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Who Will Make It? World Cup Scenarios Before Group Finals

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Player Andrey Semenov attempting an overhead kick during Russia's ill-fated match against Belgium Sunday.

With the final round of games about to start in the World Cup groups, there is plenty to play for and a plethora of permutations for many of the 32 teams competing for glory in Brazil.

Here are the main possibilities based on the latest standings.

Group A

Qualified: No one

Eliminated: Cameroon

Still at stake: Brazil and Mexico are joint top of the group on four points. They will both qualify if they beat Cameroon and Croatia respectively on Monday.

Brazil is currently first with a superior goal difference but only one more than Mexico, so both

Latin American sides will be aspiring to top spot which would reward them with a game against the runners up of Group B on June 28.

If Brazil draws or loses to Cameroon, then Croatia, currently on three points, could still win the group if it beats Mexico. A Croatia-Mexico draw, and Brazil defeat, would see the hosts eliminated on goal difference to Croatia.

Group B

Qualified: Netherlands, Chile

Eliminated: Australia, Spain

Still at stake: Having secured maximum points in their first two games, the Netherlands and Chile play each other on Monday looking for a victory they hope will enable them to avoid facing Brazil in the next round assuming the host tops Group A.

A draw would be enough to give the high-scoring Dutch top spot due to a goal difference of +5 versus Chile's +4.

Australia and Spain, also meeting on Monday, are battling for pride alone. The 2010 champion needs to win in order to avoid the ignominy of bottom spot due to Australia's superior goal difference.

Group C

Qualified: Colombia

Eliminated: No one

Still at stake: Colombia is at the top of Group C with six points from two wins, but needs at least a draw against Japan on Tuesday to ensure top spot and the reward of a knockout game against the runners up of Group D.

The Ivory Coast, on three points, would qualify with a win over Greece in its remaining game on the same day.

Greece, which has one point from two games could reach the last 16 if it beats Ivory Coast to reach four points and Japan — also currently on one point — draw or lose to Colombia.

If Japan and Greece both win, then the second position would depend on goal difference, with Greece needing to catch a two-goal deficit to Japan. If they ended level on goal difference, it would go down to goals scored over the three group games.

Group D

Qualified: Costa Rica

Eliminated: England

Still at stake: Italy will qualify for the next round with a win against Uruguay in its game

on Tuesday or a draw thanks to a superior goal difference. Uruguay must win to join Costa Rica, who is guaranteed passage with two wins out of two.

Should Costa Rica lose to England in its match on Tuesday, and Italy or Uruguay win, the top two teams would finish on six points and the group winner would be decided on goal difference. Costa Rica currently has a +3 goal difference to Italy's 0.

England, bottom on zero points, needs a win to have any chance of catching Uruguay or Italy and avoiding the humiliation of last spot. But even that would be impossible if Uruguay and Italy draw.

Group E

Qualified: No one

Eliminated: No one

Still at stake: With maximum six points and an enviable goal difference of +6, France looks assured of qualification from Group E but does not yet have mathematical certainty.

It would take a heavy Ecuador defeat of "Les Bleus" and a big win from Switzerland over Honduras on Wednesday to cause that unlikely scenario. Should France win or draw against Ecuador, it would top the group and face the runners up of Group F in the knockout stage.

Though bottom on zero points, Honduras could still qualify if it beats Switzerland and Ecuador loses, though goal difference would be the deciding factor. Honduras would have to hope the games produce a five-goal swing between itself and Ecuador, who like the Swiss is currently on three points.

Switzerland will be hoping that France beats Ecuador, which would mean a draw or win against Honduras would promote it to second in the group.

Group F

Qualified: Argentina

Eliminated: Bosnia

Still at stake: Nigeria and Iran are battling for the second qualifying berth in Group F, with Nigeria on four points and Iran one.

To have any chance, Iran has to beat Bosnia, which is already out on zero points, and hope that Argentina, top on six points, defeats Nigeria.

A 1-0 win for Iran and 1-0 defeat for Nigeria would leave them level on both points and goal difference. In that rare scenario, the rules state the teams must be separated by goals scored in all matches, then points between them and goals between them. But given Iran and Nigeria would have both scored one goal each in the group, and they drew 0-0 against each other, that would not separate them so there would have to be a drawing of lots.

Group G

Qualified: No one

Eliminated: No one

Still at stake: With Germany and the U.S. on four points, and Ghana and Portugal on one, there are a lot of possibilities in Group G.

Germany and the U.S. play each other on Thursday, with a draw ensuring passage for both and top spot for Germany on goal difference. A win for either would open the door for Ghana and Portugal to slip into second place.

If Germany wins, Portugal would need to beat Ghana and hope it can overturn a goal difference deficit of five with the U.S. If the U.S. wins, Portugal would have to win and close a deficit of eight goals with Germany to pip them.

Ghana has a better goal difference than Portugal, -1 to -4, so if it beats Portugal and the U.S. loses then Ghana would go through provided it surpassed the goal difference deficit of two between it and the United States.

If Ghana won 1-0 and the U.S. lost 1-0, however, both would be on four points each with the same goal difference. In that case, the U.S. would qualify because it beat Ghana in its group game earlier.

Group H

Qualified: Belgium

Eliminated: No one

Still at stake: With group favorite Belgium already qualified on a maximum six points from two games, Algeria is in pole position for the second berth after securing three points from a win against South Korea.

A win for Algeria against Russia on Thursday would ensure that its passage to the last sixteen. If it draws, however, Russia is eliminated but South Korea could sneak second place if it wins heavily against Belgium.

If Algeria wins and Belgium loses, Algeria will top the group on goal difference.

If both Russia and South Korea win, they would move to four points each from one now, and second place will be decided on goal difference between the two of them.

Russia has a one goal advantage right now.

If Russia beats Algeria and South Korea draws or loses against Belgium, Russia would take second spot on four points.

If South Korea is to finish second, it would need to beat Belgium by a healthy margin and, at the same time, hope Algeria and Russia draw, or Russia beats Algeria but by a narrow

margin.

The Rules

According to FIFA regulations, the ranking of teams in each group is based, in this order, on:

• Points in all group matches, with three points awarded for a win, one point for a draw and none for a loss.

• Goal difference in all group matches.

• Goals scored in all group matches.

• Points in matches between tied teams.

• Goal difference in matches between tied teams.

• Goals scored in matches between tied teams.

• Drawing of lots.

See also:

Russia Loses to Belgium in Second World Cup Match

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