

# THE TECHNICIAN

WOMEN'S

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Ireland

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the Task

**The States**  
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**NEWSLETTER  
FOR COACHES**  
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**Germany's Daniela Loewenberg (No. 14) outpaces Austria's Elisabeth Tieber in a 2006/07 European Women's Under-19 Championship qualifying match.**

## **IMPRESSUM**

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Arsenal FC Ladies  
(Julie Stewart Fleeting, striker)  
have qualified for their  
first UEFA Women's Cup  
final in April.

(PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES)



# AN EXPLOSIVE GROWTH

## EDITORIAL

BY LARS-CHRISTER OLSSON  
UEFA CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The fact that 40 of our member associations have accepted our invitation to take part in the first-ever European Women's Under-17 Championship is, in itself, a success story. But I consider it to be something more than a statistic.

It represents an accurate reflection of the explosive growth of the women's game. It is also a clear sign of UEFA's commitment and of the enthusiastic response from our member associations. It is a cause that Lennart Johansson has always championed, and it has to be said that, during his mandate, women's football has gathered so much pace that it becomes difficult to remember that, barely a decade ago, we were still pretty much on the starting blocks. We had a European Women's Championship – and nothing else. When we introduced an under-18 competition in 1997, half of our member associations entered teams; by last season, 85% of our members were on the starting grid for the competition which had subsequently been re-adjusted to an under-19 tournament. The immediate appeal of our under-17 competition not only underlines the sustained growth of the women's game but is also a clear and healthy indicator of the efforts, commitment and resources currently being injected into women's youth

football – which is the core theme on the following pages, where some interesting questions and debating points are raised.

For once, it could be argued that 'starting with the roof' can be a valid building programme. Progress made at senior national team level in various countries has been the catalyst that has sparked off rapid changes and has encouraged more and more girls to enjoy the game of football. The introduction of our age-limit competitions has catered for this growing demand and is rapidly broadening the base of the women's footballing pyramid. It can also be argued that the rising tide in national team football is also generating a surge in the standards of club football because it is a clear symptom that European club football is becoming increasingly competitive, with more and more young talent on show.

At the same time, giant strides have been made in the commercialisation of women's competitions and we have to express satisfaction with the successful incorporation of the European Women's Championship finals into our Eurotop marketing programme. But there is still an enormous amount of work to be done in this field before we can begin to claim that women's football is exploiting its full potential. There are similar advances to be made on other fronts, not least on meeting increased demands for qualified coaches capable of nurturing and developing the young talent which is so rapidly emerging.

As we welcome the under-17s into our footballing family, we are entitled to feel that solid international structures are in place. We must now be sure to build sensibly on those structures in a way which will allow the standards of women's football to maintain their upward surge.



The women's game also has its European club competition, for which the final of the 2006 edition was an all-German affair between 1.FFC Frankfurt and 1.FFC Turbine Potsdam.

## INTERVIEW

BY GRAHAM TURNER



JARMO MATIKAINEN

**THE YEAR 2006 RAISED SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS. WAS IT AN ANECDOTIC FACT, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE NUMBER OF GOALS SCORED AT THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S UNDER-19 CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS FELL BY OVER 30%? WAS IT AN ANECDOTIC FACT THAT NO EUROPEAN TEAMS WERE AMONG THE TOP FOUR AT THE FINALS OF THE FIFA UNDER-20 WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP? IN A QUEST FOR ANSWERS, WE KNOCKED AT AN OFFICE DOOR IN FINLAND AND PUT THE QUESTIONS TO A MAN WHO MADE HIS DEBUT FOR THE FINNISH FA AS ASSISTANT COACH TO THE WOMEN'S UNDER-19 SIDE IN 1999 AND WHO, SINCE THEN, HAS PLAYED VARIOUS ROLES IN THE FA'S COACHING TEAM: ASSISTANT COACH TO THE WOMEN'S UNDER-21 AND SENIOR TEAMS FROM 1999 TO 2000 AND AGAIN SINCE 2005; HEAD COACH OF THE UNDER-17 TEAM FROM 1999 TO 2005; AND HEAD COACH OF THE UNDER-19S SINCE 2000. HE LED FINLAND TO THE SEMI-FINALS OF THE 2005 EUROPEAN WOMEN'S UNDER-19 CHAMPIONSHIP AND, JUST BEFORE HE TOOK HIS TEAM TO THE UNDER-20 FINALS IN RUSSIA, TRAVELLED TO SWITZERLAND AS A MEMBER OF UEFA'S TECHNICAL STUDY GROUP AT THE 2006 EUROPEAN WOMEN'S UNDER-19 CHAMPIONSHIP. IF WE WANT A REVIEW OF WOMEN'S YOUTH FOOTBALL IN EUROPE, WHO BETTER THAN JARMO MATIKAINEN TO DELIVER...**

