

BRIAN GLANVILLE
THE STORY OF THE
WORLD CUP



**THE ESSENTIAL
COMPANION TO
BRAZIL 2014**

'THE GOLD STANDARD OF SPORTS WRITING.'
DAVID BADDIEL

ff

ii

The Story of the World Cup

The Essential Companion
to Brazil 2014

Brian Glanville

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The Story of the World Cup

URUGUAY

1930

Background to 1930

Like so many of the best ideas in football, that of the World Cup was conceived in France. Its true parents were, indeed, two Frenchmen: Jules Rimet, after whom it was eventually named, and Henri Delaunay. Rimet was President of the French Federation, FFF, for thirty years from its beginning in 1919, and President of FIFA, the Fédération Internationale des Football Associations, from 1920 to 1954; an extraordinary record. Delaunay, who had been concerned with running French football from 1908, was officially Secretary from 1919 till his death in 1956, a little before the death of the 83-year-old Rimet.

These two men complemented each other: Rimet the persuader, the diplomat, sometimes intransigent, always devoted to the game; Delaunay the worker, visionary and energetic. Sometimes they quarrelled, but they were the pioneers of French football, European football—and the World Cup.

The very first meeting of FIFA took place in Paris in 1904—without the benefit of British attendance—and decided rather grandly that it alone had the right to organise a world championship. This right was not to be exercised for twenty-six years. In 1920, at FIFA's Antwerp congress, concurrent with the Olympic Games, the idea of a World Cup, previously much debated, was accepted in principle. In 1924, at the Paris Olympics, the FIFA meeting discussed it in more serious detail, while a dazzling and hitherto obscure Uruguayan side walked off with the soccer tournament.

Two years later, at FIFA's congress, Delaunay proclaimed: 'Today international football can no longer be held within the confines of the Olympics; and many countries where professionalism is now recognised and organised cannot any longer be represented there by their best players.'

This had always been true of Britain, which even before the war had been represented by genuine amateurs and which in a couple of years would withdraw from FIFA over the question of broken time payments. Now, it was keeping out such rising countries as Austria and Hungary, while many of those which competed were professionals in all but name. In 1928, in Amsterdam, where Uruguay retained their title against a strong challenge from Argentina, Delaunay's resolution that the World Cup be set on foot at once was adopted. But where should it be played?

There were five aspirants: Italy, Holland, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay. Tiny Uruguay, with its proud footballing tradition—'Other countries have their history,' their team manager, Viera, would say at the 1966 World Cup, 'Uruguay has its football'—made an offer extraordinary for a country of merely two million people. They would pay all travelling and hotel expenses for the visiting teams, and they would build a new stadium for the tournament. It would be in central Montevideo and would be called the Centenary Stadium, for Uruguay in 1930 would be celebrating a hundred years of independence. It would be built in only eight months, three of which included the rainy season.

Faced by such transcendent enthusiasm, what could the European countries do but withdraw—together? None of the four disappointed hosts made the trip to Uruguay, which in those days took a wearying three weeks.

The Contenders

Allotted the World Cup at FIFA's 1929 congress in Barcelona, Uruguay found themselves, two

months before it was due to kick off, without a single European entrant. In addition to the four we have mentioned, the Austrians, Hungarians, Germans, Swiss and Czechs said no; the British were out of FIFA. Belgium, Romania and Yugoslavia vacillated, as did France, though after Rimet's appointment to the FIFA presidency, and Uruguay's 1924 appearance in Paris, the moral imperatives were strong.

Embittered, insulted, the Latin American federations threatened to withdraw from FIFA; a threat they would be making many times in the years to come. Belgium and Romania at last adhered—Belgium under the pressure of the veteran FIFA Vice-President, Rodolphe William Seeldrayers and Romania under that of King Carol himself. Though the German-speaking king was never popular in Romania, he had always had much to do with Romanian sport. One of his first acts, on coming to the throne, was to grant an amnesty to all suspended Romanian footballers. Now he picked the Romanian team himself and brought pressure on the companies which employed them to give them time off for Uruguay. Yugoslavia also agreed to go, so there would be four European entrants; but not even by the greatest feat of imagination could they be ranked among the élite. The bitterness in Montevideo was scarcely assuaged.

