

CONFEDERATIONS CUP 2017

Leon Goretzka's brace against Mexico puts Germany in final

SOCHI, JUN 29 /-/- Germany booked their place in the Confederations Cup final as Leon Goretzka scored twice in a devastating opening spell to Thursday's 4-1 semi-final win over Mexico. Attacking midfielder Goretzka ran riot in Sochi with goals on six and eight minutes before Timo Werner and substitute Amin Younes netted in the second half. Marco Fabian scored Mexico's stunning consolation in the 89th minute with a thunderbolt free-kick from long range. World champions Germany will face Chile in Sunday's final in St Petersburg while Mexico play Portugal in Moscow's third place play-off.

We now need to reward ourselves for our hard work and we want to get the title," said Goretzka. The German drew 1-1 with Copa America champions Chile when the teams met last Thursday in Kazan. "We already played them in the group stage and we know they are good, they are one of the best teams in the competition (to date) so far," said Germany captain Julian Draxler. Goretzka and Werner are the tournament's joint top scorers with three goals a piece in Russia. Mexico coach Juan Carlos Osorio said the result was not a fair reflection. His side had twice as many shots as the Germans, but couldn't take their chances. "Our way of playing is very aggressive. We try to get forward all the time and we paid for that," Osorio said. "They are fair winners, but the second would seem to suggest they were way better and I don't think that was the case. Germany head coach Joachim Loew pulled a surprise before kick-off by naming 20-year-old Benjamin Henrichs on the right wing for only his third international and first start in Russia. The bold move paid off as Henrichs pounced on an early mistake and his pass found Goretzka sprinting towards the box. The Schalke forward took the ball in his stride and stroked his shot past Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa on



Germany's Leon Goretzka scores their second goal.



Germany's Timo Werner (L) celebrates scoring their third goal with Lars Stindl (C) and Leon Goretzka (R) — REUTERS

Germany's youthful squad are ambitious enough to win title, says Joachim Loew

SOCHI, JUN 29 /-/- Joachim Loew hailed Germany's "brilliant" 4-1 win over Mexico in the Confederations Cup semi-final and said his youthful squad are ambitious enough to beat Chile in the final. Loew opted not to bring his World Cup winners stars to the Confed cup, but Germany's young guns booked their place in Sunday's final in St Petersburg after a devastating opening spell in Sochi. Attacking midfielder Leon Goretzka, 22, hit two goals in the first eight minutes to stun Mexico. Timo Werner, 21, made a 30-0 midway through the second half, then Marco Fabian scored Mexico's late stunning consolation with a thunderbolt free-kick before Germany's substitute Amin Younes, 23, netted Germany's fourth. "From the beginning, we did exactly what we set out to do - we were very dominant and brilliant in the opening stages," said Germany's head coach Loew. "I expect us to have back a bit in the second phase of the first half, which was to be expected, and we gave up a lot of ball. All in all, 4-1 is a great result. "We wanted to go far, but this is nothing but we would have been happy to get out of the tournament." After Germany drew 1-1 with Chile in the group stages last Thursday, Loew says his team is hungry enough to beat the Copa America champions in the final. "Chile is the most powerful team in this tournament, we know them pretty well and we expect them to go for it in the final," said Loew. "They will be trying flat out to pull it off, as they are coming to the end of their season. We have to have to try and counter that. "A lot of work has gone into our wins. We couldn't pre-empt this (reaching the final) as some players had little experience and you couldn't calculate the end of their season. We've been very lucky in the last few weeks. There's a fun in the dressing room, but they aren't over the top. "They know there is a lot ahead and they are ambitious enough to beat Chile." Goretzka and Werner are now the tournament's joint top scorers with three goals each. After scoring twice in Sochi, Goretzka says the Germans have a score to settle against Chile. Lars Stindl equalised in the second half of the group stage draw in Kazan last Thursday after Alexis Sanchez rattled the Germans by poaching an early goal



