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History Lesson The only team that has appeared at every World Cup; five-time winners; runners-up in 1950 and 1998; semi-finalists in 1938, 1974 and 1978. The 1970s team is regarded as one of the best teams ever and their fourth goal in the final - a radical move involving 83% of Brazil's population - as one of the greatest ever scored. Trained players of exciting skills such as Pele, Garrincha and Rivaldo, as well as dead-eyed finishers such as Romario. The tactics of Brazil's board play 4-2-3-1 with Luis Fabiano as the lone centre-forward ahead of Robinho, Kaka and Ramirez. Purists will tell you that Dunga's decision to leave Ronaldinho is a sign of Brazil's drift from Jogo Bonito, but it's still not quite the Stoke City we're talking about here. Admittedly, they use not one but two defensive midfielders, but they still have room for the creativity of Kaka and Robinho's pointless overelaborate jinking. The match against Brazil has three main rivals: Argentina, Argentina and Argentina. When the teams met in the last 16 of the 1990 World Cup Argentina medical teams were accused of putting tranquilizers in The Water Branco as Brazil crashed. Also known as poetic - canarinhos (small Canary Islands); impressive - selekao (choice); and actual verde amarela (yellow and green). Players Vuvuzela superstar Kaka. A purely lively, fresh-faced poster boy who plays for Real Madrid and Jesus. The off-field persona is so flawless that scientists have proven that it can cure acne-ridden teens by simply looking at them. There's always Bolton's Luis Fabiano linked with the Premier League every second and his speed and strength is suited to the English game. Sevilla want around 18 million pounds for him and Harry Redknapp, under 53 fit strikers, could see him as the man to bolster Spurs' Champions League campaign. Laager's lout is bad enough that Roberto Mancini's baiting, stepovering Robinho tends to disappear on the pitch he also regularly dropped off Manchester City's radar before being packed up to Santos. Coach Body Double Dunga means Dopey in Portuguese and working as an extra at Disney World is an opportunity if football doesn't work. Big Game Hunter Although his pragmatic approach is seen as un-Brazilian by some - he left Ronaldinho out of the squad - he won the Copa America and the Confederations Cup. Loved or hated when Dunga captained his country to victory at the 1994 World Cup. Brazilian journalists described him as a dour symbol of everything that was wrong with the game when they really wanted to say that he was a towering pillar of strength. Brazil's Country Commentators kit is home to Acai Berry, which contains high levels of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and anthocyanins that will improve your memory and sex life. Or at least that's what 94 emails we we in our inbox this morning told us. They gave the world attractive fans in skimpy attire, Brazil's answer to drunken students dressed as pirates at Trent Bridge in rainy Ashes Thursday in June. The National Monument Beautiful beaches, beautiful people, tropical climate and fast-growing economy have strengthened Brazilian optimism. Like the UK then, except for beaches, beautiful people, climate, economy. Oh, and optimism. The qualification is convenient. Finished top of his group with three matches to spare, but the process was not as imperious as some would have wanted, taking just one point from Bolivia and drawing 0-0 four times. Trisman tapes ... What he didn't say: Coffee-fueled adrenaline junkies offering shelters to train robbers and party animal pubic topiarions who think they invented the transition to their feet. World Cup stats: Record 18 finals P92 W64 D14 L14 F201 A84 Winners in 1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002 199.854: Maracana crowd that watched Brazil 2-1 defeat by Uruguay in the fateful final of the 1950 tournament. The hosts led 1-0 Fixtures North Korea, June 15, Ellis Park, 7.30pm Ivory Coast, June 20, Football City, 7.30pm Portugal, June 25, Moses Mabhid Stadium, 3pm verdict Dunga people talent, but it is the strength and depth of the squad that is truly intimidating. The forwards are not as outstanding as in the past, but the overall resources are rich, with, for example, Maicon and Dani Alves as candidates for right-back. Legitimate favourites to win their sixth World Cup on the fifth continent. The head coach was Kevin McCarra Stanislav Cherchesov after disappointing performances at Euro 2016, and the former goalkeeper has changed a lot, mainly in defense, where he brought the youth of Viktor Vasin (CSKA), Fedor Kudryashov (Rubin Kazan) and Georgi Dzhikiya (Spartak Moscow) to replace Sergei Ignashevich and Vasily Berezutski. He also plays three at the back, not four. The biggest thesis was the exclusion of Igor Denisov, who is arguably the best defender, but quarreled with Cherchesov at Dynamo