

Clash of the titans

PREVIEW

REUTERS, Cape Town

Argentina and Germany set off for the World Cup with huge doubts about their prospects but they meet in Saturday's quarterfinal in hot form with a great chance for the winners to go all the way to the final.

A war of words has erupted ahead of the match with Germany's players accusing the Argentinians of lacking respect and Diego Maradona talking of revenge for an unsavoury defeat on penalties at the same stage of the last World Cup.

Yet when his team suffered a 6-1 humiliation by Bolivia and back-to-back defeats by Brazil and Paraguay, the fans despaired of even qualifying for the finals and Maradona was vilified for his scattergun

selection policy.

Argentina eventually scraped through but after being outplayed by Spain in a November friendly, few considered them one of the main contenders in South Africa.

Yet despite, or maybe because of, the manic exhortations of their iconic leader, they have put together nine successive victories to emerge as the team everyone wants to avoid.

Maradona has produced a happy, settled squad and has shown excellent management skills in praising the contribution of Lionel Messi despite the forward's failure to score.

Messi has been a constant threat but, while awaiting his first goal, those around him have come good with Gonzalo Higuain and Carlos Tevez netting six of their tournament-leading 10.



A SIGHT FOR SORE GERMAN EYES: Lionel Messi drives the ball forward as teammate Javier Pastore looks on during Argentina's training session at the University's High Performance Centre in Pretoria on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP



Jonas Gutierrez could come in on the left for Angel Di Maria to add attacking width against Germany with Juan Sebastian Veron back to form a stable midfield base alongside Javier Mascherano.

"We have to try to find the best team, the 'gala team' to play against Germany," said Maradona, who captained his country to success over the Germans in the 1986 final but lost to them in the decider four years later.

Their meeting at the last World Cup, when Germany reached the semifinals after winning on penalties in a game that ended in an unseemly brawl, has been to the fore this week with Germany midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger stoking the fires.

"If you see how they gesticulate, how they try to influence the referee... that is not part of the game, that is a lack of respect," he said.

Maradona responded by asking: "What's the matter with you, Schweinsteiger, are you nervous? We don't have time to think about Schweinsteiger. The players are thinking about going onto the pitch, in getting their revenge."

A series of injuries, including the loss of captain Michael Ballack, forced coach Joachim Loew to reassess his forces and the young side he has put together have, as Germany so often do in tournaments, gelled expertly just when it matters.

Lukas Podolski and Miroslav Klose, set to win his 100th cap have rewarded

Loew's faith, Thomas Mueller has added attacking sharpness and Mesut Ozil has brought vigour to midfield. Skipper Philipp Lahm says it is the best Germany side he has played in.

Loew also showed his tactical nous when he hatched a plan to expose England with exhilarating counter-attacks and his team put it into action perfectly in their 4-1 second round victory.

Loew, set to be without injured striker Cacau, said he had something similar in store for Argentina in the battle to face Spain or Paraguay in the semifinals.

"I expect an unbelievably tight match as we cannot allow ourselves any mistakes because they have so many players able to score," he said. "But Argentina can be hurt. We have found some details of their weaknesses."

Messi misses training

REUTERS, Pretoria

Lionel Messi missed Argentina's practice due to a head cold on Thursday, 48 hours before the World Cup quarterfinal against Germany in Cape Town.

The 23-year-old Barcelona forward is expected to be fit for Saturday's match at Green Point stadium.

Argentina have won all four matches in the tournament to reach the last eight but Messi has so far failed to score.

Germans have nothing to lose 'We will win 3-1'

REUTERS, Cape Town

Former Germany coach Juergen Klinsmann said on Friday Germany's young team lacked experience but were still capable of conjuring up the "magic" needed to beat Argentina in the World Cup quarterfinal.

Germany's young guns demolished England 4-1 in the second-round after topping Group D, looking slicker and sharper than the more-fancied side ahead of the tournament.

"We are very pleased from a German perspective. They are a very young team who have done very well so far," said Klinsmann, a member of West Germany's World Cup winning squad in 1990.

"We had a little set back against Serbia in the group match but then they came out strong again and for us Germans it means a lot to beat England in a knock-out game."

The squad, beaten by Serbia 1-0, features players such as Lukas Podolski, Miroslav Klose and Bastian Schweinsteiger who Klinsmann led to a surprise third place finish in the 2006 World Cup in Germany, alongside gifted newcomers such as Mesut Ozil.

