



# FC Bayern Munich Soccer Fest Aims to Win American Hearts

June's Copa América tournament may be over, but fans will not have to wait long before world soccer's biggest stars return to American soil. Following a successful 2014 tour, FC Bayern Munich, one of the most famous and successful teams in the world, is back in the United States and tonight faces fellow European giants Real Madrid at the MetLife stadium, as part of the International Champions Cup.

But this summer's tour is part of a wider initiative from FC Bayern Munich. Indeed, working closely with its official partner bank, UniCredit, the club is looking to further expand its presence in the U.S. through a number of initiatives. FC Bayern Munich's chief executive — and two-time European Footballer of the Year — Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, and Giovanni Ronca, head of Corporate and Investment Banking Americas at UniCredit, answer questions about the tour and FC Bayern Munich's plans to win the hearts of a potentially huge American fan base and explain why the country has become a key market for sports teams around the world.

**FC Bayern Munich is set to return to the U.S. this summer, following its last visit in 2014. Tell us about the new tour.**

*Karl-Heinz Rummenigge:* It is exciting and a pleasure to return to the U.S., and particularly New York—one of the country's most vibrant soccer hubs. The 2014 Audi Summer Tour was a great success and an unforgettable experience for everyone at the club. We played two matches in sold-out stadiums, saw 5,000 spectators turn out for an open training session on a Tuesday afternoon and had fans queuing around the block for autographs. After a reception like that, we were always keen to come back! Last week, we played against

Inter Milan and AC Milan in landmark U.S. venues famous around the world, and tonight we face Real Madrid at New York's fantastic MetLife Stadium. It's a great chance for us to prepare ahead of the new campaign and to develop our growing U.S. fan base.

**This tour comes as part of a wider push from FC Bayern Munich to connect with its fans overseas. What's the rationale behind this?**

*Rummenigge:* It is vital for FC Bayern Munich to remain competitive not only in the local and wider domestic markets but also on the international stage. Internationally, of course, the Champions League pits us against the likes of Real Madrid and Barcelona — clubs with huge international fan bases and operations all over the world. Reaching out to our own international fan base is therefore crucial, helping us keep our club at the pinnacle of world soccer while welcoming overseas fans into the FC Bayern Munich family. We will always ensure our fans come first — no matter where they are based.

*Giovanni Ronca:* There are many advantages of international expansion for a club like FC Bayern Munich. Moving into new markets engages new fans and drives greater revenue, which, with a club like FC Bayern, translates into excellence on the pitch through stronger recruitment, better training facilities and world-class signings. This then leads to greater engagement from the fans and consequently greater revenue generating a virtuous circle of investment and reward.

**What makes the U.S. market so important to soccer clubs looking to expand their international reach?**

*Ronca:* When UniCredit supports clients entering new markets, one of our key roles is market research. In this case, our analysis indicates that the U.S. is an excellent market for elite soccer clubs such as FC Bayern Munich to grow their fan base. The American passion for sports is well known, uniting fans across the country and inspiring strong affinities between individuals and their teams. Furthermore, the country boasts a strong affinity for international club soccer — not least because of the extraordinary success of Major League Soccer. Fans regularly turn up to matches in the tens of thousands, with the Seattle Sounders, for instance, seeing an average attendance of over 44,000 in 2015. Indeed, we estimate that there are around 82 million soccer fans in the United States, of which 27 million are fans or potential fans of FC Bayern Munich.

*Rummenigge:* Expanding our activities in the U.S. is very important to us from a business point of view. What's more, the U.S. has always been a special place for FC Bayern Munich. The passion, the excitement and the warmth of the fans is incredible. Anyone at our games would think we were playing at home! The team wants to give credit to all the fans who always make us feel so welcome.

