

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

His legacy may be best remembered in bringing the men's World Cup to new markets, but the growth of women's football and the Women's World Cup has been one of the success stories of Sepp Blatter's reign as president of FIFA. We track the growth of the FIFA Women's World Cup ahead of this month's tournament in Germany and see what benefits the now major sporting event offers to sponsors, broadcasters and host cities.

IT WOULD BE EASY to assume there will be a relative lull in the international football calendar a year on from a FIFA World Cup.

However, with memories of South Africa's momentous tournament now fading, football fans can be safe in the knowledge that they have a smorgasbord of competitions to feast upon before the major domestic leagues return in August.

The UEFA European Under-21 Championships will run for two weeks from June 11 while the Copa America, which will see national teams from North, Central and South America travel to Argentina, will kick-off the following month on July 1.

Sandwiched in between these significant football tournaments is another competition that would perhaps have been swamped by other events in the crowded calendar and overlooked by many fans in years gone by, but is now a burgeoning success story in its own right.

More than 600,000 tickets have been sold for this year's FIFA Women's World Cup in Germany, which will take place from June 26 to July 17.



The action will be broadcast to around 200 territories worldwide and the available slots on the national sponsor inventory sold out a full 18 months before the start of the tournament.

Many major men's football tournaments - let alone other sports - would be envious of such impressive figures, but the commercial success of this year's Women's World Cup has come as a result of FIFA nurturing the quadrennial competition since its inception two decades ago.

China hosted the inaugural FIFA Women's World Championship, as it was then known, back in 1991. The 12-team tournament was seen by many to be an experiment by then-FIFA president João Havelange, and the United States won the title to little fanfare outside of the event's host country.

Four years' later in Sweden, the first edition of the Women's World Cup in Europe drew a modest overall attendance of 112,000, and some observers questioned the long-term viability of the venture.

However, 1999 was the game-changer. The United States, home of the richest domestic



Germany became the first to obtain two consecutive World Cup titles in 2007 - Getty Images Sport

women's league in the game, hosted the tournament, and in the first weekend of the event the overall attendance surpassed the crowd figure for the entire 1995 edition.

By the time Brandi Chastain had scored the winning penalty in the final's shootout against China in front of a world record crowd for a women's sporting event on July 10, the outlook of women's football had been irrevocably enhanced.

When the ball hit the net, Chastain whipped off her jersey in a moment that has become part of North American sporting folklore, and with an estimated US TV audience of 40 million joining the celebrations of 90,000 spectators in Pasadena's Rose Bowl, it was clear that the FIFA Women's World Cup was here to stay.

The United States also staged the next edition of the event in 2003 after the SARS outbreak forced the tournament to be shifted from the original host country of China just four months before the big kick-off. However, when China was given its opportunity to hold the competition in 2007, nearly one million spectators filed through the turnstiles.

Now, in 2011, the tournament is coming back to Europe for the first time in 16 years.

"The FIFA Women's World Cup is a key component in our event portfolio," says Thierry Weil, the former adidas executive who is now director of marketing at FIFA.

"It is our fastest growing event, with this year's event in Germany set to break numerous records. We firmly believe that this edition of the tournament will set new milestones for future Women's World Cups."

Germany staged the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in the wake of last year's World Cup in South Africa, and Weil believes the competition acted as a useful dress rehearsal, both for organisers and commercial partners keen to engage a slightly different core audience in relation to the usual football fan demographic.

"During the U-20 Women's World Cup in Germany, which can almost be seen as a warm-up event for this year's tournament, it was fantastic to see so many families attending the matches," he says.

"We certainly see higher levels of female and family attendance at our women's events than in our men's events. This is not only very positive for FIFA but also for our family of sponsors who are then able to establish touching points with a wide demographic of fans."

National Supporters

A look at the sponsor portfolio for the tournament suggests that major brands agree with Weil's rosy outlook.

