

Luciano Wernicke



501 WORLD CUP MOMENTS

Stars, Teams, Goals and Curiosities
from Football's Greatest Show on Earth

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Uruguay 1930

- * The first edition of the World Cup took place between 13 and 30 July 1930, in Montevideo, the capital city of Uruguay. For this significant tournament, the local government decided to build a large stadium with a capacity for 70,000 spectators where all the matches would be played. However, due to a storm that lasted for several days, the construction could not be finished on time and the first games were played on the fields of the Nacional and Peñarol clubs. Uruguay 1930 is the World Cup in which the fewest stadiums were used: only three. In addition, it is the only one in which all the matches took place in a single city.
- * The designation of Uruguay as the first World Cup venue discouraged the participation of many European teams. Countries like England, Spain, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands and Germany, among others, refused to compete. Some national associations blamed economic problems, others said that the clubs had refused to release their players for almost two months: in addition to their stay in the small South American nation to participate in the tournament, the players had to cross the Atlantic Ocean by boat, a journey that at that time took about two weeks to go and another two to return. Although the Uruguayan Soccer Association (AUF, the acronym in Spanish for the Asociación Uruguaya de Fútbol) agreed to pay the travel and lodging expenses

of the delegations, only four teams arrived at the port of Montevideo from Europe: those from France, Belgium, Yugoslavia and Romania. The rest of the participants – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Mexico and the United States – arrived from North and South America. Without teams from Asia, Africa and Oceania, the World Cup in Uruguay was attended by only 13 teams, the equal smallest number of participants in history along with that of Brazil 1950. Given such a low attendance, it was not necessary to hold a qualifying round to reach the tournament.

- * Due to the meagre presence of participating countries, the organisers decided to form three groups of three teams, plus another of four, which after the draw was made up of Argentina, Mexico, Chile and France. The winners of each group went directly to the semi-finals.
- * The coach of the French team, Gaston Barreau, worked as secretary of the National Conservatory of Music in Paris. Although Barreau insisted on being allowed to travel with the team to Uruguay, the authorities of that institution refused: they considered it excessive for him to be absent from his post for the required two months. Barreau, who managed France in 197 matches, had his revenge in 1938 when he was able to lead *Les Bleus* in a World Cup.
- * The FIFA president, French lawyer Jules Rimet, travelled with his country's team and a very special passenger: the World Cup. Created by sculptor Abel Lafleur, the trophy consisted of a small chalice held by a female figure representing the Greek goddess of victory, Nike. The work, 55cm high, weighing

four kilograms and costing 50,000 francs, was cast in 18-carat gold and mounted on a base of semi-precious stones. Rimet disembarked in Montevideo on 5 July and, the next day, handed the cup to the president of the AUF, Raúl Jude, who immediately deposited it in the vault of the República bank, to be kept safe until the end of the championship.

- * The competition regulations indicated that the team that won the tournament would keep the trophy until the next World Cup, when it had to be returned to FIFA. Also, the first country to win the World Cup three times would retain the prize for ever. In 1970, in Mexico, Brazil won their third World Cup and took the valuable trophy, which by then was already known as the Jules Rimet Trophy in honour of the competition's original promoter. In 1983 it was stolen from the headquarters of the Brazilian Football Confederation in Rio de Janeiro. The thieves melted it down to produce small gold ingots, which they then sold to jewellery manufacturers.
- * After arriving in Montevideo, the Mexican squad held its first training session on a field located on the grounds of the Salesian school, Pío IX. For the second, they had to move to another property because the priests in charge of the school complained to the organising committee about the large number of swear words used by the team's Spanish coach, José Juan Luqué de Serrallonga, to yell at his players when they made a mistake.
- * For this first edition, FIFA had decided that all matches would be played with balls made in Argentina. But, after a protest by the Uruguayan Minister of Industry, it was agreed that locally made

balls would also be used. They were similar: made in leather, dark brown, with rectangular sections and an outer seam. The Uruguayan ones were slightly larger. The organising committee arranged for the captains of the two teams to choose which ball to play with before the start of the matches. Except in the games in which Uruguay participated, in all the others the players preferred the Argentine balls.

