

# Back of the nyet

**TIM VYNER**  
WORLD CUP  
DRAW  
No 9 VOLGOGRAD

There were great scenes at the Volgograd fan zone, where Russia's game with Egypt was being screened. No one could have backed Russia to be 8-1 up after two games. But it is great for a tournament that continues to surprise.

Half the population of Volgograd was there: old and young, families and friends, plus a few England and Tunisia fans who are still in town. Russians were interested in why I was drawing, and wanted to know "How is your stay here. Do you like Russian people. Why don't you just take a photograph?"

"Welcome to Volgograd" is a banner displayed everywhere and it really feels like this city has embraced the World Cup. The iPad is a great tool for drawing at night. You are effectively drawing with light and the mood and carnival atmosphere of a packed fan zone is captured in colours you choose.



**WORLD CUP DIARY**  
**ADAM HURREY**

Turning Japanese, I really think so



It was a life-affirming trend started by Japanese fans in Brazil four years ago, and now it has officially become A World Cup Thing. Following their 2-1 win over Poland, a group of Senegal fans stayed behind after the final whistle to tidy up their litter at the Otkrytiye Arena in Moscow. And, judging by all the hats, trumpets, scarves and flags they had brought with them, it was no simple task.

## Bitter end is fast approaching for Russia

Across Russia, a World Cup catastrophe is unfolding: they are running out of beer. "We just didn't think they would only want beer," said one member of Moscow's bar staff, presumably with a straight face.

Meanwhile, in Nizhny Novgorod, 7,000 Swedish fans managed to drink the entire city centre dry...before their team had even kicked off against



South Korea. Only one thing for it, then - get on the hard stuff.

## Daei beware! Ronaldo is gunning for you

Cristiano Ronaldo's fourth goal of this World Cup took him to 85 overall for Portugal, and into second place in the all-time international scoring charts.

The bad news is that he is still 24 goals behind the No 1, Iranian legend Ali

Daei, who played his last international in 2006. The good news is that - if he continues to score at the same rate - Ronaldo is on course to surpass Daei's tally of 109 in just over four years' time...at the World Cup in Qatar. Wouldn't put it past him, would you?

## It's official: Ref outpaces German defender

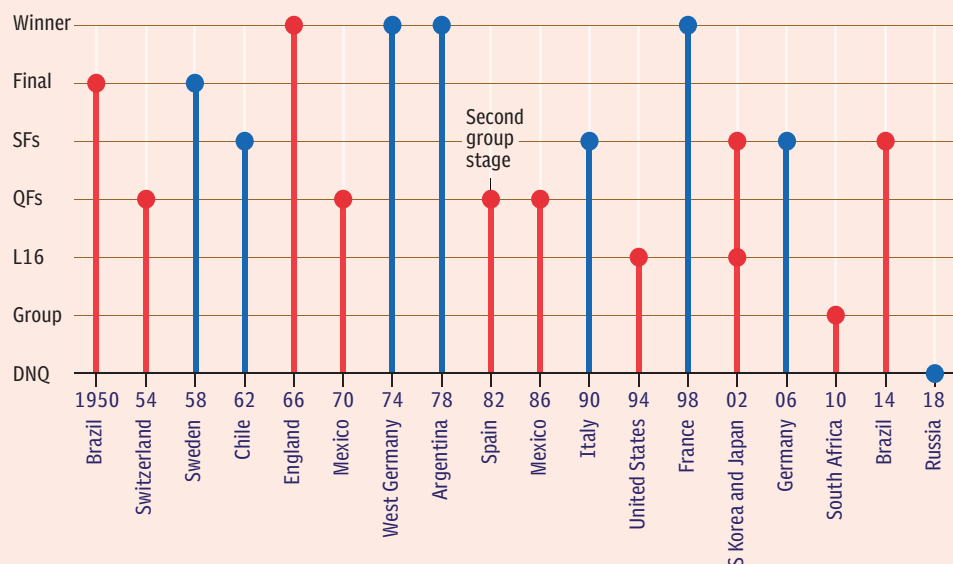
The German post mortems about their opening defeat against Mexico have hit some impressively forensic heights.

Broadcaster ZDF analysed the counter-attack that led to the winning goal and found

that defender Joshua Kimmich was sprinting back 2.4mph slower...than the referee. Bayern Munich have already been linked with a £42million move for the 40-year-old box-to-box whistler Alireza Faghani, presumably.

## Home advantage How host nations have fared

● Won first two games ● Did not win first two games



Their own media may have been doom-laden soothsayers, but Russia have set an incredible pace at their own World Cup with a five-goal demolition of Saudi Arabia followed by an assured 3-1 win against Egypt. Host nations generally do pretty well, but what of those who won their opening two games?

Since 1950, when group stages were introduced, seven host nations have won their first two matches. All went on to reach at least the semi-finals, with three of them winning the whole tournament. Russia, it would seem, have the weight of history on their

side. The last team to host and win their first two games was Germany in 2006. They fell at the semi-finals, scuppered by two extra-time Italian goals from Fabio Grosso and Alessandro Del Piero.

France in 1998 are the last hosts to win the World Cup. They won their first two matches too, beating South Africa 3-0 and Saudi Arabia 4-0. Of the others to win their first two fixtures, Sweden went all the way to the final in 1958, going down to Brazil. Four years later, Chile, the hosts, were also downed by Brazil, in the semi-final, who retained the trophy.

West Germany, hosts in 1974, and Argentina, hosts in 1978, won their first two matches - and the tournament.

Italy got off to a strong start in 1990, beating Austria and the USA, but ran aground in the semi-finals when they came up against Diego Maradona's Argentina. "Naples is not Italy," Maradona said before the game, urging the locals to support his side. For a team that was 'doomed to fail', a semi-final place would be an unqualified success for Russia.

By Jamie Johnson