



UP AGAINST HISTORY: Swedish attacking trio (L-R) of Henrik Larsson, Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Fredrik Ljungberg go through a training session ahead of their round of sixteen clash against hosts Germany in Munich today.

Sweden seek revenge

REUTERS, Bremen  
Sweden are relishing the chance of knocking hosts Germany out of the World Cup and gaining belated revenge for their semi-final defeat on their own soil at Euro 92, coach Lars Lagerback said on Thursday.  
"Yes, that's a really good comparison," Lagerback said when asked if Saturday's match were a chance to pay Germany back for the 1992 defeat in Stockholm by spoiling their party in 2006.  
"I would really like to do that," he added. "It would be good. I was one of the co-coaches in 1992. It wasn't a nice thing to experience, to lose at home in a big tournament."  
"It was a good game," Lagerback said of that 1992 match. "Germany played very well. I think they deserved to win."  
Germany lost the European final to Denmark in 1992.

A prospective classic

REUTERS, Berlin  
Swedish tourists were refused petrol in West Germany, their national flags were taken down and Scandinavian food was scratched off restaurant menus as a "Cold War" broke out after the World Cup semi-final -- in 1958.  
Nine-man West Germany, beaten 3-1 by the hosts after two late goals, were so enraged that they fled Sweden shortly later the match and ignored a post-tournament banquet.  
The German football association (DFB) president vowed that he would never return to Sweden.  
"Yes, I remember that 1958 match," said Sweden coach Lars Lagerback on Thursday. He was nine years old at the time.  
Lagerback now has the chance to lead his team to their first World Cup win over Germany since that epic battle in the latest instalment

of their tension-filled rivalry.  
The memories and bitter after-taste from the controversial 1958 semi-final are as alive in Germany today as those of the 1966 final against England that West Germany lost 4-2.  
The Germany-Sweden last 16 match on Saturday in Munich has sparked renewed interest in their past tournament meetings.  
Germany won 2-1 in the 1934 World Cup quarter-finals and knocked the hosts out of Euro 92 in the semi-finals. But it is the 1958 game in Gothenburg that still stirs the passions.  
"West Germany-Sweden was one of the best matches of the 1958 World Cup," said Patrick Krull, a sportswriter for Die Welt newspaper, noting that the Swedes used megaphones to whip up the stadium crowd into a frenzy against Germany.  
"Ever since, the rivalry has

always been at a high level. Unlike with the Dutch and England, who usually treat soccer as an extension of World War Two to push the buttons of our historical baggage, Sweden matches have focused on sport."  
They have met 31 times, according to the DFB. Sweden have won 13 and Germany 12, with six draws.  
The 1958 match marked the last time Sweden beat a German team at a World Cup. In 1974, hosts West Germany met Sweden again -- in the quarter-final. The Germans triumphed 4-2 in Duesseldorf on the way to winning the tournament.  
"The West Germany-Sweden match was the best of the 1974 tournament," said Eric Champel, a sports writer for France's L'Equipe, who was at the stadium that day.  
"The Germans were under pressure after losing to East

Zlatan making progress

REUTERS, Bremen  
Sweden striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic's injured groin has improved further and he could be ready to play against Germany after training for more than an hour on Wednesday, coach Lars Lagerback said on Thursday.  
The Sweden coach stopped short of saying Ibrahimovic, who has 18 goals in 40 games for Sweden, would automatically be recalled to the starting lineup for Saturday's second round match against the World Cup hosts.  
"He practised yesterday and it was positive," Lagerback told a news conference after Ibrahimovic missed Sweden's 2-2 draw against England after injuring his groin while warming up for their 1-0 victory over Paraguay in their second Group B match.  
"It is going in the right direction. We have to wait and see. It's one thing to do a practice for 65 minutes and another to play a match. We have to see, but we're hopeful."

GERMANY V SWEDEN  
Cautious Klinsmann

REUTERS, Berlin  
Juergen Klinsmann is basking in the affections of a nation but the coach knows a slip against Sweden on Saturday would make him responsible for one of the least successful World Cup campaigns in German history.  
Germany, three times winners and finalists on a further four occasions, have cruised into the second round of their home tournament with wins over Costa Rica, Poland and Ecuador.  
Klinsmann has heard his name chanted at the stadiums, while fans and pundits everywhere have given him warm praise for building a team with an insatiable appetite for attack.  
Another full house of 66,000 will be at the Allianz Arena in Munich expecting victory but the coach has been at pains to point out that nothing has yet been achieved.  
Klinsmann will warn his players that Sweden, who showed great character to draw 2-2 with England in their last Group B game and may have Zlatan Ibrahimovic back after injury, are capable of pricking the bubble of euphoria.

"The Swedes are quite an obstacle," he told reporters. "We've seen their games at this tournament and we know they're capable of keeping up with the best teams in the world."  
Germany's last real failure at a World Cup was in 1978 in Argentina, when as holders they went out at the second group stage. Since then they have reached the final four times, winning it in

**HEAD TO HEAD**  
Germany v Sweden head-to-head record (FIFA records)  
Germany lead 7-1, four draws

1934:	Germany 2 Sweden 1 (Milan)
1937:	Germany 5 Sweden 0 (Hamburg)
1958:	Sweden 3 West Germany 1 (Gothenburg)
1964:	West Germany 1 Sweden 1 (West Berlin)
1965:	Sweden 1 West Germany 2 (Stockholm)
1974:	West Germany 4 Sweden 2 (Duesseldorf)
1984:	West Germany 2 Sweden 0 (Cologne)
1985:	Sweden 2 West Germany 2 (Stockholm)
1987:	West Germany 1 Sweden 1 (Gelsenkirchen)
1988:	West Germany 1 Sweden 1 (West Berlin)
1990:	Sweden 1 West Germany 3 (Solna)
1992:	Sweden 2 Germany 3 (Solna)

**TEAMS**

**Germany (4-4-2)**  
1-Jens Lehmann, 3-Arne Friedrich, 21-Christoph Metzelder, 17-Per Mertesacker, 16-Philipp Lahm; 19-Bernd Schneider, 8-Torsten Frings, 13-Michael Ballack, 7-Bastian Schweinsteiger, 20-Lukas Podolski, 11-Miroslav Klose

**Sweden (4-4-2)**  
1-Andreas Isaksson, 3-Olof Mellberg, 4-Teddy Luic, 5-Erik Edman, 7-Niclas Alexandersson, 6-Tobias Linderoth, 9-Fredrik Ljungberg, 21-Christian Wilhelmsson, 16-Kim Kallstrom, 20-Marcus Allback, 11-Henrik Larsson

being rested in the Ecuador game.  
Germany have won two of three World Cup meetings against Sweden, including a 4-2 victory in 1974 on their way to winning the title on home soil. Sweden's win came in the 1958 semi-final in their home World Cup but they lost the final to Brazil.  
The Swedes have had to battle to come through the group stage this time after being held to a goalless draw with Trinidad & Tobago in their opening match.  
They clinched a 1-0 win over Paraguay with a late goal and made certain of their place with the draw against England.  
"The second half was really good against England," coach Lars Lagerback said. "Physically we were the stronger team."  
"Of course, it's a little advantage for the German team to be playing at home but... the players can handle it."  
Ibrahimovic missed the Paraguay and England games with a groin injury which is healing well, according to Lagerback. Marcus Allback played a decent match in his absence and the coach may decide to keep Ibrahimovic in reserve.

**KEY QUOTES**  
Germany coach Klinsmann: "We have great respect for Sweden and all their players. They had a stuttering start against Trinidad & Tobago but even in that game they were cool and never stopped attacking."  
Sweden coach Lagerback: "Our players have shown what character they have. We know we will play against a very good team. They have a very solid defence and their attack is not bad either."  
"It could be tough (for Germany) to play at home and have all these expectations."



I'M AFTER YOU: German striker Miroslav Klose (L), who is only two goals behind his coach Juergen Klinsmann's (R) World Cup tally of 11, controls the ball during the team's training session in Berlin on Thursday.



UP AND COMING: A ball boy plays with a ball during Portugal team's training session at The Klosterpforte Hotel in Marienfeld on Thursday.

Germany work on set-pieces

REUTERS, Berlin  
Germany's set-pieces have not been good enough at the World Cup and must improve against Sweden, assistant coach Joachim Loew said on Thursday.  
Germany have scored eight goals in three matches at the World Cup but none of them have come from headers direct from corners and free kicks -- an area where Germany expect to excel.  
Sweden scored both their goals in the 2-2 draw with England from set plays and Loew wants to see an improvement in defence and attack when they meet in the last 16 in Munich on Saturday.  
"Of course Sweden can be a danger on set pieces," Loew said at a news conference. "They have very sharp forwards who can be very precise."  
"We'll study the variants they use, talk to the players and assign marking duties. We'll also have to make sure we don't give away free kicks in dangerous situations."  
Loew programmed a series of set-piece moves for a training session that was partly closed on Thursday.  
"But we have very good headers of the ball as well, like Michael Ballack and Torsten Frings. It's true we should have done more from set pieces in this tournament. We want to benefit from that side of the game on Saturday."

Only Swede on the menu

REUTERS, Bremen  
Hosts Germany have been nothing but friendly to the Sweden team since the fierce European rivals discovered they would meet in the World Cup second round -- but the Swedes are taking no chances.  
Goalkeeper Andreas Isaksson said on Thursday they were only eating what their Swedish cook prepared at the team hotel in the centre of Bremen and steering clear of German cuisine.  
"We have a Swedish cook -- for security," Isaksson told Reuters.  
A case of suspected food poisoning hit 10 Tottenham Hotspur players before their final Premier League match last month against West Ham but it turned out to be a virus. The players were struck down after a buffet meal at the team hotel.  
Sweden coach Lars Lagerback said he detected no change in the climate in Germany towards his team. They have been based in Bremen for three weeks, a city that warmly embraced the team. Swedish flags adorn many shops and buildings throughout Bremen.  
"It's hard for me to say," Lagerback said when asked if Germans had turned frosty. "I'm almost never outside the hotel. With the Germans I meet at the hotel there is no difference. They are still very kind."  
Germany and Sweden have played many bitter matches since their first meeting in 1911.  
After hosts Sweden beat West Germany in the 1958 semi-final 3-1 in Gothenburg, angry Germans refused to sell Swedish tourists petrol and Swedish food was taken off restaurant menus.  
"Everybody's been nice here so far," said Isaksson, 24, when asked if the climate in Bremen had grown frosty since the two ended up paired for Saturday's round-of-16 match in Munich. "So far, it's been very good."  
The 1.99-metre goalkeeper on Thursday acknowledged Germany have a dangerous goalscorer in Miroslav Klose. Isaksson had been widely quoted in German newspapers this week saying he did not know the man with four World Cup goals in three matches.  
"Who is that?" Isaksson had said after Sweden's 2-2 draw against England in the final Group B match.  
But by Thursday he had done some homework.  
"He's scored four goals so far in this tournament," said the Swede, who missed his team's first match against Trinidad & Tobago after suffering concussion.  
"We have to do the best we can to stop him."