

2006 WORLD CUP

What was the IP Score?

The FIFA 2006 World Cup has been one of the most popular sporting events ever. And what with cutting edge technology, massive trademark and merchandizing deals, and billion dollar revenues from broadcasting rights, IP proved a top scorer both on and off the pitch.

Some winners

With projected television audiences of 32.5 billion people in 215 countries, the World Cup was a bonanza for broadcasting organizations. The International Federation of Football Association (FIFA) sold **broadcasting rights** worth one billion euro (US\$1.3 bn) to over 500 broadcasting organizations, including television, radio, mobile telephony and Internet licensees. In Brazil alone, five TV companies signed licensing agreements. 60.5 million viewers in the region watched Brazil's opening match; while almost a quarter of all South Korea's TV viewers got up at 4am to watch their team play France.

FIFA signed **trademark licensing** deals worth US\$840 million with the tournament's 15 official international sponsors and six national sponsors. The sponsors gained exclusive rights to use FIFA's World Cup trademarks and emblems in publicity and marketing.

Two **technological innovations** from Philips Electronics won places in the limelight – with their *ArenaVision* stadium lighting creating the limelight. Oval-shaped floodlights, based on optical research, were designed to enhance color

quality, decrease spill-light and glare, and “dramatically increase the theatrical and emotional values for TV audiences, spectators and players alike,” say Philips. (– Though some of us could not have handled much more emotional value.)

Philips' PCT-patented, radio frequency identification (RFID) technology was brought on to tackle ticket fraud. All 3.2 million tickets contained tiny electronic data-processing chips, plus an antenna to receive and broadcast radio signals, allowing contact-free scanning at venue gates.

From the commentators' box, WIPO's PCT team add that 14 out of 15 of the World Cup official sponsors use the PCT to file international patent applications for their technological innovations.



Sales of Adidas' TeamGeist™ balls soared, though at prices above most young fans' heads.

Adidas' *TeamGeist™* (Team Spirit) ball was selected for the championship because of its innovative construction. It uses only 14 panels instead of the traditional 26 or 32 hexagons, with correspondingly fewer seams. Adidas claims their roundest,

smoothest football ever offers players increased accuracy and control – although England goalie Paul Robinson was not alone in finding the ball lightweight or unpredictable (even before that penalty shoot-out). Its distinctive **industrial design**, registered through the European Union, plus powerful branding, kicked off sales of 15 million official *TeamGeist* balls.

Some losers

FIFA lost its bid to trademark two German language designations for the championship for use on “goods and services relating to the organization of sporting events.” The German federal supreme court in April found that **FUSSBALL WM 2006** and **WM 2006** lacked distinctive character, and were generic references to an event and not to a body such as FIFA. (WM, for *Weltmeisterschaft*, means World Cup).

“Smart ball” technology under development by Adidas was judged not yet fit for play. Designed to prevent refereeing mistakes, the ball contains a microchip which sends a signal to the referee the moment it crosses a goal or boundary line. Similar chips would be inserted in the players' shin pads.

Red cards

Counterfeiters faced a vigorous defense by FIFA of its IP rights. A dedicated 12-person team had already flagged some 2,500 violations by the time of the first match in Germany.



FIFA's revenue from sales of trademark licences and broadcasting rights far outstipped ticket sales.