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THE BATTALION
845-0569

World Cup successful all around

Players, fans benefit from FIFA's new game regulations

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — The best team won, just as it did four years ago. Otherwise, the 1994 World Cup was separated by light years from its 1990 predecessor.

Forget that this year's tournament was a smashing financial success and a monthlong soccer party that the United States not only was invited to, but hosted as well. And enjoyed, from Game 1 to Game 52 — and beyond, into a shootout.

Remember, instead, how good the soccer was in all nine venues. Sure, the final was something of a letdown, being decided by penalty kicks after a relatively disappointing game between two powerhouses.

Still, it had its moments, and nearly every other match did, too. More good moments than bad, by far.

"We must applaud FIFA for finding ways to make the soccer more entertaining, more exciting," said Pele, the sport's goodwill ambassador and its greatest player, who watched Brazil take home the championship for the first time since he led that nation to its third title in 1970.

"After Italia '90, FIFA understood changes must be made. Those changes were made, and the tournament in the U.S. was a great success."

There was more scoring, more creativity, tighter refereeing — at least through the quarterfinals — and tremendous enthusiasm from a public that rarely embraced the sport in the past.

Brazil clearly was the most skilled squad in the 24-team field. It was undefeated in seven games, showing resourcefulness, patience and a staunch defense.

Plus, of course, that intricate short-passing attack that sometimes appeared like a maze. Opponents got lost in that maze, and Romario or Bebeto sneaked through for memorable goals.

And equally memorable celebrations such as the "rock the cradle" number against the Netherlands.

"It was a well-earned title, as Brazil was indeed the best team in the tournament," Bebeto said. "Other teams changed when they played us. Italy is the proof of that."

Italy also was the proof of what perseverance can do for a team. Nearly eliminated in the first round, the last of 16 teams to advance, the Italians were on the verge of a second-round sendoff, too.

Then their star, 1993 player of the year

Roberto Baggio, awoke with two late goals against Nigeria. He got another against Spain, in the final moments. And two more against Bulgaria.

"He has been through some very difficult times," teammate Roberto Donadoni said. "Roberto has been unfairly blamed for our struggles, but he has been injured and he has been very well marked. But when we were in our moment of need, he was there to save us."

Italy was as worthy of a fourth World Cup crown as the Brazilians who won the shootout. The Italians could go home proud and respected.

Oddly, there were other teams that could call their stays in the United States a success.

Certainly, the Swedes and Bulgarians had to feel that way. Sweden had its best showing since losing to Brazil in the 1958 final. Bulgaria, 0-10-6 coming in, had its best World Cup ever.

Bulgaria and Romania, which fell in a quarterfinals penalty kick shootout against Sweden, stamped the Balkans as a budding power base.

The host Americans should be satisfied, too. They got the United States past the first round for the first time in 54 years. They got fans everywhere involved. Maybe they established a foothold for the sport on a professional level. Finally.

League X-rays bat, reveals cork in core

Cleveland Indian suspended for ten days

CHICAGO (AP) — Albert Belle of the Cleveland Indians was found guilty Monday of corking his bat after a weekend investigation that included a mysterious switched bat.

It sounded like a case for Sherlock Holmes, but the American League unraveled it to its satisfaction after X-raying the bat, then sawing it in half.

The league said the bat was "found to have been treated. Belle was suspended for 10 days, and the only question remaining apparently was: Was it Belle's bat?"

Belle has appealed the suspension, which will be delayed until his hearing.

Last Friday night, White Sox manager Gene Lamont voiced suspicions about Belle's bat during a game between the White Sox and Indians.

He said the staff had noticed that Belle had been hitting a lot of long balls to right field throughout the season and Lamont said he'd "heard some things."

Each manager can ask to have one bat from the opposing team checked each game, and Lamont asked umpire crew chief Dave Phillips to do so.

Phillips seized the bat and placed it in the umpires' dressing room for safe keeping.

Or so they thought.

Later, while the game was still being played, someone worked their way above a false ceiling from the direction of the visitors' clubhouse and dropped through the ceiling into the umpires' dressing room.

The thief took Belle's bat and left another player's bat in its place.

By Sunday, another twist. The original bat, or what appeared to be the original bat, was returned.

If, of course, it was really the same bat that had been confiscated from Belle on Friday night.

So, it was break-ins and switched bats, not breaking balls and switch-hitters, that overshadowed baseball between two teams fighting for first place.

Indians general manager John Hart claimed the activity wasn't criminal and any suggestion to the contrary would be "ludicrous."

"I look at it as more of a misguided sense of loyalty with a teammate than anything else," he said. "The key is to keep it in perspective for what it is. This is a baseball team and guys that stay together and play together."

Hart wouldn't say who was involved in the break-in or if it might be an Indians player but said, "Obviously, it was someone internally with the Indians."

NY Rangers fight coach's resignation

ST. LOUIS (AP) — While Mike Keenan was enjoying his first day on the job as coach and general manager of the St. Louis Blues, the team he jilted asked the league to void the hiring.

The New York Rangers and Madison Square Garden have requested NHL commissioner Gary Bettman arbitrate what they termed Keenan's "attempt to terminate his employment."

The Rangers also requested an investigation into Keenan's "reported agreement" with the Blues and "reported contact" with the Detroit Red Wings.

"In the interim, the team is requesting that the NHL prohibit Mr. Keenan from performing any services for any other NHL club, including the St. Louis Blues," the Rangers said in a statement.

The league did not immediately respond to the Rangers' demands.

Keenan, 44, didn't appear the least bit concerned about possible ramifications to the five-year deal he signed Sunday night with St. Louis to become the Blues' coach and general manager.

His first order of business Monday was a tour of the Blues' new home, the Kiel Center, which he called "spectacular."

