

UEFA

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**SPAIN'S
WINNING
FORMULA**

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Theodore Theodoridis
UEFA General Secretary

RARING TO GO

On 25 June, a mere 24 days after Divock Origi clinched the 2018/19 UEFA Champions League final for Liverpool, Javier Lopez Iglesias of Andorra's FC Santa Coloma scored the first goal of the 2019/20 competition and the first goal of the 2019/20 UEFA club competition season.

The gap between seasons is fleeting, but the transition between both remains smooth – testament to the work of players, clubs and officials across the continent.

While the actual new club competition season may have kicked off in June, symbolically the season kicks off with the UEFA Super Cup and the club competition group stage draws and the UEFA Player of the Year awards in Monaco. In that way, the 2019/20 club competition season will start and end in Istanbul, which hosts both the Super Cup and the UEFA Champions League final.

That gap between the seasons is, of course, illusory. The summer was filled with national team football, with Iberian supremacy in the UEFA Nations League with Portugal and the European Under-21 and Under-19 Championships with Spain, while France won the European Women's Under-19 Championship.

The summer of national team football also again underlined the strength of European women's football. An exceptional USA team may have won the Women's World Cup, but UEFA member associations provided the other seven quarter-finalists, with France, England and the Netherlands pushing the US team all the way.

Europe's strength in depth is no summer swallow. UEFA has been actively promoting the development of women's football for years and our Women's Football Development Programme has been running since 2012, with each association receiving €100,000 every year specifically for growing the women's game. From 2020, this figure will rise by 50%, with each association set to benefit from an annual €150,000.

UEFA's women's football strategy was unveiled on the eve of the UEFA Women's Champions League final in Budapest in May, with the aim of raising the numbers of girls and women playing the sport to 2.5 million by 2024. UEFA is also seeking to change Europe-wide perceptions of women's football and to show that there are no barriers to women in football.

The latest barrier broken saw Stéphanie Frappart referee the UEFA Super Cup – the first time that a female official has taken charge of a major UEFA men's competition match.

That was the first of many successes and achievements we can look forward to in the season ahead, which, lest we not forget, culminates with UEFA EURO 2020 taking place across the continent.

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Spain celebrate winning the European Under-21 Championship in Italy in June. One month later, Spain's Under-19s continued the winning trend in Armenia.

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Spain lift the trophy for a record eighth time at the men's finals in Armenia, while France take the honours at the women's finals in Scotland.

GRASSROOTS DRIVE GAINING IMPETUS

The sixth UEFA Grassroots Conference, held in Minsk between 10 and 13 June, provided a comprehensive review of the state of grassroots football across Europe. Former Real Madrid and Spanish ace Raúl González was guest of honour at the event in the Belarus capital.

The three-day conference brought UEFA together with grassroots managers and grassroots coach education specialists from its 55 member associations, as well as representatives of FIFA and delegates from UEFA's fellow continental confederations.

The conference centred on three themes: football in schools, grassroots club development and grassroots coach education. All three topics are crucial in increasing, broadening and maintaining mass participation and developing players who show talent. The overall aims were to build close collaboration between grassroots and coach education functions; modernise the learning environment within grassroots programmes; link schools with clubs and offer appropriate coach education; understand the benefits of football, especially for children; and set effective strategies for the future.

UEFA presented its extensive grassroots visions and activities in Minsk. In his welcome message, UEFA president

Aleksander Čeferin stressed that the grassroots sector was a major priority. "Grassroots football is of the utmost importance," he said. "The slogan Football First is at the core of UEFA's strategy for the coming years – and without healthy grassroots, the game cannot flourish."

Grassroots football is all football that is non-professional and non-elite, played by the masses at a level where participation and a love of the game are key driving forces. UEFA stressed that grassroots football's role is to ensure that everybody, everywhere, has the opportunity to play football in a safe and quality-controlled environment.

Grassroots football, UEFA underlined, is about creating a solid foundation for the game; producing playing opportunities; ensuring respect and equality; uniting people and transcending differences; serving as a vehicle for educational, social and sporting development – and promoting lifelong participation, as well as healthy exercise.

Raúl's memories and thoughts

In a question-and-answer session, Raúl – who scored 323 goals in a record 741 appearances for Real Madrid, as well as 44 times in 102 appearances for Spain – spoke of the importance of respecting football's key values, and captivated the audience with his memories of starting out as a small boy kicking a ball against a wall in the Madrid suburbs. "I think I started playing football before I was born," he said. "I've got loads of memories... particularly of playing with a ball since as far back as I can remember." He said that grassroots football had changed dramatically in the years since he was a boy. "People would play in the parks and streets, at school during breaks, and in the playground, then you'd go out and play with friends. It was a very different world."

Coaches of children, Raúl added, required special qualities and specific training to look after such young charges. "Children have to be taught to enjoy themselves and shown the values they'll need to play in a team: camaraderie, solidarity, selflessness and the confidence to go out and really be themselves. I think that football has a duty to educate these youngsters along the way. As a coach, you therefore have just as big a responsibility for the children's upbringing as their parents."

Europe's national associations went home from Minsk with a catalogue of invaluable recommendations about how to take the next steps forward in their own grassroots work – how to define strategies and resources, create timelines to put strategies into practice, and sustain successes.

Spanish ace Raúl, guest of honour at the conference, captivated the audience with his memories of playing football.





Sportsfile

In Minsk, practical sessions on the field followed on from theory seminars in the conference hall.

Looking to the future

UEFA itself will be building on the impetus of the Minsk event. Delegates heard that a new UEFA Football in Schools project will run from 2020 to 2024. Football in Schools is part of UEFA's grassroots programme, and is being financed through funding from the UEFA HatTrick programme, which will see UEFA's member associations given vital financial support to nurture their grassroots work.

Aims include providing school football activity to all young people; promoting football as a social and educational tool; developing a player pathway to link school activity with clubs; and training teachers, coaches and volunteers to provide quality educational football lessons. To launch the programme, a Football in Schools festival is earmarked for 24 September in Ljubljana, around that week's UEFA Executive Committee meeting in the Slovenian

capital. Six mixed school teams of boys and girls – two from Slovenia and one each from Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Italy – will take part.

This will be followed in May next year by the Football in Schools EURO in Rome – using the high-profile stage of EURO 2020 to promote grassroots football and its values. The tournament will feature 12 mixed teams, one from each EURO host national association, playing small-sided games and taking part in skills challenges.

Meanwhile, UEFA Grassroots Week in September, run in conjunction with the European Week of Sport and in cooperation with the European Commission, will highlight grassroots football in the UEFA member associations while, at the same time, UEFA's annual grassroots awards will reward excellence in the grassroots sector. Through the UEFA Grassroots Charter, a quality mark

focusing on grassroots football, UEFA supports and stimulates grassroots football development at national level by setting standards and providing tailored assistance.

Grassroots football will also be in the spotlight within the UEFA Share programme, formerly the UEFA Study Group Scheme. One of the programme topics is grassroots football – and a series of seminars this coming season will bring large and small associations together to share knowledge and ideas for the overall benefit of the grassroots game in Europe.

The role of grassroots football is to ensure that football is open to all. Much sterling work is happening within UEFA and elsewhere in Europe – and the successful conference in Minsk showed that the overall efforts are going a long way to ensuring the satisfactory fulfilment of this vision. 🍷

VAR conference promotes dialogue

HEADS OF REFEREE departments, competitions and VAR project managers from national associations across the continent met with representatives of UEFA, FIFA and football's lawmakers, the International Football Association Board (IFAB), at a conference in Nyon in July for an in-depth discussion on the latest developments in the VAR system, which UEFA has started to roll out in various competitions.

VAR was first trialled for a UEFA competition in the UEFA Champions League knockout phase this spring, and will be regularly deployed in the competition as of this season's play-offs. It was also used at this summer's UEFA Nations League, European Under-21 Championship finals and UEFA Super Cup match.

VAR is due to be used at EURO 2020 and will also be introduced for the UEFA Europa League in 2020/21.

Europe's top referees in Zagreb

A TOTAL OF 123 officials – 72 from UEFA's men's elite and first categories, 31 women's elite and first category referees and 20 video assistant referees – gathered in Zagreb in late July for their UEFA summer course in preparation for the 2019/20 campaign.

The three-day course featured a review of the second half of the 2018/19 season and gave referees the opportunity to exchange views and provide UEFA's Referees Committee with opinions, ideas and proposals. The referees also underwent

stringent fitness testing in readiness for the assignments ahead.

The course included analysis and discussions of the video assistant referee system, introduced into the Laws of the Game last season and that UEFA started to roll out in its competitions in the spring. Meanwhile, other amendments to the Laws of the Game came into force this summer, and the gathering in Zagreb served as a refresher session, with a test to help the referees consolidate their knowledge of football's laws.

Be part of the #FootballPeople weeks

THE WIDE-REACHING campaign to tackle discrimination and celebrate diversity in football will take place from 10 to 24 October.

The Fare network, which organises the annual event, is calling on Europe's national associations, clubs, communities and supporters to get involved and help drive social change.

Anybody who watches, plays or is leading football can take part. The activities can be simple and the options are limitless: holding workshops for fans, coaches and players; organising on-pitch activities at a match; inviting children from different backgrounds to be mascots; asking players to line up in campaign T-shirts; or producing a photo or video with a message promoting diversity.

UEFA supports the #FootballPeople weeks with specific content on social media and special activities during all the matches played in the UEFA Europa League, UEFA Champions League, UEFA Women's Champions League and European Qualifiers between 10 and 24 October.

For more information about the #FootballPeople weeks, go to www.farenet.org.



European success at U-20 and Women's World Cups

ON 15 JUNE, Ukraine were crowned U-20 World Cup champions with a 3-1 win over South Korea in the final. Italy finished fourth after losing 1-0 to Ecuador in the match for third place. The competition was held in Poland from 23 May to 15 June. France and Poland were eliminated in the round of 16, while Norway and Portugal failed to progress from the

group stage.

Another European country, France, hosted this year's Women's World Cup from 7 June to 7 July. The Netherlands finished as runners-up, Sweden took third place and England finished fourth. Seven of the nine European representatives qualified for the quarter-finals, with Scotland the only one to be knocked out in the group stage.

Spain were defeated in the round of 16 by the future winners, the USA, while Germany, Italy and Norway all fell at the quarter-final stage.

For the next edition in 2023, FIFA has already decided to increase the number of participants from 24 to 32. The host country for the tournament will be chosen in May 2020.

Women's EURO 2021 workshop

THE INAUGURAL host cities' workshop for Women's EURO 2021 was held in host country England in June.

The aim is to deliver a record-breaking tournament that leaves a legacy for girls' and women's football.

Sixty-five delegates from host cities, host stadiums, county football associations, The Football Association, UK Sport and UEFA met at Stadium MK in Milton Keynes for initial

discussions focusing on host city and venue issues. England was awarded Europe's premier women's national team final tournament by the UEFA Executive Committee in Dublin last December.

The host city representatives also garnered important experience at the Women's World Cup semi-final at the Stade de Lyon on 3 July, before starting to develop their own delivery plans.

UEFA ethics and disciplinary inspectors workshop

UEFA'S ETHICS and disciplinary inspectors attended a workshop in Gibraltar in June as they prepare for their four-year terms of office following their election by the UEFA Executive Committee.

During the workshop, the ethics and disciplinary inspectors had the chance to meet each other and exchange best practices related to their role and responsibilities within the whole disciplinary process. They also heard a presentation about the new 2019 UEFA Disciplinary Regulations and the 2019 UEFA Safety and Security Regulations, as well as an update on the latest jurisprudence of the UEFA disciplinary bodies.

The ethics and disciplinary inspectors represent UEFA in proceedings before UEFA's Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body and the Appeals Body. They may initiate disciplinary investigations and lodge appeals against decisions by the Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body, and support UEFA in the event that a party appeals against a decision by the Appeals Body before the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The UEFA Executive Committee, UEFA president, UEFA general secretary or the disciplinary bodies may commission ethics and disciplinary inspectors to conduct investigations alone or in cooperation with other UEFA or non-UEFA bodies.



UEFA match results 2018/19

THE RESULTS of all 2,000 and more UEFA matches played in 2018/19 – from the UEFA Champions League to the UEFA Regions' Cup, and including the UEFA Nations League and all the youth, women's and futsal competitions – can be found in the latest edition of the UEFA results booklet.



Football and Social Responsibility Report

UEFA HAS PUBLISHED its Football and Social Responsibility (FSR) Report for 2017/18. This sixth annual report is the first in UEFA's new four-year business cycle and comes with a fresh new design as well as new perspectives on UEFA's FSR strategy. In addition to reporting on the activities of internal UEFA units and UEFA FSR partners, the 2017/18 report also covers valuable work being done in UEFA competitions and by national associations demonstrating how football can serve as a tool for sustainable development in Europe.

A GAME OF FOUR HALVES

Spain even the scores with Germany.

At the 2017 European Under-21 Championship final in Kraków, Germany took a 1-0 lead during a first half that could go into coaching manuals as a tactical masterclass. Spain took control in the second half, but failed to overturn the deficit. Germany took the title. At the 2019 final in Udine, Spain went 1-0 ahead during a brilliant opening spell. Germany dominated the second half but failed to overturn the deficit. Spain took the title. A second bite at the cherry allowed Spain to even the scores.

UEFA's team of technical observers at the event co-hosted by Italy and San Marino

from 16 to 30 June unanimously agreed that the best two teams disputed the final. There might be murmurs of disagreement from other areas of the continent but there could be no discussion about the entertainment value of a tournament which attracted more than a quarter of a million fans and smashed TV audience records in various countries. In Germany, 9.2 million watched the final; in Romania, 40% of the viewing public tuned in to their team's semi-final against Germany; in Italy, there were big audiences even for the games not involving the hosts; in Spain, the audience for the final was the highest since 2002... and so on. It was a reward for the two →



UEFA
UNDER21
CHAMPIONSHIP
ITALY 2019



Sportsfile



Above: The Romanians had a great tournament and lost only to Germany in the semi-finals.
Opposite: A crowd of 23,000 watched Spain beat Germany in the final.



national associations that had invested hard work into organising the event. And, above all, it was a tribute to the players who performed at such a high level while grabbing cooling breaks as best they could during the colossal heatwave which had most of Europe perspiring profusely.

Goal records pulverised

There was statistical evidence to support the concept of entertainment value. The tally of 78 goals at an average of 3.71 per match pulverised records. At the ten final tournaments previously played during the current century, the average had only reached three on three occasions. The 2019 tally was 20% higher than the 3.1 registered in Poland two years earlier and 14% up on the previous record of 3.25 set way back in 2004.

The search for plausible explanations immediately focused on the heat = fatigue equation. No fewer than one third of the goals were scored after the 75th minute. But the second and last appearance of the 12-team format was also cited as a contributing factor. The hang-up in this playing system is the need to determine the best runner-up from the three groups to complete the quartet of semi-finalists. In a match schedule where fixtures in Groups A, B and C are played on successive days, the last group to play has the advantage of knowing exactly what is required. Sure enough, in the two tournaments played in this format, Group C provided the fourth

semi-finalist – and, in the 2019 event, Europe's fourth representative at the 2020 Olympic Games. The brighter side of this coin, however, was the knowledge that winning the group provided the only guarantee of success. It could be argued that the torrent of goals stemmed from the consequent play-to-win attitudes.

Slim margins

The 12-team format is also liable to generate hard-luck stories. In Group A, for example, Italy got off to a flier by replying three times to a goal scored by Spain during a breathtakingly fluent

opening spell. Local euphoria, however, lasted three days – until the hosts met a Poland side which had similarly rebounded after conceding an opening goal to defeat Belgium 3-2. Statistics say a great deal about the monologue in Bologna: Italy had 64% of the ball and 30 goal attempts – though only five on target. Poland goalkeeper Kamil Grabara was UEFA's man of the match. His team had eight goal attempts, one of them a free-kick. Final result: Italy 0 Poland 1. In the meantime, a late goal was giving Spain a 2-1 win which sent Belgium home. So, on the final day, Poland needed a draw to top the group; Italy had to beat Belgium and hope for the best; Spain had to beat Poland by at least three goals. Italy 3 Belgium 1 + Spain 5 Poland 0 = a three-way tie on six points and top spot for Spain. By the narrowest of margins, this spelt no Olympics for Poland, nor, after a two-day wait in the wings, for runners-up Italy.

