



Japan Football Association

Region: Asian Football Confederation (AFC)

World Cup appearances: 3 (1998, 2002, '06)

Best World Cup finish: 9th (2002) **Current FIFA Ranking:** 45th

Continental titles: Asian Cup (1992, 2000, '04)

Country's population: 126,804,433 **GDP (per inhabitant):** \$32,600 **Life expectancy:** 82.17

Formation: 4-2-3-1



World Cup Qualifying		
Opponent	GF	GA
Thailand	4	0
@Bahrain	0	1
Oman	3	0
@Oman	1	1
@Thailand	3	0
Bahrain	1	0
Bahrain	3	2
Uzbekistan	1	1
@Qatar	3	0
Australia	0	0
@Bahrain	1	0
@Uzbekistan	1	0
Qatar	1	1
@Australia	1	2
	23	8
Record: 8-3-2		

Group E	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA
Netherlands						
Cameroon						
Japan						
Denmark						

Name	Pos	No.	Club (league)	Caps	G
Seigo Narazaki	G	1	Nagoya Grampus (Japan)	76	0
Eiji Kawashima	G	21	Kawasaki Frontale (Japan)	9	0
Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi	G	23	Júbilo Iwata (Japan)	116	0
Name	Pos	No.	Club (league)	Caps	G
Yuichi Komano	D	3	Júbilo Iwata (Japan)	52	0
Tulio Tanaka	D	4	Nagoya Grampus (Japan)	38	8
Yuto Nagatomo	D	5	Tokyo (Japan)	25	3
Atsuto Uchida	D	6	Kashima Antlers (Japan)	31	1
Daiki Iwamasa	D	13	Kashima Antlers (Japan)	2	0
Yasuyuki Konno	D	15	FC Tokyo (Japan)	36	0
Yuji Nakazawa	D	22	Yokohama F. Marinos (Japan)	104	17
Yuki Abe	M	2	Urawa Red Diamonds (Japan)	44	3
Yashuhito Endo	M	7	Gamba Osaka (Japan)	93	8
Daisuke Matsui	M	8	Grenoble (France)	23	1
Shunsuke Nakamura	M	10	Yokohama F. Marinos (Japan)	96	24
Kengo Nakamura	M	14	Kawasaki Frontale (Japan)	46	5
Makoto Hasebe	M	17	VfL Wolfsburg (Germany)	30	1
Keisuke Honda	M	18	CSKA Moscow (Russia)	14	4
Junichi Inamoto	M	20	Kawasaki Frontale (Japan)	79	5
Shinji Okazaki	F	9	Shimizu S-Pulse (Japan)	27	16
Keiji Tamada	F	11	Nagoya Grampus (Japan)	69	16
Kisho Yano	F	12	Albirex Niigata (Japan)	18	2
Yoshito Okubo	F	16	Vissel Kobe (Japan)	48	5
Takayuki Morimoto	F	19	Catania (Italy)	5	1

TEAM NOTES

Top players:

Yuji Nakazawa is the linchpin to the defense, the only player along the back line to get regular time at Germany 2006.

Shunsuke Nakamura's ability to strike a dead ball could steal one night's highlights. He just returned to Japan from eight years in Europe (Italy, Scotland, Spain).

Shinji Okazaki looks set to provide the Samurai with the lead striker they've been lacking. Scoring more than a goal in two matches since breaking into the team less than two years ago, Okazaki's efficacy in the final third could push Japan beyond expectations.

Keys to success:

Takeshi Okada's prognostication of a semifinal run may have a method behind its madness, as the key to Japanese success in South Africa will be belief. If Japan carries too much reverence into their matches with Denmark and Cameroon, they'll fail to get the full points they have the ability to take.

Outlook:

Japan should expect a battle from Denmark to make the knock-out rounds, but once there - with their Group E to face whomever comes out of Group F - Japan could get close to their semifinal goals. However, with a deep group, Japan has no easy matches and, though no fault of their own, could replicate 2006's disappointment.