



The Greatest Show on Earth

The whole world goes football-mad this month, as the World Cup kicks off in Germany.

The FIFA World Cup begins in Germany this month, and all eyes will be focused on a sporting event that is universally considered to be “the greatest show on earth”.

The tournament consists of 32 teams from six continents, 30 referees, sporting venues in 12 cities, more than 46,000 hotel rooms and 3 million tickets.

There’s no other event on the world sporting calendar that can

extract from people such unbridled passion and sheer human emotion, and that includes the Olympic Games. It’s unmatched in comparison!

The pure magnitude of the World Cup is awe-inspiring, and can be so overwhelming that many countries live and breathe the round ball game of soccer, known internationally as football. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many players, officials and spectators.

Australia’s team, The Socceroos, will take part in this extravaganza for only the second time in our history. The first was in 1974 and now, 32 years later, we will contest the event on the same stage at the same location, Germany. Is it coincidence, or is it fate?

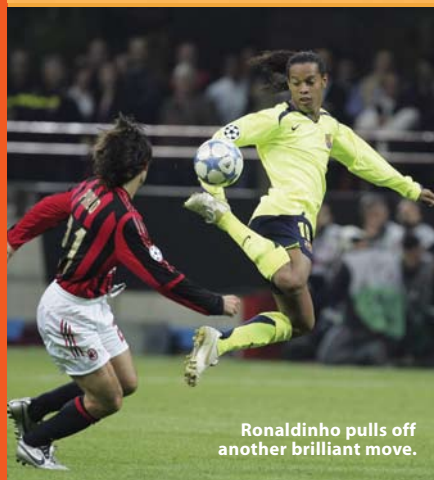
In 1974, Australia qualified for the World Cup by beating South Korea in a playoff, but were drawn in the so-called “group of death” and finished bottom, though it hardly seemed to matter. They lost 2-0 to East Germany, then 3-0 to hosts and eventual champions West Germany, and drew nil-all with Chile.

In 2005 the Socceroos qualified for the World Cup when they defeated Uruguay in a penalty



shootout at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, which sent the 80,000-plus fans at the ground, and millions watching on television, into an absolute frenzy.

If you compare Australia’s two World Cup soccer teams from 1974 and 2006, you’ll find there’s an enormous difference between them. While the modern day players earn a fortune playing abroad in the lucrative European competitions, the 1974 team were part-timers. They’d come from different parts of the world, searching for a better life in Australia, and were brought together by one common love – soccer.



Ronaldinho pulls off another brilliant move.



Travis Dodd flies for United.



(USE THIS ARTICLE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS)



ACTIVITY 1: SKIMMING FOR MAIN IDEAS

Look at the large, bold heading, the paragraph in bold type below the heading, and the four photographs at the bottom of the article.

1. Why is the title "The Greatest Show on Earth" effective?

2. What are some reasons that this year's World Cup was such a popular sporting event?

3. Explain how two examples of emotive words used in this article tell us that the FIFA World Cup appealed to soccer fans from across the world.

(Example: "The greatest show on earth" is an exaggeration that makes it sound like there is no other sporting event in the whole world that is better than the World Cup. If it's the "greatest" it is the best.)

a. _____

b. _____

4. What is the main purpose for including the four photographs on this page?



ACTIVITY 2: UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE

Circle the correct answer:

1. "The greatest show on earth" is an example of
 - a. hyperbole
 - b. imperative
 - c. technical/specialised language
 - d. alliteration
2. "Football-mad" is an example of
 - a. colloquial language
 - b. pun
 - c. alliteration
3. How have statistics been used effectively in this article?

ACTIVITY 3: VISUAL INFORMATION

Look at the graphics in the article:

- GOLEO VI (Go Leo, the FIFA World Cup mascot for 2006)
- Brazilian star Ronaldinho Gaúcho, full name Ronaldo de Assis Moreira
- Adelaide United star Travis Dodd
- Socceroos fans at the Melbourne qualifying game in 2005.

What information does each of these graphics add to the article?

Comment on what is shown in each graphic; body language and facial expressions, colours, how the pictures create movement, how they support the words and ideas from the text, etc.

GOLEO VI



Ronaldinho

Travis Dodd

Socceroos fans

ACTIVITY 4: DIARY OF A WORLD CUP FAN

Imagine that you are one of the Socceroos fans that travelled to the World Cup in Germany in 2006. Choose one particular day and write a diary entry to explain what happened that day and why it was inspirational to you. Write about 200 words.

HINTS:

- Use the information from the article and your own ideas
- Write in first person (I, me, my)
- Include your feelings and impression of the day's activities
- Colloquial language is acceptable.

Further reading

You may like to find out more about world-wide soccer players and statistics from these internet sites:

<http://fifaworldcup.yahoo.com>

<http://www.worldfootball.org>

<http://www.soccerstats.com>

<http://www.footballaustralia.com.au>