



UP FOR THE CUP —Global

Preface

The World Cup is a million different stories in one. As the tournament gets under way this month, Monocle looks at how players, coaches, companies and fans from all over the globe have been getting ready.

ILLUSTRATOR
Satoshi Hashimoto

The World Cup provides a unique opportunity for widespread and cheerful patriotic outbursts by football fans around the world and at the eye of the storm, in South Africa. It's also a chance for countries to stand out from the crowd in terms of the talent and character of their players, their coaches and their supporters.

But it's not just about football. This is the most watched sporting event in the world. So it is also a display of the politics and the personalities of the countries involved. And, of course, it's also a massive money-spinner for the media companies, advertisers, sponsors and even the guys selling cold drinks outside the stadiums.

The fact that the World Cup is being held for the first time in Africa opens up new challenges and new opportunities that the contest (first held in 1930 in Uruguay) has never seen before.

As 32 national teams and thousands of fans pour in for a month of football frenzy (from 11 June to 11 July), MONOCLE correspondents check out the unique things - small and large - that different countries and companies have been doing to make sure they take South Africa by storm. — SA

01: Peak condition *Switzerland*

The Swiss Alps aren't known for their football facilities but in recent weeks Europe's snowy peaks have been overrun with top-class players from all over the world. Japan, Algeria, Greece, the Netherlands, England and even Cote d'Ivoire decided to gear up for the World Cup in Swiss and Austrian mountain villages where altitudes are similar to those of Johannesburg (1,753m above sea level), Bloemfontein (1,400m) and Rustenburg (1,500m), where matches will be played this month. It also helps that the Alps are in the same time zone so players will not have jet lag when they head south. — BS

02: Flying colours *Germany*

The World Cup may have saved from bankruptcy a little German company that is more than 100 years old.

Hamburg's FahnenFleck was founded in 1882 and until recently was one of the leading European producers of flags. It has created a special company, based in South Africa, for the World Cup and will be selling the flags of all the contesting nations. It hopes to sell a million South African flags alone. Having suffered a 50 per cent fall in turnover last year, this summer's frenzy of footballing patriotism means the company should be able to get all of its 60 staff back on the books. — MA





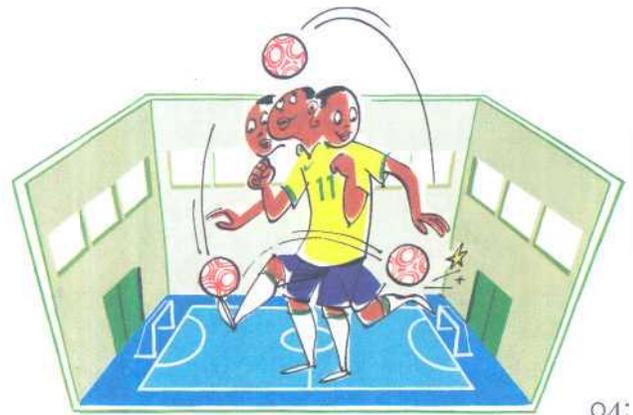
03:
Villain to hero
Honduras

Colombia must be regretting the decision to boot out veteran national coach Reinaldo Rueda when the country failed to qualify for the 2006 World Cup. One country's persona non grata became another's hero. Rueda was snapped up by Honduras, and he secured a place this time round for the little Central American nation for the first time in 28 years. Colombia failed to qualify again. Honduras was grateful to have something positive to show for itself, having displayed its more "banana republic" tendencies during months of constitutional crisis last year. — ANM



05:
A little off
Japan

The words "red card" may be among the most dreaded in football vernacular. So spare a thought for Japan's national team whose special performance-enhancing, blue and white World Cup shirts happen to feature a small red rectangle on the front and back near the neckline. Can the creators at Adidas explain? "The rectangle is part of the design and the red colour symbolises 'hinomaru', the Japanese flag," says a spokeswoman. Fans, however, have not been impressed. — DD



04:

Secret of success
Brazil

Pundits have long tried to explain the source of Brazil's uniquely freeform, silken style on the pitch, and the unparalleled international success that's come with it. Perhaps they need only look to *futsal*, the South American brand of indoor football, which for decades has been the unofficial developmental system for promising young street players in Brazil. Futsal rules encourage improvisation and ball trickery. The ball is smaller and possesses less bounce than a traditional football, and there's an emphasis on brisk one-touch passing. Brazilian stars including Pele, Ronaldo and current national team striker Robinho credit futsal for honing the skills that have helped win the country more World Cups than anyone else. No surprise, then, that Brazil has also dominated Fifa's Futsal World Cup, capturing four of the six titles awarded since 1989. — CF



06:

