



UEFA
UNDER21
CHAMPIONSHIP
POLAND 2017

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UEFA
UNDER21
CHAMPIONSHIP



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NEMESIS
UNLOCK AGILITY

Swede dreams

Sweden's players race to congratulate goalkeeper Patrik Carlgren after his penalty save from Portugal's William Carvalho clinched the 2015 UEFA European Under-21 Championship final. Sweden won the shoot-out 4-3 to take the title for the first time, following a goalless draw in front of 18,867 at the Eden Arena in Prague. "We were so hungry and ready to sacrifice everything together and that's the reason we won," said captain Oscar Hiljemark (fourth from left).





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Aleksander Čeferin

UEFA President

Prezydent UEFA

Welcome to the final tournament

On UEFA's behalf, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this UEFA European Under-21 Championship final tournament. It is a measure of the value that UEFA places in this competition as a bridge between youth and senior football that, for the first time, 12 teams are contesting the finals. This will allow more players than ever to experience the high intensity of tournament action, which will certainly stand them in good stead in their careers.

A look at the UEFA EURO 2016 winners' podium shows just how quickly some of the Portuguese players who took part in the 2015 U21 final have progressed. Indeed, many of Europe's biggest stars down the years have figured in these final tournaments, so we always watch with interest as the next generation take centre stage.

The field is exceptionally strong, with holders Sweden among seven former champions contesting this year's title. Special congratulations go to FYR Macedonia, participating here in their first men's UEFA final tournament.

We have fond memories of Poland from UEFA EURO 2012, and it is a pleasure to be back. We thank the Polish Football Federation (PZPN) and its president Zbigniew Boniek for hosting this event, which I am sure will be played in a spirit of respect and fair play.

Witamy na turnieju finałowym

Mam przyjemność powitać Państwa w imieniu UEFA na finałowym turnieju Mistrzostw Europy U21 w piłce nożnej. Wyznacznikiem wagi, jaką UEFA przykłada do tego wydarzenia, będącego pomostem pomiędzy piłką młodzieżową i seniorską, jest to, iż po raz pierwszy w historii w finałach zagra 12 drużyn. Dzięki temu więcej zawodników niż kiedykolwiek wcześniej doświadczy intensywnych emocji związanych z grą turniejową, co z pewnością będzie dobrym wstępem do ich przyszłej kariery.

Jeśli przyjrzymy się drużynom, które stanęły na podium UEFA EURO 2016, dostrzeżemy dynamiczny rozwój talentu niektórych portugalskich zawodników, którzy występowali na UEFA EURO U21 w 2015 roku. W rzeczy samej, na przestrzeni lat wiele z największych gwiazd europejskiego futbolu wykuwało swój talent właśnie podczas mistrzostw U21, dlatego z zainteresowaniem będziemy obserwować, jak następna generacja piłkarzy wkracza na arenę futbolowych zmagania.

Na murawie spotkają się niezwykle silne zespoły. Wśród drużyn walczących o tytuł jest siedmiu dawnych mistrzów, łącznie z broniącymi trofeum Szwedami. Specjalne gratulacje należą się drużynie Byłej Jugosłowiańskiej Republice Macedonii, która po raz pierwszy w historii dotarła do finałowego turnieju męskich reprezentacji, organizowanego pod egidą UEFA.

Mając w pamięci wspaniałe wspomnienia z rozgrywanego w Polsce UEFA EURO 2012, wracamy tu z prawdziwą przyjemnością. Pragnę podziękować PZPN i jego prezesowi Zbigniewowi Boniekowi za to, że zostali gospodarzami tego wydarzenia, które – czego jestem pewien – przebiegnie w duchu fair play i wzajemnego szacunku.



Zbigniew Boniek
Polish Football
Association President
Prezes Polskiego
Związku Piłki Nożnej

Welcome to Poland

I would like to welcome everyone taking part in the 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship, and all the fans who have travelled to Poland. It is going to be a great event. We are delighted to have been chosen by UEFA to organise this tournament. We have done our utmost to get ready for the competition and I'm convinced that everyone will enjoy the Polish hospitality.

We also have hopes for a sporting success. I keep my fingers crossed for the Polish national team in particular, but I wish everyone a good tournament and a wonderful stay in our country. May the best team win. Have fun, united by football!

Witamy w Polsce

Pragnę serdecznie powitać wszystkich uczestników tegorocznego turnieju UEFA EURO U21, a także kibiców, którzy z tej okazji przyjechali do Polski. Przed nami wielkie piłkarskie wydarzenie. Jesteśmy niezwykle szczęśliwi, że jego organizację UEFA powierzyła właśnie nam. Uczyniliśmy wszystko, co było w naszej mocy, by przygotować te mistrzostwa jak najlepiej – osobiście jestem przekonany, że każdy, kto pojawi się w naszym kraju, zagna słynnej polskiej gościnności.

Jednocześnie mamy nadzieję na wielki sukces sportowy. Trzymając kciuki przede wszystkim za polską drużynę narodową, życzę wszystkim uczestnikom dobrego turnieju i wspaniałego pobytu w naszym kraju. Niech wygrają najlepsi. Bawcie się dobrze – łączy nas piłka!



www.uefafoundation.org



News from UEFA

Highlight reel

A film festival in Krakow will bring the beautiful game to the big screen

If the action on the pitch inspires fans to learn more about the game during their time in Poland, the Krakow football film festival will provide the perfect opportunity. Running from 26 to 29 June to coincide with the semi-finals and final of the 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship in the city, the festival will screen 11 documentaries about the beautiful game.

Top of the bill perhaps, given the recent UEFA Champions League final, is Anthony Wonke's film *Ronaldo*, which is a behind-the-scenes study of the Portugal and Real Madrid CF striker. *Bianconeri*: Juventus story, meanwhile, takes a look at the great Turin club, while *El Zurdo* – Revenge of the Underdog documents the life and times of Argentina coach Jorge Sampaoli, who led Chile to the Copa América title in 2015.

The event will also feature a special screening of Jan Kidawa-Błoński's latest film *Star* about the career of former Poland international Jan Banaś, who will be at the screening with the director. The festival, run in conjunction with the Polish Football Federation (PZPN), will take place at the ARS Cinema at Św. Tomasza 11 in Krakow's old town, with six films showing every day on two screens from 14:00CET. Tickets are free and available at ars.pl or at the cinema during the festival.



Fourth substitute

The use of a fourth substitute will be trialled in Poland

UEFA will continue with the trial of a fourth substitution in extra time during the 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship.

The experimental rule was approved by the International Football Association Board (IFAB) in March 2016 and used for the first time in a UEFA match at the 2016 UEFA European U19 Championship in Germany last July.

The aim is to establish whether there is a player-welfare benefit, whether the fourth substitute is used tactically or genuinely for player welfare, and whether

the potential use of all four substitutes during extra time has an unfair impact.

Yellow and red cards will also be used for team officials in the technical area during the tournament to clarify when a player or official is officially warned or dismissed.

The trial of a new order of kicks for penalty shoot-outs – the so-called ABBA system – will not take place at the 2017 UEFA European U21 Championship but will continue at the 2017 U19 and Women's U19 final tournaments later this summer.



Italy's Federico Bernardeschi is one of the star attractions in Poland this month

Get your tickets now

Tickets are in great demand, with host Poland's matches and the final already sold out, but seats are still available for other games and can be purchased from tickets.u21poland.com. Tickets are divided into two categories: Category 1 for seats with the best views, on each side of the stadium, and Category 2 for seats behind the goals.

Ticket prices

Group stage
Cat 1: 25 PLN; Cat 2: 15 PLN

Semi-finals
Cat 1: 30 PLN; Cat 2: 20 PLN

Final
Cat 1: 40 PLN; Cat 2: 30 PLN

Player education

Key lessons in the fight against doping and match-fixing

UEFA considers the campaign against doping and match-fixing to be a priority. As such, it is determined to ensure that football's well-being is not harmed by these two negative phenomena.

The European body pulls no punches in underlining the consequences for anyone caught committing an anti-doping rule violation or manipulating matches. UEFA briefs players on every facet related to doping: what they should and should not do, and what the penalties can be if they violate the rules.

The warning aims to be a strong deterrent. The same goes for match-fixing: UEFA's zero-tolerance stance means offenders are banned from the game for life. Match-fixing is a serious threat to football's integrity and – if approached –

players, referees or officials must inform UEFA or their national association. As part of its mission, UEFA is committed to protecting the game and its essential values.



Win a match ball

For a chance to win an official 2017 UEFA European U21 Championship tournament match ball, keep your eyes on the @UEFAcom Twitter account on the day of the final, 30 June. As well as details of how to win the adidas Krasava ball, @UEFAcom has all the latest tournament news.

#U21EURO



Match officials

Referees

Harald Lechner (AUT)
Jesús Gil Manzano (ESP)
Benoît Bastien (FRA)
Tobias Stieler (GER)
Gediminas Mazeika (LTU)
Serdar Gözübüyük (NED)
Bobby Madden (SCO)
Ivan Kružliak (SVK)
Slavko Vinčič (SVN)

Assistant referees

Andreas Heidenreich (AUT)
Maximilian Kolbitsch (AUT)
Ángel Nevado Rodríguez (ESP)
Diego Barbero Sevilla (ESP)
Hicham Zakrani (FRA)
Frédéric Haquette (FRA)
Rafael Foltyn (GER)
Jan Seidel (GER)
Vytautas Simkus (LTU)
Vytenis Kazlauskas (LTU)
Bas van Dongen (NED)
Joost van Zuilen (NED)
David McGeachie (SCO)
Alastair Mather (SCO)
Tomas Somolani (SVK)
Branislav Hancko (SVK)
Tomaž Klančnik (SVN)
Andraž Kovacic (SVN)

Additional assistant referees

Alexander Harkam (AUT)
Julian Weinberger (AUT)
Carlos Del Cerro (ESP)
Juan Martínez Munuera (ESP)
Benoît Millot (FRA)
Jérôme Miguelgorry (FRA)
Daniel Siebert (GER)
Benjamin Brand (GER)
Donatas Rumšas (LTU)
Robertas Valikonis (LTU)
Dennis Higler (NED)
Jeroen Manschot (NED)
Andrew Dallas (SCO)
Donald Robertson (SCO)
Peter Kráľovič (SVK)
Filip Glova (SVK)
Rade Obrenović (SVN)
Roberto Ponis (SVN)

Fourth officials

Roy Hassan (ISR)
Marcin Borkowski (POL)
Michał Obukowicz (POL)
Igor Demeshko (RUS)

Tobacco-free tournament

A no-smoking policy is in operation across all internal and external areas of each venue. This brings health benefits and lowers exposure to second-hand smoke. Please respect the no-smoking policy and enjoy the game.



The road to Poland

From perfect records to play-off drama, we take our pick of some of the main talking points from the qualifying campaign



New kids on the block

Congratulations are already due to FYR Macedonia – the first Macedonian football team of any age group to qualify for a UEFA final tournament. They are also the only nation at this newly enlarged U21 EURO not to have featured in the final tournament. Blagoja Milevski's men made it through as winners of Group 3, finishing a point clear of France and three ahead of Iceland. After a 3-0 loss in their opening qualifier in Reykjavik, they responded impressively, not losing another game thereafter.

FYR Macedonia's Viktor Angelov (centre) celebrates after scoring in the qualifying match against France in March 2016

Holdings back to defend crown

Sweden surprised most observers when they lifted the trophy in Prague's Eden Arena in 2015 and Håkan Ericson's side are back to defend their title after finishing above Spain and Croatia as the unbeaten winners of Group 6. The Swedes are not the only familiar faces – the seven other final tournament participants from two years ago also qualified (Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Serbia, England, Italy, Portugal).



Sweden surprised most observers when they lifted the trophy at Prague's Eden Arena

Portuguese pride

Coach Rui Jorge took Portugal to within a penalty of winning the tournament in 2015 and returns with his side having qualified undefeated. Jorge is under no illusions as to the task ahead in Group B. "Spain will be tough, Serbia will be tough, Macedonia will certainly be tough too. For a team to get here, they had to show their quality. Now we'll try to show that we can be better than them."



Italy keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma (left) teams from the master, Gianluigi Buffon, during a training session with the seniors

Plenty of pedigree

If FYR Macedonia are new to this event, Italy – Group 2 winners ahead of Serbia – are at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of experience. They are the team with the most U21 titles (five), and the most final appearances (seven) and head a list of seven previous tournament winners to have made it through to Poland, along with Czech Republic, England, Germany, Serbia (as Yugoslavia), Spain and Sweden.



Portugal coach Rui Jorge hopes to go one better than 2015 this time



Denmark midfielder
Christian Nørgaard

Danes keep back door shut

Semi-finalists last time out, Denmark had the second best qualifying figures with nine wins from ten matches in Group 5. Niels Frederiksen's team also had one of the leading scorers – eight-goal Marcus Ingvarsten – yet at the root of their success was their defensive solidity as they conceded just three goals along the way. Only Italy could match their miserly record of 0.3 goals leaked per game.



Six in a row for England

England had a new man at the helm for the October win in Kazakhstan that secured their qualification, with Aidy Boothroyd having replaced the promoted Gareth Southgate. It was otherwise a familiar story for the Young Lions, who have won through to the past six U21 finals. Their goal now is to do better than in 2011, 2013 and 2015, when they were knocked out in the group stage each time.



Nathan Redmond takes aim
against Norway

The goals flow

No individual scored as freely as Czech Republic's ten-goal Patrik Schick on the road to Poland, though other forwards arriving at the tournament with good reason for confidence after their qualifying efforts are Serbia's Uroš Djurdjević (nine goals) and Spain's Gerard Deulofeu and Denmark's Marcus Ingvarsten (eight apiece). Spare a thought, though, for Michael Gregoritsch, whose nine goals were not enough for an Austria side beaten in the play-offs.

Uroš Djurdjević of Serbia (left) battles
with Jonas Grønner of Norway during
November's play-offs



Spain and Serbia survive test of nerve

After missing out on the last finals, Spain – champions in 2011 and 2013 – squeezed past Austria in one of the two play-off ties to decide the 11th and 12th qualifiers. Captain and record U21 appearance-maker Gerard Deulofeu's penalty gave Spain the decisive away goal in Austria and they followed up their 1-1 first-leg draw with a goalless draw back in Albacete. The other play-off produced another tight contest as Serbia's 2-0 first-leg home win proved just enough to take them past Norway as 2-1 aggregate winners.

Saúl Ñíguez (right) and Marco
Asensio were key figures for
Spain in qualifying

Germany spot on

Maximilian Arnold (right) drills home a penalty to score the second of his two goals in a 4-3 victory against Russia in October 2016. The 2009 champions were unstoppable in qualifying, reaching Poland as the only side to win all their games. Stefan Kuntz's team will now be looking to improve on their run to the semi-finals in 2015.



Results and standings

Fifty-two teams took part in qualifying –
11 remain to vie with hosts Poland for the trophy

The race for a place in Poland kicked off on 26 March 2015, with the Republic of Ireland claiming a 1-0 win against Andorra in Waterford thanks to midfielder Dylan Connolly's 31st-minute strike. Nearly 20 months and another 253 games later the last two spots in the 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship were booked by Spain and Serbia via the play-offs.

