

WORLD CUP, FROM A TO Z

- A — Alphonso Davies, Canada's No. 1 world-class player, made history by scoring his country's first-ever men's World Cup goal.
- B — Bonuses for players are determined by individual countries; hot rumour: after Saudi Arabia's major upset win over Argentina, each player's reward was a Rolls Royce.
- C — Canada competitive on the world stage? Yes, zero wins, but an emphatic yes!
- D — Davies, Alphonso (see above) is likely to be named Canada's male athlete of the year for 2022.
- E — Europe remains the centre of football/soccer excellence — Spain, France, Germany, England where the sport is lived and breathed.
- F — 'Football' everywhere except North America, where it is 'soccer'.
- G — Goooooooooooooooooaaaaallllllllll! is the go-to call for announcers when a ball hits the net.
- H — Hand-touching the ball is not only illegal, but almost an automatic goal if the violation occurs in a player's own penalty area.
- I — Injuries often at first look close to fatal, but miraculous recoveries are the norm.
- J — John Herdman, the Canadian coach, made some uncomplimentary comments about the Croatian team prior to their Group F contest, and his words may have been motivating for the Croatians, who easily won, 4-1.
- K — Knockout round is the goal of each starting World Cup team. Unfortunately, only two teams from each group advance to the knockout round.
- L — Losing does not mean coming up short at the World Cup. Losing is not making it into the 32-team field. Ergo, Canada is a winner.
- M — Money talks at the World Cup. Total payout: \$440 million. Winning team gets \$42 million; runner-up earns \$30 million.
- N — November is an abnormal time to play a World Cup, but it's just too hot in Qatar during the tournament's standard summertime schedule.
- O — Offside. Does anybody recognize a play that's offside? (Showing my soccer ignorance here.)
- P — Pulisic, Christian. The undisputed No. 1 American player is No. 2 among North Americans. (See A and D above).
- Q — Qatar, a controversial choice to host, due to a variety of political reasons.
- R — Run: Amazing how fit and athletic these world-class soccer players are, constantly on the run.
- S — 'Soccer' it is in North America, because if two very different sports were called football, confusion would reign.
- T — Tie? No, it's called a draw.
- U — Uruguay was host of the first World Cup, in 1930.
- V — Victory for the winning team will probably put an estimated \$400,000 in the bank account of each player. So yes, those are real tears from losing teams' players.
- W — 'World' Cup it is; almost every corner of the globe is represented, unlike baseball's 'World' Series.
- X — X is the only letter of the alphabet that is not the first letter of a country of the world.
- Y — Yawn! Some say World Cup games are boring. Few shots, fewer goals.
- Z — ZZZZ — Expanding on 'Y' above, yes, some of the games may be sleep-inducing.
- Spotted on **Vince the Sign Guy's** leaderboard in Indian Hills, Cool: "My boss wants me to sign up for a 401 (k); no way I'm running that far."
 - **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com, with an oldie but a goodie: "Police were recently called to a Michigan McDonald's after a man came in wearing scuba gear. Once during Grey Cup week I carried jumper cables into a bar — they warned me not to start anything."
 - **Patrick Allen**, on Twitter, after KC Chiefs beat LA Rams 26-10: "BREAKING: At 3:06 a.m., Arrowhead Stadium security found a trespasser wandering around the field. The man appeared to be extremely confused and told security he was 'looking for **Travis Kelce**.' The man, **Jalen Ramsey**, a CB for the LA Rams, was told the game was over and to go home."
 - Comedy writer **Brad Dickson** of Omaha: "At his press conference (new Nebraska football coach) **Matt Rhule** said he could've made good money sitting on his butt and doing absolutely nothing. In Omaha we call someone like that 'mayor.'"
 - Vancouver comedy writer **Steve Burgess**: "The Vancouver Canucks should trade in their jerseys for fitted sheets. At least that way they won't fold so easily."
 - Comedy guy **Torben Rolfsen** of Vancouver: "RIP Hall-of-Fame pitcher **Gaylord Perry**. He used more ingredients on the mound than **Gordon Ramsay** in the kitchen."
 - Another one from **Brad Dickson**: "So soccer doesn't stop every three minutes for a long video review by the refs? This isn't a sport!"
 - Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: "The Denver Broncos are 3-8 since trading the farm for **Russell Wilson**. It is the worst trade since **Pete Best** left the Beatles to play drums for the Cockroachers."
 - Headline at theonion.com: "New Golf Channel Show Just 30-Minute Praising Of Saudi Royals"
 - [fark.com](#) headline: "Facing the nightmare scenario of both Alabama and Ohio State missing the playoffs, the CFP expands to 12 teams."
 - **Tim Hunter** of KRKO Radio, on Chiefs QB **Patrick Mahomes** and his wife welcoming their second child: "Doesn't the godfather have to be Jake from State Farm?"
- Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca*