

UEFA

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FLYING HIGH

A historic first for Portugal
at EURO 2016



THE TECHNICIAN

Preparing for the
new season

UEFA PRESIDENCY

Three candidates for
the September election

UEFA SUPER CUP

Trondheim plays host
to a Spanish derby





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PARABÉNS PORTUGAL!

Congratulations to Portugal for winning their first-ever major trophy at senior level following a dramatic EURO 2016 final in Paris against the hosts. One goal in extra time at the Stade de France saw the Seleção achieve a historic victory which will surely inspire generations to come.

We were all inspired throughout the tournament by the fantastic supporters who brought such passion and dedication to France. I will never forget the amazing chanting and cheering that I saw at so many matches during an event which in my view showed clearly that 24 teams belong in the European Championship finals. The magic of the tournament was shared with more people than ever before, at the stadiums, on TV and on digital platforms, and it is our belief that this new format with increased exposure will help promote, protect and develop football throughout our continent.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped make EURO 2016 a success. The work done before and during the tournament by the local organising committee and the French government and authorities allowed the tournament to shine for 31 unforgettable days.

The tournament in France also allowed the UEFA Foundation for Children to run a variety

of significant social projects. One of them saw 20,000 disadvantaged youngsters taken to 43 matches across all ten host cities. This is something the foundation should be proud of, as it touched the lives of so many children who would otherwise not have had such a fantastic opportunity to enjoy football and the joy that it brings.

The summer is not only about the EURO of course, and I would like to highlight the importance of the youth competitions that have been taking place as well. Attendance records were broken at the European Under-19 Championship final tournament in Germany and excitement was at an all-time high in Slovakia as it hosted the European Women's Under-19 Championship finals.

There is no time to rest on our laurels, though. No sooner were the European champions crowned than the new UEFA club competition season was upon us. Together we will do our best to make sure that this too is a resounding success.



Theodore Theodoridis
UEFA General Secretary ad interim





IN THIS ISSUE

6 UEFA news

7 UEFA Super Cup

On 9 August, the UEFA Super Cup goes to Trondheim, in Norway, where Champions League winners Real Madrid CF take on Europa League winners Sevilla FC.

8 UEFA Research Grant Programme

The researchers who received grants for 2015/16 have presented the results of their research, while the jury has selected the projects for the coming season.

44 The Technician

What kind of pre-season training do coaches favour? Sir Alex Ferguson, Gareth Southgate and Thomas Schaaf, among others, explain their approach.

52 Kosovo

Introducing UEFA's newest member association.

54 News from member associations

EURO 2016

10 UEFA Foundation for Children

Young footballers from across the world gather in Lille and Lens for the Euro Foot Jeunes tournament.

12 Portugal make it a first

A new name has been engraved on the Henri Delaunay Cup.

18 Results

20 Gallery

A month of matches and celebrations in pictures.

42 For the record

EURO 2016 in figures.



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EURO 2016 REVIEW IN PARIS

The Executive Committee met in Paris on 9 July – the day before the EURO 2016 final – and took a look back at the final tournament in France.

The Executive Committee praised the competitiveness of the championship in its new 24-team format, and thanked all those involved in the successful organisation and running of the competition, in particular the French host cities and authorities, as well as the 6,500 volunteers who played a crucial role in the success of EURO 2016.

Also on the agenda in Paris was the creation of a Compensation Committee, which will oversee matters linked to the remuneration of UEFA’s senior management, including the UEFA President, Executive Committee members and the General Secretary.

The Compensation Committee will comprise the chairman of the Finance Committee, a member of the Governance and Compliance Committee, and an independent expert with extensive professional experience in compensation and governance matters. Detailed information will be disclosed in UEFA’s financial report. ♻️

Three candidates for the UEFA presidency

Before the deadline of 20 July, three candidates officially came forward for the position of UEFA President. They are Aleksander Čeferin (president of the Football Association of Slovenia), Michael van Praag (president of the Royal Netherlands Football Association) and Ángel María Villar Llona (president of the Royal Spanish Football Federation).

The election will take place at the 12th Extraordinary UEFA Congress on 14 September in Athens.

The candidates must all undergo an eligibility check by the FIFA Review Committee, given that the UEFA President automatically becomes a FIFA Vice-President.

The Extraordinary Congress in Athens will also elect an additional, female member of the FIFA Council from UEFA. Two candidates have been proposed: Evelina Christillin of the Italian Football Federation and Laura McAllister of the Football Association of Wales. They must also undergo a FIFA eligibility check.



Aleksander Čeferin



Michael van Praag



Ángel María Villar Llona

A THIRD SUCCESSIVE DERBY

Portugal may just have succeeded Spain as champions of Europe, but the UEFA Super Cup in early August is a reminder that, when it comes to club football, Spain still sets the benchmark.

The Super Cup, which pits the winners of the UEFA Champions League against the holders of the UEFA Europa League, will again be contested by two Spanish clubs this year, making it the third all-Spanish affair in a row. The common denominator in those three matches is the presence of Sevilla FC, who have won the Europa League for the last three seasons. This time, they will face Real Madrid CF, who beat them in Cardiff two years ago. They will be hoping to avoid a third defeat in as many years, having also lost to FC Barcelona in Tbilisi in 2015. Sevilla have only won the Super Cup once, against Barcelona in 2006, having also been beaten by AC Milan in 2007. Barcelona and Milan share the record for the most victories, with five apiece, while Real Madrid have two to their name – against Feyenoord in 2002 and Sevilla in 2014.

A nomadic event

Following problems relating to the timing of matches in its early years, the Super Cup established itself as a firm fixture in Europe's football calendar in 1998, when it moved from its previous two-legged format to a one-off match at a neutral venue. It denotes the start of the new season, since the teams are the winners of last season's competitions, but their squads already reflect the new purchases made over the summer. For 15 years, the Super Cup was contested in Monaco, where it was the highlight of a week of club football events (including club competition draws and various workshops preparing for the new season).

The UEFA Executive Committee then decided to take the Super Cup on the road, allowing other national associations to experience the joy of hosting this major fixture in Europe's club football calendar. Following matches in the Czech Republic (Prague) in 2013, Wales (Cardiff) in 2014 and Georgia (Tbilisi) in 2015, this year it is the turn of the Norwegian city of Trondheim. 🇳🇴

ALL EYES ON TRONDHEIM

The 2016 UEFA Super Cup, which will be contested by Real Madrid CF and Sevilla FC, will take place at Lerkendal Stadion – the home of Rosenborg BK – in the Norwegian city of Trondheim on Tuesday 9 August.

The hosting of the UEFA Super Cup will form part of Rosenborg's 100th birthday celebrations. The club has achieved great success at both domestic and European level, with more than 20 national championships to its name and frequent appearances in the group stage of the UEFA Champions League (with Rosenborg getting as far as the quarter-finals in 1996/97).

Trondheim is Norway's third-largest city and a renowned technological hub. It is also famous for its university and is home to more than 20,000 students. The city boasts a long and distinguished history stretching back

1,000 years or so and was the capital of Norway in medieval times.

Trondheim also has considerable experience of organising high-profile sporting events. The city is a regular fixture on the FIS Ski World Cup circuit, and Lerkendal Stadion has of course hosted a great many UEFA Champions League matches over the years.

Besides the match itself, the local organising committee will arrange a variety of other activities, such as youth tournaments and player development seminars. The trophy has already toured the local area, visiting various youth competitions and other such events.

The Football Association of Norway is looking forward to an exciting match between two of the best teams in Europe, with respect and fair play in evidence both on and off the pitch.



Getty Images



RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR 2016/17 SEASON SELECTED

The jury for the UEFA Research Grant Programme – an initiative that supports the academic work of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers studying various different aspects of European football – met in Nyon on 30 and 31 May to select the research proposals that will be awarded grants for the 2016/17 season.

The programme seeks to finance research projects that will produce interesting new insights into European football, helping Europe's football family to fulfil its mission by making its decision-making more effective and better-informed. UEFA invests a total of €90,000 a year in this programme, with each researcher receiving a maximum of €15,000.

This year, UEFA has received 50 proposals for research projects, with those projects being developed for and in cooperation with a record 29 member associations. This reflects national associations' increasing interest in academic research that will help them to take better-informed decisions and support them in the fulfilment of their missions. All 50 proposals made it through the initial screening process and advanced to the second assessment stage. Following a comprehensive third-round review, seven projects were then selected by the jury:

An innovative MRI technique for acute hamstring injuries – a feasibility study looking at micro-structural recovery on return to play, by Hans Tol, Academic

Medical Centre, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands (*project supported by the Royal Netherlands Football Association*)

The road to victory in the UEFA Women's Champions League: profiles of successful coaches and teams, by Edson Filho, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, England (*project supported by The Football Association*)

Football for human rights: embedding human rights promotion and protection through and within European football, by Jacopo Tognon, University of Padua, Italy (*project supported by the Malta Football Association*)

The preventive effect of an adductor strengthening programme on groin problems in Norwegian male football players, by Thor Einar Andersen, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo, Norway (*project supported by the Football Association of Norway*)

#Social responsibility in #football: mapping perceptions and expectations through social media conversations across

Europe, by Tim Breitbarth, Bournemouth University, England (*project supported by the German Football Association*)

Effectiveness of European countries' laws and regulations dealing with match-fixing, by Thomas Gabris, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia (*project supported by the Slovak Football Association*)

An investigation into the engagement of disabled people in European football, by Paul Kitchin, Ulster University, Northern Ireland (*project supported by the Irish Football Association*)

The seven researchers chosen will now spend the next nine months carrying out their projects in cooperation with the supporting national associations, before reporting back to UEFA next year.

Supporting top academic research in football

By encouraging close cooperation between the national associations and the academic community, UEFA hopes to help get research projects off the ground that the associations can then use to develop their own activities and projects. "There is considerable variety in terms of the topics covered. This programme has shown yet again how broad the 'playing field' for research in football is and how many aspects are deserving of further academic investigation," said Dr Michel D'Hooghe, chairman of the jury.

The jury also heard final presentations by researchers who had received grants for the 2015/16 season:

Effizienzpotenziale im strategischen Stadionmanagement (efficiency potential in strategic stadium management), by Daniel Gruber, University of Bayreuth, Germany (*project supported by the German Football Association*)

An unprecedented civilising process? Social evaluation of the 'Supporters United' fan project in Poland, by Radosław Kossakowski, Gdansk University, Poland (*project supported by the Polish Football Association*)

Transfer of skills from futsal to football in youth players, by Luca Oppici, Victoria University, Australia (*project supported by the Royal Spanish Football Federation*)

Mental health in football, by Katy Stewart, University of Glasgow, Scotland (*project supported by the Scottish Football Association*)

Optimising player performance and readiness to train: fatigue and recovery of neuromuscular function following football match-play, by Kevin Thomas, Northumbria University, Newcastle, England (*project supported by The Football Association*)

One other research project from the 2015/16 season will be presented in the next cycle in order to allow more time to collect the necessary data. 🌀

ON THE JURY

The UEFA Research Grant Programme's jury comprises five representatives of Europe's football family and five academics known internationally for their work on the subject of European football and sport in general:

Representatives of Europe's football family

- Dr Michel D'Hooghe, chairman of the jury (chairman of the UEFA Medical Committee)
- Nodar Akhalkatsi (former president of Georgian Football Federation; UEFA ethics and disciplinary inspector)
- Per Ravn Omdal (former member of the UEFA Executive Committee; UEFA honorary member)
- Giangiorgio Spiess (former member of the UEFA Executive Committee; UEFA honorary member)
- Ivančica Sudac (head of international affairs and licensing, Croatian Football Federation)

Academics of international renown

- Prof. Paul Downward (Loughborough University, England)
- Prof. Jürgen Mittag (German Sport University, Cologne, Germany)
- Prof. Gérald Simon (University of Burgundy, Dijon, France)
- Prof. Susan Bridgewater (University of Liverpool, England)
- Prof. Jan Ekstrand (first vice-chairman of UEFA Medical Committee; Linköping University, Sweden)



The recipients of UEFA research grants for 2015/16 standing behind the members of the jury.

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH IN LILLE AND LENS

From 29 May to 5 June, as France waited to welcome supporters and teams from all over Europe ahead of EURO 2016, all eyes were on Lille and Lens, where the Euro Foot Jeunes schools' tournament was taking place.

Organised jointly by the UEFA Foundation for Children and France's National Union of School Sport (UNSS), this youth football event showcased the dynamism of the northern French region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Picardie, which was very keen to impress its guests.

The 600 or so schoolchildren, who were accompanied by 120 teachers, made this vibrant sporting event a real festival of youth football. In addition to the young players from the various countries, there were also young match officials overseeing games with great character and resolve, young reporters constantly on the lookout for a great video clip or a revealing interview opportunity and young tournament officials escorting and directing the various competing teams. All of those young UNSS members played a crucial role in the tournament's success.

