

# UEFA



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# DELIVERING THE WORLD'S BEST FOOTBALL

**F**ootball never stops. Matches might end with the referee's whistle, but the game does not stop. On 26 June, while most of the football world was enjoying the 2018 World Cup group stage, the 2018/19 UEFA Champions League was already kicking off.

The World Cup in Russia again highlighted two things. First, the strength and depth of European football. France's fully deserved success means that European teams have now won the last four World Cups. Croatia's wonderful achievement in reaching the final means that three of the last four finals have been all-European affairs. Europe has now provided 13 of the 16 semi-finalists at the last four World Cups. Eight European teams have been World Cup semi-finalists this century, 13 have been quarter-finalists. We are not just producing successful clubs in Europe, but a rich seam of talented players, visionary coaches and competitive national teams.

The World Cup also showed that there is a huge appetite for national team football. UEFA has always been aware of this, and of the fact that national team football needs more than biennial summer showcases. Supporters realise that most friendlies fail to deliver competitive and meaningful football. The relationship between club and national team football needed rebalancing.

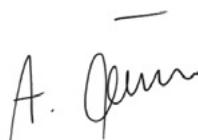
That was the thinking behind the UEFA Nations League, which kicks off on 6 September.

The first week features France v Germany, England v Spain and Spain v Croatia. The four group winners in League A will compete in next summer's UEFA Nations League finals.

In every even year there are World Cup or EURO champions; now in every odd year there will be a UEFA Nations League champion. Football is about competition and now, just like in club football, there will be a national team champion at the close of every season.

For middle-ranking and smaller nations, the UEFA Nations League offers an extra way to qualify for EURO final tournaments, and teams who have struggled against sides ranked considerably higher than them will now get the chance to take part in balanced matches.

The UEFA Nations League will help UEFA to continue to deliver for its member associations meaningful matches, intense competition, balance, opportunity for improvement, and the world's best football.



**Aleksander Čeferin**  
UEFA President



**NOTICE**

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# FRANCE AND EUROPE ON TOP OF THE WORLD

France won the 2018 World Cup at the climax of a tournament in which the European teams excelled once again.

**A**fter Italy in 2006, Spain in 2010 and Germany in 2014, France continued a record-breaking run of success for European teams, who have now lifted the World Cup trophy four times in a row. While EURO 2016 demonstrated the consistently high standards that have been reached at the top level of European football, the 2018 World Cup proved that Europe boasts many of the world's elite football nations. Despite the poor performances of the previous three champions – Italy failed to qualify, Germany suffered a shock first-round elimination and Spain went out in the round of 16 – the European teams virtually achieved a clean sweep in Russia. Of the continent's 14 group-stage representatives, ten reached the round of 16, six were quarter-finalists and four contested the semi-finals, the fifth time this feat has been achieved after 1934, 1966, 1982 and 2006. Overall, a remarkable performance, despite a few hiccups along the way.

#### **France crowned again, 20 years on**

Since winning the world title on home soil in 1998, followed by victory at EURO 2000, another major title for the French national team was long overdue. Still smarting from

their EURO 2016 final defeat at the hands of Portugal, Hugo Lloris and his team-mates arrived in Russia as outsiders, with their inexperience viewed as a particular weakness. Although question marks still hung over them during a tricky group stage, they clicked into gear in a memorable 4-3 round of 16 win over Argentina and never looked back. Epitomising the vibrancy of French youth, 19-year old Kylian Mbappé starred against Argentina, scored four goals in the tournament, and was named best young player. With outstanding performers such as Raphaël Varane, Samuel Umtiti, Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kanté in their ranks, France saw off Uruguay (2-0) in the quarter-finals and Belgium (1-0) in the last four. Many even dared to label their style too defensive! However, they proved the critics wrong in an exhilarating 4-2 victory against Croatia in the final, with Antoine Griezmann producing another match-winning display, and became the first team to net four times in a World Cup final since Brazil in 1970. France trailed their opponents for only nine minutes in the whole tournament (against Argentina) and were never even taken to extra time – proof of the dominance of the team coached by Didier Deschamps, a member of the 1998 World Cup-winning side. →

**Croatia had to come from behind in all their knockout matches and became the first team to play extra time in three consecutive final tournament matches.**

**Croatia make history**

While the French team matched the success of their 1998 predecessors, the Croatians outdid the Davor Šuker generation, losing semi-finalists in 1998. Once again, it was the French who shattered the dreams of World Cup glory for Luka Modrić and his team-mates in a final that Croatia dominated for long periods before succumbing to the powerful French counter-attack. The outcome was hardly surprising, given the Croatians' energy-sapping run to the final. Following a flawless first round (three wins, including a magnificent 3-0 victory against Argentina), Croatia had to come from behind in all their knockout matches and became the first team to play extra time in three consecutive final tournament matches. On each occasion, they turned things around thanks to an assured style of play and top performances by key players.

Modrić, who was named player of the tournament, stood out in particular and attracted most of the plaudits. However, he was aided and abetted by the likes of Danijel Subašić, who played a crucial role in penalty shoot-out victories over Denmark in the round of 16 and Russia in the quarter-finals, Mario Mandžukić, scorer of three vital goals in the knockout stage, and Ivan Perišić, who netted in both the semi-final and the final, not to mention midfield lynchpins Ivan Rakitić and Marcelo Brozović.

**Belgium and England put down a marker**

Just like Croatia, Belgium achieved their best ever World Cup finish, bettering their 1986 result by beating England 2-0 to secure third place. Also like Croatia, the Belgians were eliminated by France after failing to break down the French defence in a 1-0 semi-final

defeat. The talented Belgian side lit up the rest of the tournament thanks to a multifaceted strike force that scored more goals than any other country, goals that were shared among a record ten different players. Led by an unstoppable Eden Hazard, Roberto Martínez's men saw off Panama (3-0), Tunisia (6-1) and England (1-0) before beating Japan in the round of 16 (3-2). The golden generation then produced the performance that the world had been waiting for, a 2-1 quarter-final victory over Brazil in which Thibaut Courtois, later named the tournament's best goalkeeper, was exceptional. With several other outstanding players in their line-up (Kevin De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku, Dries Mertens, etc.), Belgium will be a force to be reckoned with in forthcoming major tournaments. The same can be said of England, who emerged from the shadows by drawing a line under a number of unwanted records. Having never previously won a World Cup penalty shoot-out, Jordan Pickford and his team-mates defeated Colombia on spot kicks in a thrilling round of 16 encounter. And having failed to reach the semi-finals since 1990, they secured a last-four berth with a comfortable 2-0 win over Sweden in the quarter-finals.



After winning the UEFA Champions League and being awarded the Golden Ball as best player of the tournament at the World Cup, Croatia's Luka Modrić is a likely contender for the Ballon d'Or.

Getty Images



FIFA via Getty Images

Kevin de Bruyne and Thiago Silva in the quarter-finals, where Belgium caused a sensation by eliminating Brazil. Meanwhile England (below) reached the semi-finals for the first



Getty Images

**The host nation enjoyed a hugely successful World Cup, which would have been even more incredible had they managed to get over the line in another shoot-out against Croatia in the quarter-finals.**

The English were especially effective from set pieces throughout the tournament, scoring nine goals from dead-ball situations, thanks in particular to the prolific Harry Kane, whose six goals made him the top scorer of this World Cup. Gareth Southgate and his players even seemed to have put one foot in the final when they took the lead against Croatia in the semi-finals, but Mandžukić crushed their dreams in extra time. The Three Lions' run to the last four triggered a huge wave of excitement back home, raising hopes that they could once again win a trophy that has eluded them since 1966.

### **Russia and Sweden surprise everyone**

Who would have imagined, before the start of the tournament, that Russia would knock out Spain in the round of 16? Before 2018, the Russians had failed to progress beyond the first round in any of their three World Cup appearances in 1994, 2002 and 2014. However, with many fearing humiliation, Russia hit the ground running with convincing wins against Saudi Arabia (5-0) and Egypt (3-1).

Although Uruguay (0-3) brought them back down to earth, Denis Cheryshev (four goals) and his team-mates overcame all the odds by snatching a quarter-final place with a win against a Spanish team unable to break down their airtight defence (1-1, 4-3 on penalties). The host nation enjoyed a hugely successful World Cup, which would have been even more incredible had they managed to get over the line in another shoot-out against Croatia in the quarter-finals (2-2, 3-4 on penalties). Like Russia, Sweden were eliminated at the quarter-final stage with their heads held high, having successfully negotiated the group stage for the first time since 2006. A heroic win over Mexico saw them finish above South Korea and Germany. In their first major competition since Zlatan Ibrahimović's international retirement, the Scandinavians were as solid as ever, only conceding to Germany (1-2) and then England in the quarter-finals (0-2). South Korea (1-0), Mexico (3-0) and Switzerland (1-0) could not find a way past Robin Olsen and his defence. However, with a lack of firepower letting them down against England in

the last eight, Sweden missed out on what would have been the fourth semi-final in their history.

### **Disappointment abounds in the round of 16**

On the back of their EURO 2016 success and an almost perfect qualification campaign, Portugal arrived in Russia with confidence high. But despite a Cristiano Ronaldo hat-trick in a 3-3 draw against Spain, the limitations of Fernando Santos's team soon became apparent as they struggled against Morocco (1-0) and Iran (0-0). The Portuguese defence, so solid at EURO 2016, appeared close to breaking point and could not cope with a classy Edinson Cavani, who scored twice for Uruguay in the round of 16 (1-2). Drawn in the same group, Spain also made heavy weather of qualifying for the last 16, beating only Iran (1-0). After losing their coach, Julen Lopetegui, two days before the start of the tournament, the newly retired Andrés Iniesta and his team-mates never seemed to find their feet in Russia. Although the Spaniards always dominated possession, their shortcomings in attack were clear for →



Fedor Smolov up against Sergio Ramos. By knocking out Spain in the round of 16, Russia were already assured of

all to see as they failed to trouble a defensive Russian side (1-1, 3-4 on penalties). Like Spain, Denmark suffered penalty heartbreak in the round of 16 against Croatia, despite a brilliant performance from Kasper Schmeichel in goal (1-1, 2-3 on penalties). It was a cruel end for a Danish team that had produced its most impressive performance of the competition against the Croatians. Until that point, despite long periods without the ball, they had been effective against Peru (1-0), solid against Australia (1-1) and robust against France (0-0). Overall, they failed to show their true colours, rather like Switzerland, who also went out in the round of 16. After a highly encouraging 1-1 draw against Brazil in their opening match, the Swiss notched up an important win against Serbia thanks to a last-gasp strike from star man Xherdan Shaqiri (2-1), before a solid draw against Costa Rica (2-2). However, their campaign was brought to an abrupt end thanks to an insipid round of 16 display against Sweden (0-1) in which they let slip a golden opportunity to finally win a World Cup knockout match, having previously lost at the same stage in 1994, 2006 and 2014.

### Germany suffer the biggest shock of all

Only four European nations failed to qualify from their group in Russia. Europe's only World Cup debutants, Iceland were unable to repeat their EURO 2016 giant-killing success, although they held their own against

Iceland notched up their first point in a World Cup against

Lionel Messi's Argentina (1-1) and were far from outplayed in defeats against Nigeria (0-2) and Croatia (1-2). Serbia, for their part, glimpsed a place in the last 16 after following up an opening win against Costa Rica (1-0) by taking the lead against Switzerland. The Serbs looked set for a memorable campaign before a sudden collapse that saw Aleksandar Mitrović and his team-mates concede twice in a narrow 2-1 defeat to the Swiss before the qualification door slammed shut in a disappointing 2-0 defeat against Brazil. For Poland, progress from the group stage quickly became an impossible dream as they suffered defeats against Senegal (1-2) and Colombia (0-3). Drawn in a relatively easy group, a surprisingly quiet Robert Lewandowski (no goals) and his team-mates performed well

below expectations, their blushes hardly spared by a 1-0 win over Japan. Poland might have been Europe's biggest flops at this World Cup if Germany, making their 18th finals appearance, had not suffered a historic failure that saw them eliminated before the round of 16 for the first time ever. Joachim Löw's men got off to a terrible start in Russia, where they fell into the Mexican trap in their opening match (1-0). After a reprieve miraculously earned by Toni Kroos against Sweden (2-1), the world champions relinquished their title with a shock 2-0 defeat at the hands of South Korea. They therefore became the third consecutive World Cup winners to be eliminated in the first round of the subsequent tournament, following in the footsteps of Italy in 2010 and Spain in 2014. France be warned ... 🇫🇷



## National team honoured at Kremlin

The World Cup is over. From mid-June to mid-July, 11 Russian Federation cities played host to 32 national teams in a tournament that was widely acclaimed as one of the most successful in the history of football. And the host's national team also performed well on their home territory. For the first time since 1986, Russia reached the knockout stage. And for the first time since 1970, they made it through to the quarter-finals.

Getting off to a good start, Russia prevailed big time over Saudi Arabia (5-0) at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium. In the group stage, they also conquered Egypt 3-1 in St Petersburg before losing 3-0 to Uruguay in Samara. So, having taken second place in Group A, they then faced Spain, the Group B winners, for the round of 16 back in Moscow. The tough match ended in a 1-1 draw after extra time, leading to a penalty shoot-out that gave Russia the opportunity for one more goal and a final score of 4-3. On to the quarter-finals. The Russians struggled against

Croatia. And once again the outcome was decided on penalties, though this time fate favoured Russia's rivals with a final score of 4-3.

The country's leaders and the Russian Football Union recognised that the host team had done their nation proud. They had showed character, purposefulness, and resilience, and played with their souls for their country. Such a worthy performance was highly appreciated by Russian fans. When the team visited a crowded FIFA Fan Fest near Moscow State University on 8 July, 25,000 grateful fans were there to cheer them. The players and coaching staff unfurled a big banner in the colours of the Russian flag with the inscription WE PLAY FOR YOU!

Then, on 28 July, the team were received by President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin's Ekaterininsky Hall, where they were presented with prestigious awards. Head coach

Stanislav Cherchesov received the Order of Alexander Nevsky. Goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev and defender Sergei Ignashevich were awarded the Order of Honour. Other players and coaches were presented with Russian Federation Presidential Certificates of Honour.

On the same day, the team also visited the Russian ministry of sport, where players received Honoured Masters of Sports of Russia badges, while the coaching staff were awarded the title of Honoured Coaches of Russia. Stanislav Cherchesov was the subject of many flattering reviews. It is no surprise, therefore, that he is on the shortlist for the Best FIFA Men's Coach award, whose winner is to be announced in London on 24 September.

At the end of July, Cherchesov signed a new 2+2-year contract with the Russian Football Union. He and his staff are now set to prepare the team for the UEFA Nations League and EURO 2020 qualifiers.



Russia's head coach, Stanislav Cherchesov, receives the prestigious Order of Alexander

## Time for the Nations League!



With Russia still fresh in their minds, Europe's national teams will make a quick return to competitive football when a brand-new competition, the UEFA Nations League, kicks off on 6 September. There will certainly be no time for reflection, with the last two World Cup winners, France and Germany, meeting on matchday 1.

The importance of this clash should not be underestimated, since the teams in League A, which comprises Europe's best 12 nations, will only play four matches each, two against each of their group rivals. The winners of Group A1, in which France and Germany are joined by the Netherlands, will secure one of the four places in the Nations League finals that will be contested from 5 to 9 June 2019 by the four League A group winners following a simple format: semi-finals, third-place match and final. In Group A2, Belgium will start as favourites against Switzerland and Iceland. Group A3 contains three teams desperate to make up for recent disappointments, with Italy, a major World Cup absentee, drawn with Portugal and Poland, who both flattered to deceive in Russia. Group A4 could well be termed the 'group of death', since it includes Spain as well as two of this year's World Cup semi-finalists, Croatia and England. The standard of teams in League A is incredibly high since, apart from Switzerland, the Netherlands and Spain, they were all at least quarter-finalists at either EURO 2016 or the 2018 World Cup. Bringing such talented teams together, League A will provide spectators and television viewers with a plentiful supply of high-quality matches and will clearly attract most of the attention. However, it is certainly not the only meaningful section of the Nations League, which was designed to give all 55 European teams something to play for. There are 12 teams each in Leagues A and B (four groups of three teams), 15 in League C (one group of three and three groups of four) and 16 in League D (four groups of four). So what exactly is at stake? In a nutshell: the winners of the 12 groups in Leagues B, C and D will be promoted to the league above, while those finishing bottom in each League A, B and C group will be relegated. For example, two World Cup quarter-finalists, Russia and Sweden, will join Turkey in Group 2 of League B, where they will fight it out for a place in League A. The Nations League also has four places at EURO 2020 at stake. While 20 teams will qualify for the tournament through the usual channel, the remaining four slots will go to the winners of play-offs to be held in March 2020, the participants of which will be determined according to their results in the Nations League – a tantalising prospect for the teams in Leagues C and D, for whom qualifying for a major competition is often virtually impossible.

