Focus on education and prevention

Effective doping control, also during the 2006 FIFA World Cup

Doping is any attempt either by a player, or at the instigation of another person such as a manager, coach, trainer, doctor, physiotherapist or masseur, to enhance mental and physical performance unphysiologically or to treat ailments or injuries – when this is medically unjustified – for the sole purpose of taking part in a competition. Doping contravenes the ethics of sport, constitutes an acute health hazard for players, and may have fatal consequences.

FIFA introduced doping tests in 1966. Currently, the confederations and associations carry out their own doping tests at competitions they stage. FIFA’s fight against doping in football focuses on education and prevention with frequently performed tests.

FIFA’s in-competition doping control policy requires two players per team to be tested after each match. Out-of-competition, unannounced doping tests are carried out at training camps on four players per team. From 1994 to 2005, 3,327 doping tests were performed during official FIFA final rounds. Only four of them proved to be positive: two for ephedrine and one each for cannabis and nandrolone. This reflected an overall incidence of 0.12% positive cases over eleven years. One may assume that, in comparison to individual sports, team sports are less prone to abuse of substances.

According to the IOC and WADA, more than 20,000 doping tests are performed annually in football. To control these samples in the confederations and member associations, FIFA has developed its own database which allows each sample to be tracked. During 2004 and 2005, 88 and 78 positive samples were registered respectively at FIFA (cf. figure 1).

Of these, 85 were positive for cannabis, 46 for cocaine, 22 for anabolic steroids, 3 for stimulants and 10 for miscellaneous substances. Most of them were tested after each match. Out-of-competition, unannounced doping tests are carried out at training camps on four players per team. From 1994 to 2005, 3,327 doping tests were performed during official FIFA final rounds. Only four of them proved to be positive: two for ephedrine and one each for cannabis and nandrolone. This reflected an overall incidence of 0.12% positive cases over eleven years. One may assume that, in comparison to individual sports, team sports are less prone to abuse of substances.

PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES

FIFA has drawn up a list of prohibited substances and methods (table 1) in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Code. Some of the banned substances are more capable of enhancing a player’s performance than others. Narcotic analgesics, mainly opiates, and diuretics are both contraindicated for the type of exercise performed in football. Categories more attractive to footballers are stimulants, anabolic agents and peptide hormones.

Drugs containing prohibited substances could be permitted, provided a player’s health were impaired if the drug was withheld. For a Therapeutic Use Exemption, a player or his doctor must submit an application to the FIFA Doping Control Sub-Committee.

THE NEED FOR PHYSICIANS

Players are required to provide details of any drug treatment before the doping test. All medications must be listed, including their dosage and indications. This information is covered by patient confidentiality and may not be communicated to non-medical persons, such as the player’s coach, unless the A sample tests positive.

In addition, whereas until recently most of the doping substances were drugs developed for therapeutic purposes, today an increasing number of substances are being developed for the sole purpose of doping. Therefore, the doctor also has an educational function.

FIFA has established a worldwide network of about 300 FIFA doping control coordinators who have attended instructional seminars. The FIFA doping control procedure is straightforward and transparent, leaving no place for cheating or wrong-doing when all steps are correctly performed.

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

WADA-accredited laboratories treat samples anonymously, each being labelled with a code, ensuring that the analyses are objective. If an A sample is positive, the test is performed a second time before the result is sent to the committee in charge.

Attention must be paid to food supplements since they may contain banned substances, meaning a player takes them without realising it. It is difficult to prove that the substances originated in food or supplements, but players testing positive must bear the responsibility themselves.
DOPING

LEGAL ASPECTS

In September 2005, to resolve any differences between FIFA and WADA concerning their sanctioning principles, FIFA sought a legal opinion from the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) as to the extent to which the World Anti-Doping Code complies with Swiss law. In its legal opinion published in April 2006, CAS explicitly confirmed FIFA’s practice of using individual case management when sanctioning doping offences. In addition, CAS noted that in general, FIFA’s principle of individual case management complies with the World Anti-Doping Code. At the same time, the independent sports arbitration body with headquarters in Lausanne (Switzerland) ruled that FIFA’s provisions with regard to the fight against doping and the sanctioning of doping offences are largely in line with the World Anti-Doping Code, and that they are also fully compliant with Swiss law.

OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE

Part of doping may come under the scope of occupational medicine. Players who suffer from allergies, for example, need appropriate treatment. But many of their drugs are on the list of banned substances. Such treatment with a drug cannot be labelled as doping, but merely as enabling an athlete to exercise his normal profession. In these cases, treatment with banned substances are permitted if the case is openly declared by the team doctor.

It is a different proposition for professional footballers to take drugs to compensate for the ever-increasing demands made on them but the serious long-term consequences of such a practice cannot be justified. Even if there is no doping in terms of performance-enhancing drugs being taken, it is still considered as treatment intended to suppress the symptoms of injuries and over-exertion.

Only a firm stand taken by sports and occupational medicine will be able at least to protect players partially from such long-term damage. This is yet another reason why the campaign against true doping must be actively pursued.

### Table 1: List of banned substances and methods from FIFA Doping Control Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prohibited substances</th>
<th>Prohibited methods</th>
<th>Substances, methods prohibited in comp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anabolic agents</td>
<td>Enhancement of oxygen transfer</td>
<td>Stimulants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hormone and related substances</td>
<td>Chemical and physical manipulation</td>
<td>Narcotics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETA-2-agonists</td>
<td>Gene-doping</td>
<td>Cannabinoids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agents with anti-estrogenic activity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Glucocorticosteroids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diuretics and other masking agents</td>
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</table>

A copy is simultaneously sent to WADA, who then informs the player, who may request analysis of the B sample, and to FIFA, where the medical officer checks for a Therapeutic Use Exemption.

The aims of these analyses are: firstly, to prove that no banned substances are present in the urine samples of clean players. Secondly, in positive cases, to prove that a banned substance is in fact present, and finally, to prevent samples from erroneously being declared positive. Still, some banned substances cannot be detected using current technologies, while others may only be detected using blood samples.

FIFA magazine: Who were your favourite players as a boy?

Steven Gerrard: They were all very creative attack-minded players with an eye for goal. At Liverpool, my favourite players during my boyhood days were John Barnes and Peter Beardsley, who also played for England. They were the main players at Liverpool who both created and scored goals. For England, it was Paul Gascoigne, a fantastic player.

Who or what has been the greatest influence on your career?

Gerrard: My Dad because he provided me with all my boots, kit and travel to games before I became a professional and he hardly ever misses a game, home or away. Steve Heighway, the Liverpool Academy director, from the age of eight to 17. He helped me through difficult teenage years with any problems that arose. And there are the three managers I have worked under: Gerard Houllier, who made me captain at Liverpool which was a massive moment in my career; Rafael Benitez, who guided Liverpool to the Champions League title last year and the England head coach Sven-Goran Eriksson.

What are your strongest memories of the World Cup?

Gerrard: It has to be Paul Gascoigne when he played for England in the 1990 World Cup. He was the star man. I vividly remember the team against West Germany in Turin. We managed to get through to the semi-finals and we were very unlucky not to go the whole way. I watched with my Mum, Dad and brother leaping around when the penalties were on.

Jiri Dvorak, F-MARC chairman and FIFA chief medical officer.
I’ve played in massive games in the Champions League, I’ve played for England in the EUROs but the World Cup only comes around once every four years and it’s a dream to play in one. That will be the perfect stage for me to show people worldwide that I can dominate at this level. I just feel as if I can still offer a bit more at international level and Germany would be the perfect place to prove it.

What are England’s chances of winning the 2006 FIFA World Cup™?

Gerrard: We have a very good chance of winning the World Cup if we keep everyone injury-free and perform to the maximum level, although there are six or seven teams who also have that capability, with Brazil favourites in most people’s eyes. The confidence and belief that the Argentina victory (Ed: 3-2 in a friendly in Geneva in November 2005) gave us were massive but we need to take that into the summer and keep progressing all the way from now until the end of the tournament. We are ready for this World Cup. There are a lot of quality players and it could be a lot of players’ last World Cup as well and so it’s important that this group of players delivers in the summer. There is a confidence and belief in the squad that we can deliver. We’ve got enough talent to win it – it’s just about going out there and proving it.

Sven-Goran Eriksson has proved himself a success with clubs and at international level. What qualities do you think he brings to coaching the England team?

Gerrard: Eriksson is a very likeable manager that all the players enjoy playing for. He brings a wealth of experience which I believe will all benefit from and beneath that calm exterior he has a real will to win.

You led Liverpool to glory in last year’s UEFA Champions League. What are the secrets of a successful team?

Gerrard: Work, togetherness and focus and a never-say-die attitude.

