



German fans in Munich celebrate their team's win over Uruguay in the third place play-off match on Saturday.

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German media exult

REUTERS, Berlin

German newspapers on Sunday praised the national team for recovering to beat Uruguay 3-2 in the third-place playoff game and for giving the country a shot of patriotic pride that recalled the 2006 World Cup at home.

Many commentators pointed out that the young Germany side should have a bright future after they enjoyed commanding victories over England and Argentina with thrilling attacking play before getting knocked out by Spain in the semifinals.

They also noted with some satisfaction that it was the second straight World Cup that Germany took the 'bronze' medal and their third consecutive World Cup among the top three after they finished runners-up to Brazil in 2002.

"Thanks lads for giving Germany one last World Cup celebration," wrote Bild am Sonntag. "What a wonderful World Cup summer you've given us. Joachim Loew has put together a team that has captivated the imagination of all Germany."

Miriam Nyary wrote that the team gave the country something special -- a newfound pride in its immigrant community. The side's multi-cultural make-up showed Germans and Turks embraced each other when Mesut Ozil scored the winner against Ghana. This multi-cultural feeling will remain long after the World Cup.

"You created something magical on the pitch and gave

us all back home in Germany such a thrill watching in the public viewing venues and on TV at home," Nyary wrote. "From the first minute you electrified us, made us tremble, cheer and weep."

"But it wasn't just the usual 'German virtues' that gave us so much joy... on the fan miles Germans and Turks embraced each other when Mesut Ozil scored the winner against Ghana. This multi-cultural feeling will remain long after the World Cup."

The conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung paid tribute to the celebrity octopus who accurately predicted the winner of all Germany's World Cup matches -- including their two defeats.

"Paul the oracle octopus (at Sea Life) in Oberhausen got it right again," FAZ wrote. "For the seventh straight time at the World Cup, Paul correctly picked the winner of Germany's match."

Millions of fans packed public viewing venues and TV ratings hit record levels. Germans dropped their normal reluctance to wave flags with the country's black, red and gold colours adorning public celebrations across Germany.

The Sueddeutsche Zeitung

in Munich said Germany were lucky to beat Uruguay in Saturday's playoff.

"Germany won a lively match against Uruguay to take third place," it wrote. "But the team looked more like a rock band that got a bit too over enthusiastic at the start and struggled to hang on to the end of the concert."

"Yet the team again presented itself as team for the future -- and one capable of winning big matches in the present."

Guenter Netzer, a former Germany midfielder and now a TV pundit, wrote in a Bild am Sonntag column: "Even if they didn't win the big prize, you have to hand it to this team for a really great performance. The chances are very good that this team will land the ultimate prize at one of the next tournaments."

The Welt am Sonntag also looked to the future.

"Germany didn't win the title but instead the team was full of excitement, creativity and was highly entertaining."

"The team is young and needs more experience -- so they will play with more courage than in last week's semifinal in two or four years or maybe even win the next title. After all, it has been 14 years since the last championship was won."

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Is Paul Italian?

INTERNET

It has been revealed that Paul the Psychic Octopus is actually Italian! "I captured him myself in the sea around Elba."

Paul the Octo-Oracle is based in Oberhausen, Germany, and up until now it was thought he had been born in Weymouth, England.

"I caught him with my own hands," declared trainer Verena Bartsch in Bild am Sonntag newspaper.

"I captured him myself in the sea around Elba, in April. He was four weeks old and 10cm long."

The Elba islands are in Italian territory 20km off the coast of Tuscany.

According to Bartsch, Paul was placed in an aquarium in Coburg and then sold to Oberhausen's Sea Life centre for 179 euros.

Crying game

INTERNET

The World Cup final officials were close to tears when they found out they had been awarded the fixture, it has been revealed.

Assistant referee Michael Mullarkey could not wait for Sunday's clash between Spain and the Netherlands.

"We had not been chosen for any of the quarterfinals or the semifinals so you do start to wonder about things," he said.

"When we were actually told it was an incredible moment. When I was sitting at home watching the 2006 World Cup on television I never envisaged that I would be here doing the final."

Meanwhile 38-year-old Webb described being chosen as an "honour and a privilege"

"We are delighted to have been selected for the game," the Englishman added. "It is the ultimate honour for a referee."

Joachim lauds spirit

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Joachim Loew hailed Germany's spirit after they came from behind to defeat Uruguay 3-2 in a thrilling game on Saturday and secure third place at the World Cup.

"In the second half, when we were forced to dig deep, we saw the mental strength the team had to resist and then snatch victory," said the Germany coach.

"I'm pleased with that, the team deserves it. Altogether, what we've achieved, we never would have expected it eight or nine months ago."

Germany claimed victory thanks to Sami Khedira's 82nd-minute header, after strikes from Edinson Cavani and Diego Forlan had seen Uruguay hit back from a goal down following Thomas Mueller's opener.

The three-time champions were hit by a series of injuries to key players, including captain Michael Ballack, on the eve of the World Cup but responded with some thrilling performances despite the inexperience in their ranks.

Loew's young players defeated England 4-1 in the last 16 and thrashed Argentina 4-0 in the quarter-finals before finally meeting their match in a 1-0 semi-final defeat by Spain.

Central midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger was one of the stars of the tournament and he believes the country has a rich footballing future to look forward to.

"I'm very proud to play in this team," said the Bayern Munich player. "We have to look to

the future, we can still achieve lots of things."

Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez lauded his side's performance at the World Cup but said they had been undone by individual errors against Germany.

