



MUPC World Finals - Twenty top teams with just one dream...

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for immediate release

MANCHESTER is preparing to welcome some of the most talented young footballers on the planet for the World Finals of the Manchester United Premier Cup. Over 9,400 teams started on the journey last summer, to reach the final stages of a competition which will see the top twenty under-15 teams battle for the title of MUPC Champions of the World from 4-7 August.

Special VIP guests from Manchester United will host the all important Opening Ceremony & Draw at 7.30pm on Tuesday 3rd August at Manchester United's Carrington training complex - where teams will fight their way through group and knockout matches from 4-6 August. The grand finale will be played at Old Trafford's "Theatre of Dreams" on Saturday 7th August at 12.30; following the unveiling of United's new first team line-up in their first Open Training session of the season.

Originally founded by Nike in 1993, Premier Cup was taken to new heights ten years later when Manchester United added their name to the tournament where youngsters - from grassroots teams to some of the biggest names in football - meet in the ultimate test of their abilities, their passion and their desire to win in the Manchester United Premier Cup.

Over a million youngsters have enjoyed the MUPC experience to date, many going on to become global superstars. No fewer than 25 tournament "old boys" were called up to represent their country in South Africa- including an incredible SIX players in Spain's championship-winning side, namely Torres, Fábregas, Piqué, "Xavi" Hernández, Iker Casillas and winning goal-scorer **Andrés Iniesta**.

Iniesta was Tournament MVP and also scored the winning 'golden goal' in 1999 as FC Barcelona lifted their first Premier Cup World Trophy:

"Premier Cup is a "dream come true" for young footballers. Such an intense level of competition is a great opportunity to test and improve your abilities against some of the best young players in the world. You should take pride in your performance and work hard for your team – every second of every match.

"Obviously I wish the team from Barcelona all the best – but to every young footballer travelling to Manchester: Give it your all and make the most of this opportunity to pursue your dreams – your future starts here!"

FC Barcelona was the first team to lift the trophy for a second time, and although Coach Victor Sánchez rates his young team highly, he admits, "For us the most important thing is to make sure the team enjoy this experience. If we achieve that we'll show the best of FC Barcelona and provide some entertaining football".



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Brazil's 2000 Premier Cup World Champions [Internacional](#) may be looking to secure a 2nd World Finals trophy for their cabinet but Coach Deive Bandeira does not underestimate the challenges ahead, "**Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.**"

[FC Porto](#) won the inaugural edition back in 1994 before the tournament went global in 1997 and have since only reached 2nd place, but are on a winning streak after beating FC Barcelona in this year's tournament in Bilbao whilst six times World Finalists [Paris Saint-Germain](#) are determined to improve on their best finish to date, second place in 2005.

South Africa's [Orlando Pirates FC](#) have vast experience at MUPC and, in this world championship year, are particularly determined to improve on previous results. With that in mind Coach Augusto Palacios took the team on a month-long training camp in preparation for the tournament. "We have developed specialised training sessions with a different technical focus for each player. Although we hope to improve on our previous performances, our main concern in Manchester will be to reduce the pressure on our young players to succeed."

2009 Runners-up [SV Werder Bremen](#) battled their way through three penalty shoot-outs in Germany's MUPC Finals in Berlin to qualify for Manchester. In the light of last year's defeat by Sao Paulo, Coach Marco Grote cites South American teams as the most dangerous but admits: "Our main goal is to represent Werder Bremen with dignity."

Host team [Manchester United's](#) best showing to date was when they reached the final at Old Trafford back in 2004, only to lose out to local rivals Manchester City. This year's UK qualifiers are [Newcastle United](#), at the final stages for the first time this year, alongside Italian qualifiers [Torino FC](#) who secured their place after beating FC Juventus in a thrilling 4:2 final encounter. Coach Roberto Fogli is very pleased with his team's performance so far and hopes that the summer break does not disrupt their rhythm. "We will need to get back to form quickly because to beat teams of such a high calibre we will need to play our very best football!"

[Colo Colo](#) will represent Chile for the fourth time in Manchester and aim for a top ten finish whilst Steve Lucey, Coach to third time USA qualifiers [Alta Loma Arsenal SC](#) says his team will "play to win" and hopes to "finish higher than any previous team from the US!"

Turkish football Academy [Bucaspor](#) were surprise winners of the European Qualification tournament in Denmark but Coach Murat Dizdar has great confidence in his young team: "Our players are talented and creative and we hope they will give of their best. Our success will be measured by the quality of our football, played in the spirit of fair play."

Other teams qualifying for Manchester for the first time this year include [Pachuca FC](#) from Mexico, Japan's [Kyoto Sanga FC](#), [Sutherland Sharks FC](#) from Australia, India's [Shillong Lajong FC](#) and Malaysian team [MSS Kedah](#). Barkis Ismail is very proud to be the first coach from Malaysia to win a place at the World Finals through the qualifying stages and hopes his team can learn from the experience. "We are overjoyed of course but although our players are individually



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very skilful, they need further strength training. We hope that the experience of playing for the first time in Europe will help them to develop.”

China’s [Changchun Yatai FC](#) narrowly won their place in Manchester with skilful displays throughout their national tournament; whilst three times Korean MUPC Champions [Ulsan Hyundai Middle School](#) cruised into this year’s World Finals with a stunning 4:1 final match, leading Coach DoKyun Kim to target a semi final place this year. However, he voiced a common concern amongst teams travelling long distances to reach Manchester: “Our biggest challenge will be helping the team recover from the time difference – so our strategy will be to concentrate on our defensive play and break swiftly to attack!”

Another team with a long journey to Manchester is the [Right to Dream Academy](#) from Ghana. Academy Manager Andy Farrant hopes the team can improve on previous 5th & 3rd place finishes, but admits: “As always in tournament conditions, the draw will be crucial. We just hope our boys perform at their best, it’s impossible to ask for any more than that. If their best can take us all the way to the final, then we will be delighted of course, but if not, we can still be satisfied that we gave it our all, and that the boys could do no more in their pursuit of victory.”

Twenty teams will travel to Manchester; 320 young hopefuls from different backgrounds and different cultures brought together by just one dream - to become the Manchester United Premier Cup Champions of the world!

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For more information, regularly updated match results and freely available high resolution images – action shots and VIP/player interaction shots throughout the tournament, please register at www.premiercupmedia.com

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Previous Premier Cup/MUPC Champions:

FC Porto, Real Madrid, RCD Español, Platense, Athletic Bilbao, FC Barcelona (2), Internacional, Vitoria, Sao Paulo (2), Corinthians, Manchester City, Fluminense (2), Chivas.