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YES, PASS-THE BALL LIKE THIS: Argentina midfielder Javier Mascherano (L) kicks the ball while forwards Carlos Tevez and Hernan Crespo (R) look on at HerzogsPark training camp in Herzogenaurach on Thursday.

GERMANY V ARGENTINA

As big as it gets

REUTERS, Berlin

Germany and Argentina were responsible for one of the worst World Cup finals ever played when they last met at this level in 1990 in Rome.

There is little danger of another clash of such cynicism and sterility 16 years on in Berlin this Friday when the best young attacking teams in the tournament meet in the quarterfinal.

"Argentina are a top team but we know we can beat them," Germany's leading striker Miroslav Klose said ahead of a game that will be eagerly watched by 72,000 at the Olympiastadion and hundreds of millions around the world.

"And we really want this victory."

Germany, the three-times World Cup winners, have taken to their home tournament with the zeal of a convert, abandoning their old caution and pouring players forward in support of Klose and his 21-year-old strike partner Lukas Podolski.

The pair have scored seven of Germany's 10 goals in four straight wins against Costa Rica, Poland, Ecuador and Sweden.

Germany's new commitment to attacking play is a tribute to the revolution worked by Juergen

Klinsmann, who was part of the West Germany team that beat Argentina 1-0 in that terrible 1990 clash to avenge their 3-2 defeat in the Mexico '86 final.

Even FIFA president Sepp Blatter has been moved to wonder, "Who can stop these Germans?"

Argentina, who won the World Cup in 1978 as well as 1986, might have the answer.

Their quick-witted forwards

have supplied the tournament's best moments, including a 6-0 win over Serbia and Montenegro that will live long in the memory.

Argentina also beat Ivory Coast and drew with Netherlands before sealing victory over Mexico thanks to a wonderful goal from midfielder Maxi Rodriguez.

Luis Gonzalez has recovered from a groin injury and should be fit to play at right midfield.

But fullback Nicolas Burdisso is still doubtful with a knee injury. The speedy Leandro Cufré is likely to deputise ahead of Lionel Scaloni, who played against Mexico, and Fabricio Coloccini, Burdisso's replacement against Netherlands.

Klinsmann will name his first choice team.

Germany have not beaten one of the game's major powers since a 1-0 win over England in October, 2000, although they came close in

two 2-2 draws with Argentina in 2005.

If Friday's game is all-square after 90 minutes then Germany would surely be the favourites to win in front of a partisan crowd during extra-time and perhaps even penalties.

"If I'm on the pitch I wouldn't have a problem taking a penalty," said Lionel Messi, who will likely come on as a substitute. "But I wouldn't like to get to that stage."

"I'd rather settle it in the 90 minutes or in extra time like (we did) against Mexico."

HEAD TO HEAD

Argentina v Germany head-to-head record (FIFA records)

Argentina lead 4-3 with three draws

1958: Argentina 1 West Germany 3 (Malmö)

1966: West Germany 0 Argentina 0 (Birmingham)

1986: West Germany 3 Argentina 2 (Mexico)

1987: Argentina 1 West Germany 0 (Buenos Aires)

1988: West Germany 1 Argentina 0 (Berlin)

1990: West Germany 1 Argentina 0 (Rome)

1993: Argentina 2 Germany 1 (Miami)

2002: Germany 0 Argentina 1 (Stuttgart)

2005: Germany 2 Argentina 2 (Düsseldorf)

2005: Germany 2 Argentina 2 (Nuremberg)

KEY QUOTES

German midfielder Torsten Frings:
 "We're all in top physical condition and we'll do everything to beat them."

Argentina forward Lionel Messi:
 "We've already shown we are in good shape and playing good football and that we can stand up to any rival we face."

TEAMS

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

Argentina (4-4-2)
 1-Roberto Abbondanzieri, 17-Leandro Cufré, 2-Roberto Ayala, 6-Gabriel Heinze, 3-Juan Pablo Sorin, 22-Luis Gonzalez, 8-Javier Mascherano, 10-Juan Roman Riquelme, 18-Maxi Rodriguez, 7-Javier Saviola, 9-Hernan Crespo

Maradona boost for Argentina

AFP, Herzogenaurach

Diego Maradona visited the Argentina squad here on Wednesday night just two days before they play hosts Germany in the World Cup quarterfinals in Berlin.

Maradona, with two friends, had dinner with the players following training, though he made no comment to the press as he entered the team's hotel.

Former Barcelona and Napoli star Maradona, who captained Argentina to World Cup victory in 1986, had previously visited the squad just before their opening match.

Klins-men ready

AFP, Berlin

Juergen Klinsmann says his Germany team are fighting fit for Friday's quarterfinal tie with Argentina and hopes his side can land the knockout blow in the battle of footballing heavyweights.

"We are ready for an almighty fight -- and to win it," Klinsmann said at Thursday's press conference.

"We will go into the match full of aggression and passion and see how Argentina respond."

The match-up is reminiscent of the duels in 1986 and 1990 when

West Germany and Argentina played in successive World Cup finals, winning one apiece.

