



Germany's penalty shoot-out legacy gone after 44 years

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(From Left) Germany's defender #03 Waldemar Anton, defender #18 Nathaniel Brown, defender #24 Malin

Penalty shoot-outs had never been a cause for concern for Germany. Rather, [they were the weapon](#) with which they settled their toughest battles, and the moment when "Die Mannschaft" became even stronger and more resolute.

But at the [2026 World Cup](#) a rule that had stood for more than four decades was overturned, and one of the most formidable records in World Cup history came to an end.

Germany's [elimination](#) by Paraguay in the round of 32 was not merely an early exit from the tournament, but the end of an exceptional record that had remained unbroken since 1982. Every time the German national team had gone to a penalty shoot-out at the World Cup, they had emerged victorious, no matter how tough the opponent or how high-stakes the match.

Germany's World Cup story

In the semi-final of the 1982 World Cup against France, Germany progressed despite Uli Stielike missing one of their penalties, before continuing their dominance in the 1986 quarter-final against Mexico.

Then the 1990 semi-final against England, and finally the 2006 quarter-final against Argentina, establishing themselves as the world's most reliable team from the penalty spot.

During those four series, the German players took 18 penalties, scoring 17 of them, whilst Stielike's missed spot-kick remained the only one on the national team's record for 44 years – a statistic that contrasted with Germany's historic ability to handle the most difficult moments of matches.

But all that came to nothing against Paraguay, on a night that will remain etched in the memory of German fans. The players missed three penalties in a single shoot-out and the team lost 4-3, suffering their first ever penalty shoot-out defeat in the history of their World Cup campaigns. Few fans would have imagined this scenario.

It was not just the World Cup record that came crashing down; this became only Germany's second defeat on penalties in a major tournament, following the 1976 European Championship final against Czechoslovakia. Memories of that night were brought back after nearly half a century, but this time on the biggest stage in world football.

Paraguay not only wrote a new chapter in its history, but also brought to a close a long era of German dominance in penalty shoot-outs at the 2026 World Cup.

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