

WORLD CUP 2014 - Semifinals
Belo Horizonte, Arena Mineirao, 8 July 2014

BRAZIL - GERMANY

1-7

THE "MINEIRAZO"

64 years later. It has taken many years of triumphs, five World Cup victories, countless champions in green-gold jerseys to erase the shame of a final lost at home in front of their own fans in 1950. 64 years later, the World Cup returns to Brazil, to give the final blow, finally to raise that cup to the sky amid millions of smiles snatched from precarious living conditions. The team is not great, in fact it is perhaps the worst Brazil in memory, but thanks to the inventions of the young star player Neymar and the compactness of the defence led by Thiago Silva, Brazil made it to the semifinals, without ever exciting but playing better and better, until beating the very strong Colombia in the quarters. Yes, but Neymar is in hospital with a fractured coccyx and Thiago Silva unavailable because disqualified. Never mind, united they can do it. And the Mineirao stadium explodes with hope and warmth, shouting the national anthem at the top of its lungs, while captain David Luiz holds up Neymar's number 10 jersey in full view: he is there spiritually, the atmosphere is goose-bumpy. One breathes football history. The Germans are a fearsome opponent, but they are not favourites, we are playing in Brazil, everything is different here. Like Colombia, they too will feel the pressure, the soft legs, the fear, the stadium against them, perhaps the referee against them. Tension can be cut with a knife, and in fact Brazil is off to a rocket start, Scolari has not been afraid, 4-2-3-1 same form even without Neymar and even knowing that the opponents are much stronger on paper. We have to surprise them as with the Colombians, score immediately and intimidate them. The public is in an agonistic trance, a hellish noise pushes the Brazilians into attack, they are 5 minutes of fire, then Germany starts on the counter-attack with Thomas Mueller on the right, cross for Oezil, touch to Khedira and shot on goal that clamorously hits team-mate Kroos positioned in front of the net. The curtain fell on Brazilian enthusiasm: these Germans were not impressed. Three minutes later, on a corner by Kroos, Mueller is sensationally left alone by David Luiz and touches the ball into the net with ease: Germany in the lead. A naivety that can cost dearly, but it can happen. Brazil went forward again and Germany closed the spaces with patience, Marcelo slipped into the area from the left and Lahm intervened cleanly, but then the Brazilian fell to the ground and wanted the penalty, a brawl broke out, shoves flew. The Brazilians have lost their heads, they have realised they can't make it but they can't not make it, this is their World Cup and they can't lose. Panic. Seven minutes of blackout. Seven minutes of earthquake that shift the world balance. Seven minutes that annihilate the certainties built up over sixty-four years. Goal, goal, goal. Four goals in seven minutes. Brazil-Germany 0-5. In the blink of an eye.

It begins in the 22nd minute: Mueller for Kroos, Fernandinho comes out empty, touch in the box for the onrushing Mueller who, instead of kicking, makes a brilliant backward touch for Klose, shot, Julio Cesar's rebound, shot, goal. It is Klose's 16th goal at the World Cup, a historic record that erases Ronaldo. In addition to the damage, the mockery. The Brazilians were in shock, two minutes later Lahm sank to the right, cross into the area for Mueller, who fumbled but Kroos the man came the the other the other way and pierced Julio Cesar's the that way with his left. Scary Germany, a merciless steamroller. The Mineirao is shocked, the World Cup is going away, Fernandinho falls asleep and Kroos snatches the ball from him on the three-quarter line, triangle with Khedira and boom! That's four. The people in the stands can't believe it, thousands are in tears, shouting "it's not possible!", the ball is thrown forward by the defenders without construction, Hummels catches it, the German central player passes the midfield in progression and touches to Khedira, triangle with Oezil and

right-footed into the net: the Germans don't stop. 5-0 in the 29th minute, a surreal atmosphere. Two minutes later Kroos came close to a personal hat-trick with a shot from the limit, deflected into the corner by Luis Gustavo perhaps with an arm. Germany finally seemed to pay after a half-hour that goes down in the history of football. Brazil in shock failed to react and only in the second half, under booing Pitying the crowd, he pulled out his pride with the entry of Paulinho and Ramires. The first 10 minutes are a Brazilian siege that could even reopen the match, as the Germans are now relaxed and deconcentrated, but Manuel Neuer, the strongest goalkeeper in the world, who unfortunately for the Brazilians is a German and has not deconcentrated himself, comes up. He performed four miracles in sequence that definitively cut the legs out from under the Cariocas: in the 5th minute Fred, the ectoplasmic centre-forward, booed Ramires in the area, a cross shot that Neuer repelled in a great way, anticipating Oscar; in the 6th minute Ramires touched for Oscar alone in front of Neuer, who was fantastic in repelling; in the 8th minute Neuer was even superhuman, with the German defence in shambles Paulinho had two sensational goal-scoring chances in two seconds, but the German goalkeeper made a superb save on both! Germany recovered thanks to its goalkeeper and hit back on the counter-attack. Mueller stole the ball from David Luiz and challenged Julio Cesar, who closed him down for a corner. Shortly afterwards it was the same challenge again, with Julio Cesar overcoming with a prodigious intervention on the German's conclusion. Loew fielded Schuerrle for the exhausted Klose and the blond Chelsea player immediately came close to scoring on an assist from Oezil, then found it in the 23rd minute of the second half after a splendid Oezil-Kroos-Lahm-Khedira-Lahm counter-attack, the ball through Schuerrle and 6-0. The rout was complete in the 33rd minute, Mueller serving Schuerrle who entered the box and from a deflected position fired a fantastic left-footer that surprised Julio Cesar in the crossbar: 7-0. Sensational is not enough. The Brazilians in the stands were experiencing an epoch-making drama, but they had the strength to applaud the Germans by giving the olè to the winning players. In the 89th minute there would also be room for a hat-trick with Mueller putting Oezil alone in front of the goal, but the Arsenal jewel failed to break through and his diagonal shot finished just wide. Instead of 8-0 came the 7-1, a long throw from Marcelo finding Oscar who slipped through the German defence, came back to cut out Boateng and, with his right-footed shot, beat Neuer brilliantly. It's over, with David Luiz praying, the Brazilians weeping, the Germans cashing in on the most extraordinary victory since the Miracle of Bern. 64 years after the Maracanazo, it happened again. Arena Mineirao, 8 July 2014. Now another Pele will be needed.

BRAZIL: Julio Cesar 5, Maicon 4, Marcelo 4.5, David Luiz 3, Dante 4, Luis Gustavo 5, Hulk 4.5 (*from 46' Paulinho 5.5*), Fernandinho 3 (*from 46' Ramires 6*), Fred 5 (*from 69' Willian sv*), Oscar 6.5, Bernard 4. Coach Felipe Scolari.

GERMANY: Neuer 7.5, Lahm 7.5, Hoewedes 7, Boateng 6.5, Hummels 7 (*from 46' Mertesacker 6.5*), Khedira 8 (*from 76' Draxler sv*), T.Mueller 8.5, Schweinsteiger 7, Klose 7.5 (*from 57' Schuerrle 8*), Oezil 7, Kroos 8.5. Manager: Joachim Low.
Referee: Rodriguez (MEX) 7

At 10' T.Mueller 0-1; at 22' Klose 0-2; at 24' Kroos 0-3; at 25' Kroos 0-4; at 29' Khedira 0-5.
On 68' Schuerrle 0-6; on 78' Schuerrle 0-7; on 90' Oscar 1-7.