Out on the pitch, the standard of organisation was matched by the quality of the football. While the main boys' competition was reserved for European teams, a subsidiary competition – the Golden League – gave boys' teams from Brazil and India an opportunity to take part in this major sporting event. The Brazilians did not just come to see the sights, either, taking the event by the scruff of the neck. Indeed, they won both the girls' competition (beating Germany 2-0 in the final) and the Golden League boys' competition (beating France's second team 3-0 in the final). Turkey won the main boys' competition, overcoming Bulgaria 3-0 in the final, while France – represented by the Lycée de la Venise Verte from Niort – performed admirably in finishing third, losing 4-1 on penalties to Bulgaria at the semi-final stage (following a 1-1 draw). In the girls' competition, France – represented by the Lycée

Brazil – guest non-European participants along with India – won the Golden League tournament.



Algoud from Valence – had cause to rue their misfortune, being drawn in a tough group alongside Germany and Brazil. Their fifth place overall was a fitting reward for their valiant efforts.

Euro Foot Jeunes was far more than just a sports tournament, though, featuring a number of other major initiatives, such as sports conferences, a photo exhibition organised by the UEFA Foundation for Children and a charity dinner in support of Orphelins de Makala (Orphans of Makala). Above all, it was also a valuable opportunity to chat with other teams and officials and forge bonds of friendship. The event's ambassadors did a remarkable job in all respects in terms of facilitating communication

– not that the young participants needed any encouragement when it came to getting to know one another. French international Laura Georges, for example, spent plenty of time with the girls' teams, telling them about her career and supporting them in their quest to fulfil their footballing dreams. The same was true of Djibril Cissé (right), who will have seen from the young players' delight in talking to him that his popularity remains undimmed. His support for the young French players was one of the highlights of the event. Meanwhile, local boy Rio Mavuba found that the young participants, who were delighted to be meeting the captain of LOSC Lille Métropole in the flesh, hung on his every considered and balanced word. ⚽



EURO FOOT JEUNES IN NUMBERS

 **600** players
(boys and girls)

 **32**
teams

 **110** young
match officials

 **45** boys'
matches

 **25** girls'
matches

 **20** different
nationalities

 **150** young
organisers from local
secondary schools

 **60** young
reporters

 **8,000**
individual nights'
accommodation

 **20,000**
meals



UNSS



**PORTUGAL
MAKE IT A FIRST**



Beginning with a new format and finishing with a new name on the trophy, EURO 2016 was something of a tournament of firsts. From an expanded starting line-up of 24 teams, Portugal emerged as the champions of Europe, winning their first-ever major international title at the climax of a close-fought competition from which Cristiano Ronaldo and his teammates came out riding high.

UEFA via Getty Images

With no one altogether sure what the new format would bring, the tournament turned out to be full of suspense until the very end.

Eder's winning goal for Portugal in the final against France was the crowning moment of a tournament that radically altered the European football map. Spain, winners of the two previous editions, were shaken by Croatia in the group stage and then dismissed unceremoniously by Italy in the round of 16. Meanwhile, the countries participating in their first EURO, who had been heralded as the main beneficiaries of the new 24-team format, truly made their presence felt in the enlarged tournament. Of the five debutants, only Albania failed to survive the group stage, narrowly missing out on one of the four spots in the round of 16 reserved for the best third-placed finishers. While Northern Ireland and Slovakia fell in the round of 16, a tremendous collective spirit carried Iceland and Wales onwards and upwards, to the quarter-finals and semi-finals respectively. They were not alone in demonstrating loudly and clearly that more teams did not mean greater discrepancies in strength. Only six of the 51 matches were won by more than a two-goal margin, proving that tactical acumen and defensive solidity are common across the European football spectrum. Portugal's triumph perfectly symbolises this EURO, in which a sound defence and a pragmatic approach were more crucial than ever.

Portugal's collective strength sees them through

Having reached at least the quarter-final stage at every EURO since 1996, Portugal saw their consistency rewarded at the end of a competition in which they had started in unconvincing fashion. With three draws in the group stage, they only just managed to snatch third place thanks to a Ronaldo brace against Hungary that brought his team back from the precipice. That and his goal against Wales in the semi-finals ensured that the Portuguese star left his mark on the tournament. Portugal did not even need their talisman to lead them to their ultimate victory. Their watertight defence was the key to their success, conceding one solitary goal in four knockout matches.

Named best goalkeeper of the tournament, Rui Patrício produced a match-winning performance in the final, pulling off seven saves in total. In the entire competition, Portugal led their opponents for a mere 73 minutes in all, proving that nothing came easy for this team, for whom Pepe was highly influential →

from start to finish. Fernando Santos was able to involve everyone in this shared adventure (all 20 outfield players were used), which was characterised by the emergence of Renato Sanches and Raphaël Guerreiro as well as the pragmatism of the experienced Nani and Quaresma.

Having miraculously survived the group stage, required penalties to beat Poland in the quarter-finals and needed extra time to defeat Croatia and France, Portugal hardly swept aside their opponents. But in a tournament in which defences were often on top, team effort tended to outshine individual talent. The Portuguese banished their painful memories and unfulfilled dreams by overcoming their French *bête noire* (ten consecutive defeats against Les Bleus before the final) in order to lift their first major international trophy.

France so near and yet so far

After their European Championship and World Cup victories in 1984 and 1998, France came within a whisker of winning a third consecutive tournament on home soil, but fell at the final hurdle against a country they normally beat, Portugal, after eliminating their own bogey team, Germany, in the last four. Player of the Tournament Antoine Griezmann, who scored twice against the Germans, embodied the attacking power of the French team, the most prolific of the tournament (13 goals).

After making heavy weather of the group stage, Didier Deschamps' men rose to the challenges offered by their section of the draw, which was not necessarily the hardest to navigate. After an early setback, they overcame a compact Republic of Ireland team before

breaking Icelandic hearts with a dazzling display and defeating their German nemesis with a mixture of determination and pragmatism: this team seemed capable of adapting to any situation. Rui Patrício's saves and André-Pierre Gignac's shot against the post denied France the victory they craved, leaving Eder to finally break the Portuguese curse. In a final largely dominated by the French, Gignac's shot was the seventh by a Frenchman to hit an upright since the start of the EURO. It turned out to be one too many.

Wales and Iceland, the new pretenders

Gareth Bale succeeded where Ryan Giggs had failed. Hero of the Welsh qualifying campaign (scoring seven of his team's 11 goals), the Real Madrid star shone brightly at his country's first-ever EURO. Producing match-winning performances in the first round and finishing as the tournament's best dribbler, he posed the main attacking threat for a solid Welsh team made up of players who normally ply their trade in the English Premier League or Championship. Playing in a 3-5-2 formation that was hard to break down, and which baffled the Belgians in particular in the quarter-finals, the Welsh could rely on the precision of Joe Allen, the inspiration of Aaron Ramsey (four assists, the best of the tournament) and the non-stop running of Hal Robson-Kanu, a striker who began the EURO without a club, but who was far from idle in France.

While Wales shone, another newcomer created an even greater stir. In their first EURO, Iceland reached the quarter-finals by eliminating England in the round of 16. The poorest team

Since 1960, only three finals have not featured Germany, Italy or Spain.

Hal Robson-Kanu scores to make it 2-1 for Wales against Belgium, opening the door to the semi-finals.



Getty Images



Getty Images

Spain captain Sergio Ramos in his team's group match against Turkey

in the tournament in terms of ball possession (37% on average), Iceland had nevertheless held the future winners, Portugal, and Hungary before sending the Austrians home at the end of the group stage. Demonstrating their constant attacking threat, Iceland scored in all five of their matches, including against France in the quarter-finals, when a nightmare first-half display put an end to their hopes of further progress (4-0 down at half-time, 5-2 at the final whistle).

Usual suspects miss out

Between them, Germany, Italy and Spain had contested all the EURO finals since 2008, and only three of the previous 14 finals had failed to feature at least one of these teams since 1960. With all three in the same section of the draw, which inevitably became the toughest to negotiate, they fell like dominoes.

Despite impressing in the group stage, Spain were eliminated first, when problems previously encountered at the 2014 World Cup resurfaced. Still masters of ball possession (61% on average, bettered only by Germany with 63%), the Spaniards failed to crack the Italians' tactical approach in the round of 16. They were not alone, since Italy finished with the competition's best defensive record, shipping only two goals in five matches. Thanks to the virtually

telepathic understanding of their Turin-based rearguard and Antonio Conte's tactical nous, Italy were able to make up for their alleged lack of attacking talent and dominate both Belgium and Spain, two of the pre-tournament favourites. Germany, usually their whipping boys in final tournaments, knocked them out in thrilling fashion in one of the most dramatic matches of the competition.

Having steered their way past Italy, the Germans began to eye a double that would have seen them establish a dynasty following their World Cup triumph in Brazil. Despite Thomas Müller's absence from the scoring charts, Joachim Löw's men showed outstanding self-assurance, chasing glory while their opponents chased the ball. However, in a semi-final that rewrote the history books, France proved the statistics wrong, just as the Germans had against Italy, with the 'Mannschaft' bowing out as unlucky losers on this occasion.

Poland's renaissance, Albania's emergence

Looking beyond Europe's major footballing nations and the big surprises of the tournament, Poland reached the quarter-finals, where they were only knocked out on penalties by a Portuguese side on the path to glory. Well organised with Robert Lewandowski as their →

lynchpin, the Poles made it through the first round of an international competition for the first time since 1982. By conceding just two goals, Poland shared the title of the EURO's best defence with Italy and Switzerland. Although beaten on penalties by Poland in the round of 16, the Swiss confirmed that they have the credentials to perform at the top level following their narrow defeat to Argentina in 2014.

Like Switzerland, the Republic of Ireland harboured hopes of reaching the last eight deep into their round of 16 match before the talented French came from behind to secure victory. The Irish campaign will be remembered as much for their players' fighting spirit on the pitch as for the incredible atmosphere generated by their supporters in the stands. The same can be said of Northern Ireland, whose win over Ukraine ensured that their first-ever EURO could be counted a success. Despite finding it difficult to threaten their opponents' goal (5.75 shots per match was the lowest average of all the participating teams), the Northern Irish reflected the evenness of the tournament as a whole, never conceding more than a single goal, even against the German machine.

Slovakia were less robust against Germany in the round of 16, losing 3-0. Hungary also fell to one of the favourites – Belgium – in the round of 16, after leading and almost knocking out Portugal in the group stage. Of the eight teams that failed to qualify for the round of 16, Albania were perhaps the only ones to leave the competition with more positives than negatives. The Albanians, who were never out of their depth, beat Romania in the third match of their first-ever major tournament and only just missed out on finishing as one of the four best third-placed teams.

Disappointment for Belgium and England, nightmare for Ukraine

Despite reaching the quarter-finals, Belgium were one of the tournament's major disappointments, which says much for the recent progress of Belgian football and the expectations now placed on their national team.

Outclassed by Italy, then imperious against the Republic of Ireland, Sweden and Hungary, the Belgians were knocked out by a less talented but better organised Welsh outfit. With time on their side, Belgium's youngsters are bound to have other opportunities in the future, as are those of England, the EURO's other major disappointment. After an unconvincing but exciting first round, the English exited the tournament with their tails



Getty Images

between their legs after defeat by Iceland, leaving a nation wondering how good its team really were.

Of the other teams that went home disappointed, Croatia certainly produced the most paradoxical of performances. Led by Luka Modrić and Ivan Rakitić, the Croatians were superb in the first round, beating Spain to top the group table. But they were then dealt a late knockout blow by Portugal, who put a cruel end to their hopes of glory.

Other teams were eliminated before they could even dream of matching Croatia's ambitions. In the wake of defeats to Croatia and Spain, Turkey finally came to life against the Czech Republic, but were too late to qualify as one of the best third-placed sides. None of the six teams that finished bottom of their group managed to win a match, even though the new format meant that virtually everyone went into their final match with a chance of reaching the round of 16.

Of the 24 participants, Ukraine were the only team to finish goalless and pointless. All the other fourth-placed sides – Romania, Russia, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Austria – managed to hold their own against one of the tournament favourites, proving that, even with 24 teams, the EURO is as closely fought as ever, a competition whose 2016 winners mirror its own image: serious, pragmatic and down to earth. ⚽

EURO debutants Albania (above) almost made it into the round of 16. The biggest surprise of the tournament was Iceland (above right) reaching the quarter-finals, at the expense of England.



Getty Images

THE AWARDS

**Player of the Tournament
(and Golden Boot winner):
Antoine Griezmann
(France)**

With six goals to his name, Antoine Griezmann recorded the second-highest tally at a EURO, behind the nine netted by Michel Platini in 1984. Like Platini, he was playing in front of the French home crowd, but in contrast to the former Juventus player, he failed to shine in the final and lead France to the title.

Nevertheless, the Club Atlético de Madrid player's feat of scoring in all three earlier knockout matches will live long in the memory, as will his level-headed approach and the technical finesse that carried the French team through a number of tricky situations. At the age of 25 and after two full seasons with Atlético, he made his mark on the international stage and established himself as one of Europe's most sought-after players.

**Young Player
of the Tournament:
Renato Sanches
(Portugal)**

It is easy to forget that Renato Sanches began Portugal's first four matches on the bench. However, in three substitute appearances, he convinced Fernando Santos to start him against Poland in the quarter-finals. After scoring his first senior international goal against the Poles, he kept his place and became the youngest-ever EURO finalist against France, aged 18 years and 238 days. The all-action style and physical prowess of FC Bayern München's recent signing were crucial to Portugal's triumph.



