



Argentina poses for a team photo ahead of their clash with Germany. The team is made up of Expo pavilion staff.

Germans mirror early World Cup success at Expo

Pavilion football teams have been battling it out on a Shanghai pitch, **Matt Hodges** reports.

Germany's early dominance of a mini "World Cup" held recently in Shanghai, which featured eight teams of seven players, curiously mirrors the exploits of its national team at the FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

Foreign teams in the competition were made up of staff members from respective country pavilions.

As the quadrennial soccer fest wraps in South Africa on July 11, regular guys are getting to live out their dreams of dribbling like Messi, pouting like Ronaldo and drilling home shots like David Villa at a pitch beside Shanghai Stadium.

Germany tore a hole through France's defense to win its first match 10-0, even without the aid of thousands of vuvuzelas goading the players on. It kept a clean sheet against Argentina (3-0) and the Expo's Logistics Center (3-0) to cruise through the group stage of the tournament and advance to a semifinal clash with Saudi Arabia.

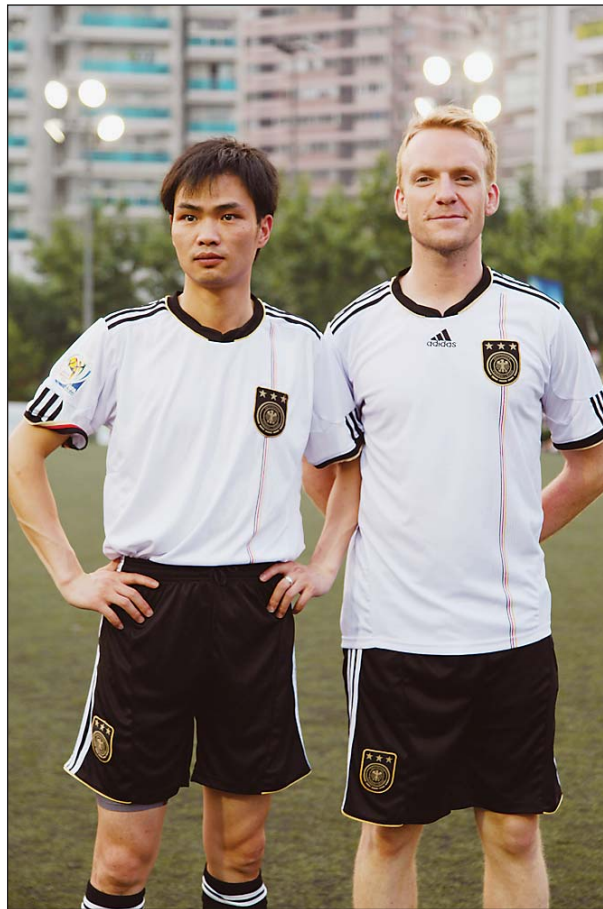
"It was like a childhood dream come true to play and beat Argentina on a decent pitch," said one German player, Peter Wolkowicz. "But it was a bit funny playing in the group stage with only eight teams, because at that point you'd normally already be in the quarterfinals."

The other group in the competition was made up of Spain, Italy, Saudi Arabia and the Shanghai Customs.

The Expo's Information and Communications Pavilion organized the first of two tournaments. DEVNET, which takes care of the networking for the United Nations Pavilion, has organized a similar Shanghai mini World Cup to be held after the completion of the real event in South Africa.

The second mini World Cup features twice as many teams (16), cheerleaders, and jerseys bearing the pavilions' logos rather than national strips.

The teams will also include staff members from Expo country pavilions.



PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Two members of staff from the Germany Pavilion prepare to compete at a mini World Cup next to the Shanghai Stadium.

The point is to "enhance communications and interactions between pavilions in the Expo site", DEVNET officials said in a press release.

"I think it was an excellent idea," said Argentine defender Maxi Chavarria. "It was very interesting to see countries like Saudi Arabia playing, and France, which was composed of French and Chinese."

"It really feels like a mini World Cup," said Wolkowicz. "Especially with us beating Argentina two days before our national team did so. Our pavilion director and other guys have started coming to watch our matches so there's a real atmosphere about it."

Germany's Expo outfit lacks big names like Miroslav Klose, but deals with some of the same headaches as the national team. It lost two key midfielders to injuries early on, just as Germany saw captain Michael Ballack hobbled by a cynical tackle before the World Cup kicked off.

German soccer pundit Franz Beckenbauer has credited some of his country's World Cup success to the cosmopolitan makeup of the team, which has strikers with Polish and Turkish passports. Coincidentally, Expo-based Wolkowicz also has a Polish surname.

Other teams have had a tougher time at the mini World Cup. At times, the competition has boiled down to a numbers game — Germany has a massive Expo staff of some 250 people — as much as a test of German discipline and resolve.

"I know Argentina struggled to even get seven guys," said Wolkowicz. "They couldn't play one game, then they had to borrow players from Paraguay or Uruguay for another. I think we even lent them one of our guys at one point."

Such collaboration wouldn't hold much water at the South African tournament, but it chimes perfectly with the spirit of the Expo.

newsbites

Design delight

The results of a global souvenir design contest supported by Expo organizers have been announced. A work called Oriental Crown China Pavilion, which was created by using remaining materials from the China Pavilion in Expo Garden won the highest award. A total of 19 works received awards either for their unique design or business value.

Varsity variety

The first Youth Week in Expo history began on July 5 and runs to July 11. An opening ceremony was held at Exposition Square. More than 2,000 alumni and students from international institutions, including Harvard, Yale and Oxford universities, and the Imperial College London, along with Peking, Qinghua, Fudan and Shanghai Jiaotong universities, are attending. Students celebrated the opening of the week by expressing the relationship between universities and cities, and between youth and the world.

Panda presents

Visitors will be able to get a free panda doll in the Chengdu Case Pavilion. A total of 130 panda dolls will be handed out every day at 6 pm at the pavilion. Visitors can get a doll by showing an Expo ticket stamped with a Chengdu Case Pavilion seal.

Flying high

Qatar Airways exhibited a model of its Boeing 777 business class cabin at the Qatar Pavilion during Qatar Week. The airline won Best Business Class in the Skytrax 2010 World's Best Airlines awards.

There are 23 weekly flights between the Qatar capital of Doha and four major cities in China: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. After a transfer in Doha, passengers can fly to locations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

To give Chinese passengers a better understanding of Qatar, the airline has introduced a city tour program. Passengers who are in transit in Doha for more than five hours can enjoy a free city tour.

New mobiles

Marko Ahtisaari, senior vice-president of Design at Nokia, gave a speech extolling Nokia's innovative design principles at the Finland Pavilion in the Expo Garden. "For Nokia, really good mobile design is about more than just style. Design has to deliver objects and services that are not only beautiful to look at but that also work just the way people want them to," Ahtisaari said.

Ahtisaari went on to introduce a new series of Nokia mobile phones, including the S40, Symbian and Meego. These new mobile phones, which have simplified functions and accessible prices, will be introduced globally.