

WORLD CUP 2002 / Final Yokohama,
International Stadium, 30 June 2002

BRAZIL - GERMANY

2-0

RONALDO'S WORLD CUP DOUBLE

In all the hullabaloo of scandal over the 'unexpected' arrival of South Korea in the semifinals, there is a national team that plays football and puts on a show, it is the Brazil of the 3Rs, Ronaldo, Rivaldo and Ronaldinho. The reborn Fenomeno, after dull years following serious injuries, regained an acceptable state of form during the Japan-Korea World Cup and, thanks to assists from 30-year-old Barcelona player Rivaldo and 22-year-old PSG youngster Ronaldinho, dragged Brazil deservedly into the final, scoring six goals. The other finalist is consequently Germany, one of the least competitive in history but the only top-level contender left in the running in this anomalous World Cup. In fact, this is the first World Cup challenge between the two most successful teams in the competition: there are seven World Cup titles on the line, but Brazil and Germany have never faced each other in the previous 16 editions. Brazil is obviously the favourite, and Germany is missing the disqualified Ballack, the team's star player, and all hopes rest on Oliver Kahn, the gruff Bayern goalkeeper who proved to be the best goalkeeper of the World Cup. But the clear supremacy on paper proved to be a boomerang for Brazil, who suffered for the entire first half from the aggressiveness and dynamism of the Germans, excellently fielded by coach Rudy Voeller: Schneider and Neuville were unstoppable spinning tops and the Greenoro midfield was out of action and unable to play. On 9 minutes, Schneider drew Neuville on the right, a low cross for Klose, who was beaten by a whisker by Edmilson. Brazil's first shot came in the 18th minute but Ronaldo wasted a filtering assist from Ronaldinho by touching off a left-footed shot on Kahn's exit. Ten minutes later Ronaldinho conceded another chance to the Fenomeno, who did not control well and was blocked by the German goalkeeper. But it was Germany who were masters of the field, dominating in midfield with pressing and fluid play that ensnared a slow and distracted Brazil. The impression was that if Germany were able to score they could win the match, but on the other side Brazil were sly, and when they did manage to see the goal they were in trouble: in the 44th minute Kleberson found an opening and tried a shot from outside the area that hit the crossbar; shortly afterwards Roberto Carlos also tried from outside the area, his shot becoming an assist for Ronaldo who made a left-footed shot, but Kahn made a miracle save with his foot. It went into the break at nil-nil. Germany upped the tempo further in the second half and in the opening minutes Brazil looked likely to capitulate: Jeremies headed in Neuville's corner but Edmilson cleared in front of goal, then Neuville himself tried a free kick from 30 metres and Marcos, diving, touched just enough to deflect the ball onto the post. The game became heated, with Gilberto Silva at the other end committing Kahn on the dive from Roberto Carlos' assist, with Kahn then prodigiously anticipating the Brazilian midfielder's tap-in.

Hamann replied with a shot that grazed the crossbar, then in the 18th minute of the second half Schneider put in a great ball for Neuville, but his split shot missed the ball by a whisker. The match could only be settled by an episode. Ronaldo, up to that moment rather irritating with lost balls, lost another in a trivial way but then had a burst of pride and came back to retrieve it from the feet of Hamann, perhaps committing a foul, he passed it to Rivaldo who unleashed a sudden left-footer from the edge of the area, Kahn went to the ground with a bit of a nod and the ball escaped him, Ronaldo pounced and touched it into the net. The very man most expected, Kahn, made the mistake that unlocked the match. Germany went down, stabbed in the back after a masterful game, and Voeller threw old hero Bierhoff into the fray in place of young Klose

and an extra forward, Asamoah, in place of Jeremies. But it was Brazil who found the double with a spectacular action: Kleberson broke out on the right and put in a low cross, Rivaldo's masterful feint freed Ronaldo, control and right-footed into the corner to beat Kahn. Apotheosis for the Fenomeno, to whom fate gave back the final as a protagonist that he had not had four years earlier due to an illness a few hours before the match against France. The Germans were never tame and tried until the very end to find at least the flagship goal, first with Bierhoff, who volleyed home a Frings assist but found Marcos in an extraordinary mood to block the rebound, and then with Metzelder, who failed to divert Schneider's free-kick into the goal, clumsily fumbling it away from an empty net. It was the fifth world title for Brazil, the Pentacampeao. And Ronaldo with these two goals wins the top scorers' table with eight goals. A great protagonist of a small World Cup.

BRAZIL: Marcos 7, Cafu 6.5, Roberto Carlos 7, Edmilson 7, Lucio 6.5, Roque Junior 6.5, Gilberto Silva 7, Kleberson 7, Ronaldo 8 (*from 89' Denilson sv*), Rivaldo 7, Ronaldinho 6.5 (*from 84' Juninho Paulista sv*). All. Luiz Felipe Scolari.

GERMANY: Kahn 6, Frings 6.5, Bode 5.5 (*from 83' Ziege sv*), Ramelow 6, Linke 6, Metzelder 5.5, Hamann 6, Jeremies 6 (*from 77' Asamoah sv*), Klose 5.5 (*from 74' Bierhoff sv*), Schneider 7, Neuville 7. All. Rudi Voeller.

Referee: Collina (ITA) 7

At 67' Ronaldo 1-0; at 78' Ronaldo 2-0.



Ronaldo had just beaten Kahn for the decisive goal in the final.