Blask

Unified AI platform for instant
iGaming analytics

World Cup 2026

What six weeks of football meant for iGaming

July 2026

What this report covers

The 2026 World Cup — hosted across the USA, Canada and Mexico — has wrapped up: a record edition with 48 nations and 104 matches. This report reads it through three lenses — search interest, iGaming demand, and how the tournament settled for the bookmakers.

World Cup demand

Blask tracked World Cup-related search demand across countries and turned it into a daily, country-level index — a view of where interest was heating up, cooling down, or spiking around key matches, national-team moments and tournament milestones.

It is not a betting revenue, but rather an event interest with the same logic behind the Blask Index, adapted from brand-level search demand to event-keyword demand.

Blask World Cup Index

iGaming demand

How betting demand actually moved during the tournament, benchmarked two ways for context.

Against the pre-WC baseline (3 May – 10 Jun) to isolate the tournament lift, and against the same calendar window a year earlier (11 Jun – 19 Jul 2025).

Blask Index

Match profitability

Which matches paid off for the bookmakers and which handed money back to players. Profitability is estimated with Blask's own proprietary model that scores every match and betting market by how much it moved the bookmaker's margin.

The top-10 most profitable and top-10 most punter-friendly matches, plus market-level deep-dives of the single most profitable and most unprofitable games, both semifinals, the final and the third-place playoff.

Blask Match Profitability Index

Analysis covers the 44 participating markets tracked by Blask; it does not include data on Iran, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Cape Verde and Curaçao.

Key highlights

1 **iGaming demand stayed flat versus the pre-WC baseline** — the tournament redistributed demand more than it grew it.

2 **The final out-drew the opening by ~49%.** Overall World Cup demand, measured by Blask World Cup Index, peaked on 4th of July — US Independence day, which landed on Saturday.

3 **Year-on-year, the lift was real: +21.1%.** iGaming demand across the 44 participating markets ran well above the same 2025 window — though part of that is organic market growth.

4 **The group stage beat the knockouts.** Average iGaming demand in the group stage topped the playoffs (excluding no-match days) — the volume of matches and teams did the work.

5 **Host exits reshaped demand.** All three hosts went out in the Round of 16; the US saw the sharpest post-exit drop, while Canada and Mexico held interest to the final.

6 **England–Ghana (0:0) was the tournament's most profitable match for bookmakers.** Profit came from both pre-match and live phases, with live slightly ahead.

7 **New Zealand–Belgium (1:5) was the most costly for the bookies.** Both phases lost money, and the wrecking ball was Total 2.5 — the biggest single-market loss across all WC matches.

8 **The Cup minted breakout brands.** GrandPashaBet led all brands at +464% Blask Index growth, with gains concentrated in LatAm-facing and Turkish/European products.

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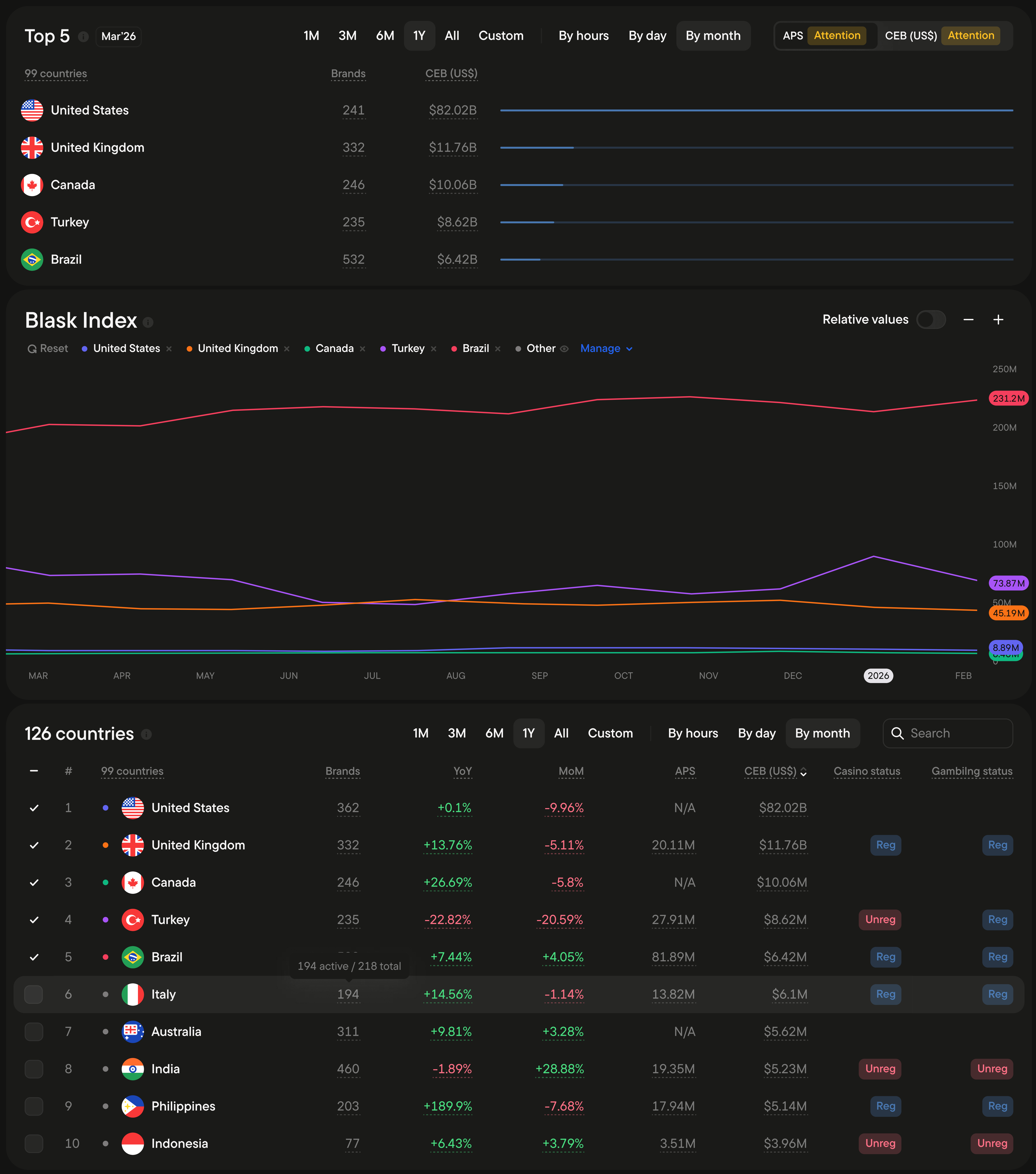
What is Blask?

Blask is an AI analytics platform for iGaming. It unifies broadly distributed and fragmented data from domestic and offshore operators in one place, delivering a single, reliable view of market dynamics and complete global- and country-level perspectives of market share trends.

Artificial Intelligence powers Blask's proprietary technology. It detects key signals and converts them into clear, visual metrics, updated hourly, enabling deep analysis and precise trend tracking across the industry.

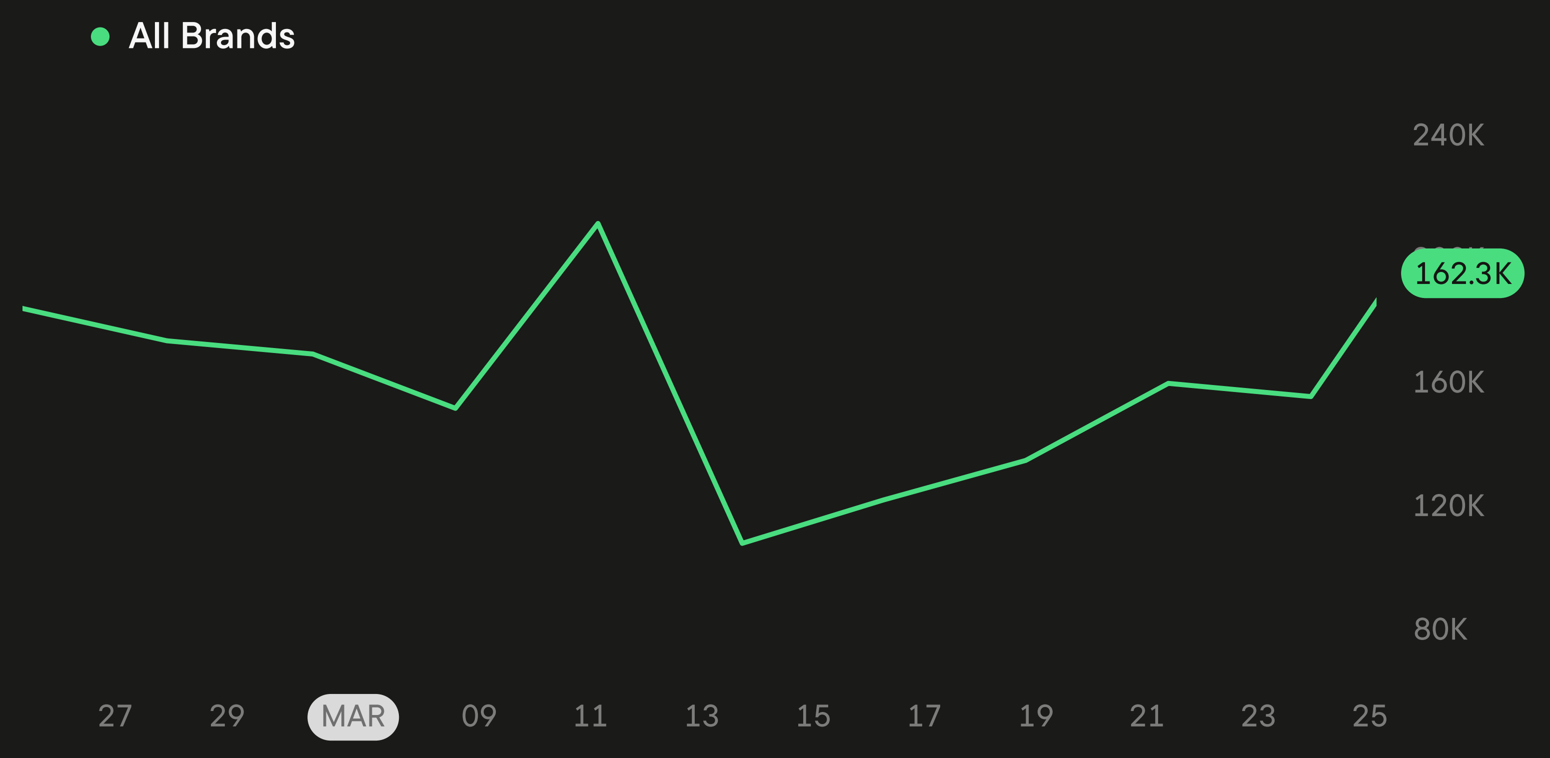
Blask makes the invisible visible. We replace legacy data sources with low-latency, high-frequency market data, reports and intelligence.



