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uefa direct



FC Internazionale lift Champion Clubs' trophy after 45-year wait 07

France to host UEFA EURO 2016 16



Photos: uefa.apj/woods.ch

Message of the president

Moments in history that help forge our future

As last month's events in Hamburg and Madrid once more amply demonstrated, the finals of UEFA's club competitions never fail to stir extraordinary passions and underline the exceptional commitment of the fans to their teams. As fleeting as these wonderful finals are, year after year they produce moments of unforgettable brilliance and glittering performances from the stars that contribute another golden thread to football's rich and enduring tapestry.

UEFA's role is to do everything to ensure that, collectively, these annual events form part of a continuous whole; in other words, that they help to promote the long-term stability and well-being of European club football.

The months leading up to the FIFA World Cup in South Africa have been exceptionally busy for European football. We have enjoyed the finals of the major European club competitions – including the first ever UEFA Women's Champions League – as well as various youth tournaments and, of course, we have seen the French Football Federation chosen to host EURO 2016. However, amid all this activity, there is one event that gives me particular satisfaction: the Executive Committee's adoption of new club licensing regulations, which enshrine the principles of financial fair play. In my view, this is a significant step towards helping clubs to live within their means and, at the same time, safeguarding the future of our competitions. What I find especially gratifying is that these regulations were not imposed on the clubs from above; rather the clubs have been fully involved in developing them and have wholeheartedly embraced the principles of financial fair play.

It cannot be reiterated enough that it is only by working together for the good of football as a whole that we can ensure the enduring success of the game. The adoption of these regulations may only be a start, but it is definitely a fundamental step towards achieving that goal.



Michel Platini
UEFA President

IN THIS ISSUE

European football festival in Madrid	03
1. FFC Turbine Potsdam win first UEFA Women's Champions League	06
The end of a long wait for FC Internazionale	07
Atlético Madrid win first UEFA Europa League	08
England crowned European U17 champions	09
France victorious in European Women's U19 Championship	11
French Football Federation appointed to host UEFA EURO 2016	16
News from member associations	18

COVER

Javier Zanetti emulates Armando Picchi, Internazionale captain 45 years ago, as he lifts the Champion Clubs' trophy.

Photo: Getty Images

European football festival

Madrid,
Milan, Munich,
and much
more...



The perfect setting for the Champions Festival at the heart of Madrid

Sportsfile

NOBODY NEEDS REMINDING THAT FC INTERNAZIONALE AND FC BAYERN TRAVELLED FROM MILAN AND MUNICH TO MADRID FOR THE UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL. BUT MOVING THE BIG CLUB FINAL FROM WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY PAVED THE WAY FOR A LOT OF SPIN-OFF BENEFITS, TAKING THE SHAPE OF A VAST FAN OF EVENTS THAT OPENED UP IN THE MADRID SUNSHINE AS PRELUDES TO THE MATCH WHICH ADJUDICATED THE EUROPEAN CROWN.

There was so much to organise that, when calendars were being flipped from Thursday 6 to Friday 7 May, work started at half past midnight on the construction of the vast Champions Festival in Madrid's famous Parque del Retiro. It laid the foundations for an enormous football fiesta which threw its doors open a week before the UEFA Champions League final and carried on until the Inter fans were dancing through the streets of the Spanish capital in celebration of a long-awaited victory.

The week-long festivities added up to the most intensive event

ever organised by UEFA in conjunction with a club competition final – and heartfelt thanks are due to the Spanish FA, the cities of Madrid and Getafe, and all the other authorities which helped to usher the concept from the drawing board into reality. The main objective was in line with the decision to move the final to the weekend – that of opening the event to an even greater public, especially children and family groups.

Objective achieved

In retrospect, there can be no doubt that UEFA's objective was

achieved. It takes something special to make a visual impact on a major capital like Madrid. But the Spaniards' innate passion for the game was supplemented by 1,520 flags, almost a thousand giant posters, 260 billboards, 40 huge promotional columns, five fully branded buses and all sorts of visual welcoming messages at all the terminals of Barajas airport. As a result, the city seemed to be living and breathing a real UEFA Champions League atmosphere.

Especially at the Champions Festival. It covered an area fractionally short of 10,000 square metres and, at peak times during the week-long run-up to the final, the area was packed to its capacity of just under 6,000 visitors. The Champions League sponsors matched UEFA's enthusiasm in reaching out to as wide a public as possible and the result was a programme which had something for everyone – from the kids to the grand-



Eusebio, a living legend, at the Museum of Champions

UEFA-Woods



The winning teams' kits at the Museum of Champions

UEFA-Woods



UEFA-Woods

dads. The Theatre of Champions, the Museum of Champions and the trophy itself were crowd-pullers for fans who really wanted to get inside the competition and its history. And the sponsors set up a great variety of features where visitors could test their special skills – from ball-juggling to the speed of their shots at goal.

Champions Festival

The pitches at the Champions Festival were put to optimal use. Special Olympic games were staged, along

“We loved being part of the Champions Festival, coaching the kids and joining in the games with them,” Laudrup and McManaman agreed afterwards. *“It was great to see so many happy faces everywhere and this event allowed UEFA to live up to what football really is: the people’s game.”*

All-star match

The climax on the main pitch was an Ultimate Champions Match in which the all-star team sheet read: Vítor Baía, Couto, Karembeu, Scifo,

of the country’s 1,000 mini-pitches. There will be a round-up of the events staged across Europe in the next Grassroots Newsletter, along with news about the best leader, best project and best club grassroots awards which went to Oleksandr Kadenko (Ukraine), Open Fun Football Schools (Moldova) and FC Amatar (Belarus) respectively. But, at the same time, there was a lot happening in Madrid.

In the Spanish capital, Grassroots Day kicked off with a press conference where UEFA’s general secretary, Gianni Infantino, and technical director, Andy Roxburgh, teamed up with Raúl González, Fernando Hierro and Luís Figo to underline the social values of grassroots football and the importance of linking it to the peak of the footballing pyramid by attaching activities to major events such as the UEFA Champions League final.

“Not everybody is able to make it to the top and very few get to play for their dream club,” Real Madrid star Raúl commented. *“So those of us who do need to be aware that our performances, our gestures and our statements can influence many, many people. Kids are obsessed with football and they will imitate everything – even a hairstyle! So the important thing is to transmit messages that can help to shape them as persons.”*



Grassroots football activities were at the heart of the festival.

Sportsfile

with matches and competitions arranged under the Red Deporte (Sport Network) banner, aiming to use the pulling power of football to help developing nations and to promote social integration. Throughout the week, the UEFA Young Champions Tournament offered footballing opportunities to boys and girls in the 10-16 age bracket, with the final games and the award ceremony bringing the five-a-side competition to a close at lunchtime on the day of the big final. A series of skills clinics allowed the young – and not so young – to learn from the likes of Michael Laudrup, Fernando Hierro, Bebeto, Steve McManaman, Christian Karembeu, Brian Laudrup and Lars Høgh. And whenever there was a lull in the activities, the pitches were made available to anyone who fancied playing a bit of spontaneous football.

Laudrup, McManaman, Altobelli, Elber and Bebeto. At the last count, the side coached by Paul Breitner seemed to have been beaten 19-15 by the Spanish all-stars. But nobody seemed to be particularly bothered about the scoreline...

On the other hand, there was greater concern about the outcome of the first-ever UEFA Champions League Under-18 Challenge, which provided a fitting footballing finale to the first-ever UEFA Grassroots Day staged on Wednesday 19 May.

Pan-European Grassroots Day

It was a genuinely pan-European event which triggered all sorts of grassroots activities throughout UEFA’s member associations. In Germany, for example, around 140,000 players of all ages, shapes and sizes enjoyed some football on almost all





UEFA/Woods

Photo sessions with the trophy are always very popular.

Alessandro Altobelli has the ball in the Ultimate Champions Match.



Sportsfile

"I started playing in the street and on dirt pitches with two stones for goalposts," recalled Fernando Hierro, the former Real Madrid and Spain defender who is now the national association's technical director. "Street football is difficult these days, so it is our duty to lay the foundations for grassroots football to flourish and to encourage the clubs to help young boys and girls to enjoy football and to shape them for their roles in society."

"When it comes to development, education and personality, football can really give you something for the future," added Luís Figo, who had travelled to Madrid as a member of the FC Internazionale Milano expedition and, like Raúl, is a long-time supporter of UEFA's grassroots projects. "People probably don't realise how much Inter do in terms of attracting kids – many of them from difficult backgrounds in under-developed countries – to soccer camps and offering them the chance of a better future. Not just those who have talent, but everybody. I think this is a fundamental concept and one that we should all identify with."

Gianni Infantino summed up the Champions Week activities in Madrid by saying: *"It's about football, passion and magic. It's all the things*

we love about football." And those words were translated into the international language of football within a matter of hours. On the main pitch at the Champions Festival, teams of school players from the outlying district of Majadahonda played grassroots football under the guidance of Chelsea FC's former international full-back Graeme Le Saux – and then had even more stars in their eyes when given the chance to meet Zinedine Zidane.

The former European and world champion had been invited to Madrid to play a role in the adidas Ultimate Search project and, after teams from Japan, South Korea and FC Bayern München had played each other, Zidane took to the field as a member of a combined European and Asian side that took on the Under-15s from Real Madrid CF – a team which included his own son! Gianni Infantino's words were reflected by the images of happiness as the youngsters shook hands with their idol and, after a few minutes when they were too shy to pass him the ball, to benefit

from his footballing magic and post a win for the 'visiting' team.

Under-18 Challenge

As we mentioned earlier, UEFA Grassroots Day was rounded off by the first UEFA Champions League Under-18 Challenge, involving the youth teams of the clubs in the adult final. At the Estadio Alfredo Di Stéfano in Real Madrid's football complex in Valdebebas, FC Internazionale Milano got off to a flying start when Denis Alibec put them ahead within two minutes. FC Bayern München proceeded to dominate possession and push the Italians onto the back foot but, despite striking the woodwork, were unable to hit the Italian net. During the second half, when the Germans were knocking hard at the Inter door, the Italians delivered a fast counterpunch, with Denis Alibec sealing the 2-0 win. It was an omen for the grand finale at the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu, which provided a spectacular climax to a week of intense activity at the base and the peak of the footballing pyramid.



The two finalists' U18 teams competed on Grassroots Day.

UEFA/Woods



Fatmire Bajramaj of 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam up against two French opponents.

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It took a penalty shoot-out to determine the winners.

UEFA-Womens



First UEFA Women's Champions League

German women win in Getafe

ON THURSDAY 20 MAY, IN THE CITY JUST SOUTH OF MADRID, THE LOCAL FANS JUST STOOD AND STARED AT THEIR OWN STADIUM. THE COLISEUM ALFONSO PÉREZ WAS DECKED OUT IN SPECTACULAR MADRID 2010 LIVERY TO GO INTO THE HISTORY BOOKS AS THE VENUE FOR THE FIRST FINAL OF THE NEW UEFA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – AND ALFONSO PÉREZ, THE 1992 OLYMPIC GOLD-MEDALLIST WHO IS THE CITY'S MOST FAMOUS FOOTBALLING SON, WAS THERE IN PERSON AS UEFA'S AMBASSADOR FOR THE HISTORIC EVENT.

The fact that 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam completed a hat-trick of victories by three different German clubs in the last three seasons to make it six German wins in nine UEFA Women's Cup / Champions League finals suggests that the French cliché *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* might be appropriate. But, whereas past victories had often been by handsome margins, the German women were made to

fight every millimetre of the way by Olympique Lyonnais, the first French side to reach the final of this competition.

Intensive commitment

Featuring 18 players who had represented their countries at senior or age-limit levels, the two squads were rich in international experience. But the Potsdam coach, Bernd Schröder, was dismayed to see his team make a shaky start against the French debutantes. OL's playmaker Louisa Nécib fired an early warning shot by driving a long-range free-kick against the German crossbar and the final statistical reckoning showed that the French had, in terms of corners, emerged as 11-2 winners. But, little by little, Potsdam fought their way back into a game in which, even though Finnish referee Kirsi Heikkinen let the play flow as much as she could, five yellow cards provided a reflection of the commitment and determination displayed by two highly competitive teams. Even in a sultry tempera-

ture of 26C, pressure on the ball carrier was relentless from start to finish.

