



UEFA·direct

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Spain – futsal champions



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WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



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Cover

Russia's Konstantin Maevski (in red) tries to get the better of Spain's Carlos Ortiz in the European Futsal Championship final, but the last word went to Spain, European futsal champions for the fourth time in a row
Photo: Action Images

A welcome geographical spread

The first final of 2012 – that of the European Futsal Championship – has just taken place in Zagreb under the watchful eye of the Croatian Football Federation, which was hosting its first major UEFA tournament. The year has thus begun with a move into uncharted territory, a theme that will be continued with EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine, of course, but also with the final rounds of the European Under-19 and Under-17 Championships, which are taking place in Estonia and Slovenia respectively. And let us not forget the final of the UEFA Europa League, which will be played at the National Arena in Bucharest.

The geographical spread of these major European football events is an excellent example of the increasingly active role played by UEFA's member associations. More and more of them – regardless of size – are putting themselves forward to organise the final rounds of our competitions. This is a most encouraging development, particularly because the hosting of such events tends to give fresh impetus to football at both regional and national level and provides the associations' executives with valuable organisational and administrative experience.



Moreover, it is not just the individual associations but European football as a whole that benefits from this experience. The entire football family therefore reaps the rewards of events being hosted right across the continent.

The same is true of event participation: international competition gives players something to measure themselves by and provides them with valuable experience. The UEFA Executive Committee's recent decision to increase to 16 the number of participants in the final round of the European Under-17 Championship fits perfectly with this philosophy of casting the net wider to make even greater strides forward.

A stylized signature of Michel Platini in blue ink.

Michel Platini
UEFA President

Spain – futsal kings again

Spain's sequence of victories at all levels was extended when, in Zagreb, José Venancio's team clinched a fifth European Futsal Championship victory – or even a sixth, if we include the first European tournament to be played under UEFA auspices in 1996.



Then, as now, Spain won the title at the expense of Russia. The Futsal EURO 2012 culminated in the two countries' fourth meeting in a final, with Spain's 3–1 victory earning them a fourth successive European title.

Records will show that Spain won all their games, scoring 20 goals and conceding only 7. But they were made to work hard for the ultimate victory, beating Italy 1–0 in a memorable semi-final and then, in the Zagreb final, coming back from the brink to beat Russia.

Remarkable attendance

The first major UEFA sport event to be staged in Croatia set records and logistical challenges. Heavy snowfalls might be on the meteorological menu for Zagreb but they are not a staple diet down on the coast at Split – the other venue for the 20-match tournament. The first snow for a decade had many people – including match officials – heading for railway stations rather than airports, and the adverse conditions made attendance figures even more remarkable. The tournament was watched by 95,609 spectators – a 62% increase on the previous finals. A new European Futsal Championship record was set when 14,300 fans saw Croatia's semi-final against Russia at

the Arena Zagreb. The 12,400 who returned to watch them in the bronze medal match against Italy would also have beaten the previous record.

All credit to the Croatian national association which, despite the climatic conditions, impeccably hosted the record-breaking event, which also attracted substantial TV audiences. The quality and intensity of the matches also contributed to a tournament which did an excellent job of promoting the indoor game. The most spectacular example was provided by the Group D game between Serbia and 2010 semi-finalists Azerbaijan. The ball had barely started rolling when Azerbaijan's Felipe hit the fastest goal ever scored in a final tournament with just eight seconds on the clock. *"The early goal set the tone,"* said Serbia's coach, Aca Kovacević, afterwards. *"I saw some amazing things and I'm sure that no one has ever seen anything like this at a Futsal EURO."*

The game had everything – including a dismissal in the eighth minute for Azerbaijan goalkeeper Andrey Tveryankin, who went into the annals of the competition by taking the field only 32 days short of his 45th birthday. The score was 2–2 when he received his second yellow card, and few would have predicted that the ball would hit the net 13 more times to make Azerbaijan 8 Serbia 9 an all-time record score for a Futsal EURO. The incredulous Azerbaijanis went home after scoring eight and losing.

Standards rising

They were not the only illustrious fallers in a tournament where three-team groups inject a "sudden death" element into most games. The Czech Republic, bronze medallists in 2010, were eliminated after narrow defeats by Romania and the Croatian hosts. Portugal, silver medallists in 2010, underlined their status among pre-tournament favourites by taking maximum points from their group games, only to be beaten 3–1 by Italy in a quarter-final where, after falling 2–1 behind, they deployed a flying goalkeeper in search of an equaliser – and conceded a third after losing possession while their net was unguarded.

Although the final outcome had a *déjà vu* look to it, some of the teams who went home early had confirmed that general standards across Europe are rising rapidly. A young Slovenian side produced an excellent first half against Spain; ditto Romania, who played better futsal than the 3–8 result against the eventual champions might

Spain's Miguelín outjumps his Russian opponent in the final



Action Images



Sportstime

suggest; and Turkey, making their debut in a final tournament, made a strong start against Italy and, despite a 5–0 loss to Russia, made their exit with coach Ömer Kaner commenting: “I’m happy and proud of my players because we’ve shown what we can do. We learned a lot from the two games we played in Croatia.” Serbia, apart from contributing to the “crazy” game against Azerbaijan, took Portugal and Russia to the limit, losing both games 2–1 after conceding in the closing minutes.

The most dramatic quarter-final, however, pitted the hosts against two-time silver medallists Ukraine. After a 1–1 draw, Croatia’s goalkeeper Ivo Jukič emerged as the hero by saving three of the four Ukrainian penalties to give the hosts a 3–1 shoot-out victory. After going 4–0 down, they valiantly fought back to 4–2 in the semi-final against

Russia and, ultimately, ran out of steam in their final game, when Italy beat them 3–1 to take the bronze medal.

The Italians had previously lost 1–0 to Spain in a semi-final in which the scant final score failed to reflect the quality and intensity of a game in which both teams had chances and the two goalkeepers excelled – Italy’s Stefano Mammarella and Spain’s evergreen Luis Amado, who was playing his seventh final tournament and went home with his fifth gold medal.

“I don’t know how it looked from the sidelines,” commented Spain’s Jordi Torres, whose five goals and one “assist” earned him the golden boot award, “but from on the pitch it was a great show. Either team could have won. We both fought until the end and we managed to up our game when things were really difficult.”

34 seconds before the end

“Really difficult” is a fair description of Spain’s predicament. Less than seven minutes remained when a low drive from Pula put Russia 1–0 up. Almost immediately, they had attacking pivot Cirilo dismissed for a second yellow card offence yet, despite throwing on the flying goalkeeper, Spain failed to find a breakthrough during the two minutes when the Russians were down to four. But, with just 34 seconds to play, Sergio Lozano hit a shot which clipped a Russian player and beat the seemingly invincible Gustavo. With almost eight of the ten minutes of extra time played, the same player struck again to put Spain ahead and, with the Russians now obliged to resort to the flying keeper, Borja managed to make an interception and kick the ball towards the Russian goal. The final hooter sounded just as it rolled into the unguarded net and Spain set about celebrating an unlikely 3–1 win which put a dramatic end to a memorable final tournament.

(More details can be found in the technical report included with this issue of UEFA.direct.) ●

The Spanish futsal team’s fourth consecutive European championship title

RESULTS

Quarter-finals

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------|
| 06.02, Split | Croatia – Ukraine | 1-1** |
| 06.02, Zagreb | Romania – Spain | 3-8 |
| 07.02, Split | Russia – Serbia | 2-1 |
| 07.02, Zagreb | Italy – Portugal | 3-1 |

** after penalty kicks

Semi-finals

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----|
| 09.02, Zagreb | Croatia – Russia | 2-4 |
| 09.02, Zagreb | Spain – Italy | 1-0 |

Third place

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------|-----|
| 11.02, Zagreb | Croatia – Italy | 1-3 |
|---------------|------------------------|-----|

Final

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| 11.02, Zagreb | Russia – Spain | 1-3* |
|---------------|-----------------------|------|

* after extra time

Lleida is waiting for the finalists

The Russians and Spaniards are back. Last year's final-four tournament in the Kazakh city of Almaty was the first not to involve a team from Europe's traditional major powers – but both will be back on the starting grid when the ball starts rolling in the 2012 final round, to be played from 27 to 29 April.



History could be made at the 2012 finals. FC Barcelona, on the back of their league and cup double last season, have earned a first-ever appearance in the UEFA Futsal Cup and, if they were to win it, the Catalan club would go into the annals as the first to be champions of Europe in both the outdoor and indoor games. But the record books hint that

it will not be easy. Since the format was switched to a four-team final tournament in 2007, SL Benfica in Lisbon in 2010 have been the only hosts to lift the trophy.

Two newcomers

There could be a new name on it. MFK Dinamo Moskva, winners at the expense of Spanish hosts ElPozo Murcia in 2007, are the only former champions on the 2012 start-

ing grid. The 2011 silver medallists, Sporting Clube de Portugal, are alone in stringing together two consecutive appearances in the final tournament, while Italy's Marca Futsal, like FC Barcelona, will be making their debut, having eliminated last season's champions, ASD Città di Montesilvano, in a fratricidal elite round confrontation.

