

TAOS HIGH ALTITUDE TRAINING

Taos Eco Park Hosts Rwanda National Team For FIFA World Cup Training Camp

Highest Altitude FIFA 2 Star Training Facility in the World:

Taos, New Mexico (USA) – The Rwanda Soccer Federation has selected the Taos Eco Park for the final leg of the Rwanda U17 National Team training camp from May 30 to June 11, in preparation for the FIFA U17 World Cup Finals that kicks off June 18 in Mexico.

Nicknamed the Amavubi (Junior Wasps), the Rwanda U17 National Team made history by qualifying for a FIFA World Cup Finals for the very first time at any level. Qualifying rounds for the FIFA U17 World Cup Finals concluded for the Confederation of African Football (CAF) in the host country of Rwanda with the Amavubi emerging as a Finalist and qualifying along with CAF countries Burkina Faso, Congo and Ivory Coast.

In preparation for a highly competitive group stage in Pachuca, Mexico, where Rwanda has been drawn to play England, Uruguay and Canada, the Rwanda National Team will conduct high altitude training at 7,000 feet (2,133 meters) above sea level at Taos Eco Park. Acclimation to the altitude of Pachuca, also at 7,000 feet, is one of the reasons Coach Richard Tardy and the Rwanda Soccer Federation selected Taos for the final leg of their training camp. The Junior Wasps will now camp in Taos, New Mexico during their brief USA tour as opposed to Phoenix.

Well, aware that the team's Group games would be played in Pachuca (a high altitude city), Richard Tardy opted for Taos, which has a similar climate to help the players acclimatize to the harsh conditions.

"It's important for players to get used to the warm conditions and the earlier they do it, the better," he stressed.

The Rwandan U17 National Team and delegation travels to Taos following a 0-0 draw in England against Tottenham Hotspur U18, a 3-1 win in Germany against FC Cologne U18 and a 1-1 draw against FC Fortuna Dusseldorf U18, played during the front end of their training camp.

Taos Eco Park's FIFA 2 Star Field will be the site of Rwanda's high altitude training and conditioning with games scheduled against New Mexico State Champion and nationally ranked Club Teams.

Training sessions and games at Taos Eco Park are open to the public:

"We welcome the Rwanda Team to beautiful Taos, NM," said Taos Mayor Darren Cordova. "Taos has always welcomed international travelers, and to now add international team sports stars pleases us tremendously."

For directions to Taos Eco Park and more information on the Rwanda U17 National Team training sessions and games go to www.taosecopark.com or please contact:

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For more information on the Rwanda team go to <http://ferwafa.com/academy>.

About Soccer & Rwanda (from an Associated Press piece in 2004)

"Soccer Helps Rwanda Heal Its Wounds"

BIZERTE, Tunisia - As a child, Jean-Remy Bitana lived through the horrors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda that left more than half a million people dead. Ten years later, he is playing on Rwanda's national soccer team, a symbol of reconciliation in this ravaged nation. The squad has defied the odds to reach the 16-team field of the African Cup of Nations.

For the rest of the story go to <http://nbcsports.msnbc.com/id/4043603>

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