

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Die Mannschaft

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Magyarok

THE
Mighty
DELTA

The Tartan Army

THE
Mighty
DELTA

A-Team Nati

THE
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Kuqezinjë

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Gli Azzurri

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Vatreni

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La Roja

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Zmajčeki

THE
Mighty
DELTA

De Rød-Hvide

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Бели Орлови

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Three Lions

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Oranje

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Les Bleus

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Orly

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Das Team

THE
Mighty
DELTA

The Red Devils

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Tricolorii

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Repre

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Синьо-жовт

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Seleçao

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Naši

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Ay-Yıldızlılar

THE
Mighty
DELTA

Jvarosnebi

24 NATIONS. ONE WINNER.
EURO 2024 GUIDE.

WELCOME

Three years after the last mid-pandemic manifestation of the tournament, the 2024 Euros are here and it feels like the sporting world (if not the real one!) is back to normal in many respects.

Packed stadiums, heaving fanzones and crammed bars are guaranteed across the continent as 24 international teams go toe-to-toe, each on a quest to (re)join the pantheon of IO nations to win a European Championships.

Although I could scan the horizon to assess each team's chances in this introduction, I'll give that a miss given that is the entire raison d'être of this special edition of 'The Mighty Delta'!

Instead, I'll focus on the strange polarity of football fans, and their tendency to exist in one of two very different states prior to big matches and major competitions like this one.

In one corner, sat right next to me, are the optimists. Blindly refusing to acknowledge their centre-half's glaring lack of pace or the gaping absence of a natural left-back (who knows why those examples sprang to mind?!), this strata of fan starts every tournament convinced that this could be the year they climb a lamp post with a scarf wrapped around their head amid a cacophony of car horns.

In the other camp, let's call it the blue corner, are the pessimists. Perhaps brutally burned by past experience, this tranche of supporters focuses on their own team's tactical failings, below-par personnel, injuries and general ineptitude all the while drawing parallels to the worldbeaters they will face at every turn.

There's very little middle ground in my experience and maybe that's one of the primary reasons we love this game (feel free to read that last bit à la Patrice Evra).

Regardless of whether you are daydreaming of glory or resigned to a pummelling, this summer promises to be a proper festival of footie and we hope this fanzine can act as your trusty sidekick.

With specialists from every nation, there's plenty of insight on each of the participants buffered by a couple of fun features.

Enjoy the mag!



Stephen Gillett | Editor-in-Chief

Editor in chief
(captain)

Design and Illustration
(International wilderness)



**THE GRAPHIC
THE BOMB**

EURO 2024 GROUPS

GROUP A



GROUP B



GROUP C



GROUP D



GROUP E



GROUP F





Nation specialist: X @XxAdamKhanX

After a disastrous 2018 World Cup, an underwhelming 2020 European Championship, and another group stage exit in the 2022 World Cup, Germany look set for a good tournament at this summer's Euros.

Die Mannschaft have not won this competition since they triumphed in 1996 via Oliver Bierhoff's 'Silver Goal', but with the tournament on home soil and their team evolving under Julian Nagelsmann they are among many people's early favourites.

Star Player

Individually, Germany's squad boasts a spectacular mix of veteran stars and promising talents, but Toni Kroos stands out. His return to the national team in March has transformed the DFB's dynamic ahead of this crucial home tournament. At 34, Kroos' composure and press resistance are unmatched in elite European football, and his leadership and maturity

will be essential if his final act in professional football is to guide a youthful team towards an international title.

Young Gun

Jamal Musiala is amongst the most impressive talents in world football, but off the back of a dominant campaign with Leverkusen, it is impossible to avoid mentioning Florian Wirtz for this accolade. The 21-year-old has contributed 18 goals and 20 assists in club football this season. A hamstring injury has seen him struggle for minutes late in the season, but, his return to fitness before the Euros should significantly boost Germany's chances of winning a title on home soil.

Wild Card

Just months after his international debut, Robert Andrich is already crucial to Julian Nagelsmann's midfield. The 29-year-old's industrious defensive edge helps balance the technical midfield of Toni Kroos and İlkay Gündoğan. That's not

to say Andrich is a liability in possession. He has an impressive passing accuracy of nearly 90% in the Bundesliga, and he scored many key goals to help Bayer Leverkusen secure a domestic double.

Opinion

Germany have the individual talent, home-field advantage, and revitalised team spirit to compete for European glory this summer. After a decade of early tournament exits and off-field issues, Die Mannschaft and their passionate supporters finally appear to be rejuvenated for a major tournament on home soil.

A favourable group stage draw positions them well to top Group A and avoid powerhouses England and France until the final. While they aren't expected to dominate, their talent and the electric stadium atmosphere could propel Germany all the way to the Olympiastadion in Berlin!"

GROUP A

SQUAD

Oliver Baumann	GK
Marc ter Stegen	GK
Manuel Neuer	GK
David Raum	DF
Robin Koch	DF
Waldemar Anton	DF
Jonathan Tah	DF
Benjamin Henrichs	DF
Antonio Rüdiger	DF
Max Mittelstadt	DF
Nico Schlotterbeck	DF
Ilkay Gündoğan	MF
Jamal Musiala	MF
Joshua Kimmich	MF
Robert Andrich	MF
Florian Wirtz	MF
Aleksandar Pavlovic	MF
Toni Kroos	MF
Pascal Gross	MF
Maximilian Beier	FW
Chris Führich	FW
Kai Havertz	FW
Deniz Undav	FW
Leroy Sané	FW
Thomas Müller	FW
Niclas Füllkrug	FW

Manager: Julian Nagelsmann

FIXTURES

14/6 VS

19/6 VS

23/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS



Playmaker
say...
Final



Bet365
say...
11/2



Nation specialist: Alex Ohari ✂ @HungarianFooty

Hungary have previous when it comes to Euro success having finished third in 1964 and fourth in 1972, and the Magyars will hope to rekindle past glories in Germany.

One of six teams unbeaten in qualifying (alongside Portugal, England, France, Belgium and Romania) Marko Rossi's side are at their third straight Euros.

With Liverpool's Dominik Szoboszlai a potential star of the tournament, Hungary look well-placed to reach the knockout stages.

Star Man

Without question, Hungary's main man is their skipper Szoboszlai. Given license to roam by coach Rossi, the Liverpool man has the freedom to drop deep to receive the ball in transition, as well as bomb forward.

Also on set-piece duties, the most expensive Hungarian in history is essential to the Magyars' chances and it was Szoboszlai's brace

versus Montenegro back in November, which secured his team's qualification to these Euros.

Young Gun

With Man City prospect Zalán Vancsa just missing out, the Hungarian youngster to watch is Torino's Krisztofer Horváth. The 22-year old attacking midfielder registered 12 goals and nine assists on loan at Kecskemét TE in the Hungarian top flight this season.

Tipped to feature in Torino's plans moving forward, the Euros represent a huge stage for Horváth to show what he can do. Technically adept and excellent at linking attacks, he will probably feature off the bench.

Wild Card

Avid watchers of previous Euro tournaments may remember central midfielder László Kleinheisler for his man-of-the-match displays against Austria at Euro 2016 and France at Euro 2020.

Although lacklustre club form and injury issues may see "Lacka" operating off the bench, his work rate, ball recovery and progressive play make him an attractive back-up option. Renowned as a 'big game' player, he could make a difference in Germany even if no longer a starter.

Opinion

Undefeated in 14 matches dating back to September 2022, Hungary are a real dark horse.

Over the past two years, they have handed England their biggest home defeat (4-0) since 1928, and won away in Germany and Serbia. Marco Rossi has instilled belief and a strong mentality alongside an efficient counter-attacking style of play.

Hungary have a knack of raising their level against good opposition and I believe they will qualify for the knockout rounds. I would also back them to compete against whoever they face in the last 16. Watch out!

GROUP A

SQUAD

Péter Szappanos	GK
Denes Dibusz	GK
Peter Gulacsi	GK
Botond Balogh	DF
Attila Szalai	DF
Adam Lang	DF
Willi Orban	DF
Endre Botka	DF
Bendeguz Bolla	DF
Milos Kerkez	DF
Zsolt Nagy	DF
Loic Nego	DF
Attila Fiola	DF
Márton Dárdai	DF
Callum Styles	MF
Krisztofer Horvath	MF
Dominik Szoboszlai	MF
Adam Nagy	MF
András Schafer	MF
László Kleinheisler	MF
Mihaly Kata	MF
Daniel Gazdag	MF
Kevin Csoboth	FW
Martin Ádám	FW
Barnabás Varga	FW
Roland Sallai	FW

Manager: Marco Rossi

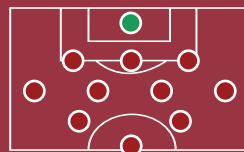
FIXTURES

15/6 VS

19/6 VS

23/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS



Playmaker
say...
Round of 16



Bet365
say...
80/1

SCOTLAND

Nation specialist: Gordon Sheach ✂ @TheTartanScarf

Steve Clarke's Tartan Army ran Spain close, as Scotland made a blistering start in qualification to help book their Euro 2024 spot.

A tough-to-beat outfit, the Scots will hope to improve on their showing at Euro 2020 when they propped up Group D despite holding England to a draw at Wembley.

Equipped with the international goal-scoring machine that is Scott McTominay, Scotland will aim to qualify from an open group.

Star Player

While McGinn, Robertson and Tierney are all fan favourites, you need look no further than 27-year-old Scott McTominay for the Tartan Army's star man.

The Manchester United academy graduate has had a somewhat nomadic Scotland career since his debut in 2018, playing in holding midfield and as a right-sided centre-back before finding his best

form alongside McGinn as a marauding attacking midfielder. His seven goals in qualifying were only bettered by Lukaku, Ronaldo, Mbappé and Kane.

Young Gun

Billy Gilmour. When the young man from Adrossan was called up for Euro 2020, he was uncapped and with only a handful of Chelsea minutes under his belt. Three years on and still only 22, he's a completely different prospect.

After a difficult loan at Norwich, he's flourished at Brighton and helped the Seagulls to their best EPL finish in 2022/23. With 25 caps already, the classy midfielder will surely be eyeing the all-time record of 102.

Wild Card

When one door closes, another opens. Late injuries to Lyndon Dykes and Ben Doak have seen both forwards withdraw from the squad, thereby opening the door for Bristol City's 21-year-old striker Tommy Conway. Conway is coming off the

back of a 10-goal season in the EFL Championship and caught Steve Clarke's eye by scoring on his most recent Under-21 appearance. He's unlikely to start, but will offer drive and threat off the bench.

Opinion

Passionate and united, the Scotland team at Euro 2020 was understandably lacking in experience at major finals.

Since then, this team has contested a World Cup play-off, secured promotion to Nations League A and reached Euro 2024 with two games to spare after opening its qualifying campaign with five consecutive wins. So, we travel with earned confidence!

