



PHOTO: AFP

FEELING LIKE PLAYING AGAIN: German coach Juergen Klinsmann kicks the ball during a training session at the Allianz Arena in Munich on Friday.

Klinsmann making headway



AFP, Munich

Juergen Klinsmann has only been in the managerial game two years, but the German coach is belying his lack of experience, guiding the hosts to the quarterfinals of the World Cup with a 2-0 win over Sweden.

In his club career the gifted striker played at Bayern Munich under Italian maestro Giovanni Trapattoni and then Ossie Ardiles at Tottenham Hotspur.

Ardiles played an ultra-attacking brand of football and tried to outscore opponents and Klinsmann has adopted a similar tactic with Germany.

"We want to be strong defensively but always believe we can outscore our opponents," Klinsmann said.

"I do not have a lot of coaching

experience but I have had around 18 coaches in my playing career and have learnt a lot from all of them," Klinsmann explained.

"I played under (Franz) Beckenbauer, (Giovanni) Trapattoni, (Berti) Vogts and (Ossie) Ardiles so I have experienced a lot and learnt a lot about the game from all of them."

Klinsmann won the 1990 World Cup with West Germany under Beckenbauer and then Euro 96 with a unified Germany under the guidance of Trappattoni.

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"We want to be strong defensively but always believe we can outscore our opponents," Klinsmann said.

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high tempo football with technique.

"We have been learning for two years and now we can compete with the best in world and that makes us proud."

Klinsmann admits he has leaned on assistant Joachim Low, a seasoned coach with VfB Stuttgart, at times to offer tactical advice.

"We were very well prepared in the coaching department," he said. "Joachim Low and the other coaches cover my experience. I learn a lot from them."

"I knew if we got the right mixture we could succeed."

When Rudi Voller resigned as Germany coach after a disastrous Euro 2004 - when Germany failed to win a single match - the country was at an all-time low.

After being snubbed by former Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, Greece manager Otto Rehhagel and Arsenal tactician Arsene Wenger, Germany turned to Klinsmann, who was promoting his sports marketing firm in the United States, and he has helped revive their fortunes.

The three-time winners are now just two games away from reaching Klinsmann's target of a place in the Berlin final on July 9.

"We are in the quarterfinals but I want more - and so does the team," Klinsmann said.

"We have always said we wanted to reach the final and that remains the aim. We are riding this wave with home support and hope it continues."

Klinsmann was heavily criticised for jetting back and forth to California to see his family - the press said he was neglecting the job - but now he can do no wrong.

"I am in Germany now so it is not a problem," he said. "It was an unusual approach for some but it does not matter where the coach lives."

"Guus Hiddink worked in the Netherlands with PSV Eindhoven and managed Australia."

Argentina, after ousting Mexico in extra-time, are up next for Germany in the quarter-final as the novice Klinsmann tests his managerial talents against some of the most experienced international managers.

Beer, bratwurst & German joy



BY SAM WILSON

Munich was a sea of black, red and gold ahead of the game.

The hospitality and organisation of this World Cup for visitors without match tickets has been well documented.

But such was the enthusiasm to watch Germany play Sweden in Munich on Saturday that both were stretched close to breaking point.

Umpteen thousands showed up at Munich's magnificent Olympic stadium and park to watch the match on two big screens - and that was several thousand too many.

Ninety minutes before kick-off the trains ceased to run because police had shut the stadium. A steward deliberately shepherded us onto a bus going in the opposite direction before we cottoned on.

When I eventually made it to the gate, the police were apologetic but firm. While some desperate fans scanned the perimeter for a hole in the fence, some rushed around aimlessly and others wandered confused.

Some proffered weeping children - others press passes - and in a few cases the police hustled us in.

The queue for bratwurst and beer would have made a glacier seem impatient, so those gasping in the heat turned to the ice cream stall, where cola ice lollies were being sold by the

litre.

In the stadium people sat on steps, in gangways and on laps - the fanfest has become a throw-back to the days before stadiums were super-policed. But there was no anarchy here, just a single-minded force of will behind Germany.

The Swedes I met before the game reckoned there would be almost as many of them here as Germans - but all I could see was black, red and gold.

