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Cover:
*Andrés Iniesta lifts the UEFA
Super Cup in Tbilisi after
FC Barcelona's fifth win*

Photo: Getty Images

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A DECADE OF DIALOGUE AND PROGRESS

Can you believe that it has been ten years since the UEFA Top Executive Programme (TEP) was created? They say time flies when you are having fun and that certainly applies to the decade of dialogue that we have had together.

There is no doubt in my mind that over the years TEP meetings have been a crucial tool for developing football in Europe, both on and off the field. They have provided the UEFA administration with an invaluable opportunity to listen to all national associations and to strengthen the unity of the continent in all football matters. These meetings have also proven that, for UEFA, all nations have a voice, no matter their size or football pedigree.

As I look back at some of the historic decisions that were initiated and facilitated by the TEP, I cannot help but feel proud of what we have achieved together. We enlarged the European Football Championship finals to 24 teams, centralised media rights for national team qualifying matches, decided to host UEFA EURO 2020 across Europe and created the new UEFA Nations League.

The hours that we have spent informally engaging in open discussion about your needs and desires have always paid off, and they always will. UEFA will stay true to its principles of cooperating and collaborating with the national

associations because that is what makes us strong and that is what guarantees that decisions are reached in a diplomatic and consensual manner.

One final note about the role of football in society, as we take stock of the dramatic stories of many thousands of war refugees in Europe this past summer: UEFA remains committed to making contributions in times of distress, and the work done since 2013 at the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan – now through the UEFA Foundation for Children – is proof of that. Whenever and wherever we feel we can help, we will do our best to aid those in need.

Michel Platini
UEFA President

‘OLD-TIMERS’ AND WIDE-EYED NEWCOMERS

At the end of every August, Monaco is the setting for the draws for the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League group stages. The two events attract massive interest, not only from the clubs involved, but also from millions of fans looking forward to savouring the season’s entertainment.

‘Old-timers’ and past winners, fully accustomed to the rarefied European limelight, are joined in the draws by wide-eyed newcomers who are eager to make their mark and give their supporters a memorable adventure in the months that follow.

The 2015/16 draws in the Mediterranean principality were no different. Alongside nine previous winners in the 32-team UEFA Champions League line-up, FC Astana are the first club from Kazakhstan to reach the group stage. They are accompanied by two other debutants in Belgian outfit KAA Gent and Germany’s VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach. The UEFA

UEFA Champions League is the competition that all the stars want to play in, and why [the] unique trophy is the one that all stars want to hold.”

He also highlighted the competition’s massive global reach, giving particular emphasis to this year’s thrilling final between Juventus and FC Barcelona in Berlin in June. *“The match reached over 400 million TV viewers worldwide, in over 200 territories, confirming its status as the world’s most watched annual sporting event. As you can see, the fans are really passionate about the UEFA Champions League.”*

Two Italian stars of the recent past came together to assist with the UEFA Champions League draw in their role as ambassadors for the 2015/16 final, to be staged at the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza in Milan on 28 May next year. AC Milan and FC Internazionale Milano both play at the venerable San Siro, and Milan legend Paolo Maldini and Inter great Javier Zanetti joined forces in Monaco to help decide the destinies of the group stage teams.

Through their fifth success, Barcelona have joined an elite group of clubs allowed to wear a ‘badge of honour’ on their shirts, and club legends played their full part in the draw proceedings. Midfielder Andrés Iniesta carried the trophy he has won four times onto the stage, and former players Andoni Zubizarreta, Carles Puyol, Juliano Belletti and Eric Abidal – themselves all European Cup winners with Barça – helped to make the draw.

The media demonstrated their own insatiable appetite for the UEFA Champions League. A total of 200 journalists from 54 countries (media and non-rights holders) came to Monaco to cover the draw, with the United Kingdom (32), France (29) and Italy (25) providing the lion’s share of the representatives.

Fascinating groups

The draw itself has thrown up some fascinating groups to follow this autumn. A mouth-watering Group D, for example, brings together last season’s runners-up Juventus, 2014 and 2015 UEFA Europa League winners Sevilla FC, English Premiership frontrunners Manchester City FC and solid German newcomers



Europa League group stage will be graced for the first time by FC Augsburg (Germany), Os Belenenses (Portugal), FC Groningen (Netherlands), AS Monaco FC (France), FC Midtjylland (Denmark), Qäbälä FK (Azerbaijan), FC Sion (Switzerland) and KF Skënderbeu – Albania’s first representatives at this stage.

Sharing the passion

UEFA General Secretary Gianni Infantino reflected the views of everyone who shares the passion of the UEFA Champions League. *“We will see spectacular goals, wonderful individual displays, gripping moments of drama,”* he said. *“All of which will serve to remind us why the*

Mönchengladbach. In Group A, ten-time winners Real Madrid CF encounter fancied Frenchmen Paris Saint-Germain, whose Swedish sharpshooter Zlatan Ibrahimović will relish an emotional return to his home-town club Malmö FF, where he began his career. The Group F field features old foes in FC Bayern München and Arsenal FC – the Bavarian giants eliminated the London club in the round of 16 in both 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Chelsea FC coach José Mourinho will go back to Portugal in Group G to face FC Porto, with whom he won the UEFA Champions League in 2004. Holders Barcelona take on Bayer 04 Leverkusen, AS Roma and FC BATE Borisov in a fascinating Group E. In Group C, Astana's UEFA Champions League baptism sees them pitted against three daunting rivals in twice-winners SL Benfica, 2014 finalists Club Atlético de Madrid and Turkey's redoubtable Galatasaray SK.



"In every match, our opponents will be favourites," said Astana coach Stanimir Stoilov, *"but we have to do all we can and put in 100% effort. We want to go through – we'll play our natural game."* The UEFA Champions League unites the far ends of UEFA's territory this season – the distance between Astana and Lisbon, where Benfica awaited the Kazakh newcomers in the opening match, stretches beyond 7,000km depending on the overland route that one might take to the Portuguese capital. In the meantime, Gent's debut in Group H brings testing opposition

MILAN AND BASEL TO HOST 2015/16 FINALS

All roads in the 2015/16 UEFA club competitions will lead to Milan, Italy, and Basel, Switzerland, for the two finals next spring. On 28 May next year, Milan's Stadio Giuseppe Meazza will host the UEFA Champions League final. The arena, opened in 1926, is home to both AC Milan and FC Internazionale Milano, and staged previous finals of European club football's blue-riband competition in 1965, 1970 and 2001. It also hosted matches at the EURO in 1980 and the 1990 World Cup.

The St. Jakob-Park in Basel, home to FC Basel 1893, will stage the UEFA Europa League final on 18 May 2016. The previous stadium on the current site was the setting for the European Cup Winners' Cup finals in 1969, 1975, 1979 and 1984, and the new venue, opened in 2001, hosted six matches at EURO 2008. ●

in Russians FC Zenit, experienced Spaniards Valencia CF and French competition veterans Olympique Lyonnais.

In contrast to the three 'new boys', Barcelona, Manchester United FC, Porto and Real Madrid have seen it all before. They are making their 20th group stage appearances. Madrid hold records for most group stage points (244), goals (269) and most qualifications from the group stage (19), while 133 clubs in total have made it to the group stage. Barcelona ace Lionel Messi leads the group stage goalscoring list (44).

The new UEFA Champions League brand identity for the competition's 2015–18 cycle was launched in Monaco. The concept behind the new identity, 'Champions becoming Legends', celebrates the very best players striving to reach legendary status. Whereas the visual identity has been refreshed for the new cycle, the classic UEFA Champions League logo, the prestigious trophy and the inspiring music that form the foundations of the brand remain unchanged. The refined design will continue to give the UEFA Champions League a unique identity to be applied across a wide range of promotional applications, always with the aim of further enhancing the competition's endless prestige. >>>

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN DISTRIBUTIONS TO CLUBS

Under the financial distribution system in place for UEFA's club competitions for the 2015–18 cycle, the amounts available to participating clubs, in particular in terms of solidarity payments, will increase considerably compared with the 2012–15 cycle.

UEFA gave an update on the figures in Monaco, and explained that all revenue from the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League would be centralised in one pot.

Redistribution to participating clubs will be based on a fixed ratio of 3.3 to 1 between the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League. More funds will go to UEFA Europa League participants, clubs involved in qualifying rounds and smaller clubs.

A record pot of €2.24bn a year is available, combining 32% higher club competition revenues with income from ticketing and hospitality at UEFA finals. In particular, solidarity payments to clubs not qualified for the group stages are now an integral part of the distribution system (3.5% of the revenue) and increased by at least 62% to €78.4m, and solidarity payments to clubs that do not qualify for UEFA competitions at all are rising to €112m – an increase of 35%.

"The concept means more funding for all," said UEFA General Secretary Gianni Infantino. *"It shows the success of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League. It is not only UEFA's wish, but also that of the clubs, as we have done this together in consultation with the European Club Association."* ●

»»» *“In a few short years, the UEFA Europa League has established itself as an attractive sporting proposition in its own right,”* Gianni Infantino reflected as he carried out that competition’s group stage draw. *“Certainly, the quality of the line-up on the starting grid for this season’s group stage promises an exciting few months ahead.”*

The UEFA General Secretary was assisted in making the 12-group draw by Ivica Dragutinović, who won the UEFA Cup with Sevilla FC in 2006 and 2007, and Alexander Frei, former FC Basel 1893 and Borussia Dortmund striker, the Swiss national team’s all-time top goalscorer and ambassador for the 2016 final, which will be held at Basel’s St. Jakob-Park on 18 May next year.

Six former UEFA Cup and UEFA Europa League winners – AFC Ajax, RSC Anderlecht, Liverpool FC, SSC Napoli, FC Schalke 04 and Tottenham Hotspur FC – are among the 48-club line-up. Two of this illustrious sextet, Londoners Tottenham and Belgians Anderlecht, who contested the 1984 UEFA Cup final, were drawn together in

a potentially tight Group J that also includes AS Monaco FC and Qarabağ FK, representing Azerbaijan.

