



World Cup 2026 Round of 32: France, England and Brazil Eye Knockout Glory

Description

The group stage of the 2026 FIFA World Cup is over, and the World Cup 2026 round of 32 begins this Sunday. Thirty-two teams have emerged from the group stage ready to contest a single-elimination knockout tournament where one bad performance sends you home. Here is your complete guide to the round of 32 fixtures and the stories shaping the next phase of football's greatest tournament.

Group Stage Verdict: A Tournament Taking Shape

France enter the World Cup 2026 round of 32 as one of the most complete sides remaining. Ousmane Dembélé's first-half hat-trick against Norway – the second-fastest in World Cup history, completed inside 32 minutes at Boston Stadium – confirmed that the Ballon d'Or winner is in the form of his life. [France had earlier dismantled Senegal 3-1](#) in their group opener, and they face Sweden at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford on 30 June as heavy favourites.



PSG's Nuno Mendes in action for Portugal during the group stage. Photo: Paris Saint-Germain (official)

Brazil cruised through the group stage and enter the knockouts in ominous form. Marquinhos has marshalled the backline with authority - Brazil are yet to concede a goal - and their meeting with Japan in Houston on 29 June should be a manageable opener, though the Seleção can ill afford

complacency against a disciplined Japanese side.

England topped Group L but were far from convincing, notably drawing 0-0 with Ghana. Their round of 32 tie against Senegal at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta on 1 July is a genuine test of knockout character. [Germany, too, had their wobbles in the group stage](#), but Julian Nagelsmann's side typically improve as tournaments progress, and they face a third-placed team in Foxborough on 29 June.

The World Cup 2026 Round of 32 Fixtures in Full

Sunday 28 June opens the knockout stage with South Africa versus Canada in Los Angeles - a battle between two nations with something to prove, and a home crowd factor that will be significant in the Californian summer heat.

Monday 29 June brings two heavyweight matchups: Brazil versus Japan in Houston and Germany against a third-placed group opponent in Foxborough. Expect both European and South American giants to advance, though Japan's defensive structure could make for a tense opening in Houston.

Tuesday 30 June is the standout day of the round. France meet Sweden at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, while Ivory Coast - Group E runners-up - face Norway and a fully rested Erling Haaland at AT&T Stadium in Arlington. Mexico host Ecuador at the iconic Estadio Azteca, and Netherlands take on Morocco in Guadalajara in what could be the tie of the round.



Marquinhos captains a Brazil side that have yet to concede in the tournament. Photo: Paris Saint-Germain (official)

Wednesday 1 July features two of the most anticipated ties: England versus Senegal in Atlanta, and the United States against Bosnia and Herzegovina at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, with the co-

hosts expecting a raucous home crowd behind them.

Teams to Watch and the Dark Horses

Beyond the obvious favourites, Morocco deserve serious attention. Achraf Hakimi has been commanding in the group stage and the Atlas Lions's defensive organisation can frustrate any opponent. Their tie with Netherlands in Guadalajara is a genuine 50-50 contest.

Norway cannot be dismissed simply because they lost to France. Erling Haaland was rested for that encounter and will be fresh and dangerous against Ivory Coast. A fit and motivated Haaland on the counterattack remains one of the most terrifying prospects in world football.

The Golden Boot race adds another compelling layer of narrative. Demba Keita currently leads with four goals. Haaland and Mbappé are close behind, and as the knockouts progress, the individual battle for the top scorer award could become as gripping as the team competition itself.

For all the knockout action from the round of 32 to the final at MetLife Stadium on 19 July, keep following the [Little Big Red Dot Sports section](#).

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Author

jadeyeo

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