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## Pitch construction begins as Abu Dhabi gears up to host FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2009

Construction has begun on new playing surfaces at Abu Dhabi's two biggest stadiums, which will play host to the FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2009 in December.

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Once completed, the new pitches at Zayed Sports City Stadium and Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium will stage all eight matches of the competition, and provide the UAE national side and club teams with permanent world-class playing facilities.

In addition to the two stadiums, seven other pitches across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi are being reconstructed or renovated to accommodate the competing clubs as exclusive training sites.

Reflecting on the long-term benefits the pitch development will bring, His Excellency Mohammed Khalfan Al-Rumaithi, President of the UAE FA, said:

'These pitches are an important part of the legacy the FIFA Club World Cup will leave behind for the Emirates. Not only will the standard of playing facilities available for UAE professional clubs be raised, but academies, like the one run by Al-Wahda, will have the opportunity to train and develop young players on world-class surfaces for many years to come.'

Using the most advanced technology available, the playing surfaces are being constructed to world-class standards, with the overall goal to deliver top quality grass color, consistent ball bounce across the entire pitch and turf that remains firm under foot. Laser equipment is being used to produce an even pitch gradient, and a specially-designed grass seed variant known as Sea Dwarf Paspalum has been carefully selected to reduce water consumption by more than 50%.

Commenting on the design of the pitches, His Excellency Mohammed Ebrahim Al Mahmood, General Secretary of Abu Dhabi Sports Council (ADSC), said: 'It's taken months of meticulous planning and preparation to get us to this stage, but with construction now underway, we are on course to produce a set of playing surfaces which everyone in the UAE can be extremely proud of.'

The pitches are being developed in two phases: the construction phase, which lasts approximately 15 weeks, then the maintenance phase, which involves intense daily care in response to the surroundings in which each pitch is growing. Regular maintenance will ensure the pitches are robust and ready for December, and have longevity for future use.

The FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2009 presented by TOYOTA will take place from 9-19 December in Abu Dhabi.

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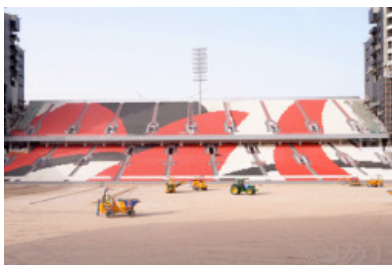
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