

THE TECHNICIAN

FUTSAL

**Futsal –
The Strapping
Teenager**

**Interview:
Jesús Candelas**

**The Superstar
President**

**Getting
the Show on
the Road**



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COVER

The UEFA Futsal Cup has been dominated by Spanish clubs, who have won it four times out of five. Boomerang Interviu are the current title-holders.

(PHOTO: E. SERRANO/EIKON GRAFICA)



FUTSAL – THE STRAPPING TEENAGER

EDITORIAL

BY PETR FOUSEK, CHAIRMAN
UEFA FUTSAL COMMITTEE

Have a look at a strapping teenager! Having been born in most of Europe's national associations between the 1960s and 1980s and nurtured as a baby, it was officially acknowledged by UEFA in the 1990s that the small child had, in 16 years, grown into a strong boy who could now stand apart from his older, more experienced and more widely educated brother – football – and his sister – women's football – and was now ready to play a full role and take an important place in the European football family. Commercial doors were opened wide when UEFA gave futsal professional recognition in 2005, allowing it, like the outdoor game, to mix promotional targets with development projects. This allowed the youngster the chance to gain a Master of Arts at the best university, alongside diamond fellows such as the European Football Championship, the European Under-21 Championship, the UEFA Cup and the most famous member of the family, the UEFA Champions League.

But 'adult status' inevitably implies new challenges: for UEFA itself, for UEFA's Futsal Committee, for the national associations and national futsal committees, futsal clubs, players, coaches, referees and managers. Futsal has reached and passed a lot of milestones in the last decade. UEFA established structures and systems, created its own futsal committee, administration, regulations and, after testing the temperature of the baby's bathwater with a European tournament, plunged it enthusiastically into a regular European Futsal Championship for national teams as from 1999. Soon after that, a UEFA Futsal Cup – a club competition for champions of European countries – was born. A UEFA European futsal conference is now staged on a regular basis, while UEFA has been steadily improving activities related to futsal ref-

erees and delegates. The popularity of futsal, the number of players and teams, levels of media interest, spectator attendance figures and the number of countries affiliated to futsal and developing the sport have all climbed steadily. The development of futsal has really moved into another gear. It's hard to think back and recall that, in 1992, only ten associations sent their national teams to the first-ever continental qualifiers for the FIFA World Championship. In 2006 (yes, only 14 years later), 40 associations entered their champion clubs for the UEFA Futsal Cup qualifiers. That represents a growth rate of 400%!

This growth is a clear indicator of the main positive features of futsal – interesting play with lots of goals and skill, a comfortable environment for spectators in indoor facilities, and an entertainment level which attracts the media and sponsors. In the meantime, futsal and football have unequivocally demonstrated that they are a strong, united couple, well able to face challenges from the 'outside world'.

This means that the national associations are now well equipped when it comes to upgrading the reputation of the game in the indoor arena and competing with other indoor disciplines. Futsal is also proving that it is an excellent tool for youth education. The game teaches young players technical skills, ball control, movement at speed, small-area orientation, creativity and fast shooting. It is not an accident that so many of the Brazilian national football players laid the foundations of their game in futsal schools. And many players realise that, even if they don't possess all the qualities necessary for a successful climb to the summit of the outdoor game, they might have exactly the right talents to make their national futsal team.

That explains why futsal is playing an increasingly relevant role in UEFA's grassroots programmes. And it is definitely a product which will produce rich harvests in the future.

When the number of 40 associations is mentioned, it means that futsal is still

12 short of a 'full house' in UEFA's 52 member associations. Further delays in those countries could sow the seeds that could give rise to troubles such as 'dissident' competitions. The development plan devised by the UEFA administration and the UEFA Futsal Committee is based on a full and united family – and this objective now seems very attainable. In sporting terms, the decision by UEFA's Executive Committee to expand the final tournament of the European Futsal Championship from eight to twelve participants represents a major step forward, not only because it gives better mathematical chances of qualifying but mainly because competing with hopes of qualifying always means greater motivation. And it means that more national associations will benefit from the experience of competing at the highest level in a final tournament. Establishing a youth competition is another subject that is high on the futsal agenda and this is being discussed intensively, along with other key projects, such as coaching, refereeing, administration, women's futsal and so on.

