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IN THIS ISSUE

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Cover:

*Bosnian striker Edin Džeko
in action against Slovakia's
Juraj Kucka in the World
Cup qualifier that Bosnia
and Herzegovina won 2-1,
helping them on their way
to the top of Group G and
their first ever World Cup.*

Photo: Getty Sport

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The UEFA Executive Committee, with the UEFA President in the chair, held its last meeting of 2013 on 12 December in Bilbao.



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The draws for the elite rounds of the European Under-19, Under-17 and Women's Under-19 Championships took place at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon at the end of November.



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For the first time, there were eight teams in the final round.



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Futsal fans have the final round of the European Futsal Championship to look forward to from 28 January to 8 February.



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ACTION SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

Although it has been fighting racism for many years, it recently became apparent that football needed to redouble its efforts to eradicate this problem from our sport. European football had already been taking the lead by imposing strong disciplinary measures for racist behaviour. Nevertheless, UEFA both realises and accepts that firm and consistent action needs to be taken across the board to kick racism out of football. So, this was the genesis of the resolution adopted by the UEFA Congress in May 2013 entitled European Football United Against Racism.

This resolution, warmly supported by the UEFA Executive Committee, was unanimously approved by the UEFA Congress. It sets out an 11-point plan, which all national associations subscribe to, designed to tackle racism head on. Thus, following the lead of UEFA, every national association in Europe has committed to conducting the fight against racism in a strong and unified fashion. And this is precisely the strength of European football – its unity on such crucial matters. Following the adoption of this resolution, we have already seen strong measures being taken by national associations to deter racist behaviour following incidents in a domestic setting.

We were proud (but not surprised) that stars of European football, both past and present, as well as leading coaches and referees, were all prepared to lend their support to and throw their weight behind this campaign. The fact is that football, which by its very nature brings together people from so many diverse cultural and racial backgrounds, is also a natural leader in the fight against racism. And so we were very pleased to see just how ready all these leading figures in European football were to play an active part in this campaign. Their support, as well as the support of every club in the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League, has been invaluable in getting our message across. That message is: European football says “No to Racism”.

We are now seeing this campaign in action at every club competition match this season. And it has been further highlighted in the FARE action weeks which coincided with matchday 3 in Octo-

ber. On that occasion, team captains at 40 matches wore No to Racism armbands, anti-racism messages were played over the public address systems, and video testimonials backing the campaign were shown in every stadium and on television, including contributions from Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Kevin Prince-Boateng and Johan Cruyff. No to Racism pennants were passed across the starting line-ups at every venue. And there will be more to come in the knockout stages of our club competitions, both on and off the field of play.

Equally important has been UEFA's own strengthened disciplinary approach. Our disciplinary regulations force supporters and clubs to take their responsibilities very seriously in this area. And recently we have seen several partial stadium closures imposed as a penalty for racist behaviour. There will be no let-up by UEFA here, and further sanctions will be imposed if these problems persist. This is what our regulations say and this is how we can expect them to be applied. We believe the message is now being received loud and clear.

As they say, action speaks louder than words. And UEFA has acted. We will remain vigilant, as racism is a big problem in society that will not be cured overnight. Nevertheless, looking towards 2014, we can say that European football stands both united and proud, because we are at least playing our part and taking real, concrete steps to get rid of racism.

Gianni Infantino
UEFA General Secretary

THIRTEEN COUNTRIES DESPERATE TO MAKE HISTORY

The 13 European teams in the starting line-up for the FIFA World Cup in Brazil include 12 regulars and one newcomer, Bosnia and Herzegovina having qualified for the first time. All 13 are hoping to make history in the backyard of the five-time World Cup winners by becoming the first European country to lift the trophy on the American continent.



Robin van Persie (left) was the top scorer in the qualifying competition with 11 goals, including a hat-trick in the Netherlands' 8-1 win against Hungary in Amsterdam

So, after Spain put an end to one unhappy statistic in 2010 by becoming the first European country to win the World Cup outside Europe, Europe's 13 representatives at the 2014 World Cup will be trying to put paid to another, no European team having been on the top of the podium at any of the seven World Cup final tournaments held on the American continent since 1930. Most of the European teams are World Cup regulars, with Belgium, Croatia, Russia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina the only ones absent from the tournament in South Africa four years ago. The fact that the Bosnians will be the only World Cup debutants in 2014 is proof of the consistency of the continent's major football powers, which leaves little room for newcomers.

Spain: four in a row?

By winning EURO 2008, the 2010 World Cup and EURO 2012, the Spanish team pulled off a fantastic treble. Chasing a fourth consecutive title, Vicente Del Bosque will be able to call on a group of players that has barely changed in recent years. On the road to Brazil, the Roja overcame France, thanks to a 1-0 win at the Stade de France. Although they are not invincible, as demonstrated by their 3-0 defeat to Brazil in the FIFA Confederations Cup final on 30 June, Spain are one of the favourites to repeat their victory of four years ago.

Netherlands: an impressive record

After a disappointing EURO 2012, in which they were knocked out in the first round after three defeats, the Dutch team recovered superbly by sailing through their qualifying group. With nine wins out of ten, 34 goals scored and five conceded, Louis van Gaal's men boast the best record of all of Europe's 2014 World Cup participants, having successfully blended their 2010 World Cup finalists with a new generation of players. The Netherlands can, in particular, call on striker Robin van Persie, the qualifying competition's top goalscorer with 11 goals.

Germany's time again?

Germany have reached at least the semi-finals of every major competition since the 2006 FIFA World Cup. Their consistency is both remarkable and frustrating, since the Mannschaft have not won a title since EURO 1996. With the best attack in Europe (36 goals) and an inexhaustible pool of talent, Joachim Löw's team were again impressive in the qualifiers. Are the Germans finally going to find the right formula to hit the jackpot?

Portugal: thanks, Ronaldo!

Having finished second behind Russia in their qualifying group, Portugal, as they did in 2010, secured their World Cup place through the play-offs. The Portuguese booked their ticket by beating Sweden, thanks to four goals from Cristiano Ronaldo in their two play-off matches. Their victory means Portugal have qualified for a record fourth consecutive World Cup.

Italy: the revival

World champions in 2006, Italy fell at the first hurdle in 2010. However, the Italians bounced back at EURO 2012, when they were beaten 4-0 by Spain in the final. Their revival was confirmed as they finished their World Cup qualifying campaign unbeaten. Since taking the helm of the Squadra Azzurra in 2010, Cesare Prandelli has put together a team that plays an attractive style of football, in which the old guard of players such as Gianluigi Buffon, Andrea Pirlo and Daniele De Rossi star alongside the new generation, led by Mario Balotelli.

England: craving success again

Under threat from Ukraine for most of the qualifying competition, England booked their place in Brazil thanks to home wins against Montenegro (4-1) and Poland (2-0) in their last

two matches. Wayne Rooney (7 goals) was a crucial member of a team that showed great defensive solidity (4 goals conceded in 10 matches) – an encouraging sign for a country that has failed to reach a World Cup semi-final since 1990.

France: it went down to the wire

The road to Brazil was certainly a tortuous one for France. Runners-up behind Spain in their group, Didier Deschamps' men staged a remarkable comeback against Ukraine in the play-offs. After losing 2-0 away from home, Les Bleus won the return leg 3-0. Although the French have struggled since reaching the 2006 final, they remain a threat thanks to the individual talent of their forwards, such as Franck Ribéry and Mathieu Valbuena.

Switzerland: youngsters to the fore

After qualifying for four consecutive major tournaments between 2004 and 2010, Switzerland missed the boat for EURO 2012. However, their absence was quickly forgotten, if their impressive unbeaten record in the World Cup qualifiers is anything to go by (7 wins and 3 draws). The Swiss, who beat Brazil in a friendly this summer, are relying on a golden generation of players, with several members of the side that won the 2009 FIFA U-17 World Cup now in their senior ranks.

Greece: still just as dangerous

Since winning EURO 2004, Greece have consistently managed to live up to their reputation as a solid outfit. While their defence has continued to prove its worth, a lack of potency up front – with only 12 goals scored in 10 group matches – meant that the Greeks had to qualify through the play-offs, where they saw off Romania. The emergence of striker Kostas Mitroglou, who netted a brace in the first leg against the Romanians, is a major plus from an attacking point of view.

Russia: solid and efficient

After being eliminated in the first round at EURO 2012, the Russian Football Union appointed Fabio Capello as head coach. So far, the Italian has done everything that has been asked of him. With "their" World Cup four and a half

years away (they will host the 2018 edition), the Russians qualified for Brazil in impressive style, winning their group ahead of Portugal. Now boasting greater defensive solidity, Russia still have plenty of flair further up the pitch, particularly in the shape of the busy Aleksandr Kerzhakov, who scored five goals in the qualifying competition.

Croatia: painful progress

Modrić, Olić, Jelavić, Mandžukić... Despite their attacking talents, Croatia only scored 12 goals in their qualifying matches, which meant that they had to negotiate the play-offs after finishing a long way behind Belgium as group runners-up. Having drawn a blank in the first leg, the Croats secured their ticket for Brazil with a 2-0 win over their Icelandic opponents in the return.

Belgium: an emerging force?

