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COVER

Manchester City's Vincent Kompany and Paris St-Germain's Peguy Luyindula (left) in action in a UEFA Cup group match.

Photo: PA Wire/PA Photos

The end of one year and start of another is traditionally associated with reviews of all shapes and sizes. As they looked back on the year just gone, newspapers, magazines and TV channels invited us to relive lots of scenes from EURO 2008, which, for us, will obviously remain the most significant event of last year.

The resounding success of the European Championship final round in Austria and Switzerland should be more than just a fantastic memory, though. Above all, it should inspire us for the many tasks the year ahead has in store. Even without the final round of a World Cup or European Championship, there will be plenty happening in 2009. First on the pitch, of course, where, alongside the club competition finals and the final round of the European Under-21 Championship, the flagship event will be the Women's EURO towards the end of summer in Finland.

Off the pitch, in March we are holding the UEFA Congress in Denmark, where elections will shape the Executive Committee for the next two years. We will also be pushing ahead with our efforts to achieve full recognition of the specificity of sport and to turn this recognition into concrete action. The protection of youth players and training clubs, financial fair play in UEFA club competitions, the relentless battle against racism, preparations for EURO 2012 and many other issues will likewise continue to keep us busy.

2009 will also be a turning point for our club competitions, with the UEFA Champions League opening its doors wider and the UEFA Europa League taking over from the UEFA Cup.

For now though, I would like to take advantage of the relative calm of the festive season and say a big thank you to everyone working for the good of football and for the unity of the football family. We're on the right track so let's keep pulling together.



Michel Platini
UEFA President

Women's and Under-21 Championships

Heading north this year



THERE MAY NOT BE A EURO OR WORLD CUP FINAL ROUND THIS YEAR, BUT THERE ARE STILL SOME EXCITING TOURNAMENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO, INCLUDING, IN PARTICULAR, THE FINAL ROUNDS OF THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S AND UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIPS.

The Women's EURO is being played for the first time with a field of 12 participants instead of the old 8-team format. The tournament takes place in Finland from 23 August to 10 September,

in Lahti, Tampere, Turku and two stadiums in Helsinki. On 18 November, the Finnish capital hosted the draw ceremony for the final round, which placed the participating teams into the following three groups:

Group A: *Finland, Ukraine, Denmark, Netherlands*

Group B: *Germany, Iceland, Norway, France*

Group C: *Sweden, England, Russia, Italy*

Finland get the tournament under way on 23 August when they play Denmark in the opening match. The group matches continue until the end of the month, followed by the quarter-finals on 3 and 4 September, the semi-finals on 6 and 7 September,



Michel Platini conducted the Women's EURO 2009 draw with the two tournament ambassadors, Satu Kunnas (left) and Antti Niemi.

and the final at the Olympic Stadium in Helsinki on Thursday, 10 September. Germany will be trying to defend the title they first won in 1995 and picked up again in 1997, 2001 and 2005.

Northern Europe is also the venue for the final round of the 2007–09 European Under-21 Championship, which takes place in Sweden from 15 to 29 June. The draw conducted in Gothenburg on 3 December produced the following result:

Group A: *Sweden, Belarus, Italy, Serbia*

Group B: *Spain, Germany, England, Finland*

Four cities are hosting matches: Gothenburg, Halmstad, Helsingborg and Malmö.

The group matches run from 15 to 23 June, with the semi-finals following on 26 June and the final at the new stadium in Malmö on Monday, 29 June.



Prof. Jan Ekstrand (centre) is conducting the UEFA Champions League injury study. On his left, Dr Michel D'Hooghe, chairman of the Medical Committee.
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Inaugural Elite Club Medical Forum

The team behind the team

WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE THE RISK OF INJURIES AND WHO IS IN CONTROL OF THESE FACTORS? HOW DO COACHES AND MANAGERS AFFECT THE RISK OF INJURIES? WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE THE RISK OF HAMSTRING INJURIES? DOES FLYING LIMIT PERFORMANCE? THESE ARE SOME OF THE QUESTIONS ADDRESSED BY THE INAUGURAL ELITE CLUB MEDICAL FORUM, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN NYON ON 17 NOVEMBER.

"Can my player play next Sunday?" asked Dr Michel D'Hooghe, chairman of the Medical Committee, recalling his earliest memories of being an international team doctor in 1972.

"I was a good doctor when my patient could play again soon, and a bad one if he couldn't. A bit later, at meetings of the FIFA and UEFA Medical Committees, I noticed that there was only a single

item on the agenda: *how are we going to organise the anti-doping controls at the next match?*" Times have changed and sports medicine is much more than that.

Health manager

These days, we talk about traumatology, psychology, pharmacology, physiology, doping, hygiene and diet. The organisation of international matches has raised issues linked to jet-lag and matches played at altitude. Nowadays, the team doctor is becoming a kind of health manager for his players. He is surrounded by specialists: coaches, advisors, physiotherapists, masseurs... a team behind the team.

Europe-wide study

The 18 doctors who travelled to Nyon looked back at the 2007/08 season, particularly the medical concept used at EURO 2008 in Switzerland and Austria and the initial reports from the study launched by UEFA and the elite European clubs on injuries in the UEFA Champions League. Led by Professor



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The forum was an important step towards exchanging information at European level.
UEFA/pjwoods.ch

UEFA/pjwoods.ch

Jan Ekstrand, second vice-chairman of the UEFA Medical Committee, the study currently has the backing of 18 clubs.

As well as the player's previous injuries, strength and suppleness, match schedules, training workload, the number of matches and recovery time, this study shows that factors linked to the management of the club should be taken into account. Its philosophy, for example. Some clubs decide to run a prevention programme, whoever their coach is. Consistency appears to be an important factor. For example, the study showed that, in Turkey, certain teams recorded a high number of injuries sustained during training simply due to the fact that they frequently changed coaches.

Hamstrings top the list

The study shows that hamstring injuries are the most common. They are particularly caused by the intensity and speed of the game. In a 25-player squad, ten players on average suffer thigh injuries, of which seven are hamstring injuries and three are to the quadriceps.

In this context, club doctors can send MRI images of hamstring injuries to specialist doctors. The experts then analyse the images and communicate with the club doctors and with Prof. Jan Ekstrand and his team, as part of an in-depth subdivision of the study. The aim is to help club doctors to determine as accurately as possible how long the recovery period will be and for how long the player will therefore be unavailable.

Coherence and exchange as means of prevention

The participants agree that coherence also seems to be a key factor in injury prevention. For this reason, they are keen for doctors to be represented on club management boards, reflecting the unquestionable importance of sports medicine in football today.

The doctors also thought that the exchange of information within the medical network represents one of the most important aspects of injury prevention. The organisation of this inaugural

UEFA forum is a vital step in this direction and the initiative was therefore very well received.

Success in the fight against doping

In addition, the participants were presented with the facts and figures on the doping controls carried out during the 2007/08 season, when 2,027 controls were conducted in all UEFA competitions, including the youth and women's tournaments. Out of the samples taken, 1,380 were tested for the performance-enhancing substance EPO. In all, 637 anti-doping controls were conducted out of competition, which represents about one third of the total number of tests carried out. The tests of two players came back positive: one for cannabis in the Under-19 category, and one for anabolic steroids in the UEFA Cup. In the second case, the player was sentenced with a two-year ban.

EURO 2008 doping controls

During EURO 2008, 286 players were tested without warning before and during the final round. Two players from each team were tested after each of the 31 matches in the tournament and two target tests were also conducted, making a total of 126 in-competition tests. In addition, 160 players – ten players from each participating team – were tested in

the weeks leading up to the tournament. All the players tested – whether before or during the final round – had urine and blood samples taken. Each sample was tested systematically for EPO, human growth hormones, blood transfusions and synthetic hormones.

Out-of-competition testing in the UEFA Champions League

A total of 793 of the players taking part in the UEFA Champions League last season were tested, including 698 for EPO. As in the previous season, out-of-competition controls were conducted on players from the 32 teams involved in the group stage. UEFA's doping control officers (DCOs) made 48 visits, with ten players systematically tested each time.

Awareness-raising sessions

In the area of prevention, one-hour awareness-raising sessions were organised for each of the 28 teams that qualified for the final rounds of the four youth competitions (Under-19, Under-17, Women's Under-19 and Women's Under-17). An interpreter was always on the spot to translate the questions and answers. UEFA highlighted the health and career risks of doping, as well as the traps to avoid.



Sportsfile

Awareness-raising sessions are designed to dissuade youngsters from doping.



André Schembri (13)
in action
against Turkey



Etienne
Barbara (5)
plays
in Germany.

Maltese players abroad

Tiny but productive

WITH ONLY 400,000 INHABITANTS, MALTA MEASURES LESS THAN 30 KM FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER AND THE SEA IS NEVER MORE THAN 7 KM AWAY. MALTA'S SISTER TWIN ISLANDS OF COMINO AND GOZO, WHICH ALSO FORM PART OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA, ARE EVEN SMALLER.

The game of association football was introduced on these islands by the British services who were stationed in Malta at the time. The first ever official match of

association football was recorded as being played on 4 March 1882 between soldiers of the garrison and the Royal Engineers. The Malta Football

Association was formed in 1900. Floriana FC and St. George's FC are the two oldest Maltese football clubs on the island, and the first league competition for clubs was organised as early as



Michael
Mifsud (9),
the best
known
Maltese
player
export.

1910. Since then, football in Malta has come a long way, with the Malta Football Association always striving as hard as it can to have the Maltese flag flying high in the international football arena.

In this respect, Malta can boast of "nourishing" local football talents who now find themselves plying their trade away from our shores.