The warm-up act told us it was a mathematical certainty that Germany would win the World Cup, as the years of their previous wins made clear ('54 x '74 - 1990 = 2006, apparently).

Next to me sat a local, Robert Breschkow, with his girlfriend Severine Thomas wearing traditional Bavarian dress. Perfectly normal, perhaps, except Severine is French.

"This month I'm German, because the French do not have a good team," she explains.

I remark how the crowd goes wild whenever Michael Ballack even touches the ball. "That's the women," Robert replies.

Only four minutes in and Lukas Podolski fires home. The crowd erupts.

A few minutes later and he does it again. Cue utter rapture.

I ask Christin Muller behind me about Podolski. "He's a good player, but he's..." she says, touching her head.

"What, like David Beckham?" I venture.

"Yes, but not as bad."

Germany are so dominant, they're already willing to talk about their prospects in a possible quarterfinal against Argentina.

"If Germany plays like this, and Argentina like in their game against Serbia, we'll beat them," Robert proclaimed. "I think Germany can make the semifinal. I hope they get to the final because the whole country will be like this."

As Christin asked Robert to help translate her point of view, for my benefit, they missed Germany score a third. I was horrified, and they didn't look too chuffed themselves.

It took us ages to realise, to my relief, that it was not actually a goal but a ricochet into the reverse of the net.

Anyway, what Christin wanted to say was that if Germany make the final, "it will be exceptional. People will be freaking out".

After the game the Germans cannot contain their joy. As they flock out of the stadium, some take a dip in the park's lake; so many jump up and down in time on our underground train that I can see "derailment" headlines running through my head.

While Germany's pessimists reigned supreme in the run-up to the tournament, the mood is beginning to change.

"It was perfect," says Michael Peerenboom of the game he's just watched. "Now it's going to get very difficult. We need luck, but we can win, I hope so."

Can Germany make it to the final?

"Listen around you!" is the reply. Fair point. Berlin, Berlin, we're going to Berlin," rocks round the train carriage.

"I'm not really a football fan," says Stephanie Schimmer, who had still traveled 100km to watch the game on a big screen.

"But the spirit here is amazing, it is lifting the whole country."

Sebastian Schaeffer watched the match in one of Munich's biggest beer gardens.

"Great, Sweden never had a chance. Germany is a tournament team - if they play that way, we are going to beat everyone - also the Englishmen!"

Swedes were everywhere before the game, but invisible afterwards.

I have given up hope of finding any Swedes to comment, but when I return to my hotel I find two looking glum right there at reception. Neither they nor the hotel staff can unlock their hotel room door.

They had been to the match itself. What was the atmosphere like?

"In the Swedish camp, it was good for four minutes," says Jonas Nilsson.

"Then with the red card for Lucic, it was over. But Germany's a very good team - we can't be that disappointed. To meet Germany this early [in the tournament] was tough luck for us."

Jonas and Andreas Lindqvist haven't decided if they'll go out on the town tonight. "Maybe," is as enthusiastic as Andreas gets.

"We'll drop the yellow kit off first," adds Jonas.

Who do they want to win now? Jonas says: "Not Germany. I would love England to win, just to poke back at all the critics of Sven-Goran Eriksson. And then a Swede would still win the World Cup."

(Sam Wilson is a BBC correspondent)

Crespo awarded Argentina's goal

AFP, Berlin

Argentina's equaliser against Mexico in the last World Cup 16 match has been attributed to Hernan Crespo, FIFA said on Sunday.

Crespo was in a tussle with Mexican player Jared Borgetti to reach the ball as it came over from a corner in the 10th minute of the match in Leipzig.

The footage was analysed by Andy Roxburgh and it has been decided that the goal will be attributed to Crespo, who deflected the ball," FIFA spokesman Markus Siegler told the daily briefing.

"We said from the beginning that priority will be given to the attacker and the goal has been given to the attacker."

Crespo now has three goals in the tournament, one behind top scorer Miroslav Klose of Germany, ahead of Sunday's two matches.

Argentina won the match 2-1 with a spectacular goal from Maxi Rodriguez in extra-time and will face host nation Germany in the quarter-finals.

Former Scotland national coach Roxburgh is a member of the Technical Study Group, which studies contentious moments of matches.

