

Germany 2018, France 2002 and the 17 most shocking group stage exits in World Cup history

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World Cup

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Jewel Samad

Goal takes a look at the most shocking group stage exits in the tournament's history

1. Getty Images

#1 Germany - 2018

An opening game loss to Mexico showed the vulnerability of the defending World Cup champions. However, Germany seemed to save themselves from the brink when, down a man, Toni Kroos scored against Sweden in stoppage time to snag a 2-1 victory in the second game.

But despite being heavily favored to grab three points against South Korea, Germany was unable to produce the result needed to get them through to the knockout round. South Korea's Kim Young-Gwon scored in stoppage time to put his side in front, stunning the Germans as they pushed for a winner. Heung-Min Son then added a second late on to shock Germany 2-0.

Thus Germany finished a shocking fourth in Group F, and become the fourth defending World Cup champion in five World Cup (France 2002, Italy, 2010 and Spain 2014) to go out in the group stage.

2. Getty

#2 France 2002

France had claimed the 1998 World Cup and were going into the 2002 finals in Korea and Japan with Thierry Henry, Djibril Cisse and David Trezeguet, top scorers in the Premier League, Ligue 1 and Serie A respectively during the 2001-02 season, leading their attack.

The French had every right to expect a strong run in Asia, grouped with Denmark, Uruguay and Senegal.

Not only did Les Bleus fail to get out of their group, however, they failed to score a single goal as they were beaten by Senegal and Denmark, while drawing 0-0 with Uruguay.

3. Getty

#3 Brazil - 1966

Two-time defending champions Brazil were infamously kicked out of the 1966 tournament by Portugal in their final fixture, having lost their second outing 3-1 to Hungary.

Pele, fresh from being the target of continued fouls against Hungary and then by Portugal's Joao Morais, vowed to never to play in the World Cup again once the Selecao were eliminated from the groups, such was his frustration.

4. Getty

#4 Italy - 2010

Marcelo Lippi returned as Italy manager in 2010, four years after guiding the Azzurri to glory in the previous World Cup, confident that the same group of players would have a good chance of doing similar in South Africa.

Draws against Paraguay and New Zealand in their first two outings were followed by a 3-2 defeat in their meeting with Slovakia and Lippi's men were dumped out of the groups in last spot.

Lippi was replaced by Cesare Prandelli soon after.

5. Getty Images

#5 Spain - 2014

Spain had lifted the World Cup trophy in 2010 and tasted victory at the European Championships either side of their South Africa feat, making their demise in 2014 even more spectacular.

Their tournament was over after just two games; the Netherlands easing past Vicente del Bosque's side 5-1 and Chile then recording a 2-0 victory in the second match.

6. historiadelfutbolboliviano.com

#6 Argentina - 1958

The 1958 World Cup marked the first finals in which Argentina appeared since 1934 and the Albiceleste went in as one of the pre-tournament favourites to claim the trophy.

They were beaten by holding champions West Germany in their opener, however, and humiliated 6-1 by Czechoslovakia in their final group game to eliminate them in last place with a goal difference of -10.

7. AFP/Getty Images

#7 Argentina - 2002

Group F was dubbed the 2002 'Group of Death', with Argentina, England, Nigeria and Sweden drawn together.

Favourites Argentina opened their campaign with a narrow 1-0 victory over Nigeria but fell to a defeat of the same scoreline against England, and then were held by Sweden in the final tie.

Sweden and England took their place in the round of 16, while Argentina were left licking their wounds having reached the quarter-final stage at the 1998 event.

8. Valderrama Colombia 1994

#8 Colombia - 1994

The 1994 World Cup followed the format of the 1990 tournament, with 16 of the 24 qualified teams progressing into the knockout round of the finals.

With potentially only one team being knocked out of the majority of groups, Colombia, in the midst of a 30-game unbeaten streak which saw them beat Argentina 5-0 in Buenos Aires, were confident in making a mark on the competition.

They lost two of their three Group A games, however, as Romania, Switzerland and host U.S.A entered the next stage.

9. Getty Images

#9 Portugal - 2002

Portugal were favourites to top Group D at the 2002 finals, with Poland, the U.S national team and South Korea their opponents.

They would later be eliminated by the latter, though, having already been beaten by the U.S in their first game.

Park Ji Sung scored the decisive goal as eventual group-winners South Korea sent Cristiano Ronaldo and his international team-mates home.

10. Getty Images

#10 Italy - 2014

Italy's 2014 campaign started with a 2-1 victory over England, a result which saw them likely contenders for the Round of 16 as Uruguay had lost to Costa Rica on the same day.

Two defeats from their following games would dump them out of the competition in the Group Stages for the second time in as many tournaments, while they have failed to even qualify for 2018.

11. Getty

#11 England - 2014

Along with Italy, England were eliminated from Group D in 2014.

The Three Lions failed to pick up a single victory at the tournament, their only point coming in a 0-0 draw with Costa Rica in their final encounter, and scored just two goals through Daniel Sturridge and Wayne Rooney.

12. #12 Spain - 1998

Spain were drawn in Group D at the World Cup 1998, alongside Nigeria, Paraguay and Bulgaria.

And although Javier Clemente's side beat the latter 6-1 when the two nations went head-to-head, it would be Nigeria and Paraguay who progressed into the next round as La Roja finished third of four.

13. Getty Images

#13 France - 2010

The 2010 World Cup was played amid a storm of controversy for the France national team, with the relationships between players, staff, media, fans and those at the top of the French Football Federation strained beyond repair.

A number of players were either sent home or refused to play for the national side as Les Bleus were beaten by Mexico and South Africa, following an opening 0-0 draw with Uruguay, leaving the tournament empty-handed.

14. Getty Images

#14 Portugal - 2014

Portugal's performances at World Cup finals had been mixed coming into the 2014 tournament in Brazil.

They ended the 2006 finals in fourth place before progressing into the round of 16 in 2010, but in 2014 Cristiano Ronaldo and Co. failed to get out of a group consisting of Germany, the U.S national team and Ghana.

While Portugal ended joint on points with the U.S, their 4-0 hammering at the hands of Germany earlier in the competition would see them eliminated with a inferior goal difference.

15. #15 USA - 1998

The U.S national team were fancied to make it out of a relatively easy group at the 1998 France World Cup but would be undone in a politically-charged clash with Iran in their second fixture.

Brian McBride's late strike was not enough to earn his side anything in a 2-1 defeat during a particularly hostile tie, and the U.S ended the campaign with three losses from three.

Germany and Yugoslavia both beat the U.S to nil in what was a miserable tournament for Steve Sampson's side.

16. #16 Belgium - 1998

Belgium had made it out of their group in three consecutive World Cup tournaments going into France '98 and would have fancied themselves to finish at least second in a group made up of the Netherlands, Mexico and South Korea.

The Red Devils failed to pick up a single victory, however, and were sent home with three draws to their name.

17. Twitter @SeFutbol

#17 Spain - 1978

The Spanish national side were by no means the international powerhouse they are now considered when they qualified for the 1978 World Cup, though they didn't expect to be toppled by Austria in their opening game of the tournament and dumped out of the competition after three games.

The sting of failing to get out of their group was made worse at the 1980 European Championship in Italy as La Roja picked up a single point before being eliminated at the bottom of Group Two.