

2010 WORLD CUP PREDICTIONS

PROSPER TIMES

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WHO WILL WIN WORLD CUP 2010?

BAZI ANALYSIS OF WORLD CUP COACHES

32 WORLD CUP TEAMS ' LUCK ANALYSES

MONTHLY FLYING STAR & FENG SHUI DIY

BAGUA MIRROR: FOOT READING

... AND MORE



ISSN 2010-0965

DEAR READERS,



“Here we go...Ole Ole Ole...” Sports bring people together. No matter where you are from, we shall stand together as one to celebrate the world’s biggest football tournament in South Africa. World Cup 2010 will kick off its first match on 11 June in Johannesburg. We are excited and we want to be part of the football fever!

This issue of ProsperTimes™ takes you to the dressing rooms of the 32 finalists. We check out the strength of each individual team, their past performances and how their luck stacks up against each other. We give each team an overall rating based on strength and luck, and analyse their prospects and their likelihood of landing their hands on the prized trophy. With a pinch of good humour and in the name of fun, we make some bold predictions.

This article is unique. And it may be the only one that offers you an unconventional perspective. A must-read for all passionate football fans. So what is exactly so special about this issue? As we know, luck has a part in determining winners and losers in sports events. Football as well, cannot escape from the watchful eyes of Lady Luck. So from the birthdays of coaches and certain key players, we make use of BaZi, a Chinese metaphysical tool, to compute their luck ratings. Combined with quantitative assessment of teams’ strength, an overall rating is calculated.

Can Italy defend their world crown? Can Brazil dazzle us again with their samba football? Can Spain finally live up to expectations? Who is likely to be the surprise outsider? And who may be the World Champion? Read on to find out.

As we are in the mood of playing some football, this issue’s “Ba Gua Mirror” gives you some “Foot” for thought. You may have heard of face reading and palm reading. How about foot reading? Lift up your feet and sniff out the auspicious features. Look out for these luscious insights in this segment.

The *Flying Star Feng Shui* series will continue to share with you some tips in applying simple Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Feng Shui for the month of May. A small amendment in the placement in a particular sector may help to alleviate the negative impact for that month! You never know, it may just work for you!

Get ready your vuvuzelas and make some noise! The World Cup is here!

LIM ENG CHEONG
CHIEF EDITOR

2010 WORLD CUP PREDICTIONS

PROSPERTIMES

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Football World Cup in South Africa

Soccer fever is

warming up in different parts of the globe as we approach 2010 World Cup in adventurous South Africa! Held every 4 years, the worldwide passion for the beautiful game is unsurpassable. Just like many football fans, I am equally excited and curious to find out which team has the honour to lift the prized trophy in this coming 19th Football World Cup.

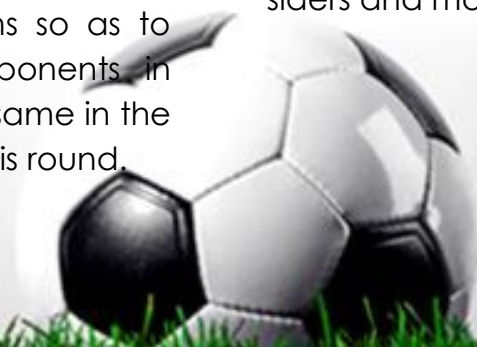
This issue of ProsperTimes™ takes you to a quick tour of the prospects of all 32 teams before the first match kicks off on 11 June in Johannesburg. You must be wondering what ProsperTimes™ has got to do with the World Cup. Or to be more explicit, what has Feng Shui got to do with the World Cup? I must admit that I wrote this article for selfish reasons. Being a football fan, I love this game. I would like to share my passion with you, my beloved readers!

One other reason, and more importantly, is that I would like to demonstrate how the luck element may have an impact to sporting events. We hear it too often that the ball is round and anything could happen. If you have ever played in some sports, you would probably agree with me that besides hard work and consistent practice, you need some luck in competitions so as to have an edge over your opponents in those "50:50" situations. It is the same in the World Cup. Remember, the ball is round.

I stumbled upon a very interesting article recently, that is, the special edition of April 2010 issue of the UBS Investor's Guide. Besides reporting on the investment potential in Africa, the normally serious economists changed out of their suits, donned football colours and started predicting the World Cup winner using econometric tools and quantitative models!

UBS relies on past performance, whether or not a team is a host nation and objective quantitative strength of each team to estimate different winning probabilities. In my analysis, besides considering the objective strength of each team, I make use of Chinese metaphysics to incorporate the luck element to forecast team ratings and see how they match up against each other. The idea is to utilise an unconventional tool to complement conventional quantitative methods to establish a unique model in predicting the outcome of the tournament.

Like every other analysis, the forecast is based on certain assumptions and conditions. Readers are advised to take it with caution and a pinch of good humour. This analysis is unique and unconventional. Read on to find out who the World Champion may be, who are the likely surprise outsiders and more.





Eight Characters 八字

The Coach Has It All

I was pondering on how the luck of a team can be established. There are more than 20 players in a squad. It would have been a huge effort if the luck of each player is analysed. In my opinion, it is also unnecessary to analyse the luck of every player as there are only 11 players on the pitch from each team at each match. And who knows if the lucky ones or the unlucky ones will be picked for that particular game. Therefore in this analysis, I zoom in on the luck of one key person in the team, the coach. The coach picks the players, leads the team, motivates the squad, devises the game plan, makes crucial substitutions, en-

forces discipline, etc. The coach is an inspiring figure and a role model. The luck of the coach is therefore critical to the success of the team!

Using Ba Zi (also known as Eight Characters), an ancient Chinese metaphysical methodology, and the birth data of the coach in each team, we can derive the luck cycle and determine if Lady Luck is smiling at him at a specific moment. A lucky coach has higher probabilities of success and can be assumed to be able to make effective and appropriate decisions on match days.



He Who Would Perfect His Work Must First Sharpen His Tools

Besides being lucky, you need substance. A lucky coach needs a skillful team to execute his game plan. Similarly, a skillful team sometimes need a bit of luck to take things further. This is to say strength and luck have to go hand in hand. You may be lucky but you still need to muster your competency and ability to excel. This analysis takes the objective strength of each team into consideration.

The objective strength is computed using the Elo Ratings, which were developed by the Hungarian-American Physicist, Arpad Elo. Elo Ratings measure the objective

strength of football teams. This method not only accounts for the number of wins, losses and draws, it also considers the conditions of the final result (see www.eloratings.net for more information).

Strength & Luck Rule the Day

This analysis combines the objective strength of the team and the luck of the coach to see who is more likely to make a resounding impact in this upcoming tournament. This means this analysis favours a lucky coach leading a strong team and perceives that such a team may be in pole position to lay their hands on the prized trophy.

