

FIFA World Cup 2026 - Match Schedule with Venues: 5 June 2026 to 12 July 2026

By Nick Stathes (nstathes@tszlegal.com); this Calendar was submitted to the FIFA Counsel on 13 March 2023, supplementing the Original Proposal submitted to FIFA Council on 3 March 2023.

www.12groupsof4.com

<div><div><div>World Cup Format Summary:</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">- Features 96 matches taking place over 38 days.- Canada hosts 12 matches, Mexico 18, & USA 66.- Nations drawn into 12 groups of 4 teams; group matches played within 1 of 4 Regional PODs.- Draw includes 12 group seeded teams (ex. A1, B1, C1, etc.) based on hosts & FIFA Ranking.- Remaining draw, A2 through L4 (36 total remaining group teams), based on Confederation.- Groups further divided into 4 Quadrants (ex. Groups A, B & C comprise a Quadrant, etc.)- Hosts placed in separate Quadrants, ensuring all hosts play at home until Semis at earliest.- Group winners & runners-up advance to 2nd Round (no 3rd place teams advance).- Highest 2 ranked group winners per Quadrant advance directly to Round of 16 (8 total).- Lowest Quadrant group winner & 3 Quadrant group runners-up to Play-in Round (16 total).- Winners of Play-in Round play against automatic Round of 16 qualifiers within Quadrant.- Each 2nd Round match within a Quadrant played within 1 of 4 Regional Venue PODs.- No teams from same group can face one another until Quarterfinals (see Proposal).- Following Play-in Round, Round of 16, & Quarterfinals, 4 Quadrant winners advance to Semis- Full Proposal sent to FIFA Council & example Quadrant found at www.12groupsof4.com.</div></div><div>This format is superior to 16 groups of 3 and & 12 groups of 4 with Round of 32</div></div> <div><div><div>South Region Venue POD</div><div>Hosts Groups A, E & I; & Quadrant 1 Second Round:</div><div>Guadalajara (GUD) (5)</div><div>Houston (HOU) (6)</div><div>Mexico City (MEX) (8)</div><div>Monterrey (MON) (5)</div></div><div><div>West Region Venue POD:</div><div>Hosts Groups D, H & L; & Quadrant 2 Second Round</div><div>Los Angeles (LA) (6)</div><div>San Francisco (SF) (5)</div><div>Seattle (SEA) (5)</div><div>Vancouver (VAN) (6)</div></div></div> <div><div><div>East Region Venue POD</div><div>Hosts Groups C, G & K; & Quadrant 3 Second Round:</div><div>Boston (BOS) (6)</div><div>New York City (NYC) (7)</div><div>Philadelphia (PHL) (6)</div><div>Toronto (TOR) (6)</div></div><div><div>Central Region Venue POD:</div><div>Hosts Groups B, F & J; & Quadrant 4 Second Round</div><div>Atlanta (ATL) (6)</div><div>Dallas (DAL) (7)</div><div>Kansas City (KC) (6)</div><div>Miami (MIA) (6)</div></div></div>
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***Canada opens its World Cup in TOR, despite Canada playing in Group D; this is the only opportunity for Canada to play in TOR throughout the World Cup as its remaining matches are in VAN (West POD)**
****If Mexico advances to this match, it will play in MEX; the other match on the same date will be played in the other city listed (easily accommodated, but perhaps unnecessary as other match in Mexico)**
*****If Canada advances to this match, it will play in VAN; the other match on same date will be played in the other city listed (this is easily accommodated, and necessary for Canada to play at home)**
******If USA advances to this match, it will play in NYC; the other Play-in Round match on same date not involving USA will be played in TOR (this is easily accommodated, and necessary for USA to play at home)**

Final Note: There is no better format for a 48 team World Cup than having 12 groups of 4 with 24 teams advancing to the Second Round. It's the best way to maintain the excitement of the Group Stage and guarantee that World Cups moving forward, which will have a minimum of three hosts, ensure host nations play at home until the Semifinals at the earliest. However, while I maintain that relative to the alternatives, this format is the best system: this calendar, my Proposal, and any idea or opinion I have set forth hereunder or under the Proposal is far from perfect. FIFA, among others, can potentially make this better. But a World Cup with 12 groups of 4 and 24 advancing to the Second Round is the optimal way to format the tournament, regardless of how FIFA elects to setup it's dates and venues.