

PreZero Arena Becomes First Certified Zero Waste Stadium in the Bundesliga

TSG Hoffenheim and PreZero met for this purpose with prominent experts from sports, business, research, and politics

Neckarsulm, May 4, 2023. It is a milestone in the history of German football. The PreZero Arena, home to TSG Hoffenheim, has become the first certified Zero Waste stadium in the Bundesliga, the premier German football league. The official inspection and confirmation by TÜV Süd according to the DIN Spec 91436 standard marked the culmination of an intense period for the club and PreZero, the stadium's naming sponsor.

"The project demonstrates that a lot can be achieved in waste management. Ideally, we would like to avoid waste altogether. However, as this is unrealistic in a stadium, Zero Waste means reducing non-recyclable waste to zero and keeping all other materials in the loop as long as possible, giving them a new life", explains Thomas Kyriakis, CEO of PreZero International. "The stadium, as a microcosm of society, also serves as a role model and sends a signal to politics, business, and society as a whole on how the European Union's Green Deal can be implemented."

Since the partnership began in 2019, TSG Hoffenheim and PreZero have focused on transparency. They chose the independent DIN Spec 91436 certification for sustainable waste and material management to ensure comparability and trust. PreZero initiated this certification in 2021 and developed it together with partners from business, academia, and NGOs. For the first time, the vision of Zero Waste could be verified. In mid-April, TÜV Süd visited the stadium as the certifying company and confirmed the Zero Waste status with a bronze category. With a recycling rate of 87%, the requirement of >85% material being put to higher-value use via reuse, recycling, composting and fermentation was even exceeded. Key components of this achievement included an intensive training package for employees, collaboration with involved service providers, and the introduction of waste separation systems.

"We consider it our social responsibility and started early on the path to bring sustainability to the PreZero Arena. The stadium has great potential," says Denni Strich, CEO of TSG Hoffenheim. "We therefore also welcome the linking of sustainability to the licensing of professional clubs by the DFL."

To celebrate the successful certification, TSG and PreZero invited guests to a discussion at the PreZero Arena today: "One Goal: Zero Waste. How sport reconciles ecology and economy." In front of around 150 invited guests, Uli Mayer-Johanssen, an expert in sustainable corporate and brand management, football expert Reiner Calmund, Dr. Andre Baumann, State Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Climate, and Energy of Baden-Württemberg, and Matthias Horx, researcher for megatrends and founder of the Zukunftsinstitut, discussed how the PreZero Arena can serve as an example of progress towards a more sustainable future.

The bronze status is just the beginning. The results from TÜV Süd will now be evaluated to implement the missing components for silver and eventually gold status. TSG Hoffenheim and PreZero continue their journey to make the stadium more sustainable.

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Additional quotes for editorial use:

Marcus Sagitz, Head of Marketing PreZero: "The implementation of the project was only possible thanks to a strong partnership. Open collaboration enables innovation – this has once again been confirmed here. We primarily want to motivate other companies and organizations to embark on the journey to Zero Waste together."

Stefan Wagner, Sustainability Manager TSG Hoffenheim: "With the certification, we have set a standard and created comparability and trust. This is just the beginning. Less packaging waste, sustainable energy, and eco-friendly mobility concepts: The ideas for making the arena a model in terms of sustainability are diverse and far from being exhausted."

Uli Mayer-Johansen, expert in sustainable corporate and brand management: "People follow narratives that anchor themselves in the collective subconscious and lead to actions. What narrative forms the basis for people's actions? The Zero Waste Stadium had a clear goal and a central idea that people could join. This created a wave of energy that paved the way for a positively perceived future."

Dr. Andre Baumann, State Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Climate, and Energy of Baden-Württemberg: "The contribution of sports to climate protection and the circular economy is of great importance. Whether it's the Bundesliga or the local league – every club can make a contribution! TSG Hoffenheim and PreZero are a great example of this. I would be delighted if even more clubs switch to sprint mode."

Reiner Calmund, football expert and official: "Until now, criteria such as teamwork, perseverance, and commitment were the qualities that footballers carried from the pitch into society. Now, sustainability is added as a significant building block. Football is much more than a 1:0, more than just the effort on the field. Thanks to its charisma, it brings topics to light and can thus act as a lever for society as a whole."

Matthias Horx, researcher for megatrends and founder of the Zukunftsinstitut: "Imagine if waste wasn't waste at all, but an endless resource. We would live in a world of abundance where we wouldn't have to save constantly but could intelligently waste. The true art of living is understanding the present from the perspective of the future. This makes the paths we can take in the future visible. This stadium project is an important step towards a livable future."

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