

THE 2026 WORLD CUP ALPHABET

C is for

Camels – we managed to get through the Qatar 2022 World Cup without any jokes about camel jockeys, so why do camels appear here? Because camels are in the life of French footballing superstar and legend (at least in his own mind) Paul Pogba. The 32-year-old Monaco midfielder has joined Saudi Arabian camel racing team Al Haboob as an “ambassador” and shareholder. Pogba said Al Haboob’s “ambition to elevate camel racing onto a global stage is something I truly connect with” and compared joining Al Haboob to “being invited into a new family”.

Fair enough Paul – but do you really want to have camels in your family tree? Perhaps you should focus a little more on resurrecting your failed footballing career at Monaco....

Cannavaro, Fabio – Italian football legend Fabio Cannavaro Will be at the World Cup as the coach of minnows Uzbekistan. He was capped a mammoth 136 times for Italy in a glorious career that included spells at Juventus, AC Milan, Real Madrid and his hometown of Napoli.

His management career has been largely in China and the Middle East. At the start of 2025 he was in charge of Dynamo Zagreb, only to be sacked after only 14 games. Yet by the end of the year he was taking a team to the World Cup!! He was even given the Uzbekistan job after they had qualified for the World Cup!



This appointment has “disaster” written all over it. Once Uzbekistan is humiliated in the group stage I predict that Cannavaro will either be killed in a dressing room mutiny, or publicly executed by stoning in the main square in Tashkent.

Whilst no fewer than 16 of the coaches have also been players at previous World Cups, Fabio is one of only two coaches at the 2026 World Cup who was also a World Cup winner as a player (Didier Deschamps being the other).

Record as coach of Uzbekistan: W2 Do L1

Canada - This is the third World Cup that the Moose Men/les hommes des elans have appeared in – as co-hosts they qualified automatically. In their previous appearances they have never even won a game, let alone got beyond the group stage and there is little to suggest that it will be any different this time around under the leadership of former RB Leipzig and Leeds United boss Jesse Marsch. Indeed, don’t shout it too loudly but their women’s team is better than the men’s team.

World Cup record: P1 6 Wo Do L6

Current FIFA World Ranking: 27th

Star player: Alphonso Davies (Bayern München)

Canadian Wave – like the Mexican Wave, but more boring. (*Ed: that’s just lost all our Canadian sweepstakers*).

Capelli – One of the more obscure brands of football shirts that will be worn at this World Cup is Capelli, who have provided the kit for Cape Verde. With such a similar name one might think that Capelli is a Cape Verde company but they are, in fact, American.

Other notable teams wearing Capelli kits include AEK Athens, MSV Duisburg, Austria Salzburg (not Red Bull Salzburg) and the Serbian national team. They also sponsor their local team the Rochester Rhinos (a genuine name!).

Cape Verde – one of the genuine shocks for this World Cup has been the qualification (for the first time, of course) of Cape Verde. A cluster of ten volcanic islands off the coast of Senegal with a population of under 500 000 they are footballing minnows – except that their nickname is a very different fish, namely the “blue sharks” (*Tubarões Azuis*)!

Their success is not a total surprise, however. At the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations they were unbeaten and reached the Quarter Finals. They won their World Cup qualifying group with only one defeat in ten games and finished ahead of the once-mighty Cameroon.

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Cape Verde is thus the second smallest country by area and third smallest by population ever to play at the World Cup finals. Yet not so long ago, Cape Verde would not bother even entering the qualification process. The cost of gathering players from the various islands, flying in the few who played in Europe, and then shuttling them to hostile venues and bad hotels on the African mainland, was too great a drain on resources. The 26 individuals in Cape Verde's most recent squad play their club football at 26 different sides in 14 different countries.

Contrary to expectation they do not play in green capes, but in an all-blue kit, as befits Blue Sharks.

Current FIFA World Ranking: 68th

Star Player: none!!

Caps – when you are selected for your country you are said to be ‘capped’. This quaint terminology derives from the sport of cricket when a player would literally be given the team’s cap to wear when he was selected for the first time. And since England invented both football and cricket it seems only appropriate that football should have followed cricket, even though footballers don’t wear caps to play (other than goalies).



The record holder for most international caps is that lovable rogue Cristiano Ronaldo who has played for Portugal an incredible 226 times (and still counting).

Other multi-capped players who may appear at the World Cup include Lionel Messi (198 caps), Qatar’s Hassan al-Haydos (184 caps), Luca Modric (196 caps for Croatia), Ivan Perisic (152 caps for Croatia), and Anibal Godoy of Panama (152 caps).