The contenders

1. Czech Republic
2. Denmark
3. England
4. FYR Macedonia
5. Germany
6. Italy
7. Poland
8. Portugal
9. Serbia
10. Slovakia
11. Spain
12. Sweden



GROUP 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Czech Republic	10	7	2	1	29	10	23
Belgium	10	6	0	4	14	11	18
Montenegro	10	4	4	2	13	11	16
Malta	10	3	2	5	9	20	11
Latvia	10	2	3	5	10	13	9
Moldova	10	2	1	7	8	18	7

BEL 2-1 MDA, MDA 0-0 MLT, MNE 1-0 MDA, LVA 1-2 MLT, MDA 1-0 MNE, LVA 0-2 BEL, CZE 4-1 MLT, LVA 1-1 CZE, MNE 0-0 MLT, BEL 2-0 MLT, MDA 0-3 LVA, CZE 3-3 MNE, CZE 1-0 BEL, MNE 3-3 LVA, MDA 1-3 CZE, MDA 0-2 BEL, MLT 0-1 MNE, CZE 2-1 LVA, BEL 1-2 MNE, MLT 0-7 CZE, MNE 0-3 CZE, LVA 0-2 MDA, MLT 2-3 BEL, LVA 0-0 MNE, BEL 2-1 CZE, MLT 1-0 LVA, CZE 4-1 MDA, MNE 3-0 BEL, MLT 3-2 MDA, BEL 0-1 LVA

GROUP 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	10	7	3	0	17	3	24
Serbia	10	7	2	1	27	8	23
Slovenia	10	5	0	5	18	11	15
Republic of Ireland	10	4	0	6	14	17	12
Lithuania	10	3	1	6	5	17	10
Andorra	10	1	0	9	1	26	3

IRL 1-0 AND, SVN 4-0 AND, AND 1-0 LTU, SVN 3-0 LTU, AND 0-2 IRL, ITA 1-0 SVN, SRB 5-0 LTU, SRB 5-0 AND, SVN 0-3 ITA, IRL 3-0 LTU, ITA 1-0 IRL, LTU 0-2 SRB, AND 0-5 SVN, LTU 3-1 IRL, SRB 1-1 ITA, SVN 2-0 SRB, ITA 2-0 LTU, IRL 1-4 ITA, AND 0-4 SRB, SVN 3-1 IRL, AND 0-1 ITA, LTU 1-0 AND, ITA 1-1 SRB, IRL 2-0 SVN, SRB 3-2 IRL, ITA 3-0 AND, LTU 1-0 SVN, IRL 1-3 SRB, LTU 0-0 ITA, SRB 3-1 SVN

GROUP 3	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FYR Macedonia	10	6	3	1	13	7	21
France	10	6	2	2	17	8	20
Iceland	10	5	3	2	13	9	18
Ukraine	10	4	2	4	14	12	14
Scotland	10	2	2	6	8	17	8
Northern Ireland	10	0	2	8	6	18	2

ISL 3-0 MKD, NIR 1-2 SCO, ISL 3-2 FRA, MKD 1-0 UKR, ISL 1-1 NIR, UKR 0-1 ISL, SCO 1-2 FRA, NIR 1-2 MKD, SCO 0-0 ISL, FRA 2-0 UKR, FRA 1-0 NIR, SCO 2-2 UKR, MKD 2-2 FRA, NIR 1-2 UKR, MKD 0-0 ISL, FRA 2-0 SCO, FRA 1-1 MKD, SCO 3-1 NIR, UKR 0-2 MKD, NIR 0-1 ISL, SCO 0-1 MKD, UKR 1-0 FRA, UKR 4-0 SCO, FRA 2-0 ISL, MKD 2-0 NIR, ISL 2-0 SCO, UKR 1-1 NIR, NIR 0-3 FRA, ISL 2-4 UKR, MKD 2-0 SCO

GROUP 4	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	10	8	2	0	34	5	26
Israel	10	6	3	1	21	4	21
Greece	10	4	1	5	13	14	13
Albania	10	3	3	4	11	20	12
Hungary	10	3	3	4	19	16	12
Liechtenstein	10	0	0	10	1	40	0

LIE 0-2 ALB, LIE 0-4 ISR, LIE 0-6 HUN, ALB 1-1 ISR, LIE 0-2 GRE, ALB 1-6 POR, POR 2-0 HUN, GRE 0-4 POR, HUN 2-2 ALB, GRE 5-0 LIE, POR 4-0 ALB, ISR 3-0 HUN, HUN 2-1 GRE, ALB 2-0 LIE, ISR 0-3 POR, POR 4-0 LIE, ALB 0-0 GRE, HUN 0-0 ISR, GRE 0-1 ISR, ALB 2-1 HUN, HUN 4-0 LIE, GRE 2-1 ALB, POR 0-0 ISR, POR 1-0 GRE, ISR 4-0 LIE, ISR 4-0 GRE, HUN 3-3 POR, GRE 3-1 HUN, ISR 4-0 ALB, LIE 1-7 POR

GROUP 5	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark	10	9	1	0	24	3	28
Bulgaria	10	5	2	3	11	7	17
Romania	10	5	1	4	15	14	16
Wales	10	4	4	2	14	12	16
Luxembourg	10	1	3	6	5	18	6
Armenia	10	0	1	9	6	21	1

WAL 3-1 BUL, ROU 3-0 ARM, LUX 1-3 WAL, ROU 0-2 BUL, ARM 2-3 ROU, BUL 3-0 LUX, LUX 0-1 ROU, BUL 2-0 ARM, DEN 0-0 WAL, ARM 1-1 LUX, DEN 1-0 BUL, WAL 2-1 ARM, ROU 0-3 DEN, DEN 2-0 ARM, WAL 1-1 ROU, LUX 0-1 DEN, BUL 0-0 WAL, ARM 1-3 DEN, ROU 2-1 WAL, LUX 0-0 BUL, WAL 0-4 DEN, ROU 4-0 LUX, ARM 0-1 BUL, WAL 1-1 LUX, DEN 3-1 ROU, LUX 1-0 ARM, BUL 0-3 DEN, BUL 2-0 ROU, ARM 1-3 WAL, DEN 4-1 LUX

GROUP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	10	7	3	0	24	7	24
Spain	10	7	2	1	31	9	23
Croatia	10	6	2	2	24	11	20
Georgia	10	4	1	5	17	17	13
Estonia	10	1	1	8	3	26	4
San Marino	10	0	1	9	1	30	1

SMR 0-3 GEO, EST 0-0 SMR, EST 0-2 ESP, CRO 1-0 GEO, SWE 3-0 SMR, EST 0-4 CRO, GEO 2-5 ESP, SMR 0-3 CRO, SWE 5-0 EST, GEO 3-0 EST, ESP 1-1 SWE, CRO 4-0 SMR, ESP 5-0 GEO, SMR 1-2 EST, GEO 0-1 SWE, CRO 2-3 ESP, GEO 4-0 SMR, ESP 0-3 CRO, SMR 0-2 SWE, CRO 2-1 EST, SWE 3-2 GEO, CRO 1-1 SWE, EST 0-1 GEO, ESP 6-0 SMR, SWE 1-1 ESP, GEO 2-2 CRO, SMR 0-3 ESP, EST 0-3 SWE, ESP 5-0 EST, SWE 4-2 CRO

GROUP 7	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	10	10	0	0	35	8	30
Austria	10	7	1	2	22	12	22
Finland	10	4	2	4	13	10	14
Azerbaijan	10	2	3	5	8	19	9
Russia	10	2	3	5	15	19	9
Faroe Islands	10	0	1	9	3	28	1

FAR 0-1 AZE, AZE 0-2 AUT, FIN 2-0 RUS, AZE 0-3 GER, AUT 4-3 RUS, FIN 3-0 FAR, AUT 7-0 AZE, GER 4-0 FIN, AZE 0-1 FIN, FAR 0-6 GER, RUS 2-0 FAR, GER 3-1 AZE, AUT 2-0 FIN, AZE 3-0 RUS, GER 4-2 AUT, RUS 2-2 AZE, GER 4-1 FAR, AUT 1-0 FAR, RUS 0-2 GER, FAR 1-6 FIN, FAR 0-3 RUS, FIN 0-1 AUT, RUS 1-1 AUT, AZE 1-1 FAR, FIN 0-1 GER, FAR 0-1 AUT, FIN 0-0 AZE, GER 4-3 RUS, RUS 1-1 FIN, AUT 1-4 GER

GROUP 8	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slovakia	8	6	1	1	21	6	19
Netherlands	8	4	2	2	15	10	14
Turkey	8	3	2	3	7	8	11
Belarus	8	2	2	4	7	11	8
Cyprus	8	1	1	6	4	19	4

NED 4-0 CYP, BLR 1-0 SVK, TUR 0-1 NED, SVK 2-0 CYP, BLR 0-2 TUR, NED1-3 SVK, CYP 0-1 BLR, CYP 0-3 TUR, NED1-0 BLR, BLR 2-2 CYP, SVK 4-2 NED, SVK 5-0 TUR, TUR 0-1 CYP, BLR 2-2 NED, CYP 0-3 SVK, TUR 1-0 BLR, NED 0-0 TUR, SVK 3-1 BLR, CYP 1-4 NED, TUR 1-1 SVK

GROUP 9	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	8	6	2	0	20	3	20
Norway	8	5	1	2	12	10	16
Switzerland	8	3	3	2	11	8	12
Kazakhstan	8	1	1	6	3	14	4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8	0	3	5	2	13	3

NOR 2-0 BIH, BIH 1-2 KAZ, KAZ 0-1 SUI, NOR 0-1 ENG, SUI 3-1 BIH, NOR 2-1 KAZ, SUI 1-1 NOR, ENG 3-0 KAZ, BIH 0-0 ENG, ENG 3-1 SUI, KAZ 0-0 BIH, SUI 1-1 ENG, BIH 0-1 NOR, SUI 3-0 KAZ, BIH 0-0 SUI, ENG 6-1 NOR, KAZ 0-1 ENG, NOR 2-1 SUI, KAZ 0-3 NOR, ENG 5-0 BIH



PLAY-OFFS

Austria 1-1 Spain	Serbia 2-0 Norway
Spain 0-0 Austria	Norway 1-0 Serbia
1-1 on aggregate; Spain win on away goals	Serbia win 2-1 on aggregate

Serbia's Andrija Živković fires at goal in the play-off against Norway (facing page); Germany's Leon Goretzka (third from left) is congratulated after scoring against Austria in Group 7

Nowy ideał samochodu.

Hyundai i30 Nowej Generacji.



Hyundai oficjalnym partnerem UEFA EURO U21 Polska 2017. Hyundai oraz UEFA wyznają te same wartości oraz hołdują tej samej wizji promocji i rozwoju piłki nożnej w skali globalnej. Nieustanny rozwój jest wpisany zarazem w ogólną filozofię Hyundai, jak i w każdy model tej marki. Dlatego Hyundai i30 Nowej Generacji tworzy nowy ideał samochodu, który wyróżnia się ponadczasowym designem, nieprzeciętnym komfortem prowadzenia oraz zaawansowanymi technologiami bezpieczeństwa i łączności.



5-letnia Gwarancja Bez Limitu Kilometrów Hyundai dotyczy jedynie tych samochodów Hyundai, które były sprzedane Klientowi końcowemu przez Autoryzowanego Dealera Hyundai na warunkach opisanych w książce gwarancyjnej. Szczegóły oferty i programu gwarancyjnego, w tym wyłączeń gwarancji, dostępne są u Autoryzowanych Dealerów Hyundai. Średni poziom spalania paliwa w cyklu mieszanym dla zaprezentowanego modelu Hyundai i30 wynosi od 3,6 do 5,6 l / 100 km, średnia emisja CO₂ wynosi od 95 do 130 g/km.

Facts and figures

The key statistics from qualifying



713

goals scored

2.8

goals per game

1,080

minutes

Defender Milan Gajić (Serbia) and goalkeeper Daniel Bachmann (Austria) played the most in qualifying – every minute of their countries' ten group games and both play-off matches



Most goals in a game: Liechtenstein 1-7 Portugal

7

Biggest margin of victory
Malta 0-7 Czech Republic
Austria 7-0 Azerbaijan

35

Germany scored the most goals (35)
and averaged the most per game (3.5)

WWWWWWWWWWWW

Germany had the only perfect record in qualifying

0.3

Denmark and Italy conceded the fewest goals on average per match (0.3)

55%

of the qualifiers reached Poland
undefeated: Sweden, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, England



29

Highest goal difference achieved by Portugal – 34 goals scored, 5 conceded

8

All eight teams that contested the final tournament in 2015 are back

1

Of the 12 sides in Poland, only FYR Macedonia have not figured in the final tournament before

WHEN THE GOALS WERE SCORED

1-15 mins	78
16-30 mins	110
31-45 mins	134
First-half added time	5
46-60 mins	112
61-75 mins	126
76-90 mins	115
Second-half added time	33

TOP SCORERS

Patrik Schick	Czech Republic	10
Uroš Djurdjević	Serbia	9
Michael Gregoritsch	Austria	9
Gerard Deulofeu	Spain	8
Marcus Ingvarsen	Denmark	8
Munir El Haddadi	Spain	7
Stipe Perica	Croatia	7
Davie Selke	Germany	7

ASSISTS

Jaroslav Mihalík	Slovakia	6
Kristoffer Olsson	Sweden	6
Aleš Čermák	Czech Republic	5
Gerard Deulofeu	Spain	5
Jeremy Toljan	Germany	5
Andrija Živković	Serbia	5

ATTEMPTS ON TARGET

Patrik Schick	Czech Republic	20
Mohamed Elyounoussi	Norway	19
Michael Gregoritsch	Austria	17
Gerard Deulofeu	Spain	16
Uroš Djurdjević	Serbia	15
Shoval Gozlan	Israel	14
Elías Már Ómarsson	Iceland	14

Scouting report

With some of Europe's most exciting young talent on display here in Poland, we highlight 12 of the rising stars who could have a defining say on the destination of the trophy



Marco Asensio (Spain)

Just watch Asensio's run from the halfway line to score against FC Bayern München in the UEFA Champions League quarter-finals to understand what a talent Real Madrid CF and Spain have on their hands. Asensio has the vision of a playmaker allied with the technical ability and pace of a winger. He also possesses enormous confidence in front of goal, as demonstrated by his emphatic finish in the UEFA Champions League final to round off Madrid's 4-1 triumph against Juventus, nine months after kicking off the season with the Spanish side's opening goal in their UEFA Super Cup victory against Sevilla FC.



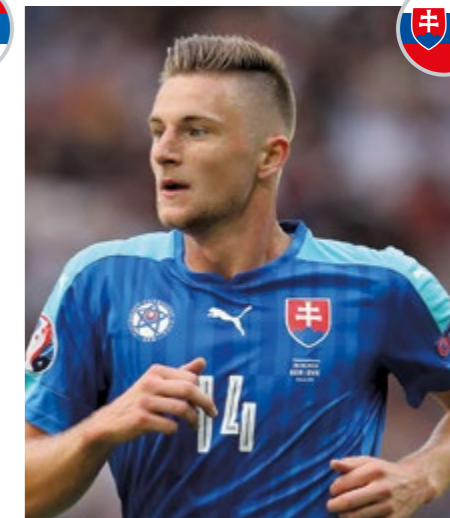
Marcus Ingvartsen (Denmark)

The FC Nordsjælland striker has been turning heads for club and country all season and will be hoping his prolific campaign continues in Poland after finishing the 2016/17 campaign as the top scorer in the Danish Super League with 23 goals in 35 matches. Combining pace and a great physical presence, the 21-year-old is a nightmare to defend against, and can find the target with both feet as well as posing an aerial threat. After scoring eight times in six qualifiers, it is no surprise Ingvartsen is the focal point of coach Niels Frederiksen's attack.



Andrija Živković (Serbia)

Big things are expected of Živković in Serbia, but so far the 20-year-old has more than coped. The Balkan country's youngest ever international when first capped in 2013, he was the star of their 2015 FIFA U-20 World Cup triumph, notching two goals and two assists, and the left-footed winger has likewise impressed on the club stage. Given the captain's armband at FK Partizan aged just 17, he signed a five-year deal with SL Benfica last summer. "With Živković in your forward line," says former Serbia coach Radovan Ćurčić, "you can expect something to happen."



Milan Škriniar (Slovakia)

Among the most experienced players in the Slovakia squad, 22-year-old Škriniar is a leader at the back. He travels to Poland having represented his country at UEFA EURO 2016, where he contested all 90 minutes of their last-16 tie against Germany, operating as a holding midfielder. Technically refined, the UC Sampdoria stopper is tough in the tackle and a capable reader of the game, while also displaying a gift for motivating team-mates. "Last but not least, he knows how to support the attack," says Slovakia Under-21 coach Pavel Hapal.



Enis Bardi (FYR Macedonia)

Despite playing in midfield, Bardi has proved himself a prolific goalscorer at club level, regularly hitting the target for Hungarian side Újpest FC this term. The 21-year-old is no less important to FYR Macedonia's attacking play and struck twice on the road to Poland, including the second goal in the 2-0 win against Scotland that sealed qualification. Born in Skopje, he made his full international debut against Belarus in a UEFA EURO 2016 qualifier in March 2015 and has also appeared in the 2018 FIFA World Cup preliminaries.



Patrik Schick (Czech Republic)

The towering forward led the way in qualifying with ten goals and chimed in with four assists as his reputation blossomed. Schick has also caught the eye of several leading clubs thanks to an effective debut campaign for Sampdoria, registering on his maiden start against Juventus and adding goals against the likes of AS Roma and FC Internazionale Milano. Given his first senior run-out for the Czech Republic last May, the 21-year-old left-footer moved to Italy from home-town club AC Sparta Praha.



Kristoffer Olsson (Sweden)

Olsson brings experience and poise to the midfield and can dictate the rhythm of Sweden's game as well providing the finishing touch in front of goal. He was an unused substitute in Sweden's 2015 triumph but gained from his time in the Czech Republic – as he did during a spell in England at Arsenal FC, where he featured for the first team in a League Cup match after two years with the academy. He joined FC Midtjylland in 2014 before returning to Sweden and AIK in January this year.



Jonathan Tah (Germany)

Tah made his senior debut against England in March 2016 before forcing his way into Germany's squad for UEFA EURO 2016. A veteran of two UEFA Champions League campaigns with Bayer 04 Leverkusen, Tah brings experience and strength to the defence as well as poise on the ball. The towering (192cm) centre-back is also a calm leader and selfless team player. He joined Leverkusen from Hamburger SV at the start of the 2015/16 campaign having first become HSV's youngest ever debutant aged 17 years, five months and 23 days.



Domenico Berardi (Italy)

All-time leading marksman for club side US Sassuolo Calcio before he turned 22, Berardi has crammed a lot into his short career. The creative winger with a powerful left foot also struck his team's first ever goal in European competition this term, pouncing five times in four UEFA Europa League qualifiers before a knee injury derailed the start of his campaign. Quick and capable across the whole front line, he will spearhead Italy's bid in Poland after contributing a goal and an assist at the 2015 finals.



