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Photos: UEFA/plwoods.ch

# Message of the president

## Refound confidence

Nothing can be built on false pretences. Half truths and ambiguous words are too shaky a basis on which to construct anything that is supposed to last.

For many years, relations between the professional clubs and football's governing bodies were stagnating in murky water in Europe. On the one hand, the clubs had a role – sometimes an important one – in UEFA bodies. At the same time, those same clubs, which belonged to an exclusive grouping, were quick not only to criticise the international football bodies, but even to take them to court. On the other hand, on the side of the game's authorities, the principles of the statutes and respect for them, coupled with a vague legal environment, meant denying the obvious and not seizing the problem head on.

On the positive side, however, the doors to dialogue always remained open. Gradually, thanks in particular to bodies like the European Club Forum and the Professional Football Strategy Council, intransigence gave way to a desire and determination to find a compromise. Since certain aspects of the problem went beyond UEFA's scope, FIFA joined forces with the advocates of dialogue and reconciliation.

January saw a historic turning point, as well as a logical development, in relations between the football authorities and the clubs – no more wranglings in the civil courts and no more exclusive groupings, but a new European Club Association which is open and transparent, and, above all, renewed confidence between football's leaders and one of the game's principal stakeholders, the clubs.

And when the confidence is there, all sides know when doubts arise or when opinions differ that they can count on the understanding of the other to remove those doubts and to find mutually acceptable solutions – no more need for controversy via the media, and no more need for lawsuits.

Confidence is a major and indispensable part of the unity of the European football family.



**Michel Platini**  
UEFA President

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### COVER

The EURO 2008 finalists started preparing in February with a series of friendly matches, including Turkey v Sweden.

Photo: Ozer/AFP/Getty Images

# XXXII UEFA Congress in Zagreb

## Keeping the associations informed



**ZAGREB, THE CAPITAL OF CROATIA, WAS THE VENUE FOR THE XXXII UEFA CONGRESS ON 31 JANUARY. AS A LOT HAD HAPPENED SINCE HE WAS ELECTED UEFA PRESIDENT A YEAR AGO, MICHEL PLATINI DECIDED THAT THE CONGRESS WAS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO REPORT ON SOME IMPORTANT TOPICS.**

In his own address, Michel Platini gave a wide overview of the events and achievements that had marked his first year in office: amendments to the UEFA Statutes adopted at an Extraordinary Congress in Zurich in order to strengthen the powers of the Executive Committee; an increase in the number of committees, which were now chaired by members of the Executive Committee; greater representation of the national associations in the committees; creation of the Professional Football Strategy Council; memorandum of understanding with FIFPro Europe; revision of the UEFA Champions League access list and reform of the UEFA Cup; and a memo-

randum of understanding with the European Club Association – to mention only the most significant moments of the past year, which also saw an intensification of relations with the European Union authorities. *“European football is united. It speaks with one single voice. And for the first time, the European Union is hearing it and, more importantly, listening to it,”* the president said, highlighting also the close links between UEFA and FIFA.

The key to many of these achievements had been the UEFA president's preferred approach of dialogue and communication: *“It is through dialogue and communication that you can make progress, build and grow.”*

And he has a clear goal on the horizon: *“My vision in this respect is clear. It envisages, in the medium term, the signature of a European football charter which defines the rights and duties of everyone, while respecting the statutes in force, of course.”*

### **Emphasis on respect**

Throughout his address, the UEFA president stressed the notion of respect: *“Respect is the new message that we will try to convey in future through our different competitions, starting with EURO 2008.”*

Sharing knowledge and information is another form of respect. *“Football is a team game, a passing game. So let's share,”* the president urged. *“Don't be afraid to share, to learn.”*

Putting his own words into deeds, a mass of information was shared with the congress delegates. In addition to the information pro-

# Messages

After words of welcome from **Vlatko Markovic**, president of the Croatian Football Federation, the country's prime minister, **Ivo Sanader**, addressed the congress on behalf of the new Croatian government, formed last January, one of whose priorities was to join the European Union. *"Croatia is a country with a great sporting tradition,"* he said, before expressing how impatient he was for EURO 2008 to kick off and for Croatia's first match in the tournament, against Austria in Vienna. He also highlighted *"the usefulness of the HatTrick programme, which gives Croatia the hope of producing more great footballers."*



Referring to the memorandum of understanding between UEFA and the European Club Association, the FIFA president, **Joseph S. Blatter**, said: *"2008 is a year of consolidation for UEFA and the start of a new era"*. He was very happy about the excellent cooperation between FIFA and UEFA: *"By working together, we have found solutions to facilitate better understanding in the world of international football."*

Regarding the relationship between football and society, the FIFA president also revealed that, directly or indirectly, a quarter of the world's population was involved in football in one way or another.

He also looked forward to seeing the representatives of UEFA's member associations in Sydney for the next FIFA Congress, which, among other matters, would discuss items dealt with by the FIFA Strategic Committee, such as the protection of national identities and the strengthening of the national teams.

Before listing the main international football events this year, he made an appeal, saying: *"We don't talk enough about protecting players' health!"*

vided by the UEFA president himself, the delegates had received the detailed written reports of the UEFA president and Executive Committee, and of the UEFA administration. The chairman of the Finance Committee, UEFA vice-president Marios N. Lefkaritis, commented on the financial report, which presented a satisfactory situation. The accounts and the budget were approved, and a strategic financial outlook for 2007/08 to 2012/13 was presented. The delegates' attention was drawn to the fact that the euro will be UEFA's reporting currency in future, instead of the Swiss franc, a change that has already been partially in effect for the current season.

## Work of the committees

Since the committees now have a new role in UEFA's operations, it was felt that the congress should hear about the committees' activities

from the chairmen themselves. Although some of the 19 UEFA committees have not met yet, most are already down to work, and Friedrich Stickler (Club Competitions), Per Ravn Omdal (Development and Technical Assistance), Senes Erzik (Fair Play and Social Responsibility, and Stadium and Security), Grigoriy Surkis (Futsal and Beach Soccer), Giangiorgio Spiess (Legal), Michel D'Hooghe (Medical), Geoffrey Thompson (National Associations), Gilberto Madaíl (National Team Competitions) and Angel María Villar Llona (Referees) presented brief reports on the tasks and activities of their respective committees.

The UEFA first vice-president, Senes Erzik, also described the role of the Professional Football Strategy Council and reported on the first meeting of this body, which brings together representatives of the national associations, leagues, clubs and players.





### HatTrick – a welcome programme

Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, chairman of the HatTrick Committee, presented a positive report on the HatTrick programme to date. Its investment programme, in particular, had initiated projects which would probably have otherwise remained on the drawing board. It had had a multiplier effect on other funding – from the local authorities primarily, but also from private sponsors. Thanks to the programme, training centres, playing fields and stadiums have been built in the territories of many UEFA member associations. The HatTrick education programme has also proved to be a highly appreciated initiative, while the mini-pitch programme – launched to coincide with UEFA's golden jubilee – was so popular that grants amounting to CHF 49 million of the CHF 52 million reserved for this project have already been approved.

The first cycle of the HatTrick programme finishes this year, when a fine-tuned second cycle begins. It will

## Certificate for the honorary president

Immediately after he was elected UEFA president at the 2007 UEFA Congress in Düsseldorf, Michel Platini proposed that his predecessor, Lennart Johansson, be made honorary president of UEFA, a proposal which the congress accepted with a standing ovation.

In Zagreb, at the start of the congress, Michel Platini presented Lennart Johansson with his honorary president's certificate. The only other former UEFA president to hold this title was Jacques Georges.

■ Three honorary members of UEFA attended the congress in Zagreb: Hans Bangerter, UEFA General Secretary from 1960 to 1988, his successor Gerhard Aigner, whose position changed to that of chief executive of UEFA in 2000, before he retired at the end of 2003, and Jean Fournet-Fayard, former member of the UEFA Executive Committee and a pillar of the Club Competitions Committee.



Lowry/AP

comprise a single investment programme (in the first cycle, a distinction was made between physical and intel-

## Through Croatian eyes

It was a great challenge for our federation to host the XXXII UEFA Congress. We wanted to justify in the best possible way the great recognition given to us by the UEFA Executive Committee. We are extremely pleased to have received praise and congratulations from the highest ranked UEFA officials and all the congress participants in acknowledgment of our complete success. This congress held in Zagreb contributed even more to the general enthusiasm of the sports community and the public towards Croatian football, after the great success of our national team in qualifying for EURO 2008. Our national team has started its preparations with friendly matches in an atmosphere of optimism for successful performances at this greatest of European competitions.

*Ante Pavlovic*



Photos: UEFA-epjwoods.fr



The congress participants in good humour!

On the occasion of the congress, Michel Platini paid tribute to three national association general secretaries who recently retired after many years of service: from left to right: Teuvo Holopainen (Finland), Horst R. Schmidt (Germany), Michel Platini and Haim Zimmer (Israel).



the Scottish Football Association, seconded by the football associations of the Republic of Ireland, Latvia and Sweden. For the purpose of the study, the Executive Committee had appointed a working group composed of three of its members – Gilberto Madaíl, Mathieu Sprengers and Geoffrey Thompson. With the assistance of the UEFA administration, Euro 2008 SA and an external company, the group had examined the matter from the angles of sporting quality, marketing impact and tournament organisation.

