

UEFA



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LE RENDEZ-VOUS

France welcomes
the biggest EURO ever

THE TECHNICIAN

Packie Bonner on the demands
on today's goalkeepers

FUTSAL CUP

A first for Russia's
Ugra Yugorsk

ORDINARY CONGRESS

Kosovo enters
the fold



UEFA

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LET'S CELEBRATE FOOTBALL AT EURO 2016

The biggest celebration of national team football in European history is upon us and we are looking forward to a spectacular UEFA EURO 2016 inside and outside the stadiums.

For the first time ever, 24 teams will participate in the tournament and we are delighted to welcome all of them to France. Albania, Iceland, Northern Ireland and Wales are making their debuts, while Slovakia have progressed to the final round for the first time as an independent nation. We are sure the new format will be a success and that more exhilarating football of the likes seen in the European Qualifiers will be on display in the month ahead.

There is no doubt that the match results will make plenty of headlines and millions of fans around the world will be entertained by the action on the pitch. However, that is just one side of the story. The tournament will also feature a number of corporate social responsibility initiatives across France as we use this amazing stage to highlight all the work we do together to promote, protect and develop football in Europe.

The UEFA Foundation for Children has a special project of its own that will take 20,000 deprived children to 43 of the 51 matches. The initiative, known as 20,000 Children's Smiles, aims to provide those involved with unforgettable moments and experiences in connection with football. The children will be looked after by the host cities and associations that play a recognised role in assisting vulnerable young people at national or local level.

It is therefore with great excitement that I look ahead to this celebration of football in France – a celebration that I believe will continue long after the final whistle at the Stade de France on 10 July.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theodoridis'.

Theodore Theodoridis
UEFA General Secretary ad interim



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Chief editor:
Emmanuel Deconche

Deputy chief editor:
Dominique Maurer

External contributors:
Rémi Langlois (FFF, page 16), UNSS (page 23), Tony Pandovski (page 36), Kieran Martin (Scottish FA, page 42)

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KEY DECISIONS TAKEN IN BUDAPEST

The UEFA Executive Committee held its latest meeting in Budapest on 2 May, on the eve of the Ordinary UEFA Congress in the Hungarian capital.

With EURO 2016 moving ever closer, the committee heard about the final phase of preparations for the tournament in France, and expressed full confidence in the measures put in place to stage a safe, successful tournament for all involved. The eagerly awaited finals, the first to feature 24 teams, kick off on 10 June.

The 2014–16 European Football Championship regulations were amended to reflect the recent decision to use goal-line technology at the final tournament. Goal-line technology will be deployed in France alongside additional assistant referees, with the officials now able to focus fully on penalty area incidents.

On the topic of refereeing, the committee decided to renew the mandates of UEFA chief refereeing officer Pierluigi Collina and refereeing officers Marc Batta and Hugh Dallas for another four years until summer 2020.

The UEFA Club Financial Control Body members were also re-elected for a further four-year term until 2020.

The use of a fourth substitution in extra time will be tested at the final tournaments of the European Under-19 Championship in 2016 (Germany) and 2017 (Georgia), the European Women's Under-19 Championships in 2016 (Slovakia) and 2017 (Northern Ireland), and the European Under-21 Championship in 2017 (Poland). In addition, the 2016 UEFA Anti-Doping Regulations were approved, with amendments made to adapt to the latest changes in the World Anti-Doping Code. The 2016 UEFA Disciplinary Regulations were also given the committee's seal of approval, as were the regulations of the 2016/17 European Under-17 Championship, European Under-19 Championship, European Women's Under-17 Championship and European Women's Under-19 Championship, and the 2017–18 European Futsal Championship. ♻️

KOSOVO JOINS THE UEFA FAMILY

The 40th Ordinary UEFA Congress in Budapest on 3 May was marked by the admittance of the Football Federation of Kosovo as UEFA's 55th member association, and the first-ever election of a female UEFA Executive Committee member.

Following a simple majority vote in which the Football Federation of Kosovo's application for UEFA membership received 28 votes for and 24 votes against, with 2 spoilt ballot papers, Kosovo joined the UEFA family with immediate effect.

UEFA General Secretary ad interim Theodore Theodoridis welcomed UEFA's newest member association to the fold. "It was a very democratic process, and very open discussions took place between the national associations," he said. "We respect the result of the Congress vote."

The delegates also elected the chief executive of the French Football Federation (FFF), 49-year-old Florence Hardouin, to the UEFA Executive Committee. A former international fencer who has also served the FFF as deputy chief executive and head of marketing and commercial development, Hardouin received 33 votes, against the 21 received by Karen Espelund of Norway, for a term of office that runs until the 2019 elective UEFA Congress. Previously, the female member of the Executive Committee had been appointed by the committee itself.

"I'm proud and delighted," Hardouin said after the election. "It's a great honour for myself, for France and for the French federation. A lot of challenges lie ahead. I hope to contribute to continuing the development of women's football." Karen Espelund received warm tributes for her hard work and

contribution to the Executive Committee's activities since her appointment as a full member in 2012.

Unity the key

Addressing the Congress, UEFA first vice-president Ángel María Villar Llona called for unity within the European football family. "European football," he said, "has achieved success by balancing the interests of professional, amateur and international football. Bearing in mind the legitimate interests of all parties, but above all the interests of football, the sport we love, let us continue working together for many years to come."

"We have a huge responsibility to work together with passion and energy," added FIFA President Gianni Infantino in his address. "And together, we can make a difference."

Six prominent European football personalities received UEFA Orders of Merit for their services to football: Sir Bobby Charlton (England, diamond), Lars-Åke Lagrell (Sweden, diamond), Károly Palotai (Hungary, diamond), Zorislav Srebrić (Croatia, diamond), Sir Trevor Brooking (England, ruby) and Father Hilary Tagliaferro (Malta, ruby).

Also on the agenda was the ratification of the composition of the UEFA Organs for the Administration of Justice and the UEFA Governance and Compliance Committee for 2015–19. 🌐



Florence Hardouin, new member of the UEFA Executive Committee.



Six European football personalities received UEFA Orders of Merit.

BACK-TO-BACK TITLES FOR CHELSEA

A sell-out crowd of 4,000 saw Chelsea FC win their second consecutive UEFA Youth League title, but the English club's success was one of many narrative threads in the overall story of the 2015/16 competition.

Chelsea emerged victorious from a field of 64 teams comprising the Under-19 sides of the 32 clubs in the group stage of the UEFA Champions League and – in a new departure for 2015/16 – the domestic youth champions of the 32 top-ranked UEFA national associations. With this new domestic champions pathway doubling the field after two 32-team trial seasons, the Youth League appears to have cemented its place in the UEFA calendar.

In the words of Fernando Gomes, chairman of the UEFA Club Competitions Committee, 2015/16 would be “a season which allowed more aspiring young players than ever to broaden their sporting horizons by taking part in a truly international competition of the highest order and to measure their talents against their peers from other nations and footballing cultures”.

The two different pools of teams were kept apart until February, when the play-offs pitted the eight second-round winners from the domestic champions path against the eight group runners-up from the UEFA Champions League path. The knockout phase then began in earnest, with RSC Anderlecht the sole surviving domestic champions.

After well over 150 games and more than 500 goals, the Belgian side headed to Nyon alongside title holders Chelsea, Paris Saint-Germain FC and Real Madrid CF to vie for the third UEFA Youth League title over two matchdays – on 15 and 18 April – at Colovray sports centre on the UEFA campus. Paris had never reached the semi-finals before, Anderlecht had done so 12 months earlier and Real Madrid had managed it in the competition's inaugural season (when their great rivals, FC Barcelona, lifted the trophy). →

“The event would not be possible without the backing of both the town of Nyon and the many volunteers, whose cooperation is greatly appreciated.”

Fernando Gomes
Chairman of the UEFA Club Competitions Committee



Charlie Wakefield (left) takes on Paris's Yohann Demigny in the final.



Chelsea captain Charlie Colkett holds the Lennart Johansson Trophy high as the London club makes it two years in a row.



Sportsfile

Chelsea captain Charlie Colkett, one of several players returning for a second shot at glory, was delighted to be back in contention for the Lennart Johansson Trophy. "It's an absolutely amazing competition," he said. "We're over the moon to be going to Nyon again. We want to be playing in the biggest games, and in this competition you come up against different opposition and different nationalities."

For all the international flavour of the UEFA Youth League – and this season 37 different countries were represented, as more players than ever got a taste of life with the seniors – the final tournament in Nyon still retains a special community feel. "The UEFA Youth League final tournament has become an integral part of the local sporting calendar, with the keen support of the region's fans central to its success," explained Fernando Gomes. "The event would not be possible without the backing of both the town of Nyon and the many volunteers, whose cooperation is greatly appreciated."

Local involvement

This season's semi-finals and final had a combined attendance figure of 11,338, and the vocal support provided by those youthful and enthusiastic fans helped to generate a carnival atmosphere. Chelsea manager Adi Viveash said: "We loved Nyon, and it was nice to show them some new potential stars of the future."

The tournament's appeal to the local community, particularly the young, attested to the solid foundations laid by UEFA. Under the banner of the UEFA Youth League Schools Project, schools and football clubs in the Nyon region each adopted a team for the finals. Moreover, the prize for the 2015/16 UEFA University Challenge winners, Lausanne, was to run the Youth Plaza at Colovray, turning it into a hive of activity and entertainment on both matchdays, with freestylers and a PlayStation truck among the attractions. A second group of students, from the Glion Institute of Higher Education, were responsible for on-site VIP catering and hospitality, while young people from the Dance Spirit dance school in nearby Divonne performed before the matches.

That local involvement helped to create a special buzz around the tournament, which Nyon's mayor, Daniel Rossellat, said he was "proud to welcome" to the Swiss town on the shores of Lake Geneva. "It offers great games for the spectators and a magnificent springboard for these young players – the best young footballers in Europe," he said.

While UEFA continues to receive highly positive feedback from the local community, the impact of the UEFA Youth League final tournament extended far beyond local children. Money raised from ticket sales was donated to the UEFA Foundation for Children and its Let's Live Our Dreams initiative. The UEFA Youth League also made a donation for every

THIS SEASON BY NUMBERS

2
consecutive UEFA Youth League titles for Chelsea FC

11,338
combined attendance for semi-finals and final

37
countries represented

#UYL skills challenge video received from participating clubs during the campaign, with the pick of the bunch being the video filmed at UEFA headquarters the morning after the semi-finals, which starred players from Chelsea and Paris, as well as Pierluigi Collina. That was the competition's best-performing post across Facebook and Twitter, with more than 8m 'impressions' and 35,000 'engagements'.

Collina, UEFA's chief refereeing officer, also contributed to the UEFA Youth League's educational programme, which is a cornerstone of the competition, by taking part in an information session for the semi-finalists on the Laws of the Game. The four squads also attended sessions on the prevention of match-fixing and the fight against doping.

That educational element dovetailed perfectly with UEFA's message of respect, which involved players and referees gathering for a group photograph before each game. The teams and match officials also came together for a so-called 'third period' after every match to exchange experiences. The referees themselves were observed and mentored by former match officials.

Newcomers from Scotland and Kazakhstan

The UEFA Youth League really catches people's attention when a player graduates. The list of alumni appearing in the higher echelons of the senior game is already long, containing names such as Alex Iwobi (Arsenal FC), Kingsley Coman (FC Bayern München), Renato Sanches (SL Benfica) and Lucas Hernández (Club Atlético de Madrid). This season there was a notable addition to that list: Marcus Rashford. In the group stage, the teenager from Manchester United FC scored twice on his competition debut; five months later, he repeated the trick in the UEFA Europa League when he was thrust into the spotlight against FC Midtjylland.

Benfica were equally prolific in front of goal, scoring a total of 29 times in their six group matches (including 11-1 and 8-0 victories against Galatasaray AŞ and FC Astana respectively), a record for a four-team group in a UEFA club competition. However, their scoring touch deserted them in the quarter-finals, where they lost 2-0 to Real Madrid, having pipped 1. FK Příbram on penalties in the round of 16. The quarter-finals also saw Anderlecht beat Barcelona, Paris defeat AS Roma, and Chelsea overcome AFC Ajax.

So, on to Nyon in the spring, with a competition that had embraced entrants from as far afield as Scotland and Kazakhstan now whittled down to the final four. With Kasey Palmer, Charlie Colkett and Tammy Abraham

all finding the net, Viveash's Chelsea proved too strong for an Anderlecht outfit coached by Nicolás Frutos and containing Samy Bourard, a player with a joint-record 23 outings in the UEFA Youth League.

In the second semi-final, an early own goal put Paris 1-0 up, before Borja Mayoral equalised from the spot for Santiago Solari's Real Madrid. That penalty, which was converted under the watchful eye of arch-predator Emilio Butragueño, was the 19-year-old's eighth goal of this campaign and a record-equalling 15th in the competition, bringing him level in the all-time chart with Atlético's Roberto Nuñez (who was also this season's top scorer with nine goals). However, Aka Wilfride Kanga and Jean-Kévin Augustin won it for Paris with two late goals in front of 4,000 spectators (a small increase on the attendance at the earlier game).

Three days later, Chelsea and Paris faced off in the final. For four of the Blues' starting XI – Bradley Collins, Jake Clarke-Salter, Temitayo Aina and skipper Colkett – it would yield a second successive UEFA Youth League title, the quartet having featured from the off against FC Shakhtar Donetsk in 2015.

But not, however, before Paris had seriously examined Chelsea's credentials. Augustin – whose profile as a player on the fringes of his club's first team (including bench duty in a recent UEFA Champions League quarter-final) was hardly atypical for this competition – missed a penalty moments after Fikayo Tomori's tenth-minute opener for the Londoners. Though the Parisians restored parity shortly before the hour through Yakou Meité – who is now, with Bourard, the joint record holder for the total number of appearances in the competition – François Rodrigues's troops soon conceded again when Palmer tucked away Ali Mukhtar's through ball. The result extended Chelsea's unbeaten run in the tournament to 15 fixtures, a sequence dating back to November 2014.

Coach Viveash made no attempt to conceal his satisfaction at the back-to-back triumphs: "It's a massive achievement to win it once, but to retain it is very difficult to do. We've created some history in the competition, and to be double European champions at this age is a tremendous achievement for the academy and the club. It's testament to all the staff and the work they have all done for the last nine months. Credit goes to everybody."

There were plus points, too, for Paris, with midfielder Meité saying: "Now we want to come back next year. It's been a really enriching experience for everyone. It's not every day that you get to face teams of the calibre of Real Madrid and Chelsea." 🌍

RESULTS

15 April 2016 Semi-finals

Real Madrid 1-3 **Paris**

Referee:
Davide Massa (Italy)

Chelsea 3-0 Anderlecht

Referee:
Andreas Ekberg (Sweden)

18 April 2016 Final

Paris 1-2 **Chelsea**

Referee:
Daniel Siebert (Germany)





DEBUTANTS TAKE FUTSAL CUP HOME TO SIBERIA

Russian champions Ugra Yugorsk, competing in the UEFA Futsal Cup for the first time, sprang a major surprise at the final tournament in Spain.

Sportsfile

Latin accents predominated when the 15th edition of the UEFA Futsal Cup reached its climax in the Spanish town of Guadalajara on Friday 22 and Sunday 24 April. But the trophy was ultimately whisked away to central Russia. You have to zoom right in to find the small town of Yugorsk on the map, before zooming right out again to find the nearest major city. The town's population hovers around the 36,000 mark, with the region's gas fields and associated service industries providing employment to the lion's share of its citizens. Winning the 2014/15 Russian Futsal Super League warmed local hearts and earned Ugra their first-ever appearance in the UEFA Futsal Cup, where they raised eyebrows by eliminating the defending champions, Kairat Almaty of Kazakhstan, in the elite round.

With Italian champions Pescara also stepping into the limelight for the first time, two of the four teams competing for the title in Guadalajara were debutants. But any suggestions that the Russian and Italian clubs would be sacrificial lambs in the hands of former champions SL Benfica and Inter FS were quickly refuted, with both teams boasting a number of wolves in sheep's clothing.

Tension and intensity

Indeed, Ugra's team sheet featured Andrei Afanasyev, Daniil Davydov, Robinho, Eder Lima, Vladislav Shayakhmetov and Dmitri Lyskov – all of whom had, a couple of months earlier, taken silver medals home from the Futsal EURO in Belgrade. Meanwhile, in addition to boasting a number of star players from Serbia, Pescara were coached by the shrewd Fulvio Colini, who, five

years earlier, had led Italy's Montesilvano to the top step of the podium on their debut in the competition.

