



England – one of the top candidates for the 2026 World Cup

Description

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England

As the 2026 [World Cup](#) approaches in North America (USA, Canada, Mexico), England enters the list of serious contenders to win the title for the first time since 1966. This assessment relies on a strong combination of exceptional talent, tactical preparation under Thomas Tuchel's leadership, a perfect qualifying record, and statistical expectations. Despite a long history of "disappointments" in the knockout stages, the English team appears more balanced and mature this time.

The golden generation

The English national team possesses one of the strongest squads in the world, combining experience with explosive youth:

- **Attack:** Harry Kane (Captain and historical top scorer) is in top form, supported by Bukayo Saka, Marcus Rashford, Ollie Watkins, Ivan Toney, Anthony Gordon, and Noni Madueke.
- **Midfield:** Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid star), Declan Rice, Kobbie Mainoo, Elliott Anderson, Eberechi Eze, and Morgan Rogers.
- **Defense:** John Stones, Marc Guàchi, Reece James, Ezri Konsa, and others such as Tino Livramento and Dan Burn.
- **Goalkeeping:** Jordan Pickford as the starter, along with Dean Henderson and James Trafford.

The final 26-man squad announced by Tuchel shows a clear philosophy: focusing on balance, confidence, and harmony instead of just big names. Tuchel excluded prominent players like Phil Foden, Cole Palmer, Trent Alexander-Arnold, and Harry Maguire for tactical and cultural reasons within the camp. This depth allows for rotation without losing quality, which is crucial in a long tournament like the World Cup (48 teams).

Thomas Tuchel: The anticipated tactical upgrade

[Tuchel's background as a Champions League winner](#) (with Chelsea) and his experience in high pressing and defensive organization have transformed England into an organized "machine." In the qualifiers, they achieved a historic European feat by winning all matches and not conceding any goals. Tuchel focuses on "trust, leadership, and standards" within the group, which reduces the internal problems that previous teams suffered from.

The English national team boasts exceptional depth in every line, backed by a golden generation that combines experience and youth. Tactical organization and defensive solidity under Tuchel, who achieved perfect qualifiers without conceding, also stand out, along with the vast experience of most players in major knockout stages and high physical fitness.

Despite this, the team suffers from a significant reliance on Harry Kane and a potential lack of attacking creativity following the exclusion of Foden, Palmer, and Trent. Friendly matches also showed some slowness and difficulty against major teams, in addition to the historical psychological pressure challenges in the knockout and adapting to the heat and fatigue in a long tournament comprising 48 teams.

Overall, England possesses all the ingredients that make them a strong contender for the title, especially balance, depth, and tactical preparation. However, their success depends on their ability to solve the problem of creativity under pressure and break the decisive stage jinx. If Tuchel succeeds in integrating collective strength with psychological resilience, the dream of the second star may finally be realized.

England are in a manageable group

England is in Group L with Croatia (June 17 in Dallas), Ghana (June 23 in Boston), and Panama (June 27 in New York/New Jersey). This is a relatively comfortable group, giving the team an ideal opportunity to build confidence, experiment with formations, and qualify comfortably before the strong knockout stage matches.

Despite all these advantages, the biggest question remains: Can the team overcome the knockout stage jinx that has plagued them for years? Their reach to the Euro final twice and their exit from the 2022 quarter-finals constantly remind them that talent alone is not enough; they need psychological resilience and focus in crucial moments.

Featured image via Alex Pantling/Getty Images

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