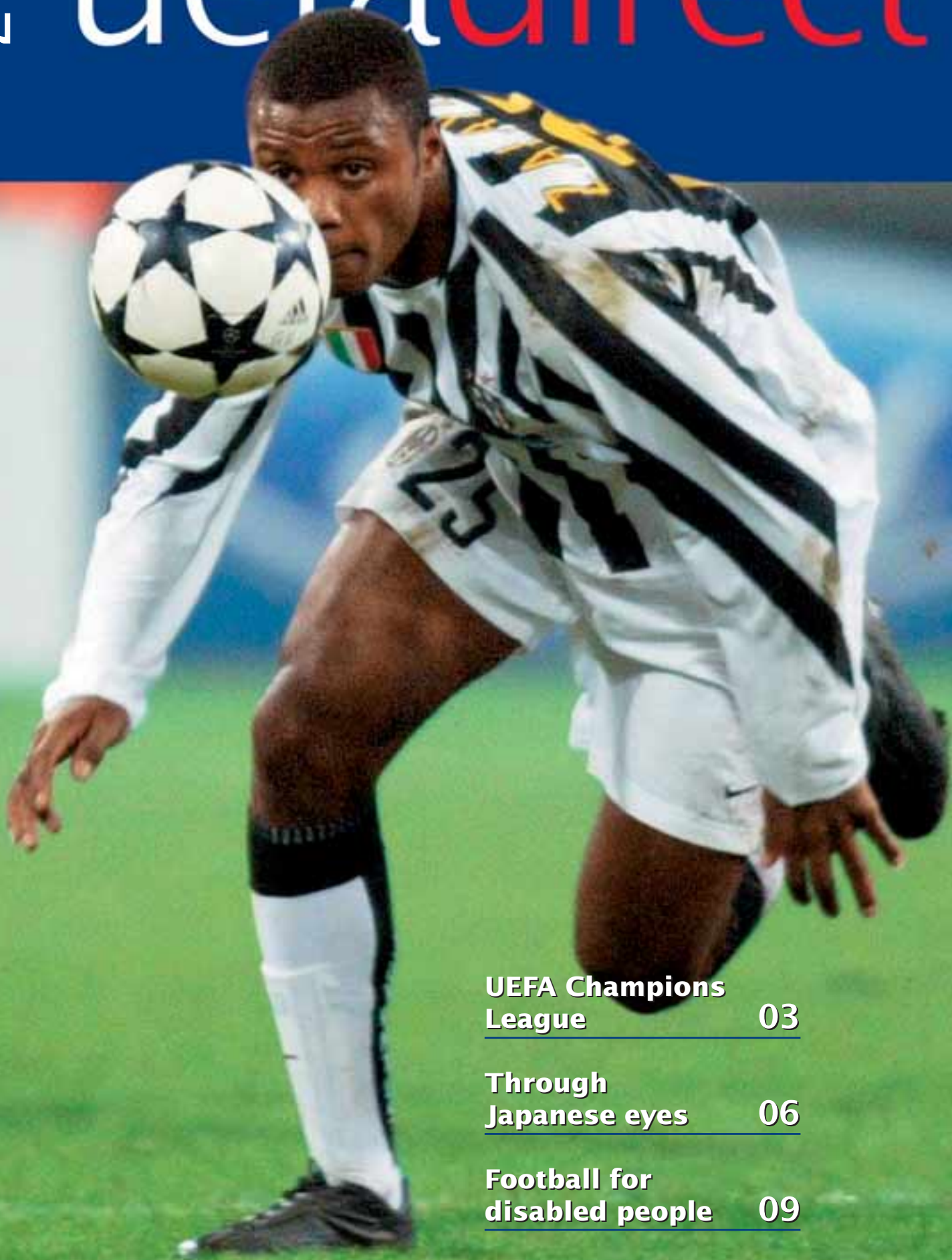


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uefa **direct**



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COVER

At the end of February, the UEFA Champions League enters its direct knock-out phase. All eyes will again be on the starball, including those of Marcelo Zalayeta (Juventus).

PHOTO: BONGARTS

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Editorial

Focus on European football

A new calendar year is ahead of us but we are in the middle of the UEFA club competition season. I have just taken over from Gerhard Aigner as the CEO of UEFA. It is one of the most interesting jobs in football and, together with my colleagues, I will continue building on the foundations laid down by Mr Aigner in serving European football in the best possible way.

The new format of the UEFA Champions League has been a success. After an interesting group stage we are now entering the knock-out stage, with some very exciting matches on the programme. We are just finalising the fine-tuning of the new format for the UEFA Cup, so as to be prepared for an interesting start to next season.

The most challenging and important project in European club football in recent years is now



under implementation. I am referring to the UEFA club licensing system which comes into force for qualification next season. All member associations and leagues are taking part in developing

club football towards better finances and infrastructure which will safeguard the future of our game. Now it is up to the clubs, leagues, associations and UEFA to make it work for the benefit of all involved.

The 16 teams in the final round of EURO 2004 are now preparing for the tournament in Portugal. Nothing beats a final round for national teams when it comes to public interest and excitement. National pride is at stake and you can feel the intensity already in the preparations. The Portuguese FA, Government and local authorities are doing their utmost to prepare for the best football tournament in the world.

2004 promises to be an exciting year, with the entire world's football interest focused on Europe.



Lars-Christer Olsson
Chief Executive

Spain (Juan Carlos Valeron) and the other 15 finalists are into their preparations for EURO 2004.

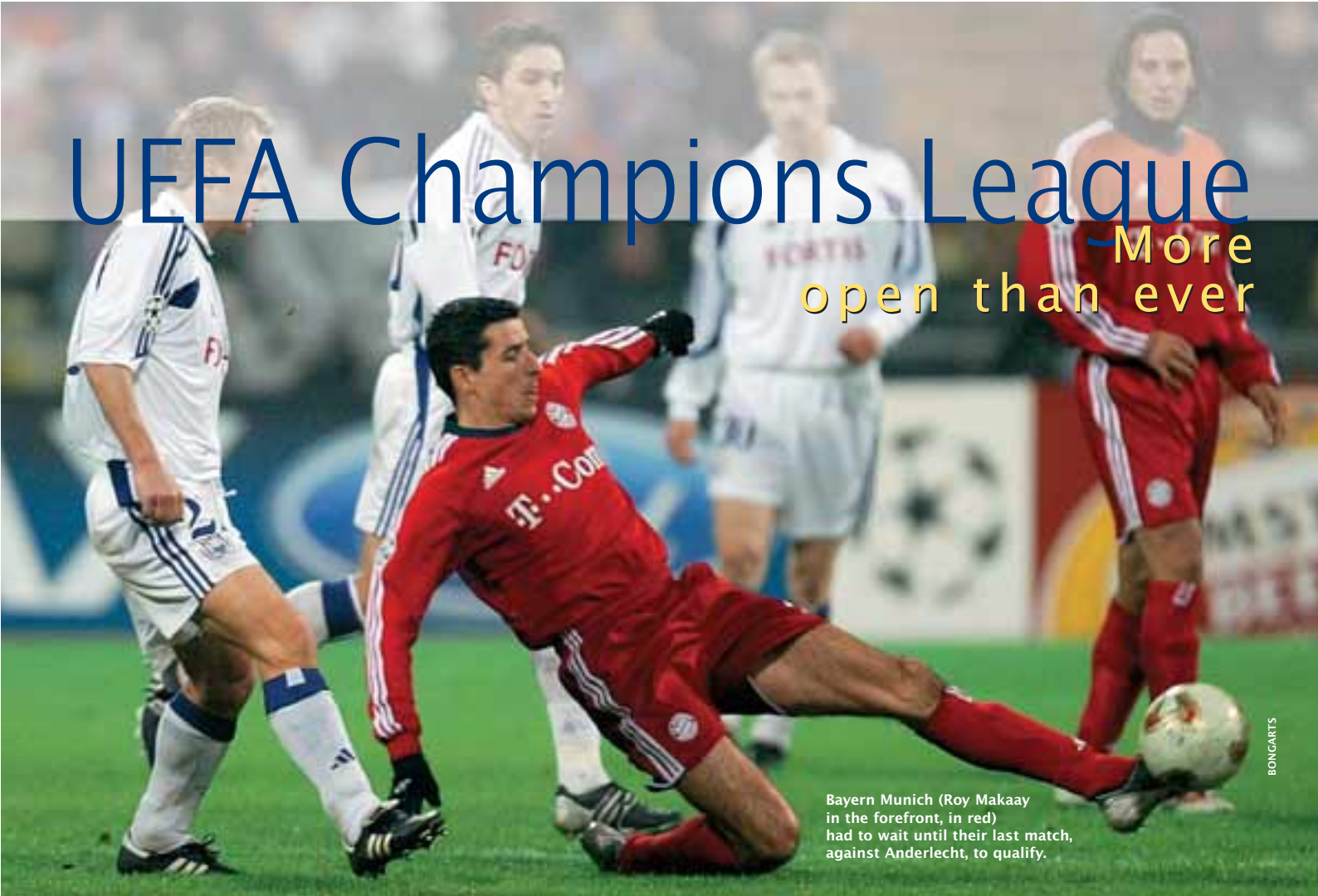
FLASH PRESS

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



UEFA Champions League

More open than ever



Bayern Munich (Roy Makaay in the forefront, in red) had to wait until their last match, against Anderlecht, to qualify.

“AT LEAST NINE TEAMS ARE CAPABLE OF WINNING THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE THIS SEASON,” SAID EMILIO BUTRAGUEÑO, FORMER STAR STRIKER AND CURRENT DIRECTOR OF REAL MADRID, IN NYON IN DECEMBER.

Despite a few surprises in the first stage, the majority of European football’s biggest clubs have qualified for the first knock-out round of UEFA’s flagship competition, starting on 24 February. And with one more knock-out round than last season, there is no doubt that every moment of every match will be full of suspense. Here we take a brief look at each of the eight ties.

Bayern Munich – Real Madrid: a duel between kings

This could easily have been the final. Between them, Real Madrid and Bayern Munich have won the Champion Clubs’ Cup/Champions League 13 times!



These two giants are squaring up in the first knock-out round because the Germans only finished second in their group. Having been knocked out in last year’s group stages, the Bavarians had to rely on a tight 1-0 win over Anderlecht in their final match in order to book their ticket. Real, on the other hand, were head and shoulders above their Group F opponents. However, both sides are so packed with stars that any outcome is possible. These two clubs faced each other in the quarter-finals in 2001/02 and in the previous year’s semi-finals. Each time, the winner went on to lift the trophy (Real in 2002 and Bayern in 2001).

