



Euro 2020

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European Championships – History

This will be the 16th European Championship and the second time following the last edition with 24 teams. However, unlike previous tournaments, there is no host or joint-host nations, with games spread across 11 cities each from different countries. London features prominently, with two of the Last 16 matches, both semi-finals and the final itself set to be held at Wembley.

This will be the first time where VAR is incorporated and in addition, the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in further modifications. Teams are allowed a 26-man squad and the use of five substitutes in matches, though can only make changes on three occasions. Should knockout games go to extra time, a sixth substitute may be used, and the number of times a manager can switch things up increases to four.

From the inception of the Championships in 1960 through to 1980 just four teams featured in the finals, with West Germany and the Soviet Union proving the most successful, each with three appearances in the final itself (West Germany winning twice and the Soviet Union once).

Since 1984, when the number of teams increased to eight and then subsequently to 16 in 1996, France and Spain have been the only two-time winners, although they and Germany have the most appearances in the final (three). Spain are the only nation to ever successfully defend their European title, and will hope to make it three from four this summer after relinquishing their crown in 2016.

Like in 2016, 24 teams will be split into six groups of four. Along with the top two from each pool, four of the six third-placed sides will advance to the knockout stages, reducing possibilities for the big sides to go out early.

European Championship Finals since 1984

Year	Host	Winners	Score	Runners-Up	Losing Semi-Finalists	
1984	France	France	2 – 0	Spain	Denmark	Portugal
1988	West Germany	Netherlands	2 – 0	Soviet Union	Italy	West Germany
1992	Sweden	Denmark	2 – 0	Germany	Netherlands	Sweden
1996	England	Germany	2 – 1 ET golden goal	Czech Republic	England	France
2000	Belgium & Netherlands	France	2 – 1 ET golden goal	Italy	Netherlands	Portugal
2004	Portugal	Greece	1 – 0	Portugal	Czech Republic	Netherlands
2008	Austria & Switzerland	Spain	1 – 0	Germany	Russia	Turkey
2012	Poland & Ukraine	Spain	4 – 0	Italy	Germany	Portugal
2016	France	Portugal	1 – 0 AET	France	Germany	Wales

Qualified Teams and Final Draw

Without a host, no teams qualified automatically, but all the major players are involved with Serbia (25th) the highest amongst FIFA's world rankings to miss out. The Netherlands are back for their first major tournament since the 2014 World Cup, where they finished third, while Scotland have made the cut for a major tournament for the first time since the 1998 World Cup.

19 of the 24 teams that featured in 2016 have qualified once again, with Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Wales reaching successive Euros for the first time, helped by the expanded format introduced last time around. Finland and North Macedonia are making their debuts, while Greece are the only former champions to miss out.

In the past, UEFA coefficient rankings were used to determine which pot a team would end up in for the draw. However, this time around it was based purely upon record in qualifying, with results against the lowest-ranked teams in the larger six-team groups excluded. That has thrown up a shock with Ukraine amongst the top seeds, France dropping down into pot 2 and Portugal further back in pot 3.

Five teams produced an unbeaten record in qualifying. Belgium, Spain and Italy are unsurprising, while Denmark enjoyed a kind draw, though Ukraine took four points from Portugal to top their pool. Big hitters England, France, Germany, Netherlands and Portugal only suffered one defeat each, as did Croatia, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey, while Norway and Ireland were the only sides to lose just once and fail to qualify.

Much of the draw was predetermined, as nations must play in the group of their host city. Belgium had to go into Group B as the Ukraine cannot play in Russia, meaning the latter were forced into group C, hosted by the Netherlands.

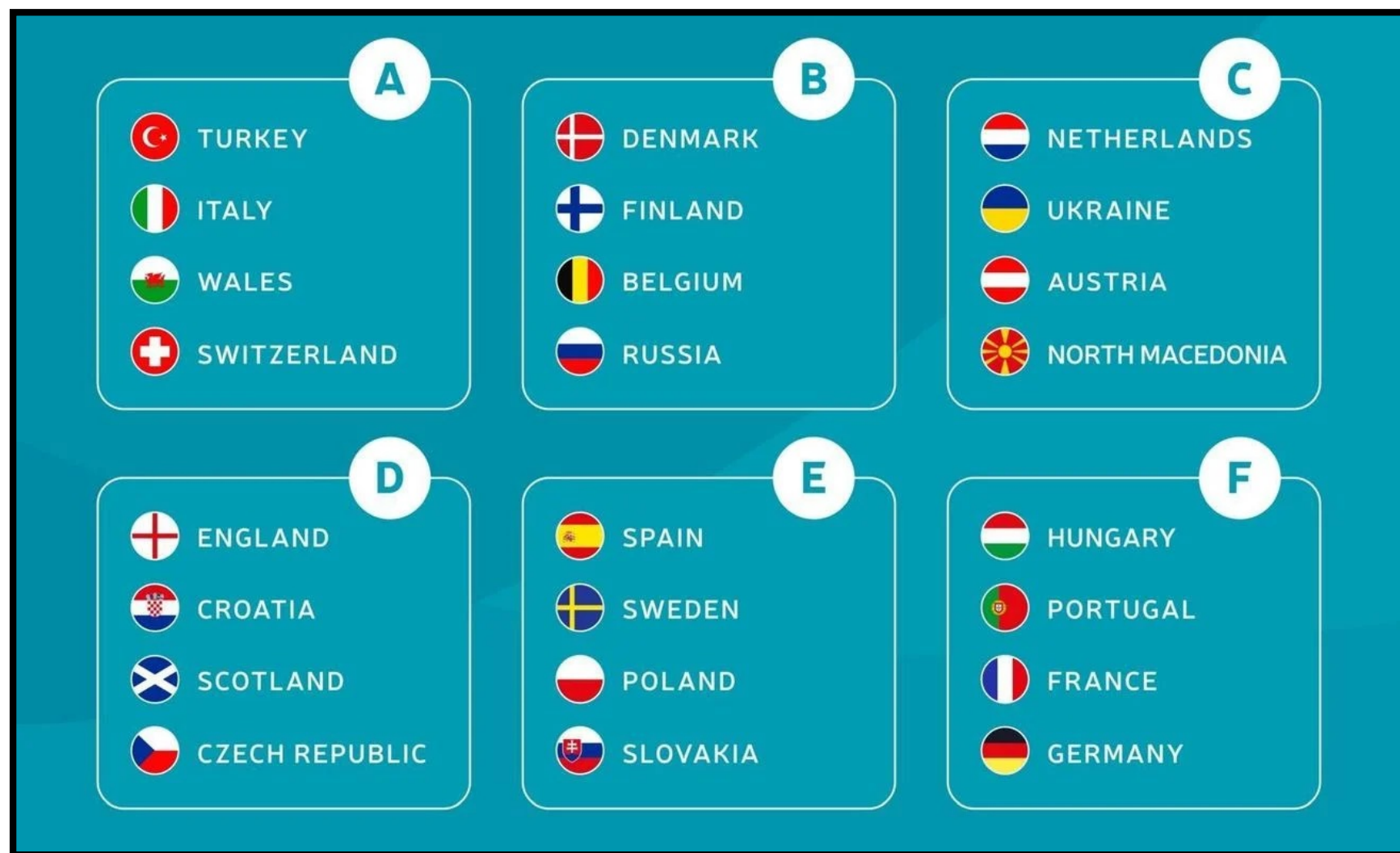
Pot 1: Belgium, Italy, England, Germany, Spain, Ukraine