What are England’s main strengths and weaknesses?

Gerrard: Our main strength is that we have fantastic team spirit, strong players and overall a really good squad. Our weakness would probably be consistency up to this point, but we aim to put that right in Germany. And hopefully we will have a lot of England fans in the stadiums and they can get behind us and give us that extra lift we may need.

What impact will England strikers Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen have in Germany?

Gerrard: Hopefully they will both have a massive impact. They are our two main goalscorers and can take us all the way! But it doesn’t really matter who scores the goals or who gets the man of the match awards, the important thing is that the team does well.

Your season started last July when Liverpool’s Champions League campaign began and you could end up playing around 60 games before you run out at the World Cup. Is that a concern?

Gerrard: No, it’s not a worry for me. The only time I worry about tiredness and injury, does that mean this year’s World Cup due to injury was the lowest point of my career. It was a nightmare. So it is a great stage for myself to go there and make up for lost time if you like and enjoy it but hopefully come back with it having been a success. Germany is important to me whether I went to Korea/Japan or not, but I think because of the frustration of missing out on 2002, I’m just looking forward to it that extra bit more and hopefully after it I come back with it having been a success.

In what respect is your game slightly different with England than it is for Liverpool?

Gerrard: At club level I play with either Xabi Alonso or Dietmar Hamann who both naturally play the anchor role which gives me the freedom to bomb on. With England, playing with people like Frank Lampard and David Beckham, I am a little bit more composed and aware of my defensive responsibilities. It doesn’t mean that I’m restricted all the time and can’t get forward though. Frank and David are clever enough that, if they see me go, they’ll naturally just sit in and look after the defensive side of things. I think we’ve got the right gel and mix in there.

Apart from English players, who else do you think could make their name at the World Cup?

Gerrard: Lionel Messi has impressed me with his performances this season and Kaka was an incredibly tough opponent in last year’s Champions League final.

Would you like to see an England versus Germany final in Berlin?

Gerrard: There is a big rivalry between England and Germany because they are two fantastic footballing countries. Yes, of course, I would love to play in the final of a World Cup against Germany – as long as we won.
In the 76 years of the FIFA World Cup™, there have been 17 final competitions, 644 matches and 1,916 goals – FIFA magazine tells you all you need to know about the biggest and most popular single-sport event.

The FIFA World Cup Trophy (left) and the Jules Rimet Cup.

The FIFA World Cup™ trophy is a challenge cup that remains in the permanent possession of FIFA. Made of 18-carat gold for the 1974 tournament, it is 36.8cm high and weighs 6.175kg. The base has space for 17 inscriptions, which will suffice until the 2038 FIFA World Cup™. The winning association receives a replica until the next tournament, although this is “only” gold-plated.

The foreunner of the current trophy was the Jules Rimet Cup, which was permanently awarded to Brazil after the Selecao’s third win in 1970. It was later stolen, however, never to be seen again. The trophy had been stolen once before when it was taken to Mexico and France and seven in Italy. Eight of the nine host cities from the 1974 FIFA World Cup™ are involved again in 2006, Dusseldorf being the only venue not to be selected this time. New for 2006 are Cologne, Kaiserslautern, Leipzig and Nuremberg.

1. The FIFA World Cup™ is the system that was used as early as 1958 in Sweden (16 teams, 35 matches) as well as in 1990 in Italy (24 teams, 52 matches). The only time the World Cup reached out further was in Spain in 1982, when matches were staged in 14 cities and 17 stadiums, and, of course in 2002, when it was co-hosted by Korea Republic and Japan, who each provided ten stadiums as in many cities.

2. A total of 23 cities have twice served as World Cup venues – Berlin, Dortmund, Frankfurt, Gelsenkirchen, Hamburg, Hanover, Munich and Stuttgart, as well as four each in Mexico and France and seven in Italy. Eight of the nine host cities from the 1974 FIFA World Cup™ are involved again in 2006, Dusseldorf being the only venue not to be selected this time. New for 2006 are Cologne, Kaiserslautern, Leipzig and Nuremberg.

3. Counting Korea Republic and Japan separately, 15 countries have organised a World Cup. After Italy (1934/90), Mexico (1970/86) and France (1938/98), Germany is the fourth nation to host a second World Cup.

