

THE FIFA WEEKLY

Fédération Internationale de Football Association – Since 1904

RONALDO
"I'M NOT
A COACH"

BELARUS
DINAMO MINSK EYE
LEAGUE CROWN

SEPP BLATTER
AUTONOMY
FOR AFRICA



Thailand
FUTSAL TOTAL

6

Futsal in Thailand

Futsal players from South America, where the game originated in the 1950s, are enriching the Thai league and giving it fresh momentum. The experience of national team coach Victor Hermans has also been vital in turning this South East Asian kingdom into an emerging futsal nation. Steven Layne reports on football's 'little brother' and Thailand's ambitions.

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Spain

The summer break is over in the Spanish league and with it the opportunity to make new signings. Jordi Puntí examines some surprise last-gasp transfers and assesses the differing fortunes of the Primera División's giants and minnows as the new season begins.

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Barbados: Marco Falopa

As technical director of the Barbados Football Association, Brazilian Marco Falopa is responsible for the nation's sporting development. In an interview, he outlines his footballing goals and visions for this holiday idyll. "The game doesn't have a long history in Barbados; we need to write its history first."

23

Sepp Blatter

Qualification is underway to see which 16 teams will contest the Africa Cup of Nations 2015 in Morocco. In his weekly column, the FIFA President praises the breadth of competition on the continent, saying: "African football associations belong among the best in the world."



Futsal Total

Our cover picture was taken in 2012 at the World Cup clash between Panama and Morocco.

Lars Baron / Getty Images



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25

Ronaldo

The former Ballon d'Or winner discusses the success of the 2014 World Cup, 'A Seleção' and their new coach Dunga.

A record high in summer transfers

Window spending (USD million) / Number of players signed

	2013	2014
England	764 / 348	987 / 351
Spain	335 / 197	658 / 237
Germany	204 / 247	294 / 235
Italy	371 / 233	236 / 254
France	351 / 164	159 / 181
Total Big 5	2,025 / 1,189	2,334 / 1,258

Source: FIFA TMS

Getty Images



Europe
54 members
www.uefa.com



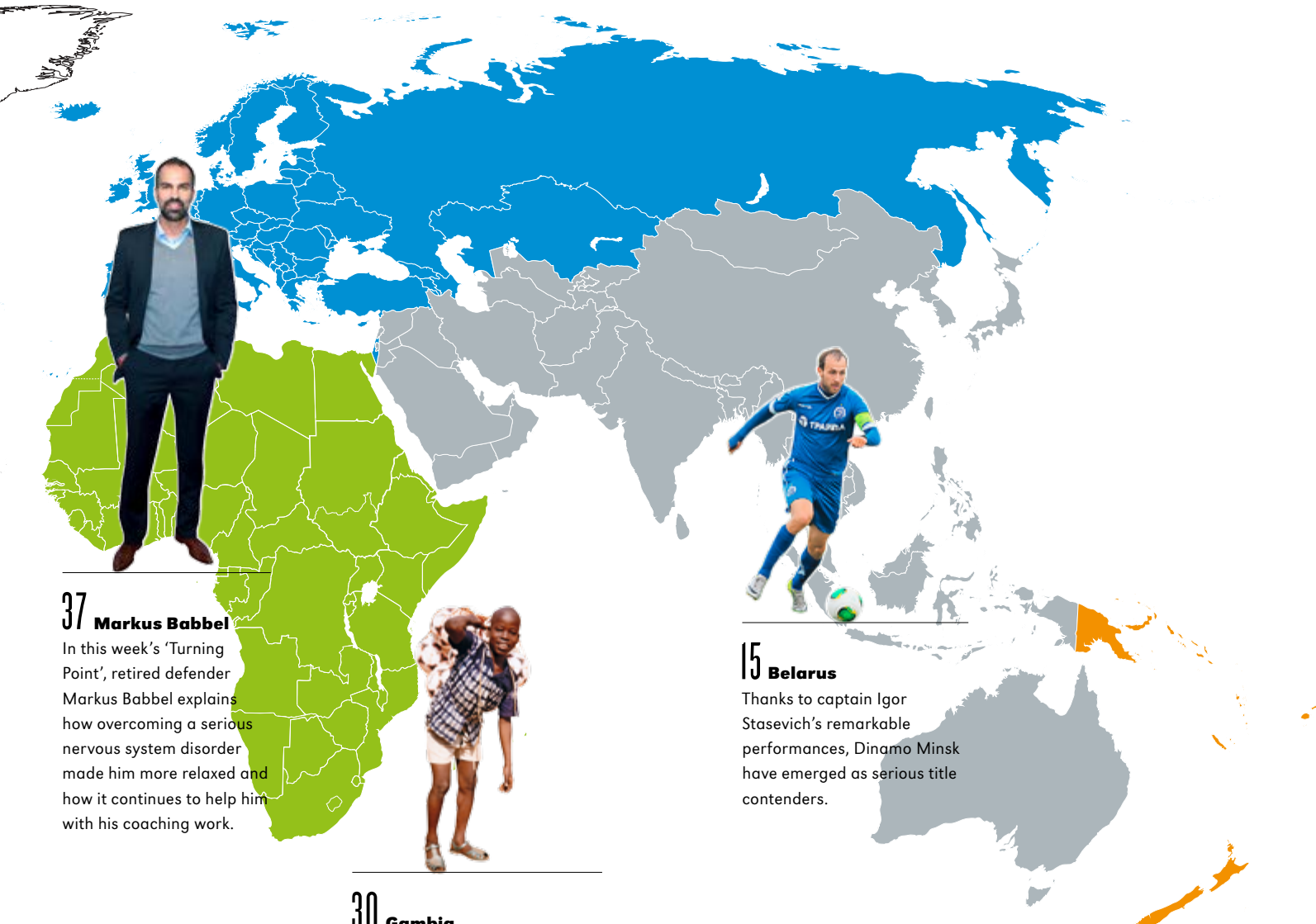
Africa
54 members
www.cafonline.com



Asia
46 members
www.the-afc.com



Oceania
11 members
www.oceaniafootball.com



37 Markus Babel

In this week's 'Turning Point', retired defender Markus Babel explains how overcoming a serious nervous system disorder made him more relaxed and how it continues to help him with his coaching work.



15 Belarus

Thanks to captain Igor Stasevich's remarkable performances, Dinamo Minsk have emerged as serious title contenders.

30 Gambia

Holger Obermann helped Gambia's young national team to prepare for the Amilcar Cabral Cup in western Africa – with surprisingly successful results.

image (1), freshfocus (1), Getty Images



FIFA Club World Cup
10 – 20 December 2014, Morocco



FIFA U-20 World Cup
30 May – 20 June 2015, New Zealand



FIFA Women's World Cup
6 June – 5 July 2015, Canada





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Hello Tomorrow



Small pitch, big stage

Futsal, a smaller-scale version of football, enjoys considerable popularity in South America, as illustrated last Sunday when a record 56,483 spectators packed into the Estadio Nacional Mane Garrincha in Brasilia for an international match. But this high-tempo five-a-side game is also being refined in South East Asia. On page six, Steven Laine reports from the futsal hotspot of Thailand.

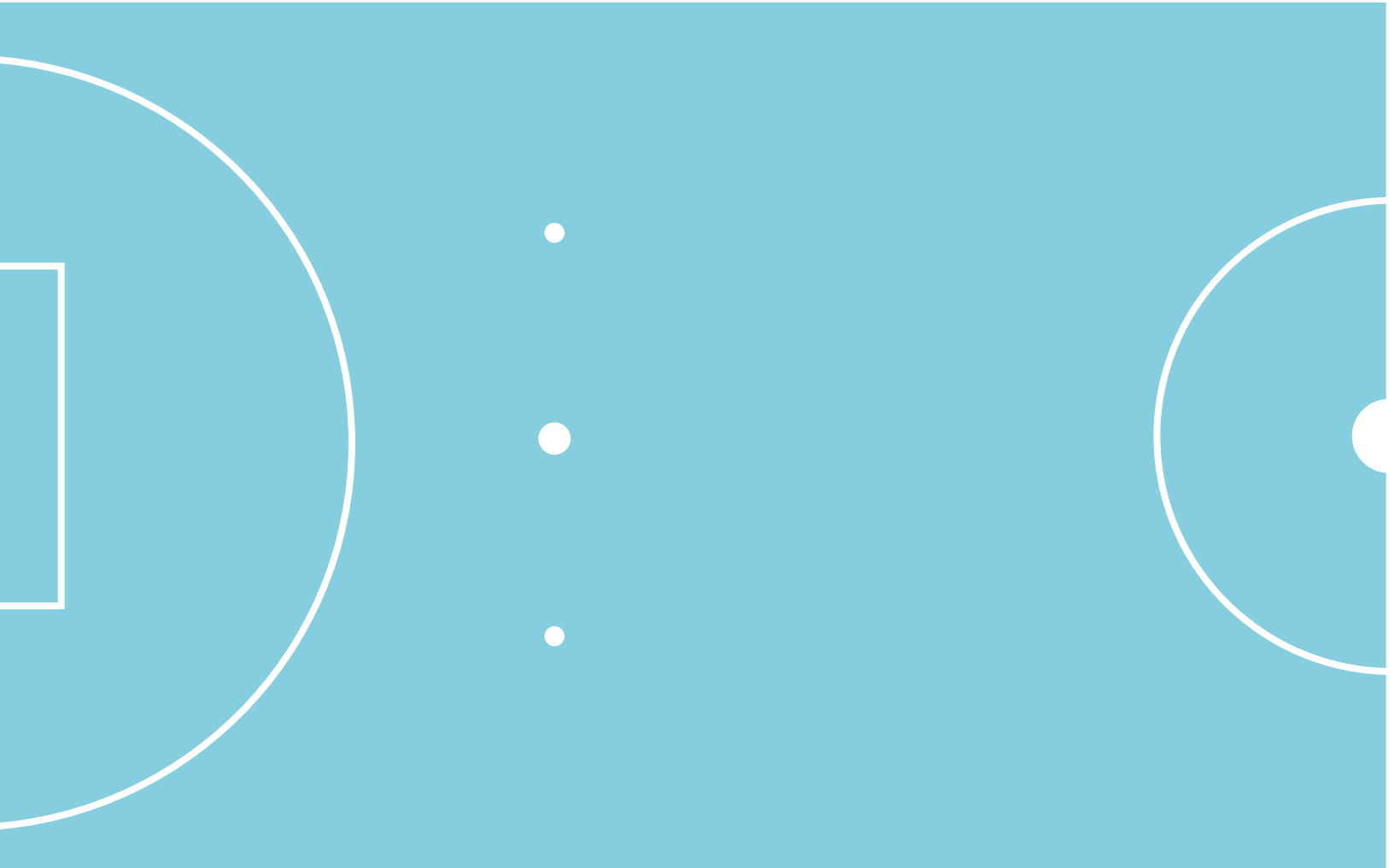
The 2014 World Cup was a huge festival of football even though A Seleção fell short of expectations. On page 25, two-time world champion Ronaldo looks back at the tournament and gives his verdict on Brazil's new-look national team.