Deportivo – Juventus: old acquaintances

This pairing is already a Champions League classic. Juventus and Deportivo have met in each of the past three seasons: in the second group stage in 2002/03 and 2001/02, and in the first phase in 2000/01. The honours are even so far, with one victory each and four draws. In other words, the outcome of this two-legged tie is anyone’s guess! However, this season the “Old Lady” has enjoyed a better start to the competition, qualifying with two matches to spare, whereas the Spaniards had to battle until the last match to overcome the formidable opposition of PSV Eindhoven.

Manchester United – Porto: eight in a row for the Red Devils?

Manchester United are intent on qualifying for the Champions



FC Porto (José Bosingwa) managed to keep their cool against Olympique de Marseille.

AFP/JULIEN



Deportivo La Coruña (Diego Tristan, in blue) faced strong resistance from PSV Eindhoven.

AFP/CONTINENTAL



Chelsea's Damien Duff.

EMPICS

League quarter-finals for the eighth year in a row. Despite David Beckham's departure, Alex Ferguson's men had no problems progressing through the first round, displaying a high quality of football along the way. However, Porto, UEFA Cup holders, will provide a tough test for United. José Mourinho's team is not only highly technical, but can also display immense mental toughness. They managed to qualify by winning their second match against Olympique de Marseille, for example, without their suspended playmaker, Deco. Porto, however, will have to face the English champions with a major handicap, since their top striker Derlei seriously injured his right knee ligaments in a league match against Alverca on 22 December.

Sparta Prague – AC Milan: miracle men face reigning champions

Although last season four Italian teams progressed through the first round, only two have qualified this time. However, they are the top two, since Milan and Juventus were last year's Champions League finalists. The current holders qualified with one match to spare. Although their football is less flamboyant than last season, their solidity has been impressive, particularly during their 1-0 win in Bruges, when they had a man sent off. They are favourites to beat Sparta Prague, who had to wait until stoppage time in their final match

against Lazio (1-0) to book their place in the first knock-out round.

Celta Vigo – Arsenal: Gunners' amazing comeback

After three matches, Arsenal had only one point in Group B. With 87 minutes on the clock in their fourth game, the London side looked to be heading out of the Champions League. However, Ashley Cole's goal in the 88th minute against Dynamo Kyiv (1-0) triggered an amazing comeback. Arsène Wenger's men then annihilated Inter in the San Siro (1-5) and disposed of Lokomotiv Moscow (2-0) in order to top the group. Celta Vigo, struggling in their national championship, booked their ticket with a 2-1 win in their last match against AC Milan, who had already qualified.





After S.S. Lazio, Sparta Prague (Lukas Zelenka, centre) find themselves up against another Italian club.



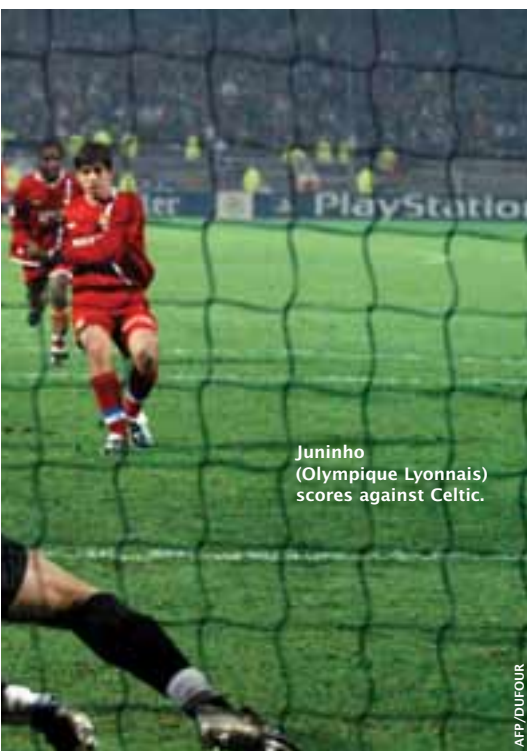
By keeping Galatasaray (Frank de Boer, left) at bay, Real Sociedad (Valery Karpin) have made it through to the fourth round.



Thierry Henry (centre) played a major role in Arsenal's qualification.

Lokomotiv Moscow – Monaco: Monegasques impress

Monaco recorded the most unexpected result of the first stage of the Champions League, with a pulsating 8-3 win over Deportivo La Coruna. Never before had so many goals been scored in a single UEFA Champions League match. At times, Monaco showed the most sparkling football in Europe. The quality of their attacking play, with playmakers Rothen and Giuly supporting centre-forwards Prso and Morientes, enthralled many spectators. Lokomotiv Moscow, reaching the second stage of the competition for the second successive year, also created a minor sensation by knocking out Inter, semi-finalists last year, thanks to their four-point haul against the Italians.



Juninho (Olympique Lyonnais) scores against Celtic.

Real Sociedad – Olympique Lyonnais: Spanish poker

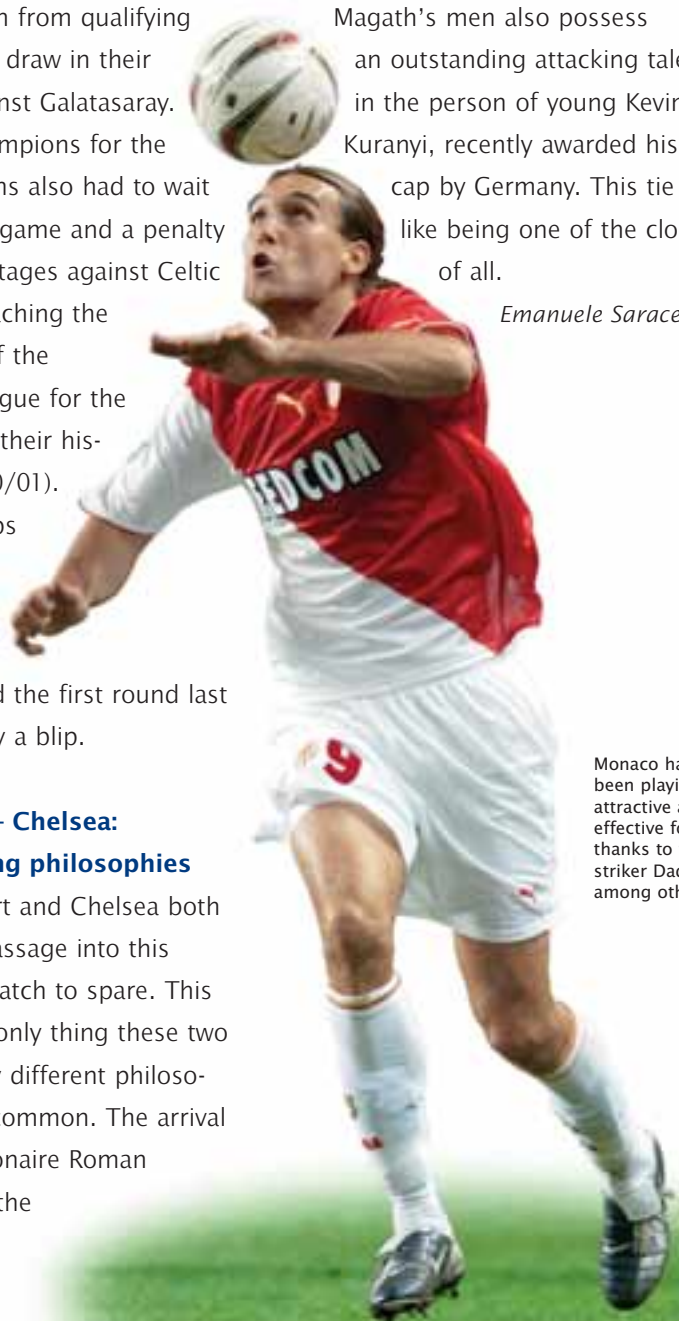
As last season, all four Spanish teams have qualified for the second stage. The overall quality of Spanish football is particularly evident, given that, like Celta, Real Sociedad are having enormous problems in la Liga this season. This did not prevent Raynald Denoueix's men from qualifying thanks to a 1-1 draw in their last match against Galatasaray. The French champions for the past two seasons also had to wait until their final game and a penalty in the closing stages against Celtic (3-2) before reaching the second stage of the Champions League for the second time in their history (after 2000/01). The French clubs have therefore shown that their failure to proceed beyond the first round last year was merely a blip.

VfB Stuttgart – Chelsea: two contrasting philosophies

Stuttgart and Chelsea both booked their passage into this round with a match to spare. This is perhaps the only thing these two clubs, with very different philosophies, have in common. The arrival of Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich at the helm of the London club enabled the

“Blues” to indulge in an unprecedented transfer campaign. Their attacking line-up has particularly been strengthened through the acquisition of Duff, Mutu and Crespo, while the midfield has been bolstered by the arrival of Veron and Makelele. Chelsea's attack-minded team will be facing the Bundesliga's meanest defence. However, Felix Magath's men also possess an outstanding attacking talent in the person of young Kevin Kuranyi, recently awarded his first cap by Germany. This tie looks like being one of the closest of all.

Emanuele Saraceno



Monaco have been playing attractive and effective football, thanks to their striker Dado Prso, among others.



Awaiting kick-off between AC Milan and Boca Juniors at the Yokohama stadium.

SABATTINI



BONCARTS



EMERICS

The UEFA Champions League (Bayern Munich vs RSC Anderlecht) and the national team (against Turkey) are very popular in Japan.

Closer links

Long before the 2002 World Cup, the European/South American Cup, contested in Tokyo since 1980, began to create close links between Japanese and European football. Having been strengthened by the transfer of several European stars to Japan and, more recently, by the arrival in Europe of some Japanese players, these links have generated a genuine interest in European football and its competitions in Japan and, at the same time, opened up new commercial opportunities in a saturated European market.

UEFA has also turned towards Japan by providing its football fans with their own Japanese version of the uefa.com website, which enables them to keep up-to-date with football on our continent. December's clash in Tokyo between AC Milan and Boca Juniors was an opportunity to turn the tables and to go and find out about Japanese football and its competitions.



PRO SHOTS

Football under the rising sun

UEFA Champions League hugely popular

THE ENTHUSIASM GENERATED BY THE CREATION OF THE J-LEAGUE IN 1993 HAS NOW COOLED. HOWEVER, THE ECONOMIC CRISIS CURRENTLY HITTING JAPAN HAS NOT AFFECTED FOOTBALL, WHICH HAS BECOME THE SECOND NATIONAL SPORT AFTER BASEBALL. WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF PLAYERS IN JAPAN.

Shuichi Tamura, a football analyst, follows the top Japanese players. He is able to make interesting comparisons as he travels all over the world. Like many Japanese journalists, he is independent. Salaried reporters usually have to cover several other sports as well as football.

What impact did the World Cup have?