Moscow. Russia's attack is impressive. Alan Dzagoev is still strong, while forwards Fedor Smolov and Aleksandr Kokorin have scored many goals in 2017. Particular attention should be paid to twins Alexei and Anton Miranchuk from Lokomotiv Moscow and Alexander Golovin from CSKA Moscow. These are young technical midfielders who could have their breakthroughs at the World Cup. How they qualified hosts Preferred system 3-5-2 Star player Igor Akinfeev (CSKA Moscow) One watch Alexander Golovin (CSKA Moscow) Manager Stanislav Cherchesov Odds 40-1 Philipp Papenkov, Sport-Express Saudi Arabia Audi Arabia Can be the lowest-ranked qualifiers. Few managers last more than a year in the hottest hot spots, but Bert van Marwijk was charge for two and led the team to a first World Cup since 2006. It wasn't always

pretty, but the side took maximum points from the weakest teams and did enough against Japan and Australia to squeeze into second place. A few days later Van Marwijk was heading home after a disagreement with the Saudi FA, replaced by Edgardo Bauza. The Argentine lasted two months and five friendlies before getting the boot. Three days before the draw in Moscow, Juan Antonio Pizzi was appointed, which led Chile to the 2016 Copa America, but was unable to take them to Russia. His team has some talent but lacks international experience. There has been talk of arranging La Liga loans. That sounds impractical, but who knows? As they qualified second in Asian Group B (round three) behind Japan Preferred System 4-3-3 (in qualifying, although the new coach may change) Star player Navaf Al-Abed (Al-Hilal) One watch Fahad al-Muwallaad (Al Ittihad) Manager Juan Antonio Pizzia Odds 1000-1John Duerden, GuardianEgyptHa sit back and defend Egypt. Only once (in 30 games) the Pharaohs conceded more than one goal under Hector Keper. But despite Egypt's final with 63%, the Argentine was criticized for his defensive style. The Egyptian national team is a mixture of youth and experience, with goalkeeper Essam El-Hadary set to become the oldest player at the World Cup in 45 years. In front of him, Egypt have a strong defensive partnership between Rami Rabia and West Bromwich's Ahmed Hegazi. The midfield is built around Mohamed Elneny and Abdallah Saeed Al-Ahli, who at 32 will bring a creative spark. Egypt hope that Mohamed Salah's fine form continues, while on the other wing you can choose from Ramadan Sobhi, Kahraba and Mahmoud Hassan Trezeghe, one to watch his straight runs in the box. As they qualified the winners of the African Group E (round three) ahead of Uganda Preferred System 4-2-3-1 Star player Mohamed Salah (Liverpool) One watch Mahmoud Hassan Trezeghe (Kasympasha, on loan from Anderlecht) Manager Hector Keper Odds 250-1Ahmad Yousef, Kingfut.comUguykar Tabres team qualified with an unusual calmness. After four consecutive World Cup play-offs they finished second behind Brazil to claim in style. Now, however, he must make an important decision: will he continue to rely on the attacking approach that served him so well or make a change? The answer seems to be to change the guard in midfield. Federico Valverde (Real Madrid on loan at Deportivo La Coruna), Matias Vecino (Inter), Nahitan Nandes (Boca Juniors) and Rodrigo Bentancourt (AC Milan) are the young and attacking players who have earned a place in the team, leading to focus on the attack. However, the November friendly ended in a 0-0 draw with Poland and a 2-1 defeat by Austria, so How they qualified second in the South American section behind Brazil Preferred System 4-4-2 Star player Luis Suarez (Barcelona) One to watch Federico Valverde (Deportivo La Coruna, on loan from Real Madrid) Manager Oscar Tabares Odds 40-1Ignacio Chance, El Observador Luis Suarez is set to form a formidable partnership with Photograph: Andres Stapff / ReutersGroup BPortugal Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Germany and France are the favorites to win the World Cup, says Portugal's coach, Fernando Santos, before adding: Then we have other candidates who want to get as much as possible and win the tournament if possible, and Portugal in this second group. Santos is cautious despite winning Euro 2016, but he is optimistic about the World Cup and does so with good reason: Portugal seems stronger than a year and a half ago, adding the creativity of the defensive organisation that formed the basis of the 2016 title. Bernardo Silva and Andre Silva were important factors in this attacking upgrade and overall the team has more depth. One area that is perhaps weaker is defence, where it has been difficult to find a replacement for Pepe (who will be 35 next summer), Jose Fonte (34) and Bruno Alves (36). As they qualified the winners of The European Group B ahead of Switzerland's Preferred System 4-4-2 Star Player Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid) One watch Bernardo Silva (Manchester City) Manager Fernando Santos Odds 20-1Nuno