

Dubai wins bid to host FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup 2009



The UAE have pulled off another sporting coup by winning the right to host the Fifa Beach Soccer World Cup 2009.

Fifa general secretary Jerome Valcke made the announcement last night in Marseille. The French city will stage the event in 2008 with Dubai claiming the spotlight the following year.

Mattar Al Tayer, vice-president of the Dubai Sports Council, was delighted and hailed Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, president of the Sports Council, for inspiring the award.

“It’s a great honour for Dubai and the UAE,” he said. “Sheikh Hamdan gave us clear instructions and support to attract such tournaments and we are delighted to have succeeded in this.

“This tournament is just one of the sports events we are trying to bring to Dubai and the UAE. We will have the rugby Sevens World Cup in 2009 and the swimming World Championships in 2010, so this is another step in the right direction for us.

“We are putting Dubai and the UAE on the map in sport and tourism.”

Al Tayer admitted the news was a double boost after the UAE qualified for their first-ever Fifa Beach Soccer World Cup.

They will take on the cream of international talent in Rio in November after winning the Asian qualifier at Al Mamzar Beach.

“We showed in the Asian qualifier it was a success, both on and off the pitch, and now we want to make it even better when we stage the World Cup,” added Al Tayer.

“I think beach soccer will grow. We had good attendances at the Asian qualifier and we want to build on that.

“With the UAE doing so well and qualifying for their first Fifa Beach Soccer World Cup, it was a fantastic all-round success.”

Joan Cusco, executive vice-president of Beach Soccer Worldwide and a member of the Fifa Beach Soccer and Futsal committee, is backing them to succeed after witnessing their vision.

“When we first discussed Dubai as a possible host, there were doubts because of the history; it was not extensive enough,” he said.

“But we know Dubai is a city that knows how to make dreams come true and with the UAE Football Association, the Dubai Sports Council and Emirates Airline, there would be the support to make this event a success.

“They showed us in their nomination this would be a great asset for the sport and the city.”