# BUILDING FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Every summer a bus is loaded up with footballs, gear, equipment and personalities ranging from the chief executive and UEFA Executive Committee member to former internationals who played in European Championships and heads off to a new destination.



Galway players celebrate with the trophy after winning the U16 Gaynor Cup final, between Midlands League and Galway League. The tournament was held at the University of Limerick.



FAI

The aim is to travel to the heart of communities where grassroots clubs weave their magic by transforming lives for the better, and to appreciate and encourage the work being done by volunteers. The fact that the visiting delegation is led by the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) makes it all the more special.

It is all part of the Festival of Football. Now in its 12th year, the festival stopped off in County Cork in August to visit over 40 clubs, host a women's football convention, a supporters' convention, a schoolboys' league awards ceremony, a civic reception at Cork city hall, and a dinner where awards were presented to recognise those making a real difference in grassroots football.

It may sound exhausting, with the festival spanning nine straight days, with hours ranging from 08.00 through to 23.00, and more kilometres covered than on the Tour de France, but this is a huge part of how the FAI connects with the people who are helping the game to grow at a local level.

The festival is an initiative introduced by the FAI's chief executive, John Delaney, and it is something he feels very strongly about. "Traditionally, the FAI has always held its annual general meeting in a hotel in Dublin. But I felt we were not really taking the time to recognise the brilliant work being done at grassroots level all around the country, so I came up with the idea of the Festival of Football.

"We first piloted the festival, which is a week-long experience that leads all the way up to our AGM, in County Kerry, and we have visited a different county every year since.

It has proved to be hugely popular, and it is fantastic to see the reaction of the volunteers and local communities when our bus pulls up at their club.

"A big part of the festival is that the FAI gives something back to these clubs. We deliver gear, equipment, match tickets for Republic of Ireland games in the Aviva Stadium, and grants to help them with facility upgrades, repairs or club advancements. It is really important to the association that we give something back because they are working hard every day to make a difference and we want to show our appreciation for that."

The foundations of Irish football have never been stronger. There is now greater support for grassroots clubs with the FAI introducing the club of the year award and club mark scheme – both of which are proving to be highly coveted prizes that clubs all over Ireland want to be associated with.

Running for over 12 years now, the club of the year award aims to recognise, celebrate and promote the inspirational work being done by clubs. This is judged by how a club handles its club management, coaching, community, participation, and facilities – with the winning club receiving €5,000 and the title of the best club in the country (for one year at least).

The club mark scheme is more about encouraging continuous development in best practice concerning governance, management and administration of a club. Clubs start their journey at entry level and can progress to become a one-star club – this will expand as more clubs join the scheme. →



FAI

Participation in the country's SportsDirect summer soccer camps has hit record numbers for three successive years.



The FAI interacts with clubs in a number of ways, such as the national draw, which raises funds for clubs and leagues across the country. But it is the personal contact that resonates most. While the festival of football comes around but once a year, Delaney is out visiting clubs every week in a similar capacity.

For someone who is chief executive of the association responsible for Ireland's most popular sport and, on top of that, is a member of the UEFA Executive Committee, chairman of its Youth and Amateur Football Committee and deputy chairman of its Women's Football Committee, it is amazing that he finds the time to visit hundreds of grassroots clubs every year.

"Connecting with grassroots clubs is something I feel very strongly about. I believe

Rising grassroots participation figures mean more people than ever are playing football in Ireland, and there has been a significant rise in the number of girls getting involved.

**160,000**  
**players have signed up to FAInet, the new online registration system.**

they represent the foundations of Irish football and everything else is built from there," he says. "It is a pleasure to meet the people who truly change lives through the volunteer work that they do at their clubs. We are very proud of the association's link with grassroots football and it is one we always look to strengthen even further."

The result of the FAI's support for grassroots football is increased participation numbers, with more people playing the game in Ireland than ever before. There has been a significant increase in the number of girls getting involved in the sport, while the Football for All programme caters for anyone with a disability or impairment.

At entry level, the SportsDirect summer soccer camps have hit record numbers for three successive years, and the Aviva Soccer Sisters camps are gaining in popularity. The FAI recently introduced an online registration system called FAInet, which already has over 160,000 players signed up. Alongside the increase in player numbers, rising numbers of people are also getting involved in coach education.

There is a positive atmosphere around Irish football right now. Perhaps this is aided by the excitement of hosting the 2019 European Under-17 Championship final tournament as well as four games in EURO 2020. But there is no doubt that the work being done at grassroots level is having a profound impact, with the FAI very much at the heart of that work.

One thing is for certain: Irish football has a bright future ahead. 🍀

Ireland international David Meyler training the Under-8s of St. Mochta's FC at the FAI's national training centre in Abbotstown.



## New elite player pathway

The introduction of youth tiers has given the SSE Airtricity League a huge boost as there is now a recognised elite player pathway from Under-13 through to senior level.

In recent seasons, SSE Airtricity League teams have made massive strides on the pitch, with Dundalk leading the way as they reached the group stages of the UEFA Europa League in 2016/17, while Ireland's overall UEFA coefficient placing has improved as a result of better performances.

Off the pitch, facility development is now a primary focus, with new stadiums in the works to host Bohemians, Drogheda United, Finn Harps, and Shelbourne. A new stand is being constructed at Tallaght Stadium for Shamrock Rovers, who have also opened an academy in Roadstone.

This year, the FAI – which administers the league – has dedicated €250,000 to youth development to assist clubs in the running of their youth teams. A special players' fund worth up to €300,000 has also been created to pay any wages that might be outstanding should a club hit financial difficulties.

While talks are ongoing with clubs about creating a possible merger with the FAI to run the league, the association continues to



implement new measures to take it up to a higher standard, including looking at a possible tier between Under-19 and senior level.

All of the good work being done off the pitch is reflected in increased attendances and the fact that more players from the league are earning international recognition. One such player is Shamrock Rovers' forward Graham Burke, who became the first home-based player in 40 years to score for the Republic of Ireland senior team when he netted in a friendly against the USA in June.

The FAI chief executive, John Delaney, visits hundreds of local clubs in Ireland every year.

## Let the children play



To make football more enjoyable for children, the FAI undertook a consultation process to implement the necessary amendments, which resulted in the introduction of the player development plan.

Overseen by the FAI's high performance director, Ruud Dokter (pictured), the plan focuses on age-specific team sizes, a uniform size of pitches

and goal posts, one size of ball, retreat lines, minimum playing time, and roll-on/roll-off substitutions.

Here is a detailed explanation from Ruud Dokter himself ...

### What is the main aim of the player development plan?

We have a simple motto: 'Let the children play'. It carries a very straightforward but important message. It is not about who wins the most games or who scores the most goals. In fact, we have removed league tables from Under-12 down to Under-8 level, so that the emphasis can be on enjoying the game and not having the children feel the pressure of results.

There are 4v4, 5v5, 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11 formats, a football that is weighted for the specific age group, a retreat line that allows

the game to flow, and every child gets to play some part with roll-on/roll-off substitutions. These have been necessary tweaks to keep children involved in the game. Ultimately, we want every child in the country to have the opportunity to play the game and to enjoy it.

### Isn't part of the plan to educate and work with parents?

Yes, it is very important to work with parents and coaches so that they are having a positive influence on the children. Their behaviour sets the tone for how a training session or game will go – if it is positive and encouraging, then the child will develop quicker, learn more and enjoy playing.

We conduct a lot of parent/coach workshops around the country, where we also listen to their feedback. It is vital that we work together and that their views are taken on board too.

### What has the reaction been to the plan?

It has been extremely positive. We understood from the start of this process that it wasn't going to be easy to change attitudes and traditions, but we are finding that parents, coaches and administrators all around the country are open to ways for their children to get more enjoyment from football – and that is what matters most. We are still working hard to maintain standards and to reach every club in the country, but it has been very encouraging so far.

#EQUALGAME



Photos: UJEFA

## AURIO 'PUMA' EMERSON CASTRO – PORTUGAL

# 'FOOTBALL CAN CHANGE LIVES'

Aurio 'Puma' Emerson Castro has mapped out his own way in life, with football serving as a crucial guide. The 28-year-old came to Portugal from Angola at the age of three and grew up in the rough and rugged neighbourhood of Jamaica on the south side of Lisbon. The neighbourhood is home to thousands of immigrants from former Portuguese colonies and is plagued by issues such as violence, drugs and extreme poverty.

'Puma' has always acknowledged that he had a tough upbringing, but still sees the neighbourhood as "my home, my cot". Football has played a central role in helping him improve his life, inside and outside Jamaica. From an early age, he was besotted by the game, and he and his neighbourhood friends would play at all hours of the day and night. His love for football kept him out of trouble, something that could not be said of the majority of his friends, whose life choices took them to prison. "They chose that life – my choice was a different one," he reflects.

As a footballer, he had a trial with Benfica and played for a spell in the Portuguese third division. 'Puma' then went on to enrol in a street football programme with the CAIS social aid organisation, took part in regional and national tournaments, and earned the honour of captaining Portugal's team in the 2011 Homeless World Cup. "An experience I will take with me for the rest of my life," he says.

Now, with the Criar-T social assistance and solidarity body, 'Puma' is giving back enthusiastically to the community, working successfully as a supervisor in its inclusion programme and coaching youngsters in a street football project. His eight-year-old son Leandro is already in love with the game and cherishing dreams for the future. "I've learned a lot from football," Puma says emphatically. "Football can definitely change lives." We could not agree more ...



SCAN HERE  
to see the video



**"FOOTBALL CAN BE A FORCE FOR GOOD.  
WHEN WE PLAY FOOTBALL, WE FORGET ABOUT PROBLEMS.  
WE ARE FOCUSED ON THE GAME, AND WE WANT TO SCORE  
GOALS, BE IN A GOOD MOOD AND PLAY WITH JOY."**

Just before half-time, Portugal's João 'Jota' Filipe opened the scoring in what would turn out to be a roller coaster of a final.



# PORTUGAL AGAIN – FOR THE FIRST TIME

Sportfile

Champions at EURO 2016. Champions of the indoor game at Futsal EURO 2018. And champions of Europe again after a roller-coaster final in the Finnish town of Seinäjoki. No surprise, maybe. But the eyebrow-raiser is that it was the first time that Portugal had ever posed under the winners' archway at a European Under-19 Championship.

It could be argued that victory in Finland was not a tale of the totally unexpected. Hélio Sousa travelled to the final tournament with 11 of the squad he had led to the European Under-17 title in Azerbaijan in 2016, including six of the players named in UEFA's all-star squad. Victory in 2018 represented a consolation for losing the 2017 final against England, and the two nations provided one of the stark contrasts that marked the final tournament in Finland. Whereas Portugal were able to play the card of continuity, England's defence of the title was undermined by a list of over 30 players who might have been in Finland had they been released by their clubs. Paul Simpson's improvised team performed well enough to reach the play-off match to decree Europe's remaining contender at the U-20 World Cup, but a 3-0 defeat by Norway meant that England would not be in Poland in 2019 to defend their world title.

### Great intensity and goals aplenty

But it would be amiss to start at the end of a memorable tournament where attacking vocations produced a goal tally of 55 that equalled the all-time record. The temptation to focus on the top teams would pass severe judgement on contenders who made enormous contributions to a tournament played with great intensity and levels of equality that were often difficult to equate with scorelines. The hosts provided a prime example. Juha Malinen, taking the helm a few months before the ball started rolling, implanted a courageous, effective playing philosophy that systematically unstitched Italy's defensive system in the opening Group A fixture. A series of one-on-one situations failed to produce a goal and the record books display a 1-0 win for Italy. Then, 2-1 ahead in the 90th minute against Norway, lapses allowed the Nordic neighbours to score twice in added time. And a 3-0 defeat against Portugal rubbed salt into the wounds sustained by a team whose

**Players who have won the U19 title in the past include Andrés Iniesta, Sergio Ramos, Joshua Kimmich and recent World Cup winners Antoine Griezmann and Kylian Mbappé.**

**Results**

**Group A** (16, 19 and 22 July)

Norway	1-3	Portugal
Finland	0-1	Italy
Finland	2-3	Norway
Portugal	2-3	Italy
Portugal	3-0	Finland
Italy	1-1	Norway

**Group B** (17, 20 and 23 July)

Turkey	2-3	England
France	1-2	Ukraine
Ukraine	1-1	England
Turkey	0-5	France
Ukraine	1-0	Turkey
England	0-5	France

**Semi-finals** (26 July)

Italy	2-0	France
Ukraine	0-5	Portugal

**U-20 World Cup play-off**  
(26 July)

Norway	3-0	England
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**Final** (29 July)

Italy	3-4*	Portugal
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\*after extra time

The goalkeepers had their hands full during the final.

performances exceeded expectations and whose results added up to a totally false impression.

**Hosts do themselves proud**

Talking of the hosts, it has to be said that their organisational performance produced optimal results. The tournament in Finland went down into the annals as the first to be played on artificial surfaces at just two venues – the excellent stadiums in Vaasa and Seinäjoki. The coaches, although initially expressing preferences for natural grass and commenting that the exceptionally hot weather hardly aided the cause, acknowledged that the surface was eminently playable. Indeed, Hélio Sousa, long before his opinion could be coloured by Portugal's victory, had expressed the view that the pitches were the best artificial surfaces he had ever encountered.

The victory over Finland, by the way, earned his team a place in the semi-final after a 3-2 defeat by Italy had put this in jeopardy, though the result was coloured by a dismissal after barely eight minutes, which left Sousa's team in numerical inferiority for an eternity. Italy earned first place in the group with a 1-1 draw against Norway, who went on to clinch that World Cup place at the expense of England.

The other group opened with a major surprise. France, with a rich tapestry of individual talents, failed to cope with Ukraine's excellent counter-attacking strategy and were beaten 2-1. Olexandr Petrakov's team (one of five who operated with five at the back at some stage of the tournament) then fought back to draw with England before clinching top spot by beating Turkey – losers in all three of their games. France bounced back spectacularly with 5-0 victories against Turkey and England.

**Two very different semi-finals**

This made Bernard Diomède's team the firm favourite in a semi-final against Italy. Supreme individual technique, fluid movement with and without the ball, impressive athletic qualities, attacking panache ... France had all the ingredients. But Paolo Nicolato's side countered this with traditional Italian qualities of tactical know-how and defensive acumen.

An overload on the right flank allowed a neat combination move to culminate in a cross that a great first touch and an outstanding finish by Christian Capone turned into 1-0 on the scoreboard. A wayward pass by centre back Malang Sarr then set up a classic counter, with striker Moise Kean running clear to make it 2-0. France,

exerting relentless second-half pressure, hit the woodwork twice, had two goals disallowed for offside and did everything but score. Italy were in the final.

Whereas that game went to the wire, the other semi-final was over in half an hour. Ukraine's five-man back line and disciplined collective defending, so impressive during the group stage, was pierced within two minutes and, when star striker Vladyslav Supriaha limped off nine minutes later, heads dropped and legs started to flag. After 30 minutes, the scoreboard in Vaasa displayed Ukraine 0 Portugal 5. Game over.

**Emotional roller coaster of a final**

The final in Seinäjoki, however, stubbornly refused to illuminate the 'game over' signal. There was a moment when it flickered – in the 72nd minute, to be precise. That was when, after João Filipe, alias 'Jota', had given Portugal the lead during added time before the break, Francisco Trincão turned the ball into the Italian net to double the advantage. It was at that point that the footballing contest turned into an emotional roller coaster. While Portugal still had the flickering 'game over' message before their eyes, substitute striker Kean cut in from the right, took a cunning back-heel pass in his stride and beat João Virginia to make it 2-1. Within seconds, the same player met a cross from the left with an unstoppable side-footed finish and, suddenly, the psychological pendulum had swung in Italy's favour – to the extent that the Italian players greeted the end of the 90 minutes with high fives, confident that victory was theirs for the taking during the half-hour of extra time.

But, no. Portugal, summoning up the mental lessons gained at the 2016 and 2017 finals, began to counter-attack with purpose against newly exuberant Italians. And it was 'Jota', once again, who found the Italian net as the first half of extra time was fading away along with the Finnish daylight. But, barely two minutes after the restart, the crazy script produced another twist when striker Gianluca Scamacca headed home from close range after a cross by indefatigable right back Raoul Bellanova. Substitutes invaded the pitch to add numbers to scenes of mass jubilation while the staff hugged each other in the technical area. Straight from the kick-off, Portugal played a long ball into the box, where substitute striker Pedro Correia held off challenges and found the net. Substitutes of a different colour invaded the pitch. In a madly memorable grand finale to a memorable tournament, Portugal had won 4-3 to take the Under-19 title for the first time. 🏆



# SPAIN WIN THE DOUBLE

Spain retained the European Women's Under-19 Championship title and became the first nation to win both the women's Under-17 and the Under-19 titles in the same year after defeating familiar foes Germany 1-0 in Biel/Bienne, Switzerland.

