

PORTUGAL - ITALY

MATCH PRESS KIT

De Goffert, Nijmegen

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Olympic play-off - Matchday 5



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Match preview

They may have missed out on their primary goal but there will be no shortage of incentive for Portugal and Italy as they meet at the Goffert Stadion in Nijmegen with a place in next year's Olympic Games at stake.

Sluggish starts

Both sides failed to reach the semi-finals having finished third in their groups, with neither able to recover from taking only one point from their first two fixtures. Although Portugal overwhelmed Israel 4-0 in their concluding Group A tie and Italy defeated the Czech Republic 3-1, their four-point totals kept them out of the top two. Normally that would have spelt the end but a reprieve was provided by England's progress to the last four; as Stuart Pearce's team will not compete in Beijing, Portugal and Italy have another chance to keep Olympic ambitions alive.

'Kind of final'

It is an opportunity both are determined to grasp, although history is on Italy's side. The most successful Olympic football team having taken part in 14 tournaments, the Azzurrini were bronze medallists in Athens three years ago and have also won seven of their eleven competitive U21 matches against Portugal. Coach Pierluigi Casiraghi treats such statistics with disdain, however, saying: "I don't care about the past. This is a special game, a kind of final. It is not followed by another match, it is not a group game and like all finals it will be decisive on its own, so it is useless to look at statistics. It will depend entirely on what happens during the game.

'Special players'

"Portugal are a completely different team to those we have played so far; they have a lot of quality and are technically and physically very strong," continued Casiraghi, who is likely to have captain Giorgio Chiellini and Luca Cigarini available after both shook off knocks. "They have skilful players like [João] Moutinho and Nani and strong midfielders in [Miguel] Veloso and [Manuel] Fernandes so we're quite well matched. We'll study them thoroughly as always but we have our style and some special players. We have to play independently from our opponents, because our players will always keep their own qualities."

Italian approach

Portugal coach José Couceiro has also studied the opposition in depth and believes his charges can use what has long been considered a traditionally Italian approach against its inventors. "Tactical preparation has improved on our part and many in Portugal may call it a lack of ambition," he said. "Well, that's what Italians have always done, they have studied the game since they were young. They know that there are moments when you don't take risks and just control the game. It will be a very even contest."



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'New objective'

Portugal have played in only three Olympics, although two of those participations came in 1996 and 2004, and they finished fourth in the former competition - their best performance to date. "I've protected the players by saying publicly that we wanted to reach the semi-finals and the Olympics," added Couceiro, who is set to risk Nani and Ricardo Vaz Té despite niggling injuries. "But they knew that we wanted much more. Unfortunately we couldn't reach that goal and now we have this new objective, qualifying for Beijing. We will do our best to get there."

Team facts

Portugal

- Portugal finished third in Group A, their hopes of progress spoiled by taking just one point from their first two matches. **José Couceiro's** side opened the finals with a goalless draw against Belgium in Groningen before a goal in each half from Ryan Babel and Maceo Rigters condemned them to defeat against the Netherlands at the Euroborg despite **Miguel Veloso's** fine 77th-minute free-kick.
- **Couceiro** was suspended for the Israel match, the punishment relating to his dismissal in the 63rd minute of last Wednesday's defeat by the Netherlands when he was sent to the stands by the referee for criticising the officiating.
- Portugal finally found their feet against Israel, **Veloso, Nani, Manuel Fernandes** and **Ricardo Vaz Té** all scoring as they eased to a 4-0 victory. However, Belgium's 2-2 draw with the Netherlands in Saturday's other Group A fixture left them third in the section on four points.
- After the game **Fernandes** told uefa.com he would be phoning Everton FC team-mate **James Vaughan** to encourage him and England to win their final match in the other group, in order to secure second and force an Olympic Games play-off match. He got his wish as England beat Serbia 2-0, though **Vaughan** did not appear.
- It set up a meeting with Italy and Portuguese coach **Couceiro** admitted he is a fan of the Azzurrini, saying: "Italy are a great team. I have liked them in this tournament. They are a different, more offensive Italy than we are used to seeing. Against us, it will be 50-50. [But] we usually don't win."
- Indeed, the last three times the teams have met in the knockout stages of this competition - in 1994, 1996 (over two legs) and 2004 - Italy have come out on top and went on to claim the title. The last came in the semi-finals three years ago when Alberto Gilardino scored twice in a 3-1 victory but perhaps the most important was the first of that trilogy, in the 1994 final, when Pierluigi Orlandini scored the only goal of the game seven minutes into extra time as Italy triumphed against a Portugal side including Luís Figo, Rui Costa, João Pinto, Sá Pinto and Jorge Costa.
- In all, Italy and Portugal have met eleven times in the European U21 Championship - qualifying and finals - with the Azzurrini winning seven to Portugal's three. The only draw came in the 2002 finals group stage and Portugal's last triumph came eleven years ago when Hugo Porfirio gave them a 1-0 victory in Lisbon, though Italy won the semi-final second leg 2-0 to go through to the final.
- The sides last met in a friendly in February 2006 when Portugal were denied by a last-gasp goal from Raffaele Palladino. **Vaz Té, Semedo, Silvestre Varela, José Gonçalves, Filipe Oliveira, Manuel Fernandes** and **Hugo Almeida** all appeared for Portugal, with **Nani** and **Ruben Amorim** unused substitutes.
- **Couceiro** will be back on the bench for the game against Italy, although **Hugo Almeida** is suspended for the game having collected yellow cards against Belgium and Israel.
- **Semedo** spent last season on loan in Serie A with Cagliari Calcio, making his debut against AC Milan in April, and could come up against club-mate Michele Canini in Nijmegen.
- Left-back **Antunes** has been included in Portugal's 21-man squad for the FIFA U-20 World Cup in Canada. The tournament kicks off on 30 June with Portugal facing Mexico, Gambia and New Zealand in Group C.

