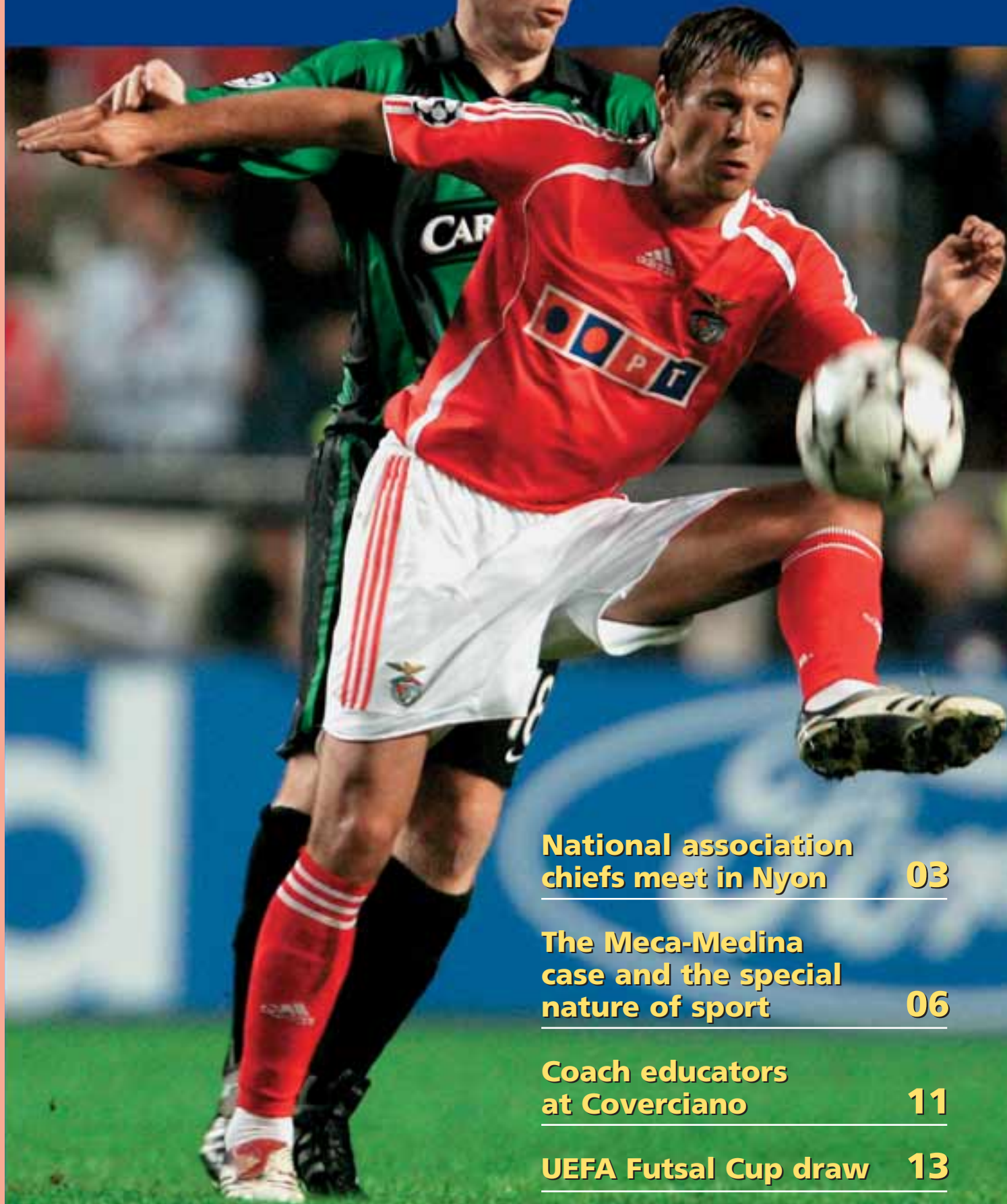


12.06

uefa direct



**National association
chiefs meet in Nyon** **03**

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UEFA President's message

As 2006 draws to a close and we look back at the year that has just passed, one of the most memorable moments for me was when I had the honour and pleasure of handing the World Cup to Italy's captain in Berlin on 9 July.

I'll leave it to the technicians to judge the quality of the play and the tactical trends, and would just like to pay tribute here to Europe's representatives, who monopolised the semi-finals and showed that the efforts of our national associations and clubs are really paying off. What also stood out was the extraordinary impact of the event and the party atmosphere that reigned for the whole duration, not only in Germany but all over the world.

Even more than during EURO 2004 in Portugal, the World Cup finals in Germany reflected the immeasurable power of national team football to bring people together despite their differences and individual interests. We should not forget, however, that this phenomenon, which is largely, if not universally, acknowledged as being extremely positive, is built on shaky ground. In the current environment, the civil courts could at any moment place a question mark over the foundations on which the football pyramid is based, where national team football and club football live together in harmony.

For many years now, we have been doing everything we can to gain acceptance of our belief that football must benefit from legal certainty and autonomy in order to be able to ensure that its institutions and competitions are well run in the interests of all, with priority placed on sporting values.

In this respect, 2006 has left us with more than a ray of hope. The Independent European Sport Review is the instrument for leading us to the desired result, and I would like to take this opportunity to urge everyone once again to spare no effort in trying to convince the politicians of the need to clarify the position of sport in European society and to provide it with the legal means to ensure that its specific nature is respected and to allow it to fulfil its social role to the full.

More than ever, we need to show a united front, and unity requires respect: respect for every stakeholder, in order to find, through continuous dialogue, the best general solution; respect for opponents and referees, in order to ensure an exemplary game and clean competitions; and respect for football's institutions and rules, so that football is spared from being the setting for constant legal disputes.

Respect also means thanking everyone who has contributed to the success of football throughout the year, be it on the field of play or behind the scenes. I hope your passion will continue to be your driving force and that, in return, football will allow you to experience the emotion that only it knows how to. In that anticipation, I wish you a very happy new year.

I would like to end with a personal message. I was overwhelmed and very honoured by the many kind wishes I received on the occasion of my birthday. As I will be unable to reply to each individually, I would like to use the occasion of this end-of-year message to thank everybody most sincerely for all their kindness.

LENNART JOHANSSON

**“More than
ever, we need to
show a united
front...”**

COVER

The UEFA Champions League group stage, concluding in early December, has seen some challenging matches, like the meeting between Benfica (Andrey Karyaka, front) and Celtic (Neil Lennon).

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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Member association chiefs meet in Nyon

An intensive and informative meeting

THE GENERAL SECRETARIES/CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF VIRTUALLY ALL OF UEFA'S MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS WERE AT UEFA'S HEADQUARTERS IN NYON ON 25 AND 26 OCTOBER TO DISCUSS VARIOUS TOPICAL ISSUES REGARDING EUROPEAN FOOTBALL WITH THE UEFA MANAGEMENT.

UEFA's own chief executive, Lars-Christer Olsson, opened the meeting with a brief overview of the eventful year that had passed since the last meeting. Apart from the major event of the World Cup, which had been a resounding success, the Football Association of Montenegro had, for example, been admitted to UEFA as a provisional member, and UEFA's HatTrick pro-

gramme had been extended. The CEO's main message was, however, that European football was facing several major challenges.

Independent Review a unique opportunity

The Independent European Sport Review, which has already been reported on extensively elsewhere,

featured heavily on the agenda. Against the background of the court cases that European football was currently fighting, there was a general desire for legal certainty. The associations were positively surprised and appreciative about the conclusions of the review, although there was some doubt as to how far those recommendations would be taken into consideration within the European Commission. UEFA stressed the need to do everything possible to ensure that the review served as a basis for the white paper on sport that the European Commission was currently working on.

Charleroi case a time bomb

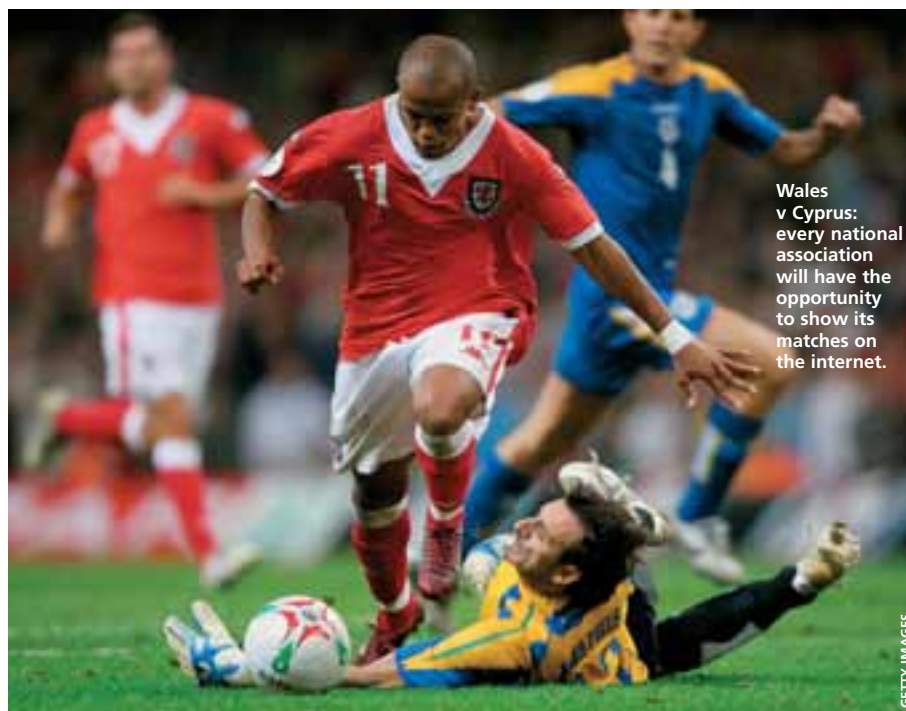
A good example of the need for greater autonomy and legal certainty was the current court case regarding the release of players for the national



Lars-Christer Olsson addresses the general secretaries.



The auditorium as seen from an interpreters' booth.



Wales v Cyprus: every national association will have the opportunity to show its matches on the internet.

