

RODRI

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 · PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

■ ■ SPAIN · MANCHESTER CITY · DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER



■ ■ FITNESS CONCERN — Persistent injury disruptions throughout 2025-26 (ACL, groin, hamstring). **Named in Spain's official 26-man squad (May 25). Coach De la Fuente: 'Certain starter if fit.'** Spain open vs Cape Verde, June 15, Atlanta.

■ FEATURED ON NEKTR BLOGS

La Roja Reloaded: Spain's Top 3 Players to Watch at the FIFA World Cup 2026

Spain enter 2026 as Euro 2024 champions and tournament favourites. Rodri is the engine that makes it all run — when he plays, Spain don't lose. Get the full squad breakdown and \$BRACKETS picks at Nektr.

■ blogs.nektr.co · @cosmicknox · Sports · May 9, 2026



Play Rodri in \$BRACKETS Fantasy

Back Spain's midfield maestro and compete for USDC prizes in the only crypto-native World Cup fantasy platform — built on Solana.

■ fantasy.sportsbrackets.net · 2026 Brackets League World Tournament

① SHORT BIO


Full name: Rodrigo Hernández Cascante | **Born:** June 22, 1996 — Madrid, Spain | **Age at WC 2026:** 29 | **Height:** 1.91 m | **Foot:** Right

Rodri is the best defensive midfielder on the planet — and one of the most important footballers of his generation. He came through Atlético Madrid's academy before Villarreal, then Atlético's first team, before **Manchester City signed him for €70M in 2019**. Under Pep Guardiola he became the fulcrum of the most dominant club side in English football history — winning **4 Premier League titles, the 2023 Champions League, and the 2023 treble**. His individual recognition peaked with the **2024 Ballon d'Or**, awarded after he anchored Spain's **UEFA Euro 2024 triumph**. He came off injured at half-time of the Euro final vs England — Spain held on to win 2-1. Then catastrophe: an **ACL tear in September 2024** ruled him out for eight months, costing City the Premier League title (their first trophyless season since 2016-17). He has battled back through multiple setbacks — groin (July 2025 Club World Cup), hamstring (October 2025 vs Brentford), FA Cup semi absence (April 2026) — but was **officially named in Spain's 26-man squad today, May 25, 2026**. De la Fuente called him one of *'the best in the world in their positions.'* When Rodri plays, Spain don't lose.

■ [Wikipedia — Rodri](#)

- Britannica — Career & Stats
- Spain 26-Man WC Squad (May 25)

② PROFESSIONAL STATS

 Ballon d'Or · 2024	5x Premier League · Man City	1x UCL / Treble · 2022-23	Euro Winner · 2024
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Competition	Season	Apps	Goals	Assists	Notes
Premier League	2025-26	~20	~1	~2	Injury-disrupted return
Premier League	2024-25	2	0	0	ACL — missed 8 months
Premier League	2023-24	35	8	4	Ballon d'Or season
Premier League	2022-23	35	4	5	Treble winner
Spain (Senior)	Career	75+	5	~15	Euro 2024 winner
Euro 2024	Germany	6	0	2	Final — subbed HT, won 2-1

- FBref.com
- Transfermarkt
- FotMob

③ SOCIAL MEDIA & OFFICIAL LINKS

■ Instagram	@rodri.16	Ballon d'Or celebrations, Man City, Spain national team
■ X (Twitter)	@Rodrigofd16	Official announcements and match reactions
■ YouTube	Man City Official	Rodri highlights & Manchester City content
■ Wikipedia	Rodri	Full career biography, City era and Spain record
■ FIFA WC Hub	FIFA Official	World Cup 2026 squad & tournament hub

④ TOP 3 TRENDING STORIES

1

Named in Spain's 26-Man Squad (May 25) — De la Fuente: 'Certain Starter If Fit'

Spain's official 26-man squad was announced today, May 25, 2026, by coach Luis de la Fuente. Rodri's inclusion was confirmed despite his injury-disrupted season. De la Fuente stated: *'The important thing is that they are back to contribute a lot. The best in the world in their positions... I'm clear they will both be vital.'* Sports Mole confirmed he is a **'certain starter in the engine room providing that he is fit.'** Olympics.com noted he is *'aiming to return to full fitness ahead of the tournament.'* Spain open vs Cape Verde on June 15 in Atlanta.

- Sources: FIFA World Cup News (squad) · Sports Mole

2

ACL, Groin, Hamstring — The Injury Saga That Has Defined His Season

Rodri's 2025-26 has been defined by a relentless injury battle: **ACL tear** (September 2024, missed 8 months), **groin problem** at the Club World Cup (July 2025), **hamstring vs Brentford** (October 2025, missed Spain's WC qualifiers vs Georgia and Bulgaria), and a further **FA Cup semi absence** (April 24, 2026). Britannica confirmed City failed to win a single trophy in 2024-25 without him — their first blank since 2016-17. Bleacher Report noted that upon his return, *'City are back in the hunt for a Premier League title and have already sealed Carabao Cup glory.'* The man is irreplaceable.

■ Sources: Britannica · Fox Sports

3

2024 Ballon d'Or — Spain's Euro-Winning Engine, Off Injured at Half-Time of the Final

Rodri was awarded the **2024 Ballon d'Or** following a season in which he anchored both Manchester City's Premier League triumph and Spain's dominant **UEFA Euro 2024** campaign. In the Euro final against England, he came off injured at half-time — Spain held on to win 2-1 without him. The moment was a microcosm of his value: even half a game from Rodri was enough. His unbeaten record when playing for Spain is the most cited statistic in world football's tactical discourse — and the 2026 World Cup is the one trophy missing from his extraordinary collection.

■ Sources: Goal.com · Bleacher Report

⑤ STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

■ STRENGTHS

✓ ■ World's Best CDM

2024 Ballon d'Or winner. Unmatched combination of ball-winning, positional intelligence, passing range and game management — simply the best in the world at his role.

✓ ■ Game Control

When Rodri plays, Spain control the tempo absolutely. His 8 PL goals in 2023-24 as a CDM show his all-round threat — opponents can't ignore him.

✓ ■ Unbeaten Record

Spain's famous unbeaten record with Rodri in the team is one of football's most remarkable stats. He doesn't just improve Spain — he transforms them.

✓ ■ Tournament Intelligence

Three PL titles, UCL, Euro 2024 — he performs without fault at the highest levels of tournament football. Experience under pressure is unrivalled in this squad.

■ AREAS TO WATCH

✗ ■ Injury Fragility

ACL, groin, hamstring across 12 months — the most injury-disrupted period of his career. Managing his load across a 7-game tournament is the biggest Spain question.

✗ ■ Match Sharpness

Limited game time in 2025-26 means he enters the tournament potentially short of full competitive sharpness — early group games may be cautiously managed.

✗ ■ Over-Dependence Risk

Spain are so reliant on Rodri that if he picks up any knock during the tournament, the midfield balance fundamentally changes — they have no like-for-like replacement.

✗ ■ Physical Demands

At 29 after a gruelling multi-injury comeback, sustaining 90-minute intensity across back-to-back knockout games is an unknown physical challenge.