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- Portugal have played 128 competitive U21 matches, winning 71, drawing 22 and losing 35 times. In this time they have scored 223 goals and conceded only 129.
- Portugal are making their fourth appearance in the finals of the European U21 Championship, having also qualified for the 1994, 2004 and 2006 tournaments.
- Last year Portugal failed to get beyond the group phase as despite being hosts. They lost to France and Serbia before a consolation victory against Germany.
- Nine players who featured in the 2006 finals are also present this time around - **Paulo Ribeiro, Semedo, Rolando, Nani, João Moutinho, Fernandes, Silvestre Varela, Hugo Almeida** and **Vaz Té**.
- In addition, the 2007 squad has two players who featured at the 2004 finals in Germany. **João Pereira** made two appearances while **Hugo Almeida** scored in each of his three games, against Sweden, Switzerland and Germany.
- Portugal qualified for 2007 finals with successive 2-0 away victories against Latvia and Poland in the qualifying round before a dramatic victory on away goals to eliminate Russia in the play-offs. After losing 4-1 in Moscow, goals from **Moutinho, Yannick Djaló** and an Ivan Taranov own goal turned around the tie for a 3-0 second-leg win in Porto.
- UD Leiria midfielder **Paulo Machado** was Portugal's top scorer in qualification, finding the net three times - against Latvia, Poland and in the first leg against Russia.
- Eight players participated in all four of Portugal's qualifying matches - **Daniel Amoreirinha, Silvestre Varela, Amorim, Sérgio Organista, Veloso, João Moreira, Paulo Ribeiro** and **Vaz Té**. Of these four played every minute - Amoreirinha, Organista, Miguel Veloso and Paulo Ribeiro.
- Of the 23 players selected by coach Couceiro for the finals, five were not involved in qualification - **Ricardo Batista, Fernandes, Nani, Hugo Almeida** and **João Botelho**. Goalkeeper Botelho is the only one to feature in a Portugal U21 squad for the first time.
- Sporting Clube de Portugal have five representatives in the squad, the most of any club. **Veloso, Moutinho, Yannick, Varela** and **Semedo** are all on Sporting's books although the latter pair have been on loan at Vitória FC and Cagliari respectively.
- At the time the squad was announced **Nani** was also a Sporting player. He has since completed a €25.5 million move to Manchester United FC.
- Another of the Lisbon club's star players, midfielder **Moutinho**, signed a new five-year contract at the end of May.
- **Moutinho, Nani** and **Hugo Almeida** were all called up by senior coach Luiz Felipe Scolari for Portugal's UEFA EURO 2008™ Group A qualifier away to Belgium on 2 June. Portugal won 2-1 with Nani scoring the opening goal. Hugo Almeida was introduced in the second half but was shown a direct red card in the last minute, while Moutinho was an unused substitute.
- Of the 23 players in the Netherlands, **Fernandes, Moutinho, Nani, Hugo Almeida** and **Antunes** are all full internationals. Antunes made his debut in Portugal's 1-1 friendly draw against Kuwait on 5 June.

Italy

- Italy finished third in Group B, hindered by taking one point from their first two fixtures in the Netherlands. **Pierluigi Casiraghi's** side opened the finals with a 1-0 defeat against Serbia in Nijmegen, Dejan Milovanović's 63rd-minute strike proving enough for victory.

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- It looked like it would be two defeats from two as two goals in three minutes midway through the first half, from David Nugent and Leroy Lita, gave England a two-goal lead at the Gelredome in Arnhem but Italy captain **Giorgio Chiellini** pulled a goal back ten minutes before half-time and **Alberto Aquilani** earned a point with a fine left-foot strike from distance in the 69th minute.
- The result left Italy third in the standings with one point from two games, five points behind section winners Serbia and one adrift of England. They therefore needed to beat the Czech Republic on Sunday while England slipped up against Serbia in Group B's other concluding game, in Nijmegen.
- The Azzurrini kept their side of the bargain, with **Aquilani**, **Chiellini** and **Giuseppe Rossi** all on target in the first half of a 3-1 victory at the Gelredome but England's 2-0 victory against Serbia ended their semi-final ambitions.
- Italy's consolation was an Olympic Games play-off against Portugal and **Rossi** told uefa.com that a significant prize is still on offer: "The Olympics is a great tournament. It's a once in a lifetime chance. In 270 minutes of football, we have played badly for ten minutes. When you make a mistake you get punished and at this level you can't make too many mistakes. That's how football is."
- The sides last met in a friendly in February 2006 when Portugal were denied by a last-gasp goal from **Raffaele Palladino**. A number of the other players who featured are also in the Netherlands: **Aquilani**, **Michele Canini**, **Andrea Coda**, **Gianluca Curci**, **Andrea Mantovani**, **Riccardo Montolivo**, **Giampaolo Pazzini**, **Alessandro Rosina** and **Alessandro Potenza**.
- If he plays, **Michele Canini** could come up against Semedo who played alongside him last season while the Portugal defender was on loan at Cagliari Calcio. They both featured in the 3-1 defeat by AC Milan in April.
- With three goals to his name ACF Fiorentina midfielder **Montolivo** was Italy's top scorer in qualifying.
- Italy reached the finals after a 2-1 second-leg win away to Spain in the play-offs following a goalless first game in Modena. They had earlier recorded two 1-0 victories in the qualifying round against Iceland and Austria.
- With just four goals, the Azzurrini scored less in qualifying than any other finalist.
- In Portugal last year, Italy were knocked out in the group stage after finishing third behind Ukraine and runners-up Netherlands in Group B with four points.
- There are nine survivors of the 2006 finals among Casiraghi's squad of 23: **Curci**, **Andrea Coda**, **Chiellini**, **Mantovani**, **Canini**, **Montolivo**, **Rosina**, **Palladino** and **Pazzini**.
- **Rosina** is the most capped player in the current crop of Italian U21s with 28 appearances and four goals.
- **Rosina**, a non-playing squad member in 2004 and a regular last year in Portugal, is the first Italian player to take part in three U21 finals.
- **Chiellini** and **Aquilani** are the only squad members who have been capped at senior level. Juventus defender Chiellini has made six senior appearances, including his debut as a second-half substitute in a 1-0 home win against Finland in November 2004. Aquilani made his only appearance two years later in a 1-1 draw against Turkey.
- Alberto Gilardino, with 19 goals in 30 matches, is Italy's top scorer in U21 competition, followed by Andrea Pirlo (16) and Gianluca Vialli (11).
- **Casiraghi** played ten U21 matches for Italy, the last of which was a 2-2 draw with Yugoslavia on 9 May 1990.
- Assistant coach **Zola** was capped 35 times by the Azzurri but never played for the U21 side.

