

Including



**31st UEFA Congress
in Düsseldorf**

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**Training top of the
Meridian project agenda**

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**Medical symposium
in Istanbul**

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COVER

Newcastle United (Steven Taylor, No. 27, in front of Eintracht Frankfurt's Ioannis Amanatidis) steamed ahead in Group H in the UEFA Cup and are through to the round of 32.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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Editorial

Dynamic Congresses

Since 2003, the UEFA Congress has taken place annually and now it has been moved to the start of the year from the spring, among other reasons, to synchronise it more closely with the football season as well as to respond to financial needs. But that is not all.

The general meeting of member associations is much more than a body that is asked to approve the accounts. At the 2005 Congress in Tallinn, for example, it unanimously adopted the "Vision Europe" strategy and, in doing so, defined the future direction of European football.

This year, the Congress will be characterised by elections, which are particularly important because they also concern the UEFA presidency. However, it will also continue with business that has been on previous agendas, such as amendments to the UEFA statutes, revisions which will allow the principles of "Vision Europe" to be applied.

One of the main advantages of the congress is also that it brings together all the leaders of all the member associations and gives them an opportunity to forge closer links.

Ultimately, though, it has to be more than that. Like all football activities, it has to keep up with our hectically moving times. Since the implementation of the conclusions of the FORCE project at the turn of the century, decision-making has already become faster and less rigid.

In the current climate, with all the risks that continue to threaten our game, it is vital for the congress to be a vibrant forum where ideas are exchanged and give rise to new initiatives.

A dynamic congress also does wonders for the image of an organisation like ours.

I hope the congress in Düsseldorf will meet all of these expectations.



Lars-Christer Olsson
Chief Executive

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



31st UEFA Congress in Düsseldorf

Thirteen candidates for the Executive Committee



Düsseldorf,
on the banks
of the Rhine.

KEYSTONE

AFTER HOSTING LAST SUMMER'S WORLD CUP FINALS, GERMANY IS ALREADY PREPARING TO HOST ANOTHER IMPORTANT FOOTBALL EVENT.

This time, however, the action will not be taking place on the field but in a conference centre, at the Düsseldorf congress centre to be precise, where delegates from UEFA's member associations will be gathering on 25 and 26 January, along with guests from FIFA and the other confederations, for the 31st UEFA Congress.

The German FA (DFB) is no stranger to hosting UEFA events, but this will be only the second time that it has hosted a UEFA congress, the first being in Munich ahead of the final of the European Championship in 1988. Prior to the reunification of Germany, East Germany also hosted a UEFA congress in Dresden in 1982.

The election of the next UEFA president, for which there are two candidates – Swede Lennart Johansson, who has occupied the presidential seat since 1990, and Frenchman Michel Platini, a member of the UEFA Executive Committee since 2002 – will be the most anticipated moment of the congress.

As a result of elections being moved from even-numbered to odd-numbered years, other ballots are also on the agenda, firstly for six seats of the UEFA Executive Committee. Except for Michel Platini, all those whose terms are coming to an end are standing for re-election. They are:

- **Senes Erzik** (Turkey), member since 1990 and vice-president since 1994;
- **Angel Maria Villar Llona** (Spain), member since 1992 and vice-president since 2000;
- **Eggert Magnusson** (Iceland), elected in 2002;
- **Joseph Mifsud** (Malta), elected in 1994;
- **Giangiorgio Spiess** (Switzerland), in office since 1996.

The committee's two co-opted members are also candidates:

- **Gilberto Madail** (Portugal),
- **Grigoriy Surkis** (Ukraine).

The other contenders are the following top national association officials:

- **Rakhat Aliyev** (Kazakhstan),



Senes Erzik
(Turkey)



Angel Maria Villar Llona
(Spain)



Eggert Magnusson
(Iceland)



Joseph Mifsud
(Malta)



Giangiorgio Spiess
(Switzerland)



Gilberto Madail
(Portugal)



Grigoriy Surkis
(Ukraine)



Rakhat Aliyev
(Kazakhstan)



Tomas Géa
(Andorra)



Frantisek Laurinec
(Slovakia)



Vlatko Markovic
(Croatia)



Mircea Sandu
(Romania)



Liutauras Varanavicius
(Lithuania)

- **Tomas Géa** (Andorra),
- **Frantisek Laurinec** (Slovakia),
- **Vlatko Markovic** (Croatia),
- **Mircea Sandu** (Romania),
- **Liutauras Varanavicius** (Lithuania).

The seats of UEFA representatives on the FIFA Executive Committee are also expiring. The first depends directly on the UEFA presidential elections, since, in accordance with the UEFA statutes, the UEFA president is an ex-officio FIFA vice-president. For the FIFA vice-president's seat currently occupied by Angel Maria Villar Llona, president of the Spanish FA, the present incumbent is the only candidate. The term of Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder (Germany) as a member of the FIFA Executive Committee is also expiring, and he is not standing for re-election. The two candidates for this seat are Franz Beckenbauer (Germany) and Angel Maria Villar Llona.

The term in office of David Will (Scotland) is also coming to an end. However, since this vice-president's seat constitutionally belongs to the four British associations, it is up to them to elect his successor.

Applicant member associations

Apart from the elections and ordinary business such as various reports and financial accounts, the congress will also be asked to approve amendments to the UEFA statutes. These include a definition of fair play, a more detailed list of UEFA's objectives and of the means for achieving them, a more precise description of the rights and duties of member associations, as well as clauses regarding the UEFA club licensing system and the participation of clubs in the UEFA competitions.

In addition, the Scottish FA is tabling a proposal asking the UEFA Executive Committee to consider at

once the possibility of increasing the number of European Championship finalists from 16 to 24.

At the 2002 Congress, Kazakhstan was admitted as UEFA's 52nd member. That number could increase again, since, at its meeting in Ljubljana in October, the Executive Committee accepted the FA of Montenegro as a provisional member and did likewise for the FA of Gibraltar at its meeting in December, in accordance with a decision of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). In Düsseldorf, the UEFA Congress will have to decide whether to admit these two associations as full members.

Election procedure

For the UEFA Executive Committee, no distinction is made between vice-presidents and members. The congress elects six members and it is then up to the Executive Committee to appoint its vice-presidents at its constituent meeting immediately after the congress.

The FIFA Executive Committee elections, on the other hand, are split into two parts: first, the election of a vice-president, then the election of a member – unless, of course, no election is required because there are the same number of candidates as there are seats to fill.

In all cases, including the presidential elections, an absolute majority is required (half of the votes plus one, counting only valid ballot papers). If a second ballot is required, a simple majority suffices. A third ballot takes place if necessary, then, in the event of a tie, the candidates are separated by the drawing of lots. Each national association has one vote, except for provisional members, which are not allowed to vote.



First course in Brazzaville, in the Republic of the Congo, in October.



The course methodology comprised practice and observation.



Meridian Project

Promoting youth training in Africa

IN THE RUN-UP TO ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY, WHICH IT WILL CELEBRATE IN JANUARY 2007, THE MERIDIAN PROJECT HAS SHIFTED ITS FOCUS ONTO THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG FOOTBALLERS.

The strategy that UEFA and the African Football Confederation (CAF) have decided to adopt is not to send European coaches to Africa to work with young Africans, but to make extensive efforts to ensure that African football itself has instructors capable of passing on knowledge to the CAF member associations which form the roots of African football.

In the first stage of this process, CAF selected a number of refereeing and coaching experts who travelled to Europe to attend UEFA courses aimed at specialists from the European national associations.

In the refereeing sector, for example, an African delegation participated in each of the following courses in the 2005/06 period: women referees' course in Nyon, referee instructor courses in Paris and Amsterdam, futsal

referees' course in Nyon, annual elite referees' course in Barcelona, referee instructor courses in Vienna and St Petersburg. A total of 14 African representatives attended these courses.

During the same period, African coaches (six per event) were invited to attend the symposium for coaching directors in Dublin, the women's football conference in Oslo, the youth football conference in Limassol, the futsal conference in Madrid, the grassroots football course in Nyon and the course for coach educators in Coverciano.

In an intermediate phase designed to prepare the ground for the second stage, African technicians and referees were invited to a meeting in Tunis from 28 July to 1 August, where they were informed about the programme drawn up by UEFA

and CAF and reminded about the importance of their task.

The second stage therefore consists of the implementation of the programme. It is being organised in the form of three-day regional courses for representatives of neighbouring national associations. The instructors who attended the courses in Europe are responsible for teaching candidates selected by their national associations, under the supervision of CAF and UEFA, on subjects specific to African football. The courses involve theoretical and practical work as well as group discussions. The first course was held in Congo at the end of October; another took place in Tanzania in December and three more are planned for 2007. The subjects covered are the same for each course and every one of the 53 CAF member associations will attend a course.

As links in a continuous chain of learning and teaching, the participants in these courses will then be expected to pass on their knowledge within their respective national associations. This will form the third, final and most important phase of the programme, since it will demonstrate how successful the new focus of the Meridian programme has been and how it is contributing to the development of youth coaching. An evaluation of the results will then provide some clues as to how the programme should continue in the future.



