

WORLD CUP 2022 DATA LED PREVIEW & SIMULATION

What do thousands of tournament simulations tell us about the World Cup?





FOREWORD

The four-year wait of the world's most popular sporting event finally ends as the FIFA World Cup 2022 kicks off in Qatar on November 20th. This will be a World Cup of firsts- the first to be played mid-season and the first to be hosted in the Middle East.

As 32 Nations compete for football's biggest prize, the question on everybody's minds is the same- which team is likely to go all the way? Will it be defending champions France, five-time champions Brazil or a Lionel Messi-led Argentina? Or will the lack of preparation time, hot conditions, and accumulated player workload give us some surprises?

In this report, we use the power of the SciSports analytics models to get key insights on player, team, group, and tournament level and answer the following questions.

- Which teams will qualify from each group?
- Who are the interesting young players to watch?
- How far will each team go?

Read on to find out.

Team SciSports

TOP 5 TEAMS BY SCISKILL

Country	Average SciSkill
England	111.8
France	107.6
Brazil	105.8
Germany	105.3
Spain	102.3

According to our SciSkill Index, the Three Lions top the chart ahead of France and Brazil for having the highest average of all squads in the competition.

TOP 5 OLDEST TEAMS

Country	Average Age
Iran	29.4
Mexico	28.9
Brazil	28.6
Argentina	28.4
Belgium	28.3

Brazil and Argentina are both tournament favourites and their experience might prove to be the difference in key moments.

TOP 5 TEAMS BY EXPECTED TRANSFER VALUE (xTV)

Country	Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)
England	€49.4m
Brazil	€44.4m
France	€39.1m
Germany	€35.7m
Portugal	€33.5m

Gareth Southgate's England also boast the highest average Expected Transfer Value, further establishing the quality within the side.

We will now go deeper into each team and group as we look to predict the winner.

GROUP A



The sheer quality of the Dutch squad should see them come out on top of this group with little trouble. Elsewhere, the uncertainty around the participation of the injured Sadio Mane, who is the player with the highest SciSkill in the group, could see a youthful and energetic Ecuador pip AFCON holders Senegal to a knock-out spot. Hosts Qatar are amongst the bottom 3 teams in the tournament for average SciSkill and will most likely struggle in their maiden World Cup appearance.



QATAR

Top Player by SciSkill	Akram Afif - 81.1
Average SciSkill	53.7
Average Potential	60.9
Average Age	27.5
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€1.0m



One to Watch - Akram Afif

Akram Afif will be hoping to replicate his domestic league form on the world stage. The 25-year-old registered over 25 goal involvements in the 2021/22 season and has some impressive performance metrics to back it up.



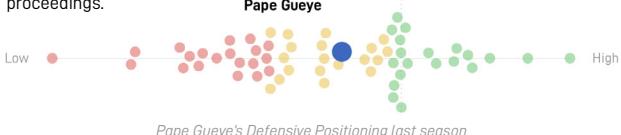
SENEGAL

Top Player by SciSkill	Sadio Mané - 148.9
Average SciSkill	80.9
Average Potential	88.9
Average Age	26.8
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€10.8m



One to Watch - Pape Gueye

Pape Gueye has struggled for game time this season with Olympique Marseille but should be a key part of Senegal's world cup side. If we look back at his 2021/22 metrics, the Defensive Midfielder will bring an element of security to proceedings.



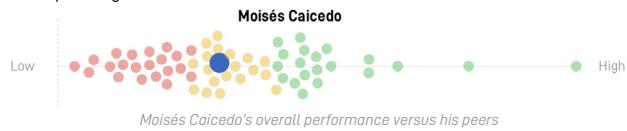
ECUADOR

Top Player by SciSkill	Pervis Estupiñán - 96.6
Average SciSkill	63.2
Average Potential	75.1
Average Age	26.0
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€4.6m



One to Watch - Moisés Caicedo

Moisés Caicedo has impressed for Brighton and Hove Albion this season and will likely be a key element for his national side. Ecuador came into the tournament with some interesting talents with Caicedo the pick of the bunch when you look at his pressing numbers.



