



# **FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION**

MODULE 1.  
INTRODUCTION TO THE  
PLANNING AND  
ORGANIZATION OF  
SPORTING EVENTS

**- CONMEBOL -  
EVOLUCIÓN**

## 1.1 List of abbreviations and terms used

Table 1. List of abbreviations and terms used

ACR	Area responsible for accreditation services
AEB	Area responsible for food and beverage operations within the official perimeters.
Capacity	Total seating capacity for football stadiums
Door Opening	Time determined at which the sports facility opens its doors to the public
Operational Areas	Responsible for the development of the different operational issues in an event.
Member Association (MA)	Football Federation or Confederation affiliated to CONMEBOL
Backdrops	Poster used in specific areas of the stadium or other event facility containing sponsors and sponsorships; also used in press conferences behind interviewees.
BOH	Back of House, a term generally attributed to persons acting outside the FOP.
BRD	Broadcast operational area, responsible for the entire operation of signal generation for the transmission of the match on different types of screens (TV, mobile devices, etc.).
Briefing	Summary of activities defined prior to the event, objectives and expected levels of service.
Broadcast Compound	Location where the trucks responsible for the transmission signal of the events (the images for TV) are positioned.

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CAW	Cleaning & Waste operational area, responsible for cleaning and waste management.
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television - Panoramic high-definition fixed and/or rotating cameras used to take graphic shots of attendees, entrance and exit gates, and internal and external areas of the sports venue.
External Customer	Service providers, guests, commercial partners, sponsors, media, general public, etc.
Internal Customer	All areas involved in the operation of the event, working together to serve mainly external customers; it also has responsibilities for deliveries to internal customers. (e.g. TRA provides services for CPT).
COL	Local Organizing Committee, responsible for structuring an event or project in a venue other than the HQ (e.g., CONMEBOL may create a LOC in country "X" in South America to develop specific tournaments such as Copa America).
CONMEBOL	South American Football Confederation
CPT	Operational area of Competitions
Countdown	List of all activities on an event day, either MD (match day)/NMD (non match day)/ MD+1 (match day +1), etc.
DCC	The Directorate of Club Competitions, as per CONMEBOL's institutional organization chart.
Debriefing	Post-event meeting to analyze negative and positive points. Important to improve operations
ED	Event Day
Host Broadcaster	The Host Broadcaster (HB) is the entity designated by CONMEBOL to produce the signal for the rights holders.
Visitor Broadcaster	Any broadcaster, except HB, which has facilities at the match location

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EVS	Event Service operational area, responsible for organizing workflows and additional events.
Final Phase	All matches from the Round of 16 onwards
Preliminary Phase	All First and Second Phase matches
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FOP	Field of play. Space between the first row of bleachers at the bottom, towards the center of the playing field.
FW	Final Whistle, the end of the match by the main referee.
Hours OFF	Times when there is no customer service at the facilities or Stadium.
Hours ON	Times where external customers are present at the facility or Stadium
Hospitality	VIPS customer area
HQ	Head Quarter, main office where part of the team in charge of the event organization is located.
Indoor	Enclosed sports facility, covered, with no open-air parts
IFAB	<i>International Football Association Board</i>
Know how	Knowledge acquired, experience
KO	Kick Off, kickoff, start of the game
LIC	Operational area responsible for Licensing
LIM	Operational area responsible for cleaning
LOG	Operational area responsible for logistics
LOK	Operational area responsible for the Look (customization and adaptation of the spaces with the official brands of the event).
MD	Match day; The abbreviations MD+1 / MD-1 are used to refer to the days before or after the match day.

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MD+1	Day after the day of the match
MD-1	Day before the match
MED	Area responsible for the medical services offered at the event
Merchandising	Products associated with the event, they can be sold or distributed to participants.
Naming Rights	Advertising technique by which a corporation or other entity acquires the right to name a venue or event, generally for a certain period of time.
NMD	Non-Match Day, days when there are no games, but teams continue to work.
OPS	Area responsible for leading all operations around an event. Guides and promotes all other areas to communicate and work together.
Outdoor	Events occurring in an open, outdoor area
Facility Perimeter	Any part outside the stadium or sports facility that is part of the official perimeter (e.g., nearby streets that are closed on game day).
PRE	Area responsible for the operation offered to media professionals
HR	Human Resources, the area responsible for the management and hiring of personnel
SAD	Supplementary Accreditation Device, an item that supplements the accreditation in certain areas of the event.
SEC	Area responsible for managing the event's security actions at all official sites. It is also responsible for maintaining strict contact with the public forces.
TIK	Area responsible for revenue sales operations
Rights Holders	These are the television companies that purchase the right to broadcast the event on their television channels or digital platforms. They receive the signal produced by the Host Broadcaster and have the right to broadcast the matches on their channels.

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TRA	Area responsible for the operations of transportation services offered to internal customers.
VAPP	Vehicle Accreditation Parking Pass; parking permit and vehicle access system
VAR	Video Assistant Referee, the referee team responsible for the review of the plays via video
VEM	Venue Management, the area responsible for leading all operations related to an event within the stadium.
VIK	Value in Kind, when a sponsor negotiates part of the payment by offering products to the event. From beverages to cars to communication technology
VIP	Very Important Person, usually guests who need special attention and differentiated services/experiences.
WFO	Work Force, name used to identify the professionals involved in the event.
Technical Zone	Area where the reserve players and the team's technical staff stay.
Zones	Predetermined areas within the stadium. E.g.: zone 1 = playing field / zone 2 = changing rooms, etc.).

Source: own elaboration.

The course is developed according to the operations that took place before the COVID-2019 pandemic. For more detailed information on the new operations protocol, we suggest taking a look at the document: "Operations Protocol for the resumption of CONMEBOL competitions" which is available on our website.

## **1.2 What is a sporting event? - CONMEBOL's vision and the different types of sporting events**

To explain what a sporting event is, first of all, we must know the meaning of the word event itself. The term event comes from the Latin *eventus*. Among the various definitions for this word, according to the Royal Spanish Academy, an event is an important and programmed occurrence of a social, academic, artistic or sporting nature.

The global sports industry highlights the emotional added value of the different sports celebrations in South America at all times, its cultural diversity, tradition and the passion injected by each of the 10 countries that participate in each of the competitions organized by CONMEBOL.

We also say that the word *event* can derive from eventuality, that is, eventual moments and situations where different changes will occur that will require actions that may not be planned.

A professional must always know that, from one moment to another, the planning can change course, precisely as a result of an eventuality. As event planners, we must be able to solve problems under pressure, to be on alert to all actions that may go off the previously planned course. If there is one thing we can assure you, it is that if something can go wrong, it will go wrong.