It particularly enabled the public to get to know the players. The Japanese team is still enormously popular. However, the World Cup did not have much impact at club level nor on the national championship. Average attendances are slightly up, but the exodus of internationals means that the Japanese are more interested in foreign leagues. The economic crisis has actually forced clubs to cut their budgets and sell their star players. Ivica Osim, the Croatian coach of JEF United, has sounded the alarm bell, saying that we need to keep the Japanese internationals in the J-League so it becomes more popular.

How interested are the Japanese in European football?

Numerous pages are devoted to it in our magazines.

Shinji Ono (Feyenoord), a Japanese in Europe.

All UEFA Champions League, Serie A and Premiership matches are televised via satellite. We also get TV coverage of the leagues in Germany, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Portugal, Brazil and Argentina.

Which are the most popular competitions?

Serie A, which has been broadcast since 1992, followed by the Premiership and the Primera División. The standard of play, the atmosphere and the number of star players all help to attract viewers. The Bundesliga and the Dutch championship are also very popular because Naohiro Takahara (SV Hamburg), Shinji Ono (Feyenoord) and Toshiya Fujita (Utrecht) play in them. However, the Champions League is more popular than all the national leagues because it involves the world's best players.

What is the standard of the J-League?

It is comparable with that of the second-rate European leagues. Compared to European football, the game in Japan is lacking in individualism. It is dominated by the midfield and defence, with little incisive forward play due to the lower standards of penetration and finishing compared to defending. Football is becoming more and more complex. Tactics, training and diet assume great importance.



The Premier League (Manchester United vs Bolton, left) and Serie A (Juventus vs Inter) add to what the J-League (Yokohama F Marinos vs Jubilo Iwata) has to offer.

Nevertheless, the national team has made enormous progress and is now ranked in the top 25 by FIFA.

Has the arrival of numerous foreigners helped the development of Japanese football?

Yes. The foreign stars, who have come from every continent, have created a lot of interest. The Europeans include people like Stojkovic, Beguiristain, Massaro, Buchwald, Basile Boli, Stoitchkov, Ivan Hasek, Salinas, Vanenburg, Bickel, Michael Laudrup, etc.

The coaches, particularly Arsène Wenger, have also helped a great deal. Others who have played an important role include Osvaldo Ardiles, Josip Kuze, Carlos Queiroz, Joao Carlos, Eddie Thompson, Nelsinho, Holger Osiek, Emerson Leao, Carlos Rexach, René Desaeeyere, Steve Perryman, Jozef Venglos and Ivica Osim. Two national coaches have also left their mark on Japan: Dutchman Marius Ooft, who also coached Jubilo Iwata, Kyoto Perple Sanga and Urawa Red Diamonds, and Frenchman Philippe Troussier.

The Japanese women have made a good impression...

There is a semi-professional league which has attracted foreign stars from Norway, Sweden, America and China. Unfortunately, the recession has forced the clubs to part with their foreign players. However, the national team tends to qualify for every World Cup, reaching the quarter-finals in 1995. They also participated in the 1996 Olympic Games.

Pascale Pierard

AC Milan defeated in Tokyo

After winning last season's UEFA Champions League final on penalties, AC Milan were less fortunate in Tokyo on 14 December, when they failed to win their fourth European/South American Cup against Argentinian side Boca Juniors.

The end justifies the means... but only if the goal is achieved. This was not the case for AC Milan who, in order to prepare for the match in Tokyo, had rested some of their star players in the last match of the UEFA Champions League group stage.

Their preparations were in vain because, in the Yokohama stadium, Carlo Ancelotti's men failed to perform to their full potential, although they might have thought they had done the hardest part by opening the scoring through their Danish striker Tomasson after 20 minutes. However, the Argentinians managed to equalise five minutes later and, despite several chances for each side, the score remained unchanged until the end of extra time.

In the penalty shoot-out, Milan failed miserably, converting only one of their first four kicks. The fifth penalty was not needed, as Boca scored with three of their four to secure the trophy.

AC Milan have now therefore lost three times in a row in Tokyo, whereas all good things come in threes for Boca Juniors and their coach Carlos Bianchi: their third European/South American Cup and their

third major success of the year after winning the Argentinian championship and the Copa Libertadores.

Boca now join AC Milan, Real Madrid and the Montevideo clubs Penarol and Nacional as three-times winners of the trophy. Overall, the South American clubs have won 22 times compared to Europe's 20 victories.



Filippo Inzaghi avoids a Boca Juniors defender, but the Argentinians had the last word.



Japan met Germany in the 2003 Women's World Cup.

BONGARTS



Philippe Troussier (left) and Japan's captain Ryuzo Morioka are congratulated by FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter on finishing the 2001 Confederations Cup in second place.

SPORTIMAGE



AFP/NOGI

The final of the 2004 Emperor's Cup early this year between Jubilo Iwata and Cerezo Osaka.

The Japanese press

The Land of the Rising Sun is saturated with sports publications. Football magazines were pioneered by the monthly World Soccer Graphic, which was founded at the same time as the J-League. Its success has led to further magazines being launched, including World Soccer magazine, World Soccer Digest, Calcio 2002, Premiership, Soccer Critique and Football Nippon Magazine. There are also three general sports magazines: Sports Graphic Number, Sports Yeah and Sportiva Magazine. The eight sports dailies are actually tabloids which sometimes also include articles on horse-racing, cycling and political affairs... as well as pornographic material.

P.P.

Beckham, the star



KEYSTONE

David Beckham surrounded by Japanese schoolchildren.

While football fans, who are still in the minority in Japan, like to read reports on the technical and tactical side of the game, most Japanese people are more excited by interviews with the stars. David Beckham's recent tour of Asia triggered scenes of mass hysteria. Shuichi Tamura says, "The quality of tactical reporting has improved. More and more column inches are being devoted to tactical analysis, although interviews remain very popular: people like to read exactly what the players are saying. The Japanese idolise footballers as much as actors or singers. Rather than the game itself or the clubs, it is the national team and the players who make football popular. We still do not have any real football tradition or culture of our own.

International players are therefore treated as real stars, even if they are not really known in Europe. Sports dailies have to inundate their readers every day with news of the stars. Journalists go to the training ground every day, even if the players don't have anything to say and they come away empty-handed...

After the World Cup, Pierluigi Collina, Beckham, Oliver Kahn, Ilhan Mansiz and Ronaldo all starred in advertising campaigns in Japan. Two players are especially popular: Katana and Beckham. Why Beckham? Firstly because he is good-looking, secondly because he is good-looking and thirdly because he is good-looking!"

P.P.



First meeting of the Football for the Handicapped Panel.

PHOTO'S: UEFA WOODS

Football for the Handicapped

First meeting in Nyon

UEFA HAS BEEN WORKING WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS EUROPE/EURASIA FOR SEVERAL YEARS

AND FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO MAKE FOOTBALL

ACCESSIBLE TO AS MANY PARTICIPANTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AS POSSIBLE.

UEFA itself is also taking a direct interest in sport for disabled people and has set up the Football for the Handicapped Panel, which met for the first time on 18 December, at the House of European Football in Nyon.

Under the leadership of UEFA's Technical Director, Andy Roxburgh, the members of the panel, together with representatives from specialised institutions, were familiarised first with the structures and functioning of UEFA.

They then heard about programmes that are already operated by European national football associations to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities. Presentations were also given on the football activities of Special Olympics as well as on the mission and activities of the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSF) and Plusport, Switzerland's national organisation for sport for disabled people.

After that, attention turned to considering ways to promote football for disabled participants and its activities, for example, by making it a permanent feature of uefa.com, by organising a European conference to encourage UEFA member associations to take charge of football for people with disabilities in their territories, by making it part of grassroots football courses, by examining the possibility of allocating funds, or by designating special ambassadors. All these proposals will now be forwarded to the relevant UEFA bodies.

The FA Development programme

The FA has launched its Disability Football Strategy for the period of 2004-2006 as part of its Football Development programme. This falls in line with one of The FA's key strategic objectives within this programme entitled 'Opportunities for All', which is a commitment to providing everybody – boys, girls, old and young alike – with the opportunity to play, coach, referee, administer or volunteer in the national game.

The FA first made a commitment to Disability Football in 1999, supporting the 'Ability Counts' programme and, in 2001, committed £6 million to the provision of free coaching, equipment and training cards for all mainstream junior and Special Schools in England. The new FA Disability Football Strategy 2004-2006 has a number of key targets for the next three years, with the overall

objective of 'becoming the world's leading governing body in the development of disability football'. These targets are to:

- establish competition structures
- improve quality of training, coaching and administrative support to disabled people
- create performance pathways – talent identification to progress players to county (regional) squads, then national squads
- support elite performers
- raise the profile of Disability football

The FA will commit £900,000 to both grassroots participation and National Disability Squads over the period 2004-2006.

For more information, email Jeff.Davis@TheFA.com

Jane Bateman



The pleasures of football should also be accessible to visually-impaired people.

THE FA/MOONEY PHOTO



Fernandinho's goal enabled Brazil to get the better of Spain.

AFP/VOINES



AFP/JAAFAR



AFP/VOINES



AFP/JAAFAR

Left to right: the players of the Republic of Ireland, Slovakia and Spain had some tough matches.

World Youth Championship

Brazil from top to bottom

FOLLOWING THE WORLD CUP WIN BY ITS SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM IN JAPAN AND KOREA IN 2002

AND THE UNDER-17 WORLD CROWN WON IN FINLAND IN 2003, BRAZIL ESTABLISHED ITS DOMINATION OF WORLD FOOTBALL

IN THE MEN'S SECTOR BY WINNING THE UNDER-20 WORLD TITLE IN DECEMBER.

As in Finland last August, it was Spain who faced Brazil at the final hurdle, but Spain's Under-20s were no more successful than their Under-17 counterparts and lost the final by the same score of 1-0. On this occasion, the winning goal

was scored in the closing minutes of a match for which Spain were down to ten men for most of the time, following the early dismissal of one of their defenders.

So Spain ended the World Youth Championship - staged in the United Arab Emirates from 27 November to 19 December - as they had begun it, with a narrow defeat. But in between they did not lose a single match, winning their last two group matches and thereby finishing in the runners-up spot behind Argentina, then going on to eliminate Paraguay, Canada and Colombia in the direct knock-out stage.

Europe had another five representatives involved in the tournament. The Republic of Ireland won their group with two wins and a draw, but were then knocked out in extra time in the next round by formidable Colombia, who went on to finish the championship in third place. Slovakia also made it past the group match stage, finishing in second place behind Burkina Faso. They then put up a keen fight against Brazil, forcing the future world champions into extra time to determine the outcome.

The three other European teams were certainly not outclassed by their rivals but generally lacked the edge that separates the winners from the losers. The Czech Republic, for example, lost only one of their three group matches, against Canada, and only by a hair's breadth at that, and they even held the future champions to a draw. But they could not manage a single win and were left at the bottom of their group.

