

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS MEXICO 1986 /
Final Mexico City, Estadio Atzecca, 29 June 1986

ARGENTINA - WEST GERMANY

3-2

BURRUCHAGA CRUSHES THE GERMAN COMEBACK

Diego Armando Maradona was unequivocally the best player of the Mexican World Cup. After his incredible performance against England, he had managed to do even better in the semi-final against Belgium, deciding the match with two sensational personal actions. In the other semi-final, West Germany had surprisingly beaten the French favourites, who had arrived tired after the unforgettable challenge against Brazil. The Germans, who until then had not been at all convincing with often poor and undeserved results, had given a feeling of great solidity against France and Beckenbauer was certain he could harness Maradona and his team. To contain the Napoli star, a man-to-man marking was set up with Germany's most in-form player, the new Bayern star Lothar Matthäus, who from the very first minutes proved to be extremely grim and kept El Pibe de Oro at arm's length from Schumacher's goal. The Germans were very compact and Argentina struggled to find space, the game stagnated and the emotions were long in coming. The first chance came for Germany: in the 15th minute Eder from the left touched in the middle to Briegel, who entered the area with force and was mown down by Ruggeri right on the line that delimited the penalty area: for the referee the foul took place outside the area and conceded a free kick from the limit. Maradona was nervous and was cautioned when the referee made the referee repeat the failed free-kick by the Germans. Shortly afterwards Matthäus was also cautioned for a foul intervention on Maradona himself. Burruchaga took the free-kick from the right flank and Schumacher clumsily came up empty: behind him, Brown intervened with his header and easily scored. For the Argentine free-kicker, brought on after Passarella had been forced off due to an ulcer, it was the apotheosis: after a perfect World Cup he also scored in the final. Germany went into crisis and struggled to react: the most inspired man, Matthäus, was forced to work in the back as Maradona's shadow, and the only one who managed to put himself forward with any conviction was Hans-Peter Briegel.

The only German chance came at the feet of Rummenigge on Berthold's header, while on the other side the Argentinians began to put on a show with an exciting Maradona-Burruchaga action, the latter's back-heel and Schumacher's footwork to anticipate Diego's finish. In the second half, Beckenbauer fielded Werder Bremen striker Rudi Voeller in place of Klaus Allofs. Germany immediately found themselves exposed going forward and Burruchaga went on the counter-attack, won a rebound and entered the box, then suffered a fantastic save by Förster right at the moment of the shot. It was the first sign of the double, which arrived on time a few minutes later: Valdano took off at full pace from his own area after a German corner, it was Maradona's turn and he passed to Enrique, who then passed to Valdano, who had made his way across the field and found himself free on the left, with the German rearguard completely misaligned. 2-0 and the Cup in Argentina's pocket. Kaiser Franz upset the German tactical plan in search of the impossible comeback: Matthäus handed Maradona over to Förster and projected himself forward; the giant Dieter Hoeness came on to act as a tower in place of the opaque Magath and Brehme finally moved to the left flank. But results were scarce. Until, 17 minutes from time, Brehme took a corner kick from the left, Voeller headed the ball into the path of Rummenigge, who slid it into the net. Germany were back in the game and the Argentinians, who already felt they were champions, found it tough. Eight minutes later, photocopied action. Brehme

Berthold took the corner, this time it was Berthold who acted as a rook and Rudi Voeller was very quick to head the ball into the net again: an incredible comeback! With the score at 2-2, the match became red-hot, Germany had a tactical assault set-up and decided to make the match their own, pushing on the accelerator and crushing the dazed Argentinians in defence. Brown remained on the pitch stoically despite a shoulder injury. But in the 84th minute the ball arrived at the feet of Maradona who, with a magical touch from the middle of the pitch, triggered Burruchaga's volley, who had slipped through the uncovered German defence. Briegel attempted a desperate recovery and Schumacher was slow to come out on the Argentine striker, who cooled him down with a diagonal touch. 3-2. The Germans broke down this time and in the final Diego put on a show, first darting between two German defenders and being run over by the desperate exit of Schumacher (there could have been a penalty, but the referee had already whistled a previous foul outside the area), then on his free-kick Schumacher repelled in a dive. Argentina returned to the roof of the World Cup, and this time without the shadow of the referee's favours they had in 1978: a team artfully built by Bilardo around the genius of Maradona, in which despite the mediocre technical level everyone gave 110% of their possibilities, achieving a formidable result. On balance, it was undoubtedly the strongest team of this spectacular World Cup.

ARGENTINA: Pumpido 6, Brown 7.5, Ruggeri 6.5, Cuciuffo 6.5, Batista 6.5, Enrique 7, Giusti 6.5, Olarticoechea 6.5, Burruchaga 8 (*from 90' Trobbiani sv*), Maradona 7.5, Valdano 7. Coach Carlos Bilardo.

WEST GERMANY: Schumacher 4.5, Jacobs 5.5, Karl-Heinz Förster 6, Briegel 6, Berthold 6.5, Brehme 6.5, Eder 6.5, Matthäus 6.5, Magath 5 (*from 60' Hoeness 5.5*), Rummenigge 6.5, Klaus Allofs 5 (*from 46' Voeller 7*). Manager: Franz Beckenbauer.

Referee: Arppi Filho (Bra) 6

On 23' Brown 1-0.

On 55' Valdano 2-0; on 74' Rummenigge 2-1; on 80' Völler 2-2; on 83' Burruchaga 3-2.



Burruchaga burns Briegel and Schumacher on the way out and sends Argentina into paradise.