

Foreign-born football players

Almost 10% of the football players at the World Cups have been foreign-born (on average)

1934

Argentinian-born Italian Luis Monti played in two World Cup finals, representing different countries; Argentina in 1930 and Italy in 1934.

1962

Alfredo Di Stéfano was a first-generation Italian-Argentine who represented Argentina and Spain; where he played for Real Madrid.

1978

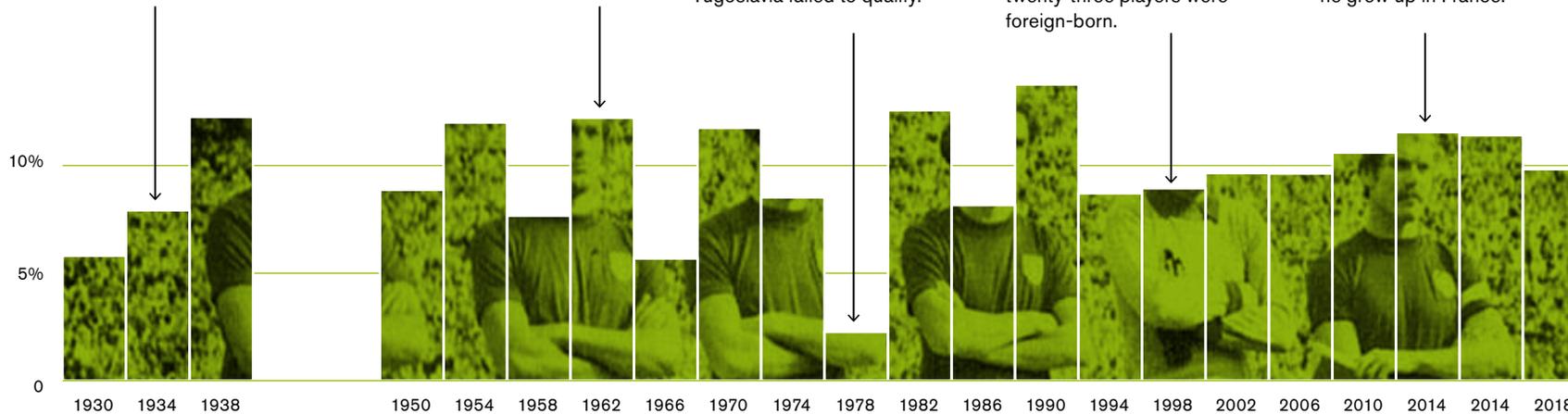
The 1978 World Cup has the lowest number of foreign-born players because the national football teams of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia failed to qualify.

1998

The World Cup winning squad of France has been considered the paragon of multiculturalism (blanc, black et beur). However, just four out of twenty-three players were foreign-born.

2014

As Rio Mavuba was born on board of a boat in international waters, his birth certificate reads "born at sea". He chose to compete for 'Les Bleus' as he grew up in France.



Defintion

'Foreign-born' refers to the football players who represent a country in which they are not born.

To count the number of foreign-born football players, we used the international state borders (2020) in retrospective.

Players who are born in a (former) colony and/or who are born in dissolved countries, like Yugoslavia, are counted as 'foreign-born'.

The most and the least

Throughout the history, the US selected most foreign-born players:

On the contrary, Brazil has never selected even one foreign-born player:



One player, five teams to choose

Adnan Januzaj was born in Belgium, but through his (grand-) parents' descent...

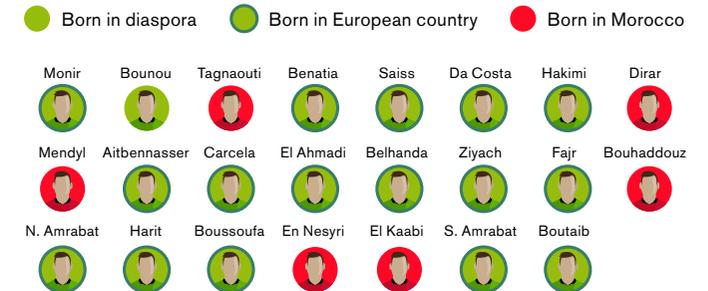


...he would have been eligible to play for the national football teams of:



Most foreign-born players in one team

In 2018, the national football team of Morocco selected 17 (of the 23) foreign-born players who originated from their diaspora.



They could have field a squad of players who were born in Europe.