Eight newcomers in the Europa League

Turning to this season’s UEFA Europa League group debutants, Skënderbeu have been given a challenging Group H assignment against Sporting Clube de Portugal, Turkey’s Beşiktaş JK and Russians FC Lokomotiv Moskva. Qəbälə will face German giants Dortmund, Greek hopefuls PAOK FC and Russia’s FC Krasnodar in Group C, while FC Rubin Kazan (Russia), Liverpool (England) and FC Girondins de Bordeaux (France) await Sion. Augsburg, meanwhile, take on 2012 finalists Athletic Club, Dutchmen AZ Alkmaar and Serbia’s FK Partizan. *“Three great journeys for our fans to make,”* said the German club’s coach Markus Weinzierl. *“As was the case in the Bundesliga, we are hoping to cause a few surprises, and we just aim to enjoy the great experiences we will have in the Europa League.”*

ŠAŠIĆ AND MESSI BEST PLAYERS IN EUROPE

The UEFA Champions League group stage draw in Monaco on 27 August not only heralded the start of the new club competition season, but also looked back on the last, with the presentation of UEFA’s awards for the best male and female players of the 2014/15 campaign.

In a live poll, 54 journalists used an electronic voting system to select their favourite players from a three-man shortlist announced on 12 August, comprising FC Barcelona duo Lionel Messi and Luis Suárez, and Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid CF). For the second time, Argentinian ace Messi won the UEFA Best Player in Europe Award, having captured the prize for the first time in 2011.

The 28-year-old broke the record for Spanish Liga goals last season, and finished the season with 58 goals in all competitions. The brilliant Barcelona midfielder was also joint top scorer in the UEFA Champions League alongside Barça team-mate Neymar and Ronaldo, finding the net ten times each.

Messi received the award from UEFA President Michel Platini at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco. *“We’re a unified squad who worked very hard to achieve the goals we did,”* Messi said. *“I’m very happy and I would like to thank my team-mates – without them I wouldn’t have received this.”*

Messi, Ronaldo and Suárez had been short-listed in August by the 54 journalists representing each of UEFA’s member associations, having initially been part of a ten-player list revealed in mid-July that was the result of a first round of voting by the same reporters.

German winner for women’s award

The UEFA Best Women’s Player in Europe Award for 2014/15 went to former 1.FFC Frankfurt and Germany forward Célia Šašić, who finished ahead of two midfielders – Amandine Henry of Olympique Lyonnais and France and Dzsenerifer Marozsán, another Germany international playing for Frankfurt.

Šašić, who retired in July, topped the poll of a jury comprising 18 journalists, each committed to supporting women’s football, chosen by the European Sports Media Group (ESM). Šašić was top scorer in last season’s UEFA Women’s Champions League – won by Frankfurt – Germany’s Frauen-Bundesliga and the Women’s World Cup



Célia Šašić

Belgian side Club Brugge KV are in the UEFA Europa League group stage for a record-equalling sixth time – joining Dutch neighbours PSV Eindhoven. Brazilian Alan and Uruguay's Edinson Cavani share the group stage goals record with 12, and Dutchman Jeremain Lens has made the most appearances (27). PSV Eindhoven are absent from the UEFA Europa League group stage for the first time – happily, owing to their presence in the UEFA Champions League. The eight group debutants take the total number of UEFA Europa League entrants over the years to 172.

New attendance record

As for attendance figures, Dortmund have established new UEFA Europa League records this season – for the qualifying competition (65,190 against Wolfsberger AC) and play-offs (64,200 against Odds BK). The group stage record crowd of 53,123 set by Schalke may be in danger with some well-supported clubs in the running this season. The overall UEFA Europa

League record of 67,553 was set when Ukraine's FC Dynamo Kyiv beat English visitors Everton FC 5-2 in the last round of 16.

A completely new UEFA Europa League brand identity for the competition's 2015–18 cycle was unveiled in Monaco. The brand identity is inspired by the strong connection between players and fans who, together in club and community, experience the vast diversity and emotion of the UEFA Europa League. New music also aims to capture the passion and vitality of UEFA Europa League matchnights. This rebranding will offer the UEFA Europa League a unique identity across a wide promotional application range.

Away from the draws, meetings and events took place to help ensure that the 2015/16 European club competitions will run smoothly. The UEFA Club Competitions Committee held a meeting, and workshops were staged for clubs taking part in the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Youth League. The European Club Association (ECA) also held an executive board meeting. ●



Lionel Messi and Michel Platini

in Canada. After receiving her award from Michel Platini in Monaco, she said: *"It's amazing, but it's also a trophy for my team-mates, both from the national team and Frankfurt. They gave me good balls, so it's for them, too."*

The initial 12-player shortlist was based on proposals by the coaches of the eight 2014/15 UEFA Women's Champions League quarter-finalists and the eight European teams that qualified for the Women's World Cup. The top 12 overall were then the subject of a second round of voting by the panel of journalists. The three players with the most points from the second round of voting were shortlisted for the final poll in Monaco. ●

A SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZ

UEFA's thriving social media channels brought the magic of Monaco to football fans worldwide, as the season kicked off with the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League group stage draws and the UEFA Best Player in Europe Awards.

The UEFA Champions League draw now rivals matches in terms of social appeal, with the Facebook post showing the draw proving to be the most popular ever from the UEFA Champions League account. It was seen by over 21 million people, 103% more than the previous high from the final in June.

As a whole, Facebook posts during the Monaco week reached 315,647,178 people, while 23,935,208 clicked on, liked, commented on or shared posts.

UEFA also unveiled an Instagram booth for the first time at a public event in Europe. Legends and footballers picked fan questions, crowdsourced with the hashtag #askUCLdraw, and replied. The campaign generated 400 fan questions, 587,800 likes and 6,435 comments.

The draw post was also the most popular on Twitter – it was seen by 3,347,590 users (impressions) and retweeted 37,614 times. Overall, there were 74,306,621 impressions generated on Twitter and 247,268 retweets. ●

SUPER CUP SPECTACLE HAS GEORGIAN FANS SWOONING

Lionel Messi may have been the star attraction but by the end of an unforgettable UEFA Super Cup encounter both FC Barcelona and Sevilla FC had won plenty of new fans in Tbilisi.



Asked during the pre-match press conference whether his side were expecting the equivalent of an away match at the Boris Paichadze Dinamo Arena, given Barcelona's huge following in Tbilisi, Sevilla's captain, Coke, replied with a smile: "Let's hope that by the 50th minute the crowd will be supporting us instead because we've been playing so well."

A light-hearted response at the time, Coke's comments were not too far wide of the mark come the dying minutes of an incredible UEFA Super Cup encounter between the holders of Europe's top two club prizes, the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League.

After José Antonio Reyes had pulled one back for Sevilla, a Kevin Gameiro penalty further reduced the arrears and with just a single goal required to force extra time, suddenly the crowd switched sides. Having chanted "Messi! Messi! Messi!" for most of the match, the majority of the 51,940 fans – predominantly locals – were now very much urging Sevilla to score again.

Lightning strikes twice

Incredulous looks were exchanged as Yevhen Konoplyanka tucked in the equaliser to make it 4-4 with ten minutes remaining. The delighted audience saluted the unlikeliest of comebacks with a chorus of "Sevilla! Sevilla! Sevilla!"

Coke's prediction had come true, though to say the fans had switched allegiances may be an exaggeration. They, like the millions of 'neutrals' watching on television throughout the world, were simply enjoying what had become arguably the most thrilling UEFA Super Cup ever.

Andalusian hearts were eventually broken as substitute Pedro slammed in the winner to make it 5-4 to Barcelona with five minutes of extra time remaining. It was a case of lightning striking twice in the UEFA Super Cup. In the 2009 edition in Monaco Pedro was also the winning goalscorer, again in the 115th minute and again as a substitute, in a much tighter 1-0 success against FC Shakhtar Donetsk.

Barcelona therefore lifted the UEFA Super Cup trophy for a fifth time. Yet the real winners in Georgia were the fans, who had been treated to a fabulous match, which once again confirmed UEFA's decision to take the competition around the continent as a resounding success. ●



Messi curls in his second goal from a free-kick in the UEFA Super Cup in Tbilisi

After a spectacular opening ceremony involving nearly 1,000 children from Georgia and eight other countries involved in conflict joining hands in support of the UEFA Foundation for Children's message of Football United for Peace, Sevilla took a somewhat surprise lead through Éver Banega's third-minute free-kick – the fastest goal in the competition's history. But Unai Emery's side soon found themselves behind. Lionel Messi, putting on a real show for the expectant local crowd, curled in two free-kicks of his own to turn the tables within the opening quarter of an hour.

Further strikes either side of half-time from Rafinha and Luis Suárez put Barça into a seemingly insurmountable 4-1 lead, but that was when the drama really began.

11 August 2015

Tbilisi, Boris Paichadze Dinamo Arena – 51,940 spectators

FC Barcelona v Sevilla FC 5-4 (3-1, 4-4) aet
Goals: 0-1 Banega 3, 1-1 Messi 7, 2-1 Messi 16, 3-1 Rafinha 44, 4-1 Suárez 52, 4-2 Reyes 57, 4-3 Gameiro 72p, 4-4 Konoplyanka 81, 5-4 Pedro 115

Referee: William Collum (Scotland)

FOOTBALL UNITED FOR PEACE



Some 1,000 children were invited by the UEFA Foundation for Children to take part in the opening ceremony of the UEFA Super Cup

At this year's UEFA Super Cup, which pitted FC Barcelona against Sevilla FC in Tbilisi, Georgia, fans both in the stadium and watching on TV witnessed a spectacular opening ceremony that sent a message that is close to UEFA's heart: football brings people together and unites them for peace.

