



EVENING ECHO ALTERNATIVE WORLD CUP GUIDE



A fan kips down for the night in our sister city of Cologne after the Englan-Sweden game on Tuesday night.

Picture: Gareth Fuller/PA.



Patriotic conduct sent to Coventry

OF THE six cities twinned with Cork, two – like us – have missed out on the World Cup hype because of their country's failure to qualify.

Perusing the websites of the newspapers of Swansea and Shanghai yesterday, it was easy to believe the tournament was not on at all: the *South Wales Evening Post's* sports section was devoted to next year's league one fixtures ("Swansea City will play host to newly promoted Cheltenham Town on the opening day of the new football season"), while the *Shanghai Daily* threw up a worthless opinion piece where a Frenchman wrote that he — surprise, surprise — would like to see France beat Germany at some stage.

The Chinese paper did have a poll to see who was the player of the day. Kewell, Kawaguchi, Materazzi, Essien and Nedved were on the shortlist, not one having received a single vote. I plumped for Materazzi and he shot into a 100% lead.

Shanghai has a population of over 20 million people.

The poll in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* proved more popular, with the voting even stretching to

two decimal points.

'Judging by the first three matches, can England win the 2006 World Cup?' the paper asked the Warwickshire public; 16.83% said yes, 54.95% said there needed to be a considerable improvement, while 28.22% proved gloomy, opting for 'No, we're simply not good enough'.

Patriotism has to take a back seat in Coventry at the moment, literally, as city council workers have been banned from flying England flags on vans and lorries during the World Cup. The council has told staff that flags are too dangerous to be put on the outside of any council vehicle.

"An e-mail was sent out to managers because of concerns that flags could contravene the Road Traffic Act, which refers to dangerous objects attached to vehicles," reports the *Telegraph*.

"Union rep Vince Butler said: 'The council are going over the top. If there is a health and safety reason I can't really understand what it is — most of the cars in the city are driving around with flags on'."

Unable to discover any media coverage of the tournament from our French brethren in Rennes, we settled instead for French newspa-

Robert O'Shea
sees what our twinned cities make of the World Cup by looking at their press coverage

per *Les Echos*, for obvious reasons.

The paper also has a poll, one that shows the Gallic temperament to be more pessimistic than the English. Fifty-nine% of those questioned people believe France will be eliminated today, 32% that the Blue ones will qualify, 9% do not decide.

YOO! ESS! EH?

Our favourite coverage came from the States. While a number of newspapers have been making a fist at American media spoofs during the tournament (though none can match the utterly abysmal Budweiser ads), there is no beating the real thing.

After yesterday's game, a downbeat note was struck in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "There was no glory for the United States at this year's World Cup, only frustration and failure... This was a bitter end for the United States, who carried high hopes — and a No. 5 world ranking from FIFA — on soccer's biggest stage. Four years ago, they made the quarter-finals and this time had even bigger plans."

The Frisco paper has actually got a man in Germany named Scott Ostler who is travelling around in a motorhome, but he is a complete tool, e.g. he asks: "How come every World Cup team has a cool nickname except for the USA?"

Their man in front of the TV is Ray Ratto (seriously). On England, who he says he is "rooting" for, he points out they: "finished first in Group B, but who couldn't be more miserable if they had learned that Henry VIII had just come back to life and was the new national coach."

He goes on to say France are "so bumfuzzled that Raymond Domesnech, their coach, thinks the referees are favouring the Swiss."

Last, but not least, we reach mighty Cologne, host to Togo versus

France today. The city's *Express* newspaper has a very impressive website, but we are only saying that because it has 20 pictures of the sexiest female fans so far.

Unfortunately, we do not speak German, so we're not too sure what they think about it all, but that does not mean we are not going to make a fist out of translating some headlines.

Superstar Owen: Kreuzbandriss — Superstar Owen: Seen at bookies.

Iran-Coach Ivankovic schmeißt hin — Iran boss Ivankovic smites assistant.

El fluppe jubelt Horror-Tag — Bad tackle went close to man area.

Die 10 gebote der Englischen fans — At least 10 English fans must die.

Er hat wirklich reformen angepakt – jetzt geht er auf die liga los — Supporters wear many hats — some bigger than others.

Ole! Raul scheißt Spanien ins achtafinal — Ole! Raul's shite, but Spain can reach the final.

Dickes Ronaldo gut wie kleines dickes Muller — Your guess is as good as ours, but 'kleines' does mean small. Maybe they're compensating for something with all those goals.