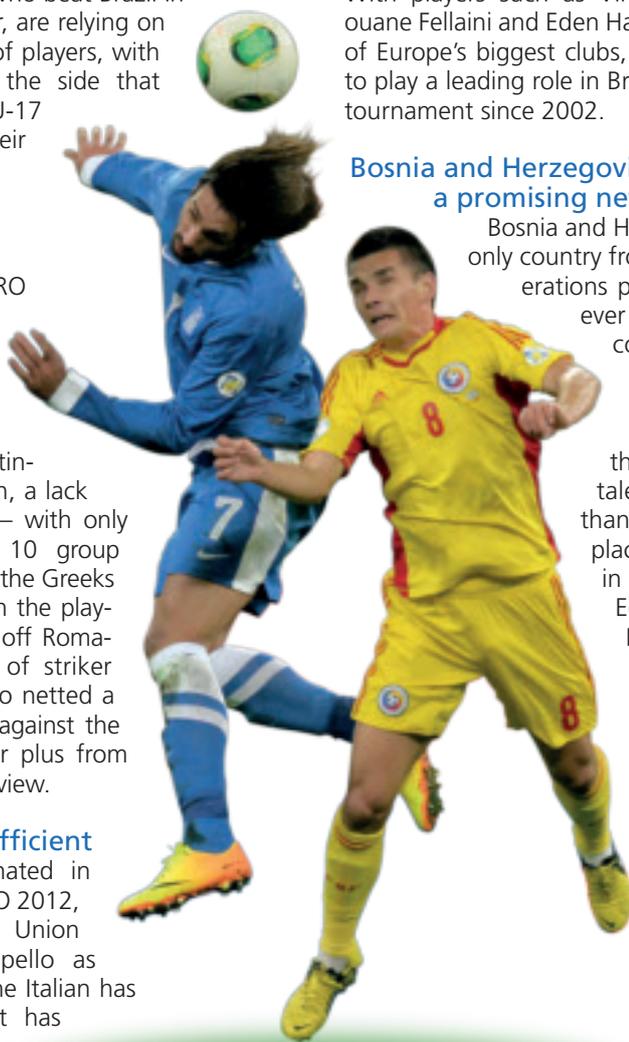
The enthusiasm generated in Belgium by the Red Devils' results is matched by the talent of their players. Unbeaten in their qualifying group (8 wins and 2 draws), Marc Wilmots' men are showing great maturity in spite of their youth. With players such as Vincent Kompany, Marouane Fellaini and Eden Hazard playing for some of Europe's biggest clubs, the Belgians look set to play a leading role in Brazil in their first major tournament since 2002.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: a promising newcomer

Bosnia and Herzegovina will be the only country from any of the confederations participating in its first ever World Cup. After coming very close in 2010, when they were knocked out by Portugal in the play-offs, the Bosnians have some talented individuals to thank for ensuring a first-place finish above Greece in their group. Strikers Edin Džeko and Vedad Ibišević stood out in particular, bagging 18 of their team's 30 goals between them. ●

Julien Hernandez

Greece (Georgios Samaras, left) eliminated Romania (Ovidiu Hoban) in the play-offs



Getty Images

FROM COSTA DO SAUIPE TO THE FRENCH RIVIERA

On 6 December, the eyes of football fans the world over were on Costa do Sauipe in Brazil for the draw for next year's World Cup. Before long, they will be turning to Nice, where the UEFA EURO 2016 qualifying draw takes place on 23 February.

Assisted by eight former world champions, the FIFA secretary general, Jérôme Valcke, conducted the draw – televised in more than 190 countries – which divided the 32 contenders (13 from Europe,

6 from South America, 5 from Africa, 4 from Asia and 4 from North America, Central America and the Caribbean) into the following eight groups:

<p>Group A Brazil Croatia Mexico Cameroon</p>	<p>Group B Spain Netherlands Chile Australia</p>	<p>Group C Colombia Greece Ivory Coast Japan</p>	<p>Group D Uruguay Costa Rica England Italy</p>
<p>Group E Switzerland Ecuador France Honduras</p>	<p>Group F Argentina Bosnia and Herzegovina Iran Nigeria</p>	<p>Group G Germany Portugal Ghana United States</p>	<p>Group H Belgium Algeria Russia South Korea</p>



All the Stars came out at the final draw for the 2014 World Cup

Looking ahead to the tournament itself, the opening match will take place on 12 June in Sao Paulo and the last group matches will be on 26 June. The round of 16 will be played between 28 June and 1 July, followed by the quarter-finals on 4 and 5 July. The semi-finals will be on 8 and 9 July, the match for third place on 12 July, and the final itself on 13 July in Rio de Janeiro.

Apart from Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the other host cities are Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Cuiaba, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Manaus, Natal, Porto Alegre, Recife and Salvador.

Rendez-vous in Nice



With the curtain barely having come down on the World Cup draw, Europe's football teams will already be gearing up for their next campaign in February.

For the 53 national associations aiming to join hosts France at UEFA EURO 2016, the journey begins on Sunday 23 February when the draw for the qualifying round will be made at the Acropolis centre in Nice.

EURO 2016 will be the first to involve 24 teams (European Football Championship final rounds have been 16-side tournaments since 1996), making the draw an exciting time for those nations which have missed out on final tournaments by a whisker in the past.

For hosts France, meanwhile, the draw in Nice will be a first chance to attract visitors to their shores in three summers' time, with this sunny corner of Provence providing a most appropriate venue for the competition's first big event. ●

A PRODUCTIVE END TO AN INTENSIVE YEAR

Another intensive year for the UEFA Executive Committee came to a close when it met in Bilbao, northern Spain, on 12 December. At its final meeting of the year, the committee backed a draft 11-point resolution for the integrity of football, and named the hosts for the UEFA Futsal Cup finals in 2014.

The year 2013 has been a highly productive one for the Executive Committee. In particular, it has set the course for UEFA EURO 2020 – a “EURO for Europe” to be staged in 13 cities across the continent. Thirty-two member associations have declared an interest in hosting matches in the 2020 tournament. In addition, the Executive Committee has paved the way for tougher punishment and concerted action against the negative phenomena of racism, match-fixing and doping.

Further steps to combat match-fixing were taken in Bilbao. The draft resolution for football’s integrity will now be submitted to UEFA’s 54 member associations for feedback, with the passing of the resolution set to take place at the XXXVIII Ordinary UEFA Congress in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 27 March.

UEFA has made the fight against match-fixing a priority and is committed to maintaining football’s integrity in the face of a phenomenon that UEFA says attacks football’s essential soul. “We have a policy of zero tolerance against match-fixing,” the UEFA General Secretary, Gianni Infantino, said. “Even one match fixed is one match too many.”

Baku to host UEFA Futsal Cup finals

The Executive Committee appointed Araz Naxçivan from Baku, Azerbaijan, to host the four-team finals of the 2013/14 UEFA Futsal Cup in late April. The other three qualified teams are FC Barcelona (Spain), Kairat Almaty (Kazakhstan) and MFK Dinamo (Russia).

Araz will host the final tournament at the 2,200-seater Sarhadachi Olympic Sport Complex. Built in 2009, the arena has staged volleyball, taekwondo, boxing, basketball and futsal internationals. Since the four-team final tournament was introduced in 2006/07, the host cities have been Murcia (Spain), Moscow (Russia), Yekaterinburg (Russia), Lisbon (Portugal), Almaty (Kazakhstan), Lleida (Spain) and Tbilisi (Georgia).

In on-the-field matters, the Executive Committee reiterated its wish that the so-called triple punishment – where a player who denies an



Getty Images

opponent a clear goalscoring opportunity in the penalty area concedes a penalty, is subsequently dismissed and is, therefore, automatically suspended for a subsequent fixture – be reconsidered by football’s lawmakers, the International Football Association Board (IFAB).

In other decisions, Albania was accepted as a Pro level member of the UEFA Coaching Convention, while Hungary, Scotland and Sweden were granted membership at the additional Elite Youth A level. Changes to the UEFA Grassroots Charter were also given the green light, with the creation of a new three-layer structure comprising gold, silver and bronze levels. In addition, the consolidated annual financial statements for 2012/13 were ratified, certain procedural rules governing the Club Financial Control Body were accepted, the regulations for the 2014/15 UEFA Regions’ Cup were approved, and the licenced UEFA match agents regulations were abolished.

The Executive Committee also made an initial review of the procedure for the forthcoming UEFA EURO 2016 qualifying draw in Nice, France, on 23 February. A decision will be taken at the committee’s next meeting. In the meantime, the UEFA EURO 2016 regulations were approved. The UEFA Executive Committee reconvenes at the House of European Football in Nyon, Switzerland, on 23/24 January for its first meeting of 2014. ●

DRAWS AT THE HOUSE OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL

On 20 November, draws for the UEFA Women's Under-19 and Under-17 Championships were made at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon.



The UEFA President presents Sherry McCue, representing England's women's Under-19 team, with the UEFA fair play trophy for 2012/13

New trophy for the Under-19 champions of 2014

In the current Women's Under-19 Championship, the 21 teams that made it through the qualifying round went into the hat with Germany, England and Spain for the draw for the elite round, which produced the following group line-ups:

- Group 1** Spain, Switzerland, **Portugal**, Belarus
- Group 2** Scotland, Russia, Iceland, **Croatia**
- Group 3** Sweden, **France**, Poland, Romania
- Group 4** Germany, **Belgium**, Czech Republic, Ukraine
- Group 5** Austria, **Netherlands**, Republic of Ireland, Turkey
- Group 6** England, **Finland**, Denmark, Serbia (mini-tournament hosts in bold)

The elite round mini-tournaments will take place between 5 and 10 April 2014. The six group winners and best runner-up then qualify for the final round in July in Norway, where the winning team will receive a brand-new trophy. Designed by London-based agency Fivefootsix, the new trophy is silver and stands 50cm tall.

2014/15 season

The 11 qualifying groups for the 2014/15 European Women's Under-19 Championship were also drawn:

- Group 1** Spain, Iceland, Croatia, **Lithuania**
- Group 2** Denmark, Ukraine, Cyprus, **Azerbaijan**
- Group 3** Norway, Scotland, Poland, **Albania**
- Group 4** Italy, Wales, **Turkey**, Kazakhstan
- Group 5** Netherlands, **Serbia**, Faroe Islands, Latvia

- Group 6** Sweden, Republic of Ireland, Moldova, Montenegro
- Group 7** Czech Republic, Romania, **Bosnia-Herzegovina**, Malta
- Group 8** **Portugal**, Russia, FYR Macedonia, Belarus
- Group 9** Belgium, **Hungary**, Slovenia, Estonia
- Group 10** Finland, Northern Ireland, Greece, Georgia
- Group 11:** Switzerland, Austria, Slovakia, **Bulgaria**

(mini-tournament hosts in bold)

The 11 group winners and the 10 best runners-up go through to the elite round, where they will be joined by Germany, England and France. The final round in 2015 will take place in Israel, who qualify automatically as hosts.

Under-17s

In the Women's Under-17 category, there was just one draw to be made, for the 2014/15 competition, the final round of the 2013/14 competition having been brought forward to the end of 2013 because of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Costa Rica taking place in March next year (see page 10).

The 40 teams that have entered the 2014/15 competition were drawn into the following 10 groups:

- Group 1** England, Russia, Moldova, **Bulgaria**
- Group 2** Poland, Finland, **Estonia**, Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Group 3** Switzerland, **Hungary**, Azerbaijan, Portugal
- Group 4** Republic of Ireland, **Serbia**, Lithuania, Romania
- Group 5** Czech Republic, **Austria**, Ukraine, Northern Ireland
- Group 6** Sweden, Scotland, **Croatia**, Montenegro
- Group 7** Belgium, Wales, **Latvia**, Belarus
- Group 8** Denmark, Turkey, **FYR Macedonia**, Kazakhstan
- Group 9** Norway, Italy, Greece, **Faroe Islands**
- Group 10** Netherlands, **Slovenia**, Israel, Slovakia.

