



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Kansas City kicks off final phase of 2026 FIFA World Cup™ bidding**

*Region unites in bid to bring the world's largest single sport event to the Midwest;  
Executive Committee formed and Executive Director appointed for KC 2026 Bid*

**KANSAS CITY (Thursday, March 7, 2019)** – The Kansas City 2026 FIFA World Cup™ Bid Executive Committee today officially kicks off the final phase of bidding to be named one of 10 United States host cities for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, the world's largest single sport event.

Kansas City is one of 17 U.S. cities currently in contention to be named a Host City, a decision that is targeted to be made in late 2020. Each U.S. Host City anticipates hosting between 5-7 matches, which is estimated to generate up to \$620 million in incremental economic activity according to a 2018 study done by leading global management consulting firm Boston Consulting Group.

A powerhouse group of Kansas City leaders have united to form the KC 2026 Bid Executive Committee.

### **Kansas City 2026 FIFA World Cup™ Bid Executive Committee**

- Clark Hunt, Kansas City Chiefs Chairman and CEO (Honorary Co-Chair)
- Cliff Illig, Sporting Kansas City principal owner (Honorary Co-Chair)
- Doug Bach, Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas County Administrator
- Lynn Berling-Manuel, United Soccer Coaches CEO
- Jason Fulvi, VisitKC President and CEO
- Shane Hackett, Heartland Soccer Association Executive Director
- Matt Kenny, Kansas City Chiefs Vice President of Stadium Services and Events
- Donna Maize, Kansas City, Missouri Assistant City Manager
- Kathy Nelson, Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation President and CEO
- Joe Reardon, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce President and CEO
- Jake Reid, Sporting Kansas City President and CEO

Veteran sports executive David Ficklin has been named Executive Director of the KC 2026 Bid. Ficklin has dedicated the past 24 years of his career to growing soccer in the United States. Most recently, he spent 11 years as Vice President of Development for Sporting Kansas City, where he led the development of more than \$300 million of world-class soccer facilities in the region and ran the successful initial phase of Kansas City's 2026 bid.

Previously, Ficklin worked on multiple international bids for the FIFA World Cup™ and Olympic Games, including the winning 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games bid. He began his soccer career as a part of the San Francisco Bay Host Committee for the 1994 FIFA World Cup™ and was then part of the inaugural front office staff of Major League Soccer's San Jose Clash (now San Jose Earthquakes) from 1995-1998. He then served as Venue Director at two venues for the groundbreaking 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup™.

"The Kansas City metropolitan area has built over \$400 million in soccer facilities over the past decade. But even more importantly, we have really been the thought leaders in innovative ways to grow the game of soccer," said Ficklin. "With that background, we look forward to using the excitement of our bid to continue to implement new and creative ways to bring the sport to thousands of new players and fans of all ages."

Kansas City's bid features one of the nation's finest collection of soccer facilities, one of the primary reasons the city is known as the "Soccer Capital of America." Arrowhead Stadium, the world's loudest stadium, is the proposed competition venue. Sporting KC's awarding winning Children's Mercy Park and Pinnacle National Development Center offer unparalleled team facilities. Swope Soccer Village, The University of Kansas Health System Training Complex and Julian Field at Park University round out the proposed training sites.

Kansas City has hosted many of soccer's most prestigious matches at the club, college and international levels. The Concacaf Gold Cup will return to Kansas City this June for a third time (2011, 2015, 2019) and other high-profile events held in Kansas City include FIFA World Cup qualifying (1968, 2001, 2012, 2013 2014), 2013 MLS Cup, 2013 MLS All-Star Game, 2014 Concacaf Women's Championship, 2015 NCAA College Cup, Concacaf Men's Olympic Qualifying (2012, 2015), Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup finals (2004, 2012, 2017) and the 2018 Tournament of Nations.

Fans interested in supporting Kansas City's bid can visit [www.KC2026.com](http://www.KC2026.com) and sign the petition, which already contains signatures from 39 U.S. states.

**MEDIA AVAILABILITY:** Jake Reid and David Ficklin will be available to discuss Kansas City's World Cup bid efforts Friday, March 8 at Sporting Kansas City's Media Day. To schedule time with either, please contact Kurt Austin ([kaustin@sportingkc.com](mailto:kaustin@sportingkc.com) or 816.516.0577).

-- [KC2026](#) --

#### **About The Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation**

The mission of the Kansas City Sports Commission & Foundation is to drive Kansas City's overall sports strategy, to enrich the quality of life, create economic impact and raise visibility for our region, with the vision of making a better Kansas City through Sports.. For the latest on Kansas City Sports Commission news, follow on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). Also follow the Kansas City Marathon presented by Garmin on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). [www.sportkc.org](http://www.sportkc.org)

#### **About The 2026 FIFA World Cup™**

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is soccer's world governing body. On June 13, 2018, FIFA's member nations voted 134 to 65 to select the United Bid of the United States, Canada, and Mexico to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup™. For the first time, 48 nations will participate in the month-long competition that is scheduled to run from mid-June to mid-July, 2026. A total of 80 matches will be played in 16 cities across North America. Sixty matches will be played in the U.S., with 10 each in Canada and Mexico. The Canadian and Mexican Host cities are already determined: Edmonton, Montreal, and Toronto in Canada and Guadalajara, Mexico City, and Monterrey in Mexico. Kansas City is among 17 finalists vying to be among the 10 U.S. Host Cities. Other competing U.S. cities are Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Nashville, New York/New Jersey, Orlando, Philadelphia, San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

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