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UEFA Best Player in Europe 2010/11



In this issue

UEFA Best Player in Europe Award 4

The draw for the group stage of the UEFA Champions League was the occasion to present Lionel Messi with the new UEFA Best Player in Europe Award for his performances last season.



FC Barcelona lift UEFA Super Cup 7

Another trophy for the Catalan club, who beat FC Porto in the UEFA Super Cup in Monaco.



UEFA Europa League group stage draw results 8

The group stage draw in Monaco split 48 participating teams into 12 groups for the third season of the UEFA Europa League.



Nearly €70 million for youth development 10

Part of the UEFA Champions League revenue is shared among the top division clubs which did not participate in the competition, for them to invest in youth development.



Elite Club Coaches Forum in Nyon 11

The annual get-together for elite club coaches once again resulted in a valuable exchange of opinions and experiences.



News from member associations 17

Supplements

The UEFA Champions League Technical Report 2010/11 analyses European club football's flagship competition.

The European Under-21 and Under-19 Championship technical reports provide technical analyses of these two competitions' final rounds, played in Denmark and Romania respectively.

Cover

Photo: AFP

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Home-grown inspiration

As reported in the last UEFA-direct, Spain have added to their long list of honours by winning this year's European U19 and U21 championships and successfully defending their women's U17 crown.

These results are proof, if any were needed, of the true strength of the Spanish player development system, which is bearing the fruit of years of concerted efforts. They also echo a UEFA policy that I hold particularly dear, namely the local training of players.

According to the latest report on the European football labour market, published by the Football Observatory at the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES), which looks at the continent's five big leagues (England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain), Spanish clubs field the greatest percentage of club-trained players, at an average of almost one in four. Extending this analysis to all the players on their books, almost 30% are graduates of the clubs' own academies (the second highest percentage among the big five, behind France).

It is therefore no surprise to see that Spain is the country best represented in this season's UEFA Champions League, with 81 Spanish players competing, just ahead of France's 78.



Overall, and contrary to popular wisdom, the highest ranking clubs are those that use the greatest proportion of club-trained players, showing that player development and performance are far from incompatible. This can only be a good thing and is all the more reason for us to step up our efforts to safeguard the entire quality chain that leads from training centres to top competition.

We can but hope, too, that this example encourages other clubs to follow the same path, helping European football to retain its identity and extend its strong roots so that it can continue to play its socio-educational role to the full.

 A stylized, handwritten signature of Gianni Infantino's name in black ink.

Gianni Infantino
UEFA General Secretary

Award for Lionel Messi

The draw ceremony for the group stage of the 2011/12 UEFA Champions League, held in the Salle des Princes at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco on the evening of 25 August, was followed by another ceremony, at which the UEFA Best Player in Europe Award for last season was presented.

This trophy, born out of an initiative by the UEFA president, Michel Platini, replaces the awards presented by UEFA in previous years, from which it differs in terms of both its character – as a single award – and the way its winner is chosen. Whereas in recent years the panel was composed of the coaches of the clubs that had qualified for the UEFA Champions League round of 16, this year the season's best player in

Europe was selected by sports journalists in the tradition of the old European Footballer of the Year award. In order to highlight the connection, a number of former winners of the original trophy [Sir Bobby Charlton (1966), Luis Figo (2000), Ruud Gullit (1987) and Lothar Matthäus (1990)] were in attendance, lending support to the UEFA general secretary, Gianni Infantino, and the UEFA competitions director, Giorgio Marchetti, during the draw.

This new trophy is awarded in partnership with European Sports Media (ESM). The 53 journalists on the panel, each representing one of UEFA's

member associations, had already shortlisted three candidates – Xavi Hernandez, Lionel Messi (both of FC Barcelona) and Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid CF) – for a second round of voting, which was held live in Monaco in the form of an electronic vote. The trophy, a silver bust engraved with the UEFA logo, was presented to Lionel Messi, who won considerably more votes than his teammate and Real Madrid's Ronaldo.

United against fraud

Although the list of group stage participants in the 2011/12 UEFA Champions League was completed on the two evenings prior to the draw, the UEFA Emergency Panel, composed of the UEFA president and four members of the Executive Committee, had to make a change to the list of automatic qualifiers, replacing Turkish champions Fenerbahçe SK with runners-up Trabzonspor AS. The Turkish Football Association had withdrawn Fenerbahçe SK from its list of representatives in the UEFA competitions because the club had been implicated in a match-fixing case. *"A move that shows that we are all united in the fight against fraud,"* in the words of the UEFA general secretary, Gianni Infantino, who pointed out that the new season also marked the start of the application of UEFA's financial fair play criteria.

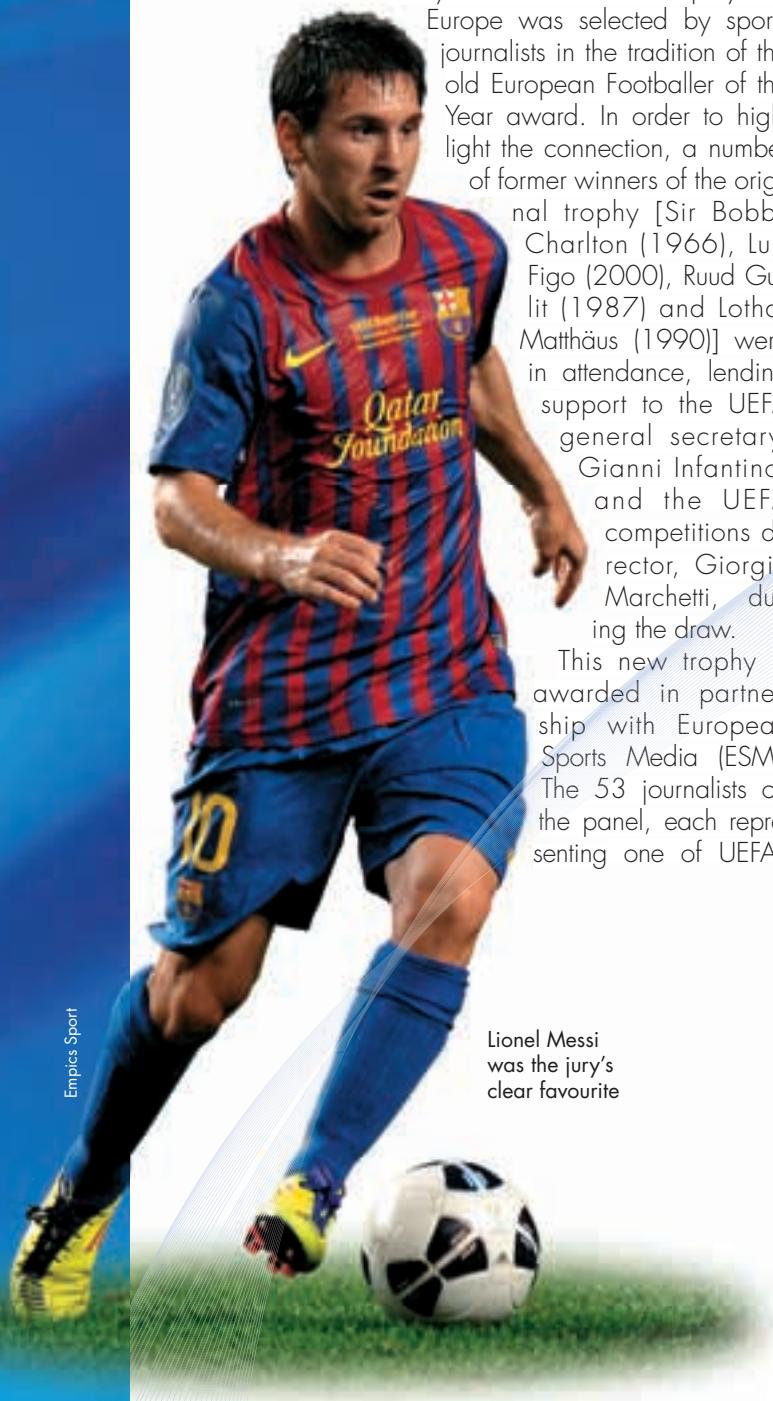
Eighteen associations represented

As in the past two seasons, 18 national associations are represented in the UEFA Champions League. England and Spain have the maximum 4 clubs, Germany, France and Italy have 3 each, Portugal and Russia have 2 representatives and 11 other national associations each have 1 participating club. Since all these associations have previously entered clubs in the Champions

The award

The UEFA Best Player in Europe Award is made of silver, stands on a Corian base and weighs 8kg. Designed by the Portuguese agency Brandia Central and made by John Nix in England, it takes the form of a player's shirt engraved with the UEFA logo.

As players nowadays sport their names on the back of their shirts, it was only logical to engrave the winner's name on the back of the award. Clearly this would not have been possible in the short interval between the jury voting and the UEFA president presenting the award, so a sticker was used for the ceremony and the engraver set to work afterwards.





A full house in the Salle des Princes at the Grimaldi Forum ahead of the draw

Sportsfile

2012 calendar

- **Round of 16:** 14/15 and 21/22 February (first legs); 6/7 and 13/14 March (return legs)
- **Quarter-finals:** 27/28 March (first legs); 3/4 April (return legs)
- **Semi-finals:** 17/18 April (first legs) and 24/25 April (return legs)
- **Final:** 19 May in Munich
- **Round of 16 draw:** 16 December 2011
- **Quarter- and semi-final draws:** 16 March

League, the number of associations represented since the group stage was expanded to 32 clubs in 1999 remains 31. Eight associations have always had at least one participant: Spain (49 places in total, shared between 11 clubs), England (48/8), Italy (46/8), Germany (39/9), France (36/9), the Netherlands (23/7), Greece (21/3) and Turkey (17/5).

At the other end of the scale, this is only the third time Cyprus has been represented (by two clubs in total), while FC BATE Borisov is the only club from Belarus to have qualified (twice).