**G**lory was built with a side effectively formed of Under-18 players, given the impending 2018 U-20 Women's World Cup in France, for which Spain, Germany, Netherlands and France had also qualified and which had a notable impact on their squad – and backroom staff – selections. Spain, led by senior team coach Jorge Vilda – who is also the Spanish FA's technical director for women's football – triumphed thanks to a goal from a 17-year-old who only earned her first international call-up for the final tournament in Switzerland.

"It's a dream come true, I'm really proud of my team," said match-winner María Llompart, the 26th different goalscorer in the finals. "We've achieved our goal and we're really, really happy. To score the goal, I just felt a lot of emotion – I'm dreaming! We've created a really amazing team; we deserve this trophy."

It is a team that will be eligible to return almost in its entirety when the event moves on to Scotland in 2019 – by which time

Spain could have another title to their name. "We won the Under-17s, now the Under-19s and hopefully the Under-20s – now it is their turn at the World Cup," said Vilda, whose confidence in his young side's ability was unerring, even after an opening defeat to Norway. That result, he felt, was one that sparked his team into action in sun-drenched Switzerland.

The Iberians arrived in the finals without conceding, but they lost that record to a Norway side who had conceded only once en route to Switzerland – against Greece in the elite round. This was a record that had even raised the eyebrows of their coach, Nils Lexerød. "That's impressive and also surprising, but we're still creating too few chances," he said. "However, it's important that we're not conceding." Indeed, Norway's effectiveness in front of goal, combined with a compact and resolute defence, ensured they raised many more eyebrows on the way to a semi-final appearance. Just two shots sufficed for them to breach the Spain defence as many times and get their

campaign off to a winning start. "It was our opening game and it was not easy to deal with our energy levels," conceded Vilda, whose side learnt their lesson.

Elsewhere in the opening group fixtures, Switzerland showed how being on home soil can prove advantageous in their opening fixture with France. They recovered from a two-goal deficit to snatch a point, Malin Gut providing one of her tournament-high three assists as they were carried by the positive energy from the crowd.

Over in Group B, an excellent combination from a throw-in on the left led to the only goal of a tight game, Germany holding on to a 1-0 win despite a late flurry of Denmark chances. The Netherlands were ruthless in their opening fixture with Italy, taking their first opportunity with a header from Lynn Wilms and then adding a penalty just five minutes later to shake the confidence of an Italian side who had set out to attack their opponents. Italy's attacking approach ultimately led to them ending the group stage with the second highest number of attempts on goal – behind Germany – but with the lowest number of goals scored: just the one Arianna Caruso headed in as a consolation in that opening 3-1 defeat.

Norway impressed again in their second group game. A Sophie Haug strike from one of their two shots on goal earned them another three points and ensured they were the only nation to qualify for the semi-finals with a game to spare. Spain had grown from their opening fixture, but enthusiasm was again evident in the Swiss game as another passionate crowd got behind the hosts in Zug. María Echezarreta Fernández denied Swiss captain Gut from the penalty spot before Rosa Marquez Baena carried the ball almost the full length of the field following a Switzerland corner, and teed up Olga Carmona to score one of the goals of the tournament in a 2-0 victory that got Spain's challenge up and running.





Germany's Nicole Anyomi in action with Spain's Anna Torroda in the final.

## Results

### Group A (18, 21 and 24 July)

Spain	0-2	Norway
Switzerland	2-2	France
Norway	1-0	France
Switzerland	0-2	Spain
Norway	1-3	Switzerland
France	1-2	Spain

### Group B (18, 21 and 24 July)

Germany	1-0	Denmark
Netherlands	3-1	Italy
Denmark	1-0	Italy
Netherlands	1-0	Germany
Denmark	3-1	Netherlands
Italy	0-2	Germany

### Semi-finals (27 July)

Norway	0-2	<b>Germany</b>
Denmark	0-1	<b>Spain</b>

### Final (30 July)

Germany	0-1	<b>Spain</b>
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A well-organised Denmark triumphed 1-0 over a profligate Italy thanks to a Sara Holmgaard goal, while the Netherlands established their place at the top of the group heading into the decisive final round of matches by defeating Germany 1-0, Rebecca Doejaaren getting the goal. With six points from two games, they were not through, though, as a dramatic final day of group stage action ensued.

The intrigue was high as Italy faced a Germany side whose destiny was not in their own hands. Indeed, had Denmark beaten the Netherlands 2-1, it would have taken them both through regardless – and after that scoreline materialised after only 20 minutes, with two goals from Dajan Heshemi-Ghermezi and a Kayleigh Van Dooren free-kick, both the Danes and the Dutch appeared to be heading for the semi-finals.

However, Denmark once again underlined their winning spirit with hard-working left wing back Sofie Svava crossing for Janni Thomsen to head in their third and take them through as group winners. Paulina Krumbiegel's second goal for Germany against Italy saw them advance in second place.

In Group A, Switzerland only had one option: beat Norway and hope. Coach Nora Häuptle deployed a back three with wing backs providing support in an energetic attacking display, with fast transitions from defence to attack and an exemplary team spirit. Géraldine Reuteler was at the heart of the action, and her excellent header from Gut's corner gave the Swiss a deserved lead. The same combination doubled the hosts' advantage early in the second half before Runa Lillegård reduced

the arrears for a Norway side featuring eight changes from their previous fixture.

Lehmann made it three in the last minute, but it was not enough to take Switzerland through as Spain got the win they needed in the group's other final fixture against France.

Norway and Germany were first up on a scorching day for the semi-finals in Biel/Bienne. The heat certainly took its toll and Germany were forced into two changes inside the opening 25 minutes due to injury and illness. Maren Meinert's team nevertheless kept their shape well and did not let the setbacks shake their confidence as they played the ball out well from the back, opening the scoring on the stroke of half-time with Melissa Kössler taking advantage of a hesitant Linn-Mari Nilsen in the Norway goal to steer Krumbiegel's free-kick in. A second from Anna-Lena Stolze early in the second half allowed the six-time champions to reach their record-equalling ninth final.

In the second semi-final, Denmark's high pressing succeeded better than Norway's had in the first and Spain were forced more onto the back foot than they would have liked. They managed to find more solutions to develop attacking actions in the second half, though, and a fine 30-yard strike from Teresa Abelleira Dueñas – who became the 25th different player to score in the finals – took them to an unprecedented fifth straight final.

There, they vanquished the same rivals as their Under-17s in the final in Lithuania in May, earning them a third title and back-to-back wins after defeating France in Northern Ireland in 2017. 🏆



# TOGETHER #WEPLAYSTRONG – THE JOURNEY SO FAR

When it comes to the participation of girls and women in football, UEFA has identified a major challenge to the growth of the game: most girls who play football quit when they hit their teens. UEFA's research shows that this comes about because suddenly other people's judgements matter to them, and if their friends do not think football is cool, girls simply gravitate towards other activities that hold more social currency.

UEFA is determined to change this, keep teenage girls in the game, and get more to play. The Together #WePlayStrong campaign launched in June 2017 is designed around how girls use social media. Starring over 750 teen footballers from all over Europe, the campaign highlights the skills, confidence and friendships that come with playing the game, making football relevant to teen girls wherever they may be, from Instagram to YouTube, Giphy to Musical.ly, and in the worlds of fashion, music, the arts, health and fitness.

## Changing perceptions

The long-term aim of the campaign is to make football the number-one played sport for girls and women in all 55 UEFA member associations.

Year one of the campaign focused on driving awareness and changing perceptions. Even without traditional media spend, Together #WePlayStrong has had over 200 million campaign views, generated over 70,000 fans on social

media and had over 25,000 mentions on Twitter and Instagram alone. 73% of teenage girls who have seen the campaign say they would like to play football, and 17,000 have used the Find a Place to Play Football tool on [weplaystrong.org](http://weplaystrong.org).

Many national associations and clubs are also supporting the movement, sharing UEFA's content on their channels, contributing content of their own and using the Together #WePlayStrong toolkit to localise the campaign.

**"This whole campaign was magical, it truly demonstrated the reach and power of football."**

**Liv Cooke**  
Football freestyler

The campaign recently scooped a bronze Cannes Lions award at this year's Festival of Creativity in the Multi-platform Social and Influencer category, up against the likes of Nike, Apple, Mars and EA Sports.

## Gathering pace

Former German international and FIFA World Player of the Year Nadine Kessler, who now heads UEFA's women's football unit, said: "It's really exciting, and the continued growth of women's football is a strategic priority for UEFA. This is a long-term project, but it's heartening to see our rate of growth is already going in the right direction and gathering pace, and all the while the game is becoming more professional throughout Europe. With that comes increased opportunity, exposure and affinity."

As part of the campaign, a hugely successful vlog called Press Play launched on the YouTube channel, giving fans unique insight into the



UEFA

daily lives of four different professional players around Europe each week. To date, the weekly vlog has amassed over 5 million views on YouTube and has since been shortlisted for a Leaders Sports Award in content creation.

Press Play draws on the abundance of brilliant talent and personalities in the women's game and tells their stories as a way to inspire more girls and women to play and keep playing football.

### Reach and power of football

And that was just the beginning of a year that has been jam-packed with engaging, original and progressive Together #WePlayStrong initiatives.

In April seven of Europe's leading women's footballers took part in one of the most spectacular kickabouts ever captured on camera in a promotional activity called Play Anywhere.

The film showcased Liv Cooke, the world's top female football freestyler, playing football in some of Europe's most idyllic locations, from Scotland and Norway, to Switzerland and Croatia, with over 100 grassroots players and 7 professionals, including Norwegian trio Ada and Andrine Hegerberg and Maren Mjelde, and English quartet Lauren James, Jordan Nobbs, Fran Kirby and Alex Greenwood.

A participation challenge was then thrown open to young people, which attracted thousands of entries from girls across Europe, inviting anyone with a football to post their own videos or photographs in an unusual or impressive location on Instagram, for a chance to win a summer trip for four to Disneyland Paris.

"This whole campaign was magical – from filming all over Europe with UEFA to meeting the winner, who was inspired by the film that we were all so proud to be involved in," said Liv Cooke. "It truly demonstrated the reach and power of football."

Reach has been a primary focus for the campaign since its creation, with Together #WePlayStrong frequently engaging with pan-European influencers, including social media celebrities Sophia Grace and Barbara Sofie.

### Female empowerment

And then, there was Rita Ora. The collaboration between the global pop superstar and #WePlayStrong, which launched in May this year, provided UEFA with an additional platform to promote the campaign and attract more girls to play by raising the profile and image of the game, while increasing visibility and engagement.

The artist announced UEFA as the official sponsor of her headline tour and, in turn, her support for the campaign. Stars of the

women's game throughout Europe met the football-loving singer throughout her recent European tour in a truly unique partnership between music and women's football.

"The values of Together #WePlayStrong centre not only on football but female empowerment and equality too, so I was 100% behind this campaign when I was approached to partner with UEFA," said Rita Ora.

"It's a privilege to be part of such an inspiring initiative, driving home messages of acceptance, individuality and finding a place to belong. My message to any young girl that's thinking of picking up a ball is to just go for it. Being part of a team inspires confidence, builds friendships and can be liberating."

### 'What is strong?'

More recently, #WePlayStrong has been celebrating the physical, emotional and mental strength of women and girls all over Europe.

The campaign's newest initiative, 'What is Strong?', has been backed by Rita Ora, who voiced the first in a series of Instagram GIFs that invite girls across Europe to answer the question: What does strong mean to you?

The campaign's strategy is essentially to break down all barriers between girls and playing football, and this initiative reappraises what it means to be strong. It encourages girls to recognise the individual strength in themselves and be confident in telling their story. The initiative can show that girls who play football are not only strong, but confident in their strengths, and can help inspire more girls to play the sport.

Rita Ora's special relationship with the target audience and strong personal connection with the campaign's message has brought tremendous results, with the number of girls and parents using the campaign to find a place to play football up 337% since the partnership began.

During its second year, the campaign will continue to seek to drive awareness and change perceptions, and it will also work towards encouraging girls who are engaging with the game digitally to start or carry on playing football. 🌍



UEFA

To promote football among girls, the Together #WePlayStrong campaign has enlisted the help of celebrities such as football freestyler Liv Cooke (above) and singer Rita Ora.

# NEW-LOOK UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE BRAND IDENTITY

A vibrant new brand identity has been unveiled for the 2018/19 UEFA Champions League – based on a concept called ‘Highlighting moments that make the ultimate stage’.

**T**he centrepiece of the new brand identity, revealed in early June, are the connected stars from the ‘starball’ in the UEFA Champions League logo. The concept captures the iconic moments of extraordinary feats of skill that make each match night in European club football’s premium competition so captivating and memorable.

## Reinforcing core brand values

Every three years, UEFA revisits its competition brand identity, in alignment with the commercial cycle of broadcast and sponsorship rights. For the latest 2018–21 cycle, the branding has been designed to be more flexible, while building on tried and trusted elements such as the UEFA Champions League anthem, the stadium and the iconic trophy. The blue colour palette deriving from UEFA Champions League match nights is now enriched with new accent colours – magenta and cyan – to give support to this fresher look.

The new identity – developed in collaboration with UEFA’s marketing partner TEAM Marketing and the London-based creative agency DesignStudio – visually articulates the UEFA Champions League brand, and has been created to support digital, mobile and social media platforms. It enhances and consolidates the core brand values that the competition is renowned for, while highlighting the leading role that the UEFA Champions League plays in the football landscape. The UEFA Champions League has expanded to become part of the global entertainment environment, rather than just merely existing as a sports event.

“The UEFA Champions League is a globally recognised brand in football, sports and entertainment,” says Guy-Laurent Epstein, UEFA Events SA marketing director. “This brand-refresh maximises the opportunities to engage with fans and stakeholders across new technologies and platforms.”

## A major step forward

Compared with previous brand identity updates, the new design is considered as a major step forward. While the ‘starball’ visual gains in importance in the new identity, the successful ‘ultimate stage’ area still features in the branding package – providing an extended range of key visuals that can be deployed for communications purposes, both internally and by UEFA’s partners.

In addition, the new identity aims to support a broad range of stakeholders – sponsors, broadcasters, licensees and clubs. A new, more flexible colour co-branding system has been introduced to give commercial partners the chance to tailor the brand identity to their own needs.

It all means that the UEFA Champions League continues to enjoy unique branding that will be applied across a wide range of promotional applications – with the objective of further enhancing the prestige of one of the world’s biggest sporting competitions. 🌟



# BE PART OF THE #FOOTBALLPEOPLE ACTION WEEKS

The #FootballPeople action weeks return between 11 and 25 October this year and the Fare network, which organises the annual event, is calling on Europe's national associations and clubs to get involved and help drive social change.

**T**he #FootballPeople action weeks are a wide-reaching campaign to tackle discrimination and celebrate diversity in football. The weeks unite professional football clubs and associations, grassroots groups, supporters, NGOs and communities affected by exclusion across Europe with the goal of

The Fare network combats discrimination in football and encourages inclusion, as enjoyed by these Syrian refugees in Armenia.

eradicating discrimination. More than 100,000 people took part in 2,000 events in over 60 countries in 2017.

The weeks are supported by UEFA, more than 400 professional clubs and more than 35 national associations, many professional leagues and players' unions.

## Join in the action

Clubs and associations can join in the action and celebrate football as a game for all by organising events and activities or associating existing events with the campaign. There are so many ways to support and champion diversity in football.

All matches in the UEFA Europa League, UEFA Champions League, UEFA Women's Champions League and UEFA Nations League played between 11 and 25 October will feature some reference to the #FootballPeople action weeks, reaching fans directly in the stadiums and millions more on television and online.

Organising activities as part of the action weeks is simple and the options are limitless: holding workshops for fans, coaches and players; organising on-pitch activities at a match; inviting children from different backgrounds to be mascots; asking players to line up in campaign T-shirts; producing a video with a message promoting diversity; or holding coaching sessions in the community.

The Fare network's executive director, Piara Powar, says: "The Football People weeks are an important window for European football to come together to challenge exclusion and discrimination and support inclusion and diversity through sport.

"Anybody who watches, plays or is leading the sport has the opportunity to support the movement by organising and taking part. Last year we reached over 100,000 active participants. Together we make it stronger again by showing a united message."

For more information about the #FootballPeople action weeks and to join in and celebrate a world of football where everybody is welcome everywhere, go to [www.farenet.org](http://www.farenet.org) or contact [info@farenet.org](mailto:info@farenet.org).



# #FootballPeople

action weeks

11 – 25 October  
2018



STANISLAV CHERCHESOV

# 'WE'RE THE CHAMPIONS OF PEOPLE'S HEARTS'

Stanislav Cherchesov's Russia team defied all expectations with their journey to the quarter-finals of this summer's World Cup, winning the affections of an enthralled nation along the way. Here he offers a coach's perspective on how they tore up the script – and reflects on his career in football.

