

Pochettino to stay as USA coach until 2030 World Cup

US Soccer says Pochettino has built trust and belief around the national team

● Pochettino signs new US Soccer contract

● Staff also stay

● Aims to strengthen national programme

AFP | Paris

Mauricio Pochettino has signed a contract extension to remain the head coach of the United States national team until the 2030 World Cup, US Soccer announced yesterday.

The 54-year-old took over in 2024 and led the USA to the last 16 at the recent World Cup, which they co-hosted with Canada and Mexico.

“It has become clear to us that there is tremendous potential to make the men’s national team program even stronger,” said Argentinian Pochettino, whose coaching staff have also agreed new contracts.

“The passion we experienced from the fans throughout the World Cup only strengthened our belief in what is possible here...”

“We want to try to have a lasting impact on the sport in the



Mauricio Pochettino reacts during a match (file photo)

country that has welcomed us so warmly and for that impact to extend beyond results on the field.”

The Americans won three matches at a World Cup for the first time before being knocked out by Belgium, following a huge controversy over FIFA’s decision to suspended striker Folarin Balogun’s ban for a red card.

Former Tottenham and Paris Saint-Germain boss Pochettino was named coach two years ago, after previous boss Gregg

Berhalter left following a group-stage exit from the 2024 Copa America which the USA hosted.

Pochettino helped turn things around and led the team to the 2025 CONCACAF Gold Cup final, which they lost 2-1 to Mexico.

He had been linked with a return to European club football, but will instead stay with the US until the next World Cup, slated to be largely held in Spain, Portugal and Morocco.

“Mauricio has built a culture where players trust the group,

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Mauricio Pochettino previously led the United States to the 2025 CONCACAF Gold Cup final and replaced former head coach Gregg Berhalter following a group-stage exit at the 2024 Copa America

trust the process and trust each other,” said US Soccer president Cindy Parlow Cone.

“We saw the impact of that belief in the way the team grew, competed and performed on the world’s biggest stage.”

The USA have not reached the quarter-finals of a men’s World Cup since 2002, and hopes were high a partisan home crowd could carry them to at least that stage.

But after the Balogun affair, a fired-up Belgium quashed those hopes last month with a crushing 4-1 victory.

Leeds rally for 4-2 friendly win over Liverpool



Dominic Calvert-Lewin #9 of Leeds United scores past Giorgi Mamardashvili #25 of Liverpool

AFP | Chicago

Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored two of Leeds’ four second-half goals as they rallied for a 4-2 friendly win over Liverpool at Soldier Field in Chicago.

The stunning comeback saw Liverpool handed their first defeat under new coach Andoni Iraola, who arrived this summer from Bournemouth to replace the sacked Arne Slot.

Liverpool had notched a 4-2 win over Sunderland and a 1-0 victory against Wrexham at Yankee Stadium in the first two matches of their US tour.

They looked in control on Sunday with a pair of first-half goals before Leeds stormed back against their English Premier League rivals.

US midfielder Brenden Aaronson launched the fightback in the 60th minute and Calvert-Lewin pulled Leeds level

in the 71st, firing in at the back post after Joe Rodon flicked on a long Ethan Ampadu throw.

Sean Longstaff’s scuffling finish in the 73rd gave Leeds a 3-2 lead and Calvert-Lewin made it 4-2 with a near-replica of his first goal in the 85th, when Ampadu’s throw was sent on by Sebastian Bornauw and he headed in.

The victory was Leeds’ second on their US tour, which opened with a 3-2 loss to Wrexham in Tampa, Florida before a 1-0 victory over Sunderland in New Jersey.

Liverpool had opened the scoring in the seventh minute when Dominik Szoboszlai’s corner was flicked on by Milos Kerkez and slammed home by Luke Chambers from six yards out.

Florian Wirtz doubled the tally in the 40th minute, tucking in a cross from Jeremie Frimpong.

Welsh FA withdraws support for Infantino’s FIFA re-election bid

AFP | London

Wales yesterday became the first nation to publicly withdraw support for FIFA president Gianni Infantino’s re-election bid over his failed plan to sell off stakes in the World Cup.

Infantino had offered its 211 member associations \$40 million each if they backed proposals for private investment in its tournaments, including the men’s and women’s World Cups.

But he was forced to scrap his plan after a furious backlash from three continental confederations.

The Football Association of Wales said yesterday it would not back Infantino’s candidature in the election in Rabat, Morocco, in March 2027.

“The Football Association of Wales hereby confirms its withdrawal of support for the candidature of Mr Gianni Infantino, for re-election as FIFA president for the 2027–2031 term,” the FAW said in a statement.

“The recent failures in good governance, processes, leadership, values, stakeholder management, communications and sound judgement have led us



Gianni Infantino

to a position where Mr Infantino has lost the confidence of the FAW to remain at the helm of world football.

“Failing to put the best interests of football first is a failure we cannot accept.”

The English FA is also understood to have written to FIFA making it clear it no longer supports Infantino.

English football’s governing body issued a statement on Saturday saying it “fully supported” the position of UEFA, which said Infantino had lost the “confidence” of the European governing body.

North and Central American football’s governing body, CONCACAF called for a “comprehensive reckoning with” Infantino’s leadership while the Asian Football Confederation pleaded for transparency.

Cycling superstar Pogacar to ride in Vuelta

AFP | Barcelona

Slovenian cycling great Tadej Pogacar will bid to win the one Grand Tour missing from his achievements the Vuelta a Espana when he rides in this year’s race for the first time since 2019, his team announced yesterday.

“It’s true - he’s coming back,” wrote the five-time Tour de France winner’s UAE Team Emirates on social media platform X to announce his participation in the race which starts on August 22.

The 27-year-old Slovenian will be favourite to triumph in the gruelling 21-stage race which begins in his home city of Monaco.

Pogacar came third in the



Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar celebrates his overall victory in this year’s Tour de France

2019 Vuelta and won three stages to announce himself to the

cycling world. “I’m excited to say I’m going

back to La Vuelta. It was my first ever Grand Tour back in 2019 and an amazing experience,” Pogacar told the UAE Team Emirates website.

“Spain is a country I love to visit and race in and I think the time is right to go back.

“The motivation is high to finish off the year in a good way and the Vuelta will be a big target. The team is strong and we hope to do good things.”

Pogacar, who won the Tour de France in style in July, could become only the fourth rider to win both that and La Vuelta in the same year, and only the ninth to win all three Grand Tours in their career.

He won the Giro in 2024.

Injured Indian pacer Bumrah ruled out of Sri Lanka

AFP | New Delhi

India’s pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been ruled out of the upcoming Test series in Sri Lanka due to a knee injury, the country’s cricket board said yesterday.

Aquib Nabi, the up-and-coming pace bowler from Jammu and Kashmir, replaces Bumrah in the 15-member team, which will play a warm-up game before their opening Test in Galle from August 15.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India said Bumrah “has not yet fully recovered



Jasprit Bumrah

from the left knee injury sustained during the ODI series against England” last month.

Nabi, who claimed 104 wickets across the last two domestic Ranji Trophy seasons, earns his maiden call-up to the senior national team.

The 29-year-old Nabi was also part of the India A squad that toured Sri Lanka recently, in which he claimed six wickets in two first-class matches.

The 32-year-old Bumrah has not bowled since the second ODI of the England series in Cardiff on July 16 due to an impact injury he suffered in the match.

India, led by Shubman Gill, will play the second Test in Colombo on August 23-27.