

ITV ANNOUNCES BLOCKBUSTER WORLD CUP 2022 SQUAD FULL PLANS REVEALED FOR TOURNAMENT COVERAGE



ITV begins the countdown to the biggest football tournament of the year with the announcement of their World Cup 2022 line up.

Viewers will be guided through the tournament by the stellar team, providing comprehensive coverage, expert analysis and the very best action on ITV.

Live games and highlights will be broadcast on ITV, providing a comprehensive coverage package and content across ITV Football's social platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, ensuring fans will not miss a single minute of the action.

Led by main presenters Mark Pougatch, Laura Woods and Seema Jaswal, ITV's World Cup squad will offer incredible insight, expertise, opinion and analysis from Ian Wright, Roy Keane, Gary Neville, Karen Carney, Graeme Souness, Joe Cole, Eni Aluko, Nigel De Jong, Nadia Nadim and Hal Robson-Kanu.

Commentary will come from Sam Matterface, Clive Tyldesley, Jon Champion, Seb Hutchinson, Joe Speight and Tom Gayle supported by co-commentators Lee Dixon, Ally McCoist, John Hartson and Andros Townsend. Reporting on the tournament will be Gabriel Clarke, Michelle Owen and Celina Hinchcliffe.

Reporting during the tournament will be Gabriel Clarke and Michelle Owen.

ITV's coverage will be complemented with a referee analyst to break down and explain all of the key on field decisions, with Peter Walton taking up that role.

Following its coverage of Euro 2020 which saw ITV draw the biggest single channel audience ever for any game of football, 27.4m, for England's semi-final against Denmark, ITV will show 32 live matches in a packed schedule kicking off on Monday 21st November with two group stage games, Senegal v Netherlands at 4pm (UK time) and USA v Wales at 7pm (UK time).

ITV will broadcast England's second game of the tournament on Friday 25th November against the USA, 7pm (UK time), in what is sure to be an important fixture as England battle to get out of Group B.

The first weeks of the tournament on ITV will also bring viewers Argentina v Mexico in what many predict will be Lionel Messi's last World Cup, reigning world champions France v Denmark, Spain v Costa Rica, Portugal v Uruguay, and many people's favourites Brazil v Switzerland, among a range of other crunch fixtures as the best in the world battle to get out of their respective groups.

ITV's live coverage continues throughout the knock-out stages, with first and second pick of the Round of 16 and first pick of the quarter finals. ITV will also broadcast one of the semi-finals and the final.

In case you miss any of the action, ITV will broadcast daily highlights of all other games on each match day throughout the World Cup.

ITV is building excitement for the FIFA World Cup 2022 from this weekend, with a specially produced new on-air trail. Featuring ITV pundits Ian Wright and Eni Aluko, the trail elicits that unique, spine-tingling sensation that World Cups can bring. For anyone, anywhere. You can view the trail: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DYJJZ1ghKk>

Niall Sloane, ITV Director of Sport, said: "The World Cup is the biggest sporting event of the year and ITV are committed to bring viewers the very best extensive coverage of the tournament accompanied by expert punditry and analysis. We will immerse viewers into the tournament with our live coverage, highlight shows, podcasts, online and social media content, ensuring viewers do not miss a minute of the action".

NOTE TO EDITORS: Link to all hi-res images, here: <https://we.tl/t-xtCdphQ3y8>

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Full fixture schedule: (times listed are UK kick-off times)

