

# Restaurants get priority over soccer fans

By [Michael Bleby](#)

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McDonald's, the fast-food chain that uses a clown and a yellow M to sell burgers, will not exercise its rights as a Fifa World Cup sponsor to provide food at the stadiums or official fan parks.

McDonald's SA waived its exclusive right of supply at the nine stadiums and 10 fan parks because it would divert too many resources away from its 132 restaurants, marketing and communications director Sechaba Motsieloa said on Friday, 26 March 2010.

"We are too small a market to stretch to do food operations throughout," Motsieloa said in an interview. "If we were not able to serve [our regular customers at restaurants] because we prioritised the World Cup over them, afterwards we may find they have gone to the competitors."

SABMiller rival brand Budweiser, which like McDonald's is a sponsor, is importing beer to exclusively supply the stadiums. It will not, however, supply the official fan parks, which is logical given that the largely local fan park audience is not familiar with the brand and it has little local following. McDonald's does not say how much it paid for its second-tier sponsorship (as opposed to the first-tier Fifa partner status of Coca-Cola and Visa) but fellow sponsor, cellphone company MTN, paid US\$65m.

It was "not unusual" for restaurant sponsors not to exercise their rights in this way, Motsieloa said. In the 2006 World Cup in Germany, McDonald's supplied only one-third of the stadium catering — prepacked, not freshly prepared — while the rest was supplied by a third-party concession-holder.

A similar concessionaire will supply food to the stadiums at this year's event, although because of McDonald's rights, none of the food sold can be branded, Motsieloa said.

The same applies to SAB, which has struck an agreement with organising body Fifa to pour beer at the 10 fan parks Budweiser will not supply. The beers will be Castle and Castle Lite, but there will be no SAB branding on them. "It will be very clear from the colour scheme exactly what you're drinking," SAB spokesman Benedict Maaga said.

McDonald's will focus its World Cup promotional activities on its restaurants — such as through a campaign starting next month to give customers match tickets, Motsieloa said. "We felt we could best leverage our official activities at the restaurants and perhaps differentiate ourselves from other quick-service restaurants," he said.

The restaurant chain, which started in SA in 1995, is counting on a 35% boost to sales compared with the same period a

year earlier. This equates to an increase of between 5% and 7% for the year as a whole, Motsieloa said.

One challenge during the busy period is to keep staff motivated and prevent absenteeism, he said. “That growth puts a lot of pressure on crew. How you keep them working becomes key. The rest of the world is either partying or watching the World Cup and they are working.”

The company will hold an internal competition giving 10 restaurants the chance to take their entire staff to see a match.

“Staff morale is going to be key,” Motsieloa said.

*Source: Business Day*

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