At the congress, Gilberto Madaíl presented the findings so far, pointing out, in the first place, that no change in format could be contemplated before EURO 2016. Four options had been envisaged, two of which had been selected for further examination – a final round involving 24 teams divided into six groups of four, and a final round involving 20 teams divided into four groups of five. The format of the qualifying competition had also been taken into consideration by the working group, given that the qualifiers also had a major economic impact on most of the participants. The pros and cons of these two formats will now be analysed against the benchmark of the current 16-team format, and the Executive Committee is due to take a decision at the end of this year.

With just over 120 days to go until UEFA EURO 2008 kicks off, the delegates' appetite was whetted with images of the host cities and a presentation by Friedrich Stickler, president of the Austrian Football Association, who, on behalf of the two host nations – Austria and Switzerland – assured everyone that they were ready for the tournament. He also gave an illustration of the massive enthusiasm generated by the competition, saying that the first 300,000 tickets put on sale had attracted tens of millions of applications. He announced that a new website would be launched on 28 February, and that a workshop with the finalists would be taking place on 12 and 13 March.

lectual investments) into which the mini-pitch component will be incorporated (it was treated separately before). The education programme will be expanded, as will the financial assistance programme, which is divided into solidarity payments, contributions towards the proper implementation of the club licensing system and for taking part in the non-top UEFA competitions, as well incentives for improving technical and management skills.

In the technical field, the delegates heard from Per Ravn Omdal about

the creation of a new, exchange-based, technical development programme (see page 15).

### Format of European Championship final rounds

Another item on the agenda of this congress – which lasted over four hours – was a status report on the feasibility study requested by the 2007 UEFA Congress in Düsseldorf into a 24-team European Championship final round. The proposal had come from

## Visit to the president of Croatia

The UEFA president and the five vice-presidents, accompanied by the president and general secretary of FIFA, Joseph S. Blatter and Jérôme Valcke, and by the president and general secretary of the Croatian Football Federation, Vlatko Markovic and Zorislav Srebric, were received in Zagreb by the president of Croatia, Stjepan Mesic.



Photos: UEFA-pjwoods.ch

# The Congress in pictures





The European Club Forum at its last-ever meeting.



# The European Club Forum gives way to the European Club Association

**THE EUROPEAN CLUB FORUM, WHICH WAS CREATED IN AUGUST 2002 AND COMPOSED OF MORE THAN 100 OF THE CLUBS INVOLVED IN THE UEFA COMPETITIONS, HAS GIVEN WAY TO A NEW BODY, THE EUROPEAN CLUB ASSOCIATION (ECA), WHICH CAME INTO BEING AT UEFA'S HEADQUARTERS IN NYON ON 21 JANUARY.**

Before this change came about, two groupings had existed: the European Club Forum (ECF), on the one hand, created and managed by UEFA and comprising a mix of clubs, including big

and small clubs from different countries; and, on the other hand, an exclusive, closed group of big clubs – in principle members of the ECF – which UEFA could not recognise because of its very

nature. It cannot be claimed that there was no dialogue between these two bodies, since some clubs belonged to both. However, the situation appeared to be frustrated to the point of deadlock by sustained complaints against FIFA and UEFA taken to the civil courts by the exclusive Brussels-based group of big clubs.

The creation of the Professional Football Strategy Council provided a valuable tool for breaking the deadlock, and last September, the UEFA president, Michel Platini, was entrusted by the Executive Committee with the task of initiating dialogue with the clubs, via the member clubs of the ECF. At its meeting in Lucerne in December, the Executive Committee decided, in view of the positive course of the discussions, to ask the UEFA president to reach an agreement with the clubs.

## Declaration of intent

With the assistance of FIFA, an important step was taken on 15



A bird's eye view of the auditorium in the House of European Football.



All the clubs from the European Club Forum were invited to join the new association.



January in Zurich, when FIFA, UEFA and representatives of a dozen European clubs (1) signed a declaration of intent, which reached its logical conclusion in Nyon a week later, at a plenary meeting of the ECF, when 16 clubs (2) founded the European Club Association. Compared with the ECF, which came under UEFA's auspices, the ECA is an independent association recognised by UEFA as the only body with the authority to defend the clubs' interests at European level. A memorandum of understanding was signed by UEFA and the ECA in Nyon on 21 January. The ECA will have its own secretariat, headed by a general secretary. It will comprise 103 clubs from UEFA's 53 member associations and will hold plenary meetings twice a year in principle.

### ECA membership

As was the practice of the ECF, the statutes of the ECA define that the number of clubs per association represented in the ECA is determined by the national association rankings, according to their clubs' performance in UEFA competitions, on the following basis:

Association ranking	Number of clubs
1-3	5
4-6	4
7-15	3
16-26	2
27-53	1

The composition of the ECA will be revised every two years. The clubs themselves are selected according to the club coefficients, which are calculated on the basis of their results in the UEFA competitions.

These coefficients also determine how many representatives each group (subdivision) has on the ECA Board, as follows:

Association subdivision	Number of clubs	Board members
1-6	27	5
7-15	27	3
16-26	22	2
27-53	27	1

Each subdivision elects its representatives at a general meeting. In addition to the 11 elected members, the board also comprises the four ECA representatives elected to the Professional Football Strategy Council by the ECA Board. Until the next general meeting, due to take place at the end of this season, the ECA will be represented by a transitional board composed of Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (FC Bayern München, chairman), Joan Laporta (FC Barcelona, vice-chairman), Umberto Gandini (AC Milan), Peter Kenyon (Chelsea FC), Marteen Fontein (AFC Ajax) and Jean-Michel Aulas (Olympique Lyonnais).

### Football the winner

This return to a state of harmony in European football has been greeted on all sides as a victory for football. "Normally with agreements there are winners and losers but this



Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, former ECF chairman, will take on the role of acting chairman of the ECA.

time everyone is a winner," Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said.

At the UEFA Congress in Zagreb, the UEFA president presented the broad lines of the memorandum of understanding: "The member clubs of this association have promised to call an end to the legal proceedings they have instigated against our bodies and not to start any more. They have promised not to belong to any other association of clubs from more than one country. And they have promised to recognise the value of the national teams and not to organise or take part in any competition that is not recognised by either UEFA or FIFA.

"Recognition of the national teams, but also of UEFA and FIFA as →



Signatories to the memorandum of understanding, from left to right: Senes Erzik, Michel Platini, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and Joan Laporta.



The European Club Forum was a discussion platform valued by all participants.

Photos: UEFA-pjwoods.ch



## Discussions and suggestions

At its meeting in Nyon on 21 and 22 January, the members of the European Club Forum were invited to join the ECA. Although this was the key item on the agenda, the ECF also dealt with other matters, mainly linked to the UEFA club competitions.

They noted the amendments made to the UEFA club competition regulations for the 2008/09 season, particularly the increase in the number of locally trained players on List A to eight, up to four of whom could be association-trained players. This is the last step in the process that began in 2006/07, when the clubs had to list four locally trained players, up to two of whom could be association-trained.

The ECF also received a detailed explanation on the new formats adopted for the UEFA club competitions for the 2009-12 period (UEFA Champions League access list, groups of four in the UEFA Cup) as well as on the marketing strategy for the same three-year cycle.

Faithful to the system used since the ECF was created, the participants also discussed certain items in groups, before comparing ideas back in plenary session. On the question of the calculation of individual club coefficients, a majority were in favour of no more than 20% (instead of 33%)

of the national association coefficient coming into the calculation. The clubs from the smaller associations also asked for the results of qualifying matches to be taken into account in the club coefficients, as opposed to just in the national association rankings, as is presently the case. The idea of playing first qualifying round matches at the weekend did not meet with great enthusiasm, while that of playing first qualifying round matches twice in the same week (Wednesday/Thursday and the weekend) was rejected outright.

In the absence of the chairman, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, on the second day, on account of other commitments, it fell to the first vice-president, Joan Laporta, to conclude this final meeting of the ECF. In his words, *"Without the European Club Forum, the European Club Association could never have come about."* He also expressed satisfaction at the atmosphere of mutual trust which would now reign between the clubs and UEFA, and called for unity: *"Every club has to feel supported,"* he said.



Joan Laporta

→ *the governing bodies of football in Europe and in the world, an end to the court cases, an end to the threats of closed leagues...*"

As for the clubs: *"It works in their favour because FIFA has agreed to make certain changes to the international match calendar, because the clubs who release players for European Championship and World Cup finals will share in the profits of these competitions, and because they can finally feel that they too are a respected part of the family."*

The president made it clear that this share in the profits was in no way a form of compensation and that it did not call into question the principle of releasing players for national team duty. *"Quite the opposite,"* he stressed. *"It reinforces and safeguards it, because the clubs finally recognise the value of the national teams."*

In figures, this share in the profits amounts to a total of EUR 43.5 million for EURO 2008 and EUR 55 million for EURO 2012 (if revenue is as high as for EURO 2008). Payments to the clubs will be calculated on a per player/per day basis and be made via the national associations, who will transfer the relevant amounts to the clubs concerned. In the case of EURO 2004, 150 clubs would have benefited.

FIFA will put a similar system in place for the 2010 and 2014 World Cups.

The memorandum of understanding between UEFA and the ECA is valid until 31 July 2014.

(1) Real Madrid CF, FC Barcelona, AC Milan, Juventus, Olympique Lyonnais, Rangers FC, Manchester United FC, Chelsea FC, FC Bayern München, AFC Ajax, FC Porto, Olympiacos CFP.

(2) Real Madrid CF, FC Barcelona, AC Milan, Juventus, Olympique Lyonnais, Rangers FC, Manchester United FC, Chelsea FC, FC Bayern München, AFC Ajax, FC Porto, Olympiacos CFP, RSC Anderlecht, Birkirkara FC, NK Dinamo Zagreb, FC København.



The e-learning platform helps the national associations to use the tools and suggestions in their daily work.



The virtual meeting platform enables members of working communities to sit in front of their computer at home and share a presentation, for example.

A friendly atmosphere at the Tel Aviv workshop.

# Tel Aviv workshop

## A critical milestone in UEFA's KISS



Oded Karny

**AS DESCRIBED IN LAST JUNE'S UEFADIRECT (NO 62), THE KISS (KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SHARING SCENARIO) PROJECT STRIVES TO ASSIST NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS INCREASE THEIR SKILLS IN VARIOUS MANAGEMENT AREAS INCLUDING EVENT MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA.**

In the development of professionalism in these areas, the workshop in Tel Aviv at the beginning of February sets a critical milestone. The idea was for 27 associations to identify a number of key issues and undertake collective action in response. Associations that share common tasks will regroup into small working communities over the next six to nine months and kill two birds with one stone, if you like, by setting up new projects within their associations and at the same time developing best practices with other associations in the domain concerned.

As a result of the workshop, eight communities were established to develop best practices in the field of in-house versus outsourced delivery of rights for sponsors, sponsor partnership strategies, sponsorship rights packaging and more. Each community is composed of so-called drivers, who are the most proactive people in the community, and members. Each community established in Tel Aviv is composed of between five and ten representatives of different national associations.

### Two revolutionary tools

Getting people to work collectively when they are thousands of kilometres apart is quite a challenge. Fortunately, the 21st century has provided

us with tools which make distance learning or collaborative work at a distance child's play. KISS has customised two of these tools. First, a tailor-made online e-learning platform makes it possible for anyone in any national association to review all seminars and workshops interactively and to access many video sequences shot in these workshops. Second, a virtual meeting platform allows the members of working communities to sit in front of their computers at home and work together exactly as if they were gathered physically in a meeting room.

### Blended learning, not just technology!

The technology may be state of the art, but that is not enough. Human beings need to get together physically

to establish working methods and bonds. In this respect, Tel Aviv is a typical example of how networking between associations should be shaped. Associations came to the workshop with specific case studies demonstrating where they are now and what they want to achieve in the future. Experts stemming from the football family (from the associations themselves as well as outside specialists and UEFA experts) were given the task of establishing links between the various associations' challenges and showing how solutions developed for one could be helpful in another. The experts' analysis helped form a number of working communities around specific tasks and projects.

Getting people to work together is also a social and cultural challenge. The success encountered in Tel Aviv resulted, in great part, from the way the Israel Football Federation put all the pieces together – including excellent venue, various visits around the country and social events – to make the workshop a very special occasion and help those involved create unforgettable bonds.



Oded Karny

The Tel Aviv workshop participants.



Fitness training under the expert eye of Werner Helsen (in white).



# Referees courses in Cyprus Protect the players

**“GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE A DUTY TO PROTECT THE PLAYERS.”**

**THE WORDS OF UEFA REFEREE INSTRUCTOR HUGH DALLAS REFLECTED**

**THE DOMINANT THEME OF THE ANNUAL MID-TERM MEETING OF**

**EUROPE’S LEADING MATCH OFFICIALS IN CYPRUS FROM 4 TO 8 FEBRUARY.**

UEFA’s Referees Committee left the match officials present in no doubt of their responsibility to protect players from unfair play and also to protect the image of the game, notably by taking strong action against dangerous tackles and mass player confrontations. The importance of respect was underlined too, with the referees instructed to punish behaviour which undermines their authority.

Limassol was the location for this gathering of 88 of the continent’s top referees – the senior contingent on the 16th UEFA Advanced Course for Elite and Premier Referees, and their junior colleagues on the 17th UEFA Introductory Course for International Referees – which

was organised in cooperation with the Cyprus Football Association.

For the two groups the message was the same, starting with the instruction to take strong action against tackles where a player uses excessive force and is deemed to give no consideration to the safety of his opponent. *“According to the Laws of the Game, the only sanction possible is a red card if it’s an aggressive action which can injure the opponent,”* said UEFA’s head of refereeing, Yvan Cornu.

## **Tough action**

The problem of pushing and holding in the penalty box was also under

the microscope. While there is a feeling inside UEFA that progress has been made, the referees were told to keep up the good work. Indeed the directive was clear: book players who ignore a first warning and, when applicable, award a free kick or penalty.

Similarly tough action was prescribed to counter the increased occurrence of mass confrontations or ‘mob scenes’ between players. Referees should not hesitate to issue yellow cards – particularly to players who race across the pitch to get involved – and red cards if there is aggressive physical contact. *“We expect the referee to be on the spot quickly in order to avoid mass confrontation,”* added Cornu.

## **Respect**

To maintain respect, the Referees’ Committee instructed match officials to caution players for repeated misbehaviour in the defensive wall, and for dissent too. *“You have to make sure the players are aware dissent is not acceptable and this does not just refer to words, but gestures too,”* said Dallas.

It is not just on the pitch that UEFA wants players to maintain acceptable standards and from February, one of the assistant referees – who will be encouraged to take more responsibility generally – will head straight to the tunnel on the half-time and full-time whistles in an effort to safeguard against possible trouble between players on their walk back to the dressing rooms.

While the referees were reminded of their responsibilities ahead of the resumption of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Cup, they were also given a platform to air their opinions. UEFA Technical Director Andy Roxburgh – whose Football Development division took charge of the refereeing unit last year – chaired an inaugural Referee Forum in Limassol where the opposition to both ‘video referees’

Some of the new international referees in action.





The referees were also able to express their points of view.



and TV monitors in the technical area was only too evident.

*"We have to make sure we don't have TV monitors by the bench in the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Cup*

*and EURO games,"* said Roxburgh in support of the referees' views. However, the men in the middle did give their unanimous backing to one oft-debated innovation: goal-line technology.

## From day to day

**ENGLISH REFEREE STEVE TANNER WAS ONE OF 34 MATCH OFFICIALS FROM 26 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WHO ATTENDED THE 17TH UEFA INTRODUCTORY COURSE FOR INTERNATIONAL REFEREES IN LIMASSOL. HERE HE DESCRIBES HIS INTRODUCTION TO LIFE AS A UEFA REFEREE.**

### Day 1 – Monday, 4 February

We started with the FIFA fitness test and there was definitely some tension on our bus ride to the stadium in Larnaca. If you speak to any referee, they get nervous on the day of the test, no matter how good their fitness is.

The test comprises 6 x 40m sprints followed by 20 x 150m tempo runs, and the conditions were not easy – the sun was shining and although I passed the test I have to say that, coming from the English winter, I found it tough as there was no breeze at all.

Rather than a tour of Limassol in the afternoon, I opted for a massage – we're told you can't underestimate the importance of rest and recovery. Before dinner the referees had an informal English test with our instructors. English is the international language and UEFA referees need to speak at least a little – fortunately, this is something I don't have to worry about.

I should say it is a great honour just to be on this course - someone told me there are 350,000 referees in Europe so to be a UEFA referee puts you in the top 0.1 per cent!

### Day 2 – Tuesday, 5 February

We were in the classroom for much of the day – our instructors, Hugh Dallas and Vlado Sajin, showed us incidents from recent Champions League games and we had to go away and discuss them in groups.

The two main points were cooperation with our assistants and consistency in our decision-making.

It was interesting to hear the opinions of the other referees – in some other countries they don't expect the assistant referee to help out with penalty decisions – but it was made very clear that the assistants are there to support us.

There was also a thought-provoking presentation by Mattia Piffaretti, a sports psychologist, who mentioned a few things that I'd not really considered. On a match day I have some superstitions, but his point of view was that instead of thinking about them you should already be concentrating on the game.

### Day 3 – Wednesday, 6 February

We had morning training at the stadium in Nicosia. We did four different sessions and wore heart-rate monitors to help Werner Helsen assess our fitness levels. Werner will send out a weekly training programme to all the new referees. As a professional referee, I get this already but for some of the others it will be really beneficial to have a properly structured programme.

