

50 days celebration sees tickets going fast

With 50 days to go to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, there are celebrations, ticket sales and gamers ready for exciting times. Media, wishing to hear the latest updates from FIFA president Sepp Blatter via video conference on Friday, 23 April 2010, are reminded that they should RSVP by 2pm today, Thursday 22 April.



Kimberley joins the revelry

The official 50-day celebration was held in Kimberley on 21 April and saw dignitaries and officials gather to mark the occasion.

“In just 50 days time we begin what I believe will be one of our most important defining moments that will last a full month, where the attention of the world will be right here in South Africa. The country the world once called a miracle nation when in 1994 we made a peaceful transition to democracy, defying all the sceptics. The world has heard many more stories about us since then, sometimes more negative than positive, but this World Cup gives all South Africans the opportunity to show the world who we really are sixteen years into our democracy,” said Dr Danny Jordaan on the occasion.

FNB marked the occasion by hosting a sod turning ceremony in Kimberley, Sol Plaatjie Municipality, where a world class artificial soccer turf will soon be built in the Galeshewe community as part of the bank's 2010 Legacy Programme. The initiative will ensure the benefits of the tournament live beyond 2010 and have a real impact in communities across the country, including non-host cities such as Kimberley. The bank hopes to launch the stadium officially in June 2010.

Tickets - 27 matches left

After the first six days of the fifth and last sales phase, 180 000 tickets have been sold. At 9am on Tuesday 21 April there were still 27 matches available of which seven games still have category 4 on sale but this is subject to change.

Out of the sales, 91 000 tickets were processed at the FNB branches countrywide, 42 000 via the FIFA website, 42 000 from the 11 ticketing centres and about 5 000 at the 18 Shoprite/Checkers stores.

According to FNB, 75 000 tickets of the 130 000 tickets sold in the first 36 hours of tickets sales were successfully sold through its 600 branch network. Despite the overwhelming demand which created enormous pressure on the ticketing system FNB was able to facilitate the purchase of 90% of the 53 000 tickets sold by the end of business on Thursday 15 April. "The bank will continue to help fans obtain tickets to this once in a lifetime opportunity until the last ticket is sold," says FNB 2010 marketing head Vicki Trehaeven.

Gamers get ready

The FIFA Interactive World Cup Grand Final will be held on 1 May 2010 at Barcelona's Port Olimpic when the world's best 32 virtual football players will line up at the same spot for the second year in succession. They will be competing to be the FIFA Interactive World Champion 2010, which comes with a prize of US\$ 20 000 and an invitation to the FIFA World Player Gala 2010, where they will mingle with the world's best footballers. After seven months of qualification, FIFA today announced the 32 grand finalists from 22 countries.

This year has seen a continued growth in the number of contestants, with over 775 000 players competing in both the live qualifier events in countries such as Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Italy and Japan and the online qualification that has run from October 2009 through to March 2010.

This year's final, which offers free admission to the public, promises to be the biggest yet, with a full entertainment show to accompany the world-class display of virtual football. Former Dutch international Patrick Kluivert will attend and show off his virtual skills by taking part in an exhibition match on the main stage.

For the list of participants and more about the FIFA Interactive World Cup go to www.FIFA.com/FIWC.

Media update

With all the events and excitement, FIFA president Joseph S Blatter will discuss the forthcoming World Cup in South Africa at a video press conference at 11am CET on Friday 23 April at Ernst & Young Offices, Wanderers Office Park, 52 Corlett Drive, Illovo, Johannesburg. South African media will be able to address questions directly to the FIFA President through the video conference facility and broadcasters will be able to directly access and record the sound via provided splitter boxes. RSVP to .

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