



Del Bosque keeps calm

Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque insisted his side would take bragging for granted ahead of a World Cup final meeting with the Netherlands they will start as clear favourites.

"Of course we must celebrate this victory but we will do so with moderation," Del Bosque said after Carles Puyol's fabulous header gave his side a 1-0 semifinal win over Germany on Wednesday.

"We will not be blinded by success. We will enjoy this and tomorrow we start preparing for the final.

"There is nothing more difficult or precious than to win a World Cup. But we still have to play the final. We cannot start bragging or get too conceited yet."

Del Bosque praised his players for sticking to their task until their domination finally yielded a winning goal 17 minutes from the end of regulation time.

"We looked to win the ball and keep it for the entire match and the players have done their job in a magnificent way," he said.

"The triumph is even bigger because of the size of the opponent. You could say Germany was less strong than expected but was because our team did a great job. The bottom line is we played better than they expected."

Del Bosque sprung a surprise by dropping Fernando Torres from his starting line-up, promoting the young Barcelona forward Pedro instead while moving David Villa to the central striker's role.

"It was a difficult decision," he said. "Fernando is a boy everyone likes, a strong personality and a good player. But we took a decision on the basis of what we thought was best for this match."

Del Bosque added: "We are privileged to have many great things in our country and one of them is sport. We have been waiting for so many years for a major success and I certainly believe Spain deserves to be triumphant."

"I am running a group of young men who are very experienced. They know what football is."

"The defeat against Switzerland (in the group stage here) was very tough on us. But we believe in our ability and character. We have been growing and think this is what brought us to the final."



CELEBRATION ON TOP OF A FESTIVAL: A Spanish girl is over the moon as she watches her team win 1-0 against Germany at the Plaza de Castillo on the second day of the San Fermin festival in Pamplona on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Spain coping with tag

AFP, Durban

Spain midfielder Xabi Alonso said the European champions are coping with the pressure of being favourites after reaching the World Cup final.

Spain beat Germany 1-0 here in the semifinals on Wednesday to reach their first ever World Cup final, where the Netherlands await them.

And while Spain have not been spectacular in their progress, they have been ruthlessly efficient since suffering a shock 1-0 reverse against Switzerland in their opening group match of the tournament.

"We have been coping with the pressure quite well," said Alonso. "We knew the pressure would be quite high, but the favourite thing means nothing, you have to show that on the pitch."

"But we've been playing well and now we're in the final against Holland."

Wednesday's semifinal was anything but a classic with a headed goal from centre-back Carles Puyol from a Xavi corner proving decisive.

But although the match was short on excitement, Spain did manage to control proceedings with their smooth-passing game.

"It was the performance we needed," added Alonso. "We have seen that when Germany get ahead in the scoreline they play on the counter attack and score many goals so we were really concerned about that."

"We tried to keep a good balance between attack and defence, we controlled the game and although it took a little bit longer than expected to score the first goal we're really pleased and delighted to play the final."

Alonso also praised the team's maturity in managing to impose their system on every opponent despite not scoring many goals.

"It's our style, it's the way we know how to play and the results have been good because we stick with that idea."

"We're happy with our performance, it was really mature and what we needed in the semi-final of the World Cup."

Barcelona playmaker Xavi said Spain got what they deserved but warned that the Dutch will be a tougher proposition in the final.

"I'm delighted because we deserved to win and be in the final," he said. "We dominated the match and managed to impose our game, especially in the second half when Germany hardly touched

the ball.

"We felt comfortable on the pitch, that's what we wanted from the match."

"Holland are a great team with good attacking and creative players but if we play like we did (against Germany) then we've got a good chance."

Real Madrid right-back Sergio Ramos said he was surprised by just how well the Spanish were playing.

"I'm really happy. No-one expected us to perform quite so well. Finally after all these years of hard work we're getting our reward," he said.

"I'm happy with how I'm playing but I'm lucky to be playing for such a team. We play with a system that allows me to get forward and I benefit from that, it seems more as if I'm a winger than a full-back."

Star striker David Villa has his eye on more than one prize as he also leads the top-scorers charts.

"I hope I can finish top scorer but right now the only thing I want is to help my team become world champions," he said.

"If we manage that and we also win an individual title it will be a collective achievement, it wouldn't just be for me but for the whole team."

Pedro repays faith

TELEGRAPH

The Liverpool forward was demoted to the bench by coach Vicente del Bosque, having failed to score a single goal at the World Cup so far.

Pedro repaid his manager's faith by producing an excellent performance as Spain booked their first final appearance thanks to Carles Puyol's powerful second-half header.

The 22-year-old is now expected to keep his place for Sunday's clash with Holland at Soccer City, and this time it won't come as a shock.

"I was a little surprised to start," said Pedro. "But thankfully I became involved in the match. I am very happy with the way we played and our progression to the final."

Strangely enough, Pedro could have helped Torres score his long-awaited goal last night if he had not been quite so selfish.

As Spain broke in the final minutes, Pedro could have squared the ball to his more experienced teammate with Torres only having Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer to beat.

Dutch want glory

AFP, Johannesburg

Dutch coach Bert van Marwijk insists Holland are ready to end their 32-year wait for a World Cup title in Sunday's final and write their own chapter in Netherlands' football history.

The Dutch face European champions Spain at Johannesburg's Soccer City with both sides bidding to win a first world title.

Holland reached both the 1974 and 1978 World Cup finals, losing to West Germany and Argentina respectively, but van Marwijk says his side are ready to go a step further than those great Dutch teams.