Maintaining the tempo we have set in recent years and even accelerating the growth of futsal will serve to underline the strength of the 'product'. But, as more and more nations join the futsal family, the most important message to transmit is that, the more you invest in the beginning, the more you stand to gain in the end.



Futsal is getting bigger and bigger in European football.

INTERVIEW

BY GRAHAM TURNER



ON SUNDAY 7 MAY, BOOMERANG INTERVIÚ RESTRICTED DINAMO MOSKOW TO A 4-3 WIN IN MOSCOW TO CLINCH A 9-7 AGGREGATE VICTORY THAT GAVE THE SPANISH CLUB ITS SECOND UEFA FUTSAL CUP TITLE IN THREE YEARS. IT REPRESENTED ANOTHER STRIKING FEATHER IN THE CAP WORN BY A MAN WHO WAS BORN IN MADRID JUST UNDER 49 YEARS AGO, WHO HAS COACHED IN SPAIN'S PREMIER DIVISION FOR THE LAST 17 SEASONS, WHO HAS SPENT THE LAST EIGHT OF THEM AT THE CLUB BASED IN ALCALÁ DE HENARES JUST OUTSIDE THE SPANISH CAPITAL, WHO HAS BEEN VOTED BEST COACH IN THE SPANISH LEAGUE THREE TIMES, AND WHO HAS, IN ADDITION TO THE EUROPEAN SUCCESSES IN 2004 AND 2006, WON FOUR SPANISH CHAMPIONSHIPS, FIVE CUPS, FOUR SUPER CUPS AND TWO WORLD CLUB TITLES. HATS OFF TO:

JESÚS CANDELAS

1 • What is the key to Boomerang Interviú's sustained success in the UEFA Futsal Cup?

"Dinamo made us work hard for the title. And I think that winning it this year was a visible demonstration that Boomerang Interviú's success story isn't dependent on the technical, tactical, physical, academic or professional qualities of the players as individuals. In my opinion, the key elements are other personal and emotional factors that make the team function as a collective unit and help us to attain our objectives."

2 • In the outdoor game, many technicians have said that the top club competition, the UEFA Champions League, is of a higher standard than the top national team competitions. Would that opinion be applicable to futsal as well?

"In futsal, no such comparison is possible. Competition structures and international fixture lists are totally different. And then there are other factors related to performance that make each competition a totally different scenario from the others, yet no less attractive. I think the parameters are so different that they help the players to feel motivated and to relish the challenge of attaining success at both club and national team levels."

3 • If we look at European club futsal, we have to acknowledge the large number of imported players in the top teams – notably Brazilian. Is their presence positive for European futsal? Do they help local players to raise their standards?

"I think it's inevitable that in sports like football, basketball, handball or futsal which generate financial resources – at different levels, of course – there is a tendency to recruit foreign players. That is natural. But in Spain there's a contradictory situation. We enjoy a privileged position in that we have a certain supremacy in world championships for national teams yet, in spite of that, we import more than we export. So the challenge currently facing us is to find the right balance. We need to stem the avalanche of average talent which has put the brake on the development of Spanish players. This is a question that has still not been resolved. There is another important factor: signing a contract is no guarantee that the player will identify with the club and give his all in the pursuit of objectives. So the answer is complex. But if recruitment is done sensibly, the presence of top players is positive and they are role models for local players to imitate."

4 • Spain and Russia have carved out supremacy at club and national team

levels. What do the rest have to do to catch up with you?

"I would focus on domestic competitions and say that the way forward depends on professional structures and organisational skills. I also think that many clubs would benefit from a more ambitious approach in sporting terms – which would help them to move closer to the leaders of the pack. We also need to cultivate support from the media and persuade players and coaches to put themselves 100 per cent into futsal. That way, we can consolidate the base of the pyramid and then superimpose much stronger international competitions."

