

TRAFFICGUARD DATA INSIGHTS

The House Won The World Cup. So Did The Bots.

How sports betting operators surged ad spend for the 2026 World Cup, and how much of it never reached a new player.



01 MARKET DATA • PUBLICLY REPORTED

The biggest betting event in history

The 2026 World Cup became the largest sports betting event ever staged. Record wagering meant record acquisition spend, and that spend is exactly what invalid traffic is built to exploit.

\$50B+

Global wagers on the tournament

Around 43% above the 2022 total

+650%

DraftKings bets vs last World Cup

Reported by DraftKings

+211%

BetMGM bets vs last World Cup

Reported by BetMGM

2M

DraftKings bets on the final alone

Reported by DraftKings

● THE RECORD THAT MADE THE STORY

"The biggest betting event in American history, we're talking the equivalent of ten Super Bowls."

02 MARKET DATA · PUBLICLY REPORTED

The house won big

Sportsbooks reported a record financial windfall from the tournament. This is the money the house made before a single ad dollar was counted.

\$4.5B+

Sportsbook net revenue (GGR)

Made by betting houses from the World Cup

~\$500M

Net profit from the final alone

Spain 1–0 Argentina, the most-bet soccer match ever

The final was the most-bet soccer match in the histories of BetMGM, Caesars and DraftKings. The house had never won like this.

03

TRAFFICGUARD PLATFORM · AGGREGATED & ANONYMISED

So did the ad spend

Across the sports betting operators TrafficGuard protects, paid search budgets surged for the tournament. Money and attention concentrated fast, and that is exactly where invalid traffic concentrates.

\$200M+

Tournament search spend

Across 100+ sports betting operators

+16.5%

Rise for the typical operator

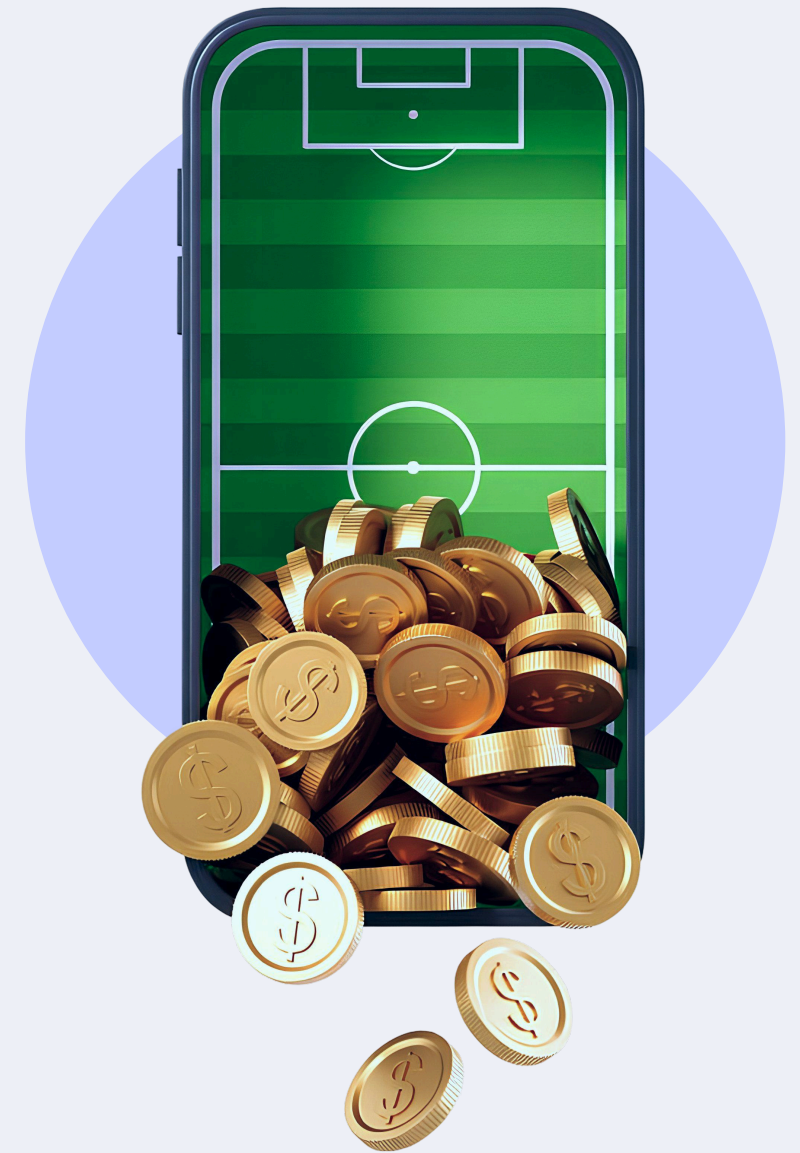
Biggest advertisers ramped hardest (up to +126%)

+60.2%

Rise in total daily spend

vs the prior three months

Source: TrafficGuard platform, 100+ sports betting operators, Google Ads (Search)



The biggest advertisers ramped hardest, lifting daily search spend by up to 126% for the tournament.

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TRAFFICGUARD PLATFORM · AGGREGATED & ANONYMISED

Where the money moved

The surge was not evenly spread. Spend chased the tournament across regions, and the fastest growth was where new players were being fought over hardest.

INCREASE IN AVERAGE DAILY SEARCH SPEND, BY REGION

+27% North America

+50% Europe

+99%
Latin America
nearly doubled its
daily spend, driven
by Brazil.

+74.4%
APAC / Oceania

+34.4% Africa

Source: TrafficGuard platform, increase in avg daily search spend vs the prior 3 months

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TRAFFICGUARD AUDIT BENCHMARK

Where the money leaked

Put the spend surge and where the money went together with the 22% invalid-traffic rate we see across sports betting audits. For any operator that ran the World Cup **without protection**, this is the cost.

22%

of surged budget goes to traffic that brings zero **new** dollars to the house

Our average invalid-traffic rate across sports betting operators that run an audit period with us.

Bots and invalid traffic

Non-human clicks burning budget with no intent to deposit.

Returning and non-incremental users

Your own players clicking paid ads to log in, often the bigger line. Spend on people who were always coming back.

IF YOU RAN THE SURGE UNPROTECTED, THIS IS HOW MUCH YOU ARE LOSING

An estimated **\$30–50M on Search alone**, and likely **\$100M+** once Affiliate and Social are added.

The 22% is our average audit invalid-traffic rate, applied to unprotected operators.

JOIN 100+ SPORTS BETTING OPERATORS ALREADY USING IT



See how much of your spend reaches real players →

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