The local organisers in Tbilisi, the easternmost European city to host the UEFA Super Cup since it left Monaco in 2012, gave their all to make this final a memorable event. The Georgian Football Federation (GFF), with the support of the UEFA Foundation for Children, decided to seize this opportunity to send a strong message by giving the spotlight to children from conflict zones in Europe, conveying the idea of peace and showing how football can bring people together. The football associations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine all joined together to support and take part in this initiative.

The GFF provided 1,000 tickets for children from Georgia and the other countries whose associations took part. The children chosen were orphans, refugees from occupied territories of Georgia or children from military families who had lost family members in military operations. Aged between 10 and 12, the children had all won local grassroots tournaments.

To send a clear message of peace and unity, the UEFA Foundation for Children and the UEFA ceremonies team used a strong and universal symbol: a human chain formed by the children, the players from both teams and the match officials. While everyone stood hand in hand, the final act of the ceremony was a rendition of John Lennon's Imagine by four talented young Georgian singers aged between 10 and 13.

Shortly before kick-off, Revaz Arveladze, general secretary of the GFF, said: *"The kids come from our neighbourhood countries, our friend countries, and there are also a lot of Georgian kids in this ceremony. The idea came from the UEFA Foundation for Children. So we started I think approximately two months before to choose these kids from the different countries. And I am very happy that those thousand kids, as well as the others who are in the stadium, can be part of this game. Many of them know everything about football today and especially about the big stars that are coming tonight, and the big clubs. So they were very emotional, and very happy."*

The adults who accompanied the children also highlighted the importance for these young people of taking part in the ceremony: *"It made a big impression on them – the experience was very intense. These children had two amazing days in Tbilisi, and what's really great is that they met children from other countries who have the same passion for football. The fact that a player like Messi has come to Georgia is a miracle in itself and it provides a lot of motivation for these children. Some of the parents have told us that the kids were so excited that they couldn't sleep."*

The UEFA Foundation for Children would like to thank the GFF for bringing together nine football associations to carry out this project and for the warm welcome that it gave the children. ●

ARE EUROPEAN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL CLUBS ALL THE SAME?

UEFA has been supporting football-related academic research projects through its Research Grant Programme since 2010. To give you a taste of the interesting work undertaken, UEFA•direct is showcasing a selection of research projects funded by the programme. This month, Dr Christoph Breuer presents his analysis of the base of the European football pyramid.

The programmes and services offered by grassroots football clubs in Europe and the range of people that they serve provide physical and mental health benefits, economic returns, and social capital. As they are major factors in the health and well-being of individuals and

football pyramid and their effects on public well-being. This approach was taken as it can be assumed that the broader and more solid the base of the pyramid (i.e. the better the condition of grassroots football), the better the chances for sustainable development of the entire sport. To develop sustainably, grassroots clubs depend on their capacity to fulfil their roles, functions and missions. A club's capacity can be understood as the ability to perform effectively, efficiently and sustainably.

A comparison of six countries

In order to gain a better understanding of the influence that organisational capacity and problems have on public well-being, an empirical comparison between football clubs in six European countries was also conducted. A total of 5,110 clubs participated in an online survey and reported that attracting and retaining volunteers and referees are currently the biggest organisational problems.

The clubs demonstrated small differences in ranking 20 organisational problems and their respective magnitudes. The characteristics of their membership (e.g. age and gender), their organisational structure (e.g. how many paid or female staff they have), and their infrastructural capacities varied. For example, only 20% of the Italian clubs who took part in the survey have their own facilities, compared with 80% of Norwegian clubs. Although financial differences exist, the proportion of clubs breaking even is fairly similar across the six countries, indicating similar levels of financial performance.

The results show that there is clear evidence of the effect of specific organisational capacities on organisational problems and public well-being. For example, following a strategic concept helps to solve almost 70% of all the organisational problems considered, while imitating the supply of commercial sports providers is harmful with respect to 40% of the problems. Moreover, a higher proportion of female staff appears to be linked with improved public well-being. While financial capacity is generally important, it does not usually lead to improved public well-being. The problem of 'the shadow over the game' (i.e. discrimination, violence and manipulation) is hardly affected at all by organisational capacities and needs to be addressed in future research to sustain the integrity of the game. ●



Dr Christoph Breuer's research compares grassroots football clubs in six European countries

communities, they have become a focus for achieving socio-political objectives. While previous academic research has focused mainly on the professional level, this research project assessed differences across countries in terms of the organisational capacities and problems of football clubs at the base of the European

Dr Christoph Breuer is a full professor at the Institute of Sport Economics and Sport Management of German Sport University Cologne; vice-chancellor of German Sport University Cologne, responsible for resources, planning and quality management; and a member of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Finance and Administration Committee. From 2006 to 2011 he was also a research professor at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin). ●



NEW SEASON STRONGEST YET

Last season the UEFA Women's Champions League was decided with a goal in the last minute of the final, and there is every chance that the 2015/16 edition will be even tighter.



Seven years on from their record third European title, 1. FFC Frankfurt made it four in May's UEFA Women's Champions League final thanks to substitute Mandy Islacker's superb winner against Paris Saint-Germain in Berlin.

Frankfurt and Paris are back for the 2015/16 edition, as are a number of teams who could so easily have made the final last season, such as former winners Olympique Lyonnais and VfL Wolfsburg, Swedish women's top division champions FC Rosengård, FC Bayern München and new contenders Chelsea LFC. Once Liverpool Ladies FC, newly professional FC Barcelona, newcomers Club Atlético de Madrid and KIF Örebro DFF and last season's semi-finalists Brøndby IF are thrown into the mix, it is clear the 2015/16 knockout phase will be ruthless from the start.

That much was also shown by the qualifying round, which was played as mini-tournaments in August. Of the record entry of 56 clubs from 47 nations, 32 were involved in that

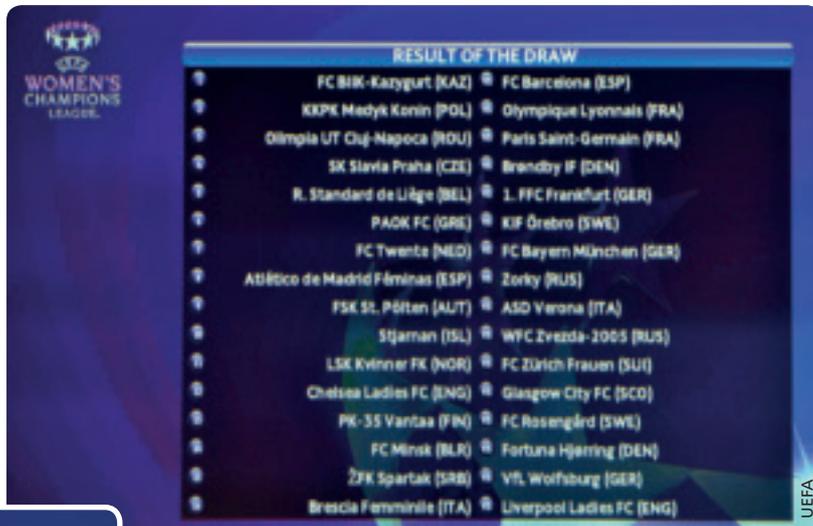
first stage, competing in eight groups to join the 24 teams given byes to the knockouts. Among those involved in the qualifiers were CF Benfica (not to be confused with neighbours SL Benfica), Ferencvárosi TC, Wexford Youths Women's AFC, ŽFK Dragon 2014 and FC Jeunesse Jonglënster – only the second entrants from Luxembourg, four years after the first.

In contrast, Faroese team Klaksvíkar Ítróttarfelag were keeping up their unique record of entering all 15 editions of this competition since the inaugural UEFA Women's Cup in 2001/02. Although they were not one of the eight group winners, they have already clinched another league title to book their return for 2016/17.

Knockout tests

In the end it was ZFK Minsk, FC PAOK Thessaloniki, Stjarnan, FC Twente, Olimpia Cluj Napoca, ZFK Spartak Subotica, KKKPK Medyk Konin and PK-35 Vantaa who won their qualifying groups, all with the maximum of 9 points, to take their places in the round of 32. The draw was not kind to many of these unseeded teams, with Medyk Konin set to face Lyon, Olimpia Cluj up against Paris, Twente due to take on Bayern and Spartak Subotica set to play Wolfsburg.

But it was the stronger sides among the 16 unseeded clubs who were the real focus of



the draw. Standard de Liège are meeting Frankfurt, ACF Brescia Femminile will encounter Liverpool – in a clash between two clubs who fell in the round of 32 on their debut 12 months ago – and highly rated Norwegians LSK Kvinner FK are up against FC Zürich Frauen.

The standout encounter will undoubtedly be Glasgow City FC, quarter-finalists in 2014/15, v Chelsea, who have a team capable of challenging anyone in their debut European season. Glasgow will be keen to avenge both a 2-0 pre-season loss at home to English opponents Chelsea at the start of the year and their loss two years ago to Arsenal Ladies FC in the tournament's first-ever Anglo-Scottish knockout match.

Road to Italy

The round of 32 will be played in the first fortnight of October, and the round of 16 ties, to be played on 18 and 19 November, will be decided on 19 October, as the last 16 draw is now made separately from the draw for the initial knockout stage. Unlike in previous years there will be country protection for the round of 16, meaning no repeat of last year's encounter between Lyon and Paris, and there will be seeding.

The quarter-finals will be in March (played in midweek as opposed to last season's weekends) and the semis a month later. The final will be at Stadio Città del Tricolore in Reggio Emilia, home to US Sassuolo Calcio and AC Reggiana 1919, on Thursday 26 May, two days before the men's UEFA Champions League concludes in nearby Milan. ●

REFEREES URGED TO PROTECT THE GAME

'Protect football's image' was a key message given to just over 100 of Europe's top men and women referees when they were primed for their duties this season at UEFA's annual mid-August gathering in Nyon. In the same week, additional assistant referees (AARs) were in the spotlight as overall preparations were finalised for another demanding campaign.

The UEFA summer course serves as an effective environment in which to gear up for the new season, and members of the UEFA Referees Committee, experienced former international referees themselves, were on hand to impart wise words of advice.

fitness levels to enable them to meet the strict physical demands placed on them.