In the 1924 Olympics Uruguay had thrashed Yugoslavia 7–0 and France 5–1. In 1928, Belgium had been beaten by Argentina 6–3; and now they were travelling without three of their best players including Bastin.

Argentina, traditional rivals of Uruguay in the Lipton Cup, would be there, however, and would be doughty rivals. In 1928, it had taken a replay before they succumbed 2–1 in the Olympic Final.

The United States would be there too; moreover, they were one of the teams seeded in the four qualifying pools, which had been set up only when it was realised there wouldn't be enough countries to make a knock-out competition possible. At this time there was still professional football of a sort in the States, the rump of the attempt by such as Bethlehem Steel to put the sport on its feet in the 1920s. The American team, managed by Jack Coll of Brooklyn Wanderers, was made up largely of British and Scots pros: Alec Wood, James Gallacher, Andrew Auld, James Brown and Bart McGhee from Scotland, George Moorhouse from England. They were powerfully built men whom the French players nicknamed 'the shot-putters'.

Brazil were present, but it was not long since the gates had been opened to the black player and the game there was still somewhat in a condition of inspired anarchy. Chile and Mexico, who made up Pool I with Argentina and France; Bolivia, in Pool II with Brazil and Yugoslavia; Peru, in Pool III with Uruguay and Romania; Paraguay, in Pool IV with the USA and Belgium completed the entry of thirteen. The four Pool winners would go into the semi-finals.

Uruguay were unquestionably the favourites, though their fine team of the 1924 and 1928 Olympics was fractionally past its peak; in the image of its famous centre-forward, Pedro Petrone. Nevertheless, it had home advantage and its still abundant talent in its favour, and it is arguable that it would have won the tournament whatever European teams had come, even England, Scotland and the formidable Austrian Wunderteam.

The Earlier Matches

The four European teams, whose boat had picked up the Brazilians en route, were tumultuously welcomed in Montevideo, though none had been seeded head of a group; a distinction reserved for Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and the USA. The Centenary Stadium was, alas, still unfinished, thanks

to heavy rain; early matches had to be played on the grounds of the Penarol and Nacional clubs, Pocito and Central Park. On Sunday afternoon, July 13, France opened the tournament against Mexico with a 4–1 win; although their admirable and unspectacular goalkeeper, Alex Thépot, was kicked on the jaw after ten minutes, giving way to his left-half, Chantrel. (There would be no substitutes for another forty years.) The French team was a good and lively one, with Etienne Mattler, who would play so well for France for so long, at right-back, Pinel as pivot, and a captain Alex Villaplane, the right-half, who would ultimately be shot by the French Resistance for collaborating with the Nazis.

Two days later, France faced the gifted Argentinians—and were most unlucky to go down by 1–0. Monti was at his most ferocious, hurting the ankle of Lucien Laurent, France's inside-left, early in the game, and giving Pinel, who largely overplayed him, some kind of a knock every time they met. Monti it was who scored the goal, nine minutes from time. Argentina were given a free kick twenty yards out. As Monti took it, Pinel stepped to his right, unsighting the excellent Thépot—and the shot flashed into the net.

Three minutes later, with Maschinot, the centre-forward limping after another tackle by Monti, Marcel Langiller raced the length of the field. It might have been the equaliser, but Almeida Rego, the Brazilian referee, suddenly blew for time. Instant chaos. While Argentina's fans invaded the field of Central Park, the French players assailed the referee, insisting there were six minutes left. Mounted police galloped on to the field, Senhor Rego consulted his watch and his linesmen, and at last, raising his arms, cried to the heavens that he had erred in good faith. Cierro, the Argentinian inside-left, fainted, the game resumed, and the remaining minutes petered uneventfully away.

Afterwards, Uruguay's watching players declared that France deserved to win, Thépot and Pinel were carried off shoulder high, and the Argentinians complained accordingly to the Organising Committee, threatening to go home; thus sounding what would become another tediously familiar note.

In their next match, against Mexico, deprived of Manuel Ferreira, taking a university exam, they brought in young Guillermo Stabile, *El Enfiltrador*, destined to become the competition's leading scorer and eventually his country's team manager.