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RESULTS

GROUP A



10/06 - Saint-Denis	France - Romania	2-1
11/06 - Lens Agglo	Albania - Switzerland	0-1
15/06 - Paris	Romania - Switzerland	1-1
15/06 - Marseille	France - Albania	2-0
19/06 - Lille Métropole	Switzerland - France	0-0
19/06 - Lyon	Romania - Albania	0-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 France	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
2 Switzerland	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
3 Albania	3	1	0	2	1	3	3
4 Romania	3	0	1	2	2	4	1

GROUP B



11/06 - Bordeaux	Wales - Slovakia	2-1
11/06 - Marseille	England - Russia	1-1
15/06 - Lille Métropole	Russia - Slovakia	1-2
16/06 - Lens Agglo	England - Wales	2-1
20/06 - Saint-Étienne	Slovakia - England	0-0
20/06 - Toulouse	Russia - Wales	0-3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Wales	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
2 England	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
3 Slovakia	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
4 Russia	3	0	1	2	2	6	1

GROUP C



12/06 - Nice	Poland - Northern Ireland	1-0
12/06 - Lille Métropole	Germany - Ukraine	2-0
16/06 - Lyon	Ukraine - Northern Ireland	0-2
16/06 - Saint-Denis	Germany - Poland	0-0
21/06 - Paris	Northern Ireland - Germany	0-1
21/06 - Marseille	Ukraine - Poland	0-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Germany	3	2	1	0	3	0	7
2 Poland	3	2	1	0	2	0	7
3 N. Ireland	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
4 Ukraine	3	0	0	3	0	5	0

ROUND OF 16

25/06 - Saint-Étienne	Switzerland - Poland	1-1
(Poland qualify 5-4 on penalties)		
25/06 - Paris	Wales - Northern Ireland	1-0
25/06 - Lens Agglo	Croatia - Portugal	0-1
(after extra time)		
26/06 - Lyon	France - Republic of Ireland	2-1

26/06 - Lille Métropole	Germany - Slovakia	3-0
26/06 - Toulouse	Hungary - Belgium	0-4
27/06 - Saint-Denis	Italy - Spain	2-0
27/06 - Nice	England - Iceland	1-2

QUARTER-FINALS

30/06 - Marseille	Poland - Portugal	1-1
(Portugal qualify 5-3 on penalties)		
01/07 - Lille Métropole	Wales - Belgium	3-1
02/07 - Bordeaux	Germany - Italy	1-1
(Germany qualify 6-5 on penalties)		
03/07 - Saint-Denis	France - Iceland	5-2

GROUP D



12/06 - Paris	Turkey - Croatia	0-1
13/06 - Toulouse	Spain - Czech Republic	1-0
17/06 - Saint-Étienne	Czech Republic - Croatia	2-2
17/06 - Nice	Spain - Turkey	3-0
21/06 - Bordeaux	Croatia - Spain	2-1
21/06 - Lens Agglo	Czech Republic - Turkey	0-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Croatia	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
2 Spain	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
3 Turkey	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
4 Czech Republic	3	0	1	2	2	5	1

GROUP E



13/06 - Saint-Denis	Republic of Ireland - Sweden	1-1
13/06 - Lyon	Belgium - Italy	0-2
17/06 - Toulouse	Italy - Sweden	1-0
18/06 - Bordeaux	Belgium - Republic of Ireland	3-0
22/06 - Nice	Sweden - Belgium	0-1
22/06 - Lille Métropole	Italy - Republic of Ireland	0-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Italy	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
2 Belgium	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
3 Rep. of Ireland	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
4 Sweden	3	0	1	2	1	3	1

GROUP F



14/06 - Bordeaux	Austria - Hungary	0-2
14/06 - Saint-Étienne	Portugal - Iceland	1-1
18/06 - Marseille	Iceland - Hungary	1-1
18/06 - Paris	Portugal - Austria	0-0
22/06 - Saint-Denis	Iceland - Austria	2-1
22/06 - Lyon	Hungary - Portugal	3-3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Hungary	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
2 Iceland	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
3 Portugal	3	0	3	0	4	4	3
4 Austria	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

SEMI-FINALS

06/07 - Lyon
Portugal - Wales **2-0**

Referee: Eriksson (SWE)
 Attendance: 55,679

07/07 - Marseille
 Germany - **France** **0-2**

Referee: Rizzoli (ITA)
 Attendance: 64,078

FINAL

10/07 - Saint-Denis
Portugal - France **1-0**
 (after extra time)

Referee: Clattenburg (ENG)
 Attendance: 75,868



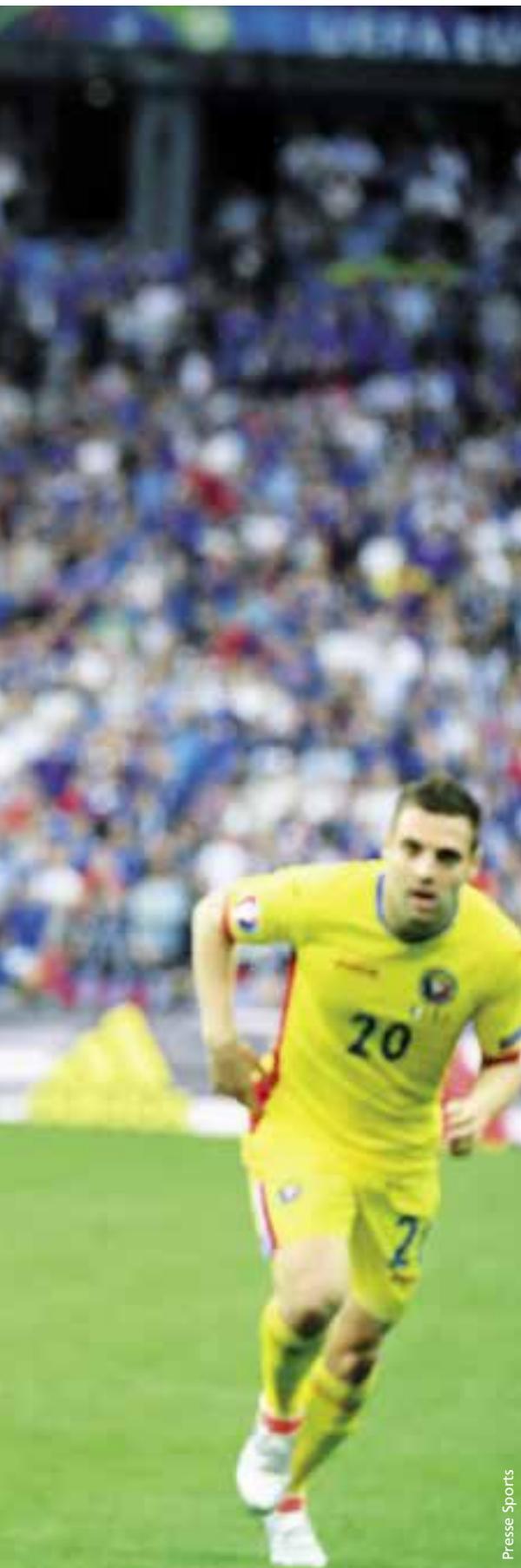


A WHIRLWIND OF EMOTIONS

EURO 2016 in pictures







Presse Sports



Getty Images



EURO 2016 SAS



Getty Images

1. France's Dimitri Payet in the opening match against Romania.
2. Fabian Schär heads Switzerland's first goal against Albania.
3. Super Victor. 4. A young Spanish supporter.



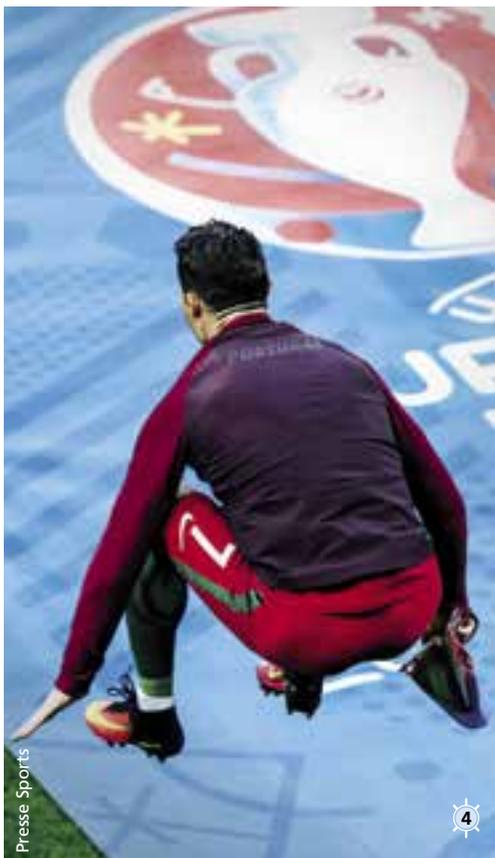
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4



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5



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6



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7

1. Hungary's Ádám Szalai runs down the left wing. 2. Marcel Sabitzer (Austria) in action against Iceland. 3. A Sweden fan. 4. Cristiano Ronaldo enters the EURO 2016 stage. 5. Ireland's Wes Hoolahan (right) celebrates with Robbie Brady after scoring against Sweden. 6. Jerome Boateng (left, Germany) and Viktor Kovalenko (Ukraine). 7. Slovakia's Marek Hamšík.





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5

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6

Getty Images

1. England's Daniel Sturridge wheels away in celebration after scoring the winner against Wales. 2. Northern Ireland and Ukraine play through the rain in Lyon. 3. David Pavelka (left, Czech Republic) and Emre Mor (Turkey). 4. Action from Russia v Slovakia. 5. Yohan Cabaye (France) against Switzerland. 6. Hungary players and fans.









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1. Gianluigi Buffon (Italy). **2.** Croatia's Ivan Perišić. **3.** Xherdan Shaqiri (Switzerland) executes a brilliant bicycle kick against Poland. **4.** Belgium celebrate Eden Hazard's goal against Hungary. **5.** Hugo Lloris (France).



UEFA EURO 2016 PARIS

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UEFA EURO 2016 PARIS

Getty Images

UEFA EURO 2016 PARIS



1. The fan zone in Paris. 2. Ashley Williams runs towards the Welsh players and coaching staff after equalising against Belgium. 3. Sam Vokes beats Thibaut Courtois with an inch-perfect header to book Wales's semi-final place.





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1. Antoine Griezmann (France) exquisitely chips the ball over Iceland goalkeeper Hannes Halldórsson. **2.** Krzysztof Maczynski (left, Poland) and Renato Sanches (Portugal). **3.** Alessandro Florenzi (Italy, left) and Jonas Hector (Germany). **4.** Manuel Neuer (Germany) dives to his right during the penalty shoot-out against Italy.





Presse Sports



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1. Ronaldo jumps highest to head Portugal's first goal against Wales. **2.** Ricardo Quaresma (left, Portugal) and Gareth Bale (Wales). **3.** France celebrate after beating Germany. **4.** A view of the Stade Vélodrome in Marseille. **5.** Griezmann doubles France's lead in the semi-final.





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4

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1. Portugal celebrate their first major football tournament win. 2. The presidential box.
3. Portugal coach Fernando Santos is held aloft by his players after the final whistle.
4. Eder hits the winning goal.





EURO 2016 GOALS: HOW, WHERE, WHEN



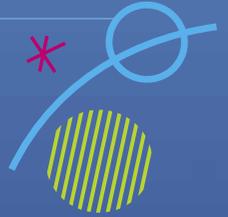
**Result for
the team
that scored
the first goal**



32
10
5



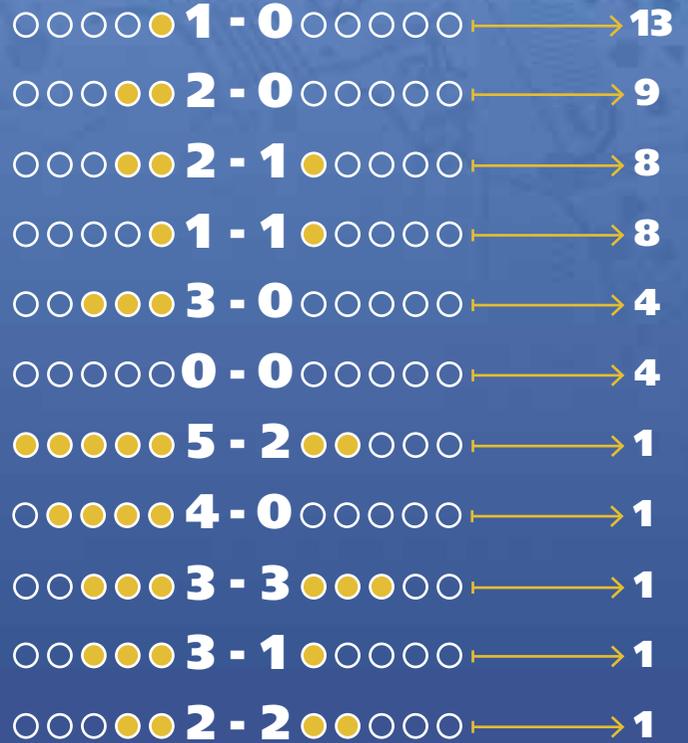
wins
draws
defeats



How the goals were scored



Scorelines



Types of goal scored



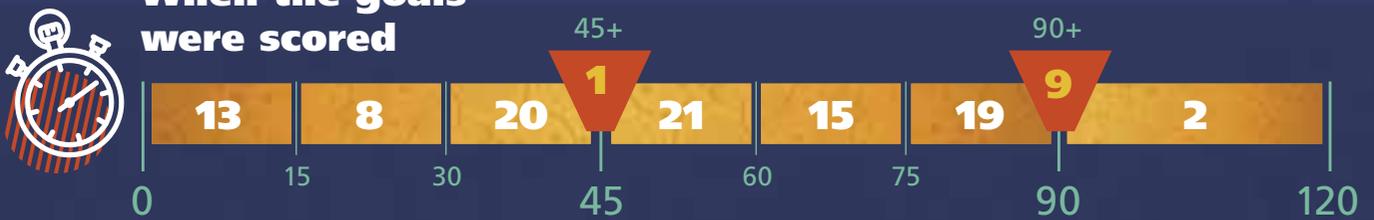
Open play **96**



Penalty **8**

Direct free-kick **4**

When the goals were scored



As demonstrated by FC Porto in the Netherlands last year, pre-season tours are used by many big clubs to regroup and reconnect.



