

WORLD CUP GERMANY 1974 / Second Round Düsseldorf,  
Rheinstadion, June 30, 1974

## WEST GERMANY - SWEDEN

4-2

### THE BATTLE IN THE RAIN

The strong enthusiasm after the first two victories against Chile (1-0) and Australia (3-0) had launched West Germany among the heavy favorites for this World Cup, where they had the important support of the home crowd. But the cold shower it suffered with the resounding 1-0 defeat (with qualification in any case already acquired) by its East German cousins had been a momentous snub, allowing the East Germans to finish the round in first place, leaving the much better-ranked West Germans behind. Many thought it was a strategic move by West Germany to avoid playing the second round against the very strong Netherlands, and in fact the all-European group with Yugoslavia, Sweden and Poland might have seemed more affordable than the one found by East Germany (Netherlands, Brazil, Argentina). Nevertheless, the defeat brought some uncertainty about the real potential of West Germany, which immediately regained the confidence of its fans with a convincing 2-0 victory over Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, unstoppable Poland, in its first World Cup appearance, had beaten Sweden 1-0 and, on the afternoon of that June 30, had also ruled Yugoslavia 2-1, taking its lead to four points. Germany was thus forced to beat Sweden and then play for qualification to the finals in the direct clash with Poland 3 days later. In Düsseldorf the rain did not cease throughout the afternoon and in the evening the field was very slippery. The Germans took the field with the flair of those who must make the match theirs in a few minutes, imposing a very high pace: captain Beckenbauer led the charge by playing in constant offensive projection. But the Swedes, instead of letting themselves be intimidated, responded with the calmness of the strong, opposing a square but effective tactical disposition and staking everything on its stars, goalkeeper Hellstrom (who would become a pillar of Kaiserslautern) and number 10 Edstrom, a 6'5", 95-footer of class and elegance, forward of PSV Eindhoven. It was precisely the Swedish goalkeeper who made his mark in the 12th minute with a miraculous exit on the feet of Gerd Müller, unintentionally served by a kamikaze pass from Tapper; on Hellstrom's rebound Hoeness arrived but kicked out. German attacks followed, spurred on by an overflowing Breitner on the left flank and an inspired Overath in the box. The German left-handed "Artist" is in his third World Cup as a star player, having beaten off competition from the very strong Netzer (formerly of Borussia, who spent the previous season leading Real Madrid's attack), in a dualism much felt in Germany between two of the most talented outfielders in German soccer. Again Hellstrom saved the result in the 24th minute with an outstanding intervention on Gerd Müller, who had cleared well to shoot on a corner kick action. Two minutes later, like a sudden flash of sunshine in the rain, came the Swedish goal: Edstrom on the edge of the box collected a loose ball from a Schwarzenbeck header, coordinating for a marvelous left-footed volley, very violent, that surprised Maier. It was a formidable feat that brought Germany to its knees, unable to grind out play as it had in the first few minutes. In the 34th minute even the unassuming Russian referee got involved, denying a rather obvious penalty for Olsen's foul on Bonhof in the box. The only big German opportunity is right at Bonhof's feet in the 45th minute, but his shot from the edge grazes the post. A perfect Sweden that put the game to sleep with ball possession and forced Germany to break its rhythm of play. The rain gives no respite even at halftime, and when in the third minute of the second half Hellstrom makes another sensational intervention on a deadly Beckenbauer conclusion from outside the box, it seems that for the

Germany there is no escape. Instead, everything happens in the next few minutes. The very young Hoeness is unleashed in a fantastic gallop of his own across the field with the ball at his feet, serves Müller, Augustsson anticipates him but the ball reaches Overath, who with his right foot (a foot he usually only uses for walking) volleys the ball into the net: 1-1. On the wings of enthusiasm, Germany immediately won the ball and threw themselves back into the attack: Hoeness's cross from the right, Müller's bank for the incoming Bonhof who beats Hellstrom again with his right foot. Within a minute the situation was reversed. This one-two would have killed anyone but Sweden, who calmly went back on the attack with a long throw by Tapper, Schwarzenbeck missed his early intervention and Sandberg got away from him and on Maier's exit slipped it in with a perfect diagonal left-footed shot: 2-2. Both teams need to win to chase Poland and there is a spectacular match with constant face-offs. In the 63rd minute another long throw by Tapper, splendid tower by Edstrom for Sandberg who misses the ball by a whisker. Grabowski came in for the dull Herzog and Germany took the upper hand: in the 75th minute the referee let a suspicious intervention by Nordqvist on Holzenbein, who had freed himself splendidly with a double dribble in the area, shortly after Hoeness's cross from the left (uncontainable with his scampering) was intercepted by Gerd Müller, then Holzenbein took over and unmarked Grabowski, who was quick to beat Hellstrom and put Germany ahead. Soon after there is a resounding post by Holzenbein served again by Hoeness. Sweden can no longer reply and Germany ramps up: the phenomenal Gerd Müller is once again stopped by Hellstrom in the 86th minute but in the 90th minute he is knocked down in the box and this time the referee points to the penalty spot. Hoeness scores, crowning an outstanding game.

WEST GERMANY: Maier 6, Vogts 6.5, Breitner 7, Schwarzenbeck 6, Beckenbauer 7.5, Herzog 5.5 (*from 65' Grabowski 7*), Hölzenbein 7 (*from 83' Flohe sv*), Bonhof 7, Hoeness 8, Gerd Müller 7.5, Overath 7.5. All. Helmut Schön.

SWEDEN: Hellstrom 7, Olssen 5.5, Karlsson 5.5, Nordqvist 5.5, Augustsson 6, Tapper 6.5, Grahn 6, Bo Larsson 6.5 (*from 33' Ejderstedt 6*), Torstensson 6, **Edström** 7, Sandberg 6.5. All. George Ericsson.

Referee: Kazakov (URS) 5.5

At 24' Edström 0-1.

On 51' Overath 1-1; on 52' Bonhof 2-1; on 53' Sandberg 2-2; on 76' Grabowski 3-2; on 89' Hoeness (Rig.) 4-2.