

FIFA Women's World Cup

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For the most recent Women's World Cup, see 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

FIFA Women's World Cup

Organising body FIFA

Founded 1991; 32 years ago

Region International

Number of teams 32

Related competitions FIFA World Cup

Current champions Spain (1st title) (2023)

Most successful team(s) United States (4 titles)

Television broadcasters List of broadcasters

Website Official website

Spain, the current champions

Tournaments

1991199519992003200720112015201920232027

The FIFA Women's World Cup is an international association football competition contested by the senior women's national teams of the members of Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the sport's international governing body. The competition has been held every four years and one year after the men's FIFA World Cup since 1991, when the inaugural tournament, then called the FIFA Women's World Championship, was held in China. Under the tournament's current format, national teams vie for 31 slots in a three-year qualification phase. The host nation's team is automatically entered as the 32nd slot. The tournament, called the World Cup Finals, is contested at venues within the host nation(s) over a period of about one month.

The nine FIFA Women's World Cup tournaments have been won by five national teams. The United States have won four times. The other winners are Germany, with two titles, and Japan, Norway, and Spain with one title each.

Eight countries have hosted the Women's World Cup. China and the United States have each hosted the tournament twice, while Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, and Sweden have each hosted it once.

The 2023 competition was hosted by Australia and New Zealand, making it the first edition to be held in the Southern Hemisphere, the first Women's World Cup to be hosted by two countries, as well as the first FIFA competition for either men or women to be held across two confederations.

Format

Qualification

Main article: FIFA Women's World Cup qualification

Qualifying tournaments are held within the six FIFA continental zones (Africa, Asia, North and Central America and Caribbean, South America, Oceania, Europe), and are organised by their respective confederations: Confederation of African Football (CAF), Asian Football Confederation (AFC), Confederation of North, Central America, and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL), Oceania Football Confederation (OFC), and Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). For each tournament, FIFA decides beforehand the number of berths awarded to each of the continental zones, based on the relative strength of the confederations' teams. The hosts of the World Cup receive an automatic berth in the finals. With the exception of the UEFA, other confederations organise its qualification campaign throughout continental tournaments. Since the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup, the number of finalists increased from 16 to 24 and now 32.[1]

Final tournament

The final tournament has featured between 12 and 32 national teams competing over about one month in the host nation(s). There are two stages: the group stage followed by the knockout stage.[2]

In the group stage, teams are drawn into groups of four teams each. Each group plays a round-robin tournament, in which each team is scheduled for three matches against other teams in

the same group. The last round of matches of each group is scheduled at the same time to preserve fairness among all four teams. In the 2015 24-team format, the two teams finishing first and second in each group and the four best teams among those ranked third qualified for the round of 16, also called the knockout stage. Points are used to rank the teams within a group. Since 1994, three points have been awarded for a win, one for a draw and none for a loss (before, winners received two points).

The ranking of each team in each group is determined as follows:[2]

Greatest number of points in group matches

Greatest goal difference in group matches

Greatest number of goals scored in group matches

If more than one team remain level after applying the above criteria, their ranking will be determined as follows:

Greatest number of points in head-to-head matches among those teams

Greatest goal difference in head-to-head matches among those teams

Greatest number of goals scored in head-to-head matches among those teams

If any of the teams above remain level after applying the above criteria, their ranking will be determined by the drawing of lots

The knockout stage is a single-elimination tournament in which teams play each other in one-off matches, with extra time and penalty shootouts used to decide the winners if necessary. It begins with the round of 16. This is followed by the quarter-finals, semi-finals, the third-place match (contested by the losing semi-finalists), and the final.[2]

History

The first instance of a Women's World Cup dates back to 1970 in Italy, with the first tournament of that name taking place in July 1970.[3] This was followed by another unofficial World Cup tournament in Mexico in 1971, in which Denmark won the title after defeating Mexico, 3–0, in the final at the Azteca Stadium.[4][5][6] In the 1980s, the Mundialito was held in Italy across four editions with both Italy and England winning two titles.[7]