Dramatic penalty shoot-out

Fatmire Bajramaj who, with three goals in 152 minutes, had been Germany's super-sub at the Women's EURO 2009, emerged as Potsdam's most dangerous attacking weapon, with her mazy runs and shrewd assists earning her UEFA's player of the match award. Her main rival for the honour was OL goalkeeper Sarah Bouhaddi who, after making some astounding point-blank saves to help keep the game goalless for 120 minutes, seemed to have won the title for Farid Benstiti's side by saving penalties from Jennifer Zietz and Anja Mittag during the penalty shoot-out.

This presented match balls to Amandine Henry and Isobell Herlovsen. But both had their spot kicks saved by Anna Felicitas Sarholz – and the psychological pendulum had swung in Potsdam's direction. After the two goalkeepers had beaten each other from the spot, the decisive moment came when the well-struck penalty by Elodie Thomis came back from the crossbar. 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam were in the history books as the first winners of the UEFA Women's Champions League.



D.Aquilina

20 May 2010
Coliseum Alfonso Pérez, Getafe
10,372 spectators
**Olympique Lyonnais –
1. FFC Turbine Potsdam 0-0**
after extra time; 6-7 in penalty shoot-out
Referee: Kirsi Heikkinen (Finland)



The finalists shake hands before kick-off as a mark of respect.

D. Aquilina



Milito's second goal

Getty Images



Inter on the attack

D. Aquilina



UEFA Champions League

The end of a long wait

FC INTERNAZIONALE MILANO HAD TO GO BACK 45 YEARS FOR THEIR PREVIOUS TRIUMPH IN EUROPE'S PREMIER CLUB COMPETITION. THEIR LONG WAIT CAME TO AN END IN MADRID LAST MONTH, AS THE ITALIANS DEFEATED FC BAYERN MÜNCHEN 2-0 IN THE FINAL OF THE 18TH UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE.

Coached by José Mourinho, who becomes only the third man to win the trophy with two different clubs – after Ernst Happel and Ottmar Hitzfeld – Internazionale capped an exceptional season in which they also won the Italian Cup and the Serie A title. And there could be more silverware to come for the *Neroazzurri*. In August, they are due to take on Club Atlético de Madrid for the UEFA Super Cup in Monaco, while at the end of the year they will fly out to Abu Dhabi for the 2010 FIFA Club World Cup.

Disciplined and organised

That Inter were worthy winners in Madrid is beyond dispute, even if the statistical buffs might point to the fact that Bayern enjoyed far more possession. Disciplined and organised, the Italians carved out their victory using an effective brand of simple and direct football. Their first goal, scored by the superlative Diego Milito, was a perfect example: following a long clearance by keeper Julio Cesar, Milito exchanged passes with Wesley Sneijder before delivering a clinical finish that left the Bavarians with the formidable task of having to break down a well organised and compact Italian defence.

Bayern did come close to finding a response at the start of the second half, but Internazionale's impeccable custodian produced a reflex save to deny Thomas Müller, and in the 66th minute he thwarted a fine effort from Arjen Robben. When Milito, this time put through by Samuel Eto'o, breached the Bayern defence to score his and Inter's second goal in the 70th minute, even the German supporters were forced to acknowledge that the trophy was beyond their side. There will not be too many sour grapes in Bavaria though, since under the guidance of Louis van Gaal, Bayern had themselves already claimed two trophies

– the German Cup and the Bundesliga title – by the time they had arrived at the Bernabéu.

A glorious past rekindled

Between them, Italian and German clubs have made 40 final appearances in the champions' competition: 26 for Italy (six different clubs) and 14 for Germany (again represented by six clubs). However, this year's final was only the third ever Italian-German affair. The previous two had both been won by the Germans (Hamburger SV and BV Borussia Dortmund, in each case against Juventus), so Internazionale arrived in Madrid needing to reverse the trend if they were to recapture their glory days. A lot has changed since their last triumph in this competition. The team that won the 1965 final featured just three foreign players; this year, by contrast, the *Neroazzurri* only had one Italian – Marco Materazzi – and he was restricted to a cameo from the bench in the dying moments.

Italian clubs have now equalled Spain's record of 12 European Champion Clubs' Cup/UEFA Champions League titles. Internazionale account for three of those, having also won the trophy in 1964 and 1965; in addition, they boast three UEFA Cup triumphs (1991, 1994 and 1998) and two European/South American Cups (1964 and 1965).



Grimm/Bongarts/Getty Images

22 May 2010
Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, Madrid – Spectators: 75,569
FC Bayern Munich – FC Internazionale 0-2 (0-1)
Goals: Diego Milito (35, 70)
Referee: Howard M. Webb (England)



Diego Forlán's decisive goal

Empics Sport



UEFA-Woods

The opening ceremony at the Hamburg Arena

Simon Davies' equaliser



Baron/Bongartz/Getty Images



Final of the first UEFA Europa League

The mattress-makers' dream

WINNING THE FIRST UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE FINAL IS A HAPPY ENDING TO ALMOST HALF A CENTURY OF WAITING FOR CLUB ATLÉTICO DE MADRID.

"Enjoy the moment, be courageous, and pursue your dream." Those were the key messages delivered to the Club Atlético de Madrid players by their coach, Quique Sánchez Flores, before they ran into the Hamburg Arena to dispute the first ever UEFA Europa League final. It wasn't far short of midnight when the *colchoneros* (the mattress-makers) made their way up into the stand to receive the gold medals which offered tangible proof that the dream had been successfully pursued.

A long wait

It was a moment of such historic significance that the Atlético captain, Antonio López, was in no hurry to lift the trophy when it was presented to him by UEFA's president, Michel Platini. Instead he planted a kiss on the silverware before raising it towards the Hamburg sky and ending 48 long years of waiting. In 1962, Atlético had won the European Cup Winners' Cup.

The success tasted as sweet in Madrid as it did in Hamburg. For the first time since the club notched a Liga and Copa del Rey double in 1996, the mattress-makers' fans could legitimately stay away from their beds to party their way through the night at the Neptune Fountain, the traditional backdrop to Atlético's celebrations.

However, Atlético's pursuit of the continental dream had been hard work. It's all too easy to focus on the joy of the winners and sweep the merits of the silver medallists under the red carpet. In Hamburg, Fulham FC wore the mantle of underdogs, just as they had done in encounters with previous winners of European titles (Shakhtar Donetsk, Juventus FC, Hamburger SV) on the way to the London club's first ever final.

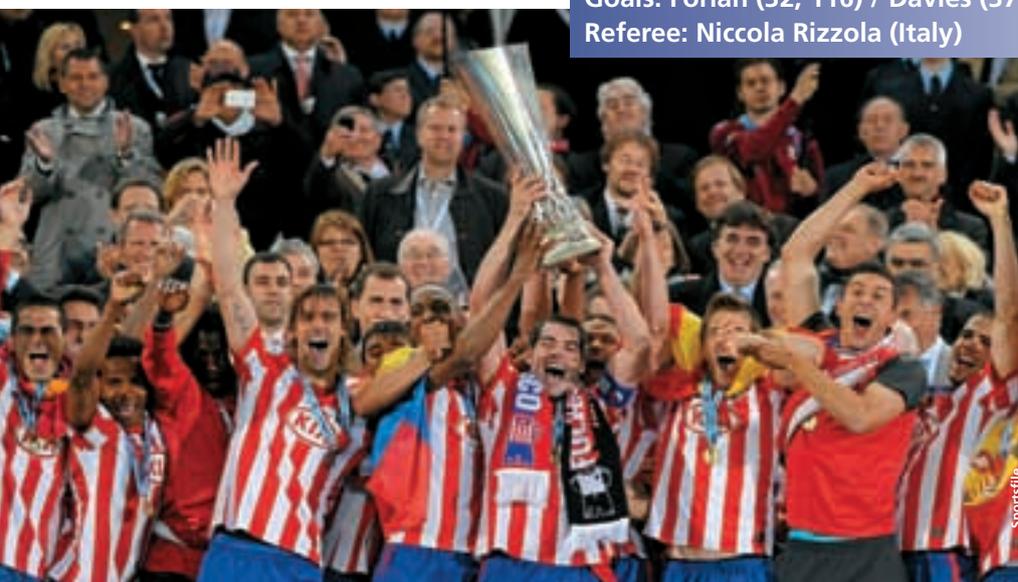
The big game in Hamburg was the 19th in an arduous campaign which had begun almost 10 months earlier in the qualifying rounds and which had involved 31,000 kilometres of travelling.

Enthralling contest

The players of both sides added a few more in the Hamburg Arena, totalling over 300 kilometres during two hours of entertaining end-to-end football which provided a spectacular finale to an exhilarating first season in the newly born competition. Although Atlético enjoyed more possession, it would be wrong to label the final as a clash of footballing cultures. The two formations mirrored each other, they played the same number of long passes and Fulham made more short passes than their Spanish opponents. The result was an enthralling contest which seemed to have tilted in Atlético's favour with Diego Forlán's first-half goal, only for Simon Davies to equalise and, as Quique Sánchez Flores admitted afterwards, *"change the complexion of the game because, once we had gone ahead, I felt we could extend our advantage through counter-attacking"*.

Diego Forlán's knockout blow in the closing minutes of extra time gave the Londoners no chance to rise from the canvas. *"We didn't expect to reach the final,"* Roy Hodgson said afterwards. *"But having got here, we hoped to win it. We have a feeling of immense sadness."* As Fulham FC's Premier League position hasn't earned a return to Europe next season, it's appropriate to thank the London club for its magnificent contribution to a memorable first season of UEFA Europa League football.

12 May 2010
Hamburg Arena – 49,000 spectators
Club Atlético de Madrid – Fulham FC 2-1
after extra time (1-1, 1-1)
Goals: Forlán (32, 116) / Davies (37)
Referee: Nicola Rizzola (Italy)



Sportsfile



Spain v Turkey in the semi-finals



A first for England



French keeper Alphonse Aréola in action against England in the semi-finals



European Under-17 Championship

First victory for England

VICTORY OVER SPAIN IN LIECHTENSTEIN SECURES ENGLAND'S FIRST

AGE-LIMIT TITLE FOR 17 YEARS

"It's a great day and it means a lot to the English game because we have critics who say we are not producing players. We had good players in this tournament and earlier ones, but what was missing was putting our name on the trophy." The comments by England's coach, John Peacock, sum up English jubilation after a 2-1 victory over Spain had ended five years of frustration, during which English teams had appeared in four UEFA age-limit finals and had taken silver medals from them all.

Highly competitive opposition

In Liechtenstein, the encounter with two-time champions

Spain was a spectacular contest between two teams who had been obliged to dig deep into physical and mental resources to beat highly competitive opposition en route to the final.

The tournament was unusual in that the host association was not rep-

resented. The cumulative audience for the 15 matches was 20,968 – less than the crowd for the 2009 final in Germany. But, as the population of Liechtenstein is 35,000, Roland Ospelt, general secretary of the national association and tournament director, was happy that attendances had significantly exceeded expectations.

Surprises

The tournament, staged from 18 to 30 May in Vaduz and Eschen-Mauren, produced surprises. Germans and Dutch, finalists in 2009, had failed to qualify and Switzerland, world champions at Under-17 level, conceded 11 goals in 3 straight defeats to

finish last in Group A. Spain, playing through periods of intense pressure against France and Portugal, won all three matches and the French grabbed second place thanks to a second-half comeback in their final game against the Swiss.

In the other group, England were also made to work hard for maximum points, coming back from one-goal deficits against Czechs and Turks, and beating a very compact Greek team thanks to a thumping header from midfielder Ross Barkley. The Turks, starting with

an impressive 3-1 win against Greece, took second spot because an equally impressive Czech side, needing to win the final fixture, could achieve no more than a goalless draw against the Greeks. The teams with the greatest punching power were the ones who progressed to the semi-finals.

This trend continued when Spain won their semi-final against the Turks 3-1, thanks largely to an attack formed by wingers Jesé Rodríguez and Gerard Deulofeu plus central striker Francisco Alcácer, alias 'Paco', whose two goals made him tournament top scorer with a tally of six. In the other semi-final, two goals by striker Connor Wickham were a reward for England's impressive first half. France's second-half revival yielded a goal by Paul Pogba – which proved insufficient.