Even though Germany established themselves as the dominant force in the Group B games played up at Trieste and Udine, margins were also slim. Their opening 3-1 win over Denmark persuaded Niels Frederiksen to switch to a three-at-the-back formation and Denmark duly responded with victories over Austria and Serbia. But the 2-0 scoreline in the latter left



78
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the final tournament
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3.71
per game



Florian Neuhaus and Dani Ceballos compete for the ball in the final in Udine.

them one goal short of Italy in the bidding for the best runner-up prize.

Serbia, although displaying a degree of panache in their middle-to-front play, conceded ten goals and travelled home without a point. Austria, despite holding Germany to a 1-1 draw (and enjoying the better chances) were eliminated with four points.

Summarising Group C is a major challenge. But it offered spectators in San Marino and Cesena huge doses of pure pandemonium – many of them involving England, who were among the pre-tournament favourites. An opening victory against France could have been sealed with a percentage of the chances Aidy Boothroyd's team created but it was not until the second half that a brilliant solo effort by Phil Foden put them ahead. Then, suddenly, a reckless tackle spelt a red card for screening midfielder Hamza Choudhury, a (missed) penalty for France, and half an hour of panicky last-ditch defending. At 90+4, England seemed to have hung on for 1-1 only for, with goalkeeper Dean Henderson about to pick up the ball, Aaron Wan-Bissaka to chip it into his own net.

England's next game was against Romania who, to the delight of their legions of supporters, had hammered Croatia 4-1 in their opening match, with

the impressive target striker George Pușcaș picking up the man of the match award and 'Gica' Hagi's son Ianis also catching the eye. After 75 goalless minutes, no one would have predicted the outcome. But another penalty against England lit the fuse for an explosion of five more goals within 15 minutes and a 2-4 scoreline that eliminated Boothroyd's team. France, in the meantime, were reluctant to join the goalscoring party. After a 1-0 win against Croatia, they went into the last game aware that a draw with Romania would qualify both teams. The match in Cesena was competitive. But the only goalless game of the tournament was the logical result of 90 minutes without an on-target goal attempt. Dark horses Romania topped the group; France, with three goals and seven points, booked an Olympic and semi-final ticket as best runner-up.

Talking points

By this time, talking points were beginning to emerge. The glut of goals was an invitation to discuss the quality of defending and the efficient operation of deep defence in numbers. This was being linked to a sharp increase in successes from the long-range areas outside the box. There was a marked trend towards the use of 'wrong-footed' wingers ready, willing

and able to cut in and go for goal – which, in turn, signified even greater responsibility for full-backs to provide attacking width. Most teams, it became apparent, gave little or no relevance to the question of ball possession – among them Romania, whose greatest slice of possession was their 46% in the goalless draw with France.

In fact, Mirel Radoi's team was receiving plaudits for breathing fresh air into the tournament. Their disregard for ball-possession statistics was rooted in a policy of direct, high-tempo attacking using the irrepressible Pușcaș as the reference point, supported by shadow striker Hagi and deep-running wingers. Compact narrow defending was accompanied by intense pressing in midfield.

But it was a high-intensity game and, when they travelled to Bologna to kick off the semi-final against Germany at 18:00, the torrid conditions ultimately took their toll. Stefan Kuntz's defending champions had impressed during the group stage with smooth building from the back – with keeper Alexander Nübel playing a proactive role à la Neuer – good wing play by the full-backs, and an attack led by Luca Waldschmidt in the role of a 'false 9', dropping deep to link attacking moves and then popping up in positions where he could practise his finishing and, ultimately, lay claim to →

the top scorer award by a comfortable margin – nobody else scoring more than four while he was rattling up his total of seven. Above all, however, Germany impressed with their counterattacks based on players flooding forward at breakneck pace without giving time for opponents to assemble defensive blocks.

Romania, however, gave them food for thought by skilfully exploiting the pockets of space between the three points of Germany's midfield triangle and creating overloads, especially on their left. Unfazed by an early German goal, they were good value for a 2-1 half-time lead, courtesy of Puşcaş. But a penalty levelled the contest and, with fuel running low, tired tackling in the closing minutes allowed Germany to clinch a 4-2 victory with free-kicks timed at 90 and 90+4.

In Reggio Emilia, France's first incursion into Spain's penalty area after 16 minutes earned them a penalty. But success was ephemeral. Condemned to shadow-chasing by Spain's high-tempo passing intricacies and short of attacking options, Sylvain Ripoll's team shipped four goals and travelled home having scored only two open-play goals in their four matches – an exception to the tournament's free-scoring rule.

Repeat of the 2017 final

And so to Udine for the repeat of the 2017 final and Spain's fourth final in the last five editions. Mercifully, temperatures

Having taken the lead in the 16th minute, France were unable to withstand the Spanish onslaught in the semi-finals, losing 4-1.

in the north were a tad lower when 23,232 spectators settled into their seats at the Stadio Friuli. Stefan Kuntz made one change in midfield; Luis de la Fuente remained loyal to Spain's semi-final line-up. He was rewarded with an early goal, Fabián Ruiz running through midfield and, with German defenders backing off, thumping a long-range left-footer past Nübel. The SSC Napoli midfielder went on to receive UEFA's player of the tournament award after a sequence of performances which had showcased his technique, passing ability and finishing skills in Spain's midfield trio alongside Marc Roca and Dani Ceballos – the man whose trophy cabinet features the player of the tournament award from 2017.

In Udine, however, it was an evening which allowed them to exhibit their defensive contributions to the team effort alongside their fluent creative skills and exceptional ability to play out of tight situations. Germany, after seeming to be hypnotised by Spain's ball circulation during the opening 25 minutes, gradually worked their way back into the game, yet without unduly disturbing Antonio Sivera in the Spain goal. German domination was accentuated after the interval but Spain effectively defended from the front and, even when the first two lines of defence were breached, their back four were more than equal to the task. Their counterattacking, a constant threat, bore fruit in the 69th minute when another long-range shot by Fabián as parried by Nübel and Dani Olmo (whose contribution earned him the man of the match award)

coolly chipped the rebound over the Germany keeper. In the 88th minute, another long-range strike by winger Nadiem Amiri hit the net via the head of Spain's centre-back Jesús Vallejo to set up a stirring few minutes until the Serbian referee's whistle declared Spain as the 2-1 winners and the champions of Europe. Spain had successfully shut down spaces and stifled German counterattacking and, as their head coach stated afterwards: "We defended when we needed to defend and we countered when we had the chance. These players are not just 'normal' footballers – they are so much more than that. We suffered a lot against a great German team, but these players have got all they need to triumph at the top level."

They applauded loudly when tournament ambassador Andrea Pirlo carried the trophy onto the pitch; applauded even more loudly when captain Dani Ceballos helped captain Jesús Vallejo to lift the trophy; and, contributing some spectacular football to an outstanding tournament, erased the disappointment of 2017 and levelled their personal score with Germany. 🇪🇺



Group A (16, 19 and 22 June)

Poland	3-2	Belgium
Italy	3-1	Spain
Spain	2-1	Belgium
Italy	0-1	Poland
Belgium	1-3	Italy
Spain	5-0	Poland

Group B (17, 20 and 23 June)

Serbia	0-2	Austria
Germany	3-1	Denmark
Denmark	3-1	Austria
Germany	6-1	Serbia
Austria	1-1	Germany
Denmark	2-0	Serbia

Group C (18, 21 and 24 June)

Romania	4-1	Croatia
England	1-2	France
England	2-4	Romania
France	1-0	Croatia
Croatia	3-3	England
France	0-0	Romania

Semi-finals – 27 June

Spain	4-1	France
Germany	4-2	Romania

Final – 30 June

Spain	2-1	Germany
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CELEBRATING THE FUTURE OF SPORTS JOURNALISM

The fourth young reporters programme took place during the European Under-21 Championship final tournament in Italy and San Marino in June.

For three weeks, a mentoring team of expert journalists led by Keir Radnege, Riccardo Romani, Martin Mazur and Andrea Giannini introduced their protégés to the different pillars of sports journalism – research and preparation, formats and structures, and ethics – underlining the importance of the written and social media, photography and video operations. In addition, the young reporters also had a chance to learn more about UEFA and its contribution to football.

The programme, organised jointly by the International Sports Press Association (AIPS) and UEFA, involved 19 reporters from three continents and followed successful programmes at the European Under-21 Championship finals in Israel (2013) and the Czech Republic (2015), and UEFA Women's EURO 2017 in the Netherlands.

"Our young colleagues had a unique chance to enjoy the life of a professional reporter," said Martin Mazur, a sports journalist from Argentina and one of the AIPS mentors. "They were covering training sessions, press conferences, mixed zones and open media days, reporting from the matches and post-match media activities. During the process, not only did

they learn how to deliver on time, but also how to comply with the rules and regulations of a big football tournament. They were encouraged to search for stories and work on different assignments, on top of the articles, videos or podcasts they were producing for their local media outlets. As the future cornerstone of European and global sports journalism, our young reporters had a chance to hear and see how deep the roots of football grow, its social and cultural impact on society, and clarify all the ideas they had about this beautiful game".

Through special presentations and Q&A sessions, the mentors helped the young journalists expand their knowledge of the complex European football landscape and answer all their questions on various topics such as refereeing, match operations, national association development, technical development and football education, futsal and many other topics. At the end of the course, just a few hours before the final between Spain and Germany in Udine, the young reporters met the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, who presented them with their certificates and wished them the best in their future careers. "You are the future of

sports journalism, not only in Europe. And the modern trends in journalism rely too much on negativity and sensationalism. You have the power and knowledge to change it. I am not asking you to turn your head the other way when something is not right, but the very opposite. I just want you also to use your skill to promote positive stories, and football has so many of them to offer. And trust me, people love reading and watching positive stories, too," Čeferin said. 📸

About AIPS

Founded in Paris in 1924, the AIPS is the peak professional body representing the international sports media, with more than 9,500 members worldwide.

The young reporters programme is a cornerstone initiative for AIPS that offers the new generation of sports journalists a unique opportunity to experience a top international event at first hand.

DOLNY ŚLĄSK CROWNED IN BAVARIAN FOOTBALL FEST

Poland's Dolny Śląsk became only the second team to win two UEFA Regions' Cup titles after the latest edition of the unique amateur competition, held in Bavaria from 18 to 26 June.

All eight teams taking it in turns to wield the microphone and teach each other songs. A final with five penalties. It could only be the UEFA Regions' Cup.

A unique tournament marking its 20th anniversary with this 11th edition in 2019, the UEFA Regions' Cup is a competition for players who have never featured at any professional level. Contested mostly by the winners of amateur tournaments between regional representative sides (who gain the right to wear national kit), the final tournament every other June is hosted by one of the eight qualifiers.

Drama from the off

This year the hosts were Bavaria, representing Germany for the first time. They were joined in Group A by 2017 hosts Istanbul plus Ligue de Normandie and West Slovakia, who had respectively knocked out Zagreb and the Irish representatives, opponents in the 2015 and 2017 finals.

There was drama from the off as West Slovakia scored four minutes in, only for Istanbul to win 3-1, while Bavaria beat Ligue de Normandie 1-0 with a goal in the 40th second. Istanbul again came from behind to defeat the French side 2-1, while Bavaria were held 1-1 by

West Slovakia, setting up a final-day decider. That game in Landslut was watched by 2,463 people, a group stage record, boosted by the teams competing in a regional youth tournament, who paraded with their flags before the match. And they were rewarded with a thrilling finish as the youngest player in the tournament, 19-year-old Henri Koudouso, scored in added time to take Bavaria to the final.

Former champions in contention

Two former champions were in Group B, and one would go on to face Bavaria in the final. Castilla y León, the 2009 winners, took Spain's record of finals appearances to eight and began with a confident 3-0 defeat of Hradec Králové, the seventh different region to represent the Czech Republic. Meanwhile, 2007 victors Dolny Śląsk (Lower Silesia) beat Russia's South Region – Chayka 1-0, Michał Jaros pouncing on the rebound from a saved penalty.

After Hradec Králové had beaten the Russian team 1-0, Castilla y León knew victory against Dolny Śląsk would take them into the final with a game to spare, and Juanan's goal looked to be enough until Paweł Slonecki levelled in the fifth minute of added time. Suddenly Group B went



The Bavarians (in white) had to wait until their last group match, against Istanbul, to guarantee their place in the final.





Dawid Pozarycki (Dolny Śląsk, in white) up against Michael Kraus (Bavaria) during the final.

from settled to three potential winners on the final day.

Castilla y León began with the advantage but lost 2-1 to South Region – Chayka, the winners with two minutes left. The Spanish side were having to push for a win as Dolny Śląsk were 2-1 up against Hradec Králové, but this time it was the Polish team's turn to concede a 95th-minute equaliser. Still, the point took Dolny Śląsk through, though there was consolation for the Spanish side as they shared the bronze medals with Istanbul.

They were presented at the traditional teams' banquet after the group stage. The ceremony over, the microphone was passed to Ligue de Normandie players to display their beatboxing skills before breaking into song, something picked up by each team in turn before members of several squads formed a conga line.

Five-goal final

There was still serious business to be had in Burghausen, with a decider whose five goals were the most ever in 90 minutes of a UEFA Regions' Cup final. And, extraordinarily, every one resulted from penalties, four converted and the other put in on the rebound, just as in the group stage, by Dolny Śląsk's Janos.

That cancelled out Ugur Türk's opening spot kick for Bavaria, and the Polish side took the lead just after the break when Kornel Traczyk made no mistake. With Bavaria having lost Michael Kraus to a red card, Jakub Bohdanowicz converted with ten minutes left and although there was time for Ekin, the fifth different penalty-taker, to pull the hosts back to 3-2 and make him the finals top scorer on three goals, Dolny Śląsk had the victory.

It was only the second time that the home side had been beaten in the seven finals where the hosts had made it. And the conquerors on the

first occasion were none other than Dolny Śląsk, against South-East Bulgaria in 2007, in similar heatwave conditions to the 2019 final, thus becoming only the second two-time winners after Italy's Veneto.

Grzegorz Borowy, Dolny Śląsk's captain, said: "I am very proud of representing our region and our country in this tournament." Ekin said his top scorer trophy would "get a special place over my bed because then I can always see what has become reality here at the Regions' Cup".

And while his side may not have made the final, Ligue de Normandie coach Clément Lerebours summed up the event: "It's a great opportunity for our players to play here, a special moment for us. It's a unique tournament, so it's a wonderful thing." 🏆

Group A (18, 20 and 23 June)

West Slovakia	1-3	Istanbul
Bavaria	1-0	Ligue de Normandie
Istanbul	2-1	Ligue de Normandie
Bavaria	1-1	West Slovakia
Ligue de Normandie	2-0	West Slovakia
Istanbul	0-1	Bavaria

Group B (18, 20 and 23 June)

Hradec Králové	0-3	Castilla y León
South Region Chayka	0-1	Dolny Śląsk
Hradec Králové	1-0	South Region Chayka
Dolny Śląsk	1-1	Castilla y León
Castilla y León	1-2	South Region Chayka
Dolny Śląsk	2-2	Hradec Králové

Final – 26 June

Bavaria	2-3	Dolny Śląsk
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VICTORIES FOR SPAIN AND ARMENIA AT THE UNDER-19 FINALS

How many theatre-goers pause to reflect on all the hard behind-the-scenes work invested in staging the production? The 15 matches played at the final tournament of the 18th European Under-19 Championship certainly offered top-class entertainment. But, before commenting on 1,380 minutes of match action, it is definitely fair play to mention the Armenian hosts who, in many ways, could be cited as role models for the staging of the event.

For a start, they got going early. One of the traditions at age-limit tournaments is for the following year's hosts to send observers to the event. Armenia went one better. Before going to Finland in 2018, they had nipped across the border to see how Georgia had organised the Under-19 finals in 2017 – a visit which allowed them to outline the planning for the first UEFA tournament to be staged in Armenia. Led by the Football Federation of Armenia's president, Artur Vanetsyan, a compact organisational team set about enjoying a once-in-a-lifetime experience – and their efforts were backed by the country's most famous footballing son, Henrik Mkhitaryan, the Arsenal midfielder acting as ambassador for the event.

Promotional efforts pay dividends

Indeed, promotion of the event went far beyond the norm. For example, a countdown clock was erected in the centre of Yerevan; a branded metro train gave the tournament extra presence in one of the world's oldest cities; and fan zones were set up. The reward was an accumulated total of spectators which exceeded the target figure of 50,000. What's more, at one of the three venues in Yerevan, the floodlighting was renovated and the pitch entirely re-laid at the Banants Stadium. And within the federation, the tournament accelerated the implementation of new management principles. In other words, the event left a legacy.