Several countries lifted bans on women's football in the 1970s, leading to new teams being established in many countries. After official continental women's tournaments were held in Asia in 1975[8] and Europe in 1984, Ellen Wille declared that she wanted better effort from the FIFA Congress in promoting the women's game.[9] This came in the form of the 1988 FIFA Women's Invitation Tournament in China as a test to see if a global women's World Cup was feasible. Twelve national teams took part in the competition – four from UEFA, three from AFC, two from CONCACAF, one each from CONMEBOL, CAF and OFC. After the opening match of the tournament between China and Canada was attended by 45,000 people, the tournament was deemed a success, with crowds averaging 20,000. Norway, who were the European champions, defeated Sweden, 1–0, in the final, while Brazil clinched third place by beating the hosts in a penalty shootout.[10] The competition was deemed a success and on 30 June FIFA approved the establishment of an official World Cup, which was to take place in 1991 again in China. Again, twelve teams competed, this time culminating in the United States defeating Norway in the final, 2–1, with Michelle Akers scoring two goals.[11]

The 1995 edition in Sweden saw the experiment of a time-out concept throughout the tournament which was later tightened mid-tournament to only occur after a break in play. The time-out only appeared in the one tournament which saw it scrapped. The final of the 1995 edition saw Norway, who scored 17 goals in the group stage, defeat Germany, 2–0, to capture their only title.[12] In the 1999 edition, one of the most famous moments of the tournament was American defender Brandi Chastain's victory celebration after scoring the Cup-winning penalty kick against China. She took off her jersey and waved it over her head (as men frequently do) as she celebrated. The 1999 final in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, had an attendance of 90,185.[13]

The 1999 and 2003 Women's World Cups were both held in the United States; in 2003 China was supposed to host it, but the tournament was moved because of SARS.[14] As compensation, China retained their automatic qualification to the 2003 tournament as host nation, and was automatically chosen to host the 2007 FIFA Women's World Cup. Germany hosted the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup, as decided by vote in October 2007. In March 2011, FIFA awarded Canada the right to host the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup. The 2015 competition saw the field expand from 16 to 24 teams.[15]

During the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup, both Formiga of Brazil and Homare Sawa of Japan appeared in their record sixth World Cup,[16] a feat that had never been achieved before by either female or male players. Christie Pearce became the oldest player to ever play in a Women's World Cup match, at the age of 40 years.[17] In March 2015, FIFA awarded France the right to host the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup over South Korea.[18]

In the 2019 edition, which was held in France, the United States won the tournament for the fourth time.

In 2023, Australia and New Zealand hosted the FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time as joint hosts, and the number of participants was expanded from 24 to 32. It was also the first tournament to be held in the Southern Hemisphere. With Australia and New Zealand respectively being members of the Asian Football Confederation and Oceania Football Confederation, this was the first FIFA senior competition to be hosted across two confederations. Spain won their first ever title, defeating England 1-0 in the final. This made Spain the 2nd nation to win both Men's and Women's World Cup, after Germany.

Trophy
The current trophy was designed in 1998 for the 1999 tournament, and takes the form of a spiral band, enclosing a football at the top, that aims to capture the athleticism, dynamism, and elegance of international women's football. In the 2010s, it was fitted with a cone-shaped base. Underneath the base, the name of each of the tournament's previous winners is engraved.[19] The trophy is 47 cm (19 in) tall, weighs 4.6 kg (10 lb) and is made of sterling silver clad in 23-karat yellow and white gold, with an estimated value in 2015 of approximately \$30,000. By contrast, the men's World Cup trophy is fabricated in 18-karat gold and has a precious metal value of \$150,000. However, a new Winner's Trophy is constructed for each women's champion to take home, while there is only one original men's trophy which is retained by FIFA with each men's champion taking home a replica trophy.[20]

Since 2007, the winners are also awarded the FIFA Champions Badge, which is worn on the jerseys of the winning team until the winners of the next tournament has been decided.[21]

Hosts
[icon]
This section needs expansion with: expansion similar to FIFA World Cup in the hosts section. You can help by adding to it. Relevant discussion may be found on the talk page. (November 2021)
Main article: FIFA Women's World Cup hosts