GETTY IMAGES

teams – the so-called Charleroi case. No only was it unclear what the court's decision would ultimately be, but also what possible side effects could emerge, particularly after the experience of the Bosman case, which resulted in the abolition of the "3 + 2" rule, even though it had not been challenged in court. Regarding the Charleroi case, it was now a question of whether the case would first be dealt with by a court of appeal in Belgium or would be referred directly to the European Court of Justice, which would affect when a final ruling could be expected.

Administrative improvements

A presentation was made to the member associations' representatives on a web-based platform that would support and streamline all of UEFA's business operations. Administrative tasks such as entering player lists or entering teams for competitions would in future no longer be done by fax but entered directly into the system.

Top Executive Programme (TEP)

A status report on the TEP was presented. The roundtable discussions that had continued this autumn and, in

which some associations had been involved for the first time, had been extremely useful in terms of helping the associations to set their own priorities. The three most popular objectives were to increase revenue, to improve relations with the state and to define relations with the leagues. The consultancy part of the TEP had begun and was still in a test phase with three pilot associations. Reference was also made to the HatTrick middle-management knowledge-sharing programme, which took the form of courses and workshops and in which UEFA was playing a supporting as opposed to educational role.

Marketing, internet video and TV rights

As far as the marketing programme for EURO 2008 is concerned, UEFA was pleased to report to its member associations that the ten global partnership and sponsorship deals had been concluded in record time and that three of the eight National Supporters (four apiece from Austria and Switzerland) had already been announced. The optional cooperation with the Sportfive agency for the EURO 2008 qualifiers was meeting its objectives and the

national associations could expect higher revenue from this cooperation for the EURO 2012 qualifiers. In the meantime, the associations could benefit from another opportunity and promote their EURO 2008 qualifiers on the internet, via uefa.com. UEFA Media Technologies SA was offering to produce and display matches (live and/or on demand) for associations that did not have the technical solution to do so themselves. Alexandre Fourtoy, CEO of UEFA Media Technologies, made the point that many Europeans lived outside Europe and would love to be able to watch their national teams' qualifying matches. Regarding "conventional" television, UEFA was able to present some positive figures for the sale of EURO 2008 TV rights. The sales process, which was being conducted on a market-by-market basis, was going extremely well both within and outside Europe, and the current indications were that revenue would be 27.6% higher than for EURO 2004 – revenue from which the associations would ultimately also benefit.

Club competition review

UEFA stressed that the review of the club competition formats that was currently being undertaken would not necessarily result in any change. The review was a proactive approach which was looking at not only the club competition formats, but also commercial aspects, as well as the match calendar and solidarity system. At the moment, a working group was considering the views of all stakeholders and drawing up proposals – no mean task, since it involved finding a common denominator among all the different opinions. There was general agreement that there were too many matches, yet when it came to deciding where matches should be cut, opinions differed, as they did on the question of whether it was a positive factor for the UEFA Cup that the teams that finished the UEFA Champions League group stage in third position should move into the UEFA Cup.



Watching national team football on the internet.

UEFA



The UEFA convention aims to improve the overall standard of refereeing.

UEFA

The Executive Committee would decide on the working group's proposals in June 2007, following another period of consultation at the start of next year.

Among the views expressed by the member associations general secretaries/chief executives was a request for higher solidarity payments and a revision of the access list. They also asked for no change to be made to the UEFA Champions League, which was successful as it was.

Refereeing matters

On the subject of the new convention on referee education and organisation, the UEFA management was pleased to report that 30 associations had applied to join so far. They

had been divided into three groups by the UEFA administration according to different timelines for admission to the convention. The 11 associations in the pilot group were expected to be ready to sign next June, at which point they would be able to benefit from the financial incentives on offer in connection with joining the convention.

The referee communication system that had already met with a positive reception in tests was also explained. The tests were continuing this season, with all UEFA elite and premier referees having been equipped with sets. The aim was to perfect the system by the start of next season and to seek approval from the IFAB for its use.

Locally trained players

The locally trained players rule which came into force this season was one of the topics raised in the open-floor discussions. It was recognised as a positive step in promoting talented young home-grown players, though concerns were raised that it could be legally challenged. The UEFA chief executive stated that many MEPs had actually declared themselves in favour of even stricter rules but although the EU accepted the rule, there was nevertheless a risk of it being challenged in court – with an uncertain outcome. Here again, the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent European Sport Review and gaining a situation of legal certainty for sports governing bodies was vital.



Olympique Lyonnais v Dynamo Kiev in the UEFA Champions League: everyone agrees that it is a great competition.

MERLE/AP/GETTY IMAGES



Gianni Infantino,
director
of UEFA's
Legal Affairs
& Club Licensing
division.

UEFA-pljwoods.ch



The UEFA statutes
recognise the Court
of Arbitration for
Sport (CAS) as,
among other things,
an appeals
arbitration body.

COFFRINI/ARF

Meca-Medina: a step backwards for the European sports model and the specificity of sport?

**THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE HIT THE HEADLINES ON
THE SPORTS PAGES OF THE NEWSPAPERS BACK IN 1995, WHEN IT HANDED
DOWN ITS RULING IN THE BOSMAN CASE.**

As nearly every football fan knows, this was the case that changed the face of the player transfer system and changed the make-up of club sides throughout Europe. Effectively, the litigation ended any limits on "foreign" players in clubs in Europe, and the consequences for football have been far-reaching.

European law has continued to have a big impact on sports matters

in recent years, although the cases are less celebrated than the Bosman issue. At first sight, it is perhaps not obvious that an obscure ruling concerning a couple of professional swimmers (David Meca-Medina and Igor Majcen) involved in a doping dispute would have similar ground-breaking consequences for sport. Nevertheless, this is just what might happen as a result of the judgment handed down by the

European Court of Justice in the Meca-Medina case in July earlier this year, despite the fact that the swimmers actually lost their case.

Positive doping test

This is – unlike Bosman – not a case that concerned free movement of workers or any other core principle of the EU legal system. On the contrary, it was a case about two swimmers failing a doping test. The fascinating – some would say bizarre – aspect of this ruling is that the penalty imposed on the swimmers (a two-year ban) was challenged under European competition (or anti-trust) law.

This fact alone tends to show just how inventive lawyers can be. The main purpose of European competition law is to attack cartels and deal with big mergers. Of course, competition law may concern the sports "business" as well: for example, one might think of lucrative television contracts for big events such as the World Cup or Olympic Games. But anti-doping rules?

In fairness to the European Commission (often cast as a villain trying to extend its reach to sport), the authorities in Brussels wanted nothing to do with the Meca-Medina case. The swimmers had, in fact, already had their case heard (twice) by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland, and only complained to the Commission after not obtaining the result they wanted from the CAS. The Commission refused to intervene. Former Commissioner Mario Monti dismissed the complaint, pointing out that it was not the job of Brussels to take the place of sports bodies when it comes to anti-doping matters.

At this point, the swimmers appealed the Commission decision to



D. AQUILINA

The Bosman case had a detrimental effect on the training of youth players.



When will the courts try to define the size of the ball?

UEFA.jp/woods.ch

the lower court in Luxembourg (the European Court of First Instance). That court backed the Commission, saying that EU law had nothing to do with doping, either in swimming or any other sport. It reasoned that anti-doping rules had a non-economic and ethical sporting objective, and therefore fell outside the scope of EU law altogether. However, on a further appeal to the highest court in Europe (the Court of Justice itself), it has now been held that sports disciplinary rulings

(e.g. in relation to doping penalties) do need to be analysed under European competition law, in particular, to determine whether the limits contained in the rules are acceptable and the penalties imposed are “proportionate”.

Now, with the greatest of respect to the judges in Luxembourg, do they really have the knowledge or expertise to decide whether it is one or two milligrams of Nandrolone that should be permissible in the body tissue of a professional swimmer? Should judges charged with the application of EU law be the ones to decide whether a ban imposed on a swimmer should be two years or 18 months (especially after two previous hearings by an independent sports

tribunal on exactly the same matter!)? And what on earth has this all got to do with European competition law? One wonders if the founding fathers of the Treaty of Rome had in mind the impact of anti-doping penalties in sport when they drafted the Treaty articles regarding economic competition.

Time to define limits

Moreover, the trouble with open-ended and subjective concepts like “proportionality” is that they can mean almost anything you want (or at least it is always open to argument). In any event, the net result now seems to be that almost any sports disciplinary measure could potentially be attacked under EU competition law. In effect, the issue becomes a lawyers’ playground and a nightmare for sports bodies and administrators.

Against this background, perhaps now is the time to reel in the well-meaning judges in Luxembourg and provide some much needed clarification as to the limits of European law when it comes to core sports rules and practices. Otherwise, the next matter up for challenge will be the size of the ball or the shape of the goalposts. And finally, this is not a call for sport to be “above the law”, as we have sometimes heard in the past. It is simply a matter of setting some sensible limits to prevent abuses of the legal system, and to stop playing into the hands of “ambulance-chasing” lawyers trying to make a career out of attacking sports rules.

Gianni Infantino

More information on the EU matters on:
www.uefa.com/uefa/KeyTopics/Kind=2048/index.html



Sport that respects the laws and laws that respect the special nature of sport.

SABATINI



NAC Breda v FC Groningen (left) and Feyenoord v SC Excelsior: the new league format has given a new lease of life to the Dutch premier division.

PRO SHOTS/ITN/ESSEX



VOS/AP/GETTY IMAGES

Play-off matches in the Netherlands

A new format to pep up the championship

HOW CAN THE CHAMPIONSHIP BE MADE MORE ATTRACTIVE AND MORE COMPETITIVE? MANY ASSOCIATIONS, ESPECIALLY FROM THE "SMALLER" COUNTRIES, ARE CONSIDERING THIS QUESTION.

Some are opting for a smaller league, with the teams facing each other four times, others prefer a play-off system. Last season, the Netherlands went for innovation with a three-round knock-out format. The system was devised by

the Dutch FA (KNVB) and the 18 clubs of the Eredivisie, the Dutch top flight. Almost all teams are concerned. KNVB spokesman Frank Huizinga explained: *"The championship had reached a kind of plateau. We wanted to increase*

the suspense and stimulate the development of the clubs."