If the hosts were allowed to make one complaint, it would probably be about something beyond their control: a draw which pitted them against former champions Italy, Portugal and Spain. The statistics are unkind

to Artur Voskanyan's team, who defended well and built neatly from the back. But physical and mental fatigue against illustrious opponents contributed to the fact that, of the dozen goals they conceded, eight hit the net in the second half. In a repeat of the 2018 final, Portugal delivered a blow to Italy's jaw by beating them 3-0 on the opening day and Carmine Nunziata's side made a premature exit after losing a must-win match against Spain, all three goals in the latter's 2-1 win stemming from set plays.

Portugal and Spain stand the heat

The other group was, as the saying goes, another kettle of fish, with the presence of Norway, Czech Republic and Republic of Ireland alongside former champions France giving it a very different footballing personality. Six competitive games yielded only ten goals, with Lionel Rouxel's team needing to sweat profusely to break down resolute resistance from the Irish and the Norwegians – both of whom were



Portugal's goalkeeper Celton Biai reaches for the ball in the final.

In the 18 years since the competition went from Under-18 to Under-19 in 2001/02, Spain has lifted the trophy no fewer than eight times.





Group A (14, 17 and 20 July)

Armenia	1-4	Spain
Italy	0-3	Portugal
Portugal	1-1	Spain
Armenia	0-4	Italy
Portugal	4-0	Armenia
Spain	2-1	Italy

Group B (15, 18 and 21 July)

Norway	1-1	Republic of Ireland
Czech Republic	0-3	France
Czech Republic	0-0	Norway
Republic of Ireland	0-1	France
Republic of Ireland	2-1	Czech Republic
France	1-0	Norway

Semi-finals – 24 July

Portugal	4-0	Republic of Ireland
France	0-0*	Spain

*Spain qualify 4-3 on penalties

Final – 29 July

Portugal	0-2	Spain
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ultimately beaten 1-0. Mind you, everybody sweated profusely in temperatures nudging 40C – to the extent that the semi-final between Portugal and the Irish needed to be punctuated by four water breaks.

Tom Mohan's Republic of Ireland side had grabbed second place behind France with a 2-1 victory over the Czech Republic, the latter sharing a lack of attacking punch with Norway, who scored one goal from 36 attempts. But, with key players suspended (midfield dynamo Lee O'Connor and striker Jonathan Afolabi), Ireland struggled against Portugal's fluent middle-to-front play and suffered a conclusive 4-0 defeat.

The only conclusive part of the other semi-final was the penalty shoot-out which decided a tactically mature contest between France and Spain. Two hours of exhilarating technique and wing play produced 38 goal attempts – but, as only three were on target, the scoreboard operator was not required to sweat profusely until the shoot-out, when each keeper saved one spot kick and the



50,000
spectators in all

France skipper's shot rattled the bar as Spain advanced with a 4-3 win.

History repeats itself

The value of continuity and experience was one of the talking points prior to the Iberian derby at the Republican Stadium. A year earlier, Portugal had won the title with ten of the players who had lifted the Under-17 trophy in 2016. Would Spain, with a dozen of their 2017 Under-17 champions in the squad, persuade history to repeat itself?

The answer was surprisingly conclusive. Santi Denia's astute game plan successfully disarmed Portugal's offensive play by wresting the initiative in midfield and Spain were good value for the 2-0 win secured by a goal in each half from right-winger Ferrán Torres. A spectacular fireworks display lit up the Yerevan sky as Spain lifted the trophy for a record eighth time. But, when the final curtain came down, the Armenian hosts also had good reason to celebrate a historic victory. 🇸🇵



Germany's Lisann Kaut fends off Melvine Malard of France during the final at St Mirren Park.

PROLIFIC FRANCE LIFT FIFTH EUROPEAN WOMEN'S UNDER-19 TITLE IN SCOTLAND

France fired their way to a fifth European Women's Under-19 Championship title in Scotland, marking their record tenth final appearance with victory over Germany in the Glasgow showpiece.

Thirteen may not be considered a lucky number by some, but it was a particularly rewarding one for a prolific French side as they epitomised the standout feature of the 2018/19 European Women's Under-19 Championship by firing their way to the title with 13 goals. Indeed, attacking was broadly back to being the best form of defence in Scotland at the final tournament played between 16 and 28 July.

With such an array of talented attack-minded players on display, UEFA's technical observers for the event – Anna Signeul and Béatrice von Siebenthal – were hard-pressed to pick a team of the tournament which was not lopsided.

Hard-pressed also were the defences, who had to cope with the kind of attacking play Signeul claimed she had "not seen for a very, very long time". "Refreshing" was another word Signeul coined to praise the positive approach taken by the eight finalists, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Scotland and Spain, and to laud a welcome re-emergence of confident, technically versed talents.

Goals galore

That it would be such a prolific tournament emerged already from the opening fixtures, with the Netherlands two up after just five minutes against a crestfallen Norway. The

Scandinavians would bounce back from the shock of an eventual 5-0 defeat by defeating the hosts Scotland 4-0 once they had influential players Olaug Tvedten and Joanna Bækkelund back for their second fixture. France, meanwhile, only just got the better of a brave Scotland with a stoppage-time winner in their opener, and they had two late goals from substitute Melvine Malard to thank for a 3-1 win over the Netherlands which put them on the brink of the semi-finals, a berth they sealed by holding Norway to a 3-3 draw in their final group outing.

Their reward for topping their group ahead of the Dutch was a clash with Spain, who had extended their outstanding

record of not conceding since matchday three of last year's final tournament – when France breached their defence – with wins over Belgium and England. Germany also picked up maximum points from their first two fixtures, meaning a goalless draw with Spain was enough to take them through as group winners.

Germany and the Netherlands kicked off the semi-finals with Melissa Kössler's third goal of the finals giving Maren Meinert's team the lead. The Netherlands fielded ten players who had commenced the European Women's Under-17 Championship in the Czech Republic in 2017, showing the extent of their development and continuity into the higher age category, and one of those – Julia Baijings – brought them level after an hour. An ingenuous foul by Janou Levels on Germany substitute Shekiera Martinez allowed Marie Müller to restore Germany's lead from the penalty spot inside the final ten minutes, and Martinez completed the scoring to take them through to their tenth final.

Ten finals apiece

That record tenth final appearance was equalled only hours later when France joined them in the showpiece, although they needed extra time to get the better of Spain. Malard finally punctured Spain's 834-minute impenetrable defence as the first period of extra time drew to its conclusion, and two goals from Vicki Becho – who became the first 15-year-old since Jordan Nobbs in 2008 to score in a final tournament at this level – sealed Les Bleuettes' win. Athenea del Castillo's last-minute goal was mere consolation for Spain, whose two-year reign as European champions came to an end.

The sun came out to greet the two finalists at St Mirren Park, where a fan zone kept the many young fans entertained before kick-off. The entertainment then shifted to the pitch, where both sides cancelled each other out in a game which showed that both had done their homework. Germany's immediate pressing stifled French attempts to find any flow in their game, while the heroics of Justine Lerond kept Germany at bay. She could do nothing to prevent Nicole Anyomi from putting Germany in front after Kössler's effort rebounded to her off the crossbar, but Sandy Baltimore soon cancelled out that strike with a low drive beating Wiebke Willebrandt inside her near post. There were chances at both ends, with Lerond



29

goals during the final tournament, an average of **3.27** per match



continuing to excel between the French posts, before Maëlle Lakrak ghosted in between two Germany defenders and got her heel to a corner to divert the ball in. The French withstood Germany's pressure, with Gina-Maria Chmielinski going agonisingly close to levelling in stoppage time, before getting their hands on their fifth Under-19 title.

It was perhaps not the fitting conclusion to a sparkling 14-year career coaching Germany's Under-19s and Under-20s that Meinert had wished for and arguably, in view of her achievements in the game, one that she would have deserved, but she was nevertheless proud by one particularly important aspect.

"I thought we did very well and developed very well in the last two years," she said. That is, after all, what such tournaments are here for, and Meinert better than anybody has contributed to the development of many young female footballers, with or without a trophy to show for it. 🌟

Group A (16, 19 and 22 July)

Norway	0-5	Netherlands
Scotland	1-2	France
Netherlands	1-3	France
Scotland	0-4	Norway
Netherlands	4-0	Scotland
France	3-3	Norway

Group B (16, 19 and 22 July)

Spain	2-0	Belgium
England	1-2	Germany
England	0-1	Spain
Belgium	0-5	Germany
Belgium	0-1	England
Germany	0-0	Spain

Semi-finals – 25 July

France	3-1	Spain
Germany	3-1	Netherlands

Final – 28 July

France	2-1	Germany
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FUTSAL CONJURES UP NEW CONTEST

‘Future futsal magicians’ is the slogan as Riga stages its first UEFA final tournament – the inaugural Under-19 Futsal EURO, the latest innovation in the sport.

History will be made in Riga between 8 and 14 September – not the first time this sentence has been written about a UEFA futsal competition this year.

The 2019 European Under-19 Futsal Championship at Arena Riga that week is not only the first UEFA final tournament of any kind to be played in Latvia; it is also the inaugural edition of the competition itself. This continues a historic year for the small-sided sport after February's first UEFA Women's Futsal EURO in Portugal and the finals of the newly rebranded UEFA Futsal Champions League in Almaty this April.

Combined with the expansion of the men's UEFA Futsal EURO to a 16-team quadrennial tournament with home-and-away qualifiers for the first time, this revolution in the sport followed a UEFA Executive Committee decision in April 2017 to revamp – and double the number of – futsal competitions. “European futsal can envisage a bright future as UEFA's new strategy for the sport starts to have a significant impact,” said the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, this year. “Important decisions taken by UEFA for the club and national team games are enhancing futsal's status and strengthening its appeal.”

Hitting the ground running

This is not the first time that UEFA has run a youth futsal competition – an Under-21 tournament was held in 2008, won by Russia in St Petersburg, but it was not continued. The new Under-19 competition has come together quickly, with Latvia appointed as hosts on 27 September last year, a week after a field of 34 participants had been confirmed. The qualifying draw was made on 1 November and on 22 January the Lithuanian town of Jonava hosted the first preliminary round game between Montenegro and Andorra, whose Hugo Rodrigues claimed the inaugural Under-19 Futsal EURO goal in a 3-2 win.

Eight teams took part in the preliminary round, Greece and Cyprus winning mini-tournaments to join the 26 top seeds in March's main round.



The equation was simple – win your group to join Latvia in the finals – and the established European futsal nations for the most part proved their worth at junior level, though Italy, runners-up in that 2008 Under-21 tournament and twice senior champions, lost their first two Under-19 qualifiers to England and Slovakia as Croatia joined the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain and Ukraine in the finals, those last four also the quartet that competed for the women's title in February.

Latvia awaits

Now the focus turns to Latvia, who adopted the slogan ‘Futsal future magicians’ to promote the tournament. And in the draw, made at the fan park by Daugava Stadium in Riga ahead of the

Latvia's Under-19 futsal team cannot wait for the first Under-19 futsal EURO to get under way at the 10,000-seater Arena Riga.



With 19 goals for and none against in their three qualifying matches, Danil Karpyuk (No4, up against the Czech Republic's Denis Dziuba) and his Russia team-mates have to be fancied for the title.

FACR

"European futsal can envisage a bright future as UEFA's new strategy for the sport starts to have a significant impact."

Aleksander Čeferin
UEFA president

football European Qualifier between Latvia and Israel, they were as good as their word, getting a conjuror to unveil the new trophy from thin air.

In the draw itself, Latvia were matched in Group A with Poland, the winners of the 2008 Under-21 tournament, Russia and reigning senior European men's champions Portugal, who will be the hosts' first opponents on 8 September. Earlier that day Ukraine and the Netherlands will kick off the tournament, followed swiftly in Group B by Croatia v Spain.

The format returns to that of the early eight-team futsal EUROs. The group stage will be played as quadruple headers at the same arena, with four matches each on Sunday 8 September and Monday 9 September, with only a day's rest before both groups conclude on the Wednesday. The top two in each group progress to the following evening's semis before the final on Saturday 14 September.

It will be tough for the hosts to feature in that first decider, Latvia having never played in a futsal final tournament at any level, although FK Nikars have often proved a force in the UEFA futsal club competition. The squad bound for

the finals have been kept busy, though, playing Lithuania, Spain, Belarus, Russia, Hungary, Poland, Kosovo, Slovakia and Turkey so far this year before staging a mid-August four-team tournament at the Elektrum Olympic Centre in Riga featuring the Netherlands, Moldova and Belarus.

Latvia's senior futsal national coach Artūrs Šketovs will also lead the Under-19s in the finals and is well aware of their task. "Countries such as Russia, Portugal, Spain have successfully operated futsal schools for a long time and they have also created a functioning pyramid of futsal national teams," he said. "Of course, for Latvia in this final tournament it will not be simple against the most powerful nations in European futsal because our team selection process started only last December. However, we will learn, and try to give our all to please our fans."

Whatever happens in Riga, it will be the start of an exciting period for the sport in the Baltic States, with Lithuania staging the 2020 Futsal World Cup – the opening game scheduled exactly a year on from the Under-19 EURO semi-finals on 12 September. Will any starlets making their names in Riga feature in both? ⚽



WHY DEAD BALLS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Getty Images

In their analysis of the last campaign for the 2018/19 UEFA Champions League technical report, UEFA's technical observers dissected the latest tendencies in set plays – a route to goal that served not only winners Liverpool well.

It was a UEFA Champions League season that began with one set-play goal and ended with another. The first, scored by Galatasaray's Garry Rodrigues, came nine minutes into the group stage on 18 September last year, in the second phase of play following a half-cleared corner in an eventual 3-0 home victory over Lokomotiv Moskva.

It will be rather less remembered than the second, scored by Liverpool substitute Divock Origi in the UEFA Champions League final in Madrid on 1 June.

This too was a second-phase strike from a corner, in this case delivered by James Milner with 87 minutes on the clock. After an inadvertent flick-on from Son Heung-Min and blocked attempt by Virgil van Dijk, Jan Vertonghen directed the ball inadvertently to Joël Matip and he teed up Origi for the goal which sealed Liverpool's triumph over Tottenham Hotspur.

These two goals bookended the collection of goals scored from set plays in the 2018/19 campaign, 66 in total. This figure represented a drop in goals from

dead balls for the second season running, yet that is not to diminish their significance. With the overall total of UEFA Champions League goals slipping too – down to 366 from 401 in 2017/18 – it means that set plays still accounted for almost one fifth (18%) of all goals recorded in the competition.

Winners Liverpool will certainly vouch for their significance. The fourth and decisive goal in their astonishing semi-final comeback against Barcelona was another dead-ball effort, Origi burying the ball high into the net at the Kop end after the swiftly



Liverpool's fourth goal was a close-range finish by Divock Origi from a swiftly taken corner, knocking Barcelona out in the semi-finals.

taken Trent Alexander-Arnold corner which caught Barcelona's defenders napping.

In a narrow-margins world, where elite clubs have analysts poring over the tiniest of details, set plays evidently matter and they received close attention from UEFA's technical observers in their assessment of the 2018/19 competition. This assessment included a series of reflections on the strategies used for corners, and the work of those teams at opposing ends of the various performance criteria.

Productive Porto

Bayern Munich and Porto delivered the most set-piece goals in 2018/19 – six apiece – and the latter's success with corners was an intriguing area of analysis, given it involved their great domestic rivals Benfica also.

With five of their 20 goals coming from corners, Porto used set plays to impressive effect on their road to the quarter-finals. Only Bayern scored as many from corners, and Sérgio Conceição's side achieved a ratio of one goal for every nine corners taken – far above the average of one in 30. As for Benfica, they created a shot from a corner 66% of the time, which was double the average rate.

The approach was different in the case of each club. Porto, a taller-than-average team, took a higher percentage of inswinging corners (57%). Moussa Marega, their Malian striker stood second on the list for xG (expected goals) from corners of every player in the competition. Another player, midfielder Danilo, had five shots.

FC Porto
scored

20
goals

5

of them coming from
corners, a ratio of 1
for every 9 taken

Their striker, **Moussa Marega**, ranked second in the list for xG (expected goals) from corners out of every player in the competition



Getty Images

Down the road in Lisbon, Benfica employed more outswinging corners (45%). They had a tendency for well-worked routines; one fifth (21%) of their corners were played short prior to delivery in an attempt to try to disrupt the defensive set-up. Defender Jardel had four shots.

