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Iran's Appearance at FIFA World Cup

Iran have appeared in the finals of the FIFA World Cup on four occasions in 1978, 1998, 2006 and 2014.

Iran may have never reached the second round of the World Cup in three previous appearances but that does not mean Team Melli's participation has been forgettable -- far from it. When the West Asians appear on the global stage, they may leave fairly early but the stories remain for much longer. With games coming against Argentina, Bosnia and Nigeria this June, just how well Iran do in Brazil under coach Carlos Queiroz is set to become the most fascinating chapter yet. This is episode four, a new hope.

It all started back in 1978 in South America. Being drawn against the mighty Netherlands, a talented Scottish team and the dark horses of Peru was a tough introduction even before the team gave away four penalties and one own goal in the three games. Two spot kicks were converted by Robbie Rensenbrink as the Dutch won 3-0 and then two more

were scored by another of the tournament's standout stars, Peru's Teofilo Cubillas, in the final match of the group.

The bright point came in between with a 1-1 draw against Scotland that ensures the name 'Iran' still sends shivers through Scots of a certain age. The Tartan Army arrived in Argentina in high spirits after being promised a place in the last four by coach Ally MacLeod. In truth, the team was overconfident and underprepared for an opening game defeat at the hands of Peru but Iran were still seen as a certain three points. They reckoned without a talented team and a goalkeeper was Nasser Hejazi -- who was on his way to achieving legend status on and off the pitch.

His successors in the national team did just that two decades later. The Asia-Oceania playoff of November 1997 will never be forgotten in Iran or Australia. A 1-1 draw in the first leg in front of well over 100,000 fans in Tehran, most of which were considerably older than the Socceroos' teenage



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goalscorer Harry Kewell, suggested the trip Down Under was going to be a tricky one.

Kewell, who has just recently announced his retirement from football, struck again in the first half and when Aurelio Vidmar made it two just after the break, Terry Venables and his men were fantasising about France. Two late goals from the visitors, however, shocked the vast majority of the 85,000 inside the Melbourne Cricket Ground into silence. The scenes in Tehran were naturally very different and the government told the team to delay their return home as celebrations on the streets threatened to get out of hand.

There was more to come. Being drawn in a group with the United States was naturally one of the stories of the 1998 World Cup. It was a tough, tough group. A narrow opening game defeat at the hands of a talented Yugoslavia team left Iran heading to Lyon to face a USA team in need of points. The game marked Iran's first, and to date only, win at the World Cup.

Veteran Hamad Estili headed the opener five minutes before the break to produce a Tardellian celebration. Then six minutes from time, a young Mehdi Mahdavi (who still looked 20 when he ended his international career in 2009) broke free to double the advantage. Brian McBride pulled one back shortly afterwards, a scrambled effort that served to make the final whistle sound all the sweeter.

The reward for making history was a game with Germany that had to be won. The players still had yet to come down from the high point of Iranian football history and a 2-0 defeat meant that they were heading home.

No Iran fan will want to remember the failed qualification for the 2002 World Cup -- suffice to say that an opportunity to exact revenge on Bahrain is taken with relish at every opportunity -- but the road to Germany 2006 was a relatively smooth one despite the riot their late goals provoked in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

Fans felt Iran had a real chance of finally reaching the second round. A team led by the affable Croatian Branko Ivankovic contained Bayern Munich's Ali Karimi and Bayern old boys, the legendary Ali Daei and Vahid Hashemian. There was top Asian-based talent too such as Andranik Teymourian and Javad Nekounam. It all suggested that a group containing Mexico, Portugal and Angola was tricky but not impossible.

A bright first half against Mexico on a scorching Sunday afternoon in Nurnberg confirmed that this Iran side could live with teams more experienced on the world stage but it all went wrong in the second half after a tired and not quite fit Karimi was withdrawn and El Tri scored two late goals to win 3-1. International news outlets praised the stubborn Iranian resistance but these were plaudits unwanted and unsought by the supporters who felt their team could and should have won. These fans lit up the cities of Germany with their numbers, colour, passion and love of the game and their country, but the team paled in comparison.

And that has been it. Qualification for 2010 ended amid heartbreak, as a late Park Ji-sung goal in Seoul killed any hopes of South Africa, and controversy.

Two years later and Carlos Queiroz entered the fray, a man with more international experience than most of the 32 men ready to patrol Brazilian technical areas this June. It will not surprise anyone to learn that his version of Team Melli is well-organised and miserly at the back, conceding just twice in eight games in the final round of qualification. His Iran team will not do a North Korea and lose 7-0 to anybody this June. The issue -- as shown by the fact that the four goals recorded in the win over Lebanon matched the entire haul from the other seven games -- is going to be scoring.

Such incidents have done little to dampen the mood of excitement back home, though. Iran can't wait to get to Brazil this June in order to, off the pitch as well as on it, write another chapter in their already fascinating World Cup history.

Source: www.socornet.com



FIFA®

PRESIDENTS



FIFA has been served by eight Presidents since its foundation in 1904. From Frenchman Robert Guerin to the current incumbent Joseph S. Blatter via Jules Rimet, the father of the FIFA World Cup™, each President has played his part in the growth and development of the world's favourite game.

Robert Guerin, France - 1904-06
Born 1876, Died 1952

Frenchman Robert Guerin was the dynamic figure behind the founding of FIFA in 1904. A journalist with Le Matin newspaper, Guerin was actively involved in football through his role as secretary of the Football Department of the Union des Societes Françaises de Sports Athletiques. He brought together representatives of the first seven member countries in Paris for the signing of FIFA's foundation act and agreement of the first FIFA statutes. On 22 May 1904, Guerin - then just 28 - was elected president at the inaugural FIFA Congress and remained in his post for two years, during which time another eight associations came on board, including the English Football Association.



1904-1906
FIFA PRESIDENTS



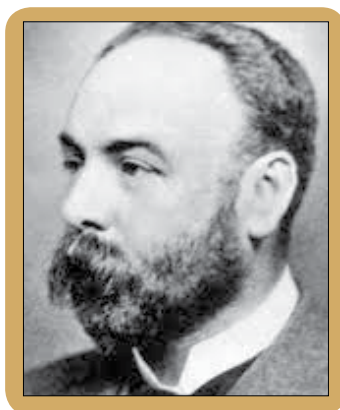
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Daniel Burley Woolfall, England
Born 1852, Died 1918

An English FA administrator from Blackburn, Daniel Burley Woolfall was elected as President on 4 June 1906. A key aim during his presidency was to achieve uniform football rules on an international level and he played a prominent role in the drafting of FIFA's new constitution. Under Woolfall, the application of the Laws of the Game, established under the English model, became compulsory and a clear definition was made of international matches. Two years after assuming the presidency, he helped organise the first noteworthy international football competition, the 1908 Olympic Games in London. His reign as president brought the arrival of FIFA's first non-European members in South Africa, Argentina, Chile and the United States but was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. Woolfall's presidency ended with his death in August 1918.

