

# Trump loudly booed at World Cup final in New Jersey

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20 July 2026

There were two noteworthy events at Sunday's World Cup final match in New Jersey. Spain defeated Argentina 1-0, on the strength of a defense so suffocating that Argentina did not record a shot on goal until the 116th minute of the contest. And US President Donald Trump was heavily booed by the crowd as he walked onto the field to award the trophy to Spain's captain Rodri.

The hostile reception to Trump follows a similar one at Game 3 of the National Basketball Association Finals, held at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan. Trump avoided attending any of the matches played by the U.S. Men's National Team in the World Cup, almost certainly because they all took place on the West Coast, in Washington state and California, where he is widely hated and which he lost by landslide margins in the 2024 presidential election.

The response to Trump Sunday was significant because there were so many football fans from around the world in attendance, particularly from Spain and Argentina, obviously, but from many other countries, including the United States. Trump is even less popular around the world than he is at home.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, whose countries co-hosted the World Cup along with the United States, also congratulated the victorious Spanish team and shook hands with the players. Neither, however, tried to hog the stage, as Trump did, and neither was treated with any hostility by the crowd.

While the booing of Trump was quite audible on the television broadcast, according to on-the-spot press accounts the boos and whistles were far louder within the stadium itself, drowning out the music piped in as part of the award ceremony.

Trump and FIFA President Gianni Infantino jointly

carried the trophy to present it to the Spanish team, but Trump resisted Infantino's effort to usher him out of the picture-taking session which followed, and he stayed on the podium during the initial celebration, in a transparent and pathetic effort to claim the spotlight.

As one press account noted: "The reaction inside MetLife Stadium quickly became one of the most talked-about moments from the post-match celebrations, with videos of the boos circulating widely across social media shortly after Spain lifted the World Cup trophy."

There was ample reason for such a reaction, ranging from global outrage over Trump's criminal war against Iran to his threats to cut off all US trade with Spain in retaliation for the Spanish government's refusal to allow US bases in Spain to be used in that war. As for the US fans in the audience, they had just been subjected to Trump's Thursday night televised speech in which he laid the basis for a direct intervention into the 2026 midterm elections, using armed federal agents to intimidate voters.

Trump's own conduct during the World Cup added insult to injury. He blatantly interfered with disciplinary process, calling up Infantino to demand that FIFA suspend the red card issued to US striker Folarin Balogun for a foul, which would have prevented him from playing in the knockout second round match against Belgium.

Infantino did as he was told, and Balogun, who had accepted the consequences of his foul with grace, was allowed to play. The Belgian team was outraged, and they outplayed the US team by a wide margin, beating them 4-1.

One group of protesters outside the World Cup final distributed specially made red cards to fans going into the stadium, asking them to raise the cards against

Trump and Infantino as they presented the trophy after the match.

More ominous was the Trump administration's use of its powers as host country to exclude the Iranian team, which was not allowed to stay overnight on US soil. After each match, the Iranians were forced to go back across the border into Mexico, where they were welcomed with appropriate hospitality.

US immigration officials also expelled a FIFA-certified referee, Omer Artan, for the "crime" of bearing a Somali passport. Fans from several African and Asian countries were subjected to racial harassment and exclusion when they attempted to enter the US to cheer on their countries' teams.

An article in *Foreign Policy* magazine Friday gave details of a little-reported aspect of the Trump "welcome" to the World Cup. It was headlined: "The Soccer Surveillance State: How the United States used the World Cup as a testing ground for policing technologies."

The article described how security cameras and sophisticated software were used to spy on fans attending a June 13 match between Qatar and Switzerland at Levi's Stadium in the San Francisco Bay Area:

Long before fans watched Qatar and Switzerland take the field that day, the stadium watched the fans: tracking faces at the gates, flagging suspicious sounds in the crowd, and feeding a constant stream of data to an on-site control center, where it then became accessible to a network of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies coordinating security for the event.

The article noted that this surveillance regime was not limited to San Francisco or to the World Cup: "This system will not shut down when the World Cup ends: DHS budget documents reveal that the tournament is a testing ground for new surveillance technologies."

DHS classified some World Cup matches as SEAR 1 events, meaning that they require the same security planning tier as a presidential inauguration. Its contractors included IDEMIA, which provides

biometric technology for airport checkpoints, and Clearview AI, described as "a facial recognition platform built from 30 billion images scraped from the internet without express consent." All this data flows into a security center operated by Cisco Systems.

An April DHS budget document stated that the department planned to use the World Cup to "deliver a final assessment of the performance of a 360-degree camera and a video analytics capability" for a "large scale public event." The same budget names the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles as the next test case.

The *Foreign Policy* report concluded that "once all the fans have returned to their homes, the cameras will still be on at MetLife Stadium, Levi's Stadium, and all the other U.S. tournament venues, sending information to data centers and around the country. The World Cup will be finished, and DHS will have its trophy: layers of data collected and surveillance infrastructure tested, all ready for the next event."



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