Germany won only one of their matches and suffered the same fate, with some regrets no doubt, since their only 'victim', the USA, finished top of the group.

As for England, their only useful result was a draw against Colombia. Unable to score a single goal in any of their three matches, the English also finished at the bottom of the table.

Brazil, meanwhile, celebrated their fourth victory in this competition, following previous titles in 1983, 1985 and 1993. They are now on a par with Argentina, who have also won the competition four times and who also made it through to the semi-finals this time round. Between them, Argentina and Brazil alone have won the competition more times than Europe, which has six titles to its name.



Brazil's Daniel wins his challenge with Spain's Pina in the final.

AFP/JAAFAR



Three of the final round venues: (left to right) Mainz, Bochum and Mannheim.
PHOTOS: BONGARTS

Under-21 final round

Preparations under way

JUST FOUR DAYS AFTER THE UEFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DECIDED TO ENTRUST THE GERMAN FA (DFB) WITH THE HOSTING OF THIS YEAR'S FINAL ROUND OF THE EUROPEAN UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP, REPRESENTATIVES OF UEFA AND THE DFB MET IN GERMANY FROM 15 TO 17 DECEMBER FOR A FIRST WORKING MEETING REGARDING THE ORGANISATION OF THE TOURNAMENT, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE FROM 27 MAY TO 8 JUNE.

All four proposed match venues were inspected during the three-day visit: the Carl Benz stadium in Mannheim, the Bruchweg stadium in Mainz, the Ruhr stadium in Bochum and the Niederrhein stadium in Oberhausen. In particular, close attention was paid to safety and security arrangements.

Another focus of attention was the media suitability of the venues, with good reason, since the European Under-21 Championship is now starting to attract a lot of media attention. Coverage of the 2002 final round in Switzerland was considerable. Some 180 representatives of the written press, 50 photographers, 40 radio broadcasters, 20 TV stations and ten Internet providers were accredited. Worldwide, 100 million viewers followed the tournament on television, mostly in the participating countries but also in Asia and Australia.

It was also announced during the visit that the draw to form the groups for the final round would take place at the Hotel Intercontinental in Frankfurt on Wednesday, 11 February. Initial decisions regarding the organisation of the draw have already been taken, whereby hosts Germany and four-time winners Italy, with the best coefficients of all the finalists, will be seeded. Italy will be in pole position in Group A and play their three group matches in Bochum. Germany will be seeded in Group B and will play twice in Mainz and once in Mannheim to start with. The other finalists are Belarus,

Croatia, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Serbia and Montenegro.

The two group winners and runners-up cross over to play the semi-finals, and the winners go into the final. For the first time, a match for third and fourth place is also scheduled this time round. This is because the European Under-21 Championship final round serves as the qualifying competition for this year's Olympic Games in Athens. Apart from hosts Greece, UEFA is entitled to another three representatives, which makes the third-place play-off in the Under-21 final round all the more important.



■ The groups for the 2004-06 European Under-21 Championship have been formed on the basis of the qualifying groups for the 2006 World Cup, as drawn in Frankfurt in early December. Andorra, the Faroe Islands, Liechtenstein and Northern Ireland have not entered the Under-21 competition but Germany is included.

Group 1

Czech Republic, Netherlands, Romania, Finland, FYR Macedonia, Armenia

Group 2

Turkey, Denmark, Greece, Ukraine, Georgia, Albania, Kazakhstan

Group 3

Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Luxembourg

Group 4

France, Republic of Ireland, Switzerland, Israel, Cyprus

Group 5

Italy, Slovenia, Scotland, Norway, Belarus, Moldova

Group 6

England, Poland, Austria, Wales, Germany, Azerbaijan

Group 7

Spain, Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lithuania, San Marino

Group 8

Sweden, Croatia, Bulgaria, Iceland, Hungary, Malta



Eliminated by Switzerland, the Czech Republic will not be defending the title they won in Switzerland in 2002.

BAUMAN/BOZZANI



Italy - Portugal in the Under-19 2003 final, won by Italy.



Fair play is one of the most important values of the youth competitions.

UEFA youth competitions

Heading into the second round



Germany (Lukas Podolski, in white, against Luxembourg) head for a place in the European Under-19 Championship second round.

THE FIRST QUALIFYING ROUNDS OF THE 2003/04 EUROPEAN

UNDER-17 AND UNDER-19 CHAMPIONSHIPS WERE COMPLETED LAST YEAR.

All of UEFA's member associations entered these two men's youth competitions, which, as a result of Kazakhstan making UEFA's numbers up to 52, meant that one more mini-tournament than last time round had to be organised in the first qualifying round of each competition. In each case, therefore, the matches were played in 12 groups of four, from which the group winners, runners-up and the best third-placed team qualified for the second round, where

they will be joined by three teams which had a bye in the first round on account of their previous results.

In the Under-17 competition, the three teams which did not

have to contest the first round were England, Poland and Spain. Some distinguished contenders fell by the wayside at that first hurdle, the Republic of Ireland, winners in 1998, and Switzerland, who won the title in 2002. The suspense continued even after the matches had been completed, while the calculations were made



Group 1

Spain, Hungary, Czech Republic, Russia

Group 2

England, Norway, Armenia, Iceland

Group 3

Poland, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey

Group 4

Portugal, Israel, Greece, Wales

Group 5

Germany, Denmark, Slovakia, Ukraine

Group 6

Finland, Romania, Austria, Moldova

Group 7

Northern Ireland, Belgium, Belarus, Scotland



Portugal beat Spain in the European Under-17 Championship final in 2003.



France (in blue) won the last Under-19 Women's Championship.

to determine the best third-placed team, which turned out to be Hungary.

The 28 teams which remain in contention have been divided into seven groups of four and will play their matches in the form of mini-tournaments up until the end of March. Only the group winners will go through to the next stage, which will take them to France for the final round, where they will be joined by the host nation, who qualify automatically.

In the 3rd European Under-19 Championship, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Spain earned byes from the first round thanks to their previous results. There were a few surprises here too, including the elimination of four-time winners France. Like their younger compatriots, Hungary's Under-19s had the good fortune to qualify as the best third-placed team. The groups for the second round were also formed according to the regulations.



The matches have to be completed by the end of May. The group winners qualify for the final round, which will be staged in Switzerland in July, as a UEFA Golden Jubilee event. Switzerland qualify automatically as host nation.

Women's final round in Finland

The 3rd European Women's Under-19 Championship will culminate in a final round in Finland from 26 July to 9 August. The first qualifying round was also played at the end of last year,



involving 36 of the 39 teams entered. Apart from Finland, who qualify automatically for the final round, Denmark and Germany were also exempt from the first qualifying round on account of their past performance. The second qualifying round involves 18 teams – the group winners and runners-up from the nine first-round groups.

For the second round, which will be played between 19 and 25 April, the 20 teams in contention have been divided into five groups of four.

The group winners go straight through to the final round with Finland, while the remaining two places will be allocated to the best two runners-up. They will be determined according to the following criteria, in sequence:

- number of points obtained in the second round;
- goal difference from those matches;
- number of goals scored in those matches;
- fair-play behaviour.

Group 1

Germany, Iceland, Poland, Hungary

Group 2

Denmark, Spain, Slovakia, Republic of Ireland

Group 3

France, England, Netherlands, Belgium

Group 4

Norway, Russia, Austria, Ukraine

Group 5

Sweden, Switzerland, Serbia and Montenegro, Italy

If two teams still cannot be separated, their fate will be determined by means of a draw.

■ The draws for the 2004/05 UEFA men's youth competitions will be made in Berlin-Potsdam on 29 January on the occasion of the UEFA Youth Football Conference.

■ Having undergone a change of name in terms of age category, from 16 to 17 and 18 to 19 respectively, the UEFA youth competitions now also have new logos, as presented on these pages. The European Under-21 Championship also has a new logo (page 11).

Produced by the Geneva agency Blue Infinity, the new logos are designed to reflect the qualities generally associated with youth: energy, enthusiasm and a competitive spirit. A system of stars, on the left of the logo, symbolises the progress of young footballers from one category to the next.

Group 1

Spain, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands

Group 2

Czech Republic, Italy, Belarus, Israel

Group 3

Slovakia, Germany, Portugal, Armenia

Group 4

Slovenia, Denmark, England, Ukraine

Group 5

Romania, Croatia, Russia, Turkey

Group 6

Poland, Finland, Austria, Scotland

Group 7

Norway, Republic of Ireland, Serbia and Montenegro, Belgium



Refereeing equipment was put to use right away.



Meridian Project

First benefits of direct aid



Computer equipment for the headquarters of the FA of the Central African Republic.

ONE OF THE THREE COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE AFRICAN FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION (CAF) AND UEFA IS THE DIRECT AID PROVIDED FOR TWO YEARS TO TWO CAF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS. THE CURRENT BENEFICIARIES ARE THE FAS OF ETHIOPIA AND OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC.

Following a first visit to Addis Abeba last May to make initial contact with the Ethiopian FA and evaluate its needs, a UEFA/CAF delegation returned to Ethiopia at the end of the year to see how the projects were coming along.

As a first step, 1000 plastic footballs were supplied to the association for its school football development programme. Each of the eleven

districts received its proportion of the balls. The association also received medical equipment and referee accessories (whistles, yellow and red cards, substitution boards, assistant referee flags). The first lot was distributed on the occasion of a league match and the rest will be shared among the eleven districts.

Among the other direct aid projects foreseen are the purchase

of equipment for 150 youth teams and 50 referees, the purchase of 11 computers with modems and printers to improve communications between the districts, and the organisation of courses. The first courses, which could take place this spring, will be devoted to coaching and medicine, and other courses, covering refereeing and administration, could follow.

A similar visit was also paid to the FA of the Central African Republic at the end of the year. The association has also received 1000 plastic footballs to develop football in schools. It has also received four computers with printers as well as a fax and photocopier. In addition, first aid kits and referee accessories have been supplied for distribution among the 13 districts, and equipment for 90 youth teams and 50 referees was delivered at the end of the year.

Other projects in the pipeline include the construction of an annexe to the association's headquarters for meetings and training courses, furniture for the headquarters and the organisation of courses, with priority given to coaching and medicine, particularly the training of youth coaches.



Footballs waiting to be blown up.

PHOTOS: UEFA



Lennart Johansson, pictured with Joseph S. Blatter, attended the traditional FIFA new year cocktail party in Zurich.

SCHORRER



Michel Platini received the Artemio Franchi Prize in Siena, in recognition of his career as a player and official. Michel Platini is pictured with Francesco Franchi, son of the former UEFA president, and the two comperes of the evening.