In the final, played on a wet pitch in Vaduz and watched by Spain's senior World Cup squad, England again rebounded from a one-goal deficit to win 2-1 and lift the Under-17 trophy for the first time. "It was a fantastic game," commented John Peacock, "with good defending, excellent attacking play and a lot of commitment from both sides." "England were strong in defence," agreed Spain's coach Ginés Meléndez, "and were able to stop us. It was a game between the best two Under-17 teams I've seen in recent years and we made it hard for England."



England's Connor Wickham celebrates victory

Results

Group A		
18.05	France – Spain	1-2
18.05	Portugal – Switzerland	3-0
21.05	Spain – Switzerland	4-0
21.05	France – Portugal	1-0
24.05	Switzerland – France	1-3
24.05	Spain – Portugal	2-0
Group B		
18.05	Greece – Turkey	1-3
18.05	England – Czech Republic	3-1
21.05	Turkey – Czech Republic	1-1
21.05	Greece – England	0-1
24.05	Czech Republic – Greece	0-0
24.05	Turkey – England	1-2
Semi-finals		
27.05	Spain – Turkey	3-1
27.05	England – France	2-1
Final		
30.05	Spain – England	1-2



Press conference



Draw ceremony



European U19 Championship

France hopes for a tournament to remember

FROM 18 TO 30 JULY, FRANCE WILL STAGE THE EUROPEAN UNDER-19 CHAMPIONSHIP. THE HOST NATION PLANS TO MAKE THE EVENT A REAL CELEBRATION OF FOOTBALL AND, HOPEFULLY, TO CLAIM THE TITLE IN THE PROCESS.



History rarely repeats itself. However, France will be delighted if it does. In the 1996 European Under-18 Championship, Gérard Houllier led a golden generation of French players to glory on home turf. Three goals from David Trezeguet in the group stage, plus one from Thierry Henry in the final, helped secure the trophy.

Fourteen years on, the French are once again the hosts, and will be keen to emulate the feats of Houllier & Co. Can they do it? They certainly have the pedigree. Eight previous appearances in the final have yielded a record six titles (1949, 1983, 1996, 1997, 2000 and 2005). Moreover, no fewer than 8 of the 23 players selected to represent France at this summer's FIFA World Cup in South Africa have been European champions at U19 level: Yoann Gourcuff, Thierry Henry, Nicolas Anelka, William Gallas, David Trezeguet,

Djibril Cissé, Hugo Lloris and Vassiriki Diaby all have a winner's medal in their trophy cabinets.

Six of the best for the FIFA U-20 World Cup

The French will be further encouraged by the fact that the reigning champions, Ukraine, won the title on home soil last year. However, they certainly cannot expect an easy ride. The other seven teams featuring in Normandy – England, Austria and the Netherlands in Group A with France; Croatia, Italy, Portugal, Spain in Group B – represent the cream of European football at U19 level. Francis Smerecki, France's coach, is expecting a hard-fought competition. "This will be a very big test, and the competition will be very stiff," he said.

European U19 Championship final rounds frequently feature the stars of the future. Italian pair Gianluigi Buffon and Andrea Pirlo, Czech goalkeeper Petr Cech, and Portuguese duo Luis Figo and

Cristiano Ronaldo are just a few of the players who have graced the tournament over the years.

Like the other seven participants, the French will not only be looking to lift the trophy but also to secure a berth at the FIFA U-20 World Cup, which is due to take place in Colombia next year. The top six teams in Normandy will qualify automatically. "If we shoot for the moon and miss, we can still catch a star," the French coach said.

A tale of five towns

France was recently chosen to host UEFA EURO 2016, so the U19 tournament also provides the ideal opportunity for the country to demonstrate its organisational prowess. In 2009, Normandy hosted one of the European U19 Championship elite round groups, so it was the natural choice when the French Football Federation (FFF) had to select a host region for this year's final tournament. The matches will be spread across five towns: Caen, Mondeville, Flers, Saint-Lô and Bayeux. The opening match and the final, along with one of the semi-finals, will take place in Caen's 21,250-capacity stadium.

The FFF and the regional league of Normandy have recruited some 1,000 volunteers to help with the organisation. They will be involved in every aspect of the event, from accommodation, giving directions and stewarding, to hospitality, media support, accreditation, communications, ticketing, transport, parking and general support services, to name but some. Every last detail of the organisation has been painstakingly prepared in cooperation with UEFA.

Christian Teinturier, the chairman of the tournament steering committee and vice-president of the FFF, is confident that the whole event will be a great success. "Normandy is a real football heartland. It has all of the infrastructure and facilities needed to organise an event on this scale and ensure a true carnival of football, staged in the spirit of respect and friendship. Our aim is to ensure that every aspect of the event is organised as professionally as possible."

The organisers hope to attract some 60,000 fans to the stadiums over the course of the 15-match tournament. The prospect of seeing the best young talents from the strongest teams in Europe should certainly ensure that there is no shortage of interest.

Stéphane Lanoue



French U21 international Sébastien Corchia conducts the draw under the watchful eyes of former France coach Michel Hidalgo and, far left, Reinhard Walsler, third vice-chairman of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee.

Photos: FFF



The semi-final between Germany and France



England v Netherlands in the other semi-final



France's Rose Lavaud takes a shot at goal in the final against England.

France take Under-19 crown in Skopje

Second European title for Les Bleuettes



"LAST YEAR WE WERE NOT FAR OFF AND WERE UNLUCKY TO LOSE THE SEMI-FINAL AGAINST SWEDEN IN EXTRA TIME, HAVING PLAYED A GOOD GAME. THIS YEAR WE WERE ABLE TO TAKE THE FINAL STEP," SAID FRENCH COACH JEAN-MICHEL DEGRANGE AFTER THE FINAL, "WHICH MAKES ME HAPPY FOR FRENCH WOMEN'S FOOTBALL. A TITLE CAN BE A VERY GOOD BOOST, SO IT IS A REAL PLEASURE TO LIFT THAT TROPHY."

The final tournament of the European Women's Under-19 Championship, from 24 May to 5 June, was the first to be staged in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where women's football is fighting to gain a stronger foothold. The event was impeccably organised, using three venues in the capital, Skopje, and one in nearby Kumanovo. A cumulative attendance of 25,850 – the second-highest in the history of the competition – was regarded as highly positive recompense. On the day of the final, grassroots activities were organised near the stadium, involving children from all over the country. For the host team, the tournament represented an important gradient on the learning curve and, despite three defeats, the team's performance palpably improved from game to game.

Bouncing back from defeat

The same could be said for France. Their presence in the final had seemed unlikely when Jean-Michel Degrange's team opened with a 2-0 defeat against the Netherlands. They bounced back with a hard-fought, nervy victory against Spain and then put six goals past the hosts to secure a semi-final place. It was hard on Angel Vilda's Spanish team who, without key players, had produced attractive football but hadn't found a knockout punch.

In the other group, Scotland faced three former champions. Beaten

by England and Germany, they fought back from 3-1 down in their last match to draw with an Italian side which was also on the way home after two defeats – the second despite leading England 1-0 until three minutes from time. The results allowed Germany and England to rest players when they met in the final game, with a 2-1 win giving the Germans top place.

Group winners eliminated

It turned out to be a poisoned chalice. In the semi-finals, both group winners were eliminated in penalty shoot-outs. The Dutch, having won all three group matches, were particularly aggrieved to go home undefeated and without conceding a goal. But after 120 goalless minutes and one wayward shot in the shoot-out, their coach Hesterine de Reus admitted "we defended well but England were just a bit better than we

were". It was the same story in Kumanovo, where one missed penalty spelled a rare German defeat after a resolute French team had earned a 1-1 draw.

The same degree of resolution was required in the final against an English team which, after pressing hard, playing attractive combination moves and, taking the lead, seemed to be on track for a successful defence of the title. But two self-inflicted wounds proved fatal. Firstly, Lucia Bronze's pass bounced nicely off Rose Lavaud's legs for the French winger to run through and equalise. And, secondly, ten minutes into the second half, English goalkeeper Rebecca Spencer, impressive throughout the tournament, played the ball across the area for Pauline Crammer to accept the gift and clinch the title.

Results

Group A		
24.05	Scotland – England	1-3
24.05	Germany – Italy	4-1
27.05	Scotland – Germany	1-5
27.05	England – Italy	2-1
30.05	Italy – Scotland	3-3
30.05	England – Germany	1-2
Group B		
24.05	Netherlands – France	2-0
24.05	FYR Macedonia – Spain	0-6
27.05	FYR Macedonia – Netherlands	0-7
27.05	Spain – France	0-1
30.05	France – FYR Macedonia	6-1
30.05	Spain – Netherlands	0-2
Semi-finals		
02.06	Germany – France	1-1**
02.06	Netherlands – England	0-0**
**France (5-3) after penalty kicks		
**England (5-4) after penalty kicks		
Final		
05.06	France – England	2-1





The referees in training under the guidance of Werner Helsen

Sponsorfile



D. Aquilina

2010 World Cup

Refs all revved up

THE BEST REFEREES ARE HIGHLY PRIZED. ALWAYS IN GREAT DEMAND IN THEIR DOMESTIC LEAGUES, ESPECIALLY AT THE END OF THE SEASON, WHEN THE STAKES ARE HIGHEST, THEY ALSO TAKE CHARGE OF NUMEROUS UEFA AND FIFA FIXTURES. IN SHORT, FOR MOST OF THE YEAR, THE LIFE OF A TOP REFEREE IS NON-STOP.

Referees are constantly travelling, and in large countries like Spain, even their domestic commitments mean a large amount of time spent on the road. On top of that, they have to train. This never-ending cycle of matches, travel and training requires a huge investment of time. Professor Werner Helsen, head of the motor learning laboratory in the faculty of physical education and physiotherapy at Leuven Catholic University in Belgium, has been training UEFA referees for the last ten years. Every fortnight, they send him their training logs and cardiogram read-outs. Based on this information, he is able to tailor their individual training programmes, checking to see whether a particular referee's training schedule is sufficiently demanding or, in contrast, too exerting, and whether there is enough variety in their sessions, etc. Looking back over schedules for the past two and a half years, Professor Helsen is able to measure the scale of the sacrifices that referees and assistant referees have to accept. Take, for example, the January–April schedules of the 13 European match official trios

appointed to officiate at the World Cup: between them they officiated at four matches for FIFA, 22 for UEFA and 116 domestic fixtures. On average, each of them had three matches a month, devoting a total of 212.2 hours (53 hours a week) to refereeing. Travel – often across several time zones – accounted for 188.7 of those 212.2 hours, while 23.4 hours a month were spent training. For Werner Helsen, each day a referee is away from home is logged as 24 hours (1,440 minutes), since referees focus on nothing but their refereeing duties when they are on the road. Normally, however, they have to combine their refereeing commitments with another job. "Some referees decide to sacrifice their jobs. They are also away a lot, which means they have no family life."

Since EURO 2000, the first tournament at which referees lived together as a team – like the players, sharing the same hotel and training together – the number of matches has increased, as has the tempo of the football itself. "If you take change of pace, which is the most tiring thing:

two years ago, referees had to change pace every seven seconds. Nowadays, a referee changes pace every four seconds."

Optimising performance

The challenge facing Werner Helsen and his team is three-fold: how to optimise referee performance, how to prevent injuries and how to cope with the demands of an overloaded schedule. "We stay in touch with the referee committees which are responsible for allocating matches, to help ensure that they go easier on certain referees at particular times. Our programmes are customised; they are adapted to the condition of the referee. When a referee has had a lot of matches and travel, we place the emphasis on recuperation."

Werner Helsen has developed a points system that enables him to measure recuperation. Each different element is awarded a score that enables the physical and mental state of the referee to be gauged.

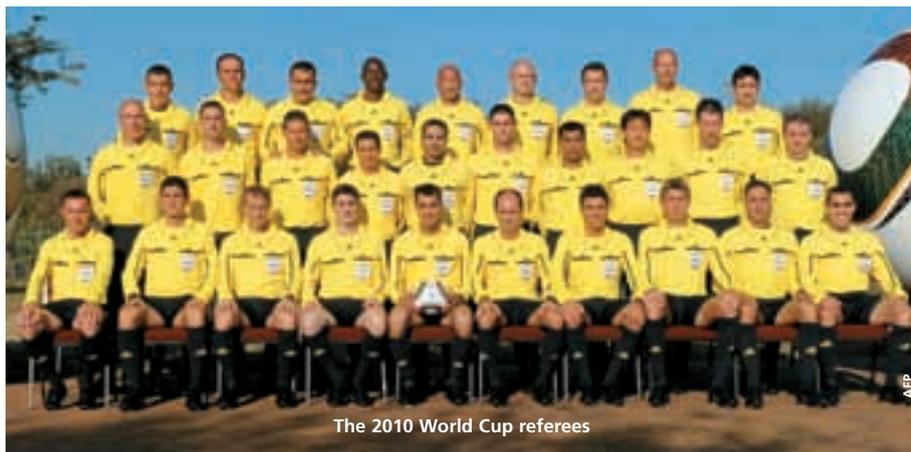
Nutrition (10 points): number of meals, portions of fruit eaten during the day, drinks.