The meeting in Port Elizabeth was a rematch of the 1970 third-place match, which Germany won 1-0, after Tabarez had guided his team to the World Cup semi-finals for the first time in 40 years.

"The match was contested by two teams who really wanted to finish in third place, by two teams who gave everything," said Tabarez.

"We made one mistake too many, but we showed that we were capable. We showed that we could compete with any team in the world."

Uruguay have been the surprise package of the World Cup, qualifying from a difficult group that also included France, Mexico and hosts South Africa before defeating South Korea and Ghana to reach the last four.

They were beaten 3-2 by the Netherlands in the semi-finals but Tabarez said his squad would take great heart from their African endeavours.

"Uruguay have been one of the surprises of the tournament and we still don't realise what's happened back home," he said.

"I received an email on Friday from a lady I didn't know who said, 'Thank you, thank you, thank you for having changed the image of our country'."

"I'm surprised, it's the beauty of sport and the serious work we've accomplished."

Tabarez wants to continue

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Oscar Tabarez would like to continue as Uruguay coach after guiding them to fourth place at the World Cup -- their best finish in 40 years.

The 63-year-old -- in his second spell as coach after taking them to the last 16 at the 1990 finals -- is out of contract but admitted following the 3-2 defeat by Germany here that his enthusiasm for the job was greater than ever.

"I am nearer to the end of my career than the beginning, but I feel fine physically," said Tabarez, who has also turned his hand to teaching and is nicknamed 'The Professor'.

"It would interest me to continue with Uruguay, but it is not the time to be speaking

about that," added Tabarez, unusual among football coaches in rousing his players with literary quotes.

Tabarez, a devotee of iconic Argentinian revolutionary Che Guevara and who named a daughter Tania after Guevara's last companion, said that he did not want to be seen to laying down terms to the national federation.

"I don't want to give the impression that I am demanding something," said Tabarez, who has been in the post since 2006.

"But from this evening (Saturday), my contract is at an end and I am no longer national team coach. Everything will depend on the offers that may be proposed," added Tabarez, who numbers Serie A sides Cagliari and AC Milan among the clubs he has coached.

Ronaldo hails Klose

SOCCERNET

Ronaldo has praised Miroslav Klose's scoring achievements after the German striker fell just short of the Brazilian World Cup winner's 15-goal all-time tournament record.

Klose's four goals in South Africa took him to 14 strikes across the past three World Cups, one less than Ronaldo's record tally amassed during the 1998, 2002 and 2006 tournaments.

A back injury cruelly robbed Klose the chance to play in Germany's third-place play-off against Uruguay, a traditionally high-scoring fixture in which he would have had a strong chance of entering the history books. At 32, Klose is unlikely to play in another World Cup.

Ronaldo said he would have been happy to see Klose break his record, but praised his 14-goal tally as a "fantastic" achievement.

"Congratulations to Klose, to score 14 goals at the World Cup is fantastic. It's sad that he did not play on Saturday," Ronaldo told AFP. "I was not opposed to him breaking my record. I have made my history. Now it is time for others to write their stories."

Germany coach Joachim Loew said Klose wanted to play against Uruguay despite his injury but ultimately put the team ahead of his personal ambitions.

Loew said: "He really wanted to play, but after training on Saturday he said to me that would not be able to take his place in the team. He was disappointed but he knew that we couldn't allow a player who was only 80-percent fit to take part."

Loew feels sorry for Klose

REUTERS, Port Elizabeth

German coach Joachim Loew deprived striker Miroslav Klose the chance of setting a World Cup scoring record but said he had no option but to leave the flu-stricken player out of the third-place playoff.

Klose, who came down with the virus after Germany's semifinal defeat by Spain on Wednesday, was a goal away from equalling Brazilian Ronaldo's record of 15 goals and at 32 years old is unlikely to play in the next World Cup.

Loew said clinching third place was Germany's priority and Klose's inclusion could have damaged his side against Uruguay in the third-place playoff, a scintillating match his team won 3-2 after trailing 2-1 at one stage.

"We needed 100 percent from everyone so we couldn't afford to use players who are not fit," Loew said after the win, which capped an impressive tournament for a young and inexperienced team largely written off in the run-up to South Africa.

"This is why we didn't field injured or ill players. It would have been irresponsible. He simply couldn't play, he failed the fitness test," he added.

Klose recently finished one of the worst seasons of his career for Bayern Munich but was one of Germany's best-performing players in the tournament, scoring four of their 13 goals and putting himself in contention for the Golden Boot award.

Loew said he empathised with Klose, who was bitterly disappointed but had admitted himself that playing in the last match would have been a mistake.

"He wanted to play but he said there was no point because he could only play a



MIROSLAV KLOSE

few minutes," Loew said. "He could hardly walk. There was no way I could have played him."

"Just imagine his feeling. You want to get a record. He really wanted to play and was absolutely devastated but he knew it was the team that was important."

Attacking midfielder Thomas Mueller and Uruguayan striker Diego Forlan netted in the playoff to draw level in the scoring charts with five goals alongside Spain's David Villa and Dutchman Wesley Sneijder.

Mueller's absence through

suspension for the semifinal defeat was seen as a major factor in Germany's below-par performance against the Spanish but he insisted his team had proved their worth and could hold their heads up high.

"I couldn't play in the semifinal so it was important to put on a great show and luckily I could contribute to our victory," Mueller said.

"We've shown we can perform at the top level. We've concluded in a very satisfactory way and the German people can be proud."



Germany players (L) celebrate while the Uruguayans (R) are dejected during the third place play-off match of the World Cup at the Nelson Mandela Bay stadium in Port Elizabeth on Saturday.

PHOTOS: AFP