NETHERLANDS

Top Player by SciSkill	Frenkie de Jong - 117.9
Average SciSkill	88.6
Average Potential	99.9
Average Age	27.1
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€23.2m



One to Watch - Frenkie de Jong

Frenkie de Jong's importance to the Dutch national team is crucial. As the key cog in central midfield, the 25-year-old's ball-carrying abilities will be key in connecting the dots for an interesting Dutch team.



GROUP A PREDICTION TABLE

Position	Team	Qualification Probability	Expected Points
1	Netherlands	90.10%	6.68
2	Senegal	65.37%	5.30
3	Ecuador	37.83%	3.26
4	Qatar	6.70%	1.44

GROUP B



England are the top team in the tournament for both average SciSkill and Potential. Despite failing to build on momentum from finishing runners-up at Euro 2020, the likes of Phil Foden, Raheem Sterling and 2018 World Cup golden boot winner Harry Kane, along with a great depth off the bench makes them a likely contender for the trophy. The Welsh team have a recent tendency to outperform in tournaments but will most likely lose out to a young USA side that now boasts several players playing at some of Europe's top clubs. Iran has never progressed past the group stage at a World Cup, and we predict a similar outcome this time around.



Top Player by SciSkill

Phil Foden - 141.5

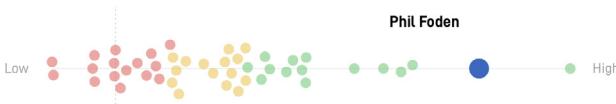
Average SciSkill	111.8
Average Potential	121.2
Average Age	27.0
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€49.4m



One to Watch - Phil Foden

Although a well-known name already, Phil Foden will be looking to impress at his first World Cup. The 22-year-old has key strengths in finishing which could be extremely important for his side.

Phil Foden



Phil Foden is one of the Premier League's best wingers in Finishing



Top Player by SciSkill

Christian Pulisic - 112.1

Average SciSkill	74.7
Average Potential	86.3
Average Age	25.6
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€9.9m



One to Watch - Brenden Aaronson

Brenden Aaronson will be expecting to play a key role for USMNT. Having impressed in Austria with Red Bull Salzburg last season, the 22-year-old clearly boasts key strengths in attacking positions.

Brenden Aaronson



Brenden Aaronson's offensive positioning will be an important part of his contributions



Top Player by SciSkill

Sardar Azmoun - 91.9

Average SciSkill	59.4
Average Potential	60.3
Average Age	29.4
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€2.6m



One to Watch - Sardar Azmoun

Sardar Azmoun will be an important part of Iran's world cup campaign. The versatile forward has impressed during his debut season in the German Bundesliga.

Sardar Azmoun



Sardar Azmoun's overall performance caught the eye last season



Top Player by SciSkill

Ben Davies - 113.0

Average SciSkill	67.4
Average Potential	77.3
Average Age	26.9
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€7.8m



One to Watch - Daniel James

Daniel James will play a key role in Wales' frontline alongside Gareth Bale. The winger's speed is likely to be an important element as Wales look to catch teams on the counter-attack.

Fast



Daniel James' Physical Indicators versus his peers

GROUP B PREDICTION TABLE

Position	Team	Qualification Probability	Expected Points
1	England	95.00%	6.83
2	United States	62.10%	4.47
3	Wales	21.97%	2.84
4	Iran	20.93%	2.17

GROUP C



Argentina are undefeated in 35 matches and are predicted to comfortably move into the next round as the most in-form team in the tournament. It will be interesting to see if the sentiment around Lionel Messi's final World Cup can be enough for them to follow up on their 2021 Copa America title and end the run of four successive European winners. The fight for the second qualification spot will be between Mexico and Poland, as Saudi Arabia, with an average xTV of €0.4million, simply don't have the quality or talent to compete with the others. The odds tilt slightly towards a Robert Lewandowski-led Poland edging out an ageing Mexico side to the next round.



