

SA preferred bidder for Rugby World Cup 2023

SA Rugby CEO Jurie Roux has pledged that South Africa will deliver a "Triple Win" in the 2023 Rugby World Cup. This after World Rugby announced that South Africa was the preferred candidate following a rigorous assessment of the competing bids. South Africa was named in preference to fellow bidders France and Ireland as the candidate best able to fulfil the agreed criteria laid out by World Rugby to deliver a successful and profitable tournament.



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"Based on the evaluation contained in this report, the candidate that scored the highest marks and is therefore deemed to be the optimal candidate to host Rugby World Cup 2023 is South Africa. It is the recommendation of the RWCL board of directors to World Rugby Council that South Africa should be awarded the right to host Rugby World Cup 2023," said the report.

Recommendation, consideration and evaluation

South Africa still has to clear one final hurdle before the celebrations can begin. The recommendation will now be put to the vote of the World Rugby Council in London on 15 November. All three candidates will appear on the ballot paper but World Rugby has stressed to its members that recommendation from the evaluation committee should be taken into consideration. There are 39 votes at stake with a simple majority required to determine the eventual host nation – the candidate nations do not have a vote.

"We told the World Rugby council that we would deliver a triple win tournament when we presented to them last month – a win for the game with record receipts; a win for the fans with an unforgettable tournament in a bucket-list destination and, most importantly, a win for the players with the most athlete-centric event in the tournament's history.

"This nomination is confirmation of that belief and reward for an outstanding bid in which no detail was too small to be addressed or any question not comprehensively answered. We are 100% confident that the commitments we made in our document will be delivered. We will make all of world rugby proud of South Africa 2023," said Roux.

Government support and backing

Mark Alexander, president of SA Rugby, thanked the South African government for their support and said that their backing had been central to the bid's success: "The support of cabinet and the presence of the deputy president, Cyril Ramaphosa,

and minister of sport and recreation, Thulas Nxesi at the presentations in London last month was critical.

“The fact that the deputy minister of sport, Gert Oosthuizen, and the director general, Alec Moemi, were also in attendance spoke volumes. I’d also like to thank the many stadium and city managers and other service providers in preparing our bid as well, of course, as our two World Cup-winning captains, Francois Pienaar and John Smit, who assisted in presenting our bid in London,” said Alexander.

“This is the first Rugby World Cup host selection to take place following a complete redesign of the bidding process to promote greater transparency and maximise World Rugby's hosting objectives. The comprehensive and independently scrutinised evaluation reaffirmed that we have three exceptional bids but it also identified South Africa as a clear leader based on performance against the key criteria, which is supported by the board in the recommendation.

“I would like to congratulate South Africa on a superb bid and all the bid teams for their dedication and professionalism throughout the process to date. Our colleagues on the World Rugby Council will now meet on 15 November in London to consider the Board’s recommendation and vote to decide the host of Rugby World Cup 2023,” said Bill Beaumont, World Rugby and Rugby World Cup Limited chairman.

The best result for rugby

“This was a rigorous and objective process which we have supported from day one and we thank World Rugby for instituting a process that took lobbying out of the equation and professionally identified which host would deliver the best tournament for players, fans and the game. We trust now that the World Rugby Council will follow through by voting to confirm what the experts have identified: that a South African Rugby World Cup in 2023 is the best result for rugby,” added Roux.

South Africa’s 827-page, 8.2kg bid book included a commitment from the South African government to exceed the minimum guarantee of £120m required by World Rugby with an additional guarantee of £40m. SA Rugby forecast another £60m in profit for World Rugby from hospitality sales and savings on event costs because of the exchange rate.

The tournament promises the largest ever attendance for a final with a record 87, 436 spectators at the FNB Stadium as part of an availability of 2.9m match tickets for the event – also a record.

The required minimum number of at least eight world-class venues in established rugby centres are already in place – the smallest of which has a fully seated capacity of 43,500 – all of them familiar with hosting test matches and with no need for extra infrastructure investment by government to meet World Rugby requirements.

Benefits to the South Africa economy

Hosting the tournament will also produce major benefits for South Africa with a forecast R27bn in direct, indirect and induced economic impact for the country. It is estimated that R5.7bn of that would flow to low-income households while

38,600 temporary or permanent jobs would be sustained with an estimated R1.4bn direct tax benefit to the government.

In addition, SA Rugby's legacy vision is to introduce one million young South Africans to rugby between now and 2027.

"Hosting Rugby World Cup 2023 will be a massive boost for our country as well as the game of rugby. This is the fourth successive time we have bid for the tournament: this is not a 'nice-to-have' for rugby in South Africa – the opportunity to recapture just some of the spirit of 1995 has been an obsession for us," said Roux.

Those eligible to vote in the secret ballot on 15 November are: Australia (three votes), England (three), New Zealand (three), Scotland (three), Wales (three), Italy (three), Argentina (three), Canada (one), Japan (two), Georgia (one), Romania (one), USA (one), Asia Rugby (two), Oceania Rugby (two), Rugby Africa (two), Rugby Americas North (two), Rugby Europe (two), Sudamerica Rugby (two).

The final decision will be announced by World Rugby at approximately 1pm (SA time) on 15 November 2017.

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