

Historic Events:

The World Cup— A pictorial history on stamps

by John F. Dunn

With the 2022 World Cup in Qatar running from November 20 through the championship match on December 18, we continue our series on the stamps that trace the history of this worldwide event from the first, 1930, competition through the 2018 tournament that was hosted by Russia. Along with dozens of other studies, the World Cup pictorial history from the very first tournament in 1930, can be accessed by StampNewsOnline subscribers for just \$15 a year.

2018, Russia

With the 2022 World Cup beginning on November 20 and running through the championship game on December 18 in Qatar, we present here stamps that trace the history of this worldwide event from the first, 1930, competition through the 2018 World Cup article is based on excerpts from Wikipedia.



Armenia, which did not qualify, issued this stamp picturing the World Cup and the Kremlin.



Burundi, which has never qualified for the World Cup, issued this souvenir sheet picturing Vladimir Putin and the 12 stadiums in which matches were held,

nation Russia was eliminated in the quarter-finals. In the final, France played Croatia on 15 July at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow. France won the match 4–2, claiming their second World Cup. England's Harry Kane won the much-coveted Golden Boot as he scored the most goals during the tournament with six.



Madagascar Harry Kane single, from a souvenir sheet



Russia sheetlets picturing at the right of each stamp the emblems of teams from Groups A through D



Russia sheetlets picturing at the right of each stamp the emblems of teams from Groups E through H

Like the tournament itself, the host selection is a multi-year process, which for the 2018 World Cup began in 2009, with nine nations announcing bids. The selection of Russia was met with considerable controversy. England was especially critical of the selection of Russia, in part based on allegations of bribery, but more important because of the level of racism in Russian football, human rights abuses by the Russian government, discrimination against LGBT people in wider Russian society, and Russia's involvement in Ukraine, particularly following the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

It is noteworthy that some nations that had issued stamps leading up to each tournament did not release stamps for the 2018 World Cup. Nevertheless, and despite some limited protests, unlike some Olympic Games every nation that qualified for the 2018 World Cup went on to participate and the tournament was considered to be a success by participants and spectators.



Panama World Cup team

and the fact that it was the smallest nation to ever qualify.

Among those participants, Panama and Iceland qualified for the first time. Panama was eliminated from the first round, or Group Stage, losing all three of its matches; Iceland also was eliminated in its Group Stage, although its fans in the stands attracted worldwide attention and support with its Skol Viking Clap



Iceland World Cup issue

The matches themselves went off with less controversy than the bidding process and site selection. There were few controversial, game-changing referee calls, in part because missed or incorrect calls could be changed via a Video Assistant Referee (VAR) process that was used for the first time in a World Cup.

There were some surprises. For the first time since 1938, Germany did not make it out of the Group Stage.



In advance of the World Cup, Germany issued this "For Sport" semi-postal souvenir sheet reminding everyone that they are four-time Champions, in 1954, 1974, 1990 and 2014.

The host country, Russia, made its way out of a weak group (Uruguay, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt), only to be eliminated in the knock-out stage.



Russia Group A stamp

Meanwhile, England's young squad made it all the way to the semi-finals, only to have hopes of its first World Cup championship since 1966 dashed in a 2-1 extra time loss to Croatia. As is usually the case, England did not issue any World Cup stamps.

The final came down to Croatia, seeking its first championship, and France its second, having won previously in 1998. On July 15, 2018, just one day after Bastille Day back home, the French national team delighted its countrymen and women with a 4-2 victory.



Russia Championship Final match issue



*Top, France Championship issue
Bottom, Croatia World Cup squad and Manager, Zlatko Dalić*

Among the other celebrants, the former French Colony, the Central African Republic—a non-participant itself—overprinted the World Cup stamp issue before the tournament with a message commemorating the French victory.

Among the participating nations, in addition to those already shown, stamps were issued by Belgium, Brazil, Spain and Uruguay, the latter recognizing its former Manager, Oscar Tabarez.



Among non-participants, Madagascar may have been the most prolific issuers, with numerous releases that provided collectors and sports fans with a comprehensive record of the 2018 World Cup. Here we see one of its many issues, a souvenir sheet showing teams from Brazil, Germany, France and England.

Meanwhile the bidding process for future host sites continues. The 2026 World Cup will be hosted by North America, with matches played in Canada, Mexico and the USA. This most likely rules out the selection for the 2030 World Cup that is being sought by a three-nation South American group of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, but it didn't stop Uruguay to throw its stamp hat into the ring with this promotional issue.



You can enjoy the complete World Cup History on Stamps article, from the inception in 1930 through this 2018 article—plus dozens of other U.S. and worldwide studies—by subscribing to StampNewsOnline.net monthly. Click here to subscribe for \$15 a year. <http://www.stampnewsnow.com/OrderForms/OrderForm-Publications.pdf>