FC Barcelona's debut illustrates the meteoric rise of a club which, until 2006, was in the second division of Spain's futsal league. The current squad is captained by Javi Rodríguez, winner of two FIFA World Cups and four EUROS with the Spanish national team and twice UEFA Futsal Cup champion with Playas de Castellón who, by winning the inaugural editions in 2002 and 2003, are the only club to have successfully defended the European title. The Barça team features four of the Spanish squad who won the Futsal EURO 2012 in February (there would have been five if attacker Fernandao had been fit to travel to Croatia along with goalkeeper Cristian, the tournament's top scorer Jordi Torras, Lin, and Sergio Lozano, scorer of two goals in Spain's 3-1 win over Russia in the final). Saad Assad also returned from Zagreb with a medal, having won bronze with Italy. He and Jordi Torras both feature in UEFA's star selection from the tournament. Sporting Clube and Dinamo had four players apiece in Croatia (including Pula, who hit the Russian club's winner in the 2007 Futsal Cup final). Curiously, Marca Futsal had no players in the Italian squad.

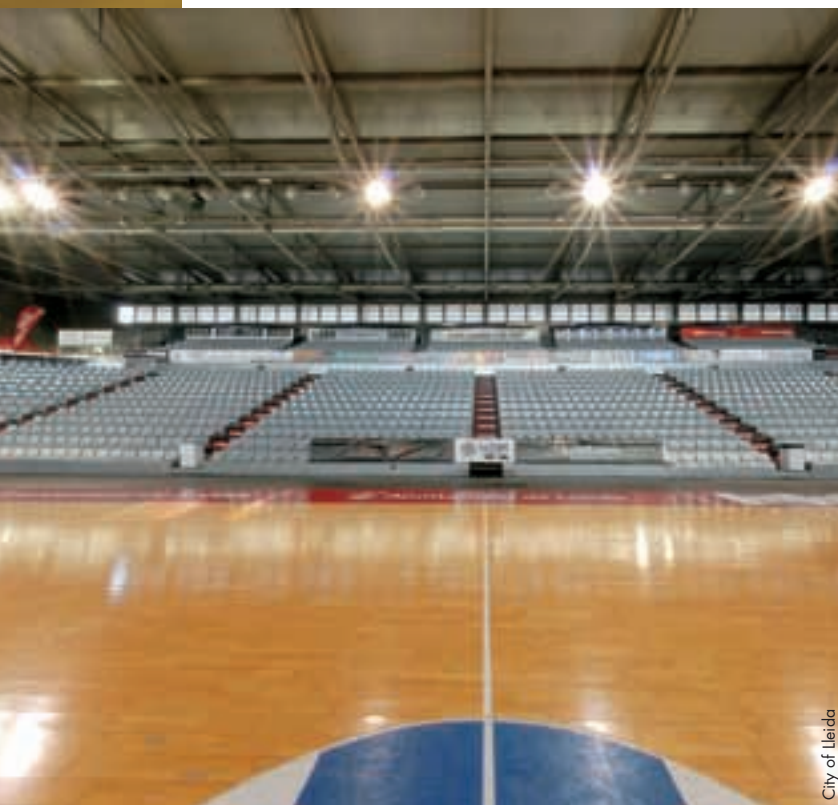
Draw on the grass

It is difficult to assess FC Barcelona's "home advantage" in the Futsal Cup, as the hosts have opted to move the final round inland to Lleida – or Lérida if your map is Spanish rather than the local version. One of Catalunya's four capitals, the city's history can be traced back to the Bronze Age and, these days, the population is in excess of a quarter of a million. The city has reacted with enthusiasm to the idea of staging the UEFA Futsal Cup final round – and the venue for the four-game tournament is the magnificent Pavelló Barris Nord, built in just four months in 2001 and, two years later, enlarged to its current capacity which, for the final round, will be around 5,500. The fixture list will be finalised once the draw for the semi-finals has been made – and this, to emphasise the empathy between the indoor and outdoor games at the Catalan club, is scheduled to take place on the grass at the Camp Nou during the half-time interval in FC Barcelona's Liga game against Athletic Club de Bilbao. ●



City of Lleida

The 2011/12 UEFA Futsal Cup finals are being held at the Pavelló Barris Nord in Lleida



City of Lleida

European Parliament report shows results of UEFA's EU work

The European Parliament voted through an extensive report on sport at its plenary meeting on 2 February in Strasbourg. The text is very positive and encouraging for the future of European football, and clearly shows that UEFA's EU work is bearing fruit.

The UEFA president, Michel Platini, said: *"This resolution shows the European Parliament understands the challenges facing European football. I am impressed with the text and the amount of effort that has gone into it."*

The report enlists MEPs' support for all of UEFA's main policies and core values in very clear terms. The European Commission's Communication on Sport, published last year, proposed ways in which the EU's competence in sport, created by the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, could be implemented. This European Parliament report, authored by MEP Santiago Fisas, outlines MEPs' views on the issue and, in particular, how the specificity of sport could be taken into account.

Backing for financial fair play

The Fisas report, as it is known, is unequivocal in its backing of UEFA's financial fair play rules. The report *"clearly states its support for licensing systems and financial fair play, as they encourage clubs to compete within their actual financial means."*

Legitimacy of sports courts

In addition, the report *"recognises the legitimacy of sports courts for resolving disputes in sport"*. In UEFA's view, sports arbitration bodies guarantee the universal application of sporting rules, as well as swift procedures, which the nature of sports competitions requires.

On the issue of betting, the parliament calls on the commission and the EU member states to recognise sports competition organisers' property rights for their competitions. The report notes that this would *"guarantee that the sports industry takes full advantage of the benefits of the internal market"*, one of the EU's cornerstones.

Fight against match fixing

MEPs also join UEFA in calling for match fixing to be made a criminal offence. In addition, the Fisas report notes that developing practical instruments is essential in order to foster cooperation between sports bodies and public authorities to combat match fixing.



The European Parliament in Strasbourg

The European Parliament strongly endorses the European sports model and the central role sports federations play within it, along with the principle of promotion and relegation. The national and territorial nature of European sports structures is emphasised in the report, which states that *"sporting clubs should make players available when they are selected for national teams"*.

Centralisation of audiovisual rights

MEPs underline the *"fundamental importance"* of audiovisual rights being managed on a *"centralised, exclusive and territorial basis"*, which is fundamental for the funding of grassroots sport.

Finally, the parliament *"reaffirms its commitment to the home-grown player rule"* and supports sports governing bodies in their efforts to foster local training of young players. The European Parliament suggests the home-grown players rule as a model for other sports in Europe. ●

First graduates in European sport governance

The first batch of graduates have been honoured with an Executive Master in European Sport Governance (MESGO) – an innovative education programme designed to produce the next generation of sports governance experts in a variety of sports, which has UEFA's full backing.

In a ceremony at the House of European Football in Nyon on 17 February, 19 graduates received their diplomas after 18 months of hard work – and they were urged to go out and make full use of the knowledge they had obtained in their professional work.

The second edition of the course is now on the horizon and applications are welcome until mid-April. The Executive Master in European Sport Governance is aimed at helping decision-makers adapt to modern-day realities and demands. It is open to experienced managers and executives working in international, European and national sports federations; clubs, leagues and trade unions; European institutions and governments; and partners of sports organisations such as media or sponsors. The Europe-wide programme features courses in Paris, Brussels, London, Barcelona, Mainz/Frankfurt, Geneva/Lyon/Lausanne and New York, and has been pioneered by five renowned universities.

UEFA and other team sport partners – the European Handball Federation (EHF), International Basketball Federation – Europe (FIBA – Europe), European Rugby Association (FIRA-AER) and European Volleyball Confederation (CEV) – are giving their support, and will be joined for the second edition by the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).

The overall course has been established by a number of academic bodies: Birkbeck Sport Business Centre, Birkbeck College, University of London; Centre de Droit

et d'Economie du Sport (CDES), Université de Limoges; Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz; Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (INEFC); University of Lleida; and Sciences Po, Paris. Topics include the context of international sport, sports organisations, governance, legal frameworks, marketing challenges, sports events, ethics, the North American model, and the future of sport governance amid dramatic changes within professional sport in recent times.

Congratulations

The inaugural graduates were congratulated in several addresses at the ceremony. *"You are the leaders of this new evolutionary movement in sports governance, and you will shape, with your experience, the future of European and international sport,"* said the UEFA general secretary, Gianni Infantino. *"You have gone through a long journey,"* the FIBA general secretary, Nar Zanolin, told the graduates. *"Hopefully you have learned a lot, and hopefully you will take this back to whatever sport you are involved in, in whatever capacity, and help the development of sport through proper governance."*

Over 18 months, the MESGO course participants – who come from all walks of team-sports life – have studied hard but also been able to socialise and build up bonds and friendships that will last a lifetime. Special footage highlighting the "fun" aspects of the course was shown to amused laughter – emphasising the happy memories gathered along the way.

Targets achieved

In addition, the positive relationship between the team sport federations and universities involved has created a programme and environment in which serious work can be done and vital expertise acquired and exchanged. The graduates also join eminent academics and politicians on a distinguished list. *"It is a very special moment for you as graduates, and also a very special moment for the universities,"* said Sciences Po executive director Inge Kerkloh-Devif. *"As you will have a diploma of Sciences Po, you will join a network with 53,000 other alumni – some of whom you may know. Welcome to these alumni. I hope it was an interesting experience and perhaps you will have new ideas to implement. You can be proud, you will be at the beginning of this new adventure. Sciences*



The final session in Nyon



The 19 graduates of the first MESGO course

Po is also proud to be part of this academic family helping to make this programme happen."