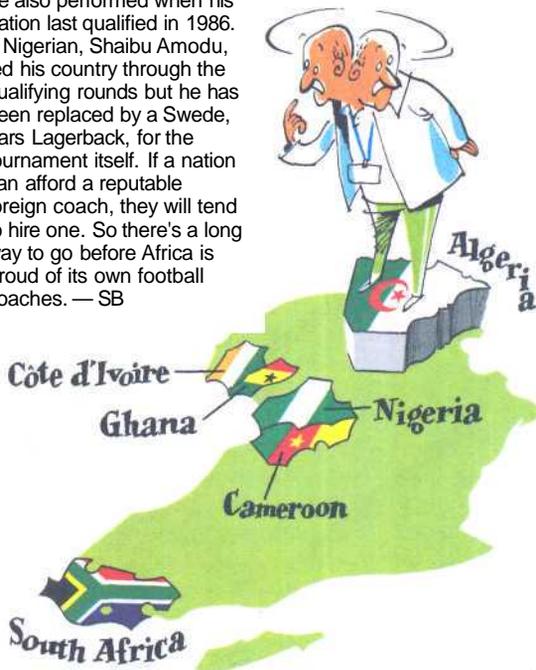
Wanted man
Greece

Greece may not have been impressed by Germany's advice to work harder to pay off the country's debts but when it comes to football Greece is more than willing to listen to its German coach Otto Rehhagel. King Otto (named after the Bavarian-born Greek king of the 19th century) is extremely popular after leading Greece to a surprise Euro 2004 title, and there has even been some talk of his suitability for a role in government. He may yet feel the effects of Greece's dire financial situation, though - the troubled government wants to slash his annual €740,000 salary by a third. — AS

07:
The outsider
Algeria

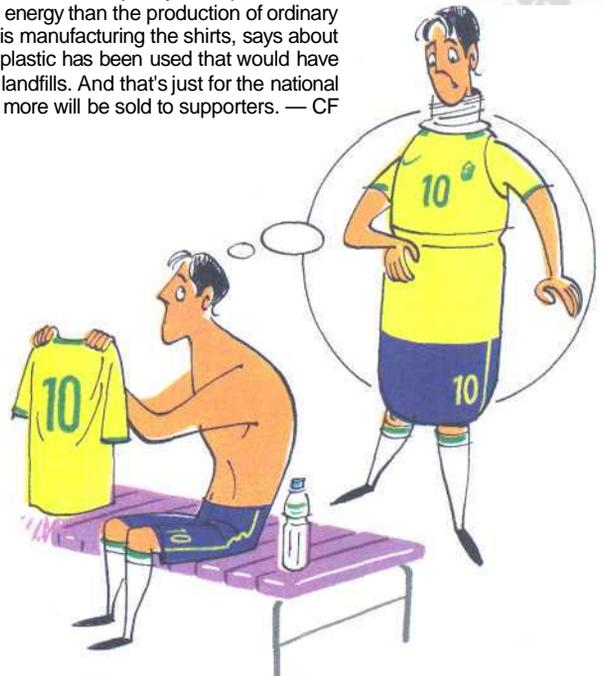
This may be Africa's World Cup but there will be only one African coach at the tournament. Four of the six African teams have European coaches, while the hosts, South Africa, have a Brazilian in charge.

Algeria's Rabah Saadane is the continent's sole representative, a role he also performed when his nation last qualified in 1986. A Nigerian, Shaibu Amodu, led his country through the qualifying rounds but he has been replaced by a Swede, Lars Lagerback, for the tournament itself. If a nation can afford a reputable foreign coach, they will tend to hire one. So there's a long way to go before Africa is proud of its own football coaches. — SB



08:
A lot of bottle
Global

It might not be immediately apparent for their opponents but around 13 million recycled bottles were used to make the shirts for nine teams playing in the World Cup (including Brazil, the USA and the Netherlands). Water bottles are melted down and converted into thread to make the jerseys in a process that uses 30 per cent less energy than the production of ordinary polyester. Nike, which is manufacturing the shirts, says about 254,000kg of waste plastic has been used that would have otherwise ended up in landfills. And that's just for the national squads. A lot more will be sold to supporters. — CF



09:
Comrade spirit
North Korea

Perhaps no team is up against it in 2010 as much as North Korea. Ranked 106th globally, the impoverished, isolated nation is making its first World Cup appearance since 1966. And it decided the squad should warm up in Zimbabwe, a close ally since the 1980s, when the North Korean People's Army trained Robert Mugabe's notorious 5th Brigade. Don't write off the comrades from Pyongyang just yet, though; they reached the quarter-finals in 1966, dispatching Italy along the way. Still, the team will have to be at their peak if they are to beat group rivals Cote d'Ivoire, Portugal and Brazil. — Acs



10:
Road to recovery
Paraguay

Striker Salvador Cabanas scored six goals to help Paraguay qualify for the World Cup, but he is likely to be on the sidelines at the main event. The 29-year-old is lucky even to have that possibility: in January, he was shot in the head in a bar in Mexico City. Seven hours of emergency surgery left the bullet lodged in his brain, but Cabanas made a good recovery and by late March was practising penalties. Although he's asked coach Gerardo Martino to keep him in mind for the World Cup squad, he is more likely to attend as a spectator. — IM

