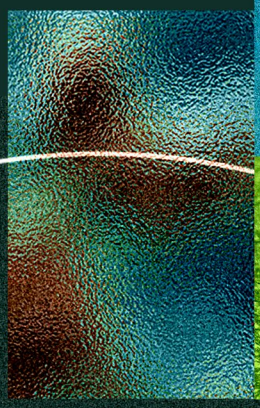
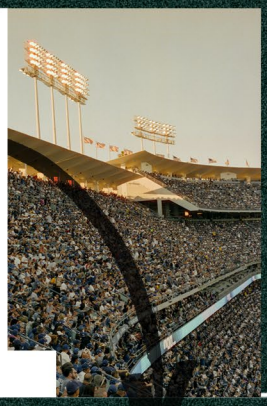
FOOTBALL FOR FUTURE

PITCHES IN PERIL





HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS THREATENING FOOTBALL - FROM WORLD CUP STADIUMS TO GRASSROOTS PITCHES

A LANDMARK CLIMATE REPORT AHEAD OF THE 2026 WORLD CUP
BY FOOTBALL FOR FUTURE AND COMMON GOAL.

COMMON GOAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup is set to become the most watched event in history - but it will unfold against the backdrop of an escalating climate crisis.

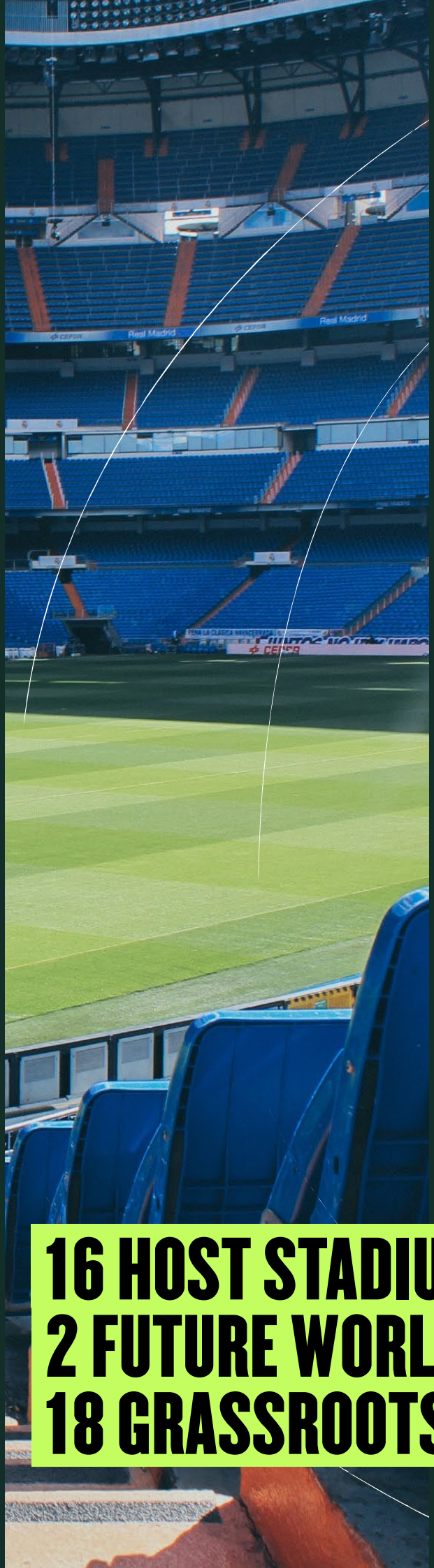
Host stadiums across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are already facing mounting threats: from dangerous heat in Miami and escalating drought in Mexico City to intensifying storms in Texas and Florida. Player health is increasingly at risk, and grassroots pitches — where every player takes their first steps — are even more vulnerable.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Football is already feeling the effects of the climate crisis — from extreme heat and flooding to declining player safety and disrupted grassroots access. Yet climate conversations too often remain within specialist circles. This report is designed to break that echo chamber, bringing climate risk into football's mainstream and kickstarting a global conversation about the game's future.

IT AIMS TO:

- Translate climate science into football's language — connecting data, lived experience, and football culture to engage players, fans, and decision-makers.
- Equip leaders across the game — from clubs to governing bodies — with location-specific risk insights and practical pathways for adaptation.
- Drive bold policy commitments — including climate-resilient infrastructure, climate adaptation funding, and credible routes to net zero.
- Catalyse a movement — using football's global platform to inspire structural change, not symbolic gestures, and to unite stakeholders from boardrooms to grassroots.



AUDIENCE:

This report is for anyone with a stake in the game's future — tournament organisers, clubs, federations, sponsors, players, fans, and policymakers.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY:

The analysis covers 16 stadiums hosting the 2026 Men's World Cup, two future venues for the 2030 and 2034 editions, and 18 grassroots pitches linked to World Cup legends. Using climate modelling from Jupiter Intelligence, it assesses three key hazards: extreme heat, drought, and extreme weather/flooding — revealing both the universal and unequal nature of climate risk in football. Alongside the climate risk data, first-of-its-kind fan polling across North America and unprecedented player mobilisation reveal the depth of concern in the football community, and a clear appetite for action.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT

Based on these findings, this report calls on the football community to take four decisive actions:

Governing bodies → Commit to net zero by 2040 and publish credible decarbonisation plans — matching the ambition of leading football institutions and aligning with IPCC climate targets.

Tournament organisers → Invest in grassroots resilience through adaptation funds and community-led climate action — ensuring the legacy of major tournaments protects the local grassroots game and the future of football.

Professional players → Your voice matters. As some of the game's most influential figures, partner with us to inspire and mobilise action to protect the sport you love.

Fans → You have the power. Start a sustainability working group at your club to push for climate action from the ground up.

16 HOST STADIUMS
2 FUTURE WORLD CUP VENUES
18 GRASSROOTS PITCHES

KEY FINDINGS

STADIUM CLIMATE RISKS

- 14 of 16 World Cup stadiums in 2025 already exceed safe-play thresholds for at least three major climate hazards — including extreme heat, unplayable rainfall, and flooding. Risks intensify at every venue by 2050.
- By 2050, nearly 90% of stadiums (14 of 16) are projected to face extreme heat conditions — unsafe without adaptation — and 11 stadiums will experience unplayable heat, where matches cannot be safely staged.
- Miami, Houston, Monterrey, and Dallas top the list of the most climate-vulnerable stadiums, each facing 100–160 days of unplayable heat by 2050, alongside multiple compounding risks including flash flooding, extreme winds, and water scarcity.

Host venues for the 2030 and 2034 World Cups are also at risk. By 2050, they are projected to see:

- More than double the number of extreme heat days
- Precipitation levels up to 157 mm/day — more than triple football's unplayable threshold
- Water demand exceeding local supply by four times.

GRASSROOTS CLIMATE RISKS

- Two-thirds of grassroots pitches where football legends like Messi, Salah, and Troost-Ekong grew up will face unsafe or unplayable heat conditions by 2050.
- Every grassroots pitch analysed already breaches at least three major climate risk thresholds, with conditions worsening by 2050 — from rising temperatures to deeper flood risks.
- Grassroots sites in the Global South are hit hardest.Facing on average 7x more unplayable heat days than Global North sites, often lacking the resources required for adaptation.

By 2050:

- William Troost-Ekong's pitch in Nigeria will face 142 days of unplayable heat — nearly five months.
- Tim Cahill's childhood pitch in Sydney is projected to experience flood depths of up to 7 metres during extreme weather events.
- Serge Gnabry's Safehub pitch in Abidjan will face 55 unplayable heat days, up from 24 in 2025.

FAN SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS

This report draws on the first wave of a 7,200-person fan survey across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, with 3,600 responses collected to date. Early results reveal overwhelming support for climate leadership in football:

- 96% of Mexican, 90% of Canadian, and 87% of U.S. fans believe the World Cup should be a global role model for sustainability in sport.
- Across all three countries, 86% say clubs and governing bodies should speak out on climate, even if they are still working on reducing their footprint.
- 91% would feel proud if their club took visible climate action.
- 92% support players speaking publicly about climate change.

PLAYER ADVOCACY

This report brings together a landmark group of professional male footballers - from World Cup winners to grassroots heroes - publicly voicing their concern about climate change. They join a growing global movement led by players like Sofie Pedersen and nearly 50 women footballers during the 2023 Women's World Cup. By speaking out, these players are helping open up space in the men's game, and we hope this encourages many more to speak out in the months and years to come.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR FOOTBALL

This study makes one thing clear: football is under threat. Extreme heat, flooding, drought, and wildfire are already reducing pitch playability at both elite and grassroots levels. Fewer safe training days. Greater health risks. Declining youth participation. These are not future risks — they are unfolding now.

