

Podolski ruled out

AFP, Porto Alegre

Germany forward Lukas Podolski has been ruled out of Monday's World Cup last 16 clash against Algeria in Porto Alegre with a thigh injury.

The 29-year-old Arsenal star - who is at his third World Cup finals - suffered the injury in Germany's 1-0 win over the USA on Thursday in their final group stage match and an MRI scan on Saturday revealed a small tear.

"Lukas must rest for two or three days, but should we progress in the tournament it won't be a problem for him to play," said Germany coach Joachim Low.

With Podolski out, Bayern Munich's Mario Goetze is set to take his place on the left wing.

Germany's right-back Jerome Boateng also missed training on Saturday with a knee irritation, but Low said it will be "no problem" for the Bayern Munich defender to play.

Loew seeks improvement

REUTERS, Santo Andre

Germany can play much better than they did in the group phase of the World Cup with the team needing to improve its finishing, coach Joachim Loew told reporters at the team's base camp in a remote resort on the Atlantic coast.

"A World Cup is a marathon and not a 100-metre dash where you go all out at the start with the best-possible performance - that'll backfire," said Loew.

"As we've seen in some other tournaments, teams win their first three matches and then it's all over in the fourth match. A team needs to improve their performance through the course of a tournament. That's the art that a team needs to master."

Germany face Algeria in Porto Alegre on Monday in the Round of 16 as the tournament enters its knockout phase.

"We haven't gone to the limit yet. But that's alright at this stage. Now we're in the knock-out round and have to step it up when it comes to some of the finer points of our game."

Loew was pleased with the way his team, one of the top title favourites, won top spot in their group with wins against Portugal and the United States, and a draw against Ghana. He said an emphasis on adapting to the hot South American climate conditions and unusual afternoon match scheduling paid off.

But singled out the poor finishing against Ghana and the United States as an area that needs to get better in the knock-out round.

"Our finishing could be better," he said, noting Germany scored on 40 percent of their shots on goal against Portugal but just 20 percent against Ghana. "We had two or three [wasted] chances against the United States. If you want to win [the World Cup], that last pass and last action have to connect."

Pleased with the way his defence was working with four towering centre backs on the backline of his 4-3-3 lineup instead of using faster fullbacks as during the qualifying, Loew said there was plenty of room for improvement on the attack.



Now or never ... Germany striker Miroslav Klose (C) needs just one more goal to become the highest scorer in World Cups and today's game against Algeria offers him the opportunity. PHOTO: REUTERS

'No room for arrogance'

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

The French players must resist falling into the trap of becoming arrogant otherwise it will present enormous problems for their World Cup campaign, said midfielder Yohan Cabaye on Saturday.

Experienced defender Bacary Sagna and midfielder Morgan Schneiderlin both claimed that not winning the World Cup would be regarded as a failure after they topped their group.

However, Cabaye said such assumptions were counter-productive.

"We have come a long way considering we almost didn't make it to Brazil, so we should not get ahead of ourselves," said Cabaye, who earned a big money move to French champions Paris Saint-Germain from Newcastle United in the January transfer window earlier this year.

"The fact we showed our quality in the group stage obviously should make us more confident but not arrogant, otherwise we are going to have major problems."

Cabaye, who should return to the starting line-up for the second round match with Nigeria on Monday after serving a one game suspension, said the French must treat African champions Nigeria with respect otherwise they risk going home.

FRANCE V NIGERIA

A test of credentials

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

After flashes of magnificent football in the group phase, France will look to confirm their World Cup credentials in Monday's last-16 tie against Nigeria.

In previous World Cups, France have always reached at least the semifinals after qualifying from the group phase, but circumspection has become the order of the day in the France camp this week.

While Didier Deschamps' side garnered plaudits by sweeping past Honduras 3-0 and crushing Switzerland 5-2, a much-changed team could only draw 0-0 in their final Group E fixture against Ecuador on Wednesday.

Both Bacary Sagna and Morgan Schneiderlin suggested that France were potential champions after the stalemate at the Maracana, but centre-back Laurent Koscielny has since introduced a note of caution as Les Bleus prepare for Monday's game in Brasilia.

It is only seven months since France had to overcome a 2-0 deficit to beat Ukraine in their qualifying play-off and the Arsenal defender

said that it would be unwise to look too far ahead.

"The first objective was to get through the group phase. Now it's to go as far as possible," he said.

"We are competitors and we are ambitious, but we know that we have opponents against us and that we might lose."

"We're aware of our qualities. Something changed after the Ukraine game, but anything is possible in a knockout match and for the moment we're only focusing on the last 16."

Koscielny could line up in central defence alongside Raphael Varane at the Mane Garrincha National Stadium as Mamadou Sakho is doubtful due to a thigh injury.

The Liverpool centre-back, who avoided punishment from FIFA despite appearing to elbow Ecuador's Oswaldo Miranda, had to go off in the 61st minute of Wednesday's game and trained on his own on Saturday.

Yohan Cabaye will come into the team in place of Schneiderlin after missing the Ecuador game due to suspension, but Paul Pogba's place

is under threat from Moussa Sissoko.

