



UEFA•direct



IN THIS ISSUE

Official publication of the
Union of European Football
Associations

Chief editor:
Emmanuel Deconche

Produced by:
Atema Communication SA,
CH-1196 Gland

Printing:
Artgraphic Cavin SA,
CH-1422 Grandson

Editorial deadline:
5 February 2014

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Cover:

*As the UEFA club
competitions enter their
final stages, Atlético's
Adrian Lopez tries to
control the ball mid-air
during his club's 2-0 win
against FC Porto in the
UEFA Champions League
on 11 December*

Photo: Getty Images

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At its meeting at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon, with the UEFA President in the chair, the Executive Committee decided, among other things, to expand the final round of the European Under-21 Championship to 12 teams, starting with the 2017 tournament.



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Before the international football season resumes, Europe's referees attended their annual winter courses, which took place in Lisbon this year.



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EXPANDING FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

UEFA can pride itself on the success both its national team and club competitions have enjoyed for nigh on 60 years. That success is due in large part to it always keeping a close eye on its competitions and making adjustments to them when the time is right. The most recent example concerns the European Under-21 Championship, whose final tournament is to be expanded from 8 to 12 teams, as decided by the UEFA Executive Committee at its meeting in January. The same process of expansion has been applied to the European Football Championship (for UEFA EURO 2016), the European Women's Football Championship (for the Women's EURO 2017) and some of the youth competitions.

Any decision to expand a final tournament must always be for sporting reasons above all else. No one would argue that this is the overriding factor when it comes to expanded under-age tournaments, which require a bigger financial investment by UEFA in order to give more young players the opportunity to experience the final round of a UEFA competition, experience which is hugely valuable for their development.

More scepticism may be aroused when it comes to the reasons for expanding the European Football Championship final round. However, the strength of our national teams, who regularly shine in the World Cup, should not be overlooked. Nor should the arrival on the scene of new forces, such as Bosnia and

Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, who want nothing more than to upset the established order. And we should not belittle the national associations' efforts to improve their coaching and facilities so that the quality of the game continues to rise at all levels – progress that UEFA strongly supports through the HatTrick programme and initiatives such as the UEFA Coaching Convention and the Study Group Scheme.

For all these reasons and more, I am sure that EURO 2016, which is gathering pace following the qualifying draw in Nice, will be a dazzling demonstration of the vitality and quality of our national teams.

Michel Platini
UEFA President

WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM COACHES MEET IN NYON

In the annals of UEFA, the organisation of conferences on women's football can be traced right the way back to 1973. But the UEFA women's national team coaches conference staged in Nyon from 10 to 12 December was only the second event of its kind. Instead of addressing the female game in general, the conference focused on encouraging the national team coaches and technical directors from all 54 member associations – and from other confederations – to simply “talk football”.

The conference was opened by Karen Espelund who, apart from chairing UEFA's Women's Football Committee, is a member of the Executive Committee. *“It's a great opportunity to learn from each other,”* she commented, *“as the strongest nations are willing to share their experience. There is growing strength in women's football because we are open, we want to share things, and we want to develop.”*

The launching pad for the conference was the exceptionally successful Women's EURO 2013 in Sweden, which attracted 133 million television viewers and smashed all previous attendance records. To fuel the subsequent debate, the salient points from UEFA's technical report on the final tournament were presented by the observers who had compiled it: Béatrice Von Siebenthal, Jarmo Matikainen, Anne Noë and Anna Signeul (though the last of those contributors missed the event in Nyon, as it clashed with her commitments with the Scottish national team in Brazil). Signeul's presentation, which was delivered by Von Siebenthal, focused on the players named by the UEFA technical observers in their all-star squad and, more importantly, discussed the qualities which had earned them that honour.

The conference participants appreciated the presentations as well as the opportunities for discussion

The selection of a goalkeeper – Germany's Nadine Angerer – as UEFA's player of the tournament provided a cue for Noë to flag up the marked improvements seen in the art of goalkeeping, while Matikainen analysed goalscoring patterns and Von Siebenthal presented a more general review of technical and tactical trends at the tournament in Sweden.

Their observations provided the foundations for discussion groups, in which coaches who had not been in Sweden were able to cross-reference with those who had been. The topics on the table included: the choice of formations and playing styles, the definition and role of a “play-maker” in the modern game, the importance of possession play, the use of wide areas, the trend towards a combination game based on moves built from the back; and the development of finishing skills – an issue which has gained in significance in the wake of a final tournament which registered a 25% decline in goalscoring (from 75 to 56 goals) in comparison with the Women's EURO 2009 in Finland.

Raising the bar as high as possible

The champion coach, Germany's Silvia Neid, attributed this to the rapid rise in standards in the women's game. During an on-stage interview, on the opening day, she remarked: *“There is a clear trend towards better, well-organised defensive play, allied with greater athletic qualities and fitness. Not so long ago, you thought you might have to wait 40, 50 or 60 minutes for the opposition to start to flag and give you opportunities to find the holes and make the breakthrough. That's not the case any more. So, the clear challenge for future development is to train players to be creative and to continually improve their technique.”*

Neid's candid interview also highlighted the fact that the rapid growth in spectator interest in the women's game is bringing it closer to the male equivalent in terms of media exposure, expectations, pressure and a more result-orientated approach. *“In the German dressing room,”* she recalled, *“the players felt the pressure and had to cope with media criticism, especially when we didn't perform well during the group phase and when we lost to Norway. The players matured a lot and learned exactly what can be*



Getty Images

required in terms of mental strength if you want to achieve your objective.”

This theme was picked up by long-time England coach Hope Powell, who was released by The Football Association following her team's group-stage exit in Sweden. Her session on leadership and pressure traced the parallel evolution of playing standards and expectations, with Pia Sundhage, coach of the Sweden team which had been hailed as the most exciting attacking force in the final tournament, providing a different slant on the same theme by outlining her pre-tournament efforts aimed at “recruiting a 12th player” for the host team and her insistence in the dressing room that “it is a privilege to play under pressure”. Sundhage communicated her joyful passion for the game by mixing her words of wisdom with a song or two...

The importance of mental aspects was further underscored by Danish author and performance development expert Rasmus Ankersen, who graphically illustrated, via a series of case histories, the value of positive attitudes and a hunger for success – elements which maybe assume even greater relevance in the women's game, where financial incentives generally have a lesser impact on successful career pathways.

Career pathways and the international calendar

The subject of pathways, which was debated in depth during the conference, highlighted significant differences between one national association and another in terms of helping talented youngsters to successfully bridge the gap between Under-19 football and the senior level, bearing in mind the lack of an Under-21 stratum in the women's game. The international calendar – an “administrative” topic which has considerable significance in the context of long-term coaching and development planning – was discussed on the final day. But otherwise, the football talk was all about on-pitch issues, including the benchmarks which had been laid down at the Women's EURO 2013 in terms of fitness and athleticism. For those who had not been in Sweden, it was fascinating to hear how Professor Peter Krstrup had prepared the Danish squad for their run to the semi-finals, how fitness coach Naomi Datson sets about the same mission in England, and how Italy's national team coach (and former FIFA World Cup winner) Antonio Cabrini took on the task of upgrading his players' physical conditioning.

The topics discussed during the conference are featured in the technical report that forms the bulk of the tournament review, which can be downloaded from UEFA.com. The marketing aspects of that publication graphically illustrate the growing popularity of women's football, but the participants at the conference in Nyon were

also anxious to emphasise the importance of a follow-up at coaching and development levels. “It is about us, as coaches, continually developing ourselves,” said Powell. “It's important, as well, to share best practice and to look at trends after major tournaments – this stimulates learning. But to come together as a group of coaches and like-minded people, talking about football, is essential for personal development.” Denmark's coach, Kenneth Heiner-Møller, added: “Everyone was able to give input on what we can do better. It was all about knowledge-sharing; helping everybody to improve; and helping to improve the game.” ●



Getty Images

Silvia Neid, coach of the reigning European women's champions, Germany, shared her experience and vision for women's football at the conference

UEFA, THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE EU STAND TOGETHER

“Supporters must never be at risk in our stadiums.” That was the message delivered by the UEFA President, Michel Platini, at the start of the last meeting of the UEFA Stadium and Security Committee, held in Nyon on 21 November, issuing a clear message as to what safety and security is all about.



In the stands, safety is the backbone of enjoying football

Many critical elements have to come together at the same time for a football match to come off successfully, but perhaps the most important of those is safety. Down on the pitch, players should feel safe as they pass the ball around. Referees should be able to show red cards without fear of repercussion. Up in the stands, parents want their children to be safe. In buses, planes and trains, staff and fans alike want to soak up the fantastic atmosphere that only football can create. The fact is, true matchday enjoyment all boils down to safety and security at some level.

Football has certainly had to learn from tragic experiences, and today the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League are examples of the highest level of operational safety and security. However, there can be no room for complacency. We must continue to expect the unexpected and prepare for it. In this light, the

Council of Europe, the European Union (EU) and UEFA are working closely together as part of a three-year safety and security programme that has support at ministerial level. The programme includes a wide range of events, workshops and training programmes, as well as advisory assistance and online materials. It aims to provide the European football family and public authorities with a roadmap for the future.

Networking and knowledge sharing

Perhaps the most notable preparatory event hosted by UEFA and the EU is the annual stadium and security conference held at the beginning of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League season to prepare the participating clubs and their police counterparts for what lies ahead. The 2013 event in Warsaw was attended by over 350 delegates, including representatives of clubs, police authorities, the

pan-European think tank of football safety and security experts and UEFA's 54 member associations. The 2014 conference will also focus on the qualifying matches for UEFA EURO 2016.

The conference takes place over two days and is unique in terms of its substance and structure, with interactive workshops and panel sessions debating real matchday incidents and best practice solutions. This may seem simple, but the reality is that incidents can happen very quickly and require an equally fast response. Understanding what to do and when can prevent a situation from escalating, or even save a life. However, the confidence to decide on a course of action can only result from open exchanges of information, experience and regular training.

UEFA, the Council of Europe and the pan-European think tank have relaunched the Stadium and Security Expert Tool (SSET), a knowledge platform designed to support stadiums' safety and security management for UEFA competitions. The tool gives stadium and security stakeholders easy, structured access to expertise, guidance and best practices online. It includes modules covering match operations, venue infrastructure, coordination with partners, communication mechanisms and strategies for police. SSET is open to all members of the UEFA football family, such as clubs and national associations, representatives of local authorities, and the police and other emergency services.

