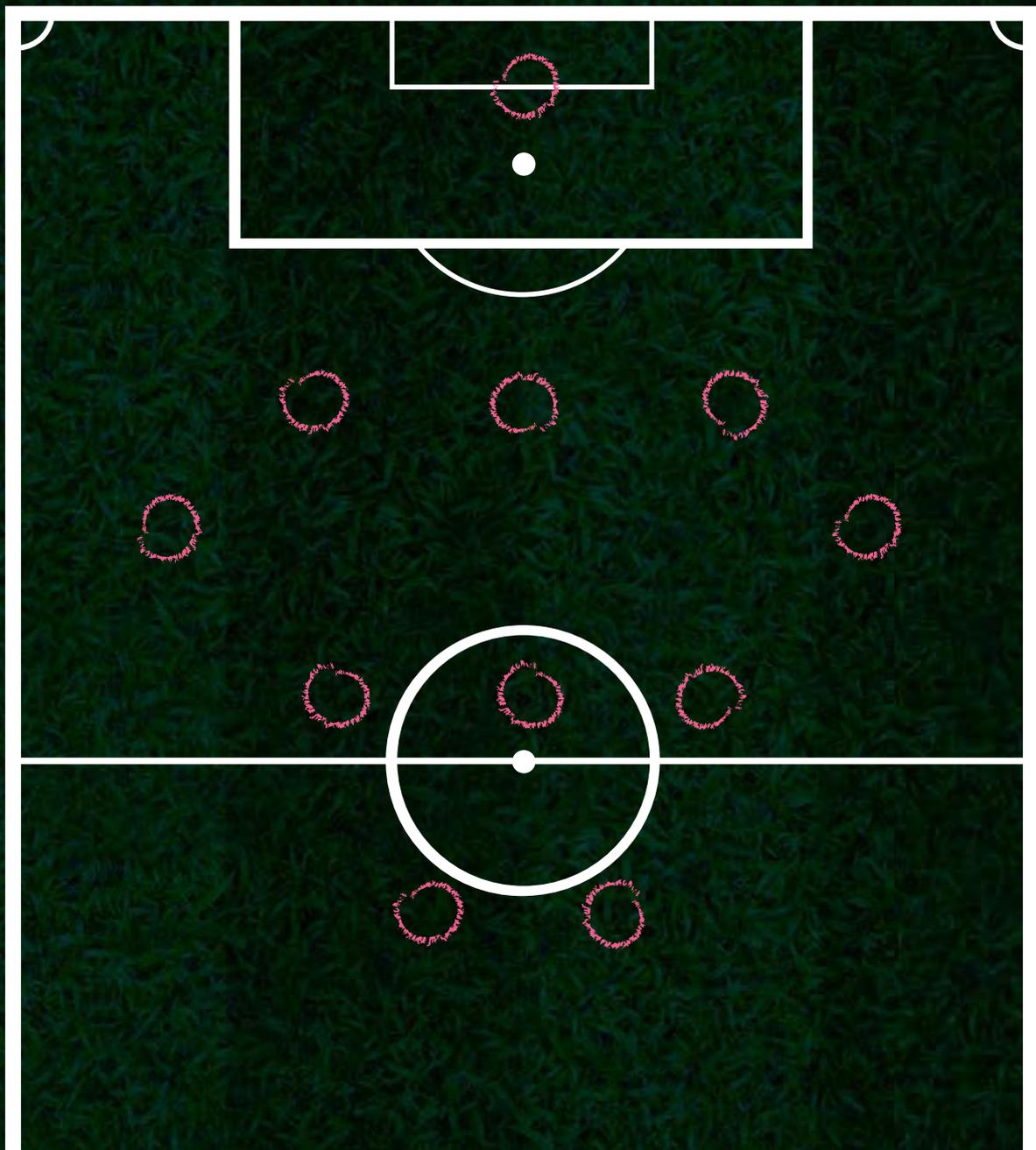


# FIVE THREE TWO

WAYS THE WORLD CUP  
WILL EAT UP CHRISTMAS

RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR COMMS PLANNING

CONTACTS TO HELP YOU  
FIND A ROUTE TO GOAL



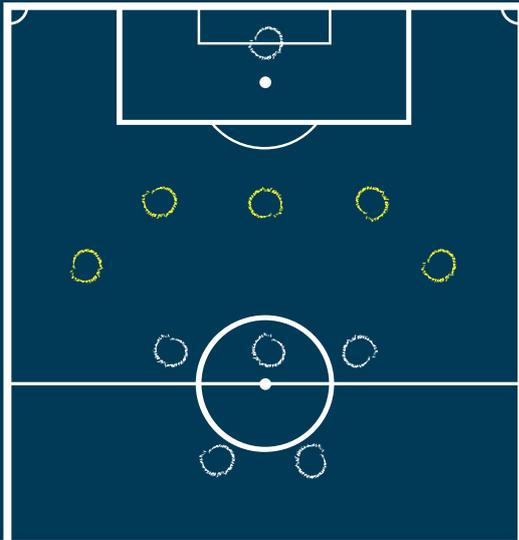


**World Cup tournaments hit media and social feeds like a tornado, tearing up traditional structures, bending culture out of shape and pulling in attention from miles around. Even excluding sports coverage and match reports, there were over 30,000 UK media articles about the last World Cup in 2018, generating 7 million+ social media likes, comments and shares.**

And this year the tornado hits not in midsummer but in the run-up to Christmas. Is it 'Black Friday' or is it, more importantly, the day England play USA and Wales play Iran?

This takeover is something we've never experienced. And of course, the success of the Lionesses at the Euros this summer has already ratcheted up excitement and expectation levels. How is the tournament going to distort what runs in media and pops up on social feeds? And how do you plan for this?

Red has worked with NewsWhip to look back at historical media and social data around previous World Cups and Euros. From this, we've been able to spot patterns in media interest, story types, and how and when stories are shared, allowing us to put together a set of potential opportunities and recommendations on how to get match fit for November.



# FIVE

## ways the World Cup will eat up Christmas

### 1 Fan Behaviour

Fans – who they are, what they do, the content they create - are a huge part of what makes the World Cup a pop culture sensation...

- images of painfully premature victory tattoos shared on social
- the communal soaking in lager at the fan parks seen again and again on TV
- the unexpected generosity of the fundraising for the German fan who cried after England knocked Germany out



The crying fan story generated over 30 media articles (BBC, Sky News, Independent, Mirror, Standard, SportsBible, Metro, Daily Mail) with nearly 200,000 social media interactions.

