



POSTAL NEWS

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GOOOOOOOOAL!! *North American Soccer stamp issued*

BOSTON —The U.S. Postal Service issued its North American Soccer stamp today at the 2026 Boston World Exposition as part of the stamp show's sports theme day.

The United States is home to tens of millions of soccer fans, and that number is only expected to grow. Soccer has become especially popular with younger Americans, with millions playing at the youth level and more than 800,000 participating in high school.

Excitement is high as players and fans await the start of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. With the United States as a co-host, the FIFA World Cup could reshape the future of soccer in the country. The tournament kicks off in Mexico on June 11 and concludes in New Jersey on July 19. The United States will host 78 FIFA World Cup matches in 11 locations.

"America is celebrating its 250th birthday this year. And if that weren't enough, the FIFA World Cup kicks off in just two weeks, with the United States, Canada and Mexico co-hosting the matches," said USPS Chief Technology Officer Gary Reblin, who helped dedicate the stamp at the expo. "Boston itself will host seven World Cup matches. You can really feel the anticipation here, there's lots of excitement in the air."

Soccer has a long history in the United States. Early games involving kicking a ball were played by Native Americans before the arrival of European settlers. By the early 19th century, games combining elements of soccer, football and rugby were played casually, with rules changing frequently.

The sport's popularity grew in the second half of the century, fueled by increasing urbanization, immigration and industrialization. Attempts to establish a professional soccer league began as early as 1894, but it was only in 1968 that the North American Soccer League was formed. The sport's profile in the United States was raised further when the New York Cosmos made signed Brazilian superstar Pelé in 1975.

Held every four years since 1930 — with a pause during World War II — the FIFA World Cup first came to the United States in 1994, drawing a record 3.5 million fans. That year, the U.S. team advanced beyond the knockout stage for the first time in 64 years and bolstered the popularity of the sport in the country.

Following the success of the World Cup, Major League Soccer launched in 1996 with 10 teams. Today, it has 30 teams, with 27 in the United States and three in Canada. International stars such as David Beckham and Lionel Messi furthered the league's popularity. In 2024, it was the second-highest attended soccer league in the world, with attendance increasing 14 percent between 2022 and 2024.

Antonio Alcalá, an art director for USPS, is no stranger to the sport, having watched his daughter play from the age of 4 until college. He still watches the sport and attends DC United and Washington Spirit games. He also worked on the 2023 Women's Soccer stamp.

Alcalá says there was a long process to get to the final design. He began by looking at all the soccer stamps from around the world that he could find and sorting them by their similarities. He then looked at stock photography to see what images would appeal the most and settled on the player striking the ball in midair.

The famous “goooooooooal” call was started by announcers in Latin America before being popularized by Andrés Cantor during the 1990 World Cup. The call is now heard around the world, from kids on playgrounds to the FIFA World Cup final.

North American Soccer stamp is issued in panes of 20. As Forever stamps, they will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price. News of the stamp is being shared with the hashtag **#SoccerStamp**.

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