Five new clubs

As far as the clubs are concerned, five are making their debut in this season's Champions League. Two of these have previously won European trophies: Manchester City lifted the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1970 and SSC Napoli won the UEFA Cup in 1989. They are joined by Romania's FC Otelul Galati, Czech club FC Viktoria Plzen and Turkey's Trabzonspor AS. These five newcomers bring the total number of clubs

A cheque for street football

Between the draw and the Best Player in Europe Award, the traditional UEFA charity cheque was presented to the streetfootballworld network, which has been a UEFA partner for several years, working, among other things, on the EUROSCHOOLS project attached to the European Football Championship final round. The network, which unites more



Michel Platini presents the charity cheque to Jürgen Griesbeck, managing director of streetfootballworld

than 80 organisations from over 50 countries around the world, uses football's popularity and power to tackle social problems such as crime, integration, employment and public health. In 2010 alone, it helped more than 600,000 young people to overcome their problems with the aid of football.

The €1 million cheque presented in Monaco will enable streetfootballworld to develop its "Respect your health – Euroschools 2012" project linked to UEFA EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine. The main aim of the project is to help local organisations in the eight host cities promote health education and social development.

UEFA Champions League 2011/12

GROUP A

FC Bayern München
Manchester City FC
SSC Napoli
Villarreal CF

GROUP C

Manchester United FC
FC Basel 1893
FC Otelul Galati
SL Benfica

Match dates for these four groups: 14 September, 27 September, 18 October, 2 November, 22 November and 7 December.

GROUP E

Valencia CF
Chelsea FC
Bayer 04 Leverkusen
KRC Genk

GROUP G

FC Zenit St Petersburg
FC Porto
FC Shakhtar Donetsk
APOEL FC

Match dates for these four groups: 13 September, 28 September, 19 October, 1 November, 23 November and 6 December.

The full match calendar is available at UEFA.com/uefachampionsleague

GROUP B

Trabzonspor AS
LOSC Lille Métropole
PFC CSKA Moskva
FC Internazionale Milano

GROUP D

Olympique Lyonnais
GNK Dinamo Zagreb
Real Madrid CF
AFC Ajax

GROUP F

Arsenal FC
Olympiacos FC
Olympique de Marseille
Borussia Dortmund

GROUP H

FC BATE Borisov
FC Barcelona
AC Milan
FC Viktoria Plzen



that have participated in the UEFA Champions League since 1992/93 to 124.

The most frequent participant is Manchester United FC, who are competing for the 17th time and have done so every year since the 1996/97 season. They are followed by the two Spanish clubs, FC Barcelona and Real Madrid CF, with 16 appearances apiece, the same number as FC Porto, who return to the competition this year after a season away, during which they won the UEFA Europa League. Next on the list are FC Bayern München and AC Milan (15), Arsenal FC and Olympiacos FC (13), Olympique Lyonnais (12) and FC Internazionale Milano (11).

Even though these clubs appear so regularly, the face of the competition changes significantly from year to year: half of this year's 32 participating clubs were not involved in the Champions League last season. ●

Prize money unchanged for participants

Among the numerous events on the programme of the summer gathering in Monaco, the meeting of the UEFA Club Competitions Committee, like the UEFA Super Cup on the pitch, serves as a link between the two seasons.

The meeting, led by the committee chairman, Michael van Praag, included not only a review of last season, but also a look ahead to the new one, and beyond.

Since the new season is the last in a three-year commercial cycle, there are barely any changes in that respect. Even though last season saw a surplus in income of €31 million, which will mean extra prize money for the 2010/11 participants, the provisional bonus payments for this season are the same as those foreseen for 2010/11, i.e.:

- €3.9 million for reaching the group stage;
- €550,000 per group match played, regardless of the result, making a total of €3.3 million per club;
- €800,000 for a win in the group stage and €400,000 for a draw;
- €3 million for each club that reaches the round of 16;
- €3.3 million for each quarter-finalist;
- €4.2 million for each semi-finalist;
- €9 million for the winners and €5.6 million for the runners-up.

In addition, each club will receive a share of the market pool, based on the commercial value of their domestic market, the number of matches played and their final position in their domestic league table last season. The clubs will also keep their gate receipts.

In addition, each of the 20 clubs that contested the play-offs should receive €2.1 million.

● The Club Competitions Committee also noted the final accounts of the two 2011 club competition finals. In the Champions League, in addition to prize money of €9 million, winners FC Barcelona received about €4.3 million from the sale of tickets for the London final. The same amount was paid to Manchester United FC on top of the €5.6 million they received as runners-up.

In the Europa League, winners FC Porto and runners-up SC Braga each received a little more than €1 million from ticket sales for the match in Dublin. They had already been awarded prize money of €3 million and €2 million respectively.

For the UEFA Super Cup, all gate receipts are kept by the local organisers. Winners FC Barcelona will, however, receive prize money of €2.5 million, and FC Porto €2 million.

Barcelona remain on top

After 1992, 1993 and 2009, FC Barcelona won their fourth UEFA Super Cup at the Stade Louis II in Monaco this summer, adding yet another trophy to their already vast collection.



In the muggy heat of Monaco, the UEFA Champions League title holders, led by Josep Guardiola, were given a helping hand on the way to their latest victory – albeit unwittingly. That being said, FC Porto started well and were quick to press high in the Barcelona camp, upsetting the Spanish defensive block. And Barcelona, despite occupying the full breadth of the pitch, appeared more awkward and demonstrated less fluid passing than we have come to expect. In addition, the Porto defenders were effective in laying the off-side trap and their opponents not always concentrated enough to avoid it.

Hapless pass

Given these circumstances, it was fitting that FC Porto had the first chance of the match, but as the minutes wore on, balance was restored and doubts were raised about whether the Portuguese would at some point pay the price for investing so much more energy than the Catalans as they generously offered the ball to Lionel Messi, who responded by setting the cat among the pigeons. The Argentine was calmly heading up the pitch to get onside when a hapless Portuguese back pass left him alone in front of the Porto keeper Helton. The freshly named best player in Europe was not going to pass up this unique opportunity to assert his authority.

Atlético lifted the trophy as UEFA Europa League winners, however, this year was the turn of the Champions League victors. Since the first ever Super Cup in 1974, the "champions" have run out victorious 18 times, but the trophy has also been lifted 12 times by winners of the Cup Winners' Cup, 5 times by UEFA Cup winners and once by Europa League winners, giving the apparent underdogs an equal tally of 18. This fourth victory for Barcelona takes the Spanish to nine UEFA Super Cup wins, with Valencia CF having claimed two, the two Madrid clubs – Real and Atlético – one apiece, and Sevilla FC the other one.

The next challenge for Barcelona will be the FIFA Club World Cup – being held from 8 to 18 December



Accelerations

With over half the match remaining, Porto could still have equalised, especially during the early stages of the second half, but Barcelona continued to present a constant threat with their sudden accelerations, in particular on the part of Lionel Messi. And it was the Argentine again who, with a pinpoint chip, gave Cesc Fàbregas the opportunity to seal Barcelona's victory.

Ninth Spanish success

And so the UEFA Super Cup returns to Spain, following Club Atlético de Madrid's success last year. While

in Japan – where the Catalans will be aiming to repeat the Champions League, Super Cup and World Cup triple they achieved in 2009. ●

26 August 2011

Stade Louis II, Monaco – 18,048 spectators

FC Barcelona v FC Porto 2-0 (1-0)

Goals: Lionel Messi (39') and Cesc Fàbregas (88')

Referee: Bjorn Kuipers (Netherlands)

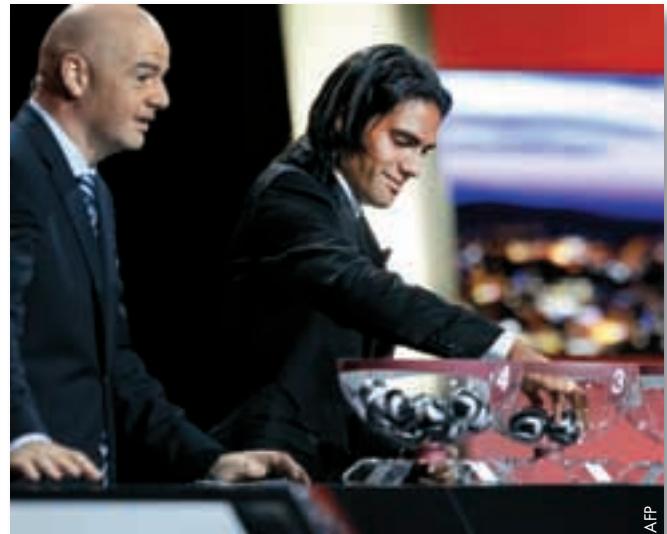
Getty Images

Extending its reach

Of last season's final four, only the runners-up, SC Braga, are embarking on this season's UEFA Europa League campaign. The 2011 title holders, FC Porto, and the two semi-finalists, SL Benfica and Villarreal CF, have all qualified for the UEFA Champions League, which goes to show that the gap between the two competitions is not a big one by any stretch.



The list of teams entering this season's Europa League group stage is once again packed with big names in European club football, featuring as it does 12 previous UEFA club competition winners in the form of Club Atlético de Madrid, RSC Anderlecht, Celtic FC, Dynamo Kyiv, S.S. Lazio, Paris Saint-Germain FC, PSV Eindhoven, FC Schalke 04, ŠK Slovan Bratislava, Sporting Clube de Portugal, FC Steaua Bucuresti and



AFP

Top goalscorer in last season's Europa League, Falcao helped the UEFA general secretary, Gianni Infantino, to conduct the draw

Tottenham Hotspur FC. A mention also for last year's finalist Fulham FC, who are also through after having qualified for the competition via the fair play rankings, as did Sweden's BK Häcken and Norway's FK Aalesunds, both of whom were, however, knocked out in qualifying.