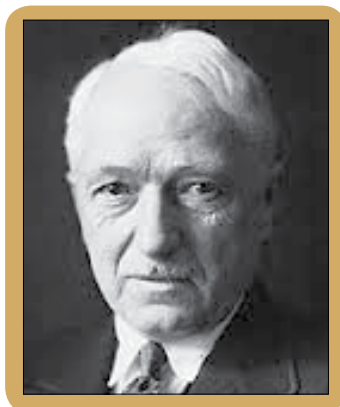


1906-1918
FIFA PRESIDENTS

Jules Rimet, France
Born 1873, Died 1956

(named Honorary FIFA President on 21 June 1954)

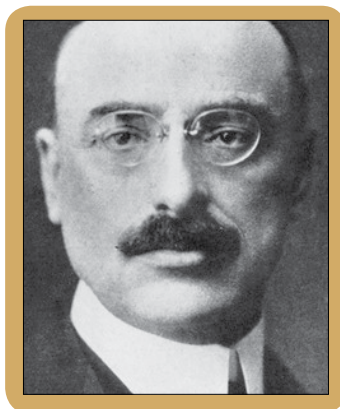
When the FIFA World Cup trophy was renamed in honour of Jules Rimet in 1946, it was rightful recognition of the role played by the Frenchman, then celebrating his 25th anniversary as President, in establishing what fast became the sport's foremost competition. Rimet, inspired by the success of the Olympic Football Tournament, was the driving force behind the FIFA World Cup's inception in 1930. His overriding aim was a rapprochement of nations through sport and the First World War only reinforced his determination. He oversaw the first five tournaments before handing 'his' trophy over for the final time to West Germany captain Fritz Walter in June 1954. That same month, the then 80-year-old ended his long reign - during which FIFA membership grew from 20 to 85 countries - and became the federation's first Honorary President.



1921-1954
FIFA PRESIDENTS

Rodolphe William Seeldrayers, Belgium
Born 1876, Died 1955

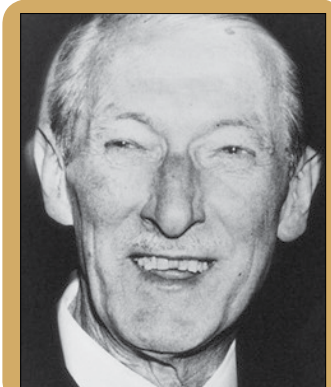
A lawyer from Brussels, Rodolphe William Seeldrayers was an accomplished sportsman in his youth, winning a Belgian championship with Racing Club Brussels - a club he later served as president. As a sports administrator, he helped found the Belgian Football Association and served on the International Olympic Committee. At FIFA he performed the duties of Vice-President for 27 years prior to succeeding Jules Rimet, his great comrade-in-arms. Seeldrayers was President for the 1954 FIFA World Cup and also oversaw the world governing body's 50th anniversary celebrations that same year. He died in office on 7 October 1955.



1954-1955
FIFA PRESIDENTS

Arthur Drewry, England
Born 1891, Died 1961

Arthur Drewry served as interim head of FIFA for six months following the death of Rodolphe William Seeldrayers and then became President in his own right in June 1956. Together with Stanley Rous, he had keenly supported Jules Rimet's efforts to bring the British associations back into FIFA in 1946 and he also served as president of the Football League and chairman of the Football Association in England. The near five years that Drewry spent as President - from his election in 1956 to his passing aged 70 on 25 March 1961 - included the 1958 FIFA World Cup in Sweden.

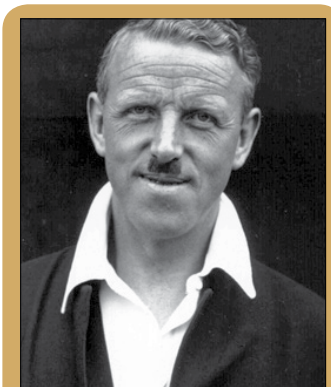


1955-1961
FIFA PRESIDENTS

Sir Stanley Rous, England
Born 1895, Died 1986

(named Honorary FIFA President on 11 June 1974)

Sir Stanley Rous had already made an impressive contribution to football on and off the field before becoming President of FIFA. As a top-class referee, he took charge of the FA Cup final in England and 36 international matches. Then, having becoming secretary of the English FA in 1934, he helped rewrite the Laws of the Game in 1938 while his patient diplomacy helped pave the way for the British nations rejoining FIFA in 1946. Rous was knighted in 1949 for his contribution to the London Olympics the previous year and to sport in general. He became the third English President of FIFA when he took the reins in September 1961 and during his term of office, the FIFA World Cup became a worldwide television spectacle - particularly with the Mexico 1970 finals, which were the first to be broadcast around the globe in colour. Four years earlier he had been witness to England's FIFA World Cup triumph on home soil.



1961-1974
FIFA PRESIDENTS

João Havelange, Brazil
Born 1916

(named Honorary FIFA President on 8 June 1998)

Dr João Havelange's 24 years as FIFA President were a period of significant change which featured, most notably, the expansion of the FIFA World Cup from a 16-team tournament to one twice as large by the time the Brazilian left his post in 1998. An Olympic swimmer and water polo player in his younger days, Havelange's greatest achievement as a football administrator was arguably to ensure increased involvement on the world stage for teams from Asia, Africa, CONCACAF and Oceania, who had had just three FIFA World Cup finalists between them in 1974. FIFA's Zurich headquarters housed just 12 staff members when he took office yet that figure would increase almost tenfold as FIFA's organisational responsibilities and commercial interests grew, not least with a wave of new tournaments introduced, notably the world championships at Under-17 and U20 level in the late 1980s and the FIFA Confederations Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup at the start of the 1990s.



1974-1998
FIFA PRESIDENTS



1998-present FIFA PRESIDENTS

Joseph S. Blatter, Switzerland
Born 1936

Joseph S. Blatter had already served FIFA for 23 years when he was elected President of world football's governing body on 8 June 1998. A former keen amateur footballer, he joined FIFA as Director of Technical Programmes in 1975 where he helped lay the foundations for future under-age and women's competitions. He worked closely under his predecessor, Dr João Havelange, serving as General Secretary for nine years from 1981 and subsequently CEO, and playing a key role in organising five FIFA World Cups from Spain 1982 onwards. The Swiss was also the driving force behind FIFA's ongoing partnership with SOS Children's Villages, which started in 1994, and since his election he has extended the federation's humanitarian remit by forming an alliance with UNICEF. Re-elected for a second term as President on 29 May 2002, Mr Blatter has expanded FIFA's competition portfolio, developing the FIFA Club World Cup as well as introducing world championships for Beach Soccer and Futsal. The President was re-elected to serve a fourth term on 1 June 2011.

Source: www.fifa.com



Ticket for 2014 FIFA World Cup





1. Which Ticket Categories are offered by FIFA?

There will be four price categories offered for the 2014 FIFA World Cup

- Category 1: This is the highest priced and located in prime areas within the Stadium.
- Categories 2 and 3 are located outside of the Category 1 area.
- Category 4 is the most affordable and is reserved exclusively for residents of Brazil.

Category 4 Tickets are the lowest priced category of Tickets and thus are the least expensive.

Category 4 Tickets are available to Brazilian residents only.

FIFA will allocate the aggregate number of at least 400,000 Category 4 Tickets across all 64

Matches. In accordance with the General World Cup Bill, from this allocation the first 300,000 Category 4 Tickets will be offered with priority access to elderly persons, students and Bolsa familia members. The prices for different matches and methods of payment are also available at www.fifa.com.

2. How does FIFA in general decide which seats belong to which category?

FIFA determines the categorisation of each seat in the Stadium on a Match-by-Match basis. This

means that (i) the Ticket Category may vary from Match to Match; (ii) all Ticket Categories may

comprise stadium seats of the lower and upper tier, (iii) the Ticket Categorisation remains unaffected from any conditions on the Match day, such as weather conditions; and (iv) Ticket Category boundaries may vary from Match to Match. Such differentiation is necessary to secure that

the maximum number of Tickets can be made available to football fans.

