

GENERAL

The FIFA Confederations Cup was first granted FIFA competition status 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.

The FIFA Confederations Cup has always been a showcase for matches between teams who would otherwise only ever meet in the FIFA World Cup™, if at all. Japan v. Colombia (2003), Mexico v. Australia (2001), Germany v. New Zealand (1999), Bolivia v. Egypt (1999), UAE v. Uruguay (1997), USA v. Côte d'Ivoire (1992), Argentina v. Tunisia, Brazil v. Greece and Germany v. Argentina (all 2005) are just some examples.

Derby clashes during the FIFA Confederations Cup are not unknown either. In the 1999 semi-final, Mexico and the USA came face-to-face – the first of only three matches between teams from the same confederation. Egypt and Saudi Arabia, two giants of Arabian football, also battled it out during the group round on one of the rare occasions that the two have confronted each other. The only inter-European encounter occurred in 2003 when France beat Turkey in the semi-final. 2005 saw the first all-South American clash, with Brazil and Argentina somewhat unsurprisingly meeting in the final.

To date, the FIFA Confederations Cup has only made stops on three continents: Asia (4x), Europe (2003 & 2005) and North America (1x).

So far, a total of 26 associations have taken part in the FIFA Confederations Cup. The 2005 edition of the tournament welcomed debutants Greece and Tunisia to the fold. Brazil and Mexico (5x) and Japan/Saudi Arabia (4x) are the most frequent participants in the event, just ahead of Argentina, Australia and the USA (3x).

In the seven competitions held to date, Europe have claimed the title three times (with two wins for France and one for Denmark), a feat matched by South America (Argentina once, Brazil twice). The only other title went to North and Central America thanks to Mexico's win over Brazil on home soil in 1999. Each confederation has been represented in the final at least once.

So far, only France (2003) have successfully defended their title.

Two host teams have lifted the cup. In Mexico in 1999, a strong Mexican side featuring Cuauhtemoc Blanco, Claudio Suarez, and co. struck gold in front of an impressive 110,000 crowd in the Azteca temple, beating Brazil in a thrilling 4-3 battle. Four years later, Cameroon forced the French team into extra-time in the final at the Stade de France that was marred by the tragic death of Cameroon's Marc-Vivien Foé during the semi-final.

MATCHES

In the 1997 tournament, Australia and Brazil played each other twice. Their first encounter, in the group stage, ended in a goalless draw. When they met for the second time, in the final, the Socceroos stood no chance of putting the brakes on the "Ro-Ro" runaway train, Romario and Ronaldo each scoring a hat trick.

On the whole, European teams have had mixed performances in the FIFA Confederations Cup. Denmark won in 1995, and the Czech Republic (1997) and Germany (2005) made it to the semi-finals, whereas in 1999 Germany were packing their bags after only three group matches, as were the Greeks in 2005 after failing to score a single goal. France, however, managed to bestow Europe with their second and third titles in 2001 and 2003.

Taking the 1992 mini tournament out of the equation, France is the only team to have won all their games on the road to their title win (2003). Mexico (1999), Brazil (1997) and Denmark (1995) each had a draw to tarnish their records. France (2001) lost to Australia, while Brazil were shocked by Mexico in 2005.

cont. MATCHES

Brazil have contested the most matches (23) at the FIFA Confederations Cup, followed by Mexico (19), Australia and Japan (13 each), and Saudi Arabia (12). The tournament's most successful teams are France (9 wins, 1 defeat), Brazil (13 wins, 5 draws, 5 defeats) and Mexico (8 wins, 5 draws, 6 defeats).

The seven final matches have seen a total of 26 goals, giving an average of 3.7 goals per match (considerably lower than the FIFA World Cup™ final average of 3.9).

All final matches bar one have been decided in regular time. Thierry Henry's golden goal winner in 2003 fired France to their second straight win, thereby avoiding the need for a penalty shoot-out. The biggest margin in a FIFA Confederations Cup final, or in any other FIFA competition for that matter, occurred in 1997 when Brazil steamrolled Australia 6-0.

To date, only two matches have been decided by penalties, both involving Mexico. In 1995, they failed to reach the final when Denmark beat them 4-2. However, they kept their cool against Nigeria to take third place thanks to a 5-4 win.

Similarly, in addition to the 2003 final, two other extra-time games have been decided by golden goals. In the 1997 semi-final, Australia's Kewell eliminated Uruguay from the tournament, and in 1999, Mexican fans celebrated Blanco's goal against the USA, securing the hosts' place in the final against Brazil.