As always with dead balls, it is important to have a player with the capacity to put the ball into the right areas. Sir Alex Ferguson, who, as Manchester United manager, asked Wayne Rooney and Robin van Persie to take corners for their powers of placement, once said that "delivery is everything" and in Alex Telles, Porto, in particular, had a player adept at serving the right ball.

Mixed approach to marking

From creating menace to curbing it, the team who were most effective at defending corners were Atlético de Madrid. For Diego Simeone's team, this was their last season with a defence featuring Diego Godín and Juanfran, and their discipline and organisation meant they did not concede a single goal from 35 corners faced; moreover, they had the lowest ratio for corners to shots conceded (4:1).

Atlético offered UEFA's observers an example of the tendency for teams to defend with a meld of man-marking and zonal approaches. On the latter point, they had one man covering the front post and another the centre of the five-metre box.

Quarter-finalists Manchester United did much the same, defending man for man with one blocker defending the front-post zone and one on the five-metre box. They had a similarly strong defensive record, posting the second-lowest shots-to-corners ratio, and they achieved this with a flexible approach which changed according to the opposition.

In the quarter-final against Barcelona, for instance, Ole Gunnar Solskjær's side defended zonally, with Marcus Rashford and Ashley Young acting as blockers. This was different from the previous round against Paris Saint-Germain when they went man for man, with Pogba defending the five-metre box zonally (albeit the ball floated over his head in the lead-up to the Parisians' opening goal of the first leg, scored by Presnel Kimpembe).

The view of Thomas Schaaf, one of UEFA's technical observers, was that goalkeepers in decades past would





Despite compact man-marking, Tottenham were unable to stop Ajax's Matthijs de Ligt heading in a goal from a corner.

demand the presence of a defender on each post whereas this is less common today. There are still exceptions, though. Against Juventus, for instance, United defended with every player back and Ashley Young starting on the back post. The other clubs in this small minority included Ajax, who would switch between one or two defenders on the post (taking the latter option against both Bayern and AEK Athens). It was more usual, though, to see a mixed approach whereby a defender playing zonally would drop back on to a post if the ball was delivered away from their zone (something seen in the defending of Roma, AEK, Galatasaray and PSG).

Contrasting fortunes

The goal that Liverpool substitute Origi scored in the final was illustrative of the very contrasting fortunes of the two teams that travelled farthest in the 2018/19 competition. For Tottenham, it was the fourth that they conceded from a corner – more than any other side. Mauricio Pochettino's men also had the third-highest corner-to-shots-against ratio, conceding a shot every 1.9 corners, and they conceded a goal every 15 corners (the season's third highest, when the average was 30).

The strategy adopted by Spurs was to have two or three players guarding the

five-metre box with the rest defending man for man. One of the set-piece goals they conceded highlighted more than anything the cleverness with which teams now block opposition players to create space for colleagues. It was Matthijs de Ligt's effort for Ajax against the Londoners in the semi-final in Amsterdam, which came after the centre-half escaped the attention of Jan Vertonghen, thanks to Donny van de Beek's blocking, and was then able to get a running jump on Dele Alli, the player marking the zone into which Lasse Schöne's delivery dropped.

It is worth noting too how a number of the shots conceded by Tottenham came from the second phase of corners, with clearances to the edge of the box leading to long-range strikes by the opposition.

The strategy adopted by Spurs was to have two or three players guarding the five-metre box with the rest defending man for man.

This was a consequence of Tottenham leaving this space unattended, something that round of 16 opponents Borussia Dortmund almost capitalised on with a clever corner that Jadon Sancho drove straight to the D of the penalty box for Marco Reus, who fired in a volley which deflected just wide.

The question of this space on the edge of the box featured in UEFA's technical observers' reflections on the tendency for teams scoring goals from the second phase at corners – eight to be precise, in 2018/19. One argument cited is that defending teams are vulnerable in these situations because of their focus on springing quick counterattacks. With Ajax, for example, there were occasions they defended corners with two wide players slightly ahead of their colleagues, waiting to counterattack.

Bayern offered a good example of a team capitalising on the second phase of corners, scoring twice in this way – including against Ajax in a 3-3 draw in Amsterdam in the group stage. A consistent play seen from Bayern at corners was for three players to remain on the edge of the box, ready to win the ball once it was cleared by the opposition.

Reds rewarded

If Bayern and Porto had the most goals



to show from their efforts with dead-ball opportunities last season, another side who made good use of set-piece situations were Liverpool. Interestingly, this was a direct consequence of a decision taken in the pre-season when Jürgen Klopp and his players and coaching staff spoke together about spending more time practising set plays. The club even recruited a throw-in coach, Thomas Gronnemark, and this increased focus bore fruit over the course of the season.

Liverpool averaged one goal for every 18.8 corners taken in the UEFA Champions League – well above the average figure of one in 30. A key contributor was right-back Trent Alexander-Arnold, a fine striker of dead balls who took 33% of all their kicks (from right and left sides).

The aerial ability of the 1.93m Virgil van Dijk was another factor. The Dutch defender ranked second-highest for xG from set plays and was the highest scoring defender in this category too (1.88xG).

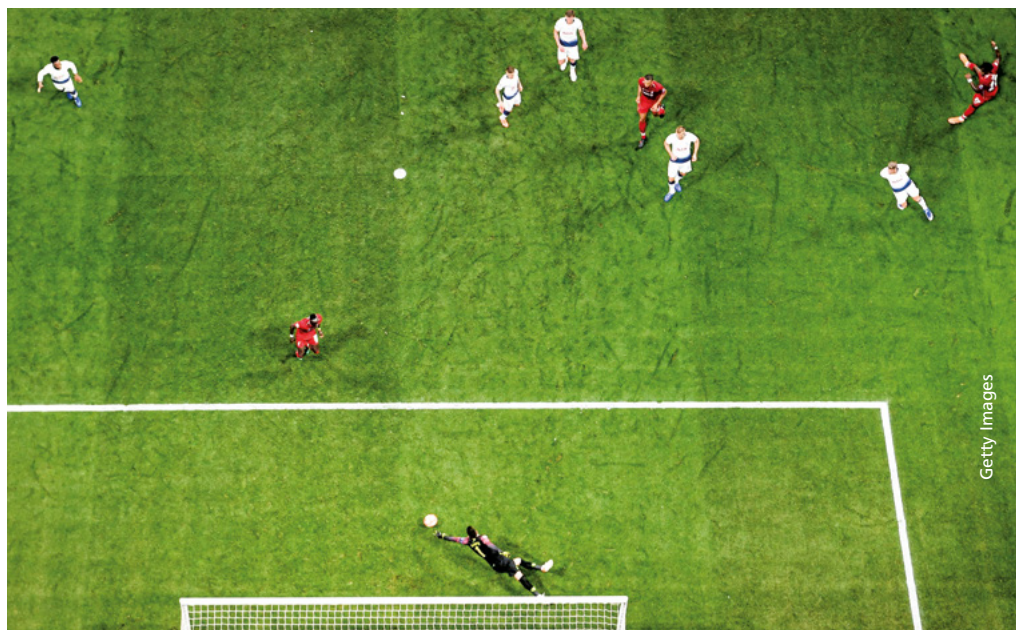
Van Dijk scored with two headed goals from corners in the knockout stage, at Bayern in the round of 16 and Porto in the quarter-finals. With his stature and

physical presence he was an obvious target for Liverpool in the opposition box, and registered six attempts overall. One of them, in the semi-final home leg against Barcelona, highlighted his footballing ability – an impressively inventive effort as he held off Sergio Busquets as a corner dropped inside the five-metre box and, with his back to goal, produced a back-heel flick which drew a save from Marc-André ter Stegen.

It was in that remarkable match that Liverpool underlined the extent of their planning for dead-ball situations.

In the first leg at Camp Nou, Klopp's match analysts had observed how Barcelona players became distracted when a decision went against them and lost their focus momentarily. Consequently, the Anfield ballboys received an instruction prior to the return fixture for them to keep the ball moving swiftly. Thanks to one alert youngster, Alexander-Arnold was able to send over the quick corner that caught Barcelona napping as Origi scored his team's fourth. And, as we well know, it was not his last set-piece goal of the Reds' famous campaign. →

Liverpool's second goal in the final came from Divock Origi from a second-phase strike from a corner.



PRESS FOR SUCCESS

UEFA's technical observers also underlined the importance of pressing in the UEFA Champions League in 2018/19 – as these examples from two knockout ties illustrate.

When Manchester United hosted Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their round of 16 tie, the home side began brightly, applying high pressure with their three mobile forwards – Jesse Lingard, Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial – leading the way with their energy and movement.

Behind them, Ander Herrera and Paul Pogba pushed up from midfield and stopped the visitors playing forward, and this led to a number of turnovers in Paris's defensive third.

From the midway point of the first half, though, there was a discernible shift, prompted by the experienced Gianluigi Buffon in the visitors' goal. Noting the difficulty United were causing with their high press, the Italian opted to go long in an attempt to bypass the five pressing opposition players.

By their own admission, Paris had struggled to cope but, as the pressure maps show, United were unable to sustain this as the match progressed. Buffon's change of strategy was a factor and so too injuries before half-time to both Lingard and Martial, which meant the introductions of Alexis Sánchez and Juan Mata, two players who were not able to press with the same intensity. The second period was a different story, with Paris running out 2-0 winners.

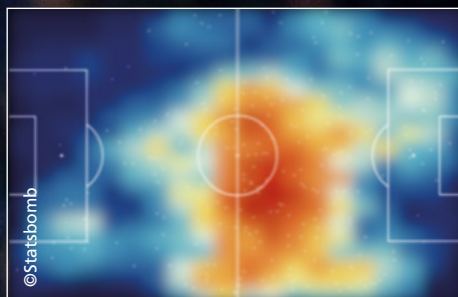
The power of the press

If the scoreboard at Camp Nou read 3-0 at the end of Barcelona's semi-final first leg against Liverpool, it was a deceptive guide to the flow of a game in which Jürgen Klopp's side pressed high and ended up with more possession than their hosts (a 52% share) as well as creating a number of clear-cut chances.

The pressure maps offer a different perspective. This was a contest in which both sides applied quick, high pressure –



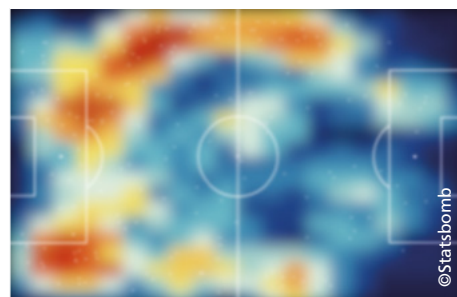
*Teams attacking from left to right



▲ Liverpool pressure v Barcelona 1st leg*



PSG's Kylian Mbappé came under pressure from Manchester United in the round of 16.



▲ Barcelona pressure v Liverpool 1st leg*

and both tried to play through their opponents' pressure. In the case of Liverpool, they applied most pressure to their hosts' left side, where Jordi Alba was providing a threat going forward.

Either side of Barcelona's front three of Philippe Coutinho, Luis Suárez and Lionel Messi, the full-backs Sergi Roberto and Jordi Alba brought width. This pair were often picked out by long diagonal passes, and then immediately pressured, by the Liverpool full-backs. One such occasion led to Barcelona's first goal, when a diagonal ball to Coutinho was cut back for Alba to deliver a cross into the box for Suárez to score.

As for Liverpool, they looked to exploit wide areas in possession in a 4-3-3 formation, with Sadio Mané making diagonal runs from the left which created space for Robertson to run into. On the right side, Jordan Henderson took up a wide position when he was introduced to replace Naby Keïta. As is evident from the pressure map, Barcelona pressured Liverpool's full-backs, often deep inside their own half, as they sought to defend crosses.

It would be Liverpool's pressing – the speed and intensity of it – that overpowered Barcelona in the extraordinary second-leg comeback that followed a week later, when as one UEFA technical observer suggested, the Blaugrana were not helped by the limited defensive contributions of Messi and Suárez. To cope with pressing that intense takes an 11-man effort.

The 2018/19 UEFA Champions League Technical Report will be published at the beginning of September. 🌱



OVER 20 YEARS OF DEDICATION TO MEDICAL EXCELLENCE

Football medicine has become an essential element of the modern-day game – and **Michel D'Hooghe** has been an instrumental figure in this crucial worldwide development.

D'Hooghe, from Belgium, has just retired after 21 years of outstanding service to UEFA's Medical Committee – including 14 as chairman. From his early days as club doctor at home-town outfit Club Brugge, his overall football acumen has seen him excel in other roles over many years – among others, president of the Royal Belgian Football Association (1987–2001), president of Club Brugge (2003–09), chairman of FIFA's Medical Committee (since 1988) and membership of the FIFA Council (1988–2016).

UEFA Direct speaks to Michel D'Hooghe about his tireless work with UEFA to promote and develop medical matters within football.

During more than two decades serving UEFA's Medical Committee, and your long years as chairman, which achievement

has made you most proud during that time?

Twenty years ago, football's global interest in medical issues was very limited. Today, coaches, players and football leaders are fully aware of the essential importance of medical input in various aspects of the game. In the 1970s, I was one of the few doctors active in football medicine. Nowadays, thousands of doctors attend football medical congresses.

You began as Club Brugge's doctor in 1972, and rose to become an eminent football administrator in several roles. Did these important positions help you to influence research into, and development of football medicine?

Absolutely! The fact that I was not only the chairman of UEFA's Medical Committee,

but also had important executive functions in international football, made it possible on many occasions to convey medical messages to football's leaders.

Consequently, as a result of our experience and research, we brought many medical proposals to the decision-making table. This has resulted in various provisions being introduced into football's laws, European competition regulations, prevention measures and measures to care for players, and it has brought about a successful anti-doping strategy.

You launched UEFA's Medical Regulations in 2013, which included pre-competition medical examinations. How important was that provision, and what changes have you seen since the introduction of such examinations?

The introduction of the evidence-based pre-competition medical assessment, obligatory for all players participating in European competitions, was an important milestone in UEFA's global 'prevention' approach. The need for this initiative has been proved by the many dramatic cardiac arrest situations that have occurred in matches, as well as in training.

Recent statistics demonstrate that careful screening before participation in our competitions is extremely effective. If, by doing this, we can save only one young player's life, we can really make a difference.

The regulations contain minimum medical requirements – including mandatory obligations for an AED defibrillator and the presence of

a pitch-side emergency doctor in all UEFA competitions. How does the situation compare to when you were a team doctor?

When I started my career as a team doctor in 1972, medical care in most European clubs was limited to the treatment of injuries. The only question that I normally got was: "Can he play next Sunday?" From then until now, I've seen a spectacular evolution in prevention and performance, emergency care, traumatology, physiology, psychology, pharmacology, and others. The mandatory presence of an AED defibrillator has saved many lives. The intervention of a specialised emergency doctor is crucial in dealing with life-threatening situations.

UEFA's Football Doctor Education Programme, training football doctors in the vital sector of

football medicine, began in 2013. What was your incentive to launch the programme?

Educational programmes are a vital part of the UEFA Medical Committee's activities. We organise a medical congress every four years, presenting recent developments in prevention, diagnosis and therapy in football medicine, and have run the Football Doctor Education Programme for six years now. Doctors from UEFA's 55 associations take part in the programme, and courses are given by medical specialists in fields such as emergency situations, injury treatment and prevention methods. We 'cascade' the knowledge acquired down to national associations and their clubs – we aim to reach a maximum number of doctors and medical experts across Europe.

UEFA is proactive in raising awareness of concussion. What would you like to see in the future in terms of on-field concussion management?

Dramatic incidents at international level have created chaotic situations. The Medical Committee has therefore reinforced medical instructions to team doctors in cases of potential concussion. For instance, we proposed the introduction of the 'three-minute rule', whereby the team doctor is given three minutes to perform a short neurological examination before deciding whether a player can continue playing. We have also offered the possibility of video assistance to provide more concrete ideas about the nature of an incident. The Medical Committee will continue to monitor these measures.

Finally, what is your happiest football memory through your years working in the game?

My successful reanimation of Club Brugge's player Nico Rijnders, who suffered a cardiac arrest on the field during a match in Belgium in 1972. I had just started as a team doctor two months previously. This incident led me to dedicate my professional life to football players' health. I've been able to help give impetus to the fantastic evolution of football medicine, together with my colleagues and UEFA's excellent medical administration. Today, I can say I'm a grateful man. 🏆

“As a result of our experience and research, we brought many medical proposals to the decision-making table. This has resulted in various provisions being introduced into football's laws, European competition regulations, prevention measures and measures to care for players.”



