



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office
INFORMATION PAPER

NACC/WG/11— IP/04
27/08/26

Eleventh Meeting of the North American, Central American and the Caribbean Working Group (NACC/WG/11)

Guatemala City, Guatemala, September 21-25, 2026

Agenda Item 5: Modernization of Communication, Navigation and Surveillance/Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM), Digital Transformation and Cybersecurity for Air Navigation Services (ANS)

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 ATFM POST OPS ANALYSIS

(Presented by the United States)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
Post Operations Analysis of International Federation Football Association (FIFA) World Cup planning, execution, lessons learned and metrics gathered.	
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency • Security & Facilitation
<i>References:</i>	• None

1. Introduction

1.1 The 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup was the largest tournament ever, both in terms of teams (48) and host countries (3). The Post Operations Analysis recaps the planning, execution and lessons learned from the three hosting countries.

2. Planning

2.1 World Cup ATFM planning started 2 years before the first match with FIFA, Canada, Mexico and the United States participating. The participants in the planning group grew to include CANSO, ICAO, IATA, other governmental agencies and airspace security portions of the three ANSPs. FIFA also engaged with other elements of the three host countries governments, but for the purposes of this review, only ATFM functions are considered.

2.2 Key to understanding the scale and scope of the tournament was learning about the FIFA concept of Team Base Camps. These are living and training locations that each of the 48 teams selected to be based from during the pool play portion of the tournament. There was a large group of locations, and each team selected their base camp once the tournament draw was completed and match locations determined. FIFA then chartered flights to and from each team base camp to their match city. The total number of chartered flights was 257, which included both domestic and cross border charters. See graphic in Appendix 1 for locations.

2.3 Elements that drove the ATFM planning:

2.3.1 Which airports would FIFA use for the charter flights – FIFA was very open to ANSP input on which airports would be best suited to efficient charter flight operations

2.3.2 Use of Fixed Base Operators (FBO) rather than passenger terminals – even when the charter flights operated from the major commercial airports, FIFA used FBOs for ground services, security and boarding as much as possible.

2.3.3 FIFA's greatest concern was efficient movement of teams and match officials to the various locations

2.3.4 The ANSPs greatest concern was impacts from weather to that efficient movement of teams.

2.3.5 Aviation Security – Late in the planning process the aviation security measures became known for all three countries. As each ANSP/Government settled on their strategy, the strategies were shared and communicated with all involved parties. See Appendix for some statistics for the USA security measures.

2.3.6 The largest unknown factor was unscheduled flight operator activity. One of the major fractional ownership companies shared updates to their bookings for awareness.

2.3.7 Communication of ATFM plans was a key element. In addition to the tri-country monthly ANSP planning virtual meetings, the plans were communicated by all three ANSPs via CDM forums to flight operators, airport authorities, other governmental agencies and most importantly ATC facilities.

2.3.8 Regional ATFM was also accomplished by using the CANSO CADENA/COMPASS platform and communication capabilities. Daily regional calls were conducted with all of the neighbouring ANSPs, flight operators, and other interested parties. These kept everyone aware of constraints for that day. Assistance from neighbouring ANSPs was not needed, but if it had been, the plan was in place, and communication means established so it could have been done at any time.

2.3.9 CANSO also arranged for three technology companies to provide web sites so the neighbouring ANSPs to see demand in real time and be prepared to assist if needed. Web site access was free for the duration of the tournament. CADENA/COMPASS also provided training sessions for the use of the web sites.

3. Execution of the plan

3.1 The tournament impacts started in early June as teams arrived and played preliminary matches, running through the final on July 19th.

3.2 Significant increases in volume were expected and materialized at certain locations starting with the round of 16 and increasing through the final.

3.3 Communication was key for the execution phase. FIFA shared their charter flight tracking information and that was used daily to communicate to ATCOs, FMUs and others so the critical team movement flight could be given the appropriate priority.

3.4 Charter flight operators used existing CDM single flight issue avenues to solve problems, and when needed FIFA had a WhatsApp group to elevate problems and receive updates in real time.

3.5 Convective summer weather was impactful for portions of the tournament, but standard ATFM tools were able to mitigate most of the impact. The most impactful day was the day prior to the final when teams and match officials were trying to get to the final location. See Appendix for depictions of the weather.

4. Lessons Learned

4.1 The following worked very well:

4.1.1 Communication was excellent, between all three ANSPs and between the ANSPs and FIFA.

4.1.2 Communicate early and often was another success of the ATFM implementation.

4.1.3 Preparedness was accomplished and when special actions were needed to prioritize a team charter flight or weather impacted specific areas, the means were in place and practiced to handle those events successfully.

