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Decisive matches

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The national associations are sparing no effort to improve their efficiency, and UEFA's assistance programmes are here to help them. In this issue, the Scottish and Finnish FAs report on what they are doing to modernise their governance structures.



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The UEFA Champions League group stage concludes at the beginning of December. By beating Naples at the start of November, Bayern (Frank Ribéry, in red, up against Juan Zuniga) moved one step closer to the knockout rounds, which Barcelona, AC Milan and Real Madrid were the first to reach.

Photo: Beier/Bongarts/Getty Images



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Financiers and supporters

What do football supporters and financiers have in common? The "euro" is liable to give them both sleepless nights – from excitement in the case of the football EURO, but from anxiety where the currency is concerned. So should we sit back and count ourselves lucky?

Absolutely not. While it is true that football is a source of refuge in times of crisis, the difficulties that European economies are facing will inevitably catch up with us in the end. It would therefore be wrong to bask in a false sense of security.

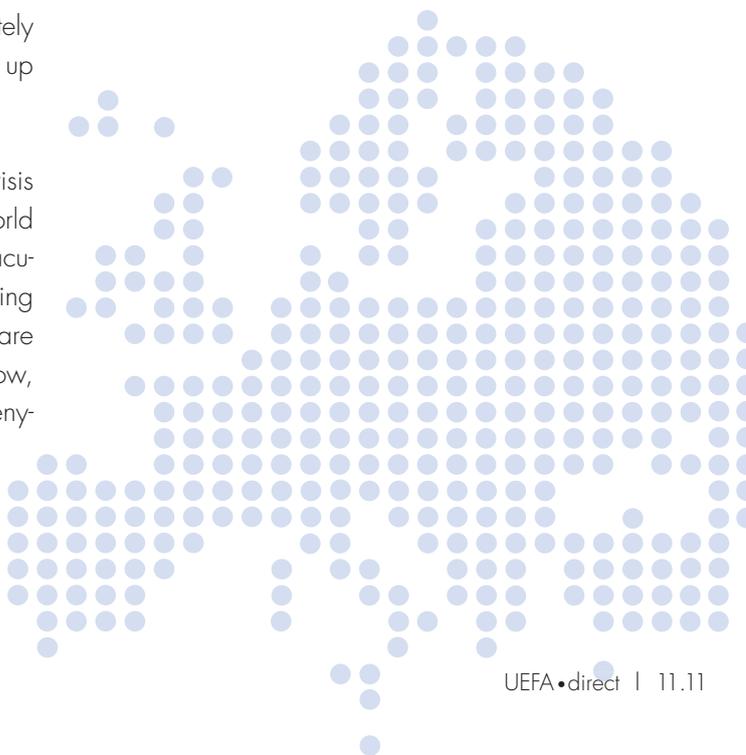
After all, we must not forget that the public form the bedrock of our sport. That is why broadcasters buy our rights and companies allocate us a large chunk of their marketing budgets, because their investment ultimately pays off through its impact on the public, who end up buying their products.

We can already see the negative effects of the crisis moving up the economic chain and affecting the world of football. Although these effects are not (yet) spectacular, they are nevertheless discernible. Players are going on strike, player unemployment is rising, some clubs are finding it hard to pay the wage bill, and so on. For now, these signs may not be ubiquitous, but there is no denying they exist.



UEFA is, of course, taking measures, but it must not be the only one to do so. The whole football family is affected. Everyone must assume their responsibilities and take action within their sphere of influence. Because an organism whose survival instincts, instead of being innate, must be instilled through rules and regulations will struggle on the evolutionary scale. Let us therefore make sure we all do whatever is needed to ensure that even the financiers can escape their anxieties on match night.

Gianni Infantino
UEFA General Secretary



New governance: leading the way

This year, the Scottish FA approved historic changes to its constitution by modernising its governance structure, which had appeared increasingly out of sync with the rampant evolution of Scottish football.



Campbell Ogilvie, president of the Scottish FA, and Stewart Regan, chief executive, are engaged in Scotland United: A 2020 Vision

The 12-strong board is now reduced to 7 and for the first time includes an independent member. More significant was the rewriting of the disciplinary procedures. After a season of high-profile challenges and criticism from member clubs and the media, it was decided the system needed a radical overhaul to reflect the demand for more efficient, transparent and legally watertight rules to govern the game. This won unanimous approval and put in motion the most significant modernisation programme in the Scottish FA's 128-year history, Scotland United: A 2020 Vision. This is the history behind the changes as well as the objectives, both in the short term, by 2015, and ultimately by the end of the decade. The UEFA HatTrick programme is crucial to achieving these objectives. The funding it offers will support four strategic

pillars: Perform and Win, Strong Quality Growth, Greater Financial Returns, and Respected and Trusted to Lead. Each has a Level 1 objective and a series of supplementary targets.

The Scottish FA has appointed its first ever performance director, Mark Wotte, to deliver in the area of Perform and Win. Key is the restoration of its national teams to major tournament finals, with the men's A squad not having qualified since the FIFA World Cup in France in 1998. The Scottish FA is in the process of setting up regional performance centres, with greater focus on expert coaching at key age groups. Wotte's first appointment was the highly respected former Manchester United and Sunderland coach, Ricky Sbragia, as national Under-17 team coach. Also, discussions with the Scottish Premier League and the Scottish Football League are under way to rejuvenate the youth league competition. This will culminate in the launch of Club Academy Scotland and a new elite tier added to the existing Performance and Initiative leagues. Entry for each will be based on club licensing criteria in line with the performance strategy. Wotte is also working with John Fleming, the Scottish FA's head of referee development, to ensure their match officials, male and female, continue to progress at FIFA, UEFA and domestic levels.

NEW GOVERNANCE

Mention football development and we first think of grassroots, operational or infrastructure improvements. All too often we overlook the obvious, which is a united and forward-thinking management plan. It is important to look inwards and ask ourselves the important questions. What can we do to improve our work ethic and company culture? Are the regulations in place today still right for our national game? How can we streamline football development in our country? The Finnish FA is already demonstrating tangible results. The Scottish FA is starting out on a new road and a better football for Scotland. UEFA wholeheartedly supports such projects and wishes them absolute success. ●



Former first minister of Scotland Henry McLeish presents his Review of Scottish Football to the Scottish FA

Quality in Growth ensures aspiring footballers have more quality access to football and can ultimately achieve the established "gold standard" of 10,000 hours of practice, widely recognised as essential for elite performance. Starting at the grassroots level, the performance strategy will dovetail with the renewed programme of football development activity. Jim Fleeting, the Scottish FA's director of football development, is working towards doubling the number of recreational football participants from the current figure of 65,000 to 130,000 over the next five years. He and his team have emulated the FIFA recruitment campaign and launched their own Big Count, with its first target of an additional 25,000 registered players by the end of the year well under way.

Better Financial Return is self-explanatory. A reduction in costs will be balanced by an increase in income. The broadcast deal with IMG assures £50 million over the next four years, and UEFA's centralisation of rights scheme will provide longer-term financial security to enable growth of the game at both elite and recreational levels.

The final pillar is being Respected and Trusted to Lead. The appointment of a compliance officer to oversee all disciplinary matters within the remit of the Judicial Panel protocols has brought greater confidence in the Scottish FA's ability to lead the game. Equity is essential to the new strategic plan, and an Equity Committee has been formed to ensure access for all. All messaging is now relayed through a variety of social media platforms, with the Scottish FA improving transparency and customer relations by driving brand-driven Facebook accounts (for Scotland national teams and the Scottish Cup), a corporate Twitter account and an international YouTube page. The new Scottish FA is founded on the values of trust, positivity, professionalism, respect, unity, passion and ambition. With the help of the UEFA Hat-Trick programme, its shared vision is a step closer to reality. ●

Approaching governance from a humanistic and shared angle

Proven results: In 2010, the Football Association of Finland launched an independent governance project under the banner of Holistic Strategic Management and Operational Efficiency of Football in Finland. It is a progressive strategy which not only addresses the basics of management but also approaches governance from a more humanistic and shared angle. The objective is simple but essential: to promote operational efficiency by implementing the Finnish FA's strategy plan 2010–13 across its 12 districts, all the way to club level.

Background: grassroots football in Finland is second to none, but still the Finnish FA wanted to increase its presence and resources at local level to achieve stronger club structures. In turn, this would bring good quality grassroots activities across the districts and support a brighter future for top clubs. Also part of the project are "back-office" communications with the districts, local clubs and communities, which are all strengthening everyday contact and knowledge sharing. This is working very well through web-based technology, such as the Football Helpdesk which was launched in January this year.

Significance: the project is not just about the implementation of a shared vision and goals, but also using shared management tools and scorecards to measure, track and push progress. The Finnish FA is already looking at nearly 50% of its districts applying strategic management tools. All scorecards will be defined by the end of this year, as well as a set of common measures to be defined from the main target areas of the overall strategy plan. All these steps are in tune with the association's absolute goal, which is for Finland to be among the top ten footballing nations at all levels by 2020.

Interactive meeting at Athens stadium

A fully interactive workshop for national association press officers and UEFA media officers took place at the end of October in Athens, with around 100 communications specialists attending the event at the Georgios Karaiskakis Stadium from Tuesday 25 to Thursday 27 October.