A general feeling of great satisfaction was evident at the graduation ceremony – and the knowledge that testing targets had been achieved. *"When we started to think about this training, the goal was very ambitious,"* CDES executive director Didier Primault added. *"The project was something like our Champions League, but we have been able to build a dream team [of universities and federations]. And the project became a reality."*

"MESGO is an international project, there are a lot of relationships, and people have to be cooperative and disciplined to make it work," said Sean Hamil from the Birkbeck Sport Business Centre. *"I can say that it's been a tremendous group to work with – academic and sporting partners."*

Variety of angles

It is already clear that the MESGO provides a unique opportunity for training, social and professional contact, knowledge sharing and personal development for sports organisations' elected representatives and managerial staff. The great strength of the course is that it views European sport and its governance from a variety of angles.

Combining various disciplines such as economics, politics and law, MESGO draws comparisons between different sports and uses carefully selected examples from other sectors to help participants develop appropriate responses to the important challenges they face in a

sports world which has evolved dramatically in recent years as a result of political, social and commercial changes.

"Thank you to the universities for this brilliant idea," said the IIHF general secretary, Horst Lichtner, who was a participant in the first course. *"And thank you to the federations for their support. It's time to shape the future and we are the pioneers. I'm confident that we will be able to contribute to the further development of the sports we love."*

Work is now progressing to plan the second edition of the MESGO course. The programme comprises nine one-week sessions over the 18-month period, starting in September 2012. The Europe-wide scheme features courses in the same cities as the first edition, with most of the sessions taking place at the headquarters of prestigious sports organisations.

To be eligible for the MESGO programme, applicants should meet the following requirements:

- have a minimum of five years' experience at managerial level;
- be educated to degree level;
- be fluent in English.

The deadline for applications is 15 April. Successful candidates will be selected after interview. The application form can be found on www.mesgo.org. For further information, contact info@mesgo.org or telephone +33 (0)1 45 49 63 22. ●

KISS kicks off year with legal workshop

KISS – the Knowledge and Information Sharing Scenario – started the new year with the ninth in a series of legal workshops.

Held on 16 and 17 February in Madrid, this workshop attracted 75 participants, representing an impressive 47 of UEFA's 53 member associations. This is an excellent overall attendance, which underlines the fact that law and regulation are the foundations for managing football in an appropriate manner and playing the game fairly. It also demonstrates that the exchange of information in legal matters – when appropriate – is of paramount importance to UEFA, its member associations, clubs, players and fans alike.

The content on the first day of the workshop was presented by UEFA experts: the unilateral, unjustified breach of an employment contract by a professional football player (recent Court of Arbitration for Sport case law); applicable regulations for the drafting of football governing bodies' statutes; and the tender and bidding processes for the staging of major events and rights sales. These issues are sophisticated and complex by nature, but actual hands-on experience and precise case studies can allow for not just a deeper comprehension of the

Launching the revamped KISS online platform

Also in February, KISS introduced its new and improved online platform. Designed for the UEFA members associations as a networking and educational tool, the content is football good practice covering a wide range of issues. A journey through a virtual stadium explains the behind-the-scenes operations while detailed videos and presentations cover a huge variety of roles and recommendations. This library of information stems from the workshops themselves as well as the KISS pool of experts. Here is a snapshot of what can now be found online:



KISS members: this section is a search engine for people operating within the programme. It is designed for delegates and field experts and is a great tool for searching for a particular contact and, should that person have delivered a presentation at a previous workshop, providing a link to the material. It is an excellent way for KISS members to stay in touch and expand their network of contacts.

All materials and workshop presentations: both these sections contain the expert content. Numerous workshops have been held on football development, communications, media operations, event management, law, infrastructure, marketing and stadium security, for example. For all topics, you can watch a presentation film and access any videos or visuals. These sections are invaluable for searching for a case study or good practice relating to a particular situation, in order to be able to adapt the solution to a specific work place and resources.

CFM and DFM: the Certificate in Football Management and the Diploma in Football Management are

personal development courses carried out in cooperation with academic experts and universities. The programme and background of each course are provided, as well as the application forms and procedures. Successful applicants can then access the individual online CFM/DFM sections for e-learning and further development as they progress through the course.

Football Doctor Education Programme: this is a relatively new aspect of KISS and is designed for team doctors from UEFA's member associations to offer them education and instruction in the specific field of football medicine. Subjects addressed, for example, are roles and responsibilities of the doctors, emergency treatment of players, injury prevention, rehabilitation and anti-doping. Participants are required to attend three workshops over a three-year period and complete a series of online e-learning modules.

Virtual stadium: a rare all-access pass to the stadium! An interactive way of viewing the platform content, this stadium takes you on a virtual journey through a long list of football good practices – accreditation, broadcasting rights, crisis and image management, hospitality, media operations, pitch maintenance, refereeing, stewards, ticketing, sponsors and security. Apart from being full of information, this stadium is fun to use and demonstrates how each element comes together in the staging of the game.

The platform landing page also provides a calendar of forthcoming KISS events as well as all the latest news stories.

For further information please contact uefadirect@uefa.ch



UEFA

**National
association
delegates
in Madrid**

legal process, but also better preparation, planning and strategy. For the KISS delegates, the benefits are found in the translation of this knowledge into their own workplace, as well as networking with like-minded professionals and developing contacts.

Also supporting the legal workshop, the FIGC (Italian Football Federation) shared a presentation on match fixing, outlining their own state law, disciplinary regulations and investigations they have conducted in previous years. This is a very serious issue for which UEFA has a zero tolerance policy. The European body has implemented a betting fraud detection system (BFDS) to monitor all matches played in UEFA competitions, as well as in the top two divisions and domestic cups of all 53 UEFA member associations. This system monitors approximately 1,800 UEFA matches and 29,000 domestic matches per season. In addition, the HatTrick programme is this year supporting the recruitment of individual integrity officers by the UEFA member associations. These officers will work in close collaboration with their local state authorities to eliminate corruption in football.

On the second day of the workshop, The Football Association (England) addressed infringements and protection of intellectual property rights (IPR). IPR is about safeguarding creations of the mind – inventions, literary or artistic works, symbols, names, images or designs used in commerce. This is vital for the football family because visionary recognition is embedded in our sport, through a club logo, slogans, a sponsor, a team kit or even a mascot.

Also discussed were recent developments within the European Union (EU). The European Parliament recently launched its Report on Sport, compiled by MEP Santiago Fisas, outlining the parliament's various positions – in particular, how the specificity of sport can be taken into account (cf. page 7).

Given the content of this workshop, it is much easier to understand the essence of law in football, as well as the necessity of this type of member association interaction. The subjects are diverse but, nevertheless, each of them is a fundamental part of the game, irrespective of whether they concern modern-day football or the sustainability of football in the future. ●

Boom times in the Netherlands

Will a Dutch women's team one day delight us in the way that the men often have? It is looking more and more likely: the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) has sent a strong signal by appointing one of its top men to head its women's football development project.

After ten years as KNVB treasurer, Johan van Kouterik was given his new appointment on 1 January. Women's football has grown 16% in the last year, with 125,000 players now registered. Women now account for one-ninth of the KNVB's players. Although hockey remains more popular, women's football is the fastest growing team sport in the Netherlands.

Boosting events

Johan van Kouterik explains: "Girls and women must, at all levels, have the opportunity to play for a club close to where they live. We want to establish a pyramid structure." Two events have boosted women's football in the Netherlands. In 2009, at their first final tournament, the national team reached the semi-finals of the UEFA Women's EURO in Finland – and they are determined to shine again in Sweden in 2013. The FIFA Women's World Cup in Germany also



Johan van Kouterik

Photo News

focused attention on the sport. "These two events attracted attention, including that of the press. The players are recognised, the stadiums were superb, and the atmosphere is very different from that felt at men's games. This level of attention also attracts sponsors. Across Europe, I see efforts being made to develop women's football."

Women's football is highly regarded in the Nordic countries. Is this the case in the Netherlands, too? "Not quite. The clichés are hard to break down. Everybody remembers the not particularly athletic looking women – hardly flattered by the men's kit they were wearing – of the 1970s and 1980s, and even the 1990s. For their part, women are not always inclined to encourage the emancipation of other women. But we have made great progress in the last five years, even if men – particularly men from the world of football – still have chauvinist views when it comes to women's football. We have to stop making comparisons, which is something that only happens in football. Women's tennis, for example, has established itself and become a sport in its own right. Moreover, everything starts with the parents: if they think that women's football is an attractive proposition, they will be more inclined to let their girls play. And they'll even go along with them – mothers included."

International assistance

The KNVB has called on its internationals for help, even though a number of them play abroad. In particular, the support of captain Daphne Koster (aged 30) has been enlisted. Koster, who was at the heart of the defence when the national team won fame in Finland in 2009, has 118 caps. "They go to schools and encourage girls to play football. They sign autographs, talk to the children and answer all their questions. They provide the impetus."

The KNVB supports the clubs, which are sometimes reluctant to train girls because they feel they will not get anything in return when the girls go on to play for a women's team. "We need more female administrators and referees, but this process takes time. Clubs will potentially attract a whole new range of sponsors, who will also be able to appeal to women and their aspirations. Women's media could also be interested in our sport. We want to support and encourage the emergence of this virtuous circle by all means possible."