Sunday November 20

Group A: Qatar vs Ecuador - 4pm - BBC

Monday November 21

Group B: England vs Iran - 1pm - BBC

Group A: Senegal vs Netherlands - 4pm - ITV

Group B: USA vs Wales – 7pm - ITV

Tuesday November 22

Group C: Argentina vs Saudi Arabia - 10am - ITV

Group D: Denmark vs Tunisia - 1pm - ITV

Group C: Mexico vs Poland - 4pm - BBC

Group D: France vs Australia - 7pm - BBC

Wednesday November 23

Group F: Morocco vs Croatia - 10am - ITV

Group E: Germany vs Japan - 1pm - ITV

Group E: Spain vs Costa Rica - 4pm - ITV

Group F: Belgium vs Canada - 7pm - BBC

Thursday November 24

Group G: Switzerland vs Cameroon - 10am - ITV

Group H: Uruguay vs South Korea - 1pm - BBC

Group H: Portugal vs Ghana - 4pm - ITV

Group G: Brazil vs Serbia - 7pm - BBC

Friday November 25

Group B: Wales vs Iran - 10am - BBC

Group A: Qatar vs Senegal - 1pm - BBC

Group A: Netherlands vs Ecuador - 4pm - ITV

Group B: England vs USA - 7pm - ITV

Saturday November 26

Group C: Tunisia vs Australia - 10am - BBC

Group C: Poland vs Saudi Arabia - 1pm - ITV

Group D: France vs Denmark - 4pm - ITV

Group C: Argentina vs Mexico - 7pm - ITV

Sunday November 27

Group E: Japan vs Costa Rica 10am - ITV

Group F: Belgium vs Morocco - 1pm - BBC

Group F: Croatia vs Canada 4pm - BBC

Group E: Spain vs Germany - 7pm - BBC

Monday November 28

Group G: Cameroon vs Serbia - 10am - ITV
Group G: South Korea vs Ghana - 1pm - BBC
Group H: Brazil vs Switzerland - 4pm - ITV
Group H: Portugal vs Uruguay - 7pm - ITV

Tuesday November 29

Group A: Netherlands vs Qatar - 3pm - ITV
Group A: Ecuador vs Senegal - 3pm - ITV
Group B: Wales vs England - 7pm - BBC
Group B: Iran vs USA - 7pm - BBC

Wednesday November 30

Group D: Australia vs Denmark - 3pm - BBC
Group D: Tunisia vs France - 3pm - BBC
Group C: Poland vs Argentina - 7pm - BBC
Group C: Saudi Arabia vs Mexico - 7pm - BBC

Thursday December 1

Group F: Croatia vs Belgium - 3pm - BBC
Group F: Canada vs Morocco - 3pm - BBC
Group E: Costa Rica vs Germany - 7pm - ITV
Group E: Japan vs Spain - 7pm - ITV

Friday, December 2

Group G: South Korea vs Portugal - 3pm - BBC
Group G: Ghana vs Uruguay - 3pm - BBC
Group H: Serbia vs Switzerland - 7pm - ITV
Group H: Cameroon vs Brazil - 7pm - ITV

As follows are the dates and times of the Round of 16 matches, Quarter Finals, Semi Finals, Third Place Play-Off and Final of the tournament. Below is the order of selection of matches between ITV and the BBC.