Renato Sanches (Portugal)

Sanches needs no introduction after his lung-busting performances at UEFA EURO 2016 helped Portugal capture the trophy for the first time. A goal in the quarter-final against Poland was just one highlight of a campaign in which he was named UEFA's young player of the tournament, the midfielder impressing as much with his composure on the ball – which belied his then 18 years – as with his drive and energy. After a quiet season by his standards at FC Bayern München, the former SL Benfica player will again be looking to make his mark on the international stage.



Jordan Pickford (England)

Pickford heads to Poland after a breakthrough season of personal highs. There were lows too, with his Premier League campaign ending in relegation with Sunderland AFC, but his shot-stopping heroics earned him a senior England call-up last October as well as a nomination for PFA Young Player of the Year. The 23-year-old has also won special praise for his distribution, and even served up an assist for Nathan Redmond in England's 3-0 qualifying defeat of Kazakhstan. "It was a wonderful pass," said then Under-21 coach Gareth Southgate. "It showed a great understanding of the game and great technique."



Dawid Kownacki (Poland)

Still only 20, Kownacki has already played over 100 games for KKS Lech Poznań and earned comparisons to another of the club's former prodigies – no less a talent than Robert Lewandowski. Kownacki can play as an out-and-out striker or in wide positions, and will always go in search of the ball rather than wait for it to come to him. Lech's penalty taker, he has a cool temperament and comes into the tournament with confidence high after a career-best nine Ekstraklasa goals in 2016/17. He also struck the decider in Poland's 1-0 victory against Germany in Tychy last November.

“For a young player, he has a high level of focus and mindfulness on top of his undisputed potential”

**Germany coach
Joachim Löw**

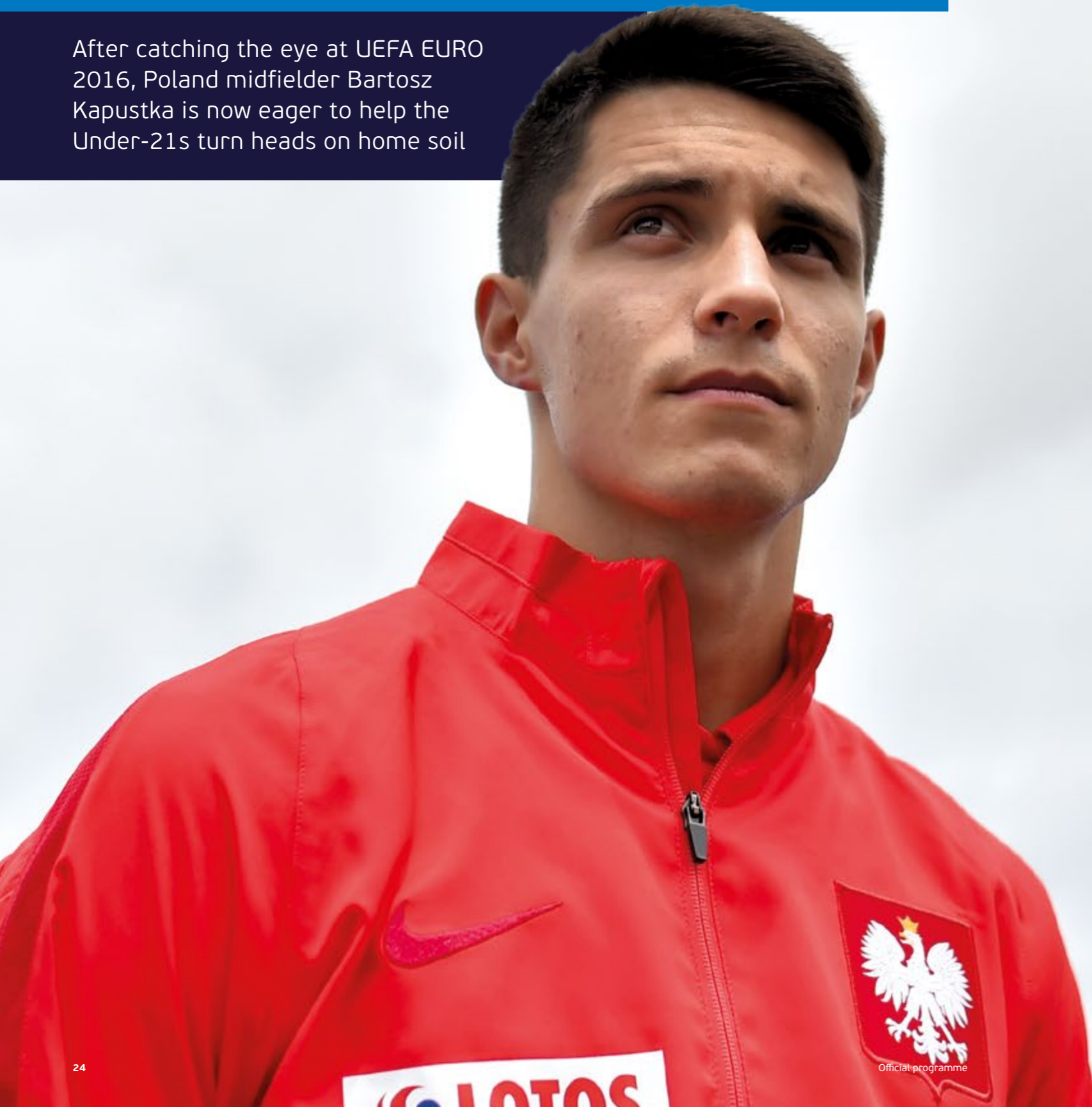


TASTE THE FEELING

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Game-changer

After catching the eye at UEFA EURO 2016, Poland midfielder Bartosz Kapustka is now eager to help the Under-21s turn heads on home soil



Bartosz Kapustka attacks the Portugal defence during the UEFA EURO 2016 quarter-finals

“Deliciously talented” is how Gary Lineker, the former England striker, described teenager Bartosz Kapustka after seeing the Poland midfielder in action at UEFA EURO 2016 last summer. Kapustka, now 20, is a midfielder with impressive technical ability, intelligence and plenty of heart. His efforts at the EURO – he appeared in four of Poland’s five games in France – earned him a move from MKS Cracovia Kraków to Leicester City FC, Lineker’s home-town club. If his first-team opportunities were scarce during his first season in England, Kapustka is now doubly determined to show what he can do as he returns to Under-21 duty.

How much do you know about your opponents in Group A: Slovakia, Sweden and England?

Of course, I know England quite well as I’ve been playing there since last summer. I already know more than half of their team, including two team-mates from Leicester. It looks like they’ll field a very good team, with players with Premier League experience. We all know how challenging the Premier League is, so any team with players from those clubs can be dangerous for anybody. I also know Slovakia quite well as some of their players are playing – or have played – in Poland. For example, there’s Lukáš Haraslín from Lechia Gdańsk, Tomáš Vestyenický, with whom I played at Cracovia, and Jaroslav Mihalík from Cracovia, too. I know less about Sweden but I am aware of the fact that they’re defending their title in Poland, which will make them a really tough opponent.

You could well face your Leicester team-mates Ben Chilwell and Demarai Gray when Poland play England in your final group game. What can you tell us about them?

I’ve spoken to them several times already about it and we’re all very eager to meet. Both have great potential, in my opinion. Ben Chilwell played some games in the Premier League this season, as back-up to Christian Fuchs. He has a very good left foot and should be a strong point of the England team. As for Demarai Gray, he is a very fast player. Only Ahmed Musa can match him for speed at Leicester. He is dynamic, very strong in one v ones, and if you give him space, he is really dangerous.

This is the first major international football tournament in Poland since UEFA EURO 2012. What do you remember of the atmosphere then? Did you go to any of the games?

No, I watched everything on TV with my friends. But, of course, I was here in the country so I felt the atmosphere and it was really great. Polish people love their football and they proved it in 2012. At that point I would not have even dreamed that I’d soon be playing for the national team.

How much of a difference could the home supporters make in this tournament?

I hope they will help us as there is a big interest in our games. All the tickets for Poland’s matches sold out immediately, so this is real proof that people are eagerly awaiting this tournament. Personally, I’m very proud and happy that I’ll be playing. It’s a big thing to play in a tournament like this in your own country. I can’t wait.

What can a player learn from competing at an U21 EURO? How does it help a player’s development?

It’s a big experience as you can play against players from the best leagues in Europe. There are many people and a lot of media following the tournament, and many of these young players today will be the stars of tomorrow. I’m pretty sure that a player can learn a lot for the future from taking part in tournaments like this. And sometimes one game in a tournament can change the whole future for a player.

Describe how it felt to pull on a Poland jersey for the first time when you made your senior debut against Gibraltar in 2015.

It was wonderful – a unique feeling. I never expected that my first game for Poland would come so quickly. At that time, everything sped up in my career. Not only did I have my first game, but I also scored my first goal. The shirt from that match is like a treasure to me – I keep it safe at home.

“It’s a big thing to play in a tournament like this in your own country. I can’t wait”

How do you think your experience at EURO 2016 can help you in these U21 finals?

It was a surprise – and a huge positive – for me that I had so many minutes on the pitch in that tournament. I wasn’t expecting it. EURO 2016 was a marvellous experience and, of course, it gave me more experience. Now I should treat these U21 finals as a new chapter and I will approach them with 100% commitment, just like I did EURO 2016. It doesn’t matter that these are U21 finals – this is also a very big thing for me.

The final is at Cracovia’s stadium, where you played for several years. How would it feel to be able to play there again – back at your old home ground?

That would be awesome. For me it would be the final brick in the wall of a Polish success story because, without a doubt, getting to the final would be a big achievement for us. There’d be a lot of my friends and family there, so if it were to happen, it would be really great. Poland are not favourites but, on the other hand, we have a good team and we have the right to dream about doing well this summer. I really hope we can be the dark horses.

Is the fact you’ve not played much this season an advantage because you’ll be fresh, or a disadvantage?

I’d definitely prefer to be coming here tired because of the season as this would mean I’d played a lot. Unfortunately, it’s not been like that. I can’t say this first season in England was a dream one for me. I didn’t play a lot, so I can’t be too glad. Of course, I trained hard and I appreciate that, but everybody knows that training is not the same as playing games. So this tournament is like a bonus for me, another chance to show people that I’ve not forgotten how to play good football. It’s another reason why I’m highly motivated to take part.

Finally, given you played in the city, can you give any tips to people visiting Krakow for these finals?

Of course, the Old Town with its Main Square is something magical – it’s a must-see. I also really liked to spend time in Kazimierz, the old Jewish district. I lived not far away from there and used to be there a lot. I’d also recommend a walk around Blonia Park. It’s a big recreation area where people play sports and it also hosts a lot of concerts and exhibitions.

Roll of honour

The 20 winners so far, and what victory meant to some of the champions in their ranks

“It’s the best possible feeling to have won the title, and to have enjoyed a tournament as wonderful as our team had”
Thiago Alcántara Spain 2011, 2013

“The Under-21 Championship opened the door to senior football for me. It was a big motivation to see that I could hold my own in top-level football. It remains one of my best career victories”
Petr Čech Czech Republic 2002

“After winning the World Cup with the ‘A’ team I was very much looking forward to playing at the Under-21 EURO as well. And it was one of the best experiences I have ever had in football. [Juan] Mata and I managed to make history”
Javi Martínez Spain 2011

“It was the culmination of all our efforts. When I took the trophy from the hands of captain Velimir Zajec, I heard the stadium chanting my name. Only then were we aware of what we’d achieved”
Vahid Halilhodžić Yugoslavia 1978

“The players who won there developed later on and made it to the ‘A’ national team. It was important for them to have already played together in tournaments, to have taken part in a final tournament and got to know each other. You learn to play together, and you understand each other better too”
Manuel Neuer Germany 2009

Year	Country	Final score
2015	Sweden	Sweden 0-0 Portugal (Sweden win 4-3 on penalties)
2013	Spain	Spain 4-2 Italy
2011	Spain	Spain 2-0 Switzerland
2009	Germany	Germany 4-0 England
2007	Netherlands	Netherlands 4-1 Serbia
2006	Netherlands	Netherlands 3-0 Ukraine
2004	Italy	Italy 3-0 Serbia and Montenegro
2002	Czech Rep.	Czech Republic 0-0 France (Czech Republic win 3-1 on penalties)
2000	Italy	Italy 2-1 Czech Republic
1998	Spain	Spain 1-0 Greece
1996	Italy	Italy 1-1 Spain (Italy win 4-2 on penalties)
1994	Italy	Italy 1-0 Portugal (after golden goal)
1992	Italy	Italy 2-0 / 0-1 Sweden (agg: 2-1)
1990	USSR	USSR 4-2 / 3-1 Yugoslavia (agg: 7-3)
1988	France	France 0-0 / 3-0 Greece (agg: 3-0)
1986	Spain	Spain 1-2 / 2-1 Italy (agg: 3-3, Spain win 3-0 on penalties)
1984	England	England 1-0 / 2-0 Spain (agg: 3-0)
1982	England	England 3-1 / 2-3 West Germany (agg: 5-4)
1980	USSR	USSR 0-0 / 1-0 East Germany (agg: 1-0)
1978	Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia 1-0 / 4-4 East Germany (agg: 5-4)

“For every professional, the first trophy is unforgettable and I’m no different”
Laurent Blanc France 1988

“At the time I don’t think I really acknowledged how big an achievement it was”
Mark Hateley England 1984

“Those tournaments are a great education for young players. When you wear that shirt it gives you wings, and you’re able to give even more than you think you can”
Andrea Pirlo Italy 2000



Match schedule

Follow the action on UEFA.com and on the @UEFAcom Twitter account #U21EURO

GROUP STAGE

16 JUNE Group A

18.00	Kielce Stadium, Kielce	Sweden	■ V ■	England
20.45	Lublin Stadium, Lublin	Poland	■ V ■	Slovakia

17 JUNE Group B

18.00	Bydgoszcz Stadium, Bydgoszcz	Portugal	■ V ■	Serbia
20.45	Gdynia Stadium, Gdynia	Spain	■ V ■	FYR Macedonia

18 JUNE Group C

18.00	Tychy Stadium, Tychy	Germany	■ V ■	Czech Republic
20.45	Kraków Stadium, Kraków	Denmark	■ V ■	Italy

19 JUNE Group A

18.00	Kielce Stadium, Kielce	Slovakia	■ V ■	England
20.45	Lublin Stadium, Lublin	Poland	■ V ■	Sweden

20 JUNE Group B

18.00	Bydgoszcz Stadium, Bydgoszcz	Serbia	■ V ■	FYR Macedonia
20.45	Gdynia Stadium, Gdynia	Portugal	■ V ■	Spain

21 JUNE Group C

18.00	Tychy Stadium, Tychy	Czech Republic	■ V ■	Italy
20.45	Kraków Stadium, Kraków	Germany	■ V ■	Denmark

22 JUNE Group A

20.45	Kielce Stadium, Kielce	England	■ V ■	Poland
20.45	Lublin Stadium, Lublin	Slovakia	■ V ■	Sweden

23 JUNE Group B

20.45	Gdynia Stadium, Gdynia	FYR Macedonia	■ V ■	Portugal
20.45	Bydgoszcz Stadium, Bydgoszcz	Serbia	■ V ■	Spain

24 JUNE Group C

20.45	Kraków Stadium, Kraków	Italy	■ V ■	Germany
20.45	Tychy Stadium, Tychy	Czech Republic	■ V ■	Denmark

SEMI-FINALS

27 JUNE

18.00	Tychy Stadium, Tychy	■	V	■
21.00	Kraków Stadium, Kraków	■	V	■

FINAL

30 JUNE

20.45	Kraków Stadium, Kraków	■	V	■
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GROUP A



POLAND



ENGLAND



SLOVAKIA



SWEDEN

GROUP B



FYR MACEDONIA



PORTUGAL



SERBIA



SPAIN

GROUP C



CZECH REPUBLIC



DENMARK



GERMANY



ITALY



UEFA
UNDER21
CHAMPIONSHIP
POLAND 2017

The winners and the best runner-up from the three groups advance to the semi-finals. Semi-final match venues to be allocated after the last group C match on Saturday 24 June.

Players are eligible to play in the competition if they were born on or after 1 January 1994.



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**UEFA
UNDER21
CHAMPIONSHIP
POLAND 2017**

GROUP A

16 June v Slovakia, 19 June v Sweden, 22 June v England



Poland

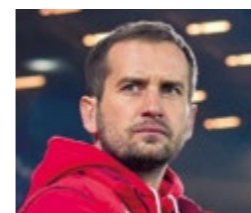


HOSTS HOPEFUL

There is a groundswell of optimism in the Poland camp that the hosts can flourish against Europe's best, and they can look forward to passionate support from the stands. Tickets for all of Poland's games sold out quickly, and fans are hoping for big things from a side boasting promising talents such as goalkeeper Jakub Wrąbel. Often described as the 'Polish Manuel Neuer' due to a physical resemblance to the German international, the Olimpia Grudziądz custodian is one of several locally based players forging a reputation, along with forward Dawid Kownacki – nicknamed 'Kownas' – who has already amassed plenty of experience at club level and is considered among the most gifted strikers in Poland.

Marcin Dorna can also count on key players who ply their trade abroad, including Leicester City FC's Bartosz Kapustka, Mariusz Stepiński of FC Nantes and Karol Linetty of UC Sampdoria. All three were part of Poland's senior squad at UEFA EURO 2016. "We have a good team and can set ambitious goals for ourselves," says Kapustka. "I played for Cracovia before joining Leicester and the final will be played at the club's stadium in Krakow. It would be great to be on the pitch there on that special day."

COACH: MARCIN DORNA BORN: 17/09/1979



Appointed in January 2013, Dorna will be eager to repeat his achievement in charge of Poland's Under-17s the previous year, when he oversaw a semi-final finish at the European showcase. Before that, the 37-year-old coached youth teams at Lech Poznań, having started out with the U11s at UKS GOSIR Dopiewo.

FACT FILE

Best performance

Quarter-finals 1982, 1984, 1986, 1992, 1994

Last tournament appearance

1994 quarter-finals

Qualifying top scorer

n/a



Pawel Dawidowicz brings experience from the seniors to the Under-21 side



Date of birth UEFA international apps/goals** Club

GOALKEEPERS

1	Bartłomiej Drągowski	19/08/1997	14/0	ACF Fiorentina
12	Jakub Wrąbel	08/06/1996	2/0	Olimpia Grudziądz
22	Maksymilian Stryjek	18/07/1996	3/0	Sunderland AFC

DEFENDERS

2	Paweł Jaroszyński	02/10/1994	0/0	MKS Cracovia Kraków
4	Tomasz Kędziora	11/06/1994	9/1	KKS Lech Poznań
5	Igor Łasicki	26/06/1995	11/1	SSC Napoli
6	Jan Bednarek	12/04/1996	8/0	KKS Lech Poznań
15	Jarosław Jach	17/02/1994	0/0	Zagłębie Lubin
23	Przemysław Szymiński	24/06/1994	0/0	Wisła Płock

MIDFIELDERS

3	Krzysztof Piątek	04/01/1998	8/1	Arsenal FC
7	Karol Linetty*	02/02/1995	18/1	UC Sampdoria
8	Radosław Murawski	22/04/1994	2/0	GKS Piast Gliwice
10	Patryk Lipski	12/06/1994	0/0	Ruch Chorzów
11	Przemysław Frankowski	12/04/1995	3/1	Jagiellonia Białystok
13	Łukasz Moneta	13/05/1994	0/0	Ruch Chorzów
17	Paweł Dawidowicz*	20/05/1995	1/0	VfL Bochum
18	Jarosław Niezgodą	15/03/1995	0/0	Legia Warszawa
19	Bartosz Kapustka*	23/12/1996	7/2	Leicester City FC
20	Jarosław Kubicki	07/08/1995	0/0	Ruch Chorzów

FORWARDS

9	Mariusz Stepiński*	12/05/1995	19/6	FC Nantes
14	Dawid Kownacki	14/03/1997	8/3	KKS Lech Poznań
16	Krzysztof Piątek	01/07/1995	0/0	MKS Cracovia Kraków
21	Adam Buksa	12/07/1996	8/3	Zagłębie Lubin

*Capped at senior level before 8 June

**U17, U19, U21, senior UEFA international matches

England



HIGH AMBITION

While England can boast six successive appearances in the final tournament, it is 33 years since the Young Lions last won the competition. As with their senior counterparts, success has been elusive, though they head to Poland in confident mood, having won six of their eight matches in an unbeaten qualifying campaign.

Notable victories included a 6-1 demolition of group runners-up Norway and a 5-0 defeat of Bosnia and Herzegovina – with 20 goals scored overall. England’s firepower is one of their chief assets, and talented forwards like Tammy Abraham and Under-21 player of the year Nathan Redmond are ably assisted by potent midfield options, including Redmond’s Southampton FC team-mate James Ward-Prowse.

Gareth Southgate was in charge for much of England’s qualifying programme, but his elevation to senior manager led to Aidy Boothroyd taking the reins. He oversaw wins against Kazakhstan and Bosnia and Herzegovina in a caretaker capacity before taking the job on a permanent basis in February. “I’m honoured to be given the task of leading England into the U21 European Championship,” said Boothroyd. “I know they are capable of achieving success in Poland. The future of English football is bright.”

COACH: AIDY BOOTHROYD BORN: 08/02/1971



After Premier League experience with Watford FC, Boothroyd’s managerial career took him into the lower leagues before his appointment as England Under-20 coach in 2014. He also had a spell with the U19s before being named as Gareth Southgate’s U21 successor, first as caretaker and then permanently in February 2017.

FACT FILE

Best performance
Winners 1982, 1984

Last tournament appearance
2015 group stage

Qualifying top scorer
Marcus Rashford, Chuba Akpom 3

For qualifying results and standings see pages 16-17

Tammy Abraham provides a goalscoring threat for England



		Date of birth	Qualifying Apps/Goals	Club
GOALKEEPERS				
1	Jordan Pickford	07/03/1994	5/0	Sunderland AFC
13	Angus Gunn	22/01/1996	1/0	Manchester City FC
21	Jonathan Mitchell	24/11/1994	0/0	Derby County FC
DEFENDERS				
2	Mason Holgate	22/10/1996	1/0	Everton FC
3	Ben Chilwell	21/12/1996	0/0	Leicester City FC
5	Calum Chambers*	20/01/1995	8/0	Arsenal FC
6	Jack Stephens	27/01/1994	2/0	Southampton FC
12	Matt Targett	18/09/1995	6/0	Southampton FC
16	Rob Holding	20/09/1995	1/0	Arsenal FC
17	Kortney Hause	16/07/1995	2/0	Wolverhampton Wanderers FC
18	Dominic Iorfa	24/06/1995	6/0	Wolverhampton Wanderers FC
23	Alfie Mawson	19/01/1994	0/0	Swansea City AFC
MIDFIELDERS				
4	Nathaniel Chalobah	12/12/1994	7/1	Chelsea FC
8	James Ward-Prowse*	01/11/1994	7/2	Southampton FC
10	Lewis Baker	25/04/1995	6/1	Chelsea FC
15	John Swift	23/06/1995	3/1	Reading FC
19	Will Hughes	17/04/1995	0/0	Derby County FC
20	Jack Grealish	10/09/1995	1/0	Aston Villa FC
FORWARDS				
7	Demarai Gray	28/06/1996	4/1	Leicester City FC
9	Tammy Abraham	02/10/1997	2/2	Chelsea FC
11	Nathan Redmond*	06/03/1994	5/1	Southampton FC
14	Jacob Murphy	24/02/1995	0/0	Norwich City FC
22	Cauley Woodrow	02/12/1994	2/0	Fulham FC

*Capped at senior level before 8 June

Slovakia



REASON TO BELIEVE

Slovakia are back in the final tournament for the first time since hosting it in 2000, when they lost to Spain in the third-place play-off having finished second in their group behind eventual champions Italy. That summer they beat England 2-0 in their last group fixture, and they will hope history repeats itself when they face the Young Lions again.

With matches against hosts Poland and holders Sweden on the agenda too, Slovakia face quite a challenge, but coach Pavel Hapal is upbeat. “There are no weak opponents, but we’re calm,” he said. “Our success so far has been based on our togetherness as a team.” Slovakia kicked off their qualifying campaign with a 1-0 defeat in Belarus, but then embarked on a run of six straight victories, including home and away wins against the Netherlands and an impressive 5-0 defeat of Turkey.

For Hapal, it was the 3-1 success against the Dutch in Nijmegen in their third Group 8 fixture that proved the turning point. “After that we started to believe,” he said. Much of his squad has been capped at senior level, while defender Milan Škriniar, midfielders Matúš Bero and Martin Chrien, and striker Adam Zreľák, whose five qualifying goals included a hat-trick against Turkey, provide the team’s strong spine.

COACH: PAVEL HAPAL BORN: 27/07/1969



Slovakia coach since 2015, Hapal knows Polish football well having coached Zagłębie Lubin for two seasons. He had previously led MŠK Žilina into the UEFA Champions League group stage as Slovak title winners in 2010. A midfielder in his playing days, he won 31 caps for Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic.

FACT FILE

Best performance
Fourth place 2000

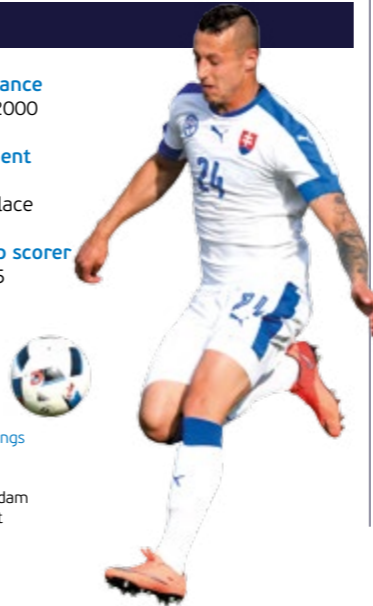
Last tournament appearance
2000 fourth place

Qualifying top scorer
Adam Zreľák 5

For qualifying results and standings see pages 16-17

Slovakia striker Adam Zreľák takes flight

UEFA.com



		Date of birth	Qualifying Apps/Goals	Club
GOALKEEPERS				
1	Adrián Chovan	08/10/1995	7/0	FK AS Trenčín
12	Marek Rodák	13/12/1996	0/0	Fulham FC
23	Adam Jakubec*	02/01/1997	0/0	FC Spartak Trnava
DEFENDERS				
2	Branislav Niňaj*	17/05/1994	6/0	KSC Lokeren OV
3	Milan Škriniar*	11/02/1995	7/1	UC Sampdoria
13	Ľubomír Šatka	02/12/1995	1/0	FC DAC 1904 Dunajská Streda
14	Róbert Mazáň	09/02/1994	6/0	MŠK Žilina
16	Lukáš Skovajsa	27/03/1994	2/0	FK AS Trenčín
19	Denis Vavro*	10/04/1996	2/0	MŠK Žilina
MIDFIELDERS				
4	Martin Valjent	11/12/1995	7/0	Ternana Calcio
5	Tomáš Huk*	22/12/1994	5/0	FC DAC 1904 Dunajská Streda
6	Stanislav Lobotka	25/11/1994	8/1	FC Nordsjælland
7	Jaroslav Mihalík	27/07/1994	8/3	MKS Cracovia Kraków
8	Martin Chrien	08/09/1995	7/4	FC Viktoria Plzeň
10	Albert Rusnák*	07/07/1994	8/3	Real Salt Lake
11	Nicolas Špalek	12/02/1997	1/0	MŠK Žilina
17	Lukáš Haraslín	26/05/1996	0/0	KS Lechia Gdańsk
20	Jakub Hromada	25/05/1996	2/0	FC Viktoria Plzeň
21	Matúš Bero*	06/09/1995	7/2	Trabzonspor AŞ
22	László Bénes	09/09/1997	2/0	VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach
FORWARDS				
9	Tomáš Vestenický	06/04/1996	4/0	MKS Cracovia Kraków
15	Adam Zreľák*	05/05/1994	4/5	FK Jablonec
18	Pavol Šafranko*	16/11/1994	5/2	FC DAC 1904 Dunajská Streda

*Capped at senior level before 8 June



DEFENDING CHAMPIONS

Håkan Ericson's charges set about their trophy defence with some eye-catching displays in qualifying. The nation's first-ever team to claim a major men's football title, Sweden returned to the fray by avoiding defeat in a group featuring both Spain and Croatia – though they were tested right to the end. Sweden drew home and away against Spain but faced elimination after falling behind to the Croats in their final qualifier, before rallying to win 4-2.

That booked their ticket to Poland, Ericson's side advancing with the best defensive record in their section, despite Tim Erlandsson taking over in goal for their last five matches after Anton Cajtoft tore a cruciate ligament in his knee. Captain Kristoffer Olsson – one of several players to lift the trophy in 2015 – finished joint-top scorer on three goals along with Gustav Engvall in a line-up that once again exhibited a never-say-die attitude.

Nevertheless, Ericson has been keen to draw a line under that triumph as he enters his farewell tournament before stepping down. "We've said this team should not carry that burden – this is a completely new side," he explained. "We will begin with lots of confidence after winning the title, and above all after going unbeaten in qualifying."

COACH: HÅKAN ERICSON BORN: 29/05/1960

The son of former Sweden coach Georg Ericson, Håkan launched his managerial career in the lower leagues before being appointed by IFK Norrköping in 2001. He then spent several years as a national coaching instructor with the Swedish Football Association (SvFF), later joining Tommy Söderberg at the Under-21 helm and taking sole command in 2013.

FACT FILE

Best performance
Winners 2015

Last tournament
appearance
2015 winners

Qualifying top scorer
Kristoffer Olsson,
Gustav Engvall 3

For qualifying results
and standings see pages
16-17

John Guidetti lifts the
trophy in 2015



DEBUTANTS DETERMINED

FYR Macedonia are gracing the UEFA European Under-21 Championship for the first time, having recorded the nation's greatest footballing success simply by their qualification. They did it in style too, posting six wins and suffering just a single loss as they won a tough group containing France, Iceland and Ukraine.

That sole defeat came in their opening game – 3-0 in Iceland – before their inexperienced group of players went on a nine-game unbeaten run that culminated in a 2-0 success against Scotland to seal qualification with 21 points, one more than favourites France. "Today we changed the mentality of the whole nation," said David Babunski afterwards. The Japan-based midfielder, one of the squad's few foreign-based players, added: "From now on, the whole country will be thinking and talking about wins in football."

As for the challenges in Group B, coach Blagoja Milevski is confident his charges can shine: "Spain and Portugal have won European titles, and this generation in Serbia has won the World Cup. We're in a group with some very good teams, but I think we have the quality to be good competitors. I'm sure when we go to Poland we'll play some good football and promote our federation and country in the best way possible."

COACH: BLAGOJA MILEVSKI BORN: 25/03/1971

There was some surprise when Milevski was appointed Under-21 coach in 2014, but his achievements since have made him a national hero. The former defender enjoyed a lengthy playing career in his homeland and further afield, winning a single cap for FYR Macedonia, before coaching Skopje club FK Vardar to a league title in 2012/13.

FACT FILE

Best performance
First appearance

Last tournament
appearance
n/a

Qualifying top
scorer
Kire Markoski 4

For qualifying results
and standings see pages
16-17

David Babunski is one of
eight players capped at
senior level



Date of birth Qualifying Apps/Goals Club

GOALKEEPERS

1	Igor Alekovski	24/02/1995	9/0	FK Vardar
12	Damjan Siskovski	18/03/1995	1/0	FK Rabotnicki
13	Filip Ilic	26/01/1997	0/0	FC Gandzasar Kapan

DEFENDERS

4	Visar Musliu	13/11/1994	5/0	FK Vardar
5	Gjoko Zajkov*	10/02/1995	10/0	R. Charleroi SC
6	Aleksa Amanovic	24/10/1996	0/0	FK Javor
14	Darko Velkovski*	21/06/1995	9/0	FK Vardar
15	Egzon Bejtulai	07/01/1994	5/0	KF Shkëndija
21	Mevlan Murati	05/03/1994	7/0	KF Shkëndija

MIDFIELDERS

2	Elif Elmas	24/09/1999	1/0	FK Rabotnicki
3	Jovan Popzlatanov	06/07/1996	0/0	FK Pelister
7	Enis Bardi*	02/07/1995	9/2	Újpest FC
8	Boban Nikolov*	28/07/1994	10/0	FK Vardar
10	David Babunski*	01/03/1994	8/0	Yokohama Marinos
11	Daniel Avramovski	20/02/1995	9/0	NK Olimpija Ljubljana
19	Besir Demiri	01/08/1994	9/1	FK Vardar
20	Tihomir Kostadinov	04/03/1996	6/0	FC ViOn Zlaté Moravce

FORWARDS

9	Marjan Radeski*	10/02/1995	10/3	KF Shkëndija
16	Petar Petkovski	03/01/1997	1/0	FK Vardar
17	Kire Markoski*	20/02/1995	7/4	FK Rabotnicki
18	Viktor Angelov	27/03/1994	6/2	Újpest FC
22	Nikola Gjorgjev*	22/08/1997	1/0	Grasshopper Club Zürich
23	Filip Pivkovski	31/01/1994	6/0	Landskrona BoIS

*Capped at senior level before 8 June

GROUP B

17 June v Serbia, 20 June v Spain, 23 June v FYR Macedonia

Portugal



NEW FACES

The Portugal team that reached the final of the 2015 UEFA European Under-21 Championship is no more. Bernardo Silva, João Mário, William Carvalho, Raphaël Guerreiro and Rafa Silva have all moved on. Only goalkeeper Bruno Varela, defenders João Cancelo and Tobias Figueiredo, midfielder Rúben Neves and attackers Carlos Mané and Gonçalo Paciência were available for qualifying this time.

New players emerged to maintain the team's momentum, however, and Portugal qualified in style, topping Group 4 with eight wins and two draws, scoring 34 goals and conceding just five. In fact, not since October 2011 have Portugal lost a competitive Under-21 match, bar their defeat on penalties by Sweden in the final two years ago. They scored three goals or more in every away game in qualifying and coach Rui Jorge has no shortage of quality to call on in players such as defender Rúben Semedo, UEFA EURO 2016 winner Renato Sanches, fellow midfielders Rúben Neves and Bruno Fernandes, wingers Gonçalo Guedes and Bruma, and the attack-minded Diogo Jota.

