

Hydration breaks booed at World Cup

22nd June 2026



Football fans worldwide are not happy about the introduction of hydration breaks at the World Cup. Spectators in the stadiums have been expressing their dissatisfaction with the breaks in play by booing and jeering. They are not the only ones to express

their consternation. Players and managers are less than happy. French manager Didier Deschamps complained about breaks disrupting the free-flowing nature and momentum of games. He said: "It's almost four quarters, and before we had two halves." Netherlands defender Virgil van Dijk said that the stoppages were unnecessary. He lamented the sudden interruptions for ad breaks on TV, saying it was "not really" something he wanted in football.

Football's governing body FIFA introduced the concept of water breaks last December. It said they would be in every game, regardless of temperatures. Some games in the USA have been held under roofs, in climate-controlled conditions. Critics argue that the breaks exist primarily for commercial reasons. The BBC reported that an average 30-second World Cup ad slot on Fox Sports costs up to \$750,000 during high-profile matches. Fox came back late from a commercial break during the tournament opener between Mexico and South Africa. The BBC added that: "Given the financial benefits... it is highly likely that the breaks will remain a long-term feature."

Sources: espn.com / yahoo.com / bbe.com

Writing

Football (soccer) games should be four quarters, not two halves. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

football fans / hydration breaks / stadiums / booing / players / momentum / ads / FIFA / temperatures / critics / commercialization / ad slots / tournament / benefits

True / False

- 1) All football fans at the World Cup booed during hydration breaks. T / F
- 2) The article says many managers are more than happy with the breaks. T / F
- 3) France's coach does not like the breaks stopping the free-flowing games. T / F
- 4) A Dutch defender said he didn't want to see such breaks in football. T / F
- 5) FIFA announced the hydration breaks late last year. T / F
- 6) Air-conditioned games played under a roof don't have hydration breaks. T / F
- 7) Critics say the breaks are really to show ads on TV in ad breaks. T / F
- 8) One TV channel was late for a second-half kick-off because of ads. T / F

Synonym Match

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

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. fans | a. first and foremost |
| 2. expressing | b. dismay |
| 3. jeering | c. point |
| 4. consternation | d. communicating |
| 5. stoppages | e. setting aside |
| 6. concept | f. competition |
| 7. regardless of | g. shouting |
| 8. primarily | h. halts |
| 9. tournament | i. idea |
| 10. feature | j. supporters |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of the World Cup?
- b) Should there be hydration breaks in football games?
- c) What do you think of hydration breaks ruining a game's momentum?
- d) Are hydration breaks more for advertisers to make money?
- e) What do you think of sticking with two 45-minute halves?
- f) How do you feel when ads interrupt a live football match?
- g) What are the alternatives to hydration breaks?
- h) What advice do you have for FIFA?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. football fans | a. the stadiums |
| 2. spectators in | b. slot |
| 3. booing and | c. halves |
| 4. not the only ones to express their | d. of water breaks |
| 5. before we had two | e. jeering |
| 6. FIFA introduced the concept | f. commercial reasons |
| 7. they would be in every game, regardless | g. worldwide are not happy |
| 8. breaks exist primarily for | h. feature |
| 9. an average 30-second World Cup ad | i. of temperatures |
| 10. the breaks will remain a long-term | j. consternation |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of football?
- What do you think of spectators booing at hydration breaks?
- Is advertising ruining live sports coverage?
- Is commercialization ruining or improving sport?
- What changes would make football better for spectators?
- Who do you want to win the World Cup?
- What questions would you like to ask the bosses of world football?

Spelling

- tosspaectr in the stadiums
- booing and irgejen
- express their rnaiotnnosect
- free-flowing nature and mtnommeu of games
- the oepagspst were unnecessary
- He lamented the sudden rnutiirensopt
- redaegrssl of temperatures
- breaks exist primarily for micolearmc reasons
- during high-ifoplre matches
- during the mureottnan opener
- the liaicnafn benefits
- remain a long-term rufetae

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Comprehension Questions

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

1.	Where have fans been expressing their dissatisfaction?
2.	What are fans doing besides booing?
3.	How do players and managers feel about the hydration breaks?
4.	What did France's coach say there are nearly four of?
5.	What did a Dutch defender say about the stoppages for water?
6.	When did FIFA first announce the breaks?
7.	What percentage of games are the hydration breaks in?
8.	How much can a 30-second ad cost on Fox Sports?
9.	What did Fox Sports come back late for due to an ad break?
10.	What did the BBC say about the future of hydration breaks?

Speaking – Football Gear

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important things to take/wear to a football match at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| • Your team's top (jersey) | • A smartphone |
| • A programme | • A drum |
| • Water | • Sandwiches |
| • A club scarf | • Binoculars |

Answers – True False

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