

UEFA



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WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

Grassroots football takes centre stage throughout Europe

#EQUALGAME

The story of Jane, a young wheelchair footballer

INTERVIEW

UEFA vice-president
Fernando Gomes

THE TECHNICIAN

Mircea Lucescu's coaching
convictions



Dear readers,

Your opinion matters – which is why we would like to hear your thoughts on UEFA Direct.

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Thank you in advance.



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'WITHOUT GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL, THERE IS NO ELITE'

The strength of football lies in its grassroots. These are the opening words of this month's cover story, and for me, they perfectly sum up our position on the importance of the grassroots game. Judging by our member associations' fantastic participation in the annual UEFA Grassroots Week, I am delighted to say that a great many people seem to agree. From 23 to 30 September, we invited the European football community to get creative and inspire others to get involved by demonstrating the full range and breadth of our beautiful game.

The response was phenomenal – a celebration of the sport for all, regardless of age, gender, ability or beliefs. From projects for grandmothers in Lithuania and prisoners in Spain to street football in Ukraine and a programme for children with health problems in Greece, it truly was a display of football at its most vibrant, diverse and inspiring. All these activities were among the highlights of the year, and served to remind us of just how important it is to continue championing the grassroots game.

Speaking of championing, we recently handed out our annual UEFA Grassroots Awards. These awards may not get the same publicity as, for example, the UEFA Player of the Year, but in terms

of the bigger picture of European football, they are just as important. Every Cristiano Ronaldo or Lieke Martens has to start somewhere, and it is the people at the beginning of that journey who inspire us to take part, nurture our love of the game and encourage us to try our best. This year's winners were, as always, shining examples of the kind of people and ideas that make you proud to work in football.

I would like to close by congratulating and thanking everyone who helped make the 2017 UEFA Grassroots Week such a triumph and all those people who have such love for the amateur game. Let us keep nurturing, strengthening and investing in this key side of football, as that is what will ensure the continued success of the game across our continent.



Theodore Theodoridis
UEFA General Secretary





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Lithuania's You're Never Too Old initiative proves a big hit.

GRASSROOTS EVENTS APLENTY

The strength of football lies in its grassroots. This year's UEFA Grassroots Week, held from 23 to 30 September, helped give thousands of people of all ages, genders and social backgrounds opportunities to get involved in the world's number one sport, with many discovering football for the very first time or returning after a lengthy spell away from the pitch.

In conjunction with the European Commission's European Week of Sport, UEFA asked its member associations to facilitate, encourage and inspire participation in all forms of football to celebrate the grassroots game in Europe.

Belgium

Football is a lifelong passion for so many people throughout Europe, and this love affair often begins at an early age. With that in mind, the Royal Belgian Football Federation used UEFA Grassroots Week

as an opportunity to inspire children under six to develop their football skills. With the support of clubs and local schools, Festifoot events were organised throughout the country. They proved to be both fun and entertaining for the children involved, and a great way to publicise opportunities for children to play football in their local areas.

The Belgian FA's grassroots manager, Jonas Heuts, was delighted with how well the Festifoot initiative was received. "Festifoot challenges are designed to help develop the motor skills of young children

by allowing them to run, jump, climb, push, pull, turn, stop, accelerate, dribble, throw ... while introducing them to ball control and striking," he said. "Festifoot was also an opportunity to introduce children to the values of respect and fair play, from their first steps in football to the implementation of a fair play protocol before and after the activities."

Festifoot gave hundreds of young children a first taste of football. "We now hope that these young girls and boys will join the wider football family through our clubs," Heuts added.

Gibraltar

Gibraltar's showpiece event during UEFA Grassroots Week was a fun day welcoming over 230 children from around the capital to the Victoria Stadium for an event packed with football-themed activities. In the spirit of making football fully accessible to all, it was not just an opportunity for 11-a-side matches – small-sided games, mini-tournaments, futsal for Under-12s and Under-14s, table football and girls' and women's football matches were also on the programme, while the Gibraltar Special Olympics team played an exhibition match against Gibraltar's Under-16 national team.

It was the culmination of a nationwide programme of events, including walking and veterans football. The Gibraltar FA's grassroots manager, Leslie Asquez, believes the hard work paid off and is already thinking about ways to make next year's week another to remember. "I am extremely delighted at the way the UEFA Grassroots Week turned out," he said. "Seeing the children come down to our Sunday Funday and watching as they had fun learning about the beautiful game, as well as learning basic football skills, makes it all worthwhile. At all of the events we put on, the enjoyment factor was great to see, from the youngsters to the older generations who were taking part in walking football. "They haven't lost their love of the game, and it's amazing to see them with a platform to enjoy playing football regularly with the development of walking football. Now the work starts to plan next year's events, which we hope will be bigger and better."

The association's Play Without Pressure motto was a common theme, encouraging young children to play, whether for the first time or as regulars on the pitch, for the enjoyment and without the weight of expectation.

Greece

Having a ball at your feet brings a smile to your face – a simple idea but one that clearly resonated with the 500 children aged 6 to 16 who took part in UEFA Grassroots Week activities throughout Greece.

In Athens, boys and girls represented by the charity The Smile of the Child, which supports children who have suffered violence, have long-term health problems or are living in poverty, came together at the Hellenic Football Federation's national

training centre to take part in games, quizzes and other football-related activities.

National team head coach Kostas Tsanas, together with performance coach Grigoris Bizas and goalkeeper of the Under-21 national team Lefteris Astras, was on hand to offer the children tips and encouragement. Afterwards, one young participant, Maria, declared her newfound love for the game. "I have no words to describe the excitement I felt," she said. "I was running everywhere all the time. Playing with a ball was fun for me."

Elsewhere in Greece, the Hellenic Football Federation teamed up with a refugee accommodation centre in Andravida, using football to support its continued efforts to integrate refugee children aged between 6 and 12 in the area.

UEFA Grassroots Week was also celebrated in Florina, a border area of Greece, where 80 children from local schools and football academies were welcomed to the municipal sports centre for speeches from coaches and veteran players. An event on the Greek island of Zakynthos, which was recently affected by fires, brought together 150 young players and a girls' football event in Thessaloniki proved equally popular.

Lithuania

Imagine if players were responsible for refereeing their own match. That is just what the Lithuanian Football Federation (LFF) decided to do during UEFA Grassroots Week, when mixed teams of boys and girls were invited to make their own calls in a friendly tournament. →

The Hellenic Football Federation teamed up with a centre for child refugees in Andravida.



Shining the spotlight on fair play and respect, the young players were also invited after their matches to share their thoughts on how to get the most out of football.

Lithuania's week of grassroots activities brought people of all ages onto the pitch, with two projects in particular keeping young and older players in mind. Kindergarten football offered children of kindergarten age the opportunity to enjoy five-a-side matches with their teachers, while the You're Never Too Old initiative championed the cause of 'grandmothers for grassroots'. The children's event in Vilnius was supported by the local women's football club, with prizes and gifts for over 200 participants, while in Marijampolė, You're Never Too Old welcomed around 30 women, many of whom were giving football a go for the very first time. The eldest participant was 81 years young. "This was the second time we had delivered this project, so some players had done it before, but this time they brought their friends, who had never played

before," said Greta Guižauskaitė, the LFF's grassroots manager.

"Our grandmothers said they wanted to spread the message that football is the perfect way to spend your leisure time, and that there's no age limit for having fun."

Norway

Trophies galore were up for grabs during UEFA Grassroots Week in Norway, where a new league for small-sided games was also launched. Meanwhile, grassroots tournaments and activities were organised throughout the country with a view to getting more children involved in the game.

With the support of the Football Association of Norway's regional association in Oslo, the capital city celebrated the launch of the OBOS mini-league, following its successful pilot at Ready 1907 football club, which went on to host cup tournaments in November, demonstrating how UEFA Grassroots Week has helped to create a legacy of small-sided games for boys and girls.

Catherine Stensaker and Mia Stoknes of Ready 1907's event committee were hugely encouraged by the uptake. "It was great to see so many happy and interested children come to Ready's facilities on a chilly Sunday – from clubs on both sides of our city. This is clearly a popular activity among our younger players, but also among everyone at the clubs involved," Stoknes said.

Stensaker agreed: "We are delighted that Ready will be able to use football equipment from the Football Association of Norway's regional association in Oslo. The club will be able to borrow up to 16 new portable pitches to organise three-a-side OBOS mini-league matches for girls and boys aged six and seven."

Romania

Accessibility was given centre stage in Romania during UEFA Grassroots Week, as the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) teamed up with charitable organisations to bring football to children and young people with disabilities.

In association with the Down Plus

UEFA DONATES MAXI-PITCH IN MARSEILLE

French footballing legend David Trezeguet joined in the UEFA Grassroots Week celebrations in Marseille on 30 September, and was moved by seeing so many young players united by the game. The 1998 World Cup and EURO 2000 winner was among the guests invited to the inauguration of a synthetic maxi-pitch donated by UEFA to the French city and 2017 European Capital of Sport. UEFA's Grassroots Week is aligned with the European Week of Sport – an initiative set up by the European Commission

and aimed at promoting sport and physical activity across Europe via its #BeActive campaign.

More than 200 children aged between 7 and 11 from two different schools in Marseille's 12th district attended Sévan stadium for the inauguration of the new facility, which was financed through a €100,000 donation by UEFA. Sévan stadium is home to UGA Ardživ, a club founded in 1924 and made up of 17 teams that are all set to benefit from the investment.

'Now is their time'

"I'm really moved by these kids," said former Juventus and Monaco forward Trezeguet. "They enjoy being on this pitch – they play together and have fun. Football can be really strong. It unites people from very different cultural backgrounds as well." Watching the children, he added: "Now is their time to play. They are the future."

The boys and girls played age-appropriate small-sided matches and took part in skills challenges and educational games featuring the Laws of the Game. The event was organised by UEFA, the French Football Federation, the Mediterranean regional league, the district of Provence and the French education ministry.

Keeping the love alive

Investments in grassroots initiatives are essential to efforts to boost participation. Football helps to bring people together and teach important life values, and



Hervé Galand, FFF



Young children took centre stage in Norway.

and Help Autism associations, football tournaments were rolled out for 50 children with Down's syndrome and autism, with all of them receiving medals afterwards.

Elsewhere, the FRF's junior grassroots cup welcomed 180 children aged between seven and ten, who competed over four days in mixed boys' and girls' teams, while the grassroots league in Timisoara hosted 700 eager young players aged from just five, who stayed until the sun went down. It was not just children who got involved.

everyone should be able to benefit. With dropout rates across Europe increasing at youth level, UEFA believes that it is crucial to continue to invest in grassroots football and ensure that it is open and accessible to all.

Grassroots football and solidarity is one of UEFA's 11 values. The strength of football lies in its grassroots, without which there can be no elite game. With this in mind, UEFA usually donates three maxi-pitches a year – one to the European Capital of Sport and one to each of the cities that host the Champions League and Europa League finals.

The administrative director of the Mediterranean regional league, Raphaël Boutin, emphasised the importance of investing in grassroots football: "We need facilities to keep grassroots football alive, especially in a city like Marseille, a football city with an increasing number of registered players."

An adults' amateur tournament attracted 200 players along to Bucharest, while grassroots investment in Romania can also be found in the Football and Femininity campaign for boosting female participation, primary school football and beach soccer.

Meanwhile, if jumpers can be goalposts, then any street can become a stadium. That was the FRF's mantra as it took the opportunity to develop 'Transformă ulița în stadion' (Turn the street into a stadium), a project helping over 1,000 children in both rural and urban areas to play football. It is part of the wider 'Performanța are viitor' (Performance has a future) project, which gives young players aged between 10 and 14 the chance to earn places at development centres and show their skills in mini-tournaments.

Scotland

From the Borders to the Shetland Islands, football is a way of life for a huge part of the Scottish population, and grassroots football is essential in offering enthusiastic players of all ages and abilities, or in remote areas, a regular chance to have a ball at their feet.

Having established a flourishing grassroots programme nationwide, the Scottish Football Association is now working to craft a legacy from UEFA Grassroots Week. Football chiefs took the opportunity to launch a new brand for their grassroots division, presenting Football For Life, part of a new four-year strategy to boost involvement. Beyond growing the game, Football for Life encourages lifelong participation – not only increasing numbers but ensuring that once players take up football, they stay with it for life.

Scotland international Leanne Ross got involved and met some of the primary school girls taking part in

Clackmannanshire's festival, just one of dozens of events held over the seven days. "Some of these girls may not have known they'd have an opportunity to play at high school, so it's really great to encourage them now," Ross said. "Grassroots football is hugely important; if you don't have grassroots, you don't have any other games, so we need to try to encourage as many girls and boys as we can to get involved by giving them quality opportunities to play the game."

These days, Scots are spoilt for choice. There are a vast number of footballing opportunities already on offer across the country, from walking football and over-35s games, to futsal, deaf, blind and 'frames' football, for those unable to play mainstream games.

Social media engagement played a big part in Scotland during Grassroots Week, with almost 700,000 impressions on Twitter alone and 3,940 photos given a 'thumbs up' in a show of support for the extensive national grassroots network.

Serbia

The Football Association of Serbia (FSS) joined forces with the country's regional football associations to hold a variety of events, focusing in particular on boosting participation among children, including those with special learning needs and physical and sensory disabilities.

Clubs and schools in each regional area worked with league administrators in Belgrade to give children with special needs the opportunity to enjoy a football festival, welcoming over 150 children to a rather unique location for football: Ada Ciganlija, an artificial island built on the Sava river.

There were plenty of other opportunities to play football during UEFA Grassroots Week. The Vojvodina regional association marked the annual celebration with a →

day dedicated to schools football, encouraging around 300 boys and girls to get involved and catering for all abilities and access needs.

Western Serbia played host to a special day giving young girls and children with special learning needs a chance to get out onto a pitch, with a fully accessible tournament and girls' league held in Čačak. Played on the artificial turf at FK Borac Čačak's facilities, the event was attended by around 200 children.

Over in the east of the country, around 500 boys and girls participated in an all-day event in Niš, at the city's main sports centre. This year's Grassroots Week also helped to publicise the ongoing programme My School - My Club, which encourages schools in Serbia to establish clubs and encourage them to play in regional leagues, thus developing a love of football in children and enabling them to be part of a team from a young age.

While the regional associations managed the delivery of projects, the FSS ploughed resources into promoting events and providing equipment.

Spain

Thousands of players from across Spain got involved in the country's biggest involvement to date in UEFA Grassroots Week.

With an emphasis on improving access to football for everyone, prisoners from Logroño prison were given a chance to compete in a special integration tournament, followed by a presentation on managing adversity in coaching given by Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) coach Juan Carlos Luque.

Participants commented on how the activities had given them hope, one describing it as "a transformational experience". "We are very grateful to UEFA and the RFEF for taking the initiative to organise these types of activity," said Vicente Pérez Corral, the prison's director. "They are extremely useful for us and for our prisoners. Football is a perfect way to develop skills useful in the workplace and for reintegration into society."

Meanwhile, another tournament in Logroño gave women and veterans from around the world a chance to compete with one another, with teams representing three continents. "It's very hard for us to find tournaments to compete in so we didn't want to miss this opportunity," said Javier Roca from Deporte sin Barreras (Sport without Barriers).

If the dipping temperatures in autumn were enough to send a chill through some Spaniards, indoor football was a great opportunity to get active and received

a publicity boost during UEFA Grassroots Week. A five-a-side tournament was also held with youth and women's categories. Coach education was another key theme throughout the country. Sports and leadership conferences were held in schools, designed to inspire grassroots coaches with stories of how access to sport had changed lives.

Ukraine

Former Ukraine stars were among the thousands of people who turned out to support UEFA Grassroots Week in what was one of the biggest events of its kind in the country. Former internationals Oleh Protasov and Ivan Iaremchuk attended the opening ceremony in the Obolon district of Kiev, where an enormous movable pitch was installed for street football. The Ukrainian Football Federation (FFU) ensured that every region was involved in the showpiece week through its 26 regional associations, whether in urban or rural areas.

Events had been promoted at top-level games to raise awareness, while five-day festivals were held in schools across the country for groups of children who had previously experienced a lower level of access to football and other leisure activities. Half of these were children of soldiers and military workers, alongside others who had been displaced internally, while a third were girls and many more were children with special needs and social vulnerabilities. All were given an opportunity to make new friends, strengthen social connections and indulge in their love of football.

Olympic pole vault gold medallist Serhii Bubka wowed the young participants at the opening ceremony by giving masterclasses in fitness, attended by Ukraine's minister for youth and sport, Ihor Zhdanov.

The closing ceremony was held at the FFU technical centre and included a champions festival combining football competitions, masterclasses, contests and interactive games. Former Dynamo Kyiv striker Oleh Protasov and defender Anatoliy Demyanenko presented each young player with a commemorative ball, champion's medal and UEFA Grassroots Week participation certificate. ⚽



2017 GRASSROOTS AWARDS WINNERS

Northern Ireland, Italy and Armenia won gold in the 2017 UEFA Grassroots Day Awards, which honour the best clubs, projects and leaders in Europe for the excellence of their work in this crucial sector of the game.