But football has an opportunity to lead. The 2026 World Cup offers a once-in-a-generation stage to elevate climate truth, spotlight resilience, and catalyse action. Governing bodies, clubs, and sponsors must now integrate adaptation into operations and respond to the shifting expectations of fans and players.

This could be the last World Cup of its kind in this region. Without significant adaptation, it is unlikely that future tournaments in North America will follow the same model as 2026 — with traditional summer scheduling, current infrastructure standards, and minimal climate protocols. By the time the tournament returns to the U.S., Canada, or Mexico, climate risks may demand a very different approach to when, where, and how matches are played.

These are not distant hypotheticals. They are foreseeable developments based on current climate trajectories, and they underscore the need for urgent, coordinated planning. The climate crisis is redefining football's social contract. The question is no longer if the game will engage, but how boldly, creatively, and collectively it will rise to meet this moment.

INTRODUCTION

The climate crisis is the defining challenge of humanity, and football is already feeling the impact. From flooded pitches and extreme heat to disrupted tournaments and rising health risks for players and fans, the effects are no longer distant or abstract.

Science shows that if we fail to meet key climate targets before 2030, Earth's planetary systems risk crossing irreversible tipping points. Every fraction of a degree now shapes a different world — and this decade is our final window to choose the future we want to live in.

AS GOVERNMENTS SEEK RESPONSES TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY, FOOTBALL, WITH ITS UNPARALLELED GLOBAL REACH, MAY BE ONE OF THE FEW FORCES CAPABLE OF BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER BEHIND A GLOBAL TRANSITION TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE WORLD. IF THE WORLD'S GAME CAN NOT HELP LEAD THIS CHARGE, WHAT CAN?

The 2026 Men's World Cup — set to be the most-watched event in history — will unfold amid intensifying climate threats. Host stadiums in the United States., Canada, and Mexico face mounting risks, including extreme heat, increasing water scarcity, and intensifying storms and floods. Grassroots pitches , where the next generation begin their footballing journey, are even more exposed.

With billions watching, the World Cup is more than a football moment. It is an opportunity to start a serious conversation about the climate realities we face and the future we want to build. This is bigger than politics. It is about respecting the science, protecting our only home, and safeguarding the places we play.

CLIMATE CHANGE
WHAT IS THE STATE OF PLAY?

1966

When England last won the Men's World Cup in 1966, global average temperatures were about 1°C cooler than they are today[4].

1980

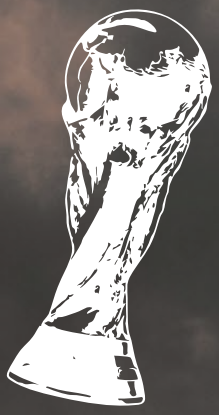
Since Mexico first hosted the Men's World Cup in 1970, global wildlife populations have declined by an average of more than 70%, with human activities as the leading cause[1].

1986

Global ocean heat content has increased by 200-300% since the late 1980s[3], when Canada made its Men's World Cup debut in Mexico 1986.

1992

Since a young Lionel Messi joined his local club Grandoli the Arctic has lost almost 3 million square kilometres of sea ice — an area roughly the size of Argentina[6].



1994

The number of climate-related disasters has risen almost 35% since the United States last hosted the Men's World Cup in 1994[2].

1998

Since Kylian Mbappé was born in 1998, carbon dioxide levels in Earth's atmosphere have increased by more than 15%. Today CO_2 levels are higher than at any point in the last 800,000 years[7]

2007

Global annual CO_2 emissions have increased by nearly 20% since Spanish wonderkid Lamine Yamal was born in 2007[9].

2014

The ten warmest years on record have all occurred since Mario Götze scored the winning goal for Germany in the 2014 Men's World Cup[5].

2025

1.5°C

2030

Without immediate CO_2 emission reductions, the world will likely exceed the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C target by the 2030 Men's World Cup - risking runaway global warming and irreversible climate breakdown[10].

2050

By the time Erling Haaland turns 50, climate change could displace 1.2 billion people from their homes — a wave of climate refugees losing homes, livelihoods, and safe places to play[8]

FOOTBALL AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Football is not separate from the climate crisis; it is shaped by it, impacted by it, and increasingly defined by it.

Climate change can often feel abstract — something distant or invisible. But when brought into focus, it reveals itself as deeply interconnected with every part of our lives, including the beautiful game.

CLIMATE'S IMPACT ON FOOTBALL

Extreme heat, floods, droughts, and wildfires are making it harder to host matches, maintain pitches, and protect players and fans globally.

In England, where this report is partly produced, 120,000 grassroots games are cancelled each year due to bad weather[11], and one in four professional clubs faces annual flooding risk by 2050[12]. In the past year alone, widely reported climate disasters have disrupted elite football — with flooding postponing La Liga fixtures in Valencia[13], and both Hurricane Milton and the California wildfires affecting MLS and NWSL matches on opposite coasts of the U.S[14 15]. Even major tournaments are being affected: both the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) and the World Cup have already seen rescheduled tournaments due to unsafe weather conditions for players and spectators[16 17], and during the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup in the U.S., matches were delayed or disrupted by record-breaking heat and severe thunderstorms, including lightning-related suspensions in New Jersey and California[18 19].

These are just a few visible examples, but disruption is everywhere. Wherever you are, you'll likely recognise your own version: cancelled games, shifting seasons, dangerous heat, or submerged pitches. Climate change is not a future threat — it is already here.

FOOTBALL'S IMPACT ON THE PLANET

Football does not just suffer the effects of climate change — it contributes to them. From stadium operations and fan travel, to kits, meals, and merchandising, every part of the football experience has an environmental impact. That footprint quickly becomes significant when it is replicated across billions of fans, thousands of clubs, and hundreds of tournaments.

As a global industry moving millions of people, products, and resources, one estimate has football producing around 66 million tonnes of CO_2 per year — roughly equivalent to the annual emissions of Austria[20].

FOOTBALL AS A CLIMATE SOLUTION

Football is starting to acknowledge its role in protecting the planet. Net zero strategies are being developed, environmental sustainability leads are being hired across the industry, and clubs are investing in greener operations. Education programmes are reaching staff, players, and fans — and critically, more voices in football are stepping up to advocate for change.

But the game's greatest strength lies in its global reach. With 5 billion fans[21], football can influence behaviours, shape narratives, and mobilise collective action like no other force on Earth.

The foundations are there — now football must build on them. Operational progress is just the start. To truly rise to this challenge, the game must harness its full power — not just to reduce its footprint, but to lead the movement for a more sustainable future.

If we are to successfully tackle climate change, we need the values and beliefs that football can give us:

- No hope is lost until the final whistle, even in extra time - just ask Sir Alex Ferguson.
- You cannot achieve great things without teamwork - everyone has an essential role to play.
- The impossible is always possible - football deals in miracles. And just like Liverpool in the 2005 Champions League final in Istanbul, we need to turn around a daunting deficit.

THE 2026 MEN'S WORLD CUP: FOOTBALL'S LARGEST AND MOST COMPLEX TOURNAMENT

WHY THIS REPORT, WHY NOW?

The 2026 Men's World Cup will be the largest and most expansive edition in the tournament's history. With 48 teams, 104 matches (up from 64 in 2022), and 16 stadiums across three host nations — the United States, Canada, and Mexico — it marks the first time a World Cup has ever been co-hosted by three countries.

While past editions like Japan/South Korea 2002 (20 stadiums[25]) and Spain 1982 (17 stadiums[26]) featured more venues, none have combined the cross-border scale, geographic diversity, and logistical complexity of the 2026 tournament. Matches will be played across four time zones and vastly different climate zones, from the arid heat of Monterrey and Guadalajara to the temperate coasts of Vancouver and Toronto.

With billions expected to tune in and millions crossing borders, 2026 Men's World Cup may not only be the most-watched edition to date, but also the most environmentally and operationally complex tournament in football history.

NEW CLIMATE REALITIES

The 2026 Men's World Cup will be played closer to climate tipping points than any tournament in history.

Since North America last hosted in 1994, climate change has become an undeniable global reality. All three host nations — the United States, Canada, and Mexico — have experienced some of the most severe climate extremes on record[27]. Wildfires have blanketed skies from British Columbia to central Mexico. Unprecedented heatwaves have scorched cities like Phoenix, Monterrey, and Toronto. Drought has deepened across California and central Mexico, while powerful storms, including Hurricane Milton in Florida and Tropical Storm Alberto in northeastern Mexico, have brought deadly flooding and widespread disruption.