The African delegation at the grassroots conference in Nyon.

PHOTOS: UEFA



FLASH PRESS



AFP

The proposal of senator Jean-François Humbert was approved by the parliament.



AFP

New legislation in France

Better protection for referees

DISREGARD FOR AUTHORITY IS AN APPALLING SOCIAL PHENOMENON THAT IS ALSO EVIDENT ON THE SPORTS FIELD, WHERE IT CAN SOMETIMES RESULT IN AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE.



Players are not the only ones to blame. Some parents, blinded by their own ambition, have no hesitation in telling their child to "Break his leg!" and abuse the referee if he awards a decision against their child. Sometimes managers and coaches also join in. Insults and unpleasant remarks are too often hurled at referees in all sporting disciplines. While elite referees are protected, their younger colleagues who operate at youth or amateur level are particularly vulnerable to physical violence and intimidation. They do not necessarily have barriers or stewards to protect them. Sometimes they do not even have any assistants and are all on their own, scapegoats of a society that is falling apart, driven only by their love of sport.

Public servants

Faced with a mass exodus of referees, France has adopted legislation under which referees in all sports are given the status of public servants, alongside firemen, policemen and customs officers.

People who attack referees in France can now be punished twice as

heavily as before under accelerated legal procedures. They run the risk of being fined up to EUR 30,000 and imprisoned for two years. In murder cases, they will be sentenced to life imprisonment.

The new law represents tremendous national recognition of the work and value of referees. Jean-Louis Piette, president of the Higher Refereeing Council, had been calling for such a law for a decade. He had lobbied and worked tirelessly to promote the idea. Things began to move more quickly in June, when a bill was tabled by senator Jean-François Humbert.

Having been approved by the senate at the start of the summer and by parliament in October, the bill will become law on 1 January. As football's representative in discussions with the sports minister, Jean-Louis Piette welcomed the efforts of French politicians: *"The minister and his colleagues are acutely aware of the problem. It was a real obstacle course for all of them, since the project involved several different ministries. The prime minister had to be called in on several occasions. The minister even accelerated the process so that the law could be adopted before the start of the presidential election campaign."*

The new law applies to referees in all sports and at all levels, including the 28,000 registered football referees. Over the last five years, around 20,000 of France's 153,000 referees have lost heart and given up. Although they are still signing up at 17 or 18, many have had enough by the time they reach 30. This exodus is leaving a gap in the age pyramid. Jean-Louis Piette explains: *"If someone calls you a fool in the street, you have virtually no chance of having a complaint upheld in the courts. From now on, it will be different for referees. The law has a deterrent effect. It's a bit like people's fear of police officers. If you fear someone, you respect them. Violence is not only a problem in the suburbs, where it is relatively well contained. It is even spreading to*



FLASH PRESS



It is not easy to identify those responsible for throwing smoke bombs onto the pitch.

rural areas. It can be seen in referees' relationships with players and managers. Some throw stones at the referee's car! Being part of a crowd also means that troublemakers can, to a degree, remain anonymous. It is hard to find a person who threw a fire-cracker from the middle of a crowd... This law will make it possible to track these people down because their offences are now considered as serious as attacks on a police officer. The French Football Federation will also be able to be more authoritarian: too often, when sporting justice has been severe, such as where youth coaches who are supposed to set a good example are concerned, the civil courts have been too lenient. From now on, we will be singing from the same hymn sheet."

The law also gives referees the same fiscal status as self-employed workers. "There is no relationship of subordination between the referee and the federation, although clearly referees must respect the laws of the game and the rules laid down by the federation. Referees are truly protected. They can therefore be even more impartial and independent on the pitch. You see, they are a very easy target. Managers can exert pressure by criticising them. For example, people often say that forwards should be protected. If you listen too hard, you might forget that football is a contact sport. This special financial

and fiscal status is also a good thing in the current era of scandals. Referees used to be a weak link. Now, they will be less tempted."

Tax advantages

The union of elite football referees and the top two French leagues (Ligues 1 and 2) have drawn up a new pay scale. Referees for matches in the top two divisions will receive a monthly salary of EUR 1,420 and a bonus of EUR 3,020 per match. The law gives them a tax allowance of EUR 4,500 per year. "Referees in the lower divisions

and youth football will therefore not be taxed, while elite referees will not pay tax on this basic amount. They will all be able to deduct their expenses. Another important factor is that this income is considered as non-commercial earnings. It is an incentive, especially as it doesn't have to be declared. Although referees have self-employed status, the federations will still pay social security contributions if they earn more than EUR 4,500 per year. However, there is no employment contract. Referees are not employees of the federation, which is a good thing for both parties. Referees remain independent and the federations don't have to make redundancy payments when referees reach the age limit, which is 45 for football."

Finally, all referees can combine their job with their passion. Only state employees were slightly worried, since this combination is limited in their case, but a ministerial declaration has been passed, freeing them from any penalties.

France has therefore sent out a strong signal in favour of those without whom sport would be impossible. Will others follow suit?

Pascale Pierard



Every footballer should be obliged to respect the referee.



Bryan Drew provides some explanations.

UEFA-pjwoods.ch



Stadia and Security Education Programme

First workshop in Nyon

AT THE END OF NOVEMBER, THE HOUSE OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL IN NYON PLAYED HOST TO THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF FIVE THREE-DAY WORKSHOPS UNDER THE BANNER OF THE STADIA AND SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (SSEP).

The three-day programme was organised by UEFA's Stadia and Security unit and is funded from the UEFA HatTrick Programme. It is targeted at all UEFA national associations and is designed to create a knowledge platform and share best practice among national associations in the key areas of safety and security at matches, to explore the latest developments and trends in stadium infrastructure and to investigate how best to build effective partnerships between stadium management, match organisers, police and authorities, all with the aim of providing a safe, secure and service-oriented environment for those involved in the game.

Opening the workshop on 29 November, the director of the National Associations Division, Jacob Erel, said: "Safety should never be

taken for granted and we must always be prepared for a worst-case scenario based on a good, solid and well-tested concept. We must provide a safe environment and make sure that football can be played in a friendly atmosphere where the game always takes centre stage."

"We hope that through this workshop you will exchange views, learn from each other via cases of best practice, and keep a network of contacts and information that will prove useful."

Chaired by Michael van Praag, chairman of the Stadium and Security Committee, the course started with some emotional video footage from three football stadium disasters that have helped shape the legacy of change in today's safety environment – the Bradford fire of 1985, the Heysel disaster of 1985 and the Hillsborough disaster of 1989.

Working with UEFA experts in the field of stadia and security, and then in group sessions, the 12 associations of Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, FYR Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey and Ukraine examined the lessons learned from such disasters and discussed the current issues and areas for learning and improvement within their own associations.

Safety management practice

The first day's afternoon session then covered the safety management practice at a UEFA Champions League and a UEFA Cup match, with extensive use of video footage. The afternoon finished with a presentation by Steve Thomas, Greater Manchester police and UEFA security officer, who delivered a keynote speech on the role of a UEFA security officer from his experience as the security officer at the 2004 UEFA Champions League final and 2005 UEFA Cup final.

Developments and trends in stadium design

The workshop continued on the second day on the theme of developments and trends in stadium design and management, and striking the right balance between services, and safety and security for fans.

It concerned itself with the stadium environment and its part in the safety and security equation at football matches. A presentation by Geraint John, co-author of "Stadia: A Design and Development Guide", on the developments and trends in stadium



Michael van Praag addresses the seminar.

UEFA-pjwoods.ch

design and management was followed by interactive group sessions, and then a question and answer session with the expert panel.

Also evaluated was the importance of stadium ownership in relation to maintenance and refurbishment and creative ways to get funding for stadium improvements and renovations.

The day ended with a review of the role of UEFA and the national associations in setting and enforcing quality standards for stadium infrastructure.

Building effective partnerships

On the last day of the workshop, the conference participants listened to two keynote speakers, both with a great deal of first-hand experience on the theme of the day – “Building Effective Partnerships”.

The important role of national governmental bodies was again highlighted in the opening expert panel by Bryan Drew, director of the United Kingdom Football Policing Unit, who said: *“Post-Hillsborough made the government think about their role in partnership with clubs and the police. It made them change the legislation to make it easier for finances to go into safety and security improvements of stadia.”*

Paulo Gomes, of the Portuguese government, spoke of his experience in making partnerships work, from the EURO 2004 final tournament in Portugal, between football, government and safety bodies. *“Staging EURO 2004 was a big challenge for the government and citizens of Portugal. Not only did we have to build new infrastructure, with seven new and three refurbished stadia, but we also had to develop a new model for stadia security and safety management,”* he said.

“People now feel much safer and more secure going to a football match in Portugal, thanks mainly to the new stadia but also to the model of stewarding and new legislation that was passed under the sport-related Violence Act. This is directly thanks to EURO 2004.”

