Gelsenkirchen – a football town through and through

In a twelve-part series, FIFA magazine takes a closer look at the 12 cities and stadiums that will be hosting the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ from 9 June to 9 July. Part 10: Gelsenkirchen.

BY JEAN-JULIEN BEER

It even smells of football here,” says 1990 World Cup winner Olaf Thon, as he stands in Hans-Schumann-Strasse in Gelsenkirchen’s suburb of Schalke. It seems that football is all that matters around this way. The legendary Gluckauf-Kampfbahn arena serves as the focus of attention, the stadium where Schalke football greats like Ernst Kazorra and Fritz Stepan once thrilled the masses with their skills. That was back in the middle of the last century, when Schalke 04 won the German championship six times between 1934 and 1942.

The first official reference to Gelsenkirchen can be traced back to 1147. However, its population numbered no more than 6,000 for several centuries. Today, Gelsenkirchen is home to just over 280,000 people. The hard manual labour of the coal and steel industries fed the mouths of many but made very few rich. Having been one of Europe’s most important industrial areas in the past, the region is now among the poorest in Germany. The last coal mine closed in 1998. Politicians are now hoping to create new opportunities in the solar power industry and thus reduce the local employment figures of 22%.

Football has remained a constant through. More than 10,000 players are registered with Gelsenkirchen’s 70 clubs. With a 200-strong staff, first division club Schalke 04 is among the biggest employers around. The club’s pre-season matches last year attracted 100,000 fans. Three years ago, 28,000 attended a training session to give the team a roaring send-off ahead of the German cup final in Berlin. “This enthusiasm, these crowds – you don’t see anything like it anywhere else in Germany,” says Schalke team official Andreas Muller. “Football is an essential part of life here.”

INDUSTRIALISATION

Thon is a part of that tradition. He was born in Gelsenkirchen in 1966. At just 18 years of age, he was a hero when he scored a hat trick against Bayern Munich in a thrilling cup tie that ended 6-6. In 1997, he helped Schalke’s “Eurofighters” beat Inter Milan in the UEFA Cup final.

Today, Gelsenkirchen’s World Cup ambassador and part of the club’s board. Many say he could even have become mayor, because, to reiterate, football means everything here. In times gone by, industry also had an important role to play. In the mid-18th century, industrialisation saw the town and the entire Ruhr region boom. The discovery of coal in the mid-18th century heralded the start of the industrialisation of the Ruhr region. For almost three centuries, the coal and steel industries formed the economic backbone of this working-class town, whose population swelled when workers moved there from what is now Poland. Gelsenkirchen developed into one of the coal and steel industry’s most important centres in Europe. The last coal mine closed in 1998. The town is now exploring the solar power industry.

Oases of green between industrial relics: Gelsenkirchen.

PHOTOS: IMAGO

The Stadium


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Official name: FIFA World Cup Stadium, Gelsenkirchen. This multipurpose arena opened in summer 2001.

Gross capacity: 44,813 (72 private boxes, 3,257 executive seats)

Work undertaken for the 2006 FIFA World Cup™: Large investment in temporary extension of media facilities

Investment: EUR 185.7 million

Finance: Entirely without public funding. EUR 122.5 million credit provided by a bank consortium, EUR 6.4 million loan from a contracting and project management company, EUR 40 million private capital from holding company. EUR 1.7 million from the Emscher-Lippe power company.

Directions to stadium: By road: from the A2 (Hannover-Oberhausen), the stadium is signposted from the Gelsenkirchen-Buer and Herten exits. By public transport: tram 302 from Gelsenkirchen main railway station.

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Are you a football buff?

The 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany™ is due to kick off in June. What do you know about the history of the competition? Are you au fait with the world's biggest single-sport event? Until the event gets underway, each issue of FIFA magazine will allow you to test your footballing knowledge.

1. To save costs, Mexico travelled to the 1954 FIFA World Cup™ in Switzerland with a squad of only 18 players. Which other country had an even smaller contingent of only 13 players?
   A: Korea Republic
   B: Scotland
   C: Czechoslovakia

2. In which of the following three years did Spain appear in the FIFA World Cup™ finals?
   A: 1970
   B: 1974
   C: 1978

3. The 1986 World Cup quarter-final between France and Brazil was decided by a penalty shoot-out after a 1-1 draw after extra time. Which of the following three players did not miss?
   A: Zico
   B: Socrates
   C: Michel Platini

