
The FIFA World Cup™ Final Draw history

Today, the Final Draw for a FIFA World Cup™ is a major event watched by thousands of spectators at the draw venue and millions more live at home on television or the internet. Accordingly, the financial and time investment required for the preparation of this event is significant, and given the huge technical requirements, it can now only be held in congress centres, such as the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), which have the necessary technology and know-how at their disposal. But this was not always the case: the Final Draw only grew to such a scale a little less than 20 years ago with Italia 90, when it could no longer be held in TV studios, hotels or even government ministries, as had traditionally been the case. Here is a brief review of the World Cup final draws in the last 80 years.

2006 – Leipzig (GER), 9 December 2005

The Final Draw for the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ provided the world with an entertaining show, led by personalities such as Heidi Klum, Franz Beckenbauer and South American songster Juanes, who performed his hit number *La camisa negra*. The official FIFA World Cup™ match ball *Teamgeist* was launched with assistance from Germany midfielder and captain Michael Ballack. The Neue Messe in the former East German city of Leipzig was the setting for a show which was watched by an unprecedented audience of 300 million in almost 150 countries worldwide, with draw assistants including the likes of Pelé, Lothar Matthäus, Roger Milla and Johan Cruyff.

The 32 teams were divided into eight groups of four, with Brazil, England, Spain, Mexico, France, Argentina, Italy and hosts Germany all seeded. As usual, there were a few eyebrows raised at the particularly interesting groups, including the usual “Group of Death”, Group C, which comprised Argentina, Côte d’Ivoire, Serbia and Montenegro and the Netherlands.

2002 – Busan (KOR), 1 December 2001

The Final Draw for the 2002 FIFA World Cup™ provided the world with a spectacular show and the prospect of some very exciting matches. The Korean coastal city of Busan, with its magnificent Busan Exhibition & Convention Centre (BEXCO), was the focus of attention for a draw televised in over 130 countries worldwide. American vocalist Anastacia gave a debut public performance of Boom, the official song of the 2002 FIFA World Cup™.

But it was the draw itself that would produce the biggest “boom” of the evening. One group in particular brought gasps from around the auditorium. Group F brought together Argentina, England, Nigeria and Sweden. The competition format remained the same as in 1998, comprising eight groups of four teams, with title holders France, Brazil, Spain, Germany, Argentina and Italy as well as hosts Korea Republic and Japan being seeded.

1998 – Marseilles (FRA), 4 December 1997

For the first time in FIFA's history, the Final Draw for the World Cup was staged in a football stadium. In an atmosphere of fascinated suspense, 38,000 spectators at the Stade Vélodrome in Marseilles and about a billion TV viewers around the globe watched the familiar ceremony with the plastic balls, names and numbers. Celebrated football personalities including Franz Beckenbauer, Carlos Alberto Parreira, George Weah and Raymond Kopa took turns to draw the names of the 32 finalist teams and place them in the eight groups under the watchful eye of then FIFA General Secretary Joseph S. Blatter.

The 1998 World Cup was the first with 32 finalists, with one seeded team in each of the eight first-round groups. Germany, Italy, Argentina, Spain, Romania and the Netherlands were seeded along with defending champions Brazil and hosts France.

1994 – Las Vegas (USA), 19 December 1993

The eyes of the football world were firmly fixed on Las Vegas and an array of stars from show business and the world of sport as an audience of around 4,500 packed the Convention Center for the Final Draw for the 1994 FIFA World Cup™. Of all the teams, Bolivia – the rank outsiders – were handed the honour of tackling defending champions Germany in the opening match.

The competition format remained the same as in 1990, comprising six groups of four teams, with Germany, Brazil, Argentina, Belgium, Italy and the USA being seeded.

