielefeld). A fourth, Pashadze, will be with Bayer Leverkusen for the coming season. Despite this, they also failed to make it through to the next round. In their case it was partly due to a lack of condition (especially noticeable in the last group game against Germany), and also to their defensive behaviour at certain moments (committing fouls near the penalty box and thus giving an opponent a dangerous free kick opportunity). Without these weaknesses they might have decided the prestige battle against the USA more clearly. But they were effective with their counter-attacks, and the majority of their players showed good technical skills.

Korea and Saudi Arabia did not rise above the status of also-rans. The Saudis, who had engaged the Brazilian World Cup-winning coach Carlos Alberto Parreira, hoped to be able to repeat their success of 1994, but failed for several reasons. Firstly, their lack of physical condition, then an unrealistic view of their capabilities, and finally that almost Asia-wide lack of international experience. In this case that comes as no surprise – players are not allowed to join foreign clubs. If they wish to come closer to the best teams in the world, then there will have to be some fundamental alterations in the structure of Saudi Arabian football.



Korea's first match against Mexico showed that their will to win can push them beyond the boundaries of acceptable play. Shortly after scoring the opening goal, Ha Seok Ju was sent off for a nasty foul. The subsequent 1:3 defeat was the beginning of the end of Korea's adventure. But to their credit they never gave up, even in the hopeless situation of being 0:5 down against Holland – they still fought for every ball. The point they won against Belgium was celebrated as if they had won the title, but all the same they (and all the other Asian

teams) will have to do a lot in the next four years if they are to make a better showing on home soil.

#### Mexico saves the day for CONCACAF

Mexico's dominance of the CONCACAF scene continues unchallenged. This time there was potentially more in it for them than the usual qualification for the second round. During the group games it was clear that this team, now coached by Manuel Lapuente, had made progress, above all in terms of tactics, but also





**Bad luck for Danish goalkeeper Schmeichel: just a split second sooner and he could have blocked the penalty from Djorkaeff in the match against France.**

in their physical ability. Add to that their expected technical skills and the result was a very attractive team. Strong European teams like Belgium and Holland were held in check in group games, and three-times World Cup winners Germany were in serious trouble at one stage during their second round match. Only a glaring weakness in front of goal in this match prevented Mexico from causing a major upset at this stage.

The «Reggae Boys» from Jamaica were a hit from the moment they arrived in France. Their colourful group of fans helped establish a

carnival atmosphere before each of their games, but this was not the only contribution they made to the tournament. Not by a long way. In every match they gave their best, even though that was not enough to trouble quality sides like Argentina and Croatia. But their victory over the more highly rated Japanese brought their campaign to a very creditable conclusion.

The USA team came to France with their ambitions raised, now that Major League Soccer is up and running in the States. They can put an unlucky draw down as one of the reasons for their early elimination – being in a group with Germany and Yugoslavia is not easy. But even so, their cramped performance against the reigning European champions (showing too much respect for a big name was certainly the problem here) was not a promising start. After that they were more relaxed against Iran and only bad luck in finishing prevented them from earning a point at least. Finally against Yugoslavia, they also could have achieved more than just an honourable defeat.

#### Variety for the spectators

The CFO went to some lengths to provide a varied programme of matches in each of the venues. In practice this meant that every team had to travel between their group matches, each one in a different city. The 32 delegations chose to locate themselves in one place, travelling to their next match a day in advance of a match and returning immediately afterwards.

This modus was regarded somewhat critically, especially by the coaches. Too much travel in between games would upset preparations, recuperation time, the daily rhythm, etc. – these were the arguments heard. But discussions held during the World Cup indicated that changing venues brought welcome variety, especially for the players. The feeling of being cooped up in a camp was avoided. Of course a plan of this kind makes heavy demands on the organisation of local transportation systems –

it all has to function, and it did just that, despite the Air France strike.

The long intervals between matches were welcomed by most of the coaches. Despite the travelling there was enough time for the players to relax, recover from minor injuries and concentrate their attention on the next game. Some officials thought that rest periods of up to seven days were too long for players to adjust to what would later be an intensive schedule. The modus for Japan/Korea 2002 is not yet known and details are eagerly awaited. Whether the teams will again be playing their group games in three different venues is also not known at this point.

#### Coaches fired during the tournament – a negative innovation for the World Cup

No fewer than three national associations dismissed their team's coach in the course of the tournament following a failure to perform up to expectation. Such turns of event may be regular occurrences in some continents and countries just before or during major competitions, but not at the World Cup. This trend needs to be studied, and it raises the question as to the level of respect that the coach's work deserves. Short term decisions such as replacing the coach during a competition indicate an unrealistic evaluation of a team's potential, plus a lack of knowledge and understanding, and in no way help in the continuous development of football. Characteristically it was those countries in greatest need of a continuous programme of development at all levels of the game that took steps of this kind.





Emmanuel Petit topped his magnificent display in the final against Brazil by scoring the third goal to clinch certain victory for the French hosts.

#### Joint winners of the Fair Play Trophy

England and France shared first place in the Fair Play rankings, with 828 points, just ahead of Norway (822) and Brazil (816). 250 yellow cards were shown by the referees and 22 red; of these four were the consequence of a second bookable offence in the same match.

Fines imposed by the Disciplinary Committee for these offences amounted to CHF 411,000, the money going towards continuing the Fair Play campaign.

#### Suker, Ronaldo, Ayala, Barthez, France

Davor Suker was the top goal-scorer with six successes, followed by Gabriel Batistuta and Christian Vieri with 5 each. The journalists present

voted Ronaldo as the best player of the tournament (Golden Ball), with Suker and Lilian Thuram next in line. Celso Ayala (Paraguay) scored the fastest goal of the competition (against Nigeria), exactly 45 seconds after the kick-off and he received a special award. Fabien Barthez won the Lew Yashin Trophy as the best goalkeeper. France was not only in the opinion of the media representatives the most attractive tournament team and thus won the FIFA Entertainment Award.

#### Attacking football

France 98 offered attacking football in every sense. Even the so-called outsiders came on the pitch ready to go for goals and not simply prevent them. This is to the credit of their coaches who contri-

buted in this way to making the tournament a more attractive event. The players were happy to put their coach's intentions into practice – their delight in going forward was clear to see. Only in this way was it possible to play such entertaining football for a whole month.

Davor Suker (Croatia, 9) and Lothar Matthäus (Germany, 8): a direct confrontation between two outstanding personalities on the pitch.





## OVERALL ANALYSIS



In 1994, Rasheed Yekini (Nigeria), was the first ever Nigerian player to score for his national team at a World Cup. Four years later he made only the odd appearance as a substitute but this did not deter him from some brilliant acrobatic displays (such as here against Spain).

The match between the outsiders in group H ended in victory for Jamaica by the skin of their teeth against Japan: Lowe (17) locked in battle with Nakayama, the only goal scorer from Japan in this tournament.





# Technical-/tactical analysis

As was to be expected there was nothing very new and certainly nothing revolutionary on the tactical level at France 98. What was new was having 32 teams instead of the previous 24. Beneficiaries of this increase were above all Africa (5 teams now, instead of 3) and South America (also 5, including the reigning world champions). Concacaf's allocation went up from two to three, Asia's from two to four, and Europe's from 13 to 15 (including the host country). Africa's performance failed to deliver the expected improvement, while the other continents' results were within the expected range.

## More uniformity on the tactical level

The international football scene continues to show convergence. Most of the teams in France had players in their squad who were under contract with clubs in one of the top leagues in Europe or South America (England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France in Europe; Argentina and Brazil in South America). While the number of players with this experience varied from team to team, the effect was that the playing systems and tactics used in these leagues carried over to the 32 finalist teams. Another fact that led to even greater similarity between teams' tactics was that all except five countries had

European or South American head coaches. And nowadays in many countries clubs are coached by trainers who have either worked in the leagues mentioned above or are in fact natives of those countries.

## All-round ability – the hallmark of the player of the future

The demands made of top players today are always increasing. Discussions with coaches and observation of

matches and training sessions showed that more and more emphasis is being placed on versatility. A player must be able to attack as well as defend; in cases of need he must be ready to understand or even play in different positions. There is still room for the out-and-out specialist who does one job well and is not assigned any other duties (e.g. Suker, Vieri, Ronaldo), but he must keep on doing that job so well that the coach cannot do without him. If his performances drop off then a more

versatile player will soon be in the team in his place. The victorious French coach Aimé Jacquet stated on a number of occasions that the versatility of a player was at least an equal factor in his mind when he was selecting his squad. And France in particular had to contend with a

Korea's goalkeeper, Kim Byung Ji, clashing with his Belgian counterpart Vande Walle: the workload of a modern-day goalie becomes more and more diversified. In some situations, it is now the order of the day for a goalkeeper to foray into the opponents' penalty area.





number of absences during the tournament – without the versatility of the players still available they would not have been able to compensate anywhere near as well as they did.

### The special importance of the central axis

In all the most successful teams, the central axis – goalkeeper, defensive organizer, central defensive and offensive midfielders and the striker – was made up of outstanding players. A look at the French team illustrates this. In goal they had Fabien Barthez, the best keeper of them all. In defence, Desailly was clearly the leading figure, and in front of him captain Deschamps was an unobtrusive but immensely valuable defensive midfielder. Their attacking midfielder was Zidane and practically every move went through him. Only up front did they have problems, where Guivarc'h and Dugary were suffering from the effects of injury and did not reach the expected form. Brazil too had a clear leader in each area, with Taffarel as a safe figure in goal (penalty shooting), Dunga in defence and in defensive midfield, Rivaldo as the offensive midfielder and Ronaldo up front.