Steve Clarke's side is utterly miserable to play against, as evidenced by the post-match complaints of Rodri and Martin Odegaard in qualifying. No Scotland side in our 150-year history has made the knockouts of a major finals. Immortality awaits.

SQUAD

Zander Clark	GK
Angus Gunn	GK
Liam Kelly	GK
Scott McKenna	DF
Kieran Tierney	DF
Greg Taylor	DF
Andy Robertson	DF
Anthony Ralston	DF
Ryan Porteous	DF
Jack Hendry	DF
Grant Hanley	DF
Liam Cooper	DF
Ross McCrorie	MF
Ryan Jack	MF
Callum McGregor	MF
Scott McTominay	MF
Kenny McLean	MF
John McGinn	MF
Ryan Christie	MF
Billy Gilmour	MF
Tommy Conway	FW
Stuart Armstrong	FW
Lawrence Shankland	FW
Che Adams	FW
James Forrest	FW
Lewis Morgan	FW

Manager: Steve Clarke

FIXTURES

14/6 VS 

19/6 VS 

23/11 VS 

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS



Playmaker
say...
Group stage
exit



Bet365
say...
100/1

SQUAD

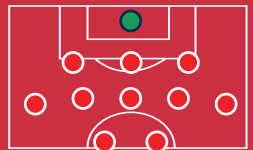
Yvon Mvogo	GK
Yann Sommer	GK
Gregor Kobel	GK
Silvan Widmer	DF
Cédric Zesiger	DF
Leonidas Stergiou	DF
Fabian Schär	DF
Manuel Akanji	DF
Ricardo Rodríguez	DF
Nico Elvedi	DF
Granit Xhaka	MF
Denis Zakaria	MF
Fabian Rieder	MF
Remo Freuler	MF
Vincent Sierro	MF
Ardon Jashari	MF
Michel Aebischer	MF
Steven Zuber	FW
Zeki Amdouni	FW
Rubén Vargas	FW
Noah Okafor	FW
Xherdan Shaqiri	FW
Breel Embolo	FW
Kwadwo Duah	FW
Renato Steffen	FW
Dan N'Doye	FW

Manager: Murat Yakin

FIXTURES

15/6 VS 19/6 VS 23/6 VS 

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker
say...
Round of 16Bet365
say...
66/1

SWITZERLAND

Nation specialist: Emanuel Staub X @Bolzplazz

Keen to banish memories of their 6-1 defeat to Portugal in the last 16 of the 2022 World Cup, Switzerland look decidedly shaky ahead of Euro 2024.

The Nati stumbled over the line in qualifying and manager Murat Yakin's attempts to inject fresh blood into an ageing squad have largely underwhelmed. A familiar face in the knockout phases of major tournaments, a repeat of their quarter-final run at Euro 2020 seems unlikely.

Star Player

After recently becoming the most capped Swiss player of all time with 122 caps, Granit Xhaka is the heart and soul of this squad, as well as its captain.

Coming off the back of a historic Double-winning season with Bayer Leverkusen, where he was an absolutely key figure, Xhaka comes to these Euros in the form of his life.

Tactically smart, aggressive and with a lovely left-foot, Xhaka sets the tone for the Swiss.

Young Gun

Elegant Montpellier centre-back Becir Omeragic and AC Milan's explosive attacker Noah Okafor are worth keeping an eye on, but arguably the most interesting Swiss prodigy is Burnley's versatile attacker Zeki Amdouni.

Cheeky, dangerous and two-footed, Amdouni is expected to play a key role for Switzerland this summer after leading the goal charts for the Nati with six strikes in qualifying. Scored five Premier League goals for the Claret's last term.

Wild Card

With Breem Embolo battling back from another injury, Murat Yakin has targeted a new target man. Young Boys breakout star Joël Monteiro appeared to fit the bill, but was injured on the eve of the tournament and Kwadwo Duah has made the final

squad following a good season at Bulgarian giants Ludogorets. Never close to call-up previously, Duah has branded the past few weeks "surreal" and it would be fantastic if he could leave a mark at these Euros!

Opinion

There has been turbulence surrounding the Swiss Nati prior to the tournament with plenty questioning Murat Yakin's position given an underwhelming qualification campaign.

However, this Swiss team has the individual quality to beat anyone on its day and they can draw positives from their proven experience of navigating the group stages.

Germany 2024 is likely to be the 'Last Dance' for the core of this group – the likes of Yann Sommer, Ricardo Rodríguez and Xherdan Shaqiri - and fans are hoping the team will bow out on a high note.



ALBANIA

Nation specialist: Xhemiun Iseni X @FootballAlbXI

Despite an impressive qualifying campaign, Albania head into UEFA Euro 2024 being generally overlooked and dismissed as they enter the so-called 'group of death' alongside Spain, Italy and Croatia.

However, with a strong spine that has players of genuine pedigree, such as Berat Djimsiti, Elseid Hysaj and Armando Broja, 'The Red and Blacks' will be confident of springing a surprise or two under the management of former Manchester City defender Sylvinho, assisted by his former teammate Pablo Zabaleta.

Star Player

When you think of Albania, Broja usually comes to mind, but following Atalanta's outstanding win over Bayer Leverkusen in the Europa League final, Berat Djimsiti has finally gained the respect he deserves.

Captain of club and country, Djimsiti is bang in form and his influence on the national team is underlined by the

fact that Albania's only loss in qualifying happened to be the only game in which he didn't play.

Young Gun

Still a complete unknown to most fans of Europe football, Mario Mitaj is a young left-back who moved from AEK Athens to Lokomotiv Moscow for €3 million as a teenager.

Once a world-class left-sided defender himself, Sylvinho saw Mitaj's potential straight away and he has played every minute for Albania over the past year. Likely to be on the radar of big clubs across Europe come the end of the tournament.

Wild Card

Armando Broja is recognisable as one of Albania's best known exports and is widely considered to be their best attacking player.

That said, the Chelsea forward didn't play a single game in the qualifiers due to a serious injury and

manager Sylvinho now needs to carefully integrate Broja into his tactics.

A matchwinner on his day, Broja allies quality with unpredictability and his return will only sharpen Albania's attacking options.

Opinion

We may have been in Pot 2, but Albania somehow landed in the 'Group of Death'!

Although our chances of progressing to the knockout stages are slim, the fact nobody expects us to do anything could make us dangerous.

The Balkan duel with Croatia could well be decisive to both team's chances and the fact the Albanians view the Croatians as role models as well as rivals will make that a fascinating tussle.

I don't expect to reach the round of 16, but we should be competitive and fans of 'The Red and Black' will create a great atmosphere.

GROUP B

SQUAD

Elhan Kastrati	GK
Thomas Strakosha	GK
Etrit Berisha	GK
Naser Aliji	DF
Ivan Balliu	DF
Arlind Ajeti	DF
Enea Mihaj	DF
Ardian Ismajli	DF
Berat Djimsiti	DF
Elseid Hysaj	DF
Mario Mitaj	DF
Marash Kumbulla	DF
Medon Berisha	MF
Klaus Gjasula	MF
Ylber Ramadani	MF
Qazim Laçi	MF
Amir Abrashi	MF
Kristjan Asllani	MF
Nedim Bajrami	MF
Rey Manaj	FW
Jasir Asani	FW
Taulant Seferi	FW
Ernest Muci	FW
Arber Hoxha	FW
Armando Broja	FW
Mirlind Daku	FW

Manager: Sylvinho

FIXTURES

15/6 VS

19/6 VS

24/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker say...
Group stage exit

Bet365 say...
500/1



ITALY

Nation specialist: Carlo Garganese ✕ @carlogarganese

The defending champions head into these Euros on the back of missing out on a second successive World Cup and the Azzurri are undoubtedly in flux.

Luciano Spalletti is moulding a very different squad to the one that won the competition three years ago, but there is still quality peppered throughout its ranks.

The cliché of Italy being the ultimate 'tournament team' was coined for a reason and they head to Germany as a serious contender.

Star Player

Nicolo Barella is this Italy side's most capped outfielder and their top scorer with nine goals – which says a lot about the Azzurri's attack ahead of the tournament.

He's played in big matches and won big titles, notably losing in the 2022/23 UEFA Champions League final and winning the last Euros.

He is genuinely world class and can do everything: tackle,

run, pass, create, score. Italy need him at his best if they are to have a good tournament.

Young Gun

It's tough to name a young gun, particularly as the likes of Tottenham's Destiny Udogie and Atalanta's Giorgio Scalvini have been ruled out of the tournament through injury.

However, Riccardo Calafiori was outstanding at the back this season in Serie A for a Bologna team, which achieved a minor miracle in qualifying for the Champions League. On the verge of a move to Juventus, the 22-year-old is one to keep an eye on.

Wild Card

With a dozen goals in all competitions since March, Atalanta striker Gianluca Scamacca is currently one of the most in-form players in Europe and he has true wildcard credentials.

Blessed with incredible technique and an imposing physique, the 6 ft 5 inch

former West Ham forward could take the tournament by storm.

Scamacca has a suspect temperament and has struggled to find consistency at the highest level, though... so while he could be magical, he may do nothing!

Opinion

There are clear gaps in Italy's squad and there aren't high expectations that they can defend their title. Their biggest issues are in attack where they don't have sufficient depth or quality despite the presence of Scamacca and Federico Chiesa.

In an era where there aren't many strong defences in Europe, Italy do have one of the better backlines and a match-winning goalkeeper in Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Italy's biggest weapon is in the dugout, although Luciano Spalletti has not been in the job long. If France, England and Portugal under-perform, and the draw is kind, you never know!

SQUAD

Guglielmo Vicario	GK
Gigi Donnarumma	GK
Alex Meret	GK
Federico Gatti	DF
Gianluca Mancini	DF
Matteo Darmian	DF
Federico Dimarco	DF
Raoul Bellanova	DF
Alessandro Bastoni	DF
Andrea Cambiaso	DF
Riccardo Calafiori	DF
Alessandro Buongiorno	DF
Giovanni Di Lorenzo	DF
Jorginho	MF
Bryan Cristante	MF
Nicolò Barella	MF
Nicolò Fagioli	MF
Michael Folourunsho	MF
Davide Frattesi	MF
Lorenzo Pellegrini	MF
Gianluca Scamacca	FW
Mattia Zaccagni	FW
Giacomo Raspadori	FW
Federico Chiesa	FW
Mateo Retegui	FW
El Shaarawy	FW

Manager: Luciano Spalletti

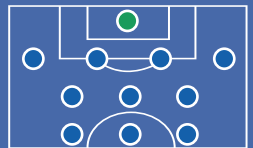
FIXTURES

15/6 VS

20/6 VS

24/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker
say...
Quarter-finals

Bet365
say...
14/1



CROATIA

Nation specialist: Lovre Nikolac ✕ @CroatiaFooty

The 2018 FIFA World Cup runners-up and 2022 FIFA World Cup semi-finalists once again land at a major tournament billed as 'dark horses' despite being almost comically experienced on the big stage.

