

2014 World Cup Qualifying

September 7th 2013

The World Cup in Brazil is only a year away but the qualifying process to decide the 31 countries that will join hosts Brazil in the finals has been hotting up.

**A. Main Idea – note taking**

Listen to the report and take notes under the following headings.

Europe	
Asia	
North and Central America	
South America	
Africa	
Oceania	

**B. Listening - vocabulary**

Listen to the first part of the report on Europe and fill in the gaps with the appropriate word or phrase.

**Europe**

There are only three games to go in the European qualifying section and as expected **the** - \_\_\_\_\_ of European football – Germany, Italy, Holland and **holders** Spain – all top their groups and are **on the** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ making it to the finals in Brazil next summer. Belgium and Switzerland look like joining them as winners of their respective groups but things are a little more complicated for teams such as Russia, England, Portugal and France. England \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ the Ukraine in their next game in Group H and must avoid **defeat** to keep their hopes of direct qualification alive but Montenegro \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ in that group with only one point separating them from the top two.

Despite a disappointing home [defeat](#) to Slovakia last Friday, Bosnia remain on top of Group G but they are now \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ with Greece in an attempt to secure their first ever appearance at a major tournament. Russia and Portugal **are** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_ in Group F though the Russians have an easier run-in and should finish top with the Portuguese making the play-offs. Probably joining them in the play-offs will be Sweden, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and possibly Albania who would also be appearing in their first ever major tournament. The next set of matches take place this Tuesday followed by the final two games in October and then the play-offs in November and then we will know the to decide the 13 sides that will represent Europe in Brazil.

## Answers

- **the powerhouses** : traditionally strong teams
- **complicate matters**: Make things more difficult
- **on the verge of**: Almost; about to
- **take on**: Will play against
- **battling it out**: Fighting against
- **are neck and neck**: Equal

## Transcript

### Europe

There are only three games to go in the European qualifying section and as expected **the powerhouses** of European football – Germany, Italy, Holland and [holders](#) Spain – all top their groups and are **on the verge of** making it to the finals in Brazil next summer. Belgium and Switzerland look like joining them as winners of their respective groups but things are a little more complicated for teams such as Russia, England, Portugal and France. England **take on** the Ukraine in their next game in Group H and must avoid [defeat](#) to keep their hopes of direct qualification alive but Montenegro **complicate matters** in that group with only one point separating them from the top two.

Despite a disappointing home [defeat](#) to Slovakia last Friday, Bosnia remain on top of Group G but they are now **battling it out** with Greece in an attempt to secure their first ever appearance at a major tournament. Russia and Portugal **are neck and neck** in Group F though the Russians have an easier run-in and should finish top with the Portuguese making the play-offs. Probably joining them in the play-offs will be Sweden, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and possibly Albania who would also be appearing in their first ever major tournament. The next set of matches take place this Tuesday followed by the final two games in October and then the play-offs in November and then we will know the to decide the 13 sides that will represent Europe in Brazil.

### South America

The qualifying section in South America is much more **cut and dry** with Argentina, Colombia and Chile filling the first three automatic qualifying places and Uruguay and Ecuador battling it out for the final direct spot in fourth. Venezuela still have a chance of making fifth place which would guarantee a play-off match against an Asian [team](#) but their hopes of appearing in their first-ever finals **appear slim**.

## Asia

Four teams from Asia have already qualified for Brazil 2014: Japan, Korea, Iran and Australia will represent the region in Brazil next year. Currently two sides – Jordan and Uzbekistan – are involved in a play-off to decide which [team](#) will play the fifth-place side in South America with Uzbekistan currently **holding the upper hand** after their 1-1 away draw in the first [leg](#).

## Africa

This weekend saw **the culmination** of all 10 groups in the African qualifying section with the leaders of each group going forward to a straight knock-out in October and November to determine the five teams to take part in Brazil 2014. Two sides that will not be featuring in next year's finals are South Africa, who failed to overcome Ethiopia, and Tunisia who lost out to Cape Verde. Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Cameroon will all be involved in the autumn play-offs as will Egypt, Algeria and surprise package Burkina Faso.

## CONCACAF

With only three games remaining in the **hexagonal tournament** all but one of the six sides involved in the North and Central American region teams are still [in with a shout](#) – though Panama will have to use up all their luck to make it through. The USA fell to Costa Rica at the weekend but should still progress along with **their conquerors**. Honduras lie in third four points ahead of struggling Mexico who sacked their coach after a home [defeat](#) against the Hondurenos at the weekend. However, Mexico should still make it even if they finish in fourth place as the play-off game would be against New Zealand from the Oceania region but the 'Tri' are in real crisis.

The race to make it to Brazil is really hotting up though after the next round of matches on Tuesday it should become a little clearer.

## Vocabulary

- **the powerhouses** : traditionally strong teams
- **complicate matters**: Make things more difficult
- **on the verge of**: Almost; about to
- **take on**: Will play against
- **battling it out**: Fighting against
- **are neck and neck**: Equal
- **cut and dry**: Clearer
- **appear slim**: To have almost no chance
- **holding the upper hand**: To be in a stronger position
- **the culmination**: The end
- **hexagonal tournament**: Between 6 teams
- [in with a shout](#): Still have a chance
- **their conquerors**: Here it refers to Costa Rica