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IN THIS ISSUE

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Cover:

By winning the UEFA Futsal Cup, Kairat Almaty defied the odds to become the first-ever Kazakh winners of a UEFA competition and, to boot, winners of the first-ever UEFA final round to take place in Georgia.

Photo: Sportstyle





FOOTBALL STANDS UNITED AGAINST RACISM

Though football may be regarded as the most competitive team sport, one aspect of football where we strive to speak with a united voice is through our actions in addressing racist behaviour in our stadiums.

There are two actions necessary in tackling racist behaviour at football matches. The first action is via awareness campaigns and the education programmes which are being run across the continent. This is the first way to kick racism out of football.

The second action, which attracts more commentary from the media, is via disciplinary sanctions. It is one thing to say that there is a “zero tolerance” policy towards racism, but you have to act, and you have to act by having sanctions that have a deterrent effect.

European football has been taking this matter seriously, by ensuring there is a deterrent effect. The last meeting of the Professional Football Strategy Council (PFSC) in Sofia on 27 March, involving representatives of Europe’s national associations (UEFA), clubs (ECA), leagues (EPFL) and players (FIFPro Division Europe), unanimously adopted a resolution aimed at combating racism and discrimination in football.

This resolution was ratified by the UEFA Executive Committee at its subsequent meeting in Sofia, where it was also proposed that UEFA’s disciplinary regulations for the 2013/14 season be revised, and that these revisions – to be ratified by the UEFA Executive Committee in London on 22/23 May – form the basis of a resolution that will be presented to UEFA’s 53 member associations at the UEFA Congress the following day.

The proposed resolution – European football united against racism – will include stiffer sanctions and penalties against clubs, players and officials convicted of any racist offence. Players and officials can expect to face more stringent

sanctions, with bans of at least ten matches being imposed for racist offences.

Additionally, if supporters engage in racist behaviour, there will be a partial stadium closure for a first offence and a full stadium closure plus a fine of €50,000 for a second offence, should they fail to heed the first warning. UEFA also encourages state authorities to ban supporters from attending matches if they are found guilty of engaging in racist behaviour.

Referees have been reminded that the UEFA Executive Committee already approved guidelines back in 2009, empowering them to stop, suspend, or even abandon matches via a three-step process aimed at tackling racism head-on. This is important also from a sporting standpoint, as the abandonment of a match will automatically open a disciplinary procedure and the match may then be declared forfeit.

This is clear. This is serious. But this is also known to (and supported by) everyone. One case of racism in European football is one too many, and European football stands united against it.

Gianni Infantino
UEFA General Secretary

KAIRAT THE KAZAKH KINGS

Everybody knew that the 2012/13 UEFA Futsal Cup would make history as the first final tournament of a UEFA competition to be staged in Georgia. Few would have predicted, however, that Kairat Almaty would make history by becoming the first club from Kazakhstan to lift a UEFA trophy.



Kairat had qualified for the final tournament on four previous occasions but had invariably been beaten in the semi-finals. History therefore handed them the underdog label as they took on the 2012 winners, FC Barcelona, before a passionate crowd at the Palace of Sport in the Georgian capital Tbilisi on 26 April. But no team had successfully defended the title for a decade – and Kairat unexpectedly extended that tradition. Despite going 1-0 and 2-1 ahead, they had seemed unlikely to when Marc Carmona’s team took a 3-2 advantage 30 seconds after the break. But they then scored three times, with Fumasa completing a hat-trick, making Fernandão’s spectacular last-minute overhead scissor kick nothing more than consolation for the Catalans as they were beaten 5-4.

Radical changes for Iberia Star

Earlier in the day, 7,200 fans had been disappointed to witness a 5-2 defeat for the tournament hosts, Iberia Star Tbilisi, against the 2012 silver medallists MFK Dinamo Moskva. The Georgian club had earned enormous credit by eliminating Italy’s Luparense C/5 and the 2010 champions SL Benfica to earn their debut in the final

four. But the outcome was not totally unexpected, as a major shake-up at the Georgian club had provoked the departure of the coach and half the squad barely six weeks earlier. The home team was beaten for the bronze medal by FC Barcelona, for whom Sergio Lozano scored the first and last goals in a 4-1 victory.

This was the curtain-raiser for a grand finale which allows Sunday 28 April 2013 to become a red-letter day in the annals of sport in Kazakhstan. Kairat were underdogs against the MFK Dinamo side which had made FC Barcelona sweat mightily during the 2012 final in Lleida. But, as Russian international forward Cirilo admitted afterwards: *“We didn’t expect Kairat to be in the final and I think that we were not ready for them. They were great in playing five against four and they outplayed us, just as they had done against Barcelona.”*

Tactical innovation

The reference to “five against four” might strike an odd chord in the five-a-side game. But Kairat’s success had a great deal to do with a tactical innovation which caught their distinguished opponents by surprise. Although he is Brazilian rather than Colombian, the fact that

Kairat Almaty celebrate winning Kazakhstan’s first UEFA title



Leonardo de Melo Vieira Leite is known as “Higuita” speaks volumes about the degree of panache which he applies to the art of goalkeeping. Although more than competent between the posts, his penchant is to advance into opposition territory to support attacks as an additional outfielder. Hence the Dinamo players’ impression that they were being outnumbered.

Higuita’s role turned out to be a tactical masterstroke by Ricardo Câmara Sobral, alias Cacau, who had joined Kairat as head coach from Czech club Era-Pack Chrudim as recently as February. “When I arrived,” he commented, “morale was very low, so I talked to the influential players like Betão and Euler. I could say that Joan and Higuita were the key players in getting us to the final, but the really important thing was the collective effort.”

Cacau understated his own contribution, but did admit: “I didn’t expect to win, but I had studied Barcelona for a month. I saw all their matches and analysed them like nobody. I noticed they were in sometimes in trouble when they defended, so the key was Higuita when we attacked – and our hard work when we had to defend.”

Great intensity

The 5,120 fans who went to the Palace of Sport for the first final to be played in Georgia were witnesses to a first half of great intensity in which, as Dinamo’s Spanish coach Tino Pérez (who went into the final with ambitions to become the first coach to win it three times) remarked: “Kairat broke up the game with the five against four and we were unable to resolve the situation. We were very nervous.”

It took 10 minutes and 45 seconds to break the deadlock. Alexandre Moraes, subsequently selected as man of the match, broke down the Kairat left and, when he neared the byline, Dinamo keeper Alexey Popov advanced towards him and positioned himself on one knee to cover the goal – only to suffer the misfortune of the shot bouncing off the knee, between his legs and into the net. Kairat patently began to believe that the “luck of the champions” was on their side.

Sergey Sergeev seemed to have dealt a psychological blow for the favourites by hitting a long, low shot into the Kazakh net just 68 seconds before the break. But Kairat demonstrated that they possessed the mettle of champions by taking the game by the scruff of the neck in the second half. After only 2’23, Leo set up Leo Santana, who beat Popov at the near post to put them 2-1 up. Exactly six minutes later, a shot by Moraes was turned into the net by Fumasa who, with four goals to his credit, emerged as the tournament’s top scorer. With just over seven minutes to play and with Dinamo deploying Tatú as flying goalkeeper, Higuita grabbed possession and put his name on the scoresheet with a long punt into the unguarded Russian net. At 4-1, it looked like game over.



Sportstyle

Barcelona, last year’s winners, finished in third place, at the expense of Iberia Star Tbilisi

But, as the Kairat captain Dinmukhambet Suleimenov admitted: “When we were leading 4-1, I think we lost concentration a bit. This resulted in Higuita’s mistake.” The keeper’s lapse was to allow Cirilo to charge down a clearance and, with almost five minutes on the clock, it set up a stirring finish which the crowd and the TV audience relished. Emotions moved up a gear when Tatú struck a low shot into the net through a crowd of players with just over three minutes to play. With Tino Pérez throwing on the flying goalkeeper, Dinamo went into onslaught mode while Kairat, regaining a quantum of composure, tried to deliver the knockout blow by counterpunching. Kazakh hearts were in mouths when Cirilo’s shot struck the post with just 13 seconds remaining. “We were desperate not to concede,” said Suleimenov, “and in the end we succeeded.”

After the siren had declaimed the 4-3 victory, a jubilant Cacau commented: “The squad wanted to be champions. To do that, you need to have joy, desire and unity.” Kairat Almaty put all three of those qualities into the celebration of a victory which made history for Kazakhstan. ●

RESULTS

26 April

Semi-finals

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Iberia Star Tbilisi – MFK Dinamo | 2-5 |
| Kairat Almaty – FC Barcelona | 5-4 |

28 April

Third-place play-off

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Iberia Star Tbilisi – FC Barcelona | 1-4 |
|------------------------------------|-----|

Final

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| MFK Dinamo – Kairat Almaty | 3-4 |
|----------------------------|-----|

WINNING GROUND FOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

On 4 October 2010, Sweden was appointed to host the Women's EURO 2013. The bid was based on a concept that focuses on women's football development, a concept called "Winning Ground".



Gothenburg's Gamla Ullevi stadium will host Group A matches



"Winning Ground" means that a successful and well-arranged tournament will give the development of the sport a new boost.