We were back in the classroom in the afternoon and the main message from Hugh Dallas was that we have a responsibility to protect players from foul play. Holding and pulling is an increasing problem and UEFA wants this stamped out very quickly.



Steve Tanner passed his fitness test in spite of the heat!

Photos: Sportfile

There was a presentation about preparing for a UEFA match from Mike Riley, my colleague from the Premier League. He gave an insight into everything he does to ensure he is fully prepared – including carrying his kit in his hand luggage just in case his suitcase goes missing.

For our final evening, we had a farewell dinner with the referees from the advanced course. I have to confess I did not stop talking about refereeing – there were so many different people to speak to and learn from.

### Day 4 – Thursday, 7 February

Before flying home, I took the opportunity to reflect on the course and I have to say, it's been absolutely phenomenal. The advice I have received here will definitely make me a stronger referee. Everyone was so helpful and even the elite referees made time to talk and give me their telephone numbers in case I ever need advice. It's good to know that I can now call on colleagues all over Europe to find out about teams should I be sent to their countries.



Alongside the UEFA Congress, the FIFA general secretary, Jérôme Valcke, conducted the draw to determine the order of the matches in World Cup qualifying groups 2 and 5, the teams concerned not having been able to agree on a fixture list.



In Zagreb, UEFA and the Alliance of European Football Coaches' Associations (AEFCA) signed a memorandum of understanding. Left to right: Karlheinz Raviol, AEFCA General Secretary, David Taylor and Michel Platini, UEFA General Secretary and President respectively, and Jozef Venglos, AEFCA President.

# Executive Committee meeting

## EURO 2012 – report and prospects

**THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MET FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR ON 29/30 JANUARY IN ZAGREB, JUST BEFORE THE UEFA CONGRESS.**

In his introductory address, the president, Michel Platini, gave an overview of the numerous things that had happened since their last meeting in Lucerne, the most notable being

the successful discussions with clubs and the signature of a memorandum of understanding in January between UEFA and the new European Club Association (cf. pages 8-10). The Executive Committee members applauded the president, who has completed in full the mandate they had given him.

The meeting was also an opportunity to take stock of preparations for the final round of the 2010-12 European Championship. In a report that was as clear-cut as it was precise, EURO 2012 commissioner Jacques Lambert reviewed the project's progress and made suggestions regarding the organisational structure. A certain degree of political instability in 2007 meant neither government could embark on the project with enough dynamism to tackle major issues (stadiums, transport, accommodation) that are vital to the hosting of a competition of this magnitude.

The situation does seem to have improved, however, and the next months will be critical according to the Executive Committee, which plans to do everything in its power to support the two host associations. In exchange, it expects the host associations and governments to demonstrate the same determination to rise to the challenge of this eastward expansion.

In other business, the Executive Committee approved the directives on the use of giant screens in EURO 2008 stadiums. Scenes that are considered to be controversial will not be shown.

### Technical development programme

The committee also gave the green light to a new technical development programme, the Study Group Scheme. The aim is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge in coach education, particularly in youth and grassroots football, and multiply the number of development activities. The project, run by UEFA with the help of the national associations, envisages small visiting groups of 5 to 11 people, in principle hosted by a club, benefiting from four-day tailor-made technical programmes. Each national association will be allowed to organise three visits per year (or visits for a maximum of 33 participants). UEFA plans to allocate some EUR 14 million to the programme over four years. The first stage will be to organise pilot exchanges.

### New members of the Grassroots Charter

Also in the field of technical development, the Executive Committee approved nine new one-star members of the UEFA Grassroots Charter – Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Moldova and Sweden – plus the five-star membership of Finland and Ukraine.

It also approved the addition of Azerbaijan, Belarus and Moldova's football associations to the UEFA Convention on the Mutual Recognition of Coaching Qualifications (level A).

The Executive Committee further adopted the Regulations of the UEFA Regions' Cup 2008/09. One additional rest day has been incorporated into the final-round calendar and the player eligibility criteria have been adjusted to support associations who have only a limited number of players.

■ The Executive Committee has modified the dates of some of its meetings this year. The new calendar is as follows: 28 March, Vaduz; 19/20 May, Moscow; 25/26 September, Bordeaux; 11/12 November, Belgrade; and 11/12 December, Nyon.

### Michel Platini at the Council of Europe

In Strasbourg on 24 January, the UEFA president, Michel Platini, addressed the winter Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He made a plea for safeguarding the essential values and specificity of sport, emphasising the importance of sport as a means of social and cultural integration.



The assembly, concerned about the risk of escalating commercialism in sport, was unanimous in adopting a resolution aimed at preserving the European model of sport and protecting the autonomy of sports associations.



The UEFA Grassroots Charter welcomed several new members in Zagreb.



## News from Brussels

From 1 July to 31 December, France will assume the presidency of the Council of the European Union. UEFA is already busy making preparations behind the scenes in anticipation of a sizable French sports portfolio.

Presided over by Slovenia since 1 January 2008, the European Union will enter an important era when the French take the helm. The programme currently being drawn up regarding the general orientation of EU action already looks ambitious. Sports activities will not be neglected; quite the opposite in fact. Aside from laying the groundwork for the entry into force of Article 149 of the Lisbon Treaty (cf. uefadirect No 70) – scheduled for early 2009 – three other main axes are under development.

First and foremost, there is health through sport, a topic that receives special attention from UEFA, as demonstrated by the recent Get Active advertising campaign aired during half-time in UEFA Champions League matches. We could also see guidelines on sport and exercise.

The second main axis centres on ethics in sport. The emphasis here will be placed on anti-doping measures and the creation of a European anti-doping network with the dual aim of facilitating the exchange of best practices between EU member states and enabling them to speak out with one voice when policy issues are at stake, for example, when collaborating with other anti-doping institutions or proposing improvements to the World Anti-Doping Code.

Protection of education will be the crux of the third section in the French presidency portfolio. France hopes to promote the "twin project", which guarantees an academic or vocational education to young athletes. France aims to encourage other member states to follow it down this path.

An informal meeting of sports ministers from the EU member states has already been scheduled for 27/28 November in Biarritz, to coincide with the European Sports Forum on 26/27 November.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO EURO2008



### All 53 UEFA members represented!

Numerous schools in Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein have been acting as ambassadors to the 53 UEFA members for almost a year. With EUROSCHOOLS 2008, the official EURO 2008 schools project, the children have enjoyed exciting moments on and off the football pitch.

For months now, school children have been playing their own, mixed-team tournaments, according to special fair-play rules and in the strips of the 53 nations.

Off the pitch, the young boys and girls have found many inventive ways to fulfil their roles as ambassadors: filming video blogs and film clips, cooking traditional national dishes, entertaining ambassadors and envoys, conducting interviews and creating exhibitions on the countries they represent.

The project has got thousands of school children involved in lively cultural exchanges that will lead right up to EURO 2008 and beyond. Members of many national governments are so enthusiastic about EUROSCHOOLS 2008 that they have invited the young "ambassadors" to visit them.

The official schools project is coordinated by streetfootballworld in

conjunction with FairPlay-vidc and the Swiss Academy for Development. Project sponsors include UEFA, of course, plus the governments of Austria and Switzerland and the Austrian and Liechtenstein football associations.

In September, youth delegations from all 53 UEFA members will come together in Austria and Switzerland to take part in an intercultural youth camp, using football as an educational tool for dialogue and fair play. Within the EUROSCHOOLS 2008 programme, the youth camp is aimed at strengthening the idea of sustainability – young people who get to know neighbouring countries and new cultures will have the chance to make, and nurture, lasting contacts throughout the whole of Europe.

At the end of the youth camp, a fair-play tournament involving 530 young people will be held in Liechtenstein.



Euroschoools 2008

## ALBANIA



### Arie Haan signs contract to coach Albania

Arie Haan is the new coach of the Albanian national team. A former Dutch international (runner-up in the 1978 FIFA World Cup), Haan entered a two-year contract with the Albanians on 4 January.

The agreement between the Dutchman and the Albanian FA was publicly announced at a press conference held by the president of the Albanian FA, Armand Duka, and Arie Haan. Haan has also picked his technical staff, all of whom are Dutch names. Haan is the fourth foreign coach to direct the Albanian national team since the fall of communism in 1990.

After the press conference in Tirana, Arie Haan and Armand Duka travelled to Copenhagen to negotiate the Group 1 match schedule for the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

During his career, Haan has coached many clubs in Europe. He achieved his greatest success in Germany when he took Stuttgart FC to the UEFA Cup final in 1989. Albania is Haan's third national team, having already had coaching spells with China and Cameroon.

Press Office



Armand Duka, president of the Albanian FA (right), and coach, Arie Haan, sign the deal.

## ARMENIA



### Jan Poulsen appointed national team coach

Jan Borge Poulsen was introduced as the new head coach of Armenia's national team by the president of the Football Federation of Armenia (FFA), Ruben Hayrapetyan, at a press conference on 24 January. The two-year contract lasts until May 2010.

