



# DPRK Middlesbrough Friendship Football Tour

18-22 September 2010



British Embassy  
Pyongyang

## INTRODUCTION

In 2000 the UK established diplomatic relations with the DPRK (North Korea). This year, Koryo Tours and CLSA, with the support of the British Embassy in Pyongyang, are marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by inviting Middlesbrough FC Ladies on a tour of Pyongyang for the game of their lives, giving the Korean people something magical to remember.

### Middlesbrough and the DPRK (North Korea)

In 1966 the DPRK competed in the World Cup in England and caused the greatest shock in World Cup history by eliminating the Italian team. They played most of their games in Middlesbrough and because of their gutsy performance and friendly attitude the locals adopted the team as their 'home side' and treated them like heroes - so much so that over 2,000 Middlesbrough fans followed the Koreans to their next match on the opposite side of the country in Liverpool. In 2002, with the support of the UK Government, Koryo Tours and VeryMuchSo Productions took the remaining players from the 1966 DPRK team back to Middlesbrough. They travelled the country and received tributes from over 120,000 football fans including standing ovations at Middlesbrough FC and Everton FC. This has remained North Korea's most significant cultural exchange with the outside world to date.

*"We knew that Britain had participated in the Korean War. We thought them to be the enemy but they welcomed us. Wherever we went, they welcomed us unimaginably, and we felt 'English people are such a peaceful nation.' When we played against Portugal they [the English] supported us passionately. I learned football is not just about the winning but it's also about the promotion of diplomatic relationships and peace."*



Pak Do Ik, the striker who scored the goal that sunk the Italians' dreams in the 1966 World Cup, interview 'The Game of Their Lives' 2002.

2010 marks the 10th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the DPRK and the UK and we wanted to mark this occasion with an event that will provide the North Korean people with something magical to remember. North Koreans love football- it is their most popular game, in particular the population adore their women's team (rated as the fifth best in the world). Koryo Tours, in conjunction with the UK Embassy in Pyongyang and with the generous sponsorship of CLSA, are taking the Middlesbrough FC Ladies to the DPRK to play a series of friendly games with local DPRK women's teams. In addition the players will give training classes to school children in the DPRK.

## PARTICIPANTS



Since 1993, British-run Koryo Tours has been running tours and cultural projects in DPRK (North Korea). In 2001, Koryo Tours and VeryMuchSo Productions produced a documentary on the North Korean football team of 1966 entitled '*The Game of Their Lives*.' The film won various awards including the UK 2003 Royal Television Society 'Best Sports Documentary'.

We have organised many sports tours to the DPRK including a cricket tour and ice hockey tour but this even has to be the highlight and will have a terrific impact- playing not only local teams but in front of local supporters. We firmly believe in the utmost importance of engaging on a cultural level with the DPRK and the great role that sport, in particular, can play in crossing cultural boundaries, creating understanding and forging strong relationships.

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We would also like to thank our partners in the UK, Explore Worldwide, who have been indispensable in helping us book the international flights for the team. Special thanks goes to Simon Grove and John Farrugia. [www.explore.co.uk](http://www.explore.co.uk)



CLSA is very pleased to be associated with this current trip to North Korea. Many CLSA clients are interested in the developing situation in North Korea and eager to see for themselves how the country operates. Since the first CLSA hosted trip in 2002, we have visited a number of times. The current trip will allow a unique insight into this little known country, and is underscored by CLSA's support of an historic soccer match between Middlesbrough Ladies Football Club and a North Korean ladies team.



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## British Embassy Pyongyang

"The British Embassy in Pyongyang is delighted to support the visit of the Middlesbrough Ladies' Football Team to Pyongyang in this, the tenth year of diplomatic relations between our two countries. The link with Middlesbrough dates back to the 1966 World Cup, when DPRK's team played three matches at the town's Ayresome Park ground and caused the biggest upset of the tournament by beating Italy 1-0. The team were embraced by the people of Middlesbrough, illustrating how a shared love of football can transcend differences and help forge longlasting friendships. Over forty years on, events such as this are a valuable way of further developing mutual understanding between our two countries."

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Hello, my name is Marrie Wiczorek and I am the manager of Middlesbrough FC Ladies. We have been given the unusual and fantastic opportunity to visit DPRK as part of a cultural/friendship visit - due mainly to the links from the World Cup in 1966 when DPRK did so well whilst playing at Ayresome Park. Because of the marvellous support the "Boro" crowd gave the DPRK team, our town is almost famous there, and we have been promised a very warm welcome. We hope to play 2 games against DPRK women's teams, and also maybe meet and coach some local schoolchildren, which would be wonderful! Our visit is the initiative of the British Embassy in Pyongyang and Koryo Tours, and sponsored by CLSA, and is based on sport, friendship - and "loving Middlesbrough"! All of our party are really looking forward to extending the hand of friendship through football.



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