In his weekly column, FIFA President Sepp Blatter turns his attention to the start of qualifying for next year's Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco. "While African football continues to gather momentum," writes Blatter on page 23, "its greatest problems remain the mass exodus of young talent and the difficulty of establishing domestic leagues." ❧

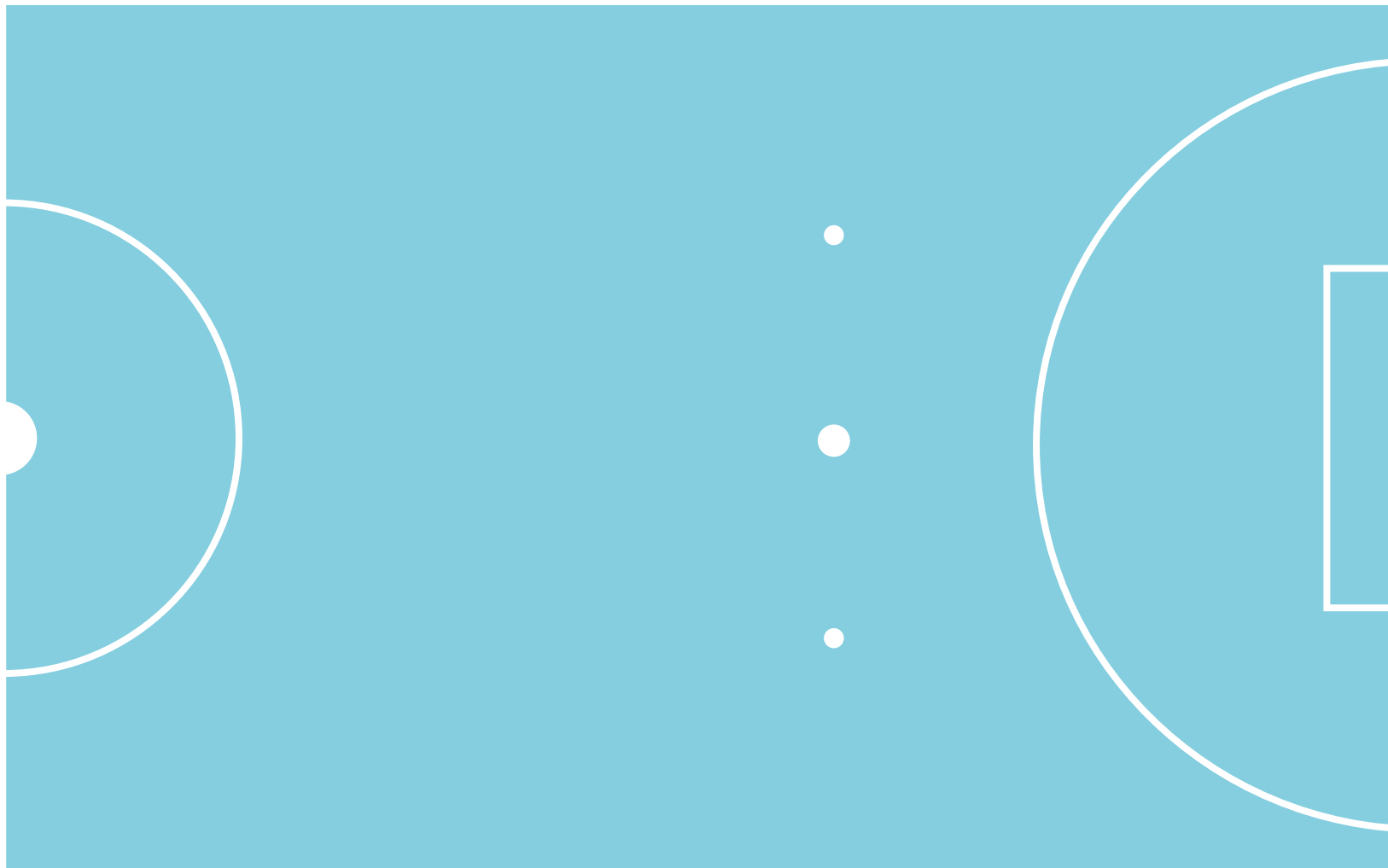
Perikles Monioudis



Tailwind Fans in Bangkok cheer on Thailand's national futsal team.



FOOTBALL'S LITTLE BROTHER



Futsal is hugely popular in Thailand, with players from South America - the continent where the game originated in the 1950s - boosting the country's domestic league. We travelled to Phuket to find out more.

Steven Layne, Phuket, Thailand



Futsal World Cup
The seventh tournament edition took place in 2012. Here Thailand take on Costa Rica in a group game in Bangkok.

Thousands of fans were decked out in crisp gold-striped, sky blue and black jerseys pile into the Saphan Hin gymnasium on the southeast side of Phuket City, the provincial capital of Thailand's largest island. Just over a century ago, Australian Captain Edward Thomas brought the world's first dredge to the city's harbour, catalysing the development of the tin-mining industry – decades before the first backpackers and beachcombers arrived. And on the night of 8 June 2014, history would once again shine down here. The Sunday evening showdown between the two top-ranked clubs in the kingdom's futsal league was the first time this three-year-old, 4,000-seat facility had ever been packed to capacity. Sitting in second place midway through their second season in the 16-team league, Phuket United have emerged as a new force on the national front to

challenge the traditional futsal elite of Chonburi Blue Wave, Thai Port and Siam Navy.

Football's little brother

In Thailand futsal has long been referred to as 'Bon Toh Lek', literally the 'small table ball'. Up until the country hosted the World Cup in 2012, the game was perceived as football's 'little brother' among the masses. And although futsal and football are governed by the same body - the Football Association of Thailand - they always seemed to be in competition with one another, whether for funding, fans or sponsorship.

But as increasing numbers of stars are born and trophies are lifted, fans are discovering their passion for the beauty and excitement of the game. Thanks in large part to legendary mentors and influences from South America and Europe, Thailand's national talent pool continues to grow, as the style and league evolve to keep pace with the rest of the futsal world.

Brazilians, Dutchmen, Spaniards and many more will agree that futsal is not only a distinct and beautiful sport in itself, but is even a powerful springboard to the 11-a-side game as well. After all, it was on a futsal pitch that the likes of Lionel Messi, Pele, Cristiano Ronaldo, Xavi and Ronaldo developed their signature skills.

What is futsal?
This five-a-side variant of football is played on a pitch measuring 38-42m x 20-25m (international standards). A match consists of two 20-minute halves, with unlimited rolling substitutions allowed. The clock is stopped for interruptions, while set-pieces must be taken within four seconds. The futsal World Cup takes place every four years, with the first edition held in the Netherlands in 1989 and the next to be hosted by Colombia in 2016. Brazil have won the title five times and Spain twice.


Eye on the ball

Suphawut

Thueanklang (r.) gets the better of Costa Rica's Jorge Arias during the same game at the World Cup.

Indeed, the two sports are complementary, and together will help to send Thailand, and the rest of Asia, to new sporting heights in the 21st century. It is only a matter of time before teams in Europe and the Americas start looking nervously over their shoulders at the emerging Asian futsal nations.

Dutch influence

Long before futsal officially arrived in Thailand, young Thais were already playing a variation of the sport, even if they did not have a proper name for it. It was simply called 'Len Bon Gun', literally 'playing ball together'. Piyapan Ratana, a defender in the national team, remembers it from his childhood days: "We used to play on concrete pitches at schools and temples, whether on a basketball court or a parking lot with makeshift goals. We played football too, but preferred to play on the hard pitch, especially when the grass pitch was too muddy to play after the rain."

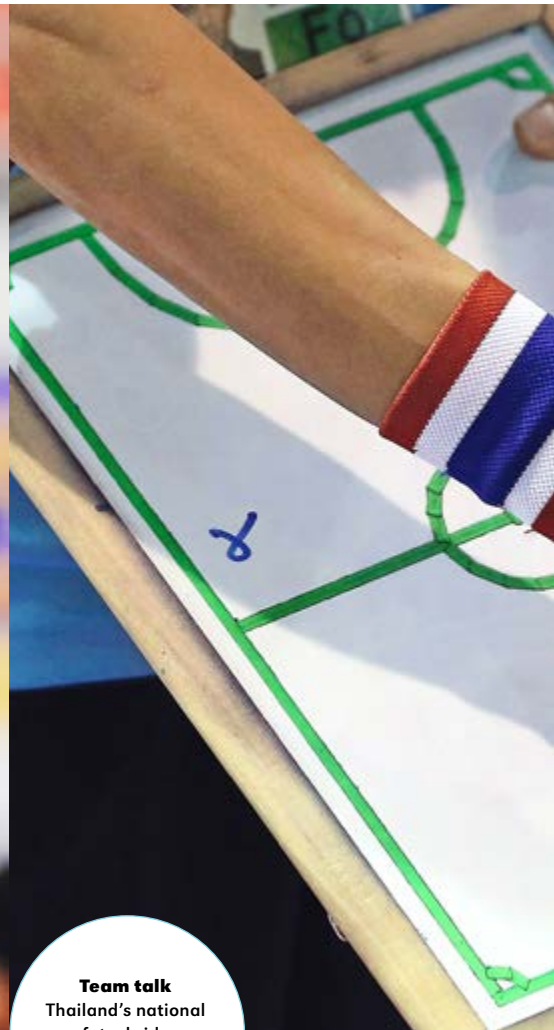
"The World Cup brought a lot of interest to futsal and opened many more opportunities for young people."

By the time Piyapan was 13 he started playing futsal formally at school. He was encouraged to do so by his parents, who knew the sport would keep him off the streets and away from drugs. After sampling success at school and temple tournaments in his home province of Nonthaburi, Piyapan went on to play for several teams in the Futsal Thailand Premier League (FTPL). He made his parents proud when he was called up to the national team in

2011, before representing his homeland in the 2012 World Cup in Bangkok.

"The World Cup had a major impact on the sport in Thailand," the 29-year-old said. "It brought a lot of interest to futsal and opened many more opportunities for young people in the future. I want everyone to have the opportunities I did."

Victor Hermans, head coach of Thailand's national futsal team, recently took a hand-



Mastermind
Pulpis is coach of Chonburi, six-time Thai champions.

Team talk
Thailand's national futsal side discuss tactics during a break.

picked squad of 15 players to a special training camp in the Netherlands and Belgium, where they played several matches against top European clubs. Among the highlights were a 3-3 draw with Dutch futsal champions ZVV Eindhoven and a 3-2 victory over Belgian top-flight club Hasselt.