- * Before the World Cup began, the famous tango singer Carlos Gardel visited the hotels where the Uruguayan and Argentine teams were staying and gave recitals to entertain the players.
- * The first World Cup began on 13 July 1930 with two matches. Mexico and France faced each other at the Estadio de los Pocitos – the Peñarol stadium, which was later demolished in 1940 – and the United States played against Belgium at Parque Central, the home of Nacional. According to the newspapers of the time, the duel between the Aztecs and the French started eight minutes earlier, which is why it is considered the first of the 964 World Cup matches played over 22 editions of the tournament up to and including Qatar 2022. The reports agree in pointing to the Frenchman André Maschinot as the person responsible for kicking the ball for the very first time in the most important sporting event in the world.
- * The French forward Lucien Laurent was the scorer of the first of the 2,720 goals netted over the 22 editions of the World Cup. Laurent, who was employed by the Peugeot car company, beat Mexican goalkeeper Óscar Bonfiglio in the 19th minute with a right-footed volley.

URUGUAY 1930

- * 'In those days, soccer players did not kiss each other after each goal,' said Lucien Laurent of his historic goal and how it was celebrated.
- * In the 23rd minute between Mexico and France, when the score was 1-0 to the Europeans, goalkeeper Alex Thépot collided with Mexican forward Dionisio Mejía and ended up unconscious on the field. Thépot was taken off the pitch and transferred to a hospital, where he was treated by doctors. Since substitutions were not allowed at that time, France continued with ten men and with the goal defended by midfielder Augustin Chantrel. Despite the mishap, France won 4-1. Chantrel's performance was highly praised by the media at the time.
- * The regulations of the 1930 World Cup indicated that the rest periods between the two halves of a match should be 'five minutes minimum, and 15 minutes maximum, according to the referee's decision'. Shortly after, FIFA would determine that the recess would be 15 minutes in all official matches.
- * On 14 July, Romania defeated Peru 3-1 at Peñarol's field. This match was witnessed by just over 300 spectators, the smallest attendance in the entire history of the World Cup.
- * In that match, Romanian forward Adalbert Steiner suffered an injury after a collision with Mario de las Casas. The situation caused a fight between both sets of players, which according to the official FIFA report ended with the expulsion of Peru's Plácido Galindo, the first player to be sent off a pitch in a World Cup. The sanction by Chilean referee Alberto Warnken was 'verbal', because the yellow and red cards used to caution or expel

players would not be used in the World Cup until 1970 in Mexico.

- * Argentine forward Manuel Ferreira played in his team's 1-0 victory over France on 15 July at Parque Central, but not in their second match, against Mexico. Why? In addition to playing football, Ferreira was studying at university to become a public notary and on the same day of the game against the Mexicans, 19 July, he had to take an exam in Buenos Aires. The proximity of the capitals of Argentina and Uruguay, separated by the wide Río de la Plata river, allowed the forward to return to his country and, the following day, rejoin the squad.
- * On 16 July, Chile were leading Mexico 1-0. Six minutes into the second half, Mexican defender Manuel Rosas Sánchez – a young amateur player who worked professionally as a baker – scored the second goal of the match, but for Chile: in an attempt to deflect the ball, Rosas Sánchez accidentally put it into the Mexican net. That unfortunate action became the first own goal in the history of the World Cup.
- * The match in which Yugoslavia beat Bolivia 4-0, on 17 July at Parque Central, was refereed by Uruguayan Francisco Mateucci, who at 27 years and 62 days old became the youngest referee in the annals of the World Cup.
- * Also that day, the United States beat Paraguay 3-0. Their three goals were scored by Bertrand 'Bert' Patenaude, a striker born in Fall River, Massachusetts, who played only four games for his country and scored six goals: four in the 1930 World Cup and two against Brazil in a friendly played in

Rio de Janeiro after the tournament, on 17 August, which ended 4-3 to the home team.

