

Cowboy taunt turns party sour

AFP, Berlin

Commentators chided the German football team Wednesday for gently mocking Argentina during a giant World Cup winners party in Berlin, an event that marked a rare exuberant celebration of national pride.

In a country where strident patriotism is still largely taboo, newspapers said the young players' "tasteless" victory dance Tuesday reflected badly on the country.

Six of the players including Mario Goetze, the sole scorer during Sunday's 1-0 win over Argentina, performed a taunt often seen in stadium stands, on a stage set up behind the capital's Brandenburg Gate before hundreds of thousands of flag-waving fans.

"This is how the gauchos (Argentines) walk, the gauchos walk like this," they sang, hunched over, to cheers from the crowd.

Then they jumped up and chanted, "This is how the Germans walk, the Germans walk like this!" and strutted around the stage.

The word "gaucho" is the South American equivalent of "cowboy".

Several German newspapers called the display of swagger before the world's media a sour note after an otherwise pitch-perfect World Cup.

"The victory celebration at the

Brandenburg Gate turned into a gigantic own-goal," the conservative daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung fumed.

"With a mean satire of the opponents in the final, the German world champions are squandering the image of an open-minded, tolerant nation."

Berlin's centre-left Tagesspiegel called the display "tasteless" and said it overshadowed the team's gracious behaviour on the pitch in Brazil.

"The German modesty is over. Their joy wasn't enough, they only find full satisfaction when they torture their mourning vanquished opponents a little," it said.

"Maybe that is what will remain in the heads of many people outside Germany from this World Cup. And then the frenetic applause of the audience. They didn't mean anything by it, that is probably true. But they showed that in football there are not only fools but damned fools."

The criticism sparked a lively debate in English and German on Twitter under the hashtag #gauchogate, with many attacking what they saw as political correctness run amok.

A user with the handle @suburp said "Germany has a word for #schadenfreude but struggles w fun and healthy national pride. It's only FUSSBALL (football). regt euch ab. (Calm down)."

Die Welt newspaper said the dance did not mark a "shining moment" but added: "We don't need to overplay it."



This so-called Gaucho dance (which particularly referred to Argentine dance or walk) performed by the German players during Tuesday's victory celebrations at Berlin's landmark Brandenburg Gate came under heavy criticism from German newspapers that called the display as 'tasteless' after an otherwise pitch-perfect World Cup 2014 in Brazil.

Boozers robbed of 10 trucks of beer

AFP, Berlin

German police were hunting Wednesday for thieves who made off with 10 truckloads of beer while the country was distracted by World Cup football fever.

"We're following up on two or three leads," said a police spokeswoman from the western city of Krefeld, where the pallets of beer were stolen from a warehouse some time between last Thursday evening and Monday morning.

The thieves carried away some 300,000 litres (80,000 gallons) of canned beer while Germans were transfixed by their team's heroics in Brazil, beating Argentina in the final on Sunday.

Appealing for help from the public, police in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia said: "Has anyone noticed a very large amount of beer? Does anyone have information about where it could be stored?"

The police spokeswoman told AFP that there was no indication the beer had ended up in the hands of the vast and jubilant crowds who welcomed the national team home on Tuesday.

Conte stuns Old Lady

REUTERS, Rome

Antonio Conte, who coached Juventus to three successive Italian league titles, has stunned Serie A by resigning two months after signing a deal for this season.

"I need to announce the decision to mutually terminate my contract with Juventus, which tied us together for this season," Conte told the Juventus TV Channel. "There was a journey towards this decision."

Conte, a former Juventus player for 13 years who took charge at the Turin club in 2011, wanted investment in the team in order to mount a serious challenge in the Champions League.

His Serie A champions finished 17 points ahead of second-placed AS Roma as they became the first team to break the 100-points barrier.

The best Conte could muster in Europe, however, was an appearance in the quarter-finals of the Champions League in 2013, when Juve were brushed aside 4-0 on aggregate by eventual winners Bayern Munich.