With a timeless spine featuring the evergreen Luka Modric, Croatia will aim to replicate their strong World Cup campaigns at a European Championships - the Vatreni having failed to reach the last eight of this tournament since losing on penalties to Turkey back in 2008.

Star Player

Still defying time and still world-class at 38, it's hard to look past Luka Modrić while he's still going strong. He continues to run Croatia's midfield and control the tempo of games and, as captain, he will look to inspire his team-mates in what could well be his last major tournament for Croatia.

Now a six-time Champions League winner, Modrić

rarely goes the distance in games these days, but he remains a class apart.

Young Gun

Given that he plays like a seasoned veteran for the Premier League champions, it is easy to forget that Joško Gvardiol is still just 22.

One of the players of the tournament at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar - when he was only 20 - Gvardiol has only improved since joining Manchester City from RB Leipzig.

After establishing himself as first-choice under Pep Guardiola, Gvardiol will seek to polish an already sparkling reputation back in Germany.

Wild Card

Now 32, Andrej Kramarić has scored 17 goals and provided six assists this season for Hoffenheim, with a significant portion of those numbers coming at the tail end of the season prior to the tournament.

He's heading to Germany in fantastic form, and it wouldn't be a surprise if the former Leicester City man continues his hot streak. Not considered a decisive player for the national team, Kramarić could change that perception this summer.

Opinion

We've managed to avoid injury issues, so our 26-man squad is as strong as it could be.

Perišić's return from his ACL injury is fantastic news and, although our qualifying campaign wasn't the best, there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic ahead of the Euros.

Our squad is well-balanced with good depth, including players from our domestic league like Marko Pjaca, Bruno Petković, and Marco Pašalić. We aim to finally win a knockout game in the Euros and at least reach the quarter-finals...if we do, don't bet against us.

GROUP B

SQUAD

Nediljko Labrovic	GK
Dominik Livakovic	GK
Ivica Ivusic	GK
Josip Juranovic	DF
Josip Stanisic	DF
Marin Pongracic	DF
Josko Gvardiol	DF
Domagoj Vida	DF
Josip Sutalo	DF
Borna Sosa	DF
Martin Erlic	DF
Lovro Majer	MF
Martin Baturina	MF
Nikola Vlasic	MF
Mateo Kovacic	MF
Luka Modric	MF
Marcelo Brozovic	MF
Mario Pasalic	MF
Luka Sucic	MF
Marco Pasalic	FW
Ante Budimir	FW
Ivan Perisic	FW
Marko Pjaca	FW
Bruno Petkovic	FW
Andrej Kramaric	FW
Luka Ivanusec	FW

Manager: Zlatko Dalic

FIXTURES

15/6 VS

19/6 VS

24/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS



Playmaker
say...
Round of 16



Bet365
say...
40/1



SPAIN

Nation specialist: Anthony Kyaw [X @AnthonyKyaw](#)

Once upon a time, Spain conquered the world with a team full of top-class players. However, since their Euro 2012 triumph, they have struggled to relive their glory days.

This year though, La Roja can dare to dream again with an exciting new generation led by Luis De La Fuente, who was promoted from within after success at youth level. After winning the Nations League last summer, and an almost perfect qualifying campaign, Spain are in good shape.

Star Player

Spain may not have a golden generation anymore, but they do have a generational player in Rodri, who's been in amazing form.

For many years, Spain depended on Sergio Busquets who seemed impossible to replace, but Rodri has stepped up seamlessly.

At club level, he helped Manchester City make history by winning four

Premier League trophies in a row. Now he is ready to lead his country in challenging for the European trophy.

Young Gun

Spain have been blessed with many exciting young talents over the last few years, but one name stands out from the rest: Lamine Yamal.

Having made his Barcelona debut at just 15, to become the youngest player to appear for the club in a century, the teen prodigy has established himself as one of Blaugrana's key players.

While most 16-year-olds trade stickers of him at break time, Yamal will start for one of the pre-tournament favourites.

Wild Card

For those unfamiliar with La Liga, seeing Nico Williams play for the first time could be something of a shock.

A quick, direct and dynamic winger, Nico doesn't fit the mould of traditional Spanish

players, but he is likely to be key for La Roja at Euro 2024.

Still only 21, Williams helped Athletic win the Copa del Rey for the first time in 40 years and is already linked with a big move this summer.

Opinion

Spain are flying under the radar a bit ahead of the tournament with the focus on France, England and hosts Germany.

That can be a good thing. Since taking over, De La Fuente has combined possession-based football with pacy, direct wingers and it has yielded results.

Even without a world-class striker, Spain have hit 25 goals in their last eight games and a leaky defence - with keeper Unai Simón particularly shaky - is more of a concern.

Winning the Euros may be too much to ask from this young generation, but they could go close.

GROUP B

SQUAD

David Raya	GK
Álex Remiro	GK
Unai Simón	GK
Dani Carvajal	DF
Robin Le Normand	DF
Nacho Fernández	DF
Dani Vivian	DF
Álex Grimaldo	DF
Aymeric Laporte	DF
Jesús Navas	DF
Marc Cucurella	DF
Mikel Merino	MF
Fabían Ruiz	MF
Dani Olmo	MF
Álex Baena	MF
Rodri Hernández	MF
Martin Zubimendi	MF
Pedri González	MF
Fermín López	MF
Álvaro Morata	FW
Joselu	FW
Ferrán Torres	FW
Nico Williams	FW
Lamine Yamal	FW
Mikel Oyarzabal	FW
Ayoze Pérez	FW

Manager: Luis De La Fuente

FIXTURES

15/6 VS

20/6 VS

24/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker say...
Quarter-finals

Bet365 say...
8/1



SLOVENIA

Nation specialist: [Nik Jošt](#) @slovenihol

It's been 14 years since we last saw Slovenia in a major tournament when the country finished behind England and the USA at the 2010 World Cup.

We have to go all the way back to 2000 for their last European Championships. That time, Slovenia didn't win any of their three games but there is a feeling that Matjaž Kek's could surprise a few this year with a squad that has some star names in its ranks.

Star Player

The main man of the Slovenian team will without a doubt be their goalkeeper, Jan Oblak. Surprisingly, it will be the 31-year-old's first international tournament in his career.

The experienced Atlético man has a very important summer ahead of him, firstly with the national team where he will be a key figure and then possibly also securing a new team for himself with Oblak reportedly being hunted by

clubs from all over Europe, including Manchester United and PSG.

Young Gun

The present and the future of the Slovenian team is undoubtedly Benjamin Šeško. The RB Leipzig striker finished his season in the Bundesliga with 14 goals, impressively scoring in each of his last 7 appearances. At the age of just 20, Šeško has already struck 11 times for the national team and is set to become the top scorer of his nation in the future. He could end up not just being the young gun, but the star man too.

Wild Card

Josip Iličić returns for one final goodbye to the national team. After two difficult years for the former Atalanta man, Iličić is back to his best and back in the team. He may not be able to play the full 90, but in tight games, he could end up being the difference at a tournament like this. He wants it, the nation wants it, but we will

have to wait to see what impact his presence will have on the team.

Opinion

Slovenia face a very tough group, consisting of familiar foes. Although only ranked 57th in the world in the current Fifa rankings, Slovenia normally perform well against 'bigger' sides and our recent friendlies underlined this - an underwhelming draw against Malta followed by victory over Portugal.

Indeed, since losing to Serbia in the 2022/23 Nations League campaign, results have been impressive. Slovenia have lost just twice in their last 19 games. Those positive results will boost Matjaž Kek's hopes that they can be high-achieving underdogs at the tournament and surprise everyone.

If we're realistic, probably the best we can hope for is a lucky third-placed finish in the group and a spot in the round of 16.

GROUP C

SQUAD

Igor Vekic	GK
Jan Oblak	GK
Vid Belec	GK
Miha Blazic	DF
Jaka Bijol	DF
Jure Balkovec	DF
David Brekalo	DF
Vanja Drkusic	DF
Erik Janza	DF
Zan Karničnik	DF
Petar Stojanovic	DF
Timi Eišnik	MF
Adam Cerin	MF
Gorenc Stančević	MF
Tom Horvat	MF
Jasmin Kurtic	MF
Sandi Lovrić	MF
Adrian Zeljkovic	MF
Josip Iličić	FW
Zan Celar	FW
Zan Vipotnik	FW
Andraz Sporar	FW
Benjamin Sesko	FW
Jan Mlakar	FW
Benjamin Verbic	FW
Nino Zugelj	FW

Manager: Matjaž Kek

FIXTURES

16/6 VS

20/6 VS

25/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker
say...
Group stage
exit

Bet365
say...
250/1



ENGLAND

Nation specialist: ✂ Richard Cole @filippoinzaghi for @playmaker_EN

This may well be the last hurrah for the man who got the Three Lions to their first-ever European Championship final at Euro 2020 before disappointment against Italy at Wembley.

Gareth Southgate's future is uncertain with the manager yet to decide whether to stay on or try something new after eight years in the role. This tournament could be a dream send-off for a fresh-looking England squad that includes one of the best players in the world, Jude Bellingham.

Star Player

It's been a strange season for Harry Kane who made his switch to Bayern Munich only to have had the bad fortune to join in an incredibly rare trophyless season.

However, Bayern's failures are nothing to do with the England captain who scored 44 goals and made 12 assists in 45 appearances in Germany.

Perhaps Kane can take out any frustration from the 2023/24 season on

England's opponents – he is vital to Southgate's side.

Young Gun

Jude Bellingham could arguably have been in the 'main man' category but it's still surprising to think that the midfielder is just 20.

After making his move from Borussia Dortmund to Real Madrid, Bellingham was completely unfazed by playing for Europe's most successful side. The former Birmingham man scored 23 goals in 43 games as his side went on to win La Liga and the Champions League against his former side.

Is there any player better than Bellingham in his age group?

Wild Card

One huge surprise regarding England's final 26-man squad was that it included more players from Crystal Palace than any other team - and Eberechi Eze's inclusion is particularly exciting.

Preferred to Jack Grealish, Eze enjoyed a storming finish to

last season and his ability to drift past players and create danger marks him out as a special talent. The Three Lions are blessed with some fantastic attacking talent and Eze is a genuine game changer.

Opinion

It feels like we say this every time, but this could well be one of the best chances England have of lifting silverware at long last.

The Three Lions got agonisingly close in 2020 and there will be real determination to finally go that extra step.

Certainly, the talent is all there. We have already mentioned some of the names that are likely to shine going forward but as Gareth Southgate knows, it is defences that often win you tournaments and how England cope without injured stalwart Harry Maguire and potentially also Luke Shaw could define their tournament.

Could this be our year?

