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## Trump to Attend FIFA Club World Cup Final

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On Sunday, US President Donald Trump is scheduled to attend the FIFA Club World Cup final at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, where Manchester City will take on Fluminense. This event marks another chapter in Trump's strategic engagement with football, a sport where the United States has yet to dominate globally but which he sees as a platform to project influence.

The final is a prelude to next year's World Cup final, set to be held at the same venue. Trump has positioned both tournaments, alongside the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, as opportunities to herald what he terms a "Golden Age of America" in his second term. His

presence at the match underscores this ambition, blending personal interest with political optics.

A key factor in Trump's involvement is his close relationship with FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who has become a regular guest at the White House. In a press conference at FIFA's New York office on Saturday, Infantino stated that Trump had been presented with a replica of the Club World Cup trophy during his March visit. This gesture highlights the personal and political bond between the two men.

Trump's connection to football also has a personal dimension. In the same press conference, Infantino noted, "I think he does. In his first term, there was a football goal in the White House garden. He explained to me that his son loved football, and as a parent, you love what your children love." Trump's youngest son, Barron, aged 19, is reportedly an avid fan, and Trump has claimed he played football briefly during his time at the New York Military Academy, although this has not been independently verified.

Despite football's growing fan base in the US, it remains overshadowed by American football, basketball, and baseball. Yet Trump, ever attuned to cultural clout, recognises the sport's global reach and potential to amplify his influence. He has frequently highlighted that the United States, alongside Mexico and Canada, secured the 2026 World Cup hosting rights during his first term in 2018. Reflecting on this during Infantino's March visit, Trump remarked he was "so sad" at the thought of missing the event as president, only to find himself back in office for it after his 2024 election victory.

The expanded FIFA Club World Cup has defied sceptics, drawing over 1.7 million spectators across the US and delivering thrilling matches. Infantino praised Trump's backing, stating on Saturday, "He embraced immediately the importance of the FIFA Club World Cup, and of course, the World Cup next year." He also quipped that Trump "certainly loves the trophy," its gold-plated design aligning with the president's penchant for opulent decor.

However, Trump's engagement with football has not been without controversy. During a June Oval Office meeting with Juventus, he veered into a rant about transgender participation in sports before asking the players, "Could a woman make your team, fellas?" Juventus general manager Damien Comolli responded diplomatically, noting, "We have a very good women's team," to which Trump quipped, "He's being very diplomatic."

Concerns have been raised that Trump's stringent immigration policies, central to his "America First" agenda, could complicate visa procedures for international fans attending the 2026 World Cup. In May, Vice President JD Vance declared that while fans are "welcome to come," they must "go home" when the tournament ends, raising concerns about the US's hospitality toward global visitors.

As Trump leverages football's global stage, his appearance at Sunday's final will be closely watched, both as a celebration of the sport and a calculated move to cement his vision of American dominance.

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