

# **Paysafe Research: First-Time and Casual Betting to Surge for 2026 World Cup**

*60% of World Cup fans plan to bet online, marking a major revenue opportunity for online sportsbooks with optimized payments tailored to local preferences*

LONDON--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- 19% of global consumers with an interest in following this summer's 2026 World Cup plan to place their first ever online bet during the soccer tournament, according to research issued today by leading payments platform [Paysafe](#) (NYSE: PSFE). The company's [All the Ways Players Pay: World Cup 2026](#) report also indicates that brand reputation and offering flexible, reliable payments will be crucial for online sportsbooks when converting and retaining new and experienced bettors alike.

With the World Cup returning to North America for the first time since 1994, there is strong appetite for online wagering in the host countries of the U.S., Mexico, and Canada as well as in Europe and Latin America, with 60% of global fans planning to bet. Across U.S. states where sports betting is legal, 62% intend to wager, with 29% placing their first ever bet. The surge is expected to be even stronger in Mexico, with 68% planning to wager, including 26% for the first time. And even in Canada, 46% of Ontarians expect to wager, with 9% newbies.

There's equally robust interest internationally, especially in the recently regulated markets of Brazil (66% plan to bet) and, above all, Peru (85%). Appetite is also high in mature European jurisdictions like Italy (64%) and the U.K. (60%).

Operators can best position their sportsbook to convert bettors by focusing on their brand reputation and payment stacks. When players select a sportsbook for the World Cup, brand trust is paramount (prioritized by 38%), but rapid payouts (a factor for 33%) trump everything else, including odds, promos, UX, and sports markets/events. And in some markets like Peru, bettors consider cashing-out quickly (38%) even more important than a sportsbook's reputation (34%).

Other payment factors are almost as crucial in sportsbook choice, with 24% of global bettors prioritizing rapid deposits and 22% the availability of preferred payment methods.

Ahead of the World Cup, there's a strong impetus for operators to maximize payment choice. Although debit cards are the top preference globally (a preference for 39%) – trending even higher in markets that restrict credit cards like the U.K. (53%) and the U.S. state of Massachusetts (56%) – alternative payment methods (APMs) are highly popular.

While some APMs like eCash remain relatively niche (a preference for 17%), 27% of players prefer pay-by-bank or other bank transfer options and 25% favor digital wallets. Wallets are today the top choice of all in some markets like Peru (a preference for 36%).

Payment localization appears key across all markets, with 19% favoring a local payment method (LPM). This trends higher in markets with strong LPM brands like Brazil, where the

central bank's Pix instant-payment solution will be bettors' go-to choice (48%).

With the tournament lasting five weeks, it's essential for operators to keep players onboard – and a reliable payment experience is crucial. 88% of global bettors would switch sportsbooks after a bad experience, with U.S. and Ecuadorean players particularly sensitive (both 93%).

Zak Cutler, President of Global Gaming at Paysafe, commented: "With the regulated online betting space encompassing new North and Latin American markets, the 2026 World Cup will be the biggest tournament to date for online sportsbooks, offering an unparalleled opportunity to win new customers and strengthen existing relationships. Our latest research indicates that to optimize player acquisition and retention, operators need to enhance their cashiers, as payments will be of paramount importance for the tournament's duration – and beyond."

### **About Paysafe's All the Ways Players Pay: World Cup 2026 research report**

The research report was based on a survey conducted on behalf of Paysafe by Sapio Research among 3,850 respondents of legal gambling age with an interest in following the 2026 World Cup (in some capacity) across the U.S. (Florida, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania), Mexico, and Canada (Ontario) as well as Brazil, Bulgaria, Ecuador, France, Germany, Italy, Peru, and Spain. The interviews were conducted online by Sapio Research in November 2025 using an email invitation and an online survey.

The full report can be downloaded here: <https://www.paysafe.com/en/all-the-ways-players-pay-world-cup-2026-edition/>.

### **About Paysafe**

Paysafe is a leading payments platform with an extensive track record of serving merchants and consumers in the global entertainment sectors. Its core purpose is to enable businesses and consumers to connect and transact seamlessly through industry-leading capabilities in payment processing, digital wallet, and online cash solutions. With 30 years of online payment experience, an annualized transactional volume of \$152 billion in 2024, and approximately 3,000 employees located in 12+ countries, Paysafe connects businesses and consumers across 260 payment types in 48 currencies around the world. Delivered through an integrated platform, Paysafe solutions are geared toward mobile-initiated transactions, real-time analytics and the convergence between brick-and-mortar and online payments. Further information is available at [www.paysafe.com](http://www.paysafe.com).

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**For further information about Paysafe, please contact:**

The Paysafe Press Office via [PR@Paysafe.com](mailto:PR@Paysafe.com)

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