



Argentina vs Cape Verde World Cup 2026: Messi Eyes History-Making Run in Miami

Description

The **Argentina vs Cape Verde World Cup 2026** Round of 32 clash takes place tonight (Friday, 3 July 2026) at Miami Stadium, and the question on everyone's lips is simple: can anything stop Lionel Messi? With six goals from three group games, the Argentine captain is the tournament's top scorer, and the defending world champions arrive in the knockout rounds in ominous form. Cape Verde, making their historic World Cup debut, represent the ultimate underdog story but the reigning champions will be in no mood for sentiment.



Source: Inter Miami CF official website (intermiamicf.com)

Messi's Record-Breaking Campaign in the FIFA World Cup 2026

Few players in football history have ever entered a knockout game carrying this kind of momentum. Lionel Messi has been simply breathtaking at the [2026 FIFA World Cup](#), scoring in every single group stage fixture to lead the *La Albiceleste* to a perfect nine-point haul from Group J.

He opened with a hat-trick against Algeria, before adding a brace against Austria – a feat [that broke the men's World Cup all-time goalscoring record](#) – and then rounded things off with a sublime free kick against Jordan in the 80th minute. His total now stands at 19 career World Cup goals, a figure that seems as though it was written in the stars.

That Jordan match was also something of a rotation game for Scaloni, with Messi introduced from the bench in the 60th minute. He still had time to settle it with that characteristic left-footed free kick, curling perfectly into the bottom corner. Rodrigo De Paul, his club captain at Inter Miami CF, has been operating as a key attacking midfielder, providing the assist against Algeria in the opener. Together, they represent the heartbeat of this Argentina side.

With Lautaro Martínez, Julián Álvarez and a supporting cast of world-class performers around him, Argentina's attack is the most feared in the tournament. They scored 8 goals in the group stage and

conceded just one.

Argentina vs Cape Verde World Cup 2026: The Debutants Who Dared to Dream



Source: Inter Miami CF official website (intermiamicf.com)

This match represents an extraordinary moment for Cape Verde. The island nation has never before reached a FIFA World Cup finals and yet here they are, in the Round of 32, having navigated a group that contained Spain and Uruguay without losing a single match.

Their group stage record tells its own story: a goalless draw with Spain, a 2-2 thriller against Uruguay, and another clean sheet in a 0-0 draw with Saudi Arabia. They finished second in Group H, earning their place in the knock-out stage on merit. Head coach Bubista has built a compact, disciplined unit that makes life difficult for opponents, and their defensive resilience has been remarkable.

Key players to watch include Vozinho in midfield and Livramento providing pace and industry. They will not roll over but they face an entirely different challenge tonight. Argentina in knockout football, with Messi on this form, is a different beast entirely.

Tactical Breakdown and What to Expect



Source: Inter Miami CF official website (interniamicf.com)

The central tactical battle is clear: Cape Verde will look to sit in a deep defensive block and frustrate Argentina, hoping to contain Messi and perhaps nick something on the counter. They have the defensive discipline to be organised, but Argentina possess the creative quality to unlock even the most stubborn of defences.

Scaloni has reported three lineup doubts, with some rotation expected after the Jordan game. However, with Messi, Lautaro Martnez and De Paul all fit and available, the world champions have more than enough quality to progress. [Other major nations have found their rhythm in the knockout rounds](#), but Argentina look a cut above the rest.

Statistical models give Argentina an 89.4% probability of progressing, and it is hard to argue with that assessment. Cape Verde’s proudest achievement was drawing with Spain; Argentina are a far more formidable proposition.

Verdict: Messi to Deliver Yet Again

This should be Argentina’s night. Cape Verde’s story has been one of the most heartwarming of the tournament, and Bubi’s men deserve enormous credit for reaching this stage. But Messi is in the form of his life, his supporting cast is world-class, and the defending champions will be far too strong.

Argentina to win. Messi to score. Another step towards the record books. Kick-off is at 6:00pm ET (6:00am SGT Saturday, 4 July 2026). Don’t miss it – follow all the [latest World Cup action in our Sports section](#).

Date Created

03/07/2026

Author

jadeyeo

default watermark