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Cover:

*FC Porto's Jackson Martinez
rises heads and shoulders
above Marek Suchy of
FC Basel 1893 in the first
leg of the UEFA Champions
League round of 16 tie.*

Photo: AFP/Getty Images

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HELPING TO BRIDGE THE GAP

As the second season of the two-year UEFA Youth League test phase draws to a close, we have received many indications from the participating players and clubs that the experiment has already had a very positive impact – and the competition will therefore become an established feature on the European football landscape.

The positive effect is not exclusively in relation to the development of youth talent and the commitment that clubs now have to this development; it is also because the competition has allowed more exchanges between youth players from different clubs off the field, while providing additional competitive international experience on it.

Building international experience for youth players, reducing the gap between clubs' youth and first teams, offering a unique international experience and providing competitive matches for these youngsters were the main objectives behind the creation of the competition. So far this season, 28 players from the UEFA Youth League have been involved in the UEFA Champions League – an increase of 65% on the entire 2013/14 season.

Equally, it is still our objective to ensure that European football continues to shape and train players, which means that the UEFA Youth League focuses on locally trained players, on club academies and on player development. For that reason, the minimum number of locally trained players in the 20-man squads for this competition has been increased from 10 to 12.

But the competition also provides additional benefits. As in youth national team competitions, matches in the UEFA Youth League are a platform from which to further promote our team education programme by teaching over 1,300 players about integrity.

It is on this basis that the UEFA Executive Committee took the decision last September to make the UEFA Youth League a permanent fixture in the annual club competition calendar. The Executive Committee also endorsed the idea of expanding the competition by including 32 domestic youth league winners. This will strengthen the competition's sporting legitimacy.

There will be two paths used – one for the youth teams of the 32 UEFA Champions League teams and the other for the 32 domestic youth league winners – to determine the knockout stages of the competition.

This new format doubles the participation of youth players in the competition. It also opens a new avenue for our member associations to have national domestic youth champions involved, while the youth teams of UEFA Champions League clubs can continue to participate in competitive football alongside their senior teams.

Whichever path they are on, we expect that upcoming youth talents will appreciate the opportunity given to them by the UEFA Youth League to glean crucial experience at an early stage in their careers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Gianni Infantino'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Gianni Infantino
UEFA General Secretary

BREAKING NEW GROUND

With the new 'Week of Football' concept making it easier to follow the action on the road to UEFA EURO 2016, the qualifying competition is more than living up to expectations. While most of football's superpowers are holding their own, there has been a surprising number of upsets already, with several newcomers making waves.

A record 24 nations will be represented in France next summer, so there is everything still to play for between now and November.

Group A: Iceland on course for a first

Iceland have undoubtedly provided the biggest surprise of the qualifying round so far. Led by striker Gylfi Sigurdsson (4 goals), they currently lie second in the group with nine points from four matches. Solid at the back and full of ideas up front, the Icelanders are well on the way to qualifying for a men's EURO for the very first time. To see the job through, they will need to fend off a possible return to form from the Netherlands, who are in third place on six points. Currently heading for the play-offs, Arjen Robben and his team-mates know that a slip-up against Turkey (4th with 4 points) in their next match could put them further off course. Things are looking good, on the other hand, for the Czech Republic, who have achieved an impressive four wins out of four and are still able to call on the experienced Petr Čech and Tomáš Rosický. At the other end of the group, Kazakhstan and Latvia have failed to register a victory between them and are more or less out of the running.

Group B: Surprising top three

The Group B table is the most surprising. Even though they have played – and won – only three matches, Israel top the group, thanks in particular to Omer Damari, currently joint top goalscorer in the European Qualifiers with five goals. Also unbeaten, Wales and their star Gareth Bale are second (a point behind having played a game more) and will be dreaming of repeating their exploits of 1976, when they reached the quarter-finals. Cyprus, meanwhile (3rd with 6 points), are benefiting from the steady progress of their clubs and players and sit proudly above the group's two 2014 World Cup sides, Belgium (4th with 5 points) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (5th with 2 points). The Bosnians in particular have struggled to recover from a disappointing World Cup. As for the Belgians and their golden generation, seen by many as one of the favourites for EURO 2016, they are preparing for two crucial matches in three days, against Cyprus and Israel. Andorra are still hunting for their first point.

Group C: Trio breaking away

Just for once, Spain are not top of their group. La Roja, who had not lost a World Cup or European Championship qualifier for eight years,



Danny Welbeck helped England to secure maximum points in their first four matches

Getty Images



Gibraltar were drawn against world champions Germany for their first ever EURO qualifier

suffered a 2-1 defeat at the hands of Slovakia. Thanks to this win in particular, the Slovaks have made a perfect start and appear to be the team to beat. A fantastic achievement for this relatively new country, which has never played in a EURO before. Despite their prolific forward line (13 goals in 4 games), the Spaniards (2nd with 9 points) are battling it out with a solid, ambitious Ukrainian outfit (3rd with 9 points). Led by their front pair of Yarmolenko and Konoplyanka, Ukraine travel to Spain for their next match and will be attempting to pull off a surprise. The top three seem uncatchable, but it is hard to predict their final order. In the other mini-league within Group C, Luxembourg's steady progress is especially noteworthy. Indeed, the Grand Duchy now seems capable of competing with opponents such as Belarus and FYR Macedonia.

Group D: Germany under pressure

Anyone who thought the world champions would find this group a walk in the park could not have been more wrong. Indeed, it is Robert Lewandowski's Poland who are leading the way with ten points already in the bank. After beating their German neighbours (2-0) for the first time in history, the Poles can boast the best attack of the qualifying round so far (15 goals in 4 matches) and sit pretty at the top of the group. Behind them, a fierce battle is being waged between the Republic of Ireland, Germany and Scotland, all on seven points. Although Germany are the best of these three teams on paper, there is nothing between them on the pitch. It may seem unthinkable, but there remains a chance that Joachim Löw's men, without the recently retired Lahm and Klose, will fail to qualify. Georgia, meanwhile, are hanging on in there and still have a mathematical chance of qualifying. At the bottom of the group, Gibraltar are

improving match by match and putting up a respectable performance in their first European Championship qualifying round, despite a leaky defence (21 goals conceded).

Group E: England a long way ahead

It is no surprise that England, with their talented group of youngsters, are dominating their section with 4 wins, 11 goals scored and only 1 conceded, giving them the best record of all the teams at this stage of the competition. Despite these impressive statistics, there remains room for improvement on the pitch and it has often been left to Danny Welbeck (5 goals) to make the difference. Behind England, who are six points clear of their nearest rivals, Slovenia, Switzerland, Lithuania (all on 6 points) and even Estonia (4 points) will be fighting tooth and nail to get ahead. Every point won could change the picture completely. Thanks to their superior goal difference (+5) and more experienced group of players, Switzerland are currently favourites, but there is a lot of excitement ahead for all the teams in this particular race. Like the other smaller nations, San Marino, meanwhile, have produced some increasingly encouraging performances.

Group F: First final round for Northern Ireland?

Although they have played in three World Cup final tournaments, Northern Ireland have never experienced the joy of competing in a European Championship final round. Could 2016 be their year? Michael O'Neill's men have every right to believe it is possible, especially if they can build on their good away record so far (two wins out of three). In second place with nine points, they have their fate in their own hands. Just one point ahead of them, Romania

also find themselves well placed, thanks to their solid defence (a single goal conceded). Hungary (3rd with 7 points) could make the play-offs, but they need to watch out for Finland (4th with 4 points). The biggest surprise in this group is the disastrous start made by Greece. Rock bottom with a single point and three defeats, Theofanis Gekas and his compatriots are in a desperate situation, compounded by a 1-0 home defeat by the Faroe Islands, who leapfrogged them at the foot of the table.

Group G: Liechtenstein in the running

In an evenly matched group, Liechtenstein are the surprise package and are still in the running for their first ever final-round appearance. The principality are currently fifth in the group with four points, only two behind second-placed Sweden – a situation that was unimaginable just a few months ago. Liechtenstein find themselves in this favourable position thanks to a 1-0 victory in Moldova, where they scored their only goal in four matches. At the top of the group, Austria (10 points), with their perfect blend of youth and experience, seem to be heading for direct qualification. Behind them, Sweden have the advantage over Russia and Montenegro in a battle that looks like it will go right to the wire. Despite their progress, Moldova are the only team in the group for which qualification appears out of reach.

Group H: Norway lie in wait

With their squad brimming with elegant players, Croatia are fighting it out with Italy at the top of the group. Although, as far as the maths are concerned, each team has ten points, their performances on the pitch are leaving contrasting impressions. Croatia have performed

magnificently, scoring ten goals and only conceding one (in a 1-1 draw against Italy), whereas the Italians have struggled to implement the ideas of their new coach, Antonio Conte. In third place, Norway are only a point behind the top two. Norwegian football is experiencing a true renaissance, as demonstrated by the emergence of talented youngster Martin Ødegaard, who, before his 16th birthday, became the youngest player ever to appear in a European Championship qualifier. Norway's next match in Croatia will be one to watch closely. Bulgaria, Malta and Azerbaijan are off the pace in a group in which most of the matches have been very tight.

Group I: Who will join France?