Travassos, Maisfutebol Portugal is a stronger side now than the team that won Euro 2016. Photograph: Matthias Hangs/Getty ImagesSpainLa Roja still La Roja and crashing at the group stage in Brazil 2014 and the disappointment of France 2016 were not catharsis at all after all. At the age of 51, and without much experience as a coach at the elite level, Julien Lopetegui managed to maintain the essence of what made Spain so successful. The backbone of the team, which dislocated brilliantly for Russia 2018, is the same as those who failed in France a year and a half ago. Eight of the team that lost to Italy in Paris would start in Russia if the World Cup started now: David De Gea, Gerard Pique, Sergio Ramos, Jordi Alba, Sergio Busquets, Andres Iniesta, David Silva and Alvaro Morata. Besides, the wonderful Isco found his feet with the senior squad. Like some of the under-21s who won the Euros with Spain and Lopetegui in 2013.How they qualified European Group G winners ahead of Italy's Preferred System 4-5-1 Star player David Silva (Manchester City) One to watch Isco (Real Madrid) Manager Julien Lopetegui Odds 15-2Jos Samano, El PaisMorocco Atlas Lions roar again. Twenty years after heartbreaking exclusion from group stage in France '98, the first African team to reach 16 returned to the World Cup. Morocco, the only African team to qualify for Russia without conceding a goal, built their game on solid defence and hard work. The experience of Karim El-Ahmadi, Mbarek Bussoufa and Mehdi Benatia fits well with Hakim Sjechi's intellect and The Power of Nordin Amrabat. Herve Renard responds, but the advice coming from one of his assistants, Patrice Beaumelle, is vital. Former Coventry City midfielder Mustafa Haji is also key in the set-up, sharing his experience and acting as a role model for this generation. The home weakness of the team is used to the left but Real Madrid's Ahraf Hakimi has filled the gap admirably with September.How they qualified African Group C winners (round three) ahead of Ivory Coast Preferred System 4-5-1 Star player Hakim Sieh (Ajax) One watch Sofiane Boufal (Southampton) Manager Airve Renard Odds 250-1 Amin El-Amri, Le MatinIranTeam Mellie are playing for a second consecutive World Cup for the first time. Carlos Keiros' men were the first Asian side to qualify for this tournament and did so with 12 consecutive clean sheets. The main aspect of Keiros' tactics is jet football with deep defense and quick counterattacks. However, in recent friendlies with Russia, Panama and Venezuela, Iran has played with a different tact, pushing higher on the pitch and taking a more aggressive approach. Keiros, despite the character and irritability that has caused many seemingly pointless controversies in recent years, is very popular in Iran because of the results and performances. Many believe that he gave the real character of the national team. Iran has many European players this season and Keiros is keen to select those who play outside their homeland. How they qualified the winners of the Asian Group A (third round) ahead of south Korea's Preferred System 4-2-3-1 Star Player Sardar Azmoun (Ruby Kazan) One watch Samar Goddos (Ostersund) Manager Carlos KeirosBehnam Jafarzadeh, varzesh3.comGroup CFrance We are not at the same level as Germany, Spain and Brazil - yet, says Didier Desham. We can't control all our games with the same authority, but still, we have a strong and competitive team with great potential. France blew hot and cold in qualifying, winning their group despite defeat by Sweden and drawing against Belarus and Luxembourg. Deschamps has exciting and explosive attacks from Antoine Griezmann, Kylian Mbappe and Ousmane Dembele (if fit). There is a strong midfield built around Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kanté, plenty of technical capabilities all around with the likes of Thomas Lemar and the sound of the defensive axis. However, France seem more effective, playing on the break and using their speed. The weakest link? Left-back position if Manchester City's Benjamin Mendy fails knee injury. How They Qualified Winners Winners European Group A ahead of Sweden's Preferred System 4-4-2 or 4-3-3 Star player Antoine Griezmann (Atletico Madrid) One watch Kylian Mbappe (Paris Saint-Germain) Manager Didier Deschamps Odds 11-2Patrick Urbini, France Football Antoine Griezmann wheels away after scoring against Wales during a friendly match in November. Photograph: Frank Fyfe/AFP/Getty ImagesAustraliaThe 31st team to qualify has worked more than anyone else, with about 250,000km travelled and traveled to remote destinations such as Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Iran, Japan, Malaysia and Honduras. The Socceros place in Russia is secure, but the identity of the manager who will lead them remains a mystery after Ange Postecoglou quit following a play-off win over Honduras in November. So Australia presents something of a challenge to opponents scouting them, and uncertainty hangs over whether Postecoglou's preferred - and controversial - 3-2-4-1 will be retained, as well as over the names that will fill those starting slots. There is still an over-reliance on Tim Cahill - who will be 38 this month - for goals, but with Aaron Mooy, Tom Rogic and Massimo Luongo, there is talent elsewhere; how to get the best out of them and their teammates will depend on who takes the job. How they qualified third in Asian Group B (third round) after Japan and Saudi Arabia. Then play-off wins against Syria and Honduras Preferred system 3-4-1-2 (but that may change when a new manager is appointed) Star player Aaron Mooy (Huddersfield Town) One watch Matthew Leckie (Hertha Berlin) Manager no odds of 300-1 Mike Hytner, Guardian AustraliaPeru Back for the World Cup after 36 years, returning to his roots. Ricardo Gareca brought new, young players and rediscovered a style that has been lost for some time. Short passes and possession are part of Peru's football DNA again - with excellent results. This is a young side that has reacted to the tightening of discipline with increased dedication. The spine consists of a very confident goalkeeper in Pedro Gallez; skillful leader Alberto Rodriguez in defence; physical and intelligent Yoshimar lotong, who manages the midfield; and Jefferson Farfan and Paolo Guerrero ahead. Defenders Aldo Corzo and Miguel Trauko are tactically astute and important. For a bit of inspiration to unlock opposing defenses, there's the talented Christian Cueva.How they qualified fifth in the South American section, followed by a play-off win over New ealand Preferred System 4-2-3-1 Star Player Jefferson Farfan (Lokomotiv Moscow) One watch Christian Cueva (Sao Paulo) Manager Ricardo Gareca Odds 150-1Pedro Canelo, El ComercioarkNot only made the World Cup qualifying campaign end successfully for the first time since 2009, but the public fell in love with the team. Denmark defeated Poland 4-0 and Ireland beat Ireland in the fall, Christian Eriksen reached the level of Michael Laudrup's game, scoring 11 goals in 12 matches. The World Cup deserves a star like him, says the coach, Age Hareide. We will be a danger to all teams because of him. Denmark will continue with the direct style of play that Hareide turned to in the autumn, an approach that fits the box to midfielder Thomas Delaney, who was Denmark's second-highest scorer in qualifying. Ahead of Nikolai Jorgensen, Andreas Cornelius and Niklas Bendtner are vying for one spot, while Brentford's central defence Andreas Bjelland and captain Simon Kier have picked ahead of Chelsea's Andreas Christensen.As they qualified second in European Group E behind Poland, then a play-off win over The Republic of Ireland Preferred System 4-3-3 Star player Christian Eriksen (Tottenham Hotspur) One look Thomas Delaney (Tottenham Hotspur) One-day-to-one , Jyllands-PostenGroup DArgentina did it after all, and it will be a farewell party for many senior players. Sergio Romero, Angel Di Maria, Sergio Aguero, Gonzalo Higuain, Lucas Biglia and Ever Banega, among others, are almost certain to play in their final tournament. For Lionel Messi - the captain and the main reason they got to Russia - this is also pretty much the case now or never. With that in mind, Jorge Sampaoli is likely to go on the attack in his bid to secure a first World Cup in Argentina since 1986. The team was unreliable in qualifying and it's up to Sampaoli to make them stronger defensively. Gabriel Mercado, Javier Mascherano and Nicolas Otamendi are likely to take places in the back three, while Biglia and Enzo Perez are expected to take centre stage in midfield. How did they qualify third in the South American section behind Brazil and Uruguay Preferred System 3-4-3. Star Player Lionel Messi (Barcelona) One watch Paulo Dybala (Juventus) Manager Jorge Sampaoli Odds 8-1Cristian Grosso, La Mission IslandWill supporters from the smallest nation ever to qualify for the World Cup will be able to support their team in Russia? Almost 10% of the country's population went to Euro 2016, and next summer may be similar levels, but Moscow and St. Petersburg are obviously easier to get to than to Yekaterinburg and Volgograd. Iceland had to overcome a number of challenges to qualify: the loss of their main striker Kolbein Sigtorsson to injury, the departure of Lars Lagerback and a draw that put them with three teams that reached Euro 2016. However, they won their group and Heimir Hallgrimsson, who is now in sole charge, showed more tactical flexibility than Lagerback did. Iceland are still mostly playing 4-4-2, but Hallgrimsson changes this 4-5-1 in some games, with good effect. Sigthorsson, all from the starting line-up France is expected to Will in Russia.How they qualified the winners of the European Group I ahead of Croatia Preferred System 4-4-2 Star player Gyfl Sigurdsson (Everton) One watch Jordur