Gomes went on to explain that new sport-related legislation had left a legacy for the system itself of safety and security, not only in Portuguese football itself, but across all the government and police authorities. It had established a new way of working based on a coordinated approach between public, semi-private and private bodies concerned with safety and security.

Also presenting on the final day was David Bohannon from the UK Home Office, who gave a good overview of the different benefits to be gained by all parties involved through collaboration, coordination and communication.

Workshop ends on high

The workshop ended with calls from the national associations for UEFA to support them in their national stadium and security programmes, and for help in lobbying their national governments, with the aim of securing specific football-related security legislation.

The timing of this first workshop came at a particularly poignant

moment, given recent crowd disturbances at a UEFA Cup match between AS Nancy-Lorraine and Feyenoord, and the call from Feyenoord director Otto Jacobs for the Dutch government to introduce legislation banning known troublemakers from travelling abroad.

Closing the seminar, UEFA Executive Committee member Joseph Mifsud said:

“I am glad to say that after this seminar we are more conscious of safety and security in our own stadia and at our own matches, and this should be the case as this is our business. The subject of insurance did not come up once over the three days and this is good as we should be taking all the measures we can to prevent what is preventable. I wish to describe this seminar as very useful.”

There are four more workshops planned to cover all UEFA member associations up to February 2007. The second one was scheduled from 18 to 20 December, for medium-sized national associations.



Maintaining security is the key concern for match organisers.

Report from Brussels

Seminar on European affairs

ON 30 NOVEMBER AND 1 DECEMBER, UEFA VICE-PRESIDENT PER RAVN OMDAL CHAIRED THE FOURTH ANNUAL SEMINAR ON EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS AT THE BRUSSELS HEADQUARTERS OF THE BELGIAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (URBSFA). PRESIDENTS, GENERAL SECRETARIES AND SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM 32 NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TOOK PART IN THE EVENT.

This year's seminar concentrated on the Independent European Sport Review. Two of the chief architects of the document, António Campinos and Michael Bernasconi, launched the first day's discussions with a lively summary of the review's analysis and recommendations. This gave national associations the opportunity to examine the review in detail and put their questions to the experts.

Messrs Campinos and Bernasconi underlined that one of the main

goals of the review was to implement the principles and proposals of the Nice Declaration, which EU government leaders agreed in December 2000. The declaration recognises that sports governing bodies are independent and have the right to organise themselves in associative structures, have a central role in ensuring solidarity between the various levels of the sport, should ensure the redistribution of broadcasting revenue to ensure solidarity, and should take the action

needed to preserve the training capacity of clubs.

White paper

Next, the European Commission's most senior official in charge of sport, Odile Quintin, presented her plans for the forthcoming white paper on sport, which the EU's executive arm aims to publish before summer 2007. The commission will use the white paper to define its current approach to sports policy, and propose some recommendations for future action. According to Mrs Quintin, the white paper will explore three areas: the social aspects of sport, its economic dimension, and the structure of sports governance.

The white paper on sport represents an opportunity for the commission to set out some basic principles for future policy-making. Although the EU has no legal competence to legislate in the field of sport, an informal European sports policy has emerged nonetheless. This policy comprises 30 years of case law, including the Bosman decision, as well as a series of political declarations, notably those of Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2000). The white paper will allow the commission to revise its philosophy in the light of recent developments.

For UEFA, it is vital that the white paper recognise and promote the special nature, or specificity, of European sport. Football does not behave like a normal economic activity, and UEFA believes that politicians, regulators and courts should recognise this when they apply European and national law.

A strong political signal

Ivo Belet, Belgian MEP and a committed 'Friend of Football', completed the seminar's first day by presenting his report on the future of professional football in Europe. Although the report has no legally binding effect, it will send a strong political signal from the European Parliament to the European Commis-





François De Keersmaecker, president of the Belgian FA.



Per Ravn Omdal led the discussions.

sion and UEFA about how the parliament sees the future of the professional game.

Mr Belet has the difficult task of finding common ground among five parliamentary committees, each with its own approach to professional football. He has coordinated a working group comprising the MEPs in charge of the five committee opinions, and has so far managed to maintain some degree of harmony between their positions.

Mr Belet's own committee, in charge of culture and education, will vote on the report at the end of January. This will produce a final text of perhaps 20 pages, including several pages of recommendations to the European Commission, UEFA and other football bodies. The report will finally come before the European Parliament's plenary session in March, when all 732 MEPs will have the chance to vote on the final text.

Practical discussions

On day two, the seminar maintained its tradition of involving national associations in more practical discussions of the issues. At the start of the morning, the 80 participants divided into three smaller workshops, which examined in detail the key points of the Independent European Sport Review. Members of the UEFA administration were on hand to answer questions and guide the debate.

For the second half of the morning, Gianni Infantino, UEFA director of Legal Affairs and Club Licensing, and Alasdair Bell, UEFA's legal advisor, offered an update on the other issues at the top of the EU agenda.

Gianni Infantino explained that UEFA's new rules on the local training of players had received wide support among MEPs and a very sympathetic response from various departments of the European Commission. UEFA vice-president Per Ravn Omdal noted that this significant achievement was the result of close and intensive cooperation between the UEFA Executive Committee and administration.

Alasdair Bell presented the recent *Meca-Medina* decision of the European Court of Justice, which has sent shock waves through all parts of European sport. By stating that even the purely sporting rules of governing bodies – such as the anti-doping sanctions of an organisation such as UEFA – must in future comply with EU competition rules, the court has further undermined legal certainty in European sport (see *uefadirect* issue 56).

Charleroi case

Gianni Infantino completed the EU update with a discussion of latest developments in the Charleroi v FIFA case, which may come before the European Court of Justice in 2007. In legal and political terms, this case again rep-

resents a further attack on the role of sports governing bodies and their ability to set rules in the interests of the sport as a whole.

Per Ravn Omdal drew some important conclusions at the end of the seminar. European football was facing a number of "severe tests": wealth was increasingly concentrating in the hands of the few, a lack of financial transparency was eroding the integrity of the game, clubs were increasingly challenging sporting rules in the courts, and sporting values were under threat.

"The governing bodies need legal certainty to address these issues," said the UEFA vice-president. *"If we are unable to set the rules of the game, football will become a free-for-all in which the richest buy their way to success."*

Mr Omdal went on to address the central challenge facing sport in its relations with the EU: *"Football is not above the law,"* he argued, *"and we must respect European and national rules. But our governments and regulators must recognise sport's specificity: it is unlike any other economic activity, and does not operate according to normal commercial rules."*



PHOTOS: UEFA



Lively discussions, both in plenary session and groups.



Michel D'Hooghe and Urs Vogel, chairmen of the FIFA and UEFA Medical Committees respectively.

4th UEFA Medical Symposium in Istanbul

20th anniversary of the Medical Committee

THE HOSTS CERTAINLY MAINTAINED THEIR REPUTATION FOR HOSPITALITY AT THE 4TH UEFA MEDICAL SYMPOSIUM, STAGED IN ISTANBUL ON THE LAST THREE DAYS OF NOVEMBER.

The Turkish Football Association, with president Haluk Olosoy at the helm and Professor Mehmet Binnet – a long-standing member of UEFA's Medical Committee – working tirelessly alongside UEFA's administration in the organisational 'engine room', offered a warm welcome to doctors from all of UEFA's member associations and team doctors from the top clubs who have, in recent years, been collaborating in UEFA's injury studies.

As it happens, the symposium marked the 20th anniversary of UEFA's Medical Committee, where the current vice-chairman, Scotland's Prof. Stewart Hillis, was one of the founder members when it was set up in 1986. The current chairman, Dr Urs Vogel, was joined by his two predecessors, Hans-Jörg Eissmann and the current chairman of FIFA's Medical Committee, Dr Michel D'Hooghe, who joined UEFA Technical Director Andy Roxburgh in setting the scene with a review of European football, including

medical developments, over the last two decades.

The UEFA Medical Symposium differs from other medical events in that it is not so much about techniques as about injury prevention, ways of enhancing the protection offered to players and the status, role and efficiency of the team doctor, not only on the field of play but also in the dressing-room. That's why one of the most fascinating sessions was a 'head-to-head' involving Stewart Hillis and the current Turkish national team coach, Fatih Terim. They both underlined that, these days, the relationships between the coaching and medical teams are vital in terms of the welfare of individual players and the team as a whole.

The discussions in Istanbul focused on some highly pragmatic issues, such as the need to keep detailed medical records in a day and age where insurance or compensation claims are becoming more commonplace. Apart from a call for UEFA to consider producing a standard

template, the doctors said they would welcome clear guidelines on confidentiality issues related to a player's medical records.

Another area of pragmatic interest was the standard of pitchside care. For example, imagine you're the doctor of the visiting team in a UEFA match and you're packing your bag. What do you need to take? What can you expect to find on site? The doctors asked for UEFA's help in upgrading information flows so that visitors can determine, before they travel, what equipment and what emergency services are already in place at the venue.

The team in Istanbul also discussed a couple of 'one is too many' issues. One death through cardiac arrest is one too many, and one positive doping test is one too many. Compulsory cardiac screening is to be upgraded, as this allows congenital irregularities to be detected and treated. And, in terms of rapid response to emergency situations, Dr Gregor Guthäuser's session underlined the importance of resuscitation techniques.

A review of doping controls, conducted by Dr Jacques Liénard, revealed that the number of tests had increased from 148 in the 1998/99 season to 1,348 in 2005/06. It was noticeable that out-of-competition testing (over 80% of the samples were also tested for EPO) produced no positive findings. And any player tempted to take nutritional supplements would have been alarmed by Dr Hans Geyer of the German Sport University in Cologne, who highlighted the number of products which contain anabolic steroids and other prohibited substances without listing them on the label.



PHOTOS: UEFA



Geoffrey Thompson (seated next to David Will) will chair the working group responsible for the revision of the UEFA statutes.



The kit regulations have been revised.

Meetings and other activities

Statutes set for amendments

ON 7 DECEMBER, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ITS LAST MEETING OF THE YEAR, IN NYON, WITH LENNART JOHANSSON IN THE CHAIR.

The imminent UEFA Congress in Düsseldorf naturally took up a large part of the meeting, with the approval of the final agenda, deciding who would present the different items, and approving the budget to be presented to the congress (see page 3).

However, neither the end of the year nor the forthcoming congress truly create a pause in UEFA's numerous activities. Among the ongoing business dealt with by the committee at its latest meeting were EU-related matters, including the Independent European Sport Review, which has already obtained wide support, notably from European sports ministers. The Executive Committee also reviewed the progress of sales of TV and marketing rights for UEFA's main competitions and was pleased with the success and ever keen interest that these competitions are meeting with in other continents.

EUR 40 million surplus

Accordingly, the committee followed the recommendation of the Club Competitions Committee and agreed that the surplus of EUR 40 million over the projected revenue of EUR 750 million from the 2006/07 UEFA Champions League should be distributed to the 32 clubs that have taken part in the group matches, who will receive an extra million euros each, with the remaining eight million to be distributed in solidarity to the 80 clubs that competed in the first round of the UEFA Cup, who will each receive EUR 100,000.

Following the decision it took at its meeting in Ljubljana in October, the committee also agreed on how the additional CHF 600,000 allocated to each member association this season and next should be used. A presentation in this respect will be made at the congress.

Proposed amendments to the UEFA statutes will be put before the congress in January, but the Executive Committee already decided at its meeting in Slovenia that it was time to undertake a total revision of the statutes, the last such revision dating back to 1997. Following on from this decision, the committee approved at its December meeting the terms of reference of a "UEFA Statutes Revision Panel", which will be supervised by

an Executive Committee working group chaired by vice-president Geoffrey Thompson. The aim is to present draft revised statutes to the UEFA congress in 2008.

In other business, the Executive Committee approved:

- revised UEFA kit regulations, which will come into force on 1 June 2008, giving the manufacturers time to adapt to the new rules;
- the 2007 Meridian Cup regulations taking account of the new format, with two under-18 matches between an African and a European representative team, each comprising a squad of 20;
- a programme of social responsibility activities in connection with EURO 2008, costing a total of CHF 1.9 million.

Last but not least, the committee received a status report on the UEFA club licensing system with an eye to the 31 December deadline for the accreditation of national association manuals.

The meeting closed on a very positive note, with a report on the incredible development of the activities and services of UEFA Media Technologies SA (UMET).



Last meeting in Nyon for the Executive Committee in its present composition.

Grassroots football – New members of the charter

At its latest meeting, the Executive Committee approved the admission of the following eight associations to UEFA's grassroots charter:

Finland, Malta, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine and Wales.

European Under-21 Championship – Draw in the Netherlands

The eight teams that have qualified for the final round of the 2006/07 European Under-21 Championship were separated into two groups in a draw conducted at Arnhem town hall on 24 November.

The final round takes place in the Netherlands from 10 to 23 June at venues in Arnhem, Groningen (where the final will be played), Heerenveen and Nijmegen.



Group A: Netherlands, Israel, Portugal, Belgium;
Group B: Czech Republic, England, Serbia, Italy. Italy, who have already won the Under-21 title

five times, as well as reigning champions the Netherlands, Portugal and Serbia, also competed in last year's final round in Portugal, while Israel are making their first appearance at this stage of the competition.

This particular edition of the Under-21 Championship marks the transition from final rounds in even-numbered years to odd-numbered years. As a result of this adjustment, which the Executive Committee favoured in order to bring the competition out of the shadow of the senior European Championship, the current championship has been reduced to one season in duration. After that, it will revert to its two-season format.

UEFA Futsal Cup – Semi-finalists known

The elite round of the UEFA Futsal Cup was played at the beginning of December and determined which four teams would go through to the final round, which will now take place in the same place and at the same time as the final.



The elite round was contested by four groups of four teams in four-day mini-tournaments.

In Group A, hosted in Verona, title-holders Boomerang Interiù qualified with flying colours by winning all three of their matches, against CC LKW Jistebnik, MNK Split and Arzignano Grifo C/5.

In Moscow, MFK Dinamo Moscow, who have reached the last two finals, finished top of Group B after clearly beating Sporting Clube de Portugal and CIP Deva, before drawing with Shakhtar Donetsk.

In Group C, Action 21 Charleroi, who won the competition in 2005, had their superior goal difference to thank for finishing ahead of mini-tournament hosts Clearex Chorzow. Marbo Belgrade and Araz Naxçivan were the other teams in the group.

The semi-finals involve a second Spanish club, El Pozo Murcia, who made their presence felt in Budapest, where they beat their three opponents, Dorozhnik Minsk, Kairat Almaty and FK Gödöllő.

The final round will take place on the home territory of one of the semi-finalists, to be decided in January. The draw for the semi-finals will be made there in March, with the matches themselves taking place on 26 April, two days ahead of the final and the consolation match.

Philipp Lahm tries to take the ball off Luis Figo. Bayern Munich and FC Internazionale have both qualified for the first knockout round of the UEFA Champions League, where they are joined by two other Italian clubs (AC Milan and AS Roma), four English (Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United), three Spanish (Barcelona, Real Madrid and Valencia), two French (Lille and Olympique Lyonnais), one Scottish (Celtic), one Dutch (PSV Eindhoven) and one Portuguese (FC Porto). Ten of these clubs reached the same stage of the competition last season. In addition, the eight teams that finished third in the group stage move across into the last 32 of the UEFA Cup. They are Werder Bremen, Spartak Moscow, Girondins Bordeaux, Shakhtar Donetsk, Steaua Bucharest, Benfica, CSKA Moscow and AEK Athens.





Last year's finalists, Boomerang Interiú and Dinamo Moscow, are still in the running this season.



Football made in Africa for young Africans.

UEFA Women's Cup – The old and the new

Having dominated the 2005/06 competition, the final of which involved 1. FFC Frankfurt and 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam, the German clubs have not made it past the quarter-finals of the UEFA Women's Cup this time.



Title-holders 1. FFC Frankfurt stumbled in the quarter-finals against Norway's Kolbotn. After losing 2-1 in Oslo, the German side certainly seemed capable of turning things round in the return match, and, after little more than an hour of play, they had in fact taken a 3-0 lead. But in the space of two minutes, Kolbotn managed to put the ball into the back of the net twice, knocking the wind out of Frankfurt's sails and eliminating them on the away goals rule.

In the case of Turbine Potsdam, they compromised their chances in the first leg by losing 3-0 away to Brøndby in Denmark. A week later, in Germany, the Danish side struck a decisive blow by opening the score. Despite eventually winning the match 2-1, it was not enough to take Turbine Potsdam through to the semi-finals.

Tradition will, however, be maintained in the final, where Umeå IK will be making their fourth appearance and hoping to add to their two victories, in 2003 and 2004, having lost their first final in 2002. The Swedish side knocked out Saestum of the Netherlands in the quarter-finals and then went on to polish off Kolbotn in the semi-finals.

The new feature of the 2007 final will be the first appearance by an English team, Arsenal LFC, who owe this honour to their clear double victory over Icelandic club Breidablik in the quarter-finals and their defeat of Brøndby in the semi-finals, secured thanks to a 2-2 draw in Denmark and a 3-0 win in London.

The first leg of the final takes place in Umeå on 21 April and the return leg is due to be held in London on 29 April.

■ The draws for the elite rounds of the 2006/07 European Under-17 and Under-19 Championships were made in Nyon on 5 December, as was the draw for the second qualifying round of the Women's Under-19 Championship.

The draw for the qualifying round of the 2007-09 European Women's Championship was made in Nyon on 13 December.

The results of these draws will be published in the next issue of *uefadirect*. They can also be found on UEFA's official website at www.uefa.com.

Football for Africa

To mark the 50th anniversary of the African Football Confederation (CAF) in 2007, UEFA is providing 81,000 footballs for young Africans.

The balls are being manufactured in Africa using African material and will be distributed to schools in all countries in the territory covered by the confederation, with each national association receiving 1,000 or 2,000 footballs, depending on the size of the country.

