

Algorithm Tips Japan as Tournament Dark Horse, Rating Samurai Blue Above Brazil and Germany

New Betminer forecast based on 10,000 simulations ranks Japan fifth in the field on 4.9% to win the World Cup, ahead of Brazil (1.8%)

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, June 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Japan are forecast to be the dark horses of the 2026 World Cup, with a new algorithmic model rating the Samurai Blue fifth in the entire 48-team field and ahead of traditional powers including Brazil, Germany and Portugal.

The Betminer forecast, available at worldcup.betminer.co.uk, rates Japan at 4.9% to win the tournament. They are ranked behind only Spain (12.9%), France (10.1%), Argentina (8.4%) and Morocco (5.0%). Japan are forecast to top Group F ahead of the Netherlands, with a realistic path to the quarter-finals.

The forecast was produced by Exquisite Media using a hybrid model that combines international Elo ratings with a proprietary Betminer signal layer. Across the 10,000 simulations, Japan reached the quarter-finals in just over a quarter of scenarios.

David Shaw, who built the system, said Japan represented the largest positive gap between the model and the bookmaker market of any team in the field. "Japan are priced at 81/1 in the outright market, which implies a 1.2% probability of winning the tournament. Our model has them at 4.9%. The market is pricing Japan at roughly a quarter of the probability our simulations support. The cleanest way to read that is that the market has not finished pricing in the change in shape Japan have undergone over the last cycle."

The model rates Japan's defensive structure as one of the strongest in the field outside the top three. Their forecast path through the tournament includes a Group F win ahead of the Netherlands, a Round of 32 fixture against a beatable opponent from one of the third-place qualifiers, and a Round of 16 fixture against a strong contender from the other half of the bracket.

Shaw said the dark-horse framing was well-worn but in this case the maths supported it. "Every tournament has a team the press calls a dark horse for two weeks and then forgets about. In this case the maths actually backs the description up. Japan are not winning the tournament in

the base case. They are reaching the quarter-finals in roughly a quarter of all simulations, which is well above where the market is pricing them."

The full forecast, including the predicted bracket, group-by-group breakdown, and win probabilities for all 48 teams, 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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