

FIFA on the defensive, England, Brazil on the offensive

 By Nick Said

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The fall-out from the Nigeria versus North Korea friendly in Tembisa continued on Monday, with FIFA being forced to defend itself to journalists over allegations it had not properly managed the security arrangements for the match.

Well, it's quite clear that they didn't, and the reason? Because they had absolutely nothing, zero, zip, to do with the fixture, which was arranged by a member of the Nigerian technical team who resides in South Africa.

Stupid - and so avoidable

It seems that anything football-related in this country is now under the umbrella of FIFA, and perhaps that is the expectation that they have created, but my colleagues in the media have, in this case, let their standards slip by making assumptions based on the testimony of fans at the stadium, who themselves put the blame at FIFA's door.

In any case, the incident, which could so easily have ended in tragedy with the deaths of a number of fans, but thankfully 'only' resulted in injuries. The idea to offer free entry to an international football match involving Nigeria in an area that is known to have a large Nigerian community may have been well-intentioned, but was absolutely stupid.

The outcome we had was predictable and an embarrassment for South Africa just days before the World Cup. That is not to say that a R20 gate fee would definitely have prevented those scenes, but the chances would have been diminished.

'Just not good enough, chaps'

England played a warm-up friendly against local PSL side Platinum Stars on Monday, winning 3-0 but receiving a tongue-lashing from their boss Fabio Capello, who was obviously looking for a cricket score.

The match was played at the Moruleng Stadium just outside Rustenburg, which is a very tidy little venue and the perfect example of a legacy that will be left for the local community beyond the World Cup. The stadium was renovated with the intention of it becoming a training venue for the tournament, and with proper management it will be a safe and comfortable sports facility for the people of Moruleng for many years to come.

A high-five for Brazil

Finally, Brazil should be applauded for taking the World Cup spirit onto the African continent after their 5-1 friendly international win over Tanzania on Monday.

Having already beaten Zimbabwe 3-0 in Harare last week, they moved further north to give the Tanzanian people what is possibly a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see best football team in the world in action.

It is an example to the more prissy nations who simply turned up in South Africa and went straight to their five-star luxury hotels, hoping they would not have to have too much interaction with the locals...

ABOUT NICK SAID

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