



Union des associations européennes de football



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uefa.com launches search for fans' top 50 players

Fans to vote for their favourite players from last 50 years

As part of the events marking UEFA's Golden Jubilee next year, European football's governing body is setting out to establish the 50 best European players of the past 50 years - as voted for by the fans.

The poll will be conducted on UEFA's official website, uefa.com, with voting due to start on Tuesday 7 October. To help the voters, UEFA has assembled a list of 250 players from across the five decades of its existence. Readers will be asked to study the lists and choose their 10 favourite players from each decade.

The nominations have been based on performances in domestic and European club competitions, as well as UEFA European Championships and FIFA World Cups. The list of candidates was carefully compiled by a team including Jozef Venglos, the former Czechoslovakian national team coach who is now chairman of UEFA's Technical Development Committee.

"The history of European football is so rich in individual talent that any such list, even as long as this, is always likely to contain a few surprises, and maybe one or two controversial omissions," said Venglos. "But I'm confident that the majority of fans will go along with our choice. And with the wild card option, they can always add a player who they think we should have included."

UEFA's Jubilee Coordinator, Keith Cooper, said: "I can well imagine fans giving this a long, hard think, and having a lot of fun in doing so. We've made sure that everyone can take the whole 50 years into consideration without falling for the temptation just to go for today's big names.

"Many of the front-runners might be fairly obvious, the stars who've helped write European football history, but everyone has their own particular favourites and it's going to be fascinating to see which of these might rise to the top."

Voting will continue for two months, and results of the poll will be revealed from January to April 2004, UEFA's jubilee year, starting with Player No 50 and working up to No1 – the fans' choice as the best European player of the past 50 years.

Separately, the 52 UEFA member associations have each nominated their outstanding player of the last half-century to be announced later in the year. These 52 Golden Players will be perpetuated in a visual display at the House of European Football in Nyon.

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