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- With **Rossi**, **Luca Cigarini** and **Dessena** in the squad, Parma FC are the club contributing the most players to the Italian cause in the Netherlands.
- Midfielder **Dessena**, who turned 20 in May, is the youngest player in the squad.
- Italy captain **Potenza** misses the finals after suffering an injury to his right thigh in training.
- **Andreolli** turned 21 on 10 June, the day before Italy's opening game against Serbia. **Cigarini** celebrated his 21st birthday yesterday (20 June), while **Mantovani** turns 23 on the eve of the final.
- Italy featured in four of the first six single-match UEFA European U21 Championship finals and won on each occasion. Portugal were their victims in 1994, followed by Spain two years later. The Spanish won the title in 1998 but Italy were again victors in 2000 thanks to a 2-1 defeat of the Czech Republic. The Azzurrini regained the title in 2004, beating Serbia and Montenegro 3-0.
- At this level, Italy have played 165 matches, winning 104, drawing 35 and losing 26. The Azzurrini have scored 292 goals and conceded 115.
- Italy have won the European U21 Championship a record five times: in 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000 and 2004. They were also runners-up in 1986 and semi-finalists in 1984 and 2002.
- The Azzurrini are the only U21 national side to have won three consecutive titles, in 1992, 1994 and 1996. Further success followed in 2000 and 2004 – their fifth European U21 Championship victory in seven attempts.

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Squad list

Portugal

No	Player	DoB	Age	Club	Current season				All-time	
					Qual.		FT		U21	
					Pld	Gls	Pld	Gls	Pld	Gls
Goalkeepers										
1	Paulo Ribeiro	06.03.1984	23	FC Porto	4	-	3	-	3	-
12	Ricardo Batista	19.11.1986	20	Fulham FC	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	João Botelho	22.09.1985	21	CD Santa Clara	-	-	-	-	-	-
Defenders										
2	Amoreirinha	05.08.1984	22	CF Estrela da Amadora	4	-	1	-	1	-
3	João Pereira	25.02.1984	23	SL Benfica	3	-	2	-	4	-
5	Semedo	11.01.1985	22	Cagliari Calcio	-	-	3	-	4	-
11	José Gonçalves	17.09.1985	21	Heart of Midlothian FC	-	-	1	-	1	-
13	Rolando	31.08.1985	21	CF Os Belenenses	1	-	-	-	2	-
21	Antunes	01.04.1987	20	FC Paços de Ferreira	-	-	3	-	3	-
22	Manuel da Costa	06.05.1986	21	PSV Eindhoven	3	1	3	-	3	-
Midfielders										
4	Miguel Veloso	11.05.1986	21	Sporting Clube de Portugal	4	-	3	2	3	2
6	Organista	26.08.1984	22	Pontevedra CF	4	-	-	-	-	-
7	Filipe Oliveira	27.05.1984	23	CS Marítimo	3	-	1	-	2	-
8	Manuel Fernandes	05.02.1986	21	SL Benfica	-	-	3	1	6	1
10	João Moutinho	08.09.1986	20	Sporting Clube de Portugal	2	1	3	-	6	1
14	Paulo Machado	31.03.1986	21	UD Leiria	3	3	1	-	1	-
15	Ruben Amorim	27.05.1985	22	CF Os Belenenses	4	-	2	-	2	-
18	Nani	17.11.1986	20	Sporting Clube de Portugal	-	-	3	1	6	1
Forwards										
9	Hugo Almeida	23.05.1984	23	Werder Bremen	-	-	3	-	8	3
16	João Moreira	07.02.1986	21	Valencia CF	4	-	-	-	-	-
17	Ricardo Vaz Té	01.10.1986	20	Bolton Wanderers FC	4	-	1	1	2	1
19	Silvestre Varela	02.02.1985	22	Vitória FC	4	1	3	-	6	-
20	Yannick Djaló	05.05.1986	21	Sporting Clube de Portugal	3	1	2	-	2	-
Coach										
-	José Couceiro	04.10.1963	43	POR	4	-	2	-	2	-

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Italy

No	Player	DoB	Age	Club	Current season				All-time	
					Qual.		FT		U21	
					Pld	Gls	Pld	Gls	Pld	Gls
Goalkeepers										
1	Gianluca Curci	12.07.1985	21	AS Roma	4	-	1	-	4	-
12	Emiliano Viviano	01.12.1985	21	Brescia Calcio	-	-	3	-	3	-
22	Andrea Consigli	27.01.1987	20	Sambenedettese Calcio	-	-	-	-	-	-
Defenders										
2	Marco Andreoli	10.06.1986	21	FC Internazionale Milano	4	-	3	-	3	-
3	Giorgio Chiellini	14.08.1984	22	Juventus	4	1	3	2	6	3
5	Andrea Mantovani	22.06.1984	22	AC Chievo Verona	4	-	2	-	2	-
13	Andrea Coda	25.04.1985	22	Udinese Calcio	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Domenico Criscito	30.12.1986	20	Genoa Cricket and Football Club	-	-	2	-	2	-
15	Michele Canini	05.06.1985	22	Cagliari Calcio	-	-	-	-	3	-
17	Andrea Raggi	24.06.1984	22	Empoli FC	-	-	2	-	2	-
Midfielders										
4	Antonio Nocerino	09.04.1985	22	Piacenza FC	3	-	3	-	3	-
6	Marco Motta	14.05.1986	21	Udinese Calcio	-	-	2	-	2	-
7	Riccardo Montolivo	18.01.1985	22	ACF Fiorentina	4	3	3	-	4	-
8	Alberto Aquilani	07.07.1984	22	AS Roma	4	-	3	2	3	2
10	Alessandro Rosina	31.01.1984	23	Torino FC	4	-	3	-	6	-
16	Daniele Dessena	10.05.1987	20	Parma FC	-	-	1	-	1	-
18	Simone Padoin	18.03.1984	23	Vicenza Calcio	3	-	1	-	1	-
21	Andrea Lazzari	03.12.1984	22	Piacenza FC	3	-	-	-	-	-
23	Luca Cigarini	20.06.1986	21	Parma FC	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forwards										
9	Giampaolo Pazzini	02.08.1984	22	ACF Fiorentina	1	-	3	-	5	-
11	Giuseppe Rossi	01.02.1987	20	Parma FC	3	-	3	1	3	1
19	Graziano Pelle	15.07.1985	21	AC Cesena	4	-	2	-	2	-
20	Raffaele Palladino	17.04.1984	23	Juventus	2	-	2	-	5	1
Coach										
-	Pierluigi Casiraghi	04.03.1969	38	ITA	4	-	3	-	3	-

