

ADRIAN STARTS CHALLENGE



Match draw: Adrian Chiles with pupils Catherine Young, left, and Emily Weightman
Picture: ANDY LAMB

MATCH of the Day presenter Adrian Chiles was in the North-East yesterday to launch a World Cup schools competition to highlight global poverty.

The host of BBC2's Match of the Day 2 performed the tournament draw at St Bede's School, in Lan-chester, County Durham, pairing the host school with Poland and Ecuador.

Schools from across the region are taking part in the Goal Difference competition, each one matched with two of the countries taking part in this summer's World Cup, in Germany.

The competition encourages pupils to design an awareness campaign for their school that focuses on those countries and the Millennium Development Goals – eight international targets to halve world poverty by 2015.

Adrian, who is half-Croatian, wore a Croatia shirt during the draw. He said football had played a major part in helping the Balkan

country become accepted as a nation. "Wherever I have been in the world, I have seen football breaking down barriers," he said.

"You can go anywhere in the world and people will talk to you about your team. The World Cup is one of the few times when poor countries compete equally with rich ones, so it is a fantastic opportunity to put some less fashionable countries in the spotlight.

"This competition is a chance to make a difference and encourage everyone else to do the same."

The competition will run until June 9, and pupils from the winning school will get tickets to a North-East match of their choice next season. Teachers will get free training worth £2,000.

Organiser Averil Newsam said: "The Millennium Development Goals could make a huge difference to millions of people worldwide, so it is important that many young people will be introduced to them in such an exciting way."