

## Football

Football is the most popular team sport in the world, with 270 million people actively involved in the sport worldwide; 265 million players and 5 million referees and officials. It has a long history as an Olympic sport since its debut at the Paris Games in 1900.

### Qualifying – the road to Rio

**For the men's competition**, 16 teams qualify from the six regional confederations of FIFA (football's governing body), with the host nation qualifying automatically. Men's teams are restricted to under-23 players (born on or after 1 January 1993), with a maximum of three overage players allowed.

Oceania and South America get one automatic spot each, North America has two, Africa and Asia three each and Europe four. These are determined from U-23, U-21 or U-20 events throughout 2015 and 2016. The final place will go to the winner of a play-off between the next best South and North American nations.

Oceania's qualifying tournament took place in July 2015 during the Pacific Games in Papua New Guinea. New Zealand was disqualified from the tournament after the semi-finals for fielding an ineligible player. Fiji claimed Oceania's berth.

**For the women's competition**, there are 12 qualifying spots with no age restrictions on the players. Joining hosts Brazil are two teams each from Asia, Africa and North America, one each from Oceania and South America and three from Europe. Qualification tournaments take place in each confederation from 2014 to 2016 with the exception of Europe, where the best teams from that region at the 2015 FIFA World Cup qualify for Rio.

New Zealand faced South Pacific Games winners Papua New Guinea home and away in January 2016 for Oceania's place. They won the first leg 7-1 in Lae then Papua New Guinea withdrew, due to visa issues, so NZ automatically qualified. (NB the 3-0 result was a world cup qualifier not a Rio qualifier.)

## Rio 2016 Football

Sixteen men's teams and 12 women's teams will compete at Rio. Each team consists of 18 players, with 11 players on the pitch at any one time.

**When:** The Rio Olympics football competition will take place from Wednesday 3 August 2016 (two days before the opening ceremony) to Saturday 20 August 2016.

**Where:** In addition to the host city of Rio (where both the men's and women's finals will be held), matches will be played in São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Salvador and Manaus.

### Men's tournament:

A total of 32 games will be played. Four pools of four teams play in the round-robin competition, with each group winner and runner-up qualifying for the quarter-finals. Games commence on Thursday 4 August.

Quarter finals: Saturday 13 August

Semi-finals: Wednesday 17 August

Finals: Saturday 20 August. Gold medal final to be held at the legendary Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. Bronze medal final to be held at Mineirão Stadium, Belo Horizonte.

### Women's tournament:

A total of 26 games will be played. Three pools of four teams play in the round-robin competition, with each group winner and runner-up qualifying for the quarter-finals along with as the two best third-placed teams. Games commence on Wednesday 3 August.

Quarter finals: Friday 12 August

Semi-finals: Tuesday 16 August

Finals: Friday 19 August. The Gold medal final will be played at the legendary Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. The Bronze medal final will be held at Corinthians Arena, Sao Paulo.

Games are played over two 45-minute halves. In group play, three points are awarded for a win and one for a draw. In the knock-out stages, extra time (two periods of 15 minutes) is used to find a winner when matches are level at the end of 90 minutes. If scores are still level, a penalty shoot-out is used.

In both the men's and women's competitions, the final determines the gold and silver medals while the losers of the semi-finals play off for bronze.



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## Olympic Sport Information



*“The Olympic Games in Rio in 2016 is a key event in our High Performance calendar as we aim to reposition football in New Zealand under our ‘Beyond Football strategy’.*

*“The Rio Olympics provide another opportunity for our women’s team to achieve success at an event New Zealanders care deeply about. Qualifying for and delivering a top performance in Rio will inspire the nation and again showcase our sport domestically and globally, allowing us to continue our work in harnessing the rapid growth we are experiencing at grassroots level.*

*“For the Football Ferns, the Rio Olympics has long been a key target of ours with our team and staff committed fully to qualifying and achieving success. Several members of the side have relocated from around New Zealand and the world to enhance our prospects for what is an important event in the evolution of both the Football Ferns team itself and the women’s game in this country.”*

*Rob Sherman, New Zealand Football Technical Director*

## The Stars of Football

Mexico currently holds the men’s Olympic title, while the USA women’s team added their fourth gold medal in London and recently claimed a third women’s world cup title.

With Argentina already qualified for the men’s event, the iconic Lionel Messi – arguably the world’s best player – could feature as an over-age player, while his great rival for the honour, Ronaldo, could fill the same role for Portugal who have secured one of Europe’s four places. Meanwhile, Messi’s Barcelona clubmate, Neymar, will be the focal point for Brazil, as he was during their FIFA World Cup Campaign.

Five-time FIFA World Player of the year, Marta, will again spearhead Brazil’s effort in the women’s event, while Carli Lloyd, winner of the golden ball award for best player of the 2015 World Cup, will lead the USA’s charge for a fifth gold medal. Runner-up for that honour, Amandine Henry, will be at the heart of France’s chances while Japan is aiming to improve on their 2012 silver medal.

