



Germany World Cup 2026 Squad: Manuel Neuer Returns At 40 As Nagelsmann Names His 26

Description

Julian Nagelsmann confirmed the **Germany World Cup 2026 squad** on 21 May and the biggest headline came before a single outfield player was named. Manuel Neuer, 40 years old and seemingly retired from international football after Euro 2024, is back. Die Mannschaft head to North America with their legendary goalkeeper, two of the most exciting young midfielders in world football, and a genuine belief that a fifth World Cup title is possible.

Germany World Cup 2026 Squad: Manuel Neuer's Shock Return

Neuer's recall is the story of Germany's summer. The Bayern Munich captain made his last appearance for Germany at Euro 2024 a 2-1 quarter-final defeat to Spain before retiring from international duty. So when Nagelsmann named him as first-choice goalkeeper ahead of the man who had taken his spot, Hoffenheim's Oliver Baumann, the football world gasped.

Manuel is one of the best goalkeepers in the history of this game, Nagelsmann said at the squad announcement at the DFB Campus in Frankfurt. For an occasion like this, you want the very best. He earned this. Marc-Andre ter Stegen, the original plan as first choice, remains sidelined. Baumann had been solid, but Neuer's quality, presence, and ability to dominate his penalty area are deemed irreplaceable at a World Cup. At 40, the 2014 World Cup winner becomes only the second player in Germany history to appear at five World Cups, alongside Lothar Matthaus.



Bundestrainer Nagelsmann at the Germany World Cup 2026 squad announcement press conference, DFB Campus Frankfurt. Source: DFB – Deutscher Fussball-Bund official website (dfb.de). Photo: Yuliia Perekopaiko/DFB

The Musiala-Wirtz Double Act

Beyond Neuer's return, the squad is built around the thrilling midfield pairing of Jamal Musiala and Florian Wirtz – arguably the most exciting creative duo at the 2026 tournament.

Musiala (Bayern Munich), 23, spent much of the past season recovering from the horrific broken leg he suffered at the FIFA Club World Cup in July 2025. His return to fitness has been painstaking but encouraging – Nagelsmann has confirmed he is ready to play a central role. At his best, as he

showed at Euro 2024, Musiala is practically unplayable in tight spaces. Wirtz (Liverpool), 22, makes his World Cup debut after a spectacular first season at Anfield. The former Bayer Leverkusen playmaker quickly became one of the Premier League's most dangerous midfielders - direct, creative, and capable of threading passes through the smallest of gaps. Together, Musiala and Wirtz give Germany an attacking midfield quality few other coaches can match at this tournament.



Jamal Musiala, Germany's most gifted creative force and one of the tournament's most anticipated performers. Source: DFB - Deutscher Fussball-Bund official website (dfb.de)

Kimnich Captains, Havertz Leads the Line

Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), 31, captains Germany for the first time at a senior tournament. A right-back of rare intelligence and passing range, Kimmich has been the most consistently excellent German player across four years of international football. His leadership, versatility, and ability to control tempo make him indispensable in Nagelsmann's system.

Up front, Kai Havertz (Arsenal) leads the line for his second World Cup. Fresh from winning the Premier League and competing in the Champions League final with Arsenal, the 26-year-old arrives with confidence and excellent form. Deniz Undav (Stuttgart) - 25 Bundesliga goals this season - provides powerful bench cover, while 18-year-old Bayern prodigy Lennart Karl is the tournament's most intriguing wildcard inclusion with just two senior caps to his name.

In defence, Antonio Rudiger (Real Madrid) and Nico Schlotterbeck (Borussia Dortmund) form the central pairing. David Raum (RB Leipzig) is the first-choice left-back, while Malick Thiaw (Newcastle United) and Nathaniel Brown (Eintracht Frankfurt) provide cover across the back line. Notable omissions include Niclas Fullkrug - whose physical style didn't suit Nagelsmann's faster, more fluid system - and Karim Adeyemi.

Germany's Group Stage and Tournament Ambitions

Germany are in Group E and face Curacao in Houston on 14 June, Ivory Coast in Toronto on 20 June, and Ecuador in New Jersey on 25 June. The group looks manageable, though Ivory Coast's speed and athleticism will provide a genuine test. Germany's base camp is in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and a final warm-up against hosts USA in Chicago on 6 June will serve as the last dress rehearsal.

After the heartbreak of Euro 2024's quarter-final exit on home soil, this German squad has something to prove. With Neuer in goal and Musiala and Wirtz at their creative peak, they have the tools and the hunger to prove it.

For more World Cup 2026 coverage, read [Germany 4-0 Finland: Die Mannschaft Head To North America Ready To Conquer World Cup 2026](#), [South Korea World Cup 2026 Squad: Son Heung-min Leads Taegeuk Warriors](#) and visit our [Sports section](#).

Date Created

03/06/2026

Author

jadeyeo