Selection results
Total of World Cup competitions hosted by each confederation (1991–2023)
Confederation and year in bold has an upcoming competition
Confederation Total Hosts
Asian Football Confederation
(AFC) 3 1991: China
2007: China
2023: Australia
Confederation of African Football
(CAF) 0
Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football
(CONCACAF) 3 1999: United States
2003: United States
2015: Canada
South American Football Confederation
(CONMEBOL) 0
Oceania Football Confederation
(OFC) 1 2023: New Zealand
Union of European Football Associations
(UEFA) 3 1995: Sweden
2011: Germany
2019: France

Attendance
See also: List of sports attendance figures
Year Hosts Venues/
Cities Total
attendance † Matches Average
attendance Highest attendances
Number Venue Game(s)
1991 China 6/4 510,000 26 18,344 65,000 Tianhe Stadium, Guangzhou China PR 4–0 Norway, Opening match
1995 Sweden 5/5 112,213 26 4,316 17,158 Råsunda Stadium, Solna Germany 0–2 Norway, final
1999 United States 8/8 1,214,209 32 37,944 90,185 Rose Bowl, Pasadena, California
United States 0–0 (5–4p) China PR, final
2003 United States 6/6 679,664 32 21,240 34,144 Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium, Washington, D.C. United States 3–1 Sweden, quarter-final
2007 China 5/5 1,190,971 32 37,218 55,832 Tianjin Olympic Center, Tianjin China PR 2–0 New Zealand, group stage

2011	Germany	9/9	845,751	32	26,430	73,680	Olympiastadion, Berlin	Germany 2-1 Canada, group stage
2015	Canada	6/6	1,353,506	52	26,029	54,027	BC Place, Vancouver	England 2-1 Canada, quarter-final
2019	France	9/9	1,131,312	52	21,756	57,900	Parc Olympique Lyonnais, Décines-Charpieu	United States 2-0 Netherlands, final
2023	Australia							
	New Zealand	10/9	1,978,274	64	30,911	75,784	Stadium Australia, Sydney	Five matches, all at Stadium Australia.
Overall			9,015,900	348	25,908	90,185	Rose Bowl, Pasadena (1999)	

† Source: FIFA[22][23]

Notes:

The 2003 Women's World Cup was initially planned to be hosted by China, with FIFA awarding the hosting rights in October 2000. Following a SARS outbreak, it was re-awarded to the United States in May 2003.[24]

The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup set a new attendance record for all FIFA competitions besides the men's FIFA World Cup.[23]

Results

Further information: List of FIFA Women's World Cup finals

See also: FIFA Women's World Cup hosts

Key

aet: after extra time

p: penalty shoot-out

TBD: to be determined

Ed. Year	Hosts	Final	Third-place	playoff	No. of teams
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Champions	Score	Runners-up	Third place	Score	Fourth place
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1	1991	China			
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United States	2-1
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Tianhe Stadium, Guangzhou

Norway

Sweden	4-0
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Provincial Stadium, Guangzhou

Germany 12

2	1995	Sweden
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Norway	2-0
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Råsunda Stadium, Solna

Germany

United States	2-0
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Strömvallen, Gävle

China 12

3	1999	United States
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United States	0-0 (a.e.t.)
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(5-4 p)

Rose Bowl, Pasadena

China

Brazil	0-0[n 1]
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(5-4 p)

Rose Bowl, Pasadena

Norway 16

4	2003[n 2]	United States
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Germany	2-1 (a.e.t.)
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Home Depot Center, Carson

Sweden

United States	3-1
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Home Depot Center, Carson

Canada 16

5	2007	China
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Germany	2-0
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Hongkou Stadium, Shanghai

Brazil

United States	4-1
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Hongkou Stadium, Shanghai

Norway 16

6	2011	Germany
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Japan	2-2 (a.e.t.)
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(3-1 p)

Commerzbank-Arena, Frankfurt
United States
Sweden 2-1
Rhein-Neckar-Arena, Sinsheim
France 1-6
7 2015 Canada
United States 5-2
BC Place, Vancouver
Japan
England 1-0 (a.e.t.)
Commonwealth Stadium, Edmonton
Germany 2-4
8 2019 France
United States 2-0
Parc Olympique Lyonnais, Lyon
Netherlands
Sweden 2-1
Allianz Riviera, Nice
England 2-4
9 2023 Australia
New Zealand
Spain 1-0
Stadium Australia, Sydney
England
Sweden 2-0
Lang Park, Brisbane
Australia 3-2
Notes

No extra time was played.[25]
The 2003 FIFA Women's World Cup was held in the United States following a SARS outbreak in China, where it was initially planned to be held.
In total, 44 nations have played in at least one Women's World Cup. Of those, five nations have won the World Cup. With four titles, the United States is the most successful Women's World Cup team; it is one of only seven nations to play in every World Cup. They have also had the most top four finishes (8), medals (8), as well as final appearances (5), including the longest streak of three consecutive finals in 2011, 2015, and 2019.