32 WORLD CUP FINALISTS ... WHO'S THE BEST & LUCKIEST OF THEM ALL?

Group A: South Africa, Mexico, Uruguay & France



South Africa

FIFA Ranking: 90

This is the first time that the World Cup is held on the African continent. South Africa, being the host country, clearly has an advantage. If history has its way, South Africa may be on her way to the second round as all previous hosts had made it to the Final 16.

However, South Africa has not been impressive in her past performances. In fact, South Africa has one of the lowest Elo Ratings among the 32 finalists. With the support of the home crowd, South Africa may raise their level but they still have a mountain to climb to overcome the likes of Mexico, Uruguay and France. All these teams have higher Elo Ratings than South Africa.

When I take a peek at the luck of the coach, Carlos Parreira, he's enjoying just average luck, which is behind his counterparts in the other 3 teams. As South Africa is inferior in terms of strength and the luck of the coach falls behind the other coaches, the odds seem to be against South Africa. South Africa has to put in extra effort or face the danger of a first round exit. History will then be rewritten.



Mexico

FIFA Ranking: 17

Get ready to pop a few tequilas for Mexico. Mexico has the skills and luck to proceed to the next round.

In fact, Mexico has the highest Elo Ratings in Group A, even higher than France. Javier Aguirre, the Mexican coach, enjoys better luck than his counterparts in Group A as well. He is a strong Water person whose favourable elements are the Wood and Fire. He has Fire in his luck cycle and the tournament is held in June when Fire element is strongest. Perhaps sharing his good fortune is Mexican veteran playmaker, Cuauhtemoc Blanco, who was coaxed out of retirement by Aguirre and has been instrumental in his team's success. Blanco has helped to revitalise the team and bring his wealth of experience to the younger players. Blanco's favourable element is also Fire, meaning he is enjoying the moment of his life as well. Good choice by Aguirre to include a lucky key player in his team.

I have a hunch that Mexico may do better than their previous World Cup campaign in Germany, where they managed to advance to the second round but was eventually knocked out by Argentina in the Final 16 match. There is a possibility that Mexico may again meet Argentina in the second round in South Africa but who knows, they may be luckier this time, booking a Quarter Final berth, equaling their best performance in World Cup 1970 and 1986. Where are the tequilas?

Group A: South Africa, Mexico, Uruguay & France



Uruguay is a relatively small country with a huge football tradition. After missing out from the previous World Cup, Uruguay has managed to book a ticket to South Africa and hope to revive her early glories as a football powerhouse. In terms of objective strength, Uruguay falls behind Mexico and France in the Elo Ratings.

The luck of Oscar Tabarez, the Uruguayan coach, is slightly better than that of his French counterpart. However, the strong Fire element in June may be detrimental to his team's charges. Up against the likes of Mexico, France and the host nation, a revival may be tough. If luck cannot be of any help, Uruguay may have to depend on some magical touches by her fearsome strike partnership of Diego Forlan and Luis Suarez to avoid the disappointing outcome of being one of first teams to book the earliest flight home.



The road to South Africa for *Les Bleus* has been bumpy. I have a feeling that it is not going to be easy for them as well in June. France needs something special to emulate her previous performance in Germany, where she was the runner-up after losing out to Italy on penalties.

Although somewhat lower than Mexico in the Elo Ratings, *Les Bleus* have established themselves as a leading football team and a force to reckon with over recent years.

Raymond Domenech, the French coach, may have a talented team at his disposal but his lucky stars may not be shining as brightly as those belonging to the other coaches. Faring just slightly better than his South African counterpart in terms of luck, he would need to rely on the geniuses of Thierry Henry and Franck Ribery to make inroads to the next round.

It was reported that Domenech had used astrology before to help him in his team selection. I wonder if he has done the same for himself ahead of the matches in South Africa and counted his chances. Anything more than a second round place may be difficult. Before they can sip some red wine, the French has some work to do.



Group B: Argentina, Nigeria, South Korea & Greece



When we talk about Argentina, two-time winner of the World Cup, who would have not heard of Diego Maradona.

Maradona was the inspiration for Argentinian football. He was magnificent as a player. But has he got what it takes to lead a star-studded squad to victory in South Africa?

With talented players like Lionel Messi, Javier Mascherano and Carlos Tevez among her ranks, Argentina is a strong contender for the tournament. Although qualification had not been a breeze for Argentina, she is still the darling of football world.

No doubt Argentina is the strongest and has the highest Elo Ratings in this Group. Maradona was a great footballer but it still remains to be seen if he is also a good football coach.

Maradona is a weak Metal element person. His favourable elements are Earth and Metal. Looking at his current luck cycle, he is not enjoying a good luck spell. He may be making the headlines for the wrong reasons. He may not have the resolve to gel the stars together so that they can play cohesively in a team. Although blessed with such a gifted team, Maradona may have difficulties in picking the right team for the job. To advance further than the second round, he needs to rely on magical Messi to turn the tide or the fans may have to start crying for Argentina.



Despite playing on their home continent, the Super Eagles are not expected to have any advantage over the teams in the Group.

According to Elo Ratings, Nigeria is the weakest among the four. After an eight-year absence from the World Cup, the Super Eagles hope to soar again in South Africa after overcoming Tunisia in the qualifying round.

Swede Lars Lagerback was appointed the coach of the Super Eagles in February this year. Checking out his Ba Zi, his luck is not in an envious configuration. In fact, it is the least favourable among the four. With his dim lucky stars and under-performing team, it would be extremely tough to venture beyond the first round. Unless Nigeria has the support of the African folks, the Super Eagles are unlikely to take off.



Group B: Argentina, Nigeria, South Korea & Greece



South Korea

FIFA Ranking: 47

Kimchi is a traditional Korean pickled dish, well known for its health benefits. I read it somewhere that Koreans say “Kimchi” instead of “Cheese” when they take photographs. And interestingly, I also read it somewhere that you can use the phrase “in deep kimchi” to say that someone is in deep trouble.



South Korea, Asia football powerhouse, is here again to represent Asia on the world stage. Qualified for the 8th time, the Taeguk Warriors are hoping to repeat their superb showing in 2002 World Cup in their home country, where they overcame all odds to brush aside European powerhouses Italy and Spain.

Elo Ratings note that South Korea is one notch higher than Greece and Nigeria, and second to Argentina in Group B. The Taeguk Warriors would have to rely on hardworking Park Ji-Sung to give his best so as to raise the level and bring the game to their opponents.

Heading the Taeguk Warriors is Huh Jung-Moo. Luck wise, he is second best, behind his counterpart for the Greek team. South Korea's strength is more or less on par with Greece and Nigeria. Therefore luck plays a larger role in “50:50” matches with Greece and Nigeria.

Consulting their individual Ba Zi, Greece coach is the luckiest among the three, indicating that South Korea could be packing their luggage after the first round.

Will the Taeguk Warriors be all smiles or “in deep kimchi”? We will know that in June.



Greece

FIFA Ranking: 12

If football is democratic, I shall vote Greece, the birthplace of democracy, through to the next round.

