

German Football Federation up in Arms at ESEM creativity



Part of your team



Ahead of a crucial European Championship Qualifier against Wales at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium, Germany had already made a good start in their quest for a place at Austria and Switzerland 2008. With Wales having recently defeated Bulgaria 1-0, and with the side always being backed by a partisan home crowd, the scene was set for an intriguing game which was sure to test the mettle of Joachim Low's much-fancied side.

Through Euroloyd DFB, the official in-house travel agent of the German Football Federation, ESEM had again been appointed to handle the arrangements for the official dignitaries as well as the various journalists and sponsors. Everybody on the trip was confident that Christian Machowski and his team would ensure that they were in capable hands.

The Challenge

Having already taken care of the German Football Federation twice before when visiting Cardiff, the ESEM team was faced with the challenge of finding an innovative new solution to the old dilemma of how to keep the various dignitaries and moreover, the main pitch-side sponsors entertained during the build-up to the game. Christian explains: "Quite apart from handling the requirements of the team and management staff of any club or football federation, it falls to us to also arrange entertainment for the rest of the group.

"On this occasion and having already exhausted various options on previous trips to Cardiff, we had to think creatively to come up with an innovative idea that still remained relevant and gave people a different taste of Wales and specifically, Cardiff."

Benefits:

- ESEM's approach and attention to detail was always completely professional.
- When tasked with coming up with a new and creative solution to a problem, ESEM responded with a suitably innovative solution that gave the 35-strong party a unique experience and exceeded expectations.
- From the initial check-in to boarding the return flights ESEM ensured that nothing was left to chance and that every individual event during the club's two day stay took place on time and without any hitches.
- ESEM ensured that all members of the party were completely informed of the itinerary for the day and even ensured that two injured players were treated by the German national team doctor after the rugby match.
- The ESEM team, led by Christian Machowski, were always on hand to handle any queries or logistical problems that may have arisen.

The solution

Given that rugby union is the national game of Wales and that it is barely known or played in Germany, ESEM hit on the idea of giving the party a specially-arranged introduction to the sport: "We contacted the Cardiff Blues Rugby Club, whose Cardiff Arms Park stadium is adjacent to the Millennium Stadium and enquired about the possibility of exclusively hiring out their facilities for the afternoon," says Christian.

"To our delight, the club's marketing team were hugely receptive and we soon put an itinerary together that promised to give everyone involved an afternoon and an experience to remember."

Working in conjunction with Cathy Selio, marketing manager of Cardiff Blues, the ESEM were tasked with creating an itinerary that would entertain the 35-strong party which was made up primarily of sponsors from companies such as Postbank, Bitburger and T-Com, whose involvement in perimeter advertising had been secured through Swiss company, Infront.

The day began with lunch at Cardiff's Park Plaza Hotel, from where executive coaches took the party over to the Arms Park Stadium. Upon arrival, the group was greeted in the club's Trophy Room and given a brief introduction to rugby union as well as an insight into the history of Cardiff Blues.

After having been handed their 'Blues' shirts, the guests were then taken down to the dressing rooms where they got changed before venturing out onto the historic Arms Park turf where they were met by former Cardiff Blues forward and Wales legend, Craig Quinell. A huge character; both in stature and personality, Craig then introduced himself and also gave a brief history of the stadium before getting down to work and giving the group some fantastic basic rugby coaching. ESEM operations manager, Melanie Evans, explains: "With nobody in the party ever having played rugby before, Craig decided to keep things simple with some basic exercises along with some running, passing and kicking drills.

"Much as these were all thoroughly enjoyed, the high point of the session came with a kicking competition where everyone in the party took penalties, with the last man standing having not missed one at the end of any of the rounds being declared the winner.

"That was followed by a brief game of rugby which was played at a gentlemanly pace but still resulted in two of the party picking up minor injuries! However, these were then treated by one of the German national team's doctors, which only added to the overall experience for the people involved.

"After the party had showered and changed, they reconvened in the bar where they were treated to refreshments before Craig Quinell joined them again and gave autographs as well as complimentary tickets for a Cardiff Blues reserve team fixture which was being played the following day, ahead of the all-important football match in the adjacent Millennium Stadium that evening."

As a mark of how successful the whole day was, the Cardiff Blues marketing team have since decided to incorporate a similar event into their offering for corporate sponsors.



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