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The approach of this course and its concepts will be unique. Although we can find different approaches around the world, examples and technical definitions on sporting events, the exclusive approach we will provide will be given by the *expertise* of each event organized by CONMEBOL itself, sharing the knowledge, experience and values that CONMEBOL has and puts into practice in each of its competitions.

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**We will study the planning and organization of events based on CONMEBOL's know-how.**

CONMEBOL, founded in 1916, is a non-profit institution responsible for the organization of the major South American continental football events. It was precisely in the year of its foundation that the oldest continental tournament of national teams in the world, the Copa America, was held.

As well as the Copa America, every year since 1960, CONMEBOL organizes the longest running club tournament in the world, the CONMEBOL Libertadores, which currently reaches an audience of over 180 countries.

Year after year, CONMEBOL, through its events, reaches millions of people around the world. With its work base in Asunción, Paraguay, it allocates over 85% of its income to direct investment in South American football, at all levels and categories, promoting the sporting and commercial competitiveness of our football.

Based on our values of passion, inspiration, reliability, professionalism and sustainability, CONMEBOL seeks to organize each of the events it develops, and not only its tournaments, but also all the "satellite" events, such as the draws for each tournament, board meetings, internal and external training, etc.

This course seeks to contribute to event organizers as a whole, regardless of the magnitude of the event to be held. It does not matter if you will be organizing a school football game or if you will be in charge of the whole organization of a South American mega sporting event. We consider that, regardless of the size of the event, the procedures, instances, concepts to be developed in this course and the respect for the chronology of the different phases, will serve as a fundamental outline, with the size and impact of the event being planned taking a second place.

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Figure 1. Organization of sporting events



Source: own.

We will categorize events according to small, medium and large/mega events, based on their impact.

Large/mega events: massive, international events, in some cases held in several cities and even in several countries, with a large number of active participants of a leading sport in worldwide audience, in its highest categories or, also, traditional events that bring together many sports, such as the Olympic Games. These events require a high organizational level, a large amount of infrastructure, human and economic resources available.

These are high-impact events within CONMEBOL: the Copa América, the CONMEBOL Libertadores and the CONMEBOL Sudamericana.

Medium-sized event: less massive events, with less global impact and a smaller budget. They may be national or even international, with a lower resource requirement than large events. When we talk about medium impact events, we are not only referring to events of not so popular sports such as some types of football or basketball, they can be events of these sports, massive, worldwide, but perhaps in their minor categories, with an attraction only for fans or great enthusiasts who follow each competition of their favorite sport throughout the planet, or even those events that achieve popularity already in their decisive stages such as the semifinals or finals.

Some of the medium-impact events within CONMEBOL are: CONMEBOL Libertadores U-20, CONMEBOL Libertadores Women's Football (with more and more followers and more clubs participating), CONMEBOL Recopa, South American Youth National Teams, etc.

Small Event: events of a civic, neighborhood or community nature. These are events that do not require a lot of infrastructure, have a low impact budget and are characterized by few economic and human resources applied, the latter often as "multitasking".

## 1.3 Common structure of sporting events

Regardless of its greater or lesser complexity and impact, the organizational structure of sporting events has a common root, which is unique, and represents the starting point that, throughout the course, we will address in detail.

Whatever the event, whatever the level of services, with more or less budget, with more or less operational areas, to plan, execute and control, the phases to follow are:

Figure 2. Organizational structure of the event



Source: own elaboration.

### Pre-event planning and organization:

Starting the planning of an event requires analysis and vision into the future. We must anticipate possible changes, evaluate different scenarios and, starting from the date of the event, start a plan backwards, as we will mention later when we talk about a kind of "imaginary" trip to the future and our key and initial question: What kind of event do we want to deliver?

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Forecast deliveries, start and end dates for each phase of the project or activity, what service levels and production deadlines we will have, etc. Always consider the design of "B" plans for cases in which an original plan cannot be fulfilled due to force majeure.

During planning, it is essential to have control mechanisms, from software designed especially for the competition to different spreadsheets that guarantee that everything is under constant monitoring, these tools must be used, each event organizer will choose their mechanisms, but they must surely exist. Having a good memory is a good attribute and advantage, but under no circumstances can we leave everything to it.

Working with deadlines is fundamental. Every task entrusted must have a deadline for completion, but as we will expand throughout the course, even with everything planned, there are bound to be last minute changes that event organizers will have to deal with, make decisions under pressure and be emotionally prepared, knowing that all these situations are normal during an event. There are no events without changes on the fly. Event managers need to be aligned with their team. Nothing should be left to chance.

**Nothing should be left to chance.**

It is also essential at this initial stage of the process to think critically about human resources: how many people will we need to carry out our event smoothly? A well-planned human resources structure, establishing hierarchies and a correct and clear assigning of responsibilities is also fundamental. We should not only think about the number of people needed, but also about the budget we have, being efficient when defining how many people per area we should have. We must build a relationship of mutual trust.

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Communication among all stakeholders is key for the proper development of the event and for the planned actions to be properly executed. A balance must be sought between the real needs and the available budget.

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## Event development:

The match day or event day, initiates the development phase of the event. It is commonly referred to as when "the ball starts rolling". Once the work team has been defined and fine-tuned, it is time for development, where everything must "run" in a coordinated manner and according to the previous stage, the planning, for the expected day, the "D" day.

In addition to working day to day on the production, monitoring all the logistics, security, suppliers and materials needed, the time has come to show our event to the world, generating that feeling of belonging, making our entire audience want to participate, making "the world" want to be present within the target audience we are aiming at.

This is the phase and moment to strengthen ties and relationships with suppliers, participants and target audiences.

Suppliers and business partners will be paramount to the success of the event.

Regardless of the size of our event, reaching out to our external customers (the fans) gives us a clear picture of what to expect on the big day.

Fans involved in the event, who believe in the proposal, and pay to be part of it, will have a much more positive understanding, being flexible with possible changes along the way.

When we do good pre-event work, in the planning stage, we will have much more certainty in all the processes that we execute during the day or days of the event. All work previously developed will be crowned with events just as planned. This is a key point in our constant learning throughout our professional life. When we talk about events and professionals in the sporting events industry, we talk about experience acquired in all the productions done over the years. There is no exact formula or rule of thumb. Each event is unique and so is the feeling of doing it.

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### Post-event:

A correct management of a sporting event forces us to be "ahead" of the facts that are happening in real time, we must always be ahead of everything that is going to happen, focused on the events that are happening here and now, but also with a clear and safe panorama, with certainty about the next steps.