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Head coaches

Portugal: José Couceiro



Date of birth: 4 October 1962

Playing career: CD Montijo, FC Barreirense, Atlético CP, SCU Torreense, Clube Oriental de Lisboa, CF Estrela da Amadora

Coaching career: FC Alverca (2002-04), Vitória FC (2004/05), FC Porto (2004/05), CF Os Belenenses (2005/06), Portugal Under-21s (since 2006)

José Couceiro is no stranger to the sharp end of football management. He was one of three coaches to fill the breach at FC Porto following José Mourinho's resignation after winning the UEFA Champions League in 2004 and, though his stint at the Estádio do Dragão was a short one, it did give him his first taste of Europe's top club competition as Porto earned a creditable 1-1 draw against FC Internazionale Milano. Intelligent and impassioned, Couceiro comes from the Mourinho school of management, very disciplined and always ready to speak his mind.

Couceiro had an undistinguished playing career in and around Lisbon, but emerged as an important advocate of players' rights, taking the post of president of the Portuguese Professional Players' Union in April 1993. A former economics student, he subsequently served as director of football at Sporting Clube de Portugal from 1997 to 1999, before taking up a similar job with Alverca in 2000.

His desire to coach shone through and he took charge of the side for the 2002/03 season, enjoying immediate success as they won promotion back to the top flight. Relegation followed but Couceiro remained among the élite after moving on to Setúbal in 2004/05. Couceiro's fortunes were clearly on the rise and he stayed in Setubal for just 19 matches before Porto came calling.

He replaced Víctor Fernández to become Porto's third coach of the season and initially things went well. He marked his debut with a 2-1 win away to GD Estoril-Praia in February 2005 that took the northern club to the top of the league. But he could not sustain that success and Porto eventually lost out to SL Benfica in the title race. Couceiro's contract was not renewed but he was not out of work for long, CF Os Belenenses appointing him coach in October 2005. He saw out the season before being headhunted by the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) to take charge of the U21s.

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Italy: Pierluigi Casiraghi



Playing career: Monza Calcio, Juventus, S.S. Lazio, Chelsea FC; Italy (44 caps)

Coaching career: Monza Calcio youth team (2002), AC Legnano (2003), Italy Under-21s (since 2006)

It came as a surprise when Pierluigi Casiraghi was chosen as Claudio Gentile's successor as Italy coach after the 2006 UEFA European Under-21 Championship. Casiraghi, like Roberto Donadoni with the senior side, had little coaching experience and would have to learn on the job during Italy's qualifying campaign.

The former Italy striker rose to the challenge, much as he did throughout a playing career that brought success for both club and country before being cut short by injury in 1998. Casiraghi's physical presence and aerial ability, which belied an unimposing frame, earned him the nickname 'Il Bisontino' – the little bison. It was a fitting moniker for a player determined to impose himself on the Italian game.

After breaking through at Monza, Casiraghi signed for Juventus in 1989. He scored 20 times in 98 Serie A appearances for the Bianconeri, winning the UEFA Cup twice and the Coppa Italia during his four-year spell at the Stadio Delle Alpi, as well as his first cap for Italy in February 1991. Casiraghi went on to score 13 times in 44 appearances for the national side and represented his country at both the 1994 FIFA World Cup and EURO '96™. He also scored the deciding goal against Russia in the play-offs that took the Azzurri to the 1998 FIFA World Cup, although he was not named in the final squad for that tournament.

'Gigi' moved to Lazio in 1993 and scored 41 Serie A goals during a five-year spell which included another Coppa Italia victory. In 1998 he joined Chelsea for €8m but the move proved ill-fated. He had scored just once in ten appearances for the London club when he suffered the cruciate ligament injury that, after numerous operations, brought an untimely end to his playing days.

Casiraghi returned to Monza, where he took charge of the youth team before becoming coach of Serie C2 side Legnano in 2003. His lack of experience at the highest level did not prevent former Italy team-mate Demetrio Albertini - then working for the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) - appointing him to the U21 role alongside his former Chelsea team-mate Gianfranco Zola. The 37-year-old quickly took to the job, guiding the Azzurrini to the UEFA European Under-21 Championship at the first attempt after masterminding a 2-1 aggregate defeat of Spain in the play-offs.

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Match officials

Referee	Stéphane Lannoy (FRA)
Assistant referees	Tomislav Petrovic (CRO), Mustafa Emre Eyisoy (TUR)
Fourth official	Damir Skomina (SVN)
UEFA Delegate	Trygve Bornø (NOR)
UEFA Referee observer	Jaap Uilenberg (NED)

Referees

Name	Nat.	DoB	UNDER21	UEFA
Stéphane Lannoy	FRA	18.09.1969	4	2



Born in Boulougne-sur-Mer, Stéphane Lannoy is one of France's best young officials and made 18 Ligue 1 appearances in the 2006/07 campaign. He is particularly regarded for his physical fitness and ability to communicate with players.

