

This World Cup could get MESSI so don't KANE the booze...

WORLD CUP 2018 SURVIVAL GUIDE



What are the odds?

Do you understand risk? There's evidence that men don't. Thinking of it in terms of football might help.

Portugal won Euro 2016. At the start of the tournament, the bookies offered odds of 20-1. Those are about the same odds as of dying in an accident. (In other words, risk-taking is more er, risky, than you might think.) So, will you survive the World Cup? Let's look at the odds.

Brazil are favourites at 9-2. Those odds are LONGER than the odds on the average man dying before he's 65. (One bloke in five dies before he's 65 which is odds of 4-1.) In other words, if you're the average male, there's more chance of you dying before you're 65 than there is of Brazil winning the World Cup. Gulp.

Moving swiftly on, this year's Men's Health Week is about diabetes. The odds on you as a UK male getting diabetes are 9-1: the same as the odds on Argentina winning the World Cup. Argentina have Messi, Aguero and Higuain so not the worst bet in the world.

Have England any chance? Well, the odds on England are about 20-1 - the same as Portugal's two years ago so you never know. Let's be optimistic. Recent research shows that optimism boosts heart health significantly.

You might be a gambler but don't gamble on your health. It's not just you who loses - your family and friends do too. Following the tips in this survival guide won't just help you survive the Euros, they'll help you tip the odds in your favour for the future too.

Get off the bench

Unless you're the substitute goalkeeper (or a blanket), warming the bench is not good for you.

A sedentary lifestyle - better known as sitting on your backside a lot - is dangerous. Human beings are designed to run about (although it is said that the Arsenal midfield have a special exemption from the Pope.)

Long periods of physical inactivity - eg. watching three World Cup games on the spin - increase your risk of

heart disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity.

Australian research even suggests that every daily hour spent in front of the TV increases the risk of heart disease by 18%.

Get off the couch and go for a walk at half- and full-time. (This will also enable you to avoid those shocking ads with Ray Winstone.)

Make smarter substitutions

Top managers live or die on the quality of their substitutions. Make some smart ones of your own when choosing the football takeaway.

Pizza

Italy didn't even qualify. Do you need any further evidence that too much pizza is not a good thing? If you can't resist, opt for veggie toppings. (Five a day is not just the number of training sessions prescribed by Mauricio Pochettino.) Try a pizza without cheese and drop the garlic bread - pick Bruschetta instead. (That's toasted ciabatta with tomatoes and herbs not Italy's left back.)

Kebab

Former Euro champions Greece have also failed to qualify. Can you see where this is going? But again, if the urge is too strong, choose shish kebab (the skewered meat) instead of doner (the reconstituted stuff) with brown pitta and salad.

Burgers

Burgers are like a manager's final instructions to the team - best kept simple. Have a grilled burger with salad, tomato and a little relish in a wholemeal bun. Avoid creamy dressings, cheese, bacon and anything battered or breaded.

Try the healthy Portuguese option: marinade thinly sliced beef or pork as long as possible in white pepper, white wine and garlic. Pan fry in a splash of oil for a minute or two and put between two slices of bread. Cristiano Ronaldo won't eat anything else after a long hard 90 minutes moaning at less talented team-mates.

Order food before drinking begins

This reduces the risk of you ordering the double deep-fried fat ball with cream and sugar. (The same applies to betting by the way. Just one drink can cloud your judgement leading to a bet on England.)

Think about your food choices. Diabetes Mellitus isn't a Colombian midfielder but a disease that is currently on the rise especially among men. (One man in 10 now has diabetes.) Yes, former England footballer Gary Mabbutt has diabetes and, yes, England probably would be better with him in the team, even at his age, but Gary proves only that you can live with diabetes not that it's a walk in the park. (Playing in a Spurs midfield that included Hoddle and Ardiles, now that was a walk in the park!)

All the info here about diet and exercise will reduce your type 2 diabetes risk.

Pace yourself

Portugal didn't win a game in their group at the Euros but still won the tournament.

'It's a marathon not a sprint' (© all football managers) so follow our drinking rules and you won't make too many misplaced passes or lose your shape in the last third:

- don't drink on an empty stomach
- have the odd soft drink or better still, glass of water
- generally a clearer liquid means less of a hangover
- drink water before bed and in the morning
- give your liver a few days off (at least 48 hours)
- don't drive and know how you're getting home
- don't mix drinks (and that includes so called energy drinks)

The NHS advise men not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week. Yes, that is less than it used to be so choose wisely! England may have picked five strikers but Germany have four and Spain only three suggesting quality is more important than quantity - the same applies to your World Cup tipples.

Get some sleep

Sitting in front of a screen all day can make it difficult to get to sleep later on. But loss of sleep - even a few hours for a few days - affects mood and judgement.

A short nap can improve your mood enormously (perhaps someone could mention it to Mark Lawrenson) and give you a boost without affecting your night's sleep. (It can also help your memory enabling you to remember the excuse you gave your boss for nipping off early to catch the afternoon kick-off.)

Nap for 20-30 minutes - much like the England back-four (or will it be three?)

How to deal with the inevitable

The best preparation for supporting England is

supporting Tottenham Hotspur. (Spurs are the club providing the most players to the England squad so that's a good omen, isn't it?) But if you haven't had the benefit of this apprenticeship, here are some tips to beat depression if and when your team gets knocked out:

- take some exercise
- sing (as if you're winning - 'always look on the bright side of life' perhaps. Singing helps get you breathing properly and boosts mood.)
- have sex ("I haven't felt that good since Archie Gemmill scored against Holland in 1978" © Trainspotting)
- do something you enjoy (eg. watch cricket or tennis)
- do something different (eg. fill in your wall chart with a different coloured pen)
- be mindful - enjoy the emotions of the journey, let the sensations of defeat flood over you like an English summer downpour, safe in the knowledge that with each moment that passes you are feeling better and will continue to feel better until Euro 2020.
- talk about it with a mate - the best tip for dealing with any problem
- look forward to the next game

It could be worse. There are 32 nations in the World Cup but Holland, the home of Johan Cruyff and total football, still couldn't qualify. (And they claim it was the smoking that killed the great man.)

How to survive a penalty shoot-out

Talking of Holland, on the day they were knocked out of Euro 96 on penalties, male heart attacks increased by 50%. In that game, the Netherlands missed just one penalty. Imagine the carnage after the semi-final of Euro 2000 when they missed five penalties against Italy. All told the Dutch have lost four out of the five shootouts they've appeared in in major tournaments. Perhaps the reason they didn't qualify this time was that there just weren't enough people still alive to select from.

Here's the thing: getting angry about losing a penalty shoot-out is like getting angry at the rain for raining, the birds for singing or a defender for clogging Dele Ali. It's going to happen. Even Germany only have win-percentage of 71%. (England's is 17%!)

Winning isn't everything

In fact, losing might save your life. US research suggests that supporting the winning team increases heart attack risk by 40%. Men under 55 are most affected apparently. But then what do the Americans know about football?

One man in five will die before the age of 65.

The Men's Health Forum is the UK charity working to change that. This guide is online at: menshealthforum.org.uk/worldcup18