



FIFA Club World Cup 2025: A bold global vision or flawed experiment?

A breakdown of
what worked, what didn't, and what comes next.

Reda LARAICHI

FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP 2025™

GROUP A



GROUP B



GROUP C



GROUP D



GROUP E



GROUP F



GROUP G



GROUP H



The Ambition

32 clubs from all continents

A truly global format never seen before

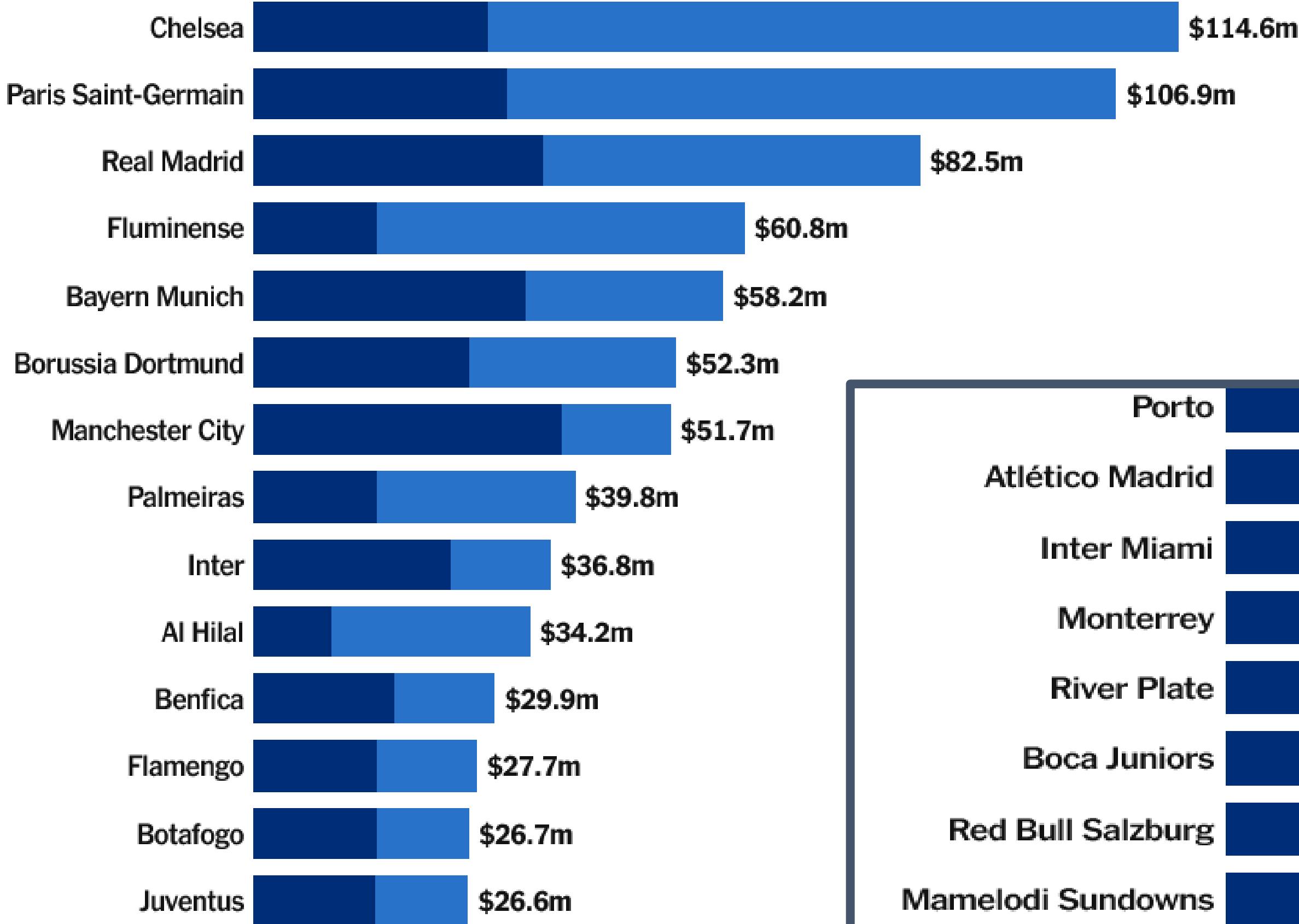
\$1 billion in prize money

Hosted in the USA: FIFA's most commercially strategic market

FIFA CWC financial rewards

Three European clubs dominate Club World Cup earnings [NYTimes](#)