Presse Sports

PRE-SEASON – WHEN FOUNDATIONS ARE LAID

So you've coached, guided and nurtured your team through the season, with its vast catalogue of highs and lows. Perhaps you've won a title, captured domestic or international trophies, or clinched a hard-earned promotion to a higher division. Maybe you've masterminded recovery and survival from a seemingly hopeless position, and avoided relegation against all the odds. You've coped with myriad internal and external pressures, and come through the other side. Well-earned rest and recreation beckons – but the next campaign is already looming on the horizon ... and preparations for the new season lie in wait around the corner.



The 'pre-season' period of several weeks is crucial for coaches and their squads in the search for success. The coaches strive to create a team spirit and cohesion that will prove its worth through the months to come. They plan, organise, improve and define objectives, and ensure that the players are in tune with the coach's overall vision for the campaign. Coaches can, among other things, try out tactical variations, or blood youngsters to help them gather vital experience for the future. It might also be a 'getting to know you' period for a coach as he – or she – sets out on a job with a new club. As for the players, they are coming back after their own much-needed break. Working together with the coach and his staff, players sweat and graft to reach maximum fitness and attain ideal match sharpness levels – to be ready and present for the battles ahead.

Taking a break

Before then, at the previous season's conclusion, coaches need a 'timeout', a welcome holiday, to replenish energy levels. Each of them has their preferred ways of refuelling the engine – be it relaxation on a beach, cherished family time or walks in countryside calm. However, with fresh challenges just a short distance away, how easy is it for the coach to recuperate between seasons? Thomas Schaaf, a veteran of countless Bundesliga campaigns with Werder Bremen and Eintracht Frankfurt, highlights a particular dilemma: "As a coach, I'm thinking that the season is at an end, but I'm asking myself how my squad is set up – the squad isn't complete yet, and there's work to do during the break."

"As a coach, I'm thinking that the season is at an end, but I'm asking myself how my squad is set up – the squad isn't complete yet, and there's work to do during the break."

Thomas Schaaf
German football coach

I have to look at which results I can achieve in the preparation, and when."

Constant success for a coach also has an impact that needs addressing in terms of taking a rest. "The ends of the season were always exhausting, because we were always involved in something," says Sir Alex Ferguson, who, as a winner of honours galore with Manchester United FC and Aberdeen FC, is in a perfect position to make an assessment. "It always went to the last game or so, or you were in a final. I only used to take two weeks' holiday when I was a young manager. It was not until about 18 years ago that I started taking three or four weeks' holiday. That is a matter of needing it."

"You do think about the next season, even well before the break," reflects Mixu Paatelainen, who has coached extensively in Scotland, as well as managing the national team in his native Finland. "It is important to be able to switch off, and to do activities such as fishing or golf, where you can engage your mind totally, instead of dwelling on your work. But it is very difficult, because there are so many things to think about."

Team-bonding

Player transfers are a dominant part of every summer, with each club welcoming newcomers, sometimes in considerable numbers. Alongside the key involvement in deciding which players come in, the coach's task is to help the recruits bed in to their new surroundings. "You want to make the new players as comfortable as possible," says Paatelainen, "introduce everybody and do everything within your powers to help them settle into a new environment, a new country, a new culture."



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Juventus in Melbourne as part of their pre-season training.

“In the last 15 years, we went abroad all the time, for commercial reasons, going to the Far East or the United States.”

Sir Alex Ferguson
Former Manchester United manager



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Obviously, you have private discussions with the player regarding tactics and weekly routines – you make sure the player feels at home.”

The pre-season period is an essential moment for careful team-building on and off the field, with new players looking to fit in seamlessly and quickly with their new team-mates, and make a good overall impression on coaches and colleagues. Team training camps are seen as an excellent way of bonding a squad together and getting away from daily routines. “When you’re training at your own training ground,” says Paatelainen, “the players go home – but at a training camp, you meet together, you have activities in the evening, social things with the players. That’s where the players get to know each other really well – there’s possibly one or two jokes going about, and maybe new nicknames that might stick! It’s very important – that really gels the team together, because you are 24 hours together.”

“Team-bonding has an important role,” adds Sir Alex. “In the last 15 years, we went abroad all the time, for commercial reasons, going to the Far East or the United States. The new players would have a dinner, and they would have to sing a song, make a statement or make a bit of poetry. It was just a way of light initiation. The players are pretty good at that ... they enjoy that part.”

Most clubs carefully plan their pre-season match programme, with games against lower-level opposition followed by more testing outings that might include a tournament featuring top-notch international outfits. “Today, there may be six, seven or eight close-season transfers, or perhaps even more,” says Schaaf. “This means that a team has to become attuned to each other as quickly as possible. Of course, everyone wants to prove themselves against strong teams. But you need to be →

able to analyse, adapt and apply certain things, so you need the gradual increase in intensity to then be able to produce optimum performance against strong opponents." Schaaf stresses that the diligent pre-season fine-tuning and experimenting process should ideally mean that actual results at this stage ought not to be viewed by the public or media as being of fundamental importance.

Observing the changes

David Moyes, a coach at the highest levels with Everton, Manchester United, Real Sociedad de Fútbol and now Sunderland, says he has seen various changes in pre-season preparations from when he was a player up to the start of the new millennium. "When you came back for pre-season preparation," he explains, "you were never in great shape. The breaks were bigger for the players, and you did have to work very hard in pre-season to keep yourself in shape. Training was much harder, less with the ball at that time, much more running-

orientated, and I think that, over the years, that has changed. I would say that even in my own work as a coach, most of the work would be done now with the ball."

"What I have just seen a little bit of recently is going back to where it was before," Moyes adds, however. "I think, without doubt, that people want their players to be fit. Coaches want to do most things with the ball, but you want your players to feel fit as well. So there is a balance in getting that right."

It's July/August for a club playing an autumn-winter-spring season. The grass is green, the sun is shining, the coach is proudly watching over his charges. A time for natural optimism, because, as Sir Alex rightly points out: "You can't lose a game then." Every coach is united by the firm hope that the hard yards of planning, training and dedication put in by everyone under those summer skies will lead to the feeling of losing becoming an absolute rarity, once the serious business of getting results kicks off in earnest ... ⚽

GETTING INTO GEAR

Even if they may find the work gruelling, players recognise the importance and benefit of pre-season training, for themselves and the team as a whole. It's the time to gradually run through the gears and attain fitness and sharpness to embark on the serious rigours of the months ahead. Gareth Southgate, manager of the England Under-21 team, played over 500 club games at England's highest levels, and made 57 appearances for England's national team, including EURO and World Cup final rounds. He looks at his pre-season experiences:

"I think there were two phases for me – one when I was a young player, where you were looking at gaining strength for the season, and making sure that you were in good condition when you went back to training to impress the manager. So you wanted to be in a good place before the start of pre-season.

"Then, once I was a little bit older, I was always coming back from having played international matches, so you had a smaller period, maybe normally three weeks – so then it was just a question of



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getting match sharpness. Your basic fitness was there, so it was very different to having a six-week pre-season, where you are starting from almost nothing, to coming in later with some sort of match play within a couple of days.

"I think, generally, it's very hard to go into the first competitive game completely fit and where you want to be. But you're also conscious that this just takes time. The matches in pre-season are never quite the same as the matches at the beginning of the season. I think everybody suffers a little bit in the first few weeks.

"I was always happy and ready to go. As long as there was long enough to switch off from the last season to think about your objectives and your goals for the next season, three weeks was always enough for me."

"The matches in pre-season are never quite the same as the matches at the beginning of the season. I think everybody suffers a little bit in the first few weeks."

Gareth Southgate
England Under-21 manager

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“Coaches want to do most things with the ball, but you want your players to feel fit as well. So there is a balance in getting that right.”

David Moyes
Sunderland manager

"One aspect seldom taken into consideration in my opinion is the workload that the player has already been subject to over the season. The player might not realise this at a tournament – he keeps going and takes the next step, because he has a goal ahead of him."

Thomas Schaaf
German football coach



BACK FROM THE EURO

This summer, countless European players have been returning to their clubs after performing on the high-profile, high-stakes stage at EURO 2016 in France. Their moods will most likely differ quite distinctly, depending on factors such as the performance of their team in the tournament, or their own personal performances.

The pre-season period takes on a different meaning for such players who, before they resume training, are in need of rest and recovery after a tournament that follows a long and demanding previous season. They might be feeling the acute disappointment of defeat as far along the line as a semi-final or final, or may have suffered an injury during the competition.

Every club coach has a specific way of handling players who rejoin the fold after a final round with their national team. They may wish to play an important psychological role, or might also feel that it is best to leave players to themselves to reflect and recover.

Here, German coach Thomas Schaaf, whose ports of call include Bundesliga outfits Werder Bremen and Eintracht Frankfurt, gives us an insight into how he deals with his charges after a major summer tournament.

"I think that, first of all, it is important to accompany the player through the tournament, and to have contact and know how he is, to already have a prior idea. How does he feel? What's on his mind? What's important for him?"

"One aspect seldom taken into consideration in my opinion is the workload that the player has already been subject to over the season. The

player might not realise this at a tournament – he keeps going and takes the next step, because he has a goal ahead of him. Then, when a disappointment happens, he thinks: 'Now I'm tired, now I've played so many matches. I had such a big programme – and now I must have a break.'

"The player might suffer a total 'drop-down', so it's important, on the one hand, that he is then given support, and is told: 'Yes, you are now entitled to recover.' The critical question then is – how long? When must you come back? What programme must you undertake? How much can you achieve in active recovery? There are many points that you have to take into account."

What about the other side of the coin – when a player comes back from a tournament as a winner or in a positive state of mind? "Then, the player is in another phase," says Schaaf. "He has had a successful experience. He is happy, and feels well. However, he may then say: 'I have achieved something, now I have the right to recover and relax.' And then, you have to be able to steer that properly as well ..."

In addition to talking with the player and working out the best mutual solution in terms of a specific pre-season training plan, the coach can look to maximise the positive effects of a player's successful tournament from a psychological point of view. "For example," Schaaf explains, "you can tell him: 'OK, now you're on the next step – so now, I am giving you a position of more responsibility within the team.' The player may then feel: 'If I have responsibility, I'm not giving it away so quickly.'" 🌐



After the physical and emotional demands of EURO 2016, on the back of an already long season, players such as Gareth Bale and Marouane Fellaini have little time to reflect and recover as they rejoin their clubs.

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Presse Sports

This year, Paris Saint-Germain spent part of the summer training in Los Angeles.



KOSOVO JOINS THE UEFA FAMILY

In May, Kosovo became UEFA's 55th and newest member at the 40th Ordinary UEFA Congress in Budapest.

Football first came to Kosovo around a century ago, with the first organised games taking place after the First World War and involving demobilised soldiers and young men who had studied abroad. Kosovo's first football clubs were established in the 1920s, and they competed in various local tournaments and leagues right the way through to the 1940s, with the Football Federation of Kosovo (FFK) being established in 1946 and becoming an equal member of the Yugoslav Football Association in 1948. In 1991, though, Kosovo's clubs and players broke away from Yugoslavia's football structures and organised their own parallel competitions. The period between 1991 and 1999 was a time of struggle and improvisation, but the end of the 1998–99 Kosovo conflict sparked hope and an enthusiastic sense of freedom, and that manifested itself in Kosovo's football stadiums.

