

SWISS WORLD CUP 1954: Final Bern,  
Wankdorf Stadium, 4 July 1954

# WEST GERMANY - HUNGARY

## 3-2

### THE MIRACLE OF BERNE

The 1954 World Cup final pitted the overwhelming favourites Hungary against West Germany. The two teams had already met in the first round with an unequivocal result: 8-3 for Hungary. According to what emerged during the tournament, it would seem that only a miracle could allow the Germans to beat Aranycsapat, who, with a bit of arrogance, fielded their star player and captain Ferenc Puskas despite the injury that had kept him off for two weeks, with the certainty of winning and giving the captain his due in the final. And the pitch seemed to prove the Hungarian coach right: after just six minutes Puskas was on hand to hit a rebound from the German defence after a Kocsis finish, he unleashed his left-footed shot and Aranycsapat were already ahead. Two minutes later, Germany made a hara-kiri: Kohlmeyer's pass to goalkeeper Turek clumsily let the ball slip out of his hand, with Czibor quick to pick it up and deposit it in the net, and so much for the World Cup. Everything as predicted, indeed even easier than expected. Yet football is not a mathematical rule, the strongest team does not always win. Every match must be played from start to finish to be won, regardless of the values on the pitch, and that is the beauty of football. And sometimes the heart of an oppressed people with a desperate desire for revenge can push a team beyond its limits. Almost with the force of desperation Rahn threw himself forward on the left and hit a cross into the box where the defender Lorant intervened in an unbalanced manner: behind him Morlock touched it into the net reopening the game. It was only 10 minutes and Germany believed in it, now crushing Hungary with a pressing that did not allow them to breathe or think; on 18 minutes a corner from the left by Fritz Walter was corrected into the goal by a touch from Rahn: it was the equalizer. Germany loosened their grip and Aranycsapat got back to their own game in their own way: Hidegkuti, in the 23rd minute, chest-footed into the box, rounded the ball on the right and fired a surgical shot that crashed off the post to Turek's right. But Germany did not stand idly by and furious scrums followed in the Hungarian area, but the result did not change until the end of the first half. The match was wide open in the second half too, with fast-flowing reversals: In the 60th minute Hidegkuti put the ball into the centre, Kocsic dribbled back and served Puskas in the middle of the area, the latter's sublime feint allowed the ball to pass between his legs and served the right winger Toth who came running in behind him, it seemed an inevitable goal but first the goalkeeper Turek repelled the ball and then Toth hit the defender Kohlmeyer with an empty goal, wasting a colossal opportunity. A few minutes later Hungary also hit the crossbar with Kocsis's header, but on the other side of the goal Germany went close to scoring with Rahn's left-footed shot from the right corner of the area, which was blocked by goalkeeper Grosics. Those were the decisive minutes: Puskas threw Czibor alone in front of the goalkeeper, Turek stopped him in despair, the ball rolled onto the feet of Hidegkuti but his shot hit the outside post. Bad luck haunted the Hungarian attack, but Germany struck six minutes from the end: Rahn slotted into the box and with a perfect left-footed shot beat Grosics, making history. 3-2 and the ball was in the centre for Hungary, Bozsik serving Puskas in depth, sprinting and shooting left-footed into the net, but the referee cancelled for a very dubious offside. Strong Hungarian protests, but the equalizing goal is annulled. Hungary didn't want it, but there was only time for one last chance, a right-footer by Czibor that once again found the insuperable Turek to push it away for a corner. It was the save that won the World Cup for West Germany. A German victory that made

much sensation, 'an inexplicable result' headlined the newspapers of the time. Three months later, a scandal emerged in connection with this match: four German players on the pitch in the final were found to have jaundice and were kept off the pitch for several months. A strange coincidence that raised doubts about the Germans' excessive use of primordial doping during the World Cup in Switzerland, which allegedly 'helped' Germany to keep up a hellish pace of play for 90 minutes. But this story remains a mystery to this day, for lack of hard evidence. I prefer to think that the Aranycsapat was defeated by an unrepeatable cocktail of bad luck and great German heart: the Miracle of Berne.

WEST GERMANY: Turek 7.5, Posipal 7, Kohlmeyer 6.5, Eckel 6.5, Mai 6.5, Liebrich 6.5, Ottmar Walter 7, Schäfer 7, Rahn 8.5, Morlock 7.5, Fritz Walter 7.5. All. Sepp Herberger.  
HUNGARY: Grosics 6, Buzansky 5.5, Lantos 6, Bozsik 6.5, Lorant 5, Zakarias 6, MihalyToth 6, Kocsis 6.5, Hidegkuti 7, Puskas 7, Czibor 7. Manager: Gusztav Sebes.  
Referee: Ling (ING) 5.5

At 6' Puskas 0-1; at 8' Czibor 0-2; at 10' Morlock 1-2; at 18' Rahn 2-2.  
On 84' Rahn 3-2.



*The incredulous German captain Fritz Walter is carried off in triumph with the Rimet Cup.*