SQUAD

Jordan Pickford	GK
Aaron Ramsdale	GK
Dean Henderson	GK
Kyle Walker	DF
Luke Shaw	DF
John Stones	DF
Marc Guéhi	DF
Trent Alexander-Arnold	DF
Kieran Trippier	DF
Ezri Konsa	DF
Lewis Dunk	DF
Joe Gomez	DF
Declan Rice	MF
Jude Bellingham	MF
Conor Gallagher	MF
Eberechi Eze	MF
Adam Wharton	MF
Kobbie Mainoo	MF
Bukayo Saka	FW
Harry Kane	FW
Phil Foden	FW
Ivan Toney	FW
Anthony Gordon	FW
Ollie Watkins	FW
Jarrod Bowen	FW
Cole Palmer	FW

Manager: Gareth Southgate

FIXTURES

16/6 VS 

20/6 VS 

25/6 VS 

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS


Playmaker
say...
Final


Bet365
say...
3/1

SERBIA

Nation specialist: [Luka Trbović](#) [X @abrtt8](#)

Surprisingly, this is the first time Serbia has qualified in its own right for a European Championships despite having featured in three of the last four World Cups. In fact, Serbia were last at a Euro in 2000 when they were a part of Yugoslavia.

On paper, there are some outstanding talents among the squad many of whom have had impressive club careers at the highest level. And yet despite that there is a sense of pessimism among fans especially after a poor 2022 World Cup.

Star Player

Powerful striker Dušan Vlahović finished second in Serie A's goal charts in 2023/24 and he will pose a big threat to all three teams in Group C. At the 2022 World Cup, Vlahović shared equal billing up front with Aleksandar Mitrović, but he will be the main man at these Euros and the nation expects him to deliver. Powerful in the air, great in his hold-up play and a lethal finisher from open-play and dead-balls,

the Juve forward is an all-round centre-forward.

Young Gun

There is only a small pool of Under-23 players in this current Serbia team, but one really stands out - Strahinja Pavlović. The RB Salzburg man is a strong, left-footed centre-back who has already made 34 appearances for his country at the tender age of 23.

He may still be young, but Pavlović already has experience from the World Cup, Champions League, and Europa League under his belt and he enters the tournament in great form having been named in the Austrian Bundesliga's Team of the Season.

Wild Card

The prime candidate for Serbia's wildcard is Udinese midfielder Lazar Samardžić. Born in Germany, Samardžić has opted to represent Serbia and he will return to his birthplace after a fine season in Serie A where he was a key factor in helping the Zebras avoid relegation.

The 22-year-old has an eye for goal and is viewed as the natural heir to Serbian captain Dušan Tadić. The whole nation is hoping he can make a positive impact at the Euros - even if it is off the bench.

Opinion

Serbia went to the World Cup in Qatar with a spring in their step, but returned home lugging a suitcase full of failure and disappointment.

The manager remains the same, but Dragan Stojkovic has had trouble shaking Serbia out of their post-World Cup hangover and expectations are low ahead of this summer's tournament - the Serbian public unimpressed by a poor qualification bid.

Serbia have a history of under-achieving when expectations are high, but they could surprise with the pressure off.

You never quite know which Serbia will turn up and we could be dangerous in this group.

SQUAD

Djordje Petrovic	GK
Vanja Milinkovic-Savic	GK
Predrag Rajkovic	GK
Nikola Milenkovic	DF
Srdan Babic	DF
Filip Kostic	DF
Milos Veljkovic	DF
Strahinja Pavlovic	DF
Nemanja Gudelj	DF
Nemanja Stojic	DF
Uros Spajic	DF
Filip Mladenovic	DF
Srdjan Mijalovic	MF
Lazar Samardzic	MF
Mijat Gacinovic	MF
Nemanja Maksimovic	MF
Sergej Milinkovic-Savic	MF
Ivan Ilic	MF
Sasa Lukic	MF
Petar Ratkov	FW
Aleksandar Mitrovic	FW
Andrija Zivkovic	FW
Dusan Tadic	FW
Luka Jovic	FW
Dusan Vlahovic	FW
Veljko Birmancevic	FW

Manager: Dragan Stojkovic

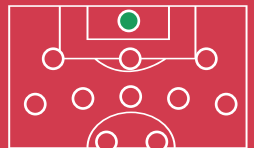
FIXTURES

16/6 VS 

20/6 VS 

25/6 VS 

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS


Playmaker
 say...
 Group stage
 exit


Bet365
 say...
 80/1



DENMARK

Nation specialist: *Toke Møller Theilade* ✕ @TokeTheilade

When we think of the Euros and Denmark there is always the memory of the famous 'Danish Dynamite' team. However, the Danes have never been able to replicate the surprise success of 1992.

Of course, the last time we saw Denmark at the Euros it was in 2020 when Christian Eriksen's cardiac arrest shook the football world. That incident seemed to spur the country onwards before a semi-final exit. Amazingly, he's back and fit again for Kasper Hjulmand's team.

Star Player

Christian Eriksen is coming off a difficult season at Manchester United, where he for the first time in his career wasn't a regular fixture. But he remains the cornerstone of the Danish team.

A playmaker in the midfield, everything offensively goes through him. The 32-year-old is also one of the most experienced players in the squad as well as a leader.

Denmark needs Eriksen at his very best if they are to live up to expectations and advance from the group.

Young Gun

There aren't a lot of young players on the Danish team, but Rasmus Højlund is arguably the most exciting player in the squad. The 20-year-old had a difficult start at Manchester United but grew as the season went on.

Højlund is Denmark's only proper number nine so there's a lot of pressure on his shoulders. Impressive during qualification, he needs to show that he can carry the team and score important goals against the biggest nations.

Wild Card

26-year-old winger Anders Dreyer had a fantastic season for Anderlecht with 17 goals and nine assists. Although he has only been capped three times at senior level so far, he could end up a key player at Euro 2024.

Denmark can struggle going forward, especially on the wings, but Dreyer has the ability to take control of games and decide them on his own.

Opinion

Denmark stole hearts and minds at the previous Euros, but that scenario is unlikely to happen this time. Kasper Hjulmand's troops have struggled since that magical summer – especially at the World Cup in Qatar.

The bland and uninspiring football continued into the Euro qualification with Denmark struggling offensively to create chances.

With the likes of Eriksen, Kjær and Schmeichel ageing, the next generation are struggling to break through at club level – many coming off sub-par seasons – and too many players are playing at a low level.

Advancing from the group stage would be a success for Denmark, but going any further than that is tough to imagine.

SQUAD

Kasper Schmeichel	GK
Frederik Rønnow	GK
Mads Hermansen	GK
Jannik Vestergaard	DF
Victor Kristiansen	DF
Rasmus Kristensen	DF
Joakim Maehle	DF
Alexander Bah	DF
Victor Nelsson	DF
Joachim Andersen	DF
Andreas Christensen	DF
Simon Kjær	DF
Christian Norgaard	MF
Pierre Højbjerg	MF
Morten Hjulmand	MF
Mathias Jensen	MF
Thomas Delaney	MF
Christian Eriksen	MF
Skov Olsen	FW
Anders Dreyer	FW
Mikkel Damsgaard	FW
Kasper Dolberg	FW
Bruun Larsen	FW
Rasmus Højlund	FW
Jonas Wind	FW
Yussuf Poulsen	FW

Manager: Kasper Hjulmand

FIXTURES

16/6 VS

20/6 VS

25/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS



Playmaker
say...
Round of 16



Bet365
say...
40/1

EURO FOOT AGEING

Words: Stephen Gillett



It's hard to deny that the modern world has an unhealthy obsession with the aesthetic side of life - your average Joe/Joanne desperately adopting the latest fads to trim blubber, unhunch shoulders and remove wrinkles.

Back in the old days, no one gave a goddamn hoot and - though Playmaker has failed to study the science on this - society was far more chilled out and self-accepting.

We salute the more psychologically-balanced trends of yesteryear, but - as X account 80s Footballers Ageing Badly has catalogued in detail - we also have to admit that most players these days look barely out of nappies compared to their grizzled counterparts of yore.

Therefore, ahead of the sticker-collecting craze that the 2024 edition of the European Championships will surely unleash, we asked FAB enthusiasts Winston and Craig to name us a Euro XI of footballers for whom time simply flew.



(age at time of photographs)

BALLERS ING BADLY



Clemot (25)



Drysdale (32)



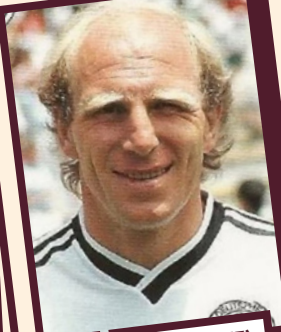
Leadbetter (33)



Pollak (35)



Borges (31)



Hoeness (33)



Bastrup (27)



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NETHERLANDS

Nation specialist: Michael Bell ✉ @MichaelJBell09

Fallers in the last 16 at the previous Euros, the Oranje have evolved nicely since losing to the Czech Republic at the Puskás Arena in the summer of 2021.

Manager Ronald Koeman inherited a talented squad from Louis van Gaal and guided it to the quarter-finals of the 2022 World Cup - only losing in extra-time to eventual winners Argentina - and after finishing second in qualification behind France, the Netherlands will be quietly confident of making a splash in Germany.

Star Player

With Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong withdrawing at the last minute, Ronald Koeman is having to roll with the considerable punch of losing his midfield kingpin. Although his tactics will need to be tweaked in de Jong's absence, Koeman will be relieved that he can count on the defensive stability provided by Liverpool colossus Virgil van Dijk.

Close to his best for much of the 2023/24 campaign, van Dijk is a proven world-class performer with a winning mentality.

Young Gun

The 21-year-old Xavi Simons heads to the Euros on the back of a fine season with RB Leipzig. An excellent dribbler, with a keen eye for goal, Simons is an exciting talent who can play on the wing or in the IO position.

So far unable to replicate his club form in a Netherlands shirt, this tournament would be the perfect place for Simons to prove any doubters wrong for the Oranje.

Wild Card

With fitness issues surrounding Memphis Depay, Ajax striker Brian Brobbey could start up front for the Netherlands.

Ajax have had a difficult season, but Brobbey has stood out with his consistently strong performances up front.

A powerful and quick attacker, Brobbey is a handful to mark and his finishing has improved drastically over the past 12 months. Brobbey could provide the spark the Netherlands need to go deep in the tournament.

Opinion

There is quiet optimism that the Netherlands have a squad capable of competing, but they need to navigate a tricky group containing France first.

The defence, led by van Dijk, will be key and Koeman will also hope that Memphis can reach his top level after an injury-hit campaign.

At Euro 88, the Netherlands won their only major trophy on German soil with Koeman part of the squad.

Could the Koeman and Germany factors foretell the end of the Oranje's trophy drought? With a bit of luck, it is possible.

