

Gauteng gears up to host sports entertainment events as iconic Soweto Derby fever hits!

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It's that time again in Gauteng where soccer will divide the nation as Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs lock horns in this weekend's Soweto Derby. The 176th instalment of the derby is ready to roll at full capacity since the return to stadiums after the shutdown to audiences due to Covid-19. Likewise, the golden province is geared to play host to a crowd of about 93,000 at FNB Stadium who will form the biggest attendance at a South Africa football match or sporting event in just over two years.

"Living by the province's slogan of being the 'Home of Champions', Gauteng continues to strive to bring world class sporting events to the province not only to power our economic recovery efforts, but to further showcase our sporting prowess on the field and via our world-class infrastructure," says Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) CEO, Sthembiso Dlamini.

"Gauteng has invested heavily in positioning itself as an attractive sports entertainment & tourism destination with world-class infrastructure and a comprehensive sports offering. The province is also fast attracting sports tourism events in all disciplines. These include soccer, rugby, cycling, rowing, horse racing and cricket. With the unifying power of sports especially now as we start building back together following the pandemic, by visiting Gauteng and being part of Africa's biggest derby and staying another day to enjoy our sprawling township tourism experiences, you will surely live again," Dlamini adds.

Over the years, events like the Soweto Derby have become a 'weekend experience'. This weekend will see full occupancy in hotels as well as bed and breakfast establishments and fans are encouraged to book a night stay and explore more of what the urban playground of Gauteng has to offer. With a full weekend events calendar, the GTA is estimating an injection of over R220m into the visitor economy revenue and more than 3,000 temporary jobs with women and youth owned vendors set to benefit immensely. By hosting consistent and quality destination events that appeals to cross-sections of our markets, we believe we will recover lost tourism jobs quicker and add to the province's drive of increasing tourism revenue out of these hosted events with solid community beneficiation.

"As the GTA, we are mainly concerned about how best these major events can power the growth and development of township-based enterprises and suppliers, contribute towards visitors and residents' safety, and bring in new money into the destination. Leveraging events as a catalyst for tourism development in terms of destination branding, infrastructure development and other economic and social benefits is significant as it provides a massive economic impact for the destination beyond the colour, flair and final match scores," added Dlamini.

Ticket sales for this much anticipated match are sold out and fans are urged to utilise transport amenities available like the Gautrain bus shuttle service. Guests can travel by train to Park Station or utilise the parking at Park Station, and at Park Station hop on the bus service from 1.30pm to 7.30pm.

For more information on the Gauteng Events Calendar, visit www.gauteng.net follow us on @visitgauteng on twitter and Instagram and I love Gauteng on Facebook.

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