SABE

Meetings and other activities Elections at the Cyprus Congress

THE 18TH ORDINARY UEFA CONGRESS

WILL BE HELD IN CYPRUS AND WILL BE ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS

OF UEFA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS.

The Congress opens on Thursday, 22 April with a celebratory part. The next morning will be devoted to the usual business of a UEFA general assembly, notably elections, which take place at Congresses held in even years.

Seven seats on the Executive Committee are concerned, namely those currently held by Viacheslav Koloskov, Marios Lefkaritis, Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, Joseph Mifsud, Per Ravn Omdal, Mathieu Sprengers and Geoffrey Thompson, whose terms are coming to an end. All the new terms are for four years.

The delegates also have to elect four UEFA representatives for the FIFA Executive Committee for a four-year period. The terms of Michel D'Hooghe, Senes Erzik, Viacheslav Koloskov and Michel Platini are coming to an end.

Candidatures must be received by the UEFA Administration by 22 February.

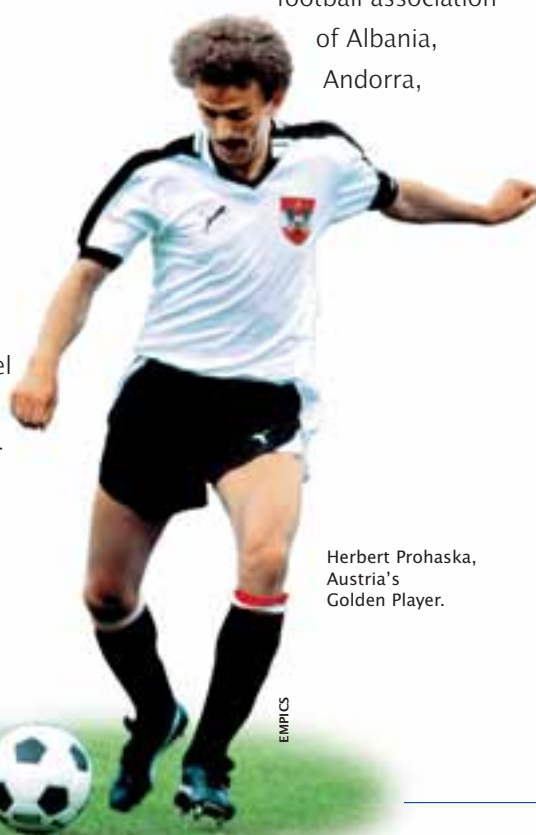
■ As part of the Jubilee celebrations, UEFA's member associations have named

their best player (Golden Player) of the last 50 years. All the Golden



Players will be honoured on uefa.com when their national association is featured. Each week of the year will be devoted to one member association in turn, with a mes-

sage from its president, the history of football in the nation in question and a look to the future. After the football association of Albania, Andorra,



Herbert Prohaska, Austria's Golden Player.

EMPICS



Report from Brussels

UEFA has announced its support for the EU's 'European Year of Education through Sport', which runs for the whole of 2004. UEFA joins several other sporting bodies involved in the campaign, which will run under the slogan 'Move your body, stretch your mind'.

UEFA's support for the Year began last September, when it took part in the jury that selected the winning entry in the competition to design the campaign's logo. Throughout this year, UEFA will be helping the European Commission to promote the objectives and activities of the Year, by sharing media opportunities and offering space in our publications.

With a budget of around 11 million euros, the EU is aiming to attract even more citizens to sport than is already the case. A third of EU citizens actively participate in some type of sport on a regular basis, and the number of sports associations in Europe also continues to increase, numbering more than 700,000 at present.

Another objective of the campaign is to stress the relationship between sport and education, and to enhance the role of physical activities in the school curriculum.

"The partnership of sport and education has a long and vivid history in Europe," says Viviane Reding, the EU Commissioner for Education and Culture, who is responsible for the campaign. *"More needs to be done to make sports an integral part of people's education and life. Sport can contribute to all-round* →



The national associations have until 27 February to indicate how many teams they would like to enter for the 2004 UEFA Intertoto Cup (Heerenveen-Villarreal in 2003).

PRO SHOTS

development, teaching social skills and a spirit of fair play, as well as self-awareness and a sense of competitiveness."

The campaign truly got under way at the end of January in an opening event in Dublin, Republic of Ireland, which featured several European sports personalities, including international football referee, Pierluigi Collina.

UEFA's support for the European Year of Education through Sport 2004 is further proof of UEFA's commitment to dialogue and cooperation with the EU. It highlights the organisation's own emphasis on youth training, and any initiative that gets young people playing more sport is one that it should endorse.

Further information about the campaign can be found on the following website: www.eyes-2004.info

Armenia and Austria in January, it is the turn of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium and Bosnia and Herzegovina in February.

Club Forum in Barcelona

The European Club Forum will hold its next meeting in Barcelona on 16 and 17 February.

The agenda will be devoted essentially to the new UEFA Cup format, relations between clubs and national teams and the UEFA club licensing system.

Concerning the UEFA Cup, following the decision taken last July to introduce a group match stage, a number of questions still have to be resolved, such as the coefficient system, marketing and the promotion of the competition.

The result of the final accounts of the 2002/03 UEFA Champions League shows a surplus of CHF 8.5 million, which was shared out in January between the 32 participants, each receiving CHF 267,718.

The Club Competitions Committee, which will be meeting in Nyon a few days earlier, also dealt with these points at its last meeting in December, when it received the proposals of the working group set up to look into a new UEFA Cup format. The Committee was pleased to learn that stadium attendance in the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Cup is so far higher this season than last, which, in the case of the UEFA

Cup, may be the result of the introduction of separate weeks for matches in the two competitions. UEFA Champions League television viewing figures have also increased.

UEFA Women's Cup semi-finals

The 3rd UEFA Women's Cup has reached the semi-final stage.



The winners of the first two competitions, 1. FFC Frankfurt and Umea, are both through to the last four. The semi-finals will be played over two legs at the end of March and beginning of April. The line-up is:

Brøndby IF – Umea IK
Malmö FF – 1. FFC Frankfurt

Announcements

■ In December, the Russian FA re-elected Viacheslav Koloskov as its president for a further four-year term.

■ FIFA has new phone and fax numbers: +41 43 222 7777 (phone) and +41 43 222 7878 (fax).

■ The Moldovan FA can now be contacted on: +373 22 21 04 10 (phone, international department) and +373 22 21 04 32 (fax).

■ The Executive Committee will meet as follows this year:

- 4/5 February, in Nyon
- 22/23 March, in Nyon or Dublin
- 21/22 April, in Cyprus
- 18/19 May, in Gothenburg
- 29/30 June, in Lisbon
- 22/23 September, in Bulgaria
- 10/11 November, in Vienna
- 15/16 December, in Nyon.



Umea (Hanna Ljungberg) are still in the top flight of women's club football.

BILBYRAN



SERGEY SHELEG

BELARUS
BFF President
Gennady
Nevyglas
presents
awards
to coach
Yuri Puntus...



SERGEY SHELEG

BELARUS
...and player
Alexander
Hleb.

News from member associations



BELARUS

Golden selection 2003

On 23 December, the Belarus Football Federation gathered in its whole complement together in the metropolitan restaurant with the symbolic name of "Seventh Heaven" for the ceremonial celebration of the 2003 football season. Traditionally, guests who have devoted many years of their lives to the service of football as well as state officials for whom the game has also become a part of their lives are invited to this occasion to pay tribute to the sportsmen. In his words of welcome, BFF President Gennady Nevyglas thanked all those present for their respect and for love of football, wished everyone a happy and successful new year, and expressed his belief that in the coming season Belarussian football would prove that it deserves its place in the world football family.

In a warm and friendly atmosphere, the 15 prize-winners were presented with their awards and memorable gifts, followed by a festive programme prepared by Belarussian entertainers. And, of course, the culminating point of the celebration was the Player of the Year and Coach of the Year awards. For the first time in the history of Belarussian football, Alexander Hleb (VfB Stuttgart and Belarus U21 team player) has been honoured with the "Player of the Year" title for the second consecutive year. And his coach, Yuri Puntus (head coach of the Belarus U21s and of FC Bate), was named Coach of the Year for the fourth time (1999, 2000, 2002, 2003).

Sviatoslav Kiselev



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Successful season

The last year was a remarkable one in the life of football in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and probably the most successful to date. The success of the national team, which got to within a step of the EURO 2004 in Portugal, is still a top subject. Just one goal was all that it would have taken, but the match against Denmark showed that we can still put on a good performance on the field and achieve good results.

As a result of the European Championship qualifying competition, the players of head coach Blaz Sliskovic are now a force to be reckoned with and they will have an important role to play in the qualifying competition for the 2006 World Cup in Germany, in a group which finds them up against Belgium, Lithuania, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, and Spain. The favourites are Spain, while Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina are expected to be fighting for the runners-up spot and a place in the play-offs.

In addition, the national futsal team came close to major success and a place in the Futsal World Championships in Chinese Taipei. In the qualifying tournament in the Zetra Olympic stadium, the team of head coach Tomislav Curcic and his assistant Muhamed Poricanin beat Russia and FYR Macedonia. They then faced the Czech Republic in the play-offs. In Sarajevo, the visitors won 7-5, while the return leg in Brno finished in a 4-4 draw. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina did not make it to the finals, they still did very well to get so far.

The fans were disappointed by the other national teams – the Under-17s, Under-19s and the women's teams. Domestic competitions in all these categories should be set up, so the quality can increase, as it already has in the Premier League, where most players are playing better as a result of the championship being unified.

Fuad Krvacac



CYPRUS

International tournament

For the eighth consecutive year, the Cyprus Football Federation is organising an international football tournament for men's national teams. From 15 to 22 February, some of the biggest names in European football and their teams will have the opportunity to begin their preparations for the World Cup qualifying rounds which begin in September.

Apart from Cyprus, this year's tournament will involve another seven teams: Latvia, who impressed during the EURO 2004 qualifiers and reached the final round, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Hungary, Romania and Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan and Belarus are newcomers to this annual tournament. According to the regulations, the competition takes the form of knock-out matches, with every team playing three matches.



GERMANY DFB President Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder has an eye on the future.

WITTERS



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
The national futsal team.



FLASH PRESS

CYPRUS
Interesting preparations for Cyprus (in white), shown here in their EURO 2004 qualifier against France.



ZOLTAN THALY

HUNGARY
Coach Lothar Matthäus and Hungarian FA President Imre Bozóky.

The idea of organising this international tournament goes back to 1997, when it was suggested by Marios Lefkaritis, ex-president and now honorary chairman of the Cyprus Football Association and member of the UEFA Executive Committee. Ever since, it has been staged on an annual basis. Up until last year, 19 countries had participated, and that list will rise to 21 this year. Out of a total of seven tournaments, Cyprus has won two, while Poland, Greece, Romania, the Czech Republic and Russia have each won once.

