



## Messi Makes History: Argentina 3-0 Algeria As Defending Champions Fire Hat-Trick To Equal Klose's All-Time Record

### Description

It was his 200th appearance for Argentina. It was also the moment the football world stopped, held its breath, and watched Lionel Messi rewrite history yet again. The defending champions opened their 2026 World Cup campaign in Kansas City with a commanding 3-0 victory over Algeria, and their captain as he so often does provided the defining chapter.

Three goals. Three records. One night that the sport will discuss for decades.



Messi opens the scoring for Argentina in the 17th minute against Algeria in Kansas City.  
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## History in the 17th Minute

Argentina controlled the tempo from kick-off, pressing high and suffocating Algeria's attempts to build from the back. The opener came in the 17th minute. A slight gap opened at the edge of the penalty area, and Messi — as he has done countless times for club and country — needed no invitation. A crisp left-footed strike found the bottom corner, sending the partisan Argentina supporters inside Arrowhead Stadium into raptures.

It was his 14th FIFA World Cup goal and, crucially, his first hat-trick at the tournament. The first half ended with Algeria managing some threatening moments that kept Emiliano Mart nez alert, but the Albiceleste's lead remained intact at the break. Scaloni's men were in control.

## Mac Allister's Role, Messi's Instinct

The second goal arrived in the 60th minute and owed as much to Alexis Mac Allister's tenacity as it did to Messi's instincts. Mac Allister let fly from distance and Algerian goalkeeper Luca Zidane - son of the legendary Zinedine Zidane - could not hold it. Messi pounced on the rebound to tap home from close range, extending Argentina's lead to 2-0.

At that point, the record was within sight. Miroslav Klose's all-time FIFA World Cup scoring record of 16 goals - set across three tournaments with Germany - had stood since 2014. One more goal, and Messi would be level.

The third came in the 76th minute. Another composed finish. Another chapter written. Sixteen FIFA World Cup goals, level with Klose, and the record entirely within reach over the matches that remain in this tournament. Messi also became the oldest player to score multiple goals in a single World Cup match, surpassing Cameroon legend Roger Milla's long-standing feat.



Messi completes his hat-trick – his 16th World Cup goal – to equal Miroslav Klose’s all-time record. (© AFA / afa.com.ar)

## The World Reacts

Within hours, football’s biggest names were falling over each other to pay tribute. Erling Haaland, himself having scored a brace for Norway earlier in the day, posted a simple verdict on social media: “Messi is crazy.” Zlatan Ibrahimović was characteristically dramatic: “Let me tell you something – this is what happens when the best of all time plays football.”

FIFA President Gianni Infantino added his congratulations, calling the achievement “a reflection of your timeless brilliance.” Spanish newspapers opened with “¡Histórico Messi!” while Marca

labelled the performance â??Brutal.â?• Lâ??Ã?quipe in France declared him â??the greatest goalscorer in the history of the World Cup.â?• The global press, for one evening, was united.

Goalkeeper Emiliano MartÃnez kept Argentinaâ??s feet on the ground: â??Favourites? No, mate. Do you see what this World Cup is like? All we can say is that weâ??re going to fight.â?•

## Context and Controversy

It was not entirely without drama. There were questions in the first half over whether Messi should have received a red card for a challenge that some observers described as reckless. The referee adjudged otherwise, and the moment passed â?? but it will linger as a footnote to an otherwise magnificent performance.

Algeria, for their part, were not without quality. Their forward line tested MartÃnez on more than one occasion, and a Chaibi strike was ruled out for offside in the opening exchanges. But they were ultimately undone by the genius of a player who seems to operate in a dimension of his own at this level.

For Argentina, this was a first victory in a World Cup opening match since their 2022 triumph in Qatar â?? a tournament they entered with a 36-match unbeaten run, only to lose to Saudi Arabia in their opener. This time, there were no such alarms. The champions have served notice.

With [Argentinaâ??s squad](#) built around Messi, Lautaro MartÃnez, Mac Allister, and Enzo FernÃndez, Scaloniâ??s side look every inch the team to beat in Group J. And if this opening night is anything to go by, the rest of the world would do well to pay attention.

*Argentina face Austria and Jordan to complete their Group J campaign. Messiâ??s next goal at this tournament would make him, outright, the greatest scorer in World Cup history.*

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