The "after" is still a period of hard work, in which "we must not let our guard down" just because the sports competition has come to an end. We need to dismantle any structure or facility that we have temporarily built to use during the event, clean the facilities, carry out work on the field after the game, return rented equipment, pay suppliers, collaborators, check the spaces used to check for possible damage and, if necessary, carry out repairs and minor alterations that may be necessary to return the sports facility as it was delivered to us before the event.

It will also be time to share all our experience so that it can serve as a legacy, a transmission of knowledge for future events that we will carry out ourselves or that will be useful for the organizers of future events of similar characteristics.

**A detailed statistical analysis of all the figures obtained, sharing experiences, analyzing failures, analyzing future improvements that can be incorporated, reviewing the lessons learned and new ideas useful for the future is vital for an appropriate closing.**

Statistics will be one of the main input documents to obtain conclusions and make our "debriefing" of the event, a document that we will go over in the last module of this course.

As we mentioned when we talked about the post-event stage: What went right, What went wrong, What went according to plan, What exceeded expectations, What can be improved, What numbers can be used to look for new opportunities (for example, if the event had a great impact in terms of television broadcasting, being able to show this in an objective and well-founded manner can help us obtain more funding from our Sponsors in the future by showing them the impact that their brands can have).

We must compare the projected budget vs. the real or executed budget, compare the numbers obtained in terms of the objectives we had set, all real measurable results vs. all

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projected measurable results. This is why we continue to reaffirm the concept of good planning and, from the beginning of the project, to be clear about the specific objectives in order to be able to establish indicators for them.

Celebrating achieved goals with the team is important so that everyone feels motivated for new stages and fulfilled with their work, new events and challenges. We must carefully analyze the negative points, all constructive criticism for the future must be shared among our staff, it is the only way to implement improvement actions for future events.

**Do not waste the opportunity to learn from your staff, be a good listener.**

### **1.4 Initial issues, questions to be asked**

The first step requires "time travel", imagining ourselves in the future, clearly visualizing the final event to be delivered, our end product, its general and specific characteristics, as well as all the details that will make it unique.

So, to start planning the event, we must ask ourselves:

**What type of event do we want to deliver?**

Visualize the event from the beginning of the event that we want to deliver as a final product, so that once we have defined and visualized that concept, we can "return to the present" and start with phase 1 of planning.

We cannot plan an event, whatever its impact and magnitude, without being clear about the final product we want to deliver.

**"There is never a fair  
wind for him who does  
not know which way he  
is going"**

Following the clear concept of where we are going, having a clear idea of what type of event we should produce, we asked ourselves a series of initial questions.

The answers we find to these questions will give us initial and fundamental information to move forward in the design of our project.

**Initial self-questionnaire:**

- **Type of event** - Is this the first edition of the event, has the same host city or country held events of the same magnitude before? Each event is unique, even an event with previous editions may vary in the way it is played, the countries, cities or teams that take part, the number of participants, the ages of the players, its definition mechanisms and rules, its sponsors, etc.

It is essential to investigate and learn about previous editions or similar events, to use as an example what has been done before, so on that basis, later adapt them to our challenge and the requirements of our event.

As part of your activities, consider attending a similar event before you start planning your own. Make careful observations about everything that happens on the operational side. Feel how the experience is or is not adding value to you.

**What do you want your audience to perceive at your event?**

- **Date of celebration** - Are there other important activities on the same dates in the city? What kind of weather do we have? Do we have enough facilities to hold the event, transportation, hotels, training grounds, stadiums or fields, etc.?

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It is essential to have an exact definition of the date of the event to be organized.

Check the calendar, from the logistical point of view, evaluate if there are other events in the city during the same period as ours, which may have a negative impact on our organization or simply force us to take more precautions than usual and to plan more carefully.

Holidays that imply less frequent public transportation, street blocks due to other outdoor events that prevent us from reaching our event site as we would normally do, other uses of the sports complex, stadium or surroundings where we will develop our event, other similar events that require security reinforcement (example: two different football games in the same city, involving classic rival teams that, although they do not directly face each other, their fans will be in two different events but in the same city at the same time, etc.).

How does the possible coexistence with another event in the city on the same date affect us? Hotel capacity, stadium and surroundings, prices for our clients, quality training centers available, capacity of bus terminals, airports, etc.

Knowing in advance about the days off and public holidays is also a fundamental task.

From the climate point of view, analyze weather statistics from previous years at the same time, and closely monitor this variable, using reliable sources. Although it is an external variable that we cannot control, we can minimize the impact that the weather may have on our event through extensive knowledge based on statistics and updated forecasts.

From the point of view of promotion and diffusion, analyze the other events that coexist with ours, in the same city, what negative impact can they really have on the one you are organizing, from the point of view of attracting followers, loss of popularity, etc.

It will always depend on the event you are organizing and the impact of the event and who is the target customer.

During the dates of our event, and not only occurring in the city, are there any worldwide events that might stop people from attending our event? Do we want to have an event, for example, on the same day or time as the Super Bowl? Or on the same day as the draw for the Champions League finals? Perhaps on the same date that your country's federation will call up players for a World Cup?

Keep in mind that, even if they are events or shows of a different nature, we must always remember that sport, a sporting event, is a by-product of the global entertainment industry. We must always analyze, in the whole market, what other events will take place at the same time and how that event impacts ours, whether it is sport related or not.

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- Duration of the event - What is the duration of our event? How do I plan the management and recruitment of human resources?

There are sporting events that last one day, such a school football championship during a morning and afternoon, a pre-season friendly match between two professional teams, a youth football tournament played in a single city for a week, and a CONMEBOL Libertadores project, played over a whole year, from February to November in 10 different countries.

It is always important to be clear that an event is NOT just the day of the event, it is not just what we see on TV when the players take the field 6 minutes before the game starts.

In many cases (99% of the cases, regardless of the event), this will require a period of development and prior planning that will be much longer than the period of the event itself.

**Proper planning and organization will be key to the success of the operation.**

A clear example is the unique finals of two of our most important tournaments, CONMEBOL Libertadores and CONMEBOL Sudamericana. The total event, with all its previous activities from the moment the teams arrive in the city where the match will be played until they leave (official training sessions, press conferences, exclusive activities for the fans, final match and journey home of the delegations, among many others) lasts 4 days in total.

The planning of the event takes a year of effort of more than 120 people working together for those 4 days. A football world cup has 30 days of official competition, but its planning and organization takes from 5 to 8 years, or even more if we think from the moment each country decides to present its candidacy.

From day "zero" of the planning stage, we must not only define the functional areas we will have and the level of services we will provide according to our event - final product, we must also define WHO will execute and lead these different areas.

