

BRAZIL ★★★★★

Joined FIFA: 1923 Confederation: CONMEBOL

Finals: 1930, 34, 38, 50★, 54, 58★, 62★, 66, 70★, 74, 78, 82, 86, 90, 94★, 98★, 2002★, 06, [2010]

Record: P92/W64/D14/L14/F201/A84

The most successful nation in World Cup history, Brazil are also the only country to have made an appearance at every tournament. But success didn't come quickly and they didn't make it past the first round in either of the first two World Cups. This was largely due to sending under-strength squads, a consequence of the internal political battle between amateurism and professionalism in Brazilian football.

Fielding ten international debutants in their first ever match at the finals, defeat to Yugoslavia dented Brazil's chances of making it out of the group stage, and even a 4-0 win over Bolivia couldn't prevent elimination. Four years later Brazil were one of only four non-European countries to compete at the finals but the players barely got a foothold in the competition. Trailing 2-0 to Spain the Brazilians pulled a goal back through Leônidas, who had been dubbed 'The Rubber Man' by the European press because of the array of tricks he could perform, but their fate was sealed by Langara's second goal of the match.

The tournament had been an unhappy experience for several members of the squad. On the 12-day sea voyage to Italy, their black players had not been allowed to mix with the other passengers or to train.

In 1938 Brazil were the only South American side to take part in the competition, but it proved a more rewarding experience, one that ended with a third place finish. Leônidas also emerged as the outstanding player of the tournament and its leading scorer. The Brazilians also took part in one of the great games in World Cup history, a 6-5



first round win over Poland. The victory was in part due to the outstanding performance of Leônidas, who scored a hat-trick. However, when coach Adhemar Pimenta rested his star striker for the semi-final, Brazil faltered against the Italians and lost 2-1.

Brazil hosted the 1950 World Cup and en route to the final game the team looked unstoppable. Uniquely the 1950 competition

was decided with a Final Pool of four teams rather than a one-off match, and Brazil brushed aside their first two opponents, scoring seven goals against Sweden and six against Spain. As a result the final match of the group against near neighbours Uruguay would decide the fate of the trophy. Brazil only needed a draw to be crowned world champions, whereas the Uruguayans needed

to win, but in front of a partisan crowd of 199,854 at the Maracanã Stadium, the hosts surrendered a lead in the last half hour and lost the game 2-1.

Defeat in the 'Fateful Final' would haunt Brazilian football for years to come and as a consequence, their traditional all white playing strip was abandoned in favour of the more inspiring and patriotic yellow, blue



and green that they are known for today. They would also try to add a little steel to their defence and in the quarter-finals of the 1954 tournament they uncharacteristically became involved in one of the ugliest matches in World Cup history, losing 4-2 to Hungary in a game dubbed the 'Battle of Berne'. Hungary's József Bózsik and Brazil's Nilton Santos were sent-off for brawling, and late in the game the hosts were reduced to nine men when Humberto Tozzi was given his marching orders for a foul on Gyula Lorant. After the final whistle there was a pitch invasion by the Brazilian entourage and the violence continued in the changing rooms, involving both managers and even the official delegations.

It would be a different story at the 1958 World Cup, as 17-year-old Pelé graced the tournament for the first time, playing in a team that also included an array of talent, such as Garrincha, Zagallo and Gilmar. To ensure the players had the mental toughness to avoid the kind of surrender witnessed in

the 'Fateful Final' of 1950, the squad also travelled to Sweden with a psychologist among their entourage, although coach Vicente Feola didn't hit upon the magical team selection until the final group game.

It was after he gave Pelé and Garrincha their first appearances of the tournament in the decisive clash with the Soviet Union that the team took on the look of champions. Both players hit the woodwork in the first two minutes and after that the Brazilians didn't hesitate, carving a path all the way to the World Cup final. Pelé scored a hat-trick in the semi-final defeat of France and another two against hosts Sweden in the final, winning both games 5-2. In victory the Brazilians were completely overcome, weeping openly on the pitch, and in one of the most famous moments in World Cup history, they carried the Swedish flag around the ground in a gesture of sportsmanship that brought the home crowd to its feet.

In 1962, with the majority of the team still in place, Brazil lifted the World Cup again.





Pelé had been injured in the second game and took no further part, allowing Garrincha to become the outstanding star of this tournament. He would score twice in each of the quarter-final and semi-final games against England and Chile, but with his play inhibited by a fever, Garrincha made little impact on Czechoslovakia in the final. After conceding an early goal Brazil retaliated with strikes from Amarildo, Zito and Vavá to lift the trophy for a second time.

Elimination from the group stage blighted Brazil's tournament in 1966, when both the style of play and the refereeing policy favoured the European teams, but by the 1970 World Cup they had a formidable squad that was talented enough to overcome the late change of manager, with Mario Zagallo

taking over as coach from the eccentric João Saldanha during the build-up.

Regarded by many as the greatest team in the history of the sport, Brazil's World Cup winning side of 1970 showcased Pelé at his peak alongside Rivelino, Tostão, Gérson, Jairzinho and Carlos Alberto, all of whom became household names as the team swept all before them. Their route to the final included a group victory over England in a match that many had predicted would be a dress rehearsal for the final, plus a cathartic defeat of their 1950 conquerors Uruguay in the semi-finals. This was the first tournament to be televised in colour, bringing another dimension to the samba flair of the Brazilians, and because of that, Carlos Alberto's emphatic strike in the 4-1

final win against Italy remains an enduring image.