Bjorgvin Magnusson (Bristol City) Manager Heimir HallgrimssonVil sigurdsson, MorgunbladiidCroatiaAdvertisement The new head coach, Slatko Dalic, was appointed two days before the final and decisive group game, but it was enough for the triumph of improvisation in Kiev, and then Croatia got rid of Greece with authority in the playoffs. Luka Modric is 32 and most other likely starters will be 29 or older - and the tournament may well be the last realistic shot at something big for this extraordinary generation. Croatia's best since the 1998 bronze-winning team. But perennial dark horses have been caught in a web of internal disagreements involving key national federation men, fans, media and politics, destroying their support at home and making it difficult for them to concentrate. As they qualified second in European Group I behind Iceland, then a play-off win over Greece Preferred System 4-2-3-1 Star player Luka Modric (Real Madrid) One to watch Nikola Vasilic (Everton) Manager zlatko Dalic Odds 25-1Alexander Holiga, Telesport Croatia's form got progressively worse during the World Cup qualifying campaign. Photograph: Darren Staples/ReutersNigeriaPlaced in a group with Algeria, Cameroon and 2012 African champions zambia, the Super Eagles qualified with a game to spare. The return of victory over Argentina in a recent friendly match in Russia further fuels optimism about what the team can achieve under Gernot Rohr. The German manager has radically improved the side by infusing the freshness of the youngsters into a team that failed to qualify for two consecutive African Cup of Nations tournaments before his appointment. Since he took over last year, the former Bordeaux manager has lost one game and knitted together a ruthless counter-attacking side that show the standout Alex Iwobi and with Chelsea defender Victor Moses playing as a dynamic, talismanic striker. The team is based on solid defence, with energetic ball-winners at the base of midfield and the calming presence of Mikel John Obi funneling balls into attack. As they qualified the winners of the African Group B (round three) ahead of zambia Preferred System 4-3-3 Star player Victor Moses (Chelsea) One watch Alex Iwobi (Arsenal) Manager Gernot Rohr Odds 150-1Solomon Fowowe, The Guardian Guardian NewspaperGroup EBrazilTite had 20 games in charge, but Brazil's conversion of rudderless World Cup crashes was surprisingly disappointing. Tite 4-1-4-1 and carefully navigate the lack of club playing time for some of their players. He's got Neymar left, Casemiro in front of the back line, Gabriel Jesus in the centre of attack and got the better from defenders Dani Alves and Marcelo. Renato Augusto is another performing at his peak, and Paulinho, one of Tite's favourite players, has managed to convert from the Chinese league to Barcelona remarkably well. This process has risks attached to it, too. Aside from regulars in the starting XI there is not much depth - Willian and Roberto Firmino aside, Tite doesn't seem to believe in many other players. As they qualified the winners of the South American section ahead of Uruguay Preferred System 4-1-4-1 Star player Neymar (Paris Saint-Germain) One watch Paulinho (Barcelona) Manager Tite Odds 5-1Carlos Eduardo Mansour, O Globo Brazil line up to face England at Wembley in November. Photograph: Adrian Dennis/AFP/Getty ImagesSwitzerlandPeople in Switzerland expect their team to reach the final these days, so there was no euphoria when a place in Russia was booked. Vladimir Petkovic's team is expected to reach at least the 1/8 final. My team has a great team spirit and a tremendous will to succeed, says Petkovic. Granit Zhaka is in the middle, dictating the tempo of the game. With creative and fast players such as Xherdan Shaqiri and Steven Souber, Switzerland are always capable of creating something on the flanks, especially as the forwards have strong defenders behind them in Juventus Stefan Lichtsteiner, right, and Milan's Ricardo Rodriguez, left. With Fabian Shore and young Manuel Akanji there is also a solid central defence to rely on. The weakest part of the team is the position of centre-forward, which is almost always occupied by Haris Seferovic.How they qualified second in European Group B after Portugal, then a play-off win over Northern Ireland Preferred System 4-5-1 Star Player Granit Zhaka (Arsenal) One watch Denis Sakaria (Borussia Monchengladbach) Manager Vladimir Petkovic Odds 66-1Kevin Lutz, BlickCosta RicaCosta Rick Were a sensation four years ago, reaching the quarterfinals of the World Cup, and face the challenge of emulation that. The coach then, Jorge Luis Pinto, was replaced by Oscar Ramirez and his team showed in the qualifying they Concacaf team beat, qualifying with two games left. Ramirez continues to deploy the 5-4-1 that served Pinto so well. He asks a lot of Brian Ruiz and Celso Borges; Ruiz is a major difference in attack and Borges gives balance in