



VIVA VOELLER: German coach Rudi Voeller and his charges on the bench celebrate as the final whistle is blown in Seoul on June 25.

Gone full circle

API/AFP, Seoul

Germany's drive to recapture past glory was nearly completed Tuesday when the three-time champion beat co-host South Korea 1-0 to reach the World Cup final for the seventh time. The Germans are now one step away from winning their fourth title, an achievement that would match Brazil's World Cup record. Brazil will be Germany's opponents in the semifinal.

For the second game in a row, midfielder Michael Ballack scored the winner, firing in a rebound in the 75th minute. But Ballack, booked shortly before scoring, won't be in the final because of two yellow cards.

Playing some of their most convincing soccer of the tournament, the Germans shrugged off a deafen-

ing home crowd of 65,000 and produced a mature performance to subdue the giant-killing South Koreans, the first Asian side to reach a World Cup semifinal.

Minutes after the final whistle, coach Rudi Voeller received a call on his cellphone from German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder congratulating the team.

"I think we are going to have a beer or two," said 21-year-old defender Christoph Metzelder, one of the revelations in the German team. "We fought with everything we had."

"The better fitness of the Germans decided the match," Beckenbauer said. "It was again a team victory, that's the strength of the German team. It was just a matter of time until we scored."

Voller knows what it feels like to be a champion, having starred on Franz Beckenbauer's squad 12 years ago.

But he also knows what it feels like to be tossed on a stormy sea of criticism as the German media and sporting establishment indulges in their favourite hobby of chucking brickbats at whoever is in charge of Die Mannschaft.

Now Voller can throw a few back at his detractors, showing that, just as with Beckenbauer, you don't need club management experience to coach a team to the biggest prize in sport.

Yet ten short months ago the Germans were on their knees after a Michael Owen-inspired England

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WHAT WOULD GERMANY HAVE DONE WITHOUT THEM? Michael Ballack (L) is congratulated by skipper Oliver Kahn after the semifinal at Seoul on June 25.

Bad luck Ballack

REUTERS, Seoul

Michael Ballack experienced the highs and the lows in Germany's 1-0 semifinal victory over South Korea, hitting the winner after having ruled himself out of the final with a bookable offence, which may have saved his team on Tuesday.

"Even though he knew that with another yellow card he would miss the final, he still committed that tactical foul which was utterly necessary," coach Rudi Voeller said of his playmaker.

"He sacrificed himself for the sake of the team, so we will try to win the Cup for him."

Turkey. "The team has so much self-confidence and so I think they will come through."

"Nothing can throw us off balance," he said, who stands to be replaced either by Jens Jeremies or Lars Ricken.

"We can make the best of what

we have available," he added.

Voller agreed, telling reporters that in a tournament, which has not produced a real star teamwork is the most important ingredient for a World Cup-winning recipe.

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Best not always best

AFP, Seoul

German coach Rudi Voller issued a stark warning to his World Cup final opponents on Wednesday, reminding them that "the best team doesn't always win."

Voller has turned around the German side in recent months since taking over midway through 2000 and now, despite coming here shorn of several injured first-choice stars, his team are on the threshold of a fourth world title after beating South Korea 1-0 in the semifinal on Tuesday.

"A few months ago we could never have expected to get through all the way to the final," he said on Wednesday ahead of the other semifinal between Brazil and surprise package Turkey in Saitama, Japan.

"We were under a lot of pressure with two play-off games against Ukraine to qualify and whoever has been around me the past couple of years knows things haven't always been easy."

"But we've come a long way together. We've grasped our opportunity by the horns."

Voller won the competition as a player under Franz Beckenbauer in 1990 and is now a game away from emulating his former mentor as a World Cup winner as both player and coach.

"Whoever we play in the final it will be tough," added Voller.

"But it's not necessarily the best teams which wins. If it were then Brazil would have won the World Cup 14 times."