These events are not isolated — they mirror a broader global trend of rising temperatures, intensifying droughts, stronger storms, and mounting risks to human health(28). Football is already feeling the strain: extreme heat and flooding are disrupting matches, threatening athlete safety, damaging infrastructure, and endangering fans.

With the world approaching the 1.5°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement, the 2026 tournament will unfold not just on the global stage, but on the frontline of the climate crisis.

The biggest tournament in football history.
The most urgent decade for climate action.

THIS REPORT

This report examines how the climate crisis is already affecting football and how risks will escalate in the years ahead. We analyse:

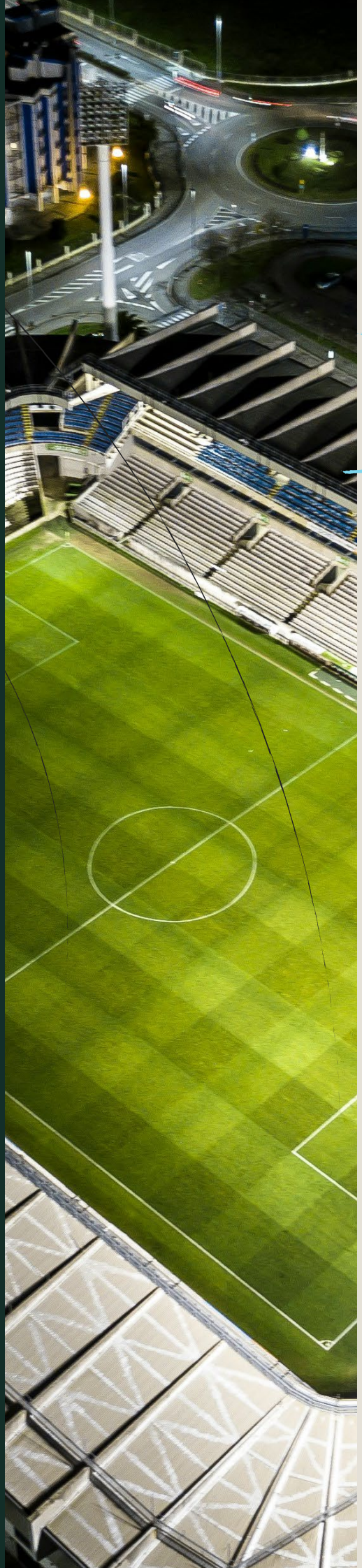
- All 16 host stadiums of the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup
- Two future World Cup venues: Santiago Bernabéu (Madrid, Spain) for 2030 and King Salman International Stadium (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) for 2034
- 18 grassroots pitches where football legends began their journeys

Each site is assessed using current data and 2050 projections for extreme heat, water stress, and acute weather events such as flooding, storms and high winds.

In addition to climate risk analysis, the report includes:

- Fan polling on climate attitudes
- Support from professional players through acknowledgment of the report's data, personal experiences, and shared concerns
- Practical sustainability recommendations for football stakeholders.

The goal is to make climate risks tangible and relevant for the world's largest cultural community: global football. With the science well established and solutions already available, the challenge now is turning awareness into action. Football has the platform and the responsibility to help accelerate that shift.



18 venues assessed.
From 2026 hosts to future World Cup venues.

CLIMATE RISK AT WORLD CUP STADIUMS

THIS SECTION ANALYSES THE CLIMATE RISKS FACING 18 MAJOR STADIUMS CONNECTED TO THE MEN'S WORLD CUP — INCLUDING ALL 16 OFFICIAL VENUES FOR THE 2026 TOURNAMENT, PLUS TWO VENUES FOR 2030 (SANTIAGO BERNABÉU, MADRID) AND 2034 (KING SALMAN INTERNATIONAL STADIUM, RIYADH).

These stadiums span vastly different geographies and climate zones — from the arid heat of Monterrey to the temperate coasts of Vancouver. But one thing unites them: growing exposure to extreme weather.

Using present-day data and 2050 projections, this analysis highlights where and how climate risks — including extreme heat, water stress, flooding, and storms — could disrupt football at the highest level. These venues are not just stages for the biggest games; they are increasingly on the frontline of climate disruption.

To protect the future of the sport, we must understand how climate risks are threatening football's ability to host and play at every level.

KEY FINDINGS

STADIUM CLIMATE RISKS FROM 2025 TO 2050

EXTREME HEAT, UNSAFE PLAYING CONDITIONS

By 2050, 14 of the 16 2026 Men's World Cup stadiums are projected to experience days exceeding 32°C WBGT in a high-emissions, SSP5-8.5 scenario—the threshold at which cooling breaks become mandatory during matches.

Additionally, 11 of the 16 stadiums are projected to experience days with WBGT levels exceeding 35°C — a threshold identified by climate scientists Steven Sherwood and Matthew Huber in 2010 as the limit of human adaptability to extreme heat[29]. At this threshold, the body's natural cooling systems begin to fail[30], increasing the risk of heatstroke, dehydration, and medical emergencies — not only for players on the field, but also for spectators in the stands. For context, the 2022 Men's World Cup in Qatar was rescheduled to November–December to avoid June–July temperatures averaging 34–35°C[31], yet many 2026 host cities are already recording WBGT levels at or above this danger threshold, even decades before the worst-case scenarios are realised.

WATER DEMAND REACHING CRITICAL TIPPING POINTS

By 2050, nearly one-third of 2026 Men's World Cup stadiums are projected to face water demand equal to or exceeding supply, raising serious concerns for pitch maintenance, cooling systems, and overall playability.

EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS ARE EXPECTED TO CAUSE FLOODING AROUND STADIUMS AND WIND DAMAGE

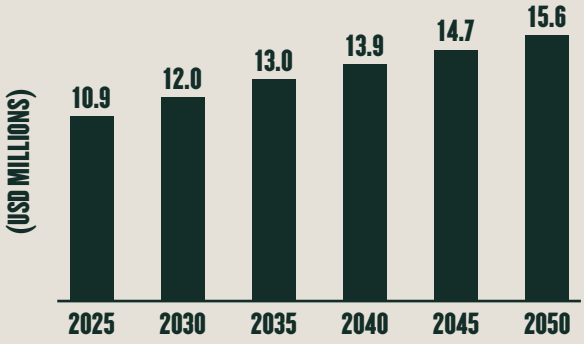
By mid-century, six of the 16 stadiums are projected to face flood depths of 1 to 2.2 metres during 1-in-100-year storm events — posing serious threats to infrastructure, transport routes, and matchday safety. This is not a future risk; it is already happening. In October 2024, extreme rainfall in Paiporta, Spain, led to water depths nearing 2 metres, resulting in 62 deaths[32]. That same month, Hurricane Milton made landfall in Florida, generating storm surges of up to 10 feet (3 metres) in northern Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor, and areas just inland received more than 13 inches (330mm) of rain, causing widespread flooding, power outages affecting 3.4 million residents, structural damage along the coast, and dozens of deaths[33].

RISING ECONOMIC IMPACTS:

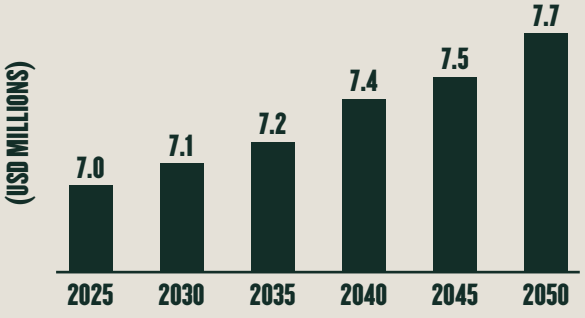
Additionally, based on Jupiter Intelligence's ClimateScore Global data:

- Flood-related damages across tournament stadiums are projected to increase from $11 million/year in 2025 to over $15.5 million by 2050 (see Graph 1)
- Wind-related damages are forecast to rise from just over $7 million to $7.7 million annually in the same timeframe (see Graph 2).

(GRAPH 1)
PROJECTED INCREASE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL FLOOD-RELATED LOSSES TO 2026 MEN'S WORLD CUP STADIUMS (2025–2050) UNDER THE SSP5-8.5 SCENARIO



(GRAPH 2)
PROJECTED INCREASE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL WIND-RELATED LOSSES TO 2026 MEN'S WORLD CUP STADIUMS (2025–2050) UNDER THE SSP5-8.5 SCENARIO



OVERVIEW

STADIUMS: CHRONIC CLIMATE RISK HAZARDS

The 2026 Men's World Cup stadiums are projected to face increasing chronic climate risks, including more frequent extreme heat (above 32°C and 35°C WBGT) and worsening drought between 2025 and 2050.