"We would like to achieve consistency in performance, as we believe that this is a key to success," said Collina, praising the referees' dedication. *"We have seen how hard you are working, and we are confident that you will do well over what will be a long season."*

A briefing centred on new offside guidelines issued by the International Football Association Board (IFAB), aimed at clarifying the interpretation of interfering with an opponent in the application of the Laws of the Game. Now, players in offside positions will also be penalised if they clearly attempt to play a ball which is close to them when doing so impacts on an opponent, or if a player makes an obvious action which clearly impacts on an opponent's ability to play the ball.

Training in Nyon

AARs – who stand on each goal line and watch in particular for penalty-area incidents – have been a successful recent innovation in major UEFA competitions, and 40 of them came to Nyon ahead of the referees for

their own specific course.

Topics included focus and concentration, positioning, anticipation, correct movement and how the match referees and AARs must achieve high-quality teamwork and communication. *"Talent wins games,"* said Collina, quoting basketball icon Michael Jordan, *"but teamwork wins championships."*

UEFA refereeing officer Hugh Dallas said that the AAR system was proving especially successful as a deterrent. *"Players and coaches are aware that another pair of eyes is on the goal line watching for incidents,"* he explained. *"This deters players from holding, pushing and blocking."*

"The referees and AARs are now viewing the same incident from two different angles – it's giving the referee an additional pair of eyes," Dallas added. *"More eyes means more accuracy."* ●



UEFA via Getty Images

Additional assistant referees in training

Referees were urged by UEFA to protect football and its image. With its high-profile club and national team matches given exposure across the world, the European body wants the game to paint a positive picture, in particular vis-à-vis youngsters who are learning to love the sport.

UEFA's chief refereeing officer, Pierluigi Collina, asked the match officials to react firmly to players mobbing them to exert pressure, and to punish serious foul play and reckless tackling or challenges which might cause serious injury. *"[Referees] are part of the game and you must protect yourself as part of the game by taking disciplinary measures if needed,"* he said. *"We don't look for friendship – we look for respect."*

The referees looked back over the previous season through video analysis and discussion, previewed the coming campaign, heard instructions and recommendations, and tested their

A WELCOME OPPORTUNITY FOR FRUITFUL DISCUSSIONS

Top coaches in European football gathered in Nyon on 2 September to discuss footballing trends and share ideas for future progress at the Elite Club Coaches Forum.

Chaired by UEFA coaching ambassador Sir Alex Ferguson and UEFA's chief technical officer, Ioan Lupescu, the discussions included many of the key topics chronicled in the 2014/15 UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League technical reports.

Chief refereeing officer Pierluigi Collina also gave an update on the Laws of the Game and initiated a discussion about interpreting the rules on handball. He also sent out a message that UEFA expects match officials in its competitions to be respected and that, to avoid mobbing, only the captain can speak to the officials, an approach supported by UEFA President Michel Platini, who was also present at the forum.

Sharing knowledge

"It [the forum] shows that UEFA is interested in the opinions of the coaches," said Ferguson. "When the new coaches come, it's important for them to lean on the experience of people like Carlo Ancelotti, Rafael Benítez and Arsène Wenger. These guys have had hundreds of games at European level and can share all of that with these young coaches. To have communication with each other about the complexities of the industry is also vital in a severe, results-based industry and that is something we really need to deal with."

Talking trends

Discussing the key topics to emerge from the club competitions was a major part of the forum. One such topic was the increase in the importance of the first goal, with 69% of teams scoring the first goal in a UEFA Champions League match going on to win the game.

"I think the evidence at the moment tells you that teams are not reacting well to conceding the first goal," Ferguson added. "The game is changing tactically and [...] a lot of teams who win games have less possession than the teams who lose. When you score, there's certainly a lot of concentration to make sure all the spaces are filled, you're defending resolutely and you're not getting yourself caught on counterattacks. And I think that maybe that's the reason that the teams who concede first are finding it difficult to win matches."

Other notable developments in the competition included a declining number of fouls, with the total 5.7% lower than it had been in 2013/14. And while the attacking qualities of the competition are not in doubt, there were fewer goals scored from crosses, down 17.7% on the previous campaign.

"Our main concern is to make the game interesting and spectacular, and that is what we talked about in the first part of our meeting," said FC Shakhtar Donetsk coach Mircea Lucescu. "All the coaches who are here have that 'attacking spirit', without which they would not have accomplished what they have, or they wouldn't be where they are now, with their teams. So everything [at the forum] was conducted in that way, to bring a more spectacular game, to bring more efficiency in scoring more goals."

Promoting respect

Incidents around attacking play were also discussed by Pierluigi Collina, who explained the amendments to Law 11 regarding offside as well as debating interpretations of handball offences. His most important message was one of respect for the officials, given that players who surround the referee in the 2015/16 season will be shown the yellow card.

"We know that respect is one of the key elements in a football match," explained Collina. "UEFA wants a positive message to come from every match played in Europe because we notice from time to time that there are overreactions on the field of play from some players, from some teams in their tactics or behaviour, and from the benches. Children and youngsters copy the behaviour of their idols, and that's why UEFA sees the importance of tackling this problem." ●



*From left to right, front row: Manuel Pellegrini (Manchester City), Arsène Wenger (Arsenal), Mircea Lucescu (Shakhtar Donetsk), Michel Platini (UEFA President), Sir Alex Ferguson (UEFA ambassador), Carlo Ancelotti (ex-Real Madrid), Rafael Benítez (Real Madrid) and Myron Markevych (Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk)
Back row: Pierluigi Collina (UEFA Chief Refereeing Officer), Laurent Blanc (Paris Saint-Germain), Julien Lopetegui (Porto), Massimiliano Allegri (Juventus), Paulo Sousa (Fiorentina), Diego Simeone (Atlético de Madrid), Leonardo Jardim (AS Monaco), Unai Emery (Sevilla), Roger Schmidt (Bayer 04 Leverkusen), Jürgen Klopp (ex-Borussia Dortmund), Luis Enrique (Barcelona), Ioan Lupescu (UEFA) and Giorgio Marchetti (UEFA)*

UEFA FUTSAL CUP MAIN ROUND



Of the 49 teams that entered the 2015/16 UEFA Futsal Cup, 29 participated in the preliminary round at the end of August. They had been split into five groups of four and three groups of three. The group winners joined the teams that had qualified directly for the main round, completing the six groups of four teams that were pulled out of the hat at the draw in Nyon on 2 July.

The main round matches will be played between 29 September and 4 October. The group winners and runners-up will qualify for the elite round, where they will join the four top seeds (Kairat Almaty, Inter FS, Tulpar Karagandy and Ekonomac Kragujevac), who will enter the competition at that stage. The elite round draw will take place in Nyon on 14 October. The teams will be divided into four groups of four and will play their matches between 10 and 15 November. The host of the final tournament, which will be held at the end of April, will be chosen from among the four group winners. ●



FYR Macedonia's KMF Zelezarec Skopje and SK Augur of Estonia in the preliminary round

ONE PLACE AVAILABLE FOR THE OLYMPIC WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT

The Netherlands will host Norway, Sweden and Switzerland in a mini-tournament to be held from 2 to 9 March 2016 in order to decide who will join Germany and France in the Olympic women's tournament in Rio next summer (3–19 August 2016).

With three places allocated to European teams, an additional qualifying event had to be organised because the three European representatives could not be determined by the results at the Women's World Cup in Canada. Since England, who finished third in Canada, are unable to take part in the Olympic tournament, the European teams that were knocked out in the round of 16 have been given an extra chance to qualify. ●

U-17 WORLD CUP IN CHILE

Six European teams (Belgium, Croatia, England, France, Germany and Russia) will travel to Chile to compete for the FIFA U-17 World Cup.

The competition will kick off on 17 October and the final will be played at the Sausalito stadium in Vina del Mar on 8 November. Matches will be staged in Santiago, Vina del Mar, La Serena, Coquimbo, Talca, Concepcion and Puerto Montt. ●

GERMAN CLUBS SHOW SOLIDARITY

In the spring, in view of the growing number of refugees arriving in Germany and the desire of amateur football clubs to show their solidarity, the German Football Association (DFB) launched the initiative '1:0 für ein Willkommen' (1-0 for a welcome). The DFB's Egidius Braun Foundation and the German national team contributed €300,000 each, a sum matched by the federal commissioner for migration, refugees and integration. UEFA has added a €50,000 donation, prompting the German government to chip in an extra €50,000 too.

This money will be used to give initial €500 grants to 800 clubs in 2015 and 600 clubs in 2016. The funds will be distributed to clubs that offer refugees the opportunity to play football, thereby providing valuable support to municipalities and public authorities. "Playing football together helps you communicate even if you don't speak the same language," said the DFB president, Wolfgang Niersbach. "Especially for children from refugee families, being able to play football again is a great blessing.

This initiative provides simple, effective support for the important work that is being done at grassroots level." ●
Rainer Kalb



Syrian players in Germany

ROMANIAN FA CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE



August was an important month for the Romanian Football Federation (FRF), which inaugurated its first two centres of excellence, in the cities of Timisoara and Targu Mures.

The centres were created as part of a broad project that aims to create a total of eight centres by 2020. The centres will be in different regions and will serve as a model for all professional clubs in Romania. Setting up centres of excellence was deemed necessary because of the current reality of Romanian football and society. This reality includes, among other things, less interest in football, the financial crisis, the fact that schools allocate only two hours a week for football, a lack of club interest in youth football and, as a logical consequence, the smaller pool from which to select players.

In light of this, it was the FRF's duty to step in and, together with the local communities, to create the centres of excellence. The FRF's first aim is to identify 56 of the most talented 15-year-old players in Romania (28 for each centre) who will then live, train, play and learn together. The FRF's plan is for this centralised system to prepare the players using top-level scientific principles, which is important because the ultimate aim is to train them for top-level football. For four years (i.e. until they are 19 and are no longer youth players), the children will be guided by eight staff: a head coach, assistant coach, goalkeeper coach, fitness coach, physiotherapist, psychologist, doctor and team manager. The staff have an average age of 35, and all coaches have a UEFA Pro licence, a UEFA A licence or a UEFA B licence.

