

Cologne's ACT using iQ to revisit one of the German football team's greatest triumphs - 50 years ago

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Whilst elsewhere in Europe, particularly in England, other soccer World Cup Finals are remembered with a great deal more enthusiasm, in Germany the date that is guaranteed to spark all manner of misty eyed recollection is 1954. It was then 50 years ago that the unfancied West German side managed to beat tournament favourites Hungary 3-2 in the final in Bern, despite having been on the wrong end of an 8-3 drubbing in the group stages. As a result, the match is referred to throughout Germany as the Miracle of Bern and is even considered by some people to hold roughly the same position in the German collective psyche as the fall of the Berlin Wall.



To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the match, Cologne production company broadview.tv decided to revisit the final in *Das Wunder von Bern - Die wahre Geschichte (The Miracle of Bern - The True History)*. The first task it faced was unearthing some more footage of the game - only 15 minutes widely assumed to have survived the intervening period - the second was to decide what format to make the 90-minute documentary in. A lot of research resolved the first problem, a whole host of issues decided the latter.

"We believe that within the next years the last documentaries about this historic event will be made as the surviving players are all now very old and a new edition in five years in this format won't be possible," comments producer Leopold Hoesch from broadview.tv. "High Definition was the logical consequence for us to produce maybe the standard documentary about 'The Miracle' which can be used internationally as well.

Hoesch describes HD as being 'very cinematic and clearer than 35mm', while the extreme length of some of the interviews - shot on a Sony HDF-F900H - meant that the lower costs of HD stock versus 35mm were also factored into the equation.

Post was taken care of in Cologne by two facilities, Bavaria Production Service and ACT Videoproduktion GmbH, where Oliver Kenneke oversaw the project using Quantel's iQ system with QColor.

"The biggest challenge at this project was the extensive colour correction required," he says. "The documentary consists of 40% historic film material and 60% new footage shot in HD - the new interviews of contemporary witnesses and recordings done in locations from 1954. That means very different qualities for the image signal. We had to retouch many images individually to eliminate 50 years of damage to the old film footage."

According to ACT, the resolution co-existent iQ was perfect for working on such a mixed format project, where HD, SD film and video all had to be combined on the same timeline. Offline was done in SD on Avid, with the EDL being imported via AAF directly into the iQ. Several different versions were produced from the box for the multiple international markets broadview.tv expects to reach with the production - HD, anamorphic SD and 16:9 SD - with the SD material being uprezzed just before output on the iQ for the HD version.



The machine's ability to produce complex effect shots came in useful on several occasions too as, as is common with many digital grading projects, the number of effects shots multiplied rapidly. These included replacing the sky in the opening pan shot of Bern's skyline with a number of tracked and animated weather layers, inserting passengers digitally into a shot of a passing bus ("Which was driving through an avenue of trees making the production of the tracked scene very difficult," says Kenneke) and numerous other digital tweaks and composites.

Given the German team's current form and penchant for 5-1 defeats, it might well be another 50 years before they have a sniff at the Jules Rimet Trophy. In the meantime, however, broadview.tv has produced a fine hour and a half that the nation can watch in comfort and always be certain of the right result.

"We put a lot of effort into the post production of *The Miracle of Bern*," concludes ACT's Robert Groß, "especially in the adaptation of the archive scenes where the colour correction took more time than we planned. But particularly for this kind of production with different materials as HD, SD, film and video our iQ has exactly the right tools."