**T**he dust has yet to fully settle on the 2018 World Cup, but for Stanislav Cherchesov there is no need to distance himself further from this summer's giddy swirl of drama and emotion before making a judgement. The man responsible for guiding Russia's footballers through their home tournament has a clear verdict in his mind.

"There are always two sides to success – a sporting side and an emotional one," he begins. "I believe that we're clearly world champions when it comes to the emotional side. We provided some success, we enjoyed the tournament and the nation was proud of us. As for the sporting side, we couldn't pick up the trophy but I consider our team's performance to be a success."

It would be difficult to find a single dissenter across the vast expanse of Russia after a tournament in which the host nation exceeded all expectations. On the road to a quarter-final defeat by Croatia, they defeated the 2010 champions Spain

in the round of 16 – thus travelling further in the competition than any group of Russian footballers in the post-Soviet era.

In the process they shredded a script that foresaw an unhappy World Cup for a team that had struggled to win matches in the year leading up to the tournament.

In the previous summer's Confederations Cup, Russia were eliminated in the group stage after losses to Portugal and Mexico.

Following a friendly defeat in Austria in late May, Sport-Express, one of the nation's most popular sports newspapers, quoted the 19th-century Russian patriotic poet and statesman Fyodor Tyutchev by declaring: "We can only trust in Russia." The implication was there was nothing more substantial in which to place their hope.

Cherchesov, a former national-team goalkeeper with experience of World Cup and European Championship campaigns, saw it differently. "All teams get criticised and our national team is no exception. It wasn't an issue for us as we knew how to prepare ourselves, and the players trusted

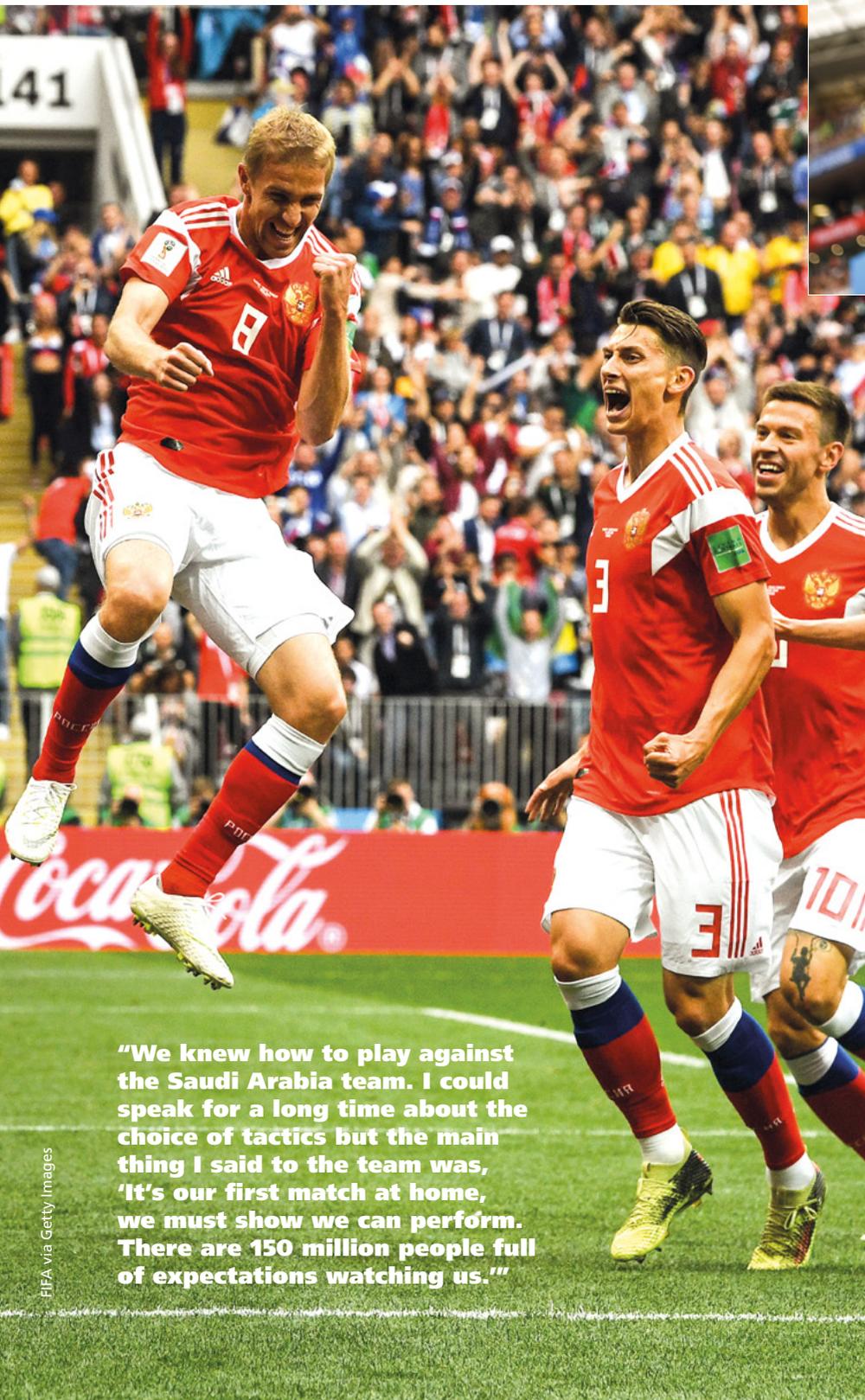
their coaches. We managed to create a competitive environment, whereby we had a fair and equal attitude to each player. There were no exceptions. "You always know your players; you trust them," he adds. "That's why we just focused on our job and staged the training camp in Austria where nobody could disturb us."

Cherchesov has much to reflect on. The route travelled between his appointment as Russia coach on 11 August 2016 and 8 July 2018, the day after their quarter-final elimination when he and his players stood on a stage at Moscow's fan zone and felt a wave of appreciation wash over them, has been a long one.

The 54-year-old starts his reflection at the very beginning, with the early days in the job as he set about assembling a strategy to make the World Cup hosts competitive. Two months earlier Russia had exited EURO 2016 with just a single point from group matches against England, Slovakia and Wales.

"We came to the national team with our own vision, which we adjusted with time," he observes. "We studied all the materials left by our predecessors – Fabio Capello, Guus Hiddink and Leonid Slutsky. During the preparation period we took into account the things they hadn't managed to achieve. →

**"We came to the national team with our own vision, which we adjusted with time. We studied all the materials left by our predecessors – Fabio Capello, Guus Hiddink and Leonid Slutsky. We took into account during the preparation period the things they hadn't managed to achieve and to implement."**



**"We knew how to play against the Saudi Arabia team. I could speak for a long time about the choice of tactics but the main thing I said to the team was, 'It's our first match at home, we must show we can perform. There are 150 million people full of expectations watching us.'"**

FIFA via Getty Images



Cherchesov during Russia's World Cup opening game against Saudi Arabia, which the tournament hosts went on to win 5-0.

"I took part in selecting the friendly matches from a sporting perspective. All other issues – TV, commercial, etc. – were left to the association. We worked closely as we each had our own job to do. I had good access to the players and all of them were happy to be part of the national team. Obviously, though, they'd come to me in different states from their clubs."

One notable question mark against Russia's players in the lead-up to the World Cup was their lack of club experience abroad. There were only two foreign-based players in his final 23-man squad: Villarreal CF's Denis Cheryshev and Vladimir Gabulov of Club Brugge KV. "It's just a statistic, nothing more," Cherchesov says. "There were times when some members of the national team played abroad and even then we could not produce good performances. What's crucial is the commitment, readiness, potential and the desire to play for your country."

Cherchesov's players ticked all the boxes and more when their World Cup campaign kicked off on 14 June with their opening Group A fixture against Saudi Arabia. Any fears about Russia's weaknesses subsided as the host team won 5-0. "We knew the opposition very well," says Cherchesov. "We knew how to play against Saudi Arabia. I could say a lot about the choice of tactics, but the main thing I told the team was: 'It's our first match at home, we have to show we can perform. There are 150 million people full of expectations out there watching us.'"

It was an evening where Cherchesov's substitutes played key roles. When Alan Dzagoev left the pitch injured after 24 minutes, his replacement, Denis Cherychev, proved he was more than ready to fill the void by scoring the first two of the four goals he would deliver at the finals.

Another substitute, Artem Dzyuba, found the net just 89 seconds after taking the field. He would start every match thereafter and overall contributed, as scorer or assist maker, to five of Russia's 11 goals. Was this good luck or good planning? "We knew the shape Cherychev was in. We knew who would substitute for who in what situations," Cherchesov replies. "The main thing was not to make mistakes. All the players who came in fitted naturally into the game."

With the boost to morale from that five-goal victory, Russia overcame Egypt 3-1 in their second fixture to secure early qualification for the last 16. Although they then lost 3-0 to Uruguay, Cherchesov ensured his players were ready to face Spain in their round of 16 meeting in Moscow. "Before the game against Spain we focused on tactics," explains



Russia's Daler Kuziaev and Sergei Ignashevich surround Spain's Diego Costa in the round of 16 tie that caused one of the biggest upsets of the World Cup, with Russia eliminating the 2010 World Cup winners in a penalty shoot-out.

Cherchesov. "It was the usual training camp regime. There were no psychological problems. We just knew we had to change tactics." This entailed a switch from a four to a five-man defence. In came Fedor Kudryashov into the middle of the back line alongside Sergei Ignashevich and Ilya Kutepov. Spain dominated possession, and over the course of 120 minutes accumulated 1,114 passes to Russia's 290, yet they struggled to penetrate the deep Russian rearguard. Cherchesov had experimented with three centre backs

before the tournament, but this was the only match where he employed the strategy. "Many teams play in a back three," he reflects. "We had two players, [Viktor] Vasin and [Georgij] Dzhikiya, who were injured and unable to take part in the tournament. So, we altered our tactics. Preparing for Spain we'd watched many matches, and playing an attacking and open game against them does not lead to success. So, we changed the set-up of the team, which the Spanish did not expect, and we achieved our aim." →

## Reflections on a coaching career – 'My work became my life'

**Can you tell us a little about your coach education? When did you decide you wanted to be a coach and how did you go about it?**

I got my A licence in Austria. My Pro licence I got in Moscow as I returned to Spartak in 2006. I took the decision to become a coach during my career as a football player. I played until I was 40 and decided right after that to become a head coach.

**You had different managerial jobs – in Austria, Russia and Poland – before taking the job with the national team. Is there anything you wish you'd done differently?**

I began with a small team, Kuffstein, and then step by

step I grew until I became the head coach of the national team. I wouldn't do anything differently.

**How do you work with your fellow coaches? How much are you involved in the day-to-day training sessions? What responsibilities does your goalkeeper coach have?**

We started working together in 2009, so we've been a team for over eight years – myself, my first assistant Miroslav Romaschenko, physical trainer Vladimir Panikov, and goalkeeper coach Guintaras Stauche. We worked together as club coaches and I then included Paulino Granero, our physiotherapist, for our work in the national team. I play an active part in planning each



FIFA via Getty Images

and every training session and have the final say. All the roles are distributed – one person is responsible for the warm-up, another for tactical exercises, etc. I can honestly say that I am able to delegate the tasks. As far as the goalkeeper coach is concerned, his responsibility is

to train the keepers in terms of physiology and psychology. He has an important say with regard to the choice of main goalkeeper.

**Finally, a more personal question. For a head coach at this level, the stress is extremely high. How do you control your emotions? How do you keep calm and relax?**

A head coach is also a person, a human being. I have my family, my wife and two kids, who support me. I need their support, which is the most important thing. It helps not to get too tense, after all! I work on staying fit, by running and swimming. The main thing, though, is that I love my work and am passionate about it. My work became my life, and my life became my hobby.



At the other end of the pitch that day, Russia were heavily reliant on their big front man, Dzyuba, holding the ball up. After his goal-scoring cameo against Saudi Arabia, he was now playing a key role, meaning that Fyodor Smolov, the Russian top flight's leading scorer for each of the past two seasons, had to settle for a substitute's berth. Dzyuba it was who converted the penalty equaliser against the Spanish. "Smolov has been one of the main players for two years," says Cherchesov, discussing his two front men. "He was also one of the main players at the beginning of the tournament. Dzyuba performed very well during the training camp and was in very good physical and psychological shape. Both players were very important during the tournament, but Dzyuba showed himself to be in better shape and that's why he became a focal point of our attack." It is an illustration, Cherchesov adds, of the importance of competition for places in a squad: one player can suddenly find a moment of good form and step in to replace another. Hence the need for flexibility. "There were some variations in the selection. Some of them were due to injuries, some due to the questions set by the games, when we had to find a right answer. A coach's choice is also sometimes down to necessity. It depended on the situation. We had a line-up [in mind] but, as I mentioned, we managed to create a competitive environment. No one is irreplaceable. All the players knew it was down to merit who took the field."

Feeding off Dzyuba, incidentally, was Aleksandr Golovin, the 22-year-old that Russian football fans hope can become

a standard-bearer for a new post-World Cup era for their national team. Within a month of the World Cup ending he had agreed a move to AS Monaco from PFC CSKA Moskva. "Golovin had already performed well during the Confederations Cup," says Cherchesov. "He also played well this year at CSKA. We're happy he's making progress and we hope he carries on improving. There was a lot written about him during the tournament and he reacted in a way that was reasonable and correct."

The same words – and more – could have applied to his entire squad in the final reckoning. The manner of their World Cup exit, defeat on penalties by Croatia in a dramatic Sochi quarter-final where they forced a shoot-out with a 115th-minute Mário Fernandes equaliser, meant they departed with heads held high. It was a match for which Cherchesov had reverted to a back four. "As far as the game against Croatia is concerned, we know that they play attacking football and they also let their opponents play, and so we didn't play defensively."

It was in the immediate aftermath of that contest that an understandably proud and emotional Cherchesov declared: "The whole country loves us. They know what their Russian national

team is worth. We hope we have turned the situation for the better."

The question now is: what words did he have for his players on that emotional evening at the Fisht Stadium? He explains that there is not so much a coach can say on an occasion like that. "In the dressing room I thanked the team for their performance during the tournament and said nothing more. After such games words are pointless. I talked to them the next day."

And now, is he hopeful that the love affair ignited during the World Cup can continue? Has the relationship with the nation's football fans changed for good? "It's difficult to give a clear-cut answer to this question," he remarks, "as fans have always got their own perspective when evaluating the national team. We now have to analyse our preparations. On top of that, some players have already announced that they're retiring, so we need to find good quality players to replace them. We must improve and we'd like to discover some new names." Such is a coach's life. You can make a nation fall in love with you, but the world of football never stops turning. At the end of July, Cherchesov signed a two-year contract extension and now turns his attention to the UEFA Nations League and EURO 2020 qualifying. Time to go again ... 🌱

**"There were some variations in the selection. Some of them were due to injuries, some due to the questions set by the games, when we had to find a right answer. A coach's choice is also sometimes down to necessity. It depended on the situation. (...) No one is irreplaceable. All the players knew that it was down to merit who took the field."**



## Cherchesov's CV

Born in Alagir in the southern Russian region of North Ossetia-Alania, Stanislav Cherchesov began his career with Spartak Ordzhonikidze before moving to Moscow for spells with FC Spartak Moskva and FC Lokomotiv Moskva. In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union he moved abroad and played in Germany with 1. FC Dynamo Dresden and Austria with FC Tirol Innsbruck. The changing political landscape meant that Cherchesov experienced international football with the Soviet Union, the CIS and Russia, representing the latter at the 1994 World Cup, where he made one appearance, and EURO '96, where he played twice. He had previously had a watching brief as back-up to Dmitri Kharine at EURO '92.

Following his six years as a player in Austria, he returned there in 2004 to embark on his coaching career at FC Kufstein in Austria's Regional League West, before moving on to FC Wacker Tirol (2004–06). In 2006 he headed back to Russia as sporting director of his old club Spartak before taking the reins there as head coach. Subsequent stints followed at FC Zhemchuzhina Sochi, FC Terek Grozny, FC Amkar Perm and FC Dinamo Moskva. His last club assignment before the Russia opportunity arrived was in Poland with Legia Warszawa that he guided to a league and cup double in 2015/16.



The promotion of events such as the grassroots day held at the headquarters of the Slovenian FA in Brdo gives an insight into the overall mission of an association.

NZS

# THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FOR MODERN ORGANISATIONS

Communicating is of paramount importance in football – both on and off the pitch. Well-designed communication programmes are essential for sharing a national association’s vision and providing important information that informs key stakeholders of the organisation’s objectives and business priorities.