Alongside them are numerous clubs making the UEFA club competition debut, thereby fulfilling UEFA's objective

2011/12 match calendar

- **Group matches:** 15 and 29 September, 20 October, 3 and 30 November and 1, 14 and 15 December
- **Draws for the rounds 32 and 16:** 16 December
- **Round of 32:** 16 and 23 February 2012
- **Round of 16:** 8 and 15 March 2012
- **Draws for the quarter- and semi-finals:** 16 March 2012
- **Quarter-finals:** 29 March and 5 April 2012
- **Semi-finals:** 19 and 26 April 2012
- **Final:** 9 May 2012, in Bucharest

GROUPS

Group A	Group B	Group C
FC Rubin Kazan	FC Vorskla Poltava	Legia Warszawa
PAOK FC	Hannover 96	Hapoel Tel-Aviv FC
Tottenham Hotspur FC	R. Standard de Liège	FC Rapid Bucuresti
Shamrock Rovers FC	FC København	PSV Eindhoven
Group D	Group E	Group F
FC Vaslui	Maccabi Tel-Aviv FC	FC Salzburg
FC Zürich	FC Dynamo Kyiv	ŠK Slovan Bratislava
Sporting Clube de Portugal	Stoke City FC	Athletic Club Bilbao
S.S. Lazio	Besiktas JK	Paris Saint-Germain FC
Group G	Group H	Group I
FC Metalist Kharkiv	SC Braga	Celtic FC
AZ Alkmaar	Club Brugge KV	Udinese Calcio
Malmö FF	NK Maribor	Stade Rennais FC
FK Austria Wien	Birmingham City FC	Club Atlético de Madrid
Group J	Group K	Group L
FC Schalke 04	FC Twente	AEK Athens FC
Maccabi Haifa FC	Wisła Kraków	SK Sturm Graz
AEK Larnaca FC	Odense BK	FC Lokomotiv Moskva
FC Steaua Bucuresti	Fulham FC	RSC Anderlecht

of extending the competitions' reach as wide as possible. In all, 23 national associations are represented this season, with England entering four clubs and Austria, Belgium, Greece, Israel, the Netherlands, Romania and Ukraine each entering three.

On 26 August, in the Salle des Princes at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco, the teams were divided into 12 groups of 4 in a draw led by the UEFA general secretary, Gianni Infantino. He was assisted by the ambassador for the 2012 final, former Romanian international Miodrag Belodedici, as well as former FC Porto striker Fernando Gomes and Colombia's Falcao, who scored 17 goals for FC Porto in last season's Europa League, thereby setting a new competition record. He received a plaque from the UEFA president in honour of his achievement.

Bonus payments for clubs

As in the UEFA Champions League, the clubs will receive the same bonus payments as last season:

- €640,000 as a participation bonus;
- €60,000 for each group match played, i.e. €360,000 for participating in the group stage;
- €140,000 for a win and €70,000 for a draw;
- €200,000 for qualifying for the round of 32;
- €300,000 for making it into the round of 16;
- €400,000 for each quarter-finalist team;
- €700,000 for each of the semi-finalists;
- €3 million for the winners and €2 million for the runners-up.

The clubs will also receive a variable amount that depends on the commercial value of their domestic media rights market, their ranking in last season's domestic championship and their success in the Europa League. Finally, host clubs keep all their gate receipts.

Behind the scenes

Professional Football Strategy Council

The club competition group stage draws and the UEFA Super Cup match form the backbone of the annual Monaco events, but other meetings underline the importance of these few days spent in the principality.

This year, one such meeting was held by the Professional Football Strategy Council, on Friday 26 August. It was the second meeting of the year for the council, which is formed of representatives of the national associations, the leagues, the clubs and the players.

Among the various items on the agenda, the international calendar attracted considerable attention from the participants, who were also told about the latest developments in the application of the financial fair play criteria and in the fight against match fixing.

Recent progress in the social dialogue on professional football was also presented, and a consensus was found on the content of the autonomous agreement aimed at introducing minimum requirements in player contracts throughout Europe. This agreement must now be approved by the appropriate decision-making bodies on all sides (UEFA, the European Club Association, the Association of European Professional Football Leagues and FIFPro Division Europe, the European association of national player trade unions).

Meeting the media

Every year the club competition draws and Super Cup match attract a lot of media attention and the turnout this year was even greater than normal, because of the presentation of the Best Player in Europe Award.

With so many media representatives travelling to Monaco, it has become customary for the UEFA president to meet them for a rundown of the hottest topics in European football.



Sportsfile

Journalists got to meet the UEFA president, Michel Platini, and UEFA's chief refereeing officer, Pierluigi Collina

This year was no exception, with the UEFA president taking questions on topics such as the implementation of the financial fair play requirements, the preparations for UEFA EURO 2012 and the benefits of additional assistant referees. He also expressed his concern at the numerous "red lights" flashing in European football, referring, among other things, to considerable financial losses and player strikes over salaries.

In another session, the media met UEFA's chief refereeing officer, Pierluigi Collina, who gave an open and honest explanation of how and by whom referees are appointed for matches and how UEFA assigns them to five different categories. He also talked about the five-referee system, which he said can take some getting used to for the main referee (he is still the only one who takes decisions, but sometimes on incidents reported to him by the additional assistants, that he himself could not see). Collina also explained why the position of the additional assistant referees had been changed (better angle for the main referee) and insisted on the need to protect the players as well as the image of the game.

- At the end of August, the referees in UEFA's top three categories (elite, elite development and first) got together in Nyon and Geneva to prepare for the new season. They received instructions, discussed topics such as teamwork and the offside rule, and underwent fitness tests. ●

Supporting youth development

The UEFA Champions League is clearly the reserve of European club football's elite, but it maintains a link with the grassroots in the form of solidarity payments: every season part of the revenue generated by the competition is reinvested in clubs' youth development programmes. The total amount available for redistribution after the 2010/11 season is almost €70 million, which is €2 million more than in 2009/10.

The solidarity payments are made to the clubs via the leagues (or the association in countries where there is no national league) and a distinction is made between the leagues/national associations that were represented in the competition (group stage onwards) and those that were not. Those that were represented each receive a minimum of €600,000; those that were not receive at least €260,000. A certain amount is also earmarked for associations which had one or more clubs in the play-offs.

Amounts paid to leagues/associations without clubs in the group stage (in euros)

	Play-offs	Total
Poland	589 224	589 224
Norway	376 603	529 233
Belgium	350 536	503 166
Austria	315 534	468 164
Czech Republic	303 324	455 954
Sweden	415 025	415 025
Moldova	260 326	412 956
Republic of Ireland	378 936	378 936
Bulgaria	330 910	330 910
Hungary	324 217	324 217
Cyprus	316 076	316 076
Albania	305 223	305 223
Croatia	289 847	289 847
Malta	288 943	288 943
Iceland	273 621	273 621
Slovenia	272 753	272 753
Finland	272 662	272 662
FYR Macedonia	269 225	269 225
Belarus	269 045	269 045
Bosnia-Herzegovina	269 045	269 045
Montenegro	267 055	267 055
Azerbaijan	265 427	265 427
Georgia	265 427	265 427
Kazakhstan	265 065	265 065
Armenia	263 075	263 075
Luxembourg	261 085	261 085
Estonia	260 597	260 597
Latvia	260 597	260 597
Lithuania	260 597	260 597
Andorra	260 000	260 000
Faroe Islands	260 000	260 000
Liechtenstein	260 000	260 000
Northern Ireland	260 000	260 000
San Marino	260 000	260 000
Wales	260 000	260 000
Total	10 400 000	11 163 150

Amounts paid to leagues/associations with clubs in the group stage (in euros)

	Play-offs	Total
England	13 533 944	13 686 574
Italy	8 377 827	8 530 457
Spain	7 766 944	7 919 574
Germany	7 331 471	7 484 101
France	4 363 452	4 516 082
Greece	2 316 99	2 316 993
Turkey	2 007 188	2 007 188
Romania	1 614 477	1 614 477
Russia	1 396 304	1 548 934
Scotland	1 503 645	1 503 645
Denmark	1 329 980	1 482 610
Netherlands	1 186 859	1 339 489
Portugal	850 873	1 003 503
Ukraine	610 883	763 513
Israel	600 000	752 630
Serbia	600 000	752 630
Slovakia	600 000	752 630
Switzerland	600 000	752 630
Total	56 590 840	58 727 660

There are strict criteria governing this redistribution to clubs:

- The money must be shared equally among the clubs in the top division that did not participate in the UEFA Champions League play-offs or group stage.
- Only clubs with a youth development programme that meets the requirements of the national club licensing manual accredited by UEFA are eligible and the money they receive must be spent on youth development programmes and community projects.
- Payments are made by UEFA to the national associations, which are then responsible for transferring the money to the leagues (where applicable) for distribution among the clubs.
- A record must be kept of which clubs received how much.
- Any request to apply a different distribution system must be submitted to the UEFA Club Competitions Committee which, if necessary, may forward it to the UEFA Executive Committee for approval.

Top coaches meet for fascinating meeting

In sports such as tennis and Formula One, which take the form of a 'travelling circus', friendships are easier to combine with sporting rivalries. But the parameters of football, based on meeting one or two different opponents a week, represent a barrier to personal relationships. This is one of the reasons why UEFA's Elite Club Coaches Forum has become such a popular annual event among the coaches themselves.

"This was the 13th," UEFA's technical director, Andy Roxburgh, said, *"and once again it was a fascinating two-day event. The UEFA Champions League finalists – Sir Alex Ferguson and Pep Guardiola – were prominent in discussions with their colleagues, which covered a really wide range of topics ranging from tactics and management issues to specific matters such as the regulations or substitutions. Coaching at the top level can be a lonely existence. So the forum gives the coaches a chance to share experiences and exchange ideas – and, of course, UEFA benefits from the feedback they provide."* Gérard Houllier added: *"These meetings are fantastic. They're like an annual refresher course where you can absorb different ideas."*

Listen to the coaches

Gérard Houllier and Roy Hodgson were at the forum on 31 August and 1 September in Nyon as members of the team of observers who provide input for UEFA's technical report on the UEFA Champions League season (which, by the way, was officially 'launched' during the forum and is now enclosed in this publication). The rest of the lineup was formed by coaches from clubs competing in the UEFA Champions League, along with former winners of the competition. The presence of the UEFA president, Michel Platini, UEFA's general secretary, Gianni Infantino, and the competitions' director, Giorgio Marchetti, underlined the importance of the event (as did the massive media presence in the lobby of UEFA's head-

quarters in Nyon) and illustrated UEFA's readiness to listen to the coaches and transmit issues to the Executive Committee with the aim of always striving to improve.