Great investment

Such a project cannot become reality without a partnership with the local authorities and, of course, with the players' clubs. The FRF is taking care of all logistics, such as all costs, including the staff's salaries, kit, participation in domestic and international competitions, and money for the players who are over 16. The local authorities' contribution is the infrastructure and the provision of a school where the children will have classes. The young footballers will definitely not neglect school, because school is a must, especially as helping the players develop their personalities and characters is also an important aim of the centres. The FRF's investment is estimated to be around €300,000 a year for each centre, which means a current total investment of around €600,000 a year, the most the FA has available.

The FRF is aiming for 80% of the players of all national teams to come from the centres of excellence, and for 100 of the 224 young foot-

ballers coming through the 8 planned centres (28 from each) to play for the A team between 2020 and 2030.

The head coaches for the current centres have experience, making them excellent teachers for the players. Adrian Văsi (a UEFA Pro licence holder) was an Under-21 national team player and also played 212 matches in the Romanian first league, in which he scored 78 goals. He has worked as a head coach at various Romanian clubs, and, most importantly, he was the last coach to lead a Romanian national youth team (the Under-17s) to qualify for a European final tournament, in 2011. Adrian Toader (a UEFA A licence holder) was also a player in the first league (162 matches, 30 goals) and has been head of FC Petrolul Ploiești's youth centre since 2009.



FRF president Răzvan Burleanu at the training centre in Mogosoia

Before starting at the centres, in July the young players went to the FRF's national training centre, in Mogosoia, where they attended several training sessions and met the FRF's president, Răzvan Burleanu. Mr Burleanu said at the end of the meeting: "We really hoped to give this first generation who will work in the centres of excellence the chance to experience the environment around the A team. That's why the players were based at the very beginning at the training centres of our national teams. There are plenty of premises to have a most successful project and such academies will be financed also by UEFA." ●

Paul Zaharia

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS



International Under-17 tournament held in Vorarlberg

The 27th edition of the international Under-17 TOTO Cup was held in Austria from 19 to 23 August. The tournament was created in 1988 at the initiative of the Austrian Football Association, working in cooperation with Austrian Lotteries. Since it was held for the first time more than 25 years ago, the TOTO Cup has been graced by numerous international stars, including Clarence Seedorf, Tomáš

Rosický, Sami Khedira, Xherdan Shaqiri and David Alaba.

The national Under-17 teams of Russia, Montenegro and Switzerland were the guests at this year's tournament in Vorarlberg. The title was won by the Russian youngsters, who finished ahead of Austria (2nd), Switzerland (3rd) and Montenegro (4th).

The four-nation tournament helped the Austrian Under-17 team to prepare for the qualifying round of the 2015/16 European Under-17 Championship. In October, Andreas



The Austrian Under-17 team

Heraf's team will travel to Luxembourg to compete with Lithuania, Serbia and the mini-tournament hosts for a place in the elite round, the winners of which will qualify for the final tournament in Azerbaijan in spring 2016.

● Carmen Redl



Latest soccer school selection held

The latest stage of the selection process for the Manchester United summer soccer school in Baku was held at Bayil stadium on 22 and 23 August. A total of 32 children born in 2007 or 2008 took part in the selection on 22 August, and 54 children born in 2004, 2005 or 2006 attended on 23 August.

The school is part of a project run by the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) and one of its main partners, Bakcell. The school does not just provide training – there are also English lessons twice a week.

Mick Bennett, a coach from the Manchester United summer soccer school, led the selection process together with Samir Alakbarov and



All eyes on Mick Bennett

Jahangir Hasanzada. Talking about the school's activities, Bennett said: "The primary things that are demanded from players who take part in

the selection are technique and certain abilities. But the players' individual attitudes and athletic skills are also important. The players must try for both themselves and their team, passionately. They also must be able to show their abilities and believe in themselves. Today there are Under-10 and Under-12 teams in our school and we intend to add an Under-9 team too. After these we will need new coaches. There is lots of potential here. I have seen many technical players in the regions. This project is a fantastic idea. Children enjoy this project so much. The participants have already proved it. Going to England as a selected player and visiting Old Trafford has been unforgettable for them. It is inspiring, really. I hope this kind of thing happens frequently."

● Ulviyya Najafova



Ljubljana win Cup of Friendship

In the second qualifying round of the UEFA Champions League, domestic champions FK Sarajevo were defeated in both legs against the Polish team KKS Lech Poznań, first in Kosovo (2-0) and then away (1-0). In the UEFA Europa League, FK Željezničar got as far as the third qualifying round after beating Malta's Balzan FC twice (2-0 and 1-0), then Hungary's Ferencvárosi TC twice (1-0 and 2-0), but were then eliminated by Belgium's R. Standard de Liège (2-1 and 1-0). In the first qualifying round HŠK Zrinjski were defeated by Armenia's FC Shirak in the first leg (2-0) then won the second leg 2-1. FK Olimpik Sarajevo drew 1-1 at home against FC Spartak Trnava and then the away match was a goalless draw.

In women's football, WFC SFK 2000 Sarajevo hosted Group 1 in the qualifying round for the UEFA Women's Champions League. Samira Hurem's players won second place in the group, while the group winner was ZFK Minsk, from Belarus, who won 3-0 against SFK 2000. The local team had won two games, against Albania's Vllaznia (5-0) and Turkey's Konak Belediyespor (3-1).

Domestic futsal champions MNK Centar Sarajevo played in Group H of the preliminary round of the Futsal Cup in Berne and won first place in the group, with victories over Göteborg Futsal Club (13-1) and hosts Mobulu Futsal UNI Bern (11-2). In the main round they will play in

Group 2 with SL Benfica (Portugal), FC Grand Pro Varna (Bulgaria) and KMN Dobovec (Slovenia).

Bosnia and Herzegovina's national women's Under-17 team won the UEFA development tournament at the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation's training centre in Zenica. Second place went to Croatia, Montenegro were third and FYR Macedonia were fourth. Ilija Lucić's Bosnian and Herzegovinian side won the decisive match against Croatia (5-2), lost to FYR Macedonia (1-0) and defeated Montenegro (2-1). Croatia beat Montenegro (1-0) and FYR Macedonia (2-1), while Montenegro beat FYR Macedonia (2-1).

Nikola Nikić's women's Under-19 team played in a UEFA development tournament in Albena, Bulgaria, where they lost to Turkey (3-2) and Russia (2-1) and beat Bulgaria (2-0), winning third place.

At the Football Association of Serbia's training centre in Stara Pazova, the Under-19s played against their peers from the United Arab Emirates and won 2-1. The youngest players, the Under-15s, played two games against FYR Macedonia. In the first match, in Vogosca, they were defeated 2-1 and in the second they drew 1-1.

NK Olimpija Ljubljana's youth players defeated FK Željezničar in the final of the 11th international youth Football Friends tournament in Foca. After 90 minutes without goals the players from Ljubljana were nimbler at taking penalties and won the penalty shoot-out 4-3. In the match for third place HNK Rijeka beat hosts FK Sutjeska 1-0.



FK Željezničar's Jovan Blagojević (left) and R. Standard de Liège's Ahmed El Messaoudi (right)

The cup for fair play was awarded to Rijeka. The best player and goalkeeper was Aljon Kerec from the winning team, Olympia, while the top scorer, with three goals, was Domagoj Prpić from Rijeka.

The tournament's slogan was One Ball, One Playground, and everyone who took part in the Football Friends tournament signed a declaration on universal respect for football friendships that will be sent to FIFA, UEFA and the UN.

The tournament was attended by FK Crvena Zvezda and FK Vojvodina from Serbia, HNK Rijeka from Croatia, NK Olimpija Ljubljana from Slovenia, FC Budućnost Podgorica from Montenegro and FK Željezničar, FK Sarajevo and hosts FK Sutjeska Foča from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

● Fuad Krvavac

Football camps for minorities

Three football camps for minorities in Croatia were organised this summer with support from the Croatian Football Federation (HNS). The cities of Vukovar, Slavonski Brod and Porec were the proud hosts of these football camps, which gathered children of different backgrounds together under the banner 'United by football against violence, racism and discrimination'.

The main goal of the minorities' football camp project is to teach tolerance in sport to children of different nationalities, through football and through appropriate workshops. One of the organisers, Toti Dedić, expressed his gratitude towards the HNS: "Thanks to the Croatian Football Federation, we have a chance to connect children through sport throughout the country, and to show that Croatian sports truly support national minorities. These camps remind us to respect everyone, regardless of nationality, race or religion."



The Vukovar camp participants

Meanwhile, Milivoj Bračun was named as coach of the Croatian Under-16 team. Bračun will be in charge of a team that is of special interest to the HNS as Croatia will host the European Under-17 Championship in 2017.

"We are aware that people are expecting a lot from us as a host country, not only in terms of organisation but also in sporting terms. Mr Bračun brings everything we consider

important for this team to the table and hopefully we'll be one of the favourites at that tournament," said Romeo Jozak, HNS technical director.

Elsewhere, the Croatian Under-19 team won the SBS cup in Japan after beating Shizuoka, Spain and Japan, and Croatian player Frane Bitunjac, who also plays for ACF Fiorentina, was named player of the tournament.

● Tomislav Pacak

Launch of the eighth season of the Respect programme

This season the English Football Association will be providing a range of new Respect resources for grassroots clubs to help create a positive environment in which young people can learn to play the game. Last year over 1,200 clubs and 100 leagues took part in The FA's Respect – Set Your Stall Out weekend, and for the coming season clubs and leagues are once again encouraged to make use of Respect-branded posters, touchline lanyards, bootlaces, sweatbands, temporary tattoos and armbands.