Independent research undertaken by UEFA shows that while the image of the game is strong, the perception of national associations can in some cases be low, with many facing similar challenges in building and maintaining a positive reputation.

It has also become evident that the image of a national association can have a direct impact on important business outcomes. For example, parents are more likely to let their children play and watch football if they have a positive perception of the sport.

Having evaluated various research projects and acknowledging the impact effective communications can have on key business objectives of an organisation, European football’s governing body decided to provide proactive communications support to its member associations.

A strategic communications initiative was established in September 2017 as part of the UEFA GROW business development



By lending a hand with some pitch maintenance work, the president of the Georgian FA, Levan Kobiasvili, highlights the efforts being undertaken in the area of grassroots football.

programme for member associations. Its aim is to support the national associations in developing a clear strategic communications framework that synchronises with their strategic priorities.

“Communication is increasingly recognised as an important part of the business activities of football organisations,” says Urška Končar, marketing and communications director of the Football Association of Slovenia (NZS). “The UEFA GROW approach to national associations, based on insights and research data, is a valuable tool for achieving effective communication strategies and campaigns to support the goals of our national association and its stakeholders. At the NZS, we are trying to improve our strategic communications in our daily business and also introduce long-term sustainability as one of our priorities.”

The strategic communications initiative seeks to enhance the strategic positioning of national associations, communicating

A youth competition in Georgia, one of the 12 associations implementing the strategic communications pillar of UEFA GROW.



around well-considered organisational goals and increasing collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. The strategy should define how an organisation communicates with its key stakeholder groups across all relevant channels.

At present, 12 UEFA member associations are implementing the strategic communications pillar of UEFA GROW, with the first strategies having been implemented this summer. The Georgian Football Federation (GFF) was one of the first member associations to embrace the programme, and it is already seeing a number of positive outcomes.

“The support which we receive from UEFA regarding the development of the strategic communications plan is invaluable, while it also constitutes a part of the wider GROW project,” says Ketii Goliadze, head of the GFF’s public relations department.

“Coordinated work regarding the proper communication of our priorities has led us firmly to believe that the PR plan is fully in line with the organisation’s strategic vision. The knowledge and competence of the individuals involved in the project provides everyone with another opportunity to grow as professionals by sharing their experience with each other.”

### When and how to share?

An effective strategic communications programme also helps those in top-level positions to determine when and how information should be shared with the relevant audiences, promote change, educate stakeholders and advise partners.

“Communications needs to be viewed as a strategic function that is integral to the organisation’s overall work,” says Phil Townsend, managing director of communications at UEFA.

“Associations and senior leaders cannot execute strategic initiatives unless they can effectively communicate their alignment and business benefits. We strongly believe in high-level partnerships with our member associations and we hope to build purposeful communication as part of our

agenda to GROW European football.” While most national associations have some form of communications planning in place, first findings show that the focus is mostly on short-term tactical activity rather than on a more strategic approach of how communications can help enhance the image of the association and changing stakeholder perceptions in the medium to long term.

Recent developments in digital communications have presented new and exciting opportunities to reach out and engage with target audiences. However, this also needs investment in skills and knowledge as teams look to understand how to integrate these new platforms into their planning and delivery.

A specialist skill set is also required to develop effective crisis communications plans, which enable national associations to respond quickly and appropriately to issues and to manage their communications around any potential reputational threats.

UEFA GROW is helping the national associations on an individual basis to create tailor-made communications strategies which outline how and in what ways they can deliver on their objectives. This also includes the development of internal communication strategies to help

align the whole organisation around the same vision, values and strategic goals.

Ways of communicating are evolving. Twenty years ago, the vast majority of the general public would obtain information through newspapers or television. Today, social and digital media are dominant and publications are forced to adapt to the demands of the majority. The same goes for national associations. If they continue using the same methods of communication they used even just a decade ago, their intended target group will not hear their message.

The focus of modern communications has moved away from pure reactive media relations towards a more integrated, more proactive strategy. While mailing lists can be beneficial, forward-thinking national associations are using a wide range of channels which are able to get the right message to the appropriate stakeholder in the most efficient way.

The UEFA GROW strategic communications project is still in its infancy; however, it has already given the national associations a clear road map to follow to ensure they stay in touch with the needs of their target audience, and to help them improve their image and communicate more effectively in order to extend the popularity and reach of football. 🌐



It is not only the current stars that an association should focus on in its communications, but the stars of the future too.

# JURY SELECTS RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR 2018/19

The jury for the UEFA Research Grant Programme – an initiative that supports the academic work of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers studying various different aspects of European football – has chosen the research projects that will receive grants for the 2018/19 season, the ninth year of the programme.

**U**EFA-funded research projects are intended to produce findings that the European football community can use to make informed decisions and that UEFA and its member associations can use to improve their activities and projects.

This year, UEFA received 55 proposals for research projects, with those projects being developed for and in conjunction with 26 different member associations – a clear sign of associations’ strong interest in relevant academic research. All 55 proposals made it through to the second assessment stage, and after a comprehensive review, the following seven were chosen by the jury:

**“These research projects will produce useful insights for the supporting member associations.”**

**Michel D’Hooghe**  
Chairman of the jury

**Evaluation Good Hosting – Eine Überprüfung von Umsetzung und Wirkung in der Swiss Football League,** by Alain Brechbühl, University of Bern, Switzerland. *Project supported by the Swiss Football Association.*

**Player transition out of football to protect wellbeing: a career identity study,** by Gavin Breslin, Ulster University, Northern Ireland. *Project supported by the Irish Football Association.*

**Quantification of energy expenditure in elite youth football players: implications**



**for population-specific sports nutrition guidelines**, by James Morton, Liverpool John Moores University, England. *Project supported by the English Football Association.*

**Why do (young) football referees quit officiating? Insights and implications**, by Paul Potrac, Northumbria University, England. *Project supported by the English Football Association.*

**Impact of sleep in young football player's health and sport performance**, by Gil Rodas, Ramon Llull University, Spain. *Project supported by the Royal Spanish Football Federation.*

**Maturity-status 'bio-banding' as a tool for ongoing talent (de)selection of academy soccer players using a multi-disciplinary approach**, by Christopher Towlson, University of Hull, England. *Project supported by the Scottish Football Association.*

**Why do professional men's football clubs invest in women's football? An analysis of the determinants underlying integration of women's football clubs**, by Maurizio Valenti, University of Stirling, Scotland. *Project supported by the Italian Football Association.*

Those seven researchers will spend the next nine months carrying out their research in cooperation with the supporting national associations, before presenting their findings to UEFA next year.

"The jury is very pleased with the research projects it has selected for this new cycle of the programme. That being said, it was hard to choose, given the large number of very high-quality and highly diverse proposals, which reflects UEFA member associations' growing interest in tackling strategic issues in cooperation with academics. The jury is confident that these research projects will produce useful insights for the supporting member associations and many other European football stakeholders," said the chairman of the jury, Michel D'Hooghe.

### Final presentations

The researchers who received grants for the 2017/18 season have now made their final presentations to the jury after carrying out the following research projects:

**Supporting the football global coach through cross-cultural training**, by Mario Borges, London South Bank University,



Tom Webb from Portsmouth University delivers his presentation on his research on the working practices and operational environments of referees.

England. *Project supported by the Portuguese Football Federation.*

**Scheduling of concurrent training preceding acute non-contact injuries in elite European football players**, by Kevin Enright, Liverpool John Moores University, England. *Project supported by the English Football Association.*

**A tale of clubs, leagues and countries: the impact of the Africa Cup of Nations on European professional football**, by Levi Pérez, University of Oviedo, Spain. *Project supported by the Royal Spanish Football Federation.*

**The working practices and operational environments of referees from a transnational comparative perspective**, by Tom Webb, University of Portsmouth, England. *Project supported by the Royal Netherlands Football Association.*

The jury of the UEFA Research Grant Programme comprises five representatives of the European football family and five academics known internationally for their work on sport and European football. This year, the jury welcomed three new members, with Edvinas Eimontas, Nathalie Iannetta Sabattier and Giangiorgio Spiess stepping down and being replaced by Evelina Christillin, Alfred Ludwig, and Hannu Tihinen. 🌐

## UEFA Research Grant Programme jury

### Representatives of the European football community:

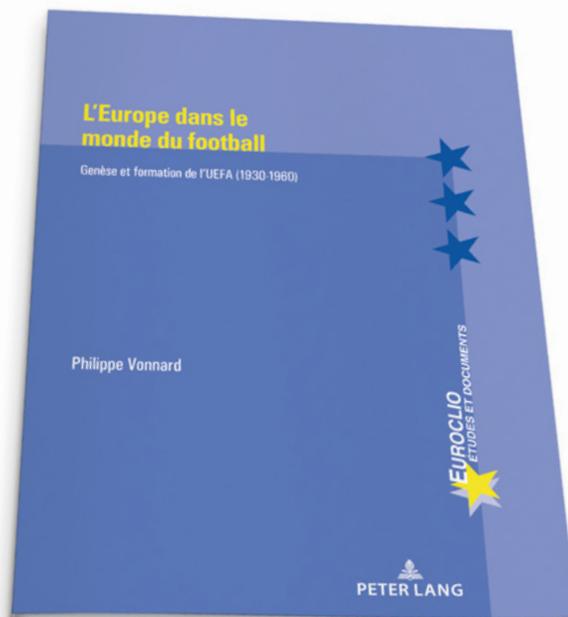
- Dr Michel D'Hooghe (chairman of the UEFA Medical Committee and the UEFA Research Grant Programme jury)
- Evelina Christillin (member of the FIFA Council) – *new*
- Alfred Ludwig (former chief executive of the Austrian Football Association) – *new*
- Ivančica Sudac (head of international affairs and licensing at the Croatian Football Federation)
- Hannu Tihinen (sporting director at the Football Association of Finland and a former international player) – *new*

### University representatives:

- Prof. Susan Bridgewater (University of Liverpool, England)
- Prof. Paul Downward (Loughborough University, England)
- Prof. Jan Ekstrand (former vice-chairman of the UEFA Medical Committee, professor at Linköping University, Sweden)
- Prof. Jürgen Mittag (German Sport University, Cologne, Germany)
- Prof. Fabien Ohi (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)

# WHEN FOOTBALL UNIFIED EUROPE

UEFA's support of football-related academic research has resulted in the publication of a study by Philippe Vonnard, researcher at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, retracing the origins of European football's governing body. Here, he presents his work.



L'Europe dans le monde du football, genèse et formation de l'UEFA (1930–1960), by Philippe Vonnard. Éditions Peter Lang, 2018, Brussels, 416 pages.

**K**yiv, 26 May 2018. Once again, the UEFA Champions League final was watched by hundreds of millions of television viewers all over the world. But what do these football fans actually know about the competition's organiser, and its origins and history? If truth be told, UEFA is an organisation that not even historians have studied in much depth. And yet it has played a major role in the development of a sport that remains popular throughout Europe and that frequently transcends international political discord.

The book *L'Europe dans le monde du football* (Europe in the world of football) examines UEFA's origins in detail. The thousands of documents stored in the UEFA and FIFA archives were analysed and cross-referenced with sources from various national football associations (England, Germany, the former East Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland). The French sports press of the time (*L'Équipe* and *France Football*) was consulted, and interviews were conducted with former UEFA general secretaries Pierre Delaunay, Hans Bangerter and Gerhard Aigner. This wealth of documentation was used to chart the history of European football from the interwar period – when, despite its name, FIFA was Europe's main continental organisation – until the early 1960s, by which time Europe had its own governing body in the shape of UEFA.

The study highlights three important aspects of the organisation's history. First, while the UEFA founders' desire to galvanise European football was nothing new and partly mirrored that of their FIFA predecessors, the creation of UEFA triggered enormous change. In its early

years, the new governing body set about organising European competitions (European Champion Clubs' Cup, International Youth Tournament, European Nations' Cup and European Cup Winners' Cup). The number of national associations involved and the regularity of matches were totally unprecedented compared with previous decades.

Second, in an era when Europeans were divided by the Cold War, UEFA was unusual in that its member associations came from all parts of Europe, in contrast to many other European organisations created around that time. Its leaders therefore had to find ways of dealing with such a political context. Inspired by the methods used by FIFA to address conflict since the interwar period, they also held the belief that football should be played without political constraints, the most utopian of them going so far as to think that the game had the power to maintain, or even create, links between European countries on either side of the political divide (as was the case when Real Madrid CF faced FK Partizan in the first Champion Clubs' Cup).

Third, the study explains the reasons behind UEFA's establishment in the 1950s and reveals the little-known fact that European and South American football officials have enjoyed a close relationship dating back to the interwar period. Although tensions between them have arisen from time to time, the sport's two flagship continents have shared ideas and worked together for many years. The research shows that this dialogue had a direct impact on the creation and chosen structure of UEFA, and even on its activities (the Copa America has existed since 1915, for example, and was a source of inspiration for the Europeans).

This study of the early development of European football therefore shows that links between Europeans have been numerous and frequent for many years. Moreover, UEFA's leaders were at the forefront of European integration from the very outset. Ultimately, the story can only be fully understood in the context of UEFA's interaction with other continents. 🌐

## English language edition coming soon

This historical study was published in French as part of the Euroclio series of books examining the history of European integration. Launched in 1990, the collection is distributed internationally by Peter Lang International Academic Publishers (Brussels office). Even though it already contains over 100 publications, only one of these concerns sport. This book is therefore an important landmark in terms of the recognition of the role played by sport in European integration. An English language version is due to be published soon.

# EUROPEAN FUTSAL'S NEW ERA

Two futsal competitions were launched in the summer: the UEFA Futsal Champions League and UEFA Women's Futsal EURO.

On 5 July draws were made for both the UEFA Futsal Champions League, formerly the UEFA Futsal Cup, and the new UEFA Women's Futsal EURO 2019 – Europe's inaugural official women's futsal championship.

From a first UEFA Futsal Cup in 2001/02 with 27 entrants, the first UEFA Futsal Champions League features 57 clubs from 53 associations. The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, said of the rebranded futsal club competition: "We are convinced that this will raise the competition's profile and increase public awareness of European club futsal."

The format remains the same as that introduced for the last UEFA Futsal Cup in 2017/18 – a preliminary round, a main round split into two paths, an elite round in November and four-team knockout finals in April. While 19 entrants are debutants, many familiar names feature in the field of participants, led by Spain's Inter FS, who last season became only the second club to retain the European title, taking their tally of victories to five, three more than anyone else.

They are joined by two-time winners Barça (the new branding for FC Barcelona's indoor teams) and Kairat Almaty, as well as fellow former champions SL Benfica and TTG-Ugra Yugorsk. Path A of the main round, from where the top three in each four-team group progress, includes matchups such as Barça v Benfica and Kairat against Sporting Clube de Portugal, beaten by Inter in the last two finals. From Path B, only the group winners proceed to the next round.

Before the main round in early October, nine preliminary round groups are played between 28 August and 2 September.

## An expanded competition

The week before that, the preliminary round of the new UEFA Women's Futsal EURO will be played, involving 10 of the inaugural 23 entrants – the teams of most of which have been set up since the new tournament was announced. Appropriately, the first name drawn on 5 July was Northern Ireland, who will be making their futsal national team debut, having never taken part in the men's futsal EURO to date.



Northern Ireland will be one of three group hosts, alongside Lithuania and Moldova, with the winners going through to the main round from 11 to 16 September. The four group winners will progress to the knockout finals in February, hosted by one of the qualifiers.

With so many new teams, the competition is wide open. However, the historically dominant European men's futsal force, Spain, have a team on a 15-match unbeaten run since December 2016. In the last 12 months they have won the strong Victory Day Cup in Moscow and a four-nation tournament on home soil in Guadalajara, key rivals Russia and Portugal among their victims.

These two competitions are not the end of UEFA's futsal innovations. On 1 November the qualifying draw will be made for the inaugural European Under-19 Futsal Championship, set to conclude in September 2019, while the senior Futsal EURO has now expanded from a 12-team finals held every two years to a 16-team tournament held every four years, with the next finals coming up in 2022. 🌐

Fifty-seven clubs have entered the first Futsal Champions League, with 19 debutants among them.

**"We are convinced that this will raise the competition's profile and increase public awareness of European club futsal."**

**Aleksander Čeferin**  
UEFA president

# AMATEUR FOOTBALL ON THE MARCH

“Success is a journey, not a destination.” The quote is attributed to Arthur Ashe. But the comment by the former tennis star could legitimately be applied to the UEFA Regions’ Cup. Without knowing their destination, amateur teams from all over Europe are on the march towards the 11th final tournament.



Who will win the next UEFA Regions’ Cup in 2019, following Zagreb’s victory against the Irish Region 2 Munster/Ulster in 2017?