Undoubtedly the different phases of the project will require different people depending on the stage and the activity that is being executed. We will have staff from day 1 all the way to the post event, some will work only in the execution phase, others only in the development phase and why not, some only in the post event. Regardless of this, already at the beginning

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of the organization and planning of the event, we must be clear about the number of personnel and staff for each operational area for each phase of the event.

This point is not only essential to know "WHO" will execute the tasks, but also to know as precisely as possible our HR budget and if our HR needs are covered with the funds we have to carry out the tournament. If not, we must adjust our needs or look for alternatives to increase the HR budget, for example, in case we do not have the capacity to carry out the event with fewer people.

Evaluate if it is possible, according to the country's legislation and our planning, to work with a volunteer plan in some sectors or areas of the event. Working in a sporting event is much more than a job, it is a unique experience as a human being, very enriching for personal and professional life. The 2014 World Cup in Brazil was a resounding success story in terms of volunteer work.

For this event, Brazil received more than 154,000 registrations/applications for its volunteer program. More than 36% of the applications were from people from Europe. Of the total number of applications received, 14,000 people were selected to work in 12 World Cup host cities. The culture of volunteering is growing at major events around the world. Many professionals in the sports industry start their careers using these programs as a gateway to the sports market, taking advantage of the opportunity to get to know new countries and new cultures.

Being a volunteer takes us to a universe of countless possibilities. There is no age to become a volunteer in a sporting event. In fact, it is common to find a wide range of ages, such as retired people who apply to help, for the pleasure of being part of a sporting event, and the satisfaction of feeling useful and helping others, placing them in a very encouraging situation, considering that today's world often sets them aside.

- Will the facilities hosting our event host other events on previous dates? How many days in advance do we need to set up (concepts of shared use and exclusive use of the stadium, court or any other space used for the event, such as dressing rooms, lounges, parking lots, etc.)?

Once we have already defined the venues where our event will take place, we must analyze their situation and their availability before, during and after our dates. We must also see how we formalize their use to ensure that they will be available for us under the required conditions.

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**During the pre-planning phase, we must draw up a schedule for the use of our facilities.**

It is essential to set a clear definition of the period of use within the contract that grants us the right to use the sports facilities, whether by rental or loan, including the hourly load of the days.

There must be period of shared use (period of availability) with the owner of the sports facility, in which the owner of the stadium can also carry out activities of interest allows us to begin certain activities for our event (repairs, adaptations of spaces, etc.). This is a stage prior to our event, but already exclusive (period of exclusivity). For example, 14 days before the event the owner of the stadium cannot use it for any activity, the stadium becomes ours, to use and make all repairs and maintenance for our event (preparation of the lawn, total customization of the stadium with the brand of the event, preparation of locker rooms, VIP rooms, installation of special TV camera platforms for our event, food and beverage canteens, etc.). Last but not least, a period of post-event use, allowing the correct dismantling and return of the stadium to the state in which it was given to us.

The following is an example of the definition of the periods mentioned above.

Figure 3. Illustrative example



Source: own elaboration.

It is important to analyze the use of the playing field prior to our event, in the period of shared use or even before it. We must be very clear that certain types of events cannot take place within a period of time prior to our event, for example, if 30 days before our event there will

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be a large recital, we know that the playing field will suffer great problems, so we must negotiate all these things, take them into account, know them and plan accordingly. We cannot have surprises or find out from the press. The club or stadium owner is the one who must inform us of all the events and uses of the field during the days prior to our event. This will allow us to negotiate deadlines and foresee more exhaustive maintenance plans for our period of exclusive use.

When negotiating and signing our contract for the use of the event space, we must list everything in detail in order to avoid future surprises that may upset our budget or generate problems due to misunderstandings.

We must define who covers electricity, water and other utility bills at the site.

It is vital to have a maintenance team that is already familiar with the space where we are going to start working. Preferably a team that already performs the daily maintenance services of these spaces, which we could also include in our agreement with the club, stadium or sports center where our event will take place.

- **Is the event indoor or outdoor? How can weather aspects influence our event and what can we do to minimize risks?**

Understanding the ideal venue for our event is essential. If we are, for example, planning a futsal event, it will take place in an indoor sports center. If it is a field football or beach football tournament, it will be an outdoor event.

As mentioned before, weather forecasts are essential to foresee and minimize all kinds of weather threats. The weather factor will never be under our control, even if we have a detailed forecast from the city's weather station or the best web sites, the risk will never be zero, but undoubtedly the more information we have in advance, the greater our decision-making and prevention capacity will be.

In major events, such as a World Cup, each city has a weather specialist who provides the event or competition manager every day with the weather forecast for that day and the following days, including the probability of strong winds, rain, hail, snow, high temperatures, etc.

In smaller events, it is a task that we must delegate and receive a reliable report on weather conditions every day. Regardless of the weather factor, it is always good to have a

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contingency and backup plan, with alternative backup scenarios for matches or training sessions.

Having a clear protocol for the referee or delegate of each of the matches in terms of the momentary suspension or cancellation of the match is fundamental so that this situation is not left to the subjective and personal opinion of each different authority of the matches. In our continental tournaments organized by CONMEBOL, we have a standard protocol of momentary suspension and even cancellation of matches in all our regulations.

We define the steps to follow, the accepted suspension times and how the return to the match should be developed, as well as, depending on the different delays that may occur, what procedure should be followed by the match delegate and the referee at all times. In extreme cases, once a match has been cancelled, we also establish, whenever possible, when the competition should be resumed.

Clear protocols, documents that support fair and uniform decision-making, without subjectivity, are essential to be consistent and leave nothing to different criteria.

- **Means and resources - What budget do we have to carry out the event? Are we going to have extra resources from registration or ticket sales?**

As stated in the phrase that guides CONMEBOL in each of its actions, we must always "think big".

We must dream of the best event, the best level of services. We must always aim to go beyond the impact of the event of the previous year or others similar, we must always aim to surpass what has been done before. We must always dream, but with our feet on the ground.

**Budgeting is a fundamental part of the event manager's success and skills.**

Whether by ourselves in our own event or, with the budget allocated to us by the owner of the event, good management, monitoring and control is critical for the success of the event.

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Regardless of whether the event is for fundraising, to generate profits for the event owner or for any surplus generated by the event to be reinvested in football, we should always try to organize the best possible event within budget.

It is useless to plan an event without considering the budget, that is why every activity we execute must be carried out not only from the analysis of the impact on our customers, the spectators, but also from our budget.

During the course we will delve into the alternatives that we may have to minimize our costs, and even raise funds that allow us to develop and expand our event with a greater investment than initially proposed.

- **Event target audience: identification and establishment of the level of service of each customer of the sporting event. Who are the customers of your event?**

Identifying and grouping the different clients of the event is fundamental in our planning and organization phase.