Last season they crashed out at the group stage before losing their Europa League semi-final with

Benfica 2-1 on aggregate.

"You were a great leader for our lads and this news leaves me enormously sad," Juventus CEO Andrea Agnelli said on the club website (www.juventus.com).

"I think of the three years we spent together, three years that allowed us to write history with this club: three consecutive league titles, two Italian Super Cups,



but above all exponential growth."

Conte's contract with Juve was set to end next June, but at the end of last season he refused to commit his future to the club, where he made more than 500 appearances in 13 years as a player.

Throughout last season he spoke about how a lack of resources was hampering Juve's potential to take on the best on the continent and after winning

Allegri new Juve boss

AFP, Rome

Massimiliano Allegri was on Wednesday appointed the new manager of Serie A champions Juventus less than 24 hours after Antonio Conte quit the post.

Allegri has been out of work since his sacking by AC Milan in January. The 47-year-old won the title in his first season (2010/2011) in charge.

Milan finished runners-up the following campaign before the club's fortunes dipped.

According to Italian media reports, Allegri has signed a two year deal worth 2.5 million euros a season.

The club, announcing his appointment, said Allegri would be unveiled as their new boss at a press conference later Wednesday alongside "Juventus sporting director Giuseppe Marotta".

Chelsea seal Costa move

AFP, London

Spain striker Diego Costa has completed his transfer to Chelsea from Atletico Madrid, the English Premier League side announced Tuesday.

The Brazil-born forward had long been linked with a move to the London side and completion of the deal appeared to be imminent after the Blues said earlier this month they had met the buy-out clause for the 25-year-old, whose transfer fee could be in the region of £32 million (\$55 million, 40 million euros).

"Chelsea Football Club is delighted to announce Diego Costa has today (Tuesday) completed his transfer from Atletico Madrid by signing a five-year contract," a statement from the London club said.

"He will join up with the first team for our pre-season European training camp next week."

Costa scored 35 goals for Atletico last season as they won the Spanish title and reached the Champions League final, only to lose in extra-time to city rivals Real Madrid after they had defeated Chelsea in the semi-final.

His desire to represent Spain, rather than Brazil, at this year's World Cup in his homeland backfired spectacularly as the reigning champions crashed out in the first round.

Costa joins former Arsenal and Barcelona midfielder Cesc Fabregas in moving from Spain to Stamford Bridge this pre-season.

"I am very happy to sign for Chelsea," Costa told his new club's website. "Everybody knows it is a big club in a very competitive league, and I am very excited to get started in England with a fantastic coach and team-mates."

Pricy but worth it

AFP, Sao Paulo

Despite high prices, World Cup tourists have given a big thumbs up to the just-ended event in Brazil, according to a study released Tuesday.

The Datafolha Institute poll showed 83 percent of respondents felt the month-long tournament had been well organized to just three percent who rated organization as poor.

Delivery of several stadiums was delayed almost to the eve of the competition, but 92 percent of those questioned across six of the 12 venues gave high marks for comfort and security.

Brazil scrapped a swath of initially planned urban mobility schemes but 72 percent of respondents said they had a positive experience getting around the continent-sized host nation.

Prior to the event there had been concerns as to whether Brazil's ageing airport infrastructure could cope with more than 600,000 foreign fans and some three million domestic travelers.

But 76 percent found they had been able to fly around the country without difficulty.

Tourist attractions in general enjoyed an 84 percent positive rating and 82 percent praised tourist security.

Expensive accommodation was a major complaint with just 32 percent rating them affordable.

Most observers, in and beyond Brazil, see the Cup as having been in the main a resounding success, however.

Topping the poll were the Brazilian people themselves, their friendliness earning good reviews from 95 percent of 2,209 foreign visitors from 60 countries interviewed between July 1 and 11 in six host cities.



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