These resources communicate clearly that young players will develop a lifetime love of the sport and improved technical skills if their experience of the game is an enjoyable one. Young players are competitive by their very nature, but most play with a sense of fairness and respect for opponents that is not always matched by some of the watching adults. Often

it is the referee – and usually a young referee – who is criticised.

The FA's Respect programme is now in its eighth season, and although the volume of cautions is roughly the same, dissent cautions (for abuse of referees or backchat) have declined by 23%.

The consensus of many leagues and clubs is that the environment within which young people learn the game has been improved by the introduction of designated spectator areas, Respect training for coaches, codes of conduct, pitchside marshals, parent briefings and Respect signage. This improvement is reflected in a decline in all misconduct charges, dismissals and – to everyone's relief – assaults on referees.

Across England, there are now approximately 27,000 registered referees, up from around



Colourful promotional material for the Respect programme

23,000 in 2008, and, more importantly, mentoring for young referees and the coverage of fixtures has improved considerably, as has enjoyment of games.

"What these statistics mean in reality is a more positive and enjoyable environment for the game to take place in," said Respect manager Dermot Collins.

"And because of this, it's much more likely that we'll keep coming back week after week – whether as players, referees, volunteers, parents or spectators. As it's still early in

the new season, we'd love to see clubs and leagues using our resources to send out clear, important messages about how they want to see grassroots football being played and watched in this country."

● Tony Snow

Successful beach soccer finals in Parnu

In August Estonia hosted the Euro Beach Soccer League Superfinal and Promotion Final in the popular seaside resort of Parnu. The four-day event attracted close to 20,000 spectators, who cheered the hosts on to three wins out of four matches.

Eight teams, including Portugal, the reigning world champions, and Russia, who are top of the world rankings, travelled to the summer resort of Parnu to play for the European title. Another eight teams, including the host country, played in the second tier to determine who will secure promotion to the top flight for next year.

Over four spectacular summer days, Estonia advanced to the Promotion Final thanks to wins

against Norway, England and Hungary. In the decisive match the hosts faced Romania, and after both normal time and extra time finished 6-6, the visitors won on penalties.

In the Superfinal Portugal beat Ukraine 5-4 with a last-second goal. Russia won the bronze, leaving Spain to miss out on a space on the podium. Italy secured fifth place in an extraordinary high-scoring match where they recorded a 15-10 victory against Switzerland.

"Beach soccer, obviously, is quite new for many fans, but they welcomed the competition very positively. The whole tournament was a big success. Stands were full and emotions were high. The sporting success of our team also played a big part in it," said Anne Rei, general secretary of the Estonian Football Association.

"We are investing more and more in futsal, beach soccer and other areas of football to

improve the local leagues and national teams. We feel that it gives something extra to football and helps to promote the game from another angle. From an organisational point of view it is also a different kind of challenge for our staff," she added.

● Media office



Parnu beach hosted the Euro Beach Soccer finals

Vikingur are cup winners for the fourth consecutive year

On 29 August the Faroese Cup final between Vikingur and NSÍ Runavík was played in Torshavn at Tórsvøllur, the national stadium. Vikingur had won the cup for the last three years and they lifted it again this year, after a convincing 3-0 victory.

The match was all but decided in the first half when Vikingur took a 2-0 lead through striker Súni Olsen and defender Gert Hansen. Runavík then lost one of their key players in Árni Frederiksberg, who received a straight red card.

In the second half it was more or less cruise control for Vikingur, and Heðin Hansen finished the match off with a goal to make it 3-0 to Vikingur, who have held the Faroese Cup for four consecutive years – quite an achievement.

Around 3,000 spectators attended this year's final, which is the highest number of spectators for a Faroese Cup final for many years.

The women's final was played on the same day as the men's. The well-known team from KÍ Klaksvík, who had won the cup for the last five years, faced EB/Streymur/Skála. It was a very tight game, with EB/Streymur/Skála dominating the first half. But the women of KÍ Klaksvík are



Vikingur captain Atli Gregersen holds the cup aloft

well known for a reason: they changed the game in the second half and, even though it remained tight, Klaksvík claimed their sixth consecutive cup title with a narrow 2-1 victory.

● Terji Nielsen

Big occasion, huge challenge and success

Tiny Georgia's capital city, Tbilisi, recently hosted the 2015 UEFA Super Cup. The first thing Georgians can be proud of with regard to hosting the event is that it attracted the biggest-ever crowd since the Super Cup became a one-match affair: a record-breaking 51,940 spectators. And, even more importantly, the game attracted fans not only from neighbouring countries, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, but from outside the Caucasus region too. Other than Spain, which was par for the course as the game was between two Spanish teams, the Super Cup attracted people from Iraq, Iran and the Middle East.

Was it a challenge for the organisers to host the game? Certainly. But was it an honour to host such a big football event? Undoubtedly. As this was the first football match of such scale to be played in Tbilisi, the biggest challenge for the Georgian Football Federation, the city authorities and the ordinary citizens was to present the Georgian capital as a suitable and reliable city, and a city that is able to host big football events in style. Our volunteers did their

utmost to create a festive atmosphere around the ground, in the old town and on the streets, and after the closing ceremony even the most sceptical observers were pleased. Therefore we can say with no exaggeration whatsoever that the presentation of the city of Tbilisi was a success, as was the game itself. Nine goals were scored, which has never happened before in a UEFA Super Cup match. So, after the attendance record, a second record was set in Tbilisi. Two records for a first-time host city is not too bad, to say the least.

It should not be forgotten that choosing Tbilisi as a Super Cup venue was a gamble in the eyes of some doubtful observers. Therefore we are particularly proud that the decision to grant Tbilisi the Super Cup was nothing but a success.

Thanks to the Super Cup we have gained invaluable experience and we are now hoping that in a couple of years we will be ready to host an even bigger event, such as the UEFA Europa League final. How likely we are to get such a fantastic chance in the near future still remains to be seen, but now we know what the hosting of a big match is like, what we need to improve and what to offer our guests to make them feel welcome.

The hosting of the 2015 Super Cup in Georgia was an unforgettable experience for our fans and indeed the whole nation, even for people who have no or little connection to our beautiful game.

● Armaz Metreveli



Increasing professionalism among referees

The Gibraltar Football Association's refereeing department recently held its annual summer seminar for match officials. The seminar attracted a large number of attendees, reflecting the increased professionalism of Gibraltarian referees.

The referees took an exam on the Laws of the Game and then attended an integrated training session with national fitness coach James Alvarez, in which they practised a number of exercises, including how to deal with psychological stress.

Presentations were given on the new interpretations of Law 11 – Offside, including that a player should only be penalised for interfering with an opponent if their action prevents their opponent from playing or being able to play the ball, and on developing the skill of applying the advantage law.

The officials also discussed free-kick management and how to attain consistency between referees in dealing with free-kicks. The officials were placed into groups to encourage more active participation.

The final exercise of the day was about judging challenges. Once again the participants were put into groups to promote full participation and healthy competition in making correct judgements. This lesson helped to ensure the protection of the players on the field of play: the primary aim of every match official.



The seminar participants

Reflecting on the overwhelming success of the annual summer seminar, referee Tim Reoch said: "As each season goes by our seminars get better and more structured. It was good to start with an examination of the Laws of the Game to get our brains into action. And group work was very effective in encouraging discussion by all group members. Although it was a long day, time flew because we found the presentations very informative, covering key aspects to make us more prepared for the season ahead."

Fellow referee Johan Ward added: "It was another great seminar, refreshing our knowledge of the Laws of the Game. There was a good lecture on the new interpretation of the offside law, with brilliant examples of when a player in an offside position should be penalised for making a clear impact on an opponent to play the ball. The integrated training was a good break from the classroom environment, although I personally would have liked a longer physical session!"

● Steven Gonzalez

National teams to promote Made in Italy products

From now on the Italian national football teams, the most well-known and admired Italian sporting icons in the world, will play for Made in Italy, as the ministry of economic development and the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) have signed an agreement with the aim of promoting Italy's image and its excellent products worldwide.

The agreement, with the support of the Italian trade agency (ICE), which promotes Italian products overseas, is part of a series of initiatives by the Italian government to support Italy's global trade development. All interested parties, both public and private, can participate in and contribute financially to the promotional activities.

The first initiative will take place on 10 October for the European Qualifier between Italy and Azerbaijan. The ICE will organise the 2015 Baku Build construction event for the construction industry and related machines and materials, thermal hydraulics, plumbing, bath furnishings and interior design.

Thanks to the agreement, the 18 FIGC national teams (from men's and women's football, futsal and beach soccer), who are involved in around 170 matches every year,

will become an instrument for promoting the country with the aim of endorsing Italian companies and supporting cultural and economic exchange.

● *Diego Antezio*



Italian icons boost Italian brands

Getty Images

Grassroots Week in Latvia gathers local celebrities as promoters

The 2015 edition of the international Grassroots Week took place from 7 to 13 September, with a notable number of local celebrities promoting the event and taking part in various football-related activities in Latvia.

The two leading promoters of Grassroots Week in Latvia were actors Andris Bulis and Dārta Daneviča, who were chosen as the honorary captains of their teams. The team captained by Mr Bulis was composed of male celebrities, including TV personalities, actors, singers and politicians, while the team captained by Ms Daneviča consisted of female celebrities, including singers, TV personalities, journalists and dancers. In total there were 22 local celebrities promoting this grassroots

football event – something unprecedented in Latvia!

Each and every football fan, club, sports centre, municipality, organisation or group of friends had the chance to organise a football-related activity in their town or city, whether at a school, in a garden or on a sports field. It had to encompass the spirit of football but there were no other restrictions. All the organisers were considered for prizes including a trip for two to Istanbul.

Grassroots Week in Latvia emphasised the social factors of football and its incredible accessibility. The motto of the event was 'Let football into your backyard!', to show that this game can be played just as beautifully in a backyard as on a field – or even on the roof of your house. As Grassroots Week proved, football is everywhere!

