



Paraguay delivers World Cup shock to send Germany packing

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Paraguay send Germany home in round of 32 clash in Qatar. Celebrate with mass hugs on the pitch

[Germany's World Cup campaign](#) ended with a thud in Boston as Paraguay held their nerve from the spot to dump out the tour's time champions after a tense 1-1 draw over 120 minutes.

The underdogs, ranked 34th in the world, survived long stretches without the ball, frustrated Germany's attack, and then outlasted them in a dramatic shoot-out to reach the last 16.

Julio Enciso's first-half header gave Paraguay a surprise lead. Although Kai Havertz levelled shortly after the break, Germany never found the extra gear they needed. Their dominance in possession, 78% in the first half counted for nothing as Paraguay's defensive discipline held firm.

Paraguay player Enciso strikes, Germany stumble

Paraguay's opener came against the run of play. After recycling a short corner, Matias Galarza whipped in a cross that found Enciso completely unmarked. His header bounced past Manuel Neuer, stunning a Germany side that had spent the entire half circulating the ball without incision.

Germany's response after the interval was immediate. Florian Wirtz delivered a deep cross from the left, and Havertz met it with a glancing header into the far corner, his third of the tournament, to restore parity. It felt like the moment that would spark Germany into life, but instead, the game drifted back into Paraguay's preferred rhythm: slow, tight, and controlled.

Germany push, Paraguay hold

Julian Nagelsmann threw on attacking options as Germany probed for a winner. Florian Wirtz nearly set up Havertz again, but Orlando Gill, Paraguay's standout performer, palmed away the tame header.

Gill's command of his box repeatedly frustrated Germany, who struggled to turn possession into meaningful chances.

Paraguay, meanwhile, retreated deeper and deeper, waiting for a counter that never quite materialised. Their ambition was summed up by the decision to replace Miguel Almirán with defender Gustavo Velazquez heading into extra time – a clear sign they were preparing for penalties.

VAR drama denies Germany

Germany thought they had found the breakthrough in extra time when Jonathan Tah powered home a header from a corner. But VAR intervened, ruling that Waldemar Anton had fouled Gill in the build-up. The decision left Germany furious and shifted momentum back towards Paraguay, who continued to defend with remarkable discipline.

Enciso's injury earlier in the second half had forced Paraguay to adjust, but their defensive shape remained intact. Gustavo Gómez and José Canale marshalled the back line superbly, repeatedly shutting down Germany's attempts to play through the middle.

The shoot-out

Germany had never lost a World Cup penalty shoot-out until now. Havertz stepped up first and saw his effort saved by Gill, immediately handing Paraguay the advantage. Joshua Kimmich and Jamal Musiala converted their kicks, but Nick Woltemade's effort was saved, and Tah blazed his over the bar.

Paraguay twice missed chances to win it. Antonio Sanabria dragged his effort wide and Neuer saved from Fabian Balbuena, but Canale finally sealed the victory with a composed finish into the corner. The celebrations from the small pockets of Paraguay fans were deafening.

A historic night for La Albirroja

Enciso's opener was Paraguay's first ever goal in a [World Cup](#) knockout match. Paraguay's victory marks their biggest result on the global stage since reaching the quarter-finals in 2010. They now move on to face France or Sweden in the last 16.

For Germany, the defeat continues a bleak trend. They have not won a World Cup knockout tie since lifting the trophy in 2014. After group-stage exits in 2018 and 2022, this early departure adds another painful chapter.

Nagelsmann's side dominated the ball but lacked the creativity and tempo needed to break down Paraguay's defensive wall.

The verdict?

Germany controlled possession, territory, and tempo, but Paraguay controlled the moments that mattered. Gill's heroics, Enciso's clinical header, and Canale's decisive penalty combined to produce the upset of the tournament.

A powerhouse undone by patience, discipline, and nerve. A nation reborn on the biggest stage.

Paraguay marched on. Germany goes home.

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