

World Cup Schedule

Brazil 2014

June 16

8:30am: Germany vs. Portugal
11:30am: Iran vs. Nigeria
2:30pm: Ghana vs. United States

June 17

8:30am: Belgium vs. Algeria
11:30am: Brazil vs. Mexico
2:30pm: Russia vs. South Korea

June 18

8:30am: Australia vs. Netherlands
11:30am: Spain vs. Chile
2:30pm: Cameroon vs. Croatia

June 19

8:30am: Colombia vs. Ivory Coast
11:30am: Uruguay vs. England
2:30pm: Japan vs. Greece

June 20

8:30am: Italy vs. Costa Rica
11:30am: Switzerland vs. France
2:30pm: Honduras vs. Ecuador

June 21

8:30am: Argentina vs. Iran
11:30am: Germany vs. Ghana
2:30pm: Nigeria vs. Bosnia-Herzegovina

June 22

8:30am: Belgium vs. Russia
11:30am: South Korea vs. Algeria
2:30pm: United States vs. Portugal

June 23

8:30am: Netherlands vs. Chile
8:30am: Australia vs. Spain
12:30pm: Croatia vs. Mexico
12:30pm: Cameroon vs. Brazil

June 24

8:30am: Italy vs. Uruguay
8:30am: Costa Rica vs. England
12:30pm: Japan vs. Colombia
12:30pm: Greece vs. Ivory Coast

June 25

8:30am: Nigeria vs. Argentina
8:30am: Bosnia-Herzegovina vs. Iran
12:30pm: Ecuador vs. France
12:30pm: Honduras vs. Switzerland

June 26

8:30am: United States vs. Germany
8:30am: Portugal vs. Ghana
12:30pm: South Korea vs. Belgium
12:30pm: Algeria vs. Russia

June 28 to July 1

8:30am & 12:30pm:
Round of 16

July 4 & 5

8:30am & 12:30pm:
Quarterfinals

July 8 & 9

12:30pm: Semifinals

July 12

12:30pm: Third-place match

July 13

11:30am: Championship match

* All times listed are west coast

* Matches are televised on

ESPN, ESPN2, ABC, and Univision

* To view results of matches

already played, visit

<www.fifa.com>

Japan's Honda finds magic — but Blue Samurai fail in first match

By Joji Sakurai

The Associated Press

RECIFE, Brazil — It seemed like a perfect way to redeem a half-year of frustration.

The roar Japan's star striker Keisuke Honda let out after putting his team ahead against Ivory Coast in the 16th minute with a beautifully poised left-footed strike appeared to be a release from the derision he suffered this year in his new role as AC Milan's No. 10.

Honda came to the World Cup with something to prove — and the goal he scored showed he still has the lethal touches that made him such a presence with his old club CSKA Moscow.

For Japan, it was a shame the rest of the team couldn't find the inspiration that inhabited their talismanic player. Ivory Coast kept muscling forward, and something had to give for a Japanese side that showed uncharacteristic sloppiness in its passing. Two strikes early in the second half gave Ivory Coast a 2-1 lead that they kept until the final whistle.

Japan's other star — Manchester United's Shinji Kagawa — was particularly ineffective in the match. Anemic in attack, he sprayed passes early in the first half and gave away chances Japan was lucky not to be punished for.

But Japan can find a measure of consolation in the fact that their best player appears now to have found his form just in time for soccer's greatest stage.



MONTHLONG COMPETITION. Japan's Masato Morishige, left, and Yuto Nagatomo (#5) struggle with Ivory Coast's Didier Drogba (#11) during a Group C World Cup soccer match at Arena Pernambuco in Recife, Brazil. Although Japanese star striker Keisuke Honda scored a goal in the 16th minute, Ivory Coast defeated Japan 2-1 in their first match of group play. (AP Photo/Dolores Ochoa)

If the Blue Samurai can regroup from defeat in their first match, they still have an outside chance of getting through to the knockout stages. Two victories would put them through, and they have the talent and the depth to beat their next opponents: Greece on Thursday, June 19 and Colombia on Tuesday, June 24.

But the performance against Ivory

Coast also exposed mental lapses the Japanese will need to address if they are to have any chance of making it through.

"We need to change our mentality," Japan goalkeeper Eiji Kawashima conceded after the loss. "It's tough to accept defeat in the first match. We just need to give everything for the next match."

FIFA not criticizing Japanese referee over penalty

By Stephen Wade

The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — The Fédération Internationale de Football Association's (FIFA) head of refereeing has declined to criticize a controversial penalty decision in Brazil's opening World Cup win over Croatia — but said everyone makes mistakes.

Brazil striker Fred fell to the ground after minimal contact with Croatia's Dejan Lovren in the first Group A game and Japanese referee Yuichi Nishimura pointed to the penalty spot. Brazilian forward Neymar converted in the 71st minute to make it 2-1 and Brazil went on to win 3-1.

"We are human," Massimo Busacca, head of FIFA's refereeing department, said. "There is not one human in life that is not committing a mistake. It's part of life. The referee lives with this responsibility."

Busacca said Nishimura "had a very good position" to make the call. He showed reporters one still frame of the incident, but did not show a



video replay of the disputed penalty sequence.

Busacca did not say if he thought the decision was

correct. And he did not say if Nishimura would referee more games. He said the game evaluation would be based on

CALL CONTROVERSY.

Croatia's Dejan Lovren (#6) is booked by referee Yuichi Nishimura of Japan during a Group A World Cup soccer match between Brazil and Croatia, the opening game of the tournament at Itaquerao Stadium in Sao Paulo, Brazil. (AP Photo/Shuji Kajiyama)

90 minutes, not just one call.

One reporter suggested the call was a mistake.

"Mistake," Busacca repeated. "It is your opinion. I let you think it if you want."

Nishimura refereed four matches at the 2010 World Cup and is remembered for sending off Brazil defender Felipe Melo in his team's quarterfinal exit against the Netherlands.

Nishimura and Busacca were teammates as referees at the tournament in South Africa.

Busacca argued the role of the referee was part of the charm of the game, prompting debates. He said some kind of video replay system might help settle debates, but acknowledged a game can turn in one moment.

"This is a World Cup," he said. "One decision can change a lot."

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