The challenge is not an easy one, but Rui Jorge is raring to get started: "Above all, the aim is to portray a good image of Portuguese players. We'll look to keep showing the quality we displayed during qualifying."

COACH: RUI JORGE BORN: 27/03/1973



Portugal Under-21 coach since November 2010, Rui Jorge is considered the mastermind behind his country's progress at this level. Portugal have not lost any of their past 30 UEFA competition matches under the former national-team full-back, who represented his country as a player at two UEFA European Championships and the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

FACT FILE

Best performance
Runners-up 1994, 2015

Last tournament
appearance
2015 runners-up

Qualifying top scorer
Gonçalo Paciência,
André Silva 4

For qualifying results
and standings see pages
16-17

Portugal striker
Gonçalo Paciência



		Date of birth	Qualifying Apps/Goals	Club
GOALKEEPERS				
1	Bruno Varela	04/11/1994	6/0	Vitória FC
12	Miguel Silva	07/04/1995	1/0	Vitória SC
22	Joel Pereira	28/06/1996	2/0	Manchester United FC
DEFENDERS				
2	João Cancelo*	27/05/1994	4/1	Valencia CF
3	Edgar Lé	01/05/1994	4/0	Os Belenenses
4	Tobias Figueiredo	02/02/1994	9/1	CD Nacional
5	Rúben Semedo	04/04/1994	5/2	Villarreal CF
13	Kevin Rodrigues	05/03/1994	0/0	Real Sociedad de Fútbol
14	Pedro Rebocho	23/01/1995	1/0	Moreirense FC
15	Fernando Fonseca	14/03/1997	3/0	FC Porto
MIDFIELDERS				
6	Rúben Neves*	13/03/1997	7/2	FC Porto
7	Daniel Podence	21/10/1995	2/2	Sporting Clube de Portugal
8	Francisco Galdes	18/04/1995	1/0	Sporting Clube de Portugal
10	Bruno Fernandes	08/09/1994	9/3	UC Sampdoria
16	Renato Sanches*	18/08/1997	0/0	FC Bayern München
17	Francisco Ramos	10/04/1995	4/0	FC Porto
20	Bruma	24/10/1994	5/1	Galatasaray AŞ
23	João Carvalho	09/03/1997	3/2	SL Benfica
FORWARDS				
9	Gonçalo Paciência	01/08/1994	6/4	Rio Ave FC
11	Iuri Medeiros	10/07/1994	5/0	Boavista FC
18	Gonçalo Guedes*	29/11/1996	7/3	Paris Saint-Germain
19	Diogo Jota	04/12/1996	5/1	FC Porto
21	Ricardo Horta*	15/09/1994	8/3	SC Braga
*Capped at senior level before 8 June				

*Capped at senior level before 8 June

GROUP B

17 June v Portugal, 20 June v FYR Macedonia, 23 June v Spain

Serbia



WINNING MENTALITY

Ten years after their last appearance in the final of this competition, Serbia will travel to Poland accompanied by high expectations after a strong qualifying campaign under the now departed Tomislav Sivić.

In all, they lost just one of ten matches before finishing second in Group 2 behind Italy, having contested a pair of 1-1 draws with the Azzurrini. Serbia then overcame Norway in the play-offs, where a 2-0 first-leg home win – thanks to a ninth qualifying strike by Uroš Djurdjević and an own goal – provided the platform for a 2-1 aggregate success.

FK Partizan striker Djurdjević took plenty of plaudits, but there are other reasons for optimism, not least the squad's tournament knowhow. As many as 22 of the players used in qualifying had experience of winning at either the 2013 UEFA European Under-19 Championship in Lithuania or the 2015 FIFA U-20 World Cup in New Zealand. Indeed, three of the current squad actually appeared in both triumphs – centre-back Miloš Veljković and the midfield pair of Nemanja Maksimović – who scored the winning goal in the U-20 World Cup final – and Mijat Gaćinović. New coach Nenad Lalatović's impact remains to be seen, but undoubtedly the new man has inherited a group with a winning mentality.

COACH: NENAD LALATOVIĆ BORN: 22/12/1977



Tomislav Sivić's post-qualification departure leaves Nenad Lalatović tasked with overseeing Serbia's campaign in Poland. The 39-year-old was a defender with FK Crvena zvezda and FC Shakhtar Donetsk and won one international cap before moving into coaching, building a CV that includes spells with Crvena zvezda, FK Vojvodina and, most recently, FK Čukarički.

FACT FILE

Best performance
As Yugoslavia: Winners 1978
As Serbia: Runners-up 2007

Last tournament
appearance
2015 group stage

Qualifying top scorer
Uroš Djurdjević 9

For qualifying results
and standings see pages
16-17

Nemanja Maksimović celebrates
scoring Serbia's extra-time
winner against Brazil in the 2015
FIFA U-20 World Cup final

UEFA.com



		Date of birth	Qualifying Apps/Goals	Club
GOALKEEPERS				
1	Filip Manojlović	25/04/1996	1/0	FK Crvena zvezda
12	Djordje Nikolić	13/04/1997	0/0	FC Basel 1893
23	Vanja Milinković-Savić	20/02/1997	6/0	Torino FC
DEFENDERS				
2	Milan Gajić	28/01/1996	12/1	FC Girondins de Bordeaux
3	Nemanja Antonov	06/05/1995	10/0	Grasshopper Club Zürich
4	Nikola Milenković	12/10/1997	0/0	FK Partizan
5	Miloš Veljković	26/09/1995	8/0	SV Werder Bremen
6	Radovan Pankov	05/08/1995	0/0	FC Ural Sverdlovsk Oblast
13	Miroslav Bogosavac	14/10/1996	0/0	FK Čukarički
14	Vukašin Jovanović	17/05/1996	7/0	FC Zenit
15	Aleksandar Filipović	20/12/1994	1/0	FK Voždovac
MIDFIELDERS				
8	Nemanja Maksimović*	26/01/1995	6/0	FC Astana
10	Mijat Gaćinović	08/02/1995	7/1	Eintracht Frankfurt
16	Marko Grujić*	13/04/1996	10/0	Liverpool FC
18	Dejan Meleg	01/10/1994	2/0	FK Vojvodina
19	Saša Lukić	13/08/1996	6/1	Torino FC
20	Mihailo Ristić	31/10/1995	5/0	FK Crvena zvezda
22	Srdjan Plavšić	03/12/1995	3/0	FK Crvena zvezda
FORWARDS				
7	Ognjen Ožegović	09/06/1994	8/4	FK Čukarički
9	Uroš Djurdjević	02/03/1994	8/9	FK Partizan
11	Aleksandar Čavrić	18/05/1994	10/2	ŠK Slovan Bratislava
17	Andrija Živković*	11/07/1996	6/0	SL Benfica
21	Nemanja Radonjić	15/02/1996	0/0	FK Čukarički
*Capped at senior level before 8 June				

*Capped at senior level before 8 June

GROUP B

17 June v FYR Macedonia, 20 June v Portugal, 23 June v Serbia



Spain



WELCOME BACK

After winning the title in 2011 and 2013, Spain missed out on the final tournament altogether in 2015, but they will carry an undoubted threat on their return as they target the trophy for a fifth time. La Rojita were among the highest scorers in qualifying with 31 goals in Group 6, netting five or more in four separate games. Despite all that, they finished one point behind section winners Sweden and only qualified for Poland via the play-offs on the away-goals rule against Austria after drawing 1-1 in St Polten and 0-0 in Albacete.

Gerard Deulofeu and Munir El Haddadi – the latter not selected for the final tournament – led the charge in the group stage with seven goals apiece; when Deulofeu then hit his eighth qualifying goal in Austria, from the penalty spot, he became Spain's all-time top scorer at Under-21 level with 16.

Albert Celades' squad is teeming with talent and experience, from full-backs Jonny Castro Otto and José Gayà to midfielders Saúl Ñíguez and Denis Suárez. Winger Marco Asensio adds a creative spark, while Iñaki Williams offers pace and power up front. Yet coach Celades, the former Spain midfielder, is wary of the challenge, saying: "I don't think we can be favourites because we didn't even win our group."

COACH: ALBERT CELADES BORN: 29/09/1975



Celades was a holding midfielder in a playing career that began under Johan Cruyff at FC Barcelona. He later played for Real Madrid CF and had spells in France and the United States before moving into coaching, working with Spain's Under-16 and U20 sides before taking the U21 post in 2014.

FACT FILE

Best performance
Winners 1986, 1998, 2011, 2013

Last tournament appearance
2013 winners

Qualifying top scorer
Gerard Deulofeu 8

For qualifying results and standings see pages 16-17

Saúl Ñíguez gives Spain attacking verve and experience



GROUP C

18 June v Germany, 21 June v Italy, 24 June v Denmark



Czech Republic



NEW GENERATION

Having exited the 2015 finals in the group stage on home soil, the Czech Republic turned to Vítězslav Lavička to oversee a fresh era. His team endured a rocky start with draws against Latvia and Montenegro in their first three qualifiers, but a mood of optimism swiftly took hold after a deserved 1-0 home success against Belgium was followed by four consecutive wins.

The Czechs sealed their spot by defeating Moldova 4-1 in their final fixture, and their progress owed much to the goals of Patrik Schick, with the UC Sampdoria forward topping the competition scoring charts with ten strikes and earning a call-up to the senior side. Fellow stalwarts Jakub Jankto (Udinese Calcio), Daniel Holzer (AC Sparta Praha), Antonín Barák, Tomáš Souček (both SK Slavia Praha), Václav Černý (AFC Ajax) and Michal Trávník (FK Jablonec) have also made impressive strides and together form the core of Lavička's side.

"We've been creating a team along the way – a team hungry for success," says the coach. "I am glad the boys understood the style of football we wish to play. I call it genuine football: we need to be active and pass the ball quickly in attack. After losing the ball, nobody is allowed to take a rest and rely on others to win it back. This qualification is a great success for Czech football."

COACH: VÍTEZSLAV LAVIČKA BORN: 30/04/1963



As a player, Lavička won seven Czech titles with AC Sparta Praha – and has continued collecting silverware ever since, most recently the 2016 Czech Coach of the Year accolade. After success with FC Slovan Liberec and Sydney FC, he led Sparta to the double in 2013/14, before beginning a second stint as Under-21 coach in 2015.

FACT FILE

Best performance
Winners 2002

Last tournament appearance
2015 group stage

Qualifying top scorer
Patrik Schick 10

For qualifying results and standings see pages 16-17

Michal Trávník also played at the 2015 final tournament on home soil



		Date of birth	Qualifying Apps/Goals	Club
GOALKEEPERS				
1	Luděk Vejmla	03/11/1994	0/0	FK Mladá Boleslav
16	Lukáš Zima	09/01/1994	7/0	Genoa CFC
23	Patrik Macej	11/06/1994	0/0	MFK Zemplín Michalovce
DEFENDERS				
2	Stefan Simič	20/01/1995	2/0	R. Excel Mouscron
3	Aleš Matějů	03/06/1996	7/0	FC Viktoria Plzeň
6	Michael Lüftner	14/03/1994	10/0	SK Slavia Praha
15	Patrizio Stronati	17/11/1994	0/0	FK Mladá Boleslav
19	Milan Havel	07/08/1994	7/1	Bohemians Praha 1905
22	Filip Kaša	01/01/1994	2/0	MŠK Žilina
MIDFIELDERS				
4	Michal Sáček	19/09/1996	0/0	AC Sparta Praha
5	Tomáš Souček*	27/02/1995	7/1	SK Slavia Praha
8	Antonín Barák*	03/12/1994	6/1	SK Slavia Praha
10	Michal Trávník	17/05/1994	10/0	FK Jablonec
11	Jakub Jankto*	19/01/1996	3/2	Udinese Calcio
12	Michal Hubínek	10/11/1994	5/0	Bohemians Praha 1905
13	Jakub Nečas	26/01/1995	0/0	FK Mladá Boleslav
17	Václav Černý	17/10/1997	8/3	AFC Ajax
18	Petr Ševčík	04/05/1994	1/0	FC Slovan Liberec
20	Martin Hašek	03/10/1995	0/0	Bohemians Praha 1905
21	Daniel Holzer	18/08/1995	7/0	AC Sparta Praha
FORWARDS				
7	Lukáš Juliš	02/12/1994	3/1	AC Sparta Praha
9	Tomáš Chory	26/01/1995	1/0	SK Sigma Olomouc
14	Patrik Schick*	24/01/1996	9/10	UC Sampdoria
*Capped at senior level before 8 June				

*Capped at senior level before 8 June

 Denmark



A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK

With their qualification for Poland, Denmark are set to appear for a third time in the last four Under-21 final tournaments. They reached the semi-finals as group winners in 2015 and while it may take something special for them to repeat that feat in a tough-looking section, coach Niels Frederiksen sounded a positive note after December’s draw. “We have a chance, but it will be difficult,” he said. “Our ambition will be to get to the semi-finals and then you don’t know what will happen.”

Frederiksen and his team can draw confidence from the impressive manner of their qualification. After a 0-0 home draw with Wales in their opening fixture, they won nine games in a row, finishing 11 points clear of nearest challengers Bulgaria.

The most striking feature of their campaign was their miserly defence as only Italy, their opening opponents on 18 June, could match their record of 0.3 goals conceded per game. It was no surprise these two teams subsequently shared a goalless draw in a friendly last November. Defensive linchpin Andreas Maxsø is a large reason behind Denmark’s success at the back, while at the other end of the pitch midfielder Mikkel Duelund Poulsen and striker Marcus Ingvartsen provide a real attacking threat.

COACH: NIELS FREDERIKSEN BORN: 05/11/1970

 He was an economics student when he began coaching in Boldklubben af 1893’s youth set-up, and combined working in the banking sector with climbing the coaching ladder. In 2011 he stepped into a full-time role at Lyngby BK, having led them into the Superliga. Frederiksen then coached Esbjerg fB before becoming national Under-21 coach in 2015.

FACT FILE

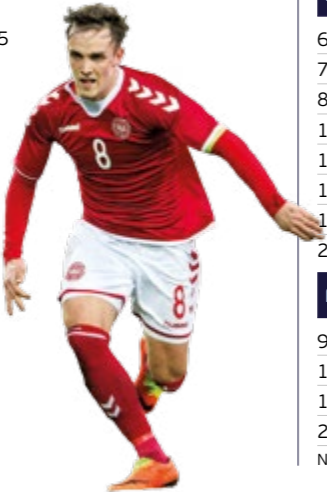
Best performance
Semi-finals 1992, 2015

Last tournament appearance
2015 semi-finals

Qualifying top scorer
Marcus Ingvartsen 8

For qualifying results and standings see pages 16-17

Denmark midfielder
Lasse Vigen Christensen



		Date of birth	Qualifying Apps/Goals	Club
GOALKEEPERS				
1	Jeppe Højbjerg	30/04/1995	8/0	Esbjerg fB
16	Thomas Hagelskjær	04/02/1995	2/0	AGF Aarhus
22	Daniel Iversen	19/07/1997	0/0	Leicester City FC
DEFENDERS				
2	Frederik Holst	24/09/1994	9/0	Brøndby IF
3	Andreas Maxsø	18/03/1994	10/0	FC Nordsjælland
4	Patrick Banggaard Jensen	04/04/1994	9/1	SV Darmstadt 98
5	Jakob Blåbjerg	11/01/1995	9/0	Aalborg BK
12	Rasmus Nissen Kristensen	11/07/1997	4/0	FC Midtjylland
13	Joachim Andersen	31/05/1996	0/0	FC Twente
15	Mads Pedersen	01/09/1996	2/0	FC Nordsjælland
20	Jacob Rasmussen	28/05/1997	0/0	Rosenborg BK
MIDFIELDERS				
6	Christian Nørgaard	10/03/1994	9/0	Brøndby IF
7	Andrew Hjulsager	15/01/1995	9/2	RC Celta de Vigo
8	Lasse Vigen Christensen	15/08/1994	8/0	Fulham FC
14	Casper Nielsen	29/04/1994	8/2	Odense BK
17	Mathias Jensen	01/01/1996	0/0	FC Nordsjælland
18	Emiliano Marondes Hansen	09/03/1995	3/1	FC Nordsjælland
19	Frederik Børsting	13/02/1995	8/2	Aalborg BK
23	Mikkel Duelund Poulsen	29/06/1997	2/0	FC Midtjylland
FORWARDS				
9	Marcus Ingvartsen	04/01/1996	6/8	FC Nordsjælland
10	Lucas Andersen	13/09/1994	0/0	Grasshopper Club Zürich
11	Kenneth Zohore	31/01/1994	4/1	Cardiff City AFC
21	Kasper Junker	05/03/1994	0/0	AGF Aarhus
No players capped at senior level before 8 June				

No players capped at senior level before 8 June

 Germany



EYES ON THE PRIZE

Germany produced an impressive response to their disappointing exit from the Under-21 finals in the Czech Republic two years ago, when they suffered a crushing 5-0 defeat by Portugal in the semi-finals.

A stunning 13-game winning streak followed, with Horst Hrubesch handing over a talented squad to Stefan Kuntz in the latter stages of qualifying. The new coach got off to a flying start, winning five matches in a row after the majority of his players returned from the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio with silver medals. When the dust had settled, Germany boasted a spotless qualifying record, having scored an unsurpassed 35 goals and collected maximum points from their ten Group 7 fixtures. “It’s true that we qualified easily, which not many can say,” said Kuntz, whose team rank among the favourites in Poland. “We certainly have the quality to play for the title.”