(mini-tournament hosts in bold)

The qualifying round mini-tournaments will be played in October next year. The top two from each group and the best third-placed will go through to the elite round with Germany, Spain and France, who have qualifying round byes. The elite round will determine which seven teams join hosts Iceland for the final round in 2015. ●



Having collected the UEFA fair play trophy for Sweden's women's Under-17 team Ellen Gibson assists with the draw

NEXT UP – THE ELITE ROUNDS

The draws for the elite rounds in the European Under-17 and Under-19 Championships were made at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon on 28 November.

Under-17s – on the road to Malta

Barely was the qualifying round of the 2013/14 European Under-17 Championship over before thoughts turned to the elite round. The draw pots contained the top two from each qualifying round group, as well as Ukraine, the best third-placed team, and Germany, who did not have to play the qualifying round.

The draw produced the following group line-ups for the elite round:

- Group 1** Spain, Switzerland, **Russia**, Wales
- Group 2** Poland, Turkey, **Greece**, Norway
- Group 3** **Netherlands**, France, Austria, Sweden
- Group 4** England, Italy, **Czech Republic**, Albania
- Group 5** Germany, **Serbia**, Georgia, Republic of Ireland
- Group 6** Romania, **Scotland**, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Group 7** **Portugal**, Iceland, Latvia, Ukraine

(Hosts of the mini-tournaments in March 2014 in bold)

The seven group winners will join hosts Malta in the final round, which will take place from 9 to 21 May 2014.

Under-19s – final destination Hungary

Italy, as the best third-placed team in the qualifying round, completed the line-up for the elite round of the current European Under-19 Championship. They join the qualifying round group winners and runners-up and Spain, who did not have to play the qualifying round.

The draw divided the elite round contenders into the following groups:

- Group 1** **England**, Ukraine, Montenegro, Scotland
- Group 2** Czech Republic, Sweden, Italy, **Bulgaria**
- Group 3** Georgia, Israel, Switzerland, Cyprus
- Group 4** Serbia, **Republic of Ireland**, Turkey, Iceland
- Group 5** **Spain**, Germany, Denmark, Lithuania
- Group 6** Russia, Austria, Norway, **Romania**
- Group 7** **Portugal**, Belgium, Greece, Wales

(Hosts of the mini-tournaments in May/June 2014 in bold)

The hosts of the final round, Hungary, will welcome the seven elite round group winners competing from 19 to 31 July 2014 to crown Europe's new Under-19 champions. The tournament will also decide who will represent Europe in the next FIFA U-20 World Cup in New Zealand in 2015. The current world champions, France, who took the title in Turkey this summer just gone, will not be defending the crown, having been knocked out in the qualifying round.

Looking ahead to 2014/15

The draws for the qualifying round of the 2014/15 European Under-19 and Under-17 Championships were also made on 28 November. The results are available on UEFA.com and will be published in the next issue of UEFA•direct. ●



Michael Lercher for Austria's U17s, (left) and Lukas Artimavicius for Lithuania's U19s collected the UEFA fair play trophies for 2012/13

FRANCE WIN THE MAURICE BURLAZ TROPHY

Since 1990, UEFA has honoured the national association that achieves the best results in the men's youth competitions (U19s and U17s) over two seasons. In the 2011/12 and 2012/13 seasons, France came out on top to win the trophy for the first time.

The trophy is named after Maurice Burlaz, former vice-chairman of the UEFA Youth Committee and a fervent supporter of youth football. The trophy was handed over Willy Sagnol, representing the French Football Federation, by Jim Boyce, chairman of the UEFA Youth and Amateur Football Committee.

Past winners of the Maurice Burlaz Trophy:

1990 Portugal, 1992 Germany, 1994 Spain/Portugal/Turkey, 1996 Spain, 1998 Spain, 2000 Portugal, 2002 Spain, 2004 Spain, 2006 Spain, 2007 Spain, 2009 Germany, 2011 Spain. ●



Willy Sagnol (left) and Jim Boyce

PENALTY SHOOT-OUT DECIDES THE FIRST EIGHT-TEAM TOURNAMENT

The seventh European Women's Under-17 Championship went into the history books as the first to be decided in an eight-team final tournament and the fourth to be won by Germany.



Germany's captain Jasmin Sehan lifts the trophy, a familiar sight after Germany's victories in 2008, 2009 and 2012.

The previous six editions had been staged at the UEFA campus in Nyon and had comprised just four matches – semi-finals followed by two games to decide the medal positions. The final tournament has now been brought into line with UEFA's other age-limit competitions.

The venue for the premiere could hardly have been better. The eight finalists headed for the national centre at St George's Park in England to take part in an event which rounded off The Football Association's 150th anniversary celebrations. The magnificent football complex allowed the eight delegations to be accommodated under a single roof and to train on impeccably prepared pitches right outside the hotel.

The four match venues were slightly further afield in Burton-on-Trent, Chesterfield, Hinckley and Telford, where the 16 fixtures demonstrated that the increase in quantity had not entailed a loss of quality – and that the standard of women's U17 football continues to rise apace. The expanded format allowed Austria, Italy, Portugal and Scotland to make debuts in the final tournament, with the first three joining the hosts in Group A, while the Scots went into a 'group of death' alongside European heavyweights – metaphorically, of course – France, Germany and Spain.

Three tickets to the World Cup

The hosts, having opened with a 1-0 defeat by Italy, bounced back to defeat an impressively well-organised Austria and, in the final fixture, a Portuguese side which, although technically gifted, ran short of fuel during its third game in seven days. France provided the surprise in the other group by losing conclusively to Spain and Germany before salvaging third place and their self-esteem with a 1-0 win against the Scots, who had breezed into

action with a nothing-to-lose mentality and stood up to bear comparisons with their more illustrious opponents. The other surprise was Spain's 4-0 victory against Germany – a result rarely seen in women's football at any level.

Spanish skills and fluency of movement also led to a 3-0 win over England in the semi-finals, with the ball hitting the hosts' woodwork as many times as it hit the net. Enrico Sbardella's Italy, technically accomplished and well-structured in defence, were beaten by a solitary goal against Germany, but found consolation in the bronze-medal match against England, which determined Europe's third participant at the 2014 FIFA U17 Women's World Cup. After a goalless draw, they prevailed on penalties – and the final in Chesterfield mirrored that outcome.

Opening minutes apart, Spain's pace, skill, athleticism and mobility had Germany penned in their own half for long periods. Yet Patricia Guijarro's goal was their only reward – and German teams do not give up. True to form, they conjured an equaliser four minutes from time and, with the Spanish girls still stunned as the final immediately went into a penalty shoot-out, won it 3-1. Jorge Vilda's Spain had delighted onlookers with some memorable football – but Anouschka Bernhard's Germany book home the trophy. ●

RESULTS

Group A

26 November	England – Italy	0-1
26 November	Austria – Portugal	0-0
29 November	Italy – Portugal	2-0
29 November	England – Austria	2-1
2 December	Portugal – England	1-6
2 December	Italy – Austria	0-1

Group B

26 November	Germany – Scotland	4-2
26 November	France – Spain	0-2
29 November	Germany – France	4-0
29 November	Scotland – Spain	0-0
2 December	Spain – Germany	4-0
2 December	Scotland – France	0-1

Semi-finals

5 December	Italy – Germany	0-1
5 December	Spain – England	3-0

Match for third place

8 December	Italy – England	0-0*
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*Italy win 4-3 on penalties

Final

8 December	Germany – Spain	1-1*
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*Germany win 3-1 on penalties

ON THE ROAD TO LISBON

The UEFA Women's Champions League quarter-final and semi-final draws were held at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon on 21 November.

In the round of 16, played in mid-November, Swedish club Tyresö FF, who are participating in the competition for the first time, knocked out the 2003 runners-up, Fortuna Hjørring of Denmark. The Swedish outfit includes Brazilian Marta, five-time winner of the FIFA Women's World Player of the Year award.

SV Neulengbach (Austria), FC Barcelona (Spain) and Birmingham City LFC (England) will also be trying to reach the semi-finals for the first time,

man is currently the competition's joint top goalscorer, equal with SV Neulengbach striker Nina Burger and Danielle Carter of Arsenal Ladies FC.

The quarter-final pairings are as follows:

1. Tyresö FF v SV Neulengbach
2. VfL Wolfsburg v FC Barcelona
3. ASD Torres CF v 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam
4. Birmingham City LFC v Arsenal Ladies FC



In the round of 16, SV Neulengbach from Austria (Natasha Celouch, in red, up against Gamze Iskeceli) knocked out Turkey's Konak Belediyespor

while three former winners of the competition will be attempting to lift the trophy again: from Germany, the current holders, VfL Wolfsburg, and 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam, winners in 2005 and 2010, and from England, the 2007 champions, Arsenal Ladies FC.

Conny Pohlers set to notch 50th goal?

The quarter-final line-up is completed by Italian club ASD Torres CF. The Sardinia-based club are former quarter-finalists, but have never managed to progress any further. This year, they again have their work cut out, with 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam, conquerors of Olympique Lyonnais, standing in their way.

VfL Wolfsburg made their mark in the round of 32 by scoring 27 goals (14 in the first leg and 13 in the second) without reply in their two matches against Estonian side Pärnu JK. Wolfsburg's Conny Pohlers is now only two goals away from becoming the first woman to score 50 times in UEFA club competitions. Having already netted six goals this season, the Ger-

man and one each by FCR 2001 Duisburg and VfL Wolfsburg). Meanwhile, Tyresö FF could secure a third victory for a Swedish club (Umeå IK have won the title twice). Since the two remaining contenders from England will face each other in the quarter-finals, only the winners of that duel will be in a position to challenge for a second English success. ●

In the semi-finals, the winners of quarter-final No. 4 will face the winners of quarter-final No. 1, while the winners of quarter-final No. 3 have been drawn against the winners of quarter-final No. 2.

The quarter-final first legs will be played on 22 and 23 March 2014, with the return legs a week later. The semi-finals are scheduled for 19 and 20 April (first legs) and 26 and 27 April (return legs). The final will be played at the Estádio do Restelo in Lisbon on Thursday 22 May.

The two German clubs will be seeking to add to the seven titles previously won by clubs from their country (three by 1. FFC Frankfurt, two by 1. FFC Turbine Pots-

OLYMPIQUE LYONNAIS – THE MOST NOTABLE ABSENTEE

Since participating in the UEFA Women's Champions League for the first time in the 2007/08 season, Olympique Lyonnais had always reached at least the semi-finals (in 2008 and 2009) and had even contested the last four finals, winning two of them (in 2011 and 2012). This season, however, the French club was eliminated by the German side 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam in the round of 16.