4. Where was the smallest stadium in the 1938 FIFA World Cup™ in France?
   A: Reims
   B: La Havre
   C: Amiens

5. Who was the Netherlands captain at the 1998 FIFA World Cup™ in France?
   A: Jaap Stam
   B: Dennis Bergkamp
   C: Frank de Boer

6. How many times have Chile taken part in the World Cup finals?
   A: 8 times
   B: 7 times
   C: 5 times

7. Which African country beat Mexico 3-1 in its first ever World Cup final competition match?
   A: Tunisia
   B: Morocco
   C: Cameroon

8. Who was the USA's first-choice goalkeeper in the 2002 World Cup?
   A: Brad Friedel
   B: Kasey Keller
   C: Tony Meola

9. Why was Frenchman Celestin Delmer missing from the official records of the 1930 World Cup, even though he had appeared in a match against Chile, until he was "acknowledged" by the French football association in 1992?
   A: He had played under a pseudonym.
   B: Reporters had confused him with another player.
   C: Two team-mates who were responsible for the records ignored his appearance because they did not like him.

10. How many matches did Pelé spend on the substitutes’ bench in the 1958 FIFA World Cup™ before he actually played?
    A: 0
    B: 1
    C: 2

11. Who coached Italy at the 1986 FIFA World Cup™ in Mexico?
    A: Angelo Vicini
    B: Cesare Maldini
    C: Enzo Bearzot

12. Which English referee awarded one penalty each to Germany FR and the Netherlands in the 1974 FIFA World Cup™?
    A: Patrick Parridge
    B: Jack Taylor
    C: Clive White

13. How did Turkey win the World Cup quarter-final against Senegal in Korea and Japan in 2002?
    A: On penalties
    B: By a golden goal
    C: In normal playing time

14. Which French player missed the final of the 1998 FIFA World Cup™ on home ground after being sent off in the semi-final?
    A: Fabien Barthez
    B: Laurent Blanc
    C: Youni Djorkaeff

15. How many matches did Ernst Happel (later a legendary coach) play in for Austria in the 1954 World Cup finals in Switzerland?
    A: Two
    B: Four
    C: None

16. Which country represented the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) at the 1982 FIFA World Cup™ in Spain?
    A: Kuwait
    B: Iran
    C: Saudi Arabia

17. Who was the second highest goalscorer with a tally of four (after Helmut Haller with five) for the West German team at the 1966 FIFA World Cup™?
    A: Franz Beckenbauer
    B: Uwe Seeler
    C: Lothar Emmerich

18. How many times has Samuel Eto'o (Barcelona) been included in Cameroon’s World Cup squad?
    A: None
    B: One time (1998)
    C: Two times (1998 and 2002)

19. Against which team did Colombia earn their only point at the 1962 FIFA World Cup™?
    A: Yugoslavia
    B: Uruguay
    C: USSR

20. What was so noteworthy about Ronaldinho's performance in Brazil’s 2002 World Cup quarter-final against England?
    A: He scored both goals for his team.
    B: He scored a goal and was sent off soon afterwards.
    C: He scored an own goal but then scored the winning goal from a free kick.

The answers can be found on page 59.
1. What does football mean to you?
I grew up with it and can’t imagine a situation in which I won’t be playing.

2. Which football club did you support as a child?
Any club where my father happened to be playing at the time.

3. Did you ever have an idol?
Yes, my father.

4. Who is the best player in the world right now?
There are a few superb players – Ronaldinho, for instance.

5. Which team is currently playing the most attractive football?
I enjoyed Barcelona’s 3-0 victory over Real Madrid last November. Barcelona played some breathtaking football in that match.

6. What is your fondest footballing memory?
The 2002 World Cup in Korea and Japan takes pride of place, of course, when we made it to the semi-final. That was the by far the most exciting moment I have ever experienced in football. But Eintracht Frankfurt’s promotion to the German top flight was also a wonderful occasion.

7. What has been your biggest disappointment in football?
Relegation to the German second division with Arminia Bielefeld.

8. What is your favourite type of music?
Korean pop music.

9. And your favourite book?
The Bible.

10. Your favourite film?
“Mr & Mrs Smith” with Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie was very funny.

11. Your favourite city?
I have two – Seoul and Frankfurt.

12. What do you like eating the most?
Ramyun (a Korean speciality) and noodles.

13. What is your favourite hobby?
Sleeping and surfi ng the net.

14. Who has been the most influential figure in world history?
There have been several – Mikhail Gorbachev is one of them.

