

UEFA



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COUNTDOWN BEGINS IN BUCHAREST

THE TECHNICIAN

Robbie Keane explains his coaching philosophy

INTERVIEW

Luis Rubiales, UEFA vice-president

FINLAND

Tears of joy for historic first

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Aleksander Čeferin
UEFA President

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT FOOTBALL'S FUTURE

Traditionally, this time of the year is for contemplating the present and looking to the future. For UEFA, all of 2019 has been focused on the future, so much so that the new UEFA strategy launched earlier this year is entitled Together for the Future of Football.

And that strategy is a blueprint for future-proofing UEFA and European football. Football may not change much year to year, bar the odd tweak to handball laws or use of referee-aiding technology, but the industry and the world around football are evolving ever faster.

The key to dealing with the challenges of a changing football landscape lies in working together. Cooperation – with associations, with clubs, with coaches, with players, with government authorities – has been the touchstone for UEFA this year.

As well as discussion and dialogue, UEFA must listen and learn. One avenue for that every year is the UEFA Elite Club Coaches Forum, which took place in Nyon in November. Leading coaches, including Pep Guardiola, Jürgen Klopp and Zinedine Zidane, swapped opinions and ideas on our club competitions and the development of the game, naturally focussing a lot on VAR this year. Their input is invaluable for us.

As well as discussion and dialogue and listening and learning, we can also teach. The UEFA Academy was launched earlier this year to establish and improve standards and to have a better-run and more prosperous sport in the future. A key programme is the Executive Master for International Players (MIP), which recently enrolled for its third edition. This is UEFA giving something back. The course will give the likes of Kaká, Didier Drogba and Andrey Arshavin the professional skills needed to succeed in a second career. And UEFA and football are getting plenty back in return, as European football will benefit from their experience and expertise in football in the future.

Dialogue, listening and learning all come together in UEFA's Top Executive Programme strategy meetings, an open forum for UEFA and the presidents and general secretaries of all member associations. The most recent one in Bucharest just before the EURO 2020 draw was particularly future-focussed. Attendees learned about the final steps in the countdown to the final tournament; itself surely the greatest example of pan-European cooperation between associations and authorities that UEFA or indeed European sport has ever undertaken. The future use of VAR in national team competitions, UEFA's innovative new girls' grassroots programme and UEFA.tv were also discussed.

This is not talking for talking's sake. Working together helps us grow together, and helps us achieve our shared goal of protecting European football, for the present and for the future.

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The Henri Delaunay Cup had pride of place at the EURO 2020 final tournament draw at Romexpo in Bucharest on 30 November.

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GROUP STAGE FOR THE WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Major changes to the UEFA Women's Champions League from the 2021/22 season were approved by the UEFA Executive Committee at its last meeting of the year in Nyon on 4 December.



Staying with the women's game, the committee confirmed the Women's EURO 2021 match schedule. England hosts the final tournament from 7 July to 1 August 2021, with the final taking place at Wembley Stadium in London. The opening match's venue will be confirmed in due course.

World Cup qualifying system

The qualifying system to determine the 13 European teams at the 2022 World Cup was approved, pending FIFA's approval. The ten European Qualifiers group winners will qualify directly for the finals in Qatar. They will be joined by the three winners from a play-off round involving the ten European Qualifiers group runners-up and the two best group winners of the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League overall ranking that have neither qualified directly for the final tournament as European Qualifiers group winners nor entered the play-offs already as European Qualifiers group runners-up.

The committee also approved the draw procedure for the league phase of the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League based on the new format approved by the committee in September. Amsterdam will host the draw on 3 March 2020 (18:00 CET).

VAR use extended

The committee agreed to use the video assistant referee (VAR) system in next spring's European Qualifiers play-offs, as well as in the 2022 European Qualifiers for the World Cup, subject to FIFA's green light in the case of the World Cup qualifiers.

Minsk was appointed as the venue for the 2020 UEFA Futsal Champions League finals – the first to be staged at a neutral venue – from 23 to 26 April.

Finally, the committee – which will next meet in Amsterdam on 2 March 2020 – approved a child safeguarding policy and a child safeguarding toolkit for its member associations to ensure that football is a safe, positive and enjoyable experience for all children and young people. 🌐

In a move to increase competitiveness and raise the exposure of the women's game, the 2021/22 season will see the start of a new 16-team group stage – four groups of four teams each, with home-and-away matches, and the top two teams in each group reaching the quarter-finals. Meanwhile, clubs in rounds 1 and 2 will be split into champions (for domestic league winners) and league paths as they contend for a place in the group stage.

UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin described the move as “a game changer for women's football – the world's best women's club competition will get both the platform and visibility it deserves.” Further details of this far-reaching decision will be given in the next issue of UEFA Direct.



“By guaranteeing teams more matches against their elite rivals, we believe that the group structure will raise the quality of the women's game even more.”

Aleksander Čeferin
UEFA President

A FIRST FOR FEMALE ASSISTANT REFEREES

In mid-November, UEFA staged its first-ever course for Europe's leading female assistant referees – opening their pathway to UEFA Women's EURO 2021.

The 38 assistant referees who came to Nyon all have high hopes of figuring among the 24 who will be selected for the final tournament scheduled to take place in England in two summers' time.

UEFA organised the course not only to kick off assistant referees' preparations for Women's EURO 2021 but also to ensure that more European assistants benefit from the experience of colleagues who have already officiated at Women's World Cup and Women's EURO tournaments.

"We asked our member associations to send us female assistant referees who are officiating at matches in the top two domestic men's divisions in their countries," said UEFA refereeing officer Dagmar Damková. "While we know the experienced assistants, there are still some assistants in Europe whose qualities we need to see at first hand – and if they are officiating in their top two men's divisions, it obviously means they have certain qualities."

The Nyon course featured sessions dealing with key areas for assistant referees, including offside, reading the game, match situations, and concentration and awareness. Participants were also given a thorough insight into the video assistant referee (VAR) system, which has gradually been introduced in various UEFA competitions in recent months.

History in the making

UEFA's overall refereeing programme is placing particular emphasis on female referees – part of the organisation's efforts to ensure they keep pace with the overall progress of women's football. "We want



to invest in female referees," said UEFA Referees Committee chairman Roberto Rosetti, "and the course for the assistant referees is another very good step for the future."

History was made in August when French referee Stéphanie Frappart led a team of predominately female officials to oversee the UEFA Super Cup match between Liverpool FC and Chelsea FC in Istanbul. She was the first female referee to take charge of a major European men's showpiece occasion. Female assistant referees are also being appointed to officiate at UEFA Europa League matches – demonstrating UEFA's firm belief in the calibre of its female officials.

Fitness check

Belgian referee fitness expert Jean-Baptist Bultynck led a fitness session designed for the specific demands of running the line. "There is a clear difference between training for referees and training for assistant referees," he said. "The main difference for assistant referees concerns short distances, sharpness and speed in the first 5–10 metres, as well as sideways movement. We concentrated in the session on checking the assistants' sideways movement and sprinting capacity, as well as looking at their decision-making."

Now it is up to the assistant referees that took part in the course in Nyon to stake their claim for a place in the team for Women's EURO 2021. 🏆

Footballing legends complete UEFA master

AN ARRAY of former international footballers such as Youri Djorkaeff, Maxwell and Luis García have graduated from the second UEFA Executive Master for International Players (MIP) programme, a course aimed at giving former footballers the professional skills needed to transition into a second career.

The trio were among 21 former international footballers to graduate from the programme. Since they started on the course two years ago, the former players have undertaken seven week-long sessions in major cities around the world. To provide them with a comprehensive overview, each session examined a different aspect of the administration

and governance of a football organisation. In addition, players not already working within a sports body had to complete a three-month work placement to ensure they had some hands-on, day-to-day experience when they graduated.

Former Germany international Annike Krahn believes the programme gives ex-players an excellent education about important facets of the game and is adamant that football players, male and female, must be involved in the decision-making processes within the sport.

“Every female footballer that has enjoyed playing and wants to stay in the field should seek to take on a demanding position within the women’s football framework because I don’t think



Luis García and Gaizka Mendieta with Prof. Francesc Solanellas (centre).

anyone knows it better than those who have had first-hand experience of the system itself,” Krahn explained.

MIP graduates receive a master of advanced studies delivered by the CDES at the University of

Limoges, France, in collaboration with Birkbeck College at the University of London. The programme is organised in partnership with the European Club Association (ECA) and FIFPro, the world players’ union.



NBA picks UEFA’s brains

THE INAUGURAL SEASON of the Basketball Africa League (BAL) is set to begin in March 2020. To help prepare for the launch, an NBA delegation comprising Jason Eckert, Kent Christian, Pierre Jouannin, Justin Bokmeyer and Frank Traore visited UEFA at its headquarters in Nyon on 4 and 5 November. Unable to apply the American franchise model to the BAL for the first few seasons, they came to put their heads together with some of the brains behind UEFA’s club competitions. On the first day of their visit, they met representatives of UEFA’s event operations and commercial operations units, who provided

them with a general overview of UEFA competition formats. On day two, which was devoted to more specific topics such as the fight against doping, club licensing and football development, the delegation learned about various UEFA programmes, especially those aimed at players. The visit concluded at the UEFA match command centre on matchday 4 of the UEFA Champions League. Jason Eckert, NBA vice-president, said: “We found the meetings incredibly helpful and productive as we embark on launching the Basketball Africa League. Since returning, we’ve already been busy leveraging what we learned for the benefit of the BAL.”

First as Benfica sport UEFA #EqualGame logo on their shirts

FOR THEIR UEFA Champions League game against Lyon, Portuguese champions Benfica supported the Fare #FootballPeople weeks in October and UEFA’s #EqualGame campaign by being the first team to wear the #EqualGame logo on their official kit. The action helped to promote diversity, inclusion, accessibility and non-discrimination in football.

Ahead of the match, Benfica also organised an event in partnership with UEFA featuring club ambassadors Luísão and Nuno Gomes. The two stars took part in a training session with over 200 children representing the Benfica Foundation and Benfica football schools.

The Benfica Foundation also invited over 2,500 young people from various

social responsibility partners to watch the game against Lyon along with their parents. The partners represented a variety of activities, including education projects, support for the homeless, walking football, disability groups, Special Olympics, refugee integration projects and the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

Applications invited for UEFA Certificate in Football Management



UEFA IS ONCE AGAIN opening its Certificate in Football Management (CFM) to international applicants from outside of its 55 member associations who are working in or connected with football.

The CFM is the must-have foundation programme for anyone working in football and already boasts a community of more than 1,000 graduates.

The second open edition will start in September 2020 and end in June 2021. It will comprise six online modules and three seminars to be held at UEFA's headquarters and famous London football venues. Each module and seminar will address a key area of football management.

Applications open on 13 January and close on 1 March 2020. For full details and to apply, visit UEFAAcademy.com.

Zurich event for Women in Football Leadership Programme

LEADERS from the front lines of football development gathered in Zurich in November for the latest edition of the Women in Football Leadership Programme (WFLP), a joint initiative between FIFA, UEFA and IMD Business School.

The week-long event brought together 24 key representatives from national football associations across the globe to share their perspectives on how to make the sport as inclusive and diverse as possible.

The Women in Football Leadership Programme was established in 2014 to empower the growing number of women working in leadership positions in football around the world.

As well as discussions, the WFLP training week included practical role plays and one-on-one coaching. Participants shared their knowledge and experience of what it takes to be a good leader and the power of team dynamics. They also looked more closely at specific obstacles standing in the way of women taking on leadership roles in the traditionally male-dominated football business.

New mentor programme to boost female coach numbers

UEFA HAS LAUNCHED an ambitious mentor programme to build on impressive progress in its Europe-wide efforts to increase the number of club and national teams coached by women.

The programme will see a team of experienced coaches, a number of whom are in charge of men's and women's national teams, act as personal mentors to a group of up-and-coming female coaches holding UEFA Pro and A diplomas.

Over an 18-month period, the mentor coaches will meet regularly with their mentees to share experiences, help develop their coaching skills, provide direction and problem-solving tips, and show them what it takes to be successful at the highest level.

The programme, which was set in motion by an opening workshop at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon, follows a successful one-year pilot project featuring a group of four mentors and mentees.



LUIS RUBIALES

'ALWAYS THINK ABOUT WHAT'S BEST FOR FOOTBALL'

Luis Rubiales is proud to be able to contribute to the development of European football as a UEFA vice-president, bringing in his experience as a player, lawyer and football administrator.

President of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) since 2018, former professional footballer Luis Rubiales was elected to the UEFA Executive Committee in February 2019 and appointed as a UEFA vice-president in May 2019. As he tells UEFA Direct, he firmly believes in the importance of players gaining qualifications and preparing for a second career, which has stood him in good stead and allowed him to serve the game in a different way.

Luis Rubiales, were you a football fan from an early age?

Football is my life. All my childhood memories are of me with a ball, playing with my friends and my father in Motril. My passion for the game comes from my family. My grandfather was a professional footballer and I've been fortunate enough to keep the family saga going.

What is your first footballing memory?

I don't know if it's my first memory but the one that comes to mind is my third birthday. My father bought me the kit of my local team, Motril CF, but unlike the real players, I didn't have any football boots. I cried and cried until he bought me a pair.

Did you have a favourite player and team as a boy?

When I was a boy I supported Motril and I liked [Bernd] Schuster a lot too. I remember people saying I looked a lot like him, though my favourite Spain player was Juanito. He had class and he fought for every ball.

You went on to have a career as a player at the higher levels in Spain, and, for a short spell,

in Scotland. What were your strengths as a player?

I was always very strong physically. I was pretty quick and had plenty of stamina, but more than anything else I was disciplined. I always put the team first. I was a very committed player and gave my all until the last minute in every match.

Do you have any special memory from your playing career?

I've been lucky enough to play against the biggest teams in the Spanish league, to win at the Bernabéu, to play in the first division with my beloved Levante UD, and to be their captain. But if I had to choose one memory, it would be the day I left Levante. The club was bankrupt and virtually all the players had to leave, but my team-mates and the people from the supporters' club got together and organised a send-off for me. It was very emotional.

How much has the game changed since your time as a player?

I retired in 2010, so things haven't changed that much. VAR is being rolled out and is giving match officials new tools to work with. And over this last decade we've seen the development of new coaching tools, while player nutrition has also changed.

You earned a law degree along the way – did you begin studying when you were a player?

In reality I've never stopped studying. I've carried on taking football-related courses and university courses. It's helped me grow as a person and at the same time it's helped me get away from the game and realise that sometimes it's good to get out of the whole football environment and experience different things.

How important do you think it is for players to gain qualifications or learn a trade/profession?

It's absolutely essential to go and get qualifications because everyone has to retire someday. That's why I especially like the UEFA philosophy, because we make a series of courses and programmes available to players so they can further their education and have better tools at their disposal when they retire. It's an approach that also works successfully in Spain.

How did you get into the administrative side of the game?

When I was a player we went through a period when players weren't being paid. At my club and then at a national level I led players in negotiations with their respective clubs. It was great because we found solutions and laid the foundations for the economic stability we enjoy now. It showed me another side of football that also excited me because it gave me a different way of serving the game.

Would you have imagined during your playing career that, one day, you would be at the helm of your country's football body?

I never gave it any thought because I just focused on three things when I was playing: my footballing career, my studies and my family.

Does having been a player help you in your role?

I don't think you need to have played football to be a good leader. The best example of that is UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin, who is a fantastic leader on every level and who loves football more than many of the players I've come across. What I do think has helped →

"Football is my life. All my childhood memories are of me with a ball, playing with my friends and my father in Motril. My passion for the game comes from my family."



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"I've been lucky enough to play against the biggest teams in the Spanish league, to win at the Bernabéu, to play in the first division with my beloved Levante UD, and to be their captain."

me in my career is having played at every level in Spanish football, from winning at the Bernabéu to losing on a mud bath. You learn values like effort and commitment, and you learn that if you're dedicated and honest you can achieve big things.

It must be a fulfilling – and challenging – role to be president of the national association in such a major football country. What attributes does an FA president need to succeed?

I think it's essential to work as hard as anyone, to listen to everyone, have very talented people around you, and adhere to values like loyalty and courage. There are times, though, when a president has to make big decisions, and that's when you have to show leadership and always think about what's best for football, whether it's a popular decision or not.

Back to football – what's the best match you've ever seen?

I can't say just one. I'll have to give you three instead: the three finals that made us two-time European champions and World Cup winners between 2008 and 2012.