This was a match in which the Bolivian referee, Ulysses Saucedo, gave no fewer than five penalties—Monti was not playing!—of which perhaps two were justified.

Stabile, who had scored three goals against Mexico, kept his place for a tempestuous game against Chile, Ferreira coming in as inside-left. Two minutes from half-time Monti, back again, kicked at Torres, Chile's left-half, as he jumped to head the ball. Torres retaliated, and both teams indulged in a protracted brawl, broken up with great difficulty by the police.

Argentina, Stabile scoring twice more, won 3–1 and advanced to the semi-finals. A tried France had anti-climactically gone down 1–0 to Chile, managed by the old Hungarian star, George Orth.

Uruguay did not enter the fray till July 18, when the Centenary Stadium was at last ready to receive them. Not unexpectedly, perhaps, the game against Peru was a disappointment. Peru's defence held out well, and where Romania had scored three against them, Uruguay could manage only one; a late one by Castro—a player who had lost the lower part of one arm.

For their next match, against Romania, Uruguay brought in Scarone and their new star, Pelegrin Anselmo, for Castro and Petrone, respectively, winning 4–0 in a canter to qualify.

In Group II, Yugoslavia unexpectedly toppled Brazil 2–1 in their first game. Brazil were individually cleverer, collectively inferior. Two of the Yugoslav team, Beck and Stefanovic, had just helped Sète win the French Cup. Tirnanic and Beck scored in the first half-hour, another goal

was disallowed for offside, and Brazil could muster but one reply through their captain, Neto. Each team then beat Bolivia 4–0, and the Yugoslavs went through.

So did the United States, their strong defence and breakaway attacks routing Belgium and Paraguay in turn by 3–0. In the semifinal, alas, the much greater pace and sophistication of the Argentinians simply overwhelmed them and they crashed 6–1; precisely the score by which Uruguay trounced Yugoslavia. The half-time score was only 1–0, a goal credited to Monti, but in the second half the Americans simply fell apart, conceding five more, the last three within nine minutes, two to the swift right-winger, Peucelle. Brown, their own outside-right, got their only goal.

Eighty thousand spectators watched Uruguay despatch Yugoslavia after sustaining the shock of a fourth-minute goal by Seculic. Cea and Anselmo made it 2–1 by the interval, and Yugoslavia were then refused, on a controversial offside decision, what would have been their equaliser.

So, in the second half, Uruguay scored four. Fernandez caught the Yugoslav defence off guard with a cleverly lobbed free kick which Iriarte converted, then Cea, the inside-left, scored two more, the first after a mistake by Yugoslavia's captain and right-back, Ivkovic. Next day, Argentina joined them in a Final which would be a repetition of the Olympic Final of 1928.

The Final Uruguay v. Argentina

In Buenos Aires the excitement was phenomenal. Ten packet-boats were chartered to take fans across the River Plate to Montevideo, but they were insufficient; thousands of desperate supporters thronged the centre of Buenos Aires, clamouring for more boats. When they eventually sailed, at ten o'clock on the eve of the Final, a great crowd thronged the quayside to see them off, letting off fireworks and chanting, '*Argentina si, Uruguay no!* Victory or death!' Arriving in Montevideo, the Argentinians were searched for revolvers by customs and police; and searched again at the entrance to the Centenary Stadium. The kick-off was scheduled for two o'clock; the gates were opened at eight in the morning, and by noon the ground was packed. Though it could take 100,000, the attendance was limited to 90,000—with memories of an inaugural day when the police had been overwhelmed by the crowds and the ticket offices, now closed with metal grilles, were assailed.

John Langenus, chosen, as had been expected, to referee the match, demanded that the safety of himself and his linesmen be guaranteed, and only a few hours before kick-off did his fellow referees authorise him to preside. The Argentinian players had been under a police guard day and night, mounted police escorting their coach to and from each training session. Around the stadium soldiers with fixed bayonets kept the crowds moving; and after all this there was still the question of the match ball.

Each team insisted on a ball of native manufacture; a point which had not been covered in the regulations. It was finally decided that Langenus should toss up on the field. To a fusillade of firecrackers, he did. Argentina won.