GROUP D

SQUAD

Mark Flekken	GK
Justin Bijlow	GK
Bart Verbruggen	GK
Micky van de Ven	DF
Jeremie Frimpong	DF
Virgil Van Dijk	DF
Matthijs de Ligt	DF
Nathan Aké	DF
Lutsharel Geertruida	DF
Denzel Dumfries	DF
Stefan de Vrij	DF
Daley Blind	DF
Ian Maatsen	DF
Xavi Simons	MF
Tijjani Reijnders	MF
Jerdy Schouten	MF
Teun Koopmeiners	MF
Ryan Gravenberch	MF
Gini Wijnaldum	MF
Joey Veerman	MF
Brian Brobbey	FW
Memphis Depay	FW
Steven Bergwijn	FW
Cody Gakpo	FW
Donyell Malen	FW
Wout Weghorst	FW

Manager: Ronald Koeman

FIXTURES

16/6 VS 

21/6 VS 

25/6 VS 

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS


Playmaker
say...
Quarter-finals


Bet365
say...
16/1



Nation specialist: *Kris Carpenter* ✂ @KC_Runz

Didier Deschamps is sweating on the fitness of Mike Maignan and Aurélien Tchouameni, but his squad - on paper - is arguably stronger than the one that reached the 2022 World Cup final.

They have lost a couple of friendlies, but Les Bleus were unbeaten in qualifying and are many people's favourites to win the tournament. With a cast of experienced veterans plus a flood of exciting youngsters, Deschamps has all the tools at his disposal...can he effectively deploy them?

Star Player

Stuck in second gear since he announced his departure from PSG in February, Kylian Mbappé is well-rested ahead of the Euros - and the stage is set for the 25-year-old to reassert his credentials as the best player in the world.

It may sound odd given his hat-trick in the 2022 World Cup final, but the electric forward had a few low key

games in Qatar and Didier Deschamps' job is to extract the best version of Mbappé in Germany.

Young Gun

His team-mate Warren Zaire-Emery deserves a mention given his rapid rise to prominence, but watch out for Bradley Barcola.

The 21-year-old joined PSG from Lyon for big money and, despite the pressure heaped on his shoulders, he has outperformed the likes of Randal Kolo Muani and Ousmane Dembele for the Parisians.

A genuine game changer with bags of pace, Barcola will likely start on the bench -but he could play his way into Deschamps' starting XI.

Wild Card

He is slightly down the pecking order, but Marcus Thuram has the ability to make a splash at the tournament.

He has been very good in his first season in Serie A at Inter and his ability to play in

a two up front gives France options should they wish to do the same at the Euros. Olivier Giroud and Kolo Muani may start ahead of Thuram, but he could thrive if given the nod.

Opinion

France are one of the strong favourites to win the tournament, but I fear two teams: England and Germany.

If Gareth Southgate's side get their act together, they could be hard to stop and people are underestimating Germany, who are a big threat with home advantage.

Within the French squad, there are areas to address. Will Deschamps change tack and select William Saliba, arguably France's most in-form defender? My main concern is that if 'The Reliables' (Griezmann, Rabiot, Mbappé etc) fail to fire, has the manager got a Plan B up his sleeve?

GROUP D

SQUAD

Alphonse Aréola	GK
Mike Maignan	GK
Brice Samba	GK
Jonathan Clauss	DF
Theo Hernández	DF
Ibrahima Konaté	DF
Jules Koundé	DF
Ferland Mendy	DF
Benjamin Pavard	DF
William Saliba	DF
Dayot Upamecano	DF
Eduardo Camavinga	MF
Youssef Fofana	MF
N'Golo Kanté	MF
Adrien Rabiot	MF
Aurélien Tchouaméni	MF
Warren Zaïre-Emery	MF
Antoine Griezmann	FW
Bradley Barcola	FW
Kingsley Coman	FW
Ousmane Dembélé	FW
Olivier Giroud	FW
Randal Kolo Muani	FW
Kylian Mbappé	FW
Marcus Thuram	FW

Manager: Didier Deschamps

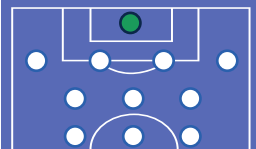
FIXTURES

16/6 VS

21/6 VS

25/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker
say...
Semi-finals

Bet365
say...
4/1



POLAND

National specialist: Ryan Hubbard ✕ @Ryan_Hubbard

Poland somehow made it to this summer's finals, despite finishing third in qualifying behind Albania and Czech Republic.

The Poles seized upon a Nations League lifeline, however, and play-off wins over Estonia and Wales (via a penalty shoot-out) secured their spot in Germany.

Losing quarter-finalists at Euro 2016, when they lost to eventual winners Portugal, Poland's only two European Championship victories came in that tournament and the odds appear stacked against them again.

Star Player

He may be the wrong side of 35 and slowing under the Catalan sun, but Robert Lewandowski is still the man the Biało-Czerwoni will turn to upon the German pitches he terrorised when at Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich.

Euro 2024 will likely be Lewy's last major international tournament and, while he will undoubtedly leave the

national team in a better state than when he joined it, he'll be desperate to go out with a bang.

Young Gun

The youngest member of the Polish squad, 22-year-old Nicola Zalewski is already an integral part of Michał Probiez's preferred eleven. Normally a midfielder, Zalewski has thrived as a left-sided wing-back at international level and chipped in with four assists since his coach's tactical tweak.

The Italian-born talent has found game time at AS Roma hard to come by since Jose Mourinho's exit and these Euros will provide a timely opportunity for him to showcase his skills.

Wild Card

There were high hopes for Jakub Piotrowski when he left Poland for Belgium in 2018; yet mediocre spells at Genk and Fortuna Dusseldorf had largely extinguished them by the time he arrived at Ludogorets in 2022.

However, the now-26-year-old has been rejuvenated in Bulgaria and is finally showing signs of fulfilling his potential. He only made his senior international debut in October, but Piotrowski has admirably filled Grzegorz Krychowiak's shoes and even bagged a couple of goals.

Opinion

With three defeats from their opening five games in qualifying, the Poles were extremely lucky to reach Germany.

Since former U21 coach Probiez replaced Fernando Santos, both performances and morale have improved tenfold. However, Poland are reliant on the aging Lewandowski and Szczęsny and are the lowest-ranked team in the 'Group of Death'. So, all the signs point to an early exit.

Barring disaster, Probiez's job isn't solely dependent on results in Germany; he is seen as the man to transition the Reprezentacja to its next generation.

SQUAD

Lukasz Skorupski	GK
Wojciech Szczesny	GK
Marcin Bulka	GK
Jan Bednarek	DF
Bartosz Bereszynski	DF
Pawel Dawidowicz	DF
Jakub Kiwior	DF
Bartosz Salamon	DF
Tymoteusz Puchacz	DF
Sebastian Walukiewicz	DF
Przemyslaw Frankowski	MF
Damian Szymanski	MF
Sebastian Szymanski	MF
Nicola Zalewski	MF
Piotr Zielinski	MF
Bartosz Slisz	MF
Jakub Piotrowski	MF
Jakub Moder	MF
Taras Romanczuk	MF
Kacper Urbanski	MF
Robert Lewandowski	FW
Krzysztof Piątek	FW
Michał Skoras	FW
Karol Swiderski	FW
Kamil Grosicki	FW
Adam Buksa	FW

Manager: Michał Probiez

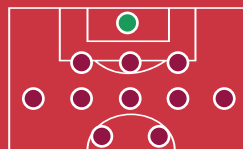
FIXTURES

16/6 VS

21/6 VS

25/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker say...
Group stage exit

Bet365 say...
150/1



AUSTRIA

Nation specialist: Anna Konovalova ✂ @FussballAnna

The Austrian national team has undergone a full-scale revolution since the arrival of German mastermind Ralf Rangnick in 2022.

Although derided for his lack of impact at crisis-hit Manchester United back in 2022, Rangnick has left no stone unturned since taking the reins of Das Team two years ago. With a new style, new names, new key stars, and fresh strategical decisions at the federation, Austria could surprise a few at these Euros.

Star Player

With David Alaba only at the tournament as a non-playing captain and Marko Arnautovic prepping for his own 'Last Dance', all eyes will turn to Marcel Sabitzer, who has been groomed to take centre stage under Rangnick.

Or not truly central: as Sabitzer's current role for Austria is off the left flank. Still only 30, Sabitzer has been outstanding all season in central midfield at Borussia Dortmund,

his stellar performances helping 'Der Bvb' reach the Champions League final.

Young Gun

Austria's current crop is packed full of exciting young players ready to replace the old guard. Two prospects certain to feature heavily are RB Leipzig pair Nicolas Seiwald and Christoph Baumgartner.

The former is a tireless midfielder, while Baumgartner is a versatile attacker who embodies Rangnick's attacking style: industrious, quick in transition and with a great football IQ. He's the perfect link between the lines, and his silky touch offers Austria genuine incision in attack.

Wild Card

With 36 goals in 111 internationals, it does Marko Arnautovic a disservice to describe him as a wild card...but he fits the category so well!

A colourful character who dances to the beat of his

own drum, the Bologna winger enters the Euros after winning Serie A on loan at Inter - and he is a proven matchwinner.

Set to retire from international duty after the tournament, Arnautovic will want to go out on a high.

Opinion

The transformation of Das Team under Rangnick has been startling and the feeling in Austria is that the national team has been revitalised after years of Franco Foda's cautious tactics.

Many of the team graduated from the Red Bull school founded by Rangnick, so a lot of change has been possible in a short space of time. The counterpressing, verticality, aggression and fast transitions favoured by Rangnick run through the veins of this Austria side.

The loss of David Alaba and Xaver Schlager is a blow, but Austria could well emerge as dark horses.

GROUP D

SQUAD

Niklas Hedl	GK
Heinz Lindner	GK
Patrick Pentz	GK
Philipp Lienhart	DF
Gernot Trauner	DF
Kevin Danso	DF
Leopold Querfeld	DF
Phillipp Mwene	DF
Max Wober	DF
Stefan Posch	DF
Flavius Danilluc	DF
Florian Kainz	MF
Nicolas Seiwald	MF
Marcel Sabitzer	MF
Florian Grillitsch	MF
Chris Baumgartner	MF
Konrad Laimer	MF
Romano Schmid	MF
Matthias Seidl	MF
Marco Grüll	FW
Alexander Prass	FW
Patrick Wimmer	FW
Marko Arnautovic	FW
Michael Gregoritsch	FW
Andreas Weimann	FW
Maximilian Entrop	FW

Manager: Ralf Rangnick

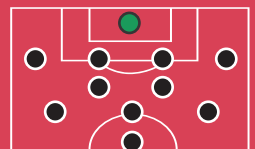
FIXTURES

17/6 VS 

21/6 VS 

25/6 VS 

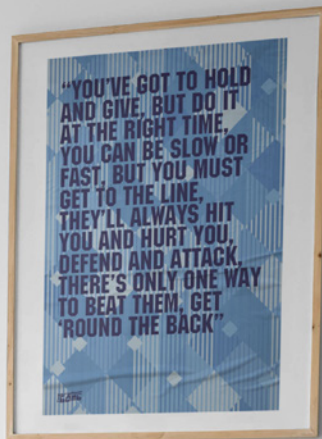
FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS


Playmaker
say...
Round of 16


Bet365
say...
80/1



Three lions on my chest, I know we can't go wrong



Double sided mug

Prints and mugs available at
www.etsy.com/uk/shop/TheGraphicBomb

Playmaker

Inspiration by numbers.





