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Ex-US soccer player criticized for supporting Mexico – 21st June, 2018

Level 4

An ex-U.S. soccer player is supporting Mexico at the Russia World Cup. Landon Donovan, 35, played for the USA national team 157 times. People say he is the best American player ever. His calls for Americans to back Mexico have angered people. Ex-teammates criticized him for being paid to wear a Mexico soccer jersey. He tweeted a photograph of himself that read: "My other team is Mexico....So join me...to cheer on our other team - Mexico."

Donovan explained why he is cheering for Mexico. He grew up in California. He speaks fluent Spanish. He said his heart "bleeds red, white and blue" and that no one should question his love for Team USA. As a child, he loved the passion of his Mexican teammates and has a strong connection to and respect for Mexico. One U.S. player said Donovan was only doing this for money. A Mexican fan said Mexico fans love to hate two men - Donald Trump and Donovan.

Level 5

An ex-U.S. soccer player is supporting rivals Mexico at the Russia World Cup. Landon Donovan, 35, played for the USA national team 157 times, scoring 57 goals. He is regarded as the best American player ever. However, his calls for Americans to back Mexico have landed him in hot water. Some ex-teammates have criticized him for getting paid by the company Wells Fargo to wear a Mexico soccer jersey. He tweeted a photograph of himself that read: "My other team is Mexico....So join me...to cheer on our other team - Mexico."

Donovan explained why he is cheering for Mexico. He grew up in California and speaks fluent Spanish. He said: "My heart bleeds red, white and blue....No one should question my allegiance to and support of U.S. Soccer." He said he was inspired by the passion of playing with Mexican teammates as a child. He added: "I always have had a strong connection and respect for our neighbor." One current U.S. player said: "I don't understand why he is doing this. Actually, I do - money." A Mexican fan said: "There are two guys that Mexico fans love to hate. Donald Trump and Landon Donovan."

Level 6

A former U.S. soccer player has justified his support of rivals Mexico at the Russia World Cup. Landon Donovan, 35, played for the USA national team 157 times, scoring 57 goals. He is widely regarded as the best American player ever. However, his calls for fellow Americans to back rivals Mexico at the World Cup have landed him in hot water. Many of his ex-teammates have further criticized him for accepting payment from the company Wells Fargo in exchange for wearing a Mexico soccer jersey. He tweeted a photograph of himself with a scarf that read: "My other team is Mexico. The tournament is here. USA fans, our team may not be in Russia, but our neighbors to the south are. So join me...to cheer on our other team - Mexico."

Donovan explained why he wanted people to cheer for Mexico. He grew up in California and speaks fluent Spanish. He said: "My heart bleeds red, white and blue and no one should ever question my allegiance to and support of U.S. Soccer and its national teams. That being said, having grown up east of Los Angeles playing with Mexican teammates whose passion...inspired me at a very young age....I always have had a strong connection and respect for our neighbor." Current U.S. player Claudia Soto said: "I don't understand why he is doing this. Actually, I do - money." A Mexican fan said: "There are two guys that Mexico fans love to hate. Donald Trump and Landon Donovan."