Girls already enjoy facilities similar to those of the boys: those selected for the national age-limit teams join



Cerity Images

By making it as far as the semi-finals of the Women's EURO 2009 in Finland, the Dutch national team has contributed to the popularity of women's football in the Netherlands



Pro Shots

An Eredivisie match between FC Twente and ADO Den Haag

FROM EREDIVISIE TO WOMEN'S BeNe-LEAGUE

As small countries, the Netherlands and Belgium are used to joining forces. The two football associations have put their heads together to learn from each other. It quickly became clear that, in order to offer their top female players a championship of sufficient quality, it would be better to organise a joint championship – the Women's BeNe-League. "The clubs and associations have agreed to establish a 16-club competition as of the 2012/13 season."

The women's Eredivisie began in the 2007/08 season, with six men's clubs starting up women's teams: ADO Den Haag, AZ Alkmaar, sc Heerenveen, FC Twente, FC Utrecht and Willem II. AZ Alkmaar and Willem II have since withdrawn, but VVV Venlo, FC Zwolle and SC Telstar have now also joined.

Johan van Kouterik raises one final issue: "We are in discussions with television channels regarding the possibility of broadcasting highlights of games in the women's Eredivisie and future Women's BeNe League. That would have an impact on people's perceptions of our sport and could also attract sponsors, as women's football is certainly an enjoyable sport to watch."

The current Belgian Eerste Klasse, in turn, comprises 14 teams. P.P.

the KNVB Talent Team, living, training and studying in Amsterdam in order to benefit from closer mentoring. To encourage younger girls, the KNVB has established the Vriendinnendag, special days organised across the country allowing girls between the ages of 6 and 16 to play football. Members can bring along female friends, neighbours and family members.

Mixed football

"We want girls to be able to play on the basis of ability. That is the primary criterion in age-limit teams. We take no account of gender, height or weight. Up to the age of 19, girls can play with and against boys. This allows us to overcome a major obstacle: you need sufficient numbers of teams to organise high-quality competitions at a variety of levels. As of junior level, girls can either decide to join a girls' team or continue their development in a mixed environment."

The next stage – joining a girls' team – is decisive. Those who are talented are forced, like most sportsmen and women, to combine their sport first with their academic studies and then with work. "FC Twente is ahead of the game in this respect. Since October 2011 it has been offering its female players the option of semi-professional status. The club pays them an allowance, which enables them to dedicate more time to training and recovery, while at the same time studying or working part-time outside of football. The club thereby eases one of its female players' major concerns. We ought to offer something to our internationals, too." ●

Pascale Pierard

A programme for the doctors

Doctors working in European football are being given the opportunity to share best practice and exchange knowledge in their crucial role through the UEFA Football Doctor Education Programme.

An inaugural workshop in Vienna from 20 to 24 February, attended by doctors from UEFA's 53 member associations, kicked off a programme which will be invaluable given the modern-day medical developments in football. The programme is being staged under the auspices of the UEFA Knowledge and Information Sharing Scenario (KISS).

The course in Vienna was presented by members of the UEFA Medical Committee and specialists in emergency medicine. The two modules on the agenda dealt with the role and responsibility of a team doctor and emergency treatment of players. For the latter, the doctors present had to complete practical exercises on different stations, such as injuries to the cervical spine, cardiac arrest and blockage of the respiratory passages.

A key aim of the programme is for doctors who attend the UEFA courses to disseminate information and know-



The doctors put the theory into practice

how by hosting similar workshops at national level and sharing information with medical staff and club doctors.

To spread the knowledge, UEFA provides three educational tools – technical handbooks, trained course delegates who are there to advise the associations at any time, and an extensive online platform with countless documents and videos for interactive e-learning. The doctors are required to spread the knowledge gained within their country as effectively as possible. ●

EURO 2012

Finalists workshop

The 16 teams taking part in UEFA EURO 2012 attended a workshop in Warsaw on 8 and 9 March.

With under 100 days until the teams take to the field, the aim of the meeting was to discuss all the organisational matters relating to the tournament (match organisation, transport, accommodation, security, medical matters, media, etc.).

Also, to mark the 100 days to go milestone, a small ceremony was organised in Nyon involving the tournament mascots, Slavek and Slavko, and a hot-air balloon in the shape of the Henri Delaunay Cup. ●



Club Competitions Committee

Regulations for three seasons

At its meeting in Nyon on 9 February, the UEFA Club Competitions Committee, chaired by Michael van Praag (Netherlands), discussed the club competition regulations for the next three seasons.

As of 2012/13, the regulations of the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Super Cup will be adopted for cycles of three years, instead of every season. The regulations submitted to the Executive Committee for approval at its meeting in Istanbul in March will therefore be valid from 2012 to 2015.

The Club Competitions Committee also supported the creation of a UEFA youth club competition, but recommended that careful attention be paid to the match calendar. The working group set up to look into the idea of a youth club competition is continuing its analyses.

Another working group was established to look into the distribution of club competition revenues in the 2012–15 cycle. Also on a financial note, the Club Competitions Committee took note of the ticket prices for the forthcoming finals. For the UEFA Champions League final at the Fußball Arena München (62,500 capacity), tickets are being sold for between €70 and €370. For the UEFA Europa League final at the National Arena in Bucharest (52,500), ticket prices range from €25 to €115. ●

Bolstering development from the bottom up

Representatives of member associations and clubs attended a workshop held on 21 and 22 February at UEFA headquarters in Nyon as part of UEFA's KISS programme.

Participants in this workshop resolved to strengthen women's football by means of efforts at grassroots level. Clubs clearly have a fundamental role to play in this respect, as they live and breathe football on a daily basis and represent the lifeblood of the game. At the heart of the debate was the question of how best to strengthen clubs' structures, improve their governance, guarantee financing and help them to establish high-quality infrastructure.

Participants were able to draw inspiration from the example of FC Twente, which has succeeded, thanks to assiduous and determined planning, in turning its women's team, established only in 2007, into one of the very finest in the Netherlands, a side that has already won two national titles. The Dutch also presented a model marketing strategy placing women's football in the spotlight and helping it to attract supporters and commercial partners.



At the heart of the debate was the question of how best to strengthen clubs' structures, improve their governance, guarantee financing and help them to establish high-quality infrastructure.

The workshop also highlighted the exemplary achievements of Iceland, which has succeeded, despite its size, in assembling a national team capable of competing with the very best. That process has relied heavily on the country's dense network of clubs, where girls have the opportunity to learn the game at a very young age. Support provided by the Football Association of Iceland has also played a key role as regards training, infrastructure and administration.

A further contribution to the discussion came from the Republic of Ireland, where a national women's league has recently been launched. This has encouraged more women to take up the sport, with the number of registered female players increasing from 10,000 to 23,000, and scouting and training programmes are also being set up.

Karen Espelund, chairwoman of the Women's Football Committee, concluded proceedings with a call for national associations and clubs to tailor UEFA's development plan to their own individual circumstances. She stressed that it was vitally important to have a strategy and a vision in this respect, developing the sport in a structured and coherent manner. ●

The UEFA president, Michel Platini, presents the trophy to Olympique Lyonnais after last year's UEFA Women's Champions League final in London

UEFA Women's Champions League

Munich will host the final

For the third year in succession, the final of the UEFA Women's Champions League will be played at a neutral venue.



Following in the footsteps of Madrid (Getafe) in 2010 and London (Fulham) in 2011, Munich will host this year's final on 17 May – the aim, as in previous years, being to link the final of this competition with that of the UEFA Champions League in order to raise the profile of this showpiece event.

This year it is Munich's magnificent Olympiastadion that will provide the setting for this meeting between the top two clubs in European women's football. The quarter-finals will be played on 14/15 and 21/22 March, with defending champions Olympique Lyonnais still in the hunt. They will face Danish club Brøndby IF at this stage of the competition. In the other quarter-finals, FC Malmö will take on 1. FFC Frankfurt, 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam will play FC Rossiyanka, and Arsenal Ladies FC will face Göteborg FC (for results and commentary, visit UEFA.com).

The semi-finals will be played on 14/15 and 21/22 April. The draw for the semi-finals, which was made at



the same time as the draw for the quarter finals, pits Lyon or Brøndby against Potsdam or Rossiyanka, while Arsenal or Göteborg will take on Malmö or Frankfurt. ●



Albania

www.fshf.org

Annual general meeting in Shkodër

The Albanian Football Association (AFA) held its annual general meeting on 22 February. For the first time ever, the highest organ in Albanian football convened in Shkodër. Significantly, the first records of football being played as an organised sport in Albania place the game's origins in Shkodër in the early years of the last century.

A number of important changes in the AFA statutes, the fundamental legal basis for Albanian football, were discussed and approved at the meeting.

The most important decision, however, was the composition of an ethics committee as a supervisory judicial authority. Its five members were elected by the delegates at the meeting, by means of a secret ballot. All are well-known figures with strong reputations and integrity within Albanian football and legal circles.

The decision to establish an ethics committee was taken as a result of changes in important areas of the AFA's activities, in



Important decisions were taken at the first general meeting to be held in Shkodër

particular sports law, refereeing and competition management. The main purpose of the committee is to further the AFA's efforts to improve the image of the association.