■ Participation fee ■ Performance



\$2 MILLION PER WIN

1 MILLION PER DRAW

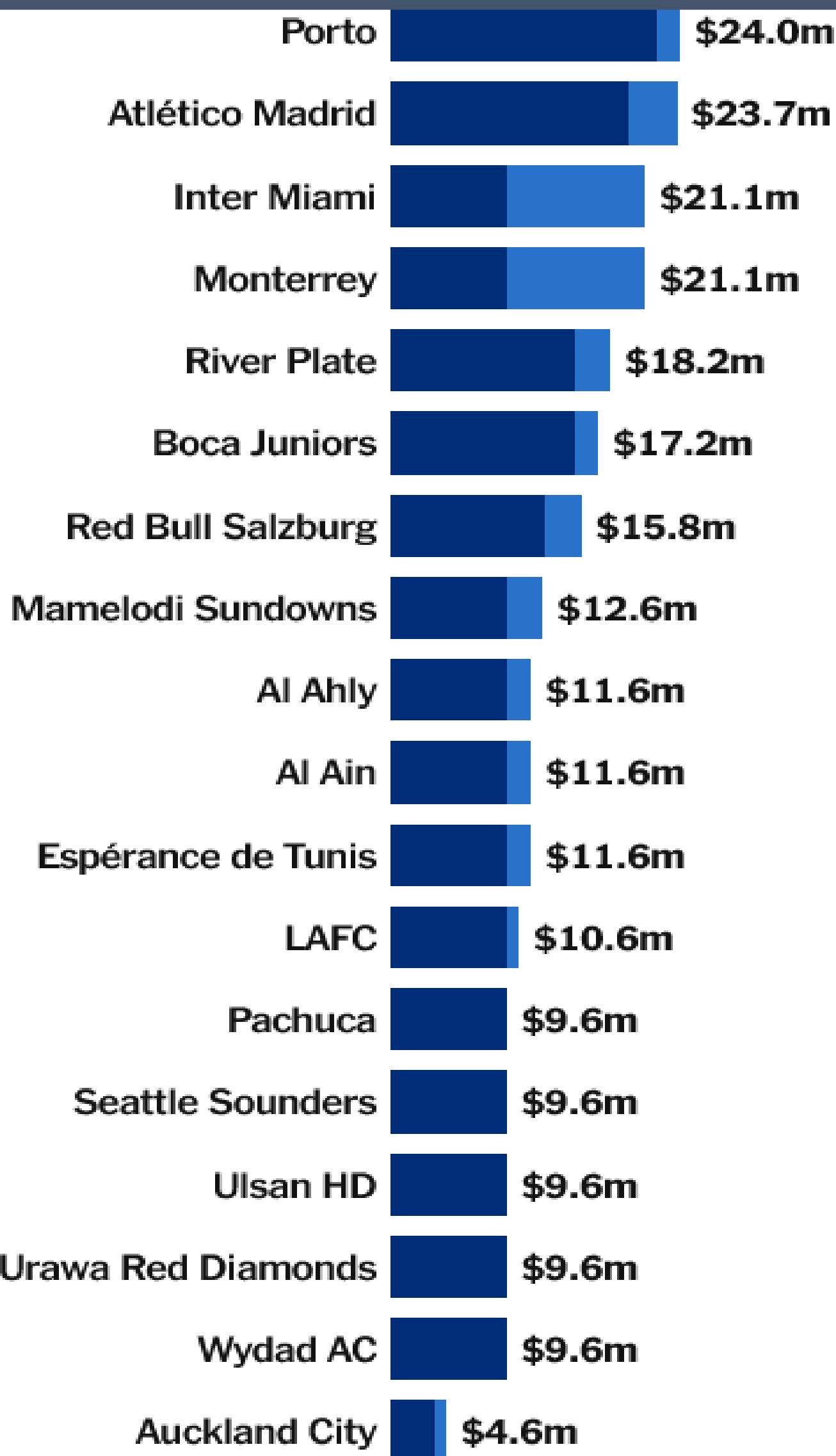
7,5 MILLION FOR REACHING THE ROUND OF 16