Map of countries' best results

Teams reaching the top four

Further information: FIFA Women's World Cup performance by country

Teams reaching the semi-finals

Team	Title(s)	Runners-up	Third place	Fourth place	Top 4
total					
United States	4 (1991, 1999*, 2015, 2019)	1 (2011)	3 (1995, 2003*, 2007)	8	
Germany	2 (2003, 2007)	1 (1995)	2 (1991, 2015)	5	
Norway	1 (1995)	1 (1991)	2 (1999, 2007)	4	
Japan	1 (2011)	1 (2015)	2		
Spain	1 (2023)		1		
Sweden	1 (2003)	4 (1991, 2011, 2019, 2023)		5	
England	1 (2023)	1 (2015)	1 (2019)	3	
Brazil	1 (2007)	1 (1999)	2		
China	1 (1999)	1 (1995)	2		
Netherlands		1 (2019)	1		
Canada		1 (2003)	1		
France		1 (2011)	1		
Australia		1 (2023*)	1		

* host nation

Best performance by confederations

See also: FIFA Women's World Cup performance by confederation

As of 2023, four of the six FIFA confederations have made it to a Women's World Cup final, the only exceptions being CAF (Africa) and the OFC (Oceania). CONMEBOL is the only confederation to have made a World Cup final without winning, following Brazil's defeat in the 2007 final. The farthest advancing African team was Nigeria, who were eliminated in the quarter finals in 1999. Oceania has sent two teams, Australia and New Zealand, to the World Cup, but Australia did not advance from the group stage until after the country's football association moved to the Asian Football Confederation, and New Zealand (which remains in the OFC) has never advanced to the knockout rounds.

The United States and Norway are the only teams to have won the tournament in their own confederations, with the U.S. winning in 1999 (at home) and 2015 (in Canada), and Norway in 1995 (in Sweden).

Total times teams qualified by confederation

Confederation	AFC	CAF	CONCACAF	CONMEBOL	OFC	UEFA
Champions	1	0	4	0	0	4
Runners-up	2	0	1	1	0	5
Third place	0	0	3	1	0	5
Fourth place	2	0	1	0	0	6
Finalists	3	0	5	1	0	9
Semi-finalists	5	0	9	2	0	20
Quarter-finalists	16	1	10	5	0	40
Top 16 (since 2015)	9	6	6	4	0	23
Qualifiers	35	20	26	18	9	60

Broadcasting and revenue

See also: List of FIFA Women's World Cup broadcasters

As of 2017, the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup Final was the most watched soccer match in American history with nearly 23 million viewers,[26] more than the 2015 NBA Finals and Stanley Cup.[27] It was also the most watched Spanish-language broadcast in tournament history.[26] More than 750 million viewers were reported to have watched the tournament worldwide.[28]

The 2015 Women's World Cup generated almost \$73 million.[29] By comparison, that equates to 1% of the revenue generated by the 2018 men's tournament of \$6.1 billion.[30][31]

In 2023, FIFA separated broadcast rights for the Women's World Cup from the men's tournament for the first time, and president Gianni Infantino suggested in May 2023 that the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup might not be broadcast in the "Big 5" European countries due to disappointing offers.[32][33] As of 3 June 2023, FIFA had yet to reach broadcast agreements in Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Japan, or the United Kingdom, with German broadcasters ZDF and ARD bidding 3% as much for the Women's World Cup as the 2022 men's World Cup, French and Spanish broadcasters less than 5%, and Italian broadcasters less than 1%.[33]

Records and statistics

Main article: FIFA Women's World Cup records and statistics

Boldface indicates a player still playing.

Top goalscorers

Marta of Brazil is the all-time leading scorer of the senior FIFA World Cups.

