

2026 World Cup Prediction Game Week 2 Analysis

June-July 2026

Happy birthday to Leo Messi! The current Golden Boot leader turns 39 today, but shows no sign of slowing down based on his magnificent performances thus far!

1 Points Table

Rank	Player	Points	Misclassification Rate	Change
1	Saathvik	49	0.3542	↑
2	Kaleb	49	0.3542	↓
3	Octavio	46	0.3958	=
4	Mustafa	46	0.3958	↑
5	Shyam	45	0.375	↑
6	Rohan	45	0.4167	↑
7	Claude	44	0.3958	↑
8	Smarak	42	0.375	↓
9	Shankar	42	0.4167	↑
10	Ritesh	42	0.4167	↓
11	Dylan	42	0.4375	↓
12	Saujanya	41	0.4167	↑
13	Amir	39	0.375	↑
14	Pratik	39	0.4167	↓
15	Abhijeet	39	0.4375	↓
16	Brian	39	0.4583	↓
17	Gemini	38	0.4167	↑
18	Akshath	38	0.4375	↓
19	Josh	37	0.4167	↓
20	Pranav	35	0.4583	↓
21	Pankaj	34	0.3542	↓
22	Luigi	34	0.5	↓
23	Joaquín	33	0.5208	↑
24	Praveen	32	0.4583	↓
25	Adarsh	32	0.5208	↑
26	Nitish	30	0.4583	↓
27	Anuroop	30	0.5208	↓
28	Vatsin	28	0.6042	↑
29	Hari	27	0.4792	↓
30	Shreyas	26	0.5417	↓

All ties were broken on the basis of number of ties called exactly. Saathvik had 9 compared to Kaleb's 8, Octavio had 8 compared to Mustafa's 7 and Shankar had 6 compared to Ritesh's 4.

2 Rules Update

- When I drafted the initial rules sheet, I forgot that there was a Round of 32 in this tournament. The scoring now works as follows:
 - For each team from your selection that gets to the Round of 32, you will be awarded 2 points.
 - For each team from your selection that gets to the Round of 16, you will be awarded 4 points.
 - For each team from your selection that gets to the Quarterfinals, you will be awarded 8 points.
 - For each team from your selection that gets to the Semifinals, you will be awarded 10 points.
 - If you correctly call the team that finishes third, you will be awarded 12 points.
 - If you correctly call the runner-up, you will be awarded 15 points.
 - If you correctly call the champion, you will be awarded 20 points.

3 Analytics

Average Points: 38.1

Standard Deviation: 6.49

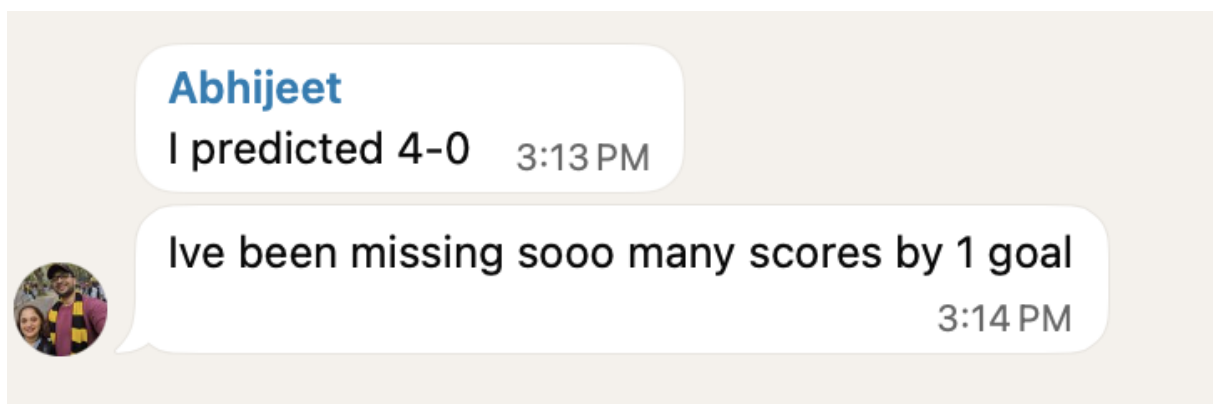
Median: 39

Range: 23

Mean MCR: 0.4375

- The theoretical maximum at this stage is 144 points. Saathvik and Kaleb have 49, just over a third of that number. Kudos!
- Rohan moved from 25th to 6th. This meteoric 19-place rise is easily worthy of this week's Most Improved Award.
- Saathvik scored **31** points this week to rise to first place. Amazing performance, you are this week's MVP!
- There were four games this week with a MCR of at least 0.9, ouch!