UEFA

The three preliminary round groups came to a conclusion in late July. Teams from FYR Macedonia, South Wales, and the Buzău region of Romania are now set to join club sides FK Nevėžis of Lithuania and Ironi Tiberias of Israel in the intermediate round in September-October, when 32 of the 39 clubs on the competition’s starting grid will be competing in eight mini-tournaments to decide the finalists. One of them will then be selected to stage the final tournament and, at the moment, the only hint at a possible final destination is that it could be the Czech Republic.

This is because one of the groups has already been completed and it was topped by KFS Hradec Králové, thanks to two wins and a draw without conceding a goal. In fact, it was goal difference that gave the Czech team a narrow edge over the West Region of Hungary in a tough grouping with teams from East Sarajevo and San Marino.

In 2017, the Istanbul (Turkey) and Ingulec (Ukraine) players before their Group A match in the 2017 UEFA Regions’ Cup final tournament.



UEFA

Whichever region hosts the final tournament might well start the ball rolling as one of the favourites, bearing in mind that half of the previous tournaments have ended with the home team lifting the UEFA Regions’ Cup trophy. This trend was started when Veneto became the first champions in 1999 – a feat that they then repeated on Italian soil in 2013. If Hradec Králové were to be chosen as the 2019 hosts, they might dream of emulating the Central Moravia side that emerged triumphant in 2001, though the dream would probably be based on a script slightly kinder to blood pressure and fingernails. On that occasion, the Czech side equalised with a penalty timed at 90+4 and went on to win the penalty shoot-out 4-2.

In fact, four of the finals have gone into extra time and shoot-outs were needed to decide two of them. And the competitive nature of the tournament is reflected by the statistic that none of the finals to date has been decided by a margin of more than one goal. Although Italy, with three wins, and Spain, with two, account for half of the previous winners, Croatia and the Republic of Ireland have dominated the last two competitions. On home soil, the Eastern Region of Ireland lifted the trophy after defeating Zagreb 1-0 in 2015, with the Croatian team achieving a measure of recompense by beating Ireland’s Region 2 in Istanbul to expand the list of winners to seven different national associations. No matter what their destination, the objective is for all 39 amateur teams to thoroughly enjoy the journey. 🏆

# NATIONWIDE UNDER-15 COMPETITION LAUNCHED

Over the last four years, the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) has worked hard to improve its domestic youth competitions. It is hoped this will enhance the quality of national youth teams, as it has been seven years since Romania last qualified for the final round of a UEFA youth competition.

**T**his is obviously a long-term project, but some benefits can already be seen.

Having successfully revamped Romania's national Under-17 and Under-19 championships and renamed them as elite leagues, the FRF recently launched its first nationwide Under-15 elite league. This inaugural competition, which will conclude in summer 2019, is being contested by players born after 31 December 2003.

This project is of vital importance, as until now there has been no national Under-15 championship, but separate competitions held in each of Romania's 41 counties and Bucharest. Those county-level competitions were of a relatively poor standard and did little to foster the development of the country's most talented young players.

The impetus started last year, when the FRF ran an Under-14 tournament for children born in 2004 that identified 153 talented young players. Earlier this summer, those players attended a special training camp, together with the best foreign-based players, with a view to establishing the country's first national Under-15 side. That team will play their first international friendlies in a few months' time.

Those children have a particular need for continuity: international studies indicate that 70% of players give up football and other sports between the ages of 13 and 15, and the new national Under-15 championship seeks to provide that continuity.

This competition, which is open to FRF-affiliated and non-affiliated clubs alike, gives teams the opportunity to pit themselves against the very best opponents in the country. Matches last 70 minutes (35 minutes each way), and the FRF will cover all expenses – accommodation, medical services and refereeing costs – from the quarter-finals onwards.



The first phase of the competition started in mid-August at the level of the 41 counties, plus Bucharest, and will run until 15 October. Between one and eight teams will qualify from each local competition, depending on how many teams take part. Non-qualifying teams will continue the competition at county level.

The second phase, at regional level from 27 October 2018 to 13 April 2019, will comprise 16 groups, with each group being contested by five or six teams. Every team will play every other team twice, home and away, and the 16 group winners will go through to the next phase.

The third phase, from 1 to 5 May 2019, will be the quarter-final stage, with four groups of four teams. Every team will play every other team once in a 'week of football', with a single venue hosting all matches in each group. The top two in each group will proceed to the next phase.

The fourth phase will be the semi-final stage from 14 to 18 June, with two

groups (A and B) of four teams each. As in the quarter-finals, every team will play every other team once at a single venue. And again, the top two in each group will go through.

The fifth phase, on 25 and 26 June, will be a final round at a single venue, with two semi-finals (the winners of Groups A and B against the runners-up in Groups B and A respectively), a third-place play-off and a final.

The competition features special rules to promote fair play, with players being sent to the 'sin bin' for seven minutes if any of the following offences are committed: diving (no matter where on the pitch); verbal or physical dissent towards the referee by a player; verbal or physical dissent towards the referee by a team official (in which case, the head coach will decide which player is sent to the sin bin); and the removal of a player's shirt when celebrating a goal. ⚽

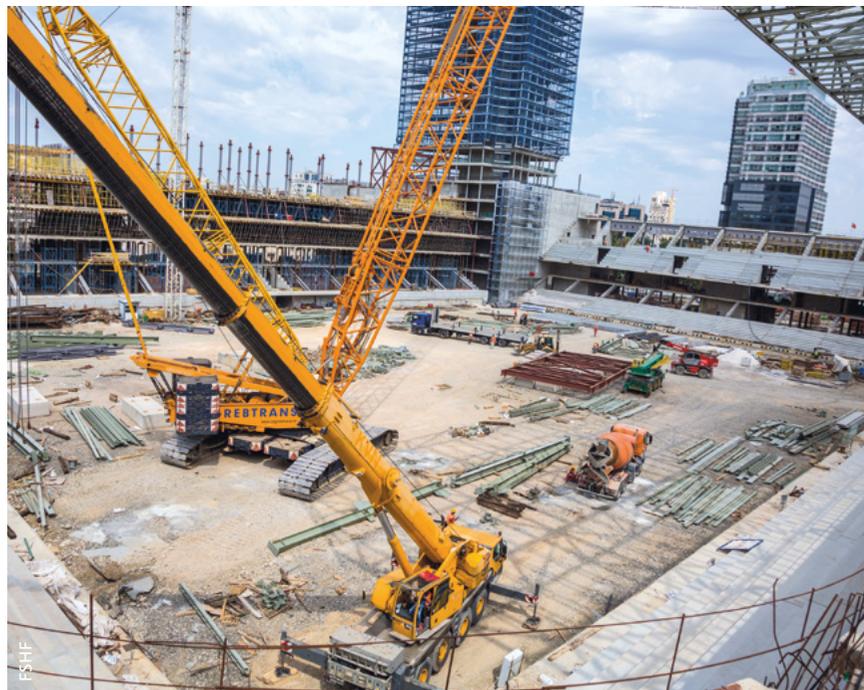
# WORK CONTINUES AT FULL SPEED ON THE NEW NATIONAL ARENA

GERT CARCANI

 Work on Albania's new national stadium has stepped up a gear and will continue apace until the new venue is ready. According to the engineers responsible for the project, about 70% of the work has already been completed. It is expected that work on the drainage and pitch will get under way at the beginning of October, as soon as the stadium roof is in place. At the same time, work will continue non-stop on all other parts of the new stadium.

The Albanian Football Association (FSHF) is keeping a close eye on how the project is progressing, while at the same time working on its new offices and a mini-stadium in another area of Tirana. Like the new national stadium, the association's new offices combined with a mini-stadium and training complex are also due to be ready sometime next year.

In addition to these investments in football infrastructure, the FSHF has also largely funded a football complex in the Ballsh area.



# FOOTBALL MASTERCLASS FOR CHILDREN

NUBAR AGHAZADE

 The IDEA (International Dialogue for Environmental Action) public union, the UN office in Azerbaijan and the Association of Football

Federations of Azerbaijan recently hosted a joint football masterclass for children on Baku's Seaside Boulevard.

This event had four objectives:

to encourage children to adopt a healthy lifestyle; to help them make good use of their spare time; to increase awareness of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals; and to support the country's sports policy.

About 50 children attended the masterclass, which was led by Azerbaijan internationals Kamran Aghayev, Ruslan Gurbanov and Javid Imamverdiyev. The three players helped the children to improve their skills, showing them how to pass and control the ball.

At the end of the event, the children who took part were presented with balls highlighting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



BELARUS

www.bff.by

## UEFA AND BELARUS GRASSROOTS PROJECT

GLEB STAKHOVSKY



UEFA and the Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) have launched a joint project aimed at developing the country's grassroots football activities and increasing participation. The one-year project, which involves nine clubs, is serving as a pilot scheme for a club development project that UEFA hopes will inspire other countries in eastern Europe.

The clubs in four regions of Belarus will be helped to develop grassroots football through education and training, to increase the number of children playing football and further develop the environment for football players. An agreement launching the project was signed at a ceremony in Minsk, on 25 June, involving representatives of UEFA, the BFF and the country's sports ministry, as well as Belarus grassroots

ambassador Alexander Hleb.

Belarus has been selected for the pilot project in view of the next UEFA Grassroots Conference, which will take place in Minsk in 2019. The project in Belarus will improve the quantity and quality of grassroots football, and UEFA has pledged constant support over the year. The BFF is establishing a project menu that includes specialist children's grassroots coach education, and an education programme for club staff and volunteers. In addition, the association will strive to develop its relationships with clubs in the grassroots sector.

Certain targets have been set by UEFA and the BFF as part of the project. These include setting up grassroots leagues, developing club management, and helping clubs by offering education and

pathways for players and coaches. The clubs themselves will be given specific targets: attracting boys and girls to play football and retaining them, establishing grassroots coaching activities, and running social and schools programmes.

The results will be showcased at the UEFA Grassroots Conference and best practice examples will be highlighted that could be replicated in several other eastern European countries.

An evaluation will be made after the conclusion of the pilot programme, and further cooperation will be agreed in consultation with the Belarus ministry of sport and tourism, with a view to supporting the continued improvement of grassroots football and education in Belarus.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

www.nfsbih.ba

## 'CHOICE RATHER THAN COINCIDENCE'

FEDJA KRVAVAC



The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (NSBiH) have signed a memorandum of understanding on the promotion of women's football and gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The signing of the document also marked the start of a campaign entitled 'Choice rather than coincidence' promoting solidarity for

greater equality and equal opportunities for all.

In other news, the federation has continued its programme to improve conditions in the country's premier league stadiums, with the general secretary, Jasmin Baković, signing a contract with the companies that will carry out the work and supply the equipment for the improvement of the reflector lighting. The project, which has been approved by the NSBiH Executive Committee, is scheduled to cover all nine stadiums at which the premier league matches are played. The NSBiH will sign a three-partite contract with each club and its local authority for the work on electrical installations and the procurement and mounting of the floodlight poles in the stadiums. All the work must be completed by November 2019, and from 2020 all premier league matches will have to be played in

stadiums with reflector lighting.

Over on the pitch, a women's football festival was held in Sarajevo. Around 300 girls from 18 clubs showed off their footballing skills. The festival drew a large number of spectators, with the fathers v daughters match a particular attraction. The festival is held within the framework of the development and promotion of women's football.

In Sarajevo, meanwhile, a 'train the trainer' course for stewards was run by the NSBiH with the support of UEFA for 31 participants from the national associations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia.

Finally, the first of the three UEFA Certificate in Football Management (CFM) face-to-face seminars took place in Sarajevo. Besides Bosnia and Herzegovina as the hosts, participants from Croatia, Georgia and Romania completed the course intake.



F. Kravac

## HEROES' WELCOME FOR WORLD CUP FINALISTS

NIKA BAHTIJAREVIĆ



Twenty years after Croatia's bronze medal debut at the World Cup, the national team went one step further this time, reaching the final and bringing home the country's first silver medal.

Under the watchful eye of the head coach, Zlatko Dalić, the Vatreni stormed through the group stage, with the team's 3-0 win over Argentina sure to remain a fond memory for Croatia fans for many years to come. Croatia's round of 16 match against Denmark and quarter-final showdown with Russia left the nation on the edge of their seats – both matches ended in penalty shoot-outs and gave goalkeeper Danijel Subašić a chance to shine, while the winning penalty was scored both times by vice-captain Ivan Rakitić.

When Dalić's squad took on the young and ambitious England in the semi-finals, the Vatreni managed to turn the score in

their favour in extra time and catapult Croatia into their first-ever World Cup final.

Though Croatia played a good game in the final, the team were ultimately kept from the World Cup trophy by a 4-2 defeat against France. "We are sad because of the loss, but we are proud of how we played," said the captain and recipient of the Golden Ball award, Luka Modrić.

The team's momentary sadness was forgotten when they arrived back to a rapturous welcome in Zagreb, where 550,000 fans had gathered to greet the silver medallists. The celebrations continued all around the country.

After the tournament, congratulations were in order — apart from thanking the players, the technical staff, and the delegation, the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) extended its thanks and congratulations to FIFA and the



local organising committee in Russia for staging such an excellent tournament. The HNS also thanked all Croatia fans at home and abroad for their unwavering support, as well as its commercial partners and media representatives for their important contribution.

Although the euphoria of Croatia's silver turn will no doubt last for many months to come, the HNS was quick to get back to business, with the first thing on the agenda being its annual summer camp for Under-15 and Under-16 players. As proved by the fact that all but one of Croatia's silver medallists have passed through the federation's youth team system, world-class teams are formed years before they ever hit the big scene – and with a silver medal alongside the previous bronze one, it is high time for Croatia to start preparing for gold.

## 'THE FRIENDLY GROUP' – A TRIBUTE TO FOOTBALL'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY

MIA KJÆRGAARD



Out on the pitch, it is sometimes hard to tell, but football can be a very friendly sport. The Danish national team took part in this summer's World Cup, where they were drawn in Group C alongside France, Australia and Peru. With the South Americans appearing in the final round of the competition for the first time in 36 years, the Peruvian Football Federation (FPF) wanted everyone to know how happy they were to be back on the greatest stage of all.

The FPF expressed their pride at qualifying for the World Cup by making an emotional video explaining just what football means to the passionate people of Peru. They then sent that video directly to

the Danish national team via Twitter, together with a message in Danish saying how much they were looking forward to the game between the two countries on 16 June – the opening match of the tournament for both teams.

After seeing that beautiful video, the Danish Football Association was keen to return the gesture by producing a video of its own. We teamed up with a number of footballing icons past and present, telling our Peruvian counterparts that even a small country can do great things. We decided that our video also needed to pay tribute to football's great sense of community, which the Peruvians had managed to capture so beautifully.

So, we rewrote the Danish national anthem, so that, instead of praising Denmark's hills, shorelines and beech trees, the song now focused on the beauty of the Andes, the shores of the Pacific and the history of the Incas, and we had it performed by the Danish national girls' choir. The video went viral, with more than 10,000 'likes' on Twitter alone and more than 4,500 retweets.

The teams' correspondence via Twitter sparked the hashtag #TheFriendlyGroup, followed by a similar exchange of messages between France and Australia – further evidence that football is a friendly game, with plenty of passion both on and off the pitch.

ENGLAND

www.thefa.com

## INTRODUCING THE NEW ELITE COACH MENTEES

EMILY LILES



The FA recently celebrated the graduation of Sarah Lowden, Ryan Semple, Katie Quinlan and Rajab Noor, its second set of FA elite coach menteeship graduates at a ceremony at St George's Park.

Now it is the turn of four new aspirational young coaches to embark on an exciting new chapter in their journeys after being confirmed as The FA's newest elite coach mentees. Carly Davies, David Powderly, Kurt Husnu and Stacey Miles will spend the next 12 months navigating their way through a bespoke programme of England youth team camps and county FA initiatives, supporting both the youth and national coach developer teams, as well as attending UEFA study visits and League

Managers Association masterclass events. Their programmes have been carefully constructed to allow for a year's worth of meaningful work experience across a broad range of opportunities, equipping them with new skills and qualities to support the next moves in their coaching careers.

When asked to outline what she is most looking forward to in the programme, former Aston Villa Ladies forward Davies cited "the opportunity to work across various areas of the elite environment provides an insight into areas I might not otherwise gain experience in."

For David Powderly, an academy coach at Charlton Athletic, the access to elite coaches, teams and environments will be

invaluable. He said: "Naturally, as a coach it will be exciting to work with coaches on the grass with the various age group national teams."

Meanwhile, Husnu believes the programme will help his development and desire to secure a full-time position. He said: "This will help turn me into an individual who is ready to work in an elite environment in a full-time role."

Last but certainly not least, FA skills coach Miles cannot wait to get started and kick-start a career in football. She said: "I am hoping to become a better coach by the end of the programme through experiences and influences along the way. I have a huge passion for a career within football and in particular coaching."