"Winning Ground is something we try to apply to everything we do when we work on the tournament. The ambition is that women's football will 'win ground' locally, nationally and internationally and contribute to positive sporting development as well as increased interest from the general public and commercial and media partners," says tournament director Göran Havik.

More than 25 football matches

The objective of the event is that it shall not be "only" 25 football matches, but that it will add value to the sport outside the pitch as well. To create these extra values, the aim is to highlight the tournament in the cities during the whole tournament and not just on matchdays. The plan is to have two arenas in each host city, one being the football stadium, the other the city centre. Therefore, the host cities will be setting up fan zones with a lot of activities to attract football supporters as well as tourists and the local population.

"The experience from the European Under-21 Championship which Sweden hosted in 2009 was that the fan zones were extremely successful and they really contributed some extra flavour and atmosphere to the event," says Göran Havik.

Seven host cities

The UEFA Women's EURO 2013 will be played between 10 and 28 July in seven cities. Group A will be played in Gothenburg and Halmstad, where host nation Sweden will play their games along with Denmark, Finland and Italy. Group B will be played in Växjö and Kalmar, where the big favourites, Germany, will play against Norway, Iceland and the Netherlands. The third group, Group C, consists of the teams of England, Spain, Russia and France, and will be played in Norrköping and Linköping. The seventh host city, Solna, will host the final at the newly built (the opening match was played there in November 2012) national stadium, Friends Arena.

The other stadiums are also newly built or newly renovated. Växjö Arena, for instance, was inaugurated last September, and the arena in Linköping was ready for matches for the start of the 2013 season.

"The Women's EURO 2013 has played an important part in the decisions about the construction and the renovation of the stadiums. In Linköping, where there is no major football tradition on the men's side, they built a stadium that will primarily be used by the city's women's team, Linköping FC. The arena in Linköping will be absolutely perfect for the Women's EURO 2013 and the decision to build the stadium is a sign that the importance of women's football has grown a lot," says Havik.

The Sweden 2013 T-shirt

To increase awareness and interest in the tournament, the local organising committee has used a very simple, but extremely effective tool: a T-shirt!

The Sweden 2013 T-shirt has been an incredible success when it comes to communication and promotion of the tournament, mostly because it has been seen in the media during the ongoing preparations. Since she was appointed to lead the Swedish team in September 2012, national coach Pia Sundhage has been wearing her Sweden 2013 T-shirt almost every time she has appeared in the media.

Other famous footballers, such as Pelé, Lionel Messi, Fredrik Ljungberg and Philip Lahm, have also either received or signed a Sweden 2013 T-shirt.

What is more, the T-shirt has also been on a journey around the world! People have been encouraged to take photos of themselves wearing the T-shirt and posing in front of a landmark somewhere in the world, thus committing themselves as ambassadors for the tournament and for women's football. So far, the T-shirt has visited nearly 70 countries. A world map with all the photos of these ambassadors can be found on the LOC website: <http://www.sweden2013.com/>

Creating local enthusiasm – a key to success

Historically, most of the tickets to a women's championship have been sold on the local market, and it has therefore been a major focus to involve the host cities in ticketing sales as much as possible.

"The seven host cities are doing a fantastic job when it comes to making the local population feel a lot of enthusiasm for the Women's EURO. We know that most of the tickets will be bought by local inhabitants in the host cities where the games will be played. The work on a local level is therefore a key to success and necessary for a successful championship. We have been working closely with the seven cities, and their dedication and work has been absolutely incredible," says Havik.

To make a lot of people – the general public as well as football players of all ages – feel committed and keen to be involved one way or the other in the event has been part of the Winning Ground concept. So far, it has proven to be suc-

cessful. More than 1,000 people have so far applied to participate as volunteers. And the great start to ticket sales also shows great dedication. At the end of April, with two and half months still to go before kick-off, 65,000 tickets had been sold to individuals in 17 countries.

"The start of the ticket sales has exceeded all expectations! In the first four hours we sold over 20,000 tickets which is something that we couldn't have dreamed of, and the fact that we have sold tickets to 17 nations is also something that is amazing. So far in the history of women's football, there has not been a great tradition of travelling supporters, but we hope that the Women's EURO 2013 will contribute to a breakthrough on that front. For example, the Norwegian Football Association is planning to set up a Camp Norway in Kalmar to take care of all the Norwegian supporters that are expected to come. This is a clear sign that we really are "Winning Ground" and that the championship this summer will give women's football a boost in the right direction," says Havik.

Big media interest

In Sweden, the preparation work for the tournament has received a lot of media attention and there is much talk about the tournament in the country.

TV4, which has the TV rights for Sweden, is planning huge coverage, including live coverage of the press conference when the Swedish squad for the tournament is announced. TV4 and TV4Sport will furthermore broadcast all 25 matches of the tournament live.

Eurosport will be the host broadcaster of the tournament and TV rights holders also include ARD/ZDF (Germany), BBC (England) and M6/W9 (France).

The tournament will therefore get a lot of attention all over Europe this summer. ●

Tobias Frejfors

Pelé shows off the Sweden 2013 T-shirt



EXCELLENCE RECOGNISED

Since 2003, the HatTrick programme has reinvested over €1 billion of European Football Championship revenue back into the development of football, supporting the 53 UEFA member associations to upgrade infrastructure, launch local community and social projects, and expand grassroots and women’s football, for example.

This year, the UEFA HatTrick awards have been introduced to officially recognise the remarkable work undertaken by the UEFA member associations in the field of development. There are five award categories, focusing on investment, social responsibility, grassroots, women’s football and special projects. Each member association is entitled to enter one venture from each of the

five areas, and each project should meet the criteria, including medium to long-term legacy, impact on football’s growth in the country, and impact on specific social target groups. Applications are not limited to projects funded by the UEFA HatTrick programme; independent entries are also welcome but must fall under the relevant categories. Expanding the scope of eligible projects in this way has produced a more comprehensive overview of the development work being carried out across Europe.

Allan Hansen, member of the UEFA Executive Committee and chairman of the UEFA HatTrick Committee, says: *“The projects submitted in the different categories of the HatTrick awards have enabled us to witness*

first-hand the creativity and efficiency of the UEFA member associations, as all were innovative and have demonstrated tangible results.”

The winners of the 2013 inaugural UEFA HatTrick awards are:

Best Investment Project Italian Football Federation (FIGC) – Città Azzurra del Calcio

The “Azzurri Football City” project is based on promoting the values, history and culture of Italian football through a series of educational and sporting events held nationwide. The events are organised in liaison with host cities, supporting not only the Italian national teams but also welcoming the players and fans of visiting teams. This travelling football roadshow unites schools, communities and municipalities in a celebration

of the game, addressing a wide range of topics such as grassroots, technical development and social responsibility. The project is complemented by a mobile museum of football which documents and tells the story of Italian football.

The city of Modena officially launched the project in conjunction with the UEFA EURO 2012 qualifying match between Italy and Estonia in June 2011. The university of Modena organised a conference entitled “Football and society: over one century of history and passion”. There was a grassroots festival attended by 400 children and the museum welcomed up to 3,000 visitors. To date, three host cities have successfully implemented the project with excellent results. The long-term investment aims to establish a sound legacy for the Italian Football Federation and the national game that it cherishes.

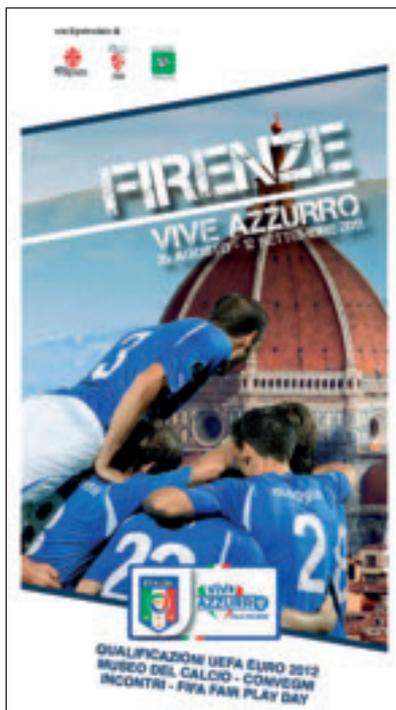
Best Social Project Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) – Football For Everyone

“Football For Everyone” demonstrates a modern approach to society and specifically addresses the issue of homosexuality in football. The project consists of 11 values but, in essence, they all stand for the elimination of discrimination and the acceptance of homosexuality in the game.

The programme works closely with players, trainers, coaches and referees, as well as youth and professional football organisations, to promote a better understanding of homosexuality and its inclusion in our everyday lives. Workshops have also been offered in this respect and, at the Dutch FA (KNVB), this issue is formally included regularly on meeting agendas. A confidential adviser has been appointed in all six district offices of the KNVB as well as at the association’s headquarters in Zeist to support amateur and professional football clubs to help homosexual people find their rightful place in the world of football. An extensive communications campaign is also being aired on Dutch television and has very quickly spread across YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

Best Grassroots Project Football Federation of Armenia (FFA) – Schools of Sport and Peace

Running from April to November 2012, the “Schools of Sport and Peace” focused on youth development, encouraging, through football, a healthy lifestyle and the exchange of interper-



FIGC



Women's football has benefited from the SCORE project in Northern Ireland

sonal, cultural and sporting values. The project targeted the remote villages of Saravan, Gndevaz and Gorayk, addressing confidence-building for children of different backgrounds and social groups, including children with disabilities. In total, three events were hosted by the FFA, as well as a summer camp, and approximately 140 children between the ages of 9 and 14 benefited from the experience. It is vital to provide grass-roots football – especially in rural areas, where access to sport is not always easy. Now the children in these villages can play football on a regular basis, supported by local coaches and better resources.

