

# UEFA



No. 185

DIRECT

JULY/AUGUST 2019  
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  
OF THE UNION OF EUROPEAN  
FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS



UEFA  
NATIONS  
LEAGUE™

## PORTUGAL'S WINNING HABIT



UEFA

FOUNDATION™

*for children*



[www.uefafoundation.org](http://www.uefafoundation.org)





**Aleksander Čeferin**  
UEFA President

## TREASURING THE MOMENT

It is often the case that we do not have the chance or take the time to appreciate the wonderful things happening right before our eyes. The run-in to the season climax featured some thrilling matches and then the back-to-back finals weeks for club and national team football – it was an extremely busy time, but summer offers us an opportune moment to reflect on what we have seen and look forward to the next challenge.

We must not take for granted these incredible football occasions, which tug at the emotions of so many people all over the world. It was therefore fitting that Lennart Johansson, the ‘father’ of the UEFA Champions League, saw one last final before sadly passing on. My predecessor as UEFA president between 1990 and 2007, Lennart had a monumental impact on European football.

He was rightly proud of introducing the UEFA Champions League and, as someone who also oversaw the huge spark in growth of the EURO, I am sure he would have been delighted about the overwhelming success of the inaugural UEFA Nations League finals.

Innovation was at the heart of his tenure and it is a principle that we will continue at UEFA. The well-received promotion/relegation aspect of the Nations League, for example, will now be tested at Under-19 level to help accelerate the increasing standards we see in youth football.

The HatTrick programme was launched in 2004 under Lennart’s watch and we are celebrating its 15th anniversary in this issue of UEFA Direct. It has played a crucial role in the development of European football, in everything from education to social responsibility activities to grassroots. Speaking of which, the busy early weeks of June cannot be mentioned without referencing the 12th Grassroots Conference in Minsk, dedicated to boosting the bedrock of our sport.

More strides were taken a few weeks before when an important milestone for one of our key priorities was achieved: the launch of UEFA’s women’s football strategy, Time for Action. Getting it started is just the first step, of course, but let me say that everyone at UEFA is excited about the future of the women’s game.

Lennart Johansson believed deeply in the power of solidarity and European unity. And if there is one thing which is happening in front of us that we should really nurture and appreciate every day, it is that and its positive impact on the game we love so much.



# IN THIS ISSUE

JULY/AUGUST 2019



Official publication of  
the Union of European  
Football Associations

**Chief editor:**

Emmanuel Deconche

**Deputy chief editor:**

Dominique Maurer

**Chief writer:**

Mark Chaplin

**External contributors:**

Julien Hernandez (pages 8-11)

Joseph Walker (pages 24-25)

Graham Turner (pages 26, 31)

Ben Gladwell

(pages 27, 29, 30)

Simon Hart (pages 28, 34-39)

Patrick Hart (pages 40-43)

**Translations:**

UEFA Language Services

**Production:**

Touchline

**Printing:**

Artgraphic Cavin,  
CH-1422 Grandson

**Editorial deadline:**

17 June 2019

**Cover photo:**

Getty Images



## 8 UEFA Nations League

Portugal continue their winning ways.

### 12 Women's football

UEFA launches its first-ever women's football strategy.

### 14 EURO 2020

Bilbao gears up for the event.

### 16 HatTrick programme

One of the largest sports solidarity programme in the world celebrates its 15th anniversary.

### 32 UEFA Super Cup

An all-English event in Istanbul.

### 40 UEFA intelligence centre

Providing strategic analysis to the national associations.

### 46 News from member associations





**20**

**Sándor Csányi**

Interview with the UEFA vice-president.



**34**

**The Technician**

Italy's former goalkeeper Morgan De Sanctis embraces his new coaching career.



**06**

**Lennart Johansson**

UEFA loses a great figure following the death of its visionary former president.



**24 Competitions**

Alongside the UEFA Nations League, no fewer than seven other trophies have been lifted these past few months.





©Emma Jonsson

## LENNART JOHANSSON – A VISIONARY LEADER

UEFA and the world of football lost a great figure when Lennart Johansson, the Swede who was UEFA president for 17 years, from 1990 to 2007, died on 4 June at the age of 89.

**D**uring Lennart Johansson's term of office, the face of the European game changed completely, both in sporting and commercial terms. UEFA itself developed from being a purely administrative body in a suburb of the Swiss capital of Berne to a dynamic modern sports organisation based at the House of European Football in Nyon in western Switzerland.

Lennart Johansson was born on 5 November 1929 in Bromma, a suburb of Stockholm. After gaining his initial administrative experience with AIK Solna – a club he always remained close to – Mr Johansson came through the ranks at the Swedish Football Association, and served as the association's president between 1984 and 1991. Establishing a reputation as a strong, capable leader, he was elected

as UEFA's fifth president at the body's Congress in Malta in 1990.

While he was at UEFA's helm, the UEFA Champions League was launched at the start of the 1990s and became the world's most prestigious club competition. National team football also flourished, with the European Championship final round growing into one of the most popular events in the world sporting calendar, with the number of participants increasing from eight to 16 during his presidency.

Lennart Johansson was named UEFA honorary president at the UEFA Congress in Dusseldorf in January 2007, and he continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of UEFA and European football, in particular by attending Executive Committee meetings.

His love for football was lifelong. "The game remains unpredictable," he said. "Sometimes you cry and sometimes you're happy. These are the things that make it such a great game, and I am so proud to have played a part in supporting the game's success in Europe.

"I know that whatever decisions I've taken, whether people agree with them, I've taken for what I see as the good of football."

UEFA's current president, Aleksander Čeferin, paid a warm tribute. "He was a devoted lover and servant of football, who put his passion at the heart of his life," he said. "He will always be remembered as a visionary leader, and as the architect of the UEFA Champions League, and world football will always be grateful to him for all he has achieved for the beautiful game." ⚽



# KEY DECISIONS IN BAKU

UEFA's Executive Committee held its latest meeting in Baku on 29 May, ahead of the UEFA Europa League final in the Azerbaijani capital.

Concussion procedures were a key item on the agenda. The Executive Committee decided to request FIFA and football's lawmakers, the International Football Association Board (IFAB), to review the current concussion protocol, and to consider potential changes to the Laws of the Game – in particular, with regard to substitutions. This, the committee felt, would reduce the pressure on the medical staff and give doctors more time to assess a potential concussion off the pitch, so that no concussed player returns to the field of play.

Turning to venue matters, the Gamla Ullevi stadium in Gothenburg, Sweden, was appointed as the venue for the UEFA Women's Champions League final in 2021.

A new UEFA vice-president was appointed at the meeting in Baku – Luis Rubiales (Spain) – while Noël Le Graët

(France) was appointed as a European member of the FIFA Council until the next UEFA Ordinary Congress in 2020.

In other business, the committee agreed to start a pilot format for the European Under-19 Championship from 2020 to 2023. Based on a promotion/relegation system between three layers, similar to the UEFA Nations League, it will offer more mini-tournaments between teams of equal strength before an eight-team final tournament. If this test phase proves positive, the system will also be introduced at Under-17 level from 2023.

The 2020/21 club competition access list was approved, and includes the principle that all associations below position 50 in the rankings (i.e. those in positions 51 to 55) should always be allocated two spots in the UEFA Europa League.

The committee also approved a match policy concerning countries not recognising Kosovo, except for those

cases where an exclusion has been decided by the Executive Committee on security grounds (currently Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Teams which cannot host Kosovan clubs or national teams on their territory may request to organise their home match on neutral ground. However, they will have to agree to play away matches in Kosovo.

Along with various other regulations, the 2019 UEFA Disciplinary Regulations were given the green light by the Executive Committee. They now include the possibility for national associations or clubs to invite children up to the age of 14 from schools or football academies to attend matches to be played behind closed doors free of charge.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 24 September. ⚽









# PORTUGAL DO IT AGAIN

Winners of EURO 2016 three years ago, Portugal continued their run of success at European level with victory in the inaugural UEFA Nations League. As already indicated by the qualifiers, the finals confirmed that this new competition is already a big hit with the fans and the teams alike.

**N**o sooner had UEFA announced the creation of the Nations League in September 2017 than the eyes of the football world started looking towards June 2019, when the finals would be played following a qualifying phase that kicked off in September 2018. And just as quickly, the questions started coming: What was the purpose of the competition? Would the big nations be interested? Would the format, in which the 55 European national teams were split into four leagues with promotion and relegation between them, be easy enough to understand? Would the public want to watch it?

By the end of the inaugural four-team finals, held in Portugal from 5 to 9 June, any doubts had been cast aside. The joy on the faces of the Portuguese supporters and players, including their captain, Cristiano Ronaldo, when they lifted the trophy was enough to demonstrate how important the Nations League had already become. When the second competition begins in September 2020, the hierarchy will be somewhat different, with Germany, Iceland, Poland and Croatia, for example, replaced in League A by Ukraine, Sweden, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Denmark following their relegation to League B.

Time now, however, to review the four matches of the 2019 finals, which certainly lived up to all expectations.

## **Portugal 3 Switzerland 1 A winning return for Ronaldo**

Despite his own absence, Cristiano Ronaldo had seen his team-mates win their qualifying group undefeated, showing the type of solidarity that had carried them to the European Championship title in 2016. However, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner was back for the final phase on home soil, and he certainly played his part. Without a goal for the national team since netting against Morocco at the 2018 World Cup, Ronaldo left Swiss goalkeeper Yann Sommer flat-footed from a 25-metre free-kick with only 25 minutes on the clock.

The goal came as welcome relief for a Portuguese side that had been outplayed in

the early stages by an in-form Swiss outfit in which Xherdan Shaqiri was a constant threat with his dribbling and long-distance shooting. Despite Portugal's solid central defensive pairing of Pepe and Rúben Dias, their opponents delivered countless crosses in search of their dangerous striker Haris Seferović, who hit the bar three minutes before the break. Unable to convert their first-half dominance into goals, the Swiss finally drew level after a curious incident in the 53rd minute. First, Steven Zuber claimed a penalty after a tussle with Nélson Semedo, but German referee Felix Brych let play continue. On the counter, Fabian Schär fouled Bernardo Silva in the Swiss penalty area. The referee initially awarded a penalty to Portugal, before finally awarding a spot-kick to Switzerland on the advice of the VAR, who ruled that Semedo had in fact fouled Zuber. The penalty was converted by Ricardo Rodríguez on 57 minutes.

The closing stages were fiercely contested, but it was Cristiano Ronaldo who decided the match with two goals in two minutes, thus avoiding the need for extra time. He scored the first after 87 minutes with a quick snapshot following a neat cutback from Bernardo Silva, before netting again at the end of a mazy run two minutes later. As against Spain at the 2018 World Cup, the Portuguese captain marked his country's opening finals' match with a hat-trick. His finishing was both clinical and decisive, since his three goals were Portugal's only shots on target in the entire match.

## **Netherlands 3 England 1 (aet) De Ligt from zero to hero**

The semi-final between the Netherlands and England in Guimarães was hotly anticipated, since it brought together two of the continent's most promising teams, which look capable of dominating European football over the next few years. It also saw a clash of styles, with the speed of the English, symbolised by the attacking trio of Raheem Sterling, Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford, contrasting with the Dutch possession game epitomised by Matthijs de Ligt and Frenkie de Jong, the AFC Ajax duo whose talent impressed the whole of Europe in this season's Champions League. →

Gonçalo Guedes (No17) celebrates scoring Portugal's winning goal.



in the final. The Dutch, who amassed 28 shots at Jordan Pickford's goal, deserved their victory, which saw them qualify for an international final for the first time since the 2010 World Cup.

### **England 0 Switzerland 0 (6-5 pens) England win... eventually**

Named player of the match (and the best goalkeeper of the finals), Jordan Pickford ensured England finished in third place by saving Switzerland's sixth penalty, taken by Josip Drmić. It was the only save in a shoot-out in which the first 11 penalties were all scored, including one by Pickford himself. While the English goalkeeper shone at the end of the match, his Swiss counterpart, Yann Sommer, impressed throughout, saving his side on countless occasions, sometimes with the aid of the woodwork. He pushed a Harry Kane lob onto the crossbar after two minutes and deflected a poor clearance from a team-mate onto the post before pulling off an incredible double save to deny Dele Alli and then Raheem Sterling in the 98th minute. Sterling also saw a free-kick crash

Despite his outstanding recent performances, it was De Ligt who gave England the chance to take an early lead by fouling Rashford after badly miscontrolling the ball in his own penalty area. The resulting spot-kick was put away by the Manchester United striker after 32 minutes. The English were rather fortunate to be ahead, since this was their first real chance of an opening half in which the Dutch enjoyed most of the possession but, with the exception of the omnipresent De Jong, hardly set the world alight. Showing great mental strength, De Ligt redeemed himself in the 73rd minute by hauling the Netherlands level, getting the better of Kyle Walker and John Stones to score with a majestic header from a Memphis Depay corner.

The remainder of the match was very open, and Jesse Lingard might have secured victory for England if his 83rd-minute strike had not been ruled out by the VAR. With the scores level at the end of normal time, the match went into extra time, during which another central defender's error decided the outcome. Under pressure from Depay, Stones lost the ball in his own penalty box, enabling the Olympique Lyonnais striker to feed Quincy Promes, whose shot was deflected into the net by the unfortunate Walker with 97 minutes on the clock. Then, in a virtually identical phase of play, Depay, a constant thorn in England's side, pounced on a misplaced pass between Stones and Ross Barkley to set up Promes, whose 114th-minute goal secured his side's place



**No teams won all their Nations League matches (each played between four and six, depending which league they were in). This shows how evenly matched the groups were.**





against the bar with three minutes of extra time remaining.

England created a host of clear-cut chances which would have left Gareth Southgate's men rueing their profligacy in front of goal if they had failed to come out on top. While Switzerland lived up to their reputation as dogged opponents, the English recovered well after their disappointing performance against the Netherlands and once again demonstrated their ability to craft numerous goalscoring opportunities. Another bonus was the fact that they managed to win another penalty competition to follow their victory over Colombia in the 2018 World Cup round of 16, their first shoot-out triumph after four losses in international finals between 1998 and 2012.

### Portugal 1 Netherlands 0 Portugal lift the title

In their last major final on home soil, at EURO 2004, Portugal had suffered a shock 1-0 defeat to Greece, forcing an entire nation to cancel a night of celebration. Fifteen years later, Cristiano Ronaldo (the only survivor from that 2004 side) and his team-mates grabbed the chance to add a second title to their collection, three years after lifting their first major trophy at EURO 2016.

At Porto's Estádio do Dragão, Fernando Santos's men played their usual brand of football, a magical formula that had taken them to the European crown in 2016. Their success owed much to their watertight defence. Despite Pepe's absence, Portugal's back four of Rúben Dias, José Fonte, Nélson Semedo and

Raphaël Guerreiro conceded hardly any space to the Dutch forwards, who only managed three shots at goal in the final, 25 fewer than in their semi-final against England! With semi-final hero Cristiano Ronaldo not at his brilliant best in the final, Bernardo Silva took on the mantle. The Manchester City attacking midfielder, who was subsequently named player of the tournament, posed the principal threat, and it was he who began the move that resulted in Portugal's 60th-minute winner, slaloming through the Dutch defence before playing a perfect pass to Gonçalo Guedes, who slotted home from 18 metres out. Just like Eder in the EURO 2016 final, the scorer was not exactly the most likely candidate, since this was Guedes's first-ever goal in an official competition match for Portugal. The Portuguese side's unfailing collective strength was confirmed by their impressive management of the remaining half-hour.

The Dutch, who lacked the cutting edge they had shown in their semi-final against England, attempted to pepper Rui Patrício's goal with crosses but, apart from a dangerous Depay header that was well saved by the Portuguese goalkeeper in the 65th minute, they never seemed capable of changing the course of the match. Unbeaten in their last 14 home matches in official competitions, Portugal, reigning European champions, merited their victory at the Nations League finals and became the first team to win the continent's newest competition for national teams – a logical conclusion to a competition that has already established itself in the European football calendar. 🏆



The total number of matches played in the inaugural UEFA Nations League (**138** qualifiers and **four** in the finals).



The total number of goals scored, an average of **2.41** per match or **one** every **39** minutes.



Portugal's Rafa Silva in the final against the Netherlands.

# FIRST-EVER UEFA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL STRATEGY

UEFA has launched a dedicated women's football strategy for the first time, aiming to double the number of female players in Europe by 2024.

**T**ime for Action: UEFA Women's Football Strategy 2019–24 commits UEFA to a five-year strategic framework with the aim of supporting, guiding and lifting both women's football and the position of women in football across Europe.

The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, said: "Women's football is the football of today. It is not the football of tomorrow. It is UEFA's duty as European football's governing body to empower the women's game. So UEFA will put significant financial investment into the sport, underlining that it dares to aim high and make European football as great as it can be. The actions that we propose and commit to in 2019 will lead to a greater, more professional and more prosperous game by 2024. Time for action."

Time for Action will focus on building the foundations within UEFA and its member associations to give European women's football the best possible platform to thrive. UEFA will invest in programmes and initiatives to support a balanced delivery of this plan from grassroots to elite levels.

## Key priorities

Time for Action is designed to be flexible but challenging, pushing UEFA to strengthen the position of the women's

game and build on the progress already made. The UEFA women's football strategy identifies five key priorities to achieve this, which reflect UEFA's ambition to ensure professional, safe and fun environments for women and girls who want to be involved in football.

**Drive participation:** More girls and women than ever are participating in football, but to secure long-term growth UEFA seeks to encourage men's professional and grassroots clubs to embrace women's and girl's football, and guarantee safe and suitable environments for female players, coaches and referees to develop.

**Develop the game:** The strategy seeks to fundamentally change perceptions of women's football across Europe. UEFA can achieve this by creating regular playing opportunities, continuing to professionalise women's football through regulatory mechanisms and insight, and being proactive in considering innovative solutions to advance the game in all areas.

**Transform competitions:** UEFA's women's competitions should be global benchmarks that have a strong competitive balance and are sustainable. This can be achieved through creating appealing, engaging tournaments that inspire the next generation alongside effective legacy programmes.

UEFA's women's football strategy for 2019–24 is described in #TimeForAction, available on UEFA.com.



The UEFA Women's Champions League final has been uncoupled from the men's final with the aim of doubling its reach and value.

## Enhance government structures:

Structural foundations and improvements to the decision-making process are vital. UEFA will improve player standards by reaching universal agreements for national team players and putting safeguarding policies in place in all UEFA member associations. As part of this, educational, leadership and mentoring programmes will be implemented and UEFA will strive to ensure that women and women's football are well represented on all bodies.

## Increase visibility and commercial value:

Women's football and its competitions need to be seen and invested in. UEFA plans to deliver a targeted communications and media plan to increase commercial revenue and interest in the women's game. Part of this will involve leveraging existing UEFA programmes such as Together #WePlayStrong and #EqualGame.





### Constant growth

**40,241**

qualified female coaches

**285**

active European international  
female referees

Cumulative audience of over

**265  
MILLION**

watched UEFA Women's EURO  
2017 across all media

**28%**

of professional clubs offer  
football for women and girls

**48**

national associations  
represented in the  
2018/19 UEFA Women's  
Champions League

Getty Images



Sportsfile



Sportsfile

### Where we want to be in 2024

The strategy aims to reach the following goals by 2024, all of which are linked to the strategic priorities: double the number of women and girls playing football across Europe to 2.5 million registered players; change perceptions of women's football across Europe; double the reach and value of the UEFA Women's EURO and the UEFA Women's Champions League; improve player standards through 55 minimum standard agreements and safeguarding policies; and double female representation on all UEFA bodies.

This strategy and its goals, actions and outcomes have been drawn up with UEFA

member associations, leagues, clubs, players and other stakeholders, who have all united to contribute to its development. It is closely connected to the overarching UEFA strategy, Together for the Future of Football 2019–24, which includes the further development of women's football as one of its four strategic priorities.

Measures taken in the last three years include increasing UEFA's funding to its women's football development programme by 50% as of 2020, launching the Together #WePlayStrong campaign, unbundling women's football competition sponsorship to support revenue growth, and creating a specific women's football unit. UEFA has also uncoupled the UEFA Women's Champions League final from the men's event in order to give the women's final a platform of its own. ⚽

The UEFA women's football strategy is as much about increasing the participation of girls as it is about making women's football more professional.