The first beneficiaries are the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Exhibition in Brussels

On 6 December, in Brussels, a press conference was held to present an exhibition entitled "Only a Game?", which will be on view at the Parc du Cinquantenaire in Brussels from May to September.

UEFA is contributing to the organisation of this exhibition on Europe and football, which is being set up in cooperation with the Brussels region and French designer Olivier Guilbaud, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, on which the European Union was founded.

Blind football – World title retained by Argentina

Last August, in Monaco, UEFA presented its traditional charity cheque (for CHF 1 million) to the International Blind Sport Federation (IBSA).

One of the highlights in IBSA's calendar took place in November, when the 4th Blind Five-a-Side Football World Championship took place in Argentina.

Title-holders Argentina succeeded in retaining the trophy by beating neighbours Brazil 1-0 in the final, which was watched by a crowd of some 2,000.

On the European side, Spain lost out on the bronze medal position against Paraguay, who beat them 2-1, while France finished fifth, just ahead of England.



Spain (Vicente Aguilar) finished fourth in the Blind Five-a-side Football World Championship.

ALBANIA



Inauguration of a mini-pitch in Tirana

UEFA Executive Committee member Michel Platini was in Tirana on 8 November for a short visit in order to inaugurate a mini-pitch at Hasan Vogli, a local school in Tirana. The mini-pitch, built under the auspices of UEFA's HatTrick Programme, is just one of 60 whose construction is being co-sponsored by UEFA, the Albanian FA (FSHF) and local municipalities. A pleasant surprise awaited Michel Platini in the form of a large crowd of people at the school chanting his name. *"I'm very surprised by the welcome here today – I've never seen anything like it. There are a lot of young faces in the crowd, so I can only assume that they were told about me by their parents. I want to thank them just for knowing my name,"* said the French footballing legend.

This was the Frenchman's fourth visit to Albania, having previously visited as the French national team coach and in the course of his duties for FIFA and UEFA. The inauguration ceremony was also attended by local mayor Edi Rama, FSHF president Armando Duka and general secretary Roland Mici.

Lysien Nurishmi



An enthusiastic crowd greet Michel Platini.

AUSTRIA



Year ends on a strong note

The Austrian national team played eight matches in 2006 under coach Josef Hickersberger, whose second spell in charge began with a 2-0 defeat against Canada on 1 March. The former Rapid Vienna coach had to wait until September for his first win back at the helm of the Austrian national team, but he has started to recover lost ground since then, with victories against World Cup participants Switzerland (2-1 in Innsbruck) and Trinidad and Tobago (4-1 in Vienna).



Captain Andreas Ivanschitz with Trix and Flix, the two EURO 2008 mascots.

Over the eight matches (3 wins, 1 draw, 4 defeats), Josef Hickersberger fielded a total of 37 players, only two of whom – captain Andreas Ivanschitz and defender Ferdinand Feldhofer (FC Wacker Tirol) – played in all eight.

Andreas Ivanschitz (who moved from Red Bull Salzburg to Panathinaikos in August) clocked up the most number of minutes on the pitch by far, followed by his former team-mate René Aufhauser and GAK defender Joachim Standfest.

Roland Linz (with FK Austria Vienna in the first part of the year and now with Boavista Porto) played a crucial part in seven of the national team's 12 goals, scoring three himself and setting up another four.

The national team has another 12 games scheduled for 2007, starting with an away match in Malta on 7 February, which comes at the end of the team's first training camp in the year preceding EURO 2008.

Peter Klinglmüller

BELGIUM



No monkey business – say no to racism!

A news conference held on 10 October at the headquarters of the Belgian FA launched an awareness campaign against discrimination in football under the slogan "No monkey business – say no to racism!".

The campaign is the joint initiative of the centre for equal opportunities and against racism, the Belgian FA and various ministers. From 10 to 29 October, all of Belgium's professional football clubs, supporters' clubs and players were encouraged to "show the red card" to racism and discrimination of any kind, which, regrettably, are becoming increasingly prevalent in football stadiums.

At the same time, prominent activities were organised at Jupiler League fixtures, as well as at regional matches. For example, posters of the campaign slogan and mascot (a monkey) were handed out to supporters, who were asked to wave them as the players went onto the pitch, and a well-known player took the microphone to explain the campaign before each match kicked off. All football clubs also received an email appeal asking them

to sign a "Red card against racism and discrimination" charter.

Furthermore, a website (www.nefaites-paslesinge.be) has been set up to provide a host of useful information, opinions and experiences. There are also online competitions to win tickets to matches or T-shirts signed by professional players. Alongside, an advert showing a number of Belgian league players with black first-division referee Jérôme Nzolo was also shown on national and local television, and inserts were distributed in newspapers.



In other words, this campaign, which took place to coincide with the annual action week organised by FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe, based in the UK) and UEFA, enjoyed significant support, and it is hoped that it will help eradicate all forms of intolerance, which far too often disfigures our beautiful game.

Pierre Cornez

BULGARIA



New mandate for Valentin Mihov

On 17th November, in Sofia, the general meeting of the Bulgarian Professional Football League was held in the Rodina hall at the Vasil Levski national stadium. The meeting was attended by delegates from the 44 professional football clubs in Bulgaria. After some serious debating, the assembly elected the president and executive board of the league. Valentin Mihov was re-elected for a new five-year term by a full majority.



Borislav Mihaylov, president of the Bulgarian FA, with the president of the football league, Valentin Mihov (right).

Mihov is a prominent figure in Bulgarian football, a former president of the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) and, since 1996, president of the Bulgarian Professional Football League.

A new executive board was elected which includes representatives of ten professional football clubs.

The general meeting was attended by the president of the BFU, Borislav Mihaylov, and the BFU executive committee member Ivan Lekov, who is also vice-chairman of the state agency of youth and sport.

Asen Videnov

ENGLAND



Three cooperation agreements signed

FA Chairman Geoffrey Thompson, accompanied by Head of International Relations Jane Bateman, represented The Football Association at the OFC's Extraordinary Congress and 40th anniversary celebration in Tahiti this month.

The Oceania Football Confederation comprises 11 member countries, the



A traditional welcome for Geoffrey Thompson in Tahiti.

largest of which – since Australia joined Asia earlier this year – is New Zealand.

The FA signed three cooperation agreements to play a role in assisting the development of football in the region: with the Oceania confederation itself, where The FA has already produced a draft blueprint for referee development; and with the islands of Fiji and the Solomon Islands, ranked second and third respectively in Oceania.

Geoffrey Thompson said: "The signing of these agreements means that our development programme is now worldwide. It gives The FA the opportunity to share its expertise with countries in other parts of the world, complementing the initiatives of FIFA and other partners to develop the game of football."

OFC General Secretary Tai Nicholas welcomed the agreement, which fits with "the OFC vision".

He added: "Getting good results on the football pitch is important but so is looking after the community that comprises the OFC football family. This agreement with The FA was made in the spirit of that ideal and we are confident it will be a success."

Nada Grkinic

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



FK Sarajevo in front at the midway point

After 15 rounds, the first part of the Bosnia-Herzegovina premier league championship is completed. Top of the table at the midway point are FK Sarajevo, followed by NK Zrinjski on four points less, and current champions NK Siroki Brijeg, who are currently six points behind FK Sarajevo. Surprisingly, past champions FK Zeljeznicar from Sarajevo and FK Leotar from Trebinje are not doing so well.

The championship resumes at the end of February or beginning of March. The exact date depends on the decision of the executive board of the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FF BHZ).

The semi-finals of the BHZ cup will involve FK Sarajevo, NK Siroki Brijeg, NK Celik and FK Slavija. The draw will take place in early spring.

The first part of the season was marked by many coach comings and goings. Eight clubs have changed coach so far.

The executive committee decided at its last meeting that all the national team staff should also be changed and advertised for selectors, coaches, goalkeeper coaches, doctors and physios. Consequently, the present coaches of the senior and under-21 national teams – Blaz Sliskovic and Ibrahim Zukanovic – are being replaced. The technical committee will propose new staff for the 14 national teams to the executive board, which will make the final decision.

The first coaches to qualify for the UEFA Pro licence received their diplomas in Vogosca, having successfully completed

the course run by the FF BHZ at its coach education centre. At the same ceremony, diplomas for UEFA A and B licences were awarded. In all, 233 coaches have successfully completed their training.

Returning to events on the field, the FF BHZ hosted the A2 group European Women's Championship preliminary tournament, for which the match venues were the Asim Ferhatovic Hase Olympic stadium in Kosevo and the Grbavica stadium. The visiting teams came from Armenia, Israel and Latvia. Israel won the tournament, beating the home team 5-2 in the deciding match. Israel's Sarit Shenar scored no less than four goals in this match.



Bosnia & Herzegovina finished second in a qualifying tournament for the European Women's Championship.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's player of the tournament, Sabina Pehic, scored a hat-trick against Latvia. Israel finished on nine points, followed by Bosnia-Herzegovina and Armenia on four points each. Latvia did not manage any points at all.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina team was coached by Murat Jaha.

