



PHOTO: AFP

FOR THE HONOUR OF THE FLAG: The South Korean squad warming up with their national flag in the background at Seoul World Cup Stadium yesterday.

Nothing to lose

INTERNET, Seoul

South Korea's Dutch coach Guus Hiddink insisted the pressure was off his side ahead of Tuesday's World Cup semi-final here against Germany.

"People can have their expectations of course," said Hiddink on Monday when asked if his giantkillers had a realistic hope of adding Germany's scalp to those of Portugal, Italy and Spain.

"But there was more pressure when the whole nation, when everyone said 'please, please, bring us a first victory in I don't know how many years,'" said Hiddink, now enjoying the status of a national hero after taking the team into the last four - the first side from Asia to come so far.

The Koreans are making their sixth appearance in the finals - but their previous five campaigns failed to produce a single win. This time as co-hosts with Japan

they have seen off Poland and Portugal in the group phase as well as Italy on a golden goal and Spain on penalties and Hiddink believes the fans' rising expectations will not cause his team to buckle.

"Of course there's pressure - but the team is not going to be paralysed."

"I think now Korea have nothing to lose. They have gone beyond the expectations of everyone. It's just another step," said Hiddink of the German challenge which lies ahead.

"There are no second chances at high-level sport. We have to go for it," he added.

Hiddink said after their previous performances over the past three weeks the Koreans need not feel cowed by the Germans' record of three titles and three further appearances in the final.

"The team is not afraid to play inside Korea - or outside Korea. That fear has gone."

Hiddink stressed the team's form has not come overnight but is the result of months of careful preparation.

"A long sequence of games, not just now but from March, has brought stability."

"The Germans are playing well and are very efficient. They are strong in the air. But we saw against Spain that for instance (Fernando) Morientes is also strong in the air. Yet he had a hard time with our defence."

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Now and then



PHOTO: AFP

IF LOOKS COULD KILL! South Korea coach Guus Hiddink stares at something during training at Seoul yesterday.

AFP, Seoul

Guus Hiddink returns to the World Cup semi-finals on Tuesday in vastly different circumstances from four years ago.

The dapper Dutchman is now the uncontested master of a South Korean team that he has whipped into a formidable footballing force in just 16 months.

Germany are the next nation to face his troops, who are high on confidence and melded together by an unshakeable team spirit after astonishing consecutive victories over Portugal, Italy and Spain.

On a balmy night in Marseille in July 1998, Hiddink was struggling to hold together a talented but tempestuous Dutch team as they took the field at the Stade Velodrome to play Brazil for a place in the final.

He had reconciled his differences with star midfielder Edgar Davids but tensions remained following the bust-up at the 1996 European Championships.

But the Dutch had played well in France and a spectacular goal by Dennis Bergkamp had beaten Argentina and put Hiddink's charges into the last four.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6

No magic mixture?

AFP, Seoul

South Korean skipper Hong Myung-bo on Monday brushed aside any notion that his teammates are taking any kind of magic potion to bolster their stamina at the World Cup.

The Koreans' opponents have been stunned by the co-hosts' fitness as they have seen off European footballing superpowers Portugal, Italy and Spain.

Hong, who said he couldn't wait to tackle three-time world champions Germany in Tuesday's semi-final in Seoul, was asked if ginseng tea might be the source of the team's stamina.

"A couple of us drink it but that doesn't have any effect," said Hong, whose shootout-winning penalty saw off the Spanish challenge in the quarter-finals.

"We've simply been training and working very hard. The most important thing is our overall fitness," added the 33-year-old veteran of 130 internationals.

German keeper Oliver Kahn has expressed amazement at the stamina of the Koreans although without

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Tangun spirit

INTERNET, Seoul

The birth of the Korean nation has all the ingredients of a great drama history, romance, sacrifice and ultimately prosperity. Add a touch of garlic and it's a dish palatable to anyone's taste. But, surprisingly, the historical legend of Tangun remains largely undigested outside of Korea's borders.

The story begins almost 5000 years ago. Hwanung, son of God, was given permission to descend from the heavens to help the people and he settled in the land between present-day North Korea and China. Hwanung heard the prayers of a bear and a tiger, who wished to become human. He gave them both 20 cloves of garlic and a piece of artemisia (a fragrant herb) and told them they would become human if they prayed to the gods, ate nothing but the plants and shunned sunlight for 100 days.

The days passed one by one but the tiger gave in to the hardship and left the cave. However the bear's will was strong and, after a hundred days, she was transformed into a beautiful woman. Her next desire was to have a child and Hwanung, attracted by her beauty and spirit, granted this wish too and married the woman, named Woong-Nyo. Their child, Tangun, became the ancestor to the Korean people. He

became king settling his people, the descendants of heaven, near present day Pyongyang in North Korea. It was here that the nation of ancient Chosun (Korea) was created and where he reigned for more than a thousand years.

Although the myth may be difficult for some to swallow, its sentiment is honourably respected in modern-day Korea. Indeed its influences have permeated much of everyday life. The connection between the gods, human and animal signifies the ingredients of life itself. This is no better displayed than in the Korea flag, which has been waving to the whole world for the past month. At the heart of the Taegukgi, is the Taeguk, a ying-yang circle of red and blue representing the balance between positive and negative forces. At the four corners are a varying combination of short and longer lines denoting heaven (justice), earth (prosperity), moon and water (vitality) and sun and fire (wisdom). The colours white, black, red and blue signify the same harmony.

Five thousand years may have passed but as co-hosts Korea head into the semi-finals of the greatest football tournament on Earth, there are many similarities to be drawn

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: AFP

LOOK HOW SERIOUS THOSE GUYS ARE! Miroslav Klose (R) and Dietmar Hamann (2nd from R) share a joke during training at Seoul yesterday.

