

# Loew axes trio

REUTERS, Berlin



Germany will travel to this month's World Cup in Brazil with only one out-and-out striker to end their 18-year wait for an international title after coach Joachim Loew cut Kevin Volland from his final 23-man squad on Monday.

Hoffenheim forward Volland joined defender Shkodran Mustafi and left back Marcel Schmelzer, still nursing a knee injury, as the three players left out of the final squad after being included in a provisional selection for a training camp in Italy.

"Obviously Shkodran, Marcel and Kevin are very disappointed and I understand that because they had every right to hope they would be in Brazil," Loew told reporters.

"All three are players who still have the chance to take part in several big tournaments in their careers."

Volland's exclusion came as a surprise given the stocky striker's physical strength and all-round play were seen as a good alternative to veteran forward Miroslav Klose, who will be 36 next week.

Loew included Borussia Dortmund's Erik Durm, who can play as left back, in the final squad after he won praise following his first cap on Sunday while also sticking with youngsters Julian Draxler and Matthias Ginter as well as midfielder Christoph Kramer, who won his first two caps in the past weeks.

## SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich), Roman Weidenfeller (Borussia Dortmund), Ron-Robert Zieler (Hanover 96)  
**Defenders:** Jerome Boateng (Bayern Munich), Kevin Grosskreutz (Borussia Dortmund), Erik Durm (Borussia Dortmund), Benedikt Hoewedes (Schalke 04), Mats Hummels (Borussia Dortmund), Per Mertesacker (Arsenal), Philipp Lahm (Bayern Munich)  
**Midfielders:** Julian Draxler (Schalke 04), Matthias Ginter (Freiburg), Christoph Kramer (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Sami Khedira (Real Madrid), Toni Kroos (Bayern Munich), Mesut Ozil (Arsenal), Lukas Podolski (Arsenal), Marco Reus (Borussia Dortmund), Andre Schuerrle (Chelsea), Bastian Schweinsteiger (Bayern Munich)  
**Forwards:** Miroslav Klose (Lazio), Thomas Mueller (Bayern Munich), Mario Goetze (Bayern Munich)



PHOTO: AFP  
Germany forward Andre Schuerrle (R) celebrates his goal with teammate Lukas Podolski during their international friendly against Cameroon in Moenchengladbach on Sunday.

# Germany, France held in WC warm-ups

AFP, Paris



Germany and France were held to draws while Chelsea duo Eden Hazard and Romelu Lukaku scored for Belgium in the latest batch of World Cup warm-ups on Sunday.

Fellow Brazil-bound Cameroon came from behind to claim a 2-2 draw against Germany.

All four goals came in an entertaining second-half as Cameroon, coached by German Volker Finke, came within a whisker of a historic first win over Germany.

The Africans took a shock lead through another Chelsea player, Samuel Eto'o, on 62 minutes only for Germany to equalise four minutes later through Thomas Mueller.

German replacement Andre Schuerrle then gave the hosts the lead before Cameroon left-wing Eric Choupo-Moting, who plies his trade in the Bundesliga for Mainz 05, popped up with the 78th-minute equaliser.

Germany coach Joachim Loew was unimpressed with his side's display, especially from Arsenal's midfielder Mesut Ozil, who produced a low-key performance.

"On the one hand they were a

## RESULTS

Germany 2 (Mueller 66, Schuerrle 71)  
Cameroon 2 (Eto'o 62, Choupo-Moting 78)  
United States 2 (Johnson 26, Dempsey 52)  
Turkey 1 (Inan 90-pen)  
Sweden 0 Belgium 2 (Lukaku 34, Hazard 78)  
France 1 (Griezmann 82) Paraguay 1 (V. Caceres 89)

good opponent and a real test of our endurance," said Loew.

"But you could see that the freshness was missing from our game.

"Our passing game was not good and we made many, many mistakes. Mesut Ozil did not have one of

his best days, he needs two more weeks, then we'll see a strong Mesut at the World Cup."

Down on a rainy Cote d'Azur Franck Ribery started on the bench in France's 1-1 stalemate with Paraguay.

