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

***Mesut Ozil, midfielder, Germany***

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**You’ve spent a season in England after playing in Germany and Spain. How have the leagues compared?**

The Premier League is probably the most difficult league in the world because it is so close and there are so many teams that are even at the top of it. Every team can beat every team and that’s a really appealing thing about it for me. I have enjoyed it a lot, Arsenal has been great for me, the manager has been fantastic. He is the one who persuaded me to come to Arsenal and he is so impressive as a coach. The fans have welcomed me. The atmospheres have been superb in England too, I’ve really enjoyed that. The fans push you on to do better.

**Have you developed as a player since your star turn at the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa?**

Of course. I developed at Real Madrid and again at Arsenal. If you play in La Liga and in the Premier League you can always develop further and get better. Because you are facing the best players in the world, battling against them every week. And in the Premier League it is a lot of games. So I am having a lot of opportunity to improve, play better, work on my game, be more consistent. Hopefully I’ll be a better player in Brazil than I was in South Africa.

**How much pressure is there on Germany to succeed, and does it affect you when you prepare for a tournament?**

Pressure doesn’t bother me. I’ve played a Real Madrid, where the pressure to win every game is immense, and it is the same in the Premier League. The fans can’t put any more pressure on us than we put on ourselves. We know that Germany are overdue a really good performance in a big tournament, and we are determined to put it right. It is something that would be huge for our supporters.

**You play with Per Mertesacker and Lukas Podolski at Arsenal, has there been much chat about your summer plans in the changing room?**

Not yet. We have been focused on Arsenal business, always, when we are in the changing room. The next game is always the most important one. But we are friends outside of where we work and of course sometimes we chat about Brazil. There couldn’t be a more exciting place to go and play football, to try and put on a show.

**What would it be like to return to England next season with a World Cup winners’ medal?**

It would be the greatest feeling possible. Although I can’t imagine many of the English fans liking it – that is their nightmare, the Germans winning a World Cup! Enough English people have mentioned this to me while I have been here, although they have been very polite about it. Although I think the Arsenal fans would be OK. I believe that when France won the World Cup, Arsenal claimed it as “their” victory, because they had so many players in that side. So maybe myself, Per and Lukas will be given a break.

**You’ve got Serge Gnabry at Arsenal too, of course, do you see him as a major part of Germany’s future?**

Yes. He is a very talented youngster and it wouldn’t surprise me if he got taken along for the World Cup. He can win a place, I think. But if not this time around, I think we will be reading and talking more about Serge in 2016 and 2018. I have seen first hand how talented he is with the ball and he can have a big impression on German football. It is pleasing to have so many youngsters coming through.

**Is Brazil the perfect setting for Germany’s Brazil-like football, what with the fans appreciating attacking play?**

Yes, why not! It is funny that you say that, because for so many years Germany were not seen as a team that could play the beautiful football, the expressive football that you associate with Brazil. But now we have a side that can play both efficiently, and with beauty. That’s something Brazilians appreciate, so maybe the home fans will take us to heart.

**How do you look back on the FIFA World Cup 2010 now. Was it a learning curve or an opportunity missed?**

It was a great experience. Great for myself, great for many other of the young Germany players. We learned a lot. We learned how well you have to play to do well at that level. The Spain game was difficult to take. Perhaps on another day we might have beaten them, but their side is impressive, it knows how to win. We can mark all this down as experience and learn from it. But the important thing is to translate that experience into something better this time around. It is no good being a side that is good enough for the quarter finals, the semi finals, being a side with potential. We have to say that now we have the side to go and win the thing.

**How do you see Germany’s group games going? You’ve got Portugal, Ghana and the USA, so it’s a real mixed bag…**

Starting against Portugal isn’t ideal – that is a really, really big game to kick things off. If we lose that, suddenly Ghana and the USA will see a chance for a shock, a chance to get out of the group. So it’s important that we concentrate early and do a good professional job against Portugal. Win the game if we can, but most of all, don’t lose it.

**There’s the possibility of a clash with Belgium in the round of 16, too, a side with some wonderful young players…**

It could happen, it all depends on how people do in the group stages. It would be quite a game – two teams packed with young talent, and real European rivals, neighbours. I’m sure they’d love to upset the odds and get one over us, so we need to try to win our group and avoid Belgium.

**Which other sides would you like to steer clear of, to give Germany an ideal run to the final?**

In the latter stages of the tournament you can’t avoid great teams, it is where you would expect to find the Brazils and Spains waiting. You have to play those sides eventually. But I think avoiding Brazil for as long as possible would be ideal. The crowds are going to be incredibly partisan over there, and facing them at home is going to be very tough for whoever draws them.

**You have over five million twitter followers. Are you going to be keeping them updated this summer?**

Absolutely, I like to use it to give thanks to the fans after we play games. Football is nothing without the supporters, so to be able to say “we appreciate it” after a game to me, is good manners. A lot of Germans will be spending their wages on flying out to Brazil to cheer us on, and that is important to us. So a tweet of appreciation is the least we can give back to them.

**You were a good chess player as a kid – will you be cracking out the board at the World Cup in between matches?**

I am happy to give anyone a game if they fancy it! But I am more going to be concentration on football tactics than chess ones!

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