### High tempo – no pressing

Due to intensive pace of most of the games, no team was in a position to apply permanent pressing tactics over the whole pitch. Determined forechecking would be applied if, towards the end of match, a team had to get a goal either to get points, or, later on, to stay in the competition.

The overall level of physical condition seemed to be

even better than in the USA 94. The more moderate temperatures, especially at the beginning of the tournament, will have helped in this respect. Differences between teams first became noticeable towards the end of the group games, when the weaker ones could not keep up the required pace as well as those who were more used to it. Motivation might have played a role in this, since teams who lost their first two games were very likely to be on their way home no matter how well they did in the third. The longer breaks between group games were welcomed all round, but they were necessary too in view of the fact that all the teams had to travel between matches and thus lost at least a day.

### More play down the wings

While play down the wings made a comeback as an attacking strategy, there was no renaissance of what could be called the typical winger. Roberto Carlos, Cafu, Lizarazu and Thuram certainly have all the skills that would be needed in this position (speed and the ability to provide a variety of types of centre), but they were not employed as purely attacking players; they also had defensive roles to fulfil. Using players in this double role puts a heavy demand on their fitness and also carries an element of risk, since a counter-attacking team will be waiting eagerly for an attack to go wrong so that they can take advantage of the hole left at the back.

Of all the teams present, only Holland, Nigeria, France and Mexico (partly) used real wingers in their system. Otherwise hardly any team operated with three strikers.



### Different playing systems – flexible interpretations

No coach brought a team to this World Cup with a new playing system. The familiar 3-5-2, 4-3-3, 4-4-2 etc. were all on view. But interpretation of these systems has become more flexible. The more successful teams were able to adapt whatever system they were using according to the state of the game. A 4-3-3 would become a 3-4-3, or a 4-4-2 would change to a 4-5-1, etc. This switching around needs excellent preparation, an instinct for the right moment to implement the changeover and the self-con-

fidence to make it work. Holland for example played on the defensive with a 4-man block, but when they got possession one of the outer backs would move into midfield to support an attack, and similar flexibility was seen in most of the best teams. Thus it was not so important which system a team used, but how it was interpreted. Players must (and will) be trained by their coaches to make decisions themselves and to accept the responsibility involved. The coach's interpreter on the field (e.g. Dunga for Brazil, Matthäus for Germany, De Boer for Holland or Boban for Croatia)





is the kind of player that is becoming increasingly important.

#### A look at the individual team blocks

The main defensive formations were a three or four-man in-line chain or a libero with two man-markers. Which system will be the one for the future cannot be discerned definitely at the moment. The two finalists both used a four-man chain, and three of the four semi-finalists. But there were different variations from this formation, such as the ad-

Having conceded only two goals in seven matches, France's defence was the best of the tournament. One of the prime architects of this defence was Marcel Desailly (8), the full-time organizer and conductor of his team's defensive tactics. He is pictured here in aerial action against the Dane, Rieper.

vancing of a wing back into midfield when the team was in possession. In the case of four-man blocks, the central defenders would alternate between going forward and covering at the back. The three-man chain seems to have gained popularity since 1994. Teams using a libero with two man-markers had

the free player only slightly deep of the other two or even in line with the two stoppers.

#### In the central defensive zone the following systems were observed:

The square system, with two central defenders and two central midfielders (e.g. France, England and Spain).

The diamond, with one libero behind and another in front of the two man-markers (e.g. Germany, Japan and Korea).

The triangle, with two central defenders and one defensive midfielder (anchor man) (e.g. Brazil, Mexico, Argentina).

In terms of technical skills, defenders showed an improvement. This is related to the sharpening up of sanctions against wild tackling, but is also a consequence of the fact that a modern team cannot afford to have players who can only perform defensive duties. Defenders today must still have all the ability to stop opponents that has always been part of the job, but in addition now have to be able to read the game well, deliver accurate passes and join in when the team is attacking. In this respect, clear differences were noted between the best and the rest of the teams.

The offside trap as a tactical manoeuvre was hardly used at all. Defences were more geared towards attacking than before, and when they went forward it was to make space tight for the opponent, especially in the middle of the field. On the flanks this forward urge created counter-attacking chances for the other team when wing backs advanced and were caught out of position.

#### Midfield

In modern football, midfield is divided into two sections. One has the task of strengthening the defence by supporting at the back and by trying to stamp out an opposing attack in its early stages. This is done by making space tight in midfield and attempting to stop, or at least hinder, an attacking move within 10 to 20 meters of the halfway line. These are the players who dictate the moment and pace of the switch-over from defence to attack. The range of skills they need is considerable; good reading of the game (anticipation), positional sense, good tackling, and the ability to play accurate decisive passes. Good examples of players in this mould are Desailly and Frank De Boer (both capable of operating either as a central defender or as a defensive midfielder), Deschamps, Dunga, and also Cesar Sampaio, Almeyda and Ince.

The offensive midfielder acts as the link man between midfield and attack and his is a vital role. He takes advantage of space created by the strikers, with the aim of going for goal himself (e.g. Rivaldo for Brazil or Zidane for France), or playing a one-two or a triangle combination with the strikers to get one of them clear (e.g. Ortega for Batistuta in the Argentina side).

The flank midfielders were also of major importance, since they not only had to combine with their advancing wing backs but also to cover for them as they went further forward.

Never before have midfielders obtained such a high percentage of the goals scored (59 or 34.5%, compared with 24.8% in the USA in 1994). Interestingly, it was not just the offensive mid-





fielders who were successful (e.g. Zidane, Ortega, Rivaldo) but also those more concerned with defence. Cesar Sampaio (Brazil) scored three goals, Holland's Ronald de Boer two, Prosinecki (Croatia) and Petit (France) also two. More proof of the all-round talent of the modern player.

Of course, both of these midfield blocks work together and merge automatically when required. Forwards help out in defence too as the situation demands. The offensive midfield is the first line of defence. On the other hand, the defensive midfield are involved in attacks and offer support up front. More all round talent is required. There is no escape from the fact that the player of today and even more of the future will have to be able to attack as well as defend.

### Attack

The most frequently observed attacking variations were:

a) The steady build-up from the back, with short or long passing combinations. Accurate diagonal passes generally caused trouble, and the Brazilians and the Dutch were outstanding in this respect, scoring a number of times after such actions. A diagonal pass put a whole defence off balance. But another favoured way through was the deep pass from midfield, particularly if a team had speedy forwards ready to outpace their markers.

b) The quick long pass right through to the strikers. For example, most of Morocco's and Croatia's goals came in this way. This needs a good eye for the opening, the ability to pinpoint the

long pass and of course the striker up front, who is quick enough and tricky enough to get past the last defender and put the ball away.

As mentioned earlier, few teams used real wingers. Their functions were largely carried out by advancing defenders or midfielders. Only Overmars for Holland, Diomedede or Henry for France, Finidi for Nigeria and the Mexican Blanco could really be described as wingers. Most of the teams had two strikers in their line-up, but their duties were very varied. In some teams both strikers would aim at getting into scoring positions themselves and take advantage of opportunities created by their midfielders or outer backs. In this category we can include Bierhoff/Klinsmann (Germany), Ronaldo/Bebeto (Brazil), Bergkamp/Kluivert (Holland). In other teams only one of

With five goals to his credit, Christian Vieri (ITA, 21) shared the championship's second best goal-scoring honours with Batistuta from Argentina. It was largely thanks to him that the Italians began to believe in an equally successful outcome for the team as that in 1994.

the forwards was an out-and-out finisher, his partner a creator of free spaces, passes and chances. This was the set-up for Chile (with Salas and Zamorano), Italy (with Vieri and Del Piero or Roberto Baggio) or Croatia (with Suker and Vlaovic or Jurcic). One thing became clear at France 98; today's striker must be able to dribble, to make chances for others and also to take them himself. The position of striker remains in a special category; if a player can display the qualities just mentioned he does not have to defend. If the goals keep coming, everyone will be satisfied.





### The goalkeeper's job is not an easy one

Despite there being some real personalities among the keepers, like Barthez or Chilavert, the general standard in this position was no better than in the USA in 1994. The changes in the rules that have been made in the last few years have certainly had an effect on goalkeeping, despite the fact that now practically every delegation, as well as most clubs, have a specialised trainer just for their goalkeepers. But observations during training sessions showed that having such a specialist goalkeeper trainer in the delegation was not always a guarantee of top quality training sessions.

Naturally there were many examples of positive effects of specialised goalkeeper training. For example, Taffarel often played out of goal in certain training exercises to polish up his ability to come out of his box. Only when there were specific routines for goalkeeper training would he return to his normal position. Both France and England had former national team goalkeepers as specialist coaches (Bergeroo and Clemence), and their training schemes were efficient, varied and game-oriented.

### Playmakers / Personalities

The trend in this respect that has been seen in international competitions in recent

years continues. The typical playmaker, who organises and directs his team's strategy, who pulls the strings in every attack and also helps out in defence, is a figure of the past. The range of activities he would have to perform is now too great for one player to cope with. Also the pace of the game today would make such a role impossible.

In modern football, the aim is to make every player take on responsibility. In mid-field for example there are now defensive and offensive organisers. Each is the boss in his own zone, but expects his colleagues to share responsibility. The ability to read a game is now a skill that every player involved in top level football must have or at least develop.

But still there were some outstanding personalities in France. The Technical Study Group saw two different categories here, the «human» and the «tactical» leaders:

The tactical leader is the one who sees to it that the coach's instructions are put into effect on the field. Players in this category would be (for example) Hagi, Klinsmann or Zidane.