3. A Guide to 2014 Brazil World Cup Tickets

In the eyes of many football fans, FIFA World Cup™ tickets are prized possessions that become genuine collectors' items at end of the tournament. The design of tickets and the language they are printed in conjure up memories of the host nation and the game in question, made memorable by the atmosphere in the stadium and surrounding the competition as a whole.

Each ticket bears a total of ten key pieces of information designed to make life easier for spectators from the moment they arrive at the stadium and to help them find their seat. In revealing how, we are going to use a ticket for Brazil's group match with Mexico as an example. Let's begin with some general information:

1. The match number is highlighted in the left-hand corner. In the example above, the Brazil-Mexico game is Match 17. You can find the numbers of all the games in the match schedule.

2. Next to the number appear the match details (in this case Brazil v Mexico). For obvious reasons the names of teams are provided on tickets for group games only, as on our sample ticket. Tickets for knockout matches use a combination of letters and numbers to identify the teams involved. For example, "1A v 2B" indicates that the match will be between the winners of Group A and the runners-up in Group B, while "W55 v W56" indicates that the game will be between the winners of Match 55 and Match 56. If in doubt, then check the match number and refer to the match schedule.



The blue section below features the following information:

3. The date of the match.
4. The kick-off time.
5. The full name and address of the stadium staging the match.
- 6: The printed name of the person buying the ticket.
- 7: The ticket category.
- 8: The price of the ticket.

The information given at the bottom of the ticket is designed to help fans reach their seats with a minimum of fuss:

9. Detailing information of both a general and specific nature and relevant to the holder both inside and outside the stadium, this section represents a very practical step-by-step guide, starting with admission to the stadium. The Brazil-Mexico ticket above clearly states that the spectator must use the southern entrance and then, once inside the stadium, proceed to Gate C. On reaching the concourse, opposite the concessions, the ticket holder will then look for the block in question, in this case "106 A", and access the stands. All that remains for them to do is find the correct

row and seat number, which on this ticket are "C" and "1" respectively.

10. To make the whole process even easier, this last section uses a colour code to indicate the area in which the seat is located. All FIFA World Cup stadiums are divided into four main areas, denoted by red, blue, green or yellow. The small black arrow indicates where the holder's area is located. The spectator service team will be on hand outside the stadium to guide fans towards the right area. All you need to remember along the way is the colour of your area.

Easily identifiable in their uniforms, members of the spectator service team will be on duty inside and outside the stadium along with volunteers should you need any help. Please do not hesitate to ask them for assistance. They will be more than willing to help ensure that your match experience is a memorable one.

In addition, the ticket is also a useful reference guide for your stadium experience. Important information is printed on the back, including a list of items that can be brought inside the stadium.

www.fifa.com



World Cup Soccer History

No other sporting event captures the world's imagination like the FIFA World Cup. Ever since the first tentative competition in Uruguay in 1930, FIFA's flagship has constantly grown in popularity and prestige. It happens every four years, with each tournament preceded by a two to three year qualifying process.

A group of visionary French football administrators, led in the 1920s by the innovative Jules Rimet, are credited with the original idea of bringing the world's strongest national football teams together to compete for the title of World Champions. The original gold trophy bore Jules Rimet's name and was contested three times in the 1930s, before the Second World War put a 12-year stop to the competition.

When the World Cup kicked off its humble beginnings in Uruguay in 1930, only 13 teams made it to the host country's far-off shores to compete. Uruguay won the World Cup, but decided not to defend their title in the following 1934 World Cup in Italy because of the poor European showing at their tournament. Italy won the tournament and retained the title in World Cup 1938.

The outbreak of World War II put an end to the Soccer World Cup tournament for the next 12 years. This was not the only time politics would influence the tournament. As the World Cup resumed in Brazil in 1950, countries like Hungary, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia boycotted the tournament for political reasons and Germany was not allowed to take part. The 1930 World Cup champions, Uru-



guay, did however set aside their differences and re-joined the tournament – which stood them in good stead as they beat the hosts in the final to take home the trophy.

The advent of media and broadcast opportunities changed the game forever as the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland became the first tournament to be televised. From that moment on there was no stopping World Cup Soccer fever. This trend strengthened as Soccer World Cup 1958 created national and international heroes from players like Pelé and Just Fontaine. The era of the Soccer Superstar had dawned, as the emergence of Brazilians Amarildo and Garrincha and Czechoslovakia goalkeeper Viliam Schrojf in the following 1962 Soccer World Cup in Brazil affirmed.

When England hosted the 1966 World Cup, a logo and mascot were created for the first time. The marketing power and income potential of the brand was now fully realised. The year 1966 also saw Soccer World Cup 2010 hosts South Africa banned because of their policy of apartheid (or separate racial development). The ban remained until 1992.

Politics again reared its ugly head at the next World Cup in 1970. The qualification stages in North Africa coincided with the so called "Football War" between Honduras and El Salvador as simmering tensions erupted into open riots. It was also the tournament in which Brazil became the first nation to win three World Cups. This firmly cemented their reputation as one of the greatest soccer-playing nations on earth. For their achievement they were allowed to keep the Jules Rimet Trophy permanently.

A new trophy debuted at the 1974 tournament in West Germany. The tournament also saw a new format featuring a first group stage, followed by a second group stage with 8 teams (first group winners and runners-up), followed by the final (second group winners). The second group runners-up played in the third-place match. The West Germans won the tournament by beating the Netherlands at Olympiastadion in Munich at the final. This format continued into the 1978 World Cup held in Argentina, where the Netherlands once again played second fiddle to the hosts as they were beaten by Argentina.

It was time for the tournament to expand, and the 1982 World Cup featured 24 teams. This was the tournament's first expansion since 1934. The teams were divided into six groups of four, with the top two teams in each group advancing into the second round, from where they split into four groups of three. The winners of each group advanced to the semi-finals. The 1982 World Cup was held in Spain and won by Italy, who now rivalled Brazil as the most successful team in the Soccer World Cup.

At the following World Cup in 1986 in Mexico, the format altered once more to a group stage followed by a knockout stage with 16 teams. In order to ensure impartiality, the kick off times for the last matches in





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all groups were synchronized. The following World Cup in 1990 was held in Italy where West Germany collected a third World Cup.

The 1994 World Cup in the USA was marred by controversy. Diego Maradona was expelled mid-tournament after testing positive for steroids, and Colombian Andrés Escobar was shot to death in Medellín, Colombia a few days after scoring an own-goal in a match that eliminated his country. Soccer events and its superstars made world news around the globe.

In 1998 the World Cup was held in France and once again allowed for an expanded format of 32 teams. The hosts France won the tournament by beating Brazil 3-0 in the final. The next World Cup moved to Asia, and for the first-time ever the tournament was co-hosted by two countries - Japan and South Korea. The tournament was a highlight for the underdogs, as South Korea, Senegal and the USA all reached the final eight. Although traditional rivals Brazil beat Germany 2-0 in the final, many believed that the balance of soccer power had finally shifted.

The World Cup in 2006 in Germany reaffirmed the power of the great soccer playing nations. It was the first World Cup in which the previous tournament champion had to qualify. Controversy struck in the final match between Italy and France, courtesy of French star player Zinedine Zidane. Zidane performed a headbutt to opposing Italian player Marco Materazzi's chest after some verbal taunting. The video of the incident went viral and ended up becoming comedy fodder the world over, including Zidane being lampooned on the animated comedy Family Guy. Italy went on to win 5-3 in a penalty shootout after a score of 1-1 at extra time.

Widely known as the Greatest Game on Earth, the World Cup is soccer's proudest moment. Nations rally behind their teams as internal strife is forgotten for one glorious month every four years. Soccer becomes much more than a game, it becomes a celebration of all that is great in humanity – our passion, drive, dedication and talent.