However, by formally establishing an ethics committee, the AFA hopes to enhance the image and transparency of Albanian football as a whole, and not just the AFA's internal structures.

The decision to set up an ethics committee was very well received by both the football community and external analysts, who considered it to be a timely measure.

This concluded the work of this year's annual general meeting, which thus drew to a close on a high note.

● Tritan Kokona



Andorra

www.fedandfut.com

Focus on grassroots and coaching

April is set to be a very active month for the Andorran Football Federation (FAF), starting with the fourth edition of its Easter grassroots tournament, which will get the ball rolling on the latest generation of artificial surfaces at the Alàs sports centre. Involving teams from Andorra and the neighbouring provinces of Girona and Lerida, the tournament has three categories – U7, U9 and U11.

With a group stage followed by semi-finals and a final in each category, the youngsters will get to play seven matches of 12 minutes each way.



Coach education course

Year after year, the success of this regional tournament further motivates the FAF to invest time and energy into its grassroots football.

Also in April, at the end of the month, the FAF's second wave of UEFA A licence

students will be receiving their qualifications.

Some 20 Andorran coaches embarked on the course last September in order to receive the A licence.

This course is just one part of the FAF's coach education programme, which comprises seminars, conferences and courses at all levels from D to A. In September, the federation's fifth D/C course will be getting under way for prospective grassroots monitors and assistants.

The FAF believes that looking ahead is more important than looking back. That is why our federation is constantly tending to its grassroots.

● Silvia Casals



Azerbaijan

www.affa.az

First award on the way to the big time

The new year got off to an unforgettable start for Amina Heydarova, one of the players on Azerbaijan's women's Under-17 national team. We hope she has many more memorable moments to come, but taking to the stage at the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) annual awards ceremony is sure to remain a very special experience for Amina, who is making her first strides into football's big time and was greeted by resounding applause as she stepped up to receive the award for best woman footballer of the year.

The AFFA holds an awards ceremony every year to honour the best players on its national teams in various categories. It

is a relatively new but very welcome development to have women's football – a comparatively recent discipline – represented at this traditional event. And it is not by chance that Mark Hereward, UNICEF representative in Azerbaijan, was asked to present the award to Amina Heydarova. Just like dozens of others, Amina plays in an organised U17 league thanks to the cooperation between AFFA and UNICEF.

Amina was also recently invited to address her peers and demonstrate her football skills through UEFA's official website. In a "guide to long-range passing" video produced for the Training Ground on UEFA.com, Amina gives users tips on passing the ball over long distances, including how to achieve the right accuracy and power to play the perfect ball.



Mark Hereward, UNICEF representative in Azerbaijan, presents Amina Heydarova with her award

Now, both Amina and the rest of the country are turning their attention to the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Azerbaijan is hosting this year.

● Firuz Abdulla



Belarus

www.bff.by

International Under-17 tournament in Minsk

From 22 to 27 January, Minsk hosted the eighth edition of an international indoor youth tournament that is already well known in Belarus and beyond. Every year many young fans from Minsk anxiously await the start of the first match.

As usual, the opening ceremony was a great mix of laser lighting displays, dynamic music and greetings from special guests. UEFA's general secretary, Gianni Infantino, even sent a welcome video message to the participants and spectators.

Eight teams assembled in Minsk in the hope of winning the trophy. Alongside Belarus were Belgium, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine, plus Georgia, the tournament newcomers, who put on an excellent performance and went all the way to the final.

Six of the eight teams have already made it into the elite round of the current European Under-17 Championship and the tournament in Minsk was excellent preparation for them all.

Belarus, Belgium, Latvia and Georgia were drawn into Group A, while Finland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Russia formed Group B. The group matches were spread across three matches. The teams that finished fourth in their



Ukraine celebrate

groups (Latvia and Finland) played for seventh place, which Finland won 2-1. Fifth place was decided in a match between Belarus and Lithuania. Like so many, it came down to a penalty shoot-out, but in the end the Lithuanians had more luck on their side. Belgium and Russia did battle for third place, with Russia proving a little stronger and winning the match 1-0, and in the final Ukraine beat Georgia 2-0.

During the closing ceremony, several players who had particularly stood out received individual awards:

- Best goalkeeper: Lucas Pirard (Belgium)
- Best defender: Stepan Rebenko (Russia)
- Best midfielder: Georgi Papunashvili (Georgia)
- Best forward: Gleb Rassadkin (Belarus)
- Player of the tournament: Vyacheslav Tankovsky (Ukraine)
- Top scorers: Dmitry Bilonog (Ukraine) and David Jikia (Georgia), on four goals apiece.

● Yulia Zenkovich



Bosnia and Herzegovina

www.nfsbih.ba

Club association initiative

The beginning of the year will doubtless be remembered for the (disastrous) weather conditions affecting the clubs' preparations for the new season and covering grounds in tonnes of snow. The championship was supposed to start on 3 March but had to be postponed for seven days.

Despite the big freeze, a FIFA and UEFA delegation visited the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (NFSBiH) for meetings with the Normalisation Committee and representatives of the premier league clubs.

Discussions were had about plans to establish an association of clubs, sponsorship of the premier league, funds for the development of youth football and other current issues.

The meetings were attended by representatives of 15 premier league clubs. Their main assessment of the initiative to establish professional associations and leagues was that it was good in principle and they would support it, provided it were further discussed when concrete proposals had been drawn up.

The next step is to urgently establish a working group, which should develop a project proposal on the establishment of an association of NFSBiH premier league clubs for the 2012/13 season.

There was also talk about the sponsorship of the premier league. It is no secret that all three of Bosnia and Herzegovina's mobile operators are interested in being the main sponsor.

In addition, it was announced that UEFA's latest distribution of solidarity funds derived from its competitions means that each among



Bosnia and Herzegovina put up a good fight against Brazil in Switzerland

the 2010/11 premier league clubs will receive €16,815 for youth development purposes.

The national team, meanwhile, are playing four friendly matches in preparation for the 2014 World Cup qualifying competition. They have already played and lost 2-1 their first in the Swiss town of St Gallen, against five-time world champions and 2014 World Cup hosts Brazil. Safet Sušić and his players then head to Dublin to play the Republic of Ireland on 26 May and, five days later, on 31 May, face Mexico in Chicago (USA). Their last friendly match will be against Wales in Cardiff on 18 August.

The women's national team have also played their first match of 2012. In Group 1 in qualifying for the UEFA Women's EURO 2013, Samira Hurem's players beat Greece 3-2 in Thessaloniki.

● Fuad Kravac



England

www.thefa.com

Campaign against homophobia and transphobia

The FA pledged to continue to lead the way on tackling homophobia and transphobia within football by launching its Opening Doors and Joining In campaign at Wembley Stadium in February.

Respected names from across the English football family – including the England women's team coach, Hope Powell, and The FA's director of football development, Sir Trevor Brooking – came together to confirm their support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) communities, to help them get actively involved in the game without fear of discrimination or prejudice.

The event took place the day after what would have been the 51st birthday of Justin Fashanu, the only high-profile British professional footballer to declare himself gay. He took his life in 1998 after eight years of turmoil following his decision to reveal his sexuality.

As part of the campaign, The FA has set out a six-point action plan promoting inclusion, widening diversity in the game and addressing discrimination in all its forms, a concept that was embraced fully by the Premier League, Football League, League Managers' Association and Professional Footballers' Association.

The FA's general secretary, Alex Horne, said the key point going forward was to ensure an environment where discrimination was not tolerated: "If you ask me whether there are any gay professional footballers, you are asking the wrong question. What the action plan is about is ensuring that anyone can participate in our game without fear, regardless of their sexuality. If someone is gay, we want them to feel secure."

Darren Bailey, The FA's director of football governance and regulation, pledged that strong action would be taken in terms of the rules and processes of the game.

He added: "Homophobic and transphobic abuse is unacceptable and will be punished. It has no place in society and no place in football. We have the rules, we have the commitment and we have made a promise to change the culture of the game. What we need is to know when abuse happens."

The FA will continue its work to remove barriers and ensure an ongoing legacy where individuals are judged only on their football merits and not their sexuality.

"We want to ensure that if any player wishes to be open about their sexuality, then they can do it with the full support of The FA. We want a 'So what?' culture in football," said Club England's managing director, Adrian Bevington.

● Nada Hook



The general secretary of The FA, Alex Horne



France
www.fff.fr

Girls' football takes pride of place in primary schools

As the French women's team prepares to compete in the Olympic football tournament in London from 25 July to 9 August, the French Football Federation (FFF), in collaboration with the ministry of education and the primary education sports union (USEP), is launching a major initiative entitled Football Princesses (*Le Football des Princesses*).

This scheme aims to encourage girls of primary school age to take up football, as well as promoting the Olympic spirit and the values embodied by Bruno Bini's players. Gaëtane Thiney, who has just joined the national technical training centre (DTN), will be the project's ambassador and coordinator.

The Football Princesses scheme comprises two parts: a sporting element and a cultural element.

In the sporting component, classes participating in the scheme will, respecting the principles of physical and sports education, complete a module comprising 8 to 12 sessions of football. Inter-class games will be held either during or at the end of the module. The first 700 schools to register will be sent an educational kit (comprising balls, bibs and information sheets) to help them to implement the scheme in the best possible way.