Hermans, a Dutch futsal icon, explained that one of the objectives of the camp was to prepare for the 2014 AFF (ASEAN Football Federation) Futsal Championship, which will take place in Malaysia from 19-27 September. Defending champions Thailand are strong favourites to lift their tenth title, having been triumphant in each of their nine appearances to date. Indonesia won the tournament in 2010 when Thailand did not enter.

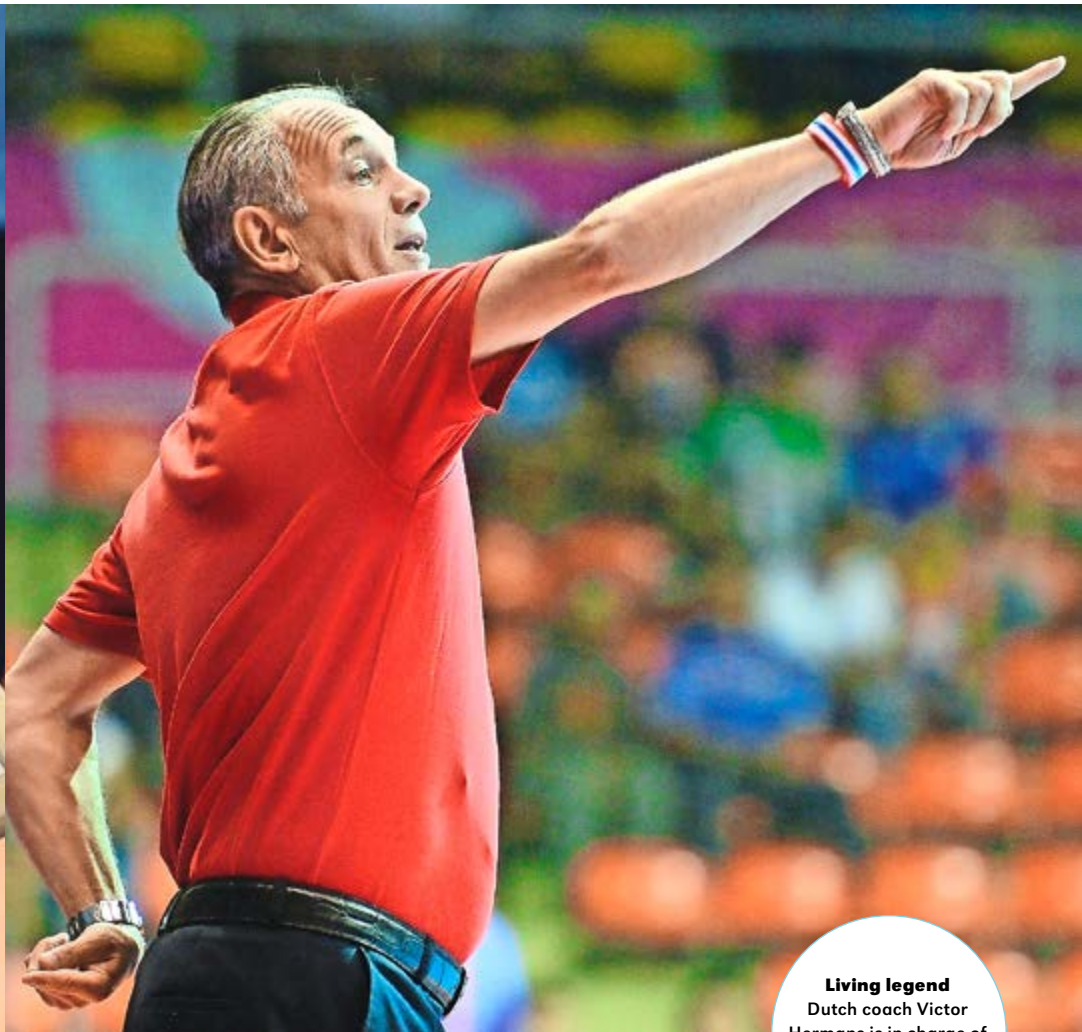
Brazilian imports

Hermans has been working meticulously towards the eighth Futsal World Cup in Colombia in 2016 ever since his side were eliminat-



Thailand
Population: approx. 70 million
Capital: Bangkok
Form of government: Hereditary monarchy
King: Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX)
Joined FIFA: 1925
National sport: Thai boxing
Other popular sports: Rugby, tennis, golf





Living legend
Dutch coach Victor Hermans is in charge of the Thailand national team.

ed by Spain in the Round of 16 at the previous edition on home soil. “We learned a lot from that match,” he explained. “Spain didn’t take any risks early on and were solid defensively, waiting for opportunities from our mistakes. That is exactly the kind of style I’ve been working on with the team since then. You have to control the game with a good defence and smart passing, and you can’t take risks too early on. Most games are won in the second half.”

Thailand are not the only Asian nation taking strides forward in the game though. “Competition in Asia is getting stronger and stronger,” Hermans continued. “We always have our eyes on Japan and Iran, but we’ve got to make sure we don’t overlook the countries behind us too. Many other teams have also been working very hard to [be able to] compete with us, especially Vietnam, Australia, Uzbekistan and Middle Eastern countries like Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.”

“Modern futsal requires a strong defence, in which players maintain the pace and control of the game.”

To maintain and increase Thailand’s competitiveness, Hermans has proposed introducing a play-off element to the Thai futsal league next season to make the championship race more interesting. The teams that finish in the top two places would start with home advantage against the fourth and third placed sides respectively. At present the FTPL title, which ensures qualification to the AFC Club Championship, automatical-

ly goes to the team with the most points at the end of the season. In six out of seven campaigns so far that has been Chonburi, with the only exception coming in 2007 when Thai Port were successful.

Even Hermans’ counterpart at Chonburi, Jose Maria Pazos Mendez - known simply as ‘Coach Pulpis’ - would welcome such a change to the rules: “Of course it might reduce our chances of winning the championship, since



Current season
Phuket players
celebrate after scoring
against defending
champions Chonburi.

it could come down to just one game, but we need to have more competition in the league. My team need to suffer and feel the pressure, otherwise we'll never improve. Winning 10-0 all the time, or being crowned champions more than a month before the season ends doesn't really help us, and it doesn't help the league."

Today, there are ten foreign players in the FTPL, all of whom come from Brazil. It was Glaucio de Castro, a former Brazilian youth futsal coach who passed away in 2006, who recruited and brought the first of them to Thailand, a move that would greatly influence the direction of the sport for the better.

Patience required

"When I first started playing in the Thai league I used to help my coaches to train the team, teaching techniques and systems," said Jackson Santos, who, alongside Maykel Jami Ferreira was the first foreign professional to

play in Thailand. "But that's not the case anymore, the level has come so far now." Jackson has become a fan favourite with Phuket, where he has finished as top scorer for two consecutive years.

The strong influences from South America, where the game originated in the 1950s, have helped complement the Thai style or 'Satai Thai', which is traditionally characterised by rapid attacking moves and the prevailing fluid 4-0 formation. Yet input from the national team's two most recent coaches, both Europeans, has seen the Thai game become increasingly tactical and defensive.

That has been achieved through the implementation of a 3-1 formation, using variations that employ a static pivot whose role as a central playmaker is to find space to penetrate the opposition defence and thus create more scoring opportunities.

According to Hermans, modern futsal requires "a strong defence, in which players

maintain the pace and control of the game. This means they are moving the ball around in a disciplined manner and not taking any unnecessary risks, but waiting for easy scoring opportunities that will arise when more impatient opponents make mistakes."

80-year-old fans

At the match on the evening of Sunday 8 June, the 4,000-strong crowd erupted, with team scarves spinning in the air, rodeo style, while fans – ranging from five to 80 years old – clapped, jumped, danced and sung to the beat of drums and countless horns. It was just an ordinary mid-season league game, but it might as well have been the World Cup final.

It seemed for a while as though the reigning Asian champions had finally met their match, before a combination of Chonburi's solid back line and their slick passing combinations broke through the Phuket defence again and again, allowing them to run out 4-2 winners. ⚽



Sixth league title
Chonburi's Chang lifts the championship trophy aloft.

Futsal grassroots

Each of the 77 provinces in Thailand has its own sports authority – all of which are subordinate to the Ministry of Tourism and Sport – and also a corresponding administrative organisation, which are government authorities that offer financial aid to diverse local projects. It is through this means that youth sports academies and local futsal school teams are supported, but some programmes nevertheless still require parents or guardians to contribute financially in order to cover costs, typically requiring payment of between \$30 and \$50 USD per month per child.

Four age categories

Futsal courses are usually offered in conjunction with programmes for seven-a-side football and most children switch between both sports. There are teams in four age categories: U-10, U-12, U-14 and U-16 and while established leagues do not yet exist, district competitions and tournaments are held at regular intervals throughout the year.

The most visible examples of cooperation between academies and the professional and

semi-professional futsal clubs is through ball-boy and player escort initiatives. Furthermore, the bigger and financially stronger clubs often hold training camps or put on other activities involving their players. Given the established structures already in place in football, it remains the example for futsal to follow, as the majority of futsal-specific programmes are still in the early stages of development.

Widespread support for local clubs in Thailand is a new phenomenon. Due to the fact that there were previously no domestic sides for people to cheer on, fans would follow Liverpool or Manchester United instead.

Women's national team

Thailand also has a women's national futsal team, with the squad primarily coming together to play in South East Asian or Asian Championships. A women's league does not exist, and although coach Pulpis got involved in training and announced plans to start a league a few years ago, it failed to get off the ground. In 2010 the side took part in the ten-team Women's Futsal World Cup in Spain, finishing in ninth place. ⚽



Like a pro
A young boy at the Dragon's Junior Futsal Academy in Phuket.

ON THE INSIDE

Spain: Primera División

Transfer merry-go-round leaves Madrid off keel



Jordi Puntí is a novelist and a prolific football features writer in the Spanish media.

Monday 1 September marked the Spanish league's deadline for registering new players, and as has become the norm in the last few years, there were a fair few last-minute surprises. Among them was Alvaro Negredo's conversion from Manchester City misfit to Valencia's great new hope. On his unveiling at the Mestalla he turned down requests from the fans to kiss the badge. "There'll be plenty of time for that," he said, looking a little taken aback at the catcalls from those who believe that love for the jersey is part and parcel of any contract. Elsewhere, Espanyol brought Jose Alberto Canas back to Spain from Swansea City, Malaga signed Nordin Amrabat from Galatasaray and Atletico Madrid acquired the services of Italian forward Alessio Cerci from Torino.