The Germans overturned a 1-0 home defeat in the first leg, winning the return match 2-1 to go through on away goals. ●

THE STAGE IS SET IN ANTWERP

After the great success of EURO 2000, which was hosted jointly by Belgium and the Netherlands, Belgium now has the honour of staging another international tournament bringing together Europe's finest teams.



The Royal Belgian Football Association was successful in its bid to stage the UEFA Futsal EURO 2014, and Belgium is now determined to maintain its reputation as an excellent host of sports events.

This superb opportunity has not come about by chance. Indeed, it is all thanks to the relentless work of Jean-Pierre Notelteirs, the chairman of the Belgian association's futsal committee, and Michel Sablon, its former technical director, who is well known in UEFA circles. The two of them are tireless in their promotion of futsal and have been unstinting advocates of this project.

The Belgian FA will pull out all the stops to make this event a real festival of football. The tournament will run from 28 January to 8 February, with games being played at two of the finest arenas in the country – Antwerp's Sportpaleis and Lotto Arena – in a city that was crowned the European capital of sport in 2013. Besides hosting a large number of concerts, the Lotto Arena is also home to the Antwerp Giants, the city's first division basketball team. And until very recently, the Sportpaleis hosted the annual Diamond Games, a prestigious WTA tennis tournament.

These two venues are clearly used to hosting sports events, and the fact that they are also used as concert halls suggests that supporters at this futsal EURO are going to be treated to a real symphony for the eyes. The tournament will be a true festival of football, with the Belgian FA stopping at nothing to promote the event. Since July, tournament representatives and freestyle foot-

ballers have been present at all major football events (supporters' days, national team matches, etc.) and other occasions (such as the investiture of the new king of Belgium, King Philippe) to promote this futsal EURO and recruit volunteers to help with its organisation.

Tickets at €5 and €10

The Belgian FA has had help promoting the event, two of its partners being the agency Sportizon, which has considerable expertise in the area of sports events, and Walter D'Haese, one of the driving forces behind Rock Werchter, one of Europe's biggest music festivals. Armed with that experience, combined with the expertise of its many partners working on the organisation of the tournament (marketing, communication, security, transport, ticketing, and so on), the Belgian FA is hoping to showcase futsal and ensure that this futsal EURO acts as a real launch pad for the sport. In order to achieve that objective, it has decided to offer attractively priced tickets – costing €5 and €10 – for all matches.

Despite the fact that futsal has yet to fully take off there, Belgium – small as it is – has already shone on the international stage. Indeed, prior to this tournament, its national football team has competed in European Futsal Championship final rounds in 1996, 2003 and 2010, and in 2005 Belgian club Action 21 Charleroi were the first non – Spanish team to win the UEFA Futsal Cup.

The Belgian association's motto is Grow and Win. Belgian futsal still has considerable room for development, but under the leadership of Alain Dopchie, Belgium's players have recently had the opportunity to rub shoulders with two of the greatest teams in world futsal: Brazil and Spain. They now have games coming up against the Netherlands, Croatia and Hungary, and then they will be straight into the tournament itself. Belgium's objective is to make it out of their group, where they face Ukraine and Romania. After that, anything is possible.

Nothing is being left to chance (other than the draw, of course, where former Belgian international Marc Degryse lent a hand), with Belgium determined to excel both in sporting terms and from an organisational perspective. ●

Pierre Cornez

THE GROUPS

Group A
Belgium
Ukraine
Romania

Group B
Russia
Portugal
Netherlands

Group C
Italy
Azerbaijan
Slovenia

Group D
Spain
Czech Republic
Croatia



The coaches of the Futsal EURO finalists with former Belgian international Marc Degryse

UEFA•DIRECT MOVES INTO NEW HANDS

After 31 years at UEFA, André Vieli, senior publications manager, retired at the end of November, marking the end of an era.

Having joined UEFA's press department on 1 September 1982, André became the right-hand man of the press chief at the time, U. Rudolph Rothenbühler, and assisted him with a wide range of tasks, from drafting press releases, writing prefaces, speeches and articles about UEFA activities, and editing and producing publications (the UEFA Bulletin, UEFAinformation, etc.), to organising press conferences and media services for important UEFA events. André was also responsible for the introduction of flash interviews at UEFA club competition finals and the creation of a pool of photographers.

As the UEFA administration's workload steadily increased, André started to concentrate specifically on other publications. In 1992, he became editor of the UEFA Bulletin and UEFA Flash, which merged to form UEFA•direct in 2002. With his attention to detail, fluent style and grasp of every nuance, André always endeavoured to provide a broad insight into UEFA's activities, as well as contributing to reports presented to the UEFA Congress. A firm advocate of the essential values of sport and UEFA, André Vieli also attached the greatest importance to the quality of interpersonal relationships.

Two figures in particular provide a vivid illustration of André Vieli's extraordinary career at UEFA: when he arrived in 1982, he became UEFA's 16th employee. Thirty-one years later, he left an organisation with more than 400 members of staff...

The UEFA General Secretary, Gianni Infantino, paid a glowing tribute to André: *"For the past 30 years, André Vieli has been a pillar both of UEFA's communications work and of the UEFA administration. In particular, as the editor of many official UEFA publications over this period, he has helped to spread information about*



At the Executive Committee meeting in Dubrovnik, the UEFA President presented André Vieli with a personalised pennant to thank him for his long years of service to UEFA

UEFA's activities across Europe and beyond, as well as promoting the wide range of European competitions and the work of UEFA's member associations. Football has changed and evolved, and as UEFA has kept in tune with the changes, André has faithfully chronicled these developments as part of his everyday work. UEFA is grateful to him for his loyalty and devotion."

So, a whole chapter in the life of UEFA has come to a close. Taking over the baton from André is Emmanuel Deconche, whose previous employers include Canal+, France Football and L'Equipe. ●

FUTSAL CUP FINALS LINE-UP COMPLETE



In August, 49 clubs were on the starting grid for the 2013/14 season. Now, as they enter the final straight, only four of them are still in with a chance of holding the trophy aloft.

Three former winners will be among those competing at the final tournament in April after current holders Kairat Almaty, 2012 winners FC Barcelona and 2007 champions MFK Dinamo all booked their semi-final places in the elite round in November. The fourth semi-final spot is filled by Araz Naxçivan (Azerbaijan), who eliminated 2011 runners-up Sporting Clube de Portugal

in the elite round. Araz have reached this stage of the competition before, finishing third in 2009/10, when they won the third-place match on penalties against the Italian side Luparense C/5.

As usual, the finals are to be hosted by one of the clubs involved and the UEFA Executive Committee, at its meeting in Bilbao on 12 December, chose Araz Naxçivan (Baku) to organise next year's edition. The semi-final draw will be held in early 2014. The semi-finals are scheduled for 24 April, while the third-place match and final will be played on 27 April. ●

NEW INVESTMENT FOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

New Scottish government funding of £200,000 will help Scotland women's national team players to work less and train more, with the aim of qualifying for the FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada in 2015.

This additional investment will give players more recovery time as well as more strength and conditioning sessions, to enhance performance levels and, in turn, to ensure they continue to make progress on the international stage.

Scottish Sports minister Shona Robison announced the additional support ahead of Scotland's qualifier against Northern Ireland. Ms Robison and Louise Martin, chair of sportscotland (the national agency for sport), were joined at Fir Park by national coach Anna Signeul and two of the players who will benefit from the additional funding, Gemma Fay and Rachel Corsie.



Thanks to additional government funding, Anna Signeul (centre), Gemma Fay (left), Rachel Corsie and the rest of Scotland's women's team will have more time to prepare for the 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada

Scotland captain Gemma Fay is employed as a partnership manager at sportscotland. The Celtic goalkeeper first broke into the women's A squad in 1998, and is now the most capped Scotland player of all time, with 160 international appearances.

Accountancy graduate Rachel Corsie currently works for Ernst & Young in Glasgow. The Glasgow City captain has more than 50 international caps and captained Scotland at the finals of the European Women's Under-19 Championship in France in 2008.

Reduced working time

Working alongside the player's employers, this financial support will allow individual squad members to reduce their working week to around 20 hours. The majority of national team players currently fit their football commitments around full-time work or study. The funding for individual players, agreed by the Scottish FA with

sportscotland, will cover the qualifying period for the 2015 World Cup, up to November 2014.

Ms Robison said: "The Scottish government is committed to supporting women's football in Scotland, and this additional £200,000 investment, targeting individual players, will be used to complement the existing support mechanisms already in place via sportscotland. The team is already progressing well within its group for the World Cup in 2015, and this additional support will help further improve the performance of the Scottish women's game.

"Qualifying for the World Cup will not only be a major game changer for the squad; it will also provide encouragement for all areas of girls' and women's football across Scotland. The 2011 World Cup final was watched by 21 million viewers across the globe, and it will undoubtedly raise the profile of women's football."

Difficult task

Coach Anna Signeul said: "Qualifying for the finals of a major tournament, particularly the World Cup, where only the seven group winners in Europe go through automatically, is a very difficult task. However this additional investment will help to give us the best opportunity.

"We often come up against nations whose players are full-time professionals and this will help us to continue narrowing the gap, and provide benefits across the women's game in Scotland.

"The majority of our players already train 15 to 20 hours a week and also manage the demands of work or study. This investment will allow them to train more, enjoy more strength and conditioning sessions and, just as importantly, benefit from more recovery time."

The chair of sportscotland, Louise Martin, said: "To perform at their very best, high performance athletes need appropriate time to focus on their preparation with the minimum of constraints and outside pressures. This additional investment will provide more crucial recovery time and strength and conditioning work, which could have a really positive impact on overall performance.

"That is why sportscotland is delighted to have been asked to channel this significant additional investment into women's football in a way that maximises our national team's chances of success on the world stage."

Scotland are currently ranked 11th in Europe and 20th in the world. ●

Andrew Harris

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS



Coach education goes online

As part of our new-technology development programme, the Andorran Football Federation (FAF) and the technical coaches committee have established the country's first ever online course for youth-level football coaches. The course lasts 60 hours, just like the normal one, and teachers will provide students with continuous feedback, both online and offline.

This new course runs from 16 December to 6 January, with theory and practical exams taking place on 12 and 13 January at Estadi Comunal d'Aixovall.

Meanwhile, all grassroots competitions stopped for the Christmas break on 15 December. Grassroots futsal leagues, which began in December, will run until March.