ESTONIA

www.jalgpall.ee

## FOOTBALL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIETY

MAARJA SAULEP



Before each match in the 2018 World Cup, the Estonian public broadcaster showed video clips highlighting the ties between football, history and culture in the countries of the participating teams. Estonian football journalist Indrek Schwede was the author and presenter of the clips.

During the three-minute clips Schwede, who is also chief editor of Estonia's largest football magazine, Jalka, explored the historical backgrounds of each country and the influences that different events and people have exerted on the development of football in those countries.

For example, in the case of Australia, Schwede talked about how the distance from the 'motherland' and the desire to differ from the United Kingdom had hindered football's development. He also talked about how European refugees who arrived in Australia after the second world war had raised the popularity of

the sport in the country. In other examples, Schwede discussed how football's image in England changed after Paul Gascoigne's tears in the 1990 World Cup semi-final; how Maradona and Messi shaped the game in Argentina; how football replaced rowing as the most popular sport in Rio de Janeiro, and how football captured people's hearts in Germany.

The clips form the basis of a lecture series that Schwede gave at the

University of Tartu.

"A large amount of information stemmed from different football literature written in English. A lot of books describe football's relationship with the social sphere, economy, politics and culture in general," Schwede said about the clips. "I read a lot of scientific articles. A good example is the journal Soccer and Society." He explained that football has become an important field of study because "in many parts of the world, football has become an important part of society and has extensively influenced different areas".

Estonia's leading football journalist is currently working on his doctoral thesis on the subject of the marginalisation of football in Estonia after the Second World War and during the Soviet occupation. The thesis touches on the reasons why the once-popular game faded and got overshadowed by individual sports.



## CONSTRUCTION OF 20,000-SEATER ARENA STARTS IN BATUMI

TATA BURDULI



Georgia's most football-mad city will have a brand-new 20,000-seater arena in 2020.

The new stadium will fully comply with

UEFA standards and be able to host international matches both at club and national team levels.

The stadium will be located in central

Batumi. Its opening will be a historic event for the city, which has been without a football arena since the old seaside stadium was demolished in 2006.

Highlighting the significance of the project, the president of the Georgian Football Federation, Levan Kobiashvili, said: "The Batumi arena project, for its scale alone, is highly important for the city and its sporting potential. Its construction is a historic event that has long been awaited by everyone in Batumi, and every football fan in the country."

Batumi will become the fifth city in Georgia (after Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Gori and Zestaponi) to have a stadium suitable to host international football matches.



## REMEMBERING ISTVÁN TÓTH POTYA

MÁRTON DINNYÉS



Ferencváros and the Association of Jewish Communities in Hungary (Mazsihisz) have commemorated István Tóth Potya, the outstanding former footballer and first professional head coach of the country's most successful football club, who went on to save hundreds of Jews from certain death in the Second World War before his own untimely passing in 1945.

The ceremony, which was attended by the Ferencváros club president, Gábor Kubatov, was held at the club's museum at the Groupama Arena before Ferencváros's UEFA Europa League first qualifying round first-leg match against Maccabi Tel Aviv of Israel. Csaba Tobak, the museum's director, said that the club "always looks forward to taking good care of the past. Its aim is to help young people be inspired not only by the likes of [talismatican FTC forward] Daniel Böde but also by men such as István Tóth Potya". He went on to explain how the connection with Tóth Potya's grandson István Tóth had come



about and how the pre-Second World War sportsman's personal memorabilia, including his training diaries, would now be displayed in the club's museum.

After those attending the commemoration had watched a short film on the life of Tóth Potya, András Heisler, president of Mazsihisz, spoke about the need for trust in the world, before presenting a special T-shirt with a portrait

of the famous coach emblazoned on the chest and the words Our Hero, which was then sported by the children who accompanied the players onto the pitch for the Europa League match that same evening.

This tribute was also part of the recently launched campaigns of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) and Chelsea FC to tackle anti-Semitism.

## STRATEGIES, INVESTMENTS AND PROJECTS

DIEGO ANTENZIO

 2017 was a year of structural consolidation for the Italian Football Association (FIGC), marked by the rapid acceleration of development programmes in key strategic sectors. The association's management model identifies the five main categories of assets and resources that underpin its operations, namely economic capital, productive assets and natural capital, human capital, intellectual and

organisational capital, and social and relationship capital. As the recently published 2017 management report confirms, on-field activities remain at the heart of the association's broader strategy. The report reveals that, despite the men's national team missing out on qualification for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, the FIGC has significantly ramped up its operations in the school, youth and technical sectors, and has continued to

invest heavily in the national youth set-up, both in terms of funding and resources. As a result, all its national men's and women's youth teams qualified for their respective European Championships.

First issued in 2015, the annual FIGC management report is designed to help monitor and evaluate management and administrative performance, and measure outcomes against the targets and strategic objectives set out by the association's governing structures. It draws information from quarterly reports outlining the progress made in relevant sectors, which are produced by each of the association's 17 operational divisions. The management report is part of a wider governance policy based on ongoing dialogue between operational areas and full transparency for all stakeholders across all the FIGC's operations. As part of this commitment, all key publications relating to the association's activities and governance are available – in Italian and English – in the 'Transparency' section of the FIGC website.



## NEW IDENTITY FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM

TOMS ĀRMANIS

 Latvia's men's senior national team has a new brand identity. From now on, the team will represent their country under the slogan "#11wolves", and instead of wearing the logo of the Latvian Football Federation (LFF) on their shirts, they will sport a new emblem combining elements of the country's flag, a shield and a football, symbolising a fighting spirit, unity and pride. The team will also have a second logo associated with it, featuring the image of a wolf, which is already the team's mascot, that will be used to unite supporters around the team through various public events and merchandising.

"We – the Latvian Football Federation – want to become more modern, attractive and dynamic. Everyone involved in Latvian football wants to achieve something great, and this change fits in with our wish to motivate our fans, players and supporters even more. Welcome to the pack, everyone!" said Kaspars Gorkšs, president of the LFF.

"The Latvian national team is starting to write a new story, with new values. Its new visual identity is something that will allow us to make our mark on the map of European football and will add to the strategical changes we are implementing as a federation. But that is only half the story. Our supporters will finally also have



their own symbol to identify with the team – a wolf. The wolf is a legendary animal in Latvian heritage and this new symbol will help to unite our national team and those willing to enter the pack on and off the pitch," added Edgars Pukinskis, the federation's general secretary.

MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

## LIGHTS, ACTION!

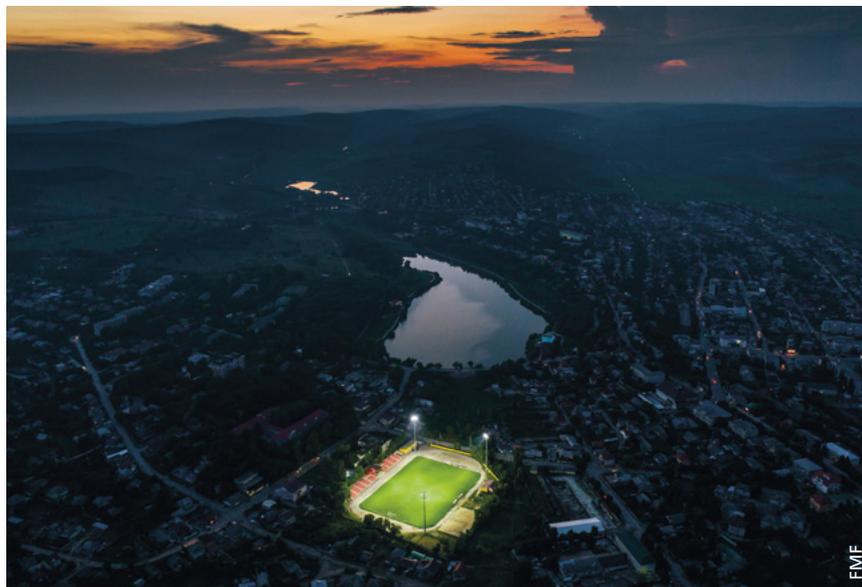
PRESS OFFICE



The lights are gradually being turned on at Moldova's stadiums. A project by the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) with UEFA support has installed floodlighting at several venues in various parts of the country.

The equipment was put into operation in Hîncești and Orhei, two cities in the centre of the country, in May and June, and another set is due to be switched on soon in the country's 'northern capital', Balti.

This means that over 75% of Moldova's top-division matches can now be played under floodlights, a great advantage for the players, who will no longer need play in the heat of the day, but especially for the supporters, who will be able to attend matches scheduled at more convenient times.



"Great things can be achieved in Moldova when all parties pursue a common goal. This rather costly project was launched a year ago and was only achievable thanks to support from UEFA," said Pavel Cebanu,

the president of the FMF.

The association is determined to continue rolling out lighting equipment at other stadiums and give a boost to Moldovan football overall.

NORTHERN IRELAND

www.irishfa.com

## CHARITY GOLF DAY WITH FOOTBALLERS PAST AND PRESENT

NIGEL TILSON



The Irish FA Foundation is staging its first charity golf day in September to raise funds for its disability football programmes in Northern Ireland.

The picturesque Royal Belfast Golf Club on the shores of Belfast Lough will host the fundraiser. The event will be played in the four-ball format with each team featuring either a current senior men's

international or a Northern Ireland legend. The national team manager, Michael O'Neill, will be among those playing 18 holes at the Hollywood course.

Former internationals David Healy, Sammy Clingan, John O'Neill and Stephen Penney have already signed up for the competition alongside Linfield and Northern Ireland goalkeeper Roy Carroll.

"This is the first time we've organised a charity golf day," says Andrea Milligan, fundraising officer with the charity foundation of the Irish FA, "and we are delighted Michael O'Neill, current players and Northern Ireland legends are supporting it. We are confident it will be a great event and hope it will raise plenty of money for our various disability football programmes, including our cerebral palsy, deaf football and powerchair teams."



MALTA

www.mfa.com.mt

## NEW ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES ANNOUNCED

KEVIN AZZOPARDI



The Malta Football Association (MFA) is taking its support for clubs and national teams to the next level with the introduction of two new schemes. Addressing the 2018 annual general meeting, held in Floriana on 21 July, Norman Darmanin Demajo, the Malta FA president, announced the new assistance programmes – one intended to encourage clubs to include more young Maltese players, and the other to increase the clubs' gate receipts.

Starting from the 2018/19 season, clubs will receive a solidarity payment for every young player under 21 who they field in a

competitive match.

"From next season, we will introduce a new scheme aimed at promoting and rewarding those clubs that make use of players aged under 21 who are eligible for our national teams," the MFA president told the meeting.

The 53 clubs across the four divisions will benefit from this scheme, which is primarily aimed at aiding the development of the country's up-and-coming players.

Under the other scheme, called the Guaranteed Gate Income Scheme, the Malta FA will pay a set amount to clubs

depending on their division, irrespective of the attendance figures for their respective matches.

This initiative, which represents a significant increase in the level of financial assistance to Maltese clubs, will give the Malta FA more leeway when it comes to offering incentives to entice more fans to follow domestic football.

The other main items on the agenda of the 2018 AGM were the presentation of the administrative report by the general secretary, Angelo Chetcuti, and the presentation of the financial report by Ivan Mizzi, the association's treasurer.

PORTUGAL

www.fpf.pt

## 'FOOTBALL FOR EVERYONE' WINNERS ANNOUNCED

MATILDE DIAS



TIFA (Algarve international adapted football tournament), Special Ones and Bola Colorida are the three outstanding projects that convinced the expert jury for the Portuguese Football Federation's Football for Everyone prize. Launched at the beginning of the year with the support of UEFA's HatTrick programme, the prize was established to promote the fight against discrimination and encourage the social inclusion of all children, youth and adults. By the application deadline of 30 April, the Portuguese Football Federation had received more than 50 applications.

First place went to TIFA, a non-profit organisation that forms part of APEXA, the support association for exceptional people in the Algarve. TIFA's aim is to promote inclusion and equal opportunities for disabled people through football. It organises the following four events: an international adapted football tournament in Albufeira; a seminar on Inclusion For Everyone; a fair on Health and Adapted

Sport; and a Football For Everyone solidarity match.

Special Ones was awarded second place. This project works directly with youngsters from deprived socio-economic environments. During a 'practice week', different activities let the participants experience the world of football: workshops on motivation, fair play and healthy eating, among others. The activities involve volunteers from the Erasmus+ programme.

Third place was awarded to the Bola Colorida project, a community intervention initiative promoted by the Associação Nacional de Futebol de Rua (national street football association), in close cooperation with Academia Cidadã, which uses street football to promote the social inclusion of vulnerable children and young people aged between 6 and 30 through the empowerment of socially deprived groups and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Bola Colorida will develop street football pilot experiments



in the neighbourhoods of Horta Nova in Carnide and Quinta do Cabrinha in Alcântara, both in Lisbon.

The expert jury that assessed all the Football For Everyone applications was multidisciplinary and composed of recognised and, most importantly, experienced and qualified members, including the administrator of the Impresa Media Group and president of SIC Esperança, Mercedes Balsemão, the president of the Portuguese Red Cross, Francisco George, goodwill ambassador of the United Nations Population Fund and the founder of Corações Com Coroa (Hearts with Crowns), Catarina Furtado, the Portuguese Football Federation's vice-president, Humberto Coelho, and its director for women's football, Mónica Jorge.

SCOTLAND

www.scottishfa.co.uk

## 16-YEAR-OLD GILMOUR SHINES IN TOULON

MICHAEL LAMONT



Scottish FA JD Performance School graduate Billy Gilmour captained Scotland's Under-21s at the Toulon Tournament in France in the summer and was named 'Revelation of the Tournament'.

The Chelsea midfielder joined fellow 16-year-old Hearts defender Chris Hamilton in being fast-tracked from Scotland's Under-17s to take part in the competition, where Scotland reached the semi-finals for the second year in a row.

During the tournament, Gilmour became the youngest scorer in Scotland's history at Under-21 level and the team also defeated France in what was a momentous victory against the hosts.

Both Gilmour and Hamilton are graduates of the elite performance schools, a Scottish FA initiative delivering an extensive and challenging programme for the country's most talented young footballers at seven schools.

Michael Johnston, Glenn Middleton and Fraser Hornby's development was also accelerated by being promoted from the Under-19s, with Johnston being named the third best player at the Toulon Tournament.

The Scottish FA's performance director, Malky Mackay, said: "The Scottish FA coaches possess a strong belief in fast-tracking our best young players, with the ultimate aim of producing a conveyor belt of talent for our national

Billy Gilmour



Scottish FA

team. In the last year we have fast-tracked a number of youngsters who have gone on to excel at a high level, and the Toulon Tournament acted as another stage to showcase our best young talent against some of the most highly rated players in the world. It's important for our players to experience different playing styles, systems and cultures, which they did in Toulon, allowing us to continue to excel against the best."

SLOVAKIA

www.futbalsfz.sk

## ALL CHANGE AT YOUTH LEVEL

PETER SURIN



Since 1 July, all of Slovakia's national youth teams – both male and female – have had new coaches, with Samuel Slovák (Under-16s and Under-17s) having decided not to continue as coach and Milan Malatinský (Under-18s and Under-19s) having passed away in tragic circumstances in May.

Slovák, who also works for the Slovak Football Association (SFZ) as its main youth coordinator, decided to step down from his coaching role owing to the commitments of his primary role at the national association.

Moreover, back in March, the SFZ's contract with Pavel Hapal, the successful coach of the national Under-21 side, was terminated by mutual consent, with Hapal being appointed head coach of Czech giants AC Sparta Praha.

Adrián Guľa, formerly the successful head coach of MŠK Žilina, has taken over from Hapal as coach of the Under-21s,



while Albert Rusnák has taken charge of the Under-18s and Under-19s. Marek Bažík has been appointed head coach of the Under 17s, and Branislav Fodrek has taken charge of the Under-16s.

Meanwhile, Jozef Jelšic has been appointed head coach of the women's Under-15s, Under-17s and Under-19s, with Miroslav Hýll overseeing the goalkeepers in those teams. All of these men belong to a new generation of coaches, applying modern philosophies and methods to their daily work. All of them have played for Slovakia at youth level, with Fodrek and Hýll having also represented their

country at senior level. "We wanted a coaching team that would get on really well with each other and would have very similar views regarding football," said Karol Belaník, SFZ vice president with responsibility for national teams.

"We hope that all of these new coaches will establish direct lines of communication with clubs and create a positive environment with a strong work ethic. We want to establish a uniform playing style across all youth teams, so that these teams are closely linked and players can move seamlessly from one to another."

SWITZERLAND

www.football.ch

## FOUR SUBSTITUTIONS NOW PERMITTED IN CHALLENGE LEAGUE AND ERSTE LIGA

PIERRE BENOIT



The Erste Liga, the highest echelon of Swiss grassroots football, linking the Swiss Football League and the amateur league, is responsible for the 16-club third tier

of competitive football in Switzerland (Promotion League), as well as the fourth tier (1. Liga), in which 42 clubs are divided into three groups.

