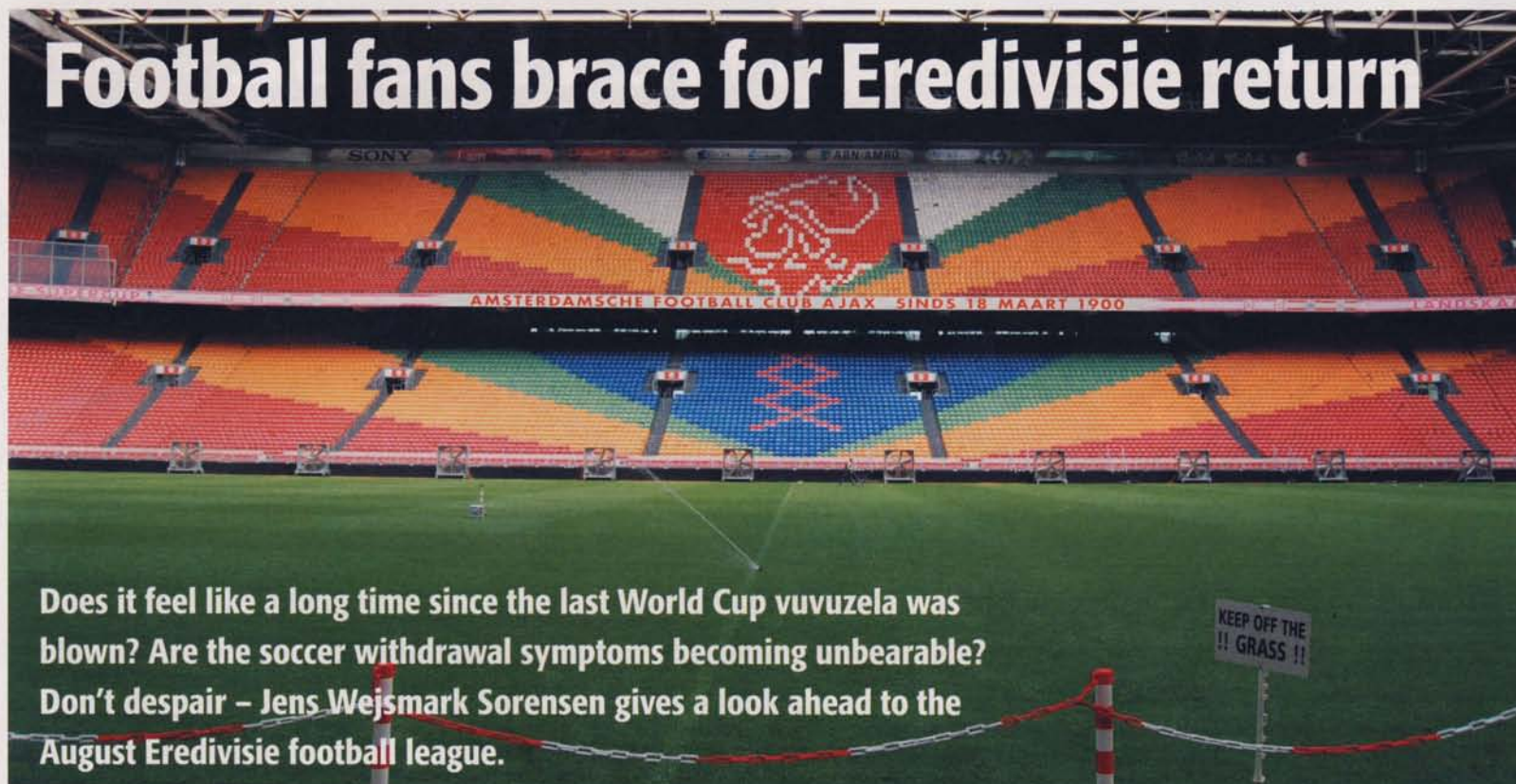


Football fans brace for Eredivisie return



Does it feel like a long time since the last World Cup vuvuzela was blown? Are the soccer withdrawal symptoms becoming unbearable? Don't despair – Jens Wejsmark Sorensen gives a look ahead to the August Eredivisie football league.

Photos: Sorensen

When reigning Dutch champions FC Twente on 6 August travel to the south of the Netherlands to play Roda JC, the 55th season of the Eredivisie will be underway.

A total of 18 teams will be competing for the championship, with 16 'old' teams and two new additions. De Graafschap and SBV Excelsior will replace relegated

RKC Waalwijk and Sparta Rotterdam.

It is an open question as to whether FC Twente can defend their first ever league championship, especially after their successful manager Steve McClaren has left the club.

Anyone having followed Dutch football will know that betting on Ajax Amsterdam, PSV Eindhoven or Feyenoord as

the next champions will normally not raise many eyebrows. Since the introduction of the Eredivisie in 1955, the three clubs have shared the title between them an incredible 48 times (Ajax 21 times, PSV 18 and Feyenoord 9).

But with AZ Alkmaar and FC Twente winning the last two seasons and with other quality teams like FC Utrecht in

the battle, the champion trophy (Kampioensschaal) will not easily find a new home. There is every chance that the new season will be as exciting and unpredictable as ever.

The full fixture list of all 306 matches and more information about the teams can be found on the official Eredivisie website: <http://www.eredivisie.nl>

Dutch World Cup loss brings tears and profit

Right after Brazil was sent home by Oranje, DVC started producing a special flag, saying 'Holland Kampioen 2010,' next to a lion's head. More than a bit risky, as the semi-final against Uruguay still had to be played and the final would

World Cup viewership low

HILVERSUM | The 11 July World Cup finals were watched by 12,215,000 viewers, according to NOS television, slightly down from the 12,270,000 who watched the semi-final against Uruguay. Nearly 10 million people watched at home or with friends, while the rest watched the game in a cafe or on a big screen. The slightly lower final figure is due to summer holidays with many Dutch on vacation. The final did not lead to absenteeism on Monday, according to health and safety organisation ArboNed. The population of the Netherlands is nearly 17 million.

Van Bronckhorst retires

ROTTERDAM | Giovanni van Bronckhorst retired from professional football on 25 July from De Kuip stadium. The 35-year-old announced he would retire after a friendly match between Feyenoord and Real Mallorca (0-1). "This is really the last," said Feyenoord general manager Eric Gudde after the game, adding Van Bronckhorst had "a phenomenal career." Van Bronckhorst played his first game for Feyenoord in 1993 against the then dreamteam, FC Barcelona. Van Bronckhorst was the captain of the Dutch team during the World Cup, after which he was appointed Knight of the Order of Oranje-Nassau.

