



FIFA water ban sparks fan backlash ahead of 2026 World Cup

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FIFA World Cup 2022 – Joel Campbell cools off

Fans attending the 2026 World Cup will not be allowed to bring reusable water bottles into stadiums. The latest restriction introduced by FIFA has sparked criticism and concerns about temperatures across the tournament’s hottest host cities. This year’s tournament features 48 teams for the first time. It will take place across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. As a result, several matches are [expected to be played in high temperatures and humidity](#)

What has changed in stadium rules?

[Under the new regulations](#) fans cannot bring reusable water bottles into venues. However, previously, spectators could carry transparent, empty plastic bottles up to one litre. The updated policy also bans cups, metal containers, and similar items.

FIFA says the move is part of a broader security framework. In a statement, the governing body explained that such objects could be used as projectiles, posing a danger to fans, players, and tournament staff. [In a statement to Reuters](#) FIFA said it is committed to protecting:

the health and safety of all players, referees, fans, volunteers and staff.

FIFA also cited safety reasons, saying the ban is intended to reduce the risk of injury:

Outside bottles are already prohibited at several of these venues for safety considerations and FIFA is applying this – consideration across its tournament stadiums.

Heat concerns at host cities

FIFA's decision has raised concerns about conditions fans may face during matches in several host cities.

Temperatures in some locations are expected to reach the mid-20s Celsius, with periods of high humidity. Supporter groups and fan organisations have questioned whether restricting access to personal water bottles could make it harder for spectators to stay comfortable inside stadiums.

FIFA says it is working with local authorities and organising committees to put heat-management measures in place. They [told Reuters](#) that they're work:

... closely with each Host City Committee and local authorities on heat mitigation factors for fans traveling to the stadium, which can include resources such as misting stations, fans, hydration stations, cooling tents and more around the stadium footprint.

These include additional water stations, shaded rest areas, cooling fans, and spray zones positioned around stadium sites.

FIFA has also said that water prices inside stadiums will remain in line with those at other major sporting events.

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FIFA fans hit back

Fan groups have slammed FIFA's policy, including England's [Free Lions](#), who called the water bottle ban [a blatant money grab](#) so close to kickoff.

The group said they had previously been assured reusable water bottles would be allowed, and questioned the sudden reversal.

What next? Suncream banned and fans forced to buy it in stadiums?

For all of the effort they are going to with drinks breaks for the players, this is such a strange, late change.

In all of our discussions, free water availability in stadiums was a key one and we were assured <https://t.co/cXjwQwhRLO> [pic.twitter.com/0XhGsHHECS](https://t.co/cXjwQwhRLO)

Free Lions (@WeAreFreeLions) [June 4, 2026](#)

[Speaking to the Guardian](#) Ronan Evain, director of Football Supporters Europe, called FIFA's water ban [a real health risk](#), warning that harder access to hydration raises the chances of heatstroke

and dehydration. He also slammed the governing body for putting profits ahead of fan safety, calling the decision "appalling" and saying it:

shows the priority seems to be, again, to generate revenues. How immoral it is to [profit from] water in this situation when people's health is at risk.

He also challenged the safety rationale, [saying](#)

If they allowed it last year and originally for this tournament, I find the security argument a bit hard to believe [?] water is unfortunately still seen as a commodity, but it's not, it's a matter of health. We don't know how expensive a bottle of water will be inside the stadium because no prices have been published.

These scathing public remarks intensify the spotlight on FIFA's handling of fan safety ahead of the tournament.

As the tournament kicks off, FIFA's rules will take effect, as fans continue to accuse FIFA of putting profits before people.

Featured image via Dan Mullan / Getty Images

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