

Sony signs 3-D video deal for 2010 World Cup

YURI KAGEYAMA - AP Business Writer - Associated Press

The 2010 World Cup is going 3-D.

Sony Corp. said Friday it has signed a deal with FIFA, the international soccer football governing body, to record up to 25 World Cup games in 3-D — a technology that gives viewers an illusion of depth on the screen.

The Japanese electronics and entertainment company is one of several electronics makers planning or working on 3-D technology for TVs and movies. Sony makes 3-D capable video cameras, and plans to sell 3-D TVs for homes next year.

People wear special glasses to see 3-D footage because the illusion of dimension is created by sending different images to the left and the right eye, although manufacturers are working on upgrades that will show 3-D without glasses.

Chief Executive Howard Stringer expressed his enthusiasm for watching a soccer game in 3-D in an interview this week.

"I thought that was very cool," he said at Tokyo headquarters.

Most 3-D releases so far have been animation films but the feature is gradually spreading to other genres, such as the soon-to-be-released sci-fi epic "Avatar."

Stringer said sports was definitely one area 3-D could display its strengths.

He also said he wanted to see "thoughtful" movies someday being made in 3-D. He ruled out Michael Jackson videos and the next "Spider-Man" movie as 3-D possibilities.

For now, 3-D video of the World Cup in South Africa won't be shown in TV broadcast for homes, according to Sony, which makes Bravia TVs, Walkman portable players and PlayStation 3 game consoles.

They will be shown at Sony booths at FIFA events in Berlin, London, Mexico City, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Rome and Sydney in June and July. Highlights will be shown in Sony showrooms, and a video version will be sold through Sony Pictures.

"It's a great opportunity to get people to experience 3-D firsthand," said Sony spokesman Atsuo Omagari.

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