The FIFA Confederations Cup has seen several acts of revenge since 1992, but only in 1997 did teams meet again in the same tournament. First came the Czech Republic and Uruguay, followed by Australia and Brazil who drew their group match before playing each other again in the final. In 2001, the Socceroos faced the Seleção once more and Australia v. Brazil therefore became the Confederations Cup's record match-up.

GOALS

Germany 2005 holds the record for the most goals in a tournament (56), just ahead of Mexico 1999 (55) and Saudi Arabia 1997 (52). The highest average of goals per match was recorded during the 1992 tournament in Riyadh (4.5 goals per match), followed by Germany 2005 (3.5), Mexico 1999 (3.4) and Saudi Arabia 1997 (3.3).

The top goalscorers in the history of the tournament are Cuauhtemoc Blanco and Ronaldinho with nine goals apiece. They are closely followed by Brazilian duo Romario and Adriano, who have both lifted the trophy. In third place is Saudi Arabia's Marzouq Al Otaibi, who scored six goals in 1999.

The three members of the legendary Brazilian "Ro-Ro-Ro" trio each have a hat trick to their name. Romario and Ronaldo scored theirs in the 1997 final against poor Australia (who were defeated 6-0), and Ronaldinho notched his in the 8-2 semi-final win against Saudi Arabia in 1999. Besides the Brazilians, Vladimir Smicer did the same for his team during the Czech Republic's 1997 group match victory against the United Arab Emirates (6-1), and Argentina's Luciano Figueroa emulated him during his team's 4-2 victory over Australia in 2005.

Two goalscorers from Saudi Arabia and Mexico merit a special entry in the record books. In 1999, Saudi player Marzouq Al Otaibi (5-1 against Egypt) and Cuauhtemoc Blanco from Mexico (5-1 against Saudi Arabia) each netted four goals in a single match.

Two goals were enough for Robert Pires (FRA) and Eric Carrière (FRA) to secure the Golden Shoe award in 2001.

The honour of scoring the fastest goal is shared by Gabriel Batistuta (who opened Argentina's 4-0 victory over Côte d'Ivoire in the second minute of the match in 1992) and Turkey's Tuncay Sanli, who also found the net in the second minute of his team's 2-1 victory over Colombia in 2003.

cont. GOALS

The Uruguayans showed a perfect sense of timing in their 1997 group match against the United Arab Emirates, taking the lead in the second minute of additional time at the end of the first half, and doubling their advantage in the second minute of additional time at the end of the second half to win the game 2-0.

In a historical overview, Brazil have scored a total of 50 goals in the FIFA Confederations Cup (an average of 2.17 per match). In second place are Mexico with 33 goals (1.74 per match), followed by France with 24 (2.40) in third.

On only one occasion have the Confederations Cup champions failed to crown one of their own as top goalscorer: in 1995 Mexico's Luis Garcia (3 goals) denied Dane Peter Rasmussen (2 goals) his glory.

The highest-scoring match in the CC was in Guadalajara (Mexico) in 1999, with Brazil punishing Saudi Arabia in an 8-2 defeat. There have been six other goal-packed matches, each with a total of 7 goals: 1992 USA v. Côte d'Ivoire (5-2), 1997 Czech Republic v. United Arab Emirates (6-1) 1997 Uruguay v. South Africa (4-3), the unforgettable 1999 Mexico v. Brazil (4-3) final, 2005 Germany v. Australia (4-3) and 2005 Germany v. Mexico (4-3).

PLAYERS, COACHES, REFEREES, CROWDS

The FIFA Confederations Cup has established itself as a meeting of football stars, with no fewer than 354 players having gone on to participate in the FIFA World Cup™. Forty-eight have even won the world title (30 BRA, 16 FRA, 1 ARG [Oscar Ruggeri], 1 GER [Lothar Matthäus]).

Even before it became an official FIFA event in 1997, the cast was already starting to take shape. On the back of Gabriel Batistuta, Oscar Ruggeri and Diego Simeone (1992) came the Laudrup Brothers three years later, along with Kazu Miura, Jorge Campos and Claudio Suarez, as well as Nigerians Jay-Jay Okocha and Daniel Amokachi.

Despite its brief history, the FIFA Confederations Cup has already given birth to some household names. Ali Bujssaim, the infallible referee from the UAE, officiated in the 1995 final and went on to referee the decider between Japan and France in Yokohama six years later. Legendary Saudi defender Mohamed Al Khilaiwi also appeared in every Saudi Arabia squad from 1992 to 1999.

110,000 spectators attended the spectacular final match in 1999 – one of the highest crowd figures ever in the history of FIFA competitions. On average, more than 60,000 fans watched each of the 16 matches of the tournament hosted by Mexico, the second highest average in FIFA competition history.