Though Uruguay clearly had to be favoured on their own stadium, before their own crowd, the team had not played with the assurance of its predecessors. Moreover, Pelegrin Anselmo was unfit and was replaced at centre-forward by Castro; Petrone's sun had definitely set. Argentina might have missed Orsi, but they had found Stabile, and their forward play had been excellent; full of fast, sweeping, intelligent movements, the traditionally fine ball control allied to subtle positioning. In goal, however, there was a manifest weakness. Angelo Bossio's flashy, unreliable play had led to his being dropped from the semi-final, but his replacement, Juan Botasso, was no great improvement.

The first half was pregnant with surprises. After only twelve minutes, Pablo Dorado, the Uruguayan right-winger, gave his country the lead, but Peucelle, his opposite number, equalised and ten minutes from halftime John Langenus boldly sanctioned a goal by Stabile which Nasazzi, Uruguay's captain, fiercely insisted was offside. Crowds being unpredictable organisms, there was no attempt to invade the pitch this time, merely a stunned acceptance.

The crowds came to life again ten minutes after the interval, when Pedro Cea capped an insidious dribble with the equalising goal. Uruguay had broken the spell. Ten minutes more and the young Uruguayan outside-left, Santos Iriarte, put them ahead, and finally Castro, Anselmo's understudy, smashed the ball into the roof of the net in the concluding seconds. Uruguay had won an exciting and surprisingly good-tempered game.

But what of Monti, alias 'The Man Who Strolled'? Long, long afterwards, at the age of 92, sole survivor of Argentina's team, Pancho Varallo, then the inside right, accused Monti of being in a state of panic after receiving death threats. Varallo, who played ten years for Argentina and in his old age ran a lottery ticket shop in the city where he'd begun his career with Gimnasia y Esgrima, declared that in the dressing-room before kick off in the final, Monti feared he'd be killed and threatened not to play, and had to be reassured by Varallo and the other players.

But throughout the match, Varallo recollected, Monti was in such a state of terror as to be virtually a passenger. When Varallo himself was injured and had to limp on the wing, Argentina were effectively reduced to ten men.

Motor horns blared in triumph, ships blew their sirens in the port, flags and banners flew, the next day was proclaimed a national holiday. The golden, 50,000-franc Cup, designed by a French sculptor, Abel Lafleur, was consigned to Nasazzi by Jules Rimet.

In Buenos Aires, the Uruguayan Consulate was stoned by an infuriated mob until the police dispersed it by opening fire. The World Cup was well and truly launched.

RESULTS: Uruguay 1930

Pool I

France 4, Mexico 1 (HT 3/0)

Argentina 1, France 0 (HT 0/0)

Chile 3, Mexico 0 (HT 1/0)

Chile 1, France 0 (HT 0/0)

Argentina 6, Mexico 3 (HT 3/0)

Argentina 3, Chile 1 (HT 2/1)

							GOALS		
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		
Argentina	3	3	0	0	10	4	6		
Chile	3	2	0	1	5	3	4		
France	3	1	0	2	4	3	2		
Mexico	3	0	0	3	4	13	0		

Pool II

Yugoslavia 2, Brazil 1 (HT 2/0)

Yugoslavia 4, Bolivia 0 (HT 0/0)

Brazil 4, Bolivia 0 (HT 1/0)

							GOALS		
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		
Yugoslavia	2	2	0	0	6	1	4		
Brazil	2	1	0	1	5	2	2		
Bolivia	2	0	0	2	0	8	0		

Pool III

Romania 3, Peru 1 (HT 1/0)

Uruguay 1, Peru 0 (HT 0/0)

Uruguay 4, Romania 0 (HT 4/0)

							GOALS		
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		
Uruguay	2	2	0	0	5	0	4		
Romania	2	1	0	1	3	5	2		
Peru	2	0	0	2	1	4	0		

Pool IV

United States 3, Belgium 0 (HT 2/0)

United States 3, Paraguay 0 (HT 2/0)

Paraguay 1, Belgium 0 (HT 1/0)

	GOALS						Pt.
	P	W	D	L	F	A	
United States	2	2	0	0	6	0	4
Paraguay	2	1	0	1	1	3	2
Belgium	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

Semi-finals

Argentina 6

Botasso; Della Torre,
Paternoster; Evaristo, J.,
Monti, Orlandini;
Peucelle, Scopelli,
Stabile, Ferreira (capt.),
Evaristo, M.