Training and development

The pan-European police and stadium security managers programme has provided training to more than 250 police commanders from over 20 countries. This joint UEFA-EU initiative focuses on stadium safety and security management and aims to achieve a consistent approach to the policing of football based on best practices.

A new Train the Trainers initiative has also been launched in order to develop stewarding on a national basis. This innovative programme aims to prepare trainers to deliver national training courses to the stewards who are deployed at football matches across the country. The role of the steward is essential to stadium operations, ensuring the fans' safety and well-being at all times. Their work involves checking tickets, directing fans, enforcing ground regulations, keeping exits clear and being fully conversant with procedures in the event that the stadium has to be evacuated or supporters need to be ejected. And of course, a friendly face and a smile are an absolute must!

Ensuring a balanced, national approach to the training and development of stewards, the programme has been rolled out in six UEFA member associations so far, while a further ten associa-

tions have requested assistance following the UEFA-EU stadium and security conference in Warsaw. This specific training programme was also used before UEFA EURO 2012, where the 12,000 or so stewards in Poland and Ukraine were commended for their excellent performance during the tournament.

UEFA, the Council of Europe and the pan-European think tank are also conducting individual advisory sessions, which are currently open to UEFA member associations on a case by case basis. The principal aim is to work alongside national associations and public authorities to tackle specific problem areas and develop general strategies to improve overall performance and regulations in terms of safety and security. This individual approach to problem-solving has proved highly effective in some countries, with external expertise and guidance helping to achieve optimum results from both a governmental and a sporting perspective.



The annual stadium and security conference is an important event for UEFA and the EU

Quite simply, football is loved worldwide. It is the most popular team sport on the planet. However, with that lofty status comes vulnerability, placing great responsibility on those who manage the game. This is clearly understood by UEFA, the Council of Europe and the EU, who are working together tirelessly to prevent violence in sport and raise the bar as high as possible when it comes to safety and security in stadiums. ●

WHEN THURSDAY COMES...

National team football will be rejuvenated by the new Week of Football concept, from Thursdays until Tuesdays, which will be introduced for the European Qualifiers for UEFA EURO 2016 and the 2018 FIFA World Cup.



Italy's Andrea Pirlo up against the Czech Republic's Libor Kozák in a qualifying match for the 2014 World Cup. With the new Weeks of Football, supporters will get the chance to attend and watch more national team matches than ever before.

The EURO 2016 qualifying format and the qualifying draw procedure were approved at the January meeting of the UEFA Executive Committee. The 53 countries would be drawn into nine groups: eight groups of six teams and one group of five. The nine group winners, the nine runners-up and the best third-placed team will qualify directly for the final round. The eight remaining third-placed sides will contest home-and-away play-off games to decide the remaining four teams. Hosts France qualify automatically and will play friendly matches against teams from the five-team qualifying group. All qualifying matches will take place in seven Weeks of Football.

The Week of Football will see matches take place over six days from Thursday to Tuesday. Each day of the Week of Football will provide 8 to 10 matches as opposed to 20–30 matches

on the same day. Kick-off times will be largely set at 18.00CET and 20.45CET on Saturdays and Sundays and 20.45CET for Thursdays, Fridays, Mondays and Tuesdays. On double-header match-weeks, teams will play on Thursday and Sunday or Friday and Monday or Saturday and Tuesday.

Speaking after the UEFA Executive Committee meeting, the UEFA General Secretary, Gianni Infantino, stated: "As part of UEFA's drive to improve the quality and appeal of national team football, the Week of Football will see a fresh new approach to international football, starting with the UEFA EURO 2016 qualifiers."

The Week of Football allows fans to watch national team football at the weekend. For EURO 2012 qualifying, only 26 matches (out of 245) took place on Saturdays and Sundays – with the Week of Football at least 33% of matches will take place at weekend.

Seven Weeks of Football

There will be seven Weeks of Football during EURO 2016 qualifying – in September, October and November in 2014 and March, June, September and October in 2015.

Gianni Infantino added: "Supporters will get the chance to attend and watch more national team matches than ever before. Broadcasters will get more games and more appointments to view. National associations get a consistent schedule and stable revenue. And national team football will get greater exposure than before."

The new Week of Football and the centralisation of media rights for European Qualifiers enhance national team football and boost UEFA's member associations. The centralisation of media rights will enable national associations to make more money from their qualifying games, and ensure stable revenues from the qualifying phase, as revenues will be disconnected from draw results. ●

FRANCE'S FRIENDLIES

Hosts France are, of course, automatic qualifiers for EURO 2016. However, they will still get to feel the EURO 2016 buzz early as they will warm up for the event by playing centralised friendlies. The teams in the five-team group in qualifying – with fewer matches to play and free dates – will play France in friendly matches during 2014 and 2015. The president of EURO 2016 SAS, Jacques Lambert, summed up the advantages of this new approach for host nations: "The advantages are quite simple. In the case of France, you can only play friendly games while the

other teams play qualifying games. The main difficulty is to find opponents because the international calendar is organised in the same way for everyone all around the world and almost every team in the world, whether it's in Europe, Africa or in South America, are playing on the same date. The problem for a national association like the French FA is to find some opponents. By pairing them right away with a group (of five teams) where there will be a team not playing on every match day, that will allow France easily to play friendly games against a team." ●

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL HOSTS FIRST MEETING OF 2014

At its first meeting of the year, in Nyon on 23 and 24 January, the UEFA Executive Committee appointed a legendary coaching figure, Sir Alex Ferguson, as UEFA coaching ambassador.

Sir Alex – who built an outstanding reputation as a coach over 35 years before retiring last May – will attend UEFA coach education workshops, national team coaches conferences and the coach student exchange programme courses. One of his tasks will be to pass on his vast experience to young coaches.

"It's an honour and a privilege to accept this role," said Sir Alex. *"With the experience I've had over the years, I hope to continue to help young coaches, in particular, in an industry which is becoming more difficult. I look forward to the challenge, I look forward to contributing in a big way for UEFA, and I thank [UEFA President] Michel Platini for giving me this opportunity."*

Sir Alex's playing career in his native Scotland took in Queen's Park FC, Saint Johnstone FC, Dunfermline Athletic FC, Rangers FC, Falkirk FC and Ayr United FC, and he began his managerial career with East Stirlingshire FC and Saint Mirren FC.

Sir Alex went on to guide Aberdeen FC to the 1983 European Cup Winners' Cup, the 1983 UEFA Super Cup, three Scottish Premier League titles and four Scottish Cups. He led Scotland on a caretaker basis in the 1986 FIFA World Cup in Mexico after the death of Jock Stein.

He joined Manchester United FC in 1986 and his successes included two UEFA Champions League triumphs, a Cup Winners' Cup, a UEFA Super Cup, 13 Premier League titles, five FA Cups and four English League Cups.

Sir Alex has started passing on his wisdom to European coaches, as a guest at the UEFA coach education workshop in Budapest last October. *"I've always enjoyed working with young people and I can continue to do this in this role,"* he said. He urged young coaches to be thorough in their preparations, to give themselves a greater chance of success, and to remember the importance of UEFA's coaching qualifications.

EURO 2016 on track

In addition to the UEFA EURO 2016 matters featured on page 8, the UEFA Executive Committee approved the composition of the pots and the procedure for the qualifying draw in Nice on 23 February. It also heard at its meeting in Nyon that preparations for the final round in France are running smoothly.

"Yes we are on time," said the president of EURO 2016 SAS, Jacques Lambert, after the meeting, *"which means that the construction/renovation of stadiums is in line with what we expected. Concerning the organising teams, the*

one at UEFA here in Nyon and the one for EURO 2016 SAS in Paris, everyone is working well.

"We are now around 20 people in the Paris office and the staff will now increase on a regular basis. You can feel that the workload, the density of the workload, the pressure, is increasing for everyone, but that's normal."

12 teams for the Under-21 final round

Among the other decisions taken in Nyon, the European Under-21 Championship final tournament field will increase from eight to twelve teams (three groups of four) for the 2017 edition. This will give more teams and players the chance to participate in the final tournament of the competition, which is of key importance. The qualifying competition should comprise eight groups of six teams and one group of five.



Michel Platini and UEFA's new coaching ambassador, Sir Alex Ferguson

The Executive Committee also approved the trial use of vanishing spray by referees at May's European Under-17 Championship final round in Malta. The spray allows the referee to mark the line where the defending team must set up its defensive wall before a free-kick is taken. The line then disappears from the pitch within a minute.

Finally, the committee approved the budget for 2014/15 which will be submitted to the UEFA Congress for final approval, and gave the green light to the final programme and agenda for the 38th Ordinary UEFA Congress in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 27 March. ●

GIVE YOUTH A CHANCE

Designed as a bridge between the academies and first teams of Europe's top clubs, the Under-19 tournament's schedule mirrored that of the UEFA Champions League up until Christmas. Now it is time for the round of 16.

With the likes of Filippo Inzaghi (AC Milan), Patrick Vieira (Manchester City FC) and Nicky Butt (Manchester United FC) in charge of UEFA Youth League sides, there has been no shortage of illustrious names involved. However, it is the development of the participating youngsters that is paramount. "I'm sure that, in the future, this year will

display – the likes of Raúl González, Wayne Rooney and Andriy Shevchenko – and the UEFA Youth League gives young talents a new international platform on which to make strides towards the highest level of club football.

"It is an important step towards professional football," said former Spain striker Fernando Morientes, now part of the Real Madrid CF youth set-up. "It is very good that they get used to things that professional football will ask of them."

Paris Saint-Germain boss, Laurent Blanc, meanwhile, thinks the competition will offer players an education as well as an opportunity. "It is a way to face a different culture and I think they will benefit from that," he said. With nine places in the last 16 up for grabs going into matchday six, drama has hardly been in short supply either – and there is plenty more to come. ●



Sinan Bytyqi, celebrating with Manchester City captain Marcos Lopes, will go down in history as the Youth League's first scorer

be remembered as the start of something great – I'm absolutely convinced of that," said Arsenal FC's senior-team manager, Arsène Wenger.

