

Dutch Fans rated the Best in the World

At the final LOC press conference the day after the conclusion of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Chief Executive Officer Dr Danny Jordaan singled out the fans as the real heroes of the 2010 World Cup, saying that it was the supporters of the beautiful game that made this event an unforgettable occasion.

Jordaan's remarks came on the heels of the 2010 FAN Awards, held at the International Media Center, Mandela Square, hosted by the Bafana Fan Club to acknowledge the contributions made by the visiting and local supporters alike and to celebrate global best practice in fan team culture.

Often relegated to the sidelines and merely providing the backdrop for the global TV coverage, for the first time in the history of the FIFA World Cup were the fans given a stage to express the very best that supporters have to offer, both in song, dance and fan rituals, and to network with each other, across the boundaries of language, nationality and culture - even joining previous opponents, such as the fans from the Netherlands and Brazil.

The overall 2010 FAN Award: Best Fans of 2010, was won the Dutch Fans (aka the Orange Army), in acknowledgement of their ability to paint the hosting city of Cape Town orange, on the occasion of their semifinal against Uruguay, and to lead the Fan March throughout the Mother City, mobilizing close to half a million followers of the beautiful game. On behalf of the more than 25,000 Dutch fans that visited South Africa for the World Cup, Bart Bender received the Winning Makarapa, titled "Best Fans of 2010



and led his delegation in song, praising the heartfelt hospitality of South Africans and the warm embrace awarded them by the Bafana Fan Club. The Dutch were also acknowledged for being the most committed fans of the World Cup, as one group of dedicated Dutch football fans travelled more than 14,000 miles to attend the World Cup finals, bypassing elephant crossings in Botswana, a sandstorm in Egypt and a rat-infested river in Sudan. After driving through 15 countries, the road reportedly took its toll: 50 new shock absorbers, dozens of flat tires, five new engines and four severed romances, including one divorce.

The sacrifice made by members of this Dutch group was clearly demonstrated by Sander Ansems, 26, for whom the price of World Cup tickets meant selling the beloved wheels that got him to South Africa: a BMW 650 Dakar motorcycle.

The event was graced by SAFA President Kirsten Nematandani, who handed over the awards to the winning teams and praised the organizers for hosting the first ever World Cup FAN Awards. Said Nematandani: “For the first time in the history of this prestigious event, the fans are given center stage and I would like to congratulate the Bafana Fan Club for mobilizing the visiting delegations in such a short space of time and providing a platform for the supporters of the beautiful game, the very lifeblood of the world’s biggest sporting event.”

In addition to the FAN World Cup Trophy for the fans from Oranje, the following awards were handed:

- **Best Singers of 2010:** won by the Spanish delegation, who celebrated their FAN Victory by rendering a heart wrenching rendition of the famous Spanish fan anthem “E Viva Espana!” and expressed their excitement at taking the award, a figurine of the Spanish striker David Villa, made out of wire by a local artist, back all the way to their capital Madrid.
- **Best Drummers of 2010:** Equally vociferous were the Brazilian fans, when receiving the 2010 FAN Award for gracing this World Cup with the best drumming performances. Playing their unique cultural instruments from the shores of the Copacabana, the Brazilian delegation enthused the international audience with a triple rendition of typically Brazilian drum beats.
- **Best Dressed Fans:** This award was received by the Mexican delegation who relayed the meticulous rituals performed by their



s every time the national team takes to the field, all the way from the famous head masks to the flag draped ‘revolutionaries’ that have become a common feature throughout the Mexican games;

- **Most Beautiful Fans:** Last, but not least, the award for the most beautiful fans of 2010 went to the hosting delegation of Bafana Fans, who were dressed up in their world famous regalia and brought the venue’s roof almost down by performing their popular Bafana songs and producing their most wanted poses for the international cameras.

The awards ceremony was followed by a joint viewing of the Third Place Playoff between Germany and Uruguay, which was eagerly watched by the visiting fans who celebrated each of the five goals by performing their unique fan rituals, both in song and dance.

Already, the Bafana Fan Club is hard at work to assemble a delegation of 10,000 Bafanatics to visit the shores of the next FIFA hosts, Brazil, and to compete for the 2014 FAN Awards on the beaches of the Copacabana. – **16 July 2010**