Sources: www.fifa.com/ www.ticketcity.com



Curitiba Could be Excluded from World Cup: FIFA

The International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) has warned that Brazil's 2014 World Cup host city of Curitiba risks being dropped as a venue for the tournament unless work gets faster.

FIFA's Secretary-General Jerome Valcke said after a visit to Curitiba's Arena da Baixada stadium that work at the place was seriously behind schedule.

Describing the situation as "delicate" and "very complicated," Valcke said, "Let's be honest. We do not like the current state of the stadium. This is not only delayed, it is way behind schedule."

He further said that a decision on whether the southern city would remain as a host city would be announced on 18

February.

The 42,000-capacity stadium is set to host four matches, which are Spain-Australia, Honduras-Ecuador, Iran-Nigeria and Algeria-Russia.

Six out of 12 venues for the 2014 World Cup are still unfinished less than five months before the tournament starts.

The privately-owned Arena da Baixada stadium, which is 90 percent complete, opened in 1999 and is under renovation for the tournament.

FIFA and the Parana state government have pledged to allocate an extra USD17 million to accelerate work at the venue.

The 2014 World Cup is scheduled to kick off on June 12.



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Jules Rimet: The First World Cup Trophy

What Happened to the World Cup's First Trophy?

From Victory to Jules Rimet

Frenchman Jules Rimet was the third president of FIFA between 1921 and 1954 and was the driving force behind establishing the World Cup as an international tournament.

The trophy for the first World Cup in 1930 was originally called Victory but in 1946 FIFA decided to name it after its president and so it became known as the Jules Rimet trophy.

Although the World Cup is usually associated with drama on the pitch, the Jules Rimet trophy also had exciting moments in its existence before coming to an unfortunate end.

Dramatic history

During the Second World War the trophy was hidden in a box under the bed of then FIFA vice-president Dr Ottorino Barassi to prevent the German Nazis getting hold of it.

Then it became an international news story when it was stolen at a public exhibition in London just three months before the 1966 World Cup tournament in England.

Although the thief was caught, the location of the trophy was still unknown a week after it went missing. That was until a dog called Pickles went out for a walk with his owner in south London and discovered the elusive item wrapped in newspaper in a bush. Pickles'

owner, David Corbett, took the precious trophy to a police station and his black and white dog became an unlikely hero, enjoying instant fame while the English Football Association breathed a huge sigh of relief.

FIFA regulations previously stipulated that any country winning the World Cup three times would keep the trophy permanently, so it resided in Brazil after they were crowned champions for the third time in 1970.

Stolen again

FIFA had a new World Cup trophy made for the 1974 tournament and the old Jules Rimet trophy was put on display in Rio de Janeiro at the Brazilian Football Confederation headquarters. It was stolen once again in 1983 and on this occasion there was no Pickles to find it.

To this day it remains a mystery as to what happened to the original Jules Rimet trophy, although many believe that it was melted for its gold.

The replica

The English Football Association had secretly made a replica of the Jules Rimet trophy after the original had been stolen in 1966. The replica was bought at auction by FIFA in 1997 and is now on display at the National Football Museum in Manchester, England.





FIFA World Cup Mascots - The Best and Worst Mascots from Previous World Cups

Mascots are now commonplace for any major international sports event, as they represent a specific feature of the country hosting the event.

The FIFA World Cups saw mascots introduced in 1966, and they have been a feature of the competition ever since.

Here is a look at all the mascots that featured in the competition's history over the decades, including the one that will be used next year in Brazil.

World Cup Willie (1966, England)

The first-ever mascot in the history of FIFA World Cups, World Cup Willie was a cartoon lion wearing Britain's Union Jack and kicking a football.

Willie was drawn by Reg Hoyer, who also illustrated a few of Enid Blyton's children's books. When asked to design a mascot, he made Willie based on his son Leo, with the design eventually getting chosen as the final mascot.

Willie proved to be lucky for the Three Lions, as they won their only World Cup on home turf, while the tradition of having a mascot representing a specific event kicked off, never to look back.

Juanito (1970, Mexico)

Mexico followed in the tradition that England had set in 1970 by designing their own mascot, but tried something a little different, as Juanito, as he was called, was not a lion but a young boy.

Juanito wore Mexico's green colors and a sombrero while standing in football attire, and became a symbol of innocence and fair play for the World Cup which was the first that was broadcasted around the world in colour.

Alemania (1974, Germany)

The World Cup in '74 saw Germany design two boys, called Tip and Tap, wearing German kits and a ball. On their uniforms were written 'WM 74', which stood for Weltmeisterschaft 74.

The concept behind the design was said to be the effort towards strengthening relations between the two Germanies at that time.

Gauchito (1978, Argentina)

Argentina followed in Germany's idea to keep kids as mascots for the World Cup, designing little Gauchito, a young boy wearing Argentina's kit, a hat with 'Argentina 78' written on it, a neckerchief and a whip.

The attire resembled that of the traditional South American gauchos. Many however criticised Gauchito for being too similar to the mascot of the 1970 Mexico World Cup.

Naranjito (1982, Spain)

Spain introduced a change from the previous World Cups that had either animals or humans as their mascots by de-

signing Naranjito, which was an orange, a fruit grown in large proportions in the country.

Naranjito wore Spain's football kit while holding a ball, beaming a big smile to describe a change in scenery in the nation after the end of dictatorship and exemplifying an optimism in the future.

Pique (1986, Mexico)

Hosting their second World Cup, Mexico wanted a completely different mascot from their previous one, Juanito, and thereby created Pique, a green jalapeno pepper which had a moustache and a sombrero.

The name Pique came from 'picante', Spanish for spicy peppers, a taste very characteristic of the Mexican cuisine, while a football next to it showed its passion for the game.

Ciao (1990, Italy)

Wanting to go in a completely different direction altogether, Italy created Ciao, a stick figure football player that was draped in the colours of the Italian flag, and had a football as its head.

It got mixed reviews upon its release, with many criticising an apparent lack of effort from the Italians in making a Lego-type stick figure, while others praised its simplicity and concept.

Striker, the World Cup pup (1994, USA)

The United States went back to the idea of having an animal as the mascot for their first-ever World Cup, creating Striker, a dog that, similar to its name, played upfront.

Wearing the US' red, white and blue, Striker was designed by the Warner Brothers animation studios, and had USA 94 written on its shirt.

Footix (1998, France)

A rooster, one of France's national symbols, was chosen as the mascot of the 1998 World Cup, with Footix, as it was called, having a blue body much like



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France's kit, a yellow beak and red feathers.

The name Footix was chosen after 47 percent of the 18,500 respondents to a vote chose it over the likes of Zimbo, Houpi, Raffy and Gallik.

Ato, Kaz and Nik – The Spheriks (2002, South Korea and Japan)

The first World Cup in Asia saw Japan and South Korea create a futuristic design for their mascot, as orange, purple and blue creatures were made by the organisers.

The concept of the mascot was that the Spheriks were members of an 'Atmoball' team, the sport being a imaginary football-like game, with Ato the coach, and Kaz and Nik the players.

The names of the Spheriks were chosen by the countries' public after over 980,000 votes were cast.

Goleo and Pille (2006, Germany)

The second lion mascot to be made for the FIFA World Cup, Goleo wore a Germany shirt with the number '06' on its back, and carried around a football which was called Pille. The name Goleo came from the words 'goal' and 'leo', the latter being Latin for 'lion'.