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

I'm sorry for my dear colleague Greg [English Football Association chairman and FIFA Council member Greg Clarke], but I have to say the goal Maradona scored when he dribbled through the England defence at the 1986 World Cup. He's one of the great icons of our sport and that's the goal every footballer wants to score.

Do you still feel a buzz when you enter a football stadium?

There's not a day in my life when I'm not thinking about a football pitch, and when I step on one or visit a stadium I still get the

same feelings I did when I was a player. I play with friends every now and again, which helps me scratch that itch. I'm up front these days, though, and not in defence. I suffered enough marking the likes of Messi, Ronaldinho, Figo, Robben and Villa, and now it's my job to score the goals, or at least try to...

Which players and teams excite you today?

Fortunately for us, UEFA organises the best club competition in the world: the Champions League. I always support the Spanish sides, but I have to say that the football played by some of the teams last season was brilliant – like Ajax, who had lots of young players and were reminiscent of the great Ajax side of the past, and Klopp's Liverpool. His hard work brought them the trophy last season.

Are you proud of being able to contribute to UEFA's development, in particular at the highest level as a UEFA vice-president?

Very proud. I'd like to thank my colleagues from virtually every national association for their wonderful support in electing me a member of the UEFA Executive Committee, and, of course, Aleksander Čeferin for proposing me as vice-president. I learn from all of them and I try to make a humble contribution in every meeting we have. It's reassuring to belong to a body that enables participation and benefits from the experience of all its members.

How do you view UEFA's continual progress as the umbrella organisation of European football?

UEFA does a vital job in ensuring that the football pyramid is respected right across Europe. The European national associations face significant challenges and it is very important for us that UEFA defends our interests and protects the basic principles of football.

UEFA is always there. Institutions are steeped in the values of their leaders, and in this case Aleksander Čeferin brings firmness, honesty, dialogue and solidarity. We need to remember that there isn't a body in the whole of European football that gives as much thought to the game's lesser lights as UEFA.

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

They're vitally important because football is the number one sport and gets more media coverage than any other. It's a mirror for society in general, especially for young people.

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

That there's no one in Europe who wants to play football but can't for one reason or another. I'm sure UEFA, with the help of every one of us at the national associations, can achieve that. ⚽



“The three finals that made us two-time European champions and World Cup winners, between 2008 and 2012, are the best football games I've ever seen.”



TWENTY COUNTRIES ALREADY STARTING TO DREAM

Europe's big teams are all present and correct following the qualifying competition for UEFA EURO 2020, all of them looking to follow in Portugal's footsteps at next summer's final tournament. Finland are the only debutants among the 20 countries that have qualified thus far, with the last four places up for grabs in the play-offs in March. As a taste of things to come, the qualifiers for EURO 2020 more than lived up to their billing.



GROUP A England shine; Czech Republic make it seven in a row

England (group winners with 21 points) showed that their run to the semi-finals of the 2018 World Cup was not a one-off, easily topping Group A. Their forwards were particularly impressive, with England scoring 37 goals in eight games (a prolific 4.6 per match – the highest average in the qualifying competition). This young English side, led by captain Harry Kane (the top scorer in qualifying with 12 goals), can now start to dream about securing a first-ever European title at Wembley Stadium, where they will play their three group matches and – if they make it that far – both their semi-final and the final. The Czech Republic (runners-up with 15 points) were the only team in Group A that managed to thwart England (beating them 2-1 in Prague), so it was no surprise to see them qualify for their seventh successive EURO – an achievement that was due in large part to their four wins in their four home games. Kosovo* (third with 11 points), led by captain Vedat Muriqi (four goals in qualifying), had never contested a EURO qualifying competition before and

had a dream debut. Indeed, they were on course for automatic qualification until they lost 2-1 to the Czech Republic in their penultimate game. Bulgaria* (fourth with 6 points) and Montenegro (fifth with 3 points) were unable to withstand the firepower of the other teams in the group.

GROUP B Ukraine untroubled; Portugal made to sweat

As reigning champions, Portugal (runners-up with 17 points) were the favourites in Group B, but it was Ukraine (group winners with 20 points) who secured top spot, remaining unbeaten with six wins and two draws. In addition to being extremely solid at the back (conceding just four goals), Andriy Shevchenko's side also had a knack of raising their game in big matches – as in the case of their impressive 2-1 victory at home to Portugal. The defending champions, meanwhile,

did not secure qualification until the final matchday (beating Luxembourg 2-0 in their last game to guarantee their place in the tournament). After two draws in their first two games, Portugal had the eternal Cristiano Ronaldo to thank for getting their qualifying campaign back on track. He scored 11 goals in the process, taking his overall tally for the national side to 99, and Portugal can now look forward to their seventh successive EURO. Portugal's qualification was largely at the expense of Serbia* (third with 14 points), who paid for their inability to beat either Ukraine or Portugal (with two draws and two defeats in their four games against those two sides), despite Aleksandar Mitrović's ten goals in qualifying. Luxembourg (fourth with 4 points) finished above Lithuania (fifth with 1 point) thanks to a 2-1 home win against their Baltic opponents on the opening matchday. →



Harry Kane propelled England to qualification with 12 goals, making him the top scorer in the competition.

GROUP C Germany and the Netherlands perform as expected

When the draw for qualifying was made, Germany and the Netherlands looked like they would dominate Group C, and they did not disappoint. Following their surprise elimination at the end of the group stage of the 2018 World Cup, Germany (group winners with 21 points) bounced back in style, qualifying for the final round of this competition for the 13th time in a

row – an incredible run stretching all the way back to 1972. A new cohort of young players, spearheaded by Serge Gnabry (eight goals in qualifying), has taken centre stage in Joachim Löw's side, and they more than played their part in two wonderfully entertaining games against the Netherlands (runners-up with 19 points), with the visiting team emerging victorious on each occasion. Having missed both EURO 2016 and the 2018 World Cup, the Netherlands

returned to winning ways in this qualifying competition, led by the sublimely talented Memphis Depay (six goals and eight assists) and a group of players (such as Virgil van Dijk, Matthijs de Ligt, Frenkie de Jong and Georginio Wijnaldum) who are rapidly establishing themselves as greats of European football. Behind those two big beasts, Northern Ireland* (third with 13 points) performed admirably, securing maximum points from their four games against Belarus* (fourth with 4 points) and Estonia (fifth with 1 point), who were soon well out of contention.

GROUP D Switzerland and Denmark made to wait

This was one of the groups where the suspense was maintained the longest, with the identity of the second automatic qualifier remaining in the balance until the very end of the 1-1 draw between the Republic of Ireland* (third with 13 points) and Denmark (runners-up with 16 points) on the final matchday. Indeed, had they scored again to secure a 2-1 victory, the Republic of Ireland, whose solidity was their main strength (conceding just five goals, albeit scoring only seven), would have leapfrogged their Danish opponents to finish second in the group. However, the metronomic Christian Eriksen (five goals and four assists in qualifying) and his team-mates succeeded in holding out, their unbeaten record in qualifying earning them a place in the final tournament. They will be joined there by Switzerland (group winners with 17 points), who have now firmly established themselves as one of the continent's top sides thanks to their impressive collective strike force, with no fewer than 15 different players getting on the scoresheet in this qualifying campaign. Like Denmark, Vladimir Petković's side had to wait until the final matchday to secure qualification, guaranteeing their place in the tournament with a straightforward 6-1 victory over Gibraltar. Gibraltar (fifth with 0 points) conceded 31 goals in their eight matches (far fewer than in previous qualifying campaigns) and finished bottom of the group, behind a combative Georgia* (fourth with 8 points).



In the tightest group, Croatia were able to secure qualification in their final game, beating Slovakia 3-1 and achieving a 100% record on home soil.

GROUP E Croatia and Wales prevail in a nail-biting finale

This was by far the closest group, with momentum swinging backwards and forwards throughout and two huge games on the last two matchdays. In the first of those two games, Croatia (group winners with 17 points) came from behind to secure a 3-1 victory over Slovakia* (third with 13 points), having been 1-0 down at half-time. For a while, the spectre of elimination had loomed over the 2018 World Cup finalists, who managed to dig themselves out of trouble thanks to their highly experienced line-up and their 100% record at home. In the second big game, Wales (runners-up with 14 points) secured their place in the final tournament with a 2-0 victory over Hungary* (fourth with 12 points), with Aaron Ramsey scoring both Welsh goals. Wales will be appearing at only their second ever EURO, following their magnificent run to the semi-finals in France in 2016. Slovakia and Hungary (both of whom also contested EURO 2016) will look at this as a missed opportunity, given how tight Group E was (with an average of just 2.65 goals per game – the lowest in qualifying – and no player scoring more than three goals in total). Even Azerbaijan (sixth with 1 point) played their part in keeping the group competitive, conceding relatively few goals (just 18 in total). They, though, are the only country hosting matches at EURO 2020 that will definitely not be participating on the pitch, since they have not qualified for the play-offs through the UEFA Nations League.

GROUP F Spain and Sweden live up to expectations

Since winning EURO 2008, the 2010 World Cup and EURO 2012 in quick succession, their results at recent tournaments have been somewhat disappointing, but Spain (group winners with 26 points) remain a major force in European football, and they proved that once again in topping Group F. The depth of talent in Spanish football is quite incredible (with 35 different players used in Spain's ten matches), and the policy of combining older players (Sergio Ramos, Sergio Busquets, Jordi Alba, etc.)



Getty Images

with ambitious youngsters (such as Kepa Arrizabalaga, Rodri and Mikel Oyarzabal) seems to have been a success. Sweden (runners-up with 21 points), who were quarter-finalists in Russia, maintained that form, qualifying for their sixth successive EURO with relative ease. Janne Andersson's side achieved a level of consistency that eluded Norway* (third with 17 points), but failed to beat their Scandinavian

neighbours, with both games between the two ending in draws. Romania* (fourth with 14 points) were the other big losers in Group F, despite the best efforts of forwards George Puşcaş and Claudiu Keşerü, who scored 11 goals between them. The Faroe Islands (fifth with 3 points) and Malta (sixth with 3 points) brought up the rear, with each beating the other at home. →



Getty Images

Ciro Immobile's Italy, here against Armenia, were perfect in qualifying, securing ten victories in as many matches.

GROUP G Poland and Austria a cut above the rest

Poland (group winners with 25 points) can look forward to contesting their fourth-ever EURO – which will also be their fourth in succession. Robert Lewandowski was typically effective (scoring six goals in qualifying), but Poland's real strength lay in their defensive rigour (with only five goals conceded) and they had no trouble taking control of Group G. Austria (runners-up with 19 points) also qualified without too much fuss, thanks to their four wins out of five at home, despite losing both of their opening two games. They also lost their final match (which was, admittedly, a 'dead rubber' by that stage), losing 1-0 away to Latvia (sixth with 3 points). North Macedonia* (third with 14 points) enjoyed their best qualifying campaign ever, with rising star Eljif Elmas scoring four goals. They were particularly inspired at home, where they inflicted defeats on

Latvia (3-1), Slovenia (2-1) and Israel (1-0). Slovenia (fourth with 14 points) and Israel* (fifth with 11 points) were never outclassed, but were unable to raise their game to a level where they could compete with Poland and Austria for any length of time.

GROUP H France and Turkey look assured

France have not failed to qualify for a European Championship final tournament since 1988, and the reigning world champions (group winners with 25 points) once again did what they needed to do, without necessarily standing out. Didier Deschamps' side – who were always able to rely on decisive contributions from Olivier Giroud (six goals in qualifying) and Antoine Griezmann (three goals and seven assists) – only struggled against Turkey, losing 2-0 in Konya and drawing 1-1 in Paris. Turkey (runners-up with 23 points) qualified with authority,

with four wins and a draw at home and, above all, an exceptionally mean defence built around the 'Turkish wall' of Çağlar Söyüncü and Merih Demiral. Indeed, Turkey conceded a miserly three goals in qualifying – an achievement that was matched only by Belgium – making them one of the two strongest teams in Europe from a defensive perspective. After qualifying automatically for both EURO 2016 and the 2018 World Cup, Iceland* (third with 18 points) were unable to make it three in a row, but they continued to reign supreme at home, where only France avoided defeat. Following their historic achievement in qualifying for EURO 2016, Albania (fourth with 13 points) put in another highly creditable performance. So, too, did Andorra (fifth with 4 points), who had not won a single point in any of their five previous EURO qualifying campaigns. Three of Andorra's 4 points came courtesy of a 1-0 win against an overwhelmed Moldova (sixth with 3 points).

GROUP I Belgium way out in front; Russia make hay in their wake

Ten wins in ten games; the best attack in Europe with 40 goals scored; the joint meanest defence in qualifying with just three goals conceded; victories with scores of 9-0, 6-1, 4-0 (twice) and 3-0 (twice); seven goals for Romelu Lukaku; seven assists apiece for Eden Hazard and Kevin De Bruyne; 15 different goalscorers... Belgium's qualifying campaign (group winners with 30 points) looks like something of a warning shot. After a frustrating semi-final defeat to France at the 2018 World Cup, Belgium's 'golden generation' look set to be even stronger contenders at EURO 2020. Behind the Belgian juggernaut, Russia (runners-up with 24 points) were also extremely dominant, with eight wins out of eight in their games against teams other than Belgium. Artem Dzyuba (nine goals) and Denis Cheryshev (five goals) spearheaded the prolific Russian attack, which scored 33 goals in this qualifying campaign, having already proved so decisive in Russia's

successful run on home soil at the 2018 World Cup. Scotland* (third with 15 points), Cyprus (fourth with 10 points) and Kazakhstan (fifth with 10 points) trailed some way behind the two automatic qualifiers, living off scraps. Meanwhile, San Marino (sixth with 0 points) struggled badly, conceding 51 goals and scoring just one.

GROUP J Italy bounce back strongly; Finland gatecrash the party

Italy (group winners with 30 points) were the other all-conquering side in this qualifying competition, with results that were only marginally less impressive than Belgium's: ten wins out of ten; 37 goals scored; and just four goals conceded. At the same time, no Italian player scored more than four goals, demonstrating the team's collective strength. These statistics show the extent to which Roberto Mancini's side have turned things around, following Italy's shock at failing to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. Italy's new attack-minded approach could be seen

in their 9-1 win against Armenia – their largest margin of victory since 1948. Finland (runners-up with 18 points) qualified behind Italy, making them the 34th nation to have earned their place at a European Championship final tournament. Led by their talismanic forward Teemu Pukki (ten goals in qualifying), Finland qualified for their first-ever EURO at the expense of tournament regulars Greece (third with 14 points) and emerging force Bosnia and Herzegovina* (fourth with 13 points), both of whom tasted defeat in Tampere. As things stand, Finland are the only tournament debutants to have qualified for EURO 2020, while Greece are the only former winners who have failed to qualify. Armenia (fifth with 10 points) can look back with pride on their shock 3-2 victory in Greece. Liechtenstein (sixth with 2 points) performed extremely creditably as well. 🇵🇱

* Asterisks denote teams that have qualified for the play-offs on account of their results in the Nations League.



The only other team to win each of their ten games, Eden Hazard's Belgium scored 40 goals while conceding only three.



BUCHAREST DRAW KICK-STARTS BIGGEST EVER EURO

Holders Portugal will face Germany and France in the group stage, which kicks off when Italy and Turkey meet in Rome on 12 June.

UEFA EURO 2020 came a step closer on 30 November when the final tournament draw was made at Romexpo in Bucharest. A blockbuster line-up emerged in Group F with European champions Portugal, world champions France and record EURO title winners Germany all paired together, along with a play-off winner. There will also be rematches of certain qualifying rivalries, including Spain v Sweden, England v Czech Republic and Russia v Belgium.

The draw determined the groups at the summer finals, with the 20 qualified teams and four still-be-to-decided play-off path winners placed into six pools. It threw up some enticing contests for the event taking place in 12 cities across the continent in a unique and truly pan-European competition.

The draw ceremony opening featured the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra and 7 Fingers, a contemporary acrobatic collective from

Montreal, who performed different dances to represent each of the host cities.

Guests at the draw included the artist in charge of EURO 2020's official soundtrack, DJ Martin Garrix, who was keen to underline how sport and music are natural bedfellows. "It's a big, big honour for me," said the 23-year-old. "Sport and music are a language on their own that everyone understands, and I can't wait. The beautiful thing is it brings people together. Whether you're in a crowd watching music or see your team scoring a goal, it's a feeling we all have."

The tournament is being held across the continent to help celebrate the 60th anniversary of the European Football Championship as an extra special event, and there was a preview of what to expect from the 12 host cities. Finals mascot Skillzy popped up in the video to guide viewers around the venues alongside his freestylers team, as they

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European Qualifiers play-offs to decide last four EURO 2020 finalists

Four EURO 2020 spots will be decided through the European Qualifiers play-offs in March 2020.