Pot 2: France, Poland, Switzerland, Croatia, Netherlands, Russia

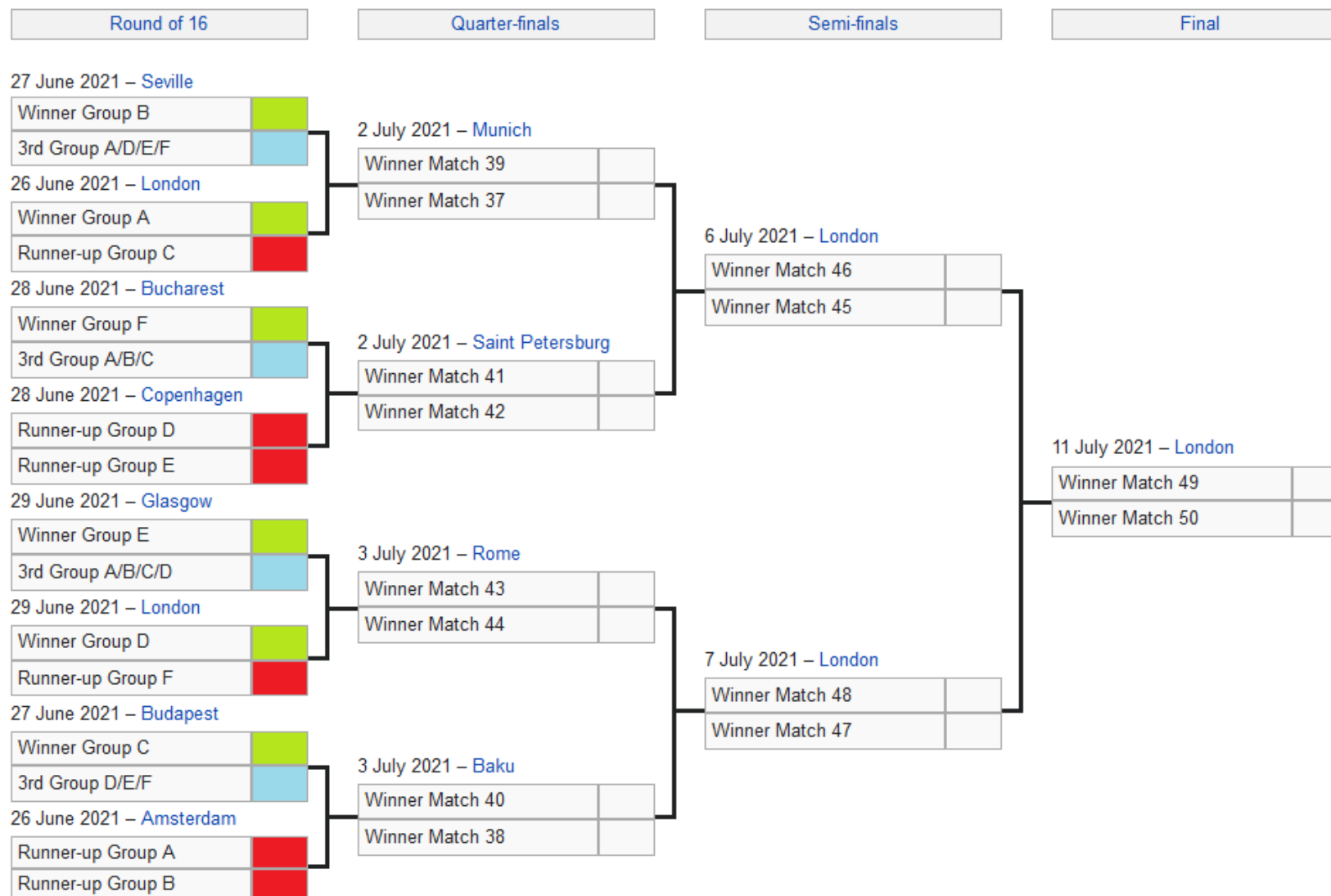
Pot 3: Portugal, Turkey, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Czech Republic

Pot 4: Wales, Finland, Romania, Hungary, Scotland, North Macedonia

Euro 2020 – Groups and Knockout Draw



Euro Knock-Out 2020



Football Form Labs Rankings – EURO 2020

Team	FIFA Ranking	Rank (Qualified Teams)	Group	Rank (Within Group)
Belgium	1	1	B	1
France	2	2	F	1
England	4	3	D	1
Portugal	5	4	F	2
Spain	6	5	E	1
Italy	7	6	A	1
Denmark	10	7	B	2
Germany	12	8	F	3
Switzerland	13	9	A	2
Croatia	14	10	D	2
Netherlands	16	11	C	1
Wales	17	12	A	3
Sweden	18	13	E	2
Poland	21	14	E	3
Austria	23	15	C	2
Ukraine	24	16	C	3
Turkey	29	17	A	4
Slovakia	36	18	E	4
Hungary	37	19	F	4
Russia	38	20	B	3
Czech Republic	40	21	D	3
Scotland	44	22	D	4
Finland	54	23	B	4
North Macedonia	62	24	C	4

Betting Odds & Expectations – EURO 2020

Team	Best Price	% Chance	Group Win	Group Win %
France	6.2	16%	2.62	38%
England	7	14%	1.51	66%
Belgium	8.5	12%	1.8	56%
Germany	10	10%	2.7	37%
Portugal	10	10%	5.5	18%
Spain	10	10%	1.39	72%
Italy	12	8%	1.57	64%
Netherlands	17.5	6%	1.54	65%
Denmark	31	3%	3.6	28%
Croatia	44	2%	4.9	20%
Turkey	75	1%	7.6	13%
Switzerland	81	1%	6.5	15%
Poland	100	1%	8	13%
Ukraine	110	1%	6	17%
Sweden	120	1%	8.4	12%
Austria	180	1%	7	14%
Czech Republic	190	1%	13	8%
Wales	201	0%	13	8%
Russia	240	0%	7	14%
Scotland	251	0%	17	6%
Finland	501	0%	38	3%
North Macedonia	501	0%	41	2%
Hungary	751	0%	55	2%
Slovakia	751	0%	23	4%

EURO 2020 – Outright Betting Preview

Although there's always the potential for an upset as Greece emphatically demonstrated in 2004, there are eight teams that will harbour realistic ambitions of going all the way this summer. The Netherlands are the outsiders of that group, but there's not an awful lot to separate the others in the betting. World Champions France are understandably favourites, despite being paired in the group of death with other contenders Germany and defending champions Portugal. Belgium's golden generation still threatens to deliver, England's young attacking talent marks them out as a serious threat, while Spain and Italy remain dangerous opponents for any side to draw.