United States 1

Douglas; Wood,
Moorhouse; Gallacher,
Tracey, Auld; Brown,
Gonsalvez, Patenaude,
Florie (capt.), McGhee.

SCORERS

Monti, Scopelli, Stabile (2), Peucelle (2), for Argentina

Brown for United States

HT 1/0

Uruguay 6

Ballesteros; Nasazzi
(capt.), Mascheroni;
Andrade, Fernandez,
Gestido; Dorado,
Scarone, Anselmo,
Cea, Iriarte.

Yugoslavia 1

Yavocic; Ivkovic
(capt.), Milhailovic;
Arsenievic, Stefanovic,
Djokic; Tirnanic,
Marianovic, Beck,
Vujadinovic, Seculic.

SCORERS

Cea (3), Anselmo (2), Iriarte for Uruguay

Seculic for Yugoslavia

HT 3/1

Final

Uruguay 4

Ballesteros; Nasazzi
(capt.), Mascheroni;
Andrade, Fernandez,

Argentina 2

Botasso; Della Torre,
Paternoster; Evaristo,
J., Monti, Suarez;

Gestido; Dorado,
Scarone, Castro, Cea,
Iriarte.

Peucelle, Varallo,
Stabile, Ferreira
(capt.), Evaristo, M.

SCORERS

Dorado, Cea, Iriarte, Castro for Uruguay

Peucelle, Stabile for Argentina

HT 1/2

ITALY

1934

Background to Italy

It would be twenty years before the World Cup returned to South America—and to Uruguay. The 1934 tournament was altogether more high-powered and highly competitive, though for the first and only time so far the holders did not defend. Uruguay, still piqued by the defection of the European ‘powers’ in 1930, plagued, too, by one of those periodic players’ strikes which would still torment them over forty years later, stayed at home. Italy organised it, Italy won, prompting the reflection of John Langenus: ‘In the majority of countries; the World Championship was called a sporting fiasco because beside the desire to win all other sporting considerations were non-existent, and because moreover, a certain spirit brooded over the whole Championship. Italy wanted to win, it was natural, but they allowed it to be seen too clearly.’

Given the Fascist climate of the times, it was perhaps inevitable. The Italian team, the *azzurri* (blues) were ‘Mussolini’s *azzurri*’, the Duce himself would appear, heavy-chinned and smirking under a yachting cap, at Rome’s Stadio Nazionale. Vittorio Pozzo, the Italian *Commissario Tecnico* a great anglophile but a great authoritarian, unquestionably used the inflated spirit of the times to promote an atmosphere, a discipline, which subsequent Italian managers have envied, and which would never have been possible without it; any more than Pozzo himself, the revered father figure ‘Kind, but with a strong hand,’ he reminisced. ‘If I let them make mistakes, I’d lose my authority.’ He did not hesitate to make use of *oriundi* South American stars of Italian origin. Three of them, all Argentines, played in the final. One was Monti, whom Pozzo wanted as a roving centre-half in the image of Manchester United’s Charlie Roberts, whom he’d known and admired when a poor student before the First World War. Pozzo’s tactics would be firmly based on pre-Third Back Game days.

‘If they can die for Italy, they can play for Italy,’ he grandiosely claimed, meaning that *oriundi* were liable for Italian military service. But when, in 1935, war was declared on Abyssinia, Enrico Guaita, the World Cup outside-right, was caught trying to slip across the Swiss border with other *oriundi*. Play yes, die, no.

Pozzo and the equally authoritarian anglophile Hugo Meisl of Austria, were the dominant figures in European football between the wars, sharing the friendship of Herbert Chapman, the remarkable Yorkshireman who built up Arsenal. The ‘natural’ final would have been between Italy and Meisl’s so-called Wunderteam, fractionally past its peak but still a fine side, which had whacked Italy 4–2 in Turin only months before the World Cup began. They would meet in the semi-final.

This time, it would be a knock-out competition with sixteen teams in the first round; a dispensation which meant that Brazil and Argentina came some eight thousand miles to play just one game. There had been, besides, a qualifying competition, in which, curiously, even the Italians were obliged to take part. They beat Greece in Milan, a match in which Nereo Rocco of Triestina later the outstanding manager of Milan, played his only (half) game for his country.