Round of 16 picks

- 1) ITV
- 2) ITV
- 3) BBC
- 4) ITV
- 5) BBC
- 6) BBC
- 7) ITV
- 8) BBC

Quarter Final picks

- 1) ITV
- 2) BBC
- 3) ITV
- 4) BBC

Semi Final picks

- 1) BBC
- 2) ITV

Round of 16

Saturday December 3

Winners of Group A vs Runners-up of Group B - 3pm - Channel TBC

Winners of Group C vs Runners-up of Group D - 7pm - Channel TBC

Sunday December 4

Winners of Group D vs Runners-up of Group C - 3pm - Channel TBC

Winners of Group B vs Runners-up of Group A - 7pm - Channel TBC

Monday December 5

Winners of Group E vs Runners-up of Group F - 3pm - Channel TBC

Winners of Group G vs Runners-up of Group H - 7pm - Channel TBC

Tuesday December 6

Winners of Group F vs Runners-up of Group E - 3pm - Channel TBC

Winners of Group H vs Runners-up of Group G - 7pm - Channel TBC

Quarter-finals

Friday December 9

Quarter Final 1 - 3pm - Channel TBC

Quarter Final 2 - 7pm - Channel TBC

Saturday December 10

Quarter Final 3 - 3pm - Channel TBC

Quarter Final 4 - 7pm - Channel TBC

Semi-finals

Tuesday December 13

Semi Final 1 - 7pm - Channel TBC

Wednesday December 14

Semi Final 2 - 7pm - Channel TBC

Saturday December 17

Third place play-off - BBC

Final

Sunday December 18

The World Cup final - 3pm - ITV and BBC

PRESS PACK INTERVIEWS

Ian Wright



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

Watching the best players in the world and just enjoying the variety of stories of the different players and countries. There are also some great grudge, rivalry matches that I'm looking forward to. For example, I want to see Ghana vs Uruguay so the Black Stars can make things right from 2010.

Who do you think will win and why?

Argentina – just coming off the back of winning the Copa America last year, it's a fantastic squad and it might be the last World Cup for Messi. They can play beautiful attacking football but they also know how to really grind out results when needed.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

England have shown they can get to the latter stages of big tournaments – we have good tournament experience now and we'd do well to get to the semi-final stages again. For Wales I'd like to see them get out of the group stages, once they do that anything can happen.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Pedri – it's his first World Cup and this is the next step in his career. Jude Bellingham – he's thriving at Dortmund; we've seen big consistent performances from him in the Champions League. One of the most exciting young players in the world and no doubt he will thrive under the spotlight of the World Cup. Sadio Mane - he's tasted success winning the African Cup of Nations last year. He'll want to lead Senegal as far as he can. Aurélien Tchouaméni - No Pogba or Kante means he and Camavinga have to step up. Mohammed Kudus – we've seen his performance in the Champions League, now we can see it on the biggest stage.



Gary Neville

What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I would definitely say the Group Phase. Having experienced the World Cup for the first time in Russia, those first 10 days when all the fans are there mingling together, is the most special atmosphere. It's something I've not experienced before having only ever played in World Cups and as a player you are almost hidden away from all this excitement of the fan experience.

Who do you think will win and why?

I'm going to go for England! They've gone from semi-final, final, runner up and now they are going to go one more. I think they are on a growth over the last few years and I don't buy into this idea that the Nation League's performance is them - they played four games in the middle of summer

that actually nobody was stimulated by and I think the two games they played recently against Italy and Germany are tough games that you can lose in any single year. So, come the tournament, hopefully injuries won't take too much of a hold and I'm going to go for England.

If not England I'm going to go for France or Argentina!

How do you think England and Wales will do?

Well I've just talked about England and I think Wales will be gallant losers!

Who do you think will be the standout stars of the tournament and why?

I'm going to go with Messi because I think it's his last hurrah, he will have the bit between his teeth to do something spectacular and try and equal what Maradona did all those years ago.

Also, I am going to go with Phil Foden and Jude Bellingham because I think they are in great form and I believe it will be important to them both to do well in this tournament on an international stage.

Roy Keane



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

The amount of games. Obviously, I'm a football fan and managed to play in a World Cup in 1994. It's always exciting - who's going to turn up, who's not going to turn up.

Who do you think will win and why?

It's going to be hard to stop Brazil. Brazil have such great strength in depth at the moment and some real quality players across the squad. I think France also have some brilliant players and England will come up just short.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

It'll be tough for Wales, but I fully expect them to get out of the group. Bale and Ramsay have shown before they can bring it to the special occasions but I don't know much football they are getting before

the tournament and how sharp they'll be. For Wales to progress in the knockout rounds Bale and Ramsay will need to show up and push the team through. England will have no problem getting out of the group - they'll be far too strong. Huge pressure on Harry Kane to produce and I still worry about England defensively and the goalkeeper.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

I would love to see Jude Bellingham have a good tournament. For such a young kid, he plays way beyond his years, looks a good athlete and is mature. He's getting a good run of games now for Borussia Dortmund and recently started for England against Germany, so I hope he takes that momentum into the World Cup.