Organised by the UEFA's media relations unit together with the national associations division, under the auspices of KISS (Knowledge & Information Sharing Scenario), the three-day workshop was a unique opportunity to gather together all UEFA's 53 national association press officers together with the small group of specialised UEFA media officers working on its main competitions.

Best practices

The objective of the workshop was to discuss and share best practices in terms of proactive PR and media communication at a national association level, as well utilising the state-of-the-art facilities at the stadium to engage in a number of practical exercises to refresh skills such as handling media interviews, running press conferences and dealing with crisis situations in today's quick-moving media world.

Day one of the full workshop on Wednesday began with an introduction by UEFA's director of communications, Alexandre Fourtoy, after which the participants were reminded of some of the basic techniques of how to deal with TV interviews and presenting. Specialist external media agency College Hill were engaged to handle media training. During the course of the after-

noon, the group tried their hand at three different practical exercises, namely, handling and leading a press conference, conducting a studio interview and dealing with a crisis in a flash-style TV interview. All the practical exercises were conducted with specialists for feedback and according to pre-prepared scenarios.

A series of presentations

The second day on Thursday started with a presentation on the opportunities for national associations to engage the media in proactive PR, with reminders of how to "sell" a story to media and a presentation from UEFA of recent media activities conducted for the European Women's Under-17 final round in Nyon. This was followed by workshops with presentations run by the national associations themselves, including presentations on Governance of the FA, by the Scottish FA; Improving the Image of Referees, by the Israel FA; Promotion of the Regions' Cup, by the Portuguese FA; Crisis PR in Match Fixing, by the Finnish FA; Promotion of a Refereeing Project, by the Dutch FA; How to Attract New Young Players, by the Bulgarian FA; and The Development of Women's Football, presented by the Austrian FA. All of the workshops were well attended and led to open Q&A sessions at the end. The workshop had begun on Tuesday with a detailed one-day update on regulations and practical issues for the UEFA media officers.

The workshop ended at lunchtime on Thursday with the participants hopefully now able to return home with a new vigour for selling in good news stories and better armed to deal with the high pressure situations in today's football media.

Theodore Theodoridis, UEFA's director of national associations, said: "It's the first time we have brought the member associations' communications specialists together with the UEFA media officers, and this exchange of expertise is the exact purpose of the KISS programme. The media training sessions gave each participant the chance of a one-on-one review of their own skills in a variety of communications scenarios, which is so important in today's world of constant and fast-paced media attention." ●

Video analysis of a practical session



Dialogue with the supporters

Supporters are the lifeblood of football. They are a constant presence – while coaches, players and officials leave and join their club, they provide the crucial source of a club's identity and provide the atmosphere at stadiums as a match ebbs and flows.

Supporter liaison was the focal point in Berlin, where a pioneering workshop was held for supporter liaison officer (SLO) project coordinators from across Europe.

The new UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations stipulate that clubs will have to have an SLO in place from the start of the 2012/13 season to ensure a proper and constructive dialogue between clubs and their fans. The gathering held in Berlin on 13/14 October helped SLOs become familiar with the project and examine their roles at national and club levels. In return, the workshop helped UEFA enhance dialogue between national associations, clubs and fans and promote a positive supporter culture throughout football.

Improve the relations

Some 47 national football body project coordinators and experts came to Berlin, including club SLOs and security experts. *"I would like to underline the position of the Executive Committee in that we fully support all the activities of the SLO project,"* said František Laurinec, UEFA Executive Committee member, Stadium and Security Committee chairman and Club Licensing Committee deputy chairman. *"UEFA is an organisation with very professional operations but we still need to improve our relationship with supporters. We cannot allow a small minority to ruin the game and so cooperating with positive supporters will be key. This workshop is one step but I'm sure it is a step in the right direction."*

Handbook and toolkit

Various presentations linked supporter liaison and safety and security. Invaluable advice is contained in the new UEFA Supporter Liaison Officer Handbook (2011 edition), prepared by UEFA in close cooperation with Supporters Direct and club, league, association and supporter experts. The handbook is complemented by a document toolkit for use by national associations comprising templates and information sheets. Other guidance has been supplied, with video training tools made available to national associations via UEFA's Knowledge & Information Sharing Scenario (KISS) programme. A library of online supporter liaison resources is also in preparation for UEFA.com.

William Gaillard, senior adviser to the UEFA president, Michel Platini, said: *"Supporter liaison is all about relationship management. But supporter liaison is not just*



about safety and security; it's about giving supporters better opportunities to enjoy themselves. Clubs need to look at supporters in a different light and view them as people who can contribute. Without supporters there is no modern football, only entertainment."

"Unlike a player, a coach or an administrator, a fan has nowhere else to go," said Antonia Hagemann, head of European development at Supporters Direct. *"It's best for all concerned that the relationship between fans and their club is as good as it can be, the efforts made by both are not taken for granted and each makes the life of the other as good as it can be. We are really encouraged by the start to the SLO project."*

UEFA expressed the need for the project to grow organically – with national project coordinators considering the specific issues and environments of their clubs, and entering into dialogue with their clubs and supporters to decide how current best practice examples from across Europe can be spread and shared. ●

A new chairman

The UEFA Executive Committee elects members of the disciplinary bodies for a four-year term. The chairman of the Appeals Body for the 2011–15 period is Pedro Tomás Marqués of Spain, elected to replace Michel Wuilleret of Switzerland, who had occupied the post for eight years.

Pedro Tomás Marqués was born in Barcelona in 1949 and graduated in law at the university in the Catalan capital, in addition to earning qualifications in English, French and German at the Swiss school in Barcelona. At the age of 24, he began his legal career, specialising in labour legislation. Pedro describes his own footballing ability as “*little short of catastrophic*” and enjoyed greater success in basketball and futsal until knee and Achilles tendon injuries nudged him towards his current enthusiasm for golf. But he had been registered as a *socio* of RCD Espanyol at the age of 14 by his father, a chemistry graduate, who was an avid supporter, both spiritually and materially, of the Barcelona club. Like many of his generation, Pedro found inspiration in the Beatles and launched himself into music as a singer and guitarist.

In professional terms, the turning point came in 1978, when Manuel Meler, president of RCD Espanyol at the time, saw the young lawyer as a perfect replacement when the club’s long-serving general secretary retired. One of the salient features during a dozen years at the club was the role of stadium director during the 1982 FIFA World Cup finals, when the now demolished arena at Sarriá was the venue for memorable second-phase matches involving Argentina, Brazil and the eventual champions, Italy.

After leaving Espanyol in 1989, Pedro Tomás embarked on long spells as managing director, general secretary and president of Spain’s professional football league, and became vice-president of the board of directors at the Spanish national association in 2001. This ushered him across the threshold at UEFA, where he chaired the Professional Football Committee for four years, was founder and coordinator of the Association of European Professional Football Leagues, worked with former general secretary Gerhard Aigner on modifications to the UEFA Champions League, and was a member of working groups set up to establish and implement the UEFA licensing system and the statutes related to the status of players and international transfers.

In 2004, he was invited to become a member of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), based in Lausanne and, in 2006, he returned to RCD Espanyol for a three-year spell as chief executive – a position he combined with his role as board member at the Spanish national association.

“It’s a fantastic honour to chair the Appeals Body,” says Pedro Tomás, *“not least because it gives you the opportunity to work with renowned lawyers. The body obviously has to make judgements on a case by case basis, but the overall philosophy is to impart justice in a way which reflects UEFA’s commitment to the principles of respect.”*

Pedro Tomás expresses the desire that disciplinary codes should continue to be considered a highly relevant factor within the specificity of sport, and considers one of the challenges to be addressed with relish as analysing, in conjunction with the Control and Disciplinary Body, precise definitions of principles of conduct, the misconduct of individuals and clubs, and ways of dealing with recidivism. *“The ultimate aim,”* he says, *“would be to prepare a revised disciplinary code to present to the UEFA Congress – and then to apply it in the best possible way.”* ●



Support of EU sports ministers

UEFA's fight against match fixing keeps gathering high-level support as UEFA continues to raise the issue at opportune moments with EU politicians. On 13 October, the UEFA president, Michel Platini, attended the informal EU sports ministers' meeting in Krakow, Poland, and used the opportunity to urge the sport ministers to join forces with UEFA.

The UEFA president addressed the EU sport ministers just after the UEFA EURO 2012 play-off draw, conducted in Krakow the same day, and which the sports ministers also attended. He said: *"I am very hopeful, as there is real momentum in Europe for action. I was speaking at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg last month [September, ed.] when they voted in an important recommendation on match fixing. Now it's the European Union's turn to show what it can do. Together we can safeguard the future of European sport and European football."*

The UEFA president's speech underlined the importance of match fixing being criminalised and made a specific criminal offence, as is already the case in some EU member states, namely Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Poland and Portugal.

Recognition of rights

The UEFA president also called for recognition of sports organisers' property rights in the context of betting on their own competitions. He said: *"It is not legislation that I am asking for here. I am simply calling for the fair recognition of a right – the right of European football not to run the risk of becoming the victim, if not the slave, of online betting and organised crime."*

France is the first country in Europe to have enshrined this right in law. Ultimately, this property right ensures cooperation between sport organisers and betting companies, which leads to more transparency, better monitoring and control mechanisms, and can help put a stop to money laundering taking place through betting.

In addition, through this cooperation, betting companies could be contractually obliged to report irregular betting patterns and there could be closer cooperation between sports bodies and betting operators regarding the type of bets allowed.