13,12 MILLION FOR REACHING THE QUARTEFINALS

21 MILLION FOR REACHING THE SEMIFINALS

30 MILLION RUNNER-UP

40 MILLION CHAMPION



The revenue opportunity

- Top European clubs earned more than on their summer tours (an average earning fee of 10-20M\$)

Non-European clubs also benefited greatly:

New Zealand team with semi-pros earned life-changing revenue (4.6 M\$)

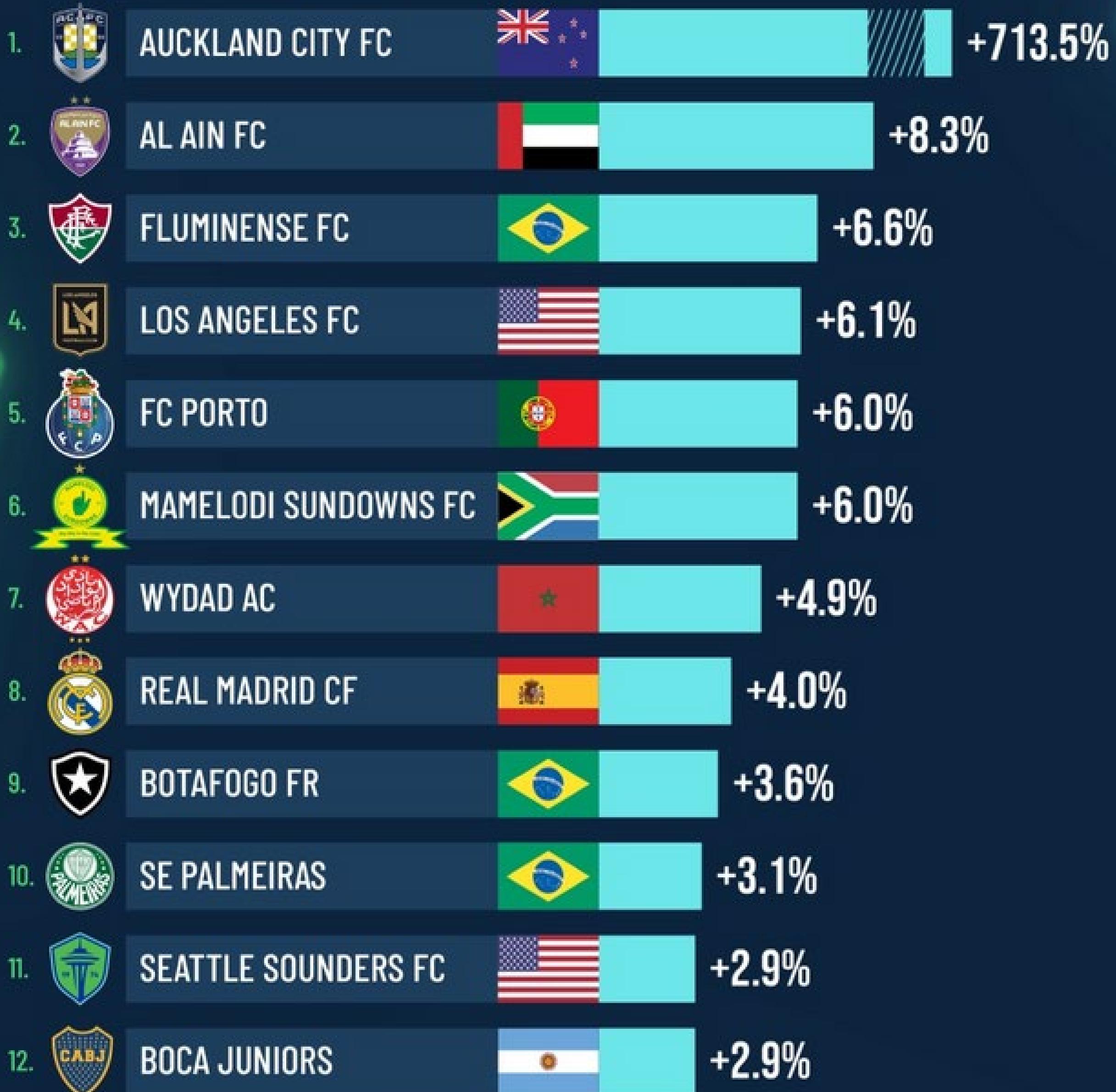
South American clubs now able to keep stars longer