Substitute Antoine Griezmann had appeared to give the French victory when he curled home an 82nd right foot shot before Victor Caceres silenced the partisan crowd in Nice, flicking home an 89th minute equaliser.

The match was the second Brazil buildup for Deschamps' side after they brushed aside Norway 4-0 last Tuesday.

# Vidal makes WC squad

AFP, Santiago

Juventus midfielder Arturo Vidal, recovering from right knee surgery, figured in Chile coach Jorge Sampaoli's 23-player World Cup squad announced on Sunday.

Vidal underwent a key-hole operation on a meniscus problem two weeks ago, originally prompting fears he could miss Chile's trip to the 2014 finals in Brazil.

The South Americans are drawn in Group B with defending champions Spain, Holland and Australia.

## CHILE SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Claudio Bravo (Real Sociedad/ESP), Johnny Herrera (Universidad de Chile), Cristopher Toselli (Universidad Catolica)  
**Defenders:** Gary Medel (Cardiff City/ENG), Jose Rojas (Universidad de Chile), Eugenio Mena (Santos/BRA), Gonzalo Jara (Nottingham Forest/ENG)  
**Midfielders:** Arturo Vidal (Juventus/ITA), Mauricio Isla (Juventus/ITA), Marcelo Diaz (Basel/SUI), Francisco Silva (Osasuna/ESP), Felipe Gutierrez (FC Twente/NED), Jose Pedro Fuenzalida (Colo Colo), Carlos Carmona (Atalanta/ITA), Jean Beausejour (Wigan/ENG), Charles Aranguiz (Internacional/BRA), Miiko Albornoz (Malmo/SWE).  
**Forwards:** Alexis Sanchez (Barcelona/ESP), Eduardo Vargas (Valencia/ESP), Jorge Valdivia (Palmeiras/BRA), Mauricio Pinilla (Cagliari/ITA), Esteban Paredes (Colo Colo), Fabian Orellana (Celta Vigo/ESP)

# Liverpool seal Lambert deal

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool confirmed Monday they have completed the transfer of England striker Rickie Lambert from Southampton.

The former Reds trainee, underwent a medical on Saturday after a fee of £4million (\$6.7 million, 4.9 million euros) was agreed with the Saints.

He is understood to have signed a two-year contract.

Lambert has emerged as an important squad player for England and is a member of the 23-man World Cup squad currently at a training camp in Miami ahead of the tournament in Brazil.

"I can't believe it. I've loved this club all my life. I left here 17 years ago -- and I haven't stopped loving it since," the 32-year-old said.

"I have always dreamt of playing for Liverpool, but I did kind of think the chance of playing for them had gone. I didn't think the chance would come."

# Looking to avoid Ballon d'Or curse

AFP, Paris



When Portugal star Cristiano Ronaldo was awarded last year's Ballon d'Or in recognition of his dazzling achievements over the course of 2013 he naturally had plenty of reason to celebrate although one could forgive him for feeling apprehensive about his country's hopes at the World Cup in Brazil.

Portugal will go the tournament as dark horses heavily reliant on their captain and talisman Ronaldo, who will need to defy the odds if he is to avoid becoming another footnote in a cautionary tale.

Since the inception of the Ballon d'Or, conceived by France Football magazine in 1956 to recognise Europe, and then latterly, the world's most outstanding player each year, of the 14 players in possession of the prize heading into a

World Cup none have achieved ultimate success on the global stage.

Granted the facts are skewed to an extent given only European players were eligible for the prize prior to 1995, ruling out the likes of three-time World Cup winner Pele and Diego Maradona, who was central to Argentina's 1986 triumph, but that still leaves some of the game's most decorated players who have fallen short.

Take Barcelona star Lionel Messi, who won the first of his four consecutive Ballon d'Or awards in 2009, for example.

An Argentina side with an embarrassment of attacking riches breezed through to the quarterfinals at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa despite Messi not contributing a single goal. However, when they needed him most he was unable to deliver as Maradona's shell-shocked Argentine team were ruthlessly torn apart by Germany 4-0 in the last eight.

That provided merely just the latest chapter of a World Cup campaign ending in disappointment



for the world's leading player, a story that dates back to 1957 Ballon d'Or recipient and Real Madrid legend Alfredo Di Stefano.