"We will see how they do



German midfielder Mesut Ozil lines up a shot during their training session at the Super stadium in Atteridgeville near Pretoria on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

against Argentina and how far this team can go. They are lacking maybe a little experience and will be playing some of the best players in the world. This will be a new

benchmark for them," he told reporters in Cape Town.

Joachim Loew, Klinsmann's former assistant coach, took over from his former boss after the World

Cup and led Germany to the Euro 2008 final where they lost to Spain.

Klinsmann said he had visited the German team on Thursday night in Cape Town

and had a glass of wine with them.

"They don't need my advice... just look at the front line the Argentinians have. They know that and they know they have nothing to lose," he said at Cape Town's City Hall.

"But there could be a moment of magic and they hit them at the right time. World Cups are all about timing," he added.

Saturday's quarter-final clash between Argentina and Germany will be a repeat of the 1986 and 1990 World Cup finals, the first won by Diego Maradona's team and the second by a German side including Klinsmann.

Both teams met again at the 2006 World Cup quarterfinal, when Germany went through on penalties and the match ended in an unseemly brawl.

Asked about his future, Klinsmann, who was sacked as Bayern Munich coach near the end of the 2008-09 Bundesliga season, said he would wait to see after the tournament.

"After the World Cup a lot of teams will think about their future, but for now we are all just following the World Cup," he said.

AFP, Cape Town

Injured German captain Michael Ballack predicted on Friday that Germany would beat Argentina 3-1 in Saturday's World Cup quarterfinal.

The 33-year-old midfielder, who was ruled out of the finals after injuring his right ankle in the FA Cup final in May, told Bild that he had no advice to

give to the predominantly young side that has produced some electrifying football twice scoring four goals.

"I have no advice to give the team, everything is going really well, what they have achieved so far is fantastic," Ballack told the newspaper on arriving in South Africa.

"Under these conditions, we have our chances

against Argentina and I predict a 3-1 victory."

Ballack, who was released by Chelsea at the end of last season and has joined one of his former clubs Bayer Leverkusen, has flown to South Africa to join-up with his compatriots and in the event of them winning their clash in Cape Town will stay with them in their hotel on the outskirts of Pretoria.

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2nd. 14" Toshin Colour TV	2nd. 21" Toshin Colour TV
3rd. 3 Toshiba DVD Players	3rd. Toshin Microwave Woven
	4th. Two Toshiba DVD Players

(See May 23 issue of the Star Sport for competition information and rules)

QUIZ SCHEDULE

Round & Draw	Starts	Ends	Answers must reach by 12pm	Lucky Draw for prizes
5. Sylhet	June 24	July 02	July 04	July 06

The Daily Star -RANGS TOSHIBA World Cup Quiz, Bumper Round Ends July 11, 2010

Tick (✓) the correct answers

- Who was the highest scorer in 2002 World Cup? Creso Ronaldo Podolski
- Who headed in the last goal of World Cup 2006? Materazzi Ballack Wiltord
- How many teams participated in the World Cup 1994? 24 30 32
- What was the name of the official ball of World Cup 1970? Magpie Discogs Telstar
- Who is this player? Miito Villa Melo

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)..... Age.....
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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, 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215. You may send as many entries as you like. Envelopes of entries must be clearly marked "Star World Cup Quiz Bumper Round"

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'German digs a mark of respect'

REUTERS, Cape Town

Germany are showing respect for their World Cup quarterfinal rivals Argentina when they accuse them of gamesmanship and being poor losers, Argentine defender Martin Demichelis said.

"It's an act of nervousness or respect, but I think it's respect," Demichelis said.

"For having beaten them in the friendly they respect us more, for our history," he added, recalling Argentina's 1-0 win in Munich in March and meeting in successive World finals in 1986 and 1990 with one victory apiece.

German players have accused the Argentinians of trying to influence referees in the build-up to the match at Green Point stadium in Cape Town on Saturday (1400 GMT).

They also said Argentina were poor losers when the sides met in the Berlin World Cup quarter-final four years ago which hosts Germany won on penalties. After the shootout, fighting broke out among players and team officials from both sides.

"Many people devalue our victory and our performance," Demichelis told a news conference on Thursday about the March warm-up match in the city where he plays his club soccer for Bayern Munich.

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