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UEFA steps up doping tests

Out-of-competition testing introduced for UEFA EURO 2004™ teams

As part of its ongoing programme to increase the quantity and frequency of doping tests in European football, UEFA today announced that it would introduce out-of-competition testing for all 16 teams involved in the forthcoming UEFA Euro 2004™ final tournament.

This is the first time that all 16 participating national teams will be tested before the start of the tournament, that takes place in Portugal next year, as well as testing at the ten play-off matches and at all the matches of the final tournament itself.

UEFA has also, in line with recent recommendations from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), added the testing for tetrahydrogestrinone (THG) as part of its anti-doping testing routine at matches. THG falls into the category of prohibited substances in UEFA's current doping control regulations.

Commenting on this increased frequency of doping testing UEFA CEO, Gerhard Aigner, said:

"UEFA is taking new steps to ensure that we have the widest possible coverage of testing before the UEFA EURO 2004™ and at the tournament itself. This is completely in line with the overall increase in testing that we have introduced in our club competitions and that were announced after the UEFA Executive meeting in September of this year.

"The message is clear – we will not tolerate those who cheat using banned substances and will act decisively if anyone is found doing so."

UEFA announced in September a 30 per cent increase in doping tests in UEFA competitions for the season 2003/04, as part of a concerted effort to deter the use of illegal substances in European football. During the 2002/03 season 396 players were controlled in 99 UEFA competition matches, resulting in only one positive case.

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