For Argentine-born Di Stefano, who acquired Spanish citizenship in time for the 1958 qualifiers despite previously representing his homeland as well as Colombia, his adopted nation fell short in their quest to reach the finals leaving one of the world's greatest players to ultimately finish his career without ever appear-

ing at the World Cup.

The only other time the reigning European Footballer of the Year, as the award was also referred to prior to merging with the FIFA World Player of the Year accolade in 2010 to become the FIFA Ballon d'Or, didn't appear at the global showcase was in 1978 when Danish striker Allan Simonsen, a European Cup finalist with Borussia Moenchengladbach the previous year, saw his nation's hopes dashed in qualifying.

However, there have been five teams featuring the reigning Ballon d'Or winner to reach the final.

Perhaps no player has come quite as close nor suffered a fate so cruel as the one that befell Italy's Roberto Baggio at USA '94.

Baggio netted all five of his goals in the knockout rounds, including two in the semi-finals against Bulgaria, to send the Azzurri into the final against Brazil.

But after a goalless 120 minutes in Pasadena, the Juventus forward blazed his penalty over the bar in the shootout to hand Brazil their

fourth world title.

Before that Johan Cruyff and the Dutch appeared most likely to put an end to the curse at the 1974 tournament.

The Netherlands and their revolutionary brand of "Total Football" conquered all before them on their way to the final and seemed destined to be crowned champions after an early penalty put them ahead against West Germany.

However, the Dutch came unstuck and would lose 2-1.

Italy's Gianna Rivera (1970), West Germany striker Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (1982) and Brazilian forward Ronaldo (1998) also fell a win shy of the Ballon d'Or-World Cup double.

Three-time reigning European Footballer of the Year Michel Platini saw his France side knocked out in the last four of the 1986 edition, while Eusebio, despite a sparkling performance at the 1966 tournament where he scored nine times to claim the Golden Boot, was part of the Portugal side dumped out by hosts England in the semifinals.

# Uli begins jail term

AFP, Munich

Football legend Uli Hoernes, former boss of powerhouse Bayern Munich, began a jail term for tax fraud in a German prison on Monday, his lawyers said.

"Mr Hoernes today began his sentence in Landsberg am Lech (prison)," a spokeswoman for his lawyers said, giving no further details.

A Munich court handed Hoernes, 62, a three-and-a-half year jail term in March for having cheated the state out of 28.5 million euros (\$38.8 million) but it was unclear exactly when the sentence would start.

The Landsberg prison in southern Bavaria state is the jail where Adolf Hitler wrote "Mein Kampf" while serving a sentence for treason after the failed 1923 Beer Hall Putsch in Munich.

The spectacular four-day trial of Hoernes, who spent four decades at the champion club Bayern Munich and also runs a successful sausage business, riveted football-obsessed Germany.

# Team morale key for success

REUTERS, Barcelona



Spain coach Vicente del Bosque believes that building strong team morale is far more important than concentrating on tactics as his team aim to retain their World Cup crown in Brazil.

Spain, who have also won the last two European Championships, have a friendly against El Salvador before they embark on the defence of the trophy they won in South Africa in their opening Group B match against the Netherlands on June 13.

"A healthy, positive dressing room is worth more than 100 hours of tactics," Del Bosque told Spanish newspaper El Pais on Sunday.

"It is good in any business for the employees to be happy and in football if the boys are happy then we will win," Del Bosque said.

"The more they get on with each other the more success that will come. It is best to have a down to earth group, remind them of their roots and where they come from."

Spain is a fractious country with regions seeking more power and limited national pride has been blamed in the past for a lack of success.

A great strength of former coach Luis Aragones was in unifying the players and it was under his leadership that Spain's recent golden period began with victory at Euro 2008.

Del Bosque admitted that players from different clubs still remained in their own groups.

"They are a good bunch. Those from Barca may sit together to eat and also those from (Real) Madrid but this happened in my era as well and it doesn't mean anything," he said.

The former Real Madrid coach is known for his calm approach and he feels it is important to have a reassuring manner.

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