1990 – Rome (ITA), 9 December 1989

Italy mobilised a galaxy of stars to support FIFA General Secretary Joseph S. Blatter during the Final Draw for Italia '90 at the Palazzo dello Sport in Rome: opera tenor Luciano Pavarotti, movie legend Sophia Loren and football stars including Pelé, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and the late Bobby Moore. It was the most ambitious draw show to date, with opera interspersed with rock (Gianna Nannini and Edoardo Bennato singing the official World Cup song *Un' estate italiana*) and modern dance.

The technical format remained the same as in Mexico: six groups of four, the seeded teams being Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Germany FR, Belgium and England.

1986 – Mexico City (MEX), 15 December 1985

The Draw in Mexico City was held at the Televisa television studios against the backdrop of a striking Mayan decor. There were 45 draw procedures in an intensive 23 minutes, with three young boys adeptly plucking out the all-important plastic balls.

A change from three-team groups to a knockout stage in the second round made no difference to the draw for the six first-round groups, with Mexico, Italy, Brazil, Germany FR, France and Poland the seeded teams.

1982 – Madrid (ESP), 16 January 1982

The Draw ceremony at Madrid's Palacio de Congresos under the patronage of the Spanish royal family is unfortunately best remembered (or forgotten) for a mishap with one of the revolving drums containing the mini-footballs with the teams' names and the confusion that ensued in an effort to keep the South American qualifiers apart in the first round. FIFA learnt its lesson and subsequently returned to the foolproof system of using men rather than machines to make the Draw.

The 1982 World Cup was the first with 24 finalists, with one seeded team in each of the six four-team, first-round groups. Lengthy discussions led to Argentina, Brazil, Germany FR, England, Spain and ultimate champions Italy being seeded.

1978 – Buenos Aires (ARG), 14 January 1978

With 99 national teams entering the preliminary competition, the qualifying period lasted longer than ever before – 21 months – and included qualifying matches between the USA and Canada on an artificial pitch (in Vancouver) and in an indoor stadium (in Seattle) for the first time.

The Final Draw at the Teatro San Martin in Buenos Aires was based upon the most complicated seeding arrangement yet, with a compromise being reached to place five seeded teams in the four groups: Argentina (group 1/team 1), Italy (1/4), Germany FR (2/6), Brazil (3/12) and the Netherlands (4/13). Two of the seeds reached the final, but the mathematical formula was not a happy one and was promptly discarded.

1974 – Frankfurt (FRG), 5 January 1974

The German organisers had picked a truly innocent hand to draw the teams during the ceremony in the main hall of Radio Hessen in Frankfurt. And yet the chosen member of the Schöneberger Sängerknaben boys' choir from Berlin created an uproar as he produced perhaps the biggest shock of all such occasions, by drawing the name of the hosts, Germany FR (one of the seeded teams together with Brazil, Italy and Uruguay), in the same group as the neighbouring German DR. Despite the political overtones, the game went ahead and the GDR won the game in Hamburg 1-0, although it was Germany FR who went on to win the cup.

1970 – Mexico City (MEX), 10 January 1970

Uppermost in the minds of the European (and other) finalists was the desire to avoid matches scheduled for midday in the heat and the altitude of Mexico City and other venues, which was made necessary by the sudden enormous expansion of worldwide television coverage.

There were no seeds, instead the committee in charge formed geographical "sections" from which the four groups were drawn at the Maria Isabel Sheraton Hotel. The hosts managed to finish second in their group on goal average behind the Soviet Union. Defending champions England were drawn in a first-round group with Brazil, who would brilliantly go on to win the title.

1966 – London (ENG), 6 January 1966

With excitement running high in the homeland of football, the Draw for the 1966 World Cup at the Royal Garden Hotel in London was the first ever to be televised live, ensuring an even more intensive build-up to the big event.

There was no change in the format, with England, Germany FR, Brazil and Italy the top seeds among the 16 finalists from an original entry of 74 countries. The Draw eventually led to the spectacular encounter between the only two newcomers in the competition, surprise package Korea DPR and Eusebio's Portugal in the quarter-final.