The tournament had been assigned to Italy at the Stockholm congress of 1932. It was realised that it could no longer be confined to a single city, nor to a country without huge resources. Uruguay had in fact paid everyone’s expenses and still made a comfortable profit in 1930, but the scale was growing. ‘The Italian Federation’, promised its delegate, *Avvocato* Mauro, ‘is capable of sustaining these burdens, and even in the case of an adverse balance wants to hold the entire final stages of the tournament, using as its theatre the numerous and flourishing Italian cities, all provided with magnificent stadiums.’ Behind the hard-working Mauro and his pleasant energetic colleague, Engineer Barassi, the Fascist government stood ready to pick up the cheque.

The Opening Games

There was still, curiously, an eliminating match to play before the tournament proper could begin curiously because it took place in Rome between two countries as distant as Mexico and the United States. The Americans, with only two survivors from their 1930 semi-final team, won, but were thrashed 7–1 in the same Stadio Torino by Italy in the following game. Thirty-two teams had entered the qualifying tournament; twenty-two from Europe, eight from the Americas, one each from Asia and Africa—none from Britain.

Both South American teams went out at once. In Genoa, Spain were 3–1 up against Brazil at half-time, a score which did not change. Argentina went down 3–2 to Sweden, their team including not a single member of the 1930 side.

In Turin, France provided the chief surprise of the round, doing far better than had been expected against the Austrians, who had most of the luck that was going. Austria won only in extra time with a most dubious goal.

The Germans, who had prepared thoroughly, were startled by Belgium in Florence, but recovered strongly. The Belgians scored twice in the first half to give them a 2–1 lead; then the team blew up. Conen, Germany's centre-forward, completed a hat-trick, and his side won 5–2.

In Trieste the fancied Czechs were troubled by the Romanians. Dobai scored for Romania after eleven minutes, but Puc, the thrustful Czech left-winger, and Nejedly, their dangerous, graceful inside-left, replied in the second half. The winner was rather a lucky goal, for Nejedly received the ball after Sobotka won it in a bounce-up.

Hungary were given a surprisingly hard time of it by Egypt in Naples, winning only 4–2. Switzerland beat the Dutch 3–2 in Milan; one of their goals, by the bespectacled centre-forward Kielholz, came from a shot which hit a bump in the ground and was crazily diverted.

The Second Round

The second round included two fascinating pairings: Italy would play Spain in Florence; Austria and Hungary, those old foes, would meet at Bologna.

Italy were rough, the referee weak. Spain took the lead with a goal which might have demoralised a less resilient team than Italy. When Langara, the centre-forward, took a free kick Regueiro—whose son would play for Mexico in the 1968 Olympics—swung at the ball, miskicked it utterly, and in miskicking beat the wrong-footed Combi. A minute after the interval, Italy were lucky to equalise when Pizziolo, the right-half, took another free kick. Zamora, obstructed by Schiavio, could only push the ball out, and Ferrari drove it home.

In extra time, Pozzo switched Schiavio and Guaita, as he would in the Final, but now it was unproductive. After the game he called each of his players, one by one, into the salon of the hotel where they were staying on the Lungarno. For the replay the following day he wanted only volunteers, and there were three changes. Pizziolo had broken his leg—another blow Italy had ridden with aplomb—and gave way to Ferraris IV, while de Maria and Borel had their only game of the competition, in attack. Spain by contrast were able to use only four of their previous team. Noguét, a young reserve, stood in for Zamora, and Bosch, the left-winger, was hurt as early as the fourth minute. Eight minutes later Meazza, always dangerous in the air, rose gracefully to Orsi's corner and headed Italy into the semi-finals.

In Bologna, Hugo Meisl picked the busy little inside-forward Horwarth and he, though not Sindelar, gave the team fresh drive in what Meisl described as ‘a brawl, not an exhibition of football’. After only seven minutes, Horwarth raced in to convert Zischek’s cross, and with Sarosi well under form Hungary found it hard to get back into the game.