Finally, the FAF's new board of directors is continuing to work on the development, promotion and proper functioning of all areas of football in Andorra. Consequently, the FAF has altered the composition of the grassroots futsal and football committees. These committees, which have already started work, will now gain new members, with club representatives being added to the existing FAF members.



Grassroots football remains top of the agenda

These committees act as working groups, focusing on the smooth functioning of the various competitions and ruling on any issues that arise during the season. They can take decisions on the structure of competitions, as well as make changes to the rules.

● Silvia Casals



A symbol of solidarity and fairness

Match ball carriers – i.e. the children who bring the ball onto the pitch and give it to the referee before the start of the game – have become an established part of the Austrian national team's home games.

However, the game against the United States on 19 November was special, in that ten-year-old Mert Can became the first child to carry the match ball onto the pitch in a wheelchair.

In so doing, the Austrian Football Association, together with sponsors Coca-Cola and TV partner ORF, promoted solidarity and fairness and supported the Licht ins Dunkel (Light up the Darkness) initiative, which seeks to offer material and moral support to disabled children and their families, as well as other people with lifelong physical and learning disabilities.

Mert Can is the face of this year's Licht ins Dunkel advert. It tells the story of two brothers



Mert Can with the referees before kick-off

– one disabled and the other not – who are both living their dream and leaning on each other for support. The slogan – "So that nobody has to go it alone" – is accompanied by the football anthem You'll Never Walk Alone.

● Christoph Walter



Football lessons for children and bonuses for PE teachers

The Football Federation of Belarus has awarded bonuses to the best PE teachers in the country. The project was launched with the help of the ministry of education and the centre for physical education and sport. The rules were plain and simple: each PE teacher had to give a football lesson in front of a special panel. The aim of this initiative is to encourage the work of sports teachers across the country. Thanks to their daily efforts, football is developed and promoted among children as a great pastime and an excellent game. Altogether, the lessons of 70 teachers from different parts of Belarus were split into three categories, according to which the teachers received bonuses ranging from 5m to 13m Belarusian roubles (€450-1,050).

The awards ceremony was held at School № 24 with the football federation's president, Sergei Roumas, and the deputy minister for education, Vasily Budkevich, both taking part. In his opening speech, Sergei Roumas said: "It is no secret that youth football is the basis of the professional sport and future victories at international level. Yet we tend to forget the first steps in football and even though we remember the first coaches we don't really speak about them in front of TV cameras and journalists. In other words, we don't give enough credit to those who help children discover their passion for football. A year ago, we decided to change this and to honour the best PE teachers and youth coaches." The school's PE teacher, Gennadiy Remez, was among the nine winners who received the first-category bonus from the football federation president.

Apart from school PE teachers, 35 coaches of various youth teams also received prizes, having been selected in accordance with the results of their teams at regional, national and international levels. In his closing speech, the first vice-president of the Football Federation of Belarus, Sergei Safaryan, said that the event had been a real success and thanked everyone for their commitment to the world's most popular game.

● Alexander Aleinik

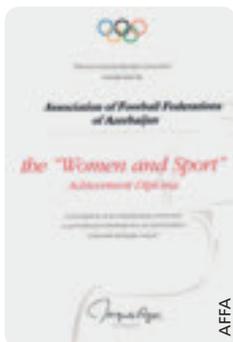


AFFA receives IOC Women and Sport Achievement Diploma

The Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) has put women's football high on its list of priorities in recent years. It has paid special attention to the development of women's football in the capital Baku, working side by side with the regions. Its work strengthening the development and promotion of women's football in Azerbaijan started with the hosting of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in 2012 – the first time the tournament had been held in Europe. That tournament, which was contested by 16 teams from all over the world, has increased girls' interest in football in Azerbaijan.

Currently, the AFFA organises three girls' leagues at Under-13, Under-16 and Under-19 level, involving more than 1,800 girls. The main aim of these leagues is to give girls the chance to play and train at a high level and to allow talented young women to maximise their potential.

The AFFA has also established three national women's teams – at Under-15, Under-17 and Under-19 level – which participate in various competitions.



The certificate received by the Azerbaijani FA

various initiatives help to get girls playing at an early age.

As a result of its activities in this area, the AFFA has been awarded the International Olympic Committee's IOC Women and Sport Achievement Diploma in recognition of its work promoting the development of women's and girls' sport.

● Ulviyya Najafova



The awards ceremony



Year of the Dragons

The year that is about to end has been a very successful one for football in Bosnia, with the national team qualifying for the World Cup in Brazil next year. At the end of the season, Safet Sušić's team travelled to St Louis in the US state of Missouri for a friendly match against Argentina at the Busch stadium. Some 35,000 fans of the Dragons were there to see them in action. St Louis has a Bosnian population of about 70,000. Sadly, they did not get to see their team win, as Argentina won the match 2-0.

Meanwhile, our Under-21 team are struggling in the qualifiers for the European Under-21 Championship final tournament in the Czech Republic in 2015. After six rounds, they have won two matches, both against Albania (4-1, 1-0), and lost four – against Spain (2-3, 1-6), Hungary (1-4) and Austria (0-2).

Our Under-17s are doing better, having advanced to the elite round of the current European Under-17 Championship by finishing their qualifying tournament in Sarajevo in second place, behind Portugal. They lost 2-0

against Portugal, beat Croatia 2-0 and drew 0-0 with Montenegro.

Not so lucky were our Under-19s, who failed to make it through their qualifying tournament in Sweden. They finished in third place, losing 4-1 against the hosts and drawing with both Azerbaijan (0-0) and Northern Ireland (1-1).

In the qualifiers for the Women's World Cup, our national team have played three matches so far, losing 7-0 away to Scotland and 1-0 at home to Sweden in Zenica, then drawing 0-0 away against Northern Ireland.

Last but not least, KFM Tango Sarajevo performed admirably in their first appearance in the UEFA Futsal Cup. They managed two wins – against Wrexham (10-0) and Asa Ben Gurion (8-3) – and finished top of the preliminary round group. In their main round tournament in Hungary, they lost 4-2 against Győri ETO FC,



A good year for Bosnia-Herzegovina, who have qualified for the World Cup

drew 0-0 with Iberia Star Tbilisi and beat FC Grand Pro Varna 8-4, putting them in second place and through to the elite round.

At the tournament in Kazakhsan, their Futsal Cup journey came to an end, however, following an 8-3 defeat against Tulpar Karagandy, a 9-0 defeat against Kairat Almaty and a 4-4 draw with MFK VitEn Vitebsk, which left them bottom of the group.

● Fuad Kravac



Memorandum of understanding with the German FA

German football legend Franz Beckenbauer was an official guest at the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) and the German FA (DFB) on 4 October.

"I follow Bulgarian football and your national team. After all, I have an honorary doctorate from your national sports academy. It is a pleasure to see that the Bulgarian national team is getting better," the Kaiser said.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by the president of the BFU, Borislav Mihaylov, and the financial director of the DFB, Horst Schmidt. The agreement governs



Borislav Mihaylov with Horst Schmidt (left) and Franz Beckenbauer

collaboration mainly in the technical aspects of football, including exchanges of coaching human resources, assistance in the develop-

ment of refereeing in Bulgaria, and friendly games, also at club level.

"We are going to use the experience of German coaches, especially in youth football," the BFU president said.

"We would like to rekindle the tradition of friendly games between the national teams of Germany and Bulgaria. However, unfortunately, in the near future, free FIFA dates for such matches are few and far between," Horst Schmidt added.

Before the signing ceremony, the German guests of the BFU had a meeting with the Bulgarian prime minister, Plamen Oresharski, at the Grand Hotel in Sofia, and later met with the rector of the national sports academy, Pencho Geshev.

● Pavel Kolev



HNS launches new website

The Croatian Football Federation (HNS) has celebrated its qualification for the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil by launching a new official website.

"We are delighted to have a website that matches the reputation of the Croatian Football Federation and the Croatian national team," said HNS spokesperson Tomislav Pacak, accompanied by the president, Davor Šuker, and the executive president, Damir Vrbanić, who offered strong support during the development period.

The new website is available at the same address as the old one (www.hns-cff.hr) and is built using a responsive web design (RWD) approach in order to provide an optimal viewing experience across a wide range of devices.

One of the many improvements is the English version of the website, which gives everybody easy access to information about all HNS activities and national teams. Users will enjoy the new extensive database, which contains details of all Croatian national teams' matches, with individual statistics on everyone who has played for any of the various national teams. The new website also includes match reports from Croatia's first, second and third leagues, as well as all the documents, forms, regulations and literature needed by clubs, players, media representatives and the general public.

The new website is confirmation of HNS management's strong commitment to open communication with fans and the media. With more than 170,000 "likes" on Facebook, the HNS is one of the most popular national



The new website of the Croatian FA

associations in Europe relative to the size of its population.

This new website is just the beginning and will lay the foundations for even better coverage of Croatia's national teams and Croatian football as a whole, from the professionals right down to the grassroots.

● Tomislav Pacak

Happy Birthday to The FA

Luminaries from the football world gathered to celebrate the 150th anniversary of The Football Association's (The FA) – on the exact site where it all began.

HRH The Duke of Cambridge, President of The FA, and The FA Chairman, Greg Dyke, played host to the UEFA President, Michel Platini, the FIFA President, Joseph S. Blatter, and members of the UEFA Executive Committee at a glittering gala dinner at London's Grand Connaught Rooms.

They were joined by the England manager, Roy Hodgson, FIFA World Cup winners Sir Geoff Hurst, George Cohen and Martin Peters, The FA's Grassroots Heroes June Kelly and Troy Townsend, plus England legends Dave Clarke and Michael Owen and a whole host of others whose contribution to football is writ large in its history.

And if the Grand Hall may have borne little resemblance to the lamp-lit, smoke-filled Freemasons' Tavern where Ebenezer Morley and the rest of football's founding fathers drafted the 13 laws that codified the world's favourite game, there was no escaping the significance of the event, exactly 150 years after that momentous occasion.

In his welcome speech, the Duke of Cambridge told the room of his passion for



To mark the 150th anniversary of The Football Association, a match was held in the grounds of Buckingham Palace

football and its importance to the world today – in spite of its humble beginnings. He had played a full part in the year's events, including as a special guest at the UEFA Congress held in London in May between the men's and women's UEFA Champions League finals.

He said: "Tonight is not just an English celebration. Football is international in every possible way and I believe that the game's constantly evolving spirit and appeal is a consolidation of all its global influences."

"Every nation should be proud of their contribution to 150 years of football. With all that in mind, I consider my position as president of The FA to be an honour and a privilege."