No team were more involved in the usual last-day scramble, however, than Real Madrid, who had their hand forced to some extent. After failing to land Radamel Falcao, who eventually chose Manchester United as his destination, they agreed to take Javier Chicharito Hernandez on loan, while Xabi Alonso and Angel Di Maria, two of their mainstays from last season, were making respective exits to Bayern Munich and Manchester United. All of a sudden, the club's post-World Cup signings of Toni Kroos, James Rodriguez and Keylor Navas seemed distant and somehow inadequate. In response to club president Florentino Perez's habitual summertime penchant for showing his financial clout, coach Carlo Ancelotti has been beaverishly explaining away the unexpected changes to his squad.

There is a case for arguing that Alonso's move to Bayern is as an act of revenge for the Kroos deal. Though the German is younger and has shown in the space of just two games that he will be a crucial cog in Real's new-look lineup, the fact is that Ancelotti's side will miss the balance the former Spain international provided in retrieving possession and setting

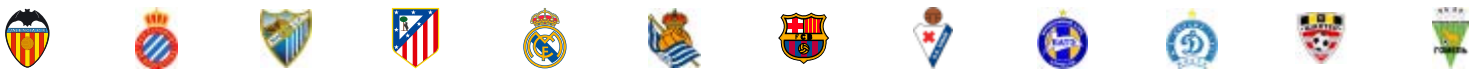


An evening to forget
Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti returns the ball to the field of play during his team's meeting with Real Sociedad.

his star team-mates on the attack. Despite their obvious quality, the opening two matches of the season have shown Real Madrid to be a disjointed side that plays in fits and starts. The first alarms of the campaign sounded in the visit to Real Sociedad, a game *Los Blancos* began by surging into a two-goal lead thanks to goals from Sergio Ramos and Gareth Bale before relinquishing midfield control en route to a 4-2 defeat. While the absence of the injured Cristiano Ronaldo was a mitigating factor, it seems that what Madrid need more than anything right now is the tireless running of Sami Khedira, who, to make matters worse, has been sidelined for eight to six weeks with injury. Proof of the uncertainty surrounding the team has come with renewed transfer speculation in the Madrid press, with possible January targets Yaya Toure and Mats Hummels both being touted as solutions to the team's problems in bringing the ball out of defence. This autumn has the makings of being a very long one at the Bernabeu.

As the recent bout of transfer activity has shown, the gap between Spain's haves and

have nots is growing all the time, prompting this comment from Villarreal coach Marcelino in the lead-up to his side's league game with Barcelona: "We could have made all our signings with the money Barcelona spent on a goalkeeper." Diego Simeone made a similar observation on the eve of his side's Spanish Super Cup first-leg meeting with Real Madrid, pointing to the financial chasm that exists between the two clubs: "We buy eight players with 95 million euros and they buy two." Atletico are not exactly strapped for cash either, having won La Liga and reached the final of the UEFA Champions League last season, giving them far more muscle in the transfer market than the other members of the Spanish top flight. The poorest of them all are first-division newcomers Eibar, whose budget of 18 million euros is the league's lowest and is dwarfed by Barcelona's 470 million and Real Madrid's 520. In the coming months, the grand old game of football will nevertheless do its best to reduce this yawning gap on the pitch, where it has been always a case of 11 against 11 and where victory is earned with goals and not the cheque book. ☹



Belarus: Vysshaya Liga

A two-horse race in Belarus



Denis Orlov is a football expert based in Minsk.

This year's campaign has been the best in the history of the Belarusian Premier League. In fact, the *Vysshaya Liga* has been on the up since the end of the 2000s, when BATE Borisov started to make an impression on the European stage and spurred on their rivals in the national league to raise their game along with them. However, there is a real breakthrough happening right now. The *Vysshaya Liga* currently has a nucleus of strong clubs that are generally comprised of high-quality footballers between the ages of 27 and 30.

The most visible achievement is the appearance of a second genuine challenger for the title; Dinamo Minsk have finally developed to the point where they can compete on an equal footing with the champions of the previous eight seasons, BATE Borisov. The team from the Belarusian capital are undoubtedly enjoying their best season in a decade. The former undisputed leaders of Belarusian football, who haven't been champions since way back in 2004, are currently in flying form. This is shown not only by the Blue-and-White's successful run in the national championship, but also by their qualification for the group stage of the UEFA Europa League.

Over winter, Dinamo Minsk were busy in the transfer market even though their budget remained at last year's level: around USD 6 million. All of this started when Vladimir Zhuravel became head coach, after leading Shakhter Soligorsk to four consecutive runners-up spots. Incidentally, the new man at the helm has returned to his native club, where he enjoyed the best years of his playing career. With him in the side, Dinamo Minsk ruthlessly saw off all-comers in the first half of the 1990s. So it is no wonder that the 43-year-old coach, so well acquainted with winning traditions, is precisely the man who has laid down the gauntlet to BATE.

Looking closely at the performances of the Blue-and-Whites, it is clear they are highly dependent on their midfield, where attacking

midfielder and captain Igor Stasevich stands out. Over time, he turned out to be surplus to requirements at BATE and, via a transfer

Minsk now have serious title ambitions.

to FK Gomel, arrived at Dinamo. Now Stasevich is having the best season of his career. He takes all the free-kicks and corners and is a wonderful passer of the ball. Moreover, he possesses great vision and leads the team with distinction. It is probably fair to say

that unseating his former employers from Borisov is a matter of principle for the 28-year-old.

For all that, it should not be forgotten that BATE Borisov still hold top spot, as fans of Belarusian football anticipate what could be the most intense and exciting autumn in its history. After the conclusion of the preliminary round, Dinamo Minsk are just two, purely symbolic, points behind BATE: 51 to 49. The remaining clubs are far enough off the pace to leave no one in any doubt that the battle for the championship will be a two-horse race. For many years in Belarus, fans were nostalgic for the nerve-shredding and dramatic title denouements of old. This year, it looks as if their wishes will be granted. With just ten rounds of matches to go and Dinamo and BATE set to meet twice in the run-in, it really is too close to call. ⚽



Igor Stasevich
The 28-year-old Dinamo Minsk player is currently in the form of his life.



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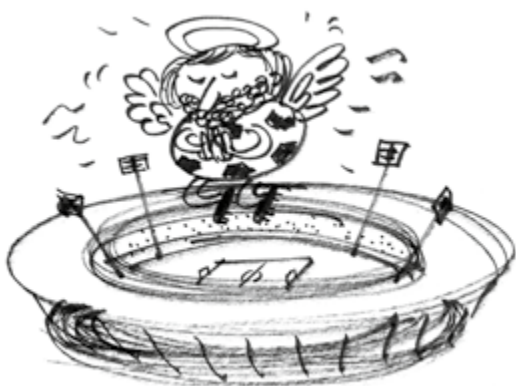
SOUL



*Options may vary depending on market



The Power to Surprise



Take your time

Alan Schweingruber

See you. Later. Take care. Have a nice day. You can sign off an email or a phone call in many different ways. Depending on who's saying goodbye, the seriousness of the subject and the level of creativity, the sign-off can be warm and welcoming, random, throwaway or purely conventional. Or was it actually meant to be friendly? It's hard to say, especially if you don't actually know the sender.

Maybe it's due to the speed with which we navigate the world around us nowadays. We communicate and work as if there's no tomorrow, but when tomorrow inevitably arrives, we're already thinking about the day after, about an important meeting or the next match. A defeat must be followed by a win. If you win the league once, the task is to win it twice. Who in reality draws any meaningful conclusions from whether a conversation ends on a cheery or more brusque note? You just take it as it comes, because we lack either the time or the sensitivity (or both) for anything else.

There are exceptions, including Peter Bichsel. The Swiss writer and noted football fan positively celebrates the slow and humdrum whenever he can. If you join him for a stroll through the city, you note that Bichsel stands still whenever he has anything to say. He makes time for a proper conversation and carefully considers his words, including when saying good-bye. Or take Gunter Netzer: when you first speak to the former football star by phone, you are infused with a sense of calm. His opening line is "warm greetings." He signs off with "very best wishes to you."

Netzer has been doing this for nearly a year. There have been many phone calls with our FIFA Weekly columnist, some of them brief

and businesslike, all of them open and friendly. Time has never been a factor. Naturally, he would sometimes deliver a cynical quip, as we have come to expect from Germany's footballing rebel of the 1970s. A third spell of wet weather in a dismal summer had just settled over Switzerland when Netzer sent greetings from the south of France: "Everyone gets what they deserve," he advised.

Time. It may sometimes seem to be slipping away from us, but we know in fact it never actually goes faster or slower, even if four minutes of added time can feel like an eternity, and many great moments in life are brief.

The main character from the preceding paragraph turns 70 on Sunday. Netzer himself insists he will not celebrate his milestone differently to any other birthday. All that might happen is that the day on which half the footballing world will be calling to offer congratulations could feel a little longer than usual. And callers might want to open with his normal closing line: "Very best wishes to you." ⚽

The weekly column by our staff writers

Teams with the most wins at the Futsal World Cup

- 1 48 wins**
Brazil
Matches: 56
Goals scored: 367
- 2 40 wins**
Spain
Matches: 51
Goals scored: 221
- 3 24 wins**
Italy
Matches: 39
Goals scored: 137
- 4 19 wins**
Argentina
Matches: 41
Goals scored: 110
- 5 17 wins**
Russia
Matches: 33
Goals scored: 180
- 6 14 wins**
Iran
Matches: 28
Goals scored: 96
- 7 13 wins**
Portugal
Matches: 23
Goals scored: 74
- 8 12 wins**
Ukraine
Matches: 26
Goals scored: 96
- 12 wins**
USA
Matches: 29
Goals scored: 89
- 12 wins**
Netherlands
Matches: 26
Goals scored: 75
- 11 10 wins**
Belgium
Matches: 20
Goals scored: 56

Source: FIFA
(FIFA Futsal World Cup, All Time Ranking, Statistical Kit, 09.09.2014)



Name

Marcos Antonio Falopa

Date and place of birth

2 April 1949, Sao Paulo (Brazil)

Clubs played for

1961-1966 Palmeiras

1970-1972 Associacao Desportiva Sao Caetano

1972-1975 Universidade de Santo Andre

Selected technical roles

1990 Palmeiras

1995-2002 CONCACAF

2002-2004 South Africa

2005-2006 Oman

2007-2009 Myanmar

2013 East Bengal FC

since 2014 Barbados

“Football in Barbados needs sustainable reconstruction.”

As technical director of the Barbados Football Association, Marcos Falopa has been charged with heading the nation’s sporting development. We chatted to the Brazilian and discovered how he plans to put the holiday idyll on the world’s footballing map.

Marcos Falopa, have you been to the beach today yet?

Marcos Falopa: (laughs) No, not yet but a few days ago I was with the U-17 side on Brownes Beach, which is close to Bridgetown. The players did running and coordination exercises. Training on sand is very intensive and the view from the beach over Carlisle Bay is pretty hard to beat.

