

Preliminary competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ – 18 FAQs

1) Who is in charge of the organisation of the preliminary competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup?

Both the preliminary and final competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ are FIFA events and as such fall under the responsibility of football's world governing body. FIFA is supported by the confederations in the organisation of the preliminary competition.

2) How many teams have registered?

For the first time ever, all 209 member associations registered for the FIFA World Cup™ preliminary competition. However, this number was reduced to 207 following decisions affecting the [Football Association of Indonesia \(PSSI\)](#) and the [Zimbabwe Football Association \(ZIFA\)](#), with 141 teams in the hat for the preliminary competition draw. Following the decision taken by the FIFA Congress in May 2016 to confirm the admission of Kosovo and Gibraltar as the 210th and 211th FIFA members respectively, both associations are entitled to take part in the 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifiers, with UEFA tasked to look into the best way to integrate them in the preliminary competition. UEFA's Emergency Panel decided on 9 June 2016 that Kosovo will join Croatia, Iceland, Ukraine, Turkey and Finland in Group I, and Gibraltar will join Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Estonia and Cyprus in Group H.

3) How many games will be played?

870 matches are scheduled to be played within the scope of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ preliminary competition.

4) Do teams receive any prize money for participating?

The FIFA Executive Committee approved the payment of special additional support of USD 300,000 to all member associations participating in the qualifiers for the 2018 FIFA World Cup™. This amount may be used by member associations to cover expenses (transport, accommodation, meals, etc.) related to the participation of their teams in the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ and/or to cover expenses related to qualifiers for other international FIFA competitions (U-17, U-20, Futsal or Beach Soccer World Cups) taking place in 2015 and 2016. Full details are available in [circular 1472](#).

5) Are there any security assessments implemented ahead of the matches?

The FIFA Security Division, in coordination with the FIFA Football Division, oversees the implementation of a security assessment ahead of the matches of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ preliminary competition.

6) Who is responsible for on-site security on match-days?

The host participating member association and the respective Local Organising Committee are responsible for on-site security arrangements on match-days.

7) Who is responsible for scheduling and deciding the venues of the matches?

The respective participating member association is responsible for scheduling its home matches. Specific arrangements for the said matches, such as the utilisation of natural or artificial turf pitches as well as the implementation of goal-line technology, are also the responsibility of the participating member association, with the only exception being associations within UEFA, in which case UEFA will decide on the match arrangements.

8) As of when should players called up for international duty join their respective national teams?

Details on the release of players to association teams is available in annexe 1 of the [Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players](#).

9) Who decides on teams' kits?

For a smooth match delivery, such pre-discussions are to take place among the teams well ahead of the matches with the final decision being taken by the FIFA Match Commissioner and the match referee in accordance with the [Regulations for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™](#).

10) When are match officials appointed? Who is responsible for appointing them?

FIFA is in charge of appointing the match officials. Names are published around a week ahead of each game on [FIFA.com](#).

11) Who is responsible for disciplinary matters?

The FIFA Disciplinary Committee is responsible for disciplinary matters to be assessed in accordance with the [FIFA Disciplinary Code](#), which is applicable to every match and tournament organised by FIFA including the preliminary competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™, as well as in application of other relevant FIFA regulations.

12) What are the disciplinary regulations in place with regard to yellow and red cards?

Yellow card: a player is cautioned if he commits any of the cautionable offences described in Law 12 of the [Laws of the Game](#).

According to the [FIFA Disciplinary Code](#) (art. 17.3), "if a player receives a caution in two separate matches of the same FIFA competition, he is automatically suspended from the next match in that competition". Qualifying group matches and play-off matches are all considered part of the preliminary competition and,

as such, match suspensions resulting from two cautions imposed in different group matches will be carried over to play-off matches.

Red card: a player is sent off if he commits any of the sending-off offences described in Law 12 of the [Laws of the Game](#).

According to the [FIFA Disciplinary Code](#) (art. 18.4), “an expulsion automatically incurs suspension from the subsequent match, even if imposed in a match that is later abandoned, annulled and/or forfeited. The Disciplinary Committee may extend the duration of the suspension.” A fine may also be imposed.

13) Can cautions be cancelled?

According to the [FIFA Disciplinary Code](#) (art. 37.1), “upon its own initiative or at the request of a confederation, the Disciplinary Committee may cancel cautions that have not resulted in an expulsion so as to restore the balance among several teams that have not played the same number of matches during the first round of a competition, or in other exceptional circumstances”.

14) What are the tie-breaker criteria applicable?

This information is available on [FIFA.com](#) in the [Regulations for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™](#) (article 20.6) as well as in the following [circular](#).

15) What measures will be implemented by FIFA to prevent match manipulation at the qualifiers?

FIFA is set to monitor all matches of the preliminary competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ through its subsidiary company [Early Warning System GmbH \(EWS\)](#) which will analyse the betting market for any suspicious betting patterns. EWS previously monitored all 820 matches played during the 2014 FIFA World Cup™ qualifiers. In addition, all FIFA referees, upon receiving their 2015 FIFA ID cards, had to sign a statement signalling their compliance with all FIFA regulations including the requirement to protect the integrity of the game, and were also given a FIFA Integrity Brochure which informed them of the requirements to report approaches relating to potential match manipulation and other suspicious or illegal activities. Additionally, at each Match Coordination Meeting (MCM) for each game of the preliminary competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™, the appointed FIFA Match Commissioner will brief the team delegations and appointed referees on preserving the integrity of the match, among other match-related matters.

16) Who is responsible for ticket sales?

The participating member associations are responsible for ticket sales for their respective home matches.

17) Who is responsible for selling/deciding on TV rights for the matches?

The preliminary competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ is a global football competition held by the participating member associations across all six confederations. Though organising the preliminary competition as a collective whole, FIFA is not in charge of the global exploitation of the TV and Media Rights to single preliminary competition matches and it is the right of each participating member association hosting

a specific preliminary match to exploit the TV and Media rights to its home matches. However, the member associations of some confederations (e.g. UEFA, OFC) have decided to entrust the relevant confederation with the global exploitation of their TV rights to their preliminary matches.

18) Is there an official online source providing the latest information on the results and standings?

The preliminary competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ will be covered extensively on FIFA.com, m.fifa.com (FIFA's mobile site), the [FIFA App](#) and through [FIFA's social accounts](#) on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The coverage – available in English, Spanish, French, German, Arabic and Russian – is provided by a global editorial network, and ranges from statistical information such as live scores, fixtures, results and standings to editorial content with live blogs on matchdays, exclusive interviews, team profiles and much more.

Last updated: 10 June 2016