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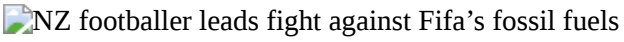

Co-authored by Marc Daalder, LockerRoom

When Katie Rood first travelled overseas to play football, she was excited to see what nature looked like outside New Zealand.

“I thought everywhere was going to be a paradise like New Zealand. I quite quickly realised that, as humans, we’ve had a pretty heavy impact on the globe. That lack of access to nature in certain places struck me,” the former Football Fern recalls.

Now, Rood finds herself in Baku, Azerbaijan, where the COP29 climate summit has brought more than 60,000 diplomats, journalists, activists, lobbyists and business executives to talk sustainability – and maybe do a bit of greenwashing.

Among those in (brief) attendance was Fifa President Gianni Infantino, who flew in by private jet for the leader’s summit last week before jetting off again. While in town, the boss of the world’s largest sporting organisation talked a big game about climate change and renewed an agreement with the Pacific Islands Forum.

That’s exactly why Rood has come (via commercial plane) all the way to COP29. Last month, she and two other footballers spearheaded an open letter to Infantino calling on him to nix Fifa’s partnership deal with Saudi Aramco. More than 130 women players from 26 countries have signed on since.

“It is the biggest oil and gas organisation in the world. It is also the biggest greenhouse gas emitter of any company, ever. It’s also owned by the Saudi state which has committed human rights abuses, especially towards women,” Rood says.

Read the full story via LockerRoom here

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