Michael Mifsud as a model

Malta's most esteemed representative on foreign soil at the moment is Michael Mifsud. He hit the headlines when he first joined German Bundesliga club Kaiserslautern in 2001, before moving to Lillestrøm in Norway three years later, in 2004. In the process the Maltese international striker earned the satisfaction of once being voted the best foreign footballer in Norway.

Mifsud joined Coventry in January 2007 and things soon went well for him, as he bagged four goals before the end of the season, one of which was voted goal of the season.

Last season, he was Coventry's top goalscorer with 17 goals, but the highlight was to be scoring twice against Manchester United in the Carling Cup at the legendary Old Trafford stadium. Malta hailed him as a hero on that memorable night.

For Mifsud, born on 17 April 1981, *"This season has been quieter on the goal front but I've not been playing in my usual striking position and so have had the responsibility of creating more goals than I have actually scored. I love scoring goals, but this season has enabled me to become better in other areas.*

"As for the future, then, of course, what I want to do is play against the best footballers in the world. I'm just hoping for that five or ten minutes to demonstrate what I am capable of doing. Just like I did against Manchester United in the cup



Andrei Agius plays his football in Italy.



Striker Chuks Nwoko (11) used to play in Bulgaria.

or when I played for Lillestrøm against Newcastle."

He added: "On the other hand, playing for my country is a special experience. I'm so proud to be Maltese and to represent my country. I hope I have also encouraged children back home to get into football. Malta is a small country, so it will always be hard to produce the best in the world in any sport or industry. I understand I have an important role to play here – to show the rest of the world that a Maltese person can compete against the best and that we should be taken seriously on an international stage."

Hard to leave

Malta's national team goalkeeper, Justin Haber, is also flying the Maltese flag at the moment with another English Championship club, Sheffield United.

As Justin himself confided: "Our young footballers are as talented as young footballers abroad. Our problem has always been lack of professional coaches and the fact that we lead cushy lives in Malta. The weather is fantastic and parents spoil their kids. It's hard to leave that sort of life but that is the wrong mentality and you have to make sacrifices to succeed."

The former Floriana FC player first moved abroad to join Bulgarian side Dobrudzha Dobrich in 1998. "When all

my colleagues in Malta were having comfortable careers, I decided to venture into the unknown," he recalled. "I had to learn the language, and the weather in January was around -20C. I was all alone in the middle of Bulgaria, with just a TV set, having to fend for myself at 18. It made me a more responsible person."

Malta's number one goalkeeper then had spells with French amateur side US Quevilly and later on with Belgium's R. Excelsior Virton. The ambitious goalkeeper then joined Greek club FC Haidari, before joining the Blades last August.

The dream of being professional abroad

The other Maltese players currently flying the flag in other countries are André Schembri, who was Malta's hero in the famous 2-1 EURO 2008 qualifier triumph in October 2006 against Hungary. His two goals against Hungary were followed by another goal in the 2-2 home draw against Turkey in September 2007.

Just before the 2007/08 season, André signed loan terms with German Liga 3 side Eintracht Braunschweig. This season he joined another German Liga 3 side, Carl Zeiss Jena. Schembri recalls his experience in Germany as follows:

"Since I was eight years old, my dream was always to play professional football abroad. I used to watch football with my father and tell him about this dream of mine. After having two trials, with Bari and Aston Villa, my dream finally came true when just before the 2007/08 season I signed terms (on loan from my club Marsaxlokk FC) with Eintracht Braunschweig in the German Liga 3. This season I was loaned again, to Carl Zeiss Jena in the German Liga 3. My target is to keep on going and to succeed in playing for a big club abroad. Here I would like to mention my father, who has always been my mentor."

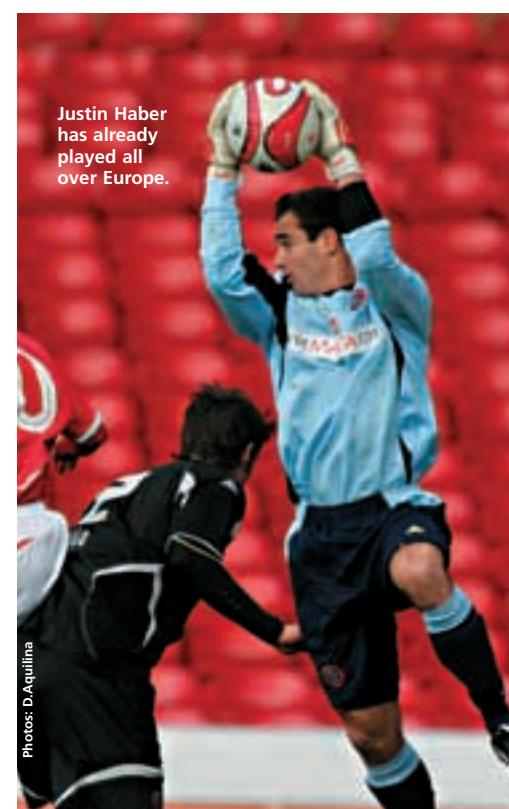
Malta international striker

Etienne Barbara is another player who always dreamt of making it abroad. Just before this season, Barbara joined regional Liga West (IV) side SC Verl in Germany.

This is Barbara's story: "Yes, as a footballer it has always been my dream to play abroad at professional level. I think I should have opted for a move abroad some years earlier. My chance came just before the beginning of this season at the age of 26, thanks mainly to my previous club in Malta, Sliema Wanderers, whom I would like to thank. Obviously the younger you are the better it is in these circumstances, but better late than never!"

"I have always looked forward to playing abroad because it crowns the career of a footballer and it is the main target of a professional player. My experience with SC Verl has been my starting line abroad. I always work hard and strive hard to learn from my coaches and from my colleagues. My target remains that of achieving something better at a much higher level."

Justin Haber has already played all over Europe.



Photos: D'Aquilla



Stefan Giglio enriched his experience with a spell in Bulgaria.

D.Aquilina

"Here in Germany the tempo of the game is always very high, even at Liga 3 level. You improve your game, and you improve physically. I believe I have gained a lot from this current experience in Germany with SC Verl."

"I am convinced that Malta can always produce talent in football abroad. Young talents are always emerging in Malta. But what makes the difference is if these talents are taken good care of from a very young age. Many players lose their path because of various different aspects in their lives. In Malta we should take better care of upcoming youngsters, especially when you think that Malta is such a small country. I believe that this issue is being taken care of in Malta."



Udo Nwoko (in red) decided to go to Portugal.



Carmel Busuttil, an example for Maltese footballers to follow.

Empics Sport/PA Photos

Hard work

"Football abilities are not that much greater here in Germany; it is more the approach to the game, the professional approach to training and the big sacrifices and hard work they put into the game that differs so much from Malta. Here, at a very young age, an upcoming young footballer has got to do it all alone, in contrast to Malta, where we lead an easy life. Having to make that greater effort helps a footballer become more mature both as a person and as a footballer. Yes, I do believe that Maltese players can make it abroad in higher numbers with the right professional attitude."

"My message to young players is to work as hard as you can. A football career is very short, so have fun and enjoy your life, but be more professional in your approach. I know it's not easy but it's the only way. Maltese players can achieve their dreams."

"Today I would say to aspiring young footballers back home in Malta, just go for it at a very young age. If you want to make it in top level football abroad you have got to work as hard as you can, to strive as hard as you can from a very young age. The sooner you try to make it abroad the better."

Other examples

Daniel Bogdanovic, recently back in the Malta national team, is another much-travelled Maltese footballer. The tall (he is over six feet tall) 28-year-old striker first tasted foreign soil just before the 2001/02 season, when he joined Hungarian side Vasas SC.

In 2003 he was back abroad with Bulgarian club Cherno More. After four seasons back in Malta, "Boogie" as he is popularly known on the island, left the sunny island to join Italian Lega Pro second division side Cisco Roma, before moving yet again, this time to Bulgaria

with Lokomotiv Sofia just before the beginning of this season.

Another Maltese international, Andrei Agius, is currently playing on loan for Italian Serie C2 side Igea Virtus. Born in 1986, Andrei emigrated abroad at a very tender age to try his luck with Serbian outfit FK Zemun. Former Serie A club FC Messina Peloro soon captured his services and earlier this season the talented defender saw his contract renewed by the now Serie B club until 2012.

Nigerian-born but naturalised Maltese Udo Nwoko forms part of the top Portuguese club Leixoes SC. Having obtained full Maltese citizenship in August 2007, Udo went on to make his debut for Malta three months later, against Moldova, in a EURO 2008 qualifying match. In 2007 Nwoko joined Leixoes and marked his debut for the Portuguese Liga side by scoring against giants Benfica.

Another much-travelled Maltese international, now back in Malta, is none other than Luke Dimech, who has pulled on the jerseys of a host of English clubs, including Mansfield Town, Chester City and Macclesfield Town, as well as for the Irish side Shamrock Rovers.

Maltese football ambassador Carmel Busuttil spent six years playing in the Belgian first division with KRC Genk from 1988 to 1994, including four seasons as team captain. He was also the club's top scorer for three consecutive seasons and played a total of 183 matches, scoring 57 goals. Both on and off the pitch he was the perfect professional and as such proved to be a most eminent football ambassador for his country.

Other players who enjoyed spells with foreign clubs of relatively good standing in past years are Chucks Nwoko and Stefan Giglio, who both turned out for Bulgaria's CSKA Sofia.

Domenic Aquilina



Giangiorgio Spiess, chairman of the sub-committee, with Joseph Mifsud, chairman of the Players' Status, Transfer and Agents and Match Agents Committee.



George Gregorius continues as the agents' spokesman.



Paul Montmartin, deputy spokesman.