At the end of the regular championship, which comprises 34 match days, the Dutch champions qualify directly for the UEFA Champions League, with the remaining European berths going to the winners of the play-offs, contested by the teams from second to ninth place. If several clubs are on equal points after 34 match days, goal difference is taken into account and then, if need be, the number of goals scored and, finally, the head-to-head results. During the play-offs, the format is identical to that used by UEFA, i.e. the number of away goals is decisive if the teams are still even.

What is at stake during this final phase of the championship is one berth in the qualifiers for the Champions League, three places in the UEFA Cup and one in the Intertoto Cup. Since the clubs at the bottom of the table are involved in relegation matches (see box 1 below), only a very small number of teams in mid-table are not involved in any extra matches.

A joint project

The KNVB worked on the project with the 18 top-flight professional clubs of the Eredivisie CV (ECV), which commissioned two independent studies, one from the University of Nijmegen, the other from an agency in Groningen. They conducted a survey of club executives, coaches, players and fans. The



The winners of the league championship (Eindhoven in 2005/06) are not affected by the play-offs and go straight into the UEFA Champions League.

KILIC/AP/GETTY IMAGES

More opportunities

The Netherlands already had a final phase to determine promotion and relegation between the top two tiers of professional football. The champions of D2 – now the Jupiler League – were promoted, while the bottom club in the Eredivisie was relegated. The clubs in 16th and 17th places in the top flight contested play-offs with the winners of the four "periods" (i.e. of the season) in D2 and the second- and third-placed clubs in the regular D2 table. The clubs were divided into two groups of four in a league format. The winners then either went up or stayed up. Under the new system, there are six periods in D2.



AZ Alkmaar
v ADO Den Haag
(left) and
BV Vitesse
v Heracles Almelo.



PRO SHOT/IT-NIESSING

KNVB and ECV technical committees, as well as the coaches, carried out their own evaluation. Frank Huizinga emphasized the general satisfaction with the new format: *"The feedback we have received over and over again is that the excitement has been there in the regular championship until the last day. And the connoisseurs stress another important aspect: these play-offs make the players adopt a tougher mental attitude."* It is not just a question of qualifying for the play-offs but also of securing the best position to avoid the strongest opponents. The fact of it being a mini-cup competition is also excellent preparation for European competition. It obliges coaches to be prepared for the whole length of the season, as their teams can no longer afford a slump in form in the spring. Club executives need to beef up their squads, enabling them to be a stronger presence on the European stage. AZ, the revelation in the championship two-and-a-half years ago, fell apart at the end of last season. The club was clearly apprehensive about the new format and, like a number of other clubs, lacked the staying power traditionally displayed by the Dutch "greats". During the past season, some voices were heard wanting a better deal for the runners-up in the championship, who could finish the season empty-handed if they come to grief in the play-offs. The

Dutch are not used to closing their eyes or shunning controversy; they prefer an open discussion, which clears the way ahead. *"We looked at the possibility of awarding a UEFA Cup place to the runners-up in the regular championship. However, under UEFA regulations, we can't allocate a berth to the play-offs at the expense of the losing finalist in the Dutch Cup. We also thought about bringing the runners-up into the play-offs at a later stage but the clubs were against this."* Last season, the match schedule was somewhat disrupted by the imminent World Cup. To outside observers, the new system was not very clear. This year, the Dutch Cup will take place before the last play-off match, which decides which club gets the second berth in the Champions League. Thus the last play-off match will be the crowning moment of the season.

Pascale Pierard

The Dutch Cup: no concessions for the top clubs

No concessions are made for the professional clubs in the Dutch Cup, which involves 38 professional teams, 48 amateur clubs, and the "B" team champions and cup winners – AZ and RKC Waalwijk, respectively. The first round of the Cup, comprising 48 places, involves only the amateur clubs. In the second round, they are joined by the two "B" teams and the professional clubs.

There is just one special arrangement. In the second round, the clubs taking part in European competition – namely, PSV, Ajax, Groningen, AZ, Feyenoord, Heerenveen and Twente – plus the winner of the play-offs for positions 10 to 13 (in this case BV Vitesse) cannot face each other at this stage.

P.P.

for the small clubs

Their winners, the second and third in D2 and also the 16th and 17th in the Eredivisie contest play-offs for the two places in D1. The play-offs consist of two phases. The four weakest D2 clubs face each other. The two winners then play the two D1 clubs. The winners of these matches play the third and final round against the winners of the second-round matches between the best four D2 clubs. In practice, this means that a D1 club has to beat two D2 teams to stay up. The champions of D2 go up automatically, while the bottom club in the Eredivisie is relegated directly.

P.P.



Ajax (Wesley Sneijder in the No. 10 shirt) won a place in the UEFA Champions League qualifiers thanks to their success in the play-offs.

BLUDENSTEIN/AP/GETTY IMAGES



Vitalijs Astafjevs,
captain of FK Skonto.



FK Skonto's
young players
won the
Latvian junior
super cup
by beating
Liepajas
Metalurgs
(centre).

Latvian clubs

Investments in long-term future

FHK LIEPAJAS METALURGS, WINNERS OF THE 2005 LATVIAN CHAMPIONSHIP, HAVE BEEN SETTING AN EXAMPLE TO LATVIAN FOOTBALL FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS BY TAKING AT LEAST TWO YOUTH TEAMS ALONG WITH THEM TO EVERY FIRST-TEAM MATCH ABROAD.

Young FHK Liepajas Metalurgs players aged 9-13 get their first experience of flying in a plane, they stay at the same hotel as the professional first team, they train and they get match practice against the youth teams of the first team's opponents. *"This is how our youngsters get to try out super high-quality pitches for the first time. Moreover, it motivates them to become professional players,"* explains Alexander Rogoza, chief executive of Liepajas Metalurgs football/hockey club. This initiative, which was taken by the club's top management five years ago, is appreciated by the Latvian Football Federation (LFF).

"It's a long-term investment in Latvian football's future," says Mr Rogoza.

FK Skonto, 14-time winners of the Latvian championship, organises similar trips for youth players. However, they do not travel with the first team. They play at least three matches against opponents of the same age and watch a couple of first division matches. *"This is a good example for Latvian football clubs and an invaluable investment in youth football development in Latvia,"* says Guntis Indriksons, president of the LFF. *"Now our youth players can compare and evaluate football in Latvia against what they see abroad. We can try and imagine our youngsters'*

ambitions and the goals they set themselves after watching such matches abroad. It's also great education for the coaches," Mr Indriksons adds. By the time they reach the age of 13, these youth players will have already played in England, Germany, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Ukraine and many other countries.

The youth players of FK Skonto and FHK Liepajas Metalurgs also met in the junior super cup in Riga on the day of the Latvian Cup final. It was real coincidence that the Latvian Cup final itself involved the Liepajas Metalurgs and Skonto first teams. The whole day turned out to be a great celebration of Latvian football. The Skonto youngsters, playing in five age groups, won the super cup with a total score of 20, compared with Liepajas Metalurgs' 13 points. But Liepajas Metalurgs won the Latvian Cup.

Great ideas – major investments

The clubs in the 2006 LMT Virsliga, including top-of-the-table FK Ventspils, have been making major improvements to their facilities. On its exposed location on the coast, Liepajas Metalurgs has already spent more than a million euros converting the former marine defence system into youth and professional player dressing rooms, a winter training centre and rest rooms. A larger contribution will be required to realise Skonto's plans to renovate their youth and senior base in Riga. The LFF, meanwhile, cannot move ahead with its project to renovate its headquarters because the government refuses to grant planning permission, under the pretence of different long-term strategic ideas and bureaucracy.

Carrying on the celebrations for the centenary of Latvian football, the LFF has announced that a "gala night" is to be organised on Christmas Eve, where football veterans, youngsters, coaches, journalists, LFF partners and others will be entertained with a concert. In addition, awards will be made to the best player of 2006, the best journalist, best referee and others.

The LFF has also decided to purchase Christmas cards from UNICEF and to thereby support the fight against poverty and to make the world a better place for children to live in.

Martins Hartmanis



Liepajas Metalurgs,
winners of the Latvian cup.

PHOTOS: LFF



Former Italian national team coaches Marcello Lippi and Azeglio Vicini.



Technical courses are traditionally a mix of practice and theory.

Coaching at Coverciano – and other stories

THE 16TH UEFA COURSE FOR COACH EDUCATORS, FROM 23 TO 26 OCTOBER, WAS THE FIFTH TO BE STAGED AT ITALY'S NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE IN COVERCIANO.

But this was a course with a difference in that the first morning opened with an emotional tribute to two Italian gentlemen – in the purest sense of the word – who had won a place in UEFA's heart and who had made great, albeit different, contributions to the game of football. With members of their families in the front row of the auditorium at Coverciano, alongside the likes of Azeglio Vicini, Marcello Lippi and UEFA's former Chief Executive, Gerhard Aigner, homage was paid to Guido Vantaggiato, former director of Coverciano and a UEFA pioneer in that he was a 'founder member' of the Jira Panel, set up in the early 1990s to get the ball rolling on UEFA's coaching convention. Tribute was also paid to Giacinto Facchetti, a legendary player, director, club president and member of UEFA's Technical Committee. Their deaths sent shock waves throughout European football.

For the participants from all 52 of UEFA's member associations, the reward for fighting back the tears was an event which the two men would have undoubtedly been proud of. To be fair, it would be wrong to present the course as an all-European occasion, as Asia, CONCACAF and FIFA were represented among the guests, along with a seven-man delegation from Africa, who did some warming up for the new-format Meridian events due to kick off in Barcelona at the end of February. But that's another story...

Varied and intensive programme

In Coverciano, the programme was as varied as it was intensive. The

three mornings included practical sessions conducted by ACF Fiorentina's youth coach, Adriano Cadregari, his counterpart at FC Internazionale, Vincenzo Esposito, and the two coaches who had last met at the final of the European Under-19 Championship in Poland last July – Spain's Ginés Meléndez and Scotland's Tommy Wilson. The 'students' at two of the sessions were the members of Fiorentina's 'Primavera' squad. The third was 'staffed' by 18 of the course participants, who demonstrated that they knew how to play as well as coach.