Fuad Krvavac

FINLAND



Hobby managers support young people in football clubs

After the age of 13, the drop-out rate increases significantly in Finnish football. There are not enough alternatives for those who do not want to play at a very competitive level. The Football Association of Finland is trying to resolve this problem with a "youth influence and hobby project". One part of the project is to create a network of "hobby managers".

Football clubs often have people who are responsible for competitive activities, but it is much harder to find proper support for those youngsters who see football as a recreational way of having fun rather than as a serious competitive sport.

Even if young people are able to act very independently, they still often need adult support. Through this new project, the FA of Finland is helping clubs to appoint youth assistants called "hobby managers".

These assistants need to be familiar with young people. They have to be people they know they can trust. The hobby manager's job is to work in a club as a supportive adult for young people, someone who encourages and listens to them, and also supports the "recreational" groups as well as youth decision-making groups (youth boards, etc.).

A national hobby manager network was established in spring 2006. It is led by the "Young Finland" organisation and hobby managers in any sport are able to join it. They receive material and training to help them in their youth work. There are also meetings within their own sport as well as with all the hobby managers. These meetings are very important for sharing experiences and networking.

Minttu Paavola

GERMANY



Task force against violence, xenophobia and racism

In his new post as head of security matters at the German Football Association (DFB), to which he was appointed on 9 November, Helmut Spahn has taken over as chairman of the task force against violence, xenophobia and racism set up at the end of October by the DFB and the German Football League (DFL).

In addition to Spahn, the 21-strong task force includes among others Walter Hützen (chairman of the DFB security panel), Andreas Nagel (DFL match operations director), Andreas Morbach (central operations unit for sports events), Prof. Gunter A. Pilz (fan research), Ralf Busch (federal working group on fan projects), Peter Peters (FC Schalke 04 general manager) and Christian Reichert (Hamburger SV board member).

The current mandate of the task force covers eight key areas. In addition to building up a nationwide information and reporting system with regard to events that have relevance for security in German football, it will coordinate measures for preventing violence and promoting integration, while providing support for clubs on security management issues and ensuring close cooperation with government and other bodies involved in security issues, prevention of violence and the fight against racism.

Stephan Brause



Ferenc Puskás with another Hungarian football legend, goalkeeper Gyula Grosics.

HUNGARY



Ferenc Puskás passes away

Hungary lost its most famous and popular footballer on 17 November, when Ferenc Puskás passed away. The 79-year old was not only a legend, not only one of the best sportsmen Hungary has ever produced, but also an icon, an example of kindness and elegance.

At the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ), a ceremony was held on the evening of his death. It was attended by former "Golden Team" defender Jenő Buzánszky and MLSZ president István Kisteleki.

Puskás' former club, Budapest Honvéd, organised its own commemoration. The club's owner, George F. Hemingway, met with István Kisteleki, MLSZ vice-president Antal Dunai and Hungarian national team technical director Zoltán Magyar. Puskás played for Budapest Honvéd from 1942 to 1956, winning five domestic championships and scoring an unprecedented 358 goals in 349 matches.

The whole of the football world was shocked by the news. His former Spanish club, Real Madrid, said farewell to their legend at their league match against Racing Santander at Santiago's Bernabéu stadium. The crowd of 78,000 were in tears as the club's anthem was played by Laura Benítez and photos of "Pancho" Puskás were shown on the giant screen. Puskás played for Real Madrid from 1958 until 1967, winning seven championships, two cup competitions and three European Champion Clubs' Cups. His record four goals in a final will probably remain unbeaten for a long time to come.

His funeral was organised by the Puskás Ferenc Memorial Committee, chaired by Pál Schmitt, who is the chairman of the Hungarian Olympic Committee. The other members of the memorial committee are Mónika Lampert, interior minister; István Kisteleki, president of the Hungarian FA; Joseph S. Blatter, president of FIFA; Lennart Johansson, president of UEFA; Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee; Ramón Calderón, president of Real Madrid; and Gyula Grosics and Jenő Buzánszky, former greats of the legendary "Golden Team" of Hungary. Spokesman is György Szölösi.

The body of Ferenc Puskás was laid out at the Szent István basilica for two days before the funeral. The ceremony itself started with the "farewell of the nation"

at the Ferenc Puskás stadium on 9 December. Admirers and fans had the chance to remember Ferenc Puskás in the stands of the national stadium. After the ceremony, the remains of the legendary player were taken to Hosök Tere for a military farewell. Following this short ceremony, the crowd walked to the Szent István basilica for a Roman Catholic mass.

On the day of the funeral, no matches were played in the first or second divisions.

The MLSZ mourns the loss of Ferenc Puskás, who was not only a superstar but a gentle and noble man whose memory will stay with us forever.

Peter Zimmermann

LATVIA



Women's team in every club

2007 is going to be a turning point for Latvian women's football, after the Latvian Football Federation's (LFF) board of administration declared that there must be a women's football team in every first division (LMT Virslīga) club. The LFF's recommendation is that all clubs, even in the lower divisions, should have a women's coach for girls who are interested in football. "Women's football is a must, so we will ask the local councils to help clubs all around the country," said Guntis Indriksons, president of the LFF.

The LFF has already established that women's clubs do not get sufficient access to training grounds. There are not enough pitches in Latvia and peak training hours are reserved for the professionals first, then for boys, then amateurs and then children. Only after their needs have been met do girls get a chance to practice. Guntis Indriksons has promised that once the government has given the LFF permission to renovate the Daugava national stadium and build five additional pitches there, use of one of the covered pitches will be reserved for girls half of the time. However, there is no movement with the government decision yet; the political parties still cannot come to an agreement on a long-term stadium lease for the LFF.



The Latvian women's team.

In other news, the LFF can report that 2006 was successful from a marketing point of view, and the main sponsors – Latvian Mobile Telephone (LMT) and Nordea Bank Finland plc, Latvian Branch – are staying loyal to the LFF, the Latvian first division and the Latvian national team.

2007 also sees the launch of the Baltic League, more details of which will be published on the LFF's website at lff.lv, a Baltic "A" team tournament, elections for the LFF board of administration, and lots of marketing plans.

Martins Hartmanis

LIECHTENSTEIN



Work finishes on the Rheinpark stadium

After about a year of building work, the extended Rheinpark stadium in Vaduz was unveiled to the general public on 26 November. The Vaduz authorities, who own the stadium, organised an open day for tours of the new south and north stands, the new training and dressing-room facilities, as well as the new offices of FC Vaduz, which are housed in the north stand. In addition to an artificial pitch, two natural turf pitches are available. The complex also boasts a children's



The Rheinpark stadium with its new stands.

playground and a beach volleyball court. Ticket sales will no longer take place at individual sales points at the different sectors, but at a central sales point next to the main car park.

The Liechtenstein FA is particularly pleased with the extension of the north and south stands, which raises the stadium's seating capacity from 3,654 to 6,127. In addition, the media will soon have their own working/catering area.

The Rheinpark stadium is the only one in the country that meets FIFA and UEFA requirements. It will be the venue for all of the national team's home matches and is also home to FC Vaduz, who play in the Swiss Challenge League.

Judith Frommelt

LITHUANIA



Closing ceremony for 2006

Lithuanian football celebrated the close of 2006 with a gala evening honouring the season's top teams and players and followed by a concert.

The celebration was attended by Lithuanian prime minister Gediminas Kirkilas, MPs Algimantas Salamakinas and Kazimiera Prunskiene, and other distinguished guests.

Orders of Merit were awarded to Vladimiras Romanovas, Kestutis Birieta and Algimantas Liubinskas.

Awards were made to FBK Kaunas, winners of the 2006 Champions' Cup, established in 1945, as well as to runners-up FK

Ekranas (Panevezys) and third-placed team FC Vetra (Vilnius). All the players of these teams were also honoured.

Referee of the year was Vjunas Vasiliuskas from Telsiai. It is the first time that this award has been made.

A special prize was given to the most correct team in the first division, LKKA ir Teledema (Kaunas).

The poll to elect the player of the year was won by Andrius Velicka, with Mantas Savenas in second place and Darius Maciulevicius third.

The president of the Lithuanian Football Federation, Liutauras Varanavicius, thanked everyone who was contributing to the promotion of Lithuanian football. The supporters were not forgotten either, with special certificates awarded in that category too.

Vaiva Zizaite

MALTA



More dynamic commitment

Figures for the last financial year of the Malta FA show that there was a brisk turnover in different areas of the association's activities.

The rise in the rate of operations throughout the year reflected the forward-looking policies which are being embarked upon by the Maltese federation under the presidency of Joseph Mifsud.

The national teams and the youth sector benefited from an increase in the association's outlay. This is evidence of the importance that is being attached to areas relating to a more dynamic commitment to the development of footballers, especially youth players.

There were a total of 1,071 matches in the season which were played at 14 different venues. The all-weather pitch at the Ta' Qali centre-

nary stadium – soon to be equipped with a FIFA two-star artificial turf surface – hosted the biggest number of matches, 447 in all. Most of these were between teams in the lower divisions which represented, until last season, 29 out of the then 49 league clubs in Malta. This total has now gone up to 51.