- Broke on to the international scene in March 2006 when he took charge of two UEFA European Under-17 Championship Elite round qualifying matches - Germany v Netherlands and Finland v Germany.
- Refereed the UEFA Cup second qualifying round match between FK Ventspils and Newcastle United FC, which the English club won 1-0, in August 2006 and RCD Espanyol's 2-1 win at AS Livorno Calcio in the Round of 32 of the same competition in February this year.
- Lannoy also has previous Under-21 experience having officiated two qualifying matches for these finals, England v Switzerland (2-3) in September 2006 and Serbia v Sweden (0-3) the following month.

Did you know?

Lannoy's 2006/07 campaign began with the very first match of the Ligue 1 season on 4 August as eventual champions Olympique Lyonnais won 3-1 at FC Nantes Atlantique, who would ultimately finish bottom.

UEFA European Under-21 Championship matches involving teams from the two countries involved in this match

Date	Comp.	Stage	Res	Venue
11.06.2007	U21	GS - FT	Serbia - Italy	1-0 Nijmegen

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Group statistics - Portugal

	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Netherlands	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Belgium	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Portugal	3	1	1	1	5	2	4
Israel	3	0	0	3	0	6	0

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
10.06.2007	Netherlands - Israel	1-0	Abe Lenstra, Heerenveen
Goals: 1-0 Maduro 10			
Referee: Damir Skomina (SVN)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
10.06.2007	Portugal - Belgium	0-0	Euroborg, Groningen
Goals: -			
Portugal: Paulo Ribeiro, Miguel Veloso, Semedo, Filipe Oliveira, Manuel Fernandes, Hugo Almeida, João Moutinho (Ruben Amorim 84), Gonçalves (Antunes 57), Nani, Yannick Djaló (Silvestre Varela 66), Manuel da Costa			
Referee: Robert Małek (POL)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
13.06.2007	Israel - Belgium	0-1	Abe Lenstra, Heerenveen
Goals: 0-1 Mirallas 82			
Referee: Craig Thomson (SCO)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
13.06.2007	Netherlands - Portugal	2-1	Euroborg, Groningen
Goals: 1-0 Babel 33, 2-0 Rigters 75, 2-1 Miguel Veloso 77			
Portugal: Paulo Ribeiro, Amoreirinha (João Pereira 46), Miguel Veloso, Semedo, Manuel Fernandes (Yannick Djaló 81), Hugo Almeida, João Moutinho, Ruben Amorim (Silvestre Varela 57), Nani, Antunes, Manuel da Costa			
Referee: Knut Kircher (GER)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
16.06.2007	Belgium - Netherlands	2-2	Abe Lenstra, Heerenveen
Goals: 1-0 Mirallas 9, 1-1 Rigters 13, 1-2 Drenthe 37, 2-2 Pocognoli 70			
Referee: Stéphane Lannoy (FRA)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
16.06.2007	Israel - Portugal	0-4	Euroborg, Groningen
Goals: 0-1 Manuel Fernandes 37, 0-2 Ricardo Vaz Té 45, 0-3 Miguel Veloso 49, 0-4 Nani 50			
Portugal: Paulo Ribeiro, João Pereira, Miguel Veloso, Semedo, Manuel Fernandes, Hugo Almeida (João Moreira 67), João Moutinho (Paulo Machado 60), Ricardo Vaz Té, Nani (Silvestre Varela 71), Antunes, Manuel da Costa			
Referee: Zsolt Szabó (HUN)			

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Group statistics - Italy

	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Serbia	3	2	0	1	2	2	6
England	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
Italy	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Czech Republic	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
11.06.2007	Czech Republic - England	0-0	Gelredome, Arnhem
Goals: -			
Referee: Zsolt Szabó (HUN)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
11.06.2007	Serbia - Italy	1-0	De Goffert, Nijmegen
Goals: 1-0 D. Milovanović 63			
Italy: Curci (Viviano 22), Andreolli, Chiellini, Nocerino, Mantovani, Montolivo, Aquilani (Pelle 82), Pazzini, Rosina, Raggi, Palladino (Rossi 74)			
Referee: Stéphane Lannoy (FRA)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
14.06.2007	Czech Republic - Serbia	0-1	De Goffert, Nijmegen
Goals: 0-1 Janković 93			
Referee: Robert Małek (POL)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
14.06.2007	England - Italy	2-2	Gelredome, Arnhem
Goals: 1-0 Nugent 24, 2-0 Lita 26, 2-1 Chiellini 35, 2-2 Aquilani 69			
Italy: Viviano, Andreolli, Chiellini, Nocerino, Mantovani (Criscito 59), Montolivo, Aquilani, Pazzini, Rosina, Raggi (Motta 46), Palladino (Rossi 46)			
Referee: Damir Skomina (SVN)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
17.06.2007	Italy - Czech Republic	3-1	Gelredome, Arnhem
Goals: 1-0 Aquilani 4, 1-1 Papadopoulos 14, 2-1 Chiellini 29, 3-1 Rossi 46			
Italy: Viviano, Andreolli, Chiellini, Nocerino, Motta, Montolivo (Padoin 46), Aquilani, Pazzini (Pelle 55), Rosina (Dessena 69), Rossi, Criscito			
Referee: Craig Thomson (SCO)			

Date	Match	Result	Stadium, Venue
17.06.2007	England - Serbia	2-0	De Goffert, Nijmegen
Goals: 1-0 Lita 5, 2-0 Derbyshire 77			
Referee: Knut Kircher (GER)			