It all began on 17 September, with Manchester City forward Sinan Bytyqi scoring the competition's first goal ten minutes into matchday one. "I'm very happy, very proud – it's always good to write some history for the team as well," he said. That marked the opening of a successful group stage campaign for City, but it was another English side, Chelsea FC, who caught the eye as the only club to win all six of their fixtures.

Three youngsters have already proven the solid grounding that this tournament can provide. Vyacheslav Karavaev (PFC CSKA Moskva), Serge Gnabry (Arsenal) and Adama Traoré (FC Barcelona) have all featured in this term's UEFA Youth League before making an appearance for their respective senior teams in the UEFA Champions League.

Following in the footsteps of Raúl, Rooney or Shevchenko

Indeed, Europe's premier club competition is full of memorable stories of teenagers thrusting themselves into the global consciousness with a dazzling

ROAD TO THE FINAL

- The UEFA Youth League group stage saw the Under-19 teams of the 32 UEFA Champions League participants meet in an autumn programme that mirrored the senior sides' campaigns.
- The top two from each group went into the round of 16 draw in December, with the route all the way to the final also mapped out during that draw.
- While country protection was in place for the last 16, the path through the rest of the competition was paved with open draws.

Round of 16: one-off ties, 18/19/25/26 February

FC Barcelona v FC København
 PFC CSKA Moskva v Paris Saint-Germain
 Club Atlético de Madrid v Manchester City FC
 Chelsea FC v AC Milan
 Real Madrid CF v SSC Napoli
 SL Benfica v FK Austria Wien
 Arsenal FC v FC Shakhtar Donetsk
 Real Sociedad de Fútbol v FC Schalke 04

- The quarter-finals will also be one-off ties, played on 11/12/18/19 March.
- The semi-final games (11 April) and the final (14 April) are to be played as part of a four-team tournament at the Colovray Stadium opposite UEFA headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland. ●

UEFA.org, THE NEW UEFA INSTITUTIONAL WEBSITE

Following the separation of UEFA.org from UEFA.com in October 2013, UEFA's institutional website received the second part of a three-stage upgrade in time for the resumption of the 2013/14 club competition season.

The site, which is focused exclusively on communicating the activities of European football's governing body, now features more information about the workings of the organisation, with a revised homepage that includes more entry points to key topics direct from the index page, and a new media releases service delivering targeted content in seven European languages.

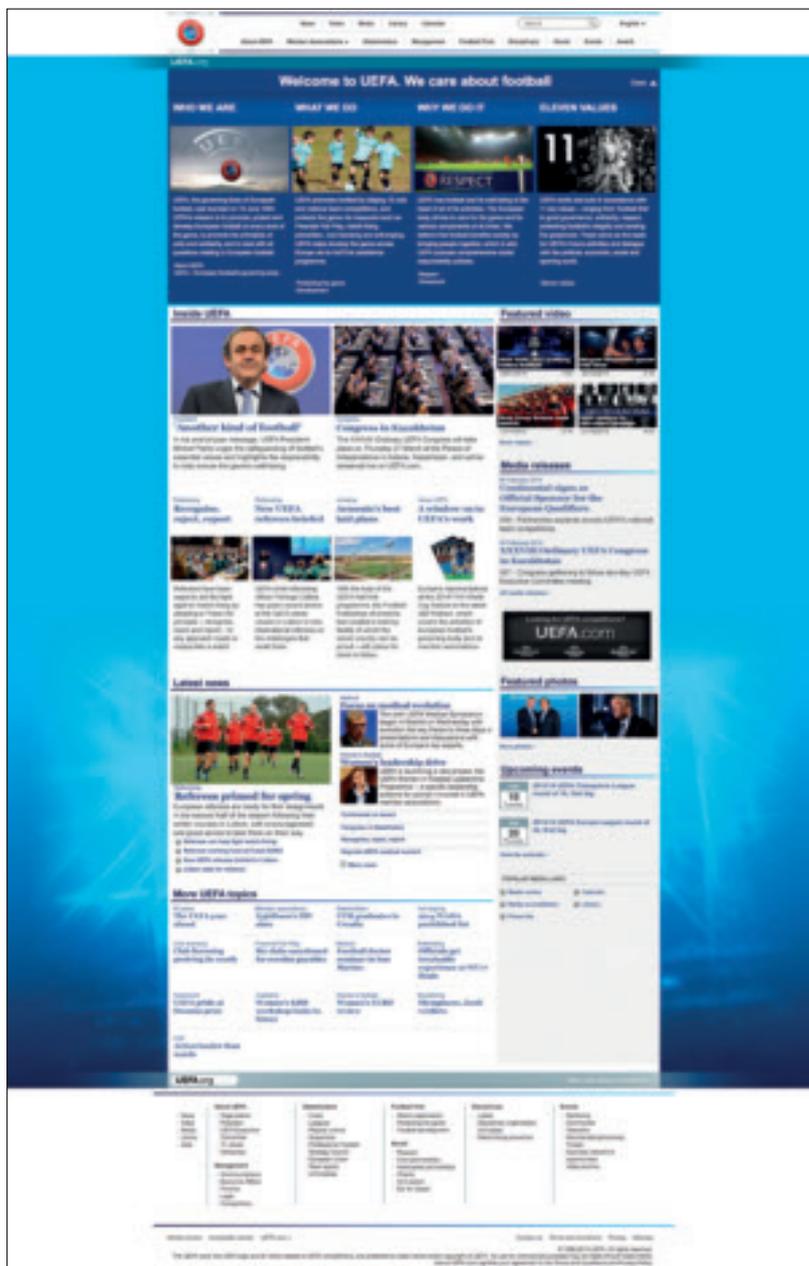
"Our first intention was to manage messaging of competition and corporate content in separate ways," said UEFA's head of communications, David Farrelly. "The messaging is different – and so is the audience. We felt that one solution failed to match UEFA's communication needs. UEFA.com is effective in reporting UEFA's competitions and the routes to qualifying for UEFA's competitions, but it was felt that corporate content ran the risk of getting quickly lost, especially once matches were being played. By making these changes, the fans are given direct access to the competitions via a dedicated service, UEFA.com, while media and other stakeholders receive their messaging on UEFA.org, a platform equally dedicated to their needs, constantly up to date, and with easy access to key topics. We believe that UEFA.com will remain the effective communications channel for our competitions, while UEFA.org provides the necessary space for other stakeholders to know what is happening at UEFA, as well as to better understand our initiatives and our policies."

Audience habits switch to social media channels

Structural changes have also been made to the relaunched UEFA.org, including the full integration of UEFA member associations and their activities in a dedicated section, and the addition of club financial controlling matters in the disciplinary section in advance of the decisions that will be made by the Club Financial Control Board in the coming months.

UEFA.org will receive its own dedicated social media service on Twitter, while there will also be increased blogging opportunities for UEFA's media and public relations unit to deliver and maintain an up-to-the-minute news service, particularly in relation to disciplinary decisions and marketing matters.

"As a service, UEFA.org will now use more blogging and newsletter tools to target direct messages to our audience, but we needed to go further than that," added Farrelly. "Our consultation process included various stakeholders, both inside and outside of the organisation. It was clear that their habits, either in terms of receiving



or disseminating information, had caused their switch towards social media channels, so we will also be present and active there, to provide more efficient and effective messaging on various decisions made and topics affecting European football's governing body. A new Twitter news feed will help us to deliver this as we move forward."

Further changes to UEFA.org are expected to be made in time for the start of the 2014/15 season. ●

A NEW TROPHY FOR BAYERN



On 21 December FC Bayern München rounded off an exceptional year by winning the FIFA Club World Cup in Morocco, beating Moroccan team Raja Casablanca 2-0 in the final. In so doing, they added yet another trophy to their list of international honours for 2013, having already won the UEFA Champions League in May and the UEFA Super Cup in August. ●

CHANGES AT UNDER-17 LEVEL FOR 2014/15



Although the current European Under-17 Championship is not yet over, preparations are already under way for next season's competition.

The draw for the 2014/15 championship was made at the end of last year, with the 52 teams that will contest the qualifying round being placed in the following groups:

- Group 1:** Scotland, **Republic of Ireland**, Faroe Islands, Gibraltar
- Group 2:** Poland, **Georgia**, Estonia, Liechtenstein
- Group 3:** Iceland, Italy, **Moldova**, Armenia
- Group 4:** England, France, **Cyprus**, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Group 5:** Ukraine, Sweden, Greece, **Latvia**
- Group 6:** Turkey, Portugal, **Slovenia**, Northern Ireland
- Group 7:** Croatia, **Hungary**, Kazakhstan, Israel
- Group 8:** Serbia, Netherlands, **Malta**, Finland
- Group 9:** Austria, Norway, San Marino, **Albania**
- Group 10:** **Belgium**, Switzerland, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Group 11:** **Slovakia**, Spain, Luxembourg, Lithuania
- Group 12:** Czech Republic, Denmark, Romania, **Andorra**
- Group 13:** Russia, **Belarus**, Wales, Montenegro
(The countries in bold will host the mini tournaments.)

The top two in each group, plus the five best third-place teams, will join Germany – who have a bye at this stage of the competition – in the elite round. There, they will attempt to secure one of the 15 remaining places at the final tournament (Bulgaria having already qualified automatically as hosts). This will be the first time in a long while that

the final round has been contested by 16 teams. The 16-team format was last used between 1985 and 2002, with eight team tournaments being staged in the intervening period.

GREECE TO HOST UNDER-19 FINAL ROUND IN SUMMER 2015



In contrast, the European Under-19 Championship will be unchanged in 2014/15. The 52 teams competing in the qualifying round have been divided into 13 groups, with the top two in each group, plus the best third-place team, joining Spain – who have a bye at this stage – playing the elite round to determine the seven teams that will join hosts Greece (who qualify automatically) at the final tournament.