BELGIUM

Nation specialist: *Scott Coyne* ✂ @BelgianPodcast

Belgium's 'Golden Generation' may be a thing of the past, but could the Red Devils now thrive in the absence of huge expectations?

There are still some survivors from those much-hyped sides, which failed to deliver at major tournaments - Jan Vertonghen, Axel Wiesel, Romelu Lukaku and, most recently, Kevin De Bruyne all with a century of international appearances under their belts.

Manager Domenico Tedesco has included some much younger, exciting players in a squad that mixes youth with vast experience.

Star Player

As mentioned, Kevin De Bruyne recently won his 100th cap for Belgium and is a key player with significant tournament experience and influence within the squad. He must perform well if the Red Devils are to have an impact and progress - the team balance and opportunities created for the side are simply greater with him starting.

De Bruyne's technique, ability, and (perhaps most importantly) his vision are world-class. He is also that rare thing in football - a two-footed wonder!

Young Gun

A product of Mechelen and Anderlecht's academies, Johan Bakayoko has had an impressive season, helping PSV claim the Dutch title with 12 goals.

Tenacious, versatile and unpredictable, the 21-year-old winger has technique, pace and an aggressive directness in taking on defenders. He made eight appearances in qualifying but can he now grab an opportunity to make a name for himself at a major international tournament?

Wild Card

Despite breaking through in the qualifying campaign and having only three caps, 19-year-old Arthur Vermeeren is considered one of the hottest Belgian talents.

Since his move from Antwerp to Atlético Madrid in January,

the midfielder has made only five appearances for the Spanish giants, but such is his talent and flexibility, he has still made the final squad.

Not likely to start, but depending on circumstances his stock could rise even further.

Opinion

Belgium have shrugged off the shackles of previous expectations under Tedesco, who has led the Red Devils to Germany with an undefeated qualifying campaign. They come into the tournament as group favourites after a positive draw.

Tedesco has successfully blended a new team with a good combination of fresh talent and experienced campaigners. This has produced a more pragmatic side that has perhaps more options open to it tactically than previously.

Despite the air of positivity around the squad, it's worth highlighting that this side has yet to be seriously tested.

GROUP E

SQUAD

Thomas Kaminski	GK
Matz Sels	GK
Koen Casteels	GK
Maxim De Cuyper	DF
Thomas Meunier	DF
Jan Vertonghen	DF
Arthur Theate	DF
Zeno Debast	DF
Timothy Castagne	DF
Wout Faes	DF
Aster Vranckx	MF
Axel Witsel	MF
Kevin De Bruyne	MF
Orel Mangala	MF
Youri Tielemans	MF
Arthur Vermeeren	MF
Amadou Onana	MF
Jérémy Doku	FW
Johan Bakayoko	FW
Yannick Carrasco	FW
Leandro Trossard	FW
Lois Openda	FW
Dodi Lukebakio	FW
Romelu Lukaku	FW
De Ketelaere	FW

Manager: Domenico Tedesco

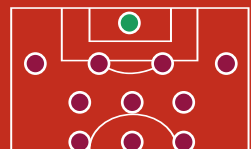
FIXTURES

16/6 VS

22/6 VS

26/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker say...
Quarter-final

Bet365 say...
16/1



ROMANIA

Nation specialist: Filip Buduru [X @RoFtbl](#)

Romania have only made it past the group stages once at a European Championships - way back in 2000.

Since then they have failed to qualify for three out of five tournaments. However, they go into this one with optimism after an unbeaten qualification bid that saw them top a group which included Switzerland.

There aren't quite as many household names compared to previous Romanian squads, but there's plenty of talent and the promise of a positive tournament.

Star Player

Nicolae Stanciu stands out as Romania's starman heading into Euro 2024.

The midfielder is the most experienced member of the squad with a total of 68 caps, 14 goals, and eight assists. Stanciu is also one of two players to have been at Euro 2016 – even winning the penalty against France in the opening match.

In his deep-lying playmaker role, Stanciu is indispensable to the team's dynamic, and his precision from set pieces could be crucial for Romania.

Young Gun

The towering Tottenham defender, Radu Dragusin, represents the future of Romanian football. Dragusin was superb for Genoa in the first half of the season and showed his class at times for Spurs when given the opportunity.

At just 22, Dragusin has shown maturity beyond his years, and his physical presence and aerial ability make him a formidable defensive presence.

Euro 2024 provides a perfect stage for Dragusin to cement his place as a stalwart in Romania's defensive line.

Wild Card

Ilanis Hagi, with his flair and creativity, could be the wild card for Romania in this tournament.

Despite having had troubles with injuries and inconsistent performances, Ilanis has also shown his technical skill and ability to produce moments of magic.

Against tight defences, he could come in handy when Romania need a flash of brilliance.

Opinion

Under the guidance of Edi Iordanescu, Romania have fostered a strong team spirit and a unified group, evident from their undefeated qualifying campaign, including a notable victory over Switzerland. While Iordanescu's selections have sometimes been debatable, his overall strategy has instilled a sense of hope and expectation among the fans.

The team's blend of experienced players and emerging talents provides a balanced squad capable of surprising many, even with the magical Olimpiu Morutan missing out due to an Achilles injury.

GROUP E

SQUAD

Horatiu Moldovan	GK
Stefan Tarnovanu	GK
Florin Nita	GK
Nicusor Bancu	DF
Andrei Ratiu	DF
Bogdan Racovitan	DF
Andrei Burca	DF
Adrián Rus	DF
Ionut Nedelcearu	DF
Vasile Mogos	DF
Radu Dragusin	DF
Alexandru Cicaldau	MF
Darius Olaru	MF
Marius Marin	MF
Adrian Sut	MF
Ilanis Hagi	MF
Nicolae Stanciu	MF
Razvan Marin	MF
Florin Coman	FW
Dennis Man	FW
Deian Sorescu	FW
George Puscas	FW
Valentin Mihaila	FW
Denis Dragus	FW
Denis Alibec	FW
Daniel Birlicea	FW

Manager: Edward Iordanescu

FIXTURES

17/6 VS 

22/6 VS 

26/6 VS 

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS


Playmaker
say...
Round of 16


Bet365
say...
200/1



SLOVAKIA

Nation specialist: Richard Cole ✂ @filippoinzaghi for @playmaker_EN

Slovakia qualified with ease for the tournament losing only to Portugal in their qualifying group – a far better result than their poor 22/23 Nations League showing.

The build-up to this one hasn't been completely smooth sailing for manager Francesco Calzona, who had to do double duty in the run-up after taking over at Napoli for the final third of the season.

The Falcons will also need to navigate a tricky group without their talisman, the (internationally) retired Marek Hamšík.

Star Player

Paris Saint-Germain defender Milan Škriniar had the second half of his season disrupted by an ankle injury that required an operation. The 29-year-old wasn't a regular starter for his side after returning from injury but should be fit and ready to captain his country at Euro 2024.

The former Internazionale man is certainly 'the biggest' name in the Slovakia squad

and he will need to be at his best to ensure his side keeps out the rest.

Young Gun

Winger Leo Sauer joined Feyenoord from MŠK Žilina initially on loan in 2022 but only made his first team debut for the Dutch side this season.

It was quite a debut, though, as Sauer came off the bench to score a last-minute equaliser to earn Feyenoord a draw away at Rotterdam rivals Sparta.

Just 18 years old, Sauer still has a lot of developing to do but a tournament like this could help him break out.

Wild Card

A lot was expected of László Bénéas as a young player when parallels were drawn between him and Marek Hamšík, and his name was linked to some of Europe's biggest clubs.

Although he never lived up to that early hype, the now 26-year-old has been a key figure for Hamburger SV this

season with 15 goals and 12 assists in 30 games across all competitions - and if he can take his club form into this tournament he may make the difference.

Opinion

Being drawn against Belgium, Romania, and Ukraine makes progressing through Group E a very difficult prospect for Slovakia.

Calzona's team will have a tough time but there are reasons for cautious optimism especially after a promising qualifying campaign in which only Portugal could (narrowly) get the best of Slovakia.

Indeed, Slovakia progressed to the round of 16 in 2016 and were unfortunate last time out when they fell short of a best third-place finish on goal difference.

They will need to be near their best, but reaching the knockouts is certainly possible. Captain Škriniar will marshal a strong defence but the Falcons may find it difficult to score enough goals.

GROUP E

SQUAD

Marek Rodák	GK
Martin Dúbravka	GK
Henrich Ravas	GK
Peter Pekarik	DF
Denis Vavro	DF
David Hancko	DF
Norbert Gyomber	DF
Adam Obert	DF
Vernon De Marco	DF
Milan Škriniar	DF
Sebastián Kósa	DF
Patrik Hrosovsky	MF
Laszlo Benes	MF
Matus Bero	MF
Tomas Suslov	MF
Ondrej Duda	MF
Tomás Rigo	MF
Juraj Kucka	MF
Stanislav Lobotka	MF
Lukas Haraslin	FW
Ivan Schranz	FW
Róbert Boženík	FW
David Duris	FW
Leo Sauer	FW
Lubomír Tupta	FW
Dávid Strelec	FW

Manager: Francesco Calzona

FIXTURES

17/6 VS 

21/6 VS 

26/6 VS 

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS


Playmaker
say...
Group stage
exit


Bet365
say...
500/1



UKRAINE

Nation specialist: Andrew Todos [X @ZoryaLondonsk](#)

A lot has changed in the world since Ukraine were last at a European Championships. Back then, the Ukrainians finished third in their group and reached the quarter-finals before eventually losing 4-0 to England (Russia didn't get out of their group).

This will be the first major football tournament for the country since the invasion, so Serhiy Rebrov will be looking to make a statement with a team packed full of exciting talent in a group that should favour them.

Star Player

Viktor Tsyhankov has stepped up to become Ukraine's talismanic star over the past 18 months.

After years of being pushed out left to accommodate the influential but injury-prone Andriy Yarmolenko; Tsyhankov has now cemented his preferred right wing position after a stellar qualifying campaign.

Following a brilliant club season alongside teammate

Artem Dovbyk, the pair will be looking to replicate their Girona chemistry in Ukraine's attack in Germany – expect goals and assists!

Young Gun

During Euro 2020, a relatively unknown but highly rated 18-year-old was surprisingly included in the final squad. He didn't make an appearance but the experience benefitted him..

Now 21, Shakhtar's attacking midfielder Giorgi Sudakov is one of the first names on Rebrov's team sheet.

He possesses strong dribbling, passing, and vision that includes ways of unlocking his ex-club teammate Mykhaylo Mudryk. Shakhtar's next big guaranteed outgoing!

Wild Card

Amid his breakthrough season at Dynamo Kyiv, 22-year-old defensive midfielder Volodymyr Brazhko won his first Ukraine call-up in March following

the injury-related withdrawal of veteran Taras Stepanenko.

