

# Football's Grandest Stage

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While both have had incredible qualifying campaigns, the obvious questions still linger: will they win the World Cup? Will the Germans keep their crown or will the Spaniards reclaim it once and for all?

The signs are there for both. Spain, following the retirement of their most successful manager Vicente Del Bosque, have gone back to the old ways under new boss Julen Lopetegui. While Del Bosque, in the later stages of his national team years, was accused of favoring players he liked and ignoring others, Lopetegui has stepped up, refreshed a team that, to many, seemed to be going through the consequences of too much success, and has adopted a back-to-basics approach. Watch any of Spain's recent matches and their scintillating form will be evident, especially against Italy. Julen Lopetegui has put his focus on the area that made Spain one of the best national teams ever: their midfield. With no shortage of options between Iniesta, Thiago, Busquets, Isco, Asensio, Koke, and David Silva, the manager has been smart in his rotation and not afraid of using younger, in-form players instead of quality; this was seen through his decision to play a confident Asensio instead of Thiago and Monreal instead of Alba. The Spaniards have been playing quality football since their exit from EURO 2016 and it's only a matter of time to see if they replicate their performances of the last decade at football's grandest stage.

The Germans are known for their efficiency, work-rate, and organization and Joachim Löw's men have no showed no signs of slowing down following their triumph over Argentina in Brazil 3 years ago. Winning the Confederations Cup this summer was just proof that the Germans have not gotten complacent and aren't settling for just 4 World Cup trophies. With fine additions such as Leon Goretzka from Schalke and Timo Werner from RB Leipzig, Germany are a much better team from the previous years. With efficient and energetic football, an unbelievable midfield of Mesut Ozil and Toni Kroos, an unbreakable defense of Boateng and Hummels and the quality of young players like Sane and Werner up front, it's hard to imagine the World Cup not staying in Berlin for another 4 years.

Both these teams are the ones to lookout for next year but fierce competition from the likes of France and Brazil may put their domination on a halt. Only time will tell us who emerges victorious at Russia next summer.