African clubs like Wydad can reduce debt and invest in restructuration & infrastructure (2024 CAF CL winner earned 4M\$ Vs a minimum of 10M\$ in FIFA CWC)

FIFA CWC impressive follower growth



FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP 2025: SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWER GROWTH DURING THE TOURNAMENT TOP PARTICIPATING CLUBS BY % INCREASE IN FOLLOWERS



Note: Follower growth measured from 1 June to 12 July 2025

FIFA CWC jerseys sponsors visibility

WWW.FOOTYHEADLINES.COM



DAZN Performance & Broadcast Reach

The Club World Cup was a global broadcast success:

2+ billion

Views
across DAZN platforms

~5%

Conversion
viewer conversion to paid subscribers
([The Guardian](#))

8 million

Simultaneous log-ins
for Chelsea–LAFC opener

25 million

Global audience
(including sublicenses)

- UK Channel 5 peak: **1.6 million viewers**, strong 16–34 demo engagement (The Sun)
- U.S. Final (TBS): **1.3M average, 1.8M peak viewers** (Dayton Daily News)
- Innovation: **DAZN XR app on Meta Quest** + global streaming infrastructure (SDX Central)

Takeaway: DAZN cemented its position as a global sports tech leader through reach, access, and immersive fan experience.

Download the DAZN app now

PSG: A commercial powerhouse at the 2025 FIFA CWC



Record-Breaking Jersey Sales

- Over 100,000 jerseys sold globally during the tournament.
- 2025 home jersey became the fastest-selling in PSG history.
- Sales up 37% vs. previous best-selling launch, outperforming 2020/21 kit by 10%.



U.S. Retail Explosion

- New York flagship store welcomed 12,000+ visitors in one week.
- U.S. online sales spiked 744% on matchday.
- Overall U.S. retail sales rose by 225% by mid-July.

→ PSG didn't just compete - they dominated the U.S. market, turning fan passion into commercial gold.

Achraf Hakimi: future Ballon d'or?

Only player to have been named this season
in the best 11 in 4 top competitions
(CL, Ligue 1, Olympic Games, FIFA CWC)

TEAM OF THE SEASON

EQUIPE TYPE

CLUB WORLD CUP Team of The Tournament

Notre onze type des joueurs sélectionnés aux Jeux Olympiques

L'EQUIPE

PARIS 2024

FRMF XTRA

UNFP TROPHÉES

TYPE LIGUE 1

DAZN

CLUB WORLD CUP

Team of The Tournament

Rakitic

Hakimi **Otamendi** **Cubarsi** **Truffert**
F. Lopez **Kone** **El Khannoussi**
Olise **Enciso**
Alvarez

Rakitic **QATAR** **Alphonse** **PL. Gazzola**
QATAR **QATAR** **QATAR** **QATAR**
QATAR **QATAR** **QATAR** **QATAR**
P. Matic **El Kaddouri** **E. Gómez**

Keda LARAICHI

Ticketing adjustments and Media&Fan reach

Ticket Pricing Adjustments

1

Dynamic pricing saw semi-final tickets plummet from an initial **€400** to just **€10**.