The mascots were unveiled in 2004, and were presented by Franz Beckenbauer and Pele. However, much criticism

was directed towards the organisers for designing a lion, which was not a traditional German animal and was part of the emblem of rivals Netherlands and England.

Zakumi (2010, South Africa)

The 2010 World Cup in South Africa saw the creation of a leopard as its mascot, with Zakumi owning a green mane and wearing a shirt that said 'South Africa 2010'.

Its green and golden colours represented the colours of South Africa's national sports teams, while its name came from Za (for South Africa) and Kumi (which meant 'ten' in African languages, the year in which the World Cup was being held).

Fuleco (2014, Brazil)

Fuleco is a three-banded Brazilian armadillo that has been created for the 2014 World Cup, with the focus being on the safeguarding of the environment with the representation of this endangered species.

Fuleco is derived from Futebol (football) and Ecologia (ecology), with the armadillo an ambassador for a drive aiming to save the environment and making the World Cup environment-friendly. Fuleco was chosen after the organisers went through 47 different proposals that were made.



Asian Cheetah Portrayed Emblem of Iran's National Football Team for World Cup 2014

The Asian Cheetah has been portrayed emblem of Iran's national football team highlighting message of environment protection. Iran national football team is to wear Asian Cheetah portrait t-shirt during world cup 2014 to give a push for the environment protection and saving animals from extinction.

The plan for the first time proposed by the De-

partment of Environment of Iran which got approval of Iran's football federation. Other national football teams are to make similar effort to help revive animal species and their generations which are exposed to extinction.

The 20th world cup football 2014 is to be held on January 13, 2014 in 12 cities in Brazil.

Hand-woven Persian Carpet of 2014 World Cup

An Iranian artist has created a rug woven into its texture the maps and flags of all countries in FIFA 2014 World Cup in Brazil. The cup of 2014 has been woven into the center of the rug that is surrounded by the maps of the countries attending and on the four edges there are flags of those countries.





2014 World Cup Brazil: Players Who Will Impact Tournament Most

The 2014 World Cup is rapidly approaching with some of the best players in the world preparing to take the pitch on the biggest stage in Brazil on June 12. There will be no shortage of elite soccer players in this year's World Cup, from big names from Europe and Asia to emerging stars in North and South America. Heading into the World Cup, all eyes will be on Andres Iniesta and the Spanish squad as they try to repeat as champions with plenty of their top players returning. Spain will be looking to defend their trophy after a successful campaign back in 2010, in which the talent-packed squad won the World Cup and then went on to win the Euro Championship in 2012. Although Spain will have a great chance of repeating, the Spaniards will have their work cut out for them with the following players almost certainly making an impact in the upcoming tournament.



Lionel Messi, Argentina

Perhaps Ronaldo's biggest rival in La Liga will be standing in his way with Messi set to lead Argentina in the tournament that is much closer to home in South America.

The two-time Champions League winner has been regarded as an elite goalscorer during his time with Barcelona, netting over 350 goals in his career. Messi may be elite in terms of goal scoring with his club, but he has only put 37 behind the goalkeeper in 83 appearances with Argentina.

Messi may have taken a back seat to Ronaldo recently in Spain due to the success of Real Madrid, but the Argentine forward is still considered to be the best player in the world in the opinion of many, including Barcelona teammate Neymar, who said the following according to Rik Sharma of Mail Online: "I also agree that Cristiano Ronaldo is one of the best players in the world, and I train every day with Messi. I know the way he plays and for me, he is the best of them all." As long as Messi is in top form come July, Argentina will be a threat to come out on top in the tournament. Messi brings the kind of scoring threat to a team that simply can't be matched, giving the Argentine squad a chance to compete with the best the world has to offer.

Cristiano Ronaldo, Portugal

Cristiano Ronaldo will perhaps be the biggest name on the main stage this July, with the international superstar attempting to lead Portugal to World Cup glory.

The Portuguese have fallen short their last two World Cup appearances with Ronaldo leading the way, but the reigning FIFA Ballon d'Or winner has taken his game to another level heading into the tournament. At 29 years old, he might finally be ready to quiet the critics and lift the FIFA World Cup Trophy on July 13.

Ronaldo has been playing at an elite level during Real Madrid's current run in the Champions League. The Portuguese forward broke Lionel Messi's record for goals in the tournament with 15. Ronaldo's goal in the 33rd minute

of the second leg against Bayern Munich helped seal the deal and put him in the history books in the process. Madrid have reached the final as a result of the 4-0 win over Munich and will face the winner of Chelsea and Atletico Madrid on April 30.

The superstar forward will be in top form heading into the tournament pending any injuries after potentially winning a Champions League title with Madrid. Ronaldo has scored 30 goals for Madrid in La Liga this season, putting him three ahead of Barcelona's Messi.

It could be argued that Ronaldo is playing the best soccer of his career, and that may pay dividends with Portugal during the tournament.



Neymar, Brazil

Ironically enough, Brazilian legend Pele, widely considered the best to have ever played the game, claims Neymar is better than Messi. The three-time World Cup champion made the controversial statement back in 2012, according to the Associated Press via ESPN.com:

"Pele says Lionel Messi isn't the best player in the world today -- much less of all time. Pele said that young Brazilian striker Neymar is better than the Argentina forward, and reiterated that he doesn't think Messi belongs in the conversation about who is the best player ever."

With Neymar set to lead the way for the host country of Brazil, there will be a tremendous amount of pressure on the forward to win it all. As usual, Brazil is considered one of the elite teams in the tournament and may have an easy path out of the Group stage facing the likes of Croatia, Mexico and Cameroon in Group A.

Neymar made a name for himself back in 2010 leading the Brazilians in the World Cup, but the team was considered a mas-

sive disappointment. Holland knocked out the Brazilian side much earlier than anticipated back in 2010, resulting in only the eighth time the country had failed to reach the semi-finals.

Now that Neymar has four more years of experience under his belt and some time alongside greats like Messi in Spain, the Brazilian forward is poised for a breakout performance in front of Brazilian fans that worship the forward.

A lot of attention will center around Ronaldo, Messi and Neymar as the tournament gets underway, but there are plenty of other players that will also make an impact on teams with a legitimate chance to win the World Cup.



Luis Suarez, Uruguay



One player that has burst onto the scene this year is Luis Suarez of Uruguay. The Liverpool forward has been virtually unstoppable in the England Premier League this season and will attempt to carry over that dominance to his national team. Uruguay was solid back in the 2010 World Cup but finished in fourth place behind Germany, Netherlands and Spain. With PFA Player of the Year winner Suarez coming into

his own, Uruguay could be as tough as they come in the upcoming tournament, with Suarez and Diego Forlan being a lethal combination. Suarez seems to improve with every game on the pitch as he's becoming a dominant goalscorer this year. Suarez currently leads the EPL in goals with 30, which is 10 more than the next player down. Ironically, the player behind him on the list of top goalscorers in the EPL is his teammate Daniel Sturridge. Now that Suarez has established himself as an elite player in one of the best leagues in the world, the stage is set for Uruguay to take the next step with perhaps the best goalscorer in the tournament leading the way. Other notable players that will likely turn heads during the 2014 World Cup are Wayne Rooney (England), Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany), Robin van Persie (Netherlands) and Radamel Falcao (Colombia). At this point in time, Spain is the top dog with perhaps the best combination of players assembled for the tournament with Iniesta, Xabi Alonso, Xavi Hernandez and Fernando Torres leading the way. Despite that being the case, all of the impact players mentioned have an opportunity to cement their legacies and prove their worth on the international stage this summer. It'll be a World Cup for the ages with every game worth watching as the best players in the world put their skills on display while representing their countries.