A modern structure

The FFK, which has undergone many organisational changes over the years, now has a modern structure, with a 59-member assembly as its legislative organ. That assembly, which consists of representatives of Kosovan Super League clubs (two delegates per club), as well as the FFK's president and representatives of other national leagues, coaching and refereeing associations, futsal and regional leagues, elects the FFK's executive committee. The executive committee has 13 members, including its president and three vice-presidents (one of whom must

come from one of Kosovo's ethnic minorities). They all serve four-year terms and can be re-elected just once. The FFK is headed by a general secretary, who is appointed by the executive committee and assisted by specialist committees focusing on competitions, financial affairs, public and foreign relations, national teams, education, registration and licensing, archiving and protocol matters. The FFK's administration and executive committee are both monitored by a separate oversight body elected by the assembly.

The FFK president and general secretary

The FFK is led by two of Kosovo's greatest ever players. Its president, Fadil Vokrri, who has been in office since February 2008, is without doubt the best player that Kosovo has ever produced. He was the leader of the 'golden generation' that took KF Prishtina into the Yugoslavian First League in 1983. After six brilliant seasons with Prishtina, he moved to Belgrade to play for one of the biggest clubs in Yugoslavia, FK Partizan, where he is regarded as one of the finest players of all time. Vokrri also went on to play for Fenerbahçe SK, where he has been voted one of the top 50 foreign players in the club's history. He even played for a couple of French sides.

The FFK's general secretary, Eroll Salihu, played in somewhat different circumstances, but he had the same passion and desire, and he led FC Prishtina into the Yugoslavian First League for the second time in the club's history.



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President: Fadil Vokrri

General secretary:
Eroll Salihu

Left: On 28 May, Prishtina won the Kosovan Cup for the fifth time, beating Drita 2-1 in the final. Right: The federation's general secretary, Eroll Salihu, and president, Fadil Vokrri, at the UEFA Congress in Budapest.



However, Salihu was playing in a different era, and although he was a key member of a great team, the political situation at that time was such that it was impossible to focus solely on football. After leaving Prishtina, Salihu had a very successful career in the Turkish Super League with Konyaspor, and he also played in Germany. He has been general secretary of the FFK since August 2007.

Future challenges

One of the main challenges that Kosovo faces in terms of the development of football is the issue of infrastructure, which is conditioned by the nation's history. There are a total of 44 football pitches in Kosovo – 36 with natural grass, 2 with artificial turf and 6 with a sand base. There are two stadiums that will be able to host international matches in the near future: Stadiumi Olimpik Adem Jashari in Mitrovica, with a capacity of 18,200, and Stadiumi Prishtines, with a capacity of 17,200. Other notable stadiums include Stadiumi Riza Lushta in Mitrovica (capacity of 5,000), Stadiumi Shahin Haxhiislami in Pec (capacity of 3,500) and Stadiumi Gjilani (capacity of 3,500). There are 14 other stadiums with capacities of between 1,000 and 3,000. It should also be noted that the Kosovan government has committed itself to building a new modern national stadium with a capacity of between 25,000 and 30,000.

Stadiumi Prishtines is the second-largest stadium in Kosovo, with a seating capacity of 17,200.

Kosovo has three national men's divisions, as well as a women's league and a futsal league.

The top men's division is the Kosovan Super League, which comprises 12 teams and boasts a total of 328 professional players. The reigning champions are KF Ferrokeli who have won the league for the last two seasons. The second tier of Kosovan football (the First League) has 16 teams, while the third tier (the Second League) is divided into two groups of 12. There are a total of 1,289 semi-professional and amateur players in the First and Second Leagues. Prishtina won last season's Kosovan Cup, which is contested by all 52 teams in the top three tiers. Kosovo's women's league boasts 7 clubs and 87 players, while its futsal Super League has 8 clubs. From the 2016/17 season the country will also have a futsal First League. There are currently 700 amateur futsal players in Kosovo. One key factor in the future of Kosovan football is, of course, the development of young players, and the future is bright in this regard, with 5,094 young footballers (and 7,498 players in total) registered with the FFK.

World Cup Qualifiers

Last, but not least, there is also the Kosovan national team. In September, they will embark on their first qualifying campaign for a major international tournament, attempting to qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Kosovo's first-ever international match was way back in 1992, when they played an unofficial friendly against Albania. Further unofficial games followed over the years, including a 1-0 defeat to Albania in 2002 and a 1-0 win against Saudi Arabia in 2007. Then, on 14 January 2014, FIFA gave Kosovo the green light to play semi-official friendly matches with a special status, the first of which was a 0-0 draw with Haiti on 5 March 2014. Four more games followed in the course of 2014, against Turkey, Senegal, Oman (a 1-0 victory – the team's first semi-official win) and Swiss club FC Wil 1900. Kosovo then played another four games in 2015, against German Bundesliga sides Eintracht Frankfurt and SV Werder Bremen, Equatorial Guinea and Albania. After being formally recognised by UEFA and FIFA in May this year, Kosovo's first official game was against the Faroe Islands in June, and they won it 2-0, becoming the first national team in 50 years to win their first-ever official match. With that in mind, the team are now looking forward to getting their qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup under way. 🇰🇲



NEW FACES IN KEY POSITIONS

CARMEN REDL

 The Austrian Football Association (ÖFB) has recently announced new appointments in a number of key positions. The Austrian finance ministry's decree on tax exemptions (which has to be implemented by 1 January 2017) and ÖFB chief executive Alfred Ludwig's impending retirement on 31 July 2016 have necessitated the restructuring of the ÖFB and new appointments in key managerial positions, both in the ÖFB's new spinoff company and in the association itself. Bernhard Neuhold, the ÖFB's current director of organisational and financial affairs, is to be the new company's managing director, while Thomas Hollerer, the association's current director of legal and administrative affairs, is set to become general secretary of the ÖFB. Both of them will take up

their new positions when Alfred Ludwig steps down. The decree on tax exemption requires that profit-oriented matters be separated from an association's other tasks if its non-profit status is to be retained.

Meanwhile, Michael Schmid took up his new position as head of marketing at Austrian Football Marketing GmbH on 1 May. The 40-year-old – previously a senior director at sporteo, running the company's Vienna office – has spent the last 15 years working in sales (having also spent time at Sportfive and Infront). He will take charge of all sales, marketing and sponsorship-related activities when Alfred Ludwig retires, if not before.

Following Nicola Watzinger's departure on maternity leave at the end of April, her team management position in the sports directorate has been filled by Michael



Kemminger. The 32-year-old, who comes from Vienna and has a master's in sports science and sports management from the University of Vienna, spent three years in the Vienna Vikings' management team and was a venue manager in 2014 when Austria hosted the International Federation of American Football's European Championship. He played competitive football himself up to Under-16 level, playing for clubs such as FK Austria Wien and FC Stadlau 1913.

UNDER-17 GIRLS WIN DEVELOPMENT TOURNAMENT

MAHAL MAMMADOV

 Azerbaijan's Under-17 girls' team recently took part in a UEFA development tournament in Skopje. Their first game, which was against the hosts, FYR Macedonia, ended in a 2-2 draw, so penalties were needed to determine the winners. The Macedonian girls proved to be more accurate from the spot, winning the shoot-out 4-2. Azerbaijan then bounced back to beat Croatia 3-1 in their second game, before Croatia defeated FYR Macedonia 6-0 in the final match of the tournament. Under the tournament regulations, teams were awarded three points for a win in normal time, two for a win on penalties, one for a defeat on penalties and nothing for a defeat in normal time, which resulted in Azerbaijan winning the tournament with four points.



The team's head coach, Siyosat Asgarov, said: "It is very important for Azerbaijan to take part in these biannual tournaments if we are to make progress in the area of women's football. It is not easy to find opponents for such national youth teams, so we appreciate these events, which allow us to play at least two or three international

matches. I also like the fact that the rules stipulate that all players must be given a chance, and it's good that all participating teams stay in the same hotel. It is very important that young players gain tournament experience, meet and communicate with teams from other countries, and are exposed to different cultures."

BELARUS

www.bff.by

REBRANDING OF THE NATIONAL TEAM

ALEKSANDR ALEINIK



The Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) recently appointed a new marketing and communications director and launched a rebranding exercise for the country's national team. Its aim is to emulate the success of nicknames such as 'the Red Devils' and 'die Mannschaft', which are well-known around the world and widely used by the respective teams' fans. Obviously, the top teams all have longer histories and deep-



rooted football traditions – with Belarus, in contrast, only becoming independent 25 years ago – but the BFF hopes to at least get this process started.

The country's fans have had plenty of opportunities to express their views on the matter. In addition to polls on the BFF's official website and social media platforms, supporters have been having their say on one of the country's leading sports websites, as well as various news sites. One particular option has been doing especially well of late, with the nickname 'the White Wings' – which stems from the book *The Land Beneath*

White Wings by famous Belarusian writer Uladzimir Karatkevich – leading the way in recent polls.

The BFF's new marketing and communications director, Uladzimir Berezkhov, says: "This is a very exciting step. We are looking at various ways of establishing links with our literary heritage and cultural traditions, and we can't wait to see the final decision. If the Belarusian people opt to associate the team with Karatkevich, almost every phrase in the book can be used as a hashtag!"

The final decision on the team's nickname is to be made in July, with a new slogan and branding set to follow soon after. The Belarusian national team will definitely have a new look by the time they kick off their qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup at home to France in September.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

www.nfsbih.ba

DRAGONS WIN KIRIN CUP

FUAD KRVAVAC



In preparation for their qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup, Bosnia and Herzegovina's senior men's team recently played Spain in a friendly in St Gallen, before jetting off to Japan to compete in the Kirin Cup. They lost 3-1 to the Spanish in Switzerland, but then made amends by lifting the trophy in Japan. In the semi-finals, the Dragons beat Denmark 4-3 on penalties (following a 2-2 draw), while hosts Japan beat Bulgaria 7-2. Mehmed Baždarević's team then beat Japan 2-1 in the final. Forward Milan Djurić was the event's top scorer with four goals and was voted player of the tournament. The Dragons will be joined in their qualifying group for the 2018 World Cup by Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece and Gibraltar. Their match at home against Gibraltar on 25 March 2017 will be the first time the two sides have ever met. The return match in Gibraltar will take place on 3 September 2017. Meanwhile, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Under-21 men's team recently played Azerbaijan in a friendly in Krsko, Slovenia, drawing 0-0. Turning to youth football, FK Radnik Bijeljina recently

beat FK Borac Banja Luka 1-0 in the final of the national Under-15 championship, while HŠK Zrinjski and FK Sarajevo were crowned national champions at Under-19 and Under-17 level respectively. Meanwhile, NS Tuzla Canton have won the right to represent Bosnia and Herzegovina in the tenth UEFA Regions' Cup after beating PFS Prijedor 1-0 in the final of the national amateur cup competition.

In the 2016/17 season, 12 teams will contest the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Premier League, down from 16 last season. The executive committee of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (NFSBiH) has recently agreed to a change of format, whereby the competition will be divided into two parts. In the first part of the season, every team will play every other team twice (i.e. playing a total of 22 games each). At that point, the top six teams and the bottom six teams will form two separate mini-leagues, playing the other sides in those mini-leagues twice more (i.e. playing another 10 games each). All the points accrued in the first part of the competition will be carried over to the second part.

There will be two new Premier League teams this season: FK Krupa (from Krupa na Vrbasu) and NK Metalleghe-BSI (from Jajce). They were the league champions of the country's two regional entities last season. The first part of the competition starts on 23 July and ends on 4 December. The second part will then start on 25 February 2017 and end on 27 May 2017. The Bosnian and Herzegovinian Cup final, which is a two-legged affair, will take place on 10 and 17 May 2017.

The NFSBiH's training centre in Zenica recently hosted the third and final event of the fifth 'Say YES to Women's Football' festival. Following events in Bijeljina and Siroki Brijeg, more than 100 girls came to Zenica to socialise and have fun playing football at the training centre. All in all, about 350 girls from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in this year's festival. The event was opened by the president of the NFSBiH's youth and women's football committee, Safija Mahmić, who welcomed participants and explained how pleased she was that so many girls were taking part in the festival.

Meanwhile, Bosnia and Herzegovina's senior women's team recently played the seventh game of their qualifying campaign for the 2017 Women's EURO, beating Estonia 1-0 in Tartu.

NEARLY 300 CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN MINI-EURO 2016

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA DEPARTMENT



On 1 and 2 June, nearly 300 children from 24 local secondary schools took part in a mini-EURO 2016 tournament at Natsionalen Stadion Vasil Levski in Sofia, representing all the different countries competing in France. The tournament was staged as part of UEFA's grassroots programme in celebration of both International Children's Day and EURO 2016.

The event was organised by the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) and Sofia city council, in cooperation with Bulgaria's ministry of youth and sport, its ministry of foreign affairs and its national sports facilities company.

It also formed part of the BFU's 'Let's Kick' campaign, which aims to support and develop women's and youth football in Bulgaria. That initiative was officially launched on 27 May, when the Bulgarian national team took part in an exhibition match with vulnerable children at the national stadium.

The mini-EURO 2016 tournament was won by the 132nd Vanya Voynova

Secondary School (who were representing Slovakia). They beat the 85th Otetz Paisii Secondary School (who were representing Romania) 4-1 in the final.

In parallel, a football festival was organised for girls in years 1 to 4 as part of FIFA's Live Your Goals programme, which included games and outdoor workouts. The girls showed off their ball skills and had a lot of fun.

