

England, Argentina fans involved in running battle

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MEXICO CITY, June 23: Stone-throwing England fans, armed with bottles, wooden clubs and bricks, ambushed rival Argentina supporters as they made their way from the Aztec Stadium following Argentina's 2-1 World Cup victory over England here on Sunday, reports AFP.

A running battle involving about 100 Argentina and England fans ensued leaving 10 injured, most with slight cuts, security forces were not called on and no-one needed hospital treatment.

During the match an isolated skirmish between a pocket of rival fans marred an otherwise good humoured spectacle.

Fists flew in an angry confrontation at half time which subsided almost as quickly as it

had begun after some 50 Argentina supporters, many clad in their national flag, converged on a smaller band of Union Jack waving England fans huddled behind the south stand goal.

Good natured Argentina supporters defused a possibly explosive situation by returning a Union Jack which they had wrestled from an England supporter.

Fears that national grievances from the 1982 Falklands war would spill over into violence on the terraces were largely dispelled.

Before and after the brief half-time fray, the atmosphere was relaxed and happy as Argentina and England supporters stood shoulder to shoulder in the 114,500 crowd.

Some 5,000 England support-

ers, scattered in small groups throughout the vast stadium were outnumbered two to one by Argentina fans, many of whom had made the journey from home and the rest who live and work in Mexico City.

Medical services at the ground treated 51 spectators, most suffering from the effects of heat and dehydration, and only two needed hospital treatment.

One Argentinian banner carried the discrete and barely legible slogan, "Malvenos for ever Argentina's", but there was no provocative chanting nor a repetition of Union Jack-burning incidents reported at previous Argentina matches.

The England fans, for their part, were generally subdued with no whisper of the taunting chant, "what's it like to lose a war."

A British Embassy spokesman said later that three English fans were being held in police cells after being arrested when police broke scuffles outside the ground.

"The police intervened very quickly to stop any trouble and no-one has been badly hurt, we are hoping that the three who have been arrested will not face charges," the spokesman added.

IN BUENOS AIRES

In Buenos Aires thousands of Argentines were out in the rainy streets of Buenos Aires last night honking horns, waving flags and throwing confetti to celebrate Argentina's victory.

President Raul Alfonsin, who watched the match at his hometown in Chascomus 125-km from Buenos Aires, sent a telegram of congratulation to the Argentine team.

"I join all Argentina in sending you congratulations for a sport's victory that is the fruit of effort, enthusiasm and creativity," he said. "I share the have renewed the confidence of joy of the squad who today all. A cordial abrazo."

An Argentine diplomatic source, in a telephone call to Reuters Buenos Aires from Paris, pointed out that Foreign Minister Dante Caputo on Friday had predicted the final score of the match as 2-1.

During the game, Buenos Aires streets and sidewalks were empty of cars and people, the silence, was broken only when Argentina scored, the cheers of jubilant Argentines echoing through the city.

Brazil's Samba drums silent

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 23: Brazil's Samba drums fell silent last night as the country absorbed the shock of its soccer team's defeat by France in the World Cup quarter-finals in Mexico, reports Reuter.

Street vendors who had set up stalls in anticipation of a night-long bonanza quietly packed up their wares and police drafted into city centres to control crowds were sent home early.

Despondent fans turned off 40,000 watts of sound amplification on Rio's Copacabana beach front, the venue for lively night-long parties to celebrate Brazil's earlier victories in the tournament.

"It's all over," wailed one fan, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Even the flags seem sad," she said, pointing to the yellow, blue and green banners strung across the streets.

President Jose Sarney sent a telegram to the team, praising its efforts and saying "the strength of sport is its spirit of competition."

"The moving support of the Brazilian fans is a demonstration of the unity of the country's patriotic spirit," the message concluded.

"I'LL CRY ALL THE WAY HOME"

In Guadalajara, Mexico, Brazilian fans reacted to their team's World Cup defeat by France in traditional fashion last night by seeking consolation in the bars and restaurants of Guadalajara.

World Cup's best match, says Pele

GUADALAJARA (Mexico), June 23: After France's dramatic penalty shoot-out win, former Brazilian star Pele said the match was the World Cup's best so far and one of the greatest in history, reports AFP.

"We have just watched a great match which should really have been the final" he said.

"France proved they are a great team. They play the ball beautifully with a pure and delicate touch. For five years they have been able to prepare for this moment with a nucleus of fine players."

"Tele Santana has only had four months to find the ideal formula with Brazil and it just has not been enough. Taking into account Brazil's lack of preparation I think they have a great future, especially with players coming through of the calibre of Julio Cesar."

Former French star Raymond Kopa said it was unfortunate either Brazil or France had to be eliminated.