Simply the best

Discussions ranged from philosophical issues about the entertainment v risk management equations coaches are required to solve when competing at the very highest level, to more pragmatic (but equally important) topics such as the impact of injuries on European campaigns and the quality of playing surfaces. The coaches agreed that the UEFA Champions League is 'simply the best' club competition and deserves to be played on top-quality pitches which help to improve the spectacle offered to the supporters. But before you mention artificial turf as a solution, the coaches in Nyon expressed concern about any generalised move in that direction, considering it not really appropriate for the world's top club competition.

The coaches also exchanged comments on the evolution of their own job descriptions over the last couple of decades. The coach is now expected to influence rather than dictate, with the result that the ability to communicate (not only with squad members but also with media and the board of directors) now has greater relevance and consumes a greater percentage of the working week.

These are just a couple of samples of the many thought-provoking issues to emerge from an intensive, high-profile event which allows the coaches to serve a wide range of discussion points directly onto UEFA's table. ●



The Elite Club
Coaches Forum

UEFA

Much appreciated programme

The first season of the UEFA Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE) ended in June.



David Elleray leads a session at the Colovray stadium

Seven introductory and three consolidation courses were held involving referee teams (usually one referee and two assistant referees) from 52 of UEFA's 53 member associations, plus a referee trio and coach from Jordan. Organised with the help of UEFA Referees Committee members David Elleray (England) and Jaap Uilenberg (Netherlands), the courses were attended by 158 young referees and assistants identified by their national associations as having the potential to become FIFA officials in the next few years. They worked with 50 different refereeing, assistant refereeing and fitness coaches from 40 different countries who also got to develop their own coaching skills as part of the programme. In addition, the participants on each of the seven introductory courses had a visit and a presentation on match preparation and analysis from one of UEFA's elite referees. Speakers included Howard Webb, who refereed the 2010 World Cup final, and Nicola Rizzoli and Carlos Velasco Carballo, who took charge of the last two UEFA Europa League finals.

During this first season, CORE participants monitored almost 100 matches in Swiss and French leagues, receiving very positive feedback from the clubs and leagues alike.

By early June, 68 participants had "graduated" from the first three CORE courses. Their level of performance and willingness to learn was sufficient to earn them all

the UEFA Centre of Refereeing Excellence Diploma (participants who do not meet the high standards required for the diploma receive a certificate of participation).

Feedback from across Europe has been very good, as shown by the comments below.

A referee's perspective

"Before attending the CORE we had no idea what to expect. We got the programme, from which we could see that the course was going to be intense, but that's all. And so we set out for Nyon, full of enthusiasm and feeling honoured to be chosen.

"We met Jaap Uilenberg at Geneva airport and we shared a ride to the hotel. We had never been in contact with a member of the UEFA Referees Committee before and we were pleasantly surprised by his relaxed and friendly attitude. We got the same positive vibes from the coaches throughout the course. Everyone was willing to help at all times. Such a good atmosphere was created that it was easy for us to feel safe in our discussions and our participation.

"The lectures and presentations were of a high level, interesting and to the point. They concluded with a clear message but also contained a healthy level of humour. They covered every aspect of the game and presented the UEFA guidelines for refereeing international matches. We also had superb physical training sessions. We had the opportunity to practise on the field what we had



Video analysis to improve performances

learned in the lectures. We were filmed in action, which proved very helpful as we could see and analyse ourselves using video clips. This is something that had a great effect on my perception of myself and my actions. With every minute of our time organised, all we thought about was football and refereeing. It would have been exhausting if it weren't for the numerous funny moments that lifted the atmosphere. It was the first time I had worked so intensively on refereeing and it will have a huge impact on my future career as a referee. I also had the opportunity to get to know people from totally different parts of Europe, with different temperaments and different approaches to refereeing and football but with the same passion for the game. The new experience, the acquaintances from all over Europe and the friendships are priceless. I feel privileged to have been part of this story and I hope the programme will continue for years to come."

An assistant referee's perspective

"CORE gave me a lot of refereeing knowledge with all the group discussions about key situations, fitness training, practical exercises with football teams at the Colovray sports centre and – for me the most important part – analysing situations on video. We can learn most from our own experience and seeing myself on the video in different decision-making situations definitely helped me, after some group discussions, make a better decision the next time or at least make it in a different way. CORE gave me the greatest possible motivation to work hard in the future. We had meetings and discussions at UEFA headquarters with experienced course leaders and coaches and we were thrilled to be UEFA ambassadors as match officials in the Swiss and French leagues, I have to admit, it felt very good. That is why my next goal is to be on the FIFA list soon. I realise I have plenty of work to do, but I am prepared for it!"

CORE gave me an opportunity to meet referees from other countries. It was very interesting to listen to their opinions and learn about their styles of life and their cultures. We really became friends and I hope to see every one of them again.

If I should choose only one refereeing word which CORE focussed on and is consequently in my mind daily it would be 'concentration'. I'm absolutely certain that CORE gave me the tools to be a better assistant now compared with how I was last November. For that I'll be grateful for my entire life."

A refereeing coach's view

"I want to put on record my thanks and appreciation for the privilege of being a coach on the recent CORE course. I had an excellent time and it was truly an inspiring experience for the young referees, who really had their eyes opened about what refereeing (and assistant refereeing) is all about."



Photo: UEFA

**CORE
graduates**

"The whole concept of the CORE programme is probably the best that UEFA has produced in terms of the long-term future of international refereeing throughout the 53 member associations. As someone who has attended a number of UEFA courses and seminars over the years, I can safely say this was the best. Two highly skilful course leaders and presenters created a high quality team."

A national association's view

"You will be interested to hear that the referee we sent to CORE finished the 2010/11 season with the highest average marks of all our top division referees. His success is in large part the result of his CORE participation: not only has he become a better referee in terms of skill, what's even more important is that he is now able to analyse his performances much more thoroughly. He has progressed in terms of man management, body language, positioning, protecting the players and the game and all the other aspects you taught him during the CORE course. We are thrilled to see his rapid progress and maturity – you wouldn't usually expect this from such a young referee and on behalf of our FA I voice our full support of the CORE initiative and hope this project will continue. CORE brings benefits to all parties: UEFA, the national associations and the referees themselves."

The second CORE season started in August with almost all UEFA member associations sending a new trio of young officials to the next round of courses. There are also likely to be participants from other confederations. ●

Four finalists confirmed

The EURO 2012 qualifying competition is nearing completion and the matches played at the beginning of September clarified the situation in several groups, confirming in some cases who would finish top and in others who was already out of the running. For those in between, the play-off draw will be held in Krakow on 13 October.



Germany, in Group A, were the first to secure their place in the final round next summer, alongside hosts Poland and Ukraine. The match against Austria in the first weekend of September was their eighth win in as many games and guaranteed them top spot in the group.



Mesut Oezil, Bastian Schweinsteiger and Toni Kroos have good reason to celebrate after Germany beat Austria to secure their place at EURO 2012

The following week, world and European champions Spain got their ticket to the finals by beating Liechtenstein, while Italy did likewise with a win against Slovenia. With the likes of Germany, Spain and Italy, all of which have lifted the World Cup, the line-up for Poland and Ukraine is looking very promising indeed.

The Netherlands should, in all likelihood, finish top of their group, having won all of their first eight matches, and in any case they are guaranteed a place in the final round, if not as group winners then as the best runners-up. And erstwhile world champions England, likewise unbeaten in qualifying, are also in a comfortable position.

The final qualifying matches will be played from 7 to 11 October. The nine group winners and best runners-up will qualify directly, while the other eight runners-up contest play-offs on 11/12 November (first legs) and 15 November (return legs) to finalise the lineup for the final round. ●

FIFA U-20 World Cup

Silver medals for Portugal's U20s

Despite taking the lead twice in the FIFA U-20 World Cup final in Bogota, in the end Portugal had to settle for silver after extra time against Brazil, who won 3-2 to lift the World Cup for the fifth time in this age group.

Before the final, Portugal's defence had been impenetrable. They kept a clean sheet not only in the group stage but also the three knockout matches leading up to the final, against Guatemala, Argentina and France.

Knocked out in the semi-finals and beaten by Mexico in the bronze-medal match, France nevertheless put in their best performance yet in the Under-20 competition, and this despite an unfortunate start against Colombia. After finishing second in their group, they beat Ecuador and Nigeria to earn a place in the semi-finals, where they lost to Portugal (2-0). Spain also had their eyes on a podium place after three straight wins in the group stage. They maintained the momentum in the round of 16, beating South Korea on penalties, but their hopes were dashed in the quarter-finals, where they lost a penalty shoot-out, this time against eventual winners Brazil.

England, Austria and Croatia also represented Europe at the U-20 World Cup, held in Columbia from 30 July to 20 August. England made it to the round of 16, where they lost to Nigeria (1-0), and although the Austrians and Croatians fell in the group stage, their foray onto the world stage was an invaluable experience. ●

European Futsal Championship



Draw for the final round

On 9 September, in Zagreb, the draw was made to divide the 12 teams that have qualified for the next European Futsal Championship final round into four groups, as follows:

Group A: Croatia, Czech Republic, Romania

Group B: Spain, Ukraine, Slovenia

Group C: Italy, Russia, Turkey

Group D: Portugal, Serbia, Azerbaijan

The tournament will take place from 31 January to 11 February 2012 at the Zagreb Arena, where the final will be played, and the Spaladium Arena in Split. The group winners and runners-up go through to the quarter-finals. ●

Futsal World Cup

Draw for the preliminary round

At the same time as Europe's best national futsal teams are preparing for the European Futsal Championship final round early next year, the continent's futsal teams already have their sights set on another final round: the FIFA Futsal World Cup in Thailand in November 2012.