Van Nistelrooy pledges Ruud awakening

AFP, Nuremberg

Ruud van Nistelrooy has vowed to step up his game amid rampant speculation that he will be dropped for the Netherlands' crunch World Cup second round clash with Portugal, his coach said.

Marco van Basten refused to say whether he would drop van Nistelrooy for Sunday's match but said he had demanded improvements in a one-on-one chat with the Manchester United striker, who van Basten has stood by prior to the finals and during them.

"We talked about football and about my expectations from him and he agreed and said he'd do everything to play a bit better," said the 41-year-old coach.

Van Basten has substituted van Nistelrooy in all three group games and is considering replacing him with Feyenoord hitman Dirk Kuyt.

Van Nistelrooy, who turns 30 on July 1, scored in the 2-1 win over Ivory Coast but has been under fire from his coach for some lacklustre displays.

His Manchester United future is also in doubt after a bust-up with coach Sir Alex Ferguson, with Bayern Munich in the frame to sign him for around 12 million euros.

Van Nistelrooy, who has two years remaining on his contract, had indicated after the 1-0 World Cup win over Serbia and Montenegro that he was determined to return to Old Trafford having earlier said he thought it best to leave.

The former PSV Eindhoven hitman has an outstanding record with United having scored 150 goals in 229 matches since joining them in 2001 for 19 million pounds.

Domenech hails fan power



AFP, Hameln

France coach Raymond Domenech paid tribute on Saturday to the contribution made by the fans in helping France seal their second round qualification against Togo.

Unlike the somewhat subdued support France received in their opening group fixtures the atmosphere in Cologne on Friday night was electric - with repeated renditions of the national anthem 'The Marseillaise' ringing round the stadium.

The France team has had a rocky relationship recently with its supporters, who jeered and booed the team in their warm-up match against Mexico at the Stade de France last month.

Then Domenech's players came in for criticism when they snubbed the fans after the 1-1 draw with South Korea in Leipzig.

The players made no such

tribute on Friday, pointedly going over to pay tribute to their supporters after the 2-0 win earned them a last 16 date with Spain in Hanover on Tuesday.

Domenech said: "I think the players felt the impact made by the crowd, you could feel it even around our hotel and then in the stadium where they saw blue everywhere they looked, people having a party."

"We hadn't experienced that before. The players gave back what the crowd gave them. It was really very powerful."

Domenech was less forthcoming over the tactics he was favouring against Spain and in particular whether he'd have to alter his 4-4-2 system with the return of Zinedine Zidane after suspension.

Frank Ribery came on for the captain with David Trezeguet used up front with Thierry Henry against the west Africans.

"I don't want to discuss that. For the time being I'm working out scenarios and in terms of the team you won't know about that until after the final training session on Monday," he told a press conference here Saturday.

"We know that if we aren't solid at the back against Spain we might as well prepare our ticket home."

"But we've also got to cause our rivals problems so you have to find a balance between defence and attack," added 54-year-old Domenech, who was capped eight times for France.

With Trezeguet used for the first time in this World Cup France looked a lot more dangerous against Togo than they had against Switzerland and the Koreans.

Assessing the task ahead in Hanover he commented: "Spain are a side who score a lot of goals, who play well and who have high quality players."

"But we know them well. We have to find their weak points and exploit them."

With Spain's impressive run to the last 16 Domenech was asked if it was an advantage with France deemed to be the underdogs.

"I don't make us favourite or the outsider. We start the game 0-0, it's not comment or FIFA rankings that make the difference, it's what happens on the pitch."

Turks become 'Deutsch'



REUTERS, Berlin

Turkey never made it on to the pitch at the World Cup finals but the soccer frenzy could prove a chance for its countrymen living in Germany to strike up a whole new relationship with their host nation.

Germany's relationship with its Turkish population - accounting for the largest group of foreigners living in the country - has often been difficult and distant over the past few years, said Celal Altun, head of Berlin's Turkish Community.

But now it could all change as a nation, surprised by its own soccer-fueled, newly found national identity, seems to have been even more taken aback to find that their compatriots of Turkish descent

standing right next to them, also happily waving the black-red-gold flag.