Sleep (4): at night but also a siesta.

Relaxation (3): general well-being, muscular and mental relaxation after training; passive recovery, which might involve a session in the sauna or the Jacuzzi, or time spent with the family.

Stretching and warming down (3).

When Werner Helsen interprets the programme results, he pays particular attention to pulse rates,



The 2010 World Cup referees

AFP



Sportsfile



UEFA/Woods

Video analysis is an excellent way for referees to optimise their performance.

What better preparation for Howard Webb and his team than to referee the UEFA Champions League final?

of optimal heart rate. During the four weekly sessions, nothing was left to chance. Thus, on Tuesdays the advice was to run on grass in order to prevent injuries, while on Thursdays, training on an actual football pitch was recommended. However, Werner Helsen's most important piece of advice to his referees was this: "Spend a week resting – put your feet up!"

Pascale Pierard

Topsportlab

Aside from his work for UEFA and FIFA, Werner Helsen has created a website (www.topsportlab.com) which provides a similar service to that offered to referees. The site, which is used by a large number of sports organisations, including Belgian football clubs Anderlecht and Club Bruges, offers an interactive service to athletes and clubs, who can input data from their matches and training sessions. This data, when combined with the results from an initial set of tests, enable the computer programme to generate recommendations and individual training programmes designed to optimise performance and prevent injuries. A set of algorithms, devised using the results of tests conducted since 2003, determine the exact risk of injury to the athlete, highlighting the areas at risk in colour on front and back diagrams of the human body. Based on the results obtained, the site will suggest preventative exercises and recommend an optimal workload. Each user is issued with a password and his details are kept confidential, but all results are compared by the system in order to identify any anomalies, and also to motivate the athlete by showing him how his performance compares with the average.

P.P.



Werner Helsen

Sportsfile

including those recorded in the morning, and to weight. At the start of May, he gathered together all of the European referees involved in the World Cup for a week. He subjected them to a barrage of tests in conditions that were not exactly conducive to optimum performance. "The temperatures barely reached 8C, it was blowing a gale and I recorded humidity levels of 90%. However, everything went brilliantly. They all came through the tests injury-free. Better still, since 2008, all of the parameters have been improving, both in terms of speed (especially important for

the assistant referees) and in terms of interval training (24 times 150 metres in 30 seconds, with 35 seconds' recovery time). Overall, the referees have improved their performances by between 25% and 30%."

Kievits Kroon

When they arrived at Kievits Kroon, their South African base during the World Cup, the referees had already completed a four-week preparation programme. Everyone received the same basic training schedule, but each referee implemented it according to his fitness levels since, apart from the sprint exercises, all performances were measured as a percentage



Getty Images

The final stages of the European club competitions put Europe's elite referees through their paces, but also put pressure on their already overloaded schedules.



The chairman of the European Club Association, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, voiced the clubs' support of the financial fair play concept at the Executive Committee meeting.



Meetings and other activities

Financial fair play moves to the next stage

ON 27 AND 28 MAY, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONVENED FOR ITS THIRD MEETING OF THE YEAR, CHAIRED BY MICHEL PLATINI. THE MEETING WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: THE FIRST SESSION, WHICH TOOK PLACE AT UEFA HEADQUARTERS IN NYON, WAS DEVOTED TO CURRENT ISSUES IN EUROPEAN FOOTBALL; THE SECOND, AT THE ESPACE HIPPOMÈNE IN GENEVA, CULMINATED WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FRENCH FOOTBALL FEDERATION (FFF) TO HOST EURO 2016.

The main focus of the first session was financial fair play in UEFA club competitions. The Executive Committee was asked to approve the new *UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations*, which introduce the concept of financial fair play, the cornerstone of which is that clubs must not spend more than they earn. The new regulations, which, including annexes, run to almost 100 pages, were unanimously approved and, with the exception of certain articles, came into force on 1 June. The supporter liaison officer requirements and the enhanced provisions on overdue payables and certain financial information will be applied from 1 June 2011, while

the club monitoring requirements (Article 57) and the break-even requirement (Articles 58 to 63) will enter into force for the financial statements of the reporting period ending in 2012.

As Michel Platini explained, these regulations have been introduced "not to punish clubs, but to help them". That view was echoed by Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, chairman of the European Club Association (ECA), who was present for this part of the Executive Committee meeting. Mr Rummenigge confirmed that football clubs fully supported the principles of financial fair play and he noted the fantastic collaboration between UEFA and the ECA in this area.

Referee experiment extended

During its meeting on 18 May, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) agreed to extend the experimental use of two additional assistant referees, as seen in the UEFA Europa League, for a further two years. The IFAB, which is responsible for the Laws of the Game, invited all of the confederations and national associations concerned to propose competitions in which they wished to trial the use of these additional match officials. With a view to extending the experiment in Europe, the Executive Committee proposed that additional assistant referees be used in the UEFA Champions League from the play-offs onwards, in the UEFA Europa League from the group stage onwards, in the UEFA Super Cup, and in the 2010-12 European Football Championship qualifiers and final round.

New regulations adopted or amended

A regular item on the agenda of the Executive Committee is an overview of the activities of the various UEFA committees, presented by their chairmen.

The Executive Committee approved the regulations of the following competitions:

- 2010/11 European Under-19 Championship
- 2010/11 European Under-17 Championship
- 2010/11 European Women's Under-19 Championship
- 2010/11 European Women's Under-17 Championship
- 2011/12 European Futsal Championship

It also decided to amend paragraph 7.07 of the 2010-12 European Football Championship regulations: the four seeded teams in the qualification play-offs will no longer automatically play their second leg at home; instead there will be a draw to decide the order of the two legs.

Regarding the 2010/11 European Under-21 Championship,



The complete UEFA Executive Committee, together with the European members of the FIFA Executive Committee and the UEFA general secretary

UEFA-Woods



IN MEMORIAM

The UEFA club competition finals in Hamburg and Madrid had only just highlighted again the joy and emotion that football arouses in hundreds of thousands of supporters when a sad anniversary arrived to remind us that football, deeply entrenched in our culture as it is, is not immune to the scourges that afflict society.

On 29 May 1985, 39 people who had gone to the Heysel stadium in Brussels to watch the European Champion Clubs' Cup final lost their lives as a result of a barbaric act. In Turin, Liverpool and Brussels, ceremonies marking the 25th anniversary of European club football's darkest hour remembered the victims again. Time may heal, but it can never take away the pain of the families and friends of the 39 victims, nor that of all those who were wounded physically, morally or psychologically in Brussels that evening.



the Executive Committee decided to move the start of the final tournament in Denmark forward by a day (to 11 June instead of 12 June), in order to give the participating teams an extra rest day. In addition, the procedure for the draw for the seven play-off matches was agreed. The seeded teams will be the seven group winners with the best coefficients on the basis of their results in the qualifying competitions of the 2007-09 and 2009-11 European U21 Championships.

The play-off draw will take place in Herning, Denmark, on 10 September, while the draw for the final round will take place on 9 November in Aalborg, Denmark. It was decided that there would be four seeded teams, including the hosts, Denmark.

The session concluded with the technical evaluation of the UEFA EURO 2016 bid dossiers of France, Italy and Turkey, presented by the National Team Competitions Committee. This final part of the session was chaired by the second vice-president, Geoffrey Thompson. The president, Michel Platini, the first vice-president, Senes Erzik, and Giancarlo Abete were unable to participate, since their national associations were all bidding to host the tournament.

Six new members for the Referee Convention

Six more national associations – Albania, Armenia, Greece, Israel, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Czech Republic – have signed the UEFA Convention on Referee Education and Organisation.

All six associations have satisfied the requirements stipulated by the convention. They will receive a bonus of CHF 200 000 for the 2009/10 season and further annual payments of CHF 100,000 from 2010/11 onwards, for as long as they continue to adhere to the convention's requirements.

International competitions

U-20 Women's World Cup in Germany

As the World Cup in South Africa occupies the attentions of football lovers around the globe, other tournaments are getting ready to kick off.

In July, it is the turn of women's football to occupy the world stage, as the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup gets underway in Germany. The opening matches take place on 13 July, with the host nation taking on Costa Rica in Bochum, while North Korea – runners-up last time around – face Brazil in Bielefeld. Aside from the hosts, there are four other European teams taking part – England, France, Sweden and Switzerland. In all, 16 teams will be competing for the title, which is currently held by the USA.

The group stage finishes on 21 July, with the top two teams from each of the four groups entering the quarter-finals, which take place on 25-28 July. The semi-finals follow soon after on 29/30 July, with the final and the third-place match taking place on 1 August in Bielefeld.

Youth Olympic Games in Singapore

Last October, eight Under-15 national sides – four boys' teams and four girls' teams – travelled to Nyon to participate in the European qualifiers for the football tournament at the inaugural Youth Olympic Games.

The girls' qualifying competition was won by Turkey, while Montenegro ran out winners among the boys. Both teams will soon be packing their bags for Singapore, which is staging the final tournament.

The girls' tournament kicks off on 12 August, while the boys' tournament starts the following day. The girls' and boys' finals take place on 24 and 25 August respectively.

UEFA club competitions

With the FIFA World Cup still in full swing, next season's UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League got underway with the draw for the first qualifying rounds of each competition.

The full draw and match calendar can be found on pages 26-27. The results of all draws and matches will be published on UEFA.com.

Meanwhile, on 27 August at Louis II stadium in Monaco, FC Internazionale Milano and Club Atlético de Madrid meet to dispute the UEFA Super Cup.

50 YEARS AGO

USSR win European Nations' Cup

On 10 July 1960, in front of a crowd of 17,966, the USSR defeated Yugoslavia 2-1 to win the inaugural European Nations' Cup, the precursor to the European Championship. The winning goal came in extra time and was scored by Viktor Ponedelnik.

Played at the Parc des Princes in Paris, the match was the culmination of a four-team final tournament played over five days. The two semi-finals were played in Paris and Marseille, with the latter also staging a third-place match, in which Czechoslovakia defeated France 2-0.

The final tournament was preceded by a 16-team knockout competition that had kicked off on 28 September 1958, when the USSR and Hungary drew a crowd of 100,572 in Moscow.

The final tournament failed to generate quite the same level of interest, especially after the French had been eliminated in the semi-finals. But the fact that this inaugural competition had been staged was,



USSR captain Igor Netto, followed by his team-mates, takes the trophy on a lap of honour.

in itself, a source of huge satisfaction and pride for everyone who had backed the vision of Henri Delaunay, UEFA's first general secretary. The supporters of the competition had fought with great conviction and perseverance to establish it in the face of resistance from those who deemed it unnecessary, given the existence of the World Cup, in which European teams were well represented.

Henri Delaunay died in November 1955, so he did not have the pleasure of seeing his vision brought to life. He did however lend his name to the tournament trophy, which his son, Pierre Delaunay, who succeeded him as UEFA general secretary, commissioned from the Parisian goldsmith Chobillon, and which was paid for by the French Football Federation.

Net receipts from the final were a little over 120,000 new French francs (the new currency had come into circulation at the start of 1960), and UEFA's share from the whole final tournament was just 24,112 francs, but the foundations laid by this inaugural competition were worth infinitely more.



France to host UEFA EURO 2016

The atmosphere at the Espace Hippomène in Geneva on the morning of 28 May was highly charged, and not just because of the high-ranking political figures present and the special security measures in place. It was here that 13 members of the Executive Committee, chaired by the second vice-president, Geoffrey Thompson, convened to determine which country would host EURO 2016, and the outcome was awaited with bated breath.



Michel Platini reveals the winner

The quality of the three bid dossiers, all of which went beyond the requirements set by UEFA, suggested that it would be a close-run thing. And it was. With the running order determined by lots, Turkey, Italy and then France each delivered a 30-minute presentation outlining the merits of their respective bids. Once



The presentations of France...