Hands-on training at the Football Doctor Education Programme workshop in Rome last December.

CERTIFICATE IN FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT CELEBRATES ITS 1,000TH GRADUATE

The UEFA Certificate in Football Management (CFM) programme, which develops the skills of national association staff and stakeholders across Europe, has celebrated its 1,000th graduate.

The milestone of 1,000 CFM graduates was reached during the programme's national edition in the Netherlands in June.

The CFM programme started in 2010 and has enabled staff from national associations and clubs across the continent, as well as staff from regional national associations, leagues and players' unions, among others, to gain a new and fresh outlook on football's various facets.

The programme gives participants the chance to develop personally and professionally in their roles, as well as to acquire greater knowledge and expertise that will stand them in good stead in their daily working lives.

The nine-month programme, organised under the auspices of the UEFA Academy, comprises six interactive online modules and three face-to-face seminars. Topics covered include football organisation, strategy and strategic management, operational management, marketing and sponsorship, communications, media and public relations, event management and volunteer management.

A university certificate

The CFM academic content is compiled by academics from universities in France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Certificates are awarded by the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration (IDHEAP) at the University of Lausanne.

"As the UEFA CFM reaches the milestone of 1,000 graduates who work in football administration all over Europe, IDHEAP is proud to have coordinated and delivered this university certificate since 2010, and for years to come," said Jean-Loup Chappelet, IDHEAP emeritus professor and former dean.

The Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) general secretary, Gijs de Jong, emphasised the Dutch association's fervent support of the programme. "The pay-off of



"As the UEFA CFM reaches the milestone of 1,000 graduates who work in football administration all over Europe, IDHEAP is proud to have coordinated and delivered this university certificate since 2010, and for years to come."

Jean-Loup Chappelet
IDHEAP emeritus professor

our international strategy is 'KNVB: for the future of our football'," he said. "And that is exactly why we are grateful for the CFM programme."

"The programme allows us to show our appreciation to talented employees in the Dutch football landscape and, maybe even more importantly, to inspire them to look further than the borders of our beautiful, but small country."

To find out more about the UEFA Certificate in Football Management and the other UEFA Academy programmes, visit uefaacademy.com 🌐

An increasingly successful programme

In September 2010, UEFA welcomed the first 35 participants in the inaugural Certificate in Football Management (CFM) programme. Three years later, by which time there were already over 100 UEFA CFM graduates, the programme was redesigned with more of a national focus. The UEFA-managed, Europe-wide selection procedure was replaced with a system of national programmes managed at local level by UEFA member associations, enabling more people to take part.



JURY SELECTS RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR 2019/20

The jury for the UEFA Research Grant Programme – designed for academics working in partnership with national associations to deliver research that improves strategic decision-making in European football – has chosen the projects for the 2019/20 season.

The Research Grant Programme was established to support visionary research in European football. It is for anyone working on, or already holding, a PhD who is analysing European football from a variety of academic disciplines. UEFA-funded research projects are intended to produce findings that the European football community can use to make informed decisions and that UEFA and its member associations can use to improve their activities and projects.

This year, UEFA received 59 proposals for research projects, with those projects being developed for and in conjunction with 27 different member associations – a clear sign of associations' strong interest in relevant academic research. All 59 proposals made it through to the second assessment stage, and after a comprehensive review, the following six were chosen by the jury, two of which are joint projects:

Understanding the role of men in facilitating gender equity in football governance by Donna de Haan, The Hague University of Applied Sciences,

Netherlands. Joint project supported by the English Football Association and in collaboration with Leanne Norman, Leeds Beckett University, England.

Performance and physiological analysis of overtime: implications for recovery and training by Ioannis Fatourous, University of Thessaly, Greece. Joint project supported by the Hellenic Football Federation and in collaboration with Georgios Ermidis, Parthenope University of Naples, Italy, and Magni Mohr, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark.

Football and refugees: cultural anthropology of the Balkan corridor (2015–2019), by Rahela Jurković, PhD from the University of Zagreb, Croatia. Project supported by the Croatian Football Federation.

Vergleich der fußball-spezifischen taktischen Leistungsfähigkeit von Frauen und Männern in Europa (Comparison of football-specific tactical performance of women and men in Europe) by Daniel Memmert, German Sport University Cologne, Germany. Project supported by the German Football Association.

UEFA Research Grant Programme Jury

Representatives of the European football community:

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

University representatives:

- **Prof. Susan Bridgewater** (University of Liverpool, England)
- **Prof. Paul Downward** (Loughborough University, England)
- **Prof. Jan Ekstrand** (former vice-chairman of the UEFA Medical Committee, chief medical officer, Aspetar, Qatar)
- **Prof. Jürgen Mittag** (German Sport University Cologne, Germany)
- **Prof. Fabien Ohl** (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)

Understanding the recovery time course in elite football referees during a congested match schedule ('Recovery' project) by Javier Sánchez, European University of Madrid, Spain. Project supported by the Royal Spanish Football Federation.

Virtual reality (VR) as a training tool for referee performance by Tammie van Biemen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands. Project supported by the Royal Netherlands Football Association.

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



'INTEGRATED CLUBS ENHANCE VISIBILITY OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL'

As the popularity of women's football continues to grow, **Maurizio Valenti** – a PhD student at the University of Stirling in Scotland – has benefited from a UEFA research grant to carry out a study exploring club organisation structures in European women's football.

Maurizio Valenti was selected as one of the seven recipients of a UEFA research grant for the 2018/19 season and has now presented the results of his research to the UEFA Research Grant Jury and experts from the UEFA administration.

He talked to UEFA Direct about the project, which seeks to identify and map organisational and managerial practices of women's clubs and explore integration between men's and women's organisations.

Can you explain the background to your study?

The idea for this study emerged from discussions I had with the heads of women's football at the Italian and Scottish football associations. The rapid evolution of the women's game in their countries made them willing to know more about the way women's clubs are managed across Europe. For this reason, the study looks at different club profiles, exploring the two main club organisational structures currently present in the women's game: independent and integrated. According to these national associations, the involvement

of men's clubs in the women's game can be one of the instruments for further developing women's football. So the idea was also to understand what led to this process of integration and why clubs are doing it.

How did your study work?

In the first part, we sent out a survey and received responses from 69 clubs, 48 of which were integrated and 21 independent. They helped us to picture women's football from different aspects, including managerial, financial, media and



2019 Women's Champions League finalists Olympique Lyonnais and FC Barcelona are prime examples of integrated clubs.

German club 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam is the archetype of a successful independent women's football club.



infrastructural elements. In the second part, based on those responses, I focused more specifically on those clubs with an integrated structure and interviewed 13 senior executives from eight different clubs across six different nations. Those eight clubs were all in their respective top divisions and were all connected to a men's club – the men's and women's teams share the same name, colours, training facilities, social media channels, communication strategies and so on.

What are the advantages of an integrated set-up for a women's team?

First of all, it is important to note that there are different degrees of integration depending on club-specific circumstances. However, in terms of advantages for the women's side, most of the time they have the possibility to leverage on pre-existing business functions such as an already established brand, have a marketing strategy in place and enhance their visibility as well as to access state-of-the-art training facilities. About 90% of the women's clubs that collaborate to some extent with a men's club said it was advantageous for them.

And what's in it for men's clubs?

That's more complex. In terms of the perceived outcomes, they say the return is not in money but it enhances the image and reputation of the club, it sustains the brand and it widens the audience, thus opening new market opportunities. They can expose their brand to a potentially wider audience that might not be attracted by the men's team. Importantly, gender equality has been a prominent political theme in recent years, and football clubs want to show they're not just fulfilling their business roles but also contributing to society.

What are the current challenges of an integrated club structure compared with an autonomous one?

Independent clubs have their own decision-making process, so they simply rely on their own board members. In some clubs that have an integrated structure – for example, in about 30% of the clubs that responded to the survey – they didn't have a seat on the board, so they potentially don't have a say in decisions. That's a weakness of the integrated model, that some clubs could overlook the needs of the women's side and use them purely for their image. When you're independent you rely on your own resources and have complete control. When you're an integrated club you're part of a larger entity, and some things might be beyond your control. For example, if the club has a poor season and needs to cut costs as a result, the women's football team could be affected by that.

What would be your recommendations for the financial sustainability of women's club football in Europe?

Collaborations between men's and women's clubs tend to help improve visibility and professionalisation, and the fact more are now involved in the women's game could play a part in long-term financial sustainability – more, bigger brands could mean larger attendances, a growing audience, and that can play in favour of the women's game overall.

“My idea would be that football's governing bodies consider universalising the game – you work towards clubs being a universal brand, rather than a men's club and a women's club.”

It's also important to look at revenue distribution and competition format – in men's football, you have the [UEFA] Europa League, but there's only the [UEFA] Women's Champions League. Increasing the number of participants in the Women's Champions League and perhaps changing the structure to increase interest, increasing prize money and looking at the television distribution rights to improve the situation for everyone are all potential ideas.

A main problem with women's football is the absence of solidarity mechanisms. In men's football, you have transfer fees between two clubs but there are also solidarity payments for clubs that trained the player in question to become a professional. We don't see that in women's football, so players can easily move on leaving their club with nothing in return. My idea would be that football's governing bodies consider universalising the game – you work towards clubs being a universal brand, rather than a men's club and a women's club.

How could your research be used by national associations and other stakeholders to foster the development of women's football in Europe?

The study generates insights on the management of women's football clubs. These can be used by stakeholders as a platform for benchmarking and future comparisons. From the study, it is clear that integrated clubs are a means to enhance visibility and professionalisation. However, it is also important to consider that this risks creating financial and sporting disparities with independent clubs or between clubs from bigger and smaller markets. If we want to see the women's game grow, there needs to be more investment. There's been a staggering increase in the last ten years, but for sure we need to see more. I'm quite positive that the game will continue this trend. It's certainly not easy, but promotion and investment at both grassroots and elite levels of the game are the key factors. 🍷



Scotland's work is paying handsome dividends.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY BOOSTS WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

UEFA has issued a strategic communications guide to help national associations throughout Europe promote women's football and convey messages aimed at attracting girls and women into the game.

Women's football is flourishing throughout Europe – and in line with its drive to foster the women's game, UEFA is helping its 55 member associations to develop creative and innovative new ways of putting women's football firmly on the map.

A strategic communications guide has been issued by UEFA to help the associations establish communications plans and initiatives that not only promote

the game but also increase awareness of and interest in women's football.

The project comes under the auspices of the UEFA GROW programme, which offers crucial support to the national associations in a variety of areas to help nurture football across Europe.

The guide gives the associations, leagues and clubs comprehensive advice on how to create and maintain an effective communications plan –

identifying objectives, defining a strategic approach, profiling a target audience, developing key messages, creating visual and editorial styles, and establishing ways of measuring the success of the plan.

Three case studies

Case studies from national associations, clubs and individuals are included in the guide, showing how effective communication and proactive initiatives

can reach wide audiences and specific target groups.

Here are three examples, taken from the football associations of Georgia, Moldova and Scotland.

Georgia – creating a strategic approach

The Georgian Football Federation has defined a clear strategic approach to promoting women's football, designed to increase the overall level of interest in women's football, make football the most followed women's sport among women in Georgia, and raise the level of interest in the Georgian women's national team.

Communications objectives centre on encouraging more women and girls to want to play football, removing cultural barriers that are preventing more women and girls from being able to play football in Georgia, and getting more schools in Georgia to provide girls' football.

The federation is working with third-party opinion formers, including the media, and key influencers to counter negative perceptions around women's football, by reframing the conversation within the context of a 'new, modern Georgia', and promoting the wider social and health benefits associated with women playing sport and, in particular, football.

The profile of women's national team players is also being strengthened, and an ambassador programme aims to help pass on positive messages.

Moldova – staging special events

Grassroots influencer events specifically for girls not only help to increase participation but are also an ideal way of promoting the women's game and changing its image.

From a communications perspective, such events demonstrate commitment to women's football and enable the creation of engaging content that raises awareness and encourages action.

The Football Association of Moldova joined forces with singer, influencer and ambassador for UEFA's Together #WePlayStrong campaign, Iuliana Beregoi, for a girls' football festival aimed at teenage girls.

Close to 1,000 participants enjoyed a fun-filled day of football activities that aimed to change perceptions,



Supported by the #WePlayStrong campaign, the Moldovan FA held a successful activity day for almost 1,000 girls.

increase participation and promote a healthy lifestyle.

A special video on the association's website conveyed the excitement of the day.

Scotland – working with sponsors

Sponsorship, as part of an organisation's commercial strategy, is key to the development of women's football.

When the Scottish energy company SSE became a title sponsor of the Scottish Football Association (SFA) girls' soccer centres – aimed at attracting girls between the ages of 5 and 12 into the game – the association covered the news in detail. An article on the SFA's website

focused on the launch event featuring national women's team coach Shelley Kerr and national team players, as well as SSE representatives.

Scotland's hard work has been paying dividends – dozens of soccer centres for hundreds of girls are up and running across the country – and SSE has also derived significant benefit from its partnership with the SFA.

UEFA emphatically endorses its member associations' sterling efforts to transmit the joy of football to women and girls. "Women's football offers our game the most potential for growth," the UEFA guide emphasises. "It is our priority at UEFA to help each [association] maximise the opportunities for its development." 🌟



The women's football strategic communications guide is available on UEFA.com.

WHEN IN ROME...

Rome, with its ancient tradition for sport and a majestic backdrop of architectural wonder, will be a perfect setting for hosting the best of European football when the biggest EURO ever hits the Italian city.

For Gabriele Gravina, the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) president, taking EURO to 12 host cities throughout the continent will be “the purest and best” tournament possible to celebrate 60 years of the competition.

“It is the right format for football: a football moves around, it rolls, it goes from place to place, engaging with many countries and many different cultures,” Gravina says. “I think it is the purest and the best format of football we can have for the EURO competition. Italy has long-lasting ties with football, we have a football culture and we are very passionate about it. Italy is always eager to show the world its football, as well as its natural and cultural beauties.

“Bidding to host some of the EURO 2020 matches, especially on the competition’s 60th

anniversary, was an excellent idea and I am sure it is going to be an unforgettable event.”

Fresh from hosting a successful European Under-21 Championship final tournament, Italy is now focused on generating even more excitement for an unforgettable festival for the senior men’s teams, hosting three group games (including the opening match) and a quarter-final at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome. The iconic stadium has undergone several makeovers since officially opening in 1953 and currently seats around 68,000.

Roman history

The Stadio Olimpico is no stranger to UEFA events, having staged four European Cup finals in 1977, 1984, 1996 and 2009, while its pedigree for big shows stretches

back as far as 1960, when Rome hosted the Olympics. For Gravina, the FIGC and the local organising structure, however, it is a perfect opportunity to showcase Rome’s treasure trove of art and architectural splendour, from the Colosseum to the Vatican Museum, St Peter’s Basilica, the Trevi Fountain, the Spanish Steps and the Pantheon.

“We will have the chance to show our culture, to demonstrate our professionalism and our organisational abilities,” Gravina adds, “Rome is the Eternal City, a place that signifies history. Everyone loves Rome and I am sure Rome will do its best to rise to the occasion.”

Gravina believes the welcoming, friendly people of Rome will create a lasting impression for fans travelling to the city. “We have the chance to display our



Rome

The Italian capital is a perennial hotspot for visitors seeking out history and culture – not to mention glamorous football pedigree. The Eternal City enjoys a reputation as the birthplace of western civilisation and boasts countless must-see attractions, from the Colosseum to St Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, the Spanish Steps and the Trevi Fountain. No less iconic is the Stadium Olimpico, originally opened in 1937 and the venue for the third European Championship final in 1968, when hosts Italy defeated Yugoslavia 2-0. It was there too that West Germany won the tournament decider in 1980, before returning to a city that lives and breathes football to clinch the World Cup in 1990.

MATCHES

12 June: Group A match
17 June: Group A match
21 June: Group A match
4 July: Quarter-final



hospitality most of all, which is so important in the world of football. Italy is a very welcoming country and we will prove it, with great love, care, and by extending the hand of friendship to every fan who will visit us during EURO 2020."

With Francesco Totti on board as local ambassador and Gianluca Vialli as volunteers ambassador, Rome has some legendary names lending their support to the event. With a volunteer programme fully under way, as well as exciting plans for the fan zones and the UEFA festival, it is set to be a wonderful summer in Rome.

