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The SCORE Cup Kicks-Off, bringing World Cup fever to disadvantaged communities

The excitement is here. Across the nation, football fans are experiencing the spectacle of a lifetime in their own country. But as the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ kicks-off, there will still be thousands of enthusiastic South Africans that will not get to attend a match, that live too far from a public viewing area, that will not benefit from upgraded facilities, newly built stadiums and big screen televisions enjoyed by large cities and towns.

Far removed from the major centres, disadvantaged children and youth, many still living in poverty, will also have little to occupy them during their six-week school holidays this year. How will these children and youth experience this “once-in-a-lifetime” event?

“We have a moral obligation to assist in bringing the excitement and benefit of the FIFA World Cup to communities across the country” says Betty Lallie, from the NGO SCORE. “We don’t want people to feel left out. We want the children and youth in the communities in which we work to feel part of this big event, to be able to say ‘I was there!’ even if they never had the chance to go to a match.”

In an effort to ensure this is an event for all South Africans, SCORE – a South African-based Sport and Development non-profit organisation - has developed a unique holiday programme, incorporating soccer, life skills training and a competition called the SCORE Cup.

SCORE’s programme has been designed to share the excitement of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ with ordinary South Africans in the rural and disadvantaged communities in which SCORE operates. The campaign was officially launched on March 31st in Khayelitsha, by the Western Cape Director of Sport, and will culminate in the SCORE Cup finals on June 26th in all participating communities. The SCORE Cup aims to involve more than 9000 children and youth in more than 45 communities throughout Southern Africa. This unique soccer tournament will see 32 mixed teams (boys and girls) drawn to represent one of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ nations.

The holiday programme will include extensive life skills training, fun group activities, football coaching and matches that follow the official match schedule taking place the next day. Making use of cell-phone technology, participating communities will easily be able to upload pictures and updates to an interactive website designed specifically for the campaign.

Local and overseas visitors are invited to experience a different side of football in South Africa by participating in an informative and interactive sport and development tour to one of the communities participating in the SCORE Cup.

In addition, adventurous football fans travelling to South Africa can bring their soccer boots, sign up as a player and experience the excitement of the SCORE Cup by playing in the tournament.

Events will be taking place at the following times and SCORE communities:

The SCORE Cup competition begins on 9 June with a draw for the 32 teams to determine which country they will represent. The matches commence 10 June and continue for 2 weeks until 25 June, with daily soccer skills and life skills sessions for the participants.

The final tournament will be on June 26th. Key communities hosting the full SCORE Cup programme are Mbekweni, Hanover Park, Khayelitsha (all three in the Western Cape, close to Cape Town), Moshate (between Pretoria and Polokwane), and Schoemansdal (close to Nelspruit).

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