15. What is your main strength?
I am honest and unassuming.

16. And your biggest weakness?
I am too quiet and unassuming.

17. What qualities do you appreciate in a woman?
All the qualities you fi nd in a person with the human touch.

18. And in a man?
The same as for a woman.

19. What do you spend most of your money on?
Clothes.

20. What are you afraid of?
Injury and war.

21. How do you see the future of the world?
People around the world will move closer together as a result of globalisation.

22. What does the word “beauty” mean to you?
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

23. Where would you like to go on holiday?
The USA.

24. Who would you most like to meet?
Jesus Christ.

25. Who will win the 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany™?
There are several candidates – Brazil, Argentina, Germany, England and the Netherlands. It would be a triumph for Korea if the teams progressed into the knockout stages.
Poland’s goalscoring legend

Grzegorz Lato, the top scorer at the 1974 FIFA World Cup™, is looking forward to a reunion with Germany.

BY THOMAS ROSE

Poland’s first and to date only World Cup Golden Shoe winner shaved off his trademark moustache long ago, but the game has not lost any of its fascination for Grzegorz Lato, even though he is getting on in years in footballing terms. “Of course I still play,” the 55-year-old smiles, referring to his outings with veterans’ team Gorski’s Eagles. “There’s only one condition: the opposition must be older than 35, as I’m not running around after the youngsters any more.”

Once it was his opponents who had trouble keeping up with the fleet-footed striker. Capped 90 times by his country, Lato was known for his pace, accurate shooting and skill on the ball. Having scored 42 international goals, he was probably Poland’s most influential player during their “golden decade” from 1972 to 1982. The man with the thinning hair played at three World Cups and two Olympic tournaments, but Poland’s most successful player says his fondest memories are of his first World Cup in 1974, and not just because he finished as the leading scorer with seven goals. For him, the most memorable moment was the first of his two goals in the first group match against Argentina (3-2) in Stuttgart. “It was my first World Cup goal in front of a packed stadium,” explains Lato. “And I knew that everyone in Poland was sitting in front of the television willing us to win.”

Although Poland’s state-backed amateurs had claimed gold at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and had even bundled England out of the World Cup at the qualifying stage, the side coached by the legendary Kazimierz Deyna, the Poles played some thrilling attacking football, winning five games in succession as they very nearly powered their way into the final. Their run of victories only came to an end in the legendary waterlogged semi-final against hosts West Germany in Frankfurt (0-1). “It was more like water polo – these days it would never have kicked off,” says Lato with a smile more than three decades later. “The water was ankle-deep on the flanks. My marker Paul Breitner kicked the ball two metres, then I knocked it two metres – until eventually one of us allowed the other to scoop the ball out of the puddle. It was a farce.”

“White Eagles” would be going home early. “Gorski was the only one who really believed we could do well,” recalls Lato. “We had a great team and in Gorski, we had a super coach. He prepared us perfectly and filled us with confidence.”

“More like water polo”

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Before Poland secured third place, Lato received several offers from Bundesliga clubs in 1974, but the star striker from Stal Mielec decided against a move that at the time would have meant an end to his international career. In 1978, the Poles went to the World Cup in Argentina with much higher expectations than four years earlier, explains Lato, for whom the opening match against West Germany (0-0), in particular, remains etched in the memory. Although Poland qualified for the second round by winning their group, they then lost to Argentina and Brazil. “We finished joint fifth along with West Germany. It was a disappointment for us at the time because we had hoped for more. Today, such a final position would be a massive success for Poland,” he adds.

Ahead of the 1982 tournament in Spain, no one had Poland on their list,” says Lato, reflecting on his third World Cup. “We had martial law at home and all our warm-up matches had to be cancelled.” After a slow start involving two goalless draws against Italy and Cameroon, Poland eventually stepped up a gear and progressed somewhat...
surprisingly to the semi-final, where they faced Italy for a second time. According to Lato, two careless mistakes cost the “White Eagles” a place in the final in a 2-0 defeat. “But you have to be able to lose as well as win. We did finish third for the second time in eight years, after all. Later things became very different for Poland.”

“FIVE MINUTES OF FAME”

Not until the age of 30 was Lato granted a late move abroad. After spells at Lokeren in Belgium and a club in Mexico, a serious Achilles tendon injury finally forced him to hang up his boots in 1984. When asked whether he ever resented missing out on the chance to earn a fortune abroad while in his prime, Lato ... more if he were playing today, he says, but money cannot buy success. “Everyone has their ‘five minutes of fame’ – and I made good use of mine.”

Although he never had any problems living as a football star in the people’s socialist republic, Lato did not want to live in a Poland under martial law. He ... did not return to his home country until 1992, trying his luck as a coach at Stal Mielec, Olimpia Poznan and Widzew Lodz.