The nominations for the awards in the categories of Best Grassroots Club, Best Grassroots Project and Best Grassroots Leader – as proposed by the bureau of the UEFA Grassroots Panel and the UEFA Development and Technical Assistance Committee – were endorsed by the Executive Committee at its meeting of 20 September.

The awards reward excellence in the grassroots field – seen by UEFA as crucial in helping to nurture football's overall good health.

"Grassroots is football's lifeblood because without healthy foundations, our sport cannot flourish," said the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin. "UEFA has always invested heavily in grassroots

projects around Europe, and will continue to do so to ensure that football can be played by all."

"I would like to thank all those who have worked tirelessly to make sure that people of all abilities can play this game at grassroots level. Thanks to their dedication, loyalty, sacrifice and love for the game, the sport's future is in safe hands," he added.



BEST CLUB, GOLD

St Oliver Plunkett (Northern Ireland)

St Oliver Plunkett, a youth-focused club, has been recognised for helping hundreds of children in Belfast to make lasting connections through football, reinforcing the principle that some of the strongest friendships are forged across frontiers.

Credited with changing lives in the greater Belfast area, St Oliver Plunkett has given over 500 boys and girls from different backgrounds the opportunity to play football together, not only promoting respect and fair play on the pitch, but helping young people to make lasting social connections in neighbouring communities.

"As far as we're concerned, everybody's welcome through that door," explained the club secretary, Neil McKee. "We just

want to get our message out that it doesn't matter what ability you have, it doesn't matter what box somebody wants to put you in, you're more than welcome at our club. The young people take great pride in the jersey and they're proud putting it on every single week. It's not just about the football. There's that sense of belonging, the pride in the jersey, the camaraderie, the teamwork. Everything comes together and strengthens those bonds. I've known a lot of the coaches at the club since primary school; we've been friends for life. And it's vitally important that we offer those opportunities for the young people of today."

One of those young players, Emel Melville, told UEFA how the club has

benefitted him since he started playing there: "The coaches, they all teach you loads of lessons that you'll carry throughout your life. They taught me respect. Although I have learned respect in my home, they taught me how to respect; it's just a different kind of respect – respect for your coaches and team-mates – and they've also taught me how to work as a unit, and they give you some self-discipline."

The Irish Football Association also hosts its own grassroots awards, championed by former Northern Ireland and Arsenal goalkeeper Pat Jennings and designed to recognise excellence throughout the province.



BEST CLUB, SILVER

FV Blau-Weiss Gonesweiler e. V. (Germany)

FV Blau-Weiss earned silver for its growing commitment to helping refugees to integrate into the community. Already giving hundreds of members a chance to play regular games, in 2014 the club turned its attention to helping refugees off the pitch, developing first-aid programmes and language courses and offering tailored assistance, in particular to Arabic-speaking women. "We never expected [to win silver]; we were just speechless," said the club's chairman, Stefan Kunz. "For us, this is very 'pure' recognition, which is not associated with prize money. It's recognition of what we do – helping the people who come to us."



BEST CLUB, BRONZE

FK Breznica Pljevlja (Montenegro)

Founded in 2013, FK Breznica Pljevlja now has 300 members, including 100 girls and veterans. The Montenegro club has six UEFA-licensed coaches and uses sport to foster a spirit of community and to promote healthy lifestyles. The club also organises an annual international girls' tournament and participates in humanitarian work.

BEST PROJECT, GOLD

GiocoCalciando (Italy)

Incorporating learning with having fun has been a hallmark of innovative teaching for years when it comes to keeping young children entertained. So, when a programme combining classroom time with football was developed in Italy, tens of thousands got on board.

The GiocoCalciando project combines e-learning and practical football sessions in primary schools throughout Italy, with over 32,000 students and 2,400 teachers taking part. Developed by the youth sector of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) and Italy's ministry of education, it has now set a gold-winning standard for school engagement in Europe.

"The idea was to provide teachers with a simple tool with which to teach football and convey certain educational messages," explained the head of the FIGC's youth and educational department, Vito Di Gioia. "GiocoCalciando is a multimedia guide which is split into four levels. At every level there is a multimedia educational part, there's a quiz with questions and answers, and there's a video section which allows us to familiarise the children with the exercises developed by our coaches. The e-learning part is very important, as the kids learn the rules of football by playing an interactive game. Fair play is crucial, as the Laws of the Game not only apply to football but also in everyday life. That's something which is stressed repeatedly in the interactive game. It's the real aim of the game."



As well as these elements taught by teachers in a classroom setting, the children also get the opportunity to follow up what they have learned with a practical session. "Our grassroots experts come to schools at least four times a year to explain the project," Di Gioia added, "then they must also train the teachers to run the project over the course of the year."

Reacting to the award, the head of the FIGC's youth sector, Vito Roberto Tisci,

said: "It's such a big recognition and, of course, it's a source of great pride for the association and me personally, having run this department for the last two-and-a-half years.

"It's the first time our football association has won this award. Besides the honour in itself, I'd like to stress the great results this project has achieved, which are very important to us."

BEST PROJECT, SILVER

Kannusta Mua (Finland)

Positive encouragement is crucial to the development of a player of any age and ability, but as the silver-winning Kannusta Mua campaign highlights, it is particularly important to strike the right tone with children. The initiative, born in Helsinki in 2016, aims to improve the behaviour of adults who are involved in children's football, to make it more enjoyable for coaches, staff, volunteers, parents and young players. Its success has been credited with helping the association to attract sponsorship, and it has now been rolled out throughout Finland.

BEST PROJECT, BRONZE

Grandmas for Football (Lithuania)

Grassroots activities for older people, and women in particular, are rapidly gaining in popularity. This small yet innovative Lithuanian project is designed to promote activity and a healthy lifestyle in older people, while strengthening that inimitable bond between grandparents and their grandchildren. Encouraging the participants aged from 46 to 75 to play alongside their grandchildren, Grandmas for Football uses a foam-rubber ball in small-sided games.



BEST LEADER, GOLD

Senik Arakelyan (Armenia)

Senik Arakelyan is a coach at the Tribune grassroots club in the city of Gyumri, where almost 1,000 children, teachers and coaches are involved in events and sessions every year. As Arakelyan watched the popularity of women's football take off elsewhere in Europe, he strived to bury his doubts that this passion would ever find its way to Armenia.

The determined coach came up against resistance from parents in the Shirak region, who were reluctant to register their daughters with clubs. So in 2013, he turned to an orphanage. "It was hard to assemble a team in Gyumri because parents would not allow their daughters to join football clubs," he said. "This was the reason I decided to start with orphanage girls. I started training with ten girls on a sand pitch. Gradually the number of participants increased and then we succeeded in the 2015/16 season and won the A and B groups in the Armenian women's championship.

"To spread awareness, we organise activities in schools

and hold tournaments during the whole year and make it possible for several hundreds of girls to play football."

Arakelyan also organises activities for disabled children and, as the representative of the Football Federation of Armenia (FFA) in Gyumri, visits schools to review their football lessons and offer advice to teachers, while also cooperating closely with local municipalities to organise tournaments, street events and schools competitions.

"Playing football is a pleasure," he says. "Every person, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity or disability, has the right to be happy and enjoy this pleasure. In my opinion, playing football is about enjoyment. People get a sense of equality and respect playing football."

FFA grassroots specialist Lala Yeritsyan said: "People like Senik are very important to football's development. People like him live for football; they are part of football. They are able to grab children's attention, to make them see how interesting playing football



can be, how important it is as a way of staying healthy. He is also able to change attitudes towards women's football, which is not very well developed in our country yet."

Senik Arakelyan won gold in the Best Grassroots Leader category for his work developing girls' football in Armenia.



BEST LEADER, SILVER

Ralf Klohr (Germany)

Abuse, aggression and attacks have no place in football, yet even at youth level, exchanges can become heated. After a match that Ralf Klohr – a dedicated regional association president – attended with other parents was abandoned by the referee because of touchline disagreements, he developed the FairPlayLiga in Germany, a simple but effective resource for helping to develop friendly and positive environments in children's football. This award has helped to encourage an approach whereby participation and enjoyment are the most important things, and to reduce the pressure on performance.



BEST LEADER, BRONZE

Ana Paula Pinho Almeida (Portugal)

Using football to teach young girls social values, Ana Paula Pinho Almeida is the technical coordinator of women's grassroots football at a Portuguese club renowned for creating opportunities for local girls. She has developed and implemented many events with the support of local education authorities.

ACTION WEEKS CHAMPION DIVERSITY IN MORE THAN 60 COUNTRIES

Some of football's biggest names joined the 100,000 people who took part in the largest social development campaign in European sport, the Fare Football People action weeks, from 5 to 19 October.

During the two weeks of action, organised and coordinated by the Fare network, a UEFA social responsibility partner, more than 2,000 activities focused on tackling discrimination and encouraging social inclusion and education across 61 countries in Europe and beyond.

Numerous national football associations, leagues, professional clubs and high-profile players contributed to the Football People weeks, with many also showing their support for UEFA's #EqualGame campaign to promote diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the game.

Various Football People events took place at national and international level across the continent, including debates on anti-discrimination and diversity in football, grassroots activities, workshops, film festivals, panel discussions and fan choreographies. A campaign video was launched on the opening day to inspire many more to become Football People.

UEFA competitions enter into the spirit

UEFA underlined its commitment to tackling all forms of discrimination and to using football to promote inclusion

during all 59 matches of the Champions League, Europa League and the Women's Champions League staged during the action weeks, as well as at three Women's World Cup qualifiers. Spots were aired in the stadiums, announcements were made over stadium loudspeakers, player escorts wore #EqualGame T-shirts and team captains donned branded armbands to encourage everyone in the stadiums and at home to embrace diversity.

The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, said: "I am excited to offer UEFA's full support for the Football People action weeks. By dedicating a matchday in the men's and women's Champions Leagues, the Europa League and Women's World Cup qualifiers to the campaign, we want to highlight our commitment to leading the way in making discrimination a thing of the past and celebrating diversity in the game."

Tibor Navracsics, European commissioner for education, culture, youth and sport, also expressed his support for the initiative: "Sport brings people together and creates communities. It has a unique power that we need to harness to build a better Europe. The Football People action weeks provide

a great opportunity for everyone to get involved."

Piara Powar, executive director of the Fare network, said: "Football can play a vital role in breaking down barriers and helping to heal divisions in society. It has never been more important to confront these issues, whether they involve racism, homophobia or gender inequality, or the rights of refugees and underrepresented minorities."

Football associations play their part

Thirty-five football associations supported the Football People weeks, with two, Belgium and Serbia, showing their support during their 2018 World Cup qualifying campaigns.

The Royal Belgian Football Association hosted a study group seminar on diversity and inclusion, which was attended by representatives from 16 national football associations, who all pledged their support for the campaign. Among those taking part were the football associations of Croatia, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Ireland, Romania, Russia, Spain and Turkey.



Wolfsburg and Atlético supported the #EqualGame campaign at their Women's Champions League match in Germany on 11 October.

Getty Images



Ryu Voelkel/Fare network

Malta develops a refugee inclusion strategy

The Malta Football Association (MFA) partnered up with Fare to run a workshop on refugee inclusion and launch a nationwide campaign to address gender-based violence.

On 13 October, the MFA launched a Zero Tolerance of Gender-based Violence campaign in collaboration with the Maltese president's foundation for the wellbeing of society. Four Maltese footballers took part in the launch at the National Stadium in Ta'Qali, while Maltese internationals Michael Mifsud and Alfred Effiong featured in a video emphasising that there are no winners in gender-based violence.

As part of the two-day event, a half-day conference looked at the role football can play in increasing the social inclusion of refugees and encouraging tolerance and diversity. The workshop served as a platform to initiate and establish a Maltese Football People network, which will generate more opportunities in and through football for new arrivals and asylum seekers.

Italy sends out a message of equality

Italy's men's and women's national teams did their bit to promote the action weeks, with stars such as Ciro Immobile and Leonardo Bonucci standing shoulder to shoulder with

players of the women's Under-19 national team to send a message of equality to everyone involved in football.

Romania gets the Roma community involved

In Bucharest, the Romanian Football Federation hosted a launch event for a series of Football People activities for marginalised young people from the Roma community. The event brought together former players, representatives of the

federation, the ministry of youth and sport, Bucharest city hall and NGOs, and was followed by a match at the national stadium involving youngsters from the Roma community.

Russian teams say no to discrimination

In Russia, the premier league game between Krasnodar and CSKA Moskva was dedicated to the Football People action weeks. The two teams lined up behind a large banner reading 'We say no to discrimination'.

Support from professional clubs

Top clubs across Europe also joined in the campaign, including AEL Limassol, Apollon Limassol, AEK Larnaka, BATE Borisov, Inter Milan, Viktoria Plzeň, Villarreal, Shamrock Rovers, Slovan Liberec, Brighton & Hove Albion, Cork City, Mallorca, Clubul Sportiv U Craiova, Panserraikos and Panathinaikos.

In Greece, Olympiacos produced a video featuring the team's top players giving out a message against discrimination. The club also took to social media to show its support for the campaign. PAOK echoed the message of inclusion on its website and social media and through videos displayed on the screens in its stadium. Celtic and Ferencvárosi TC also produced videos in support of the cause.

An unprecedented number of women's teams also took part in this year's campaign, including Chelsea, Zurich, Fortuna Hjørring, Gintra Universitetas, VFL Wolfsburg and Zvezda-2005.

Last but not least, the European Club Association (ECA) lent its support to the campaign for the first time. The ECA general secretary, Michele Centenaro, said: "The ECA stands strongly behind those actively promoting unity and inclusiveness during the Football People action weeks across the continent."

After two successful Football People action weeks that took in the length and breadth of European football, let us hope that everyone who took part continues to set an example and drive home the message that discrimination has no place whatsoever in football or in society as a whole. 🌍



FIGC/Fare network

AC Milan and Italy defender Leonardo Bonucci supports the cause.



JANE VELKOVSKI – FYR MACEDONIA

"WHEN I PLAY FOOTBALL, I FEEL LIKE EVERYONE ELSE"

Nine-year-old Jane Velkovski lives and breathes football. He plays the game whenever he gets the chance, whether it is at home or at school, and his eyes light up whenever he talks about his favourite sport.

"Football is everything in my life," Jane explains. "I play it in video games, I play it in our garden, and I play it at school. I play football everywhere." Jane's determination to play football is even more impressive given the fact that he uses a wheelchair, having been diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy. Jane, who lives in Skopje, the capital of FYR Macedonia, relishes every opportunity he gets to play the game, and is his team's last line of defence in goal.

Looking at Jane's enthusiasm for football and for life, it is difficult to imagine the constant battles he has had to endure off the pitch. He needs special care throughout the day, even for simple things such as changing his position in his wheelchair.

In 2015, Jane travelled to Paris for an operation to correct curvature in his spine. Every six months, he has follow-up treatment in the hope that this will increase his chances of one day being able to walk.

"Football has had a very positive influence on his life and having to deal with all the problems he is facing," says Jane's father, Gjorgji. "Through football, he has been able to realise that he can play an active part in society."

Jane has become a small sensation in FYR Macedonia. He first began to grow in popularity after being handed the honour of leading out FYR Macedonia for their World Cup qualifier against Spain in June. However, it was an image from the UEFA Super Cup match in Skopje a couple of months later that really captured the country's imagination.

His mother, Denica, photographed Jane next to a poster of one of his favourite players, Cristiano Ronaldo. She published the picture on the internet, and her post went viral. Jane's dream is to one day meet his idol in the flesh, or even better, to have the opportunity to run and play the game just like his hero.

#EQUAL GAME



"I MAKE NEW FRIENDS ON THE PLAYGROUND. THEY RESPECT ME, LISTEN TO ME AND TREAT ME WELL. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEY TREAT ME EQUALLY."





EQUAL GAME





EQUAL GAME



"I FIRST BECAME INTERESTED IN FOOTBALL WHEN I GOT MY ELECTRIC-POWERED WHEELCHAIR. I COULD NOW PLAY LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE, BECAUSE WITH A MANUAL WHEELCHAIR IT'S DIFFICULT."





Photos: UEFA

LUÍS FIGO JOINS UEFA AS FOOTBALL ADVISOR

Luís Figo is bringing his wealth of knowledge and experience to UEFA as he joins the organisation as a football advisor.

The former Champions League winner will work with the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, and the football division on a variety of topics, including technical aspects of the game and the overall attractiveness of the sport. He will also be the leading figure of the UEFA ambassadors programme.

"Luís Figo was a fantastic player who was exemplary in the way he conducted himself both on and off the pitch," the UEFA president said. "He is a highly respected figure within the game and I am very pleased he is joining our team. His tremendous football experience will be a very valuable asset to UEFA."

Commenting on his appointment, Figo said: "I have been lucky to gain a wealth of experience and I believe I can have a positive influence in passing on my

knowledge. Football is constantly evolving." The former Portuguese international had an outstanding playing career, which saw him earn 127 caps (a record which has been broken only by Cristiano Ronaldo) and win the Champions League in 2002 with Real Madrid, as well as the Cup Winners' Cup and the Super Cup on two occasions. His greatest individual award came in 2000, when he won the Ballon d'Or.