The six top-tier FIFA Partners - adidas, Coca-Cola, Emirates, Hyundai-Kia, Sony and Visa - have global marketing rights to events held by world football's governing body.

However, the real indicator of the commercial strength of the Women's World Cup lies with the second-tier of sponsors, the National Supporters.

Allianz, Commerzbank, Deutsche Bahn, Deutsche Post, Deutsche Telekom and Rewe - some of the biggest names in German business - all six signed up to support the event a year and a half before the big kick-off.

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP
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Commerzbank is one of six National Supporters of the 2011 World Cup - Getty Images Sport

"The National Supporter category for the Women's World Cup was in high demand and the marketing programme has been a big success so far," adds Weil. "Six very strong German brands have signed up for the event, highlighting their commitment to the tournament and to the development of women's football in general.

"The National Supporter packages are far more than pure brand exposure for the brands involved and they have been very proactive in their activation campaigns, thereby playing a decisive role in the effective promotion of the event in Germany.

"We were able to sell all six National Supporter packages well in advance of the event, with an average fee of €4 million paid by each brand. This will be the first time in the history of the Women's World Cup that the Local Organising Committee has broken even.

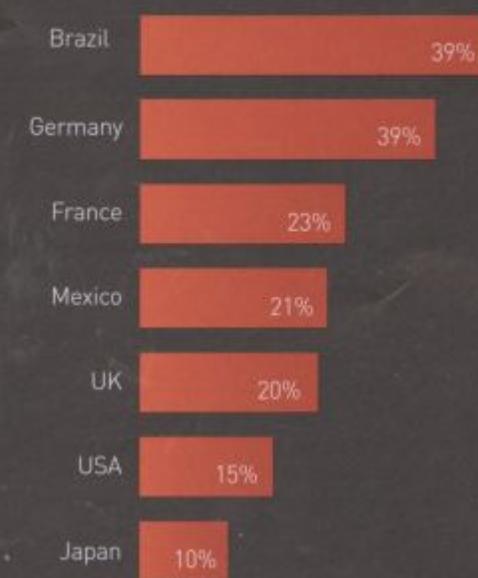
"The budget of €51 million is financed by the €24 million in sponsor revenue and a further €27 million through ticket sales. We Have currently sold almost 80 per cent of all purchasable tickets for the event.

"The profile of the Women's World Cup is getting higher and higher, and as this happens we are seeing much more interest from big brands when we are going to the market.

"From the Women's World Cup in 1999 when matches were broadcast in 67 markets, the 2007 edition of the event was broadcast in 150 markets worldwide. Success stories like this are key to the growing interest in the event."

Extensive TV coverage of the Women's World Cup has been secured in Europe through an agreement with the European Broadcasting Union. Pan-European broadcaster

People "very interested" and "interested" in women's football



Source: SPORT+MARKT Sponsoring 21+ 2010
Base: 1,000 representative citizens in each country between the ages of 16 and 69

Eurosport will air all of the tournament's matches, while German state networks ARD and ZDF will ensure broad exposure of the event on terrestrial television in the host country. Meanwhile the likes of TV4 in Sweden and NRK in Norway will offer action to audiences in traditionally strong European Women's football markets.

"We want to continue to develop the coverage and deliver a media product of the highest

calibre from a compelling sports spectacle," says Niclas Ericson, Director of FIFA TV. "We want to further explore territories such as Scandinavia, where the Women's World Cup is a must for the media companies."

However, FIFA has also guaranteed widespread exposure of the event further afield.

Al Jazeera will air matches in 23 territories across the Middle East and North Africa while in Australia, SBS has signed up and in North America, ESPN, Univision and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation will carry the action from Germany.

"The FIFA Women's World Cup is now placed in most territories across the world," Ericson adds. "We certainly feel that the Women's World Cup is making great progress in terms of interest from the media.

"We have also noticed that in many countries the event is specifically requested to be included in any discussion FIFA has in the territory regarding its media rights.