Gravina explains: "We are working with enthusiasm on organising the event together with the government, the city and all the stakeholders involved. Rome will shine, with its spectacular fan zone within a unique area in the world, with the Olympic Stadium renovated for the occasion and with the passion of the Italian fans. After the events promoted in the city for the 500 days and one year to go events, we have scheduled the European Qualifier between Italy and Greece in Rome on 12 October, which will be another stage towards the inaugural EURO 2020 match".

Club cooperation

On the pitch, the national team are focused on securing qualification and their right to play in Rome at EURO 2020, while both

Rome clubs, Lazio and AS Roma, have offered their full support to make the tournament a success.



"Rome is the Eternal City, a place that signifies history. Everyone loves Rome and I am sure Rome will do its best to rise to the occasion."

Gabriele Gravina
FIGC president

"From the beginning, our two clubs from the Italian capital have made themselves available to the fullest extent," Gravina says. "And we want to thank them for that, we really appreciate everything they do for us. The Italian team is a religion. Our blue shirt is an icon which is in the mind, in the eyes and in the heart of many Italians."

The fact there will be an unmissable celebration in Rome, with some of the very best European football on show, is unequivocal. Yet what kind of legacy does Gravina hope EURO 2020 will leave behind in Rome and Italian football?

"We believe it will have an impact in three areas," the president explains. "First of all, selfishly, we hope it will be a fantastic experience for everyone, we are collaborating with UEFA and we believe our participation will prove to be an excellent, useful event for us and for all of our partners who are closely involved."

"Furthermore, we want to capitalise on this experience in the future and to prove that Italy is able to deal with hosting such a high-profile event. We'll involve everybody. We believe that this event is not only a UEFA event, an FIGC event or just for the city of Rome. It's an event that everybody in the football world loves. It's an event for the fans. It's an event for everybody who loves our world." 🌍

PAINT THE TOWN ORANGE

With the national team enjoying a renaissance on the pitch and a fan base with a reputation for being among the most passionate – and colourful – in Europe, the Dutch are looking forward to being part of hosting an unforgettable EURO.

This will be the biggest EURO ever, and while it is a celebration of 60 years of the competition, it will also mark 20 years since the Netherlands jointly hosted EURO 2000 with neighbours Belgium – a tournament that Michael van Praag, president of the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB), remembers fondly.

"I have some great memories because all those great [footballing] countries were close by. You could go and see them play. It was also very important in the development of Dutch football," Van Praag says. "I also think that many young boys became enthused by what they saw there, and also started playing football [because of EURO 2000]."

Bid success

Their successful bid to jointly host EURO 2020 was welcome news for the KNVB and the enthusiastic supporters, who back not only the brilliant Oranje, but are also enthusiastically gearing up for a great

party in Amsterdam. "Everyone wanted to [bid]. We, the Netherlands, are also too small a country to organise something like this on our own. But, we really wanted to take part because we have a huge fan base and everybody dresses up in orange, and we thought if we manage to qualify, then you have a European Championship where you can also play a couple of home games. And that's great for them. Also, we think it's great that young kids are able to see famous players from other teams in the flesh in Amsterdam.

"The idea behind [EURO 2020] was that you organise the European Championships in places where it would never normally take place, because many countries in Europe cannot organise a European Championship as they are too small. So, by going to various cities, you end up in places where the EURO wouldn't normally take place. That's what I really liked about it and also it's the European Championship's 60th birthday, so that calls for something special."

Football for all

Football is a way of life for the Dutch, and as Van Praag explains, helping to host a history-making EURO will trigger a new kind of legacy, as support for the game, and women's football in particular, following their Women's EURO 2017 home triumph and Women's World Cup runners-up spot, continues to grow. "We are a country with a very dense infrastructure. We've [only] got 17 million people, but we have 3,140 amateur clubs, so a young boy or a girl can get on their bike and within ten minutes they can be at a club where they are trained by a qualified coach.

"But what we also see is that, especially between the ages of 13 and 16, both boys and girls stop playing football because they want to do something else, such as a different sport, gaming, going to cafés, and even though they are still very young, they can always go out and relax on a terrace [in a bar or café] somewhere. So, we obviously see a



“I expect that, when you talk about a united front against discrimination, the Netherlands will be at the forefront. Football for everyone. That is what we promote, and we will certainly use this tournament to put more focus on this.”

Michael van Praag
KNVB president



decline. We see that there's an increase in women's football, but we're seeing a decline in boys. But, we hope that the fact there's such a huge tournament coming to the Netherlands provides an extra boost, and those kids will say: 'Hey, football really is great and let's keep playing'."

After failing to qualify for both EURO 2016 and the 2018 World Cup, the Netherlands began to rebuild and are enjoying better fortunes on the pitch, most recently as finalists in the UEFA Nations League, defeated only narrowly by Portugal. Naturally, this is represents an added reason to be excited about the upcoming EURO.

"The Dutch team is always celebrated," Van Praag adds. "The side events around a match are always very important. Thousands or perhaps even tens of thousands of people attend these, all dressed in orange shirts or with an orange hat. We also see that the people who are fans of the Dutch team are not necessarily fans of football clubs. So, it's often families with wives and children, which always creates a very special atmosphere at the national team's matches. And when that is all organised in your own country, we put a lot of extra emphasis on [providing] good events on the side, to make sure to create fan zones, not only for the Dutch fans, but

also for fans of other teams. One of the things that the Netherlands is famous for is inclusion. We find it very important to be together with people from different countries and backgrounds. So I expect that, when you talk about a united front against discrimination, the Netherlands will be at the forefront. Football for everyone. That is what we promote, and we will certainly use this tournament to put more focus on this."

Amsterdam's appeal

Off the field, the KNVB and the city of Amsterdam are jointly preparing plenty of activities to engage local and visiting fans to the Dutch capital, while the city's eternal and diverse appeal will attract fans to sights outside of sport.

"You have the canals, nice terraces and nice restaurants," Van Praag says. "People from Amsterdam and the Netherlands are welcoming, we have that capacity. Amsterdam is not only a city. Just take a look at our beaches. Zandvoort is called Amsterdam Beach for example, and everything is accessible with ease. I think that Amsterdam and its surroundings are a great place for everyone to enjoy a day out. If you want to go out sailing, then you can do that, but you can also go and visit the forest, see the beautiful fields of flowers or visit a museum to see the The Night Watch by Rembrandt. You can all do that here." 🇳🇱

Amsterdam

One of the world's busiest port cities since the Dutch Golden Age, Amsterdam is a vibrant capital with a historical centre that has retained a relaxed and intimate vibe – its man-made canals, charming alleyways and ubiquitous bicycles combining to create a unique atmosphere. Amsterdam is a city steeped in art too, with masterpieces galore at the Van Gogh Museum and Rijksmuseum, and the creative spirit alive in its galleries and street art. The locals' approach to football is equally colourful, orange being the preferred choice whenever the national team are playing. Johan Cruyff remains Amsterdam's most famous footballer, and the Dutch legend's name now adorns the stadium where Europe's finest will star at EURO 2020, the same venue having hosted five games during the 2000 tournament.

MATCHES

14 June: Group C match
18 June: Group C match
22 June: Group C match
27 June: Round of 16



Johan Cruyff Arena
Capacity: 54,000

ELVIRA ASKERZADE – AZERBAIJAN

"FOOTBALL SYMBOLISES FRIENDSHIP.."

Elvira Askerzade faced serious adversity as a young girl. Her mother died when she was 11 – an experience that might have damaged a lesser spirit. But the 18-year-old from the Azerbaijani city of Lankaran has found her way forward through football. Her skills as a goalkeeper have earned her a place in Azerbaijan's national Under-19 squad – along with the captain's armband – as well as dreams of a successful career.

Her grandmother Zibeyda took on the role of parent to Elvira, who found fulfilment in playing football, despite some family reticence at the time. "I chose my dream," she says. "I knew that I could do it." Based at the national football academy in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, she is developing into a fine young keeper and confident young person.

"I love football, it's everything to me," Elvira says. "I think football symbolises friendship – because there are no boundaries or differences based on religion, race or gender." She welcomes the change of attitude in Azerbaijan towards girls playing football. "I've demonstrated that it's possible. And our nation can see that women can play football." Elvira would love to play in the UEFA Women's Champions League, and her mother's spirit still guides her. "If you believe in yourself, you can go further," she insists. "If you want something, then nothing is impossible."





FA STAFF WALK IN PRIDE PARADE

On Saturday 6 July, more than 30,000 people took part in this year's Pride in London parade, which marked 50 years since the birth of the modern LGBT+ rights movement. The Football Association was part of the parade for the first time.

BY FUNKE AWODERU

A group of over 50 employees, county football association staff and other members of the football community took part on the association's behalf and were named as runners-up in the Best New Group category.

The FA believes that football has the unique quality of connecting people irrespective of who they are or where they are from and has been doing increasingly more to immerse LGBT+ groups and individuals in the game.

In partnership with organisations such as Stonewall, Gendered Intelligence and Football v Homophobia, The FA works on a range of programmes to help foster a welcoming landscape for fans, players and everyone else connected with the game. In collaboration with organisations such as the Professional Footballers' Association and the League Managers Association, The FA also talks to players



and managers about the role they can play in making the game welcoming to everyone.

In addition, The FA works closely with government on policy matters such as the legislative framework governing hate crimes at live football games. The association has developed a range of inclusion initiatives alongside the Premier League and EFL, and liaises with them on the delivery of mandatory education sessions to any participant found guilty of discrimination.

In recent years, The FA has also worked hard to develop its own culture with inclusion as a key core value. The results of its annual culture survey show that respecting diversity and recognising that healthy difference is a strength consistently scores as one of the highest behaviours measured.

The association believes that being inclusive means valuing and celebrating its differences. Nurturing the right working environment means everyone thrives and can be themselves. Like the game of football, The FA is For All. 🌈

Women's World Cup campaign sparks boom

BY DAVID GERTY

Although they were narrowly beaten by holders the USA, the performances – and conduct – of England's players at the Women's World Cup in France have inspired a nation.

Baroness Sue Campbell, The FA's director of women's football, believes that the tournament in France has done more to help grow the women's game than anything that went before it. She has outlined her aspiration that the millions of people who watched the Lionesses on television (viewers peaked at 11.7m on BBC for the semi-final with the USA) will now start

or continue to follow a team in the Women's Super League or at any level of the football pyramid.

The team have inspired children to take up the game, and The FA next has to turn that inspiration into participation by making sure that schools are offering girls' football and that schools and clubs are creating the right environment for young female players to play and flourish.

One of the major obstacles to getting girls into sport has been the shortage of female sporting role models. Now the Women's World Cup has now put at least 24 of them in the

spotlight. Their hard work, worthy values and professionalism are characteristics that any youngster should try to copy.

The increasing popularity of women's football is a massive opportunity for The FA to capitalise on, especially with Women's EURO 2021 taking place on home soil, and the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo in between.

Before that, England will be hosting Germany for a friendly at Wembley in November, with ticket sales already over 35,000. So, the fans do not have too long to wait to see the Lionesses in action again!



ReportCalcio 2019 is available online in English.

FOOTBALL CONFIRMED AS ITALY'S PREMIER SPORT

The ninth edition of ReportCalcio, the annual report on Italian football, has confirmed football's status as Italy's most popular sport, with no less than 24% of the country's registered sports practitioners, coaches, referees and club officials (a total of nearly 1.4 million) and 22% of its sports clubs enrolled or affiliated with the Italian Football Association (FIGC).

BY DIEGO ANTENOZIO

Overall, some 28 million fans and 4.6 million players are involved in football in Italy, with approximately 568,000 matches played every year (of which 64% are at youth level).

The major addition to the 2019 report is a breakdown of the results from a study developed in partnership with UEFA, which sheds light on how participation in football benefits the country in economic and social terms. Applying the UEFA GROW SROI (social return on investment) model, it estimates Italian football's socio-economic benefits for the 2017/18 season to be around €3.01 billion, with direct effects in the economic sector (a direct contribution of €742.1 million to the national economy), the social sector (€1,051.4 million of savings thanks to the positive effects of football) and the healthcare sector (€1,215.5 million saved in healthcare expenditure).

The overall tax and social security contribution was approximately €1.2 billion, with the figure growing by 36.9% between 2006 and 2016 alone (3.2%

growth per year on average). Professional football continues to make the sporting world's biggest contribution, accounting for 70% of the overall tax revenue generated by the Italian sports sector.

A crucial role

"This has been a demanding but important undertaking," explained the FIGC president, Gabriele Gravina. "Italian football plays a crucial role in the national economy. Italian football is leading the way in several areas, including the training of coaches and referees – there are 37 Italians working as international match officials. Things are moving in the right direction, including in women's football, despite the number of registered female practitioners remaining low. I'm sure it will increase in the wake of the World Cup in France." Over the last decade, the number of registered female players has risen by 39.3%, from fewer than 19,000 to almost 26,000, and this figure is set to keep climbing. The numbers regarding Italy's 19 national

teams, which the FIGC sees as a core strategic asset, are also eye-catching: in 2018, some €30 million was invested, there were 197 official matches and 607 players were called up, spending a combined 1,010 days together.

The national teams continue to be a major asset in the Italian TV market, with viewer numbers (on TV and streaming) reaching 84.6 million in 2018 alone.

Meanwhile, the number of fans and followers of the national teams on the FIGC's social media accounts topped 8.3 million, an increase of 7.5% compared with 2017 and 56.2% compared with 2015. In particular, there has been a marked increase in interest in the women's national teams, with the number of content views on the FIGC's Vivo Azzurro channel soaring from 6,085 in 2013 to 561,603 in 2018.

Lastly, the number of match-going spectators for top-level matches in 2017/18 was close to 17 million (+8.4% compared with 2016/17 and +13.6% compared with 2015/16). ⚽

ALBANIA

www.fshf.org

NATIONAL TEAM MEMBERS VISIT CHILDREN'S HOME

ANDI VERÇANI



Members of the Albanian national team visited a children's home in the city of Durrës to deliver gifts to make the children's lives a little better.

Head coach Edy Reja, together with his assistants Sergio Porrini, Ervin Bulku and Hamdi Salihi, and players Etrit Berisha, Mërgim Mavraj, Elseid Hysaj, Ermir Lenjani, Sokol Cikalleshi and Odise Roshi, delivered the gifts, to which all the national team players had contributed. In a festive atmosphere, the players and technical staff watched a show performed by the children to welcome them. The children were excited to meet their idols, and the players enjoyed meeting the children. "For us, it is a great pleasure and source of joy to have the opportunity to bring some happiness to these children. This is a beautiful day, not only for the children but for us too. And on behalf of the whole team, I must thank the



girls who work with the orphaned children. They truly are heroes," said the captain of the national team, Mërgim Mavraj.

During every national team gathering,

the Football Association of Albania plans visits to homes for children or the elderly in order to connect with them and share important life messages.

AUSTRIA

www.oefb.at

ÖFB AND BUNDESLIGA SET UP HOMOPHOBIA OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE

SIMON CHARAMZA



Following last October's action week, the Austrian FA (ÖFB) and the Austrian Bundesliga have taken a new initiative aimed at combating homophobia in Austrian football by jointly setting up an ombudsman's office to deal with homophobic discrimination. The new office was unveiled on the occasion of EuroPride 2019 in Vienna in early June.

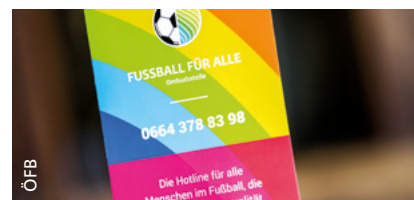
The creation of the ombudsman's office is the result of a lengthy process in which the two organisations have been discussing the theme of homophobia and gathering information and ideas at numerous meetings, including a round table involving a large number of NGOs, and by talking to fans.

The ombudsman's office is a direct point of contact for LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer) people in football – whether players, fans or officials. The ombudsman is Oliver Egger, a 26-year-old FC Gratkorn footballer who appeared as the main character in the film 'Der Tag wird kommen' (The day will come), telling his story as the first Austrian footballer to come out as homosexual.

The office will network with other organisations and NGOs in order to provide psychological support and follow-up. An independent body set up within the 'Fußball für alle' (Football for All) association and recognised by the ÖFB and Bundesliga, it can deal with issues at club or association level. It is financed by the ÖFB, the Bundesliga and UEFA.

The ÖFB's general secretary, Thomas



Hollerer, said: "As Austria's largest sports federation, the ÖFB is aware of its responsibility and of the example it should set within society. Football is for everyone, which is why we promote diversity, tolerance and integration. Creating the ombudsman's office is the next important step in this direction."

Further information and contact details for the ombudsman's office can be found at <http://www.fussballfueralle.at/> and <https://www.facebook.com/ombudsstelleffa/>.

BELARUS

www.abff.by

GIRLS' UNDER-13 LEAGUE STARTS UP

ALEKSANDR ALEINIK



The Football Federation of Belarus (ABFF) has launched a new grassroots project aimed at the development of women's football. The first girls' Under-13 #WOOOOW! league took place across Belarus from April until June.

The 60 participating teams were split into eight geographical divisions, leading to a final round at the ABFF training centre on 9 June. The winners of the inaugural trophy were FSC Pershamaiski, followed by

FC SDUSHOR-7 from Mogilev in second place and FC Progress Vertelishki from the Grodno region finishing third.

The project received significant marketing and communications support from the ABFF, with all eight divisions being named after historically famous Belarusian women and given their own branding. The project was promoted across social media with the use of the hashtag #WOOOOW! and opening and closing ceremonies were also organised.



BULGARIA

www.bffunion.bg

CROWD TROUBLE ON THE DECREASE

HRISTO ZAPRYANOV



The Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) announced a 35.1% decrease in fines on clubs for supporter misconduct in the 2018/19 season. The yearly report presented by the BFU's supporter liaison officer (SLO) reveals that fines imposed on professional clubs for crowd disturbances in 2018/19 added up to 244,225 Bulgarian leva (approximately €124,870), which is 130,525 (€66,736) less than the previous season. Furthermore, the number of partial

stadium closures imposed dropped from six in 2017/18 to just one in 2018/19.

The most significant decrease in club fines relates to pitch invasions, which were down by a staggering 80.8%. Another positive sign is that penalties for objects thrown onto the pitch and fireworks in the stands dropped by 52.3% and 48.5% respectively.

The results are even more impressive considering that the BFU's disciplinary committee did not reduce its criteria but

raised the requirements for clubs and implemented additional penalties for crowd trouble.

In his report, the SLO highlights the positive change as a direct consequence of the efforts of the club liaison officers and the ministry of the interior (including banning certain individuals from attending local or international matches), as well as the BFU's own efforts to promote equality and proper behaviour in the stands through a series of workshops and seminars.

CROATIA

www.hns-cff.hr

WORLD CUP EXPLOIT IMMORTALISED IN PRINT

NIKA BAHTIJAREVIĆ



One year after Zlatko Dalić and his squad of 22 reached the World Cup final and put tiny Croatia on front pages all around the world, the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) has celebrated the Vatreni's silver medal with publications chronicling the team's road to Russia and their subsequent success.

The first book, titled *Endless Day*, is a collection of photographs from the team's spectacular welcome in Zagreb,

where half a million fans lined the streets to welcome the players and coaches home. Selected by the HNS's official photographer, Drago Sopta, the photographs document the seven-hour bus ride the team took from the airport to the main square, and are accompanied by short narratives in which the players and Dalić describe their recollections of the day.

The second, longer book recounts the team's World Cup journey as a whole,

starting with their rocky start in the qualifiers, describing Dalić's ascension to the position of head coach at a time when the Vatreni seemed unlikely to even get to Russia, and detailing the team's incredible road to the final. The *Summer of Our Greatest Dreams* also features numerous photographs and statistics, and will serve as an excellent memento of the best month that Croatian football has ever experienced.

ESTONIA

www.jalgpall.ee

PREPARING FOR THE STARS OF TOMORROW

MAARJA SAULEP



Next year Estonia will host the European Under-17 Championship final tournament. Preparations for the big event are well under way.

The finals will take place in May 2020 in Tallinn, Tartu, Rakvere, Haapsalu, Viljandi, Otepää and Voru, so that as many young people as possible can be part of the event. The tournament will have two centres – one in the south and the other in the north of the country. The stadium capacities range from just over 1,000 to 14,000, with the final to be



played at the national stadium in Tallinn.

"Hosting the tournament is a great honour and a valuable experience for us. So far, the preparations have gone according to plan," said tournament

director Kadri Jägel. "Hopefully, the tournament will inspire the next generation and leave a legacy at local level."

Estonia's own Under-17 team is also getting ready for the challenge, playing high-level friendly matches, taking part in UEFA development tournaments and competing in the Baltic Cup. In September, an Under-17 mini-tournament is taking place in Tartu and Viljandi with the participation of Estonia, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain to test the readiness of the venues.

FAROE ISLANDS

www.football.fo

FAIR PLAY PRIZE GIVES YOUNG CHILDREN A TASTE OF FOOTBALL

TERJI NILSEN



Last year the Faroe Islands Football Association won a UEFA fair play award for the behaviour of Faroe fans attending matches of the national team and of clubs playing in UEFA competitions. Points were given for the behaviour of the fans and for their unwavering support even if the match was not going in their team's favour. Out of a maximum of 10 points, the

Faroe supporters received an average of 8.818 points.

UEFA insists that fair play prize money has been spent on football-related activities that focus on fair play, equality and gathering people in the name of football. Therefore, in cooperation with various clubs across the islands, the football association ran a number of

fair play events for children from local nursery schools to come and have fun and enjoy a game of football. The activities have been a huge success and have certainly sparked the children's interest in football. So far, around 600 children have taken part, with many more events still to come before the year is out.

GEORGIA

www.gff.ge

FIRST SUMMER CAMP FOR GIRLS

OTAR GIORGADZE



As part of UEFA's Together #WePlayStrong campaign, the Georgian Football Federation (GFF) organised its first-ever summer football camp for girls, which involved 70 girls up to 15 years of age from across the country. The week-long camp was hosted by the GFF academy in the town of Lagodekhi in eastern Georgia. The activities were led by members of

the Georgian women's national football team.

One of the most memorable and emotional events of the week for the youngsters was the visit of French women's football superstar Laura Georges. Capped 188 times by the French national team, she shared her own experiences with the girls and answered all their questions. The French star then proceeded

to train and play with the youngsters.

"The development of women's football in Georgia is directly related to projects such as this one. It serves primarily to raise awareness about the game and its positive aspects among girls of this age. They will experience the benefits of football in both their physical and mental development," said GFF vice-president Nikoloz Jgarkava.

GIBRALTAR

www.gibraltarfifa.com

PLAYING WITHOUT PRESSURE

STEVEN GONZALEZ



This summer the Gibraltar FA's grassroots department ran an extremely successful children's summer camp at the Victoria Stadium over two weeks in July. Under the guidance of grassroots manager Leslie Asquez, supported by technical director Desi Curry and women's football manager Laura McGinn, more than 130 children were actively involved in learning and developing

their football skills in a fun atmosphere characterised by the association's grassroots football theme of Play without Pressure.

Desi Curry was delighted with the turnout: "In line with our Play without Pressure campaign, our grassroots team have been extremely busy every weekend organising free participation in structured skills and games sessions. We have followed this up with ten mornings of fun and

inclusive coaching and skill development sessions, all delivered by our UEFA Level 1, C and B licence coaches. We have had approximately 130 boys and girls participating in their age specific groups, forming new friendships and falling in love with the beautiful game. Five qualified and approved coaches worked tirelessly to deliver our most successful summer so far. Bring on 2020!"

MALTA

www.mfa.com.mt

BJORN VASSALLO ELECTED PRESIDENT

KEVIN AZZOPARDI



Bjorn Vassallo has been elected president of the Malta Football Association for a four-year term. The 39-year-old received 83 of the 137 votes cast in the presidential election held during the association's annual general meeting on 20 July.

"I'm honoured that this AGM has elected me to lead the largest sports organisation in Malta," Vassallo told the assembly. "I want to thank those who supported me



a positive advert for Maltese football."

Vassallo, who served as chief executive officer and general secretary of the Malta FA between 2010 and 2016, succeeds Norman Darmanin Demajo, who decided

with their vote as well as those who expressed a different opinion. Thanks for making this AGM a mature one. It was

to step down at the end of his third three-year term at the helm of the governing body of Maltese football.

Vassallo, whose career in football administration spans more than two decades, stressed the importance of unity.

"Unity should be our top priority going forward," he said. "We must work together towards a common objective... the development and progress of Maltese football."

MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

GROWING MOLDOVAN FOOTBALL

PRESS OFFICE



On 25 and 26 June, a workshop was held under the umbrella of the UEFA GROW programme at the technical centre in Vadul lui Vodă with the participation of the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) staff, representatives of the regional football associations, government authorities and UEFA experts.

The aim of the workshop was to discuss and to better understand the strategic plan for the development of football in Moldova, painting a clear picture of where the association is going and defining clear and strategic medium-term objectives.

The benefits of creating a strategy are numerous. It provides a clear, coordinated and prioritised focus and direction for everyone involved in the organisation, as well as for external stakeholders.

"UEFA GROW is a fantastic tool for the Football Association of Moldova," said the association's president, Leonid Oleinenco. "Forming the FMF strategic plan for the next four to five years is a vital step, so that everyone has a clear idea of its goals. We believe we can work closely with the government to achieve mutual goals, such as improving the population's health by

making football more accessible. Football in Moldova has plenty of potential, and the FMF has put a strong structure in place to ensure that the game continues to develop."

"Football is popular in Moldova and because Leonid Oleinenco has been very active lately, we have held a meeting in the parliament where we agreed that the government has to support the development of football in our country," said Corneliu Popovici, adviser to the president of Moldova, who attended the workshop.

NORTHERN IRELAND

www.irishfa.com

90 SUMMER FOOTBALL CAMPS

NIGEL TILSON



Around 5,000 children took part in Irish Football Association football camps across Northern Ireland this summer. Aimed at children aged 5 to 13, the camps operate during

the Easter, July/August and Halloween periods each year.

This summer, the Irish FA Foundation staged 90 football camps at 65 venues, including goalkeeper and girls-only camps.

Last year, the foundation attracted more than 8,000 participants to 132 camps – and this year the figure already stands at close to 7,000 with the Halloween camps still to come.

During the five-day summer camps, which were sponsored by Northern Ireland company Irwin's Bakery under its Nutty Krust brand, boys and girls honed their football skills by taking part in coaching sessions that focused on passing, dribbling, 1v1s, attacking, defending, shooting and small-sided games.

The camps form part of the association's Let Them Play youth strategy, which aims to double youth football participation in Northern Ireland by 2025.

Ian Stewart from the IFA Foundation explains: "The football camps are hugely important as the association seeks to grow the game across the country and find the next generation of professional Northern Ireland footballers. We also see them as a way for the kids to make new friends when learning new football skills and, above all, to have fun."



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

www.fai.ie

IRISH TEAMS IMPRESS AT WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES

GARETH MAHER



It was a good summer for Irish students as the Republic of Ireland men's and women's football teams both performed well at the World University Games in Naples.

The women's team, managed by Dave Connell, reached the semi-finals after beating Brazil, South Korea, and China. The counter attacking style employed by the team worked well as they dominated possession in each of their group games and quarter-final, before coming up against a very good North Korea team in the semi-finals.

For the men's team, led by Greg Yelverton, they bowed out at the quarter-



final stage following a narrow loss against Russia. They had previously beaten South Korea and drawn with Uruguay.

The two teams, who were supported by Student Sport Ireland and the Football Association of Ireland, proved that they can compete against the best students in the world, and they will both take a lot of positives from the tournament.

The performances of both teams also reflects the excellent work being done in 'third-level football' [universities and colleges football], with Mark Scanlon and Dylan Maguire leading this area for the Football Association of Ireland. The future looks bright for the students – on and off the pitch.

ROMANIA

www.frf.ro

REVOLUTIONARY DECISIONS

PAUL ZAHARIA



The date of 3 July 2019 will remain notable in the history of Romanian football as the day when the executive committee of the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) took some revolutionary decisions to stimulate the development of women's football and men's youth football.

Women's football in Romania badly needs investments by clubs. Therefore, the FRF executive committee decided that, starting with the 2020/21 season, all men's first league teams will have to register at least 20 female players and compete in the national women's Under-15 championship. This is a mandatory condition that all first league clubs will have to fulfil for the first league licence.

Men's first league clubs can also conclude an agreement with a women's first, second or third league club, but the Under-15 team will have to compete in the national championship with the name of the men's first league team.

The reform will continue in the following seasons. From 2021/22 it will be mandatory for clubs to have a women's team participating in the senior women's

championship (first, second or third league). Clubs can also work with a club in the women's first, second or third league and register at least 20 players for the national women's Under-15 championship. Starting in 2022/23, in addition to being required to have a women's team playing in the senior women's championship and at least 20 players registered for the national women's Under-15 championship, clubs will also have to register at least 15 players for the national women's Under-13 championship. An agreement with a women's first, second or third league club will still be possible.

If a men's first league club also has a senior women's team, the women's team will play in the third league. However, if an agreement is signed with an existing women's club/team, that women's team will play in the league for which it is already registered.

Over in the men's youth football sector, the FRF executive committee decided that, starting with the 2021/22 season, the youth academy of each club will have to achieve a certain number of points in the assessment and ranking process in order for the club to

obtain the first league licence.

This process was put in place at the beginning of this year, and although it is not yet mandatory, 107 of the 108 clubs that take part in the FRF youth competitions initially expressed an interest in being assessed and ranked. In the end, 80 submitted the necessary information in due time. The maximum points number is 100, taking seven criteria into account: strategy and philosophy, teams and players, technical staff, support staff, training sessions and matches, infrastructure and facilities, and results. Each criteria is worth a maximum of four points, but each has a different weighting in the overall assessment. To meet the first league licensing requirements, a club will need at least 60 points out of 100. This means that not only will the clubs have to invest in children and young players, but also, and most importantly, do so at the highest possible level.

Last but not least, the FRF executive committee also decided to set up a new Under-16 championship. As a result, all age groups from the Under-13s upwards will play national championships.

RUSSIA

www.rfs.ru

VALENTIN GRANATKIN MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT

EKATERINA GRISHENKOVA



From 4 to 14 June, the 31st international youth tournament in memory of former FIFA first vice-president Valentin Granatkin was held in St Petersburg.

Twelve national teams made up of players born in or after 2001 took part. The teams were divided into three groups: Russia-1, Bulgaria, Moldova and India were in Group A, Tajikistan, Greece, Turkey and the Kyrgyz Republic in Group B, and Russia-2, Argentina, Armenia and Iran in Group C.

The matches were played at three stadiums: Petrovsky and Turbostroitel (both in St Petersburg) and Roschino Arena (Leningrad region). The winners of the



round-robin group stage qualified for the semi-finals together with the best runner-up, leaving the remaining teams to play for places 5 to 12.

The first of the semi-finals was an all-Russia affair won by Russia-1 on penalties (1-1, 5-3). The second semi-final pitted Argentina against Turkey, with the

South American contingent winning 2-0. In the final at Petrovsky Stadium, the hosts, coached by the top scorer in the history of the Russian national team, Aleksandr Kerzhakov, lost to Argentina by a single goal (1-0), scored by Tomás Lecanda in the 74th minute. Third place was taken by Turkey, who beat Russia-2 (4-2).

SERBIA

www.fss.rs

FIRST COURSE FOR FEMALE COACHES HELD IN BELGRADE

MIRKO VRBICA



The first course for female football coaches has taken place in Belgrade for coaches who work with girls between the ages of 7 and 12. This course was organised in cooperation with the Football Association of Norway with the aim of raising the popularity and development of women's football in Serbia.

The three-day course was split into theory and practice, under the leadership of Norwegian instructors Anne Pellerud and Kari Nilsen.

The 23 participants were a mix of active players, referees and students from

the faculty of sport and physical education. Having completed the course, the coaches will now share their new knowledge and skills within their local communities, especially in terms of coaching girls, getting girls involved in football, and the equipment needed to run training sessions.

In other news, Manchester United player and Serbian international Nemanja Matić returned to his roots recently when he visited the Ub municipality, where he was born, to assist with the distribution of sports equipment to local clubs.



He accompanied the president of the Football Association of Serbia, Slaviša Kokeza, general secretary Jovan Šurbatović, vice-president Marko Pantelić and the president of the Football Association of West Serbia, Slobodan Ilić. The latest donations take to almost 2,000 the number of clubs throughout Serbia to have received sports equipment from the Football Association of Serbia.

SLOVAKIA

www.futbalsfz.sk

RÓBERT VITTEK BIDS FAREWELL TO PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

PETER SURIN



Róbert Vittek has retired from professional football. Now 37 (born in Bratislava on 1 April 1982), he says he will occasionally play with the former internationals, take part in exhibition and charity games, and play for the Mufuza, the celebrity football team. He might also play for the 'club of league goal scorers', to which he belongs.