Figo joins the likes of Nadine Kessler and Dejan Stanković, who joined UEFA as football advisors earlier this year. Kessler has since been appointed as head of the new women's football unit. These appointments are all part of the UEFA president's policy to get more former players involved in the decision-making process on how football is organised and run. ⚽



SUPPORTING RESEARCH INTO NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE

The Stefano Borgonovo Foundation was the recipient of the 2012 UEFA Monaco charity cheque to support research into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a neurological disease that mainly involves the nerve cells (neurons) responsible for controlling voluntary muscle movement.



The disease is progressive, meaning the symptoms get worse over time. Currently, there is no cure for ALS and no effective treatment to halt, or reverse, the progression of the disease. The €1m cheque was presented to the wife of the renowned AC Milan and ACF Fiorentina striker Stefano Borgonovo, who himself had been diagnosed with the disease, by the then UEFA president, Michel Platini, who said: "The Monaco charity cheque reflects the governing body's commitment to improving health across Europe. We hope to make a positive contribution to finding a cure for ALS, as well as offering support to ALS patients and their families."

With the backing of UEFA, the Stefano Borgonovo Foundation has driven forward its campaign through much-needed investment into research. The money received from UEFA was used mainly to support clinical research into

the development of stem cell lines, leading to trials on patients, some being among the most advanced trials in the international scientific landscape. Clinical trials offer hope for many people and an opportunity to help researchers find better ways to safely detect, treat or prevent the disease. A comprehensive observational, retrospective cohort study was also financed in order to collect, manage and analyse data aimed at investigating the influence of potential epidemiological risk factors for ALS.

Since Stefano's death in 2013 at the age of 49, his widow, Chantal, has been tirelessly carrying on her husband's mission with the purpose of raising awareness and putting the spotlight on the disease. She has also told her story in a book, 'Una vita in gioco: l'amore, il calcio, la SLA' (A Life in the Game: Love, Football and ALS), from the very beginning of her love for Stefano to the epilogue.

CLUB LICENSING AND FINANCIAL FAIR PLAY KEEPS CLUBS ON TRACK

The Football Association of Montenegro hosted representatives of UEFA, its 55 member associations and guests from FIFA, the AFC, CAF, CONCACAF and CONMEBOL for the 16th annual UEFA club licensing and financial fair play workshop from 11 to 13 October, in order to reflect on and address a number of current licensing challenges and financial trends.

UEFA's head of club licensing, Aleš Zavrl, began by reflecting on the licensing process just completed for 2017/18: "Out of the 555 applications received for UEFA licences, 491 were granted, representing the highest success rate since the system was implemented."

The latest figures, which are based on a detailed review of over 700 clubs, were presented to the 160 licensing and financial experts in attendance. The figures showed that top-division clubs were generating higher operating profits than ever before, with combined club losses (after transfers and financing) decreasing for the fifth year in a row, dropping from €1.7bn before the introduction of financial fair play to just over €260m in the financial year ending in 2016. Improved financial stability and

performance are gaining ground throughout Europe, with transfer profits and higher UEFA competition distributions for the first time taking more than half of Europe's leagues into the black.

Getting the right results

Overdue payables assessments likewise continued to produce encouraging results, with just under €7m in overdue payables towards clubs, employees and social/tax authorities registered as at 30 June 2017.

Once again, this shows that financial fair play is working and turning European club football finances around, as does the continued decrease in clubs' net debts, which are now at their lowest level on record, equivalent to just 35% of annual revenue.

The workshop featured an update on FIFA's club licensing as well as a panel discussion in which representatives of FIFA and UEFA's sister confederations discussed their different experiences and the realities of implementing club licensing in their respective territories.

A major focal point at this year's gathering was the future of club licensing and how to adapt it to the ever-evolving landscape of European football. With that in mind, UEFA presented the results of one of its recent research projects on the keys to successful youth academies in Europe and how club licensing could be further used to raise standards in youth development across the continent. A number of UEFA member associations were also invited to present the club licensing initiatives they had introduced at national level and how they could be used to improve governance and management at both league and club level.

The representatives of UEFA's member associations took part in group discussions to look at issues such as financial polarisation and transfer concentration, sharing their experiences and giving their views on how club licensing and financial fair play should evolve and what they should focus on.

UEFA vice-president Michele Uva, who also chairs the UEFA Club Licensing Committee, encouraged this forward-looking approach: "When club licensing was introduced in 2004, it aimed primarily to raise minimum standards in European football governance following a large number of cases of mismanagement that even, in some cases, unfortunately led clubs to ruin. However, we have come a long way since then and a great deal has been achieved. I ask that we now all continue to show such great dedication and keep looking ahead in order to tackle anything that could defy these objectives." 



Savo Prelević

AN INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUE FOR ACUTE HAMSTRING INJURIES

UEFA has been supporting football-related academic research projects through its Research Grant Programme since 2010. This month, Dr Johannes L. Tol presents a feasibility study on a new approach to evaluating microstructural recovery at return to play.

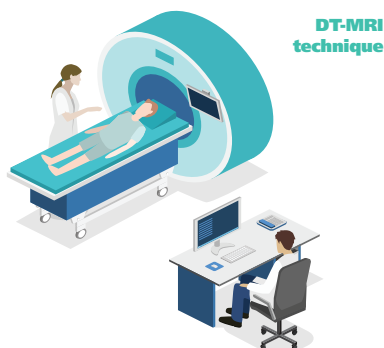
Recent studies on hamstring injuries sustained by players in the UEFA Champions League indicate a 4% increase every year since 2001 in what is the most common injury among professional footballers. Given the high reinjury rate, deciding when a player is fit to return to play remains a major challenge.

Hamstring injuries cause professional players to be absent for several weeks, which is very costly for their clubs. Meanwhile, for middle-aged recreational players, such injuries can be a source of persistent frustration and eventually cause them to stop playing, which, in turn, can affect their overall health and fitness.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is frequently used for the diagnosis and prognosis of hamstring injuries. However, conventional MRI techniques show fluid build-up but not the microstructural recovery of injured muscle fibres. Our project used an innovative MRI technique – diffusion tensor magnetic resonance imaging (DT-MRI) – to evaluate the feasibility of accurately visualising muscle fibre recovery using fibre-tracking techniques.

What we did

We tested the new technique on 5 healthy and 27 injured athletes. Fifteen of the injured athletes underwent DT-MRI scans at return to play, most of whom were professional



Dr Johannes L. Tol is a sports medicine physician. Currently a visiting professional at Aspetar Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital in Qatar, he is employed by the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam. He is a senior associate editor of the British Journal of Sports Medicine and has published extensively in international peer-reviewed journals.

footballers in the top two Dutch divisions. With our team available around the clock, most of the players underwent scans within four days of their return to play.

What we found

Most injuries occurred in the biceps femoris muscle, which is in line with the results of previous UEFA research on this muscle led by Professor Jan Ekstrand. It took 25 hours to analyse each DT-MRI data set in the present study, which leaves room for improvement in terms of our data processing and analysis techniques.

We had to overcome several hurdles on our way to making the new approach feasible for future use. Based on our results, however, we can conclude that DT-MRI is a promising technique for evaluating muscle fibres at return to play, and might ultimately provide accurate visualisations of muscle fibre recovery using fibre-tracking techniques. The new technique is still at the research stage, but the project team is working hard to improve it for the benefit of footballers at every level and everywhere. 🌐

HEALTHY HEARTS THE GOAL AT WOMEN'S EURO 2017

UEFA, the World Heart Federation (WHF), the Dutch Heart Foundation, the Royal Netherlands Football Association and the European Healthy Stadia Network joined forces at this summer's Women's EURO 2017 to promote an active, healthy lifestyle among women, children and football fans as a whole.

The European Healthy Stadia Network also developed an Active Match app to encourage fans and those working at the tournament to get to and from the stadiums on foot or by bike

The goal of the campaign, which went by the name of 'A healthy heart your goal', was to raise awareness among supporters that heart disease and strokes are the main causes of death in women across Europe and that most cardiovascular disease can be prevented by not smoking, eating a healthy diet and exercising. Just 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day, five days a week, can help reduce the risk and keep your heart healthy.

The campaign encouraged everyone attending Women's EURO 2017 in the Netherlands to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle and to play football or any other sport to keep their hearts healthy. Fitness challenges in schools and the fan zones before and during the tournament, awareness campaigns on the

giant screens and on the pitch at the semi-finals, promotional videos on YouTube, supporter walks on matchdays and tobacco-free stadiums were just some of the ways in which the campaign was put into action.

With UEFA, the European Healthy Stadia Network also developed an Active Match app to encourage fans and those working at the tournament to get to and from the stadiums on foot or by bike. The app was downloaded by more than 1,600 people, who, altogether, walked or cycled more than 2,000km.

As the campaign slogan suggests, the main goal of all these activities, in which the host cities, Dutch celebrities and international sports stars also got involved, was to get and stay fit and healthy. 🏃



FERNANDO GOMES

'THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS TO ANSWER TO OUR OWN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES'

Fernando Gomes is the proud president of the Portuguese Football Federation and a much-respected football administrator. He has given great amounts to the game in Portugal and beyond, and his impressive dedication was rewarded with the unforgettable thrill of his country's triumph at UEFA EURO 2016 in France.

A UEFA Executive Committee member since 2015, and vice-president since April this year, Fernando Gomes talks to us about his lifelong devotion to football and sport, which began when he was a small boy, and what it means to be at the helm of the national association in a country that has football engraved in its heart.

First of all, can you tell us a little about yourself?

I was born in Porto, and studied economics at the University of Porto, where I got my degree. In professional life, I worked as an expert in information systems before moving on to serve major economic groups in Portugal. I moved into sports leadership in 1992, and became president of the Portuguese Football League in 2010. I was elected as president of the Portuguese Football Federation in December 2011.

How did your move into sports leadership happen?

I started out as a player with FC Porto's basketball section in the 1960s, and I continued to play until I began professional life. At the beginning of the 1990s, the club decided to close the basketball section – but together with a group of friends and former team-mates, I decided to try to do something to keep the section alive. We went to the club president, proposed our knowledge and

experience to take care of the section, and that was when I entered into FC Porto's management. Eventually, I took on a variety of other functions. These included marketing activities, and I created a company to manage commercial issues. I joined the Porto management board in 2000, and stayed with the club until 2010, when I became president of the Portuguese Football League.

Did you ever imagine one day that you would be at the helm of Portuguese football?

No, not really. I gained considerable satisfaction as a Porto management board member, especially when, in 2003 and 2004, we won the UEFA Cup and then the Champions League. Overseeing the project to finance the construction of Estádio do Dragão in Porto was also a memorable moment. I felt proud to part of this success, because it reflected the hard work that we had all done.

I never thought of getting involved at national level – I was working for a club, and when I took the decision to leave FC Porto, my first thought was actually to reduce my involvement in football. But I was asked by several clubs to put myself forward as a candidate for the league presidency, and an idea gradually emerged that one day I might be capable of leading the football federation. This came to be, because in 2011 I was elected to that post.



Fernando Gomes looks to the sky at the Stade de France on 10 July 2016, as Portugal claim their first-ever international title.



**Now let's go further back.
Were you a fan of football as
a young child?**

Yes, indeed. I've loved sport and football all my life. I remember that at a very early age, when I was four or five years old, I used to go to watch FC Porto with my father – so, from the beginning, I had an emotional link with the club. I recall, as a young boy, listening to football on the radio. Porto won the league title in 1959, and I was always keen to know how the team was doing when they played away from home. I also clearly remember the first time that I saw a match on TV – the European Cup final in 1962, when another Portuguese team, Benfica from Lisbon, beat Real Madrid 5-3 in a wonderful match in Amsterdam. I remember the black-and-white images vividly. Of course, I also fondly recall the happy days of leaving school and playing football in the street with my friends.

**Did you have any favourite
players as a youngster?**

The players in the Porto team that won the title in 1959 were all my heroes, especially Virgílio and Hernâni, but I also very much appreciated two players from our great rivals, Benfica: Mário Coluna and Eusébio, who were in the team that won two successive European Cups at the start of the 1960s. They were fantastic players. It was special as a ten-year-old boy watching Eusébio and Madrid's Alfredo Di Stéfano parade their skills in that final in 1962.

**Let's move onto EURO 2016 – it
must have been unforgettable
for you, both as a president and
a Portugal fan ...**

What comes to my mind immediately are the fantastic moments that I was fortunate to live – for the first time, my country, which loves football so much, won a EURO title. It was something special; you never can forget that. I think of what happened in Paris on 10 July, and in Portugal the following day, when we were greeted in Lisbon by thousands of people. It was truly wonderful!

**When did you start believing that
Portugal could win the title?**

Before leaving Portugal for France, I remember that our coach, Fernando Santos, said that we would return home *[after the final]* on 11 July. And although it



Presse Sports

was clear that we were not the favourites, we believed him because he had such confidence in what he did. The moment that I then really began believing was when we beat Croatia – one of the best teams in the tournament. From then on, I started thinking that something special could happen.

**Tell us your exact emotions
when the final whistle was
blown ...**

I looked to the sky and remembered my parents, particularly my mother. My father died when I was 13. We didn't come from a rich family, and it was not easy for her to bring up three sons on her own.

**What do you think were the
reasons for Portugal's triumph?**

Fernando Santos created a fantastic team spirit and got the best out of the players, especially in the final, when Cristiano Ronaldo had to leave the field through injury. In Portugal, we say that when something bad happens to you, you generate new things to forget the negatives. At that moment, when all the players realised that Cristiano couldn't continue, they understood that they needed to pull together even more strongly. It was a key moment. Other things gave us confidence – our amazing fans in Portugal, and the Portuguese community in France. They carried the team along, greeting us when we came back from matches, even at 5.30 in the morning when we returned from Marseille after our victory over Poland in the quarter-final. I won't forget that loyalty.

Eusébio, one of Fernando Gomes's first football heroes, takes on Giovanni Trapattoni in the 1963 final of the European Champion Clubs' Cup, in which Milan denied Benfica a third consecutive win.

**"What we believe (...) is
that having success at
youth level gets you closer
to winning at senior level.
Look at our squad in
France. Most of them had
a lot of experience at
youth level."**

When you watch Portugal play, you're sat with your counterparts from the opposing association – some of whom are friends and colleagues in the UEFA Executive Committee. How tough is it not to celebrate too much when your team scores?

It's obviously not easy to stay calm, and it can depend on your personality – you never lose your passion, but you must always show respect for your colleagues and the opposing team. For example, when we beat Croatia after extra time at the EURO, Davor Šuker [*Croatian FA president and Executive Committee colleague*] was especially gracious and shook my hand warmly. We understood each other's feelings. We respected each other. It's fantastic that we can all do so at such a moment.

What's the best match that you've ever seen?

It's obviously the EURO final, because I was so involved! Other matches come to mind, of course – the 1962 European Cup final, as I've already said; Portugal's fightback from three goals down to beat North Korea 5-3 in the 1966 World Cup in England; Porto's win against Bayern Munich in the 1987 European Cup final; the 1964 Cup Winners' Cup final, which went to a replay, when João Morais gave Sporting Clube de Portugal victory over

MTK Budapest with a goal directly from a corner kick; Portugal coming back from 2-0 down to beat England 3-2 at EURO 2000 ... But there was nothing like the final in Paris.

Are you still thrilled by the atmosphere, by the buzz, when you walk into a stadium?

Certainly, and I like to go with the team to the dressing-room area and onto the pitch before matches, so I can link this buzz with the match that I am going to watch. But I can tell you that this buzz changes when the match kicks off. I'm then concentrated and calm.

Which modern players have left an impression on you?

I'd like to take the opportunity to highlight players from my country, because we are privileged to have footballers of the calibre of Cristiano Ronaldo, Ricardinho in futsal, Cláudia Neto in women's football, and Madjer, a beach soccer world champion. Portugal is lucky to have players like this, who are among the best in the world in their respective football sectors.

Is there any other person that you've met who has made a lasting impression on you?

Sir Alex Ferguson. I have great respect for him, because of the work he did as a coach at Manchester United, and the →



Sir Alex Ferguson, the technician who, to this day, has made the greatest mark on Fernando Gomes.



Above: The Dragons' victory in the 2003/04 UEFA Champions League was a highlight of Fernando Gomes's tenure at FC Porto, from 2000 to 2010.

Right: For Fernando Gomes, the legacy created by Cristiano Ronaldo in Portuguese football extends far beyond the pitch.



relationships that he established within his work. He left a considerable mark on me.

In the European Under-17 Championship, Portugal have played in seven finals and won six titles; at Under-19 level, they have reached eight finals and won two titles. Is there an explanation as to why it took Portugal so long to win a EURO? Why do you think that youth success can be so hard to repeat at senior level?

What we believe, based on our experience, is that having success at youth level gets you closer to winning at senior level. It was like that with our golden generation that were two times Under-20 world champions [in 1989 and 1991] and reached the EURO 2004 final and the 2006 World Cup semi-finals. And it was like that with the European champions. Look at our squad in France. Most of them had a lot of experience at youth level, having been either Under-17 European champions in 2003, Under-20 World Cup finalists in 2011 or Under-21 finalists in 2015. The vast majority had more than 50 caps for Portugal before arriving in our main national team. For Europe it may have been a surprise that we won the European Championship but most of our opponents knew our players and all their earlier successes. They have played many finals; they have been at top level for many years. I also think that better organisation and

leadership, like the one Fernando Santos gave us, made the difference between success and getting close to success.

