

WORLD CUP GERMANY 1974 / Final Munich,
Olympiastadion, 7 July 1974

WEST GERMANY - HOLLAND

2-1

THE LEGENDARY FINAL

World Cup Final in the futuristic Olympiastadion in Munich, the Netherlands kicked off and kept possession of the ball, after 14 exchanges (a random number?) Johan Crujff received the ball in the midfield circle and headed straight towards the lined up opponent's defence, Vogts tackled him but was unable to stop him and Crujff entered the area where Hoeness slipped and knocked him down: it was a penalty kick. One minute into the game, Germany had not yet touched the ball, Neeskens dispatched Maier and the Netherlands took the lead. The Germans, on and off the pitch, were in shock. The Netherlands arrived at the final as favourites, preceded by their reputation for modern, spectacular football that bewitched the whole world. There could not have been a better start for the Dutch, but instead of taking advantage of the German moment of disbandment, in the following minutes they limited themselves to controlling the game and ball possession. Germany became aware, reorganised and went on the counter-attack. In the 22nd minute, Overath served Holzenbein on the edge of the area, who volleyed into Müller, who was narrowly marked by Rijsbergen: both fell to the ground and the Germans claimed a penalty, but the referee called an attacking foul on Müller, who, protesting, stomped Van Hanegem and then, touched by a reaction shove from the Dutchman, theatrically let himself fall in an almost ridiculous manner. The referee overlooks and Germany continue to push. A couple of minutes passed and Again Overath triggered the speed of Holzenbein on the left, the Dutch did not attack him and the winger

This time the referee awarded a penalty, although the replay showed that there was no contact between the players. Breitner ventured to the penalty spot and scored the equaliser with a perfect penalty. The Netherlands seemed petrified by the fear of winning and remained to watch a Germany that became stronger and more beautiful to watch: on 28' Vogts triangulated with Holzenbein and cut through the distracted Dutch defence, finding himself face-to-face with Jongblod who managed to divert the full-back's conclusion prodigiously into a corner.

Shortly afterwards Hoeness set off on one of his irrepressible progressions and handed a golden assist to Müller, who was anticipated at the last moment by Rijsbergen with goalkeeper Jongblod already beaten. In the 36th minute, Beckenbauer kicked a brilliant free kick with a lob that almost surprised the Dutch goalkeeper. The Netherlands tried the counter-attack card, Van Hanegem launched Crujff who aimed at Beckenbauer, challenging him in a legendary duel, then touched to his left for Rep, who fired at the outgoing Maier. What a missed chance! In the 43rd minute Germany deservedly took the lead: Bonhof escaped to the right, he leapt clear over the unresponsive Haan and passed the ball into the middle for Müller, who, with a backward touch, displaced Krol and, with a fantastic twist, harpooned the ball and slotted it into the corner to the goalkeeper's right. The referee shortly afterwards blew the whistle for the end of the first half and Crujff pounced on it, protesting animatedly about who knows what; Mr. Haan then went on to score.

Taylor has no choice but to show him the yellow card and Crujff in turn mimics admonishing the referee. His Majesty Johan. Too nervous today to be decisive, but above all it was his team-mates who were lacking in quality because he put his soul into the recovery. In the second half there was no more Rensenbrink, who had taken the field from the start despite being injured, hiding his injury from Michels in order to be able to play in the final, with the result of leaving Holland practically ten men down: René Van de Kerckhoff entered in his place. After Germany had come close to scoring the third goal with a Bonhof header from a corner kick, the Dutch monologue began: disorderly, desperate, nervous. It was not the usual

Holland to be enjoyed, but a team that cannot handle the tension of the most important match of its existence. Crujff in the 51st minute was served by Neeskens in the middle of the area, but Maier dived out and anticipated him: the Dutch captain slid in on the goalkeeper with clear delay and hit him with a boot. Already cautioned, the referee pardoned him amid German protests.

Shortly afterwards, on Rep's corner, Maier's exit was disjointed (perhaps still dazed by the blow he had suffered) and the ball was deflected by his fists towards the goal, where, fortunately for him, Breitner was placed and his header was cleared off the line. A minute later on Crujff's free kick, Van Hanegem dived to deflect a header in front of Maier but the ball ended up in the hands of the German goalkeeper. In the 60th minute, Germany were back on the counter-attack, Grabowski was unstoppable on the right, then he delivered a perfect assist for the movement of Müller, who promptly scored: it seemed to be over but the referee cancelled on the linesman's signal. But the replay revealed that Müller's position was perfectly regular! The Netherlands went ahead again and Crujff handed a golden assist to Rep's header from Neeskens' cross: but it was not a good day for the Dutch striker, who, when pressed by Schwarzenbeck, clumsily shot wide. In the 74th minute it was Maier who made a miracle save on Neeskens' spectacular volley from René Van de Kerckhoff's cross; Van de Kerckhoff himself then sensationally deflected an inviting assist from Crujff two minutes later. Rep again ate a goal in the 78th minute, unbelievably putting a Suurbier cross into the back of the net two metres from goal. The Dutch deserved the equalizer: Crujff's tackle, in which he won the ball in defence and then launched Rep's shot, was almost touching, but for the umpteenth time the long-haired Rep finished off after having burnt Schwarzenbeck on the rush. In the final the Dutch had no more left in the tank and were once again pardoned by the English referee (very English) Taylor, who did not concede a clear penalty for Jansen's intervention on the onrushing Holzenbein. That was the end of the match: Germany with their tenacity, strength and perfection in every department defeated a team that seemed unbeatable. The script from 20 years earlier was repeated, when Puskas' fantastic Hungary was defeated by the Germans in an incredible final. And like that Hungary, this Netherlands will forever remain a fantastic memory of wonderful but not winning football.

WEST GERMANY: Maier 7, Vogts 6.5, Breitner 7.5, Schwarzenbeck 6.5, Beckenbauer 7, Hoeness 6.5, Bonhof 7, Overath 7.5, Gerd Müller 7.5, Grabowski 6.5, Holzenbein 7.5. All. Helmut Schön.

HOLLAND: Jongbloed 6.5, Suurbier 6.5, Krol 5.5, Haan 5.5, Rijsbergen 6.5 (*from 69' De Jong sv*), Neeskens 7, Jansen 5.5, Van Hanegem 6.5, Crujff 7, Rep 5, Rensenbrink 5 (*from 46' René Van de Kerckhof 5.5*). Manager: Rinus Michels.

Referee: Taylor (ING) 6

On 2' Neeskens (Rig.) 0-1; on 25' Breitner (Rig.) 1-1; on 44' Gerd Müller 2-1.



Gerd Muller scored the winning goal at the end of the first half.



West Germany World Champions with the Cup.