What Blask measures

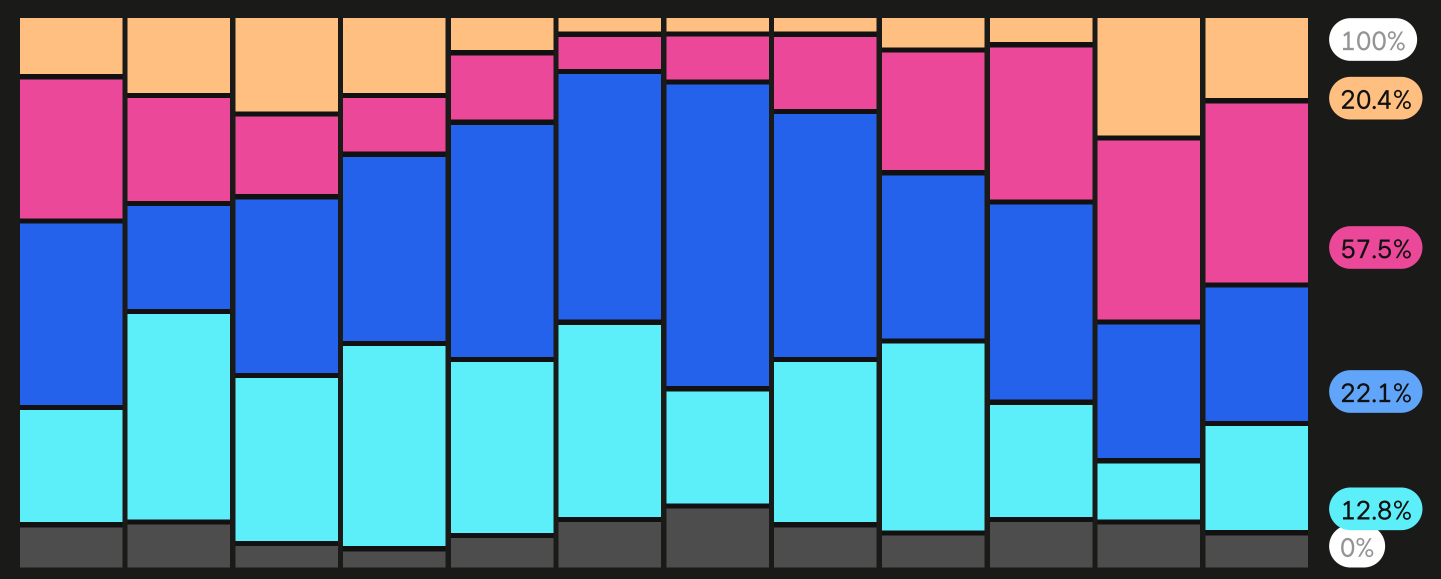
Blask Index

An AI-enhanced interest indicator. It converts de-noised online signals into an hourly index of market demand by country or brand. Pair it with APS/CEB to measure value. Historically, it shows strong correlation with actual market size.



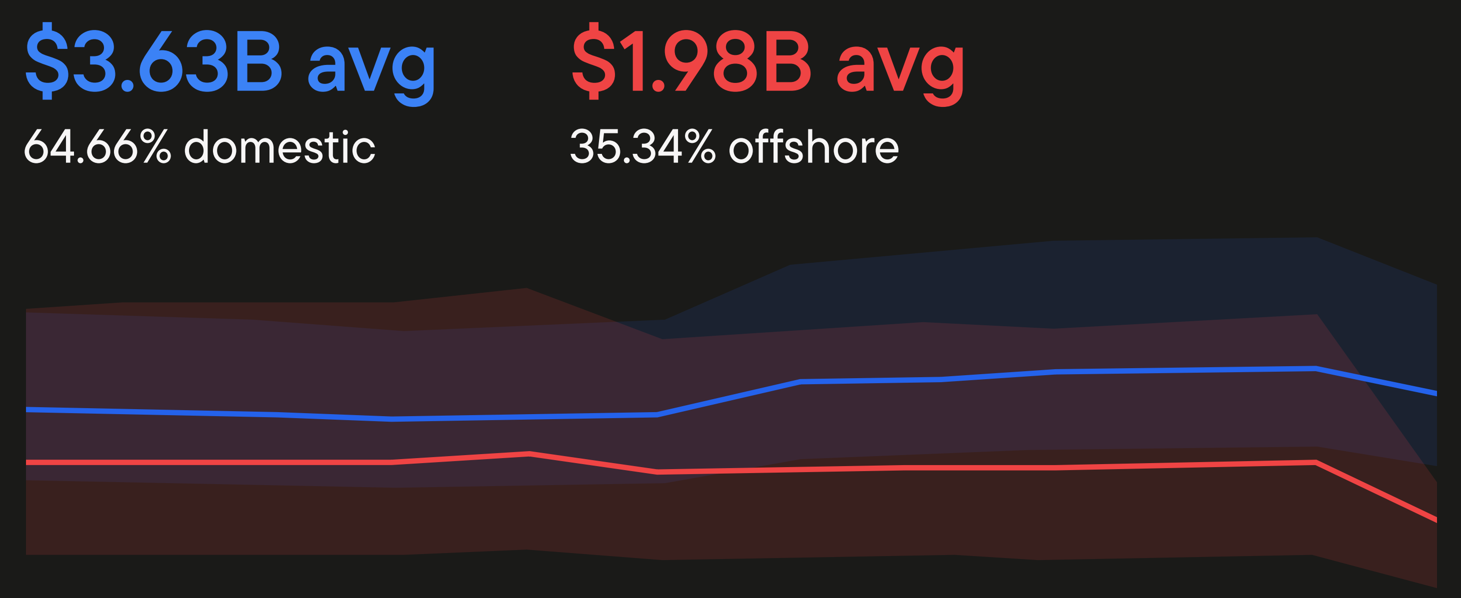
Brand's Accumulated Power (BAP)

How much of the market's attention a brand owns. A brand's share of total search-based demand in a given country and period, expressed as a percentage. BAP divides a brand's Blask Index by the market's total Blask Index to show who captures the most organic interest. Use it to benchmark competitive position and track gains or losses over time.



Competitive Earning Baseline (CEB)

An AI-derived estimate of the revenue a brand should be earning given its market influence, competitive position, and customer base. It is not a financial reporting metric; it's a modeled baseline used to spot gaps between actual vs potential revenue. Computed from BAP, APS, and competitive data. Shown as a range to reflect confidence and market variability.



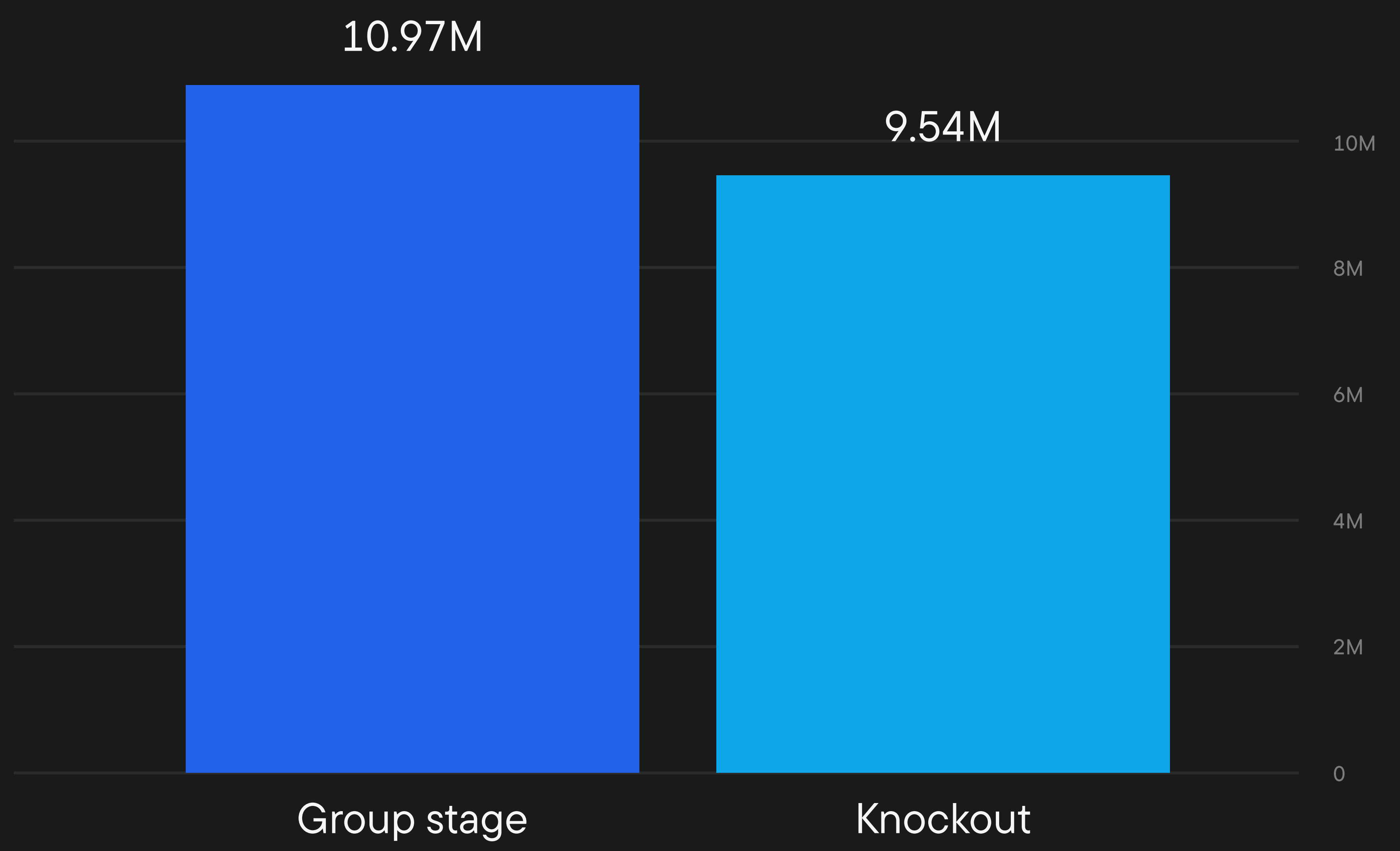
World Cup Index: demand in participating countries

Global attention

Overall World Cup demand climbed steadily through the group stage and peaked on 4 July. The first no-match day, 8 July, brought a sharp drop; the deepest fall came on 17 July, right before the final weekend.