After their dismay showing in 1994 World Cup, this is only the second time that the Greeks qualify for the finals of the tournament. Amid the Greece financial crisis, I hope the Greeks have something else to cheer

about in June.

Greece has improved her game over the years. Against all odds, exceeding all expectations, the Greeks surprised everyone when they lifted the European trophy in 2004. Will Greece spring another surprise this time round?

On paper, besides Argentina, Greek standards are on the same level with South Korea and Nigeria. As mentioned earlier, in a closely-matched meeting, luck will play a crucial role and a large proportion in determining the outcome of the match.

Leading the Greek charge, Otto Rehhagel, the oldest strategist in this tournament, at 71 years old, enjoys very good luck at the moment. In my opinion, this is critical and could be a deciding factor in propelling Greece to register her best showing in her football history. Theofanis Gekas's, top scorer for the team, luck ratings are on a high as well.

There is normally a surprise outsider in every tournament. And Greece may be the one. Frankly speaking, I was also personally surprised. With Greek gods watching over them, who know, they may be the blessed team. The ball is still round.

Group C: England, United States, Algeria & Slovenia



England

FIFA Ranking: 8



United States

FIFA Ranking: 14



The Three Lions is favourite to top Group C and it is not without reasons.

Besides garnering most points in Elo Ratings, there is a stark difference in the number of points between these teams in Group C. England has more than 200 points than United States, the second best team in objective strength in the group, and more than 400 points than Algeria, the weakest team in Group C. It would be a major upset if England does not make it to the next round.

Devising the game plan for the English assault is Fabio Capello. At the current age of 65, he is enjoying favourable luck cycle, which is definitely beneficial to England's bid for the prized trophy. With the help of prolific players like Wayne Rooney and Frank Lampard, a Top Four placing may be achievable.

The game of football is codified by England. This may be the time for the Three Lions to live up to their expectations and show what they are capable of on the pitch as well.

USA may be the world number one economy but when it comes to football or soccer, USA is far from being a superpower.

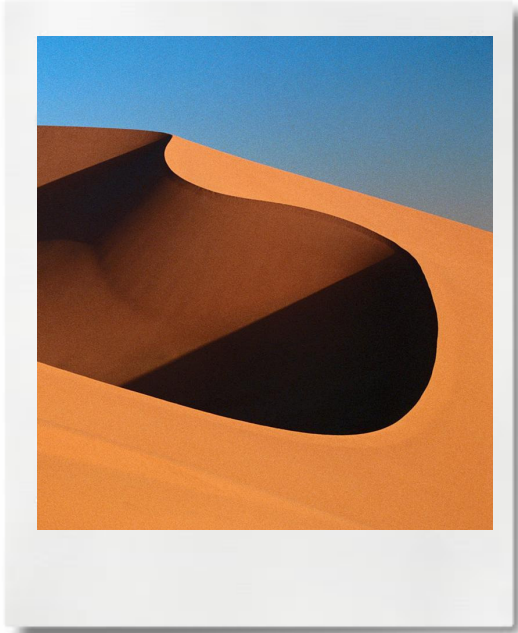
USA has been a regular finalist since 1990 but she does not manage to get past the first round most of the time. Going down memory lane, USA created a miracle by beating England 1-0 in 1950. The Americans will be happy to see history repeat itself as they will be meeting the English again during the group stages in South Africa. It is going to be tough as there is a clear difference between these two in terms of skills and standards.

Checking the Ba Zi for Bob Bradley, the coach for USA, he is a weak Earth element person who is in favour of the Fire and Earth element. Examining his luck cycle, the Metal element is dominant. This is bad news and Bradley is in a moment of tough luck. Come June, when the Fire element is relatively strong, Bradley could see some relief in difficult moments. His secret weapon, Landon Donovan, who is in favourable luck, may aid his charges.

However, to establish herself as a football powerhouse, there is still some way to go for USA. But miracles do happen.



Group C: England, United States, **Algeria & Slovenia**



After a 24-year absence, *Les Fennecs* (The Desert Foxes) is back on the world stage. This is the 3rd time that Algeria qualifies for the Finals, after featuring in the 1982 and 1986 World Cup.

According to the Elo Ratings, Algeria ranks lowly in the last three of the list. *Les Fennecs* is just slightly ahead of New Zealand and North Korea among the 32 finalists. It is not a team to be feared by most countries.

Leading The Desert Foxes is Rabah Saadane, 64. He is a weak Fire element person, who is in need of the Wood and Fire elements for nourishment and support. Unfortunately, his favourable elements are nowhere to be seen during his current luck cycle. An unfavourable omen. Counting on his forward, Karim Ziani, may be insufficient.

Once again, disappointment may be on the cards for this North African nation.



I have my respect for Slovenia. Despite being a young and small country who has gained independence only in 1991 and a population of just 2 million, she has overcome all odds to see off bigger football nations like Czech Republic and Poland during the qualification stages.

Russians suffered similar tragic fate as the Czechs and Polish when they failed to overcome the Slovenians during the qualification play-off. Kudos to Slovenia. Could Slovenians repeat their determination and exercise their perseverance once again in South Africa?

On paper, Slovenia's strength is behind England and United States. During the qualification stages, we have witnessed that Slovenia is not unfamiliar in slaying the giants.

I have also taken a peek at the luck of Matjaz Kek, the Slovenian coach. His luck is pretty good as well. Combined with hard work, there is a chance that they will register an improvement over their previous showing in 2002.

Anyway, it does not hurt much to slay a few more giants along the way.

Group D: Germany, Australia, Serbia & Ghana



Besides being famous for sausages and beer, German football is well known for its efficiency and highly respected by many. Having reached the World Cup Final for a record of 7 times, the Germans had lifted the cup 3 times in their football history. Registering a 3rd place in the previous World Cup 2006 and a runners-up title in Euro 2008, Germany is definitely a strong contender in South Africa.

Germany is ranked sixth in the Elo Ratings among the 32 finalists and has the highest Elo Ratings among the 4 teams in Group D. Advancing to the second round should not prove to be too challenging for the efficient Germans.

Under the charge of Joachim Loew, Germany has had a fantastic qualifying campaign. A strong Metal element person, Loew enjoys good luck whenever Water or Wood element is present. Experiencing Water element in his current luck cycle, he is an intelligent tactician who is able to turn the tide in his favour. He may be able to enjoy even better luck when Germany plays at night (matches starting at 2030hrs when Water element is prominent). The lesser that you expect of the Germans, the better they will perform in a tournament. Expectations are relatively high this time round. Can the Germans handle the pressure? No matter what, it is not a bad idea to savour a mug of German Weiss Bier when you watch a match or two.



The Socceroos cannot wait to hop onto the world stage again after their relatively good showing in Germany four years ago.

In terms of Elo Ratings, Australia falls behind Germany and Serbia in Group D. Drawing inspiration from their advancement to the second round in the previous World Cup, the Socceroos hope to box their way again to the next round or further.