In the other group, there seemed to be more players who dominated in terms of human leadership qualities

**After being suspended from two matches (expulsion in the match against Belgium), the Dutchman, Kluyvert (9) soon rediscovered his old touch, scoring two crucial goals for his team (1-0 against Argentina in the quarter finals and (pictured here) the equaliser for 1-1 against Brazil).**







than ever before. Players like Dunga, Chilavert, Matthäus, Frank de Boer or Deschamps (to mention just a few) demonstrated the ability to motivate, criticize, encourage and spur on their team mates. They enjoyed a special status within their teams.

#### Youth coming through

Encouragingly for the future of the game, a number of coaches chose young players for their squads and also played them in matches. Glenn Hoddle for example promoted Michael Owen to his starting line-up from the third game onwards, and the young man justified this con-

fidence by scoring two goals (the solo against Argentina being one of the most memorable moments of the tournament). Aimé Jacquet used his not yet 20 year-old protégés Henry and Trezeguet as much more than jokers. And then there was the 20 year-old Benedict McCarthy of South Africa, celebrated already as a star back home and transferred last year to Ajax Amsterdam in Holland. He is already a key player in the national team, and coach Troussier used him from the start in all their matches. All these young players were in their country's youth teams at the WYC in Malaysia in 1997. Cameroon has always been known for its youthful national teams and again

this time the west Africans were by far the youngest squad.

#### The difference between winning and losing

Most of the 32 teams were so close in the standard of their football that in many cases only tiny details decided who would win and who would lose a game. Collective play and thinking was the guideline for most of the teams, with individual efforts in the background. And oddly enough, for this very reason, it was often an individual touch of brilliance – from Ronaldo or Zidane, a cool head in a critical moment from Suker, or a stroke

The scene in the round of sixteen which led to the award of a penalty for Argentina against England: goalkeeper Seaman lunges at Simeone (no. 8), who tumbles to the ground.

of genius, say from Bergkamp, that decided a match. The right moment for playing a decisive pass is still a vital factor. Holland had this skill down to a fine art; often a matter of millimetres kept the ball away from an attempted intervention and steered it to its intended destination. Another factor that could tip a finely balanced match was the coach's tactical decisions. For example, in the Austria-Chile match, the Austrian



coach sent on Vastic as a substitute and he scored the equalizer for 1:1 in stoppage time. Mexico's coach Lapuente also seemed to have a magic touch with his substitutions: sending on his joker Pelaez against Korea was a masterstroke; it was this player who scored the goal that made it 1:1 and which signalled the turn of the match. It was the same substitute who also got the valuable goal against Holland to pull the score back to 1:2.

Quick and efficient counter-attacks also brought success in a number of instances. Croatia were the masters of this style of play. Not only was it this 'hedgehog' tactic that earned them victory in the play-off for third place against Holland, but it had also brought them success earlier against Germany. Coach Blazevic was fortunate in having talented counter-attackers like Asanovic, Jami and Boban in his side, and his tactics made excellent use of their ability.

### Statistics

There were 171 goals in all, which averages out to 2.69 per game, almost identical to the USA figure of 2.71. The contribution made by goals from set pieces was 62, slightly higher (36.3% compared to 32.6% in the USA). Considerably more goals came after corners than last time, 21 (or 33.9%) in France against 7 (15.2%). This can be traced back to some refined corner strategies as well as to some poor defensive organization. During corners it was noticeable that hardly any team had two players on the goal-line (one at the near post, one at the far) – one of the few exceptions to this being Croatia. The figures for free kick goals show a less dramatic change,

16 (25.8%) against 8 (17.4%) in the USA. Of the 18 penalties awarded, 17 were converted, only Mijatovic failing in this respect by hitting the bar.

Headed goals were not all that abundant at France 98. There were 31 in all (18.1%), a marginal improvement over the USA with 25 (17.7%).

As mentioned earlier, midfielders had a good tournament in terms of goals. They accounted for 59 goals (34.5%, versus 24.8% in 1994). Forwards continued to dominate the scoring with 93 successes (54.4%) but this was down from the USA (94, or 66.7%). The number of goals scored at the wrong end remained about the same; there were 4 this time (all in group matches).

As in the USA three matches went to the penalty-shooting stage (Argentina – England, France – Italy and Brazil – Holland). One match was decided by a Golden Goal – Laurent Blanc having the honour for France against Paraguay.

The importance of scoring the first goal was not as marked in France as it had been in the USA. In the 59 matches that did not end goal-less (including the Golden Goal encounter), only 38 times did the team that scored first go on to win

**Zinedine Zidane (France, 10) was one of the most sparkling players in this World Cup. With two goals to his name in the final against Brazil, he was largely responsible for clinching the championship title for his team.**



the match (in the USA it was 36 times out of 52 matches). 15 others ended in a draw (USA 8) and in the remaining six it was the other team that won (USA 5). In this respect, Mexico were superb at coming from behind; finding themselves one or two goals down in each of their group games, they came back each time and were undefeated (victory over Korea, draws against Belgium and Holland). Nigeria too were twice trailing against Spain and yet emerged 3:2 winners in a close match.

On ten occasions goals were scored by full teams playing against ten men, and five in matches in which both teams were a man down. Two games were won by a team with fewer players left on the field and five by a team of 11 playing against 10.

27 goals (16%) were the result of quick counter-attacking raids, clearly above the 1994 figure, when only 15 (11%) of the 141 goals came in this way.

The area between the goal area and the penalty spot is still the most fruitful for scoring goals, with 64 (37.4%) coming from this region. Within the goal area itself, far more successes were registered this time (41, or 24.0%) than four years ago (20, 14.3%). The reasons for this could be that strikers, or advancing players from the back, get through more often, that defenders do not offer enough protection to their goalkeepers or possibly that referees are less strict in stopping play for challenges within this region. Goals from a longer range (outside the penalty area) were not all that frequent, there being just 20 of them (11.7%) compared to the USA figure of 27 (19.1%).

As for the timing of goals, 45 were scored within the last fifteen minutes of regular





playing time. This points to good condition and the ability to take risks on the one hand, but also to a lack of concentration on the part of the defending team. Austria managed to get late goals in every one of their three matches, two of them being equalizers. The most barren period for scoring goals was between the 16th and the 30th minutes, at which stage each team had taken the measure of the other and were not prepared to run any risks.

On a number of occasions, coaches demonstrated a lucky touch in sending on substitutes. Aimé Jacquet brought on Dugary during France's first match against South Africa, having to replace the injured Guivarc'h. Just six minutes later the fresh player scored the important first goal. Austria's coach Prohaska had a similar experience against Chile, sending on Vastic 20 minutes before

the end, his decision was proved right when this player scored a splendid equalizer. And Mexico's «super sub», Pelaez, showed his gratitude for being sent on two occasions, needing just 5 minutes on the pitch to obtain an equalizer against Korea and a little bit longer (20 minutes) to pull one back against Holland.

#### Positive evaluations for the referees

The Referees' Committee evaluated the performance of the match officials very highly on the whole. In comparison to 1994 an improvement was noticeable, in particular among the assistant referees. There was general agreement that the basis for the appointment of referees needs to be reviewed. Looking at some specific instances, the banning of tackles from behind worked very well, but what needs to be improved is the punishment of shirt-pulling. On countless occasions this type of foul was noticed, without the referee doing anything about it.

Brazil's captain, Dunga, tried every trick in the book to ward off defeat in the final against France. His disappointment was all the more bitter when, on 12 July 1998, he realised that his perseverance had been in vain.

Mexico's goalkeeper, Jorge Campos, defended his goal immaculately up to the 74th minute in the second round game against Germany. Only then did he and his team crumble under pressure from the favourites. Here he is clearing the ball away from the top German goal scorer, Bierhoff.









Two players who were awarded the highest honours: Ronaldo (Brazil, pictured below) voted the best player of the championship (Golden Ball) and Davor Suker (Croatia) the top goal scorer (six goals, Golden Shoe).





# Unfulfilled hopes

After 17 days and 48 matches, the wheat had been separated from the chaff. The new modus with 32 teams separated into eight groups made the cut-off very clear – only the first two teams in each group went through. All the calculations and speculations of the old system, when there were 24 teams divided into six groups, and the four best third-placed teams qualifying along with the top two, were made redundant.

For group A, Alfred Hitchcock himself could not have written a better script for the last round of matches. Morocco were leading Scotland 3:0 fifteen minutes before the end, and with the Scots already having lost twice and with little left to play for there seemed to be no obstacle in the way of the Africans' qualifying for the last sixteen, for the second time since 1986. Their hopes were based on Brazil's 1:0 lead over Norway at the same moment in Marseille. When the whistle blew the Moroccans all embraced each other with smiles of joy, but these quickly turned to tears of sorrow when their coach, the Frenchman Henri Michel, had to tell them that Norway had managed to turn the game and had won 2:1, snatching qualification away from the Africans at the last second. Brazil themselves remained unchallenged at the top of the group despite the defeat, and Scotland were at the bottom, having failed to get further than the group games even at the eighth time of trying.



Italy's passage into the next round was more of a problem than the bare results would suggest. Only against Cameroon, who played much of the match with 10 men, did they put on a convincing performance, winning this encounter 3:0. Otherwise they had to work hard for their points. Against Chile (2:2) it needed a Roberto Baggio penalty late in the second half to get them back on equal terms, and against Austria the 1994 finalists looked uncertain. Austria had the chance here to do more than go down to an honourable defeat, but when they did score (Herzog via a penalty very late in the game) there was not enough time left for them to do any more

and it remained 1:2 until the whistle. This opened the door for Chile, taking part in a World Cup final round for the first time since 1982. A 1:1 against Cameroon was sufficient to see them undefeated (three draws) on their way into the last 16. Cameroon themselves had failed to take advantage of their superiority over Austria and put the game beyond doubt, allowing the Europeans to equalize seconds before the end.