Germany will nevertheless go into the final showdown with something approaching a ghost team.

They come to Asia with the heart of their defence ripped out having lost stalwarts Jens Nowotny and Christian Worns to injury.

They also lost midfielder and potential world superstar Sebastian Deisler to a damaged knee while the experienced Mehmet Scholl elected

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FOOTBALL HER HEART & SOUL: A German young lady is ecstatic after the national booters made it to the final on June 25.



COACH FANTASTIC: South Korean coach Guus Hiddink watching from the sidelines at Seoul on June 25.

What's up Guus?

REUTERS/AP, Seoul

South Korea's Guus Hiddink is a hero to his adoring Red Devil fans and after securing a place in history now finds himself the most marketable coach in the game.

Hiddink's team may have lost their hard-fought World Cup semifinal 1-0 to Germany on Tuesday but the disappointing result has had little impact on his soaring reputation within football.

He is the only coach to have taken two different nations to the last four at the World Cup and the only one to have guided an Asian team to those exalted heights.

But the amiable Dutchman's contract with the Koreans is up after Saturday's third-place playoff in Daegu and he will become a free agent should he decide, as expected, against an extension.

While there will no doubt be huge pressure on him to stay from a grateful Korean public, the man who took the Netherlands to the semifinals in France four years ago has given no

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TV angle

SHAYAN KHAN

We should have known. You underestimate Germany at your own peril. Especially during the World Cup. Experts said it was doubtful whether they would make it out of their group. Few gave them a chance of making the final. Their money was on lesser footballing nations like France, Argentina, and even Spain and Portugal. But when the pressure is on, it is the greats who rise to the occasion, and the upstarts fall by the wayside. And it would be difficult to argue there is a greater footballing nation than Germany, except maybe Brazil.

In a tournament going against the script at almost every turn, mental toughness was always going to be at a premium. The Italians and the Spanish cried about bad luck and conspiracies, and dropped their heads whenever something went against them. The Germans decided come what may they would find a way to win. And that is what they did

against South Korea Tuesday. The Koreans played very well again. At the start, they matched Germany in every department, and took care of everything the Germans threw at them. Rudi Voeller had obviously instructed his side to bombard the Korean penalty box with crosses, and they did. Schneider on the right was seeing a lot of the ball, but his final balls were invariably poor, or well dealt with by the Hong Myung-Bo and Lee Tae-Young, who completely marked Miroslav Klose out of the game. The Koreans probably created the best chance of the tightly fought first half, but Lee Chun-Soo's low pile-driver was saved brilliantly by the flawless Oliver Kahn. If Germany go all the way and win the World Cup, there will be a strong case to award Kahn with the Golden Ball, which would be the first time for a goalkeeper. In the second half, Germany were clearly stronger.

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Bumper Round, Draw in Dhaka on June 28

(Competition information, prizes and rules on June 21 issue)

The Daily Star RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Bumper Round Ends June 27, 2002

Tick (Ö) the correct answers

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. The first player to be sent off in 2002 World Cup | Totti <input type="checkbox"/> | Zivkovic <input type="checkbox"/> | Eto <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Coach of Senegal team in 2002 World Cup | Milutinovic <input type="checkbox"/> | Metsu <input type="checkbox"/> | Claude <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. First hat-trick in 2002 World Cup scored by | Pauleta <input type="checkbox"/> | Klose <input type="checkbox"/> | Crespo <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. 2006 World Cup will be held in | Brazil <input type="checkbox"/> | Germany <input type="checkbox"/> | Spain <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Who is this?  | Inamoto <input type="checkbox"/> | Totti <input type="checkbox"/> | Vieri <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms).....Age.....

Father's nameOccupation

Address

Telephone (if any)Signature Date.....

Write with a ballpoint pen in clear BLOCK letters. Cut along the dotted lines and mail to OR drop in the Quiz Box at The Daily Star. You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz 6."

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