Third meeting between UEFA and licensed UEFA match agents

AFTER BIRMINGHAM IN 1999 AND NYON IN 2003, LICENSED UEFA MATCH AGENTS WERE INVITED TO A THIRD MEETING BY UEFA, OR RATHER BY THE COMPETENT SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE UEFA PLAYERS' STATUS, TRANSFER AND AGENTS AND MATCH AGENTS COMMITTEE, WHICH DEALS WITH MATCH AGENT MATTERS.

The UEFA licence allows the individual licence-holder to arrange matches, tournaments or tours within UEFA's territory involving representative teams and/or clubs affiliated to UEFA member associations. Clubs and member associations use the licensed match agents to find opponents and venues for friendly matches or tournaments, which are mainly pre-season and often linked to a training camp.

Giangiorgio Spiess, the chairman of the sub-committee, welcomed 49 licensed UEFA match agents to Geneva and presented the day's objectives. The meeting offered participants the opportunity to make personal contacts within the circle of match agents as well as with members of the sub-committee and the UEFA administration. Exchanging experiences and views on match agent issues and problems was an important objective, but the main focus was the new draft of the UEFA Match Agent Regulations, which was presented by the head of sports legal services, Marcel Benz.

Significant increase

Mr Benz confirmed that since the introduction of the first UEFA regulations in 1997 the number of match agents had increased significantly. In 1999 there had been 29 match agents registered, by 2003 there had been 54, and in October 2008 the sub-committee had approved the 154th licence. Today they covered 27 of UEFA's 53 member

associations. The current top three were England with 30 licensed match agents, France with 20 and the Netherlands with 18. The new regulations were intended to better protect the licensed match agents, as well as the member associations and clubs, from people without UEFA licences organising friendly matches. The aim was to establish closer collaboration between UEFA and its member associations, which would include a workshop for the appointed people within the associations. Mr Benz also stressed that the agents were now free to choose whether to take out professional liability insurance or a bank guarantee to protect the contracting parties against any financial damage that could occur. The rights of the licensed match agents had also been increased under the new regulations and, finally, the application and dispute resolution procedures had been

redrafted, as the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne would now take the final decision on any disputes concerning match agents.

Positive comments

After this presentation the participants were invited to ask questions and give their feedback on the new draft. The main comments were positive, although licensed UEFA match agents clearly expect UEFA to better protect them against agents without UEFA licences. They also informed UEFA that they were considering creating their own association of licensed match agents, which would help them to share experiences and communicate with UEFA.

The last item on the agenda was the election of a spokesperson and a deputy, both of whom would attend UEFA sub-committee meetings as observers, to defend the interests of the licensed match agents. The current spokesperson, George Gregorius from Cyprus, was re-elected for a new five-year term and Paul Montmartin of France was elected deputy spokesperson.

Mr Spiess then concluded the meeting by informing the participants that the UEFA Executive Committee would be asked to approve the new regulations in December for entry into force on 1 January 2009 and he thanked everybody for their participation and contributions. He wished the match agents all the best and looked forward to news of a match agents' association.





Hervé Hamon-MJSVA

Sports ministers and leaders at the summit in Biarritz.



Vélez/AFP/Getty Images

Michel Platini and Joseph S. Blatter defended the interests of sport, as did Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee.



Hervé Hamon-MJSVA

European affairs

Summit meeting in Biarritz

**A KEY MEETING OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,
THE INFORMAL GATHERING OF MEMBER STATES' SPORTS MINISTERS IN BIARRITZ
ON 27 AND 28 NOVEMBER, PROVIDED THE UEFA PRESIDENT, MICHEL PLATINI, WITH
AN OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER A KEYNOTE SPEECH FOCUSING ON VARIOUS ISSUES
THAT ARE CRUCIAL FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR SPORT, SUCH AS THE SAFEGUARDING
OF PRINCIPLES AT THE HEART OF THE SPECIFIC NATURE AND AUTONOMY OF SPORT,
FINANCIAL FAIR PLAY, STRENGTHENING THE BAN ON INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS
OF UNDER-18S AND THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING OF YOUNG FOOTBALLERS.**

The values of a fairer, more open and more friendly European game were once again to the fore in Michel Platini's speech at the meeting, during which he defended the position of sport alongside the IOC president, Jacques Rogge, and the FIFA president, Joseph S. Blatter.

The UEFA president began by urging all European political leaders to adopt an approach that took into account the specificity of sport in a more harmonious way: "Sporting equity and competition balance cannot be left at the mercy of arbitrary market laws."

Appropriate legal framework

He also stressed the need to define an appropriate legal framework in order to ensure that the application of Community law to sport does not threaten its social, cultural and educational functions or its organisational structures: "As good European citizens, we are asking you to help us to persuade the European Commission to adopt guidelines that will enable us to comply with European law without compromising our autonomy – for we need more legal certainty in order to move forward. This is the only way we can protect

the European sports model, based on a pyramid structure, financial solidarity and the principle of promotion and relegation that is synonymous with competitions that are open to all, small and large, rich and less rich..."

Strengthening UEFA's licensing system

Advocating fairer European competitions, the UEFA president pointed out that "*Fiscal rules in Europe are extremely diverse, while systems for the licensing, monitoring and financial management of football clubs involve a myriad of different concepts and regulations,*" before adding that UEFA would not impose its licensing system on the national associations for their own competitions in accordance with the subsidiarity principle. "*However, what UEFA can do – and we are seriously considering it – is strengthen and improve our licensing system for our own club competitions. In this way, we hope to contribute to financial fair play and begin to meet the expectations of the many parties involved in our sport.*"

Michel Platini then expressed in no uncertain terms his concern for the protection and training of young footballers: "*Today, child trafficking is a global and a European problem. I will not mince my words because the situation is serious. What else do you call a phenomenon which takes 12 or 13-year-old children across oceans and borders, snatching them from their home environment and culture in order to join a business in return for payment? That is what is happening in football.*" The UEFA president announced a salutary solution to this problem, which has plagued European football for a number of years: "*Together with FIFA, we are looking at ways of stopping this trafficking, but measures can already be taken to ban the international transfer of minors,*



Hervé Hamon-MJSVA



Germany won bronze at the Women's U-17 World Cup.

Getty Images



The goals came thick and fast in the match for third place between Germany and France in the Women's U-20 World Cup.

Bongarts/Getty Images for DFB

Competitions and other activities

Double bronze for Germany

even within the European Union. Many European states have very strict rules preventing clubs from "poaching" players from their rivals' training academies, with sporting sanctions imposed on offending clubs. But these rules do not exist at European Union level."

Devastating consequences

As well as the drop in performance levels suffered by players who are transferred abroad before they officially reach adulthood, the UEFA president highlighted the psychological damage caused by such a move: *"What clubs cannot do in their own countries, they can do to their European neighbours or in Africa or South America, with devastating consequences for the training academies and young players' psychological well-being and education. When one realises that less than one in ten children who join a training academy go on to have a professional career, one can understand the precariousness of their situation and the importance of an education that prepares them for life beyond football. It is in this context that we would like to be able to ban international transfers of minors within the European Union, as they are already prohibited outside the European Union. This is not a case of restricting the freedom of movement of workers, but of providing urgent assistance to children at risk."*

Firm, balanced and concerted action is required in all of these areas in order to support the core values promoted by European football which, unfortunately, have been somewhat undermined. There is no doubt that, as the UEFA president said in closing, this meeting in Biarritz represented *"an important, historic step in the safeguarding of European sporting values, which are the values of Europe itself."*

THE FIRST FIFA U-17 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP TOOK PLACE IN NEW ZEALAND FROM 28 OCTOBER TO 16 NOVEMBER. IT WAS WON BY KOREA DPR, WHO BEAT THE USA 2-1 IN THE FINAL AFTER EXTRA TIME.

The two finalists had dashed the hopes of Europe's two remaining representatives in the semi-finals, when the champions-to-be beat England 2-1 and the USA saw off Germany by the same result, despite Germany having opened the score.

In the match for third place, played in Auckland, Germany quickly got the upper hand and defeated England with a convincing 3-0 win.

Europe's other two participants in this first women's world Under-17 championship were Denmark, who finished top of their group, before losing against the future champions in the quarter-finals, and France, who finished their group equal on points with the USA, who they drew against, but whose inferior goal difference stopped them from going any further.

■ In the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup played in Chile from 19 November to 7 December, it was also at the semi-final stage that the dreams of Europe's strongest participants were shattered. In another parallel, Germany also finished this competition in third place, beating France in a goal-packed match that ended 5-3.

And the similarities between the two tournaments did not stop there, with the line-up for the final of the Under-20 competition matching that of the Under-17 event. However, this time, the USA came out on top, beating Korea DPR 2-1.

In the semi-finals, Germany and France both lost by one-goal margins against the USA and Korea DPR respectively.

England made it as far as the quarter-finals, where they lost against the USA. Europe's other representatives, Norway, finished only third in their group.



Dzsenifer Marozsan (Germany) shields the ball chased by Jodie Jacobs (England) in the third-place play-off in the Women's U-17 World Cup.

Getty Images



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Rachel Corsie, captain of the Scottish Under-19 team that won the fair play trophy in 2008, assisted with the draw in November alongside Viacheslav Koloskov, member of the UEFA Executive Committee, and Andy Roxburgh, technical director.



Denmark and Germany shared the U17 fair play trophy in 2008. Their captains received their teams' prizes from Viacheslav Koloskov.

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UEFA Women's Cup Duisbourg knock out the titleholders

The four winners of the second qualifying round groups in the 8th UEFA Women's Cup contested the quarter-finals against the group runners-up.