# A PROGRESS REPORT

**1 • Let's start with the obvious question: having watched the European Women's Under-19 finals and taken part in the Under-20 Women's World Championship, what is your overall impression of the state of the game in women's youth football?**

"I would say that the trends in top-level international football in general are clearly visible in women's youth football. The competitions demonstrated that the best players now have top-class individual qualities in terms of excellent technique, speed, high-tempo execution, creativity and athletic preparation. At the same time, we could see that team organisation in final tournaments is very professional indeed and that the approach in the women's game doesn't differ in any aspect from that of men's football. The speed of progress is impressive to say the least. I have to add that, from Finland's point of view – being a small football nation – it makes one wonder whether the little ones can keep up with the big countries."

**2 • So what do you think are the possible causes for the 'failure' of the European teams in Russia?**

"Personally, I don't think the Europeans 'failed'. This time, the other confederations were better prepared and much more consistent during a long tournament. Maybe qualifying structures and fixture lists suited the other confederations better. The European coaches faced a bit of a dilemma, as some had players at the Under-19 finals in Switzerland just before going to Russia while others, like ourselves, had to cope with a long gap between competitive tournaments, as qualification had been earned at the Under-19 finals back in July 2005. I think that you tend to forget a bit about the special demands of long tournaments if you don't play them regularly."

**3 • How did you react? Tell us about your personal experience with the Finnish team in preparing for the finals and in the finals themselves.**

"For us, it was a great learning experience – painful at times though. To see, at close range, the top players and teams in the world is irreplaceable. On the other hand, we had a relatively clear picture of the challenge ahead of us. From a preparation point of

view, we didn't have enough resources to offer the players international training camps at regular intervals during the gap between July 2005 and the World Championship. I was hoping to play double- or treble-headers with top-class opponents once every three months. But we had to concentrate activities in late spring and the summer of 2006. Playing our final preparation matches against Canada and the USA kept our feet pretty well on the ground!

So we focused on individual qualities and tried to get the maximum for each player out of the project. Among other things, we did some research on how to develop what we call the '24-hour player'. We monitored heart-rate behaviour during training camps and in tournament play to gather information on players' recovery and the differences from individual to individual.

We also drafted some very talented younger players into the group to give them a better picture of football at the absolutely top world level. I believe in having one eye on the future – especially in youth tournaments.





KOROTAYEV/IRONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Germany's Nadine Kessler, up against South Korea's Kim Kyong Hwa, at the Under-20 Women's World Championship.

**4 • Tina Theune-Meyer – who was in Russia as a member of FIFA's technical study group – commented that “playing the European Under-19 finals was not the ideal way to get ready”. Do you agree?**

“If you're referring to fitness levels, I would say that the problem is more complicated than that. As I said, many Europeans went to Russia without having played a major tournament since July 2005. Other confederations played their qualifiers in 2006 – the African nations in the summer. So my personal experience with the Finnish team provoked the following thoughts: Firstly, a player's individual development at this level requires constant international contacts with high-class opponents. These “checkpoints” are necessary to give players insight into the demands of top-level football. This applies especially to countries with smaller resources in terms of players and material. Secondly, preparing players to meet the physical and mental demands of a world championship requires top-level tournament-type training or match events. The other confederations' qualifying tournaments in 2006 automatically served this purpose as they lasted 10 to 20 days. In Europe, we didn't have that opportunity. Thirdly, if we wish to obtain results at an age-limit tournament such as the Under-

**SWITZERLAND V  
NETHERLANDS IN THE  
FINAL ROUND OF  
THE 2006 EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
UNDER-19 CHAMPIONSHIP.**



KEystone/BIERI

20 World Championship, you need to have all the players available for longer training camps.

**5 • Does this mean that European players are not physically equipped to play sequences of matches at high level in a short space of time?**

“No. I'd better clarify what I said earlier. I can appreciate that in the Finnish team there were players who were not fit enough, but I don't see that as the main problem with, say, Germany or France.”

**6 • What can we do to improve the situation?**

“We could review our under-19 competition system; we could organise friendly tournaments to prepare for the Under-20 World Championship; and we could continue to fine-tune the international calendar.”

**7 • You mentioned the demands on some players at club level. Do you think that club football in most European countries prepares young players for the international stage?**

“In the best European countries, such as Germany, Sweden and Norway, club football is of a very high standard. The differences are quite big however. In most countries, the leap to international football from the domestic day-to-day game is huge. In this respect, the introduction of an under-17 competition will be very positive. Even so, countries that don't make it to the second qualifying round will need more activity – maybe at ‘regional’ level (Baltics, Scandinavia, British Isles, etc.) It is the same challenge in the boys' game. The “checkpoints” for coaches and players are essential. That helps a lot with long-term player development. We already started, in late 2005, to adjust our domestic players' “football education” at district level and with a scouting tournaments' calendar. We also put forward a proposal to alter the age category in the girls' Under-17 Nordic Cup. In 2007, it will be played with girls born in 1990, to give them international activity, as the UEFA Under-17 competition will focus on those born in 1991. In 2008, we jump to girls born in 1992 for the Nordic tournament as well.”

**8 • Do you think that there is a lot of work to be done on individual skills?**

“We have seen a major improvement in the women's game with regard to individual skills. You detect that in every international tournament. In the countries with strong football cultures, progress is very rapid and sustained.”

**9 • The finals in Russia produced 106 goals in 32 matches. Tina Theune-Meyer said “if I play just to keep the score down, then I'm not helping my players to develop”. Would you agree with that? Was that always the philosophy at the Under-19s in Switzerland?**

“In general, I think that the approach was very positive in Switzerland. There is always a connection between the chosen formation and the style of play. It doesn't mean, for instance, that the teams who opted to play with one striker necessarily concentrated on defending. I think there is no use having three players up front if the other seven cannot get the ball to them. Every coach wants his or her players to develop and chooses the style of play that serves that purpose. Personally, I think that whenever Finland play a UEFA competition game it offers individual challenges and opportunities to improve. Mostly it is a question of preparing the players in a way that they are brave enough to focus on performance and not the result – and that they remember to enjoy the special occasion.”

**10 • You say ‘his or her players’ – and one of the talking points in Russia was that there was only one female coach. What's your view on the situation?**

“We need to get more women involved. In practice, this means that FAs need to actively seek ways to recruit former players and women who are involved with football at club level. I think the most important factor is football background and football education. For coaching you need both. We try to involve top players during their active careers. Three years ago we organised a B-licence course aimed at female players only. With sponsorship for course costs and targeted marketing, we educated 11 top players. All of them are active and some of them are involved with our national-team activities.”



UEFA-ITALY

Jarmo Matikainen and Finland's under-19s learned a lot during the 2005 European Women's Under-19 Championship final round in Hungary.



**NORTHERN IRELAND CAPTAIN AINE  
McGOVERN EPITOMISES THE FIGHTING  
SPIRIT OF THE TEAM.**

# GREEN LIGHT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**IF ASKED TO PICK OUT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESULTS FROM THE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP  
QUALIFYING CAMPAIGN, NOT MANY WOULD HIGHLIGHT THE NORTHERN IRELAND V SLOVAKIA FIXTURE.  
BUT THE 2-1 VICTORY FOR ALFIE WYLIE'S TEAM AT THE BALLYMENA SHOWGROUNDS  
MADE 10 NOVEMBER 2005 A RED-LETTER DAY FOR THE GREEN-SHIRTED NORTHERN IRISH.**

The win and the three points made it a memorable day. But the most significant fact was that it represented Northern Ireland's first home match in international women's competition for almost two decades and the team's debut in the Women's World Cup. Although women's football had been played since 1977, prior to the senior team's first qualifier, played in Romania a few weeks before the home game

against Slovakia, Northern Ireland's nearest approach to competitive international football had been a trip to Portugal for the Algarve Cup.

On the basis that other national associations might be interested to know how the Northern Irish managed to put themselves back on the map, we asked Alfie Wylie to explain what had helped them to see the green light.

"First of all," he responded, "total support from our FA's president, Jim Boyce, and our Director of Coaching, Roy Millar. I think a combination of full backing and a free hand to get on with the job is the perfect formula. We drew up a four-year programme for the development of women's football and, about a year-and-a-half ago, the IFA appointed, for the first time, full-time coaches with responsibility for women's football."

