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Rugby World Cup 2019

The pool stages of RWC19 are now behind us and we have witnessed some fascinating results thus far. However, the tournament has reached the business end and we cannot wait to be glued to our screens to witness more history unfold before our eyes. It is said that economic forecasting was created to make weather forecasting and astrology look reputable, but we're happy to see our Quarter-Final predictions hit the mark.

Before we take a closer look at the epic clashes lined up for this weekend, a quick recap of the pool standings:

Pool A

Much to the surprise of many, hosts Japan topped their pool after winning all four of their matches. After thumping Russia in the opening game, the Brave Blossoms went on to stun the Irish and beat Samoa. The most anticipated match of Round 4 was the battle between Japan and Scotland to see who'd move on to the knock-out stages. Thankfully, the threatening Typhoon Hagibis didn't get in the way of this game. An epic first half saw Japan run circles around the Scots, and despite a better second half, the Blossoms were too much for Typhoon Haggis. The home side made history, not only by finishing top in Pool A with an impressive 19 points and being undefeated, but also making it past the pool stages for the first time.

Ireland go through in second place. Despite having more convincing wins over Russia, Samoa and Scotland, their shock loss to Japan put them three points lower on 16. The upset in this pool is what tournaments like these are all about, and has seen the Blossoms gather massive support all over the globe as impressive underdogs.

Pool B

The two qualifying teams in Pool B come as a surprise to no-one, with New Zealand finishing on top at 16 points and South Africa close behind on 15. The Italians, on 12 points, were upset that their game against the All Blacks was cancelled – ruining their chances of getting the points to qualify ahead of South Africa.

More importantly, Namibians may be justified in feeling robbed after this World Cup. The Welwitschias were set for their first win at a RWC in their final pool clash against Canada. However, nature intervened in a desperate effort to save the Canadians some face, with the match canceled due to the typhoon. On a positive note, the draw saw Namibia take home 2 points – the most in any RWC so far – and finish above Canada on the log. This gives us some renewed faith for next time, and we look forward to the Welwitschias lifting the Webb Ellis Cup in four years' time.

Pool C

Another tightly contested pool sees old nemeses England and France go through to the knockout stages. Unfortunately, the encounter between these two sides was called off due to the typhoon, which would have given us better insight into how they may fare in their matches this weekend.



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Pool D

The Welshmen finished top of their group, winning all four of their games. The Dragons and the Brave Blossoms are the only two teams to be undefeated, although several other games were canceled due to the weather. The Wallabies head through in second place, winning all of their games except the controversial match against Wales.

Cirrus Quarter-Final Predictions for RWC 2019:

Luckily there was no need for us to revise our last predictions for the Quarter Finals, and what a match up we've got! The first knock-out game is a northern v southern hemisphere battle between England and Australia, making our support a tough choice between who we dislike the least... The bookies have the English as the favourites, after being unbeaten in their pool, although the Aussies have ample experience in knockouts. The biggest wildcard in this game, however, is that France's A-team will be on the field: all three officials on the field are French. Given the recent controversy, we may well see this game controlled by the New Zealand TMO.

Saturday's second fixture pits New Zealand against Ireland. Unsurprisingly, The All Blacks go in as the favourites to win, although we hope for a good fight from the Irish trying to make up for their loss to Japan. New Zealand can beat any team on any given day, still in recent encounters the Irish were able to give them a run for their money. However, New Zealand is still the favorites in our eyes to lift the cup, so an upset win from the Irish would be great for the Boks.

Sunday's early game sees the Dragons take on *Les Bleus*. World number 2 Wales are expected to win, but just like their referee compatriots, the French rugby team has been known to pull some upsets, it just depends on which French xv turns up.

The last of the quarter final matches sees giant-killers Japan take on South Africa, or in other words SA v SA (like Pieter Labuschagne v Pieter-Steph du Toit). While the Bokke have our vote, and they beat Japan in a friendly shortly before the RWC; Japan won the last clash in a RWC (as much as we wish we could forget). Japan have also been on an incredible streak so far and have the home-ground advantage. We expect a fascinating game and it will be difficult not to scream for the underdogs (Japan, in case you were unsure) but we reckon SA's experience and forwards will carry them through.

The clashes in the Quarter Final should make for thrilling viewing, and we're extremely happy with the way the matches have been lined up. Each team that made it to this round deserves to be there and we expect all games going forward to be contested fiercely. Our predictions for the Semi-Final look like this:

