



Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira (C) briefs his players during a training session on Tuesday.

BRAZIL V ARGENTINA

LIVE ON ESPN: 12:40 AM

Celebrate football



REUTERS/AP, Frankfurt



Brazil expect Adriano to recover in time for Wednesday's Confederations Cup final against Argentina when one of the fiercest rivalries in world soccer resumes on unfamiliar territory.

Adriano, who scored twice in Brazil's 3-2 semi-final win over hosts Germany on Saturday, limped out of Monday's training with an ankle injury but the team doctor said he should be fit.

Brazil, the five times World Cup winners, and Argentina, twice former world champions, will be playing their 40th competitive match – and their fourth in Europe.

Argentina should be clear favourites after beating Brazil 3-1 in a World Cup qualifier as recently as June 8 but Brazil beat Argentina a year ago to win the Copa America, albeit with a penalty shoot-out victory in the final.

If Brazil win on Wednesday they will become only the second country

after France to hold three senior FIFA titles at the same time: the World Cup, their continental crown and the Confederations Cup. France achieved that feat in 2001.

Both sides nevertheless, will have a lot more at stake than who wins the Confederations Cup on Wednesday.

With five World Cup victories to two, Brazil appear to be the better team historically. According to FIFA records, however, Argentina are the only nation in the world to hold a lead over Brazil in head-to-heads – 34-33 with 22 ties.

But the countries have been squabbling for years about who has the lead. World Cup holder Brazil contend that it is 34-34, while Argentina believe they lead their great rival by two victories.

Neither team's records, however, agree with FIFA's.

Whoever leads, there is the chance of a classic final at Frankfurt's Waldstadion, provided both teams overcome the weariness that comes with playing five games in two weeks.

"The fact we are playing Brazil

wipes out any kind of fatigue," Argentina captain Juan Pablo Sorin said. "In reality, they are better, but we have determination, heart and desire. Brazil are always an extra motivator."

"There is nothing better than playing the final against a classic rival."

But the Brazilians also were optimistic.

"A final is a great source of motivation," Barcelona forward Ronaldinho said. "It will be a great game against a great team."

"We want to end the season on a high note, with a title. You forget you're tired when it's a final. It's the last game, and we'll shrug off our tiredness."

Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira believes the two finalists have the best individual stars in world soccer.

"It's going to be a fantastic final," he said. "It's a meeting between two excellent schools of soccer. It will be a duel between two great teams of world soccer – teams which probably have the best individual players."

Jose Pekerman's Argentina looked exhausted as they beat Mexico 6-5 on penalties in the second semi-final in Hanover on Sunday, after a grueling match ended 1-1 after extra time.

Brazil had enjoyed a relatively straightforward win over Germany 24 hours earlier in Nuremberg and the mauling they received in that last meeting in Argentina will be a powerful incentive.

Parreira will be keen to prove that his ultra-attacking formation can be effective against top class opposition.

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PROBABLE TEAMS

BRAZIL: 1-Dida; 13-Cicinho, 3-Lucio, 4-Roque Junior, 6-Gilberto; 8-Kaka, 5-Emerson, 11-Zé Roberto, 10-Ronaldinho, 9-Adriano, 7-Robinho
ARGENTINA: 12-German Lux; 4-Javier Zanetti, 16-Fabricio Coloccini, 14-Gabriel Milito, 6-Gabriel Heinze; 5-Esteban Cambiasso, 18-Mario Santana, 8-Juan Roman Riquelme, 3-Juan Pablo Sorin; 7-Carlos Tevez, 21-Luciano Figueroa
Referee: Lubos Michel (Slovakia)

AST WINNER

AFP, Frankfurt

Previous winners of the Confederations Cup, Brazil play Argentina in the 2005 final here on Wednesday:

1992 (then known as King Fahd Trophy): Argentina
Final: Argentina 5 Saudi Arabia 2
1995 (King Fahd Trophy): Denmark
Final: Denmark 2 Argentina 0
1997: Brazil
Final: Brazil 6 Australia 0
1999: Mexico
Final: Mexico 4 Brazil 3
2001: France
Final: France 1 Japan 0
2003: France
Final: France 1 Cameroon 0 (with extra-time 'golden goal')

GERMANY V MEXICO

They also ran

AFP, Leipzig

Germany, with their dreams of Confederations Cup glory shattered, face Mexico here on Wednesday in the third-place play-off.

And Germany coach Jurgen Klinsmann admits his players are in low spirits after going out 3-2 in the semi-finals to Brazil on Saturday.