"It is a pity that either side had to go out. We have seen a match of high quality and remarkable intensity and the winners should go all the way to the final."

"My only fear for the French is that they are going to find it very difficult to recover. Alain Giresse and Michel Platini in particular looked totally exhausted."

CAREERS OVER

Brazil tried to put a brave face on World Cup elimination Saturday night as their ageing stars came to terms with the fact that their illustrious international careers were over.

Men like Junior, their Italian-based midfielder whose 32nd birthday celebrations are certain to be muted as they fall on World Cup final day next Sunday, know all that is left now is to seek glory at club level.

He said, "For a whole generation the last hope of winning the World Cup has gone out of the window."

"It's so cruel. This was the crunch match, the real final. France must win the trophy now."

Zico, an idol who passed the 700 goal mark in his career under four months ago, will face the music back home after his missed penalty in the 74th minute, a couple of minutes after coming on as a substitute, proved the turning point in the match.

The 33-year-old, who then converted his penalty in the shoot-out just to add to his frustration sought no excuses but said simply, "France must know just how we feel. They went through it in Seville four years ago. These penalty shoot-outs are just like Russian roulette."

Defender Branco, who, at 22, still has more World Cup chances to come, added a warning for France as he said, "The favourites like the Soviet Union, Denmark and now us have all gone out one after the other. So why shouldn't the French go the same way?"



Fresh offer for Lineker

LIVERPOOL (England) June 23: England World Cup scoring sensation Gray Lineker of Everton will become the subject of a multi-million pound transfer scramble after the finals in Mexico, his manager Howard Kendall confirmed on Friday reports AFP.

Kendall said that an Italian club, whom he refused to name, had already approached him about the joint leading marksman in the World Cup Finals.

That club — either AC Milan or Inter Milan or Roma join Spanish side Barcelona in the chase for 25-year-old Lineker. Barcelona have offered 2.5 million pounds for him.

But Everton are likely to demand five million pounds for their leading scorer of last season when they open talks after the Mexico finals.

The First Division club are sticking rigidly to England Manager Bobby Robson's request not to involve his players in transfer talks while they are in Latin America.

If Lineker does leave Goodison Park, Kendall will try to persuade striker Adrian Heath, Everton's "Super Sub" last season, to stay.

Heath, who has been offered a new contract, wants away if he cannot be given regular

first-team football and Arsenal head a host of clubs interested in him.

"Gray couldn't really have trained if he had trained, he certainly couldn't be fit for Sunday. I'm more concerned about his playing on Sunday than him training," Robson said after a tough session in Mexico City's mid-day heat.

Robson held the work-out in the stadium of Mexico's Atlante First Division Club, right next to the capital's bull-ring, rather than in the Aztec Stadium where they face Argentina.

Goalkeeper Peter Shilton was quoted as saying this was to protest the Azteca turf, which Shilton and others have heavily criticised for its bumpy patches, particularly in front of goal.

A number of Paraguayan shots bounced awkwardly in front of Shilton in Wednesday's game.

Robson was clearly annoyed yesterday by the presence of more than 100 journalists, photographers and cameramen at the training session. Asked by a US reporter whether Lineker had pulled his groin muscles in the Paraguay match, the England Manager reported, "Where do you think he pulled it?"

The poet under the bar

By Jalal Ahmed Chowdury

Joel Bats, the man guarded the French fort with guts, skill and determination against Brazil in the world cup and saved a number of sure goals, including two penalty shots is a winner against cancer. He is, according to team-mates is the most polite personality in the French squad and lives within himself for most of the time.

Talking about himself the stimulant of the French World Cup squad (as he proved himself on Saturday night) says that he looks for the meaning of life and puts effort to adjust with life.

Bats plays for St. Germain Club of Paris. He made it into the national side in 1982.

Keeping harmony with his make-up and nature, Bats is

keen on poetry. That keenness is of serious nature. He started exploring nature and all that it was there from 1982.

Needless to say that his exploring tools are words which produce his poetic works. When Bats was away from football for quite sometime owing to cancer, he started composing poems. He writes because he takes it as a means of treatment which he found of great use in overcoming the difficult and hard time of life.

