



CANADIAN SHIELD

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW CANADIAN SHIELD TOURNAMENT BRINGS WORLD-CLASS INTERNATIONAL SOCCER TO BMO FIELD THIS SUMMER AS TORONTO PREPARES TO HOST THE WORLD IN 2026

*Canada Soccer's Men's National Team, Ukraine, Côte d'Ivoire and New Zealand to go head-to-head
as part of inaugural tournament*

This June, four men's national soccer teams will go head-to-head in The Canadian Shield, a new four country international tournament to take place in Canada, celebrating the global game. The new tournament will also prepare the teams for the biggest tournament in the world, to be hosted in North America next summer with six of those matches to be held in Toronto.

Matches will be held on June 7 and 10 at BMO Field, featuring the men's national soccer teams for Canada, Ukraine, Côte d'Ivoire and New Zealand, and is being presented by MLSE, SPORTFIVE, and MIB Sport Agency.

"Toronto is preparing to play host to the biggest sporting event in the world next summer, and with it, brings the opportunity to make history," said Keith Pelley, President & CEO of MLSE. "The Canadian Shield will not only give the Canadian Men's National Team a chance to prepare against some of the best competition in the world, but it continues to build the excitement for the city and the global fans here of the 'beautiful game'. We are grateful to the partners who have helped us bring this tournament to life, including the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto, and we look forward to welcoming the world-class teams from Ukraine, Côte d'Ivoire and New Zealand to our city in June."

The Canadian Shield will take place over two days, June 7 and 10 during the summer FIFA window, with two double headers hosted at BMO Field and a tournament champion crowned. The matches featuring Canada (ranked 31st in the world), Ukraine (ranked 25th), Côte d'Ivoire (ranked 46th) and New Zealand (ranked 89th) will be sold as double headers, with tickets for each day giving access to both games. Full tournament ticket packs will go on sale to the general public on March 21st at 2 p.m. ET at **CanadianShieldTournament.com**.

The tournament will award three points for a win, one point for a draw and two points for a shootout win. All matches will have a winner and games will go directly to penalties after 90 minutes (plus injury time).

"MIB Sport Agency and I, as a proud Canadian, are honored to have contributed to making this global event a reality, said Bamdad Mirzaei, FIFA Match Agent, MIB Sport Agency. "This tournament will bring together four top teams from four different continents, serving as a thrilling preview of the next World Cup, which will also take place partly on Canadian soil."

Schedule:

June 7: Canada vs. Ukraine – 3:30 p.m.; New Zealand vs. Côte d'Ivoire – 7 p.m.

June 10: New Zealand vs. Ukraine – 5 p.m.; Canada vs. Côte d'Ivoire – 8:30 p.m.

"We are thrilled to partner with MLSE to launch the inaugural Canadian Shield, bringing world-class soccer to Toronto at such a pivotal moment for the sport in Canada. As the country builds excitement for next year's FIFA World Cup, this tournament marks the beginning of a new tradition, one that will showcase top international talent while giving teams crucial preparation for the global stage," said Eduardo Borges, President Football Americas, SPORTFIVE. "We are proud to help bring this event to life and create an unforgettable experience for soccer fans across Canada and beyond."

Inspired by Canada's Coat of Arms, the Canadian Shield name and logo symbolizes the country's enduring foundation and pride that unites nations together. The shield, a common badge of fandom and honour in the sport, paired with soccer elements integrated into the design celebrates both the heritage and spirit of the game.

"We're honoured to host the Canadian Shield Tournament right here in Ontario as we look forward to the World Cup coming to Canada in 2026," said Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario. "This tournament will add to the already-vibrant sports scene here in Toronto and across Ontario, and will showcase the incredible talent of our athletes and enthusiasm of our fans. I can't wait to join them and cheer on Team Canada!"

"Now more than ever, it's important to come together as proud Canadians to cheer on our national team. Toronto is excited to host the Canadian Shield Tournament, with teams from Côte d'Ivoire, New Zealand and Ukraine for a friendly tournament this summer ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup," said Olivia Chow, Mayor of Toronto. "Sport brings us together and we look forward to welcoming the world to Toronto."

This year's Canadian Shield will mark the first of what will be an annual event, welcoming some of the best soccer nations in the world to BMO Field.

Team Quotes:

"Every competitive match from now until the World Cup will be critical to get our team the preparation it needs ahead of welcoming the world next year. This is an extraordinary addition to our annual competitive calendar and to be able to play at home in front of our fans again will be really special for our guys." - **Jesse Marsch, MLS Canada Head Coach of the Men's National Team.**

"I sincerely appreciate the invitation from the Canadian Soccer Association. I am confident that these upcoming matches will be an important sporting and social event for both our nations. Ukrainian community in Canada has always supported our national team worldwide, and now it is our turn to visit them. Canada is a strong partner of Ukraine, and we are pleased to accept this invitation. In addition to the matches, we are also planning social and charitable initiatives." – **Andriy Shevchenko, President of the Ukrainian Association of Football.**

"We have looked to put in place a program of games so that should we qualify for the FIFA World Cup 2026 we will have faced a range of opponents in the buildup and both Côte d'Ivoire and Ukraine will provide a real test for us, which is exactly what we want. It will also be a great opportunity to be part of a tournament played in another one of the host countries to give us a taste of what we could face in 2026 if we win our qualification games this month." - **Darren Bazeley, New Zealand Football National Team Head Coach**

"I confirm the participation of the Côte d'Ivoire National Team, Current African Champions, in the tournament. This will be a great opportunity for the Elephants to compete against teams from different continents as part of their preparation for the 2026 World Cup. We are particularly eager to face the excellent Canadian team on its home soil in the beautiful city of Toronto. Wishing all teams a great tournament." - **Yacine Idriss Diallo, President of the Fédération Ivoirienne de Football**

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