This confidence is well-founded given a talented squad that allows for tactical fine-tuning depending on the opposition – and impressive strength in depth, notably up front where the many options at Kuntz’s disposal make Germany particularly unpredictable. Davie Selke was their top scorer in qualifying with seven, but look out too for the attacking verve of livewire Serge Gnabry.

COACH: STEFAN KUNTZ BORN: 30/10/1962

 An important member of his country’s triumphant EURO ‘96 squad, Kuntz never tasted defeat in a Germany career that comprised 25 caps and six goals. He held several coaching roles after retiring and then worked as CEO of 1. FC Kaiserslautern for eight years before replacing Horst Hrubesch as national Under-21 coach.

FACT FILE

Best performance
Winners 2009

Last tournament appearance
2015 semi-finals

Qualifying top scorer
Davie Selke 7

For qualifying results and standings see pages 16-17

Davie Selke was Germany’s top scorer in qualifying



		Date of birth	Qualifying Apps/Goals	Club
GOALKEEPERS				
1	Marvin Schwäbe	25/04/1995	2/0	1. FC Dynamo Dresden
12	Julian Pollersbeck	16/08/1994	0/0	1. FC Kaiserslautern
23	Odisseas Vlachodimos	26/04/1994	0/0	Panathinaikos FC
DEFENDERS				
2	Jeremy Toljan	08/08/1994	8/0	TSG 1899 Hoffenheim
3	Yannick Gerhardt*	13/03/1994	8/0	VfL Wolfsburg
4	Jonathan Tah*	11/02/1996	3/0	Bayer 04 Leverkusen
5	Niklas Stark	14/04/1995	5/0	Hertha BSC Berlin
6	Gideon Jung	12/09/1994	0/0	Hamburger SV
14	Lukas Klünter	26/05/1996	0/0	1. FC Köln
15	Marc-Oliver Kempf	28/01/1995	0/0	SC Freiburg
16	Thilo Kehrer	21/09/1996	0/0	FC Schalke 04
MIDFIELDERS				
7	Max Meyer*	18/09/1995	7/5	FC Schalke 04
8	Mahmoud Dahoud	01/01/1996	4/0	VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach
10	Maximilian Arnold*	27/05/1994	8/5	VfL Wolfsburg
11	Serge Gnabry*	14/07/1995	6/2	SV Werder Bremen
17	Mitchell Weiser	21/04/1994	4/0	Hertha BSC Berlin
18	Nadiem Amiri	27/10/1996	3/0	TSG 1899 Hoffenheim
19	Janik Haberer	02/04/1994	2/1	SC Freiburg
20	Levin Öztunali	15/03/1996	5/1	1. FSV Mainz 05
21	Dominik Kohr	31/01/1994	0/0	FC Augsburg
FORWARDS				
9	Davie Selke	20/01/1995	7/7	Hertha BSC Berlin
13	Felix Platte	11/02/1996	0/0	SV Darmstadt 98
22	Maximilian Philipp	01/03/1994	0/0	SC Freiburg

*Capped at senior level before 8 June

*Capped at senior level before 8 June



BRIGHT FUTURE

Italy are this competition's most successful side, with five triumphs between 1992 and 2004, but they have now gone six tournaments without lifting the trophy – including a final defeat by Spain in 2013 – and Luigi Di Biagio has named a powerful squad to end that run. Gianluigi Donnarumma, Daniele Rugani, Roberto Gagliardini, Andrea Petagna and Federico Bernardeschi are all part of the senior set-up, with AC Milan keeper Donnarumma and ACF Fiorentina's Bernardeschi in particular turning heads in Serie A. Look out too for Domenico Berardi, who at the age of just 22 has already scored 43 top-flight goals for US Sassuolo Calcio. He and Bernardeschi interchange in the wide roles up front in Di Biagio's 4-3-3 system either side of striker Andrea Petagna.

This time around, Italy were undefeated in qualifying, though they had to work hard to finish ahead of Serbia in Group 2, only earning the point needed for direct qualification with a 0-0 draw in Lithuania in their last match. "Italian football has a bright future, with this new generation of footballers shining at the top level," Di Biagio said. He knows it will not be easy in a group containing "a massive team like Germany" and "two dark horses" but believes "Italy are also a very dangerous side".

COACH: LUIGI DI BIAGIO BORN: 03/06/1971



Di Biagio is taking Italy to a second successive final tournament, having stepped up from the Under-20s in July 2013. As a defensive midfielder, he made over 100 appearances for both AS Roma and FC Internazionale Milano and won 31 caps for Italy, earning a runners-up medal at UEFA EURO 2000.

FACT FILE

Best performance
Winners 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004

Last tournament appearance
2015 Group stage

Qualifying top scorer
Marco Benassi 3

For qualifying results and standings see pages 16-17

Marco Benassi featured in nine qualifying games



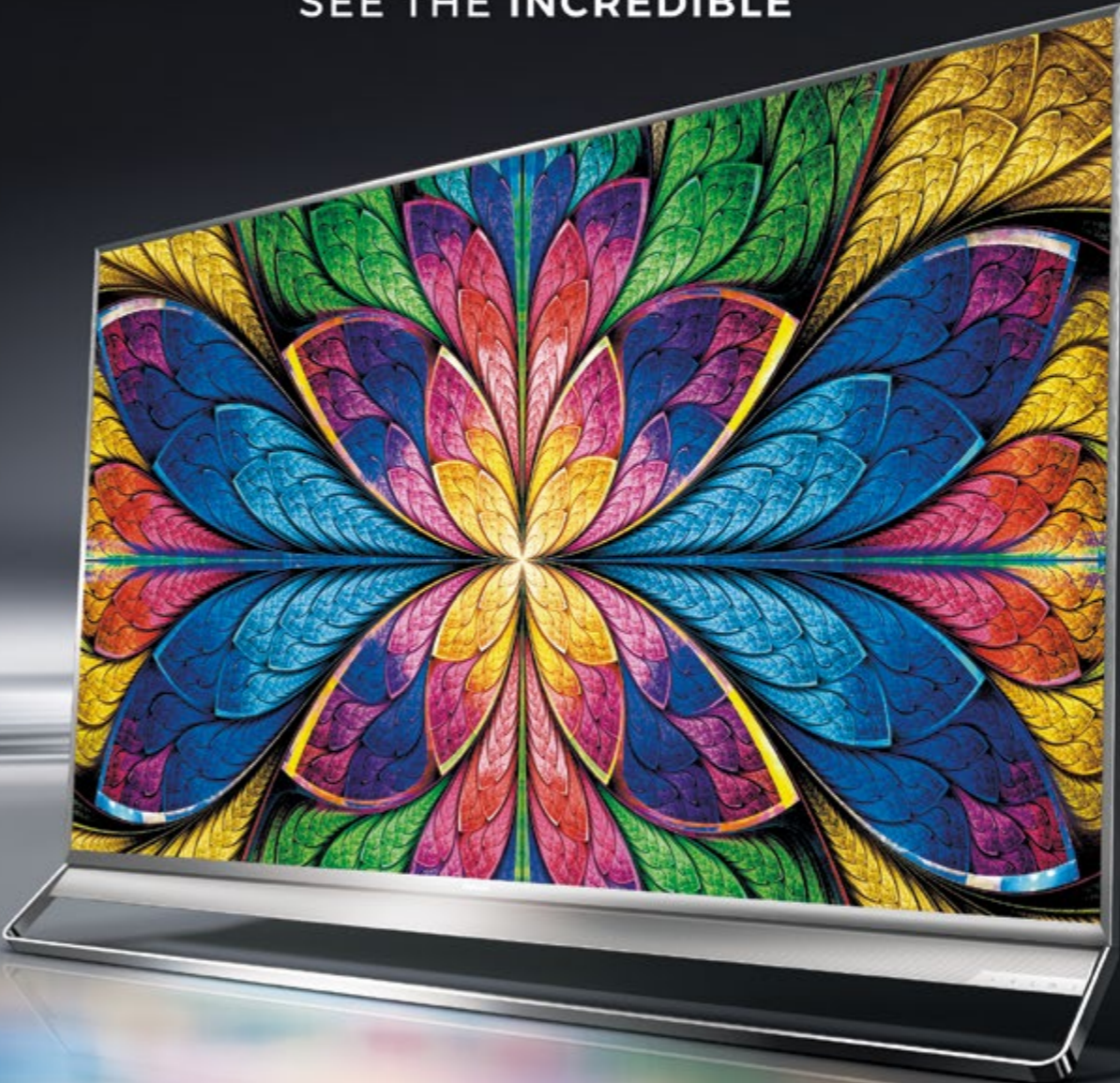
		Date of birth	Qualifying Apps/Goals	Club
GOALKEEPERS				
1	Gianluigi Donnarumma*	25/02/1999	2/0	AC Milan
17	Alessio Cragno	28/06/1994	8/0	Benevento
19	Simone Scuffet	31/05/1996	0/0	Udinese Calcio
DEFENDERS				
2	Davide Calabria	06/12/1996	2/0	AC Milan
3	Antonio Barreca	18/03/1995	5/0	Torino FC
4	Daniele Rugani*	29/07/1994	5/0	Juventus
12	Andrea Conti	02/03/1994	9/0	Atalanta BC
13	Mattia Caldara	05/05/1994	5/0	Atalanta BC
14	Davide Biraschi	02/07/1994	0/0	Genoa CFC
22	Alex Ferrari	01/07/1994	1/0	Hellas Verona FC
23	Nicola Murru	16/12/1994	5/0	Cagliari Calcio
MIDFIELDERS				
5	Danilo Cataldi	06/08/1994	8/1	Genoa CFC
6	Lorenzo Pellegrini	19/06/1996	2/1	US Sassuolo Calcio
8	Alberto Grassi	07/03/1995	3/0	Atalanta BC
10	Federico Bernardeschi*	16/02/1994	4/1	ACF Fiorentina
15	Marco Benassi	08/09/1994	9/3	Torino FC
16	Luca Garritano	11/02/1994	7/0	AC Cesena
21	Manuel Locatelli	08/01/1998	0/0	AC Milan
FORWARDS				
7	Domenico Berardi	01/08/1994	4/1	US Sassuolo Calcio
9	Alberto Cerri	16/04/1996	6/2	Pescara Calcio
11	Andrea Petagna*	30/06/1995	1/0	Atalanta BC
18	Roberto Gagliardini*	07/04/1994	0/0	FC Internazionale Milano
20	Federico Chiesa	25/10/1997	0/0	ACF Fiorentina
*Capped at senior level before 8 June				

*Capped at senior level before 8 June

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Steven Taylor (4) comforts Anton Ferdinand (5) after his miss allowed Gianni Zuiverloon to fire home the winning kick, prompting celebrations from Royston Drenthe (8), Maceo Rigters (13) and Tim Janssen (20)

Flashback 2007

Nerves of steel

It took a UEFA-record 32 penalties for the Netherlands to finally overcome England in the 2007 semi-finals. Ten years on, we look back at one of the most remarkable matches in the history of the competition

How different it had all looked as the clock ticked down on normal time. The Dutch were battling to keep their bid alive after Leroy Lita had given England a first-half lead, and their hopes were almost extinguished when the same player clattered a free-kick against a post. Despite that reprieve, the Jong Oranje were heading out as the final whistle loomed. And their chances did not seem greatly improved when Ryan Donk headed back across England's goal with a minute remaining.

The ball was sailing behind Maceo Rigters, but the forward had a flash of inspiration. Adjusting himself, he leapt into the air and rifled a sensational overhead kick high into the net to level the scores – thanks in part to some unconventional coaching with gym instructor Tjalling van den Berg two days previously. “We jumped on the trampoline so maybe that helped me score the goal,” revealed the forward afterwards. “I want to thank the trainer for that.”

The rest of the country was grateful to Rigters for salvaging the campaign, and the momentum was with the Netherlands as extra time began. So too were the numbers, with England effectively reduced to nine men for the last half an hour. Stuart Pearce had made all three substitutions when Steven Taylor injured a foot in the lead-up to the Dutch goal, but the centre-back tried to limp on; his defensive partner Nedum Onuoha was unable to do likewise, hobbling off with a groin problem.

“We soldiered on,” said Pearce, whose charges kept the hungry Dutch at bay to force penalties – and took an early advantage when Royston Drenthe blasted against the post with the fourth spot kick. England were on top again, but Boy Waterman rescued the hosts when he denied Justin Hoyte shortly after, gesturing to the crestfallen Drenthe as the majority of the 23,467-strong crowd let out a sigh of relief. “It was something like, ‘This one’s for you, Royston,’” explained the goalkeeper, whose contribution was far from over.

Indeed, it was Waterman who interrupted a run of nine successful penalties when he saved low down from England captain Nigel Reo-Coker. That left Arnold Kruiswijk just needing to beat Carson to send the Netherlands through, but the left-back scooped his effort over to prolong the suspense. Waterman was next up for the Dutch after the injured Taylor had overcome his pain to convert. “I was surprised how cool I actually was in the full stadium,” said Waterman, “but I did it.”

Carson had also scored for England, and the private tussle between the two keepers continued when the Dutch No1 kept out Matt Derbyshire’s kick down the middle nine penalties later, building on some choice advice from Louis van Gaal, his coach at AZ Alkmaar. “He told me to stand for as long as possible and only react to what they do. You’re still tempted to dive to the corner you think they’ll shoot for, but I managed to stay on my feet just long enough.”

Carson responded immediately, plunging right to thwart Daniël de Ridder, and with the tally now 12-12, up stepped Anton Ferdinand. Successful first time around, this time the defender rattled the crossbar, which meant it was back over to Zuiverloon. With the stakes high and the tension levels off the scale, the right-back stared at the target ... and squeezed a low shot inside the post beyond Carson.

Cue bedlam, and the chance for De Haan to get his heart rate under control ahead of the final. As for Waterman, he had only one thing on his mind. “After it was over, I ran in a slalom to avoid

my team-mates and get to the stands where my parents were,” said the keeper, the Netherlands’ hero of the hour thanks to his trio of saves. “After avoiding six of them, the seventh finally brought me down.”

The mood in the England camp was markedly different, of course, but there was pride amid the heartbreak for Pearce and Co. “They’ve given their lot emotionally and physically,” said the manager. “It’s probably the proudest moment of my career. At the moment, I just want a nice cappuccino and to go and cuddle some of the players in the dressing room.”

Pearce knew just how his players were feeling, having himself missed a penalty in the 1990 FIFA World Cup semi-final shoot-out against Germany. Chris Waddle was England’s other player to miss a penalty that day, and he too was in the stadium to witness this latest agony.

Both teams had nonetheless played their part in a breath-taking spectacle. And a tournament that had already broken attendance records captured the imagination once more, with the last remaining tickets for the final selling out in the space of a minute and 14 seconds. The Dutch went on to beat Serbia 4-1 to lift the trophy, but this was the game that left the most searing impression. “It’s an unforgettable evening,” said Waterman, speaking for everyone involved. “You wouldn’t be human if you forgot something like this.”

HIT AND MISS

Blow by blow of the longest ever shoot-out in UEFA competition

Netherlands 1-1 England

(aet; Netherlands win 13-12 on penalties)
20/06/2007, Heerenveen

 England	 Netherlands
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ashley Young● James Milner● Mark Noble● Justin Hoyte● Matt Derbyshire● Anton Ferdinand● Scott Carson● Liam Rosenior● Nigel Reo-Coker● Steven Taylor● Ashley Young● James Milner● Mark Noble● Justin Hoyte● Matt Derbyshire● Anton Ferdinand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ryan Babel● Royston Drenthe● Tim Janssen● Roy Beerens● Hedwiges Maduro● Daniël de Ridder● Gianni Zuiverloon● Maceo Rigters● Arnold Kruiswijk● Boy Waterman● Roy Beerens● Royston Drenthe● Hedwiges Maduro● Tim Janssen● Daniël de Ridder● Gianni Zuiverloon



'We can't wait for it to begin'

Tournament ambassador Marek Koźmiński explains why this fortnight of football offers a chance to discover the delights of Poland

It is no surprise to hear that Marek Koźmiński is eagerly awaiting the 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship. After all, the former Polish international defender is an ambassador for this summer's tournament, but, as he is quick to point out, he is far from alone in looking forward to watching the action. "Many people in Poland, especially in the cities the teams will play in, cannot wait for the tournament to begin," he says, "and I can give you the proof – the tickets for Poland's games in Kielce and Lublin were sold out immediately."

Places to see

Kielce and Lublin are the two venues set to host the action in Group A, and both are likely to prove a hit with visiting fans. Kielce, in the south, is home to the first of the recent wave of new stadiums that have risen across the country, but there is

more to see than just the football, as Koźmiński explains: "You can go to Gory Swietokrzyskie, the mountains that are not far away from the city. As for Lublin, it has a lot of attractions like the Old Town and Lublin Castle."

For visitors with an interest in history, there are few places better to explore in Poland than Krakow, Koźmiński's home city. Krakow was England's base during UEFA EURO 2012 and, five years on, the southern city will host not just three Group C fixtures – the other three are in Tychy – but also a semi-final and the final.