SENATE SEAT

In 2001, the former outside-right switched flanks and moved into politics, serving the Social Democrats as a non-card-carrying member of the Polish Senate for four years. The parliamentary football team were not the only ones to appreciate the presence of the erstwhile star in their ranks. It was a valuable experience during which he met some wonderful people, says Lato, drawing a satisfied conclusion on his “closed” chapter ...

Lato makes no secret of his excitement about returning to the scene of his greatest triumph, saying: “As in 1974, the Germans will organise a superb World Cup, of that I am sure. But when I see the new stadiums, I do feel a sense of envy, as in Poland we can only dream of such venues.” But he does draw satisfaction from Poland’s success in qualifying for the finals at the home of their neighbours. “You cannot really compare today’s team with the one of 1974, and not just because football has ... in the last 32 years. Back then we were among the three best teams in the world, but today Poland fluctuate between 20th and 30th place in the FIFA world ranking. But even without any world stars, the current team is a good collective with a very good coach – and hopefully will make it to the second round.”
For some time now football experts in England have been lauding 16-year-old Theo Walcott, with many predicting he will have a meteoric rise similar to the one enjoyed by Wayne Rooney of Manchester United. Walcott, the son of immigrants from the Caribbean island of Barbados, grew up in Reading and made his debut for Southampton at the age of 17, a few months ago. The youngster has already attracted the attention of some top English clubs, Arsenal and Liverpool are on the trail of the nimble and lightning-fast striker (he reportedly runs 100 metres in eleven seconds), as are Chelsea, who are said to have offered GBP eight million for him. Yet Southampton chairman Rupert Lowe does not want to sell Walcott – at least not until the end of the season. Lowe hopes the teenager forwards runs and goals will help Southampton clinch a return to the Premier League.

Eric Cantona, 39, has been voted the best player in the history of the English Premier League in a poll of 26,000 football supporters. Cantona, a member of the French side that won the 1998 FIFA World Cup, spent ten years in the Premier League between 1992 and 1997, winning the league title five times and the FA Cup twice. Cantona now works as an actor and film director and lives with his family in Barcelona.

The respected Spanish football magazine Don Balón has run the rule over the official websites of a number of famous players. After evaluating the design and content, amongst other criteria, of the various internet offerings the journal concluded that Michael Ballack (www.michael-ballack.com) has the highest-quality website, followed by fellow German Christian Ziege (www.christianziege.de) and Spain’s Fernando Torres (www.fernando9torres.com). The remaining places were taken by: Eric Cantona (www.michael-ballack.com), Fabio Cannavaro (www.fabiocannavaro.it), Didier Drogba (www.didier-drogba.com), Djibril Cissé (www.djib-cisse.com), Simao (www.simaoosilva.io.pt), David Trezeguet (www.trezeguet.com), Ballottí (www.ballotti.net), Francesco Toldo (www.francescotoldo.it), Paula Warchop (www.warchop.net), Alessandro Del Piero (www.alessandrodelpiero.com), Claudio Pizarro (www.claudiopizarro.com), Francesco Totti (www.francescototti.com), Jose Antonio Reyes (www.joseantonioreyes.com), Hidetoshi Nakata (www.nakata.net), Fabien Barthez (fabienbarthez.football.fr), Junichi Inamoto (www.junichi-inamoto.jp), Guillermo Barros Schelotto (www.melliguzzo.com), Zinedine Zidane (www.zidane.net), Gianluiigi Buffon (www.gianluigi.buffon.it) and Andrea D’Alessandro (www.andaliasandro.com.ar).

Almost 8.5 million Australians, or 51 percent of the population, saw the second leg of the World Cup play-off between Australia and Uruguay on television in November, according to a representative telephone poll conducted by Roy Morgan Research. Official TV ratings suggested that an average of 2.5 million people watched the thriller live. “These figures obviously did not take into account the large number of Australians who watched at organised parties,” the company claimed in explanation for the discrepancy. A spokesperson said that 4.4 millions Australians had watched the game from its hesitant beginning to its dramatic end, when John Aloisi scored the deciding penalty for the home side to secure Australia’s first appearance at the World Cup finals since 1974.