For the very first time in the history of European qualifiers, Group I contains the final round hosts. Although matches against Les Bleus are friendlies, competition between the group's other five teams is intense. For the time being, Christian Eriksen and his Danish team-mates lead the way with seven points. The Tottenham Hotspur FC midfielder is the lynchpin of a young team full of talent that could be one of the outsiders in 2016. Portugal, led by triple Ballon d'or winner Cristiano Ronaldo, are in second spot, one point behind but with a game in hand over the Danes. The main surprise in this group is Albania, in third place with four points. Brave, courageous and skilful on the ball, Lorik Cana and his compatriots are certainly playing their part. Armenia and Serbia, on the other hand, are in trouble. Although everything could change very quickly in this particular group, Serbia have not been helped by their supporters' behaviour, which has cost them a three-point deduction. ●

Julien Hernandez



Croatia and Italy share top spot in Group H after having drawn 1-1 in Italy last November

Getty Images

NEW FAIR PLAY AWARDS SYSTEM

The Republic of Ireland headed the interim UEFA Respect Fair Play rankings, based on 1,613 UEFA club and national team matches played between 1 May and 31 December 2014. With the Netherlands and England, they lead the race for the three additional places in the first qualifying round of the 2015/16 UEFA Europa League. The 2015/16 season will then herald the introduction of a new Respect Fair Play awards system.

This season's final rankings will be based on the period between 1 May 2014 and 30 April 2015, and will be announced in May. Each of the three associations allocated an additional berth in the first qualifying round of the 2015/16 UEFA Europa League will be entitled to enter the club that wins its domestic top-division fair play competition. If this club has already qualified for a UEFA competition, the second-placed team in the domestic fair play competition may be entered, and so on.

Next season will see a new system come into force. Instead of being awarded places in the UEFA Europa League, winning associations will be awarded prize money to allocate to fair play or respect-themed projects in their respective countries.

The new system was approved by the UEFA Executive Committee in December, as laid down in the new UEFA Fair Play Regulations, which were also ratified by the Executive Committee. The relevant annex to the current UEFA competition regulations will be removed and replaced by the new UEFA Fair Play Regulations as of 1 May 2015.

Each season, the UEFA Respect Fair Play competition has ranked all of UEFA's member associations on the basis of fair play assessments made by UEFA delegates at all UEFA matches, focusing on criteria such as positive play, respect for the opposition, respect for the referee and conduct of the crowd and team officials, as well as cautions and dismissals. The top three associations in the rankings have each been awarded an additional place in the UEFA Europa League first qualifying round, with the three spots going to the clubs who win those associations' domestic fair play competitions.

Three different fair play rankings

Under the new regulations, three different fair play rankings will be calculated during the 2015/16 campaign, and three categories of rewards are being introduced for the winners:

- overall fair play: the association with the highest overall fair play score;
- best season-on-season progression: the association with the greatest improvement in its overall fair play score from one season to the next;
- behaviour of spectators: the association with the highest final score for this criterion.



Fair play is a vital part of the "beautiful game"

As recognition that success in a fair play competition is an achievement by an entire national association, and to invite commitment to increasing fair play awareness, the associations ranked highest in each of the three categories will be awarded prize money to donate to amateur or professional clubs of their choice within the association, to be used for fair play or respect-themed projects. The UEFA Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee will decide on the amount of prize money awarded. These rewards will replace the three additional places offered in the UEFA Europa League.

With the current UEFA Respect Fair Play rankings taking into consideration all UEFA competition matches from 1 May to 30 April, the new UEFA Fair Play Regulations for the 2015/16 season will cover the period from 1 May 2015 to 30 June 2016. As from 2016/17, the fair play competition will include all games played between 1 July and 30 June. ●

LAYING FOOTBALL'S FOUNDATIONS

UEFA international development tournaments are back under way for Under-16 teams and the benefits are better than ever. Under-16 players all over Europe, both male and female, are showcasing their talents and expanding their range of skills as part of the latest round of these tournaments.

All 54 national associations are involved in the latest batch of mini-tournaments for boys, which kicked off in the Algarve in February, with the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) allowing the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) to organise the event, which also included Germany and Spain.

A total of 49 different teams will appear in the girls' tournaments, using them as a springboard to grow and improve both on and off the pitch.

Encouraging signs

The benefits of the development tournaments are multi-dimensional. The exposure to international opponents allows coaching staff and players alike to prepare themselves for the rigours of future competition at Under-17 level while also helping participants to develop away from the field of play.

"Our goal is to make the teams feel the freedom and the trust to do whatever they think is best for the development of their players; each team develops in its own way," explained Jeroen Roest, the tournament director for the first event of the year in the Algarve. *"This is the third year in a row that the teams have been really satisfied with the organisation of the tournament and we*

have seen the standard of performance rise each year. We tried to make the teams feel at home, using one stadium for all matches for the boys and girls and the hotels were situated really close to the training facilities."

Ambassadors primed to inspire

The tournaments also dovetail with the work of the UEFA Women's Football Development Programme, ensuring that young female players have more advice and inspiration from a newly unveiled squad of ambassadors.

France duo Camille Abily and Laura Georges, Spain's Verónica Boquete and Swedish international Lotta Schelin joined Steffi Jones at February's launch in Paris, and they will all appear at future development tournaments, where they will relay their experience to the future generation of the women's game.

"I am really proud of what UEFA is doing with these initiatives to give as many girls as possible the opportunity to play football if they want to, because that's what I stand for," said former Germany international Jones, who has already attended several assignments in her ambassadorial role. *"One example was in Minsk, where it was great to see that they have been building up structures, showing girls what football can give*



Portugal up against the Netherlands in the development tournament organised by the KNVB in the Algarve in February

KNVB

them and sharing experiences with the national association. Those are some of the important things of being an ambassador."

1. FFC Frankfurt midfielder Boquete was scheduled to attend a tournament in Zagreb in March and was equally excited about the challenges of the role. "I think this initiative is needed a lot because girls who are coming up and wanting to be like us need female points of reference," she said. "My main advice to them will be to work hard, and now I think they have enough role models to see that all of their dreams can come true, but you really have to work hard and deserve it."

With women's tournaments operating at Under-16, Under-17 and Under-18 levels, UEFA actively supports and encourages the development of players at these key ages. Should a national team be eliminated during the qualifying round of the European Women's Under-17 Championship, there is a sizeable gap before the same players can feature at Under-19 level, so UEFA's aim is to support the national associations in ensuring that significant pools of talent are not lost from the women's game. The enthusiasm of the national associations, players and teams shows that the approach is already bearing fruit.

Leaving a legacy

The tournaments also offer a wide range of national associations the opportunity to host tournaments, thus equipping them with the skills needed to stage other football events in the future.

"These tournaments are very important for boys and girls" explained Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation youth football coordinator Murat Jaha during the last series of tournaments. "In addition to football skills, it also gives them an opportunity to socialise, to make new friends and, importantly, to receive education, because the referees act as educators so that they can learn from their mistakes before becoming high-level players. We have also taken a serious step in terms of the organisation of these tournaments because it's not just about the match; there are many other preparations needed, from security at the stadium to training, transport, accommodation, food, etc."

Embracing development

At all levels – Under-16, Under-17 (girls only) and Under-18 (tournaments scheduled for later in 2015) – the national associations have embraced not only the international development tournaments but also the ethos of focusing on progression rather than results.

Seeing the impressive number of national associations involved in this programme and speaking to the national team coaches, UEFA is delighted to see that it is reaching its main targets. It is complementing the elite youth player pathway across Europe, offering more international experience to talented young



The women's football ambassadors

players and enabling them to better prepare for qualifying matches at Under-17 and Under-19 level next year. The tournaments also allow coaches to provide players with important game time and education as tailor-made presentations on the dangers of match-fixing have also been introduced for these specific age categories in order to reinforce UEFA's policy on integrity in football. ●

UNDER-16 SCHEDULE

BOYS

Following the first UEFA international development tournaments in Croatia, England, Portugal and the Republic of Ireland, the schedule for the remainder of the Under-16 season is as follows:

28 March–1 April: Gibraltar host San Marino, Malta and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

10–14 April: Azerbaijan host Greece, Georgia and Kazakhstan

12–16 April: Montenegro host Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Andorra

15–19 April: Romania host Hungary, Bulgaria and Moldova

17–21 April: Faroe Islands host Israel, Wales and Northern Ireland

26–30 April: Israel host Ukraine, Turkey and Poland

26–30 April: Belarus host Estonia, Lithuania and Sweden

27 April–1 May: Finland host Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia and Latvia

1–5 May: Albania host Armenia, Montenegro and Cyprus

8–12 May: Portugal host Belgium, Norway and Italy

GIRLS

After the season kick-off for international development tournaments in Croatia, Portugal and the Republic of Ireland, the women's Under-16 tournaments continue as follows:

5–9 April: Montenegro host Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

7–14 April: England host France, Switzerland and Sweden

15–19 April: Azerbaijan host Greece, Georgia and Kazakhstan

20–26 April: Romania host Slovakia, Bulgaria, Moldova and Hungary

22–26 April: Faroe Islands host Israel, Wales and Northern Ireland

1–5 May: Israel host Ukraine, Turkey and Poland

1–5 May: Belarus host Estonia, Lithuania and Armenia

2–6 May: Finland host Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia and Latvia

3–7 May: Portugal host Belgium, Norway and Italy ●

CELEBRATING MARKETING EXCELLENCE

One of the cornerstones of UEFA's close relationship with its 54 member associations is the pursuit of excellence for the benefit of European football. UEFA relishes the opportunity to reward the associations' quality in their abundant activities to foster football's image and well-being. One key area for such activities is marketing, and here UEFA honours its associations through the biennial KISS Marketing Awards. The 2014 awards ceremony took place in Cascais, Portugal, during the KISS Marketing Best Practices and Trends Workshop.



