


Toggle navigation



News

Search

Search

facebook

twitter

youtube

login

Search

Search

Home

News

Business

Entertainment

Life

Sports

Overseas

Trending

Focus

Weather


DZMM

ANC


TV Patrol

LOGIN


EXPLORE ABS-CBN




Military Smartwatch Everybody in Philippines is Talking About.  
breakthroughtrend.com



Meet the Life-Changing Health Watch Taking Our Country by Storm  
simplesdiscountfinder.com



No need for Air Conditioning with this Innovative Cooling Device!  
Cool Air Technology



Night Driving Is 80% Safer With Those Amazing "X-Ray Vision" Glasses  
ZaloTech  
Recommended by Outbrain

[Home](#) > [Sports](#)

### From Germany, brothers Manny and Mike Ott help Azkals find football miracle

Katrin Hartmann

Posted at Dec 05 2018 02:33 AM | Updated as of Dec 05 2018 03:39 PM

Share

Save

Facebook


Twitter

GPlus

LinkedIn

*In Germany they're unknowns, but in the Philippines they're stars. The Ott brothers are shooting this Southeast Asian national football team far ahead. Attention is rising for the Azkals. A few years ago, the country recruited reinforcements from Europe. With German-Filipino players, such as Ott, Stephan Schröck and Patrick Reichelt, the Philippines are aiming for the title at the ASEAN Football Federation Suzuki Cup this year. German exchange journalist Katrin Hartmann spoke recently to the Ott brothers.*

Previous



The arrival in the Philippines of Manny and Mike Ott helped the brothers find a footballing break and a country starving for success on the pitch to fulfill each other's dreams.

https://news.abs-cbn.com/sports/12/05/18/from-germany-brothers-manny-and-mike-ott-help-azkals-find-football-miracle

1/10



“Bacolod is sugarcane country,” says the taxi driver, smiling in the rearview mirror. Suddenly a small football pitch appears between the two-meter high plants. The lawn is a lush green, like freshly bathed chives. On it stand white-painted timbers opposite one another as rickety-build goals. “For the children,” explains the driver.

A pitch, similar to that, reminds Manuel and Mike Ott of their old football field in Bavarian Pfaffenhofen, Germany.

“We grew up next to the field. It was practically just across the street. For us, there was nothing but the village club,” the siblings say.

Manuel and Mike Ott are sons of a Filipino mother and a German father. They are unmistakably brothers with their similar facial features, beards, and their eyes of the same dark color. Another brother, Marco, Mike’s twin brother, still lives in Bavaria.

As “Gerphils,” they have dual citizenship.

Four years ago, Manuel, 26, was the first of the brothers to leave his home in Bavaria — the small town, the village club, the sports school and his team at FC Ingolstadt 04. Mike, 23, followed three years later. They had been to the Philippines before.

“We flew here on holiday almost every year,” says Manuel. “Our mother is from Boracay.”

Boracay has everything a sunny-minded holiday-goer desires: snow-white beaches, azure waters and palm trees. However, palm trees, beaches and azure waters were not what urged the Ott brothers to move. It was the football.

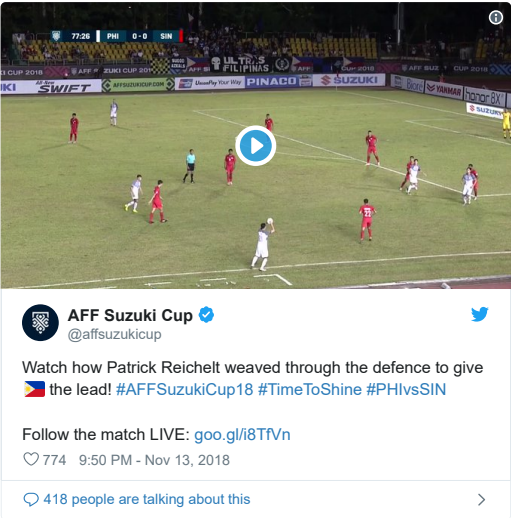
“It was 2010,” recalls Manuel, or Manny for short. “A scout came to Germany. He was commissioned for all of Europe to look for players for the Philippine national team.”

In addition to ability, the basic requirement was a Philippine passport. “Until then, I didn’t even know that there was a Philippine national football team,” says Manny.

Nevertheless, he was invited to a trial training camp in Taiwan. After, he signed the contract. “In German football, it’s getting harder and harder every year to get over the hurdles. There are a lot of good players.” The Azkals offered him a new opportunity. Mike joined him a little later. He hadn’t heard of the Azkals either.

“In the Philippines it’s all about basketball,” says Mike. “But football could have a lot of potential here if only the players had better options.”