Jan Poulsen, from Denmark, has been involved in football for many years. He coached many Danish football clubs in the 80s and was assistant coach for his home country from 1990 to 1992, helping the team achieve the title of European Champions in 1992. From then until 1999, he was head coach of Denmark's Under-21s, at the same as working in the coaching staff for Denmark's national team in EURO 96 and the 1998 FIFA World Cup. Poulsen



Jan Poulsen displays the Armenia national team shirt just given to him by the president, Ruben Hayrapetyan.

also held a top coaching position in the Jordanian Under-20s team that qualified for the FIFA U-20 World Cup.

■ The FFA, Coca Cola and SOS Children's Village organised a match between an SOS Village team and the 2007 Coca Cola Cup winners within the framework of the Global Peace Games programme. The main aim of the programme is to help socially vulnerable children make friends and to give currency to healthy lifestyles, sport and football. The match took place on a mini-pitch which was built thanks to UEFA's HatTrick programme.

It is important to note that SOS Children's Village cooperate with the FFA and Coca Cola in other areas too. The FFA and Coca Cola have organised two grassroots tournaments in the past two years, which included boys and girls from around 40 schools. In 2006 only 16 schools participated, but by 2007 this number had increased to 40.

■ Partial reconstruction of the Vazgen Sargsyan (Republican) stadium began on 20 January. The FFA has signed a contract with an Israeli company, which will manage the reconstruction of the pitch according to international standards. There are also plans to start reconstructing the stadium's VIP areas and security system. The fans' entrance and exit will likewise be modernised. Alongside all of this, the FFA is currently still in negotiations with various international organisations regarding the installation of a new lighting system. The reconstruction of the Vazgen Sargsyan stadium is due to be complete by the end of August this year.

Tigran Israelyan

## AZERBAIJAN



### Developing and popularising futsal

The first Baku International Futsal Tournament organised by the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) kicked off in the Baku Sports Palace on 15 January. Four teams participated – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Georgia and a Baku selection.

The AFFA decided to launch the Baku International Futsal Tournament, and make it an annual fixture, due to the long-standing, heavy interest in futsal within society. Next year there are plans to invite more teams and enlarge the competition. The main aim of the tournament is to develop and popularise futsal in Azerbaijan. The tournament attracted a great deal of interest and was reported on in the media. All of Azerbaijan's matches were broadcast live on the state TV channel.

The Azerbaijanis won the tournament, beating Kazakhstan in the final. After the final whistle, the AFFA presented awards to all the teams involved in the tournament.

Asim Khudiev



## BELARUS



### Fourth international youth tournament goes to Russia

The fourth international youth football tournament took place in Minsk from 8 to 13 January. It was organised by the Belarus Football Association (BFF) with the help of city's administration. The tournament attracted an impressive number of participants, thanks to the good arrangements and increasing recognition of the BFF among Europe's football associations. Besides two teams from Belarus (whose players were born in 1991/92), there were U17 participants from Azerbaijan, Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova and Russia.

The tournament was held in an indoor football arena with an artificial pitch. In the traditional format, the teams were divided into two groups for the round-robin preliminary stage, after which the final positions were determined on the last day in matches between the pairs of teams who finished the group matches in the same position.

Group A was won by Belarus, following wins against Belgium (1-0) and Lithuania (1-0) and a draw against Azerbaijan.





The Russians take the youth title.

In Group B, Russia finished top of the table, having won all their matches 1-0. Having finished their groups in the runners-up spot, Belgium and Italy played for bronze, which the Italians secured with a 1-0 win.

Despite the support of their fans, Belarus lost the final 2-0 against Russia. However, the tournament was not a question of winning or losing, but an excellent opportunity for youth footballers to test their strength in a high quality international tournament before the new season officially starts.

At the closing ceremony, the president of the BFF, Gennady Nevyglas, thanked all the teams for beautiful fair play and invited them to Minsk next January. He also expressed the hope that the tournament would improve its level and attract a wider geographical range of participants. So if your association would like to take part, please contact our organising committee (info@bff.by).

*Sergey Novysh*

## BELGIUM



### René Vandereycken sticks with Red Devils

The Belgian Football Association signed a new contract with René Vandereycken on Friday 18 January. Belgium coach since 1 January 2006, Vandereycken will now take the Red Devils into their 2010 World Cup qualifying campaign. The Belgian FA has also put in place a new communication plan for its national A side, while a decision has yet been taken on the appointment of a new assistant coach.

Vandereycken, 54, took over from Aimé Anthuenis when the team failed to reach either EURO 2004 or the 2006 World Cup. Vandereycken's top priority when taking the helm was to get the Belgian A side into EURO 2008 – an aim that he was unfortunately unable to fulfil. Nevertheless, René Vandereycken has injected much young talent into the team and the Belgian FA is convinced that his continuity-based policy will bear fruit.

*"We are very happy to have reached a swift agreement with René Vandereycken,"* said the president of the Belgian FA. *"Now, we are in the perfect position to prepare for the qualifying stages of the 2010 World Cup and for the 2008 Olympics."* René Vandereycken is to travel to China alongside Under-21 coach Jean-François de Sart.

In other news, the Belgian FA has endeavoured to enhance the media image of its national A side by creating a

new communication plan that has met with the approval of René Vandereycken. This move is part of a drive to introduce greater professionalism into Belgian football and will be most noticeable in press contact with the national team and the FA's relationship with sponsors.

The entire country now awaits that the Red Devils justify the hopes placed in them and qualify for the 2010 World Cup. Their first challenge will be to survive the preliminaries, where they will meet Spain, Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Armenia and Estonia. Qualifying will not be easy, but it is far from impossible.

*Pierre Cornez*



René Vandereycken.

## BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA



### Europe's doors open to Bosnia-Herzegovina coaches

In a formal ceremony held in Vogosca, coaches that have successfully completed courses through the Football Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina's education centre were awarded their UEFA diplomas and licences. A second generation of 14 coaches completed the UEFA Pro programme and 91 received A and B licences.

Among the newly qualified technicians are former internationals Muhamed Konjic, Dzelaludin Muharemovic, Nermin Sabic, Faruk Hujdurovic, Elvedin Begonovic, Senad Brkic and Spomenko Bosnjak. Pro licences were awarded to Vlatko Glavas (assistant to the former Bosnia-Herzegovina head coach, Blaz Sliskovic), Sener Bajramovic and Nikola Nikic (two former youth coaches), Borce Sredojevic (assistant to current head coach, Meho Kodro) and ten other experts.

The diplomas and licences were presented by Sulejman Colakovic and Bogdan Ceko, vice-presidents of the Football Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Munib Usanovic, the general secretary, and Munir Talovic, the manager of the education centre. *"With this completed programme, our coaches can work in any country that is a member of UEFA. I hope that, with these experts, football in Bosnia-Herze-*

*govina will move forward and that we will have a recognised school of football,"* said Munir Talovic.

*"It is a great pleasure to have finished this course with my colleagues, enabling us to do our job more easily,"* said Sener Bajramovic, who based his final paper on the example of Real Madrid, where he was a guest.

Emir Hadzihafizbegovic, the minister of sport and culture in the government of Sarajevo, contributed to this project with a scholarship for the coaches from his canton, Dzelaludin Muharemovic, Haris Alihodzic, Husref Musevic, Kemal Alispahic, Almir Memic and Edin Hadzialagic.

In other news, the Bosnia-Herzegovina national team played Japan in Tokyo at the end of January, losing to the home side 3-0. Ivica Osim, legendary ex-international and ex-coach of the Japanese national team, attended the game. He is recovering well from a stroke suffered at the end of last year and the Bosnia-Herzegovina FA delegation visited him in the hospital where he is being treated.

During the XXXII UEFA Congress in Zagreb, a draw was held to determine the match schedule for Bosnia-Herzegovina's World Cup qualifiers, after the Group 5 teams – Spain, Turkey, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Estonia and Armenia – failed to reach agreement at a meeting on 8 January. The Spanish-based Bosnia-Herzegovina coach, Meho Kodro, wanted to meet Spain at the start of the qualifying round, in Sarajevo. His wish was partially granted – Bosnia-Herzegovina will play its first and last qualifying matches against Spain, but will start away.

*Fuad Kravac*



Diploma award ceremony for Bosnian coaches.

## CROATIA



### A successful start to the new year

We are very proud that the Croatian football team has received the greatest recognition of being "the most successful promoter of Croatia in the world", an award presented by the Croatian Olympic Committee at its traditional annual event, "A great day of Croatian sport".

This is the fifth time that the Croatian football team has been recognised in this →

→ way, and we are especially pleased to have received this recognition for a year which was marked by great successes by Croatian athletes, including the national water polo team, who won the water polo world championship.

Winter is a time when indoor football is played intensively at all levels. The third indoor championship of Croatian first division clubs has taken place. It was a great success in terms of quality and attendance, both in the hall and in front of the TV viewers. This year's winners were FC Hajduk Split. The winners of the two previous editions were FC Zagreb.

Croatia is hosting an elite round mini-tournament in the 2007/08 European Under-17 Championship and will be welcoming Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland to the Makarska Riviera region and neighbouring centres. Preparations are well under way and we are sure that this tournament will meet the organisational standards for which we are appreciated, which is why UEFA entrusts us with the organisation of such youth tournaments.

