

# Soccer



## The 1950 World Cup



### England Humiliated

29 June 1950 at Belo Horizonte: USA v. England, 1-0. England had waited until the fourth World Cup before entering the competition.

In front of 20,000 spectators, among whom were only eight journalists (and one of them was an American holidaying in Brazil who had been asked to notify his paper 'if anything happened'), the USA gained an historic victory with a scratch team made up of amateurs from six different countries. It boasted only one known player, Eddie McIlvenny of Scotland, who was later to play for Manchester United. But it was a Haitian attacker, Larry Gaetjens, who engineered their success, scoring what was to be the only goal of the game in the 33rd minute.

The English, who set up any number of scoring situations at the beginning of the game, played from then on as if they would have been happy to score just once. But in vain. O. Borghi, the American goalkeeper, made several miraculous saves. In the 75th minute, he even managed to deflect for a corner a penalty shot by Stan Mortensen.

England had not fielded her best players, but she had drawn up a good team, among whom were especially Alf Ramsey, the future national team manager; Billy Wright, who was to be picked more than a hundred times; Jimmy Dickinson and an attacking trio remarkable on other occasions made up of Tom Finney, Stan Mortensen and Wilf Mannion. Belo Horizonte's too-small playing area and the uneven ground prevented the English side from developing their game. John Thompson, one of the few reporters present, nonetheless wrote in next day's *Daily Mirror*: "The Americans had the better side and deserved their success".

After that, England could not pull herself together. Three days later, in Rio de Janeiro, she was beaten 0-1 by Spain and left Brazil.

#### THE TEAMS

**USA:** Borghi, Keough, Maca, McIlvenny, Colombo, Bahr, Wallace, Pariani, Gaetjens, J. Souza and E. Souza

**England:** Williams, Ramsey, Aston, Wright, Hughes, Dickinson, Finney, Mortensen, Bentley, Mannion and Mullen

*Larry Gaetjen's historic goal: goalkeeper Williams cannot get over it...*