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## World Cup adventure for children

**A group of children who missed out on seeing a World Cup match because of an alleged ticket scam, are travelling to Germany to watch England's next game.**

**BBC reporter Tom Hepworth is on the coach with the pupils as they travel through France.**



The pupils travelled first by ferry and then by coach to Germany

This time last week the pupils at Mayville High School in Southsea were heading home from Germany dejected and disheartened.

They and more than 350 other schoolchildren had saved their pocket money for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the World Cup Finals.

The £410 per head included a trip to see a world cup group game but they became the unwitting victims of an alleged ticket scam.

The group of 23 schoolboys were told they would see Iran v Portugal but they didn't even make it as far as the stadium as the tickets they thought they'd bought didn't exist.

“ I'm just so happy that the football club has gone to all this effort, it's fantastic ”

Amanda Rowe

But after frantic efforts by Portsmouth Football Club their world cup nightmare has become a footballing dream ticket.

After hearing of their plight, Pompey co-owner Alexandre Gaydamak offered the boys the chance of a lifetime - tickets to see England's second round match against Ecuador.

The stepped in to pay for all their accommodation and travel and pulled strings at football's world governing body Fifa to secure 28 tickets for the boys and their teachers.

The coach left Fratton Park on Friday evening and despite a full day at school the boys were very excited as they were waved off by their parents and jealous brothers and sisters.



The children are returning to Germany to see England

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Amanda Rowe, Marlee Moret's mum, said: "When he came back after the first trip he was gutted, he's a huge football fan but after the fiasco with the tickets he was so disillusioned.

"But now after hearing what Portsmouth FC have done, he's so excited he could explode, he's really looking forward to the game and I'm just so happy that the football club has gone to all this effort, it's fantastic."

The boys have taken over one of the corners of the ferry sailing to Le Harve, Pompey shirts and England flags marking their territory.

They've got a long journey ahead of them. After they get to the French port a coach will take them to across northern France through Paris and into Germany and then on to Stuttgart; a journey that will take them more than 10 hours.

“ I can't concentrate on osmosis now - this is the World Cup ”

Marlee Moret

Marlee Moret, 14, from Southsea, said: "The journey back last time was terrible, everyone was really down but this time I don't mind the travelling.

"This is a chance in a life time to see England play in a world cup, I'm so excited about it, we hardly slept at all last night."

But fatigue is catching up with the boys as the coach speeds through France, the adrenaline has run out and a few of them are sleeping while the rest read, play computer games or talk football - can England go all the way? Are Argentina the new favourites?

### Media interest

When they get to Stuttgart they'll soak up some of the atmosphere along with thousands of other England fans and they've even organised their own Mayville five-a-side mini world cup tournament which they hope to play in one of the city's parks before the game that really matters.

There's also the matter of fitting their commitments to the world press. When the story broke of the alleged ticket scam the boys were quoted in newspapers and appeared on TV in Germany and outlets all over the world.

Deputy head Martin Castle is juggling when he will talk to BBC Breakfast News, Radio Five Live and the German network RTL and all before breakfast.

"We've been amazed at the number of people wanting to talk to us in the last week and just glad that this time it's good news," he said.

The excitement is building as we get nearer the German border there's always a reminder that this is still a school trip for Marlee.

He's got a GCSE science module exam on Tuesday.

"I will revise for it but maybe on the way back," he said.

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