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Competition facts

UEFA European Under-21 Championship: qualifying

- It started out with 51 nations, but six months, 72 games and 199 goals later, seven teams had won the right to join hosts and holders the Netherlands in the 2007 UEFA European Under-21 Championship finals.
- Russia were the most prolific scorers in qualifying, although 12 goals in their four matches were not enough to secure a place in the finals as they lost out to Portugal in the play-offs.
- The Portuguese scored eight during their campaign, the same as England and Belgium but two fewer than Serbia who were the most free-scoring of the finalists. The Czech Republic hit the net seven times, and Israel five, while Italy booked their place by scoring at the unremarkable rate of exactly one per game.
- Italy boasted the best defence in qualifying, holding out for 330 minutes before Spain's Roberto Soldado finally broke their resistance in the play-offs.
- Having lost the first leg of their play-off 3-0 in Sweden, Serbia's 5-0 second-leg triumph was the biggest win in qualifying, matching Hungary's 5-0 demolition of Finland. The Finns also conceded five against Russia although Veli Lampi did score a consolation in that match.
- Only players born or after 1 January 1984 are eligible to play in the 2006/07 European U21 Championship.
- At 15 years and eleven months, Liechtenstein midfielder David Hasler was the youngest player to appear in qualifying when he started in his side's back-to-back defeats by Northern Ireland in the preliminary round in April and May.
- Terry Dixon became the youngest in qualifying proper when he came on as a substitute in the Republic of Ireland's loss to Belgium in September. At 16 years and seven months the Tottenham Hotspur FC striker was six years younger than F.Y.R. Macedonia goalkeeper Filip Madzovski, who was born on 1 January 1984 - the maximum limit of eligibility for the competition.

UEFA European Under-21 Championship: finals

- No team has won the competition on home territory since the switch to a new format in 1994. Until then the final had been decided on a two-legged basis. Spain came closest in 1996, reaching the final where they lost on penalties to Italy.
- Italy have won four of the seven finals since the new format was introduced.
- Seven single-match finals (from a total of 15) have taken place since the format changed for the 1992-94 competition.
- Since the 1992-94 change, Italy have won all four finals in which they have appeared with Spain, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands winning the other three. France, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine have each been losing finalists.
- Six red cards have been issued in single-match finals. The most recent was Olexandr Romanchuk for Ukraine in the 2006 showpiece.
- The single-match final has seen three goals on three occasions. In 2000, Italy beat the Czech Republic 2-1, thanks to Andrea Pirlo's double. In 2004, the Azzurrini won 3-0 against Serbia and Montenegro thanks to goals from Daniele De Rossi, Cesare Bovo and Alberto Gilardino. The Netherlands won by the same margin last year, with Klaas Jan Huntelaar (two) and Nicky Hofs on target.

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- Those 3-0 wins for Italy in 2004 and the Netherlands in 2006 are the biggest winning margins in a one-off final.
- Pirlo and Huntelaar are the only men to have scored twice in a final since 1994's move to one-off games. Prior to that Vahid Halilhodžić (Yugoslavia 1978), Gary Owen (England 1982), Franck Sauzée (France 1988) and Andrei Sidelnikov (USSR 1990) had all scored twice in one leg of a final.
- Prior to the single-match finals, Pierre Littbarski, for West Germany in the 1982 final second leg, is the only man to have scored a hat-trick.
- Since the single-match finals began, two have ended in penalty shoot-outs, with nine-man Italy triumphing 5-4 in the 1996 final against Spain. The Czech Republic did likewise, prevailing 3-1 over France in 2002 following the only final to date to end in a goalless draw.
- Only the 1994 final has been decided in extra time, substitute Pierluigi Orlandini winning it for Italy against Portugal with the only goal of the game in the 97th minute.
- Only five players have won the European U21 title twice: Danny Thomas (England 1982 and 1984), Dario Marcolin and Roberto Muzzi (Italy 1992 and 1994) and Fabio Cannavaro and Christian Panucci (Italy 1994 and 1996).
- The fulcrum of Italy's FIFA World Cup winning squad had also been involved in U21 final victories: Cannavaro (1994 and 1996), Filippo Inzaghi (1994), Francesco Totti and Alessandro Nesta (1996), Andrea Pirlo and Gennaro Gattuso (2000) and Marco Amelia, Daniele De Rossi, Alberto Gilardino and Andrea Barzagli (2004). Laurent Blanc is the only other player to have achieved the double, adding his 1998 World Cup medal to the U21 one he had picked up a decade earlier.
- Pierre Littbarski claimed the 1990 World Cup with West Germany, beating England in the semi-finals. Eight years earlier he had scored a hat-trick in vain as his side lost the U21 final 5-4 on aggregate to the same opponents.
- When he helped France to success at UEFA EURO 2000™ Blanc became the first - and so far only - player to win both the U21 title and the UEFA European Championship.
- Ben Sahar at 17 is the youngest player among the eight squads in the Netherlands. He was born on 10 August 1989. The 23-year-old Dejan Milovanović, born on 21 January 1984, is the oldest player on view.

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Competition information

The Olympic Games play-off in Nijmegen takes place this evening when Italy and Portugal meet at 20.45CET with a place in next year's event in China at stake. "Now we have this new objective," said Portugal coach José Couceiro, "qualifying for Beijing. We will do our best to get there." Try as they might the sides will struggle to serve up an evening of excitement to match the Netherlands' thrilling shoot-out triumph against England at the Abe Lenstra last night. After the match had ended 1-1 after 120 minutes SC Heerenveen defender Gianni Zuiverloon, playing in his home stadium, was the hero as he converted the 32nd penalty of an epic shoot-out to secure a 13-12 victory and a second successive UEFA European Under-21 Championship final. There they will meet Serbia, who claimed a more regulation 2-0 win against Belgium in the other last-four fixture in Arnhem, the goals coming from Aleksandar Kolarov (4 minutes) and Dragan Mrdja (87).