Sixteen teams will compete in the play-offs, based on their performances in the 2018/19 UEFA Nations League – UEFA Nations League group winners that have not already qualified for EURO 2020 and teams replacing qualified group winners in accordance with paragraph 16.03 of the competition regulations, i.e. the four top-ranked eligible sides in each league.

Unlike previous play-offs, the EURO 2020 games will be single-leg knockout matches. In each path, teams have been ranked first to fourth based on the overall UEFA Nations League rankings. For each play-off final, a draw was made on 22 November to determine which semi-final winner plays at home. The winners of each of the four finals will qualify for EURO 2020.

PLAY-OFF MATCH SCHEDULE

Play-off semi-finals
Thursday 26 March 2020

- Path A:** Iceland v Romania, Bulgaria v Hungary
- Path B:** Bosnia and Herzegovina v Northern Ireland, Slovakia v Republic of Ireland
- Path C:** Scotland v Israel, Norway v Serbia
- Path D:** Georgia v Belarus, North Macedonia v Kosovo

Play-off finals
Tuesday 31 March 2020

- Path A:** Bulgaria/Hungary v Iceland/Romania
- Path B:** Bosnia and Herzegovina/Northern Ireland v Slovakia/Republic of Ireland
- Path C:** Norway/Serbia v Scotland/Israel
- Path D:** Georgia/Belarus v North Macedonia/Kosovo



Getty Images

showed off their talents in iconic spots from Bilbao to Baku.

There was a review of EURO 2016, which pre-empted Ricardo Carvalho and João Mário, a pair of team-mates from that triumphant Portugal team, bringing the Henri Delaunay Cup on stage.

With the trophy in place, it was then time for the draw itself. A selection of EURO legends, including title winners Marcel Desailly, Ruud Gullit and Theo Zagorakis, drew the balls pot by pot, prompted by UEFA deputy general secretary Giorgio Marchetti. The qualified host teams were automatically assigned to their groups, and it was soon determined that Italy and Turkey would contest the opening match in Rome on 12 June.

As the balls were drawn, a couple of storylines soon emerged, the main one being that huge pairing of heavyweights in Group F. There was also an audible reaction in the draw hall when Sweden were placed in Spain's group – one of the rematches from qualifying. There was time for some reaction from a couple of winners of a local competition who had received invitations to the draw ceremony, with both confirming the general feeling of excitement at the games ahead, especially in Group F.

With the March play-offs still to come, it all adds up to an exciting build-up to the finals themselves as Europe prepares for a EURO like no other. 🍷



Getty Images

Ricardo Carvalho and João Mário carry the Henri Delaunay Cup on stage for the draw at Romexpo in Bucharest. Sixteen teams are still in with a chance of qualifying for the final tournament and competing for the coveted trophy.

NEW EXPERIENCE FOR FINLAND

For the first time in European Championship history, Finns have watched the EURO 2020 final draw wondering when their own team's name would be selected.

Finland's football fans have wept many tears of frustration at their national team's agonising failures to qualify for major international tournaments.

Tears flowed again in November. But this time, they were tears of joy. At long last, the Huuhkajat, or Eagle Owls, had finally got the job done – booking a historic first-ever berth at the EURO 2020 finals next June/July.

The Nordic nation of some 5.5 million inhabitants celebrated wildly after their team's comfortable 3-0 success over Liechtenstein in Helsinki. The victory ensured Finland will have a front-row seat at next summer's pan-European festival of football, to be staged in 12 host cities across the continent.

"Everyone was crying on 15 November – including me," admits Hannu Tihinen, the Football Association of Finland's sports director, at the UEFA Coach Education Conference in Cyprus. "It was such a beautiful day..."

"The Finnish people had been waiting for this moment for 112 years [the Finnish FA was founded in 1907]. It was amazing to see their reaction – I was so happy for them."

Painful memories

"So near, yet so far" has been par for the course for Finland in major qualifying

competitions over the years. Two campaigns left especially painful scars.

In November 2007, a combative side coached by Englishman Roy Hodgson needed to beat Portugal in their final group match in Lisbon to reach EURO 2008 in Austria and Switzerland. Instead, a tense goalless draw put Portugal through at the Finns' expense.

"I played in that match," says Tihinen, a defender who represented Finland 76 times and made almost 400 appearances in a club career that took him abroad to FC Zürich (Switzerland), Anderlecht (Belgium), West Ham (England) and Viking Stavanger (Norway), alongside spells closer to home with KePS and HJK Helsinki.

"We actually played very well that night and we could have scored; we had a couple of chances – but in the end, there was disappointment... and there were players crying in the dressing room afterwards."

Memories of a damp October night in Helsinki ten years earlier are no less bitter. The team were a goal up entering added time in their closing group match against Hungary. With a play-off place for the 1998 World Cup in France beckoning, a late, desperate Finnish goal-line clearance rebounded off goalkeeper Teuvo Moilanen and back into the net.



CLICK HERE TO SEE HOW THE PLAYERS CELEBRATED

Getty Images

Shift in Finnish fortune

Finland's change in fortune owes much to a solid defence, the conveyor belt of goals supplied by Norwich City striker Teemu Pukki and the astute acumen of coach Markku Kanerva. Together, these strengths blended perfectly to ensure a comfortable second-place finish behind runaway group winners Italy.

There were encouraging signs even before the EURO qualifiers. Finland enjoyed a fruitful adventure in the inaugural UEFA Nations League in 2018/19 – four wins from six matches helping them to top their League C group and secure a well-deserved promotion.

Brave new generation

"The previous disappointments were probably worse for those people who had

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 "The Finnish people had been waiting for this moment for 112 years. It was amazing to see their reaction – I was so happy for them."

Hannu Tihinen

Football Association of Finland's sports director



Sportsfile



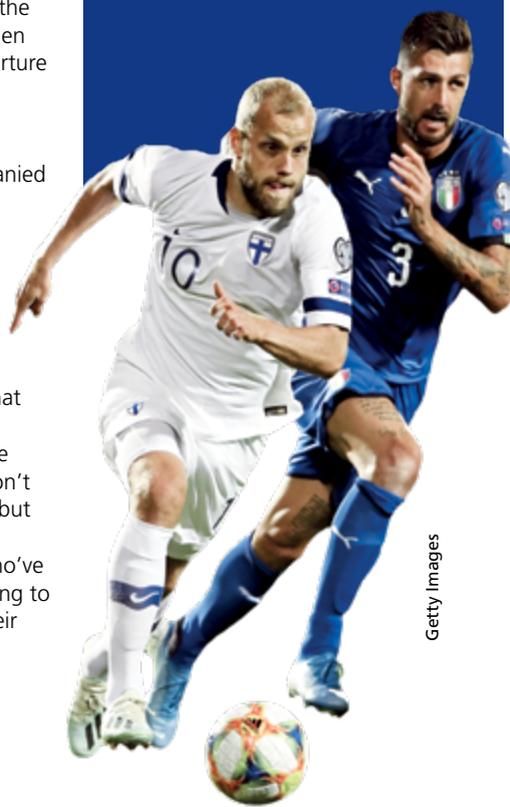
lived through long years of Finland's football history," Tihinen reflects. "But, to be honest, the current generation of players have a different mentality – they're brave, not afraid to do things on the ball. That perhaps explains their success."

Kanerva, the 55-year-old coaching mastermind behind Finland's EURO and UEFA Nations League achievements, is a former teacher and one-time head of the national coach education set-up. Tihinen says that Kanerva's innate ability to nurture strong bonds with his players and his coaching staff has been an essential element in the team's positive results.

Some team members have accompanied Kanerva as they rose through the national team ranks from Under-21 level to the senior national side. "That's been a big help – a lot of players know him well," Tihinen explains. "He pays great attention to detail – the players know that's his style, and it means that they know what to do on the pitch."

"He's also been brilliant in giving the right roles to his staff – we perhaps don't have as big a staff as other countries, but everyone knows their role exactly. I'm especially pleased for those people who've worked for the team for 20 years, giving to the players and coach. They've got their reward now."

Helsinki, 15 November: an emotional Paulus Arajuuri with supporters after Finland's historic qualification. Below: Finnish striker Teemo Pukki and Italian defender Francesco Acerbi during their countries' encounter on 8 September.



Getty Images

Solid basis – and a scoring threat

Stability and consistency were telling factors on Finland's road to EURO 2020. "We were really solid," Tihinen says. "We only played badly once, away from home against Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we did well in the two games against Italy, although we were beaten home and away."

Allied to this solid base was the crucial presence of proven goal-getter Pukki, who found the net ten times in ten European Qualifiers. "He's done fantastically well for his club and the national team over the past 18 months," Tihinen says of the scoring machine who, in addition to his exploits with Finland, fired Norwich into the English Premier League last season.

Finding Finland's football identity

Football is the number one participation sport in Finland with 140,000 registered players – but the number one sport in terms of popularity remains ice hockey. The Finnish FA has worked tirelessly to narrow the gap though a comprehensive reorganisation drive – part of a wide-ranging ten-year national football strategy.

"A lot of work has been done to create a Finnish football identity and philosophy, and to reinforce the relationship between the association and the clubs," says Tihinen.

"On the coaching front, we've been working hard to put new coach education and player development structures in place that are in harmony with the national schools' system – well-educated coaches developing kids and youth players. The objective is to increase momentum on both levels. We want our coach education and player development activities to be as efficient as anywhere in Europe."

A new experience

The warm glow of the national team's historic success has shone brightly throughout the Nordic country. However, the EURO 2020 draw in Bucharest was a reminder of the hard work ahead as Finland prepares for its first-ever finals.

The example set by another Nordic nation, Iceland, in reaching the EURO quarter-finals in France in 2016 offers a positive omen for Tihinen's beloved Eagle Owls. "If our players can stay fit for next summer, then I really do think that we are capable of beating anybody." 🇫🇮

MUNICH OPENS ITS ARMS TO EUROPE

The unique nature of UEFA EURO 2020 provides a real opportunity for “an extraordinary football festival” according to German Football Association (DFB) president Fritz Keller, who says the spirit of cross-continent inclusion is epitomised by the city of Munich.

In a tournament where football’s power to bring people together has the potential to reach new heights, Fritz Keller says Munich is perfectly placed to deliver on the ethos of EURO 2020. As president of the German Football Association (DFB), Keller is rightly proud that Munich is one of the host cities at next summer’s tournament – but he is also excited about the overall concept of the event. “I think this is an excellent idea because in our time, the cohesion of Europe is so important and we can prove together that we want to build bridges and communicate,” he said.

“If you know what a huge organisational effort UEFA and the individual nations will have to face, you can understand what a challenge – but above all what an opportunity – such a tournament is for Europe. If everyone pulls together, we will celebrate an extraordinary football festival that will go down in history.”

Encapsulating the essence of the tournament

What is more, to Keller, the Bavarian capital encapsulates the essence of the tournament. “Munich is a cosmopolitan city with a heart, the Oktoberfest is world-

famous and the people here are very hospitable,” he said. “It is a symbol of the open and tolerant society that exists in Germany today and welcomes people warmly without any restrictions.

“Apart from the TV images from the stadiums, I am also excited about the scenes from the fan zones, for example in the beautiful Olympic Park, or from the beer gardens, where everyone can find a place. Our aim is to celebrate a football festival for and with everyone. Our guests in the city of Munich and our country will go home with unforgettable moments.”





“Munich is a cosmopolitan city with a heart, the Oktoberfest is world-famous and the people here are very hospitable. It is a symbol of the open and tolerant society that exists in Germany today and welcomes people warmly without any restrictions.”

Fritz Keller
President of the German Football Association



Getty Images

Germany may be hosting the following European Championship on its own, but the notion of a tournament being played in 12 different countries chimes with Keller, who said: “Football in Germany is – this is our firm conviction – an integration factor. The tournament offers us many opportunities to document this openness and hospitality. The fact that we are also a secure and organisationally experienced location makes us optimistic about the future.”

Being part of the bigger picture is a thought that Keller relishes. “Due to its central location in the heart of Europe and its experience with major events, Germany has an obligation to support the European idea,” he added. “As the hub of the continent, we will welcome countless fans from all over the world to Germany in the summer of 2020. We are looking forward to this – and we are working passionately to make our contribution to the success of the tournament.”

A long love affair with the EURO

“By awarding the 2024 tournament to Germany, UEFA has placed great responsibility in our hands – we want to show as early as 2020 that we, as one of 12 hosts, are conscientious in dealing with this great task and justify the trust placed in us. It would be the wrong expression to call these games ‘only’ a dress rehearsal. Of course, the two events are linked, but they are independent events that deserve full concentration. Our goal must be for the people who visit us in 2020 to want to return to Germany in 2024.”

Winners of the competition on a joint record three occasions, participants in the

finals 12 times, more than anyone else, Germany have a long love affair with the EURO – something Keller would like to see rekindled in 2020. “Football is the last common ground of modern society,” he said, “and the national team makes it glow. Our team is in upheaval, we won the World Cup five years ago and have now come through difficult times. Coach Joachim Löw has placed his trust in young players and the team has received a tailwind. We want to inspire the spectators with our style and our commitment. Recently we noticed that the German fans are proud of their team again. And this development has only just begun.”

Supporting the team is not the only key role played by the public, as Keller explains: “The work of the countless volunteers is invaluable. They are the friendly faces of a tournament and the smiling ambassadors of a country. We hope that people will recognise the value of volunteering and that the tournament will inspire them to work in clubs and society. This will lead to a sustainable development, which will unfold the charisma of the tournaments far beyond the football pitches and the final whistle of the final.”

For Keller, the unifying power of football is its unique gift, and EURO 2020 gives it a focal point. “We must enter into dialogue with all those for whom football is important as a driving force in our society. None of these enormous challenges will be solved by us alone. That’s why we need supporters. We want to build bridges across all differences and create a common, lasting basis for discussion in German football – to which everyone who values our values can contribute.”

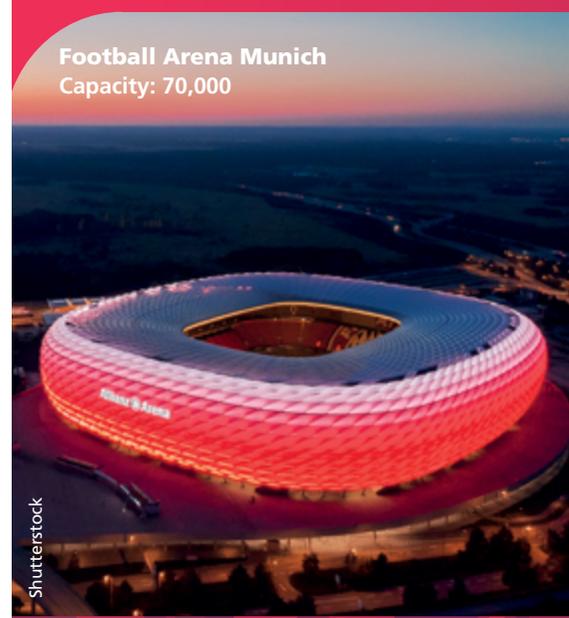
Munich

Technology meets tradition in Bavaria’s most populous city, where a ‘laptops and lederhosen’ approach has turned the region into one of the most affluent and cutting edge in Germany. While various hi-tech companies have made Munich their home, visitors are lured by the city’s Kunstareal museum quarter and celebrated brewing industry, with the Oktoberfest an annual highlight. The innovative Football Arena Munich is another popular draw, and its luminous outer shell has caught the eye since it hosted six games at the 2006 World Cup. The colourful new venue has picked up the baton from the city’s Olympiastadion, where Marco van Basten scored an outrageous volley for the Netherlands in the 1988 European Championship final.

MATCHES

- 16 June: France v Germany**
- 20 June: Portugal v Germany**
- 24 June: Germany v play-off winner A or D**
- 3 July: Quarter-final**

Football Arena Munich
Capacity: 70,000



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SPOTLIGHT ON COACH EDUCATORS AT CYPRUS CONFERENCE

Sportsfile

Coach Marcos Spanos with his players during the practical session in GSP Stadium at the 13th UEFA Coach Education Conference in Nicosia.

Football coaches must be properly trained – and UEFA emphasised coach educators' importance to the game at a conference in Cyprus in November.

Players excite fans, but coaches unlock their special talents. But how do coaches learn how to bring the best out of footballers? The task of teaching coaches the ropes is carried out across Europe by dedicated coach educators who work in their own countries, many of them in tandem with UEFA, to assess, guide and motivate aspiring coaches at various levels of the game.