There is at least one person who wants to do better, and he is the team's coach, Pim Verbeek. If Lady Luck has her way, Verbeek is not the favoured one. Relying on the services of Tim Cahill alone may not be enough. The going could be tough for the Australians. The Socceroos have to put in extra effort or they could be hopping in the wrong direction, which is the way to the airport and not the way to the second round.

Group D: Germany, Australia, Serbia & Ghana



Serbia

FIFA Ranking: 16



After decades of civil wars and political upheavals, Serbia is born. Her football team is regarded by FIFA and UEFA as the direct descendant of the Yugoslavia national team. Still in her infancy, Serbia is rebuilding on a smaller pool of players.

Second in Group D in terms of Elo Ratings, Serbia exceeded expectations to finish first, ahead of France, in Group Seven during qualification stages. They have proven to be a strong team and they should not be underestimated.

Appointed as the Serbian coach in 2008, Radomir Antic employs his tactical expertise to bring out the best in his players. He enjoys average luck at the moment and would have to depend on his star players, like Manchester United centre-back Nemanja Vidic. With a hardworking and confident team, Serbia has a good chance to advance to the second round.



Ghana

FIFA Ranking: 32

The Black Stars as they are known hope to shine brightly in their second appearance in World Cup Finals. Ghana has normally done very well in African competitions but they fumble on the world stage. Ranked the lowest among the 4 teams in Group D, Ghana hopes to sparkle and turn on the magic when they play in their home continent.

Leading the Black Stars is Milovan Rajevac, a Serbian. Rajevac will therefore be facing his own country during the group stage. He is a weak Earth element person who enjoys good luck whenever Fire element or Earth element is present. His fellow countryman, Radomir Antic, has to take note that Rajevac is currently in very good luck cycle. Supporting his cause is Chelsea midfielder, Michael Essien. It may eventually boil down to the battle of wits between the Serbian tacticians to determine the candidate to advance to the second round.



Group E: Netherlands, Denmark, Japan & Cameroon



The Oranje have lofty ambitions again. And their great aspirations are not without reasons. Netherlands qualified for the world stage in style. Winning all 8 games, they topped Group Nine with a 100% record. Dubbed as the under-achievers in world football, the Dutch has to do everything they can in order not to break the hearts of many Oranje fans again.

Netherlands leads the group in terms of Elo Ratings. If the ratings are of any significance, the Dutch should be able to cruise into the next round without much effort.

A very much players' coach, Bert van Marwijk, hopes to bust the "under-achiever" tag and realises the Dutch ambition. He enjoys relatively good luck at the moment but the real test will come in June. With a star-studded squad under his wings, he hopes to soar and bring the much-awaited success to the Dutch camp.

To equal the team's performance in the previous World Cup (reached second round) should not be an issue. To go all the way to lift the crown is long and arduous journey. It remains to be seen if the "under-achiever" tag is busted or not busted.



After missing out from World Cup 2006 and Euro 2008, the Danish Dynamite is set to explode in South Africa after a six-year absence from global football arena. Despite their rich football history, this is only the fourth appearance in the World Cup for the Danish. They had reached at least the second round in their past three appearances, with the best performance in 1998 when they achieved a Quarter-Finals placing.

Under the Elo Ratings, Denmark is placed slightly above Japan and Cameroon. The Danish Dynamite had an impressive display during the qualification stage when they saw off supposedly stronger opponents, Portugal and Sweden, to top Group One. Ironically, it is the weaker teams in the group that posed more problems for them. Similarly, come June, Japan and Cameroon may cause some difficulties for Denmark.

Looking at the luck of Morten Olsen, the long serving coach in the Danish camp, dark clouds still loom over the skies. Olsen is not in favourable luck cycle and this could be his stumbling block in his quest for renewed glory. The last thing that he wants to see is the Danish Dynamite exploding in his own face.



Group E: Netherlands, Denmark, Japan & Cameroon



When we think of Japan, we would probably be reminded of cars, technology, cherry blossom, sushi and sashimi. Little would we talk about the Japanese football national team, also known as the Samurai Blue. In the Land of the Rising Sun, the Samurai Blue, with their sheer grit and determination, hope to excel and put Japanese football as a force to reckon with on the world map as well.

Ranked behind Netherlands and Denmark in the Elo Ratings, and facing the Cameroonians in their home continent, Japan has to step on the gas, up the throttle, hit the right gear and steer her way into the next round.

The guy in the driving seat is Takeshi Okada. He is considered one of the finest Japanese strategists. After checking his luck, he has one of the highest ratings among the 32 coaches. This is a much needed turbo boost for the Samurai Blue. Born in the Year of the Monkey, Tiger Year 2010 is in direct clash with him. This may not necessarily be negative. This means Year 2010 is going to be a turbulent year for him with many changes to come. It may even be an unexpected pleasant outing for him in South Africa. Look out for the Samurai Blue. They may have a surprise for you.

Cameroon, one of the most successful African teams, is hoping to make up for lost time and make a strong statement in South Africa. Already the Cameroonians' sixth appearance in the World Cup, they wish to emulate or better their seniors' performance in 1990 when they reached the Quarter-Finals. However, they failed to make it past the group stage in the other 4 appearances.

Although FIFA ranks Cameroon highly at 19 (ahead of Denmark's 35 and Japan's 45), Cameroon has the lowest score in Elo Ratings, meaning that in terms of objective strength, they are the weakest in Group E. Cameroon has to get her act together or face the risk of a first round exit again.

Paul Le Guen, a familiar name in the French League, is leading the Cameroonian charge. A weak Earth element person, he is enjoying above average luck at the moment. He would need Samuel Eto'o to deliver the fire-power up front. Eradicating inconsistency, Cameroon may stand a chance after all.

Group F: Italy, Paraguay, Slovakia & New Zealand



The Azzurri goes to South Africa as defending champions. An honour, a responsibility and mounting pressure to bear. It would be not be very wise to write off Italy, a likely title contender for the tournament. Technically sound, playing with traditional efficiency and pragmatism, these are certainly good reasons to put your money on Italy as the likely winner.

UBS thinks that Italy has a 13% chance to lift the trophy, after Brazil and Germany. Italy is also one of the Top 5 candidates in terms of Elo Ratings. No doubt, Italy, four-time winner, is a very strong team. As Marcello Lippi, the Italian coach, has put it, "we're not inferior to any other team", signals to us the Italian ambition and confidence. However, is he better than his counterparts in terms of luck?

Taking a quick look, Marcello Lippi is in favour of the Earth element and Metal element. Overall, Lippi is in a pretty good shape. Not bad but not the best. Lippi would have to depend on his experienced pair of goalkeeping hands, Gianluigi Buffon, to defend the title and keep his opponents at bay. By keeping a clean sheet, you may not win but at least, you do not lose as well.