5 • You mentioned a professional approach but how important is it to have a professional futsal league?

"I think we need to maintain clear ideas about our own identity. I don't regard the growth of futsal as being dependent on attracting mass interest in competitions. That can happen but it's often an isolated phenomenon. On other occasions it's because solid sporting structures have been built up. We shouldn't forget that the important thing is physical education for children. This is the prime basis on which futsal should be built and it should never be allowed to slip into second place. But, at the same time, the steady improvement of futsal as a sport depends



JESUS CANDELAS HAS TURNED HIS TEAM INTO A TIGHTLY-KNIT UNIT.

schedule on a five-week pre-season with ten sessions per week in the first three and eight in the other two. During the league, we have seven sessions plus games, tailoring it down to six and then five as we go into the play-off periods at the end of the season. In all cases, the aim is to build the closest possible relationship between training and match-play. As for the content, there is continual debate about the right balance between discipline and freedom of expression. I don't think technicians will ever reach unanimity, so this boils down to the philosophy of each individual coach. Different trends are detectable at international tournaments and you have to weigh up a lot of factors in order to decide exactly how open or closed you think your strategy should be. You need to be equipped to find the correct responses to situations where fatigue sets in, where the team is affected by a succession of errors... you need to detect the appropriate times for being more creative and for taking greater risks and the times when you need to rely on a solid collective system."



Spanish club Boomerang Interviú won their second European title last May.

on establishing professional standards in all the elements within the game."

6 • How, when and why did you become a professional futsal coach?

"I never imagined that I would get to where I am now! In the 1986/87 season, I started as fitness trainer with the first team and head coach of the second team at my first proper club, Marsanz FS. So I would urge everybody never to put limits on your dreams. They can come true. Coaching, for me, is the great challenge of preserving the special passion for the game that made me agree to coach the teams that the parents' association wanted to organise at the Ciudad Pegaso junior school."

7 • How would you describe coach education structures in Spain – and the opportunities for retraining?

"Rather than comment on the educational standards that the new generation of futsal coaches are acquiring, I would say that we need to define the coach's mission. In my opinion, there are three main pillars on which the structure should be built: firstly, the coach should be a good teacher with the ability to communicate ideas; secondly, the coach needs to be a good strategist in terms of preparing and then directing team play; and thirdly, the coach needs to be strong enough in psychology to be able to direct and motivate a group of human beings. I think these requisites apply from the bottom to the top of the coaching tree. So I'd say that, in Spain, we are on the right track for continuously improving our coaching methods. But a coach's education never stops.

You can always improve in physical, tactical or technical methods as well as in psychology, methodology and team direction. That means that there can never be enough retraining courses because there's a constant demand for them. A prime example was the response to an international course organised in Madrid in June."

8 • How would you assess player development in Spain?

"There's a lot of good work being done but a bottleneck has built up, especially in a second division which has become results-orientated and where levels of patience have declined as a consequence. Players are imported because not many people are prepared to take risks with home-grown players, even though, if treated in the right way, they could very often become better than the players who are blocking their progress. If youngsters aren't given a chance to cut their teeth in the second division, it's very difficult for a premier club to take a chance with them. At our club, results are important. So development work is usually done by clubs lower down the scale who need to produce players they can then transfer. But there's no doubt that we should now be giving priority to the development of players for the future health of futsal."

9 • What are the training parameters at your club?

"Training is the 'sine qua non' for development and performance. Planning, preparing, conducting and evaluating training sessions is crucial. We base our

10 • What can be done to promote futsal still further? Do you think the new four-team finals in the UEFA Futsal Cup are a step in the right direction?

"Any change is a risk. But changes stem from a desire to improve. So I'm convinced that the new format will help the competition to gain the status it deserves. Going further afield, I also think that gaining the status of an Olympic sport would help futsal to earn greater worldwide recognition. I think this should be the immediate objective for all of us who love the sport. At the same time, I'd like to see more of the top outdoor clubs establishing futsal teams, as this would also give us a tremendous media boost and a great injection of passion for the game and for the clubs involved."