Seven places at the world cup have been reserved for Europe, for which 41 UEFA member associations are in the running, 20 of them starting their qualifying campaign in the preliminary round, for which the five following groups have been formed:

- Group A: Moldova, **Georgia**, Armenia, Malta
- Group B: Finland, Andorra, **Bulgaria**, Norway
- Group C: **Latvia**, Cyprus, England, San Marino
- Group D: Greece, Turkey, Albania, **Estonia**
- Group E: **FYR Macedonia**, France, Montenegro, Switzerland

The matches will be played in the form of mini-tournaments hosted by the countries highlighted in bold from 19 to 23 October. The group winners and two best runners-up will go through to the main round, which will take place from 14 to 18 December.

UEFA Futsal Cup

Main round next on the agenda



In the UEFA Futsal Cup, the preliminary round finished with the seven following teams going through to the main round: Club Futsal Eindhoven, ETO FC Györ, FC Geneva, FS Ilves Tampere, KMF Leotar Trebinje, AC Omonia and Vegakameratene.

The following six groups have been formed by the draw for the main round, which will take place from 24 September to 2 October:

- Group 1: MFK Dinamo Moskva, Athina '90, **FC Litija**, Club Futsal Eindhoven
- Group 2: FC Barcelona, **FK Nikars Riga**, ETO FC Györ, KMF Leotar Trebinje
- Group 3: **Iberia Star Tbilisi**, Slov-Matic Bratislava, FC Mapid Minsk, FC Geneva
- Group 4: FK Era-Pack Chrudim, **Akademia FC Pniewy**, Châtelaineau Futsal, Vegakameratene
- Group 5: Marca Futsal, **City'US Târgu Mureş**, MNK Split, FS Ilves Tampere
- Group 6: **KMF Ekonomac Kragujevac**, Uragan Ivano-Frankovsk, Asa Ben Gurion, AC Omonia

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The top two from each group go through to the elite round from 12 to 20 November, where they will be joined by the holders, ASD Città di Montesilvano C/5; 2011 runners-up Sporting Clube de Portugal; and the last two bronze medallists, Kairat Almaty and Araz Naxçıvan. ●

UEFA Women's Champions League

Round of 32 next up



The 2011/12 UEFA Women's Champions League got under way in August with the qualifying round, from which eight teams have made it through to the round of 32.

A draw made in Nyon on 23 August produced the following ties, which will be played on 28/29 September and 5/6 October:

- CFF Olimpia Cluj v Olympique Lyonnais
- Peamount United v Paris Saint-Germain FC
- CSHVSM v SV Neulengbach
- Apollon Limassol LFC v AC Sparta Praha
- PK-35 Vantaa v Rayo Vallecano de Madrid
- UPC Tavagnacco v WFC Malmö
- WFC Osijek v Göteborg FC
- Glasgow City FC v Valur Reykjavík
- BSC Young Boys v Fortuna Hjørring
- Thór/KA v 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam
- ASA Tel-Aviv FC v ASD Torres CF
- FC Twente v FC Rossiyanka
- Bristol Academy WFC v FC Energiya Voronezh
- FC Bobruchanka v Arsenal LFC
- Standard Fémina de Liège v Brøndby IF
- Stabæk Football v 1. FFC Frankfurt ●

Special award for 100-cap internationals

At its meeting in June, the UEFA Executive Committee decided to commemorate players from UEFA's 53 member associations who have made 100 or more appearances for their national team.



The first awards were made in September at EURO 2012 qualifiers played in the centurions' home countries. The list runs to more than 109 names (→UEFA.com). Pat Jennings, Northern Ireland's legendary goalkeeper, was among the first to receive his award, which consists of a commemorative cap and medal. ●

Azerbaijan's girls in Nyon

Azerbaijan's preparations for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup their country is hosting in 2012 gathered pace during a week-long training camp in Switzerland as guests of UEFA.

The team, coached by former Germany international Sissy Raith, was based at the UEFA Centre of Football Excellence at the Colovray stadium in Nyon, where they took part in training sessions as well as two matches in which they were edged out 2-1 by Team Vaud before going down 2-0 to a Switzerland side also invited to share the resources available during the week.



Azerbaijan's women's U17s enjoyed their time in Switzerland

"We enjoyed a fantastic welcome and a great atmosphere in Nyon," said Elkhan Mammadov, general secretary of the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA). "We are proud of our women's football and have such a specialist coach because we want to show that football can be a long-term career and that you can not only be a good player but then a coach, referee and so on. These sessions open their eyes to those opportunities."

"I think that these girls and the federation have started to pave the way for all European associations in the development of women's football," said UEFA's general secretary, Gianni Infantino. "When you see the smiles on the faces of the players, you know that you are on the right track." ●

Homeless World Cup

Scotland win Homeless World Cup

The ninth Homeless World Cup was held in Paris from 21 to 28 August and won by Scotland, who were crowned champions after beating Mexico 4-3 in the final.

First organised in 1993 and supported by UEFA, the aim of the competition is to combat exclusion by using

football as a means of giving homeless people an opportunity for a new start in life.

This year's tournament was organised in the Champ de Mars in Paris and contested by 64 national teams, 48 of them men's and 16 women's. The women's champions were Kenya, who also beat Mexico in their final, with the same 4-3 scoreline as the men.

Matches in the Homeless World Cup are four-a-side and each half lasts seven minutes. All games combined, a total of 3,984 goals were scored in Paris. ●

Unite against racism

Anti-racism action week

The next action week against racism and all forms of discrimination, organised annually by UEFA partner organisation FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe), is being held from 12 to 25 October.

These action weeks are an opportunity to draw attention throughout Europe to the need to stand up against discrimination. Supporter groups, minorities, clubs and other organisations are invited to join in by organising discussion groups, supporter forums, exhibitions and anything else that could help to spread the anti-racism message. ●

Fair play

FIFA and UEFA join forces to promote fair play

FIFA launched its 15th annual Fair Play Days campaign in September.

UEFA helped to promote the campaign, which runs along the same lines as its own Respect campaign, which was set up in 2008. As a result, fair play and respect were the underlying themes at the UEFA EURO 2012 and Under-21 championship qualifiers played last month. ●

Safety and security

Security conference in Vienna

The tenth joint UEFA-EU security conference was held in Vienna on 8 September.

The aim of the event is to share experience and best practice with the aim of maximising safety and security at football matches. It is attended by representatives of police forces and government agencies from across Europe, UEFA security officers, the security officers of national associations and clubs involved in UEFA competitions, and representatives of national football information points. ●

New sponsor for Azeri football

A five-year cooperation contract worth \$1,075,000 for the development of children's football was signed by the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) and Coca-Cola Bottlers Ltd on 22 June at the AFFA's headquarters.

The AFFA's general secretary, Elkhon Mammadov, said: "The AFFA's activities aimed at developing football and, in particular, children's football in Azerbaijan, as well as at developing infrastructure, have yielded good results. We are pleased that our activities have attracted the attention of prestigious companies, and that they are co-operating with us in these activities. I hope that this new contract signed will make a

valuable contribution to the development of football in Azerbaijan. Our cooperation will cover the U13 league and the school kids cup projects. These projects are ideal opportunities for boys and girls to learn new football skills and develop as players."

After the signing of the contract, those present watched a video of the U13 league and school kids cup.

This was followed by a few words from Lisani Atasayan, general manager of Coca-Cola Bottlers Ltd, who said: "I am very honoured and privileged to sign this important contract in support of the Under-13 league and school kids cup. We are very happy to be part of Azerbaijan football and to be helping develop future football stars in Azerbaijan. Supporting a healthy lifestyle has always been one of the priorities of our company."



The AFFA general secretary, Elkhon Mammadov (left), shakes hands with Lisani Atasayan, general manager of the AFFA's new sponsor

I would like to thank everyone involved in making this wonderful partnership happen."

After the contract had been signed, Elkhon Mammadov presented a national team shirt to the representative of Coca-Cola Bottlers Ltd. In return, Lisani Atasayan presented the AFFA general secretary with a special gift from his company.

In 2009/10 and 2010/11, the AFFA created U13, U14, U15, U17 and girls' U16 leagues, and plans to introduce boys' U11 and U16 leagues next season.

● Ulviyya Najafova



Belarus
 www.bff.by

Belarusian football celebrates its centenary

On 20 August, Belarusian football celebrated its 100th anniversary. A number of events took place in Gomel, the city where the first match and the first organised tournament in the territory of Belarus were played.

The leaders of the Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) and of the regional federation took part in the celebrations together with local dignitaries.



The winners of the rural schools tournament

The celebrations began with an award ceremony for the winners of the tournament for schools in rural areas. The teams that finished first, second and third received balls, certificates and other presents.

After that, there was a ceremony for the veterans of Gomel football. Warm words in praise of those who created the history of Belarusian football were spoken by the first vice-president of the BFF, Serhey Safaryan; the BFF honorary president, Gennady Nevyglas; and the president of the Minsk football federation, Mikhail Vergeenko.

Then a football festival for children aged from 6 to 10 took place, in which two delegations from Russia also participated.

The festivities were crowned by a football match between the veterans of Gomel football and grassroots football ambassadors. It was an exciting match, which ended on a 5-4 scoreline in favour of the hosts. The match commentator was a famous Belarusian journalist, Vladimir Novitsky.

The festivities continue in September with a week of grassroots football and official celebrations with guests from UEFA, FIFA and other associations. ● Yulia Zenkovich



Bosnia and Herzegovina
 www.nfsbih.ba

Futsal success for KMF Leotar

Futsal team KMF Leotar Trebinje made a successful debut appearance in the preliminary round of the UEFA Futsal Cup, emerging as winners of Group C from the tournament staged on home ground at the Mitar Mrđić hall in Trebinje. Having won all three of their matches, first against Falcao FC Stockholm (10-0), then against FC Encamp from Andorra (8-4) and, finally, against SC Tornado Chisinau from Moldova (6-3). In main round, Leotar will play in Group 2 in Latvia against the Latvian domestic champions, FK Nikars Riga; FC Barcelona; and the Hungary champions, ETO FC Györ.

Leotar is only Bosnian club to boast champions in two categories, FK Leotar having won the first premier league championship including the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002/03.