All 58 Erste Liga clubs, which include

the country's ten best Under-21 teams, recently met at the league's annual administrative seminar in Berne. This event enables the Promotion League clubs and the Erste Liga clubs to make preparations for the new season and is used to present future developments, explain rule changes and go through all relevant issues for the coming season.

One key change being introduced this season allows each team to make four substitutions in all Erste Liga (championship, cup qualifiers, finals and play-offs) and Challenge League matches. All Promotion League matches are also being broadcast live on the website and on mycujoo.tv, while the match centre allows fans to follow all Erste Liga and Promotion League matches on their mobile phone, tablet or computer.

If the rising number of clicks is anything to go by, the Erste Liga is fast becoming increasingly popular with spectators, fans and sponsors alike.



TURKEY

www.tff.org

## 2018/19 TURKISH SUPER LEAGUE NAMED AFTER LEFTER KÜÇÜKANDONYADIS

EGE ERSÖZ



The 2018/19 'Lefter Küçükandonyadis' Turkish super league season kicked off on 10 August. At the monthly board meeting in July, the Turkish Football Federation decided to name the season in memory of Lefter Küçükandonyadis, one of Turkey's greatest footballers, who died in January 2012.

Küçükandonyadis made 50 appearances and scored 21 goals for his country. He played for Turkey in the 1954 World Cup, scoring two goals. He captained the national team nine times as



well. Later, he was the first player to be awarded the 'gold medal of honour' of the Turkish Football Federation. His statue stands in Kadıköy Kuşdili park opposite Fenerbahçe's stadium.

Küçükandonyadis was born in Büyükada near Istanbul on 25 December 1925. He started playing football at Taksimspor and moved to Fenerbahçe in 1947, where he played for four years before joining Italian club ACF Fiorentina for the 1951/52 season. After one season in Italy, he went to OGC Nice in France, returning to Fenerbahçe at the

end of the 1953/54 season and playing there for more than ten years. He ended his professional football career at AEK Athens in 1964, by which time he had scored a grand total of 843 goals in his career.

After retiring as a player, Küçükandonyadis went on to coach several clubs.

Since 2014/15, the Turkish Football Federation has named its super league seasons in memory of illustrious figures in Turkish football, with Süleyman Seba, Hasan Doğan, Turgay Şeren and İlhan Cavcav coming before Lefter Küçükandonyadis.

## BIRTHDAYS

### September

**Gerhard Aigner** (Germany, 1 September)  
**José Guilherme Aguiar**  
 (Portugal, 1 September)  
**Manuel Díaz Vega** (Spain, 1 September)  
**João Morais** (Portugal, 1 September)  
**Alain Giresse** (France, 2 September)  
**Savo Milošević** (Serbia, 2 September)  
**Marco Brunelli** (Italy, 2 September)  
**Gérard Houllier** (France, 3 September)  
**Rudolphe Mannaerts** (Belgium, 3 September)  
**David Elleray** (England, 3 September)  
**Bartłomiej Zalewski** (Poland, 3 September)  
**Grigoriy Surkis** (Ukraine, 4 September)  
**Hendrik Grosse-Lefert**  
 (Germany, 4 September)  
**Barry Taylor** (England, 5 September)  
**Eija Vähälä** (Finland, 6 September)  
**Bernd Stöber** (Germany, 6 September)  
**Shmuel Shteif** (Israel, 6 September)  
**György Mezey** (Hungary, 7 September)  
**Antonio Laranjo**  
 (Portugal, 7 September) **60th**  
**Werner Helsen** (Belgium, 7 September)  
**Vignir Már Thormóðsson**  
 (Iceland, 7 September)  
**Adrian Titcombe** (England, 8 September)  
**Kostadin Gerginov** (Bulgaria, 9 September)  
**Geir Thorsteinnsson** (Iceland, 9 September)  
**Ilonka Milanova Djaleva**  
 (Bulgaria, 9 September) **50th**  
**Friedrich Curtius** (Germany, 9 September)  
**Aki Riihilahti** (Finland, 9 September)  
**Charles Robba** (Gibraltar, 10 September)  
**Cengiz Zülfikaroğlu** (Turkey, 10 September)  
**Ioannis Tschilididis**  
 (Greece, 11 September) **50th**  
**Katarzyna Wierzbowska**  
 (Poland, 11 September)  
**Tomas Karpavičius** (Lithuania, 11 September)  
**Talal Darawshi** (Israel, 12 September)  
**Tanya Gravina** (Malta, 12 September)  
**Stanisław Speczik** (Poland, 13 September)  
**Lennart Schafroth** (Sweden, 13 September)  
**Jon Skjervold** (Norway, 13 September)  
**Lennart Vestervall** (Sweden, 13 September)  
**Ingrid Jonsson** (Sweden, 13 September)  
**Philippe Prudhon** (France, 13 September)  
**Ivan Gazidis** (England, 13 September)  
**Miguel Liétard Fernández-Palacios**  
 (Spain, 13 September)  
**Javid Garayev** (Azerbaijan, 14 September)  
**Kim Robin Haugen** (Norway, 14 September)  
**Adam Giersz** (Poland, 15 September)  
**Eugeniusz Nowak** (Poland, 15 September)  
**Dejan Savičević** (Montenegro, 15 September)  
**Sokol Jareci** (Albania, 15 September)  
**Antonis Petrou** (Cyprus, 16 September)  
**Kelly Simmons** (England, 16 September) **50th**

**Marco Borg** (Malta, 16 September)  
**Antero Silva Resende**  
 (Portugal, 18 September)  
**Şenes Erzik** (Turkey, 18 September)  
**Roberto Rosetti** (Italy, 18 September)  
**Miroslava Migalova** (Slovakia, 18 September)  
**Marija Anđelković** (Serbia, 18 September)  
**Reinhard Grindel** (Germany, 19 September)  
**John Fleming** (Scotland, 20 September)  
**Paul Lyon** (Gibraltar, 20 September) **60th**  
**Miloš Marković** (Serbia, 20 September)  
**Helena Herrero González**  
 (Spain, 21 September) **60th**  
**Viktor Paradnikov**  
 (Ukraine, 21 September) **60th**  
**Nenad Dikić** (Serbia, 21 September)  
**Stefan Weber** (Germany, 21 September)  
**Vladislav Khodееv** (Russia, 21 September)  
**Luc Wilmes** (Luxembourg, 21 September) **50th**  
**Nail Izmaylov** (Russia, 21 September)  
**Cornelis de Bruin** (Netherlands, 22 September)  
**Kairat Boranbayev**  
 (Kazakhstan, 22 September)  
**Goetz Eilers** (Germany, 23 September)  
**Vlado Svilokos** (Croatia, 23 September)  
**Andreu Subies i Forcada**  
 (Spain, 23 September)  
**Giangiorgio Spiess**  
 (Switzerland, 24 September)  
**Eugen Strigel** (Germany, 24 September)  
**Ionel Piscanu** (Romania, 24 September)  
**Matteo Framaglia** (Italy, 24 September)  
**Magdalena Urbanska** (Poland, 24 September)  
**Dr Mogens Kreutzfeldt**  
 (Denmark, 25 September)  
**Paul Krähnenbühl** (Switzerland, 25 September)  
**Karl-Heinz Rummenigge**  
 (Germany, 25 September)  
**Christine Frai** (Germany, 25 September)  
**Rotem Kamer** (Israel, 25 September)  
**Ayşe Idil Cem** (Turkey, 25 September)  
**Stephen Lodge** (England, 26 September)  
**Camelia Nicolae** (Romania, 26 September)  
**Dzmitry Kryshchanovich**  
 (Belarus, 26 September)  
**Kirsi Heikkinen** (Finland, 26 September) **40th**  
**Jens Kleinfeld** (Germany, 27 September)  
**Michael van Praag**  
 (Netherlands, 28 September)  
**Karel Bohunek**  
 (Czech Republic, 28 September)  
**Zoltán Drucskó** (Hungary, 28 September)  
**Cristian Vornicu** (Romania, 29 September)  
**Dariusz Paweł Dziekanowski**  
 (Poland, 30 September)  
**Cristina Daniela Uluc**  
 (Romania, 30 September) **40th**

### October

**Håkan Sjöstrand** (Sweden, 1 October)  
**Sergejus Slyva** (Lithuania, 1 October)  
**Agnieszka Prachniak**  
 (Poland, 1 October) **30th**  
**Levent Biçakçı** (Turkey, 2 October)  
**Andrzej Wach** (Poland, 2 October)  
**Lutz Michael Fröhlich** (Germany, 2 October)  
**Léon Schelings** (Belgium, 3 October)  
**Victor van Helvoirt**  
 (Netherlands, 3 October)  
**Wilfried Heitmann** (Germany, 4 October)  
**Khennet Tallinger** (Sweden, 4 October)  
**Silvo Borošak** (Slovenia, 4 October)  
**Márton Vági** (Hungary, 4 October)  
**Frank Coulston** (Scotland, 5 October)  
**Terje Hauge** (Norway, 5 October)  
**Yves Leterme** (Belgium, 6 October)  
**Peter Sippel** (Germany, 6 October)  
**Francesca Sanzone** (Italy, 6 October) **40th**  
**Iveta Stoyanova Bankova**  
 (Bulgaria, 6 October)  
**Samantha Lovše** (Slovenia, 6 October)  
**Armand Duka** (Albania, 7 October)  
**Jari Maisonlahti** (Finland, 7 October)  
**Andrii Pavelko** (Ukraine, 7 October)  
**Draženko Kovačić** (Croatia, 8 October)  
**Pierre Delaunay** (France, 9 October)  
**Sergey Zuev** (Russia, 9 October)  
**James Buckle** (England, 9 October)  
**Ellert Schram** (Iceland, 10 October)  
**Laurent Duhamel** (France, 10 October) **50th**  
**Alin Cioban** (Romania, 10 October)  
**Christos Christou** (Chypre, 10 October)  
**Naira Abramyan** (Armenia, 10 October)  
**Joan Gaspart Solves** (Spain, 11 October)  
**Dimitar Zisovski**  
 (FYR Macedonia, 11 October)  
**Yuriy Barbash** (Ukraine, 11 October)  
**Bo Karlsson** (Sweden, 12 October)  
**Anna De Toni** (Italy, 12 October)  
**Pedro Tomás** (Spain, 13 October)  
**Aleksander Čeperin** (Slovenia, 13 October)  
**Dušan Krčňák** (Slovakia, 14 October)  
**Tom van der Hulst** (Netherlands, 15 October)  
**Michel Piraux** (Belgium, 15 October)  
**Wendy Toms** (England, 16 October)  
**Konrad Plautz** (Austria, 16 October)  
**John Delaney**  
 (Republic of Ireland, 16 October)  
**Gian Luca Angelini** (San Marino, 16 October)  
**JeanMarie Philips** (Belgium, 17 October)  
**Frans Hoek** (Netherlands, 17 October)  
**Adonis Procopiou** (Cyprus, 17 October)  
**Pedro López Jiménez** (Spain, 18 October)  
**Petros Mavroidis** (Greece, 19 October)  
**Aivar Pohlak** (Estonia, 19 October)  
**Miljenko Sakoman** (Croatia, 19 October)  
**Paul Philipp** (Luxembourg, 21 October)  
**Robert Agnarsson** (Iceland, 21 October)  
**Mircea Sandu** (Romania, 22 October)

**John Taylor** (Scotland, 22 October)  
**Ariel Kenneth Scheiman** (Israel, 22 October)  
**Fridin Ziskason** (Faroe Islands, 22 October)  
**Peter Dedik** (Slovakia, 22 October)  
**Jan Huijbregts** (Netherlands, 23 October)  
**Michel Vautrot** (France, 23 October)  
**Dragutin Karlo Poljak** (Croatia, 23 October)  
**Elmir Pilav**  
 (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 23 October)  
**Antonin Herzog** (Czech Republic, 24 October)  
**Edvin Libohova** (Albania, 24 October) **60th**  
**Elvedin Begić**  
 (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 24 October)  
**Roy Cathcart** (Northern Ireland, 26 October)  
**Markku Lehtola** (Finland, 26 October)  
**Hugh Dallas** (Scotland, 26 October)  
**Perry Gautier** (Belgium, 26 October)  
**Cristian Chivu** (Romania, 26 October)  
**Gerard Perry** (Republic of Ireland, 27 October)  
**Greg Clarke** (England, 27 October)  
**Jürgen Paepke** (Germany, 28 October)  
**Rui Cacador** (Portugal, 29 October)  
**George Fantaros** (Cyprus, 29 October)  
**Maria Persson** (Sweden, 29 October) **50th**  
**Silvia Tea Spinelli** (Italy, 29 October)  
**José Da Cunha Rodrigues**  
 (Portugal, 30 October)  
**Tim Meyer** (Germany, 30 October)  
**Alexander Alaev** (Russia, 30 October)  
**Alan McRae** (Scotland, 31 October) **70th**  
**Kurt Zuppinger** (Switzerland, 31 October)  
**José Luis Astiazarán Iriondo**  
 (Spain, 31 October)  
**Fredy Fautrel** (France, 31 October)

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### September meetings

**4 September, Nyon**  
 Elite Club Coaches Forum  
**4 September, Nyon**  
 UEFA Youth League – domestic champions path:  
 first and second round draws  
**7 September, Nyon**  
 European qualifying competition for the Women's  
 World Cup: play-off draw  
**26 September, Nyon**  
 Finance Committee  
**27 September, Nyon**  
 Executive Committee

### October meetings

**1 October, Nyon**  
 UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 32  
 draw  
**11 October, Nyon**  
 Governance and Compliance Committee  
**12 October, Nyon**  
 UEFA Futsal Champions League: elite round draw  
**17 October, Nyon**  
 Medical Committee

**19 October, Nyon**  
 European Under-21 Championship: play-off draw  
**29 October, Nyon**  
 Women's Football Committee

### September competitions

**5–11 September**  
 European Under-21 Championship: qualifying  
 matches  
**6–8 September**  
 UEFA Nations League: matchday 1  
**9–11 September**  
 UEFA Nations League: matchday 2  
**11–16 September**  
 European Women's Futsal Championship:  
 main round  
**12/13 September**  
 UEFA Women's Champions League:  
 round of 32 (first legs)  
**18/19 September**  
 UEFA Champions League: group matches  
 (matchday 1)  
 UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions League path:  
 group matches (matchday 1)  
**20 September**  
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 1)  
**26/27 September**  
 UEFA Women's Champions League:  
 round of 32 (return legs)

### October competitions

**2/3 October**  
 UEFA Champions League: group matches  
 (matchday 2)  
 UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions League path:  
 group matches (matchday 2)  
**2–7 October**  
 UEFA Futsal Champions League: main round  
**3 October**  
 UEFA Youth League – domestic champions path:  
 first round (first legs)  
**4 October**  
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 2)  
**4–10 October**  
 Women's World Cup: play-offs  
**10–16 October**  
 European Under-21 Championship: qualifying  
 matches  
**11–13 October**  
 UEFA Nations League: matchday 3  
**14–16 October**  
 UEFA Nations League: matchday 4  
**17/18 October and 31 October – 1 November**  
 UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 32  
**23/24 October**  
 UEFA Champions League: group matches  
 (matchday 3)  
 UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions League path:  
 group matches (matchday 3)  
**24 October**  
 UEFA Youth League – domestic champions path:  
 first round (return legs)  
**25 October**  
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 3)

## NOTICES

- Pierluigi Collina has stepped down from his position as UEFA's chief refereeing officer. He has been replaced by fellow Italian Roberto Rosetti, who has also taken over as chairman of the UEFA Referees Committee.
- On 13 August, the UEFA Foundation for Children launched a new call for projects. Applicants have until 13 September to submit details of their projects. All the necessary information and selection criteria are available on [www.uefafoundation.org](http://www.uefafoundation.org).
- On 6 July, Agim Ademi was elected president of the Football Federation of Kosovo. He succeeds Fadil Vokrri, who died in June.
- The football associations of Belarus, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Scotland and Spain have all appointed new general secretaries/chief executives: Belarus: Yury Verheichyk (replacing Sjarhei Safaryan); Latvia: Edgars Pukinskis (replacing Jānis Mežeckis); Liechtenstein: Peter Jehle (replacing Philipp Patsch); Scotland: Ian Maxwell (replacing Stewart Regan); Spain: Andreu Camps (replacing Esther Gascón).

## OBITUARY

On 25 July, **György Szepesi**, former president of the Hungarian Football Federation, passed away at the age of 96. Within UEFA, Szepesi served as a member of the Commission of Study on the problem of radio/television (1974–80), Club Competitions Committee (1980–82), Media Committee (1992–98) and Committee for the European Championship (1994–96). He was also a member of the FIFA Executive Committee from 1980 to 1994.



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