The 2014 award winners

The KISS Marketing Awards were organised for the first time in 2011, and are staged under the auspices of UEFA's Knowledge & Information Sharing Scenario (KISS), a programme which has proved its worth over the last ten years, with associations exchanging know-how and expertise with the aim of generating constant improvement and development.

Excellence is worthy of celebration in this crucial area of modern-day football, given that marketing is essential in reinforcing, among others, national team identities and fan bases. The awards are a superb window through which to view the top-notch promotion of football that is taking place across all four corners of Europe. UEFA feels that this sterling and often groundbreaking work deserves the European governing body's unstinting support – backing which, in itself, provides a vital source of mutual inspiration and motivation for all the associations as they develop exciting marketing strategies.

The awards focus strictly on marketing matters – brand building, sponsorship, digital marketing, fan engagement, football promotion, marketing research, merchandising and licensing. The award categories are: Best Digital Fan Engagement Campaign; Best Fan Experiential Promotion; Best Sponsorship Activation; Best Brand Strategy and Implementation; and Best Grassroots Marketing Campaign. Awards for creativity and innovation are also given in each category.

Projects were forthcoming from throughout the continent – no fewer than 37 European

associations submitted 51 projects in the various categories. A jury of five high-profile experts faced a tough task in choosing the winners after evaluating a host of outstanding entries. The jury was made up of Dennis Thom (head of marketing, Borussia Dortmund GmbH & Co. KGaA), Gareth Dunsmore (general manager, marketing communications, Nissan Europe SAS), Adrian Goldthorpe (managing partner, Lothar Böhm Associates Ltd), Sam Kelly (head of business development and marketing, AKQA) and Thierry Lardinois (director, International Observatory of Sports Consumption).

Pride in winning

The associations who won awards expressed considerable pride. For example, the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) and its 'Be Proud' digital strategy took the honours in the Best Digital Fan Engagement Campaign category, highlighting the bonding of players and supporters. "We have tried to show our fans how committed, passionate and hard-working Croatian national team players are in representing their country and making them proud," said HNS press officer Tomislav Pacak. "We thank UEFA for recognising our work; this award will be a great incentive for future projects."

With its 'Reach Out' campaign, the Malta Football Association (MFA) aimed to attract as many people as possible to last May's European Under-17 Championship final round. A total of 42,246 spectators watched the matches – equivalent to 10% of the country's population –

“a remarkable achievement,” according to the MFA’s head of marketing, Norman Saliba. “This would not have been possible had it not been for the MFA’s top management buying into the idea... Yes, football can really bring people together.”

Ideas and creativity marked the work undertaken by other successful associations. The Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) and the ARAG insurance company’s ‘KNVB and ARAG Go for Fair Play’ campaign aimed to increase the number of referees aged between 12 and 30, improve the image of referees and promote fair play and respect. Meanwhile, the Turkish Football Federation joined forces with mobile phone operator Turkcell for ‘Those Who See the Sound,’ promoting disabled football activities, and the Royal Belgian Football Association strove to increase interest in the national women’s football team by giving them a fresh brand name and identity – ‘Belgian Red Flames’.

Other associations’ campaigns looked to update overall association branding and identity, reposition the association in the marketplace, stimulate amateur football, promote domestic competitions, attract sponsors, heighten media interest and give fans – the lifeblood of the game – the chance to be heard or connect more closely with the stars that they follow.

Showcasing the best

It is vastly encouraging to UEFA to see that the marketing and promotion of football in Europe is in such professional, dedicated and enthusiastic hands and will doubtless flourish as



Jules McGeever and David Thomson (Scottish Football Association) with UEFA HatTrick Committee chairman Allan Hansen (left) after receiving the “Creativity and innovation” award in the Best Digital Fan Engagement Campaign category

skilled marketing techniques continue to evolve with time. “These marketing awards showcase the very best in national association marketing,” the chairman of the UEFA HatTrick Committee, Allan Hansen, told the associations at the ceremony in Cascais. “And it is clear to all of us that your marketing and promotion of the game is developing quickly, hand-in-hand with your friends at UEFA.”

“The 51 applications from 37 national associations says everything,” was the conclusion of UEFA’s marketing director, Guy-Laurent Epstein. “The UEFA KISS Marketing Awards continue to grow with every edition. What is important to us as part of the KISS programme is that we now have 51 examples of best practices that UEFA can add to its rich bank of content.” ●

FULL LIST OF AWARD CATEGORIES, NOMINEES AND WINNERS:

Best Digital Fan Engagement Campaign

Winner: Croatian Football Federation (HNS) – ‘Be Proud’ digital strategy

Nominees: Polish Football Federation (PZPN) – #Wszyscy Na Puchar’ (#Everyone to the Cup Final);

French Football Federation (FFF) – ‘FFF 2014 Digital Fan Engagement Campaign’

Creativity and innovation award: Scottish Football Association (SFA) – #DefyTheOdds

Best Fan Experiential Promotion

Winner: Malta Football Association (MFA) – ‘Reach Out’

Nominees: Danish Football Association (DBU) – World Penalty Championships;

French Football Federation (FFF) – ‘Casa Bleue’

Creativity and innovation award: Royal Belgian Football Association (URBSFA/KBVB) – ‘A Stadium Box Full of Women’

Best Sponsorship Activation

Winner: Turkish Football Federation (TFF) & Turkcell – ‘Those Who See the Sound’

Nominees: Danish Football Association (DBU) – World Penalty Championships;

Royal Belgian Football Association (URBSFA/KBVB) – ING ‘The Road Signs Brazil’

Creativity and innovation award: Football Association of Iceland (KSÍ) – ‘Proud Sponsors of Football’

Best Brand Strategy and Implementation

Winner: Royal Belgian Football Association (URBSFA/KBVB) – ‘Belgian Red Flames’

Nominees: Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) – ‘Official Mascot and Sonic Identity’;

Football Association of Wales (FAW) – ‘Uniting the Welsh Football Family’

Creativity and innovation award: Football Association of Albania (FSHF) – ‘Rebranding the Albanian FA’

Best Grassroots Marketing Campaign

Winner: Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) – ‘KNVB and ARAG Go for Fair Play’

Nominees: Football Association of Norway (NFF) – ‘MinFotball’ (My Football);

German Football Association (DFB) – ‘Upgrading Amateur Football in Germany’

Creativity and innovation award: Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) – ‘3x3 Girls Tournament’ ●

LISBON HOSTS FUTSAL SUMMIT

The UEFA Futsal Cup finals return to Lisbon between 24 and 26 April, as hosts Sporting Clube de Portugal, holders FC Barcelona, 2013 champions Kairat Almaty and newcomers ISK Dina Moskva converge on the Portuguese capital with club futsal's most prestigious prize at stake.

It is five years since Lisbon last staged the event in 2010, when Sporting's great rivals SL Benfica became the first Portuguese side to lift the trophy. A competition-record 9,400 crowd saw the Eagles beat Inter FS 3-2 after extra time in the final that season, and Sporting CP aim to make home advantage count as well.

A good omen for them perhaps, Nuno Dias's team have already overcome Inter in the elite round to reach the last four, and with former winner Alex and veteran Portuguese internationals Pedro Cary and Paulinho in the squad, expectations are high that they can go one better than in 2011, when they lost the final.

Barcelona stand in their way in the semi-finals this time, bidding to become the second side in the competition's history to successfully defend their crown – and just the second team after Inter to claim three titles. Barcelona have established themselves as the dominant force in European club futsal in recent years, losing only once in 21 matches since their competition debut in 2012, a sequence of results that includes a 5-1 victory over Sporting in the semis that year.

Blaugrana talisman Sergio Lozano, however, anticipates a tricky reunion with the Portuguese outfit. *"We've been drawn against the hosts, they'll pack 10,000 spectators into the arena, they'll put pressure on us and fight for everything,"* he said. *"I'm sure it will be difficult for us.*

They knocked out Inter, who aren't any old side. Those at the final stage are there because they deserve to be."

Barça's sole defeat came in the semi-finals in 2013, when they succumbed 5-4 to eventual champions Kairat. That was the Kazakhstani champions' first UEFA Futsal Cup crown, and this time around they meet Dina at the penultimate hurdle.

The Russian champions have enjoyed a terrific first term in the competition: of the 12 debutants in 2014/15 they are the only team to have advanced to the last four. Dina may be new to the UEFA Futsal Cup yet they are no strangers to success, having landed eight straight Russian titles between 1993 and 2000 as well as excelling in the unofficial European precursors to this tournament. With former UEFA Futsal Cup winners Sergei Zuev, Dmitri Prudnikov, Damir Khamadiyev and Alemao among their number, Dina have plenty of experience at the highest level too.

In recent campaigns the UEFA Futsal Cup has become something of trailblazer, having organised the first UEFA final tournaments in Kazakhstan (2011), Georgia (2013) and Azerbaijan (2014). In this, the 14th edition, however, the event is returning to its roots. The first competition in 2002 concluded at the same Meo Arena (formerly Pavilhão Atlântico) that will hold these finals, and Benfica also contested the final in Lisbon in 2004 and 2010.