Most people normally associate Barbados with holidays rather than football...

There’s no denying that. Tourism and banking are without doubt the most well-known economic sectors on the island, and when it comes to sport then cricket is the favourite. But football is also popular, especially since the World Cup in Brazil. As a Brazilian I get asked about it constantly. Everyone still talks about the final between Germany and Argentina, and unfortunately also about the semi-final between Germany and Brazil *(laughs)*.

In the FIFA Ranking Barbados are in 169th position, behind Liechtenstein and Dominica. What attracted you to the role?

I love challenges like this. I’ve already been responsible for the national teams of South Africa, Oman and Myanmar either as coach or technical director. The current technical situation in Barbados is similar to how it was in Myanmar in 2007/08. The players weren’t professionals but thanks to our work and FIFA’s development programmes they improved considerably. Back then the first thing we had to do was convince the players that nothing is impossible. If you want to be successful out on the pitch you need a good psychological starting point and a development strategy. Club coaches are crucial when it comes to players’ technical ability as they have to lead the youngsters to a higher level and offer them opportunities. The main problem in Barbados is that the most talented young players move abroad very early on. Many of them go

to the USA or England, but some don’t go as far afield and head to Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

Your contract is limited to six months. Is it possible to make any sustainable changes in such a short period of time?

Not really, six months aren’t enough to be able to do so. But I’m working according to a mid to long-term strategy and am trying to lay a foundation that can be built upon. Besides, I’m assuming I won’t only be here for six months. Randy Harris, the association president, has indicated to me that he wants to restructure football in Barbados with sustainable, target-oriented, long-term programmes.

Barbados’ qualification for the 2014 World Cup ended with six defeats from as many games, leaving them bottom of the group and 10 points behind Bermuda.

The key thing is being able to gauge your progress against international teams. Next up we’ve got a tournament in Martinique with matches against Bonaire, Surinam and Martinique. For Europeans that probably sounds like a Caribbean cruise ship’s itinerary but for us they’re important opportunities to test ourselves and take small steps forward.

CONCACAF sides were among the teams to stand out most at the 2014 World Cup. To what extent can Barbados profit from the boom in the region?

The example set by Costa Rica in particular sent out a strong signal. It showed that through continuous development work even small nations can achieve great things. After qualifying for the World Cup for the first time in 1990, Costa Rica underwent an astonishing process of development – not least at youth level. That laid the groundwork for their present success. Here in Barbados we need to follow their example. I see a glint in the eyes of the young girls and boys I meet here and we need to channel that enthusiasm.

However, long-term progress is only possible if we work on bringing through coaches and offering them further training. That’s why I view one of my most important projects here as being to raise the association’s awareness of those aspects of development work. Only well-trained coaches can guarantee a sustainable development.

What are Barbados’ chances of qualifying for a World Cup one day?

We’ve still got a very long way to go, but I know that football always throws up surprises. The game doesn’t have a long history in Barbados; we need to write its history first.

As a Brazilian, what do you think was wrong with the Seleção at the World Cup?

Brazilian football needs new structures, especially in terms of training young players and coaches. In that sense the challenges are similar to the ones Barbados are facing, even if they are at a much higher level *(laughs)*. Brazilians need to rethink. We can’t claim we always know better anymore and instead need to be open to new influences and show a willingness to learn from other footballing cultures. For example, I’m in favour of a coaching exchange programme. Our coaches can only learn from the systematic work being done in Germany, Spain, Italy, France and Holland. ☺

Marcos Falopa was talking to Thomas Renggli

First Love



Place: Srinagar, India
Date: 11 February 2012
Time: 4.07 p.m.





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Football is much more than just a game. Its universal appeal gives it a unique power and reach which must be managed carefully. FIFA believes it has a duty to society that goes beyond football.

FIFA.com users share their views on Africa Cup of Nations qualifying:

My team is Algeria! They are dominating African football with their strong composure. Their change in approach and the careful way in which this exceptional young generation of players is being deployed underlines the fantastic collaboration within this team!

amehdgana, France

I think South Africa will be the most impressive side! Their team has everything it takes to win.

luka5rs, USA

After the first round of games, it's far too early to say anything about the teams. They've got a lot of development ahead of them and all of them have great potential. The wide range of talent is very impressive!

chiazy-naija, Nigeria

I think South Africa were very strong, but I was disappointed by Nigeria. They're going to have to improve dramatically over the next few matches if they want to be successful.

JensJeremis, Germany

The big teams – particularly Nigeria – have just been a big disappointment!

kiwi83, Norway

I hope Ghana win! The team know where they come from and where they want to go. They've got the maturity needed to persevere mentally. Coach Rajevac will hopefully make a big contribution to their success on a technical level.

belaj79, Ghana

I enjoyed watching Burkina Faso against Lesotho. The match got off to a terrific start and remained flowing and strong until the end. Despite that, it'll soon be tough for Burkina Faso to survive against the other teams and their talented stars.

silvio33, Switzerland

The wide range
of talent is very
impressive!

I've got my fingers crossed for Algeria because they deserve to win the title! They're a team who can fight while remaining flexible!

sunny77, USA

For me, I thought Côte d'Ivoire had a very narrow win against Sierra Leone, who played together very well, particularly in the closing stages. The *Elephants* were simply quicker.

inou-sent 13, France

The big teams have been
a big disappointment!



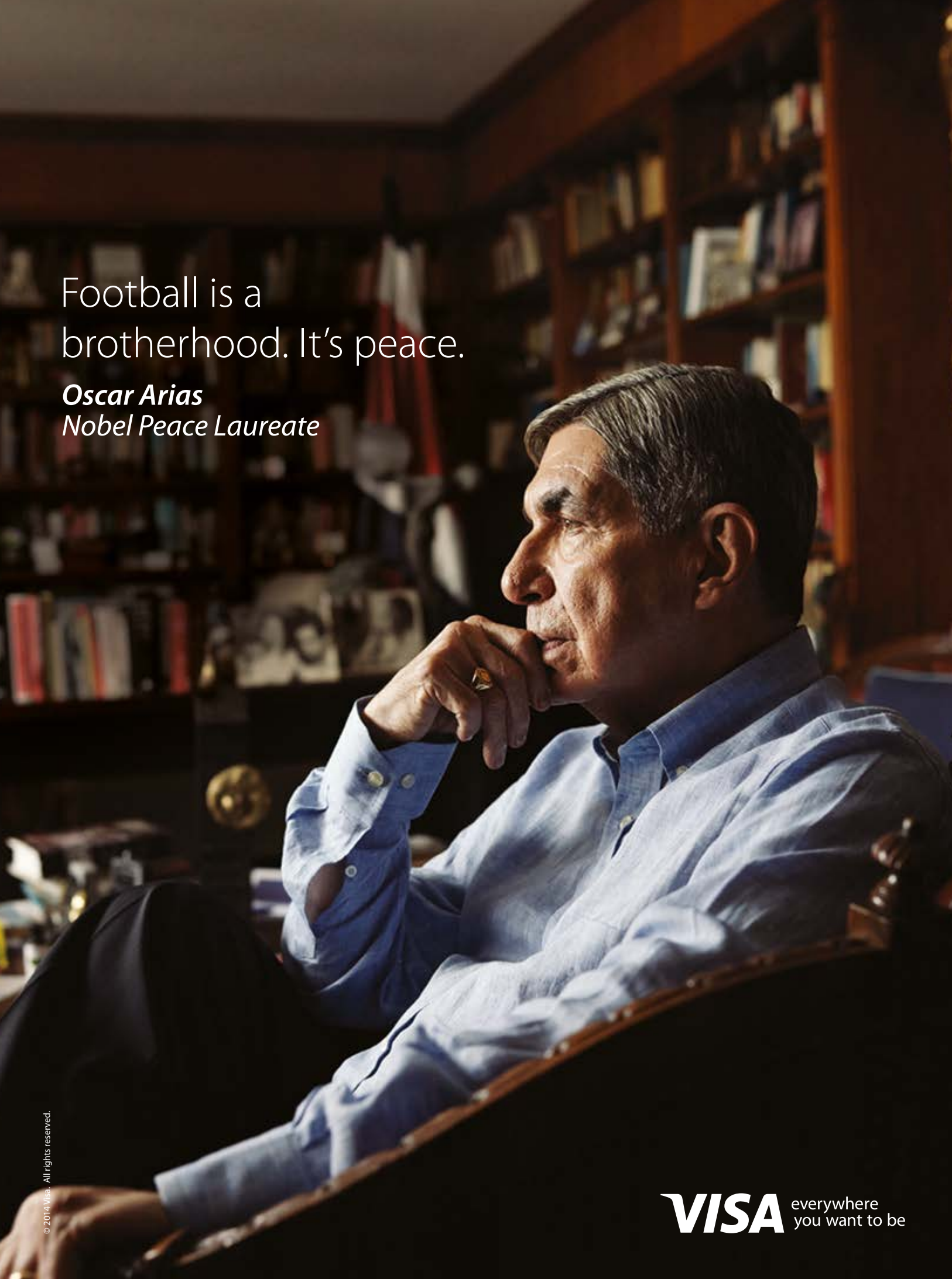
Autonomy for Africa

Barely two months after the World Cup Final, it is full steam ahead for international football once more as teams seek to qualify for their continental championships. While European sides have begun their campaign, attention has also turned to the countries attempting to be among the 16 finalists at the Africa Cup of Nations 2015 in Morocco by the time qualification draws to a close on 19 November this year.

This competition is extremely important, not just because it allows the Confederation of African Football (CAF)'s national teams to fulfil their immense footballing potential, but because these sides can only improve their competitiveness by regularly comparing their skills on an international stage. Several results from the past few days illustrate just how open the field of competitors really is, with World Cup participants Nigeria (who lost 3-2 to Congo) and Ghana (who drew 1-1 with Uganda) both dropping points, while Côte d'Ivoire and Algeria both came through relatively unscathed by recording 2-1 wins over Sierra Leone and Ethiopia respectively.

While African football continues to gather momentum, its greatest problems remain the mass exodus of young talent and the difficulty of establishing domestic leagues. It is for these reasons that CAF holds the African Nations Championship every two years, alternating with the Africa Cup of Nations. Reserved exclusively for footballers active in the continent's national championships, this tournament is intended to promote competition and broaden the pool of talent. Above all, it sends an important strategic and political message that only autonomy and 'self-help' can establish Africa's football associations where they belong: among the best in the world.

Best wishes, Sepp Blatter

A man with grey hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is seated in a dark wooden chair. He is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression, his hand resting on his chin. The background is a large, dimly lit room filled with bookshelves packed with books, suggesting a library or study. The lighting is warm and focused on the man, creating a contemplative atmosphere.

