

# Adidas Jabulani

The **Adidas Jabulani** is the official match ball for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The ball was unveiled in Cape Town, South Africa on December 4, 2009. *Jabulani* means "rejoice" in Zulu, and was developed at Loughborough University, UK.

The ball was also used as the match ball of 2009 FIFA Club World Cup in the United Arab Emirates, and a special version of the ball, the Jabulani Angola, was the match ball of the 2010 African Cup of Nations. This ball is also used in the 2010 Clausura Tournament of Argentina as well as the 2010 MLS season in the USA in the league's colours of blue and green.

## Design

The ball is constructed using a new design, consisting of eight (down from 14 in the last World Cup) thermally-bonded, three-dimensional panels. These are spherically-moulded from ethylene-vinyl acetate (EVA) and thermoplastic polyurethanes (TPU). The surface of the ball is textured with grooves, a technology developed by Adidas called GripnGroove<sup>[1]</sup> that are intended to improve the ball's aerodynamics. The design has received considerable academic input, being developed in partnership with researchers from Loughborough University, United Kingdom.<sup>[2]</sup>



Jabulani, the official match ball of the 2010 FIFA World Cup

## Colouring

The ball has four triangular design elements on a white background. Eleven different colours are used, representing the eleven players on a football team, the eleven official languages of South Africa, and the eleven South African communities.<sup>[3]</sup> The Jabulani Angola, used at the 2010 African Cup of Nations in Angola, was coloured to represent the yellow, red, and black of the host nation's flag.<sup>[4]</sup> For the final to be held in Johannesburg on 11 July, a special match ball will be used with gold panels. The ball will be called the "Jo'bulani", playing off the Johannesburg nickname of "The Golden City".

## Manufacturing

The balls are made in China, using latex bladders made in India, thermoplastic polyurethane-elastomer from Taiwan, ethylene vinyl acetate, isotropic polyester/cotton fabric, glue, and ink from China.<sup>[5]</sup>

## World Cup Final Ball

A gold version of the Jabulani ball, the **Jo'bulani**, was announced as the ball for the World Cup Final. The name of the ball inspired by the city of Johannesburg, which is often nicknamed Jo'burg and will be the site of the 2010 Final. This is the second World Cup Final ball to be produced, the other for the 2006 World Cup. The only teams able to use it will be the two teams in the final.

## Reception

This ball has been criticized many times<sup>[6]</sup>; for example, the ball was noted as behaving "completely different" at altitude by England coach Fabio Capello.<sup>[7]</sup> Brazil goalkeeper Júlio César said the ball felt horrible, comparing it to a "supermarket" ball that favored strikers and worked against goalkeepers.<sup>[8]</sup> Giampaolo Pazzini from Italy labelled it "a disaster".<sup>[9]</sup> Chile's goalkeeper, Claudio Bravo, complained about the ball, saying "it was made to prejudice goalkeepers." Spanish goalkeeper Iker Casillas also branded the ball "appalling".<sup>[10]</sup> Italian keeper Gigi Buffon said, "it is very sad that a competition so important as the world championship will be played with such a horrible ball."<sup>[11]</sup> Brazilian striker Luís Fabiano called the ball "supernatural", as it unpredictably changed direction when travelling through the air, adding that none of the players of the Brazilian squad reacted in favor of the ball. In the same interview, Brazilian Júlio Baptista said the ball worked against strikers and goalkeepers, as it moved in different and unintended directions after a kick.<sup>[12]</sup> Joe Hart of England, after training with the ball for a number of days, said the "balls have been doing anything but staying in my gloves."<sup>[13]</sup> He did, however, describe the ball as "good fun" to use, even though is hard work for goalkeepers to cope with.<sup>[14]</sup> Denmark coach Morten Olsen after their 1-0 friendly defeat at the hands of Australia: "We played with an impossible ball and we need to get used to it."<sup>[15]</sup> Brazilian striker Robinho stated, "for sure the guy who designed this ball never played football. But there is nothing we can do, we have to play with it."<sup>[16]</sup> English goalkeeper David James said that "the ball is dreadful. It's horrible, but it's horrible for everyone."<sup>[17]</sup> Marcus Hahnemann replied to the ballmaker Adidas saying that "Technology is not everything; scientists came up with the atom bomb, doesn't mean we should have invented it."

On the other hand, the American Striker Clint Dempsey has spoken in favor of the ball, declaring that "If you just hit it solid, you can get a good knuckle on the ball (...) you've just got to pay a little bit more, you know, attention when you pass the ball sometimes".<sup>[18]</sup>

Adidas has said that the ball had been used since January of 2010, and that most feedback from players had been positive. A spokesperson said the company was "surprised" by the negative reaction to the ball.<sup>[19]</sup>

## See also

- Adidas Kopanya, the official match ball of 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup.
- Adidas Teamgeist, the official ball of the 2006 FIFA World Cup
- Adidas Fevernova, the official ball of the 2002 FIFA World Cup, another match ball that came under fire.

## External links

- Adidas Jabulani unveiled - on the FIFA website<sup>[20]</sup>

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