

WORLD CUP ARGENTINA 1978 / Second Round, Group B Rosario,
Estadio Gigante, 21 June 1978

ARGENTINA - PERU

6-0

THE "MARMELADA PERUANA"

After the defeat against Italy, Argentina found themselves in the second round to play the final with Brazil, Poland and Peru. On the first day Argentina and Brazil immediately took the lead in the standings (Brazil-Peru 3-0, Argentina-Poland 2-0) and on the second day there was a direct clash that ended in a scoreless draw, so that the last day would be decisive: if both teams had won their respective matches, the goal difference would have been decisive. Due to an inexplicable FIFA decision (or one that could simply be explained as 'to benefit the hosts') the two matches were not played at the same time, but Brazil-Poland was scheduled for 3.30pm and Argentina-Peru in the evening: in this way the Argentinians would know exactly what result they would need to reach the final. No small advantage, as Brazil against Poland would have to win by the largest possible margin without knowing whether it would be enough or not. After a painful first half, Brazil prevailed 3-1, so Argentina only had to beat Peru by four goals to go into the coveted final. It was no easy feat as Peru remained the tournament's revelation, eliminating strong Scotland in the first round and fielding champions of the calibre of Luis Cubillas, a number 10 with infinite class, Cesar Cueto, an outstanding midfielder, and Hector Chumpitaz, a small but unbeatable defender. They also had a goalkeeper, Ramon Quiroga, a naturalised Argentine from Rosario, whom the Brazilians had loudly asked Peru not to field because he was too emotionally involved. No dice, Peruvian coach Calderon would not listen to reason and Quiroga took his place among the Peruvian national team's goalposts. Argentina start with the handbrake on, the obligation to win by four goals is certainly not an easy way to approach a match, with the stadium packed and General Videla ready to take action if they fail. The Biancocelestes' legs trembled and they missed the simplest of passes, Peru took courage and in the 11th minute hit a glaring post on the counter-attack with Munante: on Quesada's throw, he won the dribble over Tarantini and fired a diagonal at the far post, beating Fillol, but history turned the other way. Shortly afterwards, Cueto touched into the box for Oblitas, who, on Fillol's exit, overtook him but did not get the ball in the frame and put it wide. It was Mario Kempes who shook Argentina: in the 20th minute he passed to captain Passarella, who closed the triangle by putting him in the three-quarter box, Kempes controlled, skipped past Manzo, penetrated the area and slotted past the goalkeeper with his left: 1-0. Argentina gained confidence and the vertical power of the three forwards Kempes-Luque-Ortiz began to work: Kempes touched down on Ortiz, dribbled through for Luque, who skipped past the defender and fired a left-footed shot towards goal, hitting the post. Two minutes later it was Luque who set up Ortiz, who controlled the ball and fired a left-footed shot that hit the crossbar. Two woodpeckers in two minutes, but Peru held and Brazil hoped. In the 38th minute, Bertoni was mown down in the area by the outspoken Manzo, but the referee stopped play due to an earlier offside by Luque. French referee Wurtz was in complete control of the game, never favouring the home team. It was half-time and Argentina doubled their lead from a corner: Bertoni put the ball into the middle and Tarantini's header struck Quiroga from the centre of the box. It went into the break 2-0 up but without the clear awareness that Argentina could do it. But it was in the first five minutes of the second half that the 'Marmelada Peruana' materialised. In South America the term 'marmelada' is used for

identify the 'biscuit' at the European. And yes, Peru did not play when they returned to the pitch, a few minutes of blackout and Argentina immediately scored the two goals that allowed them to enter the final. In the 4th minute, a loose ball arrived in the middle of the area, Kempes touched to Bertoni, Bertoni touched to Kempes, shot and goal. Motionless defence. A minute later Kempes unstoppable moves like the Lion King on the Peruvian three-quarter, leaves it to Luque who triggers Larrosa on the left, cross at the second post for Passarella to take the ball, Quiroga goes butterfly and Luque touches it into the net. The match lost intensity and meaning, Argentina were in control of their destiny and Peru were unable (and unwilling) to react. The rest was academy: in the 66th minute Ortiz penetrated the area from the left and put in the centre for the touch on an empty goal by the new-entry Houseman, who put his stamp on 5-0. Then Houseman could score another one: launched by Luque, he entered the area, jumped over Quiroga, who knocked him down, but the referee conceded the advantage because the ball reached Luque, who, from an empty goal, put it over the crossbar.

Quiroga also made a few good interventions, such as coming out on Tarantini, who headed the ball into the net in the 70th minute, but seconds later it was Gorriti who conceded the sixth goal, clumsily tripping over the ball in possession, Larrosa serving Luque who fired into the net. The match had nothing more to say in the last twenty minutes, with Peru watching helplessly as Argentina melted down amidst the crowd's olé. Immediately voices of disgust were raised from all over the world at this farce, but FIFA's investigations did not clarify the existence of any match-fixing: Peru was demotivated and Argentina's superiority did the rest. What is known for sure is that a few days later the Peruvian government received a load of wheat free of charge from Argentina. But many years later, statements by Peruvian midfielder Velasquez confirmed that six Peruvians were bought by the Argentine government to accommodate the match. Looking back at it today, something is suspicious: the Peruvian defenders, more than poor Quiroga, the true scapegoat of the 'Marmelada Peruana', are too cheerful and above all, the great Cubillas has never, I mean never, tried a play.

He trots around the field like any spectator for ninety minutes. But Argentina had to go to the final: so it was written and so it was.

ARGENTINA: Fillol 6, Olguin 6.5, Galvan 6.5, Passarella 7, Tarantini 7, Larrosa 7.5, Gallego 6.5 (*from 86' Oviedo sv*), Luque 8, Ortiz 7, Kempes 8, Bertoni 7 (*from 65' Houseman 7*).

Manager: Cesar Luis Menotti.

PERU: Quiroga 4.5, Duarte 4.5, Manzo 3, Chumpitaz 4.5, Rojas 4.5, Quesada 5, Cueto 5, Velasquez 4.5 (*from 52' Gorriti 4*), Cubillas 4, Munante 5, Oblitas 4.5. Manager: Marcos Calderon.

Referee: Wurtz (FRA) 7

At 20' Kempes 1-0; at 43' Tarantini 2-0.

On 49' Kempes 3-0; on 50' Luque 4-0; on 66' Houseman 5-0; on 71' Luque 6-0.