4. Twelve cities – twelve stadiums: a system that was used as early as 1958 in Sweden (16 teams, 35 matches) as well as in 1990 in Italy (24 teams, 52 matches). The only time the World Cup reached out further was in Spain in 1982, when matches were staged in 14 cities and 17 stadiums, and, of course in 2002, when it was co-hosted by Korea Republic and Japan, who each provided ten stadiums as in many cities.

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6. In 1930 and 1950, the other two in 1982, when matches were staged in 14 cities and 17 stadiums, and, of course in 2002, when it was co-hosted by Korea Republic and Japan, who each provided ten stadiums as in many cities.

7. The successful football tournaments at the Olympic Games in 1920 and 1924 were a prime factor in persuading FIFA to launch the FIFA World Cup™ in 1930. Evidence of the status this game had already reached the Olympic gold medal in some countries can still be seen to this day. Uruguay play with four stars on their shirts; two for the World Cup wins of 1930 and 1950, the other two in commemoration of the two Olympic triumphs celebrated by the great Uruguayan team of the 1920s.

8. Thirteen teams (who did not need to qualify), 18 matches, 434,000 spectators: the inaugural World Cup was held in three stadiums – including the purpose-built Centenario – in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1930.

9. Twelve cities – twelve stadiums: a system that was used as early as 1958 in Sweden (16 teams, 35 matches) as well as in 1990 in Italy (24 teams, 52 matches). The only time the World Cup reached out further was in Spain in 1982, when matches were staged in 14 cities and 17 stadiums, and, of course in 2002, when it was co-hosted by Korea Republic and Japan, who each provided ten stadiums as in many cities.

10. A wide range of tournament formats have been employed in the history of the World Cup, with probably the strangest being the one used in 1954. Although the “modern” World Cup was already taking shape, 16 teams in four groups, two teams each were seeded and did not have to play each other – unless they had the same number of points. The 1954 World Cup final took place in Berne, Switzerland, with Brazil winning 2-1 against Germany. The winning team was elected both by the score and the result. The system has been employed from the 1986 onwards.

11. Today’s format has been in place since 1986. Since then, a knock-out system has been employed from the round of 16 onwards. The 1998 World Cup featured 32 teams, which was retained when the tournament was expanded again to 32 teams for the 1998 World Cup. The only exception was the World Cup final, which was expanded to 40 teams for the 1990 World Cup.

12. Only in 1950 was the World Cup played according to a format that did not provide for a final. Instead, the winners of four preliminary pools qualified for a final pool. Results in this group of four effectively turned the match between Brazil and Uruguay (1-2) into the final, as only these two teams were still in with a chance of winning the tournament.

13. Ever since the emergence of match highlights in the 1960s, the World Cup has been a premier television event. The cumulative audience for each of the last two tournaments (1998 and 2002) was around 30 billion, around ten times more than for the 2004 Summer Olympics.

14. To date, the host country has always made it through the group stage to qualify for the second round.

15. Despite being neighbours, the Argentine and Uruguayan football associations used different balls, and there was a heated debate as to which should be used in the 1930 FIFA World Cup. The winner of the final between the two teams, the Belgian referee Jean Langenus decided to use the lighter Argentine ball in the first half and the heavier Uruguayan ball in the second half.

16. Official FIFA World Cup™ soccer balls were launched in 1970. The first ball, TELSTAR, had 32 black-and-white panels. The TELSTAR was more visible on black-and-white televisions. The 1970 FIFA World Cup in Mexico™ was the first to be broadcast live on television.

17. Green-and-white striped shirts made their first – and to date last – appearance at a FIFA World Cup™ at the 1978 tournament. The French arrived in Mar del Plata without a change of strip for their first round match against Hungary. Since both teams’ shirts were white, the French had to find a solution: this came in the shape of a set of shirts borrowed from a local team, Atlético Kimberley, who played 2km away from the stadium. Their strip was of a quite original design – green-and-white vertical stripes – and it was therefore a unique sight at the FIFA World Cup™ finals.

18. South America v Europe: following Brazil’s fifth triumph in 2002, the score between the two traditional footballing continents in the battle for the highest honour in world football is currently 9-8. The lion’s share of the South American titles has been won by Brazil (five), Argentina and Uruguay have recorded two wins each. In Europe, four associations have...
shared the spoils: (West) Germany and France (each one).  

19. The chances of a European side winning the World Cup in 2006 are good. Eight of the nine tournaments staged in Europe to date have been won by a team from the Old Continent, with the hosts winning five. Only Brazil have been able to break this rule when winning the World Cup for the first time in Sweden in 1958. No European team has ever won the World Cup.  