"The players are still coming to terms with the Brazil defeat," said Klinsmann. "They need some picking up but we have an obligation to give our all for the fans in Leipzig."

Klinsmann may choose to give fringe players such as Tim Borowski, Patrick Owomoyela and Fabian Ernst a chance to impress and experiment further with tactics.

Mexico coach Ricardo Lavolpe must do without captain Rafael Marquez through suspension and could also rest some of his key performers with Sunday's semi-final loss against Argentina sapping their strength.

Argentina defeated Mexico 5-4 on penalties, after the encounter finished 1-1 following extra-time, and the latter must somehow find the energy to overcome Germany and the home crowd on Wednesday.

Mexico caused the biggest upset of the tournament by beating Brazil 1-0 in a group game and Germany coach Oliver Kahn rates them highly.

"We wanted to measure ourselves against the best teams in the world," he said. "Mexico are one of the top teams at the moment. They

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PHOTO: AFP

LET'S HOPE THE BALL ENDS UP IN THE NET IN THE FINAL! Argentinian hot-shot Carlos Tevez takes a tumble inside a goalpost during a training session in Hanover on Monday.

Final thoughts in Dhaka

BISHWAJIT ROY

For a day the Premier Division Football League took a backseat yesterday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

On an overcast Tuesday afternoon local stars put aside their egos and opinions about the title race and instead all they wanted to talk about was first-ever showdown of the two most passionately supported teams in Bangladesh in a FIFA Confederations Cup final.

The Brazil and Argentina clash in Frankfurt on Wednesday 'the topic' and understandably loyalties were divided ahead of the mother of all matches.

Country's mercurial marksman Alfaz Ahmed couldn't recall when he last missed a football match involving one of the two South American heavyweights and when it comes to a Brazil-Argentina battle he just forgets everything.

"It's just impossible for a football lover to keep away from the heat. I always love to see these fierce rivals lock horns and I've told my teammates that they could learn a lot of things from just one match," said the Mohammedan striker, who is now nursing an injury.

"Many call me a crazy Argentina supporter but I don't mind. I believe Argentina has a realistic chance to win especially as they have a better defence than the Brazilians. But I will miss Javier Saviola (who picked up a red card against Mexico in the semifinal)," said Alfaz, adding that Luciano Figueroa had the ability to make the difference.

Brothers Union midfielder Monwar Hossain described how the rest of his mates were enjoying the Confederations Cup matches at the Gopibagh club, in particular the dramatic semifinals.

"All the players are going to glued to the set tomorrow night. And in fact most have hedged bets. I'm a great admirer of Brazil and at the moment Robinho is my pick for his amazing ball skills," said the Bangladeshi media.

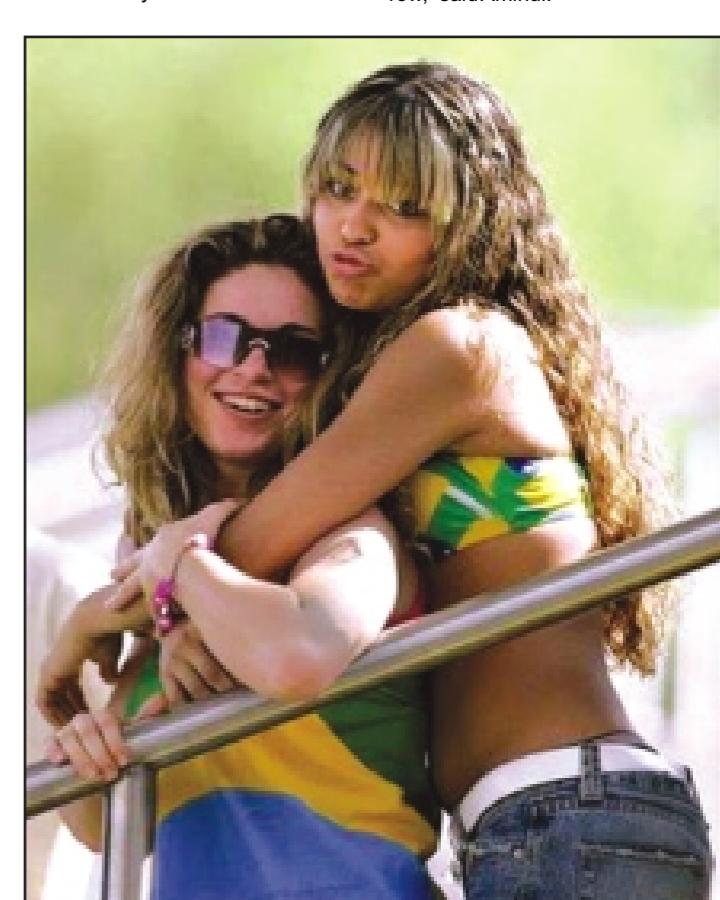
His senior clubmate Jewel Rana, the former Bangladesh captain, said the new generation of Bangladeshi footballers were more knowledgeable and enthusiastic followers of

the international game.