The premise is that well-trained coaches will help produce better players and teams – for the overall benefit of football across Europe – and the 13th UEFA Coach Education Conference in Nicosia examined the development of the coach educators' fulfilling challenge.

"Coach educators may not occupy the footballing spotlight," said UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin in opening the conference, which was attended by some 150 coach educators, technical directors and other experts from Europe and beyond. "But they are certainly key figures, because

they play a crucial role in maintaining and further developing our game."

The conference took place just ahead of the EURO 2020 draw – and two national team coaches – England's Gareth Southgate and Ukraine's Andriy Shevchenko – thanked UEFA for helping them on their coaching pathway. "The time I spent with UEFA at courses ... was so stimulating, and played a big part in forming my philosophies on the game," said Southgate in a live video interview to the conference. "During my training at coaching courses as part of UEFA's programmes," Shevchenko added, "the theoretical and practical knowledge I gathered formed an excellent basis for my future work."

The basis for Europe's coach education work is the UEFA Coaching Convention. The convention, launched in 1998 and which now has 54 UEFA member associations as signatories, has improved coaching standards, promoted the

credibility of the coaching profession and paved the way for the free movement of qualified coaches within Europe. Thanks to its existence, as well as the work of coach educators, some 190,000 coaches across Europe have a UEFA-endorsed coaching qualification. Work is ongoing on an updated convention, and the conference heard that the Executive Committee would be invited to give the new version its final approval next spring.

Delegates in Cyprus agreed that coach education must exist in a state of constant evolution, with teaching and assessment methods continually modernised to keep up with developments in both coaching and football. UEFA Development and Technical Assistance Committee chairman and UEFA vice-president Luis Rubiales summed up in Cyprus just what coach educators mean to the 'beautiful game': "You are our teachers – it doesn't matter whether it's at men's, women's, youth or elite level – your job is invaluable." ⚽

TOP CLUB COACHES MEET UEFA AT NYON FORUM

Europe's club competitions and football's development were on the agenda when leading European club coaches came to Nyon for the annual UEFA Elite Club Coaches Forum.

The latest forum, which took place at the House of European Football on 11 November, once again provided a star-studded line-up of club coaches with a key platform to come together with UEFA to debate and discuss various football issues.

The coaches present in Nyon were Massimiliano Allegri (experienced Italian coach), Carlo Ancelotti (Napoli), Unai Emery (Arsenal, at the time), Paulo Fonseca (Roma), Rudi Garcia (Olympique Lyonnais), Josep Guardiola (Manchester City), Erik ten Hag (Ajax), Jürgen Klopp (Liverpool), Mircea Lucescu (experienced Romanian coach), Maurizio Sarri (Juventus), Thomas Tuchel (Paris Saint-Germain) and Zinedine Zidane (Real Madrid).

Talks focused in particular on the video assistant referee (VAR) system, which UEFA first used in the UEFA Champions League from last season's knockout phase onwards

before extending the system to other European club and national team competitions over the past few months.

The international match calendar also featured, alongside a review of tactical and technical trends in last season's UEFA Champions League.

Important meeting for UEFA

"The meeting is important for UEFA, because it's the only opportunity that we have to speak with the top coaches," said UEFA deputy general secretary Giorgio Marchetti. "It's vital that we listen to them, because they are main stakeholders in the game."

He explained that the discussions on VAR had given the coaches an ideal chance to talk about the system with the chairman of UEFA's Referees Committee, Roberto Rosetti, who was present at the meeting in Nyon. "It's useful that the coaches and the

main referees' representative can speak together," Marchetti continued, "because it helps to clarify situations. Let's not forget that VAR is very young – it's a revolution in the game, and helps to avoid game-changing mistakes. There are things which need to be fine-tuned, but I think we have to look at the positive points about the system."

The coaches who came to Nyon welcomed the opportunity to speak to UEFA, as well as to listen and learn from their colleagues away from the pressures and demands of their everyday work. "I've had the pleasure of attending these meetings for some years now," said Unai Emery, "along with different coaches – up-and-coming coaches, coaches with experience. When we're competing [against each other], the rivalry is greater – yet when we're here, we spend time chatting and getting to know each other better." 🌐



THE TECHNICIAN



ROBBIE KEANE

'THE KEY FACTOR IS THE SMALL DETAIL'

Robbie Keane scored a record 68 goals in a record 146 appearances for the Republic of Ireland, including what is believed to be a unique record of scoring international goals in 19 successive seasons. Robbie Keane took time out from the UEFA Pro licence student exchange course in Nyon, where he was giving a talk to student coaches, to speak to UEFA Direct about his transition to coaching, his coaching philosophy and many other topics.

With the kind of speed that saw him torment defenders in the English Premier League and at international level, Robbie Keane started his coaching career in 2018, the same year that he hung up his boots after 21 seasons as a professional footballer.

However, for Keane, now assistant manager with Middlesbrough FC and the Republic of Ireland, this was no knee-jerk decision. A keen student of the game, the Republic of Ireland's record goalscorer had been working on his UEFA coaching badges for six years prior to his first coaching appointment.

The transition from player to coach, the art of goalscoring, and the varying challenges of coaching at club and international level were among the topics Keane covered in his talk to student coaches at the UEFA Pro licence student exchange course.

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"Don't come into work thinking that it's a job. I never used to think about it as a job. I'm getting paid for something I absolutely love doing. That's not a job."

Among the other speakers at the UEFA course were Northern Ireland national team coach Michael O'Neill, former FC Basel president Bernhard Heusler, Sergio Lara-Bercial, reader in sport coaching at Leeds Beckett University, and Josh Hershman, managing director of Ten Toes Media.

During the discussions, heavy emphasis was placed on the key themes from last season's UEFA Champions League, as outlined in the newly released 2018/19 UEFA Champions League technical report on www.uefatechnicalreports.com. Technical reports provide important insights into European football's technical and tactical development – and they can now be found on a dedicated UEFA website.

Did you always plan to go straight into coaching after you retired from playing?

I've been doing my coaching badges for six years now, so when I knew that I was at the end of my career, I knew that it was certainly a path that I wanted to go down. Of course, when you're young, when you're 21 years of age, you don't think about that. That's normal because you're so young, you're focused on what you're doing, you're just starting your career. As the latter stages of your career come, it's certainly something you think

about. When I reached 30, it was certainly something I would watch closely, in terms of managers and how they treated me, how they treated players, how they spoke to people, how they spoke to the media, how they put training sessions on... I'd always look closely, without my coaches really knowing I was watching.

Has coaching been what you expected it to be? And what have you found the biggest challenge or the biggest surprise?

I love it, I absolutely love it. I'm very fortunate that I've got two jobs – with the Irish national team as assistant manager and with Middlesbrough FC, also as assistant manager, so it's given me different ideas. With the Irish team, you're going from having three or four days' training and then away for two months. So, to get your coaching across and get your teeth really into it on the training pitch, I've found... I wouldn't say frustrating is the word, but you're enjoying it so much and then it's gone for a couple of months... And with the Middlesbrough job and the day-to-day stuff, I've got the best of both worlds really, also in terms of learning from an experienced manager like Mick McCarthy, who's incredible as a manager, watching him and how he does things and how he speaks to people. →



Keane
scored a record
68 goals
in a record
146 appearances
for the Republic
of Ireland

And obviously I had him as a coach as well. And then going to Middlesbrough, Jonathan Woodgate, who I have been friends with for a long time, we're the same age, and I've been able to see how he is with the day-to-day stuff.

You played at the highest level. How important is it to have had a playing career before you go into management?

It gives you the experience of the dressing room, it gives you the experience of the fans, it gives you the experience of going to away games, going away from home on a Tuesday night in December. You know how to deal with the media as a player, so you've already got a foot forward in terms of some of the hazards. But that doesn't mean you're still going to be as good as other coaches. It just gives you experience, it's how you treat people, how you speak to people, how you respect people. I think that's a big factor. If you want to be a coach and you love what you do, you have to dedicate your life to it. I left Dublin when I was 15 to go to Wolverhampton Wanderers, with my family in Ireland. I moved back to Ireland two years ago from Los Angeles, and I've done it again, I've left Ireland again, but I'm starting a different career. But I've left my wife there, and my kids. Now that's just for now; it doesn't mean it's going to be like that in the future, but I've literally gone full circle. You have to be committed if you want to do what you do. I'm looking at it as a completely different journey that I'm going on, but it's still with the same focus of being the best and wanting to dedicate my life to my craft.

What is your coaching methodology? How do you transfer your knowledge and your own playing philosophy to the players?

People forget about small details. Anybody can put a training session on. We've all done training sessions; I've been in training sessions for 20 years but with different managers with different variations and different styles of how they want to do things. But the key factor is the small detail. If one player can take one little thing away from a training session that will help him improve as a player, or give him the knowledge that we want him to take away for the game on Saturday, then we've already been successful.

You're so well-known and well-respected as a player. Do you think that brings more pressure?

I don't mind that because I've always had it. When you've had it, you're used to it. It's like scoring goals. Scoring goals is a habit. The more you do it, the easier it becomes. It's the same with pressure. I put pressure on myself more than anybody else would. It's important that you keep the same level of integrity, and when you win a game, you don't get too high and, if you lose a game, you don't get too low.

What would you say is your preferred playing philosophy today?

Playing it on the ground. All of my teams

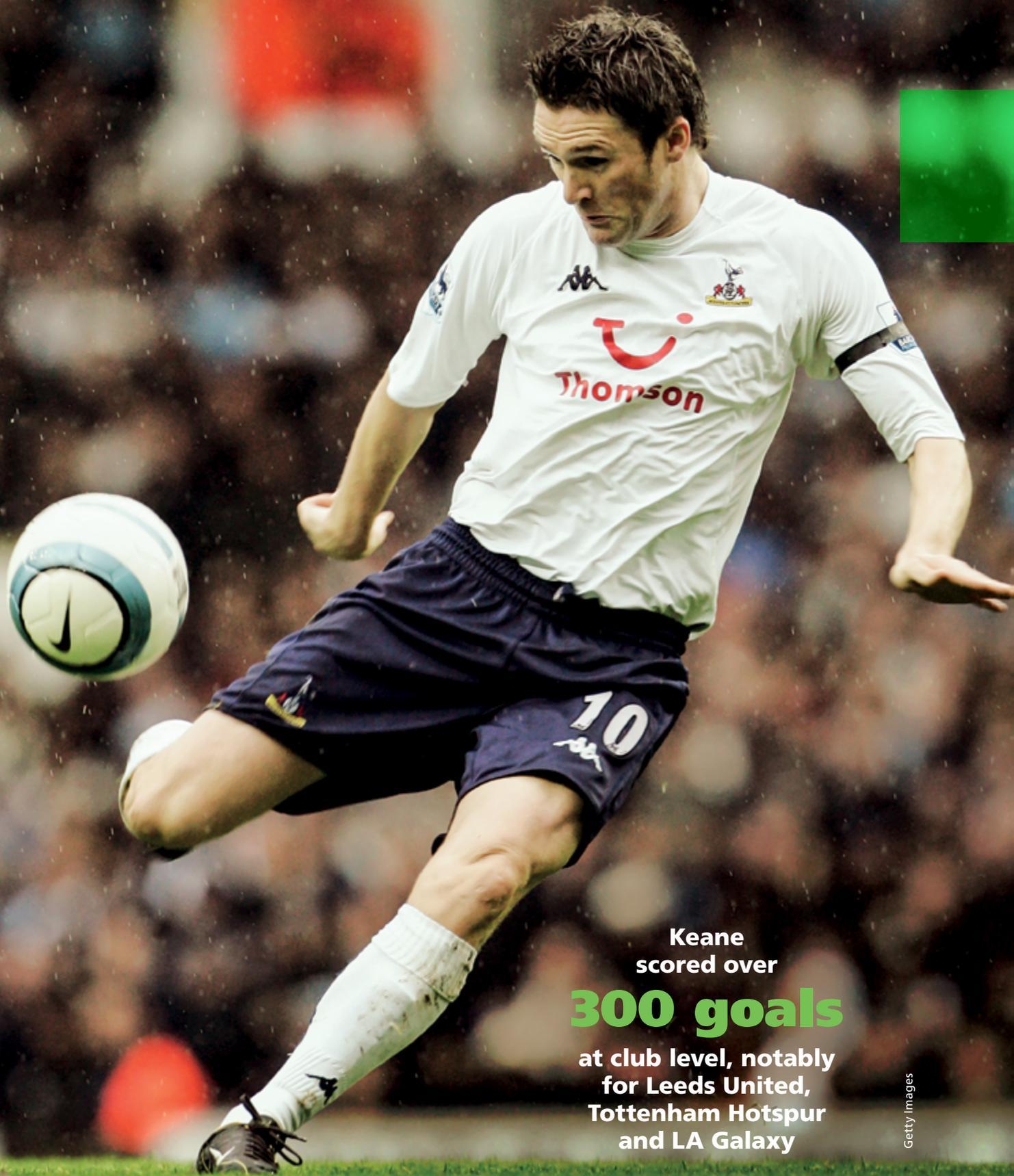
I've played with have always dominated possession of the ball. That's the way I want to play. But you have to adapt as well to where you are. We're going to play against Switzerland next month [European Qualifier last October]. Now, we're not going to dominate possession against Switzerland, so how do we adapt to that? Do we do a training session based on possession all the time leading up to the game? Why? We're not going to have that much of the ball, so do more overloads. So maybe low blocks, mid-blocks, and how we can catch them on the counterattack. That's what we have to do; you have to adapt to your situation.

What's the best piece of advice you received when you were a player? →

“How they spoke to people, how they spoke to the media, how they put training sessions on... I'd always look closely, without my coaches really knowing I was watching.”



Getty Images



Keane
scored over
300 goals
at club level, notably
for Leeds United,
Tottenham Hotspur
and LA Galaxy

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 "UEFA coach education is giving you that platform to be comfortable on stage, to be comfortable speaking in front of people, to be comfortable putting on a session. It's been a great learning curve for everybody."



I was always taking a lot of things in, from a lot of different people, different managers. The most important thing is to just enjoy what you do. Don't come into work thinking that it's a job. I never used to think about it as a job. I'm getting paid for something I absolutely love doing.

That's not a job. Every day I go in, even when I was 37 years of age, I'd wake up excited in the morning wanting to go to training. I used to wake up on a Saturday and I couldn't wait to play the game, and that's a feeling that you have to have. You can't go into training or wake up in the morning and go, "ugh, I've got training today." It can't be like that because that's when your mentality changes, that's when you don't really focus and you don't really want to be the best that you can be.

How important are technology, data and analytics, and how do you use them? Is it important to be on top of those developments?

Yes, I think you have to. It's part of football now. You have to be a part of it, but you have to be clever with it as well. You can't be telling somebody he can't do another shooting session because his load is too high, because that's his craft, he needs to work on it. But, of course, you have to listen to it, you take it on board. You know when to do your training sessions. On Tuesday or Wednesday, it may be a lot higher intensity than it would be on a Thursday. But you can't say to someone the day before a game, or I wouldn't anyway, "Oh, your numbers, I think you're a bit tired". Psychologically, straight away, he's going into a game tomorrow thinking that he's tired. So, I would flip that and go, "You're flying you

are, you're great, your numbers are great," and then maybe tell him on Monday. You have to be careful how you speak to people and how you can actually get into people's heads. That's managing people, that's man-managing people.

In September, Troy Parrott became the first Irishman to play for Tottenham since yourself, and Caoimhín Kelleher became the first Irishman to play for Liverpool. What is the reason behind this resurgence of Irish youth footballers?

Obviously, the association is doing something right. The grassroots are certainly doing something great. When I came through, it was myself, Damien Duff, Richard Dunne, Shay Given, all at the same time. And then for 20 years, it hasn't really happened and there are people coming in flutters. Now it looks like, looking at the Under-21s, there could be five or six potential players there where you say, "They could be in the squad in a year or two." Now, that's up to them, how they progress and how they continue to stay at the clubs they're at by continuing to play games all the time. Every so often, surges of players just come along. I'm hoping this will be the case for this generation coming up, and that could certainly push Irish football to where we were 15 or 20 years ago.

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 "You have to be careful how you speak to people and how you can actually get into people's heads. That's managing people, that's man-managing people."

How important are UEFA coach education and UEFA coaching licences, and what do they mean for you and coaching in general?

It is massive for everyone. We were speaking with the lads from the Irish FA, all the lads who are on the course now. I've been doing this for six years, from the B licence to the A, and now, with the difference between then and now, it's massive for all of us. The stuff you hear when the speakers come in, you listen to how they manage people, how they speak to people. We've had some great speakers in. Mick McCarthy was one of them, obviously who I know very well. Michael O'Neill was here today. So they are relevant to us because they work in Ireland and they have worked in England. Just listening to how they manage people is huge for your confidence in terms of speaking. Getting in front of a classroom; it's daunting to get in front of a classroom or up on stage and speak to people. I got up there yesterday and I didn't even think about it. Five years ago, to get up on a stage and have to give a presentation, naturally you'd be out of your comfort zone. It's giving you that platform to be comfortable on stage, to be comfortable speaking in front of people, to be comfortable putting on a session. It's been a great learning curve for everybody. 🌱

LEARNING OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

The third UEFA Grow conference witnessed the launch of Football Federations of the Future – a framework for strategy building and evidence-based decision-making.



“**F**or sure we can grow together. European football is in a very good shape but there’s still room for improvement, and if we can improve then we get in a better competitive situation, both on and off the pitch. We are strong and we are good, but we can be even better.”

These aspirational words were spoken by Karl-Erik Nilsson, UEFA first vice-president and president of the Swedish Football Federation, in Madrid in October as a tranche of general secretaries, CEOs and strategy leaders from UEFA’s 55 member associations came together for the third annual UEFA Grow conference.

A key step towards growing together is the Football Federations of the Future

initiative, which received its official launch at the conference in the Spanish capital on 30 and 31 October. Football Federations of the Future has been developed in collaboration with all 55 UEFA member associations along with input from over 40 industry representatives and a similar number of external consultants from across the business, corporate and sporting worlds. It is designed to facilitate efforts to encourage fact-based research, market intelligence and use of industry experts in the process of strategy making across European football.

National associations can draw on the framework to create their own strategies for increasing participation, maximising their business potential, engaging fully

with fans, improving the popularity of football and boosting their own profile.

Strategy is key

The Football Federations of the Future framework will allow UEFA’s member associations better access to the expertise that the European governing body can provide and the Madrid conference, with its explanation of the work of the UEFA Grow programme and insights into the significance of strategic planning, offered important lessons.

A clear strategy is the first of UEFA’s ten good governance principles and UEFA’s Grow team can provide assistance in writing and developing a strategy – a vital step for those 14 national associations



“We don’t need to reinvent the wheel in all 55 national associations. We can learn from each other and we can get a lot of good support from the UEFA Grow team in this. I’m really looking forward to seeing the development of the strategies all over Europe in the coming years.”

Karl-Erik Nilsson
UEFA first vice-president and president
of the Swedish Football Federation

whose plans are up for renewal next year, those currently without a plan or those that would like to review and enhance their business performance or strategy implementation processes.

The conference provided a platform for delegates to discuss best practice with their peers, and Maciej Sawicki, general secretary of the Polish Football Association (PZPN), delivered a valuable contribution by explaining how his association is using the Football Federations of the Future framework to create the new organisational structure alongside the strategy for the PZPN and Polish football.

As an example, he cited efforts taken to improve the PZPN’s brand by creating separate logos for the association and its national teams. He also delivered three key messages: first, that while it helps to have a partner, it was his association’s own staff who understood best the local situation and the PZPN’s needs; second, that it pays to cooperate with UEFA’s experts to build competences internally; and third, that it

is wise to involve as many people from different departments as possible.

A podium discussion involving representatives of four national associations offered other examples of best practice and lessons learned in strategic planning, with Thomas Hollerer, Anne Rei and David Mujiri – respectively the general secretaries of the Austrian, Estonian and Georgian FAs – all sharing their thoughts along with Karl-Erik Nilsson.

Another example of positive action came from the conference hosts, the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), who embarked last July on a five-point plan to introduce a strategic planning programme, currently in a process of alignment with strategic plans of the Spanish regional associations through a series of workshops with the leaders of all regions, facilitated by UEFA. The RFEF president and UEFA vice-president Luis Rubiales said: “We are finishing now the first strategic plan in our history and this

is possible because UEFA is helping us and we have an incredible gratitude to UEFA for this.”

Insight-driven decision-making

The second day of the conference focused on the importance of data, research and insight in decision-making. The advice given by UEFA was that football associations today should make decisions based on evidence, with at least one staff member responsible for driving research and insight.

The Royal Netherlands Football Association’s (KNVB) captain of strategy, Sjors Brouwer, and strategy and policy adviser, Malou van der Kamp, talked about how their association is using insights, data and research to make better decisions, and how this is linked to strategic planning and implementation.

For the KNVB it was important to involve the whole organisation in achieving the goals set, and delegates heard of the lessons their Dutch peers had learned from the process: such as the importance of investing in reliable data and of developing insights with the people who will actually use the data.

Karl-Erik Nilsson, who is chairman of UEFA’s HatTrick Committee and UEFA Grow ambassador, said of the conference: “This type of content gives a lot of inspiration to everyone who’s here. Some countries have come a bit further and some are still discussing and developing their coming strategies, and this is an excellent opportunity to learn from each other.

“We don’t need to reinvent the wheel in all 55 national associations. We can learn from each other and we can get a lot of good support from the UEFA Grow team in this. I’m really looking forward to seeing the development of the strategies all over Europe in the coming years.” 🌐



EUROPEAN FOOTBALL HELPING TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The UEFA Foundation for Children, which is set to celebrate its fifth birthday in April 2020, has supported a total of 245 projects to date.

At its last meeting on 20 November, the UEFA Foundation for Children's board of trustees added a further 42 projects to the organisation's portfolio of charitable initiatives, bringing the total number of vulnerable children and young adults that have benefited from UEFA's values through its foundation to almost a million.

The twice-yearly meeting took place on the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the context of which the foundation noted that "every child has the right to have rights".

The foundation has been given a budget of €4,764,608 for 2019/20 in order to support projects helping vulnerable children.



The UEFA Foundation for Children board of trustees – front row (left to right): Nathalie Iannetta, Margarita Louis-Dreyfus, Aleksander Čeferin, Snežana Samardžić-Marković; second row: Kevin Lamour, Fiona May, Norman Darmanin Demajo, Peter Gilliéron, Wladimir Klitschko, Greg Clarke, Kairat Boranbayev. Absent: Elkhan Mammadov.

An everlasting responsibility

In order to achieve its objective of safeguarding the fundamental rights of every child, the UEFA Foundation for Children issues an annual call for projects with a view to identifying organisations that it would like to support. More than 3,000 applications were submitted in response to this year's call for projects, showing the significant role that football can play in society. "Once again, the number and range of project proposals received by the foundation – fostering education, development, inclusion and empowerment – proves how much football inspires and offers hope," said Nathalie Iannetta, a member of the foundation's board of trustees.

The board of trustees was unanimous in agreeing to use part of the foundation's 2019/20 budget to support 42 new projects – 21 in Europe and 21 in other parts of the world (see table opposite). Another chunk of the foundation's

budget will be used to help finance the construction of five new football pitches in partnership with Lay's. In parallel, the foundation also intends to support its objectives by raising public awareness of children's universal rights in the 12 cities hosting matches at EURO 2020.

Joint action in support of all children

The foundation has seen its partners and sponsors consolidate their support in 2019, thereby helping to increase the visibility of its core message on the importance of believing in the potential of every child.

More information on the activities of the UEFA Foundation for Children can be found in the foundation's activity report for 2018/19, which is available on the foundation's website (www.uefafoundation.org) or on request from contact@uefafoundation.org.



PARTNERS	PROJECT NAME	CONTINENT/COUNTRY
EUROPE		
Asociata Luncsoara Bihorului	Sport field for children and youngsters	Romania
Associacao de Futebol de Bragança	Street football move	Portugal
Bel endroit pour une rencontre	Raconte moi un match	France
Edwin van der Sar Foundation	Child and parent day	Netherlands
European Football for Development Network	Welcome through football	Cyprus, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, UK, Ukraine
FC Barcelona Foundation	Sport-based employability for unaccompanied minors	Greece (Athens, Lesbos), Italy (Sicily), Southern Spain
Fondation arménienne pour le développement durable	Génération Sport	Armenia
Fundacion Real Madrid	Real Madrid foundation social sports schools in Europe	Bulgaria, Portugal, Romania, UK
Hawar help e.V	Scoring girls	Germany
INEX	Football for development in Czech Republic	Czech Republic
Katamon Moadon Ohadim	Neighbourhood League HKJFC	Israel
Kicken ohne grenzen	Kicken ohne grenzen	Austria
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine	Health Goals Malawi	UK
Mentor Management-Entwicklung-Organisation GmbH & Co	Goals for my future	Austria
National Paralympic Committee of Kazakhstan	Blind football pitch construction	Kazakhstan
Newcastle United Foundation	Active Lives	UK
Save the Children	Score for education	Albania
Streetfootballworld	Play Proud	Europe mainly + worldwide
The Scottish Football Partnership Trust	GoFitba project	Scotland
World at Play	Sport and play for social integration of refugee children within local communities	Bulgaria
Klitschko Foundation	Success package	Ukraine
AFRICA		
CCPA	Open fun football school - playing for peace	South Sudan
Busajo Onlus	Sport as education and promotion of equal opportunities for street girls in Soddo	Ethiopia
Inter Futura srl	African Black'n Blue: kids resiliency development through education and football	Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Uganda
Street Child	Exercising change in Palabek refugee settlement	Uganda
Georges Malaika Foundation	Future leaders of Kalebuka	Democratic Republic of Congo
Power for the People	Remba Island education health and nutrition project	Kenya
Samusocial International	Carton rouge à l'exclusion	Burkina Faso
International Organisation for Migration	Sport for inclusion: football against racism	Tunisia and Maghreb
International Trade Centre	Kick for trade	Guinea, Gambia
ASIA		
Jesuit Refugee Service Iraq	A safe space for displaced Yazidi youth	Iraq
Blue Dragon Children's Foundation	New futures through sport	Vietnam
Spirit of Soccer	Mine risk education in Cambodia	Cambodia
C.I.E.LO - Cooperation Internationale pour les équilibres locaux	Le jeu en vaut la chandelle	Sri Lanka
The Arsenal Foundation	Coaching for life	India
AFDP Global	Kick for hope	Jordan
OCEANIA		
Just Play	Just Play Programme	American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu
NORTH AMERICA		
Starfinder Foundation	Senior leaders	USA
SOUTH AMERICA		
Women Win	La Nuestra Football Club	Argentina
Plan International Belgique	A goal for gender equality	Bolivia
Fabretto Children's Foundation	Play to learn 2	Nicaragua
Fundacion del Empresariado Chihuahuense A.C	Afterschool programme for underserved communities in Chihuahua border state	Mexico

The Croatian Football Federation used World Heart Day to educate children on the importance of a healthy diet, while (below) the Danish FA launched a campaign to get Danes with cardiovascular disease to play recreational football.



HNS

TEAMING UP TO TACKLE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

In 2019, 32 UEFA member associations supported World Heart Day, the world's largest cardiovascular disease prevention campaign held annually on 29 September.

Cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease and stroke, claims 3.9 million lives in Europe prematurely each year. To put that into context, that is the equivalent of over 40 capacity crowds at Wembley Stadium.

Working alongside UEFA's social responsibility partner for health and well-being, Healthy Stadia (www.healthystadia.eu), UEFA invited the European football community to support World Heart Day – and they delivered in style.

UEFA member associations dedicated digital media posts to the campaign, attracting almost 200,000 interactions on social media and over 150,000 video views. But many member associations went one step further, launching new projects helping to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease, demonstrating how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and leveraging UEFA Grassroots Week to promote a broader range of health messages to children and young people.

Prevention

Danish football legend Michael Laudrup helped to launch Football for the Heart, a new initiative from the Danish Football Association designed to get Danes living with cardiovascular disease to play recreational football.

Scientific research in Denmark has demonstrated that recreational football can improve aerobic fitness, lower blood pressure and increase muscle strength, all of which have protective effects when it comes to cardiovascular disease – helping people to live happier, healthier lives.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

The Football Association of Wales also used a national legend and current manager, Ryan Giggs, to launch a video campaign demonstrating how to perform CPR.

Research shows that over 90% of sudden cardiac arrests in young athletes happen either during or immediately after exercise, and those with an inherited heart condition can be up to three times more likely to suffer a sudden cardiac arrest if they participate in intensive or strenuous exercise.

Welsh international players also feature in the video, demonstrating the correct CPR technique and how to safely use a defibrillator to restart the heart.

Grassroots football

World Heart Day also coincided with UEFA Grassroots Week, and several member associations dedicated activities to supporting both campaigns. The Andorran Football Federation promoted the



DBU

importance of food, nutrition and hydration for healthy development. The Croatian Football Federation also educated children on the importance of eating healthily alongside avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol as they grow up.

Speaking about World Heart Day, Healthy Stadia's executive director, Matthew Philpott, said: "The unique power of football has huge potential to deliver positive public health outcomes, helping to encourage fans to take more physical activity, eat a balanced diet and stop smoking.

"The European football family's contribution to World Heart Day has once again been outstanding and we look forward to working with UEFA member associations in 2020 to reach an even greater number of fans." ♻️

BELGIAN FA BUILDS FOR THE FUTURE AS IT TURNS 125

In 2020, as the Royal Belgian Football Association marks its 125th anniversary, the association's national training centre in Tubize will undergo further expansion that is set to make it the heartbeat of Belgian football.

BY BERT BOUSERIE AND PIERRE CORNEZ

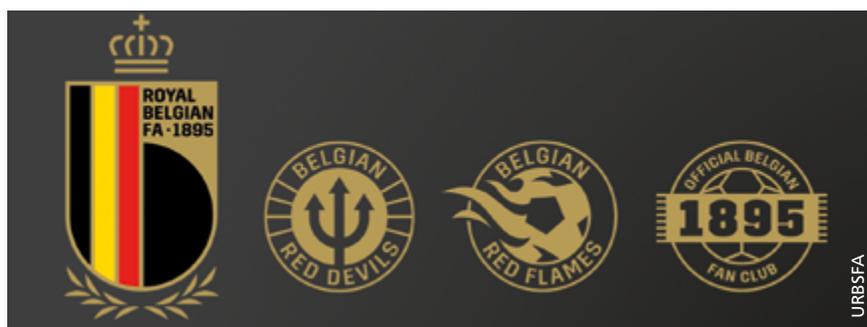
The national training centre is integral to the Belgian FA's plans to establish itself as one of Europe's top national associations by 2022. On the eve of its 125th birthday, the Belgian FA has also adopted a new visual identity for the association itself, the Red Devils, the Red Flames and the 1895 official Belgian fan club. While firmly building for the future, the association is also celebrating its landmark birthday by publishing an album of photos showcasing the rich heritage of Belgian football and organising a range of different activities in partnership with fans.

A new home for the Belgian FA

The national training centre is set to play an even more pivotal role in the future, with the Belgian FA's management and administrative staff starting to decamp to Tubize in March 2021, vacating their existing headquarters. What is more, the Belgian FA has also announced that its VAR system will be run from the national training centre as of the 2021/22 season.

The training centre's infrastructure will be developed, with plans for four new pitches, a conference centre, new dressing rooms and a brand-new building to house the association's staff.

As well as being environmentally friendly, this development project will also prioritise the well-being of the association's 150 staff. In addition to the installation of solar panels, various e-mobility solutions will be made available at the training centre and in the surrounding area. There will also be a staff restaurant and various sports facilities (including a fitness centre, a padel court, a tennis court and several additional football pitches).



"Over the last 125 years, the Belgian FA has established itself as the largest sports association in the country, and the Red Devils have sat at the top of FIFA's world rankings for more than a year now," says Peter Bossaert, CEO of the Belgian FA. "However, we want to go further and become one of the top national associations in Europe by 2022. Investing in our training centre in Tubize will help us achieve that goal."

A new image for Belgian football

The Belgian FA's 125th birthday is also the ideal opportunity for the association to modernise its image and the visual identities of its three brands: the Red Devils, the Red Flames and the 1895 official Belgian fan club.

That rebranding exercise was certainly a case of 'evolution', rather than 'revolution', given that the three key elements of the Belgian FA's old emblem – the crown, the laurel crest and the three colours of the Belgian flag – have all been retained. KBVB (the Belgian FA's initials in Dutch) and URBSFA (the French equivalent) have both been replaced by the more international Royal Belgian FA. To the left of that wording, a black ball with the colours of the Belgian flag superimposed on it forms the letter b

for Belgium. The same black ball forms the basis of the new logos of the Red Devils, the Red Flames and the 1895 official Belgian fan club. From now on, the Belgian FA will use that new visual identity in all its communications. Moreover, the association also has a brand-new website (www.rbfa.be), which went live on 8 November in Dutch, English and French.