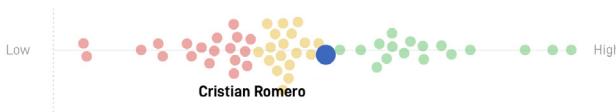
ARGENTINA

Top Player by SciSkill	Lionel Messi - 123.6
Average SciSkill	97.0
Average Potential	102.4
Average Age	28.4
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€26.3m



One to Watch - Cristian Romero

Argentina's hopes will largely depend on a solid defensive line including Cristian Romero. As shown in his performance metrics, the centre back has impressed in the Premier League and will be hoping to emulate such form on the world stage.



Cristian Romero has impressed in the Premier League this season



MEXICO

Top Player by SciSkill	Hirving Lozano - 116.7
Average SciSkill	75.5
Average Potential	80.0
Average Age	28.9
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€6.2m



One to Watch - Kevin Álvarez

Kevin Álvarez is an exciting full-back who loves to get into attacking areas. The 23-year-old will be hoping to make a name for himself as Mexico come into Group C with a good chance of reaching the knock-outs.



Kevin Álvarez is an impressive ball carrier in Liga MX



SAUDI ARABIA

Top Player by SciSkill	Saud Abdulhamid - 62.6
Average SciSkill	51.2
Average Potential	55.2
Average Age	27.6
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€0.4m



One to Watch - Saud Abdulhamid

Saud Abdulhamid has been an eye-catching talent in the Saudi top tier this season. As shown in his underlying numbers, the 23-year-old is one of the best full-backs in the league.



Saud Abdulhamid has been a key performer this season



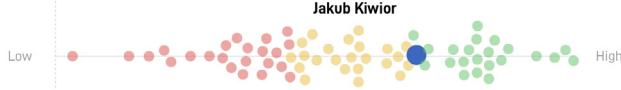
POLAND

Top Player by SciSkill	Robert Lewandowski - 138.6
Average SciSkill	78.6
Average Potential	85.9
Average Age	27.6
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€11.2m



One to Watch - Jakub Kiwior

Jakub Kiwior has impressed since his Serie A move and could be a key performer for Poland. The centre back boasts strengths in key areas including Recoveries and Ball Retention.



Jakub Kiwior is getting used to life in Serie A

GROUP C PREDICTION TABLE

Position	Team	Qualification Probability	Expected Points
1	Argentina	87.27%	6.15
2	Poland	55.93%	4.52
3	Mexico	52.03%	4.24
4	Saudi Arabia	4.77%	1.44

GROUP E



Dubbed by many to be the Group of Death, Group E sees 2 teams with the top 5 average SciSkill pitted against each other. You can never rule out Germany at a World Cup, and there is a high probability that they will not only top the group but also cause some upsets in the penultimate stages. Spain's lack of a top goal scorer has seen them struggle to dominate international tournaments since their 2012 World Cup win, but a favourable draw can see them reach the latter stages of the tournament. Costa Rica is the weakest team for average SciSkill in the tournament, and we don't expect either them or an underrated Japan causing the Europeans much trouble.



SPAIN

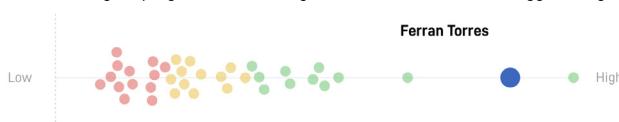
Top Player by SciSkill	Rodri - 136.4
Average SciSkill	102.3
Average Potential	114.8
Average Age	26.2
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€33.0m



One to Watch - Ferran Torres

Ferran Torres has been climbing up the ranks of Spain football. After having already played at the European Championships in 2021, he will be looking at consolidating his progress and showing his abilities on the world's biggest stage.