Qualified consecutively for the fourth time in the finals, Paraguay is regarded as one of the strongest teams in South America. Paraguay is ahead of Argentina and just one point short of Brazil during the qualification stage. Playing in the same group as the defending champion, Slovakia and New Zealand, Paraguay is in a good position to advance to the next round. Elo Ratings reflect similar sentiments as well.

Coach Gerardo Martino is currently in a moment of mixed fortunes. He needs to ensure discipline and stand firm in conveying his point across. Come June, when the Fire element is strong and to his favour, Martino has high chance to deliver the required results and guide his team to the next round.



Group F: Italy, Paraguay, Slovakia & New Zealand



Slovakia

FIFA Ranking: 38



New Zealand

FIFA Ranking: 78

Together with Slovenia, Slovakia defied all odds to see off stronger teams like Czech Republic and Poland and topped Group Three during the qualification stage. This will be Slovakia's first appearance in the global arena as an independent nation. Hoping to step out from the shadows of Czechoslovakia, the Slovaks have to prove their worth in June. They will pit themselves against the likes of the Italians and Paraguayans. Given the clear theoretical difference in terms of strength, Slovakia has an uphill task.

Examining the lucky stars of Vladimir Weiss, the Slovakian coach, he is a weak Wood element person in need of the Water element and Wood element. There may be obstacles along the way for him. To qualify for the finals is already a magnificent result for his team. To advance any further is a bonus.

Although they are not as successful as their rugby peers, the All Whites are back after a 28-year absence from the world stage. Besides South Africa who qualified automatically as the host of the event, many considered that New Zealand has an easy path to the finals. After topping the Oceanic qualification group comfortably, the All Whites beat Asia 5th best, Bahrain, to book a ticket to South Africa. On paper, New Zealand has a humble ranking of 78, and the All Whites is just above the North Koreans in terms of Elo Ratings. They have a mountain to climb.

Leading the New Zealanders is fellow countryman, Ricki Herbert, who had played for his country in 1982. His luck is average and unexpected twist is not really anticipated. Having Blackburn's star, Ryan Nelsen, in his ranks, may not help his cause either.



Group G: Brazil, North Korea, Côte d'Ivoire & Portugal



Brazil

FIFA Ranking: 1

Brazil is a branded name in the football world. Samba Brazil is again tipped to be hot favourite to kiss the trophy.

UBS Wealth Management Research team has predicted Brazil to be the most likely winner of the World Cup in South Africa. Brazil has a long list of achievements in the global scene, most notable being having won the World Cup five times, a feat that no other country has rivaled! In the past 18 tournaments, Brazil has reached the Semi-Final ten times and seven times in the Final. Amazing record! I am sure Brazil would not mind to add the 6th World Cup to her chest of silverware. If the World Cup is awarded to the highest-ranked team or the one with the highest ratings, Brazil is already the winner! Brazil is ranked No. 1 in FIFA ranking and amasses most points in Elo Ratings.

Let us now check out the luck of the Brazilian coach, Dunga, to see if he got what it takes.

Dunga, born in late October in the Year of Water Rabbit, is a weak Fire element person. He is experiencing the Fire element in his luck cycle at the moment. This is extremely good news for the Brazilians and bad news for the rest. Dunga is currently experiencing very good luck.

With a strong team, coupled with good luck, Brazil is likely to go very far in the tournament or even go all the way to lift the cup! It is not a bad idea to sip some Brazilian coffee and savour the aroma of success.



North Korea

FIFA Ranking: 106

As covert as they, frankly speaking, there isn't a lot of information on the national team of Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Most of the members of the squad play in domestic clubs. Only a handful of them are based in overseas contingents.

Ranked No. 106 in FIFA ranking and accumulating the least points in Elo Ratings, many do not look upon North Korea as a team who is likely to make it past the first round. Lacking international exposure and experience, North Korea would have to rely on teamwork, discipline and their defensive capabilities to hold and frustrate their stronger opponents.

Little is also known of the North Korean coach, Kim Jong-Hun. Do not expect beautiful football from North Korea as Kim is said to prefer to adopt an ultra defensive approach in his game plan. This is North Korea's second appearance in the World Cup and Kim hopes to repeat the feats of his predecessors when they reached the Quarter-Final in 1966 in England.



Group G: Brazil, North Korea, Côte d'Ivoire & Portugal



Despite the fact that this is just their second appearance in the World Cup, Les Elephants have a lot of potential and many believe that they will make a major impact in the tournament. On paper, they may be behind Brazil and Portugal but Ivory Coast has many big name players who play in major European clubs.

Just to name a couple, they are the Chelsea pair of Didier Drogba and Salomon Kalou, who will be very much involved in the Ivorian assault. If the players can gel and play well together as a team, and at the same time having the support of the fans on the home continent, Ivory Coast is very likely to do well.

One man who will be trying very hard to bring the team together for an honourable result in a short amount of time, is none other than Sven Goran Eriksson, the coach for Ivory Coast.

Svennis is a weak Metal element person who is currently in a good luck cycle. However, he will be under pressure to perform in June when the Fire element is strong. Given his vast experience as a football manager, minus his scandals, he is likely to deliver good results and help Les Elephants to advance to the next round.



Dazzling as she may be, Portugal has not won a major trophy before in her football history. Closest to landing a major prize is a fourth place in World Cup Germany 2006 and a third place in World Cup England 1966. It was not an easy entry to the finals for Portugal. Portugal was at one time on the brink of elimination. The Portuguese recovered eventually to finish second in Group One to earn a play-off with Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Portuguese prevailed and booked their tickets to South Africa. They are drawn into a relatively difficult group, pitting themselves against Samba Brazil, talented Ivory Coast and ultra defensive North Korea. On paper, Portugal looks set to advance to the next round but they are normally overrated and Portugal would have to work hard in order to be assured of a place in the second round. A familiar name in the Portuguese arena, Carlos Queiroz will be eager to prove his worth.

At first glance, predicting Queiroz's fortunes is not obvious. He is a weak Metal element person. The strength of the Metal element is extremely weak, so weak that we may classify his case as a "Follow the Leader" special category. Data on his time of birth, which is unavailable, is required to perform a more detailed and accurate analysis. However, after following his career ups and downs, there is a high possibility that he falls under the special category and his favourable elements will then be Water and Wood. If this is the case, he is not in an envious situation as he is not in luck after checking his luck cycle. He would have to rely on star player like Cristiano Ronaldo who is in better fortune to aid his campaign. It is going to be a challenging time for Queiroz and his team.

Group H: Spain, Switzerland, Honduras & Chile



Spain

FIFA Ranking: 2



Here comes the charging bull, European champions, Spain. In the world's biggest football competition, Spain has, however, been an under-achiever. A regular at World Cup finals, having qualified for 12 times, Spain has never ventured beyond the Quarter-Final except in 1950 when Spain is fourth in the tournament.

Things could change in South Africa. Spain secured a perfect record, winning all ten games, during the qualification stage. Is the Spanish era here? Why not. Ranked No. 2 in FIFA ranking and Elo Ratings (behind Brazil), Spain definitely has the skills and ability to land their hands on the prize.