Among the official guests at the tournament were the president of Bulgaria's amateur football league, Rumyan Valkov, the chief executive of Bulgaria's national sports facilities company, Plamen Manolov, the deputy executive director of the BFU, Pavel Kolev, and the director of the prevention, integration, sports and tourism directorate at Sofia city council, Irena Dimitrova, who presented the children with trophies, medals and gifts.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the event. They played football, made many new friends and visited Bulgaria's national sports museum, where they saw trophies



and medals won by the great Bulgarian sportsmen and women of the past.

KEEPING FOOTBALL DISCRIMINATION-FREE

DANNY LYNCH



English football's ongoing work to tackle discrimination and ensure the game is open to everyone continues, and is chronicled in English football's inclusion and anti-discrimination action plan, the latest version of which is due for release in August.

Focusing on racial equality, anti-homophobia and LGBT inclusion, as well as gender equality, disabled access and mental well-being, the plan summarises the progress made in the 2015/16 season and outlines some key priorities for the future.



Heather Rabbatts

This work is coordinated by the game's governing bodies and campaign groups, and is now in its third year.

The plan details how promoting managerial and coaching opportunities has led to an increase in BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) and female representation. In addition, the report describes the significant rise in reports of discrimination, due to the increased awareness of the need to highlight

abuse and the importance given to instilling confidence in those reporting discrimination in the sport.

Heather Rabbatts is chairwoman of The FA's Inclusion Advisory Board, the group tasked with overseeing this work. "We will not 'solve' the issue of discrimination, whatever form it may come in. But what we can do is ensure that our vigilance regarding injustices is maintained, and ensure that how we seek to address the many imbalances in representation is expressed in this cohesive action plan, which we report on publicly every season," she said.

ESTONIA

www.jalgpall.ee

A FLEXIBLE APPROACH

MAARJA SAULEP



In 2010, the Estonian Football Association (EJL) launched a special recreational league to cater for the large numbers of people who wanted to play football – the nation's favourite sport – but did not have sufficient opportunities to get involved.

The aim of the recreational league is to give opportunities to play to people who, for various reasons, cannot or will not participate at national league level. In contrast with Estonia's national league, the recreational league offers flexibility in terms of playing conditions. Since matches can be anything from 7-a-side to 11-a-side, pitch sizes vary from 35m x 50m to 90m x 120m, and matches can be either 35 or 45 minutes each way. The dates of fixtures are also flexible, being agreed between the teams concerned.

The key principle in the recreational league is that everybody gets a chance



to play. Every little village or circle of friends that wants to register a team is able to do so. There are no registration fees, and everything is done via an internet platform.

There are now a total of 133 teams playing nationwide – including 10 teams in a separate women's league launched in 2012 – with more than 3,000 registered players. This year, the EJL has also launched a recreational youth league, with a view to reducing the number of young players who drop out and stop playing football because of pressure or stress, and a total of 13 teams have signed up to participate in its inaugural season.

Every year, awards are presented to the top teams in the various recreational leagues at the EJL's national football gala.

FINLAND

www.palloliitto.fi

A MAJOR MILESTONE IN COACH EDUCATION

MIKAEL ERÄVUORI



Earlier this summer, Finland achieved a significant milestone in the area of coach education, with former Finnish international Janina Bergman becoming the 1,000th coach in Finland to be awarded a UEFA coaching diploma. Kari Ukkonen, head of coach education at the Football Association of Finland, was delighted with this achievement: "The number of trained coaches in Finland is rising steadily. More and more young coaches now hold a UEFA B licence, and that is great to see."

"We have been working on our coach education programme since the 1980s, and since the turn of the century we have updated the contents of our

training courses in accordance with UEFA's guidelines," he said.

The Football Association of Finland was also recently given the green light to organise UEFA futsal B diploma courses, making it one of the first member associations to offer such courses to its coaches.

"We have been running pilot courses for the last three years, and the first official UEFA futsal B diploma course will now start in the autumn," Ukkonen said. "In both football and futsal, coach education is constantly developing, with new criteria, new diplomas, new requirements, and so on. Consequently, we in Finland are always striving to develop our coach education as well."

FAROE ISLANDS

www.football.fo

UNDER-18 GIRLS TRIUMPH IN LITHUANIA

TERJI NIELSEN



In June, the Faroese Under-18 girls' team took part in the Baltic Cup – a UEFA development tournament featuring Latvia, Estonia and hosts Lithuania.

The Faroese girls started the tournament in a very convincing fashion, beating Latvia 6-0 in their opening match. Their next game was against hosts Lithuania and was expected to be a very tight and even contest, but the result was never in doubt as the Faroe Islands ran out 3-0 winners.

In the final game of the tournament, the Faroe Islands beat Estonia 3-0, securing their third victory in as many matches. Indeed, in addition to achieving maximum points, the Faroese girls scored a total of 12 goals without conceding once.

The team's coach, John Petersen, was very pleased with the girls' performance: "I am, of course, delighted. All 18 girls in the squad have had a good tournament, and these matches have proved that we have a big, strong squad."

In September, many of the girls in the Under-18 squad will be part of the team that heads to Finland for the qualifying round of the European Women's Under-19 Championship, where they will face Finland, Iceland and Kazakhstan in a mini-tournament.



FIRST PRO DIPLOMA COURSE COMPLETED

TATA BURDULI



Georgia's first-ever UEFA Pro diploma course was recently concluded. A total of 15

Georgian coaches of various ages successfully graduated from the course, obtaining UEFA's most advanced coaching diploma. They will now be able to work as coaches at the very highest level. The

course was organised by the Georgian Football Federation, with support from UEFA. Indeed, seven UEFA instructors visited Tbilisi during the course, including specialists from Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The presentation ceremony took place at Mikheil Meskhi Stadion, where

course graduates were presented with their diplomas by the association's president, Levan Kobiashvili, its general secretary, Davit Mujiri, and its head of coach education, Gaioz Darsadze. The ceremony was also attended by Dany Ryser, who designed the course.

FOOTBALL FUN DAY AT LOCAL SCHOOL

STEVEN GONZALEZ



Governor's Meadow first school in Gibraltar recently held a 'football fun day', during which the school's pupils were coached by technical staff from the Gibraltar Football Association (GFA).

The children were taught basic football skills, as well as playing small games and taking part in penalty shoot-outs. Many of the teachers wore football shirts and joined in the activities, embracing the theme of the day.

The football fun day was the culmination of a week of football-themed events organised for pupils in celebration of EURO 2016 in France (the first tournament that Gibraltar has ever attempted to qualify for). The children learnt all about the tournament, the different European countries participating and the Henri Delaunay Cup.

At the end of each session, pupils received a certificate from the GFA, presented by the coaches and the school's head teacher.



ISRAEL

www.football.org.il

PLAYERS PLEDGE COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND TOLERANCE

EITAN DOTAN

 In May, the Israel Football Association (IFA) decided that before all future State Cup matches at youth level, all players (both boys and girls) and match officials should sign a pledge drawn up by the IFA on the subject of equality and tolerance, promising to respect the principles of fair play both on and off the pitch.

In addition, the IFA, in partnership with the Hehalutz Youth Movement, erected an educational marquee outside Ramat Gan stadium for children participating in the 2015/16 State Cup finals (and their parents), with the aim of stamping out racism and promoting equality.

Before the start of the 2015/16 senior State Cup final – the match that traditionally brings the Israeli football season to a close – the captains of all the male and female youth teams that had won a trophy came out onto the pitch and were introduced to the crowd, receiving rapturous applause



from the 30,000 fans in the stadium. The Israeli president, Reuven Rivlin, and the chairman of the IFA, Ofer Eini, passed down the line of captains, shaking their hands and complimenting them on the social responsibility they had displayed by signing the pledge and thanking them for the commitment they had shown. The captains of the two teams contesting the final, Yossi Benayoun of Maccabi Haifa FC and Eran Zahavi of Maccabi Tel-Aviv FC, then added their signatures to the pledge, as did the match officials taking charge of the final.

ITALY

www.figc.it

SIXTH EDITION OF THE REPORTCALCIO PUBLISHED

DIEGO ANTENOZIO

 More than 4 million players, around 1.4 million of them registered, and 610,000 matches played in one year. These are just some of the statistics about football in Italy during the 2014/15 season that have been published in the sixth edition of the ReportCalcio (football report), which summarises research carried out by the Italian Football Federation in cooperation with AREL (a research and legislation agency) and PwC.

Divided into eight chapters, the report analyses football activity at professional, amateur and youth level, ranging from how the national teams are doing from a sporting, media and commercial perspective, to how the professional world is doing in terms of finance and the tax and social security contributions paid. In addition, data on spectator numbers provides a starting point for analysing the situation of stadiums in Italy. The report also includes analysis of professional



football governance models and provides benchmarks with data from the main European and world championships.

The number of professional footballers has dropped slightly (from 14,447 in 2010/11 to 12,211 in 2014/15), and so has the number of amateur players (from 466,371 to 388,954), but this is offset by an increase in the number of players in youth and school teams (from 670,589 to 698,290).

The national teams have played in more competitions (184, compared with 171 in 2013/14) and for the first time data is available on the number of spectators at national team matches, with 556,673 spectators in total throughout the year and an average attendance of 41,188 for senior team matches played in Italy, an average increase of 18.8% over the last five years.

The matches have also become very international, with 65% of national team matches in 2014/15 played outside Italy. The cumulative number of TV viewers reached more than 1.1 billion worldwide, and 82% of net sales of official merchandise came from abroad – particularly France, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.

Football in Italy turns over around €13.7bn a year, an increase of 10% over the last ten years. The situation in terms of facilities and the number of spectators attending matches is still critical, but football's role in Italy is becoming more and more important, e.g. in terms of its tax and social security contributions (totalling more than €1.05bn).

The ReportCalcio can be downloaded from the Italian FA's official website, www.figc.it.

FOCUS ON WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

TOMS ĀRMANIS



In recent years, the Latvian Football Federation (LFF) has launched a variety of initiatives with a view to promoting women's football and encouraging girls to take up the sport. As well as being an ideal way of staying healthy, playing football also opens up a whole range of different career opportunities.

In addition to organising the top two tiers of women's football, which bring together 14 of the best teams in the country, the LFF is focusing on laying the foundations for the sport's future development in Latvia – increasing the number of girls playing football, organising a wide range of activities for them and training new specialists in the field of women's football. Thus, the LFF organises regular girls' competitions for Under-10s to Under-14s during summer, as well as regular indoor competitions for four separate age groups in winter. These

competitions are supported by regular visits by LFF officials and representatives of the Latvian women's national team, with the aim of encouraging girls to continue playing football, motivating clubs to develop activities and providing the necessary equipment.

For the first time ever, the LFF is organising specialist study groups for women's football coaches in order to improve the quality of coaching and show coaches how they can influence girls' development. The LFF is also working on the branding and identity of women's football (the results of which will be revealed at the end of the summer), with a view to developing a collective sense of belonging in the country's women's football family.

These and other measures (such as a highly proactive approach to social media) show just how important the women's game is for the future development of the



LFF and Latvian football as a whole. The LFF is striving to put women's football at the heart of its growth, highlighting its key slogan for the women's game: "We play football; come and join us!"

29TH NATIONAL FOOTBALL DAY

JOËL WOLFF



On 12 June, the Luxembourg Football Federation (FLF) held its 29th National Football Day. The annual football festival, which takes place in the town of Ettelbruck, is the FLF's largest grassroots event of the year.

This year, a total of 281 youth teams featuring children between the ages of 5 and 15 competed in 5 different age categories. In addition to those various tournaments, which involved a mammoth 765 games on 18 mini-pitches, there was also a comprehensive programme of events, with activities for people of all ages.



In addition to the sale of sports equipment and activities organised by the FLF's sponsors, Luxembourg internationals Chris Phillips and Daniel Da Mota were on hand to sign autographs, and there were games to entertain the many children present. There was also plenty of food and drink available. (There needed to be, with more than 5,000 spectators and just under 3,500

players and coaches at the event.)

The logistics of this one-day event are always a challenge for the FLF's youth committee and the rest of the association's administration, but it proved – as always – to be a resounding success and a hit with all participants. Luxembourg's young footballers are already looking ahead to next year's event – the 30th in total – which will take place on 11 June 2017.

FYR MACEDONIA

www.ffm.mk

FOOTBALL WITHOUT BORDERS

ZLATKO ANDONOVSKI



The Football Federation of FYR Macedonia (FFM) recently organised a Football Without Borders camp at its headquarters. The football camp, which was opened by the FFM's general secretary, Filip Popovski, was attended by approximately 100 disabled and non-disabled boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 18.

In his opening speech, Popovski said he was delighted that so many people were taking part: "I would like to thank all of my friends who are working so hard to make this world a better place. The FFM and UEFA will always value disabled athletes. I wish this football camp every success, and I look forward to seeing some of these children taking part in the Special Olympics in the future."

"The best way to achieve tolerance is to encourage all children to play sport. We have to help each other in a spirit of solidarity, provide equipment and teach children discipline. It is important that people think like athletes, acquiring skills that are essential for life and work," he added.