20. The most frequent finalists are Brazil (seven finals, five victories) and Germany (seven finals, three wins). Italy (four finals) and Argentina (three finals) have each lost one of their finals.  

21. A total of 70 teams had taken part in the World Cup finals by 2002, including a number who either no longer exist or have undergone a transformation. When the World Cup was expanded to 24 teams, five countries qualified for the finals for the first time. Since then, there have always been three or four new teams. With six debutants, the 2006 World Cup will be no exception to the trend.  

22. In 1934, the host nation had to qualify for the finals. Italy came through against Greece with flying colours and eventually won the first of their three World Cup titles to date.  

23. The FIFA Statutes recognise the four British associations as separate members. But all four – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – have qualified for the World Cup only once, in 1958, when they were spread evenly across all four groups. Wales and Northern Ireland made it as far as the quarter-finals, with England and Scotland missing out. Wales were eventually eliminated by Pépé's first World Cup goal, while Northern Ireland conceded four against France, including two by just Fontaine.  

24. Depending on how you look at it, Germany have either a 41% chance of winning the 2006 World Cup (the hosts have won seven of 17 tournaments) or a healthy 55% (existing teams have missed out in five of the nine World Cups held in Europe). Since West Germany's win in 1974, the host nation has triumphed only twice. Argentina won on home soil in 1978, a feat repeated by France twenty years later.  

25. The importance of home advantage at a World Cup can also be seen in the fact that only three teams – Spain in 1982, the USA in 1994 and Japan in 2002 – failed to finish among the top eight.  

26. The most successful teams are those who have made it through to the finals the highest number of times. Brazil have qualified for all 18 World Cups, Italy and Germany for 16 and Argentina for 14.  

27. Brazil (2.23), Germany (1.98) and Italy (1.81) have not only contested the most games, they also have the highest points average per game. They are followed by two "smaller" football nations in Croatia (1.80 at two World Cups) and Denmark (1.77 at three).  

28. Probably the most exotic team ever to play in the World Cup was the Dutch East Indies, who featured in France in 1938 without having to play in the preliminary competition. The first country to represent the Asian confederation, they were eliminated after just one game, a 6-0 thrashing at the hands of Hungary.  

29. Italy's first round defeat by Sweden in 1950 was the first time any defending champions had lost a game at the FIFA World Cup.  

30. In 1994, and for the first time since 1938, not one of the four teams from the United Kingdom – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – was present at the FIFA World Cup final competition.  

31. Never have the defending champions fared so badly as France did in 2002. Not only did they fail to get past the opening round, but it was also the first time that the holders failed to win at least one game.  

32. Given that Brazil had been present at all 17 FIFA World Cup tournaments, and that Germany had missed just two – in 1930 and 1950 – it was remarkable that the 2002 FIFA World Cup final was the first time that these two great footballing nations had actually met in the FIFA World Cup.  

33. In 1970, for the first time in the history of the FIFA World Cup, all four semi-finalists – Uruguay, Brazil, Italy and Germany FR – were previous winners. This has happened just once since, in 1990.  

34. In 2006, a number of Argentinians who won Olympic gold in Athens in 2004 added themselves to the list of 14 players who have won both the Olympic football tournament and the World Cup.  

35. The players with the most tournament appearances are México's goalkeeping legend Antonio Carbajal (1950-66) and Germany's Lothar Matthäus (1982-98), with five World Cups each. In terms of playing time, Italy's Paolo Maldini (22.20 minutes in 23 matches at four World Cup) is ahead of Matthäus, whose 25 World Cup matches, however, remain unsurpassed.  

36. At 17 years and 41 days, Northern Ireland's Norman Whiteside became the youngest World Cup player of all time when he took to the field against Yugoslavia in 1982. Cameroon legend Roger Milla was almost exactly 25 years older (42 days, 39 days) when he made his last appearance in 1994.  

37. When Cameroon's Roger Milla scored a consolation goal in a 6-1 trouncing by Russia in 1994, he became the oldest goalscorer in World Cup history. Right: Lothar Matthäus played in five World Cups.  

38. World Cup teams sometimes feature generation gaps. When Cameroon played Russia in 1994, the 42-year-old Roger Milla found himself playing alongside Rigobert Song, who had yet to turn eighteen. The age difference was not much smaller in the 1982 World Cup final, when Italy’s Dino Zoff (40 years, 133 days) kept goal behind defender Giuseppe Bergomi (18 years, 201 days).  