4 Alternative Scoring Metrics



The current points-based system does not reward how *close* you are to the outcome. Say the result was 3-1. A 7-0 prediction and 2-1 prediction yield the same number of points. What if that was not the case?

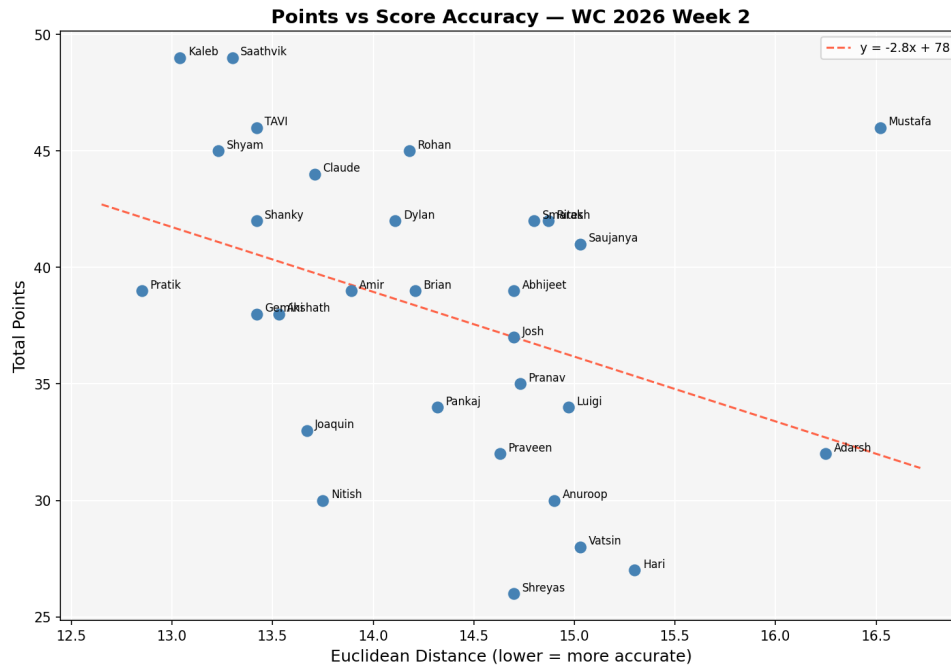
Euclidean Distance

Let each player's predictions be a vector in $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$, where n is the number of games. Each entry in this vector is a point in $\mathbb{R}^2, \langle h, a \rangle$. An alternative scoring metric that recognizes *closeness* would be the L2-norm of the difference between each player's vector and the vector of results.

For example, if you predicted 2-1 and the result was 4-2, your distance for that match is $\sqrt{((2-4)^2 + (1-2)^2)} = \sqrt{5}$.

Smaller distance $\implies$ closer $\implies$ higher rank. What's the limitation of this? 3-1 and 1-3 are treated identically, so we trade off accuracy for precision. There is a way to deal with this by accounting for the result and penalizing the wrong outcomes more harshly, but I just show a simple version here.

Based on such a scoring metric, the top five would be Pratik, Kaleb, me, Saathvik and Octavio. Mustafa would be last. Here's a scatterplot:



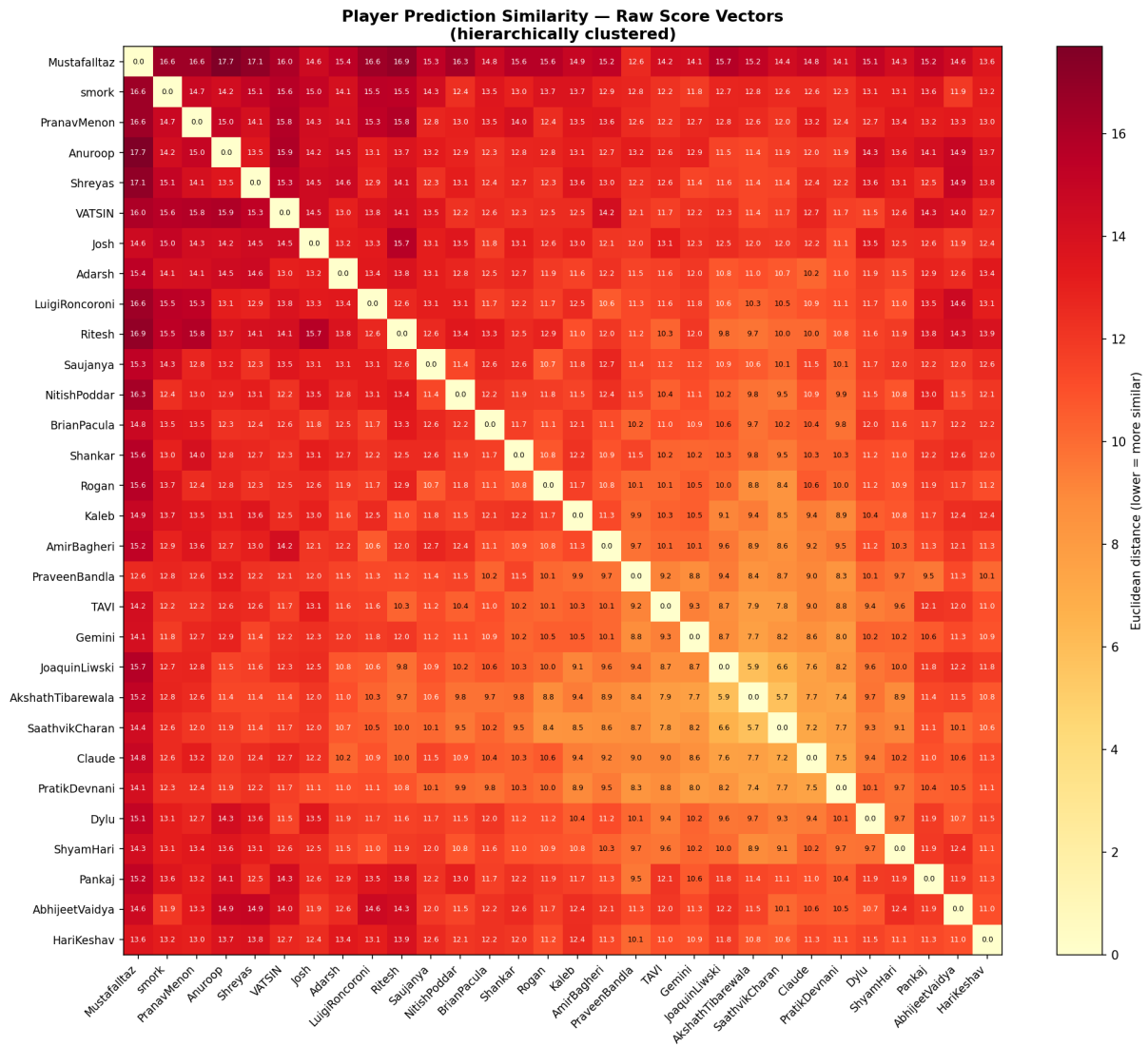
Because many of you have the same number of points but different distances, the linear relationship is not to be taken too seriously.

Mean Absolute Error

For each game i , your score is simply $|h_i - \hat{h}_i| + |a_i - \hat{a}_i|$, where $\langle \hat{h}, \hat{a} \rangle$ denotes the actual outcome. You are ranked based on the mean of this value. So this can be interpreted as how many goals you were off by on average. Based on this metric, I would be the leader, followed by Kaleb, Octavio, Saathvik and Pratik. Adarsh would be last. But the spread is very tight (range is just 0.5).

5 Player Similarity

We can use the same L2-norm based technique to figure out how similar or different each player is to one another. Pairwise Euclidean distance is computed between every pair — low distance means two players predicted very similar scorelines throughout the tournament. Here's how that heatmap looks like:



What this reveals is that Mustafa is the most different from the rest of the group, with the highest pairwise distances to almost everyone!