



PRESS RELEASE

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SUMMER OF SOCCER KICKS OFF IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Santa Cruz County is preparing to welcome the world as the 2026 FIFA World Cup comes to North America, bringing communities together through a countywide celebration of soccer, culture, creativity and connection.

Santa Cruz County will host a series of beach celebrations, tournaments, public art events, youth activities, and official Fan Zone watch parties designed to unite residents and visitors around the excitement of the world's game. Giveaways and prizes will include World Cup tickets, PlayStation 5 consoles and much more!

"This is about more than soccer," Santa Cruz County Supervisor Justin Cummings said. "The World Cup gives us an opportunity to bring people together across cultures, generations and communities while showcasing everything that makes Santa Cruz County special, from our beaches and redwood forests to our arts, restaurants, parks and vibrant local communities."



A centerpiece of the celebration will be the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's World Soccer Celebration, featuring beach watch parties, exhibitions and fan activities overlooking the Monterey Bay. Events include a June 25th evening FIFA-licensed watch party for the U.S. vs. Turkey match on Main Beach, an event that echoes famed World Cup beach parties held across the globe. Additional activities including a June 27 professional Footvolley exhibition and beach soccer, giveaways and family-friendly programming. More information is available at [Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk World Soccer Celebration](#).

Across the county, residents and visitors will find free soccer-themed events for all ages and skill levels. Santa Cruz County Parks and Scotts Valley Parks & Recreation will also host a free Skills & Drills Clinic at Anna Jean Cummings County Park on June 13th from 1-4 p.m. featuring agility skills, soccer games, scrimmages and interactive activities led by Central Coast FC. No registration is needed, just show up and have fun!

In Scotts Valley, a June 14th Wacky Soccer Tournament at Skypark from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. will feature silly twists on traditional soccer competition, food trucks, booths, prizes and family activities (register at bit.ly/svrecreation). A pair of World Cup tickets will be raffled off at the

Tournament. A player who is part of a registered, participating team is eligible to win.

In partnership with County Park Friends, the Clinic and Tournament are supported by PG&E, Comcast and Kaiser Permanente, with in-kind contributions from New Leaf, Togo's and many others. More on both events at [Santa Cruz County Parks' Community Events page](#).

From June 12 through July 18 in Watsonville, youth and gamers can participate in the 2026 PS5 EA Sports FC 26 Tournament, with PlayStation 5 consoles planned as prizes for the winning team. [Teams can sign up here](#). Watch parties, youth-centered programming and community events are also planned throughout South County.

Community partners are helping ensure the celebration focuses not only on competition, but also on wellness, creativity and inclusion. United Way of Santa Cruz County will participate in several youth-focused events throughout the tournament, providing mental health resources, arts-and-crafts activities, stress-management games and interactive programming designed to encourage healthy competition and positive social connection.

At the June 12 Video Game Tournament Kick-Off in Watsonville, United Way staff and volunteers will host activities including custom World Cup team T-shirt creation and soccer ball decorating alongside wellness activities, with additional youth-centered and wellness activities throughout the summer.

Downtown Santa Cruz will also become part of the celebration through a large public art installation at Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, where the iconic red ball sculpture has been transformed into a giant soccer ball. The MAH will also host a series of public watch parties throughout the competition, including the July 19th World Cup Final. Additional watch parties are planned at local businesses and gathering spaces throughout Santa Cruz County. Businesses interested in participating can sign up at [World Cup Watch Party Business Sign-Up](#). (For more on hosting official watch parties, see [2026 Bay Area Public Screening Playbook](#).)

Visitors from across the globe are invited to experience Santa Cruz County during one of the biggest sporting events in the world by exploring the county's iconic beaches, surfing, mountain biking, hiking, redwood forests, wine tasting, arts and culture, local restaurants and accommodations.

"Whether you are coming for a watch party, a beach event or simply to experience the energy of the World Cup, Santa Cruz County offers an unforgettable mix of natural beauty, outdoor adventure and community spirit," Visit Santa Cruz County Chief Executive Officer Terence Concannon said. "This is an opportunity to showcase our region to visitors from around the world while creating incredible experiences for the people who live here."

A full schedule of events, registration links and visitor information is available at [Visit Santa Cruz County Kick Off Santa Cruz](#).