

Continental Showdown

One of the most recent introductions to FIFA's range of competitions for national teams is the FIFA Confederations Cup. As the name implies, the tournament principally features the winning teams from each of the six continental confederations, with the defending World Champions, the host country or another team from the host continent making up the eight participants.

The FIFA Confederations Cup aims to give the top teams from all continents a chance to represent their region in a world play-off, and this opportunity – together with the handsome prize money that goes with it – is particularly important and appealing to teams from certain developing football continents.

History

The FIFA Confederations Cup was first designated a FIFA competition in December 1997 when it was held in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. Previously there had been two other tournaments in Riyadh, in 1992 and 1995, under the title of Intercontinental Championship.

In 1992, the winners were Argentina, then reigning South American champions. They came with a star-studded team including Batistuta, Redondo, Caniggia and Simeone and carried off the trophy after defeating the host country, despite their tremendous support from the home fans, in the final. The other two teams taking part on that occasion were the USA and Côte d'Ivoire.

Six teams took part in the 1995 competition and this time it was Denmark who took the honours, with strong performances from the Laudrup brothers earning them victory over Argentina. Mexico and Nigeria made it to the semi-finals, while Japan and the host country were eliminated after losing both of their group matches.

In 1997, Brazil promptly stamped their authority on the competition to win the striking new gold trophy.

One of the main purposes of the tournament was clearly demonstrated when Australia made it to the final to take on the then World Champions.

In 1999, the Mexicans richly deserved to win the Cup as one of two teams unbeaten at group stage to make it to the final. The home "Azteca" factor - Mexico had not been beaten there for 18 years – could not be ignored. Brazil lived up to expectations as its talent factory continued to produce outstanding players. The tournament also witnessed a standard of goalkeepers seldom seen in a single tournament with the likes of Keller (USA), Campos (MEX), Dida (BRA) and Utting (NZL) competing.

Surprise package Saudi Arabia recovered after a 1-5 thrashing by Mexico in their opening match to qualify for the semi-finals, following a 5-1 win in an all-Arab clash with Egypt. USA defeated giants Germany only to later narrowly fail through a Golden Goal by Mexico's top scorer Blanco. New Zealand went home happy after gamely facing up to Germany and USA.

In Korea/Japan in 2001, a near-capacity crowd of over 65,000 saw World Champions France defeat the home team Japan with the only goal of the final to win the tournament and complete an unprecedented hat-trick of three major trophies in as many years. But they had to defend resolutely at times as Japan staged a second-half fight-back.

In 2003, defending and European champions France hosted the FIFA Confederations Cup, organising matches in three of the 1998 World Cup stadiums - Lyons, St. Etienne and Paris/St. Denis. Brazil had to accept an early flight home after the group stage, bowing out of a tough group of strong performers in the shape of Cameroon, Turkey and USA. The revitalised hosts, on the other hand, won their group. Turkey consolidated their rise as a global football power and only just missed out on a place in the final. The event was overshadowed by the tragic death of Cameroonian mid-fielder Marc-Vivien Foe, whose team-mates conceded the title to France by a whisker in an emotionally-charged final against an equally shaken French side.

Despite the absence of superstar striker Ronaldo from the FCC 2005, Brazil dazzled in an exciting final against rivals Argentina to lift the trophy for the second time. Adriano gained justified recognition as a force to be reckoned with, earning both the adidas Golden Ball and Golden Shoe Awards. While Argentina's defeat was sore, their performance clearly showed a hint of great things to come with the competition shining a spotlight on the magical skills of their key-player, Riquelme. The competition also displayed German prowess in the shape of a well-organised dry run for the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ and the emergence of a young and promising German team - in particular, the partnership of up-and-coming starlets Podolski and Schweinsteiger - under the watchful eye of footballing legend, Jürgen Klinsmann, enabling them to secure third-place in a thrilling extra time play-off against Mexico.