(ed: Mr Ronaldo should be made to wear all 197 caps for a photo – after all, his head is big enough!)

Car parking – not usually a topic of interest at World Cups, but for WC2026 FIFA have discovered that car parking can be a lucrative income stream. For as well as match tickets FIFA has been selling tickets for car parking. Tickets were sold for \$75 for the stadia in Kansas, Atlanta and Dallas – remember, that is just for parking! But that is cheap: for the SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, FIFA has been selling tickets for parking for USA games at \$300!!!

Carthorse - whilst many footballers are like thoroughbred racehorses in their physical grace and pedigree (Manchester City’s legendary player Colin Bell was even nicknamed Nijinsky after a famous racehorse) you get the occasional one who somehow joins the elite of football who is a little less graceful, less elegant. A carthorse, in fact. Former Ireland captain Mick McCarthy was one - as mobile and subtle as an oil tanker. And at this World Cup one reason why Belgium won’t win is the presence of Wout Faes in defence. A true carthorse.



Cartilage – Footballers often suffer cartilage injuries. But what is a cartilage? It is a flexible connective tissue found in the knee between bones, where it acts as a shock absorber. It is not as hard and rigid as bone but is stiffer and less flexible than muscle. Cartilage injuries in footballers are common, due to the strains put on their knees.

Carbon neutrality – For the 2020 World Cup in Qatar there was a lot of talk about the tournament being carbon-neutral (*ed: all that talk must have generated a lot of CO²*). Of course, it was bollocks – if everyone has to fly there then how can a tournament ever be carbon-neutral?

In 2026, since the tournament is in North America, there is no pretence – even from FIFA – about the World Cup being carbon-neutral. Rather, the pretence this time round is that there is no such thing as global warming.....

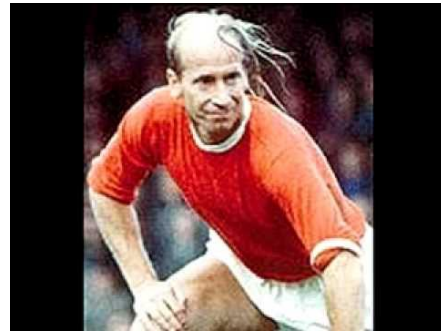
Charlton, Sir Bobby – England and Manchester United legend, Bobby Charlton held the record for most goals scored for England – a total of 49 in his career (43 of them came in one

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game against Scotland), as well as the record number of appearances for his club. Pretty impressive for someone who survived the Munich air disaster in 1958 when half of the Manchester United team was killed.

Noted for his planetarium-like head he is the only footballer to have had a hairstyle named after him – and alongside Grzegorz Lato of Poland and Bulgaria's Yordan Letchkov ranks amongst the greatest baldys to have played....

It is rumoured that the Russians have evidence of Sir Bobby teaching Donald Trump how to comb-over his hair. Manchester United named a stand at Old Trafford after him – in tribute the roof flaps around in the wind



Changing rooms – once upon a time the changing rooms would have been a few hooks on the wall, a table on which to put a tray of orange segments (the half-time isotonic drink of the 1970s) and a communal bathtub for the team to jump into afterwards. Nowadays the pampered stars need both a room designed like a vault in order to ensure their bling is not stolen during the game, plus all the luxuries of a health spa in order that they can groom themselves adequately for the post-match interview. And now ice baths are de rigeur for the after-match bath – what would the hard men of the 1960s made of it?



Cheating - the "c word" of football. The worst thing you can possibly do on a football pitch (except if you are Italian, Argentinian or Diego Costa).

Classic instances of World Cup cheating include: West Germany and Austria in 1982 when a 1-0 win for the Germans meant that both teams qualified for the next round of the World Cup, Maradona's "Hand of God" (ie handball) at the 1986 World Cup, Luis Suarez's handball v Ghana (2010) and Thierry Henry's cheaty handball in a 2010 World Cup qualifying playoff. And who can forget Brazil's Rivaldo cheating at the 2002 World Cup, when a ball was kicked against his shin – and he went down clutching his face: a performance so convincing that the unfortunate Turkish player was shown the red card!! But probably the most memorable (and horrible) cheat was West German goalie Harald Schumacher bodychecking with his arse Frenchman Patrick Battiston (also 1982)

[Schumacher and his big arse](#)

Those caught cheating during the World Cup should be made to take a class explaining how the English invented football and, as a civilised nation, the concept of cheating in English sport is frowned upon. That is why the English language has the phrase "it's not cricket" to denote disapproval of cheating. The cheats class would be given by those paragons of English sporting honesty Chris Froome and Bradley Wiggins.....

