

METHODOLOGY FOR ESTABLISHING THE FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFYING ROUNDS SCHEME

Applied for the first time in establishing the FWC 2026 One Table

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Because the qualifying competitions are conducted differently across the confederations, the qualification part of the competition is structured within a universal worldwide framework.

1. Main, final and initial phases

First, the so-called main phases are identified in each confederation. The main qualifying phases are the latest phases at which teams were permitted to begin their participation in the qualification process in a given confederation.

Next, the so-called initial phases are identified. These are the first phases with which the qualification process in a confederation begins, unless those phases are also the main phases.

The so-called final phases are then identified. These are the last phases at which the qualification process in a confederation ends, unless those final phases are also the main phases.

Where teams from a confederation participated in an intercontinental competition, the last phase of that competition is treated as the final phase for the confederation concerned, even if no team from that confederation participated in the last phase of the intercontinental competition.

The phases are identified in accordance with the KA rules.

2. Preliminary qualifying-phase scheme

The main, initial and final phases in each confederation are recognised as phases of the same type within the worldwide (universal) scheme and are placed at the same point on the timeline. The initial phases are designated as Q1. The positions of the main and final phases within the overall scheme are determined in the subsequent steps.

Confederation 1	Confederation 2	Confederation 3	Confederation 4	Confederation 5	Confederation 6
Q1		Q1	Q1		Q1
...		...	...		...
Main phase	Main phase	Main phase	Main phase	Main phase	Main phase
...	...	...		...	...
Final phase	Final phase	Final phase		Final phase	Final phase

If, however, none of the confederations has an initial phase, the main phases are designated as Q1.

3. Determining the number of qualifying phases in the confederations

It is determined whether any confederation has phases between Q1 and the main phase. If so, they are identified as successive phases following Q1.

It is then determined whether any confederation has phases between the main phase and the final phase. If so, they are identified as successive phases following the main phase.

Confederation 1	Confederation 2	Confederation 3	Confederation 4	Confederation 5	Confederation 6
Q1		Q1	Q1		Q1
?		?	?		?
Main phase	Main phase	Main phase	Main phase	Main phase	Main phase
?	?	?		?	?
Final phase	Final phase	Final phase		Final phase	Final phase

4. Determining the number of phases between the initial phase and the main phase for the worldwide scheme

The confederation with the greatest number of phases between the initial phase and the main phase is identified. The successive phases in that confederation, including the main phase, are designated as Q(n+1), where “n” is the number assigned to the phase preceding the phase concerned, bearing in mind that the initial phase is the first phase and has been designated as Q1 (Q2, Q3, etc.).

The main phase is thereby assigned a designation corresponding to its position in the sequence following the initial phase.

These designations establish the worldwide (universal) qualifying-phase scheme for the sequence extending from the initial phase to the main phase.

Confederation 1	Confederation 2	Confederation 3	Confederation 4	Confederation 5	Confederation 6
Q1		Q1	Q1		Q1
...		Q2	...		...
		Q3			
Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase
...	...	...		...	...
Final phase	Final phase	Final phase		Final phase	Final phase

5. Determining the number of phases between the main phase and the final phase for the worldwide scheme

The confederation with the greatest number of phases between the main phase and the final phase is identified. The successive phases in that confederation, including the final phase, are designated as $Q(n+1)$, where “n” is the number assigned to the phase preceding the phase concerned, bearing in mind that the main phase is designated in accordance with Section 4.

The final phase is thereby assigned a designation corresponding to its position in the sequence following the main phase.

These designations establish the worldwide (universal) qualifying-phase scheme for the sequence extending from the main phase to the final phase.

Confederation 1	Confederation 2	Confederation 3	Confederation 4	Confederation 5	Confederation 6
Q1		Q1	Q1		Q1
...		Q2	...		...
		Q3			
Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase
...	...	...		Q5	...
				Q6	
Q7 - Final phase	Q7 - Final phase	Q7 - Final phase		Q7 - Final phase	Q7 - Final phase

6. Final alignment of the phases in each confederation with the worldwide (universal) qualifying-phase scheme

The phases in a confederation forming the sequence from the initial phase to the main phase are placed within the worldwide (universal) scheme in accordance with their designations (Q1, Q2, Q3, etc.).

The phases in a confederation forming the sequence from the main phase to the final phase are placed within the worldwide (universal) scheme in reverse order relative to their position on the timeline, beginning with the final phase, and are designated as $Q(x-1)$, where “x” is the number of the phase following the phase concerned, unless the confederation has no final phase. The number of the final phase is determined in accordance with Section 5.

Confederation 1	Confederation 2	Confederation 3	Confederation 4	Confederation 5	Confederation 6
Q1		Q1	Q1		Q1
Q2		Q2	Q2		Q2
		Q3			
Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase	Q4 - Main phase
				Q5	
Q6	Q6	Q6		Q6	Q6
Q7 - Final phase	Q7 - Final phase	Q7 - Final phase		Q7 - Final phase	Q7 - Final phase