**KONSTANTIN EREMenKO,
EUROPEAN FUTSAL CHAMPION
WITH RUSSIA IN 1999.**

UEFA

SOME PLAYERS HAVE EXCEPTIONAL BALL SKILLS. SOME HAVE A DEVASTATING CHANGE OF PACE. OTHERS HAVE EXPLOSIVE SHOOTING POWER. AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE PHYSICAL PRESENCE, PERSONALITY AND MAGNETISM. KONSTANTIN EREMenKO HAD IT ALL. HE ACQUIRED SUPERSTAR STATUS AS A DOMINANT FORCE WHEN RUSSIA REACHED THE FINAL OF UEFA'S INAUGURAL EUROPEAN FUTSAL TOURNAMENT IN 1996 AND HAMMERED IN THE WINNING PENALTY WHEN HIS COUNTRY EXACTED SPORTING REVENGE ON SPAIN IN THE FIRST FULLY FLEDGED EUROPEAN FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1999. SINCE HANGING UP HIS BOOTS, EREMenKO HAS REMAINED IN THE GAME, PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR REGULAR UEFA FUTSAL CUP FINALISTS, MTK DINAMO MOSCOW – NOT AS A TECHNICIAN BUT AS

THE SUPERSTAR PRESIDENT

How has futsal changed since your retirement?

"If we talk about club football, it has become more organised, more structured. Management is at a totally different level and a lot of money is being invested in infrastructure. Clubs don't

just have a first team now – there's also a reserve side and an academy. If we talk about the game itself, futsal has become more dynamic and interesting to watch. In some facets, like set pieces, it has come a long way forward compared with when I was a player."

One of the interesting topics is that you were a genuine star within Russian and international futsal. Some people shy away from a 'star system', preferring to emphasise the collective virtues of the game. But is it legitimate to create 'stars' in order to make futsal more popular?

"This is important. Not just for a club, but for the sport as a whole. People often face a dilemma – not knowing whether to find a star within the club or to recruit one from elsewhere. In any case, a lot of work needs to be done on a potential star player. He needs promotion and a certain image and that image needs to become associated not only with his club, but also with futsal as a whole. This kind of promotion is perfectly normal and, in my opinion, desirable. If we talk about today's Dinamo, we have a superstar team, but there's no single individual to stand in the spotlight. Most of the players are stars and it's hard to single out one as bigger than the rest. If we had such a player, we would undoubtedly spend a lot of time and effort promoting him."



In 2001, Eremenko took part in the final round of the European Championship staged in his country.

UEFA



KOROTAEV/PRESSPHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

DINAMO MOSCOW – WITH EREMENKO AS PRESIDENT – PLAYED IN THE LAST TWO FINALS OF THE UEFA FUTSAL CUP.

coach. The two sides cross only when solving logistical questions like flights, preparation for games and so on. The coaches cannot intervene in the work of the administration and vice versa. For example, I personally will never mess with coaching work and give advice on tactics or squad selection. Over these four years we've built a team. But we don't intend to stop there. We will keep working. The priorities have changed now, though. Today, I devote a lot of time to public relations, work with media. This should attract more fans on to the stands and more boys into futsal. Another important priority is youth futsal, the creation of our own academy, along with the organisation of youth tournaments and taking part in them."

What do you demand from coaches? Results or the development of players?

"There are no long-term results without the development of players. In Russia, there are a lot of ambitious club presidents, coaches and players who want to prove they're at least not worse than us. That's why, when we invite a new coach to join us, we give him the chal-



KOROTAEV/PRESSPHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

Alexander Shibaev, coach of Dinamo Moscow, led his team to two European finals in a row.

lenge of repeating the successes the club has already had and that of helping us to reach new heights. This automatically means the players will have to do better. There's no other way. Those who don't develop will never get any results. That's a law of the game."

In terms of promotion, what's your opinion of the format of UEFA's futsal competitions?