In his speech, Dyke echoed the Duke's sentiments, and paid tribute to Morley as well as all the work done by The FA today. He said: "We are all privileged to spend our days involved in football, to wake up in the morning

and go to bed at night with football in our lives. We sincerely owe a debt of thanks to Ebenezer Morley and his contemporaries for the work they did 150 years ago.

"But with that involvement comes responsibility, responsibility for ensuring that football continues in good health, responsibility for ensuring it continues to thrive."

"Here in England The FA's task is to ensure as many people as possible can get involved in the game."

"I am delighted and honoured to be leading The English FA in this its 150th year. It is a great organisation that is doing great work, day in day out, to promote the game we all love."

Dyke then concluded his speech with a thank you to The Duke of Cambridge, whose huge role in The FA's celebratory year also extended to opening up Buckingham Palace's lawn to some of football's most deserving contributors.

Dyke said: "On behalf of all of us involved with The FA, your Royal Highness, thank you for being the perfect president, thank you for being here as our guest of honour tonight, and thank you for supporting our anniversary year with such enthusiasm, energy and dedication."

Here's to the next 150 years!

● Greg Demetriou

More women referees in the Faroe Islands

The number of women referees in the Faroe Islands is increasing, as reflected at the women's cup final this year, where the refereeing quartet was made up of women for the first time.

Elsa Andreasen, 31, took charge of the final for the second year in a row. She has been refereeing for seven years and is happy to have more colleagues of her own gender.

"It's great for Faroese football that more women are getting involved in refereeing."

"I enjoyed this match. We agreed before kick-off that we wanted the game to flow as

smoothly as possible and I think we managed that," says Andreasen, who did not hand out any cards in the final, in which KI Klaksvig beat IF Fuglafjordur 5-1.

Elsa Andreasen is considered a role model for young women in the Faroe Islands who want to take up refereeing. She now wants to take her own career a step further. Her ambitions are to referee international matches.

"I really enjoy refereeing and I feel that the players respect my decisions on the pitch. I now want to develop even more. The way to do that is to referee [Women's] EURO and World Cup qualifiers. A [UEFA Women's] Champions League match would not be bad either," she



The team of referees for the women's cup final

says with a smile on her face as she pulls on her yellow shirt and gets ready for her next match.

● Tróndur Vatnhamar

Harry Been receives the Erik von Frenckell medal

The Football Association of Finland has awarded Harry Been, long-time general secretary of the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB), with the Erik von Frenckell medal in recognition of his exceptional work in the field of football. The award was presented at the Finnish FA's end-of-season gala in Helsinki.

The Erik von Frenckell medal can be awarded to any Finnish or foreign individual, association or company for outstanding contributions to Finnish football, or to any member of the football family for remarkable service to the game. All Finnish national team players who receive their 100th cap are honoured with the medal.



Perti Alaja presents the Erik von Frenckell medal to Harry Been (right)

Harry Been's achievements are indisputable. His achievements in the top KNVB positions he held from 1989 to 2012, when he retired as general secretary, are outstanding. A key international player, he is valued not only by other national associations but also by FIFA and UEFA, where he occupied many important seats on various committees and expert panels.

He was in charge of the local organising committee for the first-ever European Football Championship final round to be co-hosted by

two countries, the Netherlands and Belgium, in 2000. After that, he was in charge of FIFA U20 and UEFA Under-21 final tournaments, both of which were successful events.

The Erik von Frenckell medal has been awarded to Harry Been for his positive attitude towards the Finnish game. He has always been there to serve and support the development of Finnish football. He served as an expert for the Nordic bid to host UEFA EURO 2008, sharing his knowledge and experience of a co-hosted EURO.

Harry Been is simply one of the greats in the world of football. Thanks to his openness and efforts to help others, he joins Jari Litmanen, Sami Hyypiä, Joseph S. Blatter and Anne Mäkinen, to name but a few, on the list of holders of the Erik von Frenckell medal.

● Sami Terävä



A day to remember for Quimper Kerfeunteun

Quimper Kerfeunteun FC have won the second Dream Match competition organised on the Coupe de France Facebook page. The club from Brittany picked up 10,007 votes on the social networking site, ahead of CS Sedan (7,763 votes). The competition attracted more than 18,000 votes in all.

The club's prize was a sixth round cup tie staged with all the pomp and ceremony of a French Cup final.



A dream match for Quimper Kerfeunteun FC

The Dream Match prize consists of offering the town and its club a match full protocol (press conference the day before the match, entertainment, etc.), stadium dressing and live streaming by the French Cup broadcasters, France Télévisions and Eurosport (francetsport.fr

with commentary by Claude Eymard and Emmanuel Petit, and eurosport.fr with pitchside interviews by Steve Savidan), as well as on fff.fr and the Coupe de France Facebook page.

In this sixth round cup match between two top Brittany teams, Quimper lost to FC Auray (1-2 aet).
● Jean-Baptiste Schmidt



Biggest ever football awards event

Lithuania's biggest ever football awards event was held in November to celebrate the end of the 2013 football season. The Lithuanian Football Federation awarded medals not only to the best teams in the top two men's divisions, but also to the winners of the country's women's, senior and futsal leagues.



VMFD Žalgiris, 2013 league champions

One of the most eagerly awaited parts of the evening was the results of the votes determining the best football players and coaches of 2013.

Lithuanian international and Baki FK midfielder Mindaugas Kalonas was voted Lithuania's best player, while Nerijus Valskis of FK Sūduva (from Marijampole) was voted the best player in the Lithuanian First League.

Under-19 midfielder Gratas Sirgedas was voted young player of the year, and the award for the best coach in the First League went to Konstantin Sarsanija of FK Atlantas (from Klaipeda), who led his team to second place in the league.

The winners of the First League were VMFD Žalgiris, who also won the fair play award for the season.

FK Atlantas finished in second place, a feat they last achieved 11 years ago. They had some brilliant results and featured a number of promising local players. Third place went to last year's winners FK Ekranas (from Panevezys).

The winners of the women's championship were, for the 11th year in a row, FK Gintra Universitetas (from Siauliai). Akmenės SC (from Akmene) finished second, with VMFD Žalgiris finishing third.

In addition to those awards, the main partners and sponsors supporting Lithuanian football were thanked for their contributions to the sport, as were two people preparing a written history of Lithuanian football: Gediminas Kalinauskas and Algirdas Auruškevičius.

Teams will use the winter for holidays and preparation for the coming season. But in the meantime, football is still being played in indoor arenas all over Lithuania. Indeed, the top two futsal divisions have already begun.

● Vaiva Zizaitė



Perfect record in qualifying round

Georgia's Under-19 team has again brought joy to our countrymen and fans. The team, coached by Vasil Maisuradze, achieved a 100% record in the qualifying round of the European Under-19 Championship, progressing to the elite round with three victories and nine points. Consequently, on the basis of those results, they were placed in the first pot for the draw and seeded fourth, after Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic.



The Under-19s celebrate qualifying for the elite round

"We are always eager to make our fans happy. We have proved many times that our national team has a fair chance of gaining victory over any rival. We will do our utmost to reach the finals by making it through the elite round," said Under-19 captain Nika Chanturia.

Georgia hosted Group 11 of the qualifying round, where the national teams of the Netherlands, Wales and Moldova were our guests and opponents. First, Georgia beat Wales 5-1, and then Vasil Maisuradze's players overcame Moldova 2-0. The last group match was against the Netherlands – a strong team. The Georgian players worked hard to prepare for that match, knowing that in 2012 they had lost against the Dutch in the semi-finals of the European Under-17 Championship.

Incredibly, they succeeded in avenging that defeat. Giorgi Papunashvili and Giorgi Aburjania both scored to help Georgia beat the Netherlands 2-1.

Georgia's fans and football experts are delighted with the Under-19 team's results and are looking forward to more excellent footballing performances from our "golden boys" in the elite round.

● Tata Burduli



Thomas Beck retires

After 15 years and almost 100 games for Liechtenstein's national team, Thomas Beck has decided to call time on his international career. The 32-year-old forward's final game for his country was a 3-0 defeat at home to Estonia in a friendly on 19 November. Beck scored a total of five goals for the national team, and his equaliser in the 2-2 draw with Portugal during the qualifying campaign for the 2006 FIFA World Cup will never be forgotten by Liechtenstein's football fans.

Beck's debut in the senior team came on 2 September 1998 at the age of 17 in a 7-0 defeat to Romania. For 15 years he was a regular in the team, and he amassed a total of 92 caps. Beck, who has two young children, explained before his final appearance that the end of the qualifying campaign for the 2014 FIFA World Cup was the right time to go: "It is a shame that I will not quite make it to 100 caps, but my priorities in life have changed."

He will continue to play for Austrian club FC Hard, but otherwise he will now focus on his career in banking and his young family.

The Liechtenstein Football Association thanks Thomas Beck for his many years of service to the national team and wishes him all the best for the future.

● Anton Banzer



Thomas Beck retires from international football

Setting the stage for the European Under-17 finals

A group of officials from UEFA were in Malta recently to monitor the work being done there in preparation for the final round of the European Under-17 Championship which will be hosted by Malta and its sister island Gozo from 9 to 21 May next year.

It is the first time that Malta has been appointed by UEFA to host an international competition of this magnitude.

The UEFA delegation, accompanied by representatives from Eurosport, was able to inspect the three stadiums where the matches in the 13th edition of the competition will take place, as well as the training grounds and

logistical facilities, including transport and the hotels where the participating teams will be accommodated.

The UEFA officials said that these facilities were very important for the players and the many supporters who are expected. Each stadium must have adequate security to ensure the safety and comfort of everyone. Besides the Ta' Qali national stadium, the other two venues are the Gozo and the Hibernians stadiums.

The inspection team was able to see the modernised structures at the main stadium as well as the surrounding facilities, which will hopefully guarantee that this venue could host similar international matches in the future.

The Eurosport group was also able to take a close look at the facilities for transmitting the



The Ta' Qali stadium will be hosting matches in the next European Under-17 Championship final round

matches live from all the stadiums, including the usual arrangements for relaying pre- and post-match interviews.

The Malta FA is working in earnest to stage these finals in the best possible way and according to the international standards and criteria set by UEFA.

● Alex Vella

International blind football tournament in Chisinau

A major international football tournament for blind players was recently held in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova. The first edition of the Moldova Cup took place in November, with five teams from four different countries in the running for the trophy.

The tournament was hosted by Special School No. 6 and took place in the centre of the city on 10 November, with support from the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) and a number of sponsors.