# BASQUET OF DELIGHTS

Spain triumphed when the country hosted the European Championship in 1964, and then brought the Henri Delaunay trophy back to Iberian soil when La Roja lifted the 2008 and 2012 editions.

**A**fter a hiatus of more than half a century, Spain is back playing its part in hosting the elite of European national team football. This time Bilbao, along with 11 other European cities, is gearing up to host the biggest EURO in history next year.

Spain's illustrious history in the European Championship boasts three titles, a string of record-breakers and some unforgettable moments on the pitch, reinforcing its position as one of the continent's giants. However, for Luis Rubiales, president of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), this EURO brings brand-new opportunities to showcase Bilbao's impressive San Mamés stadium, and the Basque Country's warm hospitality and natural beauty – as well as another chance for La Selección to entertain.

Rubiales shares his pride and excitement at Bilbao's involvement. "I think it will be a special EURO," he says, "as it's the European Championship's 60th anniversary. That's why they [UEFA] planned to do something different. In Spain we're very proud to have Bilbao as one of the venues. Spain has a very rich footballing tradition. We've always been modest, but also proud of our history; that's why we thought we could contribute something. Besides, Bilbao has got a brand-new stadium, which was inaugurated just a few years ago. Although it was built virtually in the

same area as the 'Catedral' [nickname of Athletic Club's former stadium], the old San Mamés, I think we met all the requirements to contribute to this project, so we're extremely happy that our colleagues at UEFA understood that Bilbao deserved to be one of the venues.

"People in the Basque Country are very passionate about football, in a very special way. But not only there. There are going to be people coming from all parts of Spain, but we also hope foreigners will come along. Besides, Bilbao is a city with a bit of everything."

## A city of culture

Steeped in culture and known for its outstanding food, Rubiales mentions some of Bilbao's main attractions. "The oldest monument may well be Santiago Cathedral, and then there's the current 'football cathedral'. It also has the Guggenheim Museum. It offers so much in terms of culture, tourist attractions and wonderful gastronomy. I think everyone will be able to get involved, everyone will feel this event is their own and they'll enjoy it, both the locals and those coming from further afield."

With EURO 2020 taking place in 12 countries across Europe, Rubiales believes that the rich tapestry of cultures will give fans a unique and varied experience, and that it is a key opportunity for other countries to demonstrate their capabilities

## Bilbao

The largest city in the Basque Country thrived on commerce and industry in years gone by, but has reinvented itself as a hive of art and culture since the stunning Guggenheim Museum opened its doors in 1997. A contemporary masterpiece in itself, the Frank Gehry-designed building is one of several museums in a city nominated as a Creative City of Design by UNESCO in 2014, and the same taste for reinvention has also touched the local football scene – hence the new San Mamés stadium, inaugurated in 2013 to replace Athletic Club's traditional home of the same name, a 1982 FIFA World Cup venue and for many years the stomping ground of goalkeeper José Ángel Iribar, a European champion with Spain in 1964.

## MATCHES

**15 June:** Group E match  
**20 June:** Group E match  
**24 June:** Group E match  
**28 June:** Round of 16



“There’s also the social side of things, the big impact that football has on society. Not only Europe, but the whole world will turn their eyes towards Bilbao, Biscay, the Basque Country, as well as Spain in general.”

**Luis Rubiales**  
RFEF president







iStock

in hosting a major final tournament.

"It's important," Rubiales adds. "I'd like to refer here to something that the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, says very often. When he talks about football, he always refers to the football pyramid. The big boys are at the top, but football is built up from the bottom.

"This has helped UEFA a lot in terms of developing the social side. And thanks also to this terrific UEFA management, they're helping the weaker ones."

### The heat is on

As with the other 11 nations hosting EURO 2020, Spain will have to qualify for the final tournament – bringing a fresh element of competitiveness to the competition. For Spain, qualification will also mean La Selección playing in Bilbao for the first time since 1967. With this in mind, the Spanish football federation and city authorities – including Athletic Club – are working closely to ensure fans enjoy an unforgettable experience, celebrating the opportunity

to be part of a new chapter in history.

"Yes, it will be special, of course," Rubiales adds. "That's why we need to make the most of UEFA's experience, as well as the help from the Basque institutions, and even from Athletic Club, the team from that city, and I think it's a very cherished and special one. They've got supporters all over Spain. At the Spanish Football Federation, we'll try to work together with all these bodies and do our best.

"The fact that all the institutions are helping and collaborating, the fact that Athletic Club has offered us their stadium for the federation to work from, and the fact that Spanish fans who want to enjoy it will be able to experience the city, will make us feel at home."

As with all countries that host UEFA competitions, Spain will have plenty of opportunities to build a lasting legacy, and Rubiales and his team have identified a two-tiered approach – adding to La Selección's illustrious back catalogue of success, and supporting Spanish society.

"I think legacy building is an important point," Rubiales explains. "I'm going to differentiate between two things here. First of all, the sporting side of things. As the Spanish national team, we'd like to go as far as possible, obviously. If we achieve that, great. But, if not, we'll shake hands with the winners as always.

"However, there's also the social side of things, the big impact that football has on society and the impact we want it to have on the city. Not only Europe, but the whole world will turn their eyes towards Bilbao, Biscay, the Basque Country, as well as Spain in general.

"For me, this is an opportunity to prove ourselves as a warm and welcoming country that leaves a mark on all its visitors. In Spain, in general, we're a leading country when it comes to football, and I say that with all due respect to the rest and while showing humility, but it doesn't just apply to that. It also goes for tourism and gastronomy ... I think that whoever comes to visit will want to come back." 🍷



# CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF UEFA'S LANDMARK SOLIDARITY PROGRAMME

Everyone who loves football knows that EURO 2020 is less than a year away and that, for the first time in the history of the European Football Championship, the final tournament is taking place in 12 host cities across the length and breadth of Europe. What many will not be aware of, however, is that EURO 2020 will channel €775.5 million into the UEFA HatTrick programme.

**H**atTrick began in 2004, based on the simple idea of taking an ample proportion of European Championship revenue and reinvesting it back into football development in three (hence the name of the programme) different ways: investment, education and knowledge sharing. By 2024, the HatTrick programme will have made available a remarkable €2.6 billion in support of its member associations.

## What has HatTrick done for football?

A pitch should never be far away from anyone who wants to play the game and,

during the past 15 years, HatTrick has significantly influenced the football landscape in the countries of UEFA's 55 member associations. It has bonded UEFA with its member associations in a mutual and long-term vision for football. It has put many more boots on feet, no matter the ability, age or gender. It has brought communities closer together, kindled new friendships, and kept people healthy and happy through the natural magic of football.

In terms of bricks and mortar, HatTrick has helped to build 34 out of 55 national team training centres and 31 headquarter offices among the UEFA member associations. This essential infrastructure is where football happens and develops, not only at elite level but in many other key areas such as

grassroots, education, technical training, coaching, refereeing and, just as important, the day-to-day operations and governance of football.

Up to 60% of the current national stadiums in Europe had a helping hand from HatTrick, either in their basic construction or renovation works to modernise them and ensure the safety of players and spectators. HatTrick has also helped to build over 3,000 mini-pitches.

Moreover, these investments have triggered a snowball effect, with statistics showing that for every euro invested by HatTrick, other bodies such as national associations, clubs, local authorities and government bodies invest €3.5 of their own. This shared financing is how football really grows, expanding through new relationships, innovation and solidarity in sport.

---

The Lilleküla Stadium in Tallinn, the venue for the 2018 UEFA Super Cup, was renovated with funding from the HatTrick programme.





Up to  
**60%**  
of the current national stadiums  
in Europe had a helping hand  
from HatTrick

But HatTrick digs deeper than the obvious need for infrastructure. Sometimes, a spotlight needs to shine on aspects of football that can fall behind or exist only in the shadows of the elite game. For example, in 2010 women's football had reached a crossroads and a new and stronger future had to be defined for it. Funded by HatTrick, the UEFA Women's Football Development Programme was launched as the potential solution and, since then, women's football has exploded. Over 450 projects have now been funded to the tune of €82.2 million across all 55 UEFA member associations, over half of them supporting grassroots football for girls and women.

A similar story exists for grassroots in general. All UEFA member associations have signed the UEFA Grassroots Charter, which aims to drive development consistently at the base level. The charter now goes under the polished theme of **GREAT**, which stands for Growth, Retention, Education, Always fair and Terms.

Another example is the football and social responsibility programme which was rolled out under HatTrick in 2016. So far, more than 80 social and environmental projects have been funded.

Club licensing is another success story under the HatTrick umbrella. Currently 53 out of the 55 UEFA member associations have implemented this important UEFA system, and 38 have gone on to develop their own domestic system.

HatTrick V will run from 2020 to 2024. To ensure momentum and continued growth, it will provide each UEFA member association with €4.5 million for investment as well as the following annual incentive payments:

- Runnings costs: **€800,000**
- Participation in youth, women's, futsal and amateur competitions: **€250,000**
- UEFA club licensing system: **€250,000**
- Good governance: **€200,000**
- UEFA Grassroots Charter: **€200,000**
- Women's football development: **€150,000**
- Coaching Convention: **€100,000**
- Refereeing Convention: **€100,000**
- Elite youth player development: **€100,000**
- Football and social responsibility: **€100,000**
- National teams' participation: **€100,000**
- Anti-match-fixing and integrity: **€50,000**

HatTrick is one of the largest sports solidarity programmes in the world and it is a great source of pride and success for UEFA. In 15 years, it has tackled big development needs and sought out the hidden parts of football that need special care and attention. It is hard to know how many millions of people have been touched by HatTrick, but the real point is to keep working and developing football because a smile is the same in every language. Happy 15th birthday, HatTrick. ⚽

## FINANCIAL EVOLUTION OF THE UEFA HATTRICK PROGRAMME



Apart from funding infrastructure, the HatTrick programme also assists grassroots football development and education, as it did here in Iceland.



MALCOLM STEELE - SCOTLAND

# "KEEP GOING... AND NEVER GIVE UP"

Malcolm Steele has had his hometown Scottish Premiership club Aberdeen FC – the Dons as they are known – engraved on his heart since childhood. The 56-year-old was diagnosed with dementia four years ago. Since then, three major loves of his life have helped give Malcolm a clear path ahead – devoted wife Tracy, Aberdeen FC and football, which has been his passion since he was a little boy.

Malcolm is part of a group of Aberdeen fans who are helped to recall cherished Dons moments as part of the Football Memories programme set up by the Scottish Football Association. The belief is that reminiscing about football may help people with dementia remain active and stay part of the club and community.

Tracy is by Malcolm's side all the time – "She's my rock", he says. They watch Aberdeen's matches together, and live life to the full. "I accept that I have dementia, and I try to manage it the best I can," he says. "[The dementia is there] but I'm still here as well. I have dementia, but it doesn't define me as a person... it never will." Tracy, the Dons and football will always be there to put a caring arm around Malcolm's shoulder.



UEFA



# PROMOTING ACCESS FOR ALL

The UEFA Foundation for Children played a prominent role in the finals of this season's club competitions, shining a spotlight on the work of its partners and promoting access to football for all.

**T**he finals of this season's UEFA Youth League, held in Nyon at the end of April, showcased various different aspects of the game, with a particular focus on football for blind and partially sighted players. Foundation partner PluSport and the Swiss Blind Football Association came together to give members of the public and the four semi-finalists the opportunity to have a go at playing without the use of their eyes.

At the final of the UEFA Women's Champions League in Budapest on 18 May, local children involved with partner association Oltaalom played a key role in the opening ceremony. Oltaalom works with children who live in precarious circumstances or come from a migrant background, giving them administrative and educational support in a bid to boost their employability. It uses football to bring children from different communities together, thereby facilitating social integration.

The UEFA Europa League's commercial partners have also been demonstrating their commitment to this valuable cause, helping to foster solidarity with the most vulnerable children in society. Kia Motors, for example, added a new humanitarian dimension to this season's trophy tour. In each of the eight European cities that the trophy visited, supporters of all ages were invited to donate football boots they no longer wore, so they could be given to children in the Zaatar refugee camp in Jordan.

And, for the fourth year in a row, FedEx Express gave local children the

opportunity to accompany the players onto the pitch at the UEFA Europa League final. This year, that initiative, carried out in partnership with the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA), resulted in 22 Azerbaijani girls taking to the field of play in Baku on 29 May, highlighting the AFFA's efforts to get more girls involved in football.

Meanwhile, at the UEFA Champions League final (1 June in Madrid) and the UEFA Nations League finals (5-9 June in Guimarães and Porto), the foundation made dreams come true for 460 seriously ill children as well as local children involved with partner organisations. 🏆

## Call for projects

Organisations wishing to respond to the UEFA Foundation for Children's 2019 call for projects can submit details of their initiatives on the foundation's website ([uefafoundation.org](http://uefafoundation.org)) from 1 to 31 July.



SÁNDOR CSÁNYI

# 'FOOTBALL MUST GIVE JOY'

Sándor Csányi combines football administrative skills with business acumen. A successful and multifaceted entrepreneur in his native Hungary, Csányi has also held football in his heart ever since childhood.

**P**resident of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) since 2010, Sándor Csányi is relishing the challenge of bringing new successes to a country which has a proud football pedigree. As a UEFA and FIFA vice-president, he is also involved in shaping the game's future in Europe and beyond. He tells UEFA Direct about why he fell for football, and highlights his hopes for the game's future.

## Were you a football fan from an early age?

I grew up in a small village in Hungary called Jászárokszállás, and I played football, just as every youngster of my age did. We all followed Hungarian football matches on TV.

## What is your first memory of football?

In the 1960s, we had fantastic football in Hungary. A long time ago, in my childhood, my favourite team was MTK Budapest. The catalyst was the European Cup Winners' Cup semi-final second leg between MTK and the Scottish team Celtic in 1964. The 'blue and whites' of MTK had lost the first leg 3-0 in Glasgow, but they fought back to win 4-0 in the return match in the Népstadion in Budapest. Hungarian clubs played some remarkable matches around this time – for example, Ferencváros defeated Juventus to win the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup final in 1965, and Újpest enjoyed an outstanding run to the final in the same competition in 1969. In addition to this, Hungary's national team performed well at the 1966 World Cup in England, beating Brazil 3-1 in one of the group matches.

## Did you play yourself? Did you have any ambitions to make a career as a player?

I always played football and I captained

"When Hungary plays I can control my external behaviour, but not my internal emotions. Inside, I have similar feelings to those of my childhood ... the same joys and sorrows."

my school team, but I was never close to professional level – I played as a registered amateur. I enjoyed the game and liked being part of a team and a community. One should remember that Hungary was really strong in that generation, with great individuals such as András Törőcsik, József Tóth, László Kiss or, later, Tibor Nyilasi – the standard was extremely high. I moved to the capital, Budapest, when I was 14 and went to high school. There, in Budapest, I had the opportunity to regularly watch the best Hungarian clubs and the national team live.

## What's the best match you've ever seen?

Hungary's two EURO 2016 play-off matches against Norway. Winning both matches meant we qualified for the European Championship finals for the first time in 44 years. In the finals, we started out against our neighbours Austria, and many people thought we would be beaten heavily. But we won that match – and it proved to be an important first step in winning our group, ahead of eventual tournament winners Portugal.

## And what about the best goal you've ever seen?

I'd go for Zinedine Zidane's goal for Real Madrid in the 2002 UEFA Champions League final against Bayer Leverkusen in Glasgow. That volley was unforgettable. In my mind, I'll always see Johan Cruyff and Zidane as the most intelligent players with the best skills.

## Do you still feel excitement when you enter a football stadium?

If anyone ever steps inside a packed Ferencváros Aréna when the national team is playing there, they feel something special. It's extraordinary, even before the game. I think everyone should visit the national stadium with their family once. And, if the team wins – like we did, for example, against 2018 World Cup silver medallists Croatia in the European Qualifiers in March – this special feeling stays for days, or even for weeks. The fans create a fantastic atmosphere, and during that time the whole country is proud and happy.

## Which players and teams excite you today?

To be honest, the most important consideration for me is the performance of our teams on the European stage. Without naming players, I keep an eye on Hungarian talents playing for various clubs or for the national team.

## Do you still get excited when you're watching your national team and they score a goal?

I'd actually say that I get more nervous when they aren't scoring! I can control my external behaviour, but not my internal emotions. Inside, I have similar feelings to those I felt in my childhood ... the same joys and sorrows.

## Is the memory of one of the world's greatest ever teams – →







**the Mighty Magyars of the 1950s – still vivid in Hungary? Is that group of players still an inspiration for later generations?**

The heritage of that amazing team and that era means a lot to us, but perhaps a bit more to my generation than to the younger ones. For them, the best players of the present are the real inspirations, because they see them regularly, and they'd like to emulate them. For us all, the most important fact is that we've increased the number of registered players threefold compared with nine years ago. This means that – just like in the 1950s – football is by far the most popular sport in Hungary.

**How did you get into the administrative side of the game? What was your career path in this respect?**

I gained some experience in football and other sports associations while I was a board member of the sports club BVSC. I was also on the finance committee of the Hungarian Football Federation in the 1990s. In 2010, after several earlier invitations, many people asked for my support and involvement in starting a new era in Hungarian football. We discussed this within my family and, subsequently, I decided to put myself forward for the position of president.

**Are you proud of being able to contribute to UEFA's development, in particular at the highest level as an Executive Committee member, and now as a vice-president? How do you view UEFA's continual progress as the umbrella organisation of European football?**

I think UEFA has a big responsibility and role to find a balance between different areas of football. Over the last ten years – thanks to my positions and involvement – I've had the chance to observe the structural, financial and technical aspects of football. I believe it's important to continue to develop the cooperation between UEFA and FIFA, and it's equally important to make progress in UEFA's relationships with the other confederations. It's a significant task to participate in a constructive dialogue with the European Union, including focussing on the development of sport's and football's regulations, which can be

implemented within the framework of EU regulations. These should also take into account the specificities of sport. Improving the balance between smaller and larger countries within European football is also essential, in order to improve the competitive nature of football in the long-term interest – something which must be considered together by UEFA and the EU. Moreover, at club level, respecting the interests of the big clubs, while taking into account the necessity of solidarity, is very important, so that a proper balance is created between the bigger, richer teams and the smaller, not-so-wealthy clubs, as well as between clubs and associations in relation to opportunities and financial matters. I believe that UEFA has made enormous efforts in this field, and has set an example.

**Tell us how Hungary is preparing for EURO 2020 as one of the 12 host cities, and about the anticipation being felt for the four matches that will be staged in Budapest ...**

The Népstadion, which was built in the 1950s and was later renamed the Ferenc Puskás Aréna, has always been a historic venue for great football matches. For EURO 2020, we're building a new stadium in the same place and fitting it with 68,000 seats, to ensure we have one of the most exciting football stadiums in Europe. Budapest is famous for various sports tournaments and cultural events. Anyone who saw the great atmosphere created by the Hungarian fans at EURO 2016 in France will agree that we can all expect a real football festival in Budapest next summer.

**When you attend matches as the MLSZ president, are you able to keep calm when your national team scores or wins, because you're hosting one of your colleagues from another association?**

I like to enjoy a game, and I also like to jump up when there's a reason to. It would be a lie not to show emotions in football, and it would be a shame not to enjoy the moments.

“Respecting the interests of the big clubs, while taking into account the necessity of solidarity, is very important, so that a proper balance is created between the bigger, richer teams and the smaller, not-so-wealthy clubs.”







Getty Images

### How do you relax and switch off away from football? Any special hobbies?

I'm lucky that I have a lot of hobbies. I like to read, to go on hiking trips, to hunt or fish, to play tennis and to sail. Time is an issue, though.

### How important do you feel respect and fair play are in football?

Respect and fair play are as important parts of the game as the football is. You want to score, you want to win, and you know that your opponent wants exactly the same. It's that simple. For me, football is a sport for everyone. I agree completely with this message conveyed by UEFA's #EqualGame campaign, and I believe that it is also our job to make sure the game is accessible to everyone.

### What do you think are the biggest dangers facing football, both now and for the future?

As I mentioned earlier, the balance between smaller and larger clubs, grassroots and professional football, must be ensured. If only the biggest clubs benefitted from top football, it would mean that some clubs or even

"The best matches I've seen are Hungary's two EURO 2016 play-off matches against Norway. Winning both matches meant that we qualified for the UEFA European Championship finals for the first time in 44 years."

countries would be left behind and lose their connection with the football family. We must acknowledge the most successful clubs, in financial and sporting terms, but the local communities must be recognised as well.