Meanwhile, in women's football, WFC SFK 2000 Sarajevo did well in the qualifying round for the 2011/12 UEFA Women's Champions League, but not quite well enough to continue into the next round. As hosts of Group 4, they finished in second place, behind CFF Olimpia Cluj of Romania. SFK 2000 Sarajevo's match at the Grbavica stadium against the eventual group winners was, in fact, the decisive match, from which Olimpia Cluj ran out as 3-1 winners. In their other two matches, SFK 2000 Sarajevo fared better, beating Atasehir Belediyespor from Turkey 4-1 and FK Gintra Universitetas from Lithuania 2-1.

In the UEFA Champions League qualifying round, our clubs did not have much success. Champions FK Borac Banja Luka lost the first leg of their second qualifying round match 5-1 away to Maccabi Haifa FC but managed to win the return leg in Banja Luka 3-2.

Some of our representatives in the UEFA Europa League have done better, however, despite NK Široki Brijeg losing both legs of their tie in the first qualifying round against Olimpija Ljubljana (0-0 at home at the Pecari stadium and 3-0 in Ljubljana). Two clubs from Sarajevo made it into the second qualifying round, FK Željezničar, at the

expense of FC Sheriff from Moldova (1-0, 0-0), and FK Sarajevo, at the expense of Örebro SK from Sweden (0-0, 2-0). Unfortunately, neither club made it past the third qualifying round, with FK Sarajevo being knocked out by SK Slavia Praha (0-5, 0-2) and Željezničar by Maccabi Tel-Aviv FC (0-2, 6-0).

In preparation for the qualifiers for the 2011/12 European Under-17 and Under-19 Championships, our teams travelled to Skopje for two friendly matches each against The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Our Under-21 team have also been in action, in a friendly against Montenegro in Niksic, which they lost 3-1.

Our women's national team played two friendly matches against Croatia, who won the match in Gracanica 4-1 but were held to a 1-1 draw by our team in Zupanja in Croatia.

Finally, the senior men's national team, under coach Safet Sušić, prepared for their last EURO 2012 qualifiers with a goalless friendly against Greece at the Asim Ferhatović Hase stadium in Kosevo.

● Fuad Krvavac



SFK 2000 Sarajevo regain possession in spectacular fashion



Japanese FA visit Wembley and receive trophy to mark their 90th year

On 23 August, The FA's chairman, David Bernstein, presented his Japanese counterpart, Junji Ogura, with a replica of a trophy originally given to the Japan Football Association (JFA) by The FA in 1919. The event, which took place at the national stadium in Wembley, is part of a year-long celebration organised by the JFA to mark their 90th year.

The Japanese FA silver cup was originally given to the association as a token of friendship and led to the formal founding of the association in 1921. The trophy was taken by the Japanese government during World War II and disappeared.

David Bernstein said: "It is a great honour for me to welcome my friend Junji Ogura, president of the Japan Football Association, and his colleagues to Wembley Stadium to present him with a replica trophy of the cup originally given to the JFA in 1919.

"Not only did the original trophy trigger the establishment of the Japan Football Association,



Sir Bobby Charlton presents the cup to the president of the Japan FA, Junji Ogura, alongside ambassador Keiichi Hayashi and the chairman of The FA, David Bernstein

it also began the KIZUNA – a long-standing and rewarding relationship and bond – between our two associations. We look forward to continued friendship with the JFA both on and off the pitch."

The small ceremony at Wembley Stadium was also attended by the Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt, MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport; Sir Trevor Brooking, The FA's director

of football development; Japanese ambassador Keiichi Hayashi; and England legend Sir Bobby Charlton.

Football has become increasingly popular in recent years in Japan. The country co-hosted the FIFA World Cup with South Korea in 2002, has a flourishing professional league (the J-League) and its senior women's team lifted the FIFA Women's World Cup in Germany last month.

"The Japanese are very serious competition in every tournament these days. They love football," said Sir Bobby Charlton, member of the 1966 World Cup winning England team and one of Manchester United's most famous players.

Thanking Mr Bernstein for the trophy, Junji Ogura said: "I believe this cup represents a strong tie and friendship between our two associations and will play an important role in the development of football in Japan, and I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Mr Bernstein and all the people in The FA."

● Deryn Wright



Estonia

www.jalgpall.ee

New bank card to assist clubs

The Estonian Football Association (EJL) and LHV bank have launched a unique new initiative which allows supporters of all Estonian clubs to raise funds for their favourite team.

From every payment made with the new LHV football card, a certain percentage of the transaction will be donated to the club of the cardholder's choice or in favour of the Estonian national team. LHV bank will automatically match each donation as its own contribution.

At the end of the year, the bank will transfer the donations to each club to spend on different projects. Consequently, the club with the most supporters and most card payments will receive the most money.

Cardholders can choose to support any club playing in any Estonian championship, meaning that amateur, lower division and youth sides can also receive donations.

In addition, the cardholder gets a discount when buying tickets for Estonian national team matches, as well as free admission to all na-



The new supporter's bank card

tional youth team matches, discounts from EJL partners, and other benefits. The card has no issuing, renewal, closing or safekeeping costs while all internet banking services are also free of any service charge.

"We are always looking for new ways to help the clubs in Estonia. I see this as a very

important step, including as a way of activating supporters of clubs and communities," said Aivar Pohlak, president of the EJL. "I thank LHV bank for sharing our vision and I believe that, together, we can develop both the football and banking culture of Estonia."

Like the EJL in sport, LHV aims to be the first and best new generation bank in Estonia. Both organisations share important values such as a personal approach and direct communication.

● Mihkel Uiboleht



Germany

www.dfb.de

Birgit Prinz hangs up her boots

An impressive sporting career is over. Germany's most capped women's player, Birgit Prinz, has retired from active duty. "Playing football has always been my great passion. But now I'd like to concentrate on my personal and professional development," said the qualified psychologist, who is also a trained physiotherapist.

With her retirement, an impressive career comes to an end. The president of the German Football Association (DFB), Theo Zwanziger, paid tribute to the exceptional sportswoman: "Birgit Prinz is an excellent, exceptional sports personality who has given incredible service to women's football in Germany." The women's national team coach, Silvia Neid, also praised the woman who has pulled on a Germany shirt more times than any other: "Birgit Prinz has played at the highest level for years on end and done so much for women's football. She has played a crucial role in all the national team's successes. Birgit has had a huge impact on women's football for many years."

In the course of her long career, the Frankfurt-born player has won more than 30 international and domestic titles. Her 214 national team appearances resulted, among others, in two World Cup and five European Championship titles, not to mention three Women's World Player of the Year awards.



Birgit Prinz in action against Nigeria during the 2011 Women's World Cup

She was the youngest female player ever to pull on a Germany shirt and the first to make 200 appearances for the women's national team, she holds the most titles and scored the most goals – although these records were never the most important thing in her eyes. For her, what mattered was the team. To be successful together was always the goal of this committed team player.

● Annette Seitz



Flórián Albert receives national award

The only Hungarian football player to have won the France Football Ballon d'Or, back in 1967, received a top state honour on Hungarian national day on 20 August. The honour (Magyar Köztársasági Érdemrend Középkerekese) was presented to him in front of the parliament by the Hungarian president, Pál Schmitt, with the prime minister, Viktor Orbán, also present.

Flórián Albert, who is celebrating his 70th birthday in mid-September, was one of the best players Hungary has ever produced. He made his debut for the Magyars at the age of 17 and followed in Ferenc Puskás' footsteps to become one of the most respected Hungarian players of all times.

He delivered an excellent performance at the 1966 World Cup, where Hungary beat Brazil 3-1. He won a bronze medal at the 1960 Olympic Games and 1964 European Football Championship.

Albert played 537 matches for his club, Ferencváros, for whom he scored 383 goals and was league's top scorer three times. He was also the top scorer in the 1962 World Cup. With Ferencváros, he also won the Inter Cities Fairs Cup (predecessor of the UEFA Cup) in 1965. The Ferencváros stadium has since been named after him.

After he retired as a player, Albert worked as a successful club leader and coach.

Kálmán Mészöly, another former great, who later sat 61 times on the national team bench as head coach, and 90-year-old Ferenc Rudas



Flórián Albert honoured by the Hungarian president

also received awards from the state. The three great players are all respected and valued by the Hungarian Football Federation, who held worthy celebrations for them on the occasion of their round-number birthdays.

● Márton Dinnyes

Stjarnan crowned new women's football champions

Stjarnan from Gardabaer are Iceland's new women's football champions, having secured the title with two games still left to be played. It is Stjarnan's first ever title, men's or women's, and therefore a real breakthrough for this 51-year-old club. Gardabaer, where Stjarnan come from, is in the suburbs of Reykjavik with a population of around 10,500.

Stjarnan's men's team were in the spotlight last season for their famous and unique goal celebrations, which were something of a hit and, with the help of YouTube and other media, gave the team quite a bit of exposure in the world of football. Now it is the turn of the women's team to step into the spotlight.

Valur, women's champions for the last five years, are certain to finish in second place, but

have to say goodbye to the title, being seven points adrift from Stjarnan with only two games left to play. Stjarnan is the seventh club to win the Icelandic women's championship in its 40 seasons of existence. On the men's side, ten clubs have won the title so far, with the 100th season still under way.

This has been a memorable year for coach Thorlakur Arnason. In his first year as a head coach of Stjarnan women's team, he landed the domestic championship title as well as reaching the final four in European Women's Under 17 Championship in his other role, as coach of the women's national Under-17 team. Although Iceland finished fourth in the final round played in Nyon, Switzerland, the competition was highly enjoyable and the experience will help the players and coaches reach higher goals in the future.

● Thorvaldur Ingimundarson



Mario Frick ahead of his 100th international

100 caps for Mario Frick

One footballer has marked the history of the Liechtenstein national team like no other: Mario Frick. The 37-year-old striker, who plays his club football with FC Balzers, made his 100th appearance for the Liechtenstein national team on 10 August in a friendly match against Switzerland, which the visiting team won 2-1. To date, since his national team debut on 26 October 1993 – before which Liechtenstein had only played four official matches – Frick has only missed 20 internationals.