In the all-German tie between 1. FFC Frankfurt, the titleholders, and FCR 2001 Duisbourg, making their debut in the competition, the newcomers made their presence well and truly felt, winning both legs (3-1 and 2-0). The three other winning quarter-finalists were also the group winners from the previous round and, like Duisbourg, Zvezda 2005 from Russia and Olympique Lyonnais from France won both legs of their respective quarter-finals. Zvezda 2005 beat Brøndby (Denmark) 4-2 and 3-1, while Olympique Lyonnais saw off Bardolino from Verona (Italy) 5-0 and 4-1. The last of the semi-finalists, Umeå IK (Sweden), who finished as runners-up last season, lost the first leg of their quarter-final against Arsenal LFC in England before getting more than even in the return leg in Sweden with a 6-0 win. In the semi-finals, which take place at the end of March/beginning of April, Umeå, who won the UEFA Women's Cup in 2003 and 2004, meet the rookies, Zvezda 2005, while Duisbourg play Olympique Lyonnais.



Dinamo
Moskva
(Tatu, in blue)
and Kairat
Almaty have
qualified
again for the
final round
of the UEFA
Futsal Cup.

Sportsfile

Two Russian clubs in the final stages of the UEFA Futsal Cup

The elite round of the 8th UEFA Futsal Cup took place in November in the form of four mini-tournaments played in Ekaterinburg, Charleroi, Zagreb and Lisbon, each involving four teams.



The final round in April will look a lot like last season's, with three of the four finalists making a return appearance: the titleholders, MFK Viz-Sinara Ekaterinburg, as the only elite round mini-tournament hosts to have qualified; MFK Dinamo Moskva, bronze medal winners in 2008, who dominated the mini-tournament in Zagreb; and Kairat Almaty, who finished last year's competition in fourth place and won the mini-tournament in Charleroi thanks to having a better goal difference than the local club, with whom they finished equal on points. Missing from this year's line-up are ElPozo Murcia FS, losing finalists last season, who did not qualify for the competition this time. The fourth finalist is, however, another Spanish team, Interviú Madrid, winners of the UEFA Futsal Cup in 2004 and 2006, and of the mini-tournament in Lisbon.

For the second qualifying round of the European Women's Under-19 Championship, the draw produced the following group configurations:

Group 1: Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Iceland

Group 2: Austria, Norway, Belgium, Ukraine

Group 3: France, Azerbaijan, Wales, Portugal

Group 4: Germany, Republic of Ireland, Russia, Slovakia

Group 5: Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, Romania

Group 6: Hungary, Spain, England, Finland

The mini-tournaments take place between 23 and 28 April. The six group winners and the best runner-up go through to the final round, being hosted by Belarus in July, for which the host team qualifies automatically.



In the European Women's Under-17 Championship, the second round mini-tournaments take place in March and April in the

following groups:

Group 1: Ukraine, Norway, Sweden, FYR Macedonia

Group 2: Czech Republic, Spain, Belgium, England

Group 3: Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Hungary

Group 4: Netherlands, France, Denmark, Wales

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The group winners go through to the final round, which is being organised by the UEFA administration in Nyon, Switzerland, from 22 to 25 June.



UEFA/pjwoods.ch

Jack Cork, captain of the English European Under-19 Championship team that won the fair play trophy in 2008, assists Jim Boyce with the draw for the elite round.



Miroslaw Krogulec

Luxembourg and Cyprus in the final of the Special Olympics tournament held in Cyprus.



Miroslaw Krogulec

A cheque for EUR 250,000 from UEFA to Special Olympics.

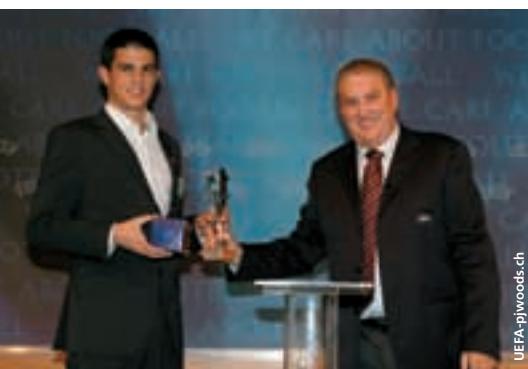
Men's U17 and U19 competitions reach the elite rounds



In the European Under-19 Championship, the remaining participants were drawn into seven groups in December.

Group 1: **Serbia**, Hungary, Finland, Austria
Group 2: Russia, Netherlands, **Slovenia**, Belarus
Group 3: Turkey, **Portugal**, Greece, Denmark
Group 4: **Belgium**, Switzerland, Republic of Ireland, Sweden
Group 5: **France**, Romania, Norway, Latvia
Group 6: Scotland, **England**, Slovakia, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Group 7: Germany, Spain, **Estonia**, Czech Republic

The matches take place in May/June and the seven winners then go to Ukraine for the final round from 21 July to 2 August, where the line-up is completed by the hosts.



UEFA/pjwoods.ch

Danijel Aleksic, captain of Serbia's U17 team, receives the European U17 fair play trophy for 2007/08 from Jim Boyce, vice-chairman of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee.



In the elite round of the European Under-17 Championship, matches will be played in the following group configurations:

Group 1: Poland, **Greece**, Slovenia, Switzerland
Group 2: **Spain**, Czech Republic, Belgium, Kazakhstan
Group 3: Croatia, Netherlands, **Luxembourg**, Azerbaijan

Group 4: Denmark, **France**, Norway, Belarus

Group 5: **Austria**, Scotland, Italy, Georgia

Group 6: Finland, **Turkey**, Romania, Wales

Group 7: Portugal, Serbia, England, **Hungary**

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The seven group winners join the hosts for the final round in Germany from 6 to 18 May.

The results of the draws for the 2009/10 competitions will be published in the next issue of uefadirect. They can also already be found on uefa.com.

Two Special Olympics football events in Cyprus

The ninth Special Olympics football coordinators meeting was held on 2/3 November and was attended by 43 representatives from 32 countries.

Among the guest speakers were Michel Sablon (Belgium Football Federation and UEFA Jira Panel), James Isaac (Tottenham Hotspur Foundation), Brad Douglas (Coerver Coaching Nordic) and Mike Smith (Special Olympics Global Football). The conference was opened by Special Olympics Cyprus footballer Nicolas Wu and the president of Special Olympics Cyprus, Yianis Panayi, in Ayia Napa.

The main themes of the meeting were coach recruitment and education, unified football, woman's football and cooperation with associations and clubs. Football coordinators also shared best practices and discussed future Special Olympics football development policies for their respective countries.

The coordinators were invited to attend the Special Olympics European Small Nations seven-a-side football tournament, which was also hosted by Special Olympics Cyprus from 2 to 7 November. During the opening ceremony, held on 3 November in Nicosia, UEFA presented a EUR 250,000 cheque to Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia

(SOEE). The money will be used to develop Special Olympics football during the 2008/2009 season. Patrick Gasser, head of Corporate Social Responsibility at UEFA, presented the symbolic cheque to Mariusz Damentko, sports director at Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia. UEFA has been supporting the SOEE football development project for the last ten years.

Ten teams coming from Cyprus, Malta, Greece, Israel, Montenegro, Estonia, Gibraltar, Luxembourg and Belgium played on four excellent grass football pitches in Ayia Napa. After the preliminary round, teams were divided into three groups to contest the main competition from 4 to 6 November. There was one day off, when all the delegations enjoyed some sightseeing and the warm hospitality of the people of Cyprus.

After the final matches on 6 November each player was awarded a medal or ribbon by a distinguished guest representing local authorities and sports organisations. Sponsors and supporters were applauded later in the evening at the main square of Ayia Napa in front of hundreds of locals and tourists.



Ozler/AFP/Getty Images

Roberto Carlos, Fenerbahçe's Brazilian player, points to the Sükrü Saracoğlu stadium, where the UEFA Cup final will be played on 20 May. The visual identity for the final was unveiled in Istanbul on 2 December. At the centre of the mosaic is the Bosphorus, linking two continents and symbolising the meeting of the two worlds of the finalists.



The Coverciano technical centre always attracts many specialists.



Coverciano technical centre 50th anniversary

ON 6 NOVEMBER 2008, THE ITALIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION (FIGC) MARKED THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS TECHNICAL CENTRE IN COVERCIANO, NEAR FLORENCE. THE CELEBRATIONS CONTINUED ALL MONTH.

The first event organised to mark the 50th anniversary of Italian football's centre of excellence was an international UEFA Top Executive Programme round table, held in Rome and Florence from 4 to 7 November. This informal forum brought together the presidents and general secretaries of ten national associations – Andorra, Armenia, Cyprus, Spain, Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, the Czech Republic and San Marino – accompanied by a UEFA delegation of vice-presidents Geoffrey Thompson, Angel María Villar Llona and Marios Lefkaritis, and the general secretary, David Taylor.

At the technical centre, the participants visited the football museum, inspected the football pitches and

admired the technical facilities, which have been continually adapted during the last half a century to keep up with technical demands.

Media seminar

This international forum was followed by a continuing professional development seminar jointly organised by the FIGC and the Italian sports press association. This joint initiative brought together some 80 journalists from all over Italy to debate the topic of *"football and those who report on it"*. Carlo Ancelotti and Renzo Ulivieri attended the seminar on behalf of the coaches and Gianluigi Buffon and Marco Donadel spoke for players, bolstered by the presence of former AC Milan midfielder

Demetrio Albertini, now vice-president of the FIGC. Members of the financial supervisory committee explained the controls the FIGC has in place for clubs. Maurizio Laudi, a member of the supervisory committee and the UEFA Control and Disciplinary Body, and Sergio Artico, the president of the FIGC's disciplinary committee, discussed sports law. Professor Paolo Zeppilli talked about the emergence of motor neurone disease and the involvement of the football family in medical research. Pierluigi Collina, who is in charge of referee selection, defended the referees and their work, and the chief of police, Antonio Manganelli, provided new, encouraging statistics on efforts to eliminate violence inside and outside stadiums. The president of the FIGC, Giancarlo Abete, and the president of the Italian Professional Football League, Antonio Matarrese, drew the seminar to a close by thanking the president of the Italian sports press association, Luigi Ferrajolo.