	ON THE PITCH						OFF THE PITCH		
	HEAT >32°C (WBGT)			HEAT >35°C (WBGT)			DROUGHT (TOTAL WATER STRESS)		
	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE
BC PLACE VANCOUVER	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0	0	0
TORONTO STADIUM	4 DAYS	14 DAYS	+10 DAYS	0 DAYS	3 DAYS	+3 DAYS	0.8	1.0	+0.2
ESTADIO AZTECAVMEXICO CITY	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	10.0	10.0	0
ESTADIO GUADALAJARA	1 DAY	9 DAYS	+8 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0.5	0.7	+0.2
ESTADIO MONTERREY	68 DAYS	108 DAYS	+40 DAYS	9 DAYS	29 DAYS	+20 DAYS	0.4	0.4	0
ATLANTA STADIUM	53 DAYS	84 DAYS	+31 DAYS	9 DAYS	28 DAYS	+19 DAYS	0.3	0.4	+0.1
BOSTON STADIUM	12 DAYS	26 DAYS	+14 DAYS	2 DAYS	7 DAYS	+5 DAYS	0.3	0.3	0
DALLAS STADIUM	98 DAYS	123 DAYS	+25 DAYS	33 DAYS	64 DAYS	+31 DAYS	1.0	1.5	+0.5
HOUSTON STADIUM	128 DAYS	152 DAYS	+24 DAYS	51 DAYS	92 DAYS	+41 DAYS	0.4	0.5	+0.1
KANSAS CITY STADIUM	50 DAYS	72 DAYS	+22 DAYS	17 DAYS	33 DAYS	+16 DAYS	0	0	0
LOS ANGELES STADIUM	6 DAYS	14 DAYS	+8 DAYS	1 DAY	2 DAYS	+1 DAY	3.7	5.4	+1.7
MIAMI STADIUM	129 DAYS	164 DAYS	+35 DAYS	8 DAYS	54 DAYS	+46 DAYS	0.9	0.8	+0.1
NEW YORK NEW JERSEY STADIUM	19 DAYS	38 DAYS	+19 DAYS	3 DAYS	11 DAYS	+8 DAYS	10.0	10.0	0
PHILADELPHIA STADIUM	29 DAYS	51 DAYS	+22 DAYS	7 DAYS	18 DAYS	+11 DAYS	0.4	0.5	+0.1
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA STADIUM	1 DAY	2 DAYS	+1 DAY	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0.2	0.3	+0.1
SEATTLE STADIUM	0 DAYS	1 DAY	+1 DAY	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0.2	0.2	0

Key: Playable | Caution (adaptation required) | Unplayable (once threshold is breached)

OVERVIEW

STADIUMS:

ACUTE CLIMATE RISK HAZARDS / EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

The 16 host stadiums also face growing threats from extreme weather events (100-year events), as projections between 2025 and 2050 point to escalating risks of extreme rainfall, strong winds, and flooding.

	PRECIPITATION (ON & OFF THE PITCH)			EXTREME WINDS (STORMS) (ON & OFF THE PITCH)			FLOOD DEPTH (ON THE PITCH)			FLOOD DEPTH (ON THE PITCH)		
	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE
BC PLACE VANCOUVER	168 MM/DAY	184 MM/DAY	+16 MM/DAY	115 KM/H	116 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0 M	0 M - 0.1 M	+0.1 M
TORONTO STADIUM	130 MM/DAY	140 MM/DAY	+10 MM/DAY	116 KM/H	118 KM/H	+2 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0 M	0 M - 0 M	0 M
ESTADIO AZTECAVMEXICO CITY	315 MM/DAY	353 MM/DAY	+38 MM/DAY	155 KM/H	158 KM/H	+3 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0.2 M	0 M - 0.2 M	0 M
ESTADIO GUADALAJARA	174 MM/DAY	196 MM/DAY	+22 MM/DAY	156 KM/H	157 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0.1 M	0 M - 0.1 M	0 M
ESTADIO MONTERREY	341 MM/DAY	361 MM/DAY	+20 MM/DAY	133 KM/H	133 KM/H	0 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0.1 M	0 M - 0.1 M	0 M
ATLANTA STADIUM	242 MM/DAY	262 MM/DAY	+20 MM/DAY	120 KM/H	122 KM/H	+2 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 1.9 M	0 M - 1.9 M	0 M
BOSTON STADIUM	230 MM/DAY	250 MM/DAY	+17 MM/DAY	136 KM/H	138 KM/H	+2 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0.3 M	0 M - 0.3 M	0 M
DALLAS STADIUM	270 MM/DAY	294 MM/DAY	+24 MM/DAY	124 KM/H	125 KM/H	+2 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 1.3 M	0 M - 1.3 M	0 M
HOUSTON STADIUM	589 MM/DAY	633 MM/DAY	+44 MM/DAY	144 KM/H	146 KM/H	+2 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0.2 M	0 M - 0.2 M	0 M
KANSAS CITY STADIUM	239 MM/DAY	259 MM/DAY	+20 MM/DAY	109 KM/H	107 KM/H	-2 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0.3 M	0 M - 0.3 M	0 M
LOS ANGELES STADIUM	220 MM/DAY	238 MM/DAY	+18 MM/DAY	98 KM/H	99 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0.6 M	0 M - 0.7 M	+0.1 M
MIAMI STADIUM	526 MM/DAY	571 MM/DAY	+45 MM/DAY	205 KM/H	206 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0.1 M	0.1 M	0 M	0.1 M - 2.2 M	0.1 M - 2.2 M	0 M
NEW YORK NEW JERSEY STADIUM	236 MM/DAY	262 MM/DAY	+26 MM/DAY	123 KM/H	128 KM/H	+5 KM/H	0.9 M	1.2 M	+0.3 M	0 M - 1.3 M	0 M - 1.7 M	+0.4 M
PHILADELPHIA STADIUM	229 MM/DAY	250 MM/DAY	+21 MM/DAY	131 KM/H	134 KM/H	+3 KM/H	1.5 M	1.6 M	+0.1 M	0.1 M - 2.0 M	0.1 M - 2.0 M	0 M
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA STADIUM	158 MM/DAY	177 MM/DAY	+19 MM/DAY	116 KM/H	117 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 0.7 M	0 M - 0.7 M	0 M
SEATTLE STADIUM	133 MM/DAY	144 MM/DAY	+11 MM/DAY	116 KM/H	119 KM/H	+3 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M - 1.1 M	0 M - 1.1 M	0 M

Key: Playable | **Caution** (adaptation required) | **Unplayable** (once threshold is breached)

Assessing 18 childhood pitches that shaped the game - from Pelé to Mbappé

CLIMATE RISK AT THE GRASSROOTS

This section highlights the climate risks facing football at the grassroots level. With over 240 million registered players globally — and countless more playing informally — the realities vary widely across geographies. In this report, we focus on 18 grassroots pitches around the world: the childhood playing grounds of icons like Pelé and Tim Cahill, as well as the early fields of the three head coaches leading the 2026 host nations. These are more than just the places where football's most influential figures began their journeys — they are the foundation of the sport itself.

Grassroots pitches are the lifeblood of football's future. They are where skills are shaped, communities are built, and millions find joy, purpose, and belonging. They support not only talent development but also physical health, mental wellbeing, and social cohesion, especially in underserved areas.

But these vital spaces are increasingly under threat. From rising temperatures and severe drought to floods and extreme storms, climate change is making many grassroots pitches unsafe, unplayable, or inaccessible, often with limited resources to adapt.

This section uses present-day data and 2050 projections to assess climate risks across 18 grassroots sites linked to legendary players and coaches. The 'Vulnerability Index' of that stadium's country is also given, which is a ranking by the The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) of 180 countries based on their level of climate vulnerability, and their readiness to successfully implement adaptation solutions[64]. Context for each location is given as a 'Climate Change Snapshot' using information from the World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal[65].

The findings underscore an urgent truth: to protect the future of football, we must protect the places where it begins.

OVERVIEW

GRASSROOTS:

CHRONIC CLIMATE RISK HAZARDS

The 2026 Men's World Cup stadiums are projected to face increasing chronic climate risks, including more frequent extreme heat (above 32°C and 35°C WBGT) and worsening drought between 2025 and 2050.

