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Cover:

The UEFA club competitions have resumed for the final stretch. In the UEFA Europa League, VfB Stuttgart (Alexandru Maxim, white) met S.S. Lazio (Senad Lulic) in the round of 16.

Photo: Getty Images

2014 FIFA WORLD CUP 4

The qualifying competition for the 2014 World Cup resumes at the end of March. By the end of the year, 13 European teams will have booked their places in Brazil.



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NO PLACE FOR THIRD-PARTY PLAYER OWNERSHIP

As well as organising and developing elite club competitions in Europe, UEFA has been proactive in implementing good governance principles in our sport, to protect its long-term future.

Recently, we were alerted to the threat of so-called third-party player ownership, and we immediately put this on the table of the Professional Football Strategy Council. We strongly believe that a strict approach is needed on this matter for a number of reasons.

Why is third-party player ownership an issue for football?

Firstly, it raises ethical and moral questions. Is it appropriate for a third party to own the economic rights to another human being and then to trade this “asset”? This would be unacceptable in society and has no place in football. Footballers (like everyone else) should have the right to determine their own future.

Secondly, we must protect the integrity of sporting competition. What happens when the same corporation or fund owns the economic rights to many players in different teams? There is an obvious risk of conflicts of interest. The danger of results being manipulated is something that UEFA must guard against, now more than ever.

Thirdly, the business model of those involved in third-party player ownership is predicated on players changing clubs frequently. Put bluntly, more transfers means more money for such owners, resulting in contractual instability and long-term revenue being lost from the sport.

Fourthly, this practice is plainly inconsistent with the economic and sporting philosophy of financial fair play, which is to ensure that clubs live within their means. Clubs should not rely on investments from third parties to acquire players that they cannot afford in the first place. In the long term, this is not good for the club or the player. Quick-fix, short-term solutions conflict with the rules and principles of financial fair play.

The Professional Football Strategy Council has considered this issue and has recently received the unequivocal support of the UEFA Executive Committee, demanding that the activity be prohibited as a matter of principle. Such a prohibition already exists in some European countries, and it is time to introduce it across the board.

We have analysed the situation in Europe. However, the issue goes beyond our continent. Since third-party player ownership appears to be a global phenomenon, and given that FIFA is responsible for the operation of the international player transfer system, we have asked the world body to take the necessary steps to introduce a global prohibition.

Following a meeting of its Football Committee, FIFA has commissioned a study to address this issue. However, unless the necessary steps are taken, UEFA will, together with the Professional Football Strategy Council, be ready to implement appropriate rules to phase out this activity in our competitions.

We understand that an adjustment period may be needed, and UEFA would be in favour of transitional measures. Nevertheless, we are firmly of the view that third-party player ownership has no place in football, and our priority remains to protect our sport and to build and maintain its long-term stability.

Gianni Infantino
UEFA General Secretary

SIGHTS SET ON BRAZIL

Between now and 15 October, the remainder of Europe's qualifying matches for the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil will be played – with the exception of the play-offs for the eight best second-placed teams, which will take place in November. The winners of those all-or-nothing games will qualify for the final tournament alongside the group winners, completing the 13-team European delegation heading to South America. While most of the favourites appear to be well on their way to qualifying, others still have some work to do.

Belgium are the surprise package in Group A. Having last played in the final round of a FIFA World Cup in 2002, Belgium are hopeful of returning to the top table of world football, thanks to a new generation of talented young players, including Chelsea FC star Eden Hazard, Axel Witsel and Romelu Lukaku, as well as the defensive solidity of Manchester City FC captain Vincent Kompany. Marc Wilmots clearly has some serious talent at his disposal. For the time being, however, the Red Devils are having to share first place in the group with Croatia, who held them to a draw in Brussels. Igor Štimac's side have lofty ambitions and the means of achieving them, with Luka Modrić and Niko Kranjčar in midfield, allied with forward Mario Mandžukić, who is having a fantastic season with FC Bayern München in the German Bundesliga. However, Croatia have yet to play Siniša Mihajlović's Serbian team, who have no room for error after their chaotic start. Although the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have battled valiantly, Wales boast the talents of Gareth Bale and Scotland have a new manager in Gordon Strachan, they will all have to excel themselves if they are to make up for the starts they have made to their respective qualifying campaigns, which have been calamitous to say the least.

Belgium's Eden Hazard takes a free-kick against Scotland

Squadra Azzurra well on their way

Although they were held by Bulgaria in Sofia, Italy have made an excellent start to their quali-

fying matches in Group B. However, they still have two games against the Czech Republic and a tricky trip to Denmark ahead of them. In theory, Cesare Prandelli, who is continuing his rebuilding work with the new generation of Andrea Ranocchia, Alessandro Matri and Mario Balotelli, should not have too many problems. Luboslav Penev's Bulgaria – who have been solid, but have drawn three of their four games to date – currently lie ahead of the Czech Republic, who have played a game less. Michal Bílek's team are still very much in the running, but they are having trouble rediscovering the form of previous years, with their star players Tomáš Rosický and Milan Baroš now over the age of 30. Of the remaining teams in this group, the biggest disappointment is certainly Denmark, who have yet to win a game. However, Morten Olsen's side, who started with some tough fixtures, still have seven matches in which to close the gap on the teams ahead of them. Armenia have made significant progress under the leadership of Vardan Minasyan, but the task of qualifying appears to be beyond them. The same is true of Malta, who have already lost considerable ground after losing three matches in a row.

Germany are their own worst enemy

It seems that Germany, the overwhelming favourites in Group C, are their own worst enemy. Unsurprisingly, they lead the group, but after stumbling against Austria in Vienna, they then drew 4-4 with Sweden – despite having led 4-0 – and were universally castigated in the German media. Despite that slip-up, it will be difficult to displace Joachim Löw's team at the top of the table. Sweden's efforts to usurp the Germans will depend heavily on their centre-forward Zlatan Ibrahimović. In theory, Erik Hamrén's team are well placed, after securing a point away to Germany and winning their two other games. In contrast, the Republic of Ireland face an uphill battle. But Giovanni Trapattoni's side will give it their all in their bid to secure at least second place, relying primarily on the experience of players such as Robbie Keane and Kevin Doyle. Swiss national



Marcel Koller would spring an enormous surprise if he managed to get his Austrian team to Brazil. Austria, who have not played in the final round of a FIFA World Cup since 1998, have certainly got potential, but they face a tricky task. Kazakhstan and the Faroe Islands can already be discounted as far as qualification is concerned.

Are the Netherlands untouchable?

In Group D, the Netherlands have a 100% record thus far, thanks to their forwards Robin van Persie, Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Jeremain Lens. The manner of their victories – four in as many matches – speaks volumes regarding their supremacy. Hungary – who lie second, but were beaten at home by Louis van Gaal's team – can hardly dare to entertain hopes of dislodging the Netherlands at the top of the group. They have, however, made considerable progress with Sándor Egervári at the helm. Victor Pițurcă's Romanians have the same number of points and are hopeful of making the play-offs, especially given the ambition shown by their young players. The biggest underperformers in this group are Turkey, who have lost three of their four games. Abdullah Avcı and his team are already right up against it. The same is true of Estonia, who have just one win – against Andorra – to show for their efforts.

Switzerland well placed, but...

Switzerland are doing well in Group E. Ottmar Hitzfeld's side are the only undefeated team in the group, having dropped just two points – at home to Norway. While Switzerland have added a new dimension, thanks to the SSC Napoli trio of Gökhan Inler, Valon Behrami and Blerim Džemali, coupled with the fiery Xherdan Shaqiri of FC Bayern München, Norway still pose a very serious threat. Had it not been for their poor performance away to Iceland, Egil Olsen's team would be level with Switzerland, who will have to travel to Norway in September. Consequently, the Norwegians remain very much in contention. Meanwhile, Albania, who are managed by the Italian Gianni de Biasi, lie just one point behind Norway and will hope to take advantage of their game against them on 22 March. Similarly, Lars Lagerbäck's Iceland team now have only limited room for manoeuvre, and their two games against Slovenia – led by new manager Srečko Katanec – will certainly be decisive. Bottom team Cyprus can point to a win against Iceland and will obviously be hoping to improve on their lowly position, but dreams of qualification appear illusory at this stage.

Portugal have work to do

Russia have made the perfect start in Group F. Fabio Capello is on course to achieve his objective, aided by some bold decision-making. His team is five points ahead of Israel and Portugal after just four matches. That 100% record is



Getty Images

obviously not good news for Paulo Bento's Portugal, who knew who their main rivals would be, but did not imagine that they would end up being so far behind. After labouring to victory in Luxembourg, their struggles continued both away to Russia, where they lost, and at home to Northern Ireland, where they were held to a draw. As a result, they are level on points with Eli Guttman's Israel, who still have their most difficult fixture to come but are hopeful of securing second place. Nigel Worthington and his Northern Ireland team have had to lower their sights somewhat after suffering draws at home to Luc Holtz's Luxembourg and Berti Vogts' Azerbaijan – two teams that will certainly have to make do with helping to decide the outcome of the group and seeking to spoil other teams' parties.

Astonishing Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina have made an extremely good start to their qualifying campaign and are currently top of Group G, level on points with Greece, after four matches. The Bosnians' success is due not only to their manager, Safet Sušić, but also to their strike force of Edin Džeko, Zvezdan Misimović and Vedad Ibišević. Their draw away to Greece in October has put

Dmitri Kombarov gets in ahead of Nani, and likewise, Russia have made a better start to their qualifying campaign than Portugal



Stevan Jovetić of Montenegro (in red) tries to beat Ukraine's Bohdan Butko to the ball

Alexei Furman / Ria Novosti

them in a strong position. Had it not been for that slip-up against Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fernando Santos' Greece team would have had a 100% record. Greece's trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 22 March could prove decisive. However, Slovakia, who are three points behind the two leaders, are still in the running and have no intention of throwing in the towel even if their joint managers, Michal Hipp and Stanislav Griga, will have to find ways of making their team more effective. Meanwhile, Lithuania and Latvia have managed just one win apiece, with both of those victories coming against Liechtenstein, who are clearly a far cry from the team that held Portugal to a draw in a FIFA World Cup qualifying match in 2004.

