

2010: Our Cup runneth over

Good news from FIFA: not only have two million tickets been sold to date, a recent poll reveals that South Africans are 'overwhelmingly positive' about hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup.



The third ticketing sales phase, which will conclude with a random draw for oversubscribed matches on 1 February, saw 1 206 865 applications received from 192 countries. Six matches are currently oversubscribed (in all categories), among them the semi-finals and the final. In total, 55 matches are oversubscribed in at least one category.

This means that after three of five ticketing sales phases, two-thirds of the available tickets have been sold.

International, SADC interest grows

There was huge interest from South African residents, who accounted for 79% of the total applications received (958 381) in this phase. This represents an increase of 24.9% in applications from South African residents in the third sales phase when compared to the earlier ticketing stages.

Apart from the host country, the USA led the ticketing standings for the third phase with 50 217 applications, followed by the UK (41 529), Australia (15 523), Mexico (14 804), Germany (14 647) and Brazil (10 767).

Increased interest was also noted in neighbouring countries - Botswana leading with 2519 ticket applications, followed by Mozambique (1795) and Namibia (1191).

Next phase

The next ticketing sales phase will start on 9 February 2010 and end on 7 April 2010. During these 58 days, more than 400 000 tickets will be made available on a first-come, first-served basis via the website or in FNB branches (in South Africa only). To enhance the service further, ticketing call centres will be open during the fourth sales phase - both internationally and in the host country to assist fans with enquiries and applications.

From 15 April 2010, ticketing centres will be open in each host city (with two in Johannesburg) where fans will be able to buy tickets over the counter and collect their confirmed tickets. For residents of the host country, the allocation of category 4 tickets (the most affordable, for South African residents only - starting from USD 20/R140) will, as planned, increase significantly.

Poll shows optimism

International research company SPORT+ MARKT conducted the latest marketing research, the fourth of a six-wave survey, immediately after the Final Draw in December 2009. This urban representative survey was conducted amongst 1000 South African respondents in all major cities and host cities, with quotas for ethnic origin, age and gender.

Public opinion remains overwhelmingly positive, suggesting a strong emotional commitment to the tournament, in particular a pronounced sense of pride (90%) in being the first African nation to host football's premier event; reinforcement of the respondents' belief in South Africa's readiness to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup (84%) and their keen anticipation of it (86%).

Long-term benefits

The majority have high expectations in terms of the potential long-term benefits of hosting, both tangible and intangible: 79% believe it will unite the people of South Africa, 88% see a boost for South Africa's image abroad, while 91% expect it to create more jobs and 95% think it will strengthen the tourism sector.

"What these findings tell us, right from the first round of surveying in December 2008 all the way through to today, is that there is a strong feeling of positivity towards the FIFA World Cup among South Africans," said FIFA secretary general Jérôme Valcke. "The scores have been consistently high with negligible deviation over the months."

Negativity has declined

Inflation remains the biggest concern for South African respondents, with 70% believing consumer goods will become more expensive because of the competition. However, the 7% point drop in this score since the previous wave in September 2009 represents the biggest fluctuation recorded in this survey and is a welcome development.

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