	CHRONIC CLIMATE RISK HAZARDS - ON THE PITCH									CHRONIC CLIMATE RISK HAZARD OFF THE PITCH (MAIN IMPACT AT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY LEVEL)		
	MAX ANNUAL WIND SPEED			HEAT > 32°C (WBGT)			HEAT > 35°C (WBGT)			DROUGHT (TOTAL WATER STRESS)		
	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE
CLUB AMÉRICA, JAVIER AGUIRRE	64 KM/H	64 KM/H	0 KM/H	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	10.79	10.7	-0.09
CSKA MOSCOW, IGOR AKINFEEV	78 KM/H	78 KM/H	0 KM/H	1 DAY	3 DAYS	+2 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	1.59	1.51	-0.08
RIDGEWAY ROVERS, DAVID BECKHAM	101 KM/H	100 KM/H	-1 KM/H	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0.64	0.82	+0.18
BALMAIN POLICE TIGERS, MARRICKVILLE RED DEVIL, TIM CAHILL	86 KM/H	87KM/H	+1 KM/H	3 DAYS	6 DAYS	+3 DAYS	0 DAYS	1 DAY	+1 DAY	0.92	1.24	+0.32
SAFEHUB ABIDJAN, SERGE GNABRY	44 KM/H	44 KM/H	0 KM/H	171 DAYS	247 DAYS	+76 DAYS	24 DAYS	55 DAYS	+31 DAYS	0	0.04	+0.04
FC SEOUL, SON HEUNG-MIN	89 KM/H	89 KM/H	0 KM/H	36 DAYS	57 DAYS	+21 DAYS	8 DAYS	21 DAYS	+13 DAYS	0.59	0.58	-0.01
SETTSU FC, KEISUKE HONDA	91 KM/H	91 KM/H	0 KM/H	53 DAYS	72 DAYS	+19 DAYS	15 DAYS	31 DAYS	+16 DAYS	0.18	0.18	0
FT GERN, PHILIPP LAHM	91 KM/H	92 KM/H	+1 KM/H	1 DAY	3 DAYS	+2 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0.09	0.10	+0.01
RACINE SOCCER CLUB, JESSE MARSCH	87 KM/H	86 KM/H	-1 KM/H	13 DAYS	29 DAYS	+16 DAYS	3 DAYS	9 DAYS	+6 DAYS	0.38	0.44	+0.06
LA FRESNEDA C. F., JUAN MATA	94 KM/H	93 KM/H	-1 KM/H	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0.15	0.22	+0.07
AS BONDY, KYLIAN MBAPPÉ	95 KM/H	94 KM/H	-1 KM/H	1 DAYS	4 DAYS	+3 DAYS	0 DAYS	1 DAY	+1 DAY	0.15	0.25	+0.10
GRANDOLI FC, LIONEL MESSI	75 KM/H	75 KM/H	0KM/H	27 DAYS	43 DAYS	+16 DAYS	5 DAYS	11 DAYS	+6 DAYS	0	0	0
BAURU ATLÉTICO CLUBE, PELÉ	67 KM/H	69 KM/H	+2 KM/H	57 DAYS	114 DAYS	+57 DAYS	4 DAYS	21 DAYS	+17 DAYS	0	0	0
UNIÓN Y CULTURA MURPHY, MAURICIO POCHETTINO	77 KM/H	77 KM/H	0KM/H	21 DAYS	34 DAYS	+13 DAYS	4 DAYS	8 DAYS	+4 DAYS	0	0	0
CF ANDORINHA, CRISTIANO RONALDO	107 KM/H	107KM/H	0 KM/H	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	0 DAYS	+0 DAYS	0.35	0.5	+0.15
ITTIHAD BASYOUN, MOHAMED SALAH	71 KM/H	71 KM/H	0 KM/H	70 DAYS	104 DAYS	+34 DAYS	10 DAYS	37 DAYS	+27 DAYS	1.29	1.74	+0.45
MAVERLEY HUGHENDEN FOOTBALL CLUB, RAHEEM STERLING	63 KM/H	62 KM/H	-1 KM/H	110 DAYS	194 DAYS	+84 DAYS	0 DAYS	10 DAYS	+10 DAYS	0.04	0.05	+0.01
ETINAN, WILLIAM TROOST-EKONG	36 KM/H	37 KM/H	+1 KM/H	295 DAYS	338 DAYS	+43 DAYS	62 DAYS	142 DAYS	+80 DAYS	0.01	0.01	0

Key: Playable | Caution (adaptation required) | Unplayable (once threshold is breached)

OVERVIEW

GRASSROOTS:

ACUTE CLIMATE RISK HAZARDS / EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

The 16 host stadiums also face growing threats from extreme weather events (100-year events), as projections between 2025 and 2050 point to escalating risks of extreme rainfall, strong winds, and flooding.

	CHRONIC CLIMATE RISK HAZARDS - ON THE PITCH									CHRONIC CLIMATE RISK HAZARD OFF THE PITCH (MAIN IMPACT AT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY LEVEL)		
	MAX ANNUAL WIND SPEED			HEAT > 32°C (WBGT)			HEAT > 35°C (WBGT)			DROUGHT (TOTAL WATER STRESS)		
	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE	2025	2050	CHANGE
CLUB AMÉRICA, JAVIER AGUIRRE	320 MM/DAY	359 MM/DAY	+39 MM/DAY	157 KM/H	160 KM/H	+3 KM/H	0.2 M	0.2 M	0 M	0 M – 0.2 M	0 M – 0.3 M	+0.1 M
CSKA MOSCOW, IGOR AKINFEEV	128 MM/DAY	131 MM/DAY	+3 MM/DAY	139 KM/H	142 KM/H	+3 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M
RIDGEWAY ROVERS, DAVID BECKHAM	104 MM/DAY	114 MM/DAY	+10 MM/DAY	115 KM/H	116 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M
BALMAIN POLICE TIGERS, MARRICKVILLE RED DEVIL, TIM CAHILL	369 MM/DAY	410 MM/DAY	+41 MM/DAY	128 KM/H	128 KM/H	0 KM/H	6.4 M	7.0 M	+0.6 M	0 M – 6.8 M	0 M – 7.5 M	+0.7 M
SAFEHUB ABIDJAN, SERGE GNABRY	412 MM/DAY	452 MM/DAY	+40 MM/DAY	151 KM/H	151 KM/H	0 KM/H	0.03 M	0.03 M	0M	0 M – 3.5 M	0 M – 3.5 M	0 M
FC SEOUL, SON HEUNG-MIN	629 MM/DAY	695 MM/DAY	+66 MM/DAY	167 KM/H	170 KM/H	+3 KM/H	1.1 M	1.2 M	+0.1 M	0 M – 2.9 M	0 M – 2.9 M	0 M
SETTSU FC, KEISUKE HONDA	286 MM/DAY	333 MM/DAY	+47 MM/DAY	175 KM/H	176 KM/H	+1 KM/H	3.1 M	3.1 M	0 M	2.9 M – 3.3 M	2.9 M – 3.3 M	0 M
FT GERN, PHILIPP LAHM	144 MM/DAY	148 MM/DAY	+4 MM/DAY	116 KM/H	115 KM/H	-1 KM/H	0.01 M	0.01 M	0M	0 M – 0.3 M	0 M – 0.3 M	0 M
RACINE SOCCER CLUB, JESSE MARSCH	177 MM/DAY	189 MM/DAY	+12 MM/DAY	122 KM/H	123 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0.03 M	0.04 M	+0.01 M	0 M – 0.5 M	0 M – 0.5 M	0 M
LA FRESNEDA C. F., JUAN MATA	163 MM/DAY	172 MM/DAY	+9 MM/DAY	132 KM/H	132 KM/H	0 KM/H	0 M	0 M	+0.0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M
AS BONDY, KYLIAN MBAPPÉ	121 MM/DAY	130 MM/DAY	+9 MM/DAY	107 KM/H	106 KM/H	-1 KM/H	0.02 M	0.02 M	0 M	0 M-0.6 M	0 M-0.6 M	0 M
GRANDOLI FC, LIONEL MESSI	485 MM/DAY	550 MM/DAY	+65 MM/DAY	167 KM/H	169 KM/H	+2 KM/H	0 M	0 M	0 M	0 M-0.1 M	0 M-0.1 M	0 M
BAURU ATLÉTICO CLUBE, PELÉ	225 MM/DAY	256 MM/DAY	+31 MM/DAY	178 KM/H	183 KM/H	+5 KM/H	0.01 M	0.01 M	0 M	0 M-0 M	0 M-0 M	0 M
UNIÓN Y CULTURA MURPHY, MAURICIO POCHETTINO	427 MM/DAY	479 MM/DAY	+52 MM/DAY	175 KM/H	176 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0.01 M	0.01 M	0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M
CF ANDORINHA, CRISTIANO RONALDO	228 MM/DAY	232 MM/DAY	+4 MM/DAY	145 KM/H	145 KM/H	0 KM/H	0.08M	0.08M	0 M	0 M-0.1 M	0 M-0.1 M	0 M
ITTIHAD BASYOUN, MOHAMED SALAH	111 MM/DAY	113 MM/DAY	+2 MM/DAY	141 KM/H	142 KM/H	+1 KM/H	0.21 M	0.21 M	0 M	0 M – 0.2 M	0 M – 0.2 M	0 M
MAVERLEY HUGHENDEN FOOTBALL CLUB, RAHEEM STERLING	437 MM/DAY	476 MM/DAY	+39 MM/DAY	177 KM/H	179 KM/H	+2 KM/H	0.1 M	0.1 M	0 M	0 M – 0.1 M	0 M – 0.1 M	0 M
ETINAN, WILLIAM TROOST-EKONG	410 MM/DAY	514 MM/DAY	+104 MM/DAY	147 KM/H	151 KM/H	+4 KM/H	0.01 M	0.02M	+0.01 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M – 0 M	0 M

