

The Maracanazo in Brazil 1950



Ribeiro, V. (2007). Maracana Stadium [photo]. Taken from <https://goo.gl/r78AtF>

The fourth Soccer World Cup Tournament was in Brazil and it started on June 24th at the newest and biggest soccer stadium in world, The Maracana Stadium which was built for the world cup and had a capacity for 200 000 people. There were 6 teams from Europe and 7 from America.

In the first round, there were four groups and the best team from each group passed to the second round. Unlike other World Cups, this tournament's winner would be determined by a final group stage; with the final four teams playing in round-robin format, the winner would be the team which would get more points.

The groups were ordered in the following way:

Group A, in this group participated: Brazil, Yugoslavia, Switzerland and Mexico.

Group B, this group was integrated by England, Spain, Chile and USA.

Group C, this group had three teams: Sweden, Italy and Paraguay.

Group D, just two participants were in this group: Uruguay and Bolivia.

In each group teams were awarded 2 points for a win and 1 point for a draw.

On the world's Cup Inaugural game, the Brazilian team was better than the Mexican one; Brazil beat Mexico 4 to 0. Days later Brazil playing against Switzerland ended in a 2-2 tie. Finally Brazil had a brilliant victory over Yugoslavia 2-0. So Brazil was the best team in the group 1.

In the group D, Uruguay defeated Bolivia the weakest team in the tournament. In their match, Uruguay was better and in its easiest victory demolished Bolivia 8 to 0.

In the second and final round, there were the four best teams: Brazil, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay.

On July 9th Uruguay and Spain ended 2-2 while Brazil in a classic display of the most extraordinary soccer, easily defeated Sweden 7-1; two days later, Brazil beat Spain 6-1 and Uruguay hardly overcame Sweden 3-2 in one of the most exciting matches of the tournament.

In the chart, you can see the positions of the teams before their last game. Brazil was the best team in the final group and had one game left to play against Uruguay, which was in second place and only a point behind.

Team	Matches				Goals		
	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	Points
Brazil	2	2	0	0	13	2	4
Uruguay	2	1	1	0	5	4	3
Spain	2	0	1	1	3	8	1
Sweden	2	0	0	2	3	10	0

Spain and Sweden didn't have opportunity to be the champion; they just played for the third place that was won by Sweden that defeated Spain 3-1.

The match that would decide the title was Brazil versus Uruguay. It was easier for Brazil to be the world champion, because a victory or a draw would grant Brazil the title, whereas Uruguay had to win the match in order to win the championship.

The game is often listed as the 1950 World Cup Final, although strictly speaking this was not the case; it was merely the decisive match in the tournament.

In Brazil, people had already begun claiming Brazil was the world champion days before to the final match. It seemed that the Brazilians would defeat Uruguay as easily as they had done with Spain and Sweden. Moreover, in the previous year, during "The America Cup" Tournament also held in Brazil, Brazil had demolished Uruguay 5-1. Brazil was better than Uruguay.

On the day of the game, in the morning, people had improvised a carnival on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, with chants of "Brazil the champion!". A victory song, "Brazil The Victors", was composed, practiced, and ready to be played after the final. Even, the most popular newspapers were headlined as "Brazil 1950 World Cup Champion"

Such was the triumphal atmosphere that even FIFA president Jules Rimet had a speech in his jacket, in homage to the Brazilian champions, written in Portuguese.

On July 16, 1950, The Brazilian and Uruguayan teams were received at Maracana stadium for 200,000 spectators. The most crowded and the noisiest place on earth in that moment.

In the locker room, the Uruguayan coach Juan Lopez asked his men to play defensively to avoid a humiliating defeat. "Brazil is the best, and it will win" he said. When Lopez retired, the captain Obdulio Varela claimed the exact opposite: "Juancito is a good man, but now he is wrong. If we play to defend ourselves, we will get the same result as Sweden or Spain".

The game started with Brazil attacking Uruguay, however the Uruguayans managed to keep the first half scoreless, 45 minutes had passed and Brazil could not score.

In the second half, Brazil scored the first goal of the match only two minutes after the interval. People shouted; Brazilians were the happiest people in the world. Uruguayan players started playing more offensively; Juan Alberto Schiaffino scored the most incredible goal of the tournament, in the 66th minute. Later, Alcides Ghiggia, scored the most valuable goal of his life, with only 11 minutes remaining on the clock. The most unexpected result appeared. Suddenly, the stadium became the most noiseless place on earth, until the end of the match with Uruguay winning 2-1.

At the end of official time, the referee blew the final and the Uruguayans were the happiest people in the stadium. On the other hand, it was the saddest day in Brazil.

Since then this event has been remembered as one of the most important in the history of football.

Reading Activity

The Maracanazo.

Choose the correct option to answer the questions.

1. How were the teams selected for the tournament's second round?

- a) The teams were the losers of each group.
- b) The teams were the winners of each group.

	True	False
The Maracanã stadium was built some years before 1950.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teams from different continents participated in the tournament.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The team with more points in each group participated in the second round of the tournament.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uruguay played three games in the first round of the tournament.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mexico played in the first game of the tournament.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bolivia was a good team in the tournament.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uruguayan coach thought his team would win.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spain was the third place in the soccer tournament.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brazil could be the champion with a draw.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uruguay scored its second goal at the 89th minute.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>