Currently, the Azkals are doing well. In the AFF Suzuki Cup, the Azkals defeated the team from East Timor 3-2 and the Lions from Singapore 1-0. They tied 1-1 with the defending champions from Thailand, and against Indonesia 0-0.



With Swedish coach Sven-Göran Eriksson at the helm, the Ott brothers have recently been training with a legend, they say. “Everyone respects him. Every player knows his career.”

However, after they had arrived in the Philippines, they had to get used to the Southeast Asian football style. “In Germany, the pace is faster, but here the players are more lively and nimble. They scurry through everywhere,” says Manny and smiles.

“Also the humidity doesn’t always make training easy for us,” says his brother, “but our mother’s genes have given us a good level of adaptability.”

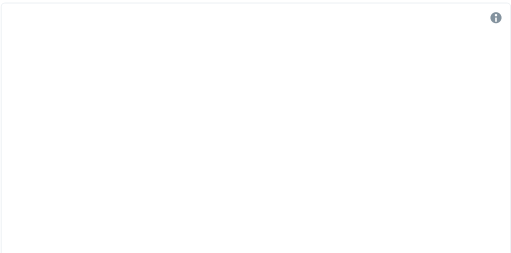
As players for the Ceres Football Club and the national team, they regularly commute between “sugarcane country” and Manila. The brothers still haven’t gotten used to the excessive traffic in Metro-Manila. “In Germany it’s much more systematic. Here it’s a test of patience,” says Mike.

After coming over, they didn’t have to change their eating habits much. “We love rice and potatoes.” But they still miss German supermarkets with the salami and cheese.

As Gerphils, they understand Tagalog quite well, but speaking it hasn’t been easy. And having to pose for selfies with the predominantly female fans is still something they’re not used to. “We’re not really selfie freaks. We’re pretty German in that respect,” says Manny and laughs.

In the Philippines, Bacolod and Cebu are the places where football has the largest fan base, otherwise it’s not a big deal. It’s not like in Germany, where some clubs look back on a century of fan history, says Manny. From time to time, the Azkals organize trial sessions for children and teens.

“Most of them really enjoy it. There are quite a few talented players,” says Mike. Even though, they can only practice between the sugar cane.





**Kat\_Hartmann**  
@KatrinHartmann7

It is not everyday that you get to meet two footballplayers of the Nationalteam of the Philippines. Thanks Manuel and Mike Ott for the interview.[#azkals](#) [#philippines](#) [#goethecloseup](#) [#football](#)

♡ 18 8:41 PM - Nov 14, 2018

[See Kat\\_Hartmann's other Tweets](#)

This article was written as part of the Goethe-Institut's Close-Up journalists' exchange programme. For more information, go to [www.goethe.de/nahaufnahme](http://www.goethe.de/nahaufnahme) or [#goethecloseup](#).

For more sports coverage, visit the [ABS-CBN Sports website](#).

- Share
- Save
  - Facebook
  - Share on Twitter
  - GPlus
  - LinkedIn

Read More: [Azkals](#), [Manny Ott](#), [Mike Ott](#), [Philippines football](#)

FROM THE WEB



Fix your eyes now with this revolutionary thing!  
[www.besthealthadvice.com](http://www.besthealthadvice.com)



This Cheap Key Gadget Might Be The Most Amazing Invention of 2018  
[en.nexttech.com](http://en.nexttech.com)



Thinning Hair? Apply This on Your Hair and Watch What Happens  
[donkonobas.com](http://donkonobas.com)

Recommended by 

• [LATEST NEWS](#)

• [MOST READ](#)

- [NASA says faraway world Ultima Thule shaped like 'snowman'](#)  
about 5 hours ago
- [San Sebastian eyes share of second in NCAA volleyball](#)  
about 5 hours ago
- [Bata, nagdiwang ng kaarawan sa burol ng pinaslang na ama](#)  
about 6 hours ago
- [FACTBOX: Impact on U.S. government widens on 12th day of shutdown](#)  
about 6 hours ago
- [3 preso, huli sa 'drug session' sa loob ng Lipa City Jail](#)  
about 6 hours ago
- [Renowned figure-skating coach hopes Pinay teen will be Olympic gold worthy.](#)  
about 6 hours ago
- [Bangkay ng lalaki, natagpuan sa Maynila](#)  
about 7 hours ago
- [9 tiklo sa anti-drug ops sa Tondo](#)  
about 7 hours ago
- [The ANC Brief: Security concerns in Mindanao](#)  
about 8 hours ago
- [Ama patay matapos hampasin ng tubo ng anak sa Bagong Taon](#)  
about 8 hours ago
- [Pari, may mensahe sa sasali sa Traslacion 2019](#)  
about 9 hours ago
- [The Day in Photos: 02 January 2019](#)  
about 9 hours ago