On 16 November 2005, FIFA.com celebrated its tenth anniversary over a glass of champagne in Zürich. In the presence of Director of FIFA Marketing & TV Jerome Valcke and the New Media team, guest of honour Andreas Herren, who launched FIFA’s official website on 16 November 1995, gave a brief speech on the project’s beginnings. Originally a monolingual website, FIFA.com has since evolved into a four-language presence offering tens of thousands of pages of original content per language. Local events are also covered in the respective language, such as Dutch for the FIFA World Youth Championship 2005 Netherlands and Japanese for the FIFA Club World Championship TOYOTA Cup Japan 2005. From 1995 to 2003 the website was operated by EnLinea. Today it is hosted by Change Media. The next significant milestone will be reached in the first quarter of 2007 when FIFAworldcup.com will be integrated into FIFA.com, turning it into a huge content site accessible via a single URL: www.FIFA.com. Since launching in 1995, traffic on FIFA.com has steadily increased. In October 2005, for example, it registered 2.4 million unique visitors, while another 2.9 million visitors stopped by FIFAworldcup.com, generating more than 80 million page views. To mark its tenth anniversary, FIFA.com now provides unparalleled coverage of the top 100 club leagues in the world, featuring up-to-the-hour results, standings and fixtures.

From left to right: Michael Ballack, Andreas Herren, George Weah.

Off to South Africa and after the latest news from the Premier League? Going to China and interested in the Super League? Want to know how your team got on last weekend? Simply go to http://www.fifa.com/en/worldleagues/index.html and enter a mine of football information.

16-year-old Theo Walcott celebrating a goal.

PHOTOS: IMAGO/DIGITIP/IMAGEAPP

Here are the answers to the 20 questions on pages 50 and 51:

1. B / C / A / C / B / A / C / B / A / C / C / B / C / A / B / C / A / B / B / C

QUIZ
5 February 1927
The Organising Committee for the FIFA World Cup™ meets in Zurich. Although there is a certain amount of opposition, the committee eventually decides to push ahead with plans for the inaugural FIFA World Cup™.

5 February 1991
A Nigerian women’s club plays a match on foreign soil for the first time, with Kakanfo Queens defeating Cameroon’s Kalara FC 3-1.

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6 February 1965
Sir Stanley Matthews retires after playing his last match for Stoke City aged 50 years and five days. For Matthews, who is still the oldest player to have played in the English league, the match against Fulham is his 701st.

8 February 1914
Luxembourg beat France 5-4 thanks to Jean Massard’s four strikes. This is still the record for the most number of goals by a Luxembourg player in an international match.

9 February 1996
The International Center for Sports Studies (CIES) is founded in Neuchâtel, Switzerland by FIFA and the university, canton and city of Neuchâtel.

10 February 1946
Resolution no. 30 of the National Sports Council approves professional football in Paraguay.

11 February 1957
At its meeting in Madrid, the FIFA Regulations Committee unanimously approves a proposal to allow teams to substitute players injured during play.

12 February 1972
Assistant referee Agustín Baso dies in La Carlota (Argentina) after players from Sportivo Rural de Santa Eufemia attack him in protest over his failure to flag for offside during a match against Belgrano Juniors de Aries.

13 February 1999
The Football Association agrees to a replay of an FA Cup match after Arsenal manager Arsène Wenger and his players offer to restart a game as a gesture of goodwill and fair play. In the match in question, Arsenal had beaten Sheffield United 2-1, but the Premier League side scored the crucial second goal in controversial circumstances. After the Sheffield United goalkeeper had thrown the ball into touch to allow an injured team-mate to receive treatment, Arsenal failed to return possession to their opponents and instead scored what proved to be the deciding goal. In the replay ten days later, Arsenal again win 2-1.

14 February 1946
The Organising Committee for the FIFA World Cup™ meets in Zurich. Although there is a certain amount of opposition, the committee eventually decides to push ahead with plans for the inaugural FIFA World Cup™.

15 February 1992
Cheltenham Town’s loans a hat-trick on his wedding day in a victory over Leicester City.

16 February 1957
Egypt win the first African Cup of Nations by beating Ethiopia 4-0 in the final in Khartoum, Sudan. El Diba scores all four goals.

18 February 1960
In Montevideo, CONMEBOL and its president, Fermin Sorhueta, approve a proposal to create the Champion Clubs’ Cup (now the Copa Libertadores) to bring together the champions of all CONMEBOL countries in 1959. The tournament begins on 15 April.

22 February 1922
Leeds United’s Bill Peirson scores a hat-trick on his wedding day in a victory over Leicester City.

25 February 1979
Argentina defeat Hungary 5-2 in Diego Maradona’s international début at the age of just 16 years and 121 days and after only 11 top-flight appearances. Maradona is still the youngest player to represent Argentina.