- Group 1:** Belgium, England, **Luxembourg**, Belarus
- Group 2:** Austria, Germany, **Latvia**, Kazakhstan
- Group 3:** Turkey, **Croatia**, Iceland, Estonia
- Group 4:** Slovakia, **Hungary**, Armenia, Azerbaijan
- Group 5:** Russia, Czech Republic, Faroe Islands, **Northern Ireland**
- Group 6:** **Republic of Ireland**, Switzerland, Malta, Gibraltar
- Group 7:** Denmark, **Portugal**, Albania, Wales
- Group 8:** Ukraine, **Israel**, Sweden, Bulgaria
- Group 9:** Italy, **Serbia**, Slovenia, San Marino
- Group 10:** Netherlands, **Poland**, Andorra, Moldova
- Group 11:** Romania, **Georgia**, Cyprus, Montenegro
- Group 12:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Liechtenstein, **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**
- Group 13:** Norway, Scotland, **Lithuania**, Finland
(The countries in bold will host the mini tournaments.)

NINTH UEFA REGIONS' CUP KICKS OFF



At the end of last year, the 38 national associations that have entered the 2014/15 UEFA Regions' Cup had their first taste of the competition at the draw for the preliminary and intermediate rounds. In the preliminary round, which comprises two groups of four countries, Estonia will play host to Wales, Kazakhstan and Sweden, while Slovenia will welcome Greece, San Marino and Scotland. The winners of those two groups will join the 30 other teams in the intermediate round. The teams representing the various national associations will not be known until the summer. All matches in the preliminary round must be played by 31 July, and matches in the intermediate round must be completed by 15 December. The winners of each group in the intermediate round will qualify for the final tournament, which is scheduled to take place in June 2015 and will be held in the country of one of the finalists. ●

THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES

Football's power to promote joy and inclusion is reflected by the sterling work undertaken across the world by UEFA's core social responsibility partner Special Olympics.

Special Olympics is an international body that changes lives by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities through sport – giving them the chance to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and share gifts, skills and friendship.

Special Olympics, founded in 1968, provides opportunities in a variety of sports to 4.2 million athletes with intellectual disabilities in over 170 countries. The partnership between Special Olympics and UEFA began in 1998 and aims primarily to involve more players with intellectual disabilities in football.

David Bowyer, from Plymouth in southwest England, is a footballer who has made important personal strides through Special Olympics. In particular, David relished his participation in the South West team that took part in last summer's Special Olympics Great Britain National Summer Games.

David is a member of the Special Olympics Plymouth & District club. *"It's made a great difference,"* he said. *"I've had an opportunity to have a life-changing experience. I've been able to play football, which I've loved to watch all of my life. I've learned a huge amount about being able to engage with everybody."*

Pride and pleasure

Friendship and fitness are key aspects of David's involvement with his club. *"I look forward to the team spirit and the camaraderie, and you meet people and make a lot of friends. I also maintain a decent fitness level, and I get opportunities for regular training sessions to improve skills. I swim and cycle as well. Fitness means self-confidence."*

There is also a feeling of pride and pleasure. Following the National Summer Games, which



involved 1,700 athletes from across England, Scotland and Wales, all with learning disabilities, David and his colleagues received the accolade of an open-top bus ride through Plymouth, as well as a civic reception – an unforgettable experience. *"We were immensely proud to represent Plymouth, our club and ourselves,"* David reflected.

The experience of playing Special Olympics football has motivated David to stay involved in the game in the future. *"Ideally, I would like to get into coaching,"* he said. *"If I can put back some of the enjoyment that I've had, this has to be of benefit, and this is my aim."* David and thousands of other sportsmen and women are eternally grateful to Special Olympics for having given them the opportunity for positive personal development – and a real sense of achievement.

For more information, go to www.specialolympics.org.

The joy of a goal is universal – David Bowyer (left) celebrates at the Special Olympics Great Britain National Summer Games

Dr SHEPHERD: "THE BENEFITS ARE MASSIVE"

Dr Stan Shepherd is the medical director for Special Olympics Great Britain.

Dr Shepherd, what are the benefits of practising sport for people with intellectual disabilities?

The benefits are massive. Any sporting activity is going to increase your self-confidence and your self-reliance. It's going to motivate you to get fit, to exercise and to have a healthy diet. Sport brings inclusion and not exclusion – it brings togetherness and not isolation.

What does football in particular bring to the athlete?

The first thing to remember is that someone with intellectual disabilities has precisely the same emotions as everyone else. So when they play football, they experience the same excitement, challenges and joy as anyone else. Having intellectual disabilities can make your life lonely and isolated. Because football is a team game, the athletes share the experience of training, playing, winning and losing together.

WINTER COURSES HELD IN LISBON

Each year, UEFA invites Europe's top men and women referees, plus men and women referees who are newcomers to the FIFA international list, to winter courses which serve to prepare the match officials for their assignments in the second half of the season. Lisbon was the venue for this year's gathering from 2 to 6 February.

UEFA takes great care in fostering its match officials. The Referees Committee comprises former international referees who have taken charge of major world and European matches, and who give the current referees invaluable guidance in their challenging role in the modern-day game.

European football's governing body organises two main referee events a year. The summer meeting sees match officials primed for the coming season, and a winter gathering prepares them for upcoming appointments in the spring. Female referees joined the UEFA sessions for the first time last year, highlighting the growing importance of women's football.

The new FIFA referees were instructed on what UEFA expected of them – clear and consistent decision-making, the ability to handle pressure and manage crisis moments, appropriate

fitness levels and exemplary conduct at all times. The importance of preparation was emphasised, as well as the need to know one's strengths and weaknesses, and a capacity to learn from mistakes.

"Welcome to you," said UEFA's chief refereeing officer, Pierluigi Collina. "It is a big achievement for you and congratulations – but consider this just as a first step." The new internationals went through an extensive medical check-up and took the FIFA fitness test, while their English knowledge was also tested. Visual tests were held to make sure the referees' eyesight was in proper order.

Ahead of coming assignments in the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League, the advanced referees underwent an injury prevention screening and fitness check. "We are facing the most important part of the season with the knockout phase," Pierluigi Collina told them. "Every match is crucial. It's important what you will do, so be ready." A group of top European referees are now also in full preparation for this summer's FIFA World Cup in Brazil.

The referees were urged to protect the image of football and the well-being of players in the face of serious foul play which could endanger another player's safety. In addition, the Referees Committee called for firm action against the mobbing of a referee by several players at once.

A match-fixing presentation was on the Lisbon agenda, urging the referees to make a full contribution to fighting this phenomenon and to adopt the "Three Rs" principle – Recognise an approach, Reject the approach and Report the approach.

The Lisbon week gave the referees a chance to exchange ideas – and to continue learning, whatever their experience. "Refereeing is a continuous learning process," said Portugal's Pedro Proença, referee of the 2012 UEFA Champions League final and UEFA EURO 2012 final. "Until the end of our refereeing careers, we must remain aware that we don't know everything, that we are always learning..." ●

EUROPE'S REFEREES FOR THE FIFA WORLD CUP IN BRAZIL



Front row (from left): Milorad Mažić (Serbia), Cüneyt Çakır (Turkey), Felix Brych (Germany), Björn Kuipers (Netherlands).
Middle row: Nicola Rizzoli (Italy), Pedro Proença (Portugal).
Back row: Svein Moen (Norway) – the European support referee, Howard Webb (England), Jonas Eriksson (Sweden), Carlos Velasco Carballo (Spain).

Albanian football rebranded

At its end-of-year gala dinner, attended by many members of the Albanian football family, the Football Association of Albania (FSHF) presented its new logo, which forms part of its rebranding process. The logo marks a departure from the symbols historically used by the association, but it remains based on traditional elements of Albanian heraldry.

The new logo is in the shape of a shield, the first time that this important element of Albanian heraldry has been used to represent the FSHF. Inside the shield, against a red

background (the colour of the Albanian flag), is a stylised double-headed eagle (Albania's national symbol) and a football in motion. Above it are the association's initials (which stand for Federata Shqiptare e Futbollit) and the year when the FSHF was founded – 1930.

The creation of this logo is the fruit of a project conducted by the FSHF in cooperation with UEFA.

Before the creative work began, the FSHF conducted a lot of research and consulted all stakeholders, including fans, sponsors, the government, national and international

management experts, footballers, former players and media professionals.

The results of this research were used to guide the creative process, from choosing the right elements to make up the logo to the final creative proposals.

From a wider perspective, the aim of the rebranding process is to create an umbrella brand and to give the FSHF its own institutional logo, different from that used by the national teams, which will continue to use the old logo based on the Albanian flag.

The next step of the process will be to create separate brands for all major competitions organised by the FSHF, such as the Albanian Super League and the Albanian Cup.

The rebranding process is also part of a longer-term strategy in response to the changing face of the Albanian market.

With this professional approach, the FSHF aims to meet the needs of both the national and international markets.

● *Gazmend Malo*

Charity futsal match

As part of its cooperation with non-profit-making entities, the Andorran Football Federation (FAF) hosted a charity event on 17 December in support of the organisation Téléthon. Around 90 spectators crowded into the sports hall of the Centre Esportiu Pas de la Casa to watch a friendly match between the national Under-21 futsal team and the Pas de la Casa futsal team (who play in the first division of the Andorran futsal league). The funds raised by the event will be used for research into therapies and cures for rare diseases that affect around 30 million people across Europe, which is the main goal of that marvellous organisation.

In other news, 19 people recently completed the country's first ever online



A friendly match to raise money for the Andorran Téléthon

course for youth-level football coaches. It was a real success, with great feedback from all participants. The FAF and the technical coaches committee devised the course as part of the association's new technology development programme, and they both agree that it has been a very positive experience and a great success.

● *Silvia Casals*

New BFF logo

The Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) has recently changed its official logo, with the new version having been chosen and approved by the association's executive committee.

The agency responsible for designing the new emblem initially came up with three themes: the European bison (one of the country's national symbols), the fern flower (the national flower) and a traditional ornamental pattern (which is used in the national flag). The designers came up with three concepts for each theme and produced ten variants. Numerous fans and football experts were consulted, and the process took some time, but eventually a winner was chosen. That design was then refined further, ultimately becoming a logo featuring the European bison (which is found only in Belarus and Poland) and a football.

The rebranding process has already begun and will probably take a few weeks to complete. By the start of the new season, though, the new logo will be used everywhere, from the BFF's offices to its official website (which is currently also being redesigned). When the new logo was unveiled in December at the awards ceremony for the 2013 season, the president of the BFF, Sergei Roumas, said that it had been time for the association to come up with a new emblem, which would perhaps mark the start of a new chapter for Belarusian football.