In Cristiano Ronaldo, Portugal has one of the best – if not the best – players in the world. How does his presence help the development and profile of Portuguese football away from the pitch?

In every way. He is a source of inspiration to all our young generations of players; he is a leader of our squad and an example for all our countrymen to follow. That example is based on honesty, work, generosity and talent. I think it's fair to acknowledge that his legacy is unique and drives our younger generations to follow in his footsteps.

Delving into the UEFA records, we find that Spain have proved a stumbling block for Portuguese hopes at Futsal EUROs (Spain have beaten Portugal six times in knockout matches or in the group stage). Would you hope to avoid your neighbours this time around?

I believe, like in football, that we have to concentrate on ourselves rather than on our opponents or possible opponents. We also know that success at this level comes from hard work, organisation and experience. We are doing our groundwork; we will be prepared to face, with ambition and respect, any national team that comes our way.

What will be your expectations in Slovenia?

We always have the same ambition: to win every game we play. We have an enormous task ahead of us given the strength of national teams like Russia, Spain, Italy, Ukraine and Azerbaijan, but we also know that an equally enormous reward is at stake in Slovenia.

How are you developing futsal in Portugal?

Futsal has always been a central part of our development plan. We increased the number of our players and national teams, male and female, we rebuilt our competitions, we attracted new sponsors, and we took futsal into our communities through social responsibility programmes. Also, our clubs kept investing in futsal, lifting our country to excellency. We will continue to raise the bar by building our national team facilities in the City of Football in Oeiras. That is going to be a major step forward.

Portugal qualified for their first Women's EURO in the Netherlands. What sort of boost will this give women's football in Portugal?

Women's football has been one of our priorities these last years. We believe this is part of a virtuous circle, having more than doubled the number of female players, reorganised our national teams and our competitions, from the base to

Carolina Mendes opens the scoring for Portugal against Scotland at Women's EURO 2017, helping the team to secure their first points at the tournament.





Getty Images

The significance of Eder's goal in the 109th minute of the EURO 2016 final was apparent to all.

"People look up to us. We need to set an example every day through values, principles and actions. If we don't, we won't be worthy as an example to our fans."

the top, and sent our national team to their first-ever Women's EURO. At the same time, their participation prompted more girls to start playing football and served as a reward to all our partners. We believe we will be a better country as a result, with more gender equality and integration, and better health indicators.

Do you take pride in your role on the UEFA Executive Committee?

I'm very proud of what we are doing because we are following the right path in our efforts to defend the game and its values, promoting inclusion and fighting match-fixing and racism, and being transparent. I hope that I am helping and adding value to the committee's work.

What are the greatest dangers facing football in Europe in the near future?

I believe that the biggest challenge for football is to answer our own social responsibilities. People look up to us. We need to set an example every day through values, principles and actions. We have to walk the walk. In other words, we need to fight racism, intolerance, corruption and violence. We have to promote social inclusion, gender equality and fair play besides being a contributor to more environmentally sustainable

societies and richer economies. I believe we have to relentlessly fight match-fixing. If we don't, we won't be worthy as an example to our fans.

What would you wish for football in the future?

I would like to see football showing an example by helping to improve the world, because it has an important social dimension in protecting and defending the correct values. I'd like more women to have the opportunity to be involved in the game. And football can play a great role in supporting migrants and refugees. I definitely feel that our sport can contribute in a significant way to creating a more inclusive and peaceful society.

And finally, what do you do to switch off from football?

My professional life meant that I had to move from Porto to Lisbon, but my family ties still bring me back to Porto. I have two granddaughters, and they are there. Because I can't be with them during the week, I look forward to the times when I can go back and see them. Otherwise, I would say that sport is actually my hobby as well. I'm interested in all sports, and I'm always watching sport in some capacity. ⚽

NO LET-UP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DOPING

UEFA has enhanced its anti-doping programme for 2017/18 with a platform and app where players, coaches and team staff can report their doping suspicions.

UEFA's anti-doping programme aims to protect the integrity of European football and provide clean athletes in all its competitions with a level playing field.

Through the use of the athlete biological passport, advice given by anti-doping experts and the support of Europe's national anti-doping organisations (NADOs), UEFA delivers a comprehensive, intelligence-led testing programme.

In order to gather additional intelligence, UEFA expanded its integrity reporting platform and app at the start of this season to allow players, coaches, team doctors and other team staff to report suspected anti-doping rule violations.

The reporting platform and app have already been successfully used for a number of years to fight match-fixing. UEFA

recognises the crucial role that whistle-blowing can also play in preventing doping and wants to give informers the opportunity to come forward to report their information in a confidential and secure way.

UEFA encourages anyone who has witnessed an anti-doping rule violation being committed, or who has reasonable grounds to believe that doping has taken place in football, to get in touch.

Informers can provide their contact details if they wish, or access a secure postbox where information can be exchanged anonymously. The confidential reporting platform and app are available in seven languages (English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish), allowing users to report in whichever language they feel most comfortable.

The integrity platform can be accessed on UEFA.com or by means of the integrity

app that can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play.

Alongside testing and investigations, prevention is also a crucial aspect of UEFA's anti-doping programme. All teams taking part in the final tournaments of UEFA's youth final competitions attend special anti-doping education sessions given by a UEFA anti-doping expert. The sessions are designed specifically for youth players and highlight the consequences of taking drugs, including the risks to the players' health and careers. Topics covered include the WADA Prohibited List, the doping control process, players' rights and responsibilities, and where to go for advice and support.

By giving young players the full picture and making them aware of all the risks that doping entails, UEFA hopes they will continue to practise the values of clean sport and remain clean throughout their careers. 🌐



TAKING COACH EDUCATION INTO THE FUTURE

Excellent football coaches rarely emerge from nowhere – rather, expert guidance is required to nurture coaches and give them the appropriate skills to foster great football players. Those throughout Europe who are responsible for ‘coaching the coaches’ gathered in Belfast from 16 to 19 October to debate and analyse how best to support this crucial profession.

UEFA’s Coach Education Conference is held every two years, and reviews developments in the sector – fulfilling UEFA’s mission to monitor and foster the game’s evolution at a technical level. The European body bases this mission on the premise that well-trained coaches help produce better players and teams, which ultimately leads to an overall improvement in the quality of football across the continent.

The Irish Football Association (IFA) were warm and welcoming hosts of an event designed to help each European national association in their work to design, deliver and sustain effective coach education for their own domestic context.

A key focal point of the conference was a review of UEFA’s Coaching Convention, launched in 1998 and seen as a cornerstone of the development and promotion of coach education. The convention, which has been signed by 53 UEFA member associations to date, has raised coaching standards, promoted the credibility of the coaching profession and paved the way for the free movement of qualified coaches within Europe. Thanks to its existence, around 200,000 coaches across Europe have a UEFA-endorsed coaching qualification that allows them to practise their profession.

“It is certain that the convention has raised the level of coach education in our member associations throughout Europe,” says UEFA’s head of football education services, Frank Ludolph. “There is also much stronger recognition of the coaching profession, and of the status of the coach.”

The convention has also been lauded for its contribution to European integration. Its provisions guarantee the mutual recognition of coaching qualifications. “This means that coaches can go from



one national association to another to work,” Ludolph explains. “It means freedom of movement, and this is very much in line with European Union jurisdiction.” In addition, UEFA’s recent introduction of specialist goalkeeper and futsal coach education programmes, including coaching licences in both sectors, are reflected in the convention.

Not like learning at school

The gathering in Belfast pointed the way forward for the convention and coach education activities generally. Leeds Beckett University in England recently carried out a study and identified three crucial priorities that UEFA is now putting into practice. These priorities are reality-based learning – whereby coaches should be educated about the everyday realities of the profession – the development of coach educators and further education to further develop UEFA licence holders’ competences as football coaches. At the conference in Belfast, the associations

were encouraged to maximise these three areas when designing their coach education programmes in future, through the adoption of principles and practices of adult learning. This reflects the belief that coach education should not be like learning in school and that coach educators and coaches are people who will derive benefit from, among other things, meeting constant challenges, relishing engagement and decision-making, effectively turning theory into practice and working purposefully with others.

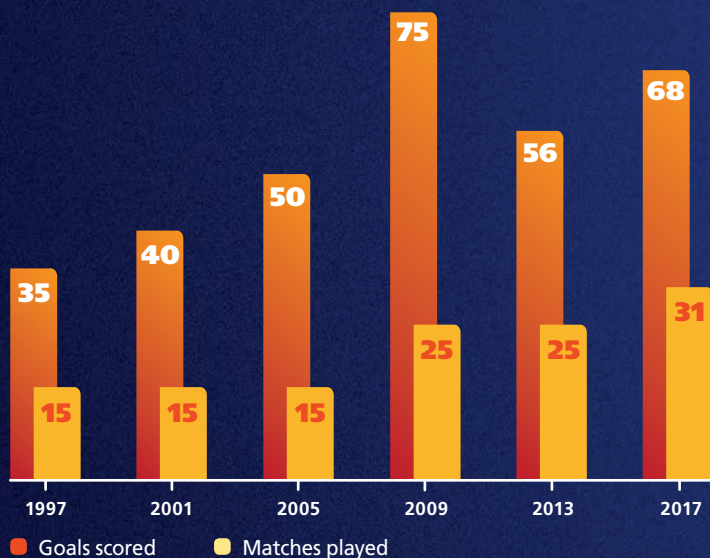
UEFA’s managing director of technical development, Ioan Lupescu, gave an important message to the coach educators before they left Belfast – namely, that their work was vital in helping to take European football forward: “Future professional coaches are benefitting from high-quality coach education,” he said. “The educator is crucial. This key technician needs to be empowered.” 🧠



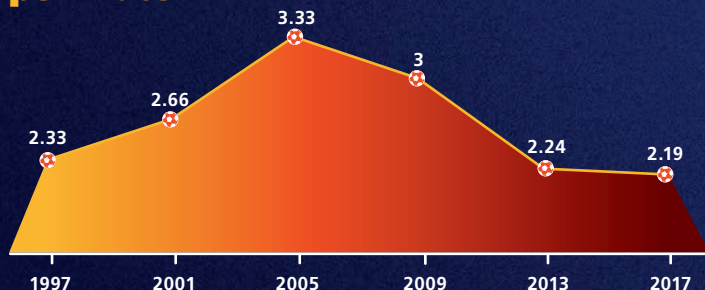
GOALS: WHO, HOW, WHEN

A total of 68 goals were scored at Women's EURO 2017. Here, we break down the numbers.

Total goals and matches per tournament



Average goals per match



Top scorers



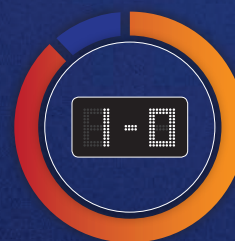
JODIE TAYLOR
ENGLAND **5**
0 assists - 328 minutes played

VIVIANNE MIEDEMA
NETHERLANDS **4**
0 assists - 536 minutes played

LIEKE MARTENS
NETHERLANDS **3**
2 assists - 525 minutes played

SHERIDA SPITSE
NETHERLANDS **3**
1 assist - 540 minutes played

First goal wins?



88%
of games with goals
were won by the team
that scored first



Goals scored from set plays



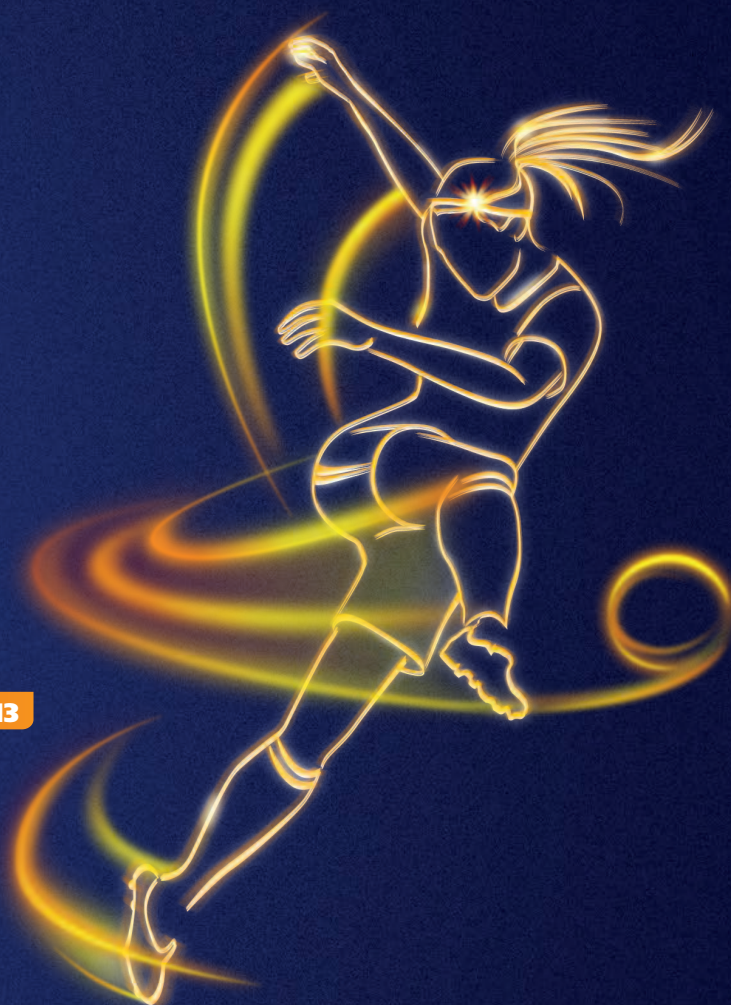
22 Total set-play goals



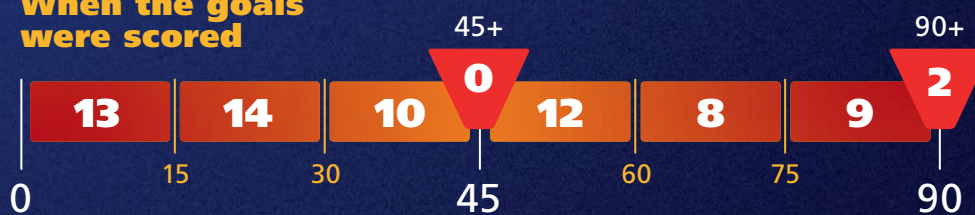
Goals scored in open play




46 Total open-play goals



When the goals were scored





"In football, being able to listen is as important as patience, as important as confidence, as important as respect. The players should learn this responsibility, this professionalism, from their coaches."

Getty Images

MIRCEA LUCESCU

'A GREAT COACH IS A COACH WHO HAS DOUBTS WITHOUT LETTING ANYONE ELSE KNOW ABOUT THEM'

Accolades are nice. But sometimes they are not enough. It would be a shame to condense more than four decades of coaching into a rosary of titles, coach of the year awards and appearances on UEFA Champions League benches. On the other hand, it would perhaps be churlish to ignore six Romanian league titles as a right-side attacker and 70 caps for Romania, including three wearing the captain's armband at the 1970 World Cup.

Coaching achievements in Romania, Italy, Turkey, Russia and Ukraine reached their zenith with eight league titles, six domestic cups and seven Ukrainian super cups with Shakhtar Donetsk, along with a historic victory against Werder Bremen in the last-ever UEFA Cup final, played in Istanbul in 2009. However, when Mircea Lucescu took time out from his current duties as Turkey's national team coach to visit UEFA's headquarters in Nyon, it was not to bask in such achievements but to share his wealth of experience with UEFA's managing director of technical development, Ioan Lupescu, and a cosmopolitan audience of would-be coaches at one of UEFA's Pro licence student exchange courses.

Mircea, the first thing I would like to ask you is how your coaching career started.

It started with a misfortune that became an opportunity. I didn't intend to become a coach. But there was a huge earthquake that killed thousands of people in Bucharest. I was playing at Dinamo at the time and that earthquake destroyed my home. We were not professionals. We were paid as amateurs by different institutions. That is how the communist system worked back then. At the same time, I was studying hard for a career in economics, specialising in external commerce, hoping to become one of the very few students selected to work for a company that dealt with commerce

beyond the country's borders, or at an embassy. My aim was to find a way of leaving the country. As a youth player, my first match outside the country had been in Turkey and I saw that the reality of capitalism was not how it was described by Romanian newspapers or television. I wanted to travel, to learn about different cultures.

After the earthquake, I moved to Hunedoara, in Transylvania, to play for a team belonging to a steel plant. The team had financial strength and good salaries. I had spare time to repair the house in Bucharest that had been destroyed by the earthquake. I was 30 years old, I played for the national team and I had some experience. So I also started working with children. In Hunedoara, children had nothing else to do but play football. I loved sharing my experience with them, telling them stories about the matches I played and so on. I showed a lot of passion and I managed to get some of them so interested and passionate about football themselves that five years later, when I became the national team coach, seven of my players were from this group of kids.

Is that what persuaded you that you had the qualities to succeed as a coach?