Key: **Playable** **Caution** (adaptation required) **Unplayable** (once threshold is breached)

PLAYERS SPEAKING UP FOR THE PLANET

Notes of support from some of the games most iconic voices

In a world grappling with climate breakdown, footballers have the power to reach audiences that scientists and policymakers can't. One climate-literate, articulate player can inspire more action than a generation of climate academics. Yet so far, few in the men's game have stepped up.

This report sets out to change that.

We started by speaking with a few friends in football who care about climate change and wanted to use their voice.

It's not about being perfect. It's about being a footballer who's proud to share that they care about our planet.

These are just some of the early advocates in the men's game (see here for some leadership in women's football). We know many others feel the same — and we hope this sparks a bigger conversation, one that helps make it easier for more players to feel confident to speak out.

91% OUR SURVEYS FOUND THAT 91% OF FANS SUPPORT PLAYERS SPEAKING PUBLICLY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

"As someone with roots in both Germany and Ivory Coast, I feel a deep responsibility to create change in both places. But the climate crisis is hitting communities in Abdijan hard - where the Safe-Hub is meant to be a safe space for young people, providing joy and opportunities. The report makes it clear that rising temperatures and extreme weather pose a real threat to kids being able to play safely in the future. That's why we need to come together to protect Safe-Hub spaces and ensure every child can grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

Serge Gnabry
Bayern Munich & Germany International

> As players, we have a responsibility to lead, not just on the field, but in how we protect the world we play in. Climate change affects every community, especially those already facing injustice. I'm committed to using my voice and platform to push for a healthier planet and a more sustainable future for the next generation.

Mark McKenzie
Toulouse FC & United States International

> Using the power of football to advocate for greener and more sustainable practices is something I have always been passionate about, and I am very proud to be able to support this campaign. I firmly believe this initiative will help us move closer towards a more sustainable future in the world of football.

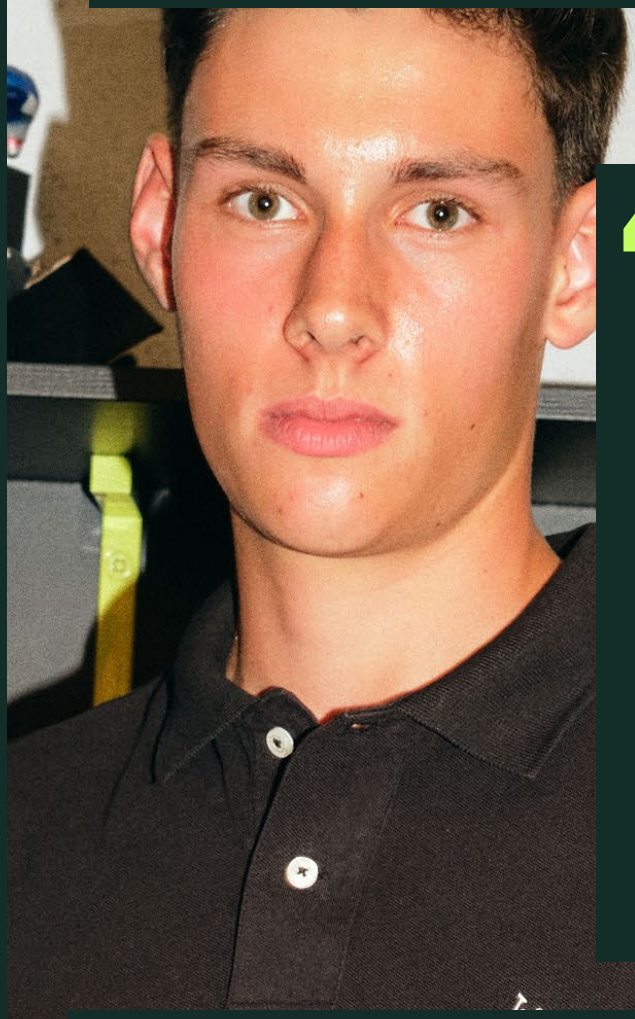
Duncan Watmore
Millwall FC & Former England U21 International

> We all have influence—and with that comes responsibility. What we do today matters. What we do everyday matters. The moment we realise we can make a difference for our planet, we'll stop waiting for others to act. As footballers, we're used to thinking about legacy—but it's not just about trophies. What we do off the pitch matters too. Every choice we make today affects the world we leave.

John Bostock
Solihull Moors

> “If we don’t collectively take care of the planet, then we will be putting our futures and our children’s futures at risk. I am plant based because I believe it’s my obligation to play my part protecting the planet and everything in it. I can never be perfect, I’m not striving for it either, but if everyone can do their part and are more conscious of their choices and the impact they have, it would make the world a better place for all.

