



Great emblem, now for the hard work!

by Neil Greig

South Africa unveiled the World Cup logo for 2010 just two days before the final of the 2006 event. It was a quick process that the local organising committee is very proud of, and so they should be!

But what is critical now is that we start with the hard work. Designing a logo, it must be said, is not even a scratch on the surface of what needs to be done down in the trenches so that our World Cup (Africa's World Cup) can be a success. The seriousness and articulate planning and preparing of our country for an event that the entire world, given the success in Germany, is even more expected now, and must be priority number one.

Germans were sceptical before the World Cup started in their country. They do not doubt that they can organise well – no-no, that is their strength. But they doubted whether or not visitors would enjoy themselves and have a good party in a country known for its seriousness and inability to break their rigidity and have fun.

Few who were in Germany did not have fun. The parties were massive and locals were surprised with the way in which Germany transformed into a sun-soaked, fun-loving country for the duration of the



Neil Greig (right), *Kick Off* editor, travelled to Germany for the World Cup semi-final between Germany and Italy



A lot of exciting matches were witnessed by fans at the Munchen stadium in Germany

tournament. "It's the weather, it's been so sunny that it's impossible not to have a good time," a 22-year-old fan and amateur soccer player told me.

But I think it is more than that. If visitors have lots to do in a place and plenty of innovative options to choose from, then a good time will be had. South Africans are confident that visitors in 2010 will have a superb time on the tip of Africa, based on the relaxed and fun-loving atmosphere known in our country. But relying on that is not enough. Yes, we will do it differently and it will be an experience that you cannot get anywhere else in the world. But we still have to be organised and ready.

Plans need to be put in place now – plans to create fun that will be attractive to people from every nation in the world. The concept of Fan Fests worked brilliantly in Germany. If 200 000 fans flock into one of our cities for an opening game or a semi-final, there needs to be enough space for them all to watch matches on big screens in pubs and coffee shops.

One must also remember that it is cold in June in South Africa, except for Durban's east coast, so we have to be even more innovative. We cannot rely on Cape Town's beaches to entertain and wow crowds. Nobody will set foot in that icy water. The weather is a factor just as that young German put it to me. The sun definitely impacted on the 2006 event.

South Africans need to be one step ahead and be prepared to make June in our country a month filled with fun and entertainment. Fan Fests could work. A safe environment for fans who do not have tickets for the stadium must be created. We could have African music artists, comedians and personalities providing entertainment like they had in Germany and then big screens to watch the games. My belief is that this will be a great idea to follow through with in South Africa. **UM**

