

# Capital nets £7m from Barca clash

Economy cashes in  
as fans flock to see  
top stars play Hearts

■ MICHAEL BLACKLEY  
Business Reporter

THE glamour friendly match between Hearts and Barcelona generated more than £7 million for the city's economy, according to a report published today.

Football fans eager to catch a glimpse of megastars such as Thierry Henry, Ronaldinho and Deco, travelled to Edinburgh in their thousands to be part of the 57,850 crowd at Murrayfield.

They packed into the Capital's bars and restaurants before and after the match.

Economic consultants DTZ said the spending by supporters over the weekend of the match helped pump a multi-million pound injection into the city's economy.

Russell Whyte, a senior economist with DTZ, said: "Some of this was captured in the club's official stores, but wider effects were experienced as fans stayed in hotels and spent time in bars, restaurants and shops.

"Further effects were also gained from the enhanced media presence and events during the build-up to the game.

"These additional benefits accrued as the game was able to attract people who would not otherwise have visited Edinburgh whether they were Barcelona fans, Hearts fans or neutrals."

The figure was worked out by following a formula similar to that used by UEFA and the Scottish Football Association to analyse the benefits of key matches.

One bar to benefit was the popular Murrayfield Bar on Roseburn Terrace. Neil Campbell, its assistant manager, said: "It was packed on the night and there was a great atmosphere. It was quite a family



**MONEY-SPINNER:** A young fan waits eagerly as Thierry Henry signs a shirt.

Picture: JULIE HOWDEN

atmosphere as well, a bit different from the normal football crowd. It was a great night as far as our takings were concerned and we'd love to see more nights like it."

The match attracted Hearts' biggest-ever home crowd and also saw images of Edinburgh beamed out live to television stations in more than 100 countries.

There were favourable reports given by Barcelona players of Edinburgh and Scotland, raising hopes that other big-name teams will come to the city for similar high-profile summer games.

Ron Hewitt, chief executive of the Edinburgh Chamber of

Commerce, said: "It was an excellent evening for the economy and for Murrayfield. The whole issue of our ability to attract and keep world-class sporting events to our stadia is extremely important.

"We'd like to think that will be borne in mind for any redevelopment of Meadowbank, the Commonwealth Pool and so on.

"Sporting stadia are crucially important in bringing another dimension to the visitor attractions in Edinburgh."

Councillor Tom Buchanan, the city's economic development leader, said: "It was wonderful to see two of Europe's major tourist

centres brought together for a sporting event such as this.

"Sometimes it is difficult for people to appreciate the sort of revenue such events bring to the local economy."

A Hearts spokesman said: "There is no doubt the game was highly beneficial in terms of the club's profile and revenues from it. It also reinforced the benefit of attracting top class football matches to the Capital.

"That's one reason we are continuing to work on proposals for the redevelopment of the main stand at Tynecastle."

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