39. The most goals scored by one player in a single World Cup match is five by Russia’s Oleg Salenko in the 6-1 win over Cameroon in 1994. The list of those who have scored four in a game is also short and comprises a number of players who rank at the very top of the all-time scoring list. (Poland, Ademir/Brazil, Kocsis/Hungary, Fontaine/France, Eusebio/Portugal and Butragueno/Spain).  

40. Of the more than 50 players to have scored a final, only three have gone on to score in a second final: Brazil’s Vava (58/62) and Pelé (58/70) as well as Paul Breitner of West Germany (1974/82).  

41. Just two players have done the double as a player and a coach. Mário Zagallo won the World Cup playing for Brazil in 1958 and 1962, whom he then coached to success in 1970. Franz Beckenbauer achieved the same feat in 1974 and 1990. The “Kaiser” also featured on the losing side for West Germany in the 1966 and 1986 finals as a player and coach respectively.  

42. In 2002, Oliver Kahn became the first goalkeeper to be awarded the Golden Ball as player of the tournament.
Silvio Piola was mistakenly believed to be dead in World War II. II: Right: Goalkeeping legend Lev Yashin.

43. The trophy awarded to the best goalkeeper is named after Lev Yashin, who in four appearances at the World Cup finals never finished higher than fourth (in 1966). The Russian number one made an unforgettable impression in three successive World Cups between 1958 and 1966. In 1970, he sat on the bench at the age of 41.

44. “Super sub”: the Brazilian Denilson can be considered the most successful substitute in World Cup history, having come on as a replacement in 11 times in 1998 and 2002, including both finals.

45. Five pairs of brothers have played in a World Cup final, but only the Walter brothers (West Germany, 1954) and the Charltons (England, 1966) finished as champions. The Evaristo (Argentina, 1930), Van de Kerkhof (Netherlands, 1974/78) and Forster (West Germany, 1982) brothers all lost out in the final.

46. Pelé is the only player with three World Cup wins to his name (1958, 1962 and 1970), although in 1962 he did miss most of the games through injury, including the final. Brazil’s Cafu is the only player to have played in three consecutive finals (1994-2002).

47. Players who have won both the Olympic football tournament and the World Cup are a rare species. Just ten Uruguayans and four Italians achieved this feat during the three World Cups in the 1930s. Ten years after winning Olympic gold, Sweden’s Niels Liebrandh lost in the 1958 World Cup final, while the 1954 “miracle of Bern” prevented the triumph of the Hungarian team of Puskás and Kocsis, who won the Olympic title in 1952. The Polish team captained by Kazimierz Deyna won gold at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Two years later they returned to the Olympic Stadium in Munich during the World Cup – but for the third-place play-off.

48. The players have developed in more ways than one over the past 30 years: World Cup hosts in 1974 and 2006, Germany’s national squad have, on average, gained 7cm (178cm – 185cm) and put on 7kg in weight (73kg – 80kg).

49. Twenty-one Brazilians and Italians from various eras can say they have won the World Cup twice.

50. At 35, the oldest player at the 1950 FIFA World Cup™ was the Englishman, Stanley Matthews. Remarkably, Matthews carried on playing for England for another seven years and did not hang up his boots until 1965.

51. Shiko Piola, who scored two goals for Italy in the 1938 FIFA World Cup™ final against Hungary, was given up for dead during World War II. He reappeared, however, and carried on scoring for both club and country, and to this day he remains the all-time top scorer in the Italian championship.

52. Marcello Trotzian’s FIFA World Cup™ career may have been the shortest in the history of the FIFA World Cup™ at just one minute long, but what a minute to experience! Trotzian was an 89th minute substitute for Argentina in their 3-2 win over West Germany in the 1986 FIFA World Cup™ final.

53. Christian Vieri was the footballer responsible for Italy’s 100th goal in FIFA World Cup™ history (and their 1,000th goal ever in Italian national team history). His goal against Cameroon (3-0) in the 89th minute of Italy’s group match occurred in Montpellier, France on Wednesday, 17 June 1998. Vieri also scored FIFA World Cup™ milestone goal number 1,900 when he netted against Korea Republic in 2002.

54. At 35, the oldest player at the 1950 FIFA World Cup™ was the Englishman, Stanley Matthews. Remarkably, Matthews carried on playing for England for another seven years and did not hang up his boots until 1965.

