



Football goes SOLO with the Qantas Socceroos

A three year multi-million dollar partnership agreement between Football Federation Australia (FFA) and Schweppes was announced today.

The agreement sees Schweppes become the Official Non-Alcoholic Beverage Partner of FFA, all national teams including the Qantas Socceroos and the Westfield Matildas as well as the Hyundai A-League, the Westfield W-League and the National Youth League.

The announcement took place to coincide with the Qantas Socceroos return to Australia for its 2010 FIFA World Cup Asian group qualifier match against Uzbekistan in Sydney on 1 April.

Fresh arrivals, Qantas Socceroos stars Scott Chipperfield, Josh Kennedy, Luke Wilkshire and David Carney were on hand at Bicentennial Park, Annandale, to mark the occasion with striker Josh Kennedy showcasing the new Solo 'gold' coloured nets which will feature at football matches throughout the year.

The FFA confirmed that the Goal of the Year will now be known as the SOLO Goal of the Year, while the FFA 5-a-side schools program will be known as the Cottee's 5-a-side program.

"We are thrilled to announce the new partnership with Schweppes and its valuable support of our ambitious plans to become the sport of first choice for players and fans," said John O'Sullivan, Chief Commercial Manager, Football Federation Australia.

Football has experienced the highest participation rates of any sport for boys aged 5-14 years for more than a decade and is also the fastest growing team sport for girls with an average annual growth rate of more than six percent over the past five years.

"There are many children who also enjoy playing the game at school, and we anticipate this interest to continue to grow, particularly with the Qantas Socceroos' quest over the next 18 months to secure a place in the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa," said O'Sullivan.

"Through the support of Schweppes we will be able to ensure more children have access to the game at school, which is extremely encouraging, as the more children who play the game, the more it will result in healthier lifestyles and a healthier population."

According to the recent Sweeney Sports Report, while most sports have lost ground, football is fast narrowing the gap between it and the traditional power sports, recording growth in interest, attendance and media coverage.

The report also reported that the sponsorship industry is currently suffering because of the global economic crisis, with corporate sponsors generally cutting back on sponsorship activities - or considering it - with rights holders having a tough time signing new deals.

"Our partnership with Football Federation Australia shows we are bucking this trend," said David Beguely, Managing Director, Schweppes Australia.

"FFA has a strong product which is attracting great interest and involvement, while Schweppes Australia understands the need to continue to ensure its brands remain visible to drive growth. Therefore it was a logical step to partner Solo, the fastest growing soft drink in Australia, with the country's fastest growing sport.

"We are fully committed to working with FFA to generate excitement and involvement in the sport from consumers and football fans throughout Australia, from a grassroots level right through to the elite level with our support of the Qantas Socceroos in the team's quest for a place in the World Cup in 2010," said Beguely.

Other brands associated with the partnership include Cottee's and Gatorade (sports drink).

In the past 12 months, FFA has negotiated new or renewed partnership agreements with Qantas, Hyundai, Westfield, nab and Optus.

For further media information or photos from the event, not for publication, please contact:

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The FFA and Solo would like to thank PILA group for supplying the soccer goal posts for this media event.

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