4.1.4 Venezuela suffered an earthquake during the World Cup on June 24th, and CADENA/COMPASS was able to assist with communications and real time coordination such that the aviation impacts of the earthquake were mitigated and managed.

4.1.5 Feedback opportunities were provided to flight operators and universally the communication and coordination was praised as being timely and effective.

4.1.6 World Cup volume was a very small percentage of the total daily traffic the North America handles each day. Increases were seen at specific sites on certain days (see also Appendix).

5. Opportunities for improvement

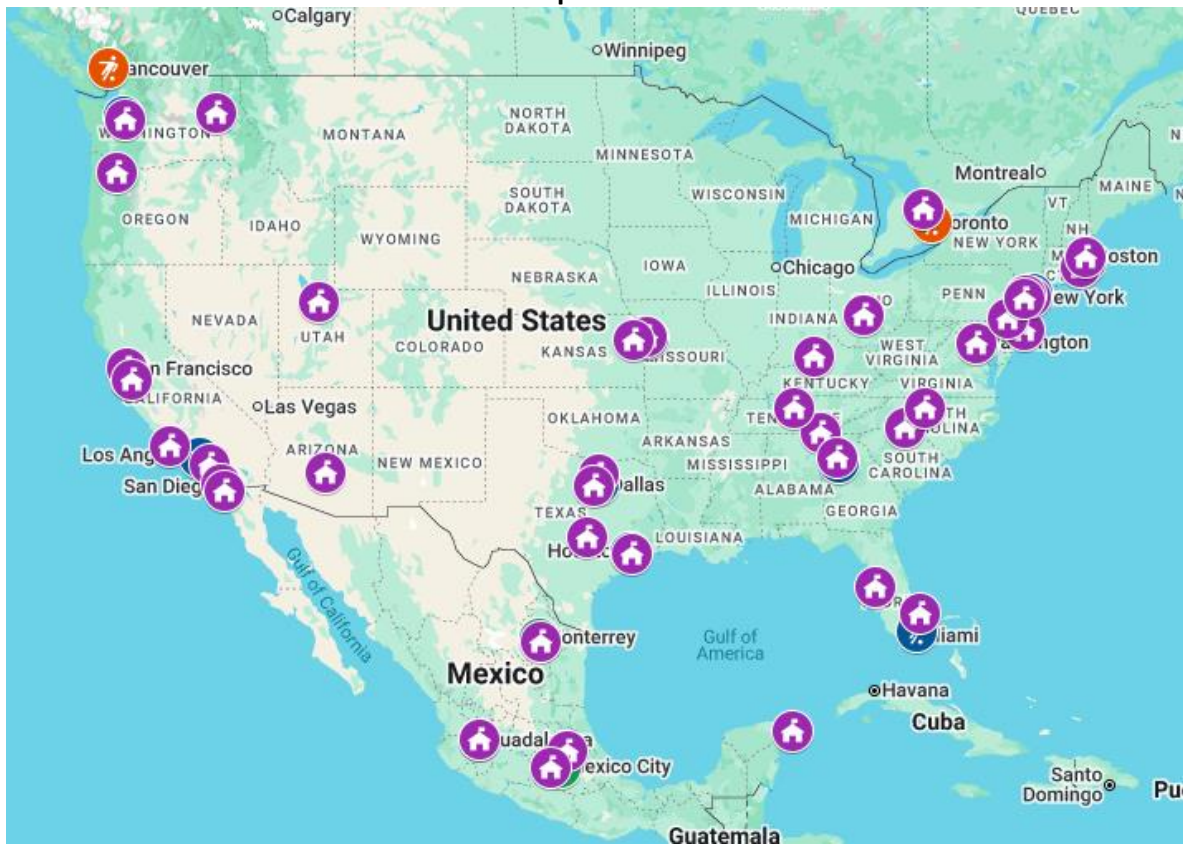
5.1 During the feedback sessions the only item that was suggested was better coordination on the initial inbound flights. Each countries football association made their own arrangements to and from the tournament, so it is possible that FIFA did not have that information or at least did not have it until very late.