55. Miloš Anzemjek, coach of Yugoslavia in 1955, was a FIFA World Cup™ veteran. He played in 1930 and was the first person to appear in both roles.

56. Helmut Schon coached West Germany in Basle a week earlier and Brazil after the match had finished 4-4 at the end of normal time. In the 1954 quarter-final, Switzerland even led 3-0 against Austria after twenty minutes, before a flood of Austrian goals overwhelmed Swiss goalkeeper Jacques Parler.

57. The youngest World Cup coach of all time was Argentina’s Juan José Tramutola, who in 1930, at the age of just 28, managed a team containing a number of players who were older than him. Conversely, Cesare Maldini, at 70, was old enough to have been the grandfather of many of his Paraguayan charges in 2002.

58. Five coaches have reached the final on two occasions: Pozzo (Italy, 1934/38), Schon (West Germany 1966/70), Zagallo (Brazil 1970/98), Beckenbauer (West Germany, 1966/90) and Bizzarri (Argentina, 1948/60). Only Pozzo won both.

59. Miloš Anzemjek, coach of Yugoslavia in 1955, was a FIFA World Cup™ veteran. He played in 1930 and was the first person to appear in both roles.

60. For once it is not Brazil who head the ranking for the highest average number of goals scored per game (2.2), but Hungary (2.7). This is largely down to the 27 goals the Hungarians notched up at the 1954 tournament – a unique record that was set in just five games. The only other nations to average more than two goals a game are Portugal, Germany and Turkey.

61. Ten or more goals have been scored in just five of the 644 World Cup matches played to date. The highest-scoring game was also one of the most exciting: Austria’s 7-5 win over Switzerland in Lausanne in 1954 has gone down in history, as have Hungary’s 8-3 triumph over West Germany in Belo a week earlier and Brazil’s 6-5 victory over Poland in Strasbourg in 1938.

62. A team has twice scored five goals in a game and still failed to win. In 1938, Poland went down 6-5 to Brazil after the match had finished 4-4 at the end of normal time. In the 1954 quarter-final, Switzerland even led 3-0 against Austria after twenty minutes, before a flood of Austrian goals overpowered Swiss goalkeeper Jacques Parler.

63. The biggest victories are to be found in Hungarian record books. In 1954, Puskás & co. subjected the debutants from Korea Republic to a 9-0 thrashing, while El Salvador suffered a similar fate in 1982, losing 10-1. Yugoslavia also rapped up a 9-0 win over Zaire in 1974.

64. Brazil (1930-54) and Germany (1934-54) scored at least one goal in 18 successive games. Italy went five games without conceding a goal at the 1990 World Cup on home soil. Not until the semi-final did Claudio Caniggia’s equaliser for Argentina end goalkeeper Walter Zenga’s record-breaking run (517 minutes).

65. Although Brazil (1978) and Italy (1990) went seven games unbeaten, both failed to make the final – losing out on goal difference and in a penalty shoot-out respectively – and both eventually finished in third place.

66. England’s Peter Shilton kept a clean sheet in ten different matches between 1982 and 1990, a record that has withstood all challenges.

67. The 644 matches played so far have produced 1,916 goals, an average of nearly three per game. In Switzerland in 1994, an average of 5.4 goals was scored per match, a figure which had fallen to a measly 2.2 by Italy ’90. Between 1930 and 1978, an average of 3.4 goals was scored per match. Since the 1982 tournament – i.e. for the last six World Cups – the average has been just 2.6.

68. Every third World Cup game has ended 1-0 or 2-1, with 10% ending 2-0 and 10-1-1. Only 8% of all matches played to date have ended 0-0.

69. Altogether, 1,916 World Cup goals have been scored so far, with the 2,000th likely to be scored at the 2006 tournament. Among the scorers of previous milestone goals are famous names such as Gerd Müller (800, 1970), Jean-Pierre Papin (1,200, 1986), Gary Lineker (1,300, 1986) and Christian Vieri (1,900, 2002).

70. The most prolific World Cup goalscorer is a German, Gerd Müller with a total of 14 (scored in 1970/74). The record for a single tournament is held by Frenchman just Fontaine, who found the net 13 times in 1958. Pele’s total of 12 strikes was matched by his compatriot Ronaldo in 2002.