In the auditorium, one of the highlights was an interview with Marcello Lippi – who started his coaching career with the UC Sampdoria youth team and realised three years later that his real

ambition was to work at the 'sharp end' of the game rather than at the base of the pyramid. The answers he gave to UEFA's Technical Director, Andy Roxburgh, proved to be points of reference during the rest of the course, which focused on the structures and methodologies of youth football, crucial man-management aspects, and, as Tony Higgins from the Scottish Professional Footballers Association stressed, the need to offer a sound educational back-up to footballers, bearing in mind that 85% of those who sign a pro contract at 16 are out of the game by the age of 21 and that 40% of those who do make the grade have no idea what to do when they hang up their boots. Paul Balsom, a physiologist working with the Swedish national team, also underlined the importance of proper fitness training during formative years.

All these threads were joined together in highly fruitful discussion sessions based on UEFA's blueprint for an 'A'-level elite youth diploma to be added to the current range of coaching courses. The value of such a diploma was underlined when the participants set about drawing up the profile of a youth coach. It immediately became apparent that the desirable qualities differ significantly from the virtues needed to sit on the bench of a club or national team. But that is also 'another story'...



PHOTOS: UEFA-BOZZANI



Draw for the Futsal Cup in Nyon.

UEFA-pljwoods.ch



EMPICS

The goal which brought FC Barcelona victory over Arsenal in the UEFA Champions League final and secured their participation in the FIFA Club World Cup in Tokyo.

Competitions and other activities

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE LENNART JOHANSSON BECAME PRESIDENT OF UEFA IN 1990, THE DELEGATES OF UEFA'S MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS WILL HAVE TWO CANDIDATES TO CHOOSE BETWEEN WHEN ELECTING THE NEXT PRESIDENT FOR THE 2007-2011 PERIOD AT THE 2007 CONGRESS IN DÜSSELDORF.

By the deadline, the UEFA administration had received candidatures from incumbent president Lennart Johansson and from Michel Platini, who has been a member of the UEFA Executive Committee since 2002. They were put forward by the Swedish Football Association and the French Football Federation respectively.

The deadline for nominations for the UEFA Executive Committee is, however, 25 November. The period in office is coming to an end for the following members: Senes Erzik, Angel Maria Villar Llona, Eggert Magnusson, Joseph Mifsud, Michel Platini and Giangiorgio Spieß.

In addition, the Congress will also appoint two European representa-

tives to the FIFA Executive Committee, as the terms of office of vice-president Angel Maria Villar Llona and member Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder are coming to an end. The 25 November deadline is applicable here too.

FIFA vice-president David Will is also reaching the end of his term of office. Under the FIFA Statutes, the four UK national associations are responsible for electing their representative.

Regional grassroots football workshops

The last of six regional grassroots football workshops launched in the wake of the UEFA grassroots football conference in

March 2006 was held in Barsinghausen (Germany) in October.

The series of workshops, aimed at helping the national associations to develop their grassroots activities and join the UEFA Grassroots Charter, began in Norway (Oslo) in May and continued in Denmark (Copenhagen), Scotland (Kilmarnock), England (Marlow-on-Thames) and the Netherlands (Zeist). Each UEFA member association took part in one of the six workshops, whose objective was to raise awareness of the Charter in a small-group setting. The associations not only learned about procedures for joining the Charter but were also informed about criteria for evaluation and application. Practical examples illustrated how major aspects of the programme should be developed.

Each workshop was opened by a member of the Executive Committee.

Award for UEFA's technical director

On the occasion of the 27th symposium of the Union of European Football Trainers (UEFT) held in Prague on 6 November, UEFA technical director Andy Roxburgh received the Lothar Meurer



The participants at the Barsinghausen workshop with some of the youngsters.

DFB



Andy Roxburgh with UEFA president Jozef Venglos (right) and general secretary Karlheinz Raviol.

Honorary Award, which was created in 2003 in remembrance of the UEFA's former general secretary and founding member.

This year's award was made in recognition of the UEFA technical director's work to improve the quality of coach education throughout Europe.

UEFA Futsal Cup – On the way to the final round

In October, 12 teams went through from the main round of the UEFA Futsal Cup to take part in the third phase of the competition, the elite round.



These were joined by four automatic qualifiers in the draw held in Nyon on 3 November, which produced the

following groups:

Group A: *Boomerang Inter-viu, Arzignano Grifo C/5, MNK Split, CC LKW Jistebnik;*

Group B: *MFK Dynamo Moscow, Sporting Clube Portugal, FC Shakhtar Donetsk, CIP Deva;*

Group C: *Action 21 Charleroi, KMF Marbo Belgrade, Araz Naxçivan, Clearex Chorzow;*

Group D: *El Pozo Murcia, FC Dorozhnik Minsk, FK Gödöllő, Kairat Almaty.*

(Mini-tournament hosts in bold.)

The elite round matches will take place between 4 and 8 December. The four group winners will take part in the new-format final phase, with the semi-finals and the final to be played in the same city from 26 to 28 April 2007.



Finland – Armenia: first EURO 2008 qualifier played on artificial turf.

European Under-19 Championships – Draws in Nyon

With the completion of the qualifying round of the European Under-19 Championship, 25 teams have gone through to the elite round, for which Spain, Italy and England have qualified automatically.

The draw for the elite round will take place in Nyon on 5 December. On the same day, draws will be held for the second qualifying round of the European Women's Under-19 Championship and the elite round of the European Under-17 Championship.

FC Barcelona in Tokyo

The second edition of the FIFA Club World Cup will take place in the Tokyo region between 10 and 17 December.

As UEFA Champions League title-holders, FC Barcelona are the European representative in the competition. The Catalans will enter at the semi-final stage, on 14 December, and will face the winners of the fixture between Korean club Jeonbuk Motors and Mexican club America. In the other semi-final, Internacional from Porto Alegre in Brazil will play the winners of the match between Auckland City (New Zealand) and Al Ahly (Egypt).

The final and third-place match will be staged in Yokohama on 17 December.

First EURO qualifier on artificial turf

Although UEFA competition matches have already taken place on artificial pitches at youth and club level, the senior international match on 15 November between Finland and Armenia set a new landmark for the use of an artificial surface.

Specifically, this was the first European Championship qualifier to be played on third-generation artificial turf ("FIFA Recommended 2-Star Standard"). →



Report from Brussels

UEFA has recently introduced some new members to the 'Friends of Football' group in the European Parliament. Since its creation in 2003, 'Friends of Football' has provided an informal meeting place for UEFA and Members of the European Parliament, where both sides can discuss the big issues facing European football.

Over the last three years, more than 30 MEPs from 15 member states have taken part in 'Friends of Football' meetings in Brussels and Strasbourg. The debates have given MEPs the chance to express their concerns and proposals across a wide range of issues, while UEFA has taken the chance to consult the politicians on its new policies and rules. In recent months, the discussions have focused on the Independent European Sport Review and how the EU institutions should implement it.

UEFA continues to invite new members to the 'Friends of Football' so that the group's membership reflects the diversity of Europe's nationalities and political views. Below is a small selection of the MEPs that UEFA has met in recent weeks.

Helmut Kuhne is a fan of Borussia Dortmund. He has been a Member of the European Parliament since 1994, and today sits on the Foreign Affairs Committee. He takes a special interest in transatlantic relations, and belongs to the parliament's delegation to the US Congress. Mr Kuhne has been a member of the German Socialist Party (SPD) since 1969. In addition to his work as a politician, he teaches at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Ruhr University in Bochum.

Ignasi Guardans is a fan of FC Barcelona, the city in which he was born. He belongs to the *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) party, which means he works with the centrist, liberal group in the Euro- →



Helmut Kuhne



Ignasi Guardans

→ pean Parliament, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

Mr Guardans was first elected in 1996 to the Spanish Chamber of Deputies, where he worked until January 2004. During those eight years, he took on a number of legal and political responsibilities, many of which were related to the world of international politics and European integration.

In 1999, he also joined the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Mr Guardans is currently vice-chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, and a member of the Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, and Culture and Education.

Benoît Hamon, a French MEP based in Paris, is one of the youngest members of the 'Friends of Football'.

He is a member of the European Parliament's Internal Market Committee, and has played an important role in the recent debate on the future of professional football in Europe.

Before joining the parliament, Mr Hamon was adviser to the French minister for employment and solidarity (1997-2000). He has been a member of the socialist party's national council since 1993, and a member of the socialist party national bureau since 2003.



Benoît Hamon



FC Internazionale – Spartak Moscow: the UEFA Champions League has also done its bit in the fight against racism.

BOZZANI

→ The Töölö stadium in Helsinki hosted the fixture. In view of the prevailing weather conditions in the country, the Finnish FA has launched a vast programme to install artificial pitches. With the support of the HatTrick programme, it has already constructed 19 pitches of this sort throughout the country and plans to have 100 more over the next three years.

Beach soccer – World title for Brazil

The second FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup was played on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 12 November.

Brazil emerged victorious once again, beating Uruguay 4-1 in the final. In the third-place match, France, the winners of the first edition, beat Portugal 6-4.

In all, 16 teams took part in the competition, including five representatives from Europe: France, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

Anti-racism action week

The FARE network (Football Against Racism in Europe) organised its seventh Action Week in October.

From 17 to 30 October, a wave of initiatives was launched across Europe in the fight to drive all forms of racism out of football and society.

A whole range of sports events and other activities, backed up with banners and brochures, took place in 37 European countries, with numerous football associations and clubs giving their support to events.

UEFA is a supporter of FARE activities and, as it has done every year, it also participated directly in the action week by organising a match in Nyon between UEFA staff and a multi-national team.

