



**Draw Procedures for the  
AFC Preliminary Draw for the  
FIFA World Cup 26™**

# Draw procedures for the AFC Preliminary Draw for the FIFA World Cup 26™

## SLOT ALLOCATION

The slot allocation for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for the FIFA World Cup 26™ is 8.5 teams.

## PRELIMINARY COMPETITION FORMAT

Similar to the preliminary qualification rounds for the FIFA World Cup 2022™ and the AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifiers, and taking into consideration the increased number of slots that have been allocated to the AFC for the FIFA World Cup 26, preliminary joint qualification for the FIFA World Cup 26 and the AFC Asian Cup 2027 will consist of three rounds as follows:

### ROUND ONE:

Twenty teams were drawn against each other to compete in home-and-away play-off ties in October 2023, with the ten winners advancing to round two of preliminary joint qualification.

### ROUND TWO:

Round two was played in a group-stage format across November 2023 and March and June 2024.

This round comprised of 36 teams, including the 26 highest-ranked teams as per the FIFA/Coca Cola World Ranking and the ten winners from round one.

The 36 teams were divided into nine groups of four teams, and each team played home and away against each other team in their respective group. The winner and runner-up in each of the nine groups (18 teams in total) have qualified to round three.

### ROUND THREE:

Round three will be played in a group-stage format across September, October and November 2024 and March and June 2025.

The 18 teams in round three will be divided into three groups of six teams each.

The top two teams from each of the three groups (six teams in total) will advance directly to the FIFA World Cup 26 finals, with the third- and fourth-placed teams in each group (six teams in total) advancing to AFC play-off matches to be played in October and November 2025.

Round three pot allocation:

The 18 teams in round three will be allocated to six pots of three teams each, based on the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking release of 20 June 2024.

The six pots representing the teams will be labelled team pots 1 to 6. The three highest ranked teams will be allocated to pot 1, the next three to pot 2, the next three to pot 3, and so on until all the pots are filled.

Each group will then be allocated one team from each team pot.

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|--|---|---|
| POT 1<br>Japan<br>Islamic Republic of Iran<br>Korea Republic | POT 2<br>Australia<br>Qatar<br>Iraq               | POT 3<br>Saudi Arabia<br>Uzbekistan<br>Jordan |
| POT 4<br>United Arab Emirates<br>Oman<br>Bahrain             | POT 5<br>China PR<br>Palestine<br>Kyrgyz Republic | POT 6<br>DPR Korea<br>Indonesia<br>Kuwait     |

Round three draw procedures:

The draw will start by drawing a team from team pot 6 and will end by drawing the last team from team pot 1. Each team pot will be completely emptied before moving on to the next pot.

Teams drawn from each pot will be allocated to groups sequentially from A to C. Thus, the team drawn first will be placed in Group A, the team drawn second in Group B, and the team drawn third in Group C. The process will be repeated until all six team pots are emptied.

The position that each team occupies in a group will be determined by the pot from which it is drawn. Thus, teams drawn from pot 1 will be placed in position 1 of each group, teams from pot 2 will be placed in position 2, and so on.

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|---|---|---|
| Group A<br><br>1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5.<br>6. | Group B<br><br>1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5.<br>6. | Group C<br><br>1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5.<br>6. |
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