

LOC says FNB Stadium pitch will be fine for AFCON

According to *Sport24*, the Local Organising Committee (LOC) for next year's Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) said on Thursday it was confident of delivering a trouble-free tournament.

South Africa will host AFCON from January 19 to February 10. The FNB Stadium will host the opening match and ceremony on January 19 and the final match and closing ceremony on February 10.

The LOC statement came after it became known that the FNB Stadium pitch has deteriorated following both a concert and the recent encounter between Kaizer Chiefs and Moroka Swallows. It is feared that the pitch might not be playable for the final AFCON match. Further concerns have arisen about another concert which will be held at the stadium in the middle of the tournament.

LOC CEO Muzo Mbebe said on Thursday that the stadium would not be affected. In an effort to minimise damage to the pitch, the organisers would plant Desso GrassMaster, a hybrid of natural grass and artificial fibres, at the stadium. "The pitch is not going to be in a bad condition before the final," Mbebe said. Johannesburg was the LOC's last stop on its tour of host cities. It has already been to Port Elizabeth, Rustenburg, and Durban, to check their readiness for the tournament, *Sport24* says.

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