EURO2008 NEWS

Trix and Flix make their debut

●○○ Another milestone in the preparations for EURO 2008 was reached on 27 September, when the twin mascots designed by Warner Bros. Consumer Products were unveiled to over 100 media representatives at Vienna's MuseumsQuartier cultural complex. Then on 10 October, ahead of the friendly between Austria and Switzerland in Innsbruck, the pair, who go by the names of Trix and Flix, were "christened". No fewer than 70,000 Austrian and Swiss football fans took part in the poll to name the mascots. By the end of the ten days of voting, 36.3% of the voters had expressed a preference for Trix and Flix, 33.7% for Flitz and Bitz, and 30% for Zagi and Zigi. Christian Schmölzer, tournament director for Austria, explained the choice of names for the poll: "We proposed names that were short, simple and easy to pronounce in different languages. They also had to be cheerful names, to reflect the characters of the mascots. And last but not least, they had to be legally protectable."

The "christening" took place in a historic setting, right in front of Innsbruck's famous "Golden Roof". The next day, Trix (in the white No. 20 shirt) and Flix (in the red No. 08 shirt) made their match debut – in front of the 11,000 crowd in the Tivoli stadium, where three EURO 2008 group matches will be played. Work to increase its seating capacity to 30,000 is due to be completed next summer.



Trix and Flix with the Austrian national team.

●○○ Another piece of good EURO 2008-related news broke in Vienna at the same time at the mascots' debut, with the Austrian post office being announced as a UEFA EURO 2008 National Supporter. The Post Office has an annual turnover of EUR 1.7 billion and employs 25,000 people.



BOZZANI



The shell was finished way back at the beginning of the year.



The logos of the MLSZ, UEFA and FIFA still shroud the building.



Lennart Johansson greets Gyula Grosics. Istvan Kistelegi looks on.

New headquarters for the Hungarian FA



AFTER MANY YEARS OF SUBLETTING AND MOVING FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER, THE HUNGARIAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (MLSZ) HAS A NEW HOME IN THE SUBURBAN AREA OF BUDAPEST. THANKS TO A UEFA DONATION, MODERN THREE-FLOOR HEADQUARTERS HAVE BEEN BUILT IN THE KŐÉRBÉREK-TOVAROS RESIDENTIAL AREA.

UEFA's HatTrick programme granted the MLSZ CHF 2.5 million for its new headquarters, while FIFA provided USD 400,000 from its Goal project for furniture and modern IT equipment. Although most of the structural work had been completed by the beginning of the year, the finishing touches were only made this autumn.

The building process was interrupted when the workers found medieval skeletons under the foundations.

Huge ceremony

The MLSZ realised that the completion of its new headquarters should be celebrated not only by the federation but by the international football world and Hungarian society as a whole, so it organised a huge inauguration ceremony. VIP guests were in attendance, including the UEFA president, Lennart Johansson, UEFA and FIFA Executive Committee member Michel Platini, and the president of the Croatian Football Association, Vlatko Markovic. The MLSZ was represented by its president, Istvan Kistelegi, and its general secretary, Ildikó Kmety. From the legendary "golden team" of Hungary – which beat England 6-3 at Wembley in 1953 – goalkeeper Gyula Grosics and right-back Jeno Buzanszky attended the event, and the wife of the greatest Hungarian footballer ever, Ferenc "Öcsi" Puskas, was also among the guests of honour.

Speaking about the past, the spirit of Hungarian football can be felt everywhere inside these very modern headquarters. A three-level high picture of Ferenc Puskas stands right in front of the entrance. In the hall, memorabilia such as old football

boots, flags and balls are displayed in cabinets, and portraits of old football legends are on the walls in every single room.

The inaugural ceremony started with a speech by the MLSZ president, who expressed gratitude to UEFA and FIFA for their generous donations. He said it was a great day in the history of Hungarian football and that the MLSZ finally had its own headquarters with the latest equipment. *"This building is an excellent thing for Hungarian football. We are part of a global football family and it gives us the strength to move on. It is a wonderful feeling that we are important, but it gives us obligations. If we win the bid to host EURO 2012, our headquarters will be all-European football headquarters,"* he said.

The UEFA president said that he believes in the principle of solidarity, with

the bigger countries helping the smaller ones. *"Many people will envy Hungarian football, mainly because of these great new headquarters."*

Michel Platini said: *"Some people ask me why a less successful association needs headquarters like these? Believe me, a better future is much important than winning a match. The world of football is waiting to warmly welcome the once very famous and successful Hungarian football back to the elite."*

After the opening ceremony, a five-minute film about the history and glorious moments of Hungarian football was shown.

On stage, Istvan Kistelegi received a signed plaque from the UEFA president and a FIFA ceremonial flag from Michel Platini. The headquarters were then unveiled and the ribbon was cut by the guests of honour, who then had a guided tour of the building. They also saw a scale model of the Puskas Ferenc stadium, which will hopefully be the venue for the final of EURO 2012.

Afterwards, the delegation was received by Janos Koka, Hungary's minister of economy and transport, at the parliament, followed by a press conference.

The long process of preparation and organisation for this opening ceremony was handled by MLSZ's communication and press department.

Péter Zimmermann



Michel Platini, Istvan Ujhelyi (representing the Hungarian government), Istvan Kistelegi and Lennart Johansson cut the ribbon.



News from member associations

AUSTRIA



An innovative player database

Roughly 600 days before the start of EURO 2008, Siemens Austria and the Austrian FA (ÖFB), in a joint news conference, presented an important new element of the "Challenge 2008 – The Austrian Way" project.



Left to right: Leo Windtner, Brigitte Ederer, Josef Hickersberger, Friedrich Stickler and Willi Ruttensteiner.

Brigitte Ederer, chairman of the board of Siemens Austria; Friedrich Stickler, ÖFB president; Leo Windtner, chairman of the Challenge project; Willi Ruttensteiner, technical director; and Josef Hickersberger, national team coach, presented the ÖFB Challenge 2008 database developed by IT experts from Siemens with the help of coaches, sports scientists and doctors.

Willi Ruttensteiner was full of enthusiasm: "The Challenge 2008 database provides comprehensive and structured information about Challenge players in the four areas of the project: football-related, sport motor function, sports medicine and sports psychology. The project team have the latest data at their disposal and can react immediately. At the same time, Siemens are ensuring the highest possible data protection." Brigitte Ederer shared his enthusiasm: "EURO 2008 requires highly professional work from the ÖFB. As technology partners, we're delighted to be able to draw on our years of experience and extensive portfolio to improve the preparations. Just as in the commercial world, it is important to encourage and support the next generation, in order to

remain competitive in the long term thanks to talented youngsters. With the new database, every Challenge player can be coached in a more targeted and effective way."

Peter Klinglmüller

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Success for the Under-21 team

October was marked by more appearances by all of the Bosnia and Herzegovina national teams. The senior national team's EURO 2008 qualifiers attracted most attention, away to Moldova and home to reigning European champions Greece. However, Blaz Sliskovics' squad were disappointing. In Chisinau, Moldova held them to a 2-2 draw, while at the Bilino polje stadium in Zenica, Greece secured a convincing 4-0 win. The match against Greece was the 100th match of the Bosnia and Herzegovina national team. After the match against Moldova, captain Sergej Barbarez (36) announced his retirement from national team football, after 49 appearances and 17 goals for his country. However, he will continue to play for Bayer Leverkusen.

With two defeats at home, Bosnia and Herzegovina have reduced their chances of qualifying for EURO 2008 to a minimum.

On a more promising note, the Under-21s have done really well, despite not qualifying for the European Under-21 Championship final round in the Netherlands. Ibrahim Zukanovics' team was in fact only eight minutes away from qualifying.

After a 2-1 defeat against the Czech Republic in Jablonec nad Nisou, the Bosnian Under-21s took the lead in the return match at the Asim Ferhatovic Hase Olympic stadium with a goal from Sejad Salihovics in the 53rd minute. However, the visitors managed to draw even in the 82nd minute, thanks to Tomas Frejlach.

This talented generation will definitely be able to compete for places in the A team and therefore improve its quality.

The amateur team of Tuzla Canton also achieved considerable success by finishing top of their UEFA Regions' Cup group against AM Varazdin (Croatia), AM Southern Federal District (Russia) and AM Drava (Hungary) and qualifying for the final round. The qualifying tournament was organised by the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Tuzla canton regional football association at stadiums in Tuzla and Banovici.

The Under-19 do not have such a happy story to tell. In their European qualifying tournament in Scotland, the players of Nikola Nikic were defeated three times, against Scotland (6-0), Germany (5-0) and Estonia (31).

Sarajevo's futsal club MNK Partizan played host to a UEFA Futsal Cup qualifying tournament at the Olympic hall in Zetra. Four teams took part, and the top two places went to Arzignano Grifo C/5 from Italy and Kairat Almaty from Kazakhstan. MNK Partizan finished third and Slov-Matic Foto Bratislava in fourth place.

At FIFA headquarters in Zurich, representatives of the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the RS Entity football association of the Bosnian Serb republic (Republika Srpska) had a meeting with representatives of UEFA and FIFA where they presented a draft constitution adapted to the statutes of UEFA and FIFA. The constitution will be voted on at the next general meeting of the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which takes place in Sarajevo in mid-December.

Fuad Kravac



The Under-21 team in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



BULGARIA



Death of Stoyan Ormandjiev

Stoyan Ormandjiev, a Bulgarian football legend, died at the beginning of October after a short illness. He was 86. In his playing days, he was capped 20 times and captained his country on five occasions.

As a coach, he took the Bulgarian national team to the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki and the 1956 Games in Melbourne, where they won bronze. As coach of CSKA Sofia, he won two league titles and two domestic cups. He also led his team to the semi-finals of the 1966/67 European Champion Clubs' Cup against FC Internazionale.

Press service

CYPRUS



Five mini-pitches completed

Thanks to assistance from UEFA, the number of mini-pitches is growing in Cyprus, giving more youngsters the opportunity to improve their footballing skills.



Mini-pitches for the benefit of the community.

With the construction of the first five mini-pitches complete, the Cyprus FA (CFA) had the opportunity to thank UEFA and its president Lennart Johansson publicly for the contribution of the mini-pitch project to football and to society as a whole.