Nobody expected the uncapped rookie to feature in the Euro play-offs, but Brazhko started against Bosnia and Iceland ahead of 33-year-old Serhiy Sydorchuk and impressed.

As an assured and consistent performer, especially defensively, he should get minutes.

Opinion

As the war with Russia continues to rage on back home; Ukraine's young squad will be out to showcase their country's defiance and resilience with uplifting performances on the pitch for their compatriots back home.

Making it out of the group is the primary task at hand. Anything beyond that would be a great bonus.

GROUP E

SQUAD

Anatoliy Trubin	GK
Georgiy Bushchan	GK
Andriy Lunin	GK
Valeriy Bondar	DF
Oleksandr Zinchenko	DF
Bogdan Mykhaylichenko	DF
Maksym Talovjerov	DF
Oleksandr Svatok	DF
Illia Zabarnyi	DF
Vitaliy Mykolenko	DF
Oleksandr Tymchuk	DF
Mykola Matvienko	DF
Yukhym Konoplia	DF
Serhiy Sydorchuk	MF
Georgiy Sudakov	MF
Taras Stepanenko	MF
Ruslan Malinovskyi	MF
Volodymyr Brazhko	MF
Mykola Shaparenko	MF
Roman Yaremchuk	FW
Artem Dovbyk	FW
Andriy Yarmolenko	FW
Vladyslav Vanat	FW
Mykhaylo Mudryk	FW
Viktor Tsygankov	FW
Oleksandr Zubkov	FW

Manager: Sergiy Rebrov

FIXTURES

17/6 VS

21/6 VS

26/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker
say...
Round of 16

Bet365
say...
100/1

PORTUGAL

National specialist: **Vasco Sousa** ✂ @playmaker_PT

With a 100% record in qualifying, Portugal enter the Euros with one of the best squads in their history.

Under Roberto Martinez, Portugal scored more goals, and conceded fewer, than any team in qualifying and are among the favourites to win out in Germany.

European champions in 2016, the 'Seleção' have a squad packed with elite performers and arguably Martinez' biggest issue is how to maximise the wealth of talent at his disposal.

Star Player

Cristiano Ronaldo scored 50 goals this season for Al Nassr and remains a certain starter, but - for the first time in a very long time - he is not Portugal's best player. Bernardo Silva is.

A favourite of Man City boss Pep Guardiola, Silva excels at everything: he scores, he assists, he is tactically almost perfect. After missing the 2016 European Championship success due to injury, Silva will want to make a mark in Germany.

Young Gun

Benfica have some excellent young players in Portugal's squad, in the form of defender António Silva and midfielder João Neves, but Porto's Francisco Conceição is the newest kid on the block.

The son of Porto coach Sergio Conceição only debuted for the Seleção back in March, but he is a talented winger with a penchant for mazy dribbles.

Roberto Martinez described Conceição as "a troublemaker" (in a good way, we think!) when selecting him for these Euros.

Wild Card

Gonçalo Ramos introduced himself to the world in sensational style at the 2022 World Cup when he relegated Cristiano Ronaldo to the bench and then promptly scored a hat-trick against Switzerland.

He has had teething problems at PSG following his switch from Benfica last summer, but the 22-year-old

is a multi-faceted finisher and still managed to score 14 goals for the French champions.

Ramos is expected to start on the bench...but he is unlikely to stay there!

Opinion

Although they rate this squad of players very highly, fans of the Seleção still have vivid memories of their loss to Morocco at the last World Cup.

That defeat served as a warning that Portugal can lose games against theoretically 'inferior' opposition.

Despite such reservations, Portugal are bursting at the seams with quality players - and the hope is that Bruno Fernandes and Bernardo Silva can come into their own at the tournament.

The quarter-finals are seen as a bare minimum and the feeling is that once in the knockout stages, anything can happen.

SQUAD

Rui Patrício	GK
José Sá	GK
Diogo Costa	GK
Nélson Semedo	DF
Pepe	DF
Rúben Dias	DF
Diogo Dalot	DF
Gonçalo Inácio	DF
Nuno Mendes	DF
João Cancelo	DF
António Silva	DF
João Palhinha	MF
Bruno Fernandes	MF
Bernardo Silva	MF
Daniilo Pereira	MF
João Neves	MF
Matheus Nunes	MF
Rúben Neves	MF
Vitinha	MF
Cristiano Ronaldo	FW
Gonçalo Ramos	FW
João Félix	FW
Rafael Leão	FW
Diogo Jota	FW
Pedro Neto	FW
Francisco Conceição	FW

Manager: Roberto Martinez

FIXTURES

18/6 VS 

22/6 VS 

26/6 VS 

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS


Playmaker
say...
Semi-finals


Bet365
say...
8/1



Nation specialist: Tomáš Daníček X @czechfooty

The Czech Republic eventually managed to negotiate a turbulent qualifying bid by securing one of Group E's two automatic spots.

However, coach Jaroslav Silhavy departed after securing the Czechs' place at these finals, the 62-year-old quitting due to the "anger and aggression" directed his way by critics.

Back for a second stint in charge of the national team, Ivan Hašek has had little time to prepare his side - and they have landed themselves a very tough group.

Star Player

His glory days at West Ham might be behind him, but the Czech's captain and most-capped player at the tournament, Tomáš Souček, is the emotional leader and lynchpin of his national team.

Under new coach Hašek, Souček seems to have been given a greater freedom to bomb forward and threaten in the box, while

retaining his status as the Czech's defensive shield and aerial lieutenant.

Young Gun

Matěj Jurásek is the youngest member of this Czech squad and he will look to build on his strong showings in the youth ranks at last summer's U-21 European Championships.

The 20-year-old has forced his way into the starting line-up at Slavia Prague, who finished runners-up to rivals Sparta Prague in the Czech top flight, and he is an exciting prospect with his own signature move: a far-post curler off the right wing.

Wild Card

From starting in a relegation play-off for FK Pardubice 12 months ago to propping up Plzeň's defence on their way to a historic European quarter-final, Robin Hranáč has come a long way in a short time.

Now, after earning his first international cap in a 2-1 win

over Armenia in March, the defender is poised to start at Euro 2024.

Dependable, with top-notch anticipation and covering pace, Hranáč was born for the middle centre-back role.

Opinion

Although set to make an eighth straight Euros appearance, this Czech side are something of an unknown quantity.

Ivan Hašek is desperately trying to play his cards close to his chest prior to the tournament, openly admitting that the element of surprise could be his side's main strength.

The squad is tactically flexible and, while more reliant on domestic talent than during Czech football's heyday, I fancy the team to progress from the group. Once out of it, anything can happen - as the Netherlands found out at Euro 2020!

GROUP F

SQUAD

Jindřich Stanek	GK
Vítězslav Jaroš	GK
Matej Kovář	GK
David Jurásek	DF
Martin Vítik	DF
Vladimír Coufal	DF
Robin Hranáč	DF
Tomáš Holes	DF
David Zima	DF
Tomáš Vlček	DF
Ladislav Krejčí	MF
Lukáš Cerv	MF
David Doudera	MF
Pavel Sulc	MF
Ondřej Lingr	MF
Tomáš Souček	MF
Antonín Barák	MF
Lukas Provod	MF
Michal Sadílek	MF
Matej Jurásek	FW
Adam Hložek	FW
Václav Cerný	FW
Tomáš Chory	FW
Mojmír Chytil	FW
Patrik Schick	FW
Jan Kuchta	FW

Manager: Ivan Hašek

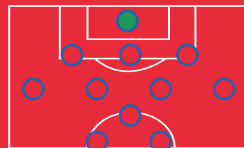
FIXTURES

18/6 VS

22/6 VS

26/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker say...
Group stage exit

Bet365 say...
150/1



TURKEY

Nation specialist: [Elnur Kuliev X @TRFootballUpdat](#)

Ahead of Euro 2020, many experts suggested Turkey were dark horses and 'ones to watch' - so inevitably they crashed out in the group stages having scored one goal and mustered only a single point.

This time, though, things may be different with Vincenzo Montella having an exciting crop of players to choose from: a few more young talents emerging to mix in with the experienced heads holding the fort in midfield and at the back.

Star Player

Despite his tender years, the star of this Turkish national team is Real Madrid wonderkid Arda Guler. Due to the sky-high standard of his club team-mates, Guler's playing time was limited for Los Blancos, but six goals in 10 La Liga games highlighted his undeniable talent.

Technically outstanding and with an uncanny appreciation of space, Guler is expected to start for

Turkey at these Euros and set to become a hero in his homeland.

Young Gun

After an outstanding season at Juventus, Kenan Yildiz is another exciting Turkish player to watch.

Yildiz came through Bayern Munich's academy, but rather surprisingly joined Juve's Under-19s in 2022/23.

The 19-year-old's decision to leave Bayern has paid off and he made 27 Serie A appearances this term, his ability to progress the ball and commit defenders catching the eye.

A fantastic goal against Germany last November showed he has what it takes at international level too.

Wild Card

Besiktas may have had a disappointing season, but one silver lining for the Turkish club was the emergence of 18-year old Semih Kilicsoy.

Eleven goals in 20 starts showcased the teenager's sharp goal-scoring instincts, and the homegrown forward weighed in with three assists to end the season as Besiktas' most productive player.

Kilicsoy can only benefit from the experience of being at the Euros, and has the ability to make an impact.

Opinion

Riding the crest of a wave of exciting young talent, Turkey arrive at these Euros buoyed by optimism and with plenty of expats ready to roar them on in the stands.

Filled with quality players from around Europe's 'Top 5' leagues, Turkish fans are hopeful this can be the year their team shake off their dark horses tag and actually perform.

If our young players can tread the line between fearless and naive, we can make a real impact. A quarter-final appearance could be on the cards!

GROUP F

SQUAD

Mert Gunok	GK
Ugurcan Cakir	GK
Altay Bayindir	GK
Samet Akaydin	DF
Ahmetcan Kaplan	DF
Abdulkerim Bardacki	DF
Ferdi Kadioglu	DF
Zeki Celik	DF
Merih Demiral	DF
Mert Muldur	DF
Kaan Ayhan	DF
Yusuf Yazici	MF
Ismail Yuksek	MF
Hakan Calhanoglu	MF
Arda Guler	MF
Okay Yokuslu	MF
Orkun Kokcu	MF
Salih Ozcan	MF
Baris Yilmaz	FW
Yunus Akgun	FW
Bertug Yildirim	FW
Kenan Yildiz	FW
Kerem Akturkoglu	FW
Irfan Kahveci	FW
Cenk Tosun	FW
Semih Kilicsoy	FW

Manager: Vincenzo Montella

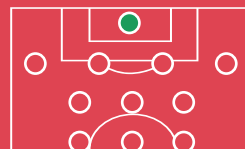
FIXTURES

18/6 VS

22/6 VS

26/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS



Playmaker
say...
Round of 16



Bet365
say...
50/1



GEORGIA

Nation specialist: Luka Lagvilava ✂ @GeorgianFooty

Under the management of former France international defender Willy Sagnol, Georgia have qualified for their first ever major tournament through the so-called 'back door' of the UEFA Nations League playoffs, defeating Luxembourg in the semi-finals and then Greece on penalties in the final in Tbilisi.