The cultural component will see participating classes, alongside the football, working

on an artistic project based on the Olympic values and the values of the French women's team. This should relate to one or more of the topics below and can take a variety of forms (postcards, posters, video, written material, murals, models, sculpture, etc.).



A campaign to encourage primary school children to take up football

Four topics have been chosen:

- Emotion: pleasure, joy, enthusiasm, conviviality
- Solidarity: teamwork, mutual assistance
- Respect: partners, opponents, referees
- Supporters: behaviour, social mix, generational mix.

On the basis of the project work produced by participating classes, a national jury will select four classes, who will be invited to

Clairefontaine by the FFF on Friday 29 June and Saturday 30 June. The highlight of their stay at the Fernand Sastre national technical centre will be the opportunity to meet the French women's national team, who will be preparing for the Olympic football tournament. In addition, all participating classes will receive posters and postcards of the French women's team.

● Aurélien Durand



Germany
www.dfb.de

Environmental campaign launched in Bremen

While many of Europe's national teams prepare for UEFA EURO 2012, over 26,000 clubs affiliated to the German Football Association (DFB) have their sights set on another major title: most environmentally friendly club of 2012. The environment cup campaign (DFB Umweltcup 2012) was launched in Bremen at the end of February by the DFB



vice-president for socio-political affairs, Karl Rothmund, the national team manager, Oliver Bierhoff, and the DFB's climate and environmental protection officer, Claudia Roth. The competition, which culminates on 31 December this year, is being promoted, among other things, by a TV commercial featuring the German national team, with the main roles played by twins Lars and Sven Bender and goalkeeper Manuel Neuer.

"The environment is at the heart of our social and socio-political activities. This campaign is designed to draw all the clubs' attention to the basics of environmental protection. Our thanks go to Oliver Bierhoff and the national team for their support," said Rothmund, DFB vice-president for socio-political affairs.

The website umwelt.dfb.de offers clubs 90 ideas for making their amateur football more environmentally friendly, from using rain water to clean football boots to writing match reports on recycled paper. And it is not just the environment that will benefit: the most environmentally friendly clubs in Germany will also win great prizes – such as training sessions with DFB coaches and VIP tickets to international matches. The participating clubs will also benefit financially, as environmentally friendly measures are a well-established means of saving money in the face of rising energy costs.

● Stephan Brause



Georgia
www.gff.ge

New season brings new merchandise for fans

The marketing department of the Georgian Football Federation (GFF) has launched a new initiative for 2012 which is making Georgian fans very happy indeed. Different kinds of high-quality items have been designed and produced specially for them, the previous lack of merchandise having been an earnest complaint voiced by Georgian fans for quite some time.

The GFF management took note of the demand among fans and decided to put various types of merchandise on sale ahead of the new season.

This started with different kinds of caps and scarves, on sale for the first time at the Georgia v Albania international at the Mikheil Meskhi Stadium on 29 February.

The next step is for an online shop to be set up on the GFF website in the near future where Georgian fans will be able to purchase different things, the idea being to have something for everyone.

At the same time, the GFF is planning to open an official national team fan shop in



Hats and scarves for national team fans

Tbilisi before the start of the FIFA World Cup qualifying competition, offering Georgian fans a wide selection of merchandise for different age groups and to suit every taste.

● Tata Burduli



Hungary

www.mlsz.hu

Zero tolerance of racism

The Mahatma Gandhi Foundation and the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) held a conference at MLSZ headquarters in February to discuss the topic of racism in football. Sándor Berzi, MLSZ vice-president, told the participants – which included representatives of the country's premier league clubs – about UEFA's anti-racism action plan and the main European trends. "Rolling back racism is an important project and it needs a complex action plan. We shared the UEFA and FIFA best practices with our stakeholders and I believe that this conference will have a positive impact on football in our country," Berzi said after the event.

The MLSZ vice-president added that the federation was following UEFA's guidelines on racism, in particular its strict zero tolerance approach. All forms of prejudice and discrimination are excluded from the pitch.



Sándor Berzi (centre) highlights the importance of taking a firm stand against racism

Many excellent speeches were made at the conference, highlighting the problem of discrimination from different angles including security, integration and more. György Szilágyi, honorary MLSZ president, said that the federation's fair play committee had been successfully fighting against all kinds of prejudice since the 1990s.

Levente Nyitrai, British embassy attaché in Hungary, explained the racism situation in

the United Kingdom and Géza Róka presented the views of Debreceni VSC, underlining the importance of the media. Gibril Deen, president of the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation, expressed his hope that football should be about nothing less or more than the joy of the game and fair play.

The MLSZ expects more preventive efforts and more action as a result of the conference.

● Márton Dinnyés



Israel

www.israel-football.org.il

Regional teams

At the beginning of February, the Football Association of Israel (IFA) launched its regional teams programme. The country was divided into five regions, and after an intensive scouting process, the best 13 to 14-year-old players in every region were invited to join representative teams.

When the head coach of the country's youngest national team (Under-16) started trying to put together his squad, it became apparent that he had very sparse data on the best players in the country in that age group.

Obviously, players from the big teams are relatively easy to scout, but at these ages there are quite a few players that, metaphorically speaking, slip through the cracks. The thinking behind the regional teams pro-

gramme is to identify promising players at an earlier age and gather as much data as possible. In the near future, regional teams of 11 and 12-year-olds will also be established.

At present, each regional team comes together once a week at a designated training facility in its region. Assembling the best players in every region helps the players and coaches measure them up against each other. It also means special training can be provided for players with high potential, training which is otherwise lacking due to insufficient resources.

The regional teams will all play one another and during the holidays the best players from each will receive more training still and play international games against similar age-limit teams from other countries.

● Michal Grundland



Liechtenstein

www.lfv.li

Training camp for U15 girls

Hard work is going into the future of women's football in Liechtenstein. At the end of February the country's first U15 girls' team – formed only last year – spent four days at a



A training camp in Switzerland for Liechtenstein's girls' U15 team

training camp in sunny Ticino, Switzerland. The national youth sports centre in Tenero played host to the talented girls as they honed their skills and prepared to face the next set of challenges that await this groundbreaking team. These include weekly training sessions run by the association (in addition to training with their clubs) and regular participation in regional and inter-regional tournaments.

The Liechtenstein Football Association is committed to furthering the U15 girls' development, establishing other age-limit teams and preparing aspiring young players for one day forming a national women's team. The road ahead is certainly long, and for little Liechtenstein, with its limited resources, it is significantly bumpier than most. But nevertheless, the U15s are taking their first few steps on the road to top-level women's football, and they are doing so with smiles on their faces.

● Anton Banzer



Malta

www.mfa.com.mt

Seminar for Maltese referees

Maltese referees are constantly taking part in seminars and similar activities which provide them with a wide and solid base to help them better control football matches both at home and at international level. Such events go a long way towards improving standards of refereeing.

Recently, two top-class Maltese referees attended an elite referees' seminar held in Sliven, Bulgaria, organised by the Bulgarian Football Union for referees and referee observers working at professional level.

Besides local speakers, there were two guest lecturers in the form of David Elleray, a UEFA Referees Committee member, and the Malta Football Association's director of refereeing, Adrian D. Casha.



Adrian Casha with referees Clayton Pisani (left) and Alan Mario Sant

Many useful topics were covered during the three-day event, including recognition of unlawful contact in challenges, the referee's action when surrounded by players, different cases of offside, communication between the four officials, including the use of radio communication systems, and concentration and consistency in decision-making.

These classroom discussions were followed by practical sessions, a review of the 2011 instructions to referees (from the FIFA Refereeing Assistance Programme and UEFA Centre of Refereeing Excellence seminars in Dusseldorf and Nyon respectively), and group work. The seminar was rounded off by a very thorough fitness test based on higher standards than the minimum accepted by UEFA.

The referees, Clayton Pisani and Alan Mario Sant, and Malta's director of refereeing and guest speaker Adrian Casha, all expressed their satisfaction at having participated in this seminar, agreeing that it had been a very useful experience.

● Alex Vella



Moldova
www.fmf.md

Ion Caras appointed as national coach

The FA of Moldova (FMF) recently announced the appointment of Ion Caras as the new coach of the national team. The 61-year-old has taken over from Romanian coach Gabi Balint, whose contract was terminated at the end of 2011.

Caras already managed the Moldovan national team between 1991 and 1997 and will now guide his country through its qualifying campaign for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Moldova have been drawn into Group H with England, Montenegro, Poland, Ukraine and San Marino.

Speaking at the media conference held at the association headquarters in Chisinau, the FMF president, Pavel Cebanu, said: "Ion is a good coach. He deserved this post and he got it. I am sure that he will do a great job."

"I am very happy with this opportunity to coach the national team again, and at the same time I understand that it's a huge responsibility," Caras said. "I intend to bring into the team all the best Moldovan players who, for some reason, have not played in recent years and together we will try to get good results for our supporters."

Born in 1950 in Balti, Ion Caras played for the Moldovan national team and club sides Nistru Chisinau, Speranta Drochia and Automobilstul Tiraspol before coaching for Tighina Bender, Zimbru Chisinau, the national team, Constructorul-93 Chisinau, Nistru Otaci, Haiducul-Sporting Hincesti, Agro Chisinau and Politehnica Chisinau. He made his second debut at the helm of the national team in a friendly against Belarus in February.

