

## Mexico Clinches 10th Gold Cup Title with Dramatic Win Over United States

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Mexico captured its record 10th Concacaf Gold Cup crown Sunday night, overcoming a determined United States squad in a tense 2-1 final at Houston's NRG Stadium.

The match started with a stunning moment for the United States when defender Chris Richards struck in just the fourth minute. Rising above the defense, Richards powered a header that ricocheted off the crossbar and barely crossed the goal line. The early lead electrified the American supporters, who were hoping their team could defy the odds after entering the tournament on a four-game losing streak, their longest since 2007.

But Mexico quickly settled into its rhythm, controlling possession and creating consistent threats. Their persistence paid off before halftime. Raúl Jiménez, known for his composure in front of the goal, finished calmly past U.S. goalkeeper Matthew Freese to bring Mexico level. As the crowd erupted, Jiménez raised his hands in tribute to his late friend and former Wolverhampton Wanderers teammate, Diogo Jota, who died days earlier in a tragic car accident alongside his brother André Silva.

After the break, the United States tried to regain its footing but struggled to match Mexico's intensity and ball movement. Midway through the second half, Edson Álvarez delivered the decisive moment. Meeting a well-placed set piece, Álvarez flicked a header past Freese to put Mexico ahead. Initially, the goal was ruled offside, momentarily silencing the stadium. But after a video review confirmed the goal, Mexican fans roared with relief and celebration.

Despite the loss, the United States can take pride in reaching its first Gold Cup final since 2021. With several regular starters unavailable due to injuries, vacation, and Club World Cup commitments, the Americans leaned on a largely inexperienced squad that managed five wins on the way to the championship match.

For Mexico, the victory reinforces its regional dominance. It was the eighth Gold Cup final meeting between these two rivals, and once again, El Tri emerged on top.

The final also marked the last competitive test for both teams before they turn their focus to the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which Mexico, the United States, and Canada will co-host. If Sunday's passionate showdown was any indication, the historic tournament to come should be every bit as thrilling.

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