2

Chelsea–Palmeiras tickets sold for **€9**, a stark contrast to their **€290** face value.

Media & Fan Reach

1

Massive global TV audience, with DAZN free-to-view streams surging past **25 million** international viewers and its sublicensed content on Dazn partners totaling over **2 billion** views – while U.S. broadcasts alone pulled in up to 9.2 million viewers via TelevisaUnivision and 1.3 million on TBS for the final

2

In Saudi Arabia, over **1.5M fans** watched Al Hilal's match at 4 AM local time.

3

Brazil saw over **100K attendees** at fan festivals, including Rio's Copacabana Beach.

Mixed global appeal & Attendance

Mixed appeal

63 matches in World Cup-style format. Critics labeled it a "vanity project," yet on-site fans expressed high satisfaction.

Attendance overview

15 matches topped 60,000 attendees (e.g., PSG vs Atlético Madrid: 80,619). However, 4 matches were under 10,000.

Average attendance

An average of 38,369 spectators per match, below any FIFA World Cup since 1962. But still, quite interesting stat if we consider some oversized stadiums and some lower quality fixtures

Key factors

Impacted by extreme heat, high ticket prices, midweek game schedules, and immigration concerns.

Broadcast & Atmosphere Challenges

1M+ empty seats in group stage (ESPN)

Schedule not adapted to international time zones

Stadiums lacked soul compared to Qatar 2022 despite being less criticized

MetLife Stadium highly criticized: extreme heat, poor pitch, traffic chaos, no roof, visibility issues

Human Rights Watch & Amnesty warned about 2026 risks under Trump immigration policies

Competitive Level & On-Pitch Drama



High scoring & Drama: Average of 3+ goals per game, featuring dramatic upsets and comebacks.

3+



PSG dominance: Impressive 4-0 victories against top teams like Atlético, Real, and Inter Miami. With a dramatic ending for PSG who lost a very unexpected 3-0 Vs Chelsea.



Shock defeat: Manchester City's unexpected 3-4 loss to Al Hilal in extra time.



Late game thrills: Benfica secured a 95th-minute penalty vs. Chelsea after a two-hour storm delay.



Auckland City's resilience: A 1-1 draw against Boca, a huge improvement after prior 16-0 aggregate losses.



Risks, fatigue & Long-term outlook

Physical toll on players

Many players faced a grueling schedule: Olympic Games → season → internationals → CWC → next season (Hakimi).

Guardiola: "In Nov-Jan we may be exhausted."

Musiala suffered a broken leg, highlighting extreme demands.

Calendar strain & Club concerns

- The PFA criticized "nonsensical accumulation" from overlapping calendars.
- Deeper coordination among global football bodies is urgently needed for player welfare.

Arsene Wenger declaration

Even with all these critics, Wenger stated that "100% of clubs would return if invited again" because notably of the money and exposure they are getting through this competition.

Brazilian Brilliance

1

Club Dominance

All 4 Brazilian clubs reached knockout stages, with Fluminense making the semifinals and Botafogo securing a 1-0 win over PSG.

2

Setting the Pace

Brazilian clubs set the competitive bar, pushing European teams to respond and elevate their game.

3

Player Power

Brazil led all nations with 91 players in the tournament, contributing an impressive 31 goals.

4

Top Scorer

Marcos Leonardo (Al Hilal) was a co-top scorer with 4 goals, highlighting Brazilian individual talent.