Football is a
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Oscar Arias
Nobel Peace Laureate



“Talent on its own is not enough”

As a FIFA Ambassador, Ronaldo helped to shape the World Cup in his homeland. We caught up with him for his thoughts on the tournament and where the Seleção go from here.



USA 1994 Dunga, recently appointed Brazil coach, celebrates after the World Cup Final in Los Angeles. The 17-year-old Ronaldo, whose maiden appearance came four years later, is on his right.

Ronaldo, what did you make of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil?

Ronaldo: I still have very vivid memories of it. Everyone is happy that we were able to stage such a good World Cup. Everyone enjoyed it, including the countless visitors from all over the world. They all returned home with a good impression of Brazil, and that includes the players too. Overall I think it was very positive.

And what about the performance of A Seleção?

Brazilians are disappointed with how things went for their team. Above all the [7-1] semi-final result against Germany was a massive blow for our football.

How did it happen?

I wasn't in the squad so I can't explain what went on. However, I'm sure there are a number of reasons and several mistakes that were made. There is no single thing that could explain why the World Cup ended the way it did for Brazil.

You retired from the game three years ago. In those kinds of situations do you wish you could don your boots as a player again?

[Laughs] I don't have a footballer's physique anymore.

But you do have the talent.

Talent on its own is not enough. We saw that at the World Cup where there was not

I definitely
don't see myself
as a coach.

one player who looked slow. It was a tournament of players with great physique. Football never stops evolving.

Were you tempted to prolong your playing career given the prospect of taking part in a World Cup in your homeland?

I was, and of course I thought about it but I'd reached my limit. It would have been very difficult for me to get into the kind of shape I'd have needed to be in after all of the difficult injuries I had in my career. I tried, but at the end of the day I had to accept that you can't play in pain. I'd have had to undergo another operation on my leg and I decided against doing that.

Where does Brazilian football go from here?

I think a lot of things will need to change. I don't know if there are already plans in place for that in Brazil. We'll have to wait and see. I'm not very involved in that.

What can you do?

I would have loved to help but I don't see very many changes at the moment. I also think we're lacking a bit when it comes to investing in the future of Brazilian football and in our players.

Why is that?

There are sporting-political as well as just sporting reasons. The main thing is that there is no decisive commitment to youth, to young players. In every crop of players in the past we had very good individuals; now we only really have Neymar.



Brazilian standard-bearer Neymar.

Name

Ronaldo Luis Nazario de Lima

Date and place of birth

22 September 1976, Rio de Janeiro

Position

Striker

Clubs played for

- 1993–1994 Cruzeiro EC**
- 1994–1996 PSV Eindhoven**
- 1996–1997 FC Barcelona**
- 1997–2002 Inter Milan**
- 2002–2007 Real Madrid**
- 2007–2008 AC Milan**
- 2009–2011 SC Corinthians Paulista**

Brazilian national team

104 appearances, 67 goals

Is he really the only one?

The other players are good too but I think Neymar is unique in the Brazilian national team.

Dunga is Brazil’s new head coach...

I don’t know what to make of that. I wish him all the best and good luck.

Was his appointment a logical decision?

I was quite surprised by it as Dunga hasn’t been a coach for very long. I hope he does a good job.

So what can you do?

I’ll just keep on with my everyday life and take care of the various bits of business and work that need to be done. At the moment I’m not thinking about what the future might hold.

Will you work in football again?

Either in football or in a different field, I don’t know yet. I’ll consider my options calmly.

Are you interested in becoming a coach?

No. The thought of having to stand in front of 30 players and talk to them doesn’t appeal to me at all. I definitely don’t see myself as a coach. ☹️

Ronaldo was speaking to Perikles Monioudis

Technical and tactical analysis

The 2014 World Cup Brazil was marked by top quality and attacking football, excellent players and a positive general football philosophy. The teams’ objectives were to score and win matches instead of trying not to lose or concede. This led to a glut of goals, 171 in total at an impressive average of 2.67 goals per match, which matched the record set in France in 1998.

Praise has to be given to the coaches and players who contributed first and foremost to this outstanding competition.

The World Cup also witnessed the rise and development of countries such as Costa Rica and Algeria, who successfully and efficiently challenged the more established teams.

Speed, tempo and power football has never been so high. Many matches were end-to-end

affairs, and a lot of games were not decided until the very end. Often little details made all the difference between winning and losing.

The most successful teams had key players in all areas who had a major influence with their play, work rate, personality and outstanding performances.

Moreover, this World Cup was an extremely balanced affair. Eight of the 16 matches in the second stage went to extra time, and four all the way to a penalty shoot-out. This underlines how close the teams are together as well as the good development work being done by the member associations.

Source: Technical Report and Statistics, 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil



Superb setting The four-kilometre Copacabana, venue for the FIFA Fan Fest / Public Viewing.

What made the difference?

Matches were often decided by little details.

Reasons for success or failure included:

- Preparation, as teams have to prepare well for a competition, considering all important details from a technical/tactical/physical point of view.
- The coach, who needed a gameplan, good tactical shape, knowledge of the opponents, meticulous preparations for each and every match, and good decision-making in terms of making substitutions.
- The squad, who also needed top-class substitutes who accepted their situation and were able to slot seamlessly into the team shape after coming on to make a difference in the game.
- Physical fitness, which was essential at this World Cup as most matches were decided in the last 30 minutes.
- An efficient style of play, which was important and decisive in dealing with the climatic situation and conditions in Brazil.

- A winning mentality, with the team and the whole squad believing in success regardless of the circumstances of the match.
- Few mistakes: without mistakes there can be no goals, and while they can never be avoided teams tried to keep them to a minimum.
- Influential players such as Messi, Robben, Muller, Rodriguez, Neymar, Sanchez in attack, Mascherano, Hummels or Sneijder in midfield and defence, and Neuer, Bravo, Romero and Navas in goal stood out and were essential and influential to the success of their teams.
- The quality and rehearsal of set pieces, which are becoming more and more important in top competitions.
- Solo efforts, because although team play is prominent in elite football, they are often decisive for success. Good examples of this were Messi, Neymar, Robben and Rodriguez to name but a few.



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The extent of the power exercised by a head of state depends on the nation's governmental structures. Among the big countries the French president leads the way in this respect. But where do club coaches wield the most power? In England? Perhaps. In Turkey? Possibly. The opinion of coaches in Spain also carries more weight than in other countries, which could be why Bayern Munich's Pep Guardiola took a long time to acclimatise to certain customs in Germany - the independence and autonomy of the club medical unit for example. This "disempowerment" now seems to be playing into the Spaniard's hands because in the case of Thiago Alcantara, a target hand-picked by Guardiola and acquired last year, Bayern chief medic Dr Müller-Wohlfahrt and his team have their hands full. They are obliged to pronounce on Thiago's recovery from injury on an almost daily basis because his true state of health is a mystery: the world-class player has been sidelined since last March after rupturing two ligaments in his knee. The club is no longer guessing at potential dates for a comeback. "We can't give an exact forecast," says sporting director Matthias Sammer: And what does Guardiola say? "You'll have to ask the doctor." ❄

Alan Schweingruber

When Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, better known as Ronaldinho, joined Atletico Mineiro in the summer of 2012, his favoured number 10 was already taken so he chose the number 49 instead. That explains the message tweeted by the former World Player of the Year at the weekend: "Now it's official. Shirt 49 is my lucky number!"

After an unhappy episode with Flamengo, he rolled back the years in Belo Horizonte and made a significant contribution to triumphs in the Copa Libertadores and Recopa Sul-Americana. His contract was due to run until December, but Ronaldinho cancelled it and will now sport his lucky number far away from home. Offers reportedly came in from across the globe including India and England, but the 34-year-old opted for Mexico instead and Queretaro Futbol Club, who lie eighth in the Liga MX. Ronaldinho was a 'Rooster' at Atletico but will spend the next two years as a 'White Cockerel' as that is the nickname for players at the Mexican club. ❄

Sven Goldmann

There is currently a great deal of fuss surrounding amateur football in Vienna after investors from Azerbaijan took over sixth-division outfit WS Ottakring with the aim of establishing the provincial club among the country's elite. Experience has taught Austrians to be wary though. In 2007 Iranian businessman Majid Pishyar brought doom rather than glory to Admira/Wacker and would later run both Portuguese side Beira-Mar and Swiss club Servette FC into the ground. Yet Ottakring appear to be in safer hands as their backers are from the same conglomerate that support Atletico Madrid, Sheffield Wednesday and RC Lens. They immediately set about changing both the name and the logo of the club, replacing the simple image of a football with an Arabian horse and renaming the side FC Karabakh, in honour of the Azerbaijani champions. The name may not be entirely suited to Ottakring, but ridiculous new monikers are something Austrian clubs are used to in the wake of sponsors claiming naming rights: After all, compared to Cashpoint Altagh and RZ Pellets WAC, Karabakh almost sounds refreshingly normal. ❄

Nicola Berger



Children play football on a sandy pitch near the Gambian capital, Banjul.

Long live the placebo effect!

For 100 days, Gambia's young and inexperienced national football team toiled in the bush to prepare themselves for hosting the Amilcar Cabral Cup in western Africa.

By reaching the final, they achieved more than anyone ever expected.

It was Hartmut Dobrick, head of the International Relations department of what was then known as the National Olympic Committee (NOK) in Germany [now the German Olympic Sports Confederation, DOSB] at Otto-Fleck-Schneise in Frankfurt, who one day asked me: "Would you like to take on an assignment for us in Gambia and coach their football team in Zone II of the West Africa Cup?" Naturally I didn't hesitate, even though the odds of making it through group matches against teams like Sierra Leone, Mali, Mauritania or Cape Verde Islands were not great.

For an entire month we lived in the bush, one hundred kilometres away from the capital city Banjul. All we had was a clay pitch; it was humid during the day and stayed hot in our small log cabins even at night. Despite these challenges, the team returned to the capital full of ambition and spent the last few weeks in less than luxurious surroundings at a former Chinese workers' camp. The Gambia Football Federation (GFF) provided me with a hotel room near the stadium where I could live comfortably, with a mosquito net strung up over the bed.

Paul Gomez – otherwise known as Pele – was exceptional in each of Gambia's warm-up matches while the oldest player, Garba, was a man you could always rely on, but the most popular member of the squad was Biri. He had previously played at Valencia under coach Max Merkel, who described him as "a extremely tough character we really respected."

Despite promising preparations, we got off to a terrible start. We were all set to leave the camp on time ahead of the first match against Cape Verde Islands when suddenly the captain rushed forward to the driver and cried: "Stop immediately, the route to the stadium is jinxed," and all because there was green powder scattered across the street. All I could do was ask the driver to turn left and take the long route to the arena via a narrow potholed road instead. We later learned that the mysterious substance was a cleaner's washing powder that had fallen from the bucket she was carrying. We arrived at the stadium just 30 minutes before kick-off – much too late for a proper warm-up.