Featuring in the tournament were teams from Bacau in Romania and Chernihiv in Ukraine, as well as a Russian team from Moscow and Moldovan teams from Tiraspol and Chisinau.

Ultimately, it was the team from Moscow that came away with the spoils, beating the Ukrainian team to take the trophy. The team from Chisinau finished third, while the teams from Bacau and



Five teams from four countries took part in an international tournament for blind players

Tiraspol came fourth and fifth respectively. All of the players participating in this international blind football tournament demonstrated great skill, determination and fair play, and they could all be proud of their performances in representing their respective countries.

The awards ceremony was attended by Mircea Cojocari (head of the FMF's administrative and protocol department), Alexandra Danilenco (president of Special Olympics

Moldova), Dumitru Scifos (president of the Moldovan Blind People's Association), Stefan Oprea (vice-president of the Moldovan Blind People's Association), Constantin Platon (president of the Moldovan Blind Sports Federation) and other officials. Among other things, the organisers awarded prizes to the best players in the tournament: defender Maksym Gotsalo from Chernihiv and forward Sergey Manjos from Moscow.

"This is a great tournament to develop blind football, offering the teams a chance to hone their skills in competitive international matches. I think everybody should be involved in sport – especially blind people, because it helps with confidence. It would get them out of their house and out interacting with others and doing things they wouldn't do otherwise. I am sure that people are finally getting the message that disabled people aren't interested in talking about their disability. They want to get on with the game," said Mircea Cojocari.

● Press office

Enterprise programme promoted in schools

Young people in secondary schools across Northern Ireland are being encouraged to take part in the Irish Football Association's enterprise programme. Now in its second year, the ground-breaking three-year project is aimed at 15 and 16-year-olds and uses football to engage them in key business and enterprise awareness, from innovation and product design, to sales and marketing, to physically developing prototypes for the programme.

Funded by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and run by the Irish FA, the partnership has been extended with Invest Northern Ireland coming on board for the second year of the programme. The first year of the initiative proved to be very successful, with Ashfield Boys' winning the overall award. The team from the Belfast school designed an innovative water bottle called a Hydro-Safe that doubles up as a 'safe'

for the storage of small items such as keys during training.

Eleven schools took part in the first year of the programme, with the aim for the second year being to have 23 schools taking part. In addition to developing and creating a Northern Irish product, the pupils also receive a number of enterprise and football-related workshops on sales, marketing, manufacturing and business administration. Pupils are then asked to present their product to three 'dragons' from the world of business and marketing in a Dragons' Den situation, with one winner chosen from each school. One overall winner is then selected and receives a grant to produce and sell 100 of the winning products in their school for school funds.

The Irish FA's head of marketing and communications, Geoff Wilson, said: *"We have had fantastic feedback from the first year of the programme, far beyond what we had expected. Teachers have found that the project has not only helped educate pupils on enterprise and business, but it has also helped them develop*

other skills such as time management and communication and social skills."

The programme has been made possible thanks to the generous support of the NI Executive through the DCAL and the Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion through Sport programme.

● Sueann Harrison



Geoff Wilson from the Northern Irish FA and Sharon Polston from Invest Northern Ireland



New management team off to a solid start

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) was delighted to confirm the appointment of Martin O'Neill as the new Republic of Ireland team manager in November with the former Celtic boss assisted by Roy Keane.

Following the departure of Giovanni Trapattoni from the manager's position, O'Neill emerged as the outstanding candidate for the association after a process led by former international Ray Houghton and the FAI high performance director, Ruud Dokter.

O'Neill, 61, is a former Northern Ireland international who was best known as a key part of the Nottingham Forest side that won the European Cup twice in 1979 and 1980 before he moved into management. His managerial career included spells with Wycombe Wanderers, Norwich City, Leicester City, Celtic, Aston Villa and Sunderland. He led Celtic to the 2003 UEFA Cup final.

O'Neill's decision to appoint former Republic of Ireland captain Keane as his assistant attracted huge interest. Former Cobh Ramblers, Nottingham Forest, Manchester United and Celtic star Keane is one of the real superstar names of Irish football. Keane, 42, led Sunderland to promo-

tion to the English Premier League in his first managerial role before coaching Ipswich Town.

The new management team took charge of the Ireland side for the 15 November friendly against Latvia at the Dublin Arena and saw their side secure a 3-0 victory thanks to goals from Robbie Keane, Aiden McGeady and Shane Long.

Next up was a visit to Poznan where the Irish drew 0-0 with Poland. Ireland's next international will be against Serbia in March. "There were loads of positives for me to take out of the two games and it has been really enjoyable for me. It was a real pleasure," said O'Neill.

The FAI CEO, John Delaney, believes the appointment will help bring back the feel-good factor to Irish football as the national team focuses on looking to qualify for EURO 2016 in France.

"A new era begins under the guidance of our new Republic of Ireland team manager Martin O'Neill. The past few weeks have been unbelievably busy as we sought to make the appointment that we feel offers our national team



Roy Keane and Martin O'Neill on the bench for the match against Latvia

the best chance of qualifying for EURO 2016," said Delaney.

"I would like to place on record my thanks to Denis O'Brien for his contribution to this process and the assistance of Dermot Desmond as we secured such a top-class manager to lead our national team. Since the appointment of Martin, with Roy Keane as his assistant, was confirmed there has been tremendous interest in the Irish team and that provides proof once again of how important the national team is to the Irish public."

● Stephen Finn



Youth competition a huge success

As part of its grassroots and amateur football programme, the Romanian FA organised the traditional Constantin Ardeleanu Trophy competition all over Bucharest at the end of October and beginning of November.

The competition was organised in partnership with the Bucharest school authorities and the Bucharest football association and was reserved for boys and girls aged between 7 and 11.

The six-a-side matches were played on mini-pitches in three categories (boys, girls and mixed) and in three rounds: school, sector (Bucharest is divided into six sectors) and, finally, the Bucharest round.

The Bucharest round took place on 7 and 8 November on mini-pitches made available free of charge by two private clubs which play in one of Bucharest's biggest parks. Each

category consisted of six teams – the winners of each sector round – making a total of around 200 children. The first two rounds involved 120 teams and more than 1,500 participants.

The Romanian FA offered prize money to all the teachers whose teams reached the Bucharest round, while the children received certificates, T-shirts, balls and bibs. The prizes, certificates and gifts were presented by three former glories of Romanian football – Miodrag Belodedici, Daniel Prodan and Ion Vladioiu – all of whom are employed by the Romanian FA and belong to the 'golden generation' of Romanian football.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience of the competition itself and then the opportunity to meet such legends of Romanian football. The happiest of all were schools 62 (boys), 40 (girls) and 188 (mixed), who won their respective categories.

● Paul Zaharia



Happy faces at the prize-giving ceremony



More match-fixing cases being investigated

Match-fixing became a hot issue in Sweden during the 2013 season. In the past, a couple of odd cases have come to light, but this year more than 15 cases of manipulation are being investigated. Two cases involve games played in Superettan, Sweden's second highest division. In most cases, it concerns a number of individual players who have been approached to influence a particular game.

"Match-fixing is shaking our game to the core. This is a problem far worse than doping at the moment. We will fight this with everything we can, including rule changes and lobbying for harder legislation," says the president of the Swedish FA, Karl-Erik Nilsson.

"We've looked at about 15 cases this season. It's thanks to excellent cooperation between the FA, UEFA, the betting companies and the management of the clubs involved that we have been able to uncover this. Now we must keep working together to eradicate this scourge."

First up is an amendment to the Swedish disciplinary regulations, to make it clear that even players and officials who refuse to participate in match-fixing but fail to pass on information of attempted manipulation can be suspended for up to two years.

Swedish football (along with other nations with a spring-autumn season) is deemed especially at risk from the attention of international syndicates because of games being played in summer time when few other leagues are active.

● Andreas Nilsson



Talented youngsters will have the opportunity to attend the Swiss FA's academies

Laugh, learn, achieve

For many children in Switzerland, football is a launching pad for an active life in sport. Every weekend, around 60,000 children aged between five and ten play football. On average, a quarter of all club players are children.

The Swiss Football Association's group of experts on children's football is keen to examine this phenomenon, which is important to both society and football itself, and to help improve the quality of children's football. The group puts children themselves right at the centre, since they are both the starting point and the target of every consideration. Its basic philosophy is that every child is talented and that the children's football concept should therefore create conditions in which the individual talents and potential of every child can blossom in the best way possible in, with and through football.

At the same time, in accordance with the fair play principle, we want to help every child

to exercise their right to play and to express their emotions. We want adults to have a clear understanding of our vision for children's football. That is why we have called it the "three Ls" concept (*Lachen, lernen, leisten* – laugh, learn, achieve), because it is easy to remember and understand.

We measure every children's event that we organise according to these principles. We want to see children laugh, learn and achieve. And precisely in that order, since you cannot learn and achieve without laughing.

With this vision in mind, the Swiss FA has decided to draft a training concept aimed at enabling children to make a successful start in football. This concept should also foster the development of the individual potential of every child, as well as serving as the basis for children's football coach education, coaching in clubs and children's competitions.

● Pierre Benoit

Andriy Shevchenko earns coaching qualification

The famous Ukrainian footballer Andriy Shevchenko, the most prolific goalscorer in the history of the Ukrainian national team and one



Andriy Shevchenko receives his coach's diploma

of the best goalscorers in all UEFA club competitions, has received the UEFA A coaching licence after following a special coach education course for long-serving professional players.

The course, which ran from 1 April to 8 November, consisted of five sessions and included theoretical and practical training on football and football-related disciplines such as medicine, psychology and physiology.

Anatoliy Popov, first vice-president of the Football Federation of Ukraine, presented Shevchenko with his diploma after he had passed all the exams and presented his thesis. Among the other famous students who earned the UEFA A licence are Oleg Venglynskyi and Vyacheslav Kernozenko.

The next step in the coach education career of these former top players will be the UEFA Pro licence course.

● Yuriy Maznychenko

New contract for Chris Coleman

The Wales manager, Chris Coleman, has signed a two-year extension to his contract. Coleman, who was appointed in January 2012, will therefore be in charge for the forthcoming EURO 2016 qualifying campaign.

The chief executive of the Football Association of Wales (FAW), Jonathan Ford, said: "The Football Association of Wales is delighted to announce that Chris Coleman has signed a new deal. Chris now has the opportunity to take Wales forward towards the European Championship in 2016 in France. This provides us with a period of stability and Chris can build upon his strategy with the present squad. I look forward to working with him over the next couple of years as we all try and achieve our goal of qualifying for major finals."

