

WORLD CUP ITALIA 1990 / Final Roma,
Stadio Olimpico, 8 July 1990

WEST GERMANY - ARGENTINA

1-0

DIEGO SHOUTS "HIJOS DE PUTA"

With the two finalists lined up on the pitch, the national anthems were played: the first was the Argentine anthem, and from the stands of the Olimpico rose a broadside of whistles against the team that had eliminated Italy in the semi-finals. Maradona, pointing to his pride, twice shouts 'Hijos de puta!' in front of the cameras, not excelling in fair play. West Germany were clear favourites for the final victory, but Argentina proved to be a strong team after holding their own against Italy in the semi-finals. The Germans played the game while the Argentines, as usual, lined up defensively for a game of containment. Germany struggled to find space, while Argentina did not even try: the result was a dull, one-sided match, but the South Americans defended well and with great tenacity, and as the minutes passed they grew in intensity, coming out of their shell and starting to show themselves in attack. At the end of the first half, there were no scoring chances and the match was, on the whole, balanced. The final came to life in the second half: in the first minute Littbarski's great play dribbled past four Argentine defenders and fired a razor-sharp shot from the edge of the box that grazed the post. Shortly afterwards Brehme crossed from the left and Berthold at the second post put in a header just high: he was completely free! In the 12th minute Matthaeus made a brilliant assist that put Augenthaler (who had been placed in attack given Argentina's offensive inconsistency) in front of Goycochea, he skipped past him and let go as soon as he felt the goalkeeper's touch, the referee didn't fall for it but Troglio, in his distress, clumsily touched his goal where, fortunately for Argentina, he found Simon to avoid the own goal on the line. Two minutes passed and Littbarski touched on Brehme who volleyed in from the edge of the box, Goycochea stretched out in the dive and put in a corner. Argentina's pressure waned, having taken to the pitch without several of their star players, either disqualified or injured, and kicks and shoves flew out to stem the German overpower, which Mexican referee Codesal Mendez emphasised with numerous yellow cards. In the 64th minute Klinsmann flew down the right, jumped over Monzon who mowed him down blatantly and the referee this time drew a direct red! It was certainly an exaggerated decision, not least because the Inter player had clearly overplayed his hand in the air with a stylistically remarkable pike. Argentina, now down to 10 men, raised their defensive barrier, decisively aiming for penalties and breaking up the game with repeated fouls and time wasters at every opportunity. Germany went limp, tired from the effort in vain, and extra time seemed inevitable. But in the 82nd minute Matthaeus woke up and produced a great central percussion, then suggested in the area for Voeller who was landed by Sensini in a rather questionable manner (Voeller fell regardless of the Argentine's intervention), but the referee awarded the penalty to the Germans. Brehme, a natural left-footer, kicked the penalty with his right to confuse the super-saver Goycochea and bagged the goal that was worth the World Cup. Argentina's reaction was practically only one of nerves and was materialised in the 87th minute with the expulsion of Dezotti, who had been unwatchable up to that point, for grabbing Kohler by the neck as he was wasting time hiding the ball. After two finals lost in a row, the second one to Argentina, West Germany were World Champions. Maradona's only play in the final was the phrase he uttered during the national anthem, and the final tears and furious protests against referee Codesal Mendez, guilty of having conditioned the match with the expulsions and the penalty: Argentina did not play, or rather played not to take a penalty. The night before, in the splendid setting of the San Nicola in Bari, Italy had won third place

beating England 2-1 with goals, needless to say, by Roberto Baggio and Totò Schillaci, who with this goal became the top scorer of the event with 6 goals.

WEST GERMANY: Illgner 6, Berthold 6 (*from 72' Reuter sv*), Brehme 7.5, Kohler 6.5, Augenthaler 7, Buchwald 6.5, Littbarski 7, Hässler 6.5, Völler 6.5, Matthäus 7, Klinsmann 6.5. All. Franz Beckenbauer.

ARGENTINA: Goycoechea 6.5, Simon 6, Serrizuela 5.5, Sensini 5, Ruggeri 5 (*from 46' Monzon 5*), Lorenzo 5.5, Burruchaga 5 (*from 54' Calderon 5.5*), Basualdo 5.5, Dezotti 4.5, Maradona 5.5, Troglia 5. Manager: Carlos Bilardo.

Referee: Codesal Mendez (MEX)

Sent off: 65' Monzon; 87' Dezotti.

At 84' Brehme (Rig.) 1-0.



Diego Maradona's bitterness during the award ceremony.



West Germany World Champions in Rome.