Coach awards

Coverciano's jubilee was also celebrated by the local political authorities on 17 November. On the same day, the technical centre hosted the Panchina d'Oro (golden bench) awards ceremony, an annual event that allows the coaches of Serie A and Serie B to honour the best technician of the previous season in their respective divisions. This year, the golden award went to former FC Internazionale Milano coach Roberto Mancini and in Serie B the silver award, or Panchina d'Argento, was given to former AC Chievo Verona coach Giuseppe Iachini. The ceremony was attended by Giancarlo Abete, the FIGC president; Marcello Lippi, the head coach; and Azeglio Vicini, head of the technical department.

Coverciano has been and will hopefully remain a benchmark for Italian football, but looking ahead it also hopes to attract members of other associations so they can share their football expertise and passion.

Barbara Moschini

Azeglio Vicini (left) and Giancarlo Abete present the Panchina d'Oro to Roberto Mancini.

Photos: SAE



AUSTRIA

• PETER KLINGMÜLLER •

Austria's Under-17s unbeaten in 2008

The team of the moment at the Austrian Football Association are the Under-17s. Made up of players born on or after 1 January 1992 and coached by former SV Austria Salzburg player Hermann Stadler, the team won an impressive eight out of ten matches in the season just gone. They were held to draws by France and Germany but managed not to lose a single match. Equally striking is their 34-4 goal difference. The youth team, who have their hearts set on qualifying for the 2009 European Under-17 Championship finals this spring, won against FYR Macedonia (4-0), Estonia



GEPA Pictures

If we can keep working like this, we can beat anyone. I don't mean to sound arrogant – we have a lot of respect for our opponents. But we reckon our chances of making it to Germany [for the next European Under-17 Championship] are good. ■

Austria's U17s were undefeated in 2008.



AZERBAIJAN

• MIKAYIL NARIMANOGLU •

Ball festival in Lankaran

The Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA), together with Hyundai Auto Azerbaijan, organised a ball festival on 14 November at the Heydar Aliyev park in Lankaran.

The event involved 320 children juggling with their feet. In his opening speech, the AFFA's general secretary, Elxan Mammadov, explained that this was one of many projects the association had organised under the 2005-2015 state programme for football development in Azerbaijan, endorsed by the president of the republic, Ilham Aliyev. Mr Mammadov in particular said that the increasing numbers of participants made these events really festive occasions and he hoped the festival in Lankaran would be as successful as those in Baku on 17 December 2007 and in Ganja on 12 April 2008.

Rahman Shabanov, who won the Baku ball festival competition, is being sent to study in Ukraine with the AFFA's support.

Suleyman Mikayilov, president of the Lankaran executive, thanked the AFFA administration for organising this football event in their city. Once the official opening

(7-0), Slovakia (2-1), Switzerland (3-0), Belgium (2-0), Northern Ireland (1-0), Liechtenstein (11-0) and Germany (1-0, two days after a 2-2 draw also against Germany, both in friendlies in Bavaria).

Many of Hermann Stadler's selection already play abroad, with David Alaba and Christoph Knasmüller at FC Bayern München, Bernhard Janeczek at VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach, captain Tobias Kainz at SC Heerenveen and Marco Djuricin at Hertha BSC Berlin. At just 15, Philipp Prosenik is causing particular excitement: he scored his first goal as an Under-17 international during one of the friendlies against Germany, and Austria has high hopes for him. His father, Christian, himself capped 24 times by Austria between 1991 and 1999, must be thrilled, as must his club, SK Rapid Wien.

Looking at the year ahead, Hermann Stadler is extremely confident, not just because of his star striker but because of the strength of the whole Under-17 team: "If

we can keep working like this, we can beat anyone. I don't mean to sound arrogant – we have a lot of respect for our opponents. But we reckon our chances of making it to Germany [for the next European Under-17 Championship] are good. ■

was over, the keepy-uppy competition kicked off.

The jury consisted of Elxan Mammadov, the AFFA's general secretary; Iskandar Javadov, the president of the regional football federation and member of the AFFA executive committee; Siyavush Ibrahimov, football coach and honoured worker of physical culture and sports; international referee Rustam Rahimov; and Vusal Javadov, representative of the Lankaran executive.

Asim Khudiyev, an international referee observer, supervised the competition.

Third place went to Emil Ahmadli, second to Shahin Huseynli and first to Elchin Gasimov.

The AFFA general secretary, Elxan Mammadov; the RFF president, Iskandar Javadov; and Hyundai Auto Azerbaijan representative Kenul Karimova congratulated the winners and awarded prizes. ■



The art of juggling without being put off by the scenery.



BELARUS

• YULIA ZENKOVICH •

Discussing nagging problems at the round table

The Belarus Football Federation (BFF), together with one of the leading national newspapers, has taken an unprecedented move. This year has been very successful for our football and the game has become extremely popular in Belarus. People talk about football everywhere. Even those who have never watched a single game want to go to the stadium and try to participate in the discussions. But although we have seen many positive changes, it is not all sunshine and roses. In order to discuss the problems of our national football and to find the keys to their solution, it was decided to invite those who really care about this beautiful game to the BFF's house of football. Thus arose the idea of a round table where everyone could directly express their opinions. The list of participants was long: the governing body of the BFF, the head coach of the national team, representatives of the top clubs, leaders of supporters' groups, directors of the leading newspapers and TV channels, and others. The round table



A round table to find solutions.

found a broad response among the media who attended the event and reported on it as having been successful. The main questions were how to improve the level of the national championship and to attract fans to the stadiums, how to improve the quality of sports programmes, and how to use this wave of popularity to develop youth football. At first, the participants were just naming the problems without offering any solutions (maybe the participants were a little bit afraid, sensing the importance of the event) but later on, thanks to Bernd Stange (head coach of the national team) and the friendly atmosphere at the round table, the discussion became rather lively. Several decisions that can bring even more positive changes were taken. Everyone agreed that this action was a positive step towards the development of national football. It was decided that similar events would be organised next year. In order to be more effective, each will be devoted to one separate question and one problem. ■

BFF

AFFA



BELGIUM

• PIERRE CORNEZ •

Eden Hazard, new jewel of Belgian football

For a long time now, many football experts have been praising the talent of a young Belgian offensive midfielder named Eden Hazard. Along with Spain's Bojan Krkic, Hazard caused a sensation at the 2007 European Under-17 Championship and attracted rave reviews.

As his premonitory first name suggests, whether by chance or not, this 17-year-old seemed destined to send football lovers to seventh heaven and he is already beginning to fulfil that promise, thanks to his impressive natural talent and the progress he has made.

Eden, born on 7 January 1991, trained for several years at the Belgian club Tubize before he was spotted by scouts from Lille, whom he joined in 2005.

His new club soon realised that he had a big future ahead of him, despite his modest

stature (1.70 metres). Eden has many intrinsic qualities, such as the ability to play with either foot, speed and perceptiveness.

These obvious abilities could not remain hidden for long and Eden made his Ligue 1

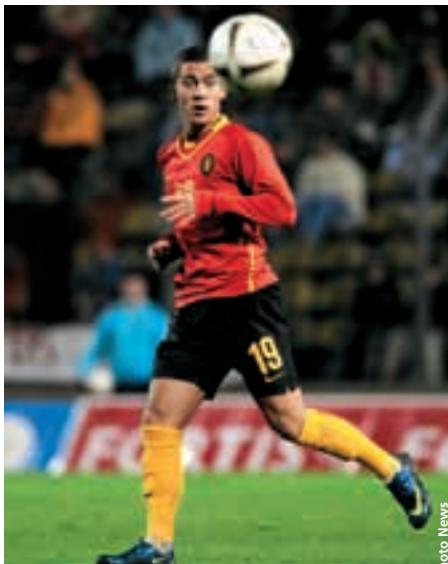


Photo News

Eden Hazard in action against Luxembourg.

debut against Nancy on 25 November 2007, when he was still only 16. He netted his first goal in the French first division against Auxerre on 20 September 2008, becoming one of the northern French club's youngest ever goalscorers (another Belgian, Kevin Mirallas, was the youngest). His success was rewarded when the club extended his contract until 2012.

This precocious talent was also recognised at senior international level when Belgian national coach René Vandereycken picked him for the first time for the friendly against Luxembourg on 19 November. When he came on as a 67th-minute substitute, he became the seventh youngest player to represent the Red Devils. The occasion certainly did not get to him, as he proved when a magnificent dribble took him past three opponents before his shot was saved by the goalkeeper.

Clearly, Eden Hazard still has much to learn and the road ahead is a long one, but we should not worry too much, since players as famous as Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Fernando Torres, to mention just a few, also made their senior international debuts at a young age and being selected so early has certainly not done them any harm – quite the contrary. ■



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

• FUAD KRAVAC •

Miroslav Blazevic's great achievement

There are not many head coaches who can say that they have led a national team 100 times in their careers. Miroslav Ciro Blazevic, head coach of the Bosnia-Herzegovina national team, has, however, done just that. The friendly match in Maribor against Slovenia was Blazevic's 100th match as coach of the national team. He was rewarded with a 4-3 win too. In his career, Blazevic has coached four national teams: Switzerland, Croatia, Iran and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"I can remember my first match as a coach. It was a long time ago, 32 years ago to be precise, when I led Switzerland out to play a friendly against Austria in Linz, which we lost," Blazevic said.

He was in charge of the Swiss national team for only two matches, however. Then from 1994 to 2000, he led Croatia 73 times, winning bronze in the 1998 World Cup finals in France. He

made 19 appearances on the bench as coach of Iran and has now been in charge of the Bosnia-Herzegovina national team for six matches so far.