"I don't think it would be right for me to discuss national team competitions. But at club level there should be changes – logical, well-explained, well-debated changes. That's what we have been working on. A year ago we were proposing that UEFA Futsal Cup matches should be played on a home-and-away basis to boost for the popularity of futsal and the clubs. The situation before that was paradoxical – a club could win the UEFA title without playing a single game in front of its own fans! UEFA adopted the change and the two most recent competitions have been played with a different format. Next season will see another new system, with a final four. This means we will have to do our best to host either a semi-final or the final group in Russia. Whoever stages the tournament will obviously have home

advantage. So I can foresee further changes in the not-too-distant future, as I'm not sure how much the new situation suits Russia, Spain or Italy, for example. Personally, I would favour a format whereby, after the qualifying round, 16 teams would play the classic Olympic system on a home-and-away basis. I think that this kind of system would be a massive boost for futsal across Europe."

What are your priorities in your role as club president?

"Dinamo has been in existence for four years and is functioning under a set of rules which I laid down when the club was founded. The most important thing is that the club is separated into two parts. The first is club administration, for which the general manager and executive manager are responsible. The second part is the team, which is under the responsibility of one of the vice-presidents along with the head



VERDY/AFP

HENRI EMILE

GETTING THE SHOW ON THE ROAD

IT IS NO SECRET THAT THE FUTSAL MAP OF EUROPE DIFFERS SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE OUTDOOR GAME. SLOWLY BUT SURELY, THE PATTERN IS CHANGING, WITH 'MAJOR POWERS' IN 11-A-SIDE FOOTBALL MAKING DETERMINED EFFORTS TO JUMP ABOARD THE FAST-MOVING FUTSAL EXPRESS. ENGLAND, FRANCE AND GERMANY ARE PRIME EXAMPLES. ALL THREE ARE ENGAGED IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND THE FOLLOWING LINES ILLUSTRATE, FROM VERY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES, HOW THEY ARE SETTING ABOUT GETTING THE SHOW ON THE ROAD.

Football fans with a good memory will probably remember seeing Henri Emile on the French bench alongside Aimé Jacquet when *Les Bleus* won the 1998 World Cup or as assistant to Roger Lemerre when France completed a double by taking the European crown in Rotterdam in 2000. When Raymond Domenech took the reins in the wake of the 2002 FIFA World Cup, he preferred to form a new back-up team. The French Federation promptly asked Henri Emile to take charge of futsal and beach soccer. Henri, being Henri, rolled up his sleeves and accepted the challenge with gusto, even enrolling Zinedine Zidane in his programme aimed at making people aware of the relevance of futsal in the modern game.

The story has its relevance. France is one of a group of major powers in the outdoor game that has remained near the back of the starting grid in futsal. That is why it's interesting to hear Henri talking about the status of

FUTSAL IN FRANCE

In France, futsal comes under the heading of "diversified football", standing alongside neighbourhood football, works football, recreational football and now beach soccer.



Before getting involved in futsal, Henri Emile worked for a long time with the French national team (here with Marcel Desailly at EURO 2004).

FIFE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The organisational structure of futsal is different in each league, with activities scheduled over the calendar year, over the winter season or totally freely. Some regions have a regional championship, while others have championships for individual *départements* (administrative districts).

Running in parallel, there is a regionally organised cup competition for clubs, which finishes at Easter with a final phase involving eight teams. The winner of this cup is then entered by the FFF for the UEFA Futsal Cup.

For the last two seasons, the FFF has been implementing a futsal development plan via its Central Futsal Committee and the National Technical Department (DTN). Each league now has a technical contact point (in principle the Regional Technical Centre or the Departmental Technical Centre) responsible for joint coordination of technical activity related to futsal alongside an administrative contact point connected with the Regional Committee.

A plan of action for each league has been put in place for the next four years, following a seminar to inform the different coordinators about our aims and objectives. At the same time, close contacts have been established

**A GERMAN STUDY HAS SHOWN
ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF USING
A SPECIAL BALL FOR FUTSAL.**



KOROTAEV/
PRESSPHOTOS/
GETTY IMAGES



VOGEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

between instructors and schoolteachers with regard to the provision of retraining. Activities are also encouraged during the school holidays.