Alfie was one of them. "He first joined us when our under-21s and under-19s played friendlies against Finland in 2003," says Sara Booth, the IFA's Women's Development Officer, "and we're lucky that he's stayed with us." Alongside him are six full-time county or regional coaches plus a grassroots coordinator. Specific coach education courses for female technicians have been written into the curriculum, along with mentorship and tutorship schemes for club coaches. At the moment, the IFA has one woman with a UEFA A licence, 18 with B status and some 150 working from Level 1 upwards. This is what prompts Alfie Wylie to say "we're coming out of a void – and we're doing it very quickly".



Rachel Furness scored the winning goal against Slovakia.



**NORTHERN IRELAND CELEBRATE  
THE VICTORY AGAINST SLOVAKIA IN THE  
WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS.**



PHOTOS: STEPHEN HAMILTON

Glentoran and Newtownabbey Strikers are the top two teams in the country.

At the same time, solid foundations were being laid. County and school structures were built during the 1990s and national teams in various age brackets were established. At the youngest end of the scale, under-13 teams were playing seven-a-side games, with the under-14s graduating to 11-a-side but playing games in three periods of 25 minutes.

But a major step forward was made early in 2006. "A well-structured league is something basic," Alfie Wylie explains. "We've now got about 1,000 girls playing football at over 40 clubs and we're very pleased with the quality that's beginning to show through. The county coaches help to build up higher standards and to detect the players they feel are good enough to come through into the national squads."

The structures Alfie refers to correspond to the sponsored Carnegie Women's League, which kicked off last April. The format features a premier league, a national league and four regional group-

ings of an intermediate league. Each of the leagues contains eight teams and is played over the April–September period in addition to cups and league cups. But the involvement of the Carnegie College of Physical Education goes beyond the parameters of commercial sponsorship. "In fact, in terms of pure funding," Alfie explains, "the IFA has put together an £8m package for women's and disability football with help from other organisations such as UEFA and the Sports Council."

To fully appreciate the potential value of the Carnegie contribution, one has to take a close look at Alfie Wylie's senior squad. Although the national team has only recently emerged from twilight into the spotlight, there has been no shortage of talented individuals. Some 25% of the current players had enough ability to attract scholarship offers from universities in the United States. In terms of player development, this type of emigration has evident benefits but, on the playing side, there can be logistical hang-ups.

Ask Alfie Wylie to name his team's most disappointing performance during the World Cup qualifying campaign and he'll single out the 2-0 defeat when his side travelled to Slovakia in March – the only match in which the Northern Irish failed to score. During the four-month winter break in competitive football, he had kept his home-based players ticking over with a two-day training camp during the Christmas period and games against boys' sides. To blend in with day-to-day commitments, some of the girls turned out at 7a.m two days per week for training sessions. But Alfie's 'Americans' travelled to Slovakia during their close season.

Hence the importance of a Carnegie connection, which offers scholarship possibilities just across the water in the Carnegie Faculty of Sport and Education at Leeds Metropolitan University, one of the largest in the UK, with 41,000 students. "This means that our top players will have first-class opportunities to further their education and their development as players," says Alfie Wylie.

As in many of the 'emerging nations' in women's football, Northern Ireland's rapid development translates into opportunities for young players who, with so few ahead of them to block the way, can accelerate through the age-limit sides into the senior team. The World Cup qualifiers were played by a squad with an average age of just over 21 that included ten members of the previous year's under-19 team. "This means that the under-19s are also a very young squad," Alfie Wylie remarks, "and some of them are even available to the under-17 side. There's a wonderful feeling of dynamism at the moment. We feel we're moving up a level – and this means that everybody is setting about their tasks with great enthusiasm and belief in the future."



UEFA-BOZZANI

**PAUL BALSOM,  
PHYSIOLOGIST WITH  
THE SWEDISH FA.**

# TALKING POINT FIT FOR THE TASK

**HOW MUCH DO YOU READ INTO RESULTS? THE FACT THAT NO EUROPEAN TEAMS PROGRESSED BEYOND THE QUARTER-FINALS AT THE FIFA UNDER-20 WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP INEVITABLY PROVOKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL PREPARATION – AND, EARLIER IN THIS ISSUE, JARMO MATIKAINEN MAKES SOME THOUGHT-PROVOKING COMMENTS.**

Whereas four European sides – France, Germany, Russia and Switzerland – travelled to Russia a few weeks after the European Women's Under-19 finals and fuelled speculation about fatigue and overloads, Jarmo felt that his Finnish side paid a price for not having played a competitive tournament for over a year. How do we strike a balance between seemingly contradictory points of view?

