



The Festival of Champions

Held every 4 years, the FIFA Confederations Cup™ is one of the most important events on FIFA's football calendar and is considered the official dress rehearsal for the FIFA World Cup™ to be staged in South Africa in 2010.

Eight nations

The FIFA Confederations Cup™ comprises the championship winners from each of FIFA's 6 confederation regions. These are Africa (CAF), South America (CONMEBOL), Europe (UEFA), Asia (AFC), Oceania (OFC) and North and Central America and the Caribbean (CONCACAF). Also participating are the current FIFA World Cup champions and the host country, who automatically qualify to play.

Teams from the same confederation may not be drawn in the same group, and must successfully progress through the round robin stage and the semi-final knockout stage to make it into the final.

Road to glory

The contest kicks off when Group A teams South Africa and Iraq face each other at Ellis Park Stadium in Johannesburg. Other members of Group A include New Zealand, and European champions and current world number 1 team, Spain. With formidable contenders Italy, Brazil, Egypt and the USA making up Group B, pundits are suggesting that the draw has placed the South African national team *Bafana Bafana* (the Boys) in a position that favours them to beat their strongest pool opponents and qualify for a place in the semi-finals.

Stadiums at the ready

As a test of the host nation's readiness to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup™, FIFA customarily uses some of the stadiums intended for World Cup matches for Confederations Cup games. All 4 stadiums participating in the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup™ are either on track or ahead of schedule to host the 2-week long football fiesta.



Ellis Park Stadium

Following an R81 million upgrade, Ellis Park Stadium in downtown Johannesburg will host the opening ceremony of the tournament, 3 group matches, a semi-final and the final. Situated close to OR Tambo International Airport, and with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system soon to be operational, fans will have easy access to this cosmopolitan neighbourhood. Nearby, look out for Eastgate shopping mall, pan-African Bruma Flea market and some of the city's best Chinese and Portuguese restaurants.

Loftus Versfeld Stadium

Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Tshwane/Pretoria will host 3 group matches, including the much-anticipated showdown between current 2005 Confederations Cup title-holders Brazil, and 2006 World Cup champions Italy on the 21st of June. Renowned for its stately buildings, museums, galleries and national zoological gardens, fans can rest assured that Gauteng's diplomatic hub offers plenty of places in which to celebrate or commiserate over their teams' results.

Royal Bafokeng Stadium

The capital city of the North West province, Rustenburg is ready to welcome 3 group matches and the third-place runner-up match. With improved road access to the refurbished Royal Bafokeng Stadium, visiting 'footie' supporters shouldn't miss the historic buildings and rural atmosphere of this gateway city before heading out to explore Sun City, the 'Big 5' (elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo and rhino) game reserves and Hartbeespoort Dam.

Free State Stadium



Mangaung/Bloemfontein in the Free State will host 3 group matches and a semi-final at the revamped Free State Stadium. Fly in to Bloemfontein Airport, or drive the province's field-lined highways, with glimpses of the snow-capped Maluti-Drakensburg mountains. Before or after matches, visit the trendy hamlet of Clarens, uncover Basotho culture, and experience Golden Gate National Park's burnished landscapes and sandstone cliffs.

Easy come, easy go

In the first initiative of its kind, the South African Department of Home Affairs plans to issue special 'event visas' for fans coming to the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup™ and 2010 FIFA World Cup™. Dedicated counters, manned by South African immigration officials stationed at major airports around the world, will assist supporters with a free pre-screening and pre-clearance process that will grant them speedy passage into and out of South Africa during these events. In order to qualify for the service travellers must hold a valid passport, match tickets, return air tickets and, from certain countries, a yellow fever inoculation certificate.

An African football

2010 is all about celebrating the first-ever African FIFA World Cup™. As part of the lead-up to the event next year, Adidas have created a football specifically

for the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup™. Called *Kopanya* (meaning ‘ join together’ in Sesotho), the custom-designed football features futuristic artwork inspired by the bold geometric patterns found in traditional Ndebele art.

Besides its striking design, its makers claim the ball demonstrates perfect flight characteristics and provides players with outstanding ball control. It seems to possess a touch of magic too. *Kopanya* made its debut during the Nelson Mandela Challenge, where South Africa defeated Africa’s highest- ranked team, Cameroon, 3-2.

More magic

In spite of recently slipping to their lowest FIFA/Coca-Cola World ranking in a decade, fresh blood is beginning to course through *Bafana Bafana*’s veins under the mentorship of new national coach Joel Natalino Santana . Knowing that the team’s success in the Confederations Cup is vital to 2010, the Brazilian-born coach is introducing upcoming talents like Teko Modise and Thembinkosi Fanteni alongside veteran football stars Benni McCarthy, Sibusiso Zuma and Siyabonga Nomvete.

As the team prepares to open one of the most important chapters in the history of African football, it’s worth noting that since their readmission to the world football stage in the early 1990s *Bafana Bafana* have qualified for 7 consecutive CAF Africa Nations Cups, and made appearances at the finals of the FIFA World Cup™ in 1998 and 2002. Riding high on a series of 5 unbroken wins, ‘the Boys’ are determined to prove they are worthy of the Festival of Champions crown.

Get your tickets

A full list of ticket options for both South African and international spectators is available from the official FIFA website. Fans can apply for tickets online by joining the FIFA.com club, or if you live in South Africa tickets can be purchased from any First National Bank branch countrywide.

2009 FIFA Confederations Cup™ logo and image of Kopanya courtesy and copyright FIFA.com

Links:

- Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA): www.fifa.com
- 2009 FIFA Conederations Cup: www.fifa.com/confederationscup/index.html
- 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa: www.fifa.com/worldcup/index.html
- 2010 Local Organising Committee: www.project2010.co.za/
- Government Communication & Information System/ 2010: www.sa2010.gov.za/
- International Marketing Council of South Africa: www.southafrica.info/2010/