The African Paradox

- Al Ahly and Mamelodi Sundowns had the quality but didn't progress
- 4 African players in the best 16 team: Guirassi, Hakimi, Bono, Coulibaly
- Guirassi finished as top goal scorer with 4 goals
- Bono named in best XI but not awarded best goalkeeper (won by Chelsea's keeper)
- Wydad and Sundowns gained 5–6% more followers during the Club World Cup, highlighting its global branding boost
- No African teams reached Round 2 despite showing potential
- Wydad GM statement: budget gaps (30–60x difference), but belief in youth and structure to close gap
- African fans elevated atmosphere
- African clubs must amplify revenue, data usage & academy efficiency



Sporty (FM))

African Clubs & Players at the 2025 FIFA CWC

Context & Participation

- 4 African clubs: Al Ahly, Mamelodi Sundowns, Esperance, Wydad
- African players represented both within CAF clubs and across global teams

Undervaluation still a challenge

- 4 clubs combined valued at €120M slightly above River Plate alone
- Structural issues: early exits, lack of digital presence, and low visibility

African talent beyond Africa

- Moroccan players led with €145M in value
- 30 African players competed for non-African clubs (RB Salzburg, Al Ain, etc.)

Club-level insights

- Al Ahly: Most valuable squad (€43M), balanced local/foreign mix
- Sundowns: 85% local players, offensive-heavy strategy
- Esperance: Cost-efficient, reliant on foreign MVPs
- Wydad: Lowest total value (€16M), youngest player in the tournament

The Positives

- Massive global reach and DAZN's 4K free streaming access
- Adidas Smart Ball + Referee Cam and VAR explanations = new immersive fan experience
- NFL-style player entrances and loud countdowns added to the show
- Top sponsors onboard: Visa, Coca-Cola, Lenovo, Airbnb, PIF
- Saudi Arabia's PIF invested an estimated \$1.5 billion to make the event viable, including support for the prize pool and DAZN broadcasting deal
- Beautifully designed trophy with integrated automation
- Inter Miami, despite criticism, beat Porto & Al Ahly to progress
- Michael Buffer's "Let's get ready to rumble" activation added American flair
- Super Bowl-style halftime show (Tems performed)
- Electric and impressive fans coming from Africa, South America, and Asia. Left a great impression

The Negatives

Overloaded football calendar (Klopp: "worst idea ever implemented in football")

Major storms caused delays

Stadiums not ready (logos taped, unfinished construction)

NFL venues rather than Football stadiums with far stands and not a big attendance, especially in the first round

Match times in extreme heat endangered player welfare (Enzo Fernandez: "dangerous conditions")

High ticket prices (prices went down during the competition "thanks" to dynamic pricing) and expensive food/beverages

Many big clubs (Barça, Liverpool, Napoli...) were absent

Visa issues for some fans and even some players (Wydad Syrian player Omar Al Somah)

Summary Takeaways

The CWC 2025 was a historic milestone, but not without controversy.

Saudi PIF's \$1.5B investment proved pivotal in funding the record prize pool, media visibility, and social media growth.

Every team at the FIFA Club World Cup 2025 walked away with at least \$5M, with European giants earning up to \$115M—far surpassing the returns of their traditional pre-season tours. Great social media followers growth as well (Auckland +700%)

Technology and innovation brought new dimensions, but fan health and experience suffered.

African teams underperformed despite strong squads, exposing structural gaps but very attractive talents.

Brazilian brilliance lit up the tournament, with their players scoring a tournament-high 31 goals and topping the scoring charts

American-style activations (Tems, Buffer) brought spectacle, but FIFA must stay true to global football culture.

Venue and climate issues must be resolved before 2026.

A triumphant launch & Future foundation

Infantino's vision delivered

Despite significant criticism, FIFA President Infantino successfully launched the CWC 2025, securing top-tier sponsors, Trump's confidence, and defying expectations.

Unprecedented financial gains

Participating clubs reaped significant rewards, with minimum payouts of \$5M and European giants earning up to \$115M, far exceeding traditional pre-season tours.

Vital pre-World Cup test

This CWC served as an essential trial, allowing FIFA to identify and address operational challenges, ensuring a smoother 2026 World Cup experience.

Valuable learnings for All

From logistical hurdles to fan experience, FIFA, players, and supporters gained crucial insights for adapting and improving future major tournaments.