England have their backs to the wall

In Group H, Montenegro are again causing a sensation, sitting in first place. However, Branko Brnović's team, which contains exceptional players such as Mirko Vučinić and Stevan Jovetić, have had relatively easy fixtures thus far. They have not yet played England, who sit two points behind them. Roy Hodgson and his team, who dropped points both away to Poland and, more significantly, at home to Ukraine, will need to be more resolute in their next few matches. After a warm-up against San Marino, the serious business will begin in earnest on 26 March, when England travel to Podgorica for a pivotal game. Five points behind the leaders, but with a game in hand, Poland have hopes of troubling the teams above them. Waldemar Fornalik's team

will seek primarily to exploit the impact of Robert Lewandowski and Jakub Błaszczykowski. Moldova, who are progressing, but showed their limitations in their first three matches, face a trickier task. And Ukraine, who have just appointed a new manager in Mykhailo Fomenko, have fallen a long way following the heady heights of EURO 2012. They have already seriously harmed their chances of qualifying, and the fact that they are above San Marino in the table will not be reassuring in the slightest.

A fascinating Franco-Spanish duel

Group I, which contains only five teams, is unquestionably one of the most interesting on account of the fratricidal struggle between Spain and France. The world and European champions remain the overwhelming favourites, but Vicente del Bosque's team were perhaps not expecting so much resistance from Didier Deschamps' side, who laid down a few markers in holding Spain to a draw in Madrid in October. Level on points, the two big teams in the group will face off on 26 March at the Stade de France. Of the teams in pursuit, Georgia are currently in the best position, but their ambitions are necessarily limited. That is even truer in the case of Belarus, who lie one point behind the Georgians. And Finland, who have played just two matches, are still waiting for their first win. Like the others, Mixu Paatelainen and his team are clearly destined to have only a walk-on part in this drama. ●

André Winckler

A FIRST FOR GEORGIA

For the first time ever, a UEFA competition final is to be played in Georgia, whose capital city, Tbilisi, will host the final round of the 12th UEFA Futsal Cup from 26 to 28 April.



Four teams have made it through the qualifying rounds unscathed in order to reach the final tournament, which will take the same format that has been in place since the 2006/07 edition, with the semi-finals on 26 April followed, two days later, by the third-place match and the final.

The four finalists are the holders, FC Barcelona, Kairat Almaty, MFK Dinamo, winners in 2007, and Iberia Star Tbilisi, who were asked by the UEFA Executive Committee in December to organise the event with the assistance of the Georgian Football Federation.

The matches will be played at the Palace of Sports in the centre of Tbilisi, a venue that can hold around 9,500 spectators. The Palace of Sports was built in 1961 and renovated in 2007 and, as well as futsal, it regularly hosts other sports, particularly basketball, handball and judo. The prestigious Dinamo Tbilisi basketball team, European champions in 1962, used to play all their matches there in front of capacity crowds.

Spanish clubs have enjoyed the lion's share of success in the first 11 editions of the UEFA Futsal Cup, winning six titles in all (Playas de Castellón FS in 2002 and 2003, Boomerang Interviú in 2004, 2006 and 2009, FC Barcelona in 2012). The honours board is completed by two Russian clubs (MFK Dinamo in 2007 and MFK Viz-Sinara Ekaterinburg in 2008), one from Belgium (Action 21 Charleroi in 2005), one from Portugal (SL



The Palace of Sports in the middle of Tbilisi

Benfica in 2010) and one from Italy (ASD Città di Montesilvano C/5 in 2011).

The draw for the semi-finals will take place in Tbilisi on 28 March. The results will be published on UEFA.com. ●

THE AMBITIONS OF IBERIA STAR

In 2002, midfielder Vakhtang Tsereteli, who was aged 20 at the time, suffered a serious injury and realised that he would never be able to play football at the top-level again. He therefore turned to futsal and joined Iberia Star Tbilisi. The following year, he became the club's president, even though he was still a player! Since then, Iberia Star have won the Georgian title 11 times and Tsereteli has set himself the target of winning the UEFA Futsal Cup. With the help of significant financial investment, he gradually took steps to move the club nearer to achieving his objective. He recruited a Brazilian coach, Sergio Benatti, who had led Action 21 Charleroi to victory in the 2005 UEFA Futsal Cup. Brazilian players were also brought in to strengthen the team. Having come within a whisker of qualifying for the final round two years in succession, Iberia Star finally achieved that feat this season, most notably by knocking out the Portuguese side SL Benfica, winners of the competition in 2010. The Georgian club will therefore participate in the final round for the first time, in front of their own supporters.

"We are going to win the tournament, I am convinced of it," said Vakhtang Tsereteli. "For our two matches, the supporters will come in their droves to encourage Iberia Star, which is named after an ancient kingdom situated in what we now know as Georgia". ●

Mamuka Kvaratskhelia



Iberia Star celebrate qualifying for the final round

DEVELOPMENT TOURNAMENTS OPEN TO ALL MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

UEFA had not even been founded when some well-advised officials first understood the need to put the training of young players at the heart of footballing activities.



Popperfoto / Getty Images

At the 1958 tournament in Luxembourg, Bobby Moore (left) exchanges pennants with the Italian captain, Bruno Bolchi, before the final, which Italy eventually won

It was 65 years ago when teams representing eight national associations (Austria, Belgium, England, Italy, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Wales) competed in the first International Youth Tournament in London from 15 to 17 April 1948. Although England won this inaugural edition, the results were not the most important aspect as far as the organisers were concerned: in the aftermath of the second world war, it was primarily an opportunity to give young footballers a chance to experience international competition under the banner of friendship. *“The tournament was conceived as a meeting place for young people playing football, as a contribution to friendship, and it corresponded with the ideas of a young generation which started to calculate with greater distances*

and dimensions,” explained Karl Zimmermann, then chairman of the UEFA Youth Committee, in the book published in 1973 by UEFA to mark the 25th anniversary of the tournament.

A game above all

In the same book, the UEFA president of the time, Gustav Wiederkehr, expressed his whole-hearted agreement: *“The friendly matches in the tournament must stress what is common to all Europeans, must mitigate contradictions and must form ties of friendship beyond the national borders.”* He had previously noted that: *“During the period of “apprenticeship”, the stress in football should first of all be put on playfulness. Wit and imagination should be displayed freely [...] It must be possible for our young footballers*

to measure their forces as openly as possible, so that each one can be, at the same time, master and pupil of his colleague. Thus, from the earliest youth, the art of playing is characterised by national particularities and enriched through international diversity."

Change of status

However, it was not long before a more competitive spirit came to the fore in this Under-18 tournament, which FIFA asked the recently founded UEFA to organise from 1957 onwards. Over the years, the tournament steadily grew until, with more than 30 participants, a qualification phase was introduced. At its meeting in Zurich in March 1980, the UEFA Executive Committee recognised these developments by relaunching the tournament as the European Under-18 Championship. The first final round was played in West Germany in June 1981 and its popularity was reflected in the attendance of some 56,000 spectators for the final between the hosts and Poland (1-0).

In parallel, at the request of the national associations at the conference of presidents and general secretaries in June 1979, the Executive Committee decided to launch a competition for Under-16s, the first edition of which was won by its hosts, Italy, in May 1982.

Women's competitions

Since their inception, the two men's youth competitions have constantly contributed to the development of young footballers in our continent. The Under-16 competition, after becoming the European Under-16 Tournament, in turn acquired European Championship status for the 1998/99 season. The age categories were then altered to Under-17 and Under-19 from the 2001/02 season. In the meantime, the blossoming of women's football had resulted in the creation of the European Women's Under-18 Championship in 1997/98 (Under-19 from 2001/02). The full set of UEFA youth competitions was completed with the launch of the European Women's Under-17 Championship in 2007/08.

New developments

In recent times – apart from the changes of format for certain final rounds – the European youth football landscape has seen two major changes. The first, which has not yet been implemented but will be introduced on a trial basis over a two-season period, mainly concerns the competitive aspect: this is the UEFA Youth League, a club competition for Under-19 teams.

The other innovation is aimed more at a return to the original spirit of the International Youth Tournament – the desire to give young footballers an additional, rewarding experience that can broaden their development. As such, new youth development tournaments were introduced in 2012 on a pilot basis. Having received the backing of the presidents and gen-

eral secretaries of the UEFA member associations at their strategy meeting in Limassol in September 2011, the idea was implemented under the auspices of the HatTrick programme in spring 2012. The first such tournament was held in Slovakia and a total of 28 national associations benefited from these development tournaments in 2012.

Thirteen tournaments in 2013

This year, all the member associations were invited to participate in these tournaments. The category chosen for both girls and boys was Under-16, thought to be a crucial period in youngsters' development. In these tournaments, results are of secondary importance and fade into insignificance compared with the possibility that they give the players to progress, an opportunity that is also extended to referees and even referee observers.

This season's programme therefore features 13 development tournaments, the first in Portugal in February and the last in Poland in August.

In principle, each tournament involves the Under-16 girls' and boys' teams of four national associations. Each team contains 20 players and nine substitutions are allowed in each match. The first five days of the tournament are reserved for the boys' teams and the second five for the girls' (or vice versa). A UEFA technical observer attends each tournament in order to talk to national youth coaches about subjects relevant to this particular age group.

These Under-16 tournaments also have the benefit of preparing the young players for the European Under-17 Championships. Given the scarcity of international friendly tournaments for women's teams in this age category, UEFA also organises development tournaments for them: between April and June this year, there will be seven development tournaments for Under-17 girls. ●

The development tournament in Portugal last February



A WIDE FINANCIAL HEALTH CHECK

UEFA, with the valuable contributions of the member associations' club licensing teams, has issued its fifth benchmarking report on European club football, featuring analysis of more than 670 top-division clubs from all of UEFA's member associations.

The European Club Licensing Benchmarking Report is a document of 124 pages published in four languages – English, French, German and Russian – which was distributed in print form during February to the UEFA member associations and key stakeholders and made available to the wider public online at UEFA.com. The report comes at a key time for European club football, in the wake of financial fair play measures introduced by UEFA aimed at limiting the financial problems which have affected the European club game.

Five-year financial review

The report provides the widest and most complete financial health check of club football available, with the five-year financial review sourced from over 3,000 detailed sets of financial statements, laying bare the strengths and weaknesses of club football finances across Europe.

