

Media Release

Communiqué aux médias

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**Union des associations
européennes de football**



Date: 19/05/2003

No. 70 - 2003

Match officials appointed for UEFA Cup final in Seville

The UEFA Referees Committee today announced the match officials for the UEFA Cup final to be played on Wednesday 21 May 2003 at the Estadio Olímpico in Seville, kicking-off at 20.45 local (and Central European) time.

The referee of the match between Celtic FC and FC Porto will be Lubos Michel of Slovakia, who will be handling his first UEFA club competition final. Indeed, he will be the first Slovak referee to be appointed for a UEFA club competition final since the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. His Assistant Referees will be Igor Sramka and Martin Balko, while the 4th Official will be Anton Stredak. Like the referee, the other match officials are from Slovakia. Igor Sramka was one of the team of Assistant Referees selected for the EURO 2000 and 2002 FIFA World Cup finals, while Martin Balko was one of the team chosen for last year's UEFA European Under-21 Championship finals in Switzerland.

Lubos Michel, a young referee who celebrated his 35th birthday last Friday, has been an international referee since 1994, having started his career at the age of 19. He was one of the team of match officials appointed for the European Under-16 Championship finals in Belgium in the following year and, since then, he has been selected for the World Under-17 Championship in Egypt in 1997, the European Under-21 Championship in Romania in 1998 (where he handled the final between Spain and Greece), the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney and last year's FIFA World Cup finals, where he officiated at the match between Paraguay and South Africa in Busan.

Lubos Michel has now handled over eighty international matches but this will be his first visit to Seville. He has, however, been the referee of matches played in Valencia, La Coruña, Albacete (Spain's UEFA EURO 2004™ qualifier against Northern Ireland last October) and Madrid, where he handled Real Madrid CF's 2-1 home win over BV Borussia Dortmund in the UEFA Champions League in February. Curiously, the first of his four visits to Porto was also for a game involving BV Borussia Dortmund – their 1-0 UEFA Champions League defeat by Boavista FC in November 1999. Apart from Boavista FC's goal-less draw with FC Bayern München in February 2002, he has handled two of FC Porto's home games – the 2-2 draw with Grasshopper-Club in the qualifying round for the 2001/02 UEFA Champions League and the 2-1 victory over Panathinaikos FC in the second group stage of the same campaign. He has never officiated at a match involving Celtic FC.