The words below read: "National Eleven 2010?"

The irony is that they were not far from the truth. The Germany squad in 2010 in South Africa had eleven players who could have represented other nations. In their first match in South Africa, Germany comprehensively outgunned a fancied Australian side. They scored four goals but for the context of this article, the first is the most interesting.

Here is how that transpired.

The midfielder Sami Khedira, born in Stuttgart to a Tunisian father and German mother, passed to Mesut Oezil, born in Gelsenkirchen to Turkish parents. He in turn slid the ball through for the Bavarian born and bred Thomas Mueller who cut the ball back for the Polish-born German striker Lukas Podolski. And that is not all. Podolski in turn blasted the ball into the net via the hands of German-born Australian goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer.

So Tunisia, Turkey, Germany and Poland essentially combined to put Germany one goal up. Four of the five people involved were born in Germany, yet not all of those four represented them. Schwarzer chose Australia and while Podolski could have played for Poland, he never felt anything but German. Oezil was courted by the Turkish but he too stated that he has never felt anything but German.

All this makes it very complicated for the average fan. And you can't help feel sorry for them. With the lines of nationalism so blurred, all they wish for are those days when names were enough to judge your nationality. For them, it's getting harder to argue that they are backing a country out of national pride when the lines of nationality on these teams are so blurred.

And now, given all this disparity, how does he really root for a nation?

In all honesty, it really should not be all that difficult. As aforementioned, football is perhaps still the last frontier for nationalism. But this nationalism is not bewildering at all. People like to be in groups with other people who share common characteristics. A nation is a convenient group with shared history, language, culture, etc. In its own way, it is not so different from club allegiance: it's just on a larger scale. So it's completely understandable that the average football fan will swear by it. What they need to understand is that nationalism really isn't acceptable in other contexts anymore, especially in Western Europe where most countries' political elites, at least, are ideologically dedicated to diluting their national identities into the broader European Union -- as quickly as possible. Multiculturalism is not a fad. It is the way of the future, and the longer the average fan closes their eyes to that, the harder it becomes for them.

It is easy to see why not. While national identity does add some spice to competitions like the Olympics and World Cup, in the larger world of politics, it's almost entirely destructive. We see it everyday across the world, from US, where ignorant Americans cheer as their military kills thousands of innocent Iraqis, to Serbia who committed vicious crimes in the name of patriotism in the old Yugoslavia. And the list could go on and on.

But sport is different. Although many fans bring the same stupid violence to sport that they have been taught in politics, most have moved beyond such primitive idiocy.

And the signs are bright. Not too long ago, club fans were wary of players who were not from the region that the club is based on. The general feeling was that they would never feel for the club as strongly as a "local lad" would. But this has slowly and steadily been erased, to the extent that many clubs now often field full teams that have no players from the country the club is from, much less the region. The feeling is now so limited that clubs often have icons that have no ties to the community or the region. Cesc Fabregas is Catalan, but who would argue that he is the face of Arsenal, a club from the north of London.

Personally, I think multiculturalism is wonderful for football. People often like to pretend that it is a new thing but it is not at all the case. Recently, it has affected Germany the most in terms of destroying stereotypes, but sooner or later, all nations will experience the same thing. Multiculturalism brings fresh ideas and new styles to traditional systems and that can be nothing but good. And anyone who has a problem with naturalised citizens, Germans with Polish parents and French people with Arab names should really join the 21st century.

This is the way of the future and they could do well to be part of it.

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