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Press release

The home team welcomes: Hertha

Tierpark Berlin's baby polar bear now has a name

At first, the little white bear eyes the blue ball sceptically, but she soon overcomes her doubts and begins chasing it across the rocks. And this isn't just any ball – on it is written the bear's brand new name in big capital letters: HERTHA.

The polar bear cub was born almost four months ago. She came into the world blind, deaf, and the size of a guinea pig. This Tuesday – now big, strong and adorably fluffy – she was finally given a name. The name was chosen in cooperation with the bear's new sponsor, Berlin's venerable football club Hertha BSC, so what could be a more fitting moniker than the German girl's name Hertha (pronounced "Hair-ta")? As the Tierpark's director Dr Andreas Knieriem explains: "It's short, snappy and has a link to her home town. Hertha is the perfect sponsor and the perfect name for our cuddly little Berliner." This way, when she grows up and moves away, the bear will always have a strong connection to the German capital. "She is also a very sporty young bear," adds Knieriem. At the age of just eleven weeks, she was already proving remarkable stamina as she chased a ball around the den. And she demonstrated a good feel for the ball even before she was steady on her legs. It was only natural that this level of talent at such a tender age would come to the attention of Berlin's football pros. Ingo Schiller, CEO of Hertha BSC, is glad to welcome the young bear onto the team: "Bears are symbolic animals for Berlin – it doesn't matter if they come from Brazil, like our mascot Herthinho, or from the Arctic, like little Hertha."

Over the past few months, Tierpark Berlin received a number of applications from hopeful sponsors for the bear. The purpose behind the two-year sponsorship is partly to help cover the costs of keeping the polar bear, and partly to raise public awareness about the threat facing our planet's largest land predator. "Hertha is an important ambassador for her fellow polar bears living in their natural habitat," says polar bear curator Dr Florian Sicks. "We want our visitors to experience this fascinating species up close and make them aware of the plight of polar bears in the wild." Last year, almost 1.5 million people visited Tierpark Berlin and learned about the natural habitats of a wide range of different species. The commented feeding sessions and shows offer opportunities for visitors to get even closer to some of these wonderful animals. Inviting the public to watch and learn about animals is one of the best ways to make society aware of the urgent need for species conservation. Zoo and Tierpark Berlin support various conservation projects around the world, including non-



profit organisation Polar Bears International, which conducts valuable research and is committed to protecting polar bears in their Arctic home.

Hintergrund:

Am 1. Dezember 2018, um 2:33 Uhr brachte Eisbärin Tonja (9) im Tierpark Berlin das damals noch taube und blinde Jungtier auf die Welt. Bei der ersten Tierarzt-Untersuchung am 14. Februar 2019 brachte die kleine Eisbärin bei einer Größe von 61 cm von Kopf bis Po stolze 8,5 kg auf die Waage. Wie bei den als Einzelgänger lebenden Eisbären üblich, ist Eisbär-Vater Wolodja (7) an der Aufzucht des Jungtiers nicht beteiligt. Er lebt mittlerweile in einem niederländischen Zoo. Seit dem 15. März ist die kleine Eisbärin gemeinsam mit ihrer Mutter Tonja für die Besucher auf der Außenanlage im Tierpark Berlin zu sehen.