midfield. Keylor Navas is a star, with Marco Uregna, who plays for the San Jose Earthquakes in MLS, adding pace to offense. Costa Rica may struggle to repeat a place in the last eight, but they have the quality to reach the play-offs. How they qualified second in the Concacaf round five behind Mexico's Preferred System 5-4-1 Star Player Keylor Navas (Real Madrid) One to watch Urenja (San Jose Earthquakes) Manager Oscar Ramirez Odds 400-1Esteban Valverde, La NacionCeriaCeria qualified for his first major tournament in seven years in comprehensive fashion. With one defeat in 10 matches, they pipped Euro 2016 semi-finalists Wales and Ireland to top the group, but it wasn't enough for Slavojub Muslim to keep his job. The 64-year-old midfielder's conflict with Serbian FA president Slavisa Kokeza over the style of play and selection of the squad - with star midfielder Sergei Milinkovic-Savic in the epicenter - led to Muslim being sacked. Mladen Krstajic took over as a caretaker and immediately brought Milinkovic-Savic into the team for the November friendly. The Lazio man extinguished his faith with superb performances and help, sending the message that he could be trusted to lead a star-studded but aging Serbia side. As they qualified the winners of European Group D ahead of the Republic of Ireland Preferred System 3-4-3 Star Player Nemanja Matic (Manchester United) One watch Sergei Milinkovic-Savic (Lazio) Manager Mladen Krstajic (caretaker)Milos Markovic, Sportske.netGroup FGermanyAfter Germany lost to France in the semi-finals of Euro 2016 much predicted However, the team bounced back impressively and qualified for the World Cup with a perfect 10 wins out of 10, scoring a joint European record of 43 goals. Die Mannschaft have not lost since that defeat by France and, quite scary for their rivals, won the Confederations Cup in the summer without all those missing players: Jerome Boateng, Mats Hummels, Manuel Neuer, Toni Kroos, Mesut Ozil, Thomas Muller, Mario Gomez, Ilkay Gundogan, Marco Reus. New players (such as Timo Werner, Lars Stindl and - above all - Leon Goretzka) have put their claims, that is, the competition for places in the World Cup team will be huge. Goretzka's impressive display for Schalke should see the Lions pick him up ahead of Khedir in central midfield. As they qualified european Group C winners ahead of Northern Ireland Preferred System 4-2-3-1 Star Player Toni Kroos (Real Madrid) One watch Leon Goretzka (Schalke) Manager Joachim Lev Odds 5-1Majhal Reyes, Sport-BildMexicoCo team had no problems with reaching the World Cup, but Juan Carlos Osorio is still in doubt because of more demanding fixtures, such as against Chile in the Copa America Centenario and Germany in the Confederations Cup El-Tri looked lost, being beaten 7-0 and 4-1 respectively. However, some players are in their prime. Guillermo Ochoa, Andres Guardado, Hector Moreno, Hector Herrera and Javier Hernandez have at least five years of experience in Europe and it could be the difference for Mexico to finally make it in the fifth game of the World Cup. Osorio has been changing lately. When the Colombian took over he always used 4-3-3, but in the last two friendlies he played with two midfield bodies, then, that he can repeat (along with a five-man defense) in Russia.How they qualified the Concacaf winners round five ahead of Costa Rica and Panama Preferred System 4-3-3 Star player Javier Chicharito Hernandez (West Ham) One watching Hirving CACHY Lozano (PSV Eindhoven) Manager Juan Carlos Osorio Odds 66-1Mauri Televisa DeportesWedenEuro 2016 was the end of the era of zlatan Ibrahimovic, as well as manager Eric Hamren. Sweden's new team under Janne Andersson is extremely hard-working and disciplined. 4-4-2 and the tactics are reminiscent of a successful period since Lars Lagerbeck in the early 2000s - but with players from more anonymous clubs. The Lagerbeck-era stars have played for Arsenal, Juventus and Barcelona - they now represent clubs in Denmark, Greece, Russia, Scotland and the United Arab Emirates (except Emil Forsberg at RB Leipzig and Victor Lindelof at Manchester City). The play-off win against Italy was well deserved, and the big thesis now is whether Ibrahimovic will come out of international retirement at the World Cup. If so, will he fit into the team created by Andersson? As they qualified second in European Group A behind France and then a play-off win over Italy Preferred System 4-4-2 Star player Emil Forsberg (RB Leipzig) One watch Victor Klasson (Krasnodar) Manager Janne Andersson Odds 80-1Max Richnau, fotbollskanalen.se Emil Forsberg starred for club and country throughout 2017, including Italy in the playoffs to reach Russia. Photograph: Antonio Calanni/APSouth KoreaThey struggled throughout the qualifiers through being anemic in attack and defense and narrowly qualified after a poor run that led to the shooting of Uli Stielike. Shin Tae-yong, who was a manager under