

Press release: Foreign Secretary and President of Panama in sporting gesture ahead of the World Cup

Today the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson swapped football shirts with the President of Panama, Juan Carlos Varela.

Next month, England and Panama will face off for 90 minutes at the World Cup – but today they were both on the same side as focus turned to their travelling fans during the tournament.

Governments from all 31 qualified nations have been working together to prepare for the World Cup, helping the Russian authorities improve safety and security for fans from all countries, including the UK and Panama.

After handing over the shirt that the England team will be sporting when they take to the turf in the match on the 24th June, the Foreign Secretary gratefully received a Panamanian shirt in return. This will be Panama's first ever appearance at a World Cup Finals.

The Foreign Secretary said:

Next month, England and Panama will play against one another in the World Cup, so we'll be on opposing sides for 90 minutes.

But before, during and after that game we share a top priority for the World Cup – the safety and security of our nationals.

Since our preparations began more than two years ago, our staff have visited all eleven host cities, worked closely with local authorities, met with representatives from all 31 competing nations and launched our Be On The Ball campaign, which offers fans specialist World Cup guidance and advice for being ready for Russia.

This includes ensuring you have appropriate travel insurance, necessary emergency numbers and information on the all-important FAN ID. We also of course encourage fans to be good guests in Russia and to remain mindful of any local laws and customs.

An estimated 4,000-10,000 England fans will travel to Russia, where the FCO has permanent representation in three of the 11 world cup host cities (Moscow, Ekaterinburg, St Petersburg), and will have a mobile team in the cities where England play.

The Foreign Office have been advising travelling fans through the Be On The Ball Campaign, which can be found by visiting [here](#).

The England v Panama game will take place on 24 June in Nizhny Novgorod.

Further information

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