Ferran Torres



Ferran Torres can be a key part of Spain's attacking output



GERMANY

Top Player by SciSkill	Serge Gnabry - 145.7
Average SciSkill	105.3
Average Potential	113.1
Average Age	27.3
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€35.7m



One to Watch - Nico Schlotterbeck

The young centre back has become a starter for Borussia Dortmund and is already providing great value in the Bundesliga. This tournament will be his first major one with the national team but most likely not his last.

Nico Schlotterbeck



Nico Schlotterbeck is one of the best centre backs in the Bundesliga



COSTA RICA

Top Player by SciSkill	Keylor Navas - 91.1
Average SciSkill	44.7
Average Potential	54.6
Average Age	27.9
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€0.8m



One to Watch - Anthony Contreras

Anthony Contreras is a centre forward who will be looking to show his goal-scoring prowess on the world stage. The 22-year-old is one of the top forwards in his home country and has a number of key attributes to offer Costa Rica.

Anthony Contreras

Anthony Contreras is a key player in attacking areas



JAPAN

Top Player by SciSkill	Daichi Kamada - 100.1
Average SciSkill	72.7
Average Potential	78.0
Average Age	28.2
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€7.2m



One to Watch - Ao Tanaka

Ao Tanaka is an extremely versatile midfielder. Having rapidly settled in Germany's second tier, he will be looking at confirming his promising performances with his peers in arguably the most difficult group of the World Cup.

Ao Tanaka

Ao Tanaka's attacking positioning is something to keep track of

GROUP E PREDICTION TABLE

Position	Team	Qualification Probability	Expected Points
1	Germany	93.50%	6.77
2	Spain	74.77%	5.65
3	Japan	22.93%	2.89
4	Costa Rica	8.80%	1.30

GROUP F



The top spot in Group F will also go down to the wire with both Belgium and Croatia expected to get just over 5 points. The sun might be setting on Belgium's golden generation, but the quality of Kevin De Bruyne and Romelu Lukaku should see them top the group. An experienced Croatia team led by Luka Modric are also favourites to qualify but things might not be very straightforward against a decent Moroccan side and CONCACAF third round winners Canada.



BELGIUM

Top Player by SciSkill	Kevin De Bruyne - 136.5
Average SciSkill	89.3
Average Potential	96.9
Average Age	28.3
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€20.81m



One to Watch - Arthur Theate

Arthur Theate has progressed impressively quickly in the last two seasons and has become the anchor point in Rennes' defence in Ligue 1. He is comfortable on the ball and doesn't hesitate to carry the ball forward, all of which makes him an incredibly bright prospect.



Arthur Theate's passing numbers this season



MOROCCO

Top Player by SciSkill	Achraf Hakimi - 111.4
Average SciSkill	71.1
Average Potential	78.7
Average Age	26.8
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€10.7m



One to Watch - Azzedine Ounahi

This young midfielder who's a graduate from the famous Moroccan Academie Mohamed VI has been getting loads of playing time in different roles for Angers SCO this season. His versatility is a weapon and he has shown he possesses the quality to already be of use in the Moroccan squad.



Azzedine Ounahi has been a key ball carrier in Ligue 1



CANADA

Top Player by SciSkill	Alphonso Davies - 113.3
Average SciSkill	62.3
Average Potential	68.9
Average Age	27.5
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€6.8m



One to Watch - Tajon Buchanan

Tajon Buchanan is the new up and coming Canadian talent. As a right winger, he's able to make best use of his speed and technical skills. He's a player that could already make the difference when it matters.