the age of 23 and under 20, is not a master tactician, but he is a good motivator. Few people in Korea have high hopes and, surprisingly, most fans are waiting for the return of former coach Guus Hiddink. With a team lacking world-class talent, the manager must depend on two outstanding players: Son Heung-min of Tottenham Hotspur and Ki Sung-yueng from Swansea City. Sheen often plays 4-4-2 but seems obsessed with fluid back three systems, so it's not clear how South Korea will play. As they qualified second in Asian Group A behind Iran (round three) Preferred system 4-4-2 Star player Son Heung-min (Tottenham Hotspur) One watch Kwon Chan Hong (Dijon) Manager Shin Tae Yong Odds 500-1Hyung-wook Seo, FootballGroupist BBelgiumBelgium broke all sorts of records in qualifying: they were unbeaten, they were unbeaten, they were unbeaten. Points from 10 games, they scored 43 goals and Romelu Lukaku became the country's country Goalkeeper. However, the last two friendly matches, and especially the 3-3 draw against Mexico, have left fans, pundits and players worried. True, Belgium were without Jan Vertonghen, Toby Alderweireld and Vincent Kompany against Mexico, but the substitutes could not fill the void. Kevin De Bruyne, for example, can't contain it. Mexico was just better tactically, he said. Their system made our five defenders sit deep and we were up against him in midfield - it was five against seven. If we don't have a good tactical system, we're going to have difficulties with countries like Mexico. It is a pity that we have not yet found a solution. The main problem is that after two years with Roberto Martinez there is still no real defensive organization. As they qualified the winners of European Group H ahead of Greece Preferred System 3-4-2-1 Star player Eden Hazard (Chelsea) One watch Thomas Meunier (Paris Saint-Germain) Manager Roberto Martinez Odds 12-1Cristoph Terrer, Het Laatste NieuwsPanama We will go to the World Cup to learn and compete. It's an experience to enjoy, said Hernon Dario Gomez, and he should know: the Colombian led four teams in the World Cup final. His experience is crucial in turning a mature squad that has performed well at age group level into the country's first qualification. This feat owes much to the defensive colossus Roman Torres, who scored the goal that took them to Russia, and midfielder Gabriel Gomez, the brains of the operation. This is a team built on solidity, discipline and kick at half-time. The creativity of Alberto Kintero is a key source of chances for Gabriel Torres and Blas Perez, the most commonly used forward pairing. Fidel Escobar, Michael Murillo (both from the New York Red Bulls) and Deportivo La Coruna and Ismael Diaz add a young performance. As they qualified third in the Concacaf round five behind Mexico and Costa Rica Preferred System 4-4-2 Star Player Gabriel Gomez (Atletico Bucaramanga) One watch Roman Torres (Seattle Sounders) Manager Hernan Dario Gomez Odds 1000-1Alvaro Martinez, El Siglo de PanamaToUniciaAfter 12-year absence Tunisia's 12-year absence returned to the World Cup, but their path was not quite straightforward. They sacked Henrik Kasperchak shortly after losing in the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations final. Nabil Mayul was appointed in April and led the country to the World Cup, mostly using 4-2-3-1. Full defenders are encouraged to attack, and on the left Ali Mayul of Al-Ahli is key because of how much he contributes in the future. The midfielders are dominated by two hard-working ball-winners in Ferjani Sassi and Mohamed Amin Ben Amor, with the MKN trio of Youssef Msakni, Wahbi Khazri and Naim Sliiti adding flair. Msakni, who plays in qatar, is a huge talent and often carries the team. Manager sometimes 4-3-2-1, especially against attacking teams, teams, defensive midfielder Gailen Chaalali instead of Khazri or Sliiti.How they qualified Winners of African Group A (round three) Preferred system 4-2-3-1 Star player Youssef Msakni (Al-Duhail) One watch Naim Sliiti (Dijon, on loan from Lille) Manager Nabil Ma'loul Odds 400-1Majed Acheh, tunisie-foot.comEngland The most amazing statistic about England is that they have not lost a qualifying match for any major competition since October 2009. It's an incredible run spanning 39 games, with three different managers in place since the team, then led by Fabio Capello, went down 1-0 to Ukraine. Gareth Southgate has certainly had an event year since his promoted from his role as England manager to the under-21s. Southgate moved out Wayne Rooney and overseen a period of change that now has England working with a younger, more experimental team in formation of 3-4-2-1. However, questions remain as to whether they improved after the ordeal when Iceland were eliminated at Euro 2016. England fans even staged an exit at a qualifying match in Malta.How they qualified European Group F winners ahead of Slovakia's Preferred System 3-4-2-1 