We can distinguish between external customers and internal customers. Example: What type of spectators will we have? General audience, family members, VIPs, VVIPs, people with mobility problems, etc. All of them must have a place in our event to enjoy it according to their expectations and level of service.

In a mega sporting event, for some years now, stadiums have become a business unit, event organizers as well as clubs are constantly looking to maximize their revenues through match day experiences (MD).

A new level of spectator has been established, one who is able and willing to pay a high value ticket for which he/she obtains a higher quality, more complete level of service. In the following modules we will talk about some concepts that result in higher revenues and new experiences (Hospitality Concept).

Regardless of the event and its magnitude, we must consider the characteristics of our clients, have the capacity to generate experiences and different levels of services that add value to the event.

At the 2019 CONMEBOL Libertadores Single Final in Lima, more than 4,300 people purchased a VIP ticket with access to a hospitality tent that provided them with extra services of diverse content, food, drinks, entertainment and games, photo-opportunities, etc.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

In our small event, we can also generate a differentiated level of service if we identify the possibility that some customers are willing to pay for it. A tent with a drink and a more comfortable chair at the school football mini-tournament or a place to watch the game from the car, with a sandwich and a drink included, are extras that we should always think about, even if to increase our profit.

The fact that it is a minor tournament should not stop us when thinking about differential service levels for our customers, nor should it restrict us from offering experiences that will make customers want to come back again, perhaps with other guests or friends so that they can also enjoy the same experience.

- **Support from local institutions: Do we have the support of the city, municipality, country, state and governmental entities?**

It is essential to have the clear support of all national and city authorities (depending on the magnitude of the tournament).

A clear example is the guarantees that cities interested in hosting a CONMEBOL Libertadores or CONMEBOL Sudamericana Single Final must present at the time of expressing their interest. In this case, the cities expressing such interest must demonstrate through documentation the full support and collaboration of all entities involved, national and local government authorities, ministries, airports, stadium authorities where the event will take place, guarantees of security and services, letter of confirmation of accommodation capacity and fair prices, and letter of legal matters addressing issues such as the protection of the CONMEBOL brand and its derivatives, etc.

**An event requires the organized, planned and joint effort of many parties involved. We must ensure, for the proper development, that we have the support of all institutions according to the level of our event.**

And likewise, with all the guarantees, we must recognize that we will have to be prepared for last-minute changes. For example, in 2018 the second leg of the CONMEBOL Libertadores final had to be moved to Madrid. In 2019, the final of the same tournament was moved from Santiago de Chile to Lima.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- **Commercial Potential** - Do we have or will we be able to count on commercial alliances to help self-finance the tournament, cover costs and generate profits?

Analyze the commercial potential, possible commercial alliances, sponsors interested in exhibiting their brand and generating experiences in our event, different levels of sponsorships that will contribute to cover the costs of the event.

We can seek to define different types of commercial alliances, rethinking the concept of brand exposure, which today goes beyond a static advertisement at the edge of the field. Brands seek to provide experiences to different customers. An autograph signing day for the children of a company's executives, a special sector of the VIP box where a brand offers product tastings, or that offers tours and access to sensitive areas of the stadium where spectators do not usually have access, etc.

We seek to maximize the number of commercial proposals and offers for the different companies and brands interested in investing in our tournament, define packages and, based on that, offer the different options.

On the other hand, the exploitation of the merchandising area is fundamental and represents a good percentage of our profit. Seek partnerships with companies that can produce commercial content of our event and thus be able to market it in official stores of the event.

The TV rights sold to different broadcasting channels represent significant profit, the main source of income of modern football for leagues, tournaments and clubs.

From 2016 onwards, CONMEBOL, year after year, has been exponentially increasing TV and Sponsors income, achieving a significant increase for the different clubs participating in our competitions, a world record, an achievement of new CONMEBOL current management.

For your event, you should rethink the concept of partnerships, not only in exchange for money but also in kind (VIK). Think about alliances with a technical sponsor that will provide all the tournament organization's staff clothing, referees, etc. Or, why not, a brand of isotonic beverages and water that will provide hydration in the stadium, hotels, training centers, etc., in exchange for brand presence in the official sites of the tournament.

- **Legal aspects and general situation:** What are the country's legal guidelines for holding events, contracting insurance, licenses, laws of the country or city, entities that

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regulate sports activities, federations, ministries, etc., labor regulations, political situation of the country, culture, etc.

The previous study and knowledge of the legal aspects and situation of a country, city or town where we are going to organize our tournament is fundamental.

Tax provisions, labor rules, regulations for importing supplies, the possibility of temporary imports, volunteer law, institutions that govern the authority, regulations on event insurance, all this as a study of the "pure and simple" law. Ignorance of the laws in force does not exempt us from responsibilities, we must always be well advised in all matters.

**An event is not just a football match, two teams, a referee and a ball.**

On the other hand, knowing the idiosyncrasy of a country, its people, general behavior, social situation, language, are a fundamental added value to plan our dealings with all those involved, as well as to plan a security scheme considering possible political, social or other conflicts, which remain latent and may affect the normal development of our event.

The questions developed above are an initial basic questioning guide that, regardless of the size of the event, we should always ask ourselves.

Seeking answers to each of them will give us a good idea of where we are standing.

**We advise you to develop your own questionnaire, in the context of the event you wish to organize.**

### 1.5 Skills of an event organizer

We believe it is essential to mention throughout the course, in addition to the development of all the theoretical and practical concepts from CONMEBOL's point of view, the importance we give to the concept of *soft skills*.

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In a world of automatism and immediacy, we often forget some basic functions and actions, of education, of temperance, many even imperceptible, but which, in the end, are decisive in defining an optimal work environment, correct decision making and the success of a project.

**The only constant thing is change.**

Beyond having everything planned, having alternative plans and preventive actions for any inconvenience that may arise, etc., unplanned changes always occur in any type of event.

Figure 4. Unplanned changes



Source: own.

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From the absence of an important person due to illness without prior notice, the failure of the computer system prior to the match, a power outage, to a change of venue of a match due to security problems 25 days before the match is scheduled to take place.

These issues that "surprise" us, must be reduced to almost zero, it is impossible to eliminate them, but they must be reduced to the minimum possible. How? Through meticulous planning.

**Failure to plan is planning to fail.**

Even so, there are always changes and last minute situations to solve. We must know how to deal with these situations intelligently. A good training to our staff, clear role definition for each of the work areas, clear decision making capabilities, formal communication channels, without skipping hierarchical lines.

Figure 5. Planning



Source: own.

## **FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION**

Before decision making, we must gather all the necessary information, and we must always check with other authorities.

