

WORLD CUP USA 1994 / Quarter-finals Dallas,
Foxboro Stadium, 9 July 1994

ITALY - SPAIN

2-1

ROBY BAGGIO DRIVES AWAY FEAR

Italy and Spain open the quarter-finals of the USA'94 World Cup, the Red Furies after a week's rest (eighth won 3-0 against Switzerland on July 2nd), the Azzurri with three days less rest and the extra time played against Nigeria. To cope with fatigue and a Spain that had appeared very tonic in previous matches, Arrigo Sacchi fielded a more muscular team with Dino Baggio and Antonio Conte in place of Signori and Berti. Javier Clemente, on the other hand, plays without any strikers, fielding a trident of offensive midfielders who are also good in coverage: Goicoechea, Luis Enrique and Caminero. It was immediately clear that the challenge was to be played in midfield, and in fact it began with great intensity and Spain, as predicted, seemed to have more pace, but Italy was well set up and did not suffer. In fact, on 13' there was a breakaway by Massaro on the right, a ball in the middle for Roby Baggio who promptly hit a left-footed shot, but Ferrer deflected it into the corner. Italy played well, conquered the midfield and deservedly took the lead in the 25th minute: Donadoni touched on Dino Baggio who fired a formidable right-footed shot from over 30 metres that went into the top corner. Spain reacted strongly and came close to equalising shortly afterwards with a powerful header from Abelardo on Goicoechea's corner, but the Azzurri's defence held and Roby Baggio counter-attacked with Conte, who misjudged the chance with his left-footed shot from the edge of the box. The Spaniards continued to push until half-time but the Azzurri did not suffer and showed off excellent counter-attacks: Italy was finally a creature of Sacchi, short and good at verticalizing, and Spain seemed trapped. In the second half, however, Italy went into Oxygen deficit, despite the entry of the lively Signori in place of the tired Albertini, and Spain dominated the match, crushing the Azzurri in defence. On 13' of the second half, when Italy seemed to have taken the measures without having suffered any goal balls, Luis Enrique won the ball (perhaps committing a foul) on Costacurta, Ferrer put in the middle for the left-footed Caminero who, thanks to a deflection of the ball, was able to make a save.

intention of Caminero who, thanks to a clear deflection by Benarrivo, beats Pagliuca for the 1-1. Italy was in turmoil and in the following minutes risked capitulating: on 16', Goicoechea's left-footed shot from the right corner of the area and Pagliuca flew to reject it with his fists; a minute later, Conte made a dubious intervention on Luis Enrique in the area, the referee Puhl let the game go on amidst the Spanish protests. Italy on the ropes, paying the price for tiredness and a 100% humidity that cut the legs. Conte had cramps and Sacchi replaced him with Nicola Berti, who immediately made himself the protagonist with his infamous facial expressions at every intervention by the referee and at the half-hour mark with a spectacular turn on an assist from Tassotti, Zubizarreta repelled for a corner. In the last ten minutes, the challenge turns dramatic. The semi-final of the World Cup was up for grabs, the teams were on an equal footing thanks to the excellent tactical work of the two coaches, but Spain had more: on a long throw by Nadal the Azzurri defence had a moment of hesitation and the new arrival Julio Salinas found himself alone in front of Pagliuca: It seemed a done goal but Saint Gianluca came out to avalanche and clamorously repelled, in an intervention that was worth as much as a goal for Italy; the ball went to Camimero and prodigious intervention also by Costacurta to stop him at the moment of the tap-in. Spain sank the knife and seemed to be able to score at any moment: in the 39th minute of the second half Hierro fired a shot from outside the box and Pagliuca flew to deflect it into the corner, a minute later Costacurta repelled a header by Nadal on the line with Pagliuca beaten. Italy staggered but three minutes from time built up a legendary counter-attack: Benarrivo stopped Goicoechea on his way into the box and offloaded to Donadoni who

Back to Berti, a splendid throw over the centre of midfield from the Inter player who finds the fast Signori in the opponent's half who promptly touches the ball to his right for the unmarked Roberto Baggio, who enters the area, jumps over Zubizarreta but stretches the ball too far and seems to run towards the goal line... but Roby, from an angled position, with an acrobatic twist manages to find a magical diagonal that goes into the net! Spanish players distraught and on the ground scattered around the field, while the Azzurri embraced each other incredulous and destroyed by fatigue. It wasn't over, Spain attacked en masse in the final minutes and Italy swept the ball away in desperation. Referee Puhl conceded a long recovery and in the 93rd minute Goicoechea crossed from the right but when the ball reached the area there was no one to hit it because Luis Enrique had collapsed to the ground a moment earlier after receiving an elbow.

moments earlier after receiving an elbow in the face from Tassotti. The Spanish striker was tarred and first chased the referee, then Tassotti to do himself justice, Puhl sent him off and shortly afterwards blew the whistle for the end of the match. The replays showed unequivocally that Tassotti's foul was a penalty and an expulsion, but it seems the Hungarian referee didn't notice anything... and Italy went into the semifinals in a dramatic match, which re-played the same suffering and joy of the match against Nigeria four days later. Tassotti will be disqualified by television for 8 days, for him the World Cup is over.

ITALY: Pagliuca 7, Tassotti 6, Benarrivo 6.5, Costacurta 7, Maldini 6.5, D. Baggio 7.5, Conte 5.5 (*from 66' Berti 7*), Albertini 6 (*from 46' Signori 7*), Massaro 6.5, R. Baggio 8, Donadoni 7. Manager Arrigo Sacchi.

SPAIN: Zubizarreta 6.5, Ferrer 7, Otero 6, Sergi 5.5 (*from 60' Salinas 5*), Abelardo 6.5, Nadal 7, Goicoechea 7, Alkorta 6, Luis Enrique 6.5, Bakero 5.5 (*from 65' Hierro 6.5*), Caminero 7. Manager: Javier Clemente.

Referee: Puhl (UNG) 5.5

On 25' D. Baggio 1-0.

On 58' Caminero 1-1; on 87' R. Baggio 2-1.



Baggio beats Zubizarreta and puts the seal that takes Italy into the semi-finals