The scene was set, then, for an enthralling final tournament in Guadalajara. The weather up on the Spanish central plane may have been cooler and wetter than expected, but the indifferent conditions failed to provoke public indifference to the fan zone set up on matchdays on the main approach to the Palacio Multiusos. Nor did they dampen the passions of the sell-out crowds, who made the tournament a spectacular, colourful event that attracted impressive TV audience figures as it built to its climax.

On UEFA's trademark black playing surface, it soon became clear that tension and intensity were endemic to the final-four format, with the spectre of sudden death casting psychological shadows over the two semi-finals. Mental strength, emotional intelligence and risk management were all just as essential as raw talent in these circumstances. Ugra had been the last team to arrive and, during the first half of their semi-final against Benfica, annoyed Brazilian coach Ricardo Paulo – aka Kakà – by looking jet-lagged and going in 1-0 down. His reward for demanding higher-tempo ball circulation and more fluent off-the-ball movement was an equaliser within 33 seconds of the restart, which served to enrich the game in terms of goalscoring opportunities and the kinds of defensive error that generate excitement among the crowd.

The scoreline at the end of normal time was 3-3, so the fans were given full value for money as the teams played another ten minutes of extra time (resulting in another goal for each side →

The sell-out crowds made the tournament a colourful event that attracted impressive TV audience figures.



Ugra Yugorsk are the third Russian club to claim the UEFA Futsal Cup, after MFK Dinamo in 2007 and MFK Viz-Sinara Ekaterinburg in 2008.

Sportsfile



Sportsfile

Despite the efforts of Pescara's Ricardo Caputo (right), Alessandro Patias came out on top for Benfica in the match for third place.



Sportsfile

RESULTS

22 April 2016 Semi-finals

Ugra Yugorsk 4-4 SL Benfica
Ugra win 3-2 on penalties

Referees: Pascal Lemal (Belgium) / Cédric Pélissier (France)

Pescara 2-4 **Inter FS**

Referees: Saša Tomić (Croatia) / Bogdan Sorescu (Romania)

24 April 2016 Match for third place

SL Benfica 2-2 Pescara
Benfica win 2-0 on penalties

Referees: Cédric Pélissier (France) / Pascal Lemal (Belgium)

24 April 2016 Final

Ugra Yugorsk 4-3 Inter FS

Referees: Bogdan Sorescu (Romania) / Saša Tomić (Croatia)

and a penalty shoot-out). In an incident-packed match, the red card shown to Ugra goalkeeper and captain Zviad Kupatadze in normal time had given his understudy Sergei Slemzin a chance to shine. And shine he did – by saving from Benfica's Rafael Henmi to earn a 3-2 win in the shoot-out.

In the other semi-final, Inter played their cards with intelligence and passion, pressing high, counterattacking at breathtaking pace, spearheaded by the irrepressible Ricardinho, and flaunting their squad's strength in depth. But it was Pescara, pitting collective virtues and endeavour against the brilliance of the hosts, who took the lead.

Despite Ricardinho failing to convert a penalty, Inter replied twice before the break, and when Rafael made it 3-1 after the break, the jubilant home supporters seemed to think they had it in the bag. However, with Colini opting for the flying goalkeeper, Adolfo Salas ensured a nervy ending by bringing Pescara back to 3-2, and the game remained in the balance until seven seconds from time, when Mario Rivillos scored on the break to make it 4-2. That was, as it turned out, the largest winning margin of a tightly contested tournament.

Channelling disappointment into ambition

In the third-place play-off, the challenge for Colini and his counterpart Joel Rocha was to turn disappointment into ambitions of travelling home with bronze medals. The tie seemed to be going Pescara's way, as the Italian side dominated a flagging Benfica, establishing a 2-0 lead and creating a flood of other goalscoring chances. Indeed, the Lisbon side's Spanish goalkeeper Juanjo was later named man of the match – an honour that had gone to Ugra's Afanasyev in the first game and Inter's

Portuguese pivot Cardinal in the second. But once again, Pescara were unable to hold on to their advantage. Benfica's use of a flying goalkeeper resulted in them scoring two late goals and allowed Juanjo to further cement his status as the Portuguese club won the penalty shoot-out 2-0.

That thrilling match was the perfect curtain-raiser for the grand finale between the Spanish hosts and the Russian visitors, which proved to be a spectacular showdown and a great advertisement for futsal. Javier Lozano Cid, the multiple world and European champion coach, who was in Guadalajara as UEFA's technical observer, said: "It was a wonderful confrontation between different playing styles and tactical parameters, but with similar levels of individual quality. The Russian team were disciplined and kept their cool as they allowed the minutes to tick by, causing the anxiety to increase among the Spanish players, especially during the second half."

Psychological burden

Inter, spurred on by the passion of the crowd, threw themselves forward, playing an aggressive, high-pressure game and committing themselves to taking command and intimidating the visitors. That approach by Jesús Velasco's team implied a level of risk-taking, and his opposite number, Kakà, urged his team to exploit counterattacking opportunities. Very focused in their orderly 1-1-2-1 defending, Ugra broke fast with direct attacks along the flanks and balls to the far post, where a teammate would power in behind the defenders' backs. Just over five minutes had gone by when Afanasyev surged forward to give Ugra an early advantage.

But within 28 seconds, Cardinal had equalised, with his compatriot Ricardinho providing the assist. And when Pola sprinted

clear to fire in a second, the final seemed to be reverting to the kind of script that the home fans would have written. But Slemzin, between the posts again in place of the suspended Kapatadze, produced a string of fine saves to keep the deficit to a minimum. Shortly before the break, a Robinho pass allowed Marcênio – subsequently named man of the match – to nimbly sidestep Jesús Herrero and make it 2-2. It was a pivotal moment, with the balance of power tilting towards Siberia.

After the break, the psychological burden on the hosts' shoulders became steadily heavier as they became aware of the expectations in the stands and the need to recoup the title after a seven-year wait. Patient build-up play began to wane; Spanish haste played into the hands of disciplined Russian defending; and, amid the growing anxiety, Ugra's keeper produced heroics, while counterattacks provoked concern

among the spectators. Then, two minutes from time, Afanasyev latched on to a partially cleared corner to make it 3-2 to the Russian side, before a panicky mismanagement of the flying goalkeeper option allowed Katata, standing right on the unguarded goal line, to force in a long clearance by Slemzin.

But even at 4-2 with 55 seconds left, there was time for further drama. With the flying keeper back on, Daniel Shiraishi made it 4-3 11 seconds later. Then, almost immediately, Ivan Chishkala was shown his second yellow card of the final. Inter had 31 seconds, deploying five outfielders against three plus the keeper, to forge an equaliser. But it was heart, adrenaline and anxiety versus cool heads, and shooting opportunities were misread. The siren put an end to a riveting spectacle; Ugra's debutants celebrated a heroic 4-3 triumph; and the trophy was on its way to Siberia. 🏆

The grand finale between the Spanish hosts and the Russian visitors proved to be a spectacular showdown and a great advertisement for futsal.

Almost 4,000 spectators watched Ugra Yugorsk pip Inter FS in the final at the Palacio Multiusos in Guadalajara.



Sportsfile



6,500 VOLUNTEERS AT THE HEART OF THE EVENT

Volunteers will play a fundamental role in the organisation of UEFA EURO 2016, with a total of 6,500 men and women on hand to help visitors get the most out of the event.

The recruitment campaign for the EURO 2016 volunteer programme, which kicked off in June 2015, was a resounding success. In just under seven months, a total of 22,670 people applied to take part across the tournament's ten host cities. Half of those applicants were then invited to attend interviews in order to look more closely at the various roles on offer and check their availability and motivation. The interviews were led by about 150 recruiters – fellow volunteers involved in the project on a longer-term basis. The programme is managed by the French federation (FFF) and the League (LFP).

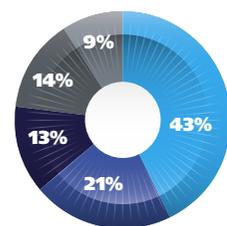
The 6,500 successful applicants received confirmation of their involvement at the end of January 2016. They are all now undergoing

general training, as well as specialist training tailored to their particular areas of activity. Emphasis is placed on camaraderie, fun and team spirit, with the programme's ambassadors, Christian Karembeu and Gaëtane Thiney, leading by example to motivate the team of volunteers and make them feel valued.

The volunteers will be working in 17 different areas of event organisation, such as accreditation, media services, hospitality, spectator services, sustainable development and technical services. Their roles will primarily involve providing assistance and support to the public and organisers.

The majority of the volunteers will work at the stadiums themselves or at other official sites (hotels, airports and the international

BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP



- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-59
- 60+



Association Volontaires 2016

The 550 volunteers who will be based in Nice got together for training and team-building at the Nice Acropolis on 19 March.

broadcast centre). A volunteer centre will be located at each stadium for the duration of the tournament, giving volunteers a place to chat and relax in their free time. A whole range of activities will be organised for volunteers on non-matchdays, to further promote the values of camaraderie, fun and team spirit that define the volunteer programme.

Diversity

Volunteers will be active for differing periods of time depending on their roles. Volunteers in the technical services and accreditation teams began work in mid-May, while those who are welcoming spectators will work only on matchdays. The wide range of positions available allows the programme managers to assign roles according to each volunteer's availability and preferences.

A multigenerational team with ages ranging from 18 to 82, the volunteers represent all sections of the population, with students, people of working age and pensioners alike. About 43% of the volunteers are between the ages of 18 and 24, which illustrates the enthusiasm among young people in particular when it comes to major sporting events such as this, and 40% are women.

"One of our objectives was to have as many women as men," volunteer manager Emmelyne Ravier says. "At the start of the recruitment process, we were a long way from achieving that. Most women thought they needed to know all about football in order to be selected, which clearly wasn't the case

at all. As of September, we started recruiting specifically among women, and that proved to be successful."

While 93% of volunteers live in France, the team contains representatives of 96 different countries – from neighbours such as Germany, Italy, Belgium and the United Kingdom to faraway places such as Peru, Brazil, Australia, Nepal, Cameroon and China.

Just over half of all volunteers – 52% – have already helped out at another sporting event, with the 2007 Rugby World Cup and the 1998 World Cup featuring prominently on volunteers' CVs.

Training

Before starting work, volunteers sign a charter setting out the rules governing their participation in the event and reminding them of the programme's values. Association Volontaires 2016, the organisation managing the programme, is required to provide volunteers with insurance cover and an official uniform, cover the cost of local transport and provide food and drink during shifts.

All volunteers undertake general training, as well as specialist training tailored to their particular roles. That training is supplemented by e-learning modules, which look in greater detail at the tasks they will be entrusted, as well as providing general information on the organisation of such an event.

The general training events allow all the volunteers working in a particular host city (between 500 and 1,000, depending on the city) to be brought together and introduced to both the team and the people in charge of each area. These ten events – one in each of the tournament's host cities – have been very popular among volunteers and important for building team spirit.

As regards specialist training, about 350 training sessions will take place between April and June across all sites. This allows volunteers to visit the stadiums and other places of work, as well as familiarising themselves with their roles through practical exercises.

The volunteer programme also seeks to get people interested in other opportunities to volunteer on a more regular basis in the future: "Where people are interested, we hope to offer them other opportunities to volunteer – be it in local leagues, at district level, in clubs or in the wider football family – once their work at the tournament has come to an end. This will allow them to use the skills they have acquired and gather more experience in a different setting," Emmelyne Ravier says. ⚽



Christian Karembeu (in the background) and Super Victor took to the stage to address the 1,000 volunteers in Saint-Denis on 5 March.

Association Volontaires 2016



CELEBRATING AT EURO 2016 TOGETHER

A new TV spot highlighting UEFA's Respect campaign debuts this summer.

Passion for football is an immensely powerful emotion, a love that unites fans across the globe. Nurturing and protecting the sport's essential values is crucial to ensuring its longevity and well-being. UEFA EURO 2016 in France this summer is certain to be a thrilling and unforgettable festival of the very best that European football has to offer – and UEFA is launching a new Respect campaign at the tournament to highlight how the beautiful game can inspire us all. Put simply, now is the time for us all to Celebrate Football!

The campaign will promote five key pillars of respect at EURO 2016: diversity, fan culture,

health, the environment and access for all. At the centre of the campaign will be a TV spot featuring three high-profile UEFA ambassadors demonstrating how football can be a force for good.

Respect, the making-of

The TV spot, which highlights the importance of respect between fans in particular, will enjoy its premiere during half-time in the opening match between France and Romania at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis on 10 June. It will then be broadcast at each of the other 50 matches in the tournament.



UEFA

“A EURO tournament is a unique occasion to mingle, to share experiences, to get to know people, and to live passion and emotion together.”

Pierluigi Collina
Chief refereeing officer

Shooting took place in Paris at the end of May, on a football pitch at the foot of the city’s iconic Eiffel Tower, at the Gare de Lyon railway station and at Parc des Princes. Behind-the-scenes videos about the making of the TV spot will be available to watch on UEFA’s corporate social media channels during the tournament.

Collina’s message

One of the stars of the spot is Pierluigi Collina, the renowned former referee from Italy who took charge of various major international football matches at world and European level and is now UEFA’s chief refereeing officer. He is clear about the significance of the EURO platform for UEFA’s new Respect campaign: “A EURO tournament,” he believes, “is a unique occasion to mingle, to share experiences, to get to know people, and to live passion and emotion together.”

“Respect is everything – football without respect cannot live,” Collina adds. “Respect for the game and its players, opponents, referees, spectators ... Everyone deserves respect, and that is why this campaign is extremely important.”

UEFA’s chief of communications and media, Pedro Pinto, is already a committed fan of the TV spot: “It embodies everything that EURO 2016 stands for,” he says. “We feel that it is our obligation as organisers to make sure that all fans have the chance to enjoy all of the good that football can bring.”

Hopefully, the innovative campaign will receive great exposure in France and beyond. “With over 130 million people watching every game,” says UEFA’s head of corporate communications, Peter Klomp, “EURO 2016 offers us a great platform for our Respect message.

“Although we may all look or talk differently, our love of football connects us all, and this tournament will bring us all closer together... to Celebrate Football.”



THE FIVE PILLARS OF THE RESPECT CAMPAIGN

Respect Access for All

Total football, total access. Together with the Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE), UEFA aims to make the EURO 2016 stadiums fully accessible and inclusive. The objective is to welcome people with different access needs and offer everyone a full and inclusive matchday experience.

is to enhance security at the tournament and create a friendly, festival atmosphere among the fans. The FSE-led fan embassies will be an integral part of that.

Respect Your Health

UEFA is joining forces with the World Heart Federation (WHF) and the European Healthy Stadia Network to create a smoke-free environment for ticket holders, staff and suppliers at every EURO 2016 match. This policy also extends to the official fan zones in the host cities.

Respect Diversity

In close cooperation with long-standing partner FARE, UEFA is reinforcing its zero-tolerance policy against all forms of racism and discrimination. FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe) observers will monitor each EURO 2016 match, and incidents will be reported to UEFA’s disciplinary bodies. No to Racism will continue to be a key element of this programme, with its education and communication initiatives promoting respect for diversity.

Respect the Environment

Given the role of transport in any event’s carbon footprint, an important part of the EURO 2016 sustainability strategy is the promotion and prioritisation of public transport. UEFA’s main aim in this respect is to minimise the air pollution caused by spectator, supplier and staff transport. To this end, an eco-calculator has been developed to enable fans to measure the greenhouse gas emissions that each of their journeys would generate.

Respect Fan Culture

UEFA is working together with Football Supporters Europe (FSE) to welcome, advise and support football fans at EURO 2016 in the best possible way. The objective



The legacy that EURO 2016 will leave behind for future generations will involve much more than just four brand-new and five completely renovated stadiums. As well as this new infrastructure, the tournament's organisers hope to pass on a set of good practices that can be used again and again.

Establishing experience and know-how, both within UEFA and among EURO 2016 stakeholders, is one of the key objectives of the tournament's social responsibility and sustainability strategy.

Tournament organisers, UEFA staff (at all levels) and suppliers have all helped to devise and implement eight social responsibility and sustainability priorities: access for all, anti-discrimination match monitoring, fan embassies, a tobacco-free tournament, waste management, public transport and mobility, responsible sourcing, and water and energy usage.

The decision to seek ISO 20121 certification for the tournament's operations has helped to ensure that sustainability is taken into account every step of the way in every aspect of the tournament's organisation, including ticketing (tickets printed on certified paper), technical services (minimising of energy consumption), refreshments (reusable cups) and media services (media content produced in digital format), to name just a few examples. Consequently, UEFA's other competitions will benefit from

these new processes and know-how in areas such as responsible sourcing and waste management. An evaluation process has been set up in order to harness the expertise acquired by the teams working at EURO 2016 and put it to good use across all UEFA activities.