This season's semi-final draw, involving tournament ambassador Paulo Futre, was made at the Lisbon football derby between Sporting and Benfica on 8 February, to further pique interest in one of the world's great futsal hotbeds. Certainly for Kairat's Brazilian forward Joan, kick-off cannot come soon enough. A UEFA Futsal Cup winner in 2007 and 2013, he says nothing quite compares to lifting the trophy. *"You feel you are writing your name in the history of this great game. Then you feel crazy joy and immeasurable happiness."* ●

The UEFA Futsal Cup is returning to the magnificent Meo Arena, which hosted the first ever final



UEFA Futsal Cup

Meo Arena, Lisbon
Semi-finals: 24 April

ISK Dina Moskva (RUS) v Kairat Almaty (KAZ)
FC Barcelona (ESP) v Sporting Clube de Portugal (POR)

Third place play-off and final: 26 April

NEW BOOK CELEBRATES UEFA'S 60TH BIRTHDAY



UEFA celebrated its 60th birthday in 2014, giving the European body the opportunity to cast a proud eye over six eventful decades of serving the game across the continent. This milestone is also celebrated by a new book, *UEFA – 60 years at the heart of football*, written by André Vieli.

André Vieli worked for the UEFA administration for 31 years, in particular as chief editor of official publications. He is therefore ideally placed to chronicle the organisation's activities since its foundation in 1954.

"This book is not meant as yet another in the long line of publications, pictures and video footage that retrace the history of the European competitions, the top players and their accomplishments," Mr Vieli writes in his preface. "Rather, it seeks to recall the main stages of the development of European football's governing body."

The book, André Vieli adds, *"simply aims to pay tribute to the pioneers of the past and to all those members of committees, the administration and other bodies who have followed in their footsteps, acting not for themselves but in the interests of football and UEFA's good name."*

UEFA – 60 years at the heart of football is published in English, French and German, and can be accessed on UEFA.org. ●

FIVE AMBASSADORS FOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

UEFA has appointed four new ambassadors, sending a strong message about its commitment to promoting the development of women's football. The official unveiling took place in Paris on 2 February. Olympique Lyonnais players Camille Abily and Lotta Schelin, Laura Georges of Paris Saint-Germain and Veronica Boquete of 1. FFC Frankfurt have joined former German international Steffi Jones to work with UEFA in a bid to encourage and educate future talent across Europe.

The UEFA President, Michel Platini, said: *"The quality of women's football has grown exponentially over the last decade and UEFA is fully committed to the further development of women's competitions. The use of ambassadors with so much experience on the field can only benefit the next generation of female footballers."* Karen Espelund, who chairs the UEFA Women's Football Committee, added: *"The growth of the women's game has meant that girls have an increasing number of top-level female players to look up to as role models and we can work with their popularity to further cultivate women's football in Europe."*

The ambassadors will attend various UEFA-sponsored tournaments and events hosted by the member associations to share their knowledge and experiences with young players and to equip them with the tools to best develop as footballers. ●

UEFA YOUTH LEAGUE FINALS IN NYON

Colovray Stadium, opposite UEFA's headquarters, is hosting the UEFA Youth League finals on 10 and 13 April. The semi-finals will be played on Friday 10 April, with the final on Monday 13 April. Since holders FC Barcelona were knocked out in the round of 16, a new name will be etched on the Lennart Johansson Trophy.

The first semi-final will pit the winners of the quarter-final between AS Roma and Manchester City FC against the winners of the Chelsea FC v Club Atlético de Madrid tie. In the second semi-final, the winners of the match between RSC Anderlecht and FC Porto will face the winners of SL Benfica v FC Shakhtar Donetsk.

The finals are once again being organised by the UEFA administration. ●

A CAMPAIGN TO ELECT THE NEW MASCOT FOR THE ISRAEL NATIONAL TEAM

At the end of an entertaining ‘election campaign’, the Israel Football Association (IFA), jointly with the main sponsor of the Israel national football team, Altschuler-Shaham, announced the identity of the new national team mascot.

In February, the Israel Football Association launched a campaign to select which of two forms the new national team mascot should take: that of a wagtail or that of an ibex. Altschuler-Shaham joined in the initiative, with the aim of enabling the general public and national team fans to take part in an alternative election campaign – without spin or smears, but with a great deal of good humour. The voting ended on 10 March, when the identity of the winner was announced.

Rather than giving the mascot a human shape, it was decided that it would be better to give human characteristics to an animal that is identified with Israeli nature. The wagtail and the ibex are creatures with which all Israelis are familiar and which they can readily recognise. Both are also popular among the public, as the preliminary research revealed.

The IFA did not want to impose either mascot on the public and therefore decided to give the public a say through an amusing election campaign between the wagtail and the ibex. The campaign included debates between the two mascot candidates, songs, funny texts and many more surprises, and the election itself was held on a dedicated website.

Ofer Eini, IFA president: *“The successful start to the EURO 2016 qualifiers, as well as the fact that tickets for all the Israel team’s games have sold out, shows the extent to which Israelis are attached to football and the national team. Apart from football, we want to give the fans more excitement and enjoyment.”*

Eli Gutman, head coach of the national team: *“I think it is a charming idea, and I am pleased with the association’s initiative. I cannot promise the winner a place in the starting line-up, but we will be happy for it to join our staff.”*

Ronit Glassman, head of the IFA marketing department: *“Selecting the national mascot is a further step in the promotion of the sport and mascot culture in Israel. The positive atmosphere surrounding the national team and ticket sales helps the association to take a step forward and engage in areas that add to the fans’ experience, while reinforcing the brand. The purpose of the project is to attach the Israel*

team to its target public – families, children and teenagers. An image of this kind will be available throughout the year, enabling us to transmit positive and cultural messages with a smile and a wink, and perhaps in the future it will also constitute a source of income, as is customary with every self-respecting international tournament and leading team worldwide.” The new mascot will make its stage debut at the two European Qualifiers taking place at the end of March, against Wales (on 28 March) and Belgium (on 31 March). In the end it was the ibex who came out on top. ●

Michal Grundland



The ibex and the wagtail – the Israeli public chose the ibex as their national team mascot.

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS



Successful 2014 with advertising value of €64.1m and 80 hours of TV coverage

At a press conference held on 25 February, Austrian Football Association (ÖFB) general secretary Alfred Ludwig reported that 2014 had been a successful year from various financial perspectives. In terms of spectator numbers, a total of 224,500 people attended the Austrian national team's six home matches last year, representing an average crowd of 37,417. Television audiences for ORF, the Austrian public broadcaster and the ÖFB's TV partner, topped the 1 million mark for three of those matches. The match against Brazil attracted 1,254,000 TV viewers out of the country's population of around 8 million. The average TV audience was 920,000 per match.

A total of 80 hours of TV coverage was devoted to the Austrian national teams last year. "It is pleasing that, of the 80 hours of TV coverage, 20 were devoted to the women's and youth teams. This shows that these areas are



Alfred Ludwig

also very important for our TV partners," said Mr Ludwig.

This media coverage is also reflected in advertising value for sponsors. With advertising

value for ÖFB partners totalling €64.1 million, the upward trend of previous years continued.

There was also an increase in the association's social media activities. With 127,000 Facebook friends, the national team page ('Das Nationalteam') doubled its audience compared with the previous year. The 'ÖFB Youngsters' Facebook page launched in March 2014 already had 10,700 friends just ten months later, while the 'Immer wieder Österreich' fan club had 11,000 members by the end of 2014 and the "Freunde des ÖFB Frauen Nationalteams" 4,000 friends.

The ÖFB already has 8,539 followers on Twitter and is planning to launch a social media and IT drive in 2015.

● Carmen Redl



New girls' U13 tournament

A tournament in the new Access Cup organised by the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) with the support of AccessBank has taken place at the Khachmaz Olympic Sports Complex. The competition is reserved for Under-13 girls born between 2001 and 2006, 111 of whom took part in the tournament in Khachmaz, including 11 who had never played in such a tournament before. The tournament consisted of 30 matches and was won by Sumgayit. Shahdagh finished second, and Kuzun Qishlag in third place. Sumgayit player Jale Ildirimova was the top

scorer of the tournament with 18 goals to her name. Nabran's Alvin Aghayeva was named best player of the tournament.

Another 30-match Access Cup tournament was held in Zagatala city, involving 15 teams and 160 players, for 16 of whom this was a new experience. Mingachevir were the winners, Zagatala the runners-up and Shaki took third place. Babadagh player Gunel Samadli was the top scorer with her six goals. Mahabbat Eyvazli of YSS (Gakh) was named the best player, and Shaki's Firangiz Azizova the best goalkeeper of the tournament.

● Firuz Abdulla



Some of those taking part in the new girls' U13 tournament



New website

On 1 February the Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) launched a new version of its official website. Apart from squad lists, scores and statistics of all teams from the Under-15s up to the senior national team, the new website also follows the country's club competitions, grassroots projects, FA news and different types of other football content. Given that the BFF is responsible for all club competitions in the country, it is extremely important to have all match sheets and at least some statistics available and easy to access in one place.

At the same time, a full infrastructure database, contact information for the country's youth football clubs and schools, and feedback possibilities will help establish direct contact with amateur players and fans of the game. In terms of marketing, the new site will create opportunities for partners and sponsors. It will

also be linked to the online fan shop which is about to be implemented.

And, in probably the most important development of all, an English version will

also appear in the near future, with Russian to be added later. Follow Belarusian football at bff.by or abff.by.

● Alexander Aleinik



The new home page



Junior Malanda, a talent lost prematurely

Belgian football lost one of its most talented players on 10 January, when 20-year old Junior Malanda died in a road accident in Porta Westfalica, Germany. Junior Malanda played for VfL Wolfsburg, where his team-mates included Kevin De Bruyne. He had played for all our national youth teams (from the Under-15s to the Under-21s) and was often mentioned as a potential future member of the senior Belgian national team. Prior to moving to the Bundesliga, his football journey had seen him represent various Brussels-based clubs before completing his apprenticeship at the French club LOSC Lille. Still relatively unknown in Belgium, he then returned to the country to join SV Zulte Waregem in 2012, when his career immediately took off. In his first season with



Photo: News

the club, which is generally considered a fairly modest outfit, he played a leading role in helping it to an impressive second-place finish in the Belgian championship. It was already clear that Junior would not be staying in Belgium forever, and this was confirmed when he joined VfL Wolfsburg a few months later.

