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mourns Pelé

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# 8 billion and counting...

## Time for celebration or Time for concern?

According to the United Nations (UN) models, the world's population has now touched 8 billion - a mere 12 years since it passed 7 billion, and less than a century after the planet supported just 2 billion people. More than half of the projected increase in the global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in eight countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The global population is growing at its slowest rate since 1950, having fallen under 1 per cent in 2020. The latest projections by the United Nations suggest that the world's population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050. It is projected to reach a peak of around 10.4 billion people during the 2080s and to remain at that level until 2100.

"The relationship between population growth and sustainable development is complex and multidimensional," said Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. "Rapid population growth makes eradicating poverty, combatting hunger and malnutrition, and increasing the coverage of health and education systems more difficult.

Conversely, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to health, education and gender equality, will contribute to reducing fertility levels and slowing global population growth."

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all three components of population change. Global life expectancy at birth fell to 71.0 years in 2021. In some countries, successive waves of the pandemic may have produced short-term reductions in the numbers of pregnancies and births, while for many other countries, there is little evidence of an impact on fertility levels or trends. The pandemic severely restricted all forms of human mobility, including international migration.

In the late 1700s, the British philosopher Thomas Malthus wondered about the Earth's ability to cope with population growth. He was not too optimistic:

"The power of population is so superior to the power of the Earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race".

We are already over-exploiting the Earth's biocapacity by 75 per cent. Put differently, humanity uses the equivalent of 1.75 piles of earth to provide natural resources for our consumption and absorb our waste. And the world population is growing by more than 200,000 people a day.

## Can Earth sustain 10 billion?

According to an article in Live Science, many scientists think that Earth has a maximum capacity to sustain 9-10 billion people. One of these scientists is the Harvard sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson believes the Earth can sustain 10 billion - but it requires changes:

"If everyone agreed to become vegetarian, leaving little or nothing

for livestock, the present 1.4 billion hectares of arable land (3.5 billion acres) would support about 10 billion people"

It's clear that whatever the maximum number of people the Earth can sustain, we need to change! If we continue our current consumption patterns, we will slowly but steadily use up the planet's resources. If nothing changes, we will need two planets by 2030.

The UN paper: "How Many People? A Review of Earth's Carrying Capacity" presents three different routes of change:

The "bigger pie" scenario: Technical evolutions in green energy and materials efficiency and reuse mean that we can get more out of the resources Earth has.

The "fewer forks" scenario: Meaning simply fewer people.

The "better manners" scenario: Humanity (as in every single one of us) reduces our impact on the planet and makes decisions based on the full impact on Earth and ecosystems (complete internalization of costs in economic terms). Examples are the use of renewable energy and the reuse of materials instead of throwing them out.

The paper concludes that a combination of all three will surely be needed.

Wishing all our readers a wonderful 2023!

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Vamos, Vamos  
**ARGENTINA**



**L**ionel Messi-inspired Argentina wins World Cup title after beating France in a sensational final. At the end of a crazy final, France was edged on penalties by Argentina.

It was the trophy he wanted the most. It was the finish he liked the most. And didn't he put the show for it? A goal from the spot kick. A goal in extra time to put Argentina up ahead again. And a penalty as sweet as the breeze around. Lionel Messi did it all at the Lusail Stadium to claim the trophy he wanted the dearest and lifted the World Cup in his last World Cup match.

After a 3-3 thriller across 120 minutes, Argentina bested France 4-2 on penalties to win their third World Cup after 36 years. Earlier, while Argentina took a 2-0 lead via Lionel Messi and Angel Di Maria,

Kylian Mbappe got France back with a brace inside 97 seconds in the second half. Messi would find the net again in extra time, but France hit back via another goal from Mbappe from the spot.

In the history of the World Cup, the title has been decided based on penalty shootouts only twice. In 1994, Brazil scored a 3-2 over Italy in the final, with Roberto Baggio missing the fifth penalty for Italy. In 2006, Italy won against France 5-4 in fines.

France coach Didier Deschamps reverted to his preferred lineup after centre-back Dayot Upamecano and Adrien Rabiot shook off a virus that had ruled them out of the semi-final against Morocco. Upamecano starts alongside Raphael Varane after the Manchester United defender recovered from a virus. At the same time, Olivier Giroud starts up

front, flanked by Kylian Mbappe on his left and Ousmane Dembele on his right.

With Messi the standout man after Argentina's penalty win, you have to give a hand to France.

How they fought back from nowhere to take the South American side the distance is quite some feat.

This is definitively a World Cup final for the ages.

- Argentina's World Cup win was a triumph of perseverance
- Lionel Scaloni and his players had experienced previous pain in tournaments
- Angel di Maria healed the wounds of missing out on the 2014 Final



# A ground-breaking World Cup with *A FAIRY TALE ENDING*

**Lionel Messi was the hero of the highest-scoring World Cup in history.**



- **Lionel Messi was the star as Argentina returned to the summit of world football**
- **The highest-scoring World Cup in history set new standards on and off the field**
- **Morocco helped make history for Africa, while Kylian Mbappe dazzled in defeat**

This was always going to be a FIFA World Cup™ like no other.

The first to be hosted in the Middle East, the first to be played in November and December, and the first of its size to be held in such a small geographical area, Qatar 2022 offered a fresh twist on this old and much-loved festival of football.

But while the treading of so much new ground came with opportunities – the novel prospect of attending multiple World Cup matches in a single day, for

example – the risks were clear and undeniable.

Gianni Infantino had raised his concerns to pre-tournament stating to pre-tournament concerns “about having so many fans from so many countries, at the same time, in the same place”.

“In a normal World Cup, you have in one city fans of two countries, not more,” added the FIFA President. “Here, you have 32

countries plus all [the] other fans from the world who come to enjoy the World Cup together in the same place.”

Given that the place in question has a population of less than 2.9 million and its stadiums are all within a 35-mile radius, questions naturally arose about how Qatar and its infrastructure would cope with a such a mass invasion. Others wondered how the on-field fare would be impacted by the tournament taking place in the middle of most players' domestic seasons, with reduced

preparation time an inevitable consequence. One by one, of course, those doubts were swept away by a tidal wave of fantastic football, flawless organisation and friendly, passionate atmospheres on the streets and in the stadiums.

Jurgen Klinsmann this week described it as “a World Cup organised to perfection”, while Infantino has been far from alone in declaring Qatar 2022 to be, quite simply, “the best ever”.

The same description is, of course,

being applied increasingly widely to the tournament's star man. Lionel Messi was already a leading contender for 'GOAT' status but his claims to that title have been further fortified by a truly magnificent month in Qatar.

In the highest-scoring World Cup of all time, it was goals from Argentina's captain that did most to determine the direction of the title. And not even La Albiceleste's fiercest rivals could begrudge this wonderful player his well-deserved moment with the prize he has so long coveted.

## Qatar 2022 factfile

Goals: 172 (a new record)

Stadium attendances: 3.4 million spectators

Fan Festival attendances: 1.8 million visitors

Volunteers: 20,000 from 150 different nations

(selected from a record 420,000 applications)

## Medalists

Champions: **Argentina**

Runners-up: **France**

Third place: **Croatia**

**Award winners**

adidas Golden Ball: **Lionel Messi (ARG)**

adidas Golden Boot: **Kylian Mbappe (FRA)**

adidas Golden Glove: **Emiliano Martinez (ARG)**

Best Young Player: **Enzo Fernandez (ARG)**





## STANDOUT SIDES

### Argentina

From the butt of the world's jokes to the worthiest of champions, La Albiceleste enjoyed one hell of a ride. And just as no-one foresaw that opening-match defeat to Saudi Arabia, few could have imagined that they would recover to achieve their long-held dream in such impressive - and dramatic - circumstances.

As for their talisman, what more can be said? Messi is quite rightly a beloved figure far beyond Argentina's borders, and neutrals across the world were both captivated and converted to his team's cause by the little magician's pursuit of World Cup glory.



### Morocco

It took 88 years of attempting for an Africa team to reach the World Cup semi-finals. Morocco were the continental trailblazers.

After sinking Belgium in the group stage, Yassine Bounou, Achraf Hakimi, Hakim Ziyech, Youssef En-Nesyri and Co eliminated Spain in the last 16 and Portugal in the quarter-finals. The Atlas Lions also gave France a strict examination in the last four before losing an end-to-end encounter with Croatia 2-1 in the battle for bronze.

## Croatia

It simply must rank as one of the greatest achievements in World Cup history - a nation inhabited by fewer than four million people finishing second and third at back-to-back editions.

Zlatko Dalic lost several key components of his 2018 side, such as Danijel Subasic, Ivan Rakitic and Mario Mandzukic, but new stars emerged in the shape of Dominik Livakovic and Josko Gvardiol to complement the divine talent of Luka Modric. The Croatian highlight was a stunning elimination of tournament favourites Brazil en route to finishing third.



## Japan

Would four-time champions Germany or 21st-century titans Spain win Group E? Japan made a mockery of the question the masses were assessing by slaying both those giants to finish top. The Samurai Blue also became only the third team in World Cup history, and the first since West Germany in 1970, to win two separate games in which they had been trailing at half-time.

### Individual achievers

**Lionel Messi:** This requires an article all of its own and, fortunately, we have one. Enjoy our detailed rundown on the various national and global records that were rewritten by Messi at Qatar 2022.

**Kylian Mbappe:** With eight goals in seven appearances, the France talisman produced the highest-scoring World Cup by any individual player since Ronaldo emerged with an identical haul from the 2002 edition. Mbappe also became just the fifth player in World Cup history to score in separate finals, the first to score a final hat-trick since Geoff Hurst in 1966 and, with four goals across 2018 and 2022, is now established as the highest-scoring player in the history of football's showpiece fixture.

**Lionel Scaloni:** At 44 years old, the

Argentinian became the youngest coach since fellow countryman Cesar Luis Menotti – who was 39 in 1978 – to win the World Cup.

**Yassine Bounou:** The Morocco hero became the first African goalkeeper to record three clean sheets in a single World Cup edition.

**Olivier Giroud:** The big Frenchman only started for France due to a late pre-tournament injury to Karim Benzema but certainly made the most of his opportunity, scoring four times to move on to 53 for his country – two clear of Thierry Henry's previous record of 51.

**Neymar:** In a tournament that ended in tears for the Brazil No10, he nonetheless equalled Pele's 77-goal haul to become A Seleção's joint-record scorer.

**Hugo Lloris:** The France skipper

surpassed Lilian Thuram (142) as his country's all-time record caps holder and also became the first goalkeeper to reach the milestone of 20 World Cup appearances.

**Harry Kane:** With his 52nd and 53rd international goals, the England captain moved alongside Wayne Rooney as the Three Lions' all-time record scorer.

**Ivan Perisic:** The Croatia wide man scored one and set up two for the Vatreni, meaning that he now has six goals and five assists across the last three World Cups. Only the great Messi (21) can claim more direct goal involvements during the same period.

**Goncalo Ramos:** The rising Portugal star became the first player to score a hat-trick on his maiden World Cup start since Miroslav Klose in 2002. He was also responsible for the first treble in the knockout stage since Tomas Skuhravy at Italia '90.

# Argentina abides: a triumph for perseverance

**Lionel Scaloni's men showed their compatriots certain things are worth fighting for**



**L**ionel Messi can finally frame the photo he always dreamed he would feature in. Eight years after he was forced to walk by the FIFA World Cup trophy with his head bowed at the Maracana, he could hold the silverware and feel it in his hands in Lusail. In his joy and the delight of the 50,000 Albiceleste fans in the stands and the 45 million who came out to dance in streets and squares right across Argentina, there lies a message that is even more powerful than a story of success and victory: a tale of resilience.

Messi never gave up. While the idolatry of Diego Maradona was

partly rooted in his rebellious nature, La Pulga will forever be a symbol of the struggle of his people. Messi, who crowned one of the most incredible careers in football history by lifting the World Cup in Qatar, never gave up, despite several lost finals and a litany of disappointments. He took the hard knocks and never, ever gave in.

That's what it's all about, getting back up and trying again, in all aspects of life," said Messi after Argentina's win over Croatia in the semi-finals, a few days before exhibiting great strength of character again as he fulfilled the aim of a lifetime. "Everyone gets

knocked down, but trying again and fighting for your dreams is important. At one point, I did have doubts, but thank goodness I came back to enjoy all this."

## Scaloni's heart-to-heart with Messi

A few months ago, Lionel Scaloni, now a World Cup-winning coach, was worried. Argentina had won the Copa America and had just sealed qualification for Qatar 2022 following a goalless draw with Brazil in San Juan. The qualifying campaign had gone smoothly, and the team's unfortunate 28-year run without a title had



ended; their fans were wild with excitement and anticipation as they allowed themselves to dream of a third-world crown.

In this fever-pitch atmosphere, Scaloni was concerned that any disappointment in the Middle East would be too much for the South American nation.

He decided to discuss the issue with Messi directly. "I talked to him before he went back to Paris because I felt what lay ahead of us was going to be difficult," he said. "We were going through something where emotions were high, and any disappointment could be quite intense. But he replied that it didn't matter, that we had to keep going because everything was going to be fine.

"And that if it weren't fine, it wouldn't be a big deal, but that we had to give it at least a try. His answer made me realise that we were doing something right."

Scaloni is another figure in the Argentinian set-up who has never stopped battling: he overcame his disappointment as a player at Germany in 2006, and years later, he rose above the widespread criticism he endured at the start of his now-historic four-year tenure.

### Di Maria heals 2014 wounds

Nor was giving up on the agenda for another protagonist of the spectacular final, Angel Di Maria. Eight years ago, he tore up a letter that Real Madrid had sent

him, requesting that he refrain from playing in the final of the 2014 World Cup at the Maracana to avoid aggravating an injury. "I remember when the letter arrived from Real Madrid," he recalled. "I didn't even want to look at it, and ripped it up. We lost the World Cup final – it was the most difficult day of my life."