● *Alexander Aleinik*

Andy Cole visits Baku

Andy Cole visited Baku in December as a special guest of the company Bakcell in order to participate in the annual BakuTel exhibition. While he was there, the former



Andy Cole makes the day of some happy youngsters

Manchester United FC star met children participating in the Football with Bakcell project, which is run jointly by Bakcell and the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA), holding a training session for a group of teenagers at the Bakcell Arena. Azerbaijani internationals Kamran Aghayev and Mahir Shukurov also participated in the event, which was followed by a press conference, at which Andy Cole said: "I am very pleased to be here. I am proud to be associated with this project. As you know, football is a sport for everyone – both for adults and kids. And I'm glad to be part of this event. I know that the Bakcell Arena is a new stadium and I'm sure the kids will be able to play football in this new stadium all year round and that the doors of this venue will always be open to all football fans."

● *Ulviyya Najafova*



On the road to Brazil

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (NFSBiH) recently organised an event at the Skenderija youth centre in Sarajevo under the heading of The Road to Brazil. The event was attended by numerous stars of Bosnian football and other sports, as well as politicians and public figures.

The NFSBiH's leaders took this opportunity to express their gratitude to their partners and sponsors for their support and confidence in the national team while they were competing for a place at the World Cup in Brazil.

Addressing the guests, the president of the NFSBiH, Elvedin Begić, thanked everyone for their cooperation during the past year.

"This year will remain inscribed in golden letters in the history of Bosnian football. I hope that the national team and the NFSBiH will continue to be successful in 2014, especially at the forthcoming FIFA World Cup in Brazil," he said.

In addition to the whole of the NFSBiH's executive board, the event was also attended by Ivica Osim, Duško Bajević, Faruk Hadžibegić, Sead Kajtaž, national team coach Safet Sušić, team captain Emir Spahić,

most-capped player Zvezdan Misimović, many former internationals and former national team coaches.

Another event was recently held in Sarajevo to celebrate and honour the country's finest sportsmen and women – the 13th time that this annual awards ceremony had been staged. The jury elected to give the award for the best sportsman of 2013 to Zvezdan Misimović, who holds the record for the most appearances for the country's national team. This was a real honour, as the award is rarely won by a footballer.

Misimović is certainly a deserving recipient of the award for 2013, as he helped the national team to achieve the long-awaited dream of qualifying for a major tournament. He has played for his country 79 times and has scored 26 goals in the process, making him Bosnia's second highest goalscorer of all time, just behind Edin Džeko. Misimović has spent a full ten years on the national team, having made his debut on 15 February 2004 against the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Skopje.

"One of the greatest honours for any sportsperson is when he is declared the best of all the athletes in the country. I feel great honour, recognition, a sense of pride,



Zvezdan Misimović, Bosnia and Herzegovina's sports personality of 2013

satisfaction and happiness, but also a desire to repay this faith in the future," Misimović said. The award for coach of the year went to Safet Sušić, while his national team were crowned team of the year.

The draw for the group stage of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil was conducted in Costa do Sauipe, in the state of Bahia, in early December. Bosnia and Herzegovina were drawn into Group F, alongside Argentina, Nigeria and Iran. Their first match will be against Argentina at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on 16 June, and they will then play Nigeria in Cuiaba on 21 June and Iran in El Salvador on 25 June.

Meanwhile, a UEFA representative recently visited the NFSBiH to review the current and future infrastructure projects to which UEFA is contributing funds. The UEFA official held a series of meetings with representatives of the NFSBiH, as well as accompanying the general secretary of the NFSBiH, Jasmin Baković, and members of his team on a visit to the new NFSBiH training centre in Zenica.

● Fuad Kravavac



Pure joy of football

More than 200 children (all born in 2004) took part in the traditional Football 7 tournament organised by the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) at DIT Sport in Dragalevtsi to celebrate the end of the year.

The competition attracted considerable public attention, and for the first time games at the ultramodern venue were televised.

A total of 16 teams, divided into four groups, competed for the BFU's Christmas Cup. Two teams from Sofia – Levski and Slavia – contested the final, with Slavia winning 4-2 on penalties after a goalless draw. Borislav Mihaylov, president of the BFU, addressed the young footballers during the awards ceremony: *"I would like to congratulate all of the young players who have been involved in this tournament. At this age, the joy of playing football for fun is more important than any result. The BFU has never been more determined to preserve the future of the game, which lies in those pure hearts of yours."*

● Pavel Kolev



More than 200 youngsters took part in the seven-a-side tournament



New technical director and Under-19 head coach

The cities of Umag and Rovinj were the venues for the boys' and girls' winter camps organised by the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) in January. While the winter camp is traditionally one of the most important selection sessions for Under-14 to Under-16 boys, this was the first time that a camp had been organised for girls. Marija Margareta Damjanović, head coach of the national women's team and women's football coordinator at the HNS, was very pleased with the result: *"The conditions were excellent and our camp was a big success. We are proud to have organised the first girls' camp, during which we had several meetings with people who are important for the development of Croatian football – including women's football."*

The person responsible for the development of football in Croatia is the HNS's new technical director, Romeo Jozak, who was appointed in December. Jozak spent many years running GNK Dinamo Zagreb's youth academy, which developed players such as Luka Modrić, Vedran Ćorluka and Mateo Kovačić, who are now key players in the national team.

"I am looking forward to this new challenge in my career. I am proud to have an opportunity to help develop Croatian football at all levels," Jozak said.

The winter camp was also a good opportunity for a coaching seminar, with 30 youth team coaches from first and second division clubs joining members of the



Stipe Pletikosa, the Croatia supporters' player of the year for 2013

national teams' technical staff to listen to presentations by experts and share their opinions and experiences.

The HNS also recently unveiled the new head coach of the national Under-19 team, with Zoran Vulić taking charge of this talented side: *"It is an honour to be named head coach of a Croatian national team. This was one of my dreams as a coach. I believe in this generation; they have a bright future."*

One of the role models for those players could be Mario Mandžukić, who was recently named sportsman of the year by Croatian sports daily Sportske novosti. In December Mandžukić won the FIFA Club World Cup with FC Bayern München, adding to his collection of trophies from 2013, which already included the UEFA Champions League, the UEFA Super Cup, the German Bundesliga and the DFB Cup.

Meanwhile, goalkeeper Stipe Pletikosa has been named player of the year by the Croatian national team supporters' group. ACF Fiorentina's Ante Rebić was named most promising player of the year, while star coach Miroslav "Ciro" Blažević, who guided Croatia to third place at the 1998 FIFA World Cup, was given a lifetime achievement award.

● Tomislav Pacak

Youth football seminar

On 21 and 22 November, the Olympic sports centre in Nymburk hosted the fourth major seminar run by the Czech Republic's elite youth sports centre. More than 170 coaches, sports managers and members of top youth clubs gathered in the conference hall. They received a wealth of information: details of financing provided by the ministry of youth and the Football Association of the Czech Republic (FAČR), information on changes to rules governing youth competitions, lectures on youth development trends and the physical testing of youth players in the national Under-16 to Under-19 teams, information about the UEFA Youth League from coaches at FC Viktoria Plzeň, and much more besides.

The FAČR also invited two special guests: UEFA technical director, Marc Van Geersom, who talked about the development of football in Belgium over the last ten years; and Alfred Galustian, co-founder of the

Coerver coaching programme, who gave a presentation and ran a 90-minute practical session for coaches.

The seminar was organised by Dušan Fízel, technical director of the FAČR, Otakar Mestek, director of the grassroots department, Antonín Plachý, head of the coach education department, Stanislav Rýznar, licence manager for professional football, and Michal Blažej, grassroots manager. Many distinguished guests also attended, such as Roman Berbr, vice-chairman of the FAČR, Josef Tancoš, a member of the FAČR's executive committee, Josef Dobeš, a former minister for education and sport, Zdeněk Psoška, chairman of the youth committee, and Václav Černý, Aleš Čvančara and Miroslav Soukup, the coaches of the national Under-16, Under-17 and Under-18 teams.

The main focus of this seminar was discussion groups looking at youth competitions and developments in coaching methods between Under 12 and Under-19 level. These discussions showed – and Marc Van Geersom



The seminars run by the elite youth sports centre are a good opportunity for discussion and sharing information

agreed on this point – that the FAČR is working closely with coaches, looking at training methods and the latest coaching trends. We know, though, that all of us must continue learning and improving, taking inspiration from many different sources. That is the only way to get our players to the very pinnacle of European football.

● Michal Blažej

Refereeing standards on the rise

This year the Estonian Football Association (EJL) has strengthened its referee development team, hiring an experienced FIFA referee, Hannes Kaasik, as a referee development officer.

Kaasik is responsible for training new referees and improving the quality of existing officials. Refereeing is becoming more popular in Estonia, with increasing numbers of courses being organised across the country with the help of regional referee coordinators. Significant progress has been made on the women's side, with two women-only courses helping to boost the number of active women referees. Estonia

now has two FIFA-level women assistant referees, and it is looking forward to making it a hat-trick next year.

Hannes Kaasik started refereeing in 2000 and has held a FIFA badge since 2006. He has refereed various European Football Championship and FIFA World Cup qualifying matches, as well as group matches in the UEFA Europa League. One of Kaasik's most important tasks is to organise sessions for clubs and players, to give them a better understanding of the Laws of the Game and the principles of refereeing.



Hannes Kaasik

In other news, Estonia's first permanent full-size indoor sports hall was completed at the end of last year. Many training sessions and matches have already taken place there during the harsh winter months, delighting coaches and players alike. In order to make maximum use of the hall, the EJL has launched a pre-season tournament for local clubs, with 12 games being played every weekend.

The hall has also been used for coaching courses.

● Press office

Blue Horizon 2016: a new direction for the FFF

In less than three years' time, France will host UEFA EURO 2016, an international event that has given rise to a dual objective on the part of the French Football Federation (FFF): not only to turn this major tournament into a real festival of sport and a public celebration, but also to change the face of French football. In response to that objective, the FFF has devised a project with the apt name of Blue Horizon 2016 – aimed at its members and French football as a whole.

The FFF has identified four priorities in its quest to breathe new life into French football by 2016: member satisfaction; supporting talented players on their journey to the top; the efficiency of French football; and sustainable financial resources. Blue Horizon 2016 will be a huge challenge for the FFF, and is primarily a response to the first priority: the FFF's desire to serve its members better in the future.

