

BEST OF FIFA WORLD CUP

THE GREATEST WORLD CUP MATCHES

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AT A GLANCE

- Uruguay stunned host Brazil with a 2–1 victory to win the 1950 World Cup.
- West Germany handed Hungary its first loss in more than 4 years to win the 1954 World Cup.
- In front of a home crowd at Wembley Stadium, England won its first World Cup title in 1966 thanks to a hat trick from Geoff Hurst in the final.
- Italy defeated West Germany 4–3 after extra time in the 1970 semifinals. This game became known as “The Game of the Century.”
- In 1982, West Germany outlasted France in the first penalty shootout in World Cup history. With the win, West Germany advanced to the final.

ICONIC PERFORMANCES

The modern version of soccer was invented in England in 1863. When FIFA hosted its first World Cup in 1930, England declined to play in it. The English felt as though they were already the best team in the world. They would not play in their first World Cup until 1950.

England's arrival did not go as expected. It faced an upstart US team in the group stage. The United States shocked England

England forward Geoff Hurst (center) did more than score goals against Germany. He dropped deep to link the attack and allow the team's midfielders a chance to get forward.

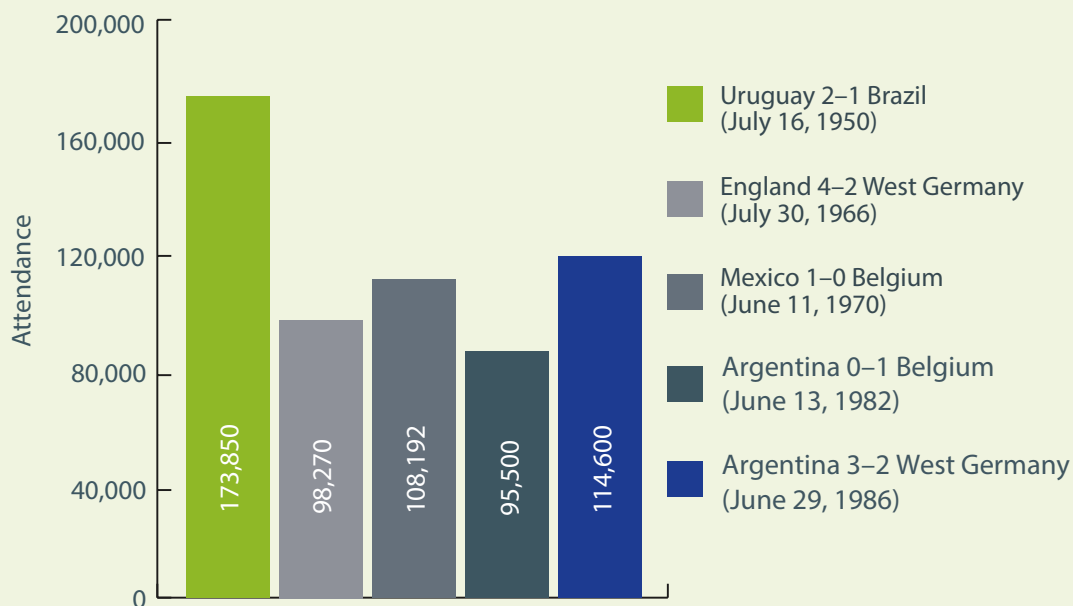


with a 1–0 win. England had played in four World Cups. But it hadn't made it past the quarterfinals.

Captain Bobby Moore led a strong defense for England when it hosted in 1966. England did not allow a goal until the semifinals. That strict defense served as a strong foundation. The team reached the final against West Germany.

More than 96,000 fans packed Wembley Stadium in London to watch the final. West Germany took the lead in the 13th minute. But the favored English team controlled most of the game. England led 2–1 in the 89th minute. It looked on its way to finally winning the World Cup. Then Germany defender Wolfgang Weber scored to tie the game in the final seconds.

MOST ATTENDED WORLD CUP GAMES



Source: Alex Mirron, "10 Highest Attendances in World Cup History (Ranked)," GiveMeSport, February 13, 2024. www.givemesport.com.

World Cup games are historic occasions. These five games are the most attended through the 2022 World Cup.

In extra time, English forward Geoff Hurst received a pass in the penalty area. He struck a hard shot off the crossbar that bounced straight down. People still disagree about whether the ball crossed the goal line. But the referees ruled it a goal. It was Hurst's second of the game.



England captain Bobby Moore lifts the World Cup trophy.

The West Germans pushed for a game-tying goal. But the tough English defense held onto the lead. In the final seconds, Hurst smashed home a goal. The shot secured a 4–2 win and England’s first World Cup title. Hurst became the first player to score a hat trick in a

Argentina started on the front foot. Messi directed the team's attacks with accurate passing. In the 23rd minute, he scored a penalty kick to give the team the lead. Messi then started a counterattack that led to a goal in the 36th minute. Argentina was so in control that France made two substitutions before half time.

Home Humiliation

Brazil hosted the World Cup in 2014. The hosts entered as favorites to win the title. In the semifinals, Brazil took on a Germany team making a record fourth semifinal appearance in a row. Even with star player Neymar Jr. injured and Thiago Silva suspended, fans expected a close game. But in a shocking display, Germany raced to a 5–0 lead by the 29th minute. The Germans won the game 7–1.

GLOSSARY

captain

a player who is the leader of a team

extra time

two 15-minute periods added to the end of tied soccer games

golden goal

a goal scored in extra time to win a game under a sudden-death format

hat trick

three goals scored by a single player in one game

penalty area

the 18-yard (16-m) box in front of the goal where a player is granted a penalty kick if they are fouled

shootout

a way of deciding the winner of a tied game where teams alternate penalty kicks

stoppage time

a number of minutes added to the end of a half to make up for stoppages during the game

volleyed

kicked the ball when it was in the air

SOURCE NOTES

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