The FA of Moldova has also announced the names of its new Under-17 and Under-19 national team coaches. The U17s will be led



Pavel Cebanu, president of the Football Association of Moldova, (left) with the new national team coach, Ion Caras

by ex-Moldovan international defender Oleg Fistican, and Romanian coach Danut Stelian Oprea will guide the U19 side. Meanwhile, Alexandru Kurteyan, who has been in temporary charge of the U21s, has put pen to paper on a full contract.

● Press office



Montenegro
www.fscg.co.me

Women's teams taking shape

Since late November the Montenegrin football family has established an additional two national teams – a senior women's team and a women's Under-17 team. The caretaker coach for both, Zoran Mijović, has organised various training matches in the past two months, including at a training camp in January attended by players hoping to be called up to represent their country. Both teams are preparing for their first ever international games in March, against Bosnia and Herzegovina's corresponding national teams.

"After successfully completing the selection process in December and holding a training camp with the provisional squads, we have made an action plan for the two teams for the following year. We have planned several friendly games at both levels, which will give



Two national teams promoting women's football in Montenegro

us a clear picture of the current standard in our teams," Mijović said.

Asked what his impressions of the two teams were after the seven-day training camp, Mijović added: "I believe that we have some solid quality in both our teams, but I cannot make a reliable assessment before the forthcoming games. I am proud that we have many offers from other national teams who are interested in playing us in friendly

games, as this should give us a lot of scope and time to work on improvements. I am extremely pleased that we have helped our FA raise interest in women's football not only within Montenegro, but also among women and girls abroad. We have had lots of contact from Montenegrin players at clubs in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Serbia, all of whom would be proud to wear the jersey of their homeland."

● Ivan Radovic



Netherlands
www.knvb.nl

Former international goalkeepers start pro coaching course

Twelve former Dutch goalkeepers started the first ever "goalkeeper pro" course in Zeist in February. Among the students are former Dutch international keepers Ed de Goeij (Feyenoord and Chelsea FC), Ruud Hesp (Roda JC and FC Barcelona) and Joop Hiele (Feyenoord). Hesp is currently the Dutch national team's goalkeeper coach. Frans Hoek, former goalkeeper coach with the Dutch national team, FC Barcelona and FC Bayern München, is leading the course in close cooperation with fellow instructor Kees Zwamborn.

The course has been developed for goalkeeper coaches who want to help young and promising goalkeepers at both professional and amateur level to further develop their tal-

ents. A goalkeeper coach should coach their goalkeepers during matches, lead training sessions and further assist the keepers in other aspects of the game. The course is aimed at preparing the students to successfully develop and execute these tasks at their clubs. Holders of a goalkeeper pro licence will be authorised to work with top amateur and professional clubs.

The course is based on UEFA's specialist goalkeeper coach diploma and the current intake is expected to finish before the end of the year. The students currently on the course are: Khalid Benlahsen, Sierd van der Berg, Ed de Goey, Ruud Hesp, Joop Hiele, Max de Jong, Kees Kalk, Patrick Lodewijks, Stefan Postma, Harald Wapenaar, Eric Weghorst and Arno van Zwam.



Ruud Hesp, the Netherlands' goalkeeper coach, took part in the specialist pro licence course

● Rob de Leede



Changing people's lives

Belfast Street League is a programme supported by the East Belfast Mission, the Irish Football Association's Peace III-funded Football for All campaign, the Belfast Community Sports Development Network and UEFA, set up to change people's lives for the better through the power of football.

Players in the Belfast Street League include homeless people, ex-offenders, drug and

alcohol dependent people, long-term unemployed people, refugees, asylum seekers and other disadvantaged groups.

- 92% players have a new motivation for life;
- 73% have changed their lives for the better;
- 35% have secured regular employment;
- 44% have improved their housing situation;
- 39% have chosen to pursue their education.

The Belfast Street League is a great example of how groups can come together through football to empower and support socially marginalised individuals in a sustainable manner.

This initiative has changed the lives of some three-quarters of participants. The East Belfast Mission's Justin McMinn and Adrian Byrne, who founded and coordinate the Belfast Street League, are inspirational role models and we are delighted to support them.

Homelessness is a cross-cutting issue that cannot be solved by simply building houses. For this reason, work by groups such as the East Belfast Mission is very important.

The Belfast Street League is a five-a-side football league based on an internationally proven development model with established leagues in London, Glasgow and Dublin. Over 60 people participate in the Belfast Street



The Belfast Street League shows drugs the red card

● Michael Boyd



A grassroots competition ahead of the UEFA Europa League final

The UEFA Europa League final in Bucharest is being celebrated by the Romanian FA with a special Grassroots Bucharest Trophy competition, organised with the support of the Romanian ministry of education and Bucharest city hall. It is actually a traditional grassroots competition, this being the eighth time it has been organised, but in 2012 it is taking on special, bigger dimensions as it is being staged ahead of the Europa League final.

It is bringing together more than 5,000 Under-12s (children born since 2000) from Bucharest schools to compete in three categories (boys, girls and mixed). It is open to all children in the first four years of school, whether they are registered players or not.

Around 100 schools from the six Bucharest districts have already signed up.

The first stage of the competition is being played within the schools from 5 to 25 March. The winners at school level will qualify for the second stage, which will be contested at district level as of 2 April.

The winners at district level will qualify for the final tournament, which is being staged on 7 and 8 May. The Romanian FA is expecting around 235 players and teachers to take part in the final tournament.

As a rule, the competition is played on artificial mini-pitches. Teams are six-a-side, with an unlimited number of substitutions allowed in matches of 2 x 15 minutes.

There will be prizes and awards for all participants: balls and bibs for all participating teams; kit, cups, diplomas and medals for the teams that qualify for the final tournament; and individual and team trophies for the winners.

Moreover, on the final day it is hoped the matches will be watched and awards presented by the UEFA president, Michel Platini, Mircea Sandu (president of the Romanian FA), Sorin Oprescu (mayor of Bucharest) and others from the world of Romanian football and other sports.

In a country such as ours, with a long football tradition, it is unsurprising that the competition, as well as the Europa League final, is generating a lot of enthusiasm among children and teachers alike. This is something quite special about grassroots events in Romania.

● Paul Zaharia



Football for All summer camps available for the first time

The Football Association of Ireland's largest grassroots programme is returning for its 16th year this summer. The summer soccer schools kick off on 2 July and will run until 24 August. Over 300 camps are scheduled to take place this year, catering for children between the ages of 6 and 14. And this year the first fully inclusive Football for All summer soccer schools are being rolled out. While all of the camps are open to all children, the Football for All camps will have more resources and be able to cater for large groups of children who need extra assistance to play the beautiful game. The national coordinator of the FAI's Football for All programme, Oisín Jordan, had this to say about the camps:

"We recognise that children sometimes need additional assistance and support to ac-

cess our camps. Our eFlow-FAI summer soccer school Football for All camps provide this, giving all children the experience of a week-long camp delivered in a fun and safe environment."

The camps will take place at five clubs in Ireland which already offer pan-disability football to children in their local communities through the FAI's Football for All club programme (Nenagh AFC, Lourdes Celtic, St Brendan's Park FC, Midleton FC and Kilcock Celtic). This programme works with clubs to help them become truly inclusive and accessible to children. The clubs embrace inclusion and promote the true meaning of Football for All, ensuring children of all abilities can access football in a local community club.

For more information, please visit www.summersoccerschools.ie or find us on Facebook.

● Derek Kinnevey



Football for all 6 to 14-year-olds this summer in Ireland

Spornfile



Switzerland

www.football.ch

Both sides of the coin

The Swiss Football Association (SFV-ASF) has spent many years carefully nurturing its talented young players. A group of experts at the association – including Markus Frei, who coached the team that won the European Under-17 Championship, and Dany Ryser, who coached the team that won the FIFA Under-17 World Cup – provides advice to Switzerland’s youth internationals and gifted age-limit players both online and at face-to-face information sessions, explaining to them the opportunities that their dream job has in store as well as the potential pitfalls. They offer these talented players a comprehensive career counselling service which covers issues such as school and things that could go wrong.

While Switzerland has many talented young footballers, only a few succeed in making it to the top at national or international level. Great technique, tactical aware-

ness, inventive play and stamina are no longer enough.

Ludovic Magnin, Philipp Degen and Alex Frei are just three examples of players who – thanks, in part, to the targeted support provided at youth level – have made it to the top in the international game.

Around 135,000 youth players are registered with the SFV-ASF, which divides them into two categories: elite and mainstream. The SFV-ASF’s elite youth football strategy has been in place for more than ten years and was instrumental in the Swiss becoming European and world champions in 2002 and 2009 respectively at Under-17 level, as well as reaching the final of the European Under-21 Championship in Sweden in 2011.

The SFV-ASF has other priorities when it comes to mainstream youth football. The focus here is on ensuring that the 130,000 or so boys and girls that play the game enjoy it and have fun. Emphasis is placed on valuable qualities such as team work, solidarity



Dany Ryser, coach of the Swiss U17 world champions of 2009

and the ability to accept criticism, as well as social aspects of the game such as integration and fair play.

