

## New national anthem rule for 2026 World Cup

11th June 2026



There has been a last-minute change to how teams sing their national anthems at the 2026 World Cup. FIFA, the organization that runs the World Cup, announced the change last week. It said that for the first

time in World Cup history, all of the players in the squads will come onto the pitch to sing their anthem. FIFA president Gianni Infantino commented on the change to the national anthem ceremony. He said: "As the FIFA World Cup grows, we continue to innovate the way the game is experienced. The pre-match ceremonies... will be no different." He added: "The FIFA World Cup is about every player and every fan and this new pre-match ceremony reflects that."

FIFA said more players will have a role in adding to the pre-match atmosphere. In the new ceremony, all squad members will stand around the centre circle and sing their national anthem. Mr Infantino said: "Having all players and referees face each other in the centre circle during the national anthems will create a moment of unity, pride, and emotion that truly belongs to the teams and to everyone in the stadium." Other parts of the pre-game ceremony remain unchanged. Team captains will still participate in the coin toss and exchange pennants with the opposing captain. Another tradition kept for the 2026 tournament is players from each team shaking hands with players from the other team.

Sources: [si.com](http://si.com) / [yahoo.com](http://yahoo.com) / [worldsoccertalk.com](http://worldsoccertalk.com)

## Writing

We should all sing our national anthem at sporting events and in cinemas. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

last-minute change / national anthem / World Cup / soccer players / innovate / FIFA / atmosphere / ceremony / referees / pride / captains / coin toss / shaking hands

## True / False

- 1) A change will come to the World Cup a minute before kick-off. T / F
- 2) The whole squad of a soccer team always sings the national anthem. T / F
- 3) All players will have to sing the U.S. national anthem. T / F
- 4) There'll be a change to the pre-match ceremony for World Cup games. T / F
- 5) The new rule will mean all players standing around the centre circle. T / F
- 6) FIFA said only the players will feel unity and pride during the anthems. T / F
- 7) Other parts of the pre-match ceremony will stay the same. T / F
- 8) The custom of shaking hands will stop at this World Cup. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. <b>runs</b>       | a. go on     |
| 2. <b>squads</b>     | b. stay      |
| 3. <b>continue</b>   | c. shows     |
| 4. <b>fan</b>        | d. mood      |
| 5. <b>reflects</b>   | e. supporter |
| 6. <b>role</b>       | f. manages   |
| 7. <b>atmosphere</b> | g. harmony   |
| 8. <b>unity</b>      | h. swap      |
| 9. <b>remain</b>     | i. teams     |
| 10. <b>exchange</b>  | j. part      |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Football is called 'the beautiful game'. Do you think it is?
- c) What do you think of the atmosphere at football matches?
- d) What is your favourite football team?
- e) How excited are you about the World Cup?
- f) Is the World Cup the world's best sport tournament?
- g) What advice do you have for the FIFA president?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the FIFA boss?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. There has been a last-                  | a. each other          |
| 2. the organization that runs              | b. game is experienced |
| 3. all of the players                      | c. in the squads       |
| 4. we continue to innovate the way the     | d. the centre circle   |
| 5. The pre-match ceremonies will be no     | e. hands               |
| 6. more players will                       | f. different           |
| 7. all squad members will stand around     | g. minute change       |
| 8. all players and referees face           | h. the coin toss       |
| 9. Team captains will still participate in | i. have a role         |
| 10. shaking                                | j. the World Cup       |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of football?
- What do you think of the FIFA World Cup?
- What do you think of your national anthem?
- How often do you sing your national anthem?
- How do you feel when you see sport stars singing national anthems?
- What will the new-style ceremony change?
- What other changes should FIFA make to football?
- How excited are you about the World Cup?

## Spelling

- the nogritaonzai that runs the World Cup
- docenannu the change
- all of the players in the udqssa
- the national anthem ermcoyen
- we continue to eniavont
- the way the game is eercxeindep
- adding to the pre-match aehtpsrem
- players and ereefsr
- unity, idpre, and emotion
- everyone in the mtausdi
- iacpritteap in the coin toss
- Another ioidrntta

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. a	4. e	5. c
6. j	7. d	8. g	9. b	10. h

## Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions. (Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	When was the change to the national anthem rule done?
2.	What does the article say FIFA is?
3.	Which players will sing the national anthems?
4.	What did FIFA say it would continue to do as the game grows?
5.	Who did FIFA's president say the World Cup is about?
6.	Where will the players stand when they sing the national anthems?
7.	What did FIFA say the new anthem ceremony would create?
8.	What will team captains continue to participate in?
9.	What will team captains continue to exchange?
10.	What will players from each team continue to do?

## Speaking – Positions

Rank these with your partner. Put the best position at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Goalkeeper
- Centre-back
- Right-back
- Winger
- Defensive midfielder
- Central midfielder
- Attacking midfielder
- Striker

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	F	4	T	5	T	6	F	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.