- **Final:** The Euroborg in Groningen will stage the final between the hosts and Serbia at 20.45CET on Saturday.
- **Olympic Games:** The Netherlands, Belgium and Serbia have all qualified for the 2008 Olympic Football Tournament in Beijing having reached the semi-finals. England also won through to the last four but will not take a team to China, so the play-off between Portugal and Italy in Nijmegen will decide Europe's fourth and final entrant.
- **Olympic eligibility:** Players born on or after the 01.01.1984 are eligible for these finals, while only players aged 23 or under (born on or after 01.01.1985) are eligible for the Olympic Games, along with three overage players.
- **South American challenge:** Brazil and Argentina are the only other teams (apart from hosts China) to seal their spots in Beijing so far, having finished first and second in the South American equivalent of these finals in January. Brazil have never won an Olympic football gold medal, while Argentina are the defending champions having defeated Paraguay in Athens in 2004. Sixteen teams will compete in the football tournament.
- **Countdown:** The Olympic Games commence in 414 days.
- **Carlsberg Man of the Match:** A member of the UEFA Technical Study Group will select a man of the match at every game in the finals. The player will receive his award at the post-match press conference. The winners so far are:

NED v ISR: Royston Drenthe (NED)
POR v BEL: Marouane Fellaini (BEL)
CZE v ENG: Nigel Reo-Coker (ENG)
SRB v ITA: Dejan Milovanović (SRB)
ISR v BEL: Kevin Mirallas (BEL)
NED v POR: Maceo Rigters (NED)
CZE v SRB: Duško Tošić (SRB)
ENG v ITA: Alberto Aquilani (ITA)
BEL v NED: Sébastien Pocognoli (BEL)
ISR v POR: Miguel Veloso (POR)
ENG v SRB: James Milner (ENG)
ITA v CZE: Giuseppe Rossi (ITA)
NED v ENG: Maceo Rigters (NED)
SRB v BEL: Branislav Ivanović (SRB)

- **Attendances:** Fans attending the finals in the Netherlands have already surpassed all previous tournaments, after extending beyond the mark of 182,671 set in Portugal last year. With two games still to play 187,025 have watched the 14 matches so far at an average of 13,359. It continues the exponential growth the championship has experienced in recent seasons. The 2006 finals in Portugal had shattered the previous record of 110,000 set in 2004 in Germany. In 2006, the highest crowd was 28,174 when Germany played Portugal in the group stage, while the average match attendance was 12,178. The attendances here so far have been:

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NED v ISR: 22,013
POR v BEL: 7,197
CZE v ENG: 9,382
SRB v ITA: 8,347
ISR v BEL: 5,239
NED v POR: 19,498
CZE v SRB: 6,109
ENG v ITA: 17,103
BEL v NED: 24,099
ISR v POR: 10,833
ITA v CZE: 7,167
ENG v SRB: 9,133
NED v ENG: 23,467
SRB v BEL: 17,438

• **TV rights:** Television rights for the finals have been sold to more than 150 countries and territories worldwide. Partnerships exist with leading broadcasters in all the participating countries including RAI (Italy), Sky Sports (UK), Talpa (Netherlands), Sport 1 (Israel), B92 (Serbia), TVI (Portugal), RTBF and VRT (Belgium), and Czech TV (Czech Republic). Free live streaming will be available on www.uefa.com in Europe in all the remaining national associations where broadcast rights have not been acquired and outside Europe in Japan and Korea Republic. [uefa.com](http://www.uefa.com) will also be offering free short highlights of each game as well as extensive full highlights and full match reruns. Regular vodcasts and video features will be available to complement the extensive news and live coverage on site.

• **Quicklinks:** A media information guide is being updated daily on [uefa.com](http://www.uefa.com), providing times of press conferences and training as well as the full addresses of the teams' hotels and training grounds. It can be accessed via this link: <http://www.uefa.com/competitions/under21/finals/index.html>

• **Hit Squad:** The Hit Squad returned to Heerenveen on Wednesday 20 June at the Burgemeester Kuperusplein. The square was again a sea of orange as Dutch fans geared up for their side's semi-final against England at the Abe Lenstra, which kicked off at 18.15. The UEFA Under-21 Hit Squad is visiting a total of 21 events from April until the final on the 23 June, travelling across the Netherlands in an official fleet of Hyundai vehicles and recording Fan Messages on behalf of JVC. ADespite heavy rain around 16,000 supporters turned up at the same venue last week – "a roaring success" according to organisers.

23 June: 15.45-19.15 - Grote Markt (Groningen)

• **New ball:** The finals have an official match ball for the first time, an adidas one featuring the orange of the Dutch national shirts tinged with gold to represent the Netherlands' success at last summer's finals and the fact that they are hosting the event. The ball employs the latest technology and is made of just 14 panels, as opposed to the 32-panel design that has characterised most footballs since 1970. With balls now being thermally bonded rather than hand stitched, fewer panels are used, allowing a smoother surface and a perfectly rounded ball which is easier for players to control.

• **Giant picture:** Cees Jansen, the mayor of Arnhem, and tournament director Harry Been unveiled a giant picture of the official match ball on the outside of the 65 metre-tall WTC Building in Arnhem. The image, which is 33m high and 30m wide, took three days to put up and will remain on the building near Arnhem Central Station for the next few weeks.

• **Official song:** Rush Hour by DJ Armin van Buuren is the official tune of the finals. Available in shops, it will be played during the warm-up before every match, as the players enter the pitch and after each goal in the final. In addition, Van Buuren will perform during the final in Groningen after a concert at the Radio 538 Fan Festival at the city's Grote Markt earlier in the day.

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• **Free transport:** Rexona are providing free coaches for Dutch fans wanting to see the host nation's games, departing from all over the Netherlands in a bid to increase support for Foppe de Haan's team. Home supporters who already have a match ticket for one of their team's games can apply for a seat on one of the coaches at www.Rexona.nl/bus.

• **Anti-doping:** All eight teams have attended a one-hour anti-doping session in which UEFA experts highlighted the dangers of drugs and doping, as well as explaining doping control procedures. UEFA's anti-doping drive, which has been stepped up in the past couple of years, is particularly aimed at younger players, with education programmes taking place at all youth tournaments.

uefa.com: A team of reporters in the Netherlands will help uefa.com provide coverage in eleven languages - English, Dutch, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Chinese and Korean - including the live MatchCentre for every game. The Dutch Under-21 site was launched on 14 February and is run in close co-operation with the KNVB.