We do the most difficult job. I don't think there's a harder job out there. And I'm mostly referring to the impact it has on your mind, the passion that is required and the fact that you constantly go through a huge variety of feelings. That is why I

believe that a good coach should, first of all, be a very balanced person. I quickly realised that there were talented players everywhere and that what mattered most was for them to be guided, educated and organised by someone who is passionate about the sport and who manages to pass some of that passion on to the players. I think this is one of the most important qualities I had, and one that has helped me tremendously everywhere I have gone throughout my career.

At Corvinul, in Hunedoara, I was a player and coach. Slowly, older players who were only there to get a salary were replaced by talented and passionate players that I discovered. People started realising that I was able to make a difference for the team, and I did. The communist party made me return to Bucharest and within a year I was a player, a club coach, the national team coach and head of the school of coaches, among other things. And it was all because of the passion and love I had for football.

But passion is not enough, surely?

You need to love football tremendously because that will enable you to get through the toughest moments of your career. Because we all have many hard moments. If you don't love football, if you are doing it just to make money, this is not the job for you. Your love of football will make you the first to bounce back after a loss and it will make you able to motivate your team and give your players hope. →

The second most important thing is knowing the game and being able to speak about it with players, with journalists, with everybody, including the [club's] president. There are a lot of coaches who hide. They don't speak to the press, they try to stay under the radar. No. You should be able to talk about the game and give an interview with a smile even under the most difficult circumstances.

A coach should also be very organised – able to organise the team efficiently and plan training sessions and matches. And able to analyse matches and find ways of extracting positive aspects even from the worst games. A coach should also learn to treat players equally, whether they are superstars or debutants. If he doesn't manage to do this, he will face difficulties. Players can be leaders in popularity, but the true leader is the coach.

When you were getting started, did you have any role models in the coaching profession?

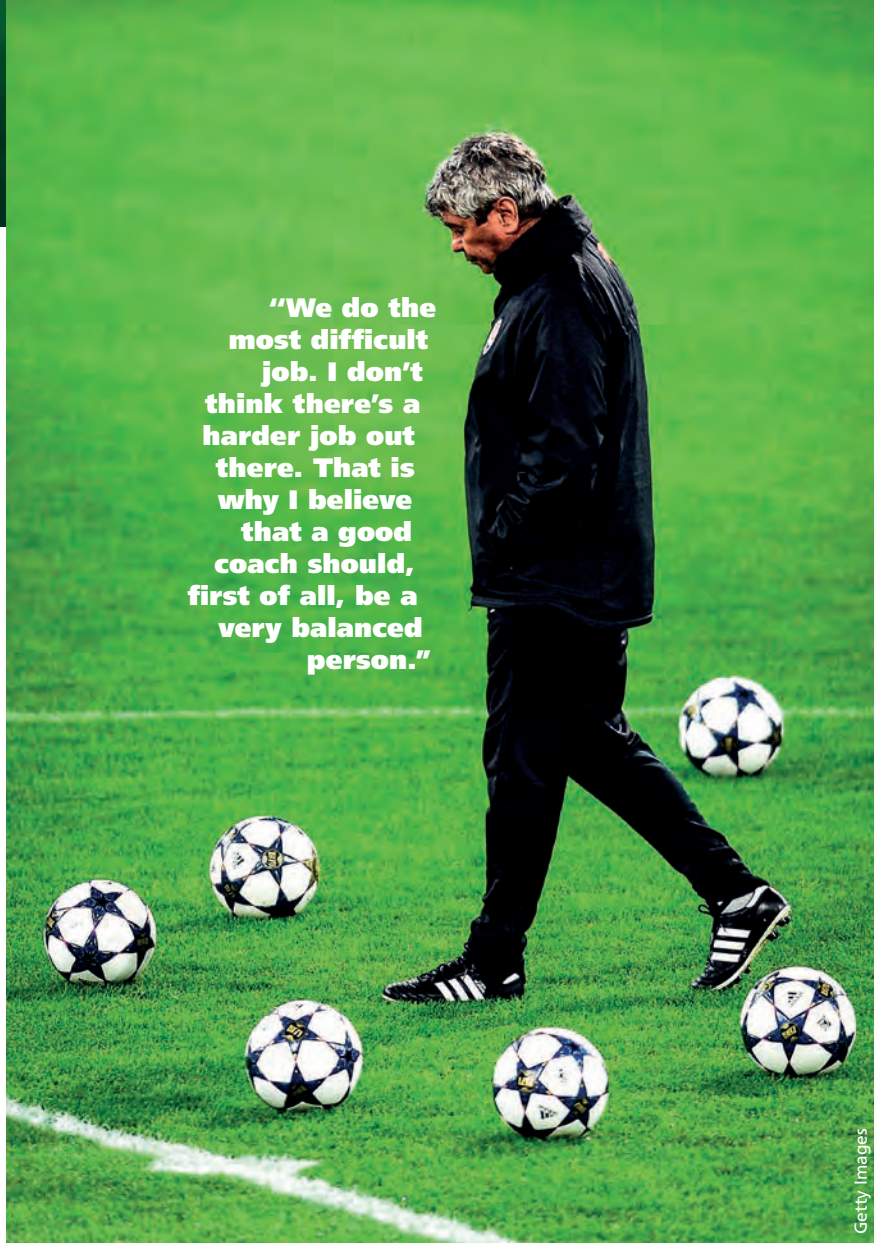
Don't forget that in eastern Europe there was not a culture of individual values. It was difficult to stand out from the crowd. I became so popular that I was punished by the communist party – sacked as national team coach after we had beaten Austria 4-0. But I would mention Angelo Niculescu, who was our coach when we went to the 1970 World Cup in Mexico. He was very calm and paid great attention to everything that was going on around him. Even though I didn't work with him for very long, I also learned a lot from Ștefan Kovács. He taught me what it meant to be a citizen of the world.

But I think I learned more from reading biographies of great leaders and, in my younger days, exchanging football magazines with people in different countries and reading publications like *El Gráfico* from Argentina, *A Bola*, France Football, *L'Équipe* and *World Soccer*.

Did this help when you left Romania in 1990?

I went to Pisa because the president [of the club] wanted me. It was an amazing experience, coming from communist Romania to a team where everything was very evolved, very well organised. At that time, I still couldn't understand how it was possible for people to actually make a living playing football. When I had to leave Pisa I didn't know what to do. I talked to Porto and Standard Liège. I also talked to

"We do the most difficult job. I don't think there's a harder job out there. That is why I believe that a good coach should, first of all, be a very balanced person."



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my wife and she didn't want to leave Italy. So we let fate decide for us. We made some notes with a bunch of Italian clubs on them, with the idea of pulling one out of a hat to see where we could go next. But one of the notes went missing: the one that said 'Brescia'. I couldn't find it anywhere. The next day I found it on the sole of my shoe and figured it was an omen. I spent five years at Brescia, clinching promotion to Serie A twice.

I also learned something important. Serie A was actually a championship involving some very good [club] presidents who led a lot of people and companies. The best specialists in the Italian championship were not the coaches. They were presidents like Andrea Agnelli, Silvio Berlusconi, Vittorio Cecchi Gori ... guys who understood relationships between people, who led people. These were guys with whom you were able to discuss psychological and mental issues. Because organising groups works the

same way in industry, in commerce and in football. These are people who can help you evaluate players' potential. They can help you with an idea; they can give input when it comes to organising your formation. But they should never interfere to the extent of telling you what to do. If they interfere once, it's all over.

Serie B was the division of the coaches. That was where tactics mattered; that was where the great games were. It was so intense. That experience helped me a lot. I worked hard at Brescia, and worked a lot with young players. Italian football played a huge role in my career. That is where I first learned what it really meant to be a coach.

How important is the relationship between the coach and the club's president or owner?

Players may come and go, but the rapport you establish with the club's president is

essential. I had good relationships with Luigi Corioni at Brescia, Massimo Moratti at Inter, Rinat Akhmetov at Shakhtar – part of the reason I spent 12 years there – Faruk Süren at Galatasaray, and Serdar Bilgili at Beşiktaş. You need the ability to establish these relationships. Unfortunately, when I joined Zenit I had no direct contact with the president in order to make my thoughts heard the way they should have been. This was the hardest thing for me. If you don't share the same philosophy, conflicts can quickly arise.

You mention the word 'philosophy'. How important is it for a coach to have one?

When I was a player-coach at 30 years old in Hunedoara, I basically had the same philosophy as I have now. It just became clearer and better because of performances and experiences over the years. The most important thing in the world is the way we evolve as people. And I think that's about curiosity. It is curiosity that makes us different from people who lived 5,000 years ago. Football is no exception, it transforms every day. Technological innovations,



"Even though I didn't work with him for very long, I also learned a lot from Ștefan Kovács. He taught me what it meant to be a citizen of the world."

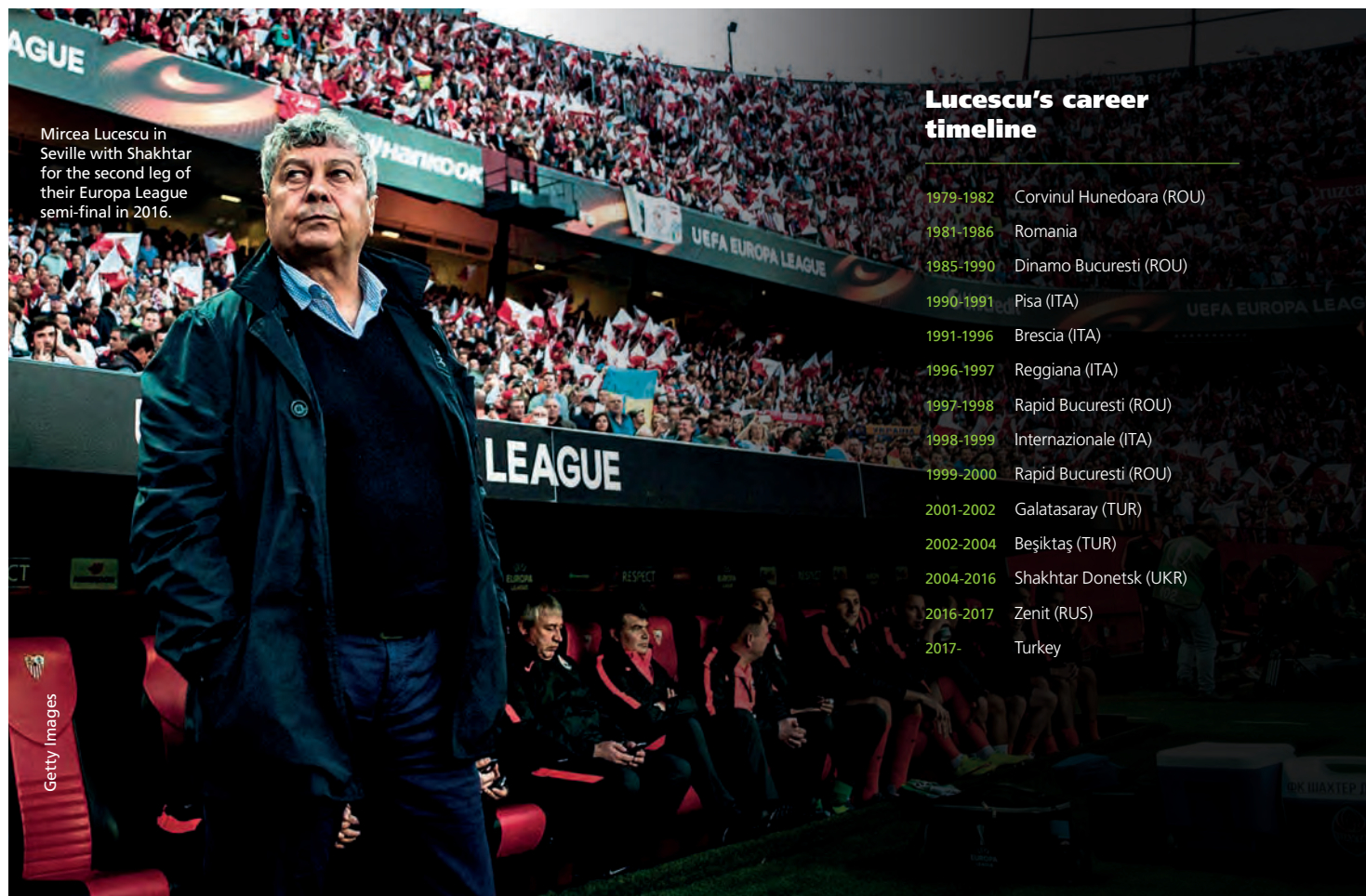
for example, will force the coaches of the future to act differently.

That is why it was important for me to change countries and clubs. Not too much, because I am very conservative. I get attached to people, places; I get attached to history and many other things. But the changes helped me because I had to adapt each time to new places, a new culture. Because you are the one who needs to change and adapt. I always had to learn new things and to bring new things to the lives of the people who surrounded me.

Other than that, my philosophy remained the same. Coaches are different. There are coaches who build teams, pragmatic coaches, opportunist coaches ... Each has his own style. Philosophy is personal.

How do you communicate your philosophy to your players?

Education is key. My first concern is to explain my philosophy and to educate my players, to show them a certain kind of behaviour. Even as a young coach travelling with the team abroad, I made →



Mircea Lucescu in Seville with Shakhtar for the second leg of their Europa League semi-final in 2016.

Lucescu's career timeline

1979-1982	Corvinul Hunedoara (ROU)
1981-1986	Romania
1985-1990	Dinamo Bucuresti (ROU)
1990-1991	Pisa (ITA)
1991-1996	Brescia (ITA)
1996-1997	Reggiana (ITA)
1997-1998	Rapid Bucuresti (ROU)
1998-1999	Internazionale (ITA)
1999-2000	Rapid Bucuresti (ROU)
2001-2002	Galatasaray (TUR)
2002-2004	Beşiktaş (TUR)
2004-2016	Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR)
2016-2017	Zenit (RUS)
2017-	Turkey



Getty Images

the players visit museums. I had Brazilian players who would try to run out immediately through another door. I always found ways of bringing them back in. I had this power to convince them. In Hunedoara, I used to take the players to evening courses and waited for them outside to make sure they didn't escape. Why? Because I realised how important intelligence is: how important it is for players to be able to listen and understand. In football, being able to listen is as important as patience, as important as confidence, as important as respect. The players should learn this responsibility, this professionalism, from their coaches.

"When everyone is celebrating, the coach should be the first to think about the next step."

"On Sunday, your interventions can be intuitive, but everything you do during the week, the way you prepare, plays a decisive role in how the game plays out."

At Shakhtar, we had players from places in Brazil where school was almost non-existent. They knew the bare minimum. They signed contracts and started getting paid. They bought diamonds, watches, cars. I slowly started to educate them, discussing things with honesty. This is linked to discipline. I never force discipline on the players. I prefer it to come naturally. I always explain to each player that his freedom stops where somebody else's freedom begins and that what he does has an influence on others. With proper education, these people will be grateful to you for their entire lives. Young players arrive with a certain temperament and we have the job of moulding them into great people with good characters. Once they grow, you need to transform them into personalities, into role models. From these personalities, leaders are born. Leaders are not necessarily people with great attributes; they are people with great achievements. They are people who can pull others behind them and push them towards success. They need to be passionate, they need to push others to go further.

How do you reconcile your philosophy and the long-term education of players with the need to produce results?

Of course, without results, any philosophy is dead. As a coach, you need to develop a playing system that depends on the qualities of the players you have, along with a series of other factors. My concept is based on the way the team is distributed over the playing area, the techniques of progression throughout the game, the manner of disarming the opposition and, only as a fourth aspect, the game system. If all this is well organised and well controlled, the result should be positive. There is no way it will not succeed in the long run. But coaches need time. It is precious. But it is difficult to obtain.

One of the other essential qualities of a successful coach is the ability to read the game and make decisions that will lead the team to victory. In many cases this is intuition. But the philosopher Henri Bergson said that intuition is the instinct of intelligence. So if you are intuitive, it's because you have accumulated knowledge that allows you to make a decision. I have won many games with an intuitive tactical move. But I have also had moments when I have sent on a player and lost the game. On Sunday, your interventions can be intuitive, but everything you do during the week, the way you prepare, plays a decisive role in how the game plays out. I remember reading *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, the Chinese general from 2,500 years ago. He said, if you know yourself and your opponent, there's an 80 to 90% chance you'll win. If you know yourself, but you don't know your opponent, you're halfway there. You can either win or lose. But if you don't know your opponent's potential, you will lose. So games are not



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decided by a momentary decision. You need thorough preparation. He also said something else which, applied to football, translates to the fact that the team that is better prepared will win. The team that wants to win. The team prepared to make bigger sacrifices. The team with the best substitutes. That is the team that will win. But all this depends on the coach. The coach should influence all these things. 2,500 years ago, people had the same way of thinking. We don't change. Only the level of civilisation changed; we are more civilised now.

Earlier on, you mentioned that a coach has to be a balanced person. Is that an easy thing to achieve?