ALL-TIME FINALS & AWARDS

2005	GERMANY	T: 8 - M: 16
Final:	BRAZIL – Argentina	4:1 (2:0)
	Frankfurt, Waldstadion – 29.06.2005	
Attendance:	45,591	
Referee:	Michel (SVK)	
Scorer:	Adriano 1:0 (11'), Kaka 2:0 (16'), Ronaldinho 3:0 (47'), Adriano 4:0 (63'), Aimar 4:1 (65')	
3rd place:	Germany – Mexico	4:3 aet (3:3, 2:1)
Golden Ball:	Adriano (BRA)	
Golden Shoe:	Adriano (BRA), 5 goals	
Fair Play Prize:	Greece	
2003	FRANCE	T: 8 - M: 16
Final:	Cameroon – FRANCE	0:1 aet (0:0)
	St. Denis, Stade de France - 29.06.2003	
Attendance:	51,985	
Referee:	Ivanov (RUS)	
Scorer:	Henry 0:1 (97', Golden Goal)	
3rd place:	Columbia – Turkey	1:2 (0:1)
Golden Ball:	Thierry Henry (FRA)	
Golden Shoe:	Thierry Henry (FRA), 4 goals/2 assists	
Fair Play Prize:	Japan	
2001	KOREA/JAPAN	T: 8 - M: 16
Final:	Japan – FRANCE	0:1 (0:1)
	Yokohama, Int. Stadium - 10.06.2001	
Attendance:	65,533	
Referee:	Bujsaim (UAE)	
Scorer:	Vieira 0:1 (30')	
3rd place:	Australia – Brazil	1:0 (0:0)
Golden Ball:	Robert Pires (FRA)	
Golden Shoe:	Robert Pires/Eric Carrière (FRA), 2 goals/2 assists	
Fair Play Prize:	Japan	
1999	MEXICO	T: 8 - M: 16
Final:	MEXICO – Brazil	4:3 (2:1)
	Mexico City, Azteca - 04.08.1999	
Attendance:	110,000	
Referee:	Frisk (SWE)	
Scorers:	Zepeda 1:0 (13'), Abundis 2:0 (28'), Serginho 2:1 (43', pen.), Roni 2:2 (47'), Zepeda 3:2 (51'), Blanco 4:2 (62'), Zé Roberto 4:3 (63').	
3rd place:	USA – Saudi Arabia	2:0 (1:0)
Golden Ball:	Ronaldinho (BRA)	
Golden Shoe:	Ronaldinho (BRA), 6 goals/4 assists	
Fair Play Prize:	Brazil	

1997 Saudi Arabia T: 8 - M: 16

Final: BRAZIL – Australia 6:0 (3:0)
 Riyadh, King Fahd Stadium - 21.12.1997
 Attendance: 65,000
 Referee: Un Prasert (THA)
 Scorers: Ronaldo 0:1 (15'), 0:2 (27'), Romário 0:3 (38'), 0:4 (53'), Ronaldo 0:5 (59', pen.),
 Romário 0:6 (75').
 3rd place: Czech Republic – Uruguay 1:0 (0:0)
 Golden Ball: Denilson (BRA)
 Golden Shoe: Romario (BRA), 6 goals
 Fair Play Prize: South Africa

1995* Saudi Arabia T: 6 - M: 8

Final: Argentina – DENMARK 0:2 (0:1)
 Riyadh, King Fahd Stadium - 13.01.1995
 Attendance: 35,000
 Referee: Bujsaim (UAE)
 Scorers: M. Laudrup 0:1 (8'), P. Rasmussen 0:2 (75').
 3rd place: Mexico – Nigeria 5:4 pso (1:1, 1:1)

1992* Saudi Arabia T: 4 - M: 4

Final: Saudi Arabia – ARGENTINA 1:3 (0:2)
 Riyadh, King Fahd Stadium - 20.10.1992
 Attendance: 75,000
 Referee: Lim Kee Chong (MRI)
 Scorers: Rodriguez 0:1 (18'), Caniggia 0:2 (24'), Simeone 0:3 (64'), Owairan 1:3 (65').
 3rd place: USA – Cote d'Ivoire 5:2 (2:1)

**Intercontinental Championship*

T: number of teams - M: number of matches – Golden Ball: best player – Golden Shoe: best goal scorer

FIFA Confederations Cup Rankings: 1992 - 2005

YEAR	COUNTRY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1992*	Saudi Arabia	ARG	KSA	USA	CIV				
1995*	Saudi Arabia	DEN	ARG	MEX	NGA	KSA			
1997	Saudi Arabia	BRA	AUS	CZE	URU	MEX	UAE	KSA	RSA
1999	Mexico	MEX	BRA	USA	KSA	GER	BOL	EGY	NZL
2001	Korea/Japan	FRA	JPN	AUS	BRA	KOR	CMR	CAN	MEX
2003	France	FRA	CMR	TUR	COL	BRA	JPN	USA	NZL
2005	Germany	BRA	ARG	GER	MEX	JPN	TUN	GRE	AUS