### If you had one wish for football in general in the future, what would it be?

I'd wish that football would stay the most popular sport, and inspire the young generation to exercise and do sports. This is important when esports and computer games are also an attraction. Football must give joy to the supporters of clubs and national teams at all levels, and help build smaller and larger communities.

### And for football in Hungary?

In this respect, I don't think very long term. For me, the most important thing is to qualify for EURO 2020. This will be the first time we'll have co-hosted such

an event, and I can't imagine anything more exciting for Hungarian people than to see their national team play in the new arena as part of such a great football festival.

### You were born in 1953 – actually, rather a significant year for Hungarian football! [Hungary beat England 6-3 at Wembley that year to become the first continental team to win on English soil]

It's fantastic what Hungary's 'golden team' achieved at that time, but I have to say that I'm someone who looks forward rather than backwards. For me, it is far more important to see Hungarian clubs, national teams and individual players achieve positive results – such as recently, thanks to our national Under-17 team reaching the U-17 World Cup through the play-offs at the European Under-17 Championship finals. 🏆

# REDS REIGN UNDER CLEAR BLUE SKY OF MADRID

A three-day football fiesta in the Spanish capital culminated in a sixth European Cup party for Liverpool's travelling hordes.

**A**fter perhaps the most unpredictable, dramatic and exciting season in recent times, two English teams were left standing to compete for club football's greatest prize in Madrid. Maybe it was the sheer surprise of having got this far after pulsating come-from-behind victories for both Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool. Maybe it was the soaring Madrid temperatures, the baking-hot sun and the clear blue skies. Maybe it was the warm Madrileño welcome, but for the huge travelling support of both sides, this was a weekend to savour whatever the result.

For Liverpool it was a ninth final and second in two years, and their fans proudly displayed their European exploits on great red flags across the city and in continuous song. For Tottenham, this was a first UEFA Champions League final and their supporters soaked up an experience they could never have expected before Lucas Moura's heroics in Amsterdam.

In a city that prides itself on its footballing heritage, those fans took centre stage as Madrid's football fiesta played out before them. Two of the city's main squares – Puerta del Sol and Plaza Mayor – were transformed into the focal point of the footballing world and given a UEFA Champions League makeover as songs between both sets of fans bounced back and forth.

"We've conquered all of Europe, we're never gonna stop," sang the Liverpool faithful as swaths of Madrileños and tourists alike gathered round, smartphones in hand, capturing the moment as the Reds' version of Allez, Allez, Allez – the song that has become synonymous with their European adventures – caught on. "He's one of our own, he's one of our own, Harry Kane, he's one of our own," came the retort as Tottenham Hotspur's fans, clad in white shirts, competed for attention.

## Fans from all over the world

Jokes were told, hugs were shared and there were plenty of laughs as both sets of supporters did their clubs proud, mingling peacefully in the city centre. As for the locals, many confessed a soft spot for the Reds after their semi-final heroics against Barcelona – arch-rivals of Real Madrid – but Saturday's game was the topic on everyone's lips. "Will Kane play?" asked one Liverpool fan, putting his arm round a Spurs supporter, who replied simply by crossing his fingers in the universal sign for 'I hope so.'

Two days before the final itself, the UEFA Champions Festival began to set pulses

## 1 June

Tottenham Hotspur 0-2 Liverpool FC

**Attendance:** 63,272

**Referee:** Damir Skomina (Slovenia)

**Goals:** 0-1 Salah 2 (pen),  
0-2 Origi 87







Sportsfile



Getty Images

At the Champions Festival, Cafu had a go at amputee football, while children from a deprived area of Madrid played together.

racing in the Spanish capital as Ol' Big Ears took pride of place under the beaming sun. Fans from all over the world, sporting shirts from teams as far-flung as South America and Asia, gathered to have their photo taken with the famous trophy and enjoy this action-packed appetiser for the main event.

Puerta del Sol hosted the main stage, where Colombian singer Sebastián Yatra got everyone in the party spirit on Thursday night. Fans and locals danced away, while divided between Sol and Plaza Mayor were an array of skills challenges, technological innovations and even a swimming pool laid on by competition sponsors. Supporters were invited to test their football pedigree, while also being given the chance to commentate on iconic strikes from this season's UEFA Champions League.

Another popular attraction at Puerta del Sol was the Real Casa del Fútbol, which featured PlayStation bays and a shirt exhibition from past finals, where jerseys worn by greats including Sir Bobby Charlton and Lionel Messi hung proudly. Here too was the #EqualGame zone, which gave fans the chance to meet UEFA social responsibility partners such as Fare and CAFE.

### A game for all

UEFA's #EqualGame campaign, which promotes diversity, inclusion and accessibility in football, was also at the heart of the festivities on Friday as visitors made their way to the Champions Pitch to watch Luis Figo, Cafu and Roberto Carlos. The legendary trio were there

to show support for the Football for all Abilities programme, each grabbing a pair of crutches as they tested themselves against stars of the amputee game, with #EqualGame ambassadors Barış Telli and Keeley Cerretti joining in the fun.

Turkish star Telli left Roberto Carlos open-mouthed as he glided past the former Brazil defender with a stunning elástico manoeuvre, much to the delight of the thousands of spectators. The former stars then donned blindfolds to take penalties as they simulated the actions of a blind footballer, with Figo admitting it was a tougher proposition than he imagined: "I watch these guys and it amazes me – their ability, their judgement, it's very special. It's always an honour for us guys to be able to help promote something like blind football."

### Packed plazas

That trio were joined by the likes of David James, Alessandro Del Piero, Deco and Célia Šašić for the UEFA Ultimate Champions Tournament. Four teams of legends locked horns in a five-a-side competition as they gave a dazzling exhibition of the old adage that form is temporary and class permanent.

As the sun set, fans gravitated back to Sol, where DJ duo Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike played a set to bring Friday to a close, the more energetic revellers then venturing out to sample Madrid's famous nightlife – and no doubt ease their nerves.

Any fans needing a reminder of the prize at stake could get a giant glimpse at

the Plaza de Oriente which hosted a huge replica of the trophy, against the backdrop of Palacio Real de Madrid, the official residence of the Spanish royal family. A more picturesque selfie spot was harder to imagine as fans soaked up a little culture, and the Spanish sun, with the iconic UEFA Champions League anthem playing in the background.

Tottenham's fan park was hosted at Plaza de Colón – named after intrepid explorer Christopher Columbus – as the two rival contingents began to separate ahead of the main event. Liverpool, meanwhile, packed out Plaza de Salvador Dalí – complete with its own towering stone formation – as live music and DJs ensured that spirits were high.

For those who did not venture as far as the fan parks, popular Colombian musician Carlos Vives got fans in the mood with a pre-match performance at Puerta del Sol, where Roberto Carlos was charged with the prestigious task of transporting the UEFA Champions League trophy from the square to Estadio Metropolitano.

Inside the ground, it was down to business. Following renditions of Glory, Glory, Tottenham Hotspur and You'll Never Walk Alone, American band Imagine Dragons played a set in the opening ceremony before the players strode out onto the pitch. Whites versus Reds, the two sets of supporters decking the stands in the colours of host club Atlético de Madrid.

It was fitting that Mohamed Salah set Liverpool on their way with an emphatically struck penalty after just two minutes. The Egyptian forward had left the field in tears and clutching his shoulder in the first half of last year's final, but he had delivered a crucial strike for his side. And his joy was complete when super-sub Divock Origi doubled the lead three minutes from time, sealing the Reds' sixth European crown. "We've won it six times, we've won it six times, in sunny Madrid we won it six times," sang the Liverpool fans, as Jordan Henderson lofted the trophy skywards.

Despite the sting of defeat, their Spurs counterparts stayed and applauded their side's herculean efforts at the end of a historic campaign. Then, finally, both sets of supporters headed off into the Madrid night – sharing stories, analysing the game and cherishing memories that will last a lifetime. 🍷

# FOUR SUNNY SEASONS FOR LYON

Olympique Lyonnais extended their winning run on 18 May, beating FC Barcelona in this season's UEFA Women's Champions League final in Budapest.

The tenth final of the UEFA Women's Champions League was the first to step away from the men's equivalent and stood proud on its own. But the change of direction made no difference to the title's destination. In conclusive manner, Olympique Lyonnais donned the continental crown for the sixth time and extended the French club's winning streak to four successive seasons.

Although the 4-1 victory at the Ferencváros Stadium replicated the result against VfL Wolfsburg in last year's final,

OL turned their modus operandi on its head. In Kyiv they had overturned a 1-0 deficit by scoring four in 19 minutes during extra time. In Budapest, they were 3-0 ahead after 19 minutes, struck a fourth before half-time, and conceded a consolation goal one minute before full-time.

It was very scant consolation for FC Barcelona, who had come through the field to raise the Spanish flag for the first time at a final. And the debutants' first half, it has to be said, argued strongly

for the value of big-match experience. The crowd of just under 20,000 had barely settled into seats – and Barça certainly had not settled into their game – when Lyon took the lead with a goal of sublime simplicity. Goalkeeper Sarah Bouhaddi stepped out of her area to pass to advancing centre-back Griedge M'Bock Bathy, who hit a nicely weighted lofted pass over the Barça left-back. Shanice van de Sanden copied and pasted the runs which had laid on three of her team's four goals in last season's final, cutting the ball low across the box for Dzsenerifer Marozsan to side-foot home from close range.

## Final

**18 May, Budapest**

**Olympique Lyonnais 4-1 (4-0) FC Barcelona**

**Attendance:** 19,487

**Referee:** Anastasia Pustovoitova (Russia)

**Goals:** 1-0 Marozsan 5, 2-0 Hegerberg 14, 3-0 Hegerberg 19, 4-0 Hegerberg 30, 4-1 Oshoala 89

Ada Hegerberg scores the second of her three goals in the final against Barcelona.

## Hat-trick for Ada Hegerberg

The move was pasted again nine minutes later with, this time, Norwegian striker Ada Hegerberg providing the final touch – something she did again five minutes later though, on this occasion, the source was the left flank. Before half-time, the efficacy of OL's wing play was underscored when, this time, right-back Lucy Bronze was the provider of the low cross that allowed Hegerberg to become the first player to complete a hat-trick in the final since the FCR 2001 Duisburg captain, Inka Grings, did so in the last edition of the UEFA Women's Cup in 2009.

At half-time, Barça coach Lluís Cortés encouraged his players to "win the second half" – and they duly did so with a more composed possession game which created chances. The only one translated into a goal, however, was the first to be scored in a final by an African international, with Nigeria's Asisat Oshoala powering in behind the OL defence to convert a through pass.

Their four-season supremacy confirms Lyon as the benchmark setter in a competition where standards and profile are steadily rising. The emergence of Barcelona is a symptom of greater competitiveness. But can anybody wrest the crown from Olympique Lyonnais? 🏆







Almost 2,500 miles away from London, fans of Chelsea and Arsenal brought a taste of the English capital to Baku on 29 May as an all-English UEFA Europa League final came to Azerbaijan.

**W**hile the location may not have made it such a local affair for Londoners, swathes of fans of both clubs from Asia and the Middle East relished the opportunity to see their heroes in action in a more accessible location, lending a greater international, multicultural feel to the event. The atmospheric, medieval streets of Baku's old town, known locally as İçəri Şəhər, were filled with a blend of criss-crossing red and blue shirts, all exploring its neat intricacies and charm. With the iconic Flame Towers flickering in the distance, a buzzing Baku Boulevard led up to Dinamo Square, the location for a fan festival on the shores of the Caspian Sea; a meeting point for football fans of all allegiances and an opportunity for the locals to feel the allure and prestige of a major European footballing event, a taste of things to come for when the city stages four EURO 2020 fixtures.

Baku's 70,000-seater Olympic Stadium's luminous outer panels drew in the crowds, projecting the Europa League branding to give an even more marked orange hue to the skyline as the sun set over the Azerbaijan capital hours before the 23:00 local-time kick-off, 20:00 in London. As the first sound of Italian referee Gianluca Rocchi's whistle approached, an on-field

performance by London-born British artist Jonas Blue lifted the fans from their seats before the two teams filed in. Blue was the singer's name, and blue was the colour worn by the winning performers as Eden Hazard helped inspire Chelsea to their second UEFA Europa League title, emerging triumphant from a field of 213 clubs from 55 nations.

#### **18 games without losing**

Chelsea justified their place at the summit as the first club to go through an entire single Europa League campaign unbeaten, contributing to a new tournament record of 18 games without losing over two campaigns. Thanks to their tournament high of 36 goals, including 11 from the season's leading marksman, Olivier Giroud, few could doubt that Maurizio Sarri's men had set a very high benchmark on the way to Baku. They saw off Eintracht Frankfurt

in a dramatic semi-final penalty shoot-out after the German club had given their passionate travelling support memorable trips to Milan, where around 15,000 took in their last-16 win over FC Internazionale Milano, and Lisbon, where a 4-2 first-leg defeat at SL Benfica was not enough for the Portuguese side to oust Adi Hütter's men from the competition. Theirs was not the only fairy tale either as lowly Slavia Praha forged a providential path to the quarter-finals, eliminating KRC Genk and Sevilla FC before going down fighting against the eventual champions.

Europa League debutants F91 Dudelange caused a stir by taking a 2-1 lead at San Siro against AC Milan (before losing 5-2), and Luxembourg's first UEFA group stage representatives – meaning 39 nations and 209 clubs have now savoured the competition – bowed out with their heads held high with a point against Real Betis Balompíe, while Villarreal's derby defeat against Valencia in the quarter-finals was their record 74th match in a competition Spanish and English clubs have dominated over the past eight seasons.

Leaving behind the flicker of Baku's Flame Towers, the Europa League will burn on in Gdańsk, Poland, in 2020, with the challenge of Chelsea's crown commencing at the end of June. 🍷

#### **Chelsea FC 4-1 Arsenal FC**

**Attendance:** 51,370

**Referee:** Gianluca Rocchi (Italy)

**Goals:** 1-0 Giroud 49, 2-0

Rodriguez 60, 3-0 Hazard 65 (pen),

3-1 Iwobi 69, 4-1 Hazard 72

# PORTO MAKE HISTORY AT COLOVRAY

A new name was etched onto the UEFA Youth League trophy when the 2018/19 competition came to a close in Nyon on 29 April.

**T**hat name was FC Porto, the first Portuguese team to lift the trophy as, in the words of coach Mário Silva, they realised a dream with their victory over Chelsea in the final. "We wanted to go down in our country's history and we're happy to have done so," he said. "While some dreams may not come true, fortunately this one did."

Porto turned that dream to reality by avenging their semi-final loss to Chelsea 12 months earlier with an impressive 3-1 success on 29 April. Vieira, Diogo Queirós and Afonso Sousa were the scorers for a team impressively organised in defence and adept at counterattacking, with the skills of No10 Romário Baró and clever movement of centre-forward Fábio Silva.

For Chelsea, whose second-half equaliser from Daishawn Redan brought parity for just 120 seconds before Porto's second goal, there was a lesson learned about the need to convert your chances, following two clear opportunities missed with the game goalless.

The 'final four' at the Colovray stadium also featured defending champions FC Barcelona and first-time semi-finalists TSG 1899 Hoffenheim, and provided the closing chapter to a campaign which featured 167 matches involving 64 teams across seven months.

Barcelona, Hoffenheim and Porto all progressed to the knockout stage after winning their respective group-stage sections. In Chelsea's case, they came

through the domestic champions route and showed impressive character to overturn a two-goal deficit and defeat NK Dinamo Zagreb on penalties in their quarter-final.

The Londoners produced more of the same on semi-final day against Barcelona on 26 April. Determined to make amends for losing the 2018 final to the Blaugrana, they twice came from behind in a 2-2 draw before another shoot-out triumph, with goalkeeper Karlo Ziger again the hero after Charlie Brown's season-best 12th goal of the campaign had taken the contest to penalties.

Porto's victory in the other semi-final against Hoffenheim proved less complicated, Romário Baró's eye-catching free-kick the highlight of a 3-0 victory. The German side had overcome Real Madrid in the quarter-finals but were second best against a Porto side roared on by a noisy contingent of supporters, whose songs and flags brought considerable colour to the stadium.

It was not only on the pitch that the UEFA Youth League provided these young players with lessons. The morning after the semi-finals, all four squads convened at UEFA headquarters for a session on two key areas of the UEFA educational programme – financial planning and the Laws of the Game. ⚽



Getty Images

## Semi-finals – 26 April 2019

FC Barcelona 2-2 Chelsea FC  
(4-5 pens)

TSG 1899 Hoffenheim 0-3 FC Porto

## Final – 29 April 2019

FC Porto 3-1 Chelsea FC





Sportsfile

Dieguinho (Sporting) outmanoeuvres Rangel (Kairat) during the final in Almaty.

### Semi-finals – 26 April 2019

Sporting Clube de Portugal 5-3 Inter FS

Barça 2-5 Kairat Almaty

### Third-place play-off – 28 April 2019

Inter FS 1-3 Barça

### Final

Sporting Clube de Portugal 2-1 Kairat Almaty

# SPORTING WIN FIRST FUTSAL CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

After 120 qualifying matches, which had reduced a record field of 57 clubs from 53 national associations to just four, the inaugural UEFA Futsal Champions League final four, played in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 26 and 28 April, was much more than just a new visual identity.

**S**ucceeding the UEFA Futsal Cup, a comprehensive rebranding had given the competition an aura it has long deserved. Players and coaches alike spoke of how they already felt a Champions League allure, and how the name now meant they were indeed involved in European futsal's elite club competition. The anticipation had never been greater, and record crowds – both combined and individually – witnessed some of the best futsal the continent has to offer.

Ultimately, it was a combination of a solid defence – conceding just nine goals in eight games – with tactical organisation and mental strength which helped Sporting Clube de Portugal emerge triumphant as the first Portuguese champions since Benfica in 2010. “They were worthy winners,” conceded Kairat Almaty coach Kakà, gracious in defeat. UEFA's technical observer for the final four tournament, Miguel Rodrigo, agreed that Sporting

had set the bar high in their meticulous preparation for each game in Kazakhstan, a happy hunting ground for the Portuguese club, who had reached the final on both occasions the Futsal Cup finals had been staged here, and lifted the title at the fourth time of asking, following back-to-back final defeats to Inter FS.

### A record crowd of 12,090

In fact, four clubs who had contested three of the previous four finals between them descended on the Almaty Arena, where Sporting exacted revenge on Inter in the semi-final with a 5-3 triumph, ending their opponents' 19-game unbeaten streak in Europe since losing the 2016 final to Ugra. Hosts Kairat had boasted a 100% record all the way through qualifying, and this continued to the showpiece as they delighted a sell-out crowd of 12,090 – a tournament record – in the Almaty Arena with a 5-2 win over Barça.

An all-Spanish tie therefore determined the bronze medal winners, with Inter playing in their 76th UEFA futsal fixture – a new record. It was not one to remember for them, however, as Esquerdinha's record ninth career finals goal secured a 3-1 win, and a second straight bronze for Barça. Their keeper Dídac Plana was named man of the match in finals which will also be remembered for the outstanding quality of the goalkeeping.

Indeed, that could hardly have been more evident than in the final – the first since 2013 without Spanish participation – where Higuita and Guitta drew gasps and cheers from a final record of 11,973 spectators. Italian duo Diego Cavinato and Alex Merlim broke Higuita and Kairat's resistance, but it was Guitta who provided the save of the tournament to secure Sporting their first-ever title in the dying seconds of a memorable final four in Almaty. 🏆



Sportsfile

# DOUBLE DELIGHT FOR THE NETHERLANDS

A prolific Netherlands showed that attacking was the best form of title defence as they became European Under-17 Championship winners for a record fourth time.

**F**rom 3 to 19 May, the European Under-17 Championship final tournament returned to the shores of the Republic of Ireland for the first time since 1994, when it was still an Under-16 event. The hosts were looking to emulate their only previous win in the tournament, back in 1998, when tournament ambassador John O'Shea was part of a team which conceded only one goal in the final tournament in Scotland.

The same defensive strength and resilience characterised the hosts' performances in Tallaght Stadium, Dublin, and the regional sports centre in Waterford, where they collected three 1-1 draws against Greece, the Czech Republic and Belgium, only narrowly missing out on a place in the quarter-finals. The Czech Republic beat them to that, with a 2-0 win over Greece setting them up for a last-eight clash with a French side who already had one player making a name for himself.