An early setback

Equipped with drums and trumpets, the crowd was in a buoyant mood, but disappointment soon followed as former Portuguese colony Cape Verde Islands arrived with six professional players from Lisbon. Despite the adverse conditions, we worked extremely hard and played with versatility and a team that appeared to be in good physical shape. Nevertheless, our opening match was ultimately a major disappointment as our counterattacking opponents scored the only goal of the game half-way through the second half to consign us to a 1-0 defeat.

Aware of how quickly the mood can change and keen to avoid the inevitable recriminations, I did not venture into the city over the next few

days. But then we defeated Sierra Leone 3-2 and sealed a convincing 4-0 win over Mauritania, and that was reason enough for the whole of Gambia to celebrate. Each and every single match was sold out and the GFF really cashed in – something nobody had imagined in their wildest dreams beforehand. The country was elated and standing tall, and even its president became a fan of the team. Strangers came up to us to shake our hands or even embrace us. Football fever had well and truly broken out. Now whenever I walked through Banjul I was running the gauntlet in a far more positive sense as people called out “Hey coach, let’s win the cup now!” Those who could not get hold of a ticket for the final made the trip to the stadium anyway, keeping up with events on the pitch with the aid of their transistor radios and cheering loudly whenever a goal was scored.

The power of vitamins

To my utter dismay Paul Gomez was unable to play in the semi-final, but despite this setback we beat Mali 4-0. Our opponents in the final were Senegal, who had several French professionals in their ranks and were clear favourites to win the trophy, but there was just one question on my mind: “What was wrong with Paul Gomez?” After a long discussion I learned the truth and discovered the story behind his absence. I had asked for vitamin pills to be sent from Germany, intending to use them as a psychological tactic rather than serious medication. As I placed the tablets beside each player’s coffee cup at breakfast on the mornings leading up to the Mali match, I told them that the vitamins would release energy and provide an enormous boost to the players’ performance.

It transpired that somebody had been taking Gomez’s pill each morning to ensure they received a double dose. We never found out who the ‘culprit’ was, nor did it matter. From that moment on, I personally handed Paul his tablet each day, and the effects were soon clear to see: by the first afternoon, Pele was out on the pitch alone, running extra laps and shooting from all over the pitch at substitute goalkeeper Ali Samba. I was optimistic, and by the time the final arrived we had the old Pele back. Long live the placebo effect!

The nation was in a state of ecstasy on the day of the final. Colourfully dressed spectators came from towns large and small across the bush to attend the game against Senegal. The radio commentator’s words poured out with such enthusiasm that I could even hear him from my seat on the touchline. Many fans brought their musical instruments

to the arena, creating a rhythmic drumming that rings in my ears to this day. But alas, the excitement came to nothing, and although Gambia had the edge for large periods of the game, the final score was 1-0 to Senegal. Nevertheless, it was not the end of the world, and the *Scorpions* had inspired an entire nation along the way.

“Allah had other plans,” the captain later declared in the dressing room, “but we should still celebrate because we have never reached the final of the West Africa Cup before.” Gambia’s president invited me up to his box in the upper reaches of the stadium. “Thanks coach, you have done our small country a great service,” he said, before adding: “Second place was the best we could do, and I’ll tell you why: the simmering tension with Senegal could very easily have led to a civil war if our little, consistently underestimated Gambia had won that match. All along our border, Senegalese farmers were waiting with pickaxes and ploughs, ready to tear down the fences and force their way into our country if they were defeated. We can be proud! What’s more, the sell-out crowds that packed into this stadium from the first game to the last have brought in the money we so desperately need.”

Potential still untapped

And with that, it was time to leave. The friends I had made on the GFF board accompanied me to the airport along with practically all the team players, even helping me to check in and get through passport control.

Since that time, I have returned to Gambia three times to train coaches and look after the country’s young players, who love the game and offer a real sense of hope for the challenges that lie ahead. As of September 2014, the team lies 148th out of 208 associations in the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking – not bad for a country that was practically at the bottom of the list just ten years ago with just 800 active footballers, of whom only a handful held semi-professional status. Several Gambians have also played in Europe since I spent time there, albeit not in the top leagues, while the capital Banjul has become an attraction for many tourists, including Germans, who like to attend the stadium’s well-organised top flight matches and marvel at the locals’ passion for the sport. Nevertheless, when it comes to world football, African teams have yet to reach their full potential.

By the way, the large silver cup Gambia won is still on display in the foyer of the Ministry of Sport. That one result made history. 🏆



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FIFA IN GAMBIA

In early 2002, FIFA invested \$500,000 in the Gambia Football Federation (GFF)’s technical centre to provide courses and seminars for youth development and women’s football.

The centre was renovated for the same amount in 2014. At the start of 2006, FIFA contributed \$400,000 for office space at the GFF’s headquarters before providing a further \$500,000 for an artificial pitch at the technical centre in early 2010. On 30 April 2014, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) suspended the GFF from all CAF competitions, including the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations, for two years after the GFF fielded five over-age players for an U-20 World Cup qualifier against Liberia.

Born in 1936 in Kassel, Germany, Holger Obermann has worked in football for many years and on four continents. In a four-part FIFA Weekly series we exclusively present excerpts from the German overseas coach’s manuscript “Mein Fussball hatte Flügel” (My football had wings).

T H E E N

London, England



1972

Cards and a cigarette: Johan Cruyff (centre) gets into the right frame of mind for a European clash against Arsenal.

N O W

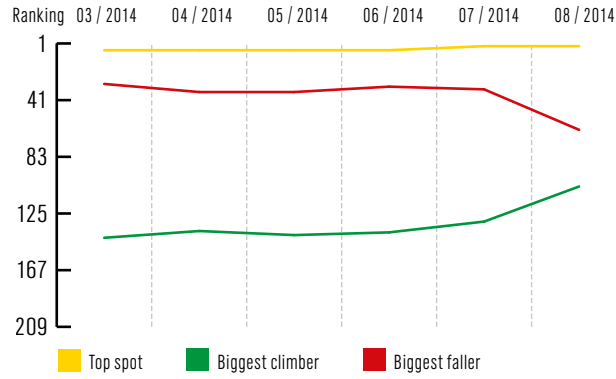
Hertfordshire, England



2013

Sony Playstation: Gareth Bale (right) and Lucas Moura during an advertising shoot at the Beckhams' place.

Rank	Team	Change in ranking	Points
1	Germany	0	1736
2	Argentina	0	1604
3	Netherlands	0	1507
4	Colombia	0	1495
5	Belgium	0	1407
6	Uruguay	0	1316
7	Spain	1	1241
7	Brazil	0	1241
9	Switzerland	0	1218
10	France	0	1212
11	Portugal	0	1152
12	Chile	0	1100
13	Greece	0	1092
14	Italy	0	1069
15	Costa Rica	1	1023
16	Croatia	1	964
17	Mexico	1	942
18	USA	-3	937
19	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	925
20	England	0	915
21	Ecuador	0	910
22	Ukraine	0	901
23	Russia	0	899
24	Algeria	0	880
25	Côte d'Ivoire	0	840
26	Denmark	0	818
27	Romania	1	740
28	Scotland	-1	738
29	Venezuela	1	724
29	Sweden	0	724
31	Serbia	0	723
32	Turkey	0	711
33	Nigeria	1	673
34	Hungary	4	656
35	Czech Republic	0	650
36	Ghana	2	648
36	Armenia	5	648
38	Egypt	-2	645
39	Slovenia	-2	643
40	Austria	3	624
41	Wales	3	623
42	Tunisia	0	617
43	Honduras	-3	596
44	Japan	1	593
45	Slovakia	1	584
46	Iceland	1	573
47	Paraguay	1	564
48	Iran	1	563
49	Montenegro	1	553
50	Sierra Leone	14	533
51	Uzbekistan	1	528
52	Peru	7	522
53	Norway	0	512
54	Cameroon	-1	507
55	Finland	0	502
56	Jordan	1	500
57	Korea Republic	-1	499
58	Burkina Faso	0	493
59	Senegal	3	491
60	Mali	0	488
61	Poland	0	482
62	Libya	1	475
63	Panama	-30	474
64	Guinea	-13	471
65	United Arab Emirates	0	464
66	Republic of Ireland	4	448
67	Oman	2	447
68	Israel	-1	439
69	South Africa	-3	438
70	Albania	-3	437
71	Bolivia	0	434
72	Bulgaria	0	429
73	Azerbaijan	0	413
74	Cape Verde Islands	1	411
75	Angola	4	408
76	FYR Macedonia	-2	407
77	Benin	14	405



78	Congo	4	395
79	Australia	-3	391
80	Trinidad and Tobago	4	384
81	Morocco	-2	381
81	Uganda	6	381
83	Saudi Arabia	-5	377
84	Zambia	-7	375
85	Jamaica	-2	373
86	Botswana	13	371
87	Togo	1	365
88	Palestine	-3	363
88	Belarus	-7	363
90	Zimbabwe	8	358
91	Iraq	-2	357
92	Qatar	-6	348
93	Estonia	-1	344
93	Congo DR	3	344
95	Northern Ireland	-6	341
95	Georgia	1	341
97	China PR	-3	334
98	New Zealand	3	330
99	Moldova	3	325
100	Latvia	3	324
101	Rwanda	8	318
102	Gabon	-9	311
103	Lithuania	1	306
104	Kenya	-9	305
105	Lesotho	26	302
106	Malawi	15	295
107	Bahrain	-2	289
107	Mozambique	7	289
109	Luxembourg	-1	288
110	Tanzania	-4	285
111	Kuwait	-4	280
112	Ethiopia	-2	275
113	Equatorial Guinea	-2	270
114	Namibia	-2	269
115	Lebanon	4	263
115	Sudan	0	263
117	Haiti	-4	262
118	Niger	-19	261
119	Liberia	-4	260
120	Tajikistan	4	252
120	Central African Republic	-3	252
122	Canada	-4	250
123	Guinea-Bissau	13	242
124	Cuba	-4	233
124	Aruba	-1	233
126	Dominican Republic	-1	230
127	El Salvador	-6	223
128	Philippines	0	221
129	Burundi	-3	219
129	Afghanistan	0	217
131	Kazakhstan	-4	213
131	Suriname	0	213
133	Mauritania	0	204
134	Guatemala	0	203
134	St Vincent and the Grenadines	1	203
136	New Caledonia	0	199
137	Turkmenistan	3	197
138	St Lucia	0	195
139	Vietnam	-10	192
140	Cyprus	-1	184
140	Chad	0	184
142	Grenada	0	182
143	Madagascar	0	179
144	Kyrgyzstan	0	176

