

Nike and Puma Had Coach Parreira as Hostage, Say Brazilian Fans

Contributed by O.Ch.
Tuesday, 04 July 2006

Brazil returned home from the World Cup on Monday, June 3, to little fanfare, and coach Carlos Alberto Parreira escaping out a back door to avoid fans and the media.

Brazil's 1-0 defeat to France in Saturday's quarterfinal left most Brazilians with a feeling of resignation rather than anger. Only a few supporters even bothered to turn up to jeer the squad on its return.

"I would have preferred not to have a scored a goal and to have come home a champion," said midfielder Gilberto, who netted in the 3-1 group-stage win over Japan. "For me, (my goal) didn't do very much."

Gilberto was the only player cheered by fans at the airport and one of the few to talk to the press.

Later, Parreira held a press conference at the Brazilian Soccer Confederation headquarters and said he regretted the loss as much as anybody else.

"No one here wanted to be champion of the world more them me," he said.

On his future as coach, Parreira said he would only discuss that after talking with confederation president Ricardo Teixeira.

Asked whether Real Madrid defender Roberto Carlos was to blame for the hole in Brazil's defense which allowed the winning goal, Parreira said, "We're not going to look for a scapegoat where one doesn't exist. We lost and France won. If no one made any mistakes and everyone was perfect all games would end 0-0."

Most fans, however, were quick to pin all the blame on Parreira.

Jorge Ganem, a 55-year-old lawyer, said Parreira didn't use his bench more because of contractual obligations to sponsors.

"Look what Parreira's done, he had a great bench but he didn't use them because he's beholden to Nike and Puma or whoever," Ganem said.

Many younger Brazilians couldn't remember the team coming home before the final.

Pravda - www.pravda.ru