Six minutes after half-time, Zischek, in the centre, drove in Bican’s pass to make it 2–0, and the match began to get rough. Sarosi reduced the lead from a penalty, things grew rougher still, and Markos, Hungary’s right-winger, foolishly got himself sent off just when his team threatened to equalise. As it was, they pressed gamely on till the end, though the most dangerous shot was Sindelar’s, gloriously saved by Szabo. Austria, calmer and better together, had deserved their win and had found new life.

In Milan, heavy rain did not prevent a large crowd, mushroomed with umbrellas and chequered with swastika flags, from attending the Germany–Sweden game. Germany, with one inside-forward lying deep, the other upfield, met in Sweden a team of similar Nordic propensities, solid rather than skilful, and had slightly the better of the first half.

Twelve minutes after the break, Rosen, the Swedish centre-half, found Kroon, his left-winger, unmarked ten yards from goal. Kroon shot wide, and Sweden’s chance had gone. Three minutes later, when Rydberg, who had made two fine saves in the first half, could only push a ball out, Hohmann, Germany’s inside-right, scored. Another three minutes and he got a far more spectacular goal, beating both Swedish backs and drawing Rydberg out of goal before placing his shot coolly past him.

Sweden soon afterwards lost their left-half, E. Andersson, who was hurt, but they kept on gamely and Dunker scored them a consoling if irrelevant goal.

At Turin, the Czechs won the best match of the round against the combative Swiss. The game swung and swayed, but the Czechs always seemed to have the resources of skill, stamina and confidence to regain the lead, running out winners by 3–2.

The Semi-Finals Italy v. Austria

The semi-finals now brought together Italy and Austria in Milan, and Germany and the Czechs in Rome. By all rights, the Italians should have been tired, the Austrians favoured, but Hugo Meisl would have none of it. Italy, he said, had better reserves than Austria, were better prepared and would be better supported. Perhaps his pessimism would have been confounded again had not Horwarth, the lively catalyst, been injured, his place going to Schall; and had it not been for a deluge creating just the heavy surface which the Vienna school found anathema.

Zischek and Sindelar—sternly guarded by Monti—were particularly disadvantaged in the heavy conditions, but Smistik had a magnificent game at centre-half. The only goal was scored by the Argentinian right-winger Guaita after eighteen minutes, in a clever move that followed a corner. Later, he missed another chance to score, and Austria, who looked much more tired than the surprisingly lively Italians, did not have a shot at goal until the forty-second minute. Ferraris was in dominant form, which was as well for Italy when the Austrians turned on pressure for a quarter of an hour after the interval. In the last minute, with Italy again calling the tune, Zischek picked up a clearance by his goalkeeper, Peter Platzer, and tore through Italy’s defence while the crowd watched, silent and aghast. But he shot wide, and Italy had reached the Final.

So did the Czechs, who beat Germany in Rome, showing clearly that the W formation, like patriotism, was not enough. They frolicked round the muscular, well-organised but uninspired Germans like Lilliputians round a Gulliver, while a curious weakness of the Germans was poor finishing. Rahn, Seeler and Muller were far away. The Germans, moreover, began the game most cautiously, both inside-forwards, rather than just one, lying deep; Hohmann, their talented inside-right, was seriously missed.

The crowd, including Mussolini in his yachting cap, was neutral and restrained as the Czechs gladly took up the initiative the Germans gave them. After twenty-one minutes Junek, the right-winger, concluded an attack which swept all the way across the forward-line with a shot which Kress could only beat out. Nejedly scored; and Czechoslovakia became a little complacent.

The second half, however, saw them regain their grip, and victory seemed inevitable—when Planicka made one of those errors which remind one of Disraeli's epigram that the defects of great men are the consolation of dunces. He simply stood and watched as a long shot by Noack, Germany's inside-left, sailed over him into goal. 1–1.

Germany, thus reprieved, pressed fiercely, and Ctyroky almost put through his own goal. Ten minutes after the equaliser, however, the forceful Puc belted a free kick from just outside the area against the bar. Krcil, the left-half, sent it back into the net. Germany collapsed, and Nejedly, taking Cambal's pass, dribbled fluently through to add the third.