Adil Aouchiche set a new tournament record of nine goals, a haul which included a hat-trick against Sweden and was topped up with four in that quarter-final. Furthermore, Aouchiche's performances continued France's reputation for providing top scorers in

the tournament, with Odsonne Edouard's eight in 2015 and Amine Gouiri's eight in 2017 previous tournament records.

## Goals in abundance

Indeed, with a total of 102 goals, this final tournament turned out to be the second most prolific after 2002, with the onus firmly placed on goalscoring. This included convincing wins for both Italy and Spain in their opening matches, and a 5-2 triumph for the Netherlands in their second group game against England – a result which ensured their place in the quarter-finals with a game to spare, and furthered their already glowing reputation as the most prolific side in qualifying with an average of 5.7 goals in their six matches.

Drama on the final day of the group stage saw Hungary and Portugal emerge from Group C with a 3-2 win over Russia and 4-2 victory against Iceland respectively, while England's journey ended despite a 3-1 win over Sweden, with France's 2-0 win over the Dutch taking them through. Meanwhile, Italy flexed their muscles with a 4-1 win over Spain, with both coaches making nine changes to their already qualified teams.

In the quarter-finals, a full-strength Dutch side impressed in a 3-0 win over Belgium, Ki-Jana Hoever completing the

win and a fine team move with their third to set up a semi-final against Spain, who needed a penalty shoot-out to see off a fierce and determined Hungary. Italy's 1-0 win over Portugal earned them the not particularly enviable task of facing France, who dismantled the Czech Republic 6-1.

## Rerun of the 2018 final

Carmine Nunziata's side nevertheless delivered one of the tournament's most tactically astute performances, neutralising a French midfield which had previously looked fearsome, coming from behind to win 2-1 and reach their second straight final. Their opponents would be familiar too, the Netherlands deciding an even encounter with Spain in the dying seconds to set up a repeat of the 2018 showpiece.

Tallaght Stadium was the venue and 5,952 fans witnessed the Dutch race into a three-goal lead before half-time. Lorenzo Colombo gave the Italians some hope with a stunning shot on the turn, but 15-year-old Naci Ünüvar restored the Netherlands' three-goal cushion with Colombo's late second merely cosmetic. So it was that the Netherlands retained their crown – as they had done in 2012 – becoming the tournament's record titleholders, with their coach Peter van der Veen vowing to return again next year in Estonia, when the Dutch will be bidding for an unprecedented hat-trick.

The tournament also served as the qualifying competition for the 2019 U-17 World Cup in Brazil, where Europe will be represented by France, Hungary, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. 🇳🇱

### Quarter-finals

Belgium	0-3	Netherlands
France	6-1	Czech Republic
Hungary	1-1 (4-5 pens)	Spain
Italy	1-0	Portugal

### World Cup play-off

Hungary	1-1 (5-4 pens)	Belgium
---------	-------------------	---------

### Semi-finals

Netherlands	1-0	Spain
France	1-2	Italy

### Final

Netherlands	4-2	Italy
-------------	-----	-------





# GERMANY SPOT ON YET AGAIN

The headline is a cliché and the outcome of the 2018/19 European Women's Under-17 Championship also had more than a hint of déjà vu. Germany increased their haul of titles to seven. And, for the fifth consecutive time, their victory was secured in a penalty shoot-out.

**T**he denouement may have been no surprise. But the tournament – played in Bulgaria from 5 to 17 May – was rich in them. Bulgaria, for a start, were among the pleasant surprises. The hosts, apart from impeccably staging the event in Albena on the Black Sea coast, made a more than dignified debut at the final tournament. Troyan Radulov received praise from his coaching colleagues for the creation of a disciplined, well-organised defend and counter strategy which made opponents sweat for victory.

Portugal also earned applause for reaching the semi-finals for the first time on the basis of victories over Bulgaria and Denmark – only to round off a Jekyll and Hyde tournament with 6-0 and 2-0 defeats against Spain and Germany. Denmark, starting with a stout 0-0 draw against Spain, nonetheless finished the group stage behind both of their Iberian rivals.

Group B was more of a conundrum. When the final matches kicked off, Austria, England, Germany and the Netherlands all had semi-final places in their sights. While Germany were securing advancement with a 3-1 win over Austria, England, 4-0 losers to Germany in their opening match, were bouncing back with

a 2-0 win over the Dutch which, once the calculators had done their work, proved to be one goal short of sending their opponents to the airport. England lost out on goal difference in a three-way tie and, as their coach Gemma Grainger rued on the way home: "We became the first team ever to have been eliminated in the group stage with six points."

## From 80 to 90 minutes

The strength of that group was underlined when the Germans and Dutch went on to the final. The former with a solid 2-0 win over Portugal thanks to one goal and one assist from their ebullient left-winger Carlotta Wamser. The latter with a dense defensive strategy which suffocated Spain's outstanding skills and possession play. Direct counterattacking provided three goals from five attempts and meant that Spain missed the final for the first time in five years.

And so to the final showdown in Albena. Scenes of pinball chaos in the Dutch area after a corner allowed Germany to take a 19th-minute lead, only for Nikita Tromp, the tournament's top scorer with six, to equalise within two minutes. After the flurry, the tempo

## Group A (5, 8 and 11 May)

Bulgaria	1-3	Portugal
Spain	0-0	Denmark
Bulgaria	0-3	Spain
Denmark	0-1	Portugal
Denmark	2-0	Bulgaria
Portugal	0-6	Spain

## Group B (5, 8 and 11 May)

Austria	1-4	Netherlands
England	0-4	Germany
Germany	2-3	Netherlands
Austria	1-2	England
Germany	3-1	Austria
Netherlands	0-2	England

## Semi-finals (14 May)

Germany	2-0	Portugal
Spain	1-3	Netherlands

## Final (17 May)

Netherlands	1-1	Germany
	(2-3 pens)	

dropped – players maybe accumulating fatigue at an event where playing time had been increased from 80 to 90 minutes, with the additional innovation of coaches being able to make five changes. The novelties, however, did not affect the outcome. In a bizarre shoot-out, the first four penalties hit the net. And the next seven stayed out. Centre-back Mieke Schiemann then despatched the twelfth into the roof of the net to give Germany their déjà vu victory. 🏆





# UEFA SUPER CUP HEADS TO ISTANBUL, THE CITY OF MIRACLES

The setting for the unforgettable UEFA Champions League final between Liverpool and AC Milan in 2005, Istanbul is now looking forward to hosting the all-English 2019 UEFA Super Cup between Liverpool and Chelsea.

BY GÖRKEM KIRGIZ

**B**eşiktaş Park is set to give the world a message of togetherness through football, next to the Bosphorus, where two continents meet. As it prepares to host the 2019 UEFA Super Cup on 14 August, the city of Istanbul is ready to offer an experience filled with passion, entertainment, culture and architecture, emulating the festival atmosphere enjoyed by everyone who was there for that memorable Champions League final in 2005.

In between, Istanbul was also the host city for the 2009 UEFA Cup final between Shakhtar Donetsk and Werder Bremen, the last final to be played under that name before the competition became the UEFA Europa League. After this year's Super Cup, the city will turn its attention to the 2020 UEFA Champions League final, which will be played at the Atatürk Olympic Stadium on 30 May.

Beşiktaş Park holds the record for the highest decibel level ever recorded in European football at 132dB. The stadium is all geared up to welcome fans, players, technical staff and media representatives and to offer them the best conditions for a perfect match.

The original Beşiktaş Park (known then as the BJK İnönü Stadium) opened its gates on 23 November 1947. It was demolished in 2013, and after 1,065 days of reconstruction work it was ready for a much better football experience when it reopened on 11 April 2016.

Beşiktaş Park is the first smart stadium in Turkey. It is equipped with broadband mobile and a Wi-Fi network with rich media display solutions. It is also used as an entertainment and concert arena. The stadium's architecture is in harmony with its splendid surroundings and also allows supporters to feel the excitement of the game and players to feel the

passion of the crowd. The view of the Bosphorus makes Beşiktaş Park even more special and unique.

For the 2019 UEFA Super Cup, the stadium will be filled to capacity with more than 41,000 supporters from different continents, heightening the passion for football among the young population of Turkey and delivering the message of togetherness symbolised by the Bosphorus' three bridges to millions of people all over the world.

Besides the action on the pitch, fans will have the opportunity to visit the magnificent structures of the historical peninsula, such as Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace, the Basilica Cistern, Grand Bazaar, Spice Bazaar, Galata Tower, Maiden's Tower and, just within walking distance of Beşiktaş Park, Dolmabahçe Palace, Dolmabahçe Mosque, İhlamur Palace and Yıldız Palace. Beşiktaş Park is ready to host the best UEFA Super Cup ever. 🏆







Athenea Del Castillo tries to win the ball from Viktoria Adam and Laura Kovács during Spain's match against Hungary on 6 April (7-0). Spain have their sights on a third title in a row.

## BIG KICK-OFF FOR UNDER-19s

Both the women's and men's Under-19 final tournaments take place in July, in Scotland and Armenia respectively.

**T**he European Women's Under-19 Championship and European Under-19 Championship will be held on opposite sides of Europe in July, with respective hosts Scotland and Armenia among eight sides in each hoping to take the titles.

While Scotland has experience of staging club finals, most recently the 2007 UEFA Cup decider between Espanyol and Sevilla at Hampden Park, it has not organised a UEFA tournament since the 1998 European U16 Championship. Scottish women's football has undergone a remarkable rise in recent years – the senior team made their European Women's Championship debut in 2017 and have qualified for a first Women's World Cup this summer – and a key member of that side believes the Under-19 finals will add to the feelgood factor.

"I'm really looking forward to it, it's great we can showcase the best talent in Europe," said forward Erin Cuthbert. "People in Scotland are really starting to take notice of women's football and there's a real buzz around. It's a great

time for the Under-19 tournament to be coming to Scotland when there's been a senior World Cup going on; people will be inspired to come out."

While Scotland have never progressed beyond the group stage in five previous finals, five of the sides who will join them in this year's tournament from 16 to 28 July have already lifted the trophy. Spain are aiming to become the first team to win the trophy for three seasons running; they have reached the final in the last five seasons and won all their games in qualifying this time round.

Germany and France both have four titles, with Germany the top scorers in 2018/19 qualifying after hitting 45 goals – Sjoeke Nüsken providing 12 of them. The 2009 champions, England, were the only side to keep six qualifying clean sheets and one of three to win all six games, along with the Netherlands and Norway, with second-time qualifiers Belgium completing the finals line-up.

Two days before the first match in Scotland, the Under-19s final tournament kicks off on the other side of the continent,

the first UEFA final tournament to be staged in Armenia, which welcomes the U19 finals from 14 to 27 July. Having claimed a first crown in 2018, Portugal are back to defend their title, having qualified without conceding a goal, although three other former winners are among the seven sides standing in their way.

The most successful team in U19 history, Spain, return to the finals after a four-year absence, not having featured since claiming their seventh title in 2015. While Santi Denia's side and last year's runners-up Italy both won five of their six qualifiers, the Republic of Ireland recorded six victories – the only side to do so. Tom Mohan's team were also the top scorers overall, notching 18 goals in their six matches at an average of three per game.

Three-time champions France have qualified for the 11th time, while this will be the seventh finals for both the Czech Republic and 2003 winners Italy. Norway, who also reached last year's tournament, are seeking to progress beyond the group stage for the first time at the fifth attempt. 🇵🇹







MORGAN DE SANCTIS

# MOVING OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE

Former Udinese, Napoli and Roma goalkeeper Morgan De Sanctis discusses the changing art of goalkeeping – and the learning process he has undertaken since becoming Roma's team manager.

**"T**o be a footballer at a high level means you live a life that's not real," says Morgan De Sanctis as he reflects on the adjustment from playing football to filling an off-field position in the game. The one-time Italy goalkeeper is today team manager at AS Roma, a role he embarked on in 2017 after leaving AS Monaco and hanging up his gloves following a 23-year professional career.

Now 42, he gained lessons from working under some of Italy's finest coaches of the past couple of decades and holds intriguing views on the evolution of goalkeeping, questioning whether the focus on footwork among today's young custodians has led to a neglect of the basic arts of keeping the ball out of the goal.

His own quest for knowledge goes on, as he acknowledged during a recent visit to Nyon as part of his UEFA Pro diploma coaching course. Yet one thing he is sure of already about the challenge of building a second career is that, whether as a coach or director of football, the demands of the 21st-century game mean "You can't do it all alone."

## What do you consider the biggest changes you've seen in terms of the evolution of football?

I started a long time ago as a professional, in 1993, and football has changed since then. Footballers have improved athletically. Even the equipment – the boots, the balls – has had an influence on the acceleration of the game's development. And it's not true that there's less technical ability. The technical ability has stayed at a very high level – only the game has got faster. Players get forward just as well as they get back. Football has changed on the pitch as

well as off it. And you have to say that, in a general sense, it's improved. I'm not one of those nostalgic people. If I watch a Champions League match today, and watch a European Cup game from 20 or 30 years ago, I much prefer the games we see today and everything that goes on around them.

## How much has the goalkeeper's role changed from when you were younger?

I was born in 1977. If I'm not mistaken, the back-pass rule came into force in 1992.

So, at 15 years old, it came as a great shock to me, because I'd grown up with certain tactics which, all of a sudden, were taken away. Maybe that was worse for those keepers who were 20, 22 at the time. I still had time to improve. Another change probably came with the arrival of [Pep] Guardiola at Barcelona, where he created this style of play which heavily involved the goalkeeper. It was already happening in some teams, but not in the same way Guardiola did it and because it was Barcelona and it was a formula for success, it captured the attention and today it's clear that the role of the goalkeeper has changed. Keepers have to know how to play with their feet. I'm from another generation, and even in the last ten years of my career, I didn't have coaches that demanded this element. However, I understand that today a goalkeeper must be prepared to do this, and to be good at it.

**"I've started to see in the younger generation the loss of a grasp of the technical and tactical basics."**

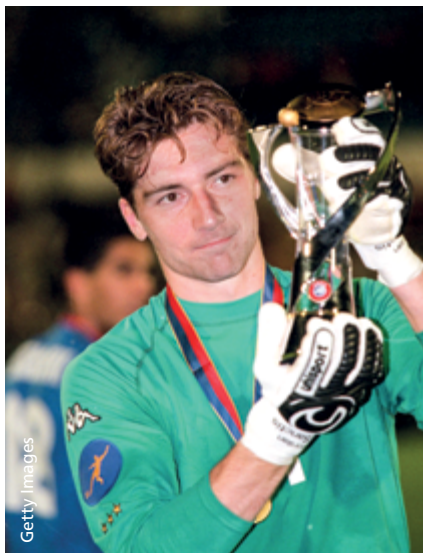
## How has this change of job description impacted on the qualities of the young keepers you see?

Almost all goalkeepers now are highly capable of playing well with both feet, but I've started to see in the younger generation the loss of a grasp of the technical and tactical basics. How do you block a shot? How do you parry the ball away? Which position do you take in a certain situation? Why is this happening? Because, probably, in the youth teams, they focus a lot on the feet, but neglect the technical and tactical aspects. What I'm getting at here is that the keeper must know how to do everything – and to do it well. And fundamentally, you must know how to make saves, above all else.

## How do you see the role of the goalkeeper evolving further?

I don't know how much further it will go. I have already seen keepers who at times play 10 or 20 metres outside of the box but the problem is there'll always be a goal there to defend. When a keeper comes out, it's not a problem if his team have the ball. The problem is when they lose it and he has to track back the distance he's come. A larger distance puts a keeper in more difficulty, and this is something which has changed the playing style because, once upon a time, the keeper was rooted to his line. Today, you hardly ever see a keeper on his line. The movements [he makes] are always going back towards goal, and [you need] the technical and tactical ability to stop in the right place and at the right moment to make an intervention. Many goals are conceded because the keeper isn't in the right place, or is trying to make up the ground, so technically they're unable to make the correct movements. →





I had a coach in the latter stages of my career who worked on this aspect, which we Italians call the situational aspect, because if you have a defence like Atlético Madrid's, for example, which stays deep, you make only small movements. If, on the other hand, you have a higher defensive line, and you have to work in that space, it's a lot more difficult.

**As an ex-player working in roles off the pitch, what challenges do you face – and how can you prepare to meet them?**

I actually had one more year on my contract as a player at [Monaco], but was anxious to take on this role Roma were giving me, as team manager, because I wanted to understand how a team works outside of the dressing room. The things I

“When you move over to the other side – whether you’re a coach, director, team manager or journalist – you have to understand that your quality of life will no longer be as it was.”



had going for me were [my willingness to] study, my diligence, work ethic, knowledge and experience. I played until the age of 40. To be a footballer at a high level means you live a life that's not real, because you work hard for two or three hours a day. The other hours of the day, you have your hobbies and your family. When you move over to the other side – whether you're a coach, director, team manager or journalist – you have to understand that your quality of life will no longer be as it was, and this is difficult for players. This was the first challenge for me, after which I started studying. I'm doing a coaching course now. I've already done the sporting director course that we have in Italy, to study the business side. My role is that of team manager, where everyone – players, coach, club, the press, and other teams – comes and ask you things, so in the end you understand how a club works. At this point, I feel more suited to a management-level role, probably as sporting director. However, I wanted to do a coaching course to understand another aspect.

**What role do these coaching courses play?**

I have an extremely positive view of UEFA's A and B coaching courses, of the UEFA Pro course, the sporting director course, the course for goalkeeping coaches. It's true that these courses don't give you all the information you need. However, you have the chance to gather information and to think like a coach or a sporting director. I'll give you an example. During the UEFA course, we've watched matches like a coach – how the teams have been set up tactically, the moves the opposition makes, if the manager makes a change, the patterns of the game, if he says something to the players. If you're doing the sporting director course, you watch it from the perspective of a sporting director, concentrating more on one player to see whether or not they're good and if they have character.

**How would you get your knowledge of football and your philosophy of the game across to players?**

I'm really fascinated by this. Today, it's true that there's been a globalisation of football, so there's no such thing as English football, Italian football, Spanish football. There's a globalised football in which an Italian team has very few Italian players.





De Sanctis was especially influenced by Marcello Lippi, who coached him at Juventus and in the Italian national team.

English teams are in the same position. In the Premier League, I don't know how many English managers there are. This can also be a positive. From my Italian perspective, and I think it's also the same for the Spanish and English, I think we need to claim a little bit of our originality, saying, 'Look, let's keep something Italian here.' However, globalisation is also good.

From the perspective of a coach or sporting director, you have to consider certain things. You need to know where you're going, because if Barcelona decide you're the right person for the position of coach or sporting director, you need to know the history, the philosophy. Then you need to evaluate the players you'll have and then you need to understand what the objectives are. Only at that point can you decide what kind of philosophy the team will have both on and off the pitch, though when giving the example of Barcelona, it's obvious that there's a philosophy which involves having possession and being in control. If I give you the example of Juventus, it's another type of football – getting the result at any cost, because the slogan is 'Winning is not important, it's the only thing that matters'. But then a revolution can happen through someone like Guardiola coming along. These are examples from big clubs. Not everyone will have the chance to

work at these clubs. So, there'll be clubs where the philosophy changes every year and the style of play too. You can have a club in Serie B which one year has a rich owner who invests money and as a result wants to win the championship and bring in better players. In those cases – aside from very rare exceptions involving great managers, directors and teams, where their history tells them what they are – things can change. Money changed Manchester City, for example.



“I think we need to claim a little bit of our originality, saying, ‘Look, let’s keep something Italian here.’”

### Which coaches influenced you most at the start and throughout your career?

I was very lucky because I had great managers. My first manager was Giorgio Rumignani, and out of gratitude I always mention him, because he was the one who got me started. He played me in Serie B in a starting role for an entire season at 17. I remember him with a lot of affection because he was an expression of the type of football that no longer exists, a romanticised football. In Italy, we say ‘pane e salame’ [bread and butter]. It's a type of football where everything is based on enjoyment, being together, very few tactics, lots of togetherness. I like to remember him because his way of doing things, even at that time, was still revolutionary. He achieved great things at clubs in Serie B and Serie C in Italy, which were important championships at the time, so I always mention him because he reminds me of a type of football which no longer exists.