In the immediate aftermath of Pelé's retirement from international football Brazil struggled to make an impact at the World Cup, despite yielding talent such as Paulo Cesar, Zico, Falção, Socrates and Cerezo. There were high points, including the impressive team knocked out of the 1986 World Cup quarter-finals by France on penalties, but the real signs of a renaissance came as Brazil won silver medals at both the 1984 and 1988 Olympics, and this provided the foundation for the 1994 World Cup winning team. Goalkeeper Taffarel, captain Dunga and star striker Romario formed the backbone of the Olympic sides and their potential finally came to fruition with victory over Italy in the final of USA 94, a game that was settled on penalties.

With that triumph a new belief was instilled in the national team, and with emerging players such as Ronaldo, Denilson and Rivaldo added to the side, they made their impact felt at the 1998 World Cup, taking Brazil to the final. However, a mysterious illness to Ronaldo on the morning of the world championship decider left the team demoralised and put paid to any chances of victory against France.

Four years later Brazil were once again in the ascendance, their thrilling brand of attacking football making them worthy champions as they beat Germany in the 2002 World Cup Final. An inspired Ronaldo, who scored eight goals in the competition, helped to restore their standing as the world's leading football nation, and in 2006, despite Brazil's surprise exit in the quarter-finals, he became the World Cup's all-time top goalscorer.

GOLDEN BALL WINNERS

More Brazilian players have been voted the Player Of The Tournament than any other nation



1938 Leônidas



1950 Zizinho



1958 Didi



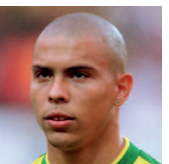
1962 Garrincha



1970 Pelé



1994 Romario




1998 Ronaldo

BULGARIA

Joined FIFA: 1924 Confederation: UEFA

Finals: 1962, 66, 70, 74, 86, 94, 98

Record: P26/W3/D8/L15/F22/A53

 Communism was good for the development of football in Bulgaria. Prior to 1944, although football was played, it was not a well-organised sport. The arrival of Soviet troops brought wholesale changes to Bulgarian life, and football was completely overhauled, immeasurably improving the quality of the domestic game. As a consequence the Bulgarians were regarded as one of Europe's top teams, becoming World Cup regulars through the Sixties and early Seventies, although it would not be until the Nineties that they realised their full potential at the finals.

Although they failed to win a single game at the 1962 tournament and conceded six goals to Hungary, they earned a goalless draw with England before heading home. They lost all three of their games in 1966, including a heated encounter with Brazil that left Pelé bruised and complaining, and four years later they managed to rack up just one point before they were eliminated, in part thanks to a 5-2 defeat by West Germany.

At the 1974 tournament the Bulgarians drew with Sweden and Uruguay and were comprehensively defeated by the total football of the Dutch, while in 1986 they finally managed to progress to the knockout stages for the first time, albeit without winning a game, but they were eliminated by hosts Mexico.

The fall of communism led to many of the country's top players moving abroad, where they gained experience that would benefit the national team. As a result, the Bulgarians reached the World Cup semi-finals in 1994, with Barcelona's Hristo Stoichkov the tournament's joint top scorer with six goals. Beating Argentina in the group stages, they also knocked Germany out of the competition in the quarter-finals, with goals from Stoichkov and Yordan Lechkov. Italy proved too strong in the semis, but defeat to Sweden in the third place play-off match still gave them their best ever World Cup finish.


In 1998 the ageing 'Golden Generation' of Bulgarian footballers had just one more World Cup in them, but a single point from three group games concluded with a 6-1 hammering at the hands of Spain. Bulgaria have failed to qualify for any of the 21st century World Cups.

CAMEROON

Joined FIFA: 1962 Confederation: CAF

Finals: 1982, 90, 94, 98, 2002, [2010]

Record: P17/W4/D7/L6/F15/A29

 The Cameroon national team are known as the 'Indomitable Lions' and their roar was first heard at the World Cup in 1982, when they boosted African football with an unbeaten appearance at the finals in Spain, drawing their three group games against Peru, Poland and Italy. The undoubted star of the team was Roger Milla, while their coach was Jean Vincent, a member of France's World Cup teams of the Fifties.

It was eight years later in Italy that Cameroon took African football to the next level. In a bruising encounter that saw both André Kana-Biyik and Benjamin Massing red-carded, Cameroon beat world champions Argentina 1-0 in a headline grabbing tournament-opener. Inspired by 38-year-old Roger Milla, who made a series of decisive interventions from the substitutes' bench, Cameroon topped a group containing

Argentina, Romania and the Soviet Union and went on a run that took them to within ten minutes of a semi-final place before they were defeated 3-2 by England.

Their success in 1990 resulted in an increase in African places at subsequent World Cups and they were joined by Morocco and Nigeria at USA 94. With 42-year-old Milla still in the squad, Cameroon arrived in the USA with high expectations, yet they took their football association to the brink of a crisis two days before their game with Brazil, as the players refused to play without receiving their outstanding bonuses. It was rumoured that a suitcase packed with \$450,000 arrived secretly, allowing the 'Indomitable Lions' to continue, but after losing 3-0 to Brazil they finished their campaign with a lacklustre display against Russia, defeated 6-1 in San Francisco.

In the game against Brazil, Cameroon broke two World Cup records, with Roger Milla becoming the competition's oldest ever player and Rigobert Song the youngest to be sent-off. Milla's goal in the final group game against Russia also made him the oldest player to have scored at the World Cup.

A series of poor performances at the finals of 1998 saw Cameroon flying home after a 3-0 defeat to Italy in the final group game. Four years later, despite a squad peppered with the stars of the 2000 Olympic gold

