

Spain to Win World Cup 2026, But Model Says 87% Chance Someone Else Lifts the Trophy

New Betminer forecast based on 10000 tournament simulations shows the favourites win the trophy in fewer than one in eight scenarios, in expanded 48-team format

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, June 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Spain are the most likely winners of the 2026 World Cup according to a new forecast produced by Betminer, but the model rates the favourites at just 12.9% to lift the trophy. In 87% of the 10,000 tournament simulations Betminer ran, someone other than Spain wins the World Cup.

The forecast, available in full at worldcup.betminer.co.uk, uses a hybrid model that combines international football Elo ratings with a proprietary Betminer signal layer covering form, defensive solidity, and match-by-match shape. Every group game, every knockout tie, and every potential extra-time and penalty scenario was simulated across the full 48-team field. The model was run end-to-end 10,000 times, producing more than one million simulated match results.

Spain finished first across the simulations with a 12.9% win probability. France came second at 10.1%, with Argentina third at 8.4%. Morocco (5.0%), Japan (4.9%) and England (3.6%) round out the top six. Brazil, the five-time champions, came ninth on 1.8%.

David Shaw of Exquisite Media, who built the forecast, said the headline number was the story. "Spain at 12.9% is the highest in the field, and that figure feels low until you remember the tournament has just expanded to 48 teams. There are now 12 groups instead of eight, a Round of 32 ahead of the Round of 16, and 104 matches in the schedule. Every extra knockout round is another coin flip the favourite has to call right. By the time you compound those probabilities, even the model's pick only wins the trophy in about one tournament in eight."

Shaw added that the 87% figure should not be read as the model hedging. "That is the maths of a 48-team knockout being honest with you. The field is more open than the bookmaker prices suggest, and any narrative that treats this World Cup as a Spain coronation is not engaging with what the numbers actually say."

The consensus bracket from the simulations has Spain beating Argentina in the final, with France and Morocco losing the semi-finals. Argentina's path to the final makes them the model's most likely runners-up, setting up a potential last World Cup appearance for Lionel Messi against the team that has overtaken his nation in the world rankings.

The full set of predictions, including win probabilities for all 48 teams, the predicted bracket, and the group-by-group breakdown, is available at worldcup.betminer.co.uk.

About Betminer

Betminer is a football prediction and analytics service that combines international Elo ratings with a proprietary signal layer derived from years of in-season prediction work. The 2026 World Cup forecast at worldcup.betminer.co.uk is the first tournament-scale application of the Betminer Algorithm. The full methodology, including the hybrid model design and the calibration approach, is available on the project's methodology page.

About the model

The 2026 World Cup forecast was produced by running 10,000 complete tournament simulations through a hybrid Elo + Betminer signal model. Every match in every round, including extra time and penalties where applicable, was sampled from a probability distribution rather than picked deterministically. The results aggregated across all 10,000 simulations provide a probability for every team's path through the tournament.

The project was produced in partnership with [BetClever](#) and [Football Park](#).

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