Having been rested against Ecuador, Mathieu Valbuena is also in line to return, while Deschamps must choose between Antoine Griezmann and Olivier Giroud to complete France's front line alongside Karim Benzema.

Nigeria's preparations for the game were disrupted by a dispute over bonuses - an issue which delayed the squad's arrival at last year's Confederations Cup - but the matter was resolved following the reported intervention of Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan.

After a laborious 0-0 draw with Iran in their opening game, Stephen Keshi's side booked their place in the last 16 by edging Bosnia and Herzegovina 1-0 and then impressed in a 3-2 loss to Argentina.

CSKA Moscow winger Ahmed Musa twice produced immediate replies to goals from Lionel Messi, only for Argentina left-back Marcos Rojo to net a 50th-minute winner.

"We need to defend well, take our chances up front and learn from the

Argentina game," Musa told BBC Sport.

"In the second round, it's winner takes all. I know with hard work and God's support we shall make history."

"But prayers without hard work is nothing, so we need to be at our best against France to make it happen."

Chelsea forward Victor Moses missed the Argentina game due to a muscular complaint, but he trained with the squad in Brasilia on Saturday.

Winger Michael Babatundé is out after his wrist was fractured by a shot from team-mate Ogenyi Onazi during the match against Argentina, but Keshi has an otherwise fully fit squad to choose from.

France will hope to get the better of a familiar foe in the shape of Nigeria goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama, who went 1,062 minutes without conceding a goal for Lille in Ligue 1 last season.

It will be Nigeria's first World Cup knockout match since the 1998 tournament in France and victory would see the West African nation reach the quarterfinals for the first time in their history.

মানসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশী পণ্যের ব্যবহার শিল্প বিকাশে সহায়ক

CROWN CEMENT FOR SOLID FOUNDATION

GERMANY V ALGERIA

1982 on Algerians' mind

AFP, Porto Alegre

Underdogs Algeria have the chance to settle a 32-year-old World Cup score and create a major Brazil 2014 upset by knocking out Germany in Monday's last 16 clash.

The sides meet at Porto Alegre's Estadio Beira-Rio, but the 1982 World Cup in Spain remains a sore point in Algeria, three decades after 'the shame of Gijon'.

Despite beating West Germany 2-1 in their group games, Algeria was eliminated after the Germans played out a mutually beneficial 1-0 win over Austria in Gijon.

Coach Joachim Loew has played down any talk of Algerian revenge being a factor in Porto Alegre.

"Why should players who weren't even born then want revenge? I can't understand that," said Loew.

But his opposite number Vahid Halilhodzic has said the team have "not forgotten" and spoken at length about the 1982 factor since reaching the knock-out stages.

But Algeria's midfielder Hassan Yebda says the north Africans are equally interested in claiming a major scalp.

"We are a little bit optimistic," said the Uldinese midfielder cautiously.

Germany are the best team here, we need the perfect game and it would be a sensation if we can reach the

quarterfinals."

And Loew has warned his side against complacency or looking beyond Algeria to a possible quarterfinal against France or Nigeria in Rio de Janeiro next Friday.

"Anyone who thinks that an easy opponent is waiting for us in the next round is making an enormous mistake," said Loew after Germany finished as Group G winners.

This is the second match running where the Germans have had to deal with spectres from their past.

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BRAZILIAN BAURU

AFP, Porto Alegre

LOEW HARD TO REACH A mobile phone malfunction means Germany coach Joachim Loew is hard to reach at the World Cup ahead of his team's last 16 clash against Algeria on Monday.

The 54-year-old has had a tough time with electronics at Germany's Santo Andre World Cup base having lost all of his favourite music when he accidentally dropped his iPod during a run on the beach.

Now a fault with his mobile telephone is keeping Germany's head coach on silent mode ahead of their last 16 match at Porto Alegre's Beira-Rio Stadium.

"I can't telephone or receive SMS messages. I have no idea where the problem lies," he admitted.

BRAZIL FAN DIES OF HEART FAILURE A 69-year-old Brazilian fan died of heart failure while watching Saturday's World Cup penalty shootout win over Chile, media reported Saturday.

The man was watching the tense encounter, which Brazil won on spotkicks after the sides were locked 1-1 after extra-time, in a nearby bar when he complained of feeling unwell.

The fan, who was diabetic, died shortly after being taken to hospital, web news portal G1 and the website of Estado de Minas newspaper reported.

Portugal and Ghana. Defender Omar Gonzalez says Klinsmann's upbeat assessment of his team's chances of progressing has even gone as far as encouraging revised travel plans.

"Juergen has been nothing but positive. He's telling us, he's telling our families to change our flights to July 14th, 15th, because we're going to be here until the very end," said the centre-half.

"So that just speaks volumes to how positive he is, how much he believes in this team, and obviously it trickles down to all of us.

"That means that we're all as confident as he is, and that we all believe in this team. We plan on being here a few more weeks," added Gonzalez.