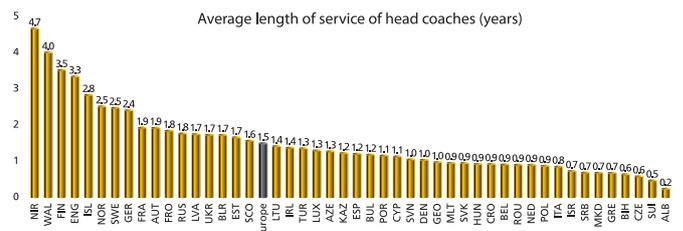
In his foreword to the report, the UEFA President, Michel Platini, explains its purpose: *"This report provides an in-depth analysis of the current situation, allowing national associations, leagues and clubs to benchmark their performance and all readers to better understand the context in which clubs across the 53 UEFA member associations operate."*

For the first time, the benchmarking report includes a whole section dedicated to UEFA club competitions and the participating clubs, including analysis on where clubs' finances are in comparison to the impending financial fair play requirements. As well as analysing the financial contribution that UEFA club competitions make to club finances, the section also includes a unique review of the last decade of UEFA's two flagship club

competitions, the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Cup/UEFA Europa League, and the impressive total of 578 different clubs that have participated during this period. Elsewhere in the section, the city bases of participating clubs are analysed, with 69% of clubs coming from outside Europe's capital cities and 27 cities contributing more than one club in the 2012/13 competitions.

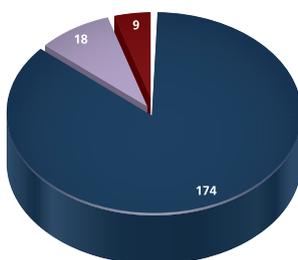
Many charts

The style of the report is visual, with many charts and a basic question-and-answer format. For example, one question asks: Is it the "same old clubs" always competing in UEFA club competitions? Analysis of the last four three-year competition cycles highlights that only ten clubs participated in the UEFA Champions League group stage in each of the three years, compared with 15-17 clubs in previous three-year competition cycles.



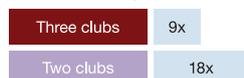
Elsewhere, the analysis provides food for thought and underlines the pressures of club football, with an extraordinary 55% of the top-division clubs analysed replacing their coaches within the previous 12-month period.

City distribution of clubs in 2012/13 UEFA club competitions



- City with one team
- City with two teams
- City with three teams

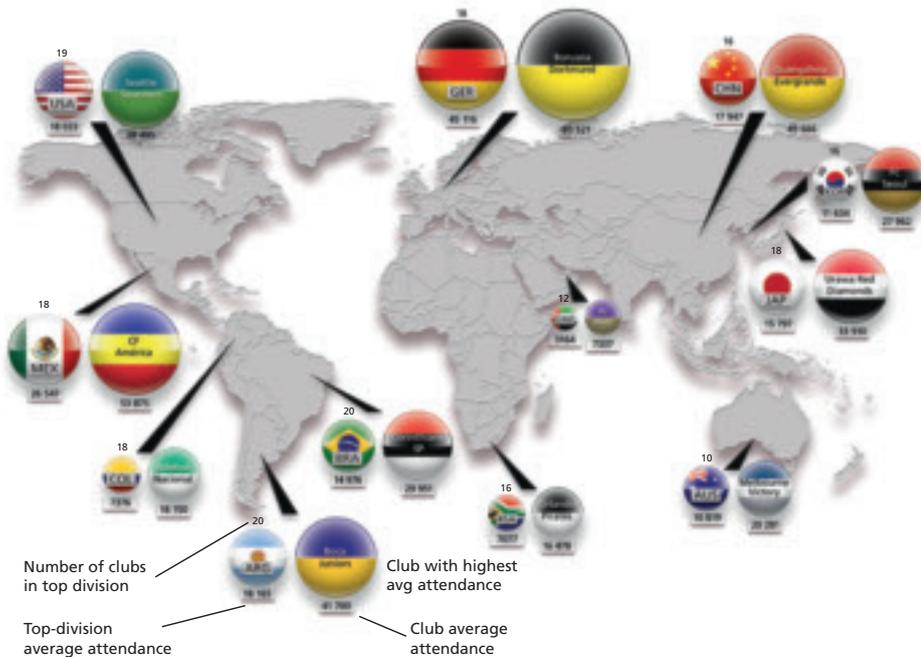
City base of clubs in 2012/13 UEFA club competitions:



The later chapters of the report study club finances in detail, at Europe-wide, national and individual club levels. Some positive messages are reiterated, namely that football revenues remain buoyant, with overall Europe-wide top-division revenues of €13.2bn in 2011 representing growth of 24% since 2007 – extraordinary given the context of this period of economic downturn. As the UEFA general secretary, Gianni Infantino, stated during a recent media engagement covered on UEFA.com, “[...] can you tell me which other industry has grown 5.6% every year in the last four or five years when we had an economic crisis which is hitting all of us? This shows that the professional football business sector is healthy from a revenue point of view.”

Increase in spectators

Even the pressure on league matchday attendances, which led to a decrease in matchday ticket income in 2011, shows signs of easing in 2012, with the majority of top-division European leagues reporting an increase in match attendances, and a 2.3% increase in overall league attendances to more than 103 million. Reaching wider, the report documents the impressive attendance levels for club football across the globe, while

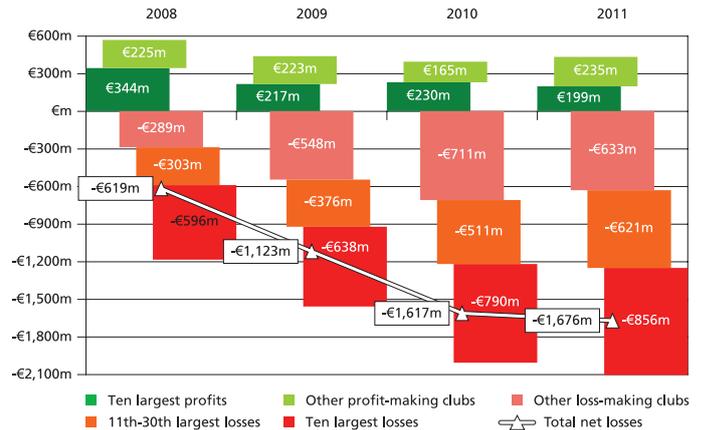


underlining that nine of the ten highest average club attendances were reported in UEFA member associations during the most recent completed season.

Is it just the “wealthy” clubs making ever larger losses?

While trends based on aggregate figures (for example, the fact that cumulative top-division losses have increased from around €600m in 2007 to around €1,700m in 2011) paint a picture of what is happening, detailed analysis at club-by-club level provides a fuller, more complete narrative.

The report reveals that the increase in club losses is a more complex problem than just an increase in losses at the top of club football from the major transfer fees and eye-watering salaries that are widely reported in the media. While losses of the ten largest loss-making clubs increased from around



€600m to around €850m between 2008 and 2011, influenced by new and ambitious club owners, losses lower down the pecking order also expanded significantly. In 2008, the losses of the other 720 top-division clubs were almost completely cancelled out, – the net loss was just €23m. If we fast-forward to 2011, this net result has jumped to €820m, with escalating wage costs of 38% between 2007 and 2011 the main culprit.

Positive signs

It is clear that the financial challenges run deeper and wider than just the high-profile cases on the surface of club football. As a counter-balance to some of the bad news, the report does identify some positive signs, with a slightly higher proportion of clubs that managed to balance their books, and an analysis of club balance sheets that yields a largely neutral picture.

With the dawning of the UEFA break-even rules from the 2012 and 2013 financial years, many clubs competing in UEFA club competitions and running deficits will have to strengthen their balance sheets in order to meet the requirements. While this will not lead to the overnight transformation of club finances, we do expect to see some positive figures reflected in next year’s report, which will feature the first financial season considered for the financial fair play break-even

rule. There is no doubt that next year’s report will be eagerly anticipated.

The search for a more sustainable balance between income, spending and investment is central to the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations. What is abundantly clear from the report is that action from UEFA, national governing bodies and their clubs is essential to protect the future health of the most popular sport in Europe and the world.

What is also clear, as evidenced by three recent financial fair play workshops in Nyon, in which all 53 UEFA member associations participated, and from club licensing site visits in the last three months to Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Andorra, Belarus, Moldova, Albania, Armenia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Greece, Malta and the Czech Republic, is the determination of the national governing bodies to act. ●

ARTEMIO FRANCHI ELECTED UEFA PRESIDENT

On 15 March 1973, delegates from 32 of the 33 national associations that were affiliated to UEFA at the time gathered in Rome at an Extraordinary UEFA Congress, the fifth of its kind. Albania was the only member association not represented.

The main purpose of this meeting, held in the Italian capital to mark the 75th anniversary of the Italian Football Federation, was to elect a new UEFA president for the remaining 14 months of the term of Gustav Wiederkehr from Switzerland, who had died suddenly on 7 July 1972 during his third term as president.

In accordance with the UEFA Statutes of the time, the most senior UEFA vice-president, Hungarian Sándor Barcs, who had been a vice-president since 1962, became caretaker president until the congress in Rome.

Four candidates

Four men had initially put their names forward for the presidential election, although Dutchman Jos. Coler withdrew before the vote and the electors had to choose between Sándor Barcs, Italian Artemio Franchi, a UEFA vice-president since 1968, and Englishman Denis Follows.

One round of voting was enough for Artemio Franchi, with 21 votes, to become the third UEFA president, following in the footsteps of Ebbe Schwartz and Gustav Wiederkehr. The vacant seat on the Executive Committee was filled by the only candidate, Switzerland's Lucien Schmidlin.

Strong position

After his election, Artemio Franchi thanked the UEFA Congress. He said that his term would barely be long enough to draw up a programme. *"We have been shown the way. Now we must*

follow it and reinforce UEFA's structures," he said, adding that, although the UEFA competitions were already very well organised and UEFA itself was in a strong position, there was still a lot to do to consolidate what had already been achieved and to create true unity in European football.

Tragic accident

Confirmed as president by acclamation at the Ordinary UEFA Congress in Edinburgh in May 1974, Artemio Franchi remained at the UEFA helm for ten years, until a car accident in Tuscany on 12 August 1983 tragically brought his life and brilliant career in sports administration to an end.