## 2 Cultural Re-Creation

The World Cup triggers instant re-creation. At its most obvious, kids rushing into back gardens to recreate a goal. But more widely and away from the on-pitch action, there is plenty of evidence of instant echoes sounding across media and social.

- the mania for waistcoats following England manager Gareth Southgate breaking out his three-piece
- the sales of opera CDs after Italia 90 and Nessun Dorma
- the hipster love-in with Nigeria shirts from 2018



In July 2018, there were over 100 media stories across the tournament about Southgate and his waistcoat, generating over 25,000 social media interactions. The story even started appearing in strange places, like a [review of a Depeche Mode gig in NME](#).

### 3 Business Impact

Football tournaments are corporate juggernauts with brands paying millions to be associated and businesses pinning their hopes on increased sales. This always provides a stream of stories for business media.

- Ronaldo removing Coca Cola bottles from his press conference podium; Pogba responding by removing Heineken
- the impact on national productivity of people skipping work
- the predicted value of a tournament to the host nation in pounds and prestige (something media will be watching hawk-eyed this year given the controversy of awarding the World Cup to Qatar).

Elon : My one tweet can change crypto market

Ronaldo : Hold my water



So widely shared was the Ronaldo story that it was claimed at the time that it wiped \$4bn off Coca-Cola's market value.

## 4 Nostalgia Fix

World Cups trigger memories of previous World Cups and nostalgia goes into overdrive with social memes and media reporting.

- Smithy's England pep talk generating 100,000 engagements at Euro 2020 despite being a decade old
- the reintroduction of 1996's Three Lions anthem
- the explosion of bucket hats and retro kits



Last summer, Euro 96 suddenly exploded back into media and public consciousness as the Euros came into focus. It was further spurred on by England playing Scotland at Wembley (in a direct echo of the 1996 tournament) and Phil Foden's 'Gazza 96' haircut. There were 3000+ Euro 1996 mentions in the media across 6 weeks, generating over 220,000 social media interactions.