Manu Leroy, head of marketing and communication at the Belgian FA, explains: "Over the years, the association has established several new brands: the Red Devils, the Red Flames and the 1895 official Belgian fan club. Those brands have always had their own logos, but they have never had anything to do with that of the Belgian FA. We were therefore keen to establish a shared visual identity. As part of our 125th birthday preparations, we decided to adopt this new identity, with these four modern logos showing that all four brands belong to the same family. What is more, the use of Hergé's 'clear line' style means that our identity is now more Belgian than ever."

Various activities have been planned to celebrate the Belgian FA's birthday, including an exhibition, a theatre production and an all-star match. The Golden Shoe gala in January will also be used to mark the occasion. 🌐

TEAM OF THE CENTENARY

From 4 October to 20 November, fans of the Poland national team had a chance to select the best XI of the last 100 years. The final squad was revealed on 6 December at the grand celebration of the Polish Football Association's centenary.

BY EMIL KOPAŃSKI AND MICHAŁ ZACHODNY

There have been many successes in the history of Polish football – three Olympic medals and two third places at the World Cup – and the centenary of the Polish FA (PZPN) is a fitting time to honour the greatest players in the country's history.

A jury of 27 football experts and thousands of fans decided who should make the team of the centenary. Senator Andrzej Person was the head juror, with former national team coaches Antoni Piechniczek, Jacek Gmoch, Paweł Janas, Jerzy Engel, Adam Nawalka and Henryk Apostel on the jury alongside members of the PZPN media and marketing committee and several Polish journalists.

Poland's team of the centenary

Józef Młynarczyk (born 20/09/1953, 42 caps), a member of the Poland squad for the 1982 and 1986 World Cups, winning a bronze medal in 1982. First-choice Poland goalkeeper between 1980 and 1986, he was famous for his dedication, even playing once with a broken finger. He achieved great success with his club, FC Porto, winning the European Cup in 1987.

Łukasz Piszczek (03/06/1985, 66 caps, 3 international goals). Played for Poland at four major tournaments: 2018 World Cup, EURO 2008, EURO 2012 and EURO 2016. The top goal scorer in the European Under-19 Championship finals in 2004, he started his career as a striker and then switched to right-back.

Władysław Żmuda (06/08/1954, 91/2). Played for Poland at four World Cups (1974, 1978, 1982 and 1986), winning a bronze medal in 1974 and 1982, and a silver medal at the 1976 Olympic football tournament. One of the most decorated Polish footballers, playing a record 21 World Cup games.

Jerzy Gorgoń (18/07/1949, 55/6). Gold and silver medallist at the 1972 and 1976 Olympics, he played at the 1974 and 1978 World Cups, winning bronze in 1974.

Antoni Szymanowski (13/01/1951, 82/1), a member of the Poland squad for the 1974 (bronze medal) and 1978 World Cups as well as the 1972 and 1976 Olympics football tournaments, where he won gold and silver medals.

Henryk Kasperczak (10/07/1946, 61/5), played at the 1974 and 1978 World Cups and the 1976 Olympics, bronze medallist at the 1974 World Cup and silver at the 1976 Olympics. Two-time domestic title winner with Stal Mielec, with whom he also reached the UEFA Cup quarter-finals in 1975/76.

Kazimierz Deyna (born 23/10/1947, died 01/09/1989, 97/41), played at the 1974 (bronze medal) and 1978 World Cups, as well as the 1972 and 1976 Olympics, where he won gold and silver medals. Top scorer at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, he was selected for the best XI of the 1974 World Cup.



Zbigniew Boniek (03/03/1956, 80/24), a member of the Poland squads for the 1982 and 1986 World Cups, winning a bronze medal in 1982. Selected by FIFA as one of the best 100 players in its history. Won the European Cup with Juventus in 1985, scored a hat-trick against Belgium at the 1982 World Cup, and was selected for the best XI of the tournament.

Grzegorz Lato (08/04/1950, 100/45), played at the 1974, 1978, and 1982 World Cups as well as the 1972 and 1976 Olympics, World Cup bronze medallist in 1974 and 1982 and top scorer in 1974, Olympic gold and silver medallist in 1972 and 1976). Scored a record ten goals in three World Cup tournaments.

Robert Lewandowski (21/08/1988, 112/61), played at the 2018 World Cup, EURO 2012 and EURO 2016. All-time top scorer for Poland, top scorer in EURO 2016 and 2018 World Cup qualifying.

Włodzimierz Lubański (28/02/1947, 75/48), played at the 1978 World Cup and won gold at the 1972 Olympics. Lubański made his first appearance for Poland at the age of 16 years and 188 days, which remains an all-time record. Voted as Poland's best player for UEFA's 50th jubilee. Won a prestigious UNESCO fair play award for Poland's match against Denmark in 1977, when he chose not to score in order not to hurt the Danish goalkeeper. 🌍



ALBANIA

www.fshf.org

SPORTS FIELD FOR YOUTH REINTEGRATION CENTRE IN KAVAJË

ANDI VERCANI



The president of the Albanian Football Association, Armand Duka, has inaugurated a new sports field at the youth reintegration centre in Kavajë. The new sports field offers the young people who live at the centre the chance to play football in good conditions.

In his speech, the Albanian FA president highlighted the association's aim to improve infrastructure for children and grassroots football in general: "For me it is a great pleasure to stand here on this special day. Children are the main focus of the Albanian Football Association, and no matter where they

are or who they are, they should be able to play football. We have had to concentrate until now on improving our professional football infrastructure, but our main duty now has to be to create infrastructure for children and grassroots football.

"Our executive committee had no hesitation in approving the request of the director of the reintegration centre. The children here play football, and we and the centre have a duty to educate or re-educate them and to facilitate their reintegration."

In reply, one of the youngsters living at the centre told the Albanian FA president:



"We are privileged to have you here today. This is a special day for us because you realised an important project for us. I thank the Albanian Football Association for providing us with a better field to train and play on. We will be the envy of the whole town!"

AUSTRIA

www.oefb.at

A SHOT IN THE ARM FOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

SIMON-PETER CHARAMZA



At 18:00 on 24 May, the 2020 UEFA Women's Champions League final will kick off at Viola Park in Vienna, where the continent's best women's club teams will come face to face in the first UEFA club competition final to be staged in Austria since 1995.

The final also served as a springboard for a publicity campaign launched by the Austrian FA (ÖFB) general secretary, Thomas Hollerer, FK Austria Wien's chairman, Markus Kraetschmer, world champion and UEFA Women's Champions League winner Fatmire 'Lira' Alushi, the ÖFB's final ambassador, Nina Burger, and Austrian internationals and Women's Champions League participants Viktoria Schnaderbeck, Manuela Zinsberger (both of Arsenal WFC) and Carina Wenninger of FC Bayern München.

"There's more interest in the final this year than ever before. UEFA and the ÖFB are both making a huge effort to drive

women's football forward. The vision is to raise the profile of women's football even higher. The Austrian national team players are great role models for young girls. Vienna is a very beautiful city, and the stadium is great – the match on 24 May will be a true celebration of football," said Lira Alushi, who won the Women's Champions League with 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam in 2010.

"Our aim is to fill the stadium. This final should be another shot in the arm for women's football in Austria. A final held in a fantastic setting can have a tremendous spin-off effect," said Thomas Hollerer.

Club teams will have the opportunity to purchase discounted tickets for the final and win attractive prizes as part of a 'team challenge'. Clubs ordering between 10 and 30 tickets will pay the special price of €6 per ticket and receive a ball signed by the Austrian women's national team. All orders will also be entered in a draw, with five exclusive prizes to be

won, including a chance to meet the Austrian women's national team.

The ÖFB will also be launching a series of promotional activities to publicise the final over the coming months, enthusiastically supported by record cap-holder and ÖFB legend Nina Burger, who was unveiled as the final's official ambassador. The ÖFB will take advantage of internationals played by the Austrian men's, women's and Under-21 teams to advertise the 2020 final and will be regularly using its social media channels, publications and websites to raise awareness of the event.

"The final is an important landmark for women's football in Austria. The opportunity to stage such a major event in our own country will put women's football under the spotlight. It's a chance to capture the public's imagination, promote the values of women's football and draw new people into the women's football community," said Nina Burger.

Full details at oefb.at/uwclf2020.

EURO 2020 VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME PRESENTED TO STUDENTS

FIRUZ ABDULLA

 Between 15 October and 15 November, the operational team set up for the three EURO 2020 group matches and quarter-final to be held at Baku Olympic Stadium presented the volunteer programme to students, student organisations and the teaching staff at 18 higher educational institutions. Altogether, more than 5,000 students attended presentations.

The presentations covered the history of the European Championship, interesting facts, previous EURO volunteer programmes and the programme planned for EURO 2020.

Members of the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) responsible for organisation and coordination with UEFA, and EURO 2020 local volunteer programme ambassador

Taleh Yuzbeyov, also took part in the presentations. They talked about the importance of such events in helping



students to gain experience in sporting and non-sporting fields, make efficient use of their leisure time, and improve their technical knowledge and skills in connection with large-scale and nationwide events. They also shared their personal experiences and memories of being volunteers.

By the application deadline of 30 November, more than 6,000 candidates had registered for the programme. The interview process started on 30 September and will continue until 28 December. Among the applicants are nearly 600 international candidates from more than 15 countries – mainly Russia, Ukraine and Asian countries. At present, online interviews are being organised for them, with the aim of selecting 300 international volunteers.

'TIS THE SEASON OF GIVING: PRESENTING THE VATRENI'S 2019 CHARITY INITIATIVES

NIKA BAHTIJAREVIĆ

 Started more than a decade ago by the players and coaching staff of the Croatian national team as a way to centralise donation requests, the Vatreno Srce Foundation gives the Vatreni a chance to put their fame to good use – and with the festive season approaching, the team organised several activities to

raise funds for numerous causes.

In October, the team auctioned off their match-worn shirts from the Croatia v Hungary match played in Split. More than €31,000 was raised through the auction, with Luka Modrić's jersey alone selling for upwards of €6,000 and setting a new record for the auction site.

The team continued their charitable efforts ahead of the qualifying match against Slovakia. On 11 November, Zagreb's Westin Hotel hosted a call centre event for the Vatreno Srce Foundation, with Croatia internationals and members of the team staff picking up the phones in order to raise funds for the foundation's projects. More than €70,000 was collected for the Kantrida children's hospital in Rijeka and for the 'Korak u život' (Step into Life) Foundation, which helps children without parental care.

The Vatreni certainly reaped what they sowed – their charitable efforts were rewarded with excellent support from the fans and two important home wins, which helped the team earn their place at their eleventh major tournament since Croatian independence.



DENMARK

www.dbu.dk

UEFA FOUNDATION HELPS BRING FOOTBALL TO CHILDREN IN SOCIAL HOUSING AREAS

ANNE TJELL



On 18 November, Denmark qualified for EURO 2020, and the Danes are ready for an exciting summer of football.

A few days earlier, Denmark's place in the European Championship finals was still not secured and there was a tense atmosphere in the stadium for the qualifying match against Gibraltar in Copenhagen on 15 November.

During the half-time interval, there was, however, already cause to celebrate as the Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) received a €45,500 donation from the UEFA Foundation for Children. The money is for the get2sport initiative and, in particular, the get2 football camps set up by the DIF in cooperation with the Danish Football Association (DBU).

The DIF chairman, Niels Nyggard, went onto the pitch to receive the award, accompanied by a group of children from



BK Union football club. Jesper Møller Christensen, president of the DBU, presented the award, the DBU having nominated get2sport for the UEFA donation.

The DIF get2sport project was selected for a donation because of the important social role it plays in bringing sport to children and young people living in social housing areas. Inclusion and integration are the keywords, and both the DIF and the DBU are delighted to be able to invite more children and young people into the football community.

The donation will allow the DBU to run more Get2 football camps. The ambition is to run 17 camps in 2020 with more than 1,000 participants from social housing areas.

Next year, the get2 football camps celebrate their tenth anniversary.

ENGLAND

www.thefa.com

ENGLAND WOMEN MAKE HISTORY WITH RECORD-BREAKING CROWD

WENDY TAYLOR



9 November 2019 at Wembley stadium entered the history books after a record-breaking 77,768 crowd watched the Lionesses take on Germany in an international friendly.

The occasion broke the record for the highest-ever attendance for an England women's home football fixture, beating the previous record of 45,619 set in 2014 when England last played Germany at the same venue.

It was also an event The FA chose to use to pay tribute to former England players and coaches who had played such an important part in the development of the women's game in the country. Over 60 stars of the women's game in England were in attendance, receiving

the warm applause of the sell-out crowd at half-time.

The match saw the hosts beaten 2-1 in a hard-fought defeat against the two-time world champions.

The FA's director of women's football, Sue Campbell, said of the historic occasion: "We are delighted to have broken the attendance record for an England women's match. To see Wembley so full and to experience such a tremendous atmosphere was a joy to behold. It felt like a truly historic moment in the development of the women's game.

"To have had the pleasure of watching the game alongside so many former England players who paved the way to

such a momentous occasion was very special indeed. I would like to thank each and every supporter who joined us and helped us make history."



RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR ATTENDANCES

MAARJA SAULEP



Estonian football enjoyed an increase in attendance this year, with records being broken at league level and reaching new heights for men's and women's national team matches.

An average of 9,690 people attended the men's national team's home matches in their EURO 2020 qualifying campaign during 2019, which is a new record both for a year and a qualifying campaign. In June 8,378 people watched Estonia play Northern Ireland in their opening home qualifying match. In September 11,006 fans attended the Estonia v Netherlands match, and 7,314 people turned out for the Estonia v Belarus match. In addition, the record attendance for a national team match at the national stadium, the A. Le Coq Arena, was also broken when 12,062 people came to see Estonia host Germany.

The Estonian women's national team also set a new record for their home matches, when a crowd of 1,881 watched defending European champions the Netherlands at A. Le Coq Arena.



"A big thank you to everybody who supported the national teams this year from the stands. We are very happy that the home matches have turned into big events where people have the chance to enjoy themselves before the match in the festival area and then watch a good encounter on the football field," said Anne Rei, general secretary of the Estonian Football Association.

Over in the club game, the top three men's leagues recorded all-time record average attendances. A big push was

provided by the UEFA Grow project launched in cooperation with clubs, which introduced community development officers.

"The league development project within the framework of UEFA Grow demonstrates really well how important steps can be made with the knowledge and cooperation of UEFA, our association and clubs. This has already had a big impact not only on attendances but also in bonding the clubs and their communities," said Anne Rei.

THE END OF AN ERA

TERJI NIELSEN



The conclusion of the EURO 2020 qualifiers in November also marked the end of an era for the Faroese men's national team. The final game against Sweden at the Friends Arena in Stockholm was also the last match with head coach Lars Olsen in charge and with captain Atli Gregersen on the team sheet.

Lars Olsen took charge of the Faroese national team in 2011 and his eight-year reign makes him the longest-serving head coach of the national team. The biggest results under his management were undoubtedly the two victories against Greece in the EURO 2016 qualifying competition – 1-0 in Athens and 2-1 in Tórshavn.



The Danish coach announced in early October that he would not renew his contract with the Faroese FA and he has now taken over at Danish Superliga team Esbjerg.

Lars Olsen will be missed, but so will captain Atli Gregersen. The charismatic defender made his national team debut at a relatively mature age, turning out for a match against Serbia in June 2009 against Serbia, just a few days before he turned 27.

Now at the age of 37 and with 59 caps to his name, he has decided to retire from the national team and focus on his final years in club football with Víkingur.

The retirement of Gregersen and the end of Lars Olsen reign marks the end of an era in Faroese national team football, and opens a new chapter.

The new manager of the Faroese men's national team is yet to be announced, and it will be up to them to pick the new captain of the team.

FRANCE

www.fff.fr

KIT AND EQUIPMENT FOR THOUSANDS OF CLUBS

LAURA GOUTRY



More than 11,200 amateur clubs have been given sports kit and equipment by the French Football Federation (FFF) as part of a far-reaching initiative celebrating the country's second World Cup title.

This highly successful project, the brainchild of FFF president Noël Le Graët, was launched in September 2018 on the back of France's victory in the 2018 World Cup in Russia. The FFF's executive committee has given the project a one-off budget of €10m spanning the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons.