France came through the group games with maximum points (only Argentina matched them in this respect) and a goal line of 9:1. This was a bit of surprise, since the French had to compensate

for the handicap of a lot of injuries, especially in attack. But early on it was clear that the real battle in this group would only be for second place, top spot being taken. Even Denmark, who finally finished second, had to wait until the last game to be mathematically certain of qualifying. South Africa still had a theoretical chance at that stage of staying in the competition, but things would have had to go very much their way. As it happened they did not, and a draw in a disappointing last match against Saudi Arabia (three of the four goals here coming from penalties) saw the team on an early flight back to Africa.









The failure of Spain to come through in Group D was one of the bigger surprises of the tournament. While there was no argument about this being a strong group, with Nigeria, Paraguay and Bulgaria making up the four, the European team were reckoned strong enough to earn one of the two top places. However, individual mistakes in the opening match against Nigeria saw them give away the lead on two occasions, and finally they went down – a defeat that few would have predicted. Then a draw against Paraguay and a runaway victory over Bulgaria gave them four points, but this was not enough to make up for that poor start, because Paraguay overcame the already-qualified Nigeria with a 3:1 win in their last game. Bulgaria were the real disappointment here and bore no resemblance to the semifinalists of 1994.

With only one point to their credit (from a 0:0 against Paraguay), and also only one goal on the positive side of the scoresheet they went out with hardly a murmur. Nigeria's two opening wins meant that their place among the last 16 was secured early on, but against Spain in particular their success was a long time coming, and after failing to look convincing for much of the game the 3:2 win has to be described as a bit lucky. In the next two matches they seemed content to do what was necessary and little more.

Three teams in Group E ended up undefeated, and so there were a number of possible permutations before the final matches started. A draw would have been enough for Mexico and Holland, as long as Belgium did not beat the already-eliminated Koreans by a margin of more than three goals. With Mexico two down at half time and Belgium one up, things were still wide



open, but just as they had done in earlier games, the Mexicans pulled level. So did the hardworking Koreans, celebrating their goal in a manner that would have befitted winning the World Cup itself, and so in the end the teams that had been most favoured before this final round of games were actually the one who went on.

While Germany and Yugoslavia were seen as the clear favourites in Group F, and indeed took the top two places, the gap between them and Iran and the USA at the bottom was not as wide as the table might suggest, and Iran's chances of qualifying were intact until the very last game. Their match against the USA showed that sport and politics can be separated. Played on the very day designated as FIFA Fair Play Day (21 June 1998) this was an engaging duel, with the

Iranians' intelligent countering tactics earning them victory. Germany won the group ahead of Yugoslavia on the ground of their superior goal difference, and so they avoided an early meeting with Holland in the next round.

The course of Group G ran much according to prediction, with Romania and England proving too strong for the outsiders from Colombia and Tunisia. The South Americans seem to have reached a plateau in their development and nearly every move went through midfielder Valderrama, who will soon be 37. Thus there was little in their play in the way of a surprise element, and their actions were all too stereotyped. Tunisia managed to emerge with some honour by earning a draw against Romania, but at this stage the Romanians were already certain of winning the group. England made a sound

impression in all three games, losing only to the East Europeans by the narrow margin of 1:2. This defeat cost them the number one place in the group and set them up for a confrontation with Argentina in the next round.

And this would be against an Argentina that had comfortably won all three matches, like the French. They beat the other three teams in the group, Croatia, Jamaica and Japan – all World Cup debutantes – without conceding a single goal. But there was only one team in it for second place too. Croatia were clearly too strong for the two Js, and there was never a chance that either of these would cause an upset. Finally the Reggae Boys beat the Asians, with Japan not being effective enough in front of goal to turn their superiority over the rest of the pitch into tangible rewards.

The following is an analysis of the 16 teams that did not make it into the second round, dealing with each confederation in turn.



# Africa



**A**frica wanted to prove that the successes they have achieved in FIFA competitions for the younger age groups are beginning to have an effect at the highest international level. Hopes were high, but reality showed that the African teams, many of them with a number of players under contract to European clubs, still lag behind the established names of world football in terms of tactical maturity and team compactness. For some of them qualification for the second round at least seemed a strong possibility. The following analysis will try to explain why they did not do quite as well as expected, although some of them only just failed to achieve their ambition.

## Morocco

Final ranking: 18<sup>th</sup> place  
Coach: Henri Michel, France



From left, back row: El Khalej, Hadda, Amzine, Chippo, Naybet, Benzekri; front row: Hadji, Triki, Saber, Bassir, Abrami

This was the fourth time that Morocco had qualified for a World Cup, following 1970, 1986 and 1994. Only once had they managed to get as far as the second round; that was in Mexico in 1986. To repeat this achievement was the aim of their French coach Henri Michel, who had been in charge of

the team since August 1995. But it would not be easy with reigning champions Brazil, Scotland and Norway in the same group.

They had three training camps in preparation for France, starting in the middle of May. Two of these were in Morocco (Ifrane and Casablanca, the latter including

a four-team tournament with France, Belgium and England also taking part), the third was in France. Out of the final 22 selected, 16 were players who earn their wages abroad, and of the home-based players only one, the goalkeeper, was in the regular starting line-up.

Morocco used a classic 4-4-2 system. The defensive block played in line, applied zone-marking tactics, but did not make use of the offside trap. The first-choice back four were El Hadrioui (left) and Saber on the flanks, Rossi and the defensive leader Naybet in the middle. Rossi and El Hadrioui were replaced by Triki and Abrami for the last group game. The most effective attacking help was provided by Saber who penetrated down the right wing. In midfield, El Khalej played just in front of the defence, Chiba on the right (he was more offensive, but following two bookings he missed the last game and was replaced by Amzine) and Chippo on the left, the latter taking on more defensive duties. The fourth midfielder, Hadji was not expected to do any defending, his task being to operate just behind the two strikers Bassir and Hadda. Between them, these three scored all five of the team's goals.

The Moroccan team had been excellently drilled by Michel in terms of tactics, and they played to his plan both in defence and in attack. But Michel also wanted them to play attractive football and

he succeeded in this aim too. The way the team delivered surprising long through passes up to the speedy forwards was both effective and interesting to watch. Almost all the goals were created in this manner. The skills the players displayed (dribbling, passing, heading, shooting) were of the highest quality in many cases – little wonder that most of them have been snapped up by clubs abroad. The most outstanding of them all were El Khalej with his accurate and well-timed passes, the spectacular Hadji with his wonderful dribbling, and the two strikers Bassir (often lying deep and then surging forward) and Hadda (a classical and untiring goalmouth worker).

They were an attractive team, disciplined, aggressive but in a controlled fashion, and always thinking about attack. Defence, midfield and the forward line combined well together. They had outstanding individual players but these put their talents at the disposal of the team. Among the weak points were the goalkeeper's lack of dominance in the area (although he was good on the line) and some inadequate defensive covering at times.

A qualification for the second round would have been a just reward for their efforts, and only a few minutes separated them from this success. As it is they can hold their heads high and look back on France 98 with pride.



## South Africa

Final ranking: 24<sup>th</sup> place

Coach: Philippe Troussier (France)



From left, back row: McCarthy, Fish, Issa, Bartlett, Vonk, Radebe; front row: Moshoeu, Augustine, Fortune, Mkhalele, Nyathi

South Africa's emergence has been rapid – African champions in 1996 and qualification for the World Cup two years later. They had an intermediate opportunity to test their current form at the African Nations' Cup (CAN) in Burkina Faso in January, and their hopes were given a boost when they reached the final again (but lost it this time – to Egypt, who would not be going to France). At that stage they were coached by Jomo Sono, a native South African, since their choice as trainer for the World Cup, Philippe Troussier, was not available until March 1998. He had previously been in charge of the Nigerian national team and then looked after Burkina Faso at the CAN.

Troussier arranged training camps in South Africa, Switzerland, Germany and finally France, so that he could look over the players available and re-organize the squad as necessary. In the end he chose 15 of the players who had been involved in Burkina Faso.

When the group draw was made it aroused mixed feelings in South Africa. France

were certainly favourites and would be hard to beat, Denmark would not be easy but a result was possible, while Saudi Arabia would have to be overcome. What looked like the key match against the Danes ended in a draw, and the one point earned here would have been very valuable had they not lost 0:3 to France and then failed to achieve anything more than a 2:2 in the final match against Saudi Arabia. Two points from three games was never going to be enough to take a team into the second round.

The 3-5-2 system the South Africans played consisted of a libero covering at the back, two stoppers and two wide players who would operate in defence or midfield as the situation demanded. Two of the central midfielders were responsible for creating attacks and the third played right in behind the two strikers, who repeatedly created spaces for attacks to come through from behind.

South Africa did not look as if they were quite ready for the match against France. The defenders did not seem to

be well enough tuned to each other's play, and for long periods there would be little happening in attack so that the home team completely dominated the game.

Individual mistakes in defence led to a clear defeat, the three goals conceded here signifying already that it would be difficult to qualify for the second round.

Against Denmark there was more cohesion within the team, Troussier having made several changes which seemed to have a positive effect. But it was a lack of cool heads in attack this time which meant that a 1:1 was all they got from the game. Theoretically the situation before the last match against Saudi Arabia was that they were still in with a minimal chance, but they did not seem to believe it. Despite taking the lead they never settled down and finally they had to consider themselves lucky that a penalty in stoppage time earned them at least a second draw.