"It is difficult to pick my favourite match. However, winning against the Netherlands in Paris, when Croatia won bronze, is the one that means the most to me," said the current coach of the Bosnia-Herzegovina national team.

He also remembers the 2002 World Cup qualifying match at the Azadi stadium in Teheran against Saudi Arabia, which Iran won 2-0: *"Over 125,000 Iranians were shouting my name, long after that win,"* he recalls.

He has been on the winning side 49 times, beaten 25 times and held to a draw 26 times. He has led his different teams out against 48 different opponents. He has played teams from all continents.

"The best gift that I have received for this milestone was the victory of Bosnia-Herzegovina against Slovenia," he said.

The Bosnia-Herzegovina Under-21 team have also been in action of late. Branimir Tulic's team beat Montenegro 3-2 at home in Bugojno. Meanwhile, the women's national team took part in a friendly tournament organised by UEFA and the Football Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo. Bulgaria won the tournament, thanks to a 2-1 win against Bosnia-Herzegovina and a 3-2 win against Kazakhstan. Bosnia-Herzegovina got the upper hand over Kazakhstan, beating them 1-0.

The first part of the Bosnia-Herzegovina premier league championship ended after the 15th round. Leading the way are Zrinjski from Mostar with 35 points, six points ahead of Slavija, in second place. The leading scorer is Slavija's Darko Spalevic, who is on 11 goals, ahead of Admir Rasic from Sarajevo (9 goals) and Zoran Kokot from Slavija (8 goals).

The Bosnia-Herzegovina cup semi-finals will be played in the spring, when Zrinjski will meet Slavija, and Siroki Brijeg will play Sloboda. ■



Miroslav Blazevic has been in the coach's seat for 100 matches.



BULGARIA

• BORISLAV KONSTANTINOV •

Visit of the UEFA president

The UEFA president, Michel Platini, paid a short visit to Bulgaria, responding to an invitation from the president of the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU), Borislav Michaylov. During his visit Mr Platini was received by the Bulgarian prime minister, Sergey Stanev. Mr Stanev affirmed his government's commitment to building a national football centre in Sofia with funds received by Bulgaria from the UEFA HatTrick I and HatTrick II programmes. It is estimated that the project will cost over EUR 4 million to complete.

Two hours after their meeting with the prime minister, the UEFA and BFU presidents visited the construction site and officially broke the ground to launch the project. When finished, the centre will have four full-size football fields (two with artificial turf) as well as a hotel, recreational facilities and a sports medical centre.

Mr Platini also had time to give a 94-minute press conference, during which he answered 36 questions from media representatives. On the same occasion, Mr Michaylov officially announced the intent of Bulgaria and Romania to present a joint bid to host the European Championship final round in 2020.

During the UEFA visit, official discussions were also held between BFU executives and the UEFA delegation, led by the UEFA president and UEFA vice-president Marios Lefkaritis. Both sides acknowledged that the BFU and UEFA have a great working relationship. The Bulgarian side expressed gratitude

to Mr Platini and his colleagues for their assistance in bringing the governing processes, policies and procedures of the BFU into line with European standards. This is an important achievement, as the BFU will hold its regular congress at the end of January and elections for the presidency and new members of the executive committee will be held at that time. ■



Michel Platini breaks the ground where the new national football centre will be built.



CROATIA

• ANTE PAVLOVIC •

Ever faithful

As 2008 drew to a close, the Croatian Football Federation (CFF) received several significant awards and acknowledgments. Particularly worthy of mention are Croatia's annual national Franjo Bucar sports award, which this year was awarded to the CFF's president, Vlatko Marković, and the special acknowledgment given by the Croatian chamber of commerce and Croatian radio-television of the exceptional contribution of the Croatian national football team in promoting Croatian tourism worldwide. These awards confirm our assessment of a year of successful work within our federation. And we are entering the new year with a programme of activities which is even more abundant in every area.

Developing the quality of football, especially through youth work and the education of professional staff, as well as the success of all the national teams and the wide area of grassroots are all very important.

The annual winter camp for talented young players is about to start, while the fourth indoor championship of Croatian first division football clubs is taking place in Zadar. Several large halls have been constructed for the World Handball Championship, which increases our possibilities for organising futsal competitions for clubs and national teams.



Dragan Primorac (right), minister of science, education and sports, presents the Franjo Bucar award to Vlatko Marković, president of the Croatian FA.

In another area, a beach soccer committee has been set up. The construction of several courts in accordance with the FIFA regulations is being planned, as well as the creation of clubs and the organisation of the first Croatian national championship. We would like to develop this type of football as quickly as possible, especially because we have the natural conditions for it.

We are also pleased to report that FC Hajduk Split successfully completed a change in its status in accordance with the sports act and has become our first professional club – a sports joint-stock company. Interest in the club's stocks was quite high. Several other clubs are preparing to make the same change.

Meanwhile, supporters of the Croatian national team have set up a social club whose motto is "Ever Faithful". We consider this to be an important initiative. Supporters, the CFF and sponsors are working hand in hand and the club is improving and extending its activity. At the UEFA HatTrick workshop held in Minsk, which was attended by UEFA representatives and seven other national associations, the CFF delegation presented the founding, organisational structure, internet communication and working programmes of its social club. UEFA praised the scheme and proposed the CFF as a good example of best practice from which other associations could also benefit. We are translating the presentation into several languages.

The CFF's cooperation with clubs founded by Croats in the world and with Croatian national minorities in Europe continues. This year, the second European championship for Croatian national minorities is taking place in Croatia in the summer. ■



ENGLAND

• JOSEPH OAKESHOTT •

Referees in Rio in November

English referees travelled to Rio de Janeiro for the first ever course run by The Football Association in Brazil. The workshop for elite referees was organised in conjunction with the South American confederation, CONMEBOL, and the Brazilian Football Confederation, the CBF.

Thirty-three of Brazil's elite referees and referee assistants attended the four-day seminar held at the Escola Brasileira de Futebol from 24 to 28 November. The speakers were The FA's head of senior referee development,

Neale Barry, Premier League referee Mike Riley, and The FA's regional referee manager, Ray Olivier. The English officials delivered the course as part of the FA-CONMEBOL cooperation programme, signed in 2003, which sends specialists from England to South America to deliver seminars on stadium safety and security, refereeing, tournament management, marketing and football development.

The technical sessions examined the theories behind refereeing in topics such as positioning and movement, calling offside, recognising fouls and getting the big decisions right, with examples from decisions in English football leading to much debate by the participants. The importance of fitness was explained and demonstrated and the participants had an opportunity to practise several training exercises that would help raise their fitness levels in view of the demanding FIFA referee tests. The on-field training session was designed to put into practice the skills identified and was based on the success of similar referee workshops delivered by The FA in Ecuador, Venezuela and Peru.

The seminar was also attended by the general secretary of the CBF, Marco Antonio Teixeira, and members of the CBF referees committee, highlighting the confederation's continued support of referee development in Brazil. ■



Referees have to be fit.



FRANCE

• MATTHIEU BRELLE-ANDRADE •

French and German technical departments reinforce links

From 8 to 10 December, the French Football Federation (FFF) hosted a meeting in Paris involving its technical department and their counterparts from the German Football Association (DFB).

It fell within the framework of the agreement signed in October 2007 by the presidents of the FFF and DFB, Jean-Pierre Escallettes and Theo Zwanziger, which aims to strengthen ties and cooperation between the two national football associations. The topics discussed at the December meeting concerned, in the main, the technical policies of the two associations, their training



The technicians come to the table.

FFF:FR



LIECHTENSTEIN

• BENI BRUGGMANN •

Difficult children

As part of the Liechtenstein, Sarganserland and Werdenberg KiFu project, coaches drop in, many times throughout the year, on training sessions given to six to ten-year-olds. The verdict from the first year was that there were lots of goodwill, good ideas and well-tailored exercises, but two or three children managed to ruin it for the rest.

The Liechtenstein Football Federation therefore decided to organise a training course on the topic of difficult children. Klaus Käppeli, an experienced children's football coach, Swiss Football Association instructor and psychologist, put together the course and gave an introductory session to explain what it entailed. Coaches Meini Ackermann, Herbert Bernegger, Mario Bislin, Martin Corradini, Bernhard Hornig, Peter Rietberger and Martin Widmer then guided the different groups through the discussion sessions. About 100 people took part in the two half-days, representing the majority of the children's coaches involved in the KiFu

project and about 20 others with a particular interest.

Käppeli first addressed the question, when is a child difficult? He made a very good point that the child does not make you angry, their behaviour does. The cause of the behaviour could lie with the child or their family, the coach, the coaching or the child's team-mates. Käppeli went on to identify children's needs in football training: they want to be seen and heard, to feel liked and welcomed by the coach, to be both helped and challenged, and to have fun.

The groups discussed real-life case studies taken from the participating instructors' experience. Mottos on how to deal with difficult children offered guidance: make them feel valued, not set upon; describe their behaviour, don't judge it; accept them as they are; look them in the eyes when communicating; talk to them and share your own feelings. Lively discussions showed the participants were not new to these problems, but now they are better equipped to deal with them. And after hearing so much about difficult children, the last piece of advice was a valuable one: really care for the few difficult children but also, more importantly, treasure the many good, happy, receptive ones. ■



ISRAEL

• SUZIN NIMROD •

Women referee top Toto Cup match

For the first time in Israel, a Toto Cup match between two top division teams has been refereed by a quartet of women.



An all-female team of referees for a cup match.

Referee Lilach Asulin, assistant referees Sivan Peretz and Tzvia Malka, and fourth official Meitar Shemesh made history when they came together to referee the match between Maccabi Haifa and Bnei Yehuda.

Asulin (36), who became an international referee in 2008, drew two yellow cards and made sure the match ran smoothly. She has already refereed an international match this season – Armenia v Bosnia-Herzegovina – and her performance was highly praised.