On 25 September, the UEFA president inaugurated a mini-pitch situated in Ayios Athanasios in the district of Limassol.

On 14 October, a mini-pitch in Polemidhia, also in the Limassol district, was officially opened, this time by UEFA Executive Committee member Marios Lefkaritis.

"Every new mini-pitch represents a benefit for the young people of Cyprus, who love football. The value of the project will be assessed in the long term and we are sure it will prove itself once construction

of the 20 mini-pitches throughout the island has been completed. We thank UEFA for its initiative and its contribution," said CFA general secretary Chris Georgiades.

The project for the construction of the 20 mini-pitches is running as scheduled, with five more pitches to be finished by the end of November and the remainder due for completion early next year.

Kyriacos Giorgalllis

ENGLAND



Two workshops in Botswana

The Football Association continued its successful drive to develop the game at all levels around the world with the delivery of two workshops in Botswana in October.

Botswana is one of The FA's partners under the UEFA-CAF Meridian Project, which brings together European national football associations with their counterparts in Africa to assist the development of the game in the continent.

The FA's Rachel Pavlou and Heather Cowan challenged an enthusiastic selection of coaches, referees, administrators and volunteers to develop a strategy to ignite the growth of girls' and women's football in the country from grassroots to a national team.

Running alongside the women's workshop was 'The Changing Lives, Saving Lives' international football development project led by Nick Levett, John Heathcote, Donna McIvor and FA young leaders Marcus Strudwick, Lauren O'Sullivan, Kirsty Dunleavy and Chris Rees.

Twenty-five young Africans were trained to become junior football organiser leaders and were also encouraged to integrate HIV/AIDS education games into their programmes.

The FA team's hard work culminated in two highly successful football festivals, where more than 100 school girls were given their first taste of playing the game.

"Having experienced the struggle for recognition that girls' and women's football has sometimes had to endure in England, I was genuinely moved by the dedication and enthusiasm of the course participants in Botswana," said Pavlou, the FA's newly-appointed National Football Development Manager for Women and Girls.

"Women's football in Botswana is very much still in its embryonic stage, but we have no doubt that it will eventually flourish because there is a clear commitment, both from the Botswana Football Association and the individuals on the course, to develop the game in the country."



A group of highly enthusiastic youngsters in Botswana.

The young leaders' project was supported by Commonwealth Games Canada, which hopes to keep young coaches involved in providing both football and HIV/AIDS education.

Nada Grkinic

FINLAND



Pekka Hämäläinen elected for fourth term

The president of the Finnish Football Association, Pekka Hämäläinen, was elected to serve for a fourth term by the Finnish FA Congress at the end of October. Hämäläinen's presidency began in 1997, and now he is set to lead Finnish football until autumn 2009.

"I am very anxious to start yet another term. We have our centenary in 2007, we've got off to a good start in the EURO 2008 qualifying campaign, and Finland will host Women's EURO 2009," Pekka Hämäläinen said, highlighting the cornerstones of his next three-year term.

In his speech to the Congress, the president emphasised how football facilities had progressed in recent years.

"Under the HatTrick programme, we have built 19 new artificial pitches, among other facilities. Our goal for the next



A fourth term for Pekka Hämäläinen.



three years is to get up to 100 artificial pitches. By creating the best possible environment for football, we support not only the top-flight game, but also the grass roots. One of our goals for the next three years is to promote the amateur game, so that the seniors keep on playing too."

Although Hämäläinen was re-elected, his deputies were replaced. Markku Lehtola and Kari Uotila succeed Jukka Gustafsson and Pertti Alaja as vice-presidents of the association.

The Congress also appointed four honorary members: Antonio Casagrande, Reijo Toivonen and Reino Töyry were rewarded for their lifelong contributions to Finnish football, while former vice-president Jukka Gustafsson was honoured for his 15 years of service as vice-president.

Sami Terävä

GERMANY



Important staff changes

The Executive Committee of the German Football Association (DFB) has made some key appointments. On 15 September, Wolfgang Niersbach took up the position as team management director. Niersbach, 55, was the DFB's director of communication from 1 September 1988 to 30 June 2001 and then vice-president of the World Cup organising committee. He takes over from Bernd Pfaff, who retired on 31 July after 48 years as a full-time employee of the DFB. "We're delighted to have Wolfgang Niersbach back. His opinion will be very important for all major developments in the future," said the DFB's president, Theo Zwanziger.

The association's new director of marketing, who succeeds Horst Lichtner, now general secretary of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), is 40-year-old Denni Strich, MBA, who joined the DFB on 1 October. He is a former professional footballer with 1. FC Kaiserslautern, Rot-Weiss Oberhausen and FC Homburg and won 18 caps as a youth player.

In the new year, following the retirement of Goetz Eilers as head of legal services, Stefan Hans, who was head of finance with the World Cup organising committee, becomes director of the DFB's new personnel, legal and finance division.

Another new full-time position that the DFB has created is that of security manager, which was filled on 9 November by Helmut Spahn, 45, who until the end of October was head of the security section of the World Cup organising committee. He replaces Alfred Seng, who did the job on a voluntary basis and has now reached retirement age.

Stephan Brause

LIECHTENSTEIN



Schoolgirls' tournament

The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) organised schoolgirls' football tournaments in the spring and autumn. The turnout was very high each time, with a total of 350 girls aged 8-13 pulling on their football boots for the afternoon. The tournaments were divided into four categories, the winners of which each went away with a trophy.



Women's football is starting to take off.

Girls' football in Liechtenstein is still at an early stage of development. FC Triesen and FC Ruggell have girls' and women's teams and are considered to be the role models in Liechtenstein. The tournaments organised by the LFV are intended to get girls interested in football and, at the same time, give them an opportunity to play.

Judith Frommelt

LITHUANIA



A great event for the referees

Lithuanian referees and referee observers, most of them from Kaunas, took part in an event with well-known former referee Michel Vautrot from France, who was in Lithuania as UEFA's referee delegate at the European Under-19 tournament.



A national team shirt for Michel Vautrot.

Michel Vautrot kindly agreed to meet the Lithuanian referees to share his experience from his great refereeing career. He also answered a lot of questions from the Lithuanian referees.

Michel Vautrot also came to Lithuania in 1992, when he was UEFA's delegate for the UEFA Champions League qualifying match between FC Zalgiris (Vilnius) and Dynamo Kiev. On that occasion too, he agreed to meet Lithuanian referees and referee observers.

Michel Vautrot's regard for referees at all levels was obvious from his meeting with our referees, which left a great impression on all those present. By way of thanks, and as a small gift for his birthday, the Lithuanian Football Federation presented him with a Lithuanian national team shirt.

Vaiva Zizaite

MALTA



Sound policy from the association

Despite being a small footballing nation, Malta is quite conspicuous among the 52 member countries on the UEFA map because of the role played by its association, the MFA.

Apart from its president, Joseph Mifsud, himself a seasoned connoisseur of international football administration, being a long-standing member of the UEFA Executive Committee, the Malta FA goes some way towards promoting the game at home and in Europe as a whole.

Malta's overseas contribution in the administrative line is complemented by its federation's sound policy of entering practically all UEFA club and national team competitions for both men and women, with futsal also being included.

Youth football, starting from the nurseries, is very much a core activity in the MFA's development programmes. It includes constant participation in friendly matches and international youth tournaments, as well as the European Under-17 and Under-19 championships.

The aim is to raise standards in these categories. There was evidence of this happening when Malta obtained creditable results in the recent qualifying group matches for the 2006/07 European Under-19 Championship. It is hoped that this will lead to positive results for the national Under-21 and senior teams.

Incidentally, Malta's 2-1 victory over Hungary in a home qualifier for EURO 2008 was greeted with extreme satisfaction by the people of the Mediterranean island, as well as generating expressions of admiration from overseas.



Although it was not the first at this level, the victory represented a momentous landmark for Malta in senior international competition. Continued improvement in the youth sector should sustain the national team and help it obtain other prestigious results against bigger footballing countries, thereby ensuring worldwide respect for Malta.

MOLDOVA



A important event marked the activity of the FA of Moldova, namely the working visit of UEFA Chief Executive Lars-Christer Olsson. He received extensive information on how the king of sports is developed and promoted in Moldova.

and attended the opening ceremony of the artificial mini-pitch in the village of Ghidiqhici.

Accompanied by Pavel Cebanu, president of the FA of Moldova, Lars-Christer Olsson met the country's prime minister, Vasile Tarlev, at the government premises. Their discussion touched on various topics related to technical and material infrastructure development, the construction of a new stadium and the renovation of the old Republican stadium.

At a press conference held at the headquarters of the FA of Moldova, Mr Olsson said: *"Since my first visit in 1998, there have been many changes that have made a good impression on me. The leadership of the FA of Moldova had invested a lot in the development of infrastructure. The installation of artificial mini-pitches all over the country will produce remarkable results in the near future and I strongly believe that better performances by the Moldovan football will follow shortly. In this respect, UEFA is ready to share its working approaches and methods, as well as the professional expertise of its different specialists".*

The "Open Fun Football Schools" project has been very well implemented in Moldova.

The coaches who followed the theoretical and practical courses in Chisinau in September have been applying their knowledge with more than 1,600 children from eight schools in regions situated on both sides of the Nistru river. Despite some initial problems crossing the Transnistrian border, the children proved that friendship and the desire to play football are invincible, and from 11 to 15 October, children from Suruceni, Draslideni, Cosnita, Speia, Ciobruciu, Causeni and Chisinau played football and had great fun.

The high standard of organisation of the Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS), as well as the success in reaching the targets set, were mentioned from the OFFS executive director and regional coordinator Valeri Cholaria. This letter of gratitude was addressed to the OFFS coordinator for Moldova, Iurii Conusevici, and to the FA of Moldova.



What is most satisfying is that, as a result of these lessons, everyone involved in this project, along with the sports leaders of Moldova, have reached the same conclusion, namely that this project is absolutely necessary for everyone.