"This has come as a big surprise for a lot of Germans," said Altun. "But the Turkish here have always felt with Germany and supported it - the Germans simply never realised that."

Europe's largest economy has long been at odds with its Turkish inhabitants who came as temporary workers to western Germany in the wake of World War Two, yet were never meant to stay.

In 2005, about 1.8 million people living in the 82.5-million strong nation held a Turkish passport, official data showed. Experts estimate that another three million have Turkish ancestors.

For the last few years, it was the gruesome details of honour killings and rows about head scarves filling the pages of German newspapers which became unjustifiably synonymous for Turkish culture, said Altun.

As the German soccer squad warmed up on the pitch for their 2-0 win over Sweden in the knock out stages, Ahmet Fierat prepared more Turkish snacks in the Tadin restaurant in Berlin's Kreuzberg district, home to a lot of Turks in the capital.

"Of course I am supporting Germany. This is where I live - it's my home as well," said 28-year old Fierat, who has been living and working in Germany for the past six years.

Turks, Germans and other nations crowd the back of the restaurant in front of the big screen for every game, said Fierat, especially the Germany matches.

Outside on the street a group of young Turkish girls walked past, a German flag in one hand, a Turkish in the other.

But the unifying soccer experience all by itself will not have a longer lasting effect on integration, said Sabine von Oppeln, a political researcher at Berlin's Otto-Suhr-

Institute.

While something like the World Cup could provide impulses, winning soccer matches can never be a tool to repair the cracks in the social system of a society, she said.

"Events like the World Cup push societal deficits on the back burner. But at some point people are waking up from their delirium," said von Oppeln.

"Even if Germany wins the tournament, people will then realise that the sales tax is going up, the burden on them grows and the social divide widens," she said.

Fierat just hopes that once the World Cup is over, Germans might keep some of their new-found enthusiasm and friendliness towards their own country and their visitors alike.

"The Germans are often a bit colder towards us Turks I would say, but they are a lot friendlier since the World Cup has started and maybe they are going to stay that way - who knows?"

Chavez silence!

AFP, Caracas

Colourful Venezuela President Hugo Chavez said Saturday that the pressing matter of the World Cup meant there would be no Sunday edition of his television and radio talk show, "Hello, Mr. President."

"Tomorrow there are important matches," said Chavez at a military parade to celebrate the 185th anniversary of the battle of Carabobo, which led to independence from Spain.

Chavez, whose country did not qualify for the tournament, suspended last week's show as his favourite side, Brazil, were in action against Australia.

Sunday sees Latin American minnows Ecuador go up against former champions England and Portugal take on twice former finalists The Netherlands for a place in the quarterfinals.

Football is very popular in Venezuela, though baseball is the favoured sport.

Parreira recalls time in Ghana



REUTERS, Bergisch Gladbach

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira remembered the early days of his career on Saturday which included camping out in army tents during a stint as coach of Ghana.

Brazil face the Black Stars in their second-round match on Tuesday and the match in Dortmund has brought back memories for Parreira, who coached in the West African nation during the 1960s.

"At that time, it was very amateur," said Parreira. "We virtually camped in army tents. Now, they are much more experienced. They've lost their innocence."

"All my connections to the country have gone. But I remember everything, the names of my players, the directors. It was the start of my international career so it's a very good memory."

The 63-year-old Parreira, who did not play football professionally, was recommended after the Ghanaians approached Brazil looking for a recently-qualified fitness trainer.

"At that time, I didn't dream of coaching Brazil at the World Cup," said Parreira. "I hadn't even thought of being a coach."

"I wanted to be fitness trainer. I worked for 13 years in that job, before I realised I could be a coach."

Parreira, who was on the staff in Brazil's victorious 1970 World Cup team, went on to coach Kuwait at the 1982 World Cup, United Arab Emirates in 1990,

Brazil in 1994, when they won their fourth world title, and Saudi Arabia in 1998.

He worked as a FIFA technical adviser 2002 and also had a brief stint in charge of Brazil in 1983.

"It all happened naturally," he said. "It's not something you work towards. I did it without forcing my way through."

Parreira said Ghana were a different prospect nowadays.

"Of their 23 players, 20 of them are based in Europe," he said. "They've created an infrastructure and all these players in Europe has improved them technically as well as their knowledge of the game."

