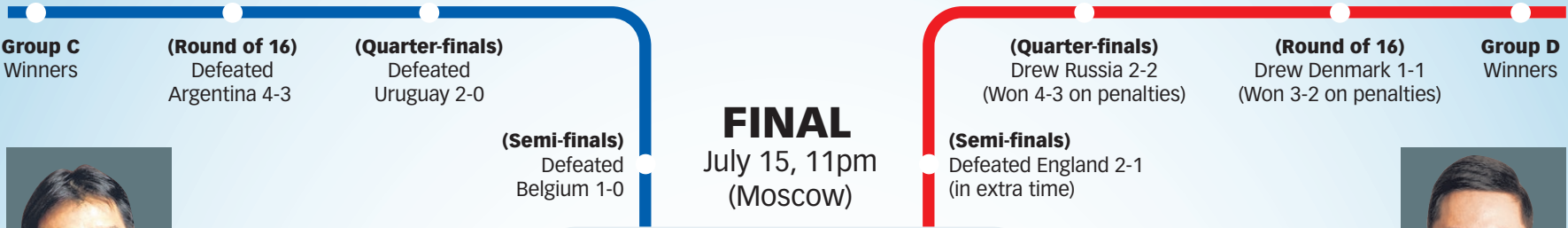


ONE CUP TO RULE THEM ALL

The BT-World Cup CEO Challenge began two weeks ago in the Round of 16 with 16 corporate leaders. Each of them adopted one team and pledged to donate S\$1,000 to The Business Times-Budding Artists Fund once his team bowed out of the tournament. In Sunday's grand final between France and Croatia, it will be Steve Ting of Gryphus Capital against Robson Lee of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher.



Steve Ting
Managing Partner,
Gryphus Capital
Partners Pte Ltd

"Boasting a starting 11 that matches up with the best, *Les Bleus* look destined to take home the spoils of victory. The back-line, marshalled by Umtiti and Varane with Lloris in goal, has been reliable. The athleticism of Kante, combined with the maturity of Pogba will allow France to control the game. France are blessed with the hottest attacking talent in the world right now. Mbappe announced himself on the world stage with his blistering pace and skills at this World Cup, with Griezmann also impressing. Deschamps was captain of the World Cup winning team in 1998, giving him clout as someone who has been there and done it. Viva La France! Allez, allez!"



Robson Lee
Partner at Gibson, Dunn
& Crutcher LLP

"What a win for Croatia, a country of just four million. They've gone one better than the Davor Suker-led side at France 98, who ended the tournament in third place. Croatia has continually been overlooked, even as a dark horse candidate. With Modric and Rakitic pulling the strings from midfield, Perisic making incisive runs and Mandzukic's penchant for scoring important goals, its time for Croatia's golden generation to shine. They've already showed the spirit of champions, coming from a goal down in each of their knockout stage games to take wins. That said, the final will revolve around who wins the midfield battle, a particular strength of Croatia's."



Alain Vandenborre
Executive Chairman and
Founder, Singapore Diamond
Investment Exchange

"While Belgium missed the opportunity to make the final after a hard fought semi-final encounter with the French, they have a very realistic chance of bettering their fourth place finish from Mexico 1986. The matchup will also put many teammates from the Premier League against each other. Squad depth should work to Belgium's advantage, especially if this encounter, like many third place playoffs of past, end up being high scoring affairs. They simply have more quality options in midfield and up front."



Julian Neo
Head of Commercial,
DHL Singapore

"Despite taking the loss against Croatia, England can hold their heads up high. They've exceeded pre-tournament expectations and have reignited England fans the world over. In what will be a rematch of the group stage encounter that the Belgians won by a single goal, I think the English will strike back, looking to even the score against the Belgians. That said, Harry Kane is in pole position to receive Golden Boot honours at the World Cup, with another goal from the talisman possibly being enough to make the award his."

FRANCE VS **CROATIA**

3rd place play-off
July 14, 10pm
(Saint Petersburg)

BELGIUM VS **ENGLAND**