UEFA-Woods

...Italy...



UEFA-Woods



...and Turkey

UEFA-Woods



News from Brussels

The first formal meeting of the EU Council of Ministers of Sport took place on 10 May in Brussels. In accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, which came into force on 1 December 2009, the council will convene for formal sessions twice a year.

This inaugural meeting was devoted to discussion of Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty (see *uefadirect* No. 94).

Each of the 27 member states was given three to four minutes to express its views. The first issue to produce universal agreement among the members appears to be health, including doping. Meanwhile, all of the member states are awaiting a European Commission communication on the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty (a kind of follow-up to the White Paper on Sport, see *uefadirect* Nos 64 and 65), which is due to be published in November this year.

A number of issues were raised by the member states. France was keen to voice its support for the UEFA initiatives regarding financial fair play and protection of minors. Meanwhile, Belgium, which will assume the EU presidency from 1 July to 31 December, highlighted three priority areas: athlete education and training, the social role of sport and anti-doping measures.

Slovenia was the only country to raise the issue of sports betting. Germany stated the need for "guidance on the application of the law on competition in sport". The Netherlands and France expressed a desire to see "the scope of application of EU law clarified". Finland, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Luxembourg all called for the specific nature and autonomy of sport to be taken into account. Luxembourg also called on the European Commission to adopt a law on intellectual property which would protect the interests of sports associations in respect of the competitions they organised. The Republic of Ireland cited the need for "protection of the European model of sport", and reacted vehemently to calls from Sweden for the commission to review the VAT rules applied to sports organisations.

The overall impression was that the sports ministers were keen to focus discussion on their respective national interests.

The next formal meeting of the EU Council of Ministers of Sport is scheduled for 18 November.

again, the overall standard was remarkable, as each association delivered eye-catching presentations, all of them embracing powerful themes, such as the desire to give young people the chance to experience this unique event.

At the end of their deliberations, the Executive Committee members were invited to deliver their verdict. In the first ballot, they awarded points to each candidate: five for their first choice, two for their second, and one for their third. Italy received the fewest points and was therefore eliminated. The second round of voting,

once again conducted via a secret ballot, saw France edge ahead of Turkey by 7 votes to 6, thus securing the right to host EURO 2016.

In keeping with the spirit of the entire bid campaign, this final stage of the process took place in a remarkable atmosphere of mutual respect. Immediately after the announcement, the FFF president, Jean-Pierre Escalettes, was quick to pay tribute to the two rival bids, before going on to note that, for France, "this is not an end of the process, it is the start of a wonderful adventure."

ARMENIA



Licences for four clubs

On 11 May, the licensing committee (first instance body) of the Armenian Football Federation (FFA) held its regular meeting at the FFA's headquarters. Licence applications had been submitted by FC Pyunik Yerevan, FC Mika Yerevan, FC Ulisses Yerevan and FC Banants Yerevan – all candidates to take part in the 2010/11 UEFA club competitions.

Financial documentation from the clubs and auditors' reports for 2009 were presented during the meeting. Based on that information, the licensing committee decided to grant licences to all four clubs. This means that Armenia will be represented by FC Pyunik (UEFA Champions League), FC Mika, FC Ulisses and FC Banants (UEFA Europa League) in the 2010/11 UEFA club competitions.

Armenia

Another piece of silverware for FC Pyunik, winners of the domestic cup



The procedure does not, however, stop there. The clubs are still required to inform the FFA about any changes that occur (e.g. changes of a personnel or administrative nature). The FFA will monitor this aspect until December, when the new club licensing cycle starts.

Meanwhile, Armenian multiple champions Pyunik have added a new trophy to their large collection of silverware. On 10 May, they played Banants in the Armenian Cup final. Unlike last year's final between the same two teams, this year's match was not a closely

fought affair, with Pyunik dominating their opponents throughout the match and achieving a clear 4-0 victory. Davit Manoyan, Marcos Pizzelli and Gevorg Ghazaryan (twice) scored the goals.

This was Pyunik's fifth Armenian Cup win, which matches the record of FC Ararat and FC Mika. It was also the highest scoring Armenian Cup final to date. At the end of the final, the winners received the new Armenian Cup, introduced this season. ■

Tigran Israelyan

AUSTRIA



Leo Windtner ÖFB president until 2013

On 30 May, the Austrian FA (ÖFB) held its ordinary annual general meeting in the Ziller valley market town of Mayrhofen in the Tyrol region of the country. Following a reception hosted by the mayor, Günter Fankhauser, and a parade by the local riflemen and federal band, the meeting moved to the newly inaugurated Europahaus congress centre, where Leo Windtner was unanimously and by acclamation returned to office as president of the ÖFB until 2013. Also elected were the three auditors (Johann Janecek, Peter Pucker and Siegfried Mair) and the members of the appeals board (chaired by Thomas Partl and also consisting of Dieter Potzmann, Sepp Geisler and Herbert Hübel as experts, plus Ludwig Binder, Willi Prechtl and Wolfgang Bartosch). In addition, five deserving figures were honoured: Kurt Ehrenberger and Martin Pucher were admitted to the ring of honour,



Azerbaijan

A girls' football lesson in Baku

Franz Wöhrer and Josef Orovits were awarded honorary membership, and Bruno Leherbauer received the gold award. From UEFA, Executive Committee member Frantisek Laurinec gave an address.

On the Saturday, the day before the general meeting, the Europahaus congress centre opened its doors to hundreds of football fans – predominantly locals – for a football exhibition and an autograph session with Austria's head coach, Didi Constantini, his assistants, Heinz Peischl and Manfred Zsak, the U20 coach, Hermann Stadler, the women's national coach, Ernst Weber, and the coach of the U21s, Andreas Herzog.

In this way, the ÖFB paid thanks to its splendid hosts, in particular the Tyrolean football association and its president, Sepp Geisler, as well as the town authorities, congress centre, hotels, etc., who, together, contributed to the success of this year's ÖFB annual general meeting. ■

Peter Klinglmüller

Austria

Leo Windtner (right), re-elected president of the ÖFB, with UEFA committee member Frantisek Laurinec.



AZERBAIJAN



Promoting football for girls

The Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) is placing special emphasis on girls' football this year. The association has already held trials at the national teams' training centre in Baku and in Lankaran, a city in the south of Azerbaijan. The trials attracted about 70 girls under 15. Shamil Haydarov, head coach of the Azerbaijan women's national team, and Sissy Raith, head coach of the girls' Under-15 team, were in charge of the tests. One day, the girls selected may have the chance to play for the Azerbaijan national women's team.

Michele Cox, a member of the FIFA Committee for Women's Football, watched the trials. All of the girls went home with excellent memories.

During her visit to Azerbaijan, Michele Cox also visited secondary school 201 in Baku, where she attended a girls' football lesson,

Belarus

Gennady Nevyglas, president of the BFF, gives the first kick of the ball on one of the 11 mini-pitches inaugurated during grassroots football week.



BELARUS

Grassroots football week

May in Belarus was marked by grassroots football week.

A lot of preparation work was done and a large number of events were organised around the whole country. From 17 to 23 May, more than 9,000 teams and more than 100,000 amateur footballers of all ages played on more than 3,000 pitches all over Belarus. The participants ranged in age from 4 to 72.

The winners of various regional competitions were awarded certificates, balls and sports equipment.

During grassroots football week, 11 mini-pitches with artificial turf built with the help of the UEFA HatTrick programme were opened in six regions and the capital, Minsk.

In order to expand the popularity of football, famous former footballers, politicians and sports officials were invited to be grassroots football ambassadors. They included the president of the Belarus Football Federation (BFF), Gennady Nevyglas, as well as the head coach of the Belarusian national team, Bernd Stange, and his assistant Harald Irmscher.



The ambassadors visited all six regions of Belarus (Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Mogiliov and Minsk regions) and the capital, Minsk. They organised master classes and open training sessions for children and difficult teenagers, and visited amateur teams and clubs. And most importantly, in each region they played football, showing that the number one sport unites people of all ages, men and women alike. The ambassadors were shown great support by fans and received a particularly warm welcome in small towns where such important guests are something of a rarity. Children queued for autographs and photographs. The new artificial pitches are a great source of pleasure to children in small towns too. In some places, the local population actively helped with the construction work as much as they could.

More than 2,500 balls and 2,000 items of sports equipment were given out to children during grassroots football week.

Special attention was also paid to football and second world war veterans, who were honoured by the grassroots football ambassadors.

23 May was the final day of grassroots football week and the day when the Belarus Cup final between BATE Borisov and Torpedo Zhodino was played at the Dinamo stadium in Minsk. BATE won 5-0.

It should be also mentioned that Belarusian club Amatar was recognised by UEFA as the best grassroots club in Europe.

At the final press conference dedicated to grassroots football week, the BFF president, Gennady Nevyglas, thanked the authorities of the regions, the ministry of sport, the ministry of education and everyone else who had supported the event, and said that the BFF would be organising more such weeks in the future. ■

Yulia Zenkovich

BELGIUM



Georges Leekens reunited with the Red Devils

Following the unexpected departure of Dutchman Dick Advocaat, the Royal Belgian Football Association (URBSFA) found itself looking for a new head coach for its national team, the Red Devils. The man put in charge of the search was Philippe Collin, chairman of the URBSFA's technical committee. His task was to find a coach who was already totally familiar with Belgian football, someone who would be able to hit the ground running, assessing current playing resources and putting together a competition-ready team in time for the next major challenge,

where the participants were set a quiz. After the lesson, Michele Cox answered the girls' questions and presented them with souvenirs.

The AFFA is providing the conditions and opportunities for girls to display their talent and football skills, and is delighted that girls' football is attracting more attention and gaining in popularity. ■

Mikayil Narimanoghlu

the first EURO 2012 qualifier, against Germany on 3 September.

The search ended on 11 May, with the appointment of Georges Leekens, who has amassed a vast wealth of experience in Belgian club football, where he has earned a stellar reputation. He also enjoyed a previous spell in charge of the national team, between 1997 and 1999, guiding the Red Devils to the 1998 World Cup finals and leading them to victory in the Kirin Cup the following year. This hugely seasoned practitioner should certainly be capable of moulding the many young talents in the current Belgium squad into a formidable team.

At the press conference confirming his appointment, Georges Leekens expressed delight at his new role: *"I'm proud to be taking on this job as I love the Belgian national team. I have inherited a very talented group of young players. I realise, of course, that quality alone is not enough; a team also has to have a fantastic mentality – it must demonstrate intelligence on the pitch and it must be well organised. Whenever they pull on a Red Devils shirt, the players need to show a positive attitude and they need to show passion. I'm ambitious, and we will be working hard together to qualify for a major international tournament again."*

In their first match under Georges Leekens, the Red Devils rewarded the enthusiasm of their new coach with a 2-1 home victory in a friendly against Bulgaria. While it might not have been the most convincing of performances, the team showed mental resilience in overturning a 1-0 deficit and securing a win at the very end of the game, to ensure that Georges Leekens' second spell in charge got off to an auspicious start. ■

Pierre Cornez

Belgium

Georges Leekens (centre), new head coach of Belgium's Red Devils



Photo News



Bosnia-Herzegovina
Grassroots Day in Sarajevo

F. Kravac

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA



One president instead of three

After the conclusion of the Bosnia-Herzegovina premier league, a joint visit by UEFA and FIFA to the FA of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FF BH) attracted great attention. The visitors met representatives of the national and entity football federations, as well as members of the FF BH presidency, regulatory commission, executive board, FF Federation of BiH and FF entity of the Republic of Srpska concerning the revision of the FF BH constitution.

Those that attended these different meetings expressed different opinions and proposals, especially on the key questions of leadership and decision-making processes in FF BH bodies, all with the same aim of finding the best solutions acceptable to all parties.

One important possible change concerns the future leadership of the FF BH, whereby there would be one president instead of a three-member presidency. The FF BH is the only football association in the world to have three rotating presidents instead of a single president.

In other news, the new league champions are Zeljeznicar from Sarajevo, who last won the championship eight years ago. At the end of the first half of the season, Zeljeznicar were in fifth place, with seven fewer points

than the leaders, Siroki Brijeg. At the end of the season, Amar Osim's team had obtained five points more than Siroki Brijeg. It is Zeljeznicar's fourth league title in all, after their previous triumphs in 1998, 2001 and 2002. In 1971/72 Zeljeznicar were champions of the former Yugoslavia.