Koźmiński promises that fans coming to Krakow "won't be bored" – and not merely thanks to the plethora of football. Wawel Castle on the banks of the River Vistula is a "must-see" and so too the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage site with its medieval Main Square (or Rynek Główny). He has a third suggestion too. "Kazimierz is the

former Jewish district and it shows that Krakow has been a multicultural place for a long, long time."

As for the Group B venues – Bydgoszcz and Gdynia – these lie up in the north of the country, and Koźmiński encourages visitors to the Baltic port of Gdynia to sample neighbouring Gdansk, a place steeped in history. "Gdynia is quite a new city, which was developed around 100 years ago to give Poland access to the sea. It's part of the so called Tri-City conurbation, with Gdansk and Sopot. Gdansk is full of history. It was the cradle of the Solidarity movement under their famous leader Lech Wałęsa, which helped to overcome the Communist regime. And Sopot is the top Polish resort, so you can find everything in the Tri-City – history, modernity, politics and beautiful Baltic beaches."

Home hopes

If there is plenty for visiting supporters to see, the one sight home spectators hope to witness is a successful Poland team. Koźmiński, who represented his country at the 2002 FIFA World Cup, shares this wish but finds reasons to temper the optimism. "I really hope we can go all the way to the final in Krakow, but of course there are so many factors that will influence our performance and it's quite hard to predict."

The erstwhile full-back is particularly intrigued

to see how Poland's rearguard copes with the challenges ahead. "I'm very interested in the performance of our defence, and if we'll see defenders who'll be in the national team for many years to come," he says, citing the potential of players like Jan Bednarek and Jarosław Jach.

Opportunity knocks

It is a quarter-century since Koźmiński walked a similar path as the youngsters involved in this U21 EURO. He remembers the mix of pride and excitement he felt when representing Poland's under-age teams – and the hope that "big things can come".

What followed, in the summer of 1992, was just that: a silver medal as a member of the Poland team that reached the final of the Olympic Football Tournament in Barcelona, followed by a move to Udinese Calcio in Serie A. "They'd started to build the team much earlier and I was lucky to be part of it. Thanks to that experience, the international 'train' came calling and it took me to Italy, where I played for many years."

Mindful of that experience, Koźmiński knows just what this tournament can mean to a young player. "This kind of tournament is like a trampoline," he says. "If you jump well, you can fly really high. Sport helps young people to build their character. For the players it's an opportunity

to meet other cultures and different styles of play. And, last but not least, it's a big exhibition. All the big clubs have their people at these matches, watching promising players."

"Sometimes you can play a lot of matches in your league but nobody notices you, yet during a tournament one good game can totally change your football future. As I said, it's like a train stopping at your railway station. You are waiting for this and if you are able to jump on, it can take you on a fantastic journey."

While that is true for some, many will need to be patient – and Koźmiński urges those taking part to remain grounded. "You should be brave, but at the same time stay humble. Be brave because this is a great opportunity to fulfil your football dreams, but stay humble too because you are young and, if don't succeed here, you will still have other chances in the future."

"This tournament is like a trampoline – jump well and you can fly really high"

Krakow's medieval architecture has earned the city's old town a place on the UNESCO World Heritage List



Host cities

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1. Bydgoszcz | 4. Kraków |
| 2. Gdynia | 5. Lublin |
| 3. Kielce | 6. Tychy |

Venues

The final tournament will be played in six venues across Poland, with the final to be staged in Krakow on 30 June



KRAKOW
Kraków Stadium

Tournament capacity 14,715

Home club MKS Cracovia Kraków

Matches

18 June 20:45 Denmark v Italy, Group C
21 June 20:45 Germany v Denmark, Group C
24 June 20:45 Italy v Germany, Group C
27 June 21:00 Semi-final
30 June 20:45 Final



LUBLIN
Lublin Stadium

Tournament capacity 15,247

Home clubs GKS Górnik Łęczna, Motor Lublin

Matches

16 June 20:45 Poland v Slovakia, Group A
19 June 20:45 Poland v Sweden, Group A
22 June 20:45 Slovakia v Sweden, Group A



KIELCE
Kielce Stadium

Tournament capacity 14,733

Home club Korona Kielce

Matches

16 June 18:00 Sweden v England, Group A
19 June 18:00 Slovakia v England, Group A
22 June 20:45 England v Poland, Group A



GDYNIA
Gdynia Stadium

Tournament capacity 14,769

Home clubs Arka Gdynia, Bałtyk Gdynia

Matches

17 June 20:45 Spain v FYR Macedonia, Group B
20 June 20:45 Portugal v Spain, Group B
23 June 20:45 FYR Macedonia v Portugal, Group B



BYDGOSZCZ
Bydgoszcz Stadium

Tournament capacity 11,585

Home club Zawisza Bydgoszcz

Matches

17 June 18:00 Portugal v Serbia, Group B
20 June 18:00 Serbia v FYR Macedonia, Group B
23 June 20:45 Serbia v Spain, Group B



TYCHY
Tychy Stadium

Tournament capacity 14,805

Home club GKS Tychy

Matches

18 June 18:00 Germany v Czech Republic, Group C
21 June 18:00 Czech Republic v Italy, Group C
24 June 20:45 Czech Republic v Denmark, Group C
27 June 18:00 Semi-final

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William Carvalho (second left) joins in the celebrations after the EURO 2016 final

Portugal step up in style

Just 12 months after losing the 2015 UEFA European Under-21 Championship final, William Carvalho, Raphaël Guerreiro and João Mário were celebrating in Saint-Denis having played their part in Portugal's UEFA EURO 2016 triumph. Here, William explains how time spent with the U21s helped sow the seeds of success



"It's difficult to find the right words to describe that moment. A dream came true. All that a football player ever dreams of is making the dream come true." The dream that William Carvalho is discussing is Portugal's conquest of Europe at UEFA EURO 2016. It was an unexpected triumph and for William and two other members of Portugal's starting XI at the Stade de France on 10 July 2016, it was a moment arguably all the sweeter for the heartbreak they suffered 12 months earlier.

It was in Prague that William, Raphaël Guerreiro and João Mário experienced the agony of defeat in the UEFA European Under-21 Championship final against Sweden. Indeed, it

was William's penalty being saved in the climactic shoot-out that sealed their fate.

Yet as he looks back, the big midfielder, now 25, can recognise the benefit of the lessons learned that evening in the Czech Republic, and, moreover, how the U21 experience helped him in France 12 months later. "Although we lost, I developed as a player because you learn from your mistakes too," he reflects. "I had that experience the year before, and a year later we played at another EURO. We knew what to expect and it ended positively for us."

Rui Jorge, Portugal's U21 coach, agrees. He looked on with pride as William, Guerreiro and João Mário – along with unused substitute

Rafa Silva – celebrated capturing the senior continental crown at the expense of their French hosts at UEFA EURO 2016. And he identifies the link between one night of heart-thumping intensity at Prague’s Eden Arena and another in Saint-Denis the following summer.

“All those moments with a great impact on a personal level are a part of a player’s development in life,” he says. “And I believe the greater impact those moments have, the greater the development will be. I think that was the case for our team. It was the most important competition they had played in so far and it will certainly be a moment they’ll remember forever.”

This time around, Rui Jorge will be boosted by the presence of UEFA EURO 2016 winner Renato Sanches, not part of Portugal’s U21 squad in 2015, but the coach feels even his most experienced players can benefit from the demands of this tournament. He adds: “It’s a good moment to develop, where the intensity levels are very high – not just physically, but also the stress levels they are under.

“It’s a unique competition and a unique moment. A competition like the final stages of a European U21 Championship is undoubtedly a special moment in their development, and the more games you can play in that competition the better. [In 2015] they played all the games until the final. There were some very intense moments – some positive and a couple very negative. But that level of intensity certainly helps them develop and makes them more ready for the future.”

Competing in any tournament tests players physically and tactically. “The mental component is always very important in a final competition, but it’s not the only thing,” Rui Jorge says when asked what he focuses on with his Portugal players. “When you need to be at the highest level and compete against the best, you need to be on top of everything to get good results. Depending on the moment, we focus our work on the aspects we think are most needed – it might be the tactical part of a match, at other times the mental element. And at other times the physical element,

with a focus on recovery. So it varies from situation to situation.”

Portugal’s players came so close to claiming the trophy in 2015 yet their defeat in the final did not diminish Rui Jorge’s satisfaction in the way they had played to their potential during the fortnight-long event. It is, he says, all any coach can ask. “I said even before we went there – because we know the players better than most people – that the most important thing was that, during those finals, they would show what we knew they were capable of doing. You’re very satisfied when, even at that crucial time, they do what you expect from them. For me that’s our biggest success – that they show other people the quality they really have.”

Looking back, William picks the semi-final against Germany as the match in which Portugal really showed their potential. Their crushing 5-0 victory featured five different goalscorers – including future UEFA EURO 2016 winner João Mário – and went into the record books as their opponents’ heaviest defeat in U21 finals.

“Rui Jorge gave us the right instructions on how to approach the match and we followed them,” William recalls. “It was a crucial victory. It’s not often that you beat Germany 5-0.”

Nor, he adds, is it very often that a player gets to taste the unique atmosphere – and face the different demands – of such a tournament. “It’s very important because all the players playing at their clubs – and some big clubs – don’t have competitive tournaments like the U21 EURO was. We played against national teams with strong players, and it demands much more from you and has great prestige. It is always good for your career.”

The same applies to the young hopefuls competing in Poland this year. Renato Sanches may have already sampled glory at the higher level, but the rest of the squad will be desperate to emulate the four Portugal players who graduated from Rui Jorge’s U21 team to be the toast of Europe the following summer. Although it must have seemed a distant dream at the time, as William Carvalho can vouch, dreams do come true.

“It was a crucial victory. It’s not often that you beat Germany 5-0”

William Carvalho fact file

Born
07/04/1992, Luanda, Angola

Clubs
Sporting Clube de Portugal
(loaned to CD Fátima 2011,
Cercle Brugge KSV 2012–13)

Sporting debut
03/04/2011, Vitória SC 1-1 Sporting

Senior Portugal debut
19/11/2013 Sweden 2-3 Portugal

Portugal caps/goals
32/1

Honours
UEFA EURO 2016
2015 Portuguese Cup

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‘INTELLIGENCE AND VISION’

UEFA’s technical team named William Carvalho as their player of the tournament. Here is what they said of his performance in the 2015 technical report

Although 480 minutes and 65.3km in 13 days ultimately took a toll, William underscored coaching-manual definitions of the ‘controlling midfielder’. Starting from the zone in front of his back four, the Sporting CP midfielder made himself available to team-mates with seemingly effortless ease, distributed the ball with intelligence and vision and pushed forward to support Portugal’s attacking play, without forgetting his obligation to provide defensive balance in a side that conceded only once. His positional sense and physical presence contributed to his ball-winning acumen, while his authoritative personality allowed him to lead and dictate the tempo of play.



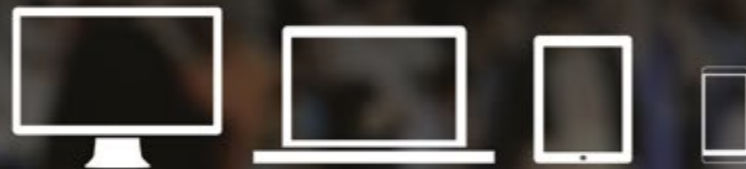
William Carvalho (left) battles for the ball with Sweden captain Oscar Hiljemark during the 2015 tournament group stage



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EURO stars

Twenty-two players from the 2015 finals went on to be called up for UEFA EURO 2016, and 13 enjoyed a taste of the action. We select a line-up of players whose starring role in the Czech Republic helped earn them a ticket to France



Harry Kane
England | Forward

Kane played in England's seven matches across both tournaments and won his second Premier League golden boot in 2016/17.



John Guidetti
Sweden | Forward

Guidetti scored twice during Sweden's run to the 2015 U21 title and played in all three of their games at UEFA EURO 2016.



Ladislav Krejčí
Czech Republic | Left midfield

Having equalised for the Czechs in their last U21 finals match against Germany, the left winger was a fixture in France last summer.



Emre Can
Germany | Central midfield

Can scored Germany's equaliser in their U21 finals opener against Serbia and started the semi-final loss to France at UEFA EURO 2016.



William Carvalho
Portugal | Central midfield

Player of the 2015 tournament in the Czech Republic, the defensive midfielder then emerged as a key man in Portugal's EURO triumph.



João Mário
Portugal | Right midfield

The FC Internazionale Milano midfielder struck twice in the Czech Republic and played in every game for champions Portugal in France.



Raphaël Guerreiro
Portugal | Left-back

A star for Portugal at the U21 finals, French-born Guerreiro was nominated for best young player at the senior tournament.



Victor Lindelöf
Sweden | Centre-back

The SL Benfica defender converted Sweden's last penalty in the final shoot-out and was an ever-present for the Blågult in France.



Joshua Kimmich
Germany | Centre-back

The versatile Kimmich fills in at centre-back but had a holding role in the Czech Republic and finished UEFA EURO 2016 at right-back.



Pavel Kadeřábek
Czech Republic | Right-back

Already a senior international when he scored the opening goal at the U21 finals, the right-back contested every minute of the senior EURO.

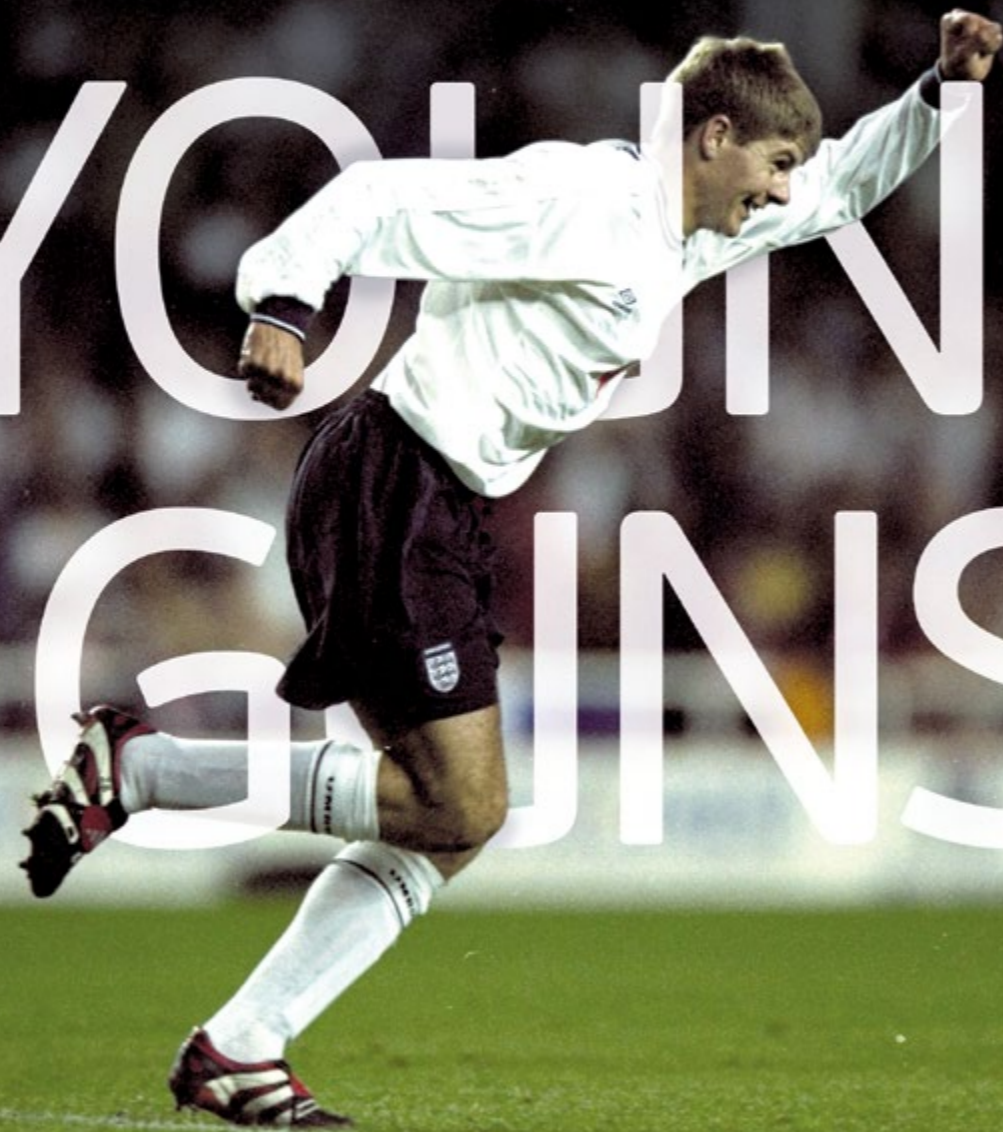


Patrik Carlgren
Sweden | Goalkeeper

A hero in the Czech Republic thanks to his shoot-out saves in the final, Carlgren earned a squad place at last summer's main event.

