

ENGLAND WORLD CUP 1966: First Round
Middlesbrough, Ayresome Park, 19 July 1966

NORTH KOREA - ITALY

1-0

THE ITALIAN NIGHTMARE IS CALLED PAK DOO-IK

Italy arrived at the 1966 World Cup in England with high expectations, after the bitter elimination in the first round in 1962 (not to mention the failure to qualify in 1958). It was perhaps not among the favourites for the title, but after three consecutive victories by Italian teams in the Champions Cup (Milan in '63 followed by Inter's double in '64 and '65), with young stars such as Rivera, Mazzola and Meroni, and after the exciting pre-World Cup friendlies, surely a semi-final was considered the minimum objective. It was head coach Mondino Fabbri who destabilised the environment, managing to create conflict with the ever-invasive Italian press and making risky choices, apparently in order to defend his own intuitions by clashing with what was being suggested to him by the sports journalists accompanying the team. After an important victory at the debut, with a rematch after the 1962 defeat, against a very modest Chile, but without convincing on the level of play, Italy was beaten 1-0 by the USSR and a victory against North Korea would be needed to be certain of qualifying for the quarter-finals (with hindsight, given that the following day the USSR beat Chile 2-1, a draw would have been enough). Valcareggi, Fabbri's deputy, spied on the Koreans in the match they lost 3-0 to the USSR and came back with this technical comment: 'To see them run, they look like a Ridolini comic'. So the eleven men sent onto the pitch by Fabbri on that fateful July afternoon expected to take a walk and preserve themselves for the much stronger Portugal that awaited them in the quarter-finals; the good Mondino also sent Bulgarelli onto the pitch despite the doctors' advice to rest after the knee knocks taken by Chile and the exertion of the match against the Soviets, and leaving the very strong Gigi Meroni, who was in great form, on the bench. The first minutes went as planned, with Italy showing flashes of class with Mazzola and Rivera: in the 2nd minute Sandrino served the Bologna centre-forward Perani, who skilfully skipped past Shin Yung-Kyoo with a lob and finished with a spectacular turn but found the great reflex of goalkeeper Li Chan Myong, who put it in for a corner. One is amazed by the athletic gesture of this goalkeeper, slender, small and wearing a tight-fitting black tracksuit to look like a child at a gymnastics recital. On 4 minutes it was the Golden Boy Rivera who escaped on the left and passed the ball into the middle for the incoming Perani who clumsily touched it out just three metres from the goal. The Azzurri's rhythms dropped, believing the goal to be easier than expected. Instead, the Koreans began to run and did not stop running: their athleticism was extraordinary compared to that of the Italians, who went into confusion, never finding unmarked men to serve and not having the pace to jump the opponent in the one-on-one. In the 23rd minute, Bulgarelli well launched his club-mate Perani, who took off alone towards the goal, but his shot ended up on the little goalkeeper, who was getting bigger as the minutes passed. With Italy in blatant embarrassment, in the 34th minute the patatrak happens: Bulgarelli in midfield enters into a tackle on Pak Seung-Jin and remains on the ground in pain with his knee in pieces. He was carried off on a stretcher and Italy remained in ten for the rest of the match, as there were no substitutions during the match. At the first opportunity the Koreans went sensationally ahead, on a deflection by the Azzurri defence there was a header by Im-Seung Hwi on Rivera in midfield and the ball swung back towards the Italian area; Pak Doo-Ik escaped from Guarneri's marking and pierced Albertosi with a razor-sharp right-footed shot. The second half for Italy was a manual of how not to play at the

On the other side, however, Korea proved to be much more organised than Valcareggi had 'guessed', closing in impeccably and starting off again every time with very fast gallops up to the opponent's area, breaking the rhythm and breath of the unfortunate Azzurri, who were also outnumbered. The only Italian flash of lightning was a personal action by Rivera in the 54th minute, who skipped past a Korean with a lob at the three-quarter line, another at speed, and then fired a left-footed shot from the edge that the flying ant Li Chan-Myong parried with a prodigious leap. It was Korea, however, who came close to doubling the lead in the 69th minute with a dazzling counter-attack by Kim Bong-Hwan, who triangulated with Pak Doo-il and then grazed the post on Albertosi's exit. There, a triangle like that Italy failed to do in 90 minutes. And who would be Ridolini's comedian? It was an epoch-making defeat, a historic and indelible figure of palta, not even with the World Cup victories to come (even today, a resounding defeat in Italy is still referred to as 'a Korea'). Overdue tomatoes at the airport on the way back home!!!

NORTH KOREA: Li Chan-Myong 8, Lim Zoong-Sun 6.5, Oh Yoon-Kyung 6.5, Ha Yung-Won 6.5, Shin Yung-Kyoo 7, Im Seung-Hwi 7, Han Bong-Jin 6.5, Pak Seung-Zin 6.5, Kim Bong-Hwan 7, Pak Doo-Ik 7, Yang Sung-Kook 6. All. Re Hyun-Myung.

ITALY: Albertosi 5.5, Landini 5.5, Facchetti 6, Janich 5.5, Guarneri 5, Fogli 5.5, Bulgarelli 6, Mazzola 5.5, Perani 4.5, Rivera 6, Barison 5. All. Edmondo Fabbri.

Referee: Schwinte (FRA) 6.5

In the 42nd minute Pak Doo-Ik 1-0.



Pak Doo-Ik beats Albertosi and enters the legend.