First of all, the facts. In Russia, Maren Meinert's Germany was the only European team to win the last of its three group fixtures – and that was at the expense of European stable-mates Switzerland. They beat them 6-0. Finland, after two magnificent performances against strong opponents, bowed out with an 8-0 defeat by Nigeria. In the quarter-finals, Germany and Russia were beaten by three and four goals, while only France went down (against the eventual champions) by a one-goal margin. To further clarify the picture, the French squad contained ten players from the Under-19 finals, the German squad 12, the Swiss squad 13, and the Russian squad 14. Germany and France had gone all the way to the Under-19 final, Russia to the semi-finals, and only Switzerland had been eliminated after the three group matches.

Further data can be gleaned from UEFA's injury study at the Under-19 finals, where 28% of the total were over-use injuries, compared with figures ranging from 6% and 17% at previous UEFA tournaments. There was also a significantly higher-than-usual figure in that 40% of the injuries occurred in training. It was also noticeable that 40% were non-contact injuries and that, in match play, the majority of injuries were sustained during the second half, reaching a peak in the final 15 minutes. Fatigue

may have been accentuated by the high temperatures in Switzerland – underlining the need to ensure adequate fluid replacement during the course of the game.

On the other hand, the 2006 finals were similar to previous tournaments in that the vast majority of injuries (88%) occurred during the group phase, when three matches were played in six days. At the Under-20 tournament in Russia, the group phase lasted seven days.



KEYSTONE/SCHNEIDER

Germany's Monique Kerschowski receives treatment during the European Women's Under-19 Championship final in 2006.



**TREATMENT FOR  
ELENA TEREKHOVA OF  
RUSSIA DURING  
THE UNDER-19 FINAL  
IN 2005.**



This was one of the basic premises for players called into United States national teams. The first step was a stringent assessment of fitness levels via two days of tests, some of them non-football-specific, such as sit-ups, push-ups and long-jumping. Speed, coordination, power and mobility were further assessed by vertical jumping and a range of tests involving acceleration, deceleration and changes of direction – among them the yo-yo intermittent recovery tests which have now been adopted for fitness testing match officials.

Having established a player's athletic condition and potential, individual training programmes could be designed. "This is of vital importance," says Paul Balsom, a physiologist who has been working with Lars Lagerbäck at the Swedish men's team for the last eight years or so. "There is a need to work on what I call 'movement proficiency' and to establish the right sort of physical preparation so that players gain self-confidence which, in turn, translates into an ability to acquire new skills.

Youth coaches are not usually fitness trainers," he adds, "so it is important to work in unison. In age-limit teams – maybe boys more than girls – there is a dangerous emphasis on selecting players born in the first three months of the year. What we should be doing is to look at skeletal ages and design training programmes accordingly. All too often, adult training programmes are imposed on young players and this is not best practice. We also have to take into account that motor skills are learned before the age of 11 or 12 and that damage done to individuals in the 6-16 age-bracket – in terms of the wrong sort of training – can be irreparable. There is a lack of scientific research on youth players in general and on young women footballers in particular and I'm sure that a lot of coaches would welcome more information when it comes to calculating workloads and training intensities."

The injury study remarks that "the injury pattern during the Women's Under-19 Championship in Switzerland was different compared with previous tournaments" and goes on to mention "the higher amount of football-specific training (50%) and less recovery training (22%) compared with previous tournaments." It was 42% apiece at the 2005 Under-19 finals, for example. "Football-specific training between matches, with contact situations, puts a higher demand on the players' physical and psychological abilities which, together with fatigue, could increase the risk of injury," the injury study adds. Strength (6%) and endurance training (2%) made only cameo appearances in Switzerland.

A legitimate explanation for Switzerland differing from previous tournaments is that the technicians felt obliged to increase the emphasis on football-specific training sessions in order to prepare their squads for the imminent Under-20 finals. It would make for an interesting roundtable discussion to get them together and ask them, with the benefit of hindsight, whether that highly logical approach had, in fact, been correct or not.