Qualifying Form

Belgium and Italy became the seventh and eighth teams to complete a perfect qualifying record for European Championships, each winning 10 games en route, though this has clearly become easier to achieve, especially with the expanded 24-team format. England managed it for Euro 2016, as did Spain and Germany four years earlier. In total, there were five unbeaten sides in qualifying this time around, with Spain, Denmark and Ukraine also managing the feat.

One thing that all the past seven winners had in common was that they finished their qualifying campaigns fairly impressively and came into the tournament with momentum, while the past six also all topped their qualifying groups. After a shock loss to Albania in their opening qualifier, Portugal won the remaining seven en route to glory last time around. Spain won all eight qualifiers going into 2012, as well as eight of their final nine games (W8-D1-L0) in 2008. Greece won their final six in 2004, France won three of their final four (W3-D1-L0) in 2000, Germany won their final four in 1996 and Denmark their final five in 1992.

However, this doesn't narrow the field down too much either. With qualification easier owing to the change in format, the major players haven't had too much difficulty in reaching the tournament, while the delay due to the coronavirus pandemic means that the qualifiers aren't as close as they would have been to the action. The Nations League may provide a better indication as to the sides in form, with Italy, Spain, Belgium and France the sides to reach the semi-finals, due to be played in October.

Favourites In Past Tournaments

While Greece's success was a huge surprise in 2004, their quarter-final win over a then dominant France team was perhaps more down to Jacques Santini's overly defensive tactics and a few key players being past their prime. More generally, the strongest teams have done fairly well in the European Championships and with seven of the eight World Cup finalists since 2006 coming from Europe, it's fair to say that the best European nations are currently very strong and have few weaknesses.

Portugal won the last edition despite being quite far down in the betting, though they almost exited at the group stage as they drew all three matches. Typically the favourites have gone deep into the tournament, with runners-up France beating joint-favourites Germany in the semi-finals in 2016. Spain were victorious as favourites in 2012 while the losing semi-finalists, Germany and Portugal, were second and fourth in the betting respectively. 2008 saw Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands all vie for favouritism, with Germany and Spain contesting the final. In 2004, runners-up

Portugal were third favourites although more had been expected of France and Italy. In 2000 the four favourites were the Netherlands (semi-finalists), France (winners), Spain and Italy (runners-up), while in 1996 Germany backed up their favourites tag by taking the title.

Covid-19 Delay & Major Injuries

There are certainly some winners and losers from the year-long delay to this tournament. England in particular will feel the extra time has been beneficial with a number of younger players emerging, though fitness doubts over Harry Maguire, Jordan Henderson and now Trent Alexander-Arnold have given cause for concern.

Of course, virtually every team has their own fitness setbacks ahead of the tournament. Spain have just had a scare with Sergio Busquets testing positive for Covid-19, though the rest of the squad have returned negative results and it appears they won't be ravaged by absentees. They will however have to make do without veteran centre-back Sergio Ramos and young starlet Ansu Fati, the Netherlands will be cursing the absence of Virgil van Dijk, Italy's Nicolo Zaniolo's injury nightmare continues, while Zlatan Ibrahimovic has been denied one last hurrah with Sweden on the European stage.

Favourites By Group (A)

Although there are no pushovers in Italy's group, they'll expect to top a selection featuring Switzerland, Turkey and Wales, which would most likely set up a favourable Last 16 tie against either Austria or Ukraine. After the debacle of failing to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. Roberto Mancini has brought a winning mentality that saw them complete a perfect qualifying campaign, as they registered 37 goals and conceded just four times in 10 matches.

Further evidence of progress could be seen in the Nations League, where an unbeaten campaign saw the Azzurri pip the Netherlands to the semi-finals, to be held in October. Younger talents such as Federico Chiesa and Manuel Locatelli look set to replace the old guard, but there's still significant experience and especially at the back, where Giorgio Chiellini and Leonardo Bonucci remain an integral part of the setup.

Marco Verratti provides control in midfield, and a well-balanced squad leaves them as strong dark horses in the betting. They also benefit from playing each of their group stage matches in Rome, so should avoid a second-place finish in the group. The Azzurri have now won a hugely impressive 17 of 21 unbeaten competitive matches, registering 15 clean sheets in the process and never conceding more than once. That defensive resolve should keep them competitive when they do eventually reach the stronger outfits, as they appear to have gone under the radar slightly.

Favourites By Group (B)

Belgium may have more reason than anyone to rue injuries, with captain Eden Hazard and vice-captain Kevin De Bruyne included in the squad, but entering the tournament with some doubts attached. The former has endured a torrid time since signing for Real Madrid, scoring just five times in two seasons at club level, while the latter suffered facial injuries in the Champions League final. Fortunately, De Bruyne will probably be available by the latter stages when they'll need him most, with a wealth of talent able to step into the void during the group stages.

Although FIFA's number one ranked side, Belgium's golden generation are yet to reach a final and in Roberto Martinez, they perhaps lack an elite level coach to go all the way. There must be some concern that the opportunity for silverware will pass them by, especially given that at the back,

Vincent Kompany is no longer around and the trio of Thomas Vermaelen, Toby Alderweireld and Jan Vertonghen are ageing.

Further, Belgium haven't been dismantling sides in the same manner as they were before. Indeed, in 2019 they scored three or more in 80% of their matches, which has dropped to just 31% since the end of that year. That said, they've won eight of their last nine group games in major competitions, losing only to Italy in Euro 2016, and will expect to top their pool with Denmark, Russia and Finland. They could also potentially be saddled with the third-placed team from the Group of Death in the Last 16, which includes heavyweights France, Germany and Portugal.

Favourites By Group (C)

The Netherlands are another side that will fancy their chances of winning their group, despite this being their first appearance at a major tournament since finishing third at the 2014 World Cup. Austria and Ukraine provide the main competition, while North Macedonia will exceed all expectations should they avoid last place.

Only two players, back-up goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg and midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum have 50 caps for the national side. With that in mind, and with Virgil van Dijk sidelined, there'll be a heavy reliance upon the likes of Matthijs de Ligt, Frenkie de Jong and Memphis Depay.

Frank de Boer only took the reins in September 2020, but so far, he's just W5-D4-L2. Four of those victories came over Bosnia, Latvia, Gibraltar and Georgia, while their recent stalemate with Scotland hardly encourages either. Depay scored both goals in the 2-2 draw, and with he and Wijnaldum the only regular sources of goals, we'd be wary about their chances of going far. That's especially the case as at the other end, clean sheets have been hard to come by, with Latvia, Gibraltar and Georgia the only attack's they've suppressed across their past nine fixtures.

Favourites By Group (D)

England should comfortably navigate a group featuring Croatia, Scotland and the Czech Republic. Although the latter two shouldn't be underestimated, especially given the derby feel to the clash with Steve Clarke's men, the Three Lions undoubtedly possess superior quality and it's the meeting with Croatia that should ignite more interest.

However, the 2018 World Cup finalists are not quite as formidable now, with key players either retiring from the international scene or growing old. Indeed, since collecting their runners-up medals in Russia, Croatia have struggled versus elite teams. Up against Spain, England, France and Portugal, they hold a W1-D2-L6 record across their Nations League fixtures and a single friendly, including defeats in each of the past five (all competitive) as they conceded 15 goals.