BRAZIL V CHILE SMASHES TWITTER RECORD A record 16.3 million tweets were sent during Saturday's World Cup game between Brazil and Chile, the most ever for a live event on the social network.

The game saw the World Cup hosts go through to the quarterfinals after a nail-biting encounter that went to extra time, with Brazil finally winning 3-2 in the penalty shootout.

The final moments of the match - which saw Chile miss their final penalty - generated 388,985 tweets a minute, Twitter told AFP.

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Cesar buries nightmare

REUTERS, Sao Paulo

Brazil goalkeeper Julio Cesar celebrated Saturday night after his dream performance helped erase the nightmare of the 2010 World Cup when his mistake helped lead to Brazil's early elimination and four years of vilification by sceptical fans.

Julio Cesar provided a safe pair of hands throughout the 1-1 draw with Chile before he stopped two penalties in the 3-2 shootout win.

The match was one of the most thrilling of the World Cup so far and the Brazil goalkeeper picked up the Man of the Match award for his display.

"The match has proven that if you have dream then go after it and don't give up," he said after accepting his prize. "We haven't won anything yet but this gives me the strength to go into the next match and help my teammates."

It was welcome vindication for a man who shared the blame for Brazil's early exit in South Africa four years ago. With the quarter final against the Netherlands tied 1-1 he flapped at a cross, allowing Wesley Sneijder to nod home the winning goal.

The keeper famously cried after the defeat and then lost his international place - and his confidence.

He went from Inter Milan to Queens Park Rangers and was relegated with the London club. He sat on the sidelines for much of last season and only started playing again when he was loaned to modest North American outfit Toronto FC.

Scolari, however, never doubted his class. The manager



Looking eager ... France striker Karim Benzema (R) needs to forget the penalty-miss against Switzerland and look forward to coming of his own against Nigeria today. PHOTO: AFP

'Brazil must improve'

REUTERS, Sao Paulo

Brazil's players have Sunday off after an exhausting win over Chile but they will be back at work early on Monday when coach Luiz Felipe Scolari will start preparing for the World Cup quarterfinal showdown with Colombia.

Brazil looked over-awed and were fortunate to escape with a 3-2 penalty shootout win over Chile after the match finished 1-1 at the end of extra time.

"We will look at how we won and all the situations in which we did not complete passes or make chances so that we can improve the next match," Scolari told reporters.

"In every match difficulties are escalating and we need to improve."

The match was intense and exhilarating and Scolari said he would try to

use the emotionally draining game to inspire his squad.

"When you win this way, with this level of emotion, you can turn it into a positive thing to show them it is down to their performance and so we try to look for their best moments and value them," he said.

Scolari was at the helm when Brazil won the trophy in 2002 but his current squad has little World Cup experience and he said that might have been telling against Chile.

"Even the most experienced players feel the pressure in the World Cup," the former Chelsea and Portugal coach said.

"Everybody does, if you say you don't you are lying. The emotions are different, it is not a normal match. As we have so many of new players they are gaining experience little by little."

Brazil, who play Colombia in Fortaleza on Friday, need to work on scoring goals and shoring up their toothless midfield.

Although Hulk had a goal chalked off for handball, Chile controlled much of the second half and nearly sealed a famous win when Mauricio Pinilla struck the crossbar in the dying seconds.

"We gain experience as we go on," Scolari added. "So let's see if we can make less mistakes in the next matches. If we make errors we provide chances for the opponent and we might not be as lucky and we might concede a goal like we almost did today in the 118th minute. So let's try and work on that."

"We scored, and then we conceded due to the error on the flank and that is not acceptable today at international level," he said.

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INFO ZONE HEAD-TO-HEAD

FRANCE					NIGERIA				
M	W	D	L		M	W	D	L	
2	0	1	1		2	1	1	0	

LAST MEETING: FRANCE 0-1 NIGERIA (2 JUNE 2009, INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY)

KEY PLAYERS

KARIM BENZEMA AHMED MUSA

TEAM FORMATION

4-3-3 4-2-3-1

4: Debuchy, Koscielny, Sakho, Evra 4: Yobo, Ambrose, Omeruo, Oshaniwa, 2: Musa, Mikel

3: Matuidi, Pogba, Cabaye 3: Onazi, Odemwingie, Azeez

3: Benzema, Griezmann, Valbuena 1: Emenike

HEAD-TO-HEAD

GERMANY					ALGERIA				
M	W	D	L		M	W	D	L	
2	2	0	0		2	0	0	2	

LAST MEETING: ALGERIA 2-1 WEST GERMANY (16 JUNE 1982, WORLD CUP)

KEY PLAYERS

B SCHWEINSTEIGER SOFIANE FEGHOULI

TEAM FORMATION

4-3-3 4-2-3-1

4: Howedes, Mertensacker, Hummels, Boateng 4: Halliche, mandi, Bougherra, Mesbah

3: Lahm, Kroos, Schweinsteiger 2: Nabil Bentaleb, Medjani

3: Ozil, Muller, Gotze 3: Djabou, Brahimi, Feghouli

1: Silmani

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