

Mi Amore
PREMIUM DAIRY ICE CREAM

Punters' day in the sun

Four gamblers were counting their winnings on Wednesday after putting money on Germany to beat Brazil by an outlandish 7-1 scoreline in the World Cup semi-final. Irish bookmaker Paddy Power had to pay out after offering odds of 500-1 for a result which was beyond the wildest dreams of most German fans. One gambler from eastern England won 2,500 pounds after wagering five pounds. Both teams to score is a popular bet and Oscar's late consolation goal for Brazil cost William

PRALINE & CREAM

TASTE OF TOGETHERNESS
MI AMORE

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Mueller calls it crazy

GOAL.COM

Thomas Mueller could not hide his delight with Germany's 7-1 victory over Brazil in the World Cup semifinal, describing the result as "crazy."

Germany launched an onslaught with a flurry on first-half goals, with Mueller opening the scoring before Miroslav Klose, Sami Khedira and two from Toni Kroos left the host trailing 5-0 at halftime.

Andre Schurrle added two more after the break and, though Oscar managed to grab a consolation for the Selecao, Mueller could not disguise his shock at such a remarkable victory.

"Of course, you couldn't expect that," the 24-year-old told ZDF. "That shows how different games can be. Brazil played differently than defensive teams and we took advantage of this in an extraordinary way. It was just crazy."

However, as Germany looks forward to a final against Argentina or the Netherlands at the Maracana on Sunday, the Bayern Munich forward urged his teammates not to get carried away.

"You should keep a sense of proportion," he said. "Every match is different. Just like everyone talked us down after the match against Algeria, they will hype us now. We are a squad with big quality, with an awesome team."

A collective implosion, says Kahn

GOAL.COM

Former Germany goalkeeper Oliver Kahn believes Brazil got all its tactical decisions wrong in Tuesday's 7-1 World Cup semifinal defeat at the hands of Joachim Low's men.

Kahn feels Brazil collectively failed as the Europeans tore the team apart and has criticized head coach Luiz Felipe Scolari for his naive tactics.

"Brazil collectively imploded. It was complete failure from the entire team right from the start until the very end," Kahn told ZDF. "The Brazilians did everything wrong from a tactical point of view. It was incredible to see how they just walked into Germany's trap. They completely fell apart after the opening goal."

"I don't know whether it was the pressure that got to Brazil and whether the burden was too much for them. But they clearly didn't know how to cope with everything. Brazil were very vulnerable emotionally and lacked experience."