With England clear favourites to top their own pool, that could actually represent a problem as they'd encounter the runners-up of the Group of Death. France, Germany and Portugal are all teams Gareth Southgate would prefer to avoid early on, while beyond that they'd likely encounter Spain in the quarter-finals, should Luis Enrique's men meet expectations.

Favourites By Group (E)

Spain are gunning for a third European crown in four attempts, though of course there are very few of the old guard remaining. That's especially the case after Sergio Ramos was omitted, despite Luis

Enrique only naming a 24-man squad, while in fact it's the first time they'll ever enter a major tournament without any Real Madrid players.

However, although the current setup can't boast the likes of Xavi and Andres Iniesta, it's not as though there's a paucity of talent either. Veteran midfielder Sergio Busquets will captain the side, Gerard Moreno enters the tournament off the back of a fine domestic campaign where he bagged 30 goals across La Liga and the Europa League, but there is a lack of experience with just eight players earning 15 caps or more.

La Roja can also point to a favourable draw, even if Sweden and Poland both represent potential banana skins. They'll expect to overcome Slovakia and should they top their group, a kind Last 16 encounter beckons as they'd face the third-best side from any of Groups A-D.

Spain have only suffered defeat once in 23 outings going all the way back to November 2018. However, a W7-D8-L1 record across their most recent fixtures isn't so special, while they've netted more than once in just three of their past 10 matches, with two of those coming against much weaker sides Georgia and Kosovo.

Favourites By Group (F)

With four of the six best third-placed teams set to advance, there's no reason why France, Germany and Portugal can't all make the knockouts. All three will expect to prove too much for Hungary, and three points would likely carry them through, especially if the likes of Finland, North Macedonia or Scotland struggle to pick up points in their respective groups.

France enter the tournament as favourites and it's hard to argue with that assessment. The 2018 World Cup winners possess a talent-laden squad and cover all over the pitch. A midfield duo of N'Golo Kante and Paul Pogba catches the eye, but most striking of all is the attacking tools at Didier Deschamps' disposal.

Kylian Mbappe is the star act, but Antoine Griezmann has enjoyed a much better second season with Barcelona and has been lethal on the international stage too. Club teammate Ousmane Dembele provides further forward power in the wide areas along with Bayern Munich's Kingsley Coman, while Karim Benzema's return only serves to highlight their potency.

Les Bleus were beaten in 2016's final by Portugal and much of the latter's squad remains intact, though veterans such as Cristiano Ronaldo and Pepe have been supplemented by rising talents such as Joao Felix and Ruben Dias.

Ahead of their final warm-up friendly with Israel, Portugal have lost just twice in 28 appearances since the 2018 World Cup and only once across their past 14. Even that recent defeat was a narrow 1-0 against France, and they'll pose a strong test for anyone they encounter.

Indeed, Portugal are a very even W2-D7-L2 against elite outfits Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands and Spain since the start of Euro 2016. These have been ridiculously low-scoring affairs, as nine of the 11 clashes featured a maximum of one goal. Even when including the likes of Croatia, Poland, Mexico, Chile, Switzerland and Uruguay, they're W7-D14-L3 over this period, as 16 out of 24 featured a maximum of two goals.

Germany are perennial winners on the international stage, but their early exit from the 2018 World Cup was a rude wake up call for manager Joachim Low and there are few remaining players from their triumph in 2014. There aren't many world stars in the squad, but it's a strong group collectively and as ever, can't be discounted from the running.

However, a major concern has to be their lack of clean sheets. They've shut their opponents out in just three of 14 matches, coming against the Czech Republic, Iceland and Romania. A 6-0 humiliation away at Spain in November hints that not all is well, and it's difficult to see them going all the way.

Conclusions

The draw certainly hasn't been kind to France, Germany or Portugal, but with the possibility for third-placed sides to advance, that doesn't unduly put us off those teams. England are perhaps the biggest losers of the draw, as should they meet expectations and top their group, a hard path to the final looks inevitable. Gareth Southgate's men should have momentum in the final stretch if they get there, with the semis and final to be held at Wembley, but doubts persist over their quality at centre-back and they'll probably find there are just too many hurdles to paper over that chink in their armour.

The odds also make England unattractive, while it's not too dissimilar to Belgium's case. Fitness doubts surrounding key players threatens to undermine their chances, as does the ageing of their centre-backs, while a drop off in form hints that the golden generation is going to pass them by.

Spain, Germany and the Netherlands all appear to suffer from a lack of real high-end talent, as well as experience, and we wouldn't want to get behind any of them either. Portugal certainly have the talent, but with a tendency to draw so many games with elite level opponents, they may struggle to get the points to top a hard group, which should lead to difficult knockout games early. They can't be discounted to repeat their heroics from five years ago, but Spain are the only side to ever lift back-to-back European Championships, and too many stalemates leaves the margin of ever too fine.

Italy are impressive dark horses for this tournament with their home advantage in the group stages, clear progression under Roberto Mancini and a seemingly favourable draw. However, world champions France look set to rule the roost, and deserve their billing as favourites with the most complete squad.

Les Bleus have lost just two of 30 competitive matches since the start of the 2018 World Cup, winning 13 of their last 16 unbeaten such outings. Up against top sides Argentina, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Uruguay, they're W12-D3-L1 over 90 minutes since July 2016 and will take some stopping this summer.

Recommendations:

[Main Tip – France @ 6.2](#)

[Dark Horses – Italy @ 10](#)

Euro 2020 Top Scorer Preview

While trying to help their teams claim glory this summer Europe's leading strikers will be looking to show who the best marksman is. In 2012, Fernando Torres took the official honours, after a six-way tie on goals scored and then a two-way tie on goals plus assists, as he'd played fewer minutes. It played out very differently four years ago though, as Antoine Griezmann scored a remarkable six goals, the most for a player in a single tournament since Michel Platini scored nine goals in 1984. Interestingly, five of those goals came in the knockout stages as the French striker took advantage of the extra knockout round that was introduced for that year.

Key Stats (since 1996 when the championships increased to 16 teams)

- Since 1996 two of the six Championships have had a tie for the top scorer, including six players finishing level in 2012 (11 top or joint-top scorers in this time)
- The top scorer netted six times in 2016, five times in 1996, 2000 and 2004 but David Villa was top with four goals in 2008 and no one scored more than three times four years ago
- Nine of the 12 top scorers played for teams that at least reached the semi-finals
- 10/12 top scorers found the net at least twice in the group stages with seven scoring three or more times

Leading Contenders (Nation, Odds)

Harry Kane (England, 8.6) is probably the deserved favourite having won the 2018 World Cup top scorer award. He picked up his third Premier League golden boot for his 23 goals this season and also picked up the playmaker of the season award to go with it, contributing 14 assists. He'll be in charge of the penalties and with the creativity of Champions League winner Mason Mount, Phil Foden, Jack Grealish and Jadon Sancho to name a few, he'll be amongst the goals leading England's line.