Of course, it took him a while to adapt to his new surroundings in the Bundesliga, one of the best leagues in the world, but he was slowly beginning to establish himself there. Wherever he went, Junior left only good memories. As

well as his footballing talent and his impressive physical qualities, the midfielder always brought a smile to people's faces. Junior Malanda was the captain of our national Under-21 team, demonstrating his role as a leader and an example for his team-mates to follow.

Belgium has lost a great footballer and a great man. *"Junior, you had a great future ahead of you, but fate had other ideas. Heaven is your pitch now, but we'll never forget you."*

● Pierre Cornez



Counties and grassroots as the foundation of development

The Croatian Football Federation's expert task force, headed by technical director Romeo Jozak, started its work with visits to county football federations in order to collect essential information for the national federation's development strategy. During February and March, Jozak and his associates are visiting all 21 county football federations and gathering key staff to talk about the current state of affairs and the specific challenges of local clubs.



Drago Sopnar/HNS

The medical symposium participants

"We have prepared approximately 20 basic topics, but we want to hear about other difficulties as well. Moreover, we are open to ideas and suggestions as we want to analyse the competition formats, coaches' work, county demographics, club issues, licensing procedure, etc to see the full picture of Croatian football," said Romeo Jozak at the beginning of this key project. *"After this analysis we can complete the football development strategy that can be presented to UEFA. Our desire is to involve as many people as possible. While being aware that elite football is the priority since it enables investments, we have to invest in our grassroots base to develop elite football."*

Meanwhile, the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) organised another medical symposium for first and second-division doctors and all national-team medical staff.

"Once again this symposium showed the need for regular meetings among doctors and physiotherapists in football. It enables the development of medical services in clubs and helps provide all players with better medical care," said Dr Boris Nemeč, HNS medical committee chairman and national team doctor.

Finally, the city of Medulin hosted the 46th referees' seminar and 20th referee observers' seminar. Theoretical and physical tests, education and analysis were on the agenda for all first-division referees, who were also introduced to the tasks of additional assistant referees.

● Tomislav Pacak



Baždarević meets premier league coaches

The new coach of Bosnia and Herzegovina's national team, Mehmed Baždarević, recently held a meeting with the coaches of the country's Under-19, Under-21 and Olympic/Mediterranean Games teams, as well as the coaches of all clubs in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian premier league, before the start of the second half of the domestic championship and the forthcoming qualifying matches for EURO 2016. He informed them of his plans for the national side, telling them that he wanted players at domestic and foreign clubs to compete for places on an equal footing.

Before the start of the second half of the championship, a seminar was held in Makarska, on the Croatian coast, for referees. They were shown video footage, as well as analysis of a trial undertaken in the first half of the season in the premier league and the Bosnian and Herzegovinian cup. Fitness tests were also conducted. The seminar was attended by a guest speaker, Alan Snoddy, who acts as a mentor under the UEFA Convention on Referee Education and Organisation.

In addition, a seminar was recently organised for premier league teams in Vogosca in order to discuss the 2015/16 club licensing procedure. Every year, the conditions and criteria stipulated by UEFA become more demanding, and the

Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (NFSBiH) provides its clubs with any assistance they need to meet those criteria. The seminar presented the different rules, with special presentations addressing each of the five licensing areas: legal, administrative, sports, infrastructure and finance.

Following the women's training camp organised at the NFSBiH training centre in Zenica, three-day training camps were held for women in five more categories (Under-15s to Under-19s). A total of 150 young players attended the five camps.

Futsal tournaments were recently held in Bijeljina and Zenica to promote women's football, with eight teams contesting each tournament. SFK 2000 Sarajevo won both tournaments, defeating ZFK Banja Luka 3-0 in the final in Bijeljina and beating ZFK Gradina Srebrenik 6-0 in the final in Zenica.

Finally, the Football Association of Slovenia hosted a meeting of the football associations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia in Ljubljana on 29 January. At the end of that meeting, the participants signed a memorandum of understanding, which provides for the further strengthening of relations between the associations, the promotion of integrity and a continuation of the fight against all negative aspects of football. The associations will also continue to exchange details of good practices in various areas. The participants discussed projects and competitions run by FIFA and UEFA, social responsibility initiatives, and cooperation between football associations and representatives of national and local government.

The NFSBiH was represented at that regional meeting by its president, Elvedin Begić, its vice-presidents, Darko Ljubojević and Ivan Beus, and its general secretary, Jasmin Baković.

● Fuad Kravac



F. Kravac

Gearing up for the second half of the season

Growing interest in futsal

For the third year running, the Faroeese Football Association is organising futsal tournaments around the islands this winter. And it is fair to say that interest in futsal in the Faroe Islands is growing steadily. When the first futsal tournaments started in the islands in 2012, there were 48 teams competing. The teams were all boys' teams and they were divided into three different age groups – U12, U14 and U16. Those competitions were very successful, and the following year girls started competing in the same age groups as the boys. Altogether, 58 boys' teams and 22 girls' teams started out in autumn 2013.

Meanwhile, when the competition for winter 2014/15 started late last year, there were no



Futsal is growing in popularity both on and off the pitch

H. E. Danielsen

fewer than 96 teams competing – 71 boys' teams and 25 girls' teams. This goes to show how popular futsal is becoming in the Faroe

Islands. At the same time, it is also attracting more and more spectators.

● Terji Nielsen

Security experts meet in Tampere

In mid-February the Football Association of Finland organised its 15th annual security seminar at the police college in the city of Tampere. A total of 170 guests attended the seminar, which provides a forum for knowledge sharing by professionals in the field of stadium security. This year's seminar included discussions on domestic and international event security, mainly focusing on national legislation, stadium infrastructure and the use of social media to inform supporters about potential security risks. The event did not focus solely on football, with Risto Virtanen, the president of the Finnish national basketball team's supporters' club, giving a presentation on the activities of the

10,000 club members who attended the FIBA World Cup in Spain in 2014.

"Our seminar has grown bigger and bigger. We want it to remain open to all event



Juha Karjalainen

organisers, although our main focus is always football. We are all facing similar challenges, and this is an excellent forum for us to discuss and share information within the football fraternity and the wider sporting family," said Juha Karjalainen, the national association's security officer.

A number of UEFA representatives attended the seminar, giving details of the latest trends and developments at European level. *"It was great to have UEFA presenting information at the seminar, as we are all aiming to achieve the highest standards in terms of event security. Many of the participants regularly work on big international matches, and they gained a lot by getting first-hand insight on security matters at European matches,"* Karjalainen added.

● Sami Terävä

Maxime Gonalons goes back to school

As part of the campaign 'Le Foot à l'école avec les Bleus/Mon EURO 2016' (Football at

school with the Blues/My EURO 2016), Maxime Gonalons visited pupils at his former primary school, Cours Perrier, in Villefranche-sur-Saône (Rhône). The French international midfielder gave up an afternoon to discuss the values of

football with the youngsters. The children were able to ask the Olympique Lyonnais captain various questions, before enjoying a football session led by Maxime Gonalons and Yoann Vallet, regional technical adviser of the Rhône-Alpes League.

Girls and boys alike were enthralled as they shared this special time with Gonalons, a native of Vénissieux. The girls also discovered that they could hold their own against the boys, as well as enjoy playing football. Maxime Gonalons relished the role of ambassador, saying that it had come naturally to him: *"I took my role very seriously, as always. I kept things simple and everyone joined in, the girls as much as the boys."*

It was an afternoon that those young schoolchildren will remember for a long time to come.

● Jean-Baptiste Schmidt



Maxime Gonalons returns to his old school



2014 World Cup winners' trophy on a 'lap of honour'

From Rio, via Berlin and Frankfurt, to German grassroots football: the 2014 FIFA World Cup winners' trophy will be embarking on a 'lap of honour' through the whole of Germany this summer. As part of the roadshow, the German Football Association (DFB) and its 21 regional associations will be giving 63 amateur clubs the chance to host the gold-plated trophy for a day on their own club premises. The journey begins in Frankfurt on 26 May and ends at the German football museum in Dortmund, where the trophy will be kept permanently.

"We are all world champions – and that is not an empty phrase", says the DFB president, Wolfgang Niersbach. "Millions of people in Germany played a part in our fourth World Cup triumph – at grassroots and amateur level. Grassroots football is the cradle of our world champions. The DFB would like to say thank you to these people again. That is why we came up with the idea of the lap of honour, which is designed to send out the message that German football as a whole won the World Cup last year."



The campaign logo

The lap of honour (details of which can be found at ehrenrunde.fussball.de) will include stops in all 21 DFB regional associations. The 2014 FIFA World Cup winners' trophy will be carried across the country in two impressive show trucks. "At every stop, 2,014 club members, friends or guests will experience an emotion-charged presentation and receive their own personal photo with the World Cup trophy via FUSSBALL.DE," promises Ralf Köttker, the DFB's media director.

● Stephan Brause



Significant growth in the number of teams

One of the main goals of long-term strategy of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) is to bring about continuous growth in the number of football players in the country. In the space of the past four years, a spectacular improvement has already been achieved. At the end of 2010, when Sándor Csányi was elected as president of the MLSZ, there were 133,466 registered football players in total. By the end of 2014, that number had jumped to 226,328. What is more, the number of children and female footballers increased the most within that, which is really good to see. Today, there are over 8,000 registered female footballers in the MLSZ database, compared with 1,500 before.