NETHERLANDS



Louis van Gaal, currently the successful coach of AZ Alkmaar and formerly with Ajax, FC Barcelona and the Dutch national team, was one of the keynote speakers at a symposium on women's football held at the main office of the Dutch Football Association (KNVB) in Zeist on 10 November. Approximately 120 players, coaches and administrators working at the top Dutch women's football listened attentively as Louis van Gaal explained what is expected of a coach at top level.

Football for girls and women is very popular these days in the Netherlands. The total number of players increased by approximately 10% to 83,000 over last season and football is now well on its way to becoming the biggest team sport for girls and women in the country, surpassing field hockey and handball. The national platform for women's football (LOVV) took the initiative to organise a symposium in corporation with the KNVB in order to highlight what is needed from administrators, coaches and players in order to raise the standard of performance in the Netherlands.

The Dutch national team had just returned from South Korea, where they had participated in the Peace Queen Cup in Seoul. The three marginal defeats suffered at the hands of Australia, Denmark and the United States stressed the need for a more professional approach to women's football at the very top. The national team is currently ranked 18th in the world but, unfortunately, the team has never managed to qualify for the final round of a European Championship or World Cup.

During the symposium Van Gaal, Andries Jonker (Van Gaal's assistant at Barcelona during his second spell with the club and formerly coach of the national women's squad) and Joop Munsterman, president of professional club FC Twente, addressed their audiences during small-scale workshops on the requirements for all involved for achieving certain goals.



During the earlier plenary session, Sweden's Pia Sundhage, a former record international and currently a coach in the national women's League in Sweden, had indicated how Sweden had gradually progressed to the top of international women's football. Guest speaker Monique Tijsterman, assistant coach of the national women's handball team, explained how the Dutch national handball association had chosen an approach which had moved the Dutch team up to fifth position in the world rankings.

Vera Pauw, national team coach and former national coach of the Scottish team, had got the symposium under way by describing the present situation in the Netherlands and why the KNVB desperately wants to take a few steps to turn the Dutch national team into an internationally recognised force in women's football.

Rob de Leede

NORWAY



More and better facilities for children and youth

In Norway, the municipalities are responsible for the infrastructure, in terms of building facilities for football, and the clubs are responsible for filling the facilities with activity.

One of the FA of Norway's most important tasks is therefore to encourage the municipalities to build a minimum of 50 full-size pitches with artificial turf and 300 mini-pitches every year in all for grassroots football. To achieve this, the FA of Norway systematically lobbies local government, in order to make it understand the importance of investing in football infrastructure.

"By building a mini-pitch or a full-size pitch with artificial turf the neighbourhood gets a perfect playground for children and youth. Our experience is that such facilities creates activity, and on some pitches we have counted as many as 400 people taking part in different football activities in one day," said Audun Fevik, director of grassroots football at the FA of Norway.

The FA of Norway recommends that all new football facilities for grassroots football should be made of artificial turf. Artificial turf has many advantages, especially since there are practically no limits for the use of such a facility. It can be used by schools during the day, by clubs during the afternoon and evening, and by everyone else, when possible. In the last two years, more than 200 pitches with artificial turf have been built in Norway, and another 100 should be in place by the end of this year, according to the estimates. The FA has its own committee for this purpose, chaired by Per Ravn Omdal. He is constantly travelling the country meeting

local politicians to convince them that it is important to build facilities for football in their municipalities. The FA of Norway has also employed five consultants, who work in regions all over Norway, helping clubs with plans and projects.

"Hopefully our focus on facilities will bear fruit, so that our organisation can continue to create positive activities for children and youth in their local environment," Mr Fevik concluded.

Roger Solheim

POLAND



Red card for racism and aggression

There is no place for racism, intolerance and violence in football. During the last weekend of October, opposition to such phenomena was expressed by the Polish football family, with players and referees going onto the field wearing T-shirts with the slogan "Red Card for Racism and Aggression". The organisers of this action – the Polish FA, the Polish players' union and the Polish premier league (Ekstraklasa SA) – aimed to show in this symbolic way that they are aware of the existing danger and that they are totally and openly opposed to racism and aggression.

"We don't want Polish stadiums to be associated with aggression, racism and xenophobia. We all want to create a better image of football. Nowadays stadiums are visited by families, who expect to be able to watch games in a cultured and sporting atmosphere. We oppose the activities of a small group of persons pretending to be football fans whose chauvinistic attitudes ruin all the efforts to improve the image of Polish football," the organisers of the action stated.

The Polish FA has been cooperating for many years with the "Never Again" association, a member of the FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe) network, in order to eliminate racism and intolerance from Polish stadiums.

Mutual initiatives enabled the organisation of some friendly matches involving teams of foreign players living in Poland or



The players and the referee take a stand against racism and violence.

football tournaments for fans which were aimed at promoting tolerance and respect for other people. Two years ago, the Polish FA and "Never Again" drew up an information brochure presenting racist, nationalist and fascist symbols and slogans which have to be eliminated from football stadiums. The brochure is very helpful for the association's delegates at football matches. Punishments for racist incidents have also become far more severe and the disciplinary body of the Polish FA is very restrictive in dealing with such situations.

Also, before the World Cup in Germany the Polish national team supported the anti-racist campaign "Let's Kick Racism out of Stadiums" by taking part in a photo session which resulted in a special poster with the aforementioned message.

Michal Kocioba / Bartek Marks

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



FAI/eircom league merger

UEFA have confirmed that, when completed, the new Lansdowne Road stadium could host either a UEFA Champions League or UEFA Cup final.

The announcement was made in Strasbourg by the UEFA Chief Executive, Lars-Christer Olsson, following a meeting with FAI Chief Executive John Delaney.

Speaking at the announcement, John Delaney said: *"Ireland showed recently with the Ryder Cup that it is capable of hosting the world's major sporting events and bringing a Champions League or UEFA Cup final to Lansdowne Road would have a similar impact in terms of promoting the country around the world. The Irish government is investing EUR 191m in the redevelopment of Lansdowne Road and the arrival of one of the biggest football matches in the world would represent an excellent dividend."*

He welcomed the announcement that Dublin City Council had granted permission for the redevelopment of the Lansdowne Road stadium: *"This is very exciting news, very gratifying and very significant. It means the project is on schedule and within budget to this point and we expect that work will begin early in 2007."*

The new stadium will provide 50,000 seats for spectators.

■ History was made recently when a motion to complete the transfer of control of national league football in Ireland to the FAI was passed at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the association.

All of the relevant bodies had already voted for the change – including the National League clubs – but this meeting was necessary to rubber-stamp the rule changes needed to facilitate the merger.



MOGOSOIAI PIETRA LUNGHEI



A mock-up of the new Lansdowne Road stadium.

It is a little known fact that the National League has operated independently for the past 85 years and last month's vote allowed the establishment of a new competition, the FAI National League, in its place.

The move to bring national league football under the direct control of the FAI is in line with a recommendation of the Genesis II report that was commissioned to examine the current administrative structures of Irish football.

The decision has already been taken to run the new league as it is currently constituted in a numerical sense for two years, with a top division of 12 teams and a lower division of ten.

The Republic of Ireland Under-17 and Under-19 sides, both managed by Sean McCaffrey, have advanced to the UEFA elite qualifying phases. The Republic of Ireland Under-19 outfit defeated Belarus, the Netherlands and tournament hosts FYR Macedonia to advance, while the Under-17s edged out Latvia, Denmark and Azerbaijan to book their place in the next round.

Sue Ronan's Republic of Ireland Women's Under-19 side also advanced to the elite qualifying phase of their European championship undefeated, beating Bulgaria, Slovakia and Italy along the way.

Fran Whearty

ROMANIA



A busy autumn

It's been a very busy autumn for the Romanian FA, firstly because of several events at the Mogosoiaia national training centre, at the association's headquarters and around Bucharest.

No fewer than three mini-tournaments took place in the space of just three months (September, October and November). Two had been planned for several months (the European Under-17 and Under-19 Championship first round qualifying matches) and one at shorter notice (European Women's Championship, first qualifying round), which gave the village of Chiajna (close to Bucharest) a taste of international action for the first time, as its highly-rated stadium was used for the tournament.

The Romanian FA was also very busy at its headquarters. Among other activities, a management seminar for first and second division club officials was organised on 6 November with Deloitte. In all, six such seminars will be organised between now and mid-2008, as the association's aim is to provide its affiliated clubs with the best possible management training, in order to raise their standards, which is a "must" not only for licensing purposes, but also taking Romania's integration in the EU into consideration.

On 23 and 24 November, a UEFA HatTrick management seminar is set to take place at the headquarters, which is also an important task from an organisational point of view.

Everything taking place in this respect proves the high quality of the work being done by the Romanian FA, which is highly motivated, after its failed bid to host the 2009 UEFA Cup final, by the letter from the UEFA Chief Executive, who said that if all the requirements were fulfilled, Romania would have every opportunity to host the UEFA Cup final in 2010 or 2011. Since the failed 2009 UEFA Cup final bid, the Romanian FA has stayed in touch with the authorities concerned, and not without results. Ioan-Angelo Lupescu, CEO of the Romanian FA, said: "Recently, the Bucharest local council approved a 100 million euro investment for building a new national stadium in Bucharest. Work is expected to start at the end of this year. We are confident that the five-star stadium will be finished in due time and will enable our association to bid to stage the UEFA Cup final in 2010 or 2011".

Meanwhile, the association is doing everything it can to prove its organisational skills by staging mini-tournaments like the ones mentioned above (which have been hosted regularly in Romania in recent years), seminars and other different kinds of events. The UEFA Cup final is not our only target.

Paul Zaharia

SWITZERLAND



Everyone's keen on mini-pitches

The executive committee of the Swiss FA (SFV) was delighted to report recently on the enormous popularity throughout the country of the mini-pitches campaign which was launched with CHF 1 million funding from UEFA's HatTrick assistance programme. In the last few months the SFV has been inundated with requests for funding under the scheme.

The aim behind the plans to install mini-pitches in Switzerland is to give back to grassroots football some of the facilities and opportunities that have been lost in the last 30 years and allow the 125,000 youth players registered with the SFV, as well as schoolchildren and recreational footballers, to indulge their passion for their sport in their leisure time.

