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Gorky Park Gets Fan Park Ready for Euro 2012

By Jemma Buckley

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Fans welcoming the Russian team on their arrival in Warsaw. Russia plays its first match in the Euros against the Czech Republic in Wroclaw on June 8. **Peter Andrews**

Football fans unable to make it to Ukraine or Poland this month to watch the UEFA European Football Championship are invited to Gorky Park's Fan Park, which has been built especially for the event.

The open-air football village, which is situated on the banks of the Moscow River and covers an area of 12,000 square meters, will open Friday in time to broadcast the opening ceremony and the first matches of the championship, including Russia's match against the Czech Republic.

From June 8 to July 1, the Fan Park will be open every day from noon until the end of the last match, and entrance will be free. Live coverage will be broadcast on an 8-by-10-meter screen, and spectator stands will provide seating for 1,200 fans.

Throughout the day, visitors will be entertained by a range of events taking place on two 20-by-30-meter Astroturf pitches located inside the Fan Park. Those who fancy themselves as the next Andrei Arshavin can sign up to take part in an amateur football tournament, and those who need a little more coaching will be able to attend master classes with retired Russian football legends Dmitry Alenichev, Yegor Titov and Alexander Filimonov.

For those who would rather watch football than play it, the big screen will also be showing a selection of the most memorable games from throughout the history of the Soviet Union and Russia.

According to organizers, the Fan Park aims to create a relaxed and safe environment for everyone to be able to enjoy the championship. "Our Fan Park has not just been designed for football fans but also for families, who are Gorky Park's regular visitors," said Olga Titova, managing partner of Brandworks and head of the Fan Park 2012 project.

"We are very well prepared for this event. The police will be here, metal detectors will scan everyone at the entrances, and there will also be private security. When the Russian team is playing we will have extra security, and the emergency services will also be present," Titova explained.

Visitors are prohibited from taking their own food and drink into the Fan Park, but a 300-meter-long food court has been constructed to feed hungry fans. Five Subway cafes will sell sandwiches, and sponsor Carlsberg will provide beer priced at 150 rubles ($4.5) for 0.5 liters.

The Fan Park is the latest in a range of sporting events that have been developed for the summer season. "This summer we will also have events like a beach volleyball tournament, a skateboarding day, Aikido, street basketball, Frisbee, yoga and so on," said the park's general director, Olga Zakharova.

Fan Park 2012 runs at Gorky Park from June 8 to July 1, from noon until the end of the last match. Metro Oktyabrskaya. For more information and the full list of events visit Fanpark2012.ru or Park-gorkogo.com

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