Three days before the Final, Germany consoled themselves with victory in the third place match in Naples against a dejected Austria. Both teams made several changes, and Germany scored after only twenty-four seconds; another save-rebound-shoot affair, scored by Lehner. Conen got a second. Horwarth, fit again, made it 1–2, and for a while Austria made the Germans look ploddingly inadequate. But Lehner eventually scored again for Germany, and the only goal of the second half came from the Austrian left-back Seszta's thirty-yard free kick. Play became rough, but Germany survived.

The Final Italy v. Czechoslovakia

Rome had been curiously phlegmatic about the tournament, and even for the Final there were surprising gaps on the terraces. It was perhaps a pity the game was not played in the north, for the Stadio Nazionale, with its pitch of less than regulation size, its less than 'capacity' crowd, was hardly an ideal arena.

It was known that Italy had the stamina and the power, not to mention home advantage and support, but the Czechs had wonderful skill and subtlety. The Czechs, indeed, began with some splendid, characteristically short-passing 'Danubian school' football, with Cambal, the centre-half, everywhere, Puc a great trial to the Italian right flank, Svoboda a clever inside-right. Planicka, though fate would be cruel to him again, looked authoritative in goal, ably abetted by his right-back Zenisek. Pozzo felt that both teams were keyed up, not least his goalkeeper, Combi, and that the game was a disappointing one in consequence.

There was no goal till twenty minutes from the end. Then Puc, who had been off the field with a cramp, returned to take a corner. When the ball finally came back to him, he struck a long shot to Combi's right, the goalkeeper dived late—and Italy were one down. How near the Czechs then came

to making the game sure! Sobotka missed a fine chance, Svoboda banged a shot against the post. The Italian attack was stuttering. Schiavio looked tired, Guaita moved into the middle to confuse matters.

Things looked black for Italy till eight minutes from the end, when a goal dropped out of the blue. Raimondo Orsi, the Argentinian left-winger, received the ball from Guaita, ran through the Czech defence, feinted with his left foot and shot with his right. The ball, swerving crazily, brushed Planicka's desperate fingers and curled freakishly into the net. Next day, Orsi tried twenty times to repeat the shot for the benefit of photographers, with no goalkeeper in goal; and failed!

So there was extra time. Pozzo decided he wanted Schiavio and Guaita to keep switching, but such was the tumult of the ecstatic Italian fans that he was unable to make himself heard. At last he rushed around the pitch and managed to tell Guaita. The second time the switch was made it produced a goal.

Ninety-seven minutes had been played when a limping Meazza got the ball on the right wing where the Czechs had tended to neglect him. He crossed to Guaita, who made ground and in turn found Schiavio. He, with a final effort, beat Ctyroky and shot past Planicka. When asked afterwards what strength he had called on, he said wryly, 'The strength of desperation'.

Italy had not only won the World Cup; they had made a profit of a million lire in the process. The more sceptical wondered if they would have won anywhere else. Four years later, they would get their answer.

RESULTS: Italy 1934

First round

Italy 7, United States 1 (HT 3/0)
Czechoslovakia 2, Romania 1 (HT 0/1)
Germany 5, Belgium 2 (HT 1/2)
Austria 3, France 2 (HT 1/1, 1/1) after extra time
Spain 3, Brazil 1 (HT 3/1)
Switzerland 3, Holland 2 (HT 2/1)
Sweden 3, Argentina 2 (HT 1/1)
Hungary 4, Egypt 2 (HT 2/1)

Second round

Germany 2, Sweden 1 (HT 1/0)
Austria 2, Hungary 1 (HT 1/0)
Italy 1, Spain 1 (HT 1/0, 1/1) after extra time
Italy 1, Spain 0 (HT 1/0) Replay
Czechoslovakia 3, Switzerland 2 (HT 1/1)

Semi-finals

Rome

Czechoslovakia 3

Planicka (capt.);
Burger, Ctyroky;
Kostalek, Cambal,
Krcil; Junek, Svoboda,
Sobotka, Nejedly,
Puc.

Germany 1

Kress; Haringer,
Busch; Zielinski,
Szepan (capt.), Bender;
Lehner, Siffling,
Conen, Noack,
Kobierski.

SCORERS

Nejedly (2), Krcil for Czechoslovakia
Noack for Germany
HT 1/0

Milan

Italy 1

Austria 0

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