World Cup Index

Avg daily WC Index by stage



Peak day

July 4

Round of 16 weekend, amplified by US Independence Day

Weakest day

July 17

No-match day ahead of the final weekend

Opening → Final

+49%

The final drew ~49% more attention than kickoff

Stage average

+15%

Group-stage daily average ran ~15% above the knockout rounds

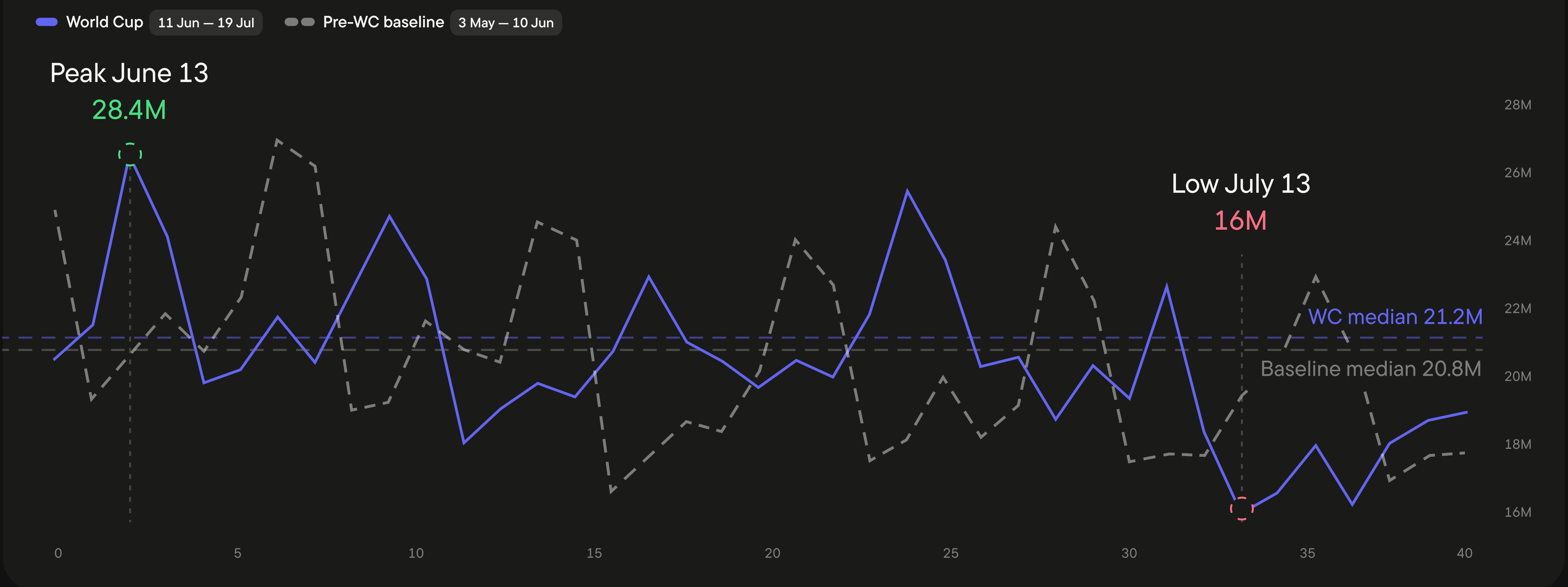
Blask Index: iGaming demand during WC vs pre-WC baseline

iGaming demand

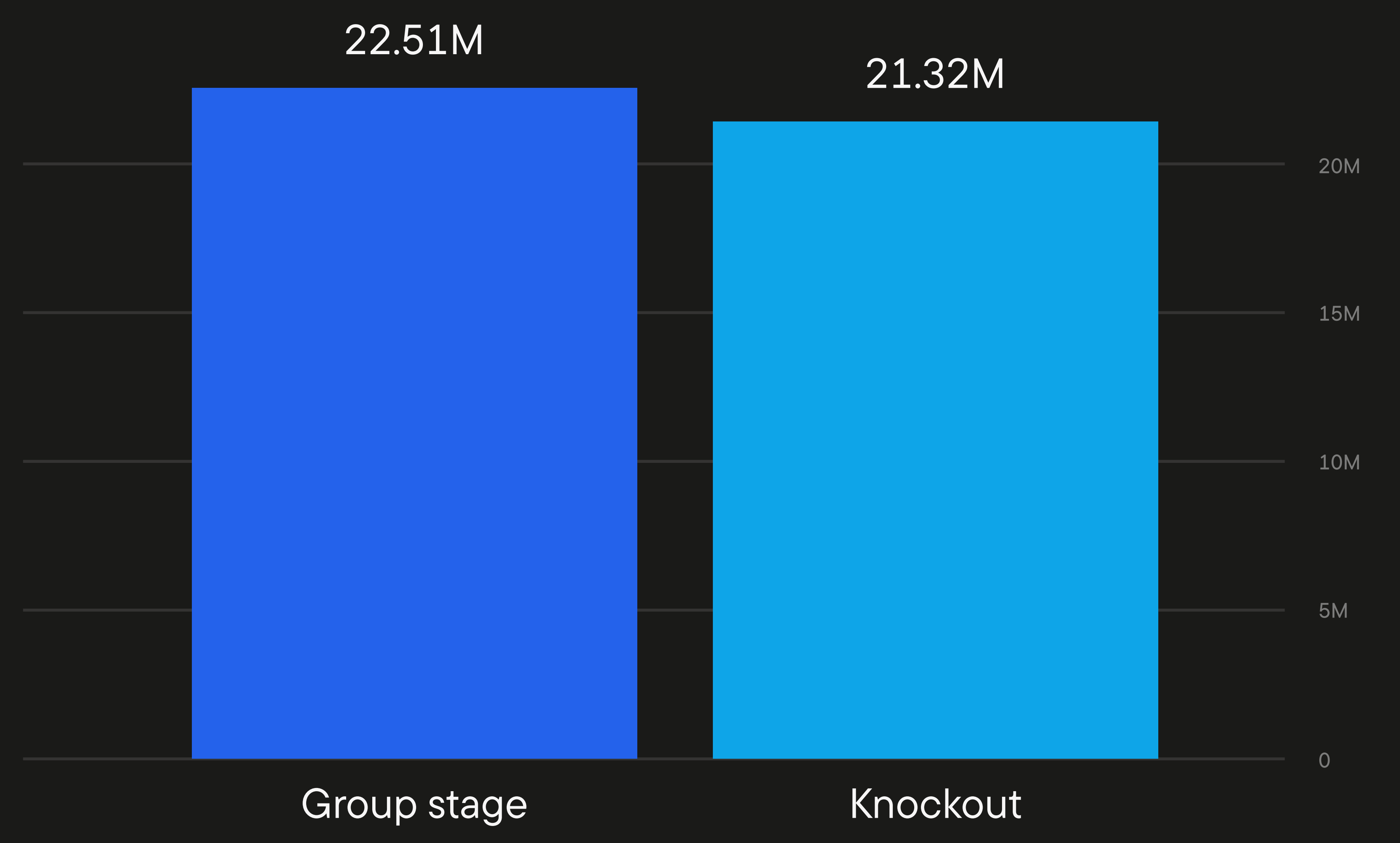
iGaming demand held almost level, with only a marginal change versus the run-up. Within the tournament, average demand during the group stage sat above the knockout rounds (excluding no-match days) — the sheer number of matches and teams did the work.

*Analysis covers the 44 participating markets tracked by Blask; it does not include data on Iran, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Cape Verde and Curaçao.

Blask Index (participating markets)