The top scorer in the league was Fedja Dudic from Travnik with 16 goals. Samir Bekric from Zeljeznicar was named best player – he played all 30 matches and scored 15 goals with the same number of assists.

The winners of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Cup are Borac Banja Luka. In the final, Borac played Zeljeznicar over two legs, first at home (1-1), and then at the Grbavica stadium (2-2). Thanks to the away goal difference, the team from Banja Luka won the trophy. It is the first Bosnia-Herzegovinian trophy for Borac, who won the Yugoslavian Cup back in 1987/88. Zeljeznicar will take part in the UEFA Champions League qualifiers, while Borac Banja Luka, Siroki Brijeg and Zrinjski Mostar will be vying for places in the UEFA Europa League.

Finally, Sarajevo won the Bosnia-Herzegovina Junior Cup.

On 19 May, the Zetra Olympic complex in Kosevo hosted Grassroots Day activities. A sizeable number of boys and girls played several matches and took part in different exercises.

A UEFA delegate has been to inspect the stadiums in Zenica and Sarajevo in order to assess the possibilities for developing their infrastructure in order from them to fulfil the criteria to become UEFA Category 3 stadiums and therefore acceptable for EURO 2012 qualifiers. ■

Fuad Kravac

BULGARIA



Amateurs meet professionals

In April, the first edition of Amateurs Meet Professionals – an amateur football competition organised by the leading beer brand in Bulgaria in 2009, Ariana, in exclusive partnership with the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) – got under way, with non-professional football teams competing for the prize of a match against the 2010 Bulgarian champions. The competition continues until the beginning of July.

All amateur football teams were invited to take part. The matches are taking place on a regional basis in ten cities across the country on ten weekends. The winners of each regional heat go through to the final tournament, which will decide which amateur team will have the privilege of playing the Bulgarian champions.

The competition takes the non-professional football game to a new level, giving amateur

Cyprus FA for the campaign: 'All colours are the same'.

The match selected for the campaign was Apolonia Nicosia FC v Apollon Limassol FC, held at the G.S.P stadium, where, before kick-off, the two teams walked on to the pitch together, accompanied by the referees and escorted by academy players from both teams holding a banner and all wearing T-shirts with the anti-racism logo and motto.

2009/10 concluded with AC Omonia Nicosia winning the championship. They will now represent our country in the 2010/11 UEFA Champions League.

In next season's UEFA Europa League, Cyprus will be represented by three clubs: Apolonia Nicosia FC (league runners-up), Anorthosis Famagusta FC (third in the league) and Apollon Limassol FC, this season's cup winners.

The season ended on a significant milestone, with over 600,000 people having attended league matches – a number that is almost equal to the population of the island!

The new season will kick off in late August, on the weekend of 28/29 August to be precise, when 14 clubs will embark on the new league championship. It will be the fourth year in a row that the championship will have been played in two stages: the regular season followed by play-offs. ■

Kyriakos Giorgallis

CYPRUS



All colours are the same

The Cyprus FA fully supports UEFA's massive efforts to counter racist behaviour. In this respect, on the last matchday of its 2009/10 season it organised a big anti-racism campaign.

Through the association's website, the president of the Cyprus FA, Costakis Koutsokoumnis, delivered a clear message to everyone involved, in order to promote the campaign.

At one of the major matches on the last day of the championship, anti-racism billboards were posted at key areas of the stadium, anti-racism guides were distributed to the teams and their officials, and information was also handed out to the supporters. All bore the motto/message chosen by the

Cyprus
National anti-racism campaign on the last day of the championship



CFA



BFU

Bulgaria
Giving Bulgarian amateurs the chance to play against the domestic champions

teams a unique opportunity to compete with the best footballers in Bulgaria. The competition's ambassadors are the manager of the Bulgarian national team, Stanimir Stoilov, as a former professional football player, and the actor Krasimir Radkov, known for his role as a popular amateur footballer.

As an official partner of Amateurs Meet Professionals, the BFU provides the referees and delegates for the competition in order to ensure that matches are played according to the highest possible standards. ■

Pavel Kolev

ENGLAND



FA youth coach training in Malawi

The Football Association (FA) headed to Africa in May as the continent prepared to host its first ever FIFA World Cup.

As part of the UEFA-CAF Meridian agreement, under which European associations partner selected African counterparts, The FA ran two modules of its Youth Award in Malawi.

FA instructors Ted Dale and Alex Watson led 36 youth coaches from across Malawi through the two courses, combining practical sessions with theory, to help them understand their players as well as the game. The modules covered themes such as motivation, self-esteem and age and maturity issues.

England
The difficult conditions did not dampen the participants' enthusiasm.



The FA

"The enthusiasm demonstrated by the Malawian coaches and their obvious love for the game of football allows them to work under very challenging circumstances," said Alex.

"Youngsters playing with moulded plastic bottles in the shape of a ball is the norm, as footballs are not widely available to youngsters," he added.

The FA has been working with the Malawi Football Association (FAM) for a number of years and both parties are pleased with the success of

DENMARK



Danish players go back to the (grass)roots

The Danish national A team went back to their roots in a national event just before travelling to South Africa, where the team is playing in the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Twenty-six players visited their childhood football clubs and schools as part of the national Back to the (Grass)roots event.

The Danish Football Association (DBU) and the 26 players in the preliminary squad for the World Cup had a busy day on Thursday 20 May. In a grand-scale national event, all 26 national team players spent a day away from the pitch and instead visited their old schools, shopping centres and football clubs in all parts of the country.

The visits were all part of the Back to the (Grass)roots and 1 GOAL campaigns, the latter consisting of cooperation between the DBU and the humanitarian organisation IBIS. It is part of the Global Campaign for Education, a worldwide educational campaign supported by FIFA which promotes education for all.

"We are very lucky in Denmark, where we have a very good and flexible educational system. But there are, unfortunately, millions of children around the world who never go to school. We are delighted to be able to help the world understand and be aware of the fact that there are still children in the world who don't even learn how to read," says Danish midfielder Jakob Poulsen, who is an ambassador for the Danish campaign.

The DBU and the national A team have a tradition of working with humanitarian

CZECH REPUBLIC



Cooperation with the fans

On Tuesday 4 May, a contract concerning cooperation between the CMFS (Football Association of the Czech Republic) and its fan club was signed by their respective representatives: Ivan Hasek, president of the CMFS, and Lubomir Mikolajsky, president of the fan club.

The contract represents an important step towards improving cooperation and the allocation of tickets to the fan club (20% of stadium capacity). The contract also names former Czech international Vladimir Smicer as the fan club's ambassador.

Since the launch of the fan club one month ago, it has registered over 1,500 members. ■

Kamil Vesely



Per Kjaerbye

Denmark
Danish international Christian Eriksen visiting his old school

organisations and other NGOs on social and health issues when participating in FIFA and UEFA finals. It is the first time, however, that footballers and organisations have joined up to create awareness of the important right of education for all children. It is hoped that using a global sports event such as the FIFA World Cup will be a very effective way of making sure that the education for all message is spread worldwide.

In all, 120 nations are participating in the campaign. ■

Pia Schou Nielsen

all workshops, the latest being no exception. Walter Nyamilandu-Manda, president of the FAM, was particularly delighted with the outcome.

"It was a fantastic course and an eye-opener for the young coaches. They highly valued the knowledge gained," he said.

Suzgo Nyirenda, the FAM's administration manager, added: *"The course really sharpened the coaches' skills and tactics and we are confident that the youth leagues will be very competitive this year."* ■

Maria de Leon



Germany

An impressive backdrop for the first match of the national blind team

and relying on the sound made by the specially adapted ball, he broke free of the scramble and scored off the woodwork. Midway through the second half of Germany's first home blind football international, Turkey had actually been ahead, but Ulrich Pfisterer's team fought back with great determination and discipline.

"I'd given up any hope of winning," said Wahl, who had struggled with cramp in the first half and been sent to the physio at half-time. "Playing here is a great honour for blind football. Our team thank the parliament, because we know that other athletes would also love to compete here in front of the Reichstag," the 29-year-old added.

"The players' performance was impressive. I had not expected this standard of play. What's more, you could sense their enthusiasm throughout," said Thomas Bach, president of Germany's national Olympic committee, who followed the match alongside many other leading politicians.

The president of the German parliament, Norbert Lammert, opened the day of blind football in front of the Reichstag, and Thomas

de Maizière, minister of the interior, presented a special prize to VfB Gelsenkirchen on behalf of the German chancellor and patron of the event, Angela Merkel. The award was in recognition of the integration of blind and visually impaired athletes into the club. The vice-president of the German FA, Karl Rothmund, hoped that it would send out a positive message: "We want to encourage as many clubs as possible to involve and integrate blind footballers." He also said that the German FA was considering organising a blind football match ahead of either the 2011 women's cup final or the national A team's next benefit match. ■

Thomas Hackbarth

In addition to its four World Cup titles (1934, 1938, 1982 and 2006), the Italian national team – which recently played its 700th match (a friendly against Cameroon) – has also won a European Championship (1968) and one Olympic gold medal (1936).

As part of the centenary celebrations, the FIGC has organised a travelling exhibition that pays tribute to the men whose football feats have inspired so much passion in millions of Azzurri fans over the last 100 years.

Among the exhibits are shirts from historic matches, football boots worn over the last 60 years, historic documents and publications, replicas of the current World Cup trophy and the old Jules Rimet trophy, and a ball dating from 1890, as well as those used at the World Cups of 1970, 1982 and 1994.

Organised in conjunction with the Italian Football Museum, which is housed at the FIGC's national training centre at Coverciano, outside Florence (the 'university' of Italian football), the exhibition will be embarking on a tour of Italy's regions. The aim is to ensure that as many fans as possible, young and old alike, are able to enjoy the exhibition and discover more about the roots of Italy's national game. Among the most precious shirts featured are the one that was worn by Giovanni Ferrari in Italy's first World Cup final triumph in 1934, and the one worn by the current Azzurri captain, Fabio Cannavaro, when he lifted the trophy in Berlin in July 2006. ■

Barbara Moschini



Italy
The page published in the Italian press on 15 May.

GERMANY



Successful home debut: national blind football team beats Turkey

The German blind football team beat Turkey 3-2 in their home debut. The match, which was played on an artificial pitch in front of the Berlin Reichstag, was the dramatic climax to an exciting day dedicated to blind football. The German Football Association's Sepp Herberger Foundation organised the event in conjunction with the German disability sports association (DBS) and the German association for blind and visually impaired people (DBSV).

Michael Wahl from Cologne scored the winning goal with three minutes left on the clock. Cheered on by a 1,000-strong crowd

HUNGARY



100 years since the first Hungarian Cup final

The Hungarian championship began in 1901, while the Magyar Kupa (Hungarian Cup) was launched in the 1909/10 season. Because of the world wars and other effects of 20th century history, the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) has held only 70 cup finals during these 100 years.

On 25 May, to commemorate that first final 100 years ago, the MLSZ inaugurated a plaque at its headquarters. Representatives of all the winning teams were invited and the plaque was unveiled by Ferenc Nemes, vice-president, and Tamás Szekeres, director of the national teams department, who is a record holder, having won seven Hungarian Cups during his career.



ITALY



National team celebrates centenary

On 15 May, Italy's national team celebrated its 100th birthday. The president of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), Giancarlo Abete, kicked off the celebrations at Milan Arena's Palazzina Appiani, the very place where Italy played its first ever match on 15 May 1910. Playing in white shirts, they defeated their transalpine neighbours, France, 6-2. The familiar azure strip only made its first appearance in their third match, when it was chosen in honour of the Savoy royal family. There have been many subsequent encounters with France over the years, most notably that famous night in Berlin in 2006, which produced a fourth World Cup title and earned the Azzurri the first ever FIFA world champions badge.

Debreceni VSC wrote history as they won the cup 3-2 against Zalaegerszegi TE at Ferenc Puskás stadium to become the first ever Hungarian team to win all the major domestic titles (league cup, championship, Hungarian Cup) in one season. László Gyetvai took the starting kick at the stadium, as the oldest surviving player to have won the Magyar Kupa, which he achieved in 1943 with Ferencváros. ■

Márton Dinnyés

Hungary

Rain did not stop László Gyetvai from kicking off the final.