71. The World Cup scoring list with a difference is provided by a look at the players who managed to get on the scoreboard more than one tournament. Pelé and Uwe Seeler are way out in this respect, having netted at least once in every tournament from 1958 to 1970. The list of players who scored at three different tournaments reads like an extract from the “Who’s Who” of world football and includes Klopstock, Babatú, Lato, Rummenigge, Baggio, Voeller, Szarmach, Maradona, Matthäus, Platini, Hierro, Retchetaie, Jordan and Julio Salinas. The latter achieved the unusual feat of spreading his three World Cup goals across the three tournaments held in 1986, 1990 and 1994.
Gabriel Batistuta scored two hat tricks.

- The fastest World Cup hat-trick was scored by Hungary’s Laszlo Kis against El Salvador in 1982. It took him just seven minutes, four fewer than Batistuta against Jamaica in 1998.

- Many hat tricks are associated with great matches and great players. Emíl Wílmovský’s four goals for Poland in 1938 were not enough to beat Brazil, for whom Leonidas struck three times in a 6-5 win. In 1966, Eusébio topped his hat trick with a fourth goal to turn the game for Portugal against Korea DPR, while Geoff Hurst’s second of three strikes in the 1966 final between England and West Germany is one of the most controversial moments in World Cup history.

- South Africa’s Pierre Issa is unlikely to forget the final 15 minutes of his country’s 1998 FIFA World Cup™ clash against eventual champions France. Having scored an own goal in the 77th minute to make it 2-0, Issa then scored another just before the final whistle. FIFA later credited his second “own goal” to Thierry Henry, thereby sparing Issa the ignominy of being the first-ever player to score two own goals in one World Cup match. And as if that were not enough — Issa’s nightmare actually unfolded in a stadium close to his heart… the Stade Velodrome, home to Olympique Marseille, Issa’s club at the time.

- History was made in the USA vs. Portugal match in Soweto, South Africa on 5 June 2002, with two own goals scored in the same game. Nearly an hour after celebrating Jorge Costa’s own goal, the Americans looked on in disbelief as a stunning effort from Jeff Agoos flew into the wrong net and left the match in the balance once again.

- The Republic of Ireland has proved very economical, accumulating 14 points from just ten goals in 13 matches at three different World Cups (1.4 points per goal). Only Croatia can compete in this respect (1.0 matches, 13 goals, 18 points; 1.38 points per goal). The most outstanding teams in recent World Cup history are all close together in this table: Brazil 1.02, Argentina 0.99, and Germany 0.95.

- More than 500 games — three in four — have produced a winner so far. Only a quarter have ended in a draw.

- Sixteen matches have been decided by a penalty shoot-out, the first in 1982, when West Germany beat France in the semi-finals. The most famous penalty decision of all ended in victory for Brazil in the 1994 final in Los Angeles. Besides this one, Italy also lost their other two penalty shoot-outs against Argentina (1990) and France (1998). In contrast, Argentina and Germany have yet to lose in three penalty decisions.

- The World Cup is the only event at which national teams from different continents face each other at the highest level. Altogether, 404 of the 644 matches contested so far fall under the intercontinental category (63%). All the same, 200 (or 32%) were all-European clashes. Matches between two South American teams have taken place 18 times. Two CONCACAF derbies complete the statistics, which are yet to include any all-Asian or all-African matches.

- Brazil won every single game on their way to lifting the trophy in both 2002 (7 matches) and 1970 (6). In 1934/38, Italy also won seven consecutive matches — and two titles.

- More than 100,000 spectators have been recorded on 17 different occasions — all of them in Rio de Janeiro or Mexico City. The all-time record was set at the decisive clash between Brazil and Uruguay at the Maracana in 1950 when 174,000 fans witnessed Uruguay’s surprise title triumph.

- For all the size of the Maracana and the Azteca Stadium, the 1998 FIFA World Cup™ gave the world governing body an attendance record to end all attendance records to mark its 90th anniversary. A total of 3.5 million spectators watched the 52 matches, an average of more than 68,000 per game.

- In view of the total capacity of over three million spectators (which would equate to an average crowd of almost 50,000), the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ could yet achieve the second-highest figure.

- French referee Joel Quiniou officiated in a record eight matches during the 1998 World Cup. The only player to receive a caution in the first minute of a match. The fastest red card belongs to Jose Batista, who was sent off in the opening minute of the game between Uruguay and Scotland in 1986.

- Red and yellow cards were not introduced until 1970, although.