

Draw shows the road to London gold

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The final countdown to the Men's and Women's Olympic Football Tournaments London 2012 began at Wembley Stadium on Tuesday as the draw for the group phases of both competitions was held. Three months and a day before the action gets under way, the venue for both finals provided a suitably imposing setting for the event, which determined the path the teams must take if they are to claim gold.

Sports presenter Mark Chapman and former England centre-forward Gary Lineker were our hosts in the Bobby Moore Room, while legendary Brazilian goal machine Ronaldo and pop singer Mel C stepped up on stage to help pull the names out of the hats. Also lending their assistance as the fate of the qualifying nations was revealed were ex-Wales international Robbie Savage, former Scotland forward Kevin Gallacher and England's national women's team striker Kelly Smith.

In the women's competition, meanwhile, reigning world champions Japan will take on Canada in their opening game, while defending Olympic champions USA were pitched against France to start the tournament. The hosts will face Senegal and New Zealand in the men's and women's opening games respectively.

The groups

Men's Olympic Football Tournament Group A: Great Britain, Senegal, UAE, Uruguay Group B: Mexico, Korea Republic, Gabon, Switzerland Group C: Brazil, Egypt, Belarus, New Zealand Group D: Spain, Japan, Honduras, Morocco **Women's Olympic Football Tournament** Group E: Great Britain, New Zealand, Cameroon, Brazil Group F: Japan, Canada, Sweden, South Africa Group G: USA, France, Colombia, Korea DPR

Men's Groups *Group A* **Great Britain** enter the games as hosts, appearing for the first time since Rome 1960, and won three of the first four instalments of the tournament. **Senegal** are making their first appearance at the games, having negotiated their way through

last night's play-off game in Coventry against Oman, winning 2-0. **UAE** are making their debut in the tournament, being the only unseeded AFC team make it to the games, qualifying from a tough group containing Australia, Iraq and Uzbekistan. **Uruguay** are making their first appearance at the games since the dominance back in the 1920s, where the side won gold at both Paris 1924 and Amsterdam 1928.

Group B **Mexico** are making their ninth appearance at the games, coming in as the winners of the CONCACAF qualifying tournament, but no team from the region has won a medal in over 100 years. **Korea Republic** are the recent stalwarts of the competition, having appeared in the last seven competitions (since Seoul hosted in 1988) but only reached knockout stages once – in Athens 2004. **Gabon** are making their debut in the tournament, but come into the games as the winner of the CAF qualifying tournament. **Switzerland** make their first appearance at the Olympics for over 80 years, after impressing many to finish second in the UEFA European U-21 Football Championships. *Group C* **Brazil** triumphed at the 2011 South American Youth Championship to make their way to the games, with an Olympic gold the only major football tournament the nation has yet to win, claiming two silver and two bronze medals in the last 30 years. **Egypt** are the African team to have qualified the most times for the games (11), but this will be their first appearance in 20 years and are yet to claim a medal. **Belarus** make their first appearance at the games. They were the surprise package at the UEFA European U-21 Football Championships qualifying from their group by tightest of margins before going on to beat the Czech Republic in the Olympic play-off. **New Zealand** make their second successive appearance, having never qualified for a tournament before Beijing 2008. *Group D* **Spain** come into the tournament as winners of the UEFA European U-21 Football Championships and are the most successful European side of the last 30 years, winning gold at Barcelona 1992 and silver eight years later. **Japan** have appeared in the last five tournaments and are Asia's only ever medal winners, claiming bronze at Mexico 1968. They are also Asia's joint most successful qualifiers. **Honduras** are appearing in their second successive tournament and third overall – all coming since the turn of the millennium. **Morocco** are now Africa's second most successful side in Olympic qualifying (seven), overtaking former gold medal winners Cameroon and Nigeria with this summer's appearance. *Women's Group E* **Great Britain** arrive as hosts, making their first appearance in the tournament and as a women's team full stop. **New Zealand** make their second appearance at the games, finishing tenth in Beijing 2008, having beaten Papua New Guinea to make it to this year's games. **Cameroon** make their

debut appearance at the games, having seen off tournament regulars Nigeria on penalties in the CAF Women's Pre-Olympic tournament. **Brazil** come into the tournament after two successive silver medal finishes, having made it to the fight for a medal in every tournament so far, with Marta leading them to victory in the South American Women's Football Championship and qualification this time around. *Group F* **Japan** come into the tournament as FIFA Women's World Cup winners, after having a fantastic 2011, and narrowly missing out on the bronze medal at the last tournament's instalment. **Canada** make their second trip to the games, following an eighth place finish at Beijing 2008, having finished second to the USA in the CONCACAF Women's Olympic Qualifying tournament – where captain Christine Sinclair top scored with nine goals. **Sweden** have appeared at every instalment of the women's tournament, reaching the bronze medal match in Athens 2004, and reach London 2012 having finished third at FIFA Women's World Cup 2011. **South Africa** make their debut at the tournament after seeing off Ethiopia in their final game of the CAF Women's Pre-Olympic tournament. *Group G* In five instalments of the competition so far the **USA** have been in every final, only losing once – to Norway at Sydney 2000, and reach this year's games after triumphing at the CONCACAF Women's Olympic Qualifying tournament. **France** make it to their first Olympic games having finished fourth at the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup as the second highest finishing European side. **Colombia** also are taking part in their first games, having finished as runners-up to Brazil in the South American Women's Football Championship. **Korea DPR** made their debut at Beijing 2008, where they finished ninth, before finishing second in the Women Asian's Qualifiers to make it to London 2012.