More and more children are taking up football

This significant growth in the overall number of players has been a direct consequence of improved facilities and restructuring, as well as of the MLSZ being able to decrease the cost of amateur team competitions (referees, administrative fees, etc.) by 90% thanks to the rule whereby any entity subject to corporate tax can decrease its corporate tax base by the value of subsidies provided to team sports.

Naturally, the growing number of players has resulted in a growing number of matches, which, in turn, requires more referees to be trained as quickly as possible. The number of teams has grown from 7,300 to 10,500, while there is now a 3,200-strong contingent of professional referees.

● Márton Dinnyés



Anti-racism project gets off to a great start

The first of 20 meetings scheduled as part of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) integration project 'Racists? A terrible group' took place in the magnificent Salone dei Cinquecento at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence on 21 February. Attended by more than 500 young players from all over Tuscany, topics such as the fight against racism, social integration and acceptance were discussed under the guidance of presenter and artistic director Antonello Piroso. To make youngsters aware of racism in football and society in general, and to promote positive actions in sport and life: that is the ambitious aim of this project, whose debate was boosted by Piroso's direct and easy language and the support of audiovisual scenes from popular films on sport and racism issues such as *Glory Road*, *Invictus* and *Remember the Titans*, plus social media activities.

Prominent arts and sports personalities also took part in this event: comedian Giobbe Covatta, rapper Frankie Hi-Nrg and actor Marco D'Amore (Ciro in the popular TV series *Gomorra*), with the latter reading a few paragraphs from Tahar Ben Jelloun's book *Racism Explained to My Daughter*. UEFA was represented by its global ambassador for diversity and change, Clarence Seedorf, who took centre stage with an emotional speech. Also participating were the coordinator of the FIGC's committee for integration and the fight against racism, Fiona May, ACF Fiorentina

forward Khouma el Babacar, and journalists Matteo Marani and Andrea Di Maio. The event was streamed live on the *Gazzetta dello Sport* website. FIGC president Carlo Tavecchio, general director Michele Uva, vice-president and Lega Pro president Mario Macalli, Italian referees association chairman Marcello Nicchi and Italian football coaches' association president Renzo Ulivieri were there as well. "We want to sow seeds in fertile soil like these youth players," said Tavecchio. "It's through their education in fairness in sport that we want to create a better society and make our contribution to a positive image of sport and football."

"Italy is a country which always welcomes people from abroad," said Clarence Seedorf. "This country is going through many changes; it's becoming a multi-ethnic country and that is something great."

"Racism happens in few places in Italy and we have to fight against it. Football is the sport I love and I will not allow anybody to spoil it," said Khouma el Babacar. Fiona May found very clear words, too: "If I were asked whether racism played a role in Italian society, I would answer 'yes and no'. Racism is there, but not more than in other countries. Italy is a welcoming place," she said, "but fear is also there. We have to get to know that which is different from us. In fact, we are all equal. There are a lot of people who don't want to change, who don't want to develop and look further."

The project 'Racists? A terrible group' will be promoted by the FIGC and its president across the whole of Italy through 20 theatrical shows until 2016. The next events will take place in Turin (March), Catanzaro (April), Bari (May) and Bologna (June).

● Diego Antenzio



The guest speakers at the event in Florence

Together we promote the right values

The Football Federation of Macedonia (FFM) is part of the new UEFA programme for the development of elite youth football players. Jean-François Domergue, the former French footballer who now heads UEFA's football development unit, recently paid a working visit to the FFM to present the programme to FFM coaches.

"The new UEFA programme is very positive in terms of the early development of young players, and when we talk about development, we don't just mean football progress, but also developing the young players to become individuals with strong values and a good education. We are very glad that you have already implemented part of our programme, because it's crucial for us to have a partner that already has a firm base. For the FFM, that is the

football academy and the youth teams, and our goal is to help you fully implement the programme in order to celebrate together the success of the emerging players of the future. The FFM has a philosophy of working with youth categories. We know you have started implementing a national youth football development programme. We are not going to impose a new work programme but we are here to help you achieve your goals through educating your coaches abroad, as well as arranging prominent guest speakers to visit your country and present their programmes to your coaches."

Mr Domergue also emphasised the importance of cooperation between the FFM and the country's football clubs, stating that the FFM is not in competition with any football club but plays an important role in the process of developing high-quality players.

It is very important for the FFM and UEFA, as the initiator of the programme, that the football

clubs understand the programme and fully engage in executing its goals. We are dealing with children who are 14 and 15 years old, and everybody involved in this programme must understand that we need players that are open-minded. We can achieve that by improving the learning process, through better education and teaching them the values that UEFA promotes. Improving the infrastructure is also very important, and the new education centre that is going to be built for implementing this programme will benefit the coaches that are involved in the process of developing elite youth football players. The goal of these projects is to improve in tactical, technical and physical terms, and the clubs that develop young players have nothing to fear and should not see this project as competition, but understand our vision as being one that wants to help raise the level of quality of football in our country.

● Zlatko Andonovski

UEFA Pro licence course to be held in Malta

The Malta Football Association's technical centre has recently been given the go-ahead to organise its first ever UEFA Pro licence course. That course, which is scheduled to begin in September 2015, represents a major breakthrough for coach education in Malta and the country's football infrastructure as a whole. Dany Ryser, a member of UEFA's Jira Panel, visited Malta at the start of the year, in conjunction with the decision to stage the course there.

During his visit, Mr Ryser joined Malta's head coach, Pietro Ghedin, in speaking at a well-attended seminar for coaches working in



The seminar participants at the Ta' Qali national stadium

Malta's top two divisions. The seminar, which was held at the Ta' Qali National Football Complex, focused on the demands of modern football.

Mr Ryser was also shown around the association's premises and had a meeting with its president, Norman Darmanin Demajo, its

general secretary, Bjorn Vassallo, and its vice-president, Chris Bonett. They discussed the potential for the UEFA Pro licence course to improve the standard of coaching in Malta.

UEFA's Jira Panel member was very impressed with the work being done by the association's technical centre to open up new avenues for Maltese coaches and further the development of coaching in all areas.

The forthcoming course in Malta should improve the quality of coach education across the country, thereby raising standards throughout Maltese football.

● Alex Vella

Moldova almost spring a surprise

In the opinion of UEFA delegate Simeon Tsolakidis from Greece, the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) did a brilliant job of staging its mini-tournament in the preliminary round of the European Futsal Championship.

All six matches in Group D, which took place between 13 and 17 January and featured the national futsal teams of France, Albania, San Marino and Moldova, were played at the new FMF Futsal Arena. The arena, which is located in Ciorescu, on the outskirts of Chisinau, was built in accordance with FIFA and UEFA standards and was officially inaugurated at the end of last year. There was a wonderful atmosphere in the arena, and fans who could not attend in person were able to watch all games live on the national TV channel Moldova1.

The tournament offered spectators a plethora of goals and a rollercoaster of emotions. On the eve of the final matchday, Moldova and France were level on 6 points each, but the hosts had the advantage thanks to their superior goal

difference. With the two teams playing each other in their final group match, France needed a win to qualify for the next round, while a draw would be enough for Moldova. All 1,302 tickets sold out, and around 200 Moldovan supporters failed to get inside the arena and had to make do with watching the match on TV instead. Futsal was the real winner in Moldova.

France scored twice in the first half through Mustapha Otmani and Alexandre Teixeira, but the hosts came back with goals by Cristian Obadă and Oleg Hilotii, levelling the scores in the second half. With just four minutes to go, Moldova were back at the top of the group and the local fans started to celebrate. But then France scored twice in the last few minutes (with goals by Sid Belhaj and Adrien Gasmî) and qualified for the next round.

France's coach, Pierre Jacky, looked delighted at the post-match press conference: *"The hosts played well and the crowd was fantastic, and we had a lot of problems during the match. But now I want to enjoy the win with my players."* Moldova's coach, Vladimir Vusatiî, was very disappointed because his team had been so

close to a surprise result and had almost qualified for the next round: *"I want to thank my players for their commitment on the pitch and I am grateful to our wonderful supporters. We are now out of the European Futsal Championship because of one mistake, for which we paid the price. But life goes on, and we will try to do better next time."*

● FMF press office



A brilliantly organised European Futsal Championship mini-tournament



Youth tournaments come to the Netherlands

In March and April, the Netherlands are hosting different international youth tournaments. In mid-March, our Under-16s played a friendly tournament in Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht and s'-Gravenzande with three other countries: the USA, the Republic of Ireland and the Czech Republic. Also in mid-March, the Dutch national Under-17 squad played the elite round of the European Under-17 Championship in the Group 3 mini-tournament in Schijndel and Gendt. The players of coach Maarten Stekelenburg played their counterparts from Georgia, Northern Ireland and Belgium. Qualification for the final tournament in Bulgaria was at stake, with only the winners of the elite round groups going through. Meanwhile, from 4 to 9 April, our women's Under-19 squad also have a European Championship elite round mini-tournament on home ground to look



The Dutch girls' U19 team

forward to. Their opponents for the matches in Meerssen and Landgraaf are the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Denmark. If they win the tournament, the squad of coach André

Koolhof will qualify for the final tournament in Israel this coming July.

