

2010 teams set up base in the Cape

By late December 2009, three football teams had confirmed their bookings for base camps in the Western Cape in the Cape Garden Route and Klein Karoo regions.



The teams are, France for the Pezula Resort Hotel & Spa at Knysna, Denmark for the Simola Golf & Country Estate, also at Knysna, and Japan for Fancourt at George. The team from Paraguay has been expressing a strong interest in the Point Hotel at Mossel Bay, but has not confirmed yet.

These areas and Cape Town, Winelands and the Cape West Coast, have gone out of their way to make sure that their venues and facilities are in tiptop shape to not only host the world's football greats, but also leave them with an impression that will draw them back for many years.

Shaun van Eck, CEO of Knysna Tourism, says, "As a top tourism destination, we are an excellent option to teams - the town boasts luxurious accommodation coupled with the wonderful lifestyle that is Knysna. The hosting of a team will be a huge boost for the town and the Garden Route and it has made the hosting of base camps a priority focus. The Knysna Council also decided to upgrade its current public sports facility, Loerie Park, should a team base themselves in Knysna."

André Smith, senior manager of environmental affairs at George Municipality, adds that the city has established a 2010 committee to deal with teams' and other arrangements, including beautification to create a soccer atmosphere. "We are expecting between 15 000 and 20 000 Japanese supporters in George. Extensive work will be carried out to prepare the field surface of their practice venue, the Outeniqua Stadium, for soccer purposes. Indications are that a second team might also choose George as a base camp with Oubaai as their preferred hotel," says Smith.

More than just the game

Despite many teams opting for base camps at a higher altitude, Western Cape towns are still bidding to host teams and to position the area as a travel destination in which 2010 visitors and locals can go beyond the 90 minutes of the football game and explore a beautiful and diverse travel mix.

Dr Laurine Platzky, 2010 FIFA World Cup co-ordinator: department of premier, provincial government of the Western Cape, says, "Cape Town and the Western Cape give coaches and teams the opportunity to select from a variety of base camp propositions that include high end accommodation in both urban and rural settings. Our internationally recognised training centres offer coaches access to the latest developments in sport science and provide indoor options for team preparation supplement. The attractive accommodation and leisure activities offered by the region make the area an ideal home for media, fans and the corporate sector accompanying their teams during 2010."

"The decision of international football teams to base themselves in the Western Cape is undoubtedly an endorsement of the province's infrastructure excellence and irresistible tourism charm," says Calvyn Gilfellan, CEO of Cape Town Routes Unlimited. "We're rolling out our 2010 marketing campaign, 'Beyond the 90 Minutes', through innovative tools such as documentary-style road trip videos in ten languages. While the idea is to sweep 2010 visitors off their feet, we also want to use this time to showcase the destination to new markets such as Brazil and Argentina and grow repeat tourism."

Dianna Martin, CEO of Bitou Tourism, agrees, "Our destination marketing efforts have been aimed at positioning Plettenberg Bay as a world-class, desirable destination not only before and during the World Cup, but also afterwards. The area offers easy accessibility to host cities Cape Town and Port Elizabeth as well as the rest of the country. It is an ideal base from which to attend games and explore South Africa."

For more information, go to www.tourismcapetown.co.za and 'kick' on *Beyond the 90 Minutes*.

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