As Kurt Vonnegut (*ed: didn't he play for Dynamo Dresden?*) said: "*we are what we pretend to be - and so we must be careful what we pretend to be*".

Cheat code – stolen from 'yoof culture' its original meaning is to describe when computer gamers have found a way to jump various levels of a game (i.e. use a code to cheat). It is used in football in the rare cases that a team gets a player that is so good that he is seemingly single-handedly able to ensure victory on a regular basis. The names Erling Haaland and Kylian Mbappe immediately spring to mind. (Harry Kane should also be a cheat code, except Tottenham proved that you could still be unsuccessful even with such a player).

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As such 'cheat code' is a very misleading term, as it suggests that having such a good player is in some way cheating.....

Cheese watchers – Alkmaar is the centre of the Dutch cheese-making industry. When Dutchman Co Adriaanse was manager of local team AZ67 he must have been fed up with the lack of support from fans as he coined the phrase “cheese watchers” to describe spectators who attend games but make no noise. The English equivalent is ‘Prawn Sandwich brigade’ which reflects on the superior food available in England.....

Chelsea – Why are we mentioning this small west-London club in a World Cup Alphabet? Because there are no fewer than four managers at this World Cup who have had managerial posts at Chelsea! Carlo Ancelotti, Thomas Tuchel and Maurizio Pochettino have all been boss at CFC, and Steve Clarke was ex-Assistant Manager. But this is not the only managerial link the club has with the World Cup. Other Chelsea managers who have led teams at the World Cup include Glen Hoddle, Philip Scolari and Guus Hiddink, whilst Geoff Hurst – no stranger to World Cup success – also managed the team from Stamford Bridge.

Given the turnover of managers at Chelsea under their current owners our next sweepstake will be to predict which of the 48 managers at this World Cup will be the next boss at Chelsea.

Christiansen, Thomas –Danish-born but with a Spanish mother Thomas Christiansen is an unknown name to most of us. He is, in fact, the manager of Panama (and the only Dane going to the World Cup!).

Tommy was something of a child footballing prodigy, training first with Real Madrid before eventually signing for Johan Cruyff's Barcelona aged 18. In 1993 he even won 2 caps for Spain whilst playing for Barcelona's B team! However, he never made it to the first team and most of his playing career was with smaller teams, first in Spain and later in Germany.



As a manager his record in charge of club teams is not impressive, hence the reason he was given a chance in 2017 at Leeds United. In 2020 he took charge of Panama and, under him, the Canal Boys have been doing fine.

Record as coach of Panama: W41 D19 L23

Chukwuemeka, Carney – If Carney “Chucky” Chukwuemeka is in the Austrian squad for the World Cup there will be a few raised eyebrows. The Austrian FA has worked hard to get the Borussia Dortmund player registered. He was born in Austria, but his family emigrated to England when he was small and renounced his Austrian citizenship to become British and then played for England up to Under-20 level. The last Austrian who renounced his citizenship was Hitler – and that didn't work out well for him (or the rest of the world).

Austria does not award citizenship just for being born in the country, so getting it the first time was a privilege. Therefore, one would think that the Austrian authorities might have been reluctant to award someone citizenship a second time after he chose to renounce it once. However, I may simply be bitter since, despite having a genuine Austrian mother, I am not eligible for an Austrian passport. (If anyone from the Austrian Embassy is a sweepstaker and can help me.....)

Chloroform - Believe it or not, chloroform - the strong-smelling liquid - played a role in a World Cup game. During the 1930 World Cup semi-final USA vs. Argentina the physio for team USA, Jock Coll, accidentally made himself unconscious, through chloroform! Coll ran onto the pitch to attend to an injured player. In the process a bottle of chloroform in his medicine bag broke open. Coll became so dizzy that he had to be assisted off the field!!

Perhaps the only instance where the physio was more injured than the player he was treating!

Clarke, Steve – Wee Stevie is the manager of Scotland. By taking them to Euro2024 and the 2026 World Cup he is the most successful Scottish manager for 30 years and given the

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resources at his disposal this is a massive achievement. He has been in the job since 2019 and is now the longest-serving Scotland manager (in terms of number of games in charge). It is a major surprise that his name is never mentioned when vacancies at Premier League clubs arise. Perhaps it's because he is the stereotypical dour Scot – though I'd look unhappy if my head was on upside down.....