**Every decision impacts the entire tournament.**

Always seek to analyze from the global conception of the event. Let's not only focus on the decision and its impact on a certain area, let's think about each step to be taken, each variant and its global impact on the event. Otherwise, while solving a specific situation at the same time, without knowing it, we could be generating a whole lot of problems in another operative sector of the event.

**Work as a team, the success of the event must always be above egos and personal interests.**

When faced with these unforeseen situations to solve, you will have to make split-second decisions in a high-pressure environment, surrounded by people, perhaps in a stadium filled with 60,000 spectators and 22 players waiting for you.

We can never fail to analyze the total context and the impact that each decision made has on the overall event. Always taking a moment to think or double check will pay off in right decisions for the event, we cannot be hasty.

**Make dynamic decisions, not hurried ones.**

Do not take anything for granted, always explain the needs clearly, develop the ability to delegate, we cannot do everything alone. Choose reliable team members in whom you can delegate and trust to carry out critical tasks, who should report to you on the daily progress. We will always check one more time.

**Trust, but check.**

## **FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION**

Beyond the events in which we represent CONMEBOL (match coordination meeting, match, etc.), or in your case, at the head of your organization or the organization for which you work organizing the event, we must keep in mind that whether at an airport or bus terminal, hotel, restaurant and whenever we are in event attire in any public place, we must keep an excellent professional behavior, be careful in the talks, maintain manners, education, etc.

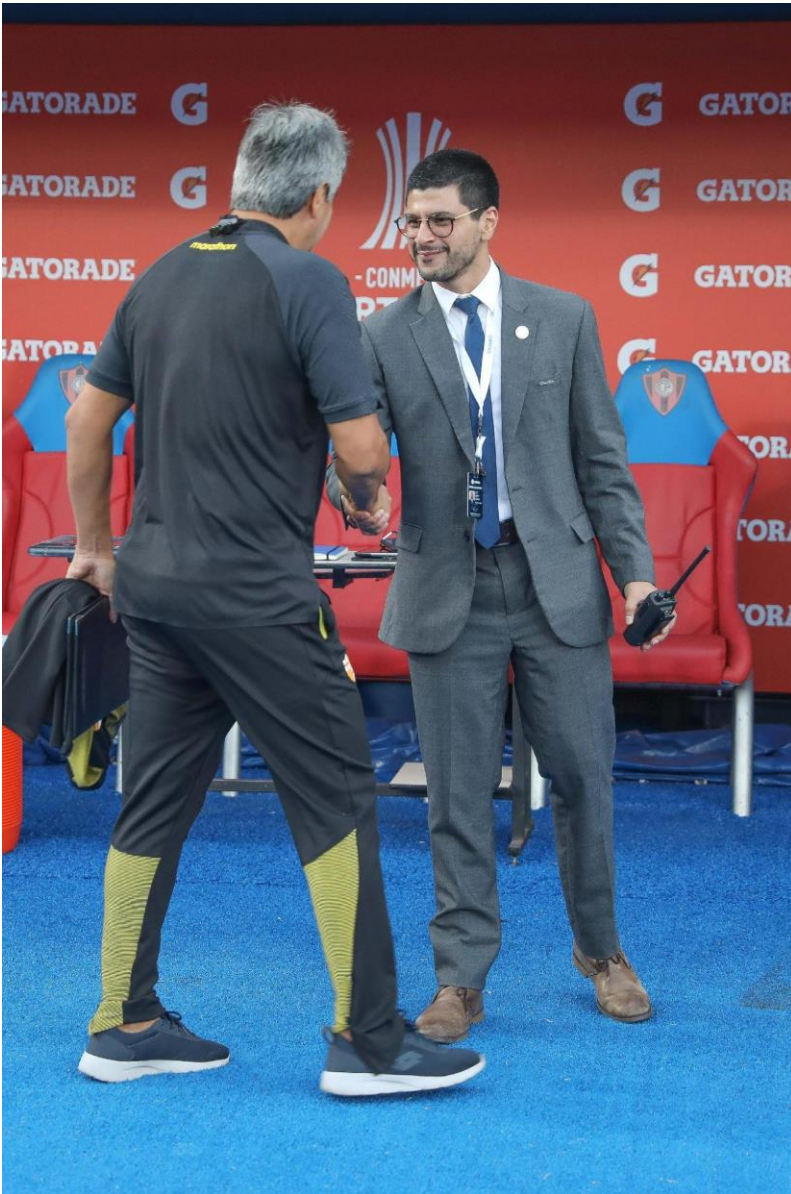
The municipality, neighborhood club, professional club, associations and confederations, transcends all personal actions, we owe ourselves to the organization and we are part of it whenever we represent it, whether in official acts or when we wear its logo in public places.

**Be grateful to your workforce, always.**

Let's be demanding with the work of each person, our staff must be excellent in order to work with us, but let's not confuse demand with tyranny, miserable staff will deliver a miserable event.

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Figure 6. Appreciation with the workforce



Source: own.

Let's thank the people who work and contribute to the proper operation of the event, throughout your career as an event organizer, you will meet many "invisible heroes", without them we could not carry out anything. Club, stadium, stadium staff, volunteers, maintenance, cleaning and security personnel, always "leave the door open" for your next events.

The CONMEBOL Libertadores Lima 2019 One Final is a clear example of success. An excellent development of the Final, with great event managers, leading the project from the top and

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middle management of the organization, but also with hundreds of "invisible heroes" who worked tirelessly for the event, so that we as Confederation managed to reorganize a 12 day event that took more than a year of work.

## 1.6 Event Marketing Basics

**"In South America, football is much more than a sport. It is a unifying social force. It is a passion that defines us as a continent. It is an agent of change that inspires us to want more and to be better. At Conmebol we work every day to nurture and enhance this reflection of our culture and our identity towards its full potential."**

A football match goes beyond 90 minutes on the field. It is a spectacle where the main customers are the fans, the passionate supporters, who are also the business partners.

In football, or in any sport, marketing adds value to the event experience for all parties involved, from commercial partners, to clubs, to players, to the fans who passionately follow their clubs at the stadium or at home.

In a sporting event, marketing operations can be classified as follows:

- Event promotion: promote events to enthuse fans and thereby increase the value of the brand, the institution, and sponsors. Ie: digital campaigns, radio, print, OOH and DOOH ads.
- Spectator experience: improve the experience of fans attending events by implementing marketing programs and activations that are developed through market analysis. Ie: fan zones, infotainment, BTL, merchandising, cup tour, all-star match.
- Hospitality: welcoming and providing a premium experience to guests who can influence the future commercial success of the brand, and to institutional guests at sporting events. Ie: hospitality packages, hospitality program, official dinners.
- Brand identity: manage brand identity, and give events a unique brand "look & feel" to ensure that the organization presents a consistent and aspirational image. Ex: city look & feel, stadium branding.