Given the cold shoulder at the beginning of the Scaloni revolution, the skilful winger showed humility and patience and worked hard to regain his place in the side. In Lusail, after giving Jules Kounde and Ousmane Dembele a torrid time down the left, earning the penalty and scoring his country's second goal, he also enjoyed a spot of redemption.



## Spirit, grit and heart

Scaloni's Argentina side demonstrated many qualities at Qatar 2022. Still, none were as impressive as their unbreakable spirit, grit and heart, which enabled them to bounce back from setbacks and flip adverse circumstances on their head. When their paths are put under the spotlight, every player, particularly the starting XI against France, is an example of this phenomenon.

For example, Emiliano Martinez joined the elite club of World Cup-winning goalkeepers after overcoming uncertainty and a series of loan moves. At the same

time, at Arsenal, Nahuel Molina managed to reinvent himself in Europe after struggling to break into the first team at Boca Juniors, Nicolas Otamendi became a leader despite that disastrous 4-0 quarter-final defeat by Germany at South Africa 2010. Nicolas Tagliafico succeeded in earning back his spot in the team after sub-par displays had seen him relegated to the bench.

This list could be extended to each of the 26 squad members, from the midfielders to the forwards, from the starters to the substitutes and even the backroom staff, including some former Albiceleste great who also experienced World Cup sorrows.

But the grit mentioned above is also collective: Argentina returned strongly from their initial surprise defeat by Saudi Arabia, survived a shoot-out against a formidable Netherlands side, and again showed the steadfast aspect of their character versus a French team reluctant to relinquish their hard-earned crown.

## Scaloni: We kept going

Scaloni, the only one to speak at the post-victory press conference, was clear: "The spirit of this team is such that they never give up. Those two French goals we let in were real blows, like against the Netherlands. But we kept going; we knew we had to win." "These



players play for the people, for the Argentinian fans. There are no egos or rivalries here – they all work towards the same goal. We had reasons to be optimistic. The message for our supporters is to enjoy it because you have to understand that sometimes

things don't go your way. Tomorrow life will go on, and our problems will still be there, but everyone will be a little bit happier, at least."And Argentina is certainly happy. Messi, this national team and its coaches have made an impact that is greater than an

extra star on a shirt. They have shown their followers that some goals are worth fighting for, that they should never throw in the towel, and that although it sometimes takes time, there is always a reward at the end.

# Argentina and Messi spot on for World Cup glory

South Americans win thriller on penalties



- **Lionel Messi and Angel Di Maria struck for Argentina in first half**
- **Kylian Mbappe netted twice in 97 seconds to draw France level**
- **Messi and Mbappe traded extra-time goals before Argentina won the shootout**

## Argentina 3-3 France (4-2 on penalties)

Goals: Argentina: Messi (23 pen, 108), Di Maria (36) France: Mbappe (80 pen, 81, 118 pen)

## Match review

Lionel Messi has longed his whole career to win the FIFA World Cup™. On an extraordinary night in Lusail Stadium, when Messi and Kylian Mbappe lived up to their heavyweight billing, the Argentina genius must have felt he won it three times.

Mbappe became only the second man after England's Sir Geoff Hurst to score a World Cup final hat-trick, but it is Messi who takes the spoils, if not the adidas Golden Boot, won by eight-goal Mbappe. Not that Messi will mind his Paris Saint-Germain team-mate winning that race. Messi opened

the scoring and looked destined for a straightforward triumph until France recovered from 2-0 down to send the game to extra-time.

Messi struck to restore Argentina's lead but Mbappe equalised for a second time. Messi and Mbappe both scored at the beginning of the shootout, but Emiliano Martinez saved from Kingsley Coman and Aurelien Tchouameni fired wide, leaving unheralded Gonzalo Montiel to convert the winning kick.

Argentina hadn't scored in their two previous final appearances – in 1990 and 2014 – but the South Americans had two goals before



half-time and could legitimately have argued they deserved more.

Messi broke the deadlock. Of course, he did. Angel Di Maria did the legwork, deceiving Ousmane Dembele to skip into the box before a nudge in the back from the Frenchman sent Di Maria tumbling.

Messi nonchalantly rolled his penalty right and Hugo Lloris

dived in the opposite direction.

Lionel Scaloni's irresistible team were swarming all over the 2018 champions. And when France were hurried out of possession high on their left, Argentina briskly swept upfield. Julian Alvarez eventually released Alexis Mac Allister, who guided a perfect ball along the floor to the back post, where Di Maria arrived unaccompanied to defeat Lloris



with a controlled strike. Didier Deschamps, seeking to inject zip and intent, withdrew Dembele and Olivier Giroud in favour of Randal Kolo Muani and Marcus Thuram on 41 minutes.

Argentina remained in the ascendancy, nonetheless, and Lloris was repeatedly worked after the break. But the remarkable Mbappe, hitherto barely involved, delivered a staggering 97-second one-two to haul France level.

Kolo Muani dashed behind the Argentina backline, initiating panic in Nicolas Otamendi, who illegally impeded the attacker's progress in the area. Martinez leapt the right way but couldn't keep out Mbappe's crunching strike.

The game had barely restarted when Coman relieved Messi of possession to instigate another raid. Mbappe cushioned Adrien Rabiot's aerial ball back for Thuram, then darted forwards to meet the flighted return with a volley that flew past Martinez.

France pinned back visibly rattled Argentina but couldn't claim the winner, while Lloris tipped over a rising drive from Messi at the death.

Argentina regained their composure in time for the extra half hour. Dayot Upamecano bravely blocked a goalbound strike from Lautaro Martinez, who was narrowly wide with another effort.

It needed Lloris's outstanding reflexes to repel Martinez early in the second half of extra-time. But there was no denying Messi on the



follow up, not even Upamecano desperately trying to clear from the line.

Still, France refused to yield. Montiel used an arm to block an Mbappe effort and the nerveless 23-year-old sent his penalty unerringly into the left corner. Both teams could have won it at the very end. Martinez did exceptionally well to save one-on-one from Kolo Muani, then an unmarked Lautaro Martinez headed wide from in front of goal.

To paraphrase former England manager Sir Alf Ramsey, Argentina had won it twice and had to win it all over again. They did just that to claim a third World Cup and first since 1986. And to give Messi the prize he so wanted to add to a glittering personal treasure trove.

## Key moment

In a game bubbling over with meaningful incidents, it was Golden Glove winner Emiliano Martinez who gave Argentina the advantage they wouldn't surrender.

Martinez made his debut only 18 months ago and rocketed to prominence in his homeland with decisive penalty shootout heroics in last year's Copa America semi-final victory over Colombia. He was outstanding in the quarter-final shootout in Qatar, saving twice when Argentina defeated the Netherlands after a two-goal lead was eaten up late in the match.

The South Americans similarly had advantages wrested away in

this astonishing final. But there would have been some comfort in the sight of the imposing Martinez between the posts for the penalties. He was close to Mbappe's penalty in normal time and had his eye in by the time Coman stepped forward. Martinez, who superbly denied Kolo Muani a winner at the end of extra-time, flew to his right to parry Coman's kick.

Argentina were in front, once more, and following subsequent successful kicks from Paulo Dybala, Leandro Paredes and Montiel, the advantage obtained by Martinez was crucial.

## Key stats

- Lionel Messi played his 26th World Cup match to move one clear of Lothar Matthaus and claim the appearance record outright
- Messi's strike from the penalty spot was Argentina's 150th





goal in World Cup matches. They are the third nation to reach that milestone after Brazil (237) and Germany (232).

- Argentina scored the first goal in all seven of their matches at Qatar 2022.
- Messi is the first player to score in the group stage, Round of 16, quarter-finals, semi-finals and final in a single World Cup
- Mbappe is the fifth and youngest player to score in two World Cup finals after Vava (1958, 1962), Pele (1958, 1970), Paul Breitner (1974, 1982) and Zinedine Zidane (1998, 2006)
- Mbappe is only the second man to score a World Cup final

hat-trick after Geoff Hurst in 1966

## Quotes

Lionel Scaloni, Argentina coach: "I'm proud. Today I am liberated. This team gives me so much pride, it is all down to them."

Emiliano Martinez: "We had the game under control but the team were doomed to suffer. France almost scored a winner, too, but thank God we are here. The World Cup is something I have been dreaming of. I have no words to express what I'm feeling."

Rodrigo De Paul: "We were born to suffer, we are going to suffer all our lives, but I will never forget this. I think we are fair winners. To

be champions, you had to beat the last champion, and we did. This is a joy I can't explain."

Hugo Lloris: "We were too reactive. It was almost a boxing match, we surrendered blow for blow. The only regret we can have is that we may have missed our first half.

Despite that, we didn't give up, we believed until the end.

"It's always cruel to be on the wrong side. But we will have given everything from beginning to end in this competition. We come out empty, it's been almost a month of competition."

## Player of the match

Lionel Messi



Edson Arantes do Nascimento

**Pelé**

They called him 'The King', and his face is one of the most recognisable in world football. The man in question is, of course, Pele, who was once named by FIFA as the greatest player of the 20th century. The legendary Brazilian passed away on 29 December 2022.

# Football and the world mourns Pelé

**P**ele's star was already in the ascendancy at the age of just 17, when he celebrated his first FIFA World Cup™ title with Brazil in Sweden on 29 June 1958. He still holds the record as the youngest world champion of all time.

Although the striker featured in the South American team's squad as they defended their title in 1962, he missed most of the tournament due to injury. Pele's immense talent was on full display once again in 1970 as he led his team to their next triumph, making him the only player ever to have won three World Cups.

## World Cup records

- Pele is the youngest scorer, youngest hat-trick scorer, youngest finalist and youngest player to score in a Final in World Cup history.
- Gunnar Gren, who competed against Brazil in the 1958 decider, made his

Sweden debut before Pele was born. Never has such an age gap – 20 years – existed between opponents in a World Cup Final.

- Uwe Seeler, Pele, Miroslav Klose, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are the only men to score at four or more World Cups. The West German pipped the Brazilian to become the first to do so by less than three minutes in 1970.
- Vava, Pele, Paul Breitner, Zinedine Zidane and Kylian Mbappé are the only players

to have scored in two World Cup Finals.

- Pele registered six assists at Mexico 1970 – a record for one World Cup. Four players managed five: Robert Gadocha at Germany 1974, Pierre Littbarski at Spain 1982, Diego Maradona at Mexico 1986 and Thomas Hassler at USA 1994. Pele also recorded an unprecedented three assists in deciders: one against Sweden in 1958 and two against Italy in 1970.



# Pele at the FIFA World Cup



# Did you know...?



## The Baptist

It was Pelé who coined football's universally-used nickname 'O jogo bonito', or 'The Beautiful Game'. He also dubbed Brazil's Mexico 1970 champions 'The Beautiful Team', which also stuck.

## The King of New York

Football barely existed in New York in the early 1970s – but celebrities did, with a who's-who of the world's biggest stars to be found in the Big Apple. But when the New York Cosmos sensationally brought Pelé out of retirement in 1975, the game's popularity exploded.

Cosmos became the most glamorous club on the planet and 'O Rei' ('The King') became the VIP to end all VIPs in NYC. "Absolutely everybody wanted to shake his hand, to get a photo with him," said Mick Jagger of Pelé's presence at Studio 54. "Saying you had partied with Pelé was the biggest badge of honour going."

Pelé's presence drew mind-blowing crowds to matches, seduced Muhammad Ali, Peter Frampton, Jagger, Elton John, Diane Keaton,

Henry Kissinger, Robert Redford, Rod Stewart and Barbra Streisand into being Cosmos fans, and coaxed Franz Beckenbauer, Carlos Alberto and Giorgio Chinaglia to the Big Apple, where he inspired the club to the Soccer Bowl for his swan song.

## Escape to Victory

Pelé had a lead role in this 1981 film, which also starred Sylvester Stallone, Michael Caine, Max von Sydow and Bobby Moore, about Allied prisoners of war playing an exhibition football match against the Germans.

## The Simpsons

"Hey, Dad, how come you've never taken us to see a soccer game," Bart asks Homer during an episode from 1997. The next scene shows the Simpsons at Springfield Stadium watching Pelé initiate a game between Portugal and Mexico. The likes of David Beckham, Ronaldo, Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar have

since appeared on *The Simpsons*.

## Music

Four days before turning 80, Pelé released *Acredita No Véio* (Listen to the Old Man), a track recorded with 2019 Grammy winners Rodrigo y Gabriela. Pelé loved music all his life and composed hundreds of tracks from the early 1960s onwards. He famously carried a voice recorder with him everywhere because "a song can come into your head at any time – even at a World Cup".

## Celebrity and honours

In 1970, Pelé was named the most famous person on the planet ahead of John Lennon, Pope Paul VI, Paul McCartney, Muhammad Ali, Paul Newman, Queen Elizabeth II, Neil Armstrong, Elvis Presley, Clint Eastwood, Elizabeth Taylor, John Wayne and Barbra Streisand.



# Pele, football's first icon



# What they said about Pele

"Pele revolutionised football. Pele stopped a war. Pele united countries, united families. There was no race problem, language problem. I was born in 1970. In 2002, I became a world champion. I was captain. I had the honour of receiving the World Cup Trophy from no less a person than Pele! Man! If I say any more I'll cry. It's really emotional!"

## **Cafu to FIFA**

**Malcolm Allison:** "How do you spell Pele?"

**Pat Crerand:** "Easy: G-O-D."

*Television commentators during the FIFA World Cup Mexico 1970™*

"The greatest goal I ever scored was a one-two with [his mother] Celeste – we named him Edson Arantes do Nascimento."

## **Dondinho, Pele's father**

"To watch him play was to watch the delight of a child combined with the extraordinary grace of a man in full."

## **Nelson Mandela**

"Pele was one of the few who contradicted my theory: instead of 15 minutes of fame, he will have 15 centuries."

## **Andy Warhol**

"An artist, in my eyes, is someone who can lighten up a dark room. I have never and will never find the difference between the pass from Pele to Carlos Alberto in the final of



the World Cup in 1970 and the poetry of the young Rimbaud. There is in each of these human manifestations an expression of beauty which touches us and gives us a feeling of eternity."