Avg daily Blask Index by stage



WC vs Baseline

+0.2%

Same-period demand basically flat

Peak day

June 13

The first full group-stage Saturday

Deepest dip

July 13

Rest day between the quarter- and semifinals

Group vs Knockout

+5.6%

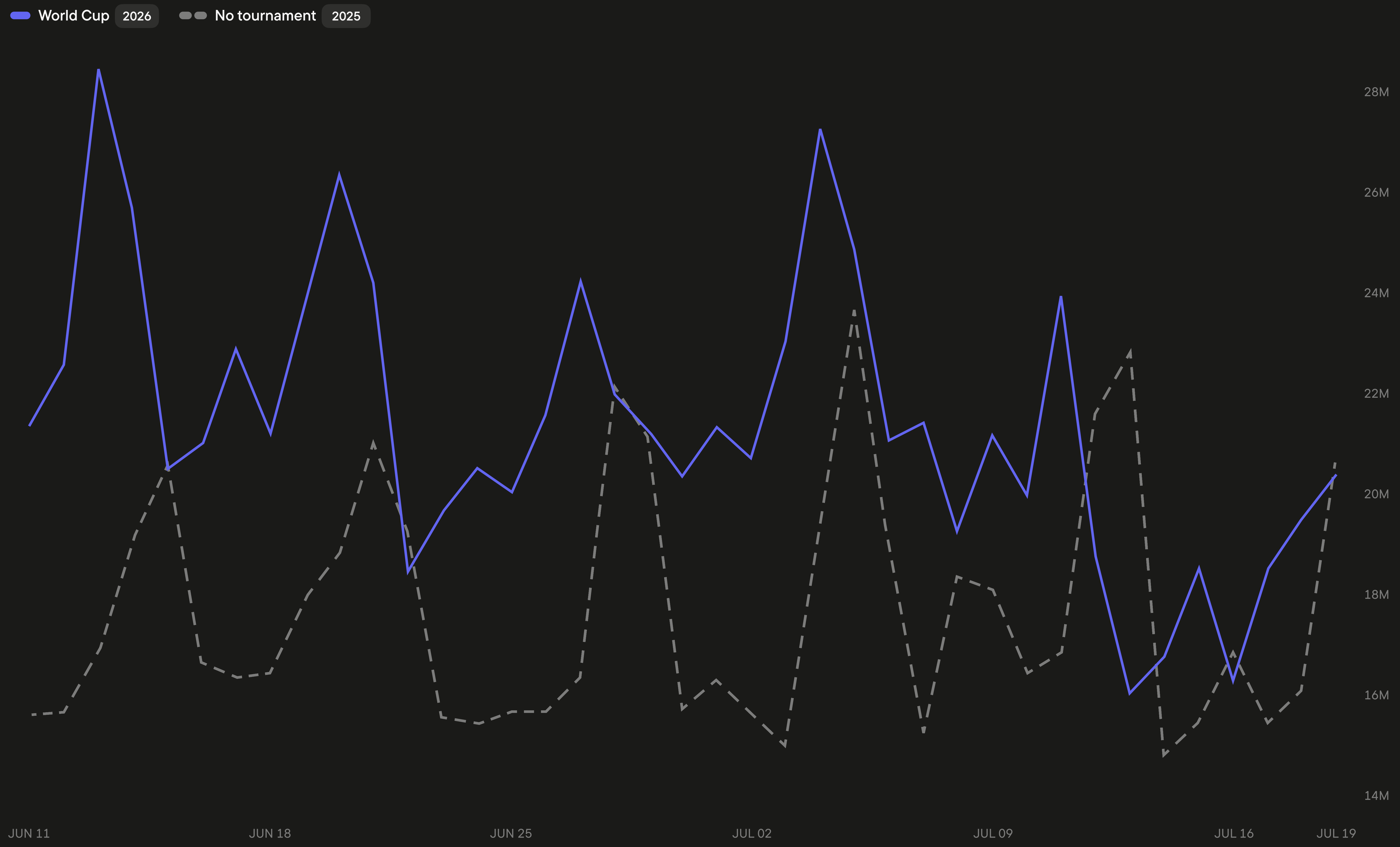
Higher per match day during the group stage

Blask Index: iGaming demand during WC vs the same period last year

Year over Year

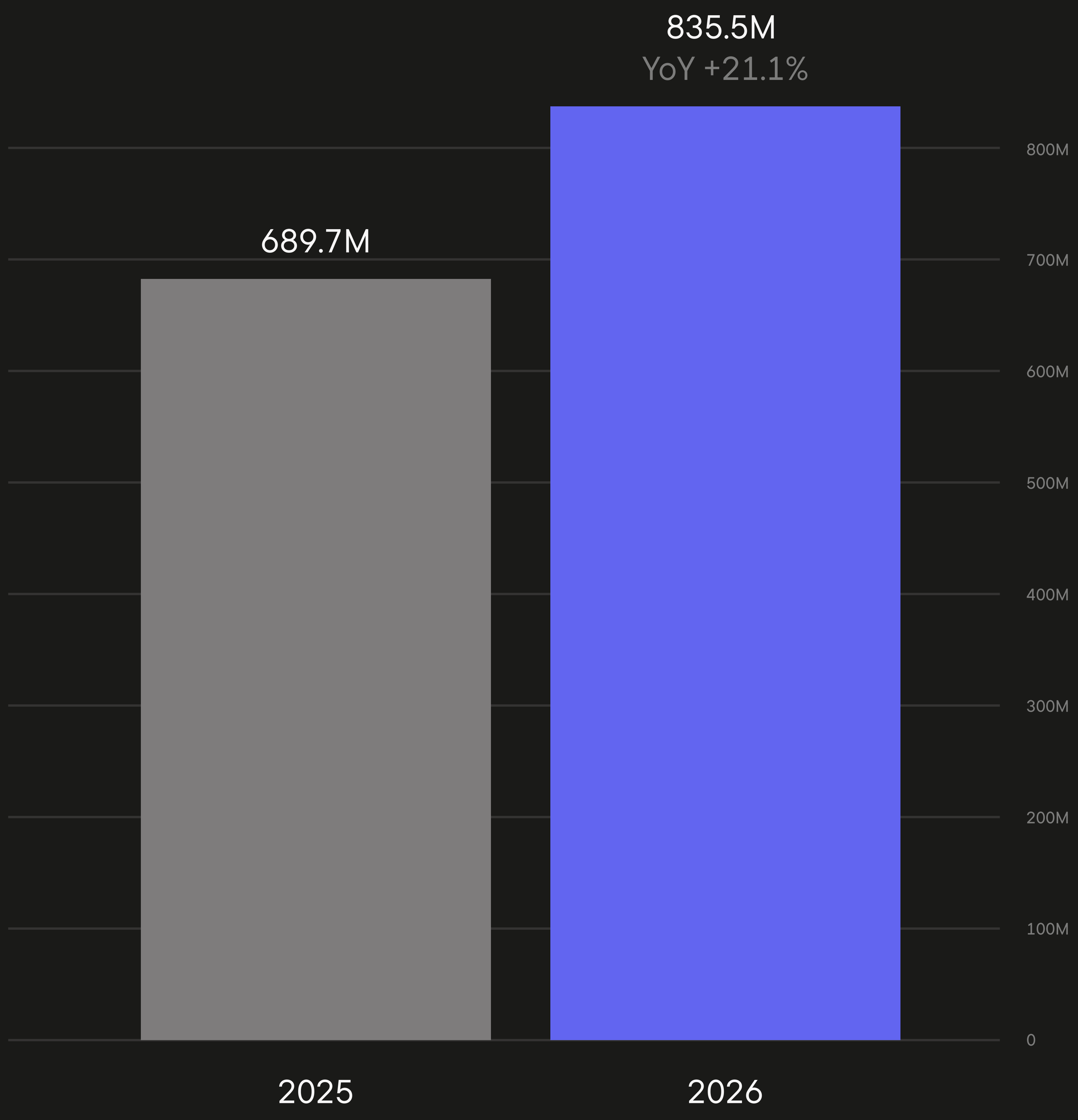
Against demand a year ago (same calendar window, no tournament), there was a clear lift — up 21.1%. Part of that reflects organic year-on-year market growth, so the pure tournament effect sits below the headline number.

Blask Index (participating markets)



Total Blask Index by year

(Jun 11 – Jul 19, 2025–2026)

