

# The 'buzzzzz' of a million vuvuzelas is here to stay

The buzz of the Confederations Cup is gently fading into the night and there are questions if the "buzz makers" will be present when the World Cup returns to South African soil in 2010.

The vuvuzela, possibly originating from Zulu meaning "making noise" or from every other language meaning "death to your ears and sanity", is a long plastic trumpet used in locally to create a buzz at soccer matches.

The noise is often described as the sound of an elephant although many have described it as the sound of a swarm of bees.

Nonetheless, the spirit horn is causing quite a stir among the international community, some even calling for it to be banned from the 2010 World Cup.

FIFA has received thousands of calls from angry fans complaining that the sound of the vuvuzela is not only distracting when watching the



**John Adams Reports**

matches on television but it also drowns out the commentators.

Coaches and players have joined in with the disapproving fans and have voiced their displeasure.

Dutch soccer coach, Bert Van Marwijk told reporters that the sound of the vuvuzela interferes with his ability to coach his players on the field.

Spanish midfielder, Xabi Alonso, added that the noise makes it nearly impossible to communicate between teammates on the pitch, and that it doesn't add any atmosphere into the stadium. He also admitted that the noise makes it difficult to concentrate while playing.

Some fans at the stadium who came to sit and enjoy a quiet afternoon or evening of soccer, complained that the decibel level of the

vuvuzela causes permanent ear damage. They claim the damage is magnified when a die-hard Bafana Bafana fan, sitting directly behind them, blasts the vuvuzela right into their eardrum.

The only concern FIFA has voiced over the vuvuzela came out of a meeting in 2008 in which they conditionally approved the noisemaker for the 2009 Confederations Cup and the 2010 World Cup as long as they remain free from logos and advertisements and as long as "hooligans don't use the vuvuzela as a weapon."

Entrepreneurs have pointed to the financial gains as the best reason to keep the instrument in the stadiums.

Upon the FIFA's announcement in 2008 allowing the vuvuzelas, there were more than 20 000 plastic instruments sold in a 24-hour period. Economists project more than 50 000 additional instruments will be sold during the World Cup next year. FIFA President Sepp Blatter remains in support of the vuvuzela as a tra-



PICTURE: RICHARD DUCHON

Fans make themselves heard during a Confederations Cup game.

ditional African sound, but many object to its African heritage claiming that the instrument's prototype was developed in America.

However, South Africans are quick to point out that life began at the Cradle of Humanity located in Maropeng in Gauteng, and thus everything comes from Africa including the vuvuzela.

No doubt, the debate will rage

until the completion of the 2010 World Cup, and the opinions will be as diverse as the countries participating in the most watched sporting event; but as for now, keep practising because the vuvuzela is here to stay.

John Adams is a journalism intern from the University of Southern California who is working at Cape Community Newspapers, which publishes Vukani.

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