

Top 5 Teams to Never Qualify for the World Cup Finals



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Out of all the FIFA World Cups in history, only a handful of nations have personally claimed the World Cup trophy, a feat only achievable by beating the other best nations at the time. Consistently, we've seen the same countries qualify for the final or even win the entire World Cup.

That's not to take away any credit from some of the other great nations that never make it past the semifinal stage, which is why, in this article, we'll discuss the top five teams to never make the World Cup Final. For this, we'll be using FIFA Men's World Rankings based on the year of each World Cup from the last few decades, which takes into account several factors.

Best teams to never qualify for a World Cup Final

#5 - Colombia

You may be surprised to see Colombia as one of the top five teams to never reach the World Cup Final, but it's true. As the only South American nation on this list, Colombia kicks it off as one of the few countries to consistently make it into the top 50 teams on the FIFA world rankings.

Having been ranked as high as 3rd overall in 2014, Colombia was eliminated by hosts Brazil in the 2014 World Cup at the quarterfinals stage, which is the furthest they've ever gone in the competition. They're easily one of the best teams to never make the World Cup Final.

#4 - Switzerland

As one of three European countries we mention in this article, Switzerland is another one of the top five teams to never reach the World Cup final based on their FIFA Men's World Rankings and World Cup performances. Switzerland, over the last few decades, has consistently climbed from the top 40 to the top 20 teams playing in a World Cup tournament.

That success has been much more apparent in recent years, like their 2018 World Cup run, where they reached the quarterfinals and finished the year ranked 8th overall in the FIFA world rankings. In both 2014 and 2022, Switzerland stayed ranked 12 overall but failed to even make a final in those years, making them one of the best teams to never make the World Cup Final.

#3 - Mexico

Similar to Portugal's experience, but the only North American team on this list, Mexico has performed well throughout most international tournaments again and again, yet they still failed to reach a World Cup Final specifically. Since 1998, Mexico has broken into the FIFA top 10 world rankings multiple times and as high as rank 8 in 2002.

Even so, Mexico performs well regardless of how far they make it, consistently placing in the top 25 teams by FIFA world rankings, reaching only as low as rank 27 within the last two decades. Still, Mexico is one of the top teams to never make the World Cup Final.

#2 - Portugal

From 2006 to 2022, Portugal always placed in the top 10 ranked teams by FIFA World Rankings (11th in 2002). Despite consistently placing 8th, 9th, and as high as 6th during 2018, Portugal never made the finals of the World Cup. With players like Cristiano Ronaldo leading the team, Portugal would only win the 2018 Euros by a thin margin.

Although Portugal has a great winning track record, they are certainly one of the top five teams to never make the World Cup Finals, as you'd expect any team ranked that high for that long to be in at least one.

#1 - Belgium

For World Cup-based performances, you might share pity with Belgian players and fans when you consider how many times they were ranked in the top five FIFA world rankings but still failed to even make a World Cup final.

Belgium started to show its strength as early as the 2002 World Cup at rank 17, before dropping significantly out of the top 50 teams in 2006 and 2010. But not long after in 2014, they'd finish at rank number four overall. Then in 2018, they'd be the number one team overall before dropping to number four again for the latest 2022 World Cup team rankings. Regardless of where they are ranked, Belgium is one of the top five teams to never make the World Cup Finals.