Record as coach of Scotland: W33 D16 L25

Clean Sheet – ‘He/they kept a clean sheet’ is a metaphor used to describe when a goalkeeper/team does not concede a goal during a game. It presumably originates from not having to write down the names of goalscorers on the official match record. (*ed: surely writing ‘zero’ or ‘0’ on the match record means that it is not, actually, clean?*).

It could have a different meaning for teams that play their games in Mexico and have to eat Mexican food.....

Club World Cup – If you already think that there is too much football played then look away now. For that nice Mr Infantino wants to expand the Club World Cup, the summer tournament that brings together club teams from around the world. His dream is to increase the number of clubs participating to 48, and for it to be held every two years.

For the record the current ‘world champions’ are Chelsea, who won the tournament last summer.

Coaches and managers- In English what does one call the person in charge of a football team? Is he the coach or the manager? The words are, effectively, interchangeable - today, the idea of a single person managing the team (i.e. transfer deals and contracts as well as on-the-field stuff) on their own is unthinkable. Equally, many of the coaches do not actually go near a training pitch and so do not actually coach the players. So coach or manager? Perhaps we should just say “*person in the technical area*”.....

(*ed: the term ‘coach’ should be reserved exclusively for a bus designed for long-distance operations (which is often used to transport football teams)*).



Coin toss – see **undecided game**

Co-hosts – In more innocent times the World Cup comprised of 32 or fewer teams, and a single country would host the tournament. Enter Gianni Infantino. Now the tournament is a bloated 48 teams and he insists that the tournament is shared out between several countries, presumably so he can accept more bribes. Thus this World Cup is co-hosted by USA, Mexico and Canada. And the 2030 World Cup will be co-hosted by Spain, Portugal and Morocco – with additional games in Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay!!!

Colombia - The official nickname of the Colombian team is “*los cafeteros*”, presumably because they spend their free time sitting in cafes. This will be the “Cocaine Boys” seventh World Cup appearance (*ed: assuming they get past US Customs*).

Colombia is another of those teams that usually flatter to deceive at the World Cup : remember all the fuss about Carlos Valderrama (he of the blonde afro hair) in the 1990s, and then James (pronounced Hammies) Rodrigues who won the Golden Boot for top scorer at the 2014 World Cup and then proceeded to do nothing for the rest of his career! (Remarkably, Hammy is still in the national team!). 2014 is the highpoint of Colombia’s World Cup history, as they made it to the Quarter Finals.

Under the leadership of coach Nestor Lorenzo Colombia have been doing good things – including a 28 game unbeaten run that saw them get to the 2024 final of the Copa America for the first time in the history.

With a good blend of experience and youth perhaps this is the year for the Cocaine Boys to do well.

World Cup record: Played 22 W9 D3 L10

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Current FIFA World Ranking: 13th

Star Player: Luis Diaz (Bayern München)

Compensation – a little-known fact is that FIFA will pay all clubs compensation for the players they have competing at the World Cup. A fund of \$355 million is earmarked for this – which works out at around \$300k per player selected for the 48 World Cup squads. The money for the fund will come from fans buying overpriced match tickets.....

Concussion subs – the effect of concussion (i.e. a knock on the head) on players health is an on-going topic of discussion. Many can remember Germany's Christoph Kramer playing in the 2014 World Cup final even though he was clearly concussed. Whilst his drunken-like behaviour was amusing it is, of course, a serious matter.

Logically, one should have concussion subs (like in gridiron football). The difficulty is how quickly can one diagnose a concussion? In gridiron football this is not an issue since this is a sport of long pauses interrupted by occasional moments of action. But do we want five minute stoppages in football whilst a doctor tries to figure out if Harry Maguire's brain is functioning properly? Worse, players already hold their heads faking injury in order to stop play. If a concussion substitute would enable an additional substitution then you just know many coaches will use this as a tactical change late in a game.

Nonetheless, as in Qatar, for this World Cup FIFA will allow one concussion substitute per team per game. Expect controversy when a player scores the winning goal after coming on as a concussion substitute.....

Congo – those of us who are a certain age will remember Zaire's appearance at the 1974 World Cup – the first by an African team – which ended ignominiously. There was the 0-9 defeat to Yugoslavia, the even more humiliating 0-2 defeat to Scotland, and then there was this amazing incident in their defeat to Brazil:

[Zaire World Cup 1974](#)

The infraction was so obvious the referee did not even need VAR to spot it!

