



REFEREES

By the numbers

2 Two days after FIFA announced its World Cup referee appointments, the Uruguayan soccer federation handed Uruguayan Jorge Larrionda a six-month suspension, effectively nullifying his appointment. The suspension followed a long investigation into match irregularities in Uruguayan soccer. Larrionda worked the USA-Costa Rica qualifier last year in Kansas City, where Josh Wolff's controversial goal gave the Americans a 1-0 win.

3 Ali Bujsaim of the United Arab Emirates will be working his third straight World Cup, tying a record held by 13 referees. The 42-year-old immigration officer is considered one of the best officials in the world. Bujsaim, who began his career in the middle in 1984, is one of seven holdovers from France '98, where he worked three games, including the Brazil-Netherlands semifinal.

6 Brian Hall's appointment marks the sixth straight World Cup an American referee has been picked. Previous selections were David Socha (1982 and '86), Vinnie Mauro (1990), Arturo Angeles (1994) and Esse Baharmast (1998).

7 Seven referees who worked U.S. qualifiers will be heading to Japan and South Korea. One of them is Jamaican Peter Prendergast, who worked the Costa Rica-USA game in 2000 when his late penalty gave the Ticos a 2-1 win. U.S. coach Bruce Arena and captain Claudio Reyna were later suspended for protesting.

19 Pierluigi Collina, who returns for his second World Cup, is one of 19 Italian referees to work the finals. No other country has produced more World Cup referees.

36 FIFA's referee committee has selected 36 referees and 36 referee's assistants for the 2002 World Cup. They will assemble March 20-23 in Seoul, where they must pass FIFA's fitness test. ■

Ali Bujsaim tries to grab the ball from Dutch captain Frank De Boer during the Netherlands-Brazil semifinal, one of three games the UAE referee worked at France '98.