APPENDIX GRAPHICS AND DATA

FIFA World Cup 2026



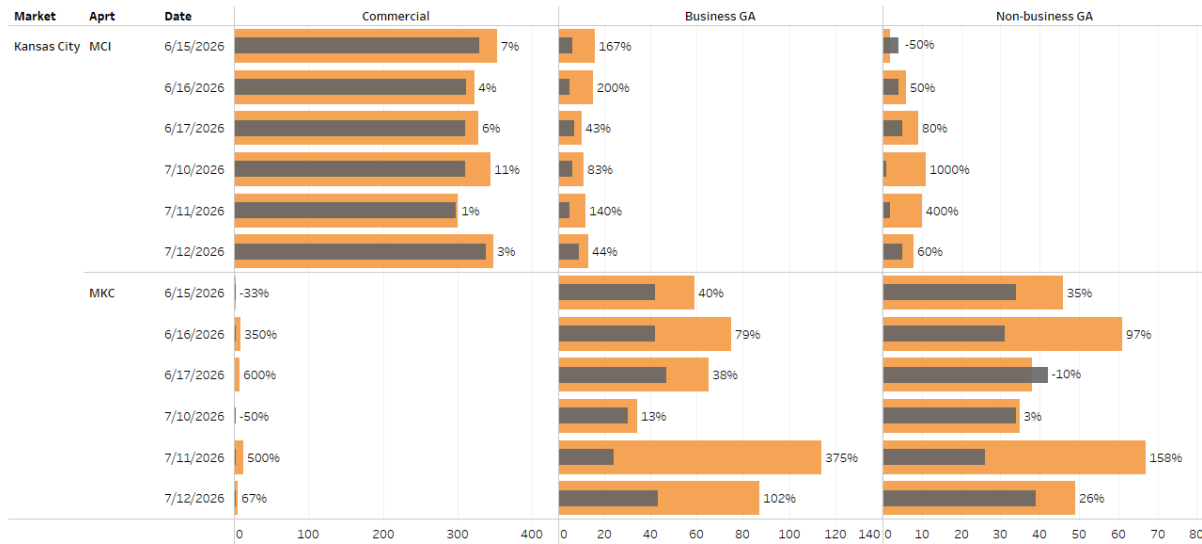
Team Base Camp and Match locations



Specific Areas and Events

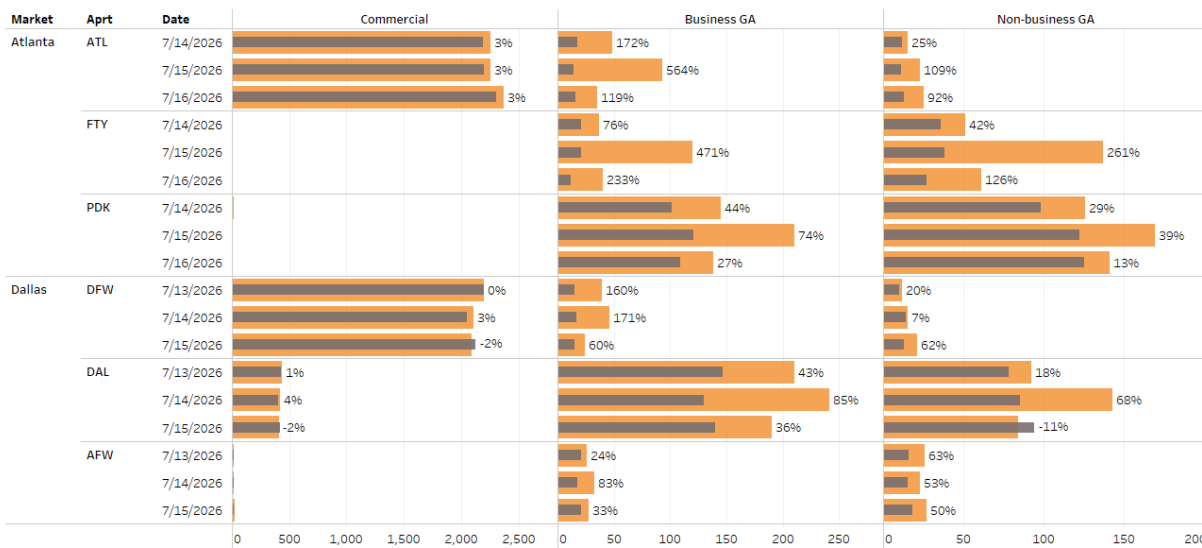
Kansas City was a prime location for both matches and team base camps with 4 team selecting the greater Kansas City area for their camps.

Commercial traffic to Kansas City International (KMCI) was up, but the major increases were seen at Charles B. Wheeler Downtown (MKC). Gray bar represents a daily average for the same month and day of week in 2025.



The primary traffic management initiative used for Kansas City was required arrival and departure routes to both MCI and MKC.

