

51 nations to take part in 2016 Homeless World Cup in Scotland



The Homeless World Cup Foundation yesterday announced the 51 nations who will participate in the 2016 Homeless World Cup.

Scotland stars Robert Snodgrass and Gemma Fay turned George Square into a giant “back green” with an enormous washing line assembled to represent the colours of all 64 teams.

The 48 men’s and 16 women’s sides will participate in a week-long celebration in the heart of Glasgow, from 10-16 July, which for the duration aims to be the, “most inspiring place on the planet.” In total 512 players will participate, each with a story to tell as they continue on a journey towards a more stable future. This year’s tournament is co-funded by the Scottish Government and Glasgow Life, with support from a range of partners.

As part of the team announcement, the rankings have been released which will be used to allocate a seeding pot for the draw, which takes place in May.

Each year, National Partners, of which there are currently 73, are invited to apply to join us at the Homeless World Cup tournament to bring one or two teams (men’s and/or women’s squads). Applying countries qualify based on a lengthy evaluation process which takes into consideration the programmes’ on the ground activities during the previous year. These programmes are evaluated based on capacity, development and growth, local partnerships, participation within the Homeless World Cup network, and communication, among other factors.

The rankings are calculated based on team performance over the last seven years, with extra weight given to Amsterdam 2015, Santiago 2014, and Poznan 2013. Players can only participate in the Homeless World Cup once, and so team performance can vary greatly from year to year. Consistency from year to year is, therefore, more important than final position in a single tournament.

Two time winners Brazil lead the men's rankings, followed by last year's champions Mexico, who defeated Ukraine (14) in the Amsterdam final. On the women's side, the three-time champs Mexico hold their top seed again this year.

Scotland's National Partner, Street Soccer Scotland, has qualified for the tournament and will enter men's (15) and women's teams (6).

Burkina Faso participates for the first time, while Ivory Coast and Australia men's teams return after a period of absence. Egypt make their debut as a men's team, whilst Greece, Ivory Coast and South Africa participate in the women's competition for the first time.

The draw for the 2016 Homeless World Cup takes place in May, and will be broadcast live.

Homeless World Cup Foundation president Mel Young said: "This is always an exciting announcement which allows us to reiterate the global nature of the Homeless World Cup and the inspiring activity our National Partners deliver across 73 countries. For us, this is about so much more than a football tournament, as it represents an opportunity to shine a light on our players who have embraced a demanding journey towards a better future. They deserve their moment, and we know Glasgow will give them a welcome like no other."

Scotland and Norwich City striker Robert Snodgrass, a long-time supporter of homeless charities in Glasgow and Liverpool adds: "I'm pleased to be able to reveal the competing nations

today ahead of this summer's Homeless World Cup in Glasgow. Football has an unbelievable power to unite people across the world, and this tournament, and the 512 participating players are testament to that."

Scotland and Glasgow City goalkeeper Gemma Fay who previously played for Hibernian Ladies said:"So many of the women who will participate in the Homeless World Cup have unimaginable stories behind and with them, and so I am very glad we can give them a platform here in Scotland to perform as part of their journey. It's incredibly inspiring."

Photo courtesy of SFA