Romelu Lukaku (Belgium, 8) chances nearly took a huge blow when Kevin De Bruyne went down injured in the Champions League final, but he looks likely to at least make their second game against Denmark. Nonetheless, Lukaku totted up 24 goals in Serie A this season with a conversion rate of 31% bettering the 23 he managed for Inter in 2019/20. He finished joint second at the most recent World Cup with four goals and now back to his best form could be a great shout.

Kylian Mbappe (France, 13) picked up the Ligue 1 top scorer for the third straight time this season with 27 goals, netting a goal every 88 minutes, while he has a total of 42 from his 46 outings in all competitions for his club. He showed his quality in Russia back in 2018 when scoring four goals, including one in the final to crown France as champions. His price is larger than expected due to the difficulty of France's group as both Portugal and Germany look to be quality outfits, but should they come through that he has every chance of adding this accolade to his honours.

Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal, 15.5) earned the Capocannoniere for the first time this season with 29 goals, while a total 35 goals this term in all tournaments may still be down on his Real Madrid days, but he'll no doubt be a leading player for Portugal. At 36, he's not getting any younger, but he's come joint second top scorer in his last two major international tournaments, and should Portugal make it out the group he has every chance.

Karim Benzema (France, 17) is back in the squad for the first time following a six-year hiatus. The Real Madrid striker netted over 20 La Liga goals for the third straight season and looks to be flourishing off Cristiano Ronaldo's exit. The only question remains as to how Didier Deschamps lines his team up with as many as five centre forwards in the squad, but with Antoine Griezmann likely to play as a false nine and Mbappe able to play out wide or up top with him, it could present an excellent opportunity for Benzema should he get the nod over both Olivier Giroud and Ben Yedder.

Memphis Depay (Netherlands, 19) is the obvious candidate for the Dutch team. The Lyon forward is being linked with a move to the Catalan giants for this summer and after scoring 20 goals in Ligue 1 this term, only trailing Mbappe, you can see why. He's in form for his country too, netting six goals and providing two assists from his last six outings, while he finished the season domestically with seven goals and three assists from his final eight games across all competitions. The Netherlands' hopes did take a serious blow when Virgil van Dijk announced his absence for the Euros though.

Ciro Immobile (Italy, 23) is a three-time Capocannoniere winner and hit 20 or more goals for the fourth time in five seasons this campaign, while his five goals from as many appearances in the Champions League for Lazio shows his quality on the big stage. Moreover, six goals from his final eight games in Serie A shows good form heading into the summer, not to mention he's netted in both his last two starts for Italy.

Robert Lewandowski (Poland, 26) only has one factor holding him back and that's the chances of Poland going deep in this tournament. The Bayern striker broke Gerd Muller's 49-year-old Bundesliga record this season with his 41 goals in just a mere 29 matches this term. Three goals already from his two World Cup qualifiers for Poland says all you need to know about where their goals are going to come from, and a more favourable draw could play into his hands.

Antoine Griezmann (France, 26) won this accolade four years ago but his form domestically was slightly different back then. Indeed, he went into that tournament having scored 22 goals for Atletico while this time around he's managed just 13 league goals from 36 appearances. He does tend to get played out of position for the Catalan giants though and his output for Les Bleus continues to be fruitful, having a hand in three of their four goals in the most recent World Cup qualifiers. Moreover, he proved his goal scoring threat in their recent friendly against Wales when scoring from outside the box.

Alvaro Morata (Spain, 31) came close to becoming the top scorer four years ago in France with his three goals. The Spaniard accumulated just 11 goals in Serie A this term but someone tends to suffer in the goalscoring department when Ronaldo is your strike partner. He'll have competition from Gerard Moreno for the number 10 spot which brings further doubt into his chances of being top scorer, but should he start he'll likely get a goal or two.

Time Werner (Germany, 31) played a crucial role in helping Chelsea lift the Champions League trophy but he's built a reputation for choking in front of goal. He averaged a goal every 433 minutes in the Premier League this term and until he eradicates that mental block, he's probably one to avoid for this tournament.

Outsiders

Serge Gnabry (Germany, 26) has 10 goals from his 27 Bundesliga appearances this term and while he had nine Champions League goals last season he failed to get a European goal this time around.

The key factor for him is his 15 goals in 20 starts for his country, but having netted only twice in eight matches since the start 2020 for Die Mannschaft, we'd have hope his price was a little longer.

Ferran Torres (Spain, 41) started the season in exceptional form for Man City in Europe. He netted four goals from his six matches and ended the tournament as their joint-top scorer, while seven goals in 15 starts in the Premier League shouldn't be overlooked. In fact, for club and country in all tournaments he now has seven goals in as many starts, while for his country alone dating back to mid-November, he has five goals in four games including a hatrick against Germany, and the youngster could well be their biggest goal threat.

Federico Chiesa (Italy, 151) is somewhat of a dark horse to win top scorer. A mere eight goals in Serie A is by no means outstanding, but the Juventus winger did net four goals in eight Champions League outings. His price is far too high for the goal threat he poses and although he has just one goal in 24 appearances for his country, having proven he can do it on the biggest stage in Europe while their group looks very winnable given how impressive Roberto Mancini has made his squad.

Our View

It's difficult to see why Griezmann's price has drifted out quite so much considering the recent form he showed for his country. Indeed, goals in the group stage can be vital and their group doesn't exactly tend to that angle in the toughest of the competition, but the striker proved that isn't the be all and end all at Euro 2016 given the introduction of the extra knockout match. Couple that with his four goals in Russia in 2018 and he has been the most prolific striker on the international major tournament stage over the last five years and should come good for the tournament favourites.

Federico Chiesa looks an exciting outside bet for us. He's started just once for Italy since he terrorised the Porto defence back in February, and should he take that goalscoring form to the Euros, he could cash in against their Group A opponents, let alone his team being one of our outsider picks to go all the way and win it.

Our final selection is based on the draw and therefore a player looking to get ahead of the rest of the pack before the knockouts. With that in mind, we very much like Belgium's chances of going deep into this tournament. The obvious selection therefore is Inter's Romelu Lukaku to pick up some early goals against the likes of Finland, Denmark and Russia before we reach the knockouts.

Recommendations:

[Antoine Griezmann EW @ 26 \(4 places, 1/4 odds\), Various](#)

[0.25Pts: Romelu Lukaku EW @ 8 \(4 places, 1/4 odds\), Various](#)

[0.1Pts : Federico Chiesa EW @ 151 \(4 places, 1/4 odds\), Bet365](#)

Group A Betting Preview

Italy are clear favorites, but there are no pushovers in this group. Still, they enjoyed a perfect record win 10 wins in qualifying, and in Roberto Mancini possess a manager with a track record of winning.

Wales took Euro 2016 by storm as they reached the semis, defying all exactions, particularly as they took down Belgium in the quarter-finals. Eventual winners Portugal put an end to their run, but although they missed out on the World Cup, they've since rebounded with qualification for this tournament and promotion to League A in the Nations League.