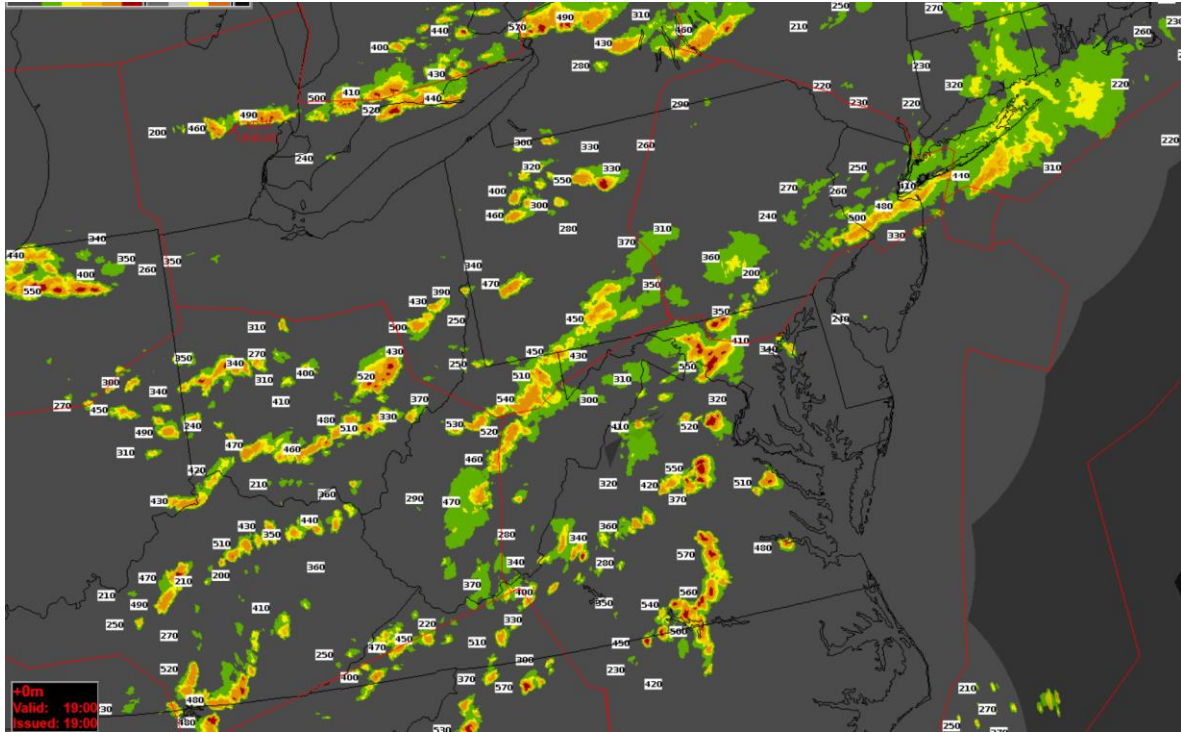
Once the tournament reached the Semi-Final stage, unscheduled traffic increased significantly. The charts below show Atlanta and Dallas primary and secondary airports



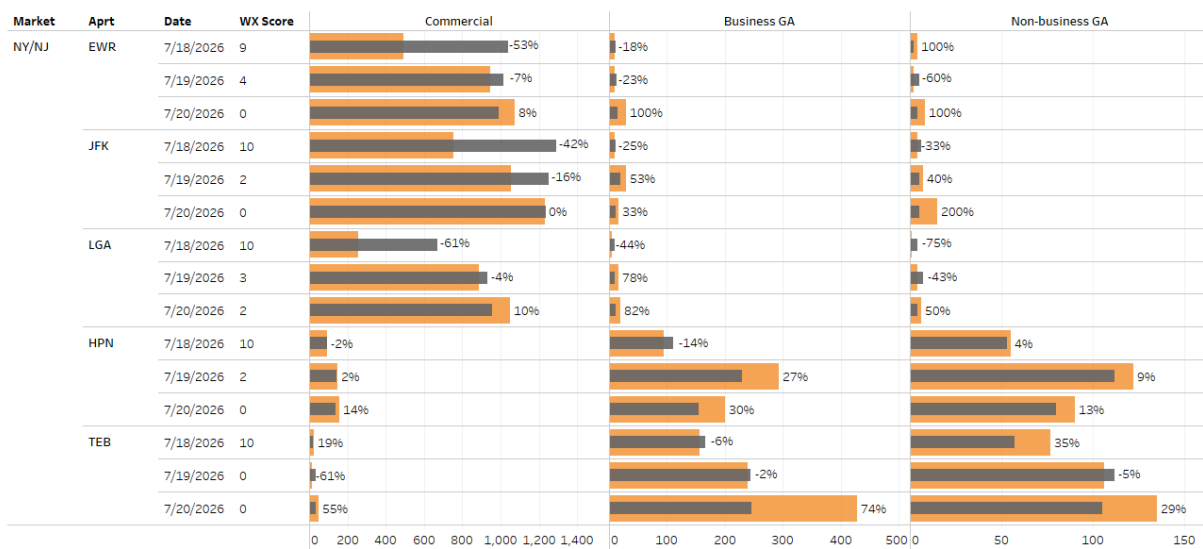
The primary traffic management initiatives used were delay programs to the secondary airports and some ground stops when aircraft parking spots were exhausted.