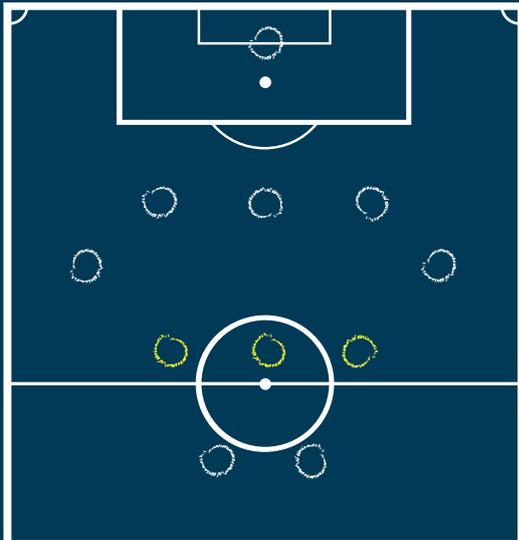
## 5 Offbeat Vibes

And then there's the truly leftfield stories which can be surprising, moving or just plain odd. It is some of these which can be greediest when it comes to eating up media attention and social conversation.

- the Japanese team tidying their changing room and leaving a thank you note (in Russian) after being knocked out in the 94th minute of the 2018 tournament
- Paul the Octopus predicting match results and becoming a media sensation in 2010
- the deaf-blind fan who was able to enjoy the 2018 tournament through his friend (a video which generated over 25 million views on The Daily Mail's Facebook feed alone).



No story had more engagement at the 2018 World Cup than the Japanese team's extreme courtesy in tidying their changing room. It generated over 150 articles and a massive 500,000 social media interactions. Honourable shout to their fans who did the same in the stadium.



# THREE

## recommendations for comms planning

### 1 Do you step out on to the pitch?

The first question that you should ask this winter... do you have the right to play?

It is a tournament awash with issues and one that won't be easy to navigate but like it or not it is happening and consumer attention will be drawn to it. Official Tournament Partners have had 12 years to get to grips with the complexity of the tournament narrative and brands looking

to join the conversation should recognise that association by affiliation may not be in their best interest.

Being clear on the role that your brand can play, the message that you want to land and the way in which you deliver it will never be more important given the tension and controversy that surrounds the tournament.

### 2 Get to grips with the schedule

Getting a handle on the key calendar moments around the tournament is vital. A condensed schedule means there is no day without a game between November 20th and December 7th, which separates the end of the Round of 16 and the quarterfinals. As a result, these days may well be targeted as 'football free' moments for brands looking to cut through.

Our data shows this is likely to be a fruitful approach, but there are other opportunities. The third-round group games and Round of 16, between November 30th – December 1st, are historically the quietest parts of the tournament from a media and social perspective, meaning brands could jump others by going out during this time, rather than waiting for there to be a gap in the football schedule which is what we expect many will do.

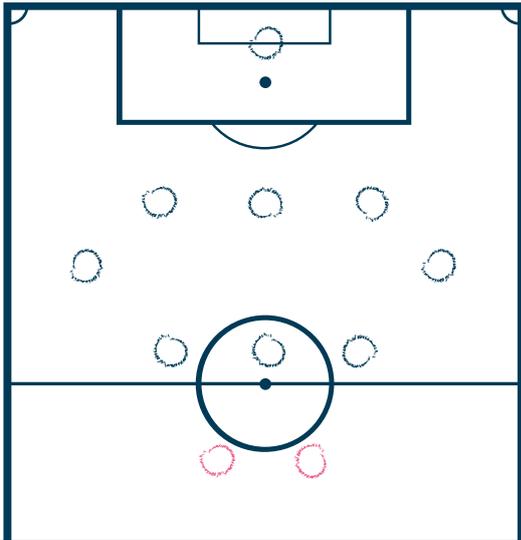
### 3 Be ready to react

The unpredictability of a World Cup and its unexpected storylines opens up great potential for impactful, reactive comms. However, in order to exploit this potential, you'll need to be on alert for emerging stories and conversations. You'll also need to know how to make things happen fast: who do you need to go to for approvals and are they ready to review suggestions quickly?

At Red, our smart press office solution 'Red Pulse' help us do this. Powered by NewsWhip, it enables us to have access to real-time media monitoring, ensuring our team are always ready to seize a reactive opportunity for a client.



**RED  
PULSE**



# TWO

**contacts to help  
you find a route  
to goal**

This is all very much topline advice. It doesn't attempt to get into the very specific set of issues around the choice of Qatar as host nation. If there's a campaign you are planning, please do get in touch.

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