

In World Cup final: Germans have history, Argentina has Maradona

By BARRY WILNER
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MEXICO CITY (AP) — West Germany does not have tradition on its side as it attempts to win the World Cup against Argentina on Sunday.

Although the Germans have captured two world championships, those 1954 and 1974 titles were won in Europe. No team from outside of South America has won a World Cup when the event was held in the Western Hemisphere.

Conversely, Brazil is the only Latin American team to capture the championship in Europe — 1958 in Sweden.

What West Germany does have going for it is experience. This will be a record fifth trip to the finals for the country, which lost in 1966 to England and 1982 to Italy.

Five Germans — goalkeeper Harald Schumacher, forwards Pierre Littbarski and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, defenders Peter Briegleb and Karl-Heinz Förster — played in the '82 final.

And, Coach Franz Beckenbauer was the team leader when the Germans won the 1974 competition.

"We have proven we are capable of playing as a team," Beckenbauer said.

"We do not have the individual players France has, but we sure

can play as a team," Rummenigge added.

The Germans will need all of their collective skills against Argentina, which will have history, the crowd of over 100,000 and the great Diego Maradona in its corner.

The Argentinians, winner of the 1978 title on home soil, are confident because they know the best player in the world is on their side. No one has been able to stop the brilliant striker in this tournament.

Praise for Maradona has come from everywhere, including FIFA, the international governing body for the sport. FIFA President Joao Havelange on Thursday called Maradona "a genius" and "the best player in the world."

"He has scored some unforgettable goals in the World Cup," Havelange said. "We can say — and this is not to detract from the Argentine team — that he represents half of the team for his work, his technical quality, his discipline, because he's in on the defense for his country, he's in the midfield and he's in the opposing area."

Neither England nor Belgium bothered to shadow Maradona and the strategy backed when he struck for two goals early in the second half of the quarterfinal and semifinal games, respectively.

Beckenbauer is considering assigning one player — most likely Lothar Matthaus — to stay with Maradona wherever he goes.

"Maradona has a clockwork in his legs and we need someone who can follow him around," Beckenbauer said.

"I've always had several defenders against me," Maradona said, "but as long as I can keep the ball below me, I can reach where I am going."

The celebrations in Buenos Aires were not concerned with the opposition's defensive schemes.

"I am not happy with the way it was organized," he told Tages-Anzeiger. "We have had much cooperation with the Mexican Organizing Committee and they prepared a whole series of documents, but we were disappointing for me that we still were confronted with problems and that the FIFA professionals again and again had to help out."

Moore has been fired as manager of the Oakland A's and Jeff Newman has been named interim manager, a team official said yesterday.

"The change is immediate. Jeff Newman is the interim manager," Mickey Morabito, A's public relations director, told The Associated Press.

Moore took over the A's in May, 1984. The A's have lost 31 of their last 44 games. Moore was dismissed two days after the A's had stopped a string of 15 consecutive road losses by beating Kansas City Tuesday night — four short of the league record.

But Oakland stumbled again in dropping a 4-4 decision Wednesday to the Royals. The game was tied 4-4 in the top of the ninth when pinch-runner Ricky Peters — thinking the bases were loaded — was caught out, third when he stroled home on a walk to Jose Canseco.

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Argentina's Diego Armando Maradona celebrates a second-round victory over England last Sunday in World Cup play. Maradona scored two goals Wednesday as Argentina shut out Belgium, 2-0, to advance to this Sunday's final against West Germany at Azteca Stadium in Mexico City.

Moore bagged as Oakland manager

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A Chicago newspaper had reported that La Russa was being considered as a replacement for Moore, A's General Manager Sandy Alderson said earlier yesterday that he had not "talked to anyone regarding our management situation."

"I haven't heard anything, other than I'm being mentioned (as a possible successor) in the press," La Russa said via telephone from his Sarasota, Fla. home yesterday. "I've learned not to assume anything."

"I'm not going to say they're interested in me if I don't know they are. But I will say that I'd like to manage in the major leagues again some day."

The A's expected to challenge for the AL West title after acquiring veteran pitchers Jaques Andujar and Moose Haas in the offseason.

Both Andujar and Haas are on the disabled list along with relief pitcher Jay Howell and veteran center fielder Dwayne Murphy.

Kingman was tied for first on May 10, but sank as the injuries hit. Alderson had flown to Kansas City on Tuesday after A's slugger Dave Kingman sent a box containing a small rat to Sue Fornoff, a sportswriter for the Sacramento Bee, in the Kansas City pressbox.

Fornoff has said Kingman has harassed her since she was assigned to the A's.

scoreboard

major league baseball

| AMERICAN LEAGUE | | NATIONAL LEAGUE | |
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