## **Eric Cantona**

"My name is Ronald Reagan, I'm the President of the United States of America. But you don't need to introduce yourself because everyone knows who Pele is."

## **Ronald Reagan**

"Pele took football to another level. Not only did he epitomise 'The Beautiful Game', but he also played with an effortless flair, the like of which had never been seen."

## **Gianni Infantino, FIFA President**

"The greatest player in history was Di Stefano. I refuse to classify Pele as a player. He was above that."

## **Ferenc Puskas**

"His Majesty, His Highness, 'Le Roi', 'The King'. My first video, VHS that I watched was of you playing during all these World Cups, sending positive messages. Thank you for sharing the passion."

## **Didier Drogba to FIFA**

"Absolutely everybody wanted to shake his hand, to get a photo with him. Saying you had partied with Pele was the biggest badge of honour going."

## **Mick Jagger**

"This debate about the player of the century is absurd. There's only one possible answer: Pele. He's the greatest player of all time, and by some distance I might add."

## **Zico**

"Even the sky was crying."

*A Brazilian newspaper the day after Pele made his final career appearance in a friendly between New York Cosmos and Santos*

# Qatar fulfills **Argentina's** **World Cup dream of 36 years**



**The first FIFA World Cup™ in the Middle East and Arab world reached a magnificent conclusion on Sunday 18 December with Argentina lifting the trophy for the third time after a dramatic final at Lusail Stadium in Qatar.**

**I**n front of a capacity crowd of 88,966, Argentina won 4-2 on penalties after a mesmerising match ended 3-3 after extra-time

Lionel Messi scored the opening goal in the first half with a penalty before Angel Di Maria doubled the advantage soon after following a sweeping counter-attack.

Late in the game, Kylian Mbappe hauled France level with two goals — the first a penalty — to force extra-time and give Les Bleus momentum.

Messi looked to have won the match when he forced the ball

home after 108 minutes but Mbappe completed his hat-trick with a second penalty soon after to force a shoot-out. Argentina were in control of the shoot-out throughout and completed victory with Gonzalo Montiel's winning spot-kick.

It was the first time a final ended 3-3 and contained the second World Cup final hat-trick in history. The tournament set a record for the number of goals with 172.

Ahead of the Final match, a stunning closing ceremony was held featuring a raft of stars, including Dana, Davido, Aisha, Manal, Balqees, Rahma, RedOne,

Ozuma, Gims and Nora. A host of songs from the tournament's Official Soundtrack were performed while 32 flying orbs paid tribute to each participating nation.

The final was the 64th match of the tournament, which got underway at Al Bayt Stadium on 20 November. More than 3.4 million tickets were sold for the matches, which were held at eight state-of-the-art stadiums, all located within an hour's journey time of central Doha.

Qatar hosted the most compact edition of the FIFA World Cup in modern history, with fans revelling in the opportunity to attend more than one match a day during the early stages of the tournament. During the 29 days, Qatar welcomed more than 1.4 million fans to the country.

While fans enjoyed exciting football on the pitch, Qatar hosted a vast number of entertainment activations across the country, including the FIFA Fan Festival™ at Al Bidda Park, which welcomed more than 1.8 million visitors, and the Corniche Activation. The tourist attractions all provided an opportunity for fans to celebrate their shared love of football in what proved a beautiful exchange of cultures from across the globe.

H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, Secretary General, Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), and



Chairman, FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC (Q22), said: "Qatar is incredibly proud to have hosted a landmark and unforgettable edition of the FIFA World Cup. This tournament has inspired billions of people across the Middle East, Arab world and globally. Through football, we have bridged the gap between East and West and showcased the very best of our people and culture. The social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of hosting this magnificent tournament will be felt for decades to come."

Eng. Yasir Al Jamal, Director General, SC, said: "It has been an incredible journey – not just the last 29 days – but the entire 12 years leading up to the tournament. Back in 2010, we told the world to 'Expect Amazing' and we have delivered in spectacular fashion. Thanks to outstanding planning and collaboration with our trusted



countrywide and international stakeholders, we have delivered an exciting fan experience, smooth transport operations and the most accessible FIFA World

Cup in history. I pay tribute to all our dedicated staff and trusted partners for always going the extra mile and delivering a truly unique edition of the FIFA World Cup."

Nasser Al Khater, CEO, Q22, said: "When fans across the globe look back on Qatar 2022, they will remember exciting action on the pitch, fantastic stadiums and a memorable fan experience. We delivered our mission to host a joyous celebration of the most popular sport on the planet – one where fans united through their shared passion for football. We are proud to have hosted the most compact, innovative and family-friendly FIFA World Cup ever – one that will deliver a sustainable legacy for communities in Qatar, across the region and globally. This tournament has set a benchmark for future mega events – and everyone who played a key role over the past 12 years should be very proud of their contribution."

# Deschamps will discuss France future in 2023

**France coach will hold talks over his future early in the new year after final defeat**



- **Deschamps has led France to three major finals in his 10 years in charge**
- **France won the 2018 World Cup but just failed to defend trophy**
- **Les Bleus also made final of EURO 2016 where they lost to Portugal**

**D**idier Deschamps said a virus in the France squad may have caused their woeful start to the World Cup final, although he refused to use it as an excuse as he confirmed he'll hold talks over his future early in 2023.

France failed to become the first team to retain the World Cup since 1962 as Argentina triumphed in a penalty shoot-out following a remarkable 3-3 draw at Lusail Stadium.

Before Kylian Mbappe's hat-trick enabled France to force extra time and penalties, Deschamps' side made a slow start, becoming the first team to fail to attempt a shot in the first half of a World Cup final.

France had been without Adrien Rabiot and Dayot Upamecano due to illness in their semi-final win over Morocco four days earlier, and several other players reportedly

experienced symptoms in the days preceding the final. Asked about the spread of the virus after Sunday's defeat, Deschamps said it played a role in France's lethargic start.

"The whole squad has been facing a tricky situation for a while now, maybe that had a physical and psychological impact," Deschamps said.

"But I had no concerns about the players who started the match. They were 100 per cent fit, but we only had four days since the last match so perhaps there is some tiredness.



"That's not an excuse but we didn't show the same energy as previous matches and for the first hour we weren't in the match. "In those first 70 minutes or so, we were playing a very aggressive and dynamic opponent and we weren't at the same level for a number of reasons.

"We managed to come back from the dead and made a magnificent comeback from a very difficult situation."

### Deschamps to discuss France future next year

Deschamps' contract with France is up, but it is widely expected there will be another deal on offer if he wishes to stay on and

target Euro 2024 success. The disappointment of missing out on lifting the World Cup for a second time, four years after triumphing at Russia 2018, will take time to sink in. That is why discussions over Deschamps' future were not a matter, as the team travelled back to Paris.

However, French Football Federation (FFF) president Noel Le Graet does not want to waste any time, and he is seeking clarity so has promised to call Deschamps at the latest.

Le Graet told French broadcaster BFMTV: "I will call him tomorrow or the day after tomorrow when he has recovered, too. We will see each other as soon as possible, of course."

The defeat will likely revive speculation regarding Deschamps' future, with France great Zinedine Zidane having long been touted as a potential successor.

Deschamps, however, will take his time to weigh up whether to extend his 10-year stay with the two-time world champions.

"You're not first to ask. Even if we had won, I would not be able to answer that tonight," Deschamps said at his post-match press conference.

"Of course, I am very sad for the players and staff, but I'll have a meeting with the [French Football Federation] president at the start of next year and then you'll find out."

# Mbappe tops the goalscoring charts at Qatar 2022

**Kylian Mbappe finished as the top scorer at Qatar 2022.  
Lionel Messi came one goal back in second**



## 8 GOALS

Kylian Mbappe (France) - 2 assists, 597 minutes played

## 7 GOALS

Lionel Messi (Argentina) - 3 assists, 690 minutes played

## 4 GOALS

Olivier Giroud (France) - 0 assists, 424 minutes played

Julian Alvarez (Argentina) - 0 assists, 466 minutes played

## 3 GOALS

Goncalo Ramos (Portugal)  
Alvaro Morata (Spain)  
Marcus Rashford (England)  
Enner Valencia (Ecuador)  
Bukayo Saka (England)  
Richarlison (Brazil)  
Cody Gakpo (Netherlands)

## 2 GOALS

Bruno Fernandes (Portugal)  
Harry Kane (England)  
Niclas Fullkrug (Germany)  
Vincent Aboubakar (Cameroon)  
Mehdi Taremi (IR Iran)  
Neymar (Brazil)  
Robert Lewandowski (Poland)  
Wout Weghorst (Netherlands)  
Rafael Leao (Portugal)  
Kai Havertz (Germany)  
Giorgian de Arrascaeta (Uruguay)



Ritsu Doan (Japan)  
 Ferran Torres (Spain)  
 Mohammed Kudus (Ghana)  
 Aleksandar Mitrovic (Serbia)  
 Salem Al-Dawsari (Saudi Arabia)  
 Cho Guesung (Korea Republic)  
 Breel Embolo (Switzerland)  
 Andrej Kramaric (Croatia)  
 Youssef En-Nesyri (Morocco)

### **GOLDEN BOOT CRITERIA**

The Golden Boot will be awarded to the player who scores the most goals in the final competition. If two or more players score the same number of goals, the number of assists (as determined by the members of the FIFA Technical Study Group) shall be decisive.

If two or more players are still equal after taking into account the number of assists, the total minutes played in the tournament will be taken into account, with the player playing fewer minutes ranked first. A Silver Boot and a Bronze Boot will also be awarded

for the second and third-highest goalscorers, respectively.

### **GOLDEN BOOT WINNERS**

1930: Guillermo Stabile (8 goals)  
 1934: Oldrich Nejedly (5)  
 1938: Leonidas da Silva (7)  
 1950: Ademir de Menezes (9)  
 1954: Sandor Kocsis (11)  
 1958: Just Fontaine, France (13)  
 1962: Florian Albert, Garrincha, Valentin Ivanov, Drazen Jerkovic, Leonel Sanchez and Vava (4)  
 1966: Eusebio (9)  
 1970: Gerd Muller (10)  
 1974: Grzegorz Lato (7)  
 1978: Mario Kempes (6)  
 1982: Paolo Rossi (6)  
 1986: Gary Lineker (6)  
 1990: Toto Schillaci (6)  
 1994: Oleg Salenko and Hristo Stoichkov (6)  
 1998: Davor Suker (6)  
 2002: Ronaldo (8)  
 2006: Miroslav Klose (5)  
 2010: Thomas Muller (5)  
 2014: James Rodriguez (6)  
 2018: Harry Kane (6)

### **TOP ASSISTERS AT QATAR 2022**

**3**

Bruno Fernandes  
 Antoine Griezmann  
 Harry Kane  
 Lionel Messi  
 Ivan Perisic

**2**

Jordi Alba  
 Diogo Dalot  
 Ousmane Dembele  
 Denzel Dumfries  
 Joao Felix  
 Phil Foden  
 Raphael Guerreiro  
 Theo Hernandez  
 Davy Klaassen  
 Kylian Mbappe  
 Mislav Orsic  
 Christian Pulisic  
 Dusan Tadic  
 Vinicius Junior  
 Andrija Zivkovic

# Spectacular Closing Ceremony kicks off World Cup final

**Music and orbs and poetry combined for meaningful Closing Ceremony full of colour and noise**



- **2022 FIFA World Cup™: The best of the closing ceremony**
- **FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Closing Ceremony provided fabulous memory**
- **Performers joined for artistic tribute to host country**
- **Ceremony staged prior to Lusail Stadium final between Argentina and France**

**T**he FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ delivered another memory to treasure for fans around the globe in the form of a dazzling and uplifting Closing Ceremony.

The audio and visual spectacular was staged prior to Sunday's final between France and Argentina at Lusail Stadium and featured a number of first-rate performers. Qatari singer Dana

opened the show with a rendition of It's a Wonderful World. She was accompanied by Tamim Al Barghouti's recital of a poem that salutes the ability of human beings to set aside differences and join together to celebrate 'The Beautiful Game'.

Al Barghouti's reading supplied a heavy nod to the inspiration underpinning the Closing Ceremony: the world uniting for the entirety



of the World Cup's 29 days. The tournament's 32 competing nations were represented by flying orbs decorated with the flags of their respective countries. The orbs descended on to the field and their movement represented a symbol of the teams' World Cup paths, until only the orbs of Argentina and France remained. Those two spheres soared into the cool evening sky in an illustration of the desire of both

teams to achieve the ultimate goal of claiming World Cup glory.

Music took over in the form of a mashup of songs from the World Cup Official Soundtrack, marking some of the tournament's most memorable moments. The first track rolling around the Lusail was (Hayya Hayya) Better Together, led by Davido and Aisha. That gave way to Ozuna and Gims performing Arhbo, before an

airing of Light the Sky from Nora Fathi, Balqees, Rahma Riad and Manal.

This ceremony was designed as an artistic tribute to the host country, with around 1,000 people from multiple countries involved in bringing the concept to life. Following its conclusion 2010 Spanish FIFA World Cup winning goalkeeper Iker Casillas delivered the trophy to the playing area.