"We will play for the whole of Holland," said van Marwijk. "I do not think in terms of revenge (for those defeats)."

"I will watch the game without thinking about historical statistics. We haven't experi-

enced winning a final and neither have Spain."

The Dutch are expecting a tight, tactical game against the Euro 2008 winners, who under Spain coach Vicente del Bosque, dominated Germany in Wednesday's semifinal.

"I suppose that the two coaches will work from a clear strategy, both sides will have a little bit of tension," said van Marwijk.

"Spain deserved to beat Germany, I like the way they played, we will play our way against them. We respect them, but we are not afraid of them."

"It will be a big challenge for us, they made it hard for the Germans to play."

If they win Sunday's final, the Dutch will become only the second team to record a perfect World Cup campaign, after Brazil in 1970, by winning every single match in both qualification and the finals.

Catalan salute Puyol

AFP, Potchefstroom

Carles Puyol was feted after his towering header settled the World Cup semifinal against Germany and sent Spain into their first ever final.

All the talk had been of Spain's metronomic passing patterns beforehand and the rapier-like finishing of David Villa.

Instead, a goal any traditional English centreback would have been pleased to score decided the contest - and even the regional Catalan press got behind not just the Barcelona man but the team, saluting one and all for their triumph.

With the Germans having provided only sporadic threats of their own, it seemed a hoped-for classic might need extra-time or even spotkicks to separate rivals who also fought out the final of Euro 2008 - when again Spain emerged the victors 1-0, with Fernando Torres on target.

With the Liverpool striker out of sorts and on the bench it called for something a little bit different and Puyol duly delivered from Xavi Hernandez's corner.

Puyol has been a mainstay of the Spanish side for a decade - he has also played for a Catalan selection, now coached by Johan Cruyff, on four occasions.



PHOTO: AFP

Spain defender Carles Puyol is unstoppable after heading in the winner against Germany in the semifinal at the Moses Mabhida stadium in Durban on Wednesday. The goal took Spain to their first-ever World Cup final.

But his goal was only his third in 89 appearances.

Even so, it was enough to book an historic final against the Dutch at Soccer City in Johannesburg and guarantee a new winner of the trophy.

"After all he has given to

the team to score a goal like that is well deserved," remarked teammate Joan Capdevila afterwards.

"I am delighted for him," said Xavi as the man himself disappeared under a welter of well-wishers.

Prior to the game Toni Nadal, former Barcelona star and uncle of tennis world number one Rafael Nadal had remarked that "Puyol's maturity is one of his great attributes, along with his pride in the job and his positional sense."

Puyol's goal came in a fine showing which saw him in the first half come close to heading another goal - he misdirected the effort over - while holding in check the feared German strike tandem of Miroslav Klose and Lukas Podolski alongside Barcelona teammate Gerard Pique.

At club level, Madrid media often play down the contribution from Catalan club Barcelona and the feeling is mutual with regard to the little-love-lost 'esteem' in which the Catalan media hold

Real Madrid.

When Barcelona beat Arsenal in the Champions League final in 2006 and Puyol - who hails from the western Catalan town of La Pobla de Segur in the province of Lleida - held aloft the trophy.

In that game, just three Spaniards started - all of them from the Catalan region - with the same number starting for Arsenal.

Against Germany, just three Real Madrid players started the game - skipper Iker Casillas, Sergio Ramos and Xabi Alonso compared with seven Barcelona stars - including new signing from Valencia, Villa.

As Catalan newspaper Avui put it Thursday - "they call them (Spain) La Roja for their kit - but the soul of Vicente del Bosque's squad is blaugrana (the blue and wine red colours of Barcelona)."

However, the whole of Spain was united in saluting the national side - and in particular Puyol - who started off as a goalkeeper and then switched to striker as a youngster.

"A masterpiece - historic," enthused Marca sports daily, "Spain are within reach of glory," was how ABC daily saw it.

It was left to Catalan Spanish-language daily Mundo Deportivo to sum up the importance of the man with the number five on his back.

"Puyoooooooooooooooooooooool!", blared the headline of a report which noted: "Only Barca's skipper managed to score."

RANGS TOSHIBA

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4th	One Toshiba 21" Colour TV	YOU	4th	One Toshiba 24" LCD TV
5th	One Toshiba Microwave Oven (23L)	and YOU		

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

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3rd.	20L Toshiba Microwave Woven	3rd.	20L Toshiba Microwave Woven
4th.	Two Toshiba DVD Players	4th.	Two Toshiba DVD Players

QUIZ SCHEDULE

Round & Draw	Starts	Ends	Answers must reach by 12pm	Lucky Draw for prizes
Bumper Round, Dhaka	July 03	July 11	July 13	July 16

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

Tick (✓) the correct answers

1. Who was the highest scorer in 2002 World Cup?	Crespo <input type="checkbox"/>	Ronaldo <input type="checkbox"/>	Podolski <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Who headed in the last goal of World Cup 2006?	Materazzi <input type="checkbox"/>	Ballack <input type="checkbox"/>	Wiltord <input type="checkbox"/>
3. How many teams participated in the World Cup 1994?	24 <input type="checkbox"/>	30 <input type="checkbox"/>	32 <input type="checkbox"/>
4. What was the name of the official ball of World Cup 1970?	Magpie <input type="checkbox"/>	Discogs <input type="checkbox"/>	Telstar <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Who is this player?	Milito <input type="checkbox"/>	Villa <input type="checkbox"/>	Melo <input type="checkbox"/>

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)..... Age.....
 Father's name..... Occupation.....
 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, 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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