Star player Harry Kane (Tottenham Hotspur) One watch Marcus Rashford (Manchester United) Manager Gareth Southgate Odds 16-1Daniel Taylor, The Guardian England squad has been revamped by Gareth Southgate since the Euro 2016 debacle, with Daniel Sturridge among those unlikely Photograph: Paul Ellis/AFP/Getty ImagesGroup HPolandAdam Nawalka's side have always looked confident of qualifying and have won eight of their 10 games. The captain, Robert Lewandowski, kicked a record 16 goals and his leadership was crucial as Poland returned to the biggest stage after a 12-year absence, but they are not a one-man team: other players have also made a big contribution to ensuring that Poland ended up in the bank alone for a draw. Defence is a concern (Poland conceded 14 goals - the most of all group winners), but Navalka is able to deal with Poland, having the second best defence at Euro 2016 before the quarter-finals. He has six months to fine-tune his plans, which include working on a formation with three central defenders. Poland have a strong backbone of The Szczesny-Kamil Glik-Grzegorz Krychowiak-Robert Lewandowski with Hull City's Camille Grosicki another key player with his pace on the left flank. How They Qualified The Winners of European Group E ahead of Denmark's Preferred System 4-2-3-1 Star Player Robert Lewandowski (Bayern Munich) One Watch Petr Selsnik (Napoli) Manager Adam Nawalka Odds 40-1Tomasz Włodarczyk, Przegląd SportowySenegalThis will be Senegalese's second World Cup final after Aliu Cisse, who was captain of the 2002 team under the late Bruno Metz, was in charge team through a complex qualifying group containing Burkina Faso, Burkina Faso, Verde. Cisse has built a strong team in all areas. The addition of M'Baye Niang to the forward line that include Monaco's Keita Balde and Liverpool's Sadio Mane allowed Cisse to play 4-3-3, albeit in a decisive win over Diafra Sakho in south Africa West Ham started at 4-4-2. Much can be expected from Mane, who has been a star man for several years and has been compared to El Hadji Diouf, the mascot for the 2002 side. His injury problems have slowed a brilliant start at Liverpool and he should be at his best in Russia.How they qualified african Group D (round three) ahead of Burkina Faso Preferred System 4-3-3 Star player Sadio Mane (Liverpool) One watch M'Baye Niang (Torino, On loan from AC Milan) Manager Aliu Cisse Odds 150-1Woury Diallo, Le quotidien Liverpool forward Sadio Mane will be Senegal's main goal threat for his second World Cup. Photograph: Siphwe Sibeko/ReutersColombiaColombia will be keen to repeat their performance from the 2014 World Cup in Brazil when they reached the quarterfinals, but it will be harder as they are not among the top seeds. This shows that the qualification was very difficult, said the coach, Jose Pekerman. We have never experienced a situation where so few points are separated by so many teams. Three factors explain Colombia's difficulties: the need to inject youth into defence, the lack of playing time for the stars (James Rodriguez at Real Madrid and Bayern Munich, Radamel Falcao in Monaco and David Ospina at Arsenal) and the lack of options in the future. Peckerman often plays 4-2-3-1 but tried 4-3-2-1 away from home. Colombia had its best results when they were more defensive and compact between the lines, hitting the counter at speed and very few passes. As they qualified fourth in the South American section behind Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina Preferred System 4-2-3-1 Star player James Rodriguez (Bayern Munich, on loan from Real Madrid) One watch Davinson Sanchez (Tottenham Hotspur) Manager Jose Pekerman Odds 50-1Gabriel Melook, El TiempoJapan Japan traditionally prefer possession-based style, but His sweeping reforms have seen Japan's two biggest stars, Keisuke Honda and Shinji Kagawa, drop out of the squad as they don't fit that philosophy - or, in other words, prefer Japan's traditional approach. There is also no room for Shinji Okazaki of Leicester City because Khalilhodzic chooses a lone forward capable of keeping the game. This election, and the general style of the manager, have been the subject of fierce debate in Japan. Khalilhodzic has extensive international football experience and took Ivory Coast to the 2010 World Cup (although he was sacked before the tournament) and 2014 tournament. As they qualified the winners of Asian Group B (third round) ahead of Saudi Arabia Preferred System 4-3-3 Star player Maya Yoshida (Southampton) One watch Yosuke Ideguchi (Gamba Osaka) Manager Wahid Halilhodzic Odds 250-1 Akihiko Kawabata, Footballista.jp Southampton defender, Maya Yoshida, will be the key to Japan's hopes. Photograph: Dean Mouhtaropoulos/Getty Images Subscribe to our weekly email, Summary, here, showing off a selection of our sporting features over the past seven days. Days of the week.

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