145	Maldives	0	174
146	Korea DPR	1	167
147	Syria	-1	161
148	Gambia	0	157
149	Antigua and Barbuda	0	156
150	India	1	143
150	Malta	0	143
152	Singapore	2	140
153	Guyana	2	136
153	Indonesia	0	136
155	Puerto Rico	1	134
155	Malaysia	-4	134
157	Thailand	0	126
158	Swaziland	1	125
159	St Kitts and Nevis	-1	124
160	Myanmar	0	121
161	Hong Kong	1	118
162	Belize	-1	117
163	Guam	11	102
164	Pakistan	1	100
165	Montserrat	1	99
166	Nepal	-2	95
167	Liechtenstein	0	94
168	Dominica	-1	93
169	Barbados	0	92
170	Bangladesh	-7	87
171	Tahiti	0	85
172	Laos	-2	84
173	Solomon Islands	2	83
173	Bermuda	0	83
175	Nicaragua	0	78
175	Comoros	-3	78
177	São Tomé e Príncipe	0	72
178	Sri Lanka	0	71
179	Chinese Taipei	-1	70
180	Seychelles	2	68
181	Turks and Caicos Islands	0	66
182	Curaçao	1	63
183	Faroe Islands	1	61
184	Yemen	-4	59
185	South Sudan	1	43
186	Macau	18	41
186	Vanuatu	1	41
188	Mauritius	-3	37
189	Fiji	-1	31
190	Mongolia	-1	29
191	US Virgin Islands	-1	28
191	Samoa	-1	28
193	Bahamas	-1	26
193	Brunei Darussalam	-1	26
193	Timor-Leste	-1	26
193	Tonga	-1	26
197	Cayman Islands	-1	21
198	American Samoa	-1	18
199	Andorra	-1	16
200	Papua New Guinea	-1	14
201	Cambodia	-1	13
201	British Virgin Islands	-1	13
203	Eritrea	-1	11
204	Somalia	-1	8
205	Djibouti	0	6
206	Cook Islands	0	5
207	Anguilla	0	1
208	Bhutan	0	0
208	San Marino	0	0



Gloriously ghastly

Hanspeter Kuenzler

Even the best players in the world occasionally trip over their own feet, especially when confronted with a microphone, a recording engineer and a silly song.

Johan Cruyff was named European Footballer of the Year in 1971, 1973 and 1974. He won the Dutch championship eight times with Ajax and once with Fejenoord. He added winner's medals from La Liga and the Copa del Rey with Barcelona, and he led the Netherlands to the 1974 World Cup Final, where the Dutch fell 2-1 to hosts Germany but Cruyff won the Player of the Tournament award. There was poetry in Johan Cruyff's feet.

This was less true of his voice. We know this because he released a single, *Oei, oei, oei* (dat was me weer een loei), loosely translated as "Ouch, ouch, ouch (yet another blow!)". The lyrics, melody and the concept (such as it is) were devised by Peter Koelewijn, a pioneer of Dutch rock'n'roll with his band The Rockets and a regular visitor to the upper reaches of the charts. However, with "Ouch, ouch, ouch" the hit-maker came up with a glaring miss.

Cruyff, a broad-minded individual in touch with the spirit of the times, was immediately up for the project. Koelewijn only appreciated the full extent of the looming catastrophe

when the player stepped up to the microphone: "Johan was tone deaf. Not only that, he had no sense of rhythm whatsoever."

The project would have been abandoned there and then if a pal had not dragged the disconsolate lead artiste from the studio to a nearby bar. After downing a couple Cruyff returned, a trifle wobbly on his feet but with a touch less reediness and a pinch more punch to his voice. Tellingly, the player is wearing a suitably sheepish smile on the cover of the single, like a man caught in an acutely embarrassing position. The record was released in 1969, rehashed in a Spanish version in 1973 after the player's switch to Barcelona, and is without a shadow of a doubt the brilliant footballer's ghastliest own goal. Even the members of the brass ensemble who provided the Bavarian oompah-style backing track tentatively struggled to suppress their laughter, as the trumpets sporadically mimic the vocals with some jarring bum notes.

As to the song itself, it is a sad story about a "distant cousin", a boxer. At the start the protagonist takes a pasting in the ring. Later on he is beaten up by the waiter in a pub where his friends have taken him for a consoling drink. Last but not least, he receives a thorough thrashing from his furious wife. ☹



Perikles Monioudis

A football? An old, worn-out football made from leather – thick cowhide, in fact? Yes and no. This 'ball' was transformed in around 1800, well before bottles had become the common everyday objects that the emergence of plastic has since made them.

Nevertheless, one thing that yesterday and today's bottles have in common is that people still take them wherever they go, whether in the street, out in the backyard or in pursuit of the next goal.

Having said that, people taking fluids from footballs is not a familiar sight nowadays; in fact, the idea of someone lifting a modern ball to his mouth and drinking from it is absurd.

The leather bottle pictured above forms part of the FIFA Collection, and its wear and tear suggests it enabled many a goal and quenched many a thirst in its time. You can't get much more useful than that! ☺

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“The illness made me more relaxed”

Markus Babbel contracted Guillain-Barré syndrome in 2002. Overcoming the serious and debilitating illness has helped him in his subsequent coaching career.

It began in the autumn of 2002 with a harmless tingling in my toes. I'd just come through a bout of glandular fever and was on the road to recovery. I was told the uncomfortable feeling would disappear in three weeks or so, but it actually became worse and worse. At one point I could barely climb the steps unaided and my legs gave up on me.

The shock news came on 28 November when I was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a knock-on effect of the glandular fever. I was totally numb below the knee, and as you'd expect it really frightened me. When my illness was made public I received almost 400 letters from fellow sufferers. There were some real horror stories among them, including dialysis and total paralysis. I was shocked.

But I wasn't about to whinge and moan, because at the end of the day I'd led a charmed life up to that point. I thought to myself: 'OK, this is an unpleasant business but lots of people have it far worse, so roll your sleeves up and fight.'

I got through it after months in a wheelchair and punishing therapy. It meant a great deal to me that my club Liverpool backed me all the way and even gave me a contract extension. After I recovered I knew I'd changed and it had definitely been a turning point. I'd never been seriously injured in my career up to that point, and never sidelined for more than a month. Since recovering from GBS I have much greater empathy with injured players. Every pro wants to get back out onto the field as soon as possible after injury, and I too was very im-

patient as a younger man. I couldn't understand why a coach might not pick me because he reckoned I wasn't back to 100 percent yet, but I take a different view nowadays. You have to listen to your body and take care of it, because as a professional footballer it's your fundamental asset.

As a general rule I'm much more relaxed than I was before the illness. I used to be stubbornly determined and success meant more to me than anything else. I'm still ambitious as a coach and I'm looking to win every game, but I'm better at putting results into context and keeping things in perspective. I'm disappointed

when we lose but it's never the end of the world. GBS also taught me to take criticism much less personally. There really are much more important things in life than the football results. ⚽

As told to Nicola Berger

Name

Markus Babbel

Date and place of birth

8 September 1972, Munich

Position

Defender

Playing career

1991–2000 Bayern Munich

1992–1994 Hamburg (loan)

2000–2004 Liverpool

2003–2004 Blackburn Rovers (loan)

2004–2007 VfB Stuttgart

Coaching career

2008–2009 VfB Stuttgart

2010–2011 Hertha Berlin

2012 TSG Hoffenheim

In Turning Point, personalities reflect on a decisive moment in their lives.



instinct takes over

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Losing the winning habit, three FAs and Wembley woe: test your knowledge!

- ① Which of these clubs has lost eight continental finals in a row since their last match in the Intercontinental Cup?



H



R



S



W

- ② Which monarchy has exactly three different football associations for different regions? (This is the crest of one of the three associations.)



- A Great Britain
- E Thailand
- I Denmark
- O Japan

- ③ The iconic picture shows a moment of triumph, but which nation was the first to beat England on their famous home Wembley turf?



- D Scotland
- R Hungary
- T Ireland
- Z Uruguay

- ④ How many of these official national team coaches won the World Cup with Germany?



- Y 1
- D 2
- O 3
- E 4

The answer to last week's Quiz Cup was **ROAR**

Detailed answers on www.fifa.com/theweekly

Inspiration and implementation: cus

Send your answer by **17 September 2014** to feedback-theweekly@fifa.org.

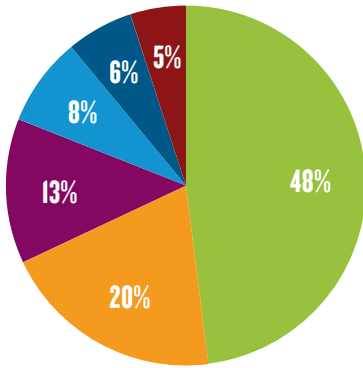
Correct solutions to all quizzes published from 13 June 2014 onwards will go into a draw in January 2015 for a trip for **two to the FIFA Ballon d'Or on 12 January 2015**.

Before sending in answers, all participants must read and accept the competition terms and conditions and the rules, which can be found at:

http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/af-magazine/fifaweekly/02/20/51/99/en_rules_20140613_english_neutral.pdf

LAST WEEK'S RESULT

Which of these previous winners was drawn into the most difficult 2014/15 UEFA Champions League group?



- BAYERN MUNICH**
- CHELSEA**
- BORUSSIA DORTMUND**
- PORTO**
- JUVENTUS**
- BENFICA**

THIS WEEK'S POLL

Which result from the recent round of international friendlies surprised you the most?

Choose from:

- Germany 2-4 Argentina
- Japan 2-2 Venezuela
- Uzbekistan 3-1 New Zealand
- Serbia 1-1 France
- Saudi Arabia 2-3 Australia
- Paraguay 0-0 United Arab Emirates

Cast your vote at:

www.fifa.com/newscentre



“Basti Schweinsteiger is our national team’s new capitano. Congrats! Good call by the coach.”

Thomas Muller

WEEK IN NUMBERS

6

years without a competitive home defeat was the run that came to a shock end for Portugal when they went down 1-0 to Albania on Sunday. It was A Seleção das Quinas’ first defeat on their own patch since a 3-2 reverse to Denmark in September 2008, and only their second since the turn of the century.



56483



was the remarkable attendance that on Sunday smashed the record for a futsal match. The game – an international between Brazil and Argentina – proved to be historic in all sorts of ways, with futsal staged in a football stadium for the first time. Nor was it just any stadium, with Brasilia’s magnificent Estadio Nacional Mane Garrincha playing host to incredible scenes on and off the pitch.

376

days without an international goal was the run that came to a welcome end for Danny Welbeck on Monday. The Arsenal striker, whose last England goal had come against Moldova on 3 September 2013, made a timely return to form with a brace in the Three Lions’ impressive 2-0 win away to Switzerland.