On the broader scale, it raises questions about the whole subject of fitness training in women's football. Gero Bisanz,

when he was laying the foundations for German success two decades ago, insisted that "I always had exactly the same demands and set the same standards as I had during ten years of coaching men's teams."

However, the double-header in Switzerland and Russia represented a workload rarely encountered in the men's game, barring a few isolated cases of players combining the 2006 FIFA World Cup with the European Under-21 Championship earlier in the summer – a combination now rendered obsolete by the shifting of the Under-21 finals to odd-numbered years.

So is there a case for seeing women's fitness programmes in a different light? Gero Bisanz recalls that one of his first moves was to talk to coaches at the clubs where his players were based. "I got them together, told them about the problems we had in terms of fitness and asked them to pay attention to specific details in training, to do fitness tests, speed tests and endurance tests. I could see what they were capable of doing technically and tactically but I really needed to know what their ceiling was in physical terms." As Jarmo Matikainen says in this issue, it can be especially relevant in countries where there is "a big leap" from club to international football.



EMPICS

**A RECORD CROWD OF 90,000 AT  
THE 1999 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP FINAL  
IN THE UNITED STATES.**

# THE STATES OF THE GAME

## USA's Jeff Tipping provides some useful tips

**AFTER ONLY TWO ISSUES, IT MAY SEEM PREMATURE TO TALK ABOUT 'REGULAR READERS' OF THE WOMEN'S TECHNICIAN. BUT REGULAR READERS WILL PROBABLY HAVE NOTICED THAT THE DESIRE TO BRING MORE FEMALE COACHES INTO THE GAME HAS BEEN ONE OF THE COMMONEST DENOMINATORS IN INTERVIEWS AND FEATURES.**

It's evidently not a short-term project – and the question is how best to set about it. Germany, one of Europe's prime movers, has embarked on recruitment campaigns aimed at current international players and one of them, Maren Meinert, was the only female coach when 16 teams gathered in Russia for the FIFA Under-20 World Championship in the summer.

But what about the rest of the world? The United States have probably travelled further down this road than anybody else so, in search of some pointers, we turned to Jeff Tipping,

who made his debut at the National Soccer Coaches Association of America as Assistant Director of Coaching way back in 1983, became Director of Coaching in 1996, and has been the NSCAA's Director of Coaching Development since 2002.

Jeff immediately points out that the parameters are vastly different. A figure of over eight million registered female players would defy imaginations at most national associations in Europe, as would the fact that one college team in the USA even has its own private aircraft.

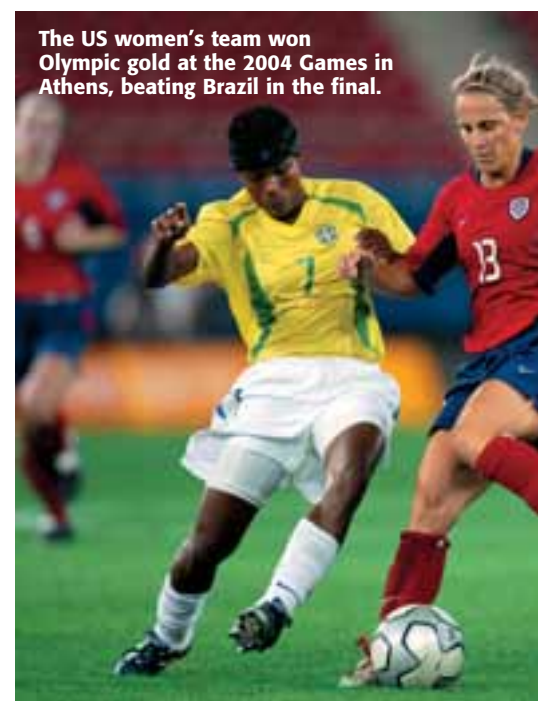
"The profile of women's football in the USA can be measured by the response to the 1999 and 2003 Women's World Cups," Jeff comments. "To have 90,000 spectators for a final and 80,000 for the semi-finals is something the men's game could hardly surpass. Another phenomenon in the States which hasn't yet really happened in Europe is that women's soccer has bred five or six genuine superstars. It has happened in other sports in Europe, but not yet in soccer. Mia Hamm is our prime example. The commercial world was quick to catch on to her marketing potential and she soon developed into a TV personality. She is undoubtedly the country's most famous soccer player – male or female. And, of course, this has had positive repercussions for the women's game as a whole."