● Robin van den Broek



A successful partnership

The Irish Football Association (IFA) is delighted to announce the continuation of its partnership with Irwin's Bakery and the Nutty Krust Holiday Camps. This partnership, which started in 2007, has gone from strength to strength, and last year saw the addition of Halloween camps alongside the existing Easter and summer camps. The Nutty Krust Holiday Camps have continued to grow in popularity, with 5,382 boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 13 taking part in 2014, an increase of 20% compared with 2013.

The Nutty Krust Holiday Camps are an exciting opportunity for children to develop and improve their football skills in a short period of time, working in a structured environment with professionally trained and vetted coaching staff. Children benefit from the social interaction and the opportunity to learn new skills in a positive, competitive environment that keeps them entertained during the school holidays.

Colette Wilson, marketing manager for Irwin's Bakery, said: "Irwin's has a long history of supporting grassroots sports development in communities across Northern Ireland, and we are delighted to continue our support of the Nutty Krust Holiday Camps with the Irish Football Association. As a family-owned business, the team at Irwin's believes in family values, and the camps are a fantastic way for parents across Northern Ireland to encourage children to adopt a fit and healthy lifestyle. With over 5,000 kids taking part last year, we are looking forward to another bumper year on the pitch."

The IFA's grassroots development manager, Ian Stewart, added: "The holiday camps are designed to be fun for both boys and girls, regardless of ability. To support families and enable the whole family to get involved, we have introduced significant multi-child savings. Bookings can be made online (see www.irishfaholidaycamps.com), and with prices starting at £20 for one child, £30 for two



Fun first

children and £40 for three children from the same family, this is a fantastic opportunity for everyone to take part."

● Sueann Harrison



Main sponsor agreement signed

The Polish Football Association (PZPN) and the LOTOS group have signed an agreement under which LOTOS becomes the main sponsor of the Polish national football team. The deal runs until 31 December 2018.

"The Polish national team is the most important for all Poles. Its results and potential have allowed it to gain such a serious partner as Grupa LOTOS. Moreover, the company will not only support the national team, but also the Under-21 team, which in 2017 will compete in the European Under-21 Championship final round which will be staged here in Poland," said Zbigniew Boniek, the PZPN president.



The PZPN president, Zbigniew Boniek and LOTOS representative shake hands after signing the sponsorship deal

LOTOS obtains the right to use the title of main sponsor of the Polish national football team and to use the official PZPN logo in its own marketing activities. The agreement also

guarantees exposure of the company's logo on Polish national team training kits. The company will also feature in media advertising during national team matches played in Poland. In addition, the LOTOS logo will appear in the centre of sponsor backdrops for press conferences, on the PZPN website, on tickets and in match programmes.

● Jakub Kwiatkowski

A new club in the First Division

Irish football has a new name at senior level, with Cabinteely FC joining the Irish First Division (the country's second tier) this season. The club, which is well known at youth level, was formed in 1967 and runs a total of 54 teams, including women's teams and Football for All. It was something of a surprise when the south Dublin club emerged as the newest member of the First Division, but this ambitious community club is confident that the growth it has achieved at youth level will reap dividends in senior football. Cabinteely FC will play their home matches at Stradbroke, the home of famous rugby club Blackrock College RFC.

The competitions director at the Football Association of Ireland (FAI), Fran Gavin, said: "I would like to welcome Cabinteely FC into the SSE Airtricity League. We have been involved in discussions with the club in recent months. They have good structures in place and good foundations on which to build a First Division side that can compete nationally. They were accepted as a member of the SSE Airtricity League following receipt of a number of expressions of interest and subsequent discussions."

Meanwhile, further developments are planned at youth level in the coming years, with the FAI's high performance director, Ruud Dokter, completing the consultation process on his player development plan. The FAI is keen to improve the standard of young players at all



The captain of FC Cabinteely, Robert Moloney, leads his team onto the field for their first pre-season friendly against St Patrick's Athletic

levels of youth football in Ireland, and a number of meetings have taken place with stakeholders around the country, following the year-long planning process conducted by the FAI's specially created technical development committee.

Finally, Irish football recently suffered a sad blow, with the loss of three well-known and highly respected administrators in the first few weeks of 2015. Former FAI president Charlie Cahill, FAI council member John Coughlan and recently appointed FAI board member Tim Fitzgerald all passed away within weeks of each other. Their contribution to Irish football was enormous, and they will be sadly missed.

● Stephen Finn

Promoting and developing women's football

The San Marino Football Federation (FSGC) is following a path of promotion and development as it aims to bring women's football up to the same level as the men's game. According to Corrado Selva, the head of women's football at the FSGC: "Our aim must be to reach, within the next three or four years, the numbers needed to start a women's national team that can compete in international matches, just as we did for the men's team more than 20 years ago."

The key concept, as Mr Selva explains, is development: "We are well aware that competition from other sports is strong (there are as many as 31 sporting federations in San Marino) and that people in our country still feel football is a male-oriented activity. So we are implementing a whole range of promotional strategies that will help to bring about the change in mentality required for women's football to develop."

Under Mr Selva's guidance, the FSGC is organising visits to primary schools in San Marino, to present football as a whole and make the pupils see that it is a beautiful sport



The San Marino FA hopes to be able to put together a women's national team before long

which can be played by girls as well as boys. As well as the school visits, marketing campaigns have also been implemented, with posters and leaflets promoting women's football distributed throughout San Marino. In addition, days dedicated exclusively to women's football have been organised, featuring public training sessions and demonstrations by FSGC coaches.

Moreover, the partnership established in summer 2013 between the FSGC and the state broadcaster San Marino RTV has given rise to two successful television programmes: *Passione Calcio Settore Giovanile* (Passion for Youth Football) and *Passione Calcio Femminile* (Passion for Women's Football). Since its launch just over a year ago, the second of those programmes has become the leading women's football TV show, not only in San Marino but across Italy, with in-depth analysis and highlights from Serie A, B, C and D.

In little more than a decade, these promotional strategies have produced a clear structure for women's football in San Marino, and despite all the problems and obstacles that beset any new adventure, the country now boasts more than 60 registered players.

● Matteo Rossi

Signeul signs new deal

Scotland women's national coach, Anna Signeul, is celebrating ten years at the helm – by signing a new two-year contract. Signeul, who joined the Scottish FA in March 2005, has agreed a deal that extends her stay in Scotland until the end of the Women's EURO 2017 qualifying campaign. Signeul has presided over a period of sustained growth for the Scotland women's national teams. She has led the A squad to their highest-ever world rankings, reached back-to-back Women's EURO play-offs (for the 2009 and 2013 tournaments), and qualified for a historic first-ever Women's World Cup play-off last year.

Scotland have also reached three European Women's Under-19 Championship final tournaments (in 2008, 2010 and 2014), and the Under-17s qualified for the finals for the first time in 2013. Signeul has overseen the opening of the Women's National Performance Centre at the University of Stirling in 2009, and subsequent regional centres, preceding the introduction of the Scottish FA Performance Strategy in 2011.

She also worked closely with the Scottish government, the sportscotland Institute of Sport and players' employers to secure individual athlete funding and additional performance support for women's A squad players in 2013. The government funding allows players to work less and train more, with the aim of narrowing the gap on nations whose players are full-time professionals.

"The last ten years have been fantastic, and I am so proud of what we have achieved together," Signeul said. "I am delighted to pledge my future to Scotland for another two years and continue this journey with a fantastic group of players and staff. The determination to go one step further and make it to the finals of a major tournament is what drives us all. When I look at what we have achieved at all

levels of the women's game over the past few years, it is remarkable. From the progress of the national teams, to Glasgow City reaching the quarter-finals of the Champions League and the introduction of club licences to help improve the overall environment, it has all happened thanks to everyone working together. This progress is due to the dedication of players, clubs, coaches, volunteers, staff and partners such as sportscotland, the sportscotland Institute of Sport and the Scottish government. I thank Stewart Regan, the board, and their predecessors at the Scottish FA for their support over the past decade, and going forward."

Stewart Regan, Scottish FA chief executive: "I am delighted that Anna has agreed to extend her stay, and on behalf of the Scottish FA I would like to thank her for the hard work, dedication and vision that has underpinned her ten years so far. The growth of women's football has been one of the real highlights of the Scottish FA's strategy, *Scotland United: A 2020 Vision*, and we are convinced that Anna will continue to push the boundaries of success for the national team."

● Julie Ferguson



Anna and her No.10 shirt



New medical and diagnostic centre

The president of the Slovak Football Association (SFZ), Ján Kováčik, inaugurated a new medical and diagnostic centre at the hospital in Zilina on the day of the friendly match between Slovakia and Finland. It is the fourth diagnostic centre of its kind in Slovakia. "I am very pleased that the north of the country has a medical centre similar to those we have in Senec, Banská Bystrica and Kosice. We understand that the human factor is extremely important. This is provided by the medical backgrounds of the director of the hospital and his team. I believe that this medical centre will be one of the best

in Slovakia," said the president of the SFZ at the opening.

The SFZ's healthcare manager, Pavol Malovič, is the professional guarantor of the Povazie diagnostic centre. He said: "It's basically a sports medicine department equipped as a top European department in the field. Players from the region of northwestern Slovakia now have the chance to get qualified medical care near their home or club, in particular in terms of diagnoses, preventive medical examinations and recommendations they need for sporting activities." He added that the SFZ would also be cooperating with the club MSK Zilina. "They are good professionals, not only in sports medicine but also in rehabilitation and the prevention of



MSK Zilina player Joseph Piaček opens the new medical centre

disorders of the musculoskeletal system," he explained.

The first footballer to use the new diagnostic centre was MSK Zilina player Joseph Piaček.