The positive performances in the team were provided

by Benedict McCarthy, who had been with the youth team a year earlier in Malaysia, a very mobile striker with good technical skills, Mark Fish, a central defender strong in the tackle and in the air, as well as providing forward drive, and Nyathi as left wing back with his healthy aggressive attitude and his desire to get involved.

Despite their continental successes, South Africa still have some catching up to do at international level. This was clear in the games against established and well-organized sides like France and Denmark. But as they take part in more intercontinental competitions, the gap between them and the world's best should soon start to close.

**At the age of 21, Benedict McCarthy (here challenging Zubromawi from Saudi Arabia) is already regarded as a superstar in South African football and has already created a niche for himself in the elite Dutch team, Ajax Amsterdam, since joining the club in 1997.**





## Cameroon

Final ranking: 25<sup>th</sup> place  
Coach: Claude Le Roy (France)



From left, back row: Song, Kalla Kongo, Wome, Angibeaud, Songo'o, Omam Biyik; front row: Simo, Mboma, Njanka, Ipoua, Ndo

Cameroon's aim was to wipe out memories of their poor showing at USA 94. To make this possible they appointed Claude Le Roy as their coach after the African Nations' Cup had finished. The Frenchman is something of a hero in Cameroon, having steered them to their last major success, the title of African champions in 1988.

His plan for their preparations saw them travelling to France, Italy, Luxembourg and Denmark starting in the middle of May, with several matches being played against club and national teams in the course of their tour. Some new players were introduced who had not taken part in the African Nations' Cup in January, but they were unfortunate in losing Marc Vivien Foe, one of the team's stalwarts, due to injury. The young team could have used him. The adaptations that Le Roy wanted to make had to be carried out in a very short, in fact too short, time.

With the youngest team of all (average age only 24 years and one month), Cameroon played attractive attacking

football, and apart from the match against Italy which went totally off course, they gave promising performances. Both Austria and Chile were dominated for periods of the game, and only a poor utilisation of chances prevented them from achieving anything better than a 1:1 in



either of these matches. Particularly against the European side, a bit more experience in looking after a lead would have seen them through (Austria equalized in stoppage time). But experience was the one thing that these youngsters obviously lacked.

Le Roy lined his players up in a 3-5-2 system, with Kalla Kongo as libero (after his expulsion against Italy, Njanka took over the role). The two man-markers were Njanka (later Pensee) and Song, both technically skilled, strong headers and uncompromising in their tackles. They had support in defence from Ndo (right) and Wome on the flanks, as well as from Angibeaud as the most defensive of all the midfielders. Olembe and Mboma were the attacking midfielders, backing up the strikers Job (or Ipoua) and Omam Biyik, one of the few names that has been around for while.

Another of the experienced players was goalkeeper Songo'o, who was actually taking part in his third

World Cup. He has all the attributes of a first class keeper, and his steadiness and calm manner helped to stabilize the team. Other key figures were Omam Biyik, strong in the air and a talented dribbler, his partner up front, Job (quick and unpredictable), and the attacking midfielder Mboma (creative, and also a good header and dribbler).

Cameroon had faith until the very end that they could make it into the second round. But their failure to get there was not really due to the result of the last match against Chile; it had been practically assured when they lost two valuable points in the last minute of that game against Austria. A brief lack of concentration cost them their chance.

**At the ripe old age of 28, midfielder Patrick Mboma (here tackling Reyes from Chile) was one of the most experienced players in the championship's youngest team, Cameroon (average age 24 years, 1 month).**





## Tunisia

Final ranking: 26<sup>th</sup> place

Coach: Henry Kasperczak (France/Poland)



From left, back row: El Ouair, Ghodbane, Badra, Chihi, Boukadida, Sami Trabelsi; front row: Ben Slimane, Souayah, Sellimi, Hatem Trabelsi, Clayton

It was exactly twenty years between Tunisia's first and second appearances at the World Cup. In 1978 they had created a bit of a surprise by beating Mexico 3:1 and drawing with Germany 0:0. They had been beaten in that tournament by Poland, and as fate would have it their coach this time had been a member of that Polish team, Henry Kasperczak. He has been in charge of the Tunisian national side since 1994.

With the team having secured the qualification for France very early (June 1997), Kasperczak had plenty of time to get them ready for the big event. One of the steps along the way would be the African Nations' Cup. Closer to the opening of the World Cup they had two training camps, one from 14 to 21 May in Castelfranco (Italy) and the other from 22 May to 4 June in Albertville (France). They only travelled to their tournament headquarters on 9 June.

In view of the strength of their group opponents, their performances can be viewed as quite satisfactory. Neither against England (0:2),



defenders, Boukadida (or Thabet), captain Sami Trabelsi and Clayton (from left to right). They used zone-marking tactics. In midfield Chihi played in the middle and both he and Bouazizi (or Ghodbane) on the wing had defensive duties to carry out. Baya (left) and Souayah provided support down the middle for the two attackers Sellimi and Ben Slimane.

The core of the team consisted of players who had taken part in the Olympics in Atlanta in 1996. They played attractive football as long as they were not under pressure. But if an opponent stepped up the pace, they lost their cohesion and their overview in defence, and all the precision that was normally a feature of their attacking play seemed to be gone. One of the causes of this was that they were not all in top class physical shape, and their performance would fade after a promising start to a match.

Within their difficult group they showed what they had been allowed to show. Before the tournament began only four of their players were engaged abroad (and of these three play in lower leagues). If one compares that statistic with those of other teams (not just the Europeans and South Americans) then their lack of experience comes as no surprise. What was a surprise was the releasing of Kasperczak from his contract after the second defeat. He probably would have gone after the World Cup anyway (he has in fact signed for the French first division team Bastia), but this kind of action on the part of the Tunisian association raises questions about their idea of respect and fairness.

**Mehdi Ben Slimane (18) slips through the Romanians, Dumitrescu (17) und Galca (5). Under contract with FC Freiburg in Germany, he was one of four players in the Tunisian squad who were playing for European clubs before the World Cup.**





The pleas and cries from goalkeeper Songo'o (Cameroon) were not always heard by his defenders (five goals conceded in three matches).



Two goals in three matches: a good result for the Moroccan striker, Hadda (here he is seen winding his way around the Norwegians, Johnsen (3) and Eggen).







Njanka from Cameroon (6, here confronting Polster from Austria) landed one of the most stunning goals of the tournament (for 1-0 against Austria), finishing off a solo streak down one half of the pitch with a perfect shot straight into the net.

In their first group game South Africa were running round in circles against the hosts, France. Their strikers (Fortune pictured below, left) were more often seen in their own penalty area than in the opponents'.

Tunisia struggled most of all in the game against England. Their true grit (here captain Sami Trabelsi confronting Scholes) was not enough to topple the English wall.





# Asia



In the year 2002 the FIFA World Cup will be held in Japan and Korea. Both these countries had qualified for France 98 and naturally wanted to put on a good show as early advertising for the big event coming up back home. But once again not only they, but all four Asian teams, went out after the group games. And while patience is supposed to be an Asian virtue, there were signs that it was lacking before and during this competition. If success did not come quickly then action had to be taken, in the fashion that is becoming too much of a habit in football – by sacking the coach. Of the four Asian teams in France, two (Saudi Arabia and Korea) applied this measure during the World Cup, while Iran had used up several during their qualification and Japan had brought in a new man after their qualification had been achieved. This is a trend that needs

careful consideration and which rather flies in the face of any idea of continuous development.

It was also still apparent that the Asian teams lacked international experience. One reason for this is that in most countries there no strong league system exists, and another is that not many Asian players are engaged in European, south or central American clubs. There are also few trainers from these parts of the world engaged in Asia, the exception being in the J-League in Japan. Thus there is not much prospect for know-how being passed on where it is very much needed. In addition, Asian players are schooled to follow the coach's instructions exactly and are thus not used to taking on any responsibility themselves. But if the coach has insufficient experience then a danger is inherent in this system.

## Iran

Final ranking: 20<sup>th</sup> place

Coach: Jalal Talebi



From left, back row: Mohammadkhani, Nakisa, Daei, Estili, Mina-vand, Zarincheh; front row: Bagheri, Pashazadeh, Mahdavi Kia, Khakpour, Azizi

In terms of results, Iran managed to salvage some honour for Asian football. They came out on top in the prestige duel with the USA with a 2:1 win, which gave them three points and put them in 20<sup>th</sup> place overall,

the best ranking of all four Asian representatives.

Before they arrived in France, the Iranian players had come through some troubled times. After their qualification they continued to work at first under their

Brazilian coach Valdir Vieira, but he was soon replaced as national trainer by the Croatian Tomislav Ivic. He in turn lasted but a few weeks, until some disappointing results in friendly matches saw him out the door and another new man in, this time the Iranian Jalal Talebi. He remained in charge throughout the tournament. Thus a steady preparation was hardly a possibility for this group of players.

After Talebi was appointed, the team went through their pre-tournament training, at first in Iran and then in Italy and France. Under the new coach they played two friendly matches against Inter Milan and Croatia, before moving on to France on 7 June.

Their three group games went pretty much as might have been predicted. They lost 0:1 to Yugoslavia, but only to a free kick goal, they beat the USA as mentioned above, 2:1, and against Germany they went down,

although it looked for a long time as if they might pull off a surprise. But in the second half, the eventual group winners upped the tempo and ran out 2:0 winners.