"As a society, we have to be more realistic and more tolerant. We have to act humanely towards everyone and respect people's differences. The only thing a child wants is to pick up a ball and play football. The FFM will continue to support these camps, with assistance from UEFA. We have a duty to set aside the financial resources necessary to provide children with the basics. Their development and happiness is key. Their

smile can't be bought and is worth a lot," he said.

"We see this as an opportunity for long-term cooperation with a considerable impact on society. We want sport without borders; a Europe without borders; a world without borders. This may seem utopian, but we can achieve it if we try, and football has a unique role to play in this regard."



MALTA

www.mfa.com.mt

FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN SPORT

ALEX VELLA



A new national task force was established last year on the initiative of the executive committee of the Malta Football Association (MFA) with a view to fighting the scourge of corruption in sport by means of an holistic plan at national level.

The anti-corruption and transparency task force, which has a broad remit and mirrors the approach adopted in a number of other countries, is chaired by the MFA's general secretary, Bjorn Vassallo, and includes Malta's minister for home affairs and security, the parliamentary secretary for sport, MFA vice-president Chris Bonett, MFA prosecutor Adrian Camilleri, MFA integrity officer Franz Tabone and shadow ministers, as well as officials representing the Malta Gaming Authority, SportMalta and the country's police force.

The task force has been asked to submit proposals to the Maltese parliament regarding three aspects of this issue – (i) education and prevention, (ii) legislation and the regulation of sport

and investigations, and (iii) enforcement – which all stakeholders are committed to addressing.

The task force will scrutinise the work that specialist working groups have done on these matters in recent months against the backdrop of the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions.

The anti-corruption and transparency experts in the task force have already had a number of plenary meetings, and more meetings are planned in the coming months. The final proposals will then be submitted to the Maltese parliament for approval and implementation, with the aim of eradicating all forms of corruption.



MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

SOROCA WIN MOLDOVAN AMATEUR CUP

PRESS OFFICE

 On 19 June, teams representing the regions of Soroca and Cahul met in the Moldovan Amateur Cup final in Vadul lui Voda. Soroca ran out 4-1 winners, lifting the Moldovan Amateur Cup – which is contested by teams from 16 administrative regions – for the first time in their history. Soroca's goals were scored by Ion Ursu (in the 18th and 32nd minutes) and Denis Rogac (in the 52nd and 60th minutes), with Constantin Chiciuc scoring a late consolation goal for Cahul in the 92nd minute. The trophy

was presented to Soroca's captain, Vasile Boldescu, by the general secretary of the Football Association of Moldova (FMF), Nicolai Cebotari.

Soroca will now represent Moldova in the intermediate round of the UEFA Regions' Cup, competing against teams from Turkey, Northern Ireland and Switzerland in a mini-tournament in Moldova.

"We have been in the final of this competition several times in recent seasons without managing to win



Vadim Kartanat

it. That allowed us to gain precious experience, and now it is our turn to taste success. We are delighted to have won the Moldovan Amateur Cup and be representing our country at international level. We have achieved our goal for the season, and we will now start preparing for the UEFA Regions' Cup," said Radion Ghilas, the president of Soroca's regional association.

NORTHERN IRELAND

www.irishfa.com

BACK IN THE GAME

PHILIP MCCARROLL

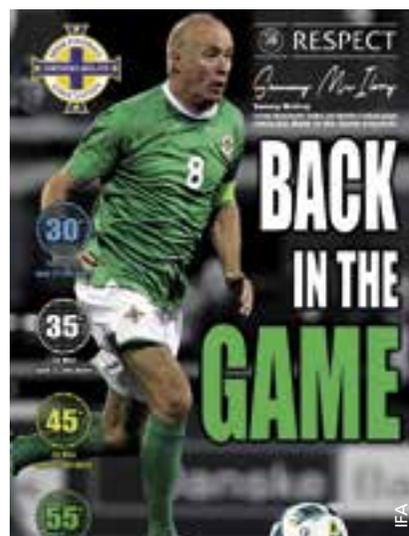
 The second Back in the Game festival took place at the Valley Leisure Centre in Newtownabbey on 28 May, with 28 teams and nearly 300 players taking part. The Irish Football Association's Back in the Game programme is aimed at 'more mature' footballers who have stopped playing football somewhere along the way. Active participation in the sport obviously has a huge impact on players' physical fitness, but it also has a significant effect on their social lives – and thus their happiness.

The main aim of Back in the Game is to get people playing again, rekindling friendships and building fitness levels. The format involves multiple short matches contested by teams in a variety of age groups (over-35s, over-45s and over-55s for the men, and over-30s for the women). The organisers do not keep score and there is no tournament element, but players' competitive spirit is hard to contain.

A couple of childhood heroes were present at this year's festival, including Mal Donaghy (who played for Northern Ireland in two World Cups and was, until recently, his country's most capped

outfield player). It was great to see him and 1980s 'wing wizard' Ian Stewart – one of the organisers of the festival – still actively involved in the game and passionate about football. Many former professionals have spoken of the difficulty of replacing football in their lives, and the obvious answer seems to be 'don't stop playing'.

Among those present was a man with an inspiring story – Davy Smyth. He is still the youngest player ever to win an Irish Cup winners' medal, having lifted the trophy with Ballymena United FC at the age of just 17. He spoke at length and with great honesty about his recent battle with serious illness and how important football has been – in terms of both fitness and social engagement – in that fight. Smyth now plays for the unofficial Northern Ireland veterans' team. Gail Macklin, the Irish Football Association's women's domestic football manager, spoke about the rapid growth seen in women's football in recent years. The number of young female players is increasing year on year, the national women's team is achieving great things, and the women's game



IFA

is a huge part of the festival.

When the final ball had been kicked, hands had been shaken and the referees (for they were there too, of course) had finally been given a rest, all the participants assembled in the leisure centre for food, drink, speeches and prizes in a celebratory atmosphere.

This event promises to grow and grow, and its promotion of physical activity, social inclusion, mental health and nutritional awareness is hugely important. Its key message, though, is this: if you miss football, get back in the game!

ROMANIA

www.frf.ro

PROMOTING FRIENDSHIP THROUGH FOOTBALL

PAUL ZAHARIA



In the last couple of years, the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) has embarked on a number of new partnerships at various levels, including cooperation with military organisations.

From 3 to 5 June 2016, the town of Otopeni (near Bucharest) hosted NATO's 2016 Steadfast Cobalt exercise, which featured more than 1,000 soldiers and civilian employees from 15 NATO and non-NATO countries.

Prior to this major exercise, the largest military football tournament ever to be held in Romania took place at the FRF's Buftea national football centre, involving no fewer than 11 teams from 9 different countries. The tournament was organised by the Romanian ministry of defence, in partnership with the FRF. More than 100 soldiers and civilian employees from

Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Spain took part in the tournament, which was run under the slogan 'Together for Football'. This was, in particular, the first time that Canada had ever participated in such an event.

The tournament was won by Romania 2, who beat Great Britain 1 in the final. In fact, the same two countries also contested the third-place play-off, with Romania 1 beating Great Britain 2 to secure the bronze medal position.

So, the Romanians emerged victorious. The real winner, though, was international solidarity, as the tournament's main objective was to promote friendship between nations through football. In the words of one of the senior organisers of the military exercise, Colonel Thomas Wirsching of the German army, who sent the FRF an effusive letter of thanks

after the event, this tournament was "an exceptional opportunity for young people from different NATO countries to meet in the spirit of this wonderful sport. It helped to foster common understanding and contributed to the establishment of deeper personal relationships and team-building outside routine military business".

That is what football is – or at least, should be – all about. Colonel Wirsching ended his letter by saying: "I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the FRF for hosting this great event. The participating teams will have fond memories of the warm hospitality that they received from the FRF on behalf of the Romanian nation."



SAN MARINO

www.fsgc.sm

FOOTBALL AND INTEGRATION

MATTEO ROSSI



On 8 June Lorenzo Marcantognini, a young player for the Italian disabled team, trained with youngsters from the San Marino Football Federation's regional young professionals team. Lorenzo was born without a tibia and had his left leg amputated when he was four. But this did not stop him wanting to play and have fun, and thanks to his perseverance he managed to achieve his dream. In December 2014 he took part in the Amputee World Cup in Culiacan, Mexico, after cutting his teeth at the Amp Futbol Cup in Warsaw, where he scored in the match for fifth place (in which Italy beat Belgium 8-1).

The training session, organised with Centro Sportivo Italiano, an organisation that promotes all the awareness-raising activities of the national amputees

team, otherwise known as the 'Blue Crutches', was a great opportunity for Lorenzo and the other football-loving



children, staff and leaders to meet and make friends. Pierangelo Manzaroli, manager of the San Marino team, and Cesare Biordi, head of the San Marino FA's youth section, welcomed Lorenzo by presenting him with a San Marino No10 shirt as a souvenir of what would be an incredible day. Then came the training session itself, which attracted a fair number of spectators. Lorenzo lived up to his reputation, following coach Lorenzo Magi's instructions to the letter and displaying excellent technical and shooting skills.

Above all, his passion, determination, positivity and sensitivity shone through – the same qualities that brought him to the football pitch, enable him to play the sport he loves and give him the strength to never give up, no matter what life throws at him.

SCOTLAND

www.scottishfa.co.uk

NATIONAL CAMP FOR UNDER-14 GIRLS

KIERAN MARTIN

 The Scottish Football Association recently organised its 10th national camp for Under-14 girls at Tulliallan in Fife. Over the last ten years, this annual training camp, which brings together the most talented young players from the Scottish FA's six regional squads, has been attended by some of Scotland's top female players, such as FC Bayern München's Lisa Evans, Caroline Weir of Liverpool Ladies FC and Hibernian LFC's Kirsty Smith.

This latest generation of young players had the opportunity to meet Anna Signeul, coach of the Scottish women's team, and Pauline Hamill, coach of the national Under-17 girls' team. The camp was organised by six of the Scottish FA's club development officers, led by Shirley Martin and Corrie Campbell of the south-western and western regions respectively. Eight members of the Scottish national team were also in attendance, with captain Gemma Fay coaching the young goalkeepers and

Joelle Murray present in her capacity as a regional squad coach.

Over the course of the weekend, the various regional teams played against each other in short 30-minute games, found out what it takes to play at elite level and represent Scotland, and listened to lectures on nutrition, player pathways and the prevention of injuries. Anna Signeul said: "We're lucky to have had national team players attending the camp over the weekend. They acted as role models during the Saturday sessions and made a key contribution, especially as

many of them had attended such camps themselves as young players. On top of that, all of our national team coaches were there, including Ann-Helen Graham, Gareth Evans, Pauline Hamill and Paul Brownlie from the Scottish FA's National Performance Academy. It was a fantastic event and a great weekend for girls' and women's football."

Pauline Hamill echoed Anna Signeul's sentiments, adding: "Tulliallan has been pivotal in providing a pathway for Scotland's youngest players and showing them the road to success. Over the course of the weekend, the girls competed against the best players from other regions, allowing them to see where they stand and see the level they should aspire to be at."



The Scottish FA

SERBIA

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SLAVOLJUB MUSLIN TAKES CHARGE OF THE NATIONAL TEAM

VELIMIR PIVIĆ

 Slavoljub Muslin was recently appointed head coach of the Serbian national team, replacing Radovan Ćurčić, whose contract with the Football Association of Serbia was terminated by mutual consent. Muslin, who is a highly experienced coach, will lead Serbia in their qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

In fact, in his short time in charge of the national side, the new head coach has already overseen a couple of victories, with Serbia beating Cyprus 2-1 and Israel 3-1, as well as drawing 1-1 with Russia.

Muslin's long and successful playing career has been followed by a coaching career of similar longevity. His first coaching position was way back in 1989 with French side Stade Brestois 29. He has since worked in a number of other countries – including Serbia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russia, Cyprus and Belgium – but becoming head coach of the Serbian national team clearly represents the pinnacle of his career.

"This is a great honour and a tremendous responsibility. We have a lot of work ahead of us, with our main goal being to qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia," he said.



FSS

REBIRTH OF A TRADITIONAL SYMBOL

PETER SURIN



The Slovak Football Association (SFZ) is constantly striving to bring its fans – notably the younger generation – closer to their idols and role models in the country's national teams.

Following a long search for an inspiring symbol to represent, embody and personify Slovakia's national teams – one that captures notions such as acuity, speed, agility and ferocity, and is rooted in tradition, while at the same time remaining relevant in these fast-paced modern times – we have finally settled on the falcon.

In 2015, we celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of Ľudovít Štúr, one of the greatest Slovaks in history. He and his contemporaries often used a falcon to symbolise a



young able individual who brings with him better times, as can be seen in the works of writers such as Janko Matúška, Ján Botto, Samo Chalupka and Janko Kráľ.

The SFZ wants to bring this traditional symbol into the 21st century by using it

to denote Slovakia's successful national teams. Thus, from now on the country's senior internationals will go out into the world as Slovak falcons (*sokoli*), while youth internationals (i.e. Under-21s and under) will be known as 'little falcons' (*sokolíci*).