Tajon Buchanan's physical indicators versus his peers



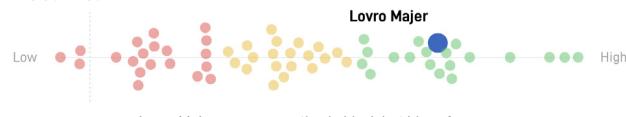
CROATIA

Top Player by SciSkill	Luka Modric - 116.9
Average SciSkill	81.2
Average Potential	89.0
Average Age	27.9
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€13.5m



One to Watch - Lovro Majer

Lovro Majer is the Croatian midfielder who seems to have everything it takes to take over control of Croatia's midfield from Luka Modric. His performances are still in need of consistency and decisiveness but there is little doubt that he has the abilities.



Lovro Majer was a sensation in his debut Ligue 1 season

GROUP F

PREDICTION TABLE

Position	Team	Qualification Probability	Expected Points
1	Belgium	90.10%	5.31
2	Croatia	65.37%	5.15
3	Morocco	37.83%	3.88
4	Canada	6.70%	2.20

GROUP G



With the likes of Neymar, Antony, Vinicius and more providing depth and variation in attack, Brazil are predicted to comfortably top the group. Having the third highest average SciSkill in the tournament, they are also one of the favourites to win their 6th World Cup crown. The rest of the group is more evenly matched, with Serbia's strong attack led by Vlahovic and Mitrovic likely propel them to narrowly beat Switzerland to the elusive Round of 16 spot. The promising Cameroon team needs to make a strong start or else their elimination will be a foregone conclusion.



BRAZIL

Top Player by SciSkill	Gabriel Jesus - 144.1
Average SciSkill	105.8
Average Potential	112.4
Average Age	28.6
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€44.4m



One to Watch - Bruno Guimarães

Bruno Guimarães has been a key part of Newcastle's success this season and deserves his call-up to the Brazilian national team. It remains to be seen how much he will feature, but the midfielder has more than enough quality to make a difference.



The midfielder provides good defensive cover in addition to technical attributes



SWITZERLAND

Top Player by SciSkill	Granit Xhaka - 113.5
Average SciSkill	83.0
Average Potential	89.8
Average Age	27.5
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€11.9m



One to Watch - Noah Okafor

Noah Okafor is a hot prospect currently playing at Red Bull Salzburg. With his reputation growing by the month, replicating his domestic league form on the world stage could see his stature grow to a top level.



Noah Okafor is an elite finisher versus his peers

GROUP G

PREDICTION TABLE

Position	Team	Qualification Probability	Expected Points
1	Brazil	92.60%	6.72
2	Serbia	46.17%	3.82
3	Switzerland	34.83%	3.63
4	Cameroon	26.40%	2.35

GROUP H



Group H looks to be the toughest to predict at this edition of the World Cup. On paper, Portugal are favourites to come out on top, with the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Bernardo Silva, who has one of the highest SciSkill values in the tournament. However, a gritty and physical Uruguay side led by Luis Suárez and Darwin Núñez will surely question that status. Elsewhere, a young Ghana squad will look to make it through the group stage for the fourth time in their five previous appearances and a fit and firing Son Heung-min could also see Korea Republic stand a chance.



PORTUGAL

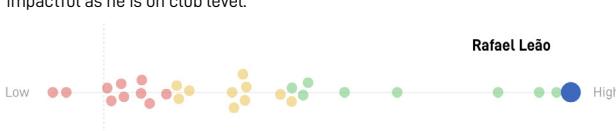
Top Player by SciSkill	Bernardo Silva - 145.3
Average SciSkill	98.0
Average Potential	106.6
Average Age	27.3
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€33.5m



One to Watch - Rafael Leão

Rafael Leão's development in the last few years has been impressive. He is likely to play an important role in Portugal's squad and may be as decisive and impactful as he is on club level.