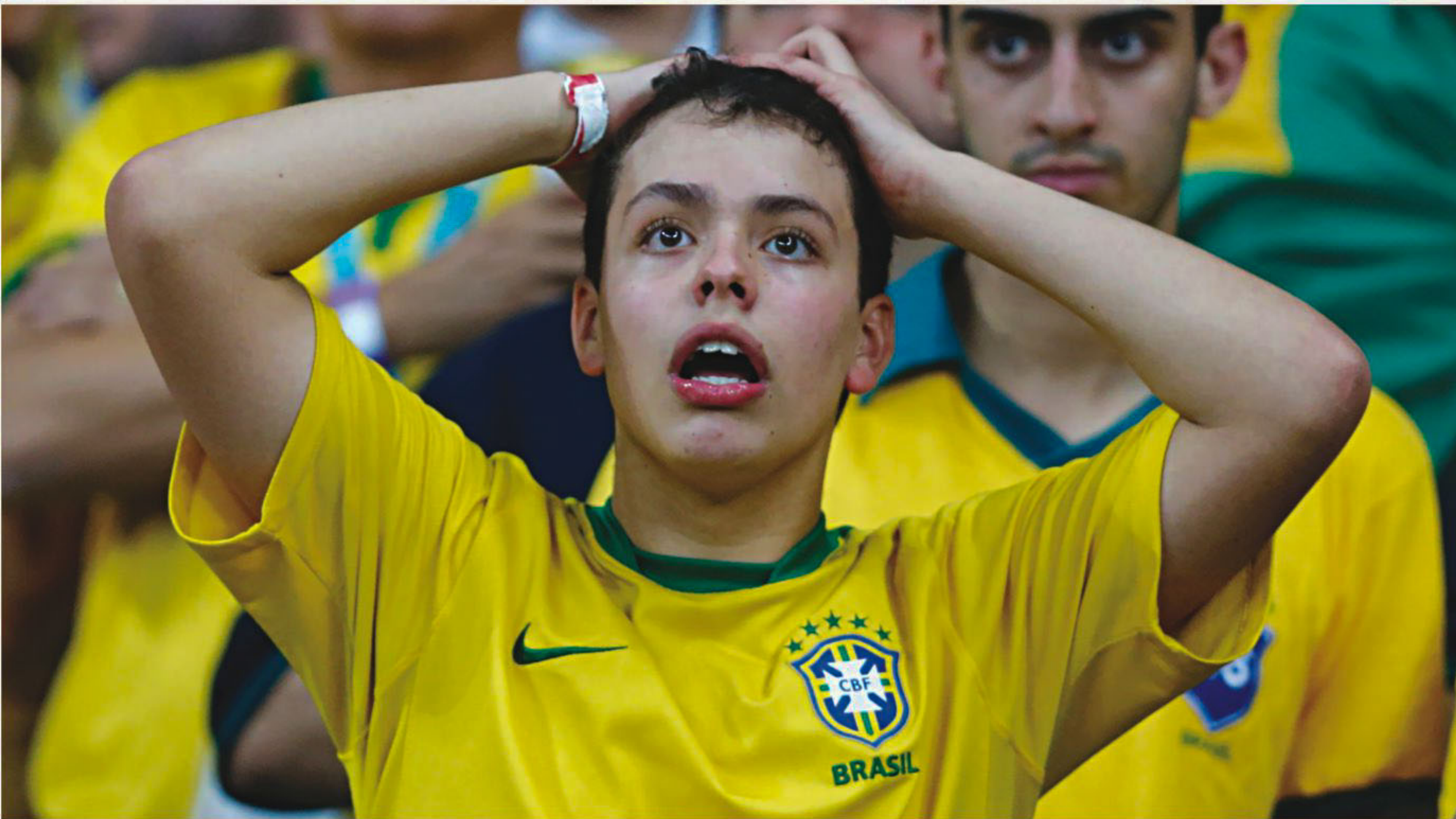


PHOTO: REUTERS

Going 7-1 down to Germany, it was all about disbelief for Brazil fans.

Photo of the Day

Paint Your Imagination

Miracle, massacre and madness

AFP, Paris

Germany's record 7-1 hammering of hosts Brazil in the World Cup semi-finals provoked very different reactions from media round the world with the Daily Mirror perhaps coming up with the best headline "Rout of this World".

Understandably the Brazilian media didn't search for superlatives such as that as their 'Selecao' imploded before the eyes of their 200 million citizens in barely credible fashion in Belo Horizonte.

"An embarrassment for eternity," read the headline in Correio Braziliense while others used terms such as "shame" and "disgrace".

Daily newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo has a spectacular front page with the stadium in darkness and just the scoreboard light up with the final result.

Its headline on its online edition reads simply: "MASSACRE!"

The on line edition of daily Lance didn't mince its words.

"The greatest shame in history. A charismatic German side cold bloodedly dismantled a static Selecao 7-1 in a Estadio Mineirao that paid homage to the European side by the end with both applause and cries ringing out of Ole'.

Lance added that with this historic defeat the traumatic loss to Uruguay in the 1950 World Cup, also hosted by Brazil, paled in comparison.

"The 'Maracanazo' has become a

small matter, literally a thing of the past."

Another Brazilian newspaper Estadio de Minas gave a health warning to its readership.

The front page shows the scoreline and a simple warning, "Want to even recall what it was like? Turn the page..."

For the German media there was disbelief and delight as reflected in tabloid Bild's headline: "7-1 Madness. Lightning German team knock out Brazil."

While Germany coach Joachim Loew has called for humility and to not get carried away ahead of Sunday's final where they will face the winners of Wednesday's semi-final between Argentina and the Netherlands some wilfully ignored him.

"Argentina, the Netherlands? Who cares! Germany is the favourite!" enthused Die Welt.

"The miracle of Belo Horizonte is already legendary," added the Berlin-based journal.

