

WORLD CUP USA 1994 / Quarter-finals Boston,
Cotton Bowl, 9 July 1994

BRAZIL - HOLLAND

3-2

THE BRANCO TORPEDO

Still not recovered from the emotions of Italy-Spain and 2 hours later in Boston Brazil and Holland took the field for the second quarter-final of USA'94. Brazil struggled not a little in the round of 16 against the hosts of the United States, playing for the entire second half in 10 men due to the expulsion of Leonardo, punished for a homicidal rapture against poor Tab Ramos, struck by a cold-blooded elbow from Brazil's left-back. For both of them, the World Cup ended: Ramos in hospital with a fractured cheekbone, Leonardo disqualified for four turns. In his place, Parreira fielded Branco, a 30-year-old former Brescia and Genoa player, famous in Italy and around the world for the violence of his free kicks. It was a very 'European' Brazil, tactically covered and with an almost undefeated defence, which gave flashes of spectacle only with the atomic offensive pair formed by Romario and Bebeto, great antagonists in the Spanish championship with Barcelona and Deportivo but inseparable friends in the Seleção. Even Holland is not

Just a guarantee of spectacle: very square and muscular, it relies on the speed of Overmars and the plays of star Dennis Bergkamp, a great disappointment in his first year at Inter but always a protagonist in the national team. The two teams feared each other, in particular the Netherlands played holed up in defence so as not to give space to the lethal Greenoro attack, and remained ready to strike on the counter-attack, but Brazil did not reveal themselves either and the first half passed in a slow lethargy. On 26 minutes Witschge's cross from the left and Bergkamp's header from a good position: over the crossbar. Brazil responded three minutes later with a Mauro Silva volley that grazed the crossbar. In the 33rd minute, Bergkamp controlled the area and shot with his right-footed shot just wide of the post. In the final minutes Brazil went close to scoring on two occasions with their central defenders: on 42 minutes with Marcio Santos' header and on 45 minutes with Aldair served in by Romario, but he bungled it in front of De Goey and put it in the bottom corner. The second half was a different story: in the 6th minute Brazil took the lead, Zinho set up Bebeto on the left, the ball in the middle for Romario who, with a touch of supreme elegance, slotted the ball into the net with his right external neck as if in a dance step. The Netherlands were in a daze, Brazil seemed to be on top: Bebeto entered the area from the right and beat De Goey diagonally, but the ball hit the post. Two minutes later, Romario was unleashed as he drew the entire Dutch defence with the ball glued to his foot, but De Goey blocked it on the way out. Until the 17th minute, Bebeto won a rebound with Wouters and sprinted towards goal, deftly past De Goey and into the net, then departed for the historic jubilation by miming the cradle with his arms together with Romario and Mazinho, to celebrate the birth of their son three days earlier. Not even time to update the scoreboard and Bergkamp reopened the game, juggling in the area between two opponents and beating Taffarel diagonally. Brazil slowed down and the Netherlands began to believe: Winter's right-footer from the edge of the box was blocked by Taffarel. In the 31st minute Bergkamp's great play penetrated the area in a triangle with Ronald De Boer and then looked for the far post but found Aldair, perhaps with his arm. The Dutch protested but for the Costa Rican referee it was only a corner. Overmars shoots, Winter breaks into the pile and scores the 2-2! It was all to do again, with the momentum in Holland's favour and Brazil seeing the ghosts of the last three World Cups thrown out for too much pride. Branco took his measures in the 33rd minute with a free-kick from long range: a missile headed into the crossbar but De Goey was alert and touched down for a corner. Three minutes later, however, it was lethal: a free kick from 35 metres out and Branco, who with Leonardo available would never have played, fired an impregnable torpedo that went in at the far post before

swell the net: 3-2. The Netherlands had no more of it and Brazil easily administered the game, striking on the counter-attack in the last minute. Bebeto touched Romario in the area and Wouters knocked him down, but the referee let it pass. Brazil and Italy then advanced... the Brazilians faced Sweden in the semifinals, who they had already faced in the qualifying round without going beyond the 1-1 draw, while Italy had to face the surprising Bulgaria, who, after having eliminated France from the World Cup in the last minute of the qualifying round, beat Argentina in their group, Mexico in the round of 16 and the favourite Germany in the quarters, playing great football and thanks to a Stoichkov in fantastic form.

BRAZIL: Taffarel 6, Jorginho 6.5, Aldair 6, Marcio Santos 7, Mauro Silva 7, Branco 7.5 (*from 90' Cafu sv*), Bebeto 8, Dunga 6.5, Zinho 7, Mazinho 6 (*from 81' Rai sv*), Romario 7.5. Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira.

HOLLAND: De Goey 6.5, Valckx 6, Rijkaard 5.5 (*from 65' R. De Boer 6.5*), R. Koeman 6, Witschge 6, Wouters 6, Overmars 6, Jonk 6, Van Vossen 5 (*from 54' Roy 6*), Bergkamp 7.5, Winter 7. All. Dick Advocaat.

Referee: Badilla (COS) 6

At 52' Romario 1-0; at 62' Bebeto 2-0; at 64' Bergkamp 2-1; at 76' Winter 2-2; at 81' Branco 3-2.