



Kicking-off 2026: How Macca's is all in on football this winter

From local clubs to the FIFA World Cup, see how Macca's is supporting every level of the game.

Busy pitches, muddy boots, and halftime oranges signal one clear message across Aotearoa: the winter football season is officially here. Every weekend, local parks and grounds come alive with the energy of junior players, their cheering families, and dedicated volunteers. Football continues to reign supreme as the most popular team participation sport in New Zealand. According to Sport NZ's recent Active NZ Participation Survey, more Kiwis than ever are lacing up their boots. Last year alone, more than 180,000 players registered to play and nearly 148,500 of those participated in New Zealand Football organised football and futsal, with numbers growing steadily year on year. At the heart of this thriving local scene is a commitment to community, teamwork, and fun. For almost 30 years, McDonald's New Zealand has been a steadfast supporter, helping to nurture the next generation of Kiwi footballers.

Equipping the grassroots game

The true joy of junior football lies in the personal growth and lifelong friendships formed on the pitch. Parents, coaches, and club volunteers know the thrill of watching kids develop their skills and build confidence. In partnership with New Zealand Football, McDonald's focuses its support on getting the resources required to deliver great training and game day experiences.. McDonald's helps fund essential equipment, tools and rewards to coaches and players at the over 400 local clubs across the country. In recent years Macca's has delivered over one million items to the junior football community. From goals, balls and grip socks, to coaching guides, trophies and certificates, this massive logistical effort makes it infinitely easier for clubs to focus on what actually matters: helping kids and their families enjoy

the beautiful game. This long-standing partnership with New Zealand Football touches every level of the community game. By supporting junior and youth teams, as well as refereeing and coach development, McDonald's helps strengthen the foundation of the sport, ensuring it continues to thrive.

A nostalgic twist for senior players

While junior football focuses on learning and fun, the passion, competition and enjoyment does not fade as players grow older. To celebrate this ongoing commitment, McDonald's is introducing a fresh twist on a beloved tradition for the 2026 season. Remember the pride of taking home the 'Player of the Day' certificate as a kid? That feeling is back, and this time, the senior community players are invited. In a brilliant nod to nostalgia, Macca's is rolling out digital Player of the Day certificates for senior teams. Team managers across the country have received digital vouchers containing a special code. The awarded player can simply open the MyMacca's app and redeem their code for a favourite burger. It is a fantastic way to celebrate the players who continue to turn up, put in the hard work, and back their teammates week in and week out. After all, the joy of being recognised for your efforts never really stops mattering.

Dreaming big for 2026

This grassroots excitement ties perfectly into a massive year for the sport globally. With the All Whites preparing to compete at the FIFA World Cup 2026, the pathway from local parks to the world stage has never looked more inspiring. As Simon Kenny, Head of Impact and Communications at McDonald's New Zealand, notes: "2026 is a huge year for football in New Zealand. Record numbers of kids and adults are playing, our A League clubs are bringing local

talent through, and fans get to watch our national team on the world stage. We're seeing the benefit of decades of investment and development through the Whole of Football philosophy, and it's great to be part of the football whanau." Through essential equipment drops and exciting new initiatives, Macca's continues to champion participation, teamwork, and the pure joy of playing the game.



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TOP For nearly 30 years, McDonald's has been football's biggest supporter.