In summer 2005, the president of the Swiss FA, Ralph Zloczower, opened the first of 50 planned mini-pitches in Payerne and since then the SFV has approved a total of 27 applications, with each being awarded grants of CHF 20,000.

Payerne is also the location for the first of what will be four SFV training academies for youth players aged 14 and 15. One of the academy's first graduates was Johan Djourou, now with Arsenal, who has since won seven full caps for his country.

Pierre Benoit



Mini-pitches are not just for football.

TURKEY



Cooperation with chess federation

The Turkish Football Association (TFA) signed a protocol with the Turkish chess federation on 6 March. This protocol encourages strong relations, collaboration and cooperation between the two federations. Football clubs wishing to set up chess rooms in their facilities asked the TFA for such rooms and the TFA set them up in collaboration with the chess federation. In all, ten clubs, including Vestel Manisaspor and MKE Ankaragucu from the Turkcell Super League, applied for chess classes. The Turkish chess federation is also providing teachers to teach chess to the players and staff of the clubs.

Through this project, the TFA is trying to encourage footballers and officials to think and act according to the logic of chess. The TFA has also set up chess rooms in its own offices and training facilities for the use of its staff and the national teams.

Ilker Ugur



The FA of Wales is concentrating on facilities.

PHOTOS: FAW

Welsh Football Association

Five priorities



THE WORK OF THE FA OF WALES HAS ATTRACTED A GREAT DEAL OF COMMENT IN RECENT MONTHS, MUCH OF IT RATHER WIDE OF THE MARK.

We are one of the smaller national associations, but our commitment to Welsh football should not be doubted, and our dedicated staff work hard to implement the five-point strategic policies which have been identified by the FAW Council. These priorities form the foundation for the development of the game for some time to come and we can be proud of our provision for the future.

Mini-pitches

During the past year, we have entered into partnership with UEFA and the FSA to install two mini-pitches in 21 of our 22 local authorities. These playing areas enable young people and the disabled to play football in a safe environment on

all-weather pitches every day of the year, and we have endeavoured to place them in socially deprived areas or where no football facilities previously existed. The shared cost is £700,000 but its true value cannot be overestimated.

Ground improvement fund

In the past two seasons, £1.1 million has been placed in a fund to upgrade stadiums and other elements of infrastructure for our member clubs. Although a larger share is allocated to clubs that will be playing in European competition, grants are also awarded to ambitious clubs in lower divisions of the pyramid league structure. Around £2 million had been distributed for similar schemes in the previous decade, but the current figures reflect the considered use of the additional income from our successful commercial negotiations.

National training facility

During this season, we hope to complete our biggest and most important signing to date – the creation of a National Training Facility at our team base at the Vale of Glamorgan Hotel. It will see the building of a 'premier class' full-size pitch, together with a half-size pitch for specific skills practice. This will be a joint venture with FIFA and will enable our international teams to prepare properly ahead of future matches.

Club licensing scheme

Clubs representing Wales in Europe are familiar with the standards required under UEFA's club licensing system. After wide-ranging consultation, the FAW Council approved a National Club Licensing Scheme that sets out a quality management system which will monitor the continuous improvement of clubs in the Welsh Premier League as well as those



National training centre

- 1-4 Training grounds
- 5 All-weather artificial pitch and running track
- 6 Skills-practice ground
- 7 Sports pavilion

which aspire to join the league. The five key areas are: sporting (youth & coaching), infrastructure, legal & administration, finance, and codes of practice.

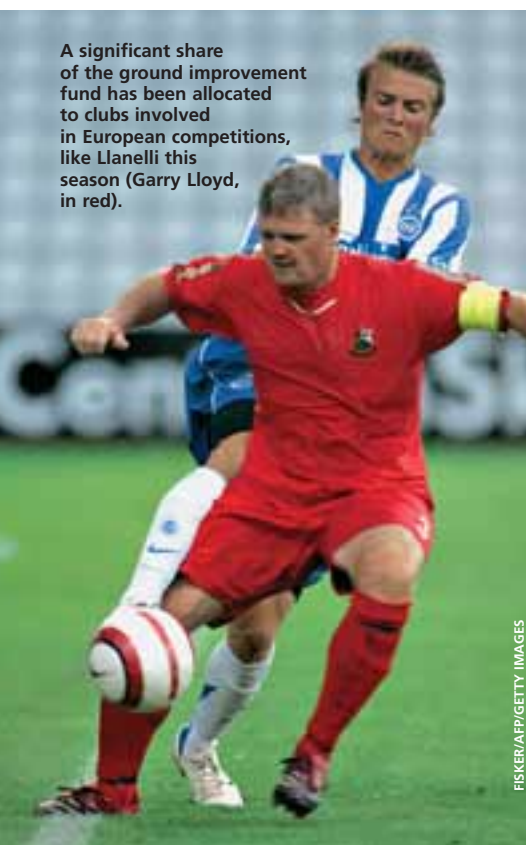
Welsh football trust

Ten years ago, the FAW founded this charitable trust to oversee its development programmes. Four years ago, the FAW and the trust in tandem were licensed by UEFA to operate the prestigious Pro licence coaching course, thereby establishing Wales as a leader in the field. In addition, grassroots football has not been neglected: a network of coaches covering the local authorities is developing all aspects of the game. The FAW provides administrative expertise through its nominated trustees and offers financial assistance, which by 2010 will have shown an investment of at least £1.5 million.

All in all, these initiatives which we have undertaken will hold Welsh football in good stead for many years to come. It is worth noting that the association receives no financial support from public bodies, but through its well-managed policies it can meet these major obligations. With the national team playing exciting and attractive football, we can continue to silence our critics.

David G. Collins

A significant share of the ground improvement fund has been allocated to clubs involved in European competitions, like Llanelli this season (Garry Lloyd, in red).



FIKIER/AP/GETTY IMAGES



Communications

Birthdays – Calendar

Birthdays

Jean Fournet-Fayard (France), member of the circle of former UEFA committee members, will celebrate his 75th birthday on 31 December. On 7 December, Andreas Akkelides (Cyprus), member of the Fair Play and Ethics Panel, will turn 60, with Torleif Sigurdsson (Faroe Islands), member of the circle of former UEFA committee members, and Berti Vogts (Germany), technical instructor, following suit on 23 and 30 December respectively. UEFA also wishes many happy returns to:

- Wolfgang Wassmund (Germany, 1.12)
- Charles Agius (Malta, 2.12)
- Ligita Ziedone (Latvia, 2.12)
- Juan Antonio Fernandez Marin (Spain, 3.12)
- Miroslav Liba (Czech Republic, 4.12)
- Alan Hodson (England, 5.12)
- Maurizio Montironi (San Marino, 5.12)
- Leszek Ryłski (Poland, 6.12)
- Franco Carraro (Italy, 6.12)
- Andrea Manzella (Italy, 8.12)
- Michel D'Hooghe (Belgium, 8.12)
- Wolfgang Riedel (Germany, 9.12)
- Les Reed (England, 9.12)
- Ioan Angelo Lupescu (Romania, 9.12)
- Alvaro Albino (Portugal, 12.12)
- Kaj Natri (Finland, 13.12)
- Gilberto Madaíl (Portugal, 14.12)
- Antonio Mortagua (Portugal, 14.12)
- Ged Poyton (England, 15.12)
- Karel Vertongen (Belgium, 17.12)
- Hansruedi Hasler (Switzerland, 18.12)
- Gennadiy Lysenchuk (Ukraine, 18.12)
- Niklas à Lidarenda (Faroe Islands, 18.12)
- Rainer Koch (Germany, 18.12)
- Ludvik Georgsson (Iceland, 19.12)
- Laszlo Vagner (Hungary, 24.12)
- Tommy Theorin (Sweden, 25.12)
- Guy Goethals (Belgium, 26.12)
- Dusan Tittel (Slovakia, 27.12)
- Bernard Carrel (Switzerland, 28.12)
- Martial Saugy (Switzerland, 28.12)

- Otakar Mestek (Czech Republic, 28.12)
- Einar Halle (Norway, 29.12)
- Wolfgang Thierriichter (Austria, 30.12)
- Horst Brummeier (Austria, 31.12)
- Christian Moroge (Switzerland, 31.12)
- Liene Kozlovska (Latvia, 31.12)

Upcoming events

Meetings

30.11/1.12.2006, Brussels
UEFA seminar on EU matters

5.12.2006, Nyon
Youth & Amateur Football Committee

5.12.2006, Nyon
European Under-17 and Under-19 Championships: draws for the 2006/07 elite rounds.
European Women's Under-19 Championship: draw for the 2006/07 second qualifying round

7/8.12.2006, Nyon
Executive Committee

13.12.2006, Nyon
Forum for elite women's football coaches

13.12.2006, Nyon
European Women's Championship: draw for the 2007-09 qualifying round

15.12.2006, Nyon
Draws for the UEFA Champions League first knockout round and UEFA Cup rounds of 32 and 16

Competitions

5/6.12.2006
UEFA Champions League: group matches (match day 6)

10-17.12.2006, Japan
FIFA Club World Cup

13/14.12.2006
UEFA Cup: group matches (match day 5)

Notice

Until 18 December, the Serb FA can be reached on the following phone/fax number: +381 11 323 3368. After that date, its usual numbers will be operational again: + 381 11 323 3447 (phone) and +381 11 323 3433 (fax).

Match agents

The Licensed UEFA Match Agents Panel has granted new licences to:

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New publication

Independent European Sport Review 2006

Following a first version that was widely circulated and commented on, the final version of the Independent European Sport Review is now available. It examines ways to preserve the European sports model and ensure recognition of the special nature of sport, as defined in the Nice Declaration. The final version of the review takes account of the discussions that followed the publication of the first version. An executive summary also exists in all official EU languages, as well as Russian. (www.independenteuropeansportsreview.com).



Obituary

Léon Walker, a member of the Amateur Football Committee from 1996 to 1998, died on 29 October, aged 69. He was also a former head of the technical department of the Swiss FA and national team coach in 1979/80.

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



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