

WORLD CUP GERMANY 1974 / Second Round
Frankfurt, Waldstadion, July 3, 1974

WEST GERMANY - POLAND

1-0

GERD MÜLLER EXTINGUISHES POLAND'S DREAM

The last match of Group B in the second round is a real semifinal: West Germany and Poland are paired at the top of the group with 4 points, but thanks to the better goal difference the Germans can only need a draw to reach the final in Munich. Tension in the host country is through the roof: Poland is the real revelation of the World Cup and places no limits on its ambitions. World Cup rookies (if we disregard the 1938 World Cup), the Poles had risen to international prominence in recent years in a bursting fashion, winning the discipline at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, eliminating England at Wembley in the World Cup qualifiers in 1973 and sending Italy home in the first round of the World Cup with a well-deserved 2-1 win, when with a friendly draw both teams would have passed the round. With harmonious, modern soccer, Poland had won over all the insiders and the German people knew they could not be trusted. An hour before the match, a violent downpour hit Frankfurt completely flooding the pitch, so much so that it was impassable. But the proverbial organization of the Germans kicks in: the firemen manage within half an hour to make the field at least acceptable by extracting the water from it with all kinds of mechanical pumps and giant sponge rollers. Part of the field (in the first half the whole of West Germany's left flank) remains a paddy field, however, and in the first quarter of an hour between slips and balls that settle without bouncing the two teams struggle to build. Poland turns out to be the readiest to adapt to the ground conditions and decisively goes on the attack: in the 19th minute a bomb by Gadocha on a free kick from long range engages Maier in a difficult diving intervention at the cross of the posts. In the 26th minute Lato cleverly skipped past Beckenbauer and Breitner and found himself alone in front of the goalkeeper, who was prodigious in his exit to close the goal mirror and repel, Gadocha took over on the shot but again Maier like a cat got up and repelled this ball as well. The Poles dominate throughout the first half, crushing Germany in their own half. The Germans are afraid of the mockery and fail to take charge of the game, despite the moving support of the crowd, which shouts "Deutschland, Deutschland" obsessively; only puddles of water and the great German defense curb Poland's overflowing offensive power, and the first half closes at zero to zero. In the resumption, Poland began to attack constantly again, buoyed by the plays of Deyna and the sprints of Lato and Gadocha, but at the first opportunity West Germany left its mark: Breitner's marching touch for Holzenbein who wedged himself into the opponent's defense, skipped past first Karsperczak and then Zmuda, the latter rudely mowing him down and the referee could do nothing but award the Germans a penalty kick. To the penalty spot goes Hoeness, but the "clown" Tomaszewski is not yet done with the surprise and pushes away the shot, admittedly rather central. But this time the Germans woke up in earnest and soon afterwards Bonhof unleashes Holzenbein in front of the Polish goalkeeper: his conclusion, however, flies clamorously to the stars. Germany has entered the game but Poland continues to believe in it, and so we see a throbbing succession of emotions, with constant tilts in front and the feeling that the balance is on a razor's edge and can only be broken by the play of a champion. So here comes Gerd Müller, the bomber of bombers, deftly beating Tomaszewski with a deadly low shot off an assist from Bonhof. Fifteen minutes to go. Poland suffers the psychological backlash and Germany two minutes later

came close to doubling the score with a fine Overath-Holzenbein-Overath combination, with the Artist's left-footed shot deflected by Tomaszewski into a corner kick. Coach Gorski tries everything, inserting 2 more forwards (Cmikiewitz and Kmiecik) for a final battle: and soon afterwards Kmiecik himself has a great chance, penetrating with the ball on his foot in the area after collecting a long cross by Szymanowski, but his right-footed shot is prodigiously repelled by Sepp Maier, more than a goalkeeper an alien (even in facial features). In the last minutes it starts to pour again with Poland obsessively on the attack and the Germans retreating into their own area to defend the very precious result; it is a very fair and gripping battle, a splendid example of extreme agonism with the utmost respect for the opponent, so much so that referee Lynemayr in such an excited finale almost does not touch the whistle. Except to blow the whistle at the end that gives the final to the hosts and a big sigh of relief for the wet Frankfurt crowd.

WEST GERMANY: Maier 8, Vogts 6.5, Breitner 7, Schwarzenbeck 7, Beckenbauer 7, Bonhof 7, Grabowski 6, Hoeness 5.5, Gerd Müller 7, Overath 6.5, Holzenbein 7. All. Helmut Schön.

POLAND: Tomaszewski 7, Szymanowski 6.5, Maszyck 6 (*from 80' Cmikiewitz sv*), Gorgon 6, Zmuda 5.5, Kasperczyk 6 (*from 80' Kmiecik sv*), Domarski 5.5, Deyna 6.5, Lato 6.5, Musial 6.5, Gadocha 7. All. Kazimierz Gorski.

Referee: Lynemayr (AUT) 6.5

75' Müller 1-0.



Gerd Müller, "der Bomber der Nation" was the top scorer at the 1974 World Cup.