Best Women's Football Project Irish Football Association (IFA) – SCORE

Launched in 2011, this pilot project was aimed at assisting clubs to establish contacts with their local schools through the provision of a SCORE coach. The clubs nominated suitable candidates for coach education, selecting enthusiastic and motivated individuals who could act as ambassadors within their local area. Each SCORE coach received a financial contribution towards the cost of the coach education course and, on completion, provided 12 coaching sessions at their local primary and secondary schools, as well as at junior clubs.

As a direct result of this project, an impressive 3,338 girls have been introduced to football and

there are 50% more B and 25% more A-licensed coaches in operation. SCORE has elevated the profile of women's football in Northern Ireland and, more importantly, empowered the clubs to take ownership of player recruitment and the education and deployment of their own coaches.

Best Special Project Football Association of the Czech Republic (FAČR) – Administration of Members and Players

This is a unique category rewarding innovation in areas of development that are perceived as less common. The FAČR launched an internal IT system that has completely overhauled its membership and player database and, at the same time, greatly improved the distribution of financial resources to its member clubs, districts and regional authorities.

This new tool has upgraded the level of administration and greatly simplified the tasks of the FAČR secretariat, which is now working with real data that can define membership status and affiliation to a certain club, district or region. Not only has this new system facilitated work within the association and its daily cooperation with public and state authorities, but it has also changed the way football is managed across the nation, creating a fairer and more effective distribution of funds and resources. A membership card benefit programme has also been created. ●

NURTURING THE GRASSROOTS

The Ullevaal Stadion in Oslo may be identified with Norway's high-profile national team matches but, from 8 to 12 April, the focus switched to the broad base of the European footballing pyramid as it became the venue for the 10th UEFA Grassroots Workshop.

All 53 UEFA member associations were represented in Oslo, where the aims of the workshop were to move forward together, to promote interactive participation, and to get new ideas and visions about how to nurture grassroots football in the future.

Three awards

UEFA's annual grassroots awards were presented at the workshop, with Italian legend Gianni Rivera, a member of the UEFA Grassroots Football Panel, performing the honours. A record 29 national associations had proposed candidates – which had left the UEFA jury with some tough decisions. In Oslo, the best leader award was presented to Fikret Kadioglu, whose volunteer work has offered fun football to 50% of the boys and girls in a remote area of Turkey.

to live his childhood when "people had nothing and there were no barriers to self-organised street football". His comments highlighted the need to recreate street football environments in modern society – a theme echoed by Yngve Hallén, president of the Norwegian national association, which hosted the event in magnificent fashion. "We have to look to the future together," he said, "not only to breed top professionals but also to create meaningful lifestyles and contribute to communities."

Working together

UEFA's grassroots ambassador, Per Ravn Omdal, also welcomed the participants to his home territory – and addressed them with his trademark passion for the grassroots game. "We have thousands of people dealing with the professional players," he said, "but there are millions of other players whose needs cannot be ignored. We have to ask ourselves whether we are fulfilling our obligations to parents and to society by shaping human beings into good citizens."

The Norwegians are acclaimed as frontrunners in the grassroots game – but the core theme of the workshop was how UEFA's member associations can best work together to bring the "tail-enders" up to speed in terms of nurturing grassroots football and making it available to all and sundry. Case histories

were presented by participants who, alphabetically, ranged from Azerbaijan to Wales and, geographically, from Iceland to Oceania – one of four other confederations represented. Martin Roberts, senior sport for development consultant for the Australian government, along with Franck Castillo, the Oceania Football Confederation's head of social responsibility, outlined the "Just Play" project aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles.

The workshop in Oslo was an outstanding success – and more about it can be found in the *UEFA•grassroots newsletter*, which is enclosed with this issue of *UEFA•direct*. ●



Participants at Ullevaal stadion

Margit Bajankiné then stepped on stage to receive the best project award on behalf of the children's homes project, which is providing football for youngsters in care homes and orphanages in Hungary. The best club accolade actually went to four Dutch clubs, with Lydia Zwier-Kentie receiving the award on behalf of SV Wilp, SC Klarenbeek, SC Cupa and VV Voorst who, realising that they did not have enough players to form girls' teams, decided to cast aside rivalries and pool their human resources in order to offer football to players who would otherwise miss out.

Rivera, born in 1943, had previously raised eyebrows by claiming that he was "fortunate"

CAN VENETO REPEAT THEIR VICTORY OF 1999?

UEFA competitions for amateur teams can be traced back to 1965. But the UEFA Amateur Cup was hamstrung by blurred definitions of “amateurism” and was left to gather dust after only ten national associations had entered teams for the 1978 edition.



With many issues clarified, the concept of an international amateur competition was revived in 1996 and the inaugural UEFA Regions' Cup was concluded in 1999, after teams from 32 member associations had competed for places in the eight-team final tournament. The first final, played in the Italian region of Veneto, had a sting in the tail, with a goal by Michele de Toni in the 29th minute of extra time giving the home team a dramatic 3-2 victory over a side from the Madrid region.

The glance in the rear-view mirror assumes extra relevance because, 14 years later, the final tournament returns to Veneto and, once again, the home team is hoping to produce some déjà vu images by lifting the trophy for a second time.

The glance in the rear-view mirror assumes extra relevance because, 14 years later, the final tournament returns to Veneto and, once again, the home team is hoping to produce some déjà vu images by lifting the trophy for a second time.

37 participants

The qualifying rounds, involving teams from 37 national associations, suggested that they will not have it easy. Nor will the reporters, for that matter, who will have to polish up their pronunciation of names like Yugoiztochen – the Bulgarian regional team which, after securing a place in the finals with two wins, took their eye off the ball and lost their third game 5-0. *“It’s a very young team,”* reflected coach Krassimir Manolov, *“and they will learn from the experience.”*

One of the other rocky but successful rides to Veneto was enjoyed by the Eastern Region team from Northern Ireland, who crept through the preliminary round as the better of the two group runners-up and then secured their trip to Italy thanks to their head-to-head performance against a team from the island of Jersey. It allows their coach, Harry McConkey, to enjoy a second final tournament, having taken the team to the 2007 finals in Bulgaria and travelling home with the UEFA fair play award in his baggage.

Hard work

The other six contenders displayed their strength by winning all their matches. Iberia has provided three of the previous seven winners and, this time, the only representative is a Selecció Catalana who needed an added-time winner against the Ardennes to kick-start their cam-



D. Aquilina

A qualifying match between Olimp Moscow (in yellow) and the amateur team from Gozo (Malta)

paign. Belarusian side FC Isloch won their three qualifiers by narrow margins, with coach Vitali Zhukouski attributing success to *“sheer hard work”*. Qarachala became the second team from Azerbaijan to qualify after an added-time goal defeated Belgrade in a tense final fixture.

Five goals by striker Imre Dolokos allowed him to emerge as joint top scorer in the qualifiers and help Hungarian team Keleti Régió to reach the finals, while Moscow side Olimp provided three of the top six scorers (headed by midfielder Sergei Orlov with five) as they scored 14 goals and conceded none.

The Veneto team came through with an identical goal tally, with their 14 goals shared by eight different players. *“I selected a lot of attackers,”* commented the team’s head coach, Fabrizio Toniutto, *“and it paid off.”* Toniutto believed that his squad was strong enough for him to rotate players during the qualifying round – and this could be an asset when Veneto try to rewind to 1999 in the final tournament between 22 and 29 June, in which the finalists will be required to play four games in eight days. ●

LAST EDITION IN NYON

The European Women's Under-17 Championship final tournament will be staged across the street from UEFA's headquarters at Stade de Colovray for what will be the final edition in Nyon from 25 to 28 June.



In November, UEFA's newest youth competition will leave home to expand from four teams to eight, with the first final tournament in this new format to be staged in England, from 26 November to 8 December this year. For the UEFA administration, it will be sad to see the women's Under-17 competition go, but as UEFA bids to further develop women's football and give more national associations the opportunity to stage final tournaments, the time is right. Iceland will stage the 2015 edition, then Belarus will get the honour in 2016.

Three newcomers

In the meantime, the 2013 final tournament in June will be something to celebrate, with the rest of the world getting the chance to get a glimpse of the action when the third-place play-off and final are screened live on Eurosport on 28 June.

This season's lineup is an unusual one, a testament, perhaps, to the increased standard of competition at this level since the first edition in 2007/08. Three-time winners – and holders – Germany have missed out on the last four for the first time, and while 2010 and 2011 winners Spain are back for more, the other three semi-

With Germany missing from the lineup, who will win the UEFA women's U17 trophy this year?



finalists – Belgium, Poland and Sweden – are all newcomers at this level.

