

World Cup Qualifiers: Europe

(April 4th 2009)

Pre-Listening / Background information

On languagecaster's main report this week we take a look at the European section of the World Cup qualifiers.

Note

The following capital cities or stadium names are mentioned in the report:

- Belgrade (Serbia) Dublin (Ireland) Belfast (Northern Ireland) Wembley (England) Moscow (Russia)
- CONCACAF is the North and Central American region

A. Main Idea

Listen to the whole report and place the countries in the box below into the correct group (Two countries per group).

Czech Republic	Ireland	Denmark	Russia	Netherlands		
Poland	Portugal	Germany	France	Spain	Turkey	England
	Serbia	Switzerland	Italy	Scotland	Greece	Croatia

Group 1	Sweden /
Group 2	Israel /
Group 3	Northern Ireland / Slovenia / Slovakia /
Group 4	Wales /
Group 5	Bosnia / Belgium /
Group 6	Ukraine /
Group 7	Lithuania /
Group 8	Bulgaria /
Group 9	

B. Comprehension

Listen to the whole report and answer the following questions.

1. The report states 'Asia or CONCACAF it most definitely isn't!' What does this mean?
2. What do Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Cristiano Ronaldo have in common?
3. What is the difference between group 2 and 3?
4. What does 'a game in hand' mean?
5. Why is group 7 a 'strange affair' according to the report?
6. Three countries have 100% records – what are they?
7. Describe the process of qualification in Europe.

C. Listening - vocabulary

Listen to the whole report and fill in the gaps with the appropriate word or phrase. Then explain the Meaning.

1. ... starting to take shape. Most of the favoured teams have _____ themselves at or near the top of the group though one or two surprise...
2. Group 1 may see a _____ as Portugal lie in 3rd place seven points behind the leaders Denmark.
3. ... 4 points from Israel this week and look _____ favourites to make the finals.
4. ... but second place Slovakia must _____ after beating local rivals the Czech Republic away...

5. Group 5 seems to be _____ with European champions Spain beating Turkey home and away...

6. Two points separate them at the top with a _____ game in Belgrade to come that will decide ...

7. On paper it should be Italy but they will not _____ a trip to Dublin in the autumn if they are still...

8. In fact, this group is so weak I am _____ that only the winners will make it through...

Podcast 34: 2008-9 Worksheet

World Cup Qualifiers: Europe

(April 4th 2009)

ANSWERS

A. Main Idea

Listen to the whole report and place the countries in the box below into the correct group (Two countries per group).

Czech Republic	Ireland	Denmark	Russia	Netherlands		
Poland	Portugal	Germany	France	Spain	Turkey	England
	Serbia	Switzerland	Italy	Scotland	Greece	Croatia

Group 1	Sweden / Portugal / Denmark
Group 2	Israel / Greece / Switzerland
Group 3	Northern Ireland / Slovenia / Slovakia / Poland / Czech Republic
Group 4	Wales / Germany / Russia
Group 5	Bosnia / Belgium / Spain / Turkey
Group 6	Ukraine / England / Croatia
Group 7	Lithuania / France / Serbia
Group 8	Bulgaria / Italy / Ireland
Group 9	Netherlands / Scotland

B. Comprehension

Listen to the whole report and answer the following questions.

1. The report states 'Asia or CONCACAF it most definitely isn't!' What does this mean?
These two regions are not as strong as Europe
2. What do Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Cristiano Ronaldo have in common?
They may not be going to the World Cup finals.
3. What is the difference between group 2 and 3?
Group 2 is between two teams while in group 3 five teams have a chance
4. What does 'a game in hand' mean?
To have played a game fewer than your rivals
5. Why is group 7 a 'strange affair' according to the report?
All the top teams are taking points from each other
6. Three countries have 100% records – what are they?
Netherlands / England / Spain
7. Describe the process of qualification in Europe.
The 9 group winners qualify. The best 8 second teams play off to make 13 in total.

C. Listening - vocabulary

Listen to the whole report and fill in the gaps with the appropriate word or phrase.

1. ... starting to take shape. Most of the favoured teams have **positioned** themselves at or near the top of the group though one or two surprise...

placed themselves / moved towards

2. Group 1 may see a **huge / shock** as Portugal lie in 3rd place seven points behind the leaders Denmark.

Very big surprise

3. ... 4 points from Israel this week and look **odds-on** favourites to make the finals.

Extreme / hot

4. ... but second place Slovakia must **fancy / their / chances** after beating local rivals the Czech Republic away...

Think they will do well / optimistic

5. Group 5 seems to be **wrapped / up** with European champions Spain beating Turkey home and away...

To be decided/ nothing to play for

6. Two points separate them at the top with a **crunch** game in Belgrade to come that will decide ...

very important / decisive game

7. On paper it should be Italy but they will not **fancy** a trip to Dublin in the autumn if they are still...

do not want to go / not looking forward to it

8. In fact, this group is so weak I am **tipping** that only the winners will make it through...

predicting

Transcript

We are passing the half way stage in the European section of the World Cup qualifiers with the groups starting to take shape. Most of the favoured teams have positioned themselves at or near the top of the group though one or two surprise teams may be making their way to South Africa in 2010.

Remember, the 53 teams are fighting for 13 places making this footballing region the most competitive. Each of the nine group winners automatically qualify, while the eight best runners up will play off to decide the remaining four teams. That means a team may come second in their group and still not qualify. Asia or CONCACAF it most definitely isn't!

Group 1 may see a huge shock as Portugal lie in 3rd place seven points behind the leaders Denmark. Amazingly for a side filled with attacking prowess, Portugal have drawn their last three matches nil - nil including this weekend against Sweden. The Swedes are also struggling in fourth place but do have a game in hand over the Portuguese but it is increasingly looking like top stars such as Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Cristiano Ronaldo may not be going to South Africa.

Group 2 is turning into a two-horse race between leaders Greece and second place Switzerland. The Greeks took 4 points from Israel this week and look odds-on favourites to make the finals.

Group 3 is a much tighter affair with any one of five teams still in with a chance of at least a play-off spot. Northern Ireland may be top after their two home victories this week but second place Slovakia must fancy their chances after beating local rivals the Czech Republic away and seeing Poland and Slovenia drop points in Belfast.

Group 4 is a much clearer affair with Germany leading the group on 16 points, which is four more than their nearest rivals Russia though they do have a game in hand and Germany still have to play in Moscow.

Group 5 seems to be wrapped up with European champions Spain beating Turkey home and away this week. That result and the shock double victory for Bosnia over Belgium means that Spain lead Bosnia by six points and are almost certain to make it to South Africa.

Group 6 sees another team with a 100% record so far - England beat Ukraine at Wembley to stay five points ahead of Croatia and though they started the last European Championship qualifying campaign in similar circumstances this England team under Capello looks assured of its place in the finals in 2010.

Group 7 is a rather strange affair with all of the top teams taking points off each other. However, Serbia and France had a good week with the Serbs winning away in Romania and France beating Lithuania home and away. Two points separate them at the top with a crunch game in Belgrade to come that will decide the group winner.

Group 8 is a much more open affair with the three top teams all unbeaten so far. Italy lead by two from Ireland and then Bulgaria are in third a further five points behind though they have a game in hand. On paper it should be Italy but they will not fancy a trip to Dublin in the autumn if they are still only two points ahead.

Group 9 is all but sorted as the Netherlands have comfortably won all five of their matches to sit atop the table eight points ahead of Scotland in second place. In fact, this group is so weak I am tipping that only the winners will make it through.

The next set of games in the European section take place in June by when the picture of which teams will represent Europe in South Africa 2010 will be much clearer.