When everyone is celebrating, the coach should be the first to think about the next step. When everyone is sad and with their guard down, the coach is the one who should motivate the players to start working again. Your experience is your best help with this – the need to find the right moment to say something, to

encourage or to criticise. A great coach is a coach who has doubts without letting anyone else know about them. A great coach is not one who is certain about things; he's the one who is not sure, but never lets it show. He needs to inspire confidence, and he needs to have a positive attitude and great optimism. Of course, it all depends on what the coach builds up in training, during match analysis and so on. This is what gives players confidence. A recipe for what you should do during a crisis doesn't exist. You should have already built a certain relationship with the players and management even before such a crisis occurs, which would allow you to get past their emotions. Football is a game of emotions, with a great emotional impact on everyone involved. Everybody has an opinion; everybody thinks they know football and understand it. The coach needs to keep an open mind and a clear head. The coach must never make the mistake of overestimating a win or underestimating a loss. They are two sides of the same coin. Both should be treated

in a balanced manner. This comes with experience. Knowledge has less to do with it than experience.

How have you maintained the stamina to coach for so many years without a break?

Coaches' lives are not relaxed. We live at 100% intensity. Over almost 50 years at the highest level, without a sabbatical, without a break, I have learned to compensate for the stress of the profession by loving things outside the game. I have always tried to strike a balance, because otherwise you lose your mind. At the end of a season, the players' physical fatigue passes after three or four days. They go on holiday to the seaside, in the mountains. Coaches need a lot more time to rest than anyone else. Because every day, every week, at every moment you have to bring something fresh, something that catches attention and doesn't become routine. Something that helps the people around you produce great performances. That is why I recommend you don't let your profession take over your life. 🌱

Mircea Lucescu shares his wealth of experience with would-be coaches at a UEFA Pro licence student exchange course on 2 November.



ANDORRA

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BAD BEHAVIOUR AT GRASSROOTS AND FUTSAL MATCHES

XAVI BONET



The Andorran Football Federation has launched a zero-tolerance campaign to tackle abusive language and bad behaviour among spectators at grassroots football and futsal matches.

Backed by the Andorran government, this new initiative includes a specific protocol that will be enforced at all grassroots matches around the country.

In the event of bad behaviour among spectators, the referee will stop the match and call the coaches and delegates of the two teams over to alert them to the situation. If the bad behaviour continues, a second warning will be issued. If this second warning does not suffice, the match will be abandoned and the relevant competition authorities will decide on the final score and any additional measures that need to be taken.



AUSTRIA

www.oefb.at

FRANCO FODA NAMED NEW NATIONAL TEAM COACH

CARMEN REDL



Franco Foda was unanimously appointed as the new Austrian national team coach at an extraordinary meeting of the Austrian Football Association board on 30 October.

The 51-year old German is an acknowledged expert in Austrian football. He coached SK Sturm Graz for many years, winning the Austrian championship and Austrian Cup, and qualifying twice for the UEFA Europa League, before taking the helm at German club 1. FC Kaiserslautern.

As a player with SK Sturm Graz, Foda won two Austrian championships and one

Austrian Cup, as well as participating in the UEFA Champions League three times. He had previously lifted the German Cup with Kaiserslautern and Bayer 04 Leverkusen, and made two appearances for the German national team.

"The fact that Franco Foda was unanimously chosen demonstrates his standing as an expert of the game," said Leo Windtner, president of the Austrian Football Association. "We are delighted to have appointed him," added Peter Schöttel, sporting director.



Gepa-pictures

AZERBAIJAN

www.affa.az

VOLUNTEERS REWARDED FOR THEIR EFFORTS

NUBAR AGHAZADA

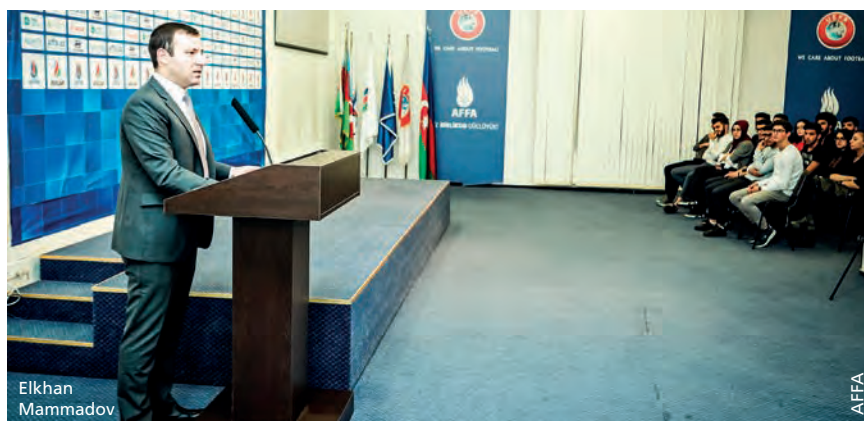
 In recognition of their efforts, the volunteers who helped out at the AFFA Azerbaijan national team's home matches in their 2018 World Cup qualifying campaign were invited to the headquarters of the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA), where they were presented with certificates.

Speaking at the event, the AFFA general secretary, Elkhan Mammadov, said that volunteering in Azerbaijan was gaining strength both in football and elsewhere. It was the AFFA that had introduced the concept for the U-17 Women's World Cup in 2012.

Two years later it organised the International Football Volunteering Forum, which had famous Italian World Cup winner Gianluca Zambrotta as the event ambassador and attracted participants

from far and wide. Mammadov highlighted the excellent work performed by volunteers and their important role in ensuring the successful organisation of the national

team's home World Cup qualifiers. He thanked and congratulated them all for their valuable contributions and wished them every success for the future.



Elkhan
Mammadov

AFFA

BELARUS

www.bff.by

DEVELOPING SCHOOL FOOTBALL

GLEB STAKHOVSKY

 The Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) has launched a schools football project entitled 'Football for all', which will see football tournaments organised for boys and girls across the country. Every town, village and school is invited to run a tournament, for which the BFF will provide the necessary equipment. The project has the backing of the ministry of education, local municipalities and football clubs.

Developing schools football is one of the top priorities of the BFF's grassroots department. Through the 'Football for all' project, the federation aims to improve the quality and increase the quantity of schools' competitions. It has chosen to target children in the 8–11 age group as it believes this to be the best time to get children involved in football.

The first tournament was held in the city of Brest in early October, with 40 boys' and 40 girls' teams applying to take part. To ensure that the emphasis is on the

enjoyment of playing football rather than on playing to win, match results are not recorded and there are no winners or losers. Every child who takes part receives a memento from the BFF – boys are given medals and girls receive T-shirts. In addition, all participating schools are given footballs and shirts.

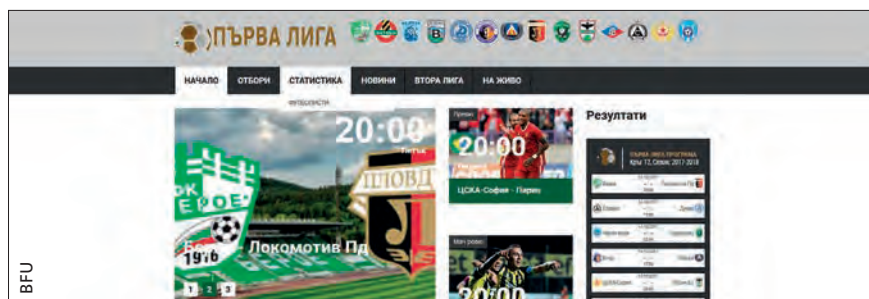
Tournaments are already under way in various parts of the country, with applications to organise yet more coming in thick and fast. From what we have seen so far, the new initiative is proving a real success, and the benefits are already starting to show.



BFF

A NEW WEBSITE FOR THE A LEAGUE

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA DEPARTMENT



The Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) is pleased to announce the launch of its online platform dedicated to the Bulgarian A League: www.fpleague.bg. The new website contains all the latest news, statistics

and results, and allows fans to follow the events of every single match in real time. The project has been funded by the FIFA Forward development programme.

Each Bulgarian A League club has a separate section on the website, where

fans can access information on results as well as individual and overall team performances. The line-ups, team data and individual player information are generated by the 'e-championship', launched by the BFU in 2014.

By accessing the e-championship, A league clubs can modify and add information relating to their team and individual players.

The new platform will be useful for everyone interested in Bulgarian top-flight football: journalists, the fans and the clubs themselves. Future plans include the addition of a video highlights section, where fans will be able to catch up with all the action, and the development of an English language version.

LUKA MODRIĆ JOINS ILLUSTRIOUS COMPANY

TOMISLAV PACAK



By earning his 100th cap for Croatia in their World Cup qualifier against Finland in October, Luka Modrić has joined illustrious company in the world of Croatian football.

To celebrate his momentous achievement, the national team captain was presented with a special shirt and UEFA medal by the president of the Croatian Football Federation, Davor Šuker, who also sits on the UEFA Executive Committee. Modrić can now count himself among the likes of Stipe Pletikosa, Josip Šimunić, Ivica Olić, Dario Šimić and Darijo Srna (the record holder with 134 caps) in the '100 caps club'.

Modrić was also recognised by fellow professional footballers at The Best FIFA Football Awards ceremony, where he was announced as a member of the FIFA FIFPro World11 for the third consecutive year. The Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder also came sixth in the vote for The Best FIFA Men's Player Award 2017.



In other news, Croatia's World Roma Organization was named as one of the recipients of the 2017 UEFA Foundation for Children Award. The organisation has worked with the Croatian FA to develop activities for boys and girls belonging to minority groups across the country. Šuker presented the award to Toti Dedić from the organisation, along with a cheque for €50,000 to support its

efforts to fight against discrimination, racism and poverty.

In line with its own efforts to fight discrimination, the Croatian FA celebrated the Fare network's Football People action weeks in October, which aim to raise public awareness and tackle discrimination in football, and organised the eighth national minorities' football camp in Osijek.

DENMARK

www.dbu.dk

GIVING SOMETHING BACK TO SOCIETY

ANDREAS HØJ



A recent study commissioned by the Danish Football Association shows just how much football gives back to Danish society. The research, which focused on the impact of volunteering, preventive health, social responsibility projects and job creation projects, was carried out by Damvad Analytics, a Danish consultancy firm, with financial support from the UEFA HatTrick programme (social responsibility incentive).

For the first time, the Danish FA has been able to put a price tag on the value of football. One of the key findings was that the work done by volunteers equates to the work of

more than 9,000 full-time employees, for a total value of more than 4 billion Danish krone (approximately €557m) a year. Volunteers put in between half an hour and six hours at their local clubs every week, adding up to 17.5 million hours a year.

The head of grassroots football at the Danish FA, Bent Clausen, is happy that the study provides concrete facts and figures for what was previously just a guesstimate within Danish football. "Football makes a unique contribution to Danish society. With the study, we can show how much value the local football clubs create for everyone in society, not just for all of us who love the beautiful game," he said.

The results of study are available for all Danish football clubs to use. Thanks to a new app, the clubs can also calculate their own impact on society, including the value of the work put in by their volunteers and the health benefits the clubs bring to local communities. Last but not least, data on income and jobs generated through the purchase of football boots, sportswear and equipment will also be published.

The data will be an invaluable tool for clubs in persuading local politicians and other stakeholders of the need for clubs to benefit from public funding in order to continue to fulfil their vital role in the local community.

ENGLAND

www.thefa.com

ST GEORGE'S PARK CELEBRATES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

EMILY LILES

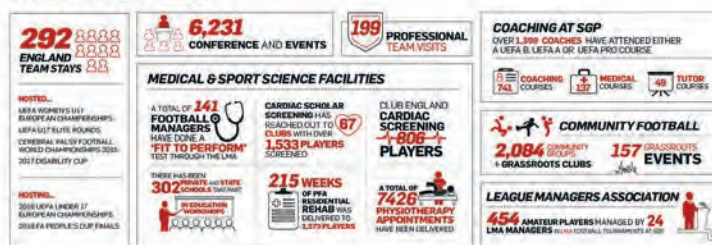


St George's Park celebrated its fifth anniversary in October.

Over the course of these five years, the likes of Barcelona and Benfica have trained there, while the home of England's 28 national teams has also hosted the European Women's Under-17 Championship finals, European Under-17 Championship elite rounds, CPISRA Cerebral Palsy World Championships and the FA Disability Cup.

A short ceremony unveiling the recently named Sir Bobby Charlton pitch, to coincide with the 80th birthday of 1966 World Cup-winning legend, kick-started the fifth-anniversary celebrations. Sir Bobby was on hand for the inauguration of the pitch named in his honour. After being presented with a shirt signed by the current senior squad, Sir Bobby then watched Gareth Southgate and his squad train in preparation for their European Qualifiers against Slovenia and Lithuania.

SGP 5 YEARS



AND COUNTING...

A total of 2,084 community clubs and groups have played on-site since the national football centre opened and, to mark its anniversary, a five-hour five-a-side community football tournament took place in the centre's futsal hall on 9 October. The participating teams included William Shrewsbury Primary School, De Ferrers Academy, Paulet High School, Wolgarston High School, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police – all of whom had used the facility in some capacity previously. The celebration also

provided an opportunity to reflect on the venue's impact on FA education.

Wayne Allison, The FA's BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) project manager, has witnessed the centre's benefits first-hand. He said: "The opening of St George's Park and the development of the coaching competency framework is proof of how much The FA is committed to coach development. The framework has led to the redesigning of all The FA coaching courses, which has culminated in the design of a new, coherent coach development pathway."

The FA

ESTONIA

www.jalgpall.ee

LOOKING TO GROW WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

MAARJA SAULEP



The Estonian Football Association (EJL) is working hard to increase the number of women and girls in football and create more chances for them to get involved. This year, more than 900 girls were able to enjoy different football activities and games around the country.

Football festivals were held in ten cities, where girls spent a day taking part in fun activities and football-related games under the supervision of qualified coaches. Nine of the festivals took place between March and October, while the tenth was organised by the EJL in September as part of its Football Unites 2017 project.

"I am happy that we have been able to generate so much excitement and offer so many girls the opportunity to get to know the game. It was nice to see how much joy the festivals brought to the children. We hope to reach more girls in the future and hopefully make them



Brit Maria Tjael

love football," said EJL general secretary Anne Rei.

In other women's football news, following the resignation in October of women's national team head coach Indrek Zelinski, the EJL is looking for someone to take over the role and become the driving force behind efforts to increase the number of female players. Outlining the EJL's short-term aims,

Rei said: "The priority over the next couple of years is to keep organising festivals to increase the number of female players. The aim is to continue structuring the top clubs through a well-prepared licensing process and continuous work and communication. Our vision is for the new head coach to be responsible for developing this process further."

FAROE ISLANDS

www.football.fo

VÍKINGUR RETAIN THEIR LEAGUE TITLE

TERJI NIELSEN



The Faroese season came to a close recently and saw Víkingur crowned league champions for the second year running. Although they lost their final game of the season 2-1

at home to EB/Streymur, and runners-up KÍ Klaksvík won their final game to bring the two teams level on points, Víkingur won the title thanks to their better goal difference.

Last season Víkingur won the title for the first time in the club's short history. Now everyone is waiting to see if they can make it three in a row next season. Both of their league titles have been won under coach Sámal Erik Hentze, who has something of a reputation, having won the championship four times with three different clubs in the past eight years. However, next season Víkingur will have to compete for the title under a new coach as Hentze has decided to retire.

The women's championship has also been decided, with EB/Streymur-Skála coming out on top and, in the process, putting an end to KÍ Klaksvík's record-breaking streak of 17 league titles.



FSF

FRANCE

www.fff.fr

MAKING FUTSAL HISTORY

LAURA GOUTRY



France have made history by qualifying for Futsal EURO 2018, which will be held in Slovenia from 30 January to 10 February next year and will mark Les Bleus' debut in the final tournament of an international futsal competition.

Having finished runners-up in their main round group back in April, Pierre Jacky's players earned a place in the play-offs in September, where they faced Croatia, a team with plenty of final-tournament experience and ranked 11th in the world. The first leg was a tightly fought match that ended in a 1-1 draw in front of more than 3,800 fans, a record home attendance for the French side.



Two weeks later, the team headed to Dubrovnik for the away leg – a spectacular match that more than lived up to expectations. After trailing twice but managing to pull back level, Les Bleus gradually got the upper hand thanks to their excellent teamwork and two goals by Landry N'Gala. The Croatians levelled the score again at 4-4, with just 16 seconds to go, only for N'Gala to complete his hat-trick in the dying moments and send

the French through with a 5-4 win.

This historic qualification is a well-earned reward for the players, the majority of whom are amateurs who train after work. Their success also looks set to have a big impact on the development of futsal in France, with the national technical director, Hubert Fournier, having already announced plans to develop France's domestic futsal league structure and create a national futsal centre.

GERMANY

www.dfb.de

YOUTH COMPETITIONS HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT

THOMAS HACKBARTH



It is not just World Cups and EUROs that have a positive impact in the host countries. A recent study shows that successful youth competition final tournaments also bring significant benefits. The Accadis University of Applied Sciences in Bad Homburg used last year's European Under-19 Championship final tournament to examine how hosting a youth competition final tournament can benefit the host association, in this case the German Football Association (DFB).