The good practices implemented during EURO 2016 will also be shared beyond UEFA's walls, with other members of the football family and other sports organisations. The post-event report, which is set to be published in autumn 2016 in accordance with the rigorous methodology imposed by the Global Reporting Initiative, will be based on data meticulously collected during the tournament. The report will set out to analyse the various aspects of the strategy, highlighting good practices and detailing the main obstacles faced for the benefit of other sports organisations embarking on similar projects. In order to facilitate this transfer of knowledge to football stakeholders worldwide, the PLAY platform also brings together all key documents relating to the sustainability strategy.

Another objective of the EURO 2016 sustainability strategy is to change people's behaviour and raise fans' awareness of transport and mobility issues.



Max Lerouge

The 50,000-seater Stade Pierre Mauroy in Lille, which opened in 2012, has been certified as a green building according to France's high-quality environmental (HQE) standard.

The various EURO 2016 stakeholders have also been heavily involved in the establishment and implementation of the tournament's sustainability strategy. For example, in-depth work has been carried out in cooperation with stadium operators in order to improve accessibility for people with disabilities by providing larger wheelchair spaces and making entrances easier to negotiate, among other things. The audio description equipment that will be installed for the benefit of blind and partially sighted spectators will continue to be used in the stadiums after the tournament. The smoking ban and the processes put in place to redistribute surplus food the day after the match (see text box opposite) also represent good practices that will become permanent policies at the stadiums concerned.

Positive synergies

Close cooperation with the host cities – where sustainability officers have been appointed to oversee fan zone operations, for example – has generated positive synergies and institutional contacts that will endure long after the tournament has come to an end. The city authorities in Paris have, for example, instigated a similar ISO 20121 certification process for their EURO 2016 operations.

UEFA has also been working closely with several of its suppliers (for example, in the event logistics, hotel and restaurant sectors) in order to identify new waste management strategies for certain materials used during the tournament and increase the use of locally sourced ingredients. These good practices are generating know-how within the companies involved – know-how that could be used at future events in France or other parts of Europe.

Another objective of the EURO 2016 sustainability strategy is to change people's behaviour and raise fans' awareness of transport and mobility issues. Supporters can use an online eco-calculator to measure the emissions generated by their travel to France, select the most sustainable mode of transport and offset their emissions. The fan guide app also enables them to make car-sharing arrangements with other supporters and access public transport timetables in real time. The 24 national teams are also playing their part, since they have all agreed, for the very first time, to offset the CO₂ emissions generated by their travel to, from and within France.

Finally, sustainability training has been given to all 6,500 of the tournament's volunteers, helping them to contribute to the success of EURO 2016 across the country. ♻️

SERVING UP SECONDS

The tournament organisers and the Fondation du Football have launched a 'Foot for Food' campaign with the aim of redistributing surplus food generated in the ten stadiums and host cities. To this end, a partnership has been established with French food bank network Banques Alimentaires, the country's largest collection agency for surplus food, which will collect and redistribute food in full compliance with health and safety regulations.

EURO 2016 caterers Do&Co and Hédiard will assess the surplus food available for distribution, along with on-site teams and stadium concessionaires. The resident clubs of nine of the stadiums involved will also be stakeholders in the project, which is set to continue after the tournament. The host cities, meanwhile, plan to extend the campaign to include the fan zones, while the Elior Group and La Tablee des Chefs will follow suit at the international broadcast centre.

All in all, more than 420,000 people stand to receive a share of the surplus food, while the 900 regular food bank volunteers will be assisted by an army of 40,000 extra volunteers during the tournament. This project, which aims to fight poverty in France, looks set to become a long-term measure, given that the clubs concerned have agreed to take over once the tournament has come to an end.



Banques Alimentaires

A PROGRAMME THAT IS ALREADY BEARING FRUIT

On 13 April, a new artificial pitch installed with funding from the UEFA EURO 2016 legacy project was officially inaugurated in Saint-Denis.

EURO 2016 has not even begun, but already the tournament's legacy is being felt.

For instance, the local authorities in Saint-Denis have recently carried out renovation work at the Auguste Delaune sports complex – an 11-hectare site boasting football, rugby, tennis and athletics facilities – using funding provided by the EURO 2016 legacy project. A total of €1m was made available for the work, allowing the authorities to lay a new artificial playing surface and redevelop the area around the pitch. One of the teams to benefit from these new facilities, which are located 2.5km from the Stade de France, will be the girls of RC Saint-Denis.

€20m for the ten host cities

The new pitch was officially inaugurated by Jacques Lambert, president of EURO 2016 SAS, and Didier Paillard, the mayor of Saint-Denis. They were accompanied by slam poet Grand Corps Malade, the host city's tournament ambassador, and Super Victor, the official mascot of EURO 2016. They all signed the mural produced by local street artist Swen

(which celebrates women's football, EURO 2016 and the city of Saint-Denis), before posing for a photograph with young club members who will benefit from the project.

Didier Paillard was delighted with the results of the renovation. "The complex's least glamorous pitch has become its finest," he said. Jacques Lambert also welcomed the investment: "Leaving behind a legacy for grassroots football is one of the key objectives of the organisers of EURO 2016. The renovation of this pitch is a sign of our intentions in this regard. A total of €20m has been made available to the ten host cities in the context of this project. Half of that has already been paid out, and the rest will follow after the tournament. Saint-Denis has chosen to use this first €1m for a large-scale investment. It's great that younger members of the community – particularly girls – will have the chance to enjoy these sports facilities. It's a top-quality pitch and a resounding success."

The new pitch was then immediately pressed into service, with the girls of RC Saint-Denis using it for a friendly match, encouraged and guided by their coach. ⚽

"It's great that younger members of the community – particularly girls – will have the chance to enjoy these sports facilities. It's a top-quality pitch and a resounding success."

Jacques Lambert
President of EURO 2016 SAS

The new pitch at the Auguste Delaune sports complex will be used by the girls of RC Saint-Denis.



UEFA

EURO FOOT JEUNES: THE BIG DAY APPROACHES

As a prelude to the real thing this summer, Lille and Lens will soon be put through their paces as they play host to the Euro Foot Jeunes schools' tournament.

Supported by the UEFA Foundation for Children and organised jointly by France's National Union of School Sport (UNSS), the International School Sport Federation (ISF), EURO 2016 SAS and the French Football Federation, the Euro Foot Jeunes schools' tournament is aimed at children all over Europe. This major sporting event, which will take place between 29 May and 5 June in northern France, promises to be an enthralling and highly enjoyable tournament.

The event, which will take place in Lens and Lille just days before the opening match of EURO 2016, will comprise both boys' and girls' competitions. A total of 800 players will take part, competing for 32 teams from 25 different countries. Matches will be divided between two venues: Stadium Villeneuve d'Ascq – Lille Métropole, and La Gaillette, RC Lens's training complex.

With the dates having been in everybody's diaries for so long, the players' impatience is palpable. And the organisers, too, are visibly excited at the prospect: "The UEFA Foundation for Children is delighted and very proud to be supporting this UNSS tournament alongside EURO 2016 SAS," said Pascal Torres, secretary of the UEFA Foundation for Children. "This is a

wonderful opportunity for young footballers to play an indirect part in the senior tournament." Laurent Petrynka, president of the ISF and national director of the UNSS, struck the same note: "We want Euro Foot Jeunes to be an opportunity to strengthen the educational dimension of the UNSS on the back of this major international sporting event in France. It is an honour and a pleasure to be hosting this tournament."

The Nord-Pas-de-Calais branch of the UNSS will be responsible for the overall organisation of the tournament. All matches will be managed, monitored and refereed by more than 300 young people from the UNSS and the region on the basis of a special concept combining sport and education. The project has been made possible by the UEFA Foundation for Children, EURO 2016 SAS, the French ministry of education, the northern French region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Picardie, the department of Pas-de-Calais, the towns/cities of Avion, Lens, Lille and Villeneuve-d'Ascq, RC Lens, the association Orphelins de Makala (Orphans of Makala), the ISF and Stade Pierre Mauroy. All that remains now is for this major football festival to kick off and light up the faces of the participating children from all four corners of Europe. 🌍

KEY STATISTICS

- 2** host cities: Lens and Lille
- 800** players, both boys and girls
- 300** tournament supervisors and organisers
- 150** young organisers from local secondary schools
- 110** young match officials
- 9,000** individual nights of accommodation
- 27,000** meals
- 45** nationalities
- 90** boys' matches
- 45** girls' matches

TOURNAMENT DRAW

Boys

Group A

Turkey
England
Bulgaria
French Overseas Team
Netherlands
Azerbaijan

Group B

France
Romania
Cyprus
Greece
Russia

Group C

Croatia
Germany
Poland
Switzerland
Wallonia

Group D

Hungary
Serbia
Flanders
Italy
Northern Ireland
Luxembourg

Girls

Group A

Switzerland
Turkey
Netherlands
Russia
Northern Ireland

Group B

France
Germany
Brazil
Greece
French Overseas Team



25TH TEAM READY FOR THE OFF

If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail – an adage that you would never dare to level at UEFA and the 18 referee teams chosen for duty at EURO 2016 in France this summer.

From 18 to 21 April, 112 referees, assistant referees and additional assistant referees gathered at their future EURO base camp at Enghien-les-Bains, just north of Paris, for fitness tests and important instructions for their assignments at the eagerly awaited tournament. UEFA's Referees Committee members were also on hand to impart words of wisdom and motivation.

Each team for European national-team football's blue-riband competition will ultimately consist of one referee, two assistant referees and two additional assistant referees. Most of the teams comprise officials from the same country.



A third assistant referee has been appointed as a reserve for each team, remaining on standby until the tournament starts to take the place of a colleague if necessary, while the Referees Committee has also chosen two referees and two assistant referees to serve as fourth officials and reserve assistant referees. Consequently, 94 match officials will return to France on 6 June, four days before the big kick-off.

Although they will naturally concentrate on their domestic competition duties until the end of the season, the referee teams are being urged to also start focusing on the biggest-ever EURO, with its increased field of 24 teams and 51 matches between 10 June and 10 July. "This will have a big impact on the competition, which will be very even because many teams will have a chance of qualifying for the round of 16," UEFA's chief refereeing officer Pierluigi Collina told them. "The four best third-placed teams in the group stage will also go through – this means that, most probably, all of the group matches will be meaningful. Each match could be decisive, and this presents a major challenge not only for the teams, but also for the referees." Collina stressed that effective teamwork, good on-field communication and consistency of performance would be essential in France.

Important changes to the Laws of the Game come into force at EURO 2016, and the UEFA Referees Committee will visit each of the 24 teams beforehand to ensure that the players, coaches and referees are on the same page as far as refereeing decisions are concerned. "We have prepared a collection of clips, which will be shown to players and coaches," says Collina, "the aim being that they and the referees all have the same instructions as to what will be done on the field of play with respect to the laws." The referees are being instructed to protect players from fouls that may endanger their safety, and to act firmly in cases of 'mobbing', when the referee is pressured by several players surrounding him.

"Each match could be decisive, and this presents a major challenge not only for the teams, but also for the referees."

Pierluigi Collina
Chief refereeing officer





The 18 EURO 2016 referee teams at their base camp in Enghien-les-Bains, to the north of Paris, where they met for briefings and fitness tests in April.

Sportsfile

FROM CORE TO EURO



Sportstyle

In a notable first for European refereeing, a graduate of UEFA's Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE) has been selected to officiate at UEFA EURO 2016.

Szymon Marciniak, who is 34 and a native of Plock in central Poland, has successfully made the transition from player to match official, and onto the list of 18 referees who will take charge of the 51 matches in France.

Having refereed since 2002, Marciniak was awarded his international badge in 2011 and in 2015 took charge of the European Under-21 Championship final between Sweden and Portugal in Prague.

Marciniak's conversion to refereeing is a unique tale. "As a player, I wasn't the referees' best friend," he says. "During a match, the referee sent me off, I didn't agree [with his decision], and I said so in not very popular words. I said that he was one of the worst referees that I'd ever met. He replied: 'OK, if you think it's an easy job, you try to do it.' I told him I would – and a couple of weeks after that game, I started a refereeing course.

"I met the referee who sent me off a few years later, when I was refereeing in the Polish second division, and I apologised to him because, to be honest, he had made the right decision. Now we are very good friends ... He was even fourth official when I refereed an Under-21 match after joining the international list."

Marciniak attended the very first CORE course in autumn 2010. His memories are happy ones, and he is grateful to UEFA Referees Committee member and senior course leader David Elleray for his invaluable guidance. "David is special to me, as a mentor and as a person," Marciniak reflects. "He taught me so much. It was a crucial moment for me, to be given so much knowledge about refereeing at the beginning of my career."

"It was very clear right from the start," says David Elleray of his former 'pupil', "that Szymon was a young man who was very keen to learn. In that sense, he's a great role model for people because of his willingness to absorb and adjust, which I think is why he impressed us then and has done so well since."

One important amendment to the laws concerns the so-called 'triple punishment' rule, previously involving dismissal, a penalty and suspension for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity. Referees will now give a yellow card, and not a red card, if a goalkeeper or defender within the penalty area genuinely tries to challenge for the ball and commits a foul. Red cards will still be given when the foul is committed outside the penalty area, as well as for violent play, and when there is no intention to play the ball when the foul is committed in the penalty area.

Goal-line technology is in place for the tournament, alongside the tried and trusted deployment of additional assistant referees on each goal line. "Goal-line technology will be used to focus on the goal line, freeing up the additional assistants to focus on the rest of the penalty area, and be ready to take a decision and support the referee," says Collina. UEFA has selected Hawk-Eye as the goal-line technology supplier for all EURO 2016 matches, and its camera-based system will be installed at each of the ten stadiums across France.

Referees are athletes too

Nowadays, referees have to be athletes in their own right. In Paris, an expert team led by Belgian sports scientist Prof. Werner Helsen, which includes fitness coaches, physiotherapists and masseurs, put the officials through their paces in fitness tests consisting of two 40m sprints and the Yo-Yo intermittent recovery test.

The officials have received a comprehensive programme to follow in the pre-EURO period. "We have produced six-week training plans for the referees and the assistant referees," Helsen says, "but we also need to consider their match appointments up to the end of the domestic seasons. In addition, we need to find a balance between rest and training."

Just like the players, the referees must be in peak condition for the EURO, which comes at a time when they would normally be winding down after testing domestic campaigns. "Maybe it is an even bigger problem for referees," Helsen reflects, recalling at the same time that top officials, some of whom are into their 40s, may cover as much as 13km in a high-level match and do a considerable amount of high-intensity running. "With increasing age, there is a need for more recovery, and this is another important aspect we will consider in the six-week period."

"The referees need to be fit, but for such an important tournament, it's also important to be fresh," Helsen continues. "In that respect, rest is also an important training mode, in particular towards the end of the season.

And doing things other than the usual training regimes they do is also a way of keeping not only mentally fit, but also fresh. Towards the end of the six-week schedule, we will also build in some days where the training volume and intensity is less, just to bring them back to us in top condition."

Important progress

UEFA is delighted that its top match officials are in such excellent shape for the high-pace, high-stakes modern game. "In 2012, for instance," says Helsen, "we started measuring body composition – how much body fat the referees had. We have seen a reduction in body fat among the referees from an average of 16.7% to only 13.5% four years later. You can only reduce body fat by manipulating the input and the output. So we have given them valuable advice with respect to nutrition and fluid intake, and it's clear that they have progressed significantly.

"Finally, they have also been assessed in more demanding field tests such as the Yo-Yo intermittent recovery test, which is a performance test that is very familiar within professional football. From research, we know that achieving the target level of 18:2 means that elite referees are able to undertake 2km of high-intensity running, if the game so requires. Since the Yo-Yo assessment was first introduced in 2012, the elite referees have showed important progress.

"Specifically, over the past four years, we examined the maximal heart rate during the test, the recovery in beats per minute at the end of the test, and the overall heart rate load that is used to measure the impact of such a physical challenge, based on the distribution of the heart beats in the five training zones that we use." Of the match officials who were tested four years ago and again at this year's winter course in Cyprus, 61.1% had significantly improved their Yo-Yo test performance (11 out of 18), 27.8% showed the same level (5 out of 18), and only two showed a temporary decrease in performance. As Helsen points out, "It is clear that these match officials are now much better prepared than four years ago, especially if we consider that they are four years older!"

"It is unbelievable that people who are no longer so young have worked so hard to improve their physical shape over recent years," Collina concludes. "We are happy and proud that our top referees are so committed to keeping fit."