In the course of the national training courses (coaching diploma or retraining courses), a presentation followed by a

demonstration carried out by two teams in the Paris region is made to the trainees.

For the start of the next school year, a "training the trainers" course will be put in place, as will training courses for futsal referees within the various leagues.

A DIFFERENT BALL GAME

The German FA's determined efforts to develop futsal include research studies aimed at providing persuasive data for youth development projects. One such study – or, rather, two – conducted by **Christopher Heim and Ulrich Frick** from the Institute of Sports Science at the University of Frankfurt demonstrates the immediate and longer-term benefits of using a futsal ball for indoor soccer. This is an extract of their findings – and any reader who wishes to have more detailed information is more than welcome to contact UEFA's football development division.

For the first research project (into the immediate effects of switching to a futsal ball) a cross-sectional study was designed with 410 fifth-grade pupils (10-12 age bracket). Participants' technical football skills were assessed in isolated trials and during play using quantitative video analysis. Both the trials and the video-taped tournaments were performed with a futsal ball as well as a normal football or a felt ball. Additionally, after the tournaments, pupils were asked to complete a questionnaire based on 19 football-related items in the form of statements relating

to four categories (fear of the ball, enjoyment, involvement in the game, quality of play).

The results indicated that isolated technical elements can be performed significantly faster with a futsal ball than with a football or a felt ball. Video analysis of matches with the different balls showed that the number of ball contacts and the number of 'positive' actions significantly increased for each player when using the futsal ball compared with playing with the other balls. The questionnaire also indicated that pupils are significantly less afraid of hurting themselves when playing with a futsal ball.

The conclusion of this study was that the quality of play among beginners can be greatly enhanced when using a futsal ball instead of a football for indoor soccer.

The longer-term effects were analysed in a second project. Over a period of two years, Christopher Heim and Ulrich Frick conducted a longitudinal study with 64 fifth-grade pupils (once again, in the 10-12 age bracket) in three different classes. Identical six-week teaching units were performed with each of the classes and each class was instructed with a different ball – futsal, football or felt ball. Participants' technical skills were tested in isolated trials (such as controlling a bouncing ball that drops from a certain height with a reproducible velocity) and during play using a quantitative video analysis. Every action – for example, passes, shots at goal and so on – was counted for each player and coded as 'positive' or 'negative'. For comparative purposes, this was done before and after the teaching units. All classes performed the isolated trials with all three balls; the tournaments before and after the teaching units were played with each type of ball used during the units. Additionally, to attain reference values, each class played a second tournament with a football before and after the teaching units.



ENGLAND ARE STILL ONE OF THE NEWCOMERS TO EUROPEAN FUTSAL COMPETITIONS.

Evaluations showed significant increases in the number of ball contacts each player had during play, while a comparison of the actions coded as 'positive' showed significant differences in favour of the class that trained with a futsal ball. Similar results emerged from the isolated

tests of football skills, with significant increases for the class training exclusively with a futsal ball. Once again, the conclusion of Christopher and Ulrich was that "football tuition in schools should be performed with a futsal ball instead of a football or felt ball when football is played indoors".

At 21, Graeme Dell was the youngest person ever to be awarded the FA's full coaching licence. He has been involved with England and Great Britain student teams since 1991 and has taken teams to eight University Games. Two years ago, when he was also named head coach of the England futsal team, he was aware that there would be no overnight miracles. At the time of writing, his national team is still waiting for a first taste of victory, but the project is under way. Graeme explains how the long trail towards the top is being negotiated by

THE PATIENT **ENGLISH**

"It was our chairman, Geoffrey Thompson, who, because of his roles at UEFA, was keen to put England on the futsal map," he recalls. "So I was asked to take a team to the 'KL Fives' in Kuala Lumpur in 2003. I started watching futsal and I was sold on it within minutes. As a national team, we were dormant for a while – until the qualifiers for the 2005 European championship – but I realised that the first step was to travel, to observe and to learn. In that respect, I was very fortunate to have such total support from The FA and from so many

colleagues, like Orlando Duarte, Javier Lozano and Vic Hermans. I saw about 40 national teams playing or training, which was a great learning experience.