Then I had Marcello Lippi, and I remember him a lot on account of two fundamental qualities: consistency and charisma. I also had Carlo Ancelotti, a great manager for managing people, and incredible in terms of his calmness, his ability, his intelligence. I had Walter Mazzarri, who organised the team →

completely. From start to finish, the team knew what would happen and what should happen. And then I had [Luciano] Spalletti, from beautiful Tuscany with its history, Leonardo da Vinci and everything. He was a creative coach – creative, clever, intuitive. If I have to think of managers who've given me something extra, these are the ones who come to mind.

**What are the most important aspects when choosing your technical staff, and how would you manage them if you became a coach?**

The first thing is to not confuse professional matters with friendship. You have to have people who, perhaps in some situations, know more than you. It's extremely important to have people of high quality around you, because if you have people who aren't good, they could well undermine you and your legitimacy in the eyes of the players and staff. You then have to get your colleagues on side, make them understand the importance of being together, sharing the workload and objectives, and respecting people's positions. And then there's obviously the question of character. You need some self-reflection. Am I an aggressive person, a difficult person, a demanding person? In this case, it's probably better to choose colleagues who'll lower the tension levels. If you're a calm person, a gentle person, you might need people who'll increase the tension levels, who are more intense, more precise, more methodological in their work.

**What are your thoughts on the role of a goalkeeping coach in the world of football?**

I'd prefer the goalkeeping coach to stay on the pitch a bit longer with the keepers. When you train with the team, you do one type of work. When you train with the goalkeeping coach specifically, working on parrying with the hands, it's a different kind of work. Maybe the indispensable thing that I see, from having been a goalkeeper myself, is that the goalkeeping coach [must be] very involved in defensive set-piece preparation.

“You have to have people who, perhaps in some situations, know more than you.”

When a coach does defensive set-piece preparation with his assistant and possibly other colleagues as well – corners, free-kicks out wide, and central ones with a wall – he must involve the goalkeeping coach because he's the only one who can make the goalkeeper understand certain things, depending on the keeper's attributes. If he's good at coming out, the goalkeeping coach might suggest holding a higher defensive line. Take [André] Onana, who has such strong legs and fine agility. Ajax play with a high line with Onana and it works because he comes out. If you're a goalkeeper who doesn't have that agility, it's something the coach must understand and talk about, or choose another [keeper], though not everyone has that choice.

**Do you remember any goalkeeping coaches whose methods really helped you improve?**

You never forget your first love. I had a coach called Gino Di Censo in the Pescara Calcio youth ranks who really helped me on and off the pitch because he loved me. He loved all his goalkeepers, but he really loved me and I'll always remember him. I had so many goalkeeping coaches, all of whom gave me something, but the key moment was probably when I was around 20. Udinese signed me and they had a coach called Alessandro Zampa, whose methodology was completely revolutionary. This was back in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Back then, particularly in Italy, they wanted goalkeepers to attack the ball, with

high and low crosses, and I really enjoyed that because it was a new approach for me to work on. I was exposed to it as a 20-year-old who wanted to learn, and it left a mark on me that made me different from so many other goalkeepers.

**Will your goalkeepers train with the outfield players or will they work separately?**

When I started out, 80% of my time was spent away from the team, because 20% was small-sided games, for which you needed goalkeepers, or target practice. Nowadays I think it's 50%. Goalkeepers are with the whole squad for 50% of the time to work on other areas, such as building the play as a team. It's no longer possible to imagine a goalkeeper not being part of the team's attacking and defensive tactical work.

**What sort of personalities will you be looking for, in terms of young goalkeepers' development?**

My eldest daughter is 18 and she's a goalkeeper. This was something that made me proud, [because] I think that if you're a youngster and you decide to be a goalkeeper, it means you have a sense of responsibility, you're a real character and have something different about you. The first thing I look at is how much charisma, personality and ability the goalkeeper has to lead on the pitch, and off it as well. For me, that determines the level in terms of being a top player, or being in that world-class bracket. Of course, there are technical



Morgan De Sanctis at the Pro diploma course at UEFA on 5 May.



## De Sanctis' club career

<b>Pescara</b>	1994–97	(league apps <b>74</b> )
<b>Juventus</b>	1997–99	(league apps <b>3</b> )
<b>Udinese</b>	1999–2007	(league apps <b>194</b> )
<b>Sevilla</b>	2007/08	(league apps <b>8</b> )
<b>Galatasaray</b>	2008/09	(league apps <b>31</b> , loan)
<b>Napoli</b>	2009–13	(league apps <b>147</b> )
<b>Roma</b>	2013–16	(league apps <b>75</b> )
<b>Monaco</b>	2016/17	(league apps <b>1</b> )

Getty Images

and athletic qualities. You can't be a goalkeeper in football nowadays [without them] as it's faster and more physical, and players have changed physically. I'm 190cm and when I started out in 1994, I was one of the tallest goalkeepers. Today I'd be average height. When I started out, Sebastiano Rossi and [Zeljko] Kalac were very tall goalkeepers who had difficulties, maybe because they were so slender. Today, however, there are goalkeepers who are 195cm who can get down so easily, because the players' build has changed, so that aspect matters.

If you're 185cm tall as a goalkeeper now, you're a phenomenon because you often don't get the chance to push the ball away, but you just have to spread yourself. To start with you're losing 10, 15 or 20 centimetres because it's not just about height, but also your reach with your arms. If you then have to come out to claim the ball with players like [Virgil] van Dijk coming in ... Having said that, psychology and ability are important. You need the physique, but you need the technique as well, and that mustn't be neglected.

### **You said that physical attributes can be key but if you're not quite at that level, can you still become a top goalkeeper?**

Football is very democratic in this regard. You can be two metres tall or 170cm. You can have legs that are thick or thin. Out of the ten outfield roles, based on your physical and technical qualities, you'll find the right one. As for goalkeepers, the physical side counts. There are goalkeepers nowadays who are a bit shorter but are still good, such as Kepa Arrizabalaga, but he's not tiny. Maybe football is harsher on goalkeepers overall, particularly at the top level where it's so fast-paced.

### **You've attended this course for the UEFA Pro diploma. What are the most important points that you'll take back home in terms of leadership and being a head coach?**

When you do these courses, one thing you understand is that when you have

the responsibility of being a manager, with others working below you whom you have to lead, teach and guide, you can't just do one thing. You have to know about communication, psychology, technique and tactics, so it's a bit of everything. You can't do it all alone. You have two key areas: first is your staff and your ability to delegate and get help. You also have to keep everyone positive, and generate respect and teamwork.

I don't really believe in the English football manager [concept] which is changing and becoming closer and closer to the Italian and Spanish models, with a coach and sporting director. If you have to coach the team, decide the formation, take care of the fitness drills, work on the pitch, choose the best XI, how can a coach start to watch 30 players every day, speak to agents, decide which type of contract fits and speak with the finance department? It's not possible. That's what these courses help you to understand. We're moving towards bigger and more complex clubs, so you have to be good at understanding your role and how to do it well. 🧠



# SUPPORTING NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH THEIR DECISIONS

The delivery in March of a report entitled Foreign Player Impact on Maltese Football took place without fanfare, and yet it marked a significant moment in the story of the UEFA intelligence centre.

For the Malta Football Association (MFA), the aforesaid 70-page 'state of the game' report justified the decision to task a still relatively new UEFA unit with a major research project that otherwise could have gone – probably for a five- or six-figure euro sum – to an external company outside the football family.

For UEFA, the successful composition and delivery of a project undertaken in February and March underlined both the effectiveness and the potential of the intelligence centre, whose creation was a strategic decision approved by the UEFA Executive Committee in 2017 and since developed through 2018 and 2019 to form the current team of seven.

## What is the UEFA intelligence centre?

The stated aim of the UEFA intelligence centre is for it to be "a recognised centre of excellence for strategic off-pitch football research, delivering balanced insights directly to UEFA policymakers, decision takers and key stakeholders." To try to reach this objective, the intelligence centre boasts a team constructed for the modern age, combining specialist technical knowledge and professional skills including data science, economics, accounting and econometric modelling, supported importantly by more than 50 years of working in the football world. The team has built, and continues to build, a network of interlinked databases designed to aid decision-making, covering almost all aspects of club and national team football. The full list of databases and project types, and a sample of the types of questions that can now be explored, can be found in the new prototype intelligence centre web catalogue.

## Servicing stakeholders

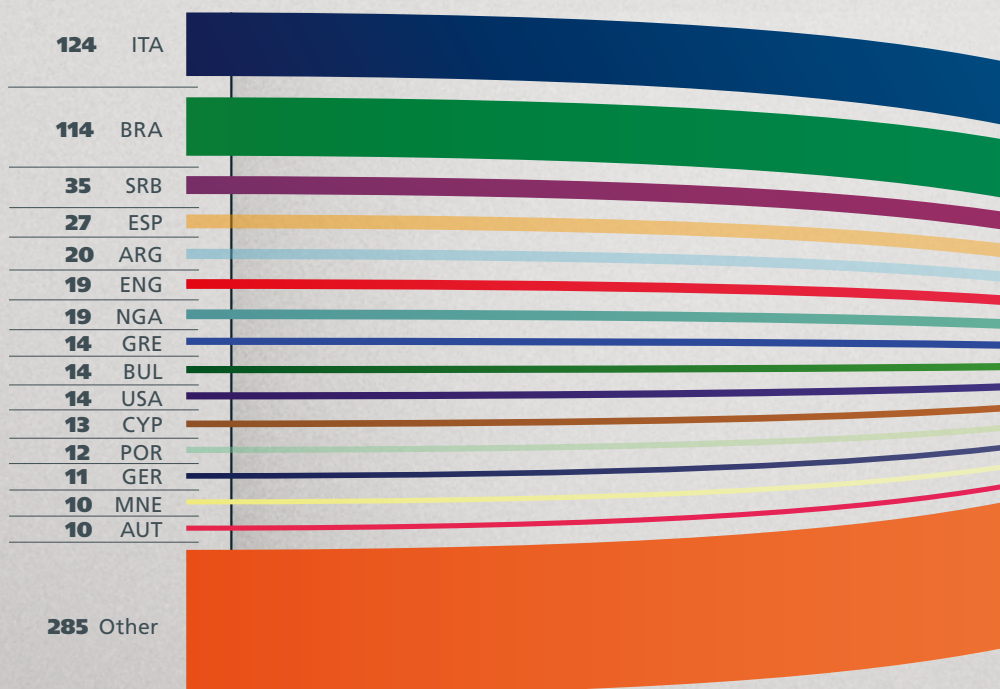
The intelligence centre strategic analytics function has already serviced more than 60 internal and external projects, but it is services to the national associations that are probably the least exploited so far. This was confirmed when, after presenting the Malta project briefly to one of UEFA's committees,

## The European football landscape database

Over the past 12 months, the intelligence centre has been building almost certainly the most comprehensive set of interlinked databases in football, including data covering all 55 UEFA member associations on topics such as:

- Club ownership
- Club and national association finances
- Commercial and sponsorship rights
- Stadium and training facility projects
- Attendances and supporters
- Domestic match and league results
- League and cup structures and formats
- Transfers and loans
- Head coach profiles
- Qualifications and career paths
- Player careers and squad usage
- Agent landscape
- Football demographics and indicators
- UEFA club competitions and national team competitions

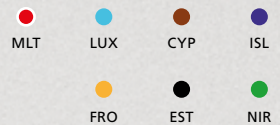
## FOREIGN PLAYER 10-YEAR INBOUND TRANSFER FLOWS TO MALTA



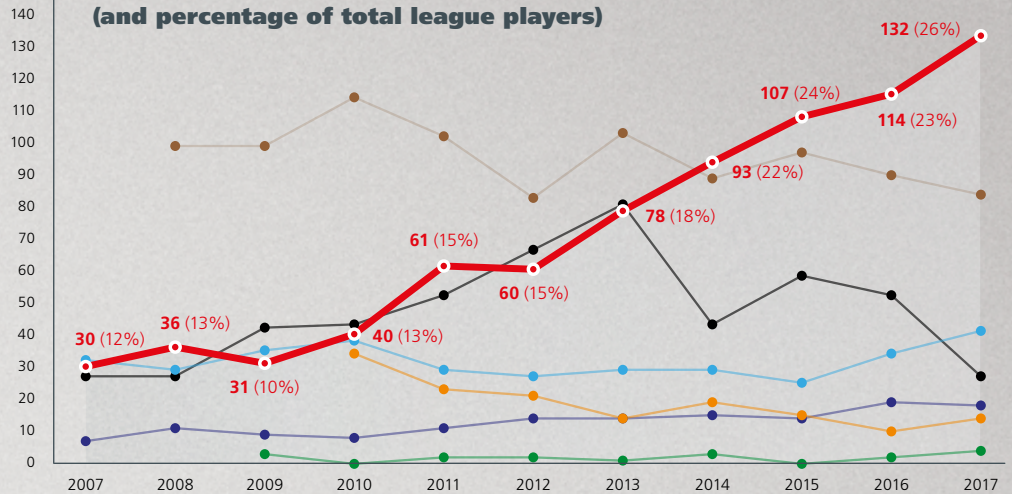


① In line with the change to the regulations, the playing time and selection of foreign players in the Maltese premier league have increased over the past ten years. Non-EEA players now make up **over 25%** of total players.

① With its changes to the regulations regarding foreign players, Malta has seen by far the biggest rise in non-EEA players over the last ten years. Estonia had a similar growth rate until 2013, but the numbers have drastically dropped since, back to 2007 levels. Other associations in the peer group have seen levels stay relatively stable.



### NUMBER OF NON-HOMEGROWN AND NON-EEA PLAYERS REGISTERED WITH TOP-DIVISION CLUBS (and percentage of total league players)



a further two national associations immediately expressed a wish for similar project work.

As the catalogue highlights, the intelligence centre is now in a position to assist with a wide range of discussions at national level. Whether it be using data to gauge the relative success of youth development or head coaching in a particular country, or identifying clubs that are doing best in transfer operations, finances or growing their supporter base, or even assessing which is the best structure and format for a domestic league, there are many insights to be shared.

### From theory to practice

However, practice usually trumps theory, and the recent task of assessing the level of impact by foreign players on Malta's national team and premier league meant an opportunity to give practical substance to the usefulness of this work.

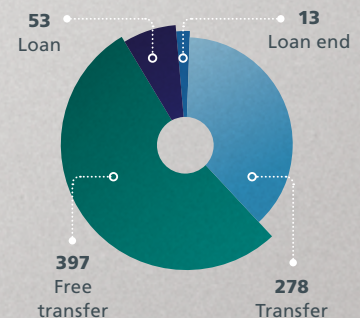
The core issue of the report was to assess the impact of a possible increase in the accepted number of foreign players in Maltese matchday squads from seven – albeit the bare question 'Should foreign player squad limits be relaxed?' belied the comprehensive scope of an answer that utilised a combination of primary data sourced from UEFA and the MFA, third-party databases and key stakeholder interviews. →

① Of the **741** recorded foreign player transfers into Malta, over **30%** of players have been transferred from either Italy or Brazil. The fact that Serbia is the third most common league but covers just **5%** of overall inbound transfers underlines how widely distributed the inbound player flow is.

## Malta

Total number of players  
**741**

### Types of inbound transfer



① In total, **62%** of inbound foreign nationals in the last decade have come from a league in their own country. The ratio is higher (**77%**) for inbound transfers from Italy, where **96** of the **124** inbound transfers were Italian nationals, and much higher for inbound transfers from Brazil, where **113** of the **124** foreign players were Brazilian nationals.



## TREND IN FOREIGN PLAYERS IN MALTESE PREMIER LEAGUE BY NATIONALITY

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Brazil</b>	9	17	10	19	35	33	41	40	32	36	47
<b>Argentina</b>	3	4	2	3	4	6	4	6	9	16	18
<b>Other South America</b>		1	1	1		1	4	3	7	7	6
<b>Central &amp; N. America</b>		1	1	1	1	1		4	9	12	15
<b>Italy</b>	1	4	2	3	7	8	27	12	24	16	31
<b>Serbia</b>	5	6	9	7	11	6	7	11	6	10	12
<b>Other Europe</b>	13	15	17	30	28	40	33	31	36	42	41
<b>Nigeria</b>	7	3	8	8	12	15	13	20	26	17	10
<b>Other Africa</b>	4	3	1	8	12	4	14	16	17	21	23
<b>Asia</b>	1	2	1	1			2	3	4	2	4
<b>Oceania</b>					1						
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>207</b>

## ① Common player nationalities

There were 207 foreign players registered with Maltese premier league clubs in 2017/18, with almost a quarter being Brazilian nationals. Italian, Argentinian, and Nigerian players have featured highly, as well as other European and African nations.

## ① Recent growth

Between 2007 and 2011, Brazilian (9 to 35) and other European (13 to 28) players increased the most. Between 2011 and 2015 there was a large influx of Nigerian (12 to 26) and other African players (12 to 17), as well as Italian players (7 to 24). In the last two seasons, nationalities have fluctuated, with Brazil, Argentina, Serbia and Italy up and Nigerian numbers down.

As described by the MFA general secretary, Angelo Chetcuti, the process began with a series of face-to-face meetings with stakeholders, which then fed into a 360° qualitative review that took from various unique intelligence centre databases. The next step was an interim report comprising a slide-deck summary of evidence, which was the prelude to the final full report setting out quantitative and qualitative evidence, tailored peer group comparisons and a series of online interactive club-by-club dashboards.

Angelo Chetcuti noted: "Rather than just provide a report, the whole project was highly collaborative and engaging. We lined up a full day with the who's who of Maltese football, from amateur game representatives to club presidents, from players and coaches to journalists and TV presenters, and from players' union to MFA specialists. UEFA had really done its homework and, to the surprise of most, the UEFA team presented facts tailored specifically to our Maltese situation that covered and enlivened each topic under discussion."

**The Maltese report**

"Following the meeting, many direct quotes from the day were integrated into the report, with UEFA crunching the data and clearly

presenting back whether it supported or contradicted the boardroom opinions," the MFA general secretary continued.

"For example, player-salary analysis confirmed the clubs' statement that many Maltese players are operating part-time – 50% Maltese versus 2% foreign – but deeper analysis also highlighted that certain clubs are not resourced to operate on a fully professional basis regardless of whether they have a complete full-time squad.

"While some people pointed out improvements in national team results, suggesting there was no problem, data clearly shows that the minutes played by Maltese-qualified Under-23 players have clearly decreased after each previous relaxation of the home-grown player rules, potentially storing up a problem for the near future. Context was also presented to support discussions on low attendances, not just the proliferation of high-quality foreign football on TV, but also data indicating high player turnover. With 65% of foreign players leaving Malta from one season to the next, it is perhaps difficult for supporters to feel connected to players."

Four leading questions about foreign players had their own dedicated chapter



## Supporting the wealth of knowledge at national associations

Without doubt, the national associations and their most engaged stakeholders know more about football in their country than anyone else, including the many local political and structural specificities. The intelligence centre is able to supplement this deep knowledge by placing it in context. For this Maltese project, six other FAs of similar size were selected, providing like-for-like comparisons with the

current position and ten-year development of Maltese football. Comparisons in the report included, among other things: the make-up of senior and junior national squads; the profile of club squads within the top league; differences in how clubs spend their money; and sporting results of clubs and national teams. Such insight is only made possible by the vast intelligence centre databases covering every European territory.

in the Maltese report, while the stakeholder feedback – relating to finances, professionalism, competition, youth development, and compatibility between club and national team interests – was intrinsic to supplying ‘state of the game’ context and facilitated the addition of a fifth chapter analysing commonly referenced issues. In layman’s terms, the interviews threw up helpful anecdotal evidence; for example, the fact that very few Maltese players were transferred overseas during the past decade is, it would seem, a matter of culture rather than quality, given the explanation from interviewees that Maltese players are just happier at home.

## Turning a sea of facts and figures into actionable insights

In this present information age, it is not always easy to sift through the sea of numbers and directly link an idea or opinion to the relevant facts. Furthermore, placing these facts in context and presenting them in a simple and easily understood way can be just as challenging. It is the role of the intelligence centre, which is also charged with writing the UEFA Club Licensing Benchmarking Report, to decipher, analyse and define trends and patterns.