Spiegel hailed the champagne and feel good football played by the national side while adding: "records tumble, the dreams of the host nation dissolve in tears."

The normally staid newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung featured a photograph of Toni Kroos, who scored two of the goals, and Miroslav Klose, whose goal consecrated him as the all-time goalscorer in World Cup history with 16.

Indeed the Poland-born striker's first-half goal rubbed salt into the wounds of the hosts as it took him above their legend Ronaldo, who was in the stadium commenting.

"The seventh wonder of football!" ran the Zeitung's headline.

Pundits and sporting personalities alike were in shock with former Liverpool and Scotland central defender and BBC pundit Alan Hansen stunned at what he had seen.

"In 22 years as a pundit, and 40 years in the game, I have never seen anything like it," he said.

"We said before the match that David Luiz is the captain, supposed to be the leader, but he has abandoned ship I am afraid. He has disappeared."

There was no gloating from International Olympic Committee's German president Thomas Bach, who cheered the first two goals but then had his head in his hands as three four and five went in in the first-half.

While the 1976 Olympic fencing champion praised the Brazilian fans for not deserting the team at half-time he said that sport could be good to you one day and immensely cruel the next.

"As an athlete, I know how things go. There are days when nothing goes right, and when at the same time, the exact opposite is happening for your opponent. Brazil had a very bad night," said Bach, who is due to fly to Rio de Janeiro for the final.

Death of the aura

ATIQUE ANAM

It's a predicament that football writers over the world, with their allegiances well-documented, find themselves in after what happened in Belo Horizonte on Tuesday. The ones who worship the Selecao will not want to hear a word about that game, much less write anything about it. Others, who were Germany fans or were wearing the German cloak for whatever allegiance, will not want their euphoria to be broken. So the difficult work of trying, with some semblance of sanity, to put into words the most insane of results falls upon those who are less ruffled by the result, albeit similarly shocked.

The enormity of the result is such that no eulogy for the Germans will be enough, given the limited space available to this article.

Hence, let us not waste space on Die Mannschaft or the record-breaking Miroslav Klosa (he hardly ever gets the amount of credit he deserves), but rather get straight to Brazil's performance, or the lack of it.

A few statistics may help put the scoreline into perspective. The 7-1 defeat was the heaviest Brazil have ever conceded in a football match since 1920. This defeat exceeds, by three goals, the biggest margin of defeat any host nation -- and there has been hosts like South Africa, Japan/Korea, Chile, Switzerland and USA in the past -- has ever suffered in a World Cup match. This is the first time that Brazil have lost a competitive match at home in 39 years.

Yet no statistic seems enough to put such a scoreline into perspective, especially when the team at the receiving end is Brazil -- the five-time world champions, the most represented nation in the World Cup and

arguably the most popular football team around the world.

So what went wrong for the Selecao on Tuesday? Probably everything. When your chief centre-back spends almost the 90 minutes at the opposite end of the pitch, a debacle is inevitable. But one should not really blame David Luiz for that crisis of identity; after all he has scored more goals in the tournament than his two centre-forwards (Fred and Joe) combined. That speaks volumes about the dearth of goalscoring and, in general, attacking options available to Brazil. The midfielders (Gustavo, Paulinho and Fernandinho) were as pedestrian as ever and if it was not for the brilliant performances from Neymar and Thiago Silva up to the quarterfinal, the cracks in Brazil's armoury would have been exposed much earlier. It would be fair to say,

THIRD EYE

with the benefit of hindsight, that right from the beginning of the tournament this Brazil side never looked like a champion side. They limped to the semifinals and the few bright spots were bright enough to temporarily obscure the much more glaring mediocrity.

Luiz Felipe Scolari has been here before, but the last time -- in 2002 -- the outcome was vastly different. When Brazil won in Japan and South Korea they had magical players like Ronaldo, Rivaldo and Ronaldinho along with workmen like Cafu, Gilberto Silva and Lucio to strike fear in the opponents' hearts. Scolari prefers the nastier streak, and in 2002 he had artisans as well as artists in his dugout; this time he did not have much of either. His first innings had enhanced Brazil's aura; in his second he oversaw its painful death.

64 years ago, Maracanazo had dealt a

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start something new

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