**ADIDAS 2014 FIFA WORLD CUP BRAZIL™ PLAYER Q&A**

***Diego Costa, forward, Spain***

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**You played twice for Brazil in 2013 friendly matches, before switching your allegiances over to Spain. How hard was that decision, and how did you reach it?**

I have said this before, but it was very difficult, an agonising decision for me. I was born in Brazil, it is my homeland, but Spain is the country that has given me everything, that has made me the player I am today. I thought long and hard, I spoke to family and friends, and I decided that it was right and best to play for Spain, because this is where I have done everything. I have a special affection for Spain. Here I feel very appreciated for all that I do, and I feel the love of the people. It is the correct decision.

**Do you understand that certain people in Brazil might not see it that way, and may give you a hard time this summer?**

I appreciate and understand that, of course. My family is in Brazil, it is where I was born, and one day I want to return to live in Brazil. I hope people in my homeland can see that my decision is not one I made against Brazil in a negative way. I chose Spain in a positive way.

**It is not a decision to go against Phil Scolari, then, because he didn’t pick you for Brazil for the Confederations Cup?**

It is not a decision I made against anyone. That is not how I work or think. I decided that my future would be best with Spain, and that because Spain have given me so much, I would go down that route. If I get booed, I get booed, it will not make me think less of Brazilian people.

**Scolari happily picked Brazil-born players like Deco and Pepe when he managed Portugal, so is he not being hypocritical in criticising your decision?**

I don’t want to get into saying that. He picked who he picked, and I’ve gone my way. Playing for Spain is all that matters to me now.

**Will you not be devastated if Brazil win the World Cup, though, and think about a missed opportunity?**

No, I would be happy for my people back home. I have made my decision from my point of view, and I wish Brazil all the best. I will just focus on giving my best for Spain.

**What if you scored a winner for Spain against Brazil?**

I’d be happy. I have chosen my team and whoever I score against I will be happy. Again, it’s nothing against Brazil. But I have picked my team and now I want them to win.

**Spain’s current status as World and double European Champions must have helped to make your decision easier?**

Yes, naturally, to be linking up with such an immensely talented squad is a real attraction. But then that could have been turned against me: Spain have David Villa, Fernando Torres, Roberto Soldado, Michu, Alvaro Negrado, Fernando Llorente. It’s not like I’ve chosen the easy option. It’s not as if it is a team I will walk into. I will fight for my place.

**All those genius midfielders putting chances on a plate for you, that must be wonderful…**

It is something to relish. I think I can help score a lot of goals for Spain, and the way they keep the football is superb. They will create a lot of chances and it is my job, if and when I get selected, to put them in the back of the net.

**How welcome have you been made in the Spain squad, was it an awkward transition to make?**

I was made so welcome, they consider me one of their own, and a lot of them went out of their way to publicly say that, which I appreciate hugely. They have been great with me.

**You’re joining a side of pass masters. Do you think you suit playing the tika-taka way?**

I think I can slot into the style nicely. I maybe offer something different as a player, I work very hard and I like to make life difficult for my opponents. I will need to work on my possession game, but I think I have always been able to pass as well as score. This side passes the ball better than any other team in the world, and its forwards are expected to be a part of that. But I am in the side to score goals, and that is what I pray I can do in Brazil.

**Having done so in La Liga all season, which of the Spanish defenders are the hardest to play against?**

All of them! Sergio Ramos, Alvaro Arbeloa and the rest… these are hard guys to get past. And then if you get past them you’ve got Iker Casillas or Victor Valdes in the net to get past. I have to have a special word for my Atleti team mate Juanfran, though. He is breaking into this Spain side and he is a very special defender. I see him every day in training and he is one of the very best right backs around. He is already pretty much legendary at Altleti – I am hoping that he can do the same for Spain. He is my friend and I’d like to see him go on and become a Spain legend.

**You’ve certainly been in fine form for Atletico Madrid this season, you must go in to the World Cup confident?**

I am confident. Atleti have had a superb season both in the La Liga and in the Champions League, and we have proven that we can fight hard against Real Madrid and Barcelona. The fans have been wonderful to me in Madrid the whole time I have been there, and that has made me want to pay them back, both for Atletico and in the Spanish shirt.

**What has changed for you to make so much personal progress as a player?**

Nothing much, I just think maybe I have worked harder and had a better mentality this year. So much of the game is in your head, and I have been confident and happy. That makes all the difference and things have worked out for me.

**You have a fiery reputation, but that seems to be tempered a little now, like you have mellowed a little…**

Yes, in the past I was so passionate that sometimes I didn’t control myself enough. I think I have learned control now, and that has benefited my game. The passion is still there, it has not dimmed at all, but I have learned how to keep it contained and channel it in a positive way.

**Do you think you might even have a chance of winning the World Cup Golden Boot?**

Any striker should go into a World Cup wanting to score lots and lots of goals. It seems early to talk about golden boots when I have only played one match for Spain, but why not have that ambition? You would hope that this side, with the quality they have, can go very far into the tournament. They haven’t lost in a World Cup since 2006. So whoever is playing up front for them is going to be presented with an excellent opportunity to finish the summer as the top scorer. F that was me, I couldn’t be happier.

**Which other forwards do you think have a chance of bagging the top scorer prize?**

There is so much talent out there. A couple of other Spaniards who could do it to start off with. Leo Messi we have all seen can score incredible goals. Suarez is scoring for fun in England. Neymar, Ronaldo, Higuain, Aguero, Ronaldo, Falcao, Costa, Fred, van Persie… where do you even start? I’m not a gambling man, so I’m not going to be placing any bets!

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