Key step

The Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union has consistently highlighted the issue of match fixing during its six months at the helm of EU policy. This two-day meeting of EU sports ministers was a key step on the agenda of the Polish EU presidency, whose aim



The UEFA president and the Polish sports minister, Adam Giersz.

is to have the combating of match fixing included in the EU Council conclusions later this year. This would be a major development, as these conclusions shape the EU's future sports policy and the work programme of the EU executive body, in other words, the European Commission.

As noted by the European Commissioner responsible for sport, Androulla Vassiliou, at the Krakow meeting, the European Commission is also due to publish a study on match fixing early next year. It will focus on how the issue is dealt with in legislative terms in different countries. So it is fair to say that the issue of match fixing features strongly on the EU agenda, and UEFA will aim to ensure this remains the case in the future too. ●

Racism and discrimination

Success of FARE action weeks

UEFA once again contributed to the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination by lending its support to the action weeks organised by the Football Against Racism in Europe network (FARE) from 12 to 25 October.

UEFA used the high profile of its competitions, particularly the UEFA Champions League, to publicise the campaign. For example, the 32 teams competing in the Champions League matches played during the action week walked onto the pitch accompanied by children wearing Unite Against Racism T-shirts and the captains were invited to wear armbands bearing the same message. A video advert was also shown on the giant screens inside the stadiums and tannoy announcements

were made before kick-off.

Every year since 2001, the FARE network has tried to raise public awareness of the issues of racism, intolerance and discrimination, and the organisation coordinates events throughout Europe in order to spread the message of unity. The theme chosen for this year's action week was Football People and initiatives were taken by supporters, players, clubs and other organisations in more than 40 countries around Europe. ●



Integration through football

Project in Northern Ireland



Mutual respect for better integration

Under the banner of Respect and with the support of UEFA and various charitable organisations, the Irish Football Association has launched the Women's World United project.

This multicultural project has been developed over the course of the last two years and was launched in Belfast at the end of October at the European Women's Championship qualifying match between Northern Ireland and Iceland. The aim is to enable female refugees, asylum seekers and recent arrivals in Ireland to enjoy playing football in a safe, friendly environment. More than 40 women and girls have already participated in Women's World United, which combines training and matches and offers people who are feeling isolated a chance to join a team and forge links within their communities. ●

Smoke-free finals

No smoking at UEFA EURO 2012

In collaboration with the local organising committees in Poland and Ukraine and several health organisations, UEFA has decided to ban smoking at EURO 2012.

Not only will smoking be prohibited within all stadium perimeters, both indoors and out, throughout the European Football Championship final round, but the sale and promotion of tobacco will also be banned.

This measure, which forms part of UEFA's social responsibility programme and reflects its commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles, sends out a particularly strong message. As Cyprus's Androulla Vassiliou, the European Commissioner responsible for sport, pointed out, the tournament "will be a magnet for millions of spectators and fans", adding that "a tobacco-free EURO 2012 sets the standard for other sporting events across the continent". ●

Entering the eighth edition

The UEFA administration has received entries from 37 member associations for the 2012/13 UEFA Regions' Cup, the competition's eighth season.



Kazakhstan's representatives will be the only new faces in the next season of UEFA's amateur team competition, while Portugal, title holders thanks to the Braga team's victory last June, are conspicuous by their absence.

Among the participants, only Malta and San Marino can enter a national team, due to the size of the two countries. All other national associations will be represented by regional teams, chosen by means of qualifying competitions organised by the associations themselves.

The preliminary round will take place between 1 August and 30 September 2012, with the intermediate round between August 2012 and April 2013. Eight teams will qualify for the final round, which will be hosted by one of the finalists in June 2013.

Draws for the preliminary and intermediate rounds will be held in Nyon during the first quarter of 2012. ●

FIFA Futsal World Cup

Main round in European qualifying

The European qualifying competition for the FIFA Futsal World Cup started with 20 teams split into 5 preliminary round groups.

The group winners, Bulgaria, Georgia*, Latvia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey, plus the two best runners-up, France and Norway, now join 21 other European teams in the intermediate round, which takes the form of mini-tournaments to be played in the following groups from 14 to 18 December:

Group 1: Spain, Belgium, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Norway

Group 2: Italy, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria

Group 3: Serbia, **Slovenia**, Israel, Georgia*

Group 4: Portugal, Slovakia, Lithuania, France

Group 5: Ukraine, **Azerbaijan**, Croatia, FYROM

Group 6: Czech Republic, Belarus, Netherlands, Turkey

Group 7: Russia, **Hungary**, Kazakhstan, Latvia

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

*Subject to a protest by the Football Association of Moldova

The winners and runners-up in each group will contest play-offs between 25 and 28 March and 8 and 11 April to determine the seven teams that will represent Europe at the FIFA Futsal World Cup in Thailand from 2 to 18 November 2012. ●

EURO 2012



Before the final draw on 2 December, the EURO 2012 play-offs will determine the last four finalists. Germany have already secured their place in the final round in brilliant fashion, winning all ten of their qualifiers, including against Belgium in Dusseldorf in October (Peer Mertesacker up against Marvin Ogunjimi).

Continuous development

With the hosting of two major competitions allocated to eastern Europe (UEFA EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine and the 2018 World Cup in Russia) and in a rather difficult economic context, a brief analysis of the stadiums recently built in that part of the world illustrates the effort that the countries in the east are making to modernise their infrastructure.

Poland and Ukraine, the host countries of UEFA EURO 2012, had to take a huge gamble, which already appears to have paid off: the stadiums that will host the matches are largely complete, the infrastructure of both countries has undergone unprecedented improvement and the host cities are carrying out final preparations to welcome the hordes of supporters.



The home of Lokomotiv Moskva, Russia's first modern stadium

In Poland, the EURO 2012 stadiums, along with those in Chorzow and Krakow which were ultimately not selected, represent only part of a huge building frenzy involving the construction of not just football stadiums, but also motor sport and athletics venues. No fewer than 65 arenas have already been built or are currently being finished off in this country alone. The list is headed by the stadiums of Legia (31,103 capacity, capable of staging high-level matches), Jagiellonia Białystok (under reconstruction, will accommodate 22,500) Zagłębie Lubin (16,300), Korona Kielce (15,550) and Krakow (15,015). These stadiums, with their modern covered stands, boxes and video screens, mark the final nail in the coffin of the athletic stadiums of the past. Although they either cannot hold more than 15,000 spectators or still have athletics tracks, the stadiums of Bydgoszcz (renovated), Sosnowiec, Bielsko-Biala and Gliwice are also worthy of mention. And there is no shortage of future projects either, including those of Górnik Zabrze (already started), Widzew Lodz and KSP Polonia Warszawa.

Progress is also being made in Ukraine, where, apart from the EURO stadiums and those in Dnipropetrovsk and Odesa, which were not selected for the final tournament, construction work has been carried out at the Stadion Yuvileiny (in Sumy, 29,300 places) and the smaller but stylish stadiums in Ternopil and Zaporizhya.

With wealthy clubs and a powerful economy, Russia has plenty of time to build the superb arenas it has promised for the 2018 World Cup; nevertheless, the country already has a number of modern stadiums, including those of FC Lokomotiv Moskva (30,979 places, the first modern stadium in the country and in this part of Europe) and FC Terek Grozny (Terek stadium, 30,000), the Arena Khimki (18,000, currently hosting matches for several clubs), the Saturn stadium (16,726) and the stadium in Ekaterinburg (already refurbished, but with major work still to be done).

Perspectives

Of the east European countries wishing to host a future European Football Championship, Romania is already well placed, with three brand-new stadiums in use, two of which meet the standards required for international matches. Inaugurated on 6 September with a match between Romania and France, the national stadium in Bucharest (55,600 places) will host the 2012 UEFA Europa League final and is also equipped to stage a European Championship final. With a capacity of just over 30,000 and a futuristic design, the Cluj arena has become the country's second stadium capable of hosting major football events, although not finals. Finally, the Ilie Oana stadium in Ploiesti was opened very recently. With a 15,000 capacity, it was built in record time at a cost of just €17 million.

The other two recently renovated stadiums that can stage high-level matches are the Dr. Constantin Radulescu stadium (Cluj, 23,500 seats, 14,000 of which are covered) and the Municipal Stadium of Piatra Neamt, with 17,500 places. And that is not all, since a new arena will be built in Giurgiu for FC Astra Ploiesti, who will therefore move from their current stadium.

In Hungary and Bulgaria, there are still no high-category stadiums, although some have been renovated – such as those in Zalaegerszeg and Győr and, in Bulgaria, Burgas and Lovech – without meeting the criteria



Getty Images

The National Arena in Bucharest, venue for the 2012 UEFA Europa League final

for major matches. Plans are afoot, but they still need to be implemented.

Small capacities

Despite the presence of a few modern stadiums, the other countries of eastern Europe do not yet have sufficient infrastructure to host the final tournaments of high-level competitions and the projects currently under way are not on a large scale.

Although the Czech Republic has a fairly modern infrastructure, its stadiums are small; indeed, its largest recently built or renovated stadium – the Slavia Praha's stadium in Prague (2008) – only holds 21,000 spectators, while the one in Teplice (Na Stínadlech) can only accommodate 18,200.

Even though its economic situation is healthy and its football is booming, Slovakia's stadiums are not at the same level; the stadium in Žilina, rebuilt in 2006, holds little more than 9,500 spectators. Nevertheless, two major projects are in the pipeline for the next few years in Bratislava and Košice.