"They can no longer be described as naive, tactically they are organised."

"They have to be respected, they have an aggressive style and technically they are very good."

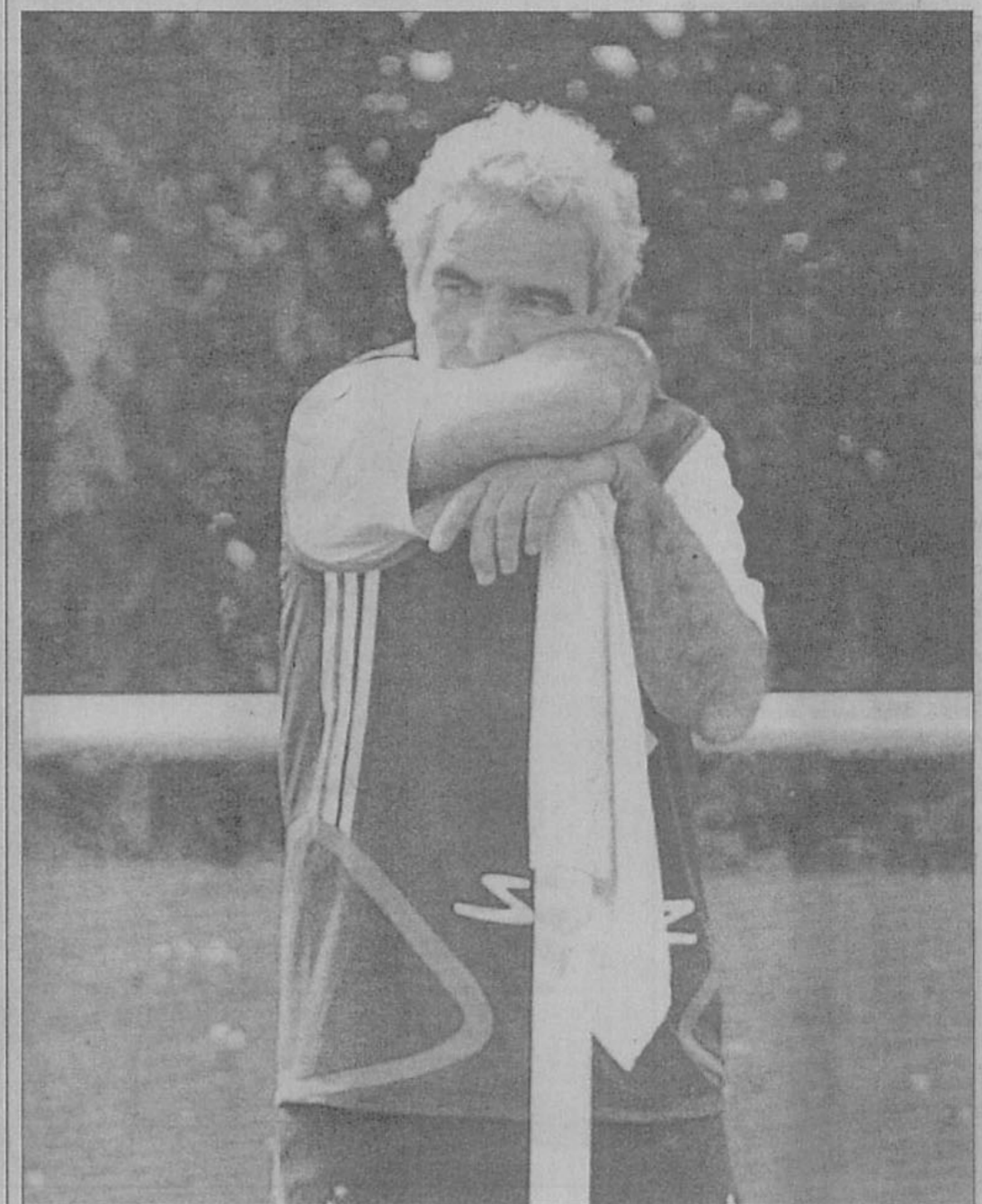


PHOTO: AFP

French coach Raymond Domenech looks at his charges during a practice session in Aarzen on Saturday.