
FIFA Futsal World Cup

History

The inaugural Futsal World Cup was held in 1989. Brazil proved to be the dominant force at the first three editions, winning in the Netherlands in 1989, Hong Kong in 1992 and Spain in 1996. At the fourth event in Guatemala in 2000, they were stopped from lifting the trophy a fourth time, when Spain beat them in a thrilling final to become the new futsal champions. Spain followed up their first futsal championship title with a second title in 2004, this time pipping Italy at the post. In 2008, Brazil finally became futsal world champions for the fourth time after a narrow victory before their home crowd over two-time world champions Spain. There were also fine performances from less established football countries for whom the 5-a-side version offers a welcome opportunity to promote their domestic game and shine in the international spotlight.

Although FIFA acknowledges the importance of futsal as a game in its own right, it has resisted the temptation to diverge too far from the principles of 11-a-side football, designing the rules to ensure continuity with the classic outdoor game.

Future

FIFA has no doubt that futsal is, and will continue to be, an important and attractive part of football. The growing level of interest in futsal is shown by constantly increasing number of entries for the FIFA Futsal World Cup preliminary competition. A total of 46 countries entered for Spain 1996, but this figure increased to 70 for Guatemala 2000, 86 for Chinese Taipei 2004 and 97 in the 2008 qualifiers.

FIFA's aim is to promote futsal, to make it more popular still, to train its representatives and to launch various futsal projects.

General

To date, the FIFA Futsal World Cup has made two stops in Europe (Netherlands 1989 and Spain 1996), two in Asia (Hong Kong 1992 and Chinese Taipei 2004), one in Central America (Guatemala 2000) and one in South America (Brazil 2008).

In 2008, two associations made their debut at the FIFA Futsal World Cup – Libya and the Solomon Islands – bringing the total number of associations that have featured in the tournament to 37.

With four futsal world titles to their name, Brazil dominate the statistics. They also narrowly missed out on two further world titles – both to Spain, in 2000 and 2004. Aside from Brazil and Spain, the other ever-presenters at the FIFA Futsal World Cup are Argentina.

Matches

The FIFA Futsal World Cup is the fourth-oldest FIFA competition after the FIFA World Cup™ and the FIFA U-20 and FIFA U-17 World Cups. Initially the Futsal World Cup was contested by 16 teams over 40 matches in three different phases, but in 2008, the number of teams taking part increased to 20.

Since the first FIFA Futsal World Cup in the Netherlands, a total of 256 matches have been played. The match between the USA and Malaysia in Segovia (Spain) on 28 November 1996 was also the 100th match in the history of the FIFA Futsal World Cup. Spain's 2004 final victory over Italy was the 200th match in FIFA futsal history.

Brazil have played the most matches in the Futsal World Cup (49), followed by Spain (44), Argentina (36) and Italy (32). The two teams to have been world champions – Brazil (41 victories, 5 draws, 3 defeats) and Spain (35 victories, 4 draws, 5 defeats) – are also the most successful teams overall.

Five different teams have played in the six finals held to date, with Brazil only missing out on the 2004 final. The Brazilians also lead the way in terms of fair play. The FIFA Fair Play Award was awarded to the USA in 1989 and 1992, but Brazil claimed the honour in 1996, 2000 and 2004. In 2008, second-placed Spain were the recipients of this prize.

Goals

The average number of goals scored in each match at the Futsal World Cup is 6.81, i.e. twice as high as at the FIFA World Cup™ between 1930 and 2006. The greatest number of goals was recorded in Hong Kong 1992 and Guatemala 2000 (302; average of 7.6 per match), followed by Spain 1996 (7.3 per match), Brazil 2008 (6.91 per match) and Chinese Taipei 2004 (6.78 per match).

Pula (RUS) holds the record for the greatest number of goals in a single match (8; Russia v. Solomon Islands, 31-2, Brazil 2008). Manoel Tobias (BRA), Falcão (BRA) and Alvaro (ESP) are in joint second place with six goals apiece.

At the Futsal World Cup in Guatemala in 2000, Tobias (BRA) scored four hat tricks (v. Kazakhstan, Guatemala, Egypt and Russia). He even scored a double hat trick in Brazil's 29-2 victory over Guatemala.

Over the course of the six tournaments held to date, Brazil have scored 322 goals (an average of 6.57 per match) and are thus the most lethal team. Spain (190; 4.32 average) are in second place. In other words, Brazil have played in exactly 20% of all matches in the FIFA Futsal World Cup (49) and have scored approximately 20% of all goals (322 of 1,744). That is twice the average!

Players to have got off the mark in rapid fashion include Manoel Tobias (Brazil v. Kazakhstan, 2000), Daniel (Spain v. Croatia, 2000), Javi Rodríguez (Spain v. Czech Republic, 2008) and Falcão (Brazil v. Argentina, 2004), with all four men firing their team into the lead in the very first minute.

The futsal world champions have twice boasted the tournament's top scorer: Brazil, with Manoel Tobias in 1996 and 2000.

The game with the most goals took place in 2008, with Russia making light work of the Solomon Islands (31-2).

Players, coaches, referees, fans

Saudi Arabia's Safouk Al Temyat is the youngest player to have played in a FIFA Futsal World Cup. He was just 16 years old when he participated in the inaugural tournament in 1989.

Javier Lozano coached the Spanish team in four separate Futsal World Cups and led his country to the title in 2000 and 2004. His feat is unequalled. Orlando Duarte (POR), Ron Groenewoud (NED), Damien Knabben (BEL), John Kowalski (USA), Fernando Larranaga (ARG), Gennadiy Lisenchuk (UKR), Clemente Reinoso (CUB) and James Roberts (AUS) coached their teams to three Futsal World Cups, but none of these men took their side to the title.

The FIFA Futsal World Cup can also be a springboard for referees, as a number have gone on to take charge of crucial matches in the FIFA World Cup™: Kim Milton Nielsen (Denmark), Pierluigi Pairetto (Italy), Emilio Soriano Aladren (Spain), Hernán Silva Arce (Chile), Alexis Ponnet (Belgium) and Laszlo Vagner (Hungary).

In terms of attendance figures, the FIFA Futsal World Cup Guatemala 2000 holds the record with an average of 5,600 per match. The record attendance for a single match is held by the 1996 final (Spain v. Brazil), as some 15,500 fans found their way to the Palau Sant Jordi in Barcelona.

Laws of the Game - summary

- 2 x 5 players on the pitch
- 2 x 20 minutes of play per match
- no clock stoppage for substitutions
- max. 7 substitutes per team; unlimited substitutions permitted
- penalty and second penalty kicks
- the goalkeeper is allowed to play all over the pitch
- the goalkeeper can throw the ball beyond the halfway line with no further restrictions
- accumulated fouls: the sixth direct free kick is taken from either the second penalty mark or even closer
- each team is allowed a one-minute time-out in each half