Physically and mentally strong, dedicated and professional: the 25th team at EURO 2016 is ready for action and raring to go...🚀

MATCH ANALYSTS FOR REFEREES

The EURO 2016 referees are being given a crucial helping hand for their duties in France in the form of expert analysis and advice on the teams, tactics and players they will encounter.

For the first time, UEFA has established a pool of match analysts whose job it is to brief the match officials, providing them with invaluable advice on the 24 participating teams.

Four analysts – all UEFA A Licence coaches – have collected information from each of the teams' pre-tournament friendlies, and two of them will be on-site at the referees' base camp at Enghien-les-Bains to provide in-tournament briefings.

"The referees will receive information from the analysts so that they know how a team plays, the tactics they use, and what their players do on the field," UEFA's chief refereeing officer, Pierluigi Collina, explains. "The objective is for the match officials to be one step ahead, and to know as much as possible before their matches."

"Every time a referee receives an appointment," Collina adds, "he and his team will meet the match

analysts. The referee, assistants and additional assistants will be given a comprehensive briefing on the two teams and the players involved in that specific match." The aim is not to give referees warnings about individual players' conduct, but to anticipate technical and tactical aspects of the game.

The referees are also using a web data platform created especially for them, where they can gather information themselves and create their own collection of clips about the teams whose matches they will be officiating.

Meanwhile, the assistant referees have their own homework to do in the form of web-based offside exercises. "We have set up a platform for our assistant referees where they can view potential offside situations in HD," Collina explains. "They have to identify an offside situation by selecting the correct frame from among five different frames. They then receive feedback on their decisions. Every seven to ten days, they receive a new set of situations. We think that this will be an important tool for their preparations."



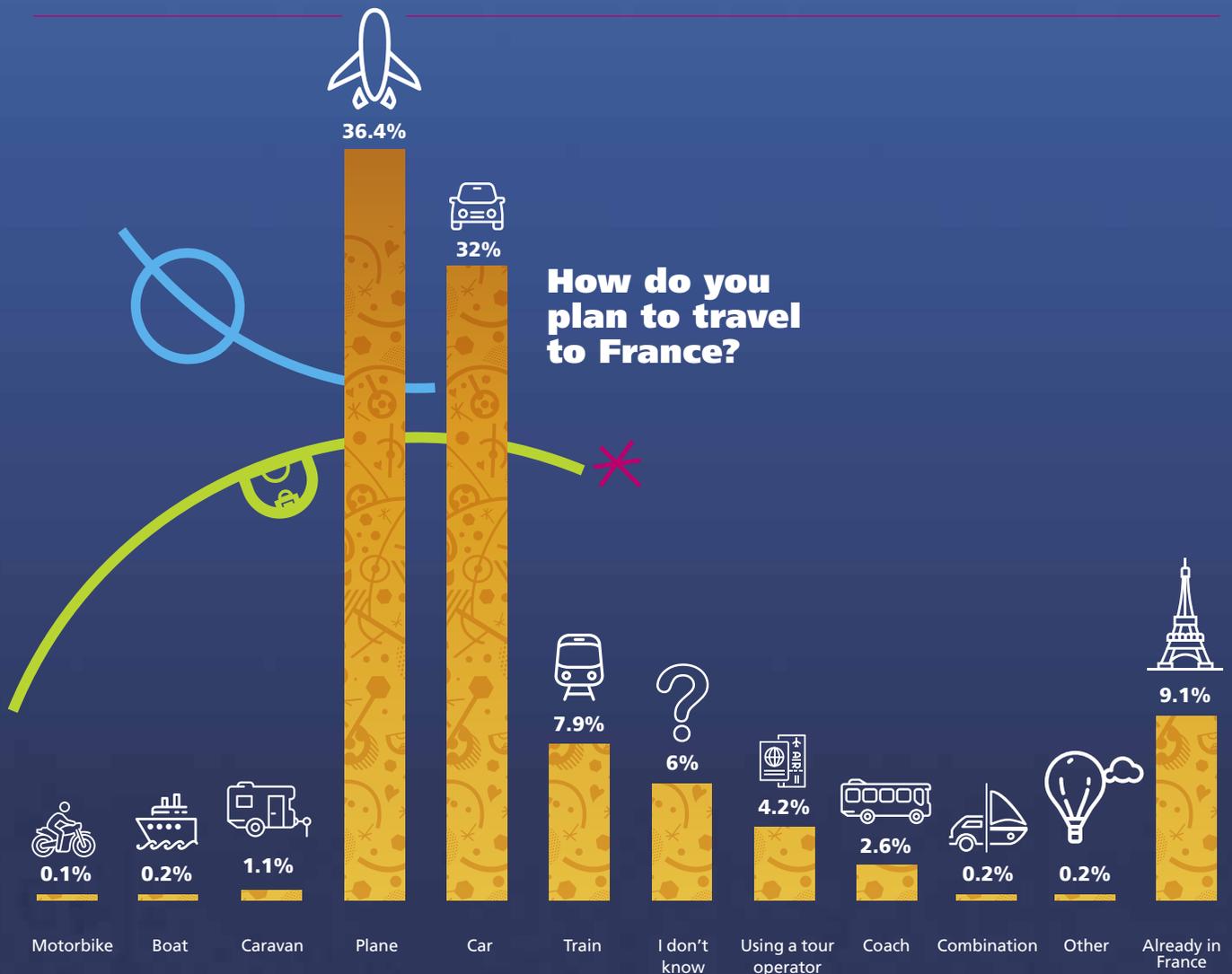
Pierluigi Collina

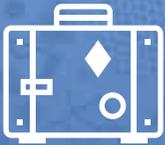
EURO 2016 SPECTATOR SURVEY

Thousands of UEFA EURO 2016 ticket holders have answered a spectator survey, providing UEFA with a wealth of information on their travel plans and transport arrangements to, from and within France, their matchday routines and their sustainability concerns. Questions included

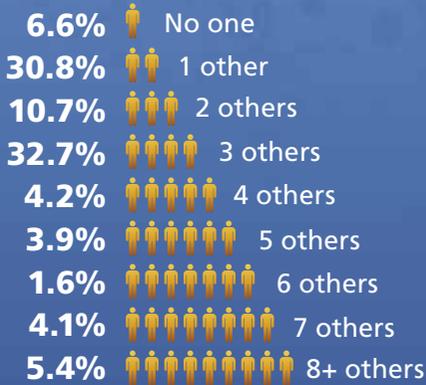
how they planned to travel to matches, when they expected to arrive at the stadium, and what they considered most important in terms of the sustainability of the event.

A total of 83,680 ticket holders aged 18 to 60 were sent the survey earlier this year, and 15,715 of them responded.





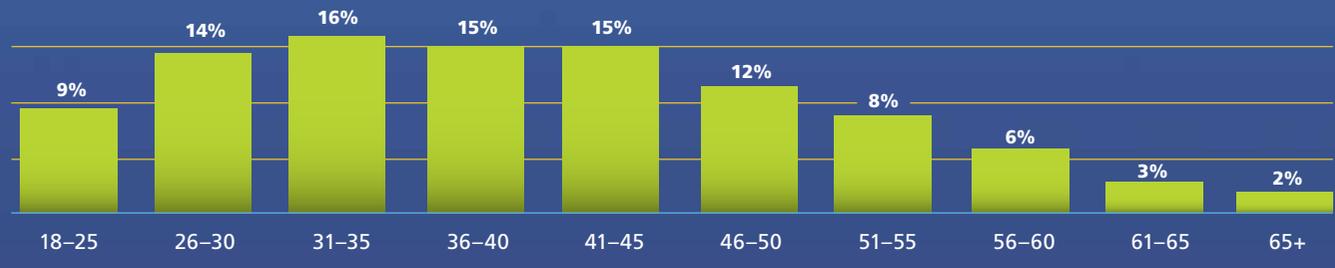
How many people are you travelling with?



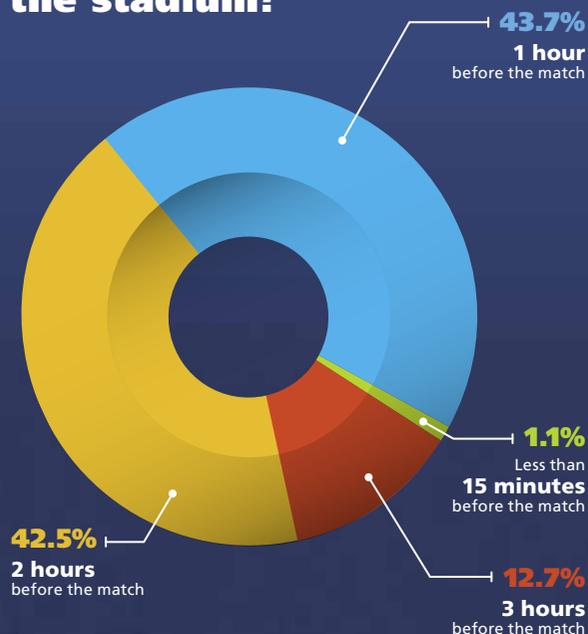
How much do you envisage spending on food and drink at a match, per person?



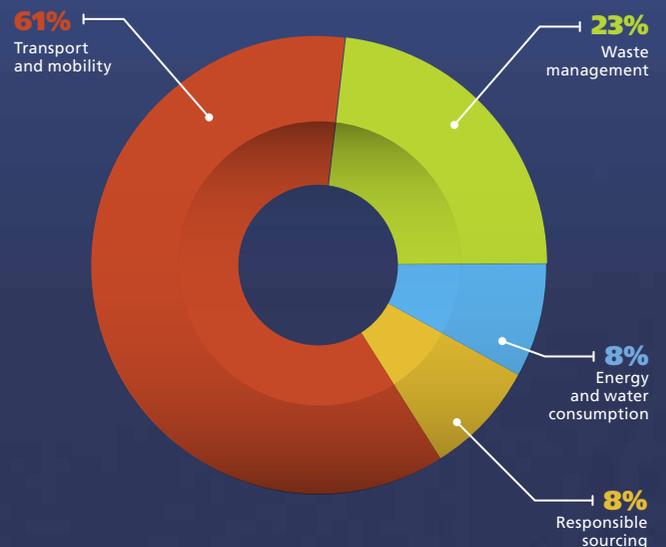
How old are you?



When do you plan to get to the stadium?



Which of these sustainability aspects is most important?



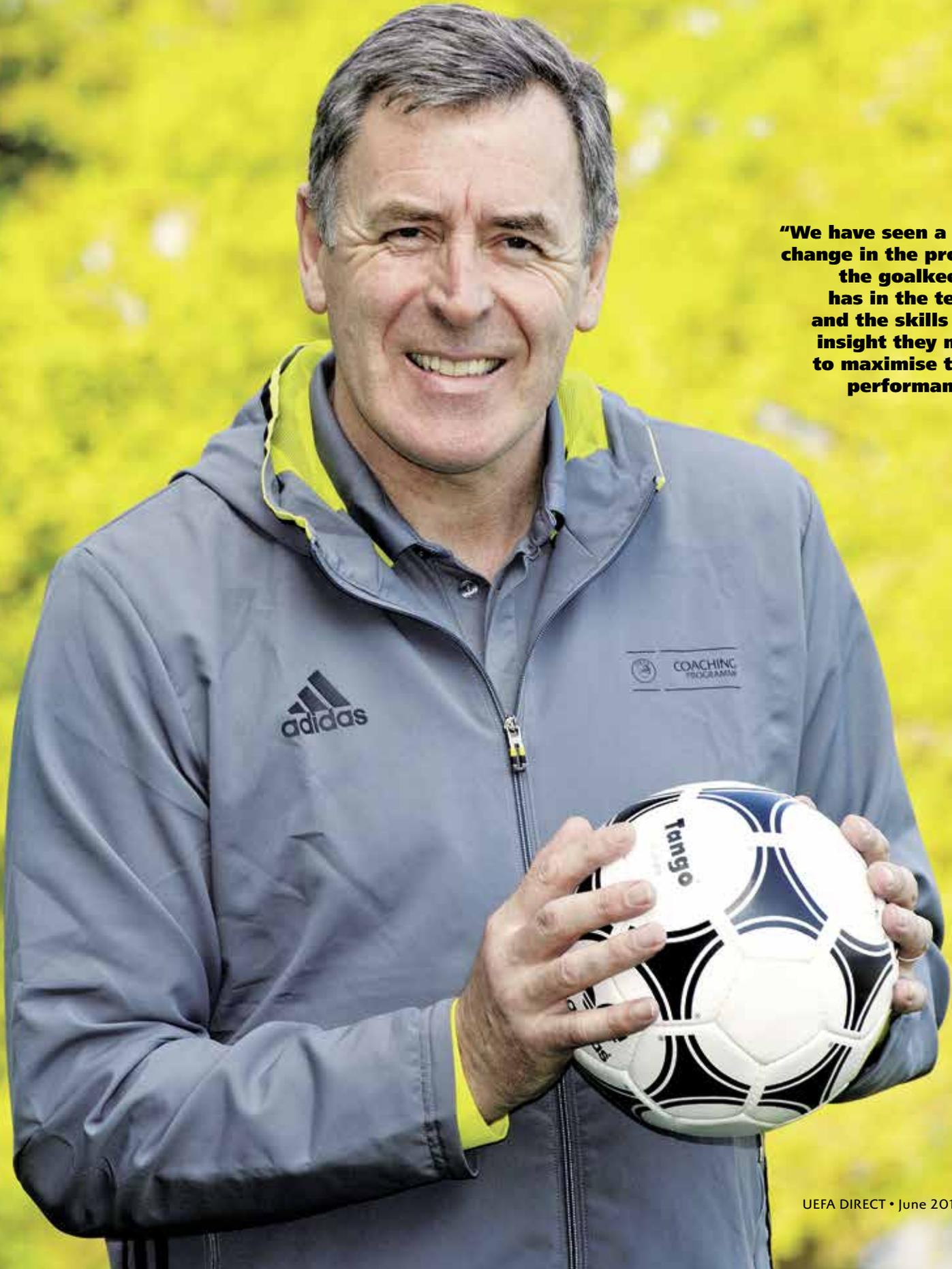
PAT 'PACKIE' BONNER

SAFE HANDS

Now a technical instructor for UEFA, the former Republic of Ireland goalkeeper talks to us about the changing responsibilities of the man between the posts.

The rapid evolution of the role of the goalkeeper is one of the more consistent of football's modern trends. In an effort to meet the challenges of this ever-changing role, various new demands have been placed on today's goalkeepers, and this in turn has resulted in greater emphasis on coach education

for goalkeeping specialists and their place within coaching teams. The leader of UEFA's goalkeeping advisory group is a man who donned goalkeeping gloves for two decades at Celtic FC and reached a FIFA World Cup quarter-final in 1990 with the Republic of Ireland thanks to his penalty save against Romania's Daniel Timofte. He is, of course, Pat 'Packie' Bonner ... →



"We have seen a real change in the profile the goalkeeper has in the team, and the skills and insight they need to maximise their performance."

Packie, in what ways has the role of the goalkeeper developed in football?

The Laws of the Game have certainly changed since my playing days but, more than that, we have seen a real change in the profile the goalkeeper has in the team, and the skills and insight they need to maximise their performance. In many ways they're much more like outfield players – the great sweepers of the past, like Franz Beckenbauer or Ronald Koeman. They have to have the skills to play, to start attacks.

Between 60% and 80% of a goalkeeper's actions now are with their feet, which shows the way in which the game has changed as a whole. At the EURO this summer, for example, we anticipate that we will see a number of goalkeepers playing far higher up the pitch than in previous European Championships and the media, the supporters, teammates and coaches are more accepting of that. When I was playing, you would just hear 'Get back on your line – you'll get chipped!' but attitudes have changed.

A few key objectives have remained the same, though ...

Of course, the main aim is to keep the ball from the back of your net and that has never changed. However, the way of achieving it

has. When you see some of the range of saves that are made by goalkeepers like Joe Hart and Thibault Courtois, you see an athleticism and skills that have certainly progressed over the years. Not only has this led to a need to focus on their holistic development but also the ways in which they are coached.

So how has the framework been established for specialist goalkeeper coaches to grow, develop and prosper across Europe?

The UEFA Goalkeeper A licence has been devised as one of the specialist programmes within the UEFA Coaching Convention. We have created an advisory group that reports directly to the Jira Panel; its remit is to monitor and support the national associations during the preparation and rollout phase. We work very closely with UEFA's football education services team to structure an approach to learning that is reality-based, rather than enshrined in traditional coaching methods. We're also very fortunate to have the support of many technical directors, who are helping us to spread the message of what can be achieved by treating the goalkeepers as being a part of the team rather than apart from the team. Various elements of these

"When I was playing, you would just hear 'Get back on your line – you'll get chipped!' but attitudes have changed."

