

ACT 1: PRE-GAME SHOWScene 1) Team Intros

The field is set for two soccer matches to be played simultaneously back-to-back and four goal nets occupy the field. A Commentators' desk sits centre stage facing the audience. Team benches are placed stage left and right. SFX: Eerie Music. The sound of bicycle bells tinkle in the air. Three darkly-robed CHEERWITCHES ride in from different parts of the field on broom-cycles, cackling in that insanely winning way witches have. They dismount, group up, and begin.

CHRWITCH 1 When shall we three meet again?
 In Thunder, Lightning, or in Rain?

CHRWITCH 2 When the Hurlyburly's done,
 When the Football's lost, and won.

CHRWITCH 3 That will be ere the set of Sun.

CHRWITCH 1 Where the place?

CHRWITCH 2 Upon the Field.

CHRWITCH 3 There to meet with...

ALL MACBETH!

They rip off their robes revealing Cheerleader outfits underneath.

(as a cheer) Fair is foul, and foul is fair,
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

Their bit done, they gather themselves and exit, cackling wildly. An ANNOUNCER comes over the sound system to introduce the four teams. As each team comes on to the field they perform a five second "shtick" – a tableau, cheer, song, etc. – then exit to their respective fields where they will stay for the remainder of ACT 1 engaging in warm-ups such as stretches, drills, and scrimmage exercises.

ANNOUNCER Welcome sports fans to Trinity College Field and the World Cup of Shakespeare. Here are your semifinalists for tonight's matches. The first team faced overwhelming odds to be here today. It took a brilliant come-from-behind victory at Cyprus over the heavily-favoured Turks, but here they are: TEAM ITALY!

TEAM ITALY enters, do their bit, and exit to the field stage right to begin their warm-ups.

Up now in the white jerseys, as always, fresh from their conquests in France, put your hands together for TEAM ENGLAND!

TEAM ENGLAND enters, do their bit, and exit to the field stage left to begin their warm-ups.

Fresh off a showstopper against Norway, give a big hand for these Gloomy Danes: it's TEAM DENMARK!

TEAM DENMARK enters, do their bit, and exit to the field stage right to begin their warm-ups.

And, finally, introducing the defending Hibernian champions, also fresh from a dramatic victory over Norway to advance to the Semi-Cup Finals: give it up for TEAM SCOTLAND!

TEAM SCOTLAND enters, do their bit, and exit to the field stage left to begin their warm-ups. BANQUO and MACBETH stop for a moment to soak up the adulation of the crowd. The CHEERWITCHES run up to them.

BANQUO What are these,
So withered, and so wild in their attire?

MACBETH Speak if you can: what are you?

CHRWITCHES *(as a cheer)* All hail, Macbeth: Star of Glamis; Star of
Cawdor; who shalt be Captain hereafter!

BANQUO If you can look into the Seeds of Time,
Speak then to me.

CHRWITCHES *(as a cheer)*
Thou shalt get Captains, though thou be none:
So all hail, Macbeth, and Banquo!
Banquo, and Macbeth, all hail!

The CHEERWITCHES exit to take their place close to the Scottish bench and MACBETH and BANQUO high-five each other before joining their team on field for warm-ups.

Scene 2) Intro to Commentators and Mascot

The triumphant strains of the Upstart Crow Sports Network (UCSN) theme begin pounding as MIDDLETON and FALSTAFF take their place at the Commentators' desk. MIDDLETON is your knowledgeable sports-savvy type who often plays "straight man" to FALSTAFF's obnoxious and overbearing character.

MIDDLETON And with a little prophecy, we are underway! Good evening football and Fringe fans alike and thank you for joining us for what promises to be an EXCITING evening of World Cup action. And by "world" of course we mean the "known world." But before we get started, we'd like to thank our sponsors: Dunsinane Enterprises and the House of Fortinbras: "If it smells like herring, it's got to be Fortinbras." I'm Thomas Middleton and joining me tonight is a veteran of the Upstart Crow Sports Network – the Master of the Metaphor, the Baron of the Round Ball – John Falstaff.

FALSTAFF Good to be back, Tom.

MIDDLETON Tonight's action is coming to you live from the Middle Kingdom.

FALSTAFF Talk about your exotic locales! We're a long way from Tipperary, folks.

MIDDLETON The semifinalists tonight: we're bringing you live action from the fields of Korea with Denmark vs. Italy (*pointing to the field stage right*) and it will be England vs. Scotland coming to you live from the fields of Japan (*pointing to the field stage left*).

TOFU the mascot has wandered disinterestedly onto the field. At the word "Japan," he half-heartedly hits a small gong.

FALSTAFF What the hell is that?

MIDDLETON That's Tofu, Jack. He's the special commemorative mascot of these 2002 games. (*to TOFU*) Say "hi" Tofu.

TOFU does a half-hearted little jump and then scratches his butt.

FALSTAFF What's a tofu?

MIDDLETON It's a vegetarian food...never mind.

FALSTAFF I'll stick with the Dallas cowgirls anytime. Nice costume, buddy.

TOFU gives FALSTAFF the finger then wanders off.

MIDDLETON Well, we're in for some gripping football action tonight, so let's get to it.

FALSTAFF Yes, football: the sport of kings and couch potatoes everywhere. We're in for a treat in the 'ol palace of the pigskin...uh, Tom?

MIDDLETON Yeah, Jack?

FALSTAFF Um...where are the teams?

MIDDLETON On the field.

FALSTAFF What, those little guys in shorts? I thought those were the cheerleaders. You told me I was doing football!

MIDDLETON *(indicating a soccer ball)* Yes, football.

FALSTAFF Soccer?! Ok, this is a bit of a curve here. I thought I was gonna do a Madden* tonight. Soccer, huh?

MIDDLETON Football.

FALSTAFF Ok, focus Big Jack, focus. Every day in every way, the endorsement cheques get bigger and better. Ok, soccer it is. I can do soccer.

MIDDLETON Good.

FALSTAFF The trick is not "to know what you're doing," but "to make it look like you know what you're doing." *(gives a big wink)*

MIDDLETON Right. So, Jack, what – if anything – can you tell us about tonight's games?

FALSTAFF Well, Tom, we all know why we're here: to figure out once and for all which of these teams is tops, which of these squads are pretenders, and which are contenders. And let me tell you, there are no lightweights here, folks.

* Referring to NFL Broadcaster John Madden.