"Moreover, broadcasters are increasing their activation around the event. For example, ESPN will have a studio in Germany during the competition. FIFA TV has also developed promotional material for the event: promo-spots, player features and a documentary about the history of the Women's World Cup. This helps to drive awareness of the event.

"For this year's event we have greatly enhanced the coverage in a bid to provide the audience with more emotion and content from the competition."

For the first time, FIFA's broadcast production team will comprise up to 18 cameras for selected matches, including in-goal cameras and two 'steadycams' for all matches.

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Nearly one million spectators attended the 2007 World Cup in China - Getty Images Sport

the future Director of Women's Football at the German Football Association, is keen to tap into the host nation audience.

"We have already sold 600,000 tickets and this demonstrates the popularity of women's football and the Women's World Cup among the public in Germany and abroad," she told *SportBusiness International*.

"We are very proud of the fact that a lot of families and children will be attending the matches at all venues. The tournament should be an event for the whole family. Hence, we have implemented a completely family-friendly ticket concept by selling special packages for families and children under the age of 16."

One Big Welcome

Sixteen teams will participate in the tournament, with Germany, Norway, Sweden, England and France representing Europe. Australia, Japan, Canada, Mexico, USA, Brazil, Colombia, Korea DPR, New Zealand, Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea will also participate.

A Welcome Tour of all the nations competing at the tournament has given Jones a chance to gauge the interest in the Women's World Cup from across the globe which Jones says "made us realise that people abroad are looking forward to the tournament and also have high expectations of Germany as the host country."

"We expect quite a lot of fans from Scandinavia, England, France, Canada and the USA, though it's hard to talk about percentages," she adds. "The FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup last year has triggered a

great sense of anticipation after it more than lived up to its billing as a World Cup."

There is a broad geographical spread of the competition's host cities, and Jones is hoping Berlin, Dresden, Wolfsburg, Bochum, Frankfurt, Augsburg, Sinsheim, Leverkusen and Mönchengladbach will be able to feed off the anticipated enthusiasm of the fans and enjoy a positive economic impact.

"Our host cities see the tournament as a great platform to reach a huge national and international audience and they have been extremely proactive over the last couple of years," Jones adds.

The event will bring tangible and intangible benefits to all host cities. I think we have found a pragmatic compromise between the flexibility necessary for local promoters to recover costs whilst protecting commercial affiliates' exclusive rights.

"Host cities profit by displaying their names on the stadium video cube and LED pitch-side fascia boards or by selling their-own posters, just to mention a couple of examples."

Long-Term Legacy

Germany of course has recent experience of hosting the biggest event of all, although Jones is eager for the 2011 Women's World Cup to establish its own identity just five years after the FIFA World Cup left an indelible mark on the country.

"Of course, the expertise gained by the German Football Association through the organisation of the 2006 FIFA World Cup has

been really helpful," Jones adds. "Nevertheless, we are doing some things differently because we are trying to write our own story."

"There's no doubt that Fan Fests were a great success. Before 2006 I never really noticed or experienced these colourful events. Our host cities will host fantastic parties too. For example, Frankfurt will put on an amazing Fest on the banks of the [river] Main."

If this year's Women's World Cup replicates the success of the 2006 World Cup, FIFA's fastest growing event will have taken another giant leap forward.

"Many things are ready, but there's still work to do once the clubs and stadium operators hand supervision of the arenas over to us at the end of their season," says Jones. "But it's all going according to plan."

In four years' time, the tournament will land in another new country, and Canada will assume the responsibility for steering the Women's World Cup through the next stage of its development as the competition expands by eight teams to a total of 24 participating nations. However, for now, Weil is focusing on the task in hand.

"First of all our goal is to make the FIFA Women's World Cup in Germany this year the most successful Women's World Cup ever," Weil concludes.

"We then want to build on the success of the event and in the build-up to the FIFA Women's World Cup 2015 in Canada we want to see further growth in women and girls playing football all over the world."