



# World Cup 2026 knockout stage gets underway



Jonathan David celebrates his hat-trick in Canada's first-ever tournament win



Teboho Mokoena celebrates South Africa's goal to reach the Round of 32

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

South Africa face Canada at Los Angeles Stadium in California tonight at 10pm (Bahrain time) in the first last-32 match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with a place in the round of 16 at stake.

Canada finished second in Group B behind Switzerland to book their place in the knockout stage, while South Africa were runners-up in Group A behind Mexico. The winner will face either the Netherlands or Morocco in the round of 16, with a potential quarter-final against favourites France or Germany further down the line.

Bafana Bafana have already created history this summer by reaching the last-32 stage of a World Cup for the first time. Hugo Broos' side began with a 2-0 defeat to Mexico, but responded well with a 1-1 draw against Czechia before sealing qualification with a surprising 1-0 win over South

Korea.

Their return of four points from three matches was enough to finish second in Group A, one point ahead of South Korea. They now prepare to face Canada, having only met once before, a 2-0 friendly win in November 2007. This will be their first competitive meeting, adding another layer of intrigue to the contest.

Canada also progressed to the knockout rounds of a World Cup for the first time, finishing with four points from three matches. They opened with a 1-1 draw against Bosnia and Herzegovina

before producing a dominant 6-0 win over Qatar. However, a 2-1 defeat to Switzerland ultimately denied them top spot in Group B.

Jesse Marsch's side were left to settle for second place, missing out on the advantages that would have come with winning the group. While they will still be viewed as slight favourites on paper, the Canucks must respond after a disappointing final group performance.

It is also confirmed that Canada will not host any further matches in the tournament. After finishing second in Group B,

their remaining games will all be played in the United States. Their Round of 32 clash against South Africa takes place in Los Angeles, with a potential round of 16 tie scheduled for Houston on July 4.

Canadian venues in Vancouver and Toronto hosted group-stage matches only and will not stage any knockout fixtures, with the remainder of the tournament continuing across the United States and Mexico through to the final on July 19.

## Team news

South Africa will welcome Teboho Mokoena back from suspension, providing a timely boost in midfield, while Themba Zwane remains unavailable following his red card against Mexico.

For Canada, Ismael Kone is ruled out with a tibia fracture sustained against Qatar, while Alphonso Davies has yet to feature due to a hamstring injury but could return from the bench.

## World Cup Schedule (Round of 32)

Today		
Time	Match	Venue
10:00 PM	South Africa vs Canada	Los Angeles Stadium
Tomorrow		
08:00 PM	Brazil vs. Japan	Houston Stadium
11:30 PM	Germany vs Paraguay	Boston Stadium

(All games in Bahrain time)



# Favorites Spain see off 10-man Uruguay



Baena celebrates Spain's winning goal

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Alex Baena scored the only goal as Spain secured top spot in Group H and advanced to the knockout stages of the World Cup with a 1-0 win over 10-man Uruguay at Estadio Guadalajara.

The result confirmed La Roja as group winners and eliminated Uruguay, with Cape Verde's goalless draw against Saudi Arabia sealing second place for the tournament debutants.

Spain will now face the Group J runners-up on July 2 in the last 32 as they continue their pursuit of a third World Cup crown, having last lifted the trophy in 2010.

Baena's decisive strike came three minutes before half-time after an error from Fernando Muslera. Marcos Llorente's delivery picked out Baena,

who took a touch before seeing his shot squirm through the Uruguay goalkeeper's grasp and into the net.

The Uruguay goalkeeper was replaced at the break by Sergio Rochet in a rare World Cup substitution, but Marcelo Bielsa's side were unable to recover.

The European champions controlled the contest with composure, limiting Uruguay's attacking threat while dominating possession. Lamine Yamal again provided a creative spark, while Spain's defensive structure ensured another controlled performance.

The game ended on a sour note for Uruguay, with Agustin Canobbio shown a straight red card in stoppage time for a high challenge on Pau Cubarsi, compounding a difficult evening for the South Americans.

# Belgium advance with New Zealand rout

● **Trossard nets double for Red Devils**

● **De Bruyne and Lukaku also score**

● **Saelemaekers completes the scoring**

AFP | Vancouver

Belgium defeated New Zealand 5-1 to book their place in the knockout rounds of the World Cup, securing their first win of the tournament to finish on top of Group G in Vancouver.

A double strike from Arsenal's Leandro Trossard and goals from Kevin De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku and Alexis Saelemaekers carried the Red Devils into the last 32 in first place ahead of Egypt on goal difference.

Egypt claimed the runners-up spot after a 1-1 draw with Iran in Seattle. The Iranians finished third in the group.

Belgium dominated a lopsided first half and had alarm bells ringing in the New Zealand defence early on when Trossard's angled shot cannoned off the inside of the upright only to

be cleared off the line by Tyler Binden.

The Red Devils looked poised to take the lead moments later when Jordanian referee Adham Mohammad pointed to the penalty spot after Trossard's shot hit the arm of covering defender Finn Surman.

But VAR sent Mohammad to the monitor to take another look at the decision, which was subsequently overturned and New Zealand breathed again.

Yet Belgium did not have long to wait before the breakthrough and again it was Trossard who proved to be in the right place at the right time, bundling home from close range after De Bruyne's corner sowed panic in the six-yard box.

Trossard effectively made the game safe five minutes into the second half, controlling a rebound in

a crowded area to volley home past New Zealand goalkeeper Max Cro-

combe at the near post. De Bruyne then stroked home an elegant low finish in the 66th minute to



Leandro Trossard #10 of Belgium celebrates scoring his team's first goal



**Lukaku's goal made him Belgium's all-time leading World Cup scorer with six goals**

make it 3-0, a crucial goal which saw the Belgians leapfrog over Egypt into first place on goal difference.

Yet there was to be a dramatic end when New Zealand's Elijah Just volleyed home a consolation strike from the edge of the area to make it 3-1.

That could have been potentially costly, with the goal suddenly bumping Belgium down into second place.

But Lukaku nodded home his team's fourth in the 86th minute with his first touch just a minute after coming on as a substitute to return Belgium to the top of the table.

Saelemaekers completed the scoring with a shot from the edge of the area.

## Injured Australian pair Leckie, Italiano out of World Cup

AFP | Oakland

Injured Australian pair Mathew Leckie and Jacob Italiano were ruled out of the World Cup Friday ahead of their last-32 clash with Egypt, leaving the Socceroos to complete the tournament with 24 players.

Striker Leckie, at a fourth World Cup, hurt his hamstring in the Socceroos' 2-0 Group D loss to the United States and did not feature in their 0-0 draw with Paraguay on Thursday.

Right-back Italiano played against Turkey and the United States but injured his groin in training and also missed the Paraguay clash.

"Jacob Italiano and Mathew Leckie will unfortunately miss the remainder of the World Cup through injury," the Socceroos said in a statement.

"Everyone at Football Australia and the Socceroos would like to wish Jacob and Mathew all the best in their recovery and thank them for their contributions during the campaign."