The smartest stadium in the region of the former Yugoslavia, the Philip II stadium (in Skopje, with 32,580 covered seats) was opened on 24 April. Originally built in 1978, it was recently almost totally renovated and has become one of the most iconic arenas in the Balkans. A number of other recently modernised stadiums have capacities greater than 15,000, including Grbavica (20,000, Sarajevo), Pod Goricom (Podgorica, Mon-

tenegro, 17,000) and Športni park Stožice (Ljubljana, 16,135). Finally, new or renovated stadiums with smaller capacities were recently opened in Slovenia (Celje, Maribor) and Croatia (NK Istra Pula and Dugo-polje, Split).

As well as in Russia and Ukraine, stadiums are being modernised in the other countries that were part of the former USSR, although the most spectacular remains the Astana Arena (Kazakhstan), with 30,000 places, a retractable roof and a synthetic pitch.

Tiraspol (Moldova) still boasts the most modern sports complex in this part of Europe, with no fewer than three stadiums: the Bolshaya arena (around 14,000 places), a smaller stadium (9,300) and an indoor arena (3,570). The Zimbru stadium (10,500) in Chisinau is the country's other principal venue and, along with the Bolshaya arena, hosts its main international matches.

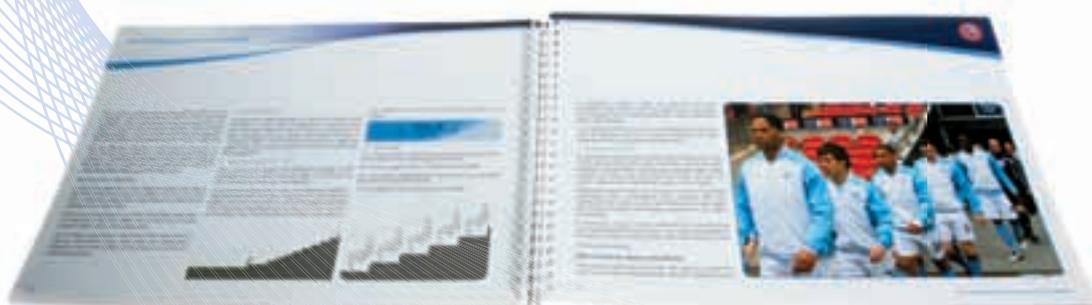
In the Baltic states, the most notable new stadium is the A. Le Coq Arena in Tallinn, with a capacity of 9,692. Finally, Belarus has only one modern new stadium, which is in Gomel (14,307 places); FC BATE Borisov, the country's strongest club in recent seasons, is planning to build a new stadium, but it will only hold 13,000 people.

In conclusion, there is no shortage of new stadiums and projects, but their size tends to be limited by expected attendances and economic difficulties. ●

George Gisca

A full set of recommendations

At two workshops on stadium development held under the umbrella of the KISS programme at RCD Espanyol's new stadium in Barcelona in 2010, many of the experts from UEFA's member associations expressed a need for guidelines setting out all the steps involved in a stadium construction project, from start to finish.



After several meetings and visits related to new stadium projects of all sizes and all over Europe, UEFA and its Stadium and Security Committee also received clear signals from many other sources that there would be great demand for a clear, concise and easy-to-read publication providing stadium developers with a full set of guidelines on all matters concerning stadium design.

allowing clubs and associations to draw from the experience of qualified professionals and eliminate mistakes commonly made due to lack of experience.

Better stadiums mean better football and nicer and safer environments for spectators. This is one of UEFA's primary objectives and this book, soon to be available in English, French, German and Russian, is a modest step in precisely that direction. ●

Accessible guide

To this end, a working group was set up to develop an accessible guide that covers all manner of decisions that must be made in the design, development and construction or refurbishment of football stadiums, highlighting issues which need to be confronted from the earliest days in the process right up to the stadium inauguration and beyond.

The intention was never to focus on competition rules or to rewrite publications already produced by UEFA and other entities such as FIFA. Instead a bibliography has been included at the end, providing references to other publications for those seeking further reading or more detailed information on specific topics.

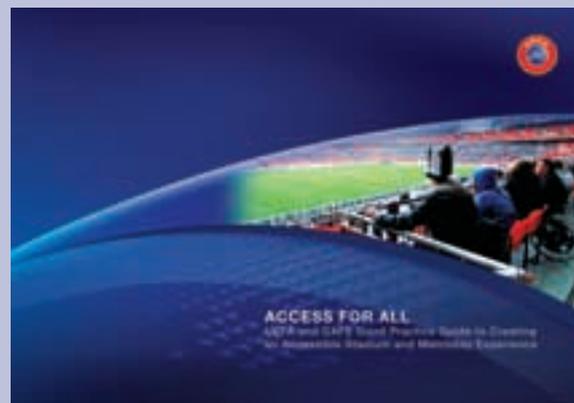
The guide includes five real-life case studies – football stadiums of different sizes, from 5,000 to 40,000-seaters, built in different periods and locations within Europe – to provide readers with indications of cost ratio and design quality.

Great help

For UEFA it is a great achievement to know that anyone who is about to work on or set in motion a new project of this scale has access to such a detailed guide. Hopefully it will be of great help and contribute to improving stadium design and construction across Europe,

ACCESS FOR ALL

In conjunction with the Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE), UEFA is also publishing a good practice guide to creating an accessible stadium and matchday experience. This book, available in the same languages as the UEFA Guide to Quality Stadiums, is aimed at national associations, clubs and stadium managers.





Albania

www.fshf.org

School football becomes a reality

"Education and Football". From now on, all secondary schools in the main cities of Albania will be familiar with this concept because, alongside the usual academic and other school activities, Albanian secondary school students will be involved in playing the most beautiful game in the world: football. As a result, regional competitions for secondary school teams will be set up. With this initiative, the Football Association of Albania (FShF) wants to organise school championships at regional, city and local levels for younger children, to encourage them to take up football as well.

To begin with, it is planned to run secondary school championships in six major regions of Albania, extending them to the whole country later on. The idea came from the FShF's amateur and youth football development department and is supported by the association's executive committee. The overall aim is to promote the playing of football



Football is now part of the secondary school curriculum

in schools, including by children below secondary school age, for whom it is also planned to organise championships, so as eventually to have competitions and official events at each and every school level.

Ultimately, the aim is to extend school championships nationwide. And it is a goal that looks as if it will become a reality – the creation of a long-term and sustainable sys-

tem based on major support from the FShF in the form of the provision of teaching material and professional technical assistance.

It was the enthusiasm shown for the test championships organised by the FShF last season for secondary schools in Tiranë, Durrës and Elbasan that prompted the amateur and youth development department and the executive committee to forge ahead with the project. By May 2012, the first activities should have already taken place.

Thanks to the vision of the FShF, which views football as more than just a sport, but as a great opportunity for education, entertainment and the promotion of values, and the hard work the association is putting in to put its long-term school football plans into action, the development of the game in Albania is certainly moving in the right direction.

● Tritan Kokona



Andorra

www.fedandfut.com

Course for sports leaders

The Andorran Football Federation (FAF) has signed an agreement with the university of Andorra (UdA) and the national institute of physical education of Catalonia (INEFC), as a result of which an Expert in Sports Leadership refresher course was presented at the conference hall of the university on 25 October.

After months of meetings and collaboration between the three institutions, the course has become a reality at last. Initiated by the FAF and encouraged by Andorra's coaches and the FAF's technical director, David Rodrigo, this is the first agreement reached by a national sports association and the university.

With the clear aim of improving the training of sports specialists in the country (coaches, trainers, managers, federation members and others interested in the sports world), this course will help to "improve the relationship between athletes and coaches," to quote Cristófol Salas, director of the Lleida INEF.

Montserrat Casalprim, director of the UdA, said: "We hope this agreement will allow us to develop other courses in the future," while Tomàs Gea, the FAF's general secretary, said: "Hopefully this is the first of many joint training courses with the UdA and INEFC."

This first course is divided into three modules: applied psychology; motivation and emotion; and leadership and communication.

● Silvia Casals



Armenia

www.ffa.am

Armenia do well in EURO 2012 qualifiers

October was marked by two notable events in Armenian football. First, the Armenian national team played their last two EURO 2012 qualifying matches. Before the match against the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Yerevan, Armenia's captain, Sargis Hovsepyan, was presented with the UEFA award of a commemorative cap and medal by the president of the Football Federation of Armenia, Ruben Hayrapetyan, for having played more than 100 matches for his country. The match ended 4-1 in favour of Armenia, and for the first time in the history of Armenian football, the national team was in with a chance of qualifying for the final tournament. Although their subsequent defeat in the Republic of Ireland left them in third place in the final group rankings, the sequence of successful matches and the best results ever in qualifying tournaments have generated a huge interest in football in Armenia.

The second notable event took place from 21 to 26 October, when Armenia hosted the Group 10 European Under-19 Championship qualifying round mini-tournament. The other teams in the group were Greece,



Captain Sargis Hovsepyan receives his UEFA award from the FFA president, Ruben Hayrapetyan

Slovakia and Andorra. The matches were played at the Republican and Mika stadiums in Yerevan. With two wins and one defeat, it was a successful tournament for the Armenian team, who finished in second place in the group and, along with the group winners, Greece, go through to the elite round.