Packie Bonner's save against Romania that took the Republic of Ireland into the 1990 World Cup quarter-finals.



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teaching philosophies are already being applied in around 55% of associations who are involved in the rollout of the UEFA goalkeeper course.

What challenges do you face in the implementation of goalkeeper licences?

To some extent, it has been changing the mentality, although the number of people who have really embraced reality-based learning right from the start has impressed us. The first course in a country is always the most difficult and we tend to spend more time on a first visit in order to see how the process is implemented into their education courses. The main issues are in having enough specialists in some of the federations from a goalkeeper education perspective. Also, the acceptance of the head coaches in clubs to allow for the integration of goalkeeper coaches in team training sessions. Just like a head coach and an assistant coach, the goalkeeper coach is also a coach with a specialism. Changing that mentality is something that will take time, especially once the younger coaches understand and see the merits of the process that we are endorsing.

Can you give some specific examples of positive results you have already seen?

Belgium is a country where they have really taken to the process, and it's the same in Poland, where they were a little tentative at the start but 18 months down the line we have seen big changes. The courses that they have embarked on have certainly increased credibility and added competence to their goalkeeper coaches as fully integrated and respected members of the coaching staff.

What can UEFA's experts do to effect the change in mentality you mentioned when it comes to integrating goalkeeper training into the team as a whole?

There are a couple of things to do, really. The first is to make the goalkeeper coaches themselves realise that the game has changed and that with it, their role has altered too. In many cases we need to see a willingness for goalkeeper coaches to step up and to do it themselves, take on the challenges. As well as that, our job is to encourage technical directors and heads of education to fit goalkeeper education into their overall structures. We can give expertise, knowledge →

Jan Oblak intercepts a Thomas Müller penalty, taking Club Atlético de Madrid into the 2016 UEFA Champions League final at the expense of FC Bayern München.

and ideas, but how they adapt that to their own systems is up to them.

What characteristics do you look to develop in the modern goalkeeper?

I think the characteristics can be split into four key categories: technical, tactical, physical and psychological. The last factor includes the concentration and focus of the goalkeeper during a match, their composure and decision-making. However, it can also include lifestyle choices, personal planning, rest and recovery, and can even go down to diet. This is another reason that the goalkeepers on the field can benefit from being coached by specialists who are an integral part of the collective team, which also includes doctors, dieticians, video analysts and fitness coaches who can all feed into that process.

What methods do you apply to make sure the learning and development process continues?

We have five key steps in the learning circle at the heart of our methodology: analysing the game, planning a training session with specific objectives based on the analysis, then transferring it to the pitch in a realistic manner and, most importantly, evaluating

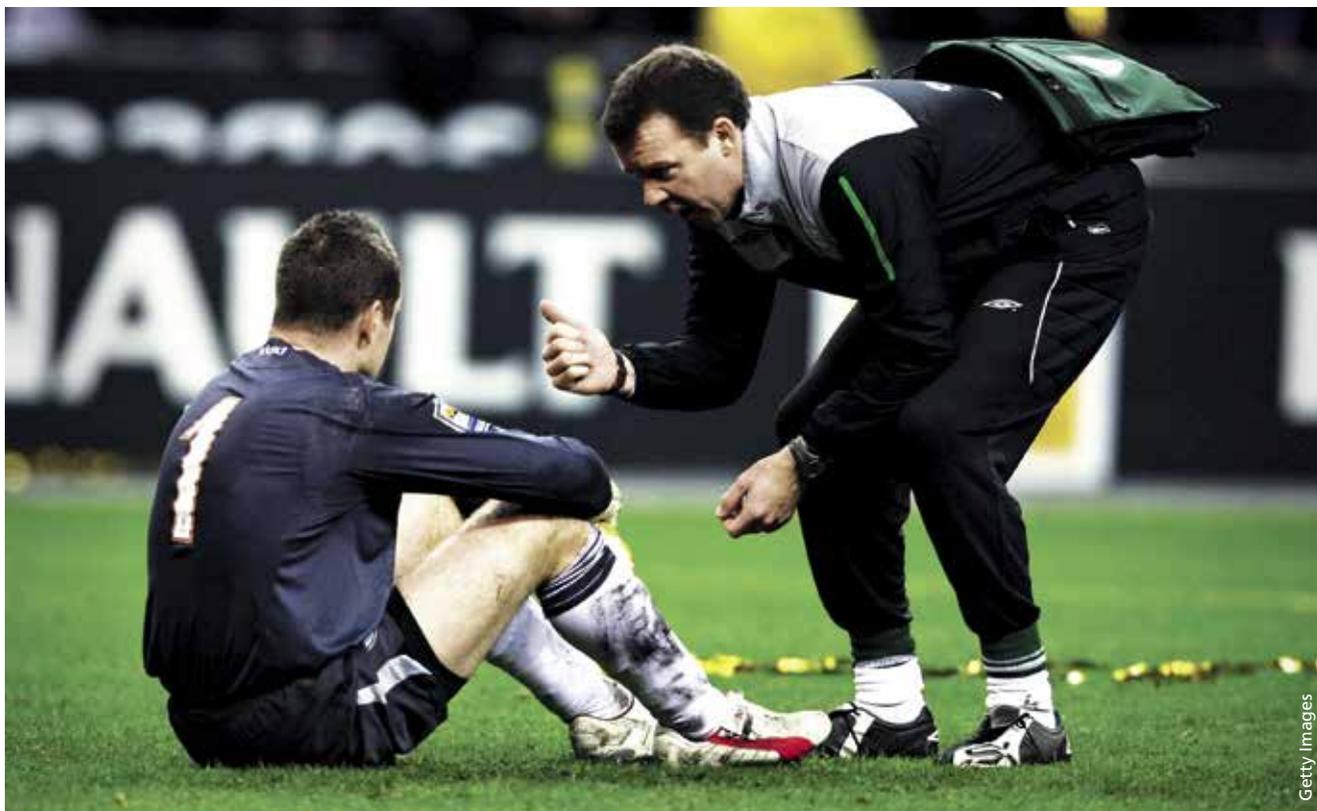
the session as a team of coaches. Then, recommendations or adaptations can be made ahead of the next match, when again, you analyse the match and start the circle again. This is all part of treating the goalkeeper as part of the game, which will get the best out of them on matchday.

Does all of this suggest that the days of individual training of goalkeepers are over?

Not at all. There is still a need for individual work that will be dictated by the personal development needs of the first, second and third-choice goalkeepers. Identifying key issues through match analysis and what needs to be done to fix them for the next game will then help the goalkeeper coach to prioritise how much work is individual and how much is collective as part of the weekly preparations. In the past, individual training may have formed 75% of the goalkeeper's programme, but that has now definitely been reduced to bring the goalkeepers into the team functions. This places greater emphasis on collective work with field players and the coaching staff as a whole but does not eliminate individual work. We say that the role of the goalkeeper has seen an evolution rather than a revolution, and the goalkeeper coaching is exactly the same. 🌱

“Just like a head coach and an assistant coach, the goalkeeper coach is also a coach with a specialism.”

Packie Bonner and Shay Given at the play-offs for the 2010 World Cup. The psychological support provided by goalkeeper coaches is a crucial part of modern training.



Getty Images

EDUCATING THE EDUCATOR

The third and final module of a goalkeeper coach educator development course took place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 2 to 5 May. Participants from Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia joined the hosts to complete the course, which was designed to help the associations implement goalkeeper coach education at national level and eventually introduce UEFA Goalkeeper A licence courses.

The programme featured match analysis-based practical sessions in which the participants, all of them goalkeeper coach educators in their respective countries, guided club coaching staff through demonstrations. The primary focus was on the goalkeeper coach's ability to carry out his role, as both goalkeeper coach and member of the wider coaching team. Brane Elsner, head of coach education at the Football Association of Slovenia, was enthusiastic about the course and the future of goalkeeper coach education. "We are teaching the new generation of coach educators how to organise themselves, prepare themselves, how to be good speakers, how to motivate and how to ask the right questions at the right time," he said. Munir Talović, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation's education director, echoed the views of his Slovenian counterpart: "This is a great chance for us to share opinions, pick up best practice examples and have the best UEFA experts teach us and show us the way."

This three-part course, with previous modules delivered in Croatia and Serbia, marked a new level of cooperation between the participating associations. This is also something that Talović believes can be developed further: "I think that the way we're doing it here can be transferred to other areas to help us develop the sport and coach education in the future."





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PLANETS ALIGN FOR ALBANIA

Albania's qualification for UEFA EURO 2016 in France – the first time they have ever qualified for a major tournament – is reward for more than 50 years of trying and is due to a number of contributing factors.



"Our team has become one, and our fans have become one. We are an emerging team, one that has improved a lot."

Andi Lila
Midfielder
for Albania



Albania captain Lorik Cana.

Getty Images

FAN – TAS – TI – CO!" bellowed the Albanian bench, seconds after the final whistle had blown on Albania's famous victory in Yerevan last October. That 3-0 win over Armenia was the most significant result in the history of Albanian football: after more than half a century of battling through European Championship and World Cup qualifiers, they had at last reached the final round of a major competition by qualifying for EURO 2016.

For Albania, one of Europe's smaller nations, the road to France this summer has been a long and winding one. UEFA members since 1954, they first took part in qualifying for the 1964 European Championship, and there have been a few high points in the intervening years – most notably, knocking West Germany out of the 1966–68 European Football Championship with a goalless draw in Tirana (which remains the only time that Germany or West Germany have failed to qualify for a major tournament). A number of planets have had to align in order for Albania to take the final step and qualify themselves.

De Biasi builds a team

In December 2011, Giovanni De Biasi, a naturalised Albanian of Italian heritage, was appointed coach of the national side. There were promising early signs during the 2014 World Cup qualifying campaign, with victories at home to Cyprus and Slovenia and – most notably – away to Norway. But De Biasi's team really announced their arrival on the big stage in their first qualifying match for EURO 2016, beating Portugal 1-0 away. They have not looked back since.

"When he started coaching Albania, De Biasi regarded the job as a personal challenge," says defender Lorik Cana, who captained Albania in all eight of their EURO 2016 qualifiers.

"He sacrificed things in order to achieve something great in Albania, and it hasn't just had an effect on the team; it's also had an effect on the way we work. He has taught us a lot. We've all bought into his project."

That project has come against the backdrop of the diaspora of the 1990s, with significant numbers of Albanian players being born or moving abroad. Many of the earliest émigrés have now returned home to coach, including Erjon Bogdani, De Biasi's assistant. Bogdani is Albania's all-time leading scorer with 18 goals and spent over a decade playing at the highest level in Italy. "Teamwork has been our watchword throughout this campaign," says Bogdani. "Team over individuals."

Cana, who plays for FC Nantes in France, following spells in England, Turkey and Italy, says: "De Biasi tried to change the way new players were brought in after an older generation had left the team, and he had a clear idea as to how he would do that. He tried to adapt to the Albanian mentality, but he also took the best parts and got rid of the worst. That was a huge factor."

The emergence of other talented individuals who were born or have been playing abroad has strengthened the national team and, at the same time, established a bond between all Albanian supporters around the world. "Things have got better," says experienced midfielder and fan favourite Andi Lila. "Our team has become one, and our fans have become one. We are an emerging team, one that has improved a lot."

Home sweet home

Something else that helped their cause was the construction of a new stadium, the Elbasan Arena, an hour's drive south of the capital. Faced with the prospect of playing their home matches outside Albania, a joint →



Young players train at the FK Partizani academy.

Gent Shkullaku

“The young players have made great progress, and the future is expected to be even brighter.”

Sulejman Mema
Coach of the KF Tirana Under-19 team

project involving the Albanian government, the Football Federation of Albania (FSHF) and UEFA ensured that a UEFA-approved stadium was ready in time for the first home match of their qualifying campaign for EURO 2016, against Denmark. “I enjoy playing at our new home,” says Lila. “It’s a very cosy and modern stadium, and it has brought us luck.”

The national team are not the only ones to have benefited from the new stadium. The 2014/15 league champions, KF Skënderbeu from the southeast of the country, used it for their home matches in UEFA’s club competitions this season (including their 3-0 UEFA Europa League victory over Sporting Clube de Portugal, which lifted them 52 places to 190th in the UEFA club rankings. “It was a pleasure to play at such a great venue,” said their Albanian international defender Kristi Vangjeli.

“We need more venues like this one. We need to improve our facilities, because playing in a great stadium is like adrenaline for the players. It makes us feel good when we take to the pitch and compete. Playing our Europa League home matches at the Elbasan Arena was a great experience for us, and it’s been a lucky venue for the national team.”

Building a youth movement

But despite the achievements of Skënderbeu and the national team, some former internationals coaching youth teams in Albania are concerned about a lack of talent at that level. “Youth football in Albania is not developing at the same rate as the domestic professional league,” says Genc Tomorri, coach of the national Under-19 champions, FK Partizani, who are about to establish a modern football academy thanks to the personal investment of the club’s owner.

“The Albanian Super League has grown stronger, but the young players are not quite ready because of a lack of technical and tactical skills. Elite teams dominate, and they don’t pay much attention to young players. I think the

number of foreign players per team should be reduced from four to three, or maybe even two. There may be downsides in the short term, but it will be beneficial for the development of youth players in the long run.

“Another problem is coach education. The FSHF is working very hard to improve clubs’ infrastructure, and its coach licensing department is always running UEFA B, A and Pro diploma courses, yet the level of education is still not improving quickly enough,” says Tomorri, who holds a UEFA Pro licence.

Ledio Pano is the son of the famous Panajot Pano, whom the FSHF voted the most outstanding Albanian footballer of the previous 50 years as part of UEFA’s jubilee celebrations in 2004. Ledio Pano, who holds a UEFA B licence, played 11 times for Albania at senior level and played for every national youth team. A former teammate of Tomorri, both men now work at the FK Partizani academy. “Coaches have a better understanding of the game now, but it’s still very hard for us to convey that knowledge because we spend more time managing the team than coaching,” Pano says.

“We have to organise the kit and the games, find places to practise and deal with other logistics. It used to be different when we played. Coaches coached, and there were pitches everywhere. Every club had pitches to practise on at their own training ground. Now they’re almost non-existent at most clubs, with the exception of a few like Apollonia or Tirana.”

While conditions for the development of young players may not be perfect, the FSHF and the clubs are working hard to find a system that works, and they are on the right track. “Academies have started to produce young players in Albania, supplying not only the Super League, but also the various national youth teams,” says Sulejman Mema, another former international, who now coaches the KF Tirana Under-19 team.

“I think this process is only just beginning. In the very near future, there will be an increase



EURO 2016 ALBANIA’S QUALIFYING CAMPAIGN

Portugal	0-1	Albania
Albania	1-1	Denmark
Serbia	0-3 (f)	Albania
Albania	2-1	Armenia
Denmark	0-0	Albania
Albania	0-1	Portugal
Albania	0-2	Serbia
Armenia	0-3	Albania

(f): Match forfeited

in quality that will benefit not only the Albanian clubs, but also the national team. The young players who are currently coming through have made great progress, and the future is expected to be even brighter with all the improvements in infrastructure and quality that have taken place in Albania recently."

Women's football on the rise

The rapid social and economic development seen in Albania has also led to other changes, including a rise in the number of women playing the game, especially in the north of the country. "In the last five years, we have seen the expansion of the women's league, the establishment of a women's national team and, just in the last couple of years, the creation of a women's Under-19 team," says Nevil Dede, who was capped 30 times by Albania and now coaches that newly formed youth team.

"At the moment, the desire is there, but there's a lack of people investing in the women's game. Apolonia are one of the very few professional clubs that have a women's team in the national club competition, but Teuta and Skënderbeu are starting to set up their own teams, and they will also take part. This is a positive step that will help the development of women's football and help the women's national team."

Albina Rrahmani has played for Albania since the establishment of the women's national team, and she is very optimistic that the number of girls playing the game will continue to rise. "The level of play has gone up, more clubs have been formed, and girls are starting to play at a young age," she says. "Parents are abandoning the traditional view that football is a boy's sport and becoming more supportive – not just at home, but also in the stadium. But there is still a lot of work to be done in this regard." ⚽

The KF Tirana Under-19s in training.



Genti Shkullaku

Getty Images



THE MAKING OF A NEW HOME

The redevelopment of Stadiumi Ruzhdi Bizhuta in Elbasan was a joint undertaking by the Albanian government, UEFA and the Football Federation of Albania. This made it possible for Albania to carry on playing their home matches in their own country, as otherwise they risked having to play abroad on account of the lack of stadiums that meet all international requirements.