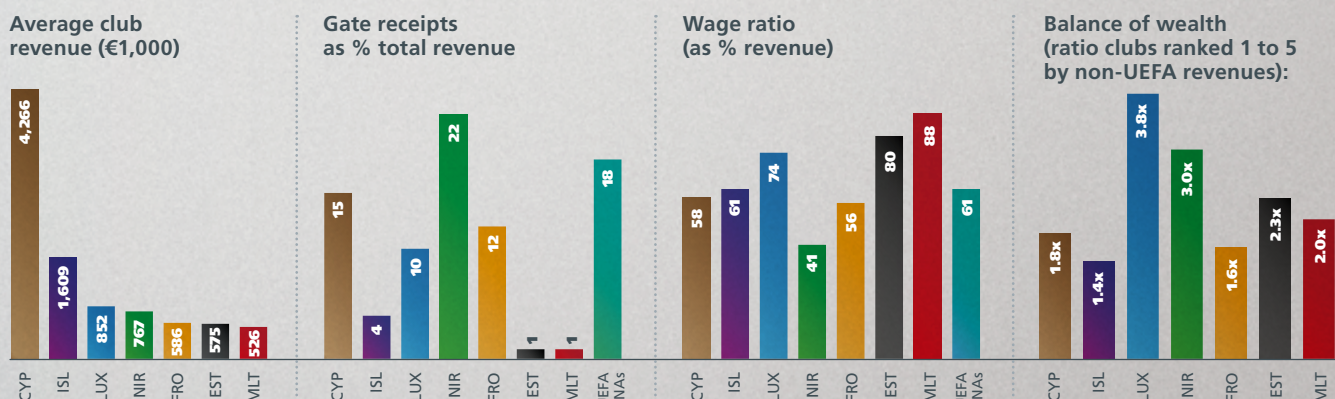
UEFA’s overarching vision for Europe’s national associations is that they become insight-driven and take decisions based on evidence. If UEFA really does its job, then any national association can be the unrivalled expert on football trends in its market, and its informed insights can be embedded into any strategic planning or decision-making process.

To realise this vision, the intelligence centre and UEFA’s national associations division (via the GROW programme) are working together to propose building a bespoke research capability for each UEFA member association; developing data and insights strategies for each association; improving UEFA’s centralised service; supporting funding for research and insights projects; and launching insights officer meetings and workshops.

It is still early days but in terms of both internal UEFA and external football policy and decision-making, the intelligence centre manifestly has much potential to be unlocked and shared. Just ask Malta! 🇲🇹

## MALTESE PREMIER LEAGUE CLUB FINANCE COMPARISONS WITH PEER GROUP

① The league averages across nine selected financial metrics (selection of four shown here) are presented for comparison purposes using the country peer group. Malta is relatively strong in generating net transfer profits but the extremely high wage ratio is a relative risk, especially combined with the soft balance sheet position. Attendances and gate receipts are also a point of relative weakness.





# TAILOR-MADE UEFA ACADEMY SUPPORT

Finland, Israel and Northern Ireland are the three new UEFA member associations that will be given special support within UEFA's elite youth academy programme for the next four seasons, from 2019/20 to 2022/23.

In Northern Ireland, the elite youth development programme targets players in the U14–U16 age brackets.

**T**he three associations will be offered tailor-made support by UEFA in the field of elite youth player development and setting up an academy. This follows the UEFA Finance Committee's agreement to continue the academy programme for at least four more seasons.

The main objective of UEFA's academy programme is to produce better players, compose the right mixture of sporting, school and life skills education, and to ensure quality development and technical programmes. This is in line with UEFA's mission statement, which puts a clear emphasis on placing constant focus on the coaching and fostering of young footballers.

Different age groups will be involved in each country: U16 and U17 in Finland,

U13 to U15 in Israel and U14 to U16 in Northern Ireland.

Each association is entitled to €200,000 per season to cover the running costs of their academy, among other things. A UEFA consultant will be in charge of one association each and will visit the association five times a year to discuss specific needs and convey UEFA's best practices.

UEFA will also make experienced coaches and technical experts available to visit the three associations to give advice and guidance from a technical point of view, as well as in terms of academy management.

UEFA's task is to deliver to the associations a complete programme for the development of talented young players, building a relationship

of confidence and trust with the associations to take the programme forward.

The link between football training and education will be a focal point of the cooperation alongside top-quality technical, tactical and fitness training – with fitness training also comprising key elements such as nutrition and hygiene. The young players will also learn essential life skills in terms of conduct, attitude and responsibility.

The UEFA programme will aim to give the players all the possible tools to succeed, including a good educational balance, which is absolutely necessary for their development. Moreover, what they learn during their time at the academy will stand them in good stead for life in general. 🌐



# UEFA LAUNCHES FREE-TO-AIR STREAMING PLATFORM

UEFA has launched its new over-the-top (OTT) streaming platform – a first for a football governing body – which is aimed at giving viewers greater access to live and on-demand video content from a variety of competitions.

**T**he service, which is named UEFA.tv, will initially provide football fans with an entertainment platform offering original programming based on 60 years of European football archive. It will also become the home of youth, women's and futsal UEFA competitions, offering wide live coverage in relevant markets. Finally, it will also serve to promote all UEFA competitions by offering behind-the-scenes content, interviews and a wide range of additional content.

All the video content is available free-to-view with registration, and supporters will now have the opportunity to watch live UEFA competition matches even when there is no rights-holder in the territory where they live.

Starting next season, the Bundesliga will be the first national league to be represented on the European governing body's new digital portal. UEFA and the German Football League (DFL) have entered into a partnership that provides for a separate channel on the streaming platform with videos from the Bundesliga in addition to European competitions. This service will include Monday highlights of weekend matches and shows such as the Bundesliga Special, aligned especially to the interests of international fans. In addition, archives of past top Bundesliga matches and unforgettable UEFA Champions League matches involving German teams will be available.

## 'A timely step to reach football fans'

"The digital landscape is evolving and we need to be in a position where we can anticipate and respond to these changes," said the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin. "UEFA is an innovative organisation and by introducing this platform we will be making football and our competitions more accessible to supporters around the world. Our partnership with the Bundesliga is yet another example of the unity of European football and clearly demonstrates our desire to address future opportunities together for the promotion of our sport."



"Media use is changing constantly," said DFL CEO Christian Seifert. "UEFA's new streaming service is a very timely step to reach football fans around the world, especially younger target groups. The DFL has consistently backed and initiated technological and media innovations ever since it was founded. We are therefore delighted to be the first national league partner in this project, which will allow us to get even more people around the world excited about the Bundesliga in the future."

The Bundesliga content on UEFA.tv will be available in major European markets such as the UK, Italy, Poland, Russia, Spain and Turkey as well as the Middle East and Africa from the start.

UEFA.tv will not be competing with TV channels but will complement them by taking advantage of the wide range of content available at UEFA, including archive footage, delayed games, magazine programmes or futsal, women's and grassroots competitions. In addition, it could be used by UEFA's 55 member associations to increase their global reach and visibility.

UEFA.tv is available on the web at [www.uefa.tv](http://www.uefa.tv) and as iOS and Android apps. 📱

In addition to archive footage, UEFA.tv gives fans the opportunity to watch live coverage of UEFA youth and futsal competitions such as this year's Under-17 final between Italy and the Netherlands.



# NEW MODULAR COACH EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The Austrian Football Association (ÖFB) is treading an innovative path by introducing a new model that aims to make coach education as individual and intensive as possible, and that is attracting huge international interest.

BY SIMON-PETER CHARAMZA

**“W**e are taking coach education to a new level,” says Dominik Thalhammer, director of coach education. “By tailoring our programmes more closely to coaches’ existing skills and requirements, we are playing a pioneering role on the international stage.”

From lecture halls to small-group tutorials, the comparison with university life is certainly apt when it comes to the ÖFB’s new, modular coach education programme. It may not sound very innovative, but it is. So much so that the forward-looking Austrian model is turning a lot of heads, including in other countries.

Until now, coaches who held an ÖFB-issued licence (usually a UEFA Pro, UEFA A or old UEFA B licence) could attend two further training courses per calendar year. Those courses mainly involved sitting in a lecture hall with up to 300 other coaches.

This tried and tested model is now being supplemented with the ÖFB’s innovative modular coach education programme, providing two additional sessions at which coaches can select their preferred module and work intensively on their own development in small groups of four people.

“By tailoring our programmes more closely to coaches’ existing skills and requirements, we are playing a pioneering role on the international stage.”

**Dominik Thalhammer**  
Director of coach education

Thomas Eidler, coach education manager, explains: “The basic idea was to move over to a skills-based training model. We did it with the Pro licence in 2018 and we are now following suit with the A licence. The main aim is to enable each coach to select the modules that most closely reflect their own individual interests, strengths or weaknesses. Coach education will therefore be much more customised in the future.”

The following modules are currently available:

- Professional skills
- Teaching skills
- Personal skills
- Social skills
- Methodological skills

In their small groups, coaches and lecturers – always taking previous personal experience into account – work together on each coach’s further development and discuss any general problems they are facing.

The modular coach education programme also includes contributions from experts in the field. For the May 2019 session, for example, the organising team led by Dominik Thalhammer and Thomas Eidler managed to recruit none other than experienced Bundesliga coach Peter Stöger, who led 1. FC Köln to the 2. Bundesliga title in Germany.

Further information and registration details can be found at [oefb.at](http://oefb.at).







# A FIT AND HEALTHY CENTENARIAN

As part of its centenary celebrations, the French Football Federation (FFF) unveiled some of the most prestigious symbols of its rich history at a public exhibition held at the Arab World Institute in Paris from 10 April to 9 June.

BY RAPHAËL RAYMOND

**A** pioneering, innovative organisation that never stands still and constantly moves with the times, the FFF has always endeavoured to promote the game and share it with as many people as possible. To celebrate its centenary, it organised a public exhibition at the World Arab Institute entitled 'FFF: 100 ans de passion et d'innovations (1919–2019)' [FFF: 100 years of passion and innovation (1919–2019)]. The exhibition looked back at the FFF's origins, showcasing its role as a driving force of world football, its innovations and the glorious victories of the French national teams. With free entry for all FFF licence holders (managers, players, referees, etc.), it was a tremendous success.

Having been opened on 10 April by the FFF president, Noël Le Graët, France's foreign affairs minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, and the president of the World Arab Institute, Jack Lang, the exhibition was visited, on 10 May, by league and district association officials, as well as the entire staff of the French men's national team. "It was a superb exhibition that

enabled us to relive the greatest moments of French football history," said Didier Deschamps, a World Cup winner as a player and a manager. "The French national team has won titles, as symbolised by the 1998 and 2018 World Cup jerseys on display, for example, but it has also had some extremely emotional times. And it was great to be reminded of them. I have always considered history to be extremely valuable. My generation learned so much from the Platini era of the early 1980s."

Organised by Xavier Thébault, the FFF's authority on the history of the federation, the exhibition also focused on football administration, an area in which France has always excelled. "The exhibition also demonstrated everything the FFF has done to ensure that French football functions effectively, from the grassroots to the very top level," added Didier Deschamps. "It's great. We must never lose sight of the fact that it's the small local clubs, which owe so much to the dedicated volunteers, that bring our best players through." ⚽



## Three questions for ...

### Noël Le Graët

President of the French Football Federation

#### What does this centenary mean to you?

It is a symbolic moment. The FFF and its leaders were responsible for the global spread of the game. Robert Guérin was one of the founders of FIFA, while Jules Rimet and Henri Delaunay were largely responsible for the creation of the World Cup and the European Championship respectively.

#### Is the pyramid-based model of French football the key to the FFF's success?

Yes, the amateur game is indispensable for the elite level. All professional players began at a small club. The FFF has been focusing on youth development since 2011, devoting substantial human and financial resources to it. Amateur football is the bedrock of everything, especially as it fosters passion for and enjoyment of the game. It means that football is accessible to everyone throughout France.

#### The Women's World Cup kicked off in France on 7 June with a sell-out opening match at the Parc des Princes. Did you expect such an enthusiastic response?

I discovered women's football properly in 2011, when the World Cup was held in Germany, and it was a revelation. With the help of amateur clubs, local leagues, district associations and professional clubs such as Lyon, Paris St-Germain and Montpellier, we have taken the game forward. France is now in the world's top four and the number of registered players has increased 3.5-fold to 180,000. This Women's World Cup should speed things up even more. I also think the FFF's progress towards gender parity is a great example to others, with women now making up 42% of FFF staff.

# FIRST VILLAGES CUP FOR CHILDREN FROM RURAL AREAS

The first edition of the Villages Cup concluded on 12 May. This new Under-13 competition is organised by the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) with its 42 affiliated county football associations (AJFs) and the rural investment financing agency (AFIR), a governmental body that manages investment in rural areas of the country.

BY PAUL ZAHARIA

**A**lthough officially a grassroots competition, most matches were watched by FRF scouts and members of the FRF technical committee with a view to spotting talent for the younger national teams.

More than 15,000 boys and girls from 930 villages all over the country took part in the competition, which started on 1 October last year. It was the first nationwide competition ever to be dedicated to children living in rural areas, regardless of whether they already play with a club. Matches were played in two 30-minute halves on a medium-sized pitch (70m x 50m) with smaller goals (5m x 2m).

Each of the 42 county football associations had to enter at least eight teams, which played first at local (county) level, followed by a second, regional phase, one region being composed of four, five or six counties. The winners of each of the eight regional rounds went through to the

final round, hosted by the village of Cumpăna, in the county of Constanța, very close to the Black Sea coast. Thanks to the efforts of the local council and the government, Cumpăna boasts a modern sports complex that includes, among other facilities, a 842-seater football stadium with an athletics track, making it the perfect venue for the finals. The eight finalists were split into two groups, from which the winners and runners-up went through to the semi-finals, which were followed by a third-place play-off and the final itself.

## A trip to Norway for the winners!

Apart from the trophies, medals and diplomas, there were some other more than attractive incentives for the children and their coaches. The winners of the competition – Ruginoasa from the county of Iași – earned a trip to Ullevaal Stadion

in Oslo to watch the Norway v Romania EURO 2020 qualifier on 7 June, while the runners-up and third placed team have seats reserved for them in the VIP sector in the National Arena in Bucharest for Romania's EURO 2020 qualifier against Spain on 5 September.

The children playing in the final also had a big surprise when they discovered that their crucial match was being officiated by FIFA referee Sebastian Colțescu, who, three days earlier, had been part of the referee team in charge of the UEFA Europa League semi-final between Chelsea and Eintracht Frankfurt. First league referee Horia Mladinovic was also among the referees for the Villages Cup final. Not only that, but Romanian international Ianis Hagi was on hand to get the final under way with a symbolic kick-off.

The fact that this first edition was won by the team from Ruginoasa, who beat hosts Cumpăna 1-0 in the final, and that the third place was decided only after penalty kicks – Sânmartin (Bihor county) defeated Rudeni (Ilfov county) – is purely statistical information. What really matters is the FRF's strategy to encourage children to play football, to have fun and to start working their way up from this level. As the FRF president, Răzvan Burleanu, said last year when the competition was launched fittingly at the Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest: "I am happy that our strategic vision for the development of football in rural areas has taken a new step. I am sure that one day some of our national team players will proudly confess that they started playing football in the Villages Cup." 🏆

Răzvan Burleanu, president of the Romanian Football Federation, hands the trophy to the team from Ruginoasa.





AZERBAIJAN

www.affa.az

## FOOTBALL AND BUSINESS SUMMIT IN BAKU

ULVIYYA NAJAFOVA



The Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFA), with UEFA support, organised a football and business summit in Baku on 15 May.

Rashad Bayramov, the moderator, welcomed participants to the summit, which consisted of three panels, and invited Tural Piriyev, the AFA's head of marketing and sponsorship; Elchin Mammadov from the ministry of taxation; and a representative from PWC to speak on the topic of the macroeconomic impact of football for the first panel discussion. After the panellists had expressed their views, they answered questions from the students participating in the event. The second panel discussion considered



the social benefits of football, and involved representatives of UEFA, UNICEF and the research and technology company Substance.

Representatives from sports marketing agency Sport Matters and the Coca-Cola Company Azerbaijan and Tural Piriyev were the panellists for the third

discussion, which focussed on the impact of football partnerships on business.

Robert Pires, the summit's star ambassador, addressed the summit participants and, at the end of the event, he conducted a draw in which two participants won a ticket to the 2019 UEFA Europa League final in Baku.

BELARUS

www.abff.by

## SHAKHTYOR UPSET VITEBSK IN CUP FINAL

ALEKSANDR ALEINIK



Shakhtyor Soligorsk beat 2019/20 UEFA Europa League contenders Vitebsk 2-0 at a packed Vitebsk stadium (7,954 spectators) to take the 2018/19 Belarus Cup. It was the second final to be held in Vitebsk in the history of the competition, and the first trophy for Shakhtyor head coach Sergei Tashuev.

The goals came from striker Darko Bodul in the closing minutes of the first half and from defender Nikola Antic from

a free-kick in the second half. Shakhtyor thus lifted the trophy for the third time in the club's history, equalling the likes of FC BATE, Dinamo Minsk, Dinamo Brest and Belshina Bobruisk. Last season's cup runners-up were playing in their fourth cup final in the last six years and achieved success for the second time since 2014.

After the cup final opened the Torpedo stadium (5,200 spectators) in Zhodino in 2013 and Borisov Arena (11,000) in 2014,

the Football Federation of Belarus (ABFF) decided to hold the final in all regional centres of the country, starting in Gomel (9,100 spectators) in 2015, when Shakhtyor Soligorsk lost to FC BATE at Central Stadium. One year later, the decider was played in Brest (4,500 spectators), with cup holders FC BATE losing to FC Torpedo Zhodino on penalties. In 2017 and 2018, Dinamo Brest made it two in a row, beating Shakhtyor Soligorsk at the Neman stadium (8,479 spectators) in Grodno and then FC BATE at the Spartak stadium (7,200) in Mogilev.

All the finals have been supported by specific marketing campaigns and the last three were played to capacity crowds. The ABFF president, Vladimir Bazanov, says that next year's cup final might return to the capital, where it has been played on 20 previous occasions since 1992, with a cup final attendance record of 15,500 spectators being set at Dinamo Stadium in 2005.



BELGIUM

www.belgianfootball.be

## FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

PIERRE CORNEZ



The physical development of players in the Under-14 age category and upwards can vary enormously. Late developers are often discarded because they are not tall or heavy enough, even though they are sometimes more talented and have greater potential to improve.

For the Royal Belgian Football Association (URBSFA), the situation faced by Dries Mertens more than 15 years ago was a source of inspiration. The current Belgian international had demonstrated his qualities at youth level and taken part in the Belgian FA's elite sport school project between the ages of 14 and 18, but he struggled against more physically developed opponents. Having battled away in the various youth categories, he was almost lost to the game forever because of his delayed physical development. And he was far from alone.

In 2008, this scenario prompted the URBSFA to launch a project to create a new stream of national teams for players who were late developers. Activities were organised for these so-called U15, U16 and U17 Futures teams, which were set up alongside the traditional U15 to U21 national teams.

Bob Browaey, senior youth education manager and head coach of the national Under-17 team, explains: "Our scouting system is based on five criteria: a winning mentality, explosive strength, game intelligence, body and ball control, and ability to learn. But we can only evaluate the first four of these criteria accurately if players are measured against opponents who are at the same stage of physical development.

"It's not only with our national teams that we are using the Futures strategy, since we are also applying it in our elite

sports schools and regional teams," says Browaey.

Countries such as the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland have followed Belgium's example by launching similar projects. In mid-April, the Under-16 Futures teams of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Sweden took part in a four-team friendly tournament at the Belgian football centre, where many excellent players were able to show off their skills. During the tournament, the URBSFA organised an international conference at which the participating countries were able to share their experiences and working methods in this area. The various sessions also focused on the relative effects of age and biological maturity in a scientific and medical context, and ways of giving psychological support to talented players who are late developers.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

www.nfsbih.ba

## END OF SEASON ROUND-UP

FEDJA KRIVAVAC



The curtain has fallen on this season's football competitions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

FK Sarajevo came away with a league and cup double for the first time in the club's

history. In the cup final, Husref Musemić's players won the first leg against NK Siroki Brijeg 3-0, which was enough, despite losing the return leg 1-0.

SFK 2000 Sarajevo continued their dominance of Bosnia and Herzegovina women's football by winning their 17th championship title in a row, finishing on 58 points, ahead of Iskra (43 points). Samira Hurem's players also did the double, beating Brcko team Lokomotiva 4-0 in the final to claim their 16th cup title.

Over in futsal, Mostar Stari Grad Staklorad beat Brotnjo in all three encounters in the final series and were crowned champions for the third consecutive season.