# Al Bayt Stadium

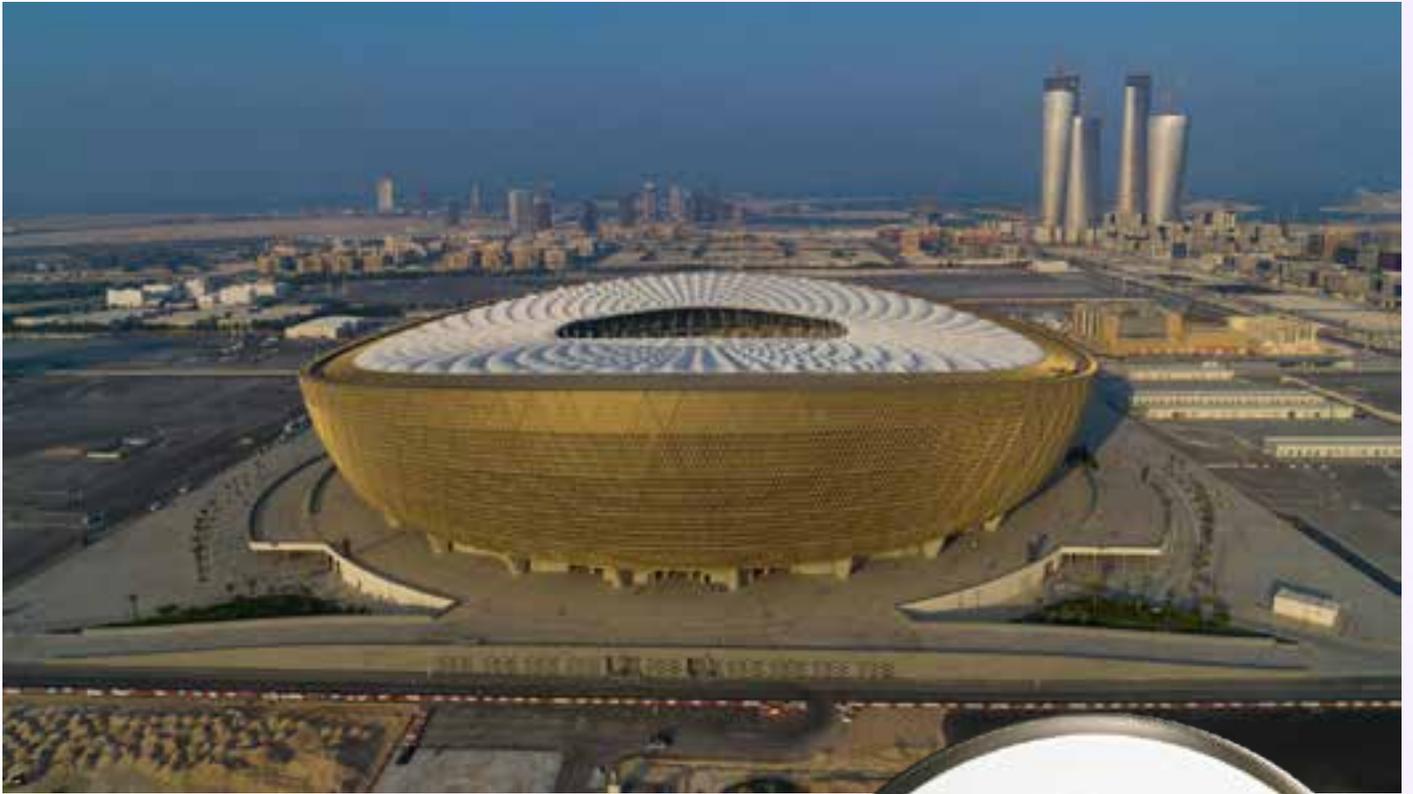


**The warmest of Arab welcomes**

**FIFA World Cup 2022™ Stadium  
Capacity\***

**68,895**

# Lusail Stadium



**Alive with heritage, an icon for the future**

**FIFA World Cup 2022™ Stadium Capacity\***

**88,966**

# Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium

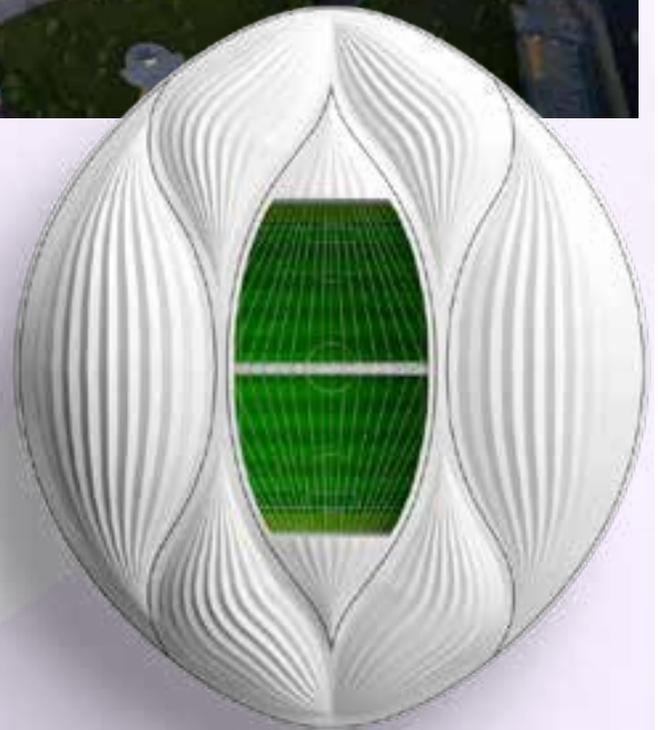


**Where desert stories unfold**

**FIFA World Cup 2022™ Stadium  
Capacity\***

**45,032**

# Al Janoub Stadium



**Football sails into a new era**

**FIFA World Cup 2022™ Stadium  
Capacity\***

**44,325**

# Al Thumama Stadium



**A venue steeped in culture and tradition**

**FIFA World Cup 2022™ Stadium Capacity\***

**44,400**

# Education City Stadium



**A shimmering jewel of inspiration**

**FIFA World Cup 2022™ Stadium  
Capacity\***

**44,667**

# Khalifa International Stadium



**A sporting legend re-energised**

**FIFA World Cup 2022™ Stadium  
Capacity\***

**45,857**



# Stadium 974



**Innovation at the heart of it all**

**FIFA World Cup 2022™ Stadium  
Capacity\***

**44,089**

# Mac Allister: Messi best player in history

**Midfielder says captain is the key factor behind Argentina's World Cup win**



- **Alexis Mac Allister salutes Messi's impact on and off the field**
- **Mac Allister starred in the dramatic World Cup final against France**
- **De Paul and Fernandez savour Qatar 2022 victory**

**A**rgentina midfielder Alexis Mac Allister hailed Lionel Messi's influence as the decisive factor in his nation's FIFA World Cup™ triumph, labelling his side's captain as "the best of all-time".

Messi became the first player in history to win two Golden Ball awards as he spearheaded Argentina's glorious Qatar 2022 campaign.

The Paris St Germain forward scored seven goals and provided three assists on his way to captaining Argentina to a third World Cup success. Two of Messi's strikes came in their breathtaking 3-3 draw with France in the Final while he also scored in the shootout which Argentina won 4-2.

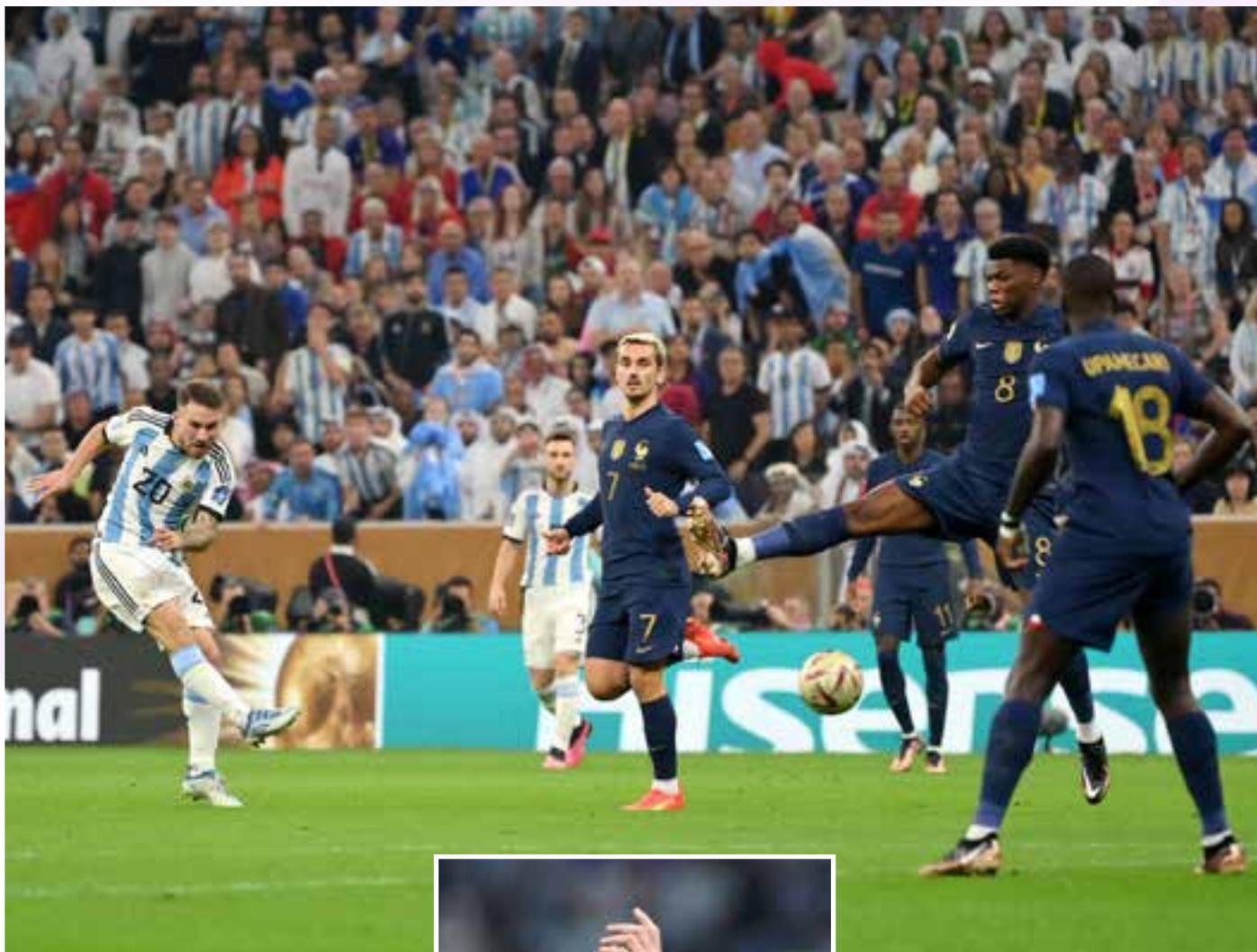
Mac Allister was one of the standout performers in the final and served up

the pass from which Angel Di Maria struck Argentina's second goal in a flowing team move.

## "Amazing" Martinez

Mac Allister also reserved special praise for Emiliano Martinez, who won the Golden Glove prize for the tournament's best goalkeeper.

Martinez made a vital intervention in the dying moments of extra-time in the final, spectacularly saving from France forward Randal Kolo Muani to send the game to penalties. He then kept out Kingsley Coman's spot-kick



to set up Argentina's shootout victory.

"Emi did really well, he is an amazing keeper," Mac Allister added.

"He helped us a lot during this tournament. I'm really pleased for him and really pleased for this country and for this team."

## Born to suffer

Mac Allister's midfield partner Rodrigo de Paul, meanwhile, admitted the dramatic Final took its toll mentally and physically on him and his teammates.

"We were born to suffer, we are



going to suffer all our lives, but I will never forget this," he said.

"I think we are fair winners. To be champions, you had to beat the last champion, and we did. This is a joy I can't explain."

Enzo Fernandez – who won the FIFA Young Player award following a string of exceptional displays – said his Qatar experience is one he will cherish for the rest of his life.

"Being here, having the possibility of winning a World Cup with my country is priceless," explained the 21-year-old midfielder. "My whole family is here, I'm going to carry it forever in my heart."

# The World Cup records

## MESSI OWNS

The FIFA World Cup records belonging to Lionel Messi and the ones he is pursuing.



- **Lionel Messi owns several World Cup records**
- **They involve appearances, assists and goals**
- **Messi is also close to a Miroslav Klose milestone**

**M**essi is one of only six men to have played in five World Cups alongside Antonio Carbajal, Lothar Matthaus, Rafa Marquez, Andres Guardado and Cristiano Ronaldo.

Messi made his 26th World Cup appearance in the Qatar 2022 final, breaking Lothar Matthaus's record.

Messi has made a record 19 appearances as captain in the World Cup. He is followed by Rafa Marquez (17) and Diego Maradona (16).

Messi has played the most minutes in World Cup history: 2,314. He broke Paolo Maldini's record of 2,217 minutes in the Qatar 2022 final.

Messi is the only player to register an

assist in five World Cups. His closest challengers are Pele, Grzegorz Lato, Diego Maradona and David Beckham, who set up goals in three editions apiece.

Pele and Messi share the record for the most assists in the knockout phase (6).

Messi is Argentina's leading marksmen in the World Cup on 13 goals. He is followed by Gabriel Batistuta (10), Diego Maradona (8), Guillermo Stabile (8), Mario Kempes



(6) and Gonzalo Higuain (5).

Messi is the only player to score in the World Cup in his teens, 20s and 30s. Pele missed out on accomplishing the same by four months.

Messi scored his first and latest World Cup goals 16 years and 184 days apart. The next biggest span in World Cup history belongs to Cristiano Ronaldo at 16 years and 160 days.

The Player of the Match, first awarded in 2002, has been given to Messi an unequalled 11 times. His four at Brazil 2014 is a record for one edition he shares with Wesley Sneijder, who received the same at South Africa 2010.

Miroslav Klose has played in a record 17 World Cup victories. Messi is currently on 16.

# Messi vows to keep playing **for Argentina**

**Lionel Messi said he was not ready to retire from international football just yet**



**L**ionel Messi promised he would play on for Argentina to experience "a few more games being world champion" after inspiring their triumph in Qatar.

The World Cup belongs to Messi and Argentina after the spectacular final that saw Kylian Mbappe hit a hat-trick for France but still end up on the losing side.