Kyriacos Georgalllis



GERMANY

Short, decentralised courses for coaches

This year, the German FA (DFB) is launching a campaign to upgrade the qualifications of club and youth coaches. From now on, short courses will be held on a decentralised basis at regional and state level for those coaches interested. At these half- or one-day courses with a maximum of six modules, the club volunteers will be provided with material and information that should help them to dispense up-to-date training adapted to the age of their players. The first club courses will be for children's and "E" youth coaches, an area where volunteer coaches train some 50,000 teams.

The impetus for this initiative came from DFB President Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder and the reason behind it is the certainty that clubs and their staff will have to meet even higher standards in the near future. To do so, the clubs will need greater support, and the DFB sees meeting this need as part of its role. "Qualified staff in the clubs are indispensable if we are to guarantee our football's future", says Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder. The DFB and its state associations will be providing a real service in the form of these short courses. To begin with, teams of instructors, trained under the direction of the association's coaches, will travel around the country. In the short time available during such courses, they are expected to give priority to the transfer of essential knowledge of a practical nature. In consequence, they will also have to adapt the course content to the coaches' particular interests, motivational factors and needs, respond to special requests and take a flexible approach. The main purpose is to offer practical aids and suggestions as to how to resolve typical situations encountered by coaches in their day-to-day work on the field.

Niels Barnhofer

"Hungarian football was once among the best in Europe. We gave the world an entertaining and successful way of playing the game with our players and our managers, both of whom were very successful abroad. Now Hungary has fallen on hard times so maybe it is time to ask the footballing world to return the favour. Hopefully Matthäus represents that favour and with his help we can re-establish Hungarian football and put it back where it should be".

The immediate concern though is to qualify once again for the World Cup, in which Hungary were once major competitors. Hungary has not reached football's greatest competition since Mexico in 1986, but qualifying for Germany in two years' time would be the perfect scenario for Matthäus, who says he wants to achieve as much as he can with Hungary. It will be a hard task for Hungary in perhaps the toughest World Cup qualifying group, but with the appointment of a footballing legend they have much optimism and the best possible start to the new year.

*Márton Dinnyés/
Matthew Watson-Broughton*



HUNGARY

Changing times

Hungarian football has a new atmosphere after the appointment of FIFA World Cup and European Championship winner Lothar Matthäus as the new national coach. Last year ended disappointingly, after Hungary missed out on a place in EURO 2004 and were then beaten at home by Estonia 1-0, a defeat that signalled the end of coach Imre Gellei's initially promising but ultimately unrewarding reign. However, the appointment of Gellei's replacement is being seen as encouraging news for Hungarian football.

The aim of employing Matthäus, who recently guided Partizan Belgrade into the UEFA Champions League, is to return Hungary to the footballing power they were in the early fifties when, with greats like Ferenc Puskás, Nándor Hidegkuti and Sándor Kocsis, they reshaped the European game with their new brand of attacking football. They famously shocked England by winning 6-3 at Wembley and won Olympic gold in 1952 as well as reaching the World Cup final in 1954. There will be a friendly with Germany next year to mark the fiftieth anniversary of that match and so the appointment of ex-Germany captain Lothar Matthäus makes that game even more special.

Imre Bozóky, President of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) says,



FINLAND

Second annual Academy Tournament kicks off

In mid-January, the second annual Academy Tournament kicked off in Finland, with 19 Under-19 teams competing nationally. The competition was first planned and organised last year, in order to achieve goals which impact on Finnish football on many levels. The model is taken from countries such as France and England, but modified to serve domestic purposes.

The Academy Tournament group stage is played between January and March. The two best teams from six groups proceed to the knock-out stage in June. In mid-July, the six best teams play a tournament to decide the national youth champion. During the finals, Academy players can also test their talents and tricks in an individual freestyle skill competition.

The FA of Finland selects the participating academies based on the applications. To be eligible, an academy has to have a coach with the highest Finnish coaching licence. Some of academy coaches even hold the UEFA Pro licence. In addition, eligibility requires cooperation with local schools attended by the players and adequate facilities for year-round training.

"We achieve three important goals by organising the Academy Tournament. We can develop our clubs to better fulfil the UEFA club licensing criteria, as they



FINLAND
Marko Tyyskä (left) and Tuomo Turunen shined in the 2003 individual freestyle skill competition.



HUNGARY
Hungary (Peter Lipscei, left) hope that their World Cup qualifying campaign will be a success and take them through to their first final round since 1986.

AFP/KISBEN/DEK



ITALY
The Italian Players' Association has awarded its "Oscars" for last season. The Referee of the Year award went to Pierluigi Collina, who was presented with his statuette by former international referee Paolo Casarin.

BOZZANI

improve their organisation and youth programmes. As a result, coach education will receive more attention. And last but not least, through the tournament we are able to extend our season to bring it closer to the international format, as the youth teams get tough competition matches during the winter", says the FAF's Technical Director, Jarmo Matikainen.

Sami Terävä



ITALY

Combined doping tests

An important new step has been taken in Italy in the fight against doping with the introduction of combined blood and urine tests

for the detection of EPO in the Serie A and Serie B professional leagues. The new programme, based on an agreement between the Italian Football Association (FIGC), the Footballers' Association and the Federation of Sports Medicine, came into force on 6 January, when the first matches in 2004 were played.

"I am proud that Italian football has decided to step up the fight against doping and is the first country in the world to adopt combined blood and urine testing for erythropoietin", said FIGC President Franco Carraro.

The President also stressed the sense of responsibility and willingness to participate demonstrated by the players in accepting the new programme which, like all forms of blood testing, is legally dependent on the players giving their consent.

The FIGC Anti-Doping Commission has been working closely with the Italian Federation of Sports Doctors, chaired by Professor Giorgio Santilli, to devise the programme, under which three league matches (two in Serie A and one in Serie B) will be scrutinised each week. The Federation of Sports Doctors itself will supervise the post-match taking of samples, which will be tested at the official laboratory of the National Olympic Committee (CONI) at the Acqua Acetosa Centre.

At each match where testing takes place, two players from each team will be required to submit samples. The system for selecting the matches is designed to ensure that all clubs are tested at least once per season. A number of surprise out-of-competition tests will also be carried out.

Of course, the testing will be fully confidential and in line with data protection standards. Finally, in case one of the four players selected at random 30 minutes before the end of the match refuses to give a blood sample, all players will also give urine samples which can be tested (at greater cost but with the same level of reliability) for EPO, with confidentiality guaranteed until the final result is available.

Antonello Valentini



LITHUANIA

First licensed coaches

The end of the year was memorable for 20 Lithuanian football coaches; they were the first to obtain the "A" level coach licence of the Lithuanian FA. These coaches are among the first to obtain the licence, not only in football but also among the coaches of other kinds of sport.

The Lithuanian Football Federation organised courses for the "A" level coaches throughout the year, before setting the exam, which concentrated on four areas: physiology/medicine, sport psychology, sport management, sport training and sport tactics.

According to Raimondas Statkevicius, Director of the LFF's Methodical Centre, the student coaches displayed a rather high professional level and were well worthy of their "A" level licences.

The newly licensed coaches include the coach of the Lithuanian national team, Algimantas Liubinskas, and his assistant, Saulius Sirmelis, as well as the coach of the Olympic team, Virginijus Liubsys, and his assistant Vitalijus Stankevicius. The other "A" licence-holders are E. Riabovas, K. Latoza, R. Lavrinavicius, V. Sukristovas, V. Buzmakovas, V. Osetrovass, A. Ramozka, R. Zalyss, V. Jodenis, I. Pankratjevass, A. Gabryss, S. Stankunas, V. Janciauskas, R. Tavoras, R. Mikocionis and A. Klimavicius.

Vaiva Zizaitė



FYR MACEDONIA

New league system

Beginning with the 2004/05 season, the football championships of the Former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (first and second divisions) will be played according to a new competition system. On the proposal of the Executive Committee of the Football Association of FYR Macedonia, this decision was adopted by the Ordinary Congress at the end of December.

Under the new system, the second division will be decreased from 18 to 12 clubs and promotion/relegation play-offs will be played among the teams that finish the second division in third and fourth place and the teams in ninth and tenth position in the first division, which will continue to be composed of 12 clubs.

The aim of the new system is to concentrate the quality of football players in a smaller number of clubs and to make the competitions more evenly balanced.

Among other recent activities, our Player of the Year for 2003 has been nominated. He is national team striker Draganco Dimitrovski, leading scorer in the first part of the present domestic championship, whose goals for FC Pobeda from Prilep have put the club in the leadership spot at the halfway stage for the first time. Best Macedonian international player of 2003 is Goce Sedloski, who plays for Dinamo in Zagreb. He is a regular



ITALY Francesco Totti and Pavel Nedved shared the Italian Player of the Year award for 2002/03.

BOZZANI



MALTA
The draw
in Frankfurt
in December.

WITTERS



NETHERLANDS
Ten years in
the president's
seat for
Mathieu
Sprengers.

KNVB

national-team player and is not far off earning his fiftieth cap. Club of the Year is FC Vardar from Skopje, who has brought FYR Macedonian club football the greatest success so far on the European scene. The first man of this club, Zoran Stratev, received the Coach of the Year award.

At the end of December, the national team suffered a setback when their match against the Spanish province of Cantabria was cancelled unexpectedly.

Head coach Kanatlarovski therefore lost another opportunity to check out more candidates for the national team from among the ranks of the country's most promising youth players.

Kanatlarovski should, however, get such an opportunity at the end of January, when matches against the Chinese national team are scheduled.

Zoran Nikolovski



MALTA

Difficult but not extravagant

For the Maltese, whose patriotic feelings have as a backdrop a wider scenario of distant but heartfelt allegiance towards big teams such as England, Italy, Brazil and Germany, amongst a few others, the 2006 FIFA World Cup draw held in Frankfurt on 5 December failed to spark enthusiasm.

This not so much because Malta will be facing familiar nations as because they do not have one of the plum teams in their group. France, the Netherlands or Spain would have also been a sumptuous treat in the absence of any of the glamorous three European 'favourites'. It could have easily been an extravagant draw for the Maltese. But that was not to be.

So far Malta has played a total of 31 games against their five group opponents, winning twice, and drawing four times. Of these, 22 were competitive matches, with Malta managing two wins against Iceland and three draws, two against Hungary and one against Croatia.

The defeats came at the hands of Sweden (six times), Bulgaria and Iceland (four times each), twice against Hungary and the other when the Reds faced Croatia. In the other nine friendlies

Malta failed to register a victory, only obtaining one draw against Bulgaria.

These statistics are far from positive for Malta, even when considering that these five nations currently enjoy creditable international rankings. The qualification of Sweden, Bulgaria and Croatia for the EURO 2004 final round is a sufficient pointer, while it should be remembered that both Hungary and Iceland did not miss out by much.