Powered by captain Valentine Hannecart's presence in midfield, Joëlle Piron's Belgium squad finished top of a group featuring Germany and Denmark to book their trip to Nyon. *"Reaching the finals is a huge achievement given the opponents we had,"* said Piron. *"We now have to go into the final tournament with the ambition of reaching the final."*

Her side will take on Poland in the first semi-final at 12.00 CET on Tuesday 25 June. Midfielder Ewa Pajor is being touted as the Polish Lionel Messi, and coach Zbigniew Witkowski knows his side have a nation – as well as the Polish Football Federation (PZPN) – behind them, having received presidential approval after confirming their place in the final tournament. *"After the final whistle, the president of the PZPN, Zbigniew Boniek, called and the girls sang our winning song for him down the phone,"* he recalled.

Spain meet Sweden at 14.30 CET on the same day, and coach Jorge Vilda says his side will have a special motivation. *"With Germany on three titles and ourselves on two, that spices things up,"* he said. *"It would be really nice to catch them."*

If they are to do that, they must first get past Yvonne Ekroth's Sweden squad, who have big dreams of their own. *"Our ambition is to make it to the final,"* she said. *"This team has great character and does not rely on any one player."*

Schools invited

All of this drama will be played out in front of some passionate crowds at Stade de Colovray in Nyon, with the UEFA administration taking the opportunity to work alongside the regional football associations of Vaud and Geneva, the Swiss Football Association and the town of Nyon to encourage schoolchildren to watch the games.

Schools in the cantons of Vaud, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Fribourg and Valais have been invited to experience an unforgettable day in Nyon, watching the matches and enjoying a number of exciting activities, including skills sessions with Swiss women's national team players, quizzes, music, and a visit to UEFA's House of European Football, with a chance to take photographs with UEFA trophies.

It promises to be an unforgettable experience for all concerned – players and fans – and a fitting way to say farewell to the competition. Just six editions old and all grown up now. ●

FOUR CITIES PREPARE TO HOST THE FINAL TOURNAMENT

The Israel Football Association is set to stage the final tournament of a UEFA competition for the second time – and is relishing the challenge of staging the biggest football event in the country’s history.



The first test of the Israelis’ organisational skills dates back to the turn of the century, when the IFA hosted the final tournament of the European Under-16 Championship, as it was then known. For the record, the tournament was won by a Portuguese team featuring Raul Meireles and Hugo Viana, for whom a brace of goals by winger Ricardo Quaresma gave them a 2-1 extra-time victory over the Czech Republic in the final played in Tel Aviv on 14 May 2000. Just over 13 years later, Israel is hosting a star-studded European Under-21 Championship in a final tournament to be played at four venues from 5 to 18 June.

High local hopes

Curiously, the opening match involves the two teams who could legitimately be labelled underdogs on the basis that they are the only two never to have won the competition in the past (assuming that we agree to pass over to Russia the two titles won by the USSR). Local hopes will be high when Israel – in the finals for the second time, having taken part in 2007 – take on a Norwegian team who have not reached the final tournament since it was expanded from four to eight contestants in 1998. On that occasion, the Nordic team went home from Romania with bronze medals and, 15 years on, they offered a show of strength by beating France 5-3 to clinch their place in Israel. Group A also involves Italy, who have taken pole position by winning the title five times, and an English team which, even though the second of two titles dates back to 1984, have been in the last four final tournaments.

The fixture list for the other half of the draw could offer excuses for dust to be blown off clichés about “groups of death”. The Russian team faces the daunting task of competing against Spain (the defending champions), Germany (winners in 2009) and the Netherlands (gold medallists in 2006 and 2007).

Biggest fixture

Bearing in mind the big countries and big names on show, ticket sales have hit the ground running. The home team will open its campaign at the 13,800-capacity stadium in Netanya; will then take on Italy at the Bloomfield Stadium in Tel



Former Israel international Eli Ohana (left) and Avi Nimni, ambassadors for the U21 final round

Aviv-Yafo (14,400); and will round off the group stage against England at the Teddy Stadium (30,400) in Jerusalem, where the final will be played. The fourth venue is the 11,500-capacity Ha Moshava Stadium in Petah Tikva, where three group games and a semi-final will be played.

The magnitude of the event can be measured by the fact that TV pictures will be broadcast to 140 countries and by the enthusiasm of the eight tournament sponsors, who are organising a wide range of activities in the host cities. The Israeli public has responded strongly to the work done by former international stars Avi Nimni and Eli Ohana as ambassadors for the final tournament, along with the players in Israel’s current Under-21 squad. The Israel Football Association has also been working hard to make sure that the event has a long-term legacy in terms of attracting families to the stadiums and highlighting the ethnic mix of the squad to transmit crucial social messages about the importance of coexistence – aspects of the history-making tournament which are further outlined in the *UEFA•grassroots newsletter* which accompanies this issue. The 2013 European Under-21 Championship finals represent Israel’s biggest fixture. ●



EIGHT BERTHS IN CANADA AT STAKE

The draw for the European qualifying round of the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2015 was made in Nyon on 16 April.

The draw concerned 48 teams, including the four winners of the preliminary round (Albania, Faroe Islands, Malta and Montenegro) and produced the following seven groups:



UEFA Executive Committee member Karen Espelund and UEFA General Secretary Gianni Infantino make the draw

- Group 1:** Germany, Russia, Republic of Ireland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia
- Group 2:** Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Romania, Estonia, FYR Macedonia
- Group 3:** Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, Serbia, Israel, Malta
- Group 4:** Sweden, Scotland, Poland, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands
- Group 5:** Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Greece, Albania
- Group 6:** England, Ukraine, Belarus, Wales, Turkey, Montenegro
- Group 7:** France, Finland, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan.

The qualifying matches will be played over two legs between September 2013 and September 2014. The seven group winners qualify directly for the final round, while the four best group runners-up will contest a play-off round in October and November 2014 to decide which other European team will be heading to Canada for the final round in 2015. ●

EURO 2012 FINALISTS IN BRAZIL

The reigning world champions, Spain, and the UEFA EURO 2012 runners-up, Italy, are in strong positions to qualify for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

They will therefore be able to make the most of the FIFA Confederations Cup that Brazil is organising from 15 to 30 June as a dress rehearsal for next year's World Cup finals.

The draw made in Sao Paulo on 1 December put Europe's two representatives one each into the two groups, as follows:

Group A: Brazil, Japan, Mexico, Italy

Group B: Spain, Uruguay, Tahiti, Nigeria

The opening match on 15 June pits Brazil against Japan. The group matches conclude on 23 June, with the top two

from each group going through to the semi-finals, which will be played in Belo Horizonte and Fortaleza on 26 and 27 June respectively.

Preceded by the match for third place, which will take place in Salvador, the final will be held at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

It will be the ninth edition of this competition, which Europe has won three times to date, thanks to Denmark in 1995 and France in 2001 and 2003.

Spain are taking part as world champions and Italy are representing Europe as UEFA EURO 2012 finalists. Apart from Brazil, hosts of the 2014 World Cup, all the other teams competing in the Confederations Cup are the champions of their respective confederations. ●

TURKEY PREPARES TO WELCOME THE WORLD'S BEST YOUTH PLAYERS

Another FIFA tournament is taking place in June: the FIFA U-20 World Cup.

The Turkish Football Federation has the honour of organising this 24-team tournament, which includes seven European participants: Spain, Greece, England, France, Croatia and Portugal – who all qualified via last year's European Under-19 Championship final round in Estonia, won by Spain – and Turkey.

The group matches will be played from 21 to 28 June in Istanbul, Kayseri, Trabzon, Rize, Gaziantep, Antalya and Bursa. The six group winners and runners-up, along with the four best third-placed teams, go through to the round of 16, to be played on 2 and 3 July. The quarter-finals will be on 6 and 7 July, the semi-finals on 10 July, and on 13 July, after the match for third place, the new Under-20 world champions will be crowned at the Ali Sami Yen Arena.

The title is currently held by Brazil. ●

FIRST WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT COURSE

In April, 18 young women referees and assistants from as many UEFA member associations took part in the inaugural women's development course.

The course was held as part of the UEFA Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE) programme, which gives guidance to match officials in the crucial early stages of their careers.

CORE aims to raise refereeing standards within UEFA's member associations, and the young women referees came away from their course with a wealth of advice and new knowledge that will stand them in good stead for future assignments at domestic and international level.

"The referees are younger ones who are showing potential for the future, and others who have received good observer reports, and who we would like to see operating more intensely," said David Elleray, UEFA Referees Committee member and CORE senior course leader.

"They have done well," Elleray said of the referees. "They've found it demanding and challenging both physically and intellectually. There has been a lot of practical work, and [while here] they have taken charge of matches in Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands."