Rafael Leão



The winger is an elite dribbler at the top level



URUGUAY

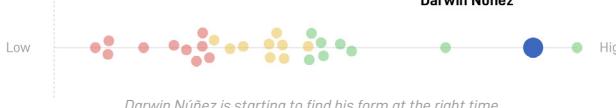
Top Player by SciSkill	Federico Valverde - 115.7
Average SciSkill	82.8
Average Potential	90.2
Average Age	28.3
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€15.2m



One to Watch - Darwin Núñez

Darwin Núñez has reached the top on a club level and is starting to become more decisive in the Premier League. His physical abilities are probably what make him so special, but there is much more to him than that and he may show everyone in Qatar.

Darwin Núñez



Darwin Núñez is starting to find his form at the right time



GHANA

Top Player by SciSkill	Thomas Partey - 108.3
Average SciSkill	68.1
Average Potential	76.4
Average Age	25.7
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€5.0m



One to Watch - Mohammed Kudus

Mohammed Kudus will be looking to replicate his form with Ajax on the international stage. The 22-year-old provides a versatile attacking option and could help Ghana reach the knockout stages.

Mohammed Kudus



Mohammed Kudus has been a good attacking option for Ajax this season



KOREA REPUBLIC

Top Player by SciSkill	Heung-min Son - 119.1
Average SciSkill	65.7
Average Potential	70.7
Average Age	28.2
Average Expected Transfer Value (xTV)	€5.2m



One to Watch - Woo-yeong Jeong

Woo-yeong Jeong is now a regular starter at SC Freiburg and is challenging FC Bayern for the title. He is yet to entirely break through representing his country but his underlying numbers show reasons to keep an eye on him.



The 23-year-old is developing at an impressive rate

GROUP H PREDICTION TABLE

Position	Team	Qualification Probability	Expected Points
1	Portugal	82.23%	5.71
2	Uruguay	45.60%	3.97
3	Ghana	43.97%	3.30
4	Korea Republic	28.20%	2.90

KNOCK-OUT PREDICTION

ROUND OF 16



QUARTER-FINALS



SEMI-FINALS



FINAL

Champions
Germany

SEMI-FINALS



QUARTER-FINALS



ROUND OF 16



GLOSSARY

SCISKILL

This Index measures a player's impact on his team's results and provides an indication of his skill level. To make it possible for scouts to compare players from all around the world, SciSkill is calculated using general match sheet data. After each match, a player's value is adjusted based on the outcome of the match by taking into account factors such as age, minutes played, competition strength and match outcome.

EXPECTED TRANSFER VALUE (xTV)

