

FIFA TV production at the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™

The following is an overview of FIFA's broadcast activities around the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™ that rewarded fans with the most extensive, innovative and entertaining coverage of a sports event to date.

Full HD coverage

All 64 matches of the 2010 FIFA World Cup and all background material gathered on-site by the specially commissioned FIFA news crews were aired in HD. This fully digital technology brought a range of innovative and enhanced functions and viewing experiences, and also dramatically increased the picture quality on mobile phones. Digital technology was also used to archive and play back the picture material.

Cameras and images

No fewer than 29 cameras were deployed at each match, and this figure rose to 32 for some key matches. At least 2,200 hours of live transmission were delivered on 16 different feeds, and this coverage was supplemented with footage of the two previous World Cups.

The extended stadium feed delivered 90 minutes of live match action plus 60 minutes of "colour material" from the stadium. Pictures of the countdown to kick-off, highlights of the first and second halves and 30 minutes of post-match coverage gave broadcasters more content than ever before and allowed even greater flexibility in terms of programme scheduling.

More than 40 news crews

The FIFA TV Team and ENG crews gathered footage outside the stadiums and fed it through to the broadcasters within an extremely tight timeframe. As well as being staff and resource-intensive, this called for considerable logistical and technical expertise. The number of FIFA TV Team crews deployed increased from 14 in 2006 to 32 in 2010, each of which accompanied a team. These crews were joined by a further 10 ENG teams gathering background material.

On the move -- mobile production

The quantity and quality of services for small screens was greatly increased thanks to a special mobile match feed with dedicated graphics, as well as additional content specially produced for small screens. The mobile match feed included team arrivals, the dressing room, team line-ups, goals, action, highlights and interviews. A designated 'Mobile Camera 1' provided live match coverage using tighter framing than the traditional television camera 1, while a mobile-specific graphics package was created using large text legible on even the smallest handset.

Leaping into the third dimension

The 2010 FIFA World Cup was the biggest-ever live sports production in 3D. FIFA produced a live international feed in stereoscopic 3D HDTV, which beamed 25 matches around the world and was used by FIFA's Media Rights Holders in various applications and formatted for both TV and cinema screens.

Despite a very tight preparation schedule of only five months, the standard of production exceeded all expectations. The technology and the production quality were almost faultless – not least thanks to Sony's high-quality technical infrastructure. The 3D production concept was based around a dedicated 3D coverage with eight cameras, supplemented with additional feeds from the 2D cameras, which were converted into 3D to be used as "cutaways" and slo-mos.

Pioneering broadcasters in Spain, France, Australia, the Middle East, Korea Republic, Japan, the United States and Canada offered the matches on "in-home" 3D viewing channels. By the end of the competition, over 600 cinemas in more than 30 countries had shown live 3D matches.

Hitting the right note: Kick-Off Celebration Concert

International stars, leading African artists, football legends and a host of dignitaries took to the stage on 10 June for the FIFA World Cup™ Kick-off Celebration Concert – an inaugural event which not only served up great sounds but also raised awareness for the FIFA-backed 1GOAL: Education for All campaign and funds for FIFA's own "20 Centres for 2010" campaign. The concert was a joint initiative by FIFA and its TV partners aimed at publicising the World Cup and attracting new fans to football through music. The concert, produced by Control Room, was one of the most-watched music events in television history.

Joining forces with the AUB

The cooperation between the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB) and FIFA is a prime example of how sports rights holders and broadcasters can work together to deliver higher-quality content while also achieving development goals. In 2004, FIFA and the AUB began discussions on promoting best practice in football broadcasting in Sub-Saharan countries beyond the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The two organisations agreed on a strategic partnership focusing on direct cooperation with broadcasters in Africa, and they turned their vision into a reality in 2010.

FIFA and the AUB worked together on several projects over a four-year period and took advantage of the first FIFA World Cup on African soil to mobilise the TV and radio broadcasting community. The most ambitious project was the FIFA-AUB Broadcast Legacy Weeks, which saw broadcasting organisations and their staff given behind-the-scenes insights into professional football broadcasting in order to enhance the quality of their football reporting, increase the commercial value of their product and create a basis for sustainable revenue.

The AUB and FIFA also set up a special channel for Africa covering all 64 FIFA World Cup matches in English and French as well as selected matches in Portuguese. Some of the most talented African commentators were also invited by FIFA to participate in a specially developed training programme led by Canal France International aimed at preparing them to report live on the matches. The reports were produced by the African Broadcasting Centre in Johannesburg (the AUB studio at the International Broadcasting Centre). The live reports included Africa-specific highlights shows produced by up-and-coming AUB talents on both sides of the camera.

The official World Cup film

The 2010 edition of the World Cup Official Film marks the 15th such production but the first in the history of the competition to be produced in 3D. Distributed by Sony Pictures Entertainment, the film features footage and interviews that tell the story of the tournament in a completely new way as well as the best shots of the match action, which appear all the more thrilling in 3D.

Feature-length documentaries

In addition to the official film, FIFA commissioned a series of documentaries which capture the World Cup from an entirely new perspective.

"Match 64 - the Final of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™" not only shows the football on the pitch but also the Final from a much wider perspective – taking the viewer through the last day of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa as it was seen through the eyes of those who made it possible.

"Our South Africa – 2010 Hopes and Dreams" is based on interviews and portraits of a variety of South Africans in a tale that reveals a more intimate side of the FIFA World Cup™ and what it has meant to so many.

“The Media Circus” deals primarily with TV production and the broadcasters who bring it to the world. It reveals how things work, the organisation behind the event and the pure magic.