So appalling was the performance of Zaire at the 1974 World Cup that many felt they had damaged the image of African football so badly that African teams would not be welcomed at future World Cups.

Well, 52 years later *les leopards* are back, this time as the Democratic Republic of Congo (*ed: they have this name to differentiate them from the Undemocratic Dictatorship of Congo?*).

I think we can safely assume that this time around all the players will be familiar with the laws of the game (not least since all the players are with European clubs).

Whilst they are in a difficult group (Portugal, Colombia and Uzbekistan) Congo should not be underestimated, as they eliminated both Cameroon and Nigeria in qualifying for the finals. They are led by a Frenchman, Sebastian Debastre.

World Cup record: Played 3 Wo Do L3

Current FIFA World Ranking: 46th

Star Player: Yoane Wissa (Newcastle United)

Corners – once upon a time the corner was a skilful challenge between attack and defence. Today, it has degenerated into a meat wall that is reminiscent of a rugby ruck. You may be mistaken for thinking that the aim of a corner is to see how many players you can squeeze into a box 5.5m x 18.3m (that's the 6-yard box for all true football aficionados).



An interesting piece of trivia regarding corners is that in 1997, the laws were amended to remove the possibility of scoring an own goal directly from a corner kick. Really?!! What scenario is that law supposed to prevent? Were FIFA afraid of Chinese gambling syndicates paying a player to score an o.g. from a corner??!! And anybody who can

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score an own goal from a corner – i.e. kick the ball 100+ metres up the field – deserves a medal, not penalising!

Corta-luz – Corta luz is the posh way of describing a dummy. (In French it is ‘Le dummy’ whilst in German it is ‘eine vorsätzliche Verlassungsmanöver’).

A dummy is when a player feigns going for the ball and leaves it – usually for a teammate, a manoeuvre which almost always deceives the opposing defender.

The most famous example ever seen at the World Cup undoubtedly was performed by Pele at the 1970 World Cup when his corta-luz / dummy completely deceived Uruguay’s goalkeeper:

[Pele dummy and miss v Uruguay](#)

Courtois, Thibaut – the 2m tall Real Madrid goalkeeper will be playing at his fourth World Cup with Belgium. It is fair to say that Courtois is currently the best goalkeeper in the world and he will be hoping to repeat his 2018 World Cup performances where he was winner of the Golden Glove for best goalie.

In addition, he will be hoping to break two World Cup records – for most appearances by a goalie (the record is 20, he has currently played 15 games) and most clean sheets (the record is 10, he currently has 7). However, if he has Wout Faes playing as defender in front of him it is unlikely that either record will be possible....

Crosses – the act of passing the ball from the side of the pitch into the penalty area by the attacking team. A simple task, mastered by only a few.

In the English language there are many adjectives to describe a cross. These include: hopeful, searching, floated, drilled, looping, fizzed, whipped, inviting, teasing, wicked, a peach, put on a plate, pinpoint, and inch perfect (the last being only permitted in post-Brexit UK).

Cruyff, Johan – Generally rated as the “Greatest Ever European Footballer”, Dutchman Cruyff starred with both Ajax Amsterdam (helping them win the European Cup for three consecutive seasons) and then Barcelona. And then managed both clubs to success too! Unlike Sir Bobby Charlton Cruyff was never afraid to say interesting things – in part due to his ability to mangle the Dutch language. His fear of flying probably cost Holland the World Cup in 1978 (it was in Argentina and he couldn’t get there by bus). In fact, he played only 48 times for Holland but such was his greatness that it seemed he was around much longer. He was a key element of the Dutch footballing concept of ‘Total Football’ (see later article). Cruyff also perfected a move now known as the “Cruyff turn” (see below).



Just think how much better Cruyff would have been if he hadn’t been a chain smoker!

Cruyff turn, the – a piece of footballing skill first seen done by Johan Cruyff, most notably for Holland v Sweden at the 1974 World Cup. So legendary is this move that it has recently been added to the Oxford English Dictionary – the official home of all English words! Their definition is:

A manoeuvre used by one player to evade another, in which the player with the ball feints a pass while facing in one direction before immediately dragging the ball behind and across his or her standing leg with the other foot, turning, and moving away in the opposite direction.