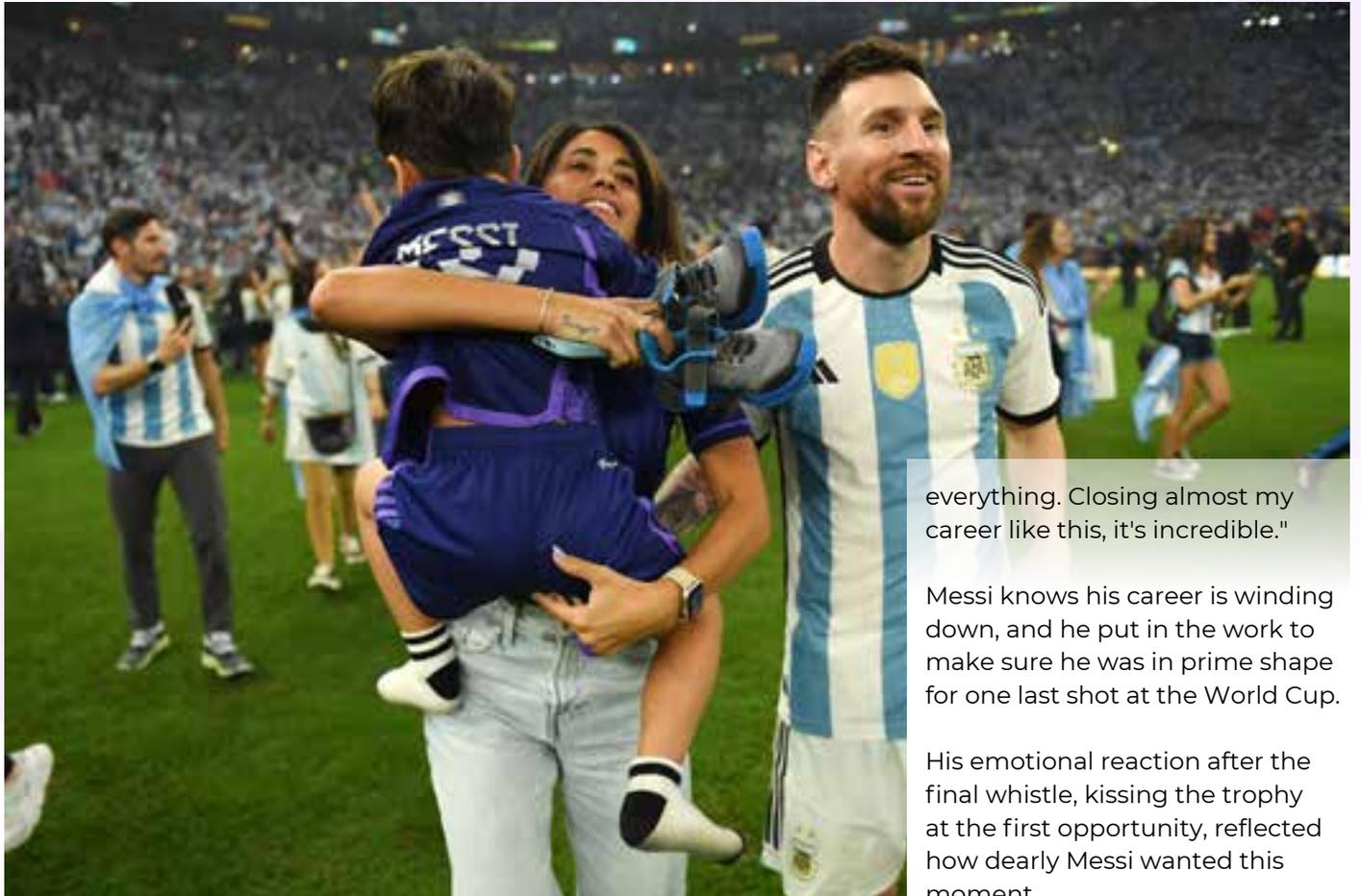
A 4-2 victory on penalties after a 3-3 draw gave Argentina their third World Cup success, after lifting the trophy in 1978 and 1986, and means Messi's final appearance on the biggest stage of all ended in a fairy tale manner.

It was the trophy he had been striving to win before the end of his career, and the 35-year-old finished the tournament with seven goals and three assists,

becoming the first player to score in every round and the group stage.

He took the Golden Ball award as the best player, but Mbappe pipped him to the Golden Boot with eight goals.

Messi told TyC Sports: "Obviously I wanted to close my career with this, I can't ask for anything any more. Thank God, he gave me



everything. Closing almost my career like this, it's incredible."

Messi knows his career is winding down, and he put in the work to make sure he was in prime shape for one last shot at the World Cup.

His emotional reaction after the final whistle, kissing the trophy at the first opportunity, reflected how dearly Messi wanted this moment.

A double in the final meant Messi became the highest-scoring South American player in major international tournaments with 26 goals - 13 in the World Cup as many in the Copa America. That took him one goal ahead of Brazil great Ronaldo, who previously held the record.

"After this, what will there be? I was able to get the Copa America, World Cup... It came to me almost at the end," Messi said

"I enjoy being in the national team, the group, I want to continue living a few more games being world champion.

"It's every little kid's dream, I was lucky to have achieved everything and what I was missing is here."



# Messi celebration is most-liked Instagram post

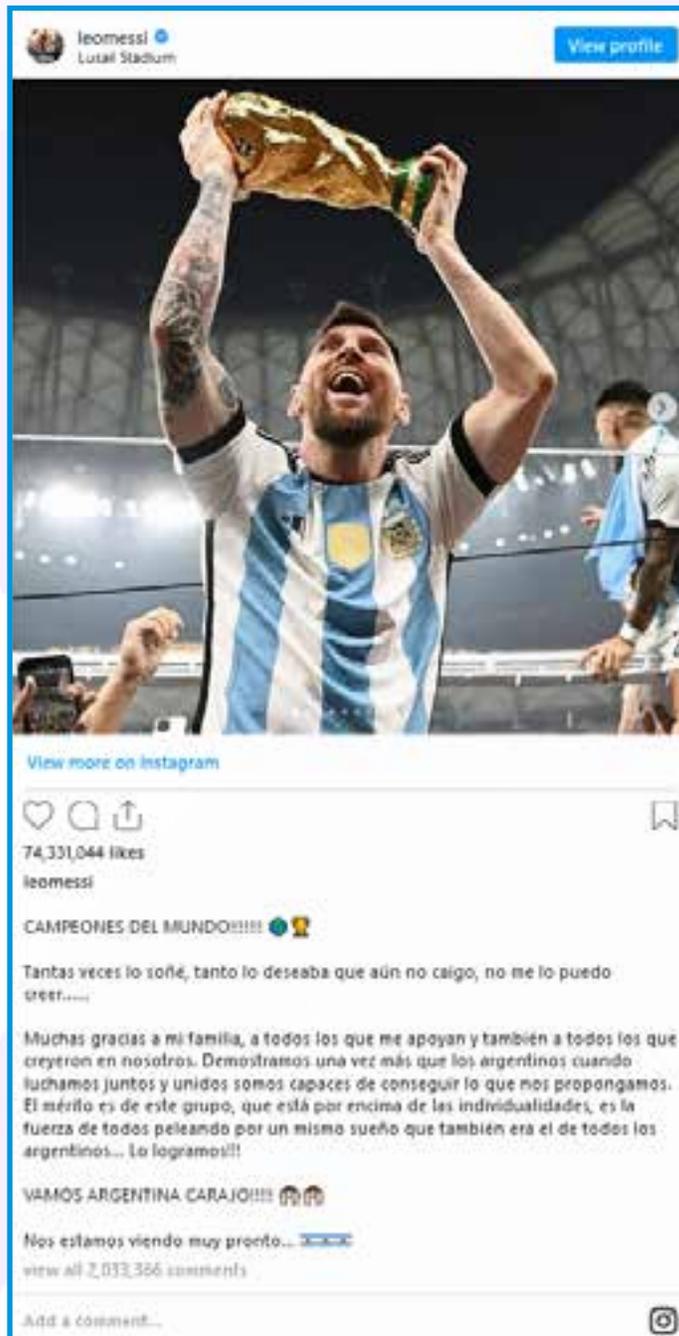
**The Argentina captain Lionel Messi has set another record, this time on social media**

- Lionel Messi has set yet another record after winning the World Cup
- The Argentina captain's post of lifting the trophy has earned 56 million likes
- The forward scored twice in the Final and also netted in the penalty shootout

**L**ionel Messi's Instagram message celebrating Argentina's World Cup win has become the most popular post in the social media platform's history, with 56 million likes.

Messi finally won international football's greatest prize after Argentine edged out France 4-2 on penalties after a thrilling 3-3 draw in the World Cup Final at Lusail Stadium.

For the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner, it is the final rubber stamp on his status as the greatest footballer of his generation, and arguably the greatest of all time.



Now, Messi has another record to his name, with his post in the wake of Argentina's success surpassing the previous high-water mark held by the World Record Egg, which gained 55.9 million likes.

"Thank you very much to my family, to all who support me and also to all who believed in us," the 35-year-old wrote in his caption.

"We demonstrate once again that Argentines when we fight together and united we are capable of achieving what we set out to do.

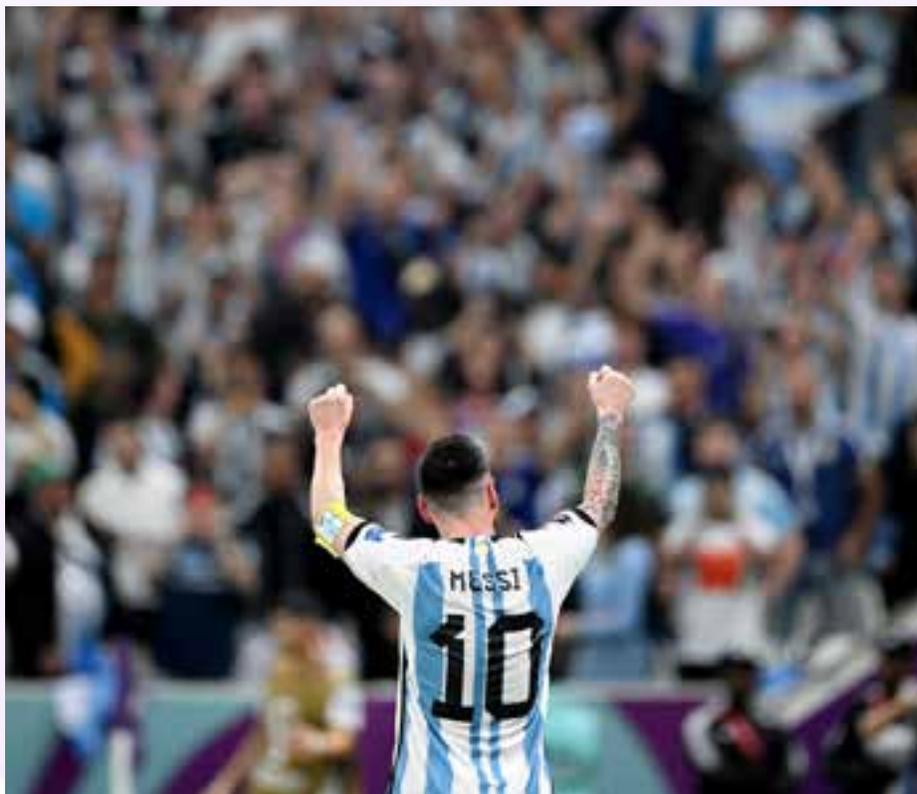
"The merit belongs to this group, which is above individuals. It is the strength of all fighting for the same dream that was also the dream of all Argentines... We did it!!!"

Messi, who was named the World Cup Golden Ball recipient for the second time, scored twice in the final, and netted the first successful penalty of his side's shoot-out.

# Messiah at the Pinnacle of greatness

**From being nicknamed 'La Pulga' (The Flea) back home in Argentina for his diminutive stature, 'Messiah' to simply, the G.O.A.T, Messi has drawn every praise and compliment in the footballing metaverse throughout his golden career. Considering the galaxy of legends that came before him and made football the beautiful game it is, Lionel Messi has evoked comparisons with the best in the way his friends and foes admire him in the game.**

**His silken feet, magical ball skills, mesmeric dribbles and darting runs into rival boxes have seen him attract a host of prefixes against his name. From being nicknamed 'La Pulga' (The Flea) back home in Argentina for his diminutive stature, 'Messiah' to simply, the G.O.A.T**



**O**ver the years, Messi anchored Blaugrana to win an astounding 10 La Liga titles and made the club a formidable unit in Spanish football. His astute partnership with Pep Guardiola as manager saw Barcelona win four consecutive La Liga titles between 2008-12 and took Barcelona to another level.

Messi played a crucial role in Barcelona winning four UEFA Champions League titles, thereby expanding their dominance across Europe, not only Spanish football. By this time, Messi was synonymous with the Catalan outfit. Messi won seven Ballon D'or awards, which is a world record. This is a recognition for the Footballer of

the Year across all players actively representing European Clubs. To win this prestigious award seven times in 17-18 years is brilliant and demonstrates that class is permanent.

But somehow, while Messi dominated Spanish & European football while representing Barcelona, he could not re-create the same magic while representing Argentina's white & light blue stripes.

While some critics alleged that his loyalty is only towards the big bucks that his clubs have to offer, the more ardent fans defended him by saying that he's grown up in the Tiki Taka style of play at Barca. Hence, his game is not naturally suited for scenarios where players around him don't feed on/off him.

How could someone be termed GOAT without winning a Copa America and a World Cup title?

Yet, for all his glorious accomplishments, breaking new grounds in the game and rewriting footballing records like few have, there is one frontier that has remained unconquered.

The agonising quest to win a major title for his national team has seen him endure many heartbreaking moments.

Images of him slumping to his knees, holding his head in his hands or throwing a blank, rueful stare at the heavens after failing to take Argentina over the line in successive Copa America finals in 2015 and 2016 only served to reinforce the fact that he is, after all, mortal.

As Messi came to the fag end of his illustrious career, people were fast losing hope that he could perhaps end his career as the best club footballer, but someone who could never anchor his national team to lift the coveted continental and world trophies.



But legends are legends for a reason - when they see a challenge in front of them, they tend to raise their game. Messi broke this career-long jinx by anchoring Argentina to win the Copa America title in 2021 and the FIFA World Cup in 2022. What champion stuff to tick the only 2 pending boxes in back-to-back years!

Now there's nothing left for Messi to conquer in world football; rightly so; he had announced

proactively that this would be his last World Cup.