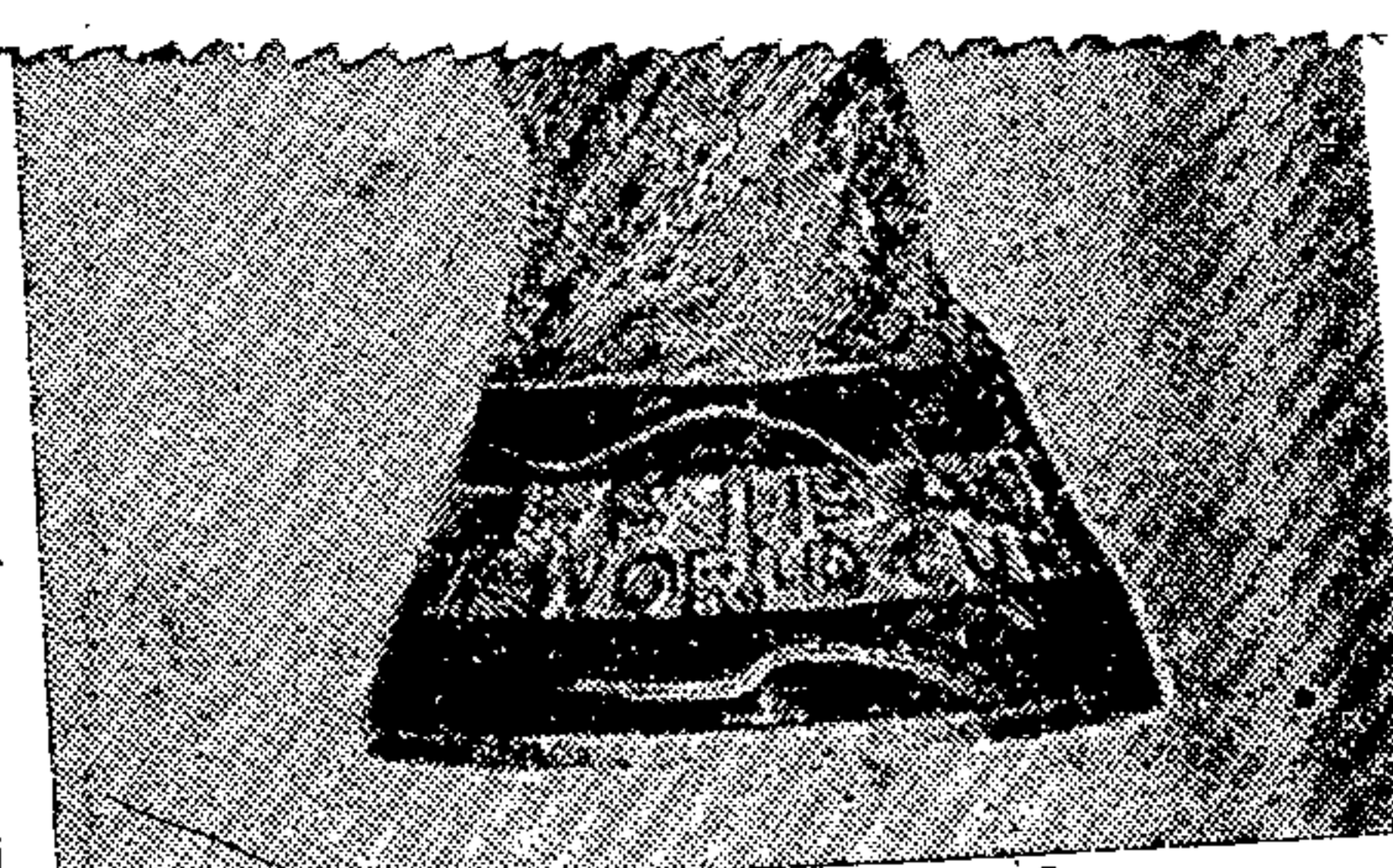
During those days in early eighties nobody knows what was the suffering of the precious French but now a-days people know about Bats disease.

He had to undergo major operations and his will-powers made him victorious against the

killer disease. He made his place back under the French Crosspiece after recovery.

Bats started a duel with himself after reaching Mexico as he said, "If the team loses for me, if I become responsible for our elimination from the finals, I won't be able to forgive me. The whole of the world will become meaningless to me and I will be lost to wilderness."

The great keeper did act according to his words against Brazil and who knows the good within Bats might earn French the 1986 World Cup and the poet keeper will be shelved in every house of the world where football or sports as a whole and poetry are cared with value.



Previous champions

YEAR	VENUE	Champion	Runners up	Scores
1930	Montevideo	Uruguay	Argentina	4-2
1934	Rome	Italy	Czechoslovakia	2-1
1938	Paris	Italy	Argentina	4-2
1950	Rio-De-Janeiro	Uruguay	Brazil	2-1
1954	Berne	West Germany	Hungary	3-2
1958	Stockholm	Brazil	Sweden	5-2
1962	Santiago	Brazil	Czechoslovakia	3-1
1966	London	England	West Germany	4-2
1970	Mexico City	Brazil	Italy	4-1
1974	Munich	West Germany	Holland	2-1
1978	Buenos Aires	Argentina	Holland	3-1
1982	Madrid	Italy	West Germany	3-1