3 Ways Technology Will Impact the 2014 FIFA World Cup

As technology has become further embedded in the sports fan's viewing habits in recent years every major sporting event receives more views than the previous. And with the explosion of digital options for watching sports events "views" come in many forms and broadcast companies measure their digital reach in addition to their television audience. This year's 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil will be no different. Technology will be impacting every aspect of the event as hundreds of millions of fans around the globe will tune in on tablets, phone, web and TV to most likely make it the most watched event of all time.

When fans watch their nation's team play The Beautiful Game in Brazil they may not be privy to all of the new technology present that was not at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. But between 4K resolution, goal-line technology and the components of the official World Cup ball there is much more tech than meets the eye.





4K Coverage

Sony and FIFA recently announced that they will work together to make the 2014 World Cup a 4K production. For those of us not caught up on the latest television technology lingo, 4K is a term that describes display devices that have a horizontal resolution of 4,000 pixels. Translation: 4K is ultra high-definition television compared to the current standard 1080p hi-def resolution that most consumers are familiar with.

This type of hi-tech, extra clear viewing experience seems to be tailor made for a sports watching experience. But the problem is that 4K television has yet to capture the attention of the masses because there is a lack of content and the cheapest 4K TV's available to consumers start at around \$1000. So Sony's goal with their FIFA collaboration is to try and bring this hi-tech future of TV to the mainstream by partnering with FIFA for the world's largest television viewing event.

To demonstrate what the World Cup action looks like in 4K, Sony is capturing footage of the final, one quarter-final and a round of 16 game on June 28th. The footage from these games will then be included in the Official 2014 FIFA World Cup Film that will be produced in, you guessed it, 4K. The Official film will be presented online by FIFA through

4K content distribution platforms after the World Cup has concluded.

This partnership between Sony and FIFA will be interesting because 4K tech is promising but still has not been largely adopted at the consumer level. The ultimate question is how effective will the world's largest television viewing event be at marketing 4K? Sony seems to think it is a worthwhile opportunity and on paper it looks like there is no better time to market this specific type of tech. So as you watch the World Cup this summer keep in mind its ramifications on the latest technology in the television industry.

Goal Line Tech

For the first time in World Cup matches goal line technology (GLT) will be used to assist referees this summer in Brazil. To implement this tech FIFA went through a long process of testing potential GLT companies and having them audition their systems at FIFA matches. From this process FIFA ended up appointing GoalControl GmbH as the official goal line technology provider for the 2014 World Cup.

GoalControl GmbH had to go through the FIFA Quality Programme and earn a FIFA Quality PRO certificate. This certificate is FIFA's way of assuring fans that any given system they implement has been thoroughly tested – in this case the system from GoalControl GmbH was tested at the



FIFA Confederations Cup Brazil 2013- and is fit for match play.

The current challenge with this tech is to install and test it in each of the 12 stadiums that will host matches. To set it up 14 high-speed cameras are positioned around a stadium with seven of the cameras tracking each goal line plane. As matches are played the position of the ball is tracked in 3D. If the ball crosses the goal line plane the referee is alerted within one second on a wristwatch that is synced to the GoalControl system.

Throughout the process of installing this system FIFA has posted videos like the one below to provide great visibility for fans to see how GoalControl GmbH is preparing their GLT.

For the overwhelming majority of goals scored in FIFA matches it is obvious if the ball crossed the plane and easy for the referees to deem a goal. But who knows if it will even be needed in this year's World Cup.

Out of the 68 goals scored in the 2013 FIFA Confederations World Cup there were zero goal line incidents. But the small percentage of tricky instances where the ball may have crossed the plane for a split second is where this tech will be crucial.

Brazuca

The Brazuca is a new ball designed by Adidas – since 1970 every World Cup ball has been designed by Adidas – that was revealed in December of 2013 and created for this year's World Cup. The name "Brazuca" was chosen in September of 2012 by a vote of 1 million Brazilian football fans. The name is a local term for describing national Brazilian pride for and the colors and design symbolize the emotions and pride associated with football in Brazil.

Beyond the symbolism and aesthetics of the ball there is quite a bit of tech that goes into creating it. The Brazuca is different than traditional soccer balls because it is made up of six interlocking polyurethane panels and has thousands of small dimples on the surface that are designed to create grip and speed.

Balls from previous World Cups have been subject to scrutiny for being too light and having erratic flight paths due to their make up. But the Brazuca has been tested for two-and-a-half years and has received approval from 600 of the world's top players including Lionel Messi, Iker Casillas, Bastian Schweinsteiger and former France player Zinedine Zidane.

Adidas is confident that the Brazuca's technology will "meet and exceed all FIFA metrics" and will "ensure top performance for every condition."

"A new structural innovation with a unique symmetry of six identical panels alongside a different surface structure will provide improved grip, touch, stability and aerodynamics on the pitch. Brazuca has been thoroughly tested to meet and exceed all FIFA metrics for an official match ball, ensuring top performance for every condition," an Adidas statement read.

iq.intel.com



Ranking the 12 World Cup 2014 Stadiums

Brazil continues to gear up for World Cup 2014.

Stadiums are being constructed to ensure the tournament runs as smoothly as possible, with city infrastructure and local communities feeling the full heat of change. Which stadiums have us most excited? Let's establish simple criteria before moving forward.

Originality and visual splendor will be prioritized, as will historical value and the stadium's ability to aid the community in which it stands. Got that? It's time to read on.

12. Estadio Mineirão, Belo Horizonte

The home of Cruzeiro has received a number of changes to make it ready for the 2014 World Cup. Although many of Brazil's tournament stadiums feature memorable architectural designs, Estadio Mineirão's renovation has focused on making games safer and more watchable. Priorities included lowering the pitch and ensuring the stadium would be able to sustain its current quality for years to come. Its 62,547 capacity crowd will also be able to access their seats with greater accessibility and can watch the game on two big screens that feature at either side of the pitch. A functional, if underwhelming, start to the list, Estadio Mineirão is the first solar-powered stadium to open in time for the competition.

11. Baixada Arena, Curitiba

Beautiful in press shots, Atlético Paranaense's residency is another aging stadium that has been chosen to host games at the 2014 World Cup.

Arguably one of Brazil's more modern reboots, the original structure was built in 1914 and will welcome football's premier tournament 100 years after construction. Extra seats will be added alongside the pitch to ensure a 40,000 capacity crowd

10. Fonte Nova Arena, Salvador

Built in Brazil's first capital, Fonte Nova Arena offers a modern adaptation of the historical stadium that was built in 1951.

Unfortunately for organisers, the 48,747 capacity venue has recently hit headlines after part of the roof collapsed. This needs to be ready for the Confederations Cup and is a physical representation of the country's struggle to finish each project in time.

As per FIFA, the stadium "will house a panoramic restaurant,



museum of football, car parks, shops, hotels and a concert hall."

Once completed, it should be an excellent addition to the tournament's lineup.

9. Castelão Arena, Fortaleza

Fans of Ceara and Fortaleza will be thankful for the massive effort to rebuild Castelão Arena and its surrounding area. Although a new roof covering the entire ring of seating is perhaps not the most exciting addition, the biggest changes are most appropriate to players, media and those journeying to the venue.

"As well as having its capacity increased to 64,846, the revamped stadium will boast an underground car park with 1,900 spaces, executive boxes, a VIP area, media centre, mixed zone and fully refurbished dressing rooms," reads the stadium's profile on FIFA's website.