We are continuing our cooperation with clubs founded by Croats elsewhere in the world. The meeting of the European council of these clubs was held in Zagreb and it was decided to stage the second European championship in Sweden on 10 and 11 May. The hosts will be FC Velebit in Gothenburg. Eight teams will qualify for the final round: three from the qualifying competition in Germany, one each from Switzerland, France, Austria and Sweden, and the selection of the Croatian minority in Austria, the first winners of the European championship for the Croatian national minorities.

We are also preparing the general meeting of the Croatian Football Federation. One of the main items on the agenda will be the promotion of youth work.

Ante Pavlovic



Ante Pavlovic (facing the camera), consultant to the Croatian Football Federation, accepts the Croatian Olympic Committee award on behalf of federation president, Vlatko Markovic.

## ENGLAND



### Disability football on the agenda in Asia

The Football Association shared its expertise in disability football with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) when it delivered a workshop in Kuala Lumpur in January.

It was the first time that a seminar on disability football had been held in the AFC as part of the cooperation agreement with The FA, which delivered a total of eight courses to over 240 participants.

The FA's National Disability Development Manager, Jeff Davis, said: "One of the objectives of The FA is to allow everybody who wishes to play the game the opportunity to reach their potential.

"In England, the development of disability football has seen a dramatic increase in the number of disabled players playing the game. In 2004 we had only around 10,000 people taking part while, in 2007 we had 38,000 participating.

"A key element in progressing development forward has been the introduction of the Coaching Disabled Footballers (CDF) course. Not only does it show main-



Jeff Davis.

stream coaches that coaching disabled players is no different from those in mainstream football, but it has seen an influx of good coaches into the disability game.

"The AFC is embarking on a number of exciting initiatives to enable disabled players across the region to become involved in football. Key to the success is the identification of quality football coaches and the CDF Tutor Training course will give the confederation a network of tutors who will be able to run workshops throughout Asia and promote disability football opportunities for all."

Workshops targeting referee assessors, instructors, recruiters, elite men and women referees, as well as a generic tutor training and goalkeeping course, were part of the busy FA-AFC programme, which will see follow-up sessions take place later in the year.

Nada Grkinic

## GERMANY



### Special coach education for Lothar Matthäus

This year, Lothar Matthäus is to undergo the German Football Association's football coach education programme. A record-breaking German international, Matthäus played in 150 international ties between 1980 and 2000 and in 1990 captained the world champions in Italy. From February to May, he will take part in a unique programme, designed especially for him and led by Erich Rutenmüller. The Executive Committee of the German Football Association (DFB) was unanimous in its support of this initiative.

DFB General Secretary Wolfgang Niersbach explains: "After a thorough analysis, in consultation with UEFA, it can be confirmed that all criteria are met. By offering him his own private programme, the DFB is honouring Lothar Matthäus's extraordinary services to German football. Another key factor, however, was the fact that he was already active as a coach in 2001, as the national coach in Hungary among other things."

The content of Matthäus' private programme is being defined in close collaboration with UEFA, which sanctions and accredits the education. To this end, the

German FA's head instructor, Erich Rutenmüller, travelled to UEFA headquarters for preliminary talks. At the same point in time, the DFB Executive Committee agreed unanimously that there would be no more special arrangements made in future. This summer sees the entry into force of the new admission requirements and general conditions for football coach education, for which DFB Sporting Director Matthias Sammer is responsible. The new football coach education programme – the German FA's 55th – begins in June. Content-wise it will be much more comprehensive than in previous years and will run for an extra ten months, with DFB technical instructor Frank Wormuth at the helm.

Maximilian Geis

## HUNGARY



### UEFA tournaments in Hungary

Hungary is a country that is proud of its hospitality. Situated in central Europe, it has always been a crossroads of Europe, and now it is looking forward to organising several UEFA events this year and next. Thanks to good lobbying by the president of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ), István Kisteleki, and International Director Bienert Gusztáv, most of the Hungarian teams will have a

chance to qualify at home for the subsequent rounds.

In spring this year, the futsal team plays host to England, FYR Macedonia and Poland in the town of Gyöngyös. The U19 elite round tournament will bring Cyprus, Lithuania and Portugal to Hungary in May, while in the autumn, Hungary will host both U17 and U19 first round mini-tournaments, hopefully of a high standard.

These four-team events are all just appetizers for the really big event in 2009, when two new sports halls in Budapest and Debrecen will be the venues for the European Futsal Championship final round, featuring 12 participants for the first time.

Márton Dinnyés



Vladimir Koman, Hungary's Under-19 captain, during the match against Wales.

## KAZAKHSTAN



### New case for Nikolai Levnikov



Nikolai Levnikov.

The Football Federation of Kazakhstan (FFK) has been reorganising its referee education activities, which have prompted a lot of criticism in recent years. Raising the standard of the body of referees is one of the top priorities of the new president of the FFK, Adilbek Dzhaksybekov.

In a first step, the FFK executive committee, on the proposal of the chairman of the referees' committee, discharged four referees from their official duties for life.

The next step was the appointment of Nikolai Levnikov – an outstanding professional from Russia and a former member of UEFA's Referees Committee, who previously headed the Russian Football Union's football referee panel – as head of the combined referees' and referee observers' department.

*"I was enticed by the challenging task set before the department, which it has to fulfil in accordance with the FIFA and UEFA requirements, and also corresponds with my vision of refereeing. Therefore, I accepted the offer of the FFK enthusiastically. We have a long way to go along the European refereeing path,"* Levnikov commented.

From 3 to 16 February, about 70 Kazakhstani referees and assistant referees willing to take charge of Superleague matches gathered in Turkey for a training session under the stewardship of key Kazakh and Russian instructors. Classes on the Laws of the Game, fitness tests and visiting many friendly matches helped in the selection of those who will be involved in refereeing top-flight matches.

*"Another important component of the referees' work is to ensure that they are not left to themselves. Every month, they will be invited to mini-seminars where we will check their fitness and analyse matches that have taken place,"* Levnikov added.

The new head of refereeing also has many other plans, including, in the near future, a school for young referees in the region of the Almaty Football Association, where Levnikov himself will give classes. Later on, similar schools will be opened in other regional associations too.

Alexandr Keplin

## LATVIA



### New strip and new cars

At a press conference held at the beginning of February, the Latvian Football Federation (LFF) announced the signature of a deal with WESS Motors/Toyota and presented the new adidas national team strip. New LFF Toyota cars were taken onto the artificial football pitch at the Olympic sports centre in Riga and the national team players mingled with the fans. The



A four-year partnership for the Latvia Football Federation.

new strips were presented by the best players of 2007 – Vitalijs Astafjevs (Skonto FC), best male player, and Guna Abolina (Saldus FK Lutrini), best female player.

For the next four years, the LFF will drive 12 new Toyota vehicles with the financial support of its general sponsor, Nordea Bank, as defined in the deal with WESS Motors.

*"Latvian football has established a strong partnership with the Nordea Bank, Latvijas Mobilais Telefons, adidas, WESS Motors and others. This proves that we are on the right track for making football as popular here as it is in western Europe,"* said Janis Mezeckis, LFF General Secretary.

Martins Hartmanis

## MALTA



### Football scoops national awards

Late last January, football came out at the very top in Malta's national sporting contests, where the best athletes and administrators chosen from all sports disciplines were rewarded for their achievements during 2007.



Award-winners: the Malta national side, with Michael Mifsud (No 9), and the president of the Malta Football Association, Joseph Mifsud, trophy in hand.

The event is held annually by the Maltese Sportswriters Association and is widely attended by representatives of the country's sports bodies and high-profile personalities.

The most prestigious honour, that of 'Sportsman of the Year', went to Michael Mifsud, the Malta international forward, whose scoring stints for championship team Coventry City have hit the headlines in several countries, apart from those in Malta. He is currently his team's top scorer.

The Malta national team, under Czech coach Dusan Fitzel, took the honours in the teams' category for their performances and some good results in the EURO 2008 qualifying campaign, which helped them earn a record number of points in the group matches as well as the highest total of goals Malta has ever scored in such a competition.

→ The other award, that of 'Sports Administrator of the Year', went to Joseph Mifsud, the Malta FA president, whose contribution to football in Malta and Europe needs no introduction. Mifsud, again re-elected as UEFA Executive Committee member early in 2007 – at the end of this term he will have been on this committee for a remarkable 17 years – is now a veteran of the European body and very much respected as one of the doyens in UEFA circles. In Malta he was retained as the top man of the association, a re-election that will keep him in the post for a record 18 consecutive years.

Alex Vella

## MOLDOVA



### Promotion of charity activities

To keep up its charity mission, the FA of Moldova (FAM) has recently made donations to an orphanage, to learning-disabled children, as well as to people of the city of Soroca who suffered the explosion of their apartment block.



Gate receipts donated to charity.

The members of the FAM Executive Committee unanimously decided that the revenue from the sale of tickets for the EURO 2008 qualifier between Moldova and Hungary, valued at MDL 40,000, should be shared between the affected people of Soroca (MDL 25,000) and the Moldova Special Olympics (MDL 15,000).