The CORE course also encourages the referees to keep on improving. "I think they found the level of expectation at CORE stronger – the professional approach, the discipline, the routine," Elleray explained. Recent UEFA Women's Champions



The participants in the recent CORE course

League final referees, UEFA Referees Committee member Dagmar Damkova (Czech Republic) and Jenny Palmqvist (Sweden) were also on hand in Nyon to pass on invaluable experience to the young referees. ●

SEMINAR FOR INTEGRITY OFFICERS

UEFA's determination to protect football from match-fixing was underlined at the European governing body's inaugural regional integrity officers' seminar in Skopje.

Integrity officers from the national associations of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia joined UEFA in the capital of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to look at how the campaign against match-fixing was progressing.

Following a UEFA Executive Committee decision two years ago, UEFA introduced integrity officers, who are liaison officers between the football authorities and state law enforcement agencies in relation to suspected match-fixing. The integrity officers exchange information and experience with the UEFA administration, monitor disciplinary proceedings and coordinate relevant action.

During the seminar, several of the national associations in attendance highlighted their highly valued work against match-fixing. ●

DELEGATES' WORKSHOP IN NYON

Potential UEFA match delegates attended a training workshop at the House of European Football in Nyon on 24/25 April.

Altogether, 64 UEFA candidates from 41 national associations gathered for the starting point of what they hope will be a new career as a UEFA match delegate. Discussions focused on all aspects of match organisation which have an impact on UEFA delegates' activities – topics included the role and attitude expected, cooperation with other UEFA match officers and referees, as well as stadium, medical, disciplinary and security matters.

The new UEFA delegate candidates will have to successfully complete two on-site training missions in UEFA competitions before being confirmed as UEFA match delegates. If the 64 new delegates are all confirmed, a pool of 294 UEFA match delegates in total will be available for assignments in UEFA competitions for the next two seasons. ●

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS



Albania
www.fshf.org

More women in football

Women's football is now a reality in Albania. In only three years of national competitions (championship and cup), the number of Albanian women footballers grew to such an extent that there were enough of them to form local teams as well as two national teams, a senior national team and an Under-19 team.

In just five friendly matches, a handful of competition matches and some training sessions, the senior women's national team succeeded in qualifying for the qualifying group stage for the FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada in 2015 by finishing second in their preliminary round mini-tournament.

Working on women's football in Albania is now one of the priorities of the Albanian Football Association (FSHF). Along with the great job of creating new teams, and especially youth teams, a great job has also been done on encouraging schoolgirls to take up football.

"I play football, and you?" is the slogan of the campaign initiated by the marketing department of the FSHF with the aim of involving as many girls as possible in football. This project will continue during



Posters have been put up in schools to encourage girls to take up football

the whole of 2013. After having started in Tirana, the project will now continue in the other main cities of Albania. The campaign consists in placing posters in schools, stadiums and other environments. It has also been delivered through women's magazines, the official football magazine of the Albanian FA, and through a billboard placed outside the Albanian national stadium. Some TV sports programmes have featured women's football development and one of the most followed afternoon programmes had women's football development as its main discussion topic one day.

● Tritan Kokona



Andorra
www.faf.ad

Francesc Vila memorial tournament and new coaches' committee

At the end of May, the Andorran Football Federation (FAF) is holding the 14th edition of the traditional international youth football tournament in memory of Francesc Vila, who was the first FAF president.

Under-9 and Under-11 teams from some of the biggest clubs in Europe will be involved in the seven-a-side event. This year, the FAF is delighted to welcome Japanese team Yokohama F. Marinos for the first time.



In previous years, Spanish clubs such as RCD Espanyol, Valencia CF and Club Atlético Osasuna dominated the results on the pitch, but the real success story was the fun, fair play and enthusiasm shown by all of the youngsters involved in the event. The FAF believes this is a great opportunity to promote its grassroots football with the participation of a team in each category.

This tournament of little football stars will take place over two days at the Aixovall and Ordino sports camps. In all, 52 games will be played in the qualification stages on the opening day, with a further 16 for the final classifications on the second day. Aside from the winning teams, individual prizes are also presented to the best players and goalkeepers in both of the age categories.

In other news, the first FAF coaches' committee was set up in April, chaired by Montse Sánchez.

The committee's main duties are to govern, administer and represent the body; to report to and to submit questions concerning its members to the FAF; to propose coach development and refresher courses; and to report on coach licence applications.

The committee attends to how coaching operates in Andorra and takes care of the coaches' interests.

● Silvia Casals

A tournament that has become an institution



Azerbaijan
AFFA www.affa.az

Baku hosts UEFA event

The Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) was given the honour of hosting a UEFA Study Group Scheme seminar on women's football from 9 to 11 April in Baku. Given the sound way in which women's football in Azerbaijan is developing, this initiative was an exceptionally good opportunity to share with visiting participants the know-how of the country in supporting and popularising women's football.

The international seminar was attended by male and female coaches and association delegates from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lithuania and Montenegro, as well as members of the host association. Delivering the opening speech, the AFFA general secretary, Elkhán Mammadov, emphasised the importance of football development in the region and spoke of the efforts and interest paid to women's football in Azerbaijan. The FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup organised last year in Azerbaijan was used as an example throughout the seminar as the longest and broadest international women's football competition to hold in the region in accordance with international standards.



A session on women's football in Baku

The event was effective in terms of sharing common values and future goals on the development of football through discussions and country presentations by each delegation. Different projects aimed at improving the technical side of women's football, grassroots football and girls' leagues, women's education and active participation in society, as well as the PR and promotional issues of women's football – which are no less important – were among the main topics discussed during the seminar.

Apart from indoor discussions and presentations, the three-day seminar was augmented by site visits to stadiums across Baku and a practical part involving a demonstration of training tactics by Patricia Gonzalez, head coach of the Azerbaijan women's Under-19 national team, observation of football lessons at secondary schools, and attendance of the Under-15 girls' league young scorer awards ceremony.

● Ayan Aghayeva

Belarusian Premier League live on the internet

The 2013/14 season has just started in Belarus and now fans across the entire country and anyone else who is interested in our national championship can watch all matches live on the internet. Unfortunately, Belarusian TV companies do not have the resources to televise all the games every weekend (at present, the Belarusian national TV company broadcasts one top game from every matchday). Having considered the situation, the Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) took a different approach to the matter.

After it had become clear that endless negotiations with TV companies would not produce any results, the BFF realised that

there were other ways to get matches broadcast. Today, the internet is an extremely powerful mass medium. The BFF purchased all the equipment necessary to bring this idea to life and signed an agreement for technical support with one of the most popular Belarusian websites, www.tut.by. After distributing cameras, computers and other accessories to the 12 clubs of the top division and explaining all the technical details, the project was on course for success.

The joint efforts of the Football Federation of Belarus and the top division clubs, along with the technical support of www.tut.by, appear to have been enough to provide spectators in our country with the opportunity to watch any Belarusian Premier League game live on the internet. So far, 24 games



All top-division matches in Belarus can now be broadcast live on the internet

on the first four matchdays have been successfully broadcast on the internet, with over 100,000 link-ups each matchday. Of course, the image quality and the work of the cameramen and commentators can still be improved on, but, nevertheless, most of the fans throughout the country are grateful for this initiative.

● Alexander Aleinik

Rewards for Šimunić, Pletikosa and Srna

It is not often that a football association gets the opportunity to recognise a player for making 100 national team appearances. So it was a truly special occasion for the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) to celebrate that achievement for three players at once.

Josip Šimunić, Stipe Pletikosa and Darijo Srna all played their 100th game for Croatia against South Korea in London, joining Darijo Šimić as the only members of that exclusive club. Prior to the home match against Serbia in March, the three new "centenarians" were presented with gifts from the HNS – framed shirts with the number 100 on the back and paintings depicting them in action for the Croatian national team.



A shirt with the number 100 for the three Croatian international "centenarians"

"It is not easy to enter this club. We are really proud of you," said the HNS president, Davor Šuker, congratulating Šimunić, Pletikosa and Srna on their achievement. Šimunić explained what this number means to him and his two teammates: "It is beautiful to play for Croatia; it always was and always will be. This is a great honour for us and we are delighted with this recognition."

Before the match, the three players received special gifts from UEFA and a standing ovation from Croatian fans at the Maksimir stadium.

There were other reasons for celebration as well – after wins against Serbia and Wales, Croatia moved into fourth place in the FIFA rankings for April, while also being the only national association with teams in both the European Under-17 Championship and FIFA U-20 World Cup, assuring Croatian football of a bright future.

● Tomislav Pacak

Domestic U17s win Josip Katalinski Skija memorial tournament

The Under-17 team of Bosnia and Herzegovina won the 6 April Josip Katalinski Skija memorial tournament in remembrance of the football legend of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslavia. In the final match, played at the Grbavica stadium, the host Under-17 team proved better than their peers from Montenegro.

Montenegro took the lead in the eighth minute with a goal from Marko Burzanovica. Adnan Osmanovic then equalised for Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 21st minute. By the end of the game, the score had not changed, leaving the match to be decided in a penalty shoot-out, in which the hosts came off better, converting 12 penalties against the opposition's 11.