"I'm sure that the Israel Football Association and the referees' union will continue to judge us on our professional skills rather than our gender. We have proved that we are even capable of refereeing top division matches," Asulin said after that match.

On her refereeing ambitions she said: *"Regarding my international aspirations, I really want to referee a World Cup match. At home, as soon as I have the opportunity to referee in the Israeli premier league I'll be happy. This means much more to me than any achievement abroad."* ■



LITHUANIA

• VAIJA ZIZAITE •

2008 season came to an end

The cup and gold medals for the Lithuanian top division championship were presented to FK Ekranas. FBK Kaunas finished in second place and FK Vatra in third. As is the tradition, Lithuanian football experts also voted for the best players and coaches in different categories.

The player of the year award was won by Lithuanian international Marius Stankevicius, while Deimantas Bicka of FK Ekranas was voted best player in the championship and Valdas Urbonas, also from FK Ekranas, took the coach of the year award. The title of youth player of the year went to another FK Ekranas player, Vytautas Cerniauskas.



Marius Stankevicius (4) in action.

It was the 44th time that such polls had been held. Marius Stankevicius, who plays his club football for UC Sampdoria, won the poll ahead of Tomas Danilevicius (AS Livorno), player of the year for the past two years, and CSKA Moscow defender Deividas Semberas.

In 2008, the Lithuanian Football Federation, after consultation with the football clubs, decided not to organise an end-of-season celebration. Instead, it bought 1,000 footballs for 50,000 litas (EUR 14,500) and shared them among the regions whose clubs finished the top and second divisions in prize-winning places. LFF representatives visited every club in question to present the footballs in person and attend the club's official celebrations. ■



FYR MACEDONIA

• ZORAN NIKOLOVSKI •

New stadium with optimal capacity

Fifteen years since the national team of FYR Macedonia came into being, the government, led by the prime minister, Nikola Gruevski, has decided to rebuild the city stadium in Skopje, where the national team plays all its European Championship and World Cup qualifying matches.

"This reconstruction will resolve our problems and enable high-quality international matches to be organised involving our national team and clubs," said the



Work on the stadium in Skopje is advancing.

president of the football federation of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, Hari Hadzi-Risteski.

What is very important is that the capacity will increase from 17,800 to 36,000, which will please fans of visiting teams like Scotland, for example, who were looking for 8,000–10,000 tickets for the World Cup qualifier in Skopje.

With the investment of EUR 32 million, three new stands will be built, all containing facilities such as press rooms, VIP lounges, parking areas, etc.

The north stand should be completed by July and the other two, behind the goals, in 18 months' time.

In addition, to increase the popularity of football, the government, through the sports and youth agency, will invest more than EUR 7 million in the installation of 50 new football grounds with floodlights, small stands and dressing rooms. ■



MALTA

• ALEX VELLA •

Fighting racism

As part of UEFA's annual anti-racism campaign organised in conjunction with Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE), the Malta FA (MFA) took its usual positive stance and, alongside other national associations, held various events to mark the FARE Action Week.

The seven-day programme included a number of activities in which everyone involved in football in Malta and Gozo participated. In this way, the MFA showed its



Schoolchildren took part in the anti-racism campaign.

solidarity with the world football authorities and their efforts to eliminate racism, a social scourge that has, at times, found fertile ground in football.

A message from the president of the MFA, Joseph Mifsud, on the need to stamp out racism and all forms of discrimination in society as a whole, as well as in sport and particularly football, was read out at matches all over the islands. This was one of many ways in which the occasion was marked.

The Maltese association's participation in the FARE Action Week, and in the many other events FIFA and UEFA organise from time to time, shows that the football authorities on the island are fully behind the efforts to use football as a platform to cleanse sport of all that is degrading and discriminatory. ■



MOLDOVA

• VICTOR DAGHI •

Youth tournament looks to the future

The Football Association of Moldova recently organised the second edition of the Viitorul tournament (viitorul means the future) with the participation of the most talented young players born in 1994, selected from all regions of the country.



Difficult conditions for the final.

In the semi-finals, the northern team beat the southern team 4-0, and the western team beat the eastern team 2-0.

The third place play-off proved to be very close and tense. It was a single goal scored by Vladimir Hariton in the 53rd minute that secured victory for the southern team. In the final, played in the hardest of conditions, under a lot of snow, the northern team, coached by Pavel Bacinov and Vladimir Luchianov, imposed their supremacy on the western team to win 4-0, with goals from Grigore Jurat (two), Petru Platon and Nicu Iliev.

The winners received their trophy from Anatol Teslev, sports director of the FA of Moldova, who was a member of the Soviet Union's national youth team that won the International Youth Tournament in 1966.

The Viitorul tournament attracted great interest from spectators and from the association's youth team coaches, including Serghei Clescenco, the former Moldovan international team who currently coaches the Under-17 national team. The aim of the tournament is to discover new talented players and as such it will become a regular competition in our calendar. ■



NETHERLANDS

• ROB DE LEED •

Amateur chairman Hans Lesterhuis resigns

Hans Lesterhuis resigned as chairman of the Dutch FA's (KNVB) amateur section on 29 November. He did so during the general meeting of non-professional football held in Zeist. At his last meeting as chairman of the bi-annual meeting, he said that he had spent half of his life in the world of football and that he wanted to make room for a successor. He started his career as a football administrator when he became a member of the board of professional club SC Cambuur Leeuwarden. He proceeded to become chairman of the Friesland department of the KNVB, in the days when the KNVB was still divided into 20 small departments, each with their own board and professional staff. In 1996 Lesterhuis was elected chairman of the largest sports community in the Netherlands, amateur football.

In recent years, Lesterhuis saw an enormous increase in female membership of the KNVB and witnessed the qualifying campaign of the Dutch team for the Women's EURO 2009 as delegation leader. In the same capacity, he followed the seven-a-side football team closely during their successful World Cup and Paralympics campaigns.

The KNVB president, Michael van Praag, praised Lesterhuis for his long-standing commitment to football. On his departure, Lesterhuis received the rare honour of being knighted in the name of the KNVB. ■



Michael van Praag presents Hans Lesterhuis with his KNVB knighthood.



NORTHERN IRELAND

• SUEANN HARRISON •

Award and study trip

At the Chartered Institute of Marketing gala awards ceremony in Belfast, the Irish FA's head of marketing and communications, Geoff Wilson, picked up the prestigious Marketing Director of the Year Award for 2008. The annual event focuses on best practice by applauding businesses that have implemented a number of initiatives in the field of marketing.

"This is a very proud moment for the association and myself," said Geoff. "This award is not about one person, but rather



Geoff Wilson (left), winner of the marketing director of the year award.

the marketing team at the association, a team of professional and dedicated marketing and PR individuals. This award demonstrates how far the association has come in terms of marketing. I do believe we have implemented some very positive marketing programmes at the association which have helped to change and improve the Irish FA brand."

Meanwhile the IFA's head of community relations, Michael Boyd, along with key leaders and drivers of change from rugby, the Gaelic Athletic Association, Sport NI and the Northern Ireland Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, was selected for a prestigious study trip in December to Boston and Houston in the United States, sponsored by the US state department and organised by the Boston College's Irish institute.

Fourteen individuals (seven from the Republic of Ireland and seven from Northern Ireland) from major sports organisations and relevant government bodies in the north and south took part in the special study visit on sport and the community. While in the United States, participants visited amateur, professional and community sports organisations that have successfully built social capital through sport. Particular emphasis was placed on community-building, fundraising, educational outreach and philanthropy. The programme was sponsored by the Irish institute in the Boston College's centre for Irish programmes and by the US state department's bureau of educational and cultural affairs. ■



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

• FRAN WHEARTY •

Bohemians complete dream double in memorable domestic season

Dublin club Bohemian FC claimed a domestic double by defeating Derry City in a penalty shoot-out in the FAI Ford Cup final at the RDS in Dublin. The Gypsies had earlier claimed the eircom League of Ireland title, with their nearest rivals, St Patrick's Athletic, a total of 19 points behind.

The major successes of the eircom League of Ireland this season were the introduction of the A Championship and Under-20 League, offering two new divisions to the league; a new club, Sporting Fingal FC; increased prize money; and record levels of television coverage.

The FAI's total investment in the eircom League of Ireland last season was EUR 5 million, EUR 2 million of which went directly to the clubs in the form of prize money, television payments, European participation grants, contributions to club promotions officers and subsidies in relation to insurance and certain matchday costs.

Next season will see a revamp of league sponsorship as eircom, which has been the title sponsor for several seasons, will become the league's communications partner. The sponsorship model will then change to a

multi-sponsorship deal, with several companies coming on board.

The league is also set for a massive boost, with the opening of Shamrock Rover's new home, Tallaght Stadium, while other infrastructural developments, such as the ongoing work at Finn Harps' new stadium, mean that the League of Ireland 2009 season promises to be an exciting affair. ■



Bohemians won the double.



SLOVAKIA

• JANA PERACKOVA •

UEFA Study Group Scheme in Bratislava

Delegations from three countries – Latvia, Lithuania and Luxembourg – participated in the UEFA Study Group Scheme on elite youth football organised by the Slovak Football Association (SFA).

The four-day workshop combined theory and practice in the form of exercises demonstrated directly on the pitch. The foreign coaches had the opportunity to watch the youth teams of FC Artmedia and Inter Bratislava in training and then to discuss the methods, and content of the training session directly with the coach in charge. In the classroom, lectures addressed the structure of Slovak elite youth competitions, regional youth competitions and youth player training sessions.



The Slovaks with their visitors from Latvia, Lithuania and Luxembourg.

