

Futsal

Sports fundamental in learning and orientation: Commissioner Vurobaravu

By Harrison Selmen, Suva, Fiji

THE VANUATU HIGH

Commission in Fiji has provided financial support for Vanuatu students, towards a major Futsal tournament scheduled for April 29, 2018.

Showing his passion for soccer, the former Laucala student and former Suva City soccer player, High Commissioner to Fiji, Nikenike Vurobaravu handed FJ\$400 to the Vanuatu students yesterday.

“We are so happy about the initiative because I personally believe that sport does not only have social benefits but is part of orientation to help students in their learning.”

The money will help to fund the students, in terms of fees.

Speaking during the handing over, Mr. Vurobaravu says it is a huge pleasure for the High Commission to commit itself in supporting student's wellbeing, especially in sports.

The High Commissioner says he is so happy to see Vanuatu students keep the love of soccer alive.

Mr. Vurobaravu reflected back to when he was a student in Suva, saying they didn't have the opportunity like students today.

“There were only few of us at USP and to secure sponsorship we had to go



lobby for support around Suva,” he told the students.

He shared his experience during the good olden days, which were memorable and he encouraged the students to embrace the love of soccer

and integrate it with their studies.

The Futsal tournament will be a major tournament involving and comprising teams around Suva. The winner will get FJ\$1500.

Student representative Johnson Kial thanked the Commissioner and his staff for the support, adding that the idea to involve students in sports is a way to get them off from activities that

could disturb them from their studies.

The Vanuatu students will have two teams to take part in the tournament and they have been preparing for the past weeks.

Football



Zenit St. Petersburg has twice faced charges from European football's governing body UEFA as a result of racism from fans during matches in the Europa League ©Getty Images

FIFA charges Russia with racism from fans during France friendly

FIFA HAS OPENED DISCIPLINARY proceedings against Russia just two months before the country hosts the World Cup over allegations of fan racism during a friendly with France last month.

French players, including Manchester United's Paul Pogba and FC Barcelona's Ousmane Dembele, were the victim of alleged racist chants from supporters attending last month's match in Saint Petersburg.

They were subjected to monkey taunts at the friendly, which France won 3-1.

“Disciplinary proceedings have been opened against the Russian Football Union (RFU) for this incident,” FIFA said in a statement.

In response, the RFU claimed an investigation had already been launched in an effort to identify the people involved.

“A request has been made to the Interior Ministry to identify

several persons who were involved in these incidents,” RFU anti-discrimination officer and former Russian international Alexey Smertin told Russia's official state news agency TASS.

“If these people's guilt is proven, then there's a high likelihood they won't be allowed to attend World Cup and Russian league games.”

It marked the latest racist incident at the Saint-Petersburg Stadium, due to host a World Cup semi-final.

Zenit St. Petersburg has twice faced charges from European football's governing body UEFA as a result of racism from fans during matches in the Europa League, the second-tier club competition on the continent.

The club were sanctioned after its fans displayed a large banner praising Serbian war criminal Ratko Mladic at a match against Macedonian

Vardar in November.

In February, chants mocking a black player were audible from sections of the Zenit crowd during a game with German club RB Leipzig.

Last year, Spartak Moscow and rivals Dynamo Moscow were both fined by the RFU for racist behaviour from their fans.

Racism remains one of the key concerns in the build-up to the tournament owing to the World Cup host country's poor record.

Russian fans have been charged with racism offences at the previous two UEFA European Championships.

Referees have been given the power by FIFA to halt or abandon matches at the World Cup, due to begin with the opening match between Russia and Saudi Arabia in Moscow on June 14, for discriminatory incidents.

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Netball

Samoa and Cook Islands earn opening wins in Oceania qualifier for Netball World Cup 2019

SAMOA AND THE COOK ISLANDS picked up opening victories as the Oceania Qualifier for next year's Netball World Cup got underway in Auckland.

Samoa have taken part in every Netball World Cup — or Championships — since 1987, and they made a strong statement of their intent to secure one of the two qualifying places for next year's big event in Liverpool as they beat Tonga 56-41.

The young Samoan team, whose players are based in two of the sport's powerhouses, Australia and New Zealand, took a 17-9 quarter-time lead at the HighWire Trust venue in Papakura.

By half-time the lead had

been extended to 33-19.

Tonga, who have never qualified for a Netball World Cup, will play the fifth team involved in these qualifiers, Fiji, tomorrow, while Samoa take on a Papua New Guinea side that was involved in a far more competitive match today, eventually losing 54-51 to the Cook Islands.

The Cook Islands, who recently moved to 17th in the International Netball Federation World Rankings, have not qualified for a World Cup since 2007 when the competition took place in Auckland.

They were pushed all the way by Papua New Guinea who only trailed by two at half time.

The Cook Islands started to

pull away in the third quarter and led by six going into the final stanza.

Papua New Guinea cut the deficit to three but ran out of time to complete the comeback.

The last time Papua New Guinea were at a World Cup it was in Birmingham 1995, which was also the last time the World Cup was held in England.

Meanwhile Fiji, top-ranked team in the qualifier at 12th in the world lists, will hope the extra day of rest will have helped them recover from their recent exertions at the Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast.

AP

Football

City rule out Aguero, but fit for World Cup

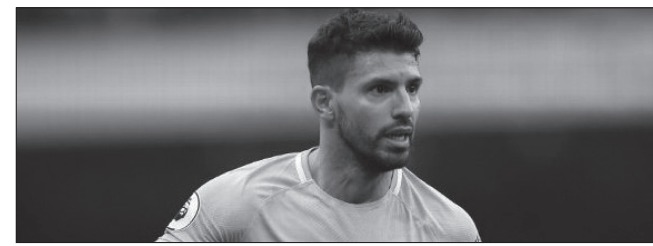
MANCHESTER CITY FORWARD Sergio Aguero wrote on Twitter on Tuesday that he has undergone arthroscopic surgery on one of his knees.

The Premier League club confirmed on Tuesday that Aguero was “likely” to miss City's five games this season, after undergoing arthroscopic surgery on one of his knees.

Aguero has not started a game since March 4 but made late substitute appearances in the home defeats to Manchester United and Liverpool.

But City said Aguero had aggravated the injury after being caught by a strong tackle from United's Ashley Young in the Manchester derby earlier this month.

And with Argentina preparing for the World Cup in June, City added: “After the season the 29-year-old will turn his



attentions to World Cup glory in Russia with Argentina.”

Manager Pep Guardiola suggested at a news conference on Friday that he did not know if Aguero will be fit again this season.

“He played the last 10 to 15 minutes and after the game he said he couldn't run and had a lot of pain,” Guardiola said. “I don't know about Swansea if he will be ready, so hopefully [he will be] for the last games if we need him and then for the World Cup.”

Sources said Aguero flew

to Barcelona on Monday to see specialist Ramon Cugat after City were confirmed as Premier League champions at the weekend.

And with five games remaining in the season and no other silverware to play for, it was decided to have an operation now.

Aguero is City's top scorer this season with 30 goals in all competitions but will have to wait until next season to reach 200 goals, having been left stranded on 199.

ESPN