Graeme Souness



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

It's going to be unique - if you're a football nut you can go there and see four games of football in one day due to the proximity of the stadiums. It'll be a true footballing festival.

Who do you think will win and why?

I think for the first time in a long time there is no obvious favourite. I think England will be in with a good shout as long as Harry Kane is scoring goals. England could go close if Harry is on form, if not they'll be home early.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I've never seen football where it's all about one man but I think for England and Wales that is the case. If both Harry Kane and Gareth Bale have good tournaments, we'll see how far their teams

can go.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

I can see Phil Foden and Harry Kane standing out for England. Pedri for Spain could also be a stand out star.

In many people's eyes Lionel Messi has never had a good World Cup but this year could be his swansong.

Eni Aluko



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I think the timing of the World Cup being in the winter is a leveller as it is new for every team and will hopefully bring surprises in terms of the parity across the tournament. I am looking forward to games in England's group, especially against Wales and the USA. Group E with Spain and Japan is also an exciting group.

Who do you think will win and why?

It is very difficult to call this World Cup. I believe Argentina are the strongest team going into the tournament and have everything to win it, including it being Messi's last World Cup.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I believe England will reach the semi finals. I'm not confident England will reach the final of this tournament, but hope I am wrong! Wales I believe

will reach the last 16.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Rafael Leão for Portugal. He has been in incredible form last season and this season for AC Milan and Portugal and will form part of a very strong Portugal team. Jude Bellingham for England. I believe Bellingham should start for England in the World Cup. He has been the best young midfielder in Europe so far this season. Vinícius Júnior for Brazil. I believe Vini will be a breakout star at the World Cup. He has established himself as a Real Madrid superstar and I think he will relish the opportunity of a World Cup.

Mark Pougatch



together in the England age group teams. Jude Bellingham of England to announce himself on the international stage and Germany's Jamal Musiala.

What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I'm really intrigued to see the ways in which a mid-season World Cup will impact on things. The truth is we don't know, and we're about to find out.

Who do you think will win and why?

I'm sticking with France even though their recent form has been patchy. Their strength in depth is frightening.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

Quarter finals for England and the final 16 for Wales.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

I'm going for two youngsters who used to play

Karen Carney



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

It's my first World Cup as a pundit. Just being with the team here at ITV is so exciting and being a part of it is just incredible.

Who do you think will win and why?

France are suffering with a lot of injuries at the moment so will need their players back fit to compete. Of course, I would love to see England win but Brazil and their squad are so strong, Brazil could do it.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

For England it's a case of pushing on from being a Euro finalist to winning it. That gap is very hard and to do that I think they need to be more expansive but that could leave them open a little bit, which is a concern. I am really excited to see

Wales - I hope they have a good tournament for their fans and could surprise a lot of people.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

I really like Vinícius Júnior. I watched him in the Champions League final and absolutely loved him. Of course, I want Harry Kane to shine. If England are going to progress, they will need him firing on all cylinders. For France, I would like to see Mbappe go for it!

Nigel De Jong

What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I am looking forward to the World Cup being hosted in a country where you get all of the teams and stadiums together within a 50km radius. It's the chance to see multiple games in one day and having the fans interact with each other from such a close distance.

Who do you think will win and why?

I'll always go for an underdog, so therefore I am going for the Netherlands. As everyone always goes for the more familiar teams, I feel there is less pressure on the Dutch. Van Gaal as a coach has really got the team working for each other without the really big superstars. That for me is the reason they can succeed.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I think both teams can do well or even better than their current form. England obviously have the pressure of performing, but with the right players they will do well. Wales have no pressure as they are not favourites to win the tournament, so that'll give them a good chance to progress.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Phil Foden, Memphis Depay, Jude Bellingham and Vinícius Júnior, are my top picks. The youngsters who have a lot to prove on the highest stage in world football and are already cemented their places in their domestic teams. These players are creative and can change the course of a game.