Together with local coaches and executives, the 25 visitors also attended a match in the elite youth category between Slovan Bratislava and MFK Dubnica. Afterwards, as it always does for its guests, the SFA organised an informal game of football on the artificial turf pitch.

On the platform of active cooperation with UEFA in the field of education, the Slovak Football Association is looking forward to hosting other UEFA member associations and also to taking part itself as a visiting association in the fantastic educational experience that the UEFA Study Groups Scheme represents. ■



SLOVENIA

• MATJAZ KRAJNICK •

U21 futsal: up with the best in Europe

2008 has been a great year for Slovenian futsal – one that will go down in the history books as the most successful year to date. After managing to bring the Brazilian national futsal team to Slovenia for two friendlies, one against the A-team and one against the U21s, and gaining invaluable experience for the future, the Slovenian futsal up-and-comers have already capitalised on the experience. In a qualifying



Zoran Tesko.

group, played in Lasko, Slovenia defied the threat of Georgia (5-1), Bulgaria (12-0) and Belgium (4-2) to qualify for the first ever European Under-21 Futsal Tournament. "We knew we could qualify," said the Slovenia U21 coach, Zoran Tesko, afterwards, "but we did not want to come across as arrogant." Slovenia were drawn into a tough group for the tournament, with hosts Russia, Italy and Croatia, and despite the fact that Tesko and his players were expected to play a back-seat role, the team were happy to be there and still of a mind to prove their worth: "We know that Russia and Italy are among the favourites to win the competition and play futsal professionally in their leagues every week. We have an amateur league in Slovenia, like in Croatia, but we will do our best to prepare a surprise for one of the top-seeded teams. But even if we fail to do so, we will be happy to have been among the top eight European teams, and whatever the final outcome is, we are pleased to have been a part of the first ever European Under-21 Futsal Tournament," said the Slovenia U21 captain, Gaj Rosic. ■



SWEDEN

• ANDREAS NILSSON •

Sweden charmed by Ibrahimovic for a third time

Zlatan Ibrahimovic made history at the football gala when he picked up his third Swedish player of the year award. Having already been honoured with the Guldbollen in 2005 and 2007, he becomes the first player ever to win the award for a third time. Brazilian legend Pelé was present at the gala to congratulate Ibrahimovic and to present him with a special award as voted by Swedish fans.

Earlier in the day, Pelé had paid a visit to the Råsunda stadium to reminisce with Agne Simonsson, Kurre Hamrin and several other opponents from the 1958 World Cup final. The former UEFA president, Lennart Johansson, hosted a friendly and memorable afternoon at Råsunda, which concluded the 50th anniversary celebrations of the World Cup in Sweden. ■



Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Pelé.
Bildbyrån



SWITZERLAND

• PIERRE BENOIT •

"Clubs find coaches": 12 clubs honoured

Football's popularity with children in Switzerland is growing every year. Although this is a welcome trend, it is causing some problems for the Swiss Football Association (SFV). Particularly at grassroots level, there is a shortage of qualified youth team coaches.

The SFV knows that the long-term growth of Swiss football at grassroots and elite levels is dependent on the development of more coaches. The overriding aim is to give every child who wants to play in a football team the chance to do so with proper supervision.

In order to achieve this goal, last season the SFV launched the "Clubs find coaches" campaign, which proved a great success. Numerous clubs from a total of ten SFV regions participated in the campaign, running theoretical and practical training courses for prospective and existing coaches and organising special coach recruitment events.

The aim was to educate interested people, inform and recruit candidates, train and supervise coaches and raise awareness of coaches' work in clubs.



National coach Ottmar Hitzfeld (centre) helps to present the prizes. Ralph Zloczower, president of the Swiss FA, is on the right.

ASF/SFV

A total of 12 clubs were honoured by SFV president Ralph Zloczower for their successful involvement in the project at a small celebration in Berne. They were each awarded a certificate and a voucher worth CHF 4,000. Another 11 clubs were given cheques for CHF 2,500.

Prize-winning clubs – CHF 4,000:
FC St. Maurice, FC Steg, FC Turtmann, FC Troistorrents, Gruppierung Allievi Alto Vedeggio, FC Volketswil, FC Alpnach, FC Perlen, FC Sursee, FC Staad, FC Eschlikon, FC Herisau. – CHF 2,500: FC Savièse, FC Vétroz, FC Visp, Gruppierung Sassariente Piano, Allievi Bioggio-Cademario, Gruppierung Castello-Coldrerio, SC Balerna femminile, FC Aarberg, FC Interlaken, FC Goldstern, FC Kirchberg. ■



UKRAINE

• BOGDAN BUGA •

Football lessons continue

Although EURO 2012 is, naturally, the main focus of its attention, the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) is still keeping an eye on its other national programmes, including, as one of the most important, its support of football in secondary schools.

Recently, the FFU, the ministry of science and education and the ministry of sport extended their special school football cooperation agreement until 2012.

"Our ministry is pleased with the way the football lessons project is going," said the first minister for science and education, Oleksandr Hrebelnyk. "And we are very grateful to the FFU, which is the first national sports association to run a programme to increase the popularity of football and promote a healthy lifestyle through physical education lessons. Over 4 million children are taking part in this project, which is fantastic."

Today, nearly all schools in the country have signed up to the programme. In return, the FFU provides financial, technical and methodological support. Since 2001, the FFU has supplied schools with one million leather balls and

800 mini-pitches have been built across the country. These efforts continue.

"Nowadays, mass school football development is one of the priorities not only of the FFU but also of UEFA, since it is regarded as the basis of the football pyramid: mass football – elite youth football – professional football," said Grigoriy Surkis, president of the FFU. "School football has a powerful influence on healthy lifestyles among children. This year, for example, 60,000 youngsters took part in the national Leather Ball Cup (for boys and girls aged 10-13) and 400,000 in the Let's Make Children Happy! football festival. At an almost professional level, five intraregional children's/youth football development centres and football leagues (for 14-17 year-olds) have been operating for a good number of years." ■



Grigoriy Surkis, president of the Ukrainian Football Federation, with Oleksandr Hrebelnyk (left).

The FA



24-28 November 2008 Committee meetings in Nyon



Communications Birthdays – Calendar

Birthdays

Friedrich Stickler (Austria), chairman of the Club Competitions Committee, celebrates his 60th birthday on 18 January. On 23 January, Harry M. Been (Netherlands), member of the National Team Competitions Committee, reaches the same milestone. Celebrating their 50th birthdays in January are match delegate George Sintoris (Greece), on the 5th, referee observer Urs Meier (Switzerland) on the 22nd, Leonid Dmitranitsa (Belarus), vice-chairman of the Club Licensing Committee, on the 25th, and referee observer Cosimo Bolognino (Italy) on the 30th. Also on the UEFA birthday roll for January are:

- Necdet Cobanli (Turkey, 1.1)
- Vlatko Marković (Croatia, 1.1)
- Malcolm Moffatt (Northern Ireland, 1.1)
- Monica Ortigueira (Switzerland, 2.1)
- Robert Sterckx (Belgium, 3.1)
- Gerhard Sager (Sweden, 3.1)
- Alexei Spirin (Russia, 4.1)
- David George Collins (Wales, 5.1)
- Mariano Moreno (Spain, 6.1)
- Walter Clarke (Northern Ireland, 6.1)
- Sergei Safaryan (Belarus, 6.1)
- Sergiy Lysenchuk (Ukraine, 6.1)
- Franco Ferrari (Italy, 9.1)
- Velić Imamović (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 9.1)
- Milos Tomás (Slovakia, 9.1)
- Guido Cornella (Switzerland, 10.1)
- Herbert Hübel (Austria, 10.1)
- Michel Dumoulin (Belgium, 11.1)
- Wolfgang Holzhäuser (Germany, 13.1)
- Sofoklis Pilavios (Greece, 13.1)
- Luis Horta (Portugal, 14.1)

- Iljo Dominković (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 14.1)
- Nodar Akhalkatsi (Georgia, 14.1)
- Alessandro Lulli (Italy, 15.1)
- Mitja Lainscak (Slovenia, 15.1)
- Christophe Perruchoud (Switzerland, 16.1)
- Sune Hellströmer (Sweden, 17.1)
- Fabrizio Tonelli (Italy, 18.1)
- Vera Pauw (Netherlands, 18.1)
- Bujar Kasmi (Albania, 19.1)
- Lars-Åke Lagrell (Sweden, 20.1)
- Pedro Galán Nieto (Spain, 20.1)
- Anders Mattsson (Finland, 21.1)
- Angel María Villar Llona (Spain, 21.1)
- María Teresa Andreu Grau (Spain, 21.1)
- Bernd Heynemann (Germany, 22.1)
- Teuvo Holopainen (Finland, 23.1)
- Zsolt Füzesi (Hungary, 23.1)
- Pat Quigley (Republic of Ireland, 24.1)
- Gevorg Hovhannisyán (Armenia, 25.1)
- Stig-Ove Sandnes (Norway, 25.1)
- Mirosław Ryszka (Poland, 26.1)
- Metin Kazancioğlu (Turkey, 26.1)
- Krister Malmsten (Sweden, 27.1)

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



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Notice

■ The XXXIII Ordinary UEFA Congress takes place in Copenhagen on 25 March. Candidates for seats on the UEFA Executive Committee must be announced to the UEFA administration in writing at least two months beforehand.

Match agents

Three new UEFA match agent licences have been granted to:

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Meanwhile, the licence of **Alan Fluin** (Sweden) has been renewed for eight years.

New publication

Le guide français et international du football – Edition 2009

Although chiefly a collection of international football results and statistics from 1904 to the present, with an emphasis on French football, this guide compiled by Sophie Guillet and François Laforge also contains sections on techniques, tactics, equipment, training and football-related games, which makes it stand out from the rest. (EUR 16, Editions De Vecchi, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris.)

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