



Copa America 2021

This preview was researched by the analysts at [Football Form Labs](#).

If you have a question about how to use Form Labs or would like to request a strategy to be researched, please do get in touch via support@footballformlabs.com

If you are not yet a member, you can get started with a [14 day free trial](#) today.

Copa America 2021 has seen a late switch in hosts from Argentina to Brazil amid concerns of growing COVID-19 cases in the former, and four venues have been revealed to play last minute hosts for this competition.

Argentina will be rueing that missed opportunity as they've reached the final on seven of the nine previous occasions that they've hosted, though they have a strong squad again here and it's no doubt that they're up there as one of the favourites this time around.

Group A

Argentina are still looking to go level on Copa America wins with Uruguay, though their last triumph was all the way back in 1993, and they've now reached four of the last six finals and lost on all four occasions. You get the impression this may be Lionel Messi's last chance at glory in this competition having fallen agonisingly short on too many occasions, and they should be confident in this group, and there's next to no doubt that they'll be appearing in the latter stages.

Only Robert Lewandowski scored more goals in the 2020/21 season than Lionel Messi, which proves that there are few signs of him slowing down and if he's on song, he could single-handedly guide his country to glory here. That being said, there is the sense that the key players of the squad are ageing, and that they may be going through something of a transition period with Messi (33), Sergio Aguero (33), Angel Di Maria (33) and Nicolas Otamendi (33) all at the back end of their careers.

La Albiceleste are in good form though and are unbeaten in their last 12 outings despite playing Chile (three times), Brazil, Germany and Mexico in that time. That shows they certainly have what it takes to go all the way here, although a lot will rest on the form of the next wave of players coming through like Lautaro Martinez and Leandro Paredes.

Bolivia are tipped to be the whipping boys of this group, and they'll likely be happy to just pick up any points they can on their journey through this group in the hopes of sneaking fourth spot. They just picked up their first World Cup qualifying win over Venezuela last week and if they were to pick up another against Chile before this competition starts, their price would certainly shorten in.

That was just their second win in 19 matches going back to October 2018, though none of their last six have been separated by more than a single strike as they look a more competitive outfit than the last couple of years. 33-year-old Marcelo Martins has been key to that going forward, scoring six of his nations last 10 goals going back to the beginning of 2020, and at their prices they could be worth getting behind in some capacity if their star striker can carry on in this vein of form.

Uruguay are another side that look to be too heavily reliant on their older players, and in recent times they haven't looked the force they once were. Indeed, they're yet to win back to back matches since June 2019 despite playing 14 games since then and that kind of inconsistency isn't going to get them very far.

Diego Godin (35), Luis Suarez (34) and Edinson Cavani (34) remain the three key players for this Uruguayan side and with the latter two having extremely convincing seasons with Atletico and Man United, respectively, that's not necessarily a bad thing. The midfield is also extremely strong with the likes of Rodrigo Bentancur and Fede Valverde controlling the middle of the park, while Jose Gimenez is also a very accomplished defender. They hold the record for most Copa America wins, though since winning in 2011 they've failed to get past the quarters in any of their last three attempts and they don't look any better a side than they have done in the past decade.

Chile have been a dark horse in this competition in recent years, winning two of the last three editions and reaching the semi-final in the other. On both occasions their squad wasn't packed with superstars, or not compared to some of the others, though they still managed to defy the odds and go all the way. They fell short in 2019 and in all honestly it would be a big shock to see them come up trumps again here.

They've won just three of their last 12 matches going back to that semi-final defeat in June 2019, with their wins coming against Guinea, Peru and Bolivia so unless they can prove that they still hold the ability to mix it with the best, it's hard to see how they're going to navigate their way through here.

Paraguay make up the five teams in Group A and they've proven recently that they're a very tricky side to get the better of. While they haven't exactly been winning many matches, they haven't lost any of their last eight going back to October 2019, drawing six of them including each of their last three against Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay.

They have a resilient side, with notable names including West Ham's Fabian Balbuena and Newcastle's Miguel Almiron, with the latter more than capable of causing some damage. They have very few other goalscoring threats, with no-one in the current squad netting more than four times, though they'll have enough to keep games competitive and navigate the groups, even if they don't go all the way.