● *Toms Ārmanis*



Dārta Daneviča and Andris Bulis took part in Grassroots Week

LFF

Contract extension for national coach Rene Pauritsch

The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) has extended the contract of its technical director and national team coach, Rene Pauritsch. The 51-year-old Austrian has been working for the LFV since 2008, initially coaching the national Under-21 side and holding other roles in youth football before taking charge of the senior national team in autumn 2012. Since becoming technical director, he has also been responsible for all sporting aspects of the LFV's activities.

"Our decision to extend Rene Pauritsch's contract shows that we are absolutely delighted with the work he is doing,



Rene Pauritsch

LFV

as well as demonstrating the importance we attach to continuity," explained the LFV president, Hugo Quaderer, at a media conference. Rene Pauritsch was also thrilled to have had his contract extended until 2020, saying he was proud to continue working for the LFV and looking forward to unlocking the potential of Liechtenstein football even further.

Liechtenstein's national Under-21 coach, Heinz Fuchsichler, has also had his contract extended by two years. "His work with young players is also very highly regarded," said Hugo Quaderer, "which is why we are very pleased to be able to count on Heinz Fuchsichler's services in the future."

● *Anton Banzer*



A summer camp for children

Before the new school year began, the Lithuanian Football Federation (LFF) organised a summer camp for children named "Recognise football...". There were 27 participants aged from 6 to 10, and even more would have liked to attend.

Of course, there are lots of things for children to do during the summer, but this football camp was really special, because it took place at the LFF stadium in Vilnius. The children were able to take part in training sessions where the Lithuanian national team trains and plays.

Some famous football players attended the camp. Of course, the children do not know all

footballers, so the organisers also gave special lessons on famous former players, which included videos, pictures and statistics.

The children visited the old town and had a special tour, on which they saw buildings with a variety of architectural styles. The next day, the children had a look inside an ambulance car and talked to the medics about how they take care of injured players.

There was also a special meeting with a FIFA referee, who presented the instruments he uses during matches.

The camp was attended by both boys and girls, and there was a special chance to meet the organisers of a new women's football initiative, Live Your Goals.



The joy of playing is the same for boys and girls

This camp was the first, but, according to the organisers, certainly not the last. The LFF promises to organise more camps, and for different age groups, next summer.

● Vaiva Zizaitė



New sponsors for Malta's national teams

For some time the Malta Football Association (MFA) has had a new practice of seeking strategic partners, and this practice is set to continue as the MFA aims to develop the game further, both by increasing participation and by improving standards. The association has recently reached a three-year agreement with Talocan Limited, a firm which sells electronic consumer products, under which Talocan will be the MFA's second 'gold sponsor', following the strategic gold partnership with Cisk and the platinum sponsorship of FXDD.

This practice is a shift from traditional sponsorship towards a brand communication concept wherein partners are given space to exploit commercial opportunities and thereby increase business activity. In the coming years the MFA will be focusing on developing its sponsorship structure in order to enhance and increase the number of sponsorship and rights packages it has and at the same time improve



The new sponsor already had its advertising board up at the national stadium for the Super Cup between Hibernians FC and Birkirkara FC

its fan engagement and loyalty programmes. This sponsorship initiative has been materially beneficial to the various stakeholders of the game in Malta and is guaranteed to give more positive results.

Talocan is pleased to partner the MFA in supporting team sports where fair play characterises the players and the spectators. The firm has said that football in Malta has excellent potential all round and that it will help to advance the processes that the present administration of the Maltese game has put in place to take the sport to a higher level.

● Alex Vella



Thousands of kids enjoy football camps

More than 3,400 children had a ball at football holiday camps staged throughout Northern Ireland during the summer. Run by the Irish Football Association, in partnership with Portadown-based Irwin's Bakery, the Nutty Krust camps gave boys and girls aged 5-13 the chance to develop their football skills while exercising, having fun and making new friends. More than 200 girls were among the thousands of youngsters who took part in the camps, which visited 60 venues across the region.



Over 200 girls took part in this summer's football camps

At all camps the Irish FA's coaches gave the kids tips on dribbling, passing and shooting, and offered them encouragement to continue into a more competitive playing environment. And all the young participants were given a Nutty Krust goodie bag and an adidas football.

Meanwhile, around 1,500 kids took part in the annual Community Football Day at Mallusk playing fields in County Antrim. The event, at which 131 teams played a series of small-sided games, was organised by the Irish FA and Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association, in association with McDonald's.

Northern Ireland goalkeeping legend Pat Jennings, who is McDonald's Head of Northern Irish Football, and former England defender Martin Keown, who is McDonald's Head of English Football, also held coaching sessions at the event.

● Nigel Tilson



Regional offices for the good of Moldovan football

In 2014 the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) congress adopted the 2014-20 Football Development Strategy, which provides a broad and comprehensive vision of the priorities of Moldovan football for the coming years. The priorities set forth in the strategy should contribute to the continuous and sustainable development of Moldovan football, taking into account the evolution of the football world as well as the opportunities in Moldova.

One of the goals of the strategy is to create four regional offices, in the northern, southern, central and eastern regions of the country. In August FMF regional offices were launched in Balti (in the northern region) and Cahul (in the southern region). Their opening ceremonies were attended by Nicolai Cebotari, FMF general secretary, Ruslan Berzoi, FMF vice-president, and Oleg Molceanov, FMF federal inspector. The aim of the regional offices is to organise and stage

youth and women's competitions and workshops, to increase the number of grassroots participants, to train referees and coaches, and to contribute to regional technical development. The FMF encourages the activities of the regional offices by offering all kinds of assistance.

"It is very important for any national football association to have clear priorities and long-term goals to develop football in the country. We all hope that the FMF regional offices will play a special role in the development of football in the Republic of Moldova," said FMF president Pavel Cebanu.

● Press Office

The opening ceremony of the centre for the southern region



New coaches for the Russian senior and U21 teams

On 7 August the Russian Football Union (RFS) announced the appointment of Leonid Slutski as head coach of the Russian national team. The Russian's contract lasts until the end of the EURO 2016 qualifying competition and currently allows him to continue as PFC CSKA Moskva head coach at the same time. The national team's coaching staff will also include Sergey Balakhnin, Sergey Semak, Sergey Ovchinnikov

and Paulino Granero. "I would like to express my thanks to the people who invited me to the national team of Russia," said Leonid Slutski in an interview with the official site of the RFS.

On 17 August the RFS was also pleased to announce the appointment of Dmitry Khomukha as head coach of the Russian Under-21 team. His contract will last until the end of qualifying in the 2015–17 European Under-21 Championship. The coaching staff will also include Vladimir Skokov, Nikolay Kocheshkov and Alexey Orlov.

Dmitry Khomukha said: "Thank you for the confidence of the RFS leaders and the offer to take charge of the Russian U21 team. It is a great honour and responsibility for me. We will try our best to achieve goals and above all to qualify for the European Championship finals in 2017. We have very serious contenders in our qualifying group – Germany, Austria, Finland ... But it is not the first time that we have had to solve such serious problems, so we are ready for them."

● Igor Vladimirov

Scottish match officials honoured

Scotland played a special role at this year's UEFA Super Cup by providing five match officials for the game, which pitted FC Barcelona against Sevilla FC in Tbilisi. William Collum was the man in the middle, with fellow Scots Francis Connor, Graham Chambers, Bobby Madden and Kevin Clancy also included in the official matchday team.

It was a game that the Scottish FA officials will not forget in a hurry! Barcelona clinched

a fifth UEFA Super Cup with a 5-4 extra-time win over their La Liga rivals in front of 51,940 fans.

Speaking to UEFA.com ahead of the game, Collum said that the opportunity to referee a European club final was an honour: "It's fantastic. I'm delighted. To be officiating such an important match and such a special occasion is really, really exciting. Without a doubt it's my biggest achievement. For a small country like Scotland, to have a referee in the Super Cup is tremendous. It's such a big occasion, a one-off. Every match is important to a referee but with this one it's just such a big occasion. It's



The Scottish referee team

massive. Sometimes you'll hear referees saying that finals should be treated like any other match but this is special. It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance."

● David Childs

Stadium modernisations starting in Trnava

In an effort to interest Slovak fans and attract them back to football, including league football, the Slovak Football Association (SFZ) is reconstructing, modernising and developing football stadiums so that they meet the requirements of the 21st century (i.e. they are up to date, safe and have good facilities).

The SFZ held negotiations with the Slovak government, who then decided to allocate an extra €4.5m to the SFZ between 2013 and 2022 for the stadium improvement project. The project is being carried out in 21 towns, which

were chosen on the basis of objective criteria, in cooperation with the towns themselves or with private partners who are co-financing the works at a ratio of 40:60.

The government had already provided subsidies for each stadium of between €750,000 and €13m.

The most modern stadium in Slovakia is the recently reconstructed stadium in Trnava, which is home to FC Spartak Trnava, a club with a significant history – they are five-time champions of the Czechoslovak First League and were semi-finalists in the 1968/69 European Champion Clubs' Cup. The foundation stone of the stadium complex was laid in September

2013. The project included improvements in terms of comfort and safety, and inside the complex there is a small chapel dedicated to Pope John Paul II.

The stadium opened its gates on 22 August, when two extraordinary matches were played – Spartak Trnava v AFC Ajax (an old boys match) and Spartak Trnava v Atlético Paranaense – in front of a capacity crowd of 19,000.

Another goal of the project is to build a national stadium in Bratislava. The Slovak government is guaranteeing the project, which should help to overcome any obstacles and achieve the goal in just two years' time.

● Peter Šurin

A brand new training centre

The Football Association of Slovenia (NZS) is on the verge of opening a new chapter in the history of Slovenian football. A brand new sports facility is about to open at the national training centre on the Brdo pri Kranju estate. The facility consists of three natural grass pitches, a brand new NZS headquarters, and a modern sports complex no more than 500m from the headquarters that holds changing rooms, a warehouse for the NZS, and fitness and wellness facilities.