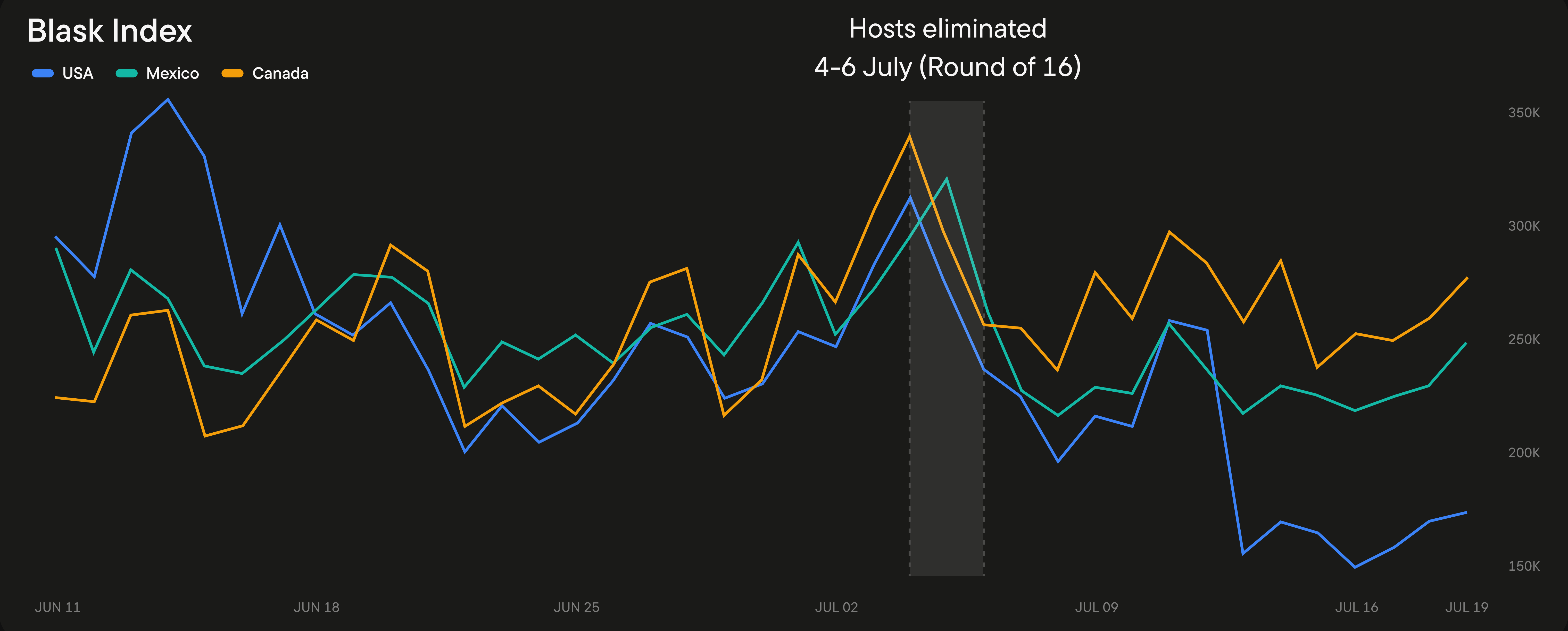


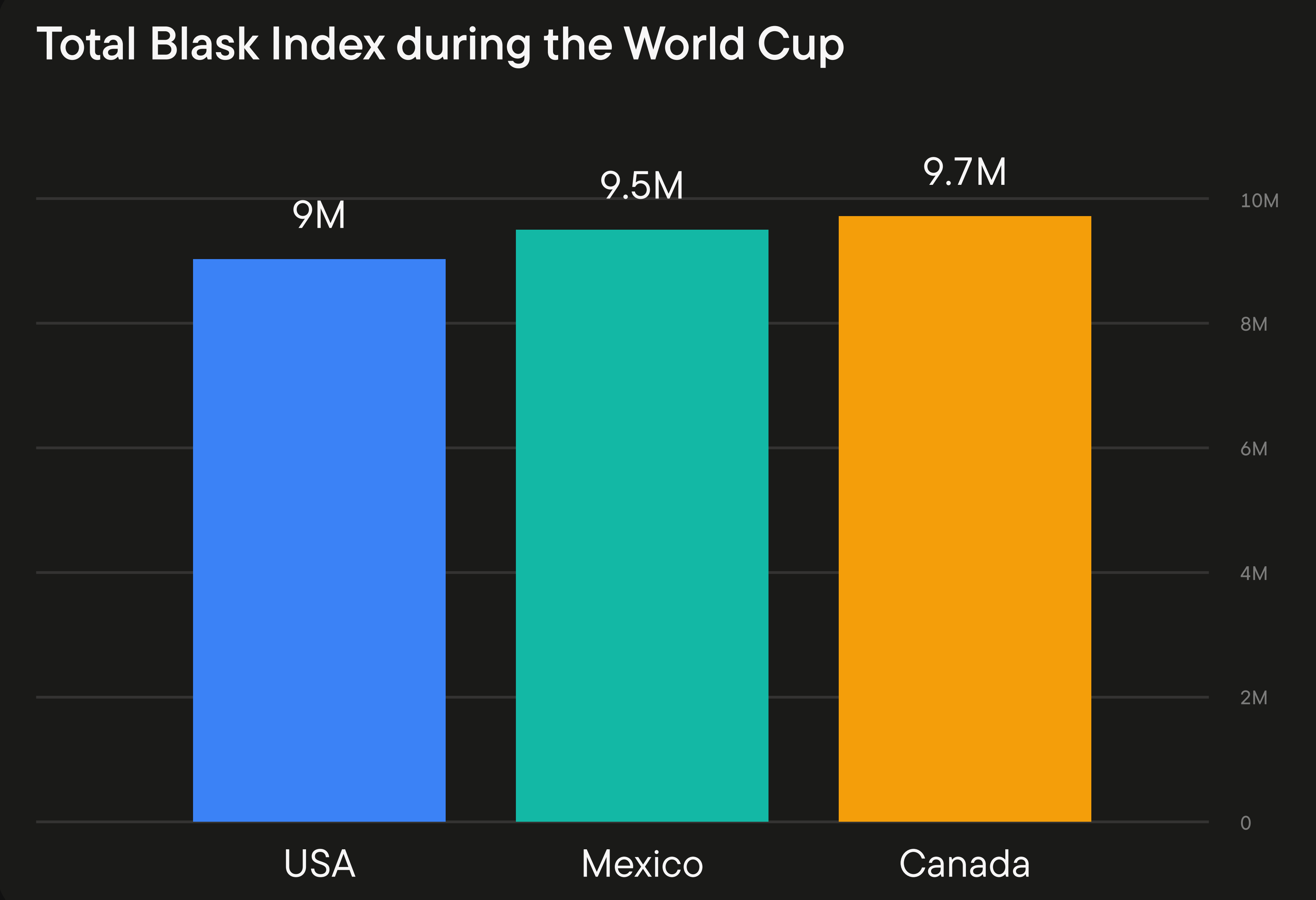
Source: Blask Index, participating markets

The host effect: demand in USA, Canada and Mexico

Host nations

All three host nations reached the Round of 16 and went out within a few days of each other. The sharpest post-exit drop was in the USA, while interest in Canada and Mexico held up all the way to the final.





USA post-exit

-28%

256K → 185K/day; demand tracked the American team

Mexico post-exit

-11%

Held through the knockout rounds

Canada post-exit

+7%

Interest rose even after elimination

Exit window

4-6 July

All three hosts out in the Round of 16

Source: Blask Index, US · CA · MX

The brands that rode the World Cup

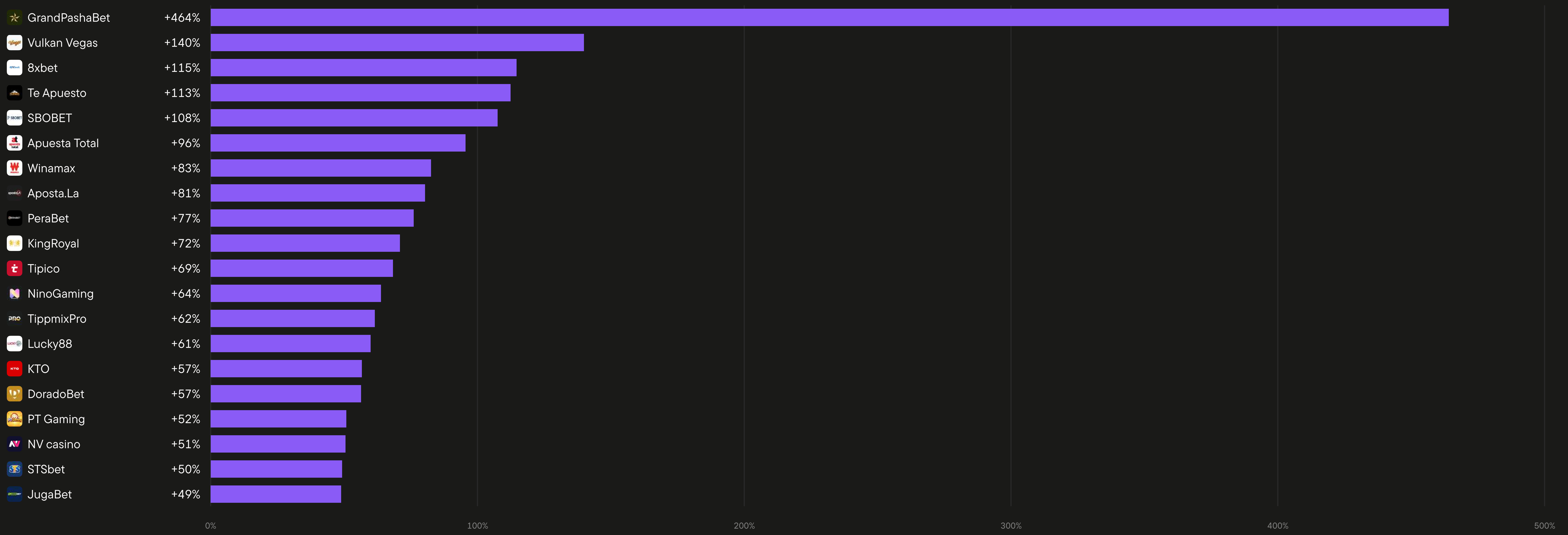
Brands

GrandPashaBet led all brands at +464% Blask Index growth, ahead of Vulkan Vegas (+140%), 8xbet (+115%) and Te Apuesto (+113%). Growth clustered in LatAm-facing and Turkish/European sportsbooks — the ones most exposed to participating national teams.

Percent isn't absolute, though: in raw index the larger books added the most (Apuesta Total +16.2M, NV casino +5.3M).

*Top 20 brands by Blask Index growth, comparing the pre-WC period (3 May – 10 Jun) with the tournament window (11 Jun – 19 Jul). Small brands below a 2M baseline are excluded.

Top 20 brands by Blask Index growth — WC vs pre-WC



Source: Blask Index, brand level

How the match profitability index works

Methodology

Every match is scored on how it moved the bookmaker's margin — not on the sporting result. Two independent reads, one taken before kickoff and one during play, are scored market by market and combined into a single signed index.

The market before kickoff

Pre-match score

Reads how the book is positioned at kickoff — how sharp the pricing is and how much margin is baked in before a ball is kicked. A strong pre-match score means the book started the game in a favourable spot.

Signals

- Closing odds
- Odds movement
- Implied win probabilities
- Bookmaker margin

How the game actually unfolded

Live Score

Reads the most-played in-play markets, where the bulk of turnover and volatility sits. This is where a match is usually won or lost for the book — a goal at the wrong moment can flip a comfortable pre-match into a loss.