## **FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION**

**Marketing is an essential component of CONMEBOL's mission to think big and generate more revenue to reinvest in South American football.**

Have you already imagined how a brand is created?

A brand is the sum of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that together directly influence a person's decision to choose one product or service over another.

In the past, a brand was simply a design, a logo, or a wrapper. But it takes more than a designer talking about colors to make a brand.

If you haven't heard of it, if you never chose it, if you wouldn't recommend it, then the brand "doesn't exist". Design is essential, but design is not the brand. A good brand is the one we want to belong to.

The value of a brand is the sum of all the times people choose it, their expectations in choosing it, their memories, and its history, rather than alternative brands. People pay for intangible value, for experiences, and for things that matter to them.

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Figure 7. Brand experience



Source: own.

### 1.7 Developing your event identity

An important issue when we start planning our event is the definition of how best to communicate the values of the brand, what experiences to provide, and what memories to leave to our audience. This is where the Marketing and Commercial Operations areas meet and work.

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**It is essential to work as a team between the person in charge of competitions and those in charge of marketing and sales before proposing activations and selling experiences to the public or companies in relation to the aspects of the competition itself and respect for the privacy of the protagonists.**

## Brand identity

Identity refers to the materials used to represent the brand. Materials such as: stationery, uniforms, merchandising, packaging, signage, digital projects, etc.

Figure 8. Brand identity



Source: own.

For people to identify an image and associate it directly with our brand, it is necessary to be consistent. To achieve homogeneity in all our contents, so that the event is one, not only inside the stadium, but also from the sharing, communication and promotion materials.

We must focus on having some key element, achieving visual homogeneity, the name of the tournament, a distinctive that positions our tournament as unique within diversity, an icon

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that is a "registered trademark" and that, once the competition or even the event is over, can continue to be recognized by its visual identity, its anthem or its mascot, beyond the vibrant events on the field, for the fans' memory. The current totally renewed image of our CONMEBOL Libertadores, with its new logo and its own anthem, are examples of brand image that go beyond the moments that each event generates in sporting terms.

From the concept of identity, we must involve not only the concept of communication, promotion and dissemination, we must also aim at identity from the operational point of view. Having identified staff, always depending on our budget and the magnitude of the tournament, speaks of brand. There are no excuses, a credential that identifies the different types of operational staff, the position of each collaborator or, if we have a larger budget (or why not look for a commercial alliance in exchange for the uniforms of all the staff) to have uniforms with the logo of the event and with the corporate image we want to give to our tournament, everything must be related.

Figure 9. Brand identity in sporting events



Source: own.

## **FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION**

Where and how to capture our tournament corporate image? In a brand manual. It will establish the guidelines for the use and design of each of the items that are part of our event, from the tournament poster, the internal stationery, the awards podium, the signatures in the e-mails we send to the participants, to the uniforms, press conference backdrops, merchandising, decoration of the stadium, team uniforms, etc., all under the same parameter, nothing should be left to chance.

When a tournament is broadcasted on television, we also need to coordinate with the production area on how we can give the best vision of our brand and take advantage of the graphic resources we have in the stadium. In the end, with the broadcast, a much larger audience is impacted by our brand.

**We should not fall into the false belief that a big budget is needed to design a correct corporate image or identity, this is where our creativity can and should make a difference.**

If we are facing a tournament with a limited budget, we could, for example, make agreements and competitions calling design students, artists, etc. who want to collaborate with the event and be the creators of our corporate image for prestige and professional positioning.

Figure 10. Brand identity



Source: own.

Undoubtedly, having a large budget will give us more options to expand our brand, but that does not limit us or make us stand by and do nothing.

## **1.8 Practical Example I - CONMEBOL Sudamericana**

The official name must be used, with or without logo, on each and every occasion when the tournament is mentioned, in all media and materials produced or controlled by the Member Associations and clubs, on every occasion in which the tournament is mentioned.

The set of rules and recommendations aimed at ensuring the correct and uniform use of the CONMEBOL Sudamericana trademark is set forth in the Official Trademark Manual.

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Figure 11. Brand essence



Source: own elaboration.

Creating, strengthening, and solidifying the brand and its identity are fundamental pieces to highlight our event in the midst of so many sporting events around the world. Consequently, the investment in the creation of this brand will directly impact the financial return that the event will have.

With thoughtful and targeted activations, it is easier to attract business partners, sponsors and investors. But just the beauty of a brand or an attractive concept will not be enough if the planned actions are not put into practice. It is necessary to create a large network of relationships, people need to believe in our product and events, and that is a hard and daily work that started 4 years ago, but it will take a few more years to consolidate. Nobody said it would be easy, right?

CONMEBOL, starting in 2016, began a rebranding process, clearly visualized in all matches of its major competitions, the CONMEBOL Libertadores and CONMEBOL Sudamericana. The brands of these two competitions were completely renewed, giving birth to their new slogans: CONMEBOL Libertadores, the Eternal Glory, and CONMEBOL Sudamericana, the Great Conquest. A new brand manual was created and shared with all partners and sponsors.

## **FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION**

Since that same year, CONMEBOL also conducts a detailed brand study that helps us understand the health of the brands, that is, how the concept and identity of the brand we work with are being perceived by consumers and how we can improve our communication on and off the playing field.

The advertising pieces and their different forms and dissemination actions need prior approval from CONMEBOL's Marketing area. Some rules must be followed and complied with so that brands are not "tainted". The promotion and dissemination of content is always evaluated by different parties, involving CONMEBOL, advertising agencies, brands, broadcasters and other commercial partners.

The next time you are watching an official CONMEBOL match on your TV or mobile device, pay attention to all the details that appear on your screen. From the advertising plaques on the field, the timer during the broadcast, details of the players' entrance ceremony to the field, the entrance gate and the ball holder with the image of the tournament, the personalized ball with the CONMEBOL brand or of the specific match, as well as the commercial guidelines of the sponsors. Everything is there in a planned and thought-out way, studied so that the audience has the best possible experience and always comes back to "consume" our CONMEBOL events, whether from the comfort of their couch at home, at the stadium, or in parallel events such as our "fan embassy", installed in the host cities of the unique CONMEBOL Libertadores and CONMEBOL Sudamericana finals.

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Figure 12. Brand experience



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 13. Brand experience



Source: own.

## **1.9 Practical Example II - Look & Feel and fan embassy in an event's host city**

Figure 14. Look & Feel



Source: own elaboration.