The FAW president, Trefor Lloyd Hughes, welcomed the news, saying: "As an association, Chris has our full backing and support. He has made a huge contribution during the past two years, inheriting the post at a very difficult time for everyone. He has been more than the national manager in terms of the work he has done as an ambassador for football and Wales."

Chris Coleman added: "I have always stated that this is the best job in the world as far as I am concerned. There has been a lot of speculation about me over the past couple of weeks but this was the one job I wanted. I feel that we have unfinished business. There were issues I wanted to discuss with the FAW, likewise the FAW with myself, and those have now been resolved. I am excited about leading my country into the European Championship qualifiers."

● Ceri Stennett



The Wales manager, Chris Coleman

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Davor Šuker (Croatia, 1 January)
 Emre Alkin (Turkey, 1 January)
 Monica Ortigueira (Switzerland, 2 January)
 Gerhard Sager (Sweden, 3 January)
 George Pirtskhalava (Georgia, 3 January)
 Andreas Demetriou (Cyprus, 3 January)
 Kuanysh Kanapyanov (Kazakhstan, 4 January)
 David George Collins (Wales, 5 January)
 Mariano Moreno (Spain, 6 January)
 Walter Clarke (Northern Ireland, 6 January)
 Sergei Safaryan (Belarus, 6 January)
 Rudolf Marxer (Liechtenstein, 6 January)
 Sergiy Lysenchuk (Ukraine, 6 January)
 Andrejs Sipailo (Latvia, 7 January)
 Nelly Viennot (France, 8 January)
 Bernhard Neuhold (Austria, 8 January)
 Franco Ferrari (Italy, 9 January)
 Velid Imamović (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 9 January)
 Herbert Hübel (Austria, 10 January)
Emil Bozhinovski (FYR Macedonia, 10 January) ☆ 50th
 Michel Dumoulin (Belgium, 11 January)
 Hans-Dieter Drewitz (Germany, 11 January)
Olivier Brochart (France, 11 January) ☆ 50th
 Elnur Mammadov (Azerbaijan, 11 January)
 Juan N. Garcia-Nieto Portabella (Spain, 12 January)
 Sarah O'Shea (Republic of Ireland, 12 January)
 Drago Kos (Slovenia, 13 January)
 Sofoklis Pilavios (Greece, 13 January)
 Siarhei Ilyich (Belarus, 13 January)
 Luis Horta (Portugal, 14 January)
Martin Iseli (Switzerland, 14 January) ☆ 50th
 Nodar Akhalkatsi (Georgia, 14 January)
 Alessandro Lulli (Italy, 15 January)
 Phivos Vakis (Cyprus, 15 January)
 Atanas Furnadzhiev (Bulgaria, 15 January)
Mitja Lainscak (Slovenia, 15 January) ☆ 40th
 Kleomenis Bontiotis (Greece, 16 January)
 Sune Hellströmer (Sweden, 17 January)
 Stephen Bennett (England, 17 January)
 Jan W. Wegereef (Netherlands, 17 January)
 Blazenka Logarusic (Croatia, 17 January)
 Faruk Baştürk (Turkey, 17 January)
 Tibor Nyilasi (Hungary, 18 January)
 Fabrizio Tonelli (Italy, 18 January)
 Bujar Kasmi (Albania, 19 January)
 Ansgar Schwenken (Germany, 19 January)
 Artur Azaryan (Armenia, 19 January)
 Lars-Åke Lagrell (Sweden, 20 January)
 Pedro Ángel Galán Nieto (Spain, 20 January)
 Maciej Sawicki (Poland, 20 January)
 Bjorn Vassallo (Malta, 20 January)
 Anders Mattsson (Finland, 21 January)

Ángel María Villar Llona (Spain, 21 January)
 Maria Teresa Andreu Grau (Spain, 21 January)
François Blaquart (France, 21 January) ☆ 60th
 Vladimir Iveta (Croatia, 21 January)
 Are Habicht (Estonia, 22 January)
 Alan Freeland (Scotland, 22 January)
 Lassin Isaksen (Faroe Islands, 22 January)
 Teuvo Holopainen (Finland, 23 January)
 Harry M. Been (Netherlands, 23 January)
 Pat Quigley (Republic of Ireland, 24 January)
Patrick Wattebled (France, 24 January) ☆ 60th
Nikolai Ivanov (Russia, 24 January) ☆ 50th
 Robin Dutt (Germany, 24 January)

Edi Sunjic (Croatia, 24 January)
 Gevorg Hovhannisyán (Armenia, 25 January)
 Pascal Fritz (France, 25 January)
 Louis Peila (Switzerland, 25 January)
 Metin Kazancıoğlu (Turkey, 26 January)
 Mirosław Ryszka (Poland, 26 January)
 Florence Hardouin (France, 26 January)
 Cyril Zimmermann (Switzerland, 26 January)
 Krister Malmsten (Sweden, 27 January)
 Nikolai Tolstykh (Russia, 30 January)
 Cosimo Bolognino (Italy, 30 January)
 Brian Lawlor (Wales, 31 January)
 Andreas Santis (Cyprus, 31 January)

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Volker Roth (Germany, 1 February)
 Karen Espelund (Norway, 1 February)
 Leonardus van der Kroft (Netherlands, 2 February)
 Trygve Bornø (Norway, 2 February)
 Steen Dahrup (Denmark, 3 February)
 Mark Blackburne (England, 3 February)
 Renata Tomasova (Slovakia, 3 February)
 Jelena Oblakovic-Babic (Serbia, 3 February)
 Vaclav Krontl (Czech Republic, 5 February)
 Peter Rudbaek (Denmark, 5 February)
 Gabriel Weiss (Slovakia, 6 February)
 Erich Rutmöller (Germany, 8 February)
 Michael Appleby (England, 8 February)
 Fino Fini (Italy, 9 February)
Donald McVicar (Scotland, 9 February) ☆ 70th
 Zoran Laković (Serbia, 9 February)
 Tomislav Karadžić (Serbia, 10 February)
 Luc Rabat (France, 10 February)
 Dani Koren (Israel, 10 February)
 Götz Bender (Germany, 10 February)
Stewart Regan (Scotland, 10 February) ☆ 50th
 William McDougall (Scotland, 11 February)
 Annelie Larsson (Sweden, 11 February)
 Fritz Stuchlik (Austria, 11 February)
 Borislav Mihaylov (Bulgaria, 12 February)
 David McDowell (Slovenia, 12 February)
 Pierluigi Collina (Italy, 13 February)
 Christian Mutschler (Switzerland, 13 February)
 Marinus den Engelsman (Netherlands, 14 February)
 Manuel Lopez Fernandez (Spain, 14 February)
Thomas Weyhing (Germany, 14 February) ☆ 60th
 Livio Bazzoli (Italy, 14 February)
 Peter Bonde (Denmark, 14 February)
 Juan Carlos Miralles (Andorra, 14 February)

John McBeth (Scotland, 15 February) ☆ 70th
 Susanne Erlandsson (Sweden, 15 February)
 Leif Sundell (Sweden, 15 February)
 Katriina Elovirta (Finland, 15 February)
 Svitlana Shkil (Ukraine, 15 February)
 Orkhan Huseynzade (Azerbaijan, 15 February)
 Adalbert Kassai (Romania, 16 February)
 Roman Sowinski (Poland, 16 February)
 Karoly Török (Hungary, 16 February)
 Tervel Zlatev (Bulgaria, 16 February)
 Gudrun Inga Sivertsen (Iceland, 17 February)
 Jozef Vengloš (Slovakia, 18 February)
Borislav Alexandrov (Bulgaria, 18 February) ☆ 70th
 Flemming Serritslev (Denmark, 18 February)
 Patrick Kelly (Republic of Ireland, 18 February)
 Constantin Gheorghe (Romania, 18 February)
 Mikael Santoft (Sweden, 18 February)
 Pertti Alaja (Finland, 18 February)
 Antonello Valentini (Italy, 18 February)
 Vasily Melnychuk (Ukraine, 18 February)
 Jordi Pascual (Andorra, 18 February)
 Petro Ivanov (Ukraine, 18 February)
 Jānis Mežekis (Latvia, 19 February)
 Lars Arnesson (Sweden, 20 February)
 Eggert Magnusson (Iceland, 20 February)
 Edward Potok (Poland, 20 February)
 João F. De Magalhães Marques (Portugal, 20 February)
 Patricia Moyersoén (France, 20 February)
 Gareth Latin (Gibraltar, 20 February)
 Ralph Zloczower (Switzerland, 21 February)
 Fernando Gomes (Portugal, 21 February)
 Asim Khudiyev (Azerbaijan, 22 February)
 Vladimir Sajin (Slovenia, 22 February)
 Ana Caetano (Portugal, 22 February)
Peter Jones (England, 24 February) ☆ 60th

Whether you are a player or a leader (and the two roles are not incompatible, as the presidents and general secretaries of our member associations demonstrated at the strategy meeting in Dubrovnik in September), a referee or a supporter, UEFA wishes each and everyone one of you an exciting and rousing new year of football.



Getty Images

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Janos Ring (Hungary, 24 February)
 Oleg Harlamov (Estonia, 24 February)
 Miroslav Radoman (Serbia, 25 February)
 Fevronia Minodora Ion (Romania, 25 February)
 Ghenadie Scurtul (Moldova, 26 February)
 Egidius Braun (Germany, 27 February)
 Allan Hansen (Denmark, 27 February)
 Peter Lundström (Finland, 27 February)
 ☆ 60th
 Ausrys Labinas (Lithuania, 27 February)
 John Beattie (England, 28 February)
 Markus Stenger (Germany, 28 February)



Meetings

- 15 January 2014, Nyon**
National Team Competitions Committee
- 22 January 2014, Nyon**
Professional Football Strategy Council
- 23/24 January 2014, Nyon**
Executive Committee
- 5–7 February 2014, Madrid**
6th UEFA Medical Symposium
- 13 February 2014, Nyon**
HatTrick Committee
National Associations Commission
- 17 February 2014, Nyon**
Women's Football Committee
- 21 February 2014, Nyon**
Club Competitions Committee
- 23 February 2014, Nice**
UEFA EURO 2016: qualifying draw



Competitions

- 28 January – 8 February 2014, Belgium**
Futsal EURO 2014
- 18/19 + 25/26 February 2014**
UEFA Champions League:
round of 16 (first legs)
- 20 February 2014**
UEFA Europa League:
round of 32 (first legs)
- 27 February 2014**
UEFA Europa League:
round of 32 (return legs)



NO TO RACISM



RESPECT