

NEWS RELEASE

FIFA U-20 World Cup New Zealand 2015 Match schedule unveiled with a format designed for all fans

- *Host nation to kick off the FIFA's festival of football*
- *Matches programmed to appeal to all key audiences*
- *All four quarter-finals to be played Super Sunday*
- *Double-header matches to be "unbelievable value for money"*

The match schedule for the FIFA U-20 World Cup New Zealand 2015 has been unveiled with a unique format designed to give fans of every age a chance to see the greatest young footballers on the planet.

The biggest celebration of world football to hit New Zealand, will kick-off with an opening ceremony at Auckland's North Harbour stadium on Saturday 30 May 2015 followed by the tournament's opening match, featuring the host nation.

Dave Beeche, CEO of the FIFA U-20 World Cup New Zealand 2015, unveiled the match schedule identifying the dates of matches, and when double headers will feature at a media briefing in Wellington, explaining fans and the host regions can start to get excited about the biggest celebration of global football New Zealand has seen.

A further announcement would be made early next year when match times will be finalised.

He said: "This is a unique programme of matches and one which we believe will cater for every audience whether it's young people and family's wanting to see the world's future footballing idols after school or work colleagues wanting a great night out.

"Whilst the final timings won't be known until early next year, we have ensured that matches will kick-off at fan friendly times throughout the day. We have also introduced a series of double-headers in the pool stages, to not only give fans great value for money but also ensure that they get to see four of the world's top footballing nations compete in two world class matches"

Another key feature is the so-called 'Super Sunday' of football, which sees all four quarter-final matches take place on the same day – Sunday 14 June. These matches will be held in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch.

"Holding all four matches on the same day, gives us a fantastic opportunity to really engage all sports fans in this country. Many of the players on show in this tournament are already plying their trade in Europe so it's a truly unique

opportunity to see some of the up and coming stars of world football on our doorstep," Beeche added.

As well as unveiling the match schedule to national and international media, gathered for the All Whites v Mexico World Cup Qualifier in Wellington, Mr Beeche also outlined a significant investment in the tournament by the New Zealand Football Foundation.

The Foundation, which was established after New Zealand's successful inclusion in the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, has agreed to invest \$100,000 into the tournament, half of which will go toward the U-20 New Zealand team's preparation and the other half toward the legacy proposals for the event.

"This is a hugely significant investment and one which is very much welcomed by the LOC as we endeavour to put on the greatest football show that this country has ever seen. A cornerstone of our successful bid for this tournament was to ensure that the tournament provides long lasting benefits into the future for the huge football participation base and engage all of New Zealand in a truly exciting global sport. This investment will certainly help us to achieve those ambitions," Beeche said.

New Zealand Football Foundation Chairman Andrew Clements added: "Winning the right to host FIFA's second largest global football tournament is a real acknowledgement of New Zealand's growing credentials in world football. We are determined to continue to develop New Zealand's footballing reputation so are therefore delighted to support this fantastic event."

The FIFA U-20 World Cup will be broadcast to more than 100 countries and a global television audience of more than 170 million people, providing significant exposure for New Zealand as a global tourism destination.

Tourism New Zealand's Major Events and PR General Manager, Catherine Bates, who was on hand to support today's announcement, added: "The match schedule is great news for fans to start planning their holiday to New Zealand now. The wide regional spread of the seven host cities in a compact country like New Zealand creates a perfect opportunity to experience all of the country through this world class event."

It is estimated around 10,000 overseas fans will travel to New Zealand for the FIFA U-20 World Cup and to support their teams.

The tournament will host 24 national teams, include 52 matches, and will run for three weeks from 30 May until 20 June 2015 during the local football season, which will provide a great opportunity for the large youth playing base in the sport to be inspired by the world's best young players. With an average of three goals scored per game in the last three FIFA U-20 World Cup tournaments this will be dynamic, exciting football at its best.

The final draw for the tournament will be completed early next year and televised live in a globally significant event following the FIFA confederation qualifying competitions.

Reporters: For more information contact Tracie Simpson on 09-307 3320 or 021 871 756. To arrange an interview with Dave Beeche please contact Sacha Haskell on 027 218 0648 or sacha@fifau20.co.nz
