

The world waits on Paul

 By Nick Said 9 Jul 2010

With all the punditry and written words on the 2010 FIFA World Cup final, it seems the public only want to hear from one 'person' ahead of the final meeting between Spain and Netherlands ... Paul the Octopus.



Paul has a remarkable record at predicting the results of football matches. He got five out of Germany's six results at the 2008 European Championships correct, with his only blemish in the final where they lost to Spain.

And he has now correctly predicted all six of Germany's results in the 2010 World Cup, including their defeat to Spain in the semis (got it right this time). That means he has a record of 11 out of 12 results, which is probably a lot more than many so-called experts!

And mathematicians believe the likelihood of Paul guessing the correct result six times in a row is less than 0.5%, or 1 in 216.

Paul believes in mussel power

English Octopus Paul was actually born in Weymouth in Blighty, but emigrated to Germany after being purchased by the Oberhausen's Sea Life Aquarium. His method of prediction is by choosing to eat a mussel from boxes emblazoned with the flags of the two competing teams.

So successful has he been that people are allegedly waiting for him to make his final prediction on Friday before heading down to the bookies!

But back to the more mundane method of predicting results by actually looking at the players on the pitch, and you really cannot see past Spain for Sunday's final.

The Dutch are a hard-working team with players who can provide flashes of brilliance, and they fully deserve their place in the Soccer City decider, but they are up against a Spanish outfit that has got better as the tournament has rolled on.

'So, Paul... who do you reckon will win?'

This Spain team is the master of keeping possession, and their win at the 2008 European Championships helped them shed the 'nearly-men' and underachievers' tag that had dogged them for 30 years.

There is enough graft and guile in their attacking play to unlock any defence, and they have been pretty stout at the back too, conceding just two goals in their six matches to date, and none in the knock-out stages against Portugal, Paraguay and Germany.

The Dutch defence has, however, looked suspect at times, and in their last three games they have conceded four goals.

There is no doubt that Holland can win on Sunday, this match is not so once-sided as to rule that out as a possibility, but Spain have to be the fairly heavy favourites.

But let's wait to see what Paul says first...

ABOUT NICK SAID

Nick Said is the business director of The Content Company, a leading supplier of South African and African football news, features, analysis and statistics to the local and international market. He is a former online business manager for Kick Off magazine, having previously held posts as sports editor for iafrica.com and operations manager for 365 Digital Publishing, where he led the team that produced the award-winning Football365.co.uk website.
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