Leading the Spanish bull charge is Vicente del Bosque. When skills and ability is very much equal, luck will play a very important role.

Del Bosque is born just before Christmas in the Year of the Tiger. He is a strong Water element person. He is in favour of the Wood element and Fire element to reduce the intensity of the Water element. And to the delight of the Spanish fans, he has these elements in his luck cycle. This means he is enjoying very good luck at the moment. It also means Spain is a strong title contender and there is high possibility that Spain will go very far in this tournament. The charging bull charges at anything that comes into his way. If you ever see one, get out of the way!



Switzerland

FIFA Ranking: 26

Swiss roll in for the ninth time in World Cup finals.

The Swiss is usually able to get past the group stage but was fast knocked out in the second round. The Swiss is hoping that they can at least emulate their best performance in the competition in 1954 when they joined seven other teams in the Quarter-Final.

Looking ahead at the journey, it is going to be challenging. There is a high chance that they may meet the Brazilians in the second round and the Brazilians, being the better side, may stop them in their tracks.

The Swiss has Ottmar Hitzfeld, a highly regarded manager in Europe, as their coach. Hitzfeld has only average luck and he may experience mixed fortunes along the way. Hitzfeld will be keeping his fingers crossed, hoping his striker, Alexander Frei, to hit the target regularly or the Swiss may face the tragic fate of being rolled over instead.



Group H: Spain, Switzerland, Honduras & Chile



Not a regular among the finalists, the Hondurans are not new to the World Cup either. After a 28-year absence from the world scene, Honduras is making her second appearance in the finals. Emotions were on a roller coaster ride during the qualification stage. Honduras booked her flight to South Africa only on the last day at the last minute. Honduras did all she could by beating El Salvador and hoped for a favourable result between USA and Costa Rica. The Americans grabbed a last minute equaliser against Costa Rica and sent Honduras to South Africa on the account of a better goal difference. The rest was history. Hondurans look forward to their trip in June and are determined not just to make up the numbers. Supposedly the weakest team in the group theoretically, Honduras will be looking upon something more to aid her progression. Honduras has reined in Reinaldo Rueda from Colombia to help in her quest for glory.

Rueda is a weak Fire element person who likes to see the Wood element and Fire element to give him a boost. He is currently in good luck cycle and when June is here, when the Fire element is strong, he will be in a good position to select the right players and devise a strategic game plan. Up against the likes of Spain, Chile and Switzerland, it is not going to be easy. Honduras is hoping for a stroke of good luck again to send them through to the next round, just like the day when Lady Luck gave them a big smile and sent them to the finals.



Just like her land area, Chile has a long football history. Chile played in the first World Cup Finals in 1930. Altogether she had already featured seven times in football biggest tournament. World Cup 2010 will be her eighth appearance. Chile finished second in the qualification group, just one point behind powerhouse Brazil.

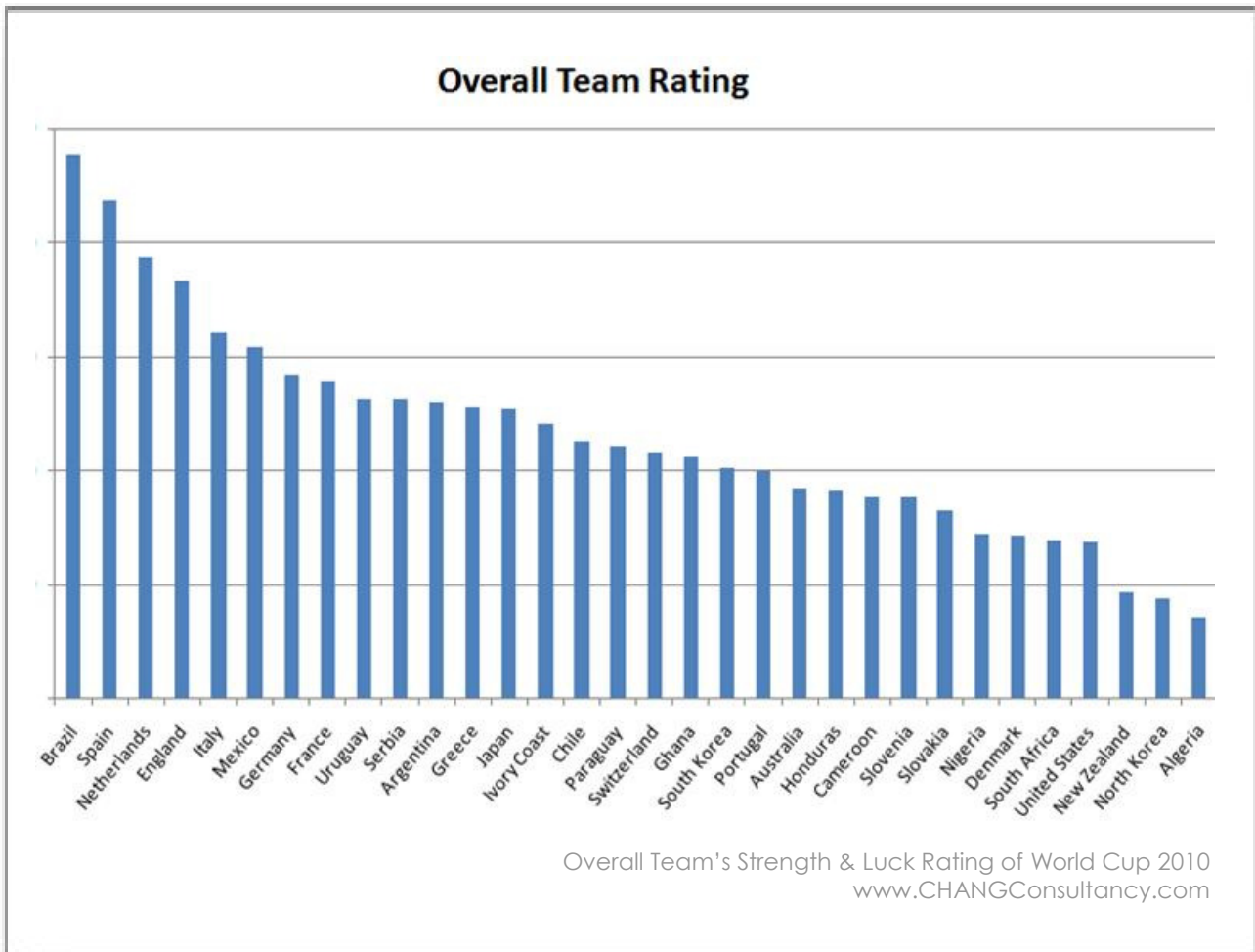
In terms of Elo Ratings, Chile is ahead of Switzerland and Honduras. Theoretically, Chile should be able to advance to the next round comfortably. However, after looking at the lucky stars of coach Marcelo Bielsa from Argentina, FIFA rankings or Elo Ratings count for nothing when we get on with the tournament in June.