- * The stadium built especially for the World Cup finally hosted a match when, on 18 July, Uruguay defeated Peru 1-0. The date of this inaugural game is not a coincidence: it also marked the first century of Uruguayan independence. That is why the stadium was named the Estadio Centenario.
- * The French goalkeeper Alex Thépot was the first to save a penalty in the World Cup. On 19 July, at the Estadio Centenario, Thépot saved from Chile's Carlos Vidal. His feat was not enough to prevent his team from losing 1-0.
- * Following Chile's victory against France, Argentina beat Mexico 6-3 in the same stadium. Mexico goalkeeper Óscar Bonfiglio saved another penalty, from Fernando Paternoster, then Argentine stopper Ángel Bossio also kept out a spotkick, from Manuel Rosas. In that match, Bolivian referee Ulises Saucedo – who was also the coach of his country's national team – awarded three penalties: two for Mexico (from the second, Manuel Rosas had his revenge and scored the first World Cup goal from the spot) and one for Argentina. This record has never been surpassed in the competition, and only equalled in Austria v Hungary in Italy in 1934 and in the final of Qatar 2022, in which, coincidentally, Argentina also played.
- * During the semi-final between Argentina and the United States, played 26 on July at the Estadio Centenario, the coach of the American team, Bob Millar, entered the field to assist one of his players, James Brown, who had been injured. Millar went

on to the pitch with a suitcase full of oils, ointments and medicines and, upon opening it, a small bottle containing chloroform fell out. The jar lost its cork, spilled its contents on the grass, and the trainer, when trying to retrieve the bottle, breathed in the chloroform vapours and fainted. Millar had to be removed from the field by his own players. Brown, meanwhile, recovered on his own, without any treatment, and continued playing. Argentina won 6-1.

- * In the other semi-final, Uruguay defeated Yugoslavia by the same score. The Europeans had opened the scoring after four minutes, but Uruguay led 3-1 before the end of the first half. According to newspaper reports, the third goal came from a free kick that was headed off the pitch, but the ball bounced off a policeman standing next to the touchline – one version even states that the officer went on to the pitch to stop the ball from going out – and remained in play, without the Brazilian referee Gilberto de Almeida Rêgo or his linesmen, the Bolivian Ulises Saucedo and the Frenchman Thomas Balvay, noticing. The action continued and the ball ended up in the Yugoslav net. The Balkan players vehemently protested the goal, which was nevertheless awarded by De Almeida Rêgo. Uruguay crowned their victory with three more goals and qualified for the final. The Yugoslavs, meanwhile, were so angry at what they considered an injustice that they did not show up to play the match for third place with the United States. It remains the only game in the entire history of the World Cup in which one of the contenders was absent.

- * Belgian Jan Langenus had two jobs during the World Cup in Uruguay: as a referee, he took part in four matches; as a journalist, he acted as a correspondent for the German magazine *Kicker* throughout the tournament. After each game, Langenus passed a report by telephone to a colleague in the publication's office.
- * The final of the first World Cup was played on Wednesday, 30 July 1930, at the Estadio Centenario, between Uruguay and Argentina. As the captains of the two teams – José Nasazzi and Manuel Ferreira – could not agree on which ball to use, Jan Langenus decided that the one made in Argentina would be used for the first half, and the Uruguayan one for the second. The first half ended with Argentina leading 2-1; in the second, Uruguay overcame the disadvantage with goals from José Cea, Victoriano Santos Iriarte and Héctor Castro and won 4-2. Castro was nicknamed *Manco* (one-armed) because he had lost his right hand in an accident with an electric saw when he was 13.
- * 'They beat us by being more brave and more clever, not by being better players,' said Argentine striker Francisco Varallo, analysing that final many years later.
- * After the final, the organisers called the champions together to raise the Uruguayan emblem on the flagpole and present them with the World Cup, but at that moment they noticed that the president of the AUF, Raúl Jude, had forgotten to remove the trophy from the vault of the República bank. To save embarrassment, someone got a replacement trophy and gave it to the scorer of the first goal in the final,

Pablo Dorado. As a result, the winning team did the lap of honour with a fake cup instead of the official prize.

- * The first world champions received their medals – almost four months after the final had finished! In addition, the Uruguayan Football Association only awarded the prizes to the 11 men who had played in the final. Peregrín Anselmo, Pedro Petrone, Santos Urdinarán and Domingo Tejera, who had participated in other matches prior to the duel with Argentina, did not receive anything, the same as the seven other players who completed the official squad list of 22.

Statistical focus – teams with the most World Cup appearances:

| <i>Team</i> | <i>Appearances</i> |
|-------------|--------------------|
| Brazil | 22† |
| Germany | 20 |
| Argentina | 18 |
| Italy | 18 |
| Mexico | 17 |

†Only Brazil have played in every World Cup