《国际足球联合：2026世界杯 扩军至48支队伍》

(CNN)The president of FIFA has had his way -- one of the world ’ s biggest sporting festivals is set for a major facelift.

(CNN)?????????????——??????????????????

A plan put forward by Gianni Infantino, head of soccer’s world governing body, has been passed "unanimously" and the competition is due to expand from 32 teams to 48.FIFA’s Council discussed the options on Tuesday and rubber-stamped the move, which will come into effect in time for the 2026 World Cup.

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So, what does the plan entail, and what does it mean for one of the most watched sporting events on earth?

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CNN Sport takes a look at the detail.

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Essentially, Infantino is keen to spread the love.

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He wants the World Cup to be more "inclusive" -- and that means giving more of FIFA’s 211 member associations the chance to take part in the tournament.

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His predecessor Sepp Blatter held on to power for 17 years by appealing to regions outside the game’s established power bases, and the Italian is using similar tactics.

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Originally, Infantino envisaged a playoff round with the 16 winners going through to the main group stage and the losers going home after just one match.

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But after a tweak to the plan FIFA now favors 16 groups of three teams, with the top two progressing to a last-32 knockout stage.

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Since 1998, when the World Cup expanded to accommodate 32 teams, the format has stayed the same.

?1998?????????32???????????????

There are eight groups of four teams, who all play each other once, with the top two progressing to the last 16.

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The last tournament, held in Brazil in 2014 and won by Germany, lasted just over a month. Any expanded tournament would mean more matches and almost certainly take longer.

2014???

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