The government covered the cost of all public works, the building of the structure and all necessary equipment, while the FSHF paid for all TV and media facilities. UEFA helped with the upgrading of the floodlights to 1,400 lux with uniform coverage of the field of play for the EURO 2016 qualifiers, as well as the installation of a suitable pitch for the Albanian national team's matches. UEFA did not just provide financial support; it also provided in-house expertise, supplying pitch and floodlighting consultants. The local council owns the new venue, but the FSHF will manage it until a new national stadium is built.

Work started in April 2014, and the construction team worked

around the clock in order to get the stadium ready in time for the EURO 2016 qualifying match at home to Denmark on 11 October 2014. In just seven months, Stadiumi Ruzhdi Bizhuta – now called the Elbasan Arena – had been redeveloped to meet international standards. The stadium now hosts international matches, as well as UEFA club competition matches.

Following the success of the Elbasan Arena project, the Albanian government has decided to invest a significant amount of money in the north of Albania in order to build a second stadium that meets international standards. The plan is to redevelop Stadiumi Loro Boriçi in Shkoder, 115km from Tirana. Shkoder is one of the largest cities in Albania, with a population of 136,000, and the most important city in the north of the country.

UEFA will be involved again, as HatTrick funding has been requested for this project. Time will tell whether the Albanian government will also give the go-ahead for the renovation of the old Qemal Stafa national stadium in Tirana.



ARMAND DUKA

'WE HAVE NO INDIVIDUAL STARS, BUT WE ARE A STAR TEAM'

For the president of the Football Association of Albania, the Eagles' qualification for UEFA EURO 2016 is the greatest success in the history of Albanian football.

Albania have qualified for their first-ever EURO. How has this changed the image of Albania in Europe and the rest of the world, especially in football?

Our qualification showed how magical and unpredictable football is, and how even the big and powerful teams can be beaten. Albanians turned their attention to football [during the qualifying campaign], and our beloved sport became a focal point in their everyday lives. Echoes of Albania's footballing achievements also extended beyond the borders of our country, and it is now entirely normal to hear the world's most prestigious media speak positively about Albanian football. But not only football. The media are talking about Albania as a country, our cultural history and our values. The image and popularity built on the success of our national team is on a scale we could not previously have imagined.

Since you were elected president of the FSHF in 2002, you have appointed only foreign coaches to lead the national team. Why is that?

I don't put foreign coaches in charge of the national team because I don't have confidence in the technical skills of Albanian coaches, but because foreigners have other advantages over natives – not least the winning mentality that foreign coaches have, and their better international image.

And have they fulfilled your expectations?

All our coaches have done a great job on the whole but, of course, what [Gianni] De Biasi has done to understand and figure

out how to lead, motivate and get the most out of this great group of players deserves the utmost admiration.

Now that Albania have reached the final tournament, what is the goal?

Of course, reaching the final tournament is a great, historic achievement. I would rate it as the greatest in the history of Albanian football. We see this accomplishment as another opportunity to give the sport a push and raise our performance to the next level, through a comprehensive strategy aimed at ensuring the continuity of results, instead of settling for just being in France. We have no individual stars, but we are a star team. It will be a great experience on which we would like to build, and with which we would like to increase the number of people playing the game – from primary school, middle school, high school and college to professional level.

What has been done so far to introduce football in schools?

A series of activities and tournaments have been organised at primary schools in the different regions, and about 1,000 children have taken part. This number is expected to double in the next editions. The elementary and middle schools championship is growing in many regions and, fuelled by the FSHF, it is expected to very quickly extend all over Albania. We are also in discussions with the ministry of education and sports to introduce football to the primary and middle school curriculum, whereby we would provide support in terms of materials, infrastructure and staff training programmes.

The national team line up before playing Georgia in November 2015.





Are you making any changes to improve football in secondary schools?

This year we are launching a high schools championship. We are still in the negotiations phase but very soon we will have a system in place that will provide yet more innovative opportunities for this all-important age group.

What is the FSHF doing to help and improve conditions at club academies?

We have always been active in our support and encouraged the creation of club and private academies. Our policy is to encourage the establishment of these 'football nurseries' to help develop and prepare talented players. However, the development of young players should be the responsibility of the clubs. As regards what we can do, we have opened more training grounds, but despite our intervention and the evident improvement in terms of playing fields, more is always required. We need more coordinated cooperation between the FSHF, central government, local government, local communities and private initiatives. Only then can we secure the future growth of Albanian football and its talented young players. This is one of our most important goals in the long term.

Albania has had a women's national team for the last five years. How has the women's game developed and improved domestically in that time?

We have had a senior national team for five years and an Under-19 team for a couple of years, which is a relatively short length of time for getting positive results. We are just focused on development at this point. It will require time and a lot of dedication before we start to see results. We are aware of this and we are working on some comprehensive programmes. But let's remember that there are many big footballing countries that have



difficulty in this regard, with women's football. The work we have done so far has created the foundations for the future and we will work quickly to achieve even more.

When you were first elected president of the FSHF 14 years ago, you promised that you would change the image of Albanian football and make the FSHF a modern organisation, while your personal goal was for the national team to reach the finals of a European Championship or a World Cup. How satisfied are you with what has been achieved?

I am very satisfied with what has been achieved, but we still are a work in progress. We started with offices in the basement of Qemal Stafa Stadium, and with UEFA's help we now have our own state-of-the-art office building, with all the necessary equipment, software and office supplies. We have a modern management structure and have created optimum conditions for all our employees. Reaching the EURO is an absolute success, but our work doesn't end there. We are always looking for improvements.

Where do you think improvements are imminent?

First, in terms of our infrastructure. We have accomplished a lot but still more is needed. Many stadiums (Elbasan Arena, Loro Boriçi, Qemal Stafa, etc.), training grounds and playgrounds have been rebuilt on the initiative of the FSHF and with the help of the UEFA HatTrick programme and local government. Second, in terms of training. The level of training has to get better. We have done quite well here, but we must keep up to date with coach education and licences at all levels. And third, in terms of organising clubs. This is the weakest point, and little has been achieved so far. 🙏

The future of Albanian football: children train at the FK Partizani academy (left); and the Apolonia women's team, in green, greet the players of Juban Danja after a match (right).



Kieran Martin
and David McArdle

FROM MODERN APPRENTICE TO SCOTLAND INTERNATIONAL

Kieran Martin is on the Modern Apprenticeship scheme at the Scottish Football Association, but one day in January of this year the 17-year-old's life changed. The association's disability development officer, David McArdle, spotted during a staff match that, unbeknown to him, Kieran had a medical condition which made him eligible to play for the national cerebral palsy team. Here, Kieran recounts his journey, which has seen him go from an apprentice to an international footballer.

In April I made my international debut. Representing your country is every young boy's dream. The thing is, I don't play for a club and stopped playing football for four years at school because my legs hurt so much after matches. I thought my legs were weak, but no matter how hard I trained (my top half seemed to sprout OK), it never made a difference. In fact, it made it worse.

Then I joined the Scottish FA as a modern apprentice and got invited to the Wednesday staff game at Lesser Hampden. It all started back in January. Scottish FA national development manager David McArdle came over to watch the game. He brought me into his office afterwards for a quick meeting – which I thought was to help with football development as part of my work duties at Hampden. He said

he had noticed something in my running style at the Christmas match and had kept an eye on me. It turns out that the lack of full rotation in my right arm and a right leg that seemed to swing were not just weakness, but a medical condition that I had not even been aware of.

He then asked if I fancied playing for Scotland. I was taken aback when he explained that I was eligible for the national cerebral palsy team. I am conscious that such terms can come with a stigma, but if anything it helped to explain all the physical ailments I had had since I was a kid, but put down to physical weakness. It all made sense.

I spoke to my family. My mum, not surprisingly, was as shocked as I was by a diagnosis on a football pitch. The more I thought about it, the more I wanted to do it:



Scottish FA

to play football at the highest level I could; to play for my country; to play in finals. Also, without sounding clichéd, to maybe help other people who have experienced the pain I have had and never really understood what it meant, and to show them that it does not need to hold you back or stop you fulfilling your potential.

It is understandable that some people have responded differently – maybe getting angry, annoyed or upset and saying that there is nothing wrong with me. Today, I am a 17-year-old who works in Scottish football and plays for his country. There is not a lot wrong with that.

The last few months have been a rollercoaster: I went from playing a weekly game with my work colleagues to making my international debut. On the last weekend in April, I earned my first two caps for Scotland in a double-header against Northern Ireland, and now I have the prospect of going to Denmark for the next international.

'The lads made me feel welcome'

As you can imagine, going to my first training camp and walking into a dressing room full of boys that I had never met left me feeling a bit apprehensive about the whole thing. I'm not going to lie – it was scary at first. But the lads were brilliant. They made me feel welcome as soon as I walked in. They are always having a laugh and always helping you to improve, giving you tips on what you could have done better and what to do the next time. Any nerves I had about meeting them were gone in the first couple of minutes. The training camp was superb. We typically got up at around 07.00, had breakfast by 08.00 and then left for training at 09.00. We had two training sessions a day on the Friday and Saturday, and then only one on the Sunday. What

I loved most about the camp was how motivated everybody was. Everyone wanted to get better. The coaches helped a lot. Even when you weren't having the best of days, they always managed to get your chin up and get you going again. Thankfully, I performed well enough at the training camp and was selected to play in the friendlies against Northern Ireland. On the weekend of my debut, we met up on the Friday afternoon for training and then left for the hotel. When I woke up on the Saturday morning, the nerves were really starting to kick in.

Walking into the dressing room, seeing all the jerseys hanging up and knowing that you will be playing for your country ... I'm not sure there is another feeling quite like it. The sense of pride you feel when stepping onto the pitch is incredible.

We dominated straight from the kick-off and managed to win 5-1, followed up with a 5-2 victory the following day. I have to admit that I didn't score, but thanks to a chance meeting with David and an open mind, I have now set some goals that I never thought possible. 🍀

"The sense of pride you feel when stepping on to the pitch is incredible."

Kieran Martin
Member of the
Scotland cerebral
palsy football team

Scottish FA

NEW NATIONAL STADIUM IN THE PIPELINE

TRITAN KOKONA

 An agreement was recently concluded between the Football Federation of Albania (FSHF) and the company Albstar for the construction of a new national stadium in the country's capital city. A signing ceremony was held at the Sheraton Tirana Hotel, where details of the project were presented.

The FSHF's president, Armand Duka, talked about the investment that the association had made in the country's football infrastructure: "We realised that, without infrastructure, there can be no development and no improvement in the quality of football. For this reason, we have invested in many projects, and their impact is already visible." He used figures

and graphs to provide an overview of the projects already completed by the FSHF.

In his speech, the Albanian prime minister, Edi Rama, stressed the importance of sport for the social fabric of the country. He praised the various efforts made by the FSHF and its president with a view to improving the country's infrastructure. He also stressed the importance of building a new stadium, which would, he said, represent a new beginning for Albanian football.

UEFA was also represented at the ceremony and welcomed the significant progress made by Albania in terms of its infrastructure. UEFA has assisted, monitored and supported the FSHF in all its construction projects and is thrilled that



the country will soon have another modern sports facility. Important details regarding the project were presented to the public by architects Marco Casamonti and Giovanni Polazzi, co-founders of the renowned Italian studio Archea. The ceremony culminated in the signing of the construction agreement by Armand Duka and a representative of the company Albstar (photo above) in the presence of all participants.

NEW FUTSAL CHALLENGE

CARMEN REDL

 The Austrian Football Association (ÖFB) recently launched an exciting new competition, the ÖFB Futsal Challenge, which represents a new approach to futsal in Austria. In this competition, clubs are only permitted to field regular futsal players – i.e. people who only ever play futsal or are at least predominantly futsal players.

A further point of contrast with the existing ÖFB Futsal League (which has been running for a number of years) is the fact that individual matches are staged, rather than mini-tournaments. Teams play two halves of 20 minutes each, with the clock only counting down while the ball is actually in play. In the ÖFB Futsal League, that only applies in the last five minutes. As well as offering an exciting new club competition, it is hoped that this new initiative will pave the way for an Austrian national futsal team. In its inaugural season, the ÖFB Futsal Challenge features six teams from the ÖFB Futsal League – four First Division teams (1. FC Allstars Wiener Neustadt, Stella Rossa Wien, Futsal Klagenfurt and 1. FC Futsal Innsbruck), plus FC Internazionale Wien 2012 from the Second Division South and SC Vienna Walzer from the Second Division North.

U17 EURO FINALS ARE A HIT

FIRUZ ABDULLA



 As Azerbaijan prepared to host the final round of the European Under-17 Championship from 5 to 21 May, the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) made sure the tournament received the widest possible publicity. An official tournament anthem, 'Biz qalib olmalıyıq' (We must win), was recorded as a duet by the championship ambassador, renowned Azerbaijani singer Röya Aykhan, and Miri Yusif, an Azerbaijani singer and rapper, and a favourite of young people especially. The video of the song was

broadcast many times on various TV channels in Azerbaijan. At the same time, promotional videos made for the AFFA were shown on local TV channels, as well as on the internet.

In the lead-up to the tournament, members of the local organising committee visited schools in Baku, encouraged by the ministry of education. Röya Aykhan, Azerbaijan's Under-17 captain Elchin Asadov and Under-21 women's player Amina Heydarova joined the tour, during which schoolchildren heard all about the tournament.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

www.nfsbih.ba

CONNECTING WITH WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

FUAD KRVAVAC



Before the recent Women's EURO 2017 qualifying match against England, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (NFSBiH) organised an event for local schoolchildren at its training centre in Zenica. About 1,000 pupils from the city's primary schools took part in the initiative, which was organised in partnership with the FARE network and the Ebbe Comms communications agency. The women's national team and head coach Samira Hurem showed the children how they train and chatted with them about football.

Two days later, the training centre was packed with supporters for the match against England. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina suffered the narrowest of defeats, losing 1-0, it was a great game and they produced one of their best performances of the campaign so far. Samira Hurem said: "I think this is an excellent idea. Children from local



F. Kravac

primary schools had the opportunity to meet the players and find out about women's football, and then they came in large numbers to support us in our crucial qualifying match."

Bosnia and Herzegovina also played host to a UEFA development tournament for women's Under-16 teams in April, with matches being played in Zenica and Vogosca. Slovenia won the tournament with three straight wins, while the hosts finished second with six points, ahead of Lithuania and Montenegro with three and zero points respectively.

The 5th Josip Katalinski Škija Memorial Tournament for men's Under-16 teams was recently contested in Zenica and Grbavica (a suburb of Sarajevo). Bosnia

and Herzegovina won that tournament, beating FYR Macedonia 2-0 in the final. In the semi-finals, Bosnia and Herzegovina beat Belgrade 7-6 on penalties following a 0-0 draw, while FYR Macedonia beat the team from Sarajevo and East Sarajevo 2-0. The third-place play-off was contested by a team representing the Serbian capital, Belgrade, and a team representing Sarajevo and East Sarajevo, with the team from Serbia prevailing 5-2. The award for the player most reminiscent of Josip Katalinski went to Amar Lukovac of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally in April, the National Deaf Futsal Championship was staged at the Juan Antonio Samaranch Olympic Hall in Sarajevo. This tournament was held under the auspices of the NFSBiH as part of UEFA's grassroots programme, which advocates football for all, regardless of gender, age, ability, ethnicity and religious/racial background. The tournament was contested by teams from Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Mostar, Brcko, Zenica and Vitez. It was won by Mladost (from Sarajevo), who beat Neretva (from Mostar) 4-2 in the final. The team from Banja Luka finished third. The tournament's top goalscorer was Djordje Kremenović from Banja Luka, while the award for the best goalkeeper went to Mladost's Halil Čehić.

BULGARIA

www.bfunion.bg

BULGARIAN GIRLS WIN DEVELOPMENT TOURNAMENT

YORDAN GROZDANOV



The Bulgarian Under-16 girls' team, led by coach Troyan Radulov, recently won a UEFA development tournament in Albena on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast. After defeating Georgia 4-1 and beating Romania 7-6 on penalties, Bulgaria needed a win against Croatia in their final match to secure victory. Mariela Nedeva scored the winning goal as Bulgaria triumphed 1-0 and won the tournament.

The tournament – which followed two other UEFA women's development

tournaments in Bulgaria in 2014 and 2015 – took place between 17 and 21 April. Once again, the teams were very satisfied with the tournament's organisation, and we saw that performance standards had risen further since the 2014 and 2015 events. The Bulgarian Football Union tried to make the teams feel at home, using just two stadiums for matches and ensuring that the teams' hotels were situated very close to the training facilities and stadiums.