Since then neither side has lifted the trophy and Klinsmann, part of West Germany's victorious 1990 team, admits only one nation can fulfill their fans' high hopes.

"Both countries have huge expectations. We know we need to go to the limits to win and we are ready to do that," Klinsmann declared.

"It is special to play against Argentina -- one of the best teams in the world. We go into this game full of energy and full of optimism."

"I would not say we are overconfident but we have a lot of self belief. If you want to beat a top side like Argentina you need that."

Argentina and Germany met twice last year with both friendlies -- one in Dusseldorf in February and the other in Nuremberg in June -- ending 2-2.

The 41-year-old Klinsmann remembers the games well but says their importance is minimal as both teams had improved so much since.

"I do not think you can compare the 2-2 draws as both teams are stronger now," said the Euro 96 victor.

"The last time we played we could only play for 70 minutes at our top level. Now we can do 120 minutes. We are confident of winning without penalties but if we need them then fine."

"Another important factor is we have our captain Michael Ballack back on board."

Ballack missed both draws against Argentina as did striker Miroslav Klose, Germany's top-

Sakib, Forhad likely to get the nod

SPORTS REPORTER

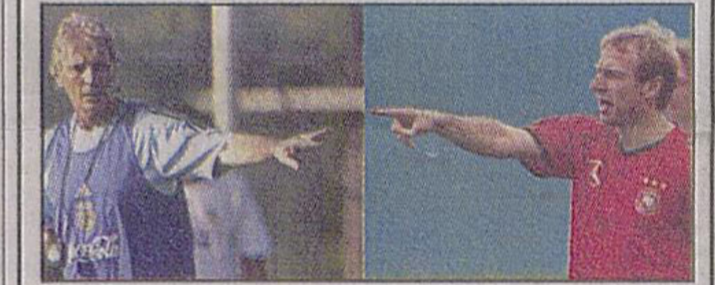
All-rounders Sakib Al Hasan and Forhad Reza are set to break into the national team for Bangladesh's tour to Zimbabwe and Kenya next month.

A meeting of the selection committee, led by Faruque Ahmed, was held yesterday. Other selectors GM Nowsher Prince, Athar Ali Khan and coach Dav Whatmore along with captain Habibul Bashar were present.

The team will be announced in the next couple of days.

Sakib, a left-handed batsman who can bowl decent spin, and Forhad, a right-arm seamer who bats in the middle-order, were called into the Tigers' preliminary squad for the conditioning camp this month following their impressive performance during the domestic season and for the second string side.

The meeting decided on the composition of the squad as well as



TACTICS

Hosts Germany will use a direct, aggressive style in a 4-4-2 formation inspired by playmaker Michael Ballack in Friday's World Cup quarter-final against Argentina, whose own 4-4-2 revolves around playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme dictating the pace of their short-passing game.

GERMANY

Defence: Germany are bolstered by two big centre halves in Per Mertesacker and Christoph Metzelder. They have both improved after a nervous start during the 4-2 win over Costa Rica and dealt well with Sweden in their second round match but they have yet to face forwards of the calibre of Argentina's.

Philipp Lahm loves to get forward on overlapping runs on the left with Bastian Schweinsteiger and scored a cracking goal against Costa Rica, the first of the tournament. Arne Friedrich on the right is slower and the obvious weak point in

Midfield: Ballack gives Germany great presence in central midfield, snapping at heels and funneling the ball with economy when the team are under pressure. A great header of the ball, he is also a danger at set pieces. The bruising Torsten Frings backs him up in midfield.

Schweinsteiger always looks to cut in from the left or pass to Lahm rather than beat his man, while Bernd Schneider on the right has more defensive work to do to back up Friedrich.

Attack: Striker Miroslav Klose has been

Poll, Ivanov red-carded

Last 8 refs named

AFP, Berlin

FIFA on Wednesday announced the referees to take charge of the World Cup quarterfinals.

Lubos Michel of Slovakia will referee Germany v Argentina on Friday and Frank De Bleeckere of Belgium will take charge of Italy v Ukraine on the same day.

England's quarterfinal against Portugal on Saturday will be officiated by Horacio Elizondo of Argentina, while Luis Medina Cantalejo of Spain will officiate the Brazil v France game that day.

Those four referees are among 12 named by FIFA's referees' committee who are in contention to take charge of the semi-finals, third-place playoff and final.

English referee Graham Poll, who mistakenly awarded three yellow cards to Croatian player Josip Simunic in the first-round match against Australia, failed to make the cut when the original list of 26 was cut down.

The same fate befell Russian

TODAY'S MATCHES

ALL MATCHES LIVE ON ESPN.
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TEAM	TIME	VENUE
Germany v Argentina*	8:50 pm	Berlin
Italy v Ukraine	12:50 am (Saturday)	Hamburg

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ONE FOOT IN THE SEMIS? German footballers (L-R) Mike Hanke, Miroslav Klose, Lukas Podolski, Jens Nowotny, David Odonker and Marcell Jansen warm up for Wednesday's training session at Wurfplatz Stadium in Berlin.

FIFA World Cup 2006 Quiz

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Round 2 Part B
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