In the match for third place, the youngsters from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia beat the Sarajevo City and East Sarajevo selection 2-1. In the semi-finals, meanwhile, Bosnia and Herzegovina first beat the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 4-1 at the Otoka stadium, while, at the Hrasnica stadium, Montenegro conquered the Sarajevo City and East Sarajevo selection 1-0.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina player Ismail Duraković was selected as the player whose play is the most reminiscent of Josip Katalinski, while the team's goalkeeper, Emir Cutahija, was singled out for having made the best move of the tournament when he

saved the decisive penalty in the final match.

In other news, the Bosnia and Herzegovina women's Under-19 team played two games at the Bare stadium in Čitluk against their counterparts from Turkey. Both teams were able to celebrate 1-0 wins.

On the boys' side, the Under-17 and Under-19 national teams each played two matches against their counterparts from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in three cities: Srebrenik, Modriča and Gradačac. The Under-17s drew 0-0 and won 2-1, while the Under-19s won 1-0 and drew 0-0.

In the refereeing sector, the UEFA Executive Committee, at its meeting on 28 March in Sofia, decided – based on the recommendations of the UEFA Referees Committee – to admit the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UEFA Convention on Referee Education and Organisation.

In recent years, in cooperation with our assigned adviser for the UEFA Referee Convention, Alan Snoddy, a number of reforms have been made to our refereeing structures, and being admitted to the UEFA convention is therefore considered a great success for the federation.

By being admitted to the convention, the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will receive €500,000 for the development of refereeing structures, as well as incentive payments (towards education, training, talents and mentors programmes, instructors, equipment, etc.) over the next four years.

● Fuad Kravac



The tournament participants after the trophy presentation ceremony



Danish FA working to improve the complete matchday experience

Inspired by the English FA, the Danish Football Association (DBU) has initiated a study into fans' experiences at national team matches. By undertaking this study, the DBU aims to develop the matchday experience, thereby boosting ticket sales.

The study consists of several online questionnaires that are being distributed via email. The first questionnaire was developed with inspiration from and with the help of the English FA and was distributed to email addresses that were collected from fans buying tickets online. In this questionnaire, respondents were asked, among other things, to review their customer journey on 13 points ranging from buying their ticket to leaving the stadium.

A second questionnaire was then sent to respondents who in the first questionnaire had agreed to participate in follow-up

surveys. In this second part of the study, the respondents were asked to evaluate which parts of the journey needed improvement the most and what kind of improvements were desirable. For validation purposes, they were also asked some of the questions from the first questionnaire in a different manner.

The DBU will continue the study for coming home fixtures and results will be evaluated and analysed continuously. Based on the results, the DBU expects to improve fans' matchday experience in general, thereby attracting a broader target group to matches, which will



The Danish FA wants to improve fans' matchday experience

improve the Danish FA's competitive position with regard to UEFA Champions League matches, concerts and other similar events, and eventually help increase ticket sales for less attractive home matches.

● Søren Gjelstrup Jessen



Celebrating the father of modern English football

England manager Roy Hodgson was joined by luminaries from across English football including Sir Bobby Charlton to celebrate the man known as the "father of modern English football".

A pioneer of his day, Sir Walter Winterbottom was honoured with a special bust in his honour at The FA's national football centre, St George's Park.

The first-ever England manager, between 1946 and 1962, Sir Walter guided England to four FIFA World Cups but was most highly regarded for his work to develop the wider English game.

Sir Walter, who died aged 88 in 2002 and would have been 100 this year, introduced



A bust in honour of Sir Walter Winterbottom, the father of modern English football

the concept of coaches and teachers of football to The FA. It was a radical proposition and one that required much endeavour to overcome the resistance of those who opposed the idea.

In the end, though, Sir Walter's tireless determination helped haul English football into the modern era, encouraging players,

clubs and administrators to change the way they thought about the game.

In 2013, the year of The FA's 150th anniversary, the profession of coaching is well established and there is no doubt that the roots of the current FA coaching pathway come as a direct consequence of Sir Walter's revolutionary attitude towards the introduction of coaches and teachers of the game.

The FA employs more than 150 full-time coaches and coach educators and licenses a further 500 coach educators to specifically develop better coaches and, in turn, players.

More than 40,000 coaches are qualified on an annual basis at different levels, and in excess of 1,500 coaches are working within the professional game.

● Greg Demetriou



Clairefontaine medical centre gets FIFA seal of approval

The medical centre of the Fernand-Sastre national technical centre (CTNFS) at Clairefontaine has been awarded the prestigious status of FIFA Medical Centre of Excellence by the FIFA Medical Committee. This seal of quality, which is subject to a strict selection process, rewards the best medical centres in the world for their expertise in taking care of elite athletes.

A ceremony to present the medical centre with its certificate was held at the CTNFS on

17 April, attended by Noël Le Graët, president of the French Football Federation, and Dr Michel D'Hooghe, chairman of the FIFA Medical Committee.

Placing as much importance on the quality of diagnosis as on treatment, aftercare, psychological support and dietary needs, the FIFA Medical Centre Of Excellence seal of approval earns a medical centre special prestige and renown.

At present, just 33 centres in the world – Clairefontaine included – benefit from this well-deserved recognition.

● Matthieu Brelle-Andrade



Left to right: Prof. Pierre Rochcongar, French Football Federation doctor, Noël le Graët, FFF president, and Dr Michel D'Hooghe, chairman of the FIFA and UEFA Medical Committees

Uwe Seeler football park opens in Malente

"All credit is truly due for what has been created here in Malente. Brilliant!" No richer compliment could have been paid by the president of the German FA (DFB), Wolfgang Niersbach, at the inauguration of the Uwe Seeler football park. Apart from the "boss" of German football, some 200 guests, including, of course, Uwe Seeler himself, were present at the former sports school in Malente to celebrate its official reopening.

The DFB president naturally took the opportunity to recall the days when the (West) German national team prepared there for major tournaments, as they did before their World Cup victory in Italy



Uwe Seeler

air always did us good. If we're going to pull off the World Cup, we obviously need some of the spirit of Malente."

At the inauguration ceremony, the president of the Schleswig-Holstein football association, Hans-Ludwig Meyer, thanked everyone who had supported the Malente modernisation project, especially the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, as well as the DFB and the north German football association. "Only thanks to the support of our partners are we able to proudly state today that we kept to the budget," he said.

● Stephan Brause

in 1990, for example. It is therefore no wonder that the man after whom the football park is named, Uwe Seeler, honorary captain of the German national team, wryly made a strong pitch for the newly opened sports facility: "The Malente

Sales of Under-21 tickets launched at gala event

To herald the start of ticket sales for the European Under-21 Championship final round, ambassadors of the seven countries that will be represented at the tournament attended a luncheon at the Messa restaurant, where the special tournament ball was also presented.

The event was hosted by the chairman of the Israel Football Association, Avraham Luzon, and the foreign ministry's deputy director-general for Europe, Rafi Shutz.

During the luncheon, Mr Luzon and Mr Shutz outlined the preparations under way in Israel to publicise the event, both locally and internationally, as the tournament will be broadcast to 140 countries around the world. The publicity is also intended to attract to the tournament sports-loving tourists, talent scouts, families of the players, dignitaries from the world of football and citizens of the participating countries who currently reside in Israel.

Before partaking of their gourmet lunch, provided by chef Aviv Moshe, the tournament manager, Ronen Hershko, gave the guests a detailed presentation covering the hosting of the matches, associated events and the wide range of activities being organised by the local organising committee in advance of the tournament.

Now that ticket sales have started, tens of thousands of fans have already ensured their places at the final round, and the pace of ticket sales is increasing from day to day. The association has set itself the goal of filling the stadiums for all the games and, to this end, has initiated cooperation with the local authorities that are hosting games.

Among those attending the ticket launch luncheon were the ambassadors of Germany (Andreas Michaelis), Italy (Francesco Maria Talo), the Netherlands (Caspar Veldkamp), Norway (H. E. Svein Sevje) and Russia (Sergey Yakoviev), and the deputy ambassador from the British Embassy, Rob Dixon.

● Michal Grundland

Top of the class

For almost ten years, Liechtenstein has had a sports school which offers performance-minded young athletes the opportunity to prepare specifically for a career in elite sport and to apply their high-achievement ambitions to both their sports activities and their school work.



A school where talented young athletes can combine their sporting and academic education

Right from the start, ever since the school opened in 2004, the Liechtenstein Football Association has been sending talented young footballers there, with consistently good results.

For the new school year, beginning in August, the association will again make full use of its assigned quota of students and enrol ten of its players. As a result, from the coming school year, no fewer than 34 Liechtenstein footballers will be completing top-level sporting and school education at the Liechtenstein sports school.

● Anton Banzer



Israel FA president Avraham Luzon with the ambassadors of the countries whose teams are taking part in the European U21 final round



A welcome initiative

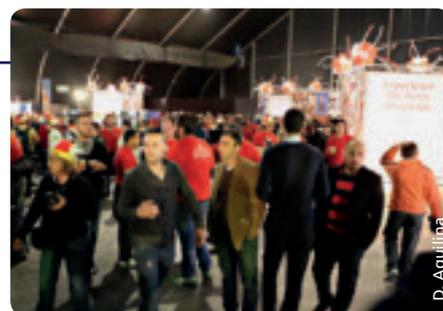
The recent Malta v Italy World Cup qualifier was a tie that the Maltese had long been looking forward to. The strong social and sporting links between the two countries, resulting from their geographical and historical affinity, made for a special occasion as the lads in red confronted the Azzurri on home soil.