game. "In the United States," he explains, "opportunities for women to play soccer were boosted by the so-called Title 9 section of the 1972 Civil Rights Act. This affected the education system in that, on any given campus, sport scholarships had to be awarded equally according to male v female ratios. As American grid-iron football wasn't on the women's agenda, soccer was a big and very valid option. In a very short space of time, scholarships went from about zero to around 140 and women's soccer took root in more and more school and college programmes. There were more youth teams, more high-school teams and, especially, women's college soccer became a very serious, high-profile sport. Significant amounts of money were injected – and not just from within



EMPICS

Mia Hamm: the biggest personality in US woman's soccer.



The US women's team won Olympic gold at the 2004 Games in Athens, beating Brazil in the final.

Jeff points out that 'equality' legislation can be put to good use by the women's



**GERMANY'S MAREN MEINERT WAS THE ONLY  
WOMAN COACH AMONG THE 16 FINALISTS AT THE UNDER-20  
WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IN RUSSIA.**



RS/BONGARS/GETTY IMAGES

soccer structures. There was also notable support from women's institutions and other governing bodies. As a consequence of all this, a much greater need for coaches was created."

"Our first female instructor," he adds, "made her debut in 1992 and, at the moment, 12 of our 45 national coaches are women. On our coach education courses, we usually have a female presence of something between 25% and 33%. There is no stereotyped profile but many of them find that, when they leave university, there is no professional league to gravitate into and they are therefore encouraged to take coaching courses to extend their involvement with the game. We set up mentorship programmes and, within our qualification courses, we encourage the women students to get together to discuss specific issues. Training philosophies are essentially the same but some management issues can be different. I think a lot of people within the game will agree that you can train women in the same way as men but you don't necessarily deal with women in the same way as you would deal with men.

"But if European associations succeed in attracting more women into coaching careers, I suspect they will have to

address the same problem that we are addressing now in the United States. We have pinpointed a lot of 'wastage' in the 25-45 age bracket and we conducted a research study in order to establish why so many women dropped out and what can be done to stem the outward flow. The first question was relatively easy to answer, as the age bracket is when many women focus on having and

raising a family. So we are working on ways of convincing them that coaching and family are compatible and we are now, for example, offering a financial supplement of \$100 per day for child care. I don't put this forward as a universal solution, but I would recommend that European associations prepare themselves to address this problem as the number of female coaches increases."

## THE LAST WORD

### UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2009

At its meeting in Berlin on 11 July, UEFA's Executive Committee named Finland as hosts of the expanded UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2009. And, for the first time, all the national associations participating in the 2007-09 European Women's Championship have received a competition manual.

Drawn up along the same lines as the UEFA Women's Cup manual, it is intended especially as a tool to assist associations hosting mini-tournaments or matches in the competition and should help ensure that the same level of organisation can be found throughout Europe.

As well as containing organisational guidelines, the manual contains suggestions for promotion and marketing, and offers participating associations the use of the European Women's Championship 'brand identity'.

A record number of 46 member associations have entered the 2007-09 competition – an increase of 12 over the 2003-05 campaign. Israel, Northern Ireland, Romania, Slovakia and Wales qualified from the preliminary round for the group phase. UEFA is now drawing up a support programme for the 15 associations which ended their participation in the preliminary round.



UEFA-pjwec09.ch

### 2007 UEFA WOMEN'S CUP FINAL

Umeå IK from Sweden have qualified for the UEFA Women's Cup final for the fourth time and are aiming to be the first team to win the title three times. They face Arsenal LFC, the first English side to reach the final. The first leg of the final will be played on Saturday, 21 April in Umeå, with the return match provisionally scheduled for Sunday, 29 April in London.

### EUROPEAN WOMEN'S UNDER-17 CHAMPIONSHIP

An impressive total of 40 national associations have entered the inaugural 2007/08 European Women's Under-17 Championship, which also acts as the qualifying competition for the inaugural FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup to be played in New Zealand in 2008, with UEFA providing three of the 16 finalists.

The competition will be staged with two qualifying rounds and a final round. The 40 entrants will compete in the first round in ten groups of four teams. The ten group-winners and six best runners-up will go through to the second qualifying round and will be drawn into four groups of four teams. The four group winners will qualify for the final round, which will take place in May 2008.



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