With the project having already drummed up wide support and enthusiasm, concrete aims and objectives having been defined, and an action plan and

follow-up measures having been put in place, the FFF is well on the road to its Blue Horizon 2016.

● Philippe Mayen





GFF Awards 2013

On 26 December the Georgian Football Federation (GFF) conducted its traditional round-up of the past year's activities at the GFF Awards 2013 gala event, which was attended by members of the national coaching committee, football club bosses, former players, current Georgian internationals, representatives of the media and other honoured guests. The best players of the year and those who had made a significant contribution to the development of football in Georgia made speeches and received various awards.

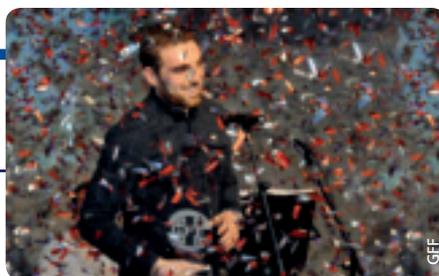
The GFF asked players and coaches to nominate people who they thought should receive awards, with the head coaches of the national teams and the coaches and captains of the clubs in Georgia's top two divisions all playing an active role.

Nominations were made for the following four awards:

- best Under-21 player;
- best player in the national league;
- best Georgian overseas player;
- best footballer of 2013.

While the jury came to a final decision regarding the recipients of those awards, the president and general secretary summed up the federation's activities over the past year, which had been a busy and challenging period. The GFF hosted a number of high-level tournaments in 2013, a total of 60 training camps were organised for the national teams and various youth teams, and the national teams played 91 friendly matches and 36 competitive matches.

As far as awards were concerned, Vako Kazaishvili was voted the best young player



Guram Kashia, best player of 2013

of the year, while Giorgi Papava and Giorgi Chanturia took second and third place respectively.

The award for the best player in the Georgian league went to Giorgi Loria, with Elguja Grigalashvili coming second and Cisko coming third.

Guram Kashia, the captain of Dutch side Vitesse, received the award for the best overseas player for the second time, while Jaba Kankava and Vako Kazaishvili came second and third respectively.

The GFF's special prize for the best team was awarded to the national Under-19 team (now the Under-20 team), coached by Giorgi Tsetsadze, which participated in the final round of the European Under-19 Championship in July last year.

The highlight of the event was the award for the best Georgian player of 2013. That went to Guram Kashia, with Giorgi Loria and Jaba Kankava in second and third place respectively. So, Georgian international Guram Kashia was the evening's clear winner, receiving that award for the second year in a row.

"I am so happy and excited ... I did not expect this to happen again. I would like to extend my deep gratitude to the GFF's management and those professionals, coaches and captains who think that I deserve the award in question. I feel uncomfortable receiving an award like this. Thank you so much!" Kashia said.

● Press centre



Attila Pintér appointed head coach

Hungary have appointed Attila Pintér, a former international and a member of the team that won the European Under-18 Championship, as their new head coach. Pintér, who replaces Sándor Egervári, is looking forward to leading Hungary in their EURO 2016 qualifying campaign.

"We had several options for the position, but we believe that a Hungarian coach could be more effective than a foreigner at the moment," said Sándor Csányi, president of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ).

"In our opinion, he has the potential to create a competitive team for the qualifiers and lead Hungary to UEFA EURO 2016. There are several reasons why we chose him. First, he is an ambitious coach who always wants to win. And second, he is the most tactically astute Hungarian coach."



Attila Pintér

At the beginning of his career (at the age of 18), Pintér played for the Hungarian team which won the European Under-18 Championship in 1984 in the Soviet Union. He was capped 20 times by Hungary, won the Hungarian Cup with Ferencvárosi TC, and also spent a brief period playing for K. Beerschot AC in Belgium.

As a coach, the 47-year-old won the Hungarian championship with Ferencváros in 2004 and the Hungarian Cup with FC Sopron in 2005, before taking over at Győri ETO FC. In two spells at Győr, he guided them to two third-place finishes, before winning the league with them last season.

"This is a great success for the whole of the Hungarian coaching community. I'm very proud to be the coach of the Hungarian national team. I have presented my plans for the clubs, and I would like to cooperate with them, because my aim is to create an effective and successful Hungarian team which is able to qualify for an international tournament."

The coach has already started work, summoning the first team squad to Telki – the MLSZ's technical centre – once a week in order to improve the cohesion of the team. Pintér has also said that both home and foreign based players are eligible for selection, as players will be chosen solely on the basis of performance.

● Márton Dinnyés



Boateng project nominated for integration prize

German international Jérôme Boateng is patron of the Midnight Sports Club in Berlin, one of the nominees for the integration prize awarded by the German Football Association (DFB) in partnership with Mercedes-Benz.

A jury comprising people such as Wolfgang Niersbach and Oliver Bierhoff has selected a total of nine nominees in the categories "club", "independent or community project" and "school", as well as choosing the recipient of a special award. The winners will be announced at a gala evening at the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart on 4 March, the night before the German national team's match against FIFA World Cup participants Chile. The special award will go to German Bundesliga club 1. FSV Mainz 05 for its exceptional work in the area of integration. The winners will be given a Mercedes-Benz



Jérôme Boateng, Oliver Bierhoff and Miroslav Klose with two amateur players

Vito, while the runners-up will receive cheques for €10,000 and €5,000. *"Football is a great driver of integration. After all, the local football club is the place where people meet. Football clubs do an enormous amount to support interaction and cooperation, including breaking down language and cultural barriers,"* said the president of the DFB, Wolfgang Niersbach. *"We have been presenting this annual integration prize in partnership with Mercedes-Benz since 2007, and we are delighted with the response it has had and with the quality of the applications."*

● Thomas Hackbarth

Fans of Hapoel Haifa FC receive award

The Israel Football Association (IFA) has given its award for the best behaved fans during the first half of the 2013/14 Israeli Premier League season to the supporters of Hapoel Haifa FC.

The IFA is working with Kick It Out Israel to create a better environment for football and stamp out all violence in stadiums. The award is presented following an assessment

by Kick It Out Israel volunteers, who visit the stadiums on a weekly basis.

The winning team's fans receive prize money from the IFA to spend on equipment. The fans of Hapoel Haifa FC were given their award before the recent home match against Beitar Jerusalem FC.

The IFA's goal is to create a great environment in the stadiums, ensuring that football is enjoyable for all.

● Michal Grundland



Nir Yankelevitch, head of professional leagues division in the Israel FA, with representatives of Kick It Out and Hapoel Haifa FC

Eschen/Mauren celebrate their 50th birthday

On 29 November 2013, celebrations were held to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Liechtensteiner football club FC USV Eschen/Mauren, with numerous guests from home and abroad being invited to join in the festivities.

Liechtenstein is home to just seven football clubs. Four of those – FC Vaduz, FC Balzers, FC Schaan and FC Triesen – were established in 1932 and went on to found the Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) in 1934. FC Ruggell and FC Triesenberg followed in 1958 and 1972 respectively. In between those two, the Unterländer Sportverein (lowland sports club; USV) was set up in the municipalities of Eschen and Mauren in 1963. Fifty years on, Eschen/Mauren is Liechtenstein's largest club in terms of the number of active members, as well as being one of the greatest in sporting terms, after FC Vaduz.



Matthias Voigt, president of the Liechtenstein FA, with guests at the FC USV Eschen/Mauren 50th anniversary celebrations

The club's management took the opportunity to invite guests from home and abroad to join in the 50th birthday celebrations. Representatives of the worlds of sport and politics came together with members of civil society to toast the club, with one particular birthday present being the publication of a special anniversary book looking back over the history of Eschen/Mauren.

Matthias Voigt, president of the LFV, congratulated the club on behalf of the national association, reminding those present that it is only through the actions of individuals – people in all manner of positions – that the continued existence and functioning of a club is guaranteed.

● Anton Banzer

FIFA badges presented to Maltese referees

At a recent event organised by the refereeing department of the Malta Football Association (MFA), 2014 FIFA badges were presented to the Maltese match officials on the world governing body's international list.

Referees Esther Azzopardi Farrugia, Marco Borg, Clayton Pisani and Alan Mario Sant, assistant referees Alan Camilleri, William Debattista, Christopher Francalanza, Mitchell Scerri, Edward Spiteri and Ingmar Spiteri, futsal referee Franco Cachia, and beach soccer referees Stefan Pace and Jude Amin Utulu were all presented with FIFA badges by the MFA's president, Norman Darmanin Demajo, in the presence of Adrian Casha, director of refereeing.

The work carried out by the refereeing department in 2013 and the events planned

for the months ahead were highlighted by the MFA's president and director of refereeing in their speeches. Special mention was made of the success of the referees' academy and the talent and mentor programme, as well as of the transformation of the refereeing department into learning centre for referees and observers.

Reference was also made to the increasing number of Maltese referees appointed by FIFA and UEFA to various friendly international matches, an exchange programme for domestic league matches (under which Maltese referees swap places with officials from an increasing number of countries), and the participation of referees and observers in a number of UEFA courses. Adrian Casha's participation in a UEFA CORE course as a coach was also recognised.



Clayton Pisani receives his 2014 FIFA badge from the president of the Malta FA, Norman Darmanin Demajo, with Adrian Casha, director of refereeing, on the right of the photo

Among those present were members of the referees' committee, observers, instructors and match officials from all categories.

● Alex Vella

Member associations



Moldova
www.fmf.md

Annual awards gala

The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) recently held its annual ceremony recognising the year's outstanding achievements in the world of football. The gala was attended by a number of officials, including Nicolae Timofti, the president of Moldova.

In front of 1,000 people, midfielder Alexandru Gatcan, who plays for FC Rostov in Russia, received the 2013 player of the year award. There were also awards for the best coach (Ion Caras, coach of Moldova's national team), the best referee (Piotr Stoianov), the best futsal player (Alexandru



The president of the Moldovan FA, Pavel Cebanu, speaking at the annual awards ceremony

Şevciuc of JLC Chişinău), the best female player (Anastasia Toma of Goliador-SS11), the best beach soccer player (Victor Comlionoc of CS Djoker-Tornado) and the best football tennis player (Alexandru Sirghi of ŞS nr. 12 Vadul lui Vodă).

