



An African miracle at the 2026 World Cup

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World Cup

[The Cape Verde national team](#) wrote one of the most captivating chapters of the 2026 [FIFA](#) World Cup, reaching the Round of 32 in their debut appearance. Their run proved that football isn't always about star power or renowned coaches; it's about faith, grit, and tactical discipline—the very weapons this African side used to etch their name into tournament history.

Entering the finals with low expectations, Cape Verde defied the odds to qualify for the second round. They finished as runners-up in Group H, earning three points from three draws—trailing group leaders Spain, who finished with seven. Finishing with only two goals scored and two conceded, they achieved one of the rarest qualification scenarios in World Cup history.

Three draws that feel like a win

The team didn't need a single win to advance. Instead, they relied on defensive solidity and collective organization to grind out three precious points, proving that a single point can be worth a tournament championship when earned against elite competitors.

Cape Verde kicked off their campaign with a gritty, goalless draw against Spain. By shutting down the European giants for 90 minutes, they delivered one of the most disciplined defensive performances of the tournament.

The draw with Spain was just the start. Cape Verde showcased their quality against Uruguay, taking an early lead and battling back twice to secure a thrilling 2-2 draw. Despite the technical gap, they nearly snatched a historic win, squandering several golden opportunities in the final minutes.

In their third match against Saudi Arabia, with qualification within reach, they played with courage and attacking intent. They were the more dangerous side for long stretches, creating chances that could have secured their first-ever World Cup victory before settling for a draw—a result sufficient to make history.

A World Cup message

Cape Verde proved that football still holds its magic, demonstrating that underdogs can compete with giants when they possess courage, discipline, and a shared vision. Without big-name stars or prior World Cup experience, this African team asserted themselves among the world's top 32, becoming one of the standout surprises of 2026.

Now, Cape Verde faces their biggest test yet: a highly anticipated Round of 32 clash against Argentina. They are no longer just guests at the tournament; they have become an inspiration, proving that the impossible can become reality when you fight until the final whistle.

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