

3. INAUGURAL CITY OF CHRISTCHURCH UNDER 16 INTERNATIONAL (SOCCER) TOURNAMENT

RR 9244

David Cox, Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Inaugural City of Christchurch Under 16 International (soccer) Tournament, reports:

Following the very successful FIFA Oceania Junior World Cup Qualifying Championship that New Zealand won taking it to the World Finals in Egypt this year the creation of the City of Christchurch Under 16 Tournament was an exciting follow-up and I understand unique in the Southern Hemisphere.

The concept was one of Canterbury Soccer, authorised in turn by New Zealand Soccer, the Oceania Football Confederation and finally by the world body FIFA.

It was then given to my committee (the same group plus Alan Direen that ran the Oceania Championship), to run. A major credit for its success was the condition of the playing surface and the support facilities at QEII Stadium, and the enthusiastic management and staff team so ably led by Alan.

Equally the support of Councillors Close and Condon also that of Alistair Graham, Peter Walls and their Leisure Unit colleagues must be acknowledged early in this report.

The tournament commenced on 10 December lasting through to and including the 18th with in the main three matches (2.30, 4.30, 6.30 pm) being played each day.

New Zealand hosted the tournament which was attended by the National under 16 squads of South Africa, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Tahiti and the USA giving direct, or via Tahiti indirect, linkages to all major FIFA areas except South America.

In the main the delegations who consisted of 18 players plus at least 5/7 support personnel, coaches, doctors etc arrived on the 7th and stayed until 19/20 December giving a total stay of 2,016 days stay in our city which with the New Zealand Tourist Bureau per day estimate of expenditure (non conference of NZ \$152.00 per day gave an expenditure level in our city of NZ \$306,432).

The Council voted financial support of \$30,000 for the six team tournament and required all children to be admitted free, a major influence for supporters to attend.

Direct return to the Council via rentals of QEII and indirect return to the Council via exclusive use of CTL "Big Reds" for all transport including sightseeing.

All accommodation and most meals were taken at the University of Canterbury. Visits were made by all visiting squads to local restaurants of their choice eg TGI Fridays, Korean etc.

Visits to the tournament by Ambassador Beaman and Mrs Beaman of the USA, government representatives of Korea and France plus very vocal local resident people from Korea, South Africa and the Oceania Islands made an exciting atmosphere.

Media coverage was extensive with daily Newstalk ZB and nationwide radio sports coverage, CHTV, Prime, TV3 and TVNZ News and feature coverage. The Press, Christchurch Star and both Sunday newspapers had coverage in each of their issues, Red and Black Sport had two features.

It has been suggested that the next tournament be one of eight teams (NZ plus seven visiting national squads) plus in the non-playing days (every other day) being used for a women's U/19 tournament (NZ plus three visiting nations).

This will utilise both main stadium and number two grounds at QEII with the village green ground held in reserve. The envisaged dates for the tournament to be held are 9-19 December with squads arriving two days prior and leaving one or two days following. This will of course cost a little more due to a $\frac{1}{3}$ increase in national squad attendance. This increase is justified in terms of competition and spectator/media appeal but is considered the upper limit for some time.

Better to operate the tournament well and have those attending wish to come back and those who chose not to come wish to do so. All National Associations attending wished to be considered for 1999.

NB: USA hosted the World Cup in 1994

France (Tahiti) hosted the World Cup in 1998

Japan/Korea will host in 2002

South Africa wish to host in 2006

So players playing in Christchurch in 1998 from Korea, South Africa and USA have a real chance of playing in 2002 or 2006 for their national squads. New Zealand has to get past Australia to compete – not an easy task – though with increased competition nothing is impossible. New Zealand did it in 1982 and could climb that mountain once again!

The Junior World Cup is in Christchurch (and Dunedin, Napier and Auckland) in mid November 1999. It has been said “why if that is the case hold the City of Christchurch Tournament in the next month”.

The response – It is vital to keep the momentum going to build on the inaugural (1998) success and do it year by year.

Many Northern European countries suspend their domestic championships in late November through December and January so could come down and travel via London or Frankfurt on Air New Zealand – an added bonus as parents and the media could follow to escape the cold.

Fairly minimal works need to be actioned at QEII with a particular focus on player/official safety and comfort. These have been discussed in a debrief with Councillor Condon, Alistair Graham and Alan Direen, to ensure compliance with FIFA's world-wide requirements.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.