Some faces from their run five years ago have departed, most notably former captain Ashley Williams, but there is still a decent blend of experience and youth to the setup. Success this summer will hinge upon keeping things tight and looking to a strong attacking core of Gareth Bale, Aaron Ramsey, Daniel James, Harry Wilson and David Brooks, though key men Bale and Ramsey have suffered significant injury setbacks in recent years. Still, it's the same blueprint that has yielded past rewards, so if key performers can stay fit, they'll certainly represent a potential banana skin.

Switzerland have been competitive for a number of years now, reaching the knockouts in Euro 2016 before losing on penalties to a decent Polish outfit, while again made the knockouts in the World Cup having taken a point off Brazil in the group stages. They finished level on points with Portugal in World Cup qualification and topped an admittedly weak group in qualification for this tournament, while they also made the semi-finals of the inaugural Nations League and retained their League A status in the most recent edition.

Switzerland have seen some players either retire or become more peripheral through age, but there's still enough quality and experience in the setup to reach the knockouts for a third successive major tournament. An experienced goalkeeper is protected by a solid back three of Manuel Akanji, Fabian Schar and Nico Elvedi, while the midfield duo of Arsenal's Granit Xhaka and Atalanta's Remo Freuler give a solid spine to the team.

Turkey finished bottom of their League B group in the inaugural Nations League and were spared relegation by a restructuring of the format. However, they finished in last place once again, behind Hungary, Russia and Serbia, and will compete in League C next time around.

Turkey did fare better in European qualifiers though, where the 23 points they collected was just two shy of group winners France, albeit with Iceland, Albania, Andorra and Moldova the competition. They've made a great start to the World Cup qualifiers with wins over the Netherlands and a Norway side brimming with young talent such as Erling Haaland and Martin Odegaard, though a draw with Latvia suggests talk of a resurgence is somewhat premature.

Italy's superior quality and unbeaten record in qualifying suggests they should take this group. They're a little short to take first, though we'd back them and the Swiss to take the top two spots. Turkey still have some convincing to do, while there are too many fitness doubts in the Welsh camp.

Recommendation

[Dual Forecast – Italy/Switzerland @ 2.88, Bet Victor](#)

Group B Betting Preview

Belgium head into this group as clear favourites, and although we'd expect them to qualify with relative ease, there are some teams here that could cause a couple of issues. Belgium's golden generation has elevated them to the top of the world rankings, though they have nothing to show for it in terms of major trophies, as they're also yet to compete in a final. Since the return of football at the back end of 2020, they've not been dismantling sides like they were before. Indeed, in 2019 they scored three or more in 80% of their matches, which has dropped to just 36% since the end of that year. That said, they've won eight of their last nine group games in major competitions, losing only to Italy in Euro 2016 and they should pull through top of this group, even if they don't put some of these sides to the sword.

Denmark pose the biggest threat to Belgium and could really be a dark horse in this tournament. Their defence is resolute and that midfield nicely balanced, though their real issue is that they lack a talisman. None of their eight attacking options have even reached double figures for international goals, and that could hold them back here unless one of their young guns comes up trumps. It's been a difficult journey for the country since they won this competition in 1992, exiting at the group stages in the following two editions, while this is now only their second appearance since 2004. They're a very complete team and have only lost twice in 11 matches under current management, though unfortunately both came at the hands of the Belgians so we wouldn't expect them to top the group, though they should certainly fancy their chances of reaching the knockout stages.

Finland look as though they have an uphill battle here in their first ever major tournament, though they shouldn't be ruled out entirely given the format, and they've proven that they're not here to be pushed around. A statement 2-0 win over France should not go unnoticed despite Les Bleus fielding largely a second-string side. While they've been somewhat dominant against sides lower down the pecking order than themselves, beating Ireland (twice) and Bulgaria (twice) in the Nations League, they've often struggled against sides of the calibre they're due to face in the coming weeks, and that doesn't bode well. They've lost three of their last five winless outings despite playing none of the top-10 sides in the world, and with this group consisting of two nations in that category, it's likely they'll be battling it out for third.

Russia make up the final nation in this group, and they'll likely have to play catchup in this group with their opening match against the Belgians. It's been a slight fall from grace in recent years as after being one of the most dangerous sides in the world in 2012 when they ranked ninth, they dropped all the way down to 64th in 2017 and are slowly looking to climb back up. They've gone W2-D4-L4 across their last 10 outings and with the victories coming against Malta and Slovenia, they'll need to find an added impetus if they want to reach the latter stages here. While they have more experience at this level of competition than a lot of sides, they've only once made it out of the groups in six attempts since their final appearance in 1988. It looks as though it'll be a shootout between the Russians and Fins for third place and potential qualification, though we wouldn't bank on either getting through with the strength of some of the other groups, and a straight forecast looks the best bet here.

Recommendation: [Straight Forecast – Belgium/Denmark @ 3.3, Paddy Power/Betfair](#)

Group C Betting Preview

As far as Group C betting odds go, it looks one of the most open of the tournament. Netherlands (FIFA World Ranking – 16th) are the clear front runners and with the likes of Matthijs de Ligt, Frankie de Jong, Georginio Wijnaldum and Memphis Depay. However, the management of Frank de Boer hasn't proved to be too much of a success in his early days since taking over from Ronald Koeman, going W4-D4-L2 to date. Three of those victories came over Bosnia, Latvia and Gibraltar, as goals seems to be on the agenda when they play, as five of their last six have seen more than two goals four of which saw more than three. There's no denying they have the players to go far but we'd be a little concerned about the reliance on Depay for their goals and if the big names at the back can gel without the presence of Virgil van Dijk.

The danger outfit in this group looks to be Ukraine (FIFA World Ranking – 24th) who went unbeaten in qualification, finishing above Portugal. Only Turkey and Belgium conceded fewer than their four times in order to get to this point from their eight qualifications matches and Andriy Shevchenko looks to be doing a great job. The likes of Mykola Matvienko, Ruslan Malinovskyi and Andriy Yarmolenko will be crucial to their chances. Ukraine have failed to escape their group in their two previous attempts at the Euros but this is probably their best chance of doing so.

Austria (FIFA World Ranking – 23rd) have a terrible record in the major tournaments and their current overly cautious approach hasn't given their fans much to get excited about. The only two previous times they've qualified for the Euro finals (2008 & 2016) has seen them exit at the group stage, the latter of which saw them host the tournament, and although they have the likes of David Alaba, Marcel Sabitzer and Marko Arnautovic in their ranks, they may struggle to take points off the likes of the Netherlands and Ukraine. Moreover, their last two outings have seen them lose to Denmark (4-0) and a heavily rotated England (1-0) side.

The lowest ranked side in the tournament are likely to be passengers in this group. North Macedonia (FIFA World Ranking – 62nd) did overturn Germany back in March in their World Cup qualifier, but other than that result they lack any real conviction against the better sides. They've gone W1-D1-L14 against the more competitive sides in qualification matches since the start of 2014 and we can't see them putting in anymore surprise performances.

In terms of the way to approach this group from a betting sense, the Dutch do have the advantage of playing their games at home in Amsterdam. However, the departure of Koeman has left their chances under question and they could be worth taking on at their current price without their leader at the back. It's Ukraine that look the most likely outfit to take them on and given how impressive they've been we like their current price to win the group.