His successor as president, first vice-president Jacques Georges (France), paid the following tribute to him in the UEFA Bulletin: *"[...] a man of his stature cannot leave us without having formed a deep and lasting imprint on our memories. Let us bear in mind the example he has set us [...]. The scale of the work he accomplished within UEFA is most clearly reflected in the form of its competitions; each and every one of the UEFA events today bears his mark.*

"[...] He always wanted football to be a good game, a fair and honest sport, and for years he fought to overcome the violence pervading the game, and to preserve football as a sport for true sportsmen who had no intention of doing each other harm. [...] and he also knew that the only language capable of truly overcoming all sorts of barriers and frontiers was the language of sport." •



Artemio Franchi thanks the UEFA Congress after his election

NEWS FROM BRUSSELS

More than ten years after the conclusion of a political agreement between FIFA, UEFA and the European Commission concerning the reform of transfer rules, the Commission asked the Centre for the Law and Economics of Sport (CDES) in Limoges and the Brussels-based KEA agency to conduct an independent study in order to assess the current situation in detail.



Overall, the document favours the system currently in place, since it is helping to sustain the economic viability of many small and medium-sized clubs. Generally speaking, transfer fees “constitute an important source of revenue for clubs”. There are three times as many transfers now as in 1995 (the year of the Bosman ruling). Over the same period, the total value of these transactions has increased by a factor of 7.4.

However, the study notes that the transfer rules make inadequate provision for transparency, which can lead to dubious transactions and unlawful practices. In this connection, financial fair play is described as a “key development whose implementation should be encouraged”.

Furthermore, it appears that the current system is failing to effectively address imbalances in and between national championships, because of the lack of a suitable financial redistribution mechanism. The study finds a very strong link between transfer expenditure and success on the pitch. It

also shows that, during the 2010/11 season, a total of around €3bn was spent on transfer fees in the EU, with the five major championships accounting for more than 55% of this sum.

In response to the publication of the study, the European Commission said it “fully recognises the right of sports authorities to set rules for transfers,” but that “the rules as they are do not ensure a fair balance” in competitions.

The results of the study will be analysed by the EU Expert Group on Good Governance in Sport on 9 April. This group, which meets under the auspices of the EU Council and European Commission, is composed of representatives of national governments and observers from sports organisations (FIFA, UEFA, the EPFL, the ECA, the IOC, FIFPro, etc.).

The study is available at the following address:
<http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/f-studies/study-transfers-final-rpt.pdf> ●

ELECTIONS AT THE UEFA CONGRESS IN LONDON

The 37th Ordinary UEFA Congress will be held on 24 May at Grosvenor House in London.

As is usual in odd-numbered years, elections for the UEFA and FIFA Executive Committees will be one of the main items on the agenda at this general meeting of Europe’s national football associations.

Elections will be held for half of the seats on the UEFA Executive Committee, with the four-year terms of office of the following eight members coming to an end this year:

- Giancarlo Abete (Italy)
- Allan Hansen (Denmark)
- Marios Lefkaritis (Cyprus)
- František Laurinec (Slovakia)
- Abraham Luzon (Israel)
- Geoffrey Thompson (England)
- Michael van Praag (Netherlands)
- Theo Zwanziger (Germany)

Applications for any of these seats positions must reach the UEFA administration by 24.00 CET on Sunday 24 March (i.e. two months before the Congress), in accordance with the UEFA Statutes.

On the FIFA Executive Committee, the following four European members are reaching the end of their terms of office:

- Michel D’Hooghe (Belgium)
- Şenes Erzik (Turkey)
- Marios Lefkaritis (Cyprus)
- Vitaly Mutko (Russia)

Again, applications must reach UEFA by 24 March, and the same deadline applies for the submission of agenda items proposed by the national associations. ●



Michel Platini and Franz Beckenbauer

Bongarts / Getty Images

PRESIDENT’S AWARD FOR FRANZ BECKENBAUER

Franz Beckenbauer joined the list of prestigious recipients of the UEFA President’s Award in Munich on 27 February.

By awarding this distinction to the former captain of the West German national team, Michel Platini honoured a man who enjoyed success throughout his career, whether as a player, coach or administrator. “Franz Beckenbauer is a landmark figure in football who can be proud of his many achievements,” said the UEFA President at the presentation ceremony.

Alfredo Di Stéfano, Sir Bobby Charlton, Eusébio, Raymond Kopa and Gianni Rivera have all received the award in recent years. ●

A NEW APPROACH

The UEFA Certificate in Football Management (UEFA CFM) was launched in autumn 2010. With the number of applications steadily rising after three editions of the programme, UEFA has decided to run the course at national level for the first time.



Alex Horne, general secretary of The FA, welcomes the seminar participants in London

This year, the CFM has entered a new era in which it will continue to grow on an even bigger scale. In England and Croatia, the course is being offered at national level for the first time. If these pilot projects prove successful, UEFA plans to run the course in other national associations so that it can benefit more candidates than the 35 who attend each annual edition of the centralised version.

Kick-off in England

This new phase of the CFM kicked off in England on 8 February, when 20 staff members of The Football Association (FA) attended the opening seminar of The FA's version of the UEFA CFM at Wembley. The programme will last six months and its content is identical to that of the European course. It comprises six online learning modules and three seminars – one at the beginning, the second in the middle and the last at the end of the learning phase, which will culminate in a graduation ceremony at the St George's Park national football centre in September.

The topics covered are:

- the organisation of football
- the strategic and performance management of a football association
- the operational management of a football association
- football event management
- football marketing and sponsorship
- internal and external communications in football associations.

Local experts

One particular feature of these national programmes is the possibility for the host association to involve local experts in the seminars. In England, some key members of The FA's administration will be participating.

In order to ensure consistency with the centralised courses, UEFA will also send some of its own experts to the seminars, while the professors who devised the online content will also play an active role. As is already the case with the European programme, the certificates will be issued by the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration (IDHEAP) in Lausanne.

Course in Croatia

Another national association has also joined this new training initiative: on 21 and 22 February, the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) held its first seminar, attended by 24 participants from its own staff, Croatian clubs and regional associations.

Other national associations have already expressed an interest and the 2013/14 season is likely to see several new projects get under way.

Thanks to this plan to roll out the UEFA CFM at national association level, the number of people duly trained in football management should therefore increase rapidly in the next few years and enable national football authorities to rely on staff who are capable of meeting the challenges that await them. ●



Advertising on integration

The Austrian Football Association (ÖFB) and the Fussballösterreich Spielbetriebs- und Vermarktungs Gesellschaft, a 50% subsidiary of the ÖFB that focuses on match operations and marketing, have produced a TV advertisement on the theme of integration. The production was supported by the office of the state secretary for integration. The ÖFB president, Leo Windtner, and the state secretary for integration, Sebastian Kurz, unveiled the advertisement in Vienna at the end of March.

It shows the entry permits of the parents of national team players David Alaba, Aleksandar Dragović, Zlatko Junuzović and Veli Kavlak, the date of their entry to Austria and the entry stamp with the signature of the official concerned. These images are interspersed with footage of the four players in action for the national team and of celebrating Austrian fans. The message "Their parents came as migrants, their sons play for Austria" explains the players' background and highlights the fact



The entry visa for Austria of the father of current international David Alaba

that migration and integration go hand in hand in the football world. The phrase "Your performance counts" is the main slogan of the advertisement.

The advert will be shown on all media channels of the ÖFB and Fußballösterreich GmbH, offered to TV stations and played on the big screen at ÖFB home matches. More information at www.oefb.at.

● Christoph Walter



The Bakcell Arena – fresh inspiration for entrepreneurship in football

This year, football entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan reached a new high. It is well known that Azerbaijan has now been selected to host European and international events and tournaments, thanks to the outstanding work of the national association and the expansion of the country's football infrastructure.

Numerous regional Olympic centres have been completed and are now being used by the public, while yet more new centres are being built. The aim is to establish such sporting centres in almost every region of the country. The last two years have been fairly remarkable in terms of the completion of new stadiums, such as the Dalgha Arena, the 8km Stadium, the Bayil Stadium, the Agsu City Stadium and the Bina Stadium.

In addition to the building of these new stadiums and the complete renovation of the

Tofiq Bahramov Olympic Stadium, construction work has begun on Baku's new Olympic Stadium, which will have a capacity of 65,000.

The proper use and leasing out of these new ultra-modern stadiums are no less important than their construction. Recently, the mobile telecommunications company Bakcell concluded an agreement with the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) regarding a five-year leasing deal for the 8km Stadium. Following the conclusion of that lease agreement, an opening ceremony was held at the stadium on Saturday 24 February. The agreement will definitely be highly beneficial for the AFFA and will act as a template for future initiatives involving local companies.

"The Bakcell Arena is a successful infrastructure project. We are encouraged by the fact that local companies are interested in football projects," said Rovnag Abdullayev, president of the AFFA, in his speech at the opening ceremony.

Under the agreement, the 8km Stadium, which has been in use since September 2012, will be owned by Bakcell for the next five years and named the Bakcell Arena. Construction of the stadium, which spans 22,500m², began in May 2010. The structure was built in a short period of time and meets all international standards. The stadium hosted group matches and all of the quarter-finals at the 2012 FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup, while Bakcell was one of the tournament's national partners.

The stadium, which has a capacity of 11,000, has separate entrances for the general public, the media and VIPs. It has a total of 17 family and VIP skyboxes, a media section in one of the stands, dressing rooms for up to four teams at a time, rooms for coaches and referees, a doping control room and media conference rooms. There is also an underground car park with space for 400 cars, as well as an area for outside broadcast vans.

● Mikayil Narimanoglu



Paul Allaerts appointed sports director

The Royal Belgian Football Association is always looking for ways to improve its operations, which is why it is delighted to have appointed former international referee Paul Allaerts as its sports director in mid-January 2013.

Although the role covers a vast range of responsibilities, the sports director's primary task is to manage the structural and practical organisation of Belgian competitions. Football is a sport that involves numerous participants and it is vital that all of them are well prepared so that the quality of our football continues to improve.

As a former top-level referee and manager in the banking sector, Paul Allaerts is used to leading large groups of people, and this experience will come in handy in his new post, in which he will need to work with various partners.

Since Paul Allaerts clearly has a huge workload to contend with, he has several experts around him to help with certain tasks, including former national team player Johan Walem (coordinator of national men's youth teams), Ives Serneels (coordinator of all national women's teams), Kris Van der Haegen (head of coach education) and Bob Browwaes (head of talent identification). In the long run, and with the help of these experts, Paul Allaerts is determined to ensure that the current positive development of Belgian football continues at an even faster rate.



Paul Allaerts (right) with the president of the Belgian FA, François de Keersmaecker

Our technical department is based at the Tubize sports centre, which Paul Allaerts hopes to transform into a true centre of excellence with perfect infrastructure and a venue for numerous activities. This centre should be the flagship of Belgian football and everything will be done to ensure that this is the case.