Most-played in-play markets

- 1X2
- Over 2.5
- Quick goal
- Late goal
- Favourite comeback
- 0:0

Combined into one signed index

Pre-match | Live | Each market scored, than summed

Negative
Players won — the bookmaker paid out

Roughly broke even

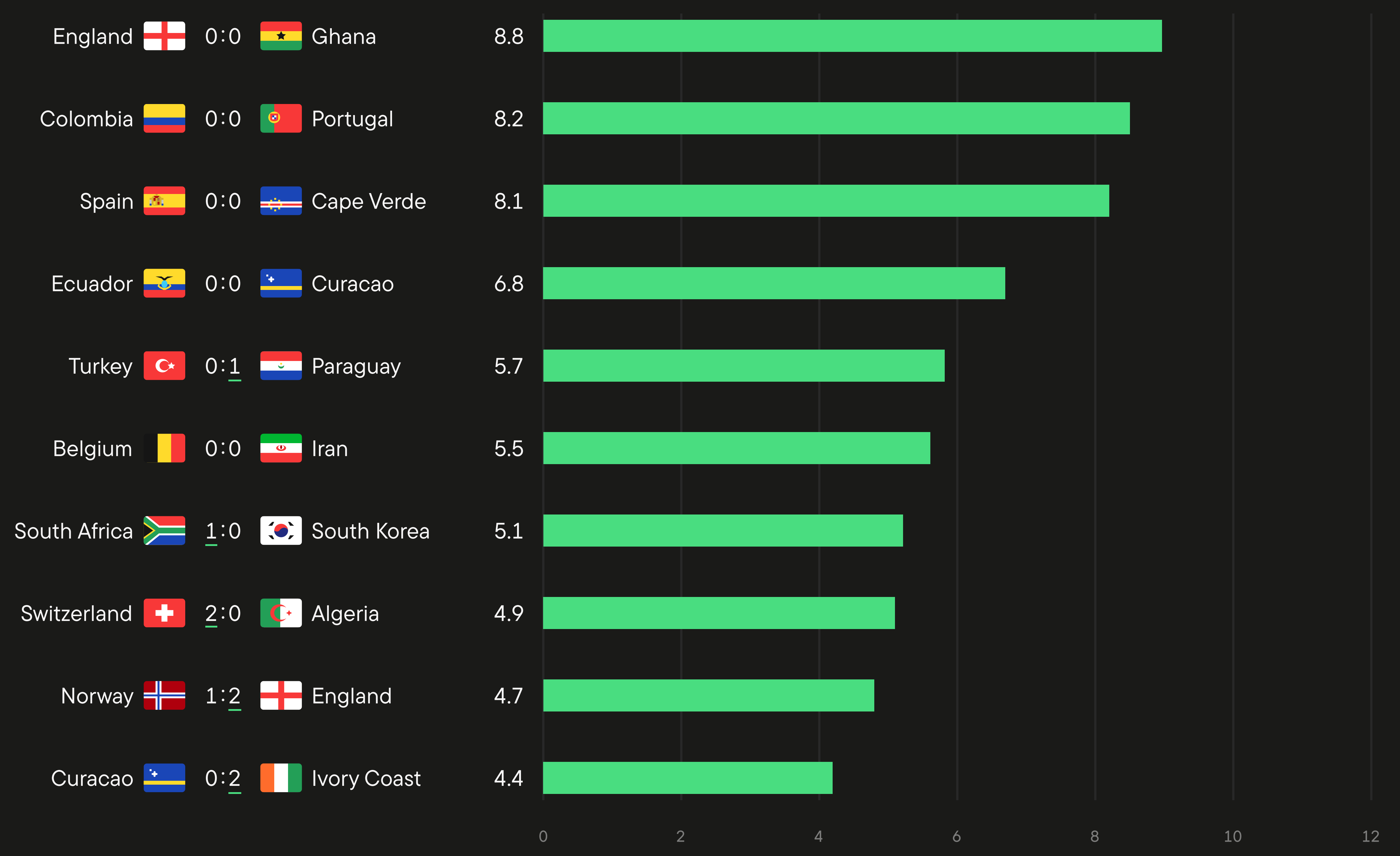
Positive
Profitable for the bookmakers

Which matches paid off for the bookmakers

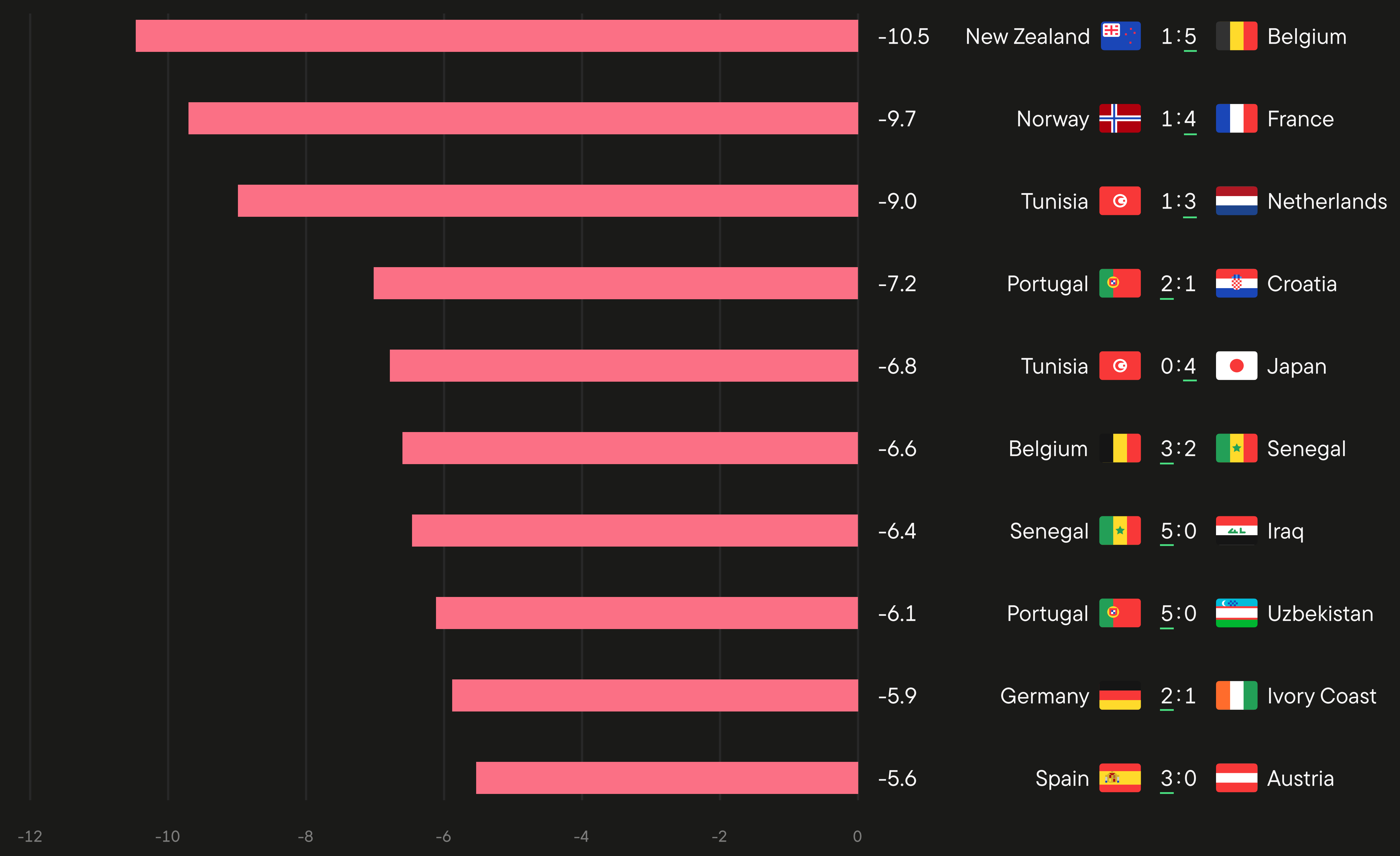
Bookmaker P&L

The most profitable match for bookmakers was England – Ghana, where England surprisingly failed to score against the African side. The most player-friendly was New Zealand – Belgium — a six-goal, 1–5 Belgian win. Notably, the index for the biggest player-friendly matches runs higher than for the most bookmaker-friendly ones: players 'best days swung harder than the books'.

Top 10 profitable matches (for bookmakers)



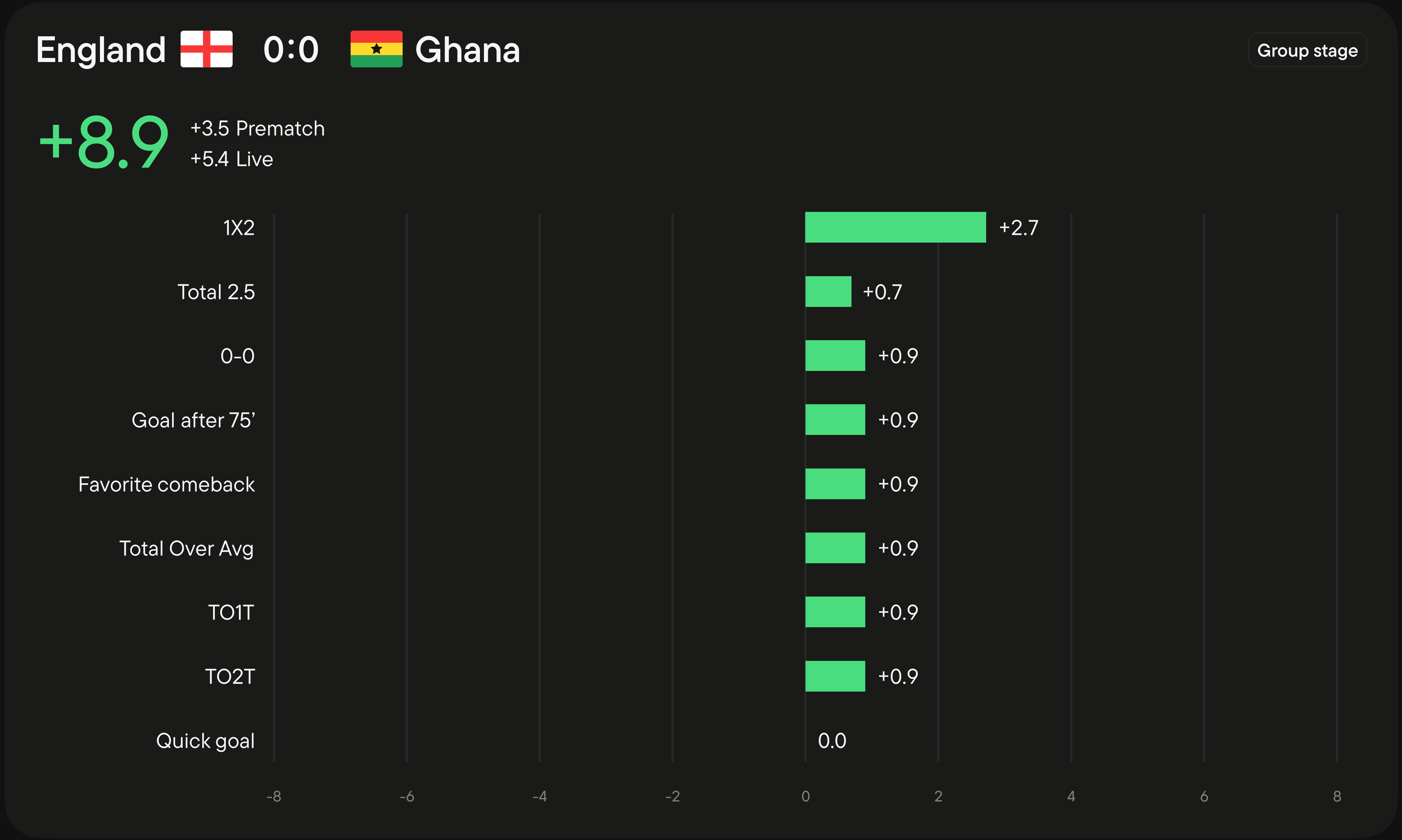
Top 10 losing matches (for bookmakers)