for the South Americans. "I was really happy to help the team with the two goals, one single-minded goal to reach the final so we're delighted," said Goretzka. "There is only one match to go. We're looking forward to playing Chile again, because in the second half (of the group stage match) I had the feeling the draw was not enough. "Now we have another chance against this top flight team. "In the first few games, we didn't do so well against Chile, so (against Mexico) we really wanted to get down to brass tacks and the two quick goals really calmed the team. "We now need to reward ourselves for our hard work and we want to get the title." After rallying from 2-0 down, Mexico are justified in being unhappy with the unflattering scoreline after having twice as many shots on goal as the Germans. The Mexicans play Portugal in Sunday's third-place play-off in Moscow. With 15 minutes left against Germany, Raul Jimenez headed against the crossbar as Germany's goalkeeper Marc-Andre Ter Stegen made a string of saves. "Our way of playing is very aggressive. We try to get forward all the time and we paid for that," said Mexico's head coach Juan Carlos Osorio. "They are fair winners, but the scoreline would seem to suggest they were way better and I don't think that was the case."

WIWINTOSS, INVITE INDIA TO BAT

NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), JUN 30 /-/- West Indies won the toss and elected to bowl first against India in the third ODI of the five-match series, here today. India have fielded an unchanged side, while West Indies made two changes. Kyle Hope and Harshad Williams will make their debut for the home side.

Teams: India: Virat Kohli (capt), Ajinkya Rahane, Shikhar Dhawan, Yuvraj Singh, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Kedar Jadhav, Hardik Pandya, Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Umesh Yadav.

West Indies: Jason Holder (capt), Kyle Hope, Shai Hope, Jason Mohammed, Evin Lewis, Rovman Powell, Roston Chase, Ashley Nurse, Devendra Bishop, Kesrick Williams, Migun Cummins.

Will give opinion only if BCCI asks for it: Kohli on coach row

NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), JUN 29 /-/- Skipper Virat Kohli today made it clear that he will air his views on new coach only if his opinion is sought by the BCCI. With Ravi Shastri throwing his hat in the ring, Kohli's proximity with the former Team Director, many feel has made him a runaway favourite for the job. When asked about his opinion on new coach, the skipper replied, "From a personal point of view, I can't pinpoint anything or give any details. As a team only voice our opinion when asked by the BCCI." Kohli said at the pre-match conference ahead of the third ODI against West Indies here tomorrow. Kohli said that there is process that is put in place and no individual opinion matters. "This is a process we al-

ways go through and something we respect as a team. It's something that is asked to the team and not in segregation. The same procedure, as and when it takes place, we will give our suggestions to the BCCI," Kohli added. When the same question was repeated in a different manner, Kohli was more curt. "Suggestions are given to the BCCI. There is no point in saying anything out in the open because that is for us as a team to convey to the BCCI as when we are asked,"

Kohli reiterated. Putting the coach selection talks in the backdrop, Kohli said their priority right now is to win the series in the Caribbean. "Right now, we have series at hand and this is what we are focussed on. I think it is a distraction early on in your career but after a while you don't get distracted by these things. "You know it's going to be there so you just have to focus on what you need to do rather than thinking about there is too much attention on me. It is not in my control, it is not something that I have asked for; it's something that's happening, so I have sort of take in my stride and focus on my skills." (PTI)



Government determined on anti-doping measures, says Sports Minister Vijay Goel

NEW DELHI, JUN 29 /-/- Taking a tough stand on doping control, Sports Minister Vijay Goel asserted on Thursday that the government is determined to take tough anti-doping measures in order to curb the use of banned substances. Stating that use of supplements laced with banned substances is a major reason behind positive dope tests by various Indian athletes, Goel asserted that the government is looking to restrict the import and use of such supplements. "The government is committed to take tough anti-doping measures to provide a healthy eco-system for development of sports in the country. Time has now come to provide safe and quality nutrition to the athletes in the wake of increasing international competition and high incidences of dope," Goel said in a statement. "Import and sale of sub-standard and dope-laced nutritional supplement is a cause to worry as an unsuspected athlete gets banned under the Anti-Doping Code be-