The study shows that the tournament in Baden-Württemberg enabled the DFB to improve its public image by almost 15%. According to the DFB's tournament director for the event, Kyung-Yiub Lee, the research indicates that UEFA youth final tournaments have a positive impact on the image of the host association as a



whole. The researchers also praise the school programme organised alongside the tournament, which resulted in many youngsters joining their local clubs. Moreover, international youth matches are attracting ever more spectators.

Between 2012 and 2014, an average of 1,760 fans attended men's and women's Under-17 and Under-19 internationals. By 2017, that number had risen to 2,707 and by all accounts it will not stop there.

GIBRALTAR

www.gibraltarfifa.com

GIBRALTAR REFEREES TAKE TO THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE FOR THE FIRST TIME

STEVEN GONZALEZ



A team of Gibraltar Football Association match officials took charge of the European Under 21 Championship qualifying match between Liechtenstein and Wales in Liechtenstein at the beginning of October. Jason Barcelo was the referee, with Johan Ward and Andrew Parody acting as assistant referees and Yaroslaff Borg as fourth official. It was the first time that match officials from Gibraltar had been appointed for a national team match and it was therefore a momentous occasion as well as a huge achievement.

The Gibraltar FA's refereeing manager,

Adrian Bacarisa, was understandably proud of their achievements: "We are ending our first year with our FIFA-listed match officials involved in a number of UEFA matches, ranging from Under-17 and Under-21 fixtures to a Europa League qualifying match and a Futsal Cup preliminary round mini-tournament. Our international match officials have embraced these appointments to develop their refereeing skills, learn from the experience and adapt to modern trends. We are all looking forward to more international appointments coming our way soon."



ISRAEL

www.football.org.il

FIRST NATIONAL CFM COURSE GETS UNDER WAY

EITAN DOTAN



The Israel Football Association (IFA) has launched its first national edition of the UEFA Certificate in Football Management (UEFA CFM). The nine-month course combines e-learning modules and three face-to-face seminars, the first of which was held at the national team complex in Shefayim. With several editions taking place each year, the course is run in cooperation with UEFA and the University of Lausanne in Switzerland and is designed to provide middle managers from UEFA member associations with advanced knowledge of football management.

In addition to local participants, managers from other UEFA member associations are also following the IFA course, during which they will be able to develop and consolidate their theoretical and practical knowledge of football management, learn new skills and share management techniques and best practices, thereby strengthening the football community throughout Europe.



The subjects studied include football organisation, strategy and strategic management, marketing and sponsorship, communications, media and public relations, and event and volunteer management. The next seminar will take place in January at the Sammy Ofer Stadium in Haifa and the final one will take place in Jerusalem at Teddy Stadium. Outside of these face-to-face gatherings, students will have to complete assignments and tests online.

"This is a great opportunity to bring together people from different places for whom football is more than just a game

they love – it's also a profession," said Rotem Kamer, chief executive of the IFA. "This combination of business and love for the game is a promising recipe for success. This course, along with other courses down the line, are designed to ensure the most advanced and effective management of the game, thereby benefiting the associations, the teams and, of course, the fans. Together with UEFA, the Israel Football Association attaches great importance to investing in those involved in the challenging task of promoting the game."

ITALY

www.figc.it

TRENTO HOSTS ITALY'S FIRST FOOTBALL HACKATHON

DIEGO ANTENZIO



In October, the city of Trento played host to the first-ever Italian football hackathon, a full weekend of research and innovation devoted to exploring new ways of taking Italian football forward. The event was organised by the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) in conjunction with the autonomous region of Trento and a number of other partners.

Over 400 'hackers' registered to take part. Of those, 158 were selected to participate in the 'total innovation' challenge, in which teams competed against each other to devise ways to harness new technologies to benefit the world of football. The groups were able to choose one of two themes: relationships and interactions between the FIGC and registered players, coaches, referees and club officials; and optimising the use of 'big data' in football, particularly in match analysis.

Before the groups set about tackling these topics, the FIGC president, Carlo Tavecchio, explained the thinking behind the hackathon: "The federation is committed to modernising football in Italy," he said. "We have made some progress through our internal reforms and rebranding, but we are also opening the door to other organisations and companies, from the world of football and beyond, as we search for new avenues and ideas."

Winning projects were selected for each of the two categories. 'Action Mining', the winning match analysis innovation, proposed an algorithm for extracting and analysing match data in near real time, which allocates a 'danger index' to each phase of play based on the likelihood of it resulting in a scoring chance being created.

The other winning idea explored the possibility of replacing traditional methods for clocking in with a near-field communication (NFC) system that would provide parents and coaches of younger players – who make up 63% of the individuals registered with the federation – with real-time updates of children's whereabouts, and record post-match interactions between opposing players. Each winning team was presented with a cheque for €5,000.

The weekend programme also included a series of talks that took a progressive and innovative look at key issues faced by the world of football. There were enthusiastic contributions from coaches, journalists and sportsmen and women, as well as from invited delegates from national football associations around Europe and representatives from other footballing organisations in Italy and abroad.

"For us, the hackathon is a bridge to the future," said the FIGC chief executive,



Michele Uva, who was clearly satisfied with how the event had gone. "For instance, it is vital for us to communicate effectively with not only the 1.4 million players, coaches, referees and club officials who are registered with the FIGC, but also the 35 million fans of Italy's national teams. This hackathon is a first for [Italian] football. For the federation, it represents an investment in ideas and technology, but it has also caught the imagination of other national associations, fans, institutions and the 'hacker' community.

"The workshops and projects were of the highest quality, and prove that we were right to take this path. We will undoubtedly run another event of this kind to explore, among other topics, the video assistant referee (VAR) system. More than ever, the federation's policies and strategies are geared towards the future development of our sport, as well as engaging with what is happening beyond the world of Italian football. We are aware that both financial investment and new ideas are essential for the future of the game."

LATVIA

www.lff.lv

CHAMPIONS AGAIN

TOMS ĀRMANIS



For the second year in a row, FK Spartaks Jūrmala are the champions of Latvia, securing top spot in the championship with one round still to play.

The team from seaside resort of Jūrmala have been in the top division for six years. Before winning the championship for the first time in 2016, their previous best

achievement was fifth place (in 2012 and 2015).

Currently coached by Lithuanian Valdas Urbonas, the team consists of several Latvian internationals as well as players from Belarus, Croatia, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

"To defend a title is twice as hard as winning it. To become champions in such




a tough league is a big achievement. It is a true cause for celebration," said Urbonas, who is the club's third coach this season. "It was a great challenge for me. Without the trust and dedication of the players, it would not have been possible."

LIECHTENSTEIN

www.lfv.li

A BUSY TIME FOR GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

ANTON BANZER

 The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) held its fourth annual girls' football camp from 16 to 20 October. More than 50 girls aged between 7 and 15 – a new record – enjoyed a packed five-day programme of football activities under the guidance of Selina Ruckstuhl, the LFV's women's football director.

The camp aims to offer the girls a fun introduction to football through a wide range of activities, and thus to further promote the women's game at grassroots level. Since only 200 or so girls and women currently play club football in Liechtenstein, it has not yet been possible to form a senior national team to participate in international competitions. The situation is different at youth level, however, where an Under-16 national team has already taken part in three UEFA development tournaments and is now



moving up to the Under-19 age category. In 2018, it will become the first LFV women's team to participate in a European Championship qualifying competition.


If the women's game continues to grow as it has in recent years, it will surely not be long before Liechtenstein has its own senior national side.

MALTA

www.mfa.com.mt

SAINTFIET TAKES OVER AS HEAD COACH

KEVIN AZZOPARDI

 Belgian Tom Saintfiet has been appointed as the new national coach of Malta. He takes over from Italian Pietro Ghedin, whose



Tom Saintfiet and Norman Darmanin Demajo

five-and-a-half-year tenure came to an end after the team's final 2018 World Cup qualifier against Slovakia in Trnava on 8 October.

Saintfiet, 44, is a UEFA Pro licence holder with a wealth of experience in international football, having worked as national coach of several countries, mostly in Africa and Asia. He was handed the job after emerging as the standout candidate in a thorough evaluation exercise carried out by the Malta Football Association's technical department.

"Saintfiet's footballing knowledge and qualifications, combined with his vast experience in international football and coaching developing nations, made him the outstanding candidate for the post of Malta coach," said Norman Darmanin Demajo, president of the Malta FA.

"We are pleased that Saintfiet has accepted our offer to become national coach and we are convinced that he will do an excellent job both for the national side and as a prominent member of our technical sector," he added.

On being appointed, Saintfiet, who took up coaching at the early age of 24 after his playing career was cut short by injuries, said: "I'm honoured to be the new national coach of Malta. My ambition is to help the Maltese national team move forward and also assist in the long-term development of Maltese football at all levels, with the backing of all stakeholders."

As well as being a top coach, Saintfiet has also written a book, *Trainer Zonder Grenzen* (Coach Without Borders).

MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

CONCORDIA WINS UEFA FOUNDATION AWARD

PRESS OFFICE



In recognition of its social projects for the benefit of vulnerable children, the non-governmental organisation Concordia was chosen as one of the recipients of the 2017 UEFA Foundation for Children Award.

The organisation was set up in 2004 to facilitate the integration of disadvantaged people into society, protect their rights and provide assistance when required. Since then, the organisation has helped more than 11,000 children, provided shelter for more than 240 orphans and vulnerable families, provided accommodation to more than 400 elderly people in its social centres, and provided more than 3.5 million hot meals to people in need.

Concordia's executive director, Otilia Sîrbu, was delighted to accept the award at the Moldovan FA's headquarters: "We are thrilled to have been selected for a 2017 UEFA Foundation for Children Award. The prize money will allow us to implement a new social project aimed at



promoting a healthy and active lifestyle among young people, especially those living in rural areas. We plan to build new playgrounds, sports facilities and Concordia centres. We will also buy equipment for our youth football teams and organise football matches and other sports activities."

Nicolai Cebotari, general secretary of the Moldovan FA, praised the new project: "We applaud and fully support Concordia in this vital initiative, and we are very happy that football is being used again as a way to bring happiness and hope to those in need."

NORTHERN IRELAND

www.irishfa.com

NEW SKILLS CENTRES FOR GIRLS

NIGEL TILSON



Girls born between 2007 and 2009 are being encouraged to give football a go at new skills centres across Northern Ireland. The Irish Football Association's girls' regional development centres aim to provide a fun and friendly environment in which girls can improve their football skills. Centres have been set up in Enniskillen, Bangor, Ballynahinch, Cookstown, Larne, Belfast, Ballymoney, Londonderry and Portadown.

Marissa Callaghan, captain of the Northern Ireland women's football team and one of the Irish FA's women's football ambassadors, explains: "Through the programme we want to give girls the opportunity to progress to our county excellence centres and to provide a clear



pathway for girls to excel in our sport. Girls don't have to be associated with a club to come along."

Staying with the topic of women's football, several players from established clubs in Northern Ireland have signed up for new regional futsal leagues across the country in order to help themselves to stay fit during the close season. Every Friday evening between now and the end of January, teams will compete in leagues in Belfast, Lisburn and Portadown.

The winners of each regional league will play in national finals in February, with the champions going on to represent Northern Ireland in the first Women's Futsal Home Nations Championship.

HELPING CLUBS TO BUILD COMMUNITY LINKS

GARETH MAHER



The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) has announced the clubs participating in a new initiative, 'More than a club', which aims to help clubs to develop their links with local communities. Bohemian FC and Cork City FC were chosen from among the 11 league clubs that applied.

The project will be run by the FAI and the Welsh social enterprise Vi-Ability, with funding provided by the European Regional Development Fund via the Ireland Wales cooperation programme 2014–20. Helping the selected clubs to recognise and harness football's potential to connect with and benefit social programmes in their local communities will in turn help them to become more valuable and relevant members of the community.

FAI project manager Derek O'Neill said: "The FAI believes that engaging with the community in a more inclusive way can positively affect a football club's prospects of sustainability. Participating in innovative community partnerships can facilitate this. The FAI is delighted to have



secured this funding from the Ireland-Wales programme, which will be used to help the two clubs to develop their community remit."

Fran Gavin, director of competitions, added: "The consultation process report recognised that, along with sporting and business interests, community engagement was another essential development pillar of successful and sustainable football clubs. The clubs' five-year strategic plans have shown a strong emphasis on community engagement. This community focus can serve to attract new club stakeholders with more people, businesses and agencies becoming advocates of the clubs and admirers of

the programmes which they can deliver. The clubs can become more than just football teams and be more relevant to more people within their communities."

The project will start immediately, with the FAI making funds available to both clubs to enable them each to recruit two full-time football enterprise coordinators for a period of 18 months. The FAI's project management team will also provide guidance on how to develop the football enterprise scheme and the social programmes.

Chris Brien from Bohemian FC said: "Bohemian FC are delighted to participate in the project. It will allow us to significantly expand the excellent community work we are already doing in our catchment area."

Shane O'Connor of Cork City FC added: "We're delighted to be included in the project, which will allow us to continue to improve on the good work in the community that our supporters' trust and Cork City have been involved in over the past few years."

SECOND EDITION OF THE YOUTH COUNCIL

PAUL ZAHARIA



The Youth Council is a unique sports leadership platform created by the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. It gives young people a voice in society and an opportunity to share, discuss and develop ideas for community development projects that capitalise on the universal values of sport, and football in particular.

Following the success of the first Youth Council held in June, the FRF recently hosted the second edition at its national football centre in Buftea. Twenty-five participants aged between 18 and 29 came from across the country to discuss footballing values such as fair play, team spirit, leadership, responsibility, respect

and friendship during training sessions on project management, communications, strategy and marketing. Those in attendance also got involved in a number of football-related activities organised by FRF staff. The FRF president, Răzvan Burleanu, said: "Football is a special phenomenon that has the capacity to bring about change and progress in society. For the Romanian Football Federation, the role of the Youth Council is to come up with new ideas, to promote change and to place football and its values at the centre of community development."

Everyone who took part in the Youth Council had to first apply for a place by sending their CV, a motivation letter and an essay in response to one of the

following three questions: How can we use football to stimulate youth development? What impact do footballing values have on society? What changes could you make within your community using football?

As well as hearing from FRF staff and other local contributors, the second Youth Council welcomed experts from outside Romania. "The Youth Council can be seen as a door to the future," one of the participants said.

Even though the seminar itself ended on 27 September, the work of the Youth Council continues, with the FRF providing ongoing support to help the participants implement the projects discussed within their own communities.

RUSSIA

www.rfs.ru

RUSSIAN FOOTBALL 120 YEARS YOUNG

EKATERINA GRISHENKOVA



On 24 October, Russian football celebrated a landmark date – the 120th anniversary of its founding. On this day in 1897, the first listed football match in Russia took place, as reported on in the domestic print media. The game between the teams of St Petersburg Amateur Sports Club and the Vasileostrovsky community of footballers ended in a 6-0 win for the Vasileostrovsky team.

The first official football body in the country, the All-Russia Football Union, was established on 19 January 1912 and became affiliated to FIFA in the same year. Two of its officers, Georges Duperron and Robert Fulda, were also elected to the Executive Committee of world football's governing body. The establishment of an organisation that would develop football was fully justified as the game had started to become very popular in the country. The All-Russian Football Union was founded on the eve of the Olympic Games in Stockholm, which was the first Olympiad in which a Russian national football team participated.

Football continued to develop during the Soviet era, and on 27 December 1934,

the Football Federation of the USSR was established under the leadership of Valentin Granatkin, a FIFA vice-president. The senior USSR national team achieved some great victories on the international scene. They won the Olympic Games in 1956 and 1988, and in 1960 beat Yugoslavia 2-1 to win the first-ever European Nations' Cup (now the European Football Championship). In 1966 the national team finished fourth in the World Cup. The national youth team won the European Under-21 (U23) Championship three times (in 1976, 1980, 1990), and in 1977 took the honours in the U-20 World Cup.

On 8 February 1992, the Football Union of Russia was founded and took over responsibility for the development of football in the country. Over the years, types of football not played during the Soviet era (women's football, futsal and beach soccer) gained recognition in Russia. The fans were happy to have so many teams, and successful ones at that. In 2008, the Russian senior team reached the semi-finals at EURO 2008 in Austria and Switzerland. Three years earlier, in 2005, the women's Under-19 team won the European Women's

Under-19 Championship in Hungary. In 2006 and 2013, the men's Under-17s won their European Championship. The national men's and women's futsal teams have also won their share of honours at international level, while the Russian beach soccer team has twice won the Beach Soccer World Cup (in 2011 and 2013).

Not to forget the successes of Russian clubs, PFC CSKA Moskva and FC Zenit St Petersburg won the UEFA Cup in 2005 and 2008 respectively.

Coming right up to date, Russia is now preparing to host the 2018 World Cup. As part of those preparations, the country hosted the FIFA Confederations Cup this summer. From 14 June to 15 July next year, 11 cities (Moscow, St Petersburg, Kazan, Kaliningrad, Sochi, Rostov on Don, Volgograd, Saransk, Samara, Nizhny Novgorod and Ekaterinburg) will be hosting World Cup matches.

Looking further ahead, St Petersburg will be one of the host cities for EURO 2020. Rolling forward 120 years since its foundation, Russian football is still making history.