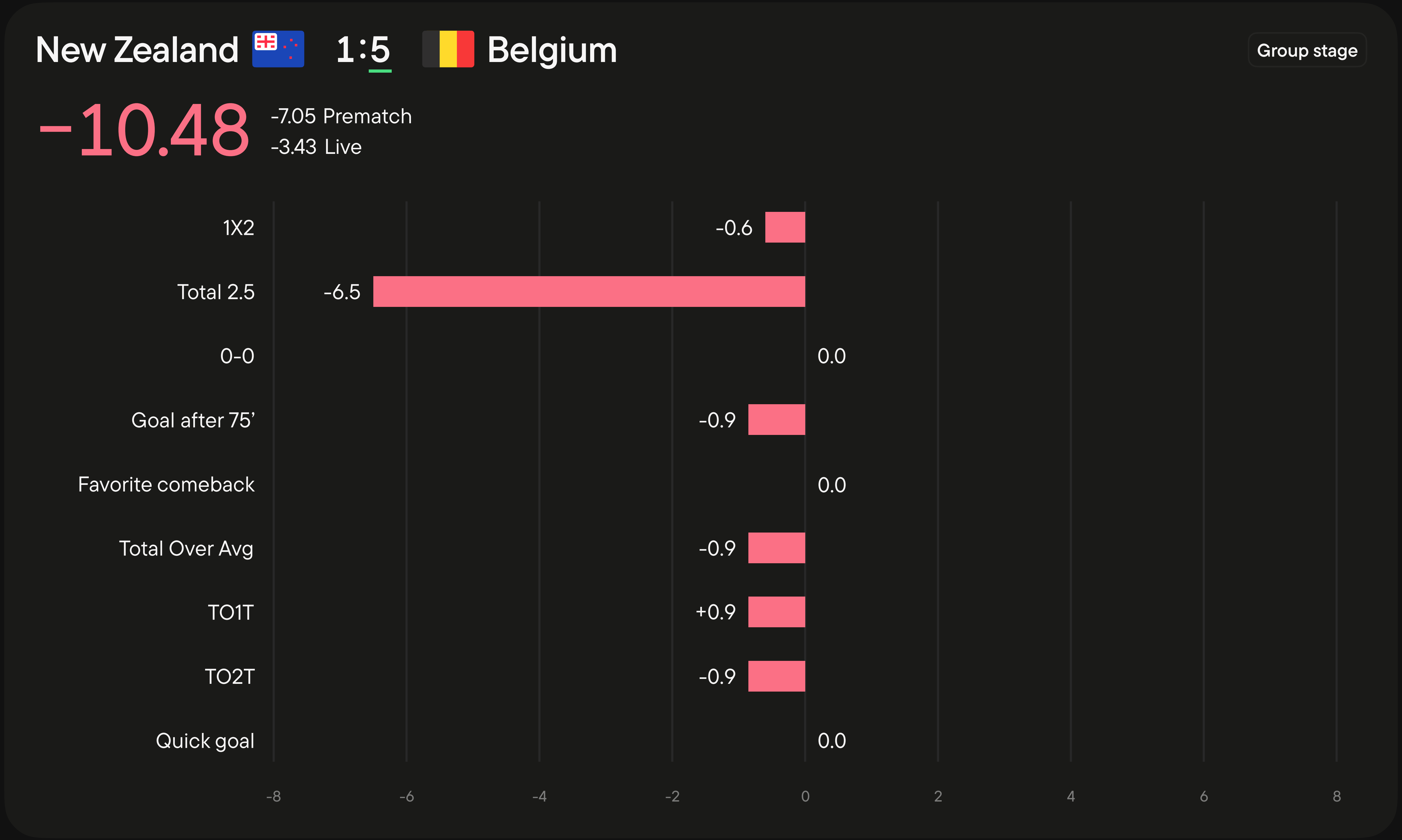
The two extremes: England – Ghana vs New Zealand – Belgium

Match deep - dive

The tournament's single most profitable match for bookmakers next to its most profitable one for players — and what drove each. Bars show the net market score summing to the match index. Bars show the net market score summing to the match index — green bars favor the bookmaker, red favor the players.



Profit came from both phases, with live slightly ahead. The engine was the 1X2 market (+2.7) — backing the favourite was simply the most lucrative line. The match paid off across nearly every market, a clean sweep for the book.



Both phases lost money — cutting against the idea that a favourite's win leaves the book ahead pre-match. The wrecking ball was Total 2.5 (−6.45), the biggest single-market loss across all six matches. Yet 1X2 barely moved (−0.60): Belgium won as expected, so the 1:5 scoreline — not a surprise result — did the damage.

Semifinals: when live overrides the pre-match read

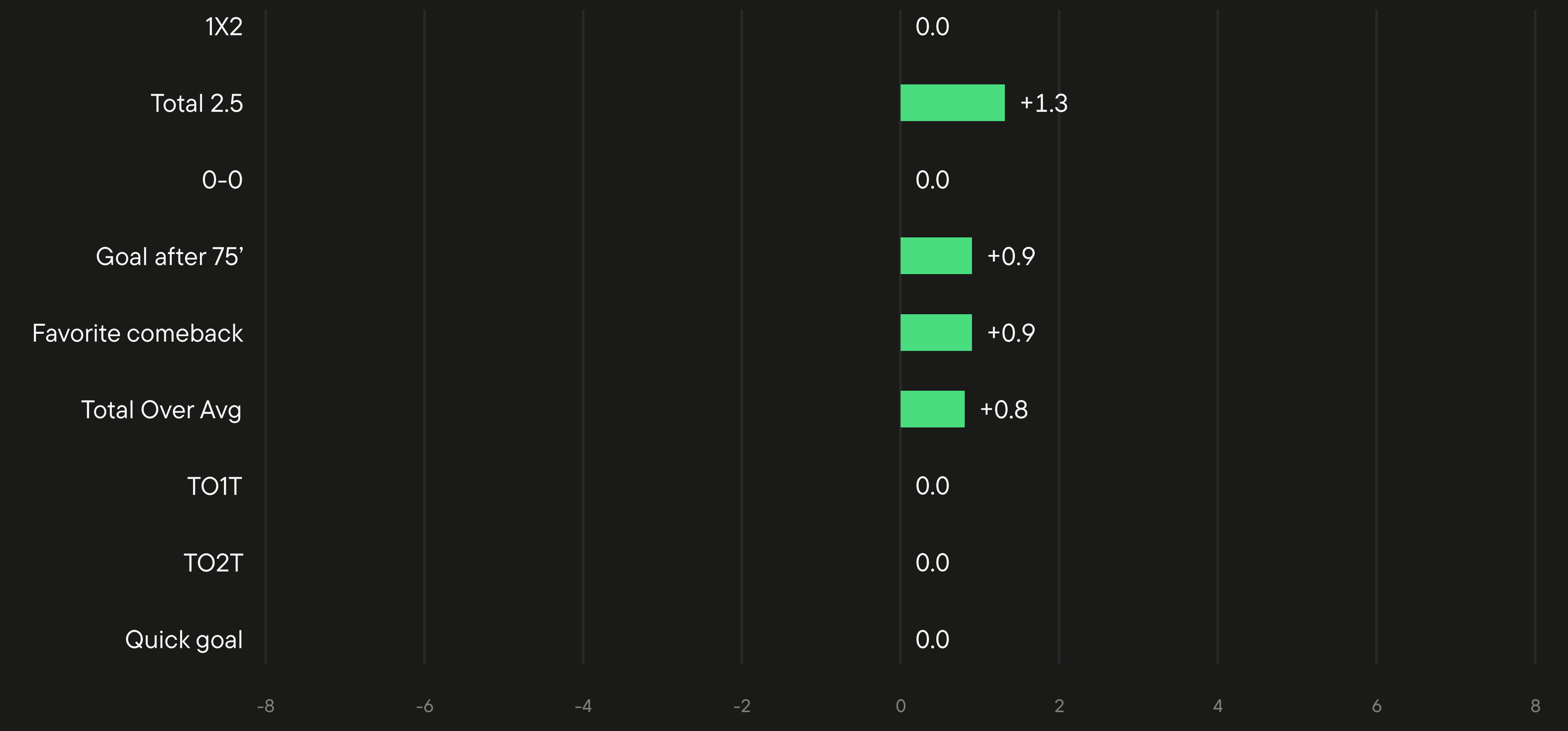
Match deep - dive

Two contrasting semifinals — one driven almost entirely by the total, one where in-play flipped a positive pre-match. Bars show the net market score summing to the match index — green bars favor the bookmaker, red favor the players.