Liechtenstein

Some of the girls' football day participants

The girls were constantly joining in or dropping out. 'Random football' only took place for half an hour, as the girls also wanted to do other things. The tournament leaders went with the flow and, among other activities, also organised a normal football match and penalty kicks. After a leisurely break, the girls practised their passing and finishing skills. The afternoon ended with another match, this time between the girls and four non-footballers.

Girls' football day will certainly be repeated, so here's to girl power on the football field! ■

Anton Banzer

LIECHTENSTEIN



Girls' football day

Despite the cold weather in Vaduz and Eschen, the first ever girls' football day to be organised by the Liechtenstein Football Association attracted a good number of participants on 19 May. The main activity of the day was 'random football', an amusing alternative to conventional football tournaments. Two upper-form grammar school classes were responsible for the smooth running of the tournament; they made sure everybody played by the rules and provided refreshments.

In Eschen, 17 girls took part in the event, with another 16 in Vaduz. From 14.00 to 17.00 hours, with short breaks, the girls – divided into two teams at each venue – played 'random football', where a dice was thrown before each match to determine the number of players in each team. So, a match could have been 5 v 5, 3 v 1, 2 v 5, 1 v 6, 6 v 6, etc. When a goal was scored, or after two minutes at the most, the dice was thrown again, so the players were continually going on and off the field. In Vaduz, more than 100 goals were scored during the three hours. It was terrific fun, as could be seen from the girls' faces.

Although it did not go according to plan, the tournament in Eschen was just as exciting.

MOLDOVA



FC Sheriff win Moldova Cup

The final of the Moldova Cup sponsored by Orange opposed on 30 May the champions, FC Sheriff Tiraspol, and the fifth-placed team in the national championship, FC Dacia Chisinau. After a hard-disputed match, FC Sheriff emerged as winners on a final score of 2-0. Both goals were scored by Brazilian striker Jymmy Franca after 27 and 52 minutes.

The match was attended by the president of Moldova, Mihai Ghimpu, who shook hands before the start of the game with the players from both teams and the match officials.

At the official ceremony after the match, the Sheriff captain, Vazha

Moldova

Sheriff's captain, Vazha Tarkhnishvili, lifts the Moldovan Cup.



Tarkhnishvili, received the trophy from the president of the FA of Moldova, Pavel Cebanu.

It is the seventh time that FC Sheriff have won the domestic cup competition in eight appearances in the final, while it was FC Dacia's third cup final, but without success so far.

2009/10 was a very successful season for FC Sheriff Tiraspol. The team formerly led by

MALTA



The end of an administrative season

The 2009/10 administrative season will come to an end with the imminent annual general meeting of the Malta Football Association (MFA) council, an event which this year has as its focal point the election of the association's president for the next three-year term.

It has been a busy season, sealed by the celebrations to commemorate 100 years of national competitions and 50 years since the MFA became a full member of FIFA and UEFA.

Administratively, the association has also been busy, with regular meetings of the council and the executive committee as well as those of several boards, all ensuring the proper functioning of the whole network.

Projects carried out within the framework of UEFA's assistance programmes were the mainstay of the season. These included projects to improve club facilities around the country, the upgrading of the national stadium complex and the building of a national grassroots centre next to the national stadium.

Meanwhile, and as is the practice every year, the association has already laid the groundwork for the coming administrative and competitive seasons to ensure a smooth continuation. ■

Alex Vella

FYR MACEDONIA



Honours for FK Renova

Although they were unable to finish the season with a 100% unbeaten home record, having lost against FC Rabotnicki in the last match, FK Renova, a club from Dzepciste, near Tetovo, nevertheless won the league championship for the first time in the club's history.

FK Renova's success is proof that in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia it is not important which town a club comes from, but it needs to have a good organisation, solid financial stability and the right infrastructure.

With their win in Tetovo, FK Rabotnicki proved that they deserved to finish the league in the runners-up spot.

As champions, FK Renova will play in the qualifying phase of the UEFA Champions League, while FK Rabotnicki and FK Metalgur will play the UEFA Europe League qualifiers, as will the eventual winners of the national cup.

FK Milano from Kumanovo will play for survival in the first division in a play-off against the team that finishes fourth in the second division. ■

Zoran Nikolovski



FYR Macedonia

The league champions, FK Renova



Malta

Pembroke Athleta's ground was built with the help of UEFA's HatTrick programme.

Belarusian coach Leonid Kuchuk and since January 2010 by Andrei Sasnitski reached the group stage of UEFA Europe League for the first time. Then, on 2 May, four rounds before the end of the Moldovan championship, the club from Tiraspol won the league title for the tenth time in row. Last but not least came victory in the Moldovan cup final. Now the thoughts of the Sheriff players and technical staff are firmly focused on the UEFA Champions League. "Our main goal is to reach the group stage of the Champions League or to qualify for the Europa League," Sasnitski says. ■

Press office

NETHERLANDS



Top League to go ahead

After many years of discussions and deliberations, the Top League will finally become a reality in August. The Top League comprises two separate top national leagues of 16 clubs, one intended for clubs which prefer to play on Saturdays and the other for those that prefer Sundays, as non-professional football in the Netherlands still recognises the distinct wish of a number of amateur clubs to restrict their football activities to Saturdays and thereby respect Sunday as the day of rest.

This current season therefore saw the end of the three first Saturday and Sunday divisions as the peak of the football pyramid at amateur level. The top four clubs from each of the three first divisions were promoted to the Top League automatically, whereas numbers five and six had a chance to qualify through play-offs. The move, supported by all stakeholders, has caused an upheaval in amateur football, with more teams than ever being promoted from the lower ranks to fill the subsequent gaps left by the introduction of the Top League.

This revolutionary step is the first major change in Dutch domestic football since the introduction of professional football in 1954. Ever since then, there has been a strict distinction between professional and amateur football. With the introduction of the Top League, the lowest ranked team in the first division (the second tier in professional football) will be relegated to the Top League, whereas the winner of the play-off between the winners of the Saturday and Sunday Top Leagues earns the right to be promoted to the next level up, the first division of professional football. ■

Rob de Leeede

SCOTLAND



CPISRA European Championships

The Scottish FA has announced the former international striker, Darren Jackson, as tournament ambassador for the 2010 CPISRA European Championships, which will be held from 17 to 28 August at the Toryglen regional football centre in Glasgow.

The Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CPISRA) is the world governing body for cerebral palsy (CP) football. It awarded the 2010 CPISRA European Championships to Glasgow in August last year and the city will welcome nine European countries along with a guest nation, Australia.

Northern Ireland
Nigel Worthington is encouraging youngsters to sign up for the summer soccer schools.

NORTHERN IRELAND



A summer full of football fun!

Northern Ireland's manager, Nigel Worthington, has given his backing to the Irish FA's Nutty Krust Summer Soccer Schools Programme, which will run during July and August. Coordinated by the IFA's grassroots development officers and staffed by qualified coaches, the soccer schools are the ideal way to get children active over the summer months. The schools, which are for children aged six and over, will be run at venues across the country and be attended by thousands of children.

"The summer soccer schools provide boys and girls with an excellent opportunity to learn new skills and develop as players," said Nigel. "The programme is a vital component in the Irish FA's grassroots strategy and by introducing children to the game at an early age and providing them with a fun and positive experience will hopefully in turn generate an interest which will keep them involved in football for life."

Republic of Ireland

The Irish national team visit the new Lansdowne Road stadium



Encouraging budding young players from across the country to take part in this year's programme, he added: "I would encourage all boys and girls to go along to their local IFA summer soccer school. The coaches will help you improve all aspects of your game. To improve as a player, it is important that you listen to the coaches on schemes like this, as they have the experience and knowledge of what is needed to make you a better player. And as well as learning new skills, you will also make new friends and have loads of fun playing football." ■

Danielle Dunbar

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



Dublin Arena opens its doors

The Dublin Arena, which will host the 2011 UEFA Europa League final, was officially opened by the Irish prime minister, Brian Cowen, at Lansdowne Road, Dublin, in May. The stadium, which will be the new home of Ireland's international rugby and football teams, is a joint venture by the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU). Funding of €191 million was provided by the government for the project, which came in at slightly under the budgeted figure of €410 million.

"It was a scary time but I was totally focused on getting the operation done and playing again. I appreciate the strength that football gave me at that time and the support network it provided me with. That's why I'm backing the championships and the Scottish FA's drive to recruit more players for their CP programme."

Stuart Sharp, the Scottish FA's national development manager for disability, is delighted to have someone like Darren on board.

"It's fantastic to have Darren here today as he will enhance the profile of the sport. We need the public to be aware of all the opportunities that exist for people with disabilities to play football, whether at recreational, regional or national level." ■

Chris Irving

SWEDEN



New development for the magazine

Since 2002 the Swedish FA has published a quarterly magazine called *Magasinet Fotboll* to showcase its activities from grassroots level up to the national teams. The magazine is distributed to all clubs, officials and football representatives, as well as to the media. Recently the magazine has branched out to include a web-TV format, with a series of monthly programmes being produced and published through the official website. Interviews with FA representatives on current subjects are mixed with player profiles and short highlights from most of Sweden's international games (from U16 to senior level). The programmes are each around 30 minutes long and can be seen online at: svenskfotboll.se/webb-tv.

The Swedish FA was honoured to co-host a UEFA KISS (knowledge and information sharing scenario) workshop on communication and media in Stockholm on 27/28th May. Participants from 23 UEFA member associations took part in seminars and discussions regarding media training, crisis management and other subjects of mutual interest. Many thanks to the UEFA KISS team and to all those involved in making the workshop a success. ■

Andreas Nilsson

Planning permission for the new stadium was received in March 2007, with work on the site beginning two months later, in May 2007, with the demolition of the old Lansdowne Road stadium. From the start of demolition through to the handing over of the stadium to the FAI and IRFU, the project took slightly less than three years to complete.

The result is a state-of-the-art 50,000 all-seater stadium which, while making a bold architectural statement, does not impact environmentally on the Dublin skyline. The stadium, which is on four levels on three sides, sweeps down to one level at the northern end, to reflect its proximity to the housing at that end of the ground.

In the first football fixture at the new stadium, an Airtricity League team will play Manchester United on 4 August, while for the first international to be held there, Ireland will welcome former world champions Argentina on 11 August. ■

Fran Whearty

WALES



Former Welsh women's international gains UEFA licence

The former Welsh women's international Kath Morgan has become the first female Welsh coach to earn a UEFA A licence.

Kath won 51 caps in a distinguished playing career and is now working as a full-time

SWITZERLAND



Huggel and Doumbia named players of the year

At the 13th Night of Swiss Football, celebrated at the Culture and Congress Centre in Berne, the forthcoming FIFA World Cup in South Africa was at the front of everyone's minds as the best players of 2009/10 received their trophies in the presence of the entire Swiss national team and other prominent figures from the worlds of politics, business and sport.

Swiss football fans had voted for the winners of the two main categories. As a result, FC Basel 1893 midfielder Benjamin Huggel (32), who helped his club to the double this season, was named best Swiss international of the year, beating fellow nominees Stéphane Griching (AJ Auxerre), Gökhan Inler (Udinese Calcio) and Stephan Lichtsteiner (S.S. Lazio).

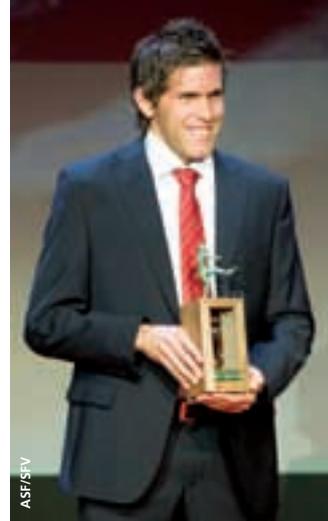
Meanwhile, Seydou Doumbia (22) of Expo Super League runners-up BSC Young Boys was named best footballer in Switzerland for the second year running. The Ivorian striker, who with 30 goals this season also earned his second consecutive top scorer title, received more votes than his team-mate Marco Wölfli and FC Basel's Benjamin Huggel and Marco Streller.

In the six other categories – cup team of the year, youth player of the year, coach of the year, referee of the year, female player of the year, and the brand new 'fair player' of the year – the winners were selected by a jury comprising members of the Swiss Football Association (SFV) and the Swiss Football League (SFL).