The ceremony continued with awards for the best goalkeeper in the national championship (Nicolae Calancea of FC Zimbru Chişinău), the best defender (Miral Samardžić of FC Sheriff), the best midfielder (Alexandru Dedov of FC Zimbru Chişinău), the best forward (Luvannor

Henrique of FC Sheriff) and the top goalscorer (Gheorghe Boghiu of FC Milsami-Ursidos).

FC Tiraspol took the 2013 fair play award, and the FMF also presented awards to the British, Swedish, Hungarian, Ukrainian and Polish embassies in Moldova, as well as the border police of the ministry of internal affairs. A special award was presented to Alina Stetenco, the head coach of the national women's Under-17 team, for her courage in the fight against match-fixing.

● Press office



Northern Ireland
www.irishfa.com

Seven women celebrated

The Irish Football Association (IFA) recently celebrated the graduation of seven inspirational local women who had completed its female football leaders' programme. The event, held at the Long Gallery in Parliament Buildings, Stormont, included an address by keynote speaker Karen Espelund, chairwoman of the UEFA Women's Football Committee and a member of the UEFA Executive Committee.

The IFA developed the programme as part of its SCORE 2 project. Funded through the UEFA women's football development programme, this groundbreaking initiative is the first of its kind to be developed and piloted by the IFA. The programme concentrates on improving the leadership competencies and confidence of women working locally in football.

Congratulating participants on their achievement, the IFA's director of football

development, Michael Boyd, said: "The IFA's vision is to develop, promote and foster Football for All in Northern Ireland. This initiative is both innovative and ground-breaking. I would like to congratulate all the participants, partners, UEFA and IFA staff for making this happen. These inspirational and strong women are great role models for young people in the game and will go on to make vital contributions to their clubs and the local game. As a champion of football for all, I am delighted to support initiatives like this which empower change and are transforming the game here."

Run over 12 months, the programme required the seven women from across Northern Ireland to complete the ILM's Women Leading the Way course, delivered by the Training for Women Network, along with further units on resilience, high-impact conversations and board training, delivered by Advance



The female football leader graduates at Stormont

Coaching. "We conceived this programme to address the lack of females within leadership positions in football and ultimately encourage more women to get involved in decision-making roles within their local football clubs. The programme has exceeded all expectations and we are really proud of the women who took part in the course," said Sara Booth, the IFA's women's domestic football manager and the programme organiser.

● Sueann Harrison



Poland
www.pzpn.pl

New coaching school opens

The Polish Football Federation (PZPN) recently opened its new coaching school in Biała Podlaska. Top names in Polish football, representatives of the local authorities and numerous journalists all attended the opening ceremony, which heralded the start



The UEFA Pro licence course participants

of a two year UEFA Pro licence course for 20 coaches.

Just before 09.00, the Polish national team's official bus arrived at the PZPN's headquarters, where it collected a number of prominent individuals: former national team coaches Andrzej Streljau, Henryk Apostel and Janusz Wójcik, current coach Adam Nawalka, and PZPN officials (including the president, Zbigniew Boniek, and general secretary, Maciej Sawicki). They then travelled together to Biała Podlaska to open the PZPN's new coaching school.

"We want to ensure that we have high-quality coaches in Poland. We consider Biała Podlaska to be the perfect place to gain coaching skills. The conditions for doing so are excellent, as coaches have a lecture

hall, locker rooms, offices and a pitch," said the PZPN president.

Coaches will take courses on football medicine, training methodologies, pedagogy, dietetics, physiology, sociology, and practical and tactical activities, as well as public speaking and cooperation with the media. After just one day of their UEFA Pro licence course, it was clear to the coaches that they would enjoy first-class facilities. Franco Ferrari, former president of the Italian Football Federation's coaching school at Coverciano, gave an excellent inaugural lecture, which he rounded off by saying: "A coaching school doesn't teach you how to become a good coach. However, it gives you options and knowledge about what you should do to become one. A football coach is like a doctor – he examines and diagnoses."

● Jakub Kwiatkowski

Sarah O'Shea appointed deputy CEO

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) recently announced the appointment of Sarah O'Shea as deputy CEO. Sarah O'Shea is currently the FAI's director of legal affairs, a role she retains while taking on additional duties as deputy to the CEO, John Delaney.

Commenting on the appointment, Delaney said: "Since Sarah's appointment in 2006 she has made a substantial contribution to the management team. She has been an excellent legal director, establishing the legal department and reforming the association's disciplinary processes.

"As the governance and administrative needs of the game change, the FAI continues to adapt its structures, and Sarah's appointment is part of that process. Sarah brings her considerable skill sets to the role of deputy CEO, and her appointment will enhance the management structure as the association continues to develop all strands of the game".

Sarah O'Shea said that she was looking forward to the challenge ahead: "We are

embarking on another important phase for Irish football and I am keen to play a valuable role, particularly in the administrative and organisational aspects of the association as deputy to the CEO."

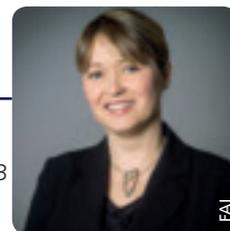
Paddy McCaul, president of the FAI, said: "As current company secretary of the association, a member of UEFA's HatTrick Committee and chairperson of the Federation of Irish Sport, Sarah is a highly respected figure in sport in Ireland and further afield." He added: "Sarah has worked very closely and successfully with the board of the association and the grassroots, and on behalf of the board and our members, I wish her every success."

Sarah O'Shea qualified as a solicitor in 2000 and graduated from the FIFA master's programme in 2006. She joined the FAI in 2006 and is currently responsible for all legal and disciplinary matters, governance issues, contracts, child welfare and football regulations. She was appointed company secretary in September 2010 and was appointed to UEFA's HatTrick Committee in July 2011. She became chairperson of the

Federation of Irish Sport in January 2013 and a panel member at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in September 2013.

Meanwhile, in other news, Irish Premier Division champions Saint Patrick's Athletic FC secured a transfer coup by signing current Irish international Keith Fahey, who has joined the club for the third time.

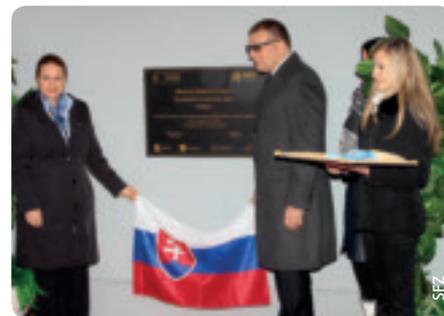
● Stephen Finn



Sarah O'Shea

New national training centre opens in Poprad

In November the president of the Slovak Football Association (SFZ), Ján Kováčik, officially opened the country's new national training centre in Poprad following reconstruction work. The centre's main stand was completely rebuilt in the first phase of the



The president of the Slovak FA, Jan Kovacik, inaugurates the new national training centre

project, and today it has a capacity of 2,000 seats, boasting 266 VIP seats, 50 press seats and 6 commentary boxes. Thanks to the SFZ's partnership with Aquacity Poprad, the new natural grass pitch is heated by geothermal water – a unique solution in the world of football and one that is highly beneficial from an ecological point of view. This reconstruction project was financed using €1.84m of funding from UEFA's HatTrick programme. In the next phase, the SFZ plans to build additional stands and training pitches, so that the stadium meets UEFA's category 3 criteria and can be used by Slovakia's national teams for international matches. The pitch and infrastructure at the national training centre have been tested and praised not only by the youth teams of Manchester United FC and AC Sparta Praha, but also by teams in the Slovak First League. This training centre, which sits at the entrance to the High Tatras, will greatly improve the development of football in Slovakia.

● Juraj Čurný

Valentin Ivanov takes charge of referees department

On 30 December the president of the Russian Football Union (RFS), Nikolai Tolstykh, officially introduced the new head of the RFS referees and referee observers department at the union's headquarters in Moscow. Valentin Ivanov, a 52-year-old former referee, officially replaced Roberto Rosetti on 3 January.

During his distinguished career as a referee, Valentin Ivanov was one of the best-known officials in Russian football. He refereed matches in the Russian championship from 1993 to 2007, and between 1997 and 2006 he was a FIFA referee. Among his honours, he refereed the final of the 2003 FIFA Confederations Cup and the 2003 Intercontinental Cup, as well as officiating at EURO 2004 and the 2006 FIFA World Cup.



Valentin Ivanov

From 2009 to 2013 he was a FIFA referee instructor.

"The referees department is one of the key parts of the Russian Football Union. Valentin Ivanov is well known, so he needs no introduction. I am sure that his considerable professionalism, knowledge and experience will be of great benefit to Russian football in this area," Nikolai Tolstykh said.

"I am fully aware of how complicated and important this job will be. But I feel confident that I will make a success of it. There is no doubt that this is a step forward in my career," Ivanov said.

"I believe that the referees department should be more open with the media. We will regularly inform the public regarding current events and let them know our views regarding particular situations. As for combining the RFS and FIFA positions, I don't think that is possible. The workload would be too large. As a result, I am choosing to focus entirely on the activities of the Russian Football Union. Among the events coming up, there are a couple of international competitions: the Valentin Granatkin memorial tournament, and the CIS Cup in St Petersburg. After that, there will be training camps for National Football League and Premier League referees," he added.

Sergey Zuev, Stanislav Sukhina and Vladimir Enyutin will all be assisting Vladimir Ivanov in the RFS referees and referee observers department.

● Irina Baranova



Prize goes to FC Mümliswil

FC Mümliswil has 13 teams in total, of which as many as seven are youth teams. The club also offers women's football. The men's first team play in Switzerland's fourth division.

The successful children's festival hosted by FC Mümliswil last summer was one of the highlights of the club's 64-year history – as was the video marking the event which the club sent to the Swiss Football Association. The beginning of that video depicts the founding of the club, with a fortune teller informing the club's executive committee that their 2013 children's festival will be the finest moment in their history.



The 2013 children's festival in Mümliswil

That prediction came true. The children's festival was attended by some 300 E, F and G-level youth players. And of all the videos submitted to the Swiss Football Association by festival hosts, FC Mümliswil's was the most popular by some distance, receiving

167 votes – 57.39% of the total. As a prize for winning the video competition, the Swiss Football Association gave the club ten tickets to one of the national team's home games in 2014.

