



PHOTO: Franz Beckenbauer and Wolfgang Niersbach, Vice President of the German Local Organising Committee World Cup 2006

Franz Beckenbauer – Welcome Tour

2006 FIFA World Cup™

Before the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ officially began, the German Local Organising Committee elected to sponsor a worldwide Welcome Tour. Franz Beckenbauer, the Committee's President and Germany's greatest football personality, travelled to all thirty-one qualified countries to extend a personal invitation on behalf of Germany. It was the first time in World Cup history that a host country had made such an extraordinary effort to honour their guests.



THERE IS A FINE LINE
BETWEEN BEING GOOD
AND BEING GREAT. WE
NEVER LOSE SIGHT
OF THAT.

The Project

From early October 2005 until the end of March 2006, Franz Beckenbauer and his crew were to travel through Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas to visit all countries, which qualified for the finals of the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ in Germany. Every visit and welcome event was to be a huge production with meetings, speeches, presentations and a rich entertainment programme. Short films about football history and World Cup preparations were to be created especially for this occasion. HRG Germany with their 2006 FIFA World Cup™ Travel & Event Services Department (WCTES) was in charge of arranging the entire Welcome Tour. Our experts conducted site inspections and sourced the best venues in respective countries. The project included creative planning of the events, scheduling flights, arranging transfers and booking hotels.

Challenges

Since the countries were still qualifying and the list of the 32 finalists was not complete, planning ahead was quite difficult. HRG experts often had less than two weeks to make the event happen. Events in far-flung regions such as Africa or South America had to be scheduled almost daily within the same week or two to eliminate the need for additional flights from Europe. Technology was another major concern due to varying systems standards in different countries and problems with the power supply. The quality of technical equipment (projectors, speakers, etc.) was often inadequate. Cultural and language differences were sometimes barriers to successful teamwork. There was very little time for setup and no time for rehearsals but the HRG team left nothing to chance. For example, seven different DVD versions were made to ensure the films could be played in all countries, despite different video systems.

The Outcome

The Welcome Tour was a huge success with live broadcasts on major national TV stations. On average, around 200 guests invited by the Football Federation and the German Embassy attended each event. The meetings began with an opening speech by Wolfgang Niersbach, the Vice President of the Organising Committee, and ended with a festive dinner. Short films, speeches and animated presentations highlighted great moments in world football. The idea was to present Germany's culture, history, major cities, football traditions and at the same time give everyone an overview of what to expect during the 2006 FIFA World Cup™. The production also included a presentation of the stadiums where the teams would play. Franz Beckenbauer and other VIP guests participated in talks and interviews with the press. Each event was tailored to accentuate special connections between Germany and the country visited. The Presidents of each National Football Federation received a very special gift: a huge stuffed animal, Lion Goleo VI, the official mascot of the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ wearing their national team's shirt!

The excellent preparation work was crucial to the tour's success. During the Americas stage, we visited eight countries in twelve days: an incredible effort in terms of logistics!

FRANZ BECKENBAUER