Laura Woods



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

This year's tournament, I am most looking forward to seeing how England fare against the best in the world and how some of the young players are going to come through on that global stage. I also really want to see Brazil - in huge competitions like the World Cup, I think Brazil make it what it is.

Who do you think will win and why?

I think England have a really good chance. If they build on what they did at the Euro's and take that experience, they could do really well. Brazil are also brilliant. Neymar is having an exceptional season so far and he is going to be a very big worry for his opponents. For me, Brazil are favourites, closely followed by England but anything can happen!

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I remember watching Wales in Euro 2016 and celebrating with their fans once England had already gone out - it was an amazing experience. I think Wales will get out of the group but will need their players to be fit to really kick on in the tournament. England, I expect will go far in the tournament and will look towards the semi-final and beyond.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

There is potential for Bukayo Saka to have a great tournament, he is playing incredibly well at the moment for Arsenal. If Harry Kane can get firing on all cylinders ahead of the tournament, I would expect him to do well. Of course, you also have the likes of Neymar and Mbappe, who are having great seasons so far.

Andros Townsend



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

Watching the best teams and players in the world come up against each other in the biggest tournament in world football.

Who do you think will win and why?

I think the French will win because they have the best young team, who are set to come of age.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I think England, providing they avoid the French, could get a semi-final, maybe even a final. Wales I think could do well and potentially get to a quarter-final.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Without a doubt, Mbappe. He impressed at the last

World Cup and could show again just how good he is on the biggest stage. I also think Harry Kane could stand out and potentially win the Golden Boot and if not will almost certainly challenge for it.

Nadia Nadim

What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I'm looking forward to seeing some of the best players in the world get together, and I'm excited to see what has been rumored to be Lionel Messi's last World Cup.

Who do you think will win and why?

It's a tricky question, but I would go for France or England. It would be fun if England could win the same year as the women won the Euro's.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I think England will do well, they are one of my top four teams, and I hope that Wales makes it out of the group, even though I think it will be England and USA that advances.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe and Ronaldo. I also think that we will see a new star being born in Takefusa Kubo from Real Sociedad who plays for Japan.

Hal Robson-Kanu



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

It's without a doubt the biggest, global sporting event. Every four years it just seems to get bigger and bigger. Experiencing this as a spectacle, where we will see the world's greatest players competing on that global stage is going to be phenomenal.

Who do you think will win and why?

Based on previous World Cups, I think Brazil will do really well, they have superstars in their team. In previous years they've had a weaker defence, but defensively I think they are much stronger now. I also expect the likes of France to do well but at this stage I would say it's too early to call.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

As Britain, we've had some great tournaments over the last few years. For England, I think they'll

need a little bit of luck to push them towards the latter stages of the competition. For Wales, we have seen what can happen at these major tournaments and with it being our first World Cup in a long time, there is going to be a real buzz about it. I think they could surprise a lot of people if the key players stay fit.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

The likes of Mbappe are going to tear it up. Neymar, we all want to see what he can do on that global stage. From a home nation's perspective, we expect Harry Kane and Gareth Bale to do well. They can both change games for their sides and have massive impacts on the tournament.

John Hartson



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I'm looking forward to being part of a great team with ITV. I am very privileged to be working at a World Cup and to see Wales perform. It's been 64 years since we last qualified and I am hoping that Wales do well. It's exciting - it's the World Cup, it's the holy grail of football!

Who do you think will win and why?