At youth level, the federation organised a girls' Under-12 tournament at its training centre in Zenica. The tournament

was won by Radnik Bumerang from Bijeljina, who beat SFK 2000 Sarajevo 3-1 in the finals. Radnik's Dragana Dimitric was named the best player of the tournament, while SFK 2000's Minela Ranica was the top scorer with 15 goals. The best goalkeeper award went to Nejla Korora from BAAP Sportiva.

Off the field of play, the first Bosnia and Herzegovina edition of the UEFA Certificate in Football Management ended in Sarajevo. The course was attended by 17 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia and Romania. The participants received their certificates from the general secretary of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation, Adnan Džemidžić, and Professor Jean-Loup Chappolet from the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration, IDHEAP.





CROATIA

www.hns-cff.hr

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH TOURNAMENT HONOURS VLATKO MARKOVIĆ

NIKA BAHTIJAREVIĆ



During spring, Pula and Medulin hosted future football stars from eight nations for a week-long international Under-15 tournament aptly named after a key figure in the history of Croatian football – former player, national team head coach and Croatian Football Federation (HNS) president Vlatko Marković, who served as the HNS president from 1998 to 2012.

“We are proud to organise this tournament in Marković’s honour and show how important investment in young talents is to the HNS,” said the federation’s current president, Davor Šuker, ahead of the opening of the tournament.

Funded through the FIFA Forward development programme, the Vlatko Marković tournament featured eight strong Under-15 teams from several continents, all of whom expressed the desire to return to Croatia for the next edition.

The tournament was also highlighted by FIFA on its official website, with



Croatian football legend and FIFA deputy general secretary Zvonimir Boban stating that he was “delighted to see the HNS honour Vlatko with this youth competition, like a pure token of his contribution to the development of the game.”

During the same period, the HNS also announced an important change in its top management, with the former director of competitions and infrastructure, Marijan

Kustić, elected by the HNS executive committee as the federation’s new executive director.

In domestic football news, Dinamo Zagreb won the Croatian championship after a historic run in the UEFA Europa League, while Rijeka won the Croatian cup competition. The two teams played in Croatia’s most recent super cup match in 2014, and they are set to meet once again in the 2019 edition.

CZECH REPUBLIC

www.fotbal.cz

## UNDER-16 DEVELOPMENT TOURNAMENT HOSTED IN PRAGUE

RADEK ŠAMŠA



It was a quiet period for the senior national team ahead of the EURO 2020 qualifiers in June, but the youth teams were not idle. Following their elimination from the European Under-17 Championship, the Czech Under-17 team, along with the Under-16 team, hosted Hungary, the USA and Venezuela for a development tournament in Prague from 15 to 19 May. The venues were the Přátelství and Evžena Rošického stadiums. Even though the weather was not so kind, the tournament itself still went very well. “We were very happy to

host all these teams. It was high-quality preparation for the boys and we believe it helped them in their development,” said Radek Bejbl, the Czech Republic’s Under-16 coach and a former Czech international, who played for Slavia Prague, Atlético Madrid, RC Lens, Rapid Vienna and Slovan Liberec at club level. All three of his team’s matches finished level at the end of normal playing time, but they managed to beat the USA and Venezuela on penalties, losing to Hungary in the shoot-out at the end of their second match. “From my point of



view, we could get better results and could be more effective in the attacking third. But at the end of the day, I think we performed quite well,” added Bejbl, who is now taking over the Czech Under-17 team for the coming season.

DENMARK

www.dbu.dk

## DANISH FOOTBALL CONDEMNS HOMOPHOBIC CHANTING

ANNE TJELL



Incidents of homophobic chanting from the stands during two Danish Superliga matches have resulted in an increased focus on discriminatory behaviour in Denmark.

During a game between Odense BK and FC Copenhagen, Danish player Victor Fischer was the target of homophobic chants from home supporters. The following day, Fischer was again targeted, when Brøndby IF fans chanted about the player following their team's match against FC Nordsjælland.

Fischer condemned the chanting, which used the word 'gay' as an insult. FC Copenhagen, Brøndby IF and Odense BK have joined Fischer in condemning anti-gay chanting.

Afterwards, Brøndby IF and Odense BK became the first Danish clubs ever to be fined for homophobic chants by the Danish FA's disciplinary authority.

The Danish Football Association (DBU) has a policy of zero tolerance of all forms of discrimination, be it of a racial, religious or sexual nature. The steps the DBU is taking include calling for consultation on combatting homophobia through policy development and issuing sanctions against clubs who engage in it, evaluating the regulatory framework after the historical decision of the disciplinary authority, emphasising the consequences of homophobic chants, updating instructions to referees, mapping diversity in Danish football and setting up diversity committees, and contributing actively to government plans for equal opportunities for LGBT people.

The DBU has been running anti-homophobia campaigns since 2017 and looks forward to building on those foundations to do even more to



discourage discrimination and encourage tolerance, inclusion and equality.

ENGLAND

www.thefa.com

## HEADS UP CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

DAVID GERTY



Heads Together and The FA have announced an exciting new campaign – Heads Up – to generate the biggest ever conversation around mental health.

The campaign was announced at Wembley Stadium on 15 May by the Duke of Cambridge and The FA's chief executive, Martin Glenn. Heads Up will harness the influence and popularity of football to help show the world that mental fitness is just as important as physical fitness, and will build on the decades of work to tackle the stigma and drive the conversation on mental health.

While it is aimed at everyone, including players, supporters, friends and families, it is widely recognised that football is a uniquely powerful way to reach men in particular. Men are three times more likely



to commit suicide than women, with suicide the most likely cause of death for men under the age of 45 in the UK. The campaign hopes to encourage more men to feel comfortable talking about their mental health, and feel able to support their friends and families through difficult times.

Heads Up will be launched at The FA Community Shield in August 2019 and will culminate at the May 2020 FA Cup final.

The campaign will be visible across all levels of football in England throughout the course of the 2019/20 season, including the men's and women's England teams, FA competitions and grassroots – from England matches through to The FA Cup. During next season, dedicated promotional activity will aim to spark conversations, while resources and training will be available.



ESTONIA

www.jalgpall.ee

## FOOTBALL CLUBS CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY

MIHKEL UIBOLEHT



Several clubs in Estonia's top leagues marked Mother's Day by having the players walk on to the field with their mothers, or honouring mothers in some other way.

The players of premier league team FC Kuressaare walked out on to the pitch hand in hand with their mothers before their home game against Maardu Linnameeskond. The teams also sent out a video message congratulating mothers on their special day.

The Viljandi Tulevik squad were also accompanied by their mothers instead of the traditional child escorts. A commemorative group photo was taken of the Viljandi players, their mothers and the visitors from FC Flora. FCI Levadia, meanwhile, had special T-shirts designed for their game against Tartu Tammeka that the players of both teams wore for



the pre-match line-up. The Levadia players also handed out flowers to their mothers on the pitch.

The players of the top two women's teams – FC Flora and Pärnu JK – also had their mothers walking out hand in hand with them ahead of their league match.

"Our approach towards football is strongly family- and community-based. We want to build strong communities and encourage families to come to the stadiums and choose football as their sport," said Anne Rei, general secretary of the Estonian Football Association.

GEORGIA

www.gff.ge

## AMPUTEE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE STARTS UP

OTAR GIORGADZE



A new era in amputee club football has begun with the inaugural edition of the amputee champions league, which was held in Tbilisi. The historic tournament was organised by the European Amputee

Football Federation (EAFF), in partnership with the Georgian Football Federation (GFF). It was contested by six clubs, including Everton (England), Cork City (Republic of Ireland), Ortoteke Gazileri (Turkey), Dinamo Altai (Russia), Legia

Warsaw (Poland) and AFC Tbilisi (Georgia).

The tournament was won convincingly by the Turkish champions, Ortoteke, who scored 27 goals in the competition without conceding any. They beat Dinamo Altai 8-0 in the final. The final standings were: 1. Ortoteke Gazileri, 2. Dinamo Altai, 3. Legia Warsaw, 4. Cork City, 5. Everton, 6. AFC Tbilisi.

The tournament was held over two days at the David Petriashvili Arena. The closing ceremony was led by the EAFF president, Mateusz Widlak, and its general secretary, Simon Baker, together with the GFF president, Levan Kobiashevili, who handed out individual awards to the best goalkeeper of the tournament (Philip Grace of Everton), the top scorer (Savas Kaya of Ortoteke Gazileri with nine goals) and the best player of the tournament (Abderrahouf Ouchenne). AFC Tbilisi's captain, Davit Chaduneli, collected a special fair play award on behalf of his team.



GIBRALTAR

www.gibraltarfifa.com

## INAUGURAL WOMEN'S FUTSAL LEAGUE KICKS OFF

STEVEN GONZALEZ



The Gibraltar FA's inaugural women's futsal league kicked off in May, with five teams registering to take part in its opening season. The league is being played at the end of the regular domestic women's football season, giving all Gibraltar's female players the opportunity to develop their overall footballing skills by taking part in both disciplines (football and futsal) if they wish to.

The new league follows straight on from the national women's futsal team playing their first-ever international fixtures when they hosted Northern Ireland for two friendlies in April.

Futsal (and in its various previous versions, such as five-a-side) has always been a very popular sport in Gibraltar, and thus forms a major part of the Gibraltar FA's new women's football strategy, which is to be rolled out very soon.

Masterminding the growth of women's football in Gibraltar is the Gibraltar FA's women's football manager, Laura McGinn, who just under a year into her role is delighted to have been able to get



the new women's futsal league up and running. As she says: "The league is a great opportunity for existing players in Gibraltar and has also helped to grow female participation by attracting newcomers to the game as well as

bringing older players back who have dropped out of 11-a-side football. We hope to be able to keep growing the league each year, attracting more players into the game and, in turn, also helping to strengthen our national futsal team."

ISRAEL

www.football.org.il

## UEFA SUPPORTS NEW YOUTH ACADEMY

EITAN DOTAN



UEFA has announced that the Israel Football Association (IFA) is to receive €200,000 each year for the next four years to set up an academy for 13-15 year-olds at the Shefayim national team complex.

The IFA is one of only three UEFA member associations to have been chosen to receive this type of financial assistance and professional support and guidance from UEFA. The establishment of the new academy is one of the association's flagship projects, its goal being to offer players aged

between 13 and 15 optimal conditions for their development, including accommodation, schooling and, of course, intensive training.

Prior to the decision, three UEFA representatives, led by its head of football development, visited the national team complex and the centres of excellence run by the IFA, and presented their vision for the development of Israeli football and the importance of establishing an academy that would ensure the best conditions for promising young players.

The IFA chairman, Moshe Zuretz, said: "The association will invest particularly significant sums in this project and I am proud that UEFA considers our programme worthy of its support and guidance."

The association's technical director, Willi Ruttensteiner, said: "At the academy we can work with young players on a variety of aspects of the game: sports education, mentality, lifestyle, nutrition and, of course, playing skills. I am convinced that we will win the cooperation of the clubs."



ITALY

www.figc.it

## HELPING STRUGGLING EX-PROS

DIEGO ANTENZIO



The Italian Football Association (FIGC) and the non-profit organisation Special Team Legends (STL) have launched a new social responsibility initiative to raise money to build a residential complex where former players who have fallen on hard times can receive support. Among the Azzurri greats present at the launch in Milan were World Cup winners Andrea Pirlo, Gianluca Zambrotta, Giuseppe Bergomi and Marco Tardelli.

"With Club Italia now incorporating a legends' section, we have embraced the work of Paolo Maldini and Beppe Dossena's STL foundation by supporting fundraising initiatives by corporate partners," explained the FIGC president, Gabriele Gravina.

"When you play football, you're in the spotlight," added Maldini. "But when the lights go out and the money dries up, many of us don't get the help we need because we're ashamed to ask for it. I am certain that, with the help of the FIGC, we will be able to combat many

difficult situations by offering free health and social care."

Club Italia's new activities were outlined by the FIGC chief executive, Marco Brunelli: "The recent overhaul of this section of the FIGC, which was set up to support the development of Italy's national teams, has been enhanced by the involvement of former internationals who will be represented on the new Club Italia board and provide valuable experience and decision-making support. Led by Antonio Cabrini, the legends' section will also organise school visits and exhibition matches against teams from other associations."

As mentioned earlier, the FIGC's partnership with STL will focus on supporting ex-players who are experiencing particular hardship.

"It's not a case of giving them money," explained Dossena. "Rather, we aim to provide health and social care so that former players of both genders can have a bit of dignity in their retirement and twilight years. Typically, their problems



stem from failed marriages, bad investments, not being able to cope when they hang up their boots, and depression, which can often lead to harmful forms of addiction. These are people aged between 40 and 60 who might not have earned that much during their careers. Some of them can't even afford to buy groceries. We hope to share some of the proceeds with other sports too, and I am grateful to the president of the Italian Golf Federation, Franco Chimenti, for his help in this regard."

LITHUANIA

www.lff.lt

## GIRLS' ELITE LEAGUE INTRODUCED

ROBERTAS KAZDANAS



Since hosting the final round of the European Women's Under-17 Championship last year, Lithuania has continued to make efforts to grow the girls' game.

A new page in Lithuanian football history was turned on 6 April when, inspired by UEFA's Together #WePlayStrong campaign and the need to lift the standard of local girls' competitions, the Lithuanian Football Federation introduced a girls' Under-15 championship.

In its first season, the girls' elite league involves six teams of different origins from across the country. The teams come from the two major cities of Vilnius and Kaunas, the towns of Gargždai and Utena – where



women's football has recently gained significant popularity – and from the traditional girls' football strongholds of Ukmergė (dubbed as the Mecca of women's football) and the suburbs of Vilnius.

The league provides the girls with the same playing conditions as boys. The format is similar to that of the Lithuanian youth league. Matches last for 80 minutes, and if the game ends in a draw the winners are determined in a penalty shoot-out.

The elite league represents a significant change in the girls' game and will improve the skills and mentality of the players before they move up to the women's league and, perhaps, be called up for the national teams.

LUXEMBOURG

www.flf.lu

## PROMOTING YOUTH FOOTBALL AND EXPANDING INFRASTRUCTURE

JOËL WOLFF



For several years now, the Luxembourg Football Federation (FLF) has been focusing primarily on the promotion of youth football at grassroots and elite levels, and on the steady expansion of its infrastructure.

At grassroots level, the FLF supports its clubs both financially and by donating equipment. Funding and equipment are largely distributed in accordance with the number of registered teams and qualified coaches in the respective clubs.

Training of qualified coaches is an important cornerstone of the FLF's grassroots activities. The federation's philosophy is that every child should have the opportunity to play football in a club, ideally under the expert supervision of qualified coaches. This year, it is



organising a total of 16 coaching courses across all levels, and all of them are already overbooked.

The FLF is also aware of the importance of fair play in youth football, which is why several targeted activities have been organised in recent years, including fair play prizes for youth teams and the 'Rot ist nichts für uns' (Red is nothing for us) campaign.

In order to support elite youth football, the association has invested a lot of money expanding its sports facilities in Mondrange in the last few years. In addition to a new indoor football centre, three artificial pitches are currently being built for the FLF's youth teams. Two more natural grass pitches will also be installed at the FLF's training centre in the coming months in order to provide the best possible facilities for the country's top young players.

FLF officials are confident that these activities, together with the planned opening of a new national stadium in 2020, will make a significant contribution to the further development of football in Luxembourg.

MALTA

www.mfa.com.mt

## VALLETTA RETAIN LEAGUE TITLE AND BALZAN WIN THE CUP

KEVIN AZZOPARDI



Valletta FC were crowned champions for the second season running after edging out Hibernians on penalties in a gripping championship decider played on 4 May at the national stadium.

The 2018/19 premier league conjured up a dramatic finale as Valletta and Hibernians finished level on 58 points to set up a title decider. It was Hibernians who forged ahead after 13 minutes, Brazilian forward Taylon Marcolino heading home from close range. Valletta equalised close to the hour mark thanks to captain Jonathan Caruana, who flicked home following a corner.

With the score tied at 1-1 at the end of normal playing time, extra time was needed. Eight minutes into the first half of extra time, Valletta went 2-1 up courtesy of Mario Fontanella, but Hibs fought back

to bring the game level in the closing stages through Austrian playmaker Marco Sahanek.

In the penalty shoot-out, Sahanek hit the upright for Hibernians and Marcolino's shot was saved by goalkeeper Henry Bonello as Valletta secured the 25th top-flight championship title in the club's history, qualifying in the process for the 2019/20 UEFA Champions League.

The cup final was another nail-biter, with Balzan winning their first major honour after beating Valletta 5-4 on penalties following a 4-4 draw.

Alfred Effiong was Balzan's hero, the Malta striker hitting four goals and converting the winning penalty to finally overcome the resilient challenge of Valletta, who had come back from 4-2 down to make it 4-4 in the closing minutes of extra time. Thanks to this



success, Balzan have claimed a berth in next season's UEFA Europa League.



MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

## LEONID OLEINICENCO ELECTED PRESIDENT

PRESS OFFICE



At an extraordinary congress of the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) held in the futsal arena of its sports complex in Ciorescu, Leonid Oleinenco was unanimously elected as the new FMF president for a term running until January 2021.

The 37-year-old succeeds Pavel Cebanu and he will be the fifth FMF president after Grigore Cușnir (1990–91), Constantin Tampiza (1991–95), Petru Comendant (1995–97) and Pavel Cebanu, who was in office from 1997 until 22 May 2019.

Leonid Oleinenco has worked for the FMF for ten years, initially as financial director and for last three years as executive director. As president, he plans to further develop the association's strategy. "I have been a part of this team for a long time," he told the congress



delegates. "We will continue to work on the development of Moldovan football. We are in a process of reform, and I hope I will meet your expectations."

At the same congress, Pavel Cebanu became FMF honorary president. Sergiu Harea, president of the Moldovan chamber of commerce and industry, was also elected as a new member of the FMF executive committee, replacing Victor Sorocean, who is now serving as Moldova's ambassador to Belarus.

Among those attending the congress were UEFA vice-president Michele Uva, FIFA development programmes manager Oliver Jung, Corneliu Popovici, adviser to the president of Moldova on cultural, educational and scientific issues, Monica Babuc, Moldova's minister of education, culture and research, Nicolae Piatac, first vice-president of the Moldovan Olympic and sports committee, Ion Scripnic, mayor of Ciorescu, and former FMF presidents Grigore Cușnir and Constantin Tampiza.

NORTHERN IRELAND

www.irishfa.com

## SHIELS NAMED SENIOR WOMEN'S TEAM MANAGER

NIGEL TILSON



The Northern Ireland senior women's team has a new manager. Kenny Shiels has replaced Alfie Wylie, who moved to a new position as head of women's elite performance at the Irish FA earlier this year.

Shiels has huge experience both as a player and as a coach/manager. He represented clubs such as Coleraine, Distillery and Ballymena United in the Irish league before turning his hand to management.

His coaching career has taken him to clubs as diverse as Carrick Rangers, Moyola Park, Greenock Morton, BEC Tero Sasana in Thailand and women's side Newtownabbey Strikers. He spent eight successful years in charge of the Northern Ireland men's Under-17 team, qualifying for the elite stages of the European Under-17 Championship in six campaigns. He also



made history in 2004 when he led Northern Ireland to the finals in France.

In 2012 he won the Scottish League Cup with Kilmarnock and last year led Derry City to the League of Ireland Cup.

He said: "I am extremely proud to have been appointed to this role and I

am delighted to be manager of my country's senior women's national team. Women's football is the fastest growing area of the game and it is hugely exciting to be taking up this role at this time. I want to do everything I can to bring success to Northern Ireland."

PORTUGAL

www.fpf.pt

## WOMEN'S FUTSAL EURO TICKET REVENUE GOES TO A GOOD CAUSE

MATILDE DIAS



All the gate receipts from UEFA Women's Futsal EURO 2019 have been donated to Gondomar Social, a charity based in Gondomar, the city that hosted the inaugural final tournament between 15 and 17 February this year.

The president of the Portuguese Football Federation, Fernando Gomes, and the head of the Gondomar's sports department presented the charity with a cheque for more than €5,000 during the Portuguese women's futsal cup final in March.

Gondomar Social provides support, guidance and opportunities to at-risk girls (from 12 to 18 years old), providing them with accommodation and one-to-one mentoring to help them develop their creativity and explore career options in several areas while learning important decision-making skills.