Thanks to this initiative, a total of 11,216 amateur clubs (both in mainland France and in overseas territories) have been given sports equipment (training equipment, mini-goals, balls, etc.) and/or kit (shirts, shorts and socks) for their players.



By the end of the project, 11,906 sets of Nike kit and 2,747 sets of equipment will have been distributed to clubs (with 164 sets of kit being sent all the way to Tahiti and New Caledonia).

All in all, a massive 85% of the 13,218 clubs targeted by the FFF have

benefited from this unprecedented community engagement initiative.

In addition, training vouchers with a total value of €400,000 have been distributed to coaches, administrators and referees as part of the project.

GEORGIA

www.gff.ge

SHARING THEIR EXPERIENCE

PRESS OFFICE



As part of the Georgian national football team's fan communication initiative, members of the team, who have qualified for the EURO 2020 play-offs, visited state school number 157 in Tbilisi.

Goalkeeper Giorgi Loria, midfielder Giorgi Aburjania and striker Giorgi Kvilitaia attended an open lesson and shared their experience with the youngsters.

The footballers, who are currently playing in the Cypriot, Dutch and Belgian leagues respectively, spoke about the early stages of their careers and answered numerous questions.

The event was attended by more than 100 children aged between 10 and 14, who received autographed posters and match tickets as gifts. In addition, the Georgian Football Federation donated sports equipment to the school.



JULIUS HIRSCH PRIZES AWARDED TO ROCK BAND AND AMATEUR CLUB

THOMAS HACKBARTH

 "We feel very honoured. By creating this fantastic award, the DFB started something very important," said Campino, the lead vocalist of rock band Die Toten Hosen, as he accepted the 2019 Julius Hirsch honorary prize from the president of the German Football Association (DFB), Fritz



Keller. Awarded annually by the DFB since 2005, the Julius Hirsch prizes recognise clubs and initiatives that publicly support democracy, human dignity and the fight against racism and anti-Semitism.

One of Germany's most successful music acts, Die Toten Hosen were awarded the honorary prize for their firm commitment to combating right-wing extremism in football. The band, which has topped the German album charts 11 times since 1990, made their most recent appearance at the 'Wir sind mehr' open-air concert in Chemnitz.

At the start of the presentation gala, which lasted just under two hours, the DFB president called for greater moral fortitude. "We democrats must stand up,

speak out and put a stop to all the mindless jokes," said Fritz Keller. "I don't want to hear any more of this rubbish." The 300 guests at the Gesellschaftshaus Palmengarten in Frankfurt included Theresienstadt concentration camp survivor Zvi Cohen.

This year's main Julius Hirsch prize was awarded to Mainz amateur club FC Ente Bagdad, which was founded by a group of students in 1973.

"Winning this prize is a huge boost as we plan our future activities," said co-founder Ronald Uhlich.

In January, FC Ente Bagdad will be involved in a variety of activities marking the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

GIBRALTAR MATCH OFFICIALS TAKE CHARGE OF FULL INTERNATIONAL FIXTURE

STEVEN GONZALEZ

 Gibraltar match officials Jason Barcelo (referee) and Andrew Parody (assistant referee) entered the record books in October's international window by becoming the first-ever Gibraltar match officials to take charge of an international fixture.

Joined by two match officials from San Marino to complete the traditional match official quartet (assistant referee Salvatore Tuttifrutti and fourth official Luca Barbeno), Jason Barcelo took charge of the Colombia v Chile friendly played in the Estadio Jose Rico Perez in Alicante, Spain.

The following day, the quartet moved on to Elche and the Estadio Martinez Valero to take charge of Ecuador v Argentina. Despite being the fourth official for that match, Jason Barcelo, who has been a FIFA-listed referee for some time now, had to take over from referee



Luca Barbeno in the second half, after the San Marino referee had to go off injured.

To finally get the chance to take charge of a full international was an amazing moment for Jason Barcelo, who reflected after the matches: "My experience was unforgettable. You can only describe it if you live it. It gives you excitement. Plus there's the great experience of refereeing top teams with top players. There were 23,000 spectators for the Colombia v

Chile match. The game was a highly strung affair that challenges a referee. However, with my experience, I controlled the match well with the help of my team. I also had to take over in the second half of the Argentina v Ecuador match because of an injury to Luca Barbeno. Both games were a great experience and a learning curve for me and my team for future international appointments."

Gibraltar's assistant referee in both matches, Andrew Parody, was equally thrilled with his own experience of officiating full international football for the first time: "It was a lovely experience to referee these matches and I feel very lucky. I am grateful for having got this opportunity with Jason. The atmosphere, the songs and chants from the crowds of tens of thousands makes you excited to be refereeing them. I want to carry on refereeing matches like these."

ITALY

www.figc.it

NEW FIGC DIVISION FOR PARALYMPIC AND EXPERIMENTAL FOOTBALL

DIEGO ANTENZIO



Football can be a path to inclusion. With the aim of increasing participation in football among people with disabilities, on 6 November the Italian Football Association (FIGC) and the Italian Paralympic Committee (CIP) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), in which they agreed to collaborate more closely. The MoU highlighted their commitment to promoting and encouraging growth in football activities currently governed by the nation's Paralympic associations. As part of this process, a working group will determine which football disciplines are to be moved under the aegis of the FIGC, and identify the requirements for coach education, participant categories and medical certification.

At the same time, a new FIGC division has been established to organise 'experimental' football activities alongside forms of the sport already recognised by international disabled sports bodies.

As the FIGC president, Gabriele Gravina, explained, "We are the first national association in the world to set up a Paralympic division. Football has a duty

to recognise these amazing sportsmen and women and their desire to compete, and to reward the many sacrifices made by their families."

The Paralympic and experimental football division will operate independently, with its own operational structure.

"This step has been a long time coming," added Gravina. "It builds on the ethos we have instilled in the FIGC and our work with the leagues over recent years, not to mention the generous support of the CIP president, Luca Pancalli.

"The experimental Quarta Categoria tournament for athletes with learning disabilities grew out of a 2017 agreement between the FIGC and the sports participation charity Centro Sportivo Italiano. The tournament's success convinced us to go a step further and collaborate more widely and more directly with the CIP."

The new division's initial objectives include expanding the Quarta Categoria. The experimental seven-a-side tournament currently involves 3,000 registered male and female representatives of 116 clubs in 11

regions and over 80 mentor clubs in Italy's top four leagues.

In the words of Luca Pancalli, previously a FIGC special commissioner: "The agreement marks a historic moment. Players with disabilities have been welcomed into the Italian football family. We are setting out on a new adventure in which all of us take to the field wearing the same colours. I'm certain we will see positive results. It's all one sport: just football, with one ball and the shared passion of the players.

"We developed this framework with the FIGC," Pancalli went on, "because we want to guarantee the same level of dignity and visibility for all members of the football family. I'm confident that the FIGC will soon be among the sporting bodies endorsed by the Paralympic committee.

"Part of what makes football so special is its ability to touch people's hearts, for instance through the stories of our wonderful athletes. Today is the first step in a mini-revolution that we hope will help the Paralympic movement and Italian sport as a whole to continue growing."

LATVIA

www.lff.lv

LATVIAN TITLES STAY IN THE CAPITAL

TOMS ĀRMANIS



At the end of Latvian club football season, both of the main titles were taken by clubs from the capital city of Riga – Riga FC won the league for the second year running, while RFS notched up their first major trophy, becoming Latvian Cup winners.

Last year, Riga FC made it a double first, winning both the league and the cup for the very first time. This year, they managed to hold on to their status as domestic champions and consolidated their victorious season with one of the

most successful performances in recent years by a Latvian club in UEFA competitions. Remaining just one goal away from a place in the UEFA Europa League group stage was an achievement that resonated far and wide across Latvia.

During their 32 games in this season's Virsliga, Riga FC had the best stats both in terms of goals scored and goals conceded, finishing the season seven points ahead of RFS and 19 points ahead of FK Ventspils. The club named defender Armands Pētersons as its most valuable player of the season. Other individual

prizes went to Roberts Ozols, Antonijs Černomordijs, Felipe Bezerra Brisola and Roman Debelko.

Finishing second in the league, RFS achieved their best position in the club's history. Moreover, they also reached the Latvian Cup final for the first time and beat FK Jelgava 3-2 after extra time. After falling three times in a row at the semi-final hurdle, RFS now have their first major trophy under their belt. Not so lucky were four-time Latvian Cup winners FK Jelgava, who lost a final for the first time.

DENNIS SALANOVIĆ NAMED FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME

ANTON BANZER

 On 8 October, the Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) held its 11th awards ceremony, the annual celebration at which it crowns the country's top footballer, club coach and volunteer of the year, and presents a special award for outstanding achievements. The awards ceremony is an important social occasion for the association, bringing together current and former members of the Liechtenstein football family in a festive and convivial atmosphere.

The 2019 ceremony saw FC Thun's Dennis Salanović receive the footballer of the year award for the first time in his career. The 23-year-old forward has already won 41 caps for the Liechtenstein



national team. Patrick Winkler was named club coach of the year after the 46-year-old Swiss won immediate promotion back

to the 1. Liga with FC Balzers just a year after the club's relegation. The audience also applauded the achievements of Christoph Arpagaus, who was chosen as volunteer of the year in recognition of his many years of service to FC Triesenberg and FC Balzers. The decision to present the LFV special award to national team players and ex-professionals Martin Büchel and Martin Rechsteiner was also well received. The deserving winners, honoured for their contribution to Liechtenstein football over a period of many years, accepted their prize with plenty of humour.

The LFV's gala evening was rounded off with the draw for the quarter-finals of the Liechtenstein Cup and a look at the association's social responsibility activities.

DISABLED CHILDREN LEARN TO LOVE FOOTBALL

MEDIA DEPARTMENT

 Children with special needs in Lithuania are discovering a love of football despite physical and learning disabilities. In cooperation with Special Olympics Lithuania, kindergartens and schools, the Lithuanian Football Federation regularly organises special activities for children, boys and girls. Three professional clubs have also joined the initiative: FK Žalgiris, current Lithuanian champions FK Sūduva, and FK Kauno Žalgiris.

The children take part in simple fun-based football activities and other games. The players supervise and assist children by showing them what to do and interacting with them as role models. Each festival ends with players awarding the children with prizes for their efforts.

The players have become great favourites of the children. "When the players first met the kids, they were cautious, but now they have learned to teach them to play, encourage and

motivate them," said Austra Kriskoviciene, a coordinator with Special Olympics Lithuania.

"The kids look up to us and it's great to see how we can make their day brighter.

Football is a game for everyone. It is important that this game awakens great emotions," said Dominykas Galkevičius, a former Lithuania international who now plays for FK Kauno Žalgiris.



MALTA

www.mfa.com.mt

SOCIAL INCLUSION PROJECTS AT THE HEART OF MALTA FA'S COMMITMENT

KEVIN AZZOPARDI



Building on the encouraging response and positive impact of last year's EU-funded inclusion project 'Include me and I will understand', the football social responsibility (FSR) department of the Malta Football Association (MFA) this year embarked on a host of projects for refugees and vulnerable people, partly funded by the European Union and UEFA.

The All In, All for Football project encourages local clubs to engage with locals and non-nationals, mainly refugees, through football-related activities.

This initiative, which is part of the MFA's overarching Football For Life programme, has so far involved a number of football clubs, coaches, staff, refugees (men, women and children) and vulnerable persons who are referred to the MFA by government agencies such as Appoġġ and Leap.

A defining moment for the FSR department and its inclusion projects was reached in September when All In, All For Football was one of the six projects nominated for the FIFA Diversity Award.

"It was indeed an honour for us to be the only European football association to be nominated for the FIFA Diversity Award for one of our inclusion projects," said Peter Busuttill from the Malta FA's FSR department.

"We would like to thank UEFA and the European Union for supporting our efforts, the clubs and all the partners as their contribution is vital for us to implement these projects, which have been very well received, especially by refugees."

In 2020, the MFA will embark on a new inclusion project, also funded by the EU – Play Football, Live Football.

The MFA is also one of the partners in



PlayGreen, a project endorsed by UEFA and funded under the European Union's Erasmus+ Sport programme for a sustainable future in sport. Six organisations have teamed up to raise awareness and build capacities about environmental sustainability in sport across Europe.

MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

ACCENT ON CHILDREN

PRESS OFFICE



The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) has achieved probably the most beautiful victory in its history, with the ministry of education having approved in November the introduction of football in schools. The project will consist of two football lessons a week as part of physical education lessons for girls and boys in primary school. The project will be piloted in about 100 schools that have signed agreements with the FMF. In total, about 15,000 children will be involved. The number of schools signing agreements with the association is constantly increasing, and more schools will be involved in the project from the start of the 2020/21 school year.

The FMF is training 166 coaches (PE and primary school teachers) who, on

completing the free training, will receive the FMF D licence. In addition, the FMF will provide each school, free of charge, with 10 balls, 20 football training marker cones, 10 training bibs, and equipment and material for teachers.

The short-term objective of the FMF is to create good conditions for teaching football in primary schools.

The continuity of this project is extremely important, and the next step the FMF plans to take will be to set up specialised football classes, starting in 2020.



The FMF has asked the ministry of education to sign a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the first four objectives of the new FMF development strategy for 2020–24: football in kindergartens, football in schools, specialised football classes and football academies, thereby making children's football the FMF's top priority for the coming four years.

DEDICATION OF GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED

NIGEL TILSON

 Brian Sloan picked up the People’s Award at this year’s Irish FA grassroots football awards gala. The People’s Award winner – decided by an online public vote – was rewarded for his work with Brookvale FC in County Armagh.

In the early 1980s Brian and his friend Alan Black set up the cross-community club in the Bessbrook area and it is still going strong. Now in their 18th year, the McDonald’s-sponsored awards recognise the huge contribution of clubs, coaches and volunteers within grassroots football across Northern Ireland.

The presentation ceremony took place at Belfast City Hall, with accolades presented in nine categories. The Volunteer of the Year trophy went to John Honeyford, who has been a



volunteer across the football spectrum in Causeway Coast and Glens, while Stuart Carson was presented with the Special Recognition Award. Stuart has coped with the tragic death of his nine-year-old son Carter in a car accident last year by coaching a team at the club his son played for, 18th Newtownabbey Youth FC, and promoting organ donation.

The Coach of the Year trophy was awarded to Danny Kelly, who helped to

set up Bangor Swifts Juniors FC and also coaches the County Down club’s senior team.

Other winners were: Football Mum of the Year – Paula Byrne (Camlough FC Under-12 girls); Top Inclusivity Project – mental health charity TAMHI (Tackling Awareness of Mental Health Issues); Best Young Volunteer – Jordan Wray (Glentoran Disability FC); Club of the Year – St Malachy’s OB Youth FC.

ALL-IRELAND CERTIFICATE IN FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT COURSE

GARETH MAHER

 The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the Irish Football Association (IFA) have successfully run a second joint UEFA Certificate in Football Management (CFM) course. Thirty-eight participants graduated from the first joint course in 2015, followed by 30 graduates this time.

Following two workshops (one in Dublin and the other in Belfast) the graduation ceremony took place in Dublin in December, with employees of the two associations joined by representatives of the Czech, Hungarian, Portuguese, and Romanian football associations.

The course showcased fantastic cooperation between the two host associations, while the guest speakers, who included industry experts such as

Sean Hamil, Mikkel Draebye and Raymond Boyle, provided superb insight in their interactive presentations.

The course covered many topics,

including club licensing, communications, marketing, human resources, strategic management, organisation of world football and financial fair play.



ROMANIA

www.frf.ro

PREPARING YOUTH PLAYERS FOR THEIR FUTURE LIVES

PAUL ZAHARIA

 Based on its wide-ranging strategy at all levels of the game and also in areas closely related to football, the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) regards football not only as a sport but also as an important part of Romanian social life. Education has a crucial role in this respect, helping youngsters to prepare themselves as future professional players at a high level, but also as citizens and reliable members of Romanian society today and in the future.

Since one of the aims and targets of the FRF is to develop football as a sport and also from a human perspective, the federation is launching a new project in January to raise new generations of players who are better prepared for life as a professional football player at the highest level. The project will enable

young players to adopt the best possible strategies in order to ensure financial stability during their careers and afterwards, to apply the best practices in terms of media relationships, but also to have a healthy and well-balanced life and to build their careers by scrupulously respecting the values of fair play and integrity.

Starting with the Under-15s, whenever they are called up for the national team, whether for training camps, friendly and/or official matches, the players will have to study the FRF's code of ethics and also follow mandatory special courses. The educational programme has seven modules: media relations and social media; anti-doping and nutrition; financial management; general education; integrity; mental coaching; and equality, diversity and social responsibility.