Almost like the universe aligned to bid farewell to this Messi-merising footballer. This World Cup was so much more about Messi than Argentina, and this could be seen in tears of happiness amongst billions of fans worldwide.

The magic & the aura of Messi was just like the magic & the atmosphere of Maradona back then. Not just the Final, but even Messi's 3rd goal in the Semi's against Croatia seemed to almost mimic Maradona's 2nd goal in the Quarter against England. Seems like the baton has well & truly passed. For me, Maradona remains GOAT, but Messi emerges as the Messiah.

Messiah means the Anointed One or the Saviour; he became the Messiah for billions of Argentina fans worldwide as the saviour of their hopes & dreams for Argentina to lift the coveted World Cup again and continue with the legacy of Maradona.



# A tribute to Lionel Messi



**L**ionel Messi, for many the greatest footballer in history, has finally got his hands on the FIFA World Cup™ trophy – and following one of the finest individual campaigns in the competition's history.

The 35-year-old provided seven goals and three assists, and broke multiple records, as Argentina conquered the sport for the first time in 36 years.

## Did you know?

Diego Maradona and Messi both made their Argentina debuts against Hungary, coming off the bench in the 62nd and 63rd minutes respectively. 'La Pulga Atomica' was sent off just two minutes into his bow.

*When Messi first scored for Argentina...*

- Twitter and iPhones didn't exist. Facebook was effectively only accessible to North American students.
- The Big Bang Theory, Ugly Betty, Dexter and Keeping Up with the Kardashians had yet to hit TV screens.
- Novak Djokovic had yet to win an ATP title and was ranked 63rd in the world.
- We Belong Together by Mariah Carey, Gold Digger by Kanye West, Sorry by Madonna and Unwritten by Natasha Bedingfield were flying high on singles' charts across the globe.
- Pluto was the universe's ninth planet. It was reclassified as a dwarf planet months later.
- Momiji Nishiya and Rayssa Leal, who seized gold and silver in women's street skating at Tokyo 2020, were not even born.
- Brokeback Mountain, Crash, King Kong and Memoirs of a Geisha had just won a joint-high three awards at the Oscars.

## The blinding big-stage intro

Messi was sent on for his World Cup debut in the 76th minute against Serbia and Montenegro at Germany 2006. Within three minutes he'd set up Hernan Crespo to score and ten minutes later he slotted home to seal a 6-0 victory – Argentina's joint-biggest in the competition.

## Youngest scorers in World Cup history

Pele, Brazil – 17 and 239 days in 1958



Manuel Rosas, Mexico – 18 and 93 days in 1930

Michael Owen, England – 18 and 191 days in 1998

Nicolae Kovacs, Romania – 18 and 198 days in 1930

Dimitri Sychev, Russia – 18 and 232 days in 2002

Lionel Messi, Argentina – 18 and 358 days in 2006

Aleksandar Tirnanic, Yugoslavia – 18 and 365 days in 1930



Julian Green, USA – 19 and 25 days in 2014

Divock Origi, Belgium – 19 and 65 days in 2014

Martin Hoffman, East Germany – 19 and 88 days in 1974

## Top five golazos

**Mexico  
Copa America 2007**

There are chips, there are incredible chips and then there's Messi's masterpiece. The elevation was truly mind-blowing. It helped Argentina reach the final.

**Brazil  
International friendly, 2012**

In the 84th minute of an engrossing East Rutherford clash, Messi collected the ball, pinned to the right touchline, with Marcelo pouncing. The Argentinian somehow conned his adversary, carried the ball north-west and, from just outside the box, fizzed an impeccable curler into the top corner to seal his hat-trick and a 4-3 win. It was nominated for that year's FIFA Puskás Award.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Brazil 2014**

Messi picked up possession near the centre-circle, shimmied Muhamed Besic and set off. He then played a one-two with Gonzalo Higuain, exquisitely slalomed around Ermin Bicakcic and produced a supreme, low finish from just outside the penalty area that went in off the post and, ultimately, earned Argentina a 2-1 victory in their opener.

**IR Iran  
Brazil 2014**

The deadlock was intact when the ball fell to Messi in injury time. Minimal danger seemed apparent but he instantly shifted the ball to his left

and produced a sensational strike from distance.

### Nigeria Russia 2018

The movement; the imaginative, exceptional, first-time control on his thigh, the palatial second touch to ward off Kenneth Omeruo; the dynamic finish... hypothetically, would any other player in football history have scored that goal? Messi did it to help snatch a 2-1 victory in a win-or-bust game for Argentina.

### The long wait

Messi propelled Argentina to FIFA U-20 World Cup™ and Men's Olympic Football Tournament glory, but had to wait 16 years for his first senior international title. After finishing runner-up thrice at the Copa America and once at the World Cup, the Rosario native helped La Albiceleste conquer South America in July.

### Stats

Pele reigned as South America's outright leading international marksman for 59 years – he outranked Ademir de Menezes, who hit 32 goals for Brazil – until Messi broke his record in 2021.

Most goals in one calendar year for Argentina

Lionel Messi – 18 goals in 14 games in 2022

Lionel Messi – 12 goals in 9 games in 2012

Gabriel Batistuta – 12 goals in 12 games in 1998

Antonio Angelillo – 10 goals in 9 games in 1957

Sergio Aguero – 10 goals in 10 games in 2015

### Quotes

*"They once said you could only stop me with a pistol. Today you need a machine gun to stop Messi."*  
- **Hristo Stoichkov**

*"When I met Messi I reached out and touched him. I needed to make sure he was human like the rest of us."*  
- **Gigi Buffon**

*"When I look back on my career, the most enjoyable thing was seeing the early years of Leo Messi. When he retires, football – not just Barcelona – should retire the No10 shirt."*  
- **Ronaldinho**

*"I think he reached and surpassed the level of Maradona. He does incredible things, at a speed that is insane."*  
- **Paolo Maldini**

*"Although he may not be human, it's good that Messi still thinks he is."*  
- **Javier Mascherano**



*"For me, watching Messi play is a pleasure is like having an orgasm. It's an incredible pleasure."*  
- **Luis Figo**





## Top-scoring men in World Cup history

Miroslav Klose (16 goals in 24 games)

Ronaldo (15 in 19)

Gerd Muller (14 in 13)

Just Fontaine (13 in 6)

Lionel Messi (13 in 26)

Pele (12 in 14)

Sandor Kocsis (11 in 5)

Jurgen Klinsmann (11 in 17)

Helmut Rahn (10 in 10)

Gabriel Batistuta (10 in 12)

Gary Lineker (10 in 12)

Teofilo Cubillas (10 in 13)

Thomas Muller (10 in 19)

Grzegorz Lato (10 in 20)



## Top-scoring men in international football history

Cristiano Ronaldo (118 in 196)

Ali Daei (109 in 148)

Lionel Messi (98 in 172)

Mokhtar Dahari (89)

Ferenc Puskas (84 in 89)

Sunil Chhetri (84 in 131)

Ali Mabkhout (80 in 109)

Godfrey Chitalu (79 in 111)

Hussein Saeed (78 in 137)

Pele (77 in 91)

Neymar (77 in 124)

# The Qatari trio who helped bring the FIFA World Cup 2022™ mascot to life



**T**here are many firsts associated with the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. It is the first edition of the tournament to be held in the Middle East and Arab world, the first compact tournament in modern history and the first to have an official soundtrack.

It is also the first FIFA World Cup™ to have a digital mascot. La'eeb – an Arabic word meaning super-skilled player – was unveiled to the world during the final draw in April. La'eeb hails from the 'mascot-verse' – a world where all previous tournament mascots live – and is known for his youthful spirit; spreading joy and confidence wherever he

goes. La'eeb, who is adventurous, fun and curious, has attended every previous FIFA World Cup tournament and contributed to some of the most famous moments in football history.

Here, we speak to Ahmed Al Baker, Fahad Al Kuwari and Mohammed Al Ibrahim, who worked on La'eeb's launch video, to find out more about the challenge of creating content that appeals to football fans across the globe.

## The vision

Qataris Al Baker, Al Kuwari and Al Ibrahim were excited to develop

the launch video for the mascot when they received the initial concept about his character.

"It was very exciting to be involved in this project and our objective was to deliver something different to every previous mascot launch," said Al Baker, who has been working as a director and producer for 12 years.

"One of our main aims was to present him in a humourous and interactive way while ensuring he appeals to as many people as possible – not just football fans."

Al Kuwari added: "I am not a huge football lover and during the animation process, I looked

at La'eeb from an outsider's point of view. Part of the challenge was creating content that non-football fans would enjoy – and I think La'eeb ended up being liked by everyone due to his uplifting personality.”

Writer and director Al Ibrahim worked as a senior content developer on the animation. He said: “I helped to build on his backstory – not only his origins but information about his home, the mascot-verse. We had to think about his personality traits and motivations – it was a really interesting project.”

The creative team also wanted La'eeb to resonate with people long after the tournament – which will conclude with the final at Lusail Stadium on 18 December.

“It's very important to us that La'eeb stays in the minds of football fans after the World Cup,” said Al Kuwari, a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar. “This is one of the reasons we built the mascot-verse, which allows La'eeb to visit mascots from previous tournaments.”

## A mascot with a voice

La'eeb's uniqueness extends to his voice.

“When we presented our work, FIFA really liked the scripts we had developed for La'eeb,” said Al Kuwari, who holds a Master's in film and screen studies from Goldsmiths, University of London.

The next challenge was deciding



La'eeb's accent and ensuring he would resonate with people in Qatar, the region and beyond.

“At first, we wanted La'eeb to speak Arabic with a Qatari accent – however we also wanted him to reach international audiences. In the end, we opted for English – but spoken by a local person – to show La'eeb is Qatari and can connect with people anywhere,” said Al Baker.

Al Kuwari added: “As content creators, it is our responsibility to create narratives true to our culture and heritage, and present them to international audiences.”

## New technology

La'eeb's virtual nature meant the creative options were endless and opened the door to utilise the latest digital technology.

“From holograms, digital screens and new media, there was plenty of room for creativity and we were able to experiment with different technologies,” said Al Baker.

Al Kuwari added: “Our priority was for La'eeb to entertain fans. We wanted to create uplifting and interactive content, so we approached this in the same way we look at cinematic scripts. Getting to know La'eeb is a journey everyone will go through during the tournament. The audience learned about his skills and personality during the draw – and there will be plenty more to find out during the World Cup.”

## The power of storytelling

For Al Ibrahim, seeing his creation come to life on a scale of such magnitude represents a dream-turned-reality.

He said: “Seeing La'eeb everywhere is testament to the power of storytelling. He is a character that will be remembered by future generations and exposed to billions of people during the World Cup.

“This is something every content creator dreams of – and knowing I've contributed is something I'll always be proud of.”

# FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Official Poster

**T**he Official Poster is on display at Hamad International Airport, where it will remain at Gate D18 beyond the FIFA World Cup 2022™. Everyone will have the chance to see the poster as they travel from and transit through Qatar.

This series of eight posters were created through close collaboration with prominent Qatari artist Bouthayna Al Muftah. The artworks combine to convey the values and messages of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ in a subtle, unique and relevant way – while remaining closely connected with local culture and heritage.

The main poster focuses on the football itself, featuring the agal – a traditional head piece worn in Qatar – alongside typography expressing the voices of a cheering crowd. Just like the beautiful game, the artist's approach is raw and emotive, packed with palpable movement and energy.



All 8 posters of the 2022 World Cup



Artist of the World Cup 2022 poster is Bouthayna Al Muftah

This approach aims to create a dialogue with fans – igniting all their senses.

#### **About the artist:**

Bouthayna Al Muftah's practice ranges from painting, photography, printmaking and typography to large-

scale installations and performance pieces. The inspiration behind Bouthayna's creative expression is the concept of collective memory, born through thousands of years of Qatari heritage – borrowing elements from folklore and the oral history of Qatar and readapting them to reflect her relationship with her land's past.

# FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Official Soundtrack



**Q**atar 2022™ was all about bringing the world together in harmony. For the first time ever, instead of one official song, a full FIFA World Cup™ Official Soundtrack was released.

A multi-song collection, featuring international artists across a variety of musical genres delivering smash hits, set the tone for a truly global celebration at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

By bringing all these voices together, this collection symbolised how music and football can unite the world. Check out the catchy and uplifting

songs that made up the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Official Soundtrack here:

- Hayya Hayya (Better Together) - Trinidad Cardona, Davido, and Aisha
- Arhabo – Ozuna featuring GIMS
- Light the Sky – Rahma, Balqees, Nora and Manal
- Dreamers – Fahad Al Kubaisi and Jung Kook (BTS)

Though not part of the Official FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Soundtrack,

an additional song was released and presented at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Opening Ceremony. 'The Calling' was part of the celebrations that kicked off Qatar 2022™ and the first match between Qatar and Ecuador.

Sung by Qatari female singer Dana, 'The Calling' is a fusion of Oriental sounds mixed with modern synthetic music. It's Inspired by traditional songs sung in hope that loves ones at sea will return soon. Here, it signified the call sent by Qatar to the world inviting them to Al Bayt Stadium and the FIFA World Cup 2022™.

# A football tournament without hooligans, David Beckham praised Qatar World Cup



## Former England captain hails fan experience and quality on the pitch

**D**avid Beckham has hailed the quality of the fan experience at Qatar 2022 and praised the tournament for uniting fans from across the globe.

The former England captain, who appeared in three FIFA World Cups

for the Three Lions, discussed the highlights of the tournament – in particular the compact nature, fan experience and quality of play.

“Seeing the fans come together and the level of football – it’s been amazing. It’s been a privilege to see the excitement and the fun the fans are having,” said Beckham, who twice reached the World Cup quarter-finals with England.

Qatar has hosted the most compact edition of the FIFA World Cup™ in modern history – with all eight stadiums within an hour’s journey time of central Doha. It has meant fans enjoying the opportunity to attend more than one match a day.