Much like North Macedonia at the previous Euros, there is a bit more about them than simply being the lowest ranked team at the competition.

Star Player

Shouldering the weight of expectation is Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, who is his country's third-highest scorer of all time at just 23 years of age.

Named Georgia's Footballer of the Year for four years straight, Kvaratskhelia has had a hand in 1/3 of his country's goals since 2022.

Nicknamed "Kvaradona", Kvaratskhelia helped Napoli secure their first league title

in 33 years in 2022/23 and was crowned Serie A MVP and Champions League young player of the season that same year.

Young Gun

Although Kvaratskhelia could obviously feature here as well, Georgia's team is filled with players who are yet to reach their prime.

Falling into the same age category as 'Kvaradona' are a young core of footballers, three of whom deserve a special mention.

Valencia shot-stopper Giorgi Mamardashvili, French-born Ajax forward Georges Mikautadze and Bordeaux winger Zuriko Davitashvili join Kvaratskhelia as the best youngsters on the team, and all of them are 23 or under.

Wild Card

A few Georgian players have created a name for themselves in Europe over recent years, but one player viewed as a national treasure back in the day was Giorgi Chakvetadze.

The first goal scorer in Nations League history enjoyed a spectacular campaign for Georgia in 2018, but has subsequently been troubled by injuries.

However, after rejuvenating his career in the Championship with Watford, Chakvetadze has doggedly worked his way back as a key component in Georgia's qualification.

Opinion

Not many expect Georgia to make an impact on their first-ever appearance at a major international tournament, but the hope is they can surprise people and make the knockout stages.

Driven by success at youth level, Georgian football has taken big strides over the past decade, and they are highly motivated to perform in Germany.

A push for a 'top 3' finish looks a possibility, but a group stage exit isn't far away from reality.

GROUP F

SQUAD

Luka Gugeshashvili	GK
Giorgi Loria	GK
Giorgi Mamardashvili	GK
Giorgi Gvelesiani	DF
Luka Lochashvili	DF
Jemal Tabidze	DF
Solomon Kverkvelia	DF
Guram Kashia	DF
Otar Kakabadze	DF
Giorgi Gocholeishvili	DF
Lasha Dvali	DF
Jaba Kankava	MF
Giorgi Kochorashvili	MF
Sandro Altunashvili	MF
Otari Kiteishvili	MF
Giorgi Chakvetadze	MF
Nika Kvekveskiri	MF
Anzor Mekvabishvili	MF
Georgiy Tsitaishvili	FW
Zura Davitashvili	FW
Khvicha Kvaratskhelia	FW
Giorgi Kvilitaia	FW
Levan Shengelia	FW
Georges Mikautadze	FW
Budu Zivzivadze	FW
Saba Lobzhanidze	FW

Manager: Willy Sagnol

FIXTURES

18/6 VS

22/6 VS

26/6 VS

FORMATION



PREDICTION/ODDS

Playmaker say...
Group stage exit

Bet365 say...
500/1



THE GREEK IDEAL

Words by Richard Cole

One of international football's biggest shocks happened two decades ago when Greece defeated hosts Portugal 1-0 in the Euro 2004 final against all the odds... 150/1 to be exact.

Greece's unlikely victory began with the appointment of Otto Rehhagel, who was reportedly chosen ahead of Terry Venables. Rehhagel was the man who transformed Werder Bremen from relative minnows into Bundesliga winners with his direct, traditional style of football. They are now a regular fixture in the top flight.

The outspoken manager began his stint disastrously.

Greece lost 5-1 to Finland with the German attempting more attacking football that didn't quite seem to work and reportedly then blaming his players for the result afterwards although he quickly adapted to a more defensive game that better suited the players available.

The next game after that was a famous one: a World Cup qualifier against England at Old Trafford where it was only David Beckham's stoppage-time free-kick that sent the Three Lions to the World Cup.

2001 ended when Greece lost 2-1 at home to Cyprus but things soon improved under Rehhagel. From 2002-2004, the Greeks lost only two of their next 24 games, recording wins in that time against the likes of

Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine... and getting the best of Cyprus in a rematch.

Their path to Euro 2004 saw them top their qualifying group one point ahead of the Spanish despite losing the opening two games. They won all their remaining fixtures.

Although Greece lost 4-0 to the Netherlands in the build-up to that memorable European Championships they went in with confidence, something that was displayed in the opening 2-1 win over Portugal in Porto (no one would have guessed a Greece win against the hosts would be how the tournament ended).

A draw with Spain before defeat to Russia came next yet the Greeks scraped through to the knockout

rounds by having scored two more goals than the Spanish.

The quarter-finals saw Greece face off against reigning champions France when the Greeks caused another upset.

Angelos Charisteas (who was playing for his manager's old team Bremen at the time) scored the only goal in a 1-0 win. After the game he described the win as "the greatest moment in Greek football," and that was true. For a few more days.

The semi-finals saw Greece play a Czech Republic side who had won all four of the games, including group stage wins over Germany and the Netherlands before a 3-0 win over Denmark in their quarter-final fixture. Greece were

helped by star player Pavel Nedved suffering an injury in the first half with the woodwork also denying Tomáš Rosický.

Charisteas was the man again in the final when he got to a corner before anyone else to head into an empty net with Portugal goalkeeper Ricardo in no man's land.

The striker often had to spend more time in his own box defending than going forward, but his efforts represented everything about Greece's heroic display at the Euros: resilient and selfless.

"It is the greatest gift that God ever gave us," captain Theo Zagorakis said after the final in which he put in a faultless performance.

"We are going to take this cup to Greek people all over the world. I think we have given them something more than joy.

"We have given them a great pride, which they will be able to carry with them for the rest of their lives."

A life-changing event

Naturally for the Greek squad, this was a monumental achievement and the peak of their careers.

That summer also went on to have a big impact in their lives going forward, beyond just being a Greek footballing god.

Captain Theodoros Zagorakis went on to be the president of his club PAOK and then represented Greece as an MEP. He wasn't the only one to get into politics, goal-scorer Angelos Charisteas became a member of his local government as well – clearly Euro 2004 as a vote-winner among the public. Similarly, Kostas Katsouranis became an ambassador for the UN.

The tournament also put players very firmly in the shop window. Michalis Kapsis earned a move to Bordeaux, while Vasilios Lakis moved to Crystal Palace for a fairly underwhelming season.

Displaying a rare level of loyalty, Nikos Dabizas, however, decided to stay at Leicester City despite their relegation from the Premier League.

Defender Giourkas Seitaridis impressed enough during his time in Portugal to earn a move to Porto who were at that time European champions themselves having won the Champions League under José Mourinho. Giorgos Karagounis also stayed in Portugal, although he had to wait until the following

year to make his move to Benfica.

Finally, Demis Nikolaidis hung up his boots after the game (he was also the president of AEK Athens at the time) to go out on the highest of highs.

No repeat shocks

Yet 20 years on, there has been no repeat of Greece's success and no other country has managed to copy the Rehhagel blueprint. Zambia's emotional 2012 AFCON win came close, but even the Zambians had far more favourable odds than the Greeks did.

Indeed, Greece fell back to earth soon after their once-in-a-lifetime victory. The newly-crowned European champions finished fourth in their 2006 World Cup qualification group of seven nations behind Denmark, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Rehhagel and his team did make it to Euro 2008 to defend their title, but the team in blue and white lost all three of their group games to Sweden, Russia, and Spain while scoring just one goal in the process.

There's very much a 'tournament' way of winning that emphasises organisation (or the ability to look like a club side) and the ability to pounce on the slightest opposition mistake.

Personifying the practicality of a man like Rehhagel, Greece were able to do it. And countries far bigger than Greece have cottoned on.



Portugal had Luiz Felipe Scolari for Euro 2004, but found their European Championship success under the far more pragmatic Fernando Santos who, of course, was the man to succeed Rehhagel as Greece manager in 2010.

In 2006, Brazil appointed Dunga a man who helped a team associated with 'jogo bonito' find a steelier side.

Then there's England who recruited the likes of Fabio Capello and Sam Allardyce (briefly) in order to prioritise winning as a tight on-pitch collective.

Gareth Southgate's brand of football could also be branded as that pragmatic style which saw Greece enjoy so much success.

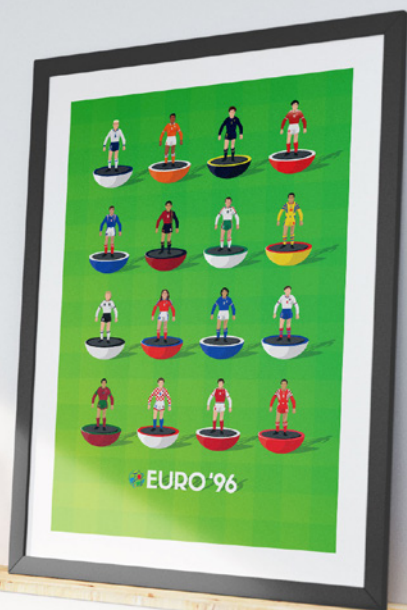
The Three Lions have always been defensively solid under Southgate and sought to make the most of opposition mistakes and capitalise on set-pieces.

Should England finally lift the European Championship this time then arguably the country will in some way owe a slight debt to 'King Otto' and his Greek warriors.



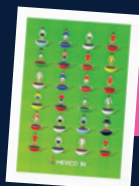
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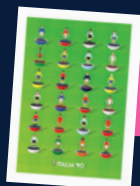


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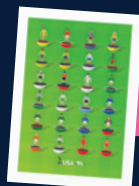
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PLAYER OF THE TOURNAMENT

- **1996:** Matthias Sammer (Germany)
- **2000:** Zinedine Zidane (France)
- **2004:** Theodoros Zagorakis (Greece)
- **2008:** Xavi (Portugal)
- **2012:** Andres Iniesta (Spain)
- **2016:** Antoine Griezmann (France)
- **2020:** Gianluigi Donnarumma (Italy)



Player of the Tournament was only introduced in 1996

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THE DIRECTORY

The Delta's address book is rammed with contacts relating to domestic football, but our network of international friends and contributors has also steadily grown on the back of our Euro and World Cup guides.

Although pinning down a pesky Slovakian proved beyond us, we are delighted to have teamed up with specialists from every other nation taking part at this summer's Euros - Playmaker, as usual, providing the narrative and analysis for the Three Lions (c'mon us!).

The amount of input/insight from our contributors has been huge and we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all of those involved.

True to form, Playmaker did the donkey work and left the Graphic Bomb to do the hard part: making the mag look beautiful. As always, the Bombers have toe-punted the ball out of the park; cheers, Darren and John!

This mag is a small example of how the beautiful game can unite people, and we'll wind up with a polite request to all of those travelling out to Germany: please be lovers not fighters...

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