## Did you know?

- To fit the football events into the Olympic schedule, the Women's Olympic football tournament begins two days before the opening ceremony, with the men's kicking off the following day.
- Olympic football is mostly played outside the host city in venues all across the host country. Alongside Rio, matches will be played in Manaus, Salvador, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo and the capital Brazil, with the final back in the iconic 74,738 capacity Maracanã Stadium.
- The Men's Olympic Football Tournament is restricted to squads of players aged 23 or younger in 2016, with the exception of three 'over-age' players per squad. This was done to ensure that the Olympics do not overshadow the World Cup as a football competition. The women's event is not age restricted and features 12 teams.
- The only time that the tournament was decided on penalties was in 2000 Sydney Olympics when Cameroon beat Spain 5-3 in a penalty shoot-out.
- The USA holds the record for the maximum number of medals won at the Olympics, with seven medals in total; four gold, two silver and one bronze. This includes both the men's and women's competition. In the men's competition, Hungary has won the most medals (three gold, one silver, one bronze) followed by Great Britain (three gold) and Argentina (two gold and two silver).
- Women's football was added to the Olympic programme in 1996.
- Goal line technology (a system that instantly alerts the referee when a ball has sufficiently crossed the goal line) will make its Olympic debut at Rio.
- England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will all compete at Rio under their own banners. While England wanted to attempt to qualify for Rio as Team Great Britain, the other nations did not agree.
- New Zealand's best performance at an Olympics was in 2012 when the Football Ferns reached the quarter-finals of the women's tournament, eliminated by eventual gold medallists, the USA.

## Football terminology

<b>Kick off</b>	A method of starting play at the start of each half or restarting play after a goal is scored. With teams assembled in their own half, one team kicks the ball from the centre point of the halfway line, normally to a team-mate standing next to them.
<b>Throw in</b>	A method of restarting play when the ball crosses the touchline on either side of the field. A player from the team not responsible for putting the ball out of play stands behind the touchline and throws the ball two-handed from behind their head back into play.
<b>Corner kick and goal kick</b>	A method of restarting play when the ball crosses the goal line at either end of the field, without a goal being scored. If the attacking team touched the ball last, the defending team restarts play from the small 6 yard box within their goal area. If the defending team touched the ball last, the attacking team restarts play from the corner of the field.
<b>Free kick</b>	A free kick is awarded when a foul is called by the referee. Indirect free kicks occur after certain minor transgressions or technical infringements (eg, offsides) while direct free kicks are awarded for more careless, reckless or excessive breaches of the laws of the game. Players may score directly from a direct free kick, but for an indirect free kick the ball must be touched by another player before a goal can be scored.
<b>Yellow card</b>	A yellow cards is shown by the referee to caution a player to communicate a caution, often for unsporting behaviour or persistent infringement of the laws of the game.
<b>Red card</b>	A red card is shown by the referee to a player to send them from the field. A red card is shown when a player receives a second yellow card in the same match or for certain offences like serious foul play, illegally denying a clear goal scoring opportunity or violent conduct. A red-carded player must leave the field for the rest of the match.
<b>Time added on, or 'injury time'</b>	The referee has the discretion to add time lost during the match for injuries and other stoppages on to the end of each half. This is commonly between 1-5 minutes each half.
<b>Extra time</b>	In knock-out matches where a clear winner must be found, extra time – two 15 minute periods – is played after a match where the scores are level after full-time.
<b>Penalty kick</b>	Often just referred to as a penalty, this occurs when a foul worthy of a direct free kick is committed in the defending team's penalty area. With the goalkeeper standing on their line, an attacker kicks the ball from a spot 12 yards away. Because of this proximity, penalty kicks are scored more often than not.

## **Penalty out shoot-out**

This is used when extra time is not successful in finding a winner in a drawn knock-match. Beginning with five players each, teams have turns taking penalty kicks to find a winner. If there is no clear winner at, or before, the completion of five kicks each, the shoot-out continues with an additional one kick each until a winner is found. In rare circumstances, teams may be forced to cycle through their players again before a winner is found.

## **Offside**

The offside rule is arguably the most confusing and debated rule of football and one intended to prevent attackers gaining an unfair advantage over defenders. A player is in an offside position if they are nearer to their opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent when the ball is played by a team-mate. You cannot be offside in your own half or if not actively involved in play.

## Timeline

- 1857** The first football club was formed in Great Britain.
- 1872** The first international game took place in Scotland.
- 1900** Football was introduced to the Olympics and, with the exception of 1932, has been played at every Games since.
- 1904** New Zealand teams playing Australia.
- 1922** New Zealand played its first full international match.
- 1930** FIFA World Cup finals were first contested and held every 4 years thereafter.
- 1984** Professional players were allowed to play at the Olympics, with certain restrictions.
- 1991** FIFA Women's World Cup was introduced – now the largest female worldwide sporting event.
- 1996** Women's football was included in the Olympics for the first time at the Atlanta Games.
- 2008** New Zealand first qualified for the Olympics.