



FIRST-ROUND SCHEDULE

All times Eastern

TUESDAY

South Korea vs. Togo, 9 a.m. (ESPN2) in Frankfurt
France vs. Switzerland, Noon (ESPN2) in Stuttgart ★

SUNDAY, JUNE 18

France vs. South Korea, 3 p.m. (ABC) in Leipzig

MONDAY, JUNE 19

Togo vs. Switzerland, 9 a.m. (ESPN2) in Dortmund

FRIDAY, JUNE 23

Togo vs. France, 3 p.m. (ESPN) in Cologne
Switzerland vs. S. Korea, 3 p.m. (ESPN2) in Hanover ★

★
KEY
MATCHES

TEAMS AT-A-GLANCE



FRANCE

Coach:

Raymond Domenech.

Appearance: 12th.

How Qualified:

Won Europe's Group 4.



1998



SWITZERLAND

Coach: Kobi Kuhn.

Appearance: Eighth.

How Qualified:

Second in Europe's Group 4, beat Turkey in playoff.



SOUTH KOREA

Coach: Dick Advocaat.

Appearance: Seventh.

How Qualified:

Finished second in Asia's Group A.



TOGO

Coach: Otto Pfister.

Appearance: First.

How Qualified:

Won Africa's Group 1.



BY JAMIE McDONALD — GETTY IMAGES

Striker Thierry Henry of France, right, is on top of the world after signing a four-year extension with his club team, Arsenal, in May.

GROUP G Note For Nuts

Johann Vogel of Switzerland was rated PSV Eindhoven's best midfielder during its run to the Champions League semifinals in 2005 — ahead of Dutch stars Phillip Cocu and Mark van Bommel and Park Ji Sung of South Korea.

STAR PLAYER » THIERRY HENRY | F | FRANCE

Henry Makes Opponents Pay the Price

How good is Thierry Henry? Barcelona and Real Madrid reportedly offered £50 million to Arsenal for the striker this past season, a figure that would have made for the most expensive transfer in history. It says even more about Henry, 29, that Arsenal turned down both requests.

Henry signed a four-year contract extension with Arsenal on May 19. He scored 33 goals for the Gunners this year, 30 last year, 39 in 2003-04, 32 in 2002-03, etc.

"He has evolved into a central striker with every attribute," reads the assessment of Henry in "When Saturday Comes: The Half Decent Football Book." "Trickery on the ball, precise finishing, shooting

power, the vision to create goals for others, free-kick expertise, stamina, a scoring record that matches any other top striker and an ability to lead."

Raymond Domenech's decision to start Fabien Barthez in goal could mean that France will need to score a few times to advance very far. Henry is the man to do it. Especially now that his future is settled, he appears ready for a big-time performance in the World Cup.

He scored three goals as France won the 1998 World Cup and had the same number in the victorious Euro 2000 campaign. He also, however, was part of the French team that did not score a goal in the 2002 World Cup.

FRANCE OUTLOOK

This defense didn't scare Premiership teams. Newcastle won five straight in midseason after it dropped D Jean-Alain Boumsong. Manchester United benched D Mikael Silvestre. Patrick Vieira was outplayed by Cesc Fabregas in the Champions League. It may not matter. Not with Thierry Henry (32 goals for France), Zinedine Zidane (28 goals for France), David Trezeguet (31), Sylvain Wiltord (26) and Louis Saha (15 goals for Manchester United).

» **Best-Case Scenario:** Strikers take Les Bleus to the final.

» **Worst-Case Scenario:** France has failed to advance past the first round in all but three World Cups since 1962; with this defense, another early exit is possible.

SOUTH KOREA OUTLOOK

An adventurous 4-3-3 formation didn't lead to many goals in qualifying: The Taeguk Warriors scored 18 in 12 matches. The roster features several European-based players, including MFs

Park Ji Sung (Manchester United) and Lee Eul Yong

(Trabzonspor, Turkey), D Lee

Young Pyo

(Tottenham Hotspur)

and F Seol Ki Hyeon (Wolves).

Team enters 0-11-3 in World Cup matches it did not host.

» **Best-Case Scenario:**

With goals from F Park Chu Young, 20, team makes the second round.

» **Worst-Case Scenario:**

A loss to Togo in the opener would mean an early trip home.

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SWITZERLAND OUTLOOK

MF Johann Vogel of AC Milan is the fulcrum. The 29-year-old made his professional debut at 15 and national team debut at 18.

Alexander Frei led the French League in scoring two years ago and has 23 goals in 42 games for the Swiss. Team showed some backbone in nasty fracas with Turkey after qualifying.

» **Best-Case Scenario:** Get physical with France and South Korea, win group and make quarterfinals.

» **Worst-Case Scenario:** After tying France twice in qualifying, things don't go as well in the real thing and the Swiss let South Korea slip into second in the group.

TOGO OUTLOOK

The first squad to arrive for the World Cup — Togo has been in Germany since the middle of May. That was the only way to ensure a lengthy stay. Otto Pfister took over after Stephen Keshi was fired following a winless African Nations Cup. F Emmanuel Adebayor

(11 goals in qualifying) skipped several practices at Monaco and left for Arsenal in January. Keshi called him a "crybaby."

» **Best-Case Scenario:** Already happened — the team qualified.

» **Worst-Case Scenario:** Adebayor's petulance means Togo pulls a France of 2002 and exits without scoring.