Right now, I would pick Brazil. I think they are incredibly strong with the likes of Vinícius Júnior and Neymar.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I'd love them both to come out of the group together. I would gladly let England win the group and Wales to come second. If Wales have the players available, they can do well. Gareth Bale

still produces in the big games but we will need him to find his form ahead of the tournament. We surprised a lot of people in 2016! England are a fantastic team - they've been to a final and a semi-final in recent years. I expect them to win the group and Gareth Southgate will be setting his sights high, I am sure.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Vinicius Júnior for Brazil on the left-hand side. He was brilliant for Real Madrid last season in the Champions League. If Malik Tillman goes to the tournament for the USA, I would expect him to stand out. He's a fantastic talent. Jack Grealish could become a star in this tournament. He was winning games on his own for Aston Villa, so hopefully he can find that similar consistent form for England.

Lee Dixon



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

Putting aside all the controversy about the World Cup being held in Qatar, I am really looking forward to seeing the country. A completely different culture and as with all World Cup's it'll be unique.

Who do you think will win and why?

I think Brazil will win it. They have a really exciting team right now. Neymar, Vinicius Jr and Antony will be leading from the front with pace to burn.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I think both will get through the group stage. England's form has been patchy to say the least and the injuries are piling up. A semi final, hopefully a minimum but maybe a quarter final given the

injury list and the expectation of a nation to go one better might hinder them.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Saka for one. He has shown a great deal of maturity since missing that penalty in the Euro's. I believe this kid is going to have a big World Cup. Fati for Spain I've seen and he is a talent for sure. Phil Foden can win a game on his own - this might be his World Cup too!

Ally McCoist

What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

The opportunity to once again see some of the best players and teams in the World compete.

Who do you think will win and why?

Brazil. They are solid defensively, excellent goalkeepers and great flair players in forward areas. Possible outsiders, I would go for Portugal.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

England have actually got the ability to go all the way however they also have the potential to be eliminated at the knockout stages as they have question marks over them defensively. I also think Wales have the potential to qualify for the latter stages and get out of their group.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Vinicius Jr of Brazil. He has blistering pace mixed with goal scoring ability. Also, Jude Bellingham of England, a fearless young player going right to the top.

Clive Tyldesley



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

We are very fortunate in this country to have probably the highest level of football in our domestic league but it's not the World Cup! It's incredibly exciting for the fans. For fans of the lower league teams, this is their Champions League. There is nothing else quite like the World Cup.

Who do you think will win and why?

I particularly look at France and Brazil who appear to have two players for every position. If those countries are well managed and they have experienced men out there, they are the two teams that jump off the page. With the timing of the World Cup this year, I expect we will see the very best of the players and they will arrive fresher.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

They are very different prospects, due to very different resources. Wales are not just Gareth Bale and Aaron Ramsay. Wales will go into Qatar as outsiders and the game against the USA will be a crunch tie for them. Entering the last 16 would be a great achievement for Wales. For England, they have a reasonably young team which provides you with an air of excitement but less certainty. I think Gareth Southgate is the best man for the England job, who can deal with the jeopardy of managing the national team both on and off the pitch. If everything comes together for England, they could be one of those top six teams that go on to win but fans will need to be patient as Gareth's approach could be pragmatic.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

I expect Harry Kane to have an outstanding tournament for England. He will be up to speed - he's a goal scorer and a match winner.

Sam Matterface



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I'm looking forward to seeing if Messi can emulate the great Maradona and at the age of 35 inspire Argentina to one last hurrah and claim the only prize to have eluded him. I'm not sure he will, it usually ends in glorious failure with Argentina.

Who do you think will win and why?

Brazil, they have a wonderfully rounded squad and they are winning every game at the moment with room to spare. Great goalkeepers, superb defenders, great attackers - they have top midfielders but not necessarily ones in form, but I think they have the best squad and more depth than anyone else and in a short sharp group stage that could be important.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I hope they both get out of the group! The draw has not been as kind to England as it has been in the past, Senegal or the Netherlands are likely second round opponents and Senegal are African champions. Then if they get through that they will bump into France or Argentina in the quarter finals! If they get past the quarter finals they would have done very well, but I think that is where the journey will end, sadly.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

The big European stars will be fresh and ready for action thanks to the timing of the tournament, Mbappe, Neymar, the usual suspects. But look out for Julián Álvarez with Argentina, he has already impressed in the Premier League. I hope Martinelli goes but not sure he will, and young Spanish stars Pedri and Ansu Fati might cause a bit of a stir.