Beckham said the timing of the tournament – in the middle of the season for many leagues around the world – had boosted the level



of play on the field. “The level of football has been incredible. I was always a supporter of playing the World Cup in the middle of the season because I knew the players would be fresh and the fitness and energy levels would be higher.”

Beckham said Argentina’s victory over the Netherlands was his favourite game of Qatar 2022 and picked out two goals as his favourites of the tournament: Richarlison’s scissor-kick for Brazil against Serbia and Luis Chavez’s free-kick for Mexico against Saudi Arabia. He went on to discuss his stars of the tournament.

“I have loved Morocco’s midfield – their elegance and the way they play the game. Jude Bellingham had a great tournament for England, and Bukayo Saka,” said Beckham.

He added: “Kylian Mbappé has had a great tournament – whenever he gets the ball at his feet, you can feel the energy in the stadium lift. And Lionel Messi – what can you say? He’s a special individual on and off the field. It feels different watching him play in this World Cup. He’s got great team-mates around him but he has been the leader – and you can feel it in every

single game. It’s special to see.”

As for England’s performance, Beckham said head coach Gareth Southgate and his players should be proud of their display against France, which ended in a narrow 2-1 defeat at Al Bayt Stadium.

“We have real quality and the England players will take this experience to the next tournament. The fans are right behind us, the future’s looking bright. We have a lot of young players who will learn from this and take it on to the Euros and the next World Cup.”

# Qatar the best host FIFA ever had with 1.4 M visitors



## Fans enjoy compact tournament, accessible features and family-friendly atmosphere

**M**ore than 1.4 million fans from across the globe have visited Qatar for the FIFA World Cup 2022™.

With Argentina and France gearing up for the final at Lusail

Stadium this evening, tournament organisers announced that cumulative attendance is set to reach 3.4 million, meaning an average attendance of 53,000 fans per match and overall capacity in excess of 96%.

Fans in Qatar have revelled in the compact nature of the event with many thousands attending more than one match per day – the first

time this has been possible in the modern history of the tournament.

All eight of Qatar's state-of-the-art stadiums are located within an hour's journey time of central Doha and easily accessible by metro, bus and taxi services.

Between matches, fans were enthusiastic to attend a host of entertainment events, including



the FIFA Fan Festival™, Corniche Activation and many others. More than 530,000 people attended the entertainment events daily throughout the tournament.

H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, Secretary General, Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, and Chairman, FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC, said: "In 2010, we told the world to 'Expect Amazing' – and we have delivered on that promise in spectacular fashion. This has been an incredible edition of

the FIFA World Cup – and one that will set a benchmark for future mega event hosts." Al Thawadi added: "We are very proud to have hosted a compact, accessible and family-friendly FIFA World Cup. This tournament has provided a platform for cultural exchange on a level not seen before in history. Fans from far and wide experienced Qatari and Arab culture for the first time and were always in the thick of the action – never far from a stadium, accommodation or

entertainment activation. "The feedback we have had from all stakeholders, including fans, players, the media, volunteers and tournament officials, has been overwhelmingly positive. Smooth transport operations have made it easy to get around and everybody has immersed themselves in the party atmosphere across the country. We have no doubt this tournament will leave a huge legacy for the country and region – socially, economically and environmentally."

# The Arab Asian African Spring at Qatar



**F**ootball was always a game owned by Europeans and Latin Americans. They had the history, style and culture, they won the tournaments. But in this World Cup, the first one hosted by an Arab country we saw contraries. The style was obviously there but the countries from Asia Africa and Arab showed their game. They upended the ones who underestimated them. This World Cup was for sure a tournament of uncertainties and a total game. The biggies forget their game before the newbies actually.

## It's time for Africa

For Africa to have multiple teams go beyond the group phase to reach the Round of 16 in a World Cup is a milestone. The remarkable result

at the 2022 men's FIFA World Cup in Qatar – which saw Senegal and Morocco move into the knockout stage is Africa's best performance at the World Cup since 2014. That year both Nigeria and Algeria reached the final 16. This is a pleasing performance after a dismal 2018 World Cup when none of the African representatives went beyond the group stage.

Reaching the Round of 16 is an important marker, but what could be even more sustaining is having Morocco reach the final eight in the quarter-finals. Senegal's hopes were dashed by a knockout loss to England. Previously, three African teams have reached the quarter-finals: in 1990 (Cameroon), 2002 (Senegal) and 2010 (Ghana).

Reaching the quarter-finals aside, the performance of Africa's representatives in Qatar points to a definitive moment indicating that the continent can compete with the top teams in the world sustainably.

Presently, the remarkable performance by Tunisia provides an indication. Tunisia did not go beyond the opening round but by beating the defending World Cup champion France 1-0 was a story in itself. It was France's only loss in the opening round.

Cameroon, too, showed the kind of mettle needed when they stunned favourites Brazil in a gutsy performance, narrowly losing out on a place in the final 16 after Switzerland beat Serbia to edge ahead of them.



Never a team of the continent had reached the semi-finals of a World Cup. A unique performance that was greeted by the president of FIFA, the Italian Gianni Infantino

"I want to congratulate Morocco, hat. And also I want to congratulate the other African teams. Senegal made it through the group stage. they played against a very strong England. And also Cameroon, Ghana and Tunisia. Fighting until the last minute to qualify. This puts on display the level of African soccer. I am very happy. The moment of African soccer was always about to arrive. And it finally did.

Gianni Infantino also recalled that from the next edition, which will take place in the United States, Canada and Mexico, twice as many African teams will qualify. Indeed, the World Cup will be held in 2026 with 48 teams instead of 32 until now.

In total, 9 or 10 places will be allocated to African soccer.

## The Asian Miracle

Asian teams came crashing back down to earth in the World Cup last 16 but the region still enjoyed its

best-ever tournament to suggest it is closing the gap on the global elite.

The continent's finest will be back in Qatar for the 2023 Asian Cup and, if the World Cup is anything to go by, it could be the finest yet.

Australia, Japan and South Korea -- three of the six Asian Football Confederation teams at the World Cup -- reached the first knockout stage.

It was the first time three AFC sides had got to the last 16, even if South Korea in particular suffered a sobering defeat, going down 4-1 to highly fancied Brazil.

There would be no repeat of 2002, when South Korea reached the semi-finals as co-hosts, still the best World Cup showing by an Asian side. The Koreans did though defeat Portugal in the group phase in Qatar.

Saudi Arabia, also part of the AFC, pulled off the biggest shock of the tournament in coming from behind to defeat Lionel Messi's Argentina 2-1 in the group stage.

Japan also roared back to stun former champions Spain and Germany and top Group E, before

suffering a heartbreaking defeat to 2018 finalists Croatia on penalties.

Speaking ahead of the game, defender Kou Itakura said: "I feel that Asia is getting closer to Europe."

Hajime Moriyasu's side boasts a growing number of players in top European leagues.

Eight of his 26-man World Cup squad play in Germany's Bundesliga and Moriyasu said Japan's success was good for all of Asia.

"In order for Japan to win the World Cup we have been nurturing our young players and trying to create an environment where we can produce good players," said Moriyasu.

"At the same time, the JFA (Japan Football Association) also has a target of contributing to Asian football and has been sending Japanese coaches to many countries in the region to try to improve their level."

He added that the standard of Asian football would have to improve further if teams were to have a chance of becoming world champions.



## We've united people, broken down social barriers and bridged the gap between different cultures'

**H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, SC  
Secretary General, assesses the  
impact of Qatar 2022**

H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi said hosting the FIFA World Cup™ in Qatar had united people from different cultures and backgrounds during a special event organised by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Titled 'The Power of Innovation for a Post-Pandemic World', the event was held at Katara Cultural Village

in Doha and focused on ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing at all ages, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The event was attended by H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Dr. Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari, Qatar's Minister of Public Health, Bill Gates, Co-Founder of Microsoft and Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, FIFA World Cup Ambassadors David Beckham and Nadia Nadim, and football legends Didier Drogba and Michael Essien. The event also looked at

how innovation in medicine and science can help prevent a global pandemic in the future.

"Our ambitions for this tournament were grand and I'm proud to say we have been able to achieve them. Uniting people, breaking down social barriers and bridging the gap between East and West are all part of the legacy of staging the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world," said Al Thawadi, Secretary General, SC, and Chairman, FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC.

Al Thawadi, who was speaking



to Al Jazeera news anchor Folly Bah Thibault, continued: “We’ve always said that we need more platforms to bring people together from different backgrounds, different walks of life, different beliefs and different ideas to get together and understand that we don’t necessarily have to agree on things but we can still progress and co-exist in a positive way. This World Cup has been able to achieve that. We have seen the exchange of culture, whether it’s in terms of food, clothes or having a life-changing experience.”

With only four matches to go, Qatar has delivered a groundbreaking edition of the tournament. As well as being

the first FIFA World Cup in the region, Qatar 2022 is also the most compact edition of the event in modern history, allowing fans to attend more than one match a day. It has also delivered numerous legacy programmes related to human, social, economic and environmental projects.

Al Thawadi said major sporting events have a special ability to unite people from across the globe.

“Global sporting events have a spark that inspires us all. What we need to do is ensure this spark doesn’t just remain in Qatar – but across the Middle East and around the world. It has

broken down stereotypes and created bonds. Our responsibility, no matter who we are, is to take that spark and start planting the seed internationally because we need more opportunities to bring people together as a global community. For me, that’s one of the biggest legacies of this World Cup.”

Al Thawadi also spoke of his pride in delivering the first global event attended by millions of fans since the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This World Cup was a global gathering of people from different walks of life to celebrate a sport we all have a passion for,” he said.

# ‘I joke that I have more World Cup participations than Messi’



## Meet the 76-year-old volunteering legend from Germany who is supporting Qatar's FIFA World Cup™

**A** 76-year-old volunteer from Germany is participating in his fifth FIFA World Cup™ in Qatar.

Hubert Bihler is overjoyed to be supporting the first edition of the tournament in the Middle East and Arab world.

Bihler is one of more than 20,000 volunteers involved in this year's World Cup. He is supporting media operations at Stadium 974 – one of eight state-of-the-art tournament venues and the first fully-demountable stadium in FIFA World Cup history.

Here, we caught up with Bihler to learn more about his experience in Qatar.

### Tell us about yourself. How did you start volunteering?

I am from Dunningen in the Black Forest region, close to France and Switzerland. I have been a football enthusiast all my life. I worked as a sports and mathematics teacher, but was always involved in



football. I was a player and coach. Football was always a part of my life and after I retired, I began to volunteer in mega events. My first experience was the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany. From there, I fell in love with volunteering.

### Tell us about your previous volunteering experiences.

I have volunteered at five FIFA World Cups: in 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018, and now in 2022. I was also a volunteer at the 2011 Women's World Cup. I sometimes joke that I have more World Cup participations than Messi.

### What does your role as a media operations volunteer entail?

We support the smooth experience of media who are here

to cover the tournament. Recently I managed over 130 photographers who were assigned to capture the action during Mexico versus Poland.

### What is unique about this experience in Qatar?

This is actually my first volunteering experience in the Arab world and so far, the generosity and hospitality of people in Qatar have impressed me. It's all about the encounters we have. Volunteering enriches my life in a great manner.

### What motivated you to become a Qatar 2022 volunteer?

The 2018 FIFA World Cup was actually going to be my last event as a volunteer, but my wife unexpectedly passed away.

I wanted another challenge so I decided to apply to volunteer in Qatar.

### How has your volunteer experience been so far?

I have experienced many memorable moments here in Qatar. A big one was seeing volunteers from all parts of the world recognise me from other FIFA events. This World Cup has a wonderful, friendly atmosphere. It's nice to see fans celebrating in a peaceful manner, with respect for one another.

### Which team are you supporting?

Now that my beloved Germany didn't qualify for the round of 16, I will be supporting Brazil. They have a great team and I also have many Brazilian friends.

# ‘Having fans appreciate my artwork on a global scale has been life-changing’



## Carling Jackson – The Athlete Artist – discusses her Qatar 2022 journey

Growing up, Carling Jackson dreamed of becoming a footballer and representing Canada at the FIFA Women's World Cup™.

The Vancouver native played at a high level in North America and was invited to take part in Canada Soccer training camps. But a series of injuries curtailed her football career at the age of just 22 – forcing her to rethink her career objectives.

An art lover all her life, Carling studied human rights artwork after hanging up her boots, later becoming a full-time artist in 2017. Since then, she's branded herself as 'The Athlete Artist', developed a strong online following and created a series of custom pieces for sporting stars across the globe.

Carling has spent the last week in Qatar as part of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy's Cultural Activation Programme during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. She has produced murals at the Corniche and outside Al Bayt and Lusail stadiums,

including during the final between Argentina and France.

We caught up with Carling to discuss her work and inspiration, along with her dreams for the future.

Describe your artwork and the passion behind it.

I call my work 'portraits of immortality'. We can't play our sport forever – so I ask athletes to choose a moment when they felt invincible, when they felt like a gladiator on the pitch, and then



I paint it. From 1912 to 1948, art was an Olympic sport, including poetry, sculpture and painting. It shows there's a close link between sport and art. When you're on the field, you're creating – and I try to bring that experience of playing to my artwork.

### Tell us about your Qatar 2022 experience.

Being the first sports artist to paint at the World Cup is life-changing. I haven't been able to fully process it yet. I've met some of my football idols and some incredible people who will be lifelong friends. It's been unbelievable.

### Tell us about the work you've created in Qatar.

I was asked to create pieces of footballers. I wanted to highlight iconic goals and moments. The first piece I did featured Richarlison's scissor-kick for Brazil

against Serbia, which was one of the best goals of the tournament. The next piece I did featured Messi and Maradona at Lusail Stadium; then I painted Mbappe and Achraf Hakimi at Al Bayt. I wanted to paint Mbappe and Hakimi as they are friends – I wanted to show the respect and sportsmanship between them. I actually know Richarlison and Achraf, so I messaged them a photo of the murals I created. It was really cool. For the final, I painted Messi and Mbappe. I added the third star to the Argentina crest after they lifted the trophy. The response from fans after the match was amazing.