The primary objective for Malta is to surpass the three-point mark which they reached in the 1994 World Cup qualifying matches. Anything better, given the quality of the opposition, would probably be satisfactory for newly-appointed coach Horst Heese and his assistant, former Malta international Carmel Busuttil. A seven- rather than a six-team group would have set a higher target for the Maltese.

Will it be moans and groans for Malta at the end of this first part of the long and winding road to the Germany finals? Time will tell. The Malta FA is leaving no stone unturned to make it a better World Cup adventure for the Mediterranean island.

Alex Vella



NETHERLANDS

Mathieu Sprengers ten years at the helm

Last month the KNVB celebrated the fact that Mathieu Sprengers has been at the helm for ten years. Sprengers succeeded KNVB legend Jo van Marle in 1993. Van Marle had been president of the KNVB since 1980 and a member of the UEFA Executive Committee from 1982 until 1995.

Sprengers, an open-minded and cheerful character who is always ready to bring a few smiles to the people around him, has since then been the best of ambassadors for the KNVB and Dutch football in general. Sprengers is generally considered to be an undisputed binding force between the often clashing interests of professional and amateur football. No one doubts his sincerity and his ability to choose what is best in the interest of Dutch football in general.

During his reign, the Belgium and Dutch football associations were elected the first ever co-hosts of a European Championship. EURO 2000 turned out to be a success for European football as well as for both host associations and helped the KNVB to support its bid to host another major event, the FIFA World Youth Championship, which will be staged in the Netherlands in 2005.

Since his appointment Sprengers has been a major force in the restructuring of the KNVB sports centre, where the costs of hotel, swimming pool, sports hall and other facilities weighed heavily on the shoulders of all football clubs. These facilities have now all been made self-supporting. Furthermore, in 1998 the KNVB employees moved into a modern office - shaped like a football stand and appropriately called "the kick-off spot of The Netherlands" - where they have been able to face the challenges of the new century.

Another large project has been launched during Sprengers' years at the helm of Dutch football. The master plan for youth football took off in 2000, giving amateur clubs all around the country the guarantee of support from the football association. Most of the benefits from EURO 2000 were allocated to this substantial gesture in favour of the clubs. The appointment of over 50 regional coaches is enabling the KNVB to reach out a helping hand to a club that is in need of assistance of any kind. The idea is that a solid basis will provide security for the future of Dutch football.

The general assembly showed its appreciation for the good work that Mathieu (Jeu) Sprengers has done in the past ten years at its meeting in December. Four ten-year-olds from an amateur club in Zeist, where the head office of the



FYR MACEDONIA
Goce Sedloski, best Macedonian
international player in 2003.

EMPICS



KEYSTONE



KEYSTONE

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
The Republic of Ireland again find themselves up against Switzerland who blocked their way to EURO 2004.



AFP/HERTZOG

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
Lansdowne Road or a new stadium for the World Cup qualifiers?

KNVB is located, turned up with a large cake with the inscription "Eeuwig JEUGdig" meaning 'youthful forever'. That is certainly something that applies to Sprengers.

Rob de Leede



NORTHERN IRELAND

Linfield's work for the community

A massive club with a proud tradition, Linfield and its supporters are making big efforts to strengthen the identity of the club, encourage more family support and improve community relations. The work that Linfield is carrying out through its Football Development Centre is strategic, forward thinking and a credit to the club.

Women's football, special needs football and cross-community football are promoted through Linfield's Football Development Centre, overseen by Linfield's Youth Development Officer, David Chisholm. Lifelong Linfield supporter Andrew Conn manages the successful Junior Blues, which encourages young fans to identify with the club, make new friends with young fans from other clubs and challenges young people to promote respect through football. Junior Blues have collected a considerable amount of money for a number of charities in recent years. Linfield's "Boost Our Support" campaign involves a number of Management Committee members and supporters working in partnership to encourage more family support. This involves a number of joint initiatives to encourage fans to support their team with passion in a way that respects all the Linfield players, supporters and football community:

- Linfield FC offer free tickets to community groups for all senior games;
- Linfield FC is currently involved in community and youth development work in partnership with the Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre;
- the club is also committed to supporting the South Belfast Regeneration Project;
- cross-community mini-soccer is played at all pre-match home games at Windsor Park;
- through its Football Development Centre and Centre of Excellence, the club encourages respect for different cultures, promoting personal development and social skills.

Michael Boyd



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Which venue for the World Cup qualifiers?

Having failed to qualify for the finals of the European Championships, the Republic of

Ireland were always going to be looking forward to the draw for the 2006 World Cup. And when the pairings were made known in Frankfurt on 5 December, the Irish were not disappointed.

In a group of six countries, the Irish were drawn with France, Switzerland, Israel, Cyprus and the Faroe Islands. And in the pairings that this group threw up, there are a number of outstanding games for the Irish, among them some with interesting and telling connotations.

Take Switzerland as a prime example. The Swiss allowed the Irish only one point out of a possible six from their two meetings in the qualifying group for EURO 2004 and were therefore one of the chief reasons why the Republic will not be in Portugal next June. What a sense of revenge the two qualifying games in the World Cup present for the Irish, particularly in the light of the insipid display the Irish put up in the Basle last October, when a victory would have ensured them a place in those Portuguese finals.

That performance has left a bitter taste in the mouths both of the players and supporters, and there will be a huge sense of making amends when the Republic face the Swiss again.

And take France, World Champions of 1998 - what a mouth-watering prospect they will provide for the Irish. In previous meetings between the two nations the French have always been huge opponents and a major attraction. They will be more so now in the light of the many world famous names they have in their line-up these days.

Cyprus are old friends of the Irish, having been in the same group for the World Cup qualifiers for the World Cup finals of 2002, while Israel will provide their own level of challenge for the Irish. It was way back in 1987 that Ireland last played Israel, with a 5-0 win in Dublin being the decisive outcome. Could that be a sign of what is to come?

And the trip to the Faroe Islands, the first for an Irish team, will also carry a big air of mystery about it.

But the big question for Football Association of Ireland

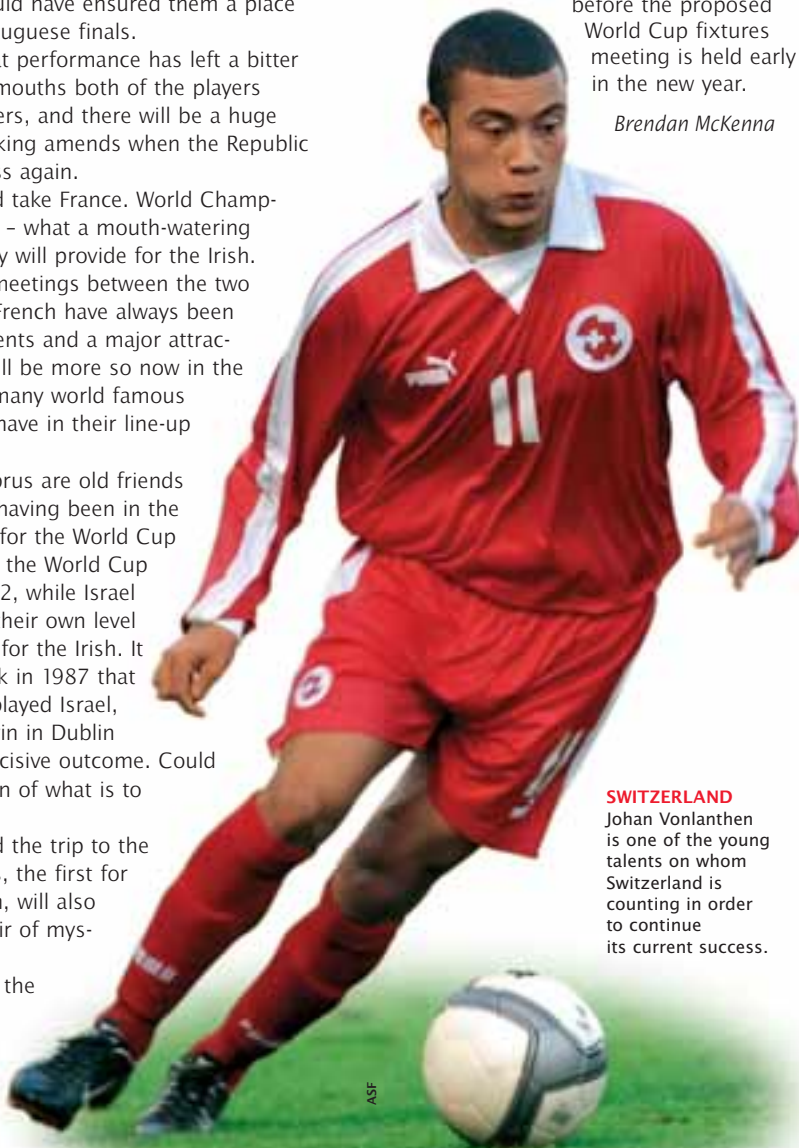
officials will be home venues for these matches, due to the uncertain future of a stadium in Dublin. With talks about the possibility of a government-backed national stadium being built and a refurbishment plan being talked about for the Irish rugby headquarters at Lansdowne Road, a suitable venue for Ireland's home soccer matches remains in the realms of the unknown at this particular time.

Suggestions have been made that the FAI may consider playing their home matches at venues in England, like Anfield or Old Trafford, or even in Scotland, at the home of Celtic in Glasgow.

At present, these are mere suggestions, but unless there is some suitable compromise or arrangement reached regarding Lansdowne Road or the proposed national stadium in the near future, these suggestions may become a reality both for the association and for the loyal Irish football supporters.

It is hoped answers will be found before the proposed World Cup fixtures meeting is held early in the new year.

Brendan McKenna



ASF

SWITZERLAND
Johan Vonlanthen is one of the young talents on whom Switzerland is counting in order to continue its current success.



TURKEY
Dr Urs Vogel,
Chairman
of UEFA's
Medical
Committee.



UKRAINE
FFU President
Grigoryi Surkiy
with UEFA
Chief Executive
Lars-Christer Olsson.



SWITZERLAND

Riding on the crest of a wave

The Swiss FA is riding on the crest of a wave right now.

The senior national team have qualified for EURO 2004 in Portugal, the Under-21s are through to the European Under-21 Championship final round in Germany, and the Under-19s are expected to do well in the European Under-19 Championship final round, which is being staged on their home turf next July.

However, the leaders of the association know only too well that it cannot rest on its laurels and be content with the current success, credit for which must be given to the coaches. No, that success has to be built on and further achievements sought, namely a place in the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany and as one of the frontrunners in EURO 2008, which Switzerland is co-hosting with Austria.

