



THIS WEEK'S RELEASE OF ARGENTINA'S NEW PURPLE AWAY SHIRT SPARKED IMMEDIATE CONTROVERSY ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AS FANS REACTED TO THE DESIGN. | BUENOS AIRES TIMES/JOAQUÍN TEMES

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Argentina unveils new purple away strip inspired by 'gender equality'

National side's new change kit, which highlights "gender equality, diversity and inclusion," will be worn at the Qatar 2022 World Cup; Mixed reaction online, with some praising and mocking the strip.

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Argentina's national men's football team is making waves with the unveiling of its first-ever purple shirt, a design its creators say is inspired by "gender equality, diversity and inclusion."

This week's release of the Qatar 2022 World Cup jersey – which will serve as the side's away shirt when an opponent's strip clashes with Argentina's traditional light-blue-and-white kit – sparked immediate controversy on social networks as fans reacted to the design.

Those in favour praised its boldness and fresh approach. Critics decried the move away from the team's traditional colours and mocked the design's inclusive approach as another obtrusive expression of cultural 'wokeness.'

In Argentina, purple has recently been associated with the battle for women's rights and gender equality, with Ni Una Menos anti-gender violence campaigners using the colour to represent their cause.

"They are saying that the colour of the national team's alternative shirt is purple for gender equality," the official remarked on Twitter. "If this were true, they should prove it by giving part of the profits to women's football."

Outspoken journalist Santiago Cúneo was among the most furious at the new design, posting a swearsy tirade on social networks that lashed out at those ruining the "tradition" of the country's national team.

"They explain that the purple colour has to do with the fight for gender equality – what f**king importance do I give that?" he asked.

'Diversity and inclusion'

According to kit manufacturer Adidas, the violet change strip is "inspired by gender equality" and is part of "an initiative that promotes the values of diversity and inclusion."



"Stylish!" commented *porteño* musician Ale Pluz on the Argentina Football Association's Instagram post revealing the new design, which has received nearly one million likes to date.

Among those praising the colour switch was Buenos Aires football club Sacachispas, which plays in the Primera Nacional division and has a purple kit. "To think that they didn't believe us when we said that Leo [Messi] was from Sacas. From 'el Lila' to Qatar," the side posted on Twitter, with the humorous message receiving a lot of interactions.

For some, such as Estela Díaz, Buenos Aires Province's Women, Gender & Diversity Minister, the new design amounts to little more than a hollow marketing ploy.

"Through sport, we have the opportunity to change people's lives, and football is one of the ideal tools to transform reality," said Pablo Lamo, general manager of Adidas Argentina, in a press release.

Should it receive an outing in Qatar, it will be the first time in the history of the World Cup, football's premier tournament, that the national side has appeared in purple, said officials from the Argentine Football Association's (AFA) at a launch event at the Floralis Genérica in the Plaza de las Naciones Unidas in Buenos Aires.

AFA have revealed the design via social media, posting images of captain Lionel Messi wearing the shirt on the national team's accounts. Many of the *Albiceleste*'s other stars – including Cristian Romero, Rodrigo De Paul, Julián Alvarez and Pablo Dybala – shared pictures of themselves posing in the jersey. Female footballers Mariana Larroquette and Agostina Holzheier represented the women's national team in the online publicity campaign.

The national side has mostly used blue as the main colour for its change kits, though the team switched to black shirts for the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Argentina famously wore a different shirt at the 1958 World Cup, though it was a one-off. In an attempt to avoid a colour clash with rivals Germany, the national side was forced to wear the yellow jersey of local Swedish side IFK Malmö.

The new shirt goes on sale on Tuesday, September 6 and is priced at 16,999 pesos. An 'elite' version, the same as those worn by the players, costs 28,999 pesos.

Both models are produced entirely in Argentina with 100 percent recycled materials. The jersey also features a motif inspired by the Sol de Mayo from Argentina's national flag.



Read and answer

1) What is the new T-shirt design inspired by ?

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2) When will players wear this new model?

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3) What did those in favour praise ? What did critics say ?

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4) Why did they choose purple ?

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5) Do you agree that through sport we have the opportunity to change people's lives ?

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6) How did AFA reveal the design ?

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7) How much do both t-shirts cost ? What are they made of ?

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VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Matching

❖ UNVEIL	❖ The quality of going beyond the usual limits
❖ RELEASE	❖ An idea
❖ CLASH	❖ To reveal
❖ boldness	❖ To free
❖ switch	❖ To collide
❖ motif	❖ To change