In this section, we will show you with real examples, how the process of Look & Feel of a city hosting a sporting event is developed; the survey of the city, analysis of points of interest and activations that mimic our competition with the environment of the city, to achieve the intended effect, the event as part of the city, without invading or atomizing it, but finally achieving the necessary impact to highlight our proposal.

The following is a simplified example of a survey of the sites in the city that we will "dress" and the actions we will apply.

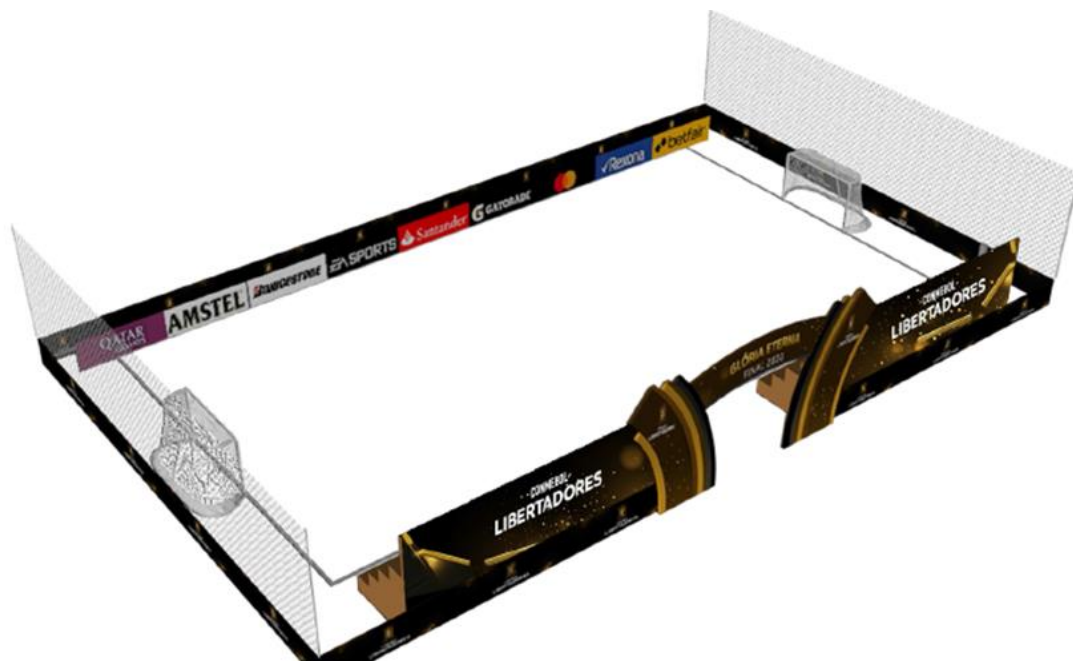
**Look & Feel survey of the host city of the CONMEBOL Libertadores Single Final**

- **Airport**
  - Airport interior branding
  - Backdrop and reception desk
  - Interactive totem

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- Suburban Stadium
  - High flags
  - Interactive totem on main access avenues to the stadium
- Subway stations and bus terminals
  - Flags at arrival stations at the Stadium
  - Branding at the entrance of the subway lines to the Stadium and main lines of the city.
  - Interior branding of each meter
- Iconic places in the city
  - Giant replica trophy with countdown to event day
  - Giant inflatable ball floating in rivers, lagoons or similar.
  - Sports arenas on the beach or city squares
  - Photo opportunity with trophy and giant logo
  - Led Screen
  - Display countdown LED clock

Figure 15. Illustrative image about Look & Feel



Source: own.

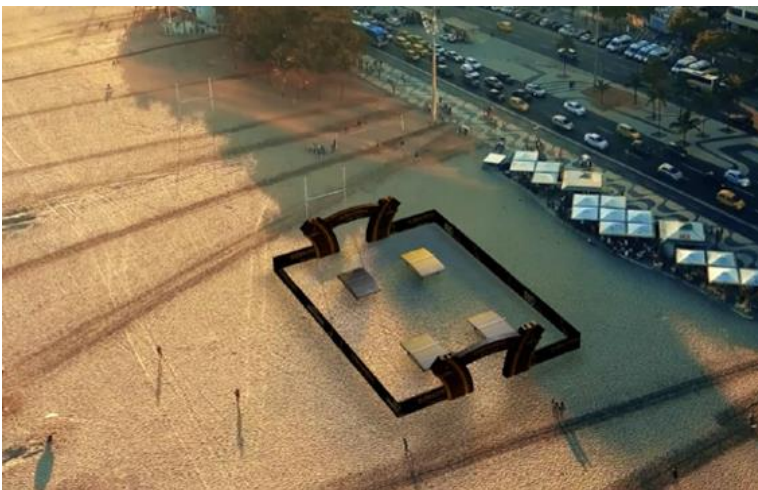
# FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 16. Illustrative image about Look & Feel



Source: own.

Figure 17. Illustrative image about Look & Feel



Source: own.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 18. Illustrative image about Look & Feel



Source: own.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 19. Illustrative image about Look & Feel



Source: own.

For each action, it will always be important to define a work schedule and, above all, make sure that the contracted supplier will manage all the promotion permits in public spaces and roads for our activations. It would not be a good strategy as organizers of an event to "dress up" the city with static or posters that we will later have to dismantle because we do not have the relevant permits.

**Beyond the design and "dress" of the city, never leave aside the legal aspects for these cases as well, each city has its own regulations for advertising on public roads.**

Fan Embassy

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

It is an entertainment area for fans in the days leading up to the match that will be the focal point of CONMEBOL's promotional activities within the Host City.

The fan embassy plays a key role in highlighting the fan experience and the local community. It is also an opportunity for commercial partners and the Host City to reach new audiences, whether football fans or not, to engage them with the brand, whether they are ticket holders or not. The Fan Embassy will feature football related activities, sponsor trade show tents and live entertainment during the 4 days leading up to the Final.

Figure 20. Fan Embassy



Source: own.

Finally, we will share a series of videos and photographs of how CONMEBOL puts into practice the theoretical concepts mentioned above:

- The complete OPENING CEREMONY at the LIBERTADORES FINAL <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtrisz01Y8>

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- The complete show of LOS PALMERAS in the Final of the SUDAMERICANA <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMbn2yVTak4>

Figure 21. CONMEBOL sporting events



Source: own.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 22. CONMEBOL sporting events



Source: own.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 23. CONMEBOL sporting events



Source: own.

Figure 24. CONMEBOL sporting events



Source: own.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 25. CONMEBOL sporting events



Source: own.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 26. CONMEBOL sporting events



Source: own.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTING EVENTS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Figure 27. CONMEBOL sporting events



Source: own.

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Figure 28. CONMEBOL sporting events



Source: own.

## References

All photographs and images used in this course are CONMEBOL's own, previously unpublished.