Each national youth team generally has a minimum of five meetings a year, almost all of them involving international matches or participation in international tournaments. With the support of specialists (teachers and others) in all the aforementioned areas, the FRF will ensure proper education for all selected players. If players have to miss any of the meetings, the FRF will send the modules to them care of their clubs and make sure they receive the same advice at club level.

This type of initiative is a first, and in the long term, it is hoped that it will produce players who are better prepared as sportsmen and women and who, if they move abroad, are able to adapt immediately to the new high standards that await them and, subsequently, to advance in their careers.

RUSSIA

www.rfs.ru

UEFA CHIEF REFEREEING OFFICER LEADS VAR SEMINAR

EKATERINA GRISHENKOVA

 UEFA's chief refereeing officer, Roberto Rosetti, was in Moscow on 1 November to lead a seminar organised by the Football Union of Russia (RFS) on the use of video assistant referees (VAR). The project manager for VAR implementation in Russia, Leonid Kaloshin, was also on hand.

The workshop was split into two parts. The first part was devoted to Russian referees, including those on the FIFA list. Afterwards, Roberto Rosetti talked with the general secretary of the Football Union of Russia, Aleksandr Alaev, the head coach of Russia's men's national football team, Stanislav Cherchesov, representatives of Russian premier league clubs and journalists.

Roberto Rosetti said: "Of course,



I am happy to be in Moscow. The period when I worked in Russia was extremely important from a professional and a human point of view. During this time, the RFS improved dramatically the level of refereeing and we worked together in a transparent and professional way for the

good of football. Coming back to Russia was a big emotion for me. During the seminar, the same emotions were experienced by the referees with whom we worked. The seminar turned out to be very interesting, with UEFA approving the further implementation of the VAR system in Russia. We are observing a serious and professional VAR project implementation in the country. The Football Union of Russia is doing an excellent job in this direction. Your organisation is working to make football fair and honest and VAR is an important tool to achieve this goal.

"The VAR implementation is important for Russian football, and for Russian referees. I am sure their expertise will increase as a result."

MAPPING THE HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

PETER SURIN



The statistician of the Slovak Football Association (SFZ), Peter Zeman, has prepared detailed facts and figures about the official international matches of the Slovak women's national team. This information has escaped the attention of the general public and Slovak football statisticians for too long. However, thanks to the hard work of Peter Zeman, the blank spots in the history of the women's national team are gradually being filled. Many of the matches played shortly after the formation of the national team were not archived and often were not even covered by the Slovakian media.

UEFA archives have been of great help to Peter Zeman, but not all the matches could be found there either. In the 1990s there was no obligation for member associations to report them to the governing body of European football. However, as a result of Peter Zeman's



hard work, SFZ statistics have been officially verified and validated from 2006 to the present day. Data since 1993 are also available but not necessarily complete. Consequently, SFZ stats do not necessarily match those of UEFA and FIFA.

The ambition of the SFZ is to gradually research official international women's matches up to 1994, when a new chapter in the history of independent Slovak

football began. The first official match of the Slovak women's national team was played on 21 June 1993, when Czech and Slovak teams met for a friendly match in the Czech town of Hluk. The home team won 6-0.

The full list of women's national team matches since 1993 is available on <https://www.futbalsfz.sk/sr-women-and-results>.

GIRL POWER AT FC FRIBOURG

PIERRE BENOIT



Women's football is booming – and not only in Switzerland. With maximum points from their opening four European Championship qualifiers, the Swiss women's national team currently share top spot in their group with Belgium. However, women are setting the tone not only on the pitch, but in the boardroom as well, for instance at FC Fribourg, a 119-year-old former top-flight club that reached the 1954 Swiss Cup final.

Since October, the club known as the Penguins has been run by six women, with its 34-year-old president, Magdalena Lauper, ably assisted by Ewa Pogrzebska (42, general secretary), Monika Barras (53) and Carla Cloutier (45, both sponsorship managers), Swann Marchand (32, match

organisation) and Talia Zalts (21, marketing).

For this once proud club, which has been wallowing in the depths of the Swiss 1. Liga and 2. Liga for many years and currently sits just one point above the relegation places with 13 points from 13 matches in the 2. Liga interregional – the fifth tier of Swiss football – an injection of new blood is no bad thing as it approaches its 120th anniversary next autumn. FC Fribourg has spent years in the shadow of ice hockey club HC Fribourg-Gottéron, which draws in huge crowds across the road while the football team often finds itself playing in front of just 100 spectators in its 10,000-capacity Stade St. Léonard. In the club's 120th anniversary year, the six women, who were elected to the helm of



FC Fribourg in October, want to make a fresh start and start the ball rolling towards better times ahead. Until very recently, the all-female crew could hardly have imagined being given such a prominent role at a football club. The six women have lived in this region for several years and are now determined to give something back to the city where they studied by playing their part in FC Fribourg's renaissance.

TURKEY

www.tff.org

PLAYER POSITION TRAINING FOR NATIONAL YOUTH TEAMS

EGE BULUNAZ



Under the leadership of the Turkish Football Federation's director of football development and national youth teams, Tolunay Kafkas, special player position training has been introduced for national youth team players to contribute to their development.

First to benefit from this training were the centre forwards in all age groups. Tolunay Kafkas managed the training session, in which ten centre forwards and two goalkeepers took part.

Training sessions for the other player positions will follow shortly.

Tolunay Kafkas has expressed his gratitude to all club representatives and coaches for their support and cooperation in this initiative.



TFF

WALES

www.faw.cymru

THE ART OF THE WALES SHIRT

MELISSA PALMER



To launch the new Wales (Cymru) national team home kit, the Football Association of Wales (FAW) held the first-ever exhibition of Wales national team shirts at St Fagans National Museum of History in Cardiff, the Welsh capital.

The free two-week exhibition, entitled The Art of the Wales Shirt – Celf Crys Cymru, was created in collaboration with official partners JD and adidas, and curated by Welsh shirt collectors Neal Heard and Simon Shakeshaft.

The Art of the Wales Shirt, covering 60 years of Welsh football shirt history, features 28 match-worn shirts, including a selection of Cymru's most iconic shirts worn by the likes of Terry Yorath, Ian Rush, Gareth Bale and both current managers, Ryan Giggs and Jayne Ludlow.

The kit exhibition showcased the FAW's commitment to both Welsh and popular culture and offered the FAW further opportunities to host exclusive fan

engagement events. The FC Cymru live event, which featured both current and former Wales players such as Tash Harding, Robert Earnshaw and Joe Ledley, can be viewed on the FA Wales social channels.

FAW CEO Jonathan Ford said: "We're delighted that this exhibition has come to life, chronicling the history of our national sides through the art of the Wales shirt."



BIRTHDAYS IN JANUARY

1 WEDNESDAY Aurelio De Laurentiis (Italy) 40 Dariusz Mioduski (Poland) Davor Šuker (Croatia)	2 THURSDAY David Mujiri (Georgia)	3 FRIDAY Andreas Demetriou (Cyprus) 50 George Pirtskhalava (Georgia) Gerhard Sager (Sweden)	4 SATURDAY José Fontelas Gomes (Portugal) Alexis Spirin (Russia)	5 SUNDAY Mette Christiansen (Norway) David George Collins (Wales) Peter Oskam (Netherlands) 60	6 MONDAY Robert Bayat (Belgium) Sergii Lyсенchuk (Ukraine) Rudolf Marxer (Liechtenstein) Michael Zoratti (Austria)	7 TUESDAY Andrejs Šipalo (Latvia)
10 FRIDAY Emil Bozhinovski (North Macedonia) Simone Grana (San Marino) Herbert Hübeler (Austria) Zsolt Széldi (Hungary)	11 SATURDAY Olivier Brochart (France)	12 SUNDAY Juan N. García-Nieto Portabella (Spain)	13 MONDAY Lilach Asulin (Israel) Niccolò Donna (Italy) Siarhei Ilyich (Belarus) Ausra Kancė (Lithuania) Drago Kos (Slovenia) Sofoklis Pilavios (Greece)	14 TUESDAY Nodar Akhalkatsi (Georgia) Marc Keller (France) Igor Satkii (Moldova) Radu Traian Visan (Romania)	15 WEDNESDAY Atanas Furnadzhiev (Bulgaria) 50 Mitja Lainščak (Slovenia) Alessandro Lulli (Italy) Phivos Vakis (Cyprus)	16 THURSDAY Kleomenis Bontiotis (Greece) Milan Karadžić (Serbia) Kenneth Reeh (Denmark) Petra Stanonik Bosnjak (France)
19 SUNDAY Artur Azaryan (Armenia) Bujar Kasmī (Albania) Ansgar Schwenken (Germany)	20 MONDAY Pedro Ángel Galán Nieto (Spain) 60 Sofia Karagiorgi (Cyprus) Lars-Åke Lagrell (Sweden) 80 Nina Patalon (Poland) Maciej Sawicki (Poland) Ilir Shulku (Albania) Bjorn Vassallo (Malta) 40	21 TUESDAY Maria Teresa Andreu Grau (Spain) Vladimir Iveta (Croatia)	22 WEDNESDAY Alan Freeland (Scotland) Are Habicht (Estonia) Lassin Isaksen (Faroe Islands) Peter Jehle (Liechtenstein) Anja Kunick (Germany) Sebastian Stawicki (Poland)	23 THURSDAY Harry M. Been (Netherlands) Teuvo Holopainen (Finland) Sviatlana Hrynkevich (Belarus)	24 FRIDAY Anneli Gustafsson (Sweden) Nikolai Ivanov (Russia) Katrien Jans (Belgium) Pat Quigley (Republic of Ireland) Edi Sunjić (Croatia) Patrick Wattebled (France)	25 SATURDAY Pascal Fritz (France) Gevorg Hovhannisyán (Armenia)
28 TUESDAY David Attard (Malta)	29 WEDNESDAY Joaquim Evangelista (Portugal)	30 THURSDAY Gilles Leclair (France)	31 FRIDAY Mieke De Clercq (Belgium) Vadims Direktorenko (Latvia) Emilie Doms (France) 30 Brian Lawlor (Wales) Stefan Majewski (Poland) Alexandros Spyropoulos (Greece)			

BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY

1 SATURDAY Hüseyin Coşkun (Turkey) Karen Espelund (Norway) Volker Roth (Germany) Libor Sionko (Czech Republic) Kyros Vassaras (Greece)	2 SUNDAY Trygve Bornø (Norway) Barbara Moschini (Italy) Urs Reinhard (Switzerland)	3 MONDAY Mark Blackbourne (England) Steen Dahrup (Denmark) Jelena Oblaković-Babić (Serbia) Renata Tomášová (Slovakia) Sergii Vladyko (Ukraine) Daniela Wimmer (Austria)	4 TUESDAY Oleh Protasov (Ukraine)	5 WEDNESDAY Igor Gryshchenko (Ukraine) Václav Kronkl (Czech Republic) Christopher Rawlings (England) Peter Rudbaek (Denmark)	6 THURSDAY Josep Maria Bartomeu (Spain) Leonid Kaloshin (Russia) 40 Lars-Christer Olsson (Sweden) 70 Gabriel Weiss (Slovakia)	7 FRIDAY Michael Gerlinger (Germany) Duško Grabovac (Croatia)
10 MONDAY Götz Bender (Germany) Sergio López-Andújar (Spain) Domagoj Vuckov (Croatia)	11 TUESDAY Madeline Ekvall (Sweden) Annelie Larsson (Sweden) Gazmend Malo (Albania) Fritz Stuchlik (Austria)	12 WEDNESDAY Panagiotis Chatzialexiou (Germany) David McDowell Zor (Slovenia) Borislav Mihaylov (Bulgaria)	13 THURSDAY Roman Babaev (Russia) Oleksandr Bandurko (Ukraine) Christian Mutschler (Switzerland) 50	14 FRIDAY Livio Bazzoli (Italy) Marinus den Engelsman (Netherlands) Wouter Lambrecht (Belgium) Manuel López Fernández (Spain) Juan Carlos Miralles (Andorra) Joeri Van De Velde (Belgium) Thomas Weyhing (Germany)	15 SATURDAY Susanne Erlandsson (Sweden) Orkhan Huseynzade (Azerbaijan) Svitlana Shkil (Ukraine) Leif Sundell (Sweden) Sonia Testaguzza (Switzerland)	16 SUNDAY Roman Sowinski (Poland) 60
19 WEDNESDAY Malky Mackay (Scotland) Jānis Mežekis (Latvia) Louis Peila (Switzerland)	20 THURSDAY Lars Arnesson (Sweden) Adnan Džemidžić (Bosnia and Herzegovina) Ion Geolghău (Romania) Eggert Magnusson (Iceland) Edward Potok (Poland)	21 FRIDAY Fernando Gomes (Portugal) Eugène Westerink (Netherlands) Ralph Zloczower (Switzerland)	22 SATURDAY Ana Caetano (Portugal) Damien Garitte (Belgium) Asim Khudiyev (Azerbaijan) Vladimir Šajn (Slovenia) Burim Sejdiu (North Macedonia) 40	23 SUNDAY Viacheslav Daragan (Ukraine)	24 MONDAY Oleg Harlamov (Estonia) Peter Jones (England) Xavier Palacin (England)	25 TUESDAY
28 FRIDAY John Beattie (England) 60 Panagiotis Papachristos (Greece) 50 Markus Stenger (Germany)	29 SATURDAY					

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

8 WEDNESDAY

Alf Hansen
(Norway)
Bernhard Neuhold
(Austria)
Nelly Viennot (France)
Jan Vork (Denmark)

9 THURSDAY

Velid Imamović
(Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Antonin Plachý
(Czech Republic)
Olga Tanschi (Moldova)
Duygu Yaşar (Turkey)

17 FRIDAY

Sune Hellströmer
(Sweden)
Blaženka Logarušić
(Croatia)
Aristeidis Stavropoulos
(Greece)
Jan W. Wegereef
(Netherlands)

18 SATURDAY

Mark Boetekees
(Netherlands)
Soldo Dragan (Bosnia and Herzegovina) **40**

26 SUNDAY

Florence Hardouin (France)
Metin Kazancıoğlu (Turkey)
Massimo Nanni
(San Marino) **50**
Miroslaw Ryszka
(Poland) **60**
Saša Zagorc (Slovenia)
Cyril Zimmermann
(Switzerland)

27 MONDAY

Thomas Cayol
(France)
Manu Leroy
(Belgium) **40**
Krister Malmsten
(Sweden) **70**
Alfredo Olivares
(Spain) **40**

FEBRUARY

Meetings

10 February, Nyon
Club Competitions Committee

13 February, Nyon
UEFA Futsal EURO 2022: play-off draw
HatTrick Committee

14 February, Nyon
UEFA Youth League: round of 16, quarter-final and semi-final draws

28 February, Nyon
UEFA Europa League: round of 16 draw

Competitions

27 January–5 February
European qualifiers for the 2020 Futsal World Cup: elite round
Qualifiers for Futsal EURO 2022

11/12 February
UEFA Youth League: play-offs

18/19 and 25/26 February
UEFA Champions League: round of 16 (first legs)

20 February
UEFA Europa League: round of 32 (first legs)

27 February
UEFA Europa League: round of 32 (return legs)

NOTICE

Last October, **Oren Hasson** was elected president of the Israel Football Association.

8 SATURDAY

Mike Appleby
(England)
Felix Grigore
(Romania)
Johan van Kouterik
(Netherlands)

9 SUNDAY

Andreu Camps i Povill
(Spain)
Daniilo Filacchione
(Italy) **50**
Fino Fini (Italy)
Moshe Zoaretz
(Israel)

17 MONDAY

Róbert Barczy
(Hungary)
Antonio Dario (Italy)
Gudrun Inga Sivertsen
(Iceland)
Eva Straatsma
(Netherlands)
Terje Svendsen
(Norway)

18 TUESDAY

Petro Ivanov (Ukraine)
Patrick Kelly
(Republic of Ireland)
Juan Luis Larrea Sarobe
(Spain)
Vasily Melnychuk
(Ukraine)
Jordi Pascual
(Andorra)

26 WEDNESDAY

Per Eliasson
(Sweden)
Ghenadie Scurtul
(Moldova)

27 THURSDAY

Egidius Braun
(Germany)
Enrique Cerezo Torres
(Spain)
Allan Hansen
(Denmark)
Peter Lundström
(Finland)



== EQUAL GAME

UEFA RESPECT