**How is FC Bayern Munich reaching out to its fans in the United States?**

*Rummenigge:* We are doing a lot of work on this front, led by our New York office, which kicked off in 2014. This on-the-ground presence gets us connected directly with our American fans, enabling us to tailor our activities and communications specifically for the U.S. market. These activities include running dedicated digital, social and e-commerce platforms for fans in the U.S., as well as support for the country's FC Bayern Munich fan clubs, which have already grown in number from eight to 100 in just a few years. We have also established a large youth development program designed to help the U.S. realize

its enormous potential in soccer by providing young players with cutting-edge resources and expert training.

**What challenges do clubs such as FC Bayern Munich and other international corporates face when broaching international markets?**

*Ronca:* One of the key challenges for any business establishing a presence overseas is the need to adapt to the demands of a new market. Local expertise is therefore crucial to success — and this is what we offer from UniCredit's New York offices. For instance, our deep local knowledge means we can guide corporates through the United States' unique debt capital markets (D.C.M.), where our new Americas D.C.M. team has already established itself among the top 10 bookrunners for U.S. corporate bond issuances in the euro market. Of course, internationalization also requires a robust long-term strategy — covering each of the key stages from initiation to consolidation. Our New York offices offer clients such as FC Bayern Munich tailored services for each stage in this process — along with the full range of products available in their domestic market — putting them in an excellent position to thrive in the U.S.

*Rummenigge:* Another challenge comes in the form of competition from other international football brands. For instance, Manchester City, as the owner of New York City FC, is building a strong presence. Yet FC Bayern Munich and the Bundesliga already enjoy comprehensive U.S. TV coverage, so there is a strong wind behind us, which enables us to differentiate ourselves through our wonderful brand of beautiful, attacking football and the quality and breadth of our U.S.-specific activities.

**Can we expect internationalization in sports to continue in the coming years?**

*Ronca:* Yes. The conditions for international expansion are excellent and we can expect to see further activity in this respect. Each sport has its leading clubs, and TV and the internet are removing barriers for fans wanting to identify with excellence.

Asia is another promising market, both for soccer clubs — with the Chinese Super League attracting marquee players such as Alex Teixeira and Ramires — and for expanding corporates in general. Here, too, we offer our support through our extensive international network covering 35 countries, with offices in Beijing, Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo. Each branch has its own team of local experts, ready to offer clients the same high level of service they enjoy in their home markets.

*Rummenigge:* Asia is certainly a promising market. We recently announced the September launch of a new FC Bayern Munich branch in Shanghai — which will benefit from UniCredit's financial and local expertise — and we can expect to see other sports organizations carry out similar expansions in the future.

Technology has brought the world closer together and helped fans all around the world follow their teams, regardless of distances and time zones. We will work hard to embrace these international fans and foster a global family of supporters. This is what we will continue to do at FC Bayern Munich — growing our family at home and abroad. We hope to see you at the match tonight!



KARL-HEINZ RUMMENIGGE



GIOVANNI RONCA



## UNICREDIT

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## FC BAYERN MUNICH

FC Bayern Munich is one of the world's most successful sports organizations on and off the pitch. Since the club's foundation in 1900, FC Bayern Munich has won 26 national championships, 18 domestic cups and five UEFA Champions League titles, making it the most successful German team in history. Stars such as Arjen Robben, Franck Ribéry, Xabi Alonso and Robert Lewandowski, along with World Champions Philipp Lahm, Thomas Müller, Jérôme Boateng, Mario Götze and Manuel Neuer, have helped Bayern attract over 400 million followers worldwide, making it one of the strongest brands in global sports. In April 2014, FC Bayern Munich opened a U.S. office in New York City to engage with its impressive fan base in the United States.

UniCredit is proud to be the official bank of FC Bayern Munich since 2003



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When it comes to your international commercial needs, we've got it organized. Whether it's trade and supply chain finance, top-quality clearing throughout Europe, or other banking services, we can help. We have a local presence in 16 European countries, branches and offices that span another 19 countries worldwide, and a strong network of correspondent banks around the globe. That means we're ready, willing and able to meet your needs both at home and abroad. Wherever you go, your bank will be with you.

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