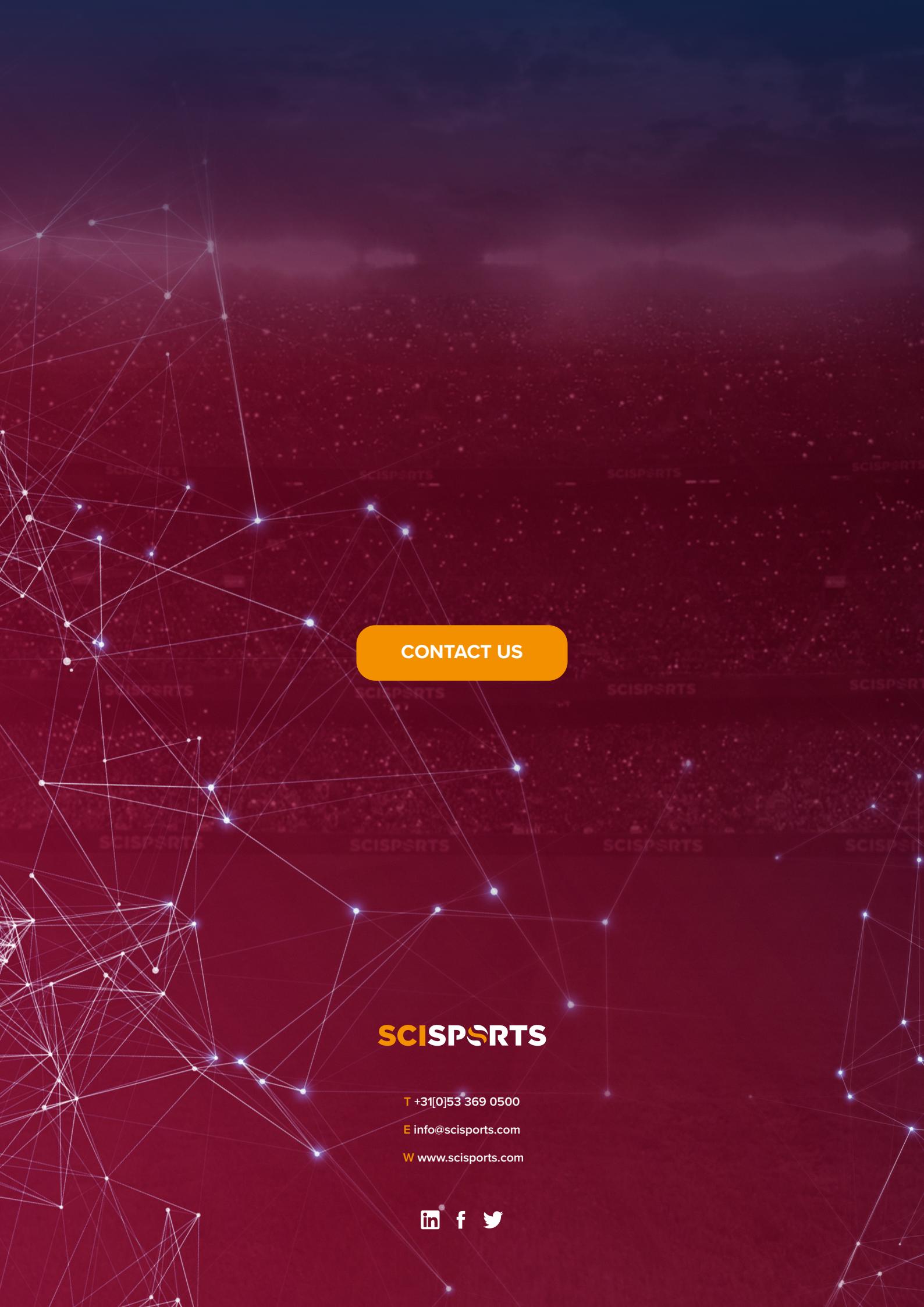
Through our partnership with FootballTransfers, we have created the most accurate player transfer value predictions in the market. Expected Transfer Value (xTV), is powered by SciSports' advanced football data such as our proprietary SciSkill Index in combination with contract length and other relevant information. Unlike the arbitrary player valuations that are currently publicly available, xTV provides a realistic, algorithmically-driven valuation for every player in the major football competitions worldwide.

POTENTIAL

This Index predicts the expected quality of a player. The value reflects the expected maximum SciSkill that the player will achieve at the peak of his career. This prediction is made by comparing players with a similar SciSkill development. To calculate a player's SciSkill Potential, the model utilises a huge set of players with historical SciSkill values to find the most accurate predictions.

SCISPORTS SIMULATION

The SciSports World Cup Simulator is designed to simulate the 2022 World Cup thousands of times over, to get insights into the expected performances of all participating teams. The simulator is based on a match prediction model that predicts the home win, draw and away win probability for each match in the tournament. Our model is trained on data from over 180,000 historic matches, to learn what factors influence the match result. Factors considered include quality, recent form, and experience of the players as well as the recent form of the team. Using this model, first all matches in the group stage are simulated. Next, for each round in the knockout stage, it is determined which teams would face each other based on the group stage results and these fictitious matches are simulated as well. In this way, the entire World Cup bracket can be simulated and for each iteration a winner can be determined. By simulating the entire tournament thousands of times, we can get insights into the probabilities that each team will reach a certain round.



CONTACT US

SCISPORTS

T +31[0]53 369 0500

E info@scisports.com

W www.scisports.com