To do so, a whole string of extraordinary talents have to be specially trained and developed. Today's players will still be in the picture come EURO 2008, but the squad will also have fresh blood injected into it by then, with some of today's Under-21s and youth players making the grade. Attention therefore has to be concentrated already on the cream of the crop of Switzerland's current youth players to get them ready for EURO 2008.

These efforts will also give renewed impetus to youth training at club and national level. In order to put these plans into action, the association has picked out the most promising players in the 17 to 20 age range and concluded agreements of cooperation with their clubs, in close cooperation with which the Swiss FA's coaching staff have assessed the current situation of the players in terms of their training, development and their lives in general, and analysed them from a medical and performance-related perspective. On the basis of these analyses, and with the input of various specialists, individualised training and development programmes will be prepared for each player and put into practice in the clubs.

In addition, there will be special training for strikers and goalkeepers, under the supervision of the national coach, the technical director and coaching specialists.

The Swiss FA hopes and expects that thanks to all these (and many other) measures, the future of the national teams will be at least as rosy as their present situation.

Pierre Benoit

Altogether, some 400 participants from different branches attended this seminar, which was obligatory for physicians, physiotherapists and masseurs employed by Turkish leagues. It was pronounced a great success by all parties involved.

The grassroots project developed by UEFA to increase overall participation in football around Europe has attracted great interest in Turkey. The Turkish Football Association has started to study this project under the leadership of Gündüz Tekin Onay, its youth teams coordinator. We believe that many youth and talented players will come onto the scene and that interest in and love of football will increase all over Turkey as a result.

The Turkish Football Association fully supports the grassroots philosophy and believes that this project, which will be launched in 2004 in conjunction with UEFA's Golden Jubilee, with the slogan "Football for Everyone, Football Everywhere", has the potential to reform football. Therefore, the TFA has started to look for sponsors to support this important project, which it hopes to be able to realise in the different cities of the country as soon as possible.

Mustafa Kemal Artalan



TURKEY

Medical seminars for football

Aiming to realise all necessary projects for the development of football in Turkey to bring it up to world standards, the Turkish Football Association organises medical seminars every year during the winter break. We believe that medical staff are a very important part of the team and need to be kept abreast of the latest scientific developments relating to football and health matters.

This year's seminar – the third such event – took place in Istanbul on 23/24 December under the coordination of TFA Medical Committee Chairman Prof. Vahit Özmen and Vice-Chairman Prof. Türker Bulut. UEFA Medical Committee Chairman Dr Urs Vogel and Vice-Chairman Prof. Stewart Hillis also participated, together with a number of scientists, sports physicians, instructors and other experts.

Several lecturers presented their scientific approaches to football and health relations and those approaches were then

discussed in plenary session and panels.

Among the topics broached were doping in football, club team physicians, first aid, player psychology, rehabilitation, football and violence, medical organisation at club level and the UEFA club licence criteria.



UKRAINE

FFU has to move in right direction

A professional football seminar with the participation of UEFA representatives was held in Ukraine in December. New UEFA Chief Executive Lars-Christer Olsson provided information about how UEFA assists its 52 member associations as well as about its national-team and club competitions and the development of children's and youth football. Marcel Benz, Senior Manager Legal Services and National Associations, Alex Phillips, Senior Manager Professional Football and League Services, and Henk Kesler, member of the UEFA Professional Football Committee, gave an account of the principal trends in professional football. During the two days of the seminar, specialists discussed the theme of professional football development – from its social role to realisation of successful marketing by associations, leagues and clubs.

One of the key conclusions of the seminar was that the Football Federation of Ukraine has to move in the right direction. The FFU and the seminar participants received comprehensive information on leading football countries, examples of successful marketing, national football funds, division of competence between an association and its members, licensing of football clubs, relationships of clubs and trade unions.

Valeriy Nykonenko



TURKEY
Besiktas-Galatasaray:
skilful play
on the field
takes efficient
work behind
the scenes.

EMPICS/TURKSPORTFOTO

Communications

Birthdays - Calendar

Birthdays

Leonardus van der Kroft (Netherlands), member of the circle of former UEFA committee members, celebrates his 75th birthday on 2 February. On 9 February, Donald McVicar (Scotland), member of the Referee Observers Panel, turns 60. He is joined at the same milestone on 15 February by fellow Scot John McBeth, member of the Match Delegates Panel; on 18 February by Borislav Alexandrov (Bulgaria), member of the Referee Observers Panel; and on 27 February by Alfonso Moreno Gonzalez (Spain), member of the Medical Committee. Peter Jones (England), another member of the Referee Observers Panel, reaches the half-century mark on 24 February. UEFA also wishes many happy returns to:

- Volker Roth (Germany, 1.2)
- Karen Espelund (Norway, 1.2)
- Alfred W. Grey (England, 2.2)
- Trygve Bornø (Norway, 2.2)
- Steen Dahrup (Denmark, 3.2)
- Pascal Fratellia (France, 3.2)
- Vaclav Krondl (Czech Republic, 5.2)
- Dusko Grabovac (Croatia, 7.2)
- Erich Rutmöller (Germany, 8.2)
- Yusuf Namoglu (Turkey, 8.2)
- Fino Fini (Italy, 9.2)
- Rinus Michels (Netherlands, 9.2)
- Vladimir Modelevski (Russia, 9.2)
- Nuno Cristóvão (Portugal, 10.2)
- William McDougall (Scotland, 11.2)
- Antonio Ferreira de Sequeira (Portugal, 11.2)
- Efstratios Papaefstratiou (Greece, 12.2)
- Nicolae Pantea (Romania, 12.2)
- John Blankenstein (Netherlands, 12.2)
- Oleksandr Bandurko (Ukraine, 13.2)
- Heinz-Herbert Kreh (Germany, 14.2)
- Dieter Pauly (Germany, 14.2)
- Marinus Engelsman (Netherlands, 14.2)
- Manuel Lopez Fernandez (Spain, 14.2)
- Georges Konrath (France, 15.2)
- Susanne Erlandsson (Sweden, 15.2)
- Svitlana Shkil (Ukraine, 15.2)
- Fritz Scherer (Germany, 16.2)
- Adalbert Kassai (Romania, 16.2)
- Jozef Venglos (Slovakia, 18.2)
- Georgios Girtzikis (Greece, 18.2)
- Flemming Serritslev (Denmark, 18.2)
- Patrick Kelly (Republic of Ireland, 18.2)
- Pertti Alaja (Finland, 18.2)
- Antonello Valentini (Italy, 18.2)
- Antonio Violante (Portugal, 18.2)
- Mihai Anghel (Moldova, 19.2)
- Richard Murray (England, 19.2)
- Jaroslav Vacek (Czech Republic, 19.2)
- Janis Mezeckis (Latvia, 19.2)
- Lars Arnesson (Sweden, 20.2)

- Eggert Magnusson (Iceland, 20.2)
- Adriatik Gjashta (Albania, 20.2)
- Ralph M. Zloczower (Switzerland, 21.2)
- Lidia Borska (Poland, 21.2)
- Vlado Sajin (Slovenia, 22.2)
- Ana Caetano (Portugal, 22.2)
- Boris Nemeč (Croatia, 23.2)
- Richard N. Parry (England, 23.2)
- Niamh O'Donoghue (Republic of Ireland, 23.2)
- Petr Dolezal (Czech Republic, 24.2)
- Wladyslaw Puchalski (Poland, 26.2)
- Egidius Braun (Germany, 27.2)
- Maurizio Mattei (Italy, 27.2)
- Allan Hansen (Denmark, 27.2)
- Zorislav Srebric (Croatia, 28.2)
- Aron Schmidhuber (Germany, 28.2)
- Gerhard Zvolánek (Slovakia, 28.2)

Upcoming events

MEETINGS

- 2.2.2004, Madrid**
Referees Committee
- 2-5.2.2004, Madrid**
Annual referee courses
- 4-5.2.2004, Nyon**
Executive Committee
- 10.2.2004, Nyon**
Professional Football Committee
- 11.2.2004, Nyon**
Club Competitions Committee
- 11.2.2004, Frankfurt**
Draw for the final round of the European Under-21 Championship
- 12.2.2004, Nyon**
1st Women's National Team Coaches Forum
- 16-17.2.2004, Barcelona**
European Club Forum

COMPETITIONS

- 24-25.2.2004**
UEFA Champions League: first knock-out round (first legs)
- 26.2.2004**
UEFA Cup: third round (first legs)

New publications



ALMANACCO ILLUSTRATO DEL CALCIO 2004

The Almanacco comes out every year (it is up to its 63rd edition) and is always appreciated by statisticians and fans of Italian football. Tradition does not however dictate that no changes can be made to this work produced by Fabrizio Melegari and published by Panini S.p.A (Viale Emilio Po, 3809 - IT-41100 Modena), and one of the new features in the 2004 edition is a section devoted to the European Champion Clubs' Cup/UEFA Champions League. It contains a condensed history of the competition, details of all the finals (line-ups, scorers and referees, attendance figures) as well as rankings and other statistics.



ROCZNIK 2003-2004

The Encyklopedia piłkarska FUJI has enriched its collection with the publication of the first official handbook of Polish football. It contains full information on Polish clubs and competitions, and also takes a look at other European and South American top domestic championships as well as the major international competitions. The encyclopaedia is available from: Wydawnictwo GiA - P.O. Box 2772 - PL-40-357 Katowice 14 / fax: +48-32-2523621.



GUIDE DU FOOTBALL 2003

Daniel Masnari is not only a recognised statistician but also someone who is always looking for ways to improve, as his latest guide shows, with its new, more practical format and additional information. It lists all the players in the first two Swiss divisions, all the 2002/03 league and cup fixtures, and has a large section devoted to international football, notably the UEFA competitions. It also provides the calendars of the main European domestic championships. The guide is available from: Global Vision.sport, Route des Jeunes 5d - CH-1227 Les Acacias/Geneva / fax: +41 - 22 307 13 55 ; e-mail: info@gvssport.ch

RAPPORTS ANNUELS 2002-03

The 2002/03 annual reports of the Swiss FA, in figures and words (the majority of the reports are in German but a few are in French).

LES IMMORTELS DU FOOTBALL POITOU-CHARENTES

As part of the Mémoire du football collection, publishers Alan Sutton (8, rue du Docteur Ramon - FR-37540 Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire) propose this work by Bruno Ahime, who draws an original portrait of a hundred or so players, coaches and managers who have marked football in the Poitou-Charentes region.

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



Official publication of the
**Union des associations
européennes de football**

Communications and Public Affairs Division

Editor André Vieli

Produced by Atema Communication SA, CH-1196 Gland

Printed by Cavin SA, CH-1422 Grandson

Editorial deadline: 16 January 2004

The views expressed in signed articles are not necessarily the official views of UEFA.

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