● Pierre Benoit



New indoor arena for national youth teams

Following a meeting between Anatoliy Konkov, the president of the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU), and the local authorities on 17 January, it has been announced that a sports complex for national youth teams will be built in 2015. It will be situated in Vyshhorod, on the outskirts of Kyiv.

The main subjects of the meeting between the president of the FFU and the local authorities included the development of football in the Kyiv region and the construction and modernisation of local facilities (stadiums and other sports infrastructure).

"We have been planning this initiative. We will build an indoor football arena, where



The president of the Ukrainian FA, Anatoliy Konkov (left), with representatives of the Kiev local authorities, announcing the good news that a new sports complex for national youth teams is to be built

everyone will be able to play football all year round. We will build a modern stadium there that will allow our national youth teams to train and play official games. We can also open a youth football academy. Local authorities have the possibility to do this," Anatoliy Konkov said after the meeting.

According to Anatoliy Prysazhnyuk, governor of the Kyiv region and head of Kyiv's regional football association, plans for 2014 include the redevelopment of the

stadium in Vasylykiv and the construction of a sports complex in Ukrainka. Meanwhile, the planned sports complex in Vyshhorod will include a large arena with artificial turf, where international competitions can be held.

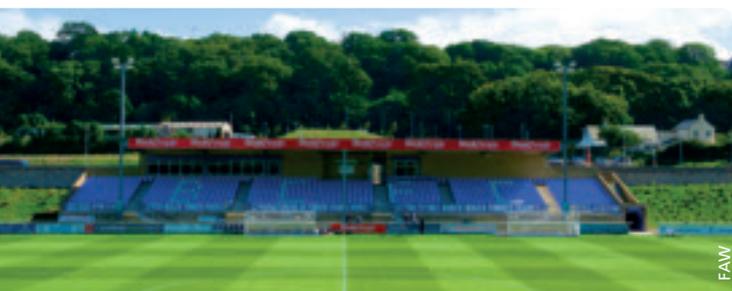
"We will also provide an opportunity for children to play football there, so they can learn basic skills from an early age," Prysazhnyuk added.

● Yuriy Maznychenko



New 3G surface for Bangor

Bangor City will be the first club in Wales to take advantage of the 3G scheme initiated by the Football Association of Wales (FAW).



Bangor City's ground will soon be getting a new, 3G playing surface

Work will begin soon on installing the new surface at Bangor City's training complex in Nantporth.

The club benefited from a £350,000 investment in the project from the FAW as part of the scheme to improve playing surfaces throughout Wales and to make Welsh Premier League clubs the hub of their communities. This is the largest single investment made by the FAW into a single club for an infrastructure project.

The FAW's president, Trefor Lloyd Hughes, said: "This is a major invest-

ment in the future of football here in Wales. We are delighted that Bangor City, one of our biggest clubs, has bought into the scheme. We hope that this announcement here today is the first of many and shows the FAW's commitment to improving facilities throughout the country."

Bangor City's chairman, Dilwyn Jones, was delighted at the official announcement, saying: "We cannot wait to get the building project under way. This facility will not only benefit Bangor City but will also benefit the city and the wider community. We want this facility to be a focal point for football, to develop skills, but more importantly, to give everyone the chance to play the game on a fantastic surface."

● Ceri Stennett

BIRTHDAYS

Benny Jacobsen (Denmark, 1 March)
Luis Medina Cantalejo (Spain, 1 March) 50th
 Damir Vrbanović (Croatia, 2 March)
Jenni Kennedy (England, 2 March) 40th
 Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder (Germany, 3 March)
 Zbigniew Boniek (Poland, 3 March)
 Hans Lorenz (Germany, 3 March)
 Alexandru Deaconu (Romania, 3 March)
Carolyn Rudolph (Germany, 3 March) 40th
 Patrick McGrath (Republic of Ireland, 4 March)
 Franco Combi (Italy, 4 March)
 Crawford Wilson (Northern Ireland, 5 March)
Zoran Bahtijarević (Croatia, 5 March) 50th
 James Samuel Shaw (Northern Ireland, 6 March)
Boris Durlen (Croatia, 6 March) 60th
Liana Melania Stoicescu (Romania, 6 March) 60th
 Ichko Lozev (Bulgaria, 6 March)
Sandro Rosell (Spain, 6 March) 50th
 Dan Ashworth (England, 6 March)
 Pedro Maria Aurteneche Viñegra (Spain, 7 March)
 Dušan Maravić (Serbia, 7 March)
 Tomás Gea (Andorra, 7 March)
 Josep Lluís Vilaseca Guasch (Spain, 8 March)
 Giorgio Crescentini (San Marino, 8 March)
 Diogo Paiva Brandão (Portugal, 8 March)
 Kris Bellon (Belgium, 8 March)
 Alexis Ponnet (Belgium, 9 March)
 Vladimir Aleshin (Russia, 9 March)
 Henk Kesler (Netherlands, 9 March)
 Ruben Hayrapetyan (Armenia, 9 March)
Herbert Fandel (Germany, 9 March) 50th
 Joseph S. Blatter (Switzerland, 10 March)
 Mateo Beusan (Croatia, 10 March)
 Ilkka Koho (Finland, 10 March)
 Carlos Del Campo Colás (Spain, 10 March)
 Jasmin Baković (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 10 March)
 Diana Andersen (Denmark, 10 March)
 Lucien Kayser (Luxembourg, 11 March)
Sergey Fursenko (Russia, 11 March) 60th
 Olga Zhukovska (Ukraine, 11 March)
 Jean-François Crucke (Belgium, 12 March)
 Miroslav Vitković (Croatia, 12 March)
 Thomas Partl (Austria, 13 March)
 Yngve Hallén (Norway, 14 March)
 Neil Jardine (Northern Ireland, 14 March)
 Lucia Knappkova (Slovakia, 14 March)
Ivan Ćurković (Serbia, 15 March) 70th
 Götz Dimanski (Germany, 15 March)
 Michael Thomas Ross (Northern Ireland, 15 March)
 Cornelius Bakker (Netherlands, 17 March)
 Simeon Tsolakidis (Greece, 17 March)
 Christos Skapoullis (Cyprus, 18 March)
 Marcello Nicchi (Italy, 18 March)
 Andreas Georgiou (Cyprus, 18 March)
Marina Tashchyan (Armenia, 18 March) 50th
 Willy Sagnol (France, 18 March)

Helmut Spahn (Germany, 19 March)
 Ronald Zimmermann (Germany, 19 March)
 Aristides Stathopoulos (Greece, 20 March)
 Sándor Csányi (Hungary, 20 March)
 Edward Foley (Republic of Ireland, 20 March)
Jim Boyce (Northern Ireland, 21 March) 70th
 Kai-Erik Arstad (Norway, 21 March)
 Ginés Meléndez (Spain, 22 March)
 Chris Georghiades (Cyprus, 22 March)
 Michail Kassabov (Bulgaria, 22 March)
 Luca Zorzi (Switzerland, 22 March)
 Pafsanias Papanikolaou (Greece, 22 March)
 Bernard Barbet (France, 23 March)
 Franz Krösslhuber (Austria, 23 March)
 Andrea Lastrucci (Italy, 23 March)
 Mirosław Malinowski (Poland, 23 March)
 Mahmut Özgener (Turkey, 23 March)
Hilda McDermott (Republic of Ireland, 23 March) 50th
 Outi Saarinen (Finland, 23 March)

Fernando Ruiz Hierro (Spain, 23 March)
 Daniel Prodan (Romania, 23 March)
 Christoforos Zografos (Greece, 24 March)
 Michael Kirchner (Germany, 25 March)
 Wilfried Straub (Germany, 26 March)
 Steen Jørgensen (Denmark, 26 March)
 Anton Ondruš (Slovakia, 27 March)
 José Antonio Casajus (Spain, 27 March)
 Armen Minasyan (Armenia, 27 March)
 Pavel Cebanu (Moldova, 28 March)
 Edgar Obertüfer (Switzerland, 29 March)
 Ian Beasley (England, 29 March)
 Stefan Ormandjiev (Bulgaria, 29 March)
 Alan Snoddy (Northern Ireland, 29 March)
 Bernadette Constantin (France, 29 March)
 Bernardino González Vázquez (Spain, 29 March)
 Sanna Pirhonen (Finland, 29 March)
 William Hugh Wilson (Scotland, 30 March)
 Richard Havrilla (Slovakia, 31 March)
 Matteo Simone Trefoloni (Italy, 31 March)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

19 March, Nyon
 Youth and Amateur Football Committee

21 March, Nyon
 UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League: draws for the quarter-finals

25/26 March, Astana
 Executive Committee

27 March, Astana
 XXXVIII UEFA Ordinary Congress

Competitions

11/12 + 18/19 March
 UEFA Champions League: round of 16 (return legs)
 UEFA Youth League: quarter-finals

13 March
 UEFA Europa League: round of 16 (first legs)

15 March – 4 April, Costa Rica
 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

20 March
 UEFA Europa League: round of 16 (return legs)

22/23 March
 UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-finals (first legs)

29/30 March
 UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-finals (return legs)

NOTICE

- The Danish FA has appointed Claus Bretton-Meyer as its new chief executive. He takes over from Jim Stjerne Hansen on 1 March.

NEW BOOK

ENCYKLOPEDIA PIŁKARSKA ROCZNIK 2013–2014

A 42st volume of Andrzej Gowarzewski's encyclopedia – which is also Polish football's official 2014 yearbook – has now been published. This is an unrivalled mine of information on Poland's domestic competitions and the players who feature in them. It also contains details of European competitions and even those of other confederations.
 (Wydawnictwo GiA, PO Box 2772, 40-357 Katowice 14, Poland)

OBITUARY

Former chairman of the UEFA Appeals Body **Léon Straessle** of Switzerland passed away on 5 January aged 88. Léon Straessle chaired the Appeals Body from 1988 to 2002 and the disciplinary study group from 1990 to 1992. He also represented UEFA on various occasions as an expert on sports law. A member of the circle of former UEFA committee members, Léon Straessle was awarded the UEFA Order of Merit in Diamond at the UEFA Congress in Limassol, Cyprus, in 2004.



NO TO RACISM



RESPECT