Individual

Rank	Player	Goals scored
1	 Brazil Marta	17
2	 Germany Birgit Prinz	14
	 United States Abby Wambach	
4	 United States Michelle Akers	12
5	 Brazil Cristiane	11

China Sun Wen

Germany Bettina Wiegmann

8	 Canada Christine Sinclair	10
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Norway Ann Kristin Aarønes

United States Carli Lloyd

Country

Rank	Country	Goals scored
1	 United States	142
2	 Germany	129
3	 Norway	100
4	 Sweden	83
5	 Brazil	71
6	 England	56
7	 China	55
8	 Japan	54
9	 Australia	48
10	 France	44

Awards

Main article: FIFA Women's World Cup awards

At the end of each World Cup, awards are presented to select players and teams for accomplishments other than their final team positions in the tournament.

There are currently five post-tournament awards from the FIFA Technical Study Group:[34]
the Golden Ball (currently commercially termed "adidas Golden Ball") for the best overall player of the tournament (first awarded in 1991);
the Golden Boot (currently commercially termed "adidas Golden Boot", formerly known as the Golden Shoe) for the top goalscorer of the tournament (first awarded in 1991);
the Golden Glove (currently commercially termed "adidas Golden Glove", formerly known as the Best Goalkeeper) for the best goalkeeper of the tournament (first awarded in 2003);
the FIFA Young Player Award for the best player of the tournament under 21 years of age at the start of the calendar year (first awarded in 2011);
the FIFA Fair Play Trophy for the team with the best record of fair play during the tournament (first awarded in 1991).

There is currently one award voted on by fans during the tournament:

the Player of the Match (currently commercially termed "VISA Player of the Match") for outstanding performance by a player during each match of the tournament (first awarded in 2003).

There is currently one award voted on by fans after the conclusion of the tournament:

the Goal of the Tournament (currently commercially termed "Hyundai Goal of the Tournament") for the fans' best goal scored during the tournament (first awarded in 2007).

The following five awards are no longer given:

the All-Star Squad for the best squad of players of the tournament (chosen by the technical study group, awarded from 1999 to 2015);

the Most Entertaining Team for the team that entertained the fans the most during the tournament (voted on by fans after the conclusion of the tournament, awarded in 2003 and 2007);

the FANTasy All-Star Team for the fans' best eleven-player line-up of the tournament (voted on by fans after the conclusion of the tournament, awarded in 2003);

the Dream Team for the fans' best manager and eleven-player line-up of the tournament (voted on by fans after the conclusion of the tournament, awarded in 2015);

the Players Who Dared to Shine for ten key players of the tournament who "dared to shine" (chosen by the technical study group, awarded in 2019).

World Cup	Golden Ball	Golden Boot	Goals	Golden Glove	Clean sheets	FIFA Young Player
Award	FIFA Fair Play Trophy					

China 1991	China	United States	Carin Jennings	United States	Michelle Akers	10	Not
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Awarded	N/A	Not Awarded	Germany
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Sweden 1995	Sweden	Norway	Hege Riise	Norway	Ann Kristin Aarønes	6	Sweden
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United States 1999	United States	China	Sun Wen	China	Sun Wen
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Brazil Sissi	7	China	Gao Hong
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United States	Briana Scurry	5	China
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United States 2003	United States	Germany	Birgit Prinz	Germany	Birgit Prinz	7	Germany
Silke Rottenberg	5	China					

China 2007	China	Brazil	Marta	Brazil	Marta	7	Germany	Nadine Angerer	6	Norway
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Germany 2011	Germany	Japan	Homare Sawa	Japan	Homare Sawa	5	United States	Hope Solo	2
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Australia	Caitlin Foord	Japan
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Canada 2015	Canada	United States	Carli Lloyd	Germany	Célia Šašić	6	United States	Hope Solo
5	Canada	Kadeisha Buchanan	France					

France 2019	France	United States	Megan Rapinoe	United States	Megan Rapinoe	6	Netherlands	Sari van Veenendaal	3
	Germany	Giulia Gwinn	France						

Australia	New Zealand	2023	Australia/New Zealand	Spain	Aitana Bonmatí	Japan	Hinata Miyazawa
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5	England	Mary Earps	3	Spain	Salma Paralluelo	Japan
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