Seb Hutchinson



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

The tournament feels quite open. Whenever you can't pinpoint a clear favourite or a team that will run away with the tournament, it makes it incredibly exciting. I'm looking forward to seeing the players who are under the radar at the moment, who can break through and make a name for themselves.

Who do you think will win and why?

I would have to go for Brazil. In recent tournaments they've underachieved by their high standards, but this time, with the depth they have in attack and the experience they have in defence, they're in a great position to get over the line.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

England and Wales' group is more difficult than many think. The USA are one of the toughest teams they could face in the group stages. They have a lot of young players coming through, which are making them a really competitive team on the global stage. Iran proved in the last tournament, they are hard to break down and have some good players playing in Europe. I think they are both capable of getting out of the group but I don't think it'll be as straightforward as many would think.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

I go back to the Brazil team and Vinícius Júnior. He has a fire in his belly and has the experience of winning the biggest competitions already at his age. With the competition for places and expectation in Brazil, he knows he has to perform.

Seema Jaswal



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I'm most looking forward to the football, the fans and the fun that surrounds the World Cup! Fans coming together from around the world brings a special energy for a very special occasion and I'm really looking forward to being a part of it all with the ITV team.

Who do you think will win and why?

Firstly, I don't think you can ever write off Brazil at a World Cup! Add to that, the five-time world champions have not won the World Cup since 2002 and looking at their current crop of players, they have a great mix of experience and youth. In their group they've been drawn alongside Serbia, Switzerland and Cameroon in Group G. I'd expect them to get through with no problem. I also can't look past their South American neighbours

Argentina who are unbeaten in 35 games in all competitions and for me look like the front runners to qualify from their group. If this is Messi's last hurrah then he will surely want to make it a memorable one?

How do you think England and Wales will do?

If you average out the FIFA ranking for each group, England and Wales find themselves in the group that ranks the highest. Group B is not straightforward by any means. However, England for me have one of the best squads in the tournament and I believe this is England's strongest pool of players for a generation. If anything, Gareth Southgate will have a selection dilemma ahead of the tournament which is never a bad thing. I am confident they will qualify for the knock out stages. As for Wales they have experienced players like Gareth Bale, Joe Allen, and Ben Davies, and some young breakthrough stars such as Brennan Johnson and Neco Williams. Enough to qualify - potentially.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

I think there's a theme to this year's World Cup. It could well be the last time we get to see the likes of Messi, Ronaldo, Benzema and Lewandowski at a World Cup. If that is the case, they have even more of a reason to want to shine on the world stage...and I think they will!

Michelle Owen



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

Wales being at the World Cup! It's their first in 64 years and something they have been building towards for the last 10-15 years. I'm half-English as well, so of course looking forward to seeing how both home nations progress.

Who do you think will win and why?

I think it's an open tournament. You can't look past the favourites such as Germany, Brazil and France. There are a lot of European teams that I expect will perform well and push to the latter stages.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I think Wales will get out of the group - I would fancy Wales against the USA and Iran. I think people are writing Wales off too much when they

come up against England. I would like to see Wales in the last 16 or pushing for the quarterfinals.

England will have learned from the final in the Euros but they've looked far from convincing of late. If the creative players are set free it could be more promising though.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

Harry Kane, I would back for the Golden Boot. Everyone is expecting Gareth Bale to stand out for Wales. If you look at what he did in those one-off games against Austria and Ukraine in the playoffs - Wales just need Gareth Bale there! I want Messi and Ronaldo to have great World Cup's as they come towards the end of their careers.