Group B

Being the new hosts has seen **Brazil** jump to the top of the betting market, and rightly so. The Canarinho have won all of the previous five editions of this competition that they have hosted, including just two years ago in 2019. They've also won it five times since their main competitors Argentina last won it, and it's exceedingly difficult to look past them.

Having gone winless in five friendlies after their last Copa America triumph, Brazil have won six games on the bounce, conceding in just one of them (4-2 victory over Peru). That run included three games against sides in this group, all of which they won by two clear goals. In fact, Brazil have lost just one of their last 15 matches against sides in this group, winning 11 of them and it'll be a real surprise if they don't come out on top here.

Colombia aren't the side they were a few years ago, and this time round they also don't have their poster boy, James Rodriguez, at their disposal. The Everton playmaker was deemed not fit enough to participate, though it's not as though this side have a lack of talent. Atalanta duo Davide Zapata and Luis Muriel have bags of goals in them, while Luis Diaz and Mateus Uribe from Porto are dangerous players too. Add in Premier League defenders Yerry Mina and Davinson Sanchez and you have the basis for a strong side.

They ended last year with consecutive heavy defeats to Uruguay (3-0) and Ecuador (6-1), though they bounced back in their first World Cup Qualifier of the year with a 3-0 win over Peru last week, which should give them a bit of confidence heading into this tournament. They're a near shoe-in to get through the groups, though they won't want to finish too low and have to face the likes of Argentina or Uruguay in their quarter-final.

Venezuela have a promising young side on their hands, though it's likely this tournament comes slightly too soon for them to make an impact. They've lost four of their five outings since the beginning of 2020, scoring just once across those defeats and it's hard to see where they're going to find some form from as they head into this.

They are one of just two teams to have never won this competition, with their best finish being fourth place in 2011. While Josef Martinez is certainly their danger man, he's not exactly been firing on all cylinders and, in fact, none of their attacking or midfield players have scored an international goal for nearly two years now, so they could be in real danger of missing out here.

Ecuador are the other side competing this year that have failed to win the competition and also have a promising young team coming through. There are suggestions that they're not quite at a level to start competing for trophies yet, though that's not to say they can't throw their hat in the ring here. Indeed, they've won four of their last five games, scoring a whopping 15 times across those four wins and the exception came at the weekend against a strong Brazil side. That run has included wins over Bolivia (twice), Uruguay (4-2) and Colombia (6-1), so they're certainly no pushover.

They currently sit third in the CONMEBOL World Cup Qualifying standings, only behind Brazil and Argentina so they've proved they're a match for all the others. This competition regularly throws up some surprises, with Chile (twice), Paraguay and Peru making the final in the last four additions, and Ecuador could be just that team this time around so are worth backing in some capacity at a long price.

Finally, **Peru** aren't looking like the force they promised to be a few years back. They're now winless in eight matches going back to September 2019 when they impressively beat Brazil 1-0, though just five goals in those eight games since has been a poor return are they will struggle to reach the heights of 2019 when they reached the final.

Captain Paolo Guerrero continues to be their main source of goals as he looks to notch his 40th international career goal, though at 37 that's a serious burden to carry as aside from Christian Cueva (10), no one in the squad has more than six goals to their name and that lack of firepower may be their undoing this time around.

Conclusion

Brazil and Argentina understandably lead the betting and are the two clear favourites. As mentioned, the Canarinho have won every tournament that they have hosted, and on balance there's truly little to suggest they won't do the same again.

Argentina regularly fall short of expectation here and have never actually reached the final when it's been hosted in Brazil. Their key members of the squad are ageing and although they have a strong support cast, their lack of success both in Brazil and in recent years leaves them too short, and also opens the door for an outsider.

That team could just be Ecuador on this occasion. They have goals all over the pitch and their strong performances in the World Cup qualifiers should give hope to fans. With four sides qualifying from each group, they have a strong chance of doing so and if they finish third or higher, they'd fancy their chances of going far.

[2pts: Brazil to win @ 3.25, William Hill](#)

[0.5 pts Ecuador to win E/W @ 51 \(2 places, 1/3\), Betvictor](#)