'TOGETHER 2016' LAUNCHED WITH STREET FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

PIERRE BENOIT



Switzerland's annual Refugee Day, which dates back to an initiative by the Swiss Refugee Council in 1980, represents the country's most important national awareness-raising campaign highlighting the plight of refugees in Switzerland. This year, the Swiss Refugee Council is being supported by the Swiss Football League, with the two of them cooperating on the new 'Together 2016' campaign. That initiative was launched on Refugee Day on Berne's Bundesplatz, with high-profile figures from the worlds of sport, politics and culture coming together to play football with refugees in a tournament in front of the Swiss parliament building.

A crowd of people looked on as Swiss player of the century Stéphane Chapuisat and Laureus ambassadors Christoph Sauser and Carlos Lima played alongside refugees in mixed teams. In addition to

the inherent glory of victory, they were also competing for prizes in the form of tickets to Swiss Super League matches.

The Together 2016 campaign, which was launched against the backdrop of EURO 2016 and is also supported by Switzerland's state secretariat for migration, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Laureus Foundation, seeks to highlight the integratory power of football in particular and sport in general. This joint campaign will culminate in a project week in October, during which the issue of integration will be explored in greater depth at various professional clubs.

There are people from more than 50 different countries playing football professionally in Switzerland, and those players act as role models for people of all ages. Elite sport motivates people to get involved, providing impetus to youth and grassroots sport. It also highlights the



importance of values such as solidarity, fairness and respect, as well as boosting self-esteem and social cohesion.

From 15 to 23 October, participating Super League and Challenge League clubs will come together to discuss the integratory power of football. This is just one way in which football can contribute to wider society, with leagues and clubs living up to their social responsibilities.

BIRTHDAYS IN AUGUST

Sheila Begbie (Scotland, 1 August)
Kimmo Lipponen (Finland, 1 August) **50th**
Vibeke Karlsen (Norway, 1 August)
Erich Rutmöller (Germany, 2 August)
Luciano Luci (Italy, 2 August)
Mehmet Süheyl Onen (Turkey, 2 August)
Andreas Schluchter (Switzerland, 3 August)
Franck Thivilier (France, 3 August)
Zdravko Jokić (Serbia, 4 August) **70th**
David Gill (England, 5 August)
Yves Wehrli (France, 5 August)
Aleh Chykun (Belarus, 5 August)
Piet Hubers (Netherlands, 6 August)
Pierino Lardi (Switzerland, 7 August)
Andrea Götzmann (Germany, 7 August)
Anna Bordiugova (Ukraine, 7 August)
Marcel Vanelshocht (Belgium, 8 August)
Plarent Kotherja (Albania, 8 August)
Olivier Henry (Belgium, 8 August)
Nico de Pauw (Belgium, 8 August)
Odd Flattum (Norway, 9 August)
Roy Hodgson (England, 9 August)
Nick Nicolaou (Cyprus, 9 August) **50th**
Peter Fossen (Netherlands, 10 August)
Urs Vogel (Switzerland, 11 August)
Laura Riposati (Italy, 11 August)
Domenico Messina (Italy, 12 August)
Eva Ödlund (Sweden, 12 August)
Emil Kostadinov (Bulgaria, 12 August)
Roger Vanden Stock (Belgium, 13 August)
Joseph Mifsud (Malta, 13 August)
Cornel Cristian Bivolaru (Romania, 13 August)
Patrick Willemarck (Belgium, 13 August)
Metin Tunçer (Turkey, 13 August)
Albano Janku (Albania, 13 August)
Yerlan Kozhagapanov (Kazakhstan, 13 August)
George Pandelea-Dobrovicescu (Romania, 14 August)
Jevgenijs Milevskis (Latvia, 15 August)
Kjell Alseth (Norway, 15 August)
Thibault De Gendt (Belgium, 15 August)
Jacques Lagnier (France, 16 August)
Victor Beceiro (Spain, 16 August)
Stanislav Sukhina (Russia, 16 August)
Sergey Pryadkin (Russia, 17 August)
Bente Ovedie Skogvang (Norway, 17 August)
Dane Jošt (Slovenia, 18 August)
Romano Clavadetscher (Switzerland, 18 August)
Borja Santana (Spain, 18 August)
Luca Miranda (Italy, 18 August)

Vitalijs Liholajs (Latvia, 19 August)
Patricia Gregory (England, 19 August)
Hans Reijgwart (Netherlands, 19 August)
František Laurinec (Slovakia, 19 August)
Graham Hover (England, 19 August)
Fabrizio Tencone (Italy, 19 August)
Per Ravn Omdal (Norway, 20 August)
Carmel Bartolo (Malta, 21 August)
Marta Bonaria Atzori (Italy, 21 August) **50th**
Kazimierz Oleszek (Poland, 22 August)
Antonios Karpetopoulos (Greece, 22 August)
Geoffrey Thompson (England, 23 August)
Ioannis Economides (Greece, 23 August) **70th**
Demetrio Albertini (Italy, 23 August)
Igor Pristovnik (Croatia, 23 August)
Luis Manuel Rubiales Bejar (Spain, 23 August)
Enrique Gonzalez Ruano (Spain, 24 August)
David Delferiere (Belgium, 24 August)
Johny Vanspauwen (Belgium, 24 August)
Nicolae Grigorescu (Romania, 24 August)
Pavel Kolev (Bulgaria, 24 August)
Bert Andersson (Sweden, 25 August)
Giancarlo Abete (Italy, 26 August)
Regina Konink-Belksma (Netherlands, 26 August)
Scott Struthers (Scotland, 26 August) **50th**
Ronit Glasman (Israel, 26 August)
Karen Nalbandyan (Armenia, 27 August)
Tammo Beishuizen (Netherlands, 27 August)
Karl Hopfner (Germany, 28 August)
Denni Strich (Germany, 29 August) **50th**
Scilla Gennaro (Italy, 29 August)
Leo Windtner (Austria, 30 August)
Charles John Grundie (Northern Ireland, 30 August)
Marian Ruzbarsky (Slovakia, 30 August)
Boško Jovanetic (Serbia, 30 August)
Christer Fällström (Sweden, 31 August)
Cristel Brorsson (Sweden, 31 August)
Stefano Podeschi (San Marino, 31 August)
Pedro Dias (Portugal, 31 August)
Christoph Kollmeier (Germany, 31 August) **40th**

BIRTHDAYS IN SEPTEMBER

Gerhard Aigner (Germany, 1 September)
José Guilherme Aguiar (Portugal, 1 September)
Manuel Diaz Vega (Spain, 1 September)

João Morais (Portugal, 1 September)
Stephan Schippers (Germany, 1 September)
Savo Milošević (Serbia, 2 September)
Gérard Houllier (France, 3 September)
Rudolphe Mannaerts (Belgium, 3 September)
David Elleray (England, 3 September)
Rudolf Bata (Czech Republic, 4 September)
Victor Mintoff (Malta, 4 September) **70th**
Grigoriy Surkis (Ukraine, 4 September)
Barry Taylor (England, 5 September)
Ludovic Debru (France, 5 September)
Eija Vähälä (Finland, 6 September) **70th**
Bernd Stöber (Germany, 6 September)
Shmuel Shteif (Israel, 6 September)
Andrew McKinlay (Scotland, 6 September)
György Mezey (Hungary, 7 September)
Antonio Laranjo (Portugal, 7 September)
Werner Helsen (Belgium, 7 September)
Vignir Már Thormóðsson (Iceland, 7 September)
Adrian Titcombe (England, 8 September)
Pierre Rochongar (France, 9 September)
Kostadin Gerginov (Bulgaria, 9 September)
Geir Thorsteinsson (Iceland, 9 September)
Ilonka Milanova Djaleva (Bulgaria, 9 September)
Charles Robba (Gibraltar, 10 September)
Ioannis Tsachilidis (Greece, 11 September)
Katarzyna Wierzbowska (Poland, 11 September)
Tomas Karpavicius (Lithuania, 11 September) **40th**
Talal Darawshi (Israel, 12 September)
Tanya Gravina (Malta, 12 September)
Stanisław Speczik (Poland, 13 September)
Jon Skjervold (Norway, 13 September)
Ingrid Jonsson (Sweden, 13 September)
Frank Wormuth (Germany, 13 September)
Philippe Prudhon (France, 13 September)
Ivan Gazidis (England, 13 September)
Miguel Liétard Fernández-Palacios (Spain, 13 September)
Javid Garayev (Azerbaijan, 14 September)
Kim Robin Haugen (Norway, 14 September)
Adam Giersz (Poland, 15 September)
Eugeniusz Nowak (Poland, 15 September)
Dejan Savičević (Montenegro, 15 September) **50th**
Sokol Jareci (Albania, 15 September)
Revaz Arveladze (Georgia, 15 September)
Antonis Petrou (Cyprus, 16 September) **60th**
Fran Gavin (Republic of Ireland, 16 September)
Kelly Simmons (England, 16 September)
Antero Silva Resende (Portugal, 18 September) **90th**

Şenes Erzik (Turkey, 18 September)
Roberto Rosetti (Italy, 18 September)
Miroslava Migalova (Slovakia, 18 September)
Marija Andjelkovic (Serbia, 18 September)
Stefano Farina (Italy, 19 September)
Gaioz Darsadze (Georgia, 19 September)
John Fleming (Scotland, 20 September)
Paul Lyon (Gibraltar, 20 September)
Miloš Marković (Serbia, 20 September)
Helena Herrero González (Spain, 21 September)
Viktor Paradnikov (Ukraine, 21 September)
Nenad Dikić (Serbia, 21 September)
Stefan Weber (Germany, 21 September)
Vladislav Khodiev (Russia, 21 September)
Luc Wilmes (Luxembourg, 21 September)
Nail Izmaylov (Russia, 21 September) **40th**
Cornelis de Bruin (Netherlands, 22 September)
Goetz Eilers (Germany, 23 September)
Umberto Lago (Italy, 23 September)
Vlado Svilokos (Croatia, 23 September)
Giangiorgio Spiess (Switzerland, 24 September)
Eugen Strigel (Germany, 24 September)
Ionel Piscanu (Romania, 24 September)
Matteo Frameglia (Italy, 24 September)
Magdalena Urbanska (Poland, 24 September)
Mogens Kreutzfeldt (Denmark, 25 September)
Paul Krähenbühl (Switzerland, 25 September)
Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (Germany, 25 September)
Christine Frai (Germany, 25 September)
Rotem Kamer (Israel, 25 September)
Ayşe İdil Cem (Turkey, 25 September)
Stephen Lodge (England, 26 September)
Camelia Nicolae (Romania, 26 September)
Dzmitry Kryshchanovich (Belarus, 26 September)
Darren Bailey (England, 26 September)
Aleš Zavrl (Slovenia, 26 September)
Jens Kleinefeld (Germany, 27 September)
Mariano Delogu (Italy, 28 September)
Michael van Praag (Netherlands, 28 September)
Karel Bohunek (Czech Republic, 28 September)
Zoltán Drucskó (Hungary, 28 September)
Kjetil P. Siem (Norway, 29 September)
Cristian Vornicu (Romania, 29 September)
Dariusz Paweł Dziekanowski (Poland, 30 September)
Cristina-Daniela Uluc (Romania, 30 September)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

August meetings

5 August, Nyon
 UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League: play-off draws

10–12 August, Nyon
 Summer Referee Course

25 August, Monaco
 UEFA Champions League: group stage draw

26 August, Monaco
 UEFA Europa League: group stage draw

30 August, Nyon
 UEFA Youth League: draw for the first and second rounds of the domestic champions path

31 August, Nyon
 Elite Club Coaches Forum

August matches

2/3 August
 UEFA Champions League: third qualifying round (return legs)

3–20 August, Rio de Janeiro
 Olympic football tournaments (men's and women's)

4 August
 UEFA Europa League: third qualifying round (return legs)

9 August, Trondheim
 UEFA Super Cup

16/17 August
 UEFA Champions League: play-offs (first legs)

18 August
 UEFA Europa League: play-offs (first legs)

23/24 August
 UEFA Champions League: play-offs (return legs)

23–28 August
 UEFA Women's Champions League: qualifying round

23–28 August
 UEFA Futsal Cup: preliminary round

25 August
 UEFA Europa League: play-offs (return legs)

September meetings

1 September, Nyon
 UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 32 draw

2 September, Nyon
 Women's Football Committee

8 September, Bucharest
 UEFA-EU Stadium and Security Conference

12 September, Paris
 European National Team Coaches Conference

14 September, Athens
 12th Extraordinary UEFA Congress

15/16 September, Athens
 Executive Committee

22 September, Nyon
 Anti-Doping Panel

23 September, Nyon
 Women's EURO 2017: play-off draw

September matches

4–6 September
 European Qualifiers for the 2018 World Cup: matchday 1

10 September–1 October, Colombia
 Futsal World Cup

13/14 September
 UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 1)
 UEFA Youth League: UEFA Champions League path group matches (matchday 1)

15 September
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 1)

27/28 September
 UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 2)
 UEFA Youth League: UEFA Champions League path group matches (matchday 2)

28 September
 UEFA Youth League: domestic champions path first round (first legs)

29 September
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 2)

30 September–21 October, Jordan
 U-17 Women's World Cup



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