Bulgaria will be hosting two more UEFA women's development tournaments



BFU

in May and August respectively. UEFA has introduced these tournaments as a way of giving talented young players an additional opportunity to play competitive international matches. There is a focus on Under-16 teams, as UEFA believes this to be a crucial stage in the development of elite players.

A SUCCESSFUL 12 MONTHS

TOMISLAV PACAK



The Croatian Football Federation (HNS) held its annual general meeting in April, giving its president, Davor Šuker, an opportunity to look back with pride at the previous year: "Our national teams achieved excellent results, led by our senior men's team, which qualified for EURO 2016 in France. At the same time, I am very pleased with our overall performance as an organisation. All of the HNS's committees and bodies worked very hard and achieved their objectives."

Šuker was especially proud to be announcing a major new project: "The HNS will be a key partner of the new IPTV channel, HNTV (Croatian Football Television). HNTV will broadcast many football matches, covering futsal, women's football and our youth teams. It will be a great way of promoting football in Croatia, and this unique

project has the HNS's full support."

Among the guests at the general meeting was the newly decorated 'French knight' Josip Skoblar. The famous goalscorer, who won the European Golden Boot while playing for Olympique de Marseille, was recently presented with a prestigious French award in recognition of his contribution to French football, with HNS management present in Marseille to witness the achievement. "This recognition means a lot to me, and I am overwhelmed with this show of respect from my French friends," Skoblar said on receiving the award. "I would also like to thank Davor Šuker and the rest of the HNS delegation for being here to show their support." Skoblar will be an HNS ambassador during this summer's tournament in France.

Meanwhile, the HNS recently organised a workshop for the coaches of Croatia's

top-division clubs, who were joined by the country's national team coaches for a two-day seminar on technical trends in European and Croatian football. "I firmly believe that our coaches are one of the key reasons for the success of Croatian football. Stars like Modrić and Mandžukić were developed by our coaches, and it's important for us to share our experience, knowledge and opinions at gatherings such as this workshop," said Ante Čačić, coach of Croatia's senior men's national team. Among the guests at the workshop was Zoran Mamić, who had just guided GNK Dinamo Zagreb to their 11th consecutive domestic crown. The HNS has taken part in various other activities and events recently, including a CAFE Week of Action in April (the first time it had participated in the initiative), promoting access to football for people with disabilities. As in previous years, the HNS also celebrated International Roma Day, supporting a dedicated football event as part of its commitment to tackling racism, discrimination, violence and poverty.

GIRLS' FOOTBALL WEEK SURPASSES ALL EXPECTATIONS

CATHERINE STEWART



The Football Association (FA) recently organised another Girls' Football Week, and the event was a resounding success, with more than twice the targeted number of players taking part.

Close to 40,000 girls aged between 5 and 16 played football as part of the week's activities, easily surpassing the initial target of 17,340. In addition, 10,254 women also took part in the event, which is aimed at encouraging schools, clubs, community groups and other educational establishments to run football sessions for women and girls, bringing the total number of participants to 49,783. A total of 342 primary schools and 106 secondary schools put on sessions for their pupils as part of the event. About 16,000 people took part in the 2015 Girls' Football Week (which was itself more than three times the initial target for that event).

The FA's head of women's football, Baroness Sue Campbell, announced the final

figures on 27 April at a special event on New Palace Yard at the Houses of Parliament. Schoolgirls from Saint Fidelis School in Bexley and Royal Park School in Sidcup took part in sessions led by FA Skills coaches, with MPs dropping in to watch.

Baroness Campbell said: "These numbers are great news for women's football and show just how much appetite there is for girls to play the game. We'd like to thank all of the schools, groups, clubs, teachers and coaches who have taken the time to put on football sessions and give girls the opportunity to play. Hopefully, these will all prove a big success and will encourage organisations to continue to provide football opportunities. We know the challenges that are faced with girls' sports participation levels, particularly for teenage girls, where drop-out rates can be high, but initiatives like this are a great way to address some of these issues. Girls need to be given the opportunity,



facilities and confidence to play, and we're

committed to providing these and increasing the number of girls who play football."

This year, following the success of last year's Girls' Football Week, there will also be a second event in the autumn (10–16 October) with a view to further increasing participation levels. That event will focus on higher and further education establishments. The FA's Girls' Football Weeks are delivered in partnership with the Independent Schools Football Association, the English Schools' Football Association, AoC Sport, British Universities & Colleges Sport, the Premier League and the Football League. Football is the most popular female team sport in England, with more than 2.89 million players. There are more than 5,900 women's and girls' teams competing on behalf of affiliated clubs.

ESTONIA

www.jalgpall.ee

INTEGRATION THROUGH FOOTBALL

MAARJA SAULEP



The Estonian Football Association (EJL) has recently launched an integration project called We Speak Football 2016, whereby the EJL invites children from predominantly Russian-speaking regions to national team matches. The project is funded by the Estonian ministry of culture and the MISA integration and migration foundation.

The aim of the project is to get the children interested in the national team. Russians account for about 25% of the Estonian population, with the Ida-Virumaa region having the largest percentage of Russian speakers. Consequently, Russians make a major contribution to Estonia's football culture, and the EJL sees football as a good way of fostering integration.

As part of the We Speak Football 2016 project, 111 young players from



the towns of Sillamäe, Johvi and Kohtla-Järve were recently given the opportunity to attend a friendly match between Estonia and Norway. The children also got to meet former national

team players Sergei Pareiko and Andrei Stepanov. The players talked about their experience of playing for the national side, answered questions and signed autographs.

According to a representative of top-flight club JK Sillamäe Kalev, the event was a great success: "The children were very excited, because for some of them it was the first time they had been to watch a match here. The feedback was very positive, and the children would love to do it again if they had the chance."

Grigori Mitsuk, an 11-year-old from Sillamäe, had never been to a national team match before and was struck by how well Estonia played. "They passed the ball and talked to each other a lot on the pitch. I was most impressed by Ragnar Klavan. He's a very good defender."

FAROE ISLANDS

www.football.fo

QUALIFYING MATCHES SOLD OUT

TERJI NIELSEN



There is currently huge demand for tickets for the Faroese national team's home matches. Both of their World Cup qualifying matches at home later this year – against Hungary and Portugal – are already sold out. Over the last two years, the Faroese have achieved some very good results on the pitch, including two victories over Greece, and the facilities at the national stadium in Torshavn have improved immensely. These are obviously the main reasons for the huge interest in the national team.

The national stadium, Tórsvøllur, has a capacity of around 5,100. It is clearly a small stadium in international terms, but the population of the Faroe Islands is only about 49,000, so the stadium actually holds more than 10% of the country's population. With more than a tenth of the population attending World Cup qualifying matches, the level of interest in



international football is clear for all to see. Just a few years ago, attendance figures at home matches were between 1,500 and

3,000 at best, so the trend is very positive. Now it is up to the team and the crowds to keep it up.

'CASAS BLEUES' TO HOST PRE-MATCH PARTIES AT EURO 2016

LAURA GOUTRY



At the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, the French Football Federation (FFF) set up 'Casas Bleues' – special venues where French supporters in Brazil could gather to watch matches together in a carnival atmosphere. In light of the popularity of that initiative, the FFF decided to do the same thing for the team's subsequent games, in Paris and around the country. Thus, a Casa Bleue will be set up wherever Didier Deschamps' team play at EURO 2016 (i.e. Paris, Marseille and Lille in the group stage).

The Casas Bleues, which will be accessible to all members of the national team's fan club (both paying and non-paying members), will allow supporters of the French team to gather several hours before kick-off to begin the festivities. There will be a plethora of

football-related activities (table football, freestyle demonstrations, competitions to see how hard supporters can shoot, etc.), as well as concerts, photo opportunities and a face-painting stand. There will also be a free catering area, with barbecue food and high spirits on the menu.

The main objective of the Casas Bleues is of course to bring French supporters together and get them behind the team. However, the FFF is also committed to giving fans the best pre-match build-up possible in order to make their matchday experience truly special and reward their proud support for the national side.

Casas Bleues at EURO 2016

- 10 June 2016 – Paris – Hippodrome d'Auteuil – opens at 12.00 – 5,000 to 8,000 people expected



- 15 June 2016 – Marseille – Hippodrome Borély – opens at 16.00 – 3,000 to 5,000 people expected
- 19 June 2016 – Lille – Hippodrome de Marcq-en-Baroeul – opens at 16.00 – 2,000 to 3,000 people expected

LARGEST-EVER WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

OTAR GIORGADZE



The 2016 Georgian women's football championship has kicked off, with a record six teams in the running for the title. All six sides represent different cities, so games will take place across the country. In the past, the women's championship has taken the form of a single tournament in one city, but the game is now growing and expanding its reach. The main reasons for that are the profile of the Georgian women's national side and the support provided by the Georgian Football Federation, which established the league.

The 2016 season kicked off in Gori. Following a special opening ceremony, FC Iveria Khashuri and 35th Football School Tbilisi contested the season's opening game, which the hosts won 3-2. The star of the match was 16-year-old Nino Chuchulashvili, who scored a hat-trick for the home side, securing victory for



her team and bringing herself to the attention of the national team coaches. The 2016 Georgian Women's Football

Championship will comprise ten rounds of matches, with the champions due to be crowned on 28 October.

GIBRALTAR

www.gibraltarfa.com

FIVE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WELSH FOOTBALL TRUST

STEVEN GONZALEZ

 The Gibraltar Football Association (GFA) has recently announced a five-year partnership with the Welsh Football Trust (WFT), which will allow Gibraltar coaches to train and be assessed in Gibraltar up to UEFA B diploma level. That agreement follows Gibraltar's admission to the UEFA Convention on the Mutual Recognition of Coaching Qualifications at B level in 2015. The Football Association of Wales (FAW) has, through the WFT and under the auspices of UEFA, offered to assist the GFA with its coach education requirements, particularly in the context of the GFA's efforts to set up its own independent coach education structure.

The agreement will allow the WFT to train tutors in Gibraltar with a view to establishing a pool of local coaching

instructors who can deliver FAW Level 1, FAW Level 2 and UEFA B diploma courses. This means that Gibraltar candidates will soon be able to take these courses at home in Gibraltar, rather than having to travel abroad. The agreement will also allow Gibraltar candidates to take UEFA A and Pro diploma courses in Wales under the auspices of the WFT. In addition, it will allow the WFT to deliver, on behalf of the GFA, the first specialist goalkeeper coaching courses in Gibraltar. This is an extremely important stage in the development of coach education in Gibraltar and the first step towards ensuring that Gibraltar coaches are able to train and qualify at home.

Carl Darlington, head of coach education at the WFT, said: "We are honoured to have been approached by



the GFA, via UEFA, to support their coach education system. We are now working together to develop a pool of tutors and coaches within grassroots football in Gibraltar."

The GFA's general secretary, Dennis Beiso, is delighted with the partnership: "This is much needed and something we have been targeting for some time. This is undoubtedly an extremely important step in terms of ensuring the development of Gibraltar's next generation of football coaches."

ITALY

www.figc.it

FOOTBALL FEVER MOUNTS AHEAD OF EURO 2016

DIEGO ANTENZIO

 Italy's ministry of foreign affairs has called on the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) to harness the power of football to promote international cooperation around the world. The FIGC offers a wealth of expertise and know-how, in particular in the field of coaching, to support the ministry's diplomatic work in a number of strategically important areas. Italian football's history of success on and off the field, its reputation in terms of technical education and the organisational structures it has established make it ideally placed to initiate dialogue with other countries.

The first of two activities scheduled for May and June took place from 2 to 5 May on the Caribbean islands of St Vincent and Antigua. As part of a wider campaign to promote cooperation in the Caribbean,



a number of national head coaches from the region attended a pair of workshops delivered by 2006 World Cup winning coach Marcello Lippi. Also in attendance was Italy's special envoy to the Caribbean, Paolo Serpi.

Next month, from 1 to 13 June, Enrico Sbardella, head coach of Italy's women's Under-19s, and Prof. Stefano D'Ottavio, lecturer at Tor Vergata University in Rome and head of fitness coaching for Italy's

national women's teams, will be running a training camp for young footballers from Tuvalu in Micronesia. Projects involving other Pacific nations are also in the pipeline. In April, Italy's current head coach, Antonio Conte, did his bit for international cooperation when he spoke at Somos Fútbol ('We Are Football'), a week-long event staged by the Brazilian Football Confederation to exchange ideas on how to further develop organised football in Brazil.

The FIGC's cooperation with the foreign ministry forms part of a wider strategy to promote the Made in Italy brand, which involves the national teams and their matches, but also the FIGC's youth and schools division and its projects with the ministry of education, universities and research to improve the education of young players.

NEW FORMAT FOR THE BALTIC CUP

TOMS ĀRMANIS

 The 26th edition of Europe's oldest football tournament for national teams – the Baltic Cup – is set to take place between 28 May and 4 June. This time, however, it will have a new format, with games being played in all three Baltic states. It has been agreed that, from now on, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia will share the football festivities on the basis of the 'week of football' format, with the first game being hosted by the official hosts of the tournament.

Thus, the 2016 Baltic Cup begins on 28 May in Klaipeda, Lithuania, with a match between the Lithuanian and Estonian Under-21 teams, with the two countries' senior teams facing each other the next day. The Latvian Under-21 team then host their Lithuanian counterparts on 31 May in Jelgava, before the two senior teams compete in Liepaja on 1 June in a repeat of the 2014 Baltic Cup final. The tournament's final games will take place in Parnu, Estonia, on 3 and 4 June, with the precise venue still to be confirmed.

As Finland (who finished second and third in 2012 and 2014 respectively) are not taking part, the organisers needed to agree on a common Baltic Cup logo for



the 2016 event. The three participating national associations agreed to retain the previous logo design, adapting the flags of the participating countries accordingly, in addition to highlighting the name of the competition.

This is the oldest tournament of its kind contested by European national teams. The Baltic states have seen great changes since the first tournament was staged

in Tallinn in 1928, but this tradition has endured. The tournament used to be staged every year, but nowadays it is organised every two years, with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia taking it in turns to host the event. In 2012 and 2014 the tournament was enriched by the participation of Finland, with the competition switching to a knockout format.

COOPERATION ON PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

ANTON BANZER

 As of this coming season, the Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) and Swiss Super League side FC Vaduz are professionalising the training of elite players in the principality. Their aim is to provide new development opportunities in a professional environment to talented footballers who have outgrown the LFV's Under-18 squad.

Specifically, FC Vaduz's current Under-23 team is to be professionalised as a development squad. Former



professional Daniel Sereinig has been hired as the team's head coach, and he will begin working with the players this summer.

This will give the players their first taste of life at a senior club and allow them to prepare for a move to a team in a major league. This cooperation

between the LFV and Liechtenstein's only professional club is supported by all of the country's other clubs and will form a cornerstone of Liechtenstein's elite player development system. It should also allow the identification and exploitation of synergies between the LFV and FC Vaduz.

Such development opportunities for young players who wish to play senior football at elite/professional level are of vital importance, as they have the potential to put the national team on a much better footing.

MALTA

www.mfa.com.mt

SPORTS MEDICINE CLINIC

ALEX VELLA



The Malta Football Association (MFA), which has provided specialised medical services to a wide range of clients at the national stadium for several years now, has recently upgraded its sports medicine facilities to provide bigger premises with better equipment as part of a broadening of the MFA's areas of operations. The aim is to better cater for football clubs but also corporate entities and individual clients looking for diagnostic services, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and musculoskeletal disorders.

Previously, testing was more or less restricted to electrocardiograms (ECGs) for players registered with MFA clubs. These tests would be performed by the



team doctor, or by a private doctor if the team did not have their own. ECGs, however, constitute only a small part of the medical screening athletes require and the new clinic also offers clinical diagnosis, MRI imaging, physiotherapy, rehabilitation of injuries and balance/strength assessments. It is open six days a week, with specialised services available by appointment. Physiotherapy

services include rehabilitation, gym work, field-based workouts and sports injury prevention training.

This state-of-the-art clinic run by professional medical staff provides a comfortable environment, modern surroundings and a nice atmosphere that meet its clients' needs and is proving popular among athletes from other sports too.

MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

UEFA SEMINAR FOR FUTSAL COACH EDUCATORS

PRESS OFFICE



The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) hosted a UEFA seminar for futsal coach instructors in Chisinau from 25 to 29 April, bringing together UEFA representatives and experts from the national associations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. The seminar involved both theory and practical sessions and was run by a distinguished group of futsal specialists featuring Spanish national team coach José Venancio López Hierro (who is also a member of the UEFA

Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee), his predecessor Javier Lozano Cid, Italy coach Roberto Menichelli, Finland coach Mičo Martić and former Belgium coach Benjamin Meurs. There were also sessions with futsal experts César Arcones de la Calle, Antonio Bores Cerezal and Óscar Callejo Mardomingo. UEFA's futsal coach education programme and the importance of having qualified futsal coach educators were among the items on the agenda at the seminar. Practical sessions looked at issues such as offensive and defensive transitions, the coaching of individual

skills and their application in match situations, the coaching of offensive situations involving two/three players, the 3-1 and 4-0 offensive systems, the fundamentals of defending, the principles of goalkeeping, warm-ups, cooling down and stretching exercises, endurance, speed, strength and coordination exercises, leadership and managing the team.

"I want to thank UEFA for asking the FMF to host this very important seminar. We have done our best to give the event the high-level platform that it deserves by providing all the necessary facilities at the FMF Futsal Arena in Ciorescu and the national technical centre in Vadul lui Voda," said the FMF's general secretary, Nicolai Cebotari. "All the delegates have been given lots of useful information and will return home with ideas on how to improve the quality of futsal in their countries, for the good of the game and its spectators."



CHILDREN GRIPPED BY FUTSAL FEVER

NIGEL TILSON

 Across Northern Ireland, children aged 10 and 11 have been embracing futsal thanks to a new initiative – Spring into Futsal – launched by the Irish Football Association (IFA). While in countries such as Brazil, Spain and Portugal, futsal is played professionally and has helped to produce some of the world's biggest football stars, it is still a relatively new phenomenon in Northern Ireland.

Primary schools across the country were invited to take part in regional tournaments – held in Lisburn, Craigavon, Omagh and Belfast – to experience the fun of futsal, with separate tournaments for boys and girls. The winners and runners-up in the respective regional



tournaments were then invited to take part in finals at Shankill Leisure Centre in Belfast.

In the boys' competition, the final was contested by St Bernard's Primary School from Newtownabbey and Howard Primary School from Craigavon. Howard

went ahead early in a very tight game, but St Bernard's hit back with two goals to claim the first ever Primary Schools Futsal Trophy.

The girls' competition was also very keenly contested, with Dundonald Primary School playing Belfast's Christ the Redeemer Primary School in the final. The game ended 2-2, with Dundonald prevailing in the resulting penalty shoot-out.

Jonathan Michael, the IFA's Football for All schools manager, said: "Our Spring into Futsal events were extremely well attended, and it was fantastic to see so many boys and girls enjoying the game. The feedback from teachers and players was very positive."

CHANGES TO THE YOUTH TEAM COACHING SET-UP

STEPHEN FINN

 The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) has announced some coaching changes for its national youth teams. Following Paul Doolin's decision to pursue other interests, FAI high-performance director Ruud Dokter has confirmed that Tom Mohan, head coach of the Under-17 team until now, will take over as Under-19 coach. Mohan, who has just obtained his UEFA Pro licence, was selected at the end of a thorough interview process. He took charge of the Under-17s in 2012 and has enjoyed tremendous success over four European qualifying campaigns, most notably in 2015, when he took the team to the European Under-17 finals in Bulgaria. He was previously assistant manager to Sean McCaffrey at that level.

"I am very happy with the appointment. Tom proved to be the preferred candidate for the role. He has been with the Under-17s for nine years and has become an expert in underage

international football. Among other things, continuity and consistency are very important in developing our talented young players, and Tom brings both of those qualities with his experience," Dokter said.

In addition, the FAI has confirmed that five former Republic of Ireland players have joined the international coaching set-up. Keith Andrews, Kenny Cunningham, Damien Duff, Mark Kinsella and Stephen McPhail have all been recruited to help coach the next generation of Irish footballers, through the Player Development Pathway.

Duff will work with Colin O'Brien's U15s, McPhail with Paul Osam's U16s, Andrews with the U17s, Cunningham with Tom Mohan's U19s and Kinsella with Noel King's U21s.

The former players have all recently been involved with the FAI coach education programme and will combine their new skills with their vast experience



Tom Mohan

FAI-Sportslife

in the game, which earned them a combined total of 265 senior caps.

"The FAI has always sought to develop talent, whether that is our own coaching staff, or, in this case, former players, who have played at the very top level," said FAI chief executive John Delaney. "I'm delighted to have these big names on board, and I look forward to watching them develop their own coaching talents, as well as observing the development of the players who they will work with."

ROMANIA

www.frf.ro

TAPPING INTO THE RURAL TALENT POOL

PAUL ZAHARIA



The Romanian Football Federation (FRF) recently launched the most important grassroots programme in its history, which aims to discover and promote young football talents and increase the football participation rate to 1.5 % of the country's population. 'Together we are football' is an umbrella programme for 11 national projects and competitions, including 'Transform the rural street into a stadium', an innovative new initiative aimed specifically at the country's more rural communities.

According to the FRF's 2015–20 strategic plan for developing football in Romania, one of the association's main targets is to raise the number of players and to spread football throughout the whole community. Increasing the number of players means first of all identifying, selecting and monitoring promising young players in all parts of the country. The countryside has always been an important source of talent (almost 50% of the Romanian population lives in rural areas), that, for various reasons, often remains hidden.



'Transform the rural street into a stadium' started in October 2015. On a weekly basis, the 21 regional coaches of the FRF logged onto a special platform on the 'Together we are football' website and entered the names of the most talented country-dwelling children aged between 7 and 10 who were not registered with a club at any level and whom they had picked out after watching matches between schools or between classes in the same school. For the purpose of this project, Romania was divided into seven regions, so that three regional coaches could cover matches in each region. Each coach selected four children, making 12 per region, who then played each other in 6 v 6 matches on small-size

pitches. Afterwards, each region selected their best player, and the seven lucky youngsters were invited to the friendly match between Romania and Spain played in Cluj on 27 March to receive awards from two Romanian football legends, Miodrag Belodedici and Ion Vladioiu. The best three of these children will join our national team at EURO 2016 in France, where they will watch Romania's second group match, against Switzerland.

Apart from the huge motivation of being able to attend such a major event, the best of the three will be registered with one of the FRF's affiliated youth clubs, while the names of all the other talents discovered and entered on the website will be available to all members of the FRF. These 'scouting' activities are clearly in line with the FRF's own strategic plan but also support the youth activities of its affiliated members, especially in those harder to reach regions where talents exist but the risk of them remaining undiscovered is substantial. This was only the beginning of what is intended to be a much more widespread programme.

SLOVAKIA

www.futbalsfz.sk

UNITED STATES WIN 2016 SLOVAKIA CUP

PETER SURIN



When it was first launched, the Slovakia Cup – a tournament for national Under-18 teams – was contested by representatives of 16 different countries and accurately described as Europe's unofficial Under-18 championship. Over time, the number of participating teams has dwindled (with eight countries contesting the 2016 tournament), but participants have started to come from further afield, with teams from Asia and North America taking part.

The organisers of this year's tournament – the 26th in total – faced a dilemma when sending out invitations, as the level of interest in the tournament far exceeded the budget available. Discussions were had with the national associations of China, Japan,

Canada, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Australia and Morocco. Ultimately, however, the only non-Europeans at this year's tournament were the United States.

"Originally, the tournament was based in Piestany. Then it moved to Trencianske Teplice. This year, we based it in Trnava and Senec, since we wanted to test our operations ahead of the final round of the European Women's Under-19 Championship, which we are hosting in July," said Ján Greguš, the technical director of the Slovak Football Association.

The United States won this year's tournament, beating Russia 2-1 in the final. In the third-place play-off, Slovakia, the 2015 winners, were beaten 1-0 by the Czech Republic. "We are not disappointed,"

said Milan Malatinský, the coach of the Slovak team. "The tournament was of a high standard, with all the teams pushing themselves to the limit. This has been and will be a very beneficial experience for Slovak football." All teams played some great football, not just the two finalists. Every team had at least one noticeably talented player. "I'm working with a lot of quality players, and I am certain I will be hearing more about them in the future," said Brad Friedel, the coach of the winning team and a former international goalkeeper. He also shared his thoughts on the organisation of the event: "Everything – from logistics to the sporting side of the tournament – was of an exceptionally high standard. Everybody made us feel very welcome."

SWEDEN

www.svenskfotboll.se

MORE PITCHES NEEDED IN STOCKHOLM

JONAS NYSTEDT



The Swedish capital, Stockholm, has grown rapidly in recent years. With more and more people moving into the city, the need for new housing

has been on top of the agenda for both politicians and city planners. However, the need for more recreational areas has not been part of the planning process

to the same extent. Not at all, in fact. It is estimated that, given Stockholm's current population, the city needs approximately 50 new pitches to meet short-term demand. Stockholm has more resources than Sweden's other 23 regional associations, but with playing surfaces having to be shared and clubs unable to meet demand, there is a fear that participation levels will wane and, in the longer term, so will interest in the sport itself.

In order to improve the situation, the Swedish Football Association, UEFA and the Sports Federation of Stockholm have launched a three-year project with the aim of trying to bridge the gap and get more pitches built.



SWITZERLAND

www.football.ch

CLAUDIO SULSER APPOINTED NATIONAL TEAM SPORTING DIRECTOR

PIERRE BENOIT



The Swiss Football Association's executive committee has announced that Claudio Sulser is to be its new national team sporting director.

Sulser, who will replace the outgoing Peter Stadelmann, was one of the best Swiss forwards of all time. The 60-year-old from Ticino – who is now a lawyer by trade and is also on the board of the Swiss Football League – won the Swiss championship four times and the Swiss Cup once, all with Grasshopper-Club.

He was crowned Swiss Footballer of the Year in 1981/82, as well as being the most prolific goalscorer in Switzerland's top flight on two separate occasions (1979/80 and 1981/82). He scored a total of 100 goals for GC. Sulser was also capped 50 times for Switzerland, scoring 13 goals. His international debut came in 1977 in an away game against Portugal, and his final game for the national side was away against Sweden in 1986.

Since his playing career came to an end at FC Lugano, Sulser has, among other things, chaired the FIFA Ethics Committee (2010–12). He is also the chairman of the FIFA Disciplinary Committee and a member of the FIFA Task Force against Racism and Discrimination. He will take up his new position after EURO 2016.

Peter Stadelmann announced a few months ago that he would be stepping

down after this summer's tournament in France. The 63-year-old lawyer from eastern Switzerland took up that position in mid-2009, replacing Ernst Lämli.

Stadelmann had, among other things, previously been the president of the Swiss Football League (2004–09), as well as holding various senior positions at FC St Gallen.



BIRTHDAYS

Dušan Savić (Serbia, 1 June)
Ekaterina Fedyshina (Russia, 1 June)
Ferenc Székely (Hungary, 2 June) **50th**
Ivaylo Ivkov (Bulgaria, 3 June)
Radek Lobo (Czech Republic, 3 June)
Klara Bjartmarz (Iceland, 3 June)
John Ward (Republic of Ireland, 4 June) **60th**
Yauheni Tratsiuk (Belarus, 4 June)
Jean-Samuel Leuba (Switzerland, 4 June)
Ludovico Micallef (Malta, 5 June)
Jaap Uilenberg (Netherlands, 5 June)
John MacLean (Scotland, 5 June)
Maksim Bechterevas (Lithuania, 5 June)
Michael Joseph Hyland (Republic of Ireland, 6 June)
Theo Zwanziger (Germany, 6 June)
Lars-Åke Björck (Sweden, 7 June)
Michel Sablon (Belgium, 7 June)
Sandor Berzi (Hungary, 7 June)
Onofre Costa (Portugal, 7 June)
Johannes Scholtz (Netherlands, 8 June)
Piero Volpi (Italy, 9 June)
Jesper Møller Christensen (Denmark, 9 June)
Antoine Portelli (Malta, 9 June) **50th**
Petri Antero Jakonen (Finland, 9 June)
Jonathan Ford (Wales, 9 June)
Monica Jorge (Portugal, 9 June)
Hans Bangerter (Switzerland, 10 June)
Andrew Shaw (England, 10 June)
Eleni Kiriou (Greece, 10 June)
Kyros Georgiou (Cyprus, 11 June)
Thórir Hakonarson (Iceland, 11 June)
Kristinn Jakobsson (Iceland, 11 June)
Zoran Dimić (Serbia, 11 June)
José Luis López Serrano (Spain, 12 June)
Alain Courtois (Belgium, 12 June)
Jørn West Larsen (Denmark, 12 June)
Iwona Malek-Wybraniec (Poland, 12 June)
Haris Gvozden (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 12 June)
Roland Coquard (France, 13 June)
Targo Kaldoja (Estonia, 13 June)
Matej Damjanović (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 13 June)
Galina Doneva (Bulgaria, 14 June)
Nuno Castro (Portugal, 14 June)
Ilija Kitić (Slovenia, 14 June)
Viacheslav Koloskov (Russia, 15 June)
Miguel Galan Torres (Spain, 15 June)
Ramish Maliyev (Azerbaijan, 16 June) **40th**
Kepa Larumbe Beain (Spain, 16 June)
Michael Joseph Maessen (Netherlands, 17 June)
Rainer Werthmann (Germany, 17 June)
Paolo Rondelli (San Marino, 17 June)
Anne Rei (Estonia, 17 June)
Philippe Piat (France, 18 June)
Hannelore Ratzeburg (Germany, 18 June)
Ivan Novak (Croatia, 18 June)

Eduard Prodan (Albania, 18 June)
Elkhan Mammadov (Azerbaijan, 18 June)
Tobias Wolf (Germany, 19 June)
Maria Mifsud (Malta, 20 June)
Michel Platini (France, 21 June)
Peter Peters (Germany, 21 June)
Zoran Cvrk (Croatia, 21 June)
Tomasz Mikulski (Poland, 21 June)
Paulius Malzinskas (Lithuania, 21 June)
Ilja Kaenzig (Switzerland, 21 June)
Keith Hackett (England, 22 June)
David Martin (Northern Ireland, 22 June)
Ante Kulušić (Croatia, 22 June)
Zvi Rosen (Israel, 23 June)
Vladimir Antonov (Moldova, 23 June)
Georg Pangl (Austria, 23 June)
Jean-Jacques Schonckert (Luxembourg, 24 June)
Gül Keskinler (Germany, 24 June)
Renatus Temmink (Netherlands, 24 June)
Jouni Hyytiä (Finland, 24 June)
Arturs Gaidels (Latvia, 24 June)
Mario Gjucinovski (FYR Macedonia, 25 June)
Foppe de Haan (Netherlands, 26 June)
Barry Bright (England, 27 June)
Sigurður Hannesson (Iceland, 27 June)
Eyjolfur Olafsson (Iceland, 27 June)
Ruud Dokter (Republic of Ireland, 27 June)
José Venancio López Hierro (Spain, 27 June)
Wim Koevrmans (Belgium, 28 June)
Ivan Borisov Lekov (Bulgaria, 29 June)
Paul Daniel Zaharia (Romania, 29 June)
Ginta Pece (Latvia, 29 June)
Peter van Zunderd (Netherlands, 30 June)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Competitions

10 June–10 July, France
 UEFA EURO 2016

28/29 June
 UEFA Champions League:
 first qualifying round (first legs)

30 June
 UEFA Europa League:
 first qualifying round (first legs)

Meetings

20 June, Nyon
 2016/17 UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League:
 draws for the first and second qualifying rounds

24 June, Nyon
 2016/17 UEFA Women's Champions League: qualifying round draw

NOTICES

- At an extraordinary congress of the German Football Association, Reinhard Grindel was elected president in place of vice-presidents Reinhard Rauball and Rainer Koch, who had led the association ad interim.
- The German Football Association has also appointed a new general secretary, Friedrich Curtius, in place of Helmut Sandrock.
- The Portuguese Football Federation has a new address: Avenida das Seleções, 1495-433 Cruz Quebrada-Dafundo, Portugal. Phone and fax numbers remain unchanged.

OBITUARY

Wilfried Straub of Germany, a member of the circle of former UEFA committee members and recipient of the UEFA President's Award in 2006, passed away on 2 May at the age of 77. Former vice-president of the German Football Association, Straub served as vice-chairman or member of many UEFA committees, including the Professional Football Committee, the Non-Amateur Football Committee, the Licensed Match Agents Committee and the Marketing and Media Committee. He also contributed to many of UEFA's expert panels, including the panel on transfer matters, on which he sat from 1978 to 1998.



#CelebrateFootball



UEFA
EURO2016
FRANCE



RESPECT