### What has the fan engagement been like?

Showcasing my work here is indescribable. My goal when I was younger was to make the World Cup as a player but that couldn't happen. Being the first sports artist to paint at a World

Cup is amazing though. It's historic. Being among the fans and getting the feedback and interaction is awesome. Having everyone appreciate my art on a global scale is life-changing and so rewarding. I'm really grateful for this opportunity.

### What's next for your career?

I live in Vancouver, one of the host cities for the 2026 World Cup. I'm working with Varley Media on creating artwork based on an incredible series of photographs taken by John Varley, who attended five World Cups. The plan is to create a gallery that tours Canada, Mexico and the US in the lead-up to the next tournament. It's going to be insane! I've also had players from this World Cup get in touch and ask me to capture their favourite moments. There is so much exciting stuff coming up.

# First-ever 100% rPET packaging during FIFA World Cup™



## Tournament organisers work with key stakeholders to promote plastic reduction strategies

**Q**atar's Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) and Coca-Cola Middle East have announced the introduction of 100% recycled bottles for Coca-Cola's range of beverages across official FIFA World Cup Qatar

2022™ venues, including stadiums and fan zones.

Aligning with the SC's key initiatives on responsible plastic recycling, Coca-Cola's pilot of 100% rPET bottles marks the first time the packaging will be in circulation at a FIFA World Cup™ tournament and serves as Coca-Cola's debut in locally producing 100% rPET bottles in the region. As part of this pilot initiative, 350ml Coca-Cola,

Sprite and Fanta bottles, plus 500ml Arwa water bottles, are available in 100% rPET packaging.

Eng. Bodour Al Meer, the SC's Sustainability Executive Director, said: "In addition to our One Tide programme, the pilot of Coca-Cola Middle East's 100% rPET bottles will significantly reduce the impact of single-use plastics and aligns to our concerted efforts to leave a sustainable legacy long



after the FIFA World Cup 2022.”

Tolga Cebe, Vice President & General Manager Middle East, The Coca-Cola Company, said: “Piloting the 100% rPET bottles for our Coca-Cola, Sprite and Fanta beverages, and Arwa water, during the tournament marks a major milestone for our operations in the region. It is an important step towards our global World Without Waste ambition to collect and recycle a bottle or can for every one sold by 2030. For Coca-Cola Middle East, this is part of a journey, and we aim to continue to champion waste collection projects and minimise our impact through local partnerships and initiatives.”

In addition to the 100% rPET bottles, Coca-Cola Middle East has placed dedicated recycling



bins across Qatar 2022 venues and is educating volunteers and fans on responsible recycling through its on-ground and on-screen communication, ensuring recyclable plastic waste is placed in the right bins for further repurposing.

The SC is also proud to announce that plastic bottles segregated and collected during the tournament will be recycled and converted into rPET bottles in-country, effectively closing the loop and leaving behind a green legacy – one of the SC’s key objectives. This was greatly supported by Coca-Cola Middle East’s efforts.

Through this initiative and the SC’s One Tide programme, Qatar is taking great strides to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated in the country and across the region.

“Our immediate objective is to raise awareness and encourage sustainable behaviours among people in Qatar – and globally – which helps to enable a circular economy for plastics,” Al Meer added.

# Approximately 80% of waste from FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ stadiums recycled



## More than 2,000 tonnes of waste collected from Qatar 2022 stadiums were recycled or composted

Qatar's commitment to staging a sustainable FIFA World Cup™ included extensive efforts to minimise waste and recycle used materials throughout the tournament. After successfully hosting 64 matches, tournament organisers ensured that more than 2,000 tonnes of waste were recycled or composted.

Eng. Bodour Al Meer, the SC's Sustainability Executive Director, said: "We are proud to announce that approximately 80% of waste from stadiums has been recycled. This is a massive achievement that has been delivered thanks to detailed planning and unwavering commitment from tournament organisers and national

stakeholders." The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), FIFA and the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC, implemented a robust programme which involved a number of initiatives before and during the Tournament. This included the use of compostable food packaging, encouraging fans to segregate waste and placing sorting facilities at all eight stadiums.

"I would like to thank all of our partners, most notably APEX Waste Solutions and Management Company, whose teams manually separated all the waste in each of our stadiums, before distributing it to local recyclers of plastic, cardboard, compost, metal, glass and electronic waste," added Al Meer.

Nasser Al Khalaf, CEO, APEX Waste Solutions and Management

Company said: "As a Qatari company, we are proud to have been a part of ensuring that Qatar 2022 left behind a sustainable legacy for future generations. Through our work with the SC, we were able to ensure that waste generated at stadiums was segregated on site before being taken to any recycling facility, which increased the recycling rate of our project."

A main focus of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Sustainability Strategy is reducing waste and increasing recycling, especially of plastics. To achieve that, tournament organisers successfully replaced plastic with compostable and reusable alternatives. For unavoidable plastics, Qatar 2022 worked diligently to remove them from the waste streams so that they can be recycled.

Organisers engaged with fans ahead of the tournament to encourage them to recycle as much as possible. There were also several public activations throughout Qatar 2022 that engaged fans and encouraged the uptake of recycling bins at tournament sites. The success of this initiative during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ will certainly create a long last legacy where recycling plays an integral part in the way waste is managed in Qatar.

# Qatar's new solar power plant to help the country deliver a carbon-neutral FIFA World Cup™



## Al Kharsaah to offset about half the emissions generated by the tournament

**T**he Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) has announced that carbon savings from Qatar's new 800 MW solar power plant will be used to offset approximately half the emissions generated from the country's hosting of the FIFA World Cup™.

The Al Kharsaah Solar PV Independent Power Producer Project will commit 1.8m tons

of carbon savings to Qatar 2022. The plant opened in October and will help to considerably reduce Qatar's carbon footprint. The project covers 10km – the equivalent of 1,400 football pitches. During its first year of operation, it is expected to generate almost 2,000,000 MWh, the equivalent energy consumption of approximately 55,000 Qatari households.

A report published in 2021 estimated that Qatar 2022 would generate about 3.6m tons of carbon emissions. Data will be

collected during the tournament to update the carbon inventory report and adjust the offsetting strategy accordingly. While about 50% of the emissions will be compensated by savings from the solar power plant, the SC will source an additional 1.5m tons through carbon-offsetting projects approved by the Global Carbon Council.

The SC, in collaboration with FIFA and Q22, has prioritised climate action over the past 12 years, as detailed in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Sustainability



Strategy. Tournament organisers have committed to delivering a carbon-neutral event – helped by a comprehensive range of initiatives, including free public transport for fans and officials, no domestic flights, green building practices, extensive recycling and composting, and electric vehicles.

Eng. Yasir Al Jamal, Director General, SC, said: “Delivering a carbon-neutral FIFA World Cup is a countrywide effort. We are proud of the vast number of projects implemented to help Qatar achieve this goal, from wide-ranging green building practices, including the

development of Stadium 974, the first fully-demountable stadium in FIFA World Cup history, to projects related to recycling, composting and the use of green vehicles.

“The announcement today that carbon savings generated from the Al Kharsaah solar power plant will help to offset the emissions of hosting the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world highlights Qatar’s commitment to environmental sustainability and setting a benchmark for future mega-event hosts.”

Qatar 2022 organisers will include

all unavoidable carbon emissions in their inventory – including flights taken by fans, players, officials and media.

Eng. Bodour Al Meer, Sustainability Executive Director, SC, said: “Our carbon reduction strategy has encompassed every area of tournament preparation. Delivering the first carbon-neutral FIFA World Cup in history will be a major achievement and help to promote the environmental agenda in Qatar, the region and globally. We thank our various stakeholders for their unwavering support and commitment in achieving this goal.”

# “The Bicycle Revolution” - Coop Africa (Cycling out of Poverty)



British Herald in chat with Luuk Eickmans, Executive Director Cycling out of Poverty Foundation.



**C**ycling out of Poverty supports students, health volunteers, farmers and small entrepreneurs with bicycles to improve access to basic needs and services such as education, health care, work and income. We believe that a bicycle makes a difference in this world and is a huge contributor to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Our mission is to improve the livelihood of African families by making bicycles and other mobility aids (such as wheelchairs, bicycle ambulances and cargo bikes) accessible and available for everyone in Africa.

**Cycling out of Poverty- Coop Africa, what a thought. It is so refreshing to hear such an idea. How do you work?**

As you aware Cycling out of Poverty is an NGO who is supporting students, health workers and entrepreneurs in Africa with bicycles, so that they can "cycle their way out of poverty"

For students who walk to school, a bicycle means that they can reach school quicker and have more energy in class, arrive home earlier and have more time to study, and avoid harassment on the way (esp girls). So a bicycle in our Bike4School programme aims to reduce tardiness, improve academic levels and attendance and reduce drop out.

For health workers a bicycle means that they can serve the community better with providing health care. Each health worker of Village Health Teams organised by the government

has the responsibility to take care of around 100 households in their area: to do regular house visits and check on the sick, elderly, expecting mothers and children. They play an important role in sensitization about hygiene and (new) diseases, as well as signalling trends and health challenges in the community and channel them back to the Ministry of Health.

A bicycle in our Bike4Care programme for them means they can do their rounds quicker, visit more patients in a day, visit the same household more often, and can act more quickly in case of an emergency. There are a lot of people who can increase their business by using a bicycle. For instance farmers can bring more products to the market on a bicycle instead of carrying it on their head, and they can move quicker and reach markets which are further away (and might give better prices). But also vendors like shoe salesmen or milk vendors



visit <https://www.coop-africa.org/en/>

obviously have the opportunity to increase their business if they are able to carry more load and move quicker and further. A bicycle in our Bike4Work programme often is tuned to the needs of the entrepreneur in our bicycle workshop: with an added front carrier or an extended rack or trailer. For entrepreneurs a bicycle means that they can increase their income.

All beneficiaries don't get the bicycle for free but always pay a contribution. Students and Health volunteers pay a subsidised rate for the bicycle, since they do not have a (steady) income, and entrepreneurs pay a bigger portion, but depending on the design of the (modified) bicycle the cost of those bicycles is much higher. The remaining part of the price of the bicycle they pay "in kind", by promising they live up to the agreement to do well in school or to continue to serve as a community health volunteer for at least 1 year. Cycling out of Poverty follows up closely with monitoring the students and the health workers in how they are using the bicycle, as well as supporting them with training on bicycle maintenance and repair to ensure durability of the bicycles.

### What are your major projects? Any recent one you could share with us

We continuously run the 3 projects: Bike4School, Bike4Care and Bike4Work: whenever we get donations we are able to issue out more bikes. First upcoming project is Bike4School, since schools are opening their academic year in January/February in Kenya and Uganda.

Due to the Covid lockdown, some students have not gone to school for almost 2 years, and have just been starting to go back to school, while other students found jobs or married during the long lockdown and are not considering going back to school. For the upcoming Bike4School project we are targeting those students for whom a bicycle can really make a difference in getting them back to school after having dropped out.

In addition to these 3 projects, we also do projects to promote cycling. Thousands of people now own bicycles, and we are putting in effort to ensure they can also safely and pleasantly use a bicycle. For this we are working with planners of the city to see where road safety for cyclists can be improved, we are organising

Critical Mass Ride and races to promote cycling as fun and "cool".

### When did it start the organisation? What brought you to such an innovative project?

We started in 2007, after one of our founders did a Master's thesis in Uganda for International Development Studies, researching the impact of bicycles on the lives of 100 women. The impact was so impressive, that for us as Dutchies it was only a logical step to start fundraising to enable more bicycles.

### You have used 'the bicycle' for more things than a bicycle can do. Bigger achievements with this tiny equipment which we lost after school. Who was the mastermind behind this idea of peddling out poverty?

The bicycle is not new to Africa. In fact, in the areas where we work, the bicycle used to be very popular and common, most people have learned how to ride as a child. So we are not bringing in an innovation in that sense: the mastermind of this is



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the local people. What we bring in is accessibility of people to a bicycle. Also, we design bicycles since the bicycles available on the local market are cheap imports from India, and we (in conjunction with some technical universities) try to design and produce a stronger bicycle for this target group. Our dream is that more people are able to cycle, for more reasons and more often. A country design for cycling is a country design for people, climate and health.

### Could you share your experience or significant achievements the project has achieved so far? Or any interesting story you encountered?

We are on our way to reach 15,000 bicycles going out in the past 15 years. And each bicycle has not only impacted its user, but the whole family. There is a girl who just got a bicycle in Bike4School, who used the bicycle to rush her sister to hospital after being bitten by a snake. Head teachers who confide in us that the harassment rate of their girl students on their way to school by thugs is reduced tremendously, giving them a safe and quick alternative from walking to school in the dark. Farmers who proudly show their house: that

they have been able to install a solar panel on the roof of their house, after their business has increased by bicycle.

### How do people in need approach you, or do you go for them?

By now we are known in the areas we work in, and people know that we are a trustworthy partner. We organise community meetings with local leaders and prominent people in the area in which we discuss the progress of the projects, and where we get feedback from them on what they see and hear in the community. That gives us direction on any changes we need to take for efficiency and effectiveness of the interventions. We work closely with schools and health centres, and are guided by government officials as to which areas are most in need.

### Africa still fought to acquire the necessities of its people. What do you think makes them struggle this hard to achieve all this? Why do they continue to be poor?

What we see is that people in our programmes are very versatile, and

in a way can adapt easily to changing situations, but on the other hand often lack a "buffer" to deal with challenges or to start something new. For instance the impact of drought or Covid is immense if you are lacking savings. But that is when looking at our target group and beneficiaries. At the same time there is a good number of middle class and upper class Africans, who are not struggling hard but are in a way building the country. These are not our target group directly, but indirectly it is important to also see these people cycling (either for leisure or to work) to keep cycling popular. Often these people have had the opportunity to get a good quality education, which is key in the development of a country. That is also why we hope Bike4School can interest as many dropout students as possible to go back to school.

### Have you got plans to spread this ray of hope around the world? As the whole world needs what you are achieving now.

We currently do not have the intention to spread to other countries, as we want to continue to provide quality in what we do.

YouTube



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