



# 2009 UEFA EUROPEAN WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

## MATCH PREVIEW



**Finland**



**Ukraine**

**Olympic Stadium, Helsinki**

**Saturday 29 August 2009 - 16.30CET (17.30 local time)**

**Group A - Matchday 3**

### **Contents**

Hosts keen to maintain momentum .....	2
Ukraine hoping for farewell flourish .....	3
Sällström keen to open scoring account .....	4



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## Hosts keen to maintain momentum

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His team may be safely through to the UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2009™ quarter-finals as section winners, but Finland coach Michael Kåld has no intention of giving eliminated Ukraine an easy ride in their third and final Group A fixture at Helsinki's Olympic Stadium on Saturday.

### **Winning momentum**

The host nation became the first team to book their ticket to the last eight thanks to consecutive wins against Denmark and the Netherlands, with a 3 September trip to Turku ensured, and they have built up a momentum that Kåld wishes to preserve. "This is a very important match for us because if we win this game we will go to Turku with good feelings," he told uefa.com. "It's always easier to go into the next game if you win the game before and we have so much energy and so many positive feelings that I want those feelings to stay within the team. We'll be giving 100 per cent and we also know that a lot of spectators will be here, so we want to give them a party."

### **Record crowd**

A new Finnish attendance record for a women's international is expected to be set during the game, comfortably beating the 16,324 for the opening match against Denmark, with Kåld's side bidding farewell to their fans in the capital until the final, and the assembled crowd can expect a strong lineup. "We have 22 players here and I know they're fit and ready to play, but if you have a player who's 'hot', I won't put them on the bench," he insisted. That said, defender Sanna Valkonen is carrying a knock and may be rested, along with winger Anna Westerlund, who is one booking away from suspension. "I always have to think about such things," added Kåld.

### **Tytova injury**

Conversely, Ukraine coach Anatoliy Kutsev is refusing even to contemplate squad rotation as his competition debutants attempt to bow out with their first points following losses to the Netherlands and Denmark. "This is European football," he explained. "We must showcase our talents; this is no place for experimenting. We'll be fielding all our key players." Defender Inessa Tytova misses out with a rib fracture, however.

### **'Attractive' match**

The two teams have never met before in a senior women's – or men's – international, but Kutsev feels he knows what to expect. "We've watched Finland's two games and it should be an even contest. There are no secrets in modern football." He also predicted an entertaining encounter. "The number of spectators will help the players on both teams play attractive football. The games played by Finland in this stadium have been a true festival of football, but we'll do our best to spoil the party."

## Ukraine hoping for farewell flourish

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With zero points on the board and their flights home already booked, Ukraine go into their final Group A match against Finland on Saturday eager, in the words of playmaker Nataliya Zinchenko, to prove that they "didn't come here for nothing".

### **Encouraging promise**

Anatoliy Kutsev's side are making their debut at a UEFA European Women's Championship, but despite showing encouraging promise in their 2-0 defeat by the Netherlands and their subsequent 1-0 loss to Denmark, those results have guaranteed that they will finish bottom in the section. Hosts Finland have won both their outings to be confirmed as group winners, meanwhile, yet Zinchenko maintains that she and her team-mates will approach the match with their heads held high.

### **'Good spirit'**

"Our chance has gone, but we will try to win our last game in order to prove we didn't come here for nothing," she said. "We haven't analysed Finland. Each of the players has watched their two games and drawn their own conclusions about their strengths. We'll go into this match in a good spirit."

### **High expectations**

The 29-year-old feels her team were slightly unfortunate to come away from their opening encounters with nothing. "We were unlucky," she said. "Maybe we wanted to win so much we found it hard to express ourselves. But we lost our first two games and, therefore, we're going home. I was expecting much more from this final tournament, but there's no pressure on us now. Everything is going smoothly."

### **Parting intentions**

Goalkeeper Iryna Zvarych is anticipating another testing occasion for Ukraine when they take on the 2005 semi-finalists, but she also hopes to bid farewell to Finland on a positive note. "It's really hard to play any game at a final tournament because this is the first time we've made it to the EURO," she explained. "We'll just try to be relaxed and play to our full potential. We'll do our best to win because it would be good to leave Finland on a high."

## Sällström keen to open scoring account

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Striker Linda Sällström joked that she hopes a misplaced comment to one of her Finland colleagues has not hindered her chances of hitting the back of the net as she sets out to register her first goal at UEFA WOMEN'S EURO2009™ against Ukraine on Saturday.

### **No offence**

Sällström's was one of the names the host nation's fans most expected to see on a tournament scoresheet, but the 21-year-old has not come close to opening her account so far, despite her team beating Group A rivals Denmark 1-0 and the Netherlands 2-1. "I played better in the pre-finals friendlies, but for some reason I've not even had any scoring chances," she said, before adding with a smile: "I don't know why – maybe I've offended someone and therefore no one will pass me the ball! On the other hand, I don't care who scores as long as we keep on winning."

### **Dual role**

A more reasonable explanation for the Djurgårdens IF DFF player's barren start might be that she has also been used on the left wing, away from her preferred position as a centre-forward. "Against the Netherlands it was maybe easier to play on the wing as they had their defence lying very deep," she told uefa.com. "That meant it was easier for me to use my speed." A former athlete at national level, Sällström certainly has plenty of pace, having clocked 12.75 seconds for the 100m.

### **Team belief**

Already confirmed as group winners thanks to their opening two victories, the hosts were also the first team to book a place in the quarter-finals, though their strong start has not surprised Sällström. "Before the finals, a lot of people maybe didn't believe in us, but the important thing was that we believed in ourselves," she explained. "Of course, it feels even better after having played so well in these two games. We're aiming for the semi-finals and from there anything can happen."

### **Possible changes**

Given that Finland can now start planning for the quarter-finals, there is scope for coach Michael Kåld to rotate his starting lineup, however Sällström warned that making too many changes might not prove wise. "It is hard to say whether there will be changes and, if there are, how many," she said. "One has to keep in mind that too many changes may also have a negative effect. We have played well and we want to continue that. Besides, I don't think anyone is tired so there is no actual need to make that many changes."