

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MEXICO 1970 -  
Final Mexico City, Estadio Azteca, 21 June 1970

## **BRAZIL - ITALY**

**4-1**

### **THE SUSPENDED FLIGHT OF PELE'**

The final that everyone wanted for this ninth Rimet Cup was undoubtedly Italy-Brazil, the only two teams to have won 2 World Cups in the previous editions (Italy 1934, 1938; Brazil 1958, 1962) and therefore with the match point to definitively keep the Cup. In fact, according to the regulations, whoever had won the World Cup three times could by right take possession of the Rimet Cup outright. This was therefore the final of finals. The predictions were all for the Brazilians, a very strong and unrepeatable team, but Italy did all it could to self-flagellate by once again keeping Gianni Rivera on the bench, the Ballon d'Or who, with his plays, even though he was only on the pitch in the second half, had solved both the match against Mexico and Germany. Valcareggi placed 4 man-markings to try and contain the Brazilian jugglers: Burgnich on Pelé, Facchetti on Jairzinho, Bertini on Rivelino and Rosato on Tostao, setting up a cover team (Mazzola and De Sisti marked Gerson on sight) that would rely entirely on counter-attacking plays with Domenghini, Riva and Boninsegna. In the 2nd minute, Gigi Riva warmed up his left with a bolide from 30 metres, but Felix flew to deflect and did not give Rombo di Tuono the most beautiful birthday present. Brazil grew as the minutes passed but Italy held well and the cariocas suffered particularly from the Azzurri's suffocating marking. Gigi Riva again made himself dangerous in the 16th minute on a free kick calibrated by Mazzola, his header grazed the crossbar. But at the first good opportunity Brazil took the lead: Tostao's throw-in from the side for Rivelino who volleyed a long left-footed cross to the opposite side where Pelè, with an imperious leap, overtook Burgnich, hovered as if suspended in the air, and with a supernatural header beat Albertosi. It was a goal that will go down in history for the elegance and power at the same time of O'Rey's athletic gesture. The match was in the hands of Brazil, who tried to put the game to sleep as only their players know how to do, with dense horizontal passes in the middle of the pitch, and Italy produced a remarkable effort in increasing the pressing to try and get possession of the ball. In this way, taking advantage of a clamorous ingenuousness of Clodoaldo, who tried to serve Rivelino with a backheel, not alerting the arrival of Boninsegna, the deadly Azzurri counter-attack was triggered: the gallop of "Bonimba" was triumphant, he jumped over Piazza at speed and won the rebound with Brito and Felix, he even had to avoid Gigi Riva who had followed the action to touch the goal and in the end the ball entered the net. Italy with great enthusiasm and humility was holding its own against a clearly stronger Brazil. With Rivera's pre-announced entrance in the second half, the Brazilians also had to fear the Azzurri's restarts and limited their incursions: the match was wide open. But inexplicably Rivera remains on the bench even in the second half, the strongest and most feared Italian man by the Brazilians does not enter the field. Undoubtedly Mazzola is one of the best on the field, but this is the moment for Italy to dare if the objective is to win. Instead, the objective remains 'not to lose', and Brazil obviously thanks and begins the siege at Albertosi's goal. In the opening period Jairzinho, well marked in the first half by Facchetti, rewarded Carlos Alberto's overlapping and the full-back's cross-shot sailed over Albertosi and across the goal line, ending up on the opposite side, with Pelé arriving with a moment's delay. Shortly afterwards a free-kick from point-blank range by Rivelino forced Albertosi to deflect with his fists, but Italy still had the strength to counter-attack: on 54 minutes Facchetti triggered a lightning fast counter-attack on the left, sending in Boninsegna who opened the ball.

splendidly for Domenghini, whose right-footer was deflected by Everaldo, displacing Felix but finishing just wide. In the 60th minute there was a free-kick from the limit for Brazil, Gerson touched to Rivelino who hit the crossbar with his right. Italy responded blow by blow to the Brazilian attacks, going to the conclusion with Mazzola, Boninsegna and Riva. But in the 66th minute there was a raid from the left by Jairzinho, Facchetti stopped him but the ball reached the feet of Gerson who counted and fired a sudden, deadly and ruthless left that surprised Albertosi and gave Brazil the lead. advantage. The Azzurri's nerves jumped, first Domenghini and then Bertini risked expulsion for blatant reaction fouls. Italy paid for the tiredness of the extra time against Germany and the pressing of the first half, as well as the absurd exclusion of Rivera. And Brazil in the final from Gerson's long throw in in the 71st minute, Pelé's ingenious header set Jairzinho free, and he nimbly anticipated Facchetti and beat Albertosi with a touch to make it 3-1. Rivera came on in the 84th minute in place of Boninsegna, and at this point it seemed a further mockery for the Milan captain: 6 minutes of useless time in a match that was already sealed. The Golden Boy nevertheless put in a great effort and created a couple of chances, but the team was by now physically exhausted and mentally already on the plane back to Rome. And in fact, before the final whistle Carlos Alberto struck for the fourth time an Albertosi who had never been a protagonist, perfectly finishing an action triggered by Jairzinho and finished with his usual class by Pelé's magical touch. Brazil were champions and the result was indisputable, rewarding a strong, spectacular and winning team like perhaps none ever in the history of football.

BRAZIL: Felix 6.5, Brito 6, Piazza 6, Carlos Alberto 7, Clodoaldo 6, Everaldo 6.5, Jairzinho 7.5, Gerson 7.5, Tostao 6.5, Pelé 7.5, Rivelino 7.5. Coach Mario Zagallo.

ITALY: Albertosi 5, Burgnich 5.5, Facchetti 5.5, Bertini 5.5 (*from 75' Juliano sv*), Rosato 6, Cera 6, Domenghini 6, De Sisti 6, Boninsegna 7 (*from 84' Rivera sv*), Mazzola 6.5, Riva 6.5.

Manager: Ferruccio Valcareggi.

Referee: Glöckner (DDR) 6.5

On 18' Pelé 1-0; on 37' Boninsegna 1-1.

On 66' Gerson 2-1; on 71' Jairzinho 3-1; on 86' Carlos Alberto 4-1.



*Pelé flew into the sky, overpowered Burgnich and scored the first Brazilian goal with his header.*