Attendances for competitive matches rose by about 20,000 over the previous season, an encouraging trend overall in spectator figures which has been maintained in the last three seasons.

It is hoped that these positive results in financial and statistical terms, and a renewed drive to accommodate the needs of youth players and the national teams, will yield better pastures for clubs and herald a brighter future for the game in Malta.

Alex Vella

Michael Mifsud (in red) up against a Hungarian defender in the EURO 2008 qualifier that Malta won 2-1.



NETHERLANDS



Record holder ends career

Last month, Marleen Wissink, goalkeeper of the Dutch women's team, put an end to her impressive career. After defending the goal for 141 matches, she admitted that she could no longer deal with the physical strain of international football. She will continue her career with German club FFC Frankfurt, where she moved 11 years ago in order to improve their game and to play women's football at the top level. With her club team she has won the German championship five times and the domestic cup twice.

Wissink, now 37, served the national team for more than 17 years and was presented with the gold medal of the Dutch Football Association (KNVB) by Hans Lesterhuis, president of amateur football at the KNVB, before an international friendly against Russia in November.

Wissink started her career on 11 April 1989, playing Norway in a home match. One of her team-mates then was current national coach Vera Pauw. Wissink played her last match during the Peace Queen Cup in Korea in early November.

With 141 caps, the goalkeeper is by far the most capped Dutch international, male and female combined. The second on the list is another goalkeeper, by the



Marleen Wissink has retired from international football.

more familiar name of Edwin van der Sar. He has 118 caps to his name so far but is due to continue until EURO 2008 in Austria and Switzerland. The question is whether he will be able to overtake Marleen Wissink's impressive record.

Apart from her football association medal, Wissink has been invited by the Royal Netherlands Football Association to do a Level 2 coaching course. Although she has not yet agreed to do so, she is certainly willing to share her knowledge and experience with her younger successors. The only thing missing in her career has been an appearance in the final tournament of a world championship, European championship or Olympic Games. The Dutch team never qualified for any of these events. Nevertheless, Wissink managed to impress international followers of the game and was once nominated for the world player of the year award.

Rob de Leede

Sanchez, former internationals Gerry Armstrong and Mal Donaghy, and many members of the NI media and IFA staff.

The celebration was a double one, as the IFA commemorated its 126th anniversary on 18 November.

Caroline Menary

POLAND



Reform of the football education system

The Polish FA is planning to reform the current system for developing young football talents. The coaches' council and the technical department of the PFA have drawn up a national programme of football education for youth and children, the main goal of which is to improve the selection system for the youngest players.



A national youth player development programme.

It also raises the very important issues of the training of coaching staff and the improvement of stadium infrastructure. The education process has been divided into three stages: the first for 7-12 year olds, the second for 13-16 year olds, and the third for 17-19 year olds. The main intention of the PFA is to make football accessible to all. The success of the programme depends closely on the commitment and assistance of the local authorities.

Currently, there are 16 regional football education centres in Poland. Based on the existing infrastructure, hundreds of new small local schools will be set up under the patronage of the PFA. According to the principles of the originators of the reform, the homogeneous system should ensure that 100 very well trained and prepared players will join first and second division clubs every year.

Michal Kocieba / Bartek Marks

NORTHERN IRELAND



Derek McKinley – 25 years of service to the IFA

The Chief Executive of the Football Association of Northern Ireland (IFA), Howard Wells, presented IFA employee Derek McKinley with a commemorative token recently to mark the anniversary of Derek's 25 years of service to the association as international kit man.



Left to right: Jim Boyce, Howard Wells, Derek McKinley and Lawrie Sanchez.

Since Derek's first international match against Israel at Windsor Park on 18 November 1981 (NI won 1-0) he has:

- Covered 187 full senior internationals at kit man.
- Visited over 40 countries with the team.
- Experienced two World Cups (1982 and 1986).
- Witnessed NI triumph for the third time at the British Home Championships in 1984.
- Saw NI win over 50 matches.
- Worked with six managers – Billyingham, Jim Platt, Bryan Hamilton, Lawrie McMenemy, Sammy McIlroy and Lawrie Sanchez.
- Kitted out some of NI's most famous players, including Norman Whiteside, Pat Jennings, Jimmy Nicholl, Martin O'Neill, Sammy McIlroy, Mal Donaghy, Gerry Armstrong, Ian Stewart, Billy Hamilton and current NI manager Lawrie Sanchez.

Derek also covered many U21, U19, U17 and women's matches over the years.

Apart from Howard Wells, the presentation to Derek was also attended by IFA president Jim Boyce, NI manager Lawrie

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



Launch of emerging talent programme

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) recently launched its Emerging Talent Programme, which is designed to produce a player pathway to the senior international team.

The programme is the latest initiative of the association's technical development plan to be rolled out. Emerging talent programmes, catering for elite players from 11 to 16 years of age, are under way in 31 schoolboy leagues nationwide. These feed into eight regional centres throughout Ireland. They, in turn, supply the international youth teams and will also deliver elite players to the national academy which is to be located at Campus Stadium Ireland.

■ Sport in Ireland will benefit from the provision of 64 UEFA mini-pitches at various local authority-owned locations throughout the country thanks to a EUR 1.6m grant announced by Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue TD. The allocation will be made available under the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism's sports capital funding provision.

UEFA, through the Football Association of Ireland (FAI), is committing a total of EUR 650,000 towards the scheme and the 26 local authorities concerned are providing the mini-pitch sites and will manage the facilities once they are operational.

Each mini-pitch will cost in the region of EUR 50,000 – 60,000, depending on their exact size and the extent of the site preparation required. These synthetic pitches are being installed in strategic locations as identified by the local authorities to ensure optimum access and usage by their communities. The facilities being provided

can also include basketball hoops and backboards in addition to volleyball posts and nets, which will add further opportunities and variety for sports participation, particularly by children and young people in the neighbourhoods concerned.

■ The FAI has also appointed four women's development officers dedicated to the growth and support of the women's game. The four new officers are a core element of the women's development plan, which is headed up by Noel King and supported by the Irish Sports Council. The FAI now has six full-time dedicated resources in place to promote and develop the women's game in Ireland.

■ In the eircom League premier division, Shelbourne finished their season in style by coming from behind against Bohemians to clinch the title. It was Shelbourne's third championship success in four seasons, as they held off Derry City's challenge to win the league on goal difference.

The Irish football community has paid a final farewell to the Lansdowne Road stadium before the redevelopment of a new 50,000-seater stadium commences in 2007. The last ever international game at the magical stadium saw the Republic of Ireland host San Marino, while the very last football match at the venue was the meeting between Derry City and St. Patrick's Athletic in the FAI Senior Challenge Cup final on 3 December.

Fran Whearty

ROMANIA



UEFA workshop

For the first time, Romania has hosted an important UEFA meeting. The FA's headquarters in Bucharest were the venue for a workshop within UEFA's HatTrick knowledge sharing programme, in which representatives from the FAs of Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Israel, Lithuania, Moldova, Northern Ireland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and, of course, Romania took part. The workshop was opened by the president of the Romanian FA, Mircea Sandu, who said how important these UEFA programmes and courses were in improving the professionalism of the national associations.

During the two-day event, held on 23 and 24 November, the participants discussed very important and interesting event management issues. The participants all shared their different experiences of organising an important football event and found some very good solutions for improving this crucial activity in the future.

A UEFA representative expressed not only how useful this seminar had been (an opinion which was shared by all the par-



The UEFA HatTrick seminar was a resounding success.

ticipants), but also praised the way in which the Romanian FA had organised the first UEFA course it had ever hosted. "Everything was perfect. The House of Romanian Football offers all the conditions not only for small meetings but also for bigger ones, at European and world level. This was matched by the organisational skills of the Romanian FA, which offered us the best possible environment," he said.

For the Romanian FA, the workshop was the highlight of a very busy autumn, in which our FA also hosted three European Championship qualifying mini-tournaments (Under-17s, Under-19s and women). It was a precursor to other busy years ahead, because the aspirations of our FA are very high, not only on a sporting level, but also with regard to organising small and big European and world events.

Paul Zaharia

SWEDEN



IF Elfsborg champions

IF Elfsborg, led by skipper and Swedish international Anders Svensson, won this year's championship after a thrilling battle in the last round with challenging newcomers AIK. This was the Borås club's fifth league title and the first since 1961.

Finishing top of the Superettan and hence promoted to the Allsvenskan next season were Trelleborg and Örebro. Both clubs have recent premiership experience, but the winner of the play-off for promotion to the Allsvenskan came as more of a surprise.

IF Brommapojkarna (colloquially "BP") from the western suburbs of Stockholm have always excelled at nurturing talent. Numerous players have started their careers with BP before moving on to the "bigger" Stockholm clubs and becoming internationals. Youth development has al-



Minister John O'Donoghue with FAI president David Blood (right) and chief executive John Delaney.