● Juraj Čurný



Čeferin wins second term

Aleksander Čeferin, president of the Football Association of Slovenia (NZS), won his second presidential mandate in the mid-February elections. After a successful first four-year term, Čeferin had unanimous support for his candidacy and was the only candidate. In the election, 29 out of 31 delegates voted for him.

Alongside the president, four vice-presidents and the chairman of the arbitration board were also elected. The five-man race for the four vice-president seats ended in the delegates giving the most votes to Milan Jarc (26 votes),



Radenko Mijatović (26 votes), Stanko Glažar (25 votes) and Franci Zavrl (22). Danilo Kacijan was the one candidate who was not elected. The newly elected chairman of the arbitration

board is Gvido Mravljak, whose term runs until 2017.

Aleksander Čeferin pointed out ahead of his new presidential reign that although football in Slovenia is not immune to the recession, it is still in a much better situation than other sports: "Financial issues are a problem in some clubs, but it is our duty to create an environment in which the clubs can feel safe and will be able to fulfil their goals. Our potential is good and we will not be afraid to use it."

Čeferin and the four vice-presidents will finish their new terms at the start of 2019.

● Matjaž Krajnc



Further commitment to prevention in football

A year ago, the Swiss Football Association launched a risk assessment for footballers in cooperation with the accident insurance company Suva. Around 14,000 registered players took the test, the results of which showed that 77% of the participants had an above-average risk of injury. For this reason, the Swiss FA and Suva have launched a second test, which is also being incorporated in the basic and further training of coaches. Philippe Gassmann, Suva project leader, is convinced

"that the risk of injury can be reduced and players' fitness improved if the right exercises are built into their daily training routine."

Davide Andreoli, coach of second interregional league club SC Buochs, is also confident that this second test is worthwhile. "It's simple and provides some useful tips that can be taken straight onto the training pitch. It supports everyday training and helps to minimise the risk of injury because it improves the players' fitness and core stability." The Swiss FA agrees that the test is extremely valuable. It is aware that coaches play a crucial role in accident prevention, which is why it is now

including the Suva football test in basic and further coach education. "Coaches always want to have as many fit players as possible to choose from. It is therefore only logical that they should use every available means to minimise the risk of injury – especially something like this, which is not very expensive and has a lot of practical benefits," says Yves Débonnaire, the Swiss FA's head of coach education.

● Pierre Benoit



FC Lancy-Florimont, winners of the SUVA 2014 prize



Foreign player limits revised

Having itself moved into new headquarters at the Hasan Doğan national team camp and education facilities in Riva, Istanbul, last month, the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) is now turning its attention to setting up a rest home for old players, to be built on land near to the TFF Celal-Meral Aras sports high school, where young players can combine their school and football education.

In other news, the TFF has taken an important decision to increase the number of foreign players to which Turkish Super League teams are entitled. From next season, each Super League team may have up to 14 (currently maximum of 8) foreign players in their squads, which can consist of a maximum of 28 players. Super League teams will also be allowed to field 11 foreign players in their starting 11, instead of the current limit of 5. In addition, a minimum of 4 domestic players of each Super League club must have grown up in Turkey and 2 of them must have been trained at the club. According to this decision, players of Turkish origin who play for another national team will count as foreign players. However, Turkish players who have already opted to play for another national team will not be affected by this rule. Furthermore, seven out of a team's 18-man matchday squad must be domestic players including at least one Turkish goalkeeper.

● Aydın Güvenir

BIRTHDAYS

Many happy returns!

Carlo De Gaudio (Italy, 1 April)
 Jan Peeters (Belgium, 2 April)
 Elisabeth Derks (Netherlands, 2 April)
 Michael Sjö (Sweden, 2 April)
 Kaj Østergaard (Denmark, 3 April)
 Martin Sturkenboom (Netherlands, 3 April)
 Dennis Cruise (Republic of Ireland, 3 April)
Yoav Strauss (Israel, 3 April) 50th
 Emil Ubias (Czech Republic, 3 April)
 Christian Kofoed (Denmark, 4 April)
 Alex Miescher (Switzerland, 4 April)
 Marco Casagrande (Finland, 4 April)
 Jan Ekstrand (Sweden, 5 April)
 Momir Đurđević (Montenegro, 5 April)
 Aleksandra Pejkovska (FYR Macedonia, 5 April)
 Vencel Tóth (Hungary, 6 April)
 Snježana Fočić (Croatia, 6 April)
 Athanassios Briakos (Greece, 6 April)
 Pavol Peracek (Slovakia, 7 April)
 Jacques Devismes (France, 8 April)
Jim Fleeting (Scotland, 8 April) 60th
 Peter Hegyi (Hungary, 8 April)
 Yevgeniy Stolitenko (Ukraine, 8 April)
 Márton Esterházy (Hungary, 9 April)
Ladislav Svoboda (Czech Republic, 9 April) 40th
 Zoran Petrović (Serbia, 10 April)
 Panagiotis Tsarouchas (Greece, 10 April)
 Vlastibor Minarovjech Jr (Slovakia, 10 April)
 Eduard Kindle (Liechtenstein, 10 April)
 Umberto Gandini (Italy, 11 April)
 Eduard Dervishaj (Spain, 11 April)
 Rodger Gifford (Wales, 12 April)
 Valeriu Ionita (Romania, 12 April)
 François De Keersmaecker (Belgium, 12 April)
 António José Fernandes Cardoso (Portugal, 12 April)
 Paolo Piani (Italy, 13 April)
 Edvinas Eimontas (Lithuania, 13 April)
 Octavian Goga (Romania, 14 April)
Georgios Bikas (Greece, 15 April) 60th
 Erol Ersoy (Turkey, 15 April)
 Antonius van Eekelen (Netherlands, 15 April)
 Dušan Fitzel (Czech Republic, 15 April)
Manuel Enrique Mejuto González (Spain, 16 April) 50th
 Charles Schaack (Luxembourg, 17 April)
Oguz Sarvan (Turkey, 18 April) 60th
Alexandre Remin (Belarus, 18 April) 50th
 Norman Darmanin Demajo (Malta, 19 April)
 Virgar Hvidbro (Faroe Islands, 19 April)
 Elena Charina (Russia, 19 April)
 Jean-Luc Veuthey (Switzerland, 20 April)
 Michael Argyrou (Cyprus, 20 April)
 Marc Lesenfants (Belgium, 21 April)

Vitor Manuel Melo Pereira (Portugal, 21 April)
 Martinus van den Bekerom (Netherlands, 21 April)
 Alexandru Burlac (Moldova, 21 April)
 Tomislav Vlahović (Croatia, 21 April)
 Jan Damgaard (Denmark, 22 April)
Morgan Norman (Sweden, 22 April) 60th
 Roderick Petrie (Scotland, 22 April)
 Giorgios Sarris (Greece, 22 April)
 Volodymyr Petrov (Ukraine, 22 April)
Claudine Brohet (Belgium, 22 April) 50th
 Roland Tis (Belgium, 23 April)
Mehmet S. Binnet (Turkey, 23 April) 60th
 Prune Rocipon (France, 23 April)
 Nebojša Ivković (Serbia, 24 April)
 Avraham Luzon (Israel, 24 April)
 Sandor Piller (Hungary, 24 April)
Mirsini Psaropoulou (Greece, 24 April) 40th
Frederick Roy Millar (Northern Ireland, 25 April) 70th
Philippe Verbiest (Belgium, 25 April) 60th
 Domenti Sichinava (Georgia, 25 April)
 Salustia Chato Cipres (Andorra, 25 April)
 Valentin Velikov (Bulgaria, 25 April)
 Marina Sbardella (Italy, 27 April)
 Jan Carlsen (Denmark, 27 April)
 Edgar Steinborn (Germany, 27 April)
 George Frank (Israel, 29 April)
 Gudmunder Ingi Jónsson (Iceland, 29 April)
 Robin Howe (Scotland, 29 April)

NOTICES

- The Turkish Football Federation has new contact details:
 Hasan Dogan Milli Takimler Kamp ve Egitim Tesisleri Riva, Beykoz, Istanbul, Turkey
 Telephone: +90 216 554 51 00/01
 Fax: +90 216 319 19 45
- Aleksander Čeferin was re-elected president of the Football Association of Slovenia on 18 February, for a four-year term.
- Martin Glenn has replaced Alex Horne as CEO of the Football Association.
- Andriy Pavelko was named president of the Football Federation of Ukraine in March.

OBITUARY

Marc-Étienne Tapernoux, former member of the UEFA administration, passed away on 13 February aged 83. Having joined UEFA in January 1971, he supported the Committee for Technical Development and looked after the UEFA Cup, indoor football and anti-doping controls. He retired in June 1995.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

1 April, Nyon
 Club Licensing Committee

2 April, Bulgaria
 European Under-17 Championship: final round draw

10 April, Nyon
 UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League: semi-finals draw

20 April, Nyon
 European Women's Championship: 2015–17 qualifying group stage draw

28 April, Nyon
 Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee

Competitions

10–13 April, Nyon
 UEFA Youth League: final round

14/15 April
 UEFA Champions League: quarter-finals (first legs)

16 April
 UEFA Europa League: quarter-finals (first legs)

18/19 April
 UEFA Women's Champions League: semi-finals (first legs)

21/22 April
 UEFA Champions League: quarter-finals (return legs)

23 April
 UEFA Europa League: quarter-finals (return legs)

23–26 April, Lisbon
 UEFA Futsal Cup: finals

25/26 April
 UEFA Women's Champions League: semi-finals (return legs)



NO TO RACISM



RESPECT