Joshua Parker
Antigua and Barbuda International

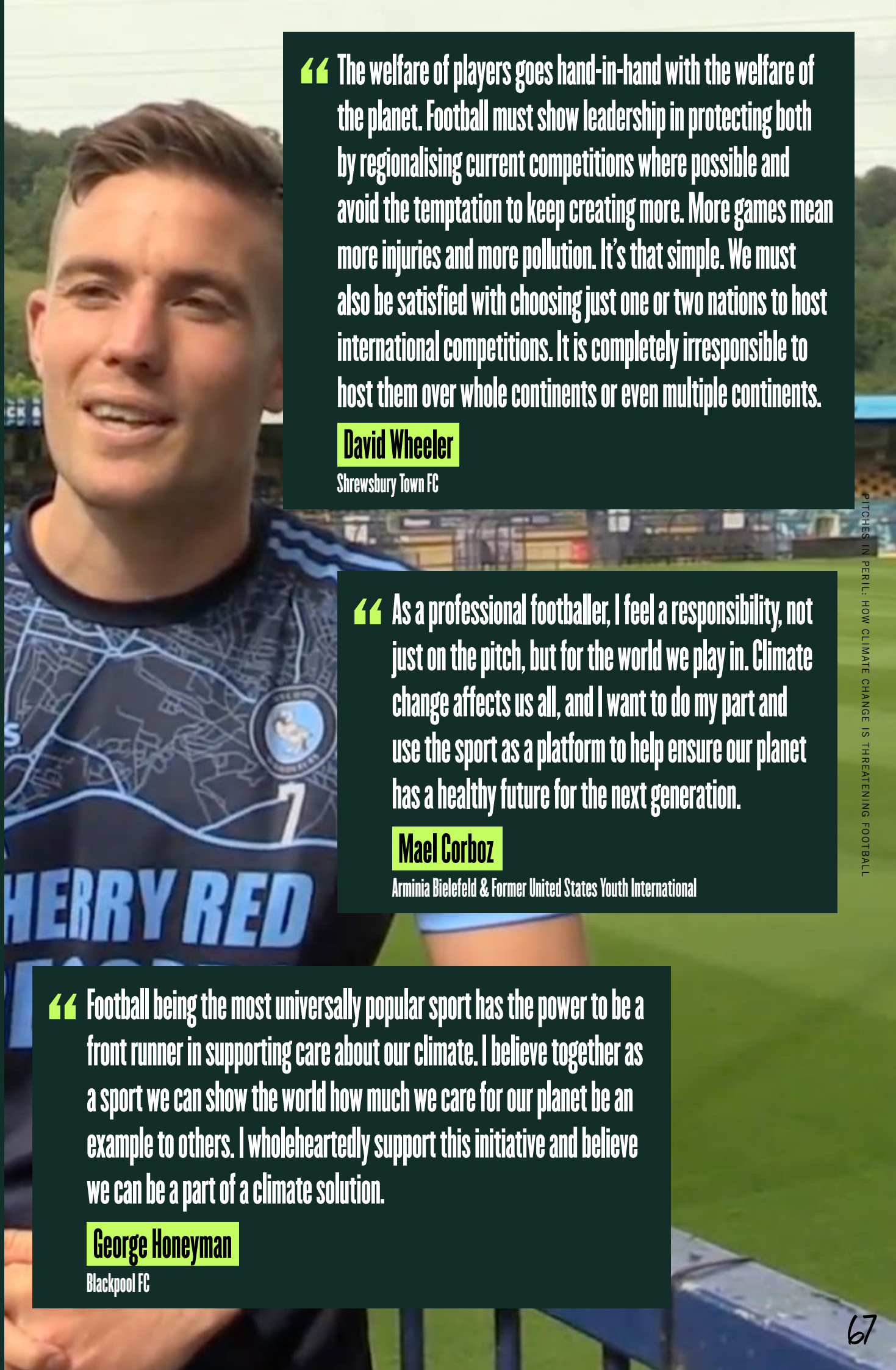


> “Football has the power to change lives and is the most influential sport on the planet that connects and unites people with one common goal. As a result, football is the perfect tool to drive change, especially when it scones to making our world a more sustainable place. We must all unite to use the power of the beautiful game to shape the future of our world.

Alexei Rojas
Arsenal FC & Colombia Youth International

> “In football we are privileged to be involved in one of the best and biggest communities in the world. If we can use this and work together we will have a massive impact on combatting the increasingly serious effects of climate change.

Ben Winterbottom
Brentford FC



> “The welfare of players goes hand-in-hand with the welfare of the planet. Football must show leadership in protecting both by regionalising current competitions where possible and avoid the temptation to keep creating more. More games mean more injuries and more pollution. It’s that simple. We must also be satisfied with choosing just one or two nations to host international competitions. It is completely irresponsible to host them over whole continents or even multiple continents.

David Wheeler
Shrewsbury Town FC

> “As a professional footballer, I feel a responsibility, not just on the pitch, but for the world we play in. Climate change affects us all, and I want to do my part and use the sport as a platform to help ensure our planet has a healthy future for the next generation.

Mael Corboz
Arminia Bielefeld & Former United States Youth International

> “Football being the most universally popular sport has the power to be a front runner in supporting care about our climate. I believe together as a sport we can show the world how much we care for our planet be an example to others. I wholeheartedly support this initiative and believe we can be a part of a climate solution.

George Honeyman
Blackpool FC

> “I’ve always lived by a simple motto: leave the world a better place than you found it. It doesn’t mean I’ll solve every global problem on my own. But if I can make my space a little bit better, and everyone else does the same, then over generations we’ll have a healthier planet and a stronger game.
>
> **Tom Davies**
>
> Sheffield United & Former England U21 International

> “Having experienced the journey from academy to professional football, I’ve seen how sport can shape lives and communities. As someone who cares about the planet, I believe we have a responsibility to use football’s global power to protect the game for future generations. I’m proud to be part of this campaign to help make the game more sustainable and inspire others to protect the world we all play in.
>
> **Fejiri Okenabirhie**
>
> Modern Sport, Egypt

> “As someone from Spain, I can’t ignore the reality of the climate crisis. We’re seeing it more clearly than ever, from record-breaking heatwaves to floods like the ones in Valencia. Football has always brought people together, but now it’s also a reminder of what we stand to lose if we don’t act. We all have a role to play in facing this challenge, for our communities today and for future generations.
>
> **Juan Mata**
>
> 2010 Spanish World Cup winner

ARE YOU A PROFESSIONAL PLAYER WHO

WANTS TO GET INVOLVED?

We're always looking to connect with more players who care about the future of football and the planet.

Whether you're just becoming curious about climate change or already passionate about sustainability, we're here to support you.

From private learning sessions to public campaigns, we work with professional footballers at every stage of their journey — helping you build knowledge, find your voice, and make an impact.

If you're interested in learning more or getting involved, we'd love to hear from you.

CLICK OR SCAN TO GET IN TOUCH

WHAT FOOTBALL FANS THINK ABOUT CLIMATE

Exclusive insights from fans in the 2026 host nations on climate, sustainability, and football's responsibility to take action.

Football's story has always been shaped by its fans — the lifeblood of the game, its memory-keepers and momentum-builders. As the climate crisis accelerates, so too does a quiet but powerful shift in public expectation: supporters are looking to football not just for entertainment, but for leadership.

To understand that shift, this report commissioned one of the largest climate-focused fan surveys in football history. Conducted in the three host nations of the 2026 Men's World Cup — the U.S., Canada, and Mexico — the first wave captured over 3,600 voices, offering a detailed snapshot of awareness, concern, and desire for action from within football's vast community of supporters.

3,600 voices across the 2026 host nations

These insights provide a rare, data-driven lens into what fans expect from the sport they love. The message is clear: fans are increasingly aware of climate risk, increasingly motivated by climate responsibility, and increasingly ready for the football industry to act. What was once a fringe concern has become a mainstream mandate.

The survey was conducted by Dynata, a first-party data provider, using Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) between May 16–21, 2025. The sample included 3,613 respondents, equally distributed across the three host countries, and representative across age, gender, and fan type (men's, women's, or both). It carries a margin of error of approximately ±2.8% at the country level.

A second wave will follow the release of this report to track shifts in attitudes and action over time.

dynata™

FAN INSIGHTS

THE CLIMATE MANDATE FROM NORTH AMERICA'S FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS

Background and Methodology

The climate crisis is no longer an abstract threat and football fans across North America know it. As the 2026 Men's World Cup approaches, supporters are calling for the sport they love to confront its role in a rapidly changing world.

This is the largest climate-focused football sentiment survey ever conducted in North America. In May 2025, over 3,600 fans across the United States, Canada, and Mexico shared their views on climate change, responsibility, and what leadership in football should now look like. These findings represent the first wave of a two-part survey that will ultimately reach 7,200 fans across the three host nations.

What we found is clear: fans are concerned, engaged, and demanding action. They want more than pledges they expect their clubs, governing bodies, and heroes on the pitch to reflect the urgency of this moment. The social contract between football and its community is shifting and the climate crisis is redrawing the terms.

This is the most comprehensive snapshot to date of how North American football fans perceive climate risk and what they expect the sport to do about it.

Survey Details

- Method: Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI)
- Dates: May 16–21, 2025
- Sample: 3,613 respondents
- Demographics: Stratified by age, gender, and fan type (men's, women's, or both)
- Margin of Error: ±2.83%

Football Fans Care About Climate Change

Across North America, football fans show concern about climate change as a general issue. For many, it is something they care about but not something they act on.

- In all three countries, climate change ranks as a mid-tier issue, with only 16% of fans naming it among their top three concerns
- Women and younger fans (18–34) show higher levels of general concern.
- By contrast, older men (55+) and fans who follow only men's football are significantly less likely to rank climate change as an issue of concern

This reflects a common pattern in public opinion: people may care about climate change in theory, but do not prioritise it over more immediate concerns like cost of living, crime, or sports performance. For many football fans, climate remains a background value not a front-line issue.

Insight: Concern for climate exists. The challenge is to raise its urgency to make it feel relevant and actionable in fans' daily lives.

Fans Are Experiencing Climate Disruption, But Do Not Link It to Football

Football fans across North America are already experiencing the effects of climate disruption in how they play, watch, and support the game but many still struggle to connect these impacts to the broader climate crisis.

- 88% of Mexican fans, and 81% of fans in both the US and Canada, say that extreme heat is already affecting players
- 57% of Mexican, 52% of US, and 40% of Canadian fans report personally experiencing match disruption due to weather or air quality issues, such as smoke, flooding, or heatwaves

The most commonly reported disruptions include:

- Extreme heat, affecting both player safety and fan comfort

FOOTBALL IS EXPECTED TO LEAD

- Wildfire smoke and poor air quality
- Flooding, poor pitch conditions, and cancellations

Despite these lived impacts, most fans do not explicitly connect them to climate change:

- Only 48% of Mexican, 36% of US, and 31% of Canadian fans say they've considered how climate change could affect football
- And only 39% of US, 32% of Canadian, and 29% of Mexican fans view climate change as a very or extremely serious risk to football

This is the climate–football perception gap: fans feel the symptoms but do not name the cause. The disconnect limits political will and slows climate action in sport. Closing it will require storytelling that links real disruptions to the climate crisis, without jargon or blame. Women, younger fans, and supporters of both men's and women's football are most likely to see the link.