England's Steven Gerrard is all smiles after netting against Luxembourg in qualifying for the 2000 finals

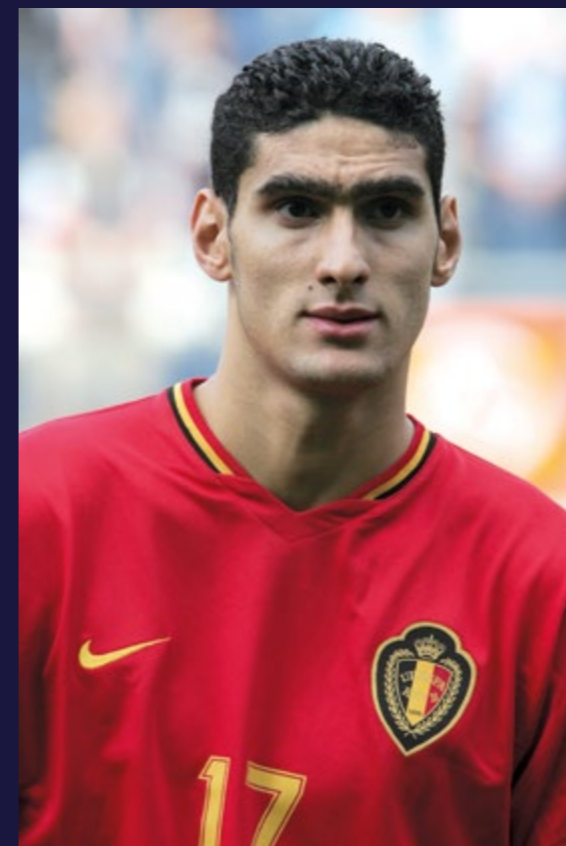
YOUNG GUNS



Ever since the UEFA European Under-21 Championship kicked off in 1976, it has given Europe's youngsters a perfect platform on which to hone their talents before hitting the big time. We look back at some of the game's top stars during their time with the U21s



Giorgio Chiellini, looking rugged even at 21, celebrates scoring for Italy against Ukraine during the 2006 final tournament



A closely cropped Marouane Fellaini appears for Belgium against Israel during the 2007 final tournament

Goalkeeper David de Gea lifts the trophy for the second time in three summers after helping Spain to victory against Italy in the 2013 final in Jerusalem



A beaming Christian Eriksen collects his man of the match trophy after scoring in 2011 hosts Denmark's 2-1 group stage win against Belarus





Klaas-Jan Huntelaar puts the Netherlands on the way to the 2006 title with the first of his two goals to beat Ukraine 3-0 in the final



Toni Kroos makes his debut for Germany in a qualifying match against Northern Ireland in 2008



Czech Republic goalkeeper Petr Čech sinks to the turf after his match-winning performance against France in the 2002 final



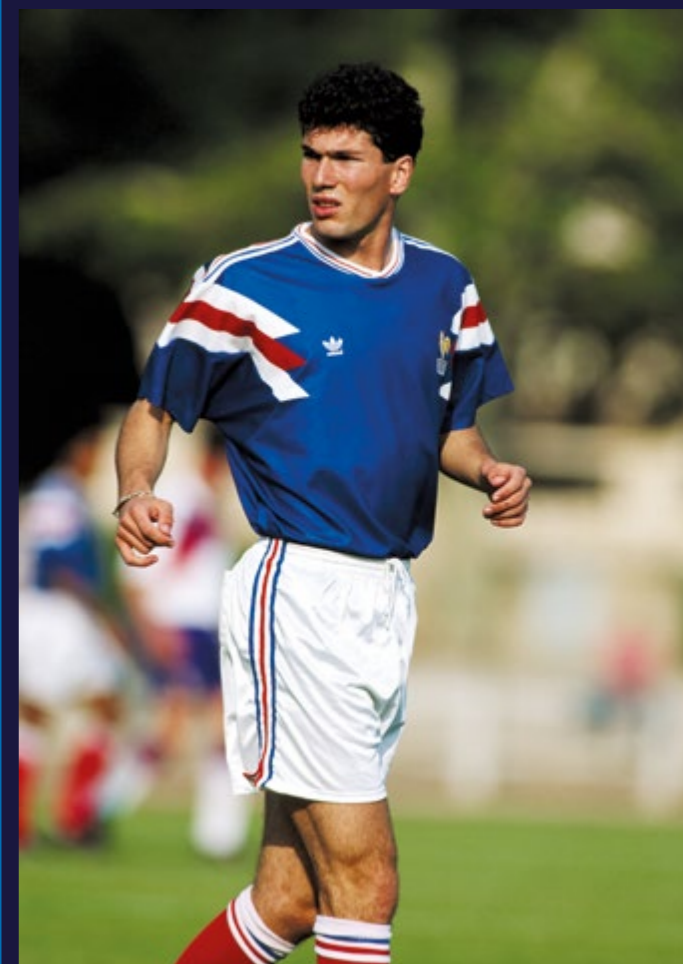
Glenn Hoddle celebrates England's quarter-final success against Italy in 1978

UEFA EURO 2016 winner Nani is a veteran of the 2006 and 2007 final tournaments with Portugal



Thierry Henry on the run for France against England in February 1999

Xherdan Shaqiri points to where he wants the ball during Switzerland's last finals appearance in 2011



A young Zinedine Zidane in action for France

Yugoslavia strike first

Roared on by fans in his home town, Vahid Halilhodžić hit a hat-trick to clinch the title

Almost four decades have passed since Yugoslavia won the first UEFA European Under-21 Championship with the help of four goals in the final from Vahid Halilhodžić, their fast, elegant, technically brilliant striker. Here, Halilhodžić remembers the drama and excitement of that two-legged triumph against East Germany in May 1978.

"In those days, the national team was always the centre of attention and we played in full stadiums on our way to the trophy – in Maribor against Hungary, and then in Novi Sad against England in the semi-finals. England were favourites going into that match, but after winning 2-1 at home we were able to get a 1-1 draw in Manchester. I scored in both games and we showed we had the strength, quality and desire to succeed.

"For the final, though, we were definitely underdogs. East Germany were physically stronger and very disciplined and had a strong collective game. They had 20,000 fans behind them in the first leg, but our captain Velimir Zajec was really commanding at the back for us and we also looked for openings upfield. Fortunately, I managed to get a goal just after half-time.

"Tickets for the second leg sold out fast and there was a celebratory mood in the country as, the day after the first leg, Sarajevo had been awarded the 1984 Winter Olympics.

"I was optimistic but a bit fearful too – the fear of failing in my home town, in front of my own fans in Mostar. Along with Blaž Slišković, my FK Velež team-mate, I knew we wouldn't be forgiven easily if we didn't perform so the biggest motivation was actually not to embarrass myself in front of family and friends.

"I had so many games in my career as player and coach, but those first 45 minutes are something I will never forget. They scored after two minutes, I equalised, and yet by the 14th minute we were 3-1 down. I then got a second goal, but they made it 4-2 just after the half-hour. Thankfully, in the 36th minute I scored my hat-trick goal and we needed just one more. The crowd was chanting 'Vahid, Vahid', but I had Frank Uhlig marking me and by now he was like my shadow. Instead, Zlatko Krmpotić set up Srećko Bogdan to score with a header and we had our fourth goal.

"I always remember the whole stadium singing my name when I took the trophy from Zajec at the end. It was a huge celebration for the whole country and we got so many telegrams congratulating us. Afterwards, I'd arranged to go to a café with my younger brother Eno, but when we got there, it was empty. It wasn't a problem, though – there were so many fans out on the streets who wanted to celebrate with me and I was out with them until the morning!"



"The crowd was chanting 'Vahid, Vahid'"

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NEMESIS

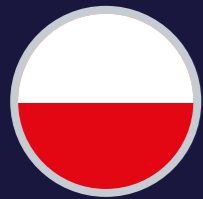
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Golden years



President of the Polish Football Federation, Zbigniew Boniek is also one of Poland's greatest ever players – a member of the team that reached the 1982 FIFA World Cup semi-finals and subsequently a European Cup winner with Juventus. Here, he remembers a golden era for the Polish game in the 1970s and early 80s

How much confidence was generated by Poland winning gold at the 1972 Olympics and was it the springboard for what came next?

I was watching those Games as a teenager and definitely the 1972 gold was a very big thing at the time. However, I wouldn't say it was the springboard for the team's later achievements as

we all know that Western countries didn't send their best teams to the Olympics and that teams from the then Communist countries dominated. Of course, winning the gold was important for our players' self-belief, but in my opinion the golden era started just after that, with qualification for the 1974 World Cup. Poland played very well in

qualifying and had two legendary games with England – we beat them 2-0 in Chorzow and then got this famous 1-1 draw at Wembley, ruling England out of the finals.

Poland won six of their seven matches at the 1974 World Cup and finished third. Was that the best Poland team of all time?

It's difficult to say whether it was the best of all time. We finished third in 1974, but we also came third in 1982. Many people in Poland would say we actually had our strongest team in 1978 in Argentina. That team had players from 1974 as well as Włodzimierz Lubański, the national side's all-time top scorer, who was back after the injury that had ruled him out of the 1974 finals. It was also the first World Cup for me. Expectations in Poland were huge and there were even some suggestions we could win it, but it didn't happen and we didn't get a medal either. Thankfully, we bounced back four years later. So if we're asked about it, some players from 1982 would say our team was the best, and some of the guys from 1974 would vote for them. Anyway, both were special and that's the best answer.

What was it like playing with Grzegorz Lato?

An absolute pleasure. Grzegorz was a fantastic player with unbelievable skills who would fight for the team every single second. I liked him and I appreciated him a lot as a team-mate. He scored 45 goals for the national team, was top scorer at the 1974 World Cup with seven goals, and gave a lot to Polish football through all those years.

For you personally, what was it like scoring a hat-trick against Belgium at the 1982 World Cup?

It was a great feeling, and for several reasons. First, I wasn't your classic forward, but rather an attacking midfielder, which meant around 70% of my duties were attacking and around 30% defending. So scoring a hat-trick at the finals was something unique for me. What was also nice was the fact they were all terrific goals, each different from the other. And last but not least, the place where I scored them – we were playing at Camp Nou, one of the 'temples' of football. A good place for a great performance!



Zbigniew Boniek scored 24 goals in 80 appearances for Poland. Here he is in action against East Germany during a FIFA World Cup qualifying match in 1981



Zbigniew Boniek turns in triumph after scoring the first goal of his hat-trick in Poland's 3-0 win against Belgium in the second round of the 1982 FIFA World Cup finals in Spain

Overall, looking at that period from 1972-82, how do you explain the success that Poland enjoyed?

There were two essential factors – we had great players and great coaches at the time. We can really talk about a golden generation in the 1970s and the start of the 80s, because the Polish national team was among the best in the world. Has there been anything to compare before or after? Well, beforehand we also had some great players but we did not succeed as a team. And afterwards, for a long time there was a drought – the communist era was ending and the transformation took some time. But since then we've become quite strong again and if we look

at the last EURO in France, it was the first time Poland had qualified from the group stage and we only lost on penalties to Portugal in the quarter-finals. We have a good team and I hope they'll continue to grow.

Going back to your playing days, how good was the RTS Widzew Łódź team you played in, which went on to reach the European Cup semi-finals in 1983?

Widzew were great and it was a very good decision when I joined them from Zawisza Bydgoszcz. I also had an offer from Lech Poznań at the time, but opted for Widzew and never regretted it because I had some great

moments with them. The European campaigns were marvellous. We got the better of both Manchester clubs in different years in the UEFA Cup – first we beat City and three years later, United. And then [in that same 1980/81 campaign] we beat Juventus. Absolutely unique memories and nobody will ever take them away from me.

Finally, what was it like when you then played for Juventus against Widzew in the 1983 European Cup semi-final?

It was a very, very strange feeling for me. I didn't enjoy it. I didn't want to play against my old club, a team I had such a depth of feeling for.



“Players from 1982 would say our team was the best, and the guys from 1974 would vote for theirs. Anyway, both were special”



In it together

“It’s important to relax and not think about football all the time”

Sweden captain Kristoffer Olsson explains why tournament life is about so much more than what happens on the pitch

For a young footballer, the UEFA European Under-21 Championship experience is not just about results on the pitch. This is certainly the view of Kristoffer Olsson, a member of Sweden’s winning squad two summers ago. He may not have got off the bench in the Czech Republic, yet Olsson returned home stronger for the experience and went on to captain the defending champions in their qualifying campaign for this summer’s tournament.

Looking back on 2015, there is one particular lesson that sticks in his mind from when coach Håkan Ericson spoke to squad members who had been watching the Swedish fairy tale unfold from the sidelines. “Our coach said our bench players must be the best bench players in the tournament,” the AIK midfielder recalls. “You don’t only need 11 or 13 players. When you are together all the time, this is very important. If you want good results as a team you need all the players and coaches and everyone together – you can’t have one or two with bad energy around the group.

“I still felt I was involved,” he adds. “If you’re on the bench you can see things and offer some advice

to your team-mates. You have to train hard in every session and the day after the game, when you’ve not played, you have to train hard so, if you’re called on, you are ready.”

Sweden’s togetherness was a notable factor in their 2015 success, and the games and quizzes organised by goalkeeping coach Leif Troedsson played a big part in fostering team spirit. Although the players had a recreation room with table tennis and PlayStation, Troedsson’s mandatory competitions were important in bringing the group together.

“We’d have a quiz on, for example, the Czech Republic,” Olsson says. “It made us come together and get to know each other even better.” There were other challenges, such as dividing the squad into groups of four and asking them to build the highest structure possible with marshmallows and a packet of spaghetti. Points collected in these off-field activities counted just as much as those earned on the football pitch in the squad’s ‘Player of the Camp’ competition.

Olsson also believes it is essential to take the

opportunity to switch off and forget about football, such as when family and friends joined the players to celebrate Swedish Midsummer at their base in Brno, with pickled herring and strawberry cake on the menu in the team hotel.

“We celebrated Midsummer together with the team and the families,” he says. “It’s a big thing in Sweden. We did it last time, so we’ll do it again. It’s important to relax and not think about football all the time. We also had time off at other points – an afternoon or evening to go into the city and have a coffee, for example.”

Looking back, Olsson suggests that the U21 EURO was bigger than he had been expecting and the sense of occasion was heightened by Sweden having the largest group of travelling supporters at the 2015 finals. “What impressed me most were the fans who came from Sweden. You looked at the other teams and they didn’t have so many fans – our supporters were singing all the time.”

They were not the only ones, Olsson laughs. The Sweden players had an unofficial tournament song, Nya Sverige (New Sweden), composed for the squad

by Swedish musician Dani M, which they sang on the coach on their way to matches – and in the dressing room afterwards.

Whatever the merits of their music, the harmony in the camp was unmistakable, even in the most testing moments. As Olsson recalls, the penalty shoot-out that decided the final against Portugal was another measure of that unbreakable team spirit.

“Before the penalties began, we were standing in the circle together and saying, ‘Let’s win this.’ We were all smiling because the journey we’d had was amazing, and we were standing there five penalties away from winning the whole thing. It was the most important thing – that we were enjoying it still.”

Olsson has one final recollection from off the field two years ago and it is one that will never leave him: the sight of 20,000 people celebrating their U21 footballers’ triumph in Stockholm’s Kungsträdgården park on their return home.

“We didn’t expect that 20,000 people would be there. There were so many people out on the streets celebrating, and it’s something nobody will ever forget. We felt like proper heroes. It was unreal.”



Kristoffer Olsson wants to repeat Sweden’s 2015 win

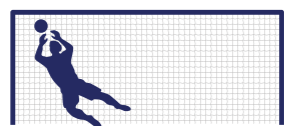
Record numbers

Some of the key facts and figures from over 40 years of the UEFA European Under-21 Championship

3

Since winning the inaugural competition, Serbia/Yugoslavia have lost more finals than any other side. They missed out in 1990 (as Yugoslavia), 2004 (as Serbia and Montenegro) and 2007 (as Serbia).

32



It took 32 penalties – a UEFA competition record – to separate England and the Netherlands in a shoot-out after a 1-1 draw in the 2007 semi-finals, the Dutch eventually winning 13-12.

35,500

A record final-tournament crowd watched Italy lift the trophy in 1996 at the Olímpico de Montjuïc, Barcelona. The Azzurrini overcame hosts Spain 5-4 on penalties after Francesco Totti and Raúl González had swapped goals in a 1-1 draw.

15

Lampros Choutos (Greece) and Tomáš Pekhart (Czech Republic) have scored the most goals in this competition, one more than Dutch pair Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Roy Makaay who each scored 14.



Sweden's Marcus Berg set a final tournament record with seven goals in 2009.

5

Italy have won a record five titles, followed by Spain on four. The Azzurrini have also contested a record seven finals – again, one more than Spain.

32

James Milner played his competition-record 32nd and last match for England in the 2009 final defeat by Germany.

4-0

Germany's 4-0 win against England in 2009 is the record victory margin for a single-match final. In 2014, the spine of Horst Hrubesch's team – Manuel Neuer, Benedikt Höwedes, Mats Hummels, Sami Khedira, Mesut Özil and Jérôme Boateng – helped their country win the FIFA World Cup in Brazil.



212,139

The Netherlands became the first side to clinch the title on home soil in 2007. Over 200,000 people attended matches during the tournament, a competition record, with average crowds of 13,259.

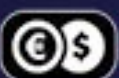
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