Promotion against the odds for IF Brommapojkarna, who won their play-off against BK Häcken.

ways been the club's priority and the team has always suffered from the constant exodus of fully fledged players and thus never been capable of reaching the top of the ladder before. So this year's success, which earned BP promotion to the Allsvenskan, was more than amazing.

And their chances of avoiding a quick drop back down seem to be quite fair, with over 1,000 licensed players on their books. On the agenda for the FA representatives' meeting in December is the proposal to extend the Allsvenskan from 14 to 16 clubs in 2008. Accordingly, only one club would have to go down next season.

Former Barcelona striker Henrik Larsson showed the way in Helsingborg's 2-0 win against Gefle in the cup final. In the women's cup final, Linköping won their first title ever, beating Umeå away from home. The result was a real turn-up for the books, since the Umeå girls had otherwise mowed their way through the season undefeated in both the Damallsvenskan (fifth league title) and the UEFA Women's Cup, where they will face Arsenal in the final in April.

Fredrik Ljungberg of Arsenal, who also captains the national team, was awarded the Golden Ball as this year's most prominent footballer. Freddie has been given the same honour once before, in 2002. The equivalent prize in women's football, the Diamond Ball, was awarded to 22-year-old Lotta Schelin of Kopparbergs/Göteborg.

Thomas Saletog

SWITZERLAND



Rot-Schwarz Thun win fair play trophy

In Switzerland too, lack of respect for opponents and referees on the football pitch has been on the increase recently.

The Swiss Football Association (SFV) is not prepared to stand by idly in the face of this unwelcome trend but has planned and launched a number of different activities to counteract it.

One of these initiatives is a fair play trophy for clubs, which continues to enjoy great popularity.

In the 2005/06 season, a total of 65 clubs comprising each of the 13 regional associations' top five in the fair play rankings – based on the first phase of league matches – competed for the national fair play award, with the winners honoured at a ceremony in the Stade de Suisse Wankdorf.

Presenting the prizes to the best five clubs in the national rankings, SFV president Ralph Zloczower stressed in his speech that the SFV attaches great value to fair play on and off the pitch and is doing its utmost to uphold the concept of



FC Rot-Schwarz Thun receive the fair play award.

fair play. Part of this is the "More respect on football pitches" project, which aims to curb the negative trend of dwindling respect for opponents and referees at the grassroots level.

The 2005/06 fair play trophy was won by FC Rot-Schwarz Thun from the Bern/Jura association. The club, founded in 1947, currently has 18 teams in various leagues, including 13 youth teams (nine for boys, four for girls), three men's teams and two women's teams.

The basic criteria for the fair play award are the numbers of yellow and red cards awarded and the resulting number of match suspensions. In addition, clubs can gain bonus points on the basis of a report by an expert match observer, the number of teams involved in the leagues, including youth and women's teams, and the final fair play standings of the first and second match phases. Runners-up in the fair play award were SC Zurzach, while FC Baden claimed third place.

Pierre Benoit

UKRAINE



A book for referees and journalists

The Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) has published a new handbook – "The Football Referee's Partner" – to aid the physical and psychological preparation of referees, a modern interpretation of the Laws of the Game, and the development of refereeing skills. The book contains clear and helpful information, not only for the referee, but for everyone who takes a keen interest in the world's favourite game.

The author of the publication is Konstantin Vihrov, who holds a PhD in pedagogical science and a member of the FFU's technical committee, who has written many scientific books on the preparation of football players and coaches at top level, as well as programmes for monitoring and managing the training regimes of Ukrainian clubs and national teams. He also chairs the FFU's scientific methodology committee and is a UEFA and FFU delegate. "Fundamental work has been carried out these last three years," he told the FFU's press service.



"The handbook contains useful information for both novice referees and professionals. It will also interest ordinary fans and be an especially important source of information for journalists, as well as radio and television commentators, given that it explains a lot of terms and the Laws of the Game."

It is also something of a unique publication, as it is the only one of its kind in the world at the moment. It was put together with the help of leading Ukrainian and European referee Nikolay Latyshev. In view of the enormous demands that are placed on referees – a perfect knowledge of the Laws of the Game, the skill to apply them correctly in match situations and to take objective decisions, the handbook will be valuable for the preparation of highly skilled native referees.

Valery Nykonenko



Communications

Birthdays – Calendar

Birthdays

Eliane Cremona (Luxembourg), member of the circle of former UEFA committee members, celebrates her 75th birthday on 24 January, while on the first day of the new year, Vlatko Markovic (Croatia), chairman of the Technical Development Committee, and referee observer Malcolm Moffatt (Northern Ireland) turn 70. A couple of days later, match delegate Gerhard Sager (Sweden) has his 60th birthday on 3 January. UEFA also wishes many happy returns to:

- Necdet Cobanli (Turkey, 1.1)
- Torben Mogensen (Denmark, 1.1)
- Mustafa Culcu (Turkey, 1.1)
- Robert Coar (England, 2.1)
- Jerzy Gos (Poland, 2.1)
- Monica Ortigueira (Switzerland, 2.1)
- Robert Sterckx (Belgium, 3.1)
- Alexei Spirin (Russia, 4.1)
- David George Collins (Wales, 5.1)
- George Sintoris (Greece, 5.1)
- Mariano Moreno (Spain, 6.1)
- Walter Clarke (Northern Ireland, 6.1)
- Sergei Safaryan (Belarus, 6.1)
- Sergiy Lysenchuk (Ukraine, 6.1)
- Franco Ferrari (Italy, 9.1)
- Velid Imamovic (Bosnia & Herzegovina, 9.1)
- Guido Cornella (Switzerland, 10.1)
- Wolfgang Holzhäuser (Germany, 13.1)
- Sofoklis Pilavios (Greece, 13.1)
- Luis Horta (Portugal, 14.1)
- Iljo Dominkovic (Bosnia & Herzegovina, 14.1)
- Nodar Akhalkatsi (Georgia, 14.1)
- Alessandro Lulli (Italy, 15.1)
- Mitja Lainscak (Slovenia, 15.1)
- Christophe Perruchoud (Switzerland, 16.1)
- Sune Hellströmer (Sweden, 17.1)
- Friedrich Stickler (Austria, 18.1)
- Fabrizio Tonelli (Italy, 18.1)
- Vera Pauw (Netherlands, 18.1)
- Bujar Kasmi (Albania, 19.1)
- Lars-Åke Lagrell (Sweden, 20.1)
- Pedro Galán Nieto (Spain, 20.1)
- Anders Mattsson (Finland, 21.1)
- Angel María Villar Llona (Spain, 21.1)
- Maria Teresa Andreu Grau (Spain, 21.1)
- Bernd Heynemann (Germany, 22.1)
- Urs Meier (Switzerland, 22.1)
- Teuvo Holopainen (Finland, 23.1)
- Harry M. Been (Netherlands, 23.1)
- Zsolt Füzesi (Hungary, 23.1)
- Pat Quigley (Republic of Ireland, 24.1)
- Gevorg Hovhannisyan (Armenia, 15.1)
- Leonid Dmitranitsa (Belarus, 25.1)
- Stig-Ove Sandnes (Norway, 25.1)
- Metin Kazancioglu (Turkey, 26.1)
- Mirosław Ryszka (Poland, 26.1)
- Krister Malmsten (Sweden, 27.1)
- Cosimo Bolognino (Italy, 30.1)
- Nikolai Tolstykh (Russia, 30.1)

Forthcoming events

Meetings

24.1.2007, Düsseldorf
Executive Committee

25-26.1.2007, Düsseldorf
UEFA Congress

Notices

- On 30 November, Balasz Bérczy took over as general secretary of the Hungarian Football Association, following the resignation of Ildiko Kmety.
- Sergey Pryadkin has been appointed chief executive of the Russian Football Union, replacing Boris Brezgin.
- In December, the French Football Federation moved to:
87, boulevard de Grenelle,
FR-75 738 Paris Cedex 15, France.
Tel.: + 33 1 44 31 73 00
Fax: + 33 1 44 31 73 73
- The Football Association of Azerbaijan has a new fax number: +994 12 490 87 22.

New book

RACING CLUB DE LENS, UN SIECLE DE PASSION EN SANG ET OR

Every football follower in Europe has heard of Racing Club de Lens, who have qualified twice for the UEFA Champions League and regularly finish in the upper echelons of the French championship. This year, Racing Club de Lens celebrates its centenary, and to commemorate this anniversary, Isabelle Dupont and Dominique Paquet have traced the history of the club and its importance in the mining region of Pas-de-Calais (*RC Lens, BP 23, FR-62210 Avion, France*).

Obituary

Efstratios Papaefstratiou, a member of the circle of former UEFA committee members has passed away at the age of 71. Following many years of service with the Greek Football Association, he was its vice-president from 1997 to 2001. At UEFA level, he was a member of the Appeals Body from 1980 to 1986 and again from 1992 to 1996. He was then vice-chairman of the Committee for Licensed UEFA Match Agents from 1996-2000.

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