Depending on the opponent they played with or without a libero. Against the stronger teams, Yugoslavia and Germany, they preferred to have a player (Khakpour) covering at the back. Against the USA however the defence played in a line, but did not use the offside trap. The two central midfielders worked together with the two centre backs to form a solid defensive block. The wing backs however helped a lot in attack and created a number of scoring opportunities, particularly down the right wing. In attack they had the two 'overseas' players, Ali Daei and Azizi.

The Iranian strategy was only to disturb an opponent's attack well inside their own half, but as soon as they got the ball they would be away, with two or three



passes creating a counter-attack. Both goals against the USA were accomplished in this way.

The strengths of the team lay in their technical skills (above all Mahdavi Kia and Azizi), their quick and efficient countering, the uncompromising tackling in defence and their staunch team spirit. As individuals, those who earn a mention were: goal-keeper Abedzadeh (absent through injury from the first match against Yugoslavia), central defender/libero Khak-pour (quick and with good

positional play), the right side midfielder Mahdavi Kia (good shot, scorer of a fine goal against the USA) and Bagheri (the playmaker and free kick specialist) as well as the two strikers Ali Daei (strong header) and Azizi (fine dribbler).

What they lacked was creativity in attack whenever they were unable to play their counter-attacking style, and their change-over from defence to attack was sometimes too slow. They also lacked decisiveness in their defensive organisation when

they were under heavy pressure. At such moments some of the defenders would tend to panic, and this led to desperate efforts or to their conceding free kicks (especially in the match against Germany).

Iran showed that they merited a place among the 32 best teams in the world. Despite the difficult conditions preceding the tournament, the team demonstrated that it had character, and they were also mentally strong as a unit. With a number of players being transferred to

Europe they should be able to make even more progress in the next few years.

**Iran lasted out well against Germany for one half but the outsiders then gave way to the Europeans' physical superiority: Zarincheh (17) seen here in a clinch with the kicker of Germany's second goal, Klinsmann.**





## Saudi Arabia

Final ranking: 28<sup>th</sup> place

Coach: Carlos Alberto Parreira (Brazil)



From left, back row: Al Deayea, Zubromawi, Dossari, Saleh, Al Khilaiwi, Owairan; front row: Amin, Al Jaber, Sulimani, Al Jahani, Al Shahrani

Saudi Arabia seemed to believe that after having engaged the World Cup winning Brazilian coach of 1994, Carlos Alberto Parreira, as their national trainer, they would have little to do themselves except sit back and enjoy a repeat of their own success in the USA, on which occasion two wins in the group games had taken them into the second round. But when it became clear that this was not going to happen in France, the association's leaders put all the blame on the Brazilian and dismissed him while the tournament was still going on. This way of trying to force success is hardly likely to have the desired effect.

The Asian Cup winners of 1996 brought eleven of their 1994 squad with them to France. A significant intermediate test was the Confederations' Cup which they hosted in December 1997. Here they were clearly beaten by Brazil and Mexico but they did manage a win over Australia, who ended up rather surprisingly in the final. Further preparation for France took place at first in Saudi Arabia and then in Europe. They took

up residence in their tournament headquarters near Paris very early, on 28 May.

Their three games produced results that were in line



with realistic expectations. Against Denmark they had a chance to achieve a draw, but weak finishing cost them that opportunity. Against France they seemed to be struggling unhappily uphill from the very beginning. After just a quarter of an hour Al Khilaiwi was justifiably sent off. Thanks to keeper Al Daeyea they kept a clean sheet for a while, but then the French ran away with the match. They rehabilitated themselves to some extent against South Africa, with two penalties earning them a share of the points.

Saudi Arabia were able to keep up with some of their opponents as long as their strength lasted. The defence was well organised, compact and uncompromising in the tackle. Their preferred tactic of counter-attacking was efficient, and they had the necessary speed in their

forward line to create several chances with this kind of move. The technical skills of some of the players must also be listed among the positive features of the side.

On the other hand, a lack of physical fitness and speed, insufficient harmony between the blocks (especially between midfield and attack) and some over-the-limit tackling are faults that will have to be corrected. In addition, they lacked international experience and this will be impossible to compensate for as long as Saudi Arabian players are not allowed to play abroad.

**Khamis Dossari (16) grappling with Brian Laudrup from Denmark. Scoring only two goals in three matches (both converted penalties) was not enough for Saudi Arabia to spring a surprise similar to the one they had pulled off four years previously in the USA.**





Saudi Arabia's captain, Fuad Amin, overpowers the Frenchman, Boghossian. Otherwise the Arab representatives were not given much joy by the hosts and ended up losing 0-4.



A well-poised aerial combat between the American, Stewart, and the Iranian, Mahdavi Kha: in the end the Arabs managed to squeeze a 2-1 win over the USA with cunning counterattacks.



Khodadad Azizi from Iran (here harassing the Yugoslav, Stojkovic) was one of three Iranian sharpshooters who had already been playing for the German league before the World Cup.





## Korea Republic

Final ranking: 30<sup>th</sup> place  
Coach: Cha Bum-Kun



From left, back row: Yoo, Lee Sang Hun, Kim Byung Ji, Choi Yong Soo, Hong, Kim Tae Yong; front row: Seo Jung Won, Kim Do Keun, Choi Sung Yong, Lee Min Sung, Ha Seok Ju

Since 1990, the Koreans have been in regular attendance at World Cup final rounds. They managed their 1998 qualification very convincingly, dominating the Asia group to the extent that they lost only one game, and that was to Japan after their

own place in France had already been secured.

As co-organisers of the World Cup 2002 they wanted to do well this time as a bit of early advertising for the success of their own competition. For this reason, their preparation was very carefully

planned. No fewer than six training camps were arranged for the players, on different continents, and a total of 18 trial matches were played before they arrived in France.

But in contrast to their top of the list position in Asia, they have never yet managed to win a game at a World Cup. This remained true for 1998, even though the association's officials had hopes of a possible surprise here or there. In their first game, the sending-off of the very player who had just scored their opening goal (Ha Seok Ju) weakened the team so much that at the end they went down 1:3. Holland next proved to be simply out of their class and raced away to

**Korea's inveterate doggedness was breathtaking. Although clearly beaten 0 - 5 in the game against the Netherlands (Choi Sung Yong seen here challenging Overmars), there was no sign of resignation from any of the team right up to the last second.**

a 5:0 win. In the last match, Belgium had to win in order to reach the second round and the start of the game reflected their determination to do so, with Korea hardly ever getting out of their own half. The expected goal came too, but the unbreakable spirit of the Asians was rewarded in the second half when their captain Yoo Sang Chul got the equalizer with a spectacular volley and the score remained at 1:1 until the end. The point the Koreans earned was celebrated as if they had won the trophy.

The strengths of the team lay in the good physical condition of every player, their strict adherence to the coach's instructions, the shooting ability of some of the forwards, and their quick and effective counter attacks.

On the negative side must be listed the lack of compactness within the different blocks, the inability to change pace, their lack of creativity in attack (on the occasions when they could not use their countering tactics), and their tendency to fall back too far to be able to take action themselves. Plus the lack of international experience that is the usual part of the downfall of Asian teams (not one of the 22 players is engaged outside Asia). And although the coach himself had played in Germany (Bundesliga) and undergone the training for his coaching diploma there, that was not a substitute for first-hand experience among the players. Korea was another association that blamed the coach for their lack of success and Cha Bum Kun was dismissed in the course of the competition.





## Japan

Final ranking: 31<sup>st</sup> place

Coach: Takeshi Okada



From left, back row: Nakayama, Nakanishi, Jo, Soma, Kawaguchi; front row: Nanami, Narahashi, Yamaguchi, Nakata, Akita, Ihara

For the first time in their history, Japan qualified for the final round of the World Cup, and this was fortunate for the association since it would have been hard for them to accept that their co-organisers for 2002, Korea, were taking part while their own team were not.

Their place among the top 32 was secured when they beat Iran in a play-off match in Malaysia. Thanks to their superior physical condition they came out just ahead at 3-2.

They too took great pains to organize their preparation down to the last detail. Two training camps were arranged in the month preceding the tournament, one at home and one in Switzerland. The announcement of the final squad was postponed until the last minute. The name of star striker Miura was not on the list and this caused some heated discussions up and down the country.

The group Japan were drawn in contained two other World Cup debutantes in Croatia and Jamaica, as well as one of the hot favourites, Argentina. They ended up losing all three games, but

only by a margin of one goal in each case. They were never outclassed by an opponent and Argentina and Croatia had to work hard for their points. Against Jamaica in the last match, the Japanese had more of the play, but their poor utilization of chances brought them nothing better than a 1-2 defeat.

Their defensive set-up was a three-man block playing practically in line, with libero Ihara sometimes lying a little deep. Two wing midfielders helped out in defence but they were more concerned with their attacking roles. There were three other midfielders in the centre, one of whom played as libero in front of the defence, the other two lending weight to attacks.

Their outstanding player was Nakata who was active just behind the two strikers. He was the pivotal point of the team, especially in attack. Of the entire Japanese team he was the only one who could truly be described as creative. As a team, what impressed were their fitness and their all round technical skills. Their mental attitude was right too, geared towards attack, which they did with good play down the wings or via coordinated positional changes in mid-field.

Too much haste in finishing was what stopped them from making better use of

their chances. In addition they were incapable of changing the pace of their game, always going at the same high speed. They had a tendency to find a complicated way of doing things instead of a simple one, which often led to loss of possession (sometimes at decisive moments).

But their enthusiastic style of play was a bonus for the tournament. They were a well-prepared team with a great deal of potential, and if they continue to follow their chosen path they could make a lot of progress before they play as hosts in 2002.