● Tigran Israelyan



The representatives of the three parties to the agreement (left to right): Cristófol Salas (INEF), Montserrat Casalprim (UdA) and Tomàs Gea (FAF)



Austria

www.oefb.at

New national team coach

At the beginning of October, the president of the Austrian Football Association (ÖFB), Leo Windtner, introduced the new national team coach at a press conference that was broadcast live by the Austrian public service broadcaster. After the national team's failure to qualify for UEFA EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine (Austria finished fourth in their group, behind Germany, Turkey and Belgium), the president decided not to renew the contract of the previous coach, Dietmar Constantini, who had been temporarily replaced by sports director Willi Ruttensteiner for the last two group matches in Azerbaijan (4-1 victory for Austria) and Kazakhstan (0-0). The new, internationally renowned coach, 51-year old Swiss Marcel Koller, has signed an initial two-year contract. Koller won



Leo Windtner (left) shakes hands with the new national coach, Marcel Koller

two national championships as a coach in his homeland and took VfL Bochum into the top division of the German Bundesliga as second division champions, with a subsequent eighth-place finish representing the third best final league position in the club's history. A native of Zurich

who won seven championship titles and five cups with his local club Grasshopper-Club as a player, Koller officially took up his post on 1 November, having joined his new employer on a permanent basis on 5 October.

In connection with the new head coach's appointment, the ÖFB has also made some changes to the national team structure. "Our objective is to establish the same structures that have already proved successful in the youth teams, in order to create greater consistency between the youth and senior teams," Leo Windtner said, adding that the aims for the coming years were to put Austria back among the top 30 countries in world football and to reach the final round of a major competition again for the first time since 1998.

● Peter Klingmüller



Azerbaijan

www.affa.az

Sharing information

Over the last five years, the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) has made great progress in enhancing the popularity of football in Azerbaijan. In April 2006, the AFFA launched *Futbol dunyasi* (The World of Football), a newspaper which is published three times a week. It also launched its new website, affa.az, at roughly the same time, followed, about two years ago, by another website, affavideo.az.

One of the association's latest big projects was to launch a third website, affatv.az, in March this year. The first event to be broadcast live via this website was the AFFA ordinary general meeting.

Users of the website can watch different videos of different AFFA events, as well as home and away matches of the national teams in all categories. The new website is eye-catching and user-friendly. Last month, the AFFA registered a record number of users who visited affatv.az to watch the European Under-21 Championship qualifying match between Azerbaijan and Belgium played on 10 October in Baku. During the match, traffic rose to 20,000. These fans were not only from Azerbaijan but also from other countries.

The aim of all these websites is to bring modern-day football closer to clubs, coaches and fans. With a combination of advanced web technology, the AFFA websites provide more information about Azerbaijani football.

● Firuz Abdulla

Top locations on 10 October for affatv.az

1.	Belgium	4,909
2.	Turkey	1,706
3.	China	1,581
4.	Russia	1,492
5.	Republic of Korea	1,450
6.	Italy	1,215
7.	Thailand	1,015
8.	Germany	1,011
9.	Greece	895
10.	France	592
11.	Ukraine	460
12.	Azerbaijan	368



Bosnia and Herzegovina

www.nfsbih.ba

BiH presidency recognises normalisation committee

The presidency chairman of the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (NFSBiH), Zeljko Komsic, and presidency member Bakir Izetbegovic received a delegation of the committee for the normalisation of the national football association, headed by its chairman, Ivica Osim, member Elvedin Begic and Jasmin Bakovic, NFSBiH general secretary. The meeting was also attended by Boris Buha, adviser to the third member of the presidency, Nebojsa Radmanovic.

The delegation thanked the presidency for its invitation and reported on the committee's activities, future plans and ideas, for which they needed full top government support. The committee stressed that all its decisions were in the interests of sport and the state, and that it continued to work to promote Bosnia and Herzegovina through sport and football.

On behalf of the presidency, Zeljko Komsic promised full support to the committee for its future action and said that the recent results of the work of committee would encourage continued government support. He wished the committee and football in Bosnia and Herzegovina every success and satisfaction.

At the meeting, the issues of stadium infrastructure and security in the country were among the items discussed.

A joint delegation from FIFA and UEFA paid a working visit to the NFSBiH to hold meetings with the normalisation committee, the presidency and the general secretary. The decision of the FIFA Executive Committee to extend the mandate of the normalisation committee until the end of 2012 was explained, and Dragan Kulina, member of the normalisation committee, presented the road map, saying that: "In principle, in accordance with the adopted road map, statutes of both entities and their respective members should be harmonised by 26 January 2012. Then, by 31 May 2012, rules of procedure for the NFSBiH general meeting should be adopted by the delegates, and by 22 October, general meeting elections should take place within all the cantonal and regional associations of the entities. The main NFSBiH elections will be held on 22 November 2012 and at that general meeting, in accordance with the new statutes and the new rules of procedure, a new NFSBiH president and executive committee will be, elected for a four-year term."



Bosnia and Herzegovina's Under-17s up against their English counterparts

■ The national youth teams of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been involved in qualifying matches for their respective UEFA championships. The women's Under-17s are now through to the second qualifying round and the men's Under-19s won their three matches and have qualified for the elite round. The men's Under-17s, meanwhile, finished in third place in their qualifying group.

● Fuad Kravac

A new home for English football

St George's Park in Burton upon Trent is to be the new "spiritual" home of English football, a place where our coaches can congregate and assimilate and share ideas before spreading the good word of technical, physical and medical best practice to millions of young players.

If we do this right, the benefits for English football will be enormous. Firstly, by having a much larger and more highly qualified coaching workforce, we will be able to raise the standard of the game throughout football – and that includes behaviour as well as the culture – from the grassroots to the very top.

Achieving this requires professionalising football coaching, making the role of the coach absolutely integral to our footballing future and improving the calibre of coaches we have available in this country. Why not have the best coaches coaching our youngest players and shaping our future?



On-site, the buildings are taking shape at a rapid rate

For example, in other countries, a full-time Under-11 coach, who may earn more than the Under-18 coach, would be deemed key to the transitional phase of the players.

Not only would that Under-11 coach have high-level coaching qualifications, but also a good educational and academic background. The Under-11 category is considered so important because it corresponds with the age at which youngsters move up to secondary school and make a similar step in their football development.

This transition sits right at the heart of The Football Association's thinking and combines the theories we have developed through our age-appropriate coaching courses, as well as the philosophies embodied within The FA's Future Game documents, which set out the way in which The FA feels English football needs to evolve in its coaching and playing styles.

Our ambition is to be the very first F-Star FIFA medical centre in the UK and the addition of a top-class medical provider will be a major step to seeing this vision become a reality. St George's Park will not only offer a "one-stop shop" for fitness screening and diagnostics for teams, players and athletes, but it will also become a centre for treatment and rehabilitation, as well as performance research.

● Scott Field

Parliament forms football support group

An Estonian football support group has been formed in the country's parliament to help the development of football.

Out of the 101 members of parliament, 33 have joined the group, with all the different parties, both the coalition and the opposition, being represented. Among the different support groups in the parliament, this one is the fourth largest and the only one dedicated to a particular sporting discipline.

"Our aim is to raise the accessibility of football in Estonia. Football helps to direct young people and offers positive emotions to both the players and spectators. Also, we have to appreciate the fact that the success of Estonian football and our footballers helps to introduce our country around the world," said Deniss Boroditš, chairman of the new support group, who used to be an active footballer at youth level.

Estonian football and the national team were the centre of attention recently, after historical wins against Serbia, Slovenia and Northern Ireland, which helped to achieve second place in their EURO 2012 qualifying group, the highest position ever for Estonia. This success is also reflected accordingly in the FIFA rankings.



The national team did themselves proud in the EURO 2012 qualifiers

In addition to the unprecedented interest of the local media, the national team's achievement also caught the attention of the international media, with representatives from 11 different countries and many international agencies attending the Estonia v Ireland EURO 2012 play-off in Tallinn.

● Mihkel Uibeleht

French Cup now on Facebook

Almost a century after its birth (1917/18), the French Cup is still showing itself to be a thoroughly modern competition. It should therefore come as no surprise to find that it has launched its own Facebook page on the occasion of its 95th edition, just as the French national team did one year ago. Fans of the competition and supporters of the participating teams now have a new forum where they can air their views and discuss their passion.

Members of the social network will now be able to follow the French Cup on their favourite platform, and even find information on a daily basis thanks to the contributions of other followers of the page devoted to the competition.

As well as the results at the end of each round, a large section of the page is dedicated to amateur clubs, with photos, videos and numerous snippets of information, commentaries and match reports posted by their representatives or spectators present in the stadium. This fan page therefore perfectly crystallises the spirit of the competition, which is open to all affiliated associations, both professional and amateur. It is unique in Europe.

The French Football Federation (FFF) also plans to launch an application called *Ma Coupe de France* (My French Cup), which will enable members to publish their cup match photos in the following categories: match action, out of the ordinary, and supporters. Prizes will be awarded for the best pictures and a league table of the most active clubs will be published.

The FFF hopes to continue its successful use of Facebook, having attracted more than 350,000 members to the national team's official page (facebook.com/equipedefrance). The latest addition to the national team page is a "fan map", where members can publish a photograph of themselves wearing the national team shirt and register their location on a map. This innovation will help the FFF to achieve its next objective of 500,000 members by June 2012.