● Pierre Benoit



Turkey

www.tff.org

Fair play leagues in all divisions

Constantly looking for innovations to promote the development of Turkish football, the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) has introduced fair play leagues for the second half of the 2011/12 season. These leagues have been implemented in all of Turkey’s professional divisions (i.e. the premier league, or Süper Lig, and the first, second and third divisions), the aim being to ensure that “the beautiful game will stay beautiful”.

According to a penalty system applied in all four divisions, teams lose points for various negative things such as red



cards, single and double yellow cards, player suspensions, stadium bans, matches behind closed doors and interruptions of games because of supporter misconduct.

Conversely, on the basis of reports by the official delegates and match observers, clubs can earn points for positive football, respect for their opponents and the referees, anti-racism and anti-discrimination action, match attendance, etc. In addition, if a team is shown no yellow or red cards during a whole match, they collect ten bonus points.

The winners of the fair play leagues are determined slightly differently in each division. In the Süper Lig, points will be accumulated from the start

of the second half of the 2011/12 season until the end of the play-off matches. At the end, each team’s points will be divided by the number of games they played to generate a match average. The team with the best average will be crowned champions of the 2011/12 fair play league and receive 4 million Turkish lira. The runners-up will receive two million and the team in third place one million.

In the other divisions, the prize money up for grabs is as follows (also in Turkish lira):

- 1. Lig fair play winners: 1,000,000
- 2. Lig fair play winners: 500,000
- 3. Lig fair play winners: 250,000

In total, the TFF will be distributing 8,750,000 Turkish lira in prize money across the four divisions at the end of the season.

● TFF Communications Department



Ukraine

www.ffu.org.ua

Guide to Ukrainian football history

As part of its 20th anniversary celebrations, the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) published an exclusive book about Ukrainian football, giving the country’s sporting bookworms a wonderful present.

This magnificent 300-page work entitled *The Football Country* tells the story of the birth and development of the world’s most popular sport in every region of Ukraine. The specifics of football across the country and the pioneers of the game, the most renowned figures and forgotten heroes, the fathers of Ukrainian football tactics and local idols, historical matches and famous teams, unique illustrations and rare statistics – the authors



An exclusive book on Ukrainian football

have included all this and more to produce a vast history of Ukrainian football.

However, the book is not limited only to history; it also gives an insight into the modern state of football and the future of the game in the country co-hosting EURO 2012. “This is

not a traditional football book. It’s a guide that takes you through the country and its great traditions in the most widespread sport in the world; a sport that has given us outstanding coaches such as Valeriy Lobanovskiy and world-class players such as Oleg Blokhin, Igor Belanov and Andriy Shevchenko. It has inspired many people to achieve great things, and their stories are worth telling,” Grigoriy Surkis, the FFU president, says in the foreword.

“Each of us can chart their own course through Ukrainian football, and every journey promises lots of discoveries, impressions and unforgettable encounters. So, bon voyage, dear friends. And welcome to *The Football Country!*”

● Bogdan Buga

Congratulations

Zoran Petrovic (Serbia), referee observer, celebrates his 60th birthday on 10 April. On 27 April, **Philip Gartside** (England), member of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee, joins him at the same milestone. Meanwhile, **Michael Sjöo** (Sweden), doping control officer, turns 50 on 2 April, as do **Christian Kofoed** (Denmark), match delegate, on 4 April, **Momir Djurdjevac** (Montenegro), member of the Media Committee, on 5 April, **Marton Vagi** (Hungary), member of the HatTrick Committee, on 10 April, **Erol Ersoy** (Turkey), referee observer, and **Antonius van Eekelen** (Netherlands), match delegate, on 15 April, **Sandor Piller** (Hungary), referee observer, on 24 April, and, last but not least, **Robin Howe** (Scotland), security officer, on 29 April.

UEFA also wishes many happy returns for April to:

Carlo De Gaudio (Italy, 1 April)
Jan Peeters (Belgium, 2 April)
Kaj Østergaard (Denmark, 3 April)
Martin Sturkenboom (Netherlands, 3 April)
Dennis Cruise (Republic of Ireland, 3 April)
Thomas Grimm (Switzerland, 3 April)
Yoav Strauss (Israel, 3 April)
Alex Miescher (Switzerland, 4 April)
Jan Ekstrand (Sweden, 5 April)
Lennart Wangel (Finland, 5 April)
Aleksandra Pejkovska
 (FYR Macedonia, 5 April)
Snjezana Focic (Croatia, 6 April)
Athanasios Briakos (Greece, 6 April)
Pavol Peracek (Slovakia, 7 April)
Jacques Devismes (France, 8 April)
Grzegorz Lato (Poland, 8 April)
Jim Fleeting (Scotland, 8 April)
Yevgeniy Stolitenko (Ukraine, 8 April)
Márton Esterházy (Hungary, 9 April)
Ladislav Svoboda (Czech Republic, 9 April)
Panagiotis Tsarouchas (Greece, 10 April)
Vlastibor Minarovjech Jr (Slovakia, 10 April)
Umberto Gandini (Italy, 11 April)
Eduard Dervishaj (Spain, 11 April)
Rodger Gifford (Wales, 12 April)
Valeriu Ionita (Romania, 12 April)
François De Keersmaecker (Belgium, 12 April)
Paolo Piani (Italy, 13 April)
Edvinas Eimontas (Lithuania, 13 April)
Georgios Bikas (Greece, 15 April)
Dušan Fitzel (Czech Republic, 15 April)
Duro Bukvic (Croatia, 16 April)
Manuel Enrique Mejuto Gonzalez
 (Spain, 16 April)
Charles Schaack (Luxembourg, 17 April)
Oguz Sarvan (Turkey, 18 April)
Alexandre Remin (Belarus, 18 April)
Michael Kuchenbecker
 (Germany, 19 April)
Virgar Hvidbro (Faroe Islands, 19 April)
Jean Appietto (France, 20 April)
Jean-Luc Veuthey (Switzerland, 20 April)
Ilhan Helvacı (Turkey, 20 April)
Vitor Manuel Melo Pereira
 (Portugal, 21 April)

Martinus van den Bekerom
 (Netherlands, 21 April)
Alexandru Burlac (Moldova, 21 April)
Jan Damgaard (Denmark, 22 April)
Morgan Norman (Sweden, 22 April)
Roderick Petrie (Scotland, 22 April)
Vladimir Petrov (Ukraine, 22 April)
Claudine Brohet (Belgium, 22 April)
Roland Tis (Belgium, 23 April)
Mehmet S. Binnet (Turkey, 23 April)
Nebojša Ivković (Serbia, 24 April)
Avraham Luzon (Israel, 24 April)
Frederick Roy Millar
 (Northern Ireland, 25 April)
Philippe Verbiest (Belgium, 25 April)
Daniel Ryser (Switzerland, 25 April)
Domenti Sichinava (Georgia, 25 April)
Salustia Chato Cipres (Andorra, 25 April)
Valentin Velikov (Bulgaria, 25 April)
Marina Sbardella (Italy, 27 April)
Jan Carlsen (Denmark, 27 April)
Edgar Steinborn (Germany, 27 April)
Zdzislaw Krecina (Poland, 28 April)
George Frank (Israel, 29 April)
Gudmundur Ingi Jónsson (Iceland, 29 April)
Emanuel Macedo de Medeiros
 (Portugal, 30 April)

Forthcoming events

Meetings

2 April, in Nyon
 Medical Committee
2-5 April, in Brussels
 Coach educators course
3 April, in Nyon
 HatTrick Committee
 Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee
26 April, in Nyon
 Stadium and Security Committee

Competitions

3/4 April
 UEFA Champions League:
 quarter-finals (return legs)
5 April
 UEFA Europa League:
 quarter-finals (return legs)
14/15 April
 UEFA Women's Champions League:
 semi-finals (first legs)
17/18 April
 UEFA Champions League: semi-finals (first legs)
19 April
 UEFA Europa League: semi-finals (first legs)
21/22 April
 UEFA Women's Champions League:
 semi-finals (return legs)
24/25 April
 UEFA Champions League:
 semi-finals (return legs)
26 April
 UEFA Europa League: semi-finals (return legs)
26-29 April, in Lleida, Spain
 UEFA Futsal Cup: finals

Notices

- At an extraordinary general meeting held on 27 February, the members of the Turkish Football Federation elected Yildirim Demirören as their new president.
- On 2 March, at an extraordinary general meeting of the German Football Association (DFB), Wolfgang Niersbach, previously DFB general secretary, was elected as the association's new president. Helmut Sandrock succeeds him as DFB general secretary.
- UEFA Grassroots Day will be celebrated on Wednesday 16 May. Numerous events are being planned across Europe to mark the occasion. For more information, go to <http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/grassroots/index.html>

Publication

The sixth and final issue of *Alive*, the official UEFA EURO 2012 newsletter, is out now and available on UEFA.com. It features articles about the official ball, the official song, the selected referees and the final preparations.



Obituary

Necdet Cobanlı (Turkey) passed away on 21 February at the age of 91. Having been elected as a European member of the FIFA Executive Committee at the 1976 UEFA Congress in Stockholm, he served three terms of office, until 1988. From 1972 to 1976, he was also a member of the UEFA Committee for the European Football Championship. Necdet Cobanlı was a member of the *Amicale des anciens*, the circle of former UEFA committee members.



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RESPECT

The Opponent



RESPECT

Diversity



RESPECT

The Game