SAN MARINO

www.fsgc.sm

FIFA PRESIDENT FLIES THE FLAG FOR SMALL NATIONS

LUCA PELLICIONI



October was an especially busy month for the San Marino Football Federation (FSGC) both on and off the field. Following the visit of the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, on the last Monday in September, the federation welcomed his FIFA counterpart, Gianni Infantino - FIFA President, on 5 October.

The FIFA president was received by San Marino's heads of state, Matteo Fiorini and Enrico Carattoni, who appointed him as a commander of the order of Saint Agatha. The FIFA president then made his way to the San Marino

Stadium, where he met with members of the federation's assembly, which includes representatives of all FSGC-affiliated clubs and associations. Delivering a message that will be warmly received in San Marino and other countries of similar size and status, he said it was "vital that smaller national associations are afforded the same respect as the game's major global powers."

Turning to off-the-field matters, the FSGC president, Marco Tura, said: "Both UEFA and FIFA hold San Marino in the highest regard, not least because we have



FSGC

embraced the agendas and initiatives of the presidents of both organisations and taken every opportunity to support their efforts to reform world football when we could have taken a back seat. This goes a long way to explaining why the excellent relationships we have enjoyed with UEFA and FIFA for some time have become even stronger in recent years."

SCOTLAND

www.scottishfa.co.uk

UEFA PRESIDENT VISITS HAMPDEN PARK

MICHAEL LAMONT



The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, visited Hampden Park at the start of October following the successful completion of the first phase of stadium development works for EURO 2020.

The UEFA president was at Hampden Park with the president of the Scottish FA, Alan McRae, the association's chief executive, Stewart Regan, Scottish government minister for public health and sport, Aileen Campbell, and deputy leader of Glasgow city council, David McDonald, as well as the members of the board of the Scottish FA and of the EURO 2020 local organising structure.

Hampden Park will play host to three group matches and a round of 16 game during EURO 2020, which will be held in 13 different cities across Europe.

In preparation for the tournament, new LED giant screens have been installed inside Hampden Park, in addition to 26 new sky boxes that have been constructed across the south stand. Two sky lounges have also been fitted out in the north



stand to enhance the hospitality experience in line with the tournament requirements.

The UEFA president toured Hampden Park to learn more about the history of the stadium and Scottish football. In conjunction with the Scottish government's Women and Girls in Sport Week, he also met players and staff from the Pollok United Soccer Academy in connection with UEFA's #EqualGame campaign to promote inclusion, diversity and accessibility in football throughout Europe. Pollok United has a thriving girls' section, led by Jane Lavery, who won the

merit award for services to grassroots football at this year's Scottish FA grassroots awards.

"EURO 2020 will be an exceptional tournament with 13 countries all contributing to hosting the competition," the UEFA president said. "Glasgow is a fantastic footballing city steeped in tradition and Hampden Park will provide the perfect setting for four matches. I enjoyed visiting Pollok United in Glasgow's South Side and seeing the impressive work being done by grassroots clubs in Scotland."

SERBIA

www.fss.rs

ENDING THE YEAR ON A HIGH

MIRKO VRBICA



Serbia have qualified for next year's World Cup in Russia, rounding off a fantastic year for the Football Association of Serbia (FAS) – its best for eight years, when Serbia last qualified for the World Cup.

Congratulating head coach Slavoljub Muslin and his players on their amazing achievement, Slaviša Kokeza, president of the FAS, said: "The national team's qualification for the World Cup was my first goal as FAS president. My second goal is to purchase a headquarters for the association, the third is to build a new stadium, and the fourth, and perhaps the most important for the prosperity of Serbian football, is to enable the privatisation of football clubs."

The senior national team's qualification for next summer's World Cup is the crowning achievement among several excellent results achieved by Serbia's other national teams.

"The Under-19 and Under-17 teams made it through to the final stages of the qualifying competitions in their respective European championships, and we can be proud of the fact that our women's teams at those age levels did the same.

"Congratulations also to our Under-21 team, who have started well in their qualifiers for the European Under-21 Championship final round in Italy. With one match less and two points more than their closest competitors, we have good reason to remain optimistic," said Goran



Slaviša Kokeza

Bunjevčević, sports director of the FAS.

Spurred on by these great results achieved by all its national teams, the FAS has been investing in infrastructure, undertaking renovation work, building artificial pitches and donating equipment to clubs in the lower leagues. More than 600 clubs throughout the country, mainly those which need the help most, have been given shirts, balls, football boots and other kit needed to ensure that players in younger age categories can progress and develop their skills in the best possible conditions.

SLOVAKIA

www.futbalsfz.sk

JOZEF JANKECH TURNS 80

PETER SURIN



In 1997, Jozef Jankech celebrated his 60th birthday as Slovakia's national team coach. Ten years later, he celebrated his 70th birthday as coach of another national team, the Maldives. This year, on 24 October, he toasted his 80th birthday in the Slovakian city of Trenčín, where he now lives.

Jankech was a fantastic right-winger who played a big part in Trenčín's golden era during the 1960s, when Jednota Trenčín finished second (1963) and third (1968) in the Czechoslovakian top flight.

After hanging up his boots, he embarked on what was to be a long and illustrious coaching career, which lasted until autumn 2010. He coached all of Slovakia's best-known teams, in addition to spending long spells with clubs abroad. At international level, Jankech was head coach of the Slovakia national team for more than three years (from July 1995 to October 1998), presiding over 34 official international matches and clocking up an average of 1.74 points per game.

He was not a man of habit. When preparing the Maldives national team for the South Asian Football Federation Cup in 2008, he said: "Routine is the worst – I always prepare for every training session

individually." His philosophy paid off: that year, the Maldives beat India in the final to become South Asian champions – their greatest footballing achievement ever.

"I started thinking about ending my coaching career in my sixties, but those around me convinced me that I still had a lot to offer. And so I continued." Jankech went on to receive the coach of the year award in Slovakia at the age of 72.

He is one of the most respected figures in Slovakian football, a living legend. Inducted into the hall of fame of Trenčín football and an honorary inductee of Slovakian football's hall of fame, the list of clubs he has coached in his time is impressive: TJ Třinec, VSS Košice, Lokomotiva Košice on three different occasions, Strojárne Martin, FC Nea Salamina in Cyprus, MŠK Žilina, TTS Trenčín, Slovan Bratislava, Kuala Lumpur FA in Malaysia, Jednota VSS Košice, Inter Bratislava, Slovan Levice on two occasions, Qatar SC, the Slovak national team, Dubnica, the Maldives national team and Dukla Banská Bystrica. He ended his coaching career at Slovan Bratislava at the age of 73.



"My coaching career lasted 45 years and that's a long time. It will be a strange feeling not to come to training and sit on the bench. I hope I can stay healthy for a few more years," he said when calling it a day.

Jankech coached no fewer than 600 matches in the Slovak top flight, which is some achievement and does not take into account his ten years of coaching abroad, his time as Slovakia's head coach or his spells with second-division teams. Altogether, his coaching record stretches to more than 1,000 matches. None of the teams he coached were ever relegated under his watch, and he won promotion with Třinec, Lokomotiva Košice, Dubnica and Slovan. In 1979, he won the Czechoslovak Cup with Lokomotiva Košice.

When asked whether he was thinking about writing a book about his life in football, he answered: "No, because only a few readers would be interested. There are a lot of people like me in this world." We would tend to disagree. There are many football coaches in the world, but there is only one Jozef Jankech – a fantastic coach and, moreover, a great person.

SWEDEN

www.svenskfotboll.se

FA INTEGRATION MANAGER TO GIVE TED TALK

ANDREAS NILSSON



When Sevana Bergström was eight years old, she just wanted to play football, but her parents said it was not for girls. After she had overcome her own struggles and played football at elite level, she set out to help other girls who were being held back by society. She started one of Sweden's leading organisations working against 'honour'-based violence and for the rights of girls.

Through grassroots football for girls, her organisation and the Ronjabollen project have empowered girls all over Sweden. "Girls with both parents born abroad are

significantly underrepresented in Swedish sport, including football. One reason is that some of these girls have parents who do not allow their daughters to take part in any activities due to outdated norms of honour-shame culture. We want to change that. Football has a unique way of reaching people and teaching values of equality and democracy," Sevana says.

Since last year, Sevana has been employed by the Swedish FA as an integration manager, heading the association's work on diversity and inclusion in football. Now her efforts



are being recognised internationally and she has been invited to give a TEDx talk in November. Sevana Bergström's TEDx talk will be available on ted.com from 25 November.

SWITZERLAND

www.football.ch

YOU CAN PLAY TOO!

PIERRE BENOIT



The Swiss Football Association has been actively promoting girls' and women's football for many years. The Swiss women's national team's recent successes in qualifying for the Women's World Cup and Women's EURO 2017 owe much to the way in which the Swiss FA supports and nurtures the sport at grassroots as well as elite level, encouraging girls to play football from a very young age.

When a young girl first joins a football club, whether she will go on to emulate stars such as Lara Dickenmann, Ana-Maria Crnogorčević or Ramona Bachmann is anyone's guess. Much more important, however, is the enjoyment she will get from playing, being with her team-mates, sharing with them the highs and lows, celebrating successes together and

supporting each other through times of disappointment.

The Swiss FA also helps girls who love watching football to decide whether to take up the game themselves. When weighing up whether football is the right choice for them, they are asked to consider the following three questions: Do I love being outside in the fresh air? Do I like being with my friends and getting to know new people? Would I enjoy playing football as part of a team?

If they can answer 'yes' to all three questions, they should take the plunge. They can find out which clubs have girls' and women's teams on the Swiss FA's website (www.football.ch) and take the first step of attending their first training session, which will hopefully be the first of many.



UKRAINE

www.ffu.org.ua

GIRLS' FOOTBALL IN THE SPOTLIGHT

YURI MAZNYCHENKO



The Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU), with the support of the German Development Bank (KfW) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Ukraine, held a football tournament dedicated to the International Day of the Girl on 11 October.

More than 80 girls aged 11 to 13 from different parts of the country, including those affected by the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, participated in the tournament, the first of its kind in Ukraine. In the final, the Kyiv team clinched victory over the team from

Rivne in a penalty shoot-out. In the match for third place, Kharkiv beat Mykolaiv 2-0. Teams from the Ternopil, Chernihiv, Donetsk and Cherkasy regions also took part.

Laura Bill, deputy head of UNICEF's representative office in Ukraine, said that the organisation of such girls' competitions helped to dispel the existing stereotypes of football being a boy's game. "UNICEF stands for equal rights for every child. Therefore, it is very important for us that girls and boys have equal rights and opportunities in society, and can realise their dreams," she said.

Medals, balls and other prizes were presented by the FFU general secretary, Yuri Zapisotskyi, FC Shakhtar Donetsk goalkeeper Mykyta Shevchenko, the head coach of Ukraine's boys' Under-17 team, Serhiy Popov, and female internationals Vira Dyatel and Iryna Vasilyuk.



BIRTHDAYS

John Ferry (Northern Ireland, 1 December)
Sergei Roumas (Belarus, 1 December)
David Griffiths (Wales, 2 December)
Carmel Agius (Malta, 2 December)
Ligita Ziedone (Latvia, 2 December)
Sean Dipple (England, 3 December) **60th**
Juan Antonio Fernández Marin
 (Spain, 3 December) **60th**
Gylfi Thór Orrason (Iceland, 3 December)
Josipa Flam (Croatia, 3 December)
Janusz Basalaj (Poland, 4 December)
Miroslav Liba (Czech Republic, 4 December)
Georg Lühinger (Liechtenstein, 4 December)
Adrian Ixari (Moldova, 4 December)
Desislava Ralkova (Bulgaria, 4 December)
Christiaan Van Puyvelde
 (Belgium, 5 December)
Christiaan Timmermans
 (Belgium, 6 December)
Heather Rabbatts (England, 6 December)
António Manuel Almeida Costa
 (Portugal, 6 December)
Alberto Pacchioni (San Marino, 6 December)
Pavel Saliy (Kazakhstan, 6 December) **50th**
Marko Simeunovič
 (Slovenia, 6 December) **50th**
Stilian Shishkov (Bulgaria, 6 December)
Andrea Agnelli (Italy, 6 December)
Andreas Akkelides (Cyprus, 7 December)
Ray Ellingham (Wales, 7 December)
Johan van Geijn (Netherlands, 7 December)
Raili Ellermaa (Estonia, 7 December) **50th**
Andrea Manzella (Italy, 8 December)
Michel D'Hooghe (Belgium, 8 December)
Konstantin Sonin (Russia, 8 December)
Les Reed (England, 9 December)
Martin Ingvarsson (Sweden, 9 December)
Florea Cristina Babadac
 (Romania, 9 December)
Dušan Bajević
 (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10 December)
Christian Andreassen
 (Faroe Islands, 10 December)
Laura McAllister (Wales, 10 December)
Alain Hamer (Luxembourg, 10 December)
Trefor Lloyd Hughes
 (Wales, 11 December) **70th**
Avi Levi (Israel, 11 December)
Ilcho Gjorgjioski
 (FYR Macedonia, 11 December)
Alvaro Albino (Portugal, 12 December)
Fiona May (Italy, 12 December)
Esther Azzopardi Farrugia
 (Malta, 12 December)
Ivan Anthony Robba (Gibraltar, 12 December)
Kaj Natri (Finland, 13 December) **70th**
Stefan Messner (Austria, 13 December)

Stephan Kammerer (Germany, 13 December)
Björn Fecker (Germany, 13 December) **40th**
António Mortágua (Portugal, 14 December)
Bülent Konuk (Germany, 14 December)
Ged Poynton (England, 15 December)
Dušan Svoboda (Czech Republic, 15 December)
Stefanie Schulte
 (Germany, 15 December) **40th**
Steve Stride (England, 16 December)
Stefano Pucci (Italy, 16 December)
Bobby Barnes (England, 17 December)
Michael Riley (England, 17 December)
Artan Hajdari (Albania, 17 December)
Kenneth Gronlund Rasmussen
 (Denmark, 17 December)
Guntis Indriksons (Latvia, 18 December)
Niklas à Lidarenda
 (Faroe Islands, 18 December)
Rainer Koch (Germany, 18 December)
Jacco Swart (Netherlands, 18 December)
Patrick Filipek (Czech Republic, 18 December)
Ludvik Georgsson (Iceland, 19 December)
Harri Talonen (Finland, 19 December) **60th**
David Casserly
 (Republic of Ireland, 19 December)
Amirzhan Tussupbekov
 (Kazakhstan, 20 December)
José Nebot (Spain, 20 December)
Edgars Pukinskis (Latvia, 20 December)
Willie Young (Scotland, 21 December)
Bjarne Berntsen (Norway, 21 December)
José Henrique Da Costa Jones
 (Portugal, 22 December) **60th**
Olzhas Abayev (Kazakhstan, 22 December)
Josef Geisler (Austria, 23 December)
Pia Hess-Bolkovac (Germany, 23 December)
László Vágner (Hungary, 24 December)
Irina Mirt (Romania, 24 December)
Noël Le Graët (France, 25 December)
Patritiu Abrudan (Romania, 25 December)
Laura Montgomery (Scotland, 25 December)
Nikola Mužiková
 (Czech Republic, 25 December)
Guy Goethals (Belgium, 26 December)
Servet Yardımcı (Turkey, 26 December) **60th**
Rudolf Repka (Czech Republic, 26 December)
Bernhard Heusler (Switzerland, 27 December)
Nils Fisketjonn (Norway, 27 December)
Dušan Tittel (Slovakia, 27 December)
Jaroslav Šišolák (Slovakia, 27 December)
Krisztina Varga (Hungary, 27 December)
Bernard Carrel
 (Switzerland, 28 December) **80th**
Martial Saugy (Switzerland, 28 December)
Otakar Mestek (Czech Republic, 28 December)
Evangelos Mazarakis (Greece, 29 December)
Anders Solheim (Norway, 29 December)

Dagmar Damková
 (Czech Republic, 29 December)
Angelo Chetcuti (Malta, 29 December)
Berti Vogts (Germany, 30 December)
Wolfgang Thierriechter
 (Austria, 30 December)
Matt Crocker (England, 30 December)
Jean Fournet-Fayard (France, 31 December)
Christian Moroge
 (Switzerland, 31 December) **70th**
David Findlay (Scotland, 31 December) **60th**
Jens Larsen (Denmark, 31 December)
Emmanuel Orhant (France, 31 December)
Liene Kozlovskā (Latvia, 31 December)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

1 December, Moscow

2018 World Cup: draw

6 December, Nyon

2017/18 European Under-19
and Under-17 Championships:
elite round draws2018/19 European Under-19 and Under-17
Championships: qualifying round draws2018/19 UEFA Regions' Cup: preliminary
and intermediate round draws

7 December, Nyon

Executive Committee

11 December, Nyon

UEFA Champions League: round of 16
draw
UEFA Europa League: round of 32 draw
UEFA Youth League: play-off draw

Competitions

5/6 December

UEFA Champions League: group matches
(matchday 6)
UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions
League path: group matches (matchday 6)

6–16 December, United Arab Emirates

Club World Cup

7 December

UEFA Europa League: group matches
(matchday 6)



EQUAL GAME



RESPECT

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