In his professional career, Vittek scored 36 goals in the German Bundesliga, 7 in French Ligue 1, 8 in the Turkish Super Lig and 2 in the Hungarian top flight. After returning to his hometown club of Slovan Bratislava, where he had started his career, he added another 24 goals to the 47 he had scored during his first stint with the club. He also won two league titles with Slovan (last season he played 15 minutes of the last league match and received his Super Liga champions' medal), the German Cup, and the Slovak player of the year award in 2006.

If injuries had not got in the way, his list of achievements would have been even longer. Before the 2010 World Cup in South



Africa, there were question marks as to whether coach Vladimír Weiss should include him in the squad. Weiss believed in

him, despite his injuries, and Vittek scored four goals: one against New Zealand to earn Slovakia one point, and two against Italy to give Slovakia a historic win and their ticket to the round of 16. His goal against the Netherlands in the round of 16 took him to the highest goal tally for a Slovakian player at the World Cup. Nobody before him, including legends such as Jozef Adamec and Adolf Scherer, has scored more World Cup goals. Altogether, Vittek scored 23 goals for the national team and held the record until June this year, when Marek Hamšík scored his 23rd and 24th national team goals in Slovakia's EURO 2020 qualifier against Azerbaijan in Baku.

Vittek has not decided yet what his next steps will be, but he has always been open to working in football after his playing days. Slovakian football would only benefit from his experience and qualities. Educated, intelligent and experienced with contacts all around the world, and not only in football, he is just the kind of person Slovakian football needs to grow bigger and stronger, both on the field and behind the scenes.

SWITZERLAND

www.football.ch

MOURNING FLORIJANA ISMAILI

PIERRE BENOIT



It was just over a year ago when I met a tall, radiant young woman called Florijana Ismaili. Exuding joie de vivre and enthusiasm, she had a wonderful life ahead of her. With wit, charm and intelligence, she talked to me about everything and anything, not just football.

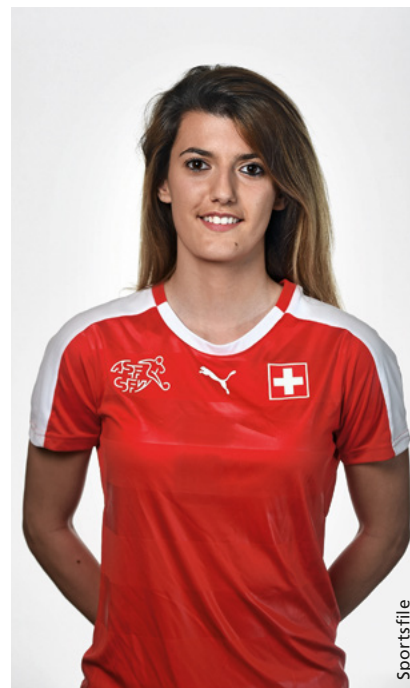
Now, a year later, she is dead, drowned in Lake Como. At the end of June, when the sad news began to spread that Florijana Ismaili had failed to resurface after jumping into the water, we all feared the worst. Her lifeless body was found three days later. The death of this much-loved footballer has created an infinite sense of loss for all who knew her at BSC Young Boys, where she was captain, for everyone at the Swiss Football Association, where she earned 33 national team caps, and for her friends and acquaintances, still unable to grasp what happened.

"Even though my family's roots are in Albania, I never doubted which country I

wanted to play for. I was born here, I played for all the national youth teams, and I owe a lot to Swiss football – that's why Switzerland was the only choice for me," she told me when I interviewed her.

Florijana Ismaili has left some enormous gaps, mainly as a person: she was always ready to offer advice and support to those around her in the workplace and on the football pitch. In the Young Boys office, where she worked for many years, she was liked by everyone who came into contact with her. And as a footballer for Young Boys and the national team, she is irreplaceable. An attack-minded number 10, her style of play was truly inspiring and somewhat reminiscent of the great Günter Netzer. Technically perfect on the ball, with a good eye for her team-mates and a scorer of wonderful goals, she will be remembered for years to come.

Florijana Ismaili will be missed. On the football pitch and – most importantly – as a wonderful human being.



Sportsfile

WALES

www.faw.cymru

NEW BRAND IDENTITY FOR WELSH DOMESTIC LEAGUES

MELISSA PALMER



The Football Association of Wales (FAW) has announced a new brand identity for the top two tiers of the men's domestic game.



FAW

Forty-five clubs from across the country will come together as one community, under a new identity: the Cymru Leagues.

Cymru Premier, the newly named top tier of Welsh football, will form the peak of the new pyramid system. Cymru North and Cymru South replace the Huws Gray Alliance and Welsh League Division 1 respectively, with both leagues coming under the FAW's jurisdiction for the first time.

The three leagues encompass every corner of Wales, which is why the new bilingual naming system places 'Cymru' at the heart of Welsh football.

Alongside the naming system, a new visual identity has been created for the

leagues. A key component of the FAW's brand identity, the daffodil, has previously been used to represent the 11 players of the national teams and will now be incorporated within the Cymru Leagues.

Seven daffodils, each representing one of the seven leagues of Welsh domestic football's top three tiers upon completion of the pyramid restructure, come together to form the striking ball logo.

The recent success of Welsh teams in UEFA competitions has captured the true Welsh spirit of supporters across the country. A radical departure from past identities, the modern logo reflects the modern new pyramid structure and the future ambitions of Welsh football.

BIRTHDAYS IN SEPTEMBER

1 SUNDAY José Guilherme Aguiar (Portugal) Gerhard Aigner (Germany) Manuel Díaz Vega (Spain) João Morais (Portugal) Alon Yefet (Israel)	2 MONDAY Marco Brunelli (Italy) Alain Giresse (France) Savo Milošević (Serbia)	3 TUESDAY David Elleray (England) Gérard Houllier (France) Raphael Kern (Switzerland) Rudolphe Mannaerts (Belgium) Bartłomiej Zalewski (Poland)	4 WEDNESDAY Hendrik Grosse-Lefert (Germany) Grigoriy Surkis (Ukraine) 70	5 THURSDAY Barry Taylor (England)	6 FRIDAY Shmuel Shteif (Israel) Bernd Stöber (Germany) Eija Vähälä (Finland)	7 SATURDAY Werner Helsen (Belgium) 60 Antonio Laranjo (Portugal) György Mezey (Hungary) Edgaras Stankevičius (Lithuania) Vignir Már Thormóðsson (Iceland)
10 TUESDAY Charles Robba (Gibraltar) 60 Cengiz Zülfikaroglu (Turkey)	11 WEDNESDAY Tomas Karpavičius (Lithuania) Kenneth Rasmussen (Denmark) Ioannis Tsachlidis (Greece) Katarzyna Wierzbowska (Poland)	12 THURSDAY Talal Darawshi (Israel) Tania Gravina (Malta) 50	13 FRIDAY Ingrid Jonsson (Sweden) 60 Philippe Prudhon (France) Lennart Schafroth (Sweden) Jon Skjervold (Norway) Stanisław Speczik (Poland) Lennart Vestervall (Sweden)	14 SATURDAY Kim Robin Haugen (Norway)	15 SUNDAY Adam Giersz (Poland) Sokol Jareci (Albania) Eugeniusz Nowak (Poland) 70 Marko Pantelić (Serbia) Dejan Savićević (Montenegro)	16 MONDAY Rimla Akhtar (England) Marco Borg (Malta) Antonis Petrou (Cyprus) Kelly Simmons (England)
19 THURSDAY	20 FRIDAY John Fleming (Scotland) Paul Lyon (Gibraltar) Miloš Marković (Serbia) 60	21 SATURDAY Nenad Dikić (Serbia) Helena Herrero González (Spain) Nail Izmaylov (Russia) Vladislav Khodееv (Russia) Viktor Paradnikov (Ukraine) Stefan Weber (Germany) Luc Wilmes (Luxembourg)	22 SUNDAY Kairat Boranbayev (Kazakhstan) Cornelis de Bruin (Netherlands) 90 Bernhard Schwarz (Austria)	23 MONDAY Goetz Eilers (Germany) Vlado Svilokos (Croatia) 50	24 TUESDAY Matteo Frameglia (Italy) Ionel Piscanu (Romania) Giangiorgio Spiess (Switzerland) Eugen Strigel (Germany) 70 Magdalena Urbańska (Poland) 40	25 WEDNESDAY Ayse Idil Cem (Turkey) Christine Frai (Germany) Rotem Kamer (Israel) Paul Krähenbühl (Switzerland) Mogens Kreutzfeldt (Denmark) João Lopes Ferreira (Portugal)
28 SATURDAY Karel Bohuněk (Czech Republic) Michael van Praag (Netherlands) Paloma Quintero Siles (Spain)	29 SUNDAY Tamás Gudra (Hungary) Jon Ottar Morland (Norway) Cristian Vornicu (Romania)	30 MONDAY Dariusz Dziekanowski (Poland) Judith Frommelt (Liechtenstein) Cristina-Daniela Uluc (Romania)				

BIRTHDAYS IN OCTOBER

1 TUESDAY Agnieszka Prachniak (Poland) Håkan Sjöstrand (Sweden) Sergejus Slyva (Lithuania)	2 WEDNESDAY Levent Bıçakcı (Turkey) Lutz Michael Fröhlich (Germany) Dominik Thalhammer (Austria) Charlie Tombs (England) Andrzej Wach (Poland) Philip Woosnam (Wales) 60	3 THURSDAY Léon Schelings (Belgium) Victor van Helvoirt (Netherlands)	4 FRIDAY Silvo Borošak (Slovenia) José Couceiro (Portugal) Wilfried Heitmann (Germany) Yerlan Jamantayev (Kazakhstan) Khennet Tallinger (Sweden) Márton Vági (Hungary)	5 SATURDAY Frank Coulston (Scotland) Gabriele Gravina (Italy) Terje Hauge (Norway)	6 SUNDAY Yves Leterme (Belgium) Samantha Lovše (Slovenia) Francesca Sanzone (Italy) Peter Sippel (Germany) 50 Iveta Stoyanova Bankova (Bulgaria)	7 MONDAY Armand Duka (Albania) Jari Maisonlahti (Finland) Andrii Paveko (Ukraine)
10 THURSDAY Naira Abramyan (Armenia) Christos Christou (Cyprus) Alin Cioban (Romania) 50 Laurent Duhamel (France) Pedro González Segura (Spain) Ellert Schram (Iceland) 80	11 FRIDAY Yuriy Barbash (Ukraine) Joan Gaspard Solves (Spain) Cheryl Lamont (Northern Ireland)	12 SATURDAY Anna De Toni (Italy) Oleg Ivanov (Ukraine) Bo Karlsson (Sweden) 70 Igor Radojčić (Serbia)	13 SUNDAY Aleksander Čeferin (Slovenia) Pedro Tomás (Spain) 70	14 MONDAY Dušan Krchňák (Slovakia)	15 TUESDAY Michel Piraux (Belgium) Tom van der Hulst (Netherlands) Māris Verpakovskis (Latvia) 40	16 WEDNESDAY Gian Luca Angelini (San Marino) John Delaney (Republic of Ireland) Konrad Plautz (Austria) Emmanuelle Puttaert (Belgium) Wendy Toms (England)
19 SATURDAY Agim Ademi (Kosovo) Petros Mavroidis (Greece) 60 Aivar Pohlak (Estonia)	20 SUNDAY Anette Karhu (Sweden) Viacheslav Semenov (Russia)	21 MONDAY Robert Agnarsson (Iceland) Paul Philipp (Luxembourg)	22 TUESDAY Peter Dedik (Slovakia) 40 Mircea Sandu (Romania) Ariel Scheiman (Israel) John Taylor (Scotland) Fridin Ziskason (Faroe Islands)	23 WEDNESDAY Jan C. Huijbregts (Netherlands) Alexander Iashvili (Georgia) Elmir Pilav (Bosnia and Herzegovina) Dragutin Poljak (Croatia) Michel Vautrot (France)	24 THURSDAY Elvedin Begić (Bosnia and Herzegovina) Antonin Herzog (Czech Republic) Edvin Libohova (Albania)	25 FRIDAY Daniel Jäger (Germany)
28 MONDAY Jürgen Paepke (Germany)	29 TUESDAY Rui Caçador (Portugal) George Fantaros (Cyprus) Maria Persson (Sweden) Silvia Spinelli (Italy)	30 WEDNESDAY Alexander Alaev (Russia) 40 José da Cunha Rodrigues (Portugal) Tim Meyer (Germany)	31 THURSDAY José Luis Astiazarán Iriondo (Spain) Fredy Fautrel (France) Alan McRae (Scotland) Kurt Zuppinger (Switzerland)			

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

8 SUNDAY

Adrian Titcombe
(England)

9 MONDAY

Friedrich Curtius
(Germany)
Kostadin Gerginov
(Bulgaria)
Ilonka Milanova Djaleva
(Bulgaria)
Aki Riihilahti (Finland)
Geir Thorsteinsson
(Iceland)

17 TUESDAY

18 WEDNESDAY
Marija Andjelković (Serbia)
Şenes Erzik (Turkey)
Stéphane Lannoy
(France) **50**
Miroslava Migaľová
(Slovakia)
Roberto Rosetti (Italy)
Antero Silva Resende
(Portugal)

26 THURSDAY

Kirsi Heikkinen (Finland)
Dzmitry Kryshchanovich
(Belarus)
Stephen Lodge (England)
Camelia Nicolae
(Romania)

27 FRIDAY

Jens Kleinfeld
(Germany)

SEPTEMBER

Meetings

3 September, Nyon
UEFA Youth League – domestic
champions path: first and second
round draws
Elite Club Coaches Forum

17 September, Nyon
Women's Football Committee

24 September, Ljubljana
Finance Committee
Executive Committee

30 September, Nyon
UEFA Women's Champions League:
round of 32 draw

Matches

5–7 September
EURO 2020 qualifiers: matchday 5

5–10 September
European Under-21 Championship:
qualifying matches

8–10 September
EURO 2020 qualifiers: matchday 6

8–14 September, Riga
Under-19 Futsal EURO: final round

11/12 September
UEFA Women's Champions League:
round of 32 (first legs)

17/18 September
UEFA Champions League: group matches
(matchday 1)

UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions
League path: group matches (matchday 1)

19 September
UEFA Europa League: group matches
(matchday 1)

25/26 September
UEFA Women's Champions League:
round of 32 (return legs)

30 September–8 October
Women's EURO 2021: qualifying matches

OCTOBER

Meetings

17 October, Nyon
Jira Panel

18 October, Nyon
UEFA Futsal Champions League: elite
round draw

Matches

1/2 October
UEFA Champions League: group matches
(matchday 2)

UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions
League path: group matches (matchday 2)

2 October
UEFA Youth League – domestic
champions path: first round (first legs)
UEFA Europa League: group matches
(matchday 2)

8–13 October
UEFA Futsal Champions League: main round

9–15 October
European Under-21 Championship:
qualifying matches

10–12 October
EURO 2020 qualifiers: matchday 7

13–15 October
EURO 2020 qualifiers: matchday 8

16/17 October
UEFA Women's Champions League:
round of 16 (first legs)

22/23 October
UEFA Champions League: group matches
(matchday 3)

UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions
League path: group matches (matchday 3)

22–27 October
Futsal World Cup: European qualifying
matches (main round)

23 October
UEFA Youth League – domestic
champions path: first round (return legs)

24 October
UEFA Europa League: group matches
(matchday 3)

30/31 October
UEFA Women's Champions League:
round of 16 (return legs)

8 TUESDAY

Draženko Kovačić
(Croatia)

9 WEDNESDAY

James Buckle (England)
Sergey Zuev (Russia)

17 THURSDAY

Frans Hoek (Netherlands)
Jean-Marie Philips
(Belgium)

18 FRIDAY

Pedro López Jiménez
(Spain)

26 SATURDAY

Roy Cathcart
(Northern Ireland)
Cristian Chivu (Romania)
Hugh Dallas (Scotland)
Perry Gautier
(Belgium) **60**
Markku Lehtola
(Finland)

27 SUNDAY

Greg Clarke (England)
Gerard Perry
(Republic of Ireland)

NOTICES

- **Mehdi Bayat** has been elected president of the Royal Belgian Football Association for a two-year term. He has taken over from Gérard Linard.
- **Bjorn Vassallo** has been elected president of the Malta Football Association for a four-year term, taking over from Norman Darmanin Demajo.
- **Donal Conway** has been re-elected president of the Football Association of Ireland for a one-year term.



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