Bielsa is a weak Water element person who is in need of the Metal element and Water element to balance things out. Unfortunately, these elements are not evident in his luck cycle. He may face obstacles and difficulties in leading his young and talented side to the next round. The form of the coach and players depend on many factors. There are some that you can influence but there are also some that you have no control over. Every Chilean and one Argentine will be hoping that everything comes together for Chile.

To Sum It Up

I have covered each and every team of the 32 finalists. I have shared with you insights on their strength, the luck of the coaches and their chances of progression in the tournament.

The simple chart below gives you a pictorial representation on how the overall ratings (strength + luck) stacked up among the 32 teams:



The team with the highest bar is one that is strongest in terms of strength and past performance and also possesses high luck ratings. For example, Brazil is not only skillful but lucky as well. There is a high possibility that Brazil will do very well and go very far in this tournament.

Teams That Are Likely To Play More Than 3 Matches ...

If the team that you are supporting is able to play more than 3 matches in the tournament, congratulations, that means this team is likely to get past the group stage and advances to the next round. Again in the name of fun, I have picked 20 teams that have the highest possibilities to progress to Round of 16. They are:

- Mexico
- France
- Argentina
- Greece
- England
- Slovenia
- Germany
- Serbia
- Netherlands
- Japan
- Italy
- Paraguay
- Brazil
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Spain
- Switzerland
- South Africa
- Ghana
- Portugal
- Chile

And The 2010 World Champion May Be ...

I have a hunch that it may be Brazil. Apologies to my European friends, do not hate me because of this. In terms of strength and skills, Brazil is definitely a title contender. Checking the luck of Dunga, the Brazilian coach, he enjoys very good luck when the World Cup kicks off in June. Good luck will definitely give him an edge over his counterparts, especially when Brazil plays against opponents of strong caliber.

Another team that I would like to specifically point out is Spain. I think Spain is going to come very close to landing their hands on the trophy. Vicente del Bosque is enjoying very good luck at the moment as well. The newly crown European champions will be eager to be awarded both honours at the same time.

One-time winner, England, may also achieve a respectable result under the leadership of Fabio Capello. It is most likely to be close but not close enough again.

I am also toying with another strange feeling. In a World Cup event, there is normally a surprise outsider. This team will exceed all expectations, defy odds and beat stronger teams along the way. I think Greece may be interesting to watch. Amid the financial turmoil, the football team may want to give fellow Greeks something to cheer about. Before you write them off, think about how Greece became European champions in 2004. No one thought that they could go all the way. That's the beauty of the game. The ball is round, remember?





Final Words Before Kickoff...

AS I mentioned earlier in this article, readers should take this information with a pinch of good humour and please do not be overly obsessed in the given predictions.

Predictions are made with assumptions in mind and not all factors are considered. This article serves as a prelude to World Cup 2010 in South Africa. It gives readers and fans immense anticipation to the biggest football tournament and hopes to raise the temperature of the football fever.

We are equally excited and looking forward to the event when the first match kicks off on 11 June. No matter where you are, whether you are brewing Brazilian coffee, sipping English tea, gulping German beer, tasting French wine, crunching Korean Kimchi, eating Japanese Sushi or biting into American burgers, football has brought us closer together! With chants of "Ole Ole", let us cheer our favourite teams, enjoy the biggest football moment and immerse ourselves in the most beautiful game on Earth!

Note:

1. This analysis makes use of Chinese Metaphysical tool, BaZi (also known as 4 Pillars of Destiny or Eight Characters), to forecast the luck of individuals at specific timings.
2. Only date of birth (excluding time of birth) is used in forecasting, thus only six characters out of the eight characters can be readily plotted.
3. Objective strength of individual teams is adapted from Elo Ratings (www.eloratings.net).
4. Analysis uses birthday of the coach in each individual team.
5. Analysis takes UBS Investor Guide April 2010 Special Edition on World Cup 2010 into consideration.
6. Birthdays of coaches are obtained from the internet. Accuracy of birth data is not verified.

Appendix I: 2010 World Cup Predictions

BaZi of World Cup Coaches

Coaches Born in Year of Rat

Diego Maradona (ARG) - 30 Oct 1960

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	辛	丙	庚
-	卯	戌	子

Lars Lagerback (NIG) - 16 Jul 1948

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	壬	乙	戊
-	寅	未	子

Radomir Antic (SRB) - 22 Nov 1948

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	辛	癸	戊
-	亥	亥	子

Marcello Lippi (ITA) - 12 Apr 1948

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	丁	丙	戊
-	卯	辰	子

Sven Goran Eriksson (SWE) - 5 Feb 1948

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	庚	甲	戊
-	申	寅	子

Ottmar Hitzfeld (GER) - 12 Jan 1949

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	壬	乙	戊
-	寅	丑	子

Coaches Born in Year of Ox

Matjaz Kek (SVN) - 9 Sep 1961

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	乙	丁	辛
-	巳	酉	丑

Morten Olsen (DEN) - 14 Aug 1949

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	丙	壬	己
-	子	申	丑

Ricki Herbert (NZL) - 10 Apr 1961

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	癸	壬	辛
-	酉	辰	丑

Coaches Born in Year of Tiger

Otto Rehhagel (GRE) - 9 Aug 1938

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	癸	庚	戊
-	酉	申	寅

Gerardo Martino (PAR) - 20 Nov 1962

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	壬	辛	壬
-	戌	亥	寅

Vicente Del Bosque (ESP) - 23 Dec 1950

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	壬	戊	庚
-	辰	子	寅

Appendix II: 2010 World Cup Predictions

BaZi of World Cup Coaches

Coaches Born in Year of Rabbit

Raymond Domenech (FRA) - 24 Jan 1952

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	己	辛	辛
-	巳	丑	卯

Dunga (BRA) - 31 Oct 1963

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	丁	壬	癸
-	未	戌	卯

Coaches Born in Year of Dragon

Bert van Marwijk (NED) - 19 May 1952

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	乙	乙	壬
-	丑	巳	辰

Paul Le Guen (CMR) - 1 Mar 1964

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	己	丙	甲
-	酉	寅	辰

Vladimir Weiss (SLK) - 22 Sep 1964

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	甲	癸	甲
-	戌	酉	辰

Coaches Born in Year of Snake

Milovan Rajevac (GHN) - 2 Jan 1954

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	戊	甲	癸
-	午	子	巳

Carlos Queiroz (POR) - 1 Mar 1953

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	辛	甲	癸
-	亥	寅	巳

Coaches Born in Year of Horse

Huh Jung-Moo (KOR) - 13 Jan 1955

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	甲	丁	甲
-	戌	丑	午

Coaches Born in Year of Goat

Carlos Parreira (RSA) - 27 Feb 1943

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	丙	甲	癸
-	辰	寅	未

Marcelo Bielsa (CHL) - 21 Jul 1955

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	癸	癸	乙
-	未	未	未

Appendix III: 2010 World Cup Predictions

BaZi of World Cup Coaches

Coaches Born in Year of Monkey

Pim Verbeek (AUS) - 12 Mar 1956

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	戌	辛	丙
-	寅	卯	申

Takeshi Okada (JPN) - 25 Aug 1956

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	甲	丙	丙
-	子	申	申

Reinaldo Rueda (HON) - 3 Feb 1957

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	丙	辛	丙
-	午	丑	申

Coaches Born in Year of Dog

Javier Aguirre (MEX) - 1 Dec 1958

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	壬	癸	戌
-	子	亥	戌

Fabio Capello (ENG) - 18 Jun 1946

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	癸	甲	丙
-	亥	午	戌

Coaches Born in Year of Dog (Continue)