The cup team of the year award went to Challenge League team FC Lausanne-Sport, who were runners-up in this season's national cup competition. In the youth player of the

Switzerland

Benjamin Huggel was elected best national team player of 2009/10.



year category, the SFL club coaches and SFV national team coaches gave the award to 18-year-old midfielder Xherdan Shaqiri, who in 2009/10 secured himself a place in FC Basel's first team, lifted the double in his first season in the Super League, made the leap into the national A team and earned himself a place in the squad travelling to South Africa for the World Cup finals.

SFV coach Dany Ryser of Solothurn was named coach of the year, having created a sensation by winning the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Nigeria, and – for the sixth year in a row – Massimo Busacca from Ticino was awarded the title of referee of the year. He also recently became the first Swiss referee to be named the world's referee of the year.

Caroline Abbé of FC Yverdon Féminin was named Swiss female player of the year. The 22-year-old defender has already won 43 caps and scored the winning goal in the women's cup final against BSC Young Boys to give Yverdon a 3-2 win. Finally, in a brand new category, Cristian Florin Ianu (26) of FC Luzern was awarded the title of 'fair player' of the year. Statistically, the second-best goalscorer in the league this season had the best fair play record. ■

Pierre Benoit

Wales

Kath Morgan, the first female Welsh coach to obtain a UEFA licence



teacher in South Wales whilst working with various club teams. She has also been involved with the backroom staff of the current Welsh women's set-up.

We hope that she will be a trailblazer for others to follow in the future. All at the Football Association of Wales and the Welsh Football Trust send their warmest congratulations to Kath. ■

Ceri Stennett

TURKEY



Breaking down disability barriers

The Turkish Football Federation (TFF) development centre, which has implemented countless projects and activities to give disabled youngsters the opportunity to play football, has just run its Breaking Down the Disability Barriers Festival for the second year in a row. Having taken place in 14 cities in 2009, this year it was extended to 27 cities and attracted some 8,000 participants. From 10 to 16 May, four disability groups joined in various football activities. The festival proved again that obstacles cannot stand in the way of sport and that football is for all. The TFF is making a significant effort to enable children and adults to play football whatever their disability and to remove all the barriers that prevent football from encompassing the whole of society. ■

Altug Soyutuna

Communications

Birthdays – Calendar

Birthdays in July

Giuseppe Mifsud-Bonnici (Malta), member of the circle of former committee members, turns 80 on 17 July. Domingos Gomes Dias (Portugal), doping control officer, celebrates his 70th birthday on 3 July, as does Antonio Matarrese (Italy), member of the circle of former committee members, on 4 July. Alfred Ludwig (Austria), member of the National Team Competitions Committee, and Jacob Erel (Israel), match delegate, both turn 60 on 26 July.

UEFA also wishes many happy returns in July to:

- Erkki Poroila (Finland, 1.7)
- Frédéric Thiriez (France, 1.7)
- Ton Verhagen (Netherlands, 1.7)
- Frank De Bleckere (Belgium, 1.7)
- Marinus Koopman (Netherlands, 2.7)
- Roland Ospelt (Liechtenstein, 4.7)
- Neale Barry (England, 4.7)
- Valentin Ivanov (Russia, 4.7)
- Raymond Kennedy (Northern Ireland, 8.7)
- Martin Maleck (Switzerland, 8.7)
- Yordan Letchkov (Bulgaria, 9.7)
- Murad Mammadov (Azerbaijan, 10.7)
- Ilija Stoilov (FYR Macedonia, 11.7)
- Edo Trivkovic (Croatia, 11.7)
- Günter Benkö (Austria, 12.7)
- Carlo Tavecchio (Italy, 13.7)
- Maria Teresa Costa (Portugal, 13.7)
- Vladimír Petr (Slovakia, 15.7)
- Ben Veenbrink (Netherlands, 15.7)
- Johannes Malka (Germany, 16.7)
- Ernst Nigg (Liechtenstein, 16.7)
- Lars Lagerbäck (Sweden, 16.7)
- Jiri Ulrich (Czech Republic, 16.7)
- Alistair MacLean (England, 18.7)
- Vicente Muñoz Castello (Spain, 19.7)
- Paolo Pecorari (Italy, 19.7)
- Alfredo Trentalange (Italy, 19.7)
- Ernest Walker (Scotland, 20.7)
- Vladimir Radionov (Russia, 21.7)
- Boris Voskresensky (Ukraine, 22.7)
- Michel Wuilleret (Switzerland, 22.7)
- Nico Romeijn (Netherlands, 22.7)
- Balázs Makray (Hungary, 22.7)
- Bontcho Todorov (Bulgaria, 23.7)
- Pavel Malovic (Slovakia, 23.7)
- Haralampie Hadzi-Risteski (FYR Macedonia, 24.7)
- Mario Gallavotti (Italy, 25.7)
- Ferenc Ragadics (Hungary, 25.7)
- Arno P. Sargsyan (Armenia, 25.7)
- Adilbek Jaxybekov (Kazakhstan, 26.7)

- David I. Bowen (Northern Ireland, 26.7)
- Jeff Davis (England, 27.7)
- Björn Ahlberg (Sweden, 28.7)
- João Leal (Portugal, 30.7)
- Des Casey (Republic of Ireland, 31.7)
- Joël Wolff (Luxembourg, 31.7)
- Cenk Cem (Turkey, 31.7)

Birthdays in August

Enrique Gonzalez Ruano (Spain), member of the circle of former committee members, celebrates his 80th birthday on 24 August.

Jean-Marc Puisseuseau (France), match delegate, turns 70 on 13th. Another match delegate, Peter Donald (Scotland), turns 60 on 8 August, followed by Joseph Mifsud (Malta), UEFA vice-president, on 13th, Giancarlo Abete (Italy), Executive Committee member, on 26th, and Leo Windtner (Austria), vice-chairman of the HatTrick Committee, on 30th. Aleh Chykun (Belarus), referee observer, celebrates his 50th on 5 August.

UEFA also wishes many happy returns for the month of August to:

- Sheila Begbie (Scotland, 1.8)
- Kimmo Lipponen (Finland, 1.8)
- Luciano Luci (Italy, 2.8)
- Mehmet Süheyl Önen (Turkey, 2.8)
- Andreas Schluchter (Switzerland, 3.8)
- Zdravko Jokic (Serbia, 4.8)
- Lamberto Perugia (Italy, 5.8)
- David A. Gill (England, 5.8)
- Piet Hubers (Netherlands, 6.8)
- Pierino L. G. Lardi (Switzerland, 7.8)
- Marcel Vanelschoot (Belgium, 8.8)
- Plarent Kotherja (Albania, 8.8)
- Olivier Henry (Belgium, 8.8)
- Florian Prunea (Romania, 8.8)
- Nico de Pauw (Belgium, 8.8)
- Odd Flattum (Norway, 9.8)
- Roy Hodgson (England, 9.8)
- Dr Urs Vogel (Switzerland, 11.8)
- Emil Kostadinov (Bulgaria, 12.8)
- Roger Vanden Stock (Belgium, 13.8)
- Cornel Cristian Bivolaru (Romania, 13.8)
- Jacques Lagnier (France, 16.8)
- Nils Skutle (Norway, 16.8)
- Bente Skogvang (Norway, 17.8)
- Danijel Jost (Slovenia, 18.8)
- Vitalijs Liholajs (Latvia, 19.8)
- Mordechai Shpigler (Israel, 19.8)
- Patricia Grégory (England, 19.8)
- Johannes Reijgwart (Netherlands, 19.8)
- Frantisek Laurinec (Slovakia, 19.8)

- Graham Hover (England, 19.8)
- Per Ravn Omdal (Norway, 20.8)
- Carmelo Bartolo (Malta, 21.8)
- Hasan Ceylan (Turkey, 22.8)
- Kazimierz Oleszek (Poland, 22.8)
- Geoffrey Thompson (England, 23.8)
- Ioannis Economides (Greece, 23.8)
- Demetrio Albertini (Italy, 23.8)
- David Delferiere (Belgium, 24.8)
- Nicolae Grigorescu (Romania, 24.8)
- Thomas Slosarich (Denmark, 24.8)
- Bert Andertsson (Sweden, 25.8)
- Regina Konink-Belksma (Netherlands, 26.8)
- Alexander Manfré (Malta, 27.8)
- Karl Hopfner (Germany, 28.8)
- Joseph McGlue (Rep. of Ireland, 28.8)
- Vincent Egbers (Netherlands, 29.8)
- Pedro Manuel Correia Magro (Portugal, 30.8)
- Christer Fällström (Sweden, 31.8)
- Christoph Kollmeier (Germany, 31.8)

Forthcoming events

Meetings

6.7.2010, Nyon

Draws for the preliminary and main rounds of the 2010/11 UEFA Futsal Cup

16.7.2010, Nyon

Draws for the third qualifying rounds of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League

6.8.2010, Nyon

Draws for the play-offs of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League

19.8.2010, Nyon

Draws for the rounds of 32 and 16 of the UEFA Women's Champions League

26.8.2010, Monaco

Club Competitions Committee
Draw for the group stage of the UEFA Champions League

27.8.2010, Monaco

Draw for the group stage of the UEFA Europa League
Professional Football Strategy Council

Competitions

1.7.2010

UEFA Europa League: first qualifying round (first legs)

6/7.7.2010

UEFA Champions League: first qualifying round (return legs)

8.7.2010

UEFA Europa League: first qualifying round (return legs)

**13/14.7.2010**

UEFA Champions League:
second qualifying round (first legs)

13.7–1.8.2010, Germany

U-20 Women's World Cup

15.7.2010

UEFA Europa League:
second qualifying round (first legs)

18-30.7.2010, France

European Under-19 Championship:
final tournament

20/21.7.2010

UEFA Champions League:
second qualifying round (return legs)

22.7.2010

UEFA Europa League:
second qualifying round (return legs)

27/28.7.2010

UEFA Champions League:
third qualifying round (first legs)

29.7.2010

UEFA Europa League:
third qualifying round (first legs)

3/4.8.2010

UEFA Champions League:
third qualifying round (return legs)

5.8.2010

UEFA Europa League:
third qualifying round (return legs)

5-10.8.2010

UEFA Women's Champions League:
qualifying round

14-26.8.2010, Singapore

Youth Olympic Games

14-22.8.2010

UEFA Futsal Cup: preliminary round

17/18.8.2010

UEFA Champions League:
play-offs (first legs)

19.8.2010

UEFA Europa League: play-offs (first legs)

24/25.8.2010

UEFA Champions League:
play-offs (return legs)

26.8.2010

UEFA Europa League: play-offs (return legs)

27.8.2010, Monaco

UEFA Super Cup

Notices

■ At the general meeting of the Austrian Football Association on 30 May, Leo Windtner was re-elected president for three years.

■ Three people have stepped down from UEFA committees, as they no longer hold an official office within their respective associations: Gordon Smith (Scotland, Football Committee), Erik Loe (Norway, Marketing Advisory Committee) and Jonathan Hill (England, Marketing Advisory Committee). They will not be replaced on the committees until 2011.

■ The next edition of *uefadirect* will be published at the end of August.

Match agents

Eleven match agents have received UEFA licences:

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Ronny Geson Gunnarsson (Norway) has had his licence renewed for eight years.

New publications

La Nazionale Italiana ai Campionati del Mondo

The Italian national football team is celebrating its centenary this year. Marco D'Avanzo and Gabriele Porri saw this as the perfect opportunity to put together a 120-page book of statistics on all the World Cup matches played by the Squadra Azzurra from 1934 to 2006. A general commentary is provided on each of Italy's World Cup campaigns, including – of course – the four that led to them victory (*Soccerdata – Via Mazzini 3/B, 21024 Biondronno, Italy – www.soccerdataweb.it*).



Le But Ultime

This book, written by radio presenter Gilles Bojan, recounts the story of Kamel, a young boy from a poor suburb, as he discovers and immerses himself in the world of football. From child's play to the professional game, from dreams of glory to the reality of injury, solitude and despair, Kamel's journey ultimately helps him to make sense of his life and identity in what is a spirited tribute to the beautiful game (*Editions de l'Homme Vrai, www.homme-vrai.com*).



WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



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

Chief editor: André Vieli

Produced by Atema Communication SA, CH-1196 Gland;
CO Créations, CH-1262 Eysins (News from member associations)

Printed by Artgraphic Cavin SA, CH-1422 Grandson

Editorial deadline: 11 June 2010

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

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www.fsc.org Cert no. SQ5-COC-100155
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