In a festive atmosphere, an FAM delegation composed of General Secretary Nicolai Cebotari, Mircea Cojocari, Head of the Administrative-Protocol Department, and Victor Daghi, Head of the Media Department, donated fitness equipment and relevant accessories worth MDL 15,000 to disadvantaged children through the Moldova Special Olympics.

The FAM continued to produce surprises by lifting the spirits of children at the Pirita orphanage in the Dubasari region, where 264 children ranging in age from 1 to 16 gathered in the sports hall

to receive gifts from the FAM president, Pavel Cebanu, accompanied by members of the Moldovan national teams, namely Victor Golovatenco (FC Himki, Russia), Victor Comlionic (SKA Rostov, Russia), Ilie Cebanu (FC Wisla Krakow, Poland) and Anatol Doros (FC Standard, Azerbaijan). The children enjoyed such gifts as sledges, books and football balls.

In other news, in cooperation with Infront Sports and Media AG, a Swiss company, the FAM is going to install an artificial mini-pitch this summer.

Victor Daghi

## MONTENEGRO



### School for football coaches begins its work

The football coaches' school, one of the most important projects of the Football Association of Montenegro, realised with the support of UEFA, started its work on 15 February. The school's first intake comprises 25 candidates for the B licence.

"Our main goal is the education of our coaches, which, unfortunately, is not at a good level. Our plan is to successfully educate two generations of coaches in the next two years, before we start thinking about an education programme for the A licence," said Niko Raickovic, the school's director.

Lessons will be taught by professors and Pro licence coaches from Montenegro and abroad.

Ivan Radovic

## NETHERLANDS



### Frank de Boer's lectures on defending

The theme of the 12th national coaching day held in Zeist on 30 January was defending, set against a background of how to become a better team player. Who could be a more appropriate speaker on this topic than former international captain Frank de Boer, who currently works with Ajax Amsterdam as coach of the Under-13s? The official opening speech was given by Foppe de Haan, the successful coach of the national Under-21 team that won the European title for two consecutive years. De Haan stressed that, most of the time, a coach concentrates on scoring goals rather than preventing them. He added, however, that by having exceptional strikers in your team you automatically improve the skills of your defenders as well. Of course, it also works the other way around, De Haan said.

In training, players simply help each other to improve all the time.

Frank de Boer, introduced by a short clip showing only a few of the numerous highlights of his career, explained how much he had learnt from the colleague who later on became his national team manager, Frank Rijkaard. The current FC Barcelona coach always stressed the importance of keeping an eye on your opponent rather than on the ball. From Italian defenders, Rijkaard coined the trade of touching your opponent and always feeling where he is, in order not to lose him.



Coaches observe the young players.

Frank de Boer said that he was never either the tallest or the quickest of defenders and that he managed to survive by making sure that his jumping ability was perfect and that he was always in the right position. "During my first week at Ajax," Frank told his audience to make his point, "I watched a 12-year-old who was on the ground make a sliding tackle at least 20 times during a short match. Afterwards I told him that he had been on the ground more in ten minutes than I had been in my whole career. Since then the boy has worked hard on being in the right position and improved amazingly, much to my satisfaction."

Frank de Boer was a fair player who was always looking for clean solutions rather than kicking the ball into the stand. "Whenever I did that, I always felt bad, until I realised that it sometimes helped my team to reposition. So it was for the benefit of my team rather than for the beauty of the game. I tell my players and colleagues now that defending is no longer a dirty word in Dutch football vocabulary."

With this message in mind, 300 youth coaches spent a useful day together watching boys in different age groups play in various settings, while the participating coaches had to work on several exercises they had been set.

Rob de Leede



Conor Devlin, Spike Hill (coach), Kenny Shiels (manager) and Conor McLaughlin in black tie.

## NORTHERN IRELAND



### Under-17 national team nominated for 'Youth Team of the Year'

Manager Kenny Shiels, who attended the function along with players Conor McLaughlin and Conor Devlin, was delighted that the squad's efforts were recognised. *"Although we failed to pick up the award on the night, we lost out to very well-deserved winners at the Royal School Armagh (Hockey 1st XI). To be nominated was and is a great boost to the backroom staff and the players involved, particularly as we are preparing to host a mini-tournament in March. The boys have all worked extremely hard and I am thankful for their dedication and commitment. We are grateful for the nomination, brought about by the squad's recent success, and it will be a welcome bout of confidence as we prepare to face the bigger footballing nations in the next stage of the UEFA championships."*

During the last year the young squad have worked remarkably hard and were

rewarded for their efforts when they qualified for the elite stage of the European Under-17 Championships. Qualification was secured by the team's successful performance in a mini-tournament in Belgium last October.

The mini-tournament saw Northern Ireland's Under-17s triumph without conceding a single goal in any of its three games. The Northern Irish successfully secured victories over Moldova (3-0), Montenegro (1-0), and hosts Belgium (1-0) to top their group and secure a place in the elite stage.

Northern Ireland will now play host to Wales, Scotland and Slovenia in Group 5 of the European Under-17 Championships elite round, which will be played between 17 and 22 March.

Conor Devlin of Glengormley will be joining Manchester United next season and Conor McLaughlin, from Belfast, will be signing for Preston.

As preparation for the elite stage, the squad has played a number of friendly matches, beginning with Everton Youth on 5 February and Liverpool Youth on 7 February.

Caroline Menary



From left to right: Packie Bonner, Ricardo Moniz, Nigel Worthington and Roy Millar.

Association (IFA), involved presentations on a variety of topics aimed at coaches working with male and female players up to the age of 16. In addition, there were practical demonstrations at the nearby JJB Soccer Dome.

Among the guest speakers at the conference were IFA director of coaching, Roy Millar, and FAI technical director, Packie Bonner, who outlined to delegates how their respective associations develop the game, while former Scotland manager Craig Brown spoke about the importance of coach education and his experiences at both club and country.

The manager of the Switzerland senior women's team, Béatrice von Siebenthal, spoke about the development of women's football in her country, the creation of an academy for women players and the decision to allow male and female players to play together to the age of 20.

Tosh Farrell, head of international development at Everton FC, and Ricardo Moniz, skills coach at Tottenham Hotspur, made presentations and followed them up at the JJB Sports Dome with practical sessions attended by players from the FAI's Emerging Talent Programme and women's winter training camps.

The conference finished with a panel discussion about issues facing coaches and the two associations in relation to the development of young players. It featured Roy Miller, Chris Hughton, Northern Ireland manager Nigel Worthington, and FAI senior tutor Noel O'Reilly. Delegates were given the opportunity to pose questions to some of the speakers.

Fran Whearty

## NORWAY



### New project to strengthen top women's division

Sondre Kåfjord, president of the Norwegian FA (NFF), and General Secretary Karen Espelund, have presented a project addressed at the top clubs in women's football with a view to strengthening the women's game. Altogether, the NFF and its partners will spend about EUR 25 million over the next five years on developing the top women's division in Norway.

*"Our aim is to contribute to the further development of the women's game, by giving the top clubs a better and more predictable economy. In that way, they can concentrate more on the most important*

*task, which is to develop football skills,"* said the NFF president.

The project does not just include economic support; the NFF will also create new administrative posts to help the clubs in areas such as marketing, infrastructure and travel. A major part of the project is to build up a specific profile for the women's game.

The leader of the interest organisation for the women's top clubs in Norway, Ulla Britt Wiig Kristensen, says the project represents a huge step for the women's game.

*"The economic support is just a small part. It's the profile building that will be most important for us in the future. We are now standing at a crossroads where the comparison between the men's and the women's games will end. Now the clubs must stand together to develop their own product."*

Yngve Haavik



The president of the Norwegian FA, Sondre Kåfjord, and the general secretary, Karen Espelund, present the project.

## REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



### FAI and IFA host Watering the Grassroots coaching conference

Over 420 delegates attended the Watering the Grassroots coaching conference in Dundalk in January. The three-day coaching conference, which was organised jointly by the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the Irish Football

## SCOTLAND



### A new coaching team

It has been a time of change for football in Scotland. Following the narrow failure to reach EURO 2008, a new coaching team has been brought in to work at both senior and youth level. George Burley, the former Ipswich, Heart of Midlothian and Southampton manager, comes in to replace Alex McLeish as national team coach, while Billy Stark has been appointed national youth team coach.



A scale model of the new national stadium.

→ Speaking about the appointment of George Burley, the chief executive of the Scottish FA, Gordon Smith, said: "George is an outstanding manager who knows football inside and out. He has a passion for the game and a clear vision of how to deliver success for the national team. I am absolutely convinced that George is the right man to lead us through the qualifiers and into the World Cup in South Africa."

The new man's first game in charge is against Croatia at Hampden on 26 March.

Rob Shorthouse

## SWEDEN



### Swedbank Arena to be inaugurated in 2012

The Swedish FA has announced that construction of the national stadium will start in 2008. After agreeing a deal worth approximately EUR 1 million a year for the next 16 years, the stadium will be named the Swedbank Arena.