The construction of Slovenian football's new home began at the start of November 2014. The training centre is in a park protected under national heritage law, which complicated the

process, as the NZS had to compile a number of documents before construction could begin. The architects who designed the centre describe it as a very functional complex, perfectly integrated into the park. The centre will be available to both Slovenian and foreign football



The Football Association of Slovenia's new home

clubs, who require top facilities for their pre- and mid-season preparations.

The project cost around €8m, and the NZS managed to get the majority of the funding through UEFA and FIFA projects. "This kind of investment in Slovenia is relatively rare. Despite the fact that we had support from every Slovenian government in power as we were raising funds and preparing the paperwork, there are no funds from Slovenian public finances invested in this project," the NZS president, Aleksander Čuferin, told the Slovenian press at a press conference at which the project plans were unveiled. Now construction is only weeks from completion and the NZS could move to its new headquarters as soon as the start of October.

● Matjaž Krajnc



Football academy opens in Biel/Bienne

Through its football academies, the Swiss Football Association provides the best possible sporting education for young footballers. For talented youngsters, the dream of becoming a professional player should not remain a dream forever. At the academies, promising young

players no longer have to choose between vocational training and a career in football, since the education they receive helps them to prepare for work outside the game as well as supporting their development as athletes.

In summer 2013, girls' football moved from Huttwil to Biel/Bienne, where it has been operating very successfully ever since. Following the opening of the Tissot Arena, a modern

complex comprising a football stadium, curling rink and ice-hockey arena, the girls have been enjoying even better training facilities since the summer holidays. With six training sessions (three technical, two fitness-based and one tactical) held at the stadium every week, the players are delighted with their new surroundings. One of them, Sally, says: "We are in excellent hands here and we have the chance to improve all the time at the training sessions. It's also good that we have been joined by a large number of strong new players with whom we can compete and measure ourselves." Alena, another member of the girls' academy, is also very positive: "It's great to be able to train in a new stadium. We have new training pitches that are even more enjoyable to train on, and where we can learn under the best possible conditions."

In this big year for women's football, the Swiss Football Association's sporting director, Laurent Prince, considers it "a unique opportunity and a great pleasure to be able to hold training sessions in the new stadium. The facilities were already outstanding, but now they are even better."

● Pierre Benoit



The football section of the new complex in Biel/Bienne

SPV/ASF



Turkish visually impaired national team are champions of Europe

The Turkish visually impaired national team, who have been supported by the Turkish Football Federation and the Turkish Blind Sports Federation and sponsored by Turkcell, beat Russia 1-0 in the final of the IBSA European Championships, organised by the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA), in Hereford, England. The Turkish visually impaired national team drew 0-0 against Germany, defeated Poland 6-0, defeated Italy 3-0 and lost 2-1 to England in the group stage. With these results,

they finished in second place in Group A with 7 points and played against Spain in the semi-finals. They got to play in the final after beating Spain (0-0; 2-0 p).

Spain finished the tournament in third place after beating England 1-0 in a penalty shoot-out.

By reaching the final, Turkey qualified for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

● Aydın Güvenir



European champions

TFF



David Griffiths elected president

Following a meeting of the Football Association of Wales (FAW) council in Cardiff on 26 August, David Griffiths has been elected as the new president of the association, David Alun Jones and Kieran O'Connor have been elected as vice-presidents and Steven Williams has become the new treasurer.

David Griffiths succeeds Trefor Lloyd Hughes, whose service was recognised at the FAW council meeting by the members present and the Wales national team manager, Chris Coleman.

David Griffiths is a life vice-president of the Welsh Football League and is a former football club secretary and a highly experienced UEFA delegate.



He said: "On both a personal note and on behalf of the FAW council, I would like to thank the outgoing president, Trefor Lloyd Hughes, for all of his hard work and dedication during his three years in the post. It is indeed a great honour to be elected as president of the FAW. It is a very proud moment for my family and I, along with my home town of Maesteg in the county borough of Bridgend."

● Rob Dowling

The new president, David Griffiths, at a recent referees' conference

FAW

BIRTHDAYS

Sir Trevor Brooking (England, 2.10)
 Levent Biçakçı (Turkey, 2.10)
 Andrzej Wach (Poland, 2.10)
 Lutz Michael Fröhlich (Germany, 2.10)
 Julius Kvedaras (Lithuania, 3.10)
 Léon Schelings (Belgium, 3.10)
 Victor van Helvoirt (Netherlands, 3.10)
 Wilfried Heitmann (Germany, 4.10)
Khennet Tallinger (Sweden, 4.10) 70th
 Silvo Borošak (Slovenia, 4.10)
 Márton Vági (Hungary, 4.10)
 Frank Coulston (Scotland, 5.10)
Terje Hauge (Norway, 5.10) 50th
 Jerzy Engel (Poland, 6.10)
 Jérôme Valcke (France, 6.10)
 Iveta Bankova (Bulgaria, 6.10)
 Samantha Lovše (Slovenia, 6.10)
 Faruk Hadžibegić (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 7.10)
 Armand Duka (Albania, 7.10)
 Jari Maisonlahti (Finland, 7.10)
Andrii Pavelko (Ukraine, 7.10) 40th
 Draženko Kovačić (Croatia, 8.10)
 Pierre Delaunay (France, 9.10)
Sergey Zuev (Russia, 9.10) 60th
 James Buckle (England, 9.10)
 Ellert Schram (Iceland, 10.10)
 Milovan Nikolić (Slovenia, 10.10)
 Laurent Duhamel (France, 10.10)
 Alin Cioban (Romania, 10.10)
 Naira Abramyan (Armenia, 10.10)
 Joan Gaspart Solves (Spain, 11.10)
 Dimitar Zisovski (FYR Macedonia, 11.10)
 Romeo Jozak (Croatia, 11.10)
 Bo Karlsson (Sweden, 12.10)
 Adrian Casha (Malta, 12.10)
 Anna De Toni (Italy, 12.10)
 Siegfried Kirschen (Germany, 13.10)
 Pedro Tomás (Spain, 13.10)
 Aleksander Čeferin (Slovenia, 13.10)
 Dušan Krchňák (Slovakia, 14.10)
 Tony Paeffgen (Lithuania, 14.10)
 Tom van der Hulst (Netherlands, 15.10)
Michel Piraux (Belgium, 15.10) 60th
 Wendy Toms (England, 16.10)
 Konrad Plautz (Austria, 16.10)
 John Delaney (Republic of Ireland, 16.10)
 Jean-Marie Philips (Belgium, 17.10)
 Frans Hoek (Netherlands, 17.10)
 Adonis Procopiou (Cyprus, 17.10)
 Pedro López Jiménez (Spain, 18.10)
 Petros Mavroidis (Greece, 19.10)
 Aivar Pohlak (Estonia, 19.10)
 Miljenko Sakoman (Croatia, 19.10)
 Paul Philipp (Luxembourg, 21.10)
 Mircea Sandu (Romania, 22.10)
 John Taylor (Scotland, 22.10)
 Arie Kenneth Scheiman (Israel, 22.10)
 Jan C. Huijbregts (Netherlands, 23.10)
Michel Vautrot (France, 23.10) 70th
 Dragutin Karlo Poljak (Croatia, 23.10)
 Elmir Pilav (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 23.10)

Christian Teinturier (France, 24.10)
 Antonin Herzog (Czech Republic, 24.10)
 Elvedin Begić (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 24.10)
 Roy Cathcart (Northern Ireland, 26.10)
Markku Lehtola (Finland, 26.10) 60th
 Hugh Dallas (Scotland, 26.10)
 Perry Gautier (Belgium, 26.10)
Gerard Perry (Republic of Ireland, 27.10) 60th

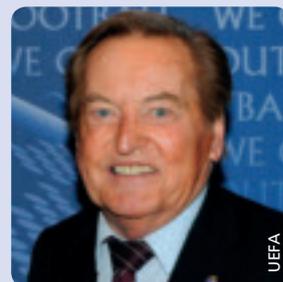
Levan Paniashvili (Georgia, 28.10)
 Jürgen Paepke (Germany, 28.10)
 Rui Caçador (Portugal, 29.10)
 George Fantaros (Cyprus, 29.10)
 Maria Persson (Sweden, 29.10)
 Bert van Oostveen (Netherlands, 30.10)
 José Cunha Rodrigues (Portugal, 30.10)
 Alan McRae (Scotland, 31.10)
 Kurt Zuppinger (Switzerland, 31.10)
 José Luis Astiazarán Iriondo (Spain, 31.10)

OBITUARY

- **Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder** (Germany), a UEFA honorary member, former UEFA vice-president and former president of the German Football Association (DFB), passed away on 17 August at the age of 82. Elected as a member of the UEFA Executive Committee at the Ordinary UEFA Congress in Luxembourg in 2000, he became a UEFA vice-president in 2007 and was made an honorary member when he retired from the Executive Committee in 2009.

In his time, Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder sat on many other UEFA committees, including the Finance Committee, the Professional Football Committee, the HatTrick Committee and the Marketing Advisory Committee. He was also a member of the FIFA Executive Committee from 1992 to 1998 and again from 2002 to 2007.

"Gerhard was a great man and a visionary with whom I sincerely enjoyed discussing ideas and proposals to improve European football," said UEFA President Michel Platini in paying tribute. *"He worked tirelessly to promote and protect the game he loved and will be missed."*



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

14 October, Nyon
 UEFA Futsal Cup: elite round draw

15 October, Nyon
 UEFA EURO 2016: play-off draw

19 October, Nyon
 UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 16 draw

28 October, Nyon
 Medical Committee

Competitions

29 September–4 October
 UEFA Futsal Cup: main round

1 October
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 2)

7/8 October
 UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 32 (first legs)

8–10 October
 European Qualifiers (EURO 2016): matchday 9

11–13 October
 European Qualifiers (EURO 2016): matchday 10

14/15 October
 UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 32 (return legs)

17 October–8 November, Chile
 U-17 World Cup

20/21 October
 UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 3)

22 October
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 3)



NO TO RACISM



RESPECT