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FIFA: Near-Perfect Fan Attendance at World Cup 2018

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Damir Sagolj / Reuters

FIFA says it has recorded a near-perfect attendance rate at World Cup games in Russia this summer.

At the beginning of the group stage, reports of empty seats at low-profile matches in remote host cities raised fears that the World Cup fever would elude the country.

However, according to Colin Smith, FIFA's chief competitions officer, Russia recorded a 98-percent attendance rate in the first 61 games of the tournament, Interfax reported Wednesday.

"The attendance was 98 percent, all of the stadiums were full, which is set to continue until the end of the tournament," he said.

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“The majority of fans were Russians, of course, but among foreigners, fans from the U.S., Germany and Brazil were the most numerous,” he added.

An estimated half a million fans visited fan zones on match days, while 160 million fans actively followed the tournament on television from around the world, according to FIFA figures.

The director of Russia’s World Cup organizing committee, Alexei Sorokin, said that his team was surprised by the atmosphere at the tournament.

“The World Cup exceeded the expectations of even the organizers. I was amazed by the atmosphere that gripped our country,” he said.

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