



# GROUP B

## PORTUGAL

4

WORLD  
RANKING

The highest-ranked team in this group is headlined by Cristiano Ronaldo, winner of the Ballon d'Or (best male player) four out of the last five years, and five times total.

## SPAIN

8

WORLD  
RANKING

Spain, champion of the 2010 World Cup, advanced to the 2018 World Cup with a goal differential of plus-33 in World Cup qualifying.

## IRAN

36

WORLD  
RANKING

Iran qualified for the World Cup without losing any of its qualifying matches. The team is led by Sardar Azmoun, who scored 11 goals in World Cup qualifying.

## MOROCCO

42

WORLD  
RANKING

Morocco qualified for the World Cup for the first time in 20 years by winning its group in the final round of African qualifying without losing a match or conceding a single goal.

## MARCOS SENNA

# A GRACIOUS PEACE

With four knee injuries in his career, it would be understandable if Marcos Senna was disappointed with football. But it's quite the opposite.

"I have had four knee injuries, but with God's help, I think I have coped with them well, and even experienced joy in the midst of them ... I give thanks, honor, and glory to God for the strength He has given me.

"I am at peace. I know God has a purpose in our lives. If I am injured, it is for a reason that I am injured and I understand that I will get better in time. I understand that God ... will keep looking after me. And for that reason I am very calm."

Senna, who was born into poverty in Brazil and began playing football in the streets at age 6, became a Spanish citizen



after Luis Aragonés, Senna's Villarreal CF coach, asked him to play for the Spanish national team.

"I was not going to give up my nationality by birth — Brazilian," Senna said. "At that time, I thought it was the best move and a privilege to have dual nationality and the opportunity to play for Spain, one of the best teams in the world. The truth is that it has changed my life. It has been extraordinary."

Senna played in the World Cup and also helped Spain win the Euro Cup, beating Germany 1-0. Several publications named Senna player of the tournament after he helped Spain go unbeaten in the Euro Cup.

He also helped Spain win or tie 35 consecutive matches, tying the mark held by Brazil, and helped Spain win a record 15 straight games during that span. That sent Spain to No. 1 in the world rankings for the first time in the nation's history.

"Winning the European Championship was a highlight of my career and a wonderful celebration," he says. "We eventually won on penalties. I knew that I would be one of the penalty-takers. We practiced penalties the day before, but on game day we had played 90 minutes plus 30 minutes in extra time. I was exhausted and had cramps everywhere. Yet, when the time came, I was calm and felt God's Spirit come on me, giving me peace and clarity. With His help, I was able to shoot confidently, score, and help Spain to victory. I knew God was in charge and had a plan for me to honor Him with this accomplishment."

"On the day of the final, I was completely focused on the match. It was a great day, especially with all of Spain sharing in the celebration. When we won, it was a time of great joy for all the players. Our lives will never be the same because of being part of winning the championship. More importantly, my life has never been the same because of my relationship with Jesus."

That relationship with Jesus began in Brazil, and it has made all the difference in his life.

"At that stage I did not know much about the Bible," Senna said. "I had been to church with my mother, but as I grew up I stopped going for some reason. I was not baptized or anything, but I knew some things from my mother and grandmother, they invited me to a meeting. I liked it and I kept on going. Then eight months after I became a follower of Christ, Villarreal signed me and I joined a church in Villarreal where I was baptized."

Senna said that fame, money and other material things aren't enough to satisfy anyone.

"If you are worried about anything," Senna says. "But God's Spirit is above all things. God can give you happiness, peace and joy. Just talking about it makes me smile. This has made me very happy and changed my life in every way. It is the best decision that anyone can make in their lives."

# WORLD CUP