For his debut in 1993, when he was just 19, Frick pulled on a national team shirt for a friendly against Estonia, playing the full 90 minutes and already being hailed in the press the next day as one of the national team's strongest assets. There followed a 17-year professional career, which included spells in Switzerland and Italy and ended when Frick announced his retirement this summer. He has returned to his first club, FC Balzers in Liechtenstein, who play in the top Swiss amateur division.

Not only does Mario Frick hold the record for national team appearances, but with 16 goals to his name, he is also the undisputed leading goalscorer. His first goal for the national team was the consolation goal in Liechtenstein's 8-1 defeat against Romania in 1997. He has also scored some important clinchers though, including a goal in Liechtenstein's very first win, against Azerbaijan in 1998, and the decisive goal in the 1-0 win in their EURO 2008 qualifier against Latvia in 2007.

In the current EURO 2012 qualifying competition, Mario Frick can still increase his goalscorer record even further.

● Anton Banzer

First referee training camp abroad

For the first time, the Israeli referees association has sent its top referees abroad for their pre-season training camp.

As part of its drive for consummate professionalism, the association sent its top 19 referees to a top-quality facility in Kapfenberg, Austria.

The camp included lectures on the different aspects of refereeing: physiological and mental, correct nutrition, how to avoid injuries and the right way to prepare for games. Past games were dissected and studied, and the referees were, of course, put through two daily taxing physical training sessions, supervised by the organisation's trainers, Dr Itzhak Ben Meleh and Roni Gotlieb.

Another part of the camp included actual refereeing of pre-season games, some of which involved leading German Bundesliga clubs FC Schalke 04 and Hertha BSC Berlin.

Israeli referees have recently been in demand by UEFA, with Alon Yefet, Menashe Masiah, Liran Liany, Eli Hacmon and Meir Levy being put in charge of games in the different club competitions. Liran Liany was given the prestigious appointment

of refereeing the UEFA EURO 2012 qualifier between the Netherlands and San Marino.

Yariv Teper, head of the Israeli referees association, said: "We are proud of the constant progress of Israeli referees and will continue to give them top-notch support so our goal of seeing an Israeli referee in the later stages of the Champions League and in the big tournaments – World Cups and EUROS – will materialise."

● Michal Grundland



Liran Liany refereed matches in this year's European U17 final round in Serbia



John Toshack appointed new head coach of the national team

The Football Federation of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia held an official press conference to present its new national coach, John Toshack, who will lead the national team to the end of the UEFA EURO 2012 cycle and the qualifiers for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Toshack's first assignment with the Macedonian national team was a match against Russia.

The well-known new coach told reporters that Balkan football is renowned for great players and highly technical performances. "My am-



The president of the FFM, Haralampie Hadzi-Risteski, presents John Toshack with a No 10 shirt

has already watched and analysed the team's matches in their EURO 2012 qualifying campaign.

"Toshack's arrival here is great recognition for Macedonian football", said the president of the football federation, Haralampie Hadzi-Risteski, who marked the moment by presenting John Toshack with a No10 national team shirt, Toshack's old number.

● Zoran Nikolovski



Modernisation of national stadium complex continues

Since its inauguration 30 years ago, the Ta' Qali national stadium, has undergone constant modernisation work to keep it in good shape and improve its facilities. Among other improvements, the Millennium Stand has been refurbished, new seats installed throughout the 18,000-capacity stadium, the dressing rooms given a facelift, the facade of the main stand resurfaced, new fencing put up, a moat built in front of the main stand, a synthetic surface laid around the pitch, a doping control centre installed and, recently, a new LED system and bigger electronic scoreboard fitted.

All this has been possible thanks to UEFA's assistance programmes, which will continue to benefit Maltese football, improving facilities not only at the Ta' Qali complex, at the clubs too.

At the main Ta' Qali stadium, better entry and security systems have been installed, including a new electronic ticketing system; easier access to all sectors, with new turnstiles at each entry point; new media boxes and ancillary improve-



D. Aquilina

ments; plus the extension of media conference areas, as well as of the stadium's lounge, bar, restaurant and reception area.

A closed circuit television system is already in place, and the bridge giving top officials and journalists access to the VIP area has been completed.

The adjacent Centenary Stadium has also undergone modernisation work, while the installation of floodlighting at the nearby training grounds and the building of a national grassroots training centre are nearing completion.

● Alex Vella



Open Fun Football School leaders and coaches seminar in Moldova

From 1 to 12 August, the Dacia hotel in Vadu lui Voda was the venue for a seminar for 20 leaders and 120 coaches from ten Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS) in Moldova: Magdaceshti, Stefan Voda, Cahul, Ocnita, Balti, Vulcanesti,

Comrat, Ceadir-Lunga, Dubasari and Bender. The opening ceremony was attended by Nicolae Cebotari, general secretary of the FA of Moldova, who addressed the participants.

The seminar was divided into theoretical and practical parts. The coaches seminar included sessions on the role and importance of the coach and how to organise football schools. The seminar instructors organised a number of practical training exercises and games in which

all the coaches participated. The practical sessions were held at the technical centre in Vadu lui Voda.

On 5 and 12 August, a demonstration Open Fun Football School was held in Ratus, where all the coaches involved in the seminar were able to observe the organisation of a school at first hand.

The seminar was organised by the central office of the CCPA (Cross Cultures Project Association)/OFFS in Moldova: Scurtul Ghenadie, CCPA/OFFS project coordinator for Moldova; Conusevici Iurie and Svetlana Ceban, coordination assistants; and OFFS instructors George Copusciulu, Vladislav Pocatilo, Iana Pogarevici, Igor Popov, Oleg Molceanov, Natalia Ceban, Vitalie Onica, Viblov Alexandr, Ina and Irina Jeleascova. The OFFS programme is an initiative of the CCPA.

Between 22 and 31 August, Open Fun Football Schools took place in ten cities throughout Moldova.

● Press office



Leaders of the Open Fun Football Schools

New women's premiership season kicks off

The fifth consecutive season of the Eredivisie Vrouwen, the Dutch women's premiership, got under way on 2 September in spectacular fashion. The three opening matches were kicked off simultaneously by local club icons.

After the regrettable withdrawal of AZ Alkmaar and Willem II from the league late last season, the future of the Eredivisie Vrouwen, which was warmly embraced by six professional clubs in 2007, seemed doubtful. Fortunately however, the remaining clubs realised that the last thing that fast-growing girls' and women's football needed

was the disappearance of its most appealing competition. The steady growth of women's football in the Netherlands has now brought total female membership to nearly 125,000, a growth of more than 3% over last season. In comparison, male membership of the Dutch FA (KNVB) stands at nearly 1.1 million. ADO Den Haag, SC Heerenveen, SC Telstar, FC Twente, FC Utrecht, VVV Venlo and FC Zwolle now make up the Eredivisie Vrouwen.

Only three days prior to the official start of the season, the women's national champions of Belgium and the Netherlands met in Venlo to contest the BeNe women's super cup. Standard Femina de Liege beat the Dutch champions,



The logo of the women's premiership

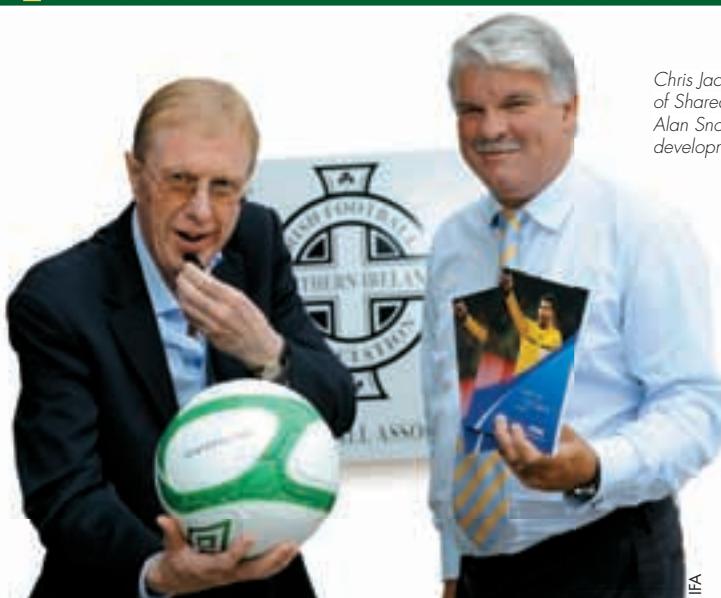
FC Twente, 4-1. Paradoxically, two of the Belgian team's goals were scored by 18-year-old Dutch international Lieke Martens, who was the leading scorer at the European Women's Under-19 Championship final round in 2010.

● Rob de Leede



Northern Ireland

www.irishfa.com



Chris Jackson, CEO of Shared Access, and Alan Snoddy, referee development officer

A sponsor for the referees

The Irish Football Association recently unveiled Shared Access as the new sponsor of its referees programme. A leading telecoms infrastructure provider company, Shared Access will sponsor all Irish FA referees throughout our local game, including all referee education and training courses.

The Irish FA's referee development officer, Alan Snoddy, said: "I am delighted to welcome Shared Access on board as the new sponsors of the association's referee programme. This is a major boost for refereeing in Northern Ireland and it is very pleasing to know that we have a company of this size and stature backing what is a key element of our game."

Chris Jackman, CEO of Shared Access, added: "We are delighted to sponsor the Irish FA's referee programme at the same time as we deepen our links with soccer clubs in Northern Ireland. Shared Access will be working with local football clubs throughout Northern Ireland in a mutually beneficial initiative, providing floodlight facilities as well as world-class shared telecommunications infrastructure."

This sponsorship builds on the association's existing partnership with Shared Access. By providing local football clubs throughout Northern Ireland with new floodlight facilities, Shared Access will close the telecommunications gap in

broadband penetration and mobile phone coverage through state-of-the-art wireless antennas housed in the floodlights.

