

# **World Cup**

## **Intergalactic Showdown**

**by Jonny Zucker**



## World Cup - Intergalactic Showdown

19.45 p.m.

The World Cup 3<sup>rd</sup> place play-off at Estadio Nacional Brasilia ended one hour ago.

The Germans wanted a penalty shoot out.

They didn't get one.

Final score: Germany 1 - Argentina 2.

As people all over the world tuck into whatever meal the time of day in their own countries dictates, a huge fleet of gigantic dark blue UFO's appear in the skies over Brazil.

They block out the sun.

The lead UFO hovers over the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro. A hatch opens and a seven foot gleaming silver alien, with an oily body, an oval shaped head and two hands with seven long fingers each, glides down to the centre circle and utters the legendary words: "Take me to your leader."



Twenty minutes later with the rest of the world glued to their TV sets, Brazilian President, Dilma Rousseff, FIFA head, Sepp Blatter and legendary Brazil forward, Pele, arrived at the stadium.

With a tight circle of security guards around them, these intrepid individuals walked onto the lush grass of the Maracana. They stopped when they reached the centre circle. They were now standing less than five metres away from the first extra-terrestrial to ever land on earth.

"I am Zoop 1," declared the alien in a gruff voice that sounded as if it had been sprinkled with strong pepper. "Having this name is useful because as well as being the Master of Planet Zooprax, I am also the goalkeeper for our national football team - I wear the number 1 shirt. Which one of you is the leader of this territory?"

Rousseff stepped forward and held out her hand. Zoop 1 looked at it and licked it. He then stuck out his hand. Rousseff paused for a moment and then licked it too. It was amazing how quickly one joins the greetings custom of different places.

## World Cup - Intergalactic Showdown

"Good," nodded Zoop 1. "The pleasantries are over. Now please get rid of your security people or I will be forced to vaporise them."

The guards tensed their muscles but didn't move.

Zoop 1 sighed and clicked one of his fourteen fingers. Instantly every gun the guards were carrying flew into the air and disintegrated in a pool of fire. The guards were then thrown fifty metres backwards by a gigantic gust of air. They crashed down onto the pitch.

Clambering to their feet they made as if to run back to the centre circle but Rousseff held up her hand and they stayed where they were.

"Right," nodded Zoop 1, "now down to business. I believe there is a football match taking place tomorrow."

Sepp Blatter took a step forward. "It's called the World Cup Final Your Majestical Highness," he said with a low bow. "It is the most important game in the world. I am the head of the organisation that runs it."

"My team wish to take part in this so-called final," said Zoop 1.

"Er... I'm afraid that won't be possible," replied Blatter. "Rule 37 of the FIFA rulebook states that extra-terrestrials are not eligible for the tournament."

Zoop 1 grabbed Blatter by the shirt collar and held him high in the air. Then he spun him round horizontally at great speed, making Blatter look like a helicopter rotator. Stopping abruptly he brought Blatter's dizzy head right up to his own.

"As you may have noticed," said Zoop 1, "we are not from round these parts, so your local rulebook does not apply. Like I said, we will play in tomorrow's final. Which teams are scheduled to play in the match?"

He dumped Blatter on the ground.

## World Cup - Intergalactic Showdown

"Our homeland, Brazil, is in the final," said Pele. "We are the host nation and the whole country will be rooting for us to win."

"Are you Edison Arantes Do Nascimento?" asked Zoop 1.

Pele nodded.

"Can I just say that I loved your last-minute dummy in the 1970 semi-final against Uruguay," enthused Zoop 1. "It was a genius move; most disappointing that you didn't manage to score after you'd pulled it off."

"You win some, you lose some," replied Pele with a wistful smile.

"Well in this case you've lost some," said Zoop 1. "My team will be replacing your team in the final."

"B...b...but that's not possible," stammered Blatter.

"We have played so hard to get here," added Rousseff, trying to reason with the alien. "And we have some of the finest players on earth - Neymar, Fred, Hulk, to name but three."

"Sorry," said Zoop 1, shaking his head. "This isn't up for discussion, this is a done deed. If you try and stop this happening we will flatten not only your entire country and populace, but the entire earth. Do you fancy selling that option to the rest of the human race?"

Blatter tried to speak again but Rousseff covered his mouth. "We are not in the business of giving way to vicious tyrants be they alien or earthling," said the Brazilian President through gritted teeth. "But in this case I see we have no choice."

"Excellent," grinned Zoop 1. "Pele, could I just get you to autograph my nose?"

"Sure," nodded Pele, scrawling his name on Zoop 1's sleek, silver nose.

"So who will we face in the final?" asked Zoop 1.

The three humans exchanged glances and then Pele spoke.

## World Cup - Intergalactic Showdown

"A country called England," he said.