

# FIFA to revamp world ranking system

The Associated Press 2006

LONDON -- FIFA is adopting a new world soccer ranking system. It's easy to see why.

Under the old scheme, the United States rose to No. 4 in April's rankings -- its highest ever position. The eye-popping rise occurred a few weeks after the Americans were routed 4-1 by World Cup host Germany.

"Maybe some guys were looking at that ranking a little bit too seriously," American goalkeeper Kasey Keller said after the loss.

The Americans have slipped slightly in the most recent poll, the last before the World Cup opens June 9, and are tied for fifth with Spain. FIFA's new computer rankings, with new criteria to rate the world's top teams, will be released July 12, three days after the World Cup ends.

"We don't think it's that bad at all, but there is always room for improvement," FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren said.

How far out of kilter are the present rankings?

Few serious soccer fans would place the Americans in the world's top 10, possibly not even the top 15.

Under FIFA's present system, five world soccer powers are ranked behind the United States: France (No. 8), Argentina (9), England (10), Italy (13) and Germany (19). The only teams ranked ahead of the United States in the May rankings were five-time World Cup champion Brazil, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Mexico. Mexico's ranking also raises eyebrows. It probably should be ranked behind the Americans.

In the last 10 games between the two countries, the United States has won seven, including a 2-0 win in the second round of the 2002 World Cup. Mexico has two victories in that period.

Over a 20-game span dating back to 1994, the United States has beaten Mexico nine times, with the Mexicans winning seven. Four were draws.

Under the new ranking system, FIFA will take into account games played over the last

four years. Under the old system, it counted results over the last eight.

Under FIFA's old computer ranking system, explained in 2,750 words on its Web site, it awarded team ranking points based on the importance of the games -- World Cup finals vs. friendly matches, for example -- the relative strength of the teams, goals

scored and conceded home or away, etc.

The new system takes into account most of the same factors, but weighs them differently. So why are the Americans and Mexicans so high in the present FIFA rankings? Under the old system, FIFA gave the most weight to games in the World Cup, the continental championships and World Cup qualifiers.

The region in which the United States is grouped, CONCACAF, plays a continental championship every two years. In Europe, it's every four. In addition, CONCACAF plays almost 50 percent more World Cup qualifiers than the average European country. Under the new system, FIFA will adjust for these factors -- and adjust more for the relatively weak CONCACAF group.

World Cup host Germany, which slipped to No. 19, also suffered under the old system.

Because it qualified automatically for this World Cup, Germany played no qualifying games.

Egypt, the African Cup of Nations champion, is ranked two spots above Germany. Greece, the defending European champion, Tunisia, Uruguay and Iran are ranked right behind Germany.

If you looking for live ranking click here: <https://www.fctables.com/fifa-rankings/>

In announcing its changes, FIFA assures the new system will be better.

"Transparency and simplicity, the key principles guiding the revision, have been combined with sporting criteria," FIFA said in a statement. Soccer fans can only hope so.