● In other news, Sunday 28 August was the first day of the On The Ball respect tournament. The inaugural tournament took place in Lurgan on the Gordon playing fields. Organised by community member Karol Gallagher with funding support from UnLtd and referees from the Irish Football Association's EU Peace III funded Football For All programme, six teams competed in short seven-a-side matches. The teams came from Lurgan and surrounding areas and comprised players aged 14 and over from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Using football as a tool for cultural interaction, 80 players from East Timor, Poland, Portugal, Brazil, England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Indonesia, Samoa, and West Africa took part.

On The Ball aims to sustain positive social integration through sport by providing a safe place for intercultural interaction and cultural exchange as well as good sporting practice. Through the medium of football, different communities can come together to appreciate the game and the things they have in common with each other. The competition is open to men's and women's teams, with the remaining tournaments taking place on 11 September and 25 and 9 October.

● Sueann Harrison/Michael Boyd



www.scottishfa.co.uk

New title sponsor for the Scottish Cup

William Hill, the UK's No.1 bookmaker, has signed a seven-figure deal with the Scottish FA (SFA) to become the title sponsor of the Scottish Cup. The three-year partnership means the famous cup competition will be renamed the William Hill Scottish Cup.

Scott Brown, captain of last year's winning side, Celtic; the SFA president, Campbell Ogilvie; and Kristoph Fahy, William Hill's group brand and marketing director, conducted the first round draw at the Buchanan Galleries shopping centre in Glasgow, where fans were also able to have their photo taken with the trophy.

William Hill, which operates over 300 betting shops in Scotland and a total of 2,364 across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, is already the official betting partner of the Scottish Premier League. The Scottish Cup sponsorship deal reaffirms its strong association with Scottish football. The agreement will also allow the bookmaker to showcase its online, mobile and retail products to Scottish football fans the length and breadth of the country.

Stewart Regan, Scottish FA chief executive, said: "We are proud to have a leading brand like William Hill as sponsor of the Scottish Cup for the next three seasons. The new 2011/12 Scottish Cup begins in just a few weeks' time and with the competition now securing a new sponsor, we can now look forward to another exciting season ahead."

Gareth Davis, chairman of William Hill PLC, said: "It seems fitting for the most established and biggest bookmaker in Scotland to be attached to the oldest association trophy in world football and we at William Hill consider it an honour to be able to put our name to the Scottish Cup."

● Clare Bodel



Celtic's captain, Scott Brown, and Kristoph Fahy, representing the Scottish Cup's new sponsor



Bronze medal at the Women's World Cup

Next year, the Swedish FA will elect a new president to succeed Lars-Åke Lagrell, who is set to retire after 21 successful years. By then, Swedish football will also have set out a new direction for the future. Fotboll 2020 is the collective name for 13 project groups, each with the responsibility of analysing their own field of expertise and proposing means and goals for the long-term future of football in Sweden. The focal points include improving pitch quality, attendance figures, internal democracy and grassroots football. Establishing national futsal and beach soccer teams is also on the agenda.

The Swedish women's national team claimed bronze medal at the FIFA Women's World Cup in Germany and, in the process, a place at the 2012 Olympic Games. Their semi-final was watched live by 1.8 million TV viewers, one of



The women's national team get a warm welcome home in Gothenburg after winning bronze at the Women's World Cup in Germany

SvFF

the highest viewing figures of all during the summer months. More than 5,000 fans turned out in Gothenburg to welcome the players back home after the tournament, and TV4 also showed

the celebration live on national television. This is undeniably another major step forward for women's football in Sweden.

● Andreas Nilsson



FC Freienbach win Swiss fair play award

FC Freienbach from the Zurich region of Switzerland have won the national club fair play trophy.

The award was created by the accident insurance company Suva to promote and reward fair play and reduce injuries.

FC Freienbach received the trophy and prize money of CHF 10,000 at a ceremony at the Stade de Suisse on 21 October attended by all the teams that finished in the top ten of the fair play rankings, including the runners-up and third-placed club, FC Adligenswil and FC Stans respectively.

With 24 teams, FC Freienbach, founded in 1965, are one of the biggest football clubs in Switzerland. In addition to three main teams and a veterans' side, the club has four women's and girls' teams and 16 youth teams.

For many years, the Swiss national team have also trained at FC Freienbach's Chrummen ground when preparing for internationals and staying at the nearby Panorama Resort & Spa in Feusisberg.



With 16 teams, FC Freienbach are very active at youth level

FC Freienbach

Etoile Sporting ANF; 8. FC Kirchberg SG; 9. FC Niederweningen; 10. SC Nebikon.

● Pierre Benoit



Football villages project celebrates its fifth year

The football villages project run by the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) reached 300,000 children in its fifth year. Sponsored by Ülker, it has become a key element of the TFF's grassroots programme.

Football villages are special ten-day football camps that bring together boys and girls aged 12–13 from different parts of the country. This year, 40 instructors gave 200 hours of coaching in five villages. The children who take part in these camps not only receive football coaching but also have special lessons in subjects like creative drama, nutrition, environment, fair play

and chess, which help their personal development.

The main aim of the project is to teach the importance of respect and fair play. The project is also a great supplier of the Under-15 national teams and has become a primary source for girls' national teams. More than 20 players have been selected for the national teams through this project. Girls' camps are also an important part of the women's football development strategy. Approximately 14,000 girls started playing football this year in the TFF's girls' football schools, and talented girls from these schools will have the chance to participate in future camps.

● Ceyla Küüköglu



A lot of girls benefit from the football camps

TFF

Birthdays

Two match delegates are celebrating their birthdays in October: **Roy Cathcart** (Northern Ireland) is turning 60 on 26 October, after **Silvo Borosak** (Slovenia) turns 50 on 4 October. UEFA also wishes many happy returns to:

Sir Trevor Brooking (England, 2.10)
 Levent Bicakci (Turkey, 2.10)
 Andrzej Wach (Poland, 2.10)
 Lutz Michael Fröhlich (Germany, 2.10)
 Sir David Richards (England, 3.10)
 Léon Schelings (Belgium, 3.10)
 Julius Kvedaras (Lithuania, 3.10)
 Wilfried Heitmann (Germany, 4.10)
 Khennet Tallinger (Sweden, 4.10)
 Frank Coulston (Scotland, 5.10)
 Terje Hauge (Norway, 5.10)
 Jerzy Engel (Poland, 6.10)
 Jérôme Valcke (France, 6.10)
 Faruk Hadzibegik (France, 7.10)
 Armand Duka (Albania, 7.10)
 Jari Maisontahti (Finland, 7.10)
 Pierre Delaunay (France, 9.10)
 Sergey Zuev (Russia, 9.10)
 Ellert B. Schram (Iceland, 10.10)
 Milovan Nikolic (Slovenia, 10.10)
 Joan Gaspart (Spain, 11.10)
 Bo Karlsson (Sweden, 12.10)
 Adrian D. Casha (Malta, 12.10)
 Siegfried Kirschen (Germany, 13.10)
 Pedro Tomás Marques (Spain, 13.10)
 George Brian Smith (Scotland, 14.10)
 Dušan Krchnák (Slovakia, 14.10)
 Tom van der Hulst (Netherlands, 15.10)
 Michel Piraux (Belgium, 15.10)
 Wendy Toms (England, 16.10)
 Konrad Plautz (Austria, 16.10)
 John Delaney (Republic of Ireland, 16.10)
 Frans Hoek (Netherlands, 17.10)
 Mark Arthur (England, 17.10)
 Adonis Procopiou (Cyprus, 17.10)
 Aivar Pohlak (Estonia, 19.10)
 Paul Philipp (Luxembourg, 21.10)
 Philip Pritchard (Wales, 22.10)
 Mircea Sandu (Romania, 22.10)
 Arie Kenneth Scheiman (Israel, 22.10)
 Jan C. Huijbregts (Netherlands, 23.10)
 Michel Vautrot (France, 23.10)
 Dragutin Karlo Poljak (Croatia, 23.10)
 Christian Teinturier (France, 24.10)

Antonin Herzog (Czech Republic, 24.10)
 Pekka Hämäläinen (Finland, 25.10)
 Markku Lehtola (Finland, 26.10)
 Hugh Dallas (Scotland, 26.10)
 Perry Gautier (Belgium, 26.10)
 Gerard Perry (Republic of Ireland, 27.10)
 Levan Paniashvili (Georgia, 28.10)
 Rui Cacador (Portugal, 29.10)
 George Fantaros (Cyprus, 29.10)
 Maria Persson (Sweden, 29.10)
 Gijsbert van Oostveen (Netherlands, 30.10)
 Alan McRae (Scotland, 31.10)
 Kurt Zuppinger (Switzerland, 31.10)

Forthcoming events

Meetings

11.10.2011, Nyon

UEFA Futsal Cup:
 elite round draw

13.10.2011, Krakow

UEFA EURO 2012:
 play-off draw

27.10.2011, Nyon

Youth and Amateur Football Committee

Competitions

5/6.10.2011

UEFA Women's Champions League:
 round of 32 (return legs)

18/19.10.2011

UEFA Champions League:
 group matches (matchday 3)

20.10.2011

UEFA Europa League:
 group matches (matchday 3)

24.09–2.10.2011

UEFA Futsal Cup:
 main round

Match agents

Six match agents have received licences from UEFA to organise matches:

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 Switzerland
 +41 (0)79 903 29 60
 benoit.gasser@hotmail.ch

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 akinladep@aol.com

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 ST5 1JB Staffordshire, England
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New publications

The European Football Yearbook 2011–12

Running to over 1,100 pages, this is an exhaustive source of information on European football, its international and domestic competitions, its top players and their achievements. Edited by Mike Hammond, it remains the ultimate reference for those who wish to know all there is to know about football in Europe (£25, www.carltonbooks.co.uk).

Arthur Kinnaird First Lord of Football

In this book, published by CreateSpace, sports historian Andy Mitchell relives the extraordinary life of Arthur Kinnaird (1847–1923), football's first real superstar, who played nine FA Cup finals before turning to coaching and then football administration, serving as president of The FA for 33 years. Well documented, this is an invaluable account not only of the early years of football but also of British society at that time (£9.99, www.lordkinnaird.com).





RESPECT
The Opponent



RESPECT
Diversity



RESPECT
The Game