

The Emirates FA Cup scores for sustainability

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Chelsea in blue, Liverpool in red - but green was the colour of Saturday's 2021/22 Emirates FA Cup Final as sustainability took centre stage (literally) with a world first recycled pitch banner

Liverpool and Chelsea might have thought they were the only ones taking to Wembley Stadium's legendary grass on Saturday, but Veolia, The Football Association (The FA) and Wembley Stadium teamed up to shoot for sustainability by creating a recycled plastic banner which unveiled the pitch ready for the game of the season.

With plastic produced from previous events at Wembley Stadium connected by EE, Veolia collected and sorted 47,600 plastic bottles, which were sent to Radici Group's facility to be recycled into PET plastic yarn. This recycled material was then spun into Saturday's 105 metre long and 68 metre wide match day pitch cover, emblazoned with the two teams' logos.

Now that the final whistle has been blown, Veolia will upcycle the banner into drawstring bags and sports bibs that The FA will donate to the local community to inspire the eco-footballers of the future.

Compared to manufacturing from raw materials, recycling all plastic from match days saves 70% of the carbon emissions and this recycled cover alone has saved 1.5 tonnes of CO2 compared to making it from virgin resources. As well as the carbon savings, over 1,000 products will be donated to local projects, making a difference to the local communities and environment too.

Gavin Graveson, Senior Executive Vice President Veolia Northern Europe Zone says:

"The Emirates FA Cup Final is the UK's biggest sporting event, with nine million viewers last year on the BBC, and Veolia is excited to be part of its illustrious history. By using the latest recycling innovations, Veolia is already helping many football teams towards their net-zero goals, and thanks to The FA and Wembley Stadium, recycling has a platform to show just what can be achieved if we work together."

With the specific aim of cutting carbon through optimised handling, increased recycling, and managing treatment of waste streams, Veolia is already helping the game to extend its own sustainability by reducing the impact of virgin material use.

WEMBLEY STADIUM'S GENERAL MANAGER, LIAM BOYLAN, COMMENTED: "The 150th anniversary of the Emirates FA Cup Final is a momentous occasion, and we are delighted sustainability is playing an important role in this event. The recycled pitch banner will take centre stage for match day, and importantly it will take on a second life when upcycled into bags and bibs for the local communities. The sustainability of events is more important than ever, and we have a responsibility as a world-class stadium to reduce our carbon footprint and constantly pursue better outcomes for our fans, our community, and our environment through our soon to be launched sustainability strategy."

THE FA'S SENIOR EVENT MANAGER, JOE DIVALL, ADDED: "The Emirates FA Cup has been an innovative competition since it began in 1871, with new additions becoming tradition over the years and helping to evolve the game into the one we know and love today. We are constantly striving to deliver a bigger and better Final in every way, and the 150 year anniversary provided the perfect opportunity to implement a recycled pitch banner that will be seen all over the world and hopefully become the standard in our industry over the coming years."

ENDS

Notes to editor

The fabric has been engineered with the use of Repetable®, an innovative polyester yarn produced by RadiciGroup from a post-consumer process involving the recycling of plastic bottles. RadiciGroup is an Italian company established in Bergamo, which is leader in the production of polyamide yarns, polyester yarns, techno-polymers and textile solutions for different applications including sportswear and fashion. Compared to virgin polyester, Repetable® allows for lower CO2 emissions (-45%) lower water consumption (-90%) and lower energy consumption (-60%), while still granting extraordinary performances. The banner has then been produced by Georg+Otto Friedrich GmbH and DPM UK.

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