

2023 Rugby World Cup

SNCF Gares & Connexions welcomes the world of rugby to France !

WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTRIBUTIONS BY AFP AND L'ÉQUIPE

During the Rugby World Cup being held from 8 September to 28 October, SNCF Gares & Connexions is joining the scrum with 29 cultural exhibitions in honour of the nations being hosted all over France. In Paris, four of the main railway stations will be decked out in the colours of the 20 countries competing for the title – a way of welcoming them and creating bonds between players, supporters, staff, everyday travellers and tourists.



Paris Gare du Nord © Mathieu Delmestre - SNCF Gares & Connexions

Welcoming, learning and discovering

Visitors, supporters and everyday travellers will be able to discover or rediscover the 20 teams in the tournament from a fresh perspective, through content such as ID cards, outstanding landmarks, culinary specialities, history, the national rugby team, and sports culture. From the start of September, Paris Gare d'Austerlitz, Paris Gare de Lyon, Paris Gare Montparnasse and Paris Gare du Nord will host outsized attractions offering a panoramic guide to these 20 countries in words and pictures.

"The Greatest Scrum of all Time" : 29 photographic exhibitions to explore all over France

SNCF Gares & Connexions, the SNCF Group subsidiary that operates and manages France's 3,000 railway stations, is celebrating rugby in 29 stations throughout France by covering their walls with giant cultural exhibitions entitled "The Greatest Scrum of all Time".

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The exhibition sites have been chosen to reflect the teams' base camps and journeys, forming a nationwide network and being located as close as possible to the players and their supporters.

For example, La Rochelle will be the base camp for Georgia's national team. The exhibition on the piazza outside La Rochelle railway station will present the Georgia team, so that people can find out a little more about the country.

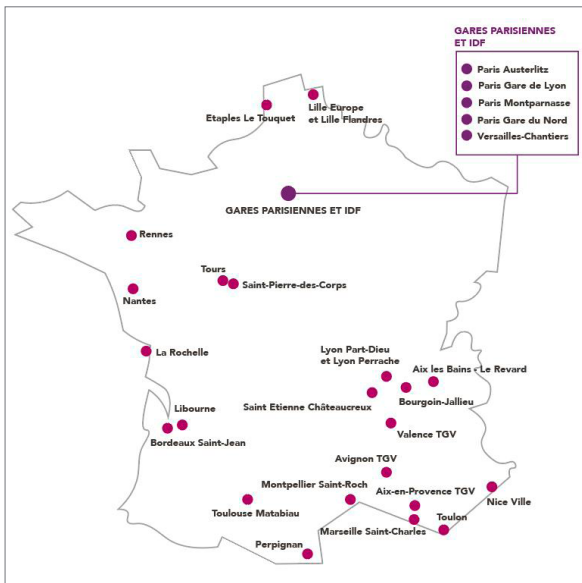
The same applies in Toulouse, base camp for the Japan team: Toulouse Matabiau railway station will present the team and more generally the country to local residents and travellers. Another example is Bourgoin-Jallieu (Department of Isère), which will host the Italy team.

lastly quotations about rugby and cultures coming together beyond borders, the exhibitions seek to convey the universal values of this 200-year-old sport and to create a bond between passionate supporters, casual fans, aficionados, curious first-timers, travellers and everyday station users.

All behind the France XV

The France team is naturally an integral part of this national package of exhibitions. The team will be given particular prominence at Aix-en-Provence TGV railway station, near to its base camp for the latter stages of the tournament.

The France XV is also given pride of place in the exhibitions at the stations in the cities where it will play its group matches, including Marseille Saint-Charles, but also in those it will pass through in transit, as well as the main Paris stations.



Map of exhibitions © SNCF Gares & Connexions



© Anne-Christine Poujulat - AFP

Photos to convey the rugby culture of the 20 competing countries

With photographic contributions by L'Équipe and AFP to enhance the presentations of the national teams, and additional images of youth and women's rugby provided by each federation, the exhibitions will use pictures to tell the story of the rugby culture in each of the 20 countries competing in the tournament.

Through photos of the official teams and of amateur rugby, women's rugby, and fans, but also of sporting and cultural reference points in each country, and



Bordeaux Saint-Jean station © David Paquin - SNCF Gares & Connexions

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Like the pianos in stations, which create a distinctive atmosphere and moments that travellers from all backgrounds can share, these exhibitions are intended to bring together all supporters, players and everyday passengers around the values of customer care, hospitality and shared emotions typical of French railway stations. These values are the very essence of this global sporting event.

Exhibitions produced with photographic contributions by AFP and L'Équipe, with the kind support of France 2023 and World Rugby, and with the assistance of Agence BITL - Bring It To Light, a cultural engineering and photographic event agency.

"AFP is delighted to be teaming up with SNCF Gares & Connexions for these exhibitions during the 2023 Rugby World Cup," said AFP's CEO Fabrice Fries. "This will be a tremendous opportunity to help the public better understand the day-to-day work of AFP's photojournalists, both on the pitch and behind the scenes."

"The Rugby World Cup in France is a major event for L'Équipe Group, which is providing coverage across all of its outlets: newspaper, magazine, website and app, TV channel and social media, but also through this wonderful exhibition, which showcases its incredible archive of over 12 million sports photos," said L'Équipe Group CEO Laurent Prud'homme. The individual exhibitions around the country, he added, "are an opportunity to pay tribute to our photographers past and present," who "will once again be at the heart of the scrum to cover this historic world cup. L'Équipe and SNCF are part of France's heritage – and our group is very proud to be involved in this festive national event, which will bring the whole of France together behind Les Bleus."

Besides these cultural exhibitions, local attractions are planned in French railway stations throughout the tournament: photocalls, make-up workshops, video mapping, expression walls, and more. For more details, visit the [Avant Match](#) website (in French).



Nantes station © Mathieu Delmestre - SNCF Gares & Connexions

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About SNCF Gares & Connexions

A subsidiary of SNCF Réseau, SNCF Gares & Connexions specialises in railway stations from design to operation, and also in marketing their business premises. With its 3,000 French stations, it is committed to constantly improving operating quality, inventing new services, and upgrading station facilities for its 10 million daily passengers and visitors. Convinced that stations are destinations in their own right, it enhances these "urban villages" to help spread culture to the widest possible audience. Every year, it custom-designs over 250 exhibitions, interventions and other arts events at stations all over France in partnership with leading institutions.

About AFP

AFP is a global news agency that provides rapid, comprehensive coverage of world news. Harnessing a network of over 450 photographers worldwide, AFP's International Photo Department enjoys peer recognition for the quality and range of its output, and every year is the winner of leading international photojournalism awards. AFP's photo offering, built on the expertise of its photographers and photo editors, is supplemented by the output of more than 70 partner agencies.

About L'Équipe Group

For 77 years, L'Équipe Group has been the leading player in French sport, with a strong and unifying brand that informs and entertains across a portfolio of outlets reaching 43 million people: a newspaper and magazines, a suite of TV channels (L'Équipe, L'Équipe Live 1, L'Équipe Live 2), a platform (website and application), and social media. More than 350 journalists work for the group's various outlets. With an archive of 12 million sport photos and nine staff photographers, L'Équipe is diversifying its activities and developing bespoke photographic exhibitions around major sporting events, to inform the public and tell them the most inspiring stories about sport and athletes.

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