Football is Expected to Lead

Football fans are looking to the game for climate leadership:

- Over 90% of fans across North America want elite football to help protect grassroots pitches from climate risks
- Over 85% support elite football contributing to community-level adaptation efforts
- 86–98% support players speaking publicly about climate change
- 86% say clubs and governing bodies should speak out, even if they are still working on reducing their footprint
- 71% of Mexican, 57% of US, and 52% of Canadian fans say football should act on climate change overall

Fans want leadership without perfection. The mandate is clear: speak up, act now.

Fans Support Action, But Not All Policies Equally

Fans support a wide range of climate policies, especially those focused on tangible local benefits and transparency:

- 92% support protecting grassroots pitches, with high levels of strong support across all three countries
- 87% in Canada, 85% in the US, and 98% in Mexico back community adaptation efforts
- 53% of US fans and 56% of Mexican fans support clubs publishing decarbonisation plans
- 41% of US fans, 41% of Mexican fans, and 34% of Canadian fans strongly support investing in nature-based solutions
- 46% of Mexican fans strongly support advancing climate justice, the highest rate among the three countries
- By contrast, only 29% of Canadian fans and 25% of US fans strongly support offering plant-based food options at matches making it the least popular policy across all three countries

THE WORLD CUP MUST BE A ROLE MODEL

Support is consistently lowest among older men (55+) and fans who follow only men's football, particularly in Canada and the US. By contrast, Mexico leads on 12 out of 15 policy areas, setting the pace for public backing. Across the board, fans respond most strongly to policies that are locally grounded, visibly impactful, and fair in intent. Effective messaging should centre these values — not ideology or personal lifestyle change.

Climate Action Builds Loyalty

Climate leadership is not just welcomed, it deepens fan connection.

- 87–98% of fans say they would be proud if their club took action on climate
- In Mexico, 80% of fans say it would make them feel closer to their club
- 87% of US fans are willing to change how they engage with football to support climate goals

Climate-positive leadership is a powerful lever for loyalty and engagement.

The World Cup Must Be a Role Model

Across the region, fans view the 2026 Men's World Cup as a critical opportunity for sustainability leadership:

- 96% of Mexican, 90% of Canadian, and 87% of US fans believe the World Cup should be a global role model for sustainability in sport
- Again, support is strongest among younger fans and women, and lowest among older men and men's football-only fan.

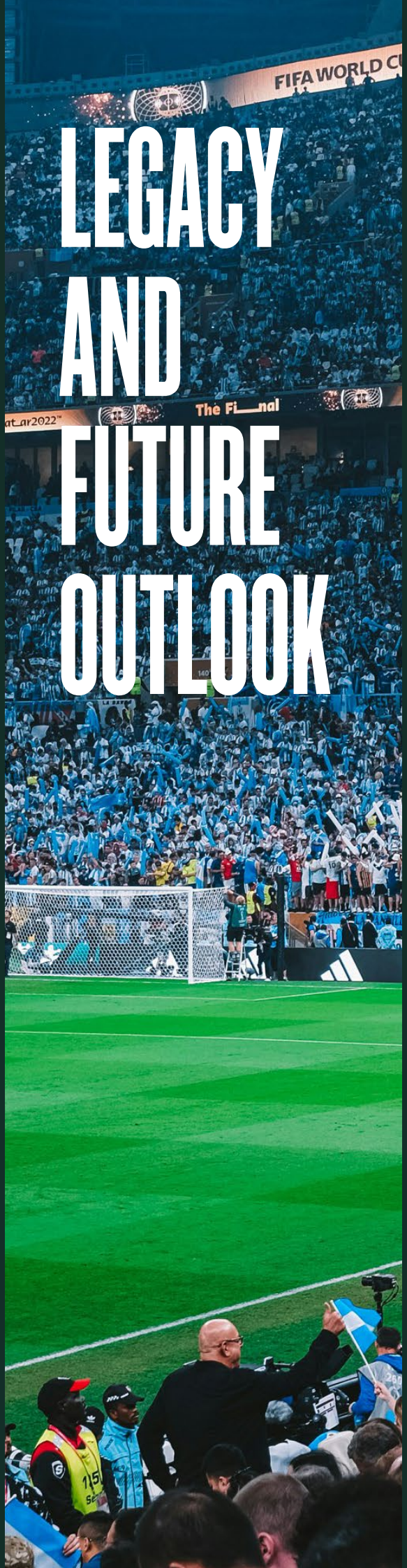
THE 2026 WORLD CUP IS A CLIMATE TEST.

BUT IT'S ALSO A LAUNCHPAD.

What Comes Next: An Invitation to Lead

This is not a complete blueprint — and that's the point. Climate challenges are evolving, and some of the most effective solutions are yet to be discovered. Tournaments offer a rare chance to test bold ideas, build public support, and model systemic transformation.

Getting there will require radical collaboration between governing bodies, host cities, civil society, players, and fans. It also means listening — to science, to frontline communities, and to the millions of people who want to see football lead on climate.



LEGACY AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Climate Movement in Football

Just five years ago, a Google search for "football and environmental sustainability" would not return much, mainly a few articles around Forest Green Rovers and seldom other isolated initiatives. Today, thanks to the work of early pioneers — from players and clubs to campaigners, community leaders and Federations — the landscape has changed. What was once a niche issue is now impossible to ignore.

Momentum is building, but it is still early days - and while progress is moving, it is uneven. What the movement needs now is a breakthrough — a cultural moment that takes climate mainstream. The stakes have never been higher, and the opportunity never greater.

The Current Picture - What This Report Reveals

The data is clear: climate change is already reshaping football. Stadiums and grassroots pitches are increasingly exposed to climate-related risks, and fans are calling for action. The future of the game will be defined by how it responds — not just with statements, but with systemic shifts that match the scale of the crisis.

Climate Action vs. Sustainability - A Necessary Distinction

Sustainability and climate action are both essential, but they are not the same. Sustainability often centres on reducing harm, while climate action calls for transforming the systems that cause it. Football has begun making progress, from greener operations and improved reporting to setting carbon targets. These matter, but are not enough.

We must now move from symbolic gestures to structural change. That means investing in heat-resilient infrastructure, supporting communities most at risk, and harnessing football's global platform to shift industries — from textiles and travel to food and finance.

Real climate action means embedding adaptation, equity, and imagination at the heart of the game, and empowering players, fans, and leaders to drive that change.

Reimagining Legacy

Every World Cup claims to be "more than a tournament." But in the age of climate crisis, the 2026 edition can truly redefine what football stands for; not through tokenism, but through bold, visible action that leaves a legacy of resilient pitches, informed fans, and empowered players.

Future tournaments should not follow this path out of obligation, but because climate leadership strengthens the game and reflects the values of the communities it represents.

Legacy begins with vision, and the choices we make now will define football's future for generations. Let us reimagine boldly, and act together.

FINAL WORD
CALL TO ACTION

This report was never just about data, it was about dialogue. It exists to widen the conversation, to meet football lovers where they are, and to bring the climate story into spaces it too often misses: the terraces, the team talks, the studio sofas, the group chats.

If it helps climate become a football issue - not just an environmental one - then it has served its purpose.

The climate crisis will deepen. But so too must our resolve not only to protect football from its impacts, but to position football as part of the solution. Because everyone in the game has a role to play. From players to pundits, groundskeepers to governing bodies, burger vans to broadcasters - all of us hold a thread in the future fabric of football.

This isn't about perfection. It's about participation. It's about care. And it's about courage.

Across climate risk analysis, player advocacy, and fan engagement, this report shows what can happen when climate science is matched with cultural strategy, and when football's voice is used not just to entertain, but to enlighten.

We hope that future World Cups - women's and men's - will treat climate risk and climate action not as add-ons, but as essentials. As expected pillars of tournament planning, communications, and legacy.
Whether you are a policymaker or a player, a sponsor or a storyteller, we hope there is something in these pages that strengthens your own work, and your sense of what's possible.

And this is only the beginning.

With less than a year until the 2026 Men's World Cup, our work continues: more research, deeper partnerships, bolder campaigns, and a growing community of players who care about the planet they play on.

We are building something - louder, larger, and rooted in football's global power.

IF YOU CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL'S FUTURE — AND THE PLANET'S — JOIN US.