"Swedbank is an ideal partner. This long-term deal for the naming rights will be a big part of giving the Swedish people the best possible successor to our old Råsunda stadium," said Sune Reinhold, chairman of the stadium project group.

Ownership of the new stadium will be shared between the Swedish FA, the city of Solna, and three construction/real estate companies. The Swedbank Arena will be built a few kilometres from where the

Råsunda stadium currently stands. The old national stadium will eventually be demolished, the site of the building being part of the financing package.

The Swedbank Arena will seat 50,000 spectators for football and 60,000 for concerts. The stadium will be the centrepiece of a new part of Solna, where apartments and commercial buildings will also be built. Construction will start later this year, and the stadium itself will be ready for kick-off in 2012.

51,984 Swedish fans have applied to the FA for tickets for EURO 2008. In all, the association received applications for 169,625 tickets and vouchers, corresponding to more than ten applicants for every ticket allocated to the Swedish FA. A draw will take place to select the successful applicants.

Andreas Nilsson

## SLOVAKIA



### Slovakia moves closer to new national stadium

After years of what felt like hopeless longing, it seems the Slovak football dream – a new national stadium – could come true. The Slovak government rejected the Slovak Football Association's request for financial backing of the national football stadium project, but the city parliament in the capital, Bratislava, recently approved a resolution granting the building site ground free of charge to the company comprised of the city's three football clubs – Slovan Bratislava, Inter Bratislava and Artmedia Petržalka.

These three clubs, along with the Slovak Football Association (SFA), should have their national shrine to football erected in the next 16 to 20 months. If there are no crucial complications, the first official kick-off on the national stadium pitch could be in 2010, according to representatives of J & T, the financial consulting company quoted in the Slovak media.

Currently, Slovakia suffers from a heavy shortage of suitable stadiums all around the country as not a single one fulfils UEFA's capacity conditions. The existing national stadium – Tehelné pole – was built in the capital more than 60 years ago and is apparently unable to fulfil its function. The only possible substitute – a stadium in Trnava (western Slovakia) is of a similar age and condition. The SFA has been granted an exception by UEFA and the Slovak national squad is allowed to play its 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers in smaller stadiums in Zilina (northern Slovakia) and Trnava, but the cut-off point is looming as the exception expires in 2010. Nevertheless, optimism prevails right across the Slovak football family, with SFA representatives, players and fans all convinced that in two years' time, the Slovak national side will win their matches in the new stadium.

Ivan Ceredejev

## SWITZERLAND



### Death of vice-president Urs Saladin

On 8 February, Urs Saladin vice-president of the Swiss Football Association (ASF) and chairman of the amateur football league, passed away after a long illness borne with great courage. He was 68.

For decades, Urs Saladin served the ASF in many different positions. He was nominated as an honorary member of the amateur football league in 1997. Urs Saladin always shared his vast knowledge and experience for the benefit of football and never sought personal gain in return. Open and honest, he was highly regarded throughout Switzerland and presided over a league comprising 13 regional associations and some 240,000 amateur footballers.

Pierre Benoit

## UKRAINE



### FFU upgrades dialogue with media

The Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) has launched a new project, the Football Press Club, in which the most competent and famous sportswriters, football experts, coaches and association officials will meet regularly at the FFU's headquarters to discuss pressing problems, burning issues and the latest news and trends in Ukrainian and international football in an informal and relaxed atmosphere.

The club was the idea of the FFU president, Grygoriy Surkis, with a view to establishing closer and friendlier contacts with the media and genuinely democratic forms of communication between the media and the football association.

"The Football Federation of Ukraine is very interested in cooperating with as many journalists as possible. Naturally, the preparations for EURO 2012 are the main topic of discussion, but it is also very important to encourage coverage of other FFU activities, such as grassroots, children's/youth and women's football, disability football, and, of course, the national teams," said Sergiy Vasyliiev, the FFU's head of information.

The first meeting of the club, in December, was spent discussing the appointment of Oleksiy Mykhailychenko as national coach, an appointment which seemed to be rather unpopular among the fans. But most of the members of the press club agreed that the former U21 coach was the right man for the job from a strategic point of view, as it ensured the succession of the next generation of players.

Igor Lynnik



The first Football Press Club meeting at the federation headquarters.



# Communications

## Birthdays – Calendar

### Birthdays

UEFA vice-president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder (Germany) celebrates his 75th birthday on 3 March. Two members of the Circle of former UEFA committee members are also on the UEFA birthday roll for March: Edgar Obertüfer (Switzerland), 80 on 29 March, and Pedro Maria Aurteneche Vinegra (Spain), 75 on 7 March. Meanwhile, Maurizio Laudì (Italy), member of the UEFA Control and Disciplinary Body, turns 60 on 24 March. Reaching the half-century mark are Steve Williams (England), member of the Artificial Turf Panel, on 19 March, followed by doping control officer José Antonio Casajus (Spain) on 27 March.

Other leading members of the European football family celebrating their birthdays in March are:

- Benny Jacobsen (Denmark, 1.3)
- Sergey Tatulyan (Ukraine, 1.3)
- Damir Vrbancic (Croatia, 2.3)
- Dragan Stojkovic (Serbia, 3.3)
- Esa Antero Palsi (Finland, 4.3)
- Boris Durlen (Croatia, 6.3)
- Liana Melania Stoicescu (Romania, 6.3)
- Dusan Maravic (Serbia, 7.3)
- Kenneth Scott (Scotland, 7.3)
- Tomás Gea (Andorra, 7.3)
- Josep Lluís Vilaseca Guasch (Spain, 8.3)
- Juraj Obložinský (Slovakia, 8.3)
- Giorgio Crescentini (San Marino, 8.3)
- Alexis Ponnet (Belgium, 9.3)
- Vladimir Aleshin (Russia, 9.3)
- Hendrik Kesler (Netherlands, 9.3)
- Ruben Hayrapetyan (Armenia, 9.3)
- Joseph S. Blatter (Switzerland, 10.3)
- Mateo Beusan (Croatia, 10.3)
- Lucien Kayser (Luxembourg, 11.3)
- Olga Zhukovska (Ukraine, 11.3)
- Jean-François Crucke (Belgium, 12.3)
- Vlastibor Minarovec (Slovakia, 13.3)
- Thomas Partl (Austria, 13.3)
- Ivan Curkovic (Serbia, 15.3)
- Markus Merk (Germany, 15.3)
- Michel Verschueren (Belgium, 17.3)
- Liutauras Varanavicius (Lithuania, 17.3)
- Christakis Skapoullis (Cyprus, 18.3)
- Andreas Georgiou (Cyprus, 18.3)
- Marcello Nicchi (Italy, 18.3)
- Marina Tashchyan (Armenia, 18.3)
- Lambros Adamou (Cyprus, 20.3)
- Luigi Agnolin (Italy, 21.3)
- Antal Dunai (Hungary, 21.3)
- Jim Boyce (Northern Ireland, 21.3)
- Chris Georgiades (Cyprus, 22.3)
- Michail Kassabov (Bulgaria, 22.3)
- Franz Krösshuber (Austria, 23.3)
- Andrea Lastrucci (Italy, 23.3)
- Outi Saarinen (Finland, 23.3)
- Fernando Ruiz Hierro (Spain, 23.3)
- Daniel Claudiu Prodan (Romania, 23.3)
- Wilfried Straub (Germany, 26.3)
- Kemal Kapulluoglu (Turkey, 26.3)
- Konstantin Vkhrov (Ukraine, 27.3)
- John McClelland (Scotland, 27.3)
- Anton Ondrus (Slovakia, 27.3)
- Joseph Gauci (Malta, 27.3)
- Armen Minasyan (Armenia, 27.3)
- Mario van der Ende (Netherlands, 28.3)
- Pavel Cebanu (Moldova, 28.3)
- Ian Beasley (England, 29.3)
- Stefan Ormandjiev (Bulgaria, 29.3)
- Alan Snoddy (Northern Ireland, 29.3)
- Bernadette Constantine (France, 29.3)
- Juan V. Dura (Spain, 29.3)
- Miriam Malone (Republic of Ireland, 29.3)
- William Hugh Wilson (Scotland, 30.3)

### Forthcoming events

#### Meetings

##### 10.3.2008, Nyon

Professional Football Strategy Council

##### 14.3.2008, Nyon

Draws for the quarter and semi-finals of the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Cup

##### 25-29.3.2008, Helsinki

UEFA futsal referee course

##### 28.3.2008, Vaduz

Executive Committee

#### Competitions

##### 4/5.3.2008

UEFA Champions League: first knock-out round (return legs)

##### 6.3.2008

UEFA Cup: round of 16 (first legs)

##### 12/13.3.2008

UEFA Cup: round of 16 (return legs)

### Notice

■ Following the appointment of Theodore Theodoridis as director of the UEFA administration's National Associations Division, his seat on the Club Competitions Committee has been allocated to Ramón Calderón (Spain).

### Match agents

New match agent licences have been granted to:

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The licence of Rudolf Schnippe

(Germany) has also been renewed until 17 January 2016.

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