"Although the standard of the domestic game has been falling, there is no shortage of interest in the younger generation about international soccer. They are more into it than we ever were. Definitely there will be a lot of noise at the club house come Wednesday," said Jewel.

Jewel was also keeping his fingers crossed in anticipation of Brazil taking revenge for their embarrassing defeat in a recent World Cup qualifier against the bitter rivals.

"It is always a treat to see Brazil's



READY FOR WEDNESDAY: Two Brazilian beauties watch the national team's training session at the Brentanobad Stadium in Frankfurt on Tuesday ahead of Wednesday's Confederations Cup final against Argentina at the Waldstadion in Frankfurt.



FOOTBALL IS FUN AND SO IS RONALDINHO

KEY BRAZIL V ARGENTINA MATCHES SINCE 1974

REUTERS, Frankfurt

A look at some key matches between Brazil and Argentina since they first met in Europe in the World Cup final in West Germany in 1974:

In all they have met 88 times, with 33 wins each in a rich footballing dating back to 1914.

Wednesday's Confederations Cup final in Frankfurt will be their fourth meeting in Europe after three memorable World Cup encounters in 1974, 1982 and 1990:

June 30, 1974 - HANOVER, West Germany: BRAZIL 2 ARGENTINA 1

Their first ever meeting outside of South America ended with Brazil winning 2-1 in a second round group match in the World Cup finals.

Brazil, the holders, took the lead with a left-foot thunderbolt from Falcao and Socrates, the Brazilians raced into a 3-0 lead with goals from Zico, Serginho and Junior.

A frustrated 21-year-old Diego Maradona, reacting to a foul on fellow midfielder Juan Barbas,

equalised with a fine free kick that beat Leao and went in off the cross-

bar in the 35th minute for an Argentine side that included a young Mario Kempes.

Striker Ramon Diaz scored a consolation goal for Argentina four minutes later and Brazil went on to a decider with Italy, which they lost 3-2.

24 June, 1990 - TURIN, Italy: ARGENTINA 1 BRAZIL 0

Brazil were all over another Argentina side defending the World Cup who, having been upset 1-0 by Cameroon in the tournament's opening game, had scraped into the second round knockout match as a third-placed team from the group stage. But the Brazilians failed to convert their chances and Diego Maradona, hobbling on one good ankle, put Claudio Caniggia away with a sublime pass for the only goal 10 minutes from time.

The match was in the news again recently because of the controversy of Brazil defender Branco allegedly drinking contaminated water from a bottle handed to him by the

kicked an opponent and was sent off in the 85th minute.

Argentine bench.

Sebastiao Lazaroni's side went home unexpectedly early for a Brazilian team while Maradona managed to inspire his troops all the way to a second successive final in Rome which they lost to West Germany.

There is parity in the five meetings so far this century with four World Cup qualifiers – two for the 2002 finals in Asia and two for next year's tournament in Germany – going to the home team.

Only penalties separated the teams in their other meeting so far this century when Brazil won the 2004 Copa America final in Lima in a shootout after a 2-2 draw.

July 26, 2000 - SAO PAULO: BRAZIL 3 ARGENTINA 1

Midfielder Vampeta scored twice as Brazil won 3-1 in the first ever World Cup qualifier between the teams at Sao Paulo's Morumbi stadium.

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Need tickets for final?

AFP, Frankfurt

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Saturday's semi-final between Germany and Brazil was a sell-out in Nuremberg, but over 3,000 seats have yet to be snapped up for Sunday's semi-final between Argentina and Mexico. Organisers reported.

What to WATCH

ESPN

FIFA Confederation Cup
Third Place Decider
Germany vs Mexico
Live at 9:40 pm
Brazil vs Argentina
Final

Live at 12:40 am (Thursday)

STAR Sports
Wimbledon Championships
Men's Singles
Quarterfinals
Live at 5:00 pm

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AFP, Frankfurt

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