A full capacity crowd of just under 20,000 thronged to Ta' Qali national stadium to watch the local boys put on a disciplined performance which limited their far higher quoted opponents to a 2-0 victory, a result similar to that of the first leg in Italy last September.

The stadium and its surroundings offered a spectacle of colour and emotions, especially through a fan park which provided entertainment a few hours before the match.

The fan park activity, organised by the Malta FA marketing department with the support of the Malta national teams' main sponsors, FXDD and CISK, was held next to the stadium. The initiative, the first of its kind, was a welcome success both for the promotional aspect of the game as well as in terms of merchandising and entertainment.

The atmosphere and swinging fun in the well-designed venue contributed to a remarkable pre-match occasion which drew praise from every quarter in Malta.



The fan park proved a huge attraction

There is no doubt that, in future, a fan park before a big match such as Malta v Italy is bound to add to the popularity of the game on this small football-mad Mediterranean island.

● Alex Vella



Women's Under-17 development tournament

For the second year in a row, the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) has hosted an international development tournament with the support of UEFA's HatTrick assistance programme.



Moldovan FA vice-president Ion Testimitanu presents the trophy to the captain of the Moldovan U19s, Carolina Tabur

The development tournaments – several of which have been taking place in various countries this spring – are real learning experiences for the players, not just in fine-tuning their skills through practice and guidance, but also in allowing them to appreciate an international and highly competitive environment.

"Entrusting the FMF for a second year with the organisation and staging of such a tournament shows the high level of appreciation and encouragement of UEFA. We believe that this is thanks to the good conditions that are provided at the national teams' technical centre in Vadul lui Voda, built with the support and goodwill of UEFA by means of the UEFA HatTrick programme," said the FMF president, Pavel Cebanu.

Under-17 girls' teams from Belarus, Slovakia and Moldova produced a fine tournament at the national teams' training centre. Moldova finally emerged victorious

in both matches, both times in a penalty shoot-out. In the last match, Slovakia beat Belarus with goals scored by Tamara Koflanovicova and Ludmila Matavkova. All the girls participating in this international development tournament demonstrated technical skill, determination and fair play. Each of them could be proud of their performance in representing their countries. The awards ceremony was attended by Ion Testimitanu, vice-president of the FA of Moldova, who presented the participants with their well-earned trophies.

"This is a great tournament to develop women's football by offering national women's Under-17 teams a chance to foster their skills in competitive international matches. I was pleased by the level of organisation and the atmosphere at the stadium," said UEFA technical observer Beatrice von Siebenthal.

● Press office



Focus on healthy eating and mental health

The Irish FA recently announced a number of exciting programmes funded by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) which will help to tackle social deprivation across Northern Ireland.

One element of the programme focuses on using football to communicate key messages on healthy eating and mental well-being. The three-year programme will involve a number of football coaching programmes in primary schools across the province, containing a healthy eating element, and providing nutritional advice for coaches during our coaching courses and a seminar programme which will focus on healthy eating and mental health for our

clubs across Northern Ireland. In addition, the association will be running a training programme on first aid and the use of defibrillators.

The Irish FA's head of marketing and communications, Geoff Wilson, said: *"This is an exciting and groundbreaking programme for us. We will be in schools, clubs and talking to coaches regarding healthy eating and mental health issues, and it is hoped that this major education and knowledge-sharing programme will have a major effect on our community."*

This project has been made possible thanks to the generous support of the NI Executive and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure through the "Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion through Sport" programme.



Launch of the programme to fight social deprivation

The programme aims to deliver sporting interventions which can:

- promote equality
- tackle poverty
- tackle social exclusion, and
- provide opportunities to realise wider socio-economic returns.

● Sueann Harrison

Referee academy opens

The Portuguese Football Federation is pleased to announce the launch of a new referee academy to ensure that young referees are provided with coaching and support to further their careers, and also to set the foundations for anybody wanting to progress and achieve excellence in their refereeing.

The academy was officially presented on 13 April and operates under the leadership of the chairman of the referee council, Vítor Pereira. Designed for football, beach soccer and futsal referees and observers, the academy fully respects the UEFA Convention on Referee Education and Organisation.

It comprises more focused instructional programmes, new learning modules and more on-the-field work. There will be three levels of coaching: beginners, advanced and elite. The number of learning and training hours will double and triple in some cases. An elite referee, for instance, will complete a total of 860 hours.

Apart from coaching referees and observers, the academy will support the



Portuguese FA president Fernando Gomes (right) in conversation with Vítor Pereira, chairman of the national referee council

referee recruitment process with technical and mentoring programmes and seminars.

Fernando Gomes, president of the Portuguese Football Federation, stressed the importance of the academy and highlighted the federation's efforts "to raise the standards among referees and observers" in the country. He believes the academy "will encourage all those involved in the sector to aim towards higher objectives in the years to come". Portuguese football is thus embarking on a new era in which it will continue to grow on an even bigger scale.

● Matilde Dias

Ruud Dokter appointed high performance director

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) has confirmed the appointment of Ruud Dokter as its new high performance director following an extensive worldwide recruitment process.



A new role for Ruud Dokter

Dutchman Dokter, 57, has wide-ranging international experience, most recently with the KNVB, the Dutch Football Association, where he has fulfilled a large variety of senior coaching positions at men's U21, U18, U17, U16 and U15 levels, as well as with the senior women's team.

Dokter has built up a wealth of experience in delivering the world famous Dutch model of player development.

He will commence his role with Irish football on 1 August and is tasked with overseeing the non-senior international men's programme, the women's senior

and underage international programme, coach education and player development. This will include the emerging talent programme as well as the academy at the FAI's headquarters in Abbotstown, where the first phase of the programme is currently being developed.

Speaking about his appointment, Dokter said: "I am really looking forward to taking up the role of high performance director with the FAI. I will be getting involved in Irish football at an exciting time for the game here, with the emergence of many promising young players and solid performances at underage international level. My first priority will be to cultivate relationships with those people who invest so much time in nurturing young Irish talent, provide a good sense of direction and influence everyone to work together. Ireland has a fine footballing tradition and I want to build on that, using my experience to optimise the development of the coming generation of elite players."

Welcoming the announcement, John Delaney, FAI chief executive, added: "Ruud will be working closely with all of the affiliates involved in Irish football, with an emphasis on coaching and the development of our elite player pathway. His experience will be a great addition to the association and we look forward to having him on board."

Dokter fills the vacancy left by the departure of previous incumbent Wim Koevermans, who has gone to work for the Indian FA.

● Stephen Finn

UEFA development tournament

For the first time, the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) has hosted a UEFA development tournament. From 8 to 16 April, the Under-16 girls' and boys' national teams of Moldova, Serbia, Slovakia and Romania competed on one of the artificial pitches at the FRF's national football centre in Buftea, in a special environment created not only by the overall facilities but also by the excellent sunny weather that prevailed.

The FRF is devoting special attention to youth football development and to grassroots football, as expressed by the federation's president, Mircea Sandu, who attended some of the matches: "Such tournaments are more than welcome because they are dedicated to youngsters who are at the first age level to compete in official competitions at European and world level. Now, at this age, coaches work with the youngsters in order to model and develop their technical and tactical skills, but also their character. Already now we can spot, generally speaking, who will become a top player and also who will be a player on whom we will be able to count from a character point of view. I am happy that women's football is becoming more and more important and, honestly speaking, I love attending matches played by youngsters. I am also confident that the tournament hosted by our centre was a success and that all our guests returned home with fond memories and having gained experience, something which can only have benefits for them in the future."

All those present unanimously agreed that the tournament reached its objectives. Most of the 12 matches played showed a very good level and, above all, a very good disciplinary record. Serbia won the girls' competition (two victories without any goals conceded and a goalless draw against Romania which they won in the shoot-out), while the Romanian boys won two matches after regular time (2-0 against Serbia and 4-1 against Slovakia) and drew the third (0-0 against Moldova) but won in the shoot-out.

At the end of the day, the rankings do not matter because it was an unofficial tournament. This was conveyed very well by Romanian playing legend Miodrag Belodedici, the ambassador of the tournament, who said: "We need at least two or three such tournaments each year for these youngsters. A competition like this is more than appreciated. It's a fantastic opportunity and a must at such an age".

● Paul Zaharia

The tournament was an all-round success



N. Profir, Romanian FA



Swiss doctors take a refresher course

The Swiss Football Association does not leave anything to chance. Its medical committee takes the same approach, being fully aware of the importance of its tasks. On this precept, it recently organised one of its biennial resuscitation courses for the doctors and physiotherapists of all the Swiss national teams.

"Although we hope we will never encounter such a situation, we have to

be prepared because there is always a risk of it happening," says the chairman of the Swiss FA's medical committee, Roland Grossen, who is also doctor to the senior national team. "Therefore, it is enormously important that our doctors and physiotherapists are trained in resuscitation procedures and that we can offer the best possible quality," he adds.

