

The Coca-Cola Company
news
release

Zakumi - a Mascot with attitude

So what can we say about him? One thing is for sure, Zakumi will be first on the dance floor and last off it at the biggest party in the world - the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™. He wants to dance and entertain as many people as he can. He is an animator for fans, players and officials, for schoolchildren, teenagers and big kids alike!

Needless to say, he is extremely proud to be the Official Mascot and determined to be the best host for everyone visiting his beloved country. He symbolizes South Africa and the rest of the African continent through his self-confidence, pride, hospitality, social skills and warm-heartedness.

Zakumi is a jolly, self-confident, adventurous, spontaneous, and actually quite shrewd little fellow. He loves to perform and always follows his instinct and intuition, yet sometimes has the tendency to exaggerate a bit. You will often find him fooling about and teasing people but not in a mean way. He is warm-hearted and caring, and wants to make as many friends as possible.

He loves to play football as it is a great way to connect with others and break down language barriers. He always carries his football around which he will use to invite people to play with him.

Zakumi loves football. At one time he decided to dye his hair green as he felt it would be the perfect camouflage against the green of the football pitch; a bit like his rosette spots are when hunting in the wilderness!

He does have one striking weakness. With all his energy, he needs frequent rests. Occasionally, in-between performances on stage, he may suddenly fall asleep on the spot at the most random times! But rest assured, these are only short breaks that a leopard of his calibre needs to recharge his batteries.

Over the last years he has travelled the whole of Africa where the leopard habitat is good (pretty much everywhere from open savannahs, forests, jungles to mountainous areas, even deserts). He has therefore learned to adapt to new environments; enjoying the diversity in nature and people across the African continent

The name 'Zakumi' is a composition of 'ZA' standing for South Africa and 'kumi', which translates into '10' in various languages across Africa.

Zakumi's main priority is to turn the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa into one huge, joyful and unforgettable party and show the thousands of international guests the warmth and spirit of the African continent.

"He wants to create a good mood for the fans and raise the excitement for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the first on African soil. He is a proud South African and wants to ensure that the world will come together in South Africa," explained Lucas Radebe, South Africa's football icon and close friend of Zakumi.

History of Official Mascots

What do an orange, a lion, a cockerel and Zakumi the leopard have in common? More than you might think... because all of them were once Official FIFA World Cup™ Mascots.

The FIFA World Cup Mascot has a tradition of more than 40 years. World Cup Willie was the first-ever FIFA World Cup Mascot, invented for the 1966 tournament in England. Not only was the Mascot a tremendous success, but it also brought

England victory over their opponents. Official Mascots have come to play a more and more important role in the FIFA World Cup™ as they represent the fun side of the event, but also serve as ambassadors of FIFA and the host country. Cast a variety of animals, a fruit, a vegetable, children and a few abstract characters, the mascots' infectious positive attitude have over the years added to the atmosphere of each competition in their own unique way.

Zakumi's predecessors since 1966:

- 1966 England, World Cup Willie (lion)
- 1970 Mexico, Juanita (boy)
- 1974 West Germany, Tip and Tap (two boys)
- 1978 Argentina, Gauchito (footballer)
- 1982 Spain, Naranjito (orange)
- 1986 Mexico, Pique (hot pepper)
- 1990 Italy, Ciao (stick figure player)
- 1994 United States, Striker (dog)
- 1998 France, Footix (cockerel)
- 2002 Korea/Japan, Spheriks (energy)
- 2006 Germany, GOLEO VI (lion)

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The Coca-Cola Company

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