**Japan held their ground well against every opponent but failed to finish off their golden opportunities. Here, Shoji Jo is trying to break through the Croatian defence.**





In the last group match versus Belgium, the Koreans landed an admirable score of 1-1: Choi Yong Soo (10) jousting with Deflandre.



The Japanese goalkeeper, Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, positions his wall for an imminent free kick. He first aroused world attention at the Olympic Football Tournament in Atlanta in 1996.







In spite of dominating most of the play and the pitch, Japan lost their third game in a row, this time to Jamaica: Narahashi (9) winning a spar with Simpson.

One of the most talented stars in Japanese football: soon after the World Cup, Hidetoshi Nakata (below, left) switched to Perugia in the Italian first division.

Noh Jung Yoon (8) injured himself in the first group match against Mexico so badly that he was out of the game for the rest of the championship.





# North, Central America and Caribbean



In addition to Mexico, whose performance has been analysed in detail in another section, the Concacaf representatives at this World Cup were the USA and Jamaica, the latter having made it for the first time. Wherever the Caribbean team appeared there was colour, music and a festival atmosphere. The USA had a highly competitive and technically skilful team, but they had tough group opposition in the form of Germany and Yugoslavia. In the end the Americans were not very successful, while the Jamaicans showed that they have more to offer than just reggae music.

## Jamaica

Final ranking: 22<sup>nd</sup> place  
Coach: René Simoes (Brazil)



From left, back row: Goodison, Whitmore, Lowe, Earle, Cargill, Barrett, staff member; front row: staff member, Gardner, Hall, Sinclair, Burton, Simpson

Until now fans of the Reggae-Boys had had to be content with minor success (winning the Shell Caribbean Cup in 1991 was their major accomplishment). But qualifying for the World Cup understandably released an unprecedented wave of support and enthusiasm for the island's football team. At last they were able to show

that Jamaicans can be successful in sports other than cricket and athletic.

With the appointment of the Brazilian René Simoes as national coach in 1994, a more professional atmosphere came into Jamaican football. The aim they set for themselves was a place at France 98, and they achieved that after a total of 20 quali-

fying matches, when a goalless draw against Mexico at home in Kingston saw them through. As might be expected from a Brazilian trainer, he took the team to his homeland and prepared them there for the big adventure. They played no fewer than 17 international matches against club and national teams between January 1998 and the start of the World Cup.

Jamaica's pattern of play was a simple one. Out of a massed defence they would launch counter-attacking raids, either by playing passes through the middle or long balls down to the two strikers. At the back they had a three-man block with Sinclair, Lowe and Goodison, from left to right. They were supported by Dawes in central midfield, Gardener (left) and Malcolm (or Earle), while Simpson and Whitmore (scorer of both goals against Japan) were responsible for organizing attacks. Hall and Burton (or Gayle) were the two forwards.

On the international scene Burton is the best-known Jamaican player, under contract with Derby County in England. But he did not fully live up to his reputation. It was rather Whitmore who is still home-based and Simpson (Portsmouth, England) who caught the eye with their good distribution of the ball in midfield and their ability to go for goal themselves. But despite the many warm-up games, it was clear that as a team they still

lacked international experience. They showed this in several ways, for example by taking unnecessary risks in defence, thus giving away dangerous free kicks and by being too open in their defensive formation in midfield (leaving space for an opponent to manoeuvre). In addition they were stretched beyond their physical limits. The pace of warm-up matches is not the same as that of World Cup battles.

But despite this criticism they were more than just a decoration for the tournament. Their delight in playing football and the open enthusiasm of their fans added an extra element, and in addition they achieved some success on the pitch too.

**Jamaica's defence was particularly vulnerable against Argentina: Goodison (5) trying to escape the clutches of the South American striker, Lopes.**







## USA

Final ranking: 32<sup>nd</sup> place

Coach: Steve Sampson



From left, back row: Keller, Pope, Regis, Reyna, Burns, Stewart;  
front row: Dooley, Wynalda, Deering, Jones, Maisonneuve

A major test in the USA team's build-up to France 98 was taking part in the Gold Cup, a chance to do well and thus boost confidence for the task ahead. They passed the test with flying colours, defeating Brazil in the semifinal and only losing 0:1 to Mexico in the final.

After this confirmation that they were on the right track, they played a number of warm-up matches, at least one every month. They sought out opponents from Europe and the Arab world, since this would be the type of opposition they would face within their group, with Germany, Yugoslavia and Iran draw against them. Between 11 and 30 May they attended training camps in San Diego, San José, Portland and Washington before arriving in France on 5 June.

Despite the tough draw, the usual American optimism was voiced in seeing themselves qualify for a place in the second round. It was thus all the more surprising that in the first half against Germany they seemed to lack self-confidence, had very little of the play, and when

they got the ball they let themselves be robbed without much of a fight. The second half was better and they had chances to equalize, but the impression remained that this was a team not playing up to its full potential. A major problem within the side came to light in the match against Iran, when despite territorial superiority and some excellent chances they managed to score only one goal and that was just before the end. This was too late to raise any hopes of a place among the last 16, and in the final match against Yugoslavia they showed the same inability to use their chances, losing again although they were by no means outplayed.

Their game plan was to use a 3-5-2 system with Regis and Pope as man-markers, and Dooley as libero in line with the other two defenders. Dooley was the tactical leader, organized the defence well and directed the positional play of his team mates. He was also involved in the start of most attacks and went forward often himself, particularly for set

pieces. Of the five mid-fielders, Reyna was operating from a central position and distributing the ball to his team mates. The two flank players, Hejduk (right) and Jones, were geared towards attack and delivered countless crosses between them. With their speed they were able to get behind the defence time and again. The other two mid-fielders were Moore, who worked totally for the good of the team, and Ramos, who was more of a soloist (replaced on occasion by Maisonneuve). The two forwards, selected from McBride, Stewart, Wegerle and Wynalda, received too few direct passes, even though this variation was practised frequently in training. Many attacks went down the wings (there were some 80 crosses played in the three matches), but not many of them were accurate enough to be productive.

The strengths of the team were their positive attacking attitude, their efficient covering, good physical condition all round and the fine skills of

some of the players (dribbling and short passing). On the negative must be listed their poor use of chances and the imbalance in the level of quality between the different blocks.

The bare figures do not truly reflect on the Americans' performance; they deserved better than to go home with three defeats on their record and only one goal to their credit. Against Germany and Yugoslavia they will have gained valuable experience, which should help them do better in the future.

Full back Frankie Hejduk (2) was a source of constant pressure with his sprints down the right wing. He is pictured here pulling a fast one on Mahdavi Kia from Iran.







A hive of activity in the American penalty box: goalkeeper Brad Friedel clears a potentially explosive threat from midfielder Jovanovic.

Jamaica's midfielder, Ricardo Gardner, finds a gap between the two Japanese, Narahashi (2) and Soma (3).





# South America



**O**f the five South American teams in France only Colombia failed to live up to expectation. In addition to Brazil and Argentina, both Chile and Paraguay earned a place in the second round. Why Colombia failed to join them, despite the potential in their ranks, is a question we will try to answer in the following analysis.

## Colombia

Final ranking: 21<sup>st</sup> place

Coach: Hernán Dario Gomez



From left, back row: Bermudez, Rincon, Mondragon, Lozano, Palacios, Valencia; front row: Cabrera, De Avila, Serna, Santa, Valderrama

Following their impressive qualification for the World Cup finals, Colombia were reckoned to be in with a chance of a second round place at least, despite being drawn in a group with Romania and England. They played nine trial matches, mainly against European opposition, to adjust themselves to the style of play they would encounter and to perfect their own fine-tuning.

The delegation arrived in France on 4 June. Although

coach Hernán Dario Gomez was expressing satisfaction about the way the warm-up games had gone, there seemed to be tension within the delegation. Asprilla, who was substituted off shortly before the end of the first match against Romania went public with his criticism of the coach and he was punished by being excluded from further participation.

The Colombians' play was by no means up to expectation. As always they had

some exceptional players in the team but they never blended into a harmonious unit. The internal quarrelling left its mark on the players – they were easy to provoke and some of their actions showed that they were close to losing control.

They stuck with their usual 4-4-2 or 4-4-1-1 formation. The defensive block used man-marking and were one of the few to set up an off-side trap, though admittedly not often. Two central midfielders supported the defence, with the two wide midfielders being more engaged in attacking moves. Right at the front they would use two strikers, or sometimes just one, with the other in a deeper, supporting role.

The centre of their defence was strong, with two stoppers and a defensive midfielder, all equally capable individuals and at least at the start of the tournament looking as if they wanted to win. But not much of this attitude remained visible for the last match against England, even though a result there would have given them a chance to make further progress. The weaknesses of the team were in the inadequate physical condition of some of the players and their overdependence on the performance of the key figures (e.g. Valderrama, Rincon, etc.).

After 1994, this was another disappointment for Colombia. The talent within the team was only seen in flashes and against oppo-

nents of the quality of Romania and England that is simply not enough. The association needs to take a close look, not only at the performance of the team but also at the whole atmosphere within the delegation, in order to draw the right conclusions for improvement in the future.

**Freddy Rincon** (above, jostling with Le Saux from England) and **Adolfo Valencia** (dribbling his way around Gheorge Popescu (6) and Ciobotariu from Romania) tried every trick in the book to increase their slender lead of only one goal in a series of three matches – but all in vain.







# Europe



**W**ith 15 teams taking part the European contingent was by far the largest. But their dominance was not only in terms of quantity – they also proved to have the best quality. Ten of the 15 qualified for the second round, six for the quarterfinals, and they ended up taking three of the top four places.

But not all the reports about the European performances were positive; why this was the case will be seen in the following analysis, where we look at the five teams that finished in the lower half of the list, in positions between 17 and 32.

