

# Swiss rolls across SA supporting WC team

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WORLD Cup fever has turned a Swiss adventurer who does not even like soccer into the ultimate fan.

After clocking 180 000km motorcycling across four continents, 40-year-old Mathias Schmid is now following the Swiss team around South Africa – and even buying tickets from scalps for inflated prices just to see the games.

“I am not even a soccer fan, but when I landed in Joburg with my bike and saw the mood of the people, I got total soccer fever,” he said.

Schmid said he resolved to follow Switzerland all over South Africa after he decided on the spur of the moment to watch their opening game.

“Football fever took over so much. I am now travelling the country, following Switzerland – until they get knocked out of the tournament.”

Now en route to Bloemfontein after watching games in Durban and Port Elizabeth, Schmid said even though he was tempted to spend a few more days at the National Arts Festival, he had to finish his soccer great trek.

“I was not interested in soccer, now I am a fanatic,” he said.

“It is a pity I cannot stay longer at the festival, but I have committed to the soccer.



**EASY RIDER:** Motorcycle adventurer Mathias Schmid gets directions from a festival trader.

Picture: DAVID MACGREGOR

It is like unfinished business.”

A biker to the bone, the travelling motorcycle mechanic has attended rallies all over the planet, including the world famous Sturgis Rally in the US, and even chased the Dakar in Chile and Argentina.

Schmid, who made time to attend the Chicken Rally on the Natal South Coast after the Durban game, said he was bowled over by the enthusi-

asm of ordinary South Africans despite being constantly warned about crime and violence – especially during his Australian epic.

After traversing every continent except Africa, Schmid’s trusty Honda Transalp is not just a bike – it is home.

Weighing in at 250kg fully loaded, the bike now has a second passenger – an unnamed rubber chicken at-

tached to the handlebars next to a green plastic alien.

Schmid said the travel bug bit after he bought his first bike when he was 14 and shortly afterwards drove across Switzerland.

In the last 10 years, Schmid has been through the middle and far East, south east Asia, Japan, Alaska, north and south America, New Zealand, Australia – and now Africa.