Castelão Arena is also built to deflect the pulsating heat and cool fans with a "glass skin" that plays more than an visual role.

8. Beira-Rio Stadium, Porto Alegre

The Beira-Rio Stadium is located on Brazil's idyllic coast and is the home of Internacional.

Originally built in 1969 alongside the help of Inter's community, many fans used to arrive in the area to cheer builders through their work.

This arena features a rather spiny design that differentiates it from Brazil's numerous bowl venues. Its 50,287 capacity will be protected by a new roof and is likely to be used for concerts after the tournament.

7. Amazonia Arena, Manaus

One of the tournament's more inspired designs, the purpose-built Amazonia Arena is currently under construction to look like a straw basket; the region's most famous product.

Situated in the urban heart of the Amazon jungle, this is the tournament's most northern venue. The 42,377 capacity building has been created with natural resources in mind and features plant screens that will simultaneously keep energy costs low and ensure a cooler stadium.

Rainwater will also be used to hydrate the pitch and fill toilets, while the scorching sun "will be harnessed to generate clean and renewable energy," according to FIFA's website.

6. Pernambuco Arena, Recife

Pernambuco Arena is an excellent example of old meeting new for the Brazilian public. This stadium originally hosted Chile's 5-2 thrashing of the USA at the 1950 World Cup, but will be updated to meet all the demands of next summer's tournament.

Similar to the Castelão Arena, the surrounding area of Recife will receive a splashing of investment alongside the new building's opening. New restaurants, cinemas and shopping centres will pop up, breathing fresh life into "an area which is considered to be economically deprived," as FIFA's website describes it.

Most importantly for sweat-ridden tourists, the stadium features escalators for all. Tired of walking around Brazil all day? These will feel like divine intervention for those who aren't used to such heat.

5. Pantanal Arena, Cuiaba

Purpose built for Brazil 2014, Pantanal Arena ditches the circular design of the country's other stadia for an interesting box choice.

Nicknamed "The Big Green," this venue is all about the environment. Although many of the competition's stadiums have focused on recyclable materials and ensuring nothing is wasted, Pantanal Arena utilises wood from "certified sources" and features technology that can monitor air and soil around the park.

Although the 42,968 capacity may be reduced after the competition, this arena is an ideal place to host exhibitions and events. Look out for the stadium's brightly-lit border when darkness descends upon Cuiaba.

4. Dunas Arena, Natal

Sometimes, a stadium just needs to take inspiration from its environment. Scheduled to be completed in December 2013, Dunas Arena is an absolute beauty and is designed to mimic the formation of Natal's sand dunes.

When crammed full of fans and ablaze with light, a beautiful shadow should be created through the cracks in the building's stands. Real thought has been put into Dunas Arena's creation, and it's sure to become one of Brazil 2014's most recognisable attractions.

3. National Mane Garrincha Stadium, Brasilia

70,042 fans will head into the Garrincha Stadium for each of the seven games across Brazil 2014.

Completed in 2012, this is the most bowl-like of the bowls we've seen, featuring an extremely tight roof that will shade the masses from Brasilia's relentless heat.

This stadium will host the opening match of the 2014 Confederations Cup and will be utilised for events after the World Cup. Like Reminiscent of a smaller Wembley stadium, it highlights the immense shade and intensity of stands that sit right next to the pitch.

Expect a fantastic atmosphere in this one.

2. Corinthians Arena, Sao Paulo

Undoubtedly the most visually breathtaking stadium of Brazil 2014, Corinthians fans will call this one home well after the tournament's conclusion.

Featuring two completely open sides, it's amazing how a reduction in capacity can make the arena look so stunning. This is a deep construction that sinks into the ground; its press shots making the 65,807 look rather smaller.

Most importantly, Corinthians Arena takes second place for invigorating a poor community. As noted on FIFA's website, "A total of close to 6,000 people will be employed either directly or indirectly over the course of the construction process."

1. Maracanã, Rio De Janeiro

How can the Maracanã be summed up in one word? Iconic. One of the world's most famous footballing venues heads to the top of the list for many reasons. Its impressive overhaul will invite 76,935 fans to each match, including the World Cup final on July 13. New seats add improved visibility, and rainwater will be collected on a specially-built roof.

Spectators can even watch from the Torre de Vidro (Glass Tower) and the stadium can be custom-tailored to any event's needs. If Brazil 2014 is going to be remembered for one moment, it's likely that will take place in the venue where Pele scored his 1,000th career goal.



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The History of Soccer in Iran

Soccer in Iran

The roots of football have been sought in the ancient civilizations of China and South America though not in ancient Iran, where chogan has been played for thousands of years.

The playing field of chogan with a goal post at each end and its general concept of two rival teams trying to score against each other is no different to that of football.

However what is different is that players in chogan compete on horseback using a special stick to run, pass and

shoot the ball, a game that is widely known today as polo.

Soccer in Iran dates back to the early 20th century when early British oil prospectors introduced the game to Bakhtiari tribesman in the south-west of the country.

Its first governing body, now known as the Iran Football Federation, was established in 1920 and joined the Asian football confederation (AFC) in 1958 and became a member of FIFA in 1945. However, no major national club competitions were held in Iran until the 1970s.



Clubs & Competitions

Clubs actually began to form in Iran in the 1940s and 50s. Teams such as Sarbaz (Soldier), Toofan (Typhoon), Darayi (Wealth) and Kian (Kings) have not appeared in competitions for many years while major old clubs like the populist Shahin (Eagle) and the royalist Taj (Crown) have undergone many changes.

The school of Shahin founded by the late Dr. Abbas Ekrami, stressed the importance of education alongside football and produced some of the most legendary stars



of Iranian football. The club was later dissolved due to a bitter rivalry with Taj which in turn had also produced some of the country's best players.

The Shahin squad then formed Paikan (Arrow) before laying the foundations of Persepolis, renamed Pirouzi (Victory) after the 1979 revolution, but is still called Persepolis by both supporters and the sports press.

Both Shahin and Paikan were revived during the post revolution years while Taj was renamed Esteghlal (Independence).

The close rivalries between Shahin and Taj in the early years, later evolved into Iran's major derby between the reds of Persepolis and the blues of Taj (later Esteghlal), drawing at times about 120,000 fans to the stadium and ranking amongst worlds top derbies.

Other major clubs in Iran that have league championship titles are Pas and



Saipa. During the last several years following the launch of Iran's professional league, clubs from outside Tehran like Sepahan from Isfahan and Foolad from the talent rich Khuzestan province have also won Iran's premier league championship title. On the continental front, Taj (1970) and later Esteghlal (1990), Persepolis (1990) and Pas (1992) have all been crowned as the Asian club champions.

The first Takht-e Jamshid Cup, named after the ancient ruins of Persepolis, was held in 1970 and, fittingly, was won by the Tehran club, Persepolis (renamed Pirouzi after 1979).

An eight-year war with Iraq and political upheavals left Iran without major club competitions until 1989 when the Qods League was established. A year later, the Qods League was renamed the Azadegan League after the prisoners of war freed after the conflict with Iraq. The Azadegan League was dominated by teams from Tehran, especially Esteghlal and Pirouzi.

The 2000-2001 season saw the establishment of the Iranian Premier League (IPL), Iran's first professional football league. In the period since its foundation, players salaries have risen and teams from outside Tehran such as Foulad, Sepahan, Zobahan, have shown that they can compete with the best that the capital has to offer.

Iran, with a population of 68 million, now has an estimated 50 million football fans. With an increasingly professional domestic league and a steadily gathering international presence, Iranian football is on an upward curve.