France 0:2 Spain

Semifinal

+3.89 +0.29 Prematch
+3.6 Live

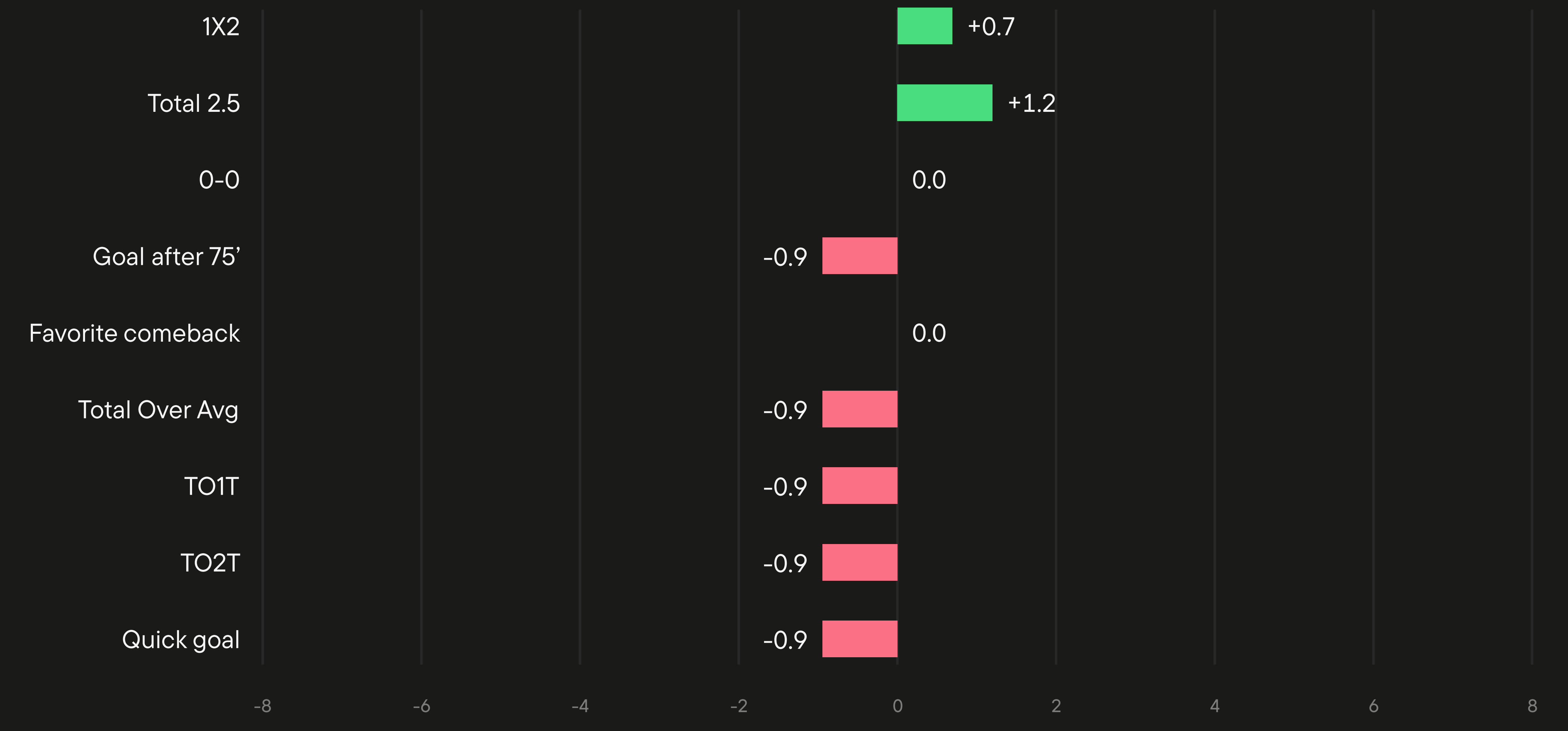


A near-neutral pre-match, then a strong live run. The driver was **Total 2.5 (+1.3)** — the mirror image of New Zealand – Belgium: a low-scoring 0:2 handed the total to the book. The same pattern seen from the other side.

England 1:2 Argentina

Semifinal

−1.00 +1.7 Prematch
-2.70 Live

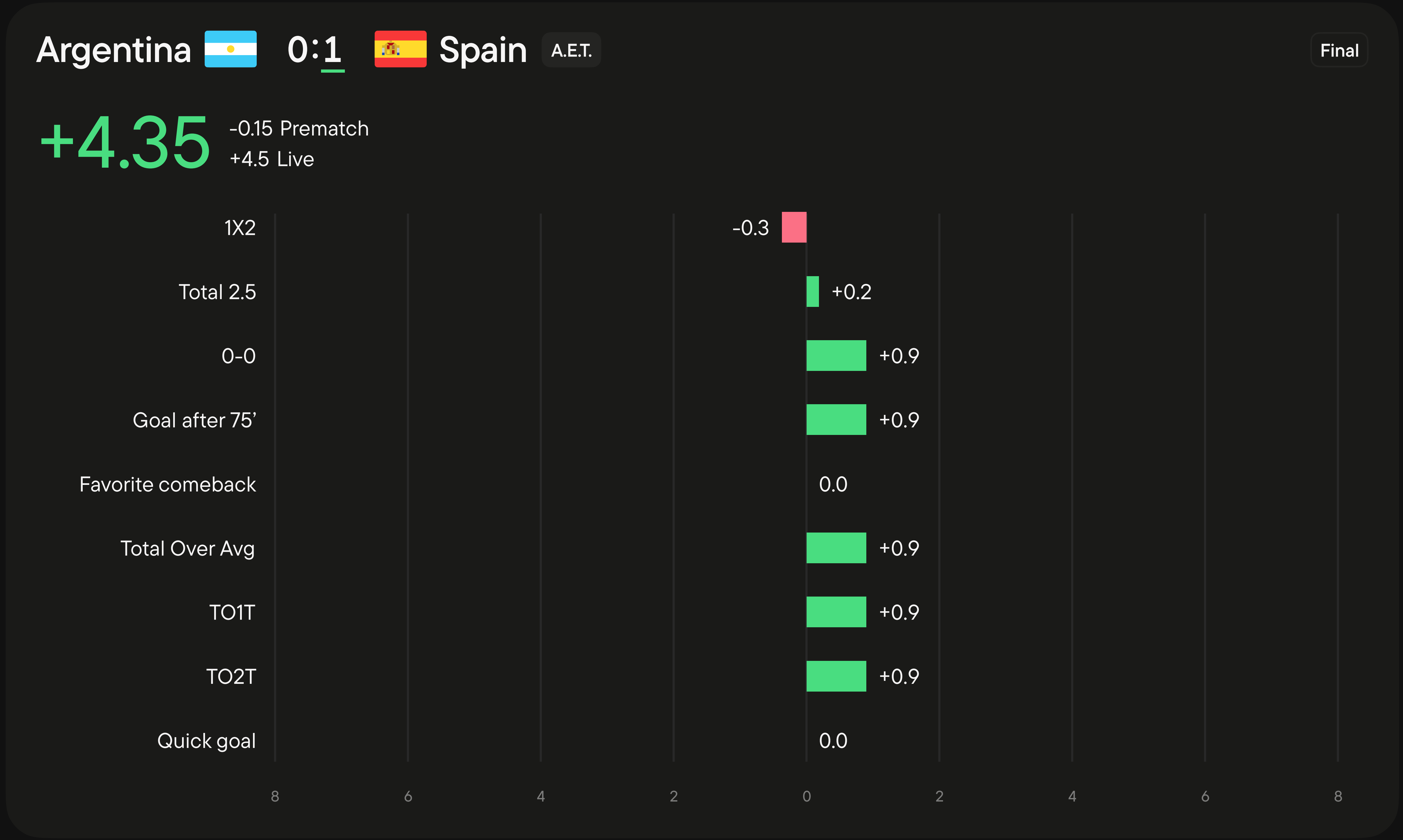


A rare case where pre-match and live pull in opposite directions — and live wins. The book was set up well before kickoff (+1.7) but bled it back in-play (−2.70), landing just under water. Almost a wash, with a small loss.

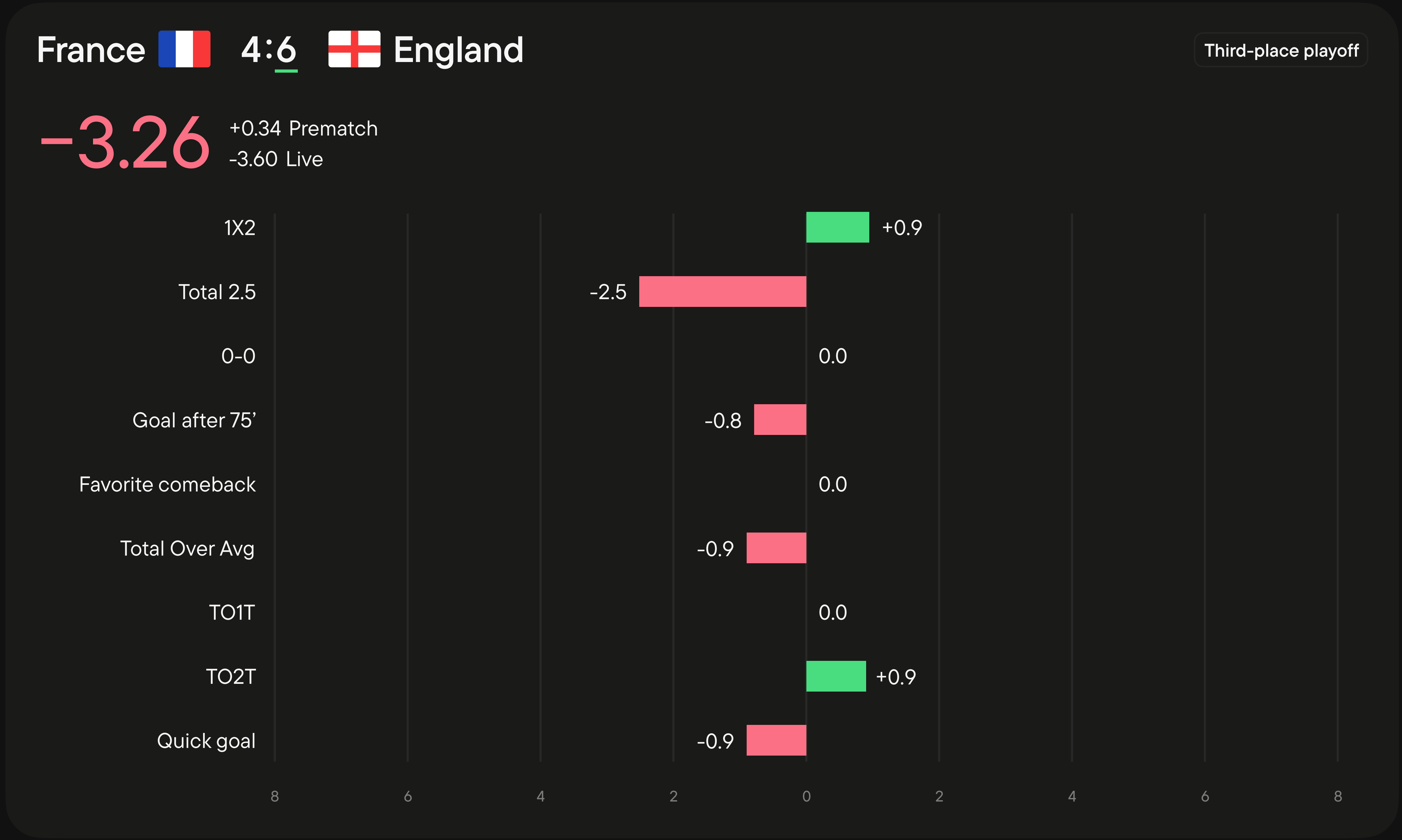
The final and the third-place playoff

Match deep - dive

How the two closing matches settled for the book. Bars show the net market score summing to the match index — green bars favor the bookmaker, red favor the players.



Almost all the profit was made in-play. The **1X2 market landed near zero** — the favourite wasn't clear-cut, or the win came without margin — so the money came from how the game unfolded: 0-0 through regulation, then a goal in extra time.



Roughly neutral before kickoff, then a losing night in-play (−3.60). Once again the totals market led the damage — **Total 2.5 (−2.5)** — the third time in these six games that match goals, not the result, moved the book.

Blask

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The data doesn't.
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