1962 – Santiago de Chile (CHI), 18 January 1962

For the Final Draw at the Carrera Hotel the new rule was maintained whereby the defending champions as well as the hosts qualified automatically to take part in the 16-team finals.

FIFA's only innovation for the tournament in Chile was to refer to first-round "groups" rather than "pools". One team was seeded per group: Brazil, England, Italy (in a daunting group that also contained Chile and Germany FR), and Uruguay.

1958 – Solna (SWE), 8 February 1958

The 1958 FIFA World Cup™ in Sweden not only saw the arrival of Pelé but also that of the finals format that was to hold fast for several subsequent tournaments: four pools of four, each team playing each other, with the top two qualifying for the quarter-finals.

For the Draw at the Cirkus studio of Swedish TV there were no seeds as such, apart from each pool containing one western European team, one of the four British teams that had qualified, and one from Latin America, which made for some strong first-round groups.

1954 – Zurich (SUI), 30 November 1953

By the time of the World Cup in Switzerland (where FIFA was celebrating its half-century at its headquarters in Zurich), the finals format was beginning to settle down: 16 finalists, four first-round pools, quarter-finals, semi-finals and a final shaped the Final Draw at the St- Gotthard Hotel in Zurich made by Emil Landolt, the mayor of the town.

However, the imaginative 1954 organisers seeded two teams per pool, who only played the two non-seeded teams. Seeding was also subject to a new procedure. The seeded teams were determined before they had even qualified for the finals, which meant that favourites Spain had to be replaced as seeds by their conquerors, Turkey – while Germany FR, the eventual champions, were unseeded in the same first-round quartet!

1950 – Rio de Janeiro (BRA), 22 May 1950

With Europe recovering from the war, the first World Cup of a new era in Brazil saw another innovation in the format for the finals, designed to ensure the Europeans would not make the long trip for only one game. The Draw for what was since a 1946 FIFA Congress decision called the “Jules Rimet Cup” took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Thirteen finalists from a rather confusing qualifying process (in which teams withdrew after qualifying and eliminated teams were re-admitted) were drawn into three pools: two of four teams, one of three and one mini-group of two. The pool winners progressed to a final pool, without a traditional final. Nevertheless, the results in the final pool meant that the last scheduled match, in which Uruguay defeated Brazil 2-1, did indeed determine the champions.

1938 – Paris (FRA), 5 March 1938

Only 15 of the 16 teams that had qualified from an original entry of 36 arrived in France for what was to be the last World Cup for 12 years. Austria had disappeared as a political entity after qualifying and the country’s place in the finals was offered to England, who having already declined to enter the qualifiers also rejected this invitation.

The Draw in the famous *Salon d'Horloge* of the Ministère des Affaires étrangères was made by the grandson of the French President of FIFA, Jules Rimet, in Paris, with Sweden receiving a bye and Germany (who had co-opted several of the Austrian stars), France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Cuba and sole South American representatives Brazil being seeded.

1934 – Rome (ITA), 3 May 1934

The inaugural World Cup had been so successful that the entries for the second were rather more encouraging, with 32 teams wanting to play in Italy. Therefore, even the hosts, Italy, had to qualify – which they did without too much difficulty against Greece.

The Draw at the Ambasciatori Hotel in Rome was again made just before the tournament began. This time, the first round was to be a knockout stage, which meant half of the teams would go home after only one game. The USA, who had submitted their entry after the official deadline, were forced to contest a play-off against Central American qualifiers Mexico before going into the first round ... and a 7-1 defeat by Italy.

1930 – Montevideo (URU), 10 July 1930

The organisation of the first World Cup looked rather different from today’s – no qualifying competition, teams playing by invitation, three weeks of sea voyage for the four European sides ... and a Final Draw which was not made until the teams and FIFA arrived in Uruguay — a mere three days before the opening matches.

The original plan had been to hold the event on a traditional knockout basis, but when only 13 teams turned up, first-round groups were formed with the top team in each group going through to the semi-finals.