Recommendations: [Group Winner – Ukraine @ 6, William Hill/Bet Victor/Sporting Index](#)

[Dual Forecast – Netherlands/Ukraine @ 2.25, Bet Victor](#)

[To Finish Bottom – North Macedonia @ 1.54, Smarkets Sportsbook](#)

Group D Betting Preview

Questions remain as to Gareth Southgate's best options all over the pitch, with few players guaranteed to start, while it's not clear whether a back three or a back four is best. Despite media clamour for the trio of Phil Foden, Jack Grealish and Mason Mount to all start, it would appear that Southgate is intent on fielding two holding players to provide protection to his backline.

Although finding the right balance in midfield and attack will be crucial, it's the defence that gives cause for alarm and especially at centre-back, where fitness doubts over Harry Maguire leaves options somewhat thin. However, England have typically found life easy under Southgate in qualification, and it's an issue that's more likely to affect them in the knockout stages.

The main competition should be provided by Croatia, though the 2018 World Cup finalists aren't quite what they once were. Key players have either grown old or retired, and recent showings against elite sides suggest they won't go as far in this tournament. They're just W1-D2-L6 when taking on Spain, France, England or Portugal since then, suffering defeat in each of the last five such matches as they shipped 15 goals, though they retain enough quality within the ranks that a finish outside the top two in this group would have to be considered a failure.

Scotland have certainly made huge strides forward under Steve Clarke, but they qualified for this tournament via the play-offs owing to their Nations League campaign. Penalty victories over Israel and Serbia were enough, but they're a tad fortunate to make the cut. The glaring weakness has to be the lack of a clinical marksman, with John McGinn in midfield arguably their biggest goal threat. He'll likely be partnered in the middle by Scott McTominay, though the Man Utd man has occasionally been utilised at centre-back. Overall, it's a defensive setup and the approach will be to hang in games and hope for a break down the other end. They'll line up with a back five that accommodates both Kieran Tierney and Andy Robertson, but anything other than an early exit will be a bonus.

This will be Scotland's first major tournament since 1998 and they'll hope home comforts can play some role, facing both the Czech Republic and Croatia at Hampden Park. A single victory could potentially be enough to qualify in third place, so they can't be discounted from escaping the group.

However, the Czech Republic were the only side to beat England in qualifying and will fancy their own chances. There's a solid spine to the team with West Ham's impressive Tomas Soucek operating in a box-to-box role in a settled 4-2-3-1 formation, with captain Vladimir Darida ahead of him and Bayer Leverkusen's Patrick Schick as the target man.

The Czech's face England in last group game and will hope to benefit from playing a weakened team should Southgate's men win their opening games and secure passage to the knockouts. As long as they avoid defeat to Scotland on the opening day, they look well-placed to finish third in the group and possibly advance to the next round.

Recommendations: [Dual Forecast – England/Croatia @ 2.1, Betway](#)

[To Finish 3rd – Czech Republic @ 3, Betway](#)

Group E Betting Preview

Having not qualified for any of the first 12 European Championships, Poland are now playing in their fourth consecutive one, and they'll be looking to go one better than their quarter-final visit five years ago. They were extremely impressive in qualifying, winning eight of their 10 games to finish top of group G, though the level of opposition they faced there is vastly different to what they'll be coming up against here. There's undoubted quality in this squad, not least in talisman Robert Lewandowski and you can bet that if Poland are to qualify from this group, he'll have a big part to play in it. Although third could qualify, they'll be eying to not leave it to chance and secure second spot here ahead of Sweden, and although they haven't managed to beat the Swedes in any of their last seven meetings going back to 1991, the most recent meeting was in 2004 and will have little bearing on their matchup here.

The benefit of having some third-place teams qualify is that it gives the likes of Slovakia some hope in what is a very tough group for the Eastern Europeans. Since the restart, they've won just two of 12 matches over 90 minutes which came by narrow one goal margins against Scotland and Russia, with all three teams they face here ranked higher than either of those sides. With that said, they've sometimes proven to be difficult to beat, drawing half of those matches and they may just throw their hat in the ring if they can nick another draw in one of those matches.

Spain rightly go in as favourites here and there is certainly an expectation on them. Luis Enrique has made headlines after not including Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos in his squad, despite naming just 24 players from a possible 26. Not only that, but it's the first time the nation will play a major tournament without a Madrid player in their ranks. They haven't been in the best form since football returned at the back end of last year winning just five of their 11 matches and despite a thumping win over Germany, there's been very little to feel confident about. A friendly with Portugal could build confidence on Friday night, and although they should still top this group even if not at their best, there are other sides that look better equipped to go deeper in the competition.

Sweden round off the group and are currently on a run of four consecutive wins-to-nil as they look to build momentum heading into the tournament. In truth, those wins came over Georgia, Kosovo, Estonia and Finland and although you can only beat what's in front of you, this group will be a sterner test of their abilities. Indeed, a 2-1 win over Croatia at the back end of 2020 is their best result for some time as up against top opposition in their Nations League group they struggled immensely going W1-L5 against Croatia, France and Portugal, while they also lost a friendly to Denmark in that run. On balance, it looks as though the Swedes head into this in better form than Poland in what is otherwise two evenly matched sides by all measures, and that momentum on the international stage could just carry them through.

Recommendation: [Dual Forecast – Spain/Sweden @ 2.5, Sky Bet/William hill/Betway](#)

Group F Betting Preview

This is undoubtedly the group of death and it's hard to see anything other than Hungary finishing in last place, even if they will have home advantage when taking on Portugal and France. The underdogs may have topped their recent Nations League group ahead of Russia, Serbia and Turkey, but this is a step up in quality and their opponents will all expect to claim three points against them.

World Cup winners France appear the most dangerous team, with their line-up having altered little since then. Samuel Umtiti has lost his place to Presnel Kimpembe, Adrien Rabiot takes over from Blaise Matuidi, while Olivier Giroud may find himself benched for one of Kingsley Coman, Ousmane Dembele or Karim Benzema.

Beyond that, there's very little different, with the return of the Real Madrid striker the main talking point. One area that could be cause for concern is in the middle of the park, as beyond N'Golo Kante and Paul Pogba, there aren't major stars waiting in the wings. Still, France scored an abundance of goals at the World Cup, memorably putting four past both Argentina and Croatia, and whoever plays alongside star attractions Antoine Griezmann and Kylian Mbappe, we'd expect them to carry on in much the same vein.

Defending champions Portugal also boast immense attacking talent, with veteran Cristiano Ronaldo supplemented by Bruno Fernandes, Diogo Jota, Joao Felix, Bernardo Silva and Andre Silva. There's great depth at full-back, though they could be in trouble if anything happens to Ruben Dias.

Portugal are extremely good at keeping things tight against top sides. Following a recent goalless friendly in Madrid, they're W2-D7-L2 against elite sides Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands and Spain since the start of Euro 2016, as nine of the 11 games featured a maximum of just one goal. However, so many stalemates could hamper their prospects of topping the group, even if it should help them gather enough points to at least qualify as a third-placed side.