## Spain

Final ranking: 17<sup>th</sup> place  
Coach: Javier Clemente



From left, back row: Nadal, Zubizarreta, Morientes, Hierro, Luis Enrique, Alkorta; front row: Aguilera, Sergi, Alfonso, Amor, Echeverria

History does repeat itself. Never has Spain's performance as a country matched the achievements of their top club sides. A reason for this may well be that in the club teams key positions are taken by foreign players, but this is not an argument that will prevent a Spanish fan from hoping that this time his country is going to hit the heights.

Spain came through their qualifying group unbeaten. Strong teams like Yugoslavia, the Czech Republic or Slovakia proved no hindrance to their progress – another reason why some experts had Spain on their list of potential World Cup winners.

And while the outcome of the tournament is well known, the figures alone do not reflect the performances

this team gave – they deserved to stay around longer than for just the three group games they played. The basic system was a 4-2-3-1, and in the first half against Paraguay Clemente's line-up was even more defensive, since he saw that a second defeat here would put paid to all their hopes after just two matches (they had already lost the opening game to Nigeria, despite having twice been in front; some unforgivable individual errors saw victory snatched from their grasp). The defence used zone-marking and played in line, but never used the offside trap. The dominating figure in their play was midfielder Hierro, who was supported alternately by Amor or Nadal. Spain mostly played a quick short-passing game and made good use of space, particularly down the wings. Both wing backs, Amor (right) and Sergio, were adept at spotting moments when there was a free passage down the flank and they were effective in supporting attacks.

The weaknesses of the team are hard to pinpoint, being different from one game to the next. It was noticeable that Clemente made a number of changes in his starting formation, as if he was not satisfied with either his players' individual performances or their collective play. Their attacks were often too transparent and lacked the element of surprise. Overall there were not

enough ideas; even set pieces were often easy for the opponent to read and neutralise.

Spain rehabilitated themselves with a splendid 6-1 win over Bulgaria, but with Nigeria surprisingly losing to Paraguay at the same time it was all in vain and failed to bring much joy to the team's fans. From a purely footballing point of view this was one of the best matches of the tournament, and Spain showed qualities that certainly should have earned them a place among the top 16 teams at this World Cup.



## Belgium

Final ranking: 19<sup>th</sup> place  
Coach: Georges Leekens



From left, back row: Clement, Nillis, Staelens, Verstraeten, De Wilde, Wilmots; front row: Boffin, Van der Elst, Oliveira, Borkelmans, Crasson

Since 1982 Belgium have had a season ticket to all FIFA World Cup final rounds and have always managed at least to qualify for the second round. Their greatest success dates back to 1986 when the «Red Devils» ended up in 4th place after losing to France in the play-off for bronze.

Georges Leekens took over the national team in January 1997 and brought them successfully through the qualifying round. They held four training camps in preparation for France, only one of them outside Belgium and that was in Morocco.

But this time they failed to reach the second round, despite being unbeaten in all three group games. Holland and Mexico finished up with better records and went through. One of the basic reasons for their early elimination was a lack of effectiveness in attack, where Oliveira failed to provide the expected impulses and Nillis played too deep. Their defence was solid, with either De Wilde or Vande Walle in goal, giving the team security in that department. The back four were a well-harmonised

block, and the only trouble they had was in the second half against Mexico when the central Americans were trying to catch up from a 0-2 deficit, at which time the Belgians had lost their numerical superiority following the sending-off of Verheyen. Still there at 37, Van der Elst was a key figure in the match against Holland, thanks to

his experience and his knowledge of the opponent. His tactical guidance of his team mates meant that the «Oranjes» hardly ever created a dangerous attack. Enzo Scifo, another veteran, was the most effective player in midfield, which makes it all the more surprising that he was not used in the opening game and taken off in the third – the decider – at a point when Belgium were leading 1-0 (a scoreline that would have seen them into the last 16). He was the only one at that stage of the game who was settling the team down, distributing the ball well and varying the pace of his team's play. Wilmots proved to be the one who did most for the side; he was to be found everywhere, creating chances and taking them himself on two occasions.

Tactically the team had been very well prepared. Coach Leekens' instructions were put into practice most effectively during the Holland match and during the first half against Mexico. In the game against their Low

Countries rivals a win would have been possible with a bit of luck, and Mexico were clearly dominated in the first half. Only when Mexico got a goal back did Belgium's organization start to crumble, but even the 2-2 in this match was a good result in view of making further progress.

In the final game against Korea it became clear that the Belgians could not dictate a game themselves and for this reason they went out – undefeated yes, but disappointed; they have only themselves to blame.

Goalkeeper Philippe Vande Walle did justice to his coach, George Leekens, for having selected him for the last group game versus Korea.





## Austria

Final ranking: 23<sup>rd</sup> place  
Coach: Herbert Prohaska



From left, back row: Mählich, Schöttel, Polster, Herzog, Feiersinger; front row: Cerny, Kühbauer, Pfeffer, Konsel, Wetl, Pfeifenberger

Austria's qualification for France was achieved by a surprising dominance of the group. Teams like Scotland and Sweden (third at the World Cup USA 94) who were in with them were left

trailing. So they came to play in the final round with high hopes.

Coach Prohaska announced his team selection quite early, on 11 May. The squad was thus able to concentrate on

its preparation without having the distraction of speculating about who would or would not be in the final 22. They attended a training camp at home in the Sportschule Lindabrunn from 20 May to 2 June, during which time they played one final preparatory game against Tunisia. The delegation took up residence in their headquarters in Margaux near Bordeaux on 7 June.

Their unique role at the World Cup was to be the «team of the last minute». In all three of their group games they scored shortly before the final whistle. Against Cameroon it was Polster who got the lucky equalizer for a

**Apparently Austria's playmaker, Andreas Herzog, (threatening Njanka from Cameroon) did not manage to dazzle his coach in the first group game and in subsequent games found a slot as the occasional substitute.**

1:1, and against Chile the substitute Vastic performed the same feat. Finally against Italy it was Herzog's turn (via a penalty), but this only made it 1:2 and so they were out.

They played with a classic 3-5-2 system, with libero Feiersinger showing good overview and organizing the defence well. The two stoppers, Schöttel and Pfeffer, were sound and reliable, while defensive midfielder Mählich made space tight for opposing attackers. In central midfield Pfeifenberger pulled the strings, supported by Cerny (who was replaced by Mählich in the last game, with Reinmayr coming in behind) and Wetl on the flanks. Kühbauer was the link man with the two strikers Polster and Vastic (or Haas). Andreas Herzog saw surprisingly little of the action; he was taken off shortly before the end of the first match against Cameroon and was then only used as a joker.

The group Austria were in was a tough one, with all the teams being fairly evenly matched. With a bit more readiness to take a risk they might have caused an upset in the last match against Italy, but there can be no talk of luck being against them – a team that equalises twice in stoppage time has had a fair share.







Anatoli Nankov (Bulgaria) steals the scene dramatically from the Paraguayan, Sarabia (11).



Kevin Gallacher from Scotland storms past Kjetil Rekdal (10), who is bent on reaching the Norwegian goal.



Spain's twofold goal scorer Hierro (6) attempting to shoot past Paraguay.





Mario Haas (7, in close grips with Reyes from Chile) is regarded as the rising star (and successor to Toni Polster) in Austrian football.



Marc Wilmots (7, tilting at the Mexican, Villa) was not only a precious team-mate but also a successful goal digger (two goals in three matches).



## Scotland

Final ranking: 27<sup>th</sup> place

Coach: Craig Brown



From left, back row: Burley, Calderwood, Durie, Dailly, Leighton, Hendry; front row: Jackson, Gallacher, Boyd, Collins, Lambert

Scotland have qualified for every World Cup since 1974 (except 1994) – an impressive record. What is less impressive is the fact that every time they have been eliminated after the group games, and for 1998 their chances of breaking the ban did not look that much higher.

Coach Craig Brown named his selection on 19 May and took them shortly afterwards to New Jersey in the States, where they played two warm-up matches against Colombia and the USA. After a short time with their families, the players reassembled and travelled to their base for the World Cup in Provence.

They were the only team to use full pressing tactics for the entire 90 minutes of a match. This kind of play requires tremendous physical fitness and they showed that they had it in plenty during the first two matches. Only against Morocco did the efforts that they had made begin to tell, and they paid the price with a clear 0-3 defeat.

As usual the Scots were an exemplary fair team (despite Burley's red card against

Morocco). There was an air of comradeship and solidarity among the players, plus lots of fighting spirit. Their fans were also totally friendly; wherever the team played,

huge numbers arrived and a football party was guaranteed. Whether the team did well or not the supporters were happy, and spurred the players on. What was most impressive was the way in which they consoled the broken-hearted Moroccan players after the last match, when it seemed that the Africans had qualified for the second round only to be informed by their coach that Norway's late winner against Brazil had snatched this prize from them.

As individuals deserving a mention, Lambert and Collins directed the team's play in midfield and Durie up front was a tireless worker.

Scotland have always been a team that put its heart into every game and not one to play with a view to saving strength for the future. Little wonder that, despite the rest days between matches, their energy showed signs of

running out towards the end. Also a lack of technical refinement on the part of some team members prevented them from playing a smooth combination game.

But Craig Brown's players, and their fans, can be praised for having made a major contribution to the success of France 98 as a football festival, which is what it was supposed to be. The team will now have four years to wait to see if they can do better at their next attempt.

Scotland had the honour of contesting the opening match against defending champion Brazil. Colin Jackson (10, being watched by Roberto Carlos) and his team very nearly upset the apple cart at this point.