The next step was to build a national team. That wasn't easy because, although there are a lot of club sides and about four million people playing small-sided football, we estimated that 40% of our futsal players were of foreign origin, mostly from Eastern Europe. In general terms, English players were short of technical and

tactical awareness. So we've stepped up our search for futsal players and, apart from the scouting we do ourselves, we have approached about 250 clubs and communities asking them not to be shy about recommending players.

In the meantime, we had set up a project that we called the F30 programme. It was a policy of selecting what you might call an elite group of 30 players and working hard on developing them. It's actually more flexible than it sounds because the squad of 30 is in continuous movement, with small numbers of newcomers being injected into the group while others drop out. It's interesting to bring in, say, four or five new players and see how they compare with the ones who are already there. The F30 squad get together for a full day every month at our national training centre in Lilleshall, where we work single-mindedly on technical and tactical improvement. We also have to work on mental strength. For example, we had to recover from a 24-1 defeat against Portugal, and we have to learn how to handle certain situations – such as being 4-1 up after a fantastic first half against Cyprus.

But the future of English futsal isn't only about building a national team. We have to look at structures – we're currently looking at a new franchise-driven league that could be in place by 2008, for example – and, more importantly, we have to raise the profile of futsal in our country. It might be a slight exaggeration but, basically, people aren't aware of futsal as a brand and, if you talk about 'five-a-side' people tend to think of it as a 'pub sport'. So there is long-term work to be done on changing the image of the game and to give futsal a recognisable 'brand identity'. Our aim (and it's a reachable objective) is to make futsal the fastest-growing indoor sport in our country – and to start getting results! We haven't quite found the winning formula yet but we're on our way and we're thoroughly enjoying a great adventure."



First international outing for England: the 'KL Fives' in Kuala Lumpur in 2003.

**THE MULTI-PURPOSE
GONDOMAR PAVILION WILL BE READY
FOR THE FINAL ROUND IN 2007.**



THE LAST WORD

THE FUTSAL COMPETITIONS THIS AUTUMN

2007 European Futsal Championship:

Portugal is the host nation for next year's final round, for which the venue will be the splendid Pavilhão Multiusos (multi-purpose pavilion) in the Porto suburb of Gondomar. Designed by Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza Vieira, this 3,800-seat arena, which is still under construction but due for completion in December 2006, will offer the teams, media, partners and spectators superb facilities and working conditions.

Thirty-six countries have entered the competition, including two newcomers: Malta and Turkey. The draw for the qualifying round will be made in Nyon on 2 October and will be broadcast live on www.uefa.com beginning at 13.30.

2009 European Futsal Championship:

The bidding procedure for the final round in November 2009 got under way this summer. Five associations have already expressed an interest in hosting the tournament, which will feature 12 teams for the first time: Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.



The Portuguese team will play the final round at home.

The UEFA Executive Committee is set to decide on the host nation next spring.

2006/07 UEFA Futsal Cup:

The current edition of this club competition kicked off in September with the preliminary round. Apart from introducing a totally new format, under which a two-leg final is replaced by a "final four", UEFA has also produced a manual for the associations hosting Futsal Cup tournaments as a way of helping them to improve the organisation of these events.

The manual has been published on [uefa.com](http://www.uefa.com) (see <http://www.uefa.com/newsfiles/445344.pdf>) and is only available in English, which is required for the organisation of any European futsal competition.

AGENDA

2006

October 2

Draw for the qualifying competition for the European Futsal Championship (Nyon)

October 10 – 16

UEFA Futsal Cup – Main Round

October 31

Draw for the Futsal Cup Elite Round

December 4 – 10

UEFA Futsal Cup – Elite Round

2007

January 15 – 21

European Futsal Championship – Preliminary Round

February 18 – 25

European Futsal Championship – Main Round

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