Germany are at home in all three group stage matches, but will need to improve upon their group stage exit at the last World Cup. Joachim Low will hope to bow out on a high, but his side is markedly different to the one that triumphed in Brazil back in 2014, even if Thomas Muller and Mats Hummels have returned to the fold.

Low will be concerned by the club form of Timo Werner, who has also missed presentable chances with the national side over the past year, though if Serge Gnabry can continue his goalscoring form on the international stage (16 in 21 matches), they shouldn't lack for firepower. However, his biggest worry must be the defence, especially after they were humbled 6-0 by Spain in the Nations League back in November. They lost their last competitive match 2-1 hosting North Macedonia, and even though their final pre-tournament friendly saw thump Latvia 7-1, conceding against the minnows goes further to suggest they may come unstuck when facing strong attacks.

Recommendations: [Group Winners – France @ 2.62](#)

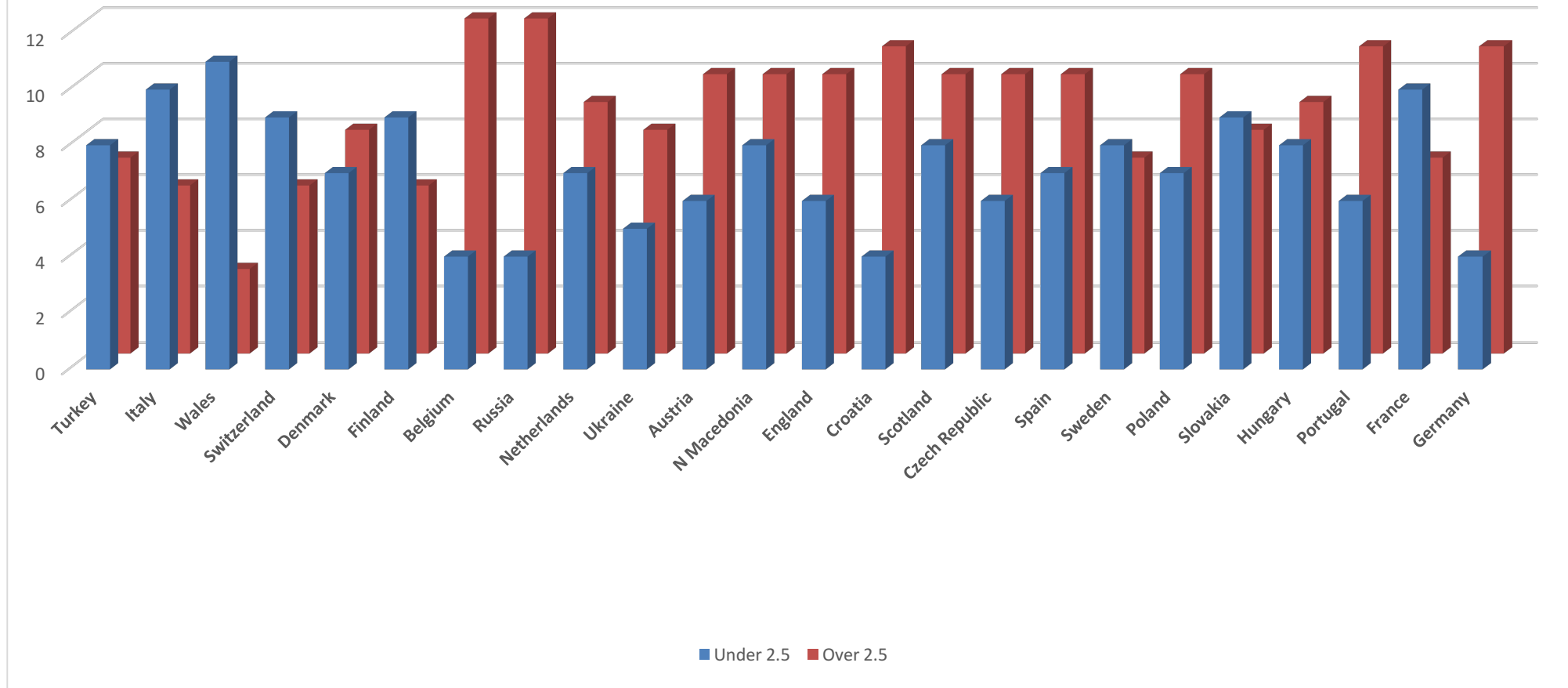
[0.5pts: To Lose All 3 Group Games – Hungary @ 2.38](#)

Total International Caps, Goals and Ages – Euro 2020

Team	Total Caps	Total Goals	Average Age
Turkey	551	79	24.6
Italy	685	82	27.3
Wales	760	70	25.0
Switzerland	877	126	26.5
Denmark	781	101	27.3
Finland	823	67	27.4
Belgium	1339	239	28.7
Russia	597	76	27.4
Netherlands	661	86	26.9
Ukraine	667	82	26.0
Austria	781	85	27.4
North Macedonia	806	102	27.1
England	543	82	24.8
Croatia	912	102	27.3
Scotland	482	36	26.8
Czech Republic	534	66	27.0
Spain	539	55	26.1
Sweden	959	93	28.7
Poland	717	97	26.7
Slovakia	901	88	27.8
Hungary	522	57	27.6
Portugal	1056	174	27.4
France	1020	164	27.3
Germany	835	140	27.1

Under/Over 2.5 Goals - Last 20 Matches*

Competitive Over/Under 2.5 Goals



* As of 08/06/21

Tournament Penalty Shoot-out Records Since 1990

Team	Penalties Record since 1990 (most recent first)	Most Recent
Turkey	W	Euro 2008 QF - Win v Croatia
Italy	LWLWLWWLLL	Euro 2016 QF - Loss v Germany
Wales	None	N/A
Switzerland	LLL	2019 Nations League Finals - 3rd place PO - Loss v England
Denmark	LLW	WC 2018 L16 - Loss v Croatia
Finland	None	N/A
Belgium	None	N/A
Russia	WL	WC 2018 QF - Loss v Croatia
Netherlands	LWWLLLL	WC 2014 SF - Loss v Argentina
Ukraine	W	WC 2006 L16 - Win v Switzerland
Austria	None	N/A
North Macedonia	None	N/A
England	WWLLLLLWL	2019 Nations League Finals - 3rd place PO - Win v Switzerland
Croatia	WWL	WC 2018 QF - Win v Russia
Scotland	WW	2020 European Qualifiers PO - Win v Serbia
Czech Republic	W	Euro 1996 SF - Win v France
Spain	LWWWLWL	WC 2018 L16 - Loss v Russia
Sweden	LW	Euro 2004 QF - Loss v Netherlands
Poland	LW	Euro 2016 QF - Loss v Portugal
Slovakia	W	2020 European Qualifiers PO - Win v Ireland
Hungary	None	N/A
Portugal	LWLWW	Confed Cup 2017 SF - Loss v Chile
France	LWLW	WC 2006 Final - Loss v Italy
Germany	WWWW	Euro 2016 QF - Win v Italy

Booking Points and Red Cards – Euro 1992-2016