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

www.fai.ie

## DEFENCE FORCES PREPARING FOR MILITARY WORLD GAMES

GARETH MAHER



Having sealed their qualification last December, the Irish defence forces football team are now busy preparing for the CISM Military World Games in China in October.

Richie Barber's team beat Lithuania and drew with France to secure a place in the finals, although they know a lot more work needs to be done between now and their departure for China.

The Irish team hosted the United Kingdom armed forces for a friendly international in May. The fiercely contested match ended in a 2-1 victory for the visitors, but Barber will focus on the positive points of the performance and the overall exercise. A number of players in the Irish squad have experience



of playing at a high level, including Adrian Friel and Chris Kenny, who play with Shelbourne and Wexford respectively.

Now the focus will be on keeping the squad together and getting in as many sessions as possible before the World Games in October.



RUSSIA

www.rfs.ru

## LOKOMOTIV MOSCOW WIN CUP FOR RECORD EIGHTH TIME

EKATERINA GRISHENKOVA



On 22 May, the final of the 2018/19 Olymp Russian Cup took place in Samara, where a crowd of more than 38,000 at the Samara Arena watched FC Lokomotiv Moscow win the cup for the eighth time – a cup competition record.

Lokomotiv's opponents in the final were premier league rivals FC Ural from Ekaterinburg. Both teams had started out in the competition in the round of 32.

It was the second final between the two clubs in the history of the Russian Cup, after the 2017 final at the Fisht Stadium in

Sochi, where the Moscow club won in front of a crowd of almost 24,500, who saw Igor Denisov and Aleksey Miranchuk score the only two goals. In the rematch, everything was decided by a single goal, headed in by Dmitry Barinov in the 27th minute.

This year, VAR was deployed in the cup competition for the first time, but not until the semi-finals and the final.

The build-up to the cup final was also a bit different this year, with competitions, flash mobs, autograph sessions with famous footballers and photo opportunities with the trophy on offer in Samara in the days leading up to the final. Then, on the day itself, a lot of different activities were organised on the square near the stadium to get the party started.



SLOVAKIA

www.futbalsfz.sk

## UNIQUE HOMEGROWN-ONLY PLAYERS MATCH

PETER SURIN



For their league match against Dunajská Streda on 5 May, MŠK Žilina decided to play exclusively with players that had come through its youth academy – all of them Slovak nationals.

The MŠK Žilina football academy has raised some well-known football names, such as Marek Mintal (former top scorer in the Bundesliga), Milan Škriniar

(Internazionale FC), Martin Dúbravka (Newcastle United), Peter Pekarík (Hertha Berlin), Tomáš Hubočan (Olympique Marseille), Denis Vavro (FC København), David Hancko (Fiorentina) and many more.

This special match showcased the 13 years of systematic and consistent work of the academy. The philosophy of the club is to educate and improve young

players and prepare the way for their transfer to top leagues abroad to ensure the long-term sustainability of the club.

There are 19 Slovak homegrown players in the current 30-member first-team squad, 18 of whom filled the match sheet for the match against Dunajská Streda. MŠK Žilina is apparently the first Slovak club to have played a match exclusively with players from its academy. The result did not go in MŠK Žilina's favour, however, with the visitors winning the match 2-1.

The MŠK Žilina football academy has about 300 players in Under-6 to Under-19 categories, 40 professional youth coaches and three training centres.

MŠK Žilina is also the only club within the Slovak Football Association to have teams in the top two divisions, which gives talented youth players the chance to adapt to senior football playing for the B team in the second division.

SWEDEN

www.svenskfotboll.se

## TRAILBLAZING WOMEN ON SWEDEN JERSEYS

ANDREAS NILSSON



A record attendance and a new jersey that features female role models kicked off Sweden's preparations for the Women's World Cup.

On 6 April, 25,882 spectators came to see Sweden play Germany at the Friends Arena, setting a new record for the women's team and the highest attendance for a women's match in Sweden since the final of UEFA Women's EURO 2013 (41,301 at the same venue).

Adding to the grand occasion was the presentation of Sweden's Women's World Cup jersey. The numbers on the back contain the portraits of 48 Swedish women who have created history. The role models (chosen by the national team players themselves) include past and present athletes, as well as performing artists, writers, scientists and leaders.

The number 8 was left open for suggestions from the public through Instagram, and the portraits within the



figure include, among others, former Sweden international Lotta Schelin, HRH Crown Princess Victoria and heptathlon champion Carolina Klüft.

"Having people to look up to and be inspired by has been crucial for me both on and off the field. It's an honour to

build on and add to the success that so many fantastic women has paved the way for. With this idea we want the national team to be a platform to celebrate the past, cherish the present and inspire the future," says national team player Elin Rubensson.

SWITZERLAND

www.football.ch

## DOMINIQUE BLANC ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT

PIERRE BENOIT



Dominique Blanc is the new president of the Swiss Football Association, succeeding Peter Gilliéron, who has stepped down after ten years in the post.



The 69-year-old from the canton of Vaud received the backing of the Amateur Liga which, with 47 of the 101 votes at the delegates' assembly, is the largest of the three sections (the Erste Liga has 26 votes and the Swiss Football League 28) and once again saw its chosen candidate elected. Kurt Zuppinger, the Erste Liga candidate, who had narrowly seen off the Swiss Football League's Jean-François Collet by 30 votes to 29 in the first round of voting, had no chance in the second round, losing to Dominique Blanc by 69 votes to 31. Dominique Blanc had received 42 votes in the first round.

After Marcel Mathier and Peter Gilliéron, the Amateur Liga has therefore put forward three of the last four

presidential election winners. The Swiss Football League's Ralph Zloczower bucked the trend by defeating the Amateur Liga president, Urs Saladin, by a whisker in 2001.

Dominique Blanc is a former player and refereed in the Erste Liga before an eight-year stint as president of the Vaud football association. The French-speaking Swiss automatically became a Swiss FA vice-president when he was elected president of the Amateur Liga in 2015.

He will take up his post on 1 July, replacing Peter Gilliéron who, just like his predecessors Marcel Mathier and Ralph Zloczower, has been named honorary president of the Swiss FA.



TURKEY

www.tff.org

## NİHAT ÖZDEMİR ELECTED PRESIDENT

GÖRKEM KIRGIZ



At its recent elective ordinary general assembly in Ankara in June, attended by 230 delegates, the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) elected Nihat Özdemir as its new president for a four-year term.

In his acceptance speech, the TFF's new president thanked former TFF presidents Yıldırım Demirören and Hüsnü Güreli, and said: "Raising Turkish football to the level it deserves and increasing the number of people who enjoy sport will be my main goal. I want to serve Turkish football with all my knowledge and energy. Our goal is to carry Turkish football to the top and to consistently

be among the top 10 in the world rankings. We will try to be worthy of this pledge with our new board of directors. During the four years ahead, we will always keep doing our best and more besides. We will move forward by creating consensus and in consultation with all stakeholders on all matters concerning public opinion. I've always believed in the power of communication. I believe we should focus on the goal by leaving aside the futile internal debates and resentments. I think it is the right time to carry Turkish football to a respectable place in the world and to increase the popularity and reach of football in Turkey."



WALES

www.faw.cymru

## FOOTBALL HELPS PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

MELISSA PALMER



During Mental Health Awareness Week (13–19 May), the Football Association of Wales and the FAW Trust ran a celebratory showcase of the We Wear the Same Shirt (WWtSS) programme at the Dragon Park national football development centre.

The nationwide WWtSS programme involves the delivery of comprehensive, unique, weekly football sessions for those experiencing mental ill health, while aiming to combat the stigma of mental health.

The programme, which has been running since 2015, provides a safe and empathetic environment, using football as a tool to encourage people with mental health problems to exercise and socialise with others in clubs across Wales.

The inclusive initiative has most recently expanded to include seven clubs running WWtSS sessions thanks to an increase in funding from the UEFA HatTrick assistance programme. The seven teams are attached to semi-pro or professional clubs, including Swansea City, Newport

County, Cardiff Met, Cambrian & Clydach BGC, Wrexham, Newtown and Haverfordwest County.

At the showcase event, WWtSS project leader Chris Foot said that participants' stories have been staggering, with some saying the project had saved their lives. WWtSS participant Luke Martin explained how the programme had given him a

positive attitude not just towards football and how to play the game, but towards life itself.

Further information on the programme, as well as interviews with WWtSS participants, can be found in episode 17 of the second series of the Welsh football magazine web show, FC Cymru, available on the FA Wales channels.



## BIRTHDAYS IN JULY

<b>1 MONDAY</b> Răzvan Burleanu (Romania) Frank De Bleeckere (Belgium) Marinus Koopman (Netherlands) Hannu Tihinen (Finland) Antonie Marinus Verhagen (Netherlands)	<b>2 TUESDAY</b> Mustafa Erögüt (Turkey) Philippe Hertig (Switzerland) Rusmir Mrković (Bosnia and Herzegovina) Peadar Ryan (Republic of Ireland) Pjetur Sigurdsson (Iceland)	<b>3 WEDNESDAY</b> Carolina De Boeck (Belgium) Bertrand Layec (France)	<b>4 THURSDAY</b> Neale Barry (England) Massimo Cumbo (Italy) Antonio Matarrese (Italy) Roland Ospelt (Liechtenstein) Lukas Pitek (Slovakia)	<b>5 FRIDAY</b> Natalia Avdonchenko (Russia) Tiago Craveiro (Portugal) Patrick Nelson (Northern Ireland)	<b>6 SATURDAY</b>	<b>7 SUNDAY</b> Alaatin Aykaç (Turkey) Slaviša Kokeza (Serbia) Hans Schelling (Netherlands) <b>60th</b>
<b>10 WEDNESDAY</b> Thomas Christensen (Norway) Levan Koblashvili (Georgia) Markus Kopecky (Austria) Murad Mammadov (Azerbaijan)	<b>11 THURSDAY</b> Darko Čeferin (Slovenia) Nina Hedlund (Norway)	<b>12 FRIDAY</b> Filip Popovski (North Macedonia) <b>40th</b>	<b>13 SATURDAY</b> Maria Teresa Costa (Portugal) Sjoukje de Jong (Netherlands) Sharon Zeevi (Israel)	<b>14 SUNDAY</b> Elke Günthner (Germany)	<b>15 MONDAY</b> Robert Sedlacek (Austria) Ben Veenbrink (Netherlands) <b>50th</b>	<b>16 TUESDAY</b> Michail Anagnostou (Greece) Lars Lagerbäck (Sweden) Ernst Nigg (Liechtenstein) Jiří Ulrich (Czech Republic)
<b>19 FRIDAY</b> Kari Iuell (Norway) Alfredo Trentalange (Italy)	<b>20 SATURDAY</b> Tormod Larsen (Norway)	<b>21 SUNDAY</b> Gudni Bergsson (Iceland) Vladimir Radionov (Russia)	<b>22 MONDAY</b> Balázs Makray (Hungary) Iain Robertson Brines (Scotland) Michel Wuilleret (Switzerland)	<b>23 TUESDAY</b> Pavel Malovič (Slovakia) Marcelino Santiago Maté (Spain) <b>60th</b> Bontcho Todorov (Bulgaria)	<b>24 WEDNESDAY</b> Gijs de Jong (Netherlands) David Gil (Israel)	<b>25 THURSDAY</b> Claus Christensen (Denmark) Mario Gallavotti (Italy) Nenad Radivojević (Serbia) Ferenc Ragadics (Hungary)
<b>28 SUNDAY</b> Björn Ahlberg (Sweden) Karl Espen Eriksen (Norway) Nataša Joksimović (Serbia) Róbert Kispál (Hungary) <b>50th</b> Stefan Tivold (Slovenia)	<b>29 MONDAY</b> Peter Stadelmann (Switzerland)	<b>30 TUESDAY</b> João Leal (Portugal) <b>50th</b> Kieran O'Connor (Wales)	<b>31 WEDNESDAY</b> Des Casey (Republic of Ireland) Cenk Cem (Turkey) Jozef De Ryck (Belgium) Tugomir Frajman (Slovenia) Duncan Fraser (Scotland) Joël Wolff (Luxembourg)			

## BIRTHDAYS IN AUGUST

<b>1 THURSDAY</b> Sheila Begbie (Scotland) Sreten Ćuk (Croatia) Alf Hansen (Norway) Igor Janković (Serbia) Kimmo Lipponen (Finland)	<b>2 FRIDAY</b> Gerard Behan (Republic of Ireland) Bisser Bochev (Bulgaria) Luciano Lucì (Italy) <b>70th</b> Erich Rutenmüller (Germany) Mehmet Süheyl Önen (Turkey)	<b>3 SATURDAY</b> Dariusz Pasięka (Poland) Andreas Schluchter (Switzerland) Franck Thivillier (France) Thura Win (England)	<b>4 SUNDAY</b> Mustafa Çağlar (Turkey) <b>50th</b>	<b>5 MONDAY</b> Aleh Chykun (Belarus) David Gill (England) Yves Wehrli (France)	<b>6 TUESDAY</b> Piet Hubers (Netherlands)	<b>7 WEDNESDAY</b> Anna Bordiugova (Ukraine) Andrea Gotzmann (Germany) Pierino Lardi (Switzerland)
<b>10 SATURDAY</b> Peter Fossen (Netherlands) Jan Willem van Dop (Netherlands)	<b>11 SUNDAY</b> Laura Ripošati (Italy) Urs Vogel (Switzerland)	<b>12 MONDAY</b> Emil Kostadinov (Bulgaria) Domenico Messina (Italy)	<b>13 TUESDAY</b> Cornel Cristian Bivolaru (Romania) Albano Janku (Albania) Joseph Mifsud (Malta) Metin Tuncer (Turkey) Roger Vanden Stock (Belgium) Michael Verschueren (Belgium) Patrick Willemarck (Belgium) <b>60th</b>	<b>14 WEDNESDAY</b> George Pandelea-Dobrovicescu (Romania)	<b>15 THURSDAY</b> Kjell Alseth (Norway) Thibault De Gendt (Belgium) Jevgenijs Milevskis (Latvia)	<b>16 FRIDAY</b> Victor Beceiro (Spain) Jacques Lagnier (France) Art Langelier (Netherlands)
<b>19 MONDAY</b> Antonio García Alcaraz (Spain) Patricia Gregory (England) Graham Hover (England) Hans Reijgwart (Netherlands) <b>70th</b> Fabrizio Tencone (Italy)	<b>20 TUESDAY</b> Eren Eroğlu (Turkey) Per Ravn Omdal (Norway) Daniel Spreutels (Belgium) <b>70th</b>	<b>21 WEDNESDAY</b> Carmelo Bartolo (Malta) Marta Bonaria Atzori (Italy) Eamon Breen (Republic of Ireland)	<b>22 THURSDAY</b> Kazimierz Oleszek (Poland)	<b>23 FRIDAY</b> Demetrio Albertini (Italy) Igor Pristovnik (Croatia) Luis Manuel Rubiales Béjar (Spain) Geoff Thompson (England)	<b>24 SATURDAY</b> David Delferiere (Belgium) Nicolae Grigorescu (Romania) Pavel Kolev (Bulgaria) Johnny Vanspauwen (Belgium)	<b>25 SUNDAY</b> Bert Andersson (Sweden) Alexander Zorkov (Russia) <b>60th</b>
<b>28 WEDNESDAY</b> Savvas Constantinou (Cyprus)	<b>29 THURSDAY</b> Scilla Gennaro (Italy) Vadym Kostyuchenko (Ukraine) Denni Strich (Germany)	<b>30 FRIDAY</b> Charles John Grundie (Northern Ireland) Boško Jovanetić (Serbia) Marián Ružbarský (Slovakia) Leo Windtner (Austria)	<b>31 SATURDAY</b> Cristel Brorsson (Sweden) Pedro Dias (Portugal) Christer Fällström (Sweden) Christoph Kollmeier (Germany) Stefano Podeschi (San Marino)			



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### 8 MONDAY

**Martin Glenn**  
(England)  
**Martin Maleck**  
(Switzerland) **50th**  
**Jacobo Betrán Pedreira**  
(Spain) **50th**  
**Ekaterina Todorova**  
(Bulgaria)

### 17 WEDNESDAY

**Antonia Kokotou**  
(Greece)  
**Giuseppe Mifsud-Bonnici**  
(Malta)  
**Alexander Safonov**  
(Russia) **50th**

### 26 FRIDAY

**David Bowen**  
(Northern Ireland)  
**Alfred Ludwig**  
(Austria)

### 9 TUESDAY

**Yordan Letchkov**  
(Bulgaria)  
**Sergiu Lisnic**  
(Moldova)  
**Heinrich Schifferle**  
(Switzerland)

### 18 THURSDAY

**Tomas Danilevičius**  
(Lithuania)

### 27 SATURDAY

**Jeff Davis**  
(England)

### 8 THURSDAY

**Olivier Henry**  
(Belgium)  
**Plarent Kotherja**  
(Albania)  
**Nico de Pauw**  
(Belgium)  
**Marcel Vanelshocht**  
(Belgium)

### 17 SATURDAY

**Sergey Pryadkin**  
(Russia)  
**Bente Ovedie Skogvang**  
(Norway)

### 26 MONDAY

**Marcin Animucki**  
(Poland) **40th**  
**Ronit Glasman**  
(Israel)  
**Regina Konink-Belksma**  
(Netherlands)  
**Scott Struthers**  
(Scotland)

### 9 FRIDAY

**Odd Flattum**  
(Norway)  
**Roy Hodgson**  
(England)  
**Nick Nicolaou**  
(Cyprus)

### 18 SUNDAY

**Romano Clavadetscher**  
(Switzerland)  
**Dane Jošt**  
(Slovenia) **60th**  
**Luca Miranda**  
(Italy) **40th**  
**Borja Santana**  
(Spain)

### 27 TUESDAY

**Tammo Beishuizen**  
(Netherlands)  
**Karen Nalbandyan**  
(Armenia)  
**Tom O'Shea**  
(Republic of Ireland)

## JULY

### Meetings

#### 4 July, Nyon

UEFA Futsal Champions League: preliminary and main round draws

#### 22 July, Nyon

UEFA Champions League/UEFA Europa League: third qualifying round draws

### Competitions

#### 4 July

UEFA Europa League: preliminary round (return legs)

#### 9/10 July

UEFA Champions League: first qualifying round (first legs)

#### 11 July

UEFA Europa League: first qualifying round (first legs)

#### 14–27 July, Armenia

European Under-19 Championship: final round

#### 16/17 July

UEFA Champions League: first qualifying round (return legs)

#### 16–28 July, Scotland

European Women's Under-19 Championship: final round

#### 18 July

UEFA Europa League: first qualifying round (return legs)

#### 23/24 July

UEFA Champions League: second qualifying round (first legs)

#### 25 July

UEFA Europa League: second qualifying round (first legs)

#### 30/31 July

UEFA Champions League: second qualifying round (return legs)

## AUGUST

### Meetings

#### 5 August, Nyon

UEFA Champions League/UEFA Europa League: play-off draws

#### 16 August, Nyon

UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 32 draw

#### 29 August, Monaco

UEFA Champions League: group stage draw

#### 30 August, Monaco

UEFA Europa League: group stage draw

### Competitions

#### 1 August

UEFA Europa League: second qualifying round (return legs)

#### 6/7 August

UEFA Champions League: third qualifying round (first legs)

#### 7–13 August

UEFA Women's Champions League: qualifying round

#### 8 August

UEFA Europa League: third qualifying round (first legs)

#### 13 August

UEFA Champions League: third qualifying round (return legs)

#### 14 August, Istanbul

UEFA Super Cup

#### 15 August

UEFA Europa League: third qualifying round (return legs)

#### 20/21 August

UEFA Champions League: play-offs (first legs)

#### 22 August

UEFA Europa League: play-offs (first legs)

#### 27/28 August

UEFA Champions League: play-offs (return legs)

#### 28 August – 3 September

Women's EURO 2021: qualifying matches

#### 29 August

UEFA Europa League: play-offs (return legs)

## NOTICES

- **Dominique Blanc** has been elected president of the Swiss Football Association for a two-year term.
- **Leonid Oleinenco** has been elected president of the Football Association of Moldova for a two-year term.
- **Just Spee** has been elected president of the Royal Netherlands Football Association for a three-year term.
- **Nihat Özdemir** has been elected president of the Turkish Football Federation for a four-year term.
- **Rod Petrie** has been elected president of the Scottish Football Association for a two-year term.

# ~~11~~ EQUAL GAME



RESPECT

EQUALGAME.COM