● Matthieu Brelle-Andrade



The French Cup does some social networking



Georgia

www.gff.ge

Successful grassroots course and festival

FIFA and UEFA representatives paid a working visit to the Georgian Football Federation (GFF) from 17 to 21 October to run a FIFA grassroots course and a festival.

The grassroots course started on 18 October at the Baia training centre in Zugdidi, attended by coaches from various football clubs and schools. FIFA grassroots instructors Aliaksandr Tchernoukho and Jean-Marie Conz, and UEFA grassroots instructor Robin Russell, were among those running the course, during which GFF representatives also made presentations. The last day of the three-day course was spent getting ready for the football festival taking place at the Poladi stadium in Rustavi on 21 October.

Around 130 children participated in the festival, which was also attended by the GFF president and general secretary, as well as the governor of the region, David Kirkitadze.

As planned, the coaches from the grassroots course worked with the children at the festival.



Grassroots festival players and staff

At the end, all the children received gifts of T-shirts and balls, while the participating coaches were awarded with special certificates. As FIFA instructor Aliaksandr Tchernoukho said,

next year's festival, to be organised by FIFA together with the GFF, will be even bigger and better.

● *Tata Burduli*



Iceland

www.ksi.is

Lars Lagerbäck for Iceland and 25 for KR

Lars Lagerbäck was introduced as Iceland's new national team coach at a press conference at the headquarters of the Icelandic FA. Lars succeeds Olafur Johannesson, who had been in charge since November 2007. Lars will start on 1 January and his assistant coach will be Heimir Hallgrímsson, who has been the successful coach of IBV for several years.

Swede Lars Lagerbäck is one of the most experienced national team coaches in Europe and his experience will be invaluable to the Icelandic national team, which is counting on a young core of players. Lars was the national

they secured the league title with one game to go, making it their 25th league title in all. They first won the title in 1912, in the competition's first year. It is therefore perhaps fitting that KR have won it again this year, which marked the 100th edition of the championship.

KR's head coach, Rúnar Kristinsson, also had a memorable year. In his first whole season as head coach of KR, he has brought the two major domestic titles home. Although new to the

coaching field, Rúnar was a very experienced player. He played for KR until he went to play abroad, and had a good reputation. He is also the most capped men's national team player, with 104 appearances. Rúnar was honoured by UEFA before Iceland's EURO 2012 qualifier against Cyprus as one of the players to have played for their country 100 times or more.

● *Thorvaldur Ingimundarson*



Kazakhstan

www.kff.kz

Kazakhstan hosts U17 qualifying matches

The Group 4 qualifying mini-tournament in the European Under-17 Championship took place in Almaty from 19 to 24 October. Kazakhstan is becoming a more active member of the European football family. In 2010/11, Almaty was the venue for one of the elite round mini-tournaments in the UEFA Futsal Cup and then went on to host the UEFA Futsal Cup finals.

Kazakhstan has considerable experience in the organisation of international tournaments. Each year, at the end of April, the Football Federation of Kazakhstan organises an impressive tournament, the Kazakhstan President's Cup. Traditionally, eight Under-17 teams participate. In the first three editions, only club teams took part. This year, however, national Under-17 teams competed for the first time. In the final, played at the Astana Arena, Azerbaijan beat Ukraine in a penalty shoot-out.

This experience allowed the federation to organise the European Under-17 qualifying mini-tournament to the highest standard. Five matches were held at the Almaty Central Stadium, which re-opened this year after renovation and is always where the senior Kazakhstan national team play their home matches.

Kazakhstan's rivals for two places in the elite round were the Czech Republic, the Republic of Ireland and Liechtenstein. Despite fierce support

from the home supporters, Kazakhstan finished the group in third place (2-0 defeat against the Czech Republic, 1-1 draw with the Republic of Ireland and 8-0 win against Liechtenstein), conceding second place to the Republic of Ireland on goal difference.

● *Alexandr Keplin*



Lars Lagerbäck, the new national coach

team coach of Sweden from 2000 to 2009, during which time Sweden qualified for every major tournament. He was also in charge of Nigeria for the 2010 World Cup.

On the domestic front, KR Reykjavík's men's team have celebrated an excellent season, having won the double. In August, they beat Þór Akureyri in the cup final and in late September,



The coaches of the four teams involved in the European U17 qualifying mini-tournament



Celtnieks stadium in Daugavpils gets a new artificial surface

On 9 October, the Latvian Football Federation, represented by its general secretary, Janis Mezeckis, and the mayor of Daugavpils, Zanna Kulakova, officially opened one of the latest generation of artificial football pitches at the Celtnieks stadium in the heart of Latvia's second largest city.



Inauguration of the new artificial pitch at Celtnieks stadium

Work to lay the new pitch began in the spring. Funding for a total of about €250,000 came from the UEFA HatTrick programme and the Latvian Football Federation, while the

Daugavpils municipality was tasked with preparing the foundations for the new surface. Although minor construction work is still in progress, the artificial surface has already been laid and is already in use – Latvian first league teams BFC Daugava and FK Jelgava-2 played the opening match on it. It is also planned that the pitch will be used by first division club FC Daugava for its home games in early spring and late autumn.

In other news, Mihails Zemlinskis has stepped down as head coach of the Latvian Under-21 team, by mutual agreement with the Latvian Football Federation and the national team coaches' department. The main reasons for this decision were the team's disappointing results in the qualifiers for the 2013 European Under-21 Championship, the team having lost their first four games, conceding 13 goals and scoring none in the process.

Last but not least, the Latvian futsal team is through to the main round of the qualifiers for the 2012 FIFA Futsal World Cup, thanks to victory in the European preliminary round mini-tournament held from 20 to 23 October at the Zemgales Olympic sports centre in Jelgava, Latvia. The team coached by Arturs Sketovs beat England 7-1

and San Marino 9-1, and drew 2-2 with Cyprus. Now they are looking forward to the main round mini-tournament on 15-18 December in Győr, Hungary, where Latvia's opponents will be Russia, Kazakhstan and the mini-tournament hosts.

● Viktors Sopirins



Benchmark for Malta's ace scorer

Only a handful of players ever manage to score 30 goals for their country. Achievements beyond that are even more difficult nowadays, with fewer goals being scored because of tight defensive play. Gone are the days when a player could hope to score 50 goals or more like the legendary Ferenc Puskas (84 national team goals), Pelé (77) and Gerd Müller (68), who surpassed that number by far.

Malta's Michael Mifsud is making a name for himself in this regard. His scoring instincts have been recognised internationally, in the same way as those of the great Carmel Busuttil, who netted 23 goals for Malta.

In recent months, Mifsud has beaten that record. His four goals in Malta's friendly win over the Central African Republic and against Croatia and Georgia in the EURO 2012 qualifiers helped this diminutive scoring catalyst



Michael Mifsud in action against the Central African Republic

reach the impressive benchmark of 30 goals in 84 international matches.

This a total which very few players are able to achieve, however refined their striking talents may be. The Maltese ace scorer is currently eighth in the list of top international scorers in Europe.

This player's ability and self-belief, though, are such that he could add more to this remarkable tally in future matches for his country.

● Alex Vella



Foundation stone of house of football laid

In the presence of a large number of football officials, guests, journalists, government representatives, the mayors of Skopje and the Aerodrom municipality, and the senior national football team, led by the head coach, John Toshack, the foundation stone of the new office building of the Football Federation of Macedonia (FFM) was officially laid in the area of Novo Lisice. The complex will cover 4,000 square metres and have four pitches and a mini-stadium with a capacity of 3,000.

The foundation stone was laid by the director of youth and sport, Lazar Popovski, followed by the mayor of Skopje, Koce Trajanovski; the mayor of Aerodrom, Ivica Konevski; and the president of the FFM, Haralampie Hadji-Risteski.

In their speeches, all of them welcomed the project and emphasised its importance not only for the development of football in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, but also for the city of Skopje and the municipality of Aerodrom.

"Our country is rich in football talent but lacks infrastructure and facilities where our young players can properly learn the secrets of football. I hope that the construction of this training centre will be an incentive for clubs and other cities in Macedonia to build such centres, which will later develop into football academies and raise the quality of football in Macedonia to the

desired level," said the president of the FFM, Haralampie Hadji-Risteski, who thanked UEFA, the municipality of Aerodrom and, above all, the government and the prime minister, Nikola Gruevski, for their enormous help in implementing this project.

The four pitches are almost complete, and it is expected that the house of football will be completed within 12-15 months. The whole project, together with the mini-stadium, will cost €4 million.

● Zoran Nikolovski



Haralampie Hadji-Risteski, president of the FFM, speaks at the foundation stone laying ceremony



Moldova
www.fmf.md

Moldova government cup

The Hiperion theoretical lyceum from Gura Galbenei won the sixth Moldova government cup for Under-14 teams. In the final, played at the Telenesti stadium, Hiperion beat the Olimp theoretical lyceum from Singerei 2-1. In the match for third place the Cobani theoretical lyceum won 3-2 after penalties against the Congaz theoretical lyceum. In all, 1,504 teams and 24,012 young players took part in the competition, which was organised by the ministry of youth and sports, the ministry of education and the Football Association of Moldova.

The awards ceremony was attended by Ion Cebanu, minister of youth and sports; Leonid Bujor, adviser to the Moldovan prime minister; Nicolae Cebotari, general secretary of FA of Moldova; and other officials. They presented the participants with well-deserved medals, trophies and gifts.



Hiperion, winners of the government cup

The organisers also chose the best players of the tournament, who were Ion Sirghi (Cimisia) – goalkeeper, Constantin Palic (Congaz) – defender, Ion Urvantev (Singerei) – midfielder, and Victor Pulbere (Gura Galbenei) – forward. All received prizes.

Former winners of the Moldova government cup are the Lopatnic lyceum (2006 and 2008), the Minerva lyceum from Chisinau (2007), the Mihai Eminescu theoretical lyceum from Edinet (2009) and the Congaz theoretical lyceum (2010). ● Press office



Northern Ireland
www.irishfa.com

A new sponsor for the IFA Championship

The Irish Football Association (IFA) recently announced the Belfast Telegraph as the new title sponsor of the IFA Championship. The leagues will now be called the Belfast Telegraph Championship 1 and 2 for the remainder of the 2011/12 season.

Aidan Murphy, chairman of the Championship Management Committee, is delighted at the new sponsorship deal. He said: "It is fantastic for the championship to have the Belfast Telegraph as its new title sponsor. It is the leading daily newspaper in Northern Ireland and this new sponsorship will be a benefit not only to our football clubs but also for the Belfast Telegraph as the championship clubs are based right across the length and breadth of Northern Ireland. The sponsorship provides a much needed

financial boost to the clubs and also gives the championship a guaranteed media platform to raise the profile of the competition."

Martin Mawhinney, editor of the Belfast Telegraph's junior football supplement, The Park, said: "We are proud of our association with local football and this agreement will strengthen our commitment to the championship. We will continue to bring our readers the first news of the big stories in Championship 1 and 2 every Monday, with reporter Keith Bailie keeping supporters up to date with what's happening around the clubs, as well as our weekly round-up of the weekend's matches. The Park is the first publication with the latest on the junior and intermediate scene each week, and we look forward to developing our relationship with clubs up and down the country."

● Graeme Beggs



Aidan Murphy, chairman of the championship management committee with Martin Mawhinney (left), editor of The Park, and Graeme Beggs, the IFA's marketing manager



Republic of Ireland
www.fai.ie

Women's national league launched in Ireland

The minister of state for tourism and sport, Michael Ring, was on hand to launch the inaugural women's national league at the Dublin Arena in October.

The league commenced on 13 November. The six clubs invited to compete in the championship are this season's UEFA Women's Champions League participants, Peamount United, together with Castlebar Celtic FC, Cork Women's FC, Raheny United, Shamrock Rovers and Wexford Youths Women's AFC. The league champions will qualify for the 2012/13 UEFA Women's Champions League.

With UEFA's support, the Republic of Ireland has become the latest country in Europe to launch a national women's football league. The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) was one of the four member associations to benefit from the UEFA women's football development pilot phase in 2010/11, the other three being Italy, Portugal and Slovakia. Speaking at the launch, Steffi Jones, UEFA's women's football development pro-

gramme ambassador, said: "Starting a national league is an essential step for women's football development in the Republic of Ireland. Playing in club competitions is the gateway to A-team football and ensures a stable future for women's football, as well as an incentive for girls around the country."

Fran Gavin, FAI league director, said: "The launch of this league marks a new era for women's football in Ireland. For the first time, the women's national league will bring together our best players, coaches and officials on a national stage as we build a platform for women's football to thrive at home. This league will be given the same focus and priority as the [men's] premier division and we will apply the same principles of competition, integrity and fairness across the board to every club involved."

Martin Nolan, CEO of Bus Éireann, title sponsors of the new women's championship, added: "The Bus Éireann women's national league will be a really important and long-awaited development for everyone involved in Irish football, and through our support we look forward to helping the FAI provide a crucial piece of the develop-

ment pathway that will ultimately help our international teams source a rich new vein of talent. Bus Éireann is at the heart of communities throughout the country and as the league expands over the next number of years, we believe that more and more communities will benefit from this exciting journey for women's football."

● Fran Whearty



The captains of the six teams in the new national women's league and the trophy they are playing for



Coaches academy opens its doors

The academy of coaches of the Football Union of Russia (RFS) has officially opened in Moscow. Candidate instructors are currently being trained, after which applicants will be selected for the first Pro coach licence course. The academy plans to begin coach training at the end of November.

The new training institution is being set up in accordance with the recommendations of the UEFA expert group which visited the RFS last December. Since then, RFS specialists have been busy developing new training programmes and tackling all the organisational issues related to the establishment of the academy.



The coaches' academy has officially opened

prospective candidates fulfil the requirement of being a practising coach at the time of their admission to the course.

The academy should be fully operational in February 2012, with courses in all coach licence categories up and running by then.

● Irina Baranova



Mathie to retire after 30-year career

Scotland's international youth team coach, Ross Mathie, will retire after November's Victory Shield match against England, ending a 30-year association with the national youth teams totalling 544 international matches.

Former Kilmarnock player Mathie has led several Scotland teams to UEFA youth final tournaments, most recently the Under-17 showpiece in 2008, and has also served as a member of UEFA technical teams at tournaments in the last few years.

Ross has been a loyal servant to the Scottish FA since he joined as Under-16 coach in 1981. He has been instrumental in the development of countless young professionals over the past four decades, providing experienced coaching at a key stage of player development, as well as



Ross Mathie with Jarmo Matikainen from the FA of Wales, and Andy Roxburgh, UEFA's technical director

instilling the principles of fair play and comradeship within his squads.

Ross Mathie said: "It has been an absolute privilege to have worked with the Scottish FA over the past 30 years, alongside wonderful people who have made my time at the association a most enjoyable experience.

"I have had the fantastic opportunity to meet and learn from some of the top youth coaches in Europe at the many youth international matches I have been involved in.

"I will always be grateful to Andy Roxburgh, UEFA's technical director, for inviting me to join him at the association in 1981, when he was technical director here."

Stewart Regan, chief executive of the Scottish FA, said: "I would like to thank Ross for his remarkable contribution not just to the Scottish FA but to Scottish football in general. He will be missed by his friends and colleagues throughout football but also by the players whose lives, not just careers, have been enhanced by Ross's positive influence."

● Clare Bodel



Increased attendances

Average attendance in the Allsvenskan increased by 11% in 2011, a welcome reversal of trends after a few years of declining crowds. Five Swedish clubs (AIK, Malmö FF, Helsingborgs IF, IFK Göteborg and IF Elfsborg) managed average attendance figures of more than 10,000 spectators per game, while the total average for the Allsvenskan was 7,326. This comes as good news after a season that was somewhat marred by crowd disturbances that caused three games to be abandoned. Rules and regulations regarding the issues of pyrotechnics and crowd interference are being looked at ahead of next season, in order to prevent some of the trouble seen this past season.

Average attendance in the Damallsvenskan (the women's top-flight division) also increased to 924 spectators per game, up from 653 last year.

After achieving qualification for both EURO 2012 (men) and the 2012 Olympic Games (women), Swedish football can look forward to a very exciting year ahead. Added to this is the new national arena, the Swedbank Arena, that will be ready to host its first game next autumn.

● Andreas Nilsson



New format for the first league

For the 2012/13 season, a new competition format is being introduced in the first league (equivalent of the third division), which will be split into two sub-leagues, a promotion league and a classic league.

At its general meeting in Nyon, the first league section of the Swiss Football Association defined the procedure for promotion from the classic to the promotion league, whereby the top two from each classic group and the best two third-placed teams overall will contest play-offs.

The rules of qualification for the Swiss Cup were also defined, with the top three promotion league teams qualifying for the main round of the following season's cup competition. The rest (except for Under-21 teams and clubs from Liechtenstein) will contest play-offs on completion of the championship to decide the remaining Swiss Cup places.

With the introduction of the promotion league in the first league and the smaller Challenge League which will come about as a result, Swiss

football can expect to see higher standards and a narrower gap between the standard of play in the Challenge League and first league.

● Pierre Benoit



Peter Gilliéron, president of the Swiss FA, with the first league committee at UEFA's headquarters



Memorable night for three Turkish legends

Before the Turkey v Germany EURO 2012 qualifier on 7 October, three former Turkish internationals who had made 100 or more appearances for their country each received a commemorative cap and medal from Senes Erzik, UEFA first vice-president, and Mehmet Ali Aydınlar, president of the Turkish Football Federation. The three centurions in question are Rüstü Reçber, Bülent Korkmaz and Hakan Sükür.

Former international goalkeeper Rüstü Reçber said: "To be remembered and not forgotten and to receive such an award is a great honour. I will keep these gifts in the best place in my house", while former international defender Bülent Korkmaz said: "When I played my 100th

game for Galatasaray, UEFA presented me with a nice painting. Like I did with that present, these new gifts will also take pride of place in my house. I would like to thank UEFA very much for this kind compliment." Last but not least, Hakan Sükür, former international striker, said: "There is no doubt that every game I played for the Turkish national team holds a very special place in my heart. I am deeply honoured that my more than 20 years of national team service, filled with games that hold such significant memories, has been recognised by UEFA, the highest football authority in Europe, by presenting me with this award. It was also another source of pride for me to receive this award from UEFA's first vice-president, Senes Erzik, and the president of the Turkish Football Association, Mehmet Ali Aydınlar. I would like to thank



Left to right: Rüstü Reçber, Mehmet Ali Aydınlar, Bülent Korkmaz, Senes Erzik and Hakan Sükür

and express my gratitude to the UEFA Executive Committee for having introduced this award and honouring me in this way."

● Türker Tozar



European Cup and world stars at OFFS festival

One of the highlights in the life of Ukraine's school grassroots football was the 21st Open Fun Football Schools international festival, backed by the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) and UEFA, which attracted thousands of children, their parents and spectators.

Four international courses took place in the Crimea and Chernivtsi regions, offering special training for over 300 leaders, coaches and volunteers from Ukrainian schools. Apart from Ukrainians, there were also participants from Denmark and Georgia.

The different regions involved in the festival received sports equipment worth around 900,000 hryvna.

This year's festival was organised according to the following schedule:

Crimean OFFS schools:

7-11 September: Dzhankoi, Sudak, Simferopol, Krasnoperekopsk area

14-18 September: Okhotnikovo (Saky area), Alushta, Hvardeiske (Simferopol area), Kyibyshevo (Bakhchysarai area)

21-25 September: Yevpatoriia, Nasypne (Feodosiia area), Krasnoperekopsk, Nyzhnia Kutuzovka (Alushta area)

Schools on the boundary with Moldova:

12-16 September: Dmytrivka (Tatarbunary area of Odesa region)

21-25 September: Sloboda (Novoselytsia area of Chernivtsi region)

22-26 September: Dovzhok (Yampil area of Vinnytsia region)

Additional FFU schools:

12-16 September: Lviv

12-16 September: Donetsk

16-20 September: Rubizhne (Luhansk region)

26-30 September: Osii (Irshavsk area of Zakarpattia region)

1-5 October: Kharkiv

1-5 October: Kyiv

The main OFFS events ended with a great children's festival in the Ukrainian capital. Beforehand, project leaders Anders Levinsen (Denmark), Valerii Cholariia (Georgia) and Ievgenii Stolitenko (Ukraine), together with top international footballers Luis Figo (Portugal) and



The festival in Kyiv

Davor Suker (Croatia), visited the Maliatko orphanage and boarding school, where they presented the children with footballs and gifts.

have their photo taken with European club football's most prized silverware.

● Dmytro Sobko



FAW awards evening

In the week of Wales' EURO 2012 qualifier against Switzerland in October, the 21st Football Association of Wales (FAW) awards evening was held at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff.

It was the biggest event ever in the history of the awards and certainly lived up to everyone's expectations. Apart from the Wales senior team, also in attendance were members of the women's national team, many former internationals, VIP guests, sponsors and members of the media who had voted for many of the award categories.

Master of ceremonies for the evening was Bryn Law from Sky TV, and the evening's entertainment came from Only Men Aloud.

The full list of award winners is:

- FAW Player of the Year: Gareth Bale
- FAW Young Player of the Year: Joe Allen
- FAW Club Player of the Year: Ashley Williams
- Fans' Player of the Season: Gareth Bale
- FAW Service Award: Mickey Thomas
- Welsh Premiership Clubman of the Year Award: Gary Lloyd
- FAW Women's Player of the Year: Jessica Fishlock
- FAW Young Women's Player of the Year: Nia Jones

- FAW Women's Club Player of the Year: Amie Lea
- FAW Service Award: Karen Jones MBE

There were also certificates of attendance for those who had studied on the UEFA Pro licence course over the last two years in Wales with the Welsh Football Trust. In addition, the members of the senior Wales squad received their caps for the 2010/11 season from the FAW president, Philip Pritchard.

● Ceri Stennett



Three of the award winners (left to right): Joe Allen, Gareth Bale and Ashley Williams

Birthdays

Jean Fournet-Fayard (France), honorary member of UEFA, celebrates his 80th birthday on 31 December, while Noël Le Graët (France), vice-chairman of the National Associations Committee celebrates his 70th on 25 December, Ged Poynton (England), member of the Stadium Construction and Management Panel, his 60th on 15 December, and referee observer Jens Larsen (Denmark) his 50th on 31 December. UEFA also wishes many happy returns for December to:

John Ferry (Northern Ireland, 1.12)
 Zeljko Sirc (Croatia, 1.12)
 Sergei Roumas (Belarus, 1.12)
 David R. Griffiths (Wales, 1.12)
 Charles Agius (Malta, 2.12)
 Ligita Ziedone (Latvia, 2.12)
 Sean Dipple (England, 3.12)
 Juan Antonio Fernandez Marin (Spain, 3.12)
 Gylfi Thor Orrason (Iceland, 3.12)
 Sayan Khamitshanov (Kazakhstan, 3.12)
 Josipa Flam (Croatia, 3.12)
 Miroslav Liba (Czech Republic, 4.12)
 Ioannis Farfarellis (Greece, 4.12)
 Jan Kovacic (Slovakia, 4.12)
 Georg Luchinger (Liechtenstein, 4.12)
 Maurizio Montironi (San Marino, 5.12)
 Leszek Rylski (Poland, 6.12)
 Antonio Manuel Almeida Costa (Portugal, 6.12)
 Andreas Akkelides (Cyprus, 7.12)
 Raymond Ellingham (Wales, 7.12)
 Andrea Manzella (Italy, 8.12)
 Michel D'Hooghe (Belgium, 8.12)
 Vitaly Mutko (Russia, 8.12)
 Les Reed (England, 9.12)
 Christian Andreasen (Faroe Islands, 10.12)
 Trefor Hughes (Wales, 11.12)
 Avi Levi (Israel, 11.12)
 Alvaro Albino (Portugal, 12.12)
 Kaj Natri (Finland, 13.12)
 Stefan Messner (Austria, 13.12)
 Gilberto Madail (Portugal, 14.12)
 Antonio Mortagua (Portugal, 14.12)
 Steve Stride (England, 16.12)
 Ilan Yablkovsky (Israel, 16.12)
 Karel Vertongen (Belgium, 17.12)
 Bobby Barnes (England, 17.12)
 Michael Riley (England, 17.12)
 Artan Hajdari (Albania, 17.12)
 Gennady Lisenchuk (Ukraine, 18.12)
 Guntis Indriksons (Latvia, 18.12)
 Niklas à Lidarenda (Faroe Islands, 18.12)
 Rainer Koch (Germany, 18.12)
 Ori Shilo (Israel, 18.12)

Ludvik S. Georgsson (Iceland, 19.12)
 Harri Talonen (Finland, 19.12)
 Edgars Pukinskis (Latvia, 20.12)
 William Young (Scotland, 21.12)
 José Henrique Jones (Portugal, 22.12)
 Olzhas Abrayev (Kazakhstan, 22.12)
 Pia Hess (Germany, 23.12)
 Laszlo Vagner (Hungary, 24.12)
 Patritiu Abrudan (Romania, 25.12)
 Guy Goethals (Belgium, 26.12)
 Oleksandr Bakhmachuk (Ukraine, 26.12)
 Rudolf Repka (Czech Republic, 26.12)
 Dusan Tittel (Slovakia, 27.12)
 Bernard Carrel (Switzerland, 28.12)
 Martial Saugy (Switzerland, 28.12)
 Otakar Mestek (Czech Republic, 28.12)
 Einar Halle (Norway, 29.12)
 Evangelos Mazarakis (Greece, 29.12)
 Dagmar Damkova (Czech Republic, 29.12)
 Berti Vogts (Germany, 30.12)
 Wolfgang Thierriichter (Austria, 30.12)
 Horst Brummeier (Austria, 31.12)
 Eugeniusz Kolator (Poland, 31.12)
 Christian Morage (Switzerland, 31.12)
 David Findlay (Scotland, 31.12)
 Liene Kozlovskā (Latvia, 31.12)

Forthcoming events

Meetings

2 December, Kyiv
 UEFA EURO 2012 final draw

5-7 December, Prague
 Course for European futsal referees

8 December, Venice
 Executive Committee

16 December, Nyon
 UEFA Champions League: round of 16 draw
 UEFA Europa League: round of 32 and round of 16 draws

Competitions

1 December
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 5)

6/7 December
 UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 6)

8-18 December, Japan
 FIFA Club World Cup

14/15 December
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 6)

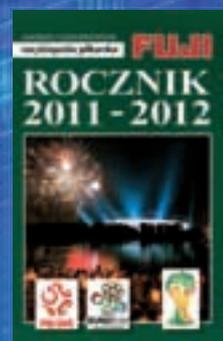
Notices

● The ninth UEFA-backed Match Against Poverty takes place in Hamburg on 13 December between a team of former top internationals and an all-star side from Hamburger SV.

On the bookshelf

Encyklopedia piłkarska ROCZNIK 2011-2012

The 39th volume of the encyclopaedia about Polish and international football, edited by Andrzej Gowazwewski, has just been published. The part dedicated to Polish competitions, which accounts for almost two-thirds of the reference work, is full of information about clubs and players, while the last section covers other 2010/11 domestic and international competitions, both in and outside Europe (wydawnictwo GiA, PO Box 2772, 40-357 Katowice 14, Poland).



Obituary

Former international referee **Giulio Campanati** (Italy) passed away on 30 October aged 88. He chaired the Italian referees' association for 18 years and also served on the UEFA Referees Committee from 1968 to 1992. A member of UEFA's circle of former committee members, he was awarded the UEFA Order of Merit in Ruby in 2000.



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RESPECT

The Opponent



RESPECT

Diversity



RESPECT

The Game