Team Squads
* — denotes “suspended for this match”  * — denotes “carrying yellow card”

USA:
1 Howard 2 Albright 3 Bocanegra 4 Mastroeni *
5 O’Brien 6 Cherundolo 7 Lewis 8 Dempsey
9 Johnson 10 Reyna * 11 Ching 12 Berhalter
13 Conrad 14 Olsen 15 Convey 16 Wolff
17 Beasley 18 Keller 19 Hahnemann 20 McBride
21 Donovan 22 Onyewu * 23 Pope *

Ghana:
1 Adjei 2 Sarpei 3 Gyan * 4 Kuffour
5 Mensah 6 Pappoe 7 Shilla 8 Essien *
9 Boateng * 10 Appiah 11 Muntari * 12 Tachie-Mensah
13 Mohamed * 14 Amoah 15 Pantsil 16 Owu
17 Quaye 18 E. Addo 19 Pimpong 20 O. Addo *
21 Ahmed 22 Kingston 23 Dramani

Brazil:
1 Dida 2 Cafu 3 Lucio 4 Jaun
5 Emerson * 6 Roberto Carlos 7 Adriano 8 Kaka
9 Ronaldo * 10 Ronaldinho 11 Ze Roberto 12 Rogerio
13 Cicinho 14 Luisao 15 Cris 16 Gilberto
17 Silva 18 Mineiro 19 Juninho 20 Ricardinho
21 Fred 22 Julio Cesar 23 Robinho *

Japan:
1 Narazaki 2 Moniwa * 3 Komano 4 Endo
5 Miyamoto * 6 K. Nakata 7 H. Nakata * 8 Ogasawara
9 Takahara 10 Nakamura 11 Maki 12 Doi
13 Yanagisawa 14 Santos * 15 Fukunishi 16 Oguro
17 Inamoto 18 Ono 19 Tsuboi 20 Tamada
21 Kaji 22 Nakazawa 23 Kawaguchi *

AA YSA Fundraising Committee:
Brian Manning, Kim Bonam, Lisa Jones, Michael Makin

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World Cup Day
June 22 2006
USA vs Ghana
Italy vs Czech Rep.
10 a.m.
Brazil vs Japan
Australia vs Croatia
3 p.m.

Entry: adults $5, children free.
World Cup menu available.
All competitions: $1 per entry.
9-5 bowling: $10 per person.

Proceeds support AAYSA fields fund
USA vs Ghana, Nuremberg

The USA always looked likely to struggle in this group, and received a painful lesson against the Czechs, when Nedved and Rosicky were rampant. But they showed tremendous courage against Italy, and stayed alive to face Ghana. The Black Stars gave Italy a good game, but came up short in front of goal, only to destroy the Czechs in their second game. Ghanaian superstars Essien and Appiah should dominate; the USA will rely on team spirit, hard work, and determined tackling. The Ghanaians play without goal scorers Gyan and Muntari, the Americans have lost the bite of Mastroeni and Pope. The American central defense is suspect, and McBride’s courage may not be enough up front. Bojanegra’s play at the back may be a key, while Donovan and Beasley must show up in midfield. The Ghanaians have the quality, but Kingston must continue to keep goal well. Few Americans have played much with top clubs, but most have World Cup experience, unlike the Ghanaians. The Black Stars deserve their nickname, but their team may be brittle under pressure. Both sides will be very motivated.

Brazil vs Japan, Dortmund

The perennial favorites have superb attacking options and an outstanding midfield. Ronaldinho has been the best player in the world for two years and shone for Barcelona again and again in the Champions League and La Liga this year. Kaka, Adriano, Robinho all have the skill and power to overwhelm any defense. But Ronaldo is out of sorts, the Brazilian defense has yet to be truly tested (are Cafu and Roberto Carlos still at the top; can the middle of the Brazilian defense hold; what of the goalkeeping?). However, Japan are unlikely to do much testing. The Japanese wilted against Australia, and struggled against Croatia. All the same, with the great Brazilian Zico coaching, Japan has a chance to make the Brazilians work in a match that Brazil might not have given enough thought to. Inamoto will have to be at the top of his game, and naturalized citizen Alessandro Santos (by birth a Brazilian) will have to play as if he’s made the Brazilian, not the Japanese, starting lineup for Japan to have much chance. Stranger things have been known, but a result for Japan seems unlikely.

Italy vs Czech Republic, Hamburg

In their first match the Czechs, descendents of the great Czechoslovak teams of the mid-twentieth century and recently star performers at Euro 04, were magnificent. But they lost the giant Koller, and, although Baros may return today, he will not be match fit. Much depends on the mercurial Nedved and the new Arsenal signing Rosicky. Against Ghana, the Czech defense was very weak, and only Petr Cech, perhaps the world’s best goalkeeper, kept the score down. Italy played very well against a strong Ghana, but was badly caught out against the USA, who outplayed them for long stretches and could even have won playing with nine men. Luca Toni will lead the line, the ageing Totti may be a key in midfield. Both teams have something to prove after big disappointments in their last matches, and, with the Italians playing a more attacking game than in the past, this may be a good match. Both of these sides are among Europe’s best, and either, if capable of consistency, could go all the way. Today both will aim for rehabilitation.

Australia vs Croatia, Hamburg

No one wanted the Australians in their group. The world’s greatest sporting nation may not be a super power in the Beautiful Game, but Australians always play hard and never give up. They scored three goals at the very end of their first match to beat Japan, with Everton midfielder Tim Cahill starring. They ran Brazil hard, and considered themselves unlucky to lose. Croatia could have done better against Brazil, and the 0-0 draw with Japan was a huge disappointment. This match will have extra edge because Croatia has three players with an Australian background, while seven Australians, including captain Mark Viduka, are of Croatian background. Croatia, with Tudor, Nico Kovac, Simic, and Prso, has talent, but not as much as in the past. The Australians not only have Cahill, Kewell, Viduka, and a solid keeper in Schwarzer, but also manager Guus Hiddink and national character on their side. Unless the Croatians improve their attack, it could be (yet) another party night down under.

“What is a bad challenge? I don’t know, but he was classy and apologized right after the game.... I’ve broken all the bones in my face, just from playing football. This isn’t the first time I’ve been caught like that.”

Brian McBride of the USA on the elbow he took from Daniele De Rossi, which led to De Rossi’s red card.

“No when the draw was made, I remember Sven-Goran Erikson being happy England didn’t get Australia. And now you can see why.”

Combative Australia and Everton midfielder Tim Cahill after the match with Japan. Still recovering from an injury, he came on in the second half (Japan led 1-0 until the 84th minute) and scored twice in a 3-1 late come-from-behind victory.