Not only players and coaches, but also our best referees need to be motivated through professional supervision, particularly in order to improve their technical and tactical preparation, and this is something our new sports director has promised to address.

Finally, although campaigns have been and continue to be organised in order to promote refereeing and encourage talented youngsters to move in this direction, Paul Allaerts is fully aware that it is not enough simply to recruit more referees: we must also be able to keep them. All too often, the motivation that drives them at the outset is lost over time and they hang up their whistle, a trend that must be reversed if we are to have enough referees for our matches.

To sum up, Paul Allaerts is embarking on a vast and ambitious project, but this does not deter him in the slightest. Perfection is his ambition, passion his motivation.

● Pierre Cornez



Rovnag Abdullayev, president of the AFFA (left), with the director of Bakcell

 **Bosnia and Herzegovina**
www.nfsbih.ba

Focus on young players

This year began with a focus on youth football, in the form of the traditional winter camp for the national men's and women's youth teams (Bosnia and Herzegovina's Under-15s, Under-17s and Under-19s), taking place in Medjugorje.

A total of 120 talented young players took part in the camp, which ended with a match between the men's Under-17 and Under-21 teams at Stadion Bare in Čitluk, in which the final score was 0-0.

The men's Under-19s are preparing for the elite round of the European Under-19 Championship, hoping to qualify for the final round in Lithuania. Alongside Toni Karačić's team in Group 1 of the elite round are hosts Austria, France and Sweden. Those matches will be played between 5 and 10 June.

In preparation for their qualifying matches, the Under-19s recently played two friendlies against Bulgaria in Blagoevgrad, winning the first 1-0 and the second 5-2.

 **Cyprus**
www.cfa.com.cy

Women's national team back in action

In January and February, the Cyprus women's national team played its first international friendly matches since May 2006.

The team has been restructured in order for it to be ready to compete in FIFA and UEFA competitions in the near future.

In January, the new-look side played its first international match against Malta in Paphos. The final score was 1-1.

In February, Cyprus lost 3-1 in Nicosia to the Greek national team.

More international friendly matches will be held in the coming months, both in Cyprus and abroad. The women's national team is aiming to reach a certain level and to become as competitive as it can for official competitions.

■ In other news, elite and elite development referees and assistant referees attended a mid-season seminar organised by the referees department of the Cyprus Football Association.

The main focus of the mid-season seminar was the cooperation between referees and their assistants during matches. The seminar was coordinated by the director of referee education in Cyprus, Jaap Uilenberg.

The seminar lasted two days and included a special ceremony, during which the Cypriot international referees and assistant referees were awarded their FIFA badges for 2013.

● Constantinos Shiamboullis



The Cyprus women's national team

Meanwhile, the men's Under-17s played two friendly matches against Montenegro in Čitluk, winning the first 1-0 and drawing the second 2-2.

At the end of the camp, there was also a match between the women's Under-19s and the senior women's team, and this also finished 0-0.

On 6 February, as part of their bid to qualify for the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, the senior men's team – the "Dragons" – played their first match of the year, a friendly against Slovenia. The match, which was played in Stadion Stožice in Ljubljana, ended with the Dragons winning 3-0.

The national futsal team recently played two matches against Croatia in Novigrad, winning the first 3-0 and second finishing in a 1-1 draw.

Before the start of the second half of the premier league season, the Bosnian club licensing association held a seminar at the Park Hotel in Vogošća looking at financial, sporting, legal, administrative and infrastructure-related criteria applied in the licensing process. The seminar was aimed at the presidents, directors, certified auditors, financial officers and



Bosnia and Herzegovina (in blue) won their first warm-up match of the year against Slovenia

secretaries of premier league clubs. It was run by experts in those areas, with special emphasis placed on financial criteria, which are the most complex in the licensing process.

At the meeting of the UEFA Executive Committee held on 25 January, the composition of the various UEFA committees for the period 2011–15 was amended. The president of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation, Elvedin Begić, was appointed third vice-chairman of the Stadium and Security Committee. Dušan Bajević was confirmed as the third vice-chairman of the Development and Technical Assistance Committee, Faruk Hadžibegić was confirmed as a member of the Football Committee, and general secretary Jasmin Baković was confirmed as a member of the Women's Football Committee.

● Fuad Kravac

 **England**
www.thefa.com

Distribution of the FA awards

Steven Gerrard and Stephanie Houghton were among the big winners at The FA England Awards in February – held as part of The Football Association's 150th anniversary celebrations.

On a star-studded night at the national football centre, St George's Park, England captain Gerrard took the men's senior prize. He completed a memorable week when he was presented with an award from The FA and UEFA to mark his 100th cap before England's 2-1 win against Brazil at Wembley.

Houghton claimed the women's honour following her fantastic TeamGB displays in 2012. The evening also celebrated the work of the Bobby Moore Fund for Cancer Research UK, with February marking 20 years since the death of the legendary England captain.

Other notable award winners included the women's senior team, voted Club England Team of the Year. The men's Under-21 and women's Under-23 players of the year were Jordan Henderson and Toni Duggan respectively.

In his keynote address, the FA chairman, David Bernstein, paid tribute to all levels of the game, in keeping with the spirit of The FA's 150th anniversary celebrations. The chairman said: "Clearly, The FA England Awards are about much more than prize-giving and honouring those who have achieved. The elite level is the pinnacle of a pyramid that makes English football so special. They are the inspiration to over two million people regularly playing football in this country. All involved at every level deserve our recognition and respect."

"Being here at St George's Park, the new home of all 24 England teams, is wonderful, and the coming days will show how our development sides will train side by side with the senior squads on perfect pitches with state-of-the-art facilities. What better preparation for the tournaments ahead this year,



Steven Gerrard was honoured with a special award to mark his 100th England cap

including the Under-21 EURO, Under-20 World Cup and the Women's Under-17 Championship, which we are delighted to be hosting in November? For all, whatever the age, it is a great setting for the pursuit of excellence. That, coupled with the togetherness and team spirit fostered by a strong club mentality, will surely be beneficial to helping bring success to England teams in the future."

The FA chairman presented England and TeamGB blind football star Dave Clarke with the lifetime achievement award, calling him "an inspiration to so many". His words were echoed by David Beckham in a filmed tribute, after the former England captain had previously joined Clarke for a blind football training session. Beckham said: "It was a real honour and a pleasure to see what you and the guys get up to and achieve. Congratulations again on the lifetime achievement award, it is really well deserved."

His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge, the FA president, welcomed the 300 guests to St George's Park with a personal video message: "In particular it is great to see our disabled teams getting due recognition for their achievements. The new national football centre is a fitting home for these inaugural awards and I am sure it will lead to even more success for our national teams in future."

● Greg Demetriou

“Ladies, break through the barrier!” campaign

The French Football Federation (FFF) launched the campaign “Mesdames, franchissez la barrière!” (“Ladies, break through the barrier!”) all over France this winter. This initiative, organised in each *département*, aims to increase the number of women involved in football and support them in their new roles.

The first step was to send football ambassadors to meet women already involved in the world of football. Until early March, female supporters and others were informed about the educational, technical and administrative tasks carried out by clubs at various events, tournaments and organised matches.



A campaign to encourage women to get involved in football

To coincide with International Women’s Day, information meetings for any women interested in taking up posts in clubs were held at each district football association headquarters between Friday 8 and Sunday 10 March.

The FFF took this opportunity to showcase the campaign at national level.

From now on, the ambassadors will help newly appointed women to launch their careers, offer them training and tell them about possible opportunities.

This follow-up work will enable the new coaches, trainers, referees or even administrators to be up and running in their posts in time for the start of next season.

The campaign brochure can be downloaded from fff.fr

● Matthieu Brelle-Andrade

Rebuilding relationships

After the war in August 2008 between Russia and Georgia, all relationships between the two countries were cut off. Currently, FIFA and UEFA have also decided not to allow national teams and football clubs from Russia and Georgia to play in the same groups or rounds of their competitions.

In January, the director of the 35th Georgian football school, Gocha Avsajanishvili, decided to extend an olive branch by inviting the FC Avtodor youth team from Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia in the south of Russia, to visit Tbilisi. The invitation was accepted. Vladikavkaz is around 200km from Tbilisi, but the road between the two has been closed because of political circumstances. At a meeting with parents before the start of the journey, the president of FC Avtodor, Hasan Albegonov, said: “Boys, remember that you are going to visit our Georgian brothers in the homeland of one of the best teams in the [former] Soviet Union, Dinamo Tbilisi. I became a fan of this club 60 years ago and was still going to watch

the team play until the conflict. Try your best to show the Georgians all your skills!” The boys born in 1995 and led by coach David Dvalishvili embarked on their journey and in five hours found themselves receiving a warm welcome from Georgian teenagers.

The heads of the 35th football school accommodated the team from North Ossetia at the school hostel. The next day, a huge number of Georgian spectators went to the school football field – nicknamed Maracana. Everybody wanted to see the future of Ossetian football, and everybody had heard of the brilliant players from Ossetia who brought glory to Dinamo Tbilisi, such as Andro Zazroev, Zaur Kaloev, Guram Tskhovrebov and Vladimer Gutsaev.

FC Avtodor planned to participate in two games, but because of bad weather conditions on the road between Tbilisi and Vladikavkaz, they had to stay more than a week, and actually played four matches in total. The Georgian media wrote several articles about the team and the Georgian minister of sport, Levan Kipiani, organised a special meeting with the boys. They spent many hours sightseeing in and around



The meeting of youth teams has helped to rebuild relationships between Georgians and Russians from Ossetia

Tbilisi, regularly calling parents and friends in Vladikavkaz to tell them how beautiful the Georgian capital was.

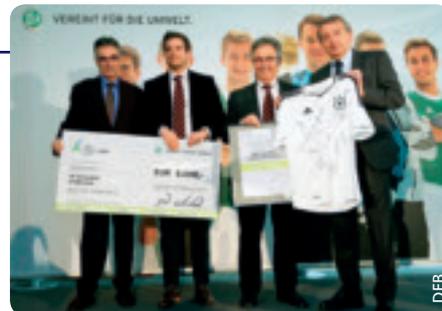
When the road was clear of snow, FC Avtodor left Georgia with plenty of gifts, and with tears in their eyes. The club has now decided to organise a tournament in Vladikavkaz in a couple of months, and have invited their new Georgian friends in order to build on the success of this visit.

It goes to show that there are no barriers in football – this magical sport can help ease any conflict and problem.

● Mamuka Kvaratskhelia / Tata Burduli

SG Sonnenhof Großaspach are German football's environment champions

In mid-February, the German Football Association (DFB) honoured the three national winners of the DFB-Umweltcup 2012 (DFB environment cup 2012) in Frankfurt. As proud overall winners of the 2012 title, SG Sonnenhof Großaspach, a regional league club from Baden-Württemberg, can now call themselves German football's environment champions. In addition to a cheque for €5,000, a certificate and a gold plaque for their clubhouse, the winners received energy efficiency advice from DFB partner Dekra. Third division club 1. FC Heidenheim were runners-up, while district league side SV Knudde 88 Giekau finished third and received a special prize for implementing 60 different eco-friendly measures – more than



The DFB president and general secretary, Wolfgang Niersbach (right) and Helmut Sandrock (left), with representatives of SG Sonnenhof Großaspach, winners of the DFB's environment cup 2012

any other participant. Rainer Adrion, coach of the German national Under-21 team, will visit the club and lead a training session.

A total of 105 million TV viewers saw the advertisement in which the DFB publicised this

online competition for clubs in 2012. More than 400 football clubs from all over Germany responded by entering the DFB environment cup in 2012 and, between them, implemented a total of 1,400 measures for environmental and climate protection. All these measures combined produce a huge annual saving of 1,222,000kWh of electricity, 804,000kWh of heat energy, 900,000kg of greenhouse gases (CO₂ equivalents) and 30,500m³ of water. DFB director Willi Hink said: “The electricity saving alone is equivalent of to the usage of 245 family homes.” Rudolf Ley of the German environment ministry added: “The minister, Peter Altmaier, would like to join me in congratulating the DFB for such a great idea. This is a fantastic result. We love how the DFB gets messages about environmental protection across so easily.”

● Thomas Hackbarth



A new technical director

After the grand opening of the new Shfayim training centre on 1 April 2012, it was just a matter of time until a new technical director was appointed. On 1 March, the Israel Football Association (IFA) was finally able to introduce the new man in that role.

The IFA has appointed the new technical director to be in charge of all national youth teams. The former head of South Africa's national youth set-up, Michael Nies, was selected after a long selection process.

For the last four years, Nies has been in charge of the youth national teams and head

of training for the South African Football Association. Before that he was the head coach of the national teams in Rwanda and the Seychelles.

This summer, Israel will host the high-profile European Under-21 Championship final round – at the same time as Nies is in charge of building a new U21 team for the future.

Nies' appointment was also a product of the great relationship between the IFA and the German Football Association (DFB), which highly recommended him for the job.

The IFA wishes him great success and welcomes him to the Israeli football family.

● Michal Grundland



Michael Nies, the new national technical director



Youth football is the priority

The implementation of Kazakhstan's youth football development programme for the period 2012–22 is continuing. Six new training centres will be added to the existing five,

making a total of 11 across Kazakhstan – in Astana, Karagandy, Taraz, Aktobe, Pavlodar, Taldykorgan, Shymkent, Kostanay, Uralsk and Oskemen. The total number of children currently attending football centres in Kazakhstan is approaching 3,000.

The idea of opening these football centres came from Adilbek Jaxybekov, the president of the Football Federation of Kazakhstan (KFF), who saw the need for a radical reform of the country's entire youth football system. The German player development model was used as a template, as it had yielded good results

in the form of victories for youth teams in various age categories. This project was made possible thanks to a memorandum of cooperation concluded by the German Football Association (DFB) and the KFF.

There are nine age categories in each football centre, with around 20–25 children in each category. The KFF is very careful when selecting its youth coaches, with only the best in the country allowed to work with the children. It is worth noting that youth coaches are given constant training – both theoretical and practical.

The biggest challenge as regards the youth sessions is the absence of facilities for winter training. In the majority of the country, the low temperatures make it impossible to train in the open air between October and April. Fortunately, local authorities in cities across Kazakhstan have started building warm indoor football pitches, which will allow children to train all year round without a winter break. Heating systems in these indoor centres will allow temperatures of up to 18C, despite the extremely cold weather outside.

Thus, the development of youth and grassroots football remains the top priority for the Football Federation of Kazakhstan.

● Izmail Bzarov



The new training centres offer more learning opportunities



LFV providing important support for social projects

The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) organises a whole range of social initiatives, consistently showing the value that it places on establishing links between elite sport and grassroots and disability sport, as well as society in general. In recent months, the association has been participating in the schools project "Oberschule macht Schule", allowing the secondary school in Triesen to find out more about the LFV and the national football team. Internationals Mathias Christen and Ivan Quintans, LFV president Matthias Voigt, head coach René Pauritsch and kit manager Josip Topić visited the school on behalf of the national association.

A special LFV initiative in the run-up to the friendly between Liechtenstein and Malta in November 2012 caused something of a stir. Joshi Kirschbaumer, the goalkeeper in Liechtenstein's Special Olympics team and an ambassador for disability sport, took part in a training session with the national side, working with the team's goalkeepers.

Meanwhile, the national Under-18 team recently showed their support for social initiatives by donating a significant sum of money from their team funds to the "Unanders" self-help group, an organisation for



International players visit a school as part of the social project

families with disabled children. The donation was presented to the group by team captain Angelo Willi, accompanied by Matthias Voigt.

● Anton Banzer

Nurseries benefit from UEFA solidarity contributions

The nurseries of clubs affiliated to the Malta Football Association (MFA) have recently benefited from the UEFA solidarity payments, which are distributed annually from UEFA Champions League revenue.



The Malta Youth FA president, Hilary Tagliaferro (centre), with, to his right, the president of the MFA, Norman Darmanin Demajo

Through these funds, which UEFA pays to the MFA, the several beneficiaries representing the backbone of grassroots football in the Maltese islands within the Malta Youth Football Association are able to sustain the development

of football in this sector. This is done through educational programmes designed to foster upright values among the younger generation of footballers.

During the presentation function attended by representatives of the youth nurseries, the MFA president, Norman Darmanin Demajo, expressed his appreciation at the work done by the football schools and organisers for their role in preparing young players in a holistic way. He stressed that a constant professional attitude is needed for rich dividends to be reaped in such a delicate and important sector.

The president of the Malta Youth FA, Hilary Tagliaferro, also reflected these thoughts and had words of encouragement for all those involved in the further advancement of grassroots football. He said that the guiding principles for the youngsters should be a sound character and a deep love for football. The function was a high-profile event in the MFA calendar, as shown by the presence of the association's top officials, including CEO Bjorn Vassallo. The MFA technical director, Robert Gatt, national team coach, Pietro Ghedin, and

representatives of the Malta Sports Council and the Maltese ministry of finance, economy and investment (national lotteries and good causes fund) were also present.

● Alex Vella

Calendar of events

The Irish Football Association (IFA) has officially launched its calendar of events that will take place as part of the Derry-Londonderry City of Culture 2013 celebrations. This programme of activities offers a wide and varied range of events that will engage football enthusiasts of all ages and abilities.



The IFA's national team manager, Michael O'Neill (centre), grassroots development officer, Kevin Doherty (left), and head of grassroots football, Lee Carroll, with two young players

The IFA's head of grassroots football, Lee Carroll, said: "The Irish FA recognises the fantastic achievement of Derry-Londonderry being awarded City of Culture 2013 and we are keen to be part of what promises to be a very exciting year. The Irish FA already has a very strong presence in the Derry-Londonderry area and we have a very exciting lineup of events that will appeal to a wide and diverse audience. We have also moved many of our high-profile matches, finals and key events to the city of Derry to mark this celebratory year."

Northern Ireland international manager Michael O'Neill was also on hand to help launch this calendar of events: "I am very excited about the range of activities the Irish FA has committed to run as part of City of Culture 2013. Derry-Londonderry has always been a hotbed of football talent and I hope that through some of these initiatives we unearth some players that go on to represent Northern Ireland at international level," he said.

Events take place throughout the year, and brochures will be distributed at information points throughout the city or can be downloaded from www.irishfa.com

● Sueann Harrison

Pavel Cebanu re-elected president

The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) held its annual congress in Chisinau on 3 February to elect its president and the members of the executive committee.

The presidential election was won by the outgoing president, Pavel Cebanu, who received 178 votes and, as a result, enters his fifth consecutive four-year term of office. "Thanks to all of you," said Mr Cebanu to the congress. "We now have four years of hard work ahead us." A number of changes to the FMF statutes, the fundamental legal basis for Moldovan football, were also discussed and approved at the meeting, which was attended by the prime minister of Moldova, Vlad Filat.

Several new members have joined the 19-strong executive committee, including former Moldovan international Ion Testemitanu, who also becomes a vice-president of the FMF and will be in charge of Moldova's national teams. Nicolai Cebotari, the federation's general secretary, was also appointed for a new four-year term, which is also his fifth in a row.

The newly elected president, whose four-year mandate will take him to 2017, identified the objectives for his new term of office: "I hope to continue our work for the development and benefit of Moldovan football," he said.

Pavel Cebanu, 57, enjoyed a distinguished playing career. The Reni-born midfielder scored

45 goals in 341 appearances for FC Nistru Chisinau in the former Soviet Union championship. He was also chosen as Moldova's outstanding player of the past 50 years to mark UEFA's Jubilee in 2004. After finishing his playing career, he coached in Moldova and Romania. He served as general secretary of the FMF before he was elected FMF president on 1 February 1997.

● Press office



A new term of office for the FMF president, Pavel Cebanu



UEFA President visits Poland

Michel Platini, the UEFA President, visited Poland on 14 February. His visit was not long, but he certainly had a packed schedule.

The visit started at the presidential palace, where Mr Platini joined Zbigniew Boniek, the president of the Polish Football Federation (PZPN), for a meeting with the president of Poland, Bronislaw Komorowski. Firstly, Mr Platini wanted to express his gratitude to Mr Komorowski and to thank everyone who helped to prepare EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine, which he described as a fantastic success.

"At this point I want to thank the whole Polish nation. Therefore, I offer my thanks to the president of the Republic of Poland. I often tell my fellow countrymen, who are organising the tournament in 2016, that you have set the bar very high."

Mr Platini's address of thanks was also directed at the government, the ministry of sport, the PZPN and, most importantly, the supporters. Without them, he said, EURO 2012 would not have been such a great event. President Komorowski said that the success of EURO 2012 had led to the improvement of the image of Poland as a modern, well-organised country. Zbigniew Boniek added that by organising EURO 2012, Poland had gained a lot, especially great acceptance and appreciation from UEFA. Later, Mr Platini handed a small replica of the Henri Delaunay Cup, the trophy given to the winners of the European Football Championship, to President Komorowski. Finally, the three men signed a Polish national



The shirt signed by Michel Platini, Bronislaw Komorowski and Zbigniew Boniek that was auctioned for charity

team shirt for auction. The money raised by the auction will be donated to an association that helps ill and disabled sports fans.

Fortunately, Mr Platini also found time to give a short interview to Janusz Basalaj, head of the communication and media department at the PZPN. Once again, he expressed his appreciation: *"I am greatly appreciative to the Polish population for their spontaneity, hospitality and love of football,"* he said. Mr Platini went on to talk about the organisation of EURO 2012 and the many great memories that came with it, his friendship with Zbigniew Boniek, and the chances of Poland organising another major European final in Poland. When asked about the last of these, he smiled and replied:

"A final for Poland? Well, you know, there are 53 countries that are hoping for that..." He also discussed the greatest danger for football today – match-fixing – and addressed the issue of corruption in football in general. *"If you know the result of a match before the first whistle, what's the point of watching it?"*

● *Jakub Kwiatkowski*



Women's football development project

At its first meeting in 2013, the executive committee of the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) approved a major project to promote and encourage the development of women's football in the country. The project is the logical continuation of a successful 2012 for women's football in Romania, marked by the country's highest ever finish in a senior preliminary round group (third place in Group 2 of the qualifiers for the Women's EURO 2013) and the first ever qualification of a Romanian women's national team for a final tournament (the European Women's Under-19 Championship in Antalya).

Promoting women's football is a constant priority of the FRF and of its women's football committee. This new project is part of the FRF's grassroots programme, and is co-funded by UEFA. The latest project continues the work of another UEFA-supported activity from last year, the 2012 summer camps, which were a big success, attracting more than 100 girls and enabling the coaches of the Romanian women's national youth teams to select the new Under-16 squad.

Regional women's football development projects preceded the new national scheme, which was launched in January. As a result of the development of women's football in Romania at regional level, a new team has also appeared on the Romanian women's football map: the FC UTA Arad women's team. The promotion of women's football at national level will involve numerous publicity activities in the first year. There will be a special website dedicated to the project, www.fotbalfeminin.ro, with sections for each of Romania's 42 county associations. In a pilot project involving eight to ten of these county associations, children of different age groups (grades 1-4, 5-8 or 9-12) will be able to choose to participate in tournaments taking place at local level, with their class or with their school. After this stage will come the finals at county level, which will also serve as a selection process for county teams. County representatives will then compete against each other, with the best girls subsequently participating in special ten-day training camps in three centres, under the guidance and permanent observation of the coaches of the women's national youth teams.

In the second year, it is planned to extend this project to another 18-20 county associations.

In the third year, the FRF intends to create a national academy for women's football, while the fourth and final year will target the creation of a stable competition structure at youth level.

The beginnings of the nationwide project in the Arad and Alba county associations, and the increasing interest being shown by other counties, are more than encouraging, suggesting that the results achieved last year by Romanian women's football will not be a flash in the pan.

● *Paul Zaharia*

The Romanian women's Under-19 team took part in the final round of the European Championship in 2012



FAI to host worldwide conference for supporters clubs

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) has invited representatives of Republic of Ireland supporters clubs around the world to attend a supporters conference in Dublin on 26 March.

The event will bring together Irish fans based all around the world at a conference in the Ballsbridge Inn on Tuesday 26 March – the day of Ireland's crucial FIFA World Cup qualifier against Austria at Dublin Arena.

The country is hosting a number of events in 2013 as part of a government initiative known as The Gathering 2013, and this is the FAI's first event in that programme. Irish fans based in the UK, Canada, Europe, Australia, the US and across the island of Ireland have been invited.

FAI regional manager Gerry Reardon explained the idea behind The Gathering: *"This is the first time all 'official' Republic of Ireland soccer supporters clubs have met up. The idea of this conference stemmed from Derry supporters club and their experience of shared 'good practice' with the recently formed Huddersfield and West of Ireland supporters clubs. We are reaching out to the Irish diaspora."*

The conference will see the supporters clubs engage in a panel discussion with FAI representatives including CEO John Delaney, finance director Tony Dignam and commercial manager



Irish supporters will descend on Dublin from far and wide

Max Hamilton, while Under-15 international team manager Niall Harrison, Football For All manager Oisín Jordan and a former international will also be speaking to the audience. This will be followed by breakout discussions with the attendees.

Members of an Ireland supporters club that have yet to be contacted, or anyone who is in the process of forming a club, would like to do so or would simply like to register their interest in the conference, can email gerry.reardon@fai.ie.

● *Stephen Finn*

New football development strategy

The Russian Football Union (RFS) has started work on a new football development strategy for the country that will take it up to the year 2020. In February, Anatoly Vorobyev, deputy general secretary of the RFS, chaired the first meeting of the football development programme committee at RFS headquarters, in the presence of Nikolai Tolstykh, president of the RFS.

"We need to devise a Russian football strategy that will take us up to 2020, especially in light of our hosting of the FIFA World Cup



in 2018. This is a new direction for the RFS," Vorobyev said.

The 2020 strategy should provide a true and accurate picture of the state of Russian football and lay down guidelines for the development of the football industry. It will be devised by a group of RFS managers. The strategy should

The football development programme committee meeting at RFS headquarters

take due account of normative documents detailing long-term plans for the development of Russia's exercise and sports industries, and will be a logical continuation of Russia's 2006–16 football development strategy. Anybody who wants to participate in the development of this strategy can submit their ideas and project proposals via an official RFS website.

● Irina Baranova

Performance schools clock up 10,000 hours

The Scottish Football Association's seven regional performance schools have achieved the milestone of 10,000 hours of coaching in the six months since their doors swung open. More than 100 young players around the country have benefited from 100 hours of additional football education each since they enrolled for the first year. The schools are one of the key pillars of the performance strategy masterminded by performance director Mark Wotte, who was at the Holyrood Secondary school in Glasgow to deliver his mid-term report to players identified as the best in the region at Under-12 level.

The mid-term report coincides with a series of football festivals throughout the country from which the next intake of performance school players will be selected for enrolment next August. He said: *"This is an essential programme in order for us to achieve the objectives set out in the strategic plan 'Scotland United: A 2020 Vision'. The performance school coaches have worked very hard to make sure each player improves his or her technical development.*

"I am very encouraged by the feedback from our performance coaches, parents and teachers."

Performance school pupil Jamie Walker, who plays for Rangers FC, said the school had

allowed him to make the most of his ambition. He said: *"When I went to the trial last year I was focused on getting here. I think I'm in the best place to become a professional footballer. Before I was training three nights a week, now I'm doing the same but with football every day at school too."*

Laurie Byrne, head teacher at Holyrood Secondary, has been encouraged by the progress of his performance school pupils both in a footballing and educational context: *"We are immensely proud to be part of the Scottish FA's performance school programme.*

I have been hugely impressed by the ease with which the young players have adapted to a school they might not otherwise have come to, and they have been welcomed by everyone. As well as the excellent work undertaken by Brian McLaughlin, there is no doubt the dedication has rubbed off on their studies, too, in terms of commitment, concentration and time management."

Brian McLaughlin, Holyrood's performance coach, said he had been impressed by the improvement in the attitude of the players in the six months he had been working with them. He said: *"The players are starting to understand why we train. They understand how big the*



Mark Wotte, Laurie Byrne and local MSP Humza Yousaf with the children of Holyrood Secondary in Glasgow

challenge is. The individual training sessions are the gem in the programme for me. We want players to think for themselves. On the pitch, we are asking them what they think they need to work at. We want to give the responsibility back to the players."

The local member of the Scottish parliament, Humza Yousaf, was also in attendance to hear about the progress of the pupils. He said: *"I'm hugely impressed with the work going on to develop these young players. There won't be immediate results, but there are structures in place now that can only be of huge benefit to the national teams in the future."*

● Clare Bodel

Marek Mintál receives fair play award

Since 1993, the Slovak Football Association has presented an annual fair play award named after Ivan Chodák, the famous Slovak footballer who became a symbol of unity between football and fair play because of his extraordinary football skills and his attitude to the sport and to life. This year, the fair play award was presented to Marek Mintál, the star forward of MŠK Žilina and 1. FC Nürnberg nicknamed "the phantom" by the fans, in recognition of his outstanding career in football. Marek Mintál is the only Slovak player to have been top scorer of both the first and second



divisions of the German Bundesliga. He has twice been named Slovak footballer of the year and he has several caps for the national team in

Marek Mintál, an example of fair play for younger footballers

different age groups. He is well known for his exemplary attitude to football, fans and the public, and an annual Under-17 tournament in Slovakia is named after him. Marek Mintál now passes on his experience to younger players in his role as head coach of the Under-21 national team. He is also the ambassador for the final round of the 2012/13 European Under-17 Championship in Slovakia, the final of which will take place on 17 May in the city where Marek started his footballing career – Žilina.

● Juraj Čurný



Increasing the popularity of women's football

The beginnings of women's football in Slovenia go back to early 1990s when the first national women's football league was organised.

More than 20 years later (the current season is the 20th women's football league), there are 1,411 registered women players in various age groups. In the hope of attracting more women to a sport that provokes the full range of human emotions, the Football Association

of Slovenia is implementing a project that aims to bring more girls to football pitches and introduce them to football.

The slogan of the project in Slovene is "Igram nogomet, pa it?" which translates into English as "I play football, and you?" During the first part of the campaign, three different events will take place from May to September. Girls will be invited to "play days", where they will get to know the game of football, learn how to find a football club in their area and, most importantly, have an unforgettable time kicking the ball



Women's football is the focus of a new development project in Slovenia

around with other girls. Their parents will be encouraged to support the girls by taking them to football events. Attracting new girls at the entry level of football will not be the sole goal of this campaign. The second part will focus on talented girls who are already involved in football, in order to scout new players for the women's national teams at senior, Under-19 and Under-17 level.

● Matjaž Krajnc



Preparation for Women's EURO 2013

National team coach Pia Sundhage is preparing her team for the Women's EURO 2013 on home turf. As part of the winter preparations, she opted to arrange three games against men's youth teams. Women playing men in friendly matches is far from uncommon (Sundhage also arranged games of this kind as coach of the US women's team), and these practice matches still got widespread public and media attention.

Sweden lost to AIK's academy Under-18s (3-0), but went on to beat BKV Norrtälje Under-20s (1-0) and the Stockholm FA district Under-16s (2-1).

"Men's teams are quicker and more physical, and this forces us to think and play faster. This



will help us to improve our game in many aspects. I know some will disagree and claim this proves some kind of point about women's football, but I don't have a lot of time for people who want to compare men's and women's football like that. These are by far the best opponents we can play right now, and it's

Marie Hammarström in action against the men's Under-16 team from Stockholm

important for our progress as a team," said Sundhage.

Preparations for the Women's EURO in Sweden are also going well. Ticket sales got off to a flying start, with some 25,000 tickets sold within hours on the 14 February launch date.

"It's a start that really exceeds all our expectations! We've got more than four months to go before kick-off, but we can already feel a huge demand and excitement for the Women's EURO in Sweden. Our goal firmly remains to make this the best Women's EURO ever," said the tournament director, Göran Havik.

● Andreas Nilsson



Girl's academy moves to Bienne

During the 2004/05 season, the Swiss Football Association (ASF-SFV) opened its girls' football academy in Huttwil, where many current national team players trained to become top footballers. Several of the present crop of national youth team players were also trained by Swiss FA coaches in Huttwil. Now, after nearly ten years in Huttwil, the SFV and its girls are moving to the new Credit Suisse Football Academy (CSA) in Bienne. The most talented Swiss girls will receive their football and academic education at the new facility from 1 July.



A training session at the national academy in Huttwil

"The basic decision has been made, now we are just tidying up the details," said Peter Knäbel, ASF-SFV sports director, who is delighted that there is already an established bilingual school system in Bienne. While the town's new stadium complex (on which work began in December 2012) is under construction, training pitches and other infrastructure also need to be put in place.

Knäbel also pointed out that Bienne and, in particular, its mayor, Erich Fehr, have looked after the Swiss FA and the academy extremely well. Furthermore, the new academy's proximity to the Macolin national sports centre was an important factor in the decision-making process.

The ASF-SFV's objectives in Bienne are the same as in Huttwil: under the guidance of national team coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg, her assistant Simon Steiner and Brigitte Steiner (Under-16 national team coach), the 21 most talented young players in Switzerland will train at the CSA. Meanwhile, the 12 to 16-year olds will complete school grades 7, 8 and/or 9 while living with host families during the week. At the weekends, they will return home and play for their club teams.

Incidentally, the world's best tennis player of all time, Roger Federer, also received a lot of his training in Bienne. The Swiss tennis academy is based in the town. It must be a good omen for the young footballers to be able to emulate the tennis star from Basel, albeit in a game with somewhat larger balls.

● Pierre Benoit



First international at new Prokopenko Arena

The Ukrainian national team will play their first home game of 2013 in Odessa on 26 March, when they will face Moldova at the redeveloped Prokopenko Arena in a qualifying match for the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

The last time the city played host to the national team was six years ago, on 28 March 2007, when Ukraine beat Lithuania 1-0 in a qualifying match for EURO 2008. The following year, the stadium closed for reconstruction, with the work being completed in November 2011.

The new Prokopenko Arena is a modern football stadium with a capacity of 34,000. In its first year of use, it was visited by nearly 500,000 spectators.

The match against Moldova will be the second competitive game for Mykhailo Fomenko, the new head coach of the Ukrainian national team. Four days before that game, Ukraine will play Poland in Warsaw.

● Serhiy Dryha

Supporters of the Ukrainian national team will be able to cheer on their players against Moldova in Odessa



BIRTHDAYS

Carlo De Gaudio (Italy, 1 April)
 Jan Peeters (Belgium, 2 April)
 Michael Sjöo (Sweden, 2 April)
 Kaj Østergaard (Denmark, 3 April)
Martin Sturkenboom (Netherlands, 3 April)
 ☆☆☆ 60th
 Dennis Cruise (Republic of Ireland, 3 April)
 Thomas Grimm (Switzerland, 3 April)
 Yoav Strauss (Israel, 3 April)
 Christian Kofoed (Denmark, 4 April)
 Alex Miescher (Switzerland, 4 April)
 Jan Ekstrand (Sweden, 5 April)
 Lennart Wangel (Finland, 5 April)
 Momir Djurdjevac (Montenegro, 5 April)
 Aleksandra Pejkovska (FYR Macedonia, 5 April)
 Snjezana Fočić (Croatia, 6 April)
 Athanassios Briakos (Greece, 6 April)
 Pavol Peracek (Slovakia, 7 April)
 Jacques Devismes (France, 8 April)
 Jim Fleeting (Scotland, 8 April)
 Yevgeniy Stolitenko (Ukraine, 8 April)
 Márton Esterházy (Hungary, 9 April)
 Ladislav Svoboda (Czech Republic, 9 April)
 Zoran Petrović (Serbia, 10 April)
Panagiotis Tsarouchas (Greece, 10 April)
 ☆☆☆ 60th
 Vlastibor Minarovejch Jr (Slovakia, 10 April)
 Umberto Gandini (Italy, 11 April)
 Eduard Dervishaj (Spain, 11 April)
 Rodger Gifford (Wales, 12 April)
 Valeriu Ionita (Romania, 12 April)
 François De Keersmaecker (Belgium, 12 April)
 Paolo Piani (Italy, 13 April)
 Edvinas Eimontas (Lithuania, 13 April)
 Georgios Bikas (Greece, 15 April)
 Erol Ersoy (Turkey, 15 April)
 Antonius van Eekelen (Netherlands, 15 April)
Dušan Fitzel (Czech Republic, 15 April)
 ☆☆☆ 50th
 Djuro Bukvić (Croatia, 16 April)
 Manuel Enrique Mejuto Gonzalez (Spain, 16 April)
 Charles Schaack (Luxembourg, 17 April)
 Oğuz Sarvan (Turkey, 18 April)
 Alexandre Remin (Belarus, 18 April)
 Norman Darmanin Demajo (Malta, 19 April)
 Michael Kuchenbecker (Germany, 19 April)
 Virgar Hvidbro (Faroe Islands, 19 April)
Jean Appietto (France, 20 April) ☆☆☆ 80th
 Jean-Luc Veuthey (Switzerland, 20 April)
 Vitor Manuel Melo Pereira (Portugal, 21 April)
 Martinus van den Bekerom (Netherlands, 21 April)
Alexandru Burlac (Moldova, 21 April)
 ☆☆☆ 50th
Tomislav Vlahović (Croatia, 21 April)
 ☆☆☆ 40th
Jan Damgaard (Denmark, 22 April)
 ☆☆☆ 60th
 Morgan Norman (Sweden, 22 April)
 Roderick Petrie (Scotland, 22 April)
 Vladimir Petrov (Ukraine, 22 April)
 Claudine Brohet (Belgium, 22 April)
 Roland Tis (Belgium, 23 April)
 Mehmet S. Binnet (Turkey, 23 April)
 Nebojša Ivković (Serbia, 24 April)
 Avraham Luzon (Israel, 24 April)
 Sándor Piller (Hungary, 24 April)
 Frederick Roy Millar (Northern Ireland, 25 April)
 Philippe Verbiest (Belgium, 25 April)
 Daniel Ryser (Switzerland, 25 April)

Domenti Sichinava (Georgia, 25 April)
 Salustia Chato Cipres (Andorra, 25 April)
 Valentin Velikov (Bulgaria, 25 April)
 Marina Sbardella (Italy, 27 April)
 Philip Gartside (England, 27 April)
Jan Carlsen (Denmark, 27 April) ☆☆☆ 60th
 Edgar Steinborn (Germany, 27 April)
 George Frank (Israel, 29 April)
 Gudmundur Ingi Jónsson (Iceland, 29 April)
 Robin Howe (Scotland, 29 April)
 Emanuel Macedo de Medeiros (Portugal, 30 April)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

4 April, in Slovakia

European Under-17 Championship: final round draw

8-12 April, in Oslo

UEFA Grassroots Workshop

12 April, in Nyon

UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League: semi-final draws

16 April, in Nyon

FIFA Women's World Cup: European qualifiers group stage draw

17 April, in Nyon

Stadium and Security Committee

18 April, in Nyon

Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee

Competitions

2/3 April

UEFA Champions League: quarter-finals (first legs)

4 April

UEFA Europa League: quarter-finals (first legs)

9/10 April

UEFA Champions League: quarter-finals (return legs)

11 April

UEFA Europa League: quarter-finals (return legs)

13/14 April

UEFA Women's Champions League: semi-finals (first legs)

20/21 April

UEFA Women's Champions League: semi-finals (return legs)

23/24 April

UEFA Champions League: semi-finals (first legs)

25 April

UEFA Europa League: semi-finals (first legs)

26-28 April, in Tbilisi

UEFA Futsal Cup: final round

30 April/1 May

UEFA Champions League: semi-finals (return legs)

NOTICES

- On 28 January, Giorgio Crescentini was re-elected president of the San Marino Football Federation.
- On 3 February, the congress of the Football Federation of Moldova re-elected its president, Pavel Cebanu, for a further four-year term.
- The new fax number (international affairs) of the Italian Football Federation is +39 06 84912620.

NEW BOOKS

ANUARUL FOTBALULUI ROMÂNESC

Under the stewardship of Răzvan Toma, chairman of its history and statistics committee, the Romanian Football Federation has published its 11th yearbook, which covers the period 2009–12.

There are two parts to the publication: the first is concerned with domestic football in Romania, including data on all players featuring in the Romanian First League and the results of the various domestic competitions. The second deals with all of the various national teams, from the senior team to futsal, via the country's youth and women's teams. It also contains the results of UEFA's club competitions and a number of pages dedicated to Romanian coaches and referees.



ENCYKLOPEDIA PIŁKARSKA ROCZNIK 2012-2013

The 41st volume of Andrzej Górzewski's encyclopedia – which is also Polish football's official 2013 yearbook – has now been published. This is an unrivalled mine of information on Poland's domestic competitions and the players who feature in them. It also contains details of UEFA competitions and even those of other confederations. (Wydawnictwo GiA, PO Box 2772, 40-357 Katowice 14, Poland)

OBITUARY

Professor **Lamberto Perugia** (Italy), a member of the UEFA Medical Committee from 1990 to 2002 and subsequently of the circle of former committee members, and a specialist knee surgeon, passed away at the beginning of February at the age of 85.



WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL

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