

PANDO! or GORDO? 2010 FIFA World Cup

BBC TICKER:

TODAY MARKS THE FIRST-EVER WORLD CUP WHERE THE TWO PREVIOUS FINALISTS WENT OUT IN THE FIRST STAGE!!



Match 41: SLOVAKIA v ITALY [Group E Finale] Date: THU 24Jun10 Venue: Johannesburg ELLIS PARK STADIUM



PANDO! or GORDO? GORDO?

+ L'Italia è delle fesserie (Italy is crap)

The played like it, acted like it and looked quite content to be on a plane back home on Friday They were outhustled, outthought and out-passioned! Where did it all go wrong for ITA? Well > I think the signs were all hiding in plain sight They are old, have not won a match in 2010 and were just indifferent They were nervous and it looks like the injury to GK BUFFON has really affected the ITA side

SLOVAKIA punished a horrible giveaway by DANIELE DE ROSSI right in front of the 'D' and after a nice pass from JURAJ KUCK, ROBERT VITTEK was again the man, slotting home to begin the ITA exodus

The second half was a lot more fun > Where was this urgency in the first 45 minutes? VITTEK struck again in the R/Box when he took a short pass and snuck the ball > L/Right although the GK was covering the near post ITA finally broke through when ANTONIO DI NATALE turned in a rebound in the 81st minute

SVK sub KAMIL KOPUNEK then sent ITA on their way when he made a hard run into the R/Box, took a perfect throw-in and first-timed the pass > L/Left ... ITA got the last score with FABIO QUAGLIARELLA's exquisite shot from long-range ...

+ KNOCKOUT ROUND OUTLOOK: No ITA? Amazing SVK is hard to get a handle on, but after a confidence-building win today, stranger things have happened

SVK MoM: ROBERT VITTEK

Hero of their opening match v. NZL, he added two more goals today

ITA MoM: FABIO QUAGLIARELLA

Just brilliant performance off the bench by the Napoli striker Terrific L/Footer was cleared off the line and then brilliantly finessed a 25y R/Footer > U/Left to give ITA some life in extra-time

Match 38: PARAGUAY v NEW ZEALAND [Group E Finale] Date: THU 24Jun10 Venue: Polokwane PETER MOKABA STADIUM



PANDO! or GORDO? PANDO!

+ Remember the SPAIN match and my scribing about 'teasing?' Well, this match was quite a bit like the ESP match

> Not much chance of penetration, thus no penetration!

But – Neither side were disappointed and probably were quite satisfied in their dressing rooms With a defensive-minded PARAGUAY and overmatched NEW ZEALAND what did you expect? A drunk Lindsay Lohan? Hmmmmm – a drunk Lindsay Lohan ... Anyways, I regress

PRG & NZL combined for just one shot in the penalty box with both sides in lockdown defensively ... PRG controlled the play for much of the first half and fired up six long-range shots while content to just hold possession ... NZL did well in the back and focused on the R/Flank when coming forward with al 5 early crosses coming from that side ... They only took 1 shot in the first 45 but didn't seem at all disappointed ...

The second half was much like the first, sprinkled in with a few more shots but the outcome was never in doubt > NZL deserved no less than a draw & PRG deserved no more than a draw ... Why was this match a **PANDO!?** Think on this > Until the final whistle blew, NZL could have won the Group with a goal and who in the world would have thought that last month ... And, good friend SIMON ELLIOTT leaves the WC stage with a result ... WELL DONE NEW ZEALAND!

+ KNOCKOUT ROUND OUTLOOK: PRG is much like ECUADOR > Solid defensively and counter-attack when available, but ECU has a much more potent attack when they come forward, so PRG's festival may come to an end this weekend ...

PRG MoM: none

NZ MoM: SIMON ELLIOTT

Is there any player better in the world? Our favorite Kiwi took most of their FK's and even had a whack at goal that just drifted W/Left THANKS SIMON!

Match 43: DENMARK v JAPAN [Group F Finale]

Date: THU 24Jun10 Venue: Rustenburg ROYAL BAFOKENG STADIUM



PANDO! or GORDO? PANDO!

+ Amazing match in the fact that it looked like it would be a dour, boring snore as JAPAN needed just a point to advance to the playoffs And, it sure started that way, JPN soaking up early pressure from DENMARK until a DEN foul in their half ...

KEISUKE HONDA lined up a FK 26y out on the R/Side of the 'D' and hit a sweet L/Foot knuckler that made a left-hand turn at the goal to set the match upside down ... DEN came forward and tried, but then conceded another FK in the 31st minute that YASUHITO ENDO (2009 Asian Player of the Year) curled > U/Right of the goal from 25y out ...

JPN was just quicker and hungrier than DEN, and there were some moments in the second half when DEN looked like they were going to do a 'France' and just go through the motions The Danes got a very soft PK and JON-DAHL TOMASSON even got his PK saved but knocked home the rebound and came away limping > Not the Danes day

JPN then handed DEN the bill when HONDA back-flicked the ball to himself, accelerated into the box and sent centered the ball to SHINJI OKAZAKI who basically just walked the ball into the gaping DEN net

+ KNOCKOUT ROUND OUTLOOK: JPN has the ability to counter when the opportunity arises but a side that gets the jump on them physically should be able to control any second round match

DEN MoM: JON-DAHL TOMASSON

JPN MoM: KEISUKE HONDA

Japan's equivalent of CLINT DEMPSEY > Strong, powerful, skillful ... and, unpredictable Scored his second goal of the Festival with his brilliant first half FK Silky-smooth touch on the ball and feel for the game means that CSKA Moscow got a bargain ...

Match 44: CAMEROON v NETHERLANDS [Group F Finale] Date: THU 24Jun10 Venue: Cape Town GREEN POINT



PANDO! or GORDO? PANDO!

+ LIKE WATCHING ALAN GORDON TIE HIS SHOES IN FRONT OF GOAL, TONIGHT WAS A REVELATION

= Like most African sides, CAMEROON is very undisciplined in defending set-pieces They take their time forming their wall and once the ball is in the air, everyone gets a free pass to run to goal

= Once a passing sequence begins to bog down, it's every man for themselves and shoot on sight ...

= HOLLAND is truly scary when they come forward and the talent on their bench (like Van der Vaart) is amazing

CMR tried their best to come forward the best they could but the NETHERLANDS was just more efficient and completing that final ball ROBIN VAN PERSIE opened the scoring in the 36^{th} minute when he made a well-timed R/Box run after taking a pass and slotted the ball thru the '5-hole' to take a 1-0 lead after the first $45 \dots$

SAMUEL ETO'O converted a deserved PK in the 65^{th} minute and KLAAS JAN HUNTELAAR R/Footed home a rebound into an empty net ...

+ KNOCKOUT ROUND OUTLOOK: NED displayed what they can do in an open match and have the ability to sweep aside all in front of them They can be a little soft in the middle of their defence, but it all looks like they'll be around in the last weekend of the Festival ...

CMR MoM: GEREMI

The pace is gone, but he's now a FK specialist and his handled FK set up the PK

NED MoM: ROBIN VAN PERSIE

Buzzed all around the zone all night and started the scoring with his 'meg' goal

WORLD CUP WINNERS BY CONTINENT

Where they play their club futbol

EUROPE > 320

Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia (Moscow & St. Petersburg), Scotland, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine

AMERICAS > 38

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, United States, Uruguay

ASIA > **34**

Israel, Japan, Korea, Russia (Rubin Kazan & Tom Tomsk), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates

AFRICA > 9

Ghana, South Africa

OCEANA > 1

Australia

Every player who appears for a winning side is counted