Then he met with the media for about an hour, flashing wit and rhapsodizing about the Stanley Cup he won just last month for New York.

Keenan and his lawyer, Rob Campbell of Toronto, both said that they'd done nothing wrong.

Keenan declared himself a "free agent" Friday, claiming the Rangers breached his contract by failing to pay him several bonuses plus his playoff bonus within 30 days of the end of the postseason.

He said he had yet to be paid any of the bonuses, which Campbell said involved a "very significant amount of money."

"My position was evaluated very critically by a number of people," Keenan said.

"I wouldn't do something of this nature without having solid information and opinions regarding our legal standing."

Campbell said the situation was "embarrassing" to the Rangers.

"It's clear that they're upset about this, and of course they're going to take a contrary position," Campbell said.

Campbell also said the Blues should not have to compensate the Rangers in any way.

"If the Blues had entered into discussions with Mike when he was employed by the Rangers, then I could see it," Campbell said.

"The Blues acted in totally good faith here."

Keenan said he had not been in contact with Bettman.

"I have no need to talk to Gary Bettman," Keenan said.

The signing of Keenan continues a busy summer for the Blues.

On July 4, they acquired defenseman Al MacInnis from Calgary and signed free-agent defenseman Scott Stevens to an offer sheet, which was matched by New Jersey.

They also signed wing Brendan Shanahan to a five-year, \$15 million contract last month and signed veteran Jon Casey, who had been offered a termination contract by Boston, to a multiyear deal about three weeks ago.

Astros down Cards

Houston bats past St. Louis in slug-fest

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Astros matched the biggest comeback in NL history, rallying from an 11-run deficit to beat the St. Louis Cardinals 15-12 Monday night.

Kevin Bass, Andujar Cedeno, Mike Felder and Ken Caminiti each drove in two runs during an 11-run sixth inning that put Houston ahead 15-11.

Houston trailed 11-0 after three innings. The Philadelphia Phillies overcame a 12-1 deficit to beat Chicago 18-16 on April 17, 1976, and the St. Louis Cardinals rallied from an 11-0 deficit to beat New York 14-12 on June 15, 1952.

The major league record for the biggest comeback is 12 runs, done twice in the AL. The Philadelphia Athletics rallied from 14-12 to beat Cleveland 17-15 on June 15, 1925, and Detroit came back from 13-1 to defeat Chicago 16-15 on June 18, 1911.

The Astros' rally against four St. Louis pitchers came following Friday night's loss in Pittsburgh in which they blew an 8-0 lead and lost 11-8.

Mike Hampton (2-1) pitched two innings for the victory. Todd Jones went three innings for his third save.

Astros 15, Cardinals 12									
Houston	ab	r	h	bi	St. Louis	ab	r	h	bi
Biggio	2b	3	2	1	Gilkey	lf	4	3	2
Finley	cf	2	0	0	OSmith	ss	5	2	2
Verns	p	0	0	0	Jeffries	1b	5	1	3
Miller	ph	1	0	0	Lofgren	cf	5	2	3
Hmpfn	p	0	0	0	Zelle	3b	5	0	2
Bass	f	3	2	2	Whiten	rf	5	1	2
Bgwel	1b	5	2	1	CPena	2b	5	1	1
Criniti	3b	5	1	2	Fgnozzi	c	5	1	2
Crizalez	lf	4	2	1	Watson	p	3	1	1
Mouton	f	3	2	1	Cmetelli	p	0	0	0
Tojnes	p	0	0	0	Evsrg	p	0	0	0
Esebio	c	4	2	2	Dixon	p	0	0	0
Cedeno	ss	5	1	3	Alieca	ph	1	0	0
BWlms	p	0	0	0	RRdzg	p	0	0	0
Edens	p	0	0	0	Perry	ph	1	0	0
Felder	f	5	1	3	Totals		44	12	17
Totals		40	15	17			44	12	17

Rangers beat Indians

Canseco's double outs Cleveland

CLEVELAND (AP) — Jose Canseco doubled home the go-ahead run with two outs in the ninth inning Monday night to lead the Texas Rangers to a 6-5 victory over the Cleveland Indians, who may soon be without Albert Belle.

The Indians, coming off a 5-5 road trip, lost for the fifth time in their last 29 home games. The loss came hours after they learned that All-Star slugger Belle had been found guilty of using a corked bat during a weekend series in Chicago.

Belle appealed the 10-day suspension and will keep playing until his case is heard by American League president Bobby Brown on July 29.

Texas blew an early 3-0 lead but came back to tie it 5-5 in the seventh on a two-run single by Ivan Rodriguez off reliever Jose Mesa (7-5).

In the ninth, Mesa yielded a one-out double by Jeff Freyre before Canseco hit his two-out double off the bullpen fence in dead center.

Darren Oliver (3-0) pitched two perfect innings, striking out three. Tom Henke got the last three outs for his 11th save.

Rangers 6, Indians 5									
Texas	ab	r	h	bi	Cleveland	ab	r	h	bi
Frye	2b	4	2	0	Lofgren	cf	5	0	0
Strange	2b	0	1	0	Vizquel	ss	5	0	0
RRdzg	c	4	0	2	Baerga	2b	4	1	2
Cnseco	dh	5	0	1	Belle	lf	4	0	1
WClark	1b	4	0	1	Murray	dh	4	1	2
JKntzlf	lf	5	1	3	Thorne	3b	2	1	0
Palmer	3b	4	0	0	Espnoz	3b	1	0	0
Greer	f	3	1	1	Rnrez	f	2	1	0
MLe	ss	4	2	2	Kirby	f	1	0	0
Hulse	f	3	1	2	Srento	1b	3	1	1
Totals		36	6	12	SAlmr	c	4	0	3
					Totals		35	5	10



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