



Rugby World Cup 2019

This year's Rugby World Cup has been a memorable one so far. Over and above a few predictable results, a handful of tight margins (we're looking at you, Welwitschias) and some epic upsets, the vibe this year has been palpable. The Japanese crowds have been vibrant supporters of all teams, showing up in numbers for all the pool games so far. It's wonderful to see this in a country which is not considered a traditional rugby nation (that may come as a surprise, with some of their team having surnames like Labuschagne...)

We're almost two weeks into the World Cup already, and well overdue for an update (sorry, we're far too glued to our TV screen. Just don't tell my boss!). For those whose Superbru isn't looking too great, fear not! Even some of our in-house rugby pundits have some explaining to do.

Pool A

The opening game saw Japan utilize the home-team advantage to beat Russia 30-10. In the second round, these underdogs faced powerhouse Ireland. Coming into the World Cup as one of the favourites, Ireland came off second as Japan upset the number one ranked team (as well as our pool prediction and my Superbru!) with an astounding 19-12 victory. This comes after Ireland thumped Scotland 27-3 in their first match. Samoa beat Russia 34-9, before losing to Scotland 34-0.

Pool B

Pool B opened with an epic clash of long-time rivals New Zealand and South Africa. The All Blacks came out on top, some would argue with a little help from a sixteenth (French) player, but we believe this is not all that bad. It may just put the Springboks through a slightly less nerve-wrecking path to the final and set them up for a couple of historic rematches – potentially Japan in the Quarter-Final and New Zealand in the final – where our southern neighbours will be rearing for vengeance.

The Welwitschias did us proud with a couple of tries against Italy and a relatively low margin against South Africa. We look forward to them showing Canada how to play in Pool B's closing game (and hopefully our first win at a World Cup!). The All Blacks will once again be undefeated in the pool stages, going through in top spot, with South Africa hot on their heels in second.

Pool C

A tightly contested match (in the second half) almost saw an impressive Argentine comeback, but *Les Bleus* (pardon my French) managed to hang onto the win at the very end. England dominated their games against Tonga and the USA.

With the toughest clashes of this pool still coming up, we expect the English to make it through on top and beat the French (revenge for the FIFA World Cup last year), who will head through in second place.



Pool D

Pool D was not without its upsets, seeing Uruguay narrowly beating Fiji before being taken to task by Georgia. The clash between pool giants Australia and Wales left a lot to be desired from the officiating, with the Welsh taking a contested win. Given the remaining fixtures, we still maintain Wales going through in first, followed by the Wallabies.

Cirrus Quarter-Final Predictions for RWC 2019:

After some of the upsets we witnessed (go Japan!), our predictions of which teams will go through remain unchanged but their opponents in the first knock-out round have altered a little. They now look like this.