• **2006 team of the tournament:** uefa.com staff writers selected the following side from the 176 who took part in Portugal.

GK: Steve Mandanda (France)

RB: Dwight Tiendalli (Netherlands)

CB: Dmytro Chygrynskiy (Ukraine)

CB: Milan Stepanov (Serbia and Montenegro)

LB: Urby Emanuelson (Netherlands)

RM: Thomas Kahlenberg (Denmark)

CM: Ismaïl Aissati (Netherlands)

CM: Rio Antonio Mavuba (France)

LM: Jérémy Toulalan (France)

CF: Artem Milevskiy (Ukraine)

CF: Klaas Jan Huntelaar (Netherlands)

The uefa.com U21 team of the tournament does not bear the official UEFA imprimatur.

Trophy: The UEFA European Under-21 Championship trophy was created by Bertoni in Milan for the 1996-98 campaign after Italy kept the previous one following their three consecutive tournament wins. The 37cm-high trophy is made of brass, glass and Plexiglas, weighs seven kilograms and cost 10,000CHF. The winning nation will get to keep the trophy until the draw for the 2009 finals and will also receive a scaled-down replica.

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Tournament schedule

Final tournament

Date		Home	Res	Away	Venue
10.06.2007	Grp A	Netherlands	1 - 0	Israel	Heerenveen
10.06.2007	Grp A	Portugal	0 - 0	Belgium	Groningen
11.06.2007	Grp B	Czech Republic	0 - 0	England	Arnhem
11.06.2007	Grp B	Serbia	1 - 0	Italy	Nijmegen
13.06.2007	Grp A	Israel	0 - 1	Belgium	Heerenveen
13.06.2007	Grp A	Netherlands	2 - 1	Portugal	Groningen
14.06.2007	Grp B	Czech Republic	0 - 1	Serbia	Nijmegen
14.06.2007	Grp B	England	2 - 2	Italy	Arnhem
16.06.2007	Grp A	Belgium	2 - 2	Netherlands	Heerenveen
16.06.2007	Grp A	Israel	0 - 4	Portugal	Groningen
17.06.2007	Grp B	Italy	3 - 1	Czech Republic	Arnhem
17.06.2007	Grp B	England	2 - 0	Serbia	Nijmegen

Group A

Pos.	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
1	Netherlands	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
2	Belgium	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
3	Portugal	3	1	1	1	5	2	4
4	Israel	3	0	0	3	0	6	0

Group B

Pos.	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
1	Serbia	3	2	0	1	2	2	6
2	England	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
3	Italy	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
4	Czech Republic	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

Semi-finals

Date	Home	Res	Away	Venue
20.06.2007	Netherlands	1-1 (13-12p)	England	Heerenveen
20.06.2007	Serbia	2-0	Belgium	Arnhem

Olympic play-off

Date	Home	Res	Away	Venue
21.06.2007	Portugal	20.45	Italy	Nijmegen

Final

Date	Home	Res	Away	Venue
23.06.2007	Netherlands	20.45	Serbia	Groningen

Top scorers - Final tournament

- 3 Maceo Rigters (NED)
- 3 Leroy Lita (ENG)
- 2 Giorgio Chiellini (ITA)
- 2 Alberto Aquilani (ITA)
- 2 Kevin Mirallas (BEL)
- 2 Miguel Veloso (POR)

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MATCH PRESS KIT

Legend

Squad list

No: number **DoB:** date of birth

Qual: qualifying **FT:** final tournament

Pld: played **Gls:** goals **All-time U21:** final tournament only

Match officials

Nat: nationality

DoB: date of birth

Under-21: Total matches officiated in UEFA European Under-21 Championship including all qualifying round matches. Matches where the official has acted as the fourth official are not included in these statistics. These are the official statistics considered valid for communicating official records in the competition.

UEFA: Total matches officiated in all UEFA competitions including all qualifying round matches. Matches where the official has acted as the fourth official are not included in these statistics. These are the official statistics considered valid for communicating official records in the competition.

Group statistics/Tournament schedule

Pos: position **Pld:** played

W: won **D:** drawn

L: lost **GF:** goals for

GA: goals against **Pts:** points

NOTE: All-time statistics

Goals totals include the outcome of disciplinary decisions (eg. match forfeits when a 3-0 result is determined). Goals totals do not include goals scored from the penalty mark during a penalty shoot-out.

National team competitions

EURO: UEFA European Football Championship • **U21:** UEFA European Under-21 Championship

WC: FIFA World Cup • **CONFCUP:** Confederation Cup

FRIE: Friendly internationals • **U21FRIE:** Under-21 friendly internationals

U21: UEFA European Under-21 Championship

U19: UEFA European Under-19 Championship • **U18:** UEFA European Under-18 Championship

U17: UEFA European Under-17 Championship • **U16:** UEFA European Under-16 Championship

RCUP: UEFA Regions' Cup • **MCUP:** UEFA-CAF Meridian Cup

:: Competition stages

F: Final

GS: Group stage

GS1: First group stage

GS2: Second group stage

KO1: First knockout round

PR: Preliminary round

QF: Quarter-finals

QR: Qualifying round

QR1: First qualifying round

QR2: Second qualifying round

FT: Final tournament

P-O 3rd: Third place play-off

P-O 7th: Seventh place play-off

QR3: Third qualifying round

R1: First round

R2: Second round

R3: Third round

R4: Fourth round

SF: Semi-finals

1/8: Eighth-finals

1/16: Sixteenth-finals

1st: first leg

2nd: second leg

P-O: Play-off

P-O 5th: Fifth place play-off

P-O 8th: Eighth place play-off

:: Statistics

(-) : Denotes player substituted

(*) : Denotes player dismissed/sent off

(+) : Denotes player introduced

(+/-) : Denotes player introduced and substituted

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