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Pumped About Euro 2012? Here Are the Best Places to Catch the Matches

By Serena Solomon (/www.dnainfo.com/new-york/about-us/our-team//serena-solomon) | June 7, 2012 10:08am

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Randolph Hernandez from sports bar Tonic said he dreamed about soccer last night.

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NEW YORK CITY — A Midtown bar could very well be the next best place for soccer fans who can't be in Poland for Friday's kick-off of the 2012 UEFA European Football Championship (<http://www.uefa.com/uefaeuro/index.html>).

Just weeks before the tournament's start, Randolph Hernandez of Tonic jetted to Eastern Europe.

He walked the pitch of Warsaw's National Stadium, touched the turf and tried to soak up the passion that will fill the space when the celebration of the Beautiful Game starts (<http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20120607/east-village/dnainfocom-new-yorks-guide-euro-cup-tournament-times#ixzz1x7IeFhj>).

Now the director of events and marketing is bringing that passion back to Seventh Avenue at 49th Street.

"I tried to imagine the energy when it is full," he said.

"I hope to bring that energy back to our staff and our patrons. I think I actually dreamed of soccer last night."

The Euro Cup, which is second only to the World Cup for soccer fans' fervor, pits the continent's best national teams against each other over three weeks.

Hernandez, 32, brought back Euro Cup decorations and merchandise for the Midtown West bar.

The competition will see New York City's soccer bars overflowing at unusual times of the day as fans tune in to more than 30 matches.

"We have been looking forward to it for some time," said Naef Qassis from Van Diemen's Cafe and Bar, a Murray Hill bar that is one of the few committed to showing every game as well as the opening and closing ceremonies.

"We are anticipating an exciting European Cup."

The tournament of 16 European national teams, held every four years, is being co-hosted by Poland and the Ukraine for 2012. The opening ceremony is this Friday at 11:30 a.m for New Yorkers (5:30 p.m. Central European Time).

It will kick off all things football until the final match, which is scheduled to whip fans into a frenzy on Sunday July 1 at 2:45 p.m. for New York (8:45 p.m on CET) drawing an estimated 300 million television viewers.

Although European teams might clash, for Qassis he always notices fans of rival nations are brought together by the tournament.

"I feel like there is a camaraderie amongst the soccer fans even if they are opposing fans in the cup," he said. "They congratulate each other and cheer everyone on. Everyone is quite the sportsman."

At Tonic, which has just completed \$250,000 in renovations, the Euro Cup will be the most important event of the year "even topping the Olympics.

There will even be a beer choice to represent every nation in the cup.

"If you support the Greek team, drink the Greek beer," said Hernandez, who expects 500 to 700 patrons per game. "That is how we are helping people support their team."

As a fan, Hernandez is especially looking forward to the first round matches between intense rivals England vs. France and Spain vs. Italy, as well as Germany vs. Portugal and Denmark vs. Netherlands.

Those teams have extremely passionate fan bases.

"We pride ourselves on football, English Premier league, the Championship League," he said.

New York City Bars Screening All 2012 UEFA European Football Championship Games

Nevada Smith's, 125 E. 11th St., East Village (<http://www.nevadasmiths.net/>)

Euro Cup Drink Specials: \$6 Corona and \$6 Stella

The famous sports bar "where football is a religion" will be screening games at its temporary location in Webster Hall as its new venue nearby is still undergoing renovations, according to owner Paddy McCarthy.

"We get a whole cross-section for the fans," he said. "A lot of English, but a whole cross-section."

For McCarthy, Nevada Smith's is a 25-year dream with the venue becoming a soccer hub in the city. He hopes to open the new venue in August with eight screens so big that several people were required to carry them.

FireFly, 54 Spring St., SoHo (<http://www.fireflynyc.com/indexmain.html>)

Euro Cup Drink Specials: There will be a new variety of European Beers from all participating countries.

All games and ceremonies will be shown on 16 large screens surrounded by flags of competing nations, according to Denise Sheridan, the Irish owner of Firefly.

"The Euro Cup is only held every four years, similar to the World Cup and the Olympics, so it's a big deal," he said, adding that with the diversity of SoHo, Firefly gets fans from every European nation.

Van Diemen's, 383 3rd Ave., Murray Hill (<http://www.vandiemensnyc.com/>)

"We do have a big European following," said owner Naef Qassis, adding that there are always big groups of Germans and Poles during soccer match screenings.

The bar, with decorations already in its windows, is expected to be full for every game, even though most matches are during the middle of the workday.

Tonic, 727 Seventh Ave., Midtown West (<http://www.tonicbarnyc.com/>)

Euro Cup Specials: A selection of beers, ciders and vodkas will be representing the national teams in the cup. There is also a \$9.95 lunch special.

The bar has declared its Midtown West location championship headquarters for New York City, with beers flowing from every competing nation.

"Tonic is generally a sports bar and we focus on [soccer]," Randolph Hernandez said.

Over the last month Hernandez has even been courting consulates and different national organizations to ensure an official contingency at the bar for matches.

Kelly's Sports Bar of NYC, 12 Avenue A, East Village (<http://www.kellysnyc.com/>)

Drink Specials: Certain drafts will be \$3 and \$4.

Football is a big deal for Kelly's and its Irish owner Jerry Doyle, who played soccer as a kid.

"I grew up playing. I have a huge passion for football," he said.

Stout, 133 West 33rd St., Chelsea (<http://www.stoutnyc.com/>)

Euro Cup Specials: None

The Irish bar is expecting plenty of its own countryfolk as well as fans from other European countries, according to manager Elizabeth Nelif.

Catch all the games at Stout along with the opening and closing ceremonies.

Third and Long, 523 3rd Ave., Murray Hill
(<http://www.thirdandlongnyc.com/contact.cfm>)

Euro Cup Drink Special: \$4 Carlsberg pints as well as daily specials.

A mainstay of Murray Hill since 1991, Third and Long is owned and operated by two New York-born Irish brothers.



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