

Bulletin 170

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EMPLOYERS FACE UP TO WORLD CUP DILEMMAS

The FIFA World Cup 2010 has long been on the horizon and with less than a week to go until kick off, traditional World Cup related issues are coming to the fore. Not only does England, yet again, not have a natural left-winger but also the problems that the tournament traditionally causes employers are back.

With only one of England's group games falling during "normal" working hours, employers are optimistic that absenteeism is likely to pose much less of a problem than in previous years. However, a number of issues still arise from staff engagement in the tournament. With the majority of the nation expected to be taken by World Cup fever, it is easy to envisage unprepared employers being swamped with problems by the time the tournament ends on 11 July.

Without dwelling on whether Fabio Capello's squad choice was based on objective selection criteria which would pass the scrutiny of the Employment Tribunal, we present Brabners Chaffe Street's **Top 5 World Cup Workplace Wonders:**

- **Be prepared**
Make sure that you have in place policies to deal with any possible problems such as short term absence, alcohol and unauthorised use of the Internet. Where possible arrange any holiday/leave for key games in advance to ensure you have adequate cover.
- **Be flexible**
Consider temporary flexible hours, enabling employees to watch vital games, on the proviso that lost hours are made up by working earlier or later on a set day. Alternatively allow shift swaps as long as details are given and arrangements agreed in advance
- **Be consistent and fair**
Equal rights must be given to all in the workplace and those who are not fans will expect to be treated no differently to those who are. Likewise, fans of other nations should be given the same chance to follow their country as their England supporting colleagues
- **Use the World Cup to your advantage**
Consider turning England's daytime games into company events. This may allow you to control the impact of the games on your business whilst providing an easy source of goodwill in challenging times
- **Clarity is key**
Ensure that all staff are briefed on your policies and that breaches will be treated seriously and dealt with. Let staff know that while you understand the excitement around the World Cup, work obligations must come first and standards must be maintained.

If you require any specific advice in connection with the material contained in this bulletin, or on any other Employment Law issues, please contact: Paul Chamberlain in Manchester on 0161 836 8864, Andrew Cross in Liverpool on 0151 600 3062 or Kevin James in Preston on 01772 229847.

If you no longer wish to receive the bulletin please let us know by return e-mail to helen.calvert@brabnerscs.com

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