Mercedes on auto gear

AFP, Seoul

German coach Rudi Voller said Monday he felt confident his side would raise their game for Tuesday's World Cup semi-final against surprise package South Korea.

The Germans have shown indifferent form since hammering Saudi Arabia 8-0 in their opening group match three weeks ago and lived on their nerves in overcoming Paraguay and then the United States 1-0 in the last two rounds.

But 'Die Mannschaft' reached the last four for the tenth time in the knowledge that they have got there playing within themselves.

Voller has demanded a big improvement - and after training Monday at the Seoul World Cup stadium he felt sure one will materialise.

"Maybe our last match wasn't too good but we can raise our game and I'm sure we will come through. Few people thought that we would get this far."

"It is tough to get to the semis but here we are in the last four and once you are there you always have a chance," said 42-year-old Voller.

"In Germany people looked at how we struggled to qualify and said it might be difficult to get into the last 16. Now we are in the semi-finals albeit with a bit of luck - but we always thought we could do it," said Voller.

Already nicknamed "Rudi Riese" (Rudi the giant) for getting the team this far, Voller is bidding to emulate Franz Beckenbauer in winning the World Cup as both player and coach, having been on the 1990

Beckenbauer-coached squad which beat Argentina in the final.

Veteran reserve striker Oliver Bierhoff may get a run out at some stage as his colleagues, who already have Miroslav Klose and Carsten Jancker to terrorise the Korean defence, believe their hosts could prove vulnerable to their strength in the air.

But Bierhoff, whose golden goal won the European Championship title for Germany in 1996, says he was expecting a real battle.

"The Koreans have beaten Spain, Italy and Portugal. So they've shown they are not a little team. But if we play a bit better than we have been we can beat them, and make the final."

"We showed in beating Cameroon that we can play high-tempo stuff throughout 90 minutes," said Bierhoff.

"And we'll have the advantage of having a referee who will be very

SEE PAGE 14 COL 8

FACTBOX

Facts and figures ahead of Tuesday's World Cup semi-final between Germany and South Korea:

Match venue: Seoul
Match officials: Referee - Urs Meier (Switzerland), Linesmen - Frederic Arnault (France), Evzen Amler (Czech Republic)
Kick-off: 5:30 pm (BST)
Coaches: Germany - Rudi Voller, South Korea - Guus Hiddink
World ranking: Germany - 11, South Korea - 40
Squad average age: Germany - 27.65, South Korea - 26.70
Most capped current player: Germany - Christian Ziege 70, South Korea - Hong Myung-bo 130
Population: Germany - 83 million, South Korea - 48 million
World Cup 2002 results:
Group stage, Germany
June 1 in Sapporo, Japan
 Germany - 8 (Miroslav Klose 20, 25, 69, Michael Ballack 40, Carsten Jancker 45, Thomas Linke 73, Oliver Bierhoff 84, Bernd Schneider 90)
 Saudi Arabia - 0
June 5, in Ibaraki, Japan
 Germany - 1 (Miroslav Klose 19)
 Ireland 1 (Robbie Keane 90)
June 11 in Shizuoka, Japan
 Germany 2 (Marco Bode 50, Miroslav Klose 79)
 Cameroon - 0

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

CUP CORNER

REUTERS, Seoul

South Koreans are being given July 1 as a holiday to celebrate their team's historic advance to the World Cup semifinals.

The holiday will take place regardless of whether South Korea reach the final by beating Germany on Tuesday, the Presidential Blue House said on Monday.

Separately, South Korea also plans a countrywide festival on July 2 to celebrate the successful co-hosting of the tournament with Japan, the first time it has been held in Asia.

SOCCKER VISIT

AP, Seoul

South Korean President Kim Dae-jung will visit Japan to watch the World

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

TODAY'S MATCH

Germany vs Rep of Korea

Venue: Seoul
Time: 5:30 pm

Kahn or bust!

AFP, Seoul

German football legend Franz Beckenbauer fears Germany's luck and the brilliant goalkeeping of captain Oliver Kahn might come to an end in the do-or-die semi-final clash with South Korea on Tuesday.

"To put it bluntly, if we did not have Olli Kahn we would have been sent home a long time ago," warned the man known as the Kaiser.

"We've barely scraped through in every match except for the match against the Saudis, who practically invited us into their goal."

"We're going to have to play a lot better in the semi-finals," he complained.

And Beckenbauer called for the other players to come to the rescue of Kahn.

"We don't have any bad players but at the same time there aren't any truly good ones. We are in the final four and that is delightful but only thanks to Oliver Kahn and that is not so delightful when you think that we had to use everything we had to stop the Americans," he complained.

"That's not going to work forever. We can't always count on Olli. He's playing like a world champion but

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Kaiser the Second



PHOTO: AFP

DESTINED FOR GREATNESS? German coach Rudi Voller has a kick-around during practice at Seoul yesterday.

AFP, Seoul

Anyone who thought the Germans broke the mould with Franz Beckenbauer had better think again.

In Rudi Voller, Germany look to have a second footballing genius who stands on the threshold of a World Cup double triumph - first as player, then coach.

Voller has to negotiate two more hurdles to achieve his goal - starting with Tuesday's semi-final against South Korea, who will be backed by millions of fans sure to throng the streets of Seoul.

Yet, while Brazil are the favourites to lift the trophy nobody is betting against the 42-year-old from Hanau, who scored more than 250 league goals in his career with Stuttgart Kickers, 1860 Munich, Werder Bremen, AS Roma, Marseille and Bayer Leverkusen. Voller, the bane of defences in the German, Italian and French leagues for more than a decade, and urbane sophisticate Beckenbauer, who invented the role of the modern sweeper, have much in common.

Even down to both of them winning the world title as players at the same age of 29.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6