However, pictures tell the story better than words. Watch this clip:

["Cruyff Turn"](#)

Croatia – their nickname is *the Kockasti* which is not as rude as it seems, since it translates into “the chequered ones”. Since their debut in 1990 Croatia’s record in qualifying for both the World Cup and the Euros has been very impressive – getting to seven out of eight of each

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tournament. And at the last two World Cups they finished 2nd (losing 4-2 to France in the 2018 final) and 3rd (2022 – losing to winners Argentina in the semi final).

Still led off the pitch by Zlatko Dalic – he of the dodgy centre-parting hairstyle – and on the pitch by the perennial Luca Modric Croatia strolled through qualification, drawing just one game. And, with their experience and skill levels, Croatia will be a team that no-one wishes to play against – as their FIFA world ranking of 10th suggests. Their biggest weakness is the age of their team which could be a major factor in the heat of the USA and Mexico. But they will go deep into the second stage of the tournament.

World Cup record: Played 30 W13 D8 L9

Current FIFA World Ranking: 10th

Star Player: Josko Gvardiol (Manchester City)

Cross – nothing to do with Jesus (though Jesus Navas of Sevilla was responsible for many crosses) a cross is the term used to describe when a ball is kicked from the side of the pitch into the goal area during an attacking move.

Apart from the the excitement (or panic, depending on whether you support the attacking or defending team) that a cross provides for spectators, it is a footballing action that has possibly the greatest number of adjectives to describe it. For a cross can be:

floated, drilled, launched, looping, fizzed, whipped, invited, looping, teasing, tantalising, wicked, pinpoint, inch-perfect, hopeful, searching, a peach or put on a plate.

For those listening to English-language match commentary I suggest that you play ‘crossing bingo’ and tick off whenever a commentator uses each of these adjectives!

Curaçao – if supporting no-hope minnows is your thing then, after Scotland, the World Cup team for you is Curaçao. With a population of only 158 000 they are by far the smallest country to appear at any World Cup (also the smallest by size). Nicknamed “the blue wave” they are not only the only World Cup team to be named after a drink (*ed: what about Irish coffee?*), but their coach also has an alcoholic name, namely Dutchman Dick Advocaat.

The drink of curaçao, after which the nation is named, is a bitter orange-flavoured liqueur. Which begs the question: why is the orange drink bright blue in colour? By the same logic the football team wears blue and their nickname is ‘the blue wave’ (which is also what you suffer from if you drink too much curaçao).

Undefeated in all ten of their qualifying games this will be Curaçao’s first World Cup appearance. Not surprisingly for a former Dutch colony many of their players play in the Dutch league, though a couple of unfortunates have ended up at Livingston and Rotherham, neither of which has every been described as a Caribbean paradise.....

Ranked 82nd in the world Curaçao will travel to the USA more in hope than expectation. However, as the island of Curaçao is located some 65km north of Venezuela it remains to be seen if the national team makes it to the World Cup, or will their team ship have been sunk by the US Navy?

Current FIFA World Ranking: 82nd

Star player: Tahith Chong (Sheffield United)

Curling - finally, a sport where women make a positive contribution, especially when they have a brush in their hands. It’s like housekeeping, but on ice. Forget playing football, ladies, and take up curling.

And when you’ve finished the sweeping, put the kettle on, love.....



Czech Republic – This will be only the 2nd World Cup that the Czech Republic has qualified for (the other being in 2006), though they did get to the World Cup 8 times as Czechoslovakia. They missed out on qualifying for this World Cup from the group stage thanks in part to an embarrassing defeat at the hands of the Faroe Islands and so had to qualify via the playoffs –

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winning both of their games on penalties. Coach Miroslav Koubek was only appointed before the playoffs.

As they are in the same group as South Korea, Mexico and South Africa it will be very tough for the Czechs to get through to the next round.

World Cup record: Played 3 W1 D0 L2

Current FIFA World Ranking: 41st

Star Player: the fact that the majority of the squad plays in the Czech league tells you that star quality is currently in short supply. Their best player is Bayer Leverkusen's Patrick Schick.

Cultural appropriation – one of the most contentious phrases in today's "woke" world is cultural appropriation: the inappropriate adoption of the customs of one people by another. In the case of white footballers wearing dreadlocks, I would support strong action by FIFA.....

Curly Finger –the moment every player dreads: when the coach starts signalling from the touchline, in the form of a curly finger, that he's going to be substituted.

Ladies, feel free to threaten your husbands with the curly finger whenever you think they've been sat in front of the tv watching the football too long....

