**NORTHERN IRELAND** by Conall Carey

The Northern Ireland football team represents Northern Ireland. In international association football. From 1882 to 1921 all of Ireland was represented by a single side the Ireland national football team, organised by the Irish Football Association (IFA). In 1921 the jurisdiction of the (IFA) was reduced to Northern Ireland following the secession of clubs in the soon to be Irish free state.

Although its team remained the national team for all of Ireland until 1950, and used the name Ireland until the 1970s. The football association of Ireland (FAI) organises the separate Republic of Ireland national football team.

Although part of the United Kingdom Northern Ireland has always had a representative side that plays in major professional tournaments whether, alongside the rest of Ireland pre- 1922 or as its own entity. Though not in the Olympic games the IOC has always recognised United Kingdom representative.

Northern Ireland has competed in three FIFA world cups reaching the quarter- final stage in the 1958 and 1982 tournaments. At UEFA Euro 2016 the team is making its first appearance at the European tournament.

**Head Coach-** Michael O’Neil

**Captain-** Steven Davis

**Top Scorer**- David Healy (36)

**Most Caps –** Pat Jennings (119)

**Stadium**

Northern Ireland play their home matches at Windsor Park, Belfast. The [Green and White Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_and_White_Army) is the name given to the fans that follow the Northern Ireland national football team.

### **FIFA World Cup**

Northern Ireland's best [World Cup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FIFA_World_Cup) performance was in their first appearance in the finals, the [1958 World Cup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1958_FIFA_World_Cup), where they reached the quarter-finals after beating [Czechoslovakia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czechoslovakia_national_football_team) 2–1 in the play-off. They were knocked out by [France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_national_football_team), losing 4–0. In the 1958 competition Northern Ireland became the least populous country to have qualified for the World Cup, a record that stood until [Trinidad & Tobago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinidad_and_Tobago_national_football_team) qualified for the [2006 World Cup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_FIFA_World_Cup). Northern Ireland remains, however, the least populous country to have qualified for more than one World Cup finals tournament, to win a World Cup finals match, to have scored at a World Cup finals, and to have progressed from the first round of the World Cup finals.

World class footballer George Best (Man United fame),1968 European Footballer of the year played for the Northern Ireland team. Best won 37 caps and scored 9 goals for his country. Even with his skills, they failed to qualify for any major tournaments.



Danny Blanchflower

With the famous

George Best.

**European Championships 2016:**

Group C P W D L Pts

Germany 3 2 1 0 7

Poland 3 2 1 0 7

Northern Ireland 3 1 0 2 3

Ukraine 3 0 0 3 0

25th of June 2016 Wales play Northern Ireland

**The Squad:**

**Goalkeepers**: Michael McGovern, Roy Carroll, Alan Mannus

**Defenders**: Conor McLaughlin, Chris Baird, Aaron Hughes, Gareth McCauley, Luke McCullough, Craig Cathcart, Jonny Evans, Paddy McNair, Lee Hodson.

**Midfielders:** Shane Ferguson, Stuart Dallas, Josh Magennis, Steven Davis, Oliver Norwood, Corry Evans, Jamie Ward.

**Forwards**: Kyle Lafferty, Niall McGinn, Conor Washington, Will Grigg.