Bob Bradley (USA) - 3 Mar 1958

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	己	甲	戌
-	卯	寅	戌

Rabah Saadane (ALG) - 3 May 1946

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	丁	壬	丙
-	丑	辰	戌

Coaches Born in Year of Pig

Oscar Tabarez (URU) - 3 Mar 1947

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	辛	壬	丁
-	巳	寅	亥

Joachim Loew (GER) - 3 Feb 1960

TIME	DAY	MTH	YEAR
-	辛	丁	己
-	酉	丑	亥

BaGUA

Mirror

a light-hearted column on ancient & cultural beliefs & practices



QUICK READING FOR THE DAY:
“FOOT” FOR THOUGHT

SIMPLE
FOOT READING
YOUR FOOT FEATURES &
ITS IMPLICATIONS

FLIP NEXT PAGE TO FIND OUT

“Foot” For Thought

AS the highlight of this issue of ProsperTimes™ is on football, we will let our foot do the talking in BaGua mirror. You may have heard of face reading or palm reading. How about foot reading? No joke, though it is not common, there is indeed a field of study on foot reading, which is documented in a Chinese classic. I am not sure if there is anyone out there who reads feet for a living but I think it is definitely tough to be a foot reading professional. You know what I mean.

I do not perform foot reading professionally but I see no harm in sharing with you some knowledge on foot reading since our focus in this issue is on foot.

Our feet undergo tremendous amount of stress everyday. Our feet take us to places. Our feet allow us to play football. Our feet enable us to stand firm and upright as we get along our daily lives. Very often we forget to take good care of our feet but today, let us take a closer look at our feet and make some foot notes along the way.

In general, an auspicious pair of feet should be long, balanced, proportionate, broad but thick, with abundant distinctive lines, soft, plushy and fleshy. See compiled list of 10 features and their corresponding implications.

Hope you have some fun with your feet. Always remember to put your best foot forward in whatever things you do. Good luck!

FOOT FEATURES & IMPLICATIONS

Fine, broad, soft & elegant feet
→ Abundance

Crude, crooked, bony & thin
→ Pathetic

Mole under the Feet
→ Auspicious, able to achieve success in life

Mole on back of feet
→ Easily bullied or intimidated by others

Turtle-liked pattern lines under feet
→ A perfect gentleman

Whorl-liked pattern lines on small toe
→ Stubborn personality

A lot of hairs above the feet
→ Idling away one's time, no accomplishment

No distinctive lines under feet
→ Poor, difficult to prosper

Tree- or flower-liked pattern lines under feet
→ Plentiful wealth

Human-liked pattern lines under feet
→ Able to attain high social or career status



MONTHLY FLYING STAR

Flying Star

5 May 2010 - 5 June 2010

Flying Star Feng Shui encompasses space and time dimensions. At different times, there will be different energy influences in different sectors. This segment presents to you the energy influences for this period of time (5 May 2010 to 5 June 2010). The effects will be more acute if you have your main door or windows in that particular sector or facing a particular direction. The following chart shares with you the implications and some recommendations. The larger number represents the annual star, while the smaller one symbolises the monthly star.

SOUTHEAST

77

Most likely to affect the ladies in the household. Take care of health and beware of robbery. You may place a bowl of still salt water in this sector to resolve this "Crossing Sword Killing Sha".

SOUTH

33

This configuration may lead to legal dispute or relationship issues. Place a lamp here to resolve the undesirable impact.

SOUTHWEST

55

Double disaster stars may lead to accidents. Health will be poor. Hang six-rod windchime here to alleviate inauspicious influences. Keep this sector still and quiet too.

EAST

66

Beware of thief. Do not engage in unlawful activities. This configuration may lead to imprisonment. Hang a blue painting or place a black sculpture here to minimise the bad energies.

CENTER

88

Double 8 configuration will bring wealth & prosperity. Keep the center clean & clutter free so that air can flow freely. Place a round red rug in the center to enhance harmony and prosperity.

WEST

11

Auspicious configuration. May leads to academic achievement. It is favourable to locate your computer in this sector.

NORTHEAST

22

Intensity of sickness Star 2 will doubled. It is most likely to affect woman in the household or young children. May cause discomfort to the stomach. Place 6 ancient Chinese coins to dissolve negative influences.

NORTH

44

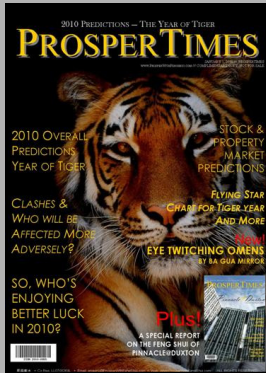
Signs of indulgence in vice. Lost of focus and direction. Romance problems may arise. Hang a red painting or sunrise painting to harmonise the situation.

NORTHWEST

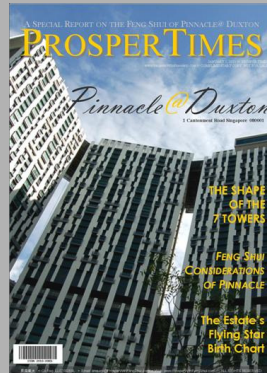
99

Prosperous Star 9 will bring you wealth in near future. Place a potted plant here to enhance the good energies. If you happen to have a wooden clock, place it here to activate the Qi.

Don't Miss Out Any Issue



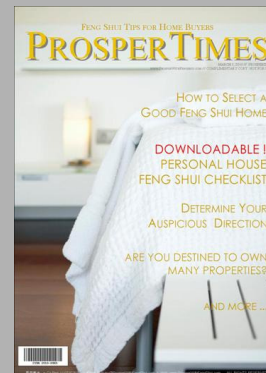
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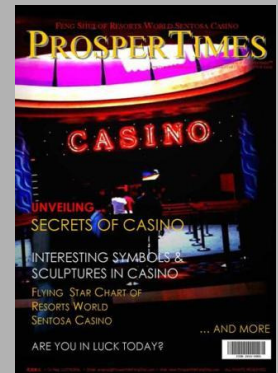
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APPOINTMENT PREFERRED



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