cause of use of these supplements. "To protect the clean athlete and meet his requirement for quality supplements, the convergence of various regulatory authorities to work out a dope free model for nutritional products is a good initiative and a welcome step," the statement added. According to Goel, a collaboration of the National Anti Doping Agency (NADA) with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and other agencies will have a far reaching impact in improving physical fitness standards in the country and help athletes in making informed choices. Goel also denied conflict of interest in the appointment of former star athletes as national observers of various sports. A total of 14 former sports persons including PT Usha, Anju Bobby George (athletics), Sanjeev Kumar Singh (archery), Aparna Popat (badminton), Mary Kom, Akhil Kumar (boxing), Jagbir Singh (hockey), Abhinav Bindra (shooting), Somdev

Devvarman (tennis), Karnam Malleshwari (weightlifting), Sushil Kumar (wrestling), I. M. Vijayan (football), Khajan Singh Tokas (swimming), Kamlesh Mehta (table tennis) were appointed as national observers of a dozen sports in late March. These former sports persons were supposed to assist the government, Sports Authority of India (SAI), and National Sports Federations (NSFs) in the preparation and implementation of the long term development plan in their respective sports covering all aspects including selection policy, coaching development, development of technical officials and monitoring and evaluation of athlete performance. Reports have appeared in a section of media about the appointment of national observers and their role particularly in the wake of conflict of interest in some areas of sports," the minister said. "The players of international eminence were appointed by the ministry as national observers for the first time for the development of sports and these national observers are performing their duties as per the guidelines and role assigned to them by the ministry," the statement added.

Barcelona to face Brazil's Chapecoense on August 7

BARCELONA, JUN 30 /-/- Barcelona will play Brazilian side Chapecoense, whose team was all but wiped out in an air crash last November, in a friendly match at the Camp Nou on August 7. The match will "help pay tribute to the 71 people who died in the accident on November 29th, 2016, as well as their families," the Spanish giants said on their website. "Barca hopes to help Chapecoense rebuild institutionally and recover the competitive level it had before the tragedy," it added. The winner of the match will receive the Joan Gamper Trophy, named after the Swiss founder of Barcelona. Nineteen Chapecoense players and 24 club officials died on November 28 when the team's plane crashed into a mountainside in Colombia. Unsuited Chapecoense had been on their way to face Atletico Nacional in Medellin for the biggest match in their history, the final of the Copa Sudamericana, South America's second biggest club tournament. After the tragedy, Atletico ceded the title to Chapecoense in tribute. Barcelona invited Chapecoense in December to play in its annual Joan Gamper friendly tournament but the exact date of the match had not been known until now. (AFP)

Young players will get chance in run-up to World Cup: MSK Prasad

TIRUPATI, JUN 29 /-/- Chairman of Selectors MSK Prasad on Friday said young players would be given chances to play for the country in the run-up to the 2019 ICC World Cup to be held in England to enable them gain experience before the showpiece event. India was slated to play as many as 55 one-day international between now and the World Cup and some new players would be given chances so as to enable them gain experience, he said. He was talking to reporters after offering worship at the famous Lord Venkateswara temple in Tirumala near. "Such a move would make sure that the new players can acquire skills and gain experience by featuring in some 40 to 50 matches by the time the World Cup is held," he said. His remarks came as the team's captain M.S. Dhoni was in Tirumala near. "Such a move would make sure that the new players can acquire skills and gain experience by featuring in some 40 to 50 matches by the time the World Cup is held," he said. He added that it is unfortunate that the team's position in the final, Overall, we did well. We must take positives from the tournament and look to correct the mistakes with an eye on the next World Cup," he said. We need serious young talent in India and please create opportunities for them to show case their skills @ international level rather going on on with same old experienced playing XI. "BCCI would plan an all-round strategy for the team by identifying the shortcomings," Prasad said. The former India wicketkeeper had arrived with family members last evening and reached the Tirumala hills on foot by climbing the around 3,500 steps.