Iran's International Track Record

Before the 1979 revolution, Iran's national team - called team melli by Iranians - had already made its mark on the international scene by winning the Asian Cup 3 times in a row in 1968, 1972 and 1976. The national side has also won the Asian Games football title four times in 1974, 1990, 1998, and 2002.

Iran soon got their first taste of World Cup action - qualifying for the 1978 tournament, where they were defeated by the Netherlands (3-0) and Peru (4-1, Hassan Rowshan scored for Iran). Sandwiched between these defeats, Iran managed to seal a shock 1-1 draw with Scotland, after a late goal by Iraj Danaeifard (the goal registered for Scotland was actually scored by the Iranian defender, Eskandarian, attempting to pass the ball back to his goalkeeper!)

During the 1980s, the Iranian national team did not feature in World Cup competitions due to the war with Iraq

(1980-88) and domestic football suffered the inevitable effects of conflict. However, the renaissance came in the early 1990s. Despite failing to qualify for either the 1990 or the 1994 World Cups, it was during this period that a number of quality players burst onto the Iranian football scene, laying the foundation for their second stab at World Cup glory in 1998.

After edging past Australia on the away goals rule to qualify for the finals, Iran were drawn in the same group as Yugoslavia, Germany and, most notably, the USA. It was certainly a tough group, and no one could fail to appreciate its political significance.

Iran played well against Yugoslavia only conceding a goal from a free kick from outside the box not covered properly by reserve keeper, Nakisa, losing one-nil.

In their second match, with rivals USA, Iran won 2-1 scoring two memorable goals from Esteeli and Mahdavia

in a match where both USA and Iran were unfortunate a number of times with both sides hitting the woodwork!

But after their momentous victory came a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Germany which dashed Iran's hopes of qualification for the next round.

Iran failed to qualify for World Cup 2002 after a disappointing playoff performance against the Republic of Ireland (losing 2-0 in Dublin and winning 1-0 in Tehran) which saw Croatian manager Miroslav Blazevic step down from the top spot to be replaced by his assistant Branko Ivanovic, who stepped up from assistant coach.

Iran became, along with Japan, the first team to



qualify for the 2006 tournament, in a group alongside Bahrain and North Korea. Iran's World Cup Group will include Mexico, Angola and Portugal.

Iranian soccer was hit hard by the Iran-Iraq war which inflicted severe blows on the nation's youth. However, since then, a dramatic increase in population has ushered in a new era of football fanaticism. Currently 70% of Iran's population is under 30 years old, creating a wealth of playing talent and a huge fan base.

International friendly matches at Tehran's Azadi stadium regularly draw crowds of over 100,000 fanatical supporters.

Iranian fans are brought up on a diet of Premiership, La Liga and especially Bundesliga football. The success of a number of Iranian players in Germany such as Vahid Hashemian and Ali Karimi has encouraged football fans to turn their attention abroad.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that Iranian football fans are growing more discerning in their tastes. A recent friendly match with Togo drew a crowd of only 1,000 fans. Since the match was held on a weekday and Togo a little known footballing name, few supporters took the trouble to attend.

Failure to qualify for World Cup 2002 was seen by many as just another example of Iran not being able to take its rightful place on the world stage, though Iran have qualified for World Cup 2014 in Brazil.





The Great Rivalry: Esteghlal v Pirouzi

Of all the teams in the IPL, it is the two giants from the capital, Esteghlal and Pirouzi, that arouse the greatest passions.

Theirs is the classic Reds (Pirouzi) vs. Blues (Esteghlal) rivalry and matches between the two teams are closely followed by legions of fans.

The two teams share Tehran's massive 100,000 capacity Azadi Stadium and derby fixtures are consistently sold out.

According to the Asian Football Confederation, Pirouzi has the largest number of fans following one team in the whole of Asia.



Stadiums & Media in Iran

Iran's major stadiums are:

- the 100,000 capacity Azadi (Freedom) sports complex in Tehran, built for the 1974 Asian games in Tehran and originally called Aryamehr
- the 50,000 (to be 70,000 capacity) Naqshe Jahan (Face of the World) stadium in Isfahan
- the 70,000 capacity Tabriz stadium
- the 50,000 (to be 70,000) capacity Mashad stadium
- most other cities in Iran have 20-30,000 capacity stadiums.

With the publication of more than ten sports dailies, sports publications in Iran enjoy a vast readership of a young, growing population, placing Iran amongst countries with the highest number of sports dailies in the world.



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Today





The Official Symbols of the Brazil World Cup 2014

Logo

A World Cup is a unique event and as such has a unique identity. We present you with the icon that will go down in history

An emblem is an essential component to strengthen the identity of a major event. And in the world of football, nothing is more important than the World Cup. Therefore, FIFA and the Local Organising Committee (LOC) of Brazil 2014 invited more than 25 national agencies to submit designs to represent a country full of vitality that, in addition to a rich traditional culture, is becoming an influential economy worldwide.

After evaluating more than 125 projects submitted, the agency was "Africa" chosen for the final design that we present.

The most recognizable emblem is three hands clasped whose union are the most coveted trophy in football. The colors yellow and green, the colors of the country, the same symbolize a welcome from Brazil to all the fans who visit the country for the World Cup 2014. Also, the hands represent the five championships won by Brazil, each finger a title of "five-time champion".

Besides the clear reference to the colors of the national flag, green and yellow allude to two of the most characteristic aspects of the country: the rainforest and the sunny beaches respectively. Nor typography has been neglected, with modern lines and bright tones to effectively capture a diverse and modern.

Mascot

Fifa has also announced the three-banded armadillo acting as a mascot for the World Cup 2014 in Brazil will be called 'Fuleco'. In the word, Fuleco, the part Ful comes from Futebol (Football) and eco comes Ecologia (Ecology).

The name was determined by an online poll in which almost 1.7 million people from Brazil took part, with 48 per cent of them choosing the winner as their favourite over 'Zuzeco' and 'Amijubi'.

According to the organisation, the word 'Fuleco' is a term which is being used to raise awareness about football and the environment.

The mascot itself represents the three-banded armadillo, which is an endangered species in Brazil and will wear the colours of the Brazilian flag.

The figure had been unveiled in September, with 12 giant, inflatable versions in all the host cities for the tournament.

At least three of them have since been taken down, however, following several violent acts against the endangered animal.

Slogan

FIFA has finalized the slogan for FIFA World Cup 2014. The Slogan is All in one Rhythm. The meaning of Slogan in Portuguese Language is "Juntos num so ritmo". It was taken into consideration to unite the football fans together. It will be mar-



keting tool during the opening and closing ceremony of World Cup 2014.

Total 6 slogan shortlisted agencies of country Brazil country took participate in this proposal. And 26 slogans included both local as well as international description. The main motive of Brazil is to making an internal linkage between fans and also to give a unite feeling to the Brazilians.

One of the most memorable quotes by Ronaldo "Football is everything for the Brazilians. This is the kind of attraction which connects everyone with each other. This is the rhythm which is present in everywhere in Brazil that binds every individual young & old also". So the country is just focusing to enhance the power of unity of this world's most popular sports game.

Ball Name

The ball for the World cup is also finalized and the name of ball is Adidas Brazuca. Yes the number brand of sports accessories Adidas has got the responsibility once again of making ball for this world battle. After receiving more than 10,00,000 votes from Brazil, the name was selected by votes from public. This name got more than 70% votes. 3 names were included which are Carnavalesca & Bossa. The Brand Adidas is holding the authority of supplying of official sports ball since 1970.

www.sefutbol.com / www.goal.com/en.wikipedia.org / www.footballwood.com