



## Morocco faces injury setback ahead of World Cup opener

### Description

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Team Morocco arrive in the US

Morocco have suffered a significant setback just days before the start of their 2026 World Cup campaign, with defender Nayef Akrad and winger Abdel Samad Al-Zalzouli both ruled out through injury.

### Unfit to play

The Moroccan Football Federation, in coordination with FIFA, [have confirmed](#) that both star players will miss the tournament. The team have called up Marwan Saadane and Amine Sebaï as replacements ahead of their Group C opener against Brazil.

Akrad's absence is a major blow to Morocco's defensive structure. A key figure in the run to the 2022 World Cup semi-finals, he had been included in the squad in the hope he would recover in time, but medical assessments ruled him out of their plans.

### Rough start for Morocco

Al-Zalzouli's withdrawal further weakens the squad's attacking options. The winger sustained a knee injury during a friendly match against Norway, forcing him out at a crucial stage of Morocco's preparations and leaving the coaching staff short of experienced alternatives.

The double setback also deprives Morocco of [valuable tournament experience](#) with both players having played important roles in Morocco's recent international progress.

Their replacements now face a difficult task. Saadane brings solid club experience, while Sebaï is still relatively new to the Morocco senior setup.

Attention now turns to Morocco's demanding World Cup opener against Brazil, one of the tournament favourites, as the Atlas Lions look to navigate an even [tougher start](#) to their campaign.

Featured image via Jordan Bank / Getty Images

By [Alaa Shamali](#)

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