Jon Champion



What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

I am extremely lucky that this is my ninth men's World Cup but I never envisaged doing a winter World Cup. It's going to be a historically unique sporting event, so to be a small part of that is such a thrill.

Who do you think will win and why?

I think it might be Brazil's time. They are 'the' country of football. With the current crop of players, they have at the moment and the stability they have heading into the tournament this could be their time.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

I think they are in a difficult group, with the USA believing they will also emerge out of the group.

I will be disappointed if England do not make the quarterfinals of the tournament. We are even conditioned now to see England reach the semi-finals and possibly beyond. For Wales to escape the group would be a good outcome.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

We have now turned a page from the older generation - we are not expecting Ronaldo and Messi to be the stand out stars, as brilliant as they still are. Is this the tournament where Mbappe strides forward and says, look at me, I am the stand out star? I think Mbappe has reached a period of maturity, and he is ready to show he is the leading light in world football.

Gabriel Clarke

What are you most looking forward to about the 2022 World Cup?

A major football tournament in November and December. Gone, hopefully, is the issue of overplayed stars and battle fatigue at the end of a long club season. The best players on the planet should be at their physical peak and with Qatar winter temperatures relatively pleasant, not too many matches should be suffocated into drabness by stifling heat. If the coaches want to play attacking, progressive football the conditions are there to do it.

Who do you think will win and why?

It's a tournament that feels very matched, with the usual suspects each offering reasons to back and to be concerned about. I'm going for England. Under the previously masterful Gareth Southgate, England have suddenly stalled. However, if the manager can fuse the frightening talent of Foden, Bellingham and Grealish into their solid tournament shape, taking that final step is within reach. Brazil carry a swagger and have a hugely talented pool of players but that was the case going into the last two World Cups. Argentina have been on a long unbeaten run and arrive with the added incentive or could it be a burden that is Lionel Messi's last chance to win a World Cup. Injuries to Pogba and Kante and inconsistency have undermined France, yet whatever team Didier Deschamps selects can still sparkle with star quality. Spain are on an upward curve under Luis Enrique but potentially lack the goalpower to trouble the very best. Not forgetting Belgium. Some believe it is one step too far for their aging Golden Generation but that very lack of spotlight this time might just be what they need. Outsiders include Denmark and Croatia

and if Ronaldo continues to find game-time hard to come by at Manchester United, his Portugal, the masters of the art of the 'dark horse' team, will only benefit.

How do you think England and Wales will do?

For all their poor form in 2022, England are a proven tournament force, with an experienced squad used to major game pressure and a manager who will have a clear tactical plan for every challenge. Their runs to the semi final in Russia 2018 and at Euro 2020 were kick started by narrow wins in their opening games and victory against Iran – in one group game in late afternoon heat – feels vital. Fail to beat the group outsiders and the shirt could start to weigh heavily. Their two Euros with Gareth Bale have given Wales every reason to believe they can reach the knockout phase at their first World Cup since 1958. For all his punctuated club career in recent years, Bale has masterfully managed to peak when his country needs him and his move to the MLS has been with only one target in mind. If coach Rob Page can provide the same defensive solidity and midfield running power that enabled Wales to qualify, Bale, still only 33, – (two younger than Messi, 4 years the junior of Ronaldo) can add more moments of game changing world class.

Who do you think will be the stand out stars of the tournament and why?

For sheer pulling power and nostalgia it will be hard to avoid Lionel Messi and Ronaldo as they play out their final World Cup tournaments. Tears one way or another are guaranteed for two of the greatest. And Legacy defining is what a World Cup does. Kylian Mbappe's superstar status was built on his brilliance as a teenager in France's run to the trophy in 2018. Still only 23, he is a better player, with the talent, personality and time to write a World Cup story to rival even Pele's. And in Qatar he has Real Madrid's Karim Benzema and Aurélien Tchouaméni. In support.