— A3 —

For the Final in the New York area, weather the day before was the major complicating factor as impactful thunderstorms lasted for much of the day along with airspace security constraints.

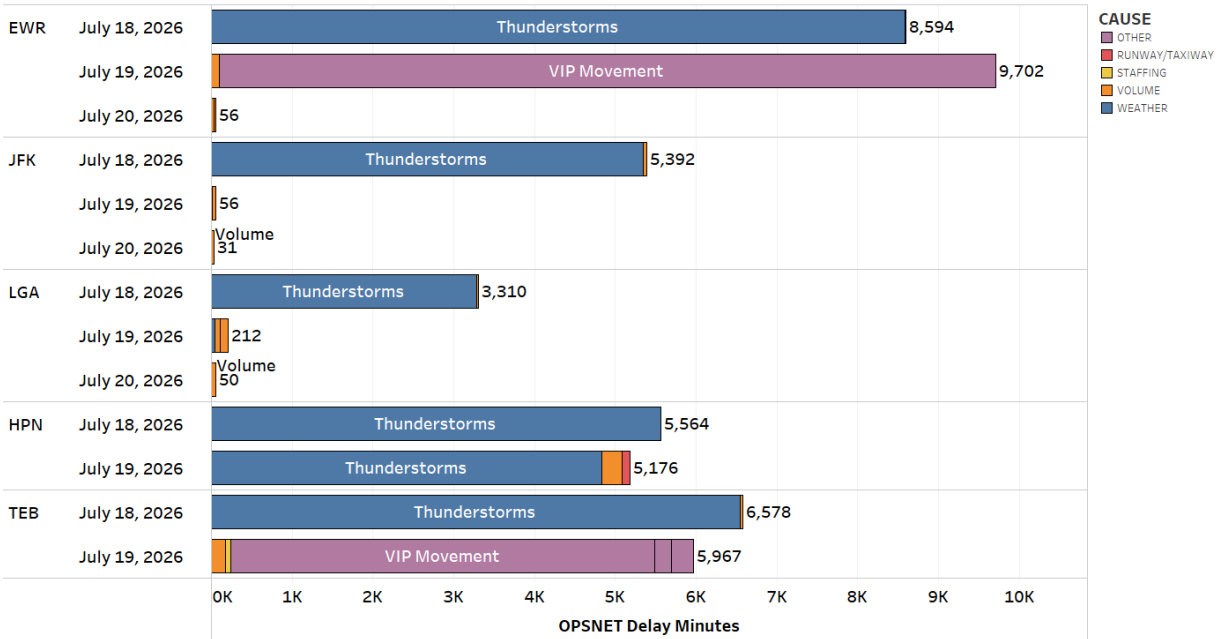


Many traffic management tools were used on this day including Ground Delay Programs, Ground Stops, Required Routes, Escape Routes, and Diversion Recovery. Communication and persistence finally allowed the match officials and other required personnel to reach the match location. Note the weather impact scores on the chart below which impacted all flights regardless of association to the World Cup.



Total delay minutes by cause are shown below for the days surrounding the final match

OPSNET Delay Minutes for the FIFA World Cup Final



Aviation Security actions and data from the FAA ATO - Aviation Security issued 254 Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) in 11 host cities covering matches and fan zones as well as team base camps and hotels across the country. Tracked 1,295 UAS tracks of interest and TFR violations, conducted 294 UAS mitigations, contacted 703 UAS operators, resulting in 15 arrests and the confiscation of 580 UASs. For the championship game, multiple TFRs were deconflicted and 8 tracks of interest were intercepted.

Event	Agency	Requested	Published
Matches	DHS	55	55
Matches	FBI	33	34
FanFest	FBI	28	28
Hotels Base Camp	DHS	107	107
cUAS Testing	FBI	11	11
Friendly	FBI	6	6
Ad Hoc Req	DHS	13	13
Total TFRs			254
Total SGIs			334