Daniel Meli, doctor to the Under-17 national team, agrees. "Resuscitation is an extremely exceptional situation which, luckily, you very rarely encounter. But,



Dr Roland Grossen, chairman of the Swiss FA's medical committee

therefore, it is important to practise it in order to be ready to act in an emergency," he says.

Antoinette Anthamatten, physiotherapist to the senior national team, is also full of praise for the course. "The course has changed a lot in recent years. Now it is very hands on, which helps us enormously and gives us the confidence to be able to do the right thing when it really matters".

● Pierre Benoit



FIFA U-20 World Cup trophy tour starts

Presented by Halkbank, one of the national sponsors of the FIFA U-20 World Cup Turkey 2013, which runs from 21 June to 13 July, the tournament's trophy tour started in April in the city of Kayseri, where the opening match will be held, with the participation of the chairman of the local organising committee, Servet Yardımcı.

Meanwhile, the well-known Turkish rock band GECE, who recorded the tournament's official song *Yıldızlar Buradan Yükseliyor* (Stars are rising here) gave a concert in the event area.

Over the course of the next seven weekends, the tour will be taking in each of the tournament's seven host cities, which are Antalya, Bursa, Gaziantep, İstanbul, Kayseri, Rize and Trabzon.

The truck containing the newly designed FIFA U-20 World Cup trophy, which will be presented to this year's winners for the first



The tournament mascot poses with the trophy

time, is open to visitors in all host cities from 12.00 to 22.00 during the subsequent weekend tours.

A giant version of the official match ball, the adidas Cafusa, is being placed in the host cities' main squares and on

public view from the start of these trophy tour activities until the beginning of the tournament.

In addition, football fans are able to purchase match tickets from the mobile ticket offices set up at the venues.

On top of the official programme of activities, a PlayStation corner and touch-screen quiz, as well as a variety of shooting and football games (including Kick-Point) are providing entertainment to the fans in the event area in each city where the trophy truck pulls up. There is also a giant TV screen showing clips of stars that have

previously competed in the FIFA U-20 World Cup, as well as a variety of photo opportunities for the public.

The full schedule for the FIFA U-20 World Cup Turkey 2013 trophy tour is as follows: 20/21 April – Kayseri; 27/28 April – Antalya; 4/5 May – Gaziantep; 11/12 May – Trabzon; 18/19 May – Rize; 25/26 May – Bursa; 1/2 June – İstanbul.

● Aydın Güvenir



UEFA President opens development centre

The UEFA President, Michel Platini, recently visited Newport in Wales to officially open the national football development centre.

On a beautiful spring day in South Wales, he was joined for this task by the Wales First Minister, Carwyn Jones, alongside invited guests, including the president of the Football Association of Wales, Trefor Lloyd Hughes, Wales manager, Chris Coleman, and former internationals Neville Southall and Ian Rush.

Facilities at the venue comprise three pitches – two premium-grade grass pitches and one third-generation artificial pitch – and a state-of-the-art headquarters building providing changing rooms, a training recovery zone and an administrative base. The facility will be known as Dragon Park.

● Ceri Stennett



Shevchenko starts his coach education

On 1 April, the first session in the latest A licence coach education programme got under way at the coach education centre of the Football Federation of Ukraine.

This year's participants include former professional players who meet the course requirements – among them, Andriy Shevchenko, retired Ukrainian footballer, the third-highest goalscorer in UEFA Champions League history and winner of the Ballon d'Or in 2004.

"First of all I am Ukrainian, a pupil of Ukrainian football," Shevchenko says. "I grew up as a football player here, and this is where I want to do my coach education. I have worked with many famous coaches and I can say with confidence that the greatest influence on



Andriy Shevchenko wants to follow in the footsteps of his master, Valeriy Lobanovsky

me was Valeriy Lobanovsky. It was a great honour for me to play and work under the leadership of this great coach. For the moment, I am not thinking about where I will work in the future. What is most important for me is to get all the necessary knowledge." The course consists of five sessions – three theoretical and two practical in clubs. The theoretical side includes presentations by visiting lecturers not only in football science but also in medicine, psychology and physiology.

● Yuriy Maznychenko



Michel Platini and the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, unveil a commemorative plaque

BIRTHDAYS

Dušan Savić (Serbia, 1 June)
 Ekaterina Fedyshina (Russia, 1 June)
 Ivaylo Ivkov (Bulgaria, 3 June)
 Radek Lobo (Czech Republic, 3 June)
 Klara Bjartmarz (Iceland, 3 June)
 John Ward (Republic of Ireland, 4 June)
 Yauheni Tratsiuk (Belarus, 4 June)
 Jean-Samuel Leuba (Switzerland, 4 June)
 Ludovico Micallef (Malta, 5 June)
 Jaap Uilenberg (Netherlands, 5 June)
 Leon Straessle (Switzerland, 6 June)
 Michael Joseph Hyland (Republic of Ireland, 6 June)
 Theo Zwanziger (Germany, 6 June)
 Lars-Åke Björck (Sweden, 7 June)
 Michel Sablon (Belgium, 7 June)
 Sándor Berzi (Hungary, 7 June)
Onofre Costa (Portugal, 7 June)
 ☆☆☆ 40th
 Johannes Scholtz (Netherlands, 8 June)
 Bryan Drew (England, 8 June)
Jesper Møller Christensen
 (Denmark, 9 June) ☆☆☆ 50th
 Antoine Portelli (Malta, 9 June)
 Petri Antero Jakonen (Finland, 9 June)
 Jonathan Ford (Wales, 9 June)
 Hans Bangerter (Switzerland, 10 June)
Leonardo Grosso (Italy, 11 June)
 ☆☆☆ 70th
 Kyros Georgiou (Cyprus, 11 June)
 Thórir Hakonarson (Iceland, 11 June)
 Alain Courtois (Belgium, 12 June)
 Jørn West Larsen (Denmark, 12 June)
 Roland Coquard (France, 13 June)
 Targo Kaldoja (Estonia, 13 June)
Galina Doneva (Bulgaria, 14 June)
 ☆☆☆ 50th
 Nuno Castro (Portugal, 14 June)
 Viacheslav Koloskov (Russia, 15 June)
 Miguel Galán Torres (Spain, 15 June)
 Meir Liber (Israel, 17 June)
 Michael Joseph Maessen (Netherlands, 17 June)
 Matthias Voigt (Liechtenstein, 17 June)
 Stephen Thomas (England, 17 June)
 Anne Rei (Estonia, 17 June)
 Philippe Piat (France, 18 June)
 Hannelore Ratzeburg (Germany, 18 June)
 Ivan Novak (Croatia, 18 June)
Eduard Prodani (Albania, 18 June)
 ☆☆☆ 50th
 Elkhan Mammadov (Azerbaijan, 18 June)
 Michel Platini (France, 21 June)
 Peter Peters (Germany, 21 June)
 Zoran Cvrk (Croatia, 21 June)
 Keith Stuart Hackett (England, 22 June)

Ante Kulušić (Croatia, 22 June)
 Zvi Rosen (Israel, 23 June)
 Vladimir Antonov (Moldova, 23 June)
 Georg Pangl (Austria, 23 June)
 Jean-Jacques Schonckert (Luxembourg, 24 June)
 Renatus Temmink (Netherlands, 24 June)
 Christian Schmöler (Austria, 25 June)
Foppe de Haan (Netherlands, 26 June)
 ☆☆☆ 70th
 Barry W. Bright (England, 27 June)
Eyjolfur Olafsson (Iceland, 27 June)
 ☆☆☆ 60th
 José Venancio Lopez Hierro (Spain, 27 June)
 Mehmet Levent Kızıl (Turkey, 27 June)
 Wim Koevermans (Belgium, 28 June)
 Ivan Borissov Lekov (Bulgaria, 29 June)
 Wolfgang Sowa (Austria, 29 June)
 Peter J. van Zunderd (Netherlands, 30 June)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

14 June, in Kaunas, Lithuania
 European Under-19 Championship:
 draw for the 2012/13 final round

24 June, in Nyon
 UEFA Champions League and UEFA
 Europa League: draws for the 2013/14
 first and second qualifying rounds

27 June, in Nyon
 UEFA Women's Champions League:
 draw for the 2013/14 qualifying round
 Women's Football Committee

Competitions

5-18 June, in Israel
 European Under-21 Championship
 final round

15-30 June, in Brazil
 FIFA Confederations Cup

21 June-13 July, in Turkey
 FIFA U-20 World Cup

22-29 June, in the Venice region of Italy
 UEFA Regions' Cup final round

25-28 June, in Nyon
 European Women's Under-17
 Championship final round

NOTICES

- On 23 March, Karl-Erik Nilsson was re-elected president of the Swedish FA.

- Since 23 April, Timo Huttunen has been acting general secretary of the Finnish FA.

- Interested UEFA member associations have until 12 September to return the official UEFA EURO 2020 bid application form to the